



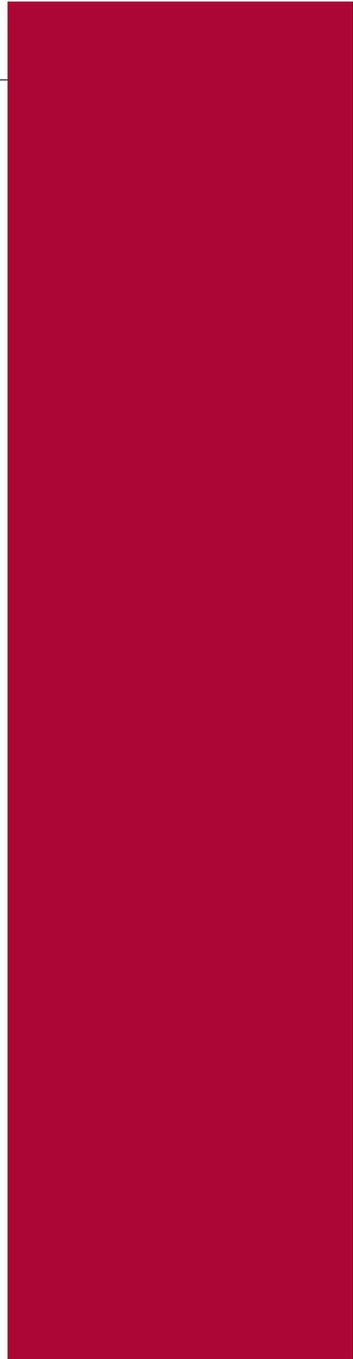
**CITY OF SACRAMENTO / STOREFRONT GUIDELINES**



# Table of Contents

---

Introduction and Process	3-5
Storefront Character	6
Entrance Doors	7
Display Windows	8
Exterior Materials	9
Awnings and Canopies	10
Signage	11-12
Exterior Lighting	13
Exterior Landscaping and Site Work	14
Exterior Fencing and Furniture for Outdoor Seating	15
Outdoor Dining and Fencing	16



# Introduction and Process

---

## OVERVIEW

Sacramento's downtown core, the center of the Sacramento metropolitan region, is envisioned as a vibrant and attractive 24-hour destination for people to live, work, shop, dine, and enjoy events and attractions. To support Sacramento's strategy to be "America's most livable City," the central businesses district's retail experiences must be special and enhance the city's position.

**The economic vitality and aesthetic quality of each enterprise downtown is critical to the success of the entire area.**

- Storefronts play a critical role in the store's merchandising strategy. A strong street presence draws customers and helps generate new business.
- Storefronts and signs not only communicate the function but also the character of the business and are an extension of the business' brand.

**Property owners and merchants are encouraged to recognize, enhance, protect and promote Downtown's vibrant and unique identity through quality storefront design.**

## STOREFRONT DESIGN GOALS

**To assist business and property owners in improving their storefronts as a part of an overall downtown enhancement and revitalization process to:**

- Enhance the character and quality of downtown retail
- Respect the integrity of the original architecture
- Create visual appeal at the downtown storefront level
- Improve the commercial success of Downtown Sacramento.

The intent of this document is to provide guidance for storefront design and encourage creativity and quality places that will attract customers. This document is based on the City's Central City Urban Design Guidelines adopted in 2009 for the central core.

The guidelines apply to the area within the Merged Downtown Redevelopment District (see attached map), with the exception of the Old Sacramento National Historic Landmark District, which has its own design and sign review standards and procedures.

# Introduction and Process

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Property owners and businesses, or their architects/design professionals are required to submit a Universal Planning Application to the City for review of purposed storefront designs.**

**Universal Planning Applications** are available for pick up at the City of Sacramento's Community Development Department located at 300 Richards Boulevard or can be downloaded online at [http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/forms/planning/documents/CDD-0063\\_Universal-Planning-Application\\_5-28-10.pdf](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/forms/planning/documents/CDD-0063_Universal-Planning-Application_5-28-10.pdf)

Complete applications include:

- **Universal Planning Application Form:** Basic information about the proposed design.
- **Acknowledgement Form:** If you are a tenant, the property owner must sign a form acknowledging that they are in agreement with the tenant's application.
- **Plans:** A site plan and elevation drawings showing the proposed improvements.
- **Photos or Drawing:** Photos or graphic representation including color and construction material (signage, exterior, furniture, umbrellas, etc) in compliance with City codes and related ordinances.

