Leadville Historic Preservation Commission Compatible Residential Infill Design Guidelines and Standards for the Leadville National Historic Landmark District

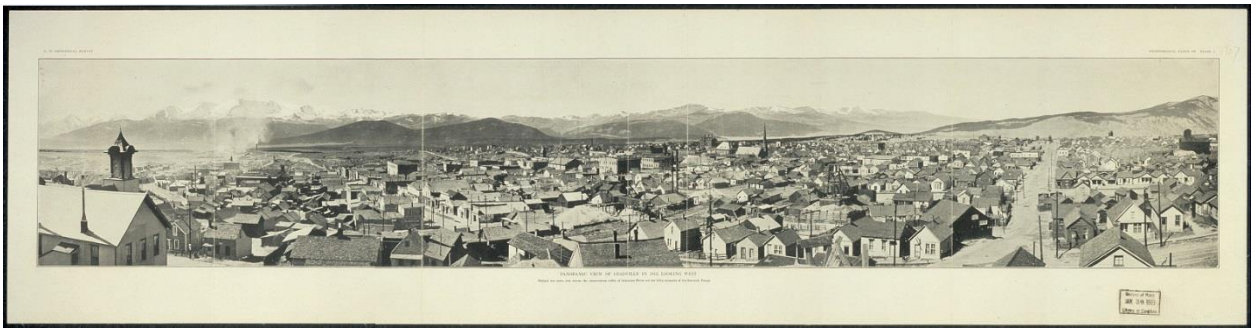

Figure 1. Panoramic view of Leadville 1912, Source: From the City of Leadville archive digital files.

Residential Infill Design Guidelines and Standards for the Leadville National Historic Landmark District

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Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the dedicated representatives of the City of Leadville who took part in the development of these Design Standards and Guidelines

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Figure 2. City of Leadville Zoning District

