

Smithfield Conservation District Recommendations and Design Guidelines

City of North Richland Hills, Texas
February 2003



Urban Prospects, Inc.

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Purpose and Objective

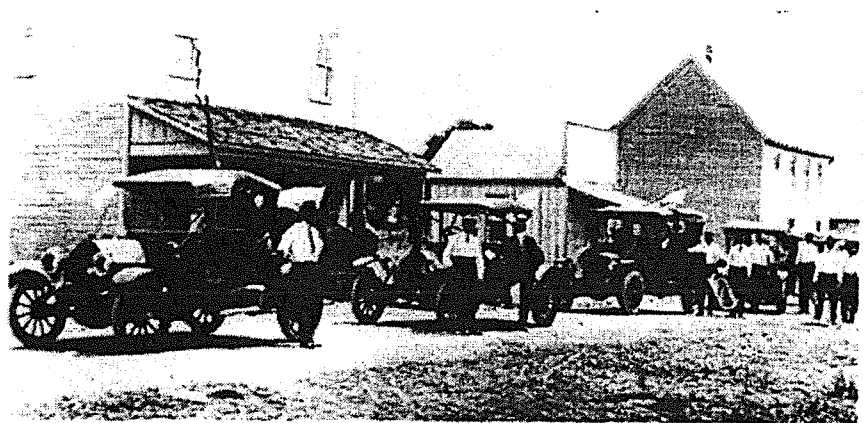
The potential for future rail transit station development in the immediate vicinity of the Smithfield area of the City of North Richland Hills, combined with its historic importance to the community and citizens of the city and of Northeast Tarrant County, and continued potential for tourism development, calls for the development of guidelines and standards for new, compatible development in the Smithfield district that both fosters economic growth and development and acknowledges and celebrates the Smithfield community's cultural and architectural history. The purpose of this report is to outline several potential development scenarios for future rail transit station development and recommend guidelines for future development that will meet these important community goals.

The report defines the proposed physical limits of a Smithfield Conservation District, suggests possible locations in the immediate vicinity for future consideration for rail transit station facilities, outlines suggestions for future street and building parcel configuration at certain locations, proposes locations for entry or gateway features to the district, and provides design guidelines for both private development of buildings and properties in the district and public improvements such as streetscaping and street lighting design.

Original Town of Smithfield

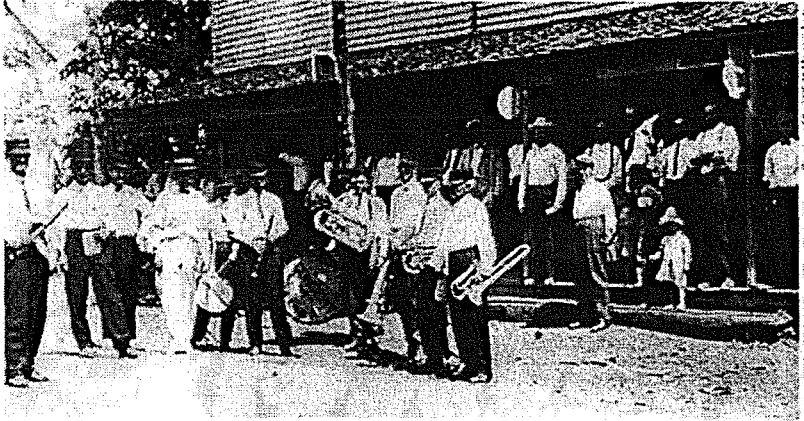
As outlined in the 1992 (?) *Smithfield Area Feasibility Study* by Municipal Planning Resources Group, Inc., the history of the Smithfield community has a long and important history. Its story began in 1856, with the founding of the Willow Springs Methodist Church on the farmland of William and Mary Turner. The surrounding community took the name "Zion" in about 1873 and in 1876, Eli Smith donated part of his nearby farm to the Zion community for the community's cemetery. Residents of the area later honored Smith for this generosity and community spirit by renaming the settlement Smithfield. Eli Smith and many members of his family are buried in the cemetery that now occupies the land he donated. As recently as 1935, Smithfield was an independent community ten miles northeast of Fort Worth with a population of 137, nine businesses and a school. In 1951, Smithfield incorporated, but voted in 1958 to end its incorporation and become annexed to the adjacent city of North Richland Hills.

The historic character and urban design of the Smithfield community represents the typical vernacular architectural vocabulary of small North Texas farming towns of the late 19th and early 20th century. One- and two-story, mostly wood-framed buildings were interspersed with brick and stone houses and commercial buildings.



Smithfield Main Street during the 1920s, with the Masonic Lodge at right.

Flat and gabled roof forms topped simply detailed structures, set near to the originally unpaved streets in order to facilitate loading and unloading of wagons, and later motor vehicles, owned by the farmers who came to the crossroads to market, worship, board or ship goods on the Cotton Belt Railroad that had a station at Smithfield, attend Masonic Lodge meetings or gather for public events.



The Grapevine Band visits Main Street in Smithfield in the early 1900s

The early 20th century Feed Store represents the architectural character of Smithfield for much of its history.

