

**BYLAW 04-15  
TOWN OF BLACK DIAMOND**

**BEING A BYLAW OF THE TOWN OF BLACK DIAMOND IN THE PROVINCE  
OF ALBERTA, FOR THE PURPOSES OF ESTABLISHING HISTORIC  
DOWNTOWN DESIGN STANDARDS.**

**WHEREAS** pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, being Chapter M-26, R.S.A. 2000, and amendments thereto, authorizes the Municipality to pass bylaws for Municipal purposes respecting businesses, business activities and persons engaged in business and to pass bylaws which regulate or prohibit and deal with any development, activity, industry, business or thing in different ways;

**AND WHEREAS** Council deems it desirable to regulate certain business development in the Town of Black Diamond;

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council of the Town of Black Diamond enacts as follows:

**TITLE**

1. This Bylaw may be cited as the “Historic Downtown Design Standards Bylaw”

**INTERPRETATIONS**

2. All development in Historical Downtown, as defined in the attached, shall be in accordance with the Historical Downtown Design Standards as attached.

This Bylaw comes into effect on the date of its third and final reading.

Bylaw 00-28 and all amendments thereto are hereby repealed.

**READ A FIRST TIME** this 11 day of August, A.D., 2004.

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MAYOR

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TOWN MANAGER

**READ A SECOND AND THIRD TIME** this 6<sup>th</sup> day of October, A.D., 2004.

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MAYOR

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TOWN MANAGER

Town of Black Diamond  
**Historic Downtown Design Standards**

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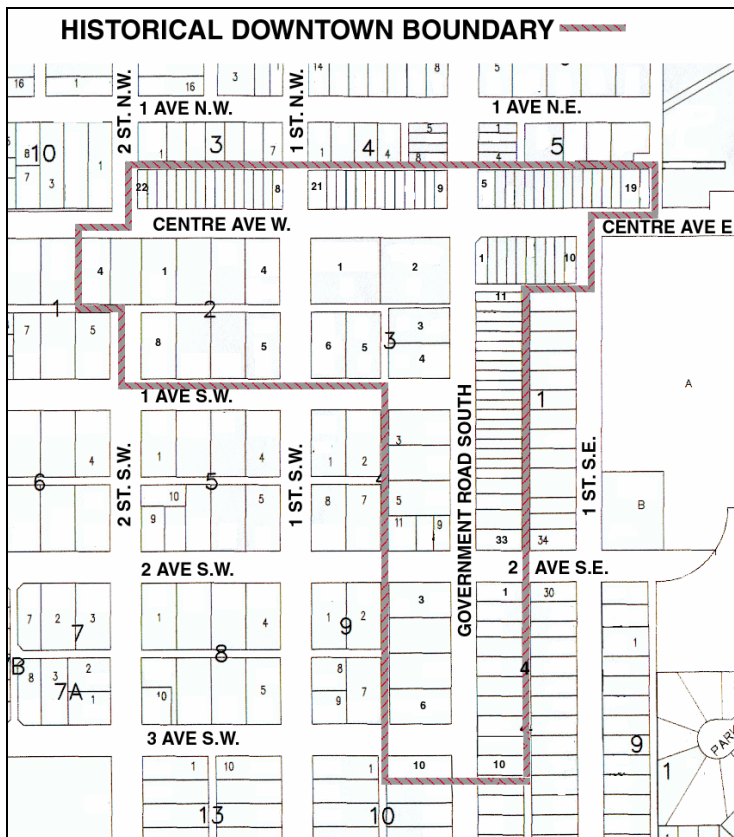
### History of Main Street



From its early beginnings as a ranching community along the Sheep River, Black Diamond grew substantially upon the discovery of coal in the late 1800's. Early merchants capitalized on the new found opportunities the mine would bring and soon the town's main street featured all the necessary businesses; a dry goods store, a grocery, blacksmith, café, laundry, pool hall, and of course, a tavern and hotel. Time, money and materials were limited, so early settlers used what they could to create a business district. Barns, sheds and houses were refitted with false-fronts to create commercial facades. Or, buildings were moved by truck from

neighbouring communities, such as Royalties and Longview to accommodate the swelling demand for commercial real estate. Black Diamond's Main Street Project represents a rare architectural glimpse at Alberta's past.

