

Village Design Guidelines



City of Saratoga

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



1 Introduction	1
2 Village Vision	2
3 Purpose	3
4 Land Use	4
5 Architecture and Design	6
5.1 General Design Principles.....	6
5.2 Storefronts.....	10
5.3 Building Materials & Colors.....	13
5.4 Signage.....	14
6 Historic Preservation	16
7 Circulation	18
8 Public Improvements	19
9 Opportunity Sites	20
9.1 Saratoga Village Shopping Center (old Buy & Save Site).....	21
9.2 14477 Big Basin Way (Currently "Rockin' Kids").....	23

1 INTRODUCTION

The Village has been the heart of Saratoga since its establishment circa 1850 and it remains a present reminder of the community's identity that reflects its quaint charm and rural past. While the forces of growth and urbanization throughout Silicon Valley have resulted in more dense development throughout neighboring suburban downtown districts, Saratoga has intentionally resisted drastic changes to the Village that might diminish the historic context and unique characteristics the community embraces.

Recognizing the importance of protecting the Village's rich history and its physical character, the City adopted the *Saratoga Village Specific Plan* in 1988 and the *Saratoga Village Design Guidelines* in 1992.

In 2015, the City Council initiated a community outreach effort to tap the community's views and its vision for the Village moving forward. The community outreach engaged more than 1000 residents as well as Village business

and property owners. Using the information collected the community began the task of updating the policies that regulate design, development and land use in the Village to affirm the long-term goals for downtown Saratoga. Through a series of community study sessions with the Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission, the process culminated with a clear set of standards and policy statements reflected in the *Village Design Guidelines and Standards*.



2 VILLAGE VISION

The “Saratoga Village” section of the Land Use Element of the General Plan provides a set of goals and policies that reflects the community’s vision for the Village.

This vision is to foster a quaint, but vibrant shopping and restaurant district, intended to reflect the community’s small-town identity and its distinctive qualities. Equally important, the Village serves as the center of community and civic activity intended to provide opportunities for public gathering and engagement.

The Village should include businesses that appeal to residents and visitors alike with the ground floor space along Big Basin Way attracting a pedestrian oriented shopper. It is distinguished from other suburban downtowns by its exquisite natural setting, historic context and ambiance reminiscent of its roots when life was rural and uncomplicated.

New development should take advantage of opportunities to create viable retail and/or mixed-use buildings that complement the context and human scale of the downtown.

Architectural styles should provide interest while complementing the eclectic nature of Village design. The Village is unique because of its natural setting, deep-seated history and connection to past eras. Furthering positive change and development over time while keeping its heritage intact will be accomplished through partnership between the City and Village stakeholders. By implementing the goals, policies and strategies outlined in this document, the City will ensure that the Village will continue to flourish as a vital and successful business district and as a primary venue for community engagement.



3 PURPOSE

While the City Code contains the basic codified regulations for development in the Village, the Saratoga Village Design Guidelines provides the qualified criteria for the staff and the decision-making bodies to evaluate whether an application is in tune with the community's

vision for the Village. Additionally, it provides Village property and business owners, developers, architects and realtors a set of community standards by which they can design and prepare their applications to best achieve City approval.



4 LAND USE

The key to commercial success in a pedestrian oriented environment is to create an engaging experience for customers. This is done by having an uninterrupted stream of interesting storefronts and uses that capture the pedestrians' attention and entices them to walk to the next tenant space. The formula includes a combination of interesting land uses with attractive storefront design and well-maintained public infrastructure. The land uses that best attract patrons are generally smart, attractive retail shops presented in an

appealing and inviting manner, along with diverse restaurant choices.

Office uses, while an asset to a commercial district, interrupt the "flow of interest" along ground floor street frontage due to the nature of its business. They are better located on side streets or second floors. While the market plays a significant role in deciding what businesses locate in the Village, through its policies and strategies Saratoga can help create an attractive environment to encourage and cultivate new retail business.

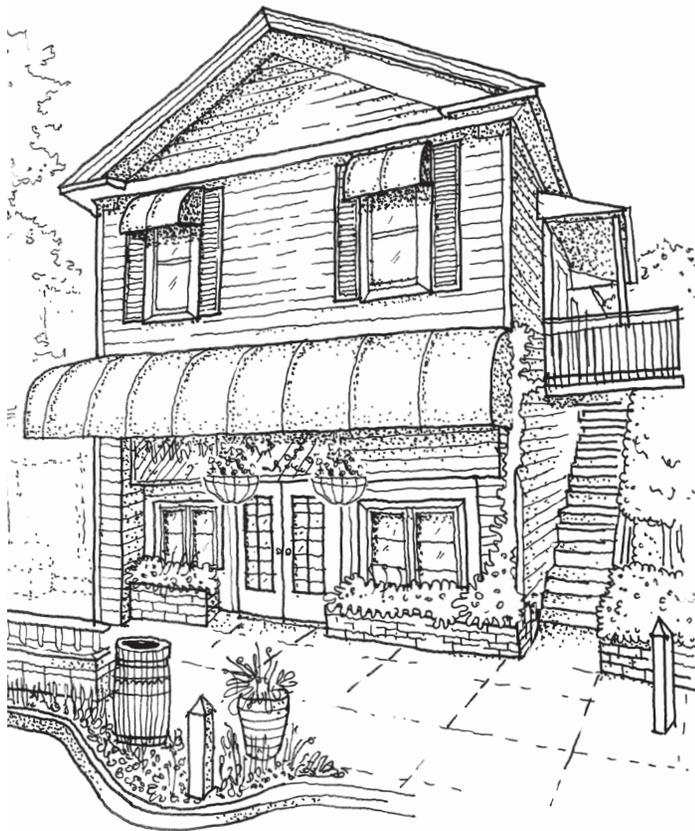


4.4 Basin Way maintains an active streetscape.

Design Guidelines

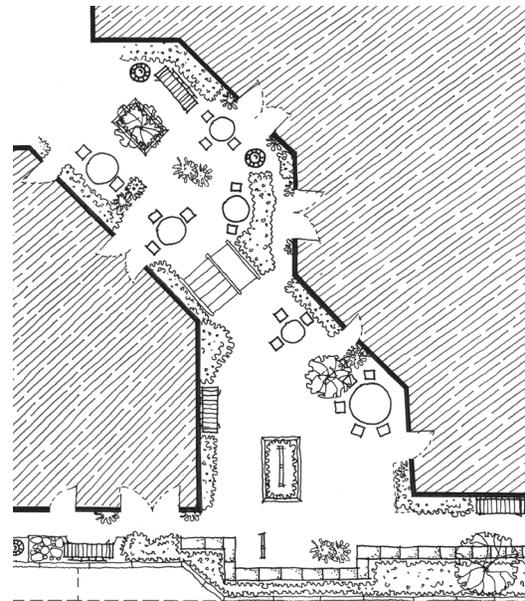
- 4.1** The City strongly encourages the predominant use of ground floor commercial space fronting Big Basin Way in the CH-1 zone for retail and restaurant uses.
- 4.2** Retail and pedestrian continuity shall be maintained along Big Basin Way.
- 4.3** Storefronts and single purpose non-retail buildings along the ground floor of Big Basin Way that are not conducive to sound retail principles are discouraged.
- 4.4** The City encourages an active streetscape that may include outdoor dining, public gathering spaces, interesting public art, and appropriate music venues.

