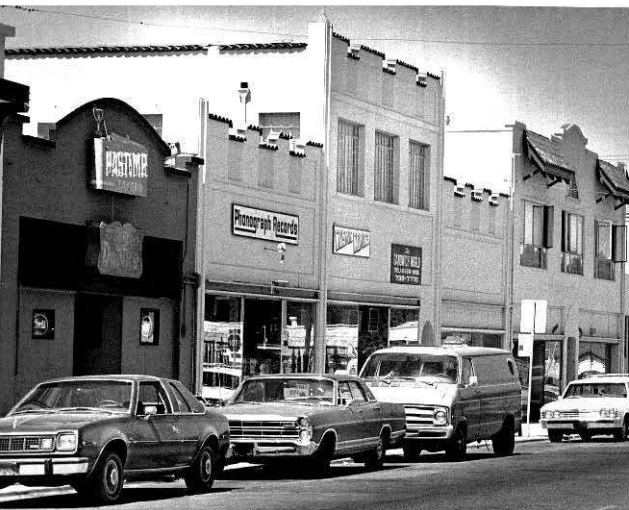




DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR MURPHY STATION HERITAGE LANDMARK DISTRICT

Adopted July 2019



City of Sunnyvale

Foreword

In 1980, the City of Sunnyvale commissioned Charles Hall Page and Associates, Inc. to prepare the first design guidelines for the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District (District). The District represents the last structures of the old Sunnyvale downtown; however, many of the contributing buildings were in poor condition at that time. Several of the buildings had been “renovated” with cheap materials, employing designs that showed little sensitivity to the original architectural character of the District and, many of the businesses were struggling financially. Additionally, the District lacked landscaping and streetscape treatments, that would both improve the appearance of and draw patrons to Murphy Avenue.

The 1980 Murphy Design Guidelines were accompanied by a development plan that included significant public improvements to the street, and a commitment by the City of Sunnyvale to invest more than two million dollars in public improvements and provide low interest loans to property owners for private storefront improvements.

Public improvements and continued investments were made along Murphy Avenue in the 1980’s and although private reinvestment moved at a slower pace, by the summer of 1994, most of the buildings in the District had been rehabilitated. Additionally, a few new structures were built on the periphery of the area.

Since the original Murphy Avenue Design Guidelines document focused on significant upgrades or new construction, and most of the improvements had been completed by 1994, the City updated the Murphy Design Guidelines with help from a grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation in 1994.

The District is now a thriving commercial center within downtown Sunnyvale and an update to the guidelines is instrumental to continue the traditions and character of this important area. This 2019 update to the Design Guidelines for the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District was sponsored as a Study Issue by the Sunnyvale Heritage Preservation Commission, and with City funding, has been completed by staff, along with assistance from the Sunnyvale Heritage Museum and selected consultants, architecture + history, llc and Johanna Street, Architect.