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**North** – buildings on south side of alley between Centre Avenue and 1 Avenue N.

**South:** Lot 11, Block 4, Plan 5378 ED (east side)  
Lot 10, Block 10, Plan 4061EC (west side)

**West:** west boundary of municipal office building lot, Centre Avenue and 2 street NW

**East:** Lot 20, Block 5, Plan 5503EH



### Architectural characteristics

The Black Diamond Main Street Project captures the “Boomtown” era where false wooden fronts were the preferred business style of the day. The downtown area has a number of prime examples of this architecture depicting commercial points in history from about 1920 onward. Black Diamond’s downtown is unique in that it has within its building inventory a large number of original Boomtown-style structures not only still standing, but continuing to house businesses.

### Building facades

The intent of these guidelines is to maintain the Town’s preservation and restoration efforts as well as provide an architectural framework for new developments and renovations to existing buildings in the Town. With its small frame buildings of wood siding and false fronts, downtown Black Diamond is an example of an early-generation “Boomtown” Alberta Main Street of which few survive today. This distinctive character is part of the town’s history and an asset that the community wishes to protect and promote. Building enhancements and new construction should respond to the surrounding architectural context and consider these essential, interrelated design qualities.



### Building characteristics

Boomtown style is typified by a large false front on an ordinary wood-framed, and gabled-roofed, one or two storey building.

- Wood construction
- Traditional recessed storefront entry
- Projecting cornice line along top horizontal line of false front
- Decorative wooden brackets under projecting cornice
- Transom windows above entry and windows
- Paneled bulkheads below display windows
- Fabric awnings or wooden canopies



### Typical Black Diamond Boomtown Commercial Facade



### Small scale - maximum two-storeys

Boomtown buildings are usually one and not more than two storeys in height. New development should respect this scale and relate to neighbouring buildings through similarity in overall height, horizontal façade elements and the width or overall mass of the building front.





## Rhythm

A typical twenty-five foot lot establishes most local building widths and contributes to the overall “rhythm” of the streetscape. (Large masses like the hotel are exceptional in this respect and consequently stand out as the physical and historic center of the community.) Secondary rhythms are also created by façade elements such as windows and event patterns in the building materials. New construction or alterations should maintain the traditional relationship of lot and building width and use vertical design elements that respect and reinforce the traditional streetscape rhythms.

## Setbacks

Continuity of building fronts along sidewalks is a distinguishing feature of many historic streetscapes. In Black Diamond, the opposite is the case, since many structures were moved in from elsewhere and placed unevenly on existing foundations, with varying degrees of setback and gaps between neighbouring buildings. However, development that creates open or vacant lots or which proposes a significant setback from the sidewalk should be discouraged, because such gaps create voids in the streetscape and prevent visual communication between the storefront, building interior and the street. Gaps between buildings can create interesting spaces and connect the façade to the rear yard. Development of pedestrian pathways, pocket gardens, sitting areas or fencing will help create appeal and effective use of this space.

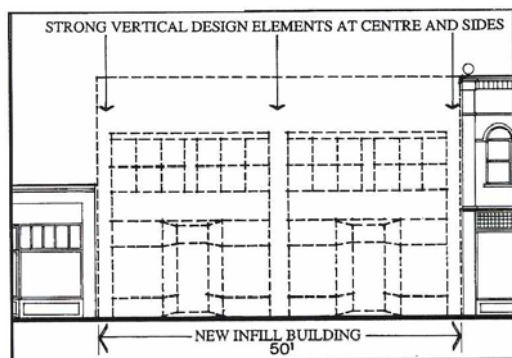
Example of a downtown pocket garden



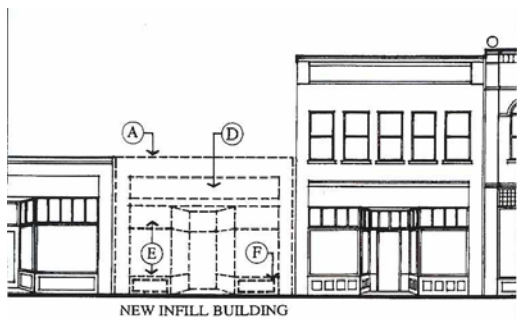
## Design elements and details

Boomtown facades were simply constructed with little if any ornamentation. They are characterized by a wood false front crowned with a simple cornice molding and parapet cap, or sometimes, a raised central parapet. Building alterations must preserve these characteristic and historic design features on the building front.

