



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

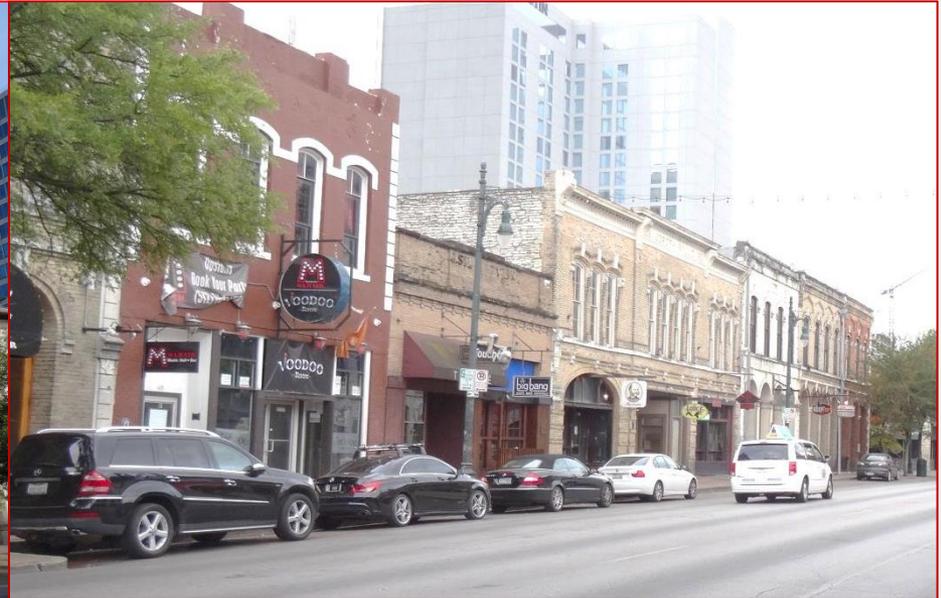
real places telling real stories

Commercial and Civic Architecture





Commercial Architecture



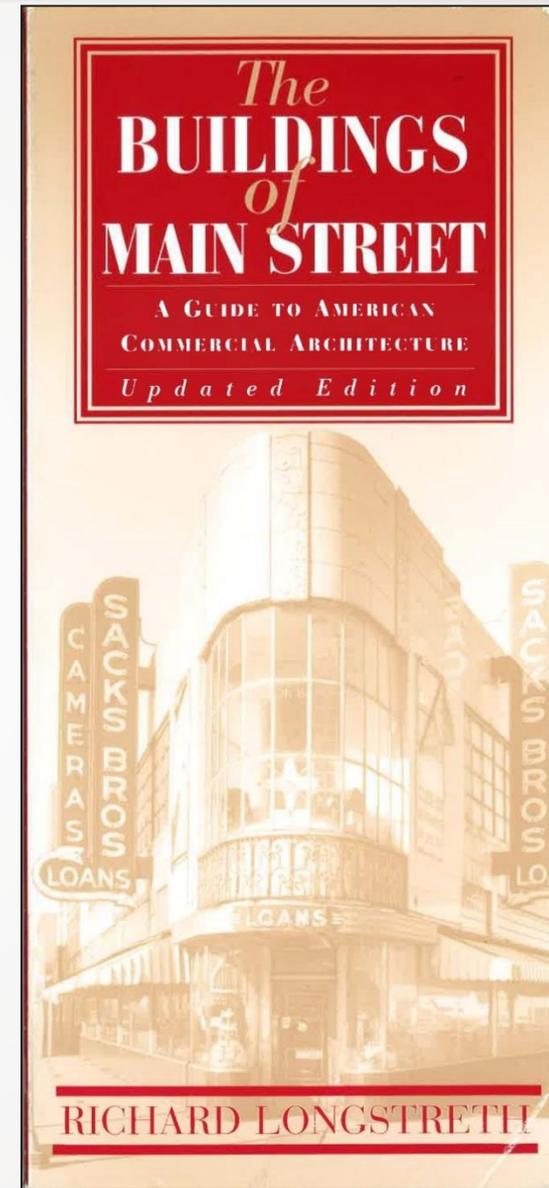


Commercial Architecture

Reference Materials

*“The Buildings of Main Street:
A Guide to American
Commercial Architecture”*

by Richard Longstreth





Commercial Architecture





Compositional Types

- One-part Commercial Block
- Two-part Commercial Block
- Enframed Window Wall
- Stacked Vertical Block
- Two-part Vertical Block
- Three-part Vertical Block
- Temple Front
- Vault
- Enframed Block
- Central Block with Wings
- Arcaded Block



One-part Commercial Block

Parapet

Display windows





Two-part Commercial Block

Two to four stories
in height

Belt course

Display windows



Private zone

Public zone



Enframed Window Wall

Decorative elements tend to be modest, often abstract

Simple surround

Little or no separation between ground floor and upper floor(s)

Large glazed display area



! Stacked Vertical Block

Five or more stories in height

Varied treatments for each layer

Series of layers, rather than coherent whole

Similar emphasis for each layer



Photo courtesy of Steve Clicque

! Two-part Vertical Block

At least four stories in height

Vertical emphasis shown by use of pilasters, engaged columns, piers, or smooth wall surface rising between windows



Two parts:

Upper zone:
emphasis is on
the “shaft” and
has sense of
verticality

Lower zone:
the “base” is
one to two
stories in
height



Three-part Vertical Block

Three parts:

Capital

Shaft

Base



Identical to two-part vertical block except has distinct upper zone of generally 1 to 3 stories



Temple Front

One compositional unit

Usually two to three stories in height

Two types:

- Portico across front
- Recessed entrance with twin columns





Vault

Typically two to three stories

Tall and comparatively narrow center opening

Massiveness and enclosure emphasized





Enframed Block

Typically two to three stories high

Façade punctuated by columns, pilasters, arcades or treatment suggestive of classical elements

Main section is bracketed by narrower end bays to form continuous wall plane



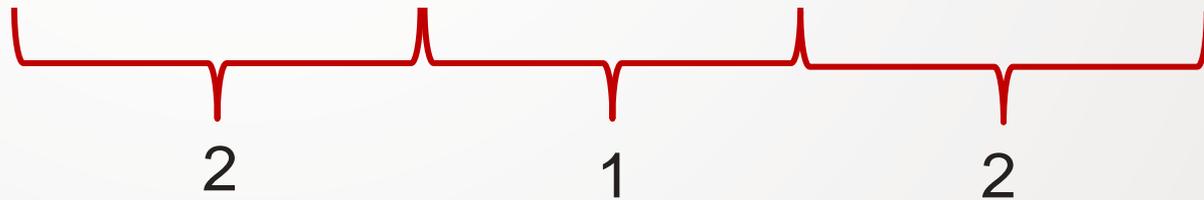


Central Block with Wings

Typically two to four stories

Projecting center section
and subordinate flanking
units

All three parts may read as
single mass or as three
related masses





Arcaded Block

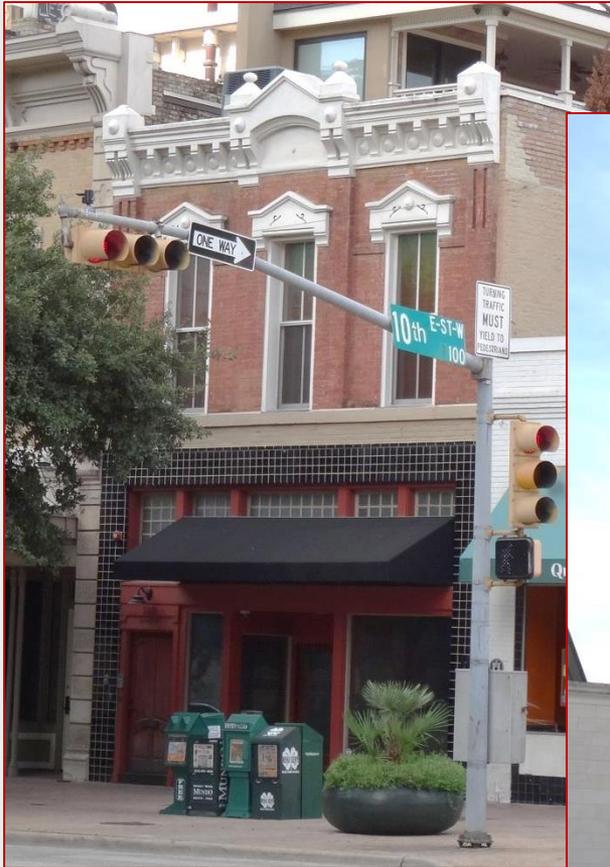
Characterized by series of tall, evenly spaced, round-arched openings

Typically two to three stories



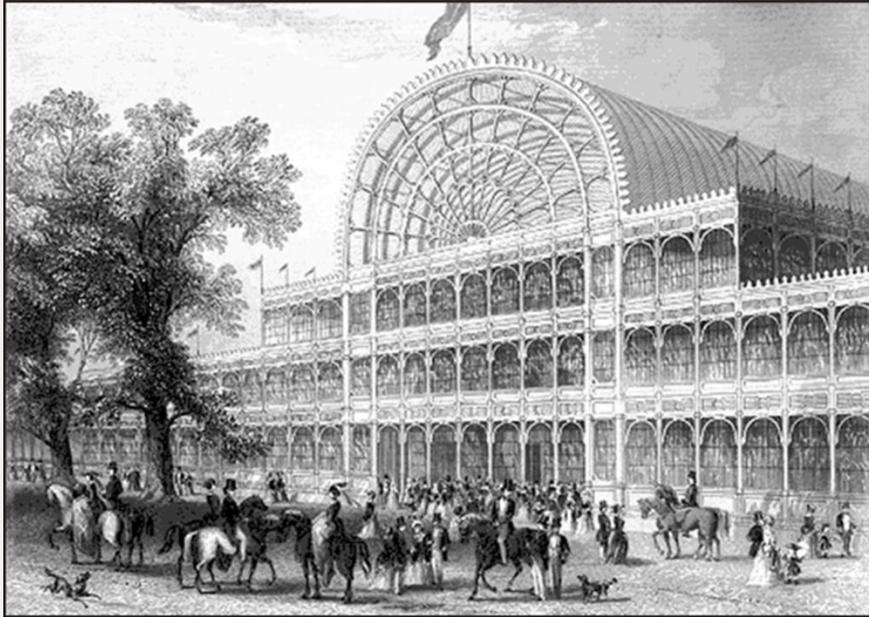


Stylistic Influences





New Concepts of Architecture





Contact Information

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