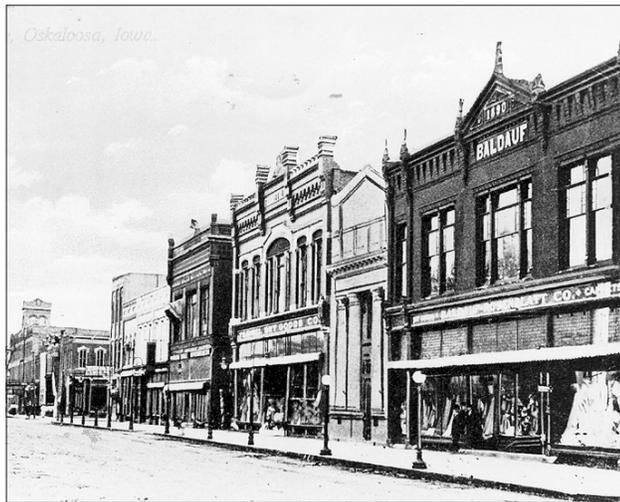


Design Guidelines
for the
**CITY SQUARE COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT**



City of Oskaloosa, Iowa
June 2000

Design Guidelines
for the
CITY SQUARE COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT



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June 2000

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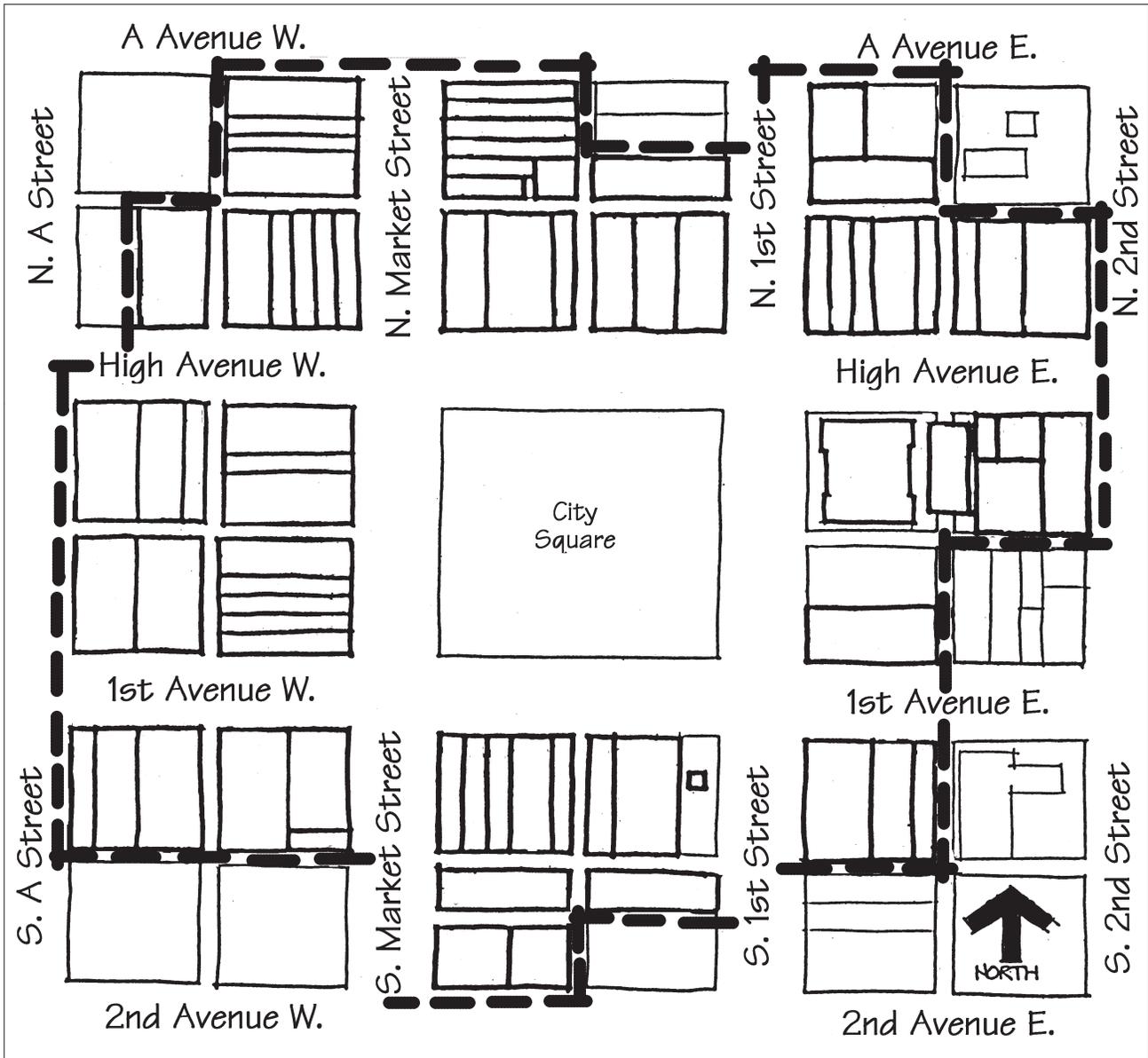
Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The City's Preservation Goals	3
What are Design Guidelines?	3
Will Complying with These Guidelines be More Expensive?	4
The Historic Preservation Commission	4
The Scope of the Guidelines	4
How to Use the Guidelines	4
Design Guidelines Components	5
Recommended Submittal Documents	7
The Concept of Significance	8
The Period of Significance	8
The Concept of Integrity	8
Choosing a Preservation Approach	9
Planning a Project	10
Significance and Benefits of the Historic District Today	10
Which Design Guidelines Apply to Your Project	12
Chapter 1: Historic Overview of the City Square Commercial Historic District	15
Chapter 2: Architectural Styles and Building Types	19
Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Historic Properties	27
Preservation of Character-Defining Features	28
Replacement of Character-Defining Features	29
Preservation of Facade Materials	30
Preservation of Masonry	31
Design of Alterations	32
Storefronts	34
Windows and Transoms	36
Recessed Entries and Doors	37
Kickplates	38
Cornices	39
Additions to Historic Buildings	40
Technical Repairs	41
Chapter 4: Design Guidelines for New Construction	45
Architectural Character	46
Site Plan Guidelines	46
Mass and Scale	47
Facade Materials	49
Upper-Story Windows	50
Entries	41
Pedestrian Interest	52

Chapter 5: Design Guidelines for All Projects	55
Accessibility	55
Awnings and Canopies	56
Building and Street Lighting	57
Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities	58
Landscaping	59
Parking	60
Rooftop Uses	60
Chapter 6: Design Guidelines for Signs	63
Sign Context	64
Appropriate Sign Types	65
Sign Materials	65
Sign Content	66
Sign Lighting	66
Appendices	67
A: Interpretation of Terms Related to Compliance	69
B: The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings	70
C: Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance	71
D: Glossary	73

Introduction





The boundaries of the City Square Commercial Historic District.

Introduction

This book presents design guidelines for the City Square Commercial Historic District in Oskaloosa, Iowa. Located at the center of this former coal mining town in southeast Iowa, the historic district represents a largely intact assemblage of historic brick commercial architecture. The time period in which these buildings were built coincides with the era of coal mining here, from the end of the Civil War to shortly before the Great Depression. At the heart of the district lies a beautiful park with a bandstand at its center. The park is framed with buildings whose scale, massing and materials are consistent and uniform, yet reflect a variety of building types, from the simple two-story brick buildings of the 1860s and 1870s to the exuberant Victorian blocks of the late nineteenth century and finally to the commercial brick style of the early twentieth century.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide guidance to property owners in the historic district when they plan exterior alterations to existing buildings or new construction. The guidelines will also be used by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) when conducting its review and granting its approval of exterior alterations and additions to structures and to proposed new construction and demolition in the district.



Today, the City Square Historic District has many buildings with inappropriate alterations. In general, the intended result of design review is to preserve the integrity of historic resources in the district and to ensure that new construction and alterations to existing buildings will be complementary to the historic character in both scale and design.

The City's Preservation Goals

In general, the intended result of historic preservation and design review is to preserve the integrity of historic resources in the district and to ensure that new construction and alterations to existing buildings will be complementary to the historic character in both scale and design. The City of Oskaloosa has identified seven goals for historic preservation in the community. These goals are to:

- 1) Promote the educational, economic and general welfare of the public through the recognition, enhancement, and perpetuation of historic districts.
- 2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage by preserving historic districts.
- 3) Stabilize and improve property values and strengthen the economy of the city.
- 4) Foster civic beauty and community pride.
- 5) Enhance the city's attraction to tourists and visitors.
- 6) Promote the use of historic districts as places for the education and enjoyment of the people of Oskaloosa.
- 7) Ensure compatibility and create an aesthetic atmosphere with local historic districts.

The guidelines reflect a basic preservation philosophy: to encourage the preservation and careful treatment of the historic resources within the district, while recognizing the need for the contemporary economic use of these structures. The guidelines are intended to be a means for balancing the historic qualities of existing historic structures with the demands of contemporary use.

What are Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines convey community policies about the character of alterations to existing structures, additions, new construction and site work. As such, they will provide a clear basis for making decisions about changes that may affect the appearance of individual properties or the overall character of the district. However, they do not dictate solutions.

Will Complying With These Guidelines be More Expensive?

In most cases, following the design principles will not cost more. They help direct *where* money should be spent improving a property, not *how much* should be invested. For example, the principles ask that a new building be placed in line with others on the block. This generally should not affect the cost of constructing the building.

The Historic Preservation Commission

Pursuant to Chapter 2.84 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Oskaloosa, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established to protect, enhance and perpetuate structures, districts and elements in the city of historical, cultural and architectural significance. This same ordinance gives the HPC the authority to draft these design guidelines. Please note, that this document is not the ordinance nor is it intended to replace it, rather its only purpose is to serve as a guide for the HPC and property owners when work is proposed in a designated historic district.

The HPC consists of five volunteer members, all appointed by the mayor. It includes members of the community who demonstrate a positive interest in historic preservation, or expertise in architecture, architectural history, historic preservation, city planning, building rehabilitation, conservation in general or real estate.

The Scope of the Guidelines

The guidelines address all projects in the district requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission. *Please note that the Building Official will not issue a building permit without a COA from the HPC.* Projects that need a COA include:

- The construction of a structure within an historic district
- The alteration of any exterior features of an historic building or structure within an historic district
- The removal or demolition, in whole or in part, of an historic structure or structure within an historic district

Color is not reviewed unless it is for painting unpainted masonry, signs and awnings. Also, ordinary maintenance generally does not require a COA unless it would alter the exterior of a building.

Note that other regulations also may affect design in the City Square Commercial Historic District, including the following:

- The Code of Ordinances of the City of Oskaloosa
- The Uniform Building Code (UBC)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act
- Federal income tax credits for certified rehabilitation of historic buildings (if applicable)
- State Income Tax Credits
- Other State Programs and Incentives

The HPC can give guidance on where to find this information.

How to Use This Document

Property owners, real estate agents, developers, tenants and architects should use the guidelines when beginning a project in the district. This will help establish an appropriate direction for its design. For any project subject to review, the applicant should refer to the guidelines at the outset, to avoid planning efforts that later may prove to be inappropriate.



Projects that need a COA include the alteration of any exterior feature of an historic structure or structure within an historic district. The removal of upper story windows, such as has happened here, would be considered inappropriate.

The HPC will consider the guidelines on a case-by-case basis, to determine if an adequate number of the relevant guidelines have been met. However, there is no set number of guidelines that must be met to gain approval. In making its determination, the HPC's overall concerns are that the proposed work complies with the intent its ordinance, that the integrity of an individual historic structure is preserved, and that the overall character of the district is protected. The design guidelines provide a basis for determining that these objectives will be achieved.

It is also important to recognize that, in each case, a unique combination of the design variables is at play and, as a result, the degree to which each relevant guideline must be met may vary. If many of the design variables are configured to be quite similar to features used traditionally, then greater flexibility in variations of other elements may be considered and still result in an overall design that is compatible with the historic context. For example, in the case of a new building, if the proposed structure will be built of brick that is quite similar in color and scale to those used traditionally, and its major features align with other structures and is of a similar height, then perhaps greater variation in the details of the new design may be considered. Thus, the HPC can respond to the unique combination of design variables in each proposed project while also applying a consistent set of guidelines.

This document is organized into five chapters, and four appendices:

- This *Introduction* provides the foundation and understanding for the preparation of this document.
- *Chapter 1: Historic Overview of the City Square Commercial Historic District* and *Chapter 2: Architectural Styles and Building Types*, provides a basic history of the area and describes the different architectural styles found in the district.
- *Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Historic Properties*, presents design guidelines that apply to all historic properties in the district.
- *Chapter 4: Design Guidelines for New Construction*, provides design guidelines for all new construction in the district.
- *Chapter 5: General Design Guidelines*, includes design guidelines that apply to all projects, including rehabilitation, new construction and site work, and should be read by all users.

- *Chapter 6: Design Guidelines for Signs*, provides design guidelines for design and location of new signs for an individual business or group of businesses.
- Finally, the *Appendices*, provides supplementary information including interpretation of terms related to compliance, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*, recommendations for ongoing building maintenance and a glossary of important terms.

Design Guideline Components

Each of the design guidelines in this document contains the following components:

Design Element

The first is the design element category (e.g., treatment of character-defining features, roofs, cornices, mass and scale, and materials) under which the design guideline falls.

Background Information

Second is a brief discussion of the issues typically associated with the specific design feature. This may include technical information, such as repetition of building forms, as well as general preservation theory that might be relevant to the topic at hand.

Design Guidelines

Third is the design guideline statement itself, which is typically performance-oriented, describing a desired design treatment. The specific design guideline is presented as a **bold face** statement. A guideline is numbered to indicate its relative position within a chapter and the document as a whole. For example, a design guideline in *Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Historic Properties* would include the letter "H" before the number to indicate that it is part of the guidelines for "Historic Properties." The number does not imply a ranking of importance.

Additional Information

The design guideline statement is followed by supplementary information that is treated as subpoints of the guideline. These subpoints may include additional requirements, or may provide an expanded explanation. These subpoints are listed as bulleted (•) statements.

Illustrations

Design guidelines are further explained through the use of photographs and illustrations. Examples given should not be considered the only appropriate options. In most instances, there are numerous possible solutions that meet the intention of the design guideline, as well as the needs of the property owner.

✓'s and ✗'s

In order to designate design approaches that are appropriate or not acceptable, many of the illustrations that supplement the policies and design guidelines are marked with either a ✓ or an ✗. Those illustrations marked with a ✓ are considered appropriate solutions to the design issue at hand. Whereas, those illustrations marked with an ✗ are not acceptable. Note, however, that the illustrations used in this document do not represent all of the possible design solutions available, and just because an approach is not listed or illustrated does not mean that it is not acceptable. If there are any questions regarding the appropriateness of a potential design solution, the HPC should be contacted.

It is important to note that *all* of the elements of the design guidelines (i.e., including the introductory and informational sections, guidelines, subpoints and illustrations) constitute the material upon which the HPC will make its determination of the appropriateness of a proposed project.

