

Design Guidelines for the City of Blanco, Texas

Mainstreet Architects Inc.
133 West Mislettee
San Antonio, Texas 78212

Preface and Background

The City of Blanco, Texas, has been concerned development and the loss of identity for many years. Blanco was selected to participate in the Visionaries in Preservation Program of the Texas Historical Commission, and as a result created a Preservation Action Plan. These Design Guidelines fulfill one step in that Preservation Action Plan. The goal of this project has been “to keep Blanco like Blanco” and not like every other Texas town.

The Project and Product

This project has been made possible through the collaboration between the City of Blanco, the Blanco Historic Preservation Commission and the Texas Historical Commission.

This project was funded in part through a Certified Local Government Grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as administered by the Texas Historical Commission.

The contents and opinions, however, do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

This program receives Federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

This document has been prepared by:

Mainstreet Architects Inc.

Sue Ann Pemberton, FAIA

133 W. Mistletoe Avenue

San Antonio, Texas 78212

mainstreet@satx.rr.com

210.732.9268

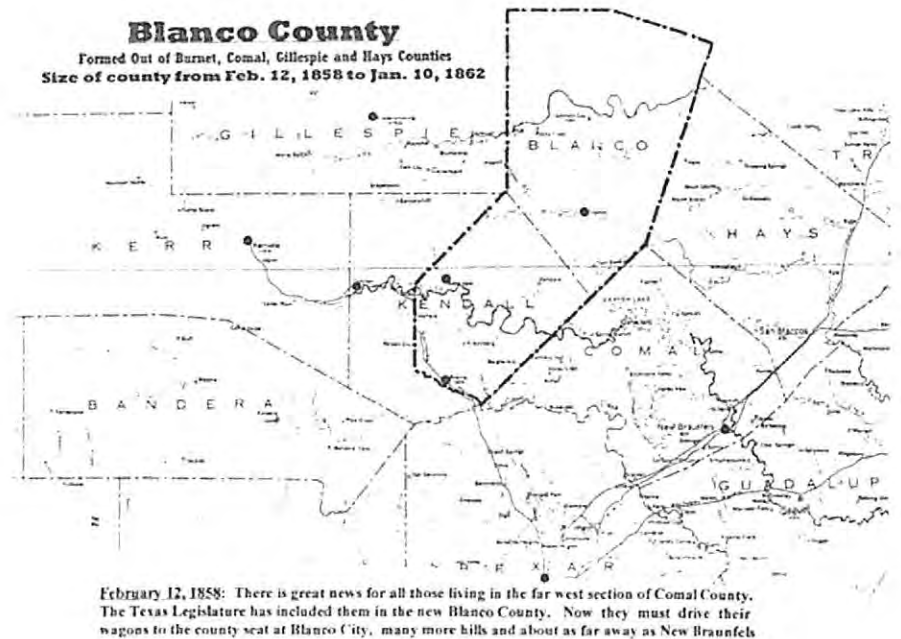
Preface	i
Table of Contents	ii
1. History and Development of Blanco	1
2. Purpose of the Design Standards and Guidelines	7
3. Secretary of the Interior's Standards	9
4. General Information	17
4.1. Priority Planning for Historic Commercial and Residential Buildings	17
4.2. Maintenance for Historic Commercial and Residential Buildings	18
4.3. Restoring Previously Modified Buildings	20
4.4. New Construction within Commercial and Residential Historic Buildings	22
5. Design Standards and Guidelines for Historic Commercial District	25
5.1. Historic Commercial Building Types and Styles	25
5.1.1. One-part Commercial Block	25
5.1.2. Two-part Commercial Block	26
5.2. Components of Historic Commercial Buildings	27
5.2.1. Storefronts	27
5.2.2. Canopies and Awnings	28
5.2.3. Upper Facade	29
5.2.4. Cornices and Roof Lines	31
5.2.5. Rear Facades and Sides of Buildings	31
5.3. Characteristics of the Historic Commercial Buildings	33
5.3.1. Building Alignment	33
5.3.2. Rhythm and Visual Continuity	33
5.3.3. Ground Floor Rhythm	34
5.3.4. Horizontal Organization	35
5.3.5. Upper Facade Organization	35
5.3.6. Common Building Heights	36
5.4. Signage and Historic Commercial District Buildings	37
5.4.1. Signage and Historic Buildings	37
5.4.2. Number, Size and Illumination of Signs	39
5.4.3. Prohibited Signs	39
5.4.4. Acceptable Sign Styles	40
5.4.5. Incidental Signs	40
5.4.6. Menu Signs	40
5.4.7. Special Purpose/Temporary Signs	41
5.4.8. Illegal Placement	41

5.4.9. Noncompliance	41
6. Design Standards and Guidelines for Historic Residential Districts	43
6.1. Historic Residential Buildings Styles	43
6.1.1. National Folk: Pyramid	43
6.1.2. National Folk: Front Gable	44
6.1.3. National Folk: Massed Plan, Side Gable	44
6.1.4. National Folk: Gable Front and Side Wing	45
6.1.5. National Folk: Hall and Parlor	45
6.1.6. Greek Revival	46
6.1.7. Queen Anne	46
6.1.8. Folk Victorian	47
6.1.9. Craftsman	47
6.1.10. Ranch	48
6.1.11. Hill Country Vernacular Rock	48
6.1.12. Minimal Traditional	49
6.2. Components of Historic Residential Buildings	50
6.2.1. Foundations and Skirting	50
6.2.2. Porches	51
6.2.3. Exterior Wall Surfaces	52
6.2.4. Exterior Doors and Entrances	54
6.2.5. Windows	55
6.2.6. Roof Forms and Details	57
6.2.7. Other Components	58
6.3. Characteristics of Historic Residential Neighborhoods	59
6.3.1. Neighborhood Characteristics and Distinctions	59
6.3.2. Site Development and Characteristics	60
6.3.3. Rhythm and Visual Continuity	63
6.3.4. Building Heights and Orientation	63
6.3.5. Color	64
6.3.6. Modern Conveniences, Amenities, and Public Safety	66
7. Materials for Historic Commercial and Residential Districts	71
7.1. Brick and Concrete Block	71
7.2. Stone Rubble and Cut Stone	72
7.3. Wood	73
7.4. Metal	75
7.5. Synthetic Materials	76
7.6. Glass	78
8. Glossary	79

9. Resources	89
9.1. Affordable Housing	89
9.2. Archeology	89
9.3. Architecture	90
9.4. Bibliographies	93
9.5. Design Review	93
9.6. Financial Incentives and Economic Benefits	95
9.7. Heritage Tourism	96
9.8. Historic Districts	98
9.9. Historic Districts Boards and Commissions	98
9.10. Historic Landscapes	99
9.11. Historic Preservation	99
9.12. Historic Preservation Easements	101
9.13. Land Trusts and Conservation Easements	102
9.14. Legal Issues	102
9.15. Local Preservation Planning	103
9.16. Maps, Aerial Images, and Photographs	105
9.17. Markers and Designations	106
9.18. Museums and Archives	107
9.19. Preservation Education	107
9.20. Preservation History	108
9.21. Small Towns and Rural Preservation	108
9.22. Surveys of Historic Resources	109
9.23. Technical Assistance	109
9.24. Transportation	111
9.25. Periodicals	111
9.26. National Organizations	112
9.27. State Organizations	112
9.28. State University Resources	113

1. History and Development of Blanco

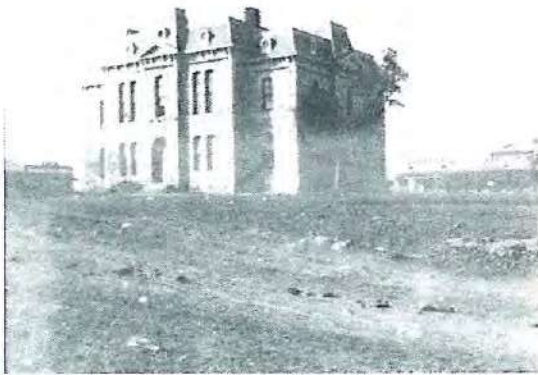
Early Anglo settlement of Blanco began in the 1850s when Captain James Hughes Callahan and Eli Clemens Hinds settled along the south side of the Blanco River.¹ In 1854, they were joined by General John D. Pitts who laid out the town of Pittsburg on the south side of the Blanco River.² At that time this area was in the westernmost part of Comal County, but the settlers soon lobbied for the creation of a new county.³ By 1858, the Texas legislature had established Blanco as a new county, carved from sections of Comal, Burnet, Hays, and Gillespie counties.⁴ The settlers of Pittsburg allocated 120 acres north of the Blanco River for the new town, and named it Blanco.⁵ The settlement on the south bank of the Blanco River was known as Pittsburg well into the 20th century.