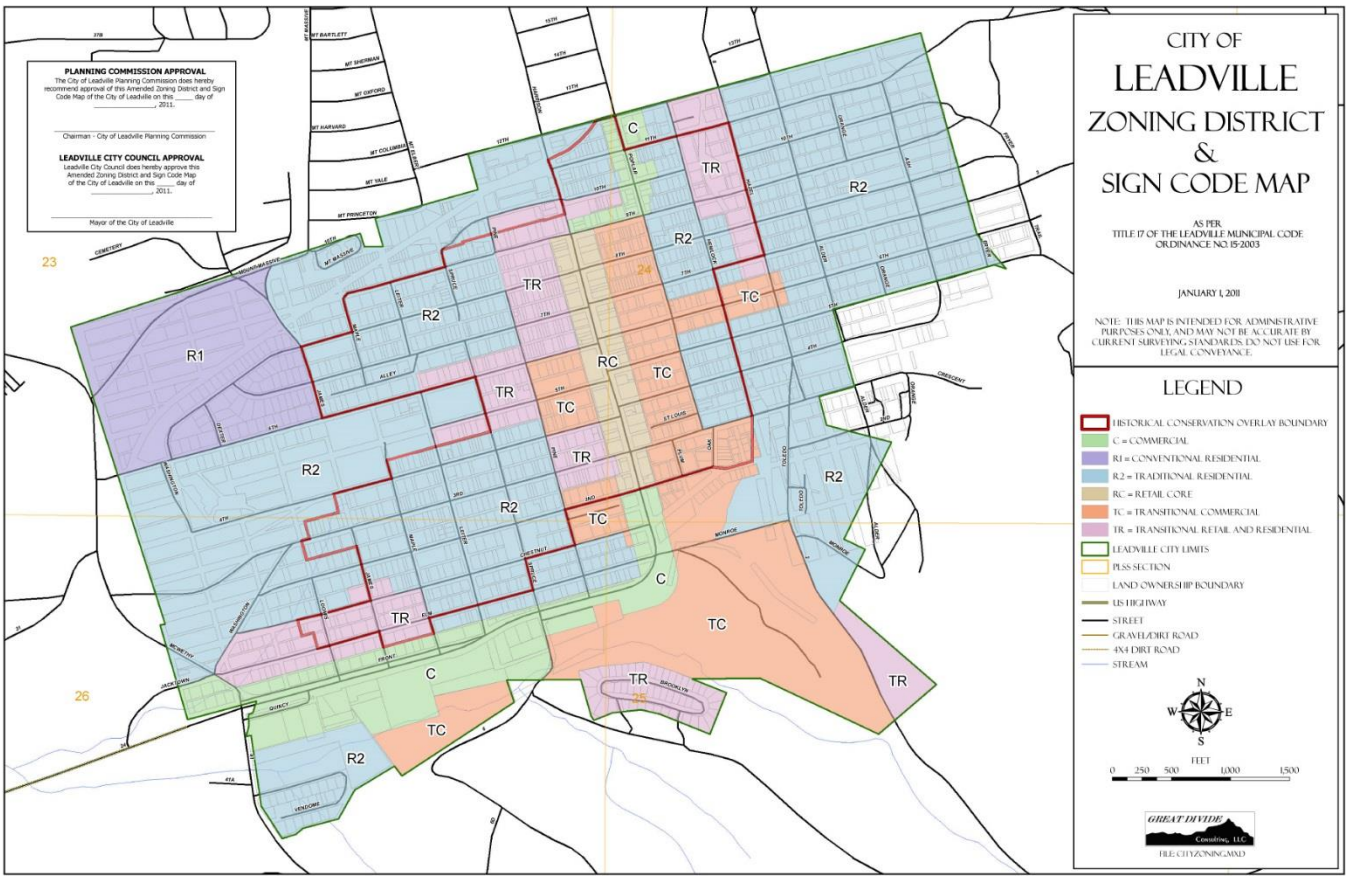

Figure 2. City of Leadville Zoning Legend and National Historic Landmark District in Red Line.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Why Have Design Guidelines and Standards?

These *Residential Infill Design Guidelines and Standards for the National Historic Landmark District of Leadville* ("Design Guidelines") represents the shared core values and policies of the Leadville community for design of the built environment. They are based on a commitment to preserving historic resources, enhancing livability and the overall design character of the city.

Leadville's National Historic Landmark (NHL) district, which in turn was one of the first NHLs designated in the nation, is one of only 7 NHL districts in the State of Colorado. Of the less than 85,000 National Register of Historic Places, Leadville is one of only 2,500 NHL districts in the country and is one of the largest in the State of Colorado.

What is Historically Significant in Leadville?

The historic buildings, sheds and site features of Leadville are valuable assets that contribute to the distinct character of the community. These resources have historic significance because they tell of an earlier time when mining in the Rocky Mountain West influenced the entire nation. They also convey a sense of the people that built the community during those boom times. Today, Leadville is still special, due to the efforts of its community to preserve the historic status of the district, as well as the sense of community and quality of life.

Purpose:

One purpose of Design Guidelines is to inform property owners about the design policies of the City. The policies focus on preserving the integrity of the community's historic resources and protecting the traditional character of the city. They indicate an approach to design that will help sustain the character of the community that is so appealing to residents and visitors.

A second purpose of Design Guidelines is to provide information for property owners to use in making decisions about new residential construction. This is accomplished by addressing basic principles of urban design that promote an environment that is scaled to the pedestrian, sustains cohesive neighborhood identity and respects the unique natural setting of Leadville.

This document further provides the City, as administered by the Leadville Historic Preservation Commission, with a basis for making informed, consistent decisions about proposed new residential construction and buildings and sites in the NHL District of the City of Leadville.

Some casual observers may not understand what is significant about Leadville's structures that survive from the mining era because they are not fancy. For those who expect all historic buildings to be mansions and monumental public edifices, the simple, vernacular construction of Leadville may appear to lack significance. The fact is, these vernacular structures help convey the reality of life in a mining boom city at the end of the nineteenth century, and it is their simplicity of design and modest scale that are so important. The structures that survive from that era serve as a connection with the past and help to inform people about it.

