

3.4.2.2. New Commercial Construction

Fredericksburg's Commercial Viability

Fredericksburg boasts one of the most consistently active and viable commercial Main Streets in Texas. The physical characteristics of Fredericksburg's commercial district substantially contribute to its success. The uniform front setbacks along the sidewalk help create a consistent look and feel that draws pedestrians along the street. The canopies and awnings create shade and protection from the rain, which helps keep pedestrians comfortable despite the weather. These standards recommend and encourage maintaining these features, in keeping with the City of Fredericksburg's commitment to keeping its Main Street commercially vital.

Use of Standards

- (a) Follow commercial guidelines for all new construction within historically commercial sections of the historic district, regardless of use or zoning. (Refer to map in *Appendix C*.)

Preservation

- (b) Avoid demolishing a historic building to accommodate new construction; the limited circumstances where demolition is permitted are set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance in *Appendix G*.
- (c) Avoid relocating a designated historic building to construct a new building.
- (d) Protect significant streetscape features from damage during construction, as well as delayed damage due to root compaction or chemical spills during construction activities.

Orientation

- (e) New construction must have the same street-front orientation as the contributing buildings on the same block.

Setbacks

- (f) Appropriate setbacks must be consistent with the surrounding context: on the historic Main Street east of Milam Street, the front wall must be flush with the property line; new commercial

resources within the historic district west of Milam Street must have front setbacks within 5 feet of the average setbacks of contributing buildings on the same block, which may allow setbacks that are deeper or shallower than the base zoning. (Refer to the map in *Appendix C*.)

Height and Massing

- (g) Appropriate heights for new infill construction depend on the surrounding context: for the front 15 feet of the building, the height must be within 5 feet of the average height of contributing buildings on block; after a stepback of 15 feet, the building's height can rise to a maximum of 28 feet; after a stepback of 30 feet, the building can rise to a maximum of 30 feet (if allowed by zoning).
- (h) New construction must have floor-to-floor heights similar to those of contributing buildings on the block.

Design

- (i) Design new buildings to be subordinate and not visually overpower the surrounding contributing historic buildings.
- (j) Design new buildings to be compatible with the surrounding contributing historic buildings but differentiated enough so that they communicate their actual date of construction and do not create a false sense of history.
- (k) Balance compatibility with differentiation among the following aspects of the new building's design: roof form, footprint shape, fenestration pattern (wall versus window, solid versus void), materials, stylistic elements, and color palette.
- (l) Avoid using a historical style not found among the contributing primary buildings in the district.
- (m) Contemporary architectural styles are appropriate provided that compatibility is retained among other building aspects; for example, a new building may have contemporary materials, fenestration pattern, and style, if it maintains a compatible

footprint shape, roof form, and color palette (as shown in *Appendix G.6*).

- (n) Exterior walls, roof features, and window and door openings must authentically communicate the structural system of the new construction. Application of false structural elements is prohibited. The size and placement of window and door openings must accurately correspond to the bays of the structural system. Lintels should reflect the structural system.
- (o) Revealing structural elements—like true load-bearing posts and beams—is encouraged.
- (p) Canopies are recommended on new primary commercial buildings where possible; recommended dimensions are at least 6 feet deep, extending across at least 25 percent of the front façade.

Constructing Canopies and Awnings along the State Highway Right-of-Way

Because Fredericksburg’s Main Street is also designated as State Highway 290, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) monitors construction within the airspace of the highway right-of-way. Some canopies and awnings potentially could extend into the right-of-way. TxDOT may grant easements for constructing canopies or awnings in the right-of-way on a case-by-case basis, for a fee. Contact the City of Fredericksburg Historic Preservation Officer for details.

Materials

- (q) The palette of materials for new commercial construction should not use more than two different primary siding materials; a third material may be added if used for trim only.
- (r) Modern materials, such as steel and glass, are appropriate for new commercial buildings, provided that the overall design balances compatibility with differentiation.
- (s) On Main Street, new primary commercial buildings should be masonry, concrete-frame, or steel-frame; wood-frame construction

is not appropriate for primary commercial buildings. (See map in *Appendix C*.)

- (t) Storefronts on the ground floors of primary commercial buildings must devote at least 50 percent of the surface area to glass.

