

Report of the Task Force to Enhance Bangor's Future Architectural Character

May 17, 2006

Statement of Purpose

This document provides architectural standards for downtown development on City-owned real estate located:

- *in the waterfront area of downtown,*
- *within the downtown core area,*
- *within the Main Street downtown corridor,*
- *within Bass Park.*

The standards are meant to lead to the construction of buildings that are architecturally appropriate to their surroundings, by helping potential developers understand the community values which their designs must satisfy to be acceptable to the City.

The City intends that these standards also be used as guidelines for renovation or construction of buildings on privately-owned land within the same area described above. The standards apply to developers of large downtown projects, individual property owners wanting to build or renovate a downtown property, and all public sector institutions that are major downtown landowners.

“Now the great function of the city is to permit, indeed to encourage and incite, the greatest potential number of meetings, encounters, challenges, between all persons, classes and groups, providing as it were, a stage upon which the drama of social life may be enacted, with the actors taking their turn as spectators and the spectators as actors.”

Lewis Mumford

Shared Community Values (*underlying building guidelines*)

Buildings not only shape our physical world but should also reflect our community's shared values. Bangor's shared values inform the design standards in this document.

Sense of History

History is of the past and in the making. Downtown should provide a sense of Bangor's history. Future development can respect and respond to the history and stories of this place, and also be aesthetically of its own time and responding to the needs of the present and the future. Downtown is culturally enriched by providing a sense of continuity throughout the past, the present and plans for the future.

What is built in our time becomes a story within the larger story of Bangor. Every story must be honest, coherent, enduring and provocative.

Unique Character

Bangor's downtown is a collection of special places, building types, styles, architectural details, and town form, as well as commercial, cultural, government, recreational and residential activity. It has not, and will not, develop a homogeneous and predictable appearance that diminishes its unique character.

Development plans should preserve access and views to water, significant vistas, and even existing structures in some cases.

Authenticity

In an authentic place one can trust their assumptions about their physical surroundings.

Downtown Bangor values what is genuine about itself. Our residents and visitors feel connected to this place because it is not contrived. Bangor prefers to have a downtown whose buildings and public infrastructure clearly reference the time in which they were built and the activities and needs of people using them, to a place that relies on replication of the past or of buildings whose authenticity is based elsewhere.

Downtown Bangor is still blessed with an existing inventory of buildings whose authenticity has given them and the spaces they occupy meaning and significance that grows naturally over time.

Safety

Downtown is densely developed and populated by people who are strangers to one another, and is inherently noisy and busy.

A downtown that not only is safe, but also feels safe, 24 hours a day allows people to fully engage in the activities that abound there.

Every streetscape, open space, and building design should incorporate lighting, lines of sight and other elements that create a safe environment. Designs should have clarity that identifies where it is safe to go, and what are public, private, and semi-public spaces.

Designs should take into account four distinct seasons in which safety factors change for drivers and pedestrians.

Diversity

Downtown should support diverse uses by a diverse population. Multi-use buildings add to downtown's capacity for diversity. Public spaces and civic amenities should foster diversity.

Diversity is a key ingredient in a city that has become a rich and vibrant place to live, work, and play; diversity supports continued economic growth.

Humane Character

Streetscapes, open spaces and buildings should be designed with people's comfort and well-being in mind. Downtown Bangor is a place where design, density, complex function, and high-activity issues are addressed with full regard for human use and enjoyment.

Buildings and public spaces are developed to interact with those around them to enhance people's experience of being downtown. Transportation and parking needs should not intrude unnecessarily.

Density

Downtown land is a scarce commodity. Density facilitates commercial and social interaction.

According to Jane Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, density is critical "to generate exuberant diversity in a city's streets and districts." Density promotes vitality and diversity. Dense urban places are representative and democratic in character; experientially diverse and exciting.

Density encourages a focused view in design.

