

History, Place & Regulation - Coupeville, Washington

Main Street

Mathew Dreska

Background

Coupeville Commercial Center



Site Plan

Site Selection:

I chose to tackle the mess that is Main Street. I found this road to be the most important entrance into Coupeville. Although the city tried to make the road better by making new sidewalks and bike lanes, the actual result is something that reminds me of Franklin Boulevard in Eugene, OR. This huge street is flanked with a sea of parking with all the buildings set back similar to Main Street. I felt designing a building that breaks this terrible patter that is Main Street.

Site Characteristics:

The site itself has a large glu-laminated beam construction commercial building. Like many of the buildings on Main St., in front of the building are parking spaces for at least 20 cars. To the South of the site is the historic Libbey House and to the North is a mansard roof county building. The mansard building is surrounded by parking that seems to be excessive.

Site Analysis:

This is a great opportunity to create something that other buildings could replicate to improve the condition of Main St. Because of its size and location, the site is a great place to put a commercial building. However, the existing building does not need to be torn down, but instead, it needs a new face to the street.

Site Context:

Main Street is the main artery that leads directly to Front St. Towards the shore there are more houses and smaller commercial buildings. Two historic houses are located within 150 feet.

Site History:

From further analysis of archival photos, I have found that the Odd Fellow’s Lodge was located where the commercial building is located now. The lodge was a 2 story saltbox structure.

Site Importance:

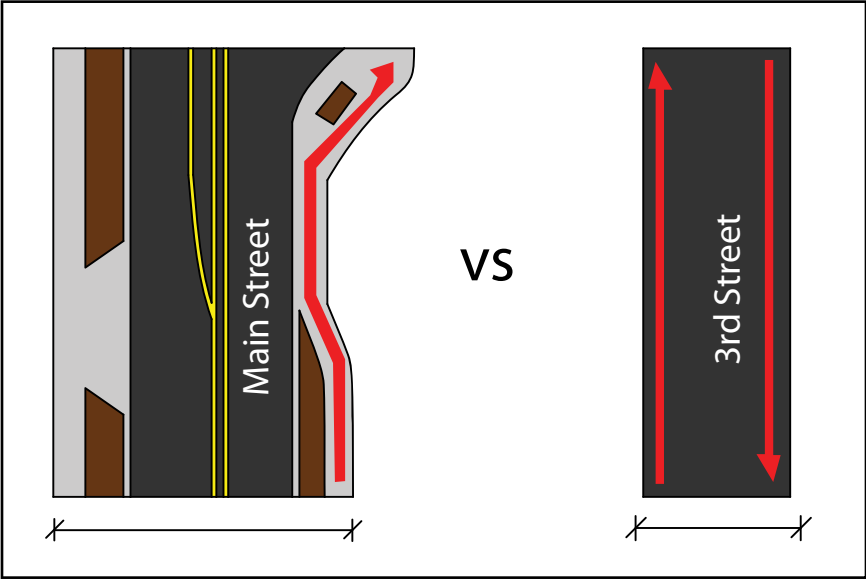
Like I have said many times, Main Street is the main artery and entrance into Coupeville. This makes the street extremely important to keep up the historic flavor of the town for visitors and potential residents.

Coupeville Context:

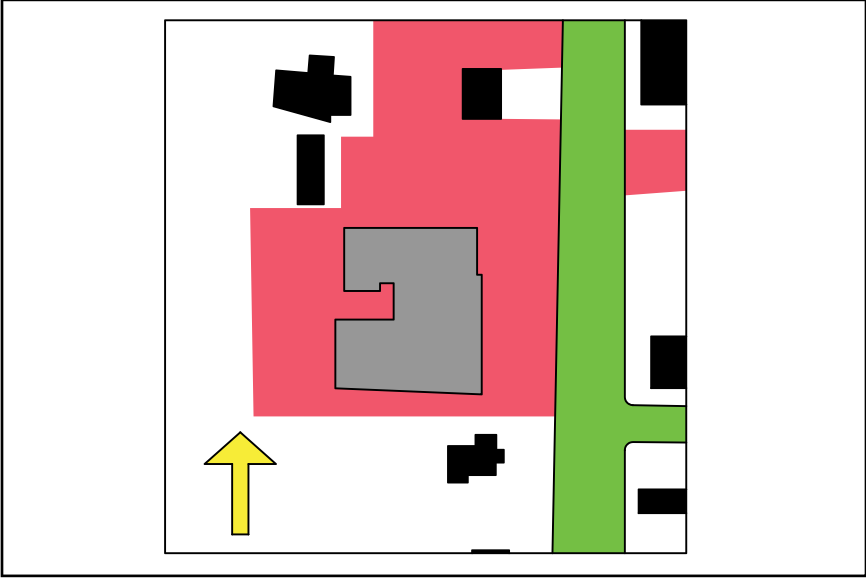
For all of my projects I have tried to keep the form and shape of the structures very simple to match all the 19th century structures around Coupeville. Along with the form, I have kept to the smaller scale of details in windows and trim details to match the houses in town and on Main St. while walking up and down Main St. I noticed a distinct pattern of open and closed space that starts from the North and continues South till my site.