The intent of the Design Guidelines is to provide clear and concise direction to developers and property

owners in order to promote compatibility and preserve the integrity of the district. The Design Guidelines will be used as a tool in evaluating submittals for all new projects to be built as infill within the district.

Applicability:
Property owners, developers and architects should use this document when preparing site and architectural plans for new residential infill development. The Design Guidelines should be reviewed, and special care should be taken to address all situations where Design Guidelines apply to a specific project.

NOTE: Notwithstanding the criteria and requirements set forth in these Design Guidelines, all other requirements and criteria as set forth in the Leadville Municipal Code still apply.

SECTION 2: NHL DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

These Design Guidelines apply to new residential construction in the NHL District. New residential construction is defined as construction requiring a foundation plan as part of the building permit process. Additions to existing residences are exempt from this process.

The purposes of this document are to make clear the goals and objectives of the City of Leadville for enhancing its natural and historic sense of place. Below are four precepts to consider on any potential project. Each of these will be discussed in detail throughout the Design Guidelines:

- Keep it simple.
- Keep it in scale.
- Respect the historic resources.
- Make all new design compatible to the existing context.

Note: The Leadville Land Use Code sets dimension limitations (i.e., height, site coverage allowances, setbacks, density, etc.) to manage land development. Dimension limitations can be more restrictive or vary through the design review process as the purpose and intent of the Design Guidelines are met within the NHL District.

The Leadville NHL District contains the greatest number of residential family structures surviving in Leadville from the mining era. They represent the largest distinctive area within the Leadville NHL District and so contribute greatly to the city's historic significance. Preservation of the integrity of this area is a primary goal of the Historic Preservation Commission.

In order to protect the district, new construction should reinforce the basic characteristics that were established early in the city's development. Projects should also enhance the residential qualities of the neighborhoods. In this respect, projects that support pedestrian activity and contribute to the quality of life are encouraged.

Preserving the manner in which buildings were historically sited on their lots constitutes another major goal for this area. Historically, a typical parcel had one large structure located at the front, with smaller supporting buildings located in the rear. Informal plant massing's were located along fence lines and building foundations.

The NHL District should develop in a coordinated manner so that an overall sense of visual continuity is achieved. Natural assets, including views, should be protected and enhanced. The scale of projects in the area should be compatible with the overall scale of the city, as well as with the scale of buildings on adjacent properties. Emphasis should be placed on developing new buildings that respect their neighbors. Where properties abut a historic building, special care should be taken in relating to these precious resources.

The NHL District is of great importance to the community, both in terms of preserving its integrity as a historic resource and of protecting the value and character of the property for owners and residents. These standards and guidelines seek to reinforce social objectives of retaining the residential qualities of the neighborhood. For purposes of this document:

- The use of "shall" indicates the standard is mandatory.
- The use of "should" indicates the guideline is advisory, but strongly recommended.

SECTION 3: POLICIES

1. Policy: Relationship to Site Context

The sloping topography and open pattern of development in the treatment area provides most buildings with solar exposure and views of the mountains. Smaller, lower buildings located on the alleys traditionally allowed views and solar exposure of the nearby primary residences. These assets **shall** be preserved for as many sites as feasible.

A. CAREFULLY relate new construction to buildings that contribute to the historic neighborhood context.

   1. New projects **shall** be compatible with the historic character of the Leadville NHL District as well as those buildings directly adjacent to the project. Neighborhood context is essential to determining compatibility.

   2. Historic proportions of height, width and depth are very important to be compatible with the historic mass and scale of the NHL district and the city. Compatibility with the traditional mass, scale and building materials of the area is especially important.

2. Policy: Views

Views to natural and historic features abound in Leadville and should be preserved. Of special importance are the views to the mountains and historic landmarks that contribute to the city's unique setting.