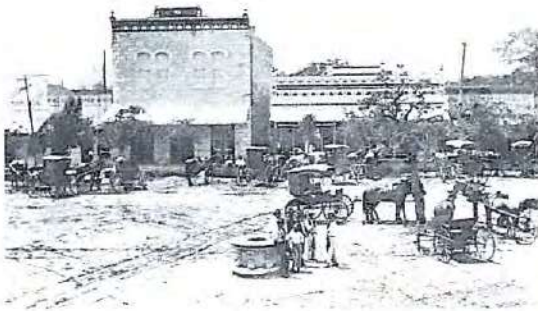
Map of Blanco County after its establishment in 1858.

Blanco County 1858 map. Blanco County Map. Kendall County, Map index for the first land owners and Index of Kendall county citizens in 1870, Delray Fischer (compiled May 1999 for the Kendall county 150th Anniversary Land Map)

- 1 Bill Morgan, *Old Friends: Great Texas Courthouses*, (Ft. Worth: Landmark Publishing, Inc., 1999). P.22.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 John Stribling Moursund, *Blanco County History* (Burnet, Nortex Press 1979)p124
- 5 Morgan, P.22.



Old courthouse building operating as a bank.



Downtown square activity.



Workers inside the hardware store.



Historic photograph depicting picking cotton.

Blanco's town square is in the form of the Shelbyville pattern.⁶ The Shelbyville square is one of four central courthouse square patterns and is the most common pattern found in Texas.⁷ It consists of a square block bounded on all four sides by a regular grid of streets running north and south and east to west. The intersection of the streets occurs at the four corners.⁸ In Blanco, the town square is bordered by 3rd and 4th streets to the south and north, and Pecan and Main streets to the east and west. The courthouse, built a short five years before the county seat was moved to Johnson City, (1886-1890), remained the center of the community as it subsequently housed many other institutions ranging from schoolhouse to bank, to hospital, and other businesses. Most of the buildings on the four streets surrounding the courthouse were constructed between the late 1800s and 1940. Early businesses included a general store, blacksmith shop, dry goods, furniture maker, hotel, and drug store.⁹ The buildings are one-story or two-story, often with commercial storefront glazing, transom windows, and canopies or awnings to provide shade.

Occupations in Blanco were centered on agriculture and ranching, with an emphasis on livestock production due to the rocky nature of the terrain.¹⁰ Ranchers raised cattle, sheep, horses and mules, goats, and hogs. The principal crops were cotton, wheat, oats, rye, corn, barley, sweet potatoes, and millet.¹¹ Commercial businesses in town supported those industries and provided other necessities of life. There was no railroad to spur growth and industry for the town. All supplies had to be hauled in by wagon and later by

6 Robert Veselka, *The Courthouse Square in Texas*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.) p.25.

7 *Ibid.* p.19 &32.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Moursund, 308-9.

10 *Ibid.* p325.

11 *Ibid.* p 333.

truck from larger cities in the area, such as Austin, San Antonio, San Marcos, or New Braunfels. Commercial enterprises by 1936 included at least 29 businesses ranging from bank to physician, to dry goods and grocery, from sheet metal and blacksmith to car dealers, as well as a beauty shop, a theater, and the local paper. The highways that were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s helped to reduce the isolation of the town. By the late 1930s, streetlights had been installed.¹²

In 1935, Highway 281 was built from south Texas north through the hill country to Oklahoma. Main Street in Blanco, Texas, was the route by which the highway passed through town. As time passed, Highway 281 became larger and supported more traffic, essentially severing the west side of the square from the remaining three sides.¹³



Inside mohair warehouse.



The Blanco News building.



Blanco's movie theater.



Inside the barber shop in Blanco.

Photographs on pages 2-3 are courtesy of the Old Blanco County Courthouse Preservation Society Historic Photograph Collection.

12 Moursund p.322.

13 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._Highways_in_Texas



The Beckmann house in its current condition.



The Kellam-Galbreath house as it is today.



Current photograph of the historic Brown-Cox house.



Amenthal, the childhood home of Lady Bird Johnson.

Some of the oldest early homes in Blanco were constructed near the river, and others were located near the town square. While several early homes can be found within a block of the town square, such as the Beckmann house (1873) on the corner of 3rd and Main, the Kellam-Galbreath house (1880) at 302 4th and the Brown-Cox house (late 1870s) at 504 W.4th, other significant early houses were located farther out from the center of town. Lady Bird Johnson's childhood home, Amenthal, (1882) at 819 River Road was built near the Blanco River on the Pittsburg neighborhood side of town. Others were surrounded by fields in the early days. For example, the Queen Anne farmhouse at 7th and Mesquite, built by the Sublett family, now owned by the Cage family, was surrounded by cotton fields in 1917, according to Mildred Byler Ford.



The Sublett residence in 1917.
Photo courtesy of Mrs. Shirley Cage.



The Sublett residence in 2008.
Photo courtesy of Rebecca Greathouse.

Because the early property owners in Blanco often purchased multiple lots, these first homes were not grouped closely together. There was likely plenty of space around them for gardens, chicken coops, or hog pens. By 1870, 11 persons appeared on the Blanco county tax assessment rolls owning from one to twelve lots (or an acre) in the town.¹⁴ Over the years, as the population increased, new houses were built on the empty lots throughout the town. Tax records show that by 1911, 61 people owned lots in Blanco ranging from 1/3 of a lot to whole blocks. As newer homes were added over the decades along the existing streets of the town, the house types of each period can be found on almost every neighborhood street. Over time, the styles of homes built within these blocks changed from National Folk, Folk Victorian, and Craftsman style homes to minimal traditional and ranch style homes. The economy of individual households often determined the amount of detailing and styling or lack thereof. County tax records confirm this observed pattern of development. For example, most of the houses on Mesquite Street were built from the 1920s to the 1970s. In 1926, a stone house was constructed at 821 Mesquite. The walls were built of thick limestone blocks with a side gable roof and a Craftsman style porch across the front (now modified). In 1936, two houses were built on Mesquite near the Blanco River; #16 was a National Folk (NF) style with a pyramid roof and #26 was a NF with a side gable roof. During the 1940s, three more NF homes were built; at #223 (NF Pyramid-Hip), #303 (NF Front Gable), and #403 (NF Pyramid). For the two decades of the 1930s and 40s, the National Folk styles appear to dominate construction along this street. Similar patterns can be found on other main streets in town. The National Folk variations were the most predominant style constructed during the 1920s through the 1940s, although there are also several



Current residential street in Blanco.



Folk Victorian style home.



Hill Country Vernacular style residence.



A National Folk: Massed plan, side gable style home.

14 Moursund. p 303.



A house with a National Folk: Pyramid style.



A Craftsman style home converted to a business.



A National Folk: Front gabled residence.



A residence in the Ranch style.

examples of Craftsman style homes and Hill Country Vernacular rock homes built during these years as well. In the 1950s, the new construction shifted from these styles to the ranch style, a minimum traditional (MT) style, and Hill Country Vernacular (HCV) rock style. Examples on Mesquite of these newer styles are #33 (HCV), #513 (Ranch), #721 (MT), #815 (HCV rock with Craftsman-influenced porch). During the 1960s, six modest homes were built, filling in lots near the river and in the 400-700 blocks.

All of the neighborhoods in Blanco are predominantly single family homes; however there are a few new examples of multifamily residences in the Pittsburg neighborhood and on the northeast side of town. Neighborhoods in Blanco were not differentiated by obvious signs of economic prosperity or class. The principal pattern is that of infill of existing lots over the decades, often because new homes were built for family members on the family homestead. An example of this infill is the Schmidt family's homestead which began with the first home being built in 1949 at 33 Mesquite. In 1958, Mr. Schmidt's parents moved to town and a home was built for them at 25 Mesquite. The grandson of Mr. Schmidt has since built a home in between the two houses at 29 Mesquite. Similar evolution of lots has occurred throughout Blanco.

The History and Development of Blanco was written by Rebecca Greathouse, M. Arch.