Building Type/Program Selection:

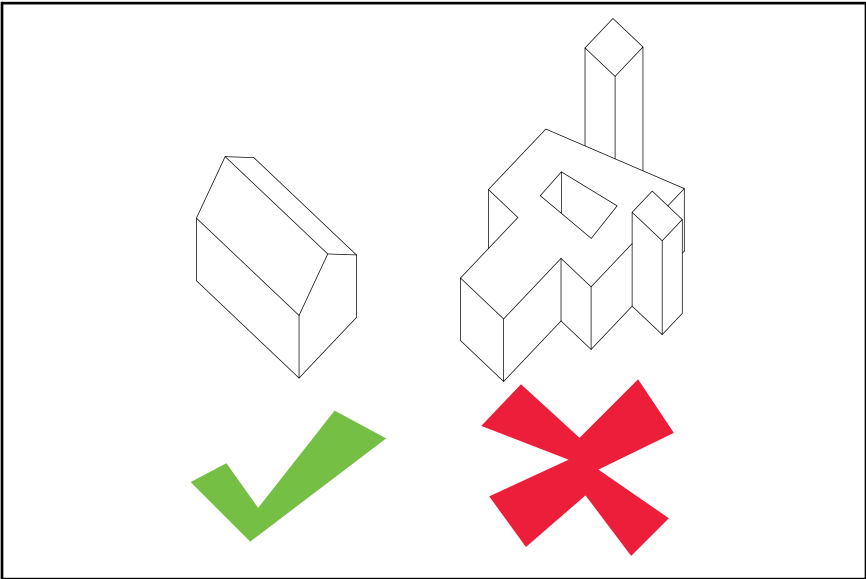
Like what is already there, I think that a commercial building is a good fit for Main Street and the historical context around the site.



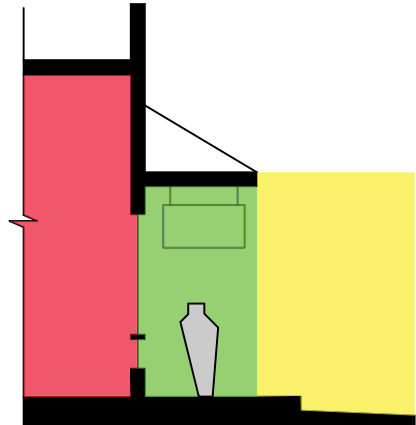
Main Street vs other Simpler Roads in Coupeville



Sea of Parking Red= Parking Spots



Simple Form vs Complex Forms



Building/Street Connection

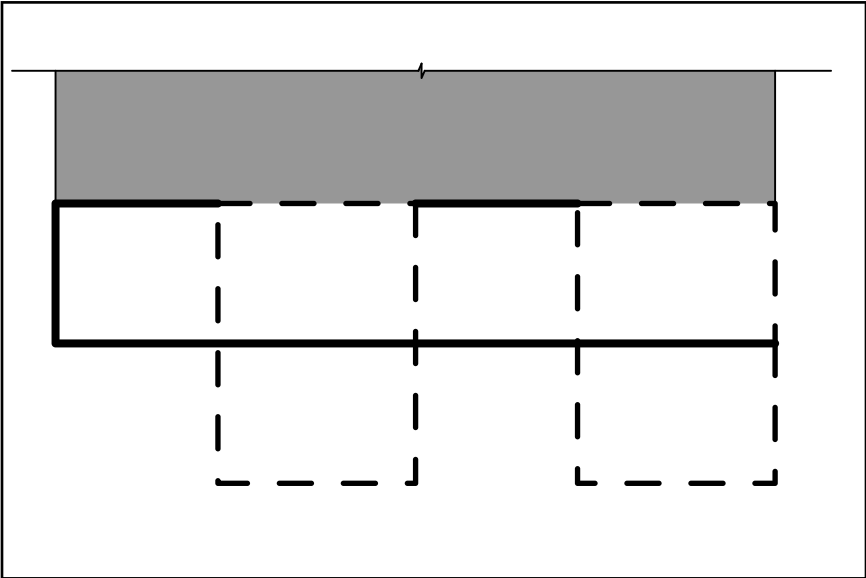
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Main Street

