3.0 Architectural Character and Building Form

3.1 Architectural Character and Style

The purpose of this section is to define an architectural vocabulary that will provide a general guideline for the design of commercial, lodging, public, semi-public and multi-family residential buildings within the City of Sedona.

No specific architectural style

In general, Sedona requires no specific architectural style or theme. Inspiration should be drawn from the forms, colors and textures of our surrounding red rock setting as well as our historical heritage, generating a harmonious architectural character that reinforces Sedona's unique sense of place. Ideally, the sensory rich experience one enjoys in our natural environment should also be experienced in our built environment.

The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that new development establishes a level of quality architecture within Sedona that is responsive to its context and builds upon the aesthetic identity of our community, rather than supporting design solutions that are based on a standardized formula or market prototype superimposed on the selected site. Over time, certain projects and buildings begin to define the dominant character of an area. But not all buildings in the surrounding area contribute equally to area character, and each new building or project should be weighed against the balance of all other projects within the area. Therefore, the intent of this architectural guideline section is to encourage development proposals that will fit within and contribute to the established or planned architectural character, form and context of a specific area.

Diversity and individual expression

To allow for diversity and individual expression, and to avoid shallow imitations of "styles", the primary criteria for determining the character and style of a building should be:

- That it expresses sensitivity to the City's unique natural setting,
- That it responds to and is sensitive to the land, rock, and vegetative forms in Sedona,
- That it harmonizes with the architectural styles of adjoining buildings that have demonstrated similar sensitivity.

While some simple and consistent architectural principles are defined, variety and individual expression within this framework is encouraged.

Character and context

Building design should take into consideration the unique qualities and the dominant character of the surrounding area.

If new projects are proposed within areas with little, no or poor architectural character, then the area of influence to identify the architectural context should be expanded, or the project should establish a new design vocabulary consistent with the Sedona Area Sensitive Design Principles.

Transplanted architectural styles
Any literal transplant of architectural styles not indigenous or compatible to this area is not acceptable. Similarly, a building or structure that has been designed to be monumental in scale or unduly formal or symmetrical in character is not acceptable.

Corporate or franchise identity
Corporate signature buildings or structures are not acceptable within the City of Sedona. Similarly, buildings that derive their image primarily from applied treatments that express corporate identity are discouraged.

Buildings that are stylized in an attempt to use the building, or portion of the building to identify a particular user is also discouraged, particularly where the proposed architectural design is the result of a corporate or franchise prototype design.

Buildings on separate pads
The design of a building that occupies a pad or portion of a building within a project or shopping center should share similar design characteristics and design vocabulary. Precise replication is not desirable; instead, the use of complimentary colors, materials and textures, as well as repeating patterns, rhythms and proportions found within the architecture of other buildings in the center can be utilized to achieve unity.

The following pages of photographs reflect a variety of architectural styles and forms that compliment Sedona's unique natural setting.