## DESIGN OR PRESERVATION REVIEW

**Exterior changes to downtown storefronts require a design review and may also require preservation review** as the Downtown falls within the Central City Design Review District and includes a number of Historic Districts and Landmarks.

**Buildings that are 50 years old or older could be considered historic, even if they have not officially been designated.** Since Design Review is considered a "discretionary" review under state environmental laws, the proposals may be referred to preservation staff for review if a building is considered eligible for listing in the Sacramento or California Registers of Historical Resources. In those instances, the project review will consider compliance with preservation and rehabilitation standards to ensure the project will be exempt from further environmental review. Contact Preservation staff at 808-5011 for additional information.

## Introduction and Process

### For historic properties:

- **Work involving the exterior or publicly accessible interiors generally requires preservation review** whether or not a building permit is required. (Painting exteriors of a historic buildings can require preservation review but does not require a building permit)
- **Other reviewed Storefront improvements**, especially in conjunction with interior tenant improvements, may also trigger other code requirements including American for Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements .
- **Installation of awning**; may require an encroachment permit, which can be obtained through the City's Department of Transportation.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

**Design Review or Preservation application packet** (Universal Planning Application)

[http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/forms/planning/documents/CDD-0063\\_Universal-Planning-Application\\_5-28-10.pdf](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/forms/planning/documents/CDD-0063_Universal-Planning-Application_5-28-10.pdf)

**Central City Urban Design Guidelines** <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/planning/urban-design/central-city-urban-design-guidelines/>

**Sign Permit Requirements** <http://qcode.us/codes/sacramento/> Click on Title 15 and then Chapter 15.148

**Historic Standards** <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/planning/preservation/about.cfm>

### CITY CONTACTS

#### Community Development Department

300 Richards Boulevard, 3rd Floor

Hours: Monday - Friday / 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

(916) 808-5011

[www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/dsd/)

**For questions related to the specific review process** for a particular building or for specific types of improvements, email [ezpermit@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:ezpermit@cityofsacramento.org)

**For building code questions and requirements** or to schedule a consultation meeting, email [planning@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:planning@cityofsacramento.org).

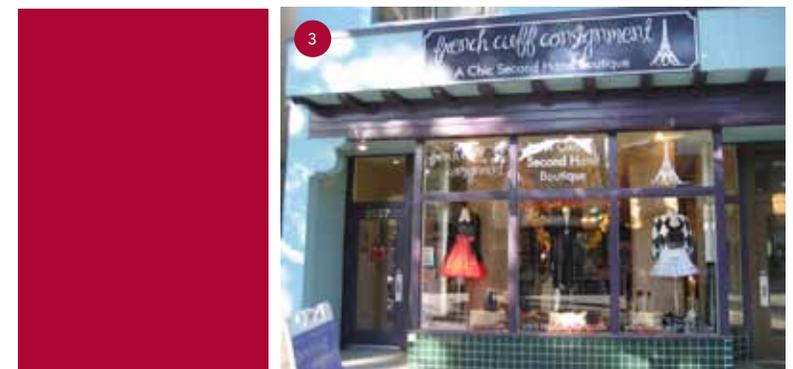
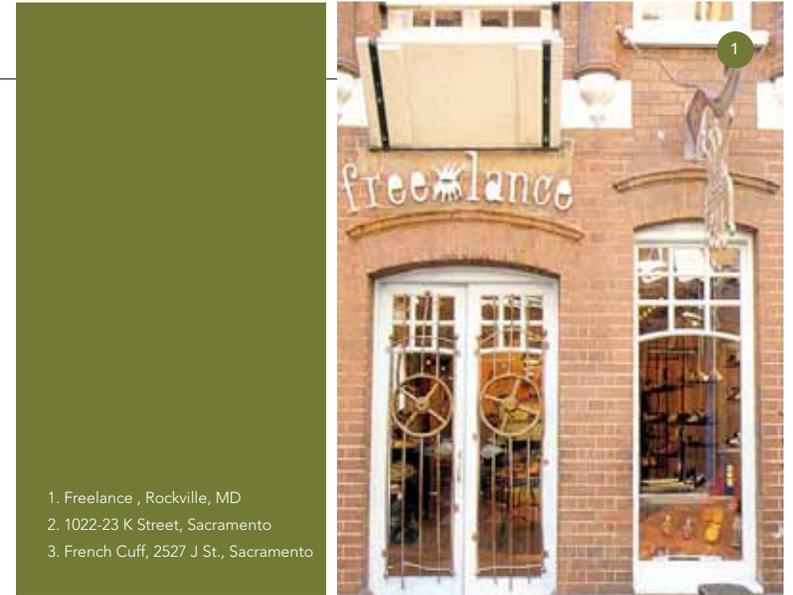
# Storefront Character

