

# H. URBAN & ARCHITECTURAL CODE

*South Downtown Neighborhood, Hartford, CT*

*Oct. 2001*

## **Purpose of Code**

A well-designed urban and architectural code serves two purposes.

A) It guides new development and the revitalization of existing buildings and streets. This assures, to some degree, that the final product (development) is of the scale, quality, and character that the neighborhood envisions.

B) It lays out everything that is expected from a prospective developer, so that the process is streamlined, and projects can be built as soon as possible.

## **Principles**

This code is based on principles of good urbanism, based on observations of successful street and building design of the past five centuries. The emphasis is placed on creating mixed use, vibrant neighborhoods, where people feel welcome to live, work, visit and recreate.

## **Code Outline**

1. All new development to occur in the form of streets and blocks. Smaller blocks will be located downtown, the heart of the city.
2. All streets will connect to other streets to create an interconnected grid network. Streets will serve not only for the movement of vehicles, but the movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and others. Wherever there is a conflict, priority will be given to a choice favoring the pedestrian.
3. Buildings will be located next to sidewalk. Fronts of buildings will face the fronts of buildings across the street. Service areas will be located to the rear of the building, and face other service areas of other buildings.
4. To ensure a certain degree of safety, the front facade will have windows onto the street and the first 20' deep of the building min. will contain habitable space (*building space whose use involves human presence*).
  - blank walls will be prohibited.
  - porches permitted by right, but may not be enclosed.
5. Parking will be located on-street or within the block. Parking will be maximized wherever possible. The most efficient configuration for lots will be utilized.
  - in order to further maximize the real estate devoted to parking, parking will be shared.
  - a liner building (narrow building) will screen parking from street where necessary.
  - only parallel parking permitted on-street.
  - curb cuts to be minimized or eliminated altogether wherever possible.

Solutions to retrofit alleys wherever possible to enable access to many lots should be sought, so as to reduce the overall number of cuts on a street.

6. In order to shape the public space of the street, buildings will be taller than 2 stories.

#### Building

height with a relationship to the street of 1:1, 1:2 or 1:3 are the renaissance ideal, proportions that can help establish the min. height for each street.

- buildings on Main St. will be a min. of 4 stories (48' to cornice min.)

7. Building types will fit in appropriately with existing buildings, allow for maximum flexibility and reuse over their lifetimes.

- buildings 1 block or less from Main Street will be a min. of 2000 sf.

8. Buildings will be made from natural materials so that they age more gracefully over time.

9. Prohibited

- blank walls to the street
- parking lots enfronting a street
- one-story buildings (except civic buildings: churches, theaters...)
- cul-de-sacs

## **SOUTH DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CODE**

### **A. BOUNDARIES**

1. This code will govern new and existing building within the South Downtown Neighborhood, Hartford, CT, which is the area described clockwise as follows:

- West** Centerline of Washington Street  
**North** Centerline of Elm, Jewel, and Gold Streets  
**East** Centerline of Main Street  
**South** Rear property line of properties abutting Park Street

### **B. URBAN CODE**

#### **I. Blocks**

1. The rule of thumb is one side of block generally no longer than 400'. A block perimeter shall not exceed 2100 linear feet in total length.

#### **II. Lots**

1. All new platting shall reflect the lot dimensions described in the Architectural Code re: Typologies. Certain exceptions permitted and may be petitioned for approval with the Planning Department.

#### **III. Building Height**

1. Building height is measured from sidewalk to top of cornice. Building height is determined by street, the minimum and maximum number of stories as indicated on the Building Height plan.

2. Minimum floor height for buildings along Main, Park, Washington, Elm, Capitol, and Buckingham is 12'-0", all others 10'-0". All other floors min. floor height will be 8'-0'.

3. No building shall be constructed less than 2 stories in height excepting churches and theaters.
4. Civic and institutional buildings permitted to have architectural features above the cornice line (such as tower, dome...) providing they do not exceed 500 sf in plan and 25% of the overall permitted height.

#### **IV. Building Footprint**

1. Maximum building footprint permitted is 40,000 sf. Parking garages are exempt from the footprint cap.

#### **V. Building Placement**

1. Building placement is determined by the Building Typology, and the setback indicated on the Regulating Plan.
2. An enclosure wall or gate is required for all buildings not occupying 100% of the building frontage (see Architectural Code re: Enclosure Walls).
3. No facade may be longer than 250'.

#### **VI. Parking**

1. Parking requirements in South Downtown shall be as follows:

**Retail** 1 space per 500 sf

**Commercial** 1 space per 800 sf

**Residential** 1 space per 1000 sf or per unit  
(whichever is greater)

**Industrial** 1 space per 1000 sf

##### **Exceptions:**

- a. Parking waived for restaurants less than 2000 sf.
  - b. Life care facilities may petition for special approval to reduce parking requirement.
2. Parking requirements may be met by both on-street and parking on property. All on-site parking to be located behind building. On-street parking counted only for the street length which the property abuts.