Sustainability

Downtown is a permanent place, and its buildings are meant to exist and function for many generations. Sustainability encompasses "green" construction practices, the reuse of existing buildings, the creation of buildings with long life spans, and the creation of buildings with built-in flexibility to allow for differing future uses and ultimately the ability to recycle the components and materials at the end of the building's life span.

Economic sustainability suggests that downtown requires affordable commercial spaces and that investment in these spaces can provide returns necessary to support it.

Buildings should share open space and resources such as parking, and services such as delivery and refuse pick-up.

Buildings and their surrounding amenities should support alternative transportation modes that include walking, biking, and public transportation.

Economic Vitality

Private projects should enhance downtown's economic vitality and must themselves demonstrate sustained profitability. Buildings and public spaces that demonstrate design excellence can go farther and become "destinations" that draw people and greater economic activity to downtown.

Civic Art

Visual art for public spaces, and performing arts presented in public spaces, nourish the public's spirit and soul. Both visual art and space created for public performances help to define the public space and articulate what is distinct about the space and the downtown. They can honor the past while expressing community aspirations for the future.

Civic art stimulates the cultural life of the region, promotes economic development, cultural tourism, downtown and neighborhood revitalization, international prestige and recognition, and an improved quality of life for a community.

Civic art leads visitors as well as inhabitants into the discovery of a city. Over time a work of art or architecture becomes an important link to a city's past, from which future generations glimpse the perceptions and attitudes of their predecessors. When the work is new, it can help people understand today's ideals and traditions and the changes going on around them.

Civic art helps the community both attain and keep its identity.

Design Standards

1. Build to the Sidewalk

The place where the building and the sidewalk meet is the most important spot in downtown. This is the pedestrian network where the interaction between people on the sidewalk and businesses in the buildings is most intense. It is a threshold across which commerce and activity must cross. Street level restaurants, shops, stores and businesses are all accessed at that line, and the more continuous it is the greater possibility for success they will all experience. A gap in the length of façades will create an area of low activity and low commercial potential in the same way a vacant lot will, and should be avoided wherever possible.

Buildings, as they meet the ground, also form the space around our city streets. The shape of the streetscape is created by the height and location of the buildings which line the sides. A mid-rise street wall which aligns fairly consistently with the street edge implies that the individual buildings defer to the street. Buildings which meet the street acknowledge the greater importance of the public space through which the streets run. They can, in this way, create an awareness of the greater importance of the civic whole, where building facades are shaped by the public spaces rather than the other way around.

Values Supported Sense of History
 Dense Urban Character
 Economic Vitality

GUIDELINES

- Downtown buildings shall be built to the property line to the greatest extent possible when the property line is adjacent to the street.
- Developments shall meet the property lines at the lower four floors. Provisions will be made for exceptions such as outdoor cafes on the lower floor and for public plazas which are coordinated with public outdoor spaces.

2. Provide Multi-Tenant, Pedestrian-Oriented Development at the Street Level

Development along new or existing public streets should foster a walkable and enjoyable pedestrian environment. New development should avoid large expanses of blank walls, should provide frequent street level entries, and should provide sidewalk amenities such as street furniture and lighting that encourage year-round and evening hour pedestrian activity. Buildings sited along major streets should utilize traditional storefront design principles along the ground floor, and provide engaging displays and clear glazing to enhance the pedestrian experience. Varied paving textures and/or elevation changes should be used to define entrances, pedestrian areas, and crosswalks.

Values Supported Dense Urban Character
Sustainability
Diversity
Economic Vitality

GUIDELINES

- Buildings shall provide street-level, pedestrian-oriented uses on all street fronts.
- street frontage shall be not be occupied by uses which have no need for or discourage walk-in traffic.
- Drive-through uses shall be accessory to the primary use of the building and designed and located not to dominate the streetscape or impair pedestrian movements.
- Building design shall encourage multi-tenant occupancy at the lower two floors.
- Consider providing visitor drop-off areas at public building entries for easy loading/unloading and other temporary parking.
- Residential Projects shall consider outdoor terraces and balconies for residents along the public ROW to bring activity to the street.

