HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT

Design Guidelines/Rehabilitation Standards For Commercial Historic Properties

Adopted by:
City of New Britain
Historic Preservation Commission
May 19, 2014

1.0. INTRODUCTION

New Britain contains a wide variety of historic commercial architecture throughout the city. In addition to the downtown area centered around Monument Park, there is also an important commercial row along Broad Street in the "Little Poland" area. Scattered throughout the city are neighborhood commercial buildings, many of which are at prominent corner locations. These buildings contained community necessities such as grocery stores, hardware stores, barbershops and restaurants. The Downtown/Franklin Square and Broad Street areas contain a significant collection of historic architecture and meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The following guidelines are consistent with those presently in use in the Broad Street Neighborhood Revitalization Zone. Property owners in this area who undertake certain projects using city funds are required to follow the guidelines in order to get project approval. There are no such guidelines presently in place for the Downtown/Franklin Square area but property owners are encouraged to follow the commercial guidelines to reinforce the historic character of their buildings and overall streetscape.

The guidelines have been prepared in accordance with the Department of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation.* These are standards in use across the country for projects utilizing the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits. It is anticipated that both the Downtown/Franklin Square and Broad Street Historic Districts will be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in coming years and property owners seeking tax credits should follow the guideline recommendations in this document.

2.0 STOREFRONTS

Overall Approach:

Storefronts are especially important features of commercial buildings. They define the historic character and style of the building. Historic storefronts and their components should be retained, maintained, and, if needed, repaired. They should not be covered or concealed.

Traditionally, storefronts comprise the first story of a commercial building's main façade and are visually divided from the upper floors of the building through design and architectural details. Typical components of storefronts include awnings, display windows, bulkheads, pilasters, entrances, beltcourses and cornices. Large display windows allowed proprietors to present their merchandise and entice the public into their stores. A common arrangement of storefronts of the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries featured recessed, central entrances, which increased the display area, essentially drawing consumers within the building's confines.

The building at 96 Arch Street exemplifies the typical commercial building form with a street-level storefront consisting of display windows on bulkheads, flanking the central entrance. A sign and awning are above, separating the storefront from the upper façade.

Some 19th and early to mid-20th century buildings may have remodeled storefronts. During the 1920s to the 1940s, storefronts came to reflect an important movement in merchandising and sales and became highly decorated through the use of applied materials. Marble, tile, and tinted glass, commonly known as "Carrara" glass, were all used to update storefronts during these decades. These updated storefronts are today significant and should be preserved and maintained in the event of rehabilitation of a historic building. Additionally, Commercial buildings dating to the 1950s and 1960s may also possess storefronts with significant materials and detailing that should be preserved in future rehabilitation efforts. However, during the urban renewal period following World War II, it was common to cover storefronts of older buildings with synthetic, non-historic materials, in an effort to modernize the downtown appearance. These alterations are often not compatible with overall building character, and removal of such materials may be appropriate when rehabilitation is undertaken. Such storefronts should be replaced with designs based on the original appearance of the storefront, if known.

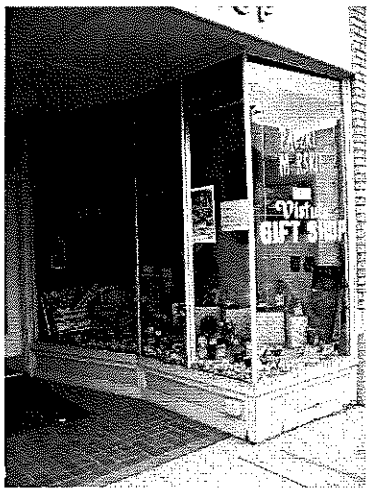
The photo below shows the same building's bulkheads with Carrara glass.

STOREFRONTS, continued...

Display Windows and Bulkheads

Traditional storefronts of the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries have sturdy bulkheads of wood or brick at the foundation of the buildings. On the bulkheads rest the large plate glass display windows through which pedestrians could view a storekeeper's goods.

Original display windows should be preserved, maintained, and, if needed, repaired. Original bulkheads should be preserved, maintained, or repaired where they exist. Original bulkhead panels should not be altered, removed, or covered with non-historic materials.



Bulkheads and display windows at 44 Broad Street.

Awnings

Historically, shopkeepers commonly covered their storefronts with awnings. An awning both offered shelter for customers and, aided in heating and cooling the building. Canvas fabric was most common for awnings prior to the 1940s, when metal awnings became prevalent. The use of awnings declined as air conditioning became more common after the 1940s.

Historic awnings contribute to the character and appearance of storefronts. Any original awnings should be preserved and maintained.

The building at 111 W. Main Street has a well-maintained original metal awning and sign from the mid-20th century.

STOREFRONTS, continued...

Doors and Entrances

Doors and entrances of late-19th and early-to-mid-20th-century commercial buildings are important visual elements. A common door design of this period featured a single, large light set in wood that could vary from simple flush or paneled designs to those with elaborate decorative detail. Double doors were common. Another important element of these entrances was the transom across the façade above the door and display windows. Because these components create a key focal point of commercial properties, major alterations to entrances or replacement with inappropriate doors can severely affect the character of a historic building. Therefore, it is extremely important to preserve and maintain original doors and entrances. Original doors should be preserved unless they are deteriorated beyond repair. Missing or severely deteriorated doors should be replaced with historically appropriate doors.

The building at 77 Arch Street retains its original, single-light glass and wood door.

Staircases and Steps

It is common in downtowns to find that not all commercial entrances are at street level, due to changes in street grading. It is also possible that some commercial buildings have exterior steps or staircases as part of their original design. If this is the case, such original elements should be preserved and maintained. If a commercial building did not historically have exterior staircases or steps, then none should be added. Original steps and stairs accessing entrances should be retained and repaired with materials to match the original. If original steps are beyond repair, they should be rebuilt and replaced with new stairs to match the originals.

Lighting

Even details such as original light fixtures contribute to a building's unique historic character by helping to portray a sense of time and place. If a commercial building retains any original light fixtures, these should be preserved and maintained.

These original lamp posts along W. Main Street are rare examples of historic light fixtures that should be preserved.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS

Storefronts

Retain and maintain historic storefronts and their components

Storefronts are often the most visible feature of historic commercial buildings. Storefront components, including display windows, bulkheads, transoms, doors, cornices, pillars, and pilasters, should be maintained with proper care and treatment. These historic storefront components should not be covered or concealed with modern materials.

Repair deteriorated or damaged storefronts or components so that the storefront retains its historic appearance.

If historic storefronts or their components are missing or beyond repair, the goal in replacement should be to replicate the historic storefront. Replacement components should match the original in size, material, texture, and detail. Historic photographs are immensely helpful in providing evidence of original design and style of missing components.

The building at 44 Main Street retains its original frame bulkheads. This historic storefront element should be maintained.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS, continued...

Awnings

Select awnings of traditional design.

Shed awnings are most appropriate for commercial buildings in New Britain. Arched awnings are appropriate for arched openings. Flat, metal awnings were the common design for awnings on mid-century storefronts. Bubble, concave, or convex designs are inappropriate for historic commercial buildings. The use of internally lit awnings and vinyl awnings is likewise discouraged. Awnings may be retractable or fixed in place. The selection of awning colors should consider the colors of the building itself. Compatible color choices complement the appearance of the storefront. Avoid harsh or overly bright colors.

Place awnings so that they do not cover or detract from architectural details and elements.

If pilasters or columns define the storefront, awnings should be placed within these spaces rather than overlap the entire storefront. Upper façade windows are also appropriate locations for awnings. If the building has transom lights of prism glass or stained glass, these important features should remain visible and should not be covered by awnings.

Select awnings of traditional materials such as canvas and metal.

Do not place solar panels on awnings.

Canvas awnings, like this one at 26 Main Street, are appropriate additions to historic commercial buildings.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS, continued...

Display Windows and Bulkheads

Preserve and maintain original display windows and bulkheads.

Display windows and bulkheads are essential elements of traditional storefronts. They contribute significantly to a commercial property's historic character and appearance. If repair is possible, these elements should be retained rather than replaced.

Select replacement display windows and bulkheads that match the originals in location, design, size, and materials.

If original display windows or bulkheads are missing or deteriorated beyond repair, replacement elements should match the originals. If the original is unknown, replacement windows should mimic the traditional scale with large glass lights and as few structural divisions as possible. The goal should be to maintain the traditional transparent storefront design. If the original bulkhead material is unknown, replacement may be of wood, brick, metal, or other material that is appropriate with the façade.

Install proper framing and glass when repairing or replacing display windows.

Wood, copper, bronze metal, steel, or aluminum window mullions or framing is appropriate. If privacy is required, interior shades or blinds are preferable to tinted glass. The use of tinted glass on a storefront is appropriate only if it was used historically.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS, continued...

Doors and Entrances

Preserve and maintain original doors and entrances.

The original components of a historic building's entrance — doors, surrounds, transoms, sidelights, and detailing — should not be removed or altered unless proved to be deteriorated beyond repair. Original framing such as jambs, sills, and headers of openings also should be retained/maintained. Primary doors, or those on the main façade, are especially important to a building's historic appearance and should be preserved. Also, historic door openings should not be altered; do not fill in or partially block these openings.

Keep repairs to deteriorated or damaged historic doors consistent with historic materials.

When historic doors require repairing, use methods and materials that will retain their historic fabric and appearance as much as possible. Epoxy may be used to strengthen and replace deteriorated wood.

Replace historic doors that are beyond repair or are missing with new doors that replicate the originals.

When historic doors require replacement, the new doors should match the originals in materials and size, and should be consistent for the style and period of the building. They should have the same series of panels and have a frame of the same dimensions. Documented research and/or historic photographs can aid in the effort to match original doors. Adjacent buildings of the same style and similar date of construction may also assist in identifying appropriate doors. In replacing missing doors, replacement doors should be similar in design to the original in style, materials, glazing (glass area) and lights (pane configuration).

These bronze doors are a unique feature at 300 Main Street and should be preserved.

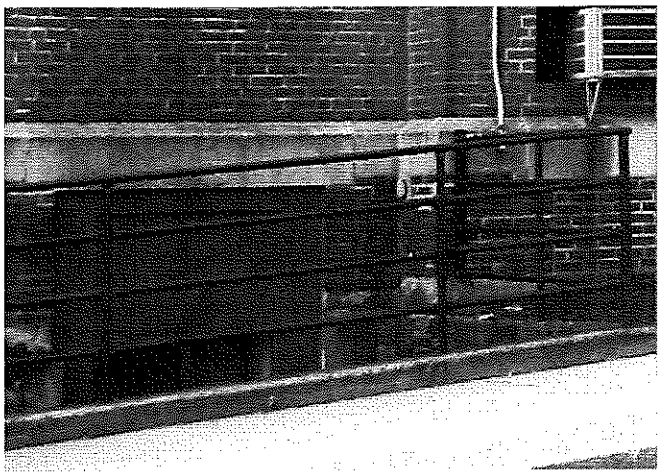
DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS, continued...

Do not install new door openings where none existed.
Altering door openings is discouraged, especially on the main facade. New openings may be located on side or rear elevations. Where new openings are permitted, they should be compatible in scale, size, proportion, placement, and style to historic openings.

Staircases and Steps
Retain original staircases and steps.
Staircases and steps that are original to a building are another historic component of the building and add to its historic identity.

Make repairs with in kind materials.
Wood and concrete stairs should be repaired with materials to match the original. If tile was historically used, its use in repair work is appropriate.

The addition of handrails is allowed.
As required by modern building codes, wood or metal handrails may be added to historic stairs or steps that never had handrails. These should be compatible with the style and design of the building. New or replacement stairs or steps can be designed to include handrails that are simple in design and no larger than 1-1/2" in diameter.



For safety, handrailing is an acceptable addition to historic buildings.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR STOREFRONTS, continued...

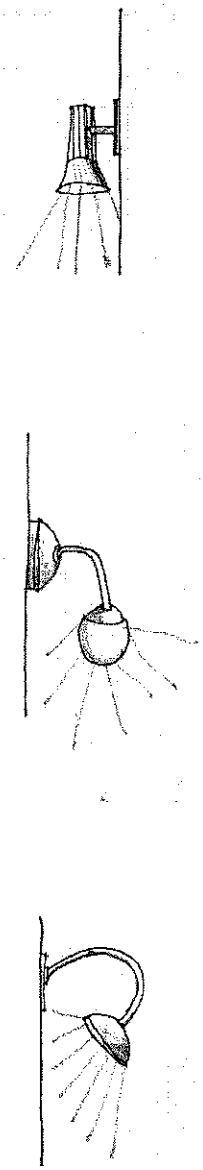
Lighting

Maintain historic light fixtures.
Original light fixtures enhance the historic character of a building. Hen possible, they should be preserved. Deteriorated or damaged historic light fixtures should be repaired using methods and materials that allow them to retain their historic appearance.

Repair or replace missing or severely damaged historic light fixtures with replacements that replicate the originals.
Historic photographs, or physical evidence can help determine original light fixture design. In the absence of such evidence, a design matching the building's period and style is most appropriate. The use of modern, low-wattage bulbs is recommended.

Fixtures introduced to the exterior should be simple in design and appropriate to the character of the building
If modern light fixtures are to be used as replacements or where light fixtures previously did not exist, they should be unobtrusive, conceal the light source, and direct light toward the building.

Light fixtures should not damage or obscure architectural features or other building elements.
When securing light fixtures, make sure they do not damage masonry, siding, or other historic materials. Lights should be positioned in a manner that enhances visibility without detracting from the building's historic character.



Examples of appropriate commercial lighting fixtures.

3.0 PRIMARY MATERIALS

Overall Approach:

Primary historic building materials, such as brick, wood siding, stone, or metal should be preserved whenever possible. If historic materials are damaged, limited replacement with material matching the original may be considered. Proper maintenance of historic primary materials excludes harsh or abrasive cleaning treatments. Historic primary materials should never be covered or concealed with other materials.