2. Purpose of the Design Standards and Guidelines

- a. These standards/guidelines and recommendations are intended to preserve and maintain the character of the historic buildings in Blanco. They reinforce and protect the defining features of the historic districts and define those visual elements which are common to each district as well as the qualities unique to this community.
- b. This document will help preserve the integrity of historic buildings and enhance the value of the Historic Districts for the private investor, residents and owners, and the community as a whole. When addressing changes to an individual building, it must not be taken out of context. Modifications affect the block as a whole and must have the broad interest of the community in mind.
- c. The standards/guidelines do not address the use of the building or its interior. Only the exterior portions, which include new construction, additions, and rehabilitation of the building, must comply with the guidelines set forth.
- d. These standards/guidelines must be applied to a building based on its original use and construction. For example, a residence may currently be used as an office, therefore it is considered a commercial business, but it is still a residential building.
- e. These standards/guidelines will be used by the City of Blanco to provide an objective basis for the decisions of the City Historic Preservation Commission. The standards/guidelines specifically address the issues below.
 1. Height
 2. Proportion of building's front facade
 3. Proportion of openings within the facility
 4. Rhythm of solids to voids in front facades
 5. Rhythm of spacing of buildings on streets
 6. Rhythm of entrance and/or porch projection
 7. Relationship of materials and texture
 8. Roof shapes
 9. Walls of continuity
 10. Scale of building

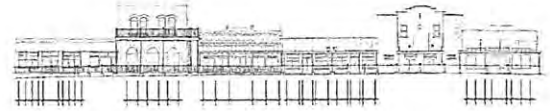


Diagram depicting the proportion and rhythm of the openings of the street facade.



The proportion and rhythm of the buildings diagrammed.



The rhythm of the commercial buildings' alignment and entrances can be seen in this plan view.



Sketch of commercial buildings along the main square.

3. Secretary of the Interior's Standards

3.1. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties

- a. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are common sense principles in non-technical language. They were developed to help protect our nation's irreplaceable historic properties by promoting consistent preservation practices.
- b. The Standards may be applied to all properties listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which may include buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.
- c. The Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations; as such, they cannot, in and of themselves, be used to make essential decisions about which features of a historic property should be saved and which might be changed. But once an appropriate treatment is selected, the Standards provide philosophical consistency to the work.
- d. There are Standards for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties – **preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.**

REHABILITATION

reconstruction

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, Preservation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Preservation should be developed.

3.1.1. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment for **Preservation**

- a. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
- b. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- c. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
- d. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- e. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- f. The existing conditions of historic features will be evaluated to determine

the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.

- g. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- h. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Rehabilitation should be developed.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

3.1.2. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment for **Rehabilitation**

- a. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
- b. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
- c. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historical properties, will not be undertaken.
- d. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- e. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
- f. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
- g. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- h. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation

measures will be undertaken.

- i. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
- j. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, Restoration may be considered as a treatment.

Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for Restoration developed.

3.1.3. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment for **Restoration**

- a. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
- b. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
- c. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
- d. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
- e. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
- f. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
- g. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of

history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.

- h. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
- i. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be taken.
- j. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the re-creation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, Reconstruction may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Reconstruction should be developed.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

3.1.4. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment for **Reconstruction**

- a. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
- b. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- c. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
- d. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of a non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
- e. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
- f. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Source: National Park Service

4. General Information

4.1. Priority Planning for Historic Commercial and Residential Buildings

4.1.1. Recommendations

- a. Evaluate the overall condition of the historic building to determine appropriate priorities for maintenance and other desired work to the building.
- b. Prioritize those activities that will extend the life of the building such as repairs to the foundation, roof, windows, and exterior siding. For example, a new coat of paint for the front of the building will not do much to extend the building's life if the roof is leaking badly.
- c. Retain and repair as much of the original building material and detailing as possible.
- d. If a historic feature is beyond repair, replace it to match the original in materials and dimensions.
- e. Determine the overall quantity of material to be repaired or replaced and plan to repair only that material. If one window is beyond repair, there is no need to replace all windows in the building.
- f. If compromises must be made with regard to budget and existing conditions, focus on what will extend the life of the building and what is most visible from the street and has the most impact on the overall streetscape.



The overall condition of the building should be evaluated to determine repair and maintenance priority.



Addressing issues that will prolong the life of the building should be attended to first.



When replacing historic features that are beyond repair, the replacement should be of the same material and dimension of the original.

4.2. Maintenance for Historic Commercial and Residential Buildings

4.2.1. Observations

- a. All buildings require maintenance and cleaning. It is generally more cost effective to maintain a historic building and repair limited areas of damage as they occur than it is to defer maintenance and have to extensively replace damaged materials and features.

4.2.2. Recommendations

- a. Leveling uneven floors or shifting of a foundation can be repaired by a foundation contractor. Piers can be replaced and additional structural piers may be necessary. Check for any possible causes for the problem such as water leaks, termites, poor site drainage, etc.
- b. Regularly clean roof drains, gutters and downspouts of trash and leaves, and inspect for good drainage. Install splash blocks or extenders where necessary for proper drainage away from the building.
- c. Regularly inspect the roof for leaks and patch them immediately. Leaks commonly occur where the roof and wall meet and where roof penetrations are present. Commercial buildings often have a parapet that should have a sound "cap."
- d. Historic buildings should be cleaned using the gentlest means possible which typically include water and soft bristle brushes. Sandblasting and high pressure washing can cause irreparable damage to historic building materials and are not permissible. Chemical cleaner must be tested in small areas of limited visibility to ensure compatibility and effectiveness on the historic materials.
- e. Regularly inspect the windows and conduct cyclical maintenance. Historic wood windows were constructed so the damaged wood elements can be repaired without requiring that the entire window be replaced.
- f. Damaged wood components should be repaired or replaced as appropriate. Any damaged or missing glazing putty should be replaced, and the window should be painted to ensure long term preservation.



Maintaining a historic building is generally more cost effective than to defer maintenance until extensive replacement is necessary.



Parapets should have a sound "cap" to prolong the life of the roofline material.



Historic wood windows should be inspected and maintained on a regular cycle to prevent deterioration as seen above.

Replace broken or missing glass with similar glass.

- g. Regularly inspect canopy and awning attachments, anchors, and structure. Replace worn or damaged materials when necessary.
- h. Repaint wood and metal building components to protect them from deterioration.
- i. Keep signs freshly painted and securely anchored on commercial buildings.



Canopies along with their attachments, anchors, and structure should be regularly inspected.



Wood and metal building components should be maintained with paint to protect it from deterioration.



The evolution of the historic drug store in Blanco can be seen through historic photographs. The original design can be restored with the aid of photographic documentation.

4.3. Restoring Previously Modified Buildings

4.3.1. Observations

- a. Buildings have a tendency to be modified and modernized over time as a way of “keeping up with the times” and through maintaining a building by replacing deteriorated materials. Replacement materials may or may not have been compatible with the original design and, if not, may have negatively impacted the historic appearance of the building. However, some additions and modifications may become historically significant over time or considered part of the “period of significance” for a building.
- b. Period of significance is the length of time when a property is associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register Listing.
- c. Consider restoring a building to its original appearances when appropriate. This will enhance the building and the surrounding district. Refer to historic photographs to determine the historic appearance of the building. If clear evidence of previous details exists, use these clues to return the building or details to its original appearance.
- d. Restoration measures should not be undertaken if the historic appearance of the building cannot be determined, rather a simplified comparable design would be appropriate.

4.3.2. Recommendations for Commercial Buildings¹

- a. If the ground floor has been altered behind the common “line” of the surrounding building, bring the storefront back to the original alignment.
- b. Replace non-historic aluminum-framed doors and windows with wood storefronts and windows in a design to match the original design.
- c. Restore blocked and boarded-up windows and openings, including transoms.
- d. Install canopies where they previously existed. Canopies provide a cohesive quality to the pedestrian experience.

1

The recommended restoration measures are for those buildings in which appropriate historical documentation exists.

Canopies were more common historically than awnings.

- e. If canopies were previously replaced with contemporary aluminum canopies, they should be returned to the original design and material. Designs should be compatible to the time period of the building.