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Storefront designs should express the individual identity of the business, while also enhancing its' setting.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Explore designs that can best express the individual business / tenant identity and also enhance the customer's experience.
- b. Recognize and respond to the store's larger setting and context, as one store within a building, or within a block front of storefronts or buildings.
- c. Respect the character of the existing building.
- d. Respect special features and characteristics of the building's architectural design and materials.
- e. Provide a comprehensive design that unifies storefront elements including window and door openings, signage, awnings, lighting, materials, etc.
- f. Comply with applicable zoning and building codes, conditions of approval, entitlement or permit requirements, and any other requirements by any public entity.



# Entrance Doors

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

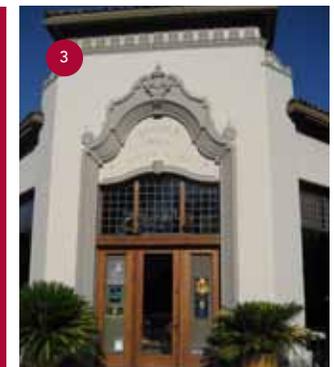
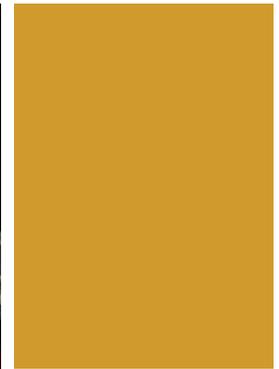
Enhance storefronts to be well designed, appropriately scaled, and provide a special feature in the building.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Primary entrances that are clearly marked, appropriately located and well designed can provide a sense of welcome and easy passage from the sidewalk into the businesses' interior.
- b. Well designed and located entryways can help reinforce or enhance the businesses' brand identity.
- c. If a restaurant has outdoor seating, consider clear thru-way door openings and window openings that have good visual connections between the interior and exterior seating areas.
- d. Keep entry door swings within the property line and comply with American's for Disabilities Act opening dimension and hardware requirements.
- e. Retain existing recessed entries, particularly on buildings that have other recessed entries. Recessed storefronts entries offer protection from weather and may be necessary for those locations where an outswinging door may open into the public pathway.
- f. Install any needed pull-down, sliding or fixed security grills inside the building's walls/doors/windows.
- g. Locate loading and services doors on the side or rear of buildings, whenever possible.
- h. Tenants leasing multiple or corner storefront spaces are encouraged to use more than one door sets to maximize access and openness to the store.



