

# *City of Helen*



## *Architectural Guidelines*

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## Introduction

One of the attractive qualities of Bavarian towns is that they have developed over centuries. A typical European town started as a small village growing within natural geographic boundaries, such as a stream edge or mountainside. Frequently, a wall was added for protection of the town edge if exposed to fields. The town would typically grow to the boundary, and then newer construction would begin to take place outside these boundaries with structures built further apart. The original town is frequently called Altstadt (old town) with newer construction occurring beyond in the Faubourg (false town). Because of walls or natural boundaries, the Old Town is much denser. Since Old Towns evolved before cars were invented, small walkways wind through this part of town. The generator of traffic was people and animals. In the Old Town, buildings vary in height but are primarily two- to three-story structures with a focus near the center spires or the clock tower or town hall. In Faubourg, the focus is more agricultural with a main house and outbuildings separated from the next by fields. Larger roadways break off into smaller paths leading to the main house. In Helen, the original town is similar to the Bavarian Old Town. Helen, too, has grown in recent years across the river and south into a faubourg known as “The Island.”

People find traditional Bavarian architecture fascinating because of its use of materials and forms. Large, exposed wood beams, decorated doorways, paned windows, shingled roofs, bell towers, cobble stoned streets all exhibit a smaller and more detailed scale than we see of today’s construction. Because old towns evolved over centuries, the buildings contain a variety of architectural forms and styles. Buildings can date anywhere from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They also incorporate elements from a number of different architectural styles. The town evolved as the needs, beliefs, and circumstances of the people changed. Early Bavarian towns were designed around an agrarian focus, which many still have. As architecture evolved circumstances may have required drawbridges, turrets, arches and other fortifications for defense. Recent designs for efficiency and changing land use in larger towns (like a shop under the house rather than cows) add another dimension to the evolution of Bavarian style.

## Alleyways

The charming villages of the mountainous regions in Bavaria are mazes of alleys called Gassen (pronounced Gah – Sen) These alleys, smaller than the Strassen (street) weave throughout the Altstadt sections of villages, and this is the area much of the real business is done. Villagers often live above their businesses and need only to go downstairs to go to work.

The density in the villages is influenced by the scarcity of land in Bavaria and by the tight restriction against building outside the central business district. Helen similarly has a shortage of land zoned retail.

Visitors to Helen are drawn to these narrow alleyways. White Horse Square, Helen Square, Horse & Ducky Platz, Fussen Platz & Swiss German Plaza. These Gassen convert a space that might accommodate one or two street side shops into an area containing perhaps six to ten shops and restaurants. Thus, not only is the visitor drawn to stroll down these quaint alleys, but the developer is also able to make better use of a piece of property.

The alleyways should have a plane surface constructed of pavers. Experience has shown that the surface must be smooth enough to allow easy walking, rolling strollers, and so forth. The surface should not be solid concrete. If concrete must be used it should be stamped and stained for a rustic look.



## Awnings

Awnings are used in Bavaria on the front of most retail shops. These awnings are retractable, of canvas or similar cloth material, and they are generally bright colored in contrast to the buildings. Awnings provide shelter from precipitation as well as providing shade from the sun.

When awnings are utilized on a building, the owner must remember to watch for fading or other deterioration to the fabric. Damaged awnings should be replaced or repaired as soon as damage is noted.



## Bavarian Color Schemes

Buildings in the Alpine Region feature woods that are stained in earth tone colors. These colors include dark rich browns, greens, and maroons, and variations of these colors include their softer shades.

Additional colors are utilized. Please check with the employees at Helen City Hall or Ace Hardware for an up-to-date color chart.