4.3.3. Recommendations for Residential Buildings

- a. Porches are one of the most modified elements of a house. Restore the porch to its original design.
- b. If floor elevation has been lowered and material changed, consider returning the porch to its original height and replacing the columns where modified.
- c. If a porch has been enclosed over time, restore it to the original open plan.
- d. If a porch has been removed, restoration is recommended as it is a major character-defining feature for the house.
- e. Remove non-historic synthetic siding that has been applied over the original siding. Siding changes the character of the house and can cause deterioration of any wood siding retained behind the synthetic material.
- f. Evaluate the condition of the underlying historic material, replace in-kind with a dimension and profile to match original.
- g. When windows have been removed and replaced with windows of a different material and proportion, such as aluminum, consider replacing them with windows to match the original in material, proportion, configuration, and operation.



Boarded-up openings should be restored.



When porches that have been modified, like the one above, consideration should be given to restoring it to its original design.



When replacement windows are not consistent with the original material and/or proportion, consideration should be given to replacing them to match the original.

4.4. New Construction within Commercial and Residential Historic Buildings

4.4.1. Recommendations

- a. All efforts should be made to protect and maintain Blanco's historic resources. New construction may occur within historic districts as in-fill on empty lots or, in very rare instances, in place of historic buildings.
- b. Historic buildings should be replaced only on those very rare instances when the building is beyond repair, such as when a building is severely damaged by fire or other such disasters.

4.4.2. New Additions

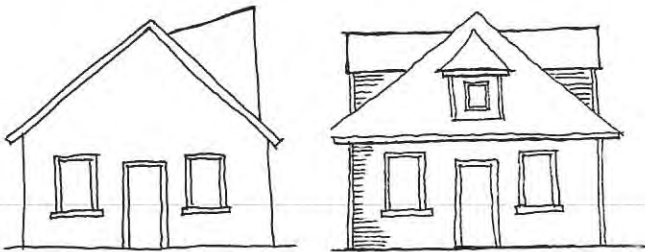
- a. Additions to existing buildings are often necessary to accommodate contemporary lifestyles and amenities. Additions shall not overpower the original structure and should be designed in such a way as to appear "removable" or subordinate. Set the addition back from the original building wall.
- b. Use details that are compatible with the original details but not more ornate.
- c. Proportion, building form, height, scale, material scale, windows, etc. should respect the original building.

4.4.3. New Construction

- a. New Construction should not be designed in a way to appear falsely historic. New buildings are new buildings and should not be confused with historic structures.
- b. Respect and maintain the overall height of buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- c. Maintain the building relationship to the street. Set the new building back a distance equal to that of the surrounding structures and orient the new building the same way.
- d. Maintain the established rhythm of the structural piers in the surrounding buildings. Consider a similar rhythm, structural bay or width.
- e. Respect the overall proportion and form of adjacent historic buildings. Maintain the same scale and width-to-height relationship.
- f. Maintain the horizontal continuity of the historic downtown by mimicking the floor



Additions should not overpower the original structure as seen in this example.



When adding dormers, avoid a "pop-up" appearance (left) by retaining the original roof pitch (right).



New construction should maintain the overall height of the buildings in its immediate surroundings, unlike the building seen above.

- heights of adjacent buildings.
- g. Respect the adjacent historic resources in their roof forms and materials.
 - h. Maintain the solid-to-void pattern established in the window openings within the commercial district.



New construction adjacent to historic resources should respect these resources' materials and roof forms.



When replacing a historic structure, refrain from using styles and/or characteristics not present within the local context.



Infill construction should respect the adjacent historic structures' style, scale, and material usage. The above is not an example of an appropriate solution.

5. Design Standards and Guidelines for Historic Commercial District

5.1. Historic Commercial Building Types and Styles

5.1.1. One-part Commercial Block

5.1.2. Two-part Commercial Block

5.1.1. One-Part Commercial Block

5.1.1.1. Observations

- a. The one-part commercial block began to appear in the 1850s and was mainly used as retail space or banks.

5.1.1.2. Characteristics

- a. Area between cornice and windows for signage
- b. Simple, one-story box with a decorated facade and simplified sides and rear
- c. Large plate glass windows
- d. Decorated cornice or parapet



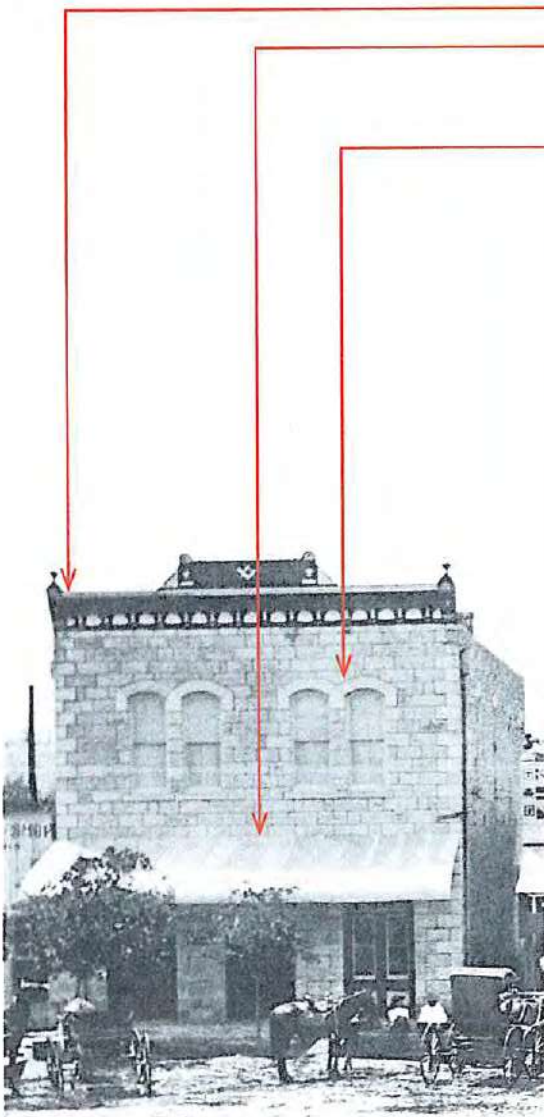
5.1.2. Two-Part Commercial Block

5.1.2.1. Observations

- a. The two-part commercial block is the most common building type used for small and moderate size commercial buildings in the country. This type was constructed from the 1850s to the 1950s. Facades reflect the public first floor use and private second floor use.

5.1.2.2. Characteristics

- a. Decorative cornice or parapet
- b. Horizontal division of two-story building into two distinct zones – public and private
- c. Large openings at first floor public area, small openings at second floor private area
- d. Masonry as the principal facade material



5.2. Components of Historic Commercial Buildings

- 5.2.1. Storefronts
- 5.2.2. Canopies and Awnings
- 5.2.3. Upper Facade
- 5.2.4. Cornice and Roof Lines
- 5.2.5. Rear Facades and Sides

5.2.1. Storefronts

5.2.1.1. Observations

- a. Commercial storefronts typically consist of a base or kick plate at the ground level with large fixed windows above.
- b. These large window expanses invite shoppers to look in and allow natural day-lighting of the interior.
- c. Additional lighting and ventilation are provided through the transom windows above.
- d. These three-part divisions of a kick plate, windows, and transom must be preserved.
- e. Kick plates were originally constructed to raise the storefront and reduce the chance of damage. They serve the same purpose today.
- f. The entrances to historic buildings are often recessed or set back from the face of the building to draw people into the building, allow space for entering, and provide protection from natural elements.
- g. Entrances are proportional to fit within the overall organization of the storefront. The entrance height is equal to the top of the display windows.
- h. Historic doors generally have large glass panels to let you see inside. They also have a kick plate similar in design and proportion to the kick plate along the front of the store.

5.2.1.2. Recommendations

- a. Display windows should remain transparent and not be altered in



An example of three-part division storefront.



Three-part storefront with recessed entrance.



Similar kick plate design on doors and the front of store.



Transoms should not be covered over or painted out.



Historic doors should be retained and repaired when necessary.



Example of canopies hung using rods.

size.

- b. Transoms should not be covered over or painted out.
- c. Entrances should not be changed. They shall not be removed to create more interior space, nor shall they project out beyond the common wall.
- d. If an entrance was not recessed originally, it should not be changed. Entrance heights should also be retained and should not be lowered.
- e. If historic wood doors are beyond repair, replace them with wood doors of the same dimensions and details.
- f. Doors are frequently installed in pairs. Historic doors should be retained and repaired if necessary.
- g. Do not replace double doors with one large single door or reduce the opening to accommodate a new, standard size door.
- h. Aluminum doors that were original to the building shall be replaced with aluminum doors, if they are missing or damaged beyond repair.
- i. Aluminum doors and frames are not appropriate where wood doors were originally installed.

