



City of Vancouver *Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines*
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GASTOWN HA-2 DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Contents

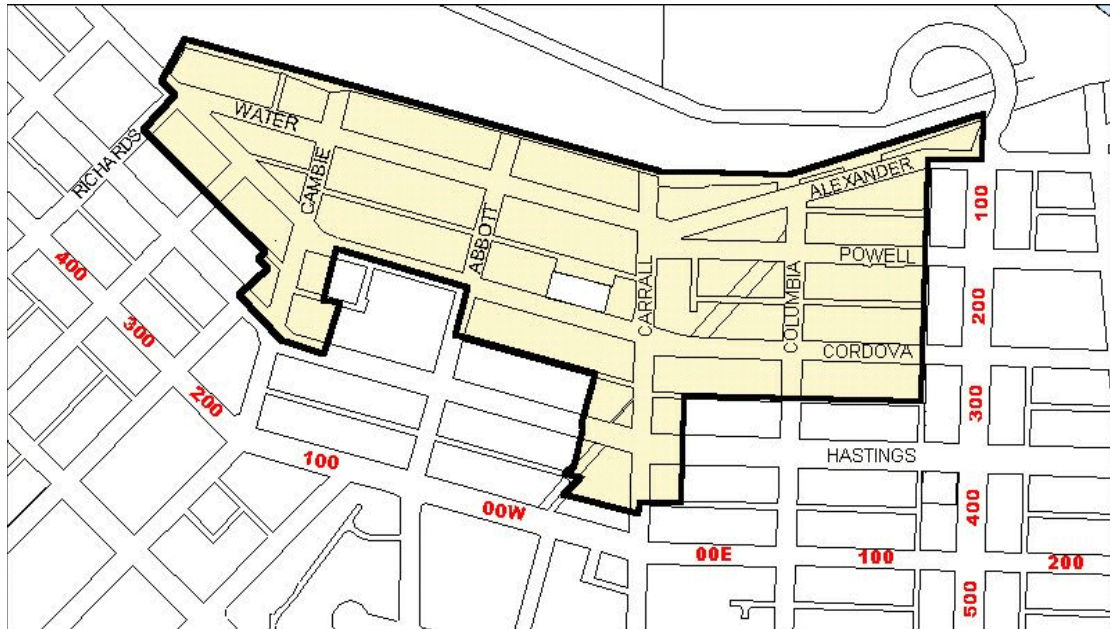
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Note: The guidelines in this report are organized under standardized headings. As a consequence, there are gaps in the numbering sequence where no guidelines apply.

1 Application and Intent

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the HA-2 District Schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law. Most of the properties in the HA-2 area (see Figure 1) have been designated as protected heritage sites. Many of the buildings on protected sites are also listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register. These will be required to be retained. The design guidelines should be consulted in seeking approval for both modifications to existing buildings and development proposals for new buildings. As well as assisting applicants, the guidelines will be used by City staff and the Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee (GHAPC) in the evaluation of development applications. These guidelines do not apply to outright uses that do not require alteration to the exterior of buildings.

Figure 1. Map of Gastown



The intent of the design guidelines is to conserve the authentic heritage character and fabric of Gastown and to ensure that new development is supportive of and harmonious with the area's heritage character. Consequently, specific guidelines are included for the rehabilitation of heritage buildings and for the contextual design of new structures. Applicants are encouraged to retain professional design advice for all development initiatives.

The guidelines which pertain to regulations and architectural components are organized to discuss the objective of the guideline, followed by criteria which apply to either Heritage Buildings or to New Buildings. Heritage buildings are those listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR) and the criteria apply equally to all buildings regardless of their A, B or C evaluation. For those buildings not listed on the VHR, these guidelines can be used to assist with the upgrading of buildings, some of which may have some heritage value or have hidden heritage features.

The Design Guidelines for Gastown should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the Conservation Standards and Rehabilitation Guidelines adopted for use in HA-2.

1.1 General Heritage Considerations

The objective that underlies this document is that appropriate design guidelines will encourage the conservation of the authentic heritage character and fabric of Gastown, and will also ensure that new development is compatible with and will contribute to that character.

Heritage buildings and street elements define the contextual character of Gastown. It is therefore desirable that historic architectural features be retained or restored and that any changes bring heritage buildings closer to their original exterior appearance. In some instances, it may be possible to replicate lost features, particularly where there is archival evidence. Attention is focussed on the appropriate care and conservation of original cornices, windows, building materials, entries and shopfronts by referencing the Conservation Standards and Rehabilitation Guidelines adopted for Gastown.

New buildings should not be designed in a pseudo-historic style, replicate existing buildings, or buildings that once existed, as this erodes the value of authentic heritage buildings. Rather, a new architectural vocabulary is encouraged that complements the heritage character of original Gastown buildings. This can be done by respecting and interpreting patterns of massing, height, fenestration, facade proportions and organization, materials and colour in the prevailing character of significant buildings in the area. Non-architectural elements such as signs, awnings, canopies and sidewalk displays can further enhance the character and interest of the area.

Of particular importance is the conservation principle which addresses how to achieve a balance between the compatibility of new work and its distinguishability from authentic heritage fabric. Understanding this balance can lead to sympathetic and creative design solutions which strengthen and enrich the heritage character of the area.

1.2 Heritage Value Assessment and Determining the Level of Intervention

Good conservation practice begins with thorough research into the history of the building. This applies to all listed Heritage buildings, but can also be of value to non-listed buildings (research may unearth valuable historic information or photos of an altered building's previous condition). Some building materials may be required to be removed as part of research.

Based on the historic research, a Heritage Value Assessment can be prepared. This is a statement of the architectural, cultural and contextual qualities that give the resource merit, and includes a list of character-defining elements and description of why they are important.

The extent of conservation work on heritage buildings is known as Levels of Intervention (see Conservation Standards and Rehabilitation Guidelines). These range from a thoroughly researched and detailed restoration of a building's appearance to an earlier or its original appearance, to a complete renovation using modern materials, which may not retain much heritage fabric. The most common conservation activity is rehabilitation, or the updating of a building to a usable state through repair or alteration, yet retaining those features that have heritage significance. If a building is being rehabilitated and continuing its current or historic use, that is a continued-use rehabilitation (such as updating an existing hotel which remains in hotel use); if the use is changing as part of the upgrading, then that is an adaptive-use rehabilitation (such as updating an existing warehouse to residential use).

