

# **BOW ISLAND** **FACADE GUIDELINES**

JULY 2010



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PREPARED FOR  
BOW ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Funded By:  
The Community Adjustment Fund  
and  
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## INTRODUCTION

One of the primary aims of this guideline is to promote Bow Island as an agricultural and light industrial based prairie town. A peaceful stop for travellers in a community proud of its "small town" characteristics. Restful and serene, with its vast flat landscapes and "laid-back" residents.

The façade guidelines will address design and development recommendations that would identify and enhance the character of this rural Prairie town. It will guide the design of revitalisation, additions, renovations, and development of buildings and public spaces improving both the function and image of Bow Island.

The guideline will:

- Clarify expectations for quality design
- Offer ideas to property owners for upgrading their buildings
- Provide a method to help ensure objectivity, consistency, and predictability in the design review process; and,
- Promote a clearer identity and character for the Town of Bow Island.

These guidelines do not seek to impose an overriding style or artificial theme. They wish to promote positive design characteristics throughout that will help Bow Island to establish and maintain its unique image. This guideline consists of practical guidelines for construction and rehabilitation of buildings and storefronts, as well as the sites upon which they are located. The guidelines aim to engender creative approaches and solutions within a workable framework, rather than laying out detailed and rigid standards. It is not the intent of this guideline to eliminate design freedom or discourage innovation and creativity. The guidelines in this study should be interpreted with some flexibility in their application.

These guidelines present minimum design criteria for the achievement of functional and attractive developments that fit within the character for the area. In general, the guidelines are intended to ensure that new or modified development preserves, or improves the positive characteristics of Bow Island's image, while avoiding negative impacts. Because these are minimum guidelines, and each project is different, they do not contain all the possible techniques for achieving the desired quality of development. Situations

may arise that are not covered by the guidelines; therefore, project designers and plan reviews are encouraged to follow the "principles" that the guidelines represent and to use creativity in meeting the expectations for quality development as expressed by this guideline.

*(Western) Prairie Style* - (Using concepts developed by Frank Lloyd Wright.)

Prairie buildings are characterized by low, horizontal lines that were meant to blend with the flat landscape around them.

Vast Prairie landscapes are reflected and complimented by deliberately blurring the distinction between buildings and the surrounding terrain. The buildings appear to be wedded to their sites and embracing the earth.

Typical elements being low, horizontal roof planes, flow and openness of façades, horizontal lines, elements and patterns with elongation of features.

Although a typically "retro-western" theme would be easy to implement, the design concepts should incorporate a more contemporary image that reflects Bow Island history, but more importantly, promote the image of a Town with continued growth and development.

## *Bow Island*

The name Bow Island may invoke images of a landscape with major water features. However, it is a prairie town, whose main trade is agricultural based with a growing processing and manufacturing industry. Bow Island's beautiful prairie landscapes and relaxed setting are the main feature to promote, without imposing an artificial character to the town.

The existing buildings are somewhat generic and industrialized. It is this disparity between the existing built environment and the surrounding prairie terrain that need to be enhanced and challenged. The contrast of incorporating contemporary elements with traditional prairie design and materials will allow for this to happen.

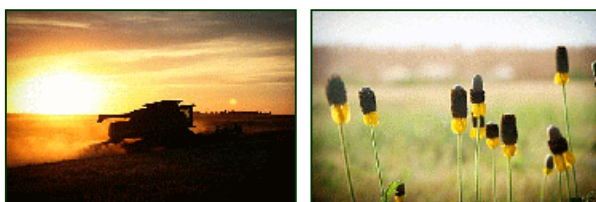


## Architectural Styles

A predetermined architectural theme, or “gimmick-based” concept is neither required nor suggested for the buildings and site development of Bow Island. Instead there are a number of ways in which architectural styles; forms and images, may be implemented to achieve cohesive design with characteristics of the community that is Bow Island.

## Contrast/Distinction

- Earth tones (prairie colours). Avoid primary and secondary colours and pastel versions of these colours.
- Base colours: Earthtone browns, greens and blues. Neutral whites and tans.
- Accent colours as they occur in nature: Deep sunset reds, oranges and golds. Deep greens and blues.



- Colour schemes could reflect seasonal contrasts.



## Cladding Materials

Materials historically familiar to the area are encouraged.

- Timber board and panel look with battens and reveals
- Horizontal “wood-look” siding or panels
- Brick

Contrast in accent material to complement the to aforementioned materials.