1. Dogmatic, New York, NY  
2. TBA  
3. Zocalo, 1801 Capitol Ave., Sacramento



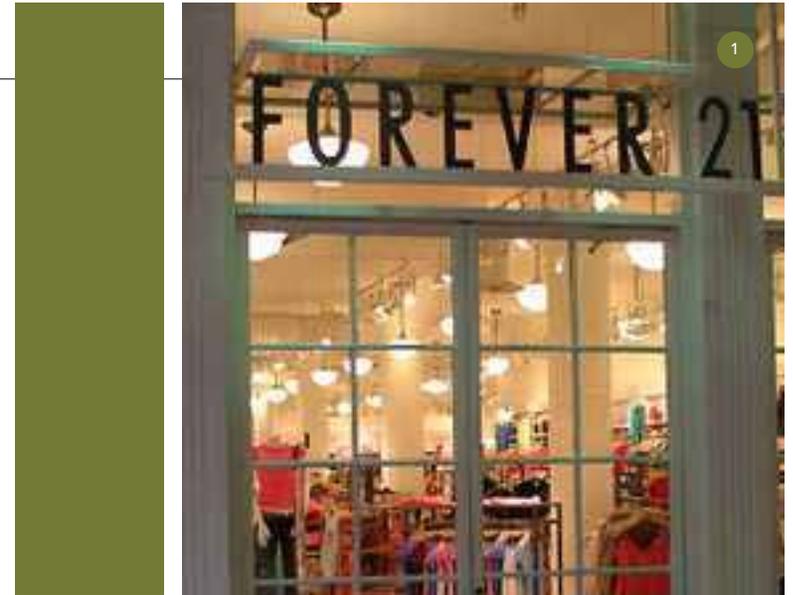
# Storefront Windows

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Well proportioned storefront windows that are unified across a storefront, and of quality design and materials, can both express the business's identity and provide key and inviting views into the business.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Focus of window design can enhance the visual connection between the interior and exterior of businesses, giving the passerby a feel for what's inside and providing a visual invitation to customers to come into the business.
- b. Display products or services, local business logos and hours of operation on storefront windows in a clear and uncluttered design. Displays in both retail and non-retail storefronts windows can be designed to add color, light, texture, information, and /or visual activity to the pedestrian experience while also ensuring visual connectivity to the businesses' interior and a cohesive storefront design.
- c. Windows should be consistent in height and design with the overall storefront to create a cohesive appearance.
- d. Keep storefront facades at least 60% transparent (with a minimum visible transmittance of 78%,) measured from the floor to the finished ceiling heights along retail frontages.
- e. While glass must be tempered, retain or increase window transparency whenever possible. Dark or tinted glass alienates pedestrians from the business activity inside and can reduce impacts of window displays.
- f. Glass considered to be opaque, such as glass block, etched, sand blasted, or stained glass should only be used as accent pieces.
- g. All glass frameless storefronts are acceptable.



1. Forever 21, Downtown Plaza, Sacramento  
2. L St. Kitchen & Wine Bar, 1801 L St.  
3. Friday Next, Amsterdam, Holland

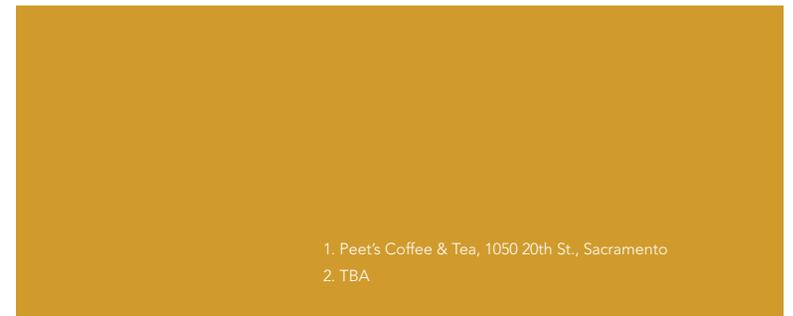
# Exterior Materials

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Well crafted storefront designs using quality materials can visually cater to the senses of the customer looking for special experiences and is one of the most important elements in creating a store's image. Quality materials that respect the special features and characteristics of the building as a whole will help to enhance the particular storefront within that building. Materials can be used to create a rich traditional feel or a more modern contemporary look. A sense of quality and durability should play a role in the selection of storefront materials.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Use high quality finishes and materials that will both respect the rest of the building and will provide for a more durable and lower-maintenance facade.
- b. Coordinate the types and colors of materials for signs, door and window frames, cornices, walls, awnings, and other storefront elements.
- c. Quality materials generally are more weather resistant and durable.
- d. Avoid faux antiqued or imitation materials (imitation brick, stone, or wood.)
- e. Material should be used that can withstand graffiti, dirt and dust. Wrap corner materials at least 12 inches before a material change.
- f. A mix of materials should be incorporated into the design. Intense colors should be accents. A change in material or color should be designed with a change in wall-plane of at least 4 inches.
- g. Decorative materials may not extend into the row beyond the storefront face more than six inches (6"). If it does, an encroachment permit will be needed.



