

S·M·I·L·E

SELLWOOD MORELAND IMPROVEMENT LEAGUE
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June 7, 2021

Portland City Commissioners
1220 SW 4th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205

Dear Commissioners:

The Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) supports DOZA Amendments 3 (Main Street Design Standards Bundle) and 5 (Threshold for Design Review).

Amendment 3 fulfills the DOZA tenet of ‘build on context’ by adding optional main street design standards to the Centers Main Street (m) Overlay. Over 50 Sellwood-Moreland residents and the Sellwood-Moreland Business Alliance testified in support of adding Main Street design standards to DOZA. Amendment 3 will help reduce building costs because it provides more options for developers to choose from which enables them to pick lower cost options as market forces and costs change.

We believe that DOZA should allow our buildings to encompass a diversity of cultures and their architectural styles. Main street design features are found in many non-western architectures and thus do not favor western architecture or a particular architectural style. Especially common are a distinctive base/middle/top, stepback design, and vertical human-scaled windows. Many examples are presented in the Appendix, Non-Western Architecture and the Sellwood-Moreland Design Guidelines. In contrast, proposed standards C6-C8 regarding buildings adjacent to historic landmarks are stylistically more restrictive than Amendment 3.



Pagoda in Katmandu, Nepal, with a stepback design and distinctive base/middle/top¹. The Appendix has many more examples of non-western buildings that include Main Street design features.

¹ Anju Thapa, <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/nepal/index.htm>

We want a lower threshold for design review so the public can participate in the design of buildings they see and enter every day. We also want to encourage construction of affordable housing. We support Amendment 5 because it provides more opportunity for public participation than the DOZA Recommended Draft and it incentivizes affordable housing.

We are disappointed that the technical amendments do not correct all of the known flaws in the DOZA Design Standards. Throughout the DOZA process we have studied the design standards, probably more so than any other group in the City, judging from submitted testimony. In one last appeal to good governance, we ask that you add these two non-controversial technical amendments. Please see our March 17, 2021, testimony for details:

- Exclude RM1 zone from standards PR1 (required 12-foot ground floor height, this is out of context in RM1 and could limit floor area due to the 35-foot height limit), QR5 (easily satisfied in RM1), and QR7 (automatically satisfied when QR5 satisfied in RM1).
- Exclude the Centers Main Street Overlay zone from optional standard QR14 (The optional standard is automatically satisfied there).

We urge you to adopt DOZA amendments 3 and 5. If you have any questions, please contact David Schoellhamer, Chair of the SMILE Land Use Committee, at land-use-chair@sellwood.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon Fulford", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Simon Fulford
President, Sellwood Moreland Improvement League

Appendix: Non-Western Architecture and the Sellwood-Moreland Design Guidelines

Appendix

Non-Western Architecture and the Sellwood-Moreland Design Guidelines

A report by the Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) Land Use Committee

February 2021

Non-Western Architecture and the Sellwood-Moreland Design Guidelines

A report by the Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) Land Use Committee

February 2021

“The house is also divided into the underworld, human world, and spiritual world.”

-Lisa McGalliard and Natalie Whitney
Traditional Models of the Indonesian House¹



This report was motivated by a comment at a Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) meeting. At the July 14, 2020, PSC work session on the Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA), Senior Planner Lora Lillard stated *“many of the more traditional architectural based solutions promote a western architectural style that has been removed in these standards through DOZA: vertical windows, cornices, base-middle-top ... We opened up the types of architecture to support people... and forwards our equity goals”*². We were concerned that the *Sellwood-Moreland Main Street Design Guidelines* we and the community had written unintentionally advocated Western architecture.

In this report, we describe that, while present day Sellwood and Westmoreland were built primarily by European immigrants and their descendants, many of the ‘main street’ design elements described in the *Sellwood-Moreland Main Street Design Guidelines* allow and encourage non-western architecture.

We sought examples of non-western architecture to educate ourselves and readers, evaluate the Main Street Design Guidelines, and answer the question ‘Do the Main Street guidelines exclude or fail to encourage non-Western architecture?’ We started with online student research projects completed for a class in Non-Western Architecture at the University of Idaho³. We augmented the list with examples from pre-colonial America, Morocco, and China. For each example, we note the main street design elements present. The following pages contain 21 examples.