A. Position a new building so that view corridors are preserved.

3. Policy: Site Planning

A new project can significantly affect neighboring properties. Such impacts include views, solar access and snow shedding.

A. Coordinate the site plan of individual building lots with those of adjacent properties.

1. Unusual setbacks may be appropriate when they help protect views to significant features.

a. Consideration for views **shall** come from within, through and outside the site.

b. Consider seasonal factors, such as snow accumulations or dense foliage.

c. Maintain views along alleys by keeping buildings small in scale.

2. Minimize the number of driveways, parking and service areas through cooperative planning with adjoining properties. This helps reduce the visual impacts of these elements on the neighborhood.

Figure 3. In-fill home that fits into the surrounding neighboring properties with considerations of site, views, and scale.

4. Policy: Building Orientation

Traditionally, a building was oriented with its primary wall planes in line with the parcel's property lines. Since most buildings were rectangular in form, this siting pattern helped reinforce the image of the city grid.

A. Maintain traditional patterns of building orientation by respecting a property's lot lines. This applies to both primary and alley structures.

B. Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

1. Clearly define the primary entrance using such things as porches on residential structures.

2. Rear or side entrances should be secondary to the front.

5. Policy: Building Setbacks

Most front façades align at a relatively uniform setback from the street in each block. The rhythm created by the placement of buildings and side yards are an especially important feature. This historic development pattern contributes to the visual continuity of the NHL District

A. Maintain the alignment of building fronts along the street.

1. Setbacks **shall** fall within the established range of setbacks in the NHL District.

B. Side yards should match the dimensions of historic yards on the street.

1. Side yards were traditionally three feet or greater in width.
2. Spacing between buildings should be similar to that seen traditionally.
3. Natural conditions may influence setbacks. Steep slopes, hillsides, river and creek edges and wetlands are examples of site constraints that may require special setback conditions.
4. Give special consideration to corner lots.

C. Decks, balconies and porches **shall** not significantly encroach into front and side yard setbacks.

Figure 4. City of Leadville home with a side porch considerate of side setbacks, natural elements, and spacing between buildings.

6. Policy: Parking Design

For the majority of the period of significance the primary transportation vehicle was the horse and carriage. The associated site and building features were the barn, stable carriage house, and drives. The accommodations for automobiles of driveways, garages, and parking areas require sensitivity to visual impacts and the historic transportation mode.

Care should be taken to provide pedestrian circulation that does not conflict with vehicular circulation.

A. Screen parking areas from street view with site features.

B. Design parking areas should be accessed from alleys or rear drives rather than from the primary street. Parking facilities such that they are subordinate to other site features.

1. In a residential context, the use of a detached garage, located along the alley, is especially encouraged.

2. If parking is located within a garage, minimize the size of the driveway.

3. An on-site parking area should be located inside or behind a building, where its visual impacts will be minimized, unless site conditions (such as steep slopes) prevent this arrangement.

4. Minimize the surface area of paving and consider using materials that blend with the natural colors and textures of the region. Options include: modular pavers, gravel and grasscrete or concrete.

5. Curb cuts and driveways should be minimal in width and shared when feasible.

6. Design the parking layout so all spaces are accessible and usable year-round.

7. Policy: Mass and Scale

A variety of building styles occur in this area but a similarity of forms, materials and scale still prevails. Projects that include a primary building with subordinate secondary structures reinforce the city's historic character. In addition to a few institutional structures and boarding houses, buildings range from small, wood frame single family cottages to larger single family homes as well as some boarding houses and a few institutional structures. Most buildings are simple in design, although some ornamentation was used historically. The smaller houses tend to exhibit very few details, reserving ornamentation for porches and eaves. Larger houses show more ornamental detail, however, even these are modest overall. A limited range of detail is an important characteristic of the area.

Traditionally, exterior wall materials were horizontal wood siding, with the exception of a few brick homes. Stone was used occasionally for foundations and fireplaces. Decorative shingles were sometimes applied to eaves and dormers.