- Metal – roofing and cladding
- Stucco

## Roofs

- Low slope roofs using waterproof membrane systems, low-pitched shingles or standing seam metal
- False front parapets, canopies or bold fascias on flat roofs to accent horizontal lines

## Architectural Details

- Horizontal elements, patterns and textures (uniform window height/widths/spacings).
- Awnings, canopies and deep overhangs (shadow lines).
- Low planter walls and railings.
- Open social areas
- Warm lighting – efficient, task specific, safe but not intrusive to adjacent properties or upper skies.
- Enhance and identify entries. (Commercial versus residential. Public access versus privacy and security).
- Corner buildings should promote street entrances.
- Large elongated windows on commercial facades
- Plazas and courtyards are encouraged to provide relief from long façades and provide pedestrian gathering places.

- Site furniture. Benches, tables etc. to promote relaxation and social interactions.
- Trash and recycling containers should be enclosed in horizontal “wood-look” siding enclosures or materials similar to adjacent building.
- Decorative paving promoting safety, incorporating the horizontal theme, and accenting entry points or street crossings.
- Lighting which is minimized and controlled to be task specific and promote security and safety.
- Signage should be also be controlled and minimized. Good design discourages garish, oversized signs with too much, unnecessary information.

## Signage

- Front lit and downward (Avoid backlit electric signs)
- Hanging signs when pedestrian orientated
- Wall and freestanding signs for vehicle visibility
- Window signage to be limited to basic, specific identity of building and function

## Sign materials

- Wood: carved, sandblasted, etched (painted or stained).
- Metal: formed, etched, cast, engraved (painted).

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

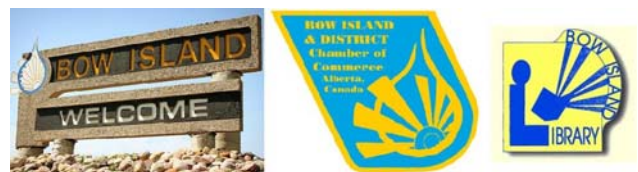
### Design Principles

- Be sensitive of Bow Island’s surrounding natural environment in new design and renovations.
- Improve the “Main Street” image of downtown with uniform, cohesive architectural design and detailing.
- Promote the more relaxed lifestyles by creating a pedestrian-oriented and human-scaled environment, reducing vehicle impact.
- Incorporate the principles of sustainable development, sustainable design, and sustainable building practices. Avoid the perception of waste or excess.
- Provide for ample landscaping and functional site amenities.
- Identify and promote businesses, but still use minimal and attractive signage.

### Town Logo/Identify

The design of a logo or “Brand” would clarify Bow Island’s identity and promote unity and cohesion within the town, as well as avoid invasive and excessive signage.

Existing signage is not consistent in design.



Use of logo must be incorporated into a more uniform format. Colours, shape and text style must be similar.

### Site Design

Bow Island’s distinctive four-season climate requires consideration of the sun and wind in building and site design. All projects should show evidence of design strategies to maximize safety, comfort and protection of users.

## *Building orientation*

- A building should be situated to take into account such elements as airflow, solar orientation and wind exposure, topography, adjacent natural features and other buildings. Proper siting and design features can make the building more mechanically and electrically energy efficient and reduce the size or need for costly systems.
- Summer heat gain, as well as heat loss during the cold Winter months are important factors to consider in renovations or new construction. With such extremes in weather, combined with high winds, extra attention to design elements such as building orientation, window/door sizes and locations, overhangs, shading devices are important to successful environmental design.
- New building and addition setbacks should be consistent with existing patterns of development.
- Portions of a building's façade should be set back to provide areas for plazas, pedestrian gathering and outdoor eating spaces, and small landscaped areas. These plazas need to be landscaped and furnished to create a relaxing, inviting feeling.



*Façade setbacks along a street front provide areas for pedestrian areas, plazas and outdoor eating spaces.*

- Primary, public entrances should be oriented toward major streets and sidewalks to encourage a high level of pedestrian activity. Clearly defined pedestrian paths should be provided to primary entrances from controlled parking areas. Orientation of secondary entrances from back lanes, public parking and plaza areas should also reinforce pedestrian access.
- The relationship between buildings, as well as between buildings and sidewalks, is important in creating a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment.

- Buildings should be linked together by landscaped sidewalks, plazas, courtyards, pocket parks, and safe passage ways.
- For buildings located on corners, the provision of corner setbacks and cut-offs is encouraged to facilitate pedestrian movement, provide better visibility for drivers, and accentuate corner buildings facades.

New development should follow improved redevelopment patterns and characteristics. i.e. open space, area landscaping and streetscapes, therefore, creating visual and functional uniformity.

New developments will inevitably intrude/obstruct/overshadow undeveloped property, but new projects should aim to minimize this.

## *Building Entries*

Building entries should be designed to be easily identifiable and should acknowledge the importance of the need for visibility from the public realm. They should be placed with consideration for vehicle and pedestrian approaches.

