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# DAB Downtown Urban Design Guidelines Criteria Checklist – Appendix A: Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, Chapter 2 Non-Historic and Interface Areas

DAB Meeting Date:  
P&DS Case Number:

The urban design objectives for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas are to:

• Reinforce the character of Downtown as a pedestrian place by encouraging architectural solutions that are visually pleasing, reflective of contemporary times yet stylistically appropriate to the context, and compatible in scale and character with their street.

• Encourage sensitive design along the edge where the Downtown commercial area abuts residential neighborhoods.

• Emphasize a clear distinction between the commercial and residential interface areas.

• Maintain the diversity in building type and size and respect the adjoining residential character.

• Discourage adverse impacts from noise, night lighting, poor building design, and commercial service areas on adjacent residential neighborhoods.

## 2.1 General guidelines for the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

### A. Maintain the historic or predominant building set back line.

1. Maintain the relationship and continuity of the building wall to the street or property line.
2. For commercial uses in residential buildings, maintain the predominant residential set back of the block, including any porches.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **A. Set back line** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### B. Views: Downtown Boulder is blessed with exceptional mountain views and projects should be designed to preserve access to this extraordinary asset from the public realm and surrounding area. The south and west edges of downtown offer the most spectacular views.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **B. Views** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### C. Sun and Shade: In Boulder's climate, sun and shade are important design considerations for providing natural light in buildings and creating appealing pedestrian areas that are ice free and sunny in the winter and shady in the summer

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **C. Sun and Shade** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |

### D. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances.

1. Use low-profile mechanical units and elevator shafts that are not visible from the street. If this is not possible, set back or screen rooftop equipment from view.
2. Be sensitive to the views from the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Skylights and solar panels should have low profiles.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **D. Minimize the visibility of mechanical, structural, or electrical appurtenances.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### E. Design all sides of the building including alley elevations.

1. Well-designed rear building entrances, windows, balconies, and planting areas are encouraged. Improve rear or side alley elevations to enhance public access from parking lots and alleys.
2. Where buildings are built to the alley edge, consider opportunities for alley display windows and secondary customer or employee entries.
3. Materials utilized on the primary elevation are to extend, or wrap, around building corners onto the secondary elevations extending back at least the width of a structural bay.
4. Screening for service equipment, trash, or any other rear-of-building elements should be designed as an integral part of the overall design. Where intact, historic alley facades should be preserved along with original features and materials.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **E. Design all sides of the building including alley elevations.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### F. Exterior building lighting should be designed to enhance the overall architecture of the building. Security lighting should be designed for safety, as well as night-time appearance.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **F. Exterior building lighting** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### G. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.

1. Parking structures should be compatible to the historic district and adjacent buildings. All parking structures should be architecturally screened and/or wrapped with an occupiable use.
2. Surface parking is discouraged. Locate any surface parking to the rear of the property and screen from view.
3. Pedestrian routes in structures and parking lots should be easily identifiable and accessed, with clear visual connections to the sidewalks and buildings.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **G. Reduce the visual impact of structured and surface parking.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### H. The law requires that universal access be located with the principal public entrance.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **H. Universal access** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### I. Consider the quality of open space incorporated into new and renovated buildings. When appropriate to the context, integrate the surrounding open spaces into the building design. Well-programmed plazas, courtyards, outdoor seating and dining areas on or adjacent to open spaces and pedestrian routes are encouraged.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **I. Open space quality** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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## 2.2 Commercial buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Areas

### A. Consider incorporating traditional facade elements in new and contemporary ways. See Section 1: The Downtown Historic District for specific building elements.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **A. Traditional facade elements** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### B. Consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings.

1. In general, buildings should appear similar in height, mass, and scale to other buildings in the area. At the same time, it is important to maintain a variety of heights. While the actual heights of buildings are of concern, the perceived heights of buildings are equally important. One-, two- and three-story buildings make up the primary architectural fabric of the Downtown, with taller buildings located at key intersections.
2. Consider the height and proportion of buildings to neighboring structures. For new structures that are significantly taller than adjacent buildings, upper floors should be set back a minimum of 15 feet from the front facade to reduce the perceived height.
3. Maintain the traditional, established breaks between buildings, such as existing walkways.
4. For projects located in the Interface Area, construct buildings three floors or less and consider the adjacent residential height, mass, and scale.
5. Commercial construction on a primarily residential block should be designed to reflect a residential character, e.g. residential set back on a primarily residential street.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **B. Consider the height, mass, and scale of buildings.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### C. Maintain a human scale, rather than monolithic or monumental scale.

1. Avoid large featureless facade surfaces. Include architectural elements and patterns that divide the facade into familiar intervals. A single facade should not exceed a maximum of 75 linear feet.
2. Consider how the texture and pattern of building materials will be perceived. Use traditionally sized building components in a way that incorporates details, textures, and patterns to establish a sense of human scale.
3. Maintain the distinction between ground and upper floors. Develop the first-floor façade as primarily transparent. Consider using windows and other architectural features to create a pattern that will reinforce the traditional façade rhythm found on commercial buildings in the Downtown area. Ground floors are generally differentiated by a higher percentage of glazing and transparency than upper floors.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **C. Maintain a human scale, rather than monolithic or monumental scale.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### D. Construct primary entrances at grade.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **D. Construct primary entrances at grade.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### E. Maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional approximately 25’ façade widths for projects that extend over several lots by changing the materials, patterns, reveals, or building setbacks in uniform intervals or by using design elements such as columns or pilasters.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **E. Maintain the rhythm established by the repetition of the traditional façade widths.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### F. Distinguish ground floor height from upper floor heights. Ground level floor to floor height is encouraged to be taller than upper stories.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **F. Distinguish ground floor height.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### G. Shade storefront glass by appropriate means such as awnings or recesses.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **G. Shade storefront glass by appropriate means such as awnings or recesses.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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## 2.3 Residential buildings in the Non-Historic and Interface Area

### A. Maintain the diverse architectural character of the residential buildings in the Interface Area.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| 1. **Maintain the diverse architectural character of the residential buildings in the Interface Area.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches. Residential entry porches are encouraged to extend 18” to 30” above grade, except when the context or character of the block demonstrates at grade entries.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| **B. Construct residential units to include entry stoops and/or porches.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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### C. When feasible, maintain residential uses in historic residential buildings.

| **Criteria** | **Applicant Self-Evaluation** | **Staff Review - Compliance** | **Staff Comment** |
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| 1. **When feasible, maintain residential uses in historic residential buildings.** | *Describe how the project meets the criteria* | S ☐ PS ☐ NS ☐ N/A ☐ | *Staff Comment* |
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#### Staff Review Compliance Key:

* S: Criteria Satisfied
* PS: Criteria Partially Satisfied
* NS: Criteria Not Satisfied
* N/A: Criteria Not Applicable