Findings and Recommendations

While detailed planning and development for a rail transit facility to serve the City of North Richland Hills is still sometime off, the most likely and appropriate locations for an eventual commuter or light rail station near the Smithfield district would be

- (1) the historic location of the Smithfield railroad depot, the south side of the existing rail tracks just east of Davis Boulevard. This site has present advantages of no current development and the possibility of acquisition of additional undeveloped property for the necessary parking; or
- (2) along the existing rail tracks immediately west of Davis Boulevard. This site has the present significant disadvantage of longtime, important commercial/industrial users of the land. Its advantage for rail station development, however, is its physical proximity to the Smithfield district commercial core without the intrusion of busy Davis Boulevard, which will serve as an impediment to rail passenger pedestrian access to the Smithfield district.

It is important to effectively promote and preserve the Smithfield area as a unique and historic location and destination that is differentiated from other commercial areas of the City of North Richland Hills. Therefore, the area to be subject to the Smithfield Conservation District design guidelines should be delineated rather narrowly, to incorporate the historic commercial and institutional core of the Smithfield community. To create a much larger area of differentiated architecture and public design standards would create false history and dilute the authenticity and sense of place that the core Smithfield area could present to visitors and residents. Thus, the proposed boundary of a Smithfield conservation district is limited to:

- the northern boundary of the Smithfield Elementary School property on the north
- Davis Boulevard on the east
- Mid Cities Boulevard on the south
- the first fifty feet of property fronting on the west side of Smithfield Road on the west.

This area includes the remaining historic buildings of the immediate Smithfield community -- the old Methodist Church, now a daycare center, the cemetery, the Feed Store, and the Hightower-Autrey House -- and is bounded by important thoroughfares leading into and out of the district.

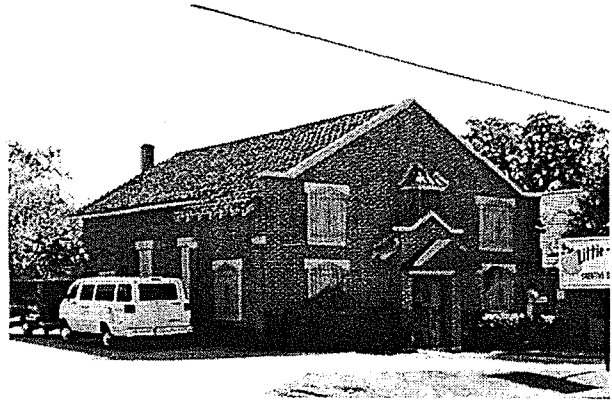
In addition, important though modern institutional buildings that represent longstanding historic organizations in the community -- the Baptist, Christian and



The Hightower/Autrey House, dating from the 1880s, is the last 19th century historic residence in the city, and represents an excellent and rare example of this style and type of farmhouse.

Methodist Churches and the Masonic Lodge – as well as new commercial buildings that have been carefully designed to reference the historic architecture of Smithfield are strategically located within this proposed district boundary.

The 1935 Methodist Church, one of the few remaining historic buildings in Old Smithfield that helps to preserve its architectural character.



It is further recommended that the property south of Main and west of Center St., including the tract presently occupied by the fence company, be considered for future development as an expansion of the “street grid pattern,” that is, to include a public or private street extending east of Smithfield to connect with a southern extension of Center Street. The creation of this additional block of building lots that can be developed as street frontage for retail/commercial uses would be an appropriate and highly marketable expansion of the “Main Street” image of the Smithfield district in a concentrated area. This block of new development would be either immediately adjacent to a future rail station on the west side of Davis or immediately opposite a station located on the east side. By creating more street frontage, a larger mass of pedestrian-oriented commercial development can be created. As the scope of this design guidelines study does not include the master planning or land use activity required to fully address such a proposal, the guidelines at this juncture can only recommend the design standards that would be appropriate for this “new” area as it is incorporated into the Smithfield district.

Guidelines

The proposed design guidelines for the Smithfield conservation district would include standards for streetscape improvements on:

- Main St. from Davis to Smithfield
- Smithfield from Mid-Cities to the Elementary School (Courtland)
- Center St. and the recommended “new” street connecting Smithfield to Center
- Davis Boulevard (west side) from Mid-Cities to a point opposite Courtland St.

As discussed above, a critical element in marketing the “special character” of a district conceived and developed to reference and celebrate the historic nature of Smithfield, and to be differentiated from other commercial areas of the city, is the differentiation of streetscape elements. Therefore, these guidelines will recommend adoption of streetlight and other street furniture selections that are consciously different from those adopted in the city’s Image Study.

