

DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR KING'S HIGHWAY BUILDINGS BOROUGH OF HADDONFIELD, NEW JERSEY

A Supplement to the Downtown Master Plan and Zoning Framework



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Introduction

This Design Guidance is focused on the specific topics identified through the Visioning Process as essential to the realizing the hoped-for outcomes for Kings Highway, which are articulated in the Downtown Area Master Plan.

This design guidance can serve as a reference as Borough boards and commissions evaluate the design of new buildings, new additions and buildings being renovated along Kings Highway. Additional design guidelines and regulations for preservation of historic buildings are located in Article VI Historic District of the Haddonfield Land Development regulations. This guidance expands and complements the Historic District criteria, in order to create a single coordinated vision for the character and quality of King's Highway.

Goals

The primary goals of this design guidance are to support the larger goals of the overall Downtown Area Master Plan, in particular:

- Maintain and enhance the liveliness, activity and success of the Downtown Area. This means allowing for a healthy mix of housing, shopping, offices and civic uses downtown.
- Conserve and enhance the features of downtown's core, King's Highway. This means emphasizing ground-level retail, providing for a variety of uses on upper levels, and maintaining careful controls on the scale, articulation and architectural expression of new or renovated buildings so they fit into the historic context.
- Establish development regulations and design guidelines that ensure more predictability about the form and character of alterations and new construction.
- Encourage development of housing in all ranges, and especially provide for the development of housing for low-income households, middle-income households and seniors.

This Design Guidance meant to be used by both the Planning Board and the Historic Preservation Commission when they are evaluating proposals for new construction or alterations along King's Highway, including in the historic district. The Guidance is intended to supplement the design framework provided in the Land Development Ordinance, in sections that concern zoning districts and historic preservation.

This document supplements, and should be read in conjunction with, the proposed Downtown Element of the Haddonfield Master Plan and the Downtown Zoning Framework.

Topics Covered

- A. Scale and Rhythm
- B. Height and Setback
- C. Fronts and Sides
- D. Materials
- E. Details
- F. Storefronts
- G. Windows

A. Scale and Rhythm

Precedents, Objectives:

The small-scale, humane quality of King's Highway's buildings is the fundamental basis of its appearance and its civic and commercial success. There are many characteristics and details that have established this quality, but the two of most important elements are the *variety in the heights of the buildings* and the complementary *consistency of their widths*.

There are a few existing three-story buildings, several two-story buildings, and a few very modern one-story buildings, thus creating the great variety in the downtown skyline.

However, the horizontal rhythms of the King's Highway buildings are remarkably consistent – in contrast to the varying building heights. Typical building façades (or portions of facades) are generally about the width of a single store, or the width permitted by typical historic wood structures. The consistent and repeated dimension that results from this condition forms a brilliant partnership with the varieties described in the various sections of these Guidelines.

A third consistent rhythm overlays both the typical building width and the varied skyline: all of the very good facades along King's Highway include *architectural details that distinguish the ground floor retail areas from the upper floor living and working areas*. This, when combined with the two larger scale characteristics of varied height and consistent width, creates the overall building blocks for all new building designs here. This is a very good design idea that has been used successfully in some existing buildings.

In addition to those basic formal characteristics is a fourth quality that relates to the sides of buildings. Most buildings, in following the consistent width rhythm, extend back along walkways and north-south streets, and therefore include side facades that are much longer than the facades facing King's Highway. This longer dimension of the historic buildings is often about 100 feet, and reflects the normal nature of building the historic structure, and the needs of the businesses that they house.

Design Guidance:

1. All new structures facing King's Highway should be made of building forms that are 25-feet to 30-feet wide, to reflect the actual structural and functional dimensions of the spaces within, and to be compatible with the many older buildings that already exist here. This consistent dimension is especially important in any second and third floors that might be developed, so that the height and cornice lines can be varied by building form, and not only by detail.
2. The distinctions between the 25-feet to 30-feet wide architectural elements can be made with changes in materials, columns, piers, etc. On upper floors, in order to establish the skyline variety, 25 feet to 30 feet width forms and bays should be separated by significant setbacks – for example, by outdoor decks. Slight indentations and projections in the façade wall do not accomplish the variations and small-scale qualities that are the substance of the character of King's Highway.

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3. The third rhythm – the distinction between the ground floor and upper floors – should be created by the presence of cornices, trim and the differences between the storefronts and the upper floors.

The Colonial detail of a small shed roof hanging over the sidewalk is *not* necessary to make this distinction, nor desired. Indeed, these roofs are often applied to buildings of non-Colonial eras, are larger in dimension and scale than cornices and trim, and are in most cases inappropriate. Awnings – see below – create the same shelter, and add more small-scale variety.