Within the scope of an overall rehabilitation, there may be a range of levels of intervention, e.g., certain parts of the building may be restored (e.g., the cornice), conserved (e.g., brick masonry), replaced (e.g., storefront), or replicated (e.g., window sash).

For new buildings, the context for site and building should be assessed and a statement of architectural character intent completed which clearly describes the fit of the building in the heritage area.

2 General Design Considerations

2.1/2.2 Neighbourhood and Streetscape Character

Gastown is the birthplace of Vancouver and contains the largest collection of buildings from the turn of the 20th century in the city. The existing built form of Gastown is a reflection of its historic development, both in its urban form and streetscape. The area contains a notable collection of buildings which vary in width and height, from one to thirteen storeys, with most in the two to four storey range. This variation in height presents a characteristic "sawtooth" appearance to the block profile (see Figures 2a and 2b). Some buildings are low and narrow,

others high and wide, almost always with a projecting cornice at the roofline. This is a legacy of the needs and aspirations of the original owners, whose buildings reflect the time when they were erected. The characteristic “sawtooth” profile is an important consideration in Gastown, as its retention is fundamental to the conservation of the area’s built form.

Buildings are clad in brick or stone masonry and vary in architectural character in response to their location within Gastown. Large floor plate warehouse buildings were located along Water Street, while narrower, more elaborate buildings were located along Cordova Street that was, at the turn of the 20th Century, Vancouver’s main commercial street.

Figure 2a. Cordova Street early 1900s

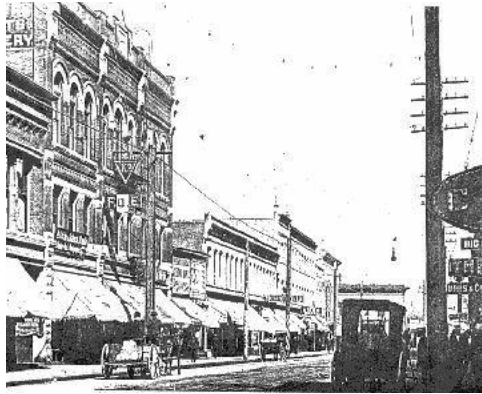


Figure 2b. Water Street early 1900s

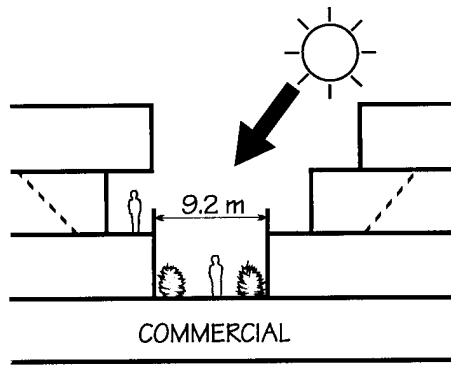


2.6 Light and Ventilation

Sufficient daylight access should be provided to all new residential units. The following criteria will be considered. Figure 3 illustrates how the criteria can be achieved in a development with a courtyard.

- (a) Living rooms should not face into courtyards that are less than 9.2 m. Small courtyards are encouraged to have terraced walls to increase access of daylight.
- (b) In double-fronting units (i.e., street/courtyard or lane/courtyard, a minimum clear courtyard dimension of 6.0 m and a courtyard height/width ratio of 1.5 to 1.0 may be acceptable provided no secondary living spaces (bedrooms, dining rooms and dens) face onto the courtyard. Secondary living spaces may face the courtyard on the highest floor only;
- (c) Secondary living spaces may face into the courtyard on lower floors provided that the minimum courtyard width is 9.2 m;
- (d) Courtyard width will be measured to any obstruction including exterior corridors;
- (e) Courtyard configuration and building massing should maximize sun access to courtyard level including terracing of upper levels on the south side of courtyards;
- (f) Where courtyards or light wells exist in adjacent developments, new developments are encouraged to link open space with adjacent courtyards or light wells yet maintain privacy and security;
- (g) Where new development abuts or is adjacent to existing development with windows on the sidewalls, adequate light and ventilation should be maintained; and
- (h) Mechanical ventilation of commercial space should be exhausted at a location having the least impact on residential livability. This should ideally be at the roof, especially for restaurant kitchen exhaust.

Figure 3. Terraced massing on south side improves light penetration into courtyards and units



2.8 Noise

Commercial activities such as parking and loading, exhaust fans, and entertainment uses, can create noise which disturbs residents. Buildings with dwelling uses should meet acoustic standards. Some of the methods which can be considered are:

- (a) orienting bedrooms away from noise sources;
- (b) providing mechanical ventilation (to allow choice of keeping windows closed);
- (c) using sound-deadening construction materials and techniques; and
- (d) noise generated by the development itself, such as parking and loading activities, exhaust fans, and entertainment uses, should be mitigated by location and design.

2.9 Privacy

Residential privacy in relation to other units, pedestrians, and adjacent development is an important aspect of project livability and neighbourliness.

- (a) Unit orientation, window placement and screening should be used to enhance privacy;
- (b) Balconies and decks, which do not front onto the street, should be oriented, screened or landscaped to reduce direct overlook of adjacent residential uses or other units in the project; and
- (c) In developments with courtyards, stacked units are encouraged to reduce privacy conflicts due to access corridors.

2.10 Safety and Security

Safety and security are key components of livability. New development, both residential and commercial, should provide a secure environment through attention to principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

- (a) Separate lobbies and circulation (including elevators) should be provided for retail, office and residential uses. Lobbies should be visible from the street;
- (b) The design of parking facilities should provide for personal safety and security. Underground residential parking, including pedestrian access routes from parking into the building, should be secure and separate from commercial parking;
- (c) Buildings should maximize opportunities for surveillance of sidewalks, entries, circulation routes, semi-private areas, children's play areas and parking entrances. Blind corners and deeply recessed entries should be avoided. Visibility into stairwells and halls is desirable. Laundry facilities, amenity rooms, and storage rooms should be grouped together and visible for surveillance;
- (d) Residential lighting should ensure good visibility of access routes and landscaped areas without excessive lighting levels, glare or overspill to neighbours; and
- (e) Access routes from building to residential garbage should be separate and secure from commercial garbage.