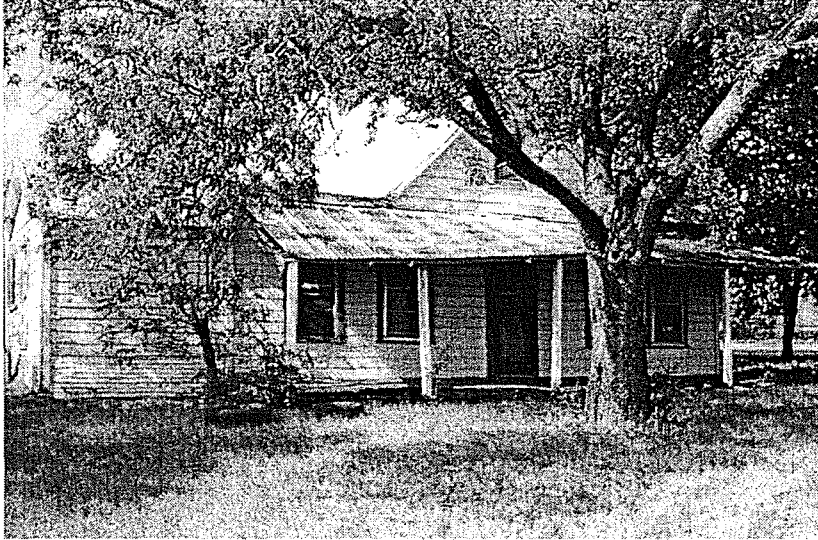
The goal of the guidelines recommendation will be to adopt a street furniture and lighting standard that is cost effective in both purchase and maintenance.

Standards and guidelines for building design in the conservation district reference and acknowledge the unique character of the structures that previously existed in Smithfield. Thus, the guidelines recommend one- and two-story buildings, constructed to a “build-to” line that is essentially the sidewalk edge. Both brick and wood frame or substitute (e.g. cementitious or “HardiePlank”) materials will be recommended, with standards for window and door opening rhythms, materials and details; roof shape and pitch; porch or canopy design, etc. included. Because of the irregular lot size and ownership pattern existing in the district, the scale of new development is addressed by recommending a “module” dimension approach for street-facing facades. For example, a large scale development with extensive street frontage will be required to break up the façade in a regular module pattern that suggests historic building front dimensions. Off- street parking will of course be limited to the rear of street-facing buildings in the district, and it is recommended that the city encourage shared parking agreements among new developments in order to reduce the physical and visual impact of surface parking lots on this unique and historic area.

The large, irregularly shaped land parcel extending north of Main Street along Davis Boulevard is a special property with unique conditions that suggest specific design guidelines for its eventual development. While the frontage on Davis Boulevard would be inappropriate for development that would meet the “build to” pedestrian character of Main St. and other areas internal to the Smithfield district, any new development that is internalized on the property and is accessed from Main Street should meet the same design and site standards as the rest of the district. If the property affords adequate depth to “double load” development, a public or private street extending northward from Main Street should intersect at right angles with a roadway connecting to Davis Boulevard, thereby extending the “street grid” of Smithfield and avoiding an inappropriately “suburban” cul-de-sac condition.

Gateways

The locations of gateway or entry features at key roadway intersections to announce arrival in and directions to the Smithfield district are particularly important to the successful and economically viable development of a special Smithfield district. A wayfinding element at a re-designed intersection of Smithfield Road and Davis Boulevard, directing motorists north to the Smithfield district, and an entry feature at or near the intersection of Smithfield and Mid-Cities Boulevard should be developed. A northern entry feature should be located near the elementary school and the historic Hightower-Autry House across the street.



This remarkable landmark property is particularly significant by virtue of its age, architectural design and association with important Smithfield families; every effort should be made by the community to preserve and find a compatible adaptive use for this landmark, for it can serve as an outstanding entry feature to the conservation district. A larger scaled entry feature announcing the Smithfield district should be placed on or near Davis Boulevard near Main Street, particularly if a future rail station is located on the east side of Davis.

Design Guidelines

Smithfield Conservation District

I. Site Considerations

A. Building Setbacks

Objective

Building setbacks help define street and sidewalk areas as active public spaces. Historically, commercial buildings in Smithfield were built close to the front property line, behind a sidewalk, pathway, or canopy and were free-standing structures rather than built to fill the width of the lot. This “street wall” shall be retained and reinforced in new construction in the area.

Guidelines

- Constructing buildings to the back of sidewalks, along the street, and close to side property lines reinforces the vitality of the public sidewalk.
- Locating building entrances and storefront windows close to the street helps to maintain visual supervision of the street and sidewalk areas.

- New construction should take into consideration existing buildings with windows on, or adjacent to, side and rear property lines. Providing an appropriate setback to new buildings adjacent to existing older buildings with windows facing sideyards allows for light, air and usable space between the buildings.
- Allowing side setbacks for new buildings adjacent to existing side windows preserves visual access. Side setbacks can provide opportunities for entry features, pedestrian passageways to parking at the rear, private patios, or service access.

B. Driveways and Parking Lots

Objective

To establish and reinforce a pedestrian oriented district that concentrates on retail and transit related uses, off street parking locations and the curb cut entrances and driveways that provide access to them should be minimized along the streets in order to provide a safe pedestrian environment by minimizing the impact of automobiles.

Guidelines

- The road edge should be clearly defined and entrances defined by landscaping or lighting.
- A majority of the street frontage of a property should have a building wall at the sidewalk edge.
- Off-street parking should not be allowed to interrupt the continuity of retail along the block faces. This is important to both preserve and enhance the historic character of the district and to strengthen its retail, pedestrian character.
- Existing parking located adjacent to streets and sidewalks should be screened at the established building setback line and to the height of automobile hoods. This will provide continuity of the building façade line, screen unsightly views and will provide a level of security by allowing views to and from sidewalks. New building development should be encouraged at these locations to reinforce the continuous blockface.
- Off-street parking lots should be located behind buildings so they are subordinated to other site features and their visual impact minimized.
- Driveway curb cut entrances should be minimized, with shared ingress and egress points for neighboring buildings encouraged, limited to one per block face on the primary streets where possible, and with minimum pavement opening radius in order to limit the intrusion into pedestrian space and minimize the inappropriate interfacing of cars and pedestrians.
- The surface area of paving material should be minimized, and landscaping elements that soften the visual impact of a parking lot should be included in the site design.