Sedona Public Library

Tlaquepaque

photo by Coldwell Banker

Tlaquepaque

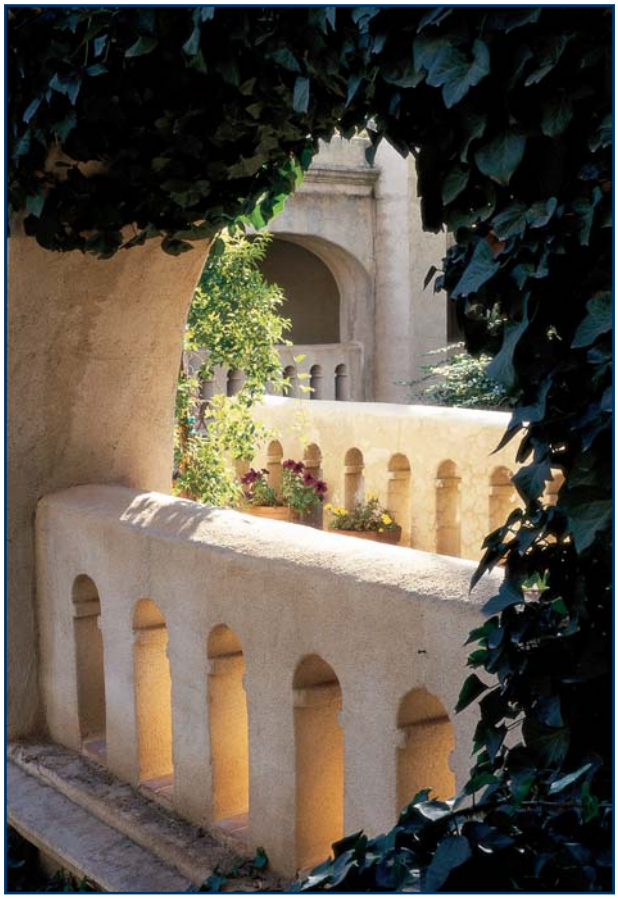
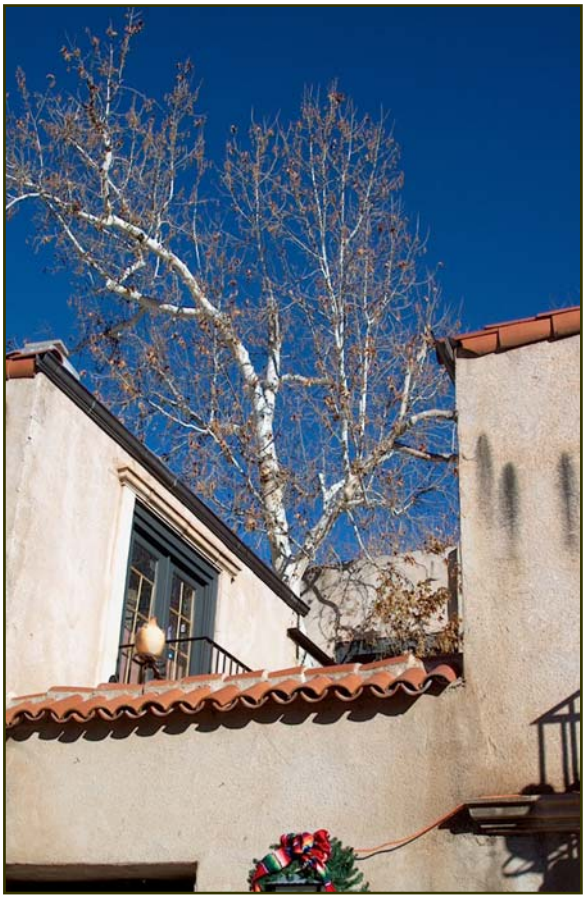