- Levels of privacy shall be included in the design to mark transitions from public to semi-public to semi-private to private space.
- Development projects shall feature an outdoor pedestrian space scaled to the demands of the building's use. Patios, dining facilities, public art and street furniture are encouraged to enhance activity and diversity on the street. When designing pedestrian areas consider:
 - Solar exposure to maximize sunlight.
 - Protection and relief from vehicular environment.
 - Structured and/or informal seating or waiting opportunities.
 - Street furnishings (trash receptacles, information kiosk), focal elements (water features, sculpture or natural site feature, public art), light and power.
 - Consider views outward from the pedestrian area at sitting and standing levels.
- Where pedestrian circulation paths cross vehicular routes, a change in paving materials, textures or colors shall be provided to emphasize the conflict point, improve visibility, enhance safety, and provide added aesthetic appeal with the pedestrian access primary.

3. Accentuate Primary Entrances

City dwellers will feel more comfortable and safe downtown if they feel welcome and accommodated. If the streetscape offers cues to the use of buildings, and is clearly defined as a human place, people will be less frustrated living and working there.

Primary entrances connect to lobbies and elevators, while storefront entrances open onto ground level businesses. Because buildings seen from the street present foreshortened views, it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other—even when a large opening has been created for the lobby entrance. Providing some indication from the sidewalk about the location of the entrance can make using the building more pleasant.

Larger buildings which do not provide lobby entrances on each street may force pedestrians to search for the way in. Not only can buildings provide indications of the entrance locations, but they can offer multiple ways into the building, making downtown more comfortable for everyone.

Ease-of-use issues like this can increase the sense that downtown was created for and belongs to everyone. Buildings which cooperate with larger scale, city-wide issues regarding the way people move within downtown can assist in creating a comfortable place.

Values Supported Humane Character
 Safety
 Civic Art

GUIDELINES

- Large buildings which front multiple streets shall provide multiple entrances. Building entrances which connect to a central lobby shall be distributed on different street facing facades.
- Primary building entrances shall be accentuated.
- Primary entrances shall open onto public sidewalks along the primary street frontage.

- Service entrances and loading facilities shall be located at the rear or side of structures and screened from public view.
- Where buildings face more than one public street, service and loading circulation may be located along secondary streets where appropriate.
- Where no off-street options are available, loading and service entrances located along public streets shall occupy the minimum space necessary and be compatible with the other uses of the street, including pedestrian activities, retail development, and traffic flow.
- The sharing of service circulation and loading facilities between buildings is encouraged.
- Civic art and artistic crafting of building materials can help distinguish building entrances.
- Storefront areas shall incorporate significant landscaping (including canopy trees). Frontage design and signage locations shall be coordinated with the placement of plant material.

4. Encourage the Inclusion of Local Character

Our city is a collection of what we find valuable in our region, the visual form of the city with its special places, building types, architectural details and city form, as well as the everyday and special activities of our diverse population and their individual and collective cultures. Within this collection of activities lies an individual spirit, valuable because it gives us a stronger sense of identity in a world which is quickly losing individuality.

The fact that individuals and corporations find it unique, memorable, distinctive, and humane is a strong economic force and a key element in the creation and nourishment of a healthy community.

Values Supported

- Sense of History
- Unique Character
- Authenticity
- Humane Character
- Sustainability
- Economic Vitality

GUIDELINES

- The use of quality local materials is encouraged / local character shall be included in the design.
- Materials selection shall consider limited use of non-renewable resources.
- Care shall be taken to avoid nostalgic reproductions, but to use the materials in a meaningful manner.
- Design shall not mimic, diminish or obscure the existing historic fabric.
- Buildings shall represent the era in which they are designed and may include modern use of quality construction materials.
- Building designs and treatments that express corporate identity shall not take precedence over these design guidelines and such development shall conform to the historic and architectural considerations in these guidelines.
- Buildings that are stylized in an attempt to identify a particular tenant, particularly where the proposed architectural design is the result of a corporate or franchise prototype design, shall not take precedence over

these design guidelines and such development shall conform to the historic and architectural considerations in these guidelines.