2.11.2 Vehicular Access

Lane Access

An active pedestrian environment with a strong sense of street enclosure is encouraged. It is important that vehicular and service functions remain on the lane, so as not to conflict with pedestrian activity.

- (a) Vehicular access to underground parking, loading, and service areas should be provided from the lane; and
- (b) Negative impacts of vehicular entrance parking ramps and service areas should be minimized through proper treatment such as enclosure, screening, quality finishes, sensitive lighting and landscaping.

3 Uses (Reserved)

4 Guidelines Pertaining to the Regulations of the Zoning and Development By-law

4.1 Height

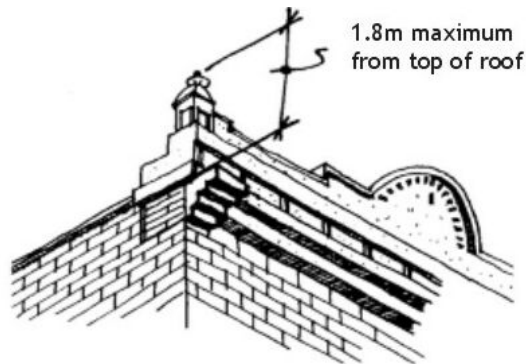
4.1.1 Objective

The objective is to reinforce the original scale of Gastown and the character defining sawtooth profile. The height of heritage buildings ranges from 1 to 13 storeys. While most are in the 3 to 4 storey range (typically about 12.2 m in height), within one block there are buildings of varying heights which creates the characteristic sawtooth building profile. Heritage buildings typically have a high ground floor ceiling height.

4.1.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings Seeking Heritage Incentives

The permitted height for a heritage building is its existing height. A parapet, with or without a cornice, to a maximum of 1.8 m in addition to the maximum height is not included in the calculation of building height in order to encourage the retention and replacement of cornices and parapets (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Parapet and cornice height



The Director of Planning or DP Board can consider applications for rooftop additions to heritage buildings to provide access to rooftop open space and provide additional floor area provided that architectural, conservation, contextual and urban design considerations have been satisfied.

These considerations include:

- (a) the massing and design of the addition should be compatible with and distinguishable from the heritage building;
- (b) the structural requirements of the addition do not involve the removal of significant historic fabric, especially on facades facing streets;
- (c) the addition will not block significant public views or overshadow public open space; and
- (d) the addition is inconspicuous.

In addition, when heritage incentives are provided to facilitate the rehabilitation of a heritage building, a maximum one-storey addition will be considered provided:

- (a) the height of the additional storey does not exceed 3.66 m in height and meets requirements of Section 5.1;
- (b) total building height does not exceed 22.9 m; and
- (c) the addition is inconspicuous.

Figure 5. Addition to existing building



4.1.3 Criteria for New Buildings

The maximum height for new buildings is established by the HA-2 District Schedule. A parapet on the principal facade, with or without a cornice to a maximum height of 1.8 m above the maximum building height, is not included in the calculation of building height. This is to encourage the inclusion of strong building cornices and parapets on new buildings.

There is potential for a conditional increase in the maximum permitted building height, provided that specific criteria regarding context and urban design are met as noted in the HA-2 District Schedule.

For projects not seeking tax or bonus density incentives, the height and massing provisions contained in this section do not apply. These projects will be reviewed on their individual architectural, contextual and urban design considerations.

4.2 Yards and Setbacks

4.2.1 Objective

The objective is to respect the characteristic building massing and siting of the heritage buildings in Gastown, which were typically built out to the front, side (and often) rear property lines. Older residential or hotel buildings typically had partial sideyard lightwells on one or both sides of the building. Encroachments onto City streets, in the form of bay windows, cornices, basement areaways and fire escapes were not uncommon.

4.2.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

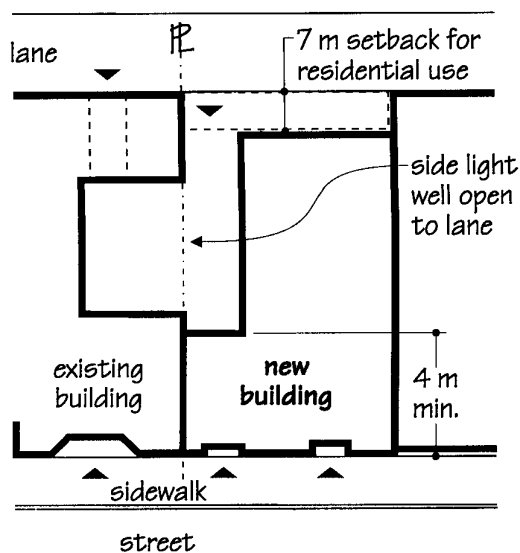
All heritage and existing buildings should retain their original relationships to the front and side property lines at all existing floors.

4.2.3 Criteria for New Buildings

All new buildings should be built to the front and side property lines of their sites for the full extent of their facades. Rear setbacks are not required, but may be permitted.

Permitted exceptions include where new residential buildings are required to provide air to a habitable room of a dwelling, the use of traditional side light wells at the mid-depth of the site and possibly open to the lane are encouraged, so that the building facade frontage fills the site width. This can be combined with a courtyard at grade accessed from the inside of the building or from the street through a passage or from the lane.

Figure 6. Lightwell setback diagram



Street level arcades parallel to the street are not supported since such design elements tend to interfere with the block massing and creates public safety and vandalism concerns.

4.3 Acoustics (Reserved)

4.4 Building Bay and Shopfront Width

4.4.1 Objective

The objective is to respect the typical streetscape rhythm comprised of many buildings in each block with one or more bay widths in each building.

The heritage buildings of Gastown are of various widths and do not necessarily correspond to building height; the same bay width can be found on both low and high buildings. The texture and visual interest evident within the local streetscape(s) which are typically comprised of buildings with pronounced bay divisions, should be reflected in the design of new buildings.

The buildings of Gastown, especially along Water Street, were originally warehouses having been adapted over time to retail functions. As such, creating new (or rehabilitating existing) shopfronts, where they are not part of the building's original design, presents different challenges with respect to design criteria.

4.4.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

The architectural elements of the original and/or early building facades such as columns, pilasters, entries and shopfronts, which serve to establish a pedestrian scale and rhythm, should be retained. These features add texture and visual interest.