MURPHY STATION HERITAGE LANDMARK DISTRICT

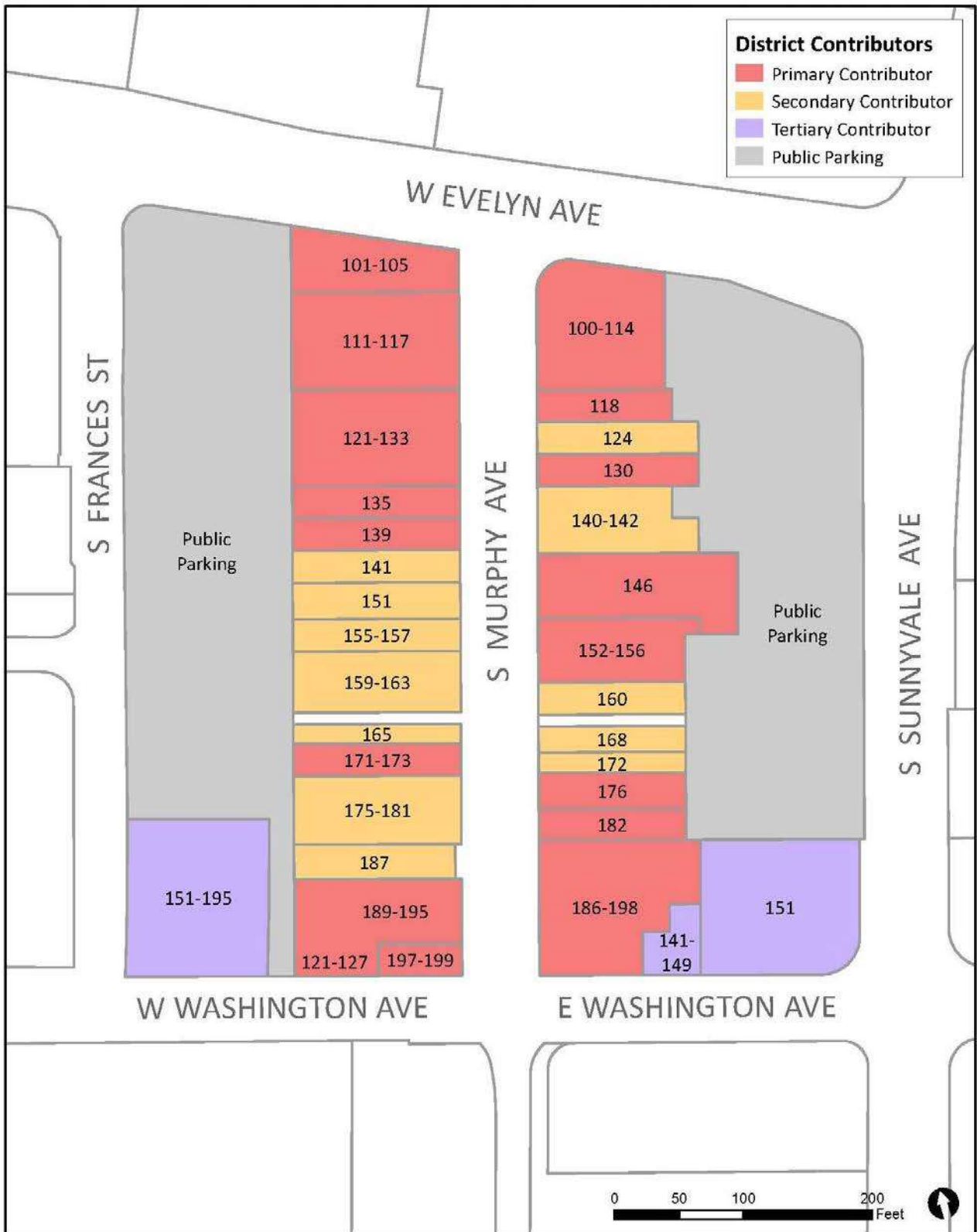


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An Introduction to the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District

Murphy Avenue – Sunnyvale’s Main Street

In 1850, Martin Murphy Jr. and his family settled in the Santa Clara Valley. Murphy purchased one half of the Pastoria de las Borregas Ranchero and called this property Bayview Ranch. In 1864, the Central Railroad (now Southern Pacific) constructed a railline between San Francisco and San Jose, which crossed the Bayview property through an easement from Murphy. In turn, the Murphys established a “Flag Stop” near their ranch and named it “Murphy’s Station.”

As a result, a commercial center developed at Murphy Station. Much of the growth and development around the train station can be attributed to W. E. Crossman, a savvy and farseeing real estate investor. In 1898, Crossman bought 200 acres of the Murphy Estate from Martin Murphy’s son and promoted the town, which he named Encinal. The town was renamed Sunnyvale in 1901, and finally incorporated in 1912.

The 100 block of South Murphy Avenue and surrounding parcels that make up the Heritage Landmark District are situated between the current major downtown thoroughfares of Washington, Evelyn, Sunnyvale and South Frances, and are within the City’s Downtown Specific Plan area. As Sunnyvale’s historic commercial core, the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District developed along Evelyn Avenue and the railroad tracks at the intersection of Murphy Avenue (originally called Main Street). This historic Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District characterizes the heart of the fledgling City and preservation of this district began in 1979 with the first inventory of historic resources by the City of Sunnyvale.

Many of the very early wood-frame buildings that lined Murphy Avenue are gone, but an early commercial building remains at 101 S. Murphy Avenue, at the corner of Evelyn Avenue. This building, constructed in 1897, housed a general store and was the location of Sunnyvale’s first post office. By 1929, addresses were assigned to buildings along Murphy Avenue and around downtown. Prior to that, a business location was described simply as “On Murphy Avenue, Sunnyvale.”

