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## Huntington Station Development Design Recommendations

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FEBRUARY 17, 2017

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## **INTENT:**

While it is understood that in many ways design preferences can be subjective, certain principles can help to guide design that is fitting and appropriate for a site. Though people may have different favorite architectural styles, looking to the surrounding context and prioritizing important elements can help create a design that has the broadest appeal. It is understood the current rendering for Gateway Plaza is just conceptual and that it doesn't make sense for Renaissance Downtowns to spend extensive time designing the building to a high level of detail when the developer's architect is ultimately going to be providing the drawings. This document seeks to identify what design elements are appropriate for the site and which are most important for the developers architect to understand and use as they develop the final plans.

## **RE-ESTABLISHING DOWNTOWN:**

The general consensus of most Huntington Station residents is that they "want their downtown back." Focusing the design on the commercial streetscape in a way that feels like the traditional Main Street environment that Huntington Station lost and treating the apartments above as secondary architecturally, can help to highlight the elements that most Station residents are looking for. The building(s) should read more as a Main Street than as an apartment building. Three stories may be what's needed to make the project economically viable, and it is appropriate for a suburban downtown area, but most people remember old Huntington Station as primarily two story buildings. Architecture should focus on the streetscape and provide an interesting pedestrian environment with the apartments above being less dominant in the design.

## **THE LOOK OF HUNTINGTON STATION:**

Much of the time architects are taught that buildings should be "of their time," and that working in more traditional styles is pastiche. The problem with this concept is that as soon as a building is built, it is already outdated. For buildings to have longevity and to resist falling out of fashion, they need to be built "of this place."

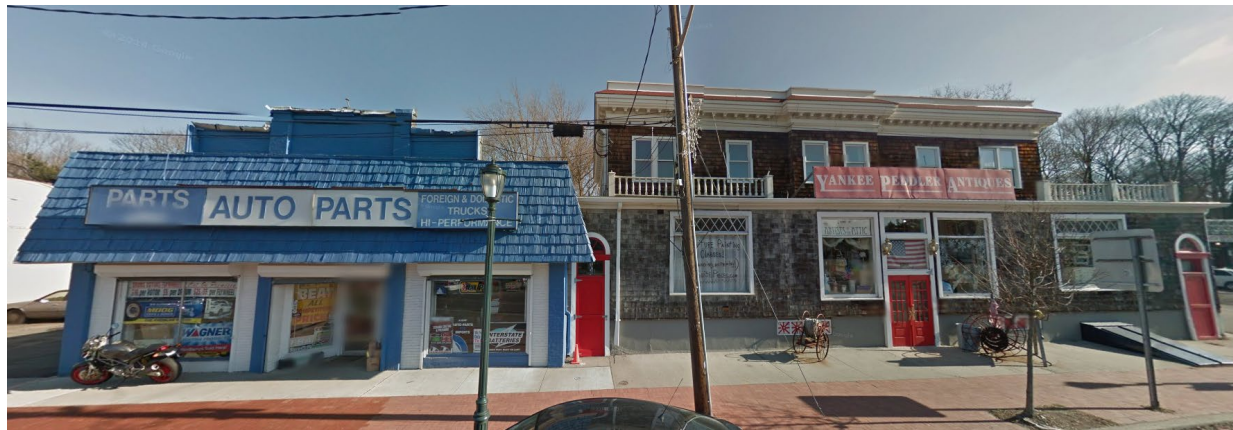
Instead, the design of buildings should come from the idea of "this is how we build here." Architecture should be inspired by where it is. It should seem organic to the place and not a transplant from somewhere else. The focus should be less a matter of when the building is built, but where.

Huntington Station was developed primarily after the construction of the "new" train station in 1909. Most of the construction surrounding the station along New York Avenue, both commercial and residential, was built between 1909 and 1929. Local styles include bungalows, Dutch colonials, colonial revivals, four-squares etc. There is a diversity of styles present, and a natural diversity due to many different builders, but also a similarity between buildings due to many of them being constructed in a short amount of time.