1. Peet's Coffee & Tea, 1050 20th St., Sacramento  
2. TBA



# Awnings & Canopies

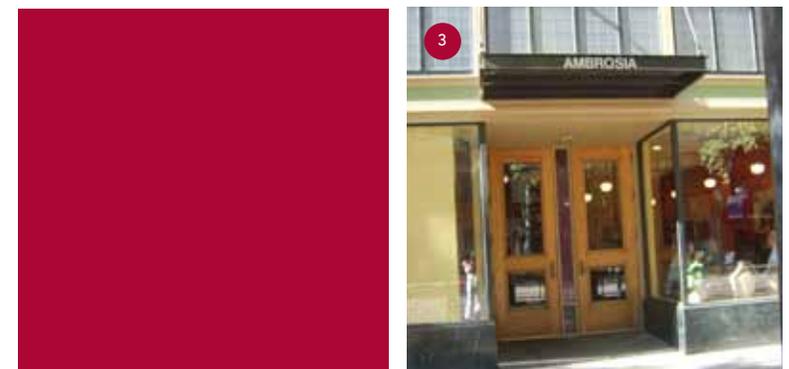
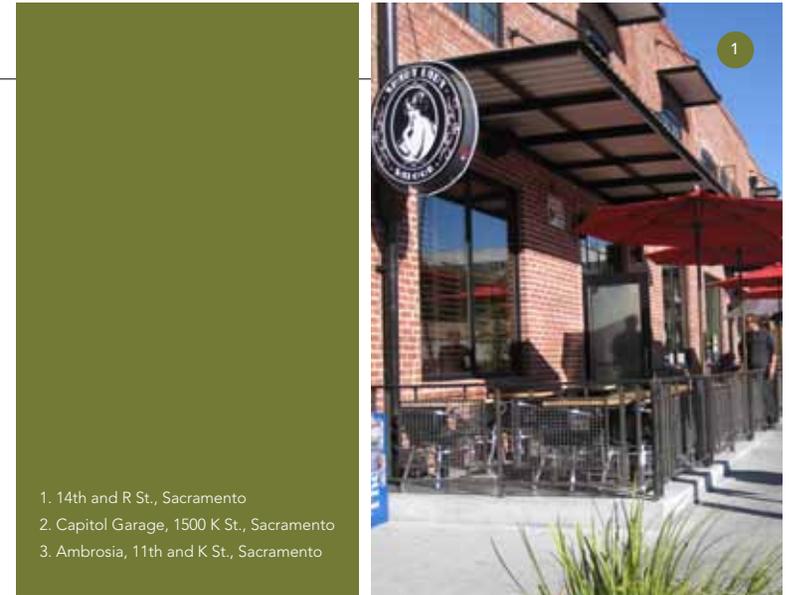
## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Use awnings appropriate to the design to emphasize entrances, provide shade or interest and variety to the storefront building façade, or add to the streetscape and to a tenant's image.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Use awnings, colonnades, or arcades where appropriate to provide pedestrian protection in coordination with the design of the storefront.
- b. Awnings and canopies can provide a secondary location for signage, add color and interest to storefronts, and emphasize display windows and entrances.
- c. Complement both the scale and design of door and window openings with the design and placement of the awnings or canopies.
- d. Ensure comfortable pedestrian access and sightlines with the placement and design of awnings or canopies.
- e. Place awnings above storefront window, at least 8 feet above the sidewalks.
- f. Awning material must be fire treated or non-flammable. Awnings should be made of high quality canvas or can be made of glass or metal.
- g. Avoid shiny vinyl material.
- h. Consider translucent materials with ultraviolet filters to allow filtered light.

Awnings and canopies will require a revocable encroachment permit through the City's Department of Transportation when the awning or canopy will be infringing over the public right-of-way (sidewalk).