The buildings along Murphy Avenue reflect typical commercial architectural styles and types for the period 1900-1950. This includes primarily one and two-story, wood-frame structures that reflect the character of an early twentieth-century American Main Street. One author has described the traditional American Main Street as having been “the face of a town, the expression of its identity...the rhythm of windows and walls...a singular expression of time and place.” Murphy Avenue weathered challenging times in the 1980’s, but as more investment was made by the City, and through private loans, the district and individual buildings have been upgraded and are thriving amid downtown Sunnyvale.

Several buildings within the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District possess an architectural integrity which was dramatically enhanced by upgrades and investment executed

in the 1980's and 1990's. In the rare occasion where less characteristic materials and characterless signage remain, the circumstances are generally reversible.

The buildings within the District do not require restoration to a particular period of time, nor should they be reconstructed to an “antique” appearance. Each building has a particular style and appearance. Where there is a high level of architectural integrity, changes should be limited. Where past alterations have resulted in loss of historic materials, there is more flexibility in renovating when needed.

The Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District was historically a place to get your shoes fixed, eat lunch, and go to the movies. Traditionally the district was the hub of downtown Sunnyvale's social and retail activity. The stores and restaurants were small, but were oriented to personal service and offered a wide array of services and products. Today, these same spaces offer a wide-variety of local cuisine, and provide a lunch destination for Sunnyvale's workforce and a dinner destination for the residents. Additionally, the district offers a genuine, pleasant place to dine or shop, with an environment conducive to meeting people and enjoying the outdoor dining spaces.

Since the demolition of the Sunnyvale Town Center Mall, the redevelopment projects within the area have established downtown Sunnyvale as an exciting place to visit, work, and live. There are numerous offices, residential units and a variety of existing and future commercial and residential opportunities to bring people to the area. In this sense, the District provides a setting where people can gather to eat and socialize inserting new energy and patronage to Murphy Avenue.

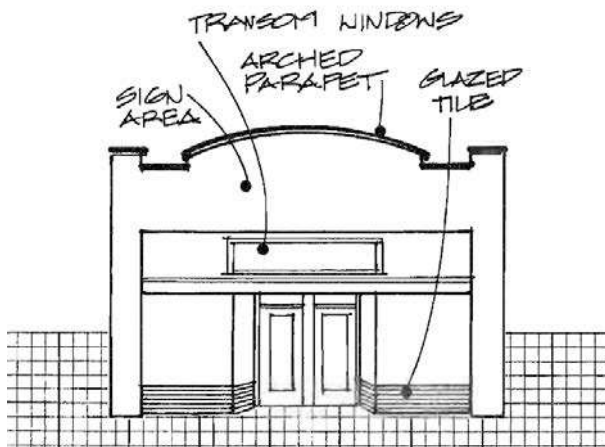
Historically, the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District was surrounded by residences. While many of the adjacent single-family residences no longer remain in the area, redevelopment of the Sunnyvale Town Center has resulted in multi-family residential uses within the immediate area (with more on the way). In this respect, the District's small shops and restaurants are especially attractive to residents of this, modern, twenty-first century urban village.



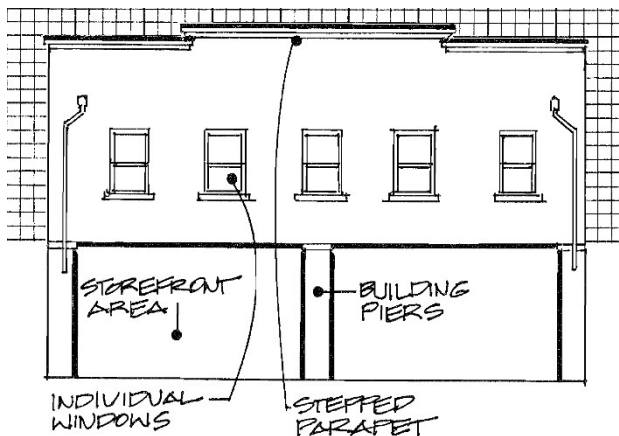
1943 Sanborn Maps of S. Murphy Avenue showing the former configuration of the rear lots, prior to parking areas being inserted where S. Francis and Arques Streets once aligned.

General Design Guidelines for the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District

The following are general guidelines for existing structures within the entire area that is known as the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District (District). The District is comprised of the 100 Block of S. Murphy Avenue and a few buildings along Evelyn Avenue and Washington Avenue. Given the small size of the area, recommendations and guidelines for each individual building are provided in the next section of this document. This section is intended to provide overview or general guidelines for existing buildings. A separate section is provided for new construction or major renovation. Further, this section is intended to supplement and expand on the 1994 Guidelines.