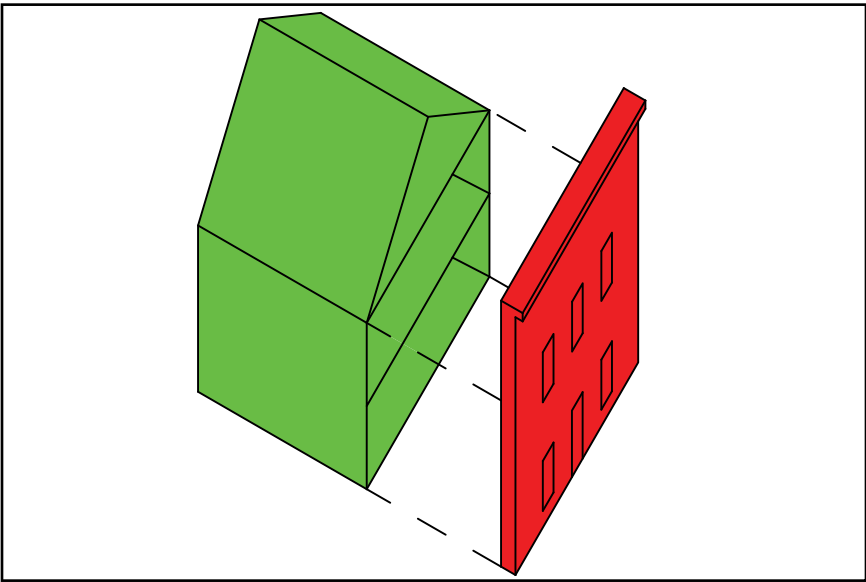
Mathew Dreska

Project 1a

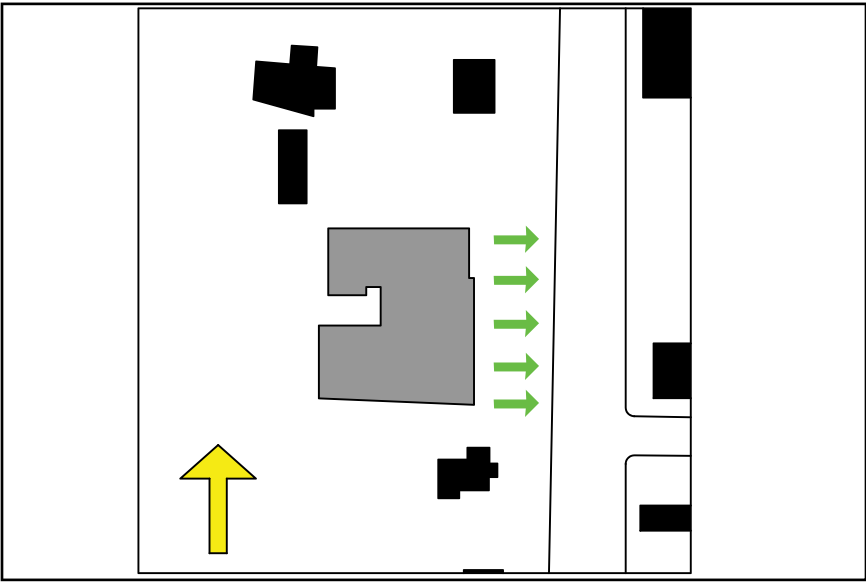
Front Street on Main Street



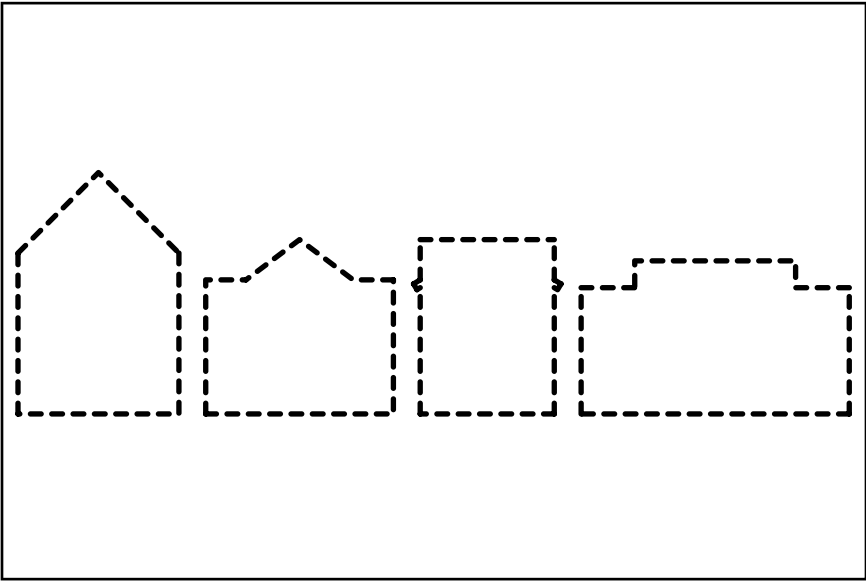
Parti



False Fronts



Push the building closer to the street



Front Street Room Forms

The Idea:

I thought of my structure as a large commercial space that could be filled with a grocery store, cafe's, small shops, etc..

Codes/Requirements Met:

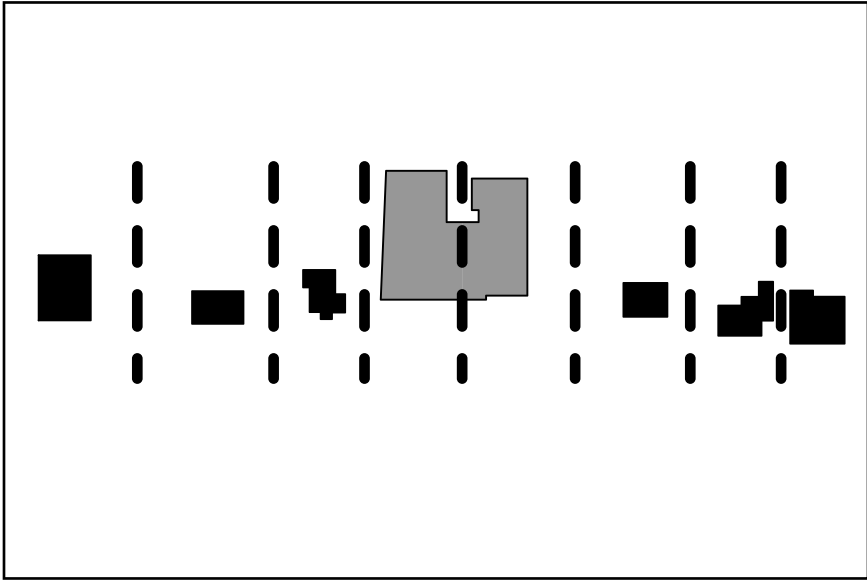
I kept the height of the building right below 28 feet and I pushed the structure to the edge of the property line, which is allowed.