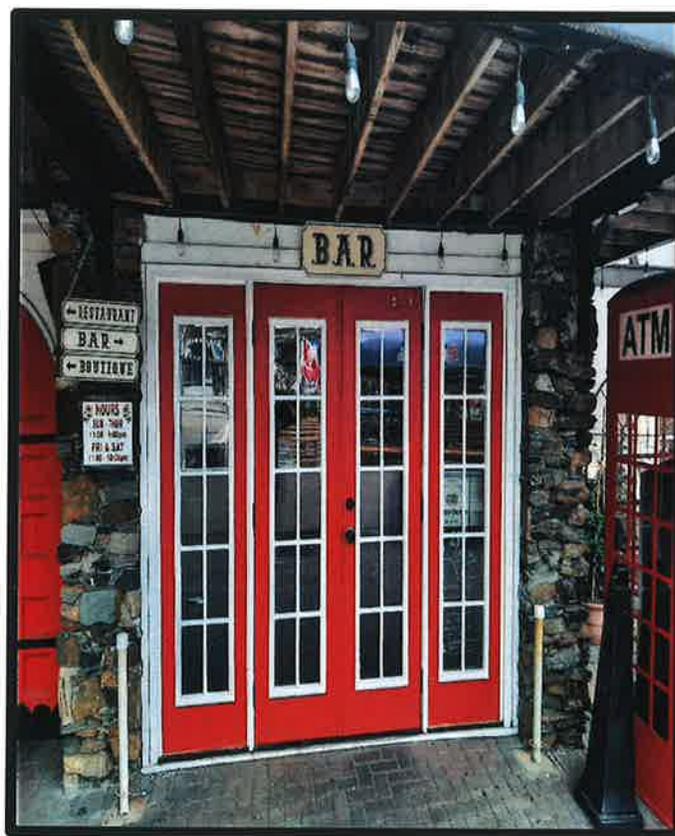
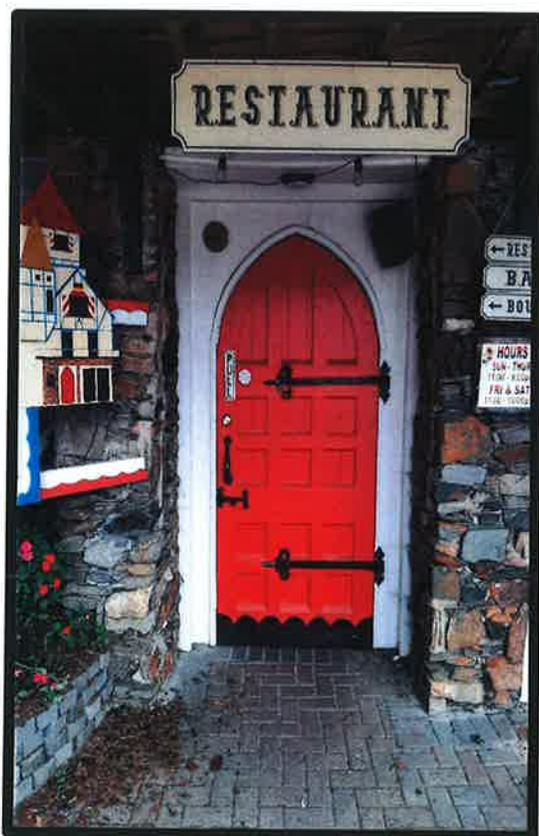
Often buildings consist of a lower level constructed of block covered with stucco. Upper levels are frequently wood in stark contrast to the color on the base. Builds may also be covered in half timbers.



## Doors

All doors should have Alpine style trim or faux painted accents. Doors should be made of wood whenever possible. The door often has a semicircular head or a segmented arch head, with or without additional ornamentation. Good examples are the Helendorf Inn or the Hofbrau Haus.

Additionally, doors should have “Carriage” lights on the sides.