Preservation of Facade Materials

In the district, brick and stone are the dominant primary building materials. Wood and metal also occur as accent elements. Historic building materials and craftsmanship add textural qualities as well as visual continuity and character to the streetscape and should be preserved.

H.13 Don't cover or obscure original facade materials.

- If original materials are presently covered, consider exposing them once more.
- Covering of original facades not only conceals interesting details, but also interrupts the visual continuity along the street.
- Vinyl, aluminum and imitation brick are inappropriate as coverings of historic materials.
- Retaining later covering materials that have not achieved historic significance is discouraged.



Vinyl, aluminum and imitation brick are inappropriate as coverings of historic materials. The material on the left is covering the original material and is inappropriate.

Sample of the guideline format used in this document.

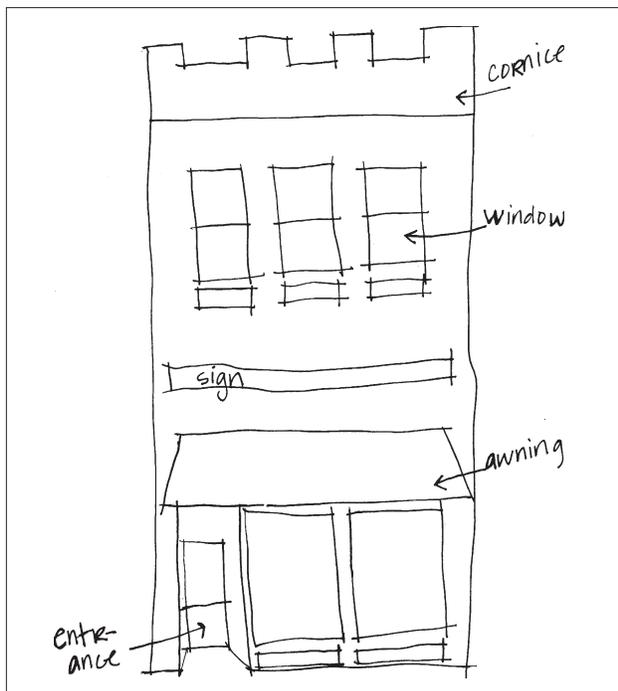
Recommended Submittal Documents

Adequate documentation is essential to provide a complete understanding of the work proposed. Applicants are encouraged, and may be required, to submit the following documentation:

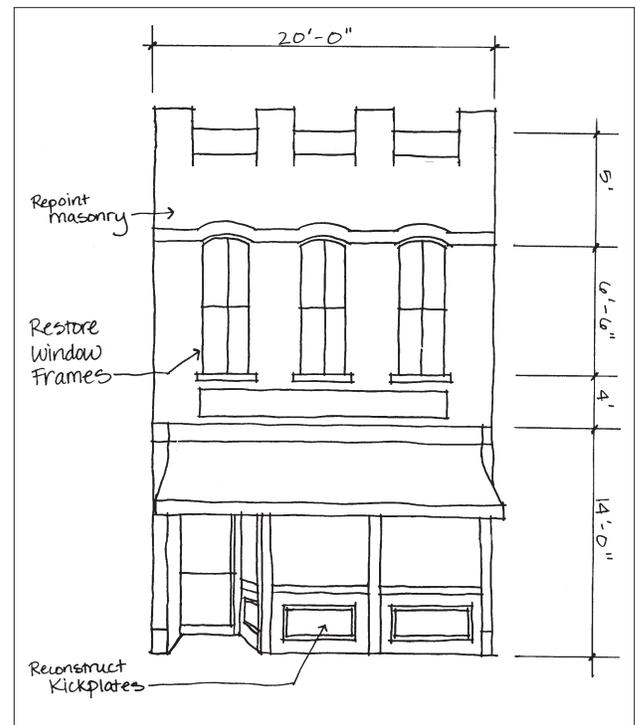
- Completed COA application form
- Site plan/roof plan (drawn to scale)
- Proposed building elevations (to scale)
- Photographs of building conditions (existing and historic)
- Product literature or specifications
- Materials samples and color samples

If a drawing is to be included in the submittal package, it should be drafted to scale and executed in a manner that clearly depicts the character of the proposed work. While a professionally produced drawing is encouraged, it is not required, as the sketches that follow illustrate.

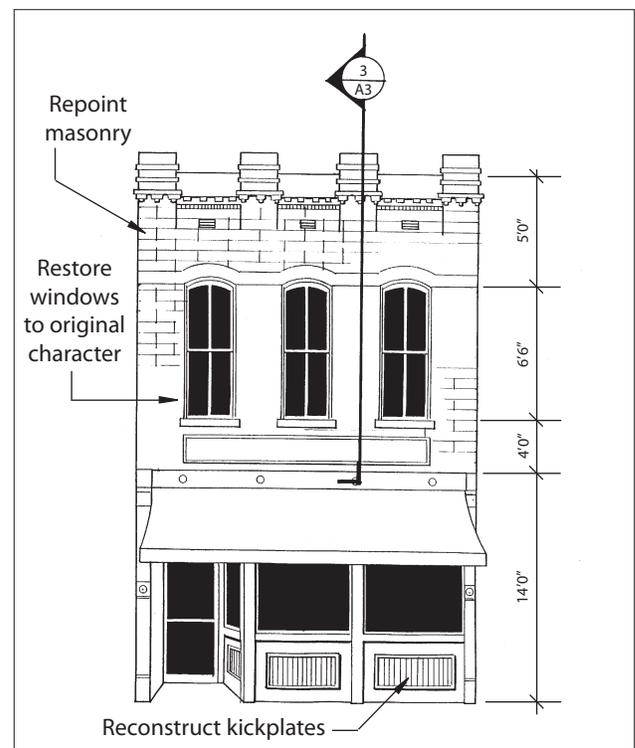
For a complete list of required submittal documents, contact the Historic Preservation Commission.



Inappropriate drawing: the scale and character are not clearly conveyed, nor are there any dimensions.



Appropriate drawing: while in free-hand, this drawing does adequately convey the scale and character of the proposed work.



Appropriate drawing: mechanically drafted to scale, this drawing best conveys the character of the proposed work.

The Concept of Significance

A building possessing architectural significance is one that represents the work of a noteworthy architect or builder, possesses high artistic value or that well represents a type, period or method of construction. A historically significant property is one associated with significant persons, or with significant events or historical trends or is a property already determined to be contributing to the significance of an established historic district.

The Period of Significance

The City Square Commercial Historic District has a *period of significance*, which is the time period during which the area gained its architectural and historical importance. It is generally recognized that a certain amount of time must pass before the historical significance of a property can be evaluated. The National Register of Historic Places, for example, generally requires that a property be at least 50 years old or have extraordinary importance before it may be considered for listing.

City Square Commercial Historic District has a period of significance that spans approximately 65 years (1860-1925). Characteristics of structures built during this period are brick construction, two- to three-story buildings, commercial storefronts at the street level and professional offices or apartments on upper stories. Throughout this period of significance, the district was witness to the construction of a number of buildings and alterations that have become an integral part of its character. Conversely, several structures have been built, or alterations have been made (e.g., covering original brick with synthetic materials) after this period that are generally considered non-contributing and may be considered for removal or replacement. In general, keep the following in mind:

- **Early alterations, additions or construction more than 50 years old *may* have become historically significant and thus merit preservation.**

Many additions or alterations to buildings in the district that have taken place in the course of time are themselves evidence of the history of the building and its neighborhood and therefore may merit preservation.

- **More recent alterations, additions or new construction that are not historically significant may be removed.**

For example, metal siding may presently obscure original masonry. In this case, removal of this alteration, and restoration of the original material is strongly encouraged. Most alterations less than fifty years old lack historic significance.

The Concept of Integrity

In addition to being from an historical period, a property also must have integrity; that is, a sufficient percentage of the structure must date from the period of significance. The majority of the building's structural system and materials should date from the period of significance and its character-defining features also should remain intact. These may include architectural details, as well as the overall mass and form of the building. These are the elements that allow a building to be recognized as a product of its own time.

Choosing a Preservation Approach

City Square Commercial Historic District has a wealth of architecture remaining from its period of significance. It is crucial that character-defining features of the buildings be preserved. Such preservation projects may include a range of activities, such as maintenance of existing historic elements, repairs to deteriorated historic elements, the replacement of missing features and construction of new additions. When planning a preservation approach, consider the definitions of the following terms:

1. **Maintenance.** Some work focuses on keeping the property in good working condition by repairing features as soon as deterioration becomes apparent, using procedures that retain the original character and finish of the features. In some cases, preventive maintenance is executed prior to noticeable deterioration. No alteration or reconstruction is involved. Such work is considered “maintenance.” Property owners are strongly encouraged to maintain their properties in good condition such that more aggressive measures of rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction are not needed. Ordinary maintenance of a property does not need approval from the HPC unless it will change the exterior appearance. Tuckpointing, masonry cleaning and masonry painting are exceptions, and must be reviewed by the HPC, due to the risk of improper methods that can damage historic materials.
2. **Preservation.** The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building or structure, as well as the existing form and vegetative cover of a site is defined as “preservation.” It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials. Essentially, the property is kept in its current good condition.
3. **Rehabilitation.** “Rehabilitation” is the process of returning a property to a state that makes a contemporary use possible while still preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values. Rehabilitation may include the adaptive use of the building and major or minor additions may also occur. Most good preservation projects may be considered rehabilitation projects.
4. **Renovation.** To “renovate” means to improve by repair, to revive. In renovation, the usefulness and appearance of the building is enhanced. The basic character and significant details are respected and preserved, but some sympathetic alterations may also occur. Alterations should be reversible, such that future owners may restore the building to its original design, should they wish to do so.
5. **Restoration.** To “restore,” one reproduces the appearance of a building exactly as it looked at a particular moment in time; to reproduce a pure style—either interior or exterior. This process may include the removal of later work or the replacement of missing historic features. One should use a restoration approach for



The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building or structure is defined as “preservation.” Compare the bottom photo with the historic street scene in the top photograph. Although changes have occurred, the overall historic character of this building can still be seen.

replacing missing details or features of a historic building when the features are determined to be particularly significant to the character of the structure and when the original configuration is accurately documented.

6. **Remodeling.** To remake or to make over the design image of a building is to “remodel” it. The appearance is changed by removing original details and by adding new features that are out of character with the original. Remodeling is inappropriate for historic buildings.

Planning a Project

The first step in planning a preservation project is to identify any significant features and materials. Retaining such details will greatly enhance the overall quality of the preservation project. If these features and materials are in good condition, then selecting an appropriate treatment mechanism will provide for proper preservation. In making the selection follow this sequence:

1. If a feature is intact and in good condition, maintain it as such.
2. If the feature is deteriorated or damaged, repair it to a sound condition.
3. If it is not feasible to repair the feature, then replace it with one that is the same or similar in character (materials, detail, finish) to the original one. Replace only that portion that is beyond repair.
4. If the feature is missing entirely, reconstruct it from appropriate evidence.
5. If a new feature or addition is necessary, design it in such a way as to minimize the impact on original features.

In essence, the least level of intervention is preferred. By following this tenet, the highest degree of integrity will be maintained for the property.

Significance and Benefits of the Historic District Today

Across the nation, thousands of communities promote historic preservation because doing so contributes to neighborhood livability and quality of life, minimizes negative impacts on the environment and yields economic rewards. Many property owners are also drawn to historic resources because the quality of construction is typically quite high and the buildings are readily adaptable to contemporary needs. These same reasons apply in Oskaloosa.

Construction Quality

Most of the historic structures in the city are of high quality construction. Masonry walls were carefully laid, resulting in buildings with considerable stability. These structures also were thoughtfully detailed and the finishes of materials, including fixtures, wood floors and trim are generally of high quality and are features that owners today appreciate. By comparison, in today’s new construction, materials of such quality are rarely available and comparable detailing is very expensive. The high quality of construction in historic buildings is therefore a “value” for many people.

Adaptability

Owners also recognize that the floor plans of historic buildings easily accommodate comfortable lifestyles and support a diversity of populations. Rooms are frequently large, permitting a variety of uses while retaining the overall historic character of each structure. Open space often exists on a lot to accommodate an addition in the rear, if needed.

Livability and Quality of Life

When groups of older buildings occur as an historic district, they create a street scene that is “pedestrian friendly,” which encourages walking and neighborly interaction. Decorative architectural features also contribute to a sense of identity that is unique for each historic neighborhood, an attribute that is rare and difficult to achieve in newer strip-commercial areas of a city. This physical sense of neighborhood can also reinforce desirable community social patterns and contribute to a sense of security.

Environmental Benefits

Preserving a historic structure is also sound environmental conservation policy because “recycling” a building saves energy and reduces the need for producing new construction materials. Three types of energy savings occur:

- First, energy is not consumed to demolish the existing building and dispose of the resulting debris.
- Second, energy is not used to create new building materials, transport them and assemble them on site.
- Finally, the “embodied” energy, that which was used to create the original building and its components, is preserved.

By “reusing” older materials as a historic building, pressure is also reduced to harvest new lumber and other materials that also may have negative effects on the environment of other locales where these materials are produced. Because older buildings are often more energy-efficient than new construction, when properly used, heating and cooling needs are reduced as well.

Economic Benefits

Historic resources are finite and cannot be replaced, making them precious commodities that many buyers seek. Therefore, preservation adds value to private property. Many studies across the nation document that, where local historic districts are established, property values typically rise, or at least are stabilized. In this sense, designation of a historic district appears to help establish a climate for investment. Property owners within the district know that the time and money they spend on improving their properties will be matched with similar efforts on surrounding lots; these investments will not be undermined by inappropriate construction next door.

The condition of neighboring properties also affects the value of one’s own property. People invest in a neighborhood as much as in the individual structure itself and, in historic districts where investment is attracted, property owners recognize that each one benefits from the commitment of their neighbors. An indication of the success of historic preservation is that the number of designated districts across the country has increased, due to local support, such that an estimated 1,000,000 properties, both as individual landmarks and in historic districts, are under local jurisdictions of more than 2,000 preservation commissions.

Rehabilitating an historic building also can cost less than constructing a new one. In fact, the standards for rehabilitation of historic structures presented in this document promote cost-saving measures. They encourage smaller and simpler solutions, which in themselves provide savings. Preserving building elements that are in good repair is preferred, for example, rather than replacing them. This typically is less expensive. In some instances, appropriate restoration procedures may cost more per square foot than “new” construction. However, since restoration work is typically done on smaller areas (as compared to new construction or the wholesale replacement of materials), then cost savings occur. Special economic incentives may also exist to help offset potential added costs.

USE THESE CHAPTERS

Which design guidelines apply to your project?

Use the chart below to identify the chapters you should use.

PROPOSED WORK

	Introduction	1. Historic Overview	2. Architectural Styles	DESIGN GUIDELINES	3. Guidelines for Historic Properties	4. Guidelines for New Construction	5. Guidelines for All Projects	6. Guidelines for Signs
Renovate or alter an historic property	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Renovate or alter a non-historic property	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Add on to an historic property	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Add on to a non-historic property	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Construct a new building	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Alter an existing or install a new sign	✓	✓	✓					✓
Site improvements	✓	✓	✓				✓	

In addition to these chapters, there are appendices which address the following:

- Appendix A: Interpretation of Terms Related to Compliance
- Appendix B: The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings
- Appendix C: Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance
- Appendix D: Glossary

Defining Character in the City Square Commercial Historic District



Chapter 1

Historic Overview of the City Square Commercial Historic District

This historic overview is taken from the Nomination of the City Square Commercial Historic District in Oskaloosa, Iowa to the National Register of Historic Places, prepared by Cityscape Design, Inc. in 1985.