photo by Tom Johnson



One World Art

Old Market Place

Fairfield Sedona Resort

Pink Jeep Plaza

Garland's Building on Highway 179

Sedona Station

George Moore Office Building

Southwest Inn

Sedona City Hall

Hillside Shops & Galleries

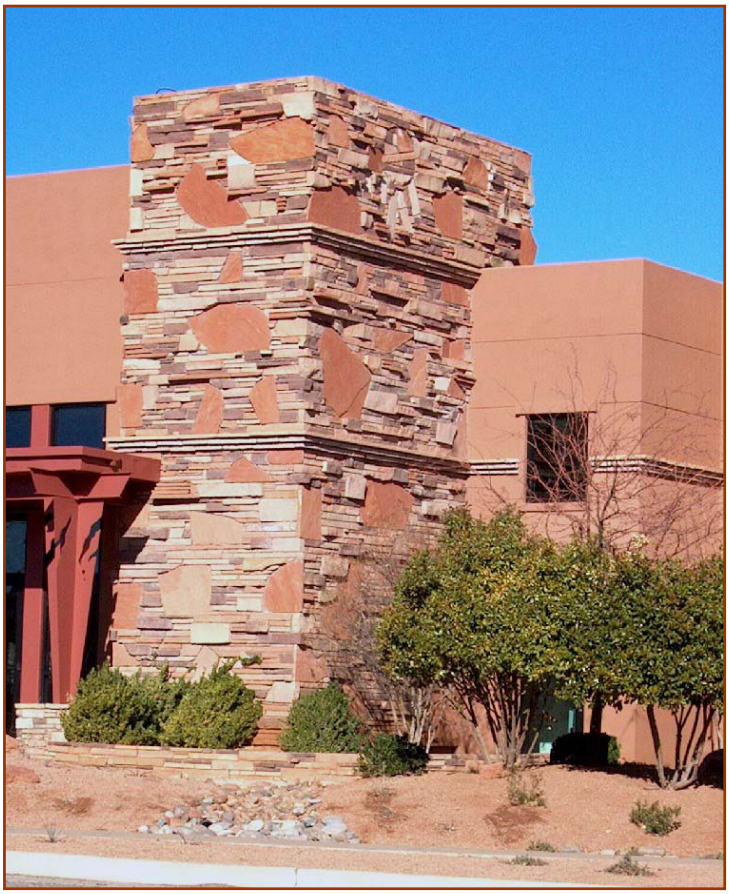
photo by Tom Johnson

Miller Brother's Building

National Bank of Arizona

Jordan Historical Park

Cinedona Building



La Tierra Plaza I

Yavapai College

Sedona Creative Life Center

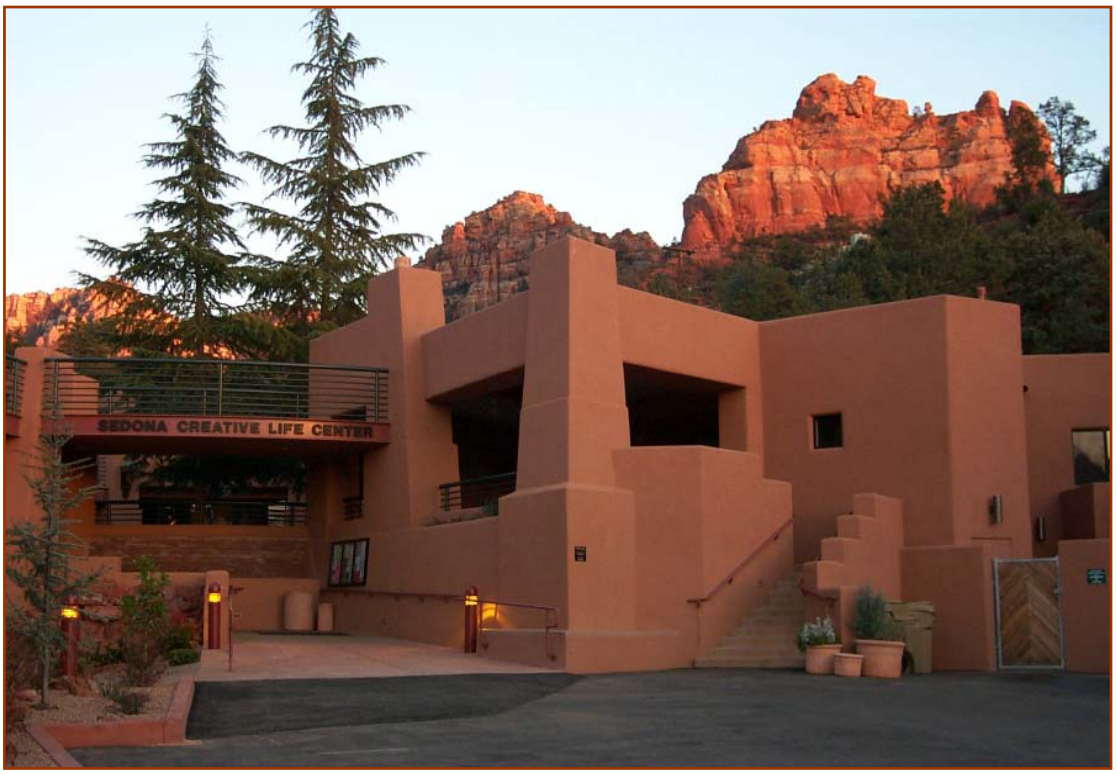


photo by Jensvold Thompson Architects

3.2 Proportions and Scale

Elevation and perspective drawings, photographic simulations, models and the use of other graphic studies are encouraged and may be required to illustrate or fully explain how the development will address the situations mentioned above.

All development proposals should indicate that the applicant has studied and reconciled the scale and proportions of buildings in the following situations:

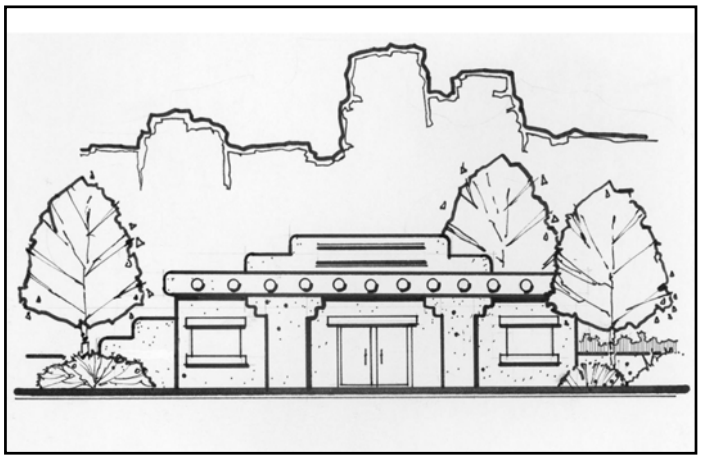
- Project site,
- Adjacent and neighboring properties,
- Major streets from which the project will be accessed or viewed,
- Special Districts, such as Uptown Sedona or the Creek District.

3.2.1 Proportion

Proportion may be defined as a numerical comparison of parts, or as a statement of relative difference between parts, *i.e. contrast*. Webster's dictionary further defines proportion as "*a part considered in relation to a whole…a relationship between things or parts of things with respect to relative magnitude, quantity or degree…harmonious relation*".

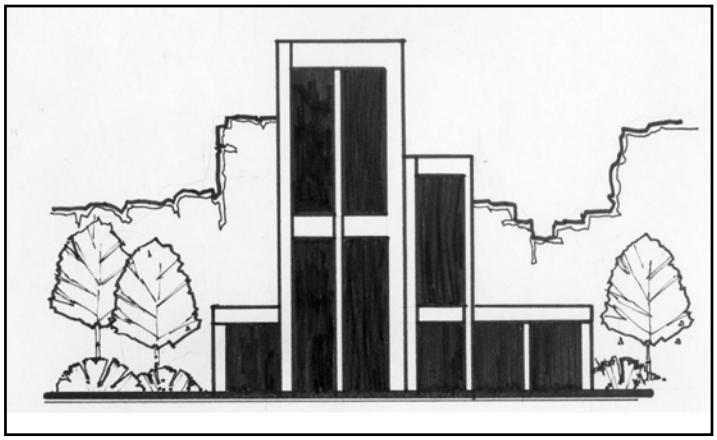
All new development proposals should be designed so that they are in proportion to elements within the project site, adjacent and neighboring properties and the area within which they are located.

Horizontal emphasis
Building proportions with horizontal emphasis are generally desired. Vertical proportions that are excessively wide and with a strong horizontal emphasis that exaggerate building height are to be avoided.



Encouraged

Discouraged



Vertical elements

Vertical elements that are taller than the majority of a building, such as towers, or narrow vertical masses, when used appropriately, can add visual interest and identity to a building or project without interfering with established view corridors or views to Sedona's surrounding red rocks.

Taller buildings or portions of a building should be located internally to a site or structure so that buildings step down in height as they reach the edges of the site or structure.

Sensitivity to adjacent buildings

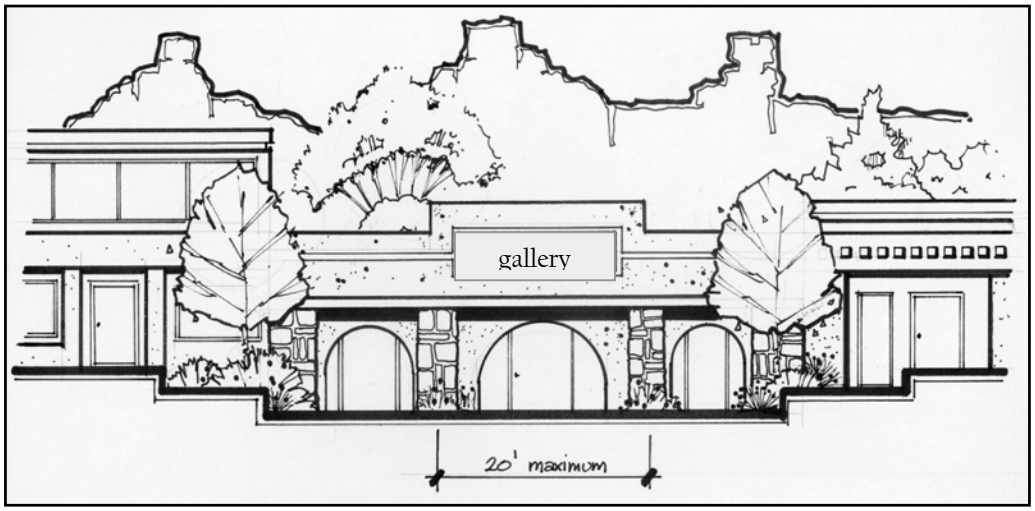
New development should not overpower neighboring buildings. Through the use of, for example, variations in building height, roofline, and grade definition, designing new buildings in proportion with the mass and floor area of existing developments, and using harmonious materials, colors and a complimentary landscape palette, the perceived height and mass of a new project can be effectively reduced.

In the Uptown area, where one building abuts another, the new development should attempt to show elements of "continuous connection" to neighboring buildings. Through the use of common parapet heights, covered walkway fascias, similar materials and/or forms, a sense of "belonging" can be achieved.

View protection
Special care should be taken to control proportion and massing in order to minimize restricting views of the surrounding scenery.

See also Section 2.4.2, "View Considerations".

Varied facades
It is desirable that the spacing of elements in facades be varied rather than repetitive, with a high priority placed on the three dimensional interplay of light and shadow. The proportion of solid area to window area should be considered. "Storefront" type glass walls are not appropriate with a continuous unbroken facade longer than 20 feet. Topographical changes should be reflected by vertical offsets in the facades of buildings.



3.2.2 Scale

Scale may be defined as the relationship of spaces and structures to human size, to a building or project's surroundings, and to the overall context of Sedona.

Compatible scale
Apparent scale of buildings should be compatible with the natural features of the landscape, rather than dominating them. New development should respect the predominant scale of development in the surrounding area by, for example, using elements of a similar scale and providing a gradual transition to any larger scaled masses proposed.

Human scale
Building elements and facades, especially at the ground or pedestrian level, should be kept intimate and close to human size so as to achieve a sense of human scale and interest.

Mix of scales
A mixture of scales may be appropriate in less pedestrian areas, with some elements scaled for appreciation from the street and moving automobile, and others for enjoyment by pedestrians.

3.3 Building Massing

In order to maximize the integration of the built environment with the natural environment, and to minimize the distractions of the built environment, all new development proposals should incorporate means of reducing the apparent size and bulk of buildings.

The following methods for reducing the apparent size and mass of larger buildings are suggested and are encouraged. Any other approaches that achieve the same objective are also encouraged.

3.3.1 Building Massing

Massing
A building should be designed in a manner that reduces its apparent bulk by dividing the building into smaller masses. Ideally, the definition of each mass should relate to the internal function of the building. This may then provide a logical hierarchy for breaking down the mass of the building.