C. Other Outdoor Areas

Objective

All sites in Smithfield should be improved for uses and activities to reduce vandalism, increase safety and to provide more attractive, functional and defensible spaces. “Defensible spaces”

are areas designed and constructed to contribute to public safety. The rear portions of many commercial buildings often face dark, unattractive loading areas that can also collect unwanted trash and garbage.

Guidelines

- Sites should be designed to maximize visual supervision, lighting and safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation through and around spaces.
- Rear-lot areas of commercial buildings in the Smithfield district provide an opportunity for well-designed service access, deliveries, proper trash collection enclosures, and additional parking.
- In some cases, rear-yard areas may provide opportunities for creating attractive outdoor areas for dining, gardens and patios spaces.

II. Building Design

Building design guidelines for Smithfield address the exterior of buildings and the relationship of buildings to the surrounding setting or context and the street. While building design decisions must balance many factors including economic constraints, programmatic needs, functional requirements, and aesthetics, the relationship of each building to its neighbor and its visual and architectural character to the heritage of the Smithfield community are the primary issues of public concern.

Major design principles

There are two major design principles that are paramount to building design in Smithfield. The first is the principle of “*context*” – how well does the proposed building fit within the historic Smithfield district setting. The second major principle is “*pedestrian friendly streets*” – how does the building design contribute to creating an active pedestrian street life.

Historic context

By evaluating the existing historic buildings in the surrounding area, as well as the historical record of former buildings and structures that characterized the Smithfield community, major reoccurring design elements help create the image of Smithfield as a historic place. These design elements include features such as building location and setbacks, building heights, building form, rhythm of openings, rhythm of horizontal building lines, color, materials, texture, building style, and building details. Historically, a pattern of repeated design elements contributed to the overall character and image of Smithfield. A new building proposal need not match every building element to fit within the context. The more elements a new building design addresses, however, the more likely the design will contribute to the desired design appearance of the Smithfield Conservation District.

It is important, however, to note that creating a visual distinction between new buildings from older, historic structures distinguishes the authentic and historic parts of the Smithfield community. Additions and new construction that are sympathetic to the historic building styles and design, yet representative of their own time, avoids creating a “phony” or inauthentic historic look that misrepresents the community’s real history to visitors and residents.

Pedestrian-friendly streets

The types of building design elements that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly street environment include: street-level activities, building to the edge of sidewalks, storefront windows and openings at the ground floor, awnings and canopies over window displays and entries, pedestrian amenities along the street, and extending building activities into the sidewalks such as outdoor seating, dining and sales displays.

A. Building Form

Objective

Building form should be consistent with the character of Smithfield as a historic early 20th century commercial center and should reinforce the pedestrian activity at the street level. Historically, buildings in the center of Smithfield were rectangular in shape and one- or two-stories in height, covering most of the width of building lots. This building shape creates a regular rhythm of building mass and streetwall along the street. The buildings are articulated with simple architectural details reflecting vernacular, rather than high-style, architectural vocabularies, commercial window displays, and entries at the street level that create an attractive pedestrian-friendly environment.

Guidelines

- The form and mass of buildings in the Smithfield consist of rectangular building forms limited to one- or two-stories in height. Curving, undulating or diagonal building forms or elements or buildings taller than two stories are inconsistent with traditional Smithfield architecture.
- Blank walls on the ground floor of street frontages are unattractive and uninviting. Ground story facades facing the street shall feature display windows with large expanses of glass -- rather than multiple individual panes -- surmounting simple wood paneled kickplates.
- Multiple paned transom windows above entry doors and storefront windows are appropriate embellishments to street level facades.
- Recessed entries provide weather protection, protect passing pedestrians from opening doors, and add attractive detail to the storefront. Do not recess the entire storefront.
- Simple architectural ornamentation at the street level of buildings such as wood cornices or cast iron columns can both accent buildings, and provide visual interest for pedestrians and motorists. Do not incorporate high style architectural ornamentation that does not reflect the vernacular early 20th century design context of Smithfield.

B. Horizontal Rhythm

Objective

New buildings shall fit with the general character and image of the Smithfield area. Historically, buildings in Smithfield had a distinct horizontal rhythm along their front facades at the ground story. This horizontal rhythm was created by the size of the lots, the rhythm of openings (windows and entries) along the street, and the use of common horizontal window lines, building lines and cornices. The rhythm is also reinforced with the use of common building materials and window proportions. The repetition of these common elements in building facades creates a continuous band along a block. The most common band is the division -- at a similar height -- between the storefronts and upper facades of any two-story buildings and a cornice line on one-story buildings at the same height. A predominance of canopies or awnings extending along several facades, the alignment of windows and windowsills, and the alignment of floor-to-floor building lines also accentuate the horizontal massing of buildings in the district. The horizontal rhythms of building facades reinforces the pedestrian activity at the street level, and help to unify the image and character of each block in the Smithfield.