4. The fourth rhythm that can be reflected in new structures is the side or north- or south-facing façade. For these walls, façade elements can be as long as 100 feet, but no greater – in contrast to the 25-foot to 30-foot dimensions facing King's Highway. This dimension applies to all three permitted floors, and must be made evident in buildings that are longer than 100 feet by significant massing and architectural changes: an open space or courtyard between buildings, in combination with lower roofs, roof variations, setbacks, entrances, etc.

B. Heights and Setbacks

Precedents, Objectives

The variety of heights, cornice details and roof forms is one of the three dominant visual characteristics of building form that are described in *Scale and Rhythm*, above. This variety must be preserved if new structures are built.

In considering this variety, note that the only three-story buildings built before 2006 are late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century structures, and that the balance of the buildings constructed since then are primarily two stories, plus a few modern one-story buildings.

The proposed zoning framework recommends that, while the maximum overall height remains at three stories, the maximum height along the front and side sidewalks is two stories, with the third-story portions set back. The combination of the lower front façade height, with setbacks, will help retain the small-scale quality of the street that is so cherished.

The overall intention and result of this guideline is that all buildings – especially wide buildings – should appear as if they were made of several small, 25 foot- to 30 foot-wide, structures, reflecting the historical development pattern along Kings Highway. Long facades and long cornices, are not acceptable facing King's Highway.

Design Guidance:

1. In order to create the varied skyline, third-floor facades should be set back at least 15 feet from the second-floor façade, as the proposed zoning framework recommends. Third floors should also reflect the 25 foot- to 30 foot rhythms recommended for the first two stories of buildings (see *Scale and Rhythm*) and include bays and setbacks to accomplish this.

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2. The varied skyline should apply even if two adjacent buildings facing King's Highway are of the same number of stories. It is not desirable to align roof edges between buildings and to create long uninterrupted cornices between buildings.

3. Note also that the longer permitted facades, on the N-S sides of buildings, should also be limited to two stories facing the street or public walkway, with third floors set back at least 10 feet. The 100-foot maximum length of side façade elements, as described in *Scale and Rhythm*, applies to all floors, including the third.

C. Fronts and Sides

Design Guidance for Front Walls:

All buildings must include front doors and windows facing the street: no blank walls permitted facing the street.

Every street-facing ground-level business or residential unit should have a separate entry.

If retail space is included on the ground floor of any building, the Guidance for the facades of the King's Highway District will apply.

The minimum area of window and door openings should be at least 30 of the area of the wall, in some cases more. Blank walls, on any floor, are not acceptable.

Design Guidance for All Walls:

The minimum area of window and door openings should be at least 30 of the area of the wall, in some cases more. Blank walls, on any floor, are not acceptable.

Side walls that face public ways, or which are set back a minimum of five feet from a lot line, should have windows and can have doors.

D. Building Façade Materials

Precedents, Objectives:

There is considerable variety in the façade materials that now exist. The common materials that have been used over the years are horizontal painted wood siding, bricks and stucco. Stone has only been used as trim. This variety, too, is one of the important contributors to the great, small-scale, beautiful, quality of King's Highway.

Design Guidance:

1. New additions and renovations should reflect the precedents along King's Highway, and therefore should consider that same palette range: bricks, painted wood siding (or "Hardi Plank," a reinforced concrete version of wood siding that is acceptable in historic preservation), stucco and finished stone (primarily as trim on walls and in details).

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2. Unpainted wood and metal are not appropriate along Kings Highway. “Fake” materials such as aluminum and vinyl siding, non-cementitious stucco, brick face, fake stones, etc. are not acceptable.
3. The quality of King’s Highway façade designs should apply to the side streets and walkways, also, so that these acceptable materials are recommended for those walls.

E. Building Details

Objectives:

The quality of the design of details makes downtown Haddonfield a great pedestrian place. Poorly-made windows, lack of trim and plastic awnings, for example, will diminish the quality of downtown, even if the size, shape and uses of buildings are acceptable. As stated above in “Building Façade Materials,” Haddonfield is a real place of great quality, so the small details of all buildings must be of the highest quality.

Design Guidance:

1. Surfaces. Unpainted wood or metal surfaces are not used in the historic buildings along King’s Highway; this precedent must be followed in all these details:
 - a. Windows (primarily located on upper floors): Painted wood or painted metal.
 - b. Doors: Shop doors should be significantly transparent, but a great variety of types are acceptable. All trim and frames should be painted. Handle details can and should add ornament, grace, and a small-scale quality to all entrances.
 - c. All wood surfaces should be painted.
2. Trim. Trim should be incorporated around doors, storefronts and upper-floor windows; the existing buildings along King’s Highway include this type of detail, which links the openings to the walls around them. All trim should be painted wood or painted metal. The trim can be simple or complex in form and detail, but the proportions and widths of the elements should be significant to that the trim and frame are very visible; this is not the place for a minimalist modern aesthetic.
3. Cornices. The cornices and roof edges on the best buildings of downtown are complex and richly ornamented. No matter the exact style, this detail design complexity is Haddonfield’s way of linking the building to the sky; all new renovations and structures should include such an ornamental character of detail throughout.
4. Awnings. Sloped fabric-like awnings are most common on Kings Highway. A variety of colors and designs (stripes, patterns, letters, symbols) is desirable. Do not permit rounded plastic “waterfall” awnings, that show the dirt and that are customarily used to act as signs in low-quality shopping places. Metal awnings have been used in many places to great affect; see the “Lovell Shoes” sign now on King’s Highway as a unique example of contemporary design, a design that adds to the richness and small-scale quality of the Highway.