Buildings were often expanded over time, resulting in additions to the rear. Usually, these stepped down in scale from the main structure. Attic spaces were sometimes expanded by adding dormers. Other functions were accommodated in secondary structures such as barns and sheds, which were detached and located at the rear and accessed by an alley.

The limited combination of roof forms found on many buildings creates a sense of cohesion across city. Virtually all are simple gabled or hip roofs and are often steeply pitched, in response to snow conditions. Wood shingles and metal were used on the roofs of many early buildings. Standing seam metal is frequently used along with rolled sheet metal and asphalt shingles.

Traditionally, a limited mix of small and large building sizes existed in the area. Even on larger lots where larger buildings occur, the traditional building scale is preserved.

A. Maintain the traditional perceived scale of buildings.

1. The tradition of one- and two-story street façades **shall** be continued.

B. New construction **shall** appear similar in mass and scale to historic structures found traditionally in the NHL District.

C. Break up the massing of larger buildings into components. A larger building may be divided into modules that reflect the traditional scale of construction.

1. Modules should be expressed three dimensionally by having significant architectural changes.

2. Step down the mass of larger buildings to minimize the perceived scale at the street.

3. Historic proportions of height, width and depth are important features to be compatible with the historic mass and scale.

4. Building elements **shall** be in scale with the overall mass of the building.

E. Roofs **shall** be similar in scale to those used historically on comparable buildings.

1. The length of a roof ridge **shall** not exceed those seen historically on comparable buildings.

Figure 5. Images depicts the consideration of the mass and scale of the surrounding properties and building use.

8. Policy: Building Form

The traditional residential building form consists of a simple rectangular mass with a gabled or hipped roof. Additions are usually located to the rear of the main building and step down in scale from the central mass. It is the combinations of these shapes that establish a neighborhood's scale. These forms **shall** be preserved, in their height, width and depth, throughout the _ NHL District. New construction that does not respect these forms could diminish the integrity of the _NHL district.

A. Use building forms similar to those found traditionally.

1. Vertically oriented, rectangular shapes are typical and are encouraged.

2. Building forms that step down in scale to the rear of the lot are encouraged.

9. Policy: Roof Form

Roofs of similar shapes reoccur in the NHL District. Gabled roofs, generally oriented with the ridge perpendicular to the street, and hip roofs are typical. Shed roofs occur most frequently on rear additions and secondary structures.

The size, shape and type of roof **shall** be similar to those found traditionally in the city. Consideration of environmental and climatic determinants such as snow and ice shedding, drainage and solar exposure **shall** also be integral to the roof design.

A. Use Traditional Roof Forms

1. Sloping roof forms, such as gable, hip and shed, **shall** be the dominant roof shapes. These forms **shall** be symmetrically designed. Avoid flat roofs and barreled roofs.

2. Traditional roofs are simple and steeply pitched and most have hip or gable ends facing the street. Many primary roofs had pitches of 15:12 or steeper; although some as low as 8:12 were found. Shed roofs had a wider range of pitches, from 1:12 to 15:12.

3. Orient ridgelines parallel with the floor planes.

4. Orient ridgelines perpendicular to the street when feasible.

B. Chimneys should be similar in size and position to those found historically.

Figure 6. Building depicts sloping roof forms traditionally found in Leadville.

10. Policy: Architectural Character

Traditionally, buildings in Leadville were simple in character. This is a fundamental characteristic that is vital to the preservation of the historic integrity of the city. Regardless of stylistic treatment, a new building **shall** appear simple in form and detail. Buildings also **shall** be visually compatible with older structures in the NHL District without being direct copies of historic buildings.

A. Respect the sense of time and place in all projects.

1. Exact interpretations of a point of time in the past are discouraged.

B. New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged, such that they are seen as products of their own time, yet compatible with their historic neighbors.

1. New designs **shall** draw upon the fundamental traits of historic buildings without copying them. This will allow them to be seen as products of their own time yet compatible with their historic neighbors.