4 LAND USE



4.5 Incorporate office and residential uses on upper levels.

**The term "retail" within the context of this document means the sale or rental of goods as defined under Section 15-06.560 of the City Code.*



4.6 Spaces between buildings can activate public spaces.

Design Guidelines

- 4.5** Office and residential uses are encouraged on the second floor and discouraged on the ground floor along Big Basin Way in the CH-1 zone.
- 4.6** The City should look at expanding existing public spaces and facilitate the creation of new public plazas and gathering spaces to promote community interaction and passive enjoyment.
- 4.7** The City should explore opportunities to incorporate public art and music in the Village as a means to attract shoppers and invite civic engagement.

5 ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

Architecture and design standards create the framework for building, enhancing, and protecting the image and character of the Village which has endured for over 165 years. It is not the intent of these guidelines to impose strict architectural styles or specific design solutions, but rather to encourage visual harmony and compatibility in terms of the historical context and existing design fabric of the Village. The

existing architectural context of the Village is an eclectic mix of old and new styles. Within the diversity of styles, these standards are intended to encourage finding the common threads that are the substance of what makes the Village special and incorporating those features in future development and changes to existing structures.

5.1 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES



5.1.4 *A mixture of one- and two-story buildings.*

Design Guidelines

- 5.1.1** The architectural design and style of new construction shall complement and contribute to the distinctive character and essence of the Village. Generic and uninspired elevations lacking detail and articulation will not be acceptable.
- 5.1.2** New construction shall consider the context, scale and character of surrounding structures.
- 5.1.3** Architecture should add interest and intrigue reflecting design excellence while complementing the eclectic makeup of the Village.
- 5.1.4** The predominant form and scale of the Village is one and two stories. New development and renovations shall be deferential to the measured skyline that protects view sheds of the hills and maintains a comparable and compatible place in the Village.

5.1 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES



5.1.5 Roof forms exhibit architectural simplicity and vary throughout the Village.



5.1.8 Small details animate public spaces.

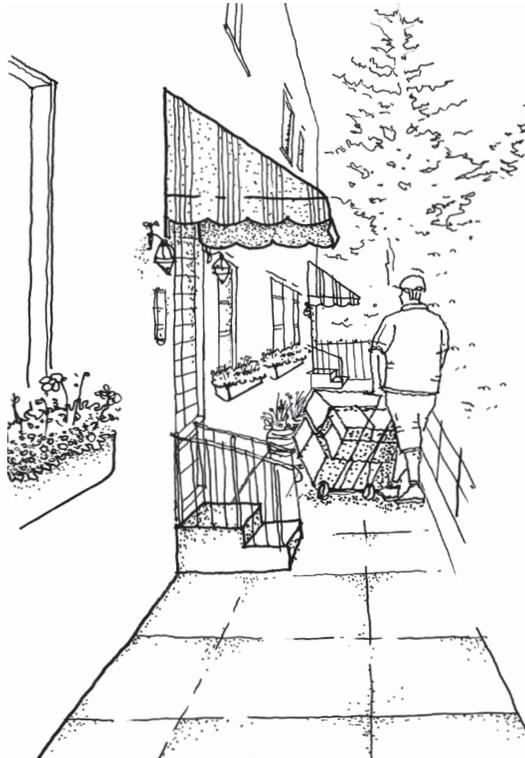
Design Guidelines

- 5.1.5** Roof forms should exhibit architectural simplicity, but should vary throughout the Village to create a visually interesting skyline.
- 5.1.6** Overly vertical rooflines that invade the picturesque views of the hillside and detract from the natural setting of the Village will not be allowed.
- 5.1.7** Roof mounted equipment shall be adequately screened from view.
- 5.1.8** Architectural elements and details shall be proportionate to the scale and style of the building.
- 5.1.9** Diversity of design is encouraged, but traditional, timeless architectural designs are preferred over populist trendy styles.

5.1 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES



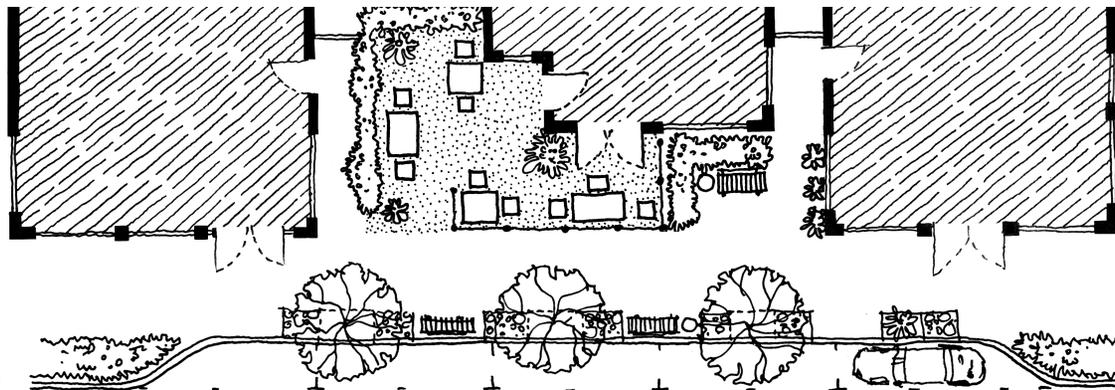
5.1.12 Public art opportunity.



5.1.16 Rear entries are active spaces.

Design Guidelines

- 5.1.10 Overly stylistic architectural elements that tend to clutter elevations and storefronts are not in keeping with the Village theme.
- 5.1.11 Utility boxes and utilities shall be located in inconspicuous places whenever possible and shall be screened from view.
- 5.1.12 Utility boxes may be used as opportunities for public art.
- 5.1.13 Applicants shall work with the City and Fire Department staff early in the development review process to design backflow devices and utilities to minimize their visibility.