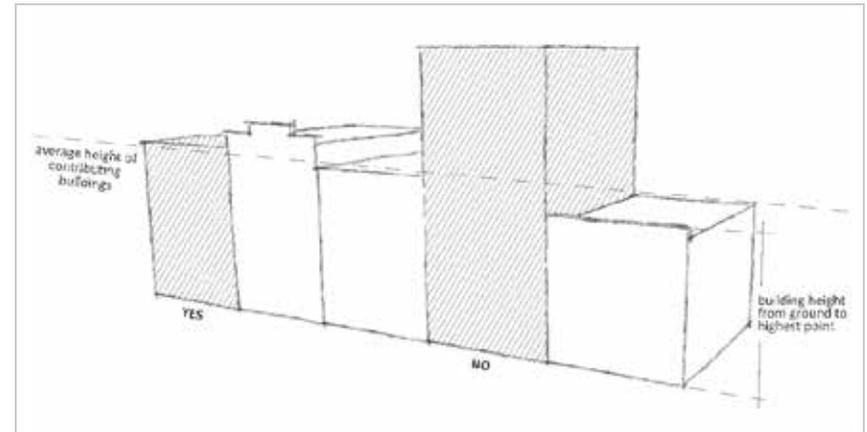


Figure 3-62. Sketch depicting use of the average building height of contributing buildings on the block to determine the appropriate height for the front of a new commercial building. Note that additional height may be appropriate if it is set back from the front wall per standard 3.4.2.2(f–g). Source: HHM archives.

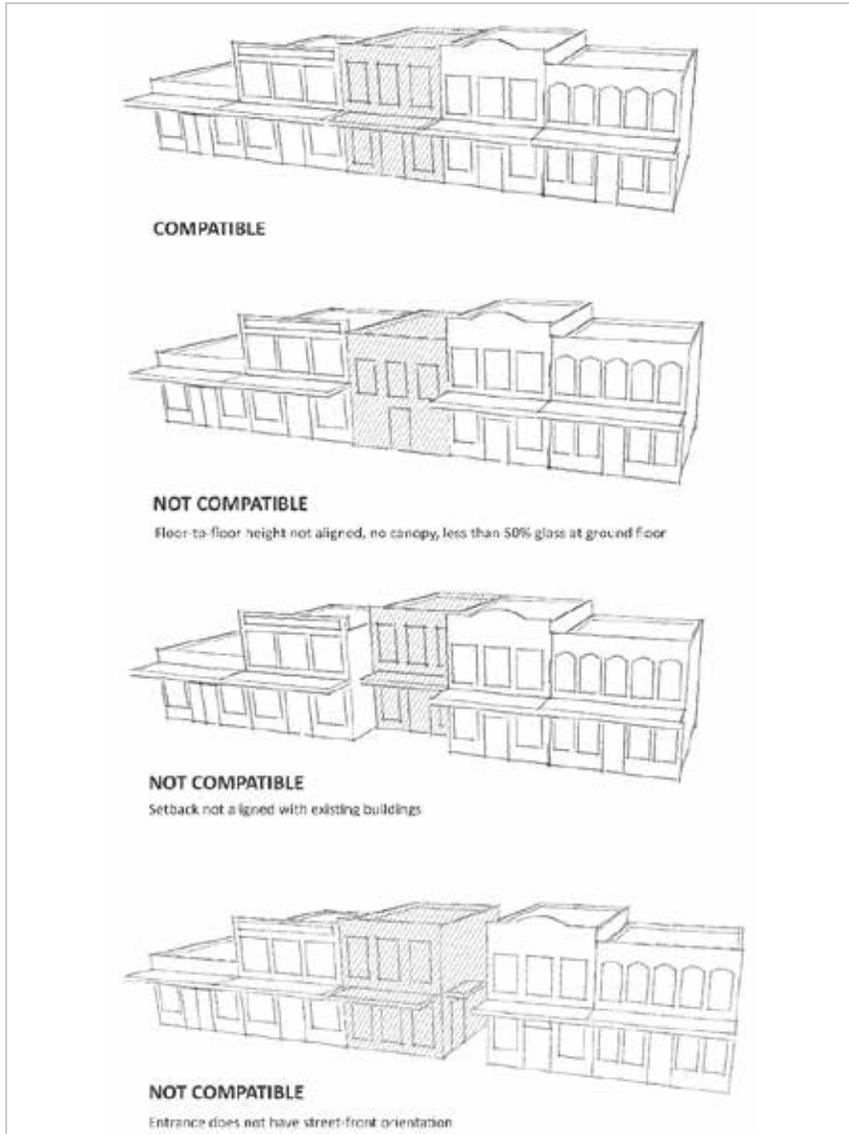


Figure 3-63. Illustration of appropriate and inappropriate setbacks for new commercial construction on the portion of Main Street within the Fredericksburg Historic District and east of Milam Street. Source: HHM archives.



Figure 3-64. Example of an **appropriate** new commercial infill building at 127 E. Main Street, constructed with the front wall flush to the sidewalk – consistent with the adjacent historic buildings on Main Street east of Milam Street. Source: City of Fredericksburg Historic Preservation Office.



Figure 3-65. Example of an **inappropriate** ca. 1980 commercial building at 116 E. Main Street; its setback from the sidewalk interrupts the consistent line of storefronts. Source: HHM 2002 survey.