Shopfront widths are historically in the 7 m range (see Figure 7). Consolidating two (or more) shopfronts into one is discouraged, since it reduces pedestrian interest. If such a consolidation is proposed, the retention of original historic building features should not be compromised, even if this means retaining a redundant entry configuration. Where a shopfront is to be created in a building where they did not originally exist, the shop front design and configuration should respect the existing bay width of the building.

Figure 7. Shopfront width



4.4.3 Criteria for New Buildings

The design of the facade of a new building should be divided into vertical units of width within the range typical of heritage buildings in Gastown. Shopfront width should not exceed 7.6 m.

New buildings in excess of 15.2 m in width should seek to establish a dominant rhythm through the use of vertical elements and a fenestration pattern which maintains the fine-grained texture of the historic streetscape.

Figure 8. Vertical elements in facade composition



4.5 Exterior Design

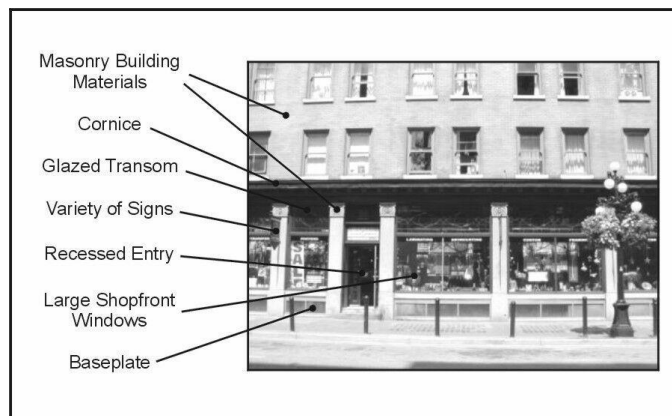
4.5.1 Lower Street Facade

4.5.1.1 Objective

The objective is to respect the scale, configuration and rhythm of the traditional components of the lower facade of Gastown buildings including ground floor height, bay width and access to upper floors.

The lower facade is that portion of the building made up of the ground floor level and is typically defined by a minor cornice, decorative band and often a signband. Shopfronts traditionally had high ceilings, were very transparent with large display windows with clear glazing, often with a large glazed transom, and recessed entryway, often embellished with decorative tiles, stone or terrazzo paving. The base plate was often of wood and sometimes decorated (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Lower facade

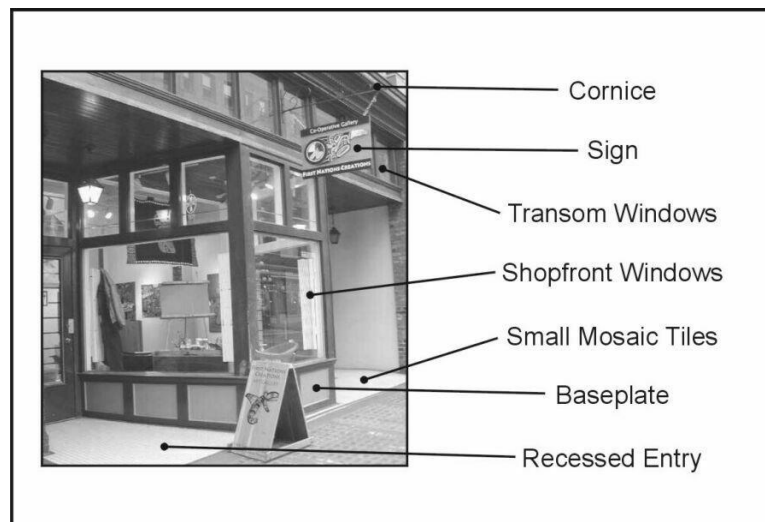


Street level access to the main floor should be provided. Split level entries from the sidewalk to cellar spaces are discouraged in new buildings. In particular lower level retail frontages in split level configurations have disadvantages with respect to retail visibility and security and tend to attract street debris.

Traditionally, street level entry doors for stairs to upper floors were incorporated into the facade in a separate vertical bay with details relating to the design of the shopfront entry(s) but in a less elaborate expression. Often the entry was recessed from the street sidewalk and the floor surface treated in a decorative fashion, similar to the shopfront.

The design of security grilles should not eliminate the visibility of the architectural elements behind them. As a guideline, security grilles should not obscure more than 20% of the area behind them, and be designed in character with the shopfront. Grilles should be disguised or hidden during normal business hours.

Figure 10. Features of rehabilitated shopfront



4.5.1.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

The shopfront configuration is a basic aspect of the pedestrian experience in Gastown, and provides the area's fine-grained retail interest. Existing shopfronts should be retained on heritage and existing buildings.

Historic photos and drawings should be used to support the restoration or replication of decorative elements of historic significance in the lower facade.

The following features should be carefully incorporated in the design of rehabilitated or restored shopfronts.

- (a) restoration of cast iron elements;
- (b) a high percentage of glazing, in the display window area, transoms windows and in the entry door(s);
- (c) a recessed entry is customary, with a rectangular or trapezoidal plan;
- (d) transom window above the entry, often stretching the full width of the shopfront, above the recessed entry;
- (e) base plates rich in detail and of durable materials;
- (f) detailing of the floor surface in the entry recess with tiles (especially small mosaic tiles), terrazzo, stone or other similar durable decorative materials;
- (g) a shopfront cornice which is generally a reduced version of the main cornice atop the building; and
- (h) lighting and signage (see Figure 10).

Access to upper floors should be in the original configuration, if feasible.

Where new shopfronts are required for existing buildings where none existed previously, their design and configuration should be respectful of the traditional shopfronts of Gastown (see Figure 11). Existing architectural features should be retained (e.g., cast iron columns, masonry pilasters) and integrated into new shopfronts.

Figure 11. Typical shopfront configuration



4.5.1.3 Criteria for New Buildings

The lower facade of new buildings should be distinguished at its uppermost edge by a continuous intermediate cornice or similar decorative banding element. This provision is to ensure that new structures reflect the same lower facade proportions and scale of Gastown's heritage buildings.

The ground floor should be of a generous height to allow for adequate space to incorporate a transom window above the entry doors and signband strip between the transom and the intermediate cornice. These horizontal elements are important aspects of the texture and complexity of the lower facade; they should form a continuous strip across the facade, interrupted only at the vertical pilasters or columns (part of the vertical banding of the building overall).