5.1.15 Provide a transition from the sidewalk into a building.

5.1 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

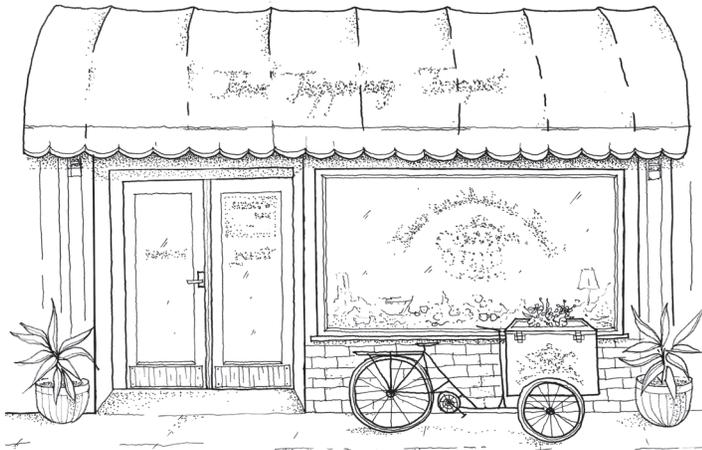


5.1.17 Murals can animate.

Design Guidelines

- 5.1.14** Architectural elements that are not functionally integrated with the building, such as false mansard roofs, false cornices, etc., are not appropriate except in circumstances when restoring an historic building under the guidance and supervision of the Heritage Preservation Commission.
- 5.1.15** New development, where appropriate, on Big Basin Way shall consider deeper building setbacks to accommodate outdoor seating opportunities, public plazas, and public art.
- 5.1.16** Rear entries shall be given similar consideration as front entries with the use of awnings, decorative elements, and planter boxes to enhance the appearance and create an inviting quality.
- 5.1.17** Large, blank walls should be avoided by incorporating architectural elements and details, murals, trellises, and vines, or other attractive techniques.

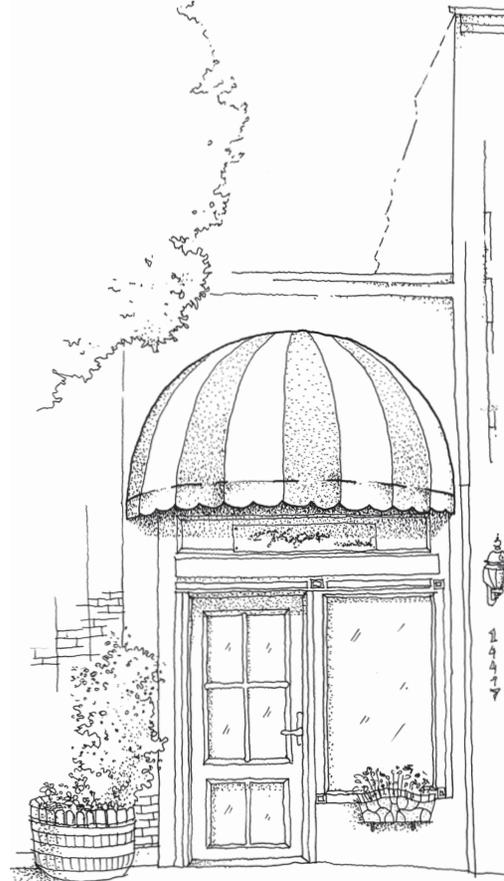
5.2 STOREFRONTS



5.2.1 "Main Street" retail format.



5.2.2 Expansive display windows.



5.2.4 Awnings provide unique character.

Design Guidelines

- 5.2.1 Well-designed storefronts include attractive entries, expansive display windows, a distinctive kick plate and a prominent horizontal band separating the first floor from the roof line or the second story. This is considered a typical "Main Street" approach to retail.
- 5.2.2 First floor elevations in newly constructed buildings on Big Basin Way in the CH- 1 zone, shall be constructed with retail in mind. Display windows shall ideally measure at least 10 feet in height from grade and no more than a 24-inch-high kick plate measured from grade.
- 5.2.3 Horizontal over vertical window patterns should be emphasized.
- 5.2.4 Window coverings such as awnings are encouraged to provide architectural interest as well as functional use such as weather protection.