Background

Brick was the dominate primary building material for commercial buildings in New Britain in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The distinctive qualities of masonry such as texture, finish, size and scale, help to express the overall historic character of a building.

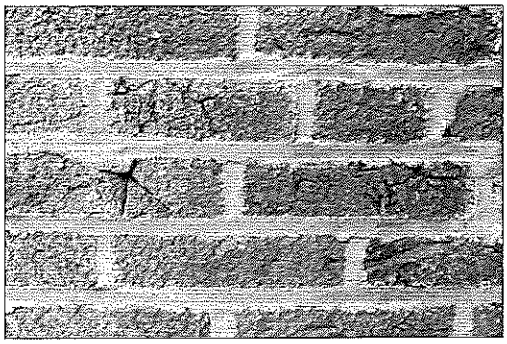
In the mid-20th century an array of new materials were introduced for use on commercial building facades. One example is tinted glass, known as "Carrara Glass," which became popular for storefront exteriors in the 1930s and 1940s. Other storefront materials that came into use were aluminum and stainless steel for display window surrounds. During the 1950s, the use of thin veneers for exterior sheathing became popular, using materials such as marble, stone, and concrete. Porcelain panels, concrete panels and glass curtain walls were also used for commercial buildings during this period.

Proper maintenance and protection of primary materials is key to their preservation. Wood surfaces should be painted, and masonry should be kept dry. When deterioration occurs, primary materials should be repaired. In cases where materials are beyond repair, replacement with material matching the original is appropriate. Replacement of original materials should be as minimal as possible, however, in order to maintain as much historic fabric as possible.

PRIMARY MATERIALS, continued...

Brickwork and Masonry

Brick and stone have been typical primary building materials in New Britain since its founding. The unique scale, texture, and finish of the brick or stone used in a given building contribute to its distinct appearance and historic character. When repairing historic masonry, it is important to match the original materials as closely as possible. The color, texture, and joint profile of the historic mortar are also important characteristics.



Hard mortars may force moisture through the more permeable brick and force mechanical stresses to be relieved through the softer brick...

...which may lead to cracking, spalling.

Properly maintained masonry can last indefinitely. The keys to brick and mortar preservation are to keep water out and to apply the correct type of mortar when repairs are needed. Soft mortars are most appropriate for buildings constructed prior to the mid 20th century. More modern buildings may have harder mortars, and should be mare with mortars similar to those used in their construction.

Siding

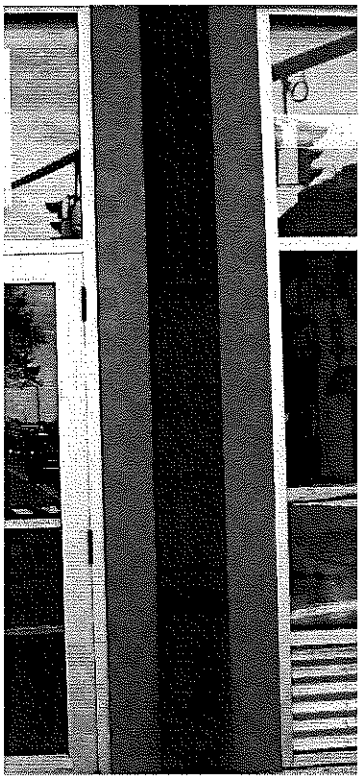
Wood siding is not as common on commercial buildings as masonry, but in instances where it is the original exterior material, it should be preserved. The original exterior siding of a building helps convey its historic character.

PRIMARY MATERIALS, continued...

Original siding should never be covered with new materials. Vinyl and aluminum poorly match the appearance and texture of wood siding. Additionally, these synthetic materials can also cause damage to historic buildings, as they do not allow the historic building to "breathe" and do not provide sufficient permeability. Moisture and condensation can become trapped in the wood underneath, leading to rot and structural problems. Removal of synthetic siding and the rehabilitation of original wood siding is highly encouraged.

Cast Iron and Metal

Many historic commercial buildings feature decorative cast iron and other metals including copper, tin, and steel. Exterior metals may have both structural and decorative uses and are found in cornices, window hoods, capitals, columns, lintels, sills, and other elements. Metal features should be preserved and maintained or replicated with new metal to match the original. Metals should be cleaned by the gentlest means possible to prevent damage or discoloration.



This cast iron pilaster at 66 W. Main Street has decorative and structural functions. When the building's storefront was remodeled, care was taken not to cover this feature.

Paint

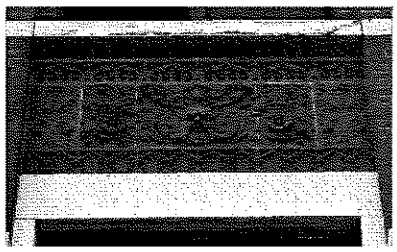
Property owners are encouraged to select colors in keeping with the building's architectural style and period. Commercial buildings appear in a wide variety of color schemes. While paint color does not impact the form of a building, it can affect the perception of the building and help it blend with the surrounding streetscape. Selected colors schemes should be compatible with surrounding structures to create a sense of visual continuity along the block, and they should reflect the historic style and period of the building.

Generally, removal of exterior paint from historic buildings should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Conditions such as mildewing, excessive chalking, or staining may warrant paint removal. In such cases paint can be removed to the next sound layer using the gentlest means possible. Where deep cracks occur in paint or if blistering and peeling is extensive, the old paint should be completely removed before repainting. If woodwork is stripped to bare wood, priming should take place within 48 hours (or as soon as wood is dry if it is wet).

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR PRIMARY MATERIALS

Generally, property owners are advised not to paint masonry or brick buildings that have not been previously painted. An exception to the rule might be when masonry is mismatched due to improper repairs, repointing, etc., and painting would unify the exterior appearance. Paint may be applied to masonry walls that have been sandblasted in order to form a protective surface.

Brickwork and Masonry



This terra cotta panel at 246 Main Street is a primary material as well as a decorative architectural feature.

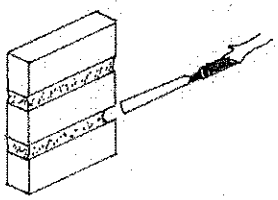
Preserve and maintain original brick, stone, terra cotta, cast concrete, mortar, and other masonry original to a building. Masonry is a character-defining element of historic buildings. Different textures, finishes, and patterns should be preserved as they contribute to a building's distinct appearance and historic character. Original masonry surfaces should not be covered or concealed with non-historic materials such as stucco, metal, adobe or vinyl.

When cleaning masonry, use the gentlest means possible. Historic masonry should be cleaned only when necessary to prevent deterioration or to remove graffiti and stains and should never be subjected to any kind of harsh, abrasive cleaning such as sandblasting or forceful pressure-washing. Mild detergent cleansers may be used to remove dirt or grime from masonry. Water and a mild detergent using natural bristle brushes, and/or a non-harmful chemical solution, both followed by a low-pressure water rinse is recommended. When cleaning brick, it is advisable to test a small area first to ensure the method and cleaning agent are not detrimental to the masonry. Do not clean or remove paint from masonry with high pressure water that exceeds 600 pounds per square inch.

Keep historic masonry visible and untreated. Masonry that has never been painted should remain unpainted. Painting is an option if the appearance of the historic brick and mortar has been severely compromised from earlier repairs or

patching. For example, brick or masonry that is extremely mismatched from previous repairs may be painted. Also, buildings that have been sandblasted and show masonry and mortar erosion may be painted to restore a protective surface.

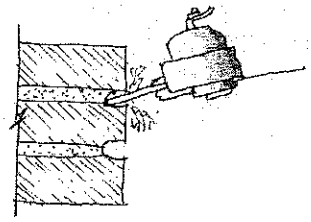
If repairs have failed to prevent water from penetrating through the masonry, getting into bricks, the use of water-repellant coatings is recommended. However, silicone-based sealants should not be used on masonry walls, as these types of sealants do not allow the brick to "breathe" and can trap moisture within walls.



Hand tools (above) are preferred when removing mortar. Avoid power tools (below) which can damage historic masonry.

Avoid the use of power tools on historic masonry.
Power tools are damaging and should be avoided when removing mortar. Hand tools are preferred since they allow for precision work and minimal damage to adjacent brick and stone.

Preserve original mortar when feasible, but if repointing is necessary use mortar mixes similar to the original.
Before the 1930s, soft mortar with a high ratio of lime was historically used in masonry buildings. Relatively low proportions, if any, of Portland cement were used. Harder mortars appear in more modern buildings. New mortar should match the original mortar in width, depth, color, joint profile, and texture. When repointing historic mortar, it is important to use a mix that is softer and more permeable than the masonry units to ensure the preservation of the historic masonry.



It may be necessary to consult with a historic architect, architectural conservator, or experienced contractor to determine the appropriate treatment.

Impermeable modern mortar can be inappropriate for repointing older brick and stone because they may force moisture to pass through the more permeable masonry rather than the mortar. Mechanical stresses cause expansion, contraction, settlement, and water-driven deterioration mechanisms like freeze-thaw will also be relieved in the masonry rather than the mortar if the latter is harder than the former. Modern mortars may also contain harmful soluble salts that further accelerate masonry deterioration.

DESIGN STANDARADS FOR PRIMARY MATERIALS, continued...

Siding

Original siding should be preserved and maintained.
A building's original siding material is a significant part of the historic fabric. It provides scale, texture, and shape, which help to define and characterize an architectural style. Loss of original siding can change the identity of a building in an adverse manner.

Original siding should be repaired when necessary, and replaced only if it is proven to be deteriorated beyond repair.
Regular maintenance of siding will ensure its longevity. Wood siding should be painted or opaque stained to provide a finished surface. (Paint color is not reviewed.) If replacement of siding is necessary due to deterioration, new siding should match the original in size, placement, and design.

Synthetic or substitute materials such as vinyl, aluminum, and asbestos are not compatible materials to historic buildings built prior to about 1950, and are discouraged as replacement materials on these earlier historic buildings.
Synthetic sidings are poor substitutes for traditional materials and greatly detract from a building's historic appearance. Traditional materials such as wood or brick should never be replaced with synthetic materials. However, these types of materials might be suitable for buildings constructed in more recent decades if the materials were used originally.

Clean siding with the gentlest means possible.
Cleaning methods such as propane-torching, sand–blasting, or pressure-washing should never be employed, as they are destructive, dangerous, and/or abrasive.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR PRIMARY MATERIALS, continued...

Cast Iron and Metal

Cast iron and metal original to a building should be preserved and maintained.
Metal elements are often important in defining a building's historic character and significance. Original metal features should be cared for properly and not covered, removed, or obscured.

Metal elements should be cleaned with the gentlest means possible and kept free of rust.
Clean soft metals such as bronze, lead, tin, and copper with appropriate chemical methods to ensure they will not become damaged or discolored, For removal of paint build-up or corrosion, use the gentlest cleaning methods for cast iron, wrought iron and steel metals. If hand-scraping and wire brushing have proven ineffective, low pressure dry grit blasting (less than 100 pounds per square inch) may be appropriate as long as it does not damage the surface.

Repair metal features by patching, splicing, or otherwise reinforcing the metal using recommended preservation methods.
For extensively deteriorated or missing parts, repair may also include limited replacement in kind. As an alternative, compatible substitution of materials is acceptable, when surviving examples or sufficient documentation can facilitate an accurate reconstruction of the original. Missing elements should be replicated with new metal to match the original as closely as possible in texture, profile, and appearance. In some situations, it may be acceptable to use substitute materials such as aluminum, wood, plastics, and fiberglass, which are painted to match the metal. Check to be sure any substitute material is compatible with the original metal and there is no danger of a galvanic reaction.

These original cast iron pilasters at the entrance on 191 Arch Street should be retained and maintained with gentle cleaning.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR PRIMARY MATERIALS, continued...

Tinted Glass, Marble and Stone Veneers, Concrete Panels, Porcelain and Aluminum

In the decades of the mid-20th century, several new materials first appeared on commercial building facades. These included tinted glass, aluminum and stainless steel for display window surrounds, porcelain panels, concrete panels, and glass curtain walls. Some of these materials are no longer manufactured, creating challenges for repair and replication. It is always preferred to repair than replace original elements. However, if repair is not feasible, use materials that match the original as closely as possible. There is a growing industry in salvaging and selling materials from this time period and if not available locally, the internet is a useful means for locating them. Guidelines for these materials are as follows:

Preserve and maintain historic materials from the mid-20th century.

If repair is not an option, consult salvage companies or internet sources for replacement materials.

If exact replacement materials cannot be obtained, use materials that replicate the original as closely as possible in appearance, color and texture.

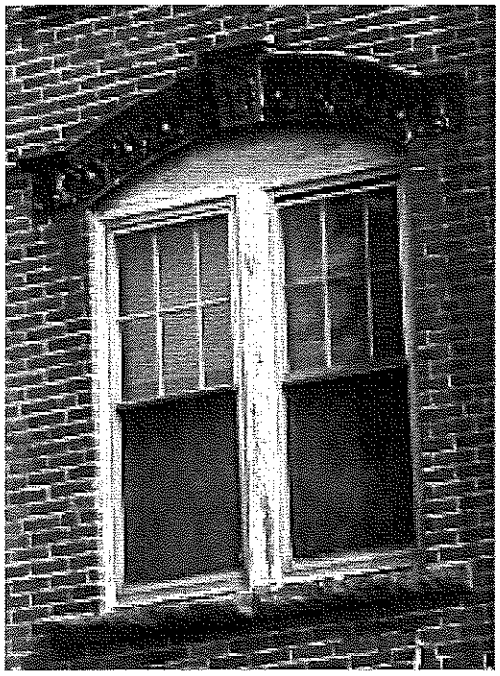
Paint

Maintain the building's original historic painted or unpainted appearance.