New storefront design should be informed by, and compatible with, the historic shopfronts of the area, but not be replicas or exact copies. Wooden or steel components are encouraged.

The following features should be incorporated in the design of shopfronts in new buildings:

- (a) access to the shopfronts should be level with the sidewalk;
- (b) a high percentage of clear glazing, both in the display window area, transom windows and in the entry door(s);
- (c) a recessed entry;
- (d) transom windows above the entry;
- (e) base plates rich in detail and of durable materials;
- (f) detailing of the floor surface in the entry recess with tiles (especially small mosaic tiles), terrazzo, stone or other similar durable decorative materials;
- (g) a shopfront cornice which is generally a variation or reduced version of the main cornice atop the building; and
- (h) lighting and signage.

Access to upper floors should be in a configuration typical of heritage buildings in Gastown.

4.5.2 Upper Street Facade

4.5.2.1 Objective

The upper facade is that portion of the building above the ground floor and its intermediate cornice. The objective is to respect the traditional appearance and proportions of the upper facades of heritage buildings in Gastown (see Figure 12).

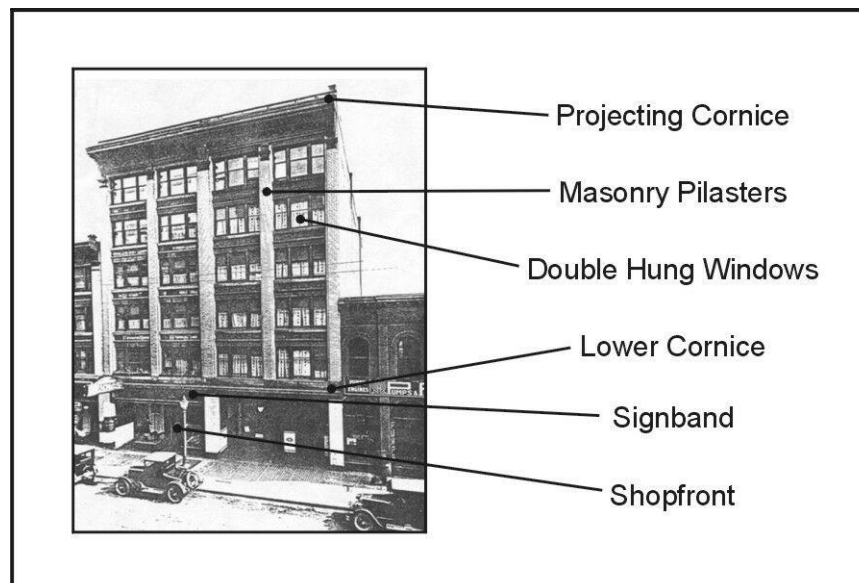
The upper floor windows of Gastown's early buildings are typically:

- (a) punched openings in a masonry surface with a roughly equal solid to void ratio;
- (b) vertical orientation in a masonry surface; or
- (c) horizontally oriented windows organized into groups (sometimes connected to form bands of windows between the vertical divisions, with spandrel below).

To maintain this upper floor pattern and texture, window openings in new construction are encouraged to be repetitive, and organized in relationship to the vertical elements which frame and divide the facade.

The clear distinction between the upper storeys of buildings and shopfront level, found in heritage buildings, is encouraged in the rehabilitation of heritage buildings and in the design of new buildings.

Figure 12. Facade components



4.5.2.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Vertical elements such as pilasters, columns and projecting bays should be retained and rehabilitated. Historic photos and drawings should be used to support the restoration or replication of decorative elements of historic significance on the upper facade. Existing projecting bays should be retained and the City will assist the owner in acquiring an encroachment agreement, if necessary, provided that building by-law and life-safety concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

The existing fenestration pattern of heritage buildings should be retained. Where new openings are proposed, they should be compatible with the existing architectural features of the building.

Residential balconies are discouraged on the street facade.

4.5.2.3 Criteria for New Buildings

New buildings should be designed to achieve a level of surface texture and detailing comparable to the heritage buildings of Gastown and to present a similar balance between wall and window area. The intent is not to replicate or mimic heritage facades but to ensure that new buildings are harmonious and neighbourly.

This should be done by the following measures:

- (a) the upper facade should be ordered by the use of vertical elements such as pilasters, columns and bays;
- (b) upper floor windows should reflect the fenestration pattern of Gastown's heritage buildings; with windows set into masonry facades; and
- (c) detailed design resolution to define the upper edge of the facade.

Residential balconies are discouraged on the street facade.

4.5.3 Lane Facade

4.5.3.1 Objective

The objective is to ensure that each building plays its part in making the lanes of Gastown suitable places for pedestrians and attractive when viewed from adjacent buildings. They are also the preferred location for vehicular access to parking contained within buildings. Many heritage buildings in Gastown traditionally had a different—plainer, simpler—architectural character on the lane facade from the main street facade. This distinction is important to retain.

The lanes of Gastown contain some original elements of authentic heritage character including granite paving and overhead wires which, in their grittiness, provide an important foil to the beautification of the principal streets of Gastown.

Lanes are an under-utilized resource in an intensively used pedestrian precinct of the city. They are used as walking routes and access to parking. The provision of a better and cleaner environment, without eroding their inherent “back lane” character will help make the lanes appealing and safer for pedestrians.

4.5.3.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

The original architectural characteristics of the lane facade should be considered an important aspect of a building's heritage value. Often simpler materials were used than on the front facade. This is particularly important for the north facade of buildings on the north side of Water Street, whose facades are highly visible from Canada Place and the waterfront. Special attention should also be given to buildings adjacent Blood Alley, Trounce Alley and other public spaces and pedestrian mews.

4.5.3.3 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

The design of the lane facade should consider that pedestrians will use the lane and that people in surrounding buildings will overlook it. Loading facilities and parking garage entries should be finished in suitable materials or painted to be similar to the building which they serve.

Garbage containers and loading bays should be recessed within the volume of the building (if it abuts the lane) and screened from view. The materials and colour of these screens should be similar to the building to which they are attached.

5 Architectural Components

5.1 Rooftop Features

5.1.1 Objective

The objective is to encourage the retention of existing rooftop features, such as mechanical penthouses, light monitors and water towers, and to permit the addition of appropriate rooftop elements on heritage and new buildings.