5.2.2. Canopies and Awnings

5.2.2.1. Observations

- a. Canopies are common on historic commercial buildings. They are a significant horizontal element of the building block and create a common human scale.
- b. Some of the canopies in Blanco are hung from the building using rods, while others are supported by poles or columns.

5.2.2.2. Recommendations

- a. Many of the pipe columns still present today were original to the building, and should not be

changed. If they are beyond repair or missing, they should be replaced with pipe columns of the same proportions.

- b. Canopies should be maintained if still in place and consideration should be given to reinstalling a canopy if there is evidence that one previously existed.
- c. Canopies and awnings should be installed at a height consistent with other historic canopies and appropriate for the specific building. This will continue the horizontal organization already established.
- d. Bubble awnings, awnings of shiny plastic, and awnings with internal lighting are not appropriate.
- e. Awnings and canopies should not conceal the character-defining features of historic storefronts.

5.2.3. Upper Facade

5.2.3.1. Observations

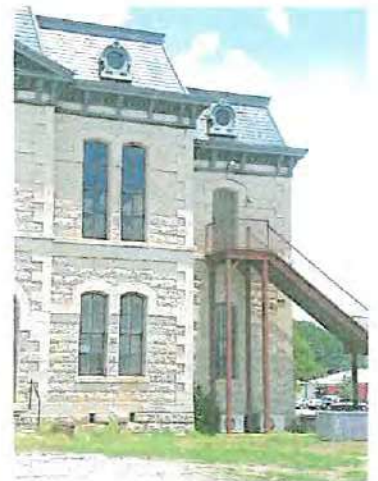
- a. Older buildings are recognized by several characteristics. One is their individual window openings with lintels above them, whereas in buildings of the early 1900s, windows were placed in banks of two or three where technology allowed for larger openings.
- b. Decorative brickwork and decorative pressed metal at the cornice and upper facade are features that typically indicate a historic building. The craftsmanship, level of detail, and material choice of these decorative features can indicate the time period of construction.
- c. The placement, material, font, and size of signage on a building can also help to indicate a time period for the building's significance.



If evidence exists of a removed canopy, consideration should be given to reinstalling it.



Canopies and awnings should align at a consistent height appropriate to each building.



Hood moldings on individual window openings,

5.2.3.2. Recommendations

- a. Many windows have hood moldings or decorative tops made of stone, brick, or other materials. These moldings should be retained and not removed or covered up.
- b. Most window openings are tall and narrow. These openings should not be modified to install new, smaller windows, or larger ones.
- c. The majority of windows along the upper floors of the commercial buildings appear to be “punched” or constructed as individual units in the wall of the buildings.
- d. Most of the commercial windows are wood framed and double hung, meaning both sashes move up and down. Wood windows should be maintained and not replaced by aluminum or vinyl windows.
- e. Decorative features like brickwork and pressed metal are part of the building’s character and should be retained. These features should not be removed or covered up, and if they have been, consideration should be given to reconstructing these elements if adequate documentation exists.
- f. Historic signage should be retained if possible; however, if it should be removed for new signage, then the sign size, shape, and placement should be retained by the new signage.
- g. If signage does not currently exist, but adequate documentation of the building’s signage is available, then the documentation should be used as a reference for the sign size, shape, and placement.



Example of tall, narrow windows that appear to be “punched” out, these should be maintained.



The area where historic signage existed should be where new signage is placed.

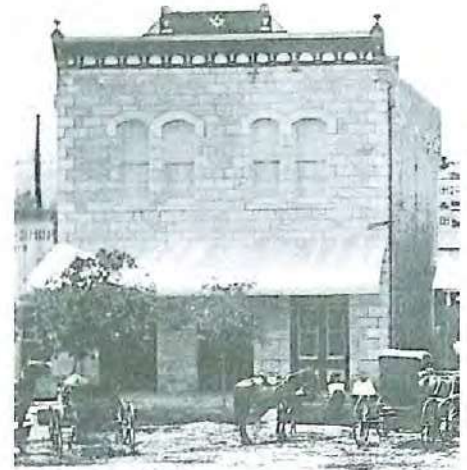


Detailed cornice at roof line retains its historic character.

5.2.4. Cornices and Roof Lines

5.2.4.1. Observations

- a. The roof line of a historic commercial building is usually detailed to create a "crown" or cornice.
- b. The roof line of a commercial building is typically not seen from the front or sides of a building due to a parapet or wall that extends above the roof line in order to conceal it. The roof line is usually visible from the rear of the building.



5.2.4.2. Recommendations

- a. The roof line should not be modified from the original.
- b. Parapets should be retained and maintained. Proper maintenances of the roof and parapet walls will help prevent roof leaks.
- c. If the original cornice and detail are missing, consider replacing the details to match the original design, if there is enough information to do so.
- d. If newer materials cover the original cornice details, it is recommended that these materials be carefully removed to reveal the original design when rehabilitation is undertaken.
- e. Mechanical equipment, when placed on the roof, should not be visible within the line of sight.

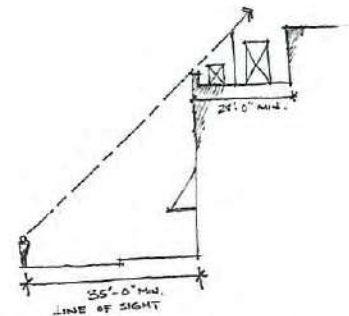


Replacing missing cornice and details is encouraged when enough evidence exists.

5.2.5. Rear Facades and Sides of Buildings

5.2.5.1. Observations

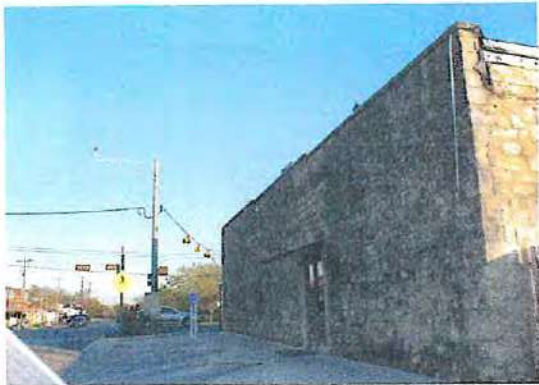
- a. The side and rear elevations of most historic commercial buildings were often constructed of a different material than the more prominent materials used on the front facade.
- b. The number, size, and amount of detail on the windows differ depending on which elevation they are located.



Roof-top mechanical equipment should not be visible within the line of sight.



Rear entrances should not appear as prominent as front entrances.



Rear and side facades should not create a false history by being "dressed up."



The rear and side facades should be respected for their simple original design.

- c. Historically, rear entrances to buildings are utilitarian and not of architectural significance.

5.2.5.2. Recommendations

- a. Rear and side facades should respect their simple original design and should not be "dressed up" to create a false impression or false history.
- b. Some corner buildings were constructed with two "fronts" to face both streets. Both of these facades should retain their prominence.
- c. As parking becomes more available from the rear of the building, these entrances to the building may become a more prominent access to the building. However, this entrance shall not compete with the front entrance.

5.3. Characteristics of the Historic Commercial Buildings

- 5.3.1. Building Alignment
- 5.3.2. Rhythm and Visual Continuity
- 5.3.3. Ground Floor Rhythm
- 5.3.4. Horizontal Organization
- 5.3.5. Upper Facade Organization
- 5.3.6. Common Building Heights



5.3.1. Building Alignment

5.3.1.1. Observations

- a. Buildings in the historic commercial district have a consistent alignment or have a common setback ensuring that the front walls of all buildings are constructed along the same line.
- b. Historic buildings that are not in the downtown square also have a setback from the street that should be respected.

A consistent alignment of the buildings should be maintained. Avoid violating the common alignment.

5.3.1.2. Recommendations

- a. This common line of construction shall be respected and maintained to give the appearance of a common wall.
- b. Construction shall not recede from this common setback and no part of the building shall project beyond this line except canopies, awnings, and signage.
- c. If the entrance to a building has been modified, consideration should be given to returning the entrance and wall of alignment back to its original position if future alterations are made.
- d. New construction should follow the historic building line.