The painted surface of historically painted buildings or features should be maintained. Buildings that have not been previously painted should not be painted. Exceptions are when masonry is extremely mismatched due to improper repairs, repointing, etc. and painting would unify the exterior appearance. Paint may be applied to masonry walls that have been sandblasted in order to form a protective surface.

Use non-abrasive methods to remove paint and protect historic masonry during removal.

Removal of paint from historically unpainted buildings should occur only after insuring that the paint is not protecting bricks with damaged surfaces. Non-abrasive methods such as chemical cleaning, hand-scraping, or hand-sanding should be used in removal. Electric heat guns and heat plates are advised with caution. Destructive or abrasive techniques, such as high-pressure removal, should not be used.



Non-abrasive methods will carefully remove flaking paint, then fresh paint can be applied. (116 Winter Street)

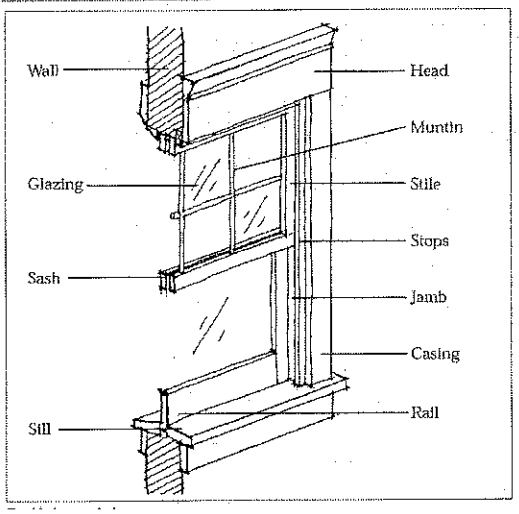
4.0 WINDOWS

Overall Approach:

Original windows should be preserved, maintained, or repaired. Historic windows should not be concealed, enclosed or covered. If deterioration of original windows warrants replacement, new windows should match the historic window in size, and number and arrangement of panes, or lights. The frames of the replacement windows should also be of the same material, such as wood or metal, as original windows. Window openings on facades should not be altered.

Background

Windows are one of the most significant architectural features and visual components of historic buildings. Window design, placement, and arrangement together define the historic character of a building. Windows help define scale and add visual interest, and they often have unique ornamental trim, hoods, or surrounds that help to characterize a building's style. Because historic windows are so significant to the character of a building, their retention and treatment is very important.



Profile of a sash window noting its different elements.

WINDOWS, continued...

Why Preserving Original Windows is Recommended and Makes Economic and Environmental Sense

Nationally-accepted standards for preservation advise the retention and careful treatment of historic wood and metal windows unless the windows have become deteriorated beyond repair. The reasons for preserving original windows include:

- Windows are a significant part of the original fabric of historic structures. Their size, arrangement, and unique decorative qualities help define and characterize an architectural style and time period as well as the scale of a building and/or historic district. The loss of windows alters the defining qualities of the historic fabric, structure and/or historic district. Adding storm windows to rebuilt historic wood windows can make them as efficient as new vinyl windows and costs less than the installation of new windows. A comprehensive window study in Vermont in 1996 found that adding weatherstripping to a wood window with an added storm window was as energy efficient as most new vinyl thermo-pane windows.

- Historic window frames, made from old-growth lumber, can last indefinitely, unlike new-growth wood or vinyl.

- All windows expand and contract with temperature changes. However, vinyl expands more than twice as much as wood and seven times more than glass. As a result of such expansion and contraction, failed seals between the frame and glass can reduce performance significantly. Vinyl windows have a high failure rate – more than one-third of all windows being replaced today are less than ten years old (Source: *Fine Homebuilding Magazine,* October/November, 2004).

Any energy savings from replacing wood windows with aluminum or vinyl seldom justifies the costs of installation. For most buildings, it would take decades to recover the initial cost of installation of replacement windows. With a life expectancy of 25 years or less, installing new vinyl or aluminum windows does not make good economic sense.

WINDOWS, continued...

- Often the appearance of vinyl windows does not closely resemble historic wood windows; their texture and thinness are inappropriate for New Britain's historic districts. If original windows are beyond reasonable repair, aluminum-clad windows baked enamel finishes are a more acceptable alternative.

- Historic wood and metal windows are made from natural materials and represent embodied energy.

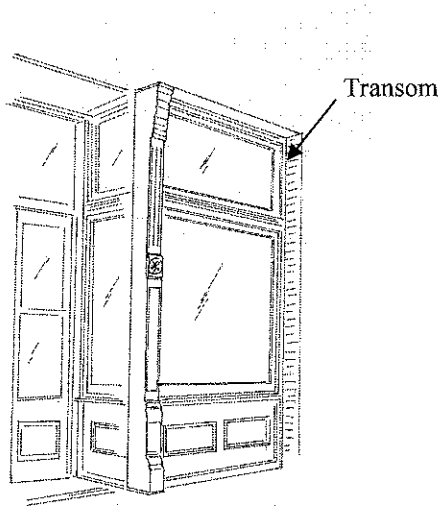
- When vinyl windows are replaced, they are not recyclable. They must be thrown away and are therefore detrimental to the Environment.

Vinyl windows do not have the appearance of historic wood windows.

WINDOWS, continued...

Transoms

Transoms were common components of storefronts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They allowed additional natural light into stores and, when open, aided in ventilation. Architecturally, transoms also enhanced the building's aesthetics as a decorative detail. Transoms are located immediately above a storefront's large display windows and doors. They should be preserved as key architectural features of storefronts and entrances. Original transoms and framing should be preserved and maintained, and, if necessary, repaired. Luxfer glass tiles, often with intricate design detail, is especially decorative and worthy of preservation.



Storm Windows

The installation of storm windows is conducive to preservation of historic windows, protecting them from harsh weather. Additionally, storm windows help lower energy costs. It is important, however, to carefully integrate storm windows with historic framing and details. They should be of a design that allows a full view of the historic windows they protect. They may, though, have a central meeting rail at the same location as the historic window behind it.

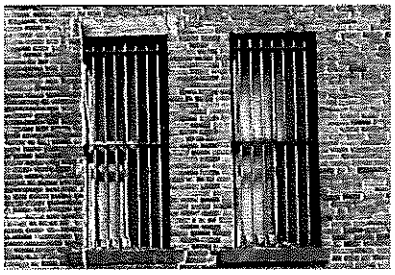
WINDOWS, continued...

Appropriate materials for storm windows include painted wood, anodized aluminum or baked enamel; ideally, their materials should match those of the original or historic windows. Unfinished aluminum storm windows are discouraged. If it is desired to add screens to historic windows, they also should be of full-view design, or may have a central meeting rail to match the historic window.

Security Doors and Windows

When a commercial business is faced with security issues, the business owner may consider installing some form of security system to protect the property. There are several options for security, including the installation of alarms and video surveillance. If security doors or windows are installed, care should be taken in their installation as to not damage or detract from the building's historic character and appearance.

If a property owner decides to install security doors and windows, it is recommended that these additions be of non-obtrusive designs. Security doors of full-view design, with minimal structural framing that allows the viewing of the historic door behind it, are advised. The addition of such a design would be allowed even on facades, though it is discouraged. Security doors with elaborate grillwork or decorative detailing are not appropriate. Burglar guards should also be as visually unobtrusive as possible. When security grilles and storm/screen windows and doors are added to buildings, care should be taken to integrate these items with the building's historic framing and details.



These security grilles are installed on windows on the rear elevation. They would not be appropriate on a façade.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WINDOWS

Treatment of historic wood windows

Preserve and maintain original windows.

Window openings, windows, window details, and the size and shape of these elements help establish rhythm, scale and proportion of buildings and reflect architectural style and character

Repair deteriorating wood windows as needed. When possible, replace missing panes or damaged sashes rather than entire windows.

To help protect the building's historic character and appearance, save as much of the historic window material and detail as possible. Repair is preferred over replacement. Epoxy may be used to strengthen deteriorated wood. Replace only those elements necessary.

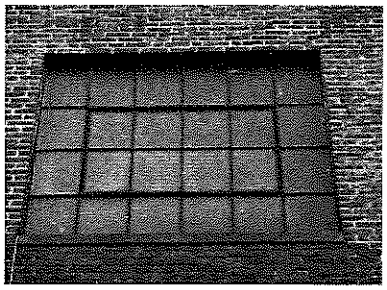
Original wood sash windows, like this example at 52 Main Street, should be kept in good repair.

Treatment of historic steel, aluminum, bronze and other metal windows

Preserve, maintain and repair original windows.

During the mid-20th century, metal windows such as steel, aluminum and bronze became widely used. These architectural elements should be preserved, as well as their original designs and details. When repair is undertaken, materials closely matching the original should be used.

Concerns over energy conservation have more recently prompted some replacement of metal windows. It is true that during the 1950s and 1960s, aluminum windows were often installed with single glazing on large curtain walls, resulting in poor energy efficiency. However, improving the energy performance of metal windows does not require their replacement; these historic materials can be preserved and their energy performance improved by the application of weather stripping and security fittings. Several other options are available, including spring-metal, vinyl strips, compressible foam tapes and sealant beads are other weather stripping. Another alternative involves the retention of the original window frames and the replacement only of the window panes with thermal glass panes (3/8" to 5/8" thick), provided that the rolled metal sections are at least 1" wide. Or the property owner may choose simply to install storm windows to improve energy efficiency.



Metal windows should also be preserved. (222 Main Street)

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WINDOWS

Replacement Windows

Replace windows only if they are beyond repair, and replacements should match the original in size, materials, and number and arrangement of lights.

If historic windows must be replaced, wood is the material of choice; however, other acceptable alternatives include aluminum-clad wood or aluminum. It is not difficult to find appropriately sized wood windows for historic commercial buildings through most major window manufacturers. Anodized or baked-on enamel aluminum, in white or dark finishes is also appropriate; however, for multi-story buildings, the historic character is best preserved by having wood windows installed on the second story and baked or anodized aluminum windows on the third floor and above. Replace historic metal windows with like materials.

The anodized windows at 38-50 W. Main Street are appropriate replacements.

In addition to materials, another concern in replacing windows is that they match the historic wood or metal window in appearance, dimensions, depth of frame, and the arrangement of divided lights. True divided lights for windows are recommended, or windows with lights that are bonded to the glass with spacers and appropriate grid profiles.

The use of vinyl windows as replacements is discouraged. These windows do not have the same appearance and profile as wood or aluminum windows.

Transoms

Original transom glass and framing should be preserved and maintained.

Transoms add distinct character and are important storefront elements. When repair of transoms is necessary, materials should match the original.

Transom lights should not be obscured.

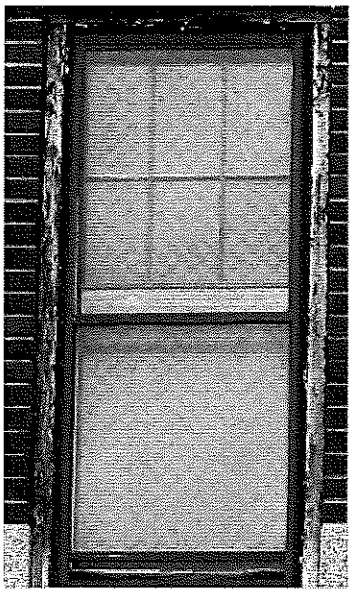
Do not cover or conceal transoms with signs, the introduction of new materials, or other items. Awnings installed below the transom are appropriate as they do not obscure transoms from complete view.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR WINDOWS, continued

Storm Windows

Storm windows and doors should be of appropriate material and design so as not to detract from the building's historic appearance.

When fitting storm windows and doors for installation, wood, baked-on enamel or anodized aluminum are appropriate materials. These additions should fit within the window frames, not overlap the frames. Storm windows should be full-view design or with the central meeting rail at the same location as the historic window. Storm doors also should be of full-view or half-light design. They should be compatible with the existing door and not obscure or cover architectural features.



Storm windows should be full-view in design, so that the original window remains visible, like the example one the 6/1 windows at 37-39 Main Street.

Security Doors and Windows

Security doors are most appropriate for rear and side elevations.

Entrances on facades are key focal points and visual elements of historic buildings. Therefore, security doors are not recommended, as they can detract from historic appearance of the building. Side and rear elevations are less visible, and security doors and windows may be added on these elevation.

Security doors and windows should be full-view design or have a central meeting rail that matches the historic door or window.

Full-view security doors allow the historic doors behind them to remain visible. Security doors with ornate or decorative grillwork obscure historic features and are not permitted on facades.

5.0 ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Overall Approach:

Historic architectural details and features are important stylistic elements that help to define a building's character and should be preserved and maintained. Do not remove or conceal historic architectural details. Repair of such details is preferred to replacement; if it is necessary to replace historic architectural details, the material, design, color, and texture of the replacements should match those of the original feature as closely as possible.

Background

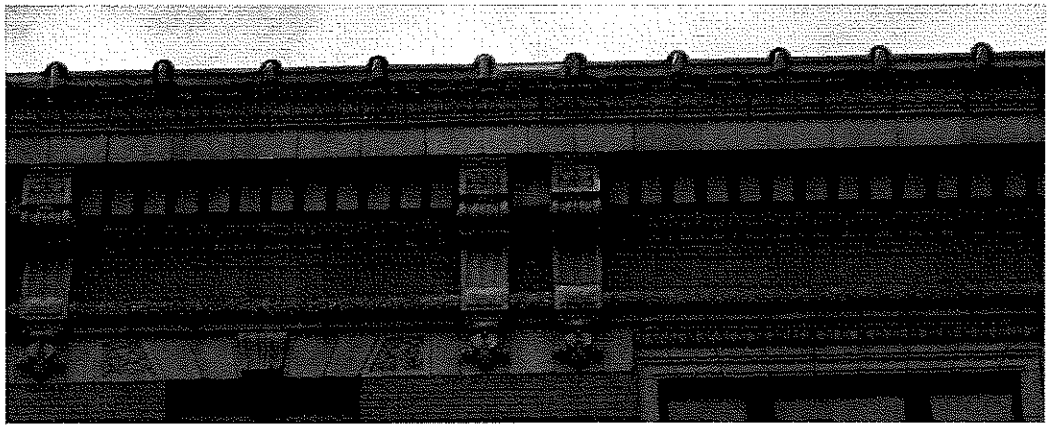
Architectural details convey historic character. Some common architectural details include features such as columns, pilasters, window hoods and surrounds, brackets, cornices, and decorative panels, windows, and ornamentation. These elements add visual interest, help define building styles, and exhibit craftsmanship. A variety of finishes and materials are used to provide unique features of individual buildings, including brick, stone, concrete, metal, and tile.