Rooftop structures for mechanical services are authentic elements of Gastown's early buildings and, as such, play an important historic role and should be permitted in the future. The intent of the criteria below is to ensure that such mechanical rooftop features are not overly dominant in the streetscape and utilize appropriate materials and colours.

Where architectural additions are proposed, such as penthouses for access to roof decks and additional floor area, refer to Section 4.1 Height. Guards, handrails and planters for rooftop outdoor space should be setback from primary facades.

5.1.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Where feasible existing mechanical penthouse and water towers should be retained. New rooftop additions for equipment on top of heritage buildings, such as satellite dishes and skylights should follow criteria for new buildings. The cladding material for new architectural additions should be compatible with and distinguishable from those of the main building. New elements such as skylights should not be visible from the sidewalk opposite the principal facade.

5.1.3 Criteria for New Buildings

Rooftop additions for equipment on top of new buildings should be set back far enough from the front or exterior facades in order to not be seen from the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street. If this is not possible rooftop equipment should be screened.

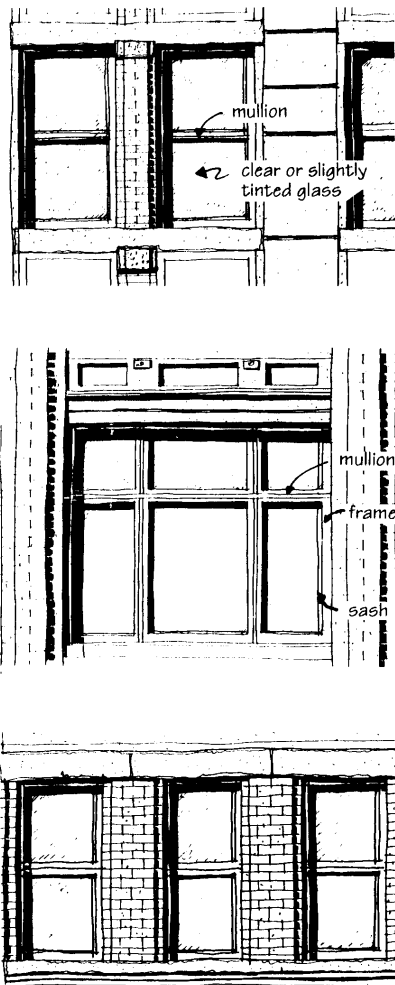
5.2 Windows

5.2.1 Objective

The objective is to respect the importance of traditional windows in establishing the character of heritage buildings and to ensure that windows in new buildings respond to these traditional fenestration patterns.

The windows in Gastown buildings are extremely important to the character of the area and it is fortunate that there are a number of original or repaired traditional ones remaining. Predominantly made of wood, mostly of double or single hung (vertically sliding) sash, there are also examples of pivoting, casement and fixed sash. They are sometimes found individually, or grouped in pairs or threes, forming a horizontal band of vertical units (see Figure 13). Nonetheless, over time there have been many renovations, especially with replacement windows which are inappropriate and detract from the character of Gastown heritage buildings.

Figure 13. Window types and configurations



The intent of these guidelines is to encourage the retention, repair and rehabilitation of original windows. Wood is the predominant material of existing windows, although there are some steel sashes found in the area. Where rehabilitation of original windows is not feasible, then the criteria are designed to promote the use of new replica windows based on original appearance and profiles. Where original windows have been removed, replica windows should be based on historical research.

5.2.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Where there are existing windows within historic window openings which are either original or more recent replacements in the historical form and material, every effort should be made to repair them. Where existing appropriate windows are too deteriorated to repair, replacement windows should replicate either original windows, as documented by historical photographs, drawings or the existing windows. Where they exist, lintels and sills should be retained.

In the event that the original windows have been replaced and the existing windows are inappropriate to the building or the area's character, then new windows should be designed to replicate the window's size, configuration and appearance (shape, proportion, type of operation, detail, colour and clarity of glass), which were original at the time of construction or as based on archival information. If historical information is not available, the criteria for new buildings below should be referenced.

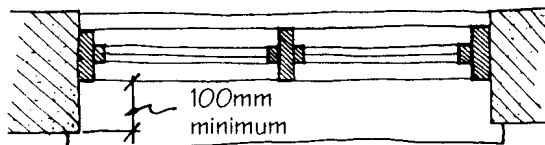
Repair of existing wood windows should use wood sash and frames. Replacement of wooden windows should be in wood, that match the appearance (shape, proportion, type of operation, detail, colour and clarity of glass) of the wood original when painted.

5.2.3 Criteria for New Buildings

Windows for new buildings should be compatible with the design elements which are typical of the wood windows of Gastown's heritage buildings:

- (a) windows should have frames and sash with dimensions similar to traditional wood windows;
- (b) the window should be divided into a minimum of two sash or panes; more divisions are also possible;
- (c) windows designed to be operable are encouraged and the method of opening should replicate that of traditional window types—double hung, casement or pivoting; hopper windows or horizontally sliding windows are discouraged as they are not traditional
- (d) glass should be clear; tints, colours or mirrored surfaces are not acceptable;
- (e) frames and sash should be of wood or steel;
- (f) the sash should be recessed within the window frame at least 100 mm from the exterior surface of the building facade (see Figure 14);
- (g) window openings should have a distinct lintel and sill; and
- (h) laminated glass is encouraged in lieu of double glazing units.

Figure 14. Horizontal Window Section



Windows in adjacent heritage buildings should be considered in the design of windows for new buildings in Gastown.

5.3 Exterior Walls and Materials

5.3.1 Objective

The objective is to retain the heritage character of the area by using building materials traditionally found in Gastown for both rehabilitation and new construction.

5.3.2 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

The building materials commonly used in the heritage buildings in the area should be used for the facades of all buildings:

- (a) standard clay brick in a range of buff/beige through red colours, full dimension; noting that some historic brick was originally painted or has been painted over time;
- (b) real or full dimension building stone, particularly granite and sandstone;
- (c) terracotta, tile and glazed brick materials and decorative elements;
- (d) cast iron and pressed metal decorative elements, particularly cornices;
- (e) wood elements for shopfront base plate, windows, bay window framing;
- (f) stucco or cement rendered surfaces; and
- (g) specially treated concrete finishes for rear or for some secondary surfaces.