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5. Roof forms. The existing pattern of buildings shows many roof shapes and configurations: slope with the peak parallel to the Highway; slope with the peak perpendicular to the Highway, flat, and — in a few cases — a one-way slope. Although mansard-type roofs have been used in a few places, they should only be acceptable if they are used in the historic nineteenth-century way, so that they include dormer windows and basically surround all of the visible building facades.

Any new structures should reflect the expected variety, in that no one roof — and therefore no one cornice — covers any building that is wider than the 25- to 30-foot dimensions described in the *Scale and Rhythm* section of this Design Guidance memo. It is also possible to use more than one roof type on wider buildings that include more than one 25- to 30-foot building form.

F. Storefronts

Precedents, Objectives:

The traditional, and functional, characteristic of storefronts is the easy visibility into the interior of the shop, allowing for the visibility of the shop's wares. Buildings must be open to show that business is thriving in Haddonfield. This characteristic is true on the best storefronts of King's Highway, and so should continue in any new storefronts that are created. The inevitable result will be a varied pedestrian experience that draws the shopper along the street and into the store.

While open and transparent, the good storefronts here also are made of a rich complexity of detail and trim. This quality gives the walking shopper even more to look at and enjoy.

Experience on other successful walkable shopping streets is that, if lights remain on in the storefront windows at night, the streets are far safer and more active. It is also good salesmanship, allowing the evening pedestrian can see what is being sold, even if the store is closed. And, the police can see what is happening inside the closed shop.

Design Guidance:

(Note: See the regulations in the draft zoning guidance, King's Highway District, regarding minimum window sizes, locations of storefronts, etc.)

1. Transparency. All ground-floor windows must be made of clear glass, with no pulled curtains and no covering by large temporary signs. This requirement applies to ground-floor offices as well as shops. (See *Chapter 191, Signs*, of the Haddonfield Code, regarding the temporary sign regulations.)

2. Styles. Two types of storefront designs have been designed for King's Highway: large plate-glass windows, as used in Victorian and modern storefronts, and smaller glass panes that are similar to those used in Colonial shops. Both types have been designed well on King's Highway; both are acceptable in new storefronts. However, the small-paned Colonial type of window is not as transparent as good retailing would expect. The smaller panes, if

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desired, should be used sparingly; see the combination of large glass and small panes in the Benjamin Lovell Shoe store as one example of detail richness combined with openness.

3. Night Lighting. The lighting systems in the storefronts, and perhaps in the stores themselves, should be designed to have some lights remain on throughout the evening, until about midnight. Various details have been developed for this lighting, including the use of color-corrected fluorescent lights for the hours when the shop is closed, and that use less energy.

4. Security Grates. If security grates are installed (note that they are discouraged, since they imply that crime is a significant problem, and are therefore not good salesmanship), they must be of the fully transparent type, made of bars rather than metal panels. They also must be mounted inside behind the storefront so that the displays (and the store interiors) are visible from the sidewalk.

G. Windows

Precedents, Objectives:

There is a great collection of actively-used upper floors, a characteristic that does not exist along many small-town shopping streets. This asset is reflected in the many sizes and proportions of windows in those upper floors.

The typical, well-proportioned, upper-floor window is placed within frames set into the façade wall; glass is not the dominant material here, in contrast to the ground floor storefronts. The historic – late eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century building windows include small panes of glass; some have shutters.

Design Guidance:

1. Upper floors should always include real windows, facing both Kings Highway, cross streets and public rights of way or easements leading perpendicular to Kings Highway. and not be blank walls or fake windows.
2. Upper floor walls should incorporate windows or doors to balconies; approximately 30 to 40 percent of the façade should be given over to windows and doors, depending on the use. This will maintain the solidity of the wall, but at the same time create a sense of openness to the street below.
3. Windows must be made of clear glass and painted wood or vinyl, and must include either true divided light or simulated divided light mullions. Snap-in mullions are not acceptable.
4. If shutters are desired, they must be of a proportion that permits them to be closed and to fully cover the window. Fake shutters, screwed to the wall, are not acceptable either.

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