Goals:

I tried to make this building look as similar as possible to the historic Libbey House next to the site. The lap siding and bright colors are to make the building comply with the historic district requirements and to make it stand out on drab Main St.

Results:

I think I was able to make something way too similar to the existing 19th century houses. The building reminded me of Sisters, OR where the idea of making exact copies of old houses has gone overboard. I think both the code and requirements allowed me to do something that wasn't all the pleasing.



Open and Closed Pattern on Main Street



East Elevation

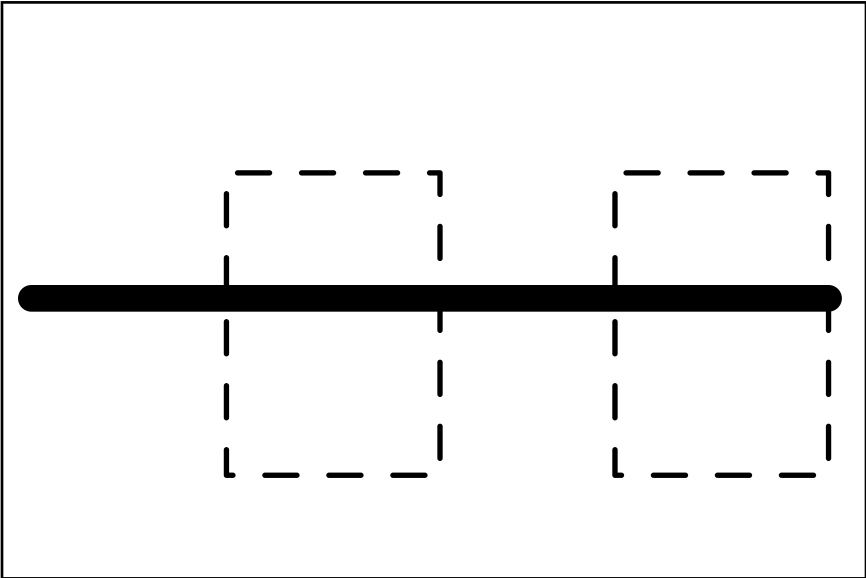
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Main Street