2. The exact copying of or replication of historic styles is discouraged.

3. Applying highly ornamental details that were not a part of a building in Leadville is inappropriate. Elaborate Victorian ornamentation, which is atypical in Leadville, is not allowed.

4. Historic details that were not found in Leadville are not allowed.

5. Historic details that are authentic to Leadville are discouraged, to maintain a distinction between a new project and the historic building.

C. Avoid stylistic details that confuse the history of Leadville.

Figure 7. Buildings reflect compatible architectural character that complements surrounding historic properties but can be distinguished as their own time period.

11. Policy: Building Components

Projecting elements, such as dormers, bays, stairs, chimneys and cornices, help to provide visual interest to a building and can influence its perceived scale. These features **shall** be compatible in size, shape and type with those found in historic buildings and should be treated as an integral part of the building design.

A. Building components **shall** be similar in scale to those used historically.

1. Decks in rear yards may be larger if in proportion to the site and structure.

B. Bay and oriel windows should fit below the cornice or roofline and be subordinate elements.

1. Cornice lines should not be broken by other building elements.

C. Awnings may be used on residential buildings if limited in size, scale and quantity.

D. Porches are especially characteristic of the treatment area. Although a wide variety of design details for porches are found, the basic organization of the porch as an entry element is important and should be preserved.

1. The use of a porch is encouraged in a residential context.

2. A porch should be covered by a roof.

3. A porch should be of a substantial size to function as more than an entry landing, but should be similar in mass and scale to those found historically.

4. Place the height of porch decks at an elevation similar to those found historically when feasible.

5. Porches should have a finished (painted) appearance.

Figure 8. Note the historic porches with covered roofs.

12. Policy: Pattern of Building Materials

The pattern created by the unit size of the materials (bricks, siding, shingles, etc.). Application **shall** be similar to those materials used traditionally in city and in the treatment area. These **shall** be configured in combinations that express human scale.

A. Materials **shall** appear similar in scale, texture and finish to those used traditionally.

1. A hierarchy of building materials **shall** be used, with heavier coarser materials used as foundations and more refined materials used above.

2. The dimensions of brick units, clapboard siding and other building materials should be similar to those used historically.

3. Exterior wood finishes **shall** be painted in colors designated on any Historic Color Palette or in rustic natural wood stains and finishes.

B. Maintain the existing range of exterior wall materials found in the NHL District. Reuse of existing materials is encouraged. A mix of wood frame, stone and brick construction is typical.

1. Foundation finish materials may include stone, concrete, board formed concrete, wood lattice and vertical boards. A clear distinction between foundation and wall material should be present. Clapboard siding should not extend to the ground.

2. Appropriate materials for primary structures include horizontal and vertical siding, shingles (in limited applications), and brick.

3. The lap dimensions of siding should be similar to those found traditionally. Masonry unit sizes should also be similar to those found traditionally.

4. Siding materials not allowed include stucco, reflective materials such as mirrored glass or polished metals and rustic shakes.

5. Corrugated metal and other acceptable metal siding may also be considered on structures and foundation skirting.

C. Roof materials **shall** appear similar to those used traditionally.

1. Fire retardant wood shingles and shakes are appropriate for most building types.

2. Metal sheeting, corrugated metal, or standing seam metal roofs with a baked-on paint finish are generally appropriate. Metal roofs should have matte finishes but must minimize glare.

3. Asphalt shingles in muted colors and rolled roofing may be considered.

D. New substitute materials may be considered, if they appear similar in character and detailing to those used traditionally on Leadville's residential structures.

1. New materials must have a demonstrated durability in this climate and have the ability to be repaired under reasonable conditions.

2. Details of hard board and cementious siding, and their joints, should match that of traditional wood siding.

Figure 10. In-fill building depicted uses appropriate materials similarly found in historic Leadville neighborhoods.