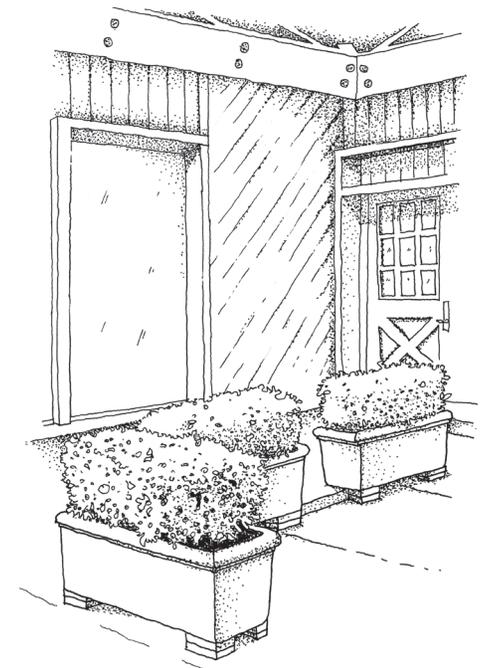
5.2 STOREFRONTS



5.2.5 Provide a sense of invitation and openness.

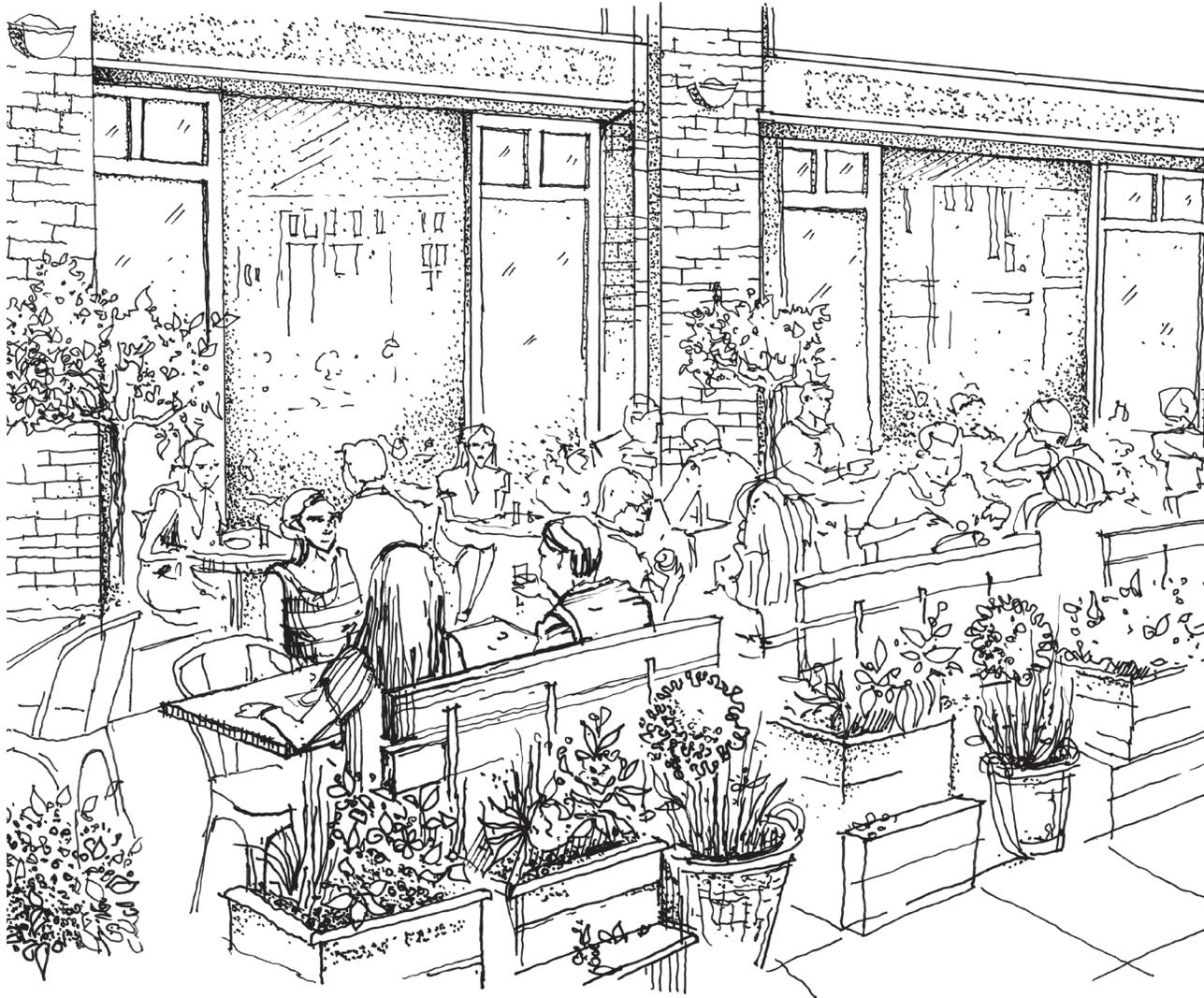
Design Guidelines

- 5.2.5** Entries should consist of large, glass panels with vertical proportions to provide a sense of invitation and openness.
- 5.2.6** The use of well-maintained planter boxes, either freestanding or under windows are encouraged to add a splash of color or accent a storefront design.



5.2.6 Planter boxes shape the entry route.

5.2 STOREFRONTS



5.2.7 Outdoor dining can be an extension for the interior space.

Design Guidelines

- 5.2.7** Operable windows and sliding glass doors are encouraged at ground floor restaurants to spur outdoor dining and enhance streetscape liveliness.
- 5.2.8** Corner commercial buildings should continue storefront applications along the side street elevation including window treatments, kick plates and horizontal bands.



5.2.8 Corner commercial building.

5.3 BUILDING MATERIALS & COLORS

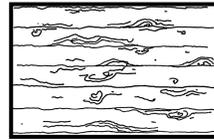
Design Guidelines

- 5.3.1** Larger, more expansive buildings should use more subdued colors. Smaller buildings and those with more architectural detail may use brighter hues.
- 5.3.2** Materials and colors of buildings should coordinate with neighboring buildings to create a harmonious effect.
- 5.3.3** Base colors should be more neutral and subtle while brighter accent colors should be used for contrasting architectural details. Brick and stone should be left in their natural state and should not be painted.

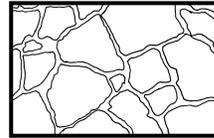


5.3.4 Natural materials should be used.

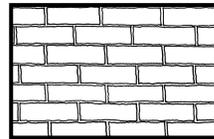
AUTHENTIC MATERIALS



Wood



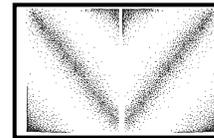
Natural Stone



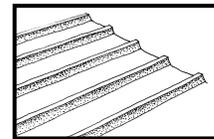
Natural Brick



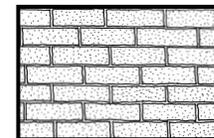
UNAUTHENTIC MATERIALS



Mirrored Glass



Plastic



Painted Brick



5.3.7 Authentic materials help define the Village character.

Design Guidelines

- 5.3.4** Wood, Stucco, brick, tile, stone, and other natural materials should be the primary building materials on facades, with a mixture of these materials being optimum.
- 5.3.5** Buildings with identifiably historic features should highlight, not hide those features.
- 5.3.6** The use of materials and colors should be compatible and complimentary when more than one tenant is housed in the same building. The use of different colors to distinguish tenants, without a cohesive architectural design, can be visually disruptive.
- 5.3.7** The use of plastics, mirrored glass, painted brick or similar unauthentic materials are inappropriate.
- 5.3.8** The color of tenant signage, window awnings, and light fixtures should coordinate with the building facades. Deeper and brighter tones for these elements will create visual interest.

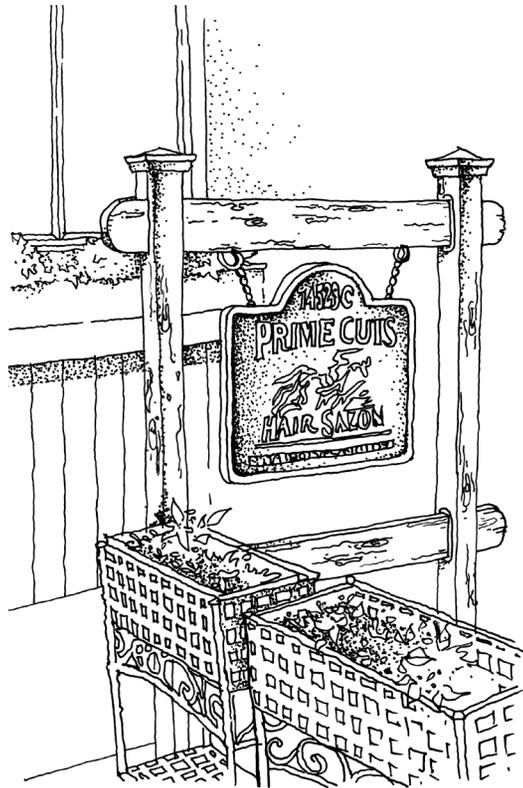
5.4 SIGNAGE

Signs can go a long way toward enhancing or detracting from the attractiveness of the Village area. It is the intent of the sign guidelines to encourage signage that functions clearly to inform the shopper of business names and service but does not detract from the architectural quality of individual buildings