## *Public Space*

Unless otherwise limited, buildings should have a strong visual and pedestrian relationship to the street and should be clustered around and connected to public space.

## *Strong Pedestrian Connection*

Where buildings are setback from the street, a strong pedestrian connection should be provided to the street edge from the building to promote connectivity to proposed or existing transit/and vehicular drop-off areas.

## *Corner Sites*

Corner sites are important places visually and create challenges relative to interaction of pedestrian and vehicular circulation. All corner projects should show evidence of coordination with adjacent development and development on each of the other corner sites. Corner buildings should make a strong tie to the building lines of each street.

Corner projects should allow for pedestrian access from the corner.

## Parking

- Wherever possible, Locate parking areas to the rear of buildings, along alleys, or on side streets, and away from intersection corners.
- Parking lots should be broken up into smaller parking modules, interconnected by pedestrian walkways, separated by landscaping.
- Vast expanses of uninterrupted pavement should be avoided to minimize negative visual impacts, excessive drainage issues and to minimize the impact to the natural environment.
- Parking lots and other paved surfaces should meet the principles of sustainability. The life-cycle of the surface material from its origin, to long-term maintenance costs, to the environmental impact of disposal should be considered. Surfaces should be light coloured to minimize solar heat gain.
- On street parking should be attractively landscaped with peripheral planting strips of trees and shrubs in order to continue the linear street frontage created by the existing buildings and to soften harsh edges.
- Parking lots should be softened through the use of trees, landscaped islands, potted plants, benches, and other amenities.
- Common/shared access drives and shared parking circulation aisles are strongly encouraged in adjacent parking areas. Adjacent parking lots should be interconnected when possible. Vehicular entry/exit driveways should be minimized and safety identified with appropriate signage and paving variations.
- The provision of safe, convenient pedestrian links between parking areas and businesses is an important element to minimize interaction of vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists. Parking areas should be linked directly to public sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, mid-block paths, alleys, or open space areas.
- Incorporate bicycle parking into parking lots where applicable.



*Discouraged*



*Encouraged: Landscaping wide pedestrian sidewalks and shading. Parking facilities do not overwhelm the character of the neighborhood*



*Encouraged: Landscaping, wide pedestrian sidewalks and shading*

## Outdoor Space

Locate courtyards, surface parking and open spaces with view corridors from adjacent spaces.



Pedestrian areas, courtyards, plazas, and sculpture parks are strongly encouraged. Art and creativity should be enhanced. Bow Island shows character with its quirky and fun sculptures. This should be celebrated.



## Screening

- Refuse storage containers, utilities and other equipment should be located from view of the public and screened to the highest degree possible.
- Screening devices must be compatible with the architecture, materials, and colours of the adjacent building(s).
- Incorporating creativity and art in the design of screening devices is encouraged.
- All exposed mechanical equipment should be screened with design elements consistent with the building's materials and architectural style.
- Landscaping should be incorporated into the design of screening for refuse storage, utilities and other equipment areas, and to soften the appearance of the man-made environment.



Art and Creativity are encouraged in the design of screening.



Example of refuse storage screening.

## Architectural Design

The construction of new buildings and rehabilitation of existing structures is important to continued economic vitality and growth of Bow Island. These new/rehabbed buildings should be compatible with the proposed concepts of this guideline and must successfully incorporate the recommendations and guidelines.

Since new buildings are constructed on vacant lots it is easier to incorporate the new proposed design ideals. Revitalisation of existing buildings present a challenge, but as there are no significant historical influences, sentimental issues

are relatively easier to overcome. Renovating existing buildings should take care in material selections and correct architectural detailing to avoid results looking out of character.

New structures should be sympathetic and compatible with the surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, façade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, colour and use of materials, without feeling that they have to precisely duplicate a specific architectural style to be successful.

## Architectural Styles

While a predetermined architectural theme is not required of new/rehabbed structures, there are a number of architectural styles and forms that best fit the character of Bow Island.

- Designers should familiarize themselves with the design elements and details proposed.
- Architectural "gimmicks" should be avoided. Avoid the use of dramatic visual contrast from neighbouring structures as an attention-getter.
- Side and rear building facades should have a comparable level of design detail and finish compatible with the front façade, particularly if they are visible from streets, adjacent parking areas, or residential uses.
- Large developments should include varying architectural styles within the project to maintain project uniformity, but with common design elements, and introduce an eclectic mix of buildings to achieve an incremental character.
- Avoid monotony in new development with the use of façade articulation and detail.
- Standard corporate and/or franchise style architecture should be discouraged. "Chain Store" architecture must be compatible with surrounding architectural styles and materials.



