

HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



BROWNSVILLE, TENNESSEE
DRAFT June 19, 2014



COMMERCIAL SECTIONS ONLY- CHAPTERS 4 & 5



CHAPTER 4 DRAFT 6-19-2014

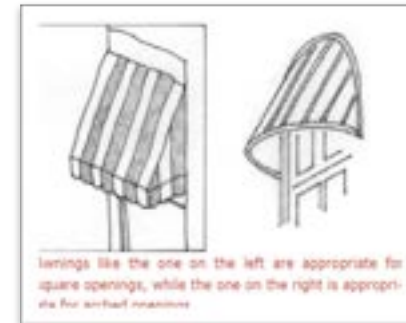
Commercial Guidelines

Approach - These guidelines apply to commercial buildings, structures, signage, and landscapes in the historic district. Of primary importance in the approach of design guidelines is the emphasis on preservation over replacement. The frequent use of terms such as retain, maintain, and preserve demonstrates this emphasis. Historic buildings, landscapes, and components shall be preserved and well maintained. If they become damaged, they shall be repaired. If the damage is too severe for repair, the minimal area necessary should be replaced using materials and designs that match the historic appearance.

Awnings

The use of canvas storefront awnings or canopies is appropriate.

- Retain and preserve original wooden or metal awnings.
- Install retractable or fixed canvas or metal awnings.
- Do not obscure architectural details with awnings.
- Use an awning shape that matches the opening shape.
- Match the style and period of the building.





Front Façade Gallery/Veranda/Balconies and Rear Balcony/Decks

Documentation of a pre-existing front façade gallery/veranda/balcony is required. Decks are modern features, and, if installed, shall be located on the rear, or otherwise out of view from the street.

Below are guidelines specific to each feature:

Gallery/Veranda (Typically supported on wooden or iron columns)

- Purpose is to provide protection from the elements and permit ventilation.
- The Gallery or Veranda is usually an extension of living space although sometimes used as a means of circulation.
- The Gallery can be covered with a roof or not covered, while the Veranda is always covered.
- Both Galleries and Verandas are usually associated with architectural treatments from 1850 and later.

Balcony

- Typically cantilevered on the building.
- Usually not over four feet in width from the building face to the outer edge.
- Supports are usually of wrought iron when on the front of pre-1880 buildings.
- Supports are usually of wood when on the rear, on service buildings, and on the front of post 1880 buildings.

Decks/Rear Balconies

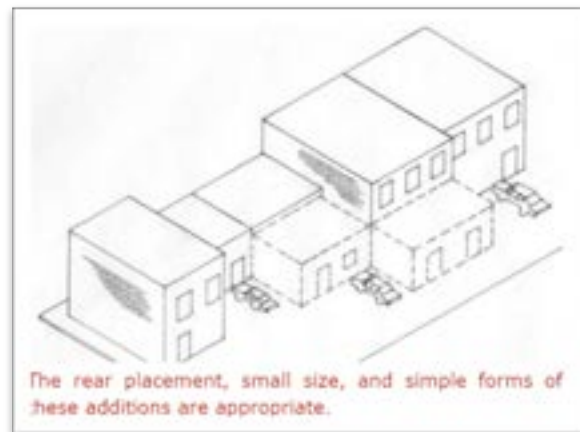
- Locate decks on the rear elevation or low-visibility side elevation.
- Use plants or fencing to screen view.
- Construct decks with wood or metal.
- Stain or paint decks to colors of building.

Enclosed Additions



Additions to rear elevations or roofs may be appropriate.

- Place ground additions on rear elevations.
- Keep rear additions simple.
- Use form or brick construction for addition; concrete block is a less desirable option as long as it is painted to match color of building.
- No removal of historic walls will be allowed in order to accommodate an addition, unless structural deficiencies through a structural report can be demonstrated.
- Design additions must be identifiable and distinguished from the original structure.
- Care should be taken to avoid access and circulation issues.