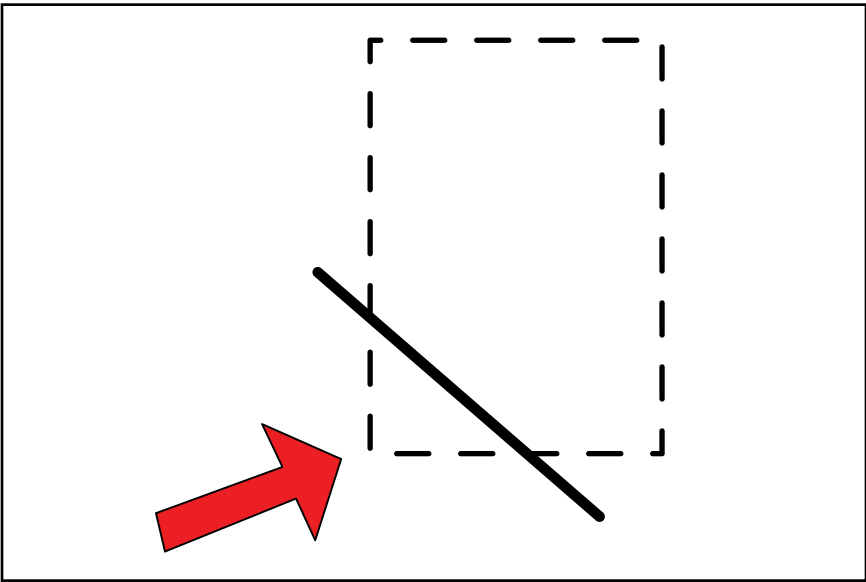
Mathew Dreska

Project 1b

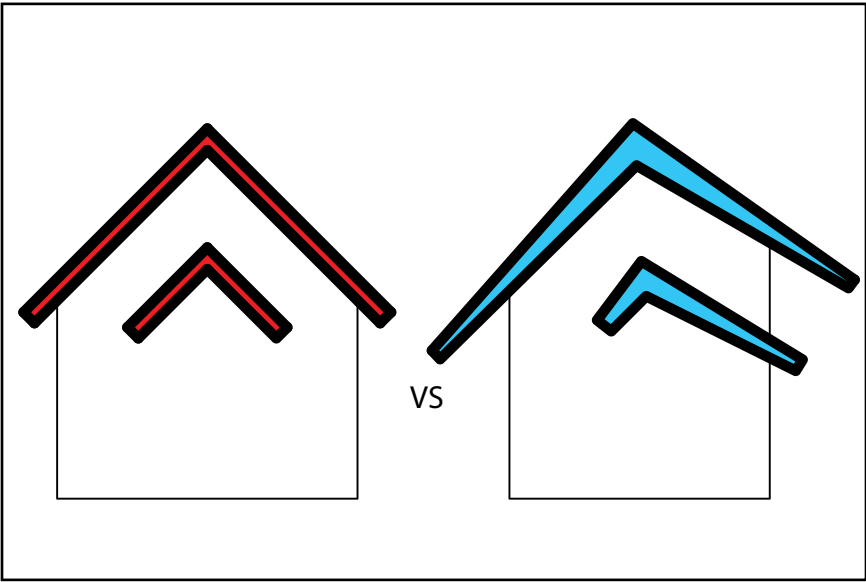
Modern Saltboxes



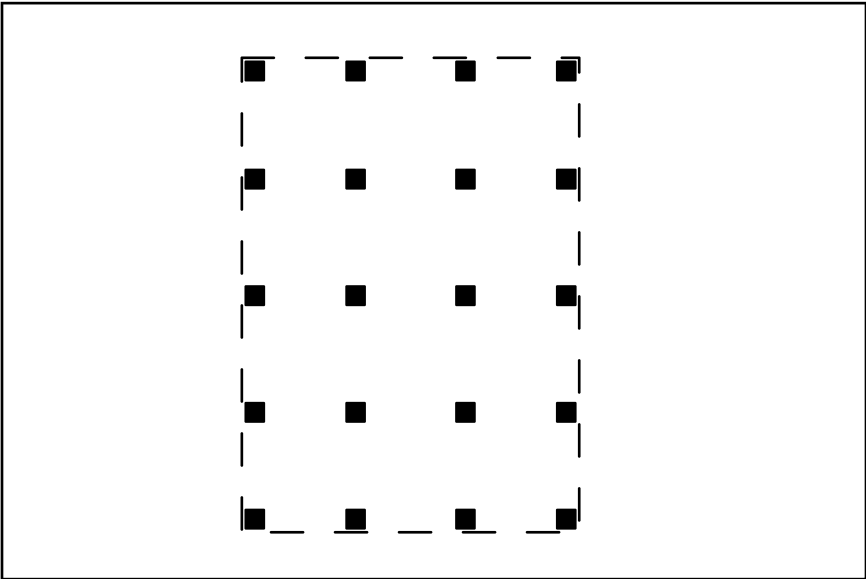
Parti



Slice in the Saltbox allows for a more inviting entry



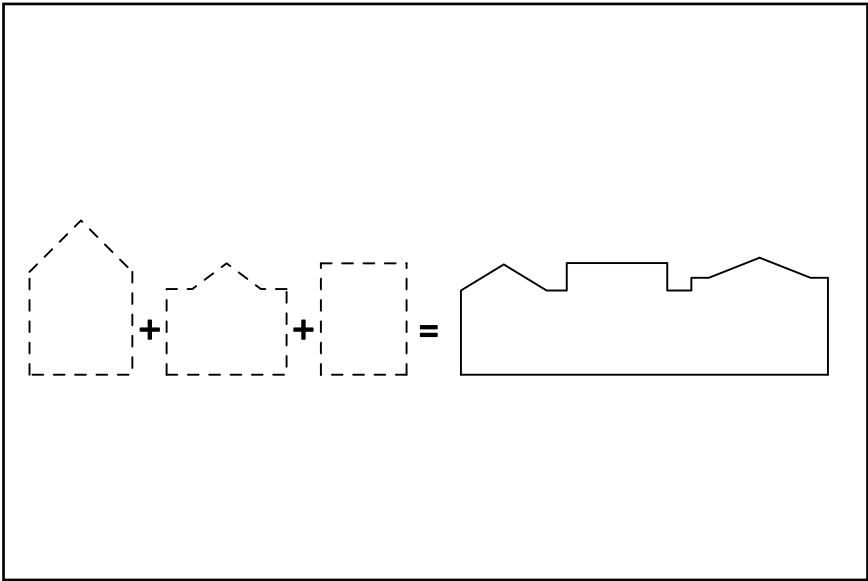
Traditional vs Modern



Structure makes the form

Change of Plans:
Instead of developing a really bad scheme that a potential builder would have done, Peter and I found that the worse thing to do would be to leave the parking lot on the street. So, I made another go around on project 1 to develop some more ideas that aren't copying the exact same shape, form and details of the buildings in Coupeville.

Ideas:
Going away from my first design, I decided to add some modern touches into the structure. I still kept the same idea of the open and closed space with the 2 protruding masses, but made them more translucent. For instance, I made these new masses completely glass that made the simple structure visible. Also, I cut a slice out of the South mass to make the view entering Coupeville of main St. more inviting. The last big move I made was to incorporate some of the old roof forms and idea of the false front to the existing wall of the glu-lam structure. Although it is very Venturiesque, I think that the lines were subtle enough to keep hidden behind the large saltbox masses.