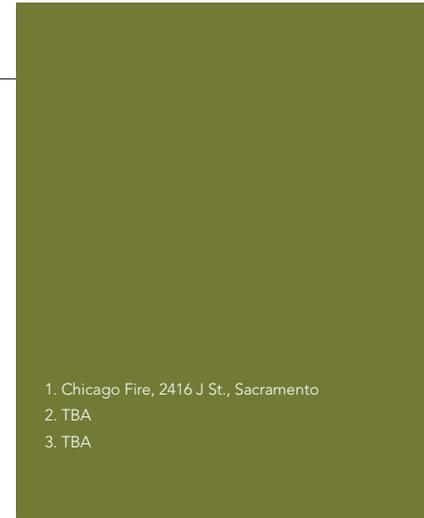
# Signs

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

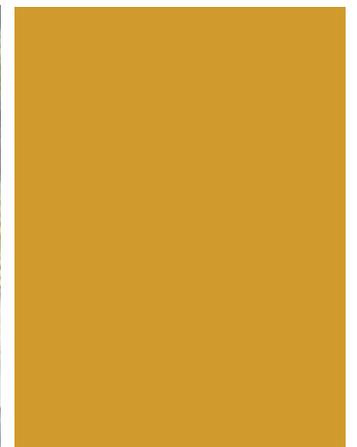
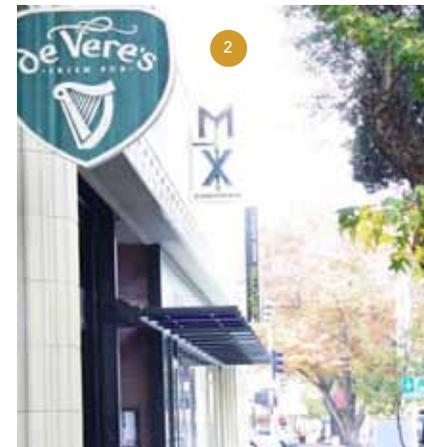
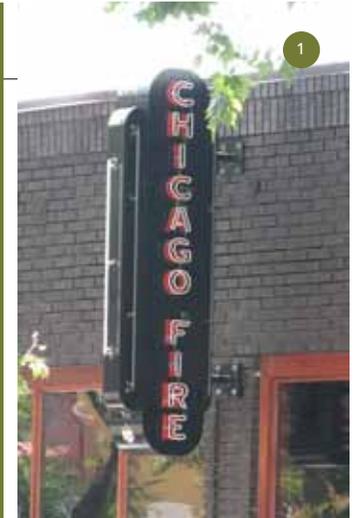
Signs are important to direct customers, attract customers, brand a company, and frequently form the customer's first impression of a business. Effective storefront signage complements the design of the storefront and building, often working together to turn the entire storefront into the message that promotes the company's products or services.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Provide information on signs clearly and legibly, often "less is more".
- b. Limit content to the tenant's trade name or logo.
- c. Consider sign materials, design, placement, colors and typefaces that complement the storefront's design and respect architectural features. Signage should have a maximum of two to three colors with not more than two accent colors for letter and perimeter line work.
- d. Use of high quality materials that will enhance both your business and character of downtown. Appropriate material may include metal, wood, Plexiglas or hard plastic, neon, stone, cast & engraved metals, fired ceramics, screen print on canvas awnings and painted graphics on building surface, assure they are weather proof and fade resistant
- e. Conceal sign lighting or if the sign is non-illuminated, design lighting fixtures to complement the design of the sign.
- f. Limit signage to the number necessary to effectively communicate the business message. Too many signs in one storefront can detract from the overall appearance.
- g. Conceal all conduit, tubing, raceways, and conductors, transformers and related equipment.
- h. Ensure clear legibility for universal accessibility that meets or exceeds the ADA standards for signage.
- i. Backlit cabinet signs should be avoided.



1. Chicago Fire, 2416 J St., Sacramento
2. TBA
3. TBA



## Signs (continued)

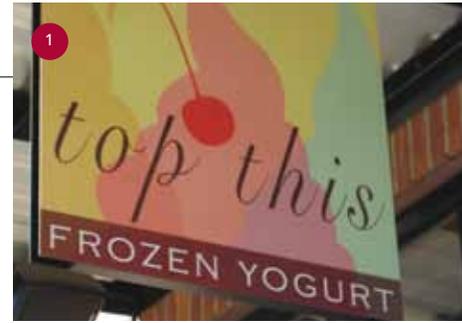
- j. Retail businesses and facilities that are entertainment or culturally oriented and contribute to the active night life of the Central Business District and the Arts and Entertainment District may be allowed creative signage that may exceed the requirements of the sign ordinance, subject to review and approval of the Planning Director.
- k. Buildings with multiple tenants should have a common signage program, include and multiple directory.
- l. Orient all signage to the pedestrian with less focus on vehicular activity.
- m. Locate and design the size of signs to preserve sight lines and enhance visual corridors. Blade signs along pedestrian corridors foster circulation and will require an Encroachment Permit if they project over the Public Right-of-Way.
- n. Wall mounted signs and their support brackets shall maintain vertical clearance above the finished floor to prevent physical contact with pedestrians, but any sign should not exceed 20' above the ground or higher than the building cornice line or street wall height.

### TYPE

The types of signs listed below are recommended:

- Flat or stud mounted wall signs with routed out copy
- Individual letters (individual channel or reverse pan channel)
- Wall plaques
- Logos
- Projecting signs or blade signs with urban level design
- Flush mounted, three dimensional, individual letters are encouraged
- Flat can signs are not supported
- Innovative or interesting signage (exposed neon highly encouraged)

All signs must comply with the City's Sign Code, section 15.148.190, which regulates the size, scale, location and lighting of commercial signs. All signage requires a City sign permit, and within the downtown will involve either Design or Preservation review, and could involve approval by the Planning Director.



