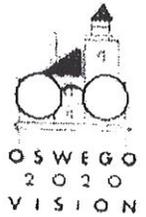


City of Oswego Downtown Design Guidelines



*"It is the policy of the City to have a vibrant and visually appealing Main Street/Downtown Area."
~ City of Oswego 2020 Vision Plan, 2003*

These guidelines shall apply to all development activity in the B2 and B3 zones located in the Oswego downtown district as defined by the Future Land Use Map in the *City of Oswego 2020 Vision Plan*. New construction, rehabilitation and renovation plans shall be reviewed by a Historical Review Committee (HRC). The HRC will render an advisory opinion to the Planning Board as to their review of the plans. The HRC shall be appointed by the Mayor.

I. Building Scale & Location

- a. New construction of party wall buildings shall be two stories or greater in height and no greater than five stories.
 - (i) Exceptions may be considered to reflect historical adjacent properties.
- b. Where party wall buildings currently exist, or where new party wall buildings are constructed, the new building shall maintain a continuous wall at the building line and at the street wall.
 - (i) Partial set backs of the street wall will be considered where the setback area is used as a public plaza or pedestrian amenities such as recessed entries or chamfered corners.
 - (ii) Entry points shall be located to afford direct access from the sidewalk. Corner buildings may have two separate entry points or a single entry point at the corner.
- c. At party wall buildings, side setbacks of zero are recommended.
 - (i) Narrow side setbacks are prohibited and excessively large setbacks (greater than thirty feet) are not encouraged, but will be considered when provided for outdoor public or semi-public spaces.
- d. Party wall buildings shall be related in height, incorporate storefront windows; doors at the street level, and simple historically appropriate rooflines.
- e. Free standing buildings - It is the intent of these Guidelines that free standing buildings compliment, rather than detract from the streetscape in as much as all of the requirements described in the Guidelines should apply to free standing structures.
 - (i) New construction shall be located and oriented in a manner that conforms to the other buildings on a given street.
 - (ii) The scale, rhythm, and massing of new construction shall be compatible with other buildings in the Downtown District.
 - (iii) The materials and detailing used for new construction shall be compatible with those of corresponding historic properties and their features.
- f. "Trademark Buildings," which identify the Owner or occupant by a trademarked architectural style, are prohibited. These franchised buildings shall be designed to harmonize with the Downtown historic style.

II. Materials and Detailing

- a. Building facades shall reflect the nineteenth century style of the Downtown District.
- b. Wherever possible as much of the original detail and material should be retained and preserved. The distinguishing original qualities or historic character of a building shall be maintained and treated with sensitivity.
- c. All new construction or remodeling should utilize historically appropriate materials such as brick, stone, and wood to reflect the surrounding nineteenth century buildings.
 - (i) Tile, stucco, metal wall panels and other materials may be used in a limited manner if they are compatible with a buildings original design and consistent with the Guidelines.
 - (ii) All exterior wood should be finished using paint. Cladding or covering traditional details with metal is not encouraged.
- d. All sides of the building shall be architecturally consistent. Building materials, architectural style and exterior detailing shall reflect the main facade of the building.
- e. Parapets, cornices and roof overhangs are encouraged in order to reinforce the line of the building wall and to maintain the nineteenth century character of the Downtown District.

III. Windows

- a. Existing windows shall not be covered or changed in size unless the proposed change is part of an effort to restore the original appearance of the building.
- b. Windows and doors should be balanced in their placement on building facades and consistent in style across the entire exterior of the building.
 - (i) All exterior walls shall have windows facing public areas as well as streets and parking lots.
 - (ii) The primary front facing facade shall incorporate no less than 15 percent and no more than 35 percent glass area.
 - (iii) Glass area per floor should be greater at the ground floor than at upper floors to encourage a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.
 - (iv) Window proportions should be vertical in orientation ranging from a width-to-height ratio of 1:2 to 3:5.
 - (1) Windows wider than 3 feet are discouraged, except for entry level commercial uses.
 - (2) Exceptions will be considered if historically appropriate.
- c. Window materials shall be either heavy commercial wood systems with a painted finish or heavy commercial wood windows with an aluminum cladding.
 - (i) Though wood window systems are preferred, aluminum storefront products may be used at first floor street level locations if integral aluminum moldings,

trim, and panning are used to imply historic detailing.

ii) Aluminum clad windows and aluminum storefront systems shall be finished in the manufacturer's applied paint finish. Anodized aluminum finishes are not encouraged.

d. Window operation shall be single-hung, double-hung, casement, or fixed.

(i) Sliding or folding doors/windows at entry levels will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

e. Window glazing shall be historically appropriate and shall not be heavily tinted or finished with an inappropriate reflective surface.

IV. Doors

a. Primary entrance doors shall be full glass to allow for visual access into the building.

(i) The use of wood doors with a stained or painted finish is encouraged.

(ii) A ten to twelve-inch bottom rail is recommended at entrance doors.

(iii) Door hardware style and finish shall be in keeping with the architectural character of the building.

b. Secondary or utility doors shall have an architecturally appropriate amount of glazing.

c. Aluminum stile and rail doors are permitted with either medium or wide stile widths.

(i) Aluminum doors shall be finished in the manufacturer's applied paint finish. Anodized aluminum finishes are not encouraged.