Bas relief detail at 54 W. Main Street

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS, continued...

Cornices

Cornices provide decoration along the roofline of buildings. Different cornice designs are often associated with specific architectural styles. Therefore, preserving these features helps maintain the historic character of buildings. Historic cornices should be preserved and maintained. Do not remove, conceal or cover historic cornices with modern materials. When repair is necessary, care should be taken to maintain the configuration, details, and materials of the original cornice.



The cornice at 272 Main Street is highly detailed.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Historic architectural details and features should be retained and maintained, and not covered or concealed.
Historic architectural features convey style, character, and craftsmanship. The preservation of these elements is important in retaining a building's historic integrity. Removing or concealing original architectural details can strip the building of its historic character. Proper care and maintenance will help to prolong the lifespan of architectural details and features.

The elaborate terra cotta panel at 59 Arch Street should be maintained and never concealed.

Only serious staining should warrant cleaning.
Cleaning architectural details and features should be undertaken only as needed to ensure their longevity . In general, water, mild detergent, and brushes are appropriate cleaning agents and tools. When a property owner is presented with a more complicated situations, it would be prudent to consult with an architectural conservator, historic architect, or professional contractor with extensive experience working with historic buildings.

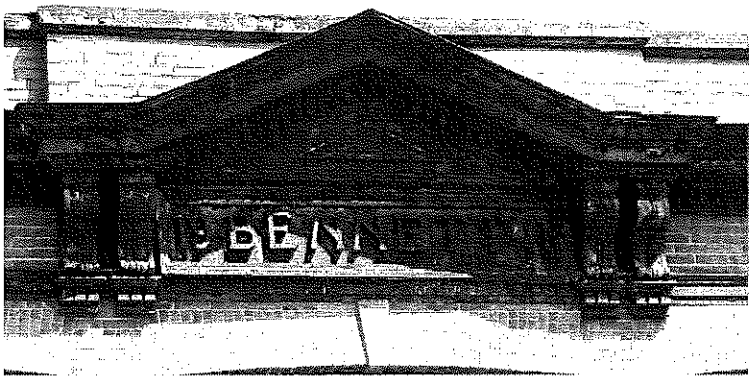
When repairing deteriorated or damaged historic architectural features, use the methods that allow them to retain their historic appearance and as much of the building's historic fabric as possible.
Where wood features have experienced some decay, epoxy can be used to strengthen damaged areas and fill in small openings. For large areas of decay, it is appropriate to excise rotted material and fit new wood into the resulting gap. For metal features that have become lightly corroded, appropriate methods of rust and flaking paint removal involves the use of a wire brush. If corrosion is heavy, alternative methods include low pressure grit or sand blasting, flame cleaning, and chemical treatment. It is recommended that a property owner seek professional help for these latter methods, which are more hazardous. Care should be taken to cover and protect adjacent materials such as brick, glass, and wood during grit blasting. Upon completion of rust and paint removal, the metal pieces should be painted. Epoxies may be used to fill small gaps.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS, continued...

Architectural features should not be added to buildings where none historically existed.
Architectural details and features are visually important elements of a building in that they impart the historic style of the building. Removal of original features will alter a building's historic character, just as introducing non-historic elements will compromise the building's historic integrity.

Replace missing or severely damaged historic architectural details and features with examples that replicate the original.
When replacement of historic architectural details is necessary, care should be taken to match the original feature in design, proportion, and detail. Consult historic records, such as historic photographs, drawings, graphics, or physical evidence to assist in matching original details. If no such evidence can be found, it is appropriate to follow a simple design in keeping with the building's historic architectural style and period.

When replacing historic architectural features, property owners are encouraged to use the same materials; however, if substitute materials successfully match the appearance of the original detail, they may be appropriate. This may be especially true for features such as upper facades and cornices, not readily visible from street level.



This metal cornice is not severely damaged, just in need of cleaning. Repair is recommended over replacement.

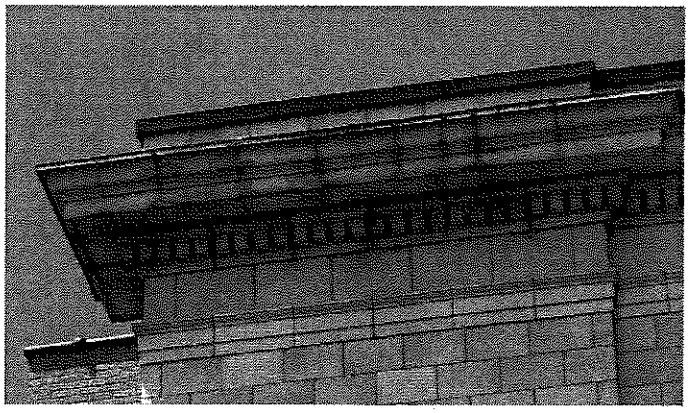
DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS, continued...

Cornices

Historic cornices should be preserved and maintained.
Cornices are visible and often decorative features of historic buildings and help to define their character and architectural style. Do not remove, cover, or conceal original cornices with modern materials.

Cornices should not be added to a building if the building appears to have never had such a feature.
A historic building's integrity is compromised by the addition of non-historic elements.

When replacing a missing cornice, match the original in style, materials, size, and design.
If an original cornice is missing, physical or pictorial evidence of the original design can aid in its replacement. However, if no historical, physical and/or pictorial evidence exists for the building, it is appropriate to install a new cornice that is compatible in size, scale, style, and materials to the building and adjacent buildings.

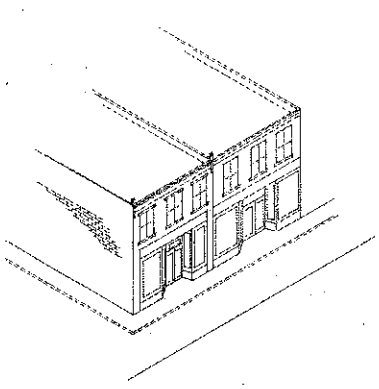


The cornice on the building at 99 W. Main Street is an important, character-defining feature and should be preserved and maintained.

6.0 ROOFS

Overall Approach:

Roofs can help define building style and are important elements of historic appearance. The shape of the historic roof should be retained. If modern features are added, they should be shielded from public view.



Most historic commercial buildings were designed with flat or sloping roofs.

Background

The shape and design of a historic building's roof contribute to the overall character of the building. Along a streetscape, the repetition of similar roof forms engender a sense of rhythm, scale, and cohesiveness. Roof pitch, materials, size, and orientation collectively help define roof character and appearance. Typically, commercial buildings have flat or shed roofs; gable and hipped roofs are not common. The building's roofline on the façade is often enhanced with decorative features such as parapets, cornices, finials, and cresting.

Chimneys

Typically, commercial buildings do not have chimneys. Though, it is not uncommon on commercial buildings to find brick flues along side or rear walls. These were used to release heat and generally were not visible from the street

Given modern heating and cooling technology, any flues or chimneys on commercial buildings became obsolete. Still, they should be retained and maintained. Preserving an original chimney contributes to the property's architectural integrity. Chimneys should be maintained and preserved in accordance with the primary materials guidelines.

ROOFS, continued...

Gutters and Downspouts

Other utilitarian features of historic commercial buildings are gutters and down spouts. These, of course, have retained their historic function. Through the mid-20th century, boxed or built-in gutters were the style most commonly used. Original gutters and downspouts not only contribute to the overall architectural integrity of a historic building, but they also continue to perform the important function of diverting water away from the building. By providing proper drainage, gutters and downspouts prevent water damage to roofs, walls, and foundations, ensuring maintenance of buildings.

For these reasons, gutters and downspouts should be regularly maintained. Preserve and repair as needed original built-in box gutters or hidden gutters. If it is necessary to install new hanging gutters, the most historically accurate choice is the half-round design. Appropriate alternatives include "K" or ogee design gutters.

This downspout helps contain rain water and diverts it away from the building at 66 W. Main Street.

Skylights

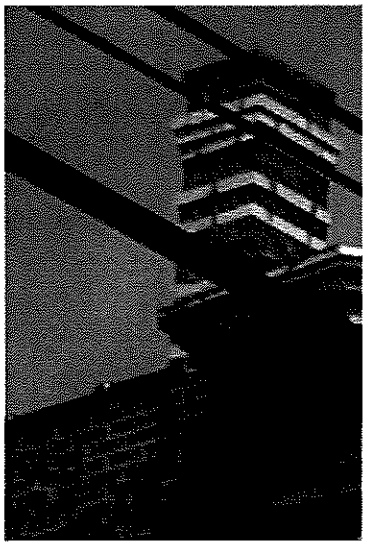
Skylights typically are modern additions that allow more natural light into a building's interior. It is appropriate to install skylights to a historic building if their addition does not damage any significant architectural feature nor create a visual impact that detracts from historic appearance of the building.

Installation of skylights, therefore, is appropriate on rear roof lines or behind gables or dormers. Skylights that lie flat, flush with the roofline, are appropriate. Preserve and maintain light wells with skylights on top, found on older buildings.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ROOFS

Historic roof shapes and features should be retained.
Preserved roofs in their original size, shape and pitch, and also their original features (such as cresting, finials, etc.). Roof features, such as parapets, cornices, and chimney flues, should be retained and preserved.

The introduction of new roof elements should not detract from the building's historic appearance and character.
Modern roof additions, such as skylights, solar panels, decks, balconies, and satellite dishes, should be concealed from public views. Also, they should not obscure original features.


This brick flue is a historic roof element that should be preserved.

Chimneys
Original chimneys should not be removed or altered.
Original chimneys should be retained and maintained, even if they have lost their historic function. Do not cover original chimneys with stucco or other veneers that are not original. Concrete, slate, unglazed terra cotta and stone caps are appropriate, if original.

Chimneys should be cared for following the guidelines for brickwork/masonry.
When necessary use gentle cleaning methods. If repointing is needed, use soft, historic mortar mixes that match the original bonding agent.

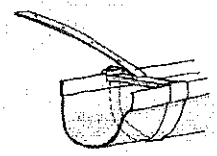
If chimneys become unstable and need to be rebuilt, they should match the original as closely as possible.
If an original chimney becomes damaged or unstable, it may be rebuilt or supported. Physical structural supports may include metal straps or brackets anchored to the roof framing. Care should be taken to match repairs to historic materials, shapes, mortar, material color, and brick patterns.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ROOFS, continued...

Gutters and Downspouts

Gutters, downspouts, and splash blocks should be used and maintained.

Existing boxed or built-in gutters should be retained and maintained. Repair of deteriorated or damaged gutters is preferred over replacement.



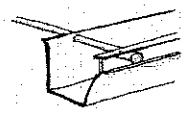
If original gutters are beyond repair, replacement gutters of an appropriate type should be installed.

The most appropriate design for hanging gutters on building to the mid-20th century is half round. Beginning in the 1940s, ogee gutters came into use, and this design would be appropriate on buildings dating from that period.

Half round gutters, as shown above, are the most appropriate for New Britain's historic buildings. Ogee gutters, below, may be acceptable for post-1940 structures.

Locate downspouts away from architectural features and on the least public elevation of the building.

Proper placement of downspouts will protect the building and not detract from its historic character. Make sure that downspouts drain away from foundations and not affect neighboring buildings.



Skylights

Skylights that are original to a building should be preserved and maintained.

Skylights should be placed in inconspicuous areas where they will not detract from the historic appearance of the building.

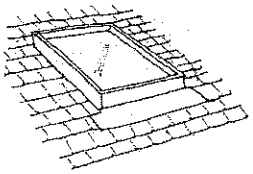
Skylights should be installed on rear rooflines or behind gables, parapets, or dormers, where they are not visible from the street.

Use appropriate skylight design.

Only skylights that lie flat or flush with the roofline are appropriate; convex or "bubble" designs are not permitted, as they detract from the historic character of the building.

Appropriate downspout and splash block.

Skylights which are flush with the roof and not readily visible from the street are appropriate for commercial buildings.



7.0 FOUNDATIONS

Overall Approach:

Foundations of historic commercial buildings in New Britain are most often of brick, stone, or concrete masonry. Preserve original foundation materials through proper maintenance. Repair foundations using masonry guidelines.

Background

Historic commercial building foundations are typically of brick, stone, or concrete. The longevity of historic foundations can be prolonged with proper maintenance. It is important during winter months that care is taken to prevent contact between foundations and salts or other ice melts that can have destructive effects on historic masonry.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR FOUNDATIONS

Original foundations should be preserved and maintained.
Maintain original foundation materials, design, and detailing. Do not cover original foundations with concrete block, plywood panels, corrugated metal, or wood shingles.

Follow masonry guidelines for cleaning, care, and repair of masonry foundations.

If replacement foundations are necessary, they should match the original as closely as possible.
Match replacement materials to the historic foundation and install the new materials using similar construction techniques.

Water should be kept away from foundations as much as possible.
Irrigation systems should direct spray away from foundations; water from irrigation nozzles should not come within 3' of foundations. Keep woody ornamental shrubs and trees away from foundations, as shrubs can hold in moisture, and tree roots can protrude and damage foundations. Use splashblocks, drains, and site grading to direct water away from foundations.