False Front

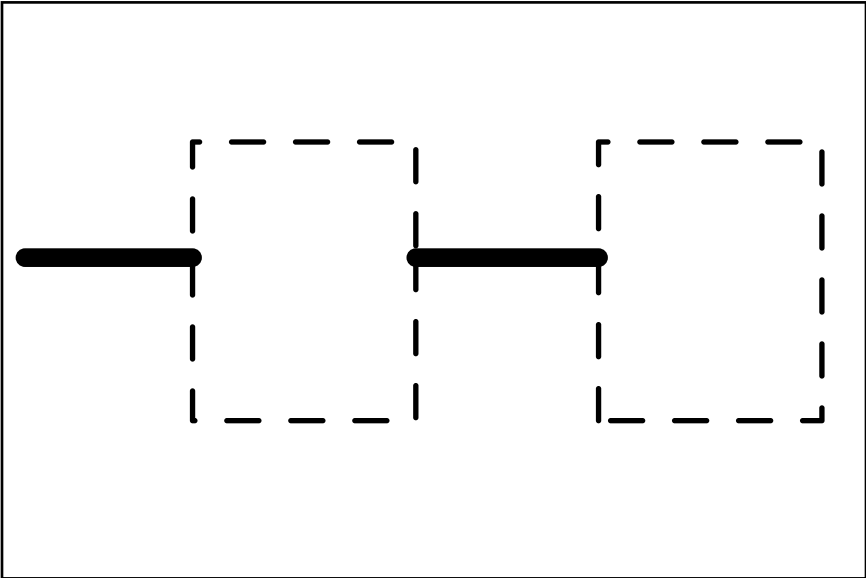


East Elevation

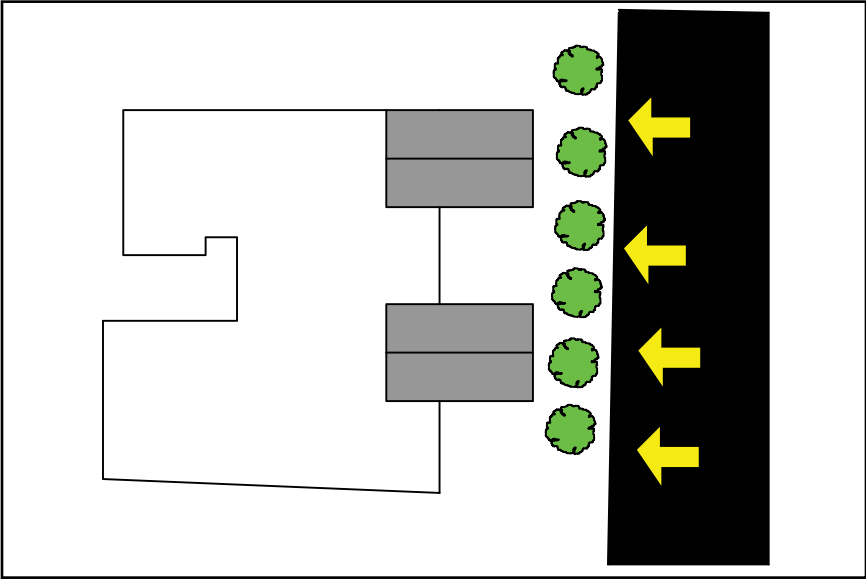
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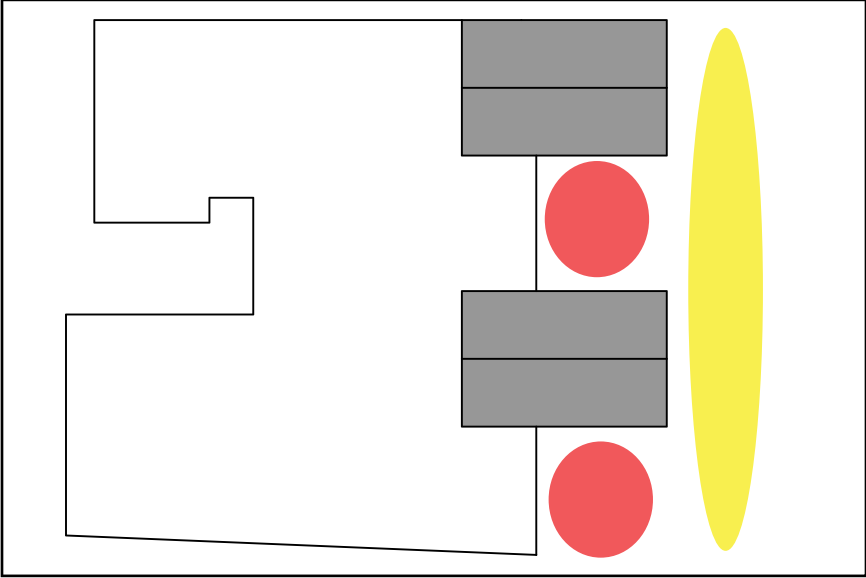
Project 3
Odd Fellow's Building



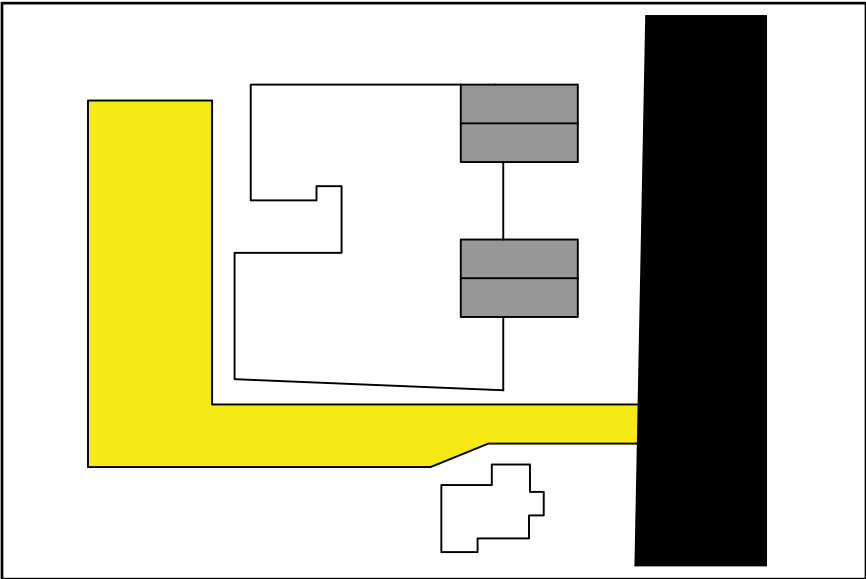
Parti



Street Tree Line



Outdoor Spaces Red= Eating Areas Yellow= Open Grass



Parking Yellow= New Parking to the side and back

The Idea:

Working off of Project 1b, I kept the same 2 large rectangular masses, but made the false front on the glu-lam structure just a simple flat roof top.