Entrances (add pictures of Somewhere in Time and Shoebox)

Original entrances and elements shall be retained.

- Do not enclose or remove original entrance openings.
- Do not add unfinished aluminum doors to storefronts.
- Retain historic designs and dimensions of recessed entrances.
- Preserve and maintain historic transoms and transom openings.
- Do not enclose or conceal transoms.
- Use the historic design in entrance rehabilitation if evidence is available such as historic photographs or discoloration indicating original doors.
- Do not add new entrances or storefronts.
- No tinted glass shall be used.



Recommendation: Maintain original entrances and do not enclose. Retain historic designs and dimensions of recessed entrances.



Fire Escapes

Fire escapes and staircases are modern features and shall be located on rear or side elevations out of view from primary right of ways and use unobtrusive design and materials.

- Locate fire escapes and staircases on rear elevations.
- Do not damage architectural features through the installation of fire escapes and staircases.
- Construct of metal, in accordance with Building Codes



Gutters and Downspouts

Well maintained gutters and downspouts help to protect building from water damage.

- Use and maintenance of gutters and downspouts is highly recommended.
- Retain and repair as needed historic boxed or built-in gutters.
- If new gutters are used, half-round or ogee designs are acceptable.



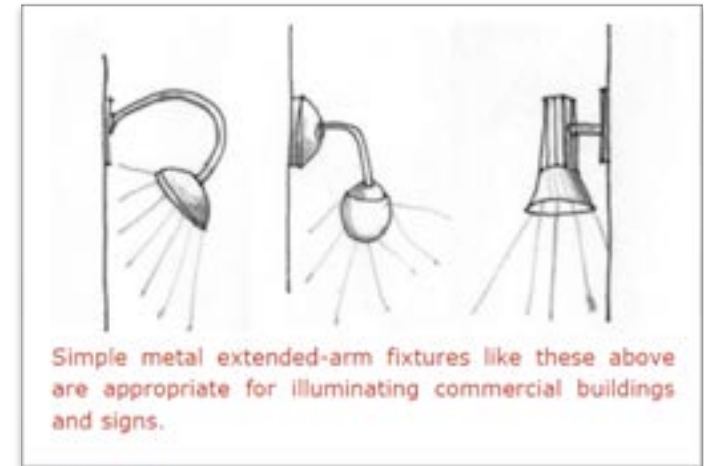


Lighting

Historic light fixtures shall be retained and maintained. New light fixtures shall be unobtrusive and characteristic of the age and style of the building.



(Add Street light photo)