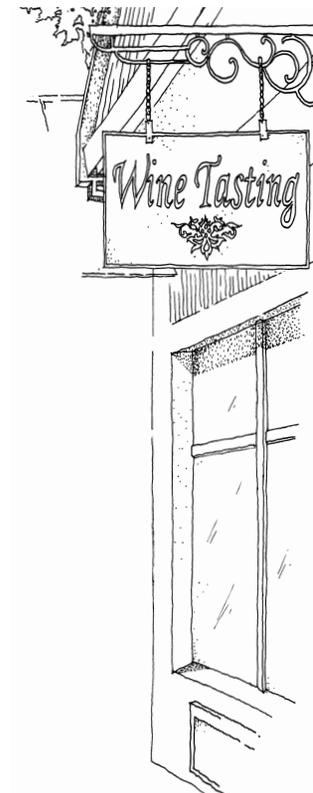
or from the streetscape as a whole. Sign size, type, location, and lighting specifications are provided in the City's sign ordinance under Article 15-30 of the Saratoga City Code. The policies in this document are in addition to the City's sign regulations.



5.4.1 Unique signage will help differentiate businesses.

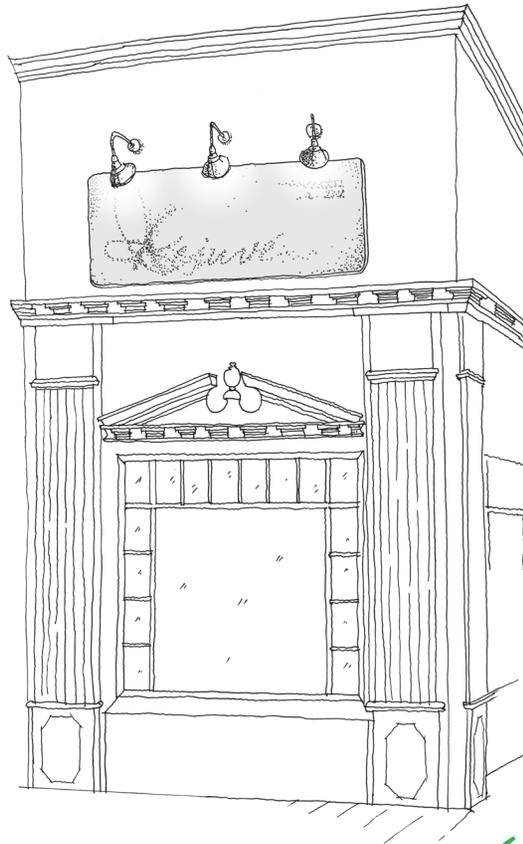


5.4.2 Similar materials.



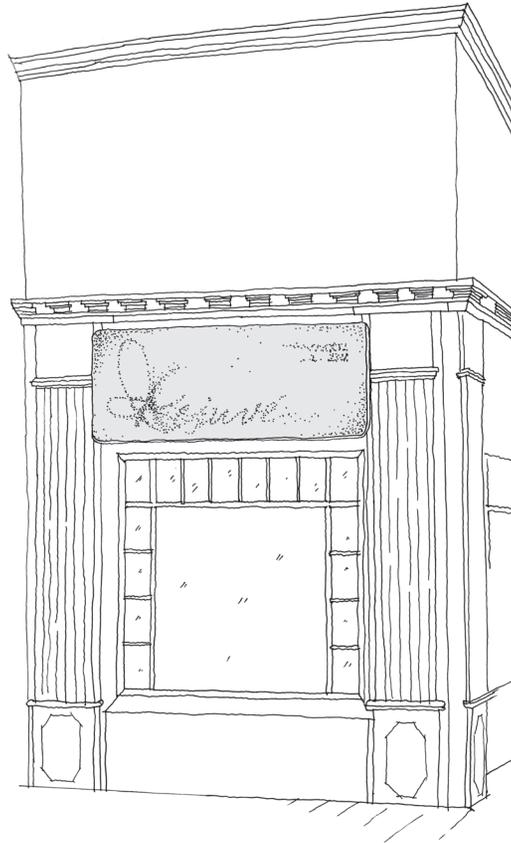
5.4.6 A "blade" sign extends over the public sidewalk.

5.4 SIGNAGE



Sign does not obscure architectural details and is appropriately illuminated ✓

5.4.3 *Appropriate placement for signs.*



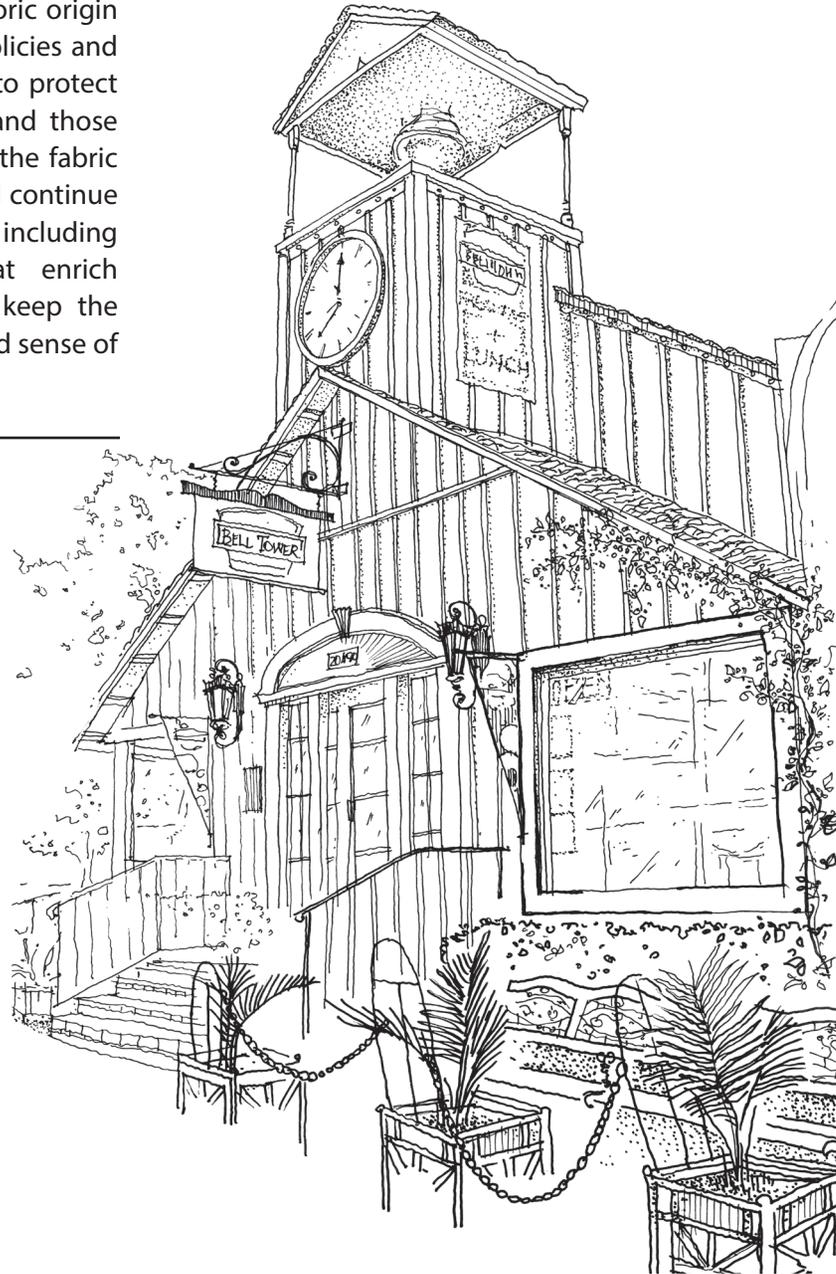
Sign does obscure architectural details ✗