**Discouraged.** Building Without variation appear monotonous.



**Encouraged:** Semblance of cohesion yet individuality defined by varying factors, such as, materials, colour, and architectural detailing.

## Materials

- The use of sustainable building materials is strongly encouraged. Sustainable building materials are those that last a long time and improve the energy efficiency of a building and that incorporate recycled materials, such as steel or recycled insulation materials in order to reduce material intensity, and in the case of wood products, are harvested from sustainably managed forests. Products that use toxic binders should be avoided. Building materials that are produced locally (within 500 miles) will minimize the impact to the environment by minimizing energy used in transportation.
- Limit the variety of building materials to be used.
- Material changes should generally occur at a change in building plane. If a change is proposed along the line of a single plane, a pronounced expansion joint should be used to define a clear separation.

Materials natural to the area are encouraged.

Timber board and panel look with battens and reveals.

- Horizontal wood (wood-look) siding
- Brick

Contrast to aforementioned materials.

- Metal – roofing and cladding
- Stucco



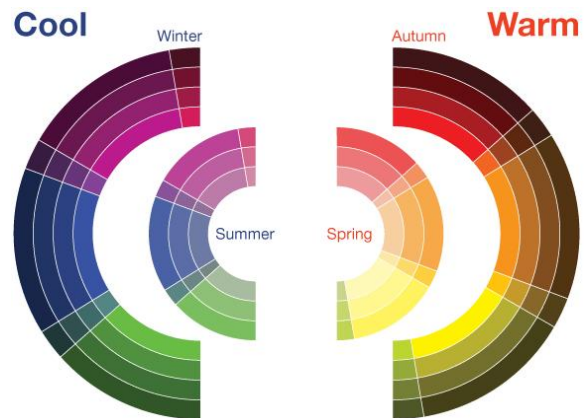
Hardboard plank and siding. (Fiber cement)



Examples of use of Hardboard plank and siding. (Fibre cement)

## Colour

There are an unlimited number of colours and colour combinations, and the appropriateness of any given colour or combination for a particular building will depend on a number of factors, including, architectural style and details, building material, building size, building context, adjacent building colours, etc.



- In general, use no more than three colours on a façade, including “natural, warm colours” such as unpainted stone or brick.
- Use more subtle colours on larger buildings. Use stronger colours only to highlight elaborate detailing.
- Colour changes should generally occur at a change in building plane or material.
- Use contrasting colours to accent architectural details, window trim, and entrances.
- Colour should not be used to obscure the integrity of natural building materials.
- Exterior colours should be compatible with the surrounding character and adjacent buildings.
- Stain and flat paints are desirable and encouraged. Matte finishes are encouraged while glossy paints and bright finishes are strongly discouraged.
- Colours should be chosen and analysed on both sunny and cloudy days to ensure the desired appearance is consistent.
- The use of corporate signature logos, with bold colour schemes, on buildings and signs is strongly discouraged.

- Colour schemes could reflect seasonal contrasts.
  - ▶ Earth tones (prairie colours). Avoid primary and secondary colours and pastel versions of these colours.
  - ▶ Base colours: golds, greens and blues. Neutral whites and tans.
  - ▶ Accent colours: Deep sunset reds, oranges and yellow. Deep greens and blues.

### *Building Mass and Organization*

When appropriate, limited use of vertical elements, such as piers, columns, pilasters, etc. can be incorporated into a building's design to break up the massing and to create visual interest.

Significant horizontal articulation should be expressed on all sides of a building visible from pedestrian viewpoints through:

- Roof eave line or roof structure
- Roof overhang
- Horizontal features, canopies, awnings
- Horizontal character of material

Break up of massing can be achieved with:

- Recessed entries and doors
- Covered walkways, trellises and/or architectural awnings
- Architectural details should be consistent with the style of the main building

New construction should be sympathetic and compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, and height.

Relationship of height to width proportions of existing facades should be respected in infill development.



*Appropriate infill development.*

### *Roofs*

Rooflines of new buildings should be consistent with buildings on adjacent properties, to avoid extremes in building height.

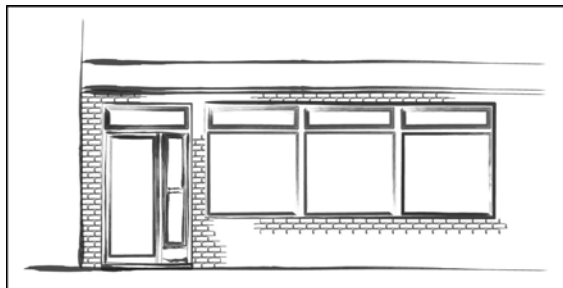
- Flat membrane systems, low-pitched shingle or standing seam metal.
- Incorporate, false front parapets or bold fascias on flat roofs.
- The visible portion of pitched roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material complementary to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.
- Any rooftop equipment must be concealed from public view. Screening methods and materials must be an integral part of the building's design.

