



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STRUCTURES CONTRIBUTING TO THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN
BUSINESS DISTRICT

Effective Date: February 1, 2018

Preservation of character-defining elements of historic buildings is a priority, and alterations and repairs should accurately represent the historic qualities of the buildings. Original documentation should be used for restoration work whenever possible. Where original documentation is unavailable, interpretations of similar elements that occurred in the area may be considered.

In filing for a Certificate of Preservation (COP), all requirements must be made, complied with, and so indicated on said application. Recommendations as indicated herein may or may not be included in your application for a COP. Maintenance recommendations are included for informational purposes only and are not to be included in an application for COP, and as such shall not be considered by the Commission in reviewing said application.

Adopted: February 1, 2018

PART ONE

General Guidelines

A. Change in Use

Recommendation:

1. A change in use is not regulated, but every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for the building that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.

B. Original Design Character

Requirement:

1. Respect the original design character of the building. Analyze the building to determine which elements are essential to its character. Do not try to make the building to appear older or younger in style that it really is. The genuine heritage of the Historic Downtown District should be expressed.

C. Historical Changes

Requirement:

1. Preserve older alterations that have achieved historic significance in themselves. Examples would be an addition or entryway that was added to the original building early in its history. More recent alterations that are not historically significant may be removed.

D. Plan and Implement Strategies

Requirement:

1. Evaluate the historic property and establish a plan for implementing strategies or preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction, alterations to the exterior, and addition.
2. Rehabilitation work should not destroy the distinguishing character of the property or its environment. Match the original material when feasible. A substitute material is acceptable if the form and design of the substitute convey the visual appearance of the original.
3. Deterioration architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate, or otherwise upgrade the existing material using recognized methods whenever possible. If alternative materials must be used, they should match the original in appearance as closely as possible.

4. Replacement of missing architectural elements should be based in accurate duplications of original features. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match that being replaced in design, color, texture, and other physical qualities. The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence.
5. When reconstruction of an element is impossible because of lack of historic evidence, a new design that relates to the building in general size, scale and material may be considered, using design elements that reflect the building's style.
6. During repair or rehabilitation, protect and maintain historic features that survive in generally good condition. Treatments include rust removal, caulking, sealing and repainting. Original materials and details that contribute to the historic significance of the structure should be preserved whenever feasible.
7. When disassembly of a historic element is necessary for its rehabilitation, use methods that minimize damage to the original materials. Always devise methods of replacing the disassembled material in their original configuration.

E. Roofs

Requirement:

1. Preserve original pitch and shape of the roof forms where they contribute to the historic character of the building. Do not use shingle mansard roofs. Replace existing roof materials with the same type of material where it is visible from the street. Rooftop mechanical systems, satellite dishes, and microwave dishes should be unobtrusive and out of public view when possible.
2. Maintain historic chimneys. Preserve historic skylights whenever possible. Do not remove ornamental roof features.

F. Cornices

A cornice is the decorative strip along the top of most historical commercial buildings. It caps off the façade physically and visually. Cornices are usually constructed of brick, wood, cast iron, or sheet metal, and occasionally the horizontal supporting beam itself acts as a cornice.

Requirement:

1. Whenever possible, the original cornice should be preserved. Damaged cornices should be repaired without disturbing the rest of the cornice, using similar materials.

G. Upper Fronts

The upper front of a building is the section of a façade above the main storefront.

Requirement:

1. To assist in making a business look alive, upper floors should appear occupied. Do not fill in upper windows.
2. A second story addition must be in keeping with the historical architecture of the building. Do not construct a front porch or balcony where none existed before.

H. Facades

The basic commercial façade consists of two main parts: the storefront with an entrance and display windows; and the upper front, usually with regularly spaced windows and a cornice at the top of the building. The storefront and upper front are visually important.

Requirement:

1. The elements of a façade should be retained as closely as possible to those of the original structure, using existing original materials whenever possible.
2. If parts of the façade are missing, design and reconstruction should be based on historical, pictorial, or physical documentation. When documentation is unavailable, a new design for missing elements should be compatible with the size, scale and material of the historical building.

I. Exteriors

Requirement:

1. Do not paint, coat, or waterproof unpainted masonry. Do not sandblast exterior surfaces. Use the gentlest means possible to clean exterior materials.
2. When repainting brick, use historic mortar mix (softer than modern mixes), matching the original mortar joints.
3. Maintain historic exterior materials. Repair, as part of renovation, damaged exterior materials with like materials and only in the areas of damage. Do not use imitation brick or stone, wood or metal siding, or aggregates on the building façade.

J. Storefronts

Common historic storefront design consists of large, thinly framed windows and a recessed entrance. Frequently there is a cornice at the top of the storefront to separate it from the upper façade, and low bulkheads at the base of the storefront to protect the windows and define the entrance.

Requirement:

1. Historic storefronts should be repaired rather than replaced or covered. Retain original elements, such as bulkheads or cast iron columns. Storefronts can consist of a variety of materials, but the overall image should be simple and unobtrusive, using materials similar to those of the rest of the building. If replacement of elements is required, new materials should match the original in placement, composition, design, texture, and other visual qualities. The frame can be wood, cast iron, or anodized aluminum. Bulkheads are generally wood panels, aluminum-clad plywood, polished stone, glass, or tile.
2. Where the original storefront no longer exists, replacement should be based on historical research and physical evidence and be compatible with nearby historic buildings. Do not extend the storefront out of its place in the façade. It should be in the same plane as the upper façade and not extend beyond the original opening.
3. Retain transom windows, reopening previously covered transom whenever possible. Do not enclose, replace the window type, cover, or install air-conditioning units in transom windows.