##### **Parking space dimensions**

On-street: 25'-0" length

Off street: 9'-0" x 18'-0".

3. Parking requirements which cannot be met on property may be met by two means:
  - a. making a permanent arrangement elsewhere
  - b. contributing to a General Parking Fund toward the construction and operation of municipal garages (\$8,000 per space required).
4. Parking areas to be screened from street by an enclosing wall 3'-0" high, either built or natural, or a liner building (a long, narrow building, about 25' or less deep).

#### **VII. Building Use**

1. The first and second floors of all buildings must have a habitable space the first 20'-0" in depth enfronting the street.
2. Service areas (loading docks, shipping/receiving) to be located at back of building and will be back-to-back with other buildings' service areas. Utility connections and dumpsters will also be located in this area.
3. Commercial properties to be screened from adjacent residential properties by an enclosure wall min. 6'-0" high.
4. Uses permitted within the South Downtown Neighborhood are:

Commercial (retail, entertainment and office)  
Civic and institutional  
Industrial and artisanal  
Residential .

### VIII. Landscaping

1. The following flora is permitted within the R.O.W.'s with the South Downtown Neighborhood:  
Elm, Maple, Oak, Copper Beech, Sycamore, Ash

Some flowering trees may be used in addition to those above, providing they are used intermittently with those trees of stature listed.

2. Berms are prohibited.

### IX. Use of Sidewalk for Dining, Merchandise Display

1. Merchandise may be displayed on the sidewalk, providing that the display not exceed 6'-0" from the facade.
2. Dining permitted only in the sidewalk area adjacent to the curb, providing it does not exceed 5'-0" in total width.

## C. ARCHITECTURAL CODE

### I. Building Typologies

1. New building will be in the form of one of the six building types indicated on the Building Typologies Sheet.

### II. Fenestration

1. The building surface facing the public space of the street (facade) is of critical importance for both the building occupants and pedestrians. To enliven the street and ensure safety, **retail buildings** must be fenestrated as follows:

	MIN.	MAX.
First Floor	30%	80%
All others	30%	60%

3. Sill height for first floor is 24" for retail frontages, 36" in all other locations. Glazing to occur between sill height and 8'-0" above sidewalk on retail streets.
4. Only clear (transparent) glass will be considered to meet the fenestration requirements. Sandblasted or other translucent glass may be used only if compliance is met with all other criteria. Because it significantly decreases the view to the sidewalk, its use between 3'-0" and 7'-0" above sidewalk is prohibited.
5. Blank walls are not permitted; enclosure walls may not longer than 18' enfronting Main and Park Streets. Maximum blank wall anywhere in neighborhood: 30'-0". Garage doors permitted only in the industrial/artisanal areas and must meet the requirements stated above re: translucence and habitable space behind.

### III. Building Entrances

1. Pedestrian entrances not to be spaces any greater than 75'-0" apart. On retail streets entrances to be no greater than 35'-0" apart.
2. Main entrance to building must be from the main street. Rear entrances permitted if, *and only if*, there is a main entrance from a main street, and it is nicer and more substantial (larger or more detailed). Under no circumstances may a front entrance be closed off for preference of use of the rear entrance. Patrons exiting an establishment must be permitted to exit through the main entrance. A one way foot traffic pattern is

explicitly prohibited.

#### **IV. Building Materials**

1. Building to be constructed from natural materials that will weather gracefully over time, such as brick, stucco, stone, cast concrete, masonry, wood, etc.
2. Materials such as aluminum or vinyl siding, porcelain panels, imitation stucco (such as Dry-Vit, Sto-Wall, or other brands) are inappropriate as siding in this application, and are prohibited. Chain link fencing prohibited.
3. Existing buildings with these exterior finishes must meet these requirements if applying for a permit to expand building, or upgrade building interior >50%.
4. Materials following can only be used in the areas described:
  - a. Concrete may only be used for building walls, columns and pilasters, flooring.
  - b. Wood: for doors, window frames, mullions, sash, shutters, balconies, eaves, cornices, railings, columns, fences and pergolas.
  - c. Stucco: for building walls and enclosure walls.
  - d. Glass: for fenestration. Spandrel glass, tinted, and mirrored glass prohibited.

#### **V. Signage**

1. Pedestrian signs (signs perpendicular to facade) permitted, not to exceed 8 sf per side of sign. Signs may be lit by incandescent light only. Internally illuminated signs prohibited.
2. Signs attached to building permitted up to 24 sf per business. Signs must be externally lit. Internally illuminated signs prohibited.
3. Neon signs permitted for interior display only, not to exceed 4 sf total per business.
4. Signage on awning fringe prohibited.
5. Signage on storefront window may be stenciled and is encouraged. Signage should be minimal, describing only the business name and service.
6. Signage permitted on door or adjacent to door: Displaying hours of business only at 4'-6" or lower. Total area not to exceed 70 sq. inches; credit card symbols to be no larger than 16 sq in; menus may be displayed in a small lit showcase no larger than 4 sf, or may be posted in window, not to exceed 2 sf.