Individual landmark buildings, such as a church or school, can appropriately interrupt this rhythm. However, too many landmark buildings clustered together can disrupt the overall unity of the urban streetscape and can also diminish the distinct character of each individual building.

Guidelines

- A building larger than the width seen traditionally in the district should be divided into modules that are similar in scale to typical buildings. The modules should be expressed three-dimensionally throughout the entire building mass, expressed in a setback of wall planes, a change in primary façade material for the full width of the module or addition of vertical trim or other architectural elements. Variations in façade treatment should appear throughout the structure, including in the roof massing and rear elevations.
- Large project sites should be developed with several buildings, rather than a single structure.
- The horizontal rhythm of the street wall shall be reinforced in new buildings by using a similar alignment of windowsills, building lines, floor lines, cornices, rooflines, and floor-to-floor spacing along a blockface.
- Using building design elements such as cornice lines, ground floor canopies and awnings, overhangs and windowsills helps to maintain a clear visual division in building design between the street level (ground floor retail uses) and upper floors.

C. Proportion and Design of Openings

Objectives

The proportion and rhythm of door and window openings should reflect the historic image and character of Smithfield. A common element is the similar size, spacing and shape of window openings. Historic buildings that were two stories had narrow, vertical openings above the horizontal ground floor storefronts. (More modern style buildings, however, often use continuous “ribbons” of glass that are horizontal in form and wrap the building with no spacing between openings.) Repeating the pattern of historic window openings helps to reinforce the character of Smithfield as different from other suburban centers in North Richland Hills.

Guidelines

- Maintaining building widths and historic proportions and spacing of building openings (windows and entries) preserves the architectural character of Smithfield street facades.
- The primary entrance to buildings shall be clearly defined and oriented to the street, and not to parking areas or side or rear elevations.
- Openings above the ground story in the facades of Smithfield buildings should be narrow, vertically oriented windows, double hung in appearance, with no more than two lights (panes of glass) per sash.
- Clear or very slightly tinted glass should be used in upper story and storefront windows. No reflective, heavily tinted, patterned or sandblasted glass should be used in storefront or upper story windows. Patterned, colored or sandblasted glass can be appropriately used in transoms above storefront windows, however.

D. Roof Form

Objective

Historically, buildings in Smithfield had flat or moderately pitched gable roof shapes. Flat roofs with parapets or pitched roofs with false parapets were typical of commercial buildings in similar late 19th and early 20th century rural crossroads communities. Vernacular architectural styles such as those found in Smithfield did not incorporate high style features such as towers, spires or special cornice designs.

Guidelines

- Flat roof forms with parapets, or gable roofs either facing or perpendicular to the street with a 5/12 or similar pitch are appropriate to the character and image of historic Smithfield.
- Articulated roof shapes such as stepped building setbacks or unique rooftop elements are not appropriate in the Smithfield district.
- Roof forms inconsistent with the character of Smithfield include: sloped roof shapes on one-story commercial buildings except those with a false parapet on the front elevation, false mansard roofs and curving roofs.
- A visual terminus, such as a simple cornice, at the tops of two-story buildings helps reinforce the character of Smithfield architecture.

E. Building Materials

Objective

Buildings shall use high quality building materials that reinforce the solid and reliable image of Smithfield and provide a consistent visual relationship within the district so as to enhance the pedestrian experience at the street level. Building materials add greatly to the overall character and experience of the district. While the structural construction materials may vary, the public face of buildings, or finish materials, should be consistent. Smithfield's historic buildings, fashioned from the local materials of the North Central Texas prairie and reflecting local traditions, share a history. In Smithfield, brick, stone and wood were commonly used building materials. These materials provided a strong and consistent image in the environment of the community. Building materials on the ground floor of buildings are especially important. The ground floor is where most people can easily come into contact with the building's edge, where materials can be touched and easily seen. Quality building materials and their application add texture and richness to the pedestrian environment.

Guidelines

- Materials used in the construction of new buildings or additions should be typical of common building materials of the historic period and location, including brick; stone indigenous to North Texas such as dark fieldstone; or horizontal wood siding of dimensions similar to novelty, shiplap or tongue-and-groove. Cementitious horizontal siding, in a smooth, paintable finish and of traditional dimensions may be used in place of wood siding.
- Use of non-historic materials such as exterior insulation finish systems, metal, stucco, artificial stone, mirrored or structural glass, curtainwall, concrete block, diagonal wood, rough-sawn wood, wood shingles, fake brick, or stone or gravel aggregate materials on large building surfaces is incongruous with the historic quality of Smithfield and may not be used. Non-indigenous stone, such as white limestone typically found in Central Texas, is also inappropriate to the Smithfield district.
- Stone patterns, sizes and color of individual stones should be similar to those found in historic stone buildings in the area, or typical of structures of this type, age or vicinity.
- Masonry bonding patterns, sizes and color should be similar to those found in the historic commercial and institutional buildings nearby, or typical of structures of the type, age and vicinity.
- Mixing of materials, such as use of stone on a front elevation and wood or cementitious siding on visible side elevations, should be minimized, as it does not reflect the historic use of buildings materials.
- Rear elevations of buildings, particularly those that face an alley or parking area, should be simplified and secondary to that of the primary façade. However, the same materials should be used at rear facades as those on primary elevations.

