AMESBURY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES

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ADMINISTERED BY:

The Planning Board & Design Review Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION--- TO AMESBURY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to offer suggestions for building design that enhance and extend Amesbury's image as a traditional New England town with a valuable architectural heritage. This heritage includes many distinctive industrial era mill building, Victorian residences, and historic colonial structures. Elements and motifs representing this heritage can be incorporated in to both new construction and renovation of older buildings .

A design vocabulary for new construction should capture various theme elements that exist in town. In particular, Amesbury is known for its many splendid buildings constructed within the Victorian period (1837 - 1901). Importantly, it was during this period that Amesbury became nationally renown for its carriage production. Furthermore, this Victorian Heritage can be seen through a variety of interesting buildings throughout the downtown and surrounding area that established a strong sense of place for Amesbury.

Respect for and acknowledgment of Amesbury's architectural heritage should be considered when designing new structures as well as renovations. Design for a project should respect the significant historic buildings and architectural heritage, of its surrounding neighborhood. In this way the unique features of each neighborhood can be enhanced so as to maintain the charm and character of the overall Amesbury community.

The Design Review Committee and Planning Board will use the following list of Architectural Design Criteria when reviewing applications for new development or renovations. It is strongly urged that applicants read through the guidelines before preparing an application. It is also suggested that the applicant photograph representative buildings adjacent to, or within the vicinity of their building project, and include these with their application.

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CRITERIA

1. SITE PLANNING: Building location and orientation.

2. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE & CHARACTER: see guidelines.

3. BUILDING HEIGHT: Comparable building heights give the streetscape a unified skyline. New construction and additions should reflect surrounding buildings in the district.

4. FACADE: Building size, massing and proportion of architectural elements. The height-to-width relationship of floor levels and windows with adjacent buildings and building within the district should complement each other.

5. WINDOW TREATMENT: Number, size and location of windows and doors determine whether the facade is static or dynamic, organized or chaotic. Design of window frame details, trim, muntins, mullions and sills all determine whether a building is pleasant or boring to look at. Energy efficiency is important. Windows on adjacent buildings in the district must be reflected in the design.

6. ROOF TREATMENT: Shape, pitch, style or roof and roofing materials should be consistent with adjacent buildings and buildings in the district.

7. DETAILS: Window treatment, architectural trim work, piers, pilasters, soffits, cornices, canopies, porches, turrets, etc., should be compatible within the district.

8. BUILDING MATERIALS: Traditional building materials, when feasible, should be used for both new construction and renovations. These include brick, stone, wood and slate for earlier buildings. Windows and doors being replaced may include plastic, vinyl or aluminum materials, provided they are of historic design and receive prior approval.

9. COLOR SCHEME: All buildings should express a color consistent with the style and period of the architecture.

10. SIGNS: Signs should state clearly and artistically the nature of the business without overwhelming either the architecture or the streetscape. Respect for the district that the sign is in must be acknowledged.

11. STREETSCAPE: Window boxes, planters, street furniture, vendors, etc., should respect our Victorian Era, while blending with the harmony of the overall community.

III. NEW CONSTRUCTION

A. Design

In the design of a new building to stand alongside existing older buildings, the key visual characteristics are *scale, proportion, color* and *texture.*

Compatibility is the key to successful new construction within the surrounding neighborhood. New construction should be designed to complement its environment. If it is adjacent to older structures, the new design should reflect their proportions and color. A design that calls sharp attention to itself is distracting and creates visual confusion. Careful harmony is established when the design of new construction is planned with consideration of the whole street scene.

Buildings are often said to have human scale or monumental scale. ***Scale* refers to the apparent size or bulk of a building with respect to the size of the human body.** Buildings with doors, openings, and other building elements of great size are said to have monumental scale. Large, undifferentiated building surfaces are said to be scaleless. That is, unless a person is standing adjacent to the building, it is impossible to tell if the building is large or small. Conversely, the greater the amount of ornamentation and reduction of surface through the use of color, texture, and decoration, the more likely the building will appear to have human scale.

***Proportion* is the relationship of the height of an object to its width. Most building constructed during the 19th and early 20th century were built with rectilinear forms which emphasized vertical proportions**. This practice was as much the result of structural systems as it was a design aesthetic, The overall shape of the building facade often had **vertical** proportions since the building was often created with a single structural span from side to side. This span was limited to a relatively narrow dimension by the strength of the framing materials. Likewise, individual elements such as windows, doors, and other openings also had a vertical emphasis in order to minimize the span of the opening in the wall. Often when a building itself had horizontal exterior proportions, window openings were organized in small groupings in order to give the building an overall vertical appearance.

Color is one of the most frequently misused building design elements. It is also extremely important. Some colors look comfortable or attractive next to one another, others do not. Intensity, shade, hue, and surface characteristics must all be considered when selecting colors. Color can be used to emphasize details or cause them to fall into the background. The more intense a color, the greater will be its emphasis. Lighter and brighter colors visually stand out, and darker colors appear to recede. When first selecting colors, begin by considering the most important colors -- the existing natural unpainted surfaces of brick, stone and mortar. Paint should complement and harmonize with these natural tones. **Most importantly, color is relative**--that is to say, a color can seem dramatically different in different lights or located next to different colors--**exterior colors should always be selected taking adjacent colors and daylight into account.**

Texture, like color, is relative--a texture seems rougher next to a smooth surface and vise versa. Building materials should be carefully considered for their textures, including the size of their parts; For instance, a concrete block building will look coarse next to the 'fine grain' of a brick building (so common in downtown). Likewise, a stucco building might seem 'blank' next to a brick building.

To summarize, it is strongly recommended that all new construction within Amesbury's many neighborhoods complement the scale and proportion of buildings which already exist. Building mass should be sympathetic to neighboring buildings. Colors and textures should harmonize with buildings next door and themselves. Whenever possible, a professional architect or designer (who has been trained in these issues) should be consulted. Establishing these priorities **at the onset of the design** and planning stage will help ensure a successful project, one that is a credit to the owner and to the community.

B. General Recommendations

1. Building Location:

Buildings should be located to help define the urban/rural spaces they join:

a. Parking areas in front of buildings should be discouraged.
b. Existing setback areas left unfilled should receive special design treatment (landscaping, lighting, signage.)
c. Attractive rear and side access should be provided. Parking and loading areas should be placed at the side or rear of buildings.

2. Scale/Mass:

Design and scale of new development should be compatible with that of surrounding development:

a. Proposed buildings should be designed using architectural elements to break up large massive facades into smaller components of graduated heights and/or varied setbacks to match neighboring buildings.
b. The addition of elements which maintain a human scale should be encouraged. Large dominating facades should be broken up