Most of the downtown was torn down in the name of urban "renewal" but several examples of the original commercial architecture still exist as well as numerous examples of residential architecture in the surrounding neighborhoods. These remaining buildings can be used as inspiration for future development to help ensure that this development fits comfortably within its context.

## SURVIVING EXAMPLES OF HUNTINGTON STATION ARCHITECTURE

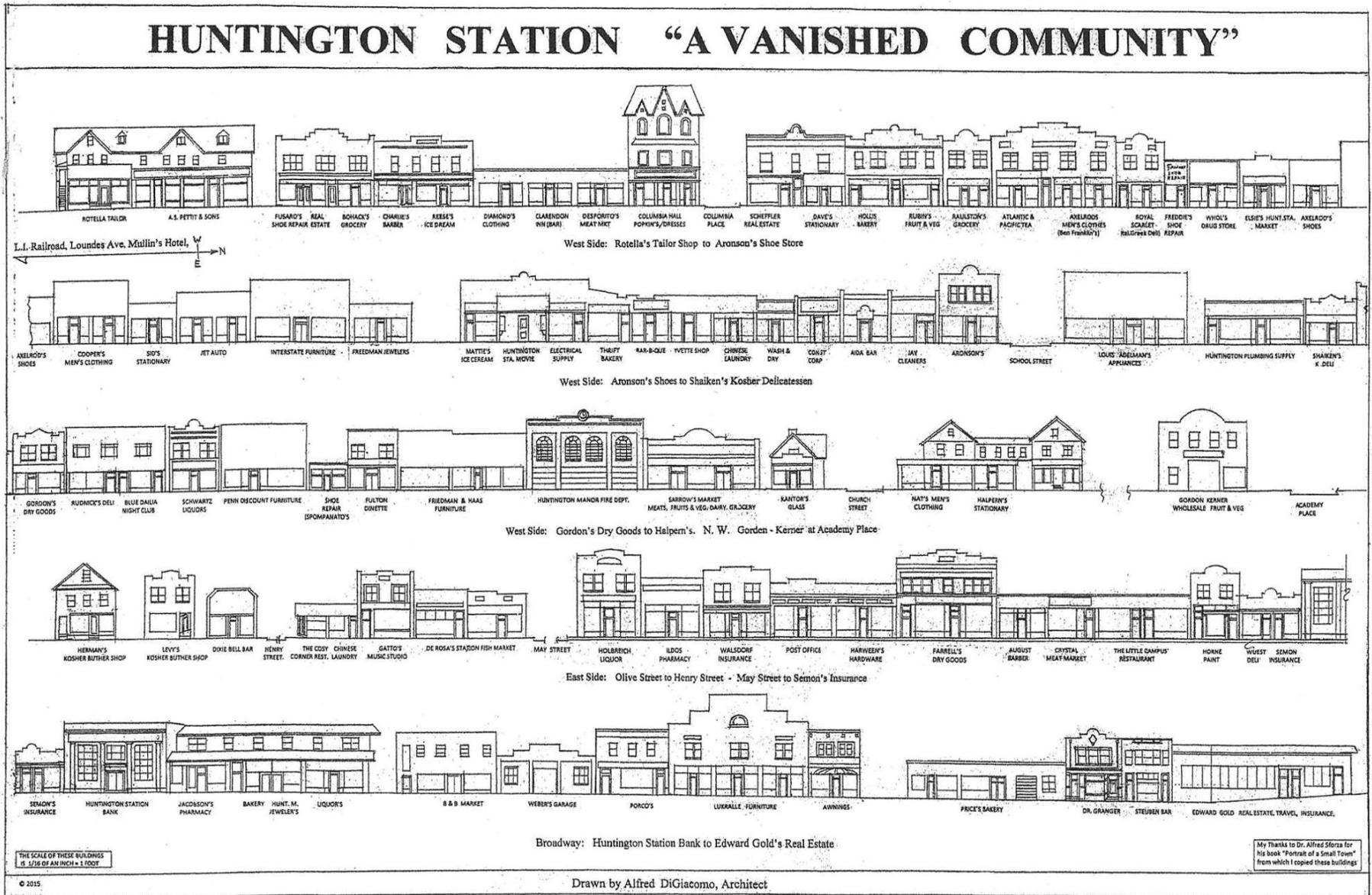
WITHIN A FEW BLOCKS OF THE SITE:



FURTHER SOUTH ALONG NEW YORK AVENUE:



ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT EXISTED PRIOR TO URBAN "RENEWAL":



## INCORPORATING THESE DESIGN CONCEPTS INTO GATEWAY PLAZA:



Without detailed information about the internal arrangement of the units within the building, only a conceptual design exploration could be done. It is understood that with more detailed site engineering, certain dimensions may change, but the purpose was to propose an alternate architectural solution while working with the same understood parameters of the original RD rendering. The focus was on bringing the proportions of the building more in line with the remaining original buildings in the area.



Looking at the end of the main façade closest to the existing Brothers Barber Shop building highlights the difference in scale and proportion between the two buildings. With the dimensions that were able to be determined, it seems that the second and third floor units have tall, narrow windows that start very close to (or at) the 8'-0" ceilings inside. The storefronts also appear to be rather short in height as compared to the neighboring building which minimizes their importance and draws attention to the height of the apartments above. In addition, a continuous three story façade without significant breaks adds to the appearance of height.

## ALTERNATIVE 1:



This first version uses a design concept similar to the Northridge building. The ground floor shops are treated as a complete one story façade and the third floor apartments are within the gambrel roof, allowing the eave line to drop to the top of the second floor. Unlike the Northridge building however, the roofline is continuous as it wraps the corner and continues the same profile for the appearance of a true gambrel roof with reverse gables in some locations, and shed dormers in others. The apartment building on the southeast corner of Northridge Street has a similar treatment of its upper floor. The dormers in



Drawing by: Elissa Kyle



the lofts above the third floor units are also treated similarly as the Northridge building using roofing shingles at the sides of the dormers to minimize their appearance (photo at right).

The windows are dropped from an 8'-0" head height in the original rendering to 7'-6" on the second floor and 7'-0" on the third floor which helps to bring the scale down as well.

Windows with multiple "lites" at the top sash and a clear bottom sash are typical of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several houses in the surrounding neighborhoods that still have their original windows have a "nine over clear" pattern like the windows shown on the second floor, others have "six over clear" as shown on the third floor.

Using details that already exist in original homes within the neighborhood and remaining commercial buildings can help to reinforce existing patterns which strengthens neighborhoods character and creates a sense of place.

## ALTERNATIVE 2:



This alternate design concept shows the first two floors of the building being treated as a typical two story downtown commercial building with the additional floor of apartments above, set back just a bit to reduce their appearance. The plate height of the main roof is brought down a couple feet to lower its profile. Dormers are at the window locations to allow the height of the windows and break up the continuous roofline. The windows at both levels are brought down to a more common 6'-8" head height to lower the scale of the building and bring it closer to the neighboring barber shop building.

It is not expected that either of these concepts would be applied across the entire building. Part of the appeal of downtown, Main Street shopping is the variety and visual interest of the shopping environment. The building could be treated as several segments stitched together along its length. It shouldn't be made too "twee" or Disney-like as a fake-old Main Street, but there should be a sufficient balance between continuity and variety.

Both of these design concepts attempted to work

within assumed constraints of budget for materials. Bricks facades are assumed to be "thin brick" with simple details not requiring a skilled mason. In some places stucco may be appropriate if detailed correctly and upper floors are assumed to be clad with fiber cement siding and asphalt roofing. The closer elements are to a pedestrian on the sidewalk, the more important it is that they appear to be "authentic."

The tower at the northern end of the development is an element that has the potential to be both an icon of Huntington Station's revival and a landmark to those coming into the Station. Its design should be considered very carefully as it will be visible from a considerable distance and terminate the vista for those travelling towards the site from both the north and the south. Design concepts for the tower haven't been developed yet, there may be suggestions in the future.



**LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://www.originalgreen.org/blog/2012/walk-appeal-measurables.html>

[http://originalgreen.org/blog/2017/great-storefronts.html?utm\\_content=buffer2fa9b&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://originalgreen.org/blog/2017/great-storefronts.html?utm_content=buffer2fa9b&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)