A common setback should be retained within the historic commercial district.



If an entry has been modified, returning it to its original design should be considered.

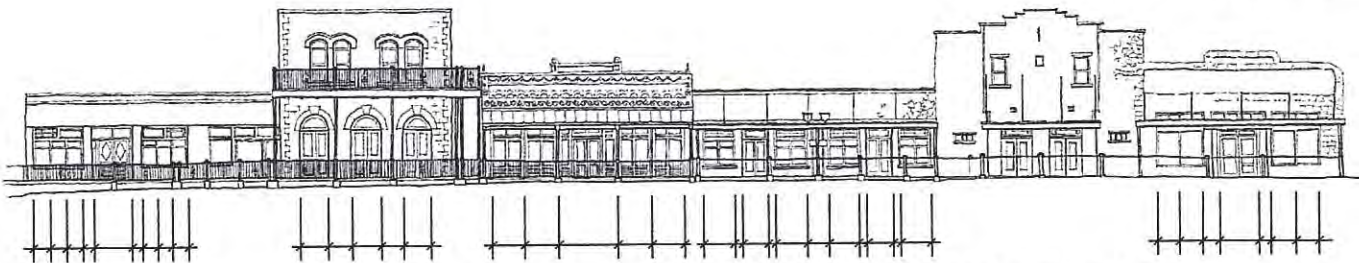
5.3.2. Rhythm and Visual Continuity

5.3.2.1. Observations

- a. Most commercial buildings in the

historic district have elements in common which create a rhythm and visual pattern. Some elements include windows, doors, columns, piers, awnings, canopies, etc.

- b. The majority of these buildings were designed on a strong architectural tradition of repeating parts. This tradition should be maintained.
- c. While all buildings do not have identical details, the visual continuity and rhythm remains.



The repetition of doors and windows creates a pattern between structural bays.

5.3.2.2. Recommendations

- a. The continuity, visual pattern, and rhythm should be retained.
- b. Modifications that previously interrupted that rhythm should be removed during renovations to restore the visual continuity. For example removing a previously installed "slip cover" or fake facade.

5.3.3. Ground Floor Rhythm

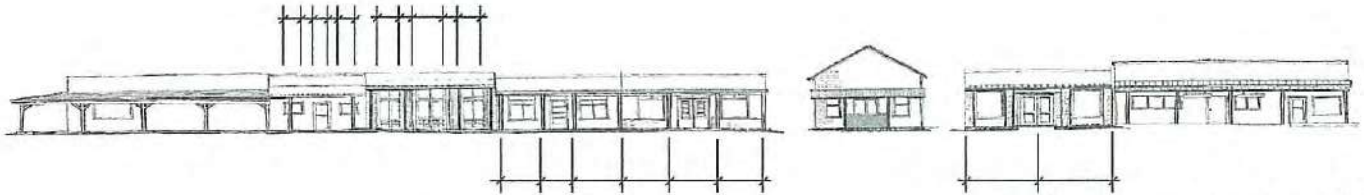
5.3.3.1. Observations

- a. Each bay, or structural width, generally has glass doors and windows between structural piers, creating a solid-to-void pattern. This pattern may deviate slightly from building-to-building, but maintains an overall rhythm of the ground floor.
- b. A characteristic common to many commercial buildings is the recessed entrance. This recessed space adds to the rhythm of the building face and to the block of buildings. This rhythm is also experienced by

the pedestrian walking down the block.

5.3.3.2. Recommendations

- a. The regularity of doors and windows across a building's facade creates a rhythm at the ground floor which should be retained.



The tradition of repeating parts should be maintained.

5.3.4. Horizontal Organization

5.3.4.1. Observations

- a. Downtown commercial buildings have a common horizontal organization in the heights of storefronts, canopies, etc.
- b. Horizontal organization separates the first floor storefront use from the private second floor offices or living spaces.
- c. Horizontal bands are clearly seen in the front facades of historic buildings.
- d. The first floor typically has more openings and greater attention to detail than the second floor.
- e. In two story buildings, the horizontal bonding or organization continues with the roofline and windows.



5.3.4.2. Recommendations

- a. These horizontal organizations should be maintained, uninterrupted by signage, canopies, awnings, etc.



The private use of the upper floors is evident in the smaller expanse and size of windows.

5.3.5. Upper Facade Organization

5.3.5.1. Observations

- a. Given the more private use of the upper floors, there are smaller expanses of windows and more defined openings than the ground floor storefront.



Two-story buildings have a consistent height while one-story buildings vary.



Side walls should retain their modest appearance.

These distinct upper floor window openings establish a pattern and rhythm of solid-void-solid with the adjacent wall surface.

- b. These distinct window openings have consistent proportions that create a common rhythm across the building and the block.

5.3.5.2. Recommendations

- a. Avoid altering the proportions of the upper floor openings, roofline, and details.

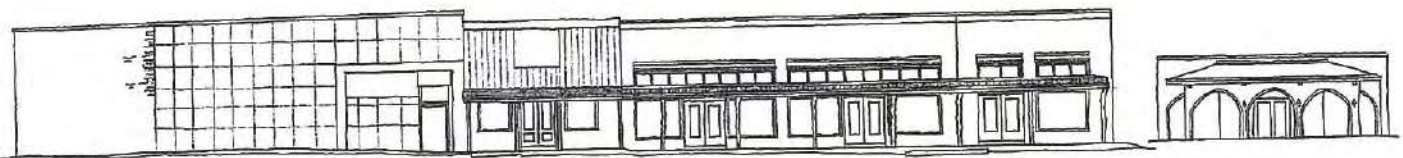
5.3.6. Common Building Heights

5.3.6.1. Observations

- a. The two-story buildings have a consistent height and similar cap detail on the front facade. Some buildings have a constructed cornice of masonry while others have a pressed metal cornice.
- b. One-story buildings generally have more variation in the height and detail of the facade cornice.
- c. Roofs are low slope and are hidden behind the parapet wall of commercial buildings.
- d. Side wall and rear elevations are not as detailed as the front elevation, but may have some form of cap or detail.

5.3.6.2. Recommendations

- a. Modifications of this cap or detail by addition or subtraction are not appropriate as it would alter the horizontal organization.
- b. Reconstruct cornice details and parapets as the opportunity presents itself.



The common height of storefronts and canopies should be retained.

5.4. Signage and Historic Commercial District Buildings

- 5.4.1. Signage and Historic Buildings
- 5.4.2. Number, Size and Illumination of Signs
- 5.4.3. Prohibited Signs
- 5.4.4. Incidental Signs
- 5.4.5. Menu Signs
- 5.4.6. Special Purpose/Temporary Signs
- 5.4.7. Illegal Placement
- 5.4.8. Noncompliance

5.4.1. Signs and Historic Buildings

5.4.1.1. Observations

- a. Signage has long been a part of historic buildings.
- b. Historic buildings were often designed with “built-in” locations for signage.
- c. Historically, painted advertising often appeared on the walls of buildings. This signage is an important part of historic and development of commercial buildings and businesses.
- d. Display windows act as signage by allowing the passer-by to look into the storefront.
- e. There are minor and major sign locations on most buildings. Doors and windows offer locations for minor signs such as street address number or tenant name.

5.4.1.2. Recommendations

- a. Primary design considerations for signage should address size, scale, height, color, and location so as to be harmonious with the building and overall historic characteristics of the district.
- b. A well-designed store window display can say more about the occupant than words in a sign. Avoid filling the display window with additional signage and blocking the view inside.
- c. Painting new signs on the building is acceptable provided that the sign meets other signage criteria and is in scale



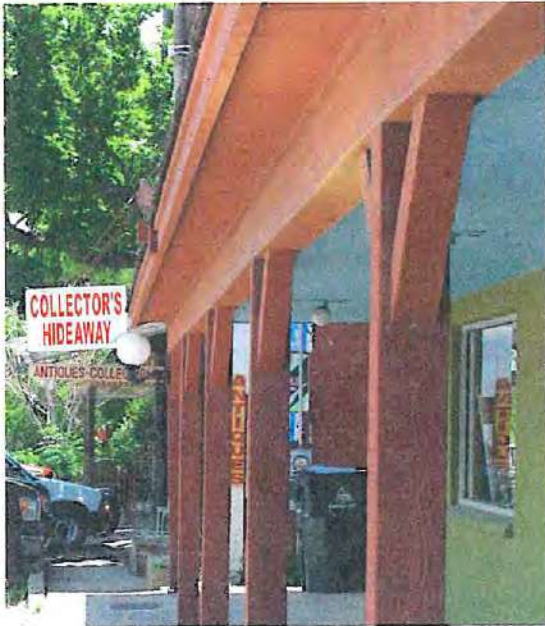
Historic photograph of Blanco building with painted advertising.