IV. Design Details

A. Awnings and Canopies

Objective

Awnings and canopies shall be encouraged to create a more pedestrian scale experience along commercial streets at sidewalk level, while providing protection from inclement weather and the sun. They help to define the pedestrian space along commercial building facades. Canopies and awnings can also provide an architectural element to help articulate the building façade, creating greater variety and interest at the street level. Besides being a historic design element of commercial buildings in Smithfield as depicted in historic photographs, they can also provide appropriate places for signs advertising the uses contained within the buildings. Awnings and canopies come in many shapes, styles and colors. In general, awnings should fit the historic character of the district and building, be well maintained, functional and not obstruct the flow of pedestrian movement along the public sidewalk space.

Guidelines

- Use of canopies and awnings throughout the district on ground floors of commercial uses, by locating them over window displays and entries along public sidewalks, creates a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Carefully design canvas or other fabric awnings in terms of size, shape and placement such that they fit within individual bays or structural divisions of the building façade rather than extending beyond a single bay. Poorly placed awnings can cover decorative ornaments, transoms or other architectural elements of the façade and overwhelm the simple articulation of the building itself.
- Fixed, rolled front awnings of corrugated metal, as found in many early 20th century North Texas commercial districts, are appropriate for the Smithfield district.
- Fixed canopies may extend the width of a commercial building, and may be supported at the outer edge by simple wood or metal posts, as long as the supports do not interfere with pedestrian passage along the front sidewalk.
- Encouraging the use of retractable canvas awnings on darker areas, or north-facing facades of storefronts, will enhance the climatic environment for the pedestrian.
- Using awnings and canopies over storefronts and entries provide opportunities for colorful accents and signage that creates an interesting and active retail street frontage. Note that especially bright-colored canvas awnings often fade over time, creating a maintenance or replacement problem. Light-colored canvas awnings on darker and north facing facades allow daylight to filter through to storefronts.
- Vinyl, striped aluminum or plastic awnings and canopies appear impermanent and are inappropriate as they are not in keeping with the historic character of the district.
- Fixed awnings or canopies that simulate solid, mansard roof shapes or solid forms detract from the existing urban design vocabulary of the Smithfield.

V. Signs

A. Building Identification Signs

Objective

Signs shall be designed as integral parts of the site and architectural design of proposed projects. The guidelines provide suggestions on how to design signs that enhance the character

of buildings and support a pleasant, pedestrian scale environment at the street level. Attractive, artistic, well-proportioned and thoughtfully located signs will enhance the image of Smithfield district. In general, signs should relate in placement and size to other building elements. They should not obscure a building's distinctive architectural elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details. Sign materials should complement building façades. Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, lettering style, and placement on the building. Franchises and chain stores will adapt their graphics to meet local guidelines and ordinances. This will contribute to a district that effectively orients visitors, while supporting an attractive, pedestrian-friendly experience.

Guidelines

General Sign Guidelines

- Maintain a minimum clearance above the public right-of-way for signs that project from buildings to help prevent accidents and enhances pedestrian safety.
- Protruding signs above rooflines, eaves or parapets creates unsightly facades and detracts from the architectural quality of the building and are inappropriate.
- Firmly anchor signs that project from the building to the building façade with attractive, non-corrosive hardware that will not damage the façade of the building.
- Use of darker letters against a lighter background makes the sign more legible for the viewer.
- Encouraging merchants to create their own unique signs, symbolic of their personal business creates a distinct Smithfield district that effectively orients visitors.
- Create a network of quality, well-designed signs, that clearly announce the type of services/uses offered.

Flush Mounted Signs

Flush mounted signs are signboards or individual die-cut letters placed directly on the facade of a building. Historically a brick recess or horizontal molded band was designed to accommodate a flush mounted sign.

- Fit signs within the proportions of the building façade so they do not extend above the top of a building wall or parapet.
- Locate flush mounted signs on a historic storefront along a first floor cornice line, above the awning or transom windows to maintain the architectural character of the building.
- Center signs within storefront bays and do not extend beyond the limits of the storefront or over elements such as columns, pilasters or transoms.
- Use of die-cut letter signs made from materials consistent with the district and mounted directly on the building is encouraged.

Hanging/Blade Signs

Blade signs are suspended or mounted on buildings, perpendicular to the sidewalk, and usually placed just above eye level.

- Maintain a minimum clearance above the sidewalk as a public safety measure.
- Blade signs should have effective with areas of no more than three (3') square feet
- Directly illuminate blade signs located beneath awnings.
- Encourage blade signs that use logos, business icons and symbols.

Window Signs

Window signs identify the corresponding building uses or activities and preserve a majority of the display area for maximum visibility for passing pedestrians.

- Do not exceed 20% of the total area of the window with signs.
- Window signs should be made of high quality materials such as paint or gold leaf, or that are etched into the glass.

Lighted Signs

Externally lit signs are appropriate in the Smithfield area.

- Light signs externally with gooseneck or other appropriate, simple lighting fixtures.
- Plastic backlit signs are inappropriate for the district.
- Containing light within the frame of externally illuminated signs accentuates the message and reduces glare and light pollution.