Typical one-story, commercial building found along Murphy Avenue. Some of the one-story buildings are two bays wide with two symmetrical storefront entries. The entry is often recessed somewhat from the front plane of the building. This sketch appeared in the previous version of the guidelines.



Typical two-story, commercial building found along Murphy Avenue. Some of the two-story buildings also have a Murphy Avenue-facing door that accesses the second story. This sketch appeared in the previous version of the guidelines.



Above: An intact, recessed storefront from the late 1920s.

Below: A strong example of a two-story, commercial building with a storefront at the first floor and a pedestrian entry to the upper story unit. Historically, these would have housed a business below, such as a small grocery with the grocer living above. Today, the upper story spaces have often been converted to office.



Materials Introduction

Sanborn Maps of the 100 block of S. Murphy Avenue indicate that historically this collection of buildings was wood frame, often with a stucco finish. Photographic evidence indicates windows were either wood frame or steel sash and were frequently framed in wood. A solid, permanent material was often employed at the storefront base, also referred to as a bulkhead, such as tile, stone or brick. Storefront entries sometimes had special flooring, such as terrazzo or colorful tile.



Note the tile work at the storefront base, the stepped parapet, the signage area, and stucco finish at 121-133 S. Murphy Ave.

Materials General Guidelines

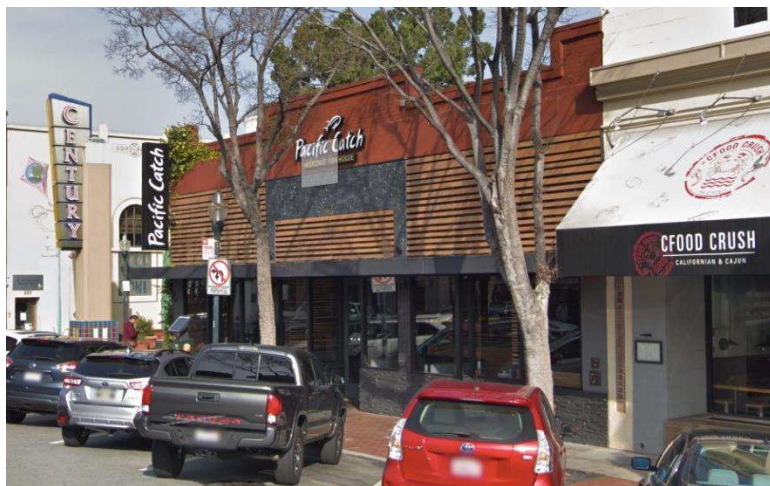
- Make removal of incompatible materials a priority, especially at the bulkhead, entry, or transom area of the storefront and at the building cornice or roofline.
- New materials should harmonize with existing or historic building materials. Materials should be limited to traditional materials such as brick, stucco, stone, terra-cotta, wood, tile and metal. Materials with a matte finish are preferred; polished or reflective surfaces are discouraged. Choose materials, as well as colors, that relate to the architectural style or character of the building being renovated or, if the building is not historic, to the style or character of the District. DO NOT choose materials that are user specific as they may not hold from merchant to merchant or reflect the traditional materials employed at storefronts.
- Retain or reintroduce transparent windows at the front façade; opaque, black, mirrored or heavily tinted glass should be avoided.
- Limit the number of materials employed on any single façade so the materials do not create an overly busy façade.
- Repair historic windows rather than replace them. However, if replacement is required, employ wood sash or anodized aluminum. For instance, steel window framing is appropriate on a Moderne style building, whereas natural wood trim would enhance a simple Spanish-inspired building.

General Design Guidelines for Building Renovations

- Reintroduce missing architectural features and decorative elements with compatible materials.
- Ensure that awnings and signage take into consideration the spacing of storefront bays.
- Maintain a consistent architectural style on all building elevations.
- Retain character-defining features and limit changes that would impact character-defining features.
- Encourage variation in tile base from building to building in the District.



Above: This one-story commercial building has many intact features including its two recessed storefront entries and the detailing enframing the storefront including the large openings for the transom windows. Some transom windows have been lost and the base materials have been changed but the shape, form, massing and major features of this storefront remain.



Above: This storefront, in another Peninsula downtown, was recently remodeled. The selection of wood slats for use at the clerestory area reflects the corporate image of this restaurant mini-chain, but does not reflect the traditional material or feature employed at this area of a 1920s-30s storefront.