### *Windows*

- Windows are an important element of a building's overall composition and architecture. Window design should be consistent with the predominant architectural style.
- Bold window frames and sills should be used to enhance openings and add additional relief. They should be proportional to the glass area framed (e.g. a larger window should have thicker framing and sill members).
- Heights of doors and windows should match as it creates design uniformity.
- Windows are part of a building system and can affect a building's overall energy performance. The use of sustainable practices are encouraged. South facing windows should incorporate overhangs that block the direct sun from entering the building during summer months.
- Glass should be non-reflective and not heavily tinted in order to reduce undesirable mirror effects.
- Interior shading and curtain treatment that may be visible from the exterior should be compatible with the exterior wall colours.
- In general, upper stories should have a window to wall area proportion that is smaller than that of ground floor storefronts.
- The use of security grilles on windows is discouraged, as they communicate a message of high crime and are rarely compatible with the building design.

## Doors

- Doors should be consistent with the predominant architectural style of the building.
- Doors should match the materials, design, and character of window framing.
- Heights of doors and door transoms should match window height, as it creates design uniformity.
- Public entries to commercial structures should be clearly defined and articulated.
- Recessed entries with overhangs that provide for weather protection and a transition zone from sidewalk activity into the businesses are strongly encouraged.
- Providing rear pedestrian entrances via alleys and parking lots is encouraged. Improvements to rear facades may include signage, landscaping, and awnings, but should not compete with front façade.



*There are numerous window and door styles and combinations. The appropriateness of any combination will depend on cohesion of design, unified heights and sustainability.*

## Architectural Details

Architectural details should be used with the appropriate style for Bow Island. The styles are typified by a series of “character defining elements” that are felt to be desirable building components and which should be used appropriately.

- A strong relationship to the terrain to help anchor buildings to the ground should be established through the use of low planter walls, trees and shrubs, railings, and other horizontal materials and textures.

- The design of the building elements, especially at the ground floor level, should be kept at human-scale using small parts and accents.
- Special architectural features should be used to accent buildings at prominent street corners and at the end of a street corridor or pedestrian way.
- Where the façade is divided into distinct storefronts, it is desirable to cover portions of the façade with an arcade or canopy, but preferably not along its entire length.
- Arcade columns and supports should appear thick and structurally substantial.
- Support any overhead shed roof element.
- Down-directed, exterior lighting should be designed as part of the overall architectural style of the building and should highlight interesting architectural features. The lighting of full façades or roofs is discouraged.
- Lighting should not produce glare or spill over onto adjacent properties from interior or exterior of stores and buildings. The latest technical and operational energy conservation concepts should be considered in lighting designs.
- Walk-up ATM’s, vending machines, multi-functional kiosks and similar uses should be integrated into existing or planned building designs and not included as an afterthought.

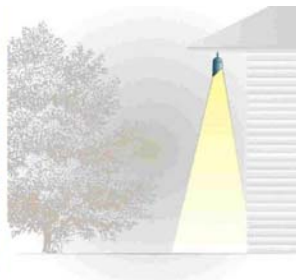
## Exterior Lighting

MUST BE CONTROLLED AND LIMITED.

- Site lighting, security lighting and architectural/landscape lighting should provide the user with illumination levels appropriate for the designed activity (i.e. parking, walking, security etc.) Light must be confined to within site boundaries.
- Lighting quality is a critical aspect of the character of a project. Just as each project should present a unique and distinct identity during the day, it should be equally well represented at night. Lighting should enhance the architecture of a building, be functional and not be offensive to its viewer or to adjacent properties.
- **Indirect lighting that minimizes light pollution is strongly encouraged.**
- **Warm colour light sources should be used.**
- Carefully designed exterior lighting plans are required to provide the best balance between site safety, security and appearance considerations. Illumination levels should also be reasonably uniform throughout the site and without glare or light trespass onto adjacent properties, or into the sky.
- Restrained site lighting patterns for commercial development will help prevent commercial lighting from adversely impacting residential properties.