V. Signage

a. Signs shall have City of Oswego permits and comply with City Code.

b. Appropriately designed signs should be simple, identify the business clearly, enhance the building on which it is located, and make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and neighborhood.

c. Signage shall be located to create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Methods to be encouraged are flush attachment to the facade of the building or painted on the interior of the first floor facade glass.

d. Signs shall be located to communicate effectively and create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Signs shall be appropriately proportioned and placed in a logical manner between floor levels or between windows without obscuring key elements of the building. Signs shall be placed in a manner that is respectful of the architectural elements of the building.

e. Signs painted on the interior of storefront windows or doors shall not obstruct visual access to the interior of the building.

- (i) Lettering shall not be more than six (6) inches in height.
- (ii) The combined coverage of lettering and graphics shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the total window surface.

f. Signs should incorporate appropriate lighting while avoiding the creation of light pollution. Shielded and direct light is recommended with down lighting being the preferred technique.

g. Neon tube lighting and box type signs with internal illumination are not desirable.

h. Sign materials and colors shall be subdued and traditional to reflect those that would historically be found in the Downtown District.

VI. Awnings

a. Awning materials shall be heavy-duty canvas. Material colors and patterns shall be subdued and traditional to reflect those that would historically be found in the Downtown District. Text and/or graphics shall be limited to the valance portion of the awning.

b. Awning construction and shape shall be historically appropriate, reflect the opening over which they are installed, and be in keeping with the architectural style of the building. Operable awnings are encouraged.

c. Awnings should be lit from above with appropriately styled light fixtures. Backlighting of awnings is not allowed.

VII. Parking

a. Parking lots shall be laid out in a way that minimizes visibility from existing streets.

b. Parking lots shall be located to the rear of the buildings or, if that is not possible, to the side with the lot screened from the street. The screen shall be buffered from the sidewalk using a combination of appropriately scaled site walls, fencing, and/or landscaping.

c. Parking lots shall include green space with trees and/or shrubs appropriate to the space.

d. Parking lots shall be appropriately sized. Large open lots negatively impact the continuity and scale of the pedestrian environment.

e. Pedestrian access should be clearly designated. Safe and continuous pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle paths should be incorporated.

f. Where possible, adjoining parking lots should be connected to each other and to the side streets.

g. Connected rear lots are encouraged because they are convenient and reduce congestion on the primary street network.

h. Service alleys are encouraged because they allow access to the rear of properties.

i. Parking lots on corners are not allowed.

j. Parking lots in front of buildings are not allowed.

k. Structures designed to accommodate parking shall include facades that reflect the historical fabric of the Downtown District. Parking structures shall incorporate retail use at the street level.

VIII. Colors

a. Exterior colors shall be consistent, complimentary, and harmonious with the overall scheme established in the Downtown District and reflect a nineteenth century historical palette.

b. Color palettes recommended for use are available from the HRC through the City of Oswego – Engineer's Office.

IX. Waterfront

a. Pedestrian access to Oswego waterfront amenities is to be provided wherever possible. Orientation to the river shall be encouraged for properties situated to take advantage of views through rear patios, balconies and other venues facing the Oswego waterfront.

X. Enforcement

a. New construction shall conform to New York State Building Code and the City of Oswego Zoning Ordinance.

b. New construction shall be reviewed by HRC for advisory opinion.

c. Exterior renovations of downtown buildings must be reviewed by HRC.

d. Applications for HRC review shall include a color rendering and samples or descriptions of materials to be used.

XI. Historical Review Committee

a. The committee shall consist of five members appointed by the Mayor. All members shall have a known interest in historic and architectural preservation within the City of Oswego.

b. Committee members shall serve for a term of four years, with the exception of the

initial term of one of the five members, which shall be one year, one, which shall be two years, and one, which shall be three years.

c. The Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman shall be elected by and from the members of the Committee.

d. The powers of the Historical Review Committee shall include:

- (i) The review of new construction, renovation and rehabilitation projects located in the B2 and B3 zoning districts located within Oswego's Downtown area in accordance with the City of Oswego 2020 Vision Plan as adopted by the Oswego Common Council;
- (ii) Employment of professionals as necessary for National Register listed buildings or new construction projects or rehabilitation projects costing over \$10,000 to carry out the review duties of the Committee with costs of professional services to be funded through proposal review fees.
- (iii) Adoption of criteria for the clear identification of significant historic, architectural, and cultural elements and for the specifications of building and site plan elements that are consistent with the City of Oswego Downtown Design Guidelines;
- (iv) Recommending acquisition of a landmark structure by the City government where its preservation is essential to the character of the City and where private preservation is not feasible; and
- (v) Providing the City of Oswego Planning Board an advisory opinion prior to issuance of Building Permits for projects located in B2 or B3 zoning districts located in the Downtown area defined in the Future Land Use Map of the Oswego 2020 Vision Plan.

XII. The Committee may meet at least monthly as necessary, but meetings may be held at any time on the written request of any two of the Committee members or on the call of the Chairman or the Mayor.

XIII. A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of three of the Historical Review Committee's members, but not less than a majority of the full-authorized membership may issue an advisory opinion.

The City of Oswego Downtown Design Guidelines were adopted by the City of Oswego Common Council by Resolution 154 on April 9, 2007, revised by the City of Oswego Common Council by Resolution 201 on May 27, 2008, and Resolution 187 on May 11, 2009.