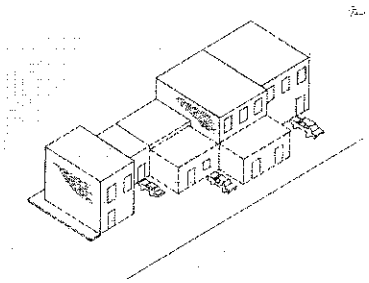
8.0 ADDITIONS

Policy:

Minimize the effect of additions to appearance of historic buildings and districts through complementary design, materials, and placement. Additions should be compatible in size, scale, and design with the historic building.

Background

Keeping historic commercial buildings functional sometimes requires additions. A thriving business may, for example, require more space. Additions to historic commercial buildings should above all else respect the building's historic character and appearance. Additions should be compatible with the historic building's style, scale, and form.



Shown is appropriate placement for ground level additions.
Rear elevations are best for additions to commercial properties.

Rear Additions

The most favorable, and spatially logical, location for an addition on a historic commercial building is the rear elevations. A rear additions will have no visual impact on the historic primary façade, as long as its dimensions do not exceed those of the original building. Additions must not be allowed to damage historic architectural features.

Lateral Additions

Though lateral additions are less preferable than rear additions, they may be considered. The size and scale of new lateral additions must be smaller than the original building, and such additions must not detract from the historic form and character of the original building. In construction of lateral additions, care should be taken to avoid damaging or concealing significant architectural elements of the building.

Roofline Additions

In some cases, a property owner's only option to expand usable interior space is to go through the roof. On a historic building, it is essential to the preservation of the historic character of the primary facade that the rooftop addition be recessed sufficiently as to not be visible from the street.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS

Decks

Decks have no historical precedent on commercial buildings, and their addition to such buildings is rare. However, should a property owner choose to construct a deck on a historic property, it is imperative that the deck not damage or obscure significant historic architectural features, nor cause a negative visual impact to the historic appearance or character of the building. Construction of a deck should only occur on the building's rear elevation or another location that is not in public view.

Fire Escapes

Historically, multi-story buildings used for commercial and/or residential purposes were equipped with exterior fire escapes. These features were traditionally fitted to the rear or side elevations of buildings, where they are not visible from the street.

The building at 69 Arch Street has an appropriate one-story rear addition. The property owner has constructed a deck above the addition, which is accessed by a metal fire escape/staircase, appropriately out of public view.

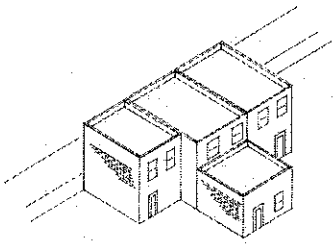
Rear Additions

Additions should be compatible with the original building in scale, proportion, rhythm, and materials.

If an addition is desired, its overall design should be compatible with and not detract from the historic character of the building. The addition's materials, roof pitch, window design, window placement and rhythm, ratio of solids to voids, and general form should complement those of the original building. Plan new drainage patterns with regard to the protection of historic materials.

Rear additions should be smaller and simpler in design than the historic building.

Ideally, the size and scale of a rear addition should be lesser than the dimensions of the original building. The addition should complement and not eclipse the building. Rear additions should not be readily visible from the street. While the addition should be visually compatible, it should also be distinct from the historic building. Subtle differences in materials or styles can help distinguish an addition from the original building.



The location, scale, proportion, rhythm, materials, and size of this addition are all appropriate.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS, Continued...

Rear additions should not obscure or damage significant architectural features.
It is essential that additions do not obscure, alter, or conceal cornices, architectural details, and other important elements. Construction of additions should not result in damage or removal of historic walls or roofs. Original door openings should be preserved and used to access the addition. Plan new drainage patterns with respect to the maintenance of historic materials.

Lateral Additions
Lateral additions should be compatible with the original building in scale, proportion, rhythm, and materials.
Since lateral additions are more obtrusive than rear additions, their design must complement the character of the historic building and not detract from its historic character. The addition's materials, roof pitch, window design, window placement and rhythm, ratio of solids to voids, and general form should complement those of the original building. Plan new drainage patterns with regard to the protection of historic materials.

Mass and scale of lateral additions should be subordinate to that of the historic building.
In order to reduce the visual impact of a lateral addition, it should be recessed significantly. It should not detract from the historic form and character of the original building.

Design lateral additions so that they will not obscure or damage significant architectural features.
It is essential that lateral additions do not obscure, alter, or conceal cornices, architectural details, and other important elements. Construction of additions should not result in damage or removal of historic walls or roofs. Original door openings should be preserved and used to access the addition.

Additions should be distinguishable from the historic building and be a product of their own time.
While the addition should be visually compatible, it should also be distinct from the historic building. Nuances in materials or styles can help distinguish an addition from the original building.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS, continued...

The dimensions of a lateral addition should be lesser than the those of the original building. The addition should complement and not overshadow the building.

Roofline Additions

Mass and scale of rooftop additions should be subordinate to that of the historic building.

Rooftop additions should be smaller and simpler in design than the historic building. Upper story additions should not overhang the lower floors.

Rooftop additions should use similar roof forms to the buildings to which they are attached.

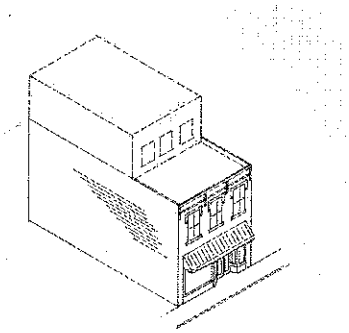
The roof form of the addition should mimic that of the original building. For example, if the original building has a flat roof, then the addition should have a flat roof as well.

Additions should not cause the removal of character-defining materials and features.

Addition design and placement should not obscure or damage significant architectural features including cornices and parapets.

Rooftop additions should be recessed and not be readily visible from the street.

The original profile of the historic building should be maintained. The rooftop addition should not overwhelm the original façade. The mass and scale of the original façade should be preserved. Rooftop additions should not be readily visible from the street level.



Rooftop additions should be recessed so that they are not readily visible from the street. Roof forms of the additions

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONS, continued...

Decks

Locate decks where they are not visible from the street.
A deck should be added to rear elevations of buildings. A deck added to the side elevation of a building should be screened from public view with fencing or landscaping. A rooftop deck should likewise be screened from view through either placement or existing roof parapets.

Decks should be simple in design.
In order not to detract from the historic architecture, decks should be simple in design. Wood balusters should be less than three inches apart.

It is recommended that decks be constructed of materials similar to those used on historic buildings, however decks of alternative materials may also be acceptable if not readily visible from the street.

Stain or paint decks in colors that are compatible with those of the building.

Fire Escapes

Retain original fire escapes when possible.
Original fire escapes should be retained and maintained. Repair of a historic fire escape is preferable to replacement. If repair is not possible, a fire escape should be replaced in kind as closely as possible.

Original fire escape at 67 Arch Street.

9.0 ACCESSIBILITY

Overall Approach:

The primary entrance of a commercial buildings should be ADA-compliant. If this is not possible, an alternative entrance should be available, clearly marked, and maintained to the same standards as the primary entrance. If it is necessary to add access ramps, use a simple design that respects the building's historic character .

ADA curbs at Court and Main Streets.

Background

Passed in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all places of public accommodation be accessible to everyone. In addition to meeting ADA requirements, historic commercial buildings must also meet local and state building codes. Property owners should also consult the Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) when complying with ADA requirements. State and local requirements, however, may differ from the ADA requirements, and property owners need to be aware of all applicable accessibility requirements before making any modifications to their buildings.

Compliance with ADA, however, does not have to compromise the building's historic integrity. A historic building can attain a high level of accessibility without detrimental impact to its significant features or overall character. Creative solutions include incorporating ramps, installing wheelchair lifts, creating new entrances, and modifying doors, hardware, and thresholds. In addition, alternative measures can be considered if there is a threat to the historic resource. Ideally, access to historic buildings should be through the primary public entrance. If this would result in permanent damage to significant features of the building, then a secondary public entrance should be made accessible. In these instances, directional signs to the accessible entrance should be prominently displayed. Rear or service entrances are not acceptable options as the only accessible entrance.

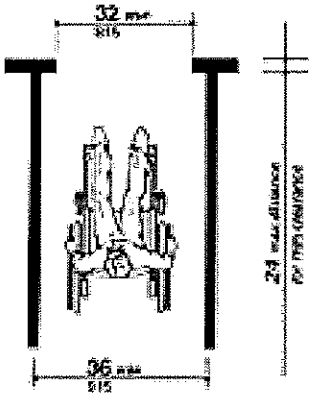
ACCESSIBILITY, continued...

A common accessibility solution is the installation of permanent ramps. Their design and location should not sacrifice a building's historic character. Designs should be kept simple, with railings distinguishable from historic features. The material used to face the ramps could be wood, metal, brick, or stone. Do not use unpainted, pressure-treated wood, which has a temporary appearance and does not blend well with most historic buildings. Temporary or portable ramps of light-weight materials are not recommended, as they are not safe and detract from the historic character of the building. However, temporary ramps are a short-term option until a permanent design in installed.

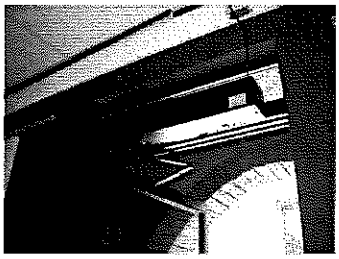
The ramps' slope should not exceed 1:12 (8%), and a lesser incline is recommended. If the ramps are to negotiate the rise of just one step, most codes will allow a slightly steeper ramp for historic buildings. Landings should be 5' x 5' at a minimum in order to accommodate wheelchairs.

When retrofitting entrances to allow accessibility, historic doors should be maintained; do not widen the door frames on facades. Widening an entrance is acceptable if the historic doors are missing. Typical standards require a minimum of a 32" clear opening with manageable door opening pressures. Ideally, historic doors can be retained and pressurized door openers installed.

For more information on accessibility, please refer to *National Park Service Preservation Brief 32, Making Historic Properties Accessible.*



New entrances or retrofitted doors should be a minimum of 32 inches in width to meet ADA standards.



Doors can also be modified with pressurized door openers to allow for ease of access.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLITY

Accessibility solutions must meet all state and local accessibility requirements as well as ADA mandates.

Accessibility solutions should provide the highest level of access and the least impact on the building's historic character. When considering accessibility options, keep preservation in mind. Avoid damage to historic features and materials .

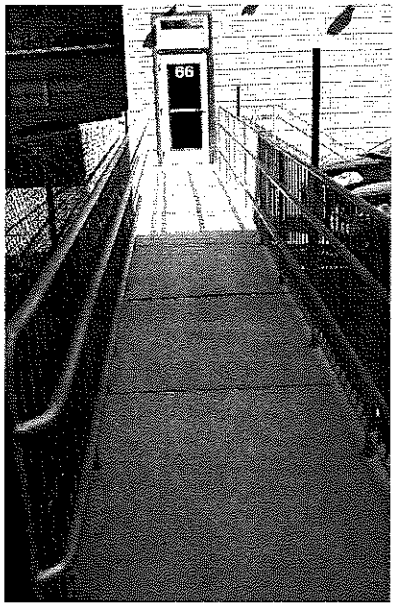
Locate access ramps where they will have the least visual impact on the building's historic character.

Access ramps should be simple in design.
Simple designs are most apt to blend with historic buildings. Ramps should be constructed of concrete, metal or wood and painted in colors that are compatible with those of the building.

Avoid use of temporary ramps.
These ramps provide short-term access until a more permanent design is installed.

If historic doors do not allow for universal access, they should be retrofitted to meet standards.
The use of automatic door openers with push plates is also an alternative to meet ADA door requirements on commercial buildings.

Push plates for ADA access are appropriate solutions for access into commercial buildings.



This ramp and railing at 66 West Main is an appropriate rear design.

STANDARDS FOR SIGNS

10.0 SIGNAGE

Policy:

Existing historic signs should be retained and maintained. New signs and significant alterations to existing signs should be compatible with the historic building and streetscape. Signs should be installed in such a manner that no damage occurs to historic materials. All signs must meet the specific requirements of New Britain's sign ordinance.

Historic Sign Designs and Placement

Historically, signs were common fixtures on commercial buildings, in a variety of designs and placement. During the 19th century, signs were displayed in windows, over doors, painted on exterior walls, and hanging over or even across the street. One of the more common places to mount signs was on the lintel above the first story, and around 1900 it became popular to paint signs directly on the inside of display windows in gold leaf.

When electricity became available, signs were illuminated with light fixtures, which were of simple design in order not to distract a view from the advertisement itself. During the 1920s, neon signs were introduced, and these brightly colored advertisements became very popular during the mid-20th century, particularly for restaurants and movie theaters. All historic signs and light fixtures should be preserved and maintained.

SIGNAGE, continued...

Current commercial advertisement practices are more conservative than those of the 19th century. Today, municipal codes tend to limit the number, dimensions, and placement of signs in order to maintain an standardized streetscape. However, signs remain important elements in the historic and commercial character of business districts, and historic signage should be retained and maintained if possible. Historic commercial buildings located at the end of a block often had painted advertising. Today, these faded "ghost sings" can provide evidence of early or original occupants of a building and can provide artistic interest. These, too, should be preserved.

Modern backlit fluorescent signs are inappropriate on historic buildings. Signs that obscure significant architectural details should be removed from historic buildings. New signs should be of a size and style that complements the historic building and should not obscure architectural features.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Basic Approach

The design guidelines that follow should be used in conjunction with New Britain's sign ordinances. Buildings with multiple business should adopt a an overall sign plan rather than separate signage for each business. These design guidelines apply to new construction and rehabilitation.

SIGNAGE, continued...

HISTORIC SIGNS

Historic signs should be preserved, maintained, and repaired.
Historic signs add to the overall appearance and character of historic commercial buildings and should be treated as significant features of the property.