Introduction

From its modest beginnings as county seat, center of local agricultural trade, and way-side for those traveling west, Oskaloosa emerged in the post-Civil War era as one of the major population and trade centers of southeast Iowa. During this period the Oskaloosa City Square Commercial District as it appears today began to be formed.

Thirty-four brick structures of simple, Greek Revival style and early Italianate style were produced during the formative, pre-1885 phase. High Victorian elements began to appear around 1870 and were very popular in the city's era of intense coal extraction and paving brick production, beginning in earnest about 1880 and slowing after 1895. This style of architecture is represented in twelve buildings around the city square.

Establishment of Oskaloosa as a major mining and commercial center, along with its evolution as a farming service center, roughly corresponded to the initiation of a new style of facade: the post-Victorian transitional architecture of the period, 1890 and 1910. This influence can be observed in the sixteen new buildings added to the district during this period.

A final building type emerged in the district from 1905 to 1925—the twentieth century commercial brick style—and its thirteen remaining structures in the district are distinctly set apart from the pre-1900 structures.

By virtue of faithful maintenance of these buildings throughout time, these buildings have survived the ravages of weather and economic forces. The variety of building types coupled with their intactness provides Oskaloosa with a valuable resource which recounts the evolution of Midwestern commercial architecture.

This chapter reviews the historical economic development of the district and describes the details of the types of architecture found within it.

Historic Overview of Development in the City Square Commercial Historic District

Between 1844 (when the town was first laid out) and 1925, the city of Oskaloosa was transformed from a virtually uninhabited virgin prairie to a county seat of over 10,000 citizens. The center of activity in Oskaloosa has always been the town square and its surrounding commercial district. It has been the center for local and regional trade, the center for city and county civic functions, and the center for local gatherings, celebrations and entertainment. The commercial district developed around the open public square which early on was planted with trees and later



The center of activity in Oskaloosa has always been the town square and its surrounding commercial district, as seen in this photograph from 1902.

graced with a bandstand. This park, the City Square Park, is a local landmark, a source of pride for the city, and the center of the City Square Commercial Historic District.

Enclosing the town square and radiating out from it along tangent streets are 78 commercial buildings or blocks. Each of these buildings is of brick load-bearing construction, two- or three-stories in height, with long, narrow plans dictated by the 20 feet by 120 feet dimensions of downtown commercial properties. While representing the evolution of small town commercial styles from the early frontier years through the Victorian era and into the early twentieth century, these buildings all conform to the urban pattern of the district—they are each long, narrow, brick boxes, flat roofed, attached to its neighbors and set back an equal distance from the street, thereby creating continuous facade walls. The grid of the streets and the facade walls enclosing these streets and the square are the elements that form the strict urban pattern of this district. It is a traditional human-scale pattern that is easily understood due to the intact state of its elements.

Early Settlement Period

Early Settlement Period Mahaska County was organized in 1844, authorized by an act of the Legislature of the Territory of Iowa. By this same act, three commissioners from outside the county were appointed to select a location for the county seat. In May of 1844, these three men chose the area known as

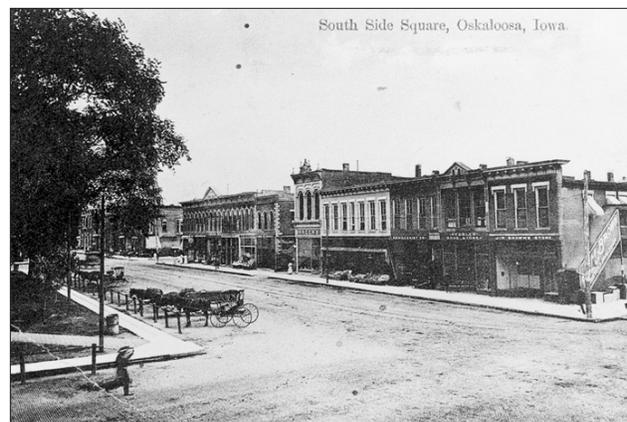


By 1850 early businesses included six general and dry good stores, four tailors, two boot and shoe stores, and two saddlers.

The Narrows for this new seat of government. The site selected, one quarter section in area, was soon given the name Oskaloosa and was laid out that same spring by the county surveyor. The first sale of lots took place in June of 1844.

“At the time the town was located there were but few trees on the quarter section named. Tall prairie grass covered the surface everywhere. It was provided on the plat of the original survey that a public square should be reserved near the center of the quarter section on which the county seat was located. The square was surrounded by a fence. Later different individuals planted trees in the square and as a matter of local pride took care of them until their growth was assured.” (Manoah Hedge, *Past and Present of Mahaska County*, 1906.)

From the beginning, businessmen established themselves adjacent to the square. Before the winter of 1844, Charles Purvine had built and opened a tavern on the east side of the square, on the later site of the Downing Hotel. Evidently this tavern was a log structure, since the first frame building in Oskaloosa was a dwelling built by Micajah T. Williams in 1845. By 1850, early businesses included six general and dry good stores, four tailors, two boot and shoe stores, and two saddlers. There was also a jeweler, a wagonmaker, a gunsmith, a stoves and tinware shop, a furniture shop, at least eight lawyers, and five physicians. The county's first courthouse was a two-story wood frame building located on the northwest corner of the square. The first bank in Oskaloosa was established in 1855, with an address in one of the town's first brick buildings, the Union Block building.



The brick buildings in the commercial area were each two- or three-stories tall at their front facades and were nearly all 100 feet to 120 feet deep.

Historic photographs of the district from 1864 show a growing Oskaloosa. The four sides of the square, facing the central park were nearly completely filled in with commercial buildings. The streets were dirt and the sidewalks were of wood plank. A wood fence enclosed the park with its young trees planted in straight rows and wooded posts held up storefront awnings. A number of two- and three-story brick buildings and single-story frame buildings with boom town facades surrounded the square. While of more than one design, the brick buildings were attached and together created a uniform facade wall. Storefronts varied but were generally tall with large display windows, and appeared to be of cast iron.

In the late 1850s local financiers turned down an offer by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad to locate a transcontinental line through Oskaloosa. This was a great loss with regard to the town's potential growth – *"...the moneyed men in Oskaloosa failed to see the immense value to be gained by the offer..."* (Hedge ,1906.)

Post Civil War Period

It was not until after the Civil War that railroads began to carve their imprint on the city's structure. The Iowa Central Railroad entered the city area southwest of Oskaloosa. When completed in 1871, the line ran from Albia in south central Iowa to Mason City in north central Iowa. The line was later extended south to St. Louis and north to Minneapolis and St. Paul, and in 1882 a branch east to Peoria was completed. The first depot for the Iowa Central was located on the south side of West First Avenue (then known as Main Street) at the crossing of the tracks, six blocks west of the square.

The first Sanborn map of Oskaloosa was completed in 1885. By this time there were at least 45 brick buildings or blocks within the presently set boundary of the district. (The boundary of the district includes only the core of the somewhat larger commercial area that existed in 1885.) The new courthouse on the northeast corner of the square was near completion at this time.

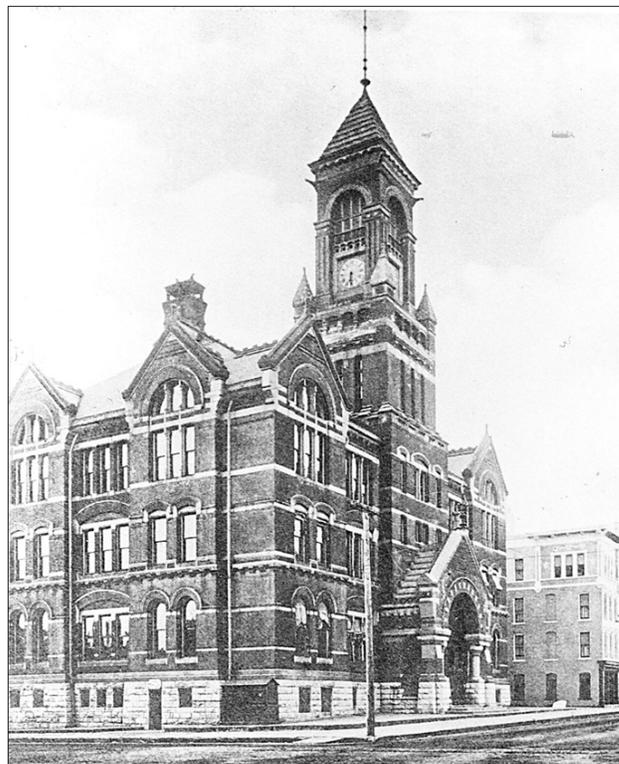
In 1885 the brick buildings in the commercial area were each two- or three-stories tall at their front facades and were nearly all 100 feet to 120 feet deep. The main street for commercial development in Oskaloosa was High Avenue and commercial buildings lined both sides of the street for two blocks west of the square and

continued, less densely, in the third block. Workshops, a large grocery warehouse, and a lumber yard were located off of West First Avenue in the second and third blocks west of the square. This street was less densely developed than High and had a much different character.

Located within the center of town, in addition to the commercial shops, workshops, and warehouses, and the nearly complete courthouse, there were many second- and third-level offices and at least three meeting halls, four banks, six hotels or large boarding houses, seven liveries, and an opera house. There was a planing mill, a fire house, and a building with a roller skating rink on the second floor. By the mid 1860s, a bandstand had been built in the center of the town square park.

Post 1890s Period

Sanborn maps from 1891 and 1896 show the district continuing to grow, with downtown commercial blocks continuing to fill in. By 1896, every building facing the square and every building on the diagonal quarter blocks were of brick, each two- or three-stories in height. New buildings were generally more than one



The first Sanborn map of Oskaloosa was completed in 1885. The new courthouse on the northeast corner of the square was near completion at this time.

20-foot bay wide and were built the full 120 feet deep. Based upon Sanborn map information, the busiest years for construction within the district between 1885 and 1927 were these years between 1891 and 1896. The style of commercial buildings was changing at this time from the ornately decorated late Victorian type to a new type influenced by the contemporary style of Chicago architecture and the work of H.H. Richardson. At the turn of the century, Oskaloosa was growing and prospering and considered itself a most successful city. The main center of activity, the identity of the town, was the central commercial area.

The Twentieth Century

The 1902, 1910 and 1917 Sanborn maps of the district record increasing commercial development and density particularly along the streets tangent to the square. 1909 saw the construction of the new Fire Department building along East Second Avenue in the block just south of the square. In 1911, the City Hall was added to the west.

In 1912 the present bandstand in the center of the City Square Park was built replacing the 1892-built wooden bandstand. The old wood fence around the park was long gone. Diagonal walks crossed the park as they do today, with park benches lining each side. The statue of Chief Mahaska had been installed in the park in 1909, dedicated in a gala celebration which drew as many as 20,000. Seasonal festivals took place in the park and bands played regularly from the bandstand throughout the summer.



1909 saw the construction of the new Fire Department building along East Second Avenue in the block just south of the square. In 1911, the City Hall was added to the west.

While the automobile has changed our lives, and has caused Americans to make tremendous changes in their built environment, the urban pattern of the Oskaloosa commercial area was already in place when the auto arrived. The automobile's only impact on the architecture of the district was in the scale and ornament of the commercial building facade. The same narrow, rectangular two- or three-story box form and the same load-bearing brick construction continued to prevail in the early twentieth century.

Since the turn of the 19th century, Oskaloosa has experienced great change and has grown much larger in area, but its population has not increased significantly since that time and it has not become the metropolis its citizens had once so hopefully expected. Today, Oskaloosa has a population of approximately 11,000 citizens, which is remarkably close to the same as it has been for the past 50 years. As a county seat town, Oskaloosa is still very much the commercial center of the county, and the City Square Park and central commercial area are still the heart of town.

Typical of most Midwestern towns of similar size, Oskaloosa has experienced residential, commercial, and industrial decentralization with its accompanying expanded geographic area and decreased density. At the same time, the population, commerce, and industry of the county have been concentrated in the county seat. This is typical of many Iowa counties, where rural populations have decreased. The main commercial street through town, the strip, is A Avenue, one block north of High Avenue. This is the route of Iowa Highway 92 through Oskaloosa. Market Street is the busiest street in the district, carrying the traffic of Iowa Highway 63 in town.



While the automobile has changed our lives, and has caused Americans to make tremendous changes in their built environment, the urban pattern of the Oskaloosa commercial area was already in place when the auto arrived.

Chapter 2

Architectural Styles and Building Types

Introduction

Seventy-eight buildings are included within the City Square Commercial Historic District. With regard to historic architectural styles the sources of these styles in a small town are often indirect and difficult to trace. Buildings of mixed influence are common. In particular, with commercial buildings the means and desires of the building owner, the available building materials, and the skills of the local builders may have had a more direct influence on the design of a building than any recognized architectural style. It is commonly the ornament of a particular style, and not the underlying design philosophy, that is copied and applied to a small town building's major facade.

Therefore, while identifying the influence of various architectural styles as they were applied to the facades of these buildings is helpful in gaining an understanding of this resource, of greater importance is the urban pattern of the district, the massing and materials of the buildings, and their substantial intactness. The buildings of this district share a common material, brick, and a common massing and land use. They stand at the physical and symbolic center of the town, enclosing the beautiful town square and housing the major commercial and civic functions of the town.

Commercial building types within the district share a basic two- or three-story boxlike form. They are rectangular in plan with load-bearing masonry walls. Facades and sidewalls are rectangular and roofs are flat. Individual buildings are attached, often sharing interior sidewalls. At streetside a continuous facade line is created with each building being set at the sidewalk edge. The width and depth of these buildings has been prescribed by the dimensions of the lots and properties. As early as the 1850s the 120 feet by 120 feet quarter blocks were each divided into six 20-foot wide by 120-foot deep properties. While buildings may span several of these 20-foot wide properties, the 20-foot

wide bay is still expressed internally with columns or bearing walls placed every 20 feet and on the facade in the placement of window groupings and ornament. This helps give the town a consistency in scale.

Public buildings are much fewer in number than commercial buildings. Similar to the commercial types, these buildings are also of load-bearing masonry but are freestanding rather than attached. The courthouse and the City Hall/Fire Department building are the tallest, most massive, and most architecturally elaborate buildings in the district. Unlike the commercial types with street level storefronts, each public building has a raised basement with a stepped approach from the street to the main level. Both the courthouse and the City Hall-Fire Department building have towers.

Property owners should review these descriptions carefully. In many cases the following design guidelines make reference to the characteristics of styles that are presented in this chapter. The property owner is encouraged to use the styles section in analyzing the overall historic character of his/her building, as well as distinguishing its character-defining features. Ultimately, this should aid the property owner in choosing an appropriate design solution for any proposed work.



Tall, narrow, double-hung windows, often with round arch heads typify the Italianate style.



Decorative paired brackets and dentil courses are also typical to the Italianate style.