Design Guidelines

- 5.4.1** Signage should be identifiable and create interest, but not be ostentatious.
- 5.4.2** The style and materials should bear a relationship to the building architecture.
- 5.4.3** Signs should not obscure architectural elements.
- 5.4.4** Roof signs are not permitted, including signs extending above eave lines.
- 5.4.5** While window signs are permitted, transparency must be maintained, and it should not detract from the overall appearance of the storefront.
- 5.4.6** In addition to a wall sign, the use of tasteful projecting signs attracting the attention of pedestrians should be considered.
- 5.4.7** Illuminated building signs in the Village Sign District shall be externally illuminated, halo-lit solid surface, or internally illuminated individual channel cut letters.

6 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The Village represents the City's historic origin and identity. Through various city policies and actions great effort has been taken to protect the historic context of the Village and those historic buildings that contribute to the fabric that reflects its history. Saratoga shall continue to strive to protect its heritage including those contributing structures that enrich the experience of the Village and keep the community connected to its roots and sense of place.



Design Guidelines

- 6.1 Pursuant to Section 13-10.040 of the City Code, the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) shall review and forward a recommendation on changes to any structure listed on the Heritage Resource Inventory List.
- 6.2 The HPC will rely on the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Historic Resources as guidance for review of historic structures.

6 HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Design Guidelines

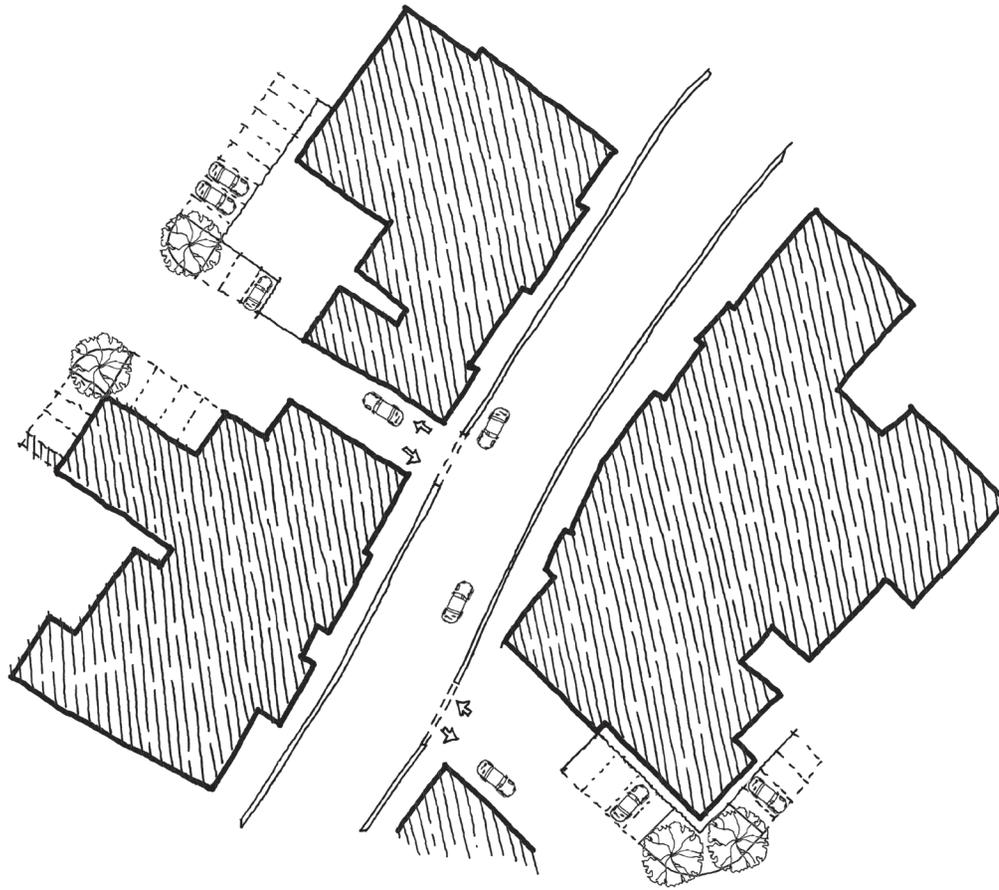


- 6.3** New construction and improvements to structures not listed on the Heritage Resource Inventory List should respect, not detract from adjacent historic structures, or the overall historic context of the Village.
- 6.4** Property owners of historic buildings in the Village should be encouraged to take advantage of the programs that offer financial incentives which assist in the restoration, rehabilitation, and preservation of historic structures.
- 6.5** Buildings with identifiably historic features should highlight, not hide those features.

7 CIRCULATION

Effective circulation is essential to promoting a successful Village. Given the physical constraints and the limited roadway options available for navigating through the Village, there are challenges to providing effective circulation

where vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians can coexist in an effective and safe environment. The City is committed to providing a safe and manageable transportation system in the Village for all modes of mobility.