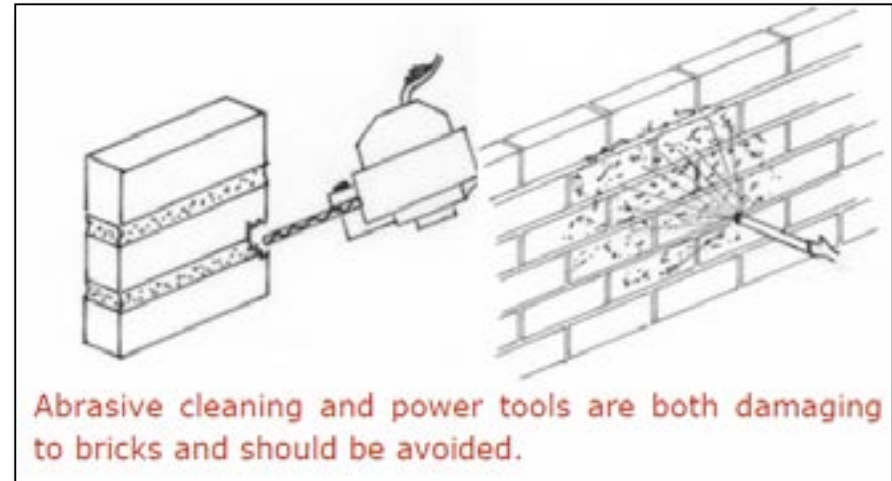


Masonry

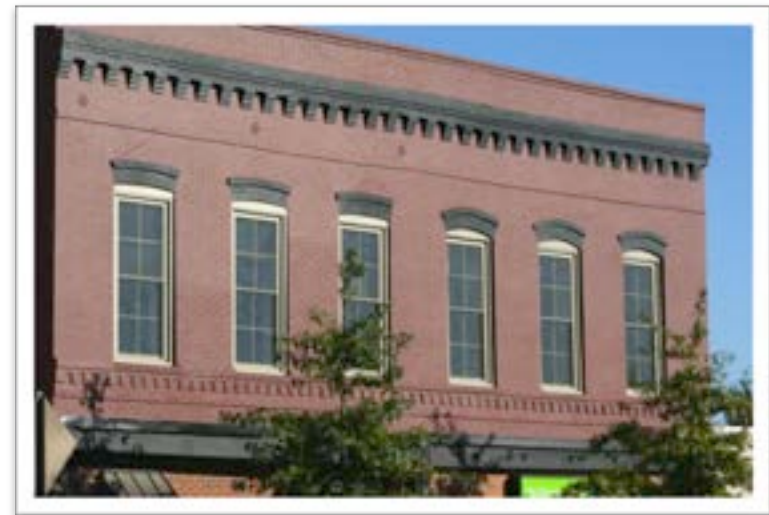
Original masonry shall be preserved and maintained. Identify, retain, and preserve masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window architraves, door pediments, steps, and columns; and details such as tooling and bonding patterns, coatings, and color. Stabilize deteriorated or damaged masonry as a preliminary measure when necessary; prior to undertaking appropriate preservation work. Protect and maintain masonry by providing proper drainage. Abrasive cleaning of exterior masonry shall be avoided.



- Preserve and maintain original exterior masonry walls and details.
- Repair and replace, if needed, damaged masonry with new masonry which matches historic masonry as closely as possible.
- Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling.
- Clean masonry using only the least abrasive methods possible, preferably detergent or steam cleaning. Chemical cleaning may be used if detergents and steaming are ineffective, subject to approval of the HZC.



- Carry out masonry surface cleaning tests after it has been determined that such cleaning is appropriate. Tests will be observed over a sufficient period of time so that both the immediate and the long range effects are known to enable selection of the gentlest method possible.
- Use low-pressure water cleaning and rinsing only if the pressure is kept below 500 to 600 pounds per square inch.





- Do not use sandblasting as means to clean. Sandblasting can cause severe deterioration of masonry. This can be especially pronounced in bricks, as sandblasting removes the exterior hard patina and exposes the soft inner core. Never use sandblasting or other abrasive cleaning methods on masonry surfaces.
- When repointing, use mortar that matches original in composition and appearance.
- Portland cement shall not be used at any time as it will damage existing brick.
- Do not apply stucco or dryvit surfaces to historic buildings, except in rear elevations when in poor condition. (Structural report will be necessary to document.)
- Protect masonry so that water does not stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in curved decorative features.



Recommendation: Preserve and Maintain Original Masonry

Recommendation: Identify, retain, and preserve masonry features that are important.

(Add Post Office photo)





Metal

Cast iron pilasters, columns, cornices, and hood moldings are common features on commercial building. They will be preserved and maintained, and if repair or replacement is needed, it will be with materials that match the original and will not promote corrosion.

- Preserve and maintain historic cast iron and sheet metal.
- Keep metal painted and clean.
- Use detergent for cleaning.
- Repair or, if item too damaged, replace item with compatible metals.
- Keep metal painted and clean.

(Add Barber Shop Photo)

Ramps and Lifts

At least one entrance to commercial buildings will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Ramps must comply with the Building code, Zoning Ordinance, and Municipal Codes.

Construct ramps of concrete or wood and paint in dark colors compatible to the building.





Rear Elevations

Rear Elevations shall be maintained and kept simple in appearance.