Codes/Requirements:

In contrast to the last project, I kept the material very simple for this new structure. In the Coupeville Historic Preservation Plan there is a goal which states that lap siding or board and baton are encouraged as sidings, which is what I put on the entire building. Along with the siding type, the guidelines also would like to see a tree line along the road. In my design the tree line allows me to block the view of the ugly county detention center and Main St.

Goals:

I wanted to go back to more traditional forms like the Odd Fellow's Lodge which was located on my before the existing building was erected. I kept the same rhythm of open and closed with the more open masses protruding out of the old building and into it. Because I wanted to keep the building edge similar to the houses around my site, the development of outdoor spaces was a big key to my design. With many overhangs, large pergola, and benches to sit, I have hopefully made a nice outdoor space to enjoy in Coupeville.

Did the Guidelines Help?:

I would say that the guidelines helped me come up with some different ideas from project 1b. There are some things in the guidelines that might be to vague like where buildings should be located on their site in context to the other historic structures. I think that Main St. has a wide variety of setbacks, which make it unique, but at the same time very difficult to decide where the building edge should be.

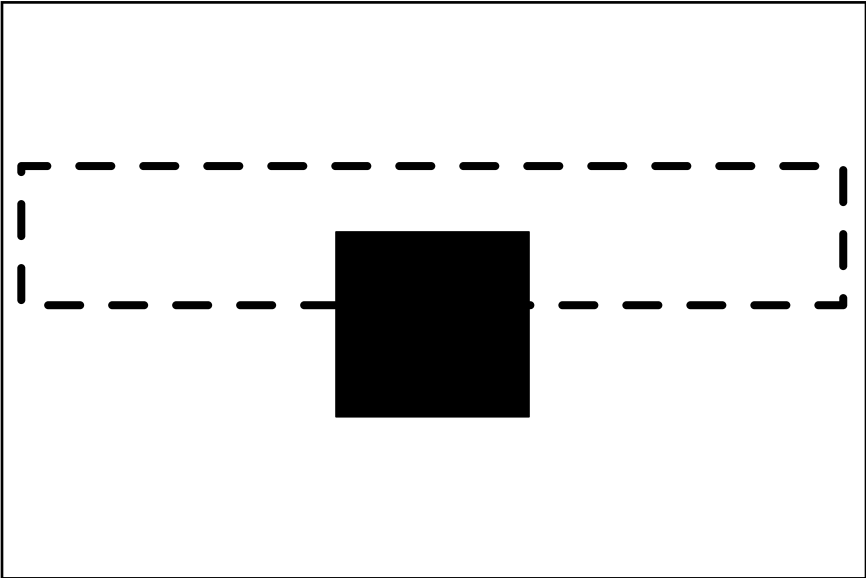


East Elevation

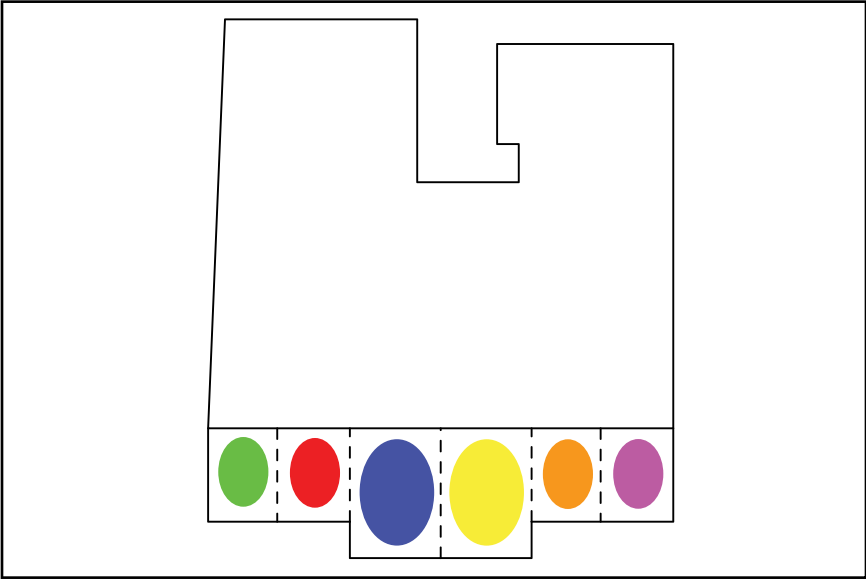
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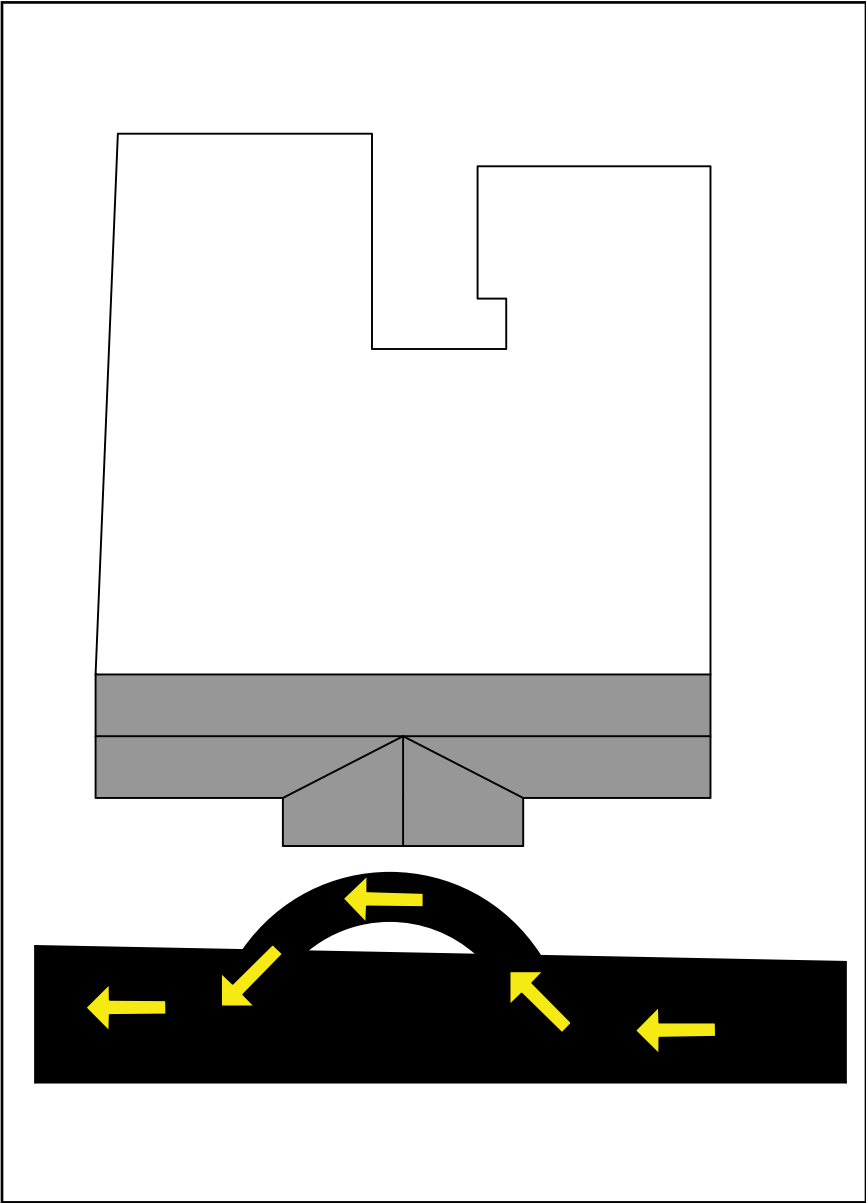
Project 4
Coupeville Grocery



Parti



Different Potential use of Space



Front Round-a-Bout

Developer Thoughts:

If I was a developer who was oblivious to the context of Coupeville, I would want to make the largest money making commercial building possible. For my design, I thought of the main space as a grocery store like Safeway or Ray's. I took queues from the mansard building to the North with its round-a-bout in front of it. I tried to make the lines of the building very horizontal which clashes with all the smaller size houses around the site.

Zoning/Guideline Issues:

By putting in the round-a-bout I was able to make a place for quick pick-up and drop-off without creating parking spaces, which is forbidden on the new guidelines. Also, I made a very large horizontal piece that could be broken up into many different commercial spaces maximizing my profit as a builder. This wouldn't be allowed without the gable roof with the same slope as the houses around Coupeville.