- Extended bands of corporate/franchise colors unrelated to the architecture shall be avoided.

5. Control On-Site Parking

As development increases downtown, parking demand will increase and should be planned for and developed as an integral component of a successful city core. Acknowledging this, and the positive and negative impact that structured parking can have on the fabric of downtown, requires that attention be paid to the potential conflicts on-site parking can create.

Parking garages are generally considered necessary but unfortunate and expensive components to downtown development. Their costs can vary widely depending upon the complexity of the design, and are difficult to recoup. These factors contribute to a pattern of development where open sided concrete frame garages with sloped floors take the place of occupied buildings. The problem with these structures is not what they create—useful storage for cars—but in what they displace—pedestrian oriented street-level activity.

Parking uses and the appearance of parking structures should not dominate public streetscapes. Parking structures should be compatible with adjacent uses and architecture in form, bulk, massing, articulation, and materials. The design of parking structures should create a visually attractive and active pedestrian environment by incorporating retail, commercial, and residential uses along all public streets.

Garages that build-in space for retail functions at street level preserve the vitality of other businesses on the street and maintain the continuous pedestrian streetscape

Values Supported Dense Urban Character
 Humane Character
 Diversity
 Economic Vitality

GUIDELINES

- Parking shall occur at interior courts or above or below grade. It shall not occur at grade along property lines which are adjacent to a street, or at the first floor.

- Where above-ground structured parking is located at the perimeter of a building, this shall be screened in such a way that cars are not visible from adjacent buildings or the street.
- Bike racks are encouraged. Place racks at locations that do not obstruct the flow of pedestrians, are easily identifiable, visible and convenient to customer entrances.
- Above-ground parking shall be designed in such a way that neighboring buildings are not adversely affected by headlights.
- Light fixtures installed in the interiors of parking garages shall be fully screened from the exterior or utilize full cut-off shielding.
- All above-grade parking structures shall include usable retail, commercial uses, commercial display or civic art spaces along street frontages to create a high quality urban environment.
- Parking structures should have one story of mixed uses on the street level.
- Visible diagonal ramps and non-horizontal parking plates shall be screened from all visible angles whenever possible and not allowed on primary facades unless it can be clearly demonstrated that these very elements enhance the overall architectural design in a meaningful way.
- Loading docks shall not be visible from the street.

6. Utilize Quality Construction Methods and Materials

The well-built building can provide a sense of continuity and history simply by being around for a long time. This is because buildings can tell a history of our city as part of the urban fabric. They can remind us of our past and the story of our lives in Bangor, and make us feel that we belong to something bigger than ourselves. Their appearance can affect our immediate sense of pride, and our developed sense of continuity; the slower the physical world around us changes, the more permanent it feels, and the more we will feel a part of a city that existed before us and will exist after us.

Downtown buildings should not only provide the appearance that they will be there for a long time, they should also provide façades and structures which actually will be there for a long time. Well-built buildings provide greater resale value, and by holding their value longer can help the economic viability of the whole city center. Property can be affected by the value of adjacent property, and as poor quality buildings age, the value of neighboring properties and buildings may decrease.

A stock of quality buildings which can be used for a relatively long time can also be a better use of natural resources. If the design and construction facilitate extended use, less energy may be spent creating new building materials. Energy costs could easily be higher in the future, raising construction costs and limiting incentives for new construction.

Further, reconstruction and mitigation of problems related to poor building methods affects more than just the property owner. It impacts the city's movement around the building as scaffolding is installed at the sidewalk and as traffic is impacted by the work.