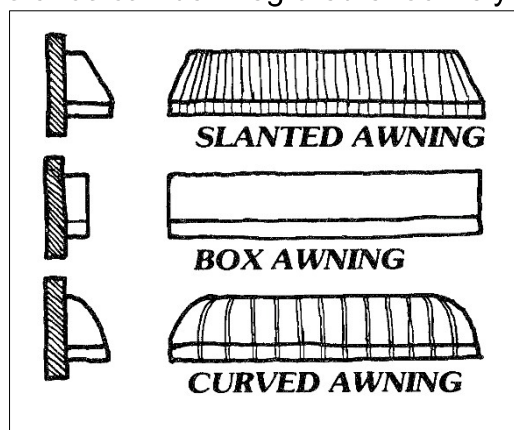


The storefront before it was altered; the clerestory windows were retained behind the wood slats shown above.

Awnings Introduction

Many of the buildings within the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District were designed to have retractable 45-degree angle awning stretching the length of the storefront display windows or façade. Awnings are a colorful way to create an inviting pedestrian environment at the storefront, while also contributing to the distinctive image of the business. Brightly colored canvas awnings add character to the streetscape. Awnings can be designed to cover each individual storefront window band or entry, or span across the entire building front, if compatible with the individual building.

A commercial building with a very flat, undecorated façade benefits greatly from awnings. Second-story windows should also be considered as possible locations for awnings. Upper stories can be integrated effectively into the storefront area through the use of awnings.



Typical awning types found along Murphy Avenue. This sketch appeared in the previous version of the guidelines.

Awnings General Guidelines

- Awnings should be compatible with the building architecture.
- The minimum clearance between the lowest point of the awning and the grade immediately below must be eight feet for pedestrian areas and fifteen feet for vehicular clearance.
- Retractable awnings may be considered if appropriately designed.
- Provide awnings that are simple in design, color and detail and that complement the building's established (or future) color palate.
- Select materials for awnings that will age, weather and fade slowly to maximize the investment, such as canvas and matte finish vinyl. Replace frayed, ripped, faded, or heavily soiled canvas awnings every five years.
- Use awnings creatively, to provide the main signage area or supplement wall signs and window graphics.
- Employ stenciling when business names and addresses when signage is placed onto awnings
- Employ awnings to compliment the commercial storefront's historic character and features.
- Use the overall character and architecture of the building to guide awning size, placement, materials, and colors.
- Choose awning shapes that relate to the shape of the entrances and contribute to the cumulative effect for the building as well as the streetscape.
- Consider how the spacing and size of awnings affect the appearance of the entire building as well as each individual storefront.



This is a good example of using several awnings of the same size and character along a corner storefront to break up the awning plane and highlight the individual elements of the building.



Above: This small-scale, two-storefront corner building would benefit from restoration of the clerestory windows and consistently placed and sized awnings below the clerestory. Varying color of these awnings differentiates the two merchants which can be okay if done well.

Below: Using awnings at secondary elevations and at second story windows can further highlight the building features, while providing necessary sun shade for building users.



Color Introduction

American Main Streets have traditionally been colorful places. Every element along the streetscape contributes to an integrated and harmonious commercial environment. The colors of each building, the elements and colors of the window displays, the awnings and signage, as well as lighting contribute to the overall character of the streetscape. Along S. Murphy Avenue and within the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District the proliferation of mature trees and

plantings also contribute to the color of the streetscape, in some places softening the architecture.

Color General Guidelines

- Employ a lighter shade color for the body of the building.
- Use bright, bold colors to highlight trim and for ornamentation, awnings, signs, and banners.
- Choose darker, contrasting colors for tiles or other materials employed at the base of the building.
- Consider the color of nearby buildings. Colors of adjacent buildings should complement one another. Maintain a balance of colors. For example, a minimum of three colors is recommended for use on building facades, with the third, and rare fourth, color used on accent items such as awnings, or doors and windows.
- Where limited decorative features exist, create visual interest by applying color in a pattern that resembles architectural elements such as pilasters, coursing, window lintels, or cornice lines. In some cases, slightly darker or lighter shades of the base color would “create” enough ornamentation to add visual interest. Employ color to manipulate large, unarticulated facade renovations. The use of paint breaks up the large unarticulated face of the building elevations.
- Make every effort to coordinate all the colors which comprise a building’s facade, including awnings and signage.
 - Awnings add an architectural element to the façade and serve a practical purpose as well. Colors selected for awnings should work with the overall signage and color scheme of the building. The awning color should pair well with one of the highlight trim colors or introduce another complementary color.
 - Signage should reflect the historic character of S. Murphy Avenue and be placed in locations that are appropriate and work well with the architectural features of each building.