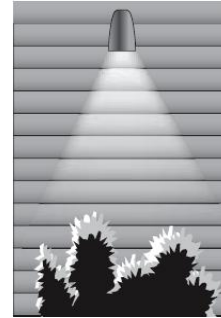


*Discouraged*

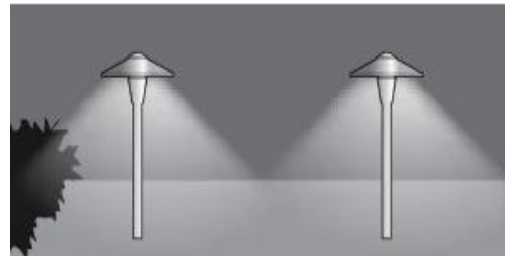


*Encouraged. There are numerous lighting fixtures, but appropriate systems are ones with minimum spillage and light pollution. Controlled warm colours are strongly encouraged*

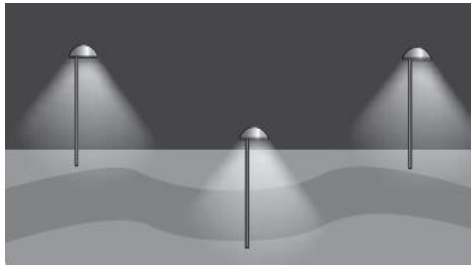
## Lighting Types



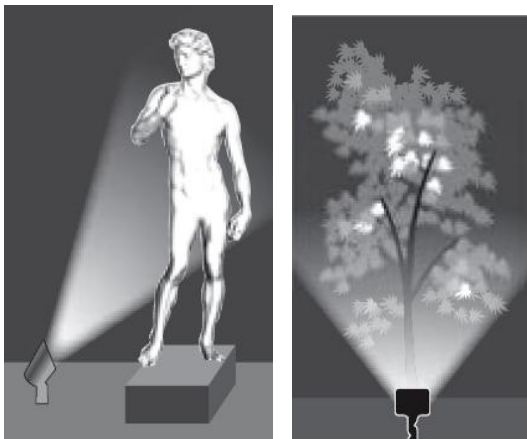
**DOWN LIGHTING:** Can highlight interesting textures, greenery or statuary. It simulates natural lighting, coming from above. This type of lighting is strongly encouraged and it minimizes light pollution and is favorable for highlighting signage.



**AREA LIGHTING:** Fills in low level areas of a landscape with light, and may be used to define perimeters, highlight areas of interest and provide a margin of safety along pathways. Must be strictly controlled and limited to places of special interest.



**PATH LIGHTING:** Is used to illuminate a safe avenue along a walkway. It may also be used to highlight ground cover and perimeters. Must be strictly controlled and limited to places of special interest.



**SHADOWING, SILHOUETTING, SPOT LIGHTING AND FLOOD LIGHTING ARE DISCOURAGED.**

## *Landscaping and Amenities*

Landscaping should be an integral part of the overall design concept. A carefully planned landscape is able to serve more than one function for the site as well as the streetscape. The landscaping and public spaces within Bow Island should add character as well as provide a functional purpose.

## *Landscaping*

- Existing features such as mature trees, shrub masses, washes, and rock outcroppings should be recognized, preserved, and incorporated into the design.
- The use of native plants and natural landscaping is strongly encouraged.
- Landscaping should be used to create boundaries between buildings, different developments, and incompatible uses.
- Landscaping should be used for screening parking areas, refuse storage, mechanical equipment and utilities, as well as for aesthetic purposes.
- It is important for landscape designers of new development to understand the specific site conditions and the environmental water and maintenance requirements of selected plant materials.
- The landscape design of a new project or renovation should blend with the dominant existing or planned streetscape and character of the area.
- The plant and site materials should be within the context of its environment including scale and density.
- Along streets and highways, plant materials must be selected and placed to avoid blocking sight lines at intersections and driveways.
- Buildings should be softened and anchored to the site and surrounding environment with landscaping.
- Raised planters are acceptable when designed to accentuate the architecture and/or enhance pedestrian areas.

## Public Spaces and Amenities

- Plazas, courtyards, pedestrian, parks and gardens are strongly encouraged.
- Projects should provide site amenities and other design features that encourage pedestrian utilization, including benches, seating areas, public art, bicycle racks, and lighting. Design of amenities should be consistent throughout the project.
- Outdoor spaces should be designed with public amenities and landscaping that provides shade, an opportunity to rest, and adequate lighting.
- The location of site amenities should not interfere with pedestrian movement.
- Public spaces should include a variety of appropriately designed pedestrian amenities that may include the following:
  - ▶ **Benches and seating elements** are encouraged. Creative benches, as well as planters with integrated seating, are encouraged.
  - ▶ **Site furniture (chairs, tables)** should be simple in design and not detract from the surroundings. They should be designed to utilize shade areas while also maintaining overall site visibility.