Italianate

• circa 1860-1885

Originally inspired by farmhouses found in Northern Italy, this blending of classical and romantic features became one of the most popular of the picturesque styles in the United States. Because of its ornate details, such as bracketed cornices, this style was easily adapted to simple buildings and/or storefronts. As the details and features of this style were capable of being interpreted in wood, masonry or iron, it was also very adaptable in the various regions of the country. With this adaptability and the sensibilities of the times, its popularity grew, particularly with those building infill townhouses, rowhouses and commercial buildings.

Characteristics

- Tall, narrow, double-hung windows, often with round arch heads
- Window panes are either one-over-one or two-over-two
- Protruding sills
- Quoins at building corners
- Ornate cornices
- Double doors with glass panels
- Transom, often curved, above the front door
- Brackets, modillions and dentil courses
- Flat roof
- Decorative paired brackets

Vernacular Commercial storefronts

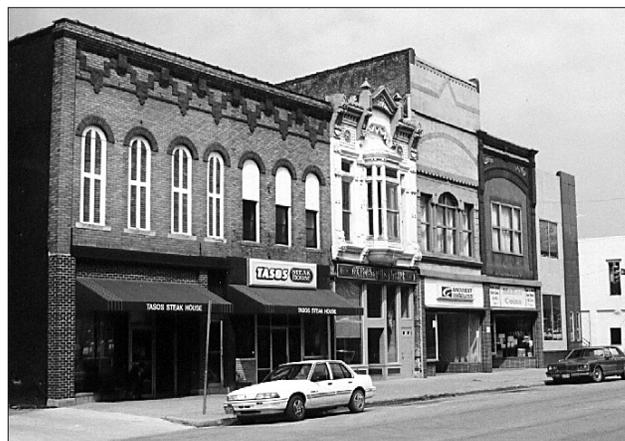
• circa 1890-1920

The commercial storefront of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is the most common type of building found today in most commercial districts throughout the country. Usually between two and four stories, this commercial building is divided into two distinct bands. The first floor is more commonly transparent, so goods can be displayed, while the second story is usually reserved for residential or storage space. The upper floor is typically supported by a steel beam that spans the glass opening. A kickplate is found below the display window while above, a smaller band of glass, a transom, is seen. Also, the main door is frequently recessed.

These buildings have stone and brick facades. Ornamental detail exists, but is simple, limited to a shallow molding as a cornice. Some cornices were made of masonry, while others were made of stamped metal. Many carry simplified Italianate detailing. In essence, these buildings lack distinctive detail, contrasting them with the revival styles that were also popular during this period.

Characteristics

- Cast-iron supported storefronts
- Large display windows
- Transom lights
- Kickplate
- Recessed entry
- Tall second story windows
- Cornice



The commercial storefront of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is the most common type of building found today in most commercial districts throughout the country.



Based on classical detailing that originated in ancient Greece, these buildings are known primarily for columns with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian capitals.

Greek Revival influences

• circa 1850-1860

The end of the 18th century brought about great interest in classical building styles throughout the United States and Europe. The Greek Revival style became quite popular during the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1850, it was seen in almost all settled areas in the nation.

Based on classical detailing that originated in ancient Greece, these buildings are known primarily for columns with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian capitals. Other Greek Revival detailing includes classical entablatures, simple window surrounds and door surrounds consisting of transom and sidelights.

Characteristics

- Rounded columns
- Pediment roof
- Tall first floor windows
- Entablature
- Doors with transom, side and corner lights
- Gabled or hipped roof
- Frieze band windows

Romanesque Revival

• circa 1895-1940

Developed by the prominent Boston architect, Henry Richardson, the Romanesque, or Richardsonian Romanesque, style was commonly used for large public buildings during the 1880s—following suit to Richardson’s Trinity Church in Boston. Romanesque structures are always of masonry construction. Because of this, Romanesque buildings were much more expensive to build than were those late Victorian buildings of the same era, which could be constructed of wood. For this reason, they are mostly architect-designed landmarks and were never common.

Characteristics

- Asymmetrical facades
- Masonry walls, usually with rough-faced, squared stonework
- Most have towers with conical roofs
- Round-topped arches over windows, porch supports or entrance
- Deeply recessed openings
- Decorative colonnettes around windows
- Decorative floral patterns on column capitals and wall surfaces



Developed by the prominent Boston architect, Henry Richardson, the Romanesque, or Richardsonian Romanesque, style was commonly used for large public buildings during the 1880s. Compare this contemporary photograph with the historic photograph of the courthouse on page 17. Note that a later Art Deco clock tower now caps the building; whereas, the rest of the building is original.

Design Guidelines for Historic Properties



Chapter 3

Design Guidelines for Historic Properties

The following design guidelines for historic buildings shall apply to all contributing properties in the City Square Commercial Historic District. The Historic Preservation Commission will use the “Design Guidelines” in formal reviews of proposed changes to historic properties. They are also for use by property owners and their architects, when developing designs for alteration and strategies for rehabilitation or repair of historic features. Note that the guidelines for new construction (Chapter 4) apply to non-contributing properties.

A basic tenet of preservation is that intervention in the historic building should be minimized and, therefore, in the treatment of an historic building, it is best to preserve those features that remain in good condition. For those that are deteriorated, repair rather than replacement is preferred. When replacement is necessary, it should be done in a manner similar to that used historically. In this way, the original building fabric will be preserved to the greatest extent possible. This is important in maintaining the integrity of the property.

Property owners should check with the Historic Preservation Commission to determine if a property is considered “historic.”

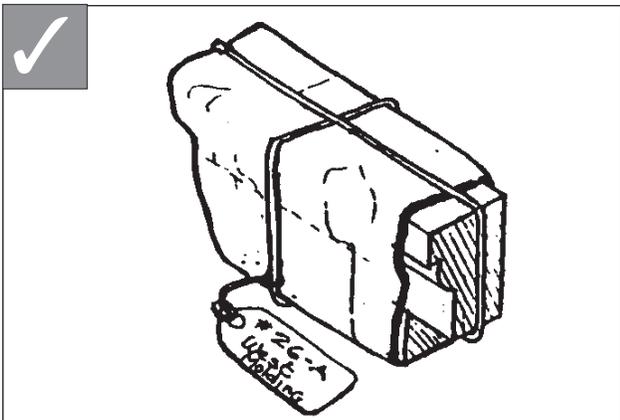
A basic tenet of preservation is that intervention in the historic building should be minimized and, therefore, in the treatment of an historic building, it is best to preserve those features that remain in good condition:

- **For those that are deteriorated, repair rather than replacement is preferred.**
- **When replacement is necessary, it should be done in a manner similar to that used historically.**

The guidelines are numbered to indicate their relative position within this chapter and the document as a whole. For example, the design guidelines in this chapter include the letter “H” before the number to indicate that it is part of the guidelines for “**H**istoric Properties.”



Preserve character-defining features that are intact.



When disassembly of an historic feature is required in a restoration procedure, document its location so that it may be repositioned accurately.



Repair those features that are damaged. This method is preferred over replacement.

Preservation of Character-Defining Features

Historic features, including original materials, architectural details, as well as window and door openings, contribute to the character of a structure and should be preserved when feasible. Continued maintenance is the best preservation method. When required, repair or replacement should not destroy the distinguishing qualities or character of the property and its environment. (For additional information on defining the character of an historic building, please visit the National Park Service website.)

H.1 Protect and maintain significant stylistic features.

- Maintain historic features from the outset so that intervention is not required. Employ treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint.

H.2 Avoid removing or altering any historic or significant architectural features.

- Preserve features such as original doors and windows in their original form and position.
- Cast columns and cornices are examples of architectural features.

H.3 Avoid adding features that were not part of the original building.

- For example, decorative millwork should not be added if not an original feature of the structure.

H.4 When disassembly of an historic feature is necessary for its restoration, minimize damage to the original materials.

- Document the location of an historic feature so it may be repositioned accurately. Always devise methods of replacing the disassembled materials in their original configuration.

H.5 Repair those features that are damaged.

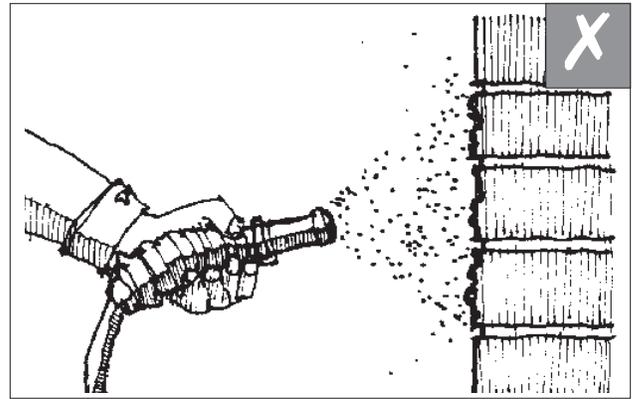
- This method is preferred over replacement.
- Use methods that will not harm the historic materials.

H.6 Use approved technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing historic materials.

- When choosing preservation treatments, use the gentlest means possible that will achieve the desired results.

H.7 Minimize intervention with historic elements.

- Repair only those features that are deteriorated. Finally, replace only those features that are beyond repair.
- Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade the existing material, using recognized preservation methods whenever possible.
- Protect materials and features that are adjacent to the area being worked on.



Use approved technical procedures for cleaning, refinishing and repairing historic materials. Abrasive cleaning methods, such as sandblasting and water blasting, can damage the historic materials and change their appearance. Such procedures are inappropriate.

Replacement of Character-Defining Features

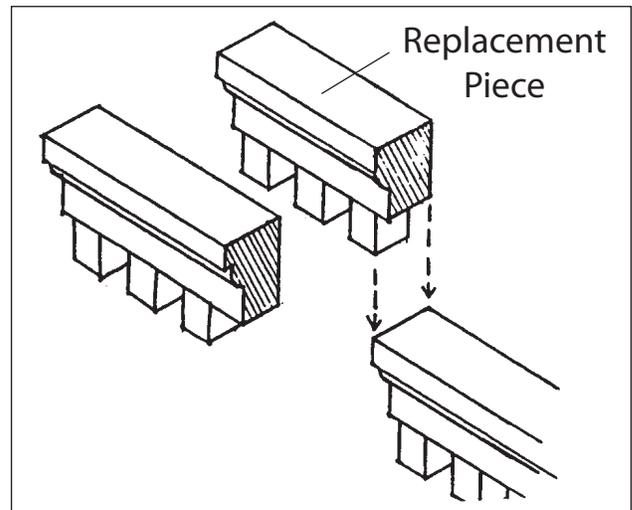
While restoration of the original feature is the preferred alternative, in-kind replacement is also an option. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match that being replaced in design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Replacement should occur only if the existing historic material cannot be reasonably repaired.

H.8 Replacement of a missing element may be included in repair activities.

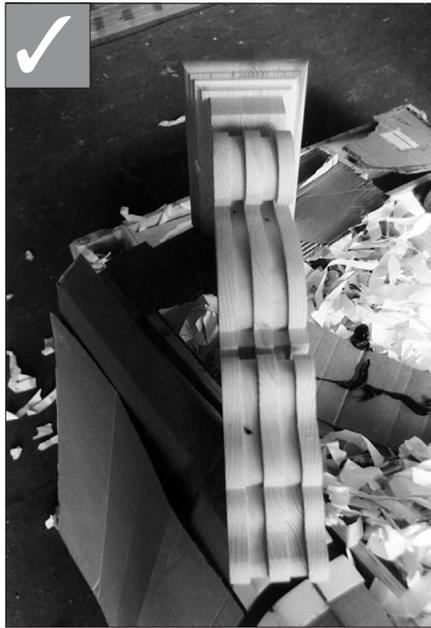
- Replace only those portions that are beyond repair.

H.9 A replacement feature should match the original when feasible.

- The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's heritage.
- Using the same kind of material as the original is preferred. However, a substitute material may be acceptable if the size, shape, texture and finish conveys the visual appearance of the original material.



Where replacement is required, one should remove only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair.



When reconstruction of an element is impossible, develop a new design that is a simplified interpretation of the original.

H.10 When reconstruction of an element is impossible, develop a new design that is a simplified interpretation of the original.

- This is appropriate when the information is inadequate to allow for an accurate reconstruction of missing features.
- The new element should be similar to comparable features in general size, shape, texture, finish and usually material.

H.11 Conjectural designs for replacement parts that cannot be substantiated by written, physical or pictorial evidence are generally inappropriate.

- However, consider designs that are based on details from similar buildings within the historic district, when there is evidence that one existed. For example, where “scars” on the top of the building suggest the location of decorative brackets or a cornice, but no photographs exist of its design, then designs for historic brackets on surrounding historic structures that are clearly similar in character may be used as a model.



Don't cover or obscure original facade materials. If original materials are presently covered, consider exposing them once more.

Preservation of Facade Materials

In the district, brick and stone are the primary building materials. Wood and metal also occurs as accent elements. Historic building materials should be preserved.

H.12 Retain and preserve original facade materials.

- Avoid removing materials that are in good condition or that can be repaired in place.
- Remove only those materials that are deteriorated and must be replaced.

H.13 Don't cover or obscure original facade materials.

- If original materials are presently covered, consider exposing them once more. Covering of original facades not only conceals interesting details, but also interrupts the visual continuity along the street.
- Vinyl, aluminum and imitation brick are inappropriate as coverings of historic materials.



Vinyl, aluminum and imitation brick are inappropriate as coverings of historic materials. The material on the left is covering the original material and is inappropriate.

H.14 When replacement of facade material is needed, use materials similar to those employed historically, when feasible.

- If substitute materials must be used, they should match the original in appearance as closely as is possible.
- Match brick and mortar in color, profile, texture and compression strength to that of the original building or to another similar historic building.

Preservation of Masonry

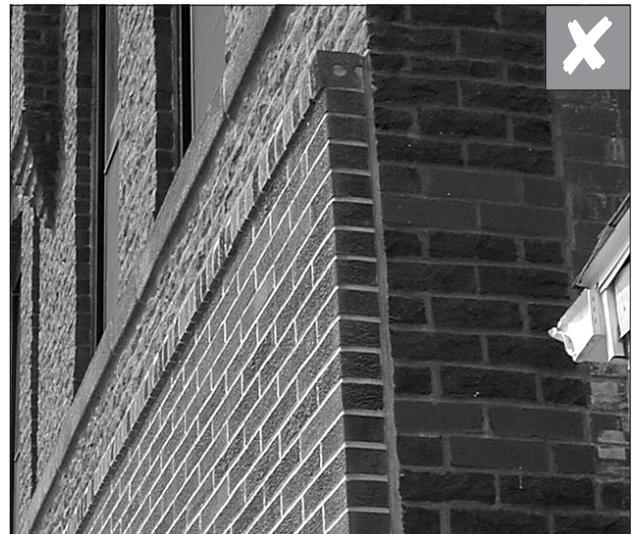
Many of the buildings in the district were built of brick or stone.

H.15 Preserve masonry features that define the overall historic character of the building.