¹ <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/indonesia/INDEX.HTM>

² <https://youtu.be/Duwc4Vb-XSs>, time 43:30.

³ <https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/research.htm>

The *Sellwood-Moreland Main Street Design Guidelines*⁴ highlight local design and building patterns, identify community design preferences, and document a vision for an evolving community with vibrant main streets and an enhanced streetscape. The guidelines were developed by representatives from the Sellwood-Moreland Improvement League (SMILE) Land Use Committee, the Sellwood-Moreland Business Alliance (SMBA), donated support from PDX Main Streets and technical support from design consultants Forage Design, and Qamar Architecture & Town Planning. The year-and-a-half-long public process included public workshops and walking tours, community surveys, outreach at local markets, studying local design patterns, outreach by SMILE list serves, Nextdoor postings, participant lists, Facebook and Instagram, articles in the news, and through SMBA outreach lists. The SMILE Board of Directors approved the guidelines on May 20, 2020. The ‘at-a-glance’ section of the guidelines is included in this report.

Many of the main street design elements are found in nonwestern architecture. Especially common elements are base-middle-top, stepbacks, and human-scaled vertical windows. Most examples we found contained at least one main street design element. In our testimony to the PSC on DOZA, we asked that main street design elements be included as options in the Community Design Standards and that one element be required in the Main Street overlay. With the exception of the winter houses of the Cowlitz and Clackamas Nations, all of the examples presented in the following pages would satisfy our proposed requirement in the Main Street Overlay, but perhaps not existing zoning or building codes.

⁴ <http://www.sellwood.org/2020/08/01/sellwood-main-street-design-initiative/>

SELLWOOD-MORELAND “GUIDELINES AT A GLANCE”

Encouraged Mixed Use Design Patterns + Building Form

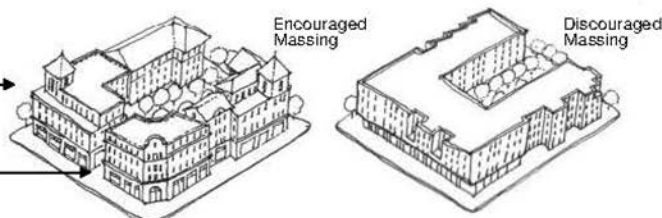
- **Upper Level Stepbacks** (maintain density and minimize scale contrasts)
- **Base-Middle-Top**
Articulated rooflines
Horizontal bands/cornices
Storefronts
- **Main Street Storefronts**
Recessed Entries, raised sills, display windows with clerestory windows above
- **Cost Efficient Design**
Stacked floorplates (no cantilevers)
Vertically + horizontally aligned windows/doors
Avoid arbitrary and abstract Form articulation
- **Windows**
Human-scale proportioning
Tall vertical inset windows
Divided panes in larger windows
Symmetrical window patterns
Avoid excessive material framing
- **Harmonious Design on All Sides**
No blank walls, consistent materials
- **Corner Treatments**
Chamfers, Entries, Arches, Balconies,
Simple Ornament or Artistic Details
- **Balconies + Bays**



Images above and below demonstrate main street patterns, harmonious design on all sides, and tall vertical inset windows that reflect human scale proportions. (Illustrations by Laurence Qamar) These illustrations are intended to show all the features described on this page. It is not expected that all features would be included in one new development.



- **Building Massing/Building Form**
Divide large building projects into smaller multiple buildings
- **Create Mid-block Passthroughs, Courtyards + Gathering Spaces** where possible
- **Relate to Neighborhood Patterns**
Minimize appearance of scale contrasts with newer larger buildings through main street base-middle-top, storefront design, etc
- **Materials & Craftsmanship**
Limit number of materials and use natural materials (brick, stucco, concrete, wood, clapboard)
- **Arches at Entries, Upper Windows & Ground Level**
- **Streetscape Design & Pedestrian Amenities**
Landscaping, street seats and benches, public art, bike racks, tree grates, sidewalk awnings.
- **Pedestrian Oriented Signage**
Neon and Portland marquee blade signs
- **Facade Lighting**
- **Utilities Screening**



These illustrations are intended to show all the features described on this page. It is not expected that all features would be included in one new development.