*There are numerous styles of site furnishings. The appropriate style will depend on cohesion of design, unified aesthetic value, sustainability and low maintenance.*

- ▶ **Wind resistant umbrellas** are encouraged to create shade areas and to minimize heat build up.
- ▶ **Bicycle racks** should be located in areas that do not conflict with pedestrian and/or vehicular movement. The design of the racks should be complementary to the environment where it's located and may function as a work of art incorporating functional artistic elements.
- ▶ Identifiable **decorative paving** that helps to add visual interest and a sense of place is encouraged.
- ▶ **Cigarette receptacles** should be located in open environments and should be enclosed in containers that blend well with the setting.
- ▶ **Drinking fountains** housed in simple and easily identifiable design elements which blends with the surrounding environment and reflects historical building materials. Multi-use fountains with "pet" drinking bowls are encouraged. (If appropriate, low level, decorative lighting should provide appropriate nighttime visibility for safety and pedestrian movement as well as providing accent detail.)
- ▶ **ATM machines** should be located in an area that visually does not detract from the site, or impair pedestrian circulation.
- ▶ **Public telephones** should be housed in simple and easily identifiable structures that blend with their surroundings and reflect historical building materials.



*There are numerous styles of site furnishings. The appropriate style will depend on cohesion of design, unified aesthetic value and sustainability.*

- ▶ **Trash and recycling containers** should be appropriately sized and located so as not to interfere with pedestrian circulation or design and should be enclosed in local natural and/or simple materials.
- ▶ Interpretive signs may be incorporated as an integral part of the design of pedestrian spaces. Design features that highlight the area's history and historical and natural environment are encouraged.
- ▶ Public art/design features that invite participation and interaction in public spaces are encouraged. Art/design features should add local meaning, interpret the local culture, environment and/or history, and capture or reinforce the unique character of place (interpretive features, signs, sculptures, etc.).
- ▶ Murals shall only be allowed on building walls that are visible from interior courtyards and alleys. Murals shall not include commercial advertising of any kind. Murals shall reflect the local character and/or history.

### *Retaining Walls and Fences*

- Retaining walls and fences should be designed to be compatible with the surrounding landscape and architectural features of the building.
- Chain link fencing, security wire, and razor wire should not be allowed.
- Landscaping should be incorporated to soften the appearance of walls and fences.
- Materials consistent with local vernacular architecture, as well as indigenous to the area should be encouraged.
- Elements made of iron and other metals may be integrated into fence and wall designs if responding to architectural details.

### *Recommended Wall and Fence Materials*

- Wood/Heavy timber
- Textured concrete block or stucco surfaced walls (if compatible with adjacent buildings)

### *Discouraged Wall and Fence Materials*

- Corrugated metal
- Bright coloured plastic
- Non-textured or unfinished concrete or block walls

### *SIGNS*

These guidelines address issues related to sign legibility, placement, colour, materials, illumination. These guidelines are intended to help business owners put up quality signs that add to and support the image of Bow Island.

### *Sign Legibility*

- Brief messages should be used whenever possible. The fewer the words, the more effective the message. A sign with a brief, succinct message is simpler and faster to read, looks cleaner, and is generally more attractive. Businesses with long names are encouraged to use a generic identification (e.g. "CLEANERS") rather than force too many words into the allowed sign area.
- An effective sign should do more than attract attention; it should communicate its message clearly and quickly. Usually, this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering style, size and spacing.
- Avoid hard-to-read, intricate typefaces. Typefaces that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
- Letters and words should not be spaced too close together. Crowding letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, over spacing these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. Letters should not occupy more than 75 percent of the sign face.
- The number of lettering styles should be limited in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs (generally up to ten square feet) and three for large signs.
- There should be an adequate amount of contrast between the colours to increase legibility. If there is little contrast between the brightness or hue of the message of a sign and

its background, it will be difficult to read. Generally, light coloured letters and a darker, contrasting background presents the most visible and best-looking image.

- Symbols and logos should be used in place of words whenever possible. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message. If the nature of the business suggests a particular symbol to identify the business, this should be incorporated into the sign.

### *Sign Placement*

- When multiple tenants share a development site, signs should be integrated as one unit to create shared identity for the property or be located and designed as a unified package so that signs do not visually compete with each other.
- Signs should be designed to relate to the architectural features of the building on which they are located.
- Signs should be placed at or near the public entrance to a building or main parking area to indicate the most direct access to the business.
- Signs should be placed at locations consistent with the proportions of the building's façade. For example, a particular sign may fit well on an upper, more basic wall, but would overpower and obstruct the finer detail of a lower storefront area.
- Signs should not be located so that they cover or interrupt the architectural details or ornamentation of a building's façade.
- Signs should not project above the edge of the rooflines and should not obstruct windows and/or doorways.
- The location and extent of signs should not obstruct scenic views.
- Repetitious signage information on the same building frontage should be avoided.

### *Sign Colour*

Too many colours overwhelm the viewer's ability to process the information that the sign is trying to communicate. Limit the use of accent colours to

increase legibility. Colours should be limited to no more than three on a single sign.