- Maintain and preserve historic doors at rear entrances.
- Screen HVAC units and service equipment through landscaping or wood and/or brick enclosures, or place units and equipment on roofs out of view from the street.
- Signs and awnings are appropriate for identification of businesses.



Roofs

Roofs help define buildings as commercial and their historic shapes shall be retained as contributing elements to historic character.

- Retain the historic shape of roofs.
- Retain and maintain roof related features such as parapet walls, cornices, and chimneys.
- If modern roof elements like skylights, solar panels, decks, balconies, and satellite dishes are desired, install them so they are not visible from the street.
- Maintain historic roof materials like clay, slate or sheet metal when visible.
- Roofs shall be maintained.
- During any renovations, roof shall be inspected to check for integrity issues.



Recommendation: Maintain historic roof materials like slate and sheet metal and retain the historic shape of roofs.



Signage

Historic signs shall be preserved. New and replacement signs shall be at customary locations, minimal in number, and traditional in appearance, all keeping with the period of historic significance (1890-1930s). Signage should address both vehicular and pedestrian interest.

Signs shall follow the city's sign ordinance and permit process, and in the event of a difference from these guidelines, the stricter standard will apply. Changes in business require a new sign permit and may be subject to HZC review. Advertising on benches/structures is not permitted. Temporary and advertising banners should be limited, and when necessary require a city permit under the City sign ordinance. Temporary civic banners, per ordinance, are exempt from these guidelines. Noncompliant or abandoned signage must be removed in accordance with the City's sign ordinance.

Types of Signs (see illustrations)

Awning Sign – Sign/lettering painted on cloth awning.

Banner Sign – Attached to city utility and street light poles by City.

Blade Sign/Projecting Arm – Hangs perpendicular to the building and is particularly fitting for pedestrian traffic.

Band Sign – Painted or attached to the face of building façade directly above the storefront transoms along the building band designed for sign placement.

Building/Wall Sign – Painted or attached to building usually above storefront.





Free-Standing & Sandwich Board Signs – Movable, freestanding and two-sided a-frame sidewalk signs.

Murals – Artwork painted or applied directly to walls of buildings. The design and placement of any mural require the prior approval of the City and HZC.

Open/Closed Signs – Signs on or near storefront entrance, sometimes with hours of operation listed.

Plaque/Cornerstone Sign – Historic marker with date and summation of building/lot historic significance.

Post & Arm Signs– Freestanding bracketed signs and signs affixed to freestanding posts. Signs of this type would not be commonly permitted in Brownsville’s configuration, the exception being signs for official use by local and state governments for way finding.

Postal Sign – Street number and address, typically on or above door.

Temporary and Advertising Banners – Any vinyl or plastic streamers signs which require a permit and are limited to a 14-day period per calendar quarter.

Window Sign – Logos and names applied/painted on shop-front glass.





General Design and Appearance

- Design all signs to have a traditional appearance. Use sign designs based on styles from the late 1890s through the 1930s, the period of historic significance for the Brownsville town square. Avoid signs that reflect an earlier period of history such as colonial Williamsburg or New England.
- The maximum number of signs per building is limited to three. This limit would include awning signs but not window signage.
- Only one freestanding sign per street frontage is allowed. Signs should be movable and should not be positioned to interfere with pedestrian traffic or to obstruct views.
- Temporary signs require a permit. Contact City Hall for temporary sign approval (14-day limit per calendar quarter). Civic groups are exempt from the permit requirement.
- Use light lettering for window decal signs and do not allow them to distract from the building façade or engross the window.
- Design signs to have no more than three colors.

Size and Scale

- All signs should be proportionate to the building façade and other signs.
- Wall signs must not exceed the height of the building cornice.



Commercial Guidelines

- Design wall and band signs to have a maximum of one square foot per one linear foot of width of the building façade or storefront. Example: 30 feet of building width equates to 30 square feet of total wall signage. See illustrations for appropriate proportions and design examples for wall and band signs.
- For window signs, the maximum coverage is 25% of the total glass area.
- Design awning lettering to be a maximum of 12 square feet or 25 percent of the total square footage of the front-facing panel, whichever is less.
- Size sandwich-board signs to be six (6) square feet or less per side.
- Size blade/projecting-arm signs to be a maximum of 4.5 square feet and hang them a minimum of eight (8) feet from the grade surface/sidewalk.
- Avoid signs that are out of scale or have substantially different locations than signs on adjacent buildings.