Neon and Bare Bulb Signs

The careful and limited use of neon and bare bulb signs can add to the historic quality and uniqueness of the Smithfield district.

- The use of neon and bare bulb signs for entertainment uses such as restaurants or performance facilities, is consistent with the traditional use of such signs and appropriate in the district.
- Small-scaled neon signs within storefront windows, particularly to indicate opening times, etc., are also appropriate in the district.
- Utilizing the pictorial images related to the particular business fabricated in neon makes for an attractive user-friendly experience.

Signs on Awnings

Painting signs on the valence (vertical flap) of an awning is an inexpensive and simple method of creating signage.

- Individual letters may be painted directly on the valence of an awning facing the street.
- Awning text should have an area not exceeding 10 square feet.
- Limit signage on the sloping surface of an awning to small graphic symbols or logos unique to a particular business.

Directional Signage for Parking Lots

- Contain directional signs marking entries and exits to customer parking lots to no more than one commercial image, logo or message that is subservient to text identifying "customer parking."
- Limit each driveway to no more than one directional sign, located on private property near sidewalks.

Sign Types Not in Keeping with Historic Character and Not Allowed

- Building signs advertising products and vendors, rather than business types and services.
- Flashing, animated, blinking, rotating, reflecting or revolving signs.
- Electronic reader boards and other similar sign types.

- Changeable copy signs, other than for use with a movie marquee.
- Chalkboards or blackboards, other than for use in a restaurant or on a café menu board.
- Portable signs, such as “A” frame signs.
- New, freestanding commercial signs (directional signs for customer parking, etc.).
- Off-site and general advertising signs and billboards.
- Standard product and logo signs provided by national distributors (merchants are encouraged to create their own unique signs, symbolic of their personal business).
- Advertising signs, other than graphic symbols or logos unique to a business, located on the sloping surface of awnings.
- Signs, other than real estate notices, on vacant or closed buildings.
- Temporary signs and promotional decorations, such as pennants and balloons (with the exception of holiday decorations, which should be removed promptly after a holiday has passed).
- Signs on privately owned benches.
- Signs using fluorescent material.
- Private signs on public property.

VI. Circulation and Streetscape

A. Pedestrian Circulation

Objective

The design of pedestrian circulation should create an effective, safe and continuous travel corridor for pedestrians, serving the same major destinations as automobiles. The pedestrian circulation serves local businesses and institutions by providing pedestrian access to buildings; serves future transit and transit facilities; provides open space and public outdoor activity space to the community, and provides a buffer from the traffic and noise of the street. An active and vital pedestrian environment at the street level is critical to establishment of Smithfield as a unique economic retail center, a potential rail station location and as a reference to the community’s early history. The pedestrian circulation system requires attention to safety as well as comfort and ease of access. Pedestrian safety and comfort are directly related to the width of the sidewalk and the buffers created from the travel lanes in the street. The pedestrian character of the streets is also created by the spatial relationship established by the adjacent buildings and landscaping, which helps to create a “sense of place” distinguishing Smithfield from other commercial centers and enhancing adjacent property values.

Guidelines

- Adequate width for sidewalk uses is important to move people along the street to window shop and make purchases, provide for occasional loading and unloading, on-street parking and the use of street furniture. Wider sidewalks (ten feet or more) accommodate more intensive pedestrian traffic and uses on the sidewalk by local merchants and residents.
- The width of sidewalks should be a maximum and minimum of 10 feet. Wider sidewalks provide enough room for two people walking together to pass one another without making abrupt changes in direction, provide space for pedestrian amenities

closer to the street travel lanes, and allow for outdoor eating and displays.

- Mid-block pedestrian crosswalks can be added where blocks are too long to reasonably expect pedestrians to use corner crosswalks. Mid-block crosswalks should be added only where factors such as street width, traffic speed and sight lines allow for safe pedestrian crossings.
- Use of special, decorative paving treatments can help to separate the pedestrian zone from the street travelways at intersection crossings.
- A continuous sidewalk improvement along major arterial streets insures safe pedestrian connections. Where ever possible new projects and renovation of exiting sites should close the gaps between pedestrian connections by providing pedestrian and sidewalk improvements on all streets.
- The placement of street furniture, utility poles, parking meters, signs, and street trees should be spaced to not obstruct movement from the parking space to the building entry, or prevent car doors from opening at the sidewalk edge.

B. On-Street Parking

Objective

On-street parking helps to create an active and vital street life, improves the safety of pedestrians on the sidewalk and provides additional convenient parking and access to adjoining activities and uses. It also provides a buffer zone between the pedestrian sidewalk and the travel lanes in the street. While on-street parking decreases the capacity of the adjacent travel lanes to a certain degree, it also slows or calms traffic and encourages future retail spending by motorists whose eye is caught by adjacent storefront or occasional sidewalk displays. On-street parking should be designed to be safe and convenient for users and fit the level of activity on adjacent properties and the level of traffic in the street.

