

TOWN OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

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Architectural Guidelines

Architectural Guidelines can be utilized to encourage the built environment of a community to a specific form or theme. The advantage is that the guidelines can provide a consistent built form, community pride and identity, act as a brand for tourists and visitors, and ensure high quality materials are utilized. To act as a brand, the guidelines in this document follow a specific theme. This theme is based on current assets found within the community as well as the history that founded the Town. The theme carried throughout the Town of Rocky Mountain House's Architectural Guidelines document is:

Historical Hudson's Bay Trading Fort Theme

This theme was derived from RMH's unique history with its association with David Thompson, the competing trading forts located here (owned by Northwest and Hudson's Bay companies), and the strong local tourism attraction of the Rocky Mountain House National Historic Site. Further, there have been a number of projects that already incorporate this theme, including the Town entrance signs, the bi-centennial park, and some of the directional signage on Main Street.

Guidelines

The fur trade era used natural materials (such as timber, rock, and clay) for the construction of their buildings and trading forts. Other types of building materials were not readily available. Thus, these types of materials are encouraged in all facets of design under these architectural guidelines. Other general guidelines include:

- *Sensitivity to Nature* – often forts and buildings were built along river banks and cliffs to provide views and have access to the river. Building design should be oriented to take advantage of views and of proximity to natural features (i.e. rivers, streams, forest) wherever possible.
- *Handcrafted* – Fur tradesmen had no access to manufacturing companies to provide materials for building. Thus everything in this period was individually handcrafted, and often out of wood. Design is encouraged to give impression of being hand-built using local materials.
- *Human-oriented* – All buildings should be oriented to the street level and to the 'human scale' by incorporating features such as canopies, sheltered entrances, seating areas, and low-scale decorative lighting. For larger buildings, offsetting walls and stepping back upper floors shall be encouraged in order to cater to the first floor. Building indentation to accommodate landscaped pedestrian areas is also encouraged.

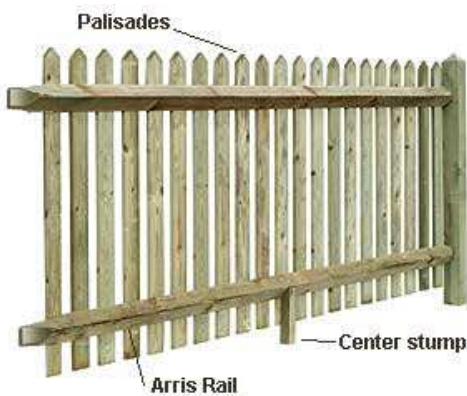


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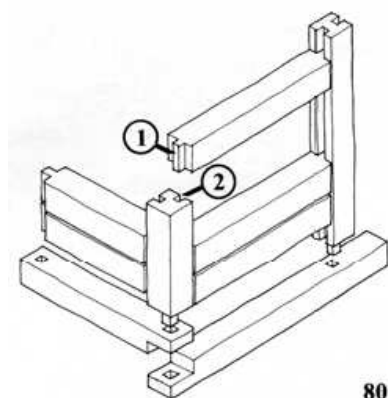
- *Uniform Building Scale and Placement* – Building scale should relate to the size and shape of adjacent buildings that are of similar use. As well, building setbacks should be consistent with other buildings on the street.
- *Corner Lots* – Corner sites should be given special consideration, including additional pedestrian space, more prominent themed features due to its visibility, and is cognizant of sight lines for turning vehicles.

Façade

1. Facades are intended to follow the look of a different time era in Canadian history, with the fur trade being the prominent economic driver, and main commercial complexes were housed in Trading Forts.
2. Fascia is encouraged to follow the look or form of the type of construction being done in this era, specifically either the post in ground (Palisade) or post on sill (Red River frame) construction types. An example of post in ground and post on sill construction is shown below:



Post in ground (Palisade construction)



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Post on sill (Red River Frame construction)



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For a detailed description of these types of construction, please refer to <http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ab/rockymountain/natcul/natcul2/11.aspx>

3. New facades will be encouraged to follow the design elements of existing “Fort theme” features found throughout the Town of RMH. Images of examples of these features are provided below:



The entrance signs to RMH follow a post-in-ground style of construction, along with a bastion (small square buildings overlooking fort walls for protection and surveillance) that is similar to that found at the corners of traditional Trading Forts. Wherever applicable, the use of bastions is encouraged to be incorporated with development.



This traditional trading fort can be found at the Rocky Mountain House Historical Site that follows a similar construction style.



The Centennial park sign at the bottom of Main Street incorporates fur trade elements by using shaved timbers with peaks that are placed side-by-side to give the look of a palisade-constructed Fort wall.