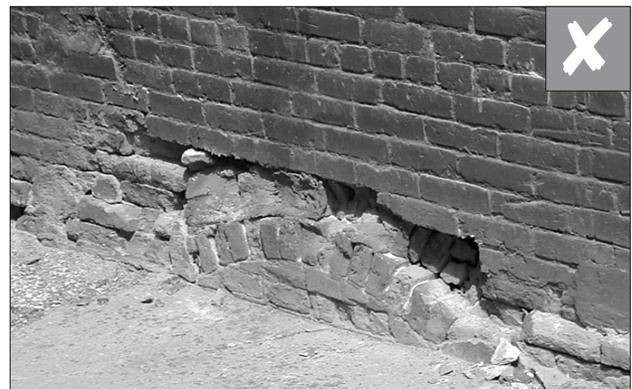
- Examples are walls and foundations.
- Avoid rebuilding a major portion of exterior masonry walls that could be repaired.
- Brick or stone which was not painted historically should not be painted.

H.16 Preserve the original mortar joint and masonry unit size, the tooling and bonding patterns, coatings and color, when feasible.

- Original mortar, in good condition, should be preserved in place.
- Repoint only those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing.
- Duplicate the old mortar in strength, composition, color, texture and joint width and profile.
- Mortar joints should be cleared with hand tools. Using electric saws and hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick.
- Avoid using mortar with a high portland cement content, which will be substantially harder than the brick and does not allow for expanding and contracting. The result is deterioration of the brick itself.



When replacement of facade material is needed, use materials similar to those employed historically when feasible. This brick does not match that of the original and is inappropriate.



Avoid rebuilding a major portion of exterior masonry walls that could be repaired.



Avoid using mortar with a high portland cement content, which will be substantially harder than the brick and does not allow for expanding and contracting. The result is deterioration of the brick itself.



H.17 Generally, brick that was not painted historically should remain unpainted.

- Masonry naturally has a water-protective layer, or patina, to protect it from the elements. Painting masonry walls can seal in moisture already in the masonry, thereby not allowing it to breathe and causing extensive damage over the years.
- Painting of unpainted brick, unless it is mismatched or so deteriorated that it cannot withstand weather, is not appropriate.



Design of Alterations

Alterations may be considered for historic buildings; however, these alterations should occur in a manner that will not affect the historic integrity of the property and should be reversible for future property owners.

H.18 Design an alteration to be compatible with the historic character of the property.

- Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the design character of the original building.
- Alterations that seek to imply an earlier period than that of the building are inappropriate.

H.19 Avoid alterations that would damage historic features.

- For example, mounting a sign panel in a manner that causes decorative moldings to be chipped or removed would be inappropriate.
- See also the design guidelines for additions.

Generally, brick that was not painted historically should remain unpainted. The right half of the brick building in the top photograph was painted by the property owner, right along the property line. This change was inappropriate. Compare with the restoration in the bottom photograph.



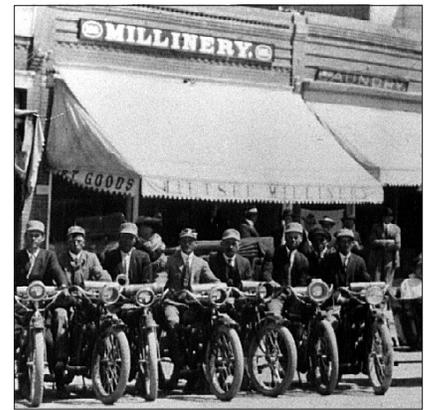
This row of buildings had lost some details over time and a monochromatic color scheme obscures the original design character. Overhead garage doors that had replaced original storefronts were later alterations without historic significance. (Compare with the “after” photograph at right.)

After rehabilitation, the row of buildings shown in the photograph above conveys a stronger sense of its historic character. Note that some old uses were retained, while other new uses were also introduced. Some non-contributing alterations were removed and storefronts reconstructed. One was retained, but was painted to minimize impacts.

Design of Alterations, continued...



The windows in this structure were boarded and architectural details needed repair. (Compare with the photo below.)



A modest building can also be renovated to be compatible with the context. In this photograph the original millinery shop front had simple moldings at the top. (Compare with the photos below.)



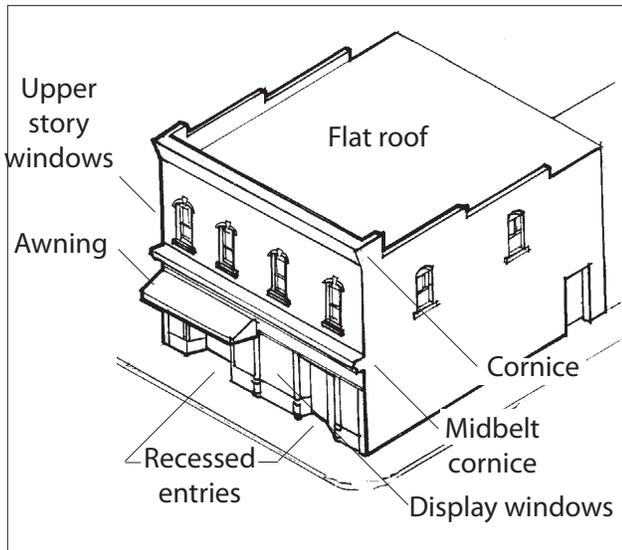
Storefront windows were reopened and upper-story windows were repaired.



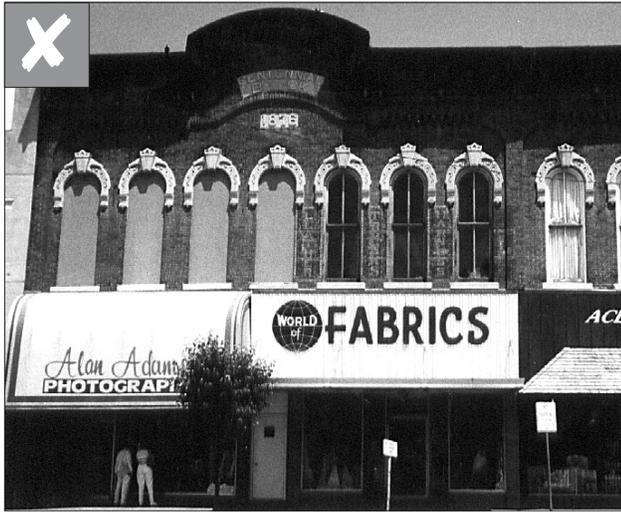
Years later, all original detail had been stripped from the building. (Compare with the photos above and below.)



The same building (above) after renovation exhibits the more classical features of commercial storefronts, including a painted cornice, kickplate and recessed entry.



The renovation of a commercial structure should maintain the character-defining elements of the building type.



Preserve the historic character of the storefront, when it is intact. These include the columns or piers (usually brick or metal) that support the storefront framing, the recessed entry, the storefront glass and the transom above. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed.

Storefronts

Storefronts in the historic district possess components that were traditionally seen on commercial buildings. The repetition of these standard elements creates a visual unity on the street that should be preserved.

H.20 For a commercial storefront building, a rehabilitation project should preserve these character-defining elements:

- **Display windows:** The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed.
- **Transom:** The upper portion of the display, separated from the main display window by a frame.
- **Kickplate:** Found beneath the display window. Sometimes called a bulk-head panel.
- **Entry:** Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- **Upper story windows:** Windows located above the street level. These usually have a vertical orientation, and appear to be less transparent than the large expanse of glass in the storefront below.
- **Cornice molding:** A decorative band at the top of the building. A **midbelt cornice** may sometimes be found separating some floors.

H.21 Preserve the historic character of the storefront, when it is intact.

- These include the columns or piers (usually brick or metal) that support the storefront framing, the recessed entry, the storefront glass and the transom above. These features should not be altered, obscured or removed.
- This will help maintain the interest of the street to pedestrians by providing views to goods and activities inside first floor windows.
- If the storefront glass is intact, it should be preserved.

H.22 If the storefront already is altered, restoring it to the original design is preferred.

- If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts. The storefront still should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.

H.23 Alternative designs that are contemporary interpretations of traditional storefronts may be considered.

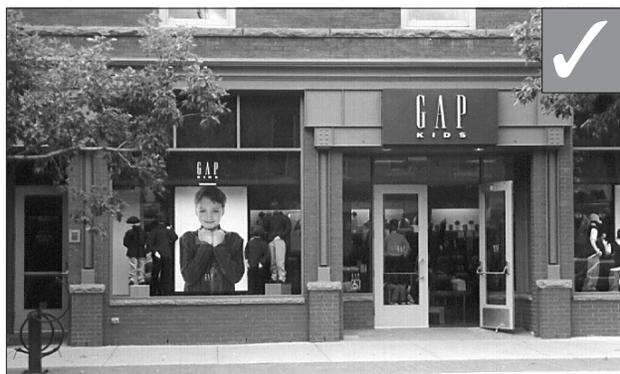
- Where the original is missing and no evidence of its character exists, a new design that uses the traditional elements may be considered.
- However, the new design must continue to convey the character of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display window.
- Altering the size of the historic window opening or blocking it with opaque materials is inappropriate.
- Note that, in some cases, an original storefront may have been altered early in the history of the building, and may itself have taken on significance. Such alterations should be preserved.
- Greater flexibility in treatment of rear facades is appropriate. However, care should be taken to preserve storefronts on those buildings which have traditional commercial storefronts on more than one facade, such as a corner building.



If a storefront is altered, consider restoring it to the original design. (Compare with the two photos of the same building below.)



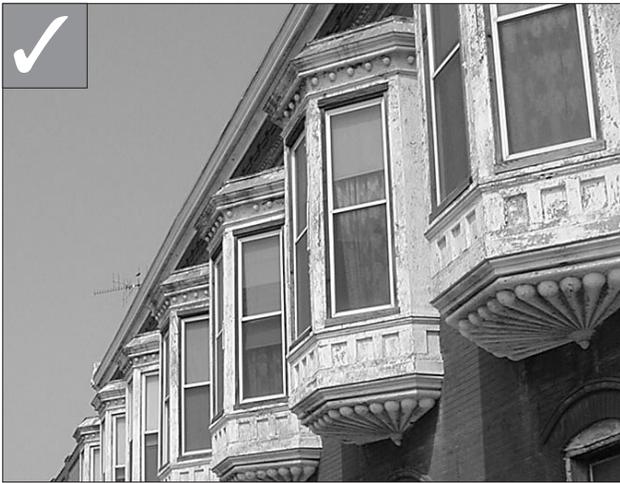
Using historic photographs can help in determining the original character. (Compare with below.)



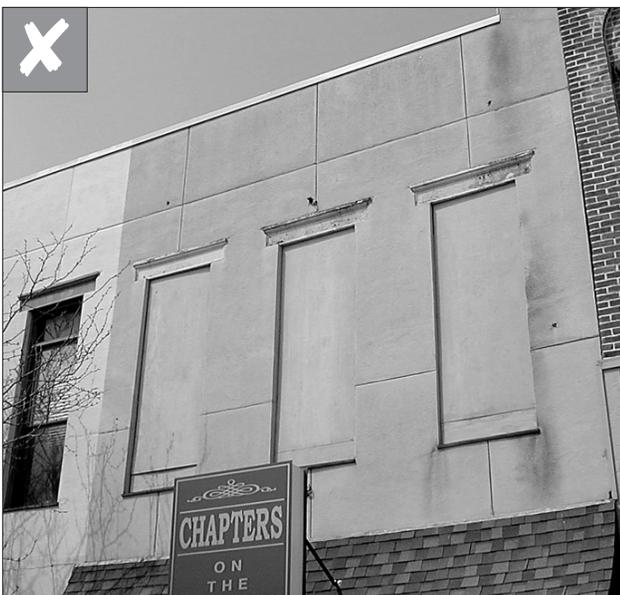
If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts. The storefront still should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians.



This rehabilitation preserves surviving details and reconstructs missing ones.



Maintain historically significant windows and doors.



Preserve historic upper story-windows. Don't block them or alter their size. Consider reopening windows that are currently blocked.

Windows and Transoms

Original windows are important features that help convey the early character of a building. The size and shape of original windows are important characteristics that contribute to the integrity of historic commercial buildings. These elements should be preserved, when feasible.

H.24 Maintain historically significant windows.

- When these elements have already been altered, consider restoring them.
- Do not alter the size of window panes or sash. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.

H.25 Retain the original shape of the transom glass in historic storefronts.

- Transoms, the upper glass band of traditional storefronts, introduced light into the depths of the building, saving on light costs. These bands should not be removed or enclosed.
- The shape of the transom is important to the proportion of the storefront, and it should be preserved in its historic configuration whenever possible.
- If the original glass is missing, installing new glass is strongly preferred. However, if the transom must be blocked out, be certain to retain the original proportions. One option might be to use it as a sign panel or decorative band.

H.26 Preserve historic upper story windows.

- Historically, upper-story windows had a vertical emphasis. The proportions of these windows contribute to the character of each commercial storefront.
- Don't block them or alter their size.
- Consider reopening windows that are currently blocked.
- Maintain the historic sash and wood trim as well. Repair sash rather than replace it when feasible.

H.27 Repair wood features by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the wood.

- Avoid the removal of damaged wood that can be repaired.
- If portions of wood siding must be replaced, be sure to match the style and lap dimensions of the original.

Recessed Entries and Doors

The repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street that helps establish a sense of scale and identifies business entrances. This pattern should be maintained.

H.28 Maintain historically significant doors.

- The size and shape of original doors are important historic characteristics that contribute to the integrity of historic commercial buildings.
- Use original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired and reused in place. Do not “discard” the original doors and door hardware when they cannot be repaired.
- Avoid altering the shape of these features.
- If these elements have already been altered, consider restoring them if their original condition can be determined.

H.29 When replacement is necessary, use a door style that is found on similar storefronts in the area.

- A wood door with an open glass panel is appropriate on most styles. The glass should make up at least two-thirds of the door.
- The original doorway configuration should be preserved in any situation.

H.30 Maintain recessed entries where they are found.

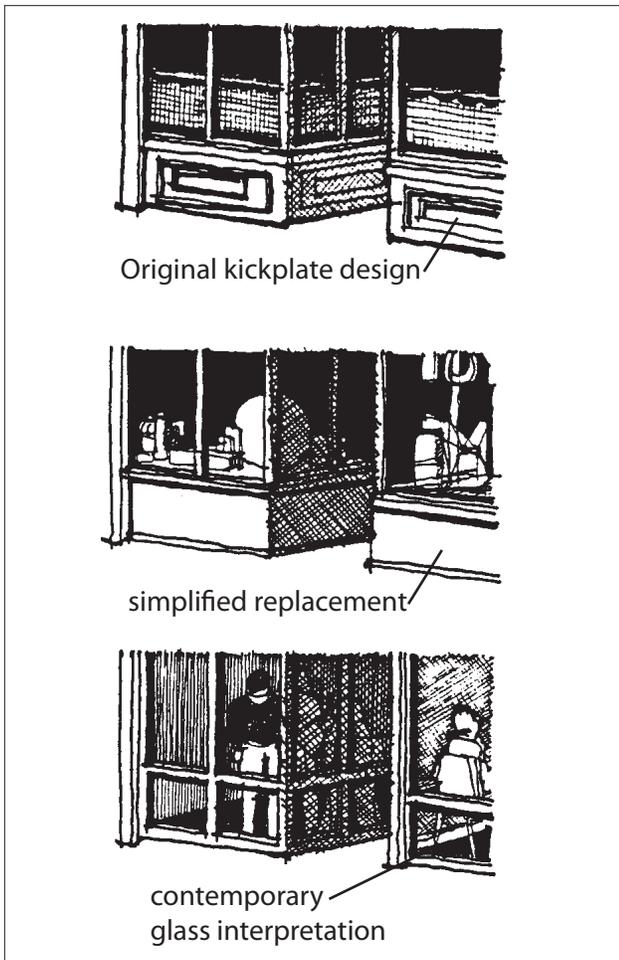
- The repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale.
- These recessed entries were designed to provide protection from the weather and the repeated rhythm of these shaded areas along the street helps to identify business entrances. Typically, recessed entries were set back between three to five feet.
- Restore the historic recessed entry if it has been altered.
- Avoid doors that are flush with the sidewalk.