Materials, Construction, and Lighting

- Construct signs of finished wood, painted metal, brass letters, gold leaf, or glass. Do not use materials such as plastic, vinyl, plywood, or unfinished wood for signage materials, nor plastic and vinyl for trim, posts, or hanging bracket materials. Wood composite products are acceptable for use for signage materials.
- Use finished wood or painted/finished metal for sign brackets.
- Pole signs are not permitted.
- Use light fixtures appropriate to the historic period of the building. Use simple, low-key designs that do not detract from the building. These designs include gooseneck lamps and small spotlights. Use warm, soft colored lights. Brightness levels should be limited to 150 watts or equivalent, not to exceed 1200 lumens.



- Internally illuminated, plastic backlit or neon signs are not permitted.
- Flashing or blinking lights are not permitted.
- New wiring must go through the masonry joints, NOT the masonry units/bricks.

Placement and Mounting

- Place painted or applied wall signs on the flat surface of the building.
- Use traditional locations for wall signs such as above transoms or below cornices.
- Do not cover or obscure transom glass.
- Do not conceal or obscure original decorative designs or detailing with signs.
- Locate sign brackets for projecting signs no higher than second floor windowsills.
- Mount signs such that they minimize damage to historic materials. Install mounting bolts through mortar joints rather than the face of the masonry or brick.
- Select locations, sizes, and placement of signs to complement those of neighboring buildings. Avoid signs that are out of scale or have substantially different locations than signs on adjacent buildings.
- Do not mount temporary signs or banners in any way that causes damage or leaves marks.
- Federal ADA regulations require a minimum clearance of four feet for passage/egress. No structures including freestanding signs shall impede pedestrian access along sidewalks and to entranceways.



Historic Signs

- Preserve and maintain historic wall signs painted on exterior masonry walls.
- As desired, touch up historic wall signs with new paint as long as the paint and design matches the original.



Storefronts

Historic storefronts were generally composed of a central or offset recessed entrance, flanking display windows resting on bulkheads, and large transoms. Most of the storefronts were of glass to allow easy viewing of merchandise and window displays. Brick piers and cast iron columns were often used on the storefront to support the upper façade yet allow for the extensive use of glass.

- Maintain and preserve original storefronts. Do not remove original features to the storefront, i.e. doors, bulkheads, transoms, etc.
- Replace original storefront elements that are clearly deteriorated with elements that match the historic design and materials.
- If new storefronts are required, maintain traditional designs and arrangements.
- Do not cover display windows or change their size.
- Do not install tinted glass.





Commercial Guidelines

- Preserve and maintain original cast iron columns, brick piers, wood columns, and stone piers.
- Recessed entries (that have been destroyed) are encouraged to be returned during major renovations of a building.



Recommendation: Maintain and preserve original storefronts. Do not remove original features to the storefront, i.e. doors, bulkheads, transoms, etc. A single awning should not be used on multiple windows. Each window should have a separate awning.

Streetscape

Landscaping shall complement buildings. Sidewalk and street improvements will enhance downtown character.





Commercial Guidelines

- Maintain trees in the commercial area.
- Maintain concrete sidewalks and period lighting.
- When introducing new streetscape, support the traditional character of the commercial area.

Recommendation: Maintain trees in the commercial area and maintain concrete sidewalks



Wood

Wood: Clapboard, weatherboard, shingles, and other wooden siding and decorative elements

- Identify, retain, and preserve wood features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments; and their paints, finishes, and colors.
- Protect and maintain wood features by providing proper drainage so that water is not allowed to stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in decorative features. Apply chemical preservatives to wood features such as beam ends or outriggers that are exposed to decay hazards and are traditionally unpainted
- Retain coatings such as paint that help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light. Paint removal will be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings.
- Inspect painted wood surfaces to determine whether repainting is necessary or if cleaning is all that is required.