Town of Black Diamond  
Historic Downtown Design Standards  
**New construction**



two-storey design example



single storey



example of corner lot development in downtown area

New development must respond to the Boomtown design precedent and adapt these character-defining features:

- Alignment: new buildings should be aligned with adjacent development or be constructed to front property line.
- Setbacks: setbacks are not encouraged unless they significantly enhance activity of the street such as a sidewalk café. If required, it should be no greater than five ft.
- Vertical breaks in large buildings: storefront entrances should occur at approximately 25 foot intervals, or create design break within larger structures by incorporating major vertical elements.
- Rooflines in particular should match the rhythm of the streetscape with Boomtown detailing on upper cornice where possible. Avoid suburban-style roof lines.
- Building height should be restricted to two storeys.
- Materials should match period building materials as closely as possible and avoid synthetic materials such as vinyl siding or anodized aluminum. Stucco and brick are considered traditional, but stucco texture should be flat.
- Upper windows should reflect the repetitive pattern along the street.
- First floors/pedestrian levels should have windows and promote retail use.

## Materials

Recommended materials - (for enhancement or restoration projects):

Most of Black Diamond's historic buildings are wood structures with shiplap sheathing and (usually painted) wood siding. Recommended materials include:

- Cedar siding
- Brass door hardware
- Wood frame windows and doors
- Sheet metal flashings
- Wood fibre siding - must have an appropriate historic profile and design

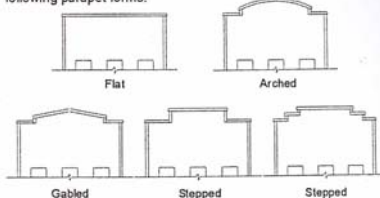
## Materials not permitted

- Vinyl siding , anodized aluminum siding
- Vinyl windows - may be permitted only if trimmed in wood

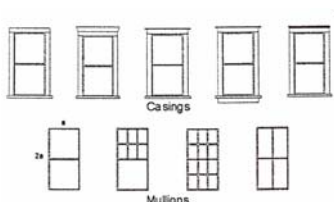


Boomtown style

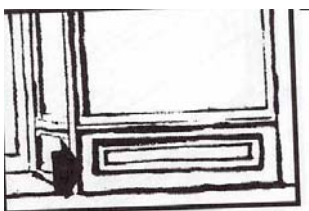
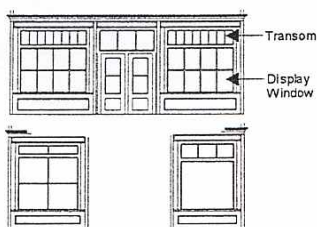
Buildings may have false fronts applied to them with the following parapet forms:



Upper window designs



Display and transom windows



## Roof and parapet styles

Traditional Boomtown roof styles were gabled with a false front installed to create a commercial appearance. The parapet flat or single stepped. They may have cornice detailing and brackets. Vent stacks, roof vents, chimneys and other mechanical protrusions should not be visible from the street.

Parapets:

- should be proportionate to the building
- should be trimmed (outlined) in wood and painted

## Windows

Windows are one of the most character-defining aspects of a building. Where possible, historic styles and patterns should be maintained. Large picture windows on the upper levels should be discouraged. Mullions and wood casings should be used.

Lower level windows: Display windows extend vertically from the bulkheads to the bottom of the transom. Their width typically spans the front façade. Double glazing and energy efficiency treatments should be as inconspicuous as possible. New window configuration should maintain the architectural character of the building close to its historic appearance.

## Cornices

Upper cornices are used to add detail to buildings and are usually installed as a cap to a parapet. Wood or metal materials are traditional, however, stucco covered styrofoam forms are now common, especially in new construction.

lower cornice – this is a decorative horizontal band located just above the storefront windows.

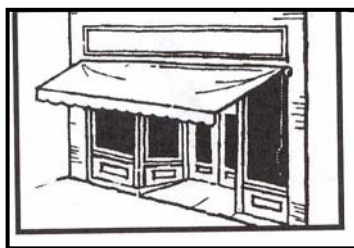
## Bulkheads

Bulkheads are a decorative façade element located below the display windows. These can be added but are not a required architectural detail in the Boomtown style.