Values Supported

- Sense of History
- Authenticity
- Humane Character
- Sustainability
- Safety

GUIDELINES

- Buildings shall be built as high-quality, long-term components integrated into the urban fabric.
- Buildings shall be constructed to be as maintenance free as possible and shall be designed to achieve a life span greater than seventy-five years.
- A building is at the end of its lifespan when factors including operating or maintenance costs, repair or reconstruction costs, and pressure for more flexible spaces, among others, outweigh the cost of building a new similar building.
- Building design shall incorporate LEED criteria for sustainability. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System[®] is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. Developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.
- Buildings shall have a built-in flexibility to their design and recognize that buildings frequently undergo alterations to conform to uses not considered in the original design.
- Consideration shall be given to floor-to-floor heights and structural grids as they may impact possible future uses.
- Consideration shall be given to the design of exterior walls and skins of buildings. These shall not be considered sacrificial surfaces to be replaced several times in the life of the building.
- Materials used in new development shall reflect the historic palette of downtown.
- A straightforward use of natural and traditional building materials is encouraged.
- Brick, stone, high quality metals, cast concrete, wood, and glass will achieve the greatest level of compatibility with the surrounding area and will best stand the test of time.
- Façade materials shall be high quality, authentic materials.

7. Design Buildings with Human Scale

Cities are large manmade environments, and while they provide many necessities we have come to expect from our world, they are still unnatural, designed places which can be horrific and unhealthy as easily as they can be comfortable and appropriate.

Contemporary building materials are typically machine made rather than handmade, and are frequently installed without alteration or customization. Through this historical inevitability, recent buildings inadvertently present this industrial reality as an aesthetic, deferring to the industrial and eliminating evidence of human hands and craft.

However, the use of modern building materials does not condemn a city to inhumaneness, as any materials may be used to create human scale in a design. The same phenomenon of standardization has exerted pressure on the form of buildings during this century. Structural components are less costly when uniformly designed and mass produced. Fortunately, the industry has seen innovations which make non-standard parts less costly for a more appropriate and humane consideration of the user.

The massing of new development should be compatible with the existing development found on adjacent parcels. Bangor is characterized by human scaled architecture that complements a pleasant pedestrian environment. New construction downtown should avoid large monolithic massing along all street frontages. Where new structures are larger than adjacent buildings, horizontal and vertical variation should be used to break large expanses of building into components that are in scale with the context to which they most closely relate.

The façade proportions used in new development should be compatible with the existing development. While some buildings have predominantly vertical or horizontal orientation, most use architectural details and architectural features, such as window openings and roof shapes to balance the proportions of facades into pleasant and cohesive compositions.

Values Supported Unique Character
 Humane Character

GUIDELINES

- Buildings shall be designed with a variety of scales, creating a scale and level of detail at the street level appropriate to the pedestrian.
- Clearly articulating different uses at lower building levels will aid in creating a sense of human scale in mid- and high-rise buildings. Addressing human scale may further be achieved through architectural detailing, and by variation in the three dimensional character of the building mass as it rises skyward. Monolithic, vertical extrusions of a maximum building footprint are strongly discouraged.
- The lower floors shall be differentiated architecturally.
- Where existing adjacent buildings have a consistent massing and roof forms which enhance the character of the area, that massing and form shall be reinforced unless it can be clearly demonstrated that an alternate design would enhance the vitality of the area.
- Traditional arrangement of façade components into base, middle, and top composition shall be used to achieve compatibility and continuity within the surrounding architectural context.
- The following features shall be considered as potential elements to help break down building scale:
 - Covered walkways, trellises or architectural awnings that provide varying degrees of shade and sun at ground level.
 - Distinct and multiple architectural roof forms, clearly pronounced eaves, distinct parapet designs and cornice treatments.
 - Projecting bays, recessed balconies, and roof shape variation shall be judiciously utilized to provide interest, individuality, and appropriate scale to new structures.
- The design shall incorporate elements to visually screen elements such as HVAC units, dumpsters loading areas. The integration of the screening of those elements is encouraged over the addition of fencing and landscaping which is not in harmony with the overall design.