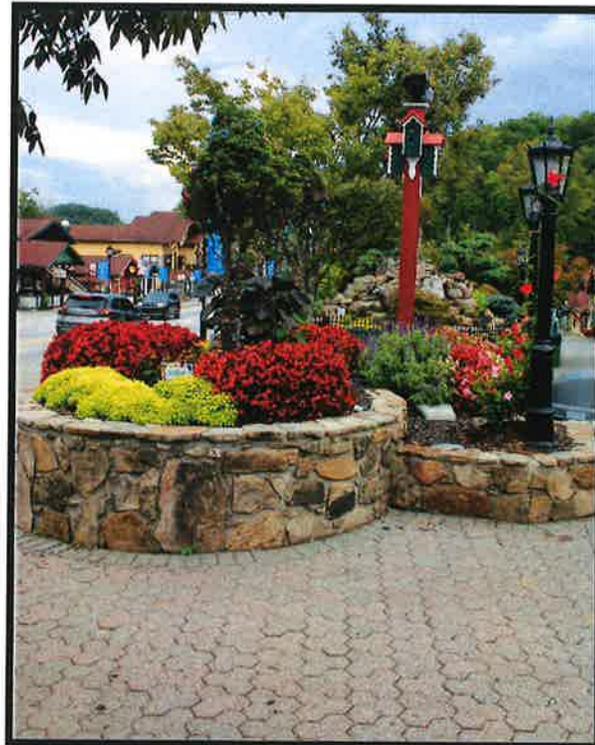


## Horizontal Circulation

The key to site circulation and horizontal pedestrian circulation is simplicity. Part of the charm of historic Bavarian site planning is that it evolved during an era that did not have cars and trucks. Small vehicles, such as carts and wheelbarrows, require much less turning area than today's vehicles and small alleyways and walkways result.

Cars in the landscape should be minimized. Create parking and site circulation behind buildings, so the building can be close to the street, and cars hidden behind. If the building cannot complete the job of screening the cars, add screening walls or hedges to minimize the cars presence. The result provides two benefits. First the building can be closer to the street, which is a traditional Bavarian pattern, and second, even when all cars are parked and the lot is full, the scene will look historically Bavarian.

Even though the design of vehicles has changed over the centuries, for the most part the size of pedestrians has not. A four-foot sidewalk is comfortable, a five-foot sidewalk is needed for two wheelchairs to pass. Consider using materials other than standard concrete, such as precast pavers or stamped and stained concrete, making sure that the texture is not too coarse to accommodate those with ambulatory impairments.



## Roofs

Roofs in Bavaria, especially on retail buildings in villages, are 6/12, 5/12 or even 4/12 pitches. These low slopes enable snow to be held more easily in winter for roof insulation.

Roofs should overhang the front and rear of the buildings. They are often supported by knee braces as much as five (5) feet or six (6) feet in vertical height. Often the larger the building, the greater the overhang, and large buildings with overhangs eight (8) feet – ten (10) feet are not uncommon. The minimum overhang for buildings in Helen should be three (3) feet with a maximum of six (6) feet for gables and two (2) feet for the eaves. Gable overhangs should be of a consistent length; that is if the overhang is four (4) feet, it should be four (4) feet throughout the span of the gable. Corbels should be used to support the large overhangs.

Red is the most common color for roofing shingles, but the use of brown shingles should be considered for contrast.

Some different roof types to consider are listed below:

Gable          Dormer          Jerkinhead          Hexagonal (towers)          M Shaped

Shingles that are red or brown are acceptable. Standing seam metal can be used as well as coated metal shingles. They must be red or brown, but not bright red.



## Roofscapes

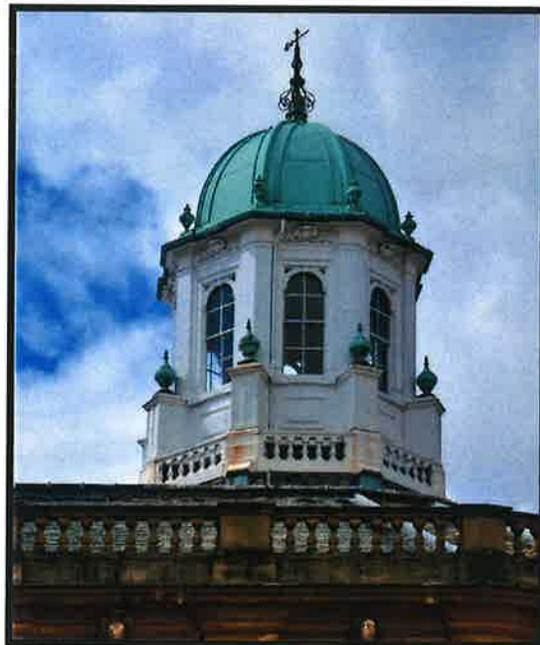
The Alpine roof is a collection place for a variety of elements.