5.3.3 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

For existing buildings, where new materials are required for repair, they should preferably match the old materials they are replacing. If this is not feasible for cost, technical or availability reasons, then new substitute materials should be largely indistinguishable from original materials. The treatment of existing materials is primarily that of good conservation techniques.

Common conservation problems with brick masonry found in Gastown are related to the cleaning, painting (applying paint for the first time is not an appropriate conservation measure), removal of paint and appropriate colours for the building. It is important to note that in many cases, especially the oldest buildings, the brick was originally painted and the paint layers should not be removed if original.

The addition of new ventilation units and fireplace flues on the exterior of heritage buildings is prohibited.

5.3.4 Criteria for New Buildings

For new buildings, modern materials other than those listed in 5.3.2 can be considered if they are largely indistinguishable from the materials traditionally used in the area.

Potential compatible materials include:

- (a) areas of smooth-finish poured concrete or precast concrete panels;
- (b) painted steel columns and framing elements can be considered for shopfront openings or the delineation of facade divisions; and
- (c) glazed surfaces which are articulated in a manner evocative of traditional facade ordering;

Materials to be avoided include:

- (a) surfaces which imitate historic materials in a different form (e.g., aluminum or vinyl siding with embossed wood graining, composite board materials);
- (b) textured stucco; if stucco is used it should have a smooth surface and be limited to side walls, roof top additions and small areas of the main facade; and
- (c) decorative marble or granite tiles unless used as accent materials in a shopfront.

In general, large surfaces should be brick, stone or painted surfaces in brick tones. Colour schemes should relate to traditional and authentic colour schemes and colour placement found on heritage buildings in Gastown.

The exposed sides and rear of buildings should be treated in similar materials to the principal street facade, although usually with less decorative elements.

5.4 Awnings and Canopies

5.4.1 Objective

The objective is to encourage the use of awnings and canopies reminiscent of the originals of Gastown which were typically of a three or four point, or triangular shape.

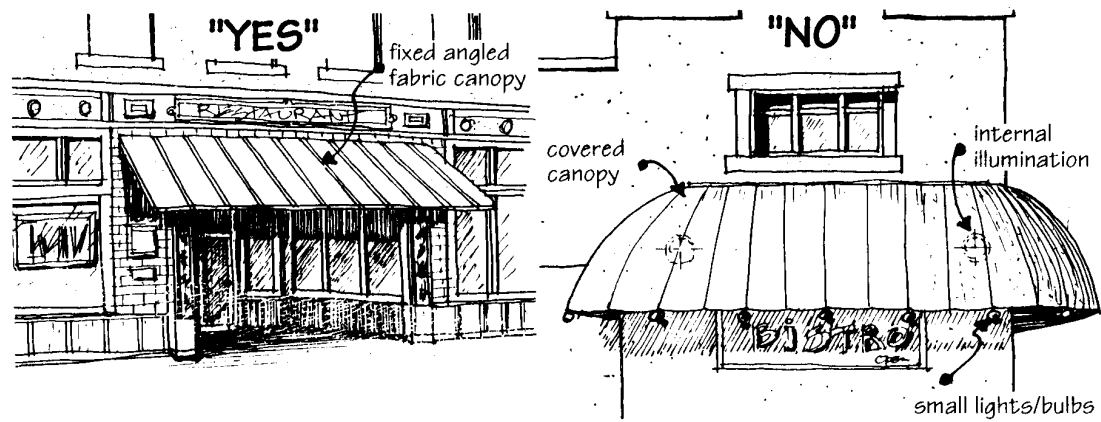
5.4.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Historically, most commercial buildings in Gastown had awnings for sun or rain protection. They were large and played an important role in the streetscape and public realm of the area. Retractable fabric awnings (laced, not stapled) were the most common type.

In some instances, metal and glass fixed canopies are appropriate, particularly if there is archival evidence of their precedent on the building or on similar Gastown buildings.

Awnings or canopies should be designed to fit within the dominant structuring elements of the lower facade. This usually means fitting the overall design of the shopfront, below the intermediate cornice and between vertical columns or pilasters (see Figure 15). The criteria for new buildings should also be considered.

Figure 15. Awnings and canopies



5.4.3 Criteria for New Buildings

Retractable fabric awnings are encouraged for use on new buildings, however fixed, three or four point, or triangular shaped fabric canopies are an acceptable alternative. The fabric (usually heavy canvas, not shiny or translucent vinyl) can be a solid colour, preferably a traditional dark colour, or striped and usually the ends of the frame are left open. Plain valences, often with a signband are common.

In some instances, metal and glass fixed canopies are appropriate. Curved and unusually shaped fixed awnings are prohibited. Internal illumination of awnings or canopies is prohibited.

Awnings and canopies should be designed to fit within the dominant structuring elements of the lower facade. This usually means fitting within the overall design of the shopfront, below the intermediate cornice and between vertical columns or pilasters. Furthermore, they should respect the edges of facade features; for example they should meet the facade at the top or bottom of transom windows or signbands and not in the middle. Where the sidewalk in front of the shopfront slopes across the facade of the building, awnings or canopies should respond to the stepping of shopfront elements, by also stepping at the vertical element which defines the separation between shopfronts.

One style and colour of awning or canopy should be used across the width of a facade which has multiple shopfronts.

5.5 Lights

5.5.1 Objective

The objective is to ensure that the design, location, intensity and colours of nighttime light sources mounted on private buildings are appropriate to the historic character of Gastown. They should also consider the impact on the public street lighting of the area.

The intent of the criteria below is to encourage the sidewalks of Gastown to be illuminated with a soft, even light. In order to achieve this, it is important that light fixtures on private property be located at a pedestrian scale to avoid glare for pedestrians and that light sources are warm in colour and similar to daylight in their rendition of colours.