C. Hardscape Elements

Design Objective

Hardscape elements such as pedestrian kiosks, benches, bus shelters, newspaper racks, trash cans and café tables furnish the street environment with functional elements and enhance community livability. They increase opportunities for people to socialize and spend time outdoors along public streets, and thereby enhance the urban character of the Smithfield district. Large front lawns, landscaped front setbacks and front yards are not in keeping with the urban image of the Smithfield district. Instead, simple and functional hardscape design elements are important to enhance and accentuate the urban quality of the district. Benches, lighting, well-maintained sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities enhance the pedestrian environment at the street level and add to the unique character of the district. The best streets encourage participation and invite safe leisurely walking. Remember, however, that the sidewalks and other streetscape amenities are not the primary focus in a retail environment: patrons' and visitors' attention should be focused on the buildings, storefronts and merchandise.

Guidelines

- Provide hardscape elements including paving materials, pedestrian street furniture, and

art along public streets that enhances the street environment by creating a pleasant and active place for people to walk, congregate, and interact informally.

- Where appropriate, considering additional hardscape elements, such as small entry plazas and seating alcove areas.
- Consider opportunities for public art displays along the streets.
- The pattern and texture of ground paving materials (sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.) should match the simple, vernacular context of the district, with brush finish concrete used for long sidewalk runs to simulate the gravel pedestrian pathways of the historic period. Consider using brick pavers only for accent materials at crosswalks, driveways entrances and key areas of pedestrian congregation.
- Use hardscape materials that are functional, able to endure weather conditions (rain and freeze/thaw conditions), solid quality and vandal resistant, yet are attractive and able to fit in with the context of materials in the district.

D. Street Trees

Objective

Trees, when carefully and conservatively selected and placed along the rights-of-way, can reinforce the historic, hometown image character of Smithfield and support the pedestrian friendly character of the street. They increase the desirability of pedestrian activity as well enhance the status of street and adjacent property values. Not only are trees attractive, they can improve air quality, add shading, reduce water runoff, and add to the property values of an area at a relatively low improvement cost. They define the pedestrian space along sidewalks and provide separation between the pedestrian zone and the travel lanes in the street. However, the judicious placement of mature canopy trees is important, in order to avoid obscuring storefront windows from the view of passing motorists, which impinges on the retail success of the area.

New development will better fit into Smithfield when it protects existing mature trees on the site and provides new trees of the same or similar variety. Landscaping should blend with adjacent landscaping, reinforce the pedestrian circulation system, direct people to building entrances, provide seasonal color and shade, and conserve water usage. Street trees in an urban area have to meet special conditions. To both functionally grow in an urban area and contribute to the street environment, urban street trees need to be carefully selected and maintained.

Guidelines

- When installing large canopy trees at intervals along the street, make certain they are appropriately placed so as not to obscure views of storefront windows, building entrances and other key retail-related features and elements.
- Select tree varieties that create a tall, shading canopy above the sidewalk and be pruned to maintain a clear space between the lower branches and the sidewalk and roadway. This helps prevent damage to cars and trucks and also protects important views of building signage and retail storefront displays.
- Selecting street trees that are easy to maintain helps reduce sidewalk damage.

E. Street Lighting

Objective

Appropriate street lighting fixtures are effective design elements that help to distinguish unique and historic environments like the Smithfield district from newer areas of a city. While Main Street in Smithfield did not historically have a distinctive street lighting system, installation of a unique, historically appropriate system will set the district apart and provide it with an image and a marketing edge that will enhance its economic success and attract visitors, residents and future transit riders.

Guidelines

- Select a unified street lighting style to fit the vernacular historic character of the Smithfield district, e.g. the historic, acorn lamp style provided by TXU.
- Maintain a consistent appearance of all decorative street lighting fixtures, street poles and bases.
- Select all streetlight fixtures to provide lighting for both the auto and sidewalks in the Smithfield district.
- To the extent feasible, placing light standards symmetrically along opposite sides of a street produces a pleasing, well-lit street.
- Plan for installation of electrical outlets and power panels in places of potential public gathering in order to provide the power necessary for holiday lighting and special events.

VII. Service, Loading and Mechanical Equipment

Objective

Service areas, loading docks, delivery areas, and mechanical equipment are all necessary functional elements of a vibrant and successful retail district. While necessary, these elements often detract from the pedestrian experience and the visual urban environment. Functional service areas of buildings should receive the same design attention and consideration as more public spaces. Although the materials and finishes need not be the highest quality, functional service requirements of a building should be carefully placed and screened to reduce the visual blight in the urban setting. In many cases, the functional requirements can be placed at the back of buildings, off alleyways and side streets. Screening and enclosures also offer the opportunity to create attractive and interesting design elements to a building project, rather than a purely functional solution

Guidelines

- Whenever feasible locate loading areas to be accessible from side streets or from the rear of buildings rather than from the street facade.
- Functionally separate loading areas from parking and pedestrian walkways to enhance

pedestrian safety and provide convenient access for delivery trucks.

- Locate and design loading areas to minimize their visibility from public areas and adjacent properties. Substantial and attractively constructed fences or walls should screen dumpsters and trash enclosures.
- Locate mechanical equipment (including air conditioning units, pipes, ducts, vents, access doors, meters, transformers and other building systems equipment), away from pedestrian ways and seating areas.
- Rooftop and ground mounted mechanical equipment and trash storage areas shall be screened from view from adjoining properties and public rights-of-way.