13. Policy: Windows

Windows are some of the most important character- defining features of most structures. They give scale to buildings and provide visual interest to the façade's or elevation's composition. Distinct window designs often define many historic building styles. They were commonly inset into relatively deep openings or they have surrounding casings and sash components with substantial dimensions. These cast shadows that significantly contribute to the character of the building.

Traditionally, buildings of the same type had common window-to-wall proportions. This helped contribute to the sense of continuity in the neighborhood. This ratio of open surfaces (windows and

doors) to enclosed surfaces (walls) of the building exterior should be similar to that seen in the NHL District area. The ratio of the height-to-width of door and window openings also should be compatible with buildings found traditionally in this treatment area.

A. Windows should be of a traditional size and relate to a pedestrian scale.

1. Windows should be simple in shape, arrangement and detail.

2. Unusually shaped windows, such as triangles and trapezoids **shall** be considered as accents only and limited to one per building façade or elevation.

3. The number of different window styles should be limited.

B. The window-to-wall ratio should be similar to that seen on comparable historic buildings in the treatment area.

1. Large surfaces of glass are inappropriate on residential structures and **shall** not be allowed.

2. If necessary, divide large glass surfaces into smaller windows that are in scale with those seen traditionally.

C. Windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.

1. A general rule is that the height should be twice the dimension of the width.

2. Windows with traditional depth and trim are preferred.

D. The placement and grouping of windows **shall** be similar to that seen historically.

E. Windows should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.

1. Divided lights should be formed from smaller muntins integral to the window. True divided lights may be used. Pop-in muntins are inappropriate.

F. Skylights should be limited in number and size.

1. Skylights should be located in areas that minimize visibility, not break or penetrate a ridgeline, and be limited in number.

2. Skylights **shall** be sized in proportion to the roof area, but should not cause excessive light spill. Light fixtures within the skylight should also not cause light spill.

3. Tubular daylighting devices may be used but should be limited in number.

14. Policy: Doors

A door, which is often an important character-defining feature, gives scale to a building and provides visual interest to the composition of a building's primary façade.

A. Maintain the traditional pattern of doors along streets and alleys.

1. All buildings that face the street should have a well-defined front entrance.

2. Openings should be similar in location, size and type to those seen traditionally. The entrance should be at, or near, grade level.

3. A garage door should be designed to minimize the apparent width of the opening.

4. The material and detailing of garage doors should be utilitarian, to be compatible with nearby sheds when located on an alley, or detailed as part of the building if located on the front.

B. Doors should be designed and finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.

15. Policy: Utilities

Utilities that serve properties may include telephone and electrical lines, ventilation systems, gas meters, fire protection, telecommunications and alarm systems.

A. Minimize the visual impacts of utilities and service equipment.

1. Provide adequate space for utilities that does not abut the public right-of-way.

2. Locate utilities in the rear of a property when feasible and screen them from major pedestrian routes.

3. Minimize the visual impacts of vents and exhaust hoods by integrating them into the building design and finish to match the adjacent surface.

4. Vents for direct-vent fireplaces **shall** not be installed on the building front and should be finished to match the adjacent surface.

5. Screen from view rooftop appurtenances, such as mechanical equipment and antennas.

16. Policy: Energy Conserving Design

Using energy conserving designs that are also compatible with the historic character of the community is encouraged. Any project proposing to use active or passive solar energy should be energy efficient in design. The conservation of all resources should be a primary concern.

A. Consider solar designs on the structure.

1. Integrate glass areas for energy collection into the overall building design. Design glass areas to be a composition of windows similar in character to those seen traditionally, rather than a large continuous surface of glass.

2. Avoid blocking the solar and view exposures and minimize glare onto neighboring properties.

3. Roof-mounted panels **shall** not extend above the ridgeline. They shall be integrated in the structure and as flush with the roof pitch as possible. Solar shingles or laminated solar panels are preferred.

Additional Photo Examples of Desired Infill Design Character from other mountain communities (for illustrative purposes only)