This storefront, which is very intact at the upper level, would benefit from differing colors for trim and at the highly decorative cornice.



This single building houses two storefronts. Different body paint colors, varying signage and use of awnings creates two distinct facades.

Windows and Window Displays Introduction

Storefront windows are a primary character-defining feature of these building types. The clerestory windows above also contribute to the overall character of the building and provide additional light into interior spaces. A well-designed window display should draw the pedestrian's attention to the major project or service of a business establishment. If the display windows are large, putting one of everything in the window will not necessarily draw shoppers to a store. Regulations for window signage can also be found in Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.44.

Windows General Guidelines

- Provide creative, colorful, organized, attractive and informative window displays that convey the type and style of the business and its associated merchandise.
- Create dramatic eye-catching displays through the use of lighting and color.
- Correct dropped ceilings or mezzanine floors installed and built directly against window glazing as these detract from the window display area.
- Locate interior mechanical equipment away from the storefront glazing
- Uncover clearstory windows that have been obscured.
- All glazing should be open and clear. Avoid the following:
 - Window covering;
 - Window film;
 - Obscure or spandrel glazing;
 - Security bars; or
 - Other similar materials that obscures views inside the building.



Above: Using one color for the storefront works here as the raised, simple letter signage at the sign band and the creative use of the window display area provides plenty of color and variation.

Lighting Introduction

Historically, some of the facades along Murphy Avenue may have been lighted at night; certainly, this was the case along many California Main Streets. Most likely the former Sunnyvale Theater was brightly lit with dazzling colors each night. Neon is a particularly versatile signage material that was fashionable in the 1930's to 1950's and has returned to popularity. Neon is attractive during the day and also contributes to the ambiance of the street at night.

Storefront lighting is essential to a vibrant nighttime atmosphere. Storefronts or restaurant windows can be a primary source of illumination on the street. Often an entire storefront is flooded with light from down lights in display windows. Exterior wall-mounted-fixtures also cast light onto storefronts, illuminating signage after dark. Lighting also can highlight historic or key elements of buildings at the street level, washing bay columns or the underside of the storefront cornice with light, and drawing attention to the building and the streetscape.



*A Los Angeles street lit at night in the 1940s.
Neon signs are a common feature of historic downtowns.*

Lighting General Guidelines

- Use lighting to highlight building elements of the surrounding storefront, such as columns, the glazed bulkhead, or the underside of the storefront cornice, to draw attention to a store.
- Design display windows and signage for nighttime appeal as well; consider how these elements will look when lighted at night.
- Use accent lighting to highlight storefront, restaurant and building entrances that is appropriate to the style of the building. Neon signage may be considered where historically appropriate.
- Employ consistent fixture styles at all building elevations, where feasible.



Above: This commercial street has varying street lights, building lighting, storefront lighting and neon signage all of which contributes to the nighttime character and sense of safety.

Signage Introduction

Murphy Street signage was placed on the valance of awnings, within bands above or below transom windows, and almost always appeared on the storefront windows. It was designed carefully to reflect both the type and the quality of products or services offered by the business establishment. Cluttered, poorly designed signage projects a tacky, disorderly appearance and consequently is difficult to read.

Signage General Guidelines

- Ensure proposed signage, including temporary signs and window graphics, complies with Sunnyvale Municipal Code Section 19.44 (Signs).
- Preserve historic signs; they are reminders of the area's history.
- Scale signs to fit within the boundaries of the storefront that it is advertising.
- Design storefront signage so that it is lightweight in appearance. Signs made up of individual letters, square signs hung away from the face of the building, and signs perpendicular to the face of the building all tend to appear lighter than square signs affixed to the face of the building.

- Encourage individual letters (e.g. channel, halo-lit), cabinet/box signs are not allowed on Murphy Avenue.



A variety of signage including Projecting, hanging signs, lettering on awnings and affixed letter signs to sign bands add to the vibrancy of the streetscape.



This chain store used simple applied letters as signage, respecting the established sign band and clerestory windows.