7.3 Minimize driveway curb cuts along Big Basin Way.

Design Guidelines

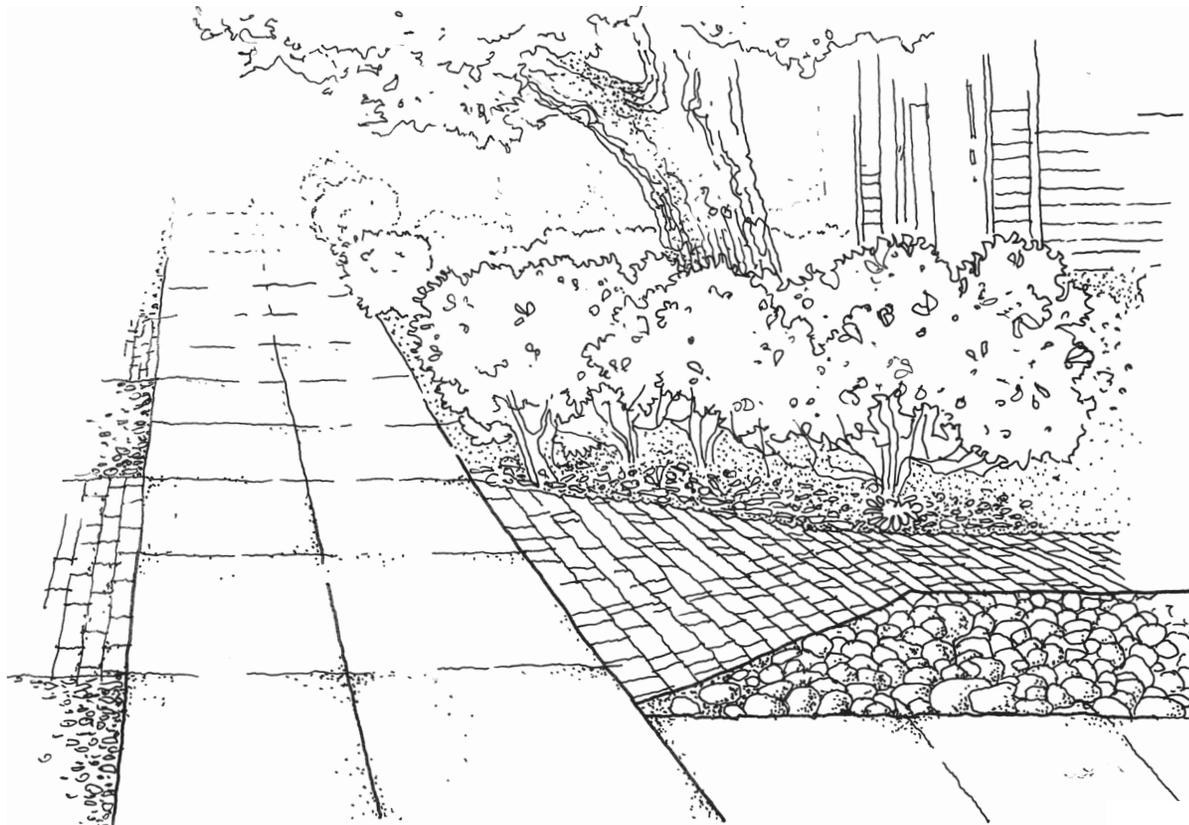
- 7.1** The City is committed to providing effective and safe circulation through the Village for cars, bicycles and pedestrians.
- 7.2** The Circulation and Scenic Highway Element of the General Plan shall identify specific policy for the Village to ensure that there is a strategy for safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian circulation.
- 7.3** The City will strive to minimize driveway curb cuts along Big Basin Way to lessen the disruption of pedestrian traffic flow and improve pedestrian safety.

8 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

Over the last 25 years, the City has built an attractive and functional public infrastructure system throughout the Village primarily funded through the City's Capital Improvement Program. The public infrastructure strategy includes specific pavement patterns for streets, sidewalks, crosswalks, and public plazas. There are also distinctive street furniture styles, landscape planters, street trees, street lights,

bike racks, directories, and newspaper racks that improve the functional and pleasurable use of the Village.

These public improvements are not only necessary for the safe navigation of the Village, but also to make the shopper's experience more enjoyable.



8.3 A complex range of paving materials.

Design Guidelines

- 8.1** The City is committed to maintaining the public infrastructure throughout the Village to provide safe and convenient use of the public right-of-way, as well as to ensure that the visual experience of public improvements is pleasant, enjoyable and consistent.
- 8.2** Applicants approved for new construction or business operation within the Village may be required to make public improvements associated with their land use. Public improvements are subject to the specifications and approval of the Public Works Director.
- 8.3** Sidewalk treatment including pavement pattern, street trees and similar public improvements along the west side of Saratoga-Los Gatos Road within the Village boundary shall be consistent with the sidewalk improvements along Big Basin Way.