Door transom with appropriate minor signage.



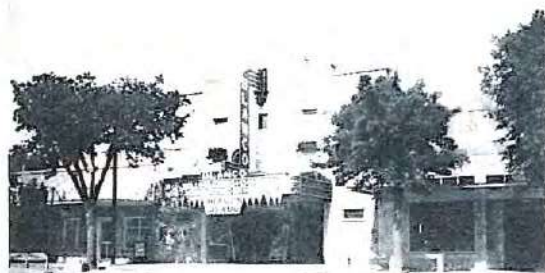
Store window displays can say more about the occupant than additional signage.



Blade signage is an appropriate signage type and is often for the pedestrian to view.



Seven (7) feet of height clearance from the sidewalk must be provided when hanging signs under canopies.



Historic photograph of Blanco Theater with marquee signage.

with the building. Signage painted on masonry may only be done if painted signage previously existed.

- d. Construct the sign of the most durable material that one can afford.
- e. Signage needs to be securely anchored to the building or canopy but must not be anchored in such a way as to cause damage to the historic building material, such as in the mortar joints rather than the brick or masonry.
- f. Do not damage, disfigure, or cover architectural features and details with signs. If the wall is masonry, install the sign in mortar joints which can easily be repointed.
- g. Blade signs, or two-sided hanging signs are an appropriate signage type and are often installed from a canopy for the pedestrian to view.
- h. An appropriate position for small blade signs is above or near the entrance. For larger signs, place them higher and centered on the facade unless corner placement is more suitable.
- i. Hanging signs under canopies, or blade signs, must have at least seven (7) feet of height clearance from sidewalk.
- j. Window signs may be hung inside a front window or painted on the glass. This is a traditional placement used both on ground floor and second-story windows.
- k. Neon signage may be historically appropriate on certain styles or periods of historic buildings, such as buildings constructed in the early twentieth century and later. However, neon signage is not appropriate for all buildings. Do not install where neon was not original to building.

- l. All signage should be kept in good maintenance and shall be kept free of all debris and other refuse.
- m. Plastic signs, either lighted from the back or internally in flat plastic panels, are not appropriate on any building in the downtown district.
- n. Identify “built-in” locations and try to work within them for any new signage.
- o. Avoid listing all services or products on a sign as the viewer will get lost in the information.
- p. Historical painted advertising shall not be removed or painted over.
- q. Refer to the City of Blanco Sign Ordinance for additional signage requirements and restrictions. All signage should have prior approval of the Historic Preservation Commission.



Plastic signage is not appropriate in the downtown district.



The historic “built-in” locations should be identified and worked within for signage.

5.4.2. Number, Size and Illumination of Signs

5.4.2.1. Recommendations

- a. For the number and size of signs per property, refer to the City of Blanco Sign Ordinance.
- b. Signs that direct the reader to a specific place or along a specific course, such as “entrance,” “exit,” and “handicap access,” shall not count toward the total allowable signage. Emergency signs are exempt.
- c. Sign illumination shall comply with the Blanco Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.

5.4.3. Prohibited Signs

5.4.3.1. Recommendations

- a. Billboards, junior billboards, portable signs (including torpedo signs), pole signs, changeable copy signs, electric (or plastic) signs, feather banners, hand-held signs (other than political), off-premises signs, pennants,



Avoid listing all services on the signage.



The "motel" sign is an example of a pole sign and is considered prohibited signage in the Historic District.



A flush-mounted sign with appropriate design for the building.



Ground signs should be an appropriate scale like above.

- cloud buster balloons, inflatable device signs, and advertising benches are prohibited.
- b. Digital or LED-lighted signs, including those with rotating or flashing lettering or images are prohibited.
- c. Roof-mounted signs or sky signs are prohibited.
- d. For any abandoned or dilapidated sign, please refer to the Blanco Sign Ordinance for more information.

5.4.4. Acceptable Sign Styles

5.4.4.1. Recommendations

- a. Flush-mounted wall signs: Use type fonts traditionally seen in the area; try to limit the number of colors to three; and, when possible, mount the sign so that it aligns with others on the block.
- b. Directory signs: These can include an assortment of small individual signs of common size, proportion, and orientation, as well as professional-style directories.
- c. Ground signs or free-standing, monument-style signs are appropriate for houses used for commercial purposes as well as for churches, community centers, commercial, and similar structures.

5.4.5. Incidental Signs

5.4.5.1. Recommendations

- a. Allowable incidental signs, including those carrying business hours and street numbers, must conform to historic district standards. They are not included in the total allowable signage area.

5.4.6. Menu Signs

5.4.6.1. Recommendations

- a. Menu boards shall be limited to no more than three hundred

sixty (360) square inches, with no more than one (1) per establishment. The menu may be displayed inside the window adjacent to the main entrance. It is permissible for the name of the restaurant to be placed on the menu, but not on the menu board. The business' logo shall be considered a sign.

5.4.7. Special Purpose/Temporary Signs

5.4.7.1. Recommendations

- a. All special purpose signs shall receive prior approval and shall be removed within twenty-one (21) days of such approval unless a different display period is specified. Banners, pennants and most flags are considered special purpose signs and are appropriate for advertising and decoration only during special events or celebrations.



Special purpose signs, such as the flag above, are appropriate for decoration during events and celebrations.

5.4.8. Illegal Placement

5.4.8.1. Recommendations

- a. Commercial signs, posters, decals or advertisements should not be tacked, nailed, pasted, or taped to any portion of the exterior of the building, with the exception of temporary posters placed on the inside window, which shall be removed within 48 hours of the end of the event.



Temporary signage must receive prior approval.

5.4.9. Noncompliance

5.4.9.1. Recommendations

- a. Any legally erected sign that falls out of compliance because of revisions to these standards shall be considered for nonconforming status.



Temporary posters placed on the inside of storefronts should be promptly removed following the event.

6. Design Standards and Guidelines for Historic Residential Districts

6.1. Historic Residential Buildings Styles

- 6.1.1. National Folk: Pyramid
- 6.1.2. National Folk: Front Gable
- 6.1.3. National Folk: Massed Plan, Side Gable
- 6.1.4. National Folk: Gable Front and Side Wing
- 6.1.5. National Folk: Hall and Parlor
- 6.1.6. Greek Revival
- 6.1.7. Queen Anne
- 6.1.8. Folk Victorian
- 6.1.9. Craftsman
- 6.1.10. Ranch
- 6.1.11. Hill Country Vernacular Rock
- 6.1.12. Minimal Traditional

6.1.1. National Folk: Pyramid

6.1.1.1. The Pyramidal National Folk is a massed plan of a rectangular shape, and is commonly built with a equilateral hip roof. Such roofs appeared in the early post-railroad era on modest houses.

6.1.1.2. Characteristics

- a. Equilateral roof
- b. Square shaped plans
- c. Full width porch
- d. Large flexible interior plan



6.1.2. National Folk: Front Gable

6.1.2.1. The Front Gable National Folk became common in expanding Southern cities in the late 19th century. These are usually one-story, double-width forms with low-pitched roofs.

6.1.2.2. Characteristics

- a. Front-facing gable
- b. Low-pitched roof
- c. Double-width form



6.1.3. National Folk: Massed Plan, Side Gable

6.1.3.1. The side-gabled folk houses with massed plans are usually one-story forms that vary principally in roof pitch, size, and placement of porches. In the South, the houses usually have full-length shed roof porches and relatively large flexible plans.

6.1.3.2. Characteristics

- a. Side-gabled roof
- b. Full-length shed roof porch
- c. Massed Plan
- d. One-story in height



6.1.4. National Folk: Front Gable and Side Wing

6.1.4.1. The front gable and side wing houses of the South were traditionally one-story, hall-and-parlor plans that were expanded to add a gabled front wing. These houses had more flexible interior spaces than the typical hall-and-parlor.