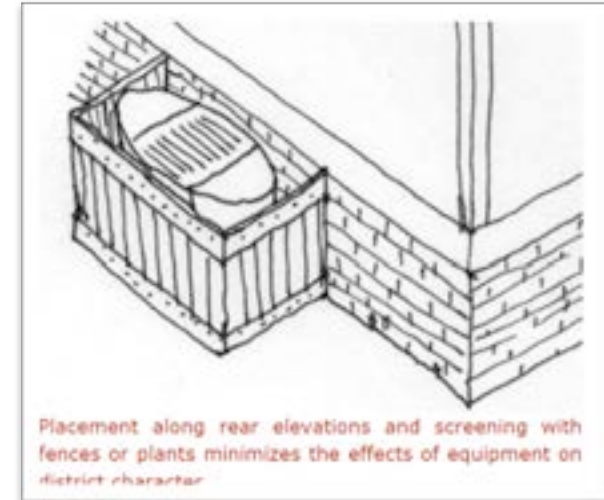
Commercial Guidelines

- Remove damaged or deteriorated paint to the next sound layer using the gentlest method possible (hand scraping and hand sanding), then repainting.
- Use with care electric hot-air guns on decorative wood features and electric heat plates on flat wood surfaces when paint is so deteriorated that total removal is necessary prior to repainting.

Utilities

Utilities are important to the functionality of buildings. Because utilities are modern, they will be placed along rear elevations, roof, or otherwise out of view from street-view or sidewalk view, and visibility will be further screened through landscaping or fencing.

- Place garbage containers behind buildings.
- Screen garbage containers from view using plants or fencing.
- Locate mechanical systems behind or on top of buildings.
- Screen mechanical systems from view using plants or fencing.
- Satellite dishes and solar panels may be placed on roofs where they are not readily visible from the street.
- Electric Meters shall be located in the back or side of the building.





- Mechanical ventilation shall be located in a rear of building or roof and not visible from street-view or sidewalk view; preferably on roof it at all feasible.

Windows

Upper façades shall retain their historic appearance and details.

- Preserve and maintain original windows, opening dimensions, and details.
- Do not alter original window openings.
- Preserve and maintain historic detailing such as terra cotta panels and decorative porches.
- If original window is missing, install replacement windows that are appropriate for the period of the building.
- Use wooden, anodized aluminum with dark or bronze finishes, or aluminum with a white baked enamel finish.
- Profiles and trim shall match historic dimensions and details and require HZC approval.
- Vinyl Windows are not permitted.

Recommendation: Preserve and maintain original windows, opening dimensions, and details.





Infill Building (Find better photos – Methodist Church extension)

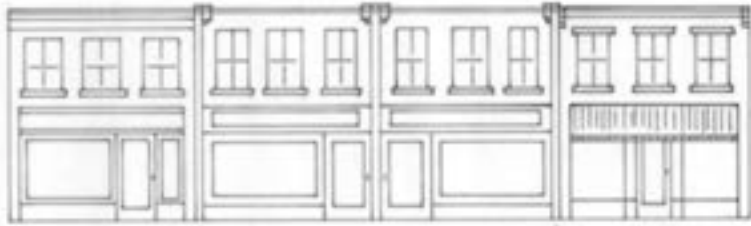
New construction shall be differentiated from the old except that the reconstruction of historic buildings may be allowed.

