

6 Design Character

What is design character? Design character is all about how a place looks and feels. It is largely expressed in aspects of the built environment such as site design, architectural aesthetics, building/street relationships and appeal of public and private spaces. It establishes identity for a place and a community and influences the experience people have there. A positive and attractive design character can draw people in to spend time in a place, while places that lack good design character can become barren and lifeless.

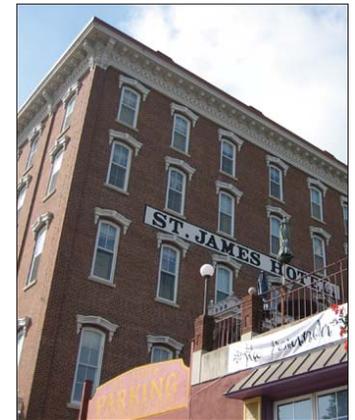
The design character of Red Wing contributes to both defining unique areas as well as creating continuity throughout the community. This plan addresses design character related to the following categories:

- Urban design and architecture
- Street design and block patterns
- Gateways and Identity
- Redevelopment and Revitalization in Historic Areas
- New Neighborhoods
- Sustainable Design
- Public Art

Urban Design & Architecture

Urban design is the art of making places. It involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes in the community to create successful development. Attention to urban design influences the overall design character of the entire city. It addresses issues such as districts and nodes, building locations and their relationship to each other, land use patterns, streets, parking and access. It generally envelops all elements that contribute to the attractiveness and function of the built environment.

Architectural features contribute largely to the relationship and character of the built environment. Guidance for architectural restoration and maintenance has already been established for historic buildings in Downtown Red Wing. However, architectural guidelines can also apply to the broader community, addressing building facades, signage size and location, setbacks, building/street relationships, as well as maintenance requirements.



Red Wing's historic architecture contributes to the overall design character of the community.

Street Design & Block Patterns

Streets are easy to take for granted but street design in Red Wing is an extremely valuable foundation that defines the character of the city's neighborhoods and districts. It influences who will use that road and how they will use it. Street pattern is one aspect that influences street design. For example, streets arranged in manageable block sizes (approximately 300 feet on each side), and including sidewalks, establish a character that promotes walkability and neighborhood cohesion.

In the historical parts of Red Wing, such a block pattern is common. However, Red Wing's topography pose challenges to such a pattern of blocks made by street connections. The block pattern in Red Wing will need to be formed by more than just a street grid (greenway corridors, mid-block trail connections, parks). The presence of alleys is also an important design feature allowing for undisturbed street frontages and support of positive social dynamic between neighbors.

Street width is another primary component for defining the character of a street. A narrower street feels more intimate and promotes greater social interaction. Wider streets create an expanse between neighbors that is more difficult to overcome and also encourages car traffic to move at higher speeds. Accommodating on-street parking on wider streets works to narrow the travel lanes and define the transition between the street and

sidewalk, creating a more comfortable and attractive environment for pedestrians.

Street amenities, including trees, planters, street lamps, furniture and signage all contribute to the appeal of a street. Such amenities further define the transition between space for cars and space for people, as well as the transition between public and private properties. Street amenities, and their specific design and placement, can unify an entire neighborhood or identify a place as being unique. They can also be used to highlight the transition between two different neighborhoods or districts.

On larger arterial roads, design character is also crucial to consider. Accommodation of off-street trails for walkers and bikers should not be overlooked along roads that primarily handle higher volumes of car traffic. Street amenities, such as street trees and attractive lighting, will also soften the experience of large roads and create a positive experience for those traveling along it.

Gateways & Identity

Highway 61 is the primary entry corridor and gateway into Red Wing. Because Red Wing is geographically linear along the River, the Highway 61 approach to the more intensely developed core of the community is a relatively long trip. In addition, linear commercial development continues to be built along the corridor making the creation of a consistently positive character



Landscaping can provide community character and identify along large busy roadways.

ever more challenging. This situation poses some unique challenges for Red Wing in its attempts to create a positive travel experience and development opportunity along the Highway 61 corridor.