Historic painted wall signs and "ghost" signs should be retained.
Retain painted wall signs on a building's elevations; do not paint over or remove these historic advertisements.

Signs based on documented historic appearance are encouraged.
Historic photographs exist for many commercial buildings in New Britain, and property owners and merchants should consult these photographs to mimic historic designs for creating new signs for their buildings.

SIGNAGE, continued...

NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Appropriate Types of Signs and Standards

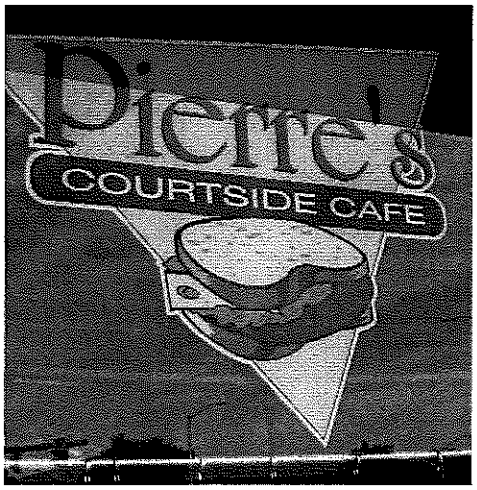
A variety of sign types are appropriate for new construction and adaptive reuse on historic buildings in New Britain. These include:

Wall Signs - Signs that lay flat and are applied directly to an exterior wall surface of a building, or signs that are painted directly on the wall of a building.

- When planning a wall sign determine if architectural elements exist that could define a "sign panel." If so, locate signs so they fit within these panels.
- The size and proportions of a wall sign shall be similar to those seen historically on the building, adjacent streetscape and district.

Painted Window Signs—Signs that are painted directly onto either the interior or exterior of windows.

- Metal leaf and subdued colors are historically appropriate window sign materials.
- The maximum area of a window sign shall not exceed 25% of the window area, or eight square feet, whichever is lesser.



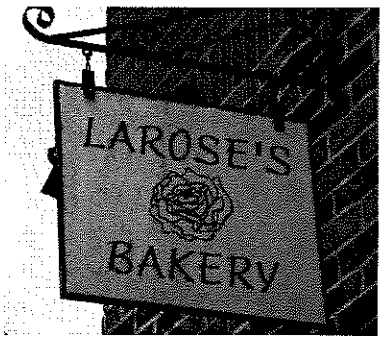
This painted window sign at 2 Main Street incorporates a logo and adheres to the recommendation of a maximum of three basic colors.

SIGNAGE, continued...

NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Awning Signs—Lettering and/or logos that are incorporated into awnings.

- The maximum area of an awning sign shall not exceed 20% of the awning panel or eight square feet, whichever is the lesser amount.
- Awnings should be compatible in size and shape with the character of the building and streetscape.
- Awnings should be of shed roof design, not curved or round unless the opening itself is curved or round such as an arched window or door.
- Backlit awnings, metal awnings, and vinyl awnings are not appropriate for historic buildings, but are acceptable for modern buildings or new infill.



This projecting sign at 167 Broad Street is of simple design, incorporates a logo, and limits the use of color to two colors.

Projecting/Hanging Signs—Signs that extend from a small pole or post that is attached to the exterior of a building. These include cloth banner signs as well as signs of wood, metal, or other materials.

- Projecting signs should be in compliance with the zoning ordinance.
- The bottom of a projecting sign should be at least ten feet above the sidewalk.
- In size, the sign should not dominate the building's facade.

A hanging sign of simple design at 244 Main Street.

SIGNAGE, continued...

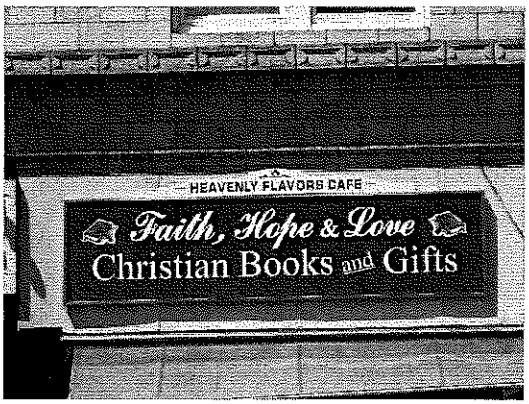
NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Free Standing or Monument Signs—Signs that are not attached to a building but stand alone on the grounds of a property.

- Freestanding or monument signs may be used as an alternative to a sign on the building, if the latter is inappropriate.
- Freestanding and monument signs should be pedestrian in scale (not exceeding four feet in height) and blend in with the architecture of the building and streetscape.

Inappropriate Types of Signs

- Signs that are out of character with those seen historically and that would alter the historic character of the street.
- Backlit plastic panel signs and backlit awnings.
- Oversized signs that dominate the visual appearance of the building.
- Signs attached to a building in such a way as to obscure significant architectural detailing.
- Animated signs and electronic changeable signs.



This wall sign at 91 Main Street is appropriately placed above the storefront without concealing the decorative beltcourse separating the storefront and upper façade. The color of the sign attractively matches that of the awning below.

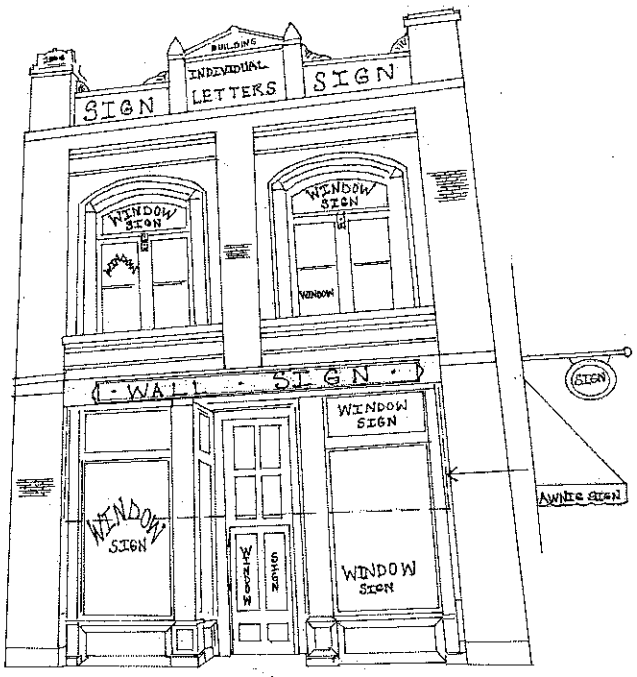
SIGNAGE, continued...

NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Number and Location

Signs may be located in a variety of places on buildings, including storefront beltcourses, upper façade walls, side walls, or on awnings or canopies. Signs may hang or be mounted in windows, or project from the building's facade. Signs may also be painted on windows or the glass areas of doors. Free standing signs may be placed on the lot of the building, or in the case of removable sandwich board type signs, on the sidewalk, taking care that do not block pedestrian traffic or the visibility of motorists.

Too many signs can have a distracting effect, so no more than three signs should be used per building, in addition to painted window signs. Also wall signs should not exceed 20% of the overall wall surface.



This drawing shows appropriate locations for commercial signage. No more than three signs should be used per building, not counting signs painted on windows.

SIGNAGE, continued....

NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Materials

To achieve a harmonious blend with the character and appearance of historic buildings, new signs should be constructed of materials traditionally used in the historic period. For 19th and early 20th century buildings, this may include wood, glass, copper, or bronze. Finished wood signs are appropriate. Plastic, substrate, or unfinished wood signs are not recommended. Signs of metal such as aluminum and brass are not recommended.

For mid-20th century buildings that do not retain their original signs, new signs may be of materials traditional to their period such as backlit fluorescent or neon signs of glass or plastic, metal letters, or glass and metal projecting signs.

Illumination

Fixtures for lighting for signs should be simple and not detract from the historic character of the building. Simple spot lighting or up-lighting is most preferable for signs. This type of lighting is effective, without clashing with the general appearance of a building.

An appropriate light fixture design for illuminating a sign at 136 Main Street.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNAGE

NEW SIGNS FOR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

New signs should be of traditional materials.
Construct new signs out of materials such as wood and glass, and metals such as copper, bronze or aluminum. Metal signs should have matte or subdued finishes. Sandblasted wood signs are appropriate. The use of plastic, neon, or applied letters may be appropriate for mid-20th century storefronts.

Signs should be sized in proportion to the building.
Avoid oversized signs as they detract from the building's historic architecture

Signs should have no more than two or three colors.
Colors should be compatible with overall building colors.

Signs that resemble logos or symbols for businesses are encouraged.

Buildings should have no more than three signs, not counting signs painted on windows.
Too many signs on a building can be visually distracting and overwhelm the building's appearance.

Use traditional lettering styles for signs.
Appropriate fonts for sign include Serif, Sans Serif or Script. Letters should not exceed 18 inches in height or cover more than 60% of the total sign area.

The businesses at 13 Beaver Street make use of several appropriate sign location for advertising, while adhering to the recommendation of limiting number and colors of sign to three.

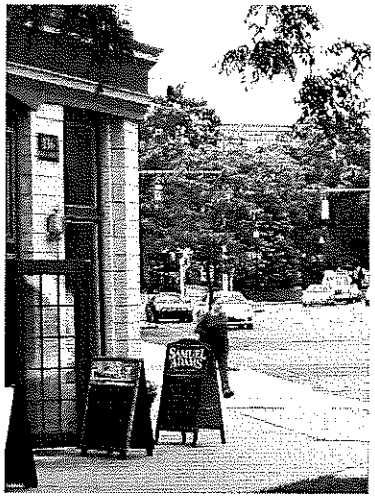
DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNAGE, continued...

SIGNS FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND ADAPTIVE REUSE

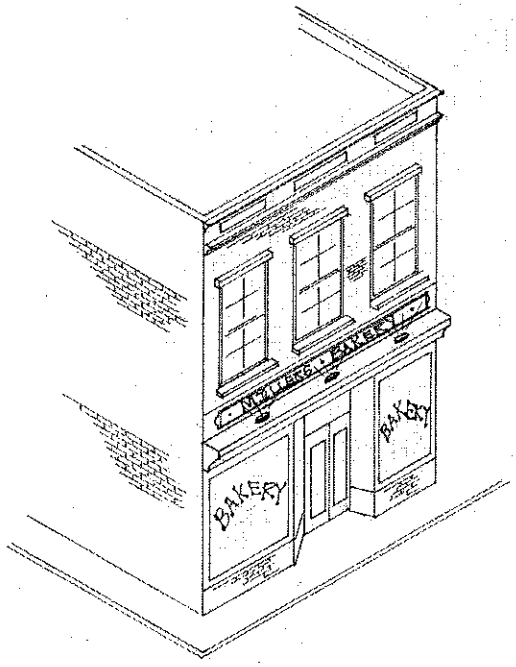
Place signs in traditional locations.
Traditional sign locations include storefront beltcourses, upper façade walls (not to exceed 20% of the overall wall surface), hanging or mounted inside windows, or projecting from the face of the building. Movable sandwich boards or "menu easels" are also appropriate.

Install signs so that no damage occurs to historic fabric.
The installation of signs should not cause damage to historic materials. Mounting brackets and hardware for signs should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.

Conceal lighting for signs.
Spot– or up-lighting is appropriate for signs. Internally lit or back-lit signs are not appropriate except for mid-20th century buildings.



These small sandwich board signs allow for flow of pedestrian traffic.



Lighting for signs should be indirect and as unobtrusive as possible. This example shows lights mounted above a storefront cornice.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNAGE, continued...

SIGNS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS/OFFICES IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Signage should the historic character of the building.
Commercial buildings located in residential neighborhoods should use signs that are compatible with the architectural and historical character of the streetscape.

Historic locations such as sign panels and cornices should be considered first when adding signage.
Commercial buildings in residential areas were often designed with areas intended for signage such as a sign band or panel below the cornice on the main façade. These areas should be considered first when locating signage on the building.

Signs should not obscure or conceal architectural features.

One sign per building is acceptable. The building may also have window signs and one additional awning sign.

Appropriate sign types are flat signs, wall signs, projecting signs, awning signs and window signs.
While flat, wall or painted signs in traditional locations are encouraged, other historically correct sign types are also allowed.

Signs should be non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated.
Because of their location near dwellings, signs on commercial buildings in residential neighborhoods should not be a distraction to residents in their homes.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR SIGNAGE, continued...

SIGNS FOR ADAPTIVELY REUSED BUILDINGS

Residential buildings adapted for commercial or office use should have signs that respect the building's original character.
When a former residence has been adapted for commercial or office use, the primary requirement for signage of these buildings is to maintain the historic residential character of the building and not detract from adjacent residential properties.

Signs should be located on the building itself, or as close to the building as possible for freestanding signs.
Signs for residential buildings may include letters along a fascia board above the entrance, wall signs adjacent to the main entrance or freestanding signs in front yards.

One sign per building is acceptable.

Signs should either be non-illuminated or indirectly illuminated within a discreet light source, such as in-ground or hidden lighting.

STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

11.0 NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Overall Approach:

New construction in New Britain's commercial areas should be compatible with adjacent buildings in scale, mass, and height; materials, orientation, shape, placement, and rhythm and proportion of openings should also be considered. The architecture of an infill building should not strive to imitate historic counterparts, but stand as a product of its own time and blend harmoniously with the surrounding historic built environment.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Basic Approach

Business districts will have a certain amount of vacancy, where historic buildings have been lost or where there are vacant lots. These opportunities for new construction promote economic development within historic districts. Construction of a new building within a historic district can be a challenge; however careful thought and planning can result in a design that is compatible with the historic surroundings.