#### **VI. Expression Lines**

1. Expression lines on retail street buildings to occur at 2'-0" and 12'-0" above sidewalk and 12" below cornice. Expression lines to occur on other buildings at 2'-6" above sidewalk and 12" below cornice.

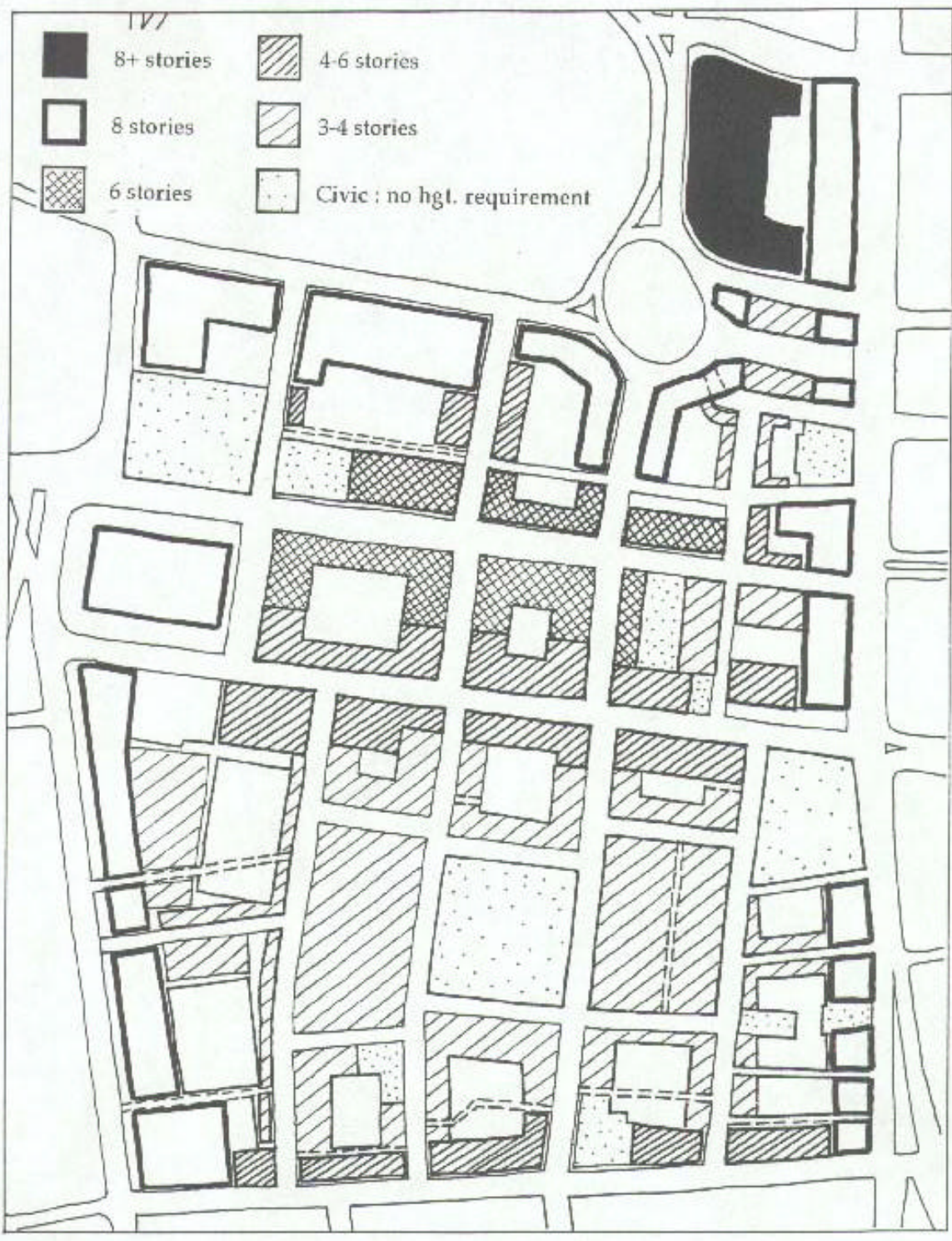


## REGULATING PLAN

### *Required Build-to Line*

This plan indicates the required line that the front façade must be built to. It is different for each lot, and potential developers should consult the original plan for an accurate (1"=100'-0") setback distance.





### REGULATING PLAN

*Building Height*

This plan indicates the minimum and maximum building height for each lot in the South Downtown Neighborhood.