Bright "day-glo" (fluorescent) colours should be avoided as they are distracting and do not blend well with other background colours.

Sign colours should relate to and complement the materials or colour scheme of the buildings, including accent and trim colours.

Signs should not be painted directly over stone or brick facades.

### *Sign Materials*

Materials should be selected with consideration for the architectural design of the building's façade. Sign materials should complement the architecture and materials of the structure.

- Wood: carved, sandblasted, etched (painted or stained).
- Metal: formed, etched, cast, engraved (painted).
- Tile (painted, sealed, inlaid tiles)
- Stucco
- Decorative iron brackets or wood are preferred for sign hardware support.
- The selected materials should contribute to the legibility of the sign. For example, glossy finishes are often difficult to read because of glare and reflections.
- Sign materials should be very durable. Paper and cloth signs are not suitable for outside because they deteriorate quickly.
- Individually mounted internally illuminated channel letters, and internally illuminated plastic faced cabinet signs are strongly discouraged.

### *Sign Illumination*

- First, consider if the sign needs to be lighted at all.
- Lights in the window display may be sufficient to identify the business. This is particularly true if good window graphics are used.

- Other than “open” signs, digital or electronically lit messages of any kind or signs having the same effect are discouraged.

### *Front Lit (Avoid backlit electric signs)*

- It is best to illuminate the sign by a shielded external source of light because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building’s architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the sign will cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the building as well.
- Blinking, rotating, flashing, hanging, or reflecting lights should be prohibited.

### *Wall Signs*

- A wall sign should be located where the architectural features or details of the building suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign. The best location for a wall sign is generally a band or blank area between the storefront and the parapet.
- Window signage shall be limited.
- The use of illuminated “open” signs is strongly discouraged as it detracts from the quality and character of the building.
- New wall signs for individual businesses in a shopping centre should be placed consistent with the location of signs for other businesses in the centre. This will establish visual continuity among storefronts and create a unified appearance for the centre.
- For new and remodelled shopping centre, a comprehensive sign program for all signs in the centre should be developed.

### *Projecting Signs*

- The use of small, pedestrian-oriented signs is strongly encouraged.
- Projecting signs should be used for ground floor uses only. On a multi-storied building, the sign should be suspended between the bottom of the second story windowsills and the top of the doors or windows of the first story.
- The scale of projecting signs should not detract from the architectural character of the building.

- Projecting signs should be hung perpendicular to the face of the building.
- Sign supports and brackets should be compatible with the design and scale of the building.
- Decorative iron and wood brackets are encouraged.
- Avoid damaging brick and stonework; brackets should be designed so that they can be bolted into masonry joints when possible.
- Internal illumination of projecting signs is discouraged.

### *Hanging Signs*

- Where overhangs or covered walkways exist, pedestrian oriented hanging signs are encouraged. Signs should be hung over the pedestrian right-of way.
- Hanging signs should be simple in design and not used to compete with existing signage at the site, such as wall signs.

### *Awning Signs*

- The text of awning signs should be compatible with the awning and the building colour scheme.
- The shape, design, and colour of awnings should be carefully designed to coordinate with, and not dominate, the architectural style of the building. Where multiple awnings are used on the building, the design and colour of the signage awnings should be consistent with all other awnings.
- Internally illuminated awnings are strongly discouraged.

### *Window Signs*

- Window signs (permanent or temporary) should not cover more than 25-percent of the area of each window.
- Window signs should be primarily individual letters placed on the interior surface of the window and intended to be viewed from outside only.

- The text or sign copy of a window sign should be limited to the business name, and brief messages identifying the product or service (e.g. “maternity wear” or “attorney”), or pertinent information (e.g. hours of operation, “reservations required”, etc.).

### *Freestanding Signs*

- For house conversions, bed and breakfasts, and other small-scale commercial uses, simple, low freestanding signs may be appropriate.
- Freestanding signs supported by two poles or structures are encouraged over signs supported by single poles, which may appear top heavy.
- Freestanding signs should incorporate architectural elements into the sign portion, as well as the supporting structure.
- Freestanding signs should incorporate a landscaped area at the base of the sign equal to one to two times the size of the sign face.

### *Figurative Signs*

- Signs, which advertise the occupant business through the use of graphic or crafted symbols, such as shoes, keys, glasses, or books, are encouraged.
- Figurative signs may be incorporated into any of the allowable sign types identified above.

### *Strongly Discouraged Sign Types*

- **Pole Signs** - Large signs supported by a single pole are strongly discouraged in all of the districts. These signs are typically out of scale with the built environment and designed for highway traffic only.
- **Neon Signs** - Signs that are internally illuminated letter signs are strongly discouraged within all districts, especially “open” signs.