Mayan Architecture - Pyramids



SMILE Guidelines:

Stepbacks

Bottom, middle, top

Use of natural materials

Harmonious design on all sides

Mayan Architecture- Labna

Labna was a minor ceremonial center built around 850 A.D. At least 60 chultunes (cisterns) were found within the Labna area, leading archeologists to believe that up to 3000 people might have lived within the city limits. The Arch is located at the end of a ceremonial road. It formed one side of a quadrangle with other structures that have since fallen down.



SMILE Guidelines:

Arches at entries

Simple ornaments or artistic details

Use of natural materials

Taos Pueblo



Photo by [Howard Davis](#). © Howard Davis. Trademark of Taos Pueblo

SMILE Guidelines:

Use of natural materials

Upper level stepbacks

Harmonious design on all sides



Pueblo dwellings and modern pueblo architecture



SMILE Guidelines:

Upper level stepbacks

Human scaled inset windows

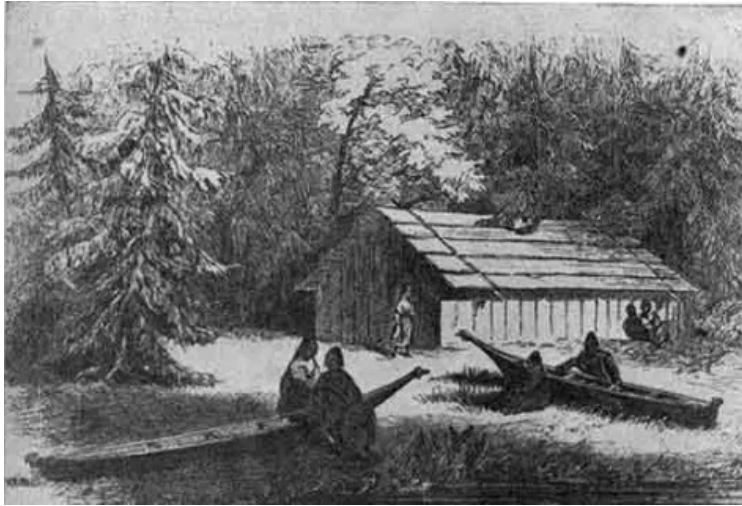
Arched windows

Natural materials



Clackamas and Cowlitz Nations

Sellwood-Moreland is located in the traditional territory of the Clackamas and Cowlitz Nations⁵. Their single-story winter houses were built of planks and bark, using natural materials that were abundant⁶. These buildings could house many families and were often built partially underground to provide thermal insulation.



Cowlitz Plank House, drawing by James Swan⁶



Clackamas Chinook Plank house at Willamette Falls⁶



Cathlapotle Plankhouse, Chinook Indian Nation, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge⁷

SMILE Guidelines: Materials & Craftsmanship

⁵ <https://native-land.ca/>

⁶ <https://ndnhistoryresearch.com/2016/12/31/houses-of-the-oregon-tribes/>

⁷ https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Ridgefield/visit/Cathlapotle_Plankhouse.html

Japanese Castles

Windows: Human scale,
symmetric, vertical, inset

Stepbacks



Base/
middle/
top

Courtyard

Corner treatments

Himeji Castle
Japan-guide.com

Paul Long
<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/japan2/castles.htm>