Pedestrian Breezeways Introduction

Each side of the 100 block of S. Murphy Avenue has a mid-block pedestrian passageway or breezeway that leads to rear of the buildings and the associated parking area. These breezeways were likely created in the mid-1950s when the adjacent buildings that face Murphy Avenue were constructed. They feature Mid-Century elements such as low, fairly flat roofs, Roman brick bases and limited decorative details. Each breezeway has entrances or small storefronts that face the walkway. They have been somewhat modified over time and need more frequent maintenance.

Pedestrian Breezeway General Guidelines

All the signage and landscaping encroaching upon the pedestrian promenades should be carefully designed to enhance the intimate, inviting pedestrian-scale. The applied elements such as signage, awnings, and planters should be colorful and well maintained.

- Refurbish the Murphy Station entry monuments. Consider consistency with the Murphy Ave entry sign at Washington Ave.
- Retain the Roman brick that appears at the Murphy Avenue entry of the breezeways.
- Select additional tile that compliments the Roman brick to extend through the breezeways for the lower wall area through the breezeway.
- Encourage redesign of window and door openings along the breezeway to achieve a more uniform or consistent architectural vocabulary. Many of these have been altered or completely changed and as a collection they have an ad hoc appearance.
- Design improvements along the breezeways will create a more inviting atmosphere and allow businesses to better relate to the thru-space.
- Select consistent light fixture for along the breezeway for improved nighttime safety and access.
- Provide similar treatments in tile, lighting, paint, window and door selections for each of the two breezeways.
- Consider studying the roof structure of these spaces and determine if slightly raising the roof might improve the pedestrian experience through the space.
- Consider removing the roof over the breezeways to make this an open air passage between Murphy Avenue and the rear parking areas; this could make these more inviting spaces.

General Design Guidelines for Building Renovations



Above: The east side breezeway.

Below: The west side breezeway.



Walkway in downtown San Mateo.



Walkway Examples



Open air connection to rear parking at this small scale commercial complex.

Rear Facades Introduction

The rear facades of the buildings within the District face the public parking lots for the downtown area. These rear facades originally faced what were the back yards of residences facing S. Francis Street at the west and additional residences and the lumber yard to the east. As such, the rear facades were not originally intended to be accessed as an entry to the business or viewed formally. Therefore, many of the rear elevations of these buildings currently lack the historic continuity of the elevations along S. Murphy Avenue and may have originally consisted of blank walls. However, when the parking areas were added in the 1950s, these facades became significantly more public and some rear entries to businesses accessed directly from the parking areas were created.

Rear Façade General Guidelines

- Strive to make these rear areas attractive for semi-public uses or secondary entrances to shops and restaurants, with limited use of display windows, ornament and signage.
- Signage should be smaller scaled for the rear facades than for the front facades. The location of the signage should facilitate communication about the location of entrances and the identification of the business.
- Lighting of the rear areas of buildings is particularly important to create visual interest as well as a sense of security. Small white lights could outline the shape of a canvas canopy or could be incorporated into the landscaping.
- Carry the architectural design or a similar architectural vocabulary from the front of the building to the rear of the building (e.g. entries, windows, architectural details, colors and materials).
- Encourage active use of rear areas, such as outdoor dining.

Rear Areas – Uses – Waste Management, Storage, Outdoor Dining / Seating and Parking

Some of the buildings have ample space at the rear for ancillary uses. It is important to determine if there is adequate space for the desired uses; to avoid over programming an area, or trying to fit too many ancillary uses in too small of a space. The following guidelines should be considered for the rear area uses:

- Adequately separate outdoor seating / dining from storage and trash enclosures.
- Design trash enclosures to be compatible with the buildings they serve and blend with the existing architecture.
- Employ trash enclosures to screen trash receptacles.
- Ensure rear uses are safe in relation to adjacent parking; make sure uses do not spill into parking areas.

General Design Guidelines for Building Renovations



This trash enclosure in another commercial area was designed to blend with the existing architecture.



A parking enclosure at the east parking area.



A sidewalk separates the parking spots from the buildings and rear use areas along the edge of the parking area.



These rear facades of the west side Murphy Avenue buildings have a sidewalk, which helps with pedestrian safety. They also do not have any trash storage at the rear.