The essential principle in designing new buildings for historic districts is that the new architecture should blend in with the historic character of the district and convey its own period of construction. New buildings should not attempt to mimic historic designs. It is a common misconception that new buildings must look "old." This notion is demystified in the realization that even historic buildings and neighborhoods are themselves evolving and adapting to progress, though still successfully conveying their historic integrity. Therefore, an attempt to imitate historic design in a new building is an anachronism.

The collection of original buildings from a district's historic period conveys the district's sense of historic time and place. And, it is important that new buildings constructed within a district reflect their own time to allow a discernible evolution of the streetscape.

NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, continued...

To promote accurate interpretation of a commercial district's change over time, it is advised that new buildings not attempt to imitate historic design; rather, these new buildings should reflect their own period through current architectural design. However, these designs should be compatible with the historic character of the district. They should not sharply contrast with the existing built environment. Designs that are meant to conflict with the older buildings simply for the sake of being different are discouraged. The guiding principle in new building design is compatibility.

New construction within a historic district should reinforce the basic visual characteristics of the surrounding area. This can be accomplished by integrating fundamental design elements of historic structures with contemporary stylistic trends. New construction should be based upon basic principles that define the character of the given district, such as orientation to the street and basic mass, form and materials of historic buildings within the district. If new building design takes these factors into account, it will be visually compatible with its surroundings, while still distinctly reflecting its own period of construction. New construction should be in keeping with the size, scale and materials of the historic buildings on the block and contribute to the overall sense of cohesiveness and continuity along the street.

Following are discussions of some of the basic design features that should be considered when designing new buildings for historic districts.

SITE DESIGN

Elements of site design impact the overall appearance and character of a property. When planning new construction, it is important to consider issues such as street patterns, building orientation, street lighting, and parking as part of the overall site plan.

Street Patterns

Street patterns or layouts, including alley space, are important elements that help reflect the overall character of a historic district. Street patterns influence how buildings are sited and lots developed. Traditional street patterns should be preserved when planning new construction.

Building Orientation

Commercial buildings traditionally have store fronts and primary entrances oriented to the street and sidewalk. This pattern encourages pedestrian consumer business and accessibility. Entrances are often regularly spaced along a street, which imparts visual cohesiveness to the streetscape New construction within a historic district should maintain this visual continuity by locating entrances of new buildings in a similar rhythm to the established pattern.

Street Lighting

New street lamp design should be compatible with the surrounding historic commercial area and with other elements of the streetscape. In residential areas, lighting should be appropriate to the design and scale of the neighborhood. Light fixtures should be subtle and unobtrusive. They should not detract from the visual appearance or the architectural character of surrounding area. Do not install light fixtures that suggest an inaccurate time period for the historic district in question.

Parking

Adequate and easily accessible parking is essential for the economy of commercial areas. Parking areas should be located at the rear of commercial properties. They should be screened with attractive and regularly maintained landscaping. Parking garages should be sensitive to the surrounding historic neighborhood and streetscape. Mass and scale should be comparable to historic structures, and the building should not compromise the visual continuity of the street. Construction of parking garages should follow the design principles for new construction.

This parking lot at the rear of 38-52 Main Street is screened with plants and fencing.

BUILDING SCALE

Building Height

Building heights along a streetscape effect the visual continuity of a historic district. The height of newly constructed buildings should be within a similar range of heights of historic buildings in the surrounding area. Likewise, any prominent decorative features such as cornices or parapets should be of similar height as those traditionally found in the neighborhood. In order to maintain the established visual continuity of the streetscape, it is important that new buildings not overwhelm surrounding historic structures in height, but respect the established height pattern of the vicinity.

Building Width

Similarity in building widths along a block or within a district creates a sense of rhythm that imparts visual continuity to the streetscape. New construction within a historic district should reflect the established pattern of building width. It is acceptable for new buildings to be wider than existing buildings if they convey a perception of width similar to historic buildings. Incorporating vertical divisions in the building's design can create the appearance of traditional widths.

Mass and Scale

Mass and scale are significant design features that contribute to the visual character and rhythm of historic districts. As commercial districts prospered during a specific period, their buildings were construction within a certain timeframe and possess commonality in mass and scale. Newly constructed buildings should respect the traditional scale of buildings in the surrounding area. It is acceptable for new buildings to be larger than historic ones, but should not be dramatically greater in mass and scale that has been established in the neighborhood. A building that is much larger than surrounding historic structures will compromise the visual continuity of the streetscape.

Solid to Void Ratio

Solid to void ratio refers to the relationship between exterior solid wall surface and windows and door openings. Traditionally, the facades of commercial buildings have a balanced ratio of wall surface and windows and doors. This includes storefronts and display windows, which commonly occupy the ground level, as well as upper story windows. New construction design should have a similar solid to void ratio as that of historic buildings in the area.

STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Lighting

Lighting enhances the visibility of commercial businesses. Traditionally, lighting was limited to subtle fixtures that illuminated entrances and/or signage on the building. Exterior lighting for new buildings should be similarly reserved and follow the existing patterns of position, style, and frequency of lights. Lighting on new buildings should not detract from the historic streetscape and should be subtle and simple in design.

This street lamp in one of New Britain's many parks is also equipped to hold flower pots.

SITE DESIGN STANDARDS

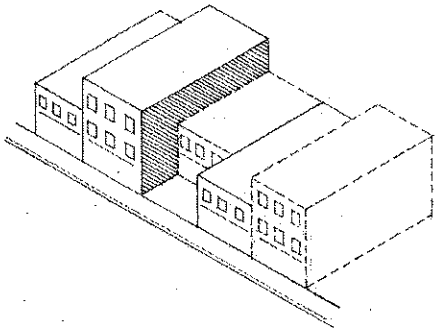
Street Patterns

Respect historic patterns of building development.
New buildings should be situated on their sites in a similar manner to surrounding historic buildings in the area.

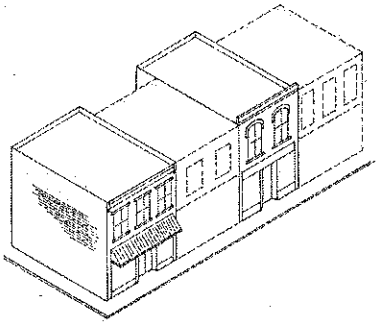
Preserve historic street patterns.
Traditionally, historic commercial districts developed in grid patterns. New construction within historic districts should perpetuate historic street or alley patterns.

Building Orientation

New construction should be oriented toward the major street.



On the left, inappropriate new construction. On the right is shown appropriate new construction with uniform setback to create a continuous wall of facades.



STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, continued...

Traditionally primary entrances are oriented to the street for pedestrian accessibility. New buildings should be oriented toward the street to be consistent with the character of the streetscape.

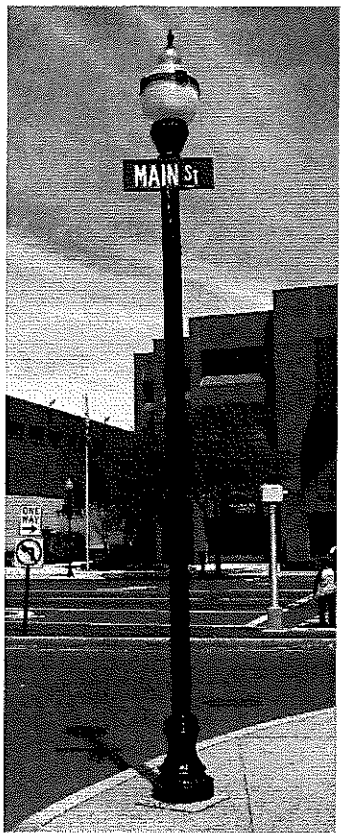
Setback of new buildings should be in line with existing buildings to create a continuous façade wall.
New buildings should follow the established setback lines to create an even flow of buildings.

New construction should respect uniform setbacks along a block.

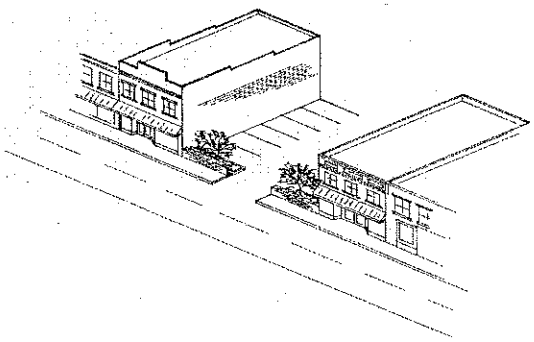
Street Lighting

Street lighting should be simple in design and unobtrusive.
Lighting should not visually dominate the site or detract from the architectural character of surrounding buildings

Street light design should be compatible with the surrounding streetscape.
In residential areas, this may mean very subtle or minimal lighting.



Above is an example of an appropriate exterior pole light on Main Street.



Parking lots should be screened with landscaping aligned with adjacent buildings.

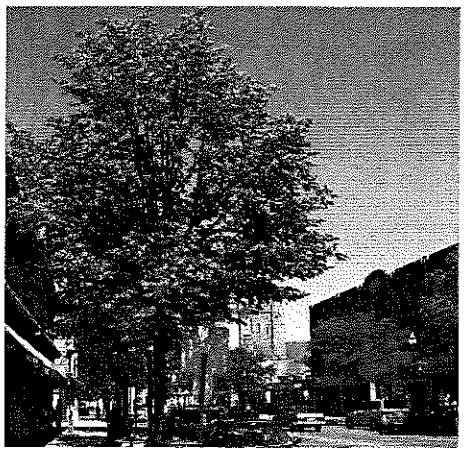
STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, continued...

Protect historic buildings and structures when planning and constructing parking lots.

Place parking areas where they are least visually obtrusive.
Parking areas are most recommended behind commercial buildings.

Screen new parking areas with landscape materials.
Screen new parking areas with landscaping, which should have the same setback and location as the front walls of adjacent buildings. Large parking areas should be divided with plantings. Keep landscaping trimmed for visibility of pedestrians and vehicles.

Additional landscaping would help to screen this parking lot..



Trees enhance the appearance of Main Street and also provide shade.

BUILDING SCALE STANDARDS

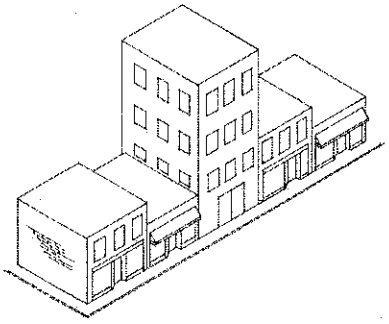
Mass and Scale

New buildings should be compatible with adjacent buildings in terms of scale and proportion.
Replicating the existing pattern established along the block will provide visual continuity and uniform scale.

New buildings should not be dramatically larger than historic buildings so as to overwhelm the streetscape.
While new buildings may be larger than historic ones, they should not compromise the visual continuity of the street. New buildings of a larger mass should be visually subdivided into smaller visual units that are similar in size to historic structures in the area.

Height

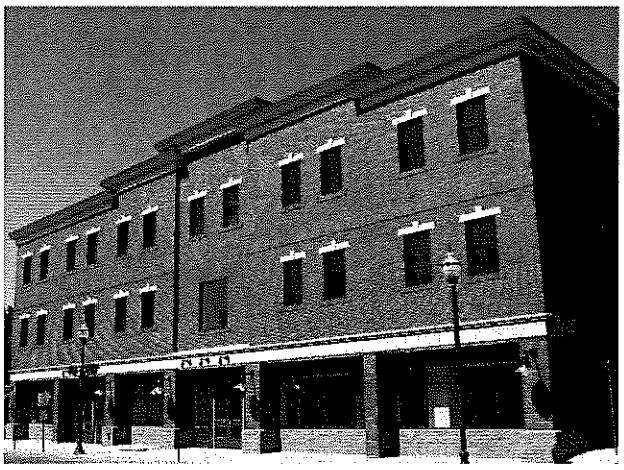
The height of new buildings should be compatible with that of adjacent historic buildings.
New construction should be compatible in height with the block and general surroundings on which it is sited.



New buildings that are not compatible in height to surrounding historic buildings, such as that shown in the image at left, disrupt the sense of visual continuity along the street, and thus compromise the character of the streetscape.

Width

New buildings should be designed to appear similar in width to surrounding historic buildings.
For construction plans that will infill a footprint wider than that of a single building, the design should incorporate visual divisions that give the appearance of multiple building widths. This can be accomplished with vertical divisions within the building design.



Large new buildings should be designed with vertical divisions to be consistent with traditional historic building widths. This infill building on Arch Street achieves this effect with brick pilasters on the first floor and graduated roof height.

Solid to Void Ratio

Window size and proportion of openings should be consistent with adjacent historic buildings.
New building design should balance wall surface space and openings for windows and doors, matching the ratio seen on neighboring historic buildings. The new building should follow the established patterns of rhythm, size, and spacing of window and door openings as seen on surrounding historic buildings.

Solid to void ratio: The top sketch at left illustrates new construction that maintains traditional solid to void ratio through appropriate number and size of windows. The bottom sketch illustrates inappropriate window size and placement.

BUILDING FORM

New buildings should possess forms that are similar to those of existing historic buildings along the blocks on which they are sited.
Typically, commercial buildings in New Britain have been constructed in simple rectangular forms of varying heights.

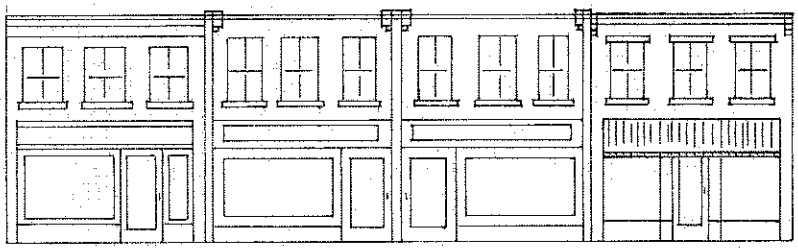
The roof form of new commercial buildings should match those of adjacent historic buildings.
Flat roofs are most common for commercial buildings, but new construction should have roof forms consistent with surrounding buildings on the block.