1. Blade Sign, Top This, 1409 R St., Sacramento
2. Blade Sign, PF Chang's, 1530 J St., Sacramento
3. Blade Sign, Christmas and Co., 116 K St., Sacramento
4. Individual Letter, Blue Cue, 1004 28th St., Sacramento



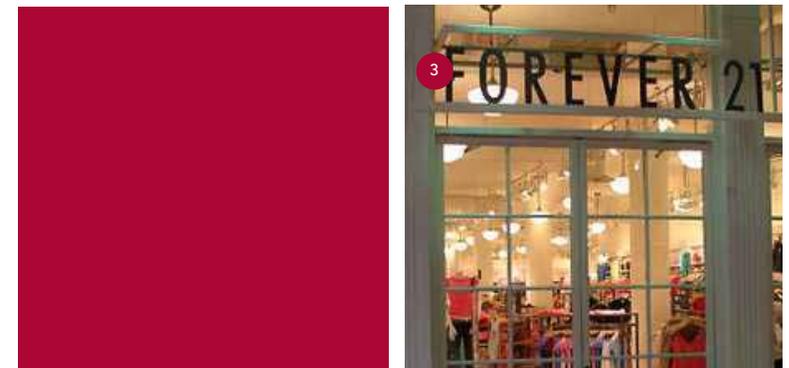
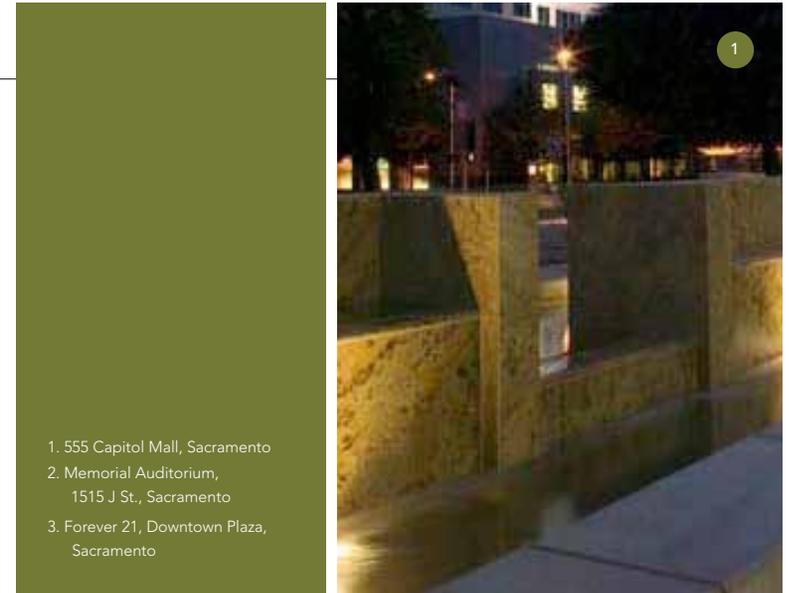
# Lighting

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Lighting that adds to street character, increases public safety, and helps to animate the Downtown is encouraged.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Light facades, recessed doorways, outdoor spaces and passageways.
- b. Incorporate decorative lighting elements as a component of a storefront's overall design.
- c. Use exterior lighting to highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features.
- d. Design and locate exterior lighting in relation to the building's architectural elements.
- e. Locate fixtures and light angles to spotlight merchandise instead of pointing to the window and causing distracting reflections
- f. Lighting can be used to express seasonality.
- g. Include "after hours" lighting within the storefront windows to enhance the pedestrian experience. To control light spillage and protect adjacent property from a lighting nuisance, lighting should focus on illuminating building's façade surfaces.
- h. Purposefully design and select lighting and electrical equipment to conceal light sources and ensure unobtrusive installations, unless the light fixtures themselves are part of the storefront's overall design.



# Landscaping and Hardscape

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Onsite Landscape elements can provide color, detail, texture, shade, and visual interest to a storefront façade.

## GUIDELINES

- a. Consider decorative on-site paving treatment, texture and color of surfaces that complement the architectural style and materials of the building and storefront.
- b. Paving should be of non-slip material for wet or dry conditions.
- c. Plantings can provide for visual interest and shade. Planter pots and hanging baskets can be flexible than fixed beds and can be clustered to create an accent or moved to provide space for special events, cleaning, or during winter weather. Property owners are responsible for maintaining these planting materials.
- d. Design landscape elements to activate the building façade, soften building contours, highlight important architectural features or screen unattractive elements.
- e. Use plants that are live, perennial, high quality and suitable for the central valley climate.
- f. Provide necessary irrigation to all plants.