- Differentiate new construction in the commercial area from the old.
- Make new buildings compatible with adjacent buildings through massing, size, scale, and architectural features. Avoid exact historic reproductions.
- Respect and maintain the existing configuration of storefront and upper façade arrangements.
- Reinforce the appearance and rhythm of historic vertical divisions to maintain consistent facade widths.
- Do not construct buildings with upper facades of solid brick or glass walls or strong horizontal lines.
- Continue the existing alignment and proportions of upper facade windows.
- Use appropriate window shapes, rectangular and arched with vertical, rather than horizontal, proportions on new buildings. Do not use square windows, narrow width horizontal windows, and other designs out of keeping with traditional window forms and shapes.
- Do not exceed the average height of buildings on a block or neighboring blocks, by more than 10 percent.
- Use brick or masonry construction, not exterior surfaces of glass and metal, wood, vinyl, or stucco. No concrete blocks shall be used in the front façade.

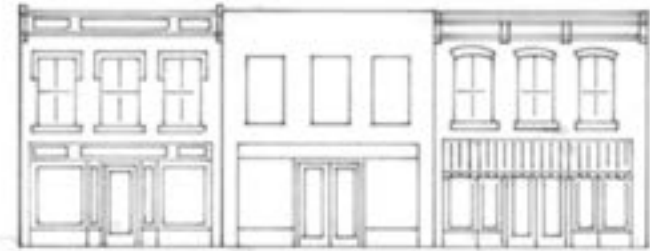




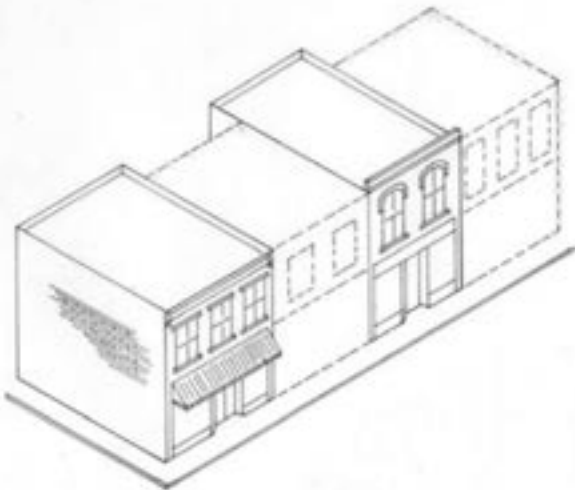
Commercial Guidelines



The new buildings in the center of this row appropriately reflect historic trends in massive, size, scale, and features.



The new building at the center respects the traditional division of the façade into upper and lower sections and maintains the traditional arrangement of storefront and upper elements.



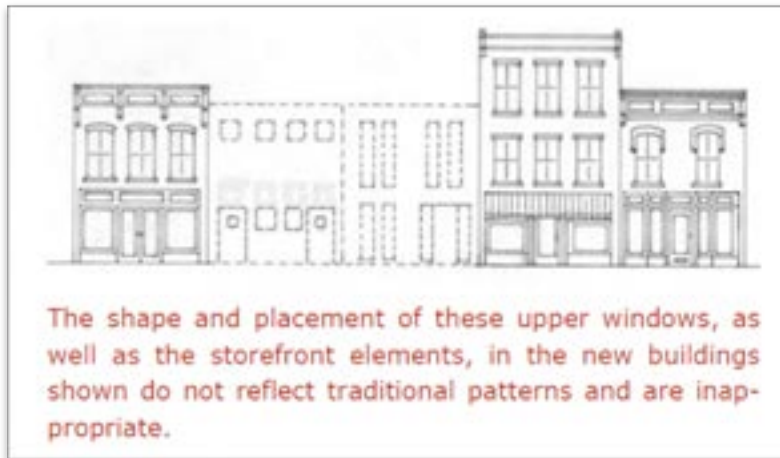
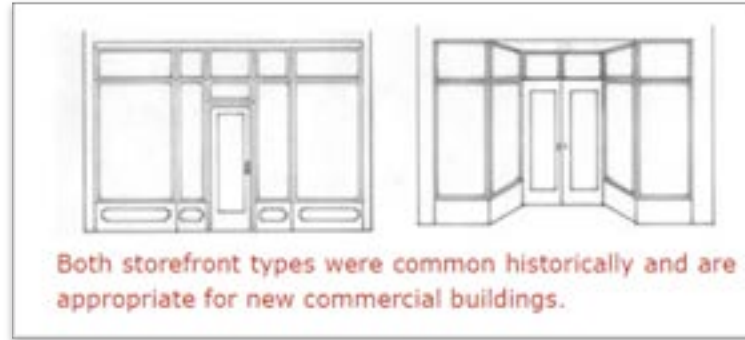
The width of these new buildings, shown with dashed lines, is appropriately similar to existing buildings.