Elements and Details

1. **Roofing:** The roofing materials of the fur trade area consisted mostly of wood shakes or shingles on more permanent structures, and the use of split logs across trusses for a more temporary fix. Either one of these types of roofing styles (wood shingles, or spit logs) would fit the theme character and is encouraged. Examples of these styles (Cedar is the recommended material) are provided below:



Cedar shakes



Cedar Shingles



Cedar Composite

An example of the use of shake roofing material to incorporate a more natural design (i.e. made with local materials)



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2. Siding: To coincide with the Façade composition that the theme is striving for, the primary siding should be of wood or of wood-style. Three primary styles are strongly encouraged for siding that fits into the theme, but other ideas can be presented that may also tie into the theme. The three primary styles are Palisade, Red River, or Wood-style stucco. Palisade can be achieved by split-log design, while Red River may be achieved through horizontal panel boards. Examples are provided below:



Palisade



Red River



Stucco



Red River style wood siding



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The use of Cedar shakes or composite for siding would also add character and defined edges to siding. If stucco is used, it is best that not an entire wall is covered in stucco to give it a flat or drab appearance. The use of rock or wood trim with stucco ensures that design has form and texture.



Shake siding



Stucco siding with rock trim

In place of wood or stucco siding, rock or cultured rock siding can be utilized, but is not necessarily encouraged as it can be expensive and limit design form through appearing gaudy or pretentious. However, in some cases a full wall sided with rock may work. Examples:



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3. **Beams:** Structurally supporting beams for buildings were often cut and shaved from square timbers and were often at least 4 in. x 4 in. thick. Use of timbers that are of this size and style is encouraged for a trim or a supporting cross-beam holding siding or roofing. A local example is provided below:



4. **Trim:** High quality, stone-style trim, sills, and ledge are encouraged to provide a more modern feel to wood-themed structures. Although often this type of trim was not practical for building construction in the fur trading era, many fireplaces, chimneys, and wells were made from stone and clay construction. Often the stones used were both flat and round. Various types of these stone styles can be found below:



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Country Ledge stone



River Rock



Fieldstone



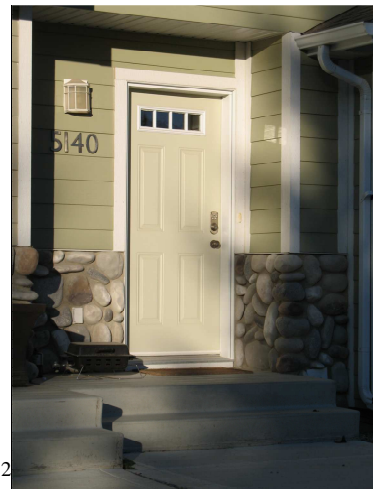
¹¹Chimneys of 1864-75, Rocky Mountain House

The use of Country Ledge stone, River Rock, or Fieldstone stone styles are encouraged as trim to complement wood-sided structures.

Local examples of this type of stone-style trim is shown below:



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5. **Colour:** The types of colour schemes encourage for painting and on other materials follows a “natural” theme where colours model those found in nature and can be already found on natural materials used (i.e. timber, rock, clay). In addition, a muted and subtle feel to the colour is encouraged over a sharp, contrasted, or glossy colour scheme. An example of a muted colour scheme is found below:



6. **Signage:** Although not a necessity in the fur trade era, signage can either add to or take away from a specific architectural theme. The signage encouraged fits into the fur trade era theme and also, wherever possible, is pedestrian-oriented. Having signage made of natural materials will incorporate this theme and is encouraged. **Electric, illuminated, corrugated plastic, vinyl, or tin signs are not strongly supported.**

Signage should also be coordinated with the design of the building and not take away from the general character of the building. With this regard, the scale, materials, colour, and finish of all signage should be in conformance with the building it is placed on.

The types of signage encouraged are listed below:

Projecting Signs

An example of pedestrian oriented signage would be the use projecting signage that is perpendicular to the building façade. These signs are small in size (less than 2 x 2 feet), but effective in attracting pedestrians into stores and shops as they walk down the adjacent sidewalk. An added benefit of projecting signs is that they do not cover any portion of the frontage of a building. Examples are provided below:



Fascia Signs

Fascia signs can be of whatever font or colour as desired. However, more durable fascia signs made from wood, plexiglass, fibreglass, or metal are encouraged over more flimsy fascia signs made from cloth, plastic, or vinyl. Also encouraged is the use of overhead spot-lighting on fascia signs rather than illuminated signs. An example of this type of lighting is shown below:



Awning/Canopy Signs

Awning and Canopy signs are encouraged to be used in only the instance where a structural overhang or eave does not exist on a business frontage. The primary goal is to have overhangs built with wood shingles and timber beams as discussed above. However, canopy signs may work well to cater to pedestrians and provide an additional architectural feature to a building where an overhang does not exist.



Storefront Canopy

Windows and Doors

1. Window coverings in the fur trade era consisted of either raw hide or shutters. Wood or wood-designed shutters are encouraged for all types of windows. If the shutters are painted, a neutral colour or stain is preferred.