Building Specific Guidelines

135 S. MURPHY AVENUE

Summary Information

- Year Built: 1913; formerly Pastime Bar
- Contribution Type: Primary Contributor to District
- Parcel Number: 209-06-005
- Stories: 1
- 2018 Tenant: Murphy's Law
- Architectural Style: Contemporary Mission Revival

Past Alterations

- Last exterior alteration permit – 1984 (exterior improvements, enlarged storefront windows, rear seating area)
- Other alterations noted in field: none



Above: A photograph of the building, with the Pastime sign, and a much less glazed storefront dating to about 1981. The scalloped parapet is a similar configuration today.



Above: The storefront in its present condition.

Below: Detail of the signage at the arched parapet.

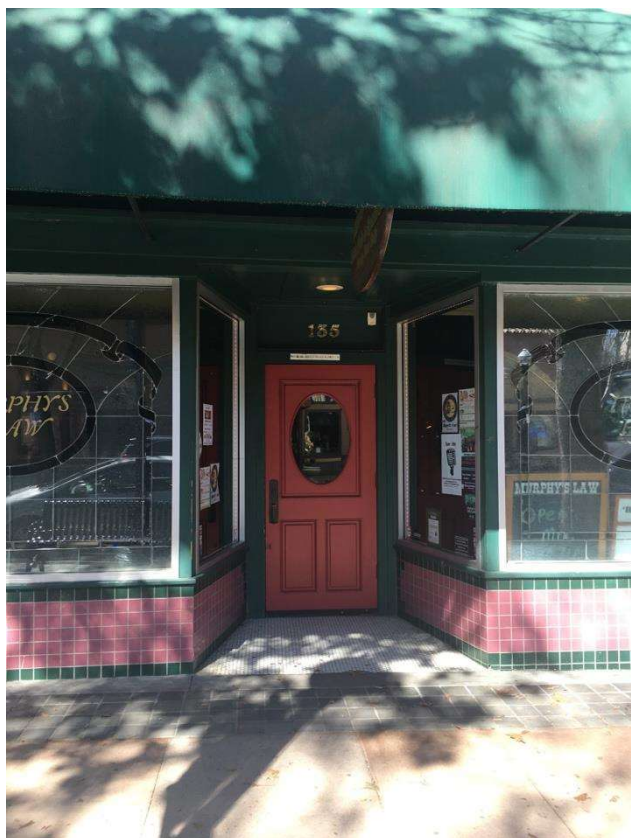


Building Specific Guidelines

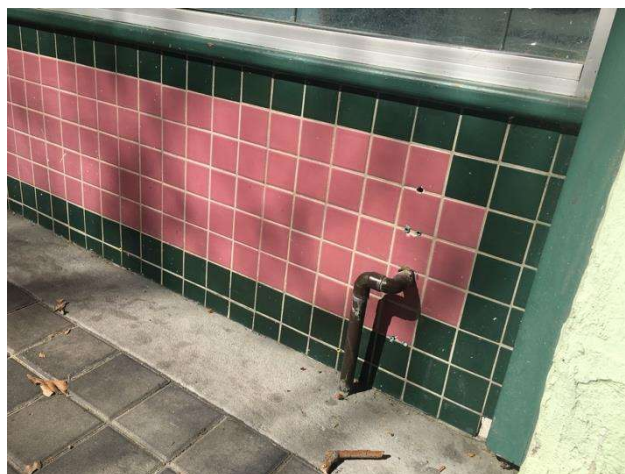
135 S. MURPHY AVENUE

Building Specific Character-Defining Features

- Single, centered, angled, recessed storefront entry.
- Smooth stucco finish.
- Ceramic tile base.
- Storefront configuration with windows above tile base and tiled entry floor
- Arched, Mission Revival-inspired parapet.
- Use of an awning.
- Simple color scheme.



Above: The angled, recessed entry to the building.



Above: Detail of tile base with utility line at front façade.

Building Specific Guidelines

- Limit changes to character-defining features in future upgrades, or renovation or rehabilitation projects.
- Limit roof top additions, as this would alter the overall character of the structure and its contribution to the District.
- Retain a glazed storefront.
- Avoid painting on ceramic tile base.
- Avoid elimination of rear seating area as it activates the back of the property and contributes positively to the District.

Recommendations for Priority Improvements (as of 12/13/18)

- Conduit and meters should be minimized at Murphy Avenue façade and priority given to relocating these, if possible.
- Consider use of a smaller-scaled awning to enhance the storefront.
- Replace missing tiles from ceramic tile base.
- Consider re-painting in a lighter, creamier color, with dark accents.
- Maintain the tile base along Murphy Avenue, but consider use of different colored tiles to better enhance the building character.