This plan suggests thinking of the Highway 61 approach to Red Wing as a series of segments or “rooms” through which one passes on their way to or through Red Wing. Each room would have a unique character with a central point of intensity (maybe a primary intersection) and edges or walls (maybe river or creek crossings). There is a great opportunity to play upon the river and creek crossings as the thresholds from one room to the next – they remind visitors of Red Wing’s tremendous natural amenities.

The first and western-most room would be bound by the Cannon River crossing and the Spring Creek crossing and would be focused on the Anderson Center area. This room could have a native landscape character with forest at the river and creek crossings, prairie through most of it and oak savanna flanking the intersection with County Road 19. Development would set significantly back from the roadway in this area allowing room for landscape and trails. Native landscaping should be the primary streetscape element with roadway lighting and other streetscape enhancements kept to a minimum.

The middle room would be bound by Spring Creek and Hay Creek and would be focused on the Tyler Road intersection. This room would have a more developed character than areas to the west with a specific focus on well designed but lower maintenance streetscape enhancements such as street lighting, banners, bollards, pedestrian facilities and strategic landscape plantings (Tyler Road is a good model for this type of streetscape). The community should present a positive image in this area but maintenance-intensive streetscaping is probably not realistic or warranted.

The eastern most room is bound by Hay Creek and Colvil Park with downtown being the central focus. This segment is the most energized and active room with intensive urban landscaping, pedestrian amenities, ornamental lighting, banners, special paving and seasonal features. Here, the streetscape can take advantage of the great building facades along the corridor to create a tremendous positive experience for travelers.

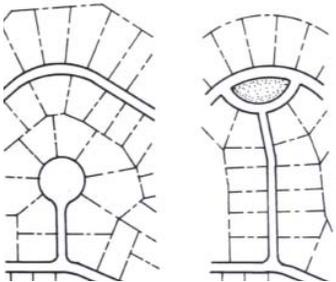
Identity can be carried out in other parts of the city as well through other forms, such as landscaping, streetscape, lighting and signage. For example, the city park signs could be systematically replaced with new signs following a consistent theme, like the new Barn Bluff sign. This helps define city facilities, creates a pleasing and uniform look and builds community identity.



Signage and streetscape elements help establish identity for the community.



Restoration of historic homes requires added attention to historic character and detail.



Through-streets, like the diagram on the right, provide for greater neighborhood accessibility and cohesion.

Illustrations from *Redesigning Cities* by Johnathan Barnett

Redevelopment & Revitalization in Historic Areas

Redevelopment in Red Wing will occur as both infill and larger-tract projects. It is important in both scenarios that planning and design for such projects strongly consider the historic context of the redevelopment site. Establishing design character within a neighborhood or district will require redevelopment to fit within this same character. Currently Red Wing has three historic districts (Downtown, the St. James Hotel and Historic Mall), which require review by the Heritage Preservation Commission for exterior renovation and alterations, and construction of new buildings or additions. Red Wing also has one conservation district, West Residential, which requires review by the Heritage Preservation Commission, but only for construction of new buildings or additions. Alterations to the exterior of existing structures are not included in the review process.

Red Wing has a rich stock of older residential districts that are generally defined by the geographical character of the city. These neighborhoods represent one of the primary assets of Red Wing and deserve attention by the city to preserve their unique character and value. If left simply to the market, alterations to residential properties may not maintain the original character of the residence and ultimately threatening the character of the entire district.

The character and value of the older/historic residential districts would be enhanced if renovations and additions respected the materials and architectural character of each residence. This is the principle purpose of conservation districts. This plan suggests expanding the use of the conservation districts to include the East Side neighborhood. The districts should be used to ensure exterior renovations and alternations, and construction of additions and new buildings are done in a manner that respects the design character of the district.

New Neighborhoods

Design character of new residential neighborhoods in Red Wing should be thoughtfully considered for their impact on natural systems and compatibility with surrounding land uses. Design of the building placement, lot size, street patterns, architectural amenities and landscape elements will influence the attractiveness, accessibility and cohesion of the neighborhood. Street patterns should support connections to other neighborhoods and destinations and encourage community-wide interaction.