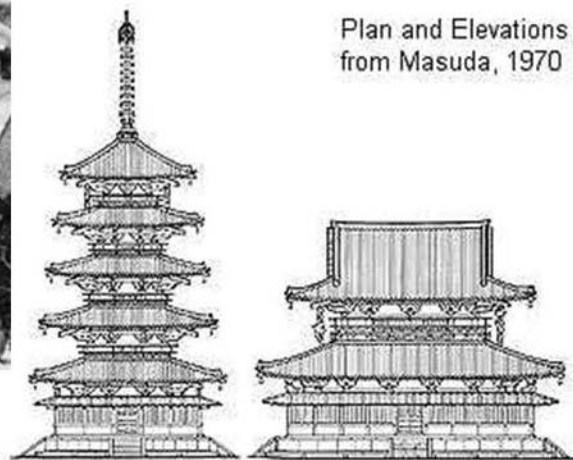
Japanese Temples

Courtyard



Horyu-ji

Base/
middle/
top



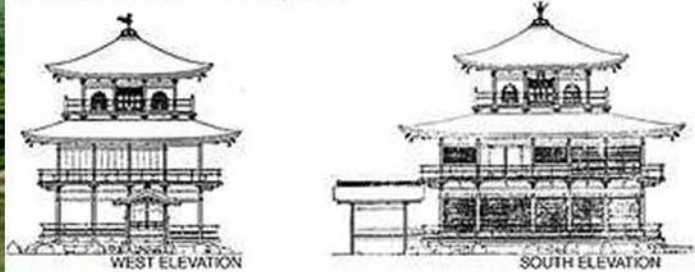
Plan and Elevations
from Masuda, 1970

Corner treatments



Stepbacks

Elevations from Murata, 1963



Kinkaku-ji, or Golden Pavilion

Balcony

Arches

Tets Takemoto

<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/japan3/INDEX.HTM>

Korean Temples

Corner treatments

Balconies



Pul-guk-sa Temple

http://eng.bulguksa.or.kr/bbs/board.php?bo_table=relic&wr_id=75

Base/
middle/
top



Temple pagodas



Morgan Barry

<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/korea/index.htm>

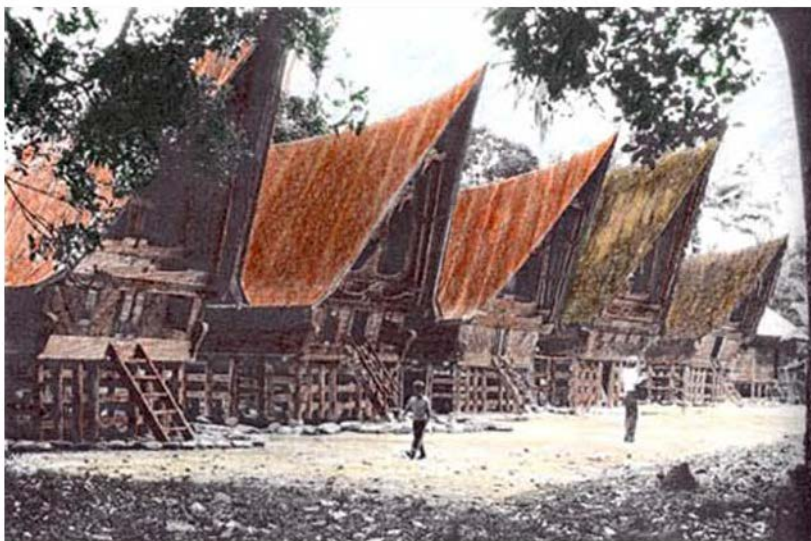
Traditional Indonesian Houses

Base/middle/top

"The house is also divided into the underworld, human world, and spiritual world."