## Awnings and canopies

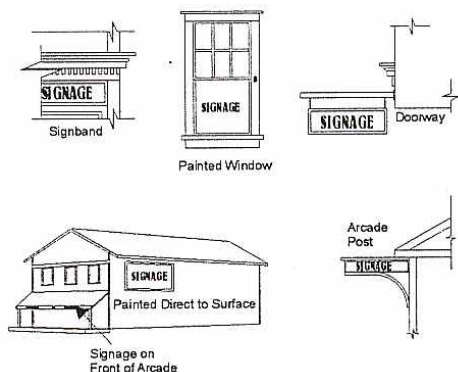


The Alberta Main Street Programme recommends commercial grade fixed or retractable fabric raked awnings be installed. Fixed wooden, metal or fabric canopies may be considered. Contemporary bubble, boxed or backlit awnings are not permitted.

## Signs

Commercial signs can be placed in several areas of the building (as long as they meet development requirements), but a balance of signage is recommended. The idea is to highlight the major tenant or business and to not create a clutter or confused appearance.

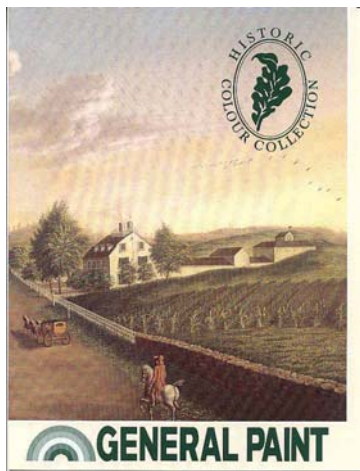
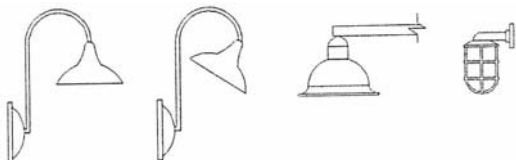
- No backlit signage permitted
- Only hand painted or screened signs –no vinyl lettering
- Projecting signs are encouraged
- Signage can be added to additional exposed façade (all visible sides of building)
- Signage can be painted directly onto the building



## Lighting

Historically, Boomtown era lighting was very simple and consisted primarily of gooseneck –style lamps attached to the front of the building above the sign band.

Backlit lighting within the historic downtown area shall not be permitted. Neon can be used only if applicable to the era of building restoration.



Colour chart:  
General Paint  
Historic  
Colour  
Collection

## Colours

Colour schemes for existing buildings and new developments should emphasize the character-defining features of the façade and respond to the colours and features of the neighbouring buildings.\

For the purposes of the Black Diamond Historic Downtown Design Standards, the General Paint Historic Colour Collection chart is used as a guide.



### Fencing / Screening



Most commercial buildings are constructed to the property line with little or not front yard setback. In the rare case of a building with a deeper setback, a low, transparent fence style is recommended. Wood or metal (wrought iron) are preferred materials.

### Landscaping

Refer to Land Use Bylaw for landscaping guidelines.

Window boxes attached to the building, wooden planter boxes placed in front of a storefront and the development of pocket gardens or sitting areas, where feasible, are encouraged.

### Street furniture

Benches, litter and recycle receptacles (with lids or coverings to protect from weather) and flower boxes located in public areas should be made of wood. Exceptions are in pocket garden areas where variety is encouraged. Bicycle stands, bollards and decorative street lights should be heavy gauge metal and painted black.



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Detailed information regarding historic building restoration and design is available through Alberta Community Development's publication, *Downtown Historic Guidelines*

Sources: Alberta Community Development *Guidelines for Rehabilitation of Designated Historic Resources*, 1993,  
Town of Black Diamond Bylaw 00-28, *Old Town Downtown Design Guidelines*,  
Graphic reproduction with permission from Town of Cochrane,  
*Western Heritage Design Guidelines*, November 27, 2000

Photo credits: Black Diamond Main Street Project

This document was prepared by M. Monique LeBlanc, Black Diamond Main Street Project Coordinator, 2004