1. House Kitchen, 555 Capitol Mall, Sacramento  
2. Esquire Grill, 1213 K St. Sacramento  
3. The Urban Blossom, Dallas, Texas

# Exterior Fencing and Furniture for Outdoor Seating

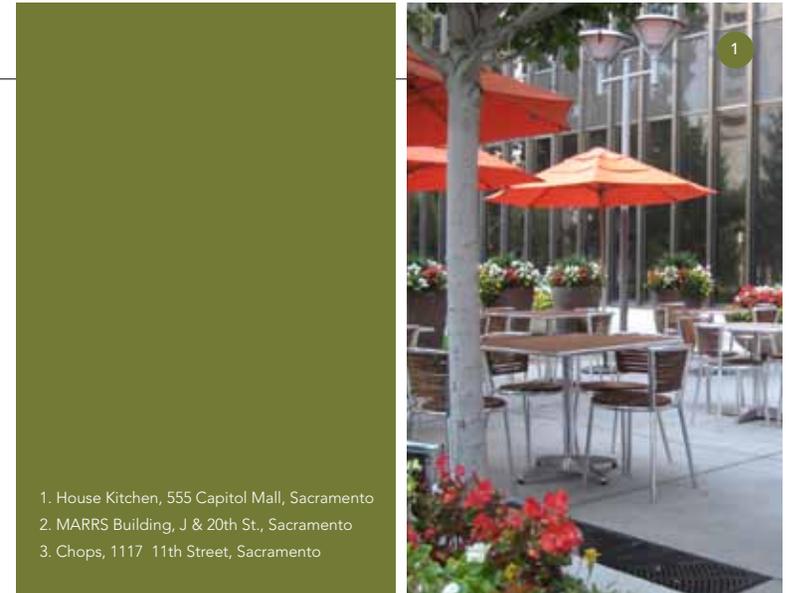
## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Outdoor dining is encouraged in the Central City to activate the street and offer patrons an option of sitting in an open air environment while dining. While the City encourages outdoor dining arrangements, operators need to be mindful of the safety and flow of pedestrian traffic and the visual appropriateness.

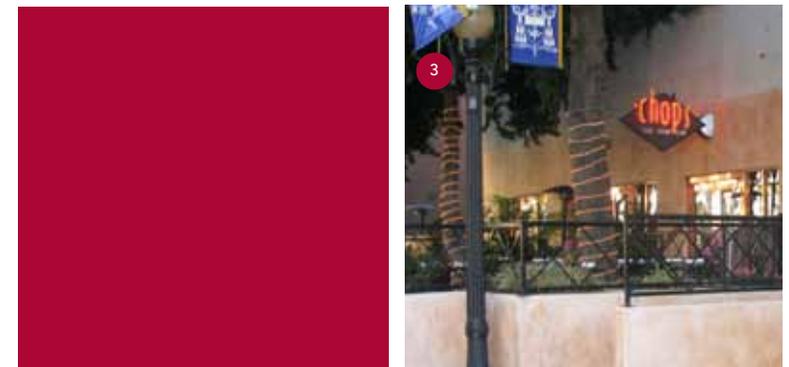
## GUIDELINES

- a. Sidewalk cafes are encouraged and enliven the streetscape. Sidewalk cafes are permitted on any public right-of way subject to review and approval by the Planning director. Since a sidewalk café is within the sidewalk right-of-way, a revocable Encroachment Permit through the Department of Transportation will be required. A building permit will be required and you may also need an electrical permit.
- b. A minimum six foot clear zone between the outside edge of any sidewalk café and any fixed element within the sidewalk is necessary to accommodate accessibility requirements, account for pedestrian traffic, and access to vehicles adjacent to the curb.
- c. The sidewalk area can be used for outdoor dining seating areas. Moveable tables and chairs made of high quality materials are encouraged unless otherwise approved by the Planning Director in concurrence with other city departments. Outdoor seating can only be used in conjunction with businesses that serve food. Decorative accent lighting may be incorporated into the awning, canopy or fencing.

The Department of Transportation will circulate the revocable Encroachment Permit to other department for approval. For more information or questions, contact the Community Development Department at (916) 808-5011 or the Department of Transportation at [916] 808-5011. Design review will need to approve fencing, furniture, and other features in outdoor cafes.



1. House Kitchen, 555 Capitol Mall, Sacramento  
2. MARRS Building, J & 20th St., Sacramento  
3. Chops, 1117 11th Street, Sacramento



## Outdoor Dining and Fencing