Minangkabau house and rice barns at Lima Kaum



Toba Batak village, Ambarita, Samosir Island

Lisa McGalliard and Natalie Whitney

<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/indonesia/INDEX.HTM>

Pagodas in Katmandu

Stepbacks



Base/
middle/
top

Durbur Square

Windows: Human scale,
symmetric, vertical

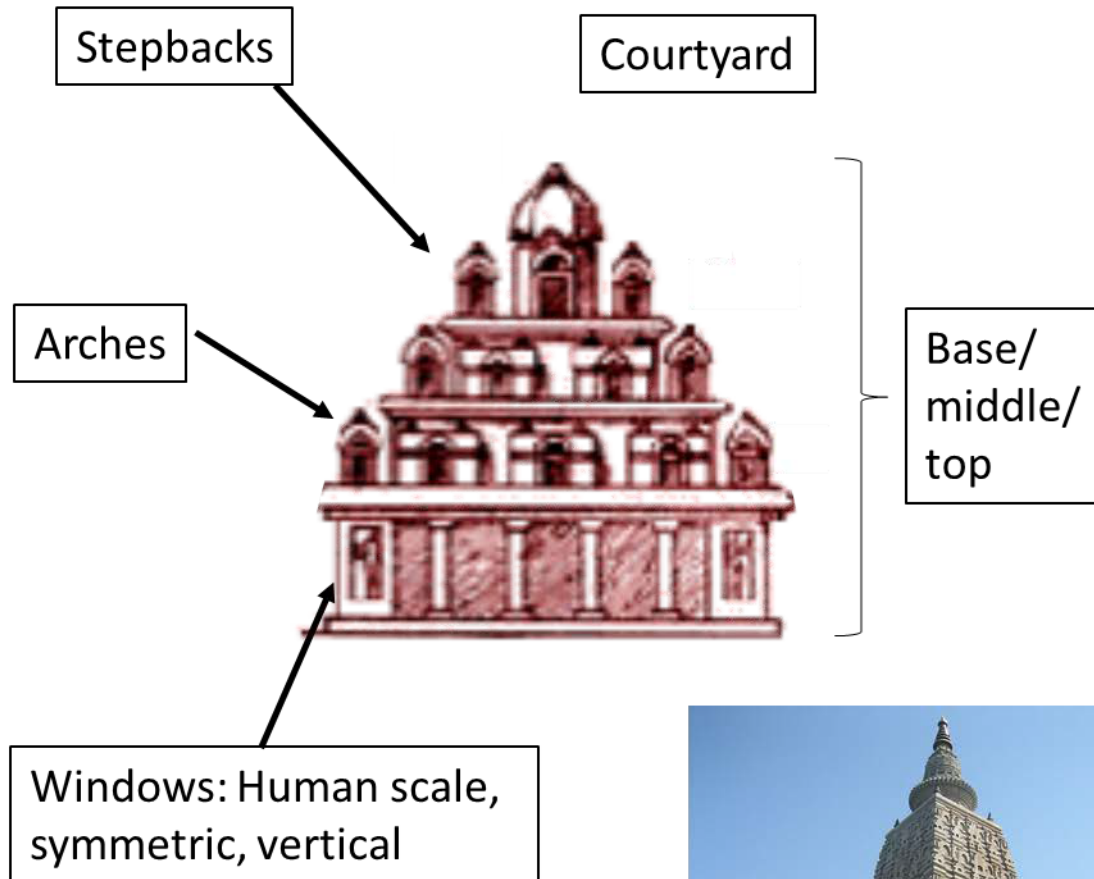
Bay windows (not shown)

Anju Thapa

<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/nepal/index.htm>

Indian Buddhist Vihara

(religious building that houses Buddha images, generally built in the center of a courtyard)



Miranda Anderson
<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/thaiweb/wat.htm>

Mahabodhi Temple, India
Wikipedia



Houses in Jaisalmer, India

Balconies



Base/
middle/
top

A typical cobbled street in Jaisalmer

Windows: Human scale,
Vertical, divided

Arches (not shown)

Balmiki Bhattacharya

<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/Jaisalmer/jaisalmercover.htm>