Sustainable Design

Sustainability is a commonly used term in planning. In fact, a “sustainable community” is a guiding principle embraced in the Vision Statement by the City of Red Wing. For the Red Wing Comprehensive

Plan, sustainable is used to reflect a quality that is lasting, enduring and infinite. A common definition for sustainable development is a development pattern that accommodates present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words it is a development pattern that lasts, endures and does not have an end life. This is important from a global perspective because of the notion that populations grow exponentially and land and natural resources are finite. Sustainability represents the interdependent relationship “between our community and the natural ecosystem” as stated in the guiding principle for Red Wing.

Sustainable development is synonymous with green building and green infrastructure. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is an International organization with a focus on real estate development practices. It is a widely well respected organization. Recent publications show support time and again for green building practices despite being more costly upfront because over time, the cost savings (benefits) due to reduced energy consumption, enhanced quality of life, and longer lasting materials outweigh the upfront costs.

Design character also considers how site and building design will contribute to the sustainability of the community. Sustainable building techniques, energy conservation practices and ecologically-sensitive site design and environmental protection all contribute to

sustainable design character. By increasing attention to the sustainable design character of urban development in Red Wing, negative impacts to the natural systems and environment can be reduced. The U.S. Green Building Council outlines strategies for increasing sustainability in a community in its document, LEED (Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design) for Neighborhood Developments. Strategies focus on ways to promote livability, increase transportation efficiency, increase walkability, conserve land, and reduce stormwater impacts.

Sustainable building design is an important way to reduce environmental impacts and increase overall design character of the community. Sustainable design of buildings focuses on utilizing renewable and local resources, reducing energy consumption and limiting impacts to the surrounding natural environment.

Stormwater management is a large component of addressing sustainable design on a site. Modern thought on stormwater management presently focuses on treating stormwater runoff as close as possible to the location it falls in order to reduce negative impacts of sedimentation and pollution. Innovative stormwater management techniques include implementation of on-site infiltration using features such as bioswales and rain gardens. These are generally a depression or low area, planted with trees, shrubs and perennials, where water can collect and is allowed to infiltrate into the ground.

This type of treatment technique can be designed so that overflow runoff from one bioswale runs into the next lower bioswale, creating a linked system or “stormwater treatment train”.

Permeable pavers are another example of an on-site infiltration strategy that intercepts and transmits runoff to permeable soils or gravel layers where pollutants are filtered, runoff is slowed, and water is allowed to infiltrate into the ground. An underground reservoir used in conjunction with pavers can hold large amounts of water to control runoff volumes. Pavers can be made of various materials and installed as roadways or parking surfaces.

Red Wing can also encourage implementation of rooftop gardens or green roofs on both existing and new buildings. Green roofs are becoming increasingly popular and help reduce the volume of stormwater runoff and environmental heat gain. Studies indicate that green roofs reduce a building’s contribution to stormwater runoff by up to seventy-five percent and can reduce the maximum roof-top temperature by more than sixty degrees.



Public art builds unique character and identify and enhances the aesthetics of public spaces.

Public Art

Today, creative city planners and developers are responding to new market pressures and a desire for quality spaces and community identity. Public art is seen

as an important ingredient. Many communities have formal public art programs, mostly utilizing a percent-for-art model (an ordinance mandating a portion of the city’s capital budget be used for public art). Many more communities however, engage in public art activities without an ordinance or formal city program. These programs are usually driven by a desire to have art in key public or private locations and are implemented in public-private partnerships between cities, developers and foundations.

Public art can play a role in enhancing Red Wing as a destination, a distinct place within Minnesota. Expanding access to the arts enhances the quality of life in Red Wing. Public art can also acknowledge and celebrate the city’s history through commemorative art, memorials and interpretive projects.

Public art, in its many forms, can serve Red Wing by:

- Enhancing the aesthetic of standard public improvements and building projects.
- Acting as a catalyst or focal point for public spaces and private redevelopment.
- Engaging community in creating places and shaping their city.
- Generating visitor and retail traffic and creating a sense of destination.
- Building a unique character and identity.
- Attracting and retaining a base of residents, employers, and visitors.