5.5.2 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

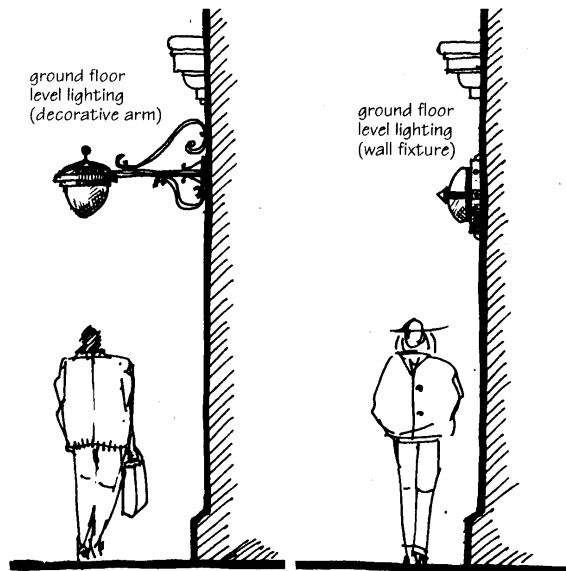
Installation of ground floor level lighting at a pedestrian scale is permitted provided that the fixtures selected are appropriate to the historic character of the building and the illumination they give is incandescent (or colour corrected to the incandescent spectrum) and not overly intense.

Fixture design should be chosen from either available replica styles appropriate to the heritage building's architecture or from contemporary designs which are compatible with the historic

area.

Fixtures may be surface mounted or be on projecting arms (see Figure 16).

Figure 16. Lighting



5.6 Signs

5.6.1 Objective

The objective is to support the re-establishment of historic signage and accommodate a range of sign types which are in keeping with the historic character of Gastown.

5.6.2 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

Permitted signs include:

- (a) projecting signs (usually with a horizontal orientation);
- (b) fascia or shopfront signband signs (horizontal and traditionally incorporated immediately below the storefront cornice and above the transom windows);
- (c) letters (painted or raised) applied directly to the building surface;
- (d) painted and gilded window signage;
- (e) display window signs, including limited use of neon;
- (f) base plate signage;
- (g) awning signs;
- (h) historic painted signs or murals which are conserved; and
- (i) neon, where supported by historic research.

Certain sign types are not appropriate:

- (a) box signs internally illuminated, including channel lettering;
- (b) awnings or canopies internally illuminated as part of signage; and
- (c) new wall decorations and murals.

Regulations for signs are to be found in the Sign By-law.

5.7 Cornices and Parapets

5.7.1 Objective

The objective is to recognize the historic role of building cornices and parapets and to ensure these elements are conserved, replaced or installed on buildings in Gastown.

5.7.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

The retention of original cornices is highly encouraged. Repairs should be undertaken with matching materials and anchoring systems should be reinforced to ensure safety. If cost or structural considerations make conservation of existing cornices difficult, substitute materials can be considered.

Where original cornices have been removed, their replacement can be considered, either with replicas based on archival evidence or with characteristic cornice profile based on the scale typical of the heritage building type.

5.7.3 Criteria for New Buildings

Cornices and parapets for new buildings should be carefully designed to provide a distinctive upper edge to the facade.

They should comprise:

- (a) strong projecting cornice shape, preferably with a raised parapet on the main facade;
- (b) materials characteristic of the area, including metal, corbelled brick, stone; and
- (c) decorative finials, signs plates or date markings.

6 Colour

For heritage and existing buildings, the original applied colour should be documented and the colour scheme based on these documented colours. Otherwise colours should be based on known historic colour schemes of the time period which the building was constructed. Gloss finish on window sash and storefronts is highly encouraged. For new buildings, any applied colours should conform in placement and finish to known historic colour schemes appropriate to the area.

7 Open Space

7.1 Objective

Semi-private open space is desirable to provide within or on top of buildings in Gastown.

7.2 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

The open space should preferably occur at the rear of the building, in internal courtyards (often above the commercial level) or on the rooftop. Common roof decks above the second floor are encouraged as semi-private open space subject to consideration of overlook, scale relationships, view blockages and noise impacts on units and properties below.

The visual impact of rooftop open space should be considered for heritage buildings, particularly with respect to the design and visibility of stair access penthouse, guards, handrails, screening, awnings and landscape elements.

8 Public Realm

8.1 Objective

Certain elements of private buildings which affect the public realm of Gastown are worth noting.

8.2 Criteria for Heritage and New Buildings

Where encroachment of elements like bay windows, cornices and fire escapes contribute to the heritage character of an existing building they are encouraged to be retained and conserved.

The planting of street trees and other sidewalk improvements as part of development activity on private property needs to be coordinated with the overall public realm plan for Gastown.

9 Interiors

9.1 Objective

The interiors of many of Gastown's heritage buildings have heritage value and are worthy of conservation as rehabilitation occurs.

9.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Interior fixtures and features which are identified as part of heritage building's character may include shop interiors, stairwells, light wells, structural framing of note, special wall finishes and may include light fixtures and hardware of heritage value.

Every effort should be made to identify and retain these elements where they contribute to the heritage value of the building.

10 Accessibility

10.1 Objective

The provision of access for the disabled is an important aspect of building rehabilitation and efforts should be made to improve the accessibility of existing buildings. It is required to be designed into new buildings.

10.2 Criteria for Heritage Buildings

Efforts should be made to provide disabled access that does not compromise the heritage value of existing buildings. In this regard, the compliance alternative provisions of the Vancouver Building Bylaw should be consulted.

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

The following terms have been used in the text of this document and are briefly described here:

Base Plate	The vertical wall surface below the shopfront window and above the sidewalk surface; traditionally finished in wood or tile
Bay	The regularly spaced primary structural module of a building
Bay Window	A polygonal projecting element from the wall surface, usually an extension of the internal floor level and containing windows
Corbelling	Usually in brick masonry; brickwork projecting successively with each course
Cornice	A projecting decorative elements at the top of the wall surface; the uppermost part of an entablature, which is composed of an architrave, a fascia and a cornice
Double-hung	A type of window with two glazed sash elements which slide vertically, one up and one down, in a plane one in front of the other; single hung is similar but only one sash moves vertically
Fascia	The narrow horizontal trim band usually found at the roof edge
Fenestration	The pattern and rhythm of windows in a facade
Mosaic Tile	Very small ceramic or glass tiles used to form a decorative pattern
Mullion	A support member between adjacent windows
Muntin	A slender division bar between two panes of glass in a window sash
Parapet	The vertical projection of a wall above the adjacent roof level
Pilaster	A flat vertical decorative element slightly protruding from the wall surface; often an expression of the internal structural bay system of a building, although not necessarily performing any structural work
Terrazzo	A highly polished cast-in-place marble and aggregate concrete floor material; a variety of speckled patterns and colours are possible
Transom	The horizontal window area above a large window, door or shopfront; often operable for ventilation