Transoms, the upper glass band of traditional storefronts, introduced light into the depths of the building, saving on light costs. These bands should not be removed or enclosed.



Maintain recessed entries where they are found. The repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale.



Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel. If the original is missing, develop a compatible replacement design.



The kickplate, located below the display window, adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.

H.31 Where entries are not recessed, maintain them in their original position, when feasible.

- However, one may also need to comply with other code requirements, including door width, swing and construction.
- In some cases, entries must comply with accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Note, however, that some flexibility in application of these other regulations is provided for historic properties.

Kickplates

H.32 Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

- The kickplate, located below the display window, adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.
- If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

H.33 If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

- Wood is an appropriate material for replacements on most styles. However, ceramic tile and masonry may also be considered when appropriately used with the building style.



If the kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

Cornices

H.34 Preserve the character of the cornice line.

- Most historic commercial buildings have cornices to cap their facades. Their repetition along the street contributes to the visual continuity on the block.
- A straight or stepped parapet is appropriate.

H.35 Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

- Use historic photographs to determine design details of the original cornice.
- The substitution of another old cornice for the original may be considered, provided that the substitute is similar to the original.

H.36 A simplified interpretation is also appropriate for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.

- Appropriate materials include stone, brick and stamped metal.



Preserve the character of the cornice line.



When a building is missing its cornice, consider the two options presented below.



Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.



A simplified interpretation also is appropriate for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.



An addition may be set back to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building. In the image at the top, the original three floors of this building are visible. In the angle view above, two newer floor are visible. Note how in this building the addition cannot be seen when looking at the building straight on.

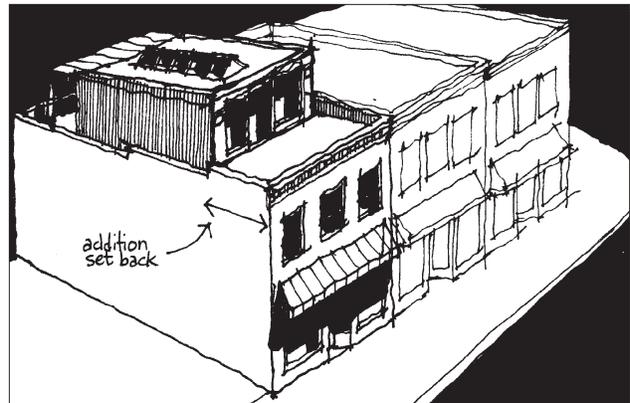
Additions to Historic Buildings

H.37 An addition should be compatible in scale, materials and character with the main building.

- An addition should relate to the historic building in mass, scale and form. It should be designed to remain subordinate to the main structure. An addition with a pitched roof is inappropriate.
- The addition should be subtly distinguishable in its design from the historic portion and have simplified details.
- An addition to the front of a historic building is inappropriate.

H.38 An addition should be set back from any primary, character-defining facade.

- An addition should be to the rear of the building.
- A roof-top addition should be set back substantially, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.
- A roof-top addition shall be simple in design to prevent it from competing with the primary facade.



An addition should be set back from any primary, character-defining facade and its architectural details should be kept simple.

Technical Repairs

Many historic building elements survive that should be maintained in a manner that will preserve their integrity as character-defining features.

H.39 Use the gentlest means possible to clean the surface of a structure.

- Perform a test patch (in an inconspicuous place) to determine that the cleaning method will cause no damage to the material surface. Many procedures can actually have an unanticipated negative effect upon building materials and result in accelerated deterioration or a loss of character.
- Abrasive methods such as sandblasting and water blasting are strongly discouraged, as they permanently erode building materials and finishes and accelerate deterioration.
- If cleaning is appropriate, a low pressure water wash is preferred. Chemical cleaning may be considered if a test patch is first reviewed and negative effects are not found.

H.40 Repair deteriorated primary building materials by patching, piecing-in, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing the material.

- Avoid the removal of damaged materials that can be repaired.
- Isolated areas of damage may be stabilized or fixed, using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair and special masonry repair components also may be used.

H.41 Plan repainting carefully.

- If masonry has been painted, it may be preferable to continue to repaint it, because paint removal methods may cause damage to the building materials and finish.
- Note that frequent repainting of trim materials may cause a build up of paint layers that obscure architectural details. When this occurs, consider stripping paint layers to retrieve details. However, if stripping is necessary, use the gentlest means possible, being careful not to damage architectural details and finishes.



Isolated areas of damage may be stabilized or fixed, using consolidants. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair and special masonry repair components also may be used.



Plan repainting carefully.

Design Guidelines for New Construction



Chapter 4

Design Guidelines for New Construction

These design principles apply to all new construction projects and renovations to non-contributing buildings in the City Square Commercial Historic District. New buildings and additions should not imitate historic buildings, but should be compatible with them. Creativity in new design is especially encouraged when it also is compatible with the design goals of the district. Note, however, that designs that are incompatible with the district may be more appropriately located elsewhere. The challenge is to strike a balance in the design of a new building such that it will be compatible with its historic neighbors without literally copying the historic designs of the area.

The City Square Commercial Historic District conveys a sense of a time and place, which is expressed through its numerous historic buildings. This character should be maintained. When new building does occur, or an existing structure is altered, it should be in a manner that reinforces the basic character-defining features of the area. Such features include the way in which a building is located on its site, the manner in which it faces the street, its materials and the general alignment of architectural elements and details along a block. When these design variables are arranged in a new building to be similar to those seen traditionally in the area, visual compatibility results.

The guidelines are numbered to indicate their relative position within this chapter and the document as a whole. For example, the design guidelines in this chapter include the letter “N” before the number to indicate that it is part of the guidelines for “New Construction.”



Before: New buildings should be compatible with the historic context. Creative new design is especially encouraged that is compatible with the design goals of the district. Here, a vacant lot awaits compatible infill. (See below.)

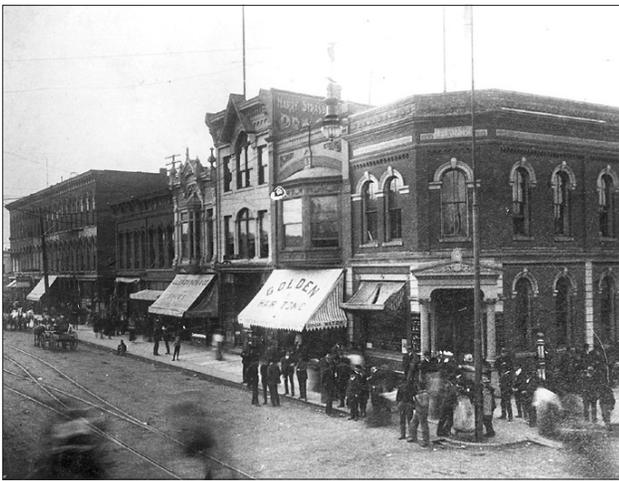


After: Simplified interpretations of traditional building elements, including a transparent first floor with display windows and an ornamental cornice, help this new building fit into its historic context.

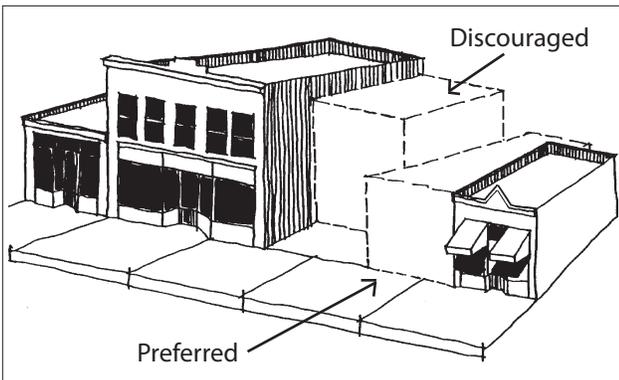
Note:
Examples of compatible new construction in other historic districts throughout the country (such as those above from Ft. Collins, Colorado) are provided to illustrate the design principles of this chapter.



Contemporary interpretations of traditional building elements are encouraged. In this case, shed form awnings are stretched across rigid frames. Transom windows are expressed with a metal grill design.



A new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among older buildings in the area without copying them is preferred.



Align the building front at the sidewalk edge.

Architectural Character

While it is important that new buildings and alterations be compatible with the historic context, it is not necessary that they imitate older building styles. In fact, stylistically distinguishing new buildings from their older neighbors in the historic district is preferred, when the overall design reinforces traditional development patterns.

N.1 New interpretations of traditional building styles are encouraged.

- A new design that draws upon the fundamental similarities among older buildings in the area without copying them is preferred. This will allow it to be seen as a product of its own time and yet be compatible with its historic neighbors.
- Buildings, that are similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, are strongly encouraged.
- In essence, infill should be a balance of new and old in design.
- This applies to architectural details as well as the overall design of a building.
- The literal imitation of older historic styles is discouraged.

Site Plan Guidelines

Most structures in the historic district contribute to a strong “building wall” along the street because they align at the front lot line and are usually built out to the full width of the parcel, to the side lot lines. Although small gaps do occur between some structures, these are exceptions. These site plan characteristics should be preserved.

N.2 Maintain the alignment of buildings at the sidewalk edge.

- Locate the front building wall at the sidewalk line when feasible.
- Where a building must be set back from the sidewalk, use landscape elements to define the sidewalk edge.

N.3 Orient the primary entrance of a building toward the street.

- A building should have a clearly defined primary entrance. For most commercial buildings, this should be a recessed entryway.
- A secondary public entrance to commercial spaces is also encouraged on a larger building.

N.4 Respect the town grid in new construction.

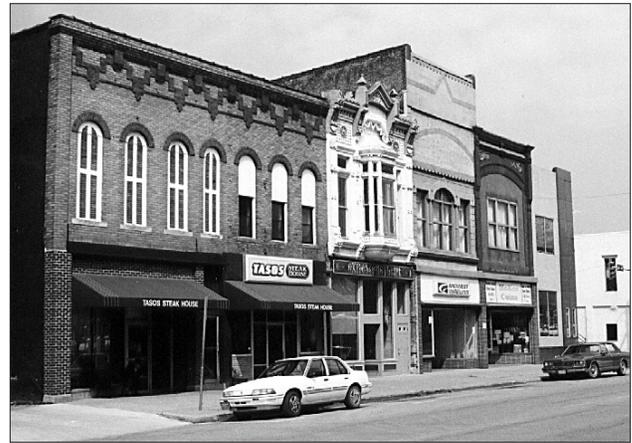
- Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines, in a manner similar to historic building orientation, not at an angle.
- Orient the primary facade toward the street.

Mass and Scale

Building heights are consistently within the same range: from two to three stories in height. Although a few institutional structures (e.g., the courthouse and surrounding churches) may reach greater heights, these are the exceptions. Building features—such as storefronts, windows and cornices—also align along the block, which contribute to a perceived uniformity in height to pedestrians. The dominant scale of two to three stories should be maintained. This may be accomplished by literally constructing a building within this traditional height range; in other cases, where a larger structure is needed, taller portions may be set back.

N.5 Maintain the established building scale of two to three stories in height.

- Historically, most buildings were two and three stories in height, although some smaller, one-story buildings existed. New buildings should reflect this range.
- Develop a primary facade that is in scale and alignment with surrounding historic buildings.
- If a building must be taller, consider stepping upper stories back from the main facade, or design the lower levels to express the alignment of elements seen traditionally in the block.
- Also consider stepping the mass of a tall building down to a lower height as it approaches smaller historic buildings or the alley.



Respect the town grid in new construction. Orient a new building parallel to its lot lines, in a manner similar to historic building orientation, not at an angle.



Historically, most buildings were one, two and three stories in height. New buildings should reflect this range.



Some smaller, one-story buildings did exist historically in the historic district.



This single infill building is divided into smaller building modules that reflect traditional building widths. Upper floors step back from the front, thus maintaining the traditional two-story scale of the street.



A part of this contemporary infill building is a parking structure which is concealed with a “wrap” of office and retail uses. The openings in the parking section of the development also utilize window proportions similar to those seen historically.



A new building should maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block.

N.6 Buildings should appear similar in width to those seen historically in the block.

- Historically, buildings were built in 20-foot increments. New buildings should reflect this pattern.

N.7 Consider dividing a larger building into “modules” that are similar in scale to buildings seen historically.

- If a larger building is divided into multiple “modules,” these should be expressed three-dimensionally, throughout the entire building, including the roof.

N.8 A new building should maintain the alignment of horizontal elements along the block.

- This alignment occurs because many of the buildings are similar in height.
- Window sills, moldings and cornices are among those elements that may be seen to align.
- The main floor of a building should align with those of historic properties.

N.9 Floor-to-floor heights should appear to be similar to those seen historically in the block.

- In particular, the windows in new construction should appear similar in height to those seen traditionally.

Facade Materials

Traditionally, a limited palette of building materials was used in the historic district—primarily brick and stone. This same selection of materials should continue to be predominant. New materials also may be considered, however, when they relate to those used historically in scale, texture, matte finish and detailing.

N.10 Simple material finishes are encouraged.

- Matte finishes are preferred.
- Polished stone or mirrored glass, for example, is inappropriate.

N.11 Materials should appear similar to those used historically.

- Masonry was the traditional material and is preferred for new construction. This includes stone and brick.
- Wood and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds and should be continued in new construction.
- New materials may be considered, but they should appear similar in character to those used traditionally in the district. For instance, brick should be similar in size to that used historically; or stucco, cast stone and concrete should be detailed to provide a human scale.
- New materials should have a demonstrated durability. For example, some facade materials used in new construction are more susceptible to weather and simply do not last as long as stone or brick.



Materials should appear similar to those used historically, as do the materials in this new building.



Materials should appear similar to those used historically. Masonry was the traditional material and is preferred for new construction. This includes stone and brick.



The ratio of solid-to-void should be similar to that seen traditionally on commercial storefront buildings in the district.



Window dimensions that are similar to those used traditionally are encouraged.

Upper-Story Windows

A pattern exists along the streets in the historic district with the repetition of evenly spaced, similarly sized, upper-story windows. These also give a building a sense of human scale. Using window sizes and proportions that are familiar to the pedestrian helps them to relate to the overall size of a building. The alignment and similar scale of these upper-story windows are parts of a common way of building that should be continued.

N.12 Upper-story windows with vertical emphasis are encouraged.