Design Character Policies

Urban Design & Architecture

1. New development should be compatible with surrounding uses and integrated with existing systems and patterns of the city.
2. Urban design standards should be developed for each activity center, historic neighborhoods and new residential neighborhoods, in order to establish an identity for each district in the city.
3. Architectural guidelines for redevelopment and new housing should be drafted to establish a consistency of quality and attractiveness for the city as a whole.
4. Architectural guidelines for commercial development should be strengthened in the activity areas in addition to the historic downtown core.

Street Design & Block Patterns

5. Block sizes in and adjacent to downtown should maintain the walkable size of approximately 380'.
6. Where steeper terrain and presence of natural resources are key objectives, block patterns should seek to retain connectivity through use of mid-block greenway patterns, trail connections or park features.

7. Streets should be designed based on their function as a people mover (traffic, bicycle and pedestrian) as well as by the character of the use they serve. The following street types help define Red Wing's transportation system and network.

- a. Alley residential
- b. Local residential street
- c. Collector residential street
- d. Alley activity center street
- e. Local activity center street
- f. Collector activity center street
- g. City collector
- h. City arterial
- i. Rural collector

8. A minimum number of amenities within the streetscape should be met:
 - a. Street trees at 40-80 feet on-center, depending on street type.
 - b. Street lighting for both vehicles and pedestrians with full cut off lighting fixtures to adhere to the principle of dark lighting.

Historic Neighborhoods

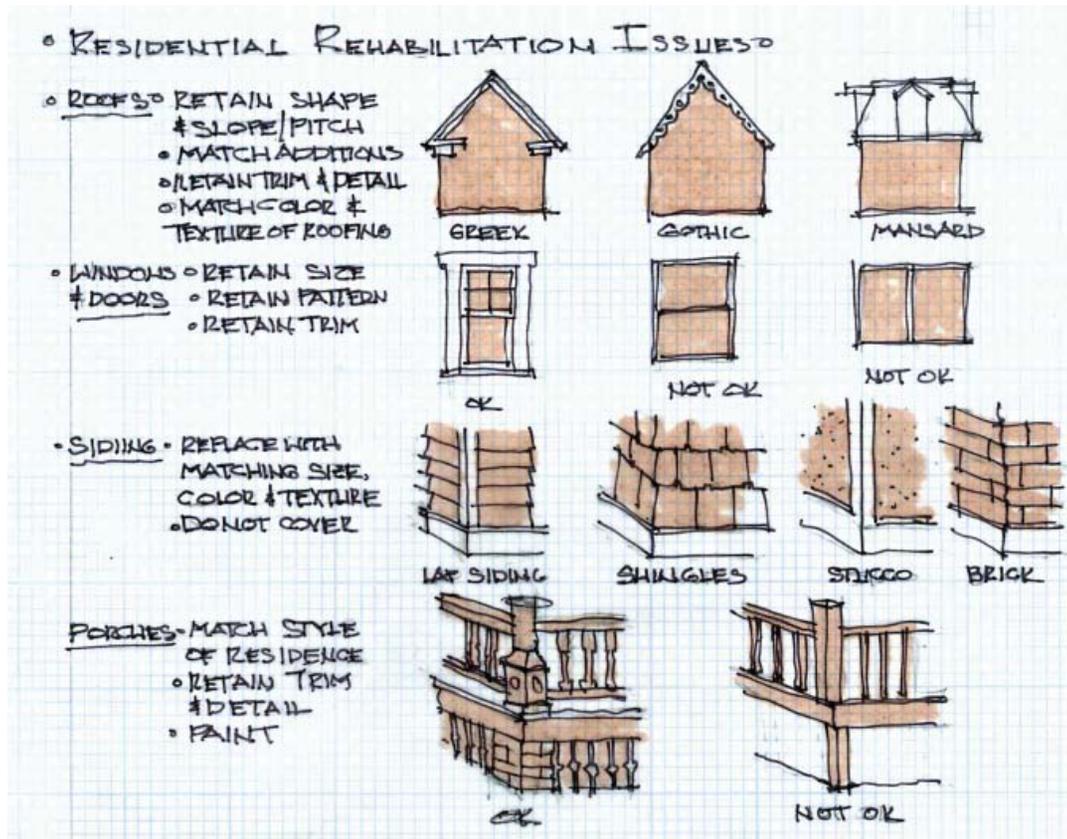
These guidelines are intended to assist the property owner in making good decisions on the maintenance of their property that will protect the value of the property and the neighborhood. For instance, review of paint



Street design not only addresses streetscaping but should also focus on how buildings relate to the street and each other to create a coherent and attractive public street space.

color schemes does not have to be considered since paint colors are easily reversible.