K. Exterior Details

Details can be some of the most striking elements of a building façade. Since the design and size of many commercial buildings are quite similar, their unique decorations should be noted and preserved.

Requirement:

1. Subtle wood details, as in window moldings, should be retained. Do not add architectural details where none existed before, such as colonial doors, small window panes, or storefront shutters.
2. Decorative tile should be retained, as should structural or pigmented glass such as beveled, stained, leaded, and etched glass, where they contribute to the original historic value.
3. During repair, renovation, or rehabilitation, all decorative terra cotta and all forms of brick work or stone should be repaired and maintained. Cast iron and sheet metal decorations, common on many nineteenth century buildings should be preserved.

L. Windows – Storefront

Requirement:

1. Retain the large display windows characteristic of commercial buildings in their original size, shape, and proportions, and use the original materials whenever possible. Preserve original components, replacing only damaged portions. When replacing glass or restoring windows, retain the original size and shape of the storefront opening.

2. Display windows should use clear glass only; transom windows can be clear, tinted or stained. Neither should have dividing mulls.
3. Restore previously enclosed display windows when the original design is documented.
4. Do not fill in window spaces or add store windows which obscure the historic windows. If dropped ceilings cover part of the window openings, have the drop set back so the entire window space appears open from the outside. Interior window treatments should not change the overall character of the windows. Do not add merely decorative exterior shutters that do not fit the windows.

Recommendations:

1. Traditional storefronts are composed almost entirely of glass, allowing natural light to enter what is typically a long narrow space that contains no other windows. This storefront attracts business and should be well maintained.

M. Windows – Upper Front

Requirement:

1. Existing windows should be repaired whenever possible, using similar materials. If required, replacement windows should match the original in materials, configuration, and style, and fill the entire opening. If aluminum frame is used, paint it to match the remaining windows. Storm windows should be either mounted inside or painted to match the window sash.

Recommendation:

1. Upper story windows help tie together all the facades on a street. They give a building the appearance of vitality and should not be filled in or covered over. If the space is vacant, appropriate shades, curtains or other interior window treatments should be used.

N. Awnings and Canopies

The canvas awning was an important design element common in in the traditional storefront. They help shelter passersby, reduce glare, and conserve energy by controlling the amount of sunlight that hits the store windows. Moveable awnings can be retracted allowing the sun to shine into your building in the winter and can be extended to shade the storefront front he summer heat. Awnings can also effectively and tactfully disguise inappropriate storefront alterations.

Requirement:

1. There are a variety of materials for awnings, including canvas, and the synthetic material acrilan. Standard street level awnings should be mounted between the display windows and the first floor cornice or sign panel with the valance about 7 feet above the sidewalk. They should reinforce the frame of the storefront without covering up the side piers, and should

project 4 to 7 feet from the building. A 12-inch valance flap is usually attached at the awning bar and can serve as a sign panel.

2. Canopies, however, especially large ones that are an integral part of the building, may still be intact and should be preserved. Smaller canopies may benefit from the addition of a canvas over the rails, and a 12 to 24 inch skirt along the front and sides.

Recommendation:

1. Since the average life of an awning is between four and seven years, the only record or authentic awnings are old photographs or renderings, unless they have been maintained regularly through the years. Always check any old photographs available on your building.
2. An awning can bring attention to your building but careful attention should be given to its design. Consider how it will appear in relation to the scale of your building and to the others on the street. An intelligently designed and placed awning can save you money, identify your storefront, and create a nice sidewalk area for you customers.

O. Entrances

Requirement:

1. Retain original recessed entries where they exist. Use building symmetry to suggest location, preferable recessed and canted. Retain tiled entryway floors. On upper levels, maintain historic door placements; do not add new entrances to secondary level on the façade.
2. Entrance doors on historical commercial buildings usually have a larger clear glass panel and are made of wood, steel, or aluminum. When restoring, paint the frames a compatible color with the rest of the façade. Replacement doors should resemble the original in design and proportions.
3. Retain doors, hardware, trim and the original number of doors and their locations. Do not install unfinished aluminum doors or residential doors. Do not add transom or sidelights where none existed before.

P. Additions

Requirement:

1. Additions should be placed away from public view at the rear of the building or well behind the façade. Maintain the form, orientation and symmetry of the original structure.
2. Create a discernable break at the juncture with the original structure. Walls of the addition should not be flush with the original structure. Ideally, the addition should be able to be removed without substantial loss of historic materials and elements.

3. Use matching or similar elements for style, roofing, siding, and windows.

Q. Pavement

Requirement:

1. Parking lots should not be the main focus of the front of the building.

R. Plant Beds and Planting

Requirement:

1. Landscaping plans shall be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Recommendation:

1. The goal is to beautify the district and make it more pleasant for pedestrian traffic. Locate plantings in traditional areas of the site, such as along fences, walks and foundations. Well maintained concrete planters that harmonize with nearby buildings and existing streetscape are recommended.

S. Walls and Fences

Requirement:

1. New fence and wall designs must be appropriate for the primary structure and reinforce the pedestrian scale instead of forming barriers and exclusionary walls.
2. Any fencing shall be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

T. Service Areas and Equipment

Requirement:

1. Screen service equipment and trash containers from the public view. The visual impact of mechanical and electrical equipment shall be minimized.

U. Signs

Requirement:

1. Signs shall be subordinate to the architecture and overall character throughout the district. Sign materials shall be compatible with the building materials. Position flush-mounted signs so they will be within architectural features. Locate flush signs so they do not extend beyond the outer edges of the building front. Avoid obscuring ornament and detail.
2. Locate projecting signs along the first floor level of the façade. Positions near the building's entrances are encouraged. Locate pole mounted signs in landscaped areas.
3. Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs. Align several smaller signs, or group them onto a single panel. Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs to visually tie them together.