- A typical, upper-story window is twice as tall as it is wide. These proportions are within a limited range; therefore, upper-story windows in new construction should relate to the window proportions seen historically.
- Windows should align with others in a block. Windows, lintels and their trim elements should align with those on adjacent historic buildings.

N.13 Windows should be trimmed with wood, painted metal or anodized aluminum.

- This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.

N.14 Window dimensions that are similar to those used traditionally are encouraged.

- Many windows are “one-over-one,” in that a single pane of glass is in each the upper and lower sash. Others are “two-over-one,” with two panes (or lights) in the upper half. These arrangements are preferred.
- The dividing frame elements, or muntins, in a window should be similar in dimension to those used traditionally.

N.15 The ratio of solid-to-void should be similar to that seen traditionally on commercial storefront buildings in the district.

- First floors should be more transparent than upper floors.
- Upper floors should appear more solid than first floors.

Entries

The repetition of recessed building entries that occurs along the street in the historic district provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale and invites pedestrians to enter buildings in the area. This trend should be continued in new construction.

N.16 Building entrances should appear similar to those used historically in the block.

- Clearly define the primary entrance with an awning, canopy or other architectural or landscape feature.
- A contemporary interpretation of a traditional building entry, which is similar in scale and overall character to those seen historically, is encouraged.
- Building entrances should be recessed.
- Clearly define primary entrances.

N.17 Locate the primary building entrance to face the street.

- The building entrance should be recessed.
- A primary building entrance also should be at or near street level. A sunken terrace entrance is not appropriate as the primary access from the street.

N.18 Doors should be trimmed with wood, painted metal or anodized aluminum.

- This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.



Clearly define the primary entrance facing the street.



Traditional storefront features—such as a kickplate, display window, transom and recessed entry—are reinterpreted in this new storefront design.



Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity. Avoid a blank wall or vacant lot appearance.



When providing a storefront at the street level is not feasible, consider using display cases that illustrate goods and services available inside or nearby.

Pedestrian Interest

The historic district should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. Streets, sidewalks and alleys should encourage walking, sitting and other outdoor activities; buildings also should be visually interesting to invite exploration by pedestrians. Existing pedestrian routes should be enhanced. A building should express human scale through materials and forms that were seen traditionally. This is important because buildings are experienced at close proximity by the pedestrian.

N.19 Develop the ground floor level of a project to encourage pedestrian activity.

- Provide at least one of the following along primary pedestrian ways:
 - A storefront
 - Display cases
 - Public art
 - Landscaping
 - Decorative wall surfaces
- Include traditional elements such as display windows, kickplates and transoms on commercial storefronts.
- Avoid a blank wall or vacant lot appearance.



Public art is a good way to provide pedestrian interest along a street.

Design Guidelines for All Projects



Chapter 5

Design Guidelines for All Projects

These design guidelines shall apply to all projects in the City Square Commercial Historic District. These include certain site improvements, alterations to existing structures and new construction.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates that places of public accommodation be accessible to all users.

A.1 The guidelines introduced herein should not prevent or inhibit compliance with accessibility laws.

- All new construction shall comply completely with ADA.
- Owners of historic properties also should comply to the fullest extent, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.
- Special provisions for historic buildings exist in the law that allow some alternative solutions in meeting the ADA standards. For example, some building owners have placed ramps within interior spaces so as not to interfere with the historic storefront.
- Consult with the State Preservation Architect with the State Historical Society of Iowa for more information regarding compliance or alternative solutions in meeting the ADA.

The guidelines are numbered to indicate their relative position within this chapter and the document as a whole. For example, the design guidelines in this chapter include the letter “A” before the number to indicate that it is part of the guidelines for “All Projects.”



Historically, awnings and canopies were noteworthy features of buildings in the historic district and their continued use is encouraged.



Operable awnings are encouraged on historic buildings.



A rigid awning or canopy that is permanently attached to the building front and out of character of the building style is inappropriate.

Awnings and Canopies

Historically, awnings and canopies were noteworthy features of buildings in the historic district and their continued use is encouraged.

A.2 A fabric awning is encouraged.

- Operable awnings are encouraged on historic buildings.
- Use colors that are compatible with the overall color scheme of the facade. Solid colors or simple, muted-stripe patterns are appropriate.
- The awning should fit the opening of the building.
- Simple shed shapes are appropriate for rectangular openings.
- Odd shapes, bullnose awnings and bubble awnings are inappropriate on most historic structures.
- A rigid awning or canopy that is permanently attached to the building front and out of character of the building style is inappropriate.
- Internal illumination of an awning is inappropriate.

A.3 A fixed metal canopy may be considered where evidence demonstrates that one existed historically.

- Appropriate supporting mechanisms are wall-mounted brackets, chains and posts.

A.4 Internal illumination in an awning is inappropriate.

A.5 Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features.

- It should be mounted to highlight moldings that may be found above the storefront and should not hide character-defining features.
- Its mounting should not damage significant features and historic details.

Building and Street Lighting

The character and level of lighting that is used on a building is a special concern. Traditionally, these exterior lights were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances and first floor details. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight, were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices. Although new lamp types may be considered, the overall effect of modest, focused building light should be continued.

A.6 Use lighting for the following:

- To accent architectural details.
- To accent building entrances.
- To accent signs.
- To illuminate sidewalks.

A.7 Use lighting as it was used historically in the district.

- Shielded lighting is preferred.
- Lighting should not dominate a facade or the street.
- Washing the entire facade with light is inappropriate.

A.8 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.

- All exterior light sources should have a low level of luminescence.
- Lights that cast a color similar to daylight are preferred.
- Lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.

A.9 Prevent glare by using shielded and focused light sources.

- Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light downward.
- Unshielded, high intensity light sources and those that direct light upward should not be permitted.
- Shield lighting associated with service areas, parking lots and parking structures.



Do not locate window air conditioning units on the building's primary facade.



Locate a satellite dish out of public view to the extent feasible and in compliance with other regulations.



Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas. Dumpsters shall be screened from view.

Mechanical Equipment and Service Utilities

Utility service boxes, telecommunication devices, cables and conduits are among the variety of equipment that may be attached to a building that can affect the character of the area. Trash and recycling storage areas also are concerns. To the greatest extent feasible, these devices should be screened from public view and negative effects on any historic resource should be avoided.

A.10 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment on the public way.

- Screen equipment from view.
- Do not locate window air conditioning units on the building's primary facade.
- Use low-profile mechanical units on rooftops that are not visible from public ways.
- Locate a satellite dish out of public view to the extent feasible and in compliance with other regulations.

A.11 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

- Locate them on secondary walls when feasible.

A.12 Locate standpipes and other service equipment such that they will not damage historic facade materials.

- Cutting channels into historic facade materials damages the historic building fabric and is inappropriate.
- Avoid locating such equipment on the front facade.

A.13 Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas.

- Locate service areas away from major pedestrian routes, typically at the rear of a building.
- Dumpsters should be screened from view.
- Consider placing gates on trash storage areas to further diminish its visual impact.

Landscaping

Landscaping in the City Square enhances the pedestrian experience downtown and its continued use is encouraged.

A.14 Landscaping is encouraged where space allows.

- Landscape features such as parks, gardens, street lights, signs, benches, and walkways that have traditionally linked buildings to their environment should be retained.
- Storefronts should continue to define the sidewalk edge, however.

A.15 Planting trees is encouraged.

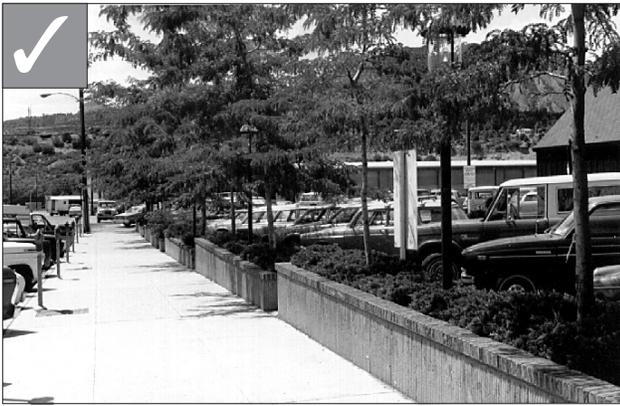
- Existing trees should be preserved, when feasible.
- When an existing street tree dies, it should be replaced in kind.

A.16 Using new trees, plants, flowers and shrubbery that are well adapted to the Iowa climate is encouraged.

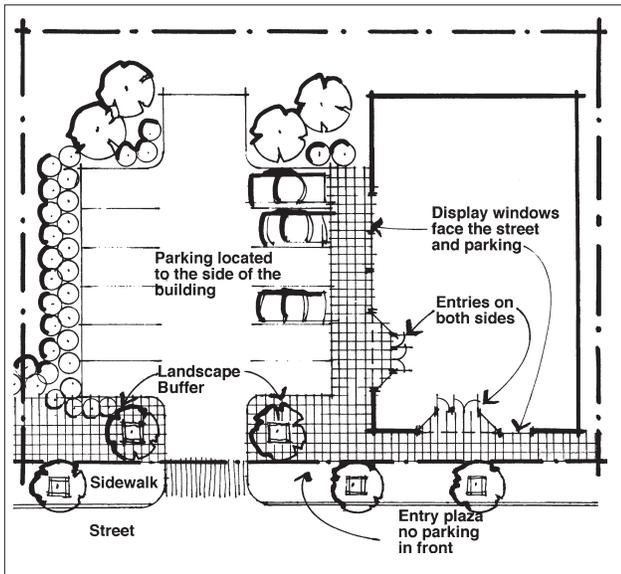
- While a wide variety of plants can grow in the Iowa climate, those that are better adapted and that require less water are preferred.



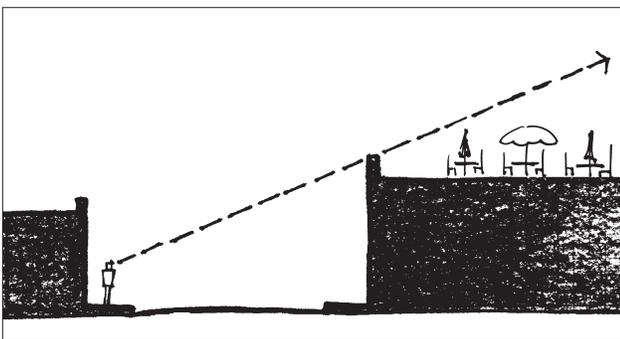
Landscaping in the City Square enhances the pedestrian experience downtown and its continued use is encouraged.



Minimize visual impacts of off-street parking, as seen from the public way.



Screen a parking area from view from the street. A minimum of five feet should be used as a buffer from the inside sidewalk edge.



Set activities back such that they are not visible from the sidewalk across the street (approximately 25 feet for a two-story building).

Parking

Automobiles have been a part of the scene for many years. Historically, however, they were a secondary feature in the street scene. Today, their visual impacts should be minimized, to enable one to perceive the historic character of the street.

A.17 Minimize visual impacts of off-street parking, as seen from the public way.

- Screen the edges of parking lots with planted areas, decorative paving, fences, hedges and decorative walls.
- When landscaping at the sidewalk edge use at least a five foot deep plant bed. This will provide a good buffer for pedestrians.
- Using a low brick wall may also be an appropriate solution.
- Landscaping the interior of a parking lot is encouraged.

A.18 Large areas of off-street parking are discouraged in the historic district.

- Minimize the number of new curb cuts.

A.19 Where appropriate, design a parking area to be accessed from an alley rather than the street.

A.20 Locate parking such that it will be subordinate to other site features.

- An on-site parking area should be located inside or behind a building, where its visual impact will be minimized.
- Minimize the surface area of paving and consider using less impervious material such as modular pavers.

Rooftop Uses

A.21 Minimize the visual impact of rooftop uses as seen from the street.

A.22 Set activities back such that they are not visible from the sidewalk across the street.

- This includes potted plants, umbrellas and tables.
- For historic buildings, see also the guidelines for historic properties.

Design Guidelines for Signs



Chapter 6

Design Guidelines for Signs

Traditionally, commercial signs have been a part of the character of downtown Oskaloosa. Early photographs include a variety of signs, which occurred in four types:

- Medium-sized, square or rectangularly-shaped signs that projected from the building above the awnings or canopies; printed on both sides
- Small, horizontally-oriented rectangular signs that protruded from the building below the awnings or canopies but above pedestrians' heads; printed on both sides
- Medium- to large-sized, horizontally-oriented rectangular signs attached flat against the building, above and/or below the awnings; printed on one side only
- Window signs, painted on glass; used at the street level and on upper floors

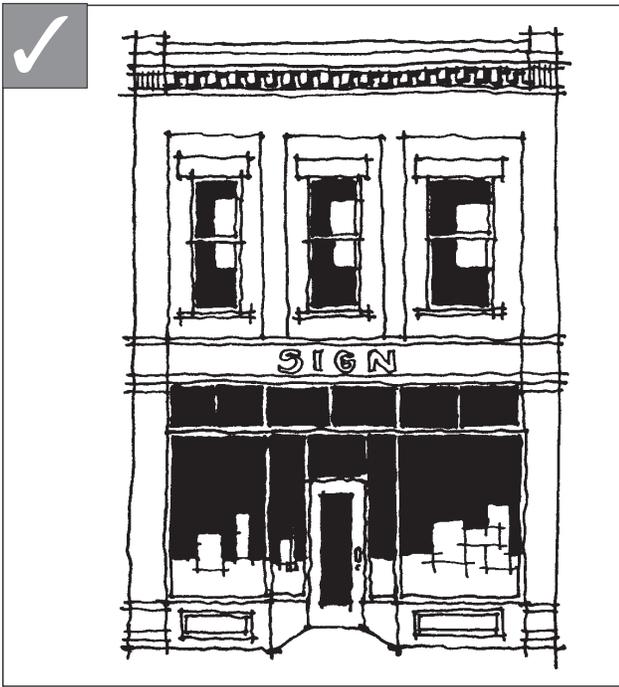
Historically, signs that were mounted on the exterior advertised the primary business of a building. Typically, this use occupied a street level space and sometimes upper floors as well. Window signs were the only ones used for businesses above. Sizes varied. Most signs were a few square feet in area.

The earliest signs had no lights, but in time a variety of methods were used. Many signs in the early twentieth century had incandescent lamps focused on the sign panel. By the 1930s, some were outlined in lights and by the 1950s, neon appeared occasionally. Even so, throughout the history of the area, signs have remained subordinate to the architecture. While some large signs have existed, these were relatively limited in number, such that one's overall ability to perceive the character of sets of buildings was maintained. Therefore, the key unifying features of the area, including the alignment of first floor elements and the rhythm of building fronts and windows, have remained clearly visible.

In addition, signs were mounted to fit within architectural features. In many cases, they were mounted flush above the storefront, just above moldings. Others were located between columns or centered in "panels" on a building face. This method also enabled one to perceive the design character of individual structures.

Therefore, these traditions, of having a diversity of signs that remain subordinate to the overall context, and of signs complementing architectural compositions, should be maintained.

The guidelines are numbered to indicate their relative position within this chapter and the document as a whole. For example, the design guidelines in this chapter include the letter "S" before the number to indicate that it is part of the guidelines for "Signs."