9. Retain existing roof profiles and replace roof coverings with original materials or materials that have similar scale, texture and color.



Illustrations generated during the design forum to represent various areas of detail in historic home rehabilitation, like that addressed in policies #8-13.

10. Retain original siding where possible. Do not cover original siding. Replace siding, if required, with original materials or materials that can replicate the scale, profile, texture and color of the original.

11. Repair original windows and doors where possible. Replace windows and doors, if required, with windows of the same size, style and configuration of the original window. Retain original trim or replace with matching trim. Replacement windows can be pre-finished aluminum or vinyl clad as long as the other features are correct.

12. Repair original porches, steps, railings and trim where possible. If replacement of portions of a porch is required, match original size and style. Removal of porches and/or replacement with construction that does not respect the building can be very detracting and negatively affect the value of the property.

13. Repair original trim and decorative features where possible. These features often are important in defining the style of the residence. Replacement trim should match the original.

14. Repair and repoint masonry foundations. Do not cover with other materials. If replacement is

required, use materials that replicate the scale, texture and color as close as possible.

New Neighborhoods

15. New residential development should be located outside of the identified green network in Figure 4-2 of Chapter 4.
16. Streets of new neighborhoods should primarily be through-ways to maintain a connected community.
17. Sidewalks should be developed on both sides of all new residential streets.
18. New neighborhoods should be designed to treat stormwater runoff on site to the greatest extent possible by implementing neighborhood bioswales, infiltration ponds, and rain gardens.
19. Neighborhood commercial nodes should be established at intersections of main arterials within new neighborhoods with walkable connections to surrounding households.
20. Encourage siting of garages on residential property to be in the rear or side yards or setback from the front of the house, preferably accessed by an alley.

Sustainable Design

The following goals are established as a benchmark for the City of Red Wing to aspire to over the course of the this 20 year plan. As new investments are made (private and public) the City of Red Wing will work towards the following opportunities:

21. Renewable energy will represent 30% of overall energy use from the City.
22. Seventy-five percent of the total fuel consumption of all city fleet vehicles will be from renewable fuels (bio-diesel, ethanol, solar energy, etc.).
23. Of all residential building permits 75% will be issued in walkable neighborhood districts as defined by a walkability index measure (to be developed as an implementation initiative).
24. Thirty percent of all built horizontal materials (parking lots, roof structures, roads, etc.) will be covered by plant materials. (i.e. shade tree canopy and rooftop gardens).
25. All outdoor lighting shall meet dark sky (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design or LEED Standard) friendly standards. (i.e. lighting that reflects down and out rather than up or lighting that is timed to dim or turn out when not needed).



Single Family detached homes could be designed with the ability to add an accessory unit over the garage to provide more options for housing.



The main building at the Anderson Center for the Arts - the largest artists residence in Minnesota.

26. Seventy-five percent of stormwater from a 10 year storm event will be treated and infiltrated on-sited. (i.e. via rain gardens, infiltration basins, cisterns, or other best management practices).
27. A key to the success of these opportunities is the ability to measure attainment. Indexes and measurement tools need to be established and are identified as an implementation initiative later in this plan.

Public Art

28. Develop, finance, and implement public art projects in the downtown and in conjunction with redevelopment and public improvement projects. The river parks and planned river trail offers a great opportunity to add public art.
29. Consider opportunities for art programs or art-related events within Red Wing Parks and Recreation.
30. Integrate public art with capital facilities planning (i.e. consider an artist-designed bench or railings instead of a using a standard mass-produced catalog item.
31. Establish a relationship between the arts community (Sheldon Theatre, Anderson Center, Hobgoblin, galleries, artists, Red Wing Arts

Association, Art Reach, schools, etc.) and the city's economic development goals and planned projects.

32. Explore mechanisms to establish ongoing revenues sources for financing public art.