Chefchaouen, Morocco

Google Maps Street View



Chefchaouen, Morocco

Google Maps Street View



Arches

Windows:
human scale, inset, symmetric

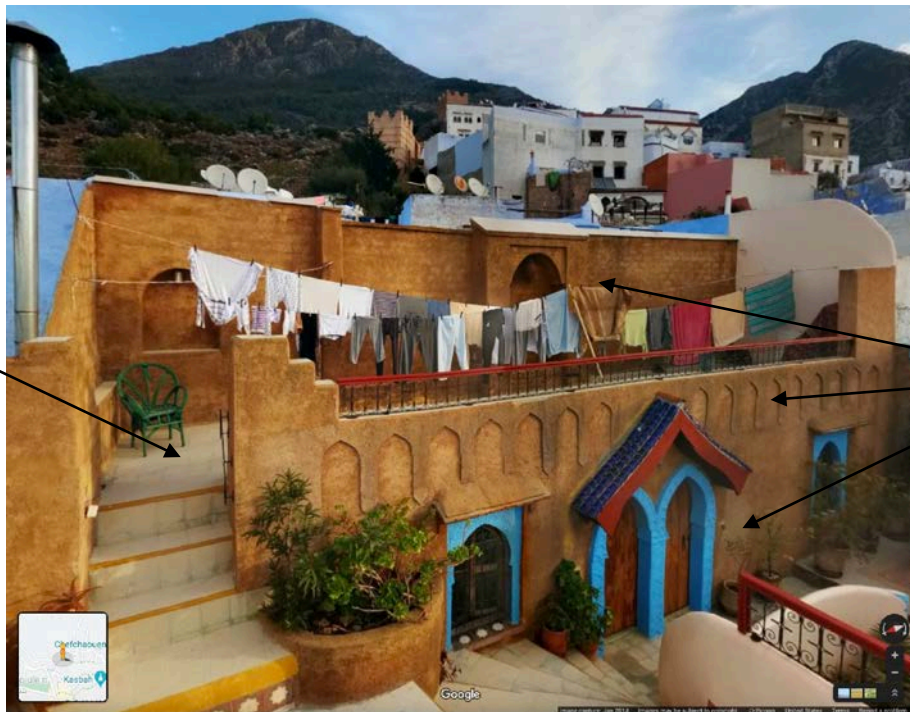
Buildings have an
base, middle and top

Natural Materials: stucco, ceramic tile,
stone and brick

No blank walls, consistent materials

Chefchaouen, Morocco

Google Maps Street View



Courtyard

Stepback

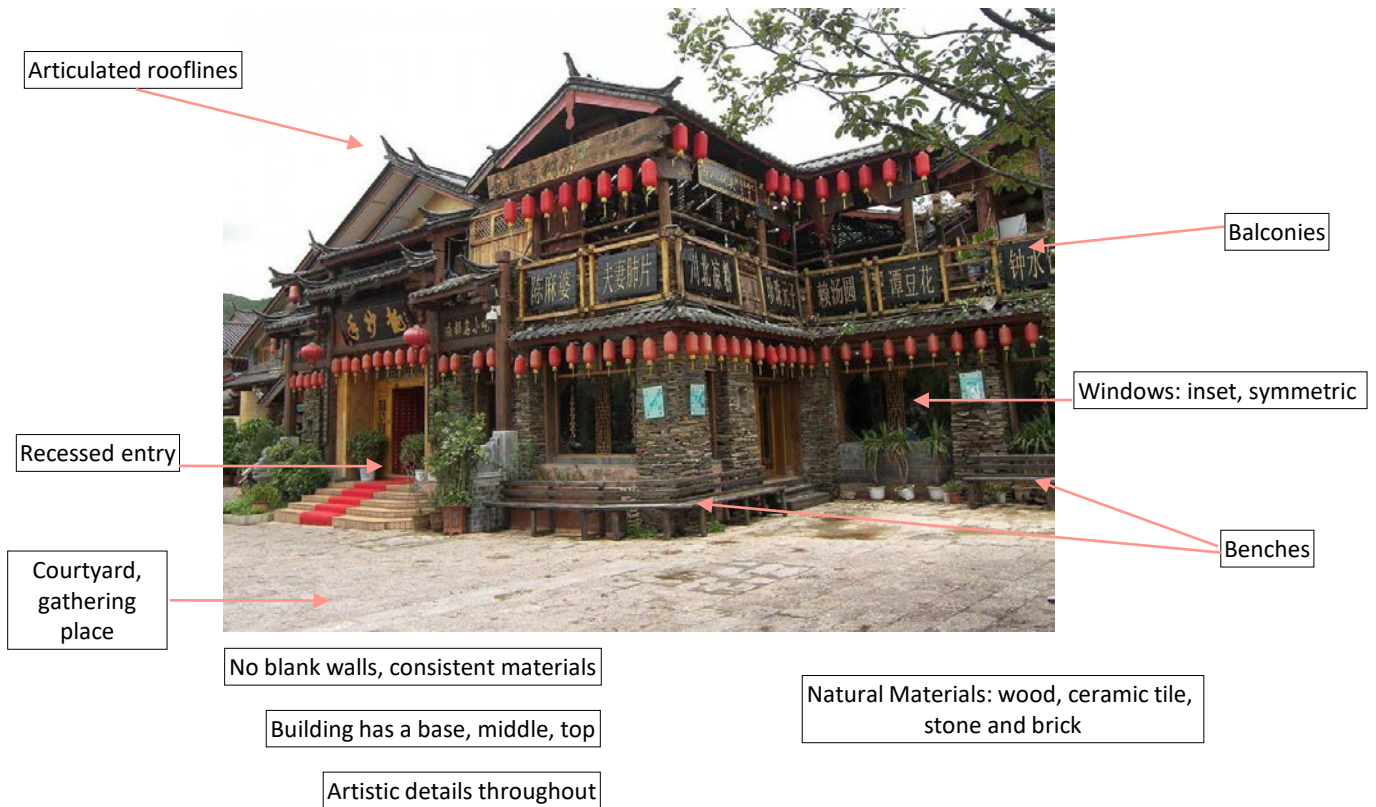
Arches

Natural Materials: stucco and brick

No blank walls, consistent materials

Windows: human scale, symmetric, vertical, inset

Lijiang, China



Beijing, China



Lijiang, China



Buildings have base, middle, top and articulated rooflines

No blank walls, consistent materials

Natural Materials: wood, ceramic tile and brick

Artistic details throughout

Zhaoxing, China