The overall facade composition, including ornamental details and signs, should be coordinated. Signs also should be in proportion to the building, such that they do not dominate the appearance.



Inappropriate: A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.

Sign Context

A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention; and, second, to convey information, essentially identifying the business or services offered within. If it is well designed, the building front alone can serve the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the district in mind.

S.1 Consider the building front as part of an overall sign program.

- Coordinate the overall facade composition, including ornamental details and signs.
- A sign should be in proportion to the building, such that it does not dominate the appearance.
- Develop a master sign plan for the entire building; this should be used to guide individual sign design decisions.

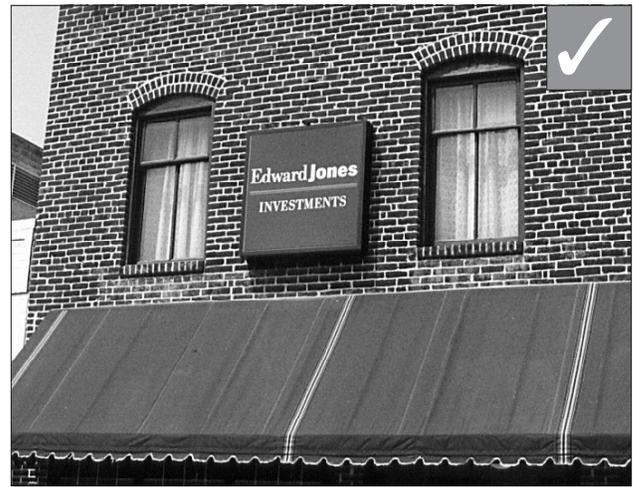
S.2 A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- A sign should appear to be in scale with the facade.
- Locate a sign on a building such that it will emphasize design elements of the facade itself. On an historic building a sign should not obscure architectural details or features.
- Mount signs to fit within existing architectural features. Use signs to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.

Appropriate Sign Types

S.3 Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered.

- A flush-mounted wall sign should be positioned just above the display window. It should not be located above second-floor windows.
- When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others on the block.
- When planning a wall sign, determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a “sign panel.” If so, locate a flush-mounted sign such that it fits within panels formed by moldings or transom panels on the facade. In no case should a sign obscure significant facade features.



Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered.

S.4 Projecting signs may be considered.

- A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance at, or slightly above, eye level, just above the door or to the side of it.
- Note that other approvals may be required to allow a sign to overhang the public right-of-way.



Appropriate: Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs.

S.5 A window sign may be considered.

- A window sign may be painted on a window.
- A window sign should cover no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.
- It may be painted on the glass or hung just inside a window.

S.6 A directory sign may be considered.

- Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs. Align several smaller signs, or group them into a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.

Sign Materials

S.7 Sign materials should be compatible with that of the building facade.

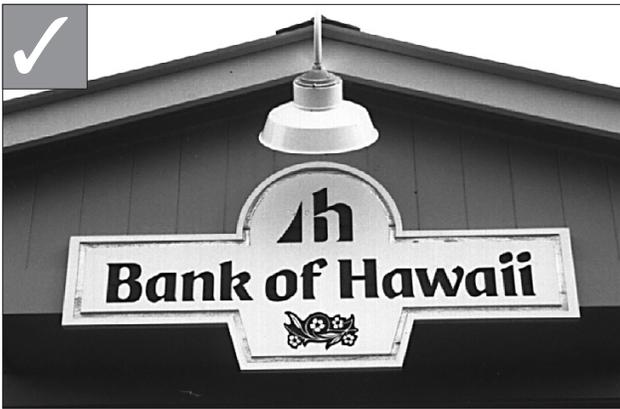
- Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged. Unfinished materials, including unpainted wood, are discouraged because they are out of character with the historic context.
- Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are inappropriate.
- Painted signs on blank walls may be considered.



A window sign may be considered. A window sign may be painted on or hung just inside a window.



Appropriate: Symbol signs add interest to the street, are quickly read and are remembered better than written words.



Appropriate: Light shall be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp.

Sign Content

S.8 Symbol signs are encouraged.

- Symbol signs add interest to the street, are quickly read and are remembered better than written words.

S.9 Use colors for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.

S.10 Simple sign designs are preferred.

- Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area historically are encouraged. Avoid sign types that appear too contemporary.
- Also limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used.

S.11 Select letter styles and sizes that will be compatible with the building front.

- In general, letters should not exceed 10 inches in height for a typical one-bay storefront. This applies to letters on flush-mounted, projecting and window signs. Taller letters may be considered, for flush-mounted signs only, on a larger surface area.
- Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typeface styles.

Sign Lighting

S.12 Indirect lighting is preferred for a sign.

- Indirect lighting, that which is directed at a sign from an external, shielded lamp, is preferred.
- A warm light, similar to daylight, is appropriate.

S.13 If internal illumination is used, it should be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- Internal illumination of an entire sign panel is discouraged. If internal illumination is used, a system that backlights sign text only is preferred.
- Neon and other tubular illumination may be considered. However, use neon in limited amounts so it does not become visually obtrusive.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interpretation of Terms Related to These Guidelines

These definitions apply to terms in the preceding text.

Appropriate - In some cases, a stated action or design choice is defined as being “appropriate” in the text. In such cases, by choosing the design approach referred to as “appropriate,” the reader will be in compliance with the guideline. However, in other cases, there may be a design that is not expressly mentioned in the text that also may be deemed “appropriate” by the HPC.

Consider - When the term “consider” is used, a design suggestion is offered to the reader as an example of one method of how the design guideline at hand could be met. Applicants may elect to follow the suggestion, but may also seek alternative means of meeting it. In other cases, the reader is instructed to evaluate the ability to take the course recommended in the context of the specific project.

Context - In many cases, the reader is instructed to relate to the context of the project area. The “context” relates to those properties and structures adjacent to, and within the same block as, the proposed project.

Contributing - Architecturally, historically or geographically significant buildings or structures are generally considered to be “contributing” to a local district.

Guideline - In the context of this document, a “guideline” is a requirement that would be met, in order to be in accordance with the intent of this document.

Historic - In general, a historic property is one that is at least 50 years old or older, associated with significant people or events or conveys a character of building and design found during the district’s period of significance.

Imperative mood - Throughout this document, many of the guidelines are written in the imperative mood. The reader is often instructed to “maintain” or “preserve” an established characteristic. For example, one guideline states: “Preserve significant storefront components.” In such cases, the user shall comply. The imperative mood is used, in part, because this document is intended to serve an educational role as well as a regulatory one.

Inappropriate - Inappropriate means impermissible. When the term “inappropriate” is used, the relevant design approach shall not be allowed. For example, one guideline states: “Signs that are out of character with those seen historically, and that would alter the historic character of the street, are inappropriate.” In this case, a design out of character with those seen historically would not be approved.

Non-contributing - Recent buildings and those fifty years old or older which have lost their integrity are considered “non-contributing.” These buildings or structures do retain value as residential or commercial properties, but do not possess the historical significance and/or physical integrity necessary to be listed as contributing.

Preferred - In some cases, the reader is instructed that a certain design approach is “preferred.” In such a case, the reader is encouraged to choose the design option at hand. However, the Commission may consider other approaches as long as they maintain the character of the district and meet the intent of the guidelines.

Primary facade - The primary facade is the principal elevation of a building, usually facing the street or other public way.

Should - If the term “should” appears in a design guideline, compliance is strongly encouraged, but is not required.

Appendix B

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*
2. *The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*
3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*
4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*
5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*
6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*
7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*
8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*
10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Alterations and additions to existing properties should not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material. Such design should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, neighborhood and environment.

For more information about alternative treatments for an historic property, visit the National Park Service website.

Appendix C

Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance

Using regularly scheduled maintenance procedures to preserve historic building materials is strongly encouraged. Consider the following recommendations:

C.1 Maintenance of Streets and Alleys

- Clear debris from sidewalks and alleys, especially where site drainage may be affected.
- Clear garbage around dumpsters

C.2 Maintenance of Upper Story Windows

- Wash upper story windows.
- Clear debris from upper story windows.
- Repair shades or curtains in upper story windows or replace with new.
- Re-glaze loose glass. This will reduce air leaks.
- Install weather-stripping. This will enhance energy conservation significantly.

C.3 Maintenance of Storefronts

- Wash display windows
- Repair damaged kickplates.
- Re-caulk display windows to reduce air infiltration.
- Install weather-stripping around doors.
- Repoint mortar where necessary. Use the proper procedure for repointing, matching the color, texture and detailing of the original masonry. (More information on this subject available through the National Park Service's Preservation Brief series.)



Regular and periodic maintenance of a historic building assures that more expensive preservation and restoration measures will not be needed at a future date.

C.4 Maintenance of Roofs

- Clear debris from gutters and downspouts to prevent their backing up.
- Patch leaks in the roof. This should be a high priority.
- Replace deteriorated flashing.
- Repoint eroded mortar in the parapet wall. Use an appropriate mortar mix.
- Re-solder downspout connections to prevent water leaking onto walls.
- Do not allow water to disperse at the foundation of a building.

C.5 Maintenance of Awnings and Canopies

- Repair leaking downspouts on metal canopies.
- Replace worn fabric awnings.
- Re-secure loose awning hardware.
- Wash fabric awnings regularly. This will help extend the life of the fabric. Spray with water from the underside first, to lift dirt particles, then rinse them off.

C.6 Maintenance of Signs

- Re-secure sign mounts to the building front.
- Repaint faded graphics.
- Repair worn wiring.
- Replace burned out bulbs.
- Remove obsolete signs that are attached to a building.
- Preserve historic painted signs in place.

C.7 Energy Conservation

- It is not necessary to remove existing glass or to install thermopane glass to realize the energy savings. Generally, the problem is that older sash has dried and the glazing compound around it has shrunk, which allows air to leak around the glass.
- The best strategy is to re-glaze the existing glass and add weather-stripping. Storm windows may be installed on the interior side of windows. Be certain that the frame styles of the storm windows match those of the original windows.

C.8 Other energy conservation tips include:

- Reglaze all loose glass.
- Weatherstrip doors and windows.
- Install ceiling fans to circulate air.
- Consider installing insulation in the crawl space or basement.
- Existing windows, if properly caulked and weather-stripped, will provide adequate insulation.
- Most energy loss is through filtration, which can be treated.
- If a greater degree of insulation is desired, install an interior storm window. This will provide a dead air space, which will also reduce sound transmission.

C.9 Structural Systems

- Recognize the special problems inherent in the structural systems of historic buildings, especially where there are visible signs of cracking, deflection or failure.
- Undertake stabilization and repair of weakened structural members and systems.
- Replace historically important structural members only when necessary. Supplement existing structural systems when damaged or inadequate.
- Do not leave known structural problems untreated. This will cause continuing deterioration and will shorten the life of the structure.

Appendix D

Glossary

Alignment. The arrangement of objects along a straight line.

Arch. A structure built to support the weight above an opening. A true arch is curved. It consists of wedge-shaped stones or bricks called Voussoirs (vu-swar'), put together to make a curved bridge which spans the opening.

Architrave. The lowest of the three main parts of the entablature. Also, the ornamental moldings around doors, windows and other openings.

Ashlar. A square, hewn stone used in building. It also refers to a thick dressed, square stone used for facing brick walls, etc.

Bracket. A supporting member for a projecting element or shelf, sometimes in the shape of an inverted L and sometimes as a solid piece or a triangular truss.

Building Form. The overall shape of a structure (i.e. most Federal-influenced structures are rectangular in form).

Building Mass. The physical size and bulk of a structure.

Building Module. The appearance of a single facade plane, despite being part of a larger building. One large building can incorporate several building modules.

Building Scale. The size of structure as it appears to the pedestrian.

Canopy. A roofed structure constructed of fabric or other material placed so as to extend outward from a building providing a protective shield for doors, windows and other openings, supported by the building and supports extended to the ground directly under the canopy or cantilevered from the building.

Column. A slender upright structure, generally consisting of a cylindrical shaft, a base and a capital; pillar. It is usually a supporting or ornamental member in a building.

Cornice. The projection at the top of a wall. The top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.

Elevation. A mechanically accurate, "head-on" drawing of a face of a building or object, without any allowance for the effect of the laws of perspective. Any measurement on an elevation will be in a fixed proportion, or scale, to the corresponding measurement on the real building.

Entablature. The part of the building carried by the columns. The entablature consists of the cornice, the frieze and the architrave.

Facade. Front or principal face of a building, any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

False Front. A front wall which extends beyond the sidewalls of a building to create a more imposing facade.

Fenestration. The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

Frame. A window or door component.

Frieze. Any plain or decorative band, or board, on the top of a wall immediately below the cornice. This is sometimes decorated with ornamentation.

Kickplate. The horizontal element or assembly at the base of a storefront parallel to a public walkway. The kickplate provides a transition between the ground and storefront glazing area.

Lintel. A heavy horizontal beam of wood, stone or metal over an opening of a door or window to support the weight above it.

Mass. The physical size and bulk of a structure.

Molding. A decorative band or strip of material with a constant profile or section designed to cast interesting shadows. It is generally used in cornices and as trim around window and door openings.

Parapet. A low wall or railing often used around a balcony or along the edge of a roof.

Pediment. A triangular section framed by a horizontal molding on its base and two sloping moldings on each of its sides. Usually used as a crowning member for doors, windows and mantles.

Pier. The part of a wall between windows or other openings. The term is also used sometimes to refer to a reinforcing part built out from the surface of a wall; a buttress.

Pilaster. A support or pier treated architecturally as a column, with a base, shaft and capital that is attached to a wall surface.

Post. A piece of wood, metal, etc., usually long and square or cylindrical, set upright to support a building, sign, gate, etc.; pillar; pole.

Preservation. The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

Protection. The act or process of applying measures designed to affect the physical condition of a property by defending or guarding it from deterioration, loss or attack or to cover or shield the property from danger of injury. In the case of buildings and structures, such treatment is generally of a temporary nature and anticipates future historic preservation treatment; in the case of archaeological sites, the protective measure may be temporary or permanent.

Reconstruction. The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure or object, or part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time on its original site.

Rehabilitation. The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural value.

Renovation. The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible a contemporary use.

Restoration. The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

Scale. The size of structure as it appears to the pedestrian.

Shape. The general outline of a building or its facade.

Sill. The lowest horizontal member in a frame or opening for a window or door. Also, the lowest horizontal member in a framed wall or partition.

Size. The dimensions in height and width of a particular object.

Soffit. The underside of a structural part, as of a beam, arch, etc.

Stile. A vertical piece in a panel or frame, as of a door or window.

Stabilization. The fact or process of applying measures designed to reestablish a weather resistant enclosure and the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at present.

Storefront. The street level facade of a commercial building, usually having display windows.

Transom Window. A small window or series of panes above a door, or above a casement or double hung window.

Visual Continuity. A sense of unity or belonging together that elements of the built environment exhibit because of similarities among them.

Window Parts. The moving units of a window are known as *sashes* and move within the fixed *frame*. The *sash* may consist of one large *pane* of glass or may be subdivided into smaller panes by thin members called *muntins* or *glazing bars*. Sometimes in nineteenth-century houses windows are arranged side by side and divided by heavy vertical wood members called *mullions*.