The new buildings at the center use design elements to maintain the existing rhythm of vertical divisions and building elements generally.



Commercial Guidelines





CHAPTER 5

Relocation

Historic buildings should not be relocated from a district. The relocation of historic buildings into a district may be appropriate.

- If desired, relocate a historic building into a district if it does not result in the loss of a historic building on the site to which it is moved.
- If desired, relocate a historic building into a district if it maintains and supports the district's architectural character through its style, height, scale, massing, materials, texture, site, and setting. The building must be architecturally compatible with adjacent structures on its new site.
- Do not remove a historic building or structure from a historic district if it retains its architectural and historical integrity.

Demolition

Do not demolish historic buildings or structures. Demolition of historic buildings in the city's historic districts shall not occur unless authorized.

Demolition may be allowed if the HZC deems at least one or more of the following conditions is met:

- If a building has lost its architectural and historical integrity and its removal will not adversely affect the district's historic character.
- If the denial of the demolition will result in an unreasonable economic hardship.
- If the public safety and welfare requires the removal of a structure or building.



Relocation and Demolition

- If the structural instability or deterioration of a property is demonstrated through a report by a structural engineer or architect. Such a report must clearly detail the property's physical condition, reasons why rehabilitation is not feasible, and cost estimates for rehabilitation versus demolition. In addition to this report there shall be a separate report which details future action on the site.

The storefront should be saved if possible.

If demolition is approved by the HZC, a demolition permit is required.

Economic Hardship

It will be incumbent on the applicant to demonstrate economic hardship. The Historic Zoning Commission advises that the following evidentiary checklist be utilized by the applicant to state their case:

- Current level of economic return:
 - Amount paid for the property, date of purchase, party to whom purchased and relationship between the owner of record, the applicant and the person from whom the property was purchased;
 - Current annual gross and net income from the property and the three previous three years; itemized operating and maintenance expenses for the previous three years; depreciation deduction and annual cash flow before and after debt service, if any, during the same period;
 - Remaining balance on mortgage or other financing secured by the property and annual debt services, if any during the prior three years;
 - Real estate taxes for the previous four years and assessed value of the property according to the two most recent assessed valuations;



Relocation and Demolition

- All appraisals obtained within the last two years by the owner or applicant in connection with the purchase, financing or ownership of the property;
- Form of ownership or operation of the property, whether sole proprietorship, for-profit or not-for-profit corporation, limited partnership, joint venture or other;
- Any State or Federal income tax returns relating to the property for the last four years.
- Any listing of property for sale or rent price asked, and others received, if any, with the previous two years, including testimony and relevant documents regarding:
 - Any real estate broker or firm engaged to sell or lease the property;
 - Reasonableness of price or rent sought by the applicant;
 - Any advertisements placed for the sale or rent of the property.
- Feasibility of alternative uses for the property that could earn a reasonable economic return:
 - Report from a licensed engineer or architect with experience in rehabilitation as to the structural soundness of any building on the property and their suitability for rehabilitation;
 - Cost estimates for the proposed construction, alteration, demolition or removal, and an estimate of any additional costs that would be incurred to comply with the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness;
 - Estimated market value of the property: 1) in its current condition; 2) after completion of the proposed alteration or demolition; and, 3) after renovation of the existing property for continued use;
 - Expert testimony or opinion on the feasibility of rehabilitation or reuse of the existing structure by an architect, developer, real estate consultant, appraiser and/or other real estate professional experienced in historic properties and rehabilitation.



GLOSSARY