6.1.4.2. Characteristics

- a. Side-gabled roof, with front-facing gabled wing
- b. Shed roof porch
- c. One-story in height
- d. Flexible interior spaces



6.1.5. National Folk: Hall-and-Parlor

6.1.5.1. Hall-and-Parlor style is traditionally two rooms wide and one room deep as a traditional British folk form. However, the addition of a front porch and rear addition became a dominant pre-railroad folk housing for the southeastern United States and continued after the introduction of the railroad.

6.1.5.2. Characteristics

- a. Side-gabled roof
- b. Two rooms wide and one room deep
- c. Addition to rear
- d. Front porch



6.1.6. Greek Revival

6.1.6.1. One of the most familiar stereotypes in American architecture is the full-colonnaded Greek Revival mansion of the southern states. The southern Greek Revival residences partially sprung from French colonial building practices.

6.1.6.2. Characteristics

- a. Entry porch with prominent columns
- b. Gabled or hip roof with a low pitch
- c. Emphasized cornice line with wide, divided trim



6.1.7. Queen Anne

6.1.7.1. Queen Anne was the dominant style of domestic architecture from 1880 to 1900. Although the style is based on characteristics from the late Medieval styles such as Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture, the American variation has inventive spindlework and fretwork.

6.1.7.2. Characteristics

- a. Asymmetrical facade
- b. Decorative wood detailing
- c. One story porch that extends along one or both side walls
- d. Steeply pitched, irregular shaped roof



6.1.8. Folk Victorian

6.1.8.1. The Folk Victorian style was implemented using existing Folk residences and adding Victorian detailing. Railroads spread the materials and machinery needed for this style.

6.1.8.2. Characteristics

- a. Gabled roof
- b. Porch roof supports are either spindles or square posts
- c. Simple folk form
- d. Spindle work detailing



6.1.9. Craftsman

6.1.9.1. The Craftsman style was inspired by the English Arts and Crafts movement, Oriental wooden architecture, and the manual arts. The style began in southern California and spread through pattern books.

6.1.9.2. Characteristics

- a. Low-pitched gable roofs
- b. Porch roof supports are square or tapered columns
- c. Roof rafters and decorative beams are exposed
- d. Wide, open eave overhang



6.1.10. Ranch

6.1.10.1. The Ranch style is a uniquely American domestic architectural style. It began in the 1930s and is loosely based on Spanish Colonial, Craftsman, and Prairie precedents.

6.1.10.2. Characteristics

- a. Single-story with asymmetrical facade
- b. Porch roof supports in decorative iron
- c. Low-pitched roof with long, low roofline
- d. Large picture windows with decorative shutters
- e. Brick or wood cladding



6.1.11. Hill Country Vernacular Rock

6.1.11.1. The stone rubble that is indicative to the Texas Hill Country is commonly used within Blanco. This stone is pieced together and held with mortar to create load-bearing walls that in turn form modest dwellings. These vernacular rock houses are common throughout the Texas Hill Country and should be preserved.

6.1.11.2. Characteristics

- a. One-story house
- b. Typically metal roofing
- c. Porches framed by rock arcades



6.1.12. Minimal Traditional

6.1.12.1. Minimal Traditional style is reminiscent of the traditional Eclectic House form, but without the decorative detailing. It began during the 1930s Depression era and continued until shortly after World War II.

6.1.12.2. Characteristics

1. Minimal decoration
2. Low to intermediate roof pitch





An example of a pier and beam residence.

6.2. Components of Historic Residential Buildings

- 6.2.1. Foundations and Skirting
- 6.2.2. Porches
- 6.2.3. Exterior Wall Surfaces
- 6.2.4. Exterior Doors and Entrances
- 6.2.5. Windows
- 6.2.6. Roof Forms and Details
- 6.2.7. Other Components

6.2.1. Foundations and Skirting

6.2.1.1. Observations

- a. Houses in the historic residential areas of Blanco are of frame construction on pier-and-beam foundation consisting of wood post, brick, or stone piers set into the ground. This type of construction elevates the house above the ground. Wood posts often fail over time, causing the house to shift, and eventually the posts will need to be replaced.
- b. There are a number of frame structures with brick, stone, or concrete perimeter beams. Some houses of concrete block and masonry construction also exist. These masonry structures have interior supports similar to pier-and-beam construction.
- c. The skirting closes the space under the house, but has openings for ventilation. The skirting material and detail are defined by the style and period of the house. For example, Craftsman houses frequently have a flared skirt of horizontal board siding, stone, or brick with ventilation screens. Brick and stone houses, along with a few wood frame houses, typically have brick or stone skirting. Sometimes concrete block that resembles stone is used as skirting.



Flared shingle skirting example on a craftsman residence.



Vents along the perimeter provide necessary ventilation under the house.

6.2.1.2. Recommendations

- a. Repair deteriorated foundations before attempting other repairs, such as roof leaks. The

movement of the foundation may cause other materials to shift or cause leaks.

- b. The foundation posts may be replaced with new posts of cedar or chemically treated wood; or concrete piers may be installed. Floors can be leveled and additional support may be installed if needed.
- c. Both stone and brick foundations may have deteriorated or have missing mortar, which requires repointing or replacing mortar. See Materials section.



Double front porch is indicative of the style and era of the residence.

6.2.2. Porches

6.2.2.1. Observations

- a. The front porch is one of the most prominent features of individual residences and is found on most of the houses. The front porch is an extension of the living space and contributes to the character of the street and the neighborhood. While most porches are elevated above ground, some of the newer houses have porches that are near grade.
- b. Throughout Blanco, many porches retain their character-defining features of columns, railings, steps, and other details.
- c. Some porches have been altered and their original columns have been removed and replaced with fabricated metal or other inappropriate materials and design.
- d. Other alterations include lowering the porch level, installing concrete or brick porch flooring at grade, and enclosing all or part of the porch to accommodate additional living space.
- e. Porches require a great deal of maintenance because of their exposure to the weather; repair



Elevated porches are typical of pier and beam residences.



By preserving the porch's defining features, the house retains its character.



Regular maintenance to porches is necessary due to their exposure to the elements.



When repairs and replacement of parts are necessary, match the original design as closely as possible.



When adding an access ramp, it should be thoughtfully placed and designed within its context.

is inevitable and necessary.

6.2.2.2. Recommendations

- a. Retain original materials and make repairs that match the original design of the porch floor, columns, railings, brackets, steps, and other character-defining details.
- b. Wood porch floors and columns may require eventual replacement due to moisture penetration; wood floors and columns should only be replaced with wood.
- c. At no time shall the porch elevation be lowered to grade and steps redesigned. Porches should not be enclosed to provide more living space as this can dramatically alter the appearance of the house. Any enclosure should be reversible.
- d. As renovation occurs, consider restoring a previously altered porch and its features. If porches have been drastically altered, or if there is no clear idea of what was originally in place, they can be designed to be sympathetic to the original style of the house. Do not construct a porch of a different house style.
- e. If an access ramp needs to be provided, it should be located to minimize the loss of historic features and should preserve the historic character of the property.
- f. Ramps should be constructed out of various materials to be compatible with housing styles. Ramps constructed out of unpainted pressure treated wood are considered temporary and not visually compatible with historic properties.

6.2.3. Exterior Wall Surfaces

6.2.3.1. Observations

- a. The most prominent exterior wall

material is horizontal wood siding the profile of which varies from building to building.

- b. Blanco housing also has a few examples of board-and-batten siding. This is a vertical wood siding with narrow wood strips, or battens, covering the seams of the siding.
- c. The historic wood siding has been on some of the houses for 100 years and can last decades to come if properly maintained and painted. Brick, stone, and stucco are also present.
- d. Although the majority of the houses retain their original siding, a few of the houses have been covered with non-historic siding such as asbestos, vinyl, aluminum, and occasionally stucco.

6.2.3.2. Recommendations

- a. Each exterior wall surface material requires different maintenance which can be referenced in the Materials Section of this document.
- b. It is important to retain the original siding and its dimension, profile, and shadow lines.
- c. If the building was constructed of wood siding and needs repairs or board replacement, most siding types are still manufactured and available from suppliers or can be custom milled for a nominal fee.
- d. For the integrity of the neighborhood and house itself, it is not recommended that any synthetic siding be installed over existing wood siding or cause the existing wood siding to be removed. This not only changes the appearance of the house but may also cause deterioration of the historic material it covers. Additionally, synthetic siding often conceals many of the



A residence with wood siding.



An example of board-and-batten siding.



An example of a stone rubble residence.