**Dormers** – Dormers are typically not used on broad roofs of rural Alpine buildings. They are found in villages and towns where steep roofs are common. Two types are most prevalent. The eyelid and the standard dormer. Both are well adapted for use on 12/12 slopes and steeper.

**Other** – Chimneys are often a simple element, made of stucco with a round top. These can be used to cover vent pipes protruding through the roof. Bell towers are more decorative and are a prominent feature of the roofs.

**Dovecotes** – Dovecotes are occasionally seen and are constructed of stucco with red tile roofs.

**Cupola** – A cupola is relatively small, usually dome-like structure on top of a building often crowning a larger roof or dome. Cupolas often serve as a roof lantern to admit light and air or as a lookout.



## Towers

Towers are found throughout Europe and give the eye vertical relief from what would otherwise be a lateral panorama. Having evolved from the watch towers thousands of years ago, they add much interest to the village landscape.



## Vertical Circulation

- Vertical distance in level can be handled in three ways:

#1 Steps

#2 Ramps

#3 Elevators

Steps: Maximum riser height is 7"

Minimum tread depth is 11"

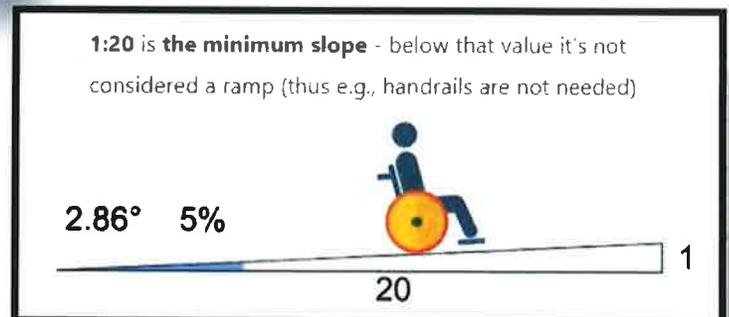
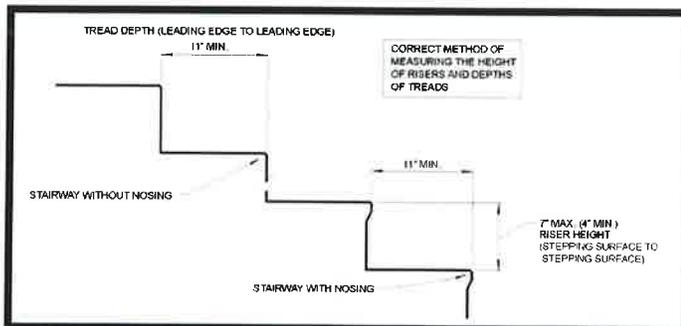
Ramps: Maximum slope per

ADA Standards = 1:20

Maximum rise per run = 1' – 6"

Handrails required on both sides over 6" rise

Elevators: This is a modern usage projected into an architectural setting far removed from concern with engineering demands and all other contemporary influences. Fortunately, there are many types of Alpine towers of appropriate proportions and dimensions that can readily be adapted to this unusual use.



## Conclusion

If the perspective builder follows the guidelines as spelled out in the preceding pages, he or she should be able to create an inviting atmosphere. By doing this, you are creating a better place for everyone. The more we take pride in our town and attempt to create a European style village of our own the more we succeed. More people will come and will be return visitors.