New buildings should maintain the traditional separation between storefronts and upper facades.
Typically, ground floor storefronts are visually separated from upper floors through design patterns and window placement. New construction should follow this pattern, and the separation should be in alignment with adjacent buildings.

STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, continued....

Rhythm and Spacing

Proportions of window and door openings should be similar to those of surrounding historic buildings.
Similarity spacing of window and door openings strongly imparts visual rhythm to a group of buildings. A spacing pattern applies to display windows along storefronts as well as upper level windows. New buildings should maintain a pattern similar to that already established in the district.



Historic NEW Historic

New construction should be consistent with storefront and window size and spacing.

BUILDING DETAILS

Materials

Use of traditional building materials that are compatible with adjacent buildings is preferred.
Using traditional construction materials such as wood, brick, and metal in new buildings will help to provide a sense of visual continuity and flow to the street.

New materials that are similar in character to traditional materials may be acceptable with appropriate detailing.
Alternative materials may be appropriate if their appearance is similar in scale, proportion, texture and finish to historic building materials. Metal products are allowed for soffits and eaves only, or when adjacent historic buildings incorporated these materials in the original design.

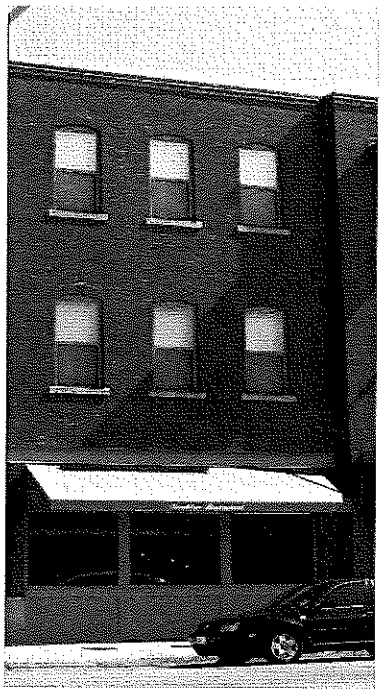
STANDARDS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION, continued...

Architectural Character

Building components of new construction that are similar in size and shape to those found historically along the street are preferred.
New commercial buildings should include traditional storefront components such as windows, doors, bulkheads, and display windows that are compatible in size and shape to those of historic buildings. This will perpetuate visual continuity in the district.

The scale of decorative elements similar to that of surrounding historic examples is preferred.
New buildings can include ornamental elements such as cornices, moldings, or other decorative elements if they are similar to those on surrounding historic buildings.

New buildings should be contemporary but compatible in design to historic buildings.
New construction design should distinctly express its own period and not try to mimic historic styles. Conversely, new buildings should not stand out dramatically from the existing historic architectural context. New buildings need to be visually compatible with neighboring historic buildings, yet be representative of their own time. Similarities in mass, scale, and established patterns of features such as windows, doors, and storefronts collectively promote visual harmony.



New construction such as illustrated above should have windows and storefronts in keeping with traditional designs and detailing.

Contemporary interpretations of traditional details are encouraged.
Some decorative elements of historic buildings can be incorporated into contemporary designs, for example, window moldings and door surrounds. These provide visual continuity for the group of buildings, while the updated version still conveys that the construction is new.

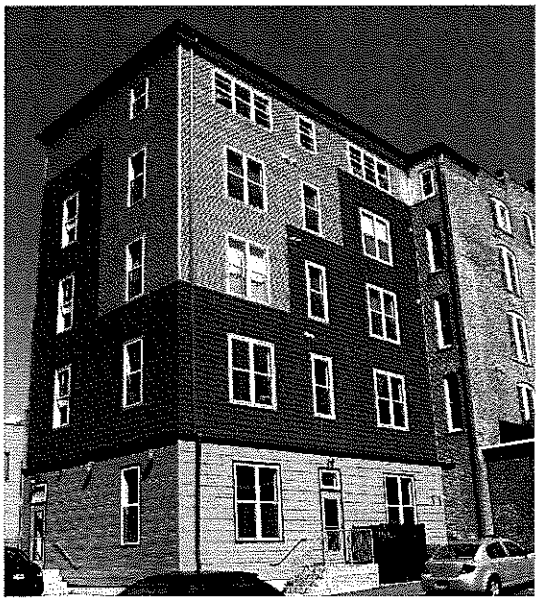
The imitation of historic styles is discouraged.
Contemporary interpretations of historic styles may be considered if they are subtly distinguishable as new. Attempts to duplicate historic styles obfuscates the evolution of architecture within the district.

Windows

Windows similar in size and orientation with those in adjacent historic architecture are encouraged.
Traditionally, windows on upper stories of historic commercial buildings are rectangular in form with a vertical emphasis. Arched windows are also common. Transoms are also both rectangular and arched. Fenestration of mid-twentieth century commercial buildings may have a decidedly more horizontal emphasis or non-traditional window size.

Storefront display windows should reflect historical examples in size, scale, and proportion.
Display windows are important character-defining features of commercial buildings, and similarity in scale will promote visual continuity of the streetscape.

Windows shall be simple in shape.
Odd-shaped windows such as octagons, circles, diamonds, etc. are not recommended unless there are examples in neighboring historic commercial buildings of the recent past.



This infill building is a rear addition to 66 W. Main Street. It matches the original building in height, mass and scale, as well as in window style and pairing.

Entries

Entries should be similar to surrounding historic examples in size, shape, and placement.
Historic commercial buildings have a wide variety of entrances, including recessed entries, central and corner entries, and both single and paired (double) doors. New construction design should follow these entrance design patterns to create a unified sense of scale and rhythm along the street.

Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies should be of traditional materials.
Cloth, canvas, or metal awnings or canopies are best for commercial buildings. Vinyl or other synthetic materials are not recommended.

Awnings should fit the opening(s) to which they are attached.
Rectangular openings should have rectangular awnings, and arched openings should have curved awnings..

Lighting

Exterior lighting should be subtle and unobtrusive.
Light fixtures should be unobtrusive in design, materials, and placement.

Lighting should be compatible with the building and the streetscape and not be visually dominant or intrusive.
Light design should complement the new building's style and not detract from the surrounding historic setting. Lighting should be a subtle addition to the property and not dominate the overall site or spill over onto adjacent properties.

Light fixtures should not suggest a false sense of history.
Contemporary interpretations of historic light fixture designs are appropriate, but fixtures should not be duplicate styles of earlier architectural periods.

Sight lighting should be compatible and appropriate for the surrounding area.
Light design should complement the building while not detracting from the historic setting. For commercial buildings in residential neighborhood, lighting should not have an adverse impact on surrounding residences.

Datestones/Cornerstones

New construction should be identified through datestones or cornerstones.
The use of datestones or cornerstones in new buildings will aid in the differentiation of new construction from adjacent historic buildings.

Appropriate light fixtures on new building on Arch Street.

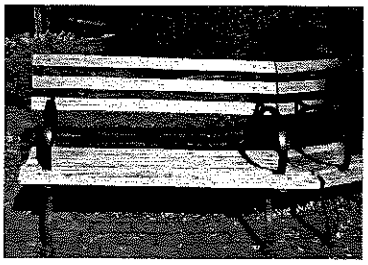
12.0 STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Overall Approach:

The addition of elements such as light fixtures, planter boxes, street furniture, bike racks, and sidewalks, enhance the streetscape.

Background

Investment in streetscape improvements is recommended in commercial areas. Streetscape elements such as benches, planters and landscaping; level sidewalks and their sloped egresses improve accessibility. Future streetscape improvements should respect the historic character of the area and follow traditional designs and landscaping. Modern interpretations of streetscape elements may also be appropriate. .



The addition of streetscape elements such as benches is encouraged.

STANDARDS FOR STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Commercial areas should be enhanced through streetscape elements.
Elements such as benches and planters make commercial areas more attractive and enjoyable. They encourage people to spend more time doing business in historic commercial areas.

Major streetscape improvements considered in the future should be consistent with the historic character of the commercial area.
Streetscape element designs should be compatible in design and style with the surrounding streetscape and built environment.

Landscaping should not damage historic buildings or conceal historic elements.

Outdoor furniture should be of uniform appearance, appropriate materials and not impede pedestrian flow.

Investments such as this streetscape planter on Main Street enhance commercial areas and are encouraged.

13.0 MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT and FIRE ESCAPES

Overall Approach:

Mechanical equipment, service utility devices, and fire escapes should be concealed from public view. They should be placed in inconspicuous areas and be as unobtrusive as possible. Screening with landscaping or fencing is recommended. Any devices affixed to a historic building should be installed to avoid damaging the property. Painted conduits to blend with the color of the building.

Background

Modern developments in communication and energy have resulted in the increased use of devices such as satellite dishes, solar panels and air conditioning systems. Commercial buildings also require garbage and recycling storage areas and other equipment. Conscientious placement of these elements can result in their effective incorporation on historic properties, minimizing their impact on the historic character.

Place mechanical systems, utility boxes, garbage receptacles, and other service elements in inconspicuous areas where they are not in public view. Locate satellite dishes, solar panels, and other communication or energy devices as unobtrusively as possible. Rear walls or rear roof slopes are the best locations for these devices.

These dumpsters and HVAC units are appropriately located at the rear of the building.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT

Satellite Dishes

Install satellite dishes on rear elevations.

Satellite dishes should be placed in inconspicuous areas where they are not readily visible from the street.
Locate these appliances on the rear elevation or rear roof slope; do not be mount them on building facades.

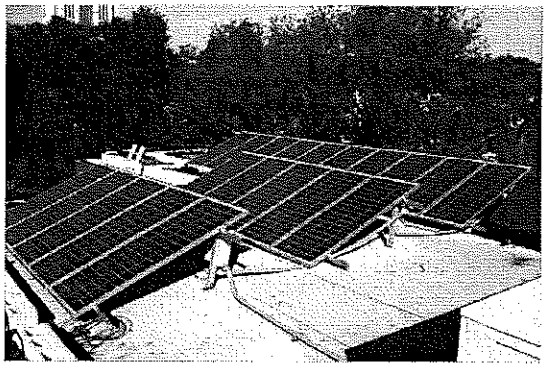
Satellite dishes that are small in size are more appropriate than larger ones.

Solar Devices and Systems

Solar devices and systems should be located where they are least visible and obtrusive and cause the least impact to the integrity of the historic building.
It is recommended that solar panels be located on rooftops, in rear lots, or on accessory buildings behind the commercial buildings , where they are not readily visible from public right-of-ways (except alleys). Another option is a side lot in a location that is not readily visible from the street. If readily visible, solar panels are most appropriately placed in roof lines.

It is preferred that solar panels be located where they are the least visible from the street.
Rear elevations or rear roof slopes are the best location for solar devices. Solar panels should never be mounted on the facade of a building.

Solar panels that are attached to a buildings should not be readily visible from the street.
Solar panels should be mounted on rooftops flush with the roofline or hidden behind cornices or parapet walls. If not attached to the building, solar panels should be located in side or rear yards. Exposed hardware, frames, and piping should have a non-reflective finish.



Rooftops are the preferred location for solar panels.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, continued...

Utilities

Ground-mounted mechanical systems should be located behind or on top of buildings.

Mechanical systems on the ground should be screened from view using fencing or landscaping. If on top of buildings, they should be set back or installed behind a parapet, not visible from the street. Screening may also be necessary to reduce the noise from mechanical systems, especially in residential areas.

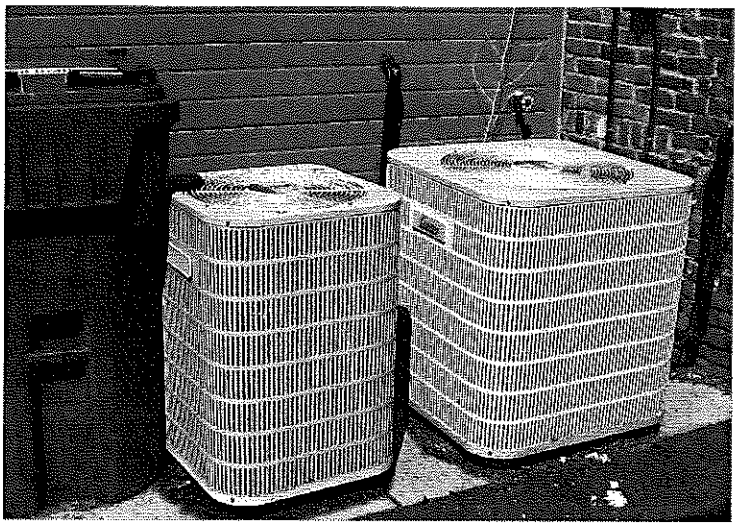
Window-mounted mechanical systems should be located on the side or rear elevations; their visibility should be as minimal as possible.

Meters, conduits, and other equipment should be located on rear elevations.

Trash and Recycling Storage Areas

Place garbage containers behind buildings and screen them from view.

Dumpsters and other garbage containers can be concealed with fencing or plants. In residential areas, locate these to have a minimal impact on adjacent residences.



These HVAC units and garbage receptacle are appropriately placed on the rear elevation of the building. They could be further concealed by screening.

DESIGN STANDARDS FOR MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT, continued...

Fire escapes should be located on rear elevations or otherwise located so they are not visible from the street.
Fire escapes are important safety features on multi-story commercial buildings. Fire escapes traditionally are located on the rear or side elevations of buildings, and fire escapes that are added to historic buildings should be sited in these locations where they will not be readily visible.

The addition of fire escapes should not damage historic architectural features. Construction of fire escapes should not damage historic features of the building.

Fire escapes may be either open or enclosed.
If enclosed, fire escape surfaces should be of materials matching or compatible with those used on the historic building. If open, fire escape surfaces should be of metal or alternative materials.

This metal fire escape has been appropriately added to the side elevation of the building at 240 Main Street.