8. Intensity of Site Use

Downtown is a special and limited space. Every opportunity must be taken not to squander this precious real estate. Buildings should be occupy as much of the lot area as possible. Buildings should be multistory and multi use to the maximum extent possible. Pedestrian oriented cities require that the scale of activity be compressed to something much smaller and more intimate than one appropriate to cars. In waterfront areas development parcels generally have been created outside of areas for open space and views but in some scenarios the incorporation of those open areas, views and public connections will need to be incorporated into the design.

Values Supported Dense Urban Character
 Unique Character
 Humane Character
 Economic Vitality
 Sustainability

GUIDELINES

- Building heights shall be compatible with adjacent structures.
- Development shall strive for a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 2.0 or higher.
- Extensive use of lot area for single use on-site surface parking shall be discouraged.

9. Integration with Overall Development Plan

Downtown areas should be laid out and planned to maximize the public's full benefit of these spaces as both economic assets and public amenities. Site developments should take extra care to coordinate private and semi-private spaces within the context of the greater adjacent public spaces. Historic and waterfront views and vistas should be preserved. Connection and connectivity to pedestrian walkways should be maintained.

Values Supported Sustainability
 Human Character
 Unique Character
 Economic Vitality

GUIDELINES

- Outdoor spaces shall be designed to complement their surrounding planned or existing public improvements.
- Roadways shall be integrated with the existing terrain, limit through traffic movements and discourage high speeds.
- New construction shall not block scenic or historic views and vistas.
- Building height and orientation shall be designed around the preservation of scenic or historic views.
- Fences shall be avoided which limit visual connectivity of public space and views.
- Outdoor improvements shall maintain a similar palette of construction materials consistent with the style and quality of the public improvements.
 - Bike racks are encouraged. Place racks at locations that do not obstruct the flow of pedestrians, are easily identifiable, visible and convenient to customer entrances.
 - Deciduous trees shall be used along the south side of buildings to shade and cool in the summer but allow sun to passively warm the building in the winter.

- Street trees shall be used through paved areas and along pedestrian ways to provide shade and reduce heat buildup and glare at a minimum of one tree per 50 feet of frontage along a roadway or walkway.
- Utilities shall be located below ground.

10. Appropriate Lighting & Signage

Downtown is a pedestrian-oriented space, and as such the signage and lighting design should not appear to imitate the mall or highway commercial strip. If the streetscape offers cues to the use of buildings, and is clearly defined as a human place, people may be less frustrated living and working there. Signage need not be designed to attract motorists passing by at high speeds; it can more subtly invite people into offices, shops and restaurants. Lighting downtown should provide for basic public safety but should be utilized in a way that reflects that this is a residential community, which allows for and human scale and privacy to have a place in design.

Values Supported

- Humane Character
- Civic Art
- Sense of History
- Dense Urban Character
- Economic Vitality
- Safety

GUIDELINES

- Site lighting, security lighting, and architectural/landscape lighting shall provide the user with illumination levels appropriate for the designed activity (i.e. parking, walking, outdoor dining).
- Site lighting shall strive to minimize glare.
- Exterior lighting shall take into account background lighting and lighting from other sources to only provide the minimal amount of lighting needed.
- Light trespass beyond property lines shall be controlled by shielding or aiming fixtures away from residential properties.
- Light poles and fixtures shall be in scale with proposed or surrounding buildings. Consider using pedestrian scale lights in bollards (3 to 4 foot high posts) where appropriate.

- All development shall use full cut off light fixtures for exterior lighting in which no more than 2.5% of the total output is omitted at 90 degrees from the vertical pole or building wall on which it is mounted.
- Architectural & Landscape Lighting shall;
 - Architectural lighting shall be used to highlight special features only. Lighting expansive wall planes shall be avoided.
 - Landscape feature lighting, and lighting at the pedestrian level is encouraged.
- Signage shall strive to maintain the quality of materials used in the downtown.
- Signage shall be scaled and illuminated for a pedestrian clientele.
- Unique signage is a form of civic art which shall be encouraged.
- Building-mounted signage shall be fully integrated with the design of the building.
- Traditional corporate logos and mass produced signage shall be discouraged.