Balconies

Windows: human scale, symmetric

Courtyard, gathering place

Buildings have base, middle, top, Stepbacks, and articulated rooflines

Village blends into the landscape and has a well defined gateway

Natural Materials: wood, ceramic tile and brick

No blank walls, consistent materials

Artistic details throughout

Beijing, China



Articulated
rooflines

Windows: human
scale,
symmetric, vertical

Balconies

Courtyard,
gathering
place

Natural Materials: wood, ceramic tile and brick

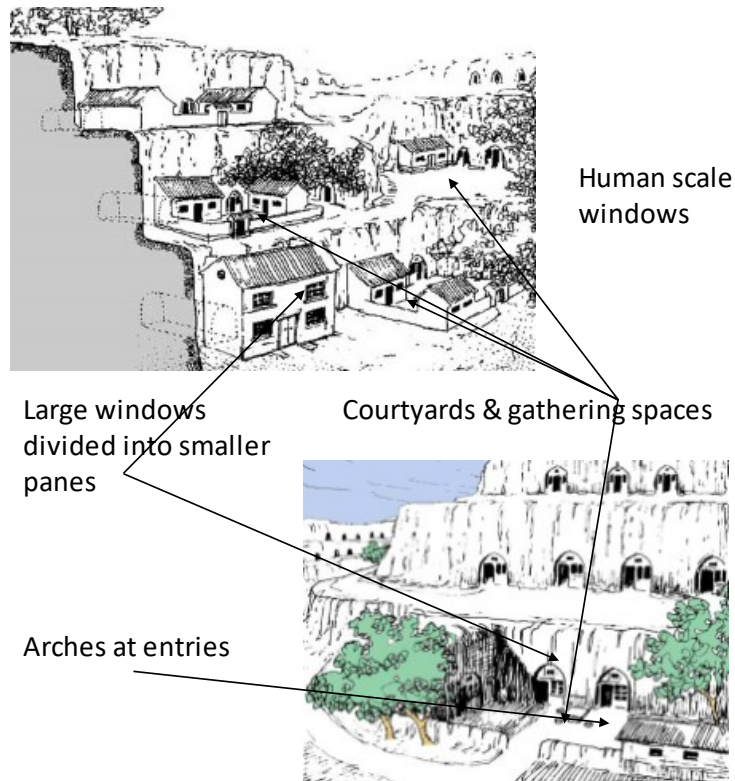
Artistic details throughout

No blank walls, consistent materials

Building has a base, middle, top

Chinese Earth Shelters or Cave Dwellings

Cliffside or Vaulted Cave Dwellings



Paul Long
<https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/arch499/nonwest/china/other.html>