Other Thoughts:

Many of the guidelines helped with my design process for this project, but at the same time I was able to make something which wouldn't contribute to Coupeville's rich historic buildings. I would like to see these guidelines become a little specific in terms of responding to scale and structures located on the same street. When it comes to the round-a-bout, I think that this is a pretty good idea for a developer for attracting elderly residents which makes up a lot of Coupeville.



East Elevation

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Main Street

Mathew

Conclusions



Aerial View of Coupeville



Photo of Main Street towards Front Street



Typical Front Street Facade



Front Street

What did I Learn?:
Responding to the historical context of Coupeville in a thoughtful and architecturally pleasing manner is difficult. Not only is it hard to do something different yet closely similar to the old vernacular of Coupeville, the current zoning codes hinder certain design moves I would like to do with the site. Thinking of the impact of one building on main Street is daunting because that is the main entrance into town. Anything that is put on that road must relate back to the old Coupeville to potentially make main Street something that belongs in Coupeville.

Critical Formal and Typological Determinants:
As you drive down Main Street heading South, there are houses that make a noticeable pattern of open and closed spaces. However, as you reach 5th street, the pattern ceases; filled in with a giant detention center and glu-lam commercial building from the 50's. These contrasting patterns are unique, but only one should be kept. It has been my job to determine which one should stay, and clearly the old pattern is vital for the historical history of the town.

Guidelines (Good or Bad):
Overall, I think that the guidelines are a very good start for Coupeville even though they have been around 5 years without really becoming law. Sometimes the guidelines are too vague or too specific. I think that form based code would be perfect for this small town to give potential builders some pointers and rules to abide by.

Form Based Code:
1. Create certain maximum heights that pertain specifically to commercial, residential, mixed use, and other types of buildings.
2. Have site specific rules for setbacks and landscaping that don't hinder peoples views of the cove or of historic houses.

These are just some examples of some form based codes that would help Coupeville realize its true historic meaning.