9 OPPORTUNITY SITES

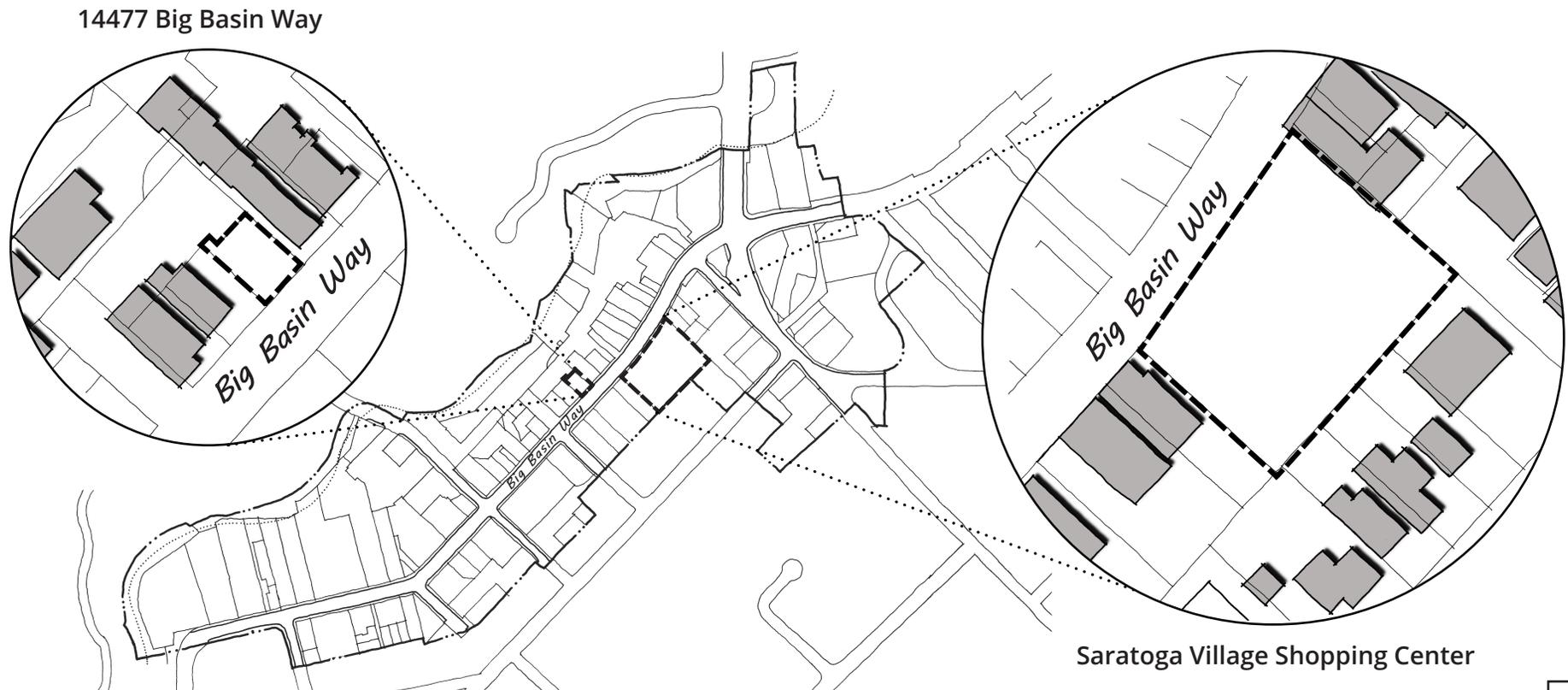
9.1 SARATOGA VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER (OLD BUY & SAVE SITE)

The Saratoga Village Shopping Center located on the south side of Big Basin Way east of Third Street was developed as a strip mall in 1955. The property has had limited commercial success since the loss of the Buy and Save market. While located within a downtown pedestrian-oriented business district it is challenged with

businesses being set back off the street in a “strip mall” pattern.

This site which represents the largest development site in the Village is roughly 1.02 acres with a street frontage of 235 feet. Over the years, there have been discussions initiated

about what an appropriate redevelopment project might look like. However, community consensus has yet to be determined. Given the prominent location of the site, its size, the length of street frontage it occupies on Big Basin Way, and the opportunity it presents to invigorate the east end of the Village, site



9.1 SARATOGA VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER

specific parameters are being provided to help define City expectations.

Due to its property size and its linear street frontage, careful consideration and skillful design will be required to ensure any new development has proper context and compatibility with the

fabric of the Village. Therefore, in addition to the Village wide policies stated in this document, policies 9.1.1 through 9.1.8 shall be considered with respect to the Saratoga Village Shopping Center.

Design Guidelines

- 9.1.1 Redevelopment of the Saratoga Village Shopping Center site should take a "main street" approach placing storefronts on the street that relate to the pedestrian in a multi-tenant and mixed-use format.
- 9.1.2 The development should remain in character with the scale and pattern of prevalent building elevations in the immediate vicinity and along Big Basin Way.



9.1.1 "Main Street" approach to retail.

Design Guidelines

- 9.1.3 The City encourages retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor and seeks to maximize the amount of ground floor commercial square footage consistent with best practices regarding tenant space depth, width and storefront height. The City should allow active space in front for uses, such as outdoor dining.
- 9.1.4 The street frontage of the property is exceedingly longer than the typical city block in the Village. Given this unusually expansive street frontage, a continuous, monolithic building elevation along Big Basin Way would be inconsistent with the Village development pattern.
- 9.1.5 To avoid the appearance of a continuous building mass, the use of distinguishing architectural design schemes, variations in height, building materials, colors, textures and storefront variety should be incorporated, while still maintaining a unified architectural theme.

9.1 SARATOGA VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTER



9.1.3 Retail and restaurant uses on the ground floor.



9.1.6 Public gathering places connect the retail environment.

Design Guidelines

- 9.1.6** The project should incorporate a public gathering place or spaces to help encourage community activity and interaction. This public space could be designed to help create a break in the building mass. The public/private function and use of this space is to be determined in consultation and collaboration with the City.
- 9.1.7** The project is expected to provide the required on-site parking.
- 9.1.8** During certain peak hours and days, the Saratoga-Los Gatos Blvd./Big Basin Way intersection experiences high levels of congestion affecting traffic circulation in the Village. Given the size of the project site and its proximity to that intersection, the ingress and egress from the project site should be designed and located so as to not exacerbate traffic circulation in the area.

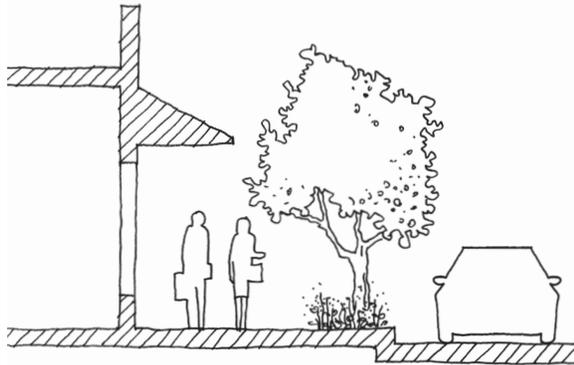
9 OPPORTUNITY SITES

9.2 14477 BIG BASIN WAY (CURRENTLY “ROCKIN’ KIDS”)

The site contains a one-story single-family residence converted to commercial use. The converted residence stands alone in the CH-1 zone among conventional commercial buildings. The building sits back off the street contrary to traditional “main street” format which puts buildings on the street appealing to a pedestrian-oriented shopper.

The City would like to see this property redeveloped in a manner that better utilizes the property with a development that fits into the commercial context of the Village.

Therefore, in addition to the policies in this document that apply Village wide, Design Guidelines 9.2.1 through 9.2.4 specifically apply to this property.



9.2.1 “Main Street” storefront.

Design Guidelines

- 9.2.1 Redevelopment of the site shall place a commercial building on the street in a pedestrian oriented design and in a “main street” format.
- 9.2.2 New development should be in character with the scale and pattern of prevalent building elevations in the immediate vicinity and along Big Basin Way.
- 9.2.3 The Big Basin Way driveway to the property shall be eliminated and parking access should be via Parking District #3.
- 9.2.4 New development should incorporate an appropriate transition to the adjacent walkway to the east which provides pedestrian access to the Parking District #3 lot and adjacent commercial buildings property.