2. Other than window shutters for windows, or planks for doors, most windows and doors were kept open, especially in the summer months. To provide the feel of open air window and doors, clear pane designs that are simple and have no inserts throughout the window are encouraged. These usually consist of a single sheet of glass for each window or door. Examples are shown below:



3. When a fort was lucky enough to make its own glass or have it brought in, the types of windows used had 19th century era design. The design of these windows had inserted squares of individual panes of glass that usually varied from 6 to 12 square inches. Windows that have inserts to model this design are also encouraged to conform with the time period of the Fur trade. Examples are found below:



4. Windows should have wood-clad window frames. Exposed metal or plastic flashing for window frame is not recommended.

Materials

1. Modern building supply technology has given any prospective building more choices for the type of materials to use. However, some materials detract and do not conform to the fur trade theme that is encouraged. Further, more options have led to more inconsistency from building to building in neighbourhoods and commercial districts.



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2. The primary building material used in fur trade construction was wood. The use of wood or ``wood-like`` composite for the beams and trim is encouraged. Types of materials that exhibit this wood or ``wood-like`` characteristics include:
 - i. Timber (designed as posts or squared logs)
 - ii. Composite or Engineered wood siding
 - iii. Cedar shakes, shingles, and paneling (below)



5/16 x 4 Inch Cedar Panelling



Hand-Split Cedar Shakes / #1 Heavy 18"x3/4"



4"x 4"x 8' Pioneer-style wood box beam

3. Preferred siding materials are wood, stone, and stucco, that is ULC rated. The intent is to give the look of materials that are found locally to the Rocky Mountain House area. **Vinyl, aluminum, tin, or metal siding is not encouraged.**
4. The number of exterior materials is encouraged to be limited to two or three plus roofing material. Having too many types of material on one building façade can distract and take away from surrounding environment.
5. Consistent materials and colours should be used throughout the entire exterior of a building. In cases of where a building is on a corner lot or has multiple visible sides, each side should be given equal attention in terms of façade treatment.
6. Cultured Stone veneer molds can be used for Stone-style trim, sills, and ledger. Other material may include plastic stone molds that can be easily bought at hardware supply stores. However, casts or actual stone and mortar construction is encouraged due to quality, durability, and environmental friendliness.



Example of culture stone veneer mold used for base trim.

Examples of Fur Trade themed buildings (with modern elements)

The above concepts can be made to look more modern to avoid an “old” or “worn-down” feel to the theme elements. This can be done with artificial or engineered wood siding, beams, or trim that is made from water resistant materials; with inserted modern windows and doors that are of high quality, and modern, urban design; and stucco siding that gives the ‘look’ of timber construction. Examples of this type of architectural design, with a modern twist, are provided below:



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End Notes

¹ Government of Manitoba (2011) Building Traditions and Building Types. How to Series 5: Architectural Styles in Manitoba http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/pdf/how_to_series_5-bldg_traditions_bldg_types.pdf

² Photo of 5904 59 Street Close – Shake roofing, Rocky Mountain House

³ Photo of 5436 60 Street - Shake roofing, Rocky Mountain House

⁴ Photo of 5716 60 Ave – Wood siding, Rocky Mountain House

⁵ Photo of 5131 52 Street – Shake siding, Rocky Mountain House

⁶ Photo of 5040 51 Ave, Movie Headquarters, Rocky Mountain House

⁷ Photo of ATB Financial, Rocky Mountain House

⁸ Photo of Oras Communications, Rocky Mountain House

⁹ Photo of the Fabric Centre, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁰ Photos of Westview Lodge – Senior Housing Complex, Rocky Mountain House

¹¹ Parks Canada (1976) Chimneys of 1864-75, Rocky Mountain House.

http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dmm/page2_E.asp?oPHOTO_ID=1423845&oPHOTO_PATH=http://pc.gc.ca/apps/dmm/photo/SITE/09_90/04_02/02Q.jpg

¹² Photo of Alpine Drugs – Rock trim, Rocky Mountain House

¹³ Photo of 5140 52 Street - Entrance, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁴ Photo of Caine's Jewellers – Storefront canopy, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁵ Photo of 5520 57 Street – Window, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁶ Photo of Gateway Crossing Multi-tenant building, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁷ Photo of 5204 52 Street – Window, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁸ Photo of 5131 52 Street, Rocky Mountain House

¹⁹ Photo of 5211 50 Street, New Image Hair Design, Rocky Mountain House

²⁰ Photo of ATB Financial, Rocky Mountain House

²¹ Photo of Clearwater Veterinary Centre, Rocky Mountain House

²² Photo of 5312 60 Street, Rocky Mountain House

²³ Photo of 5520 57 Street, Rocky Mountain House

²⁴ Photo of 5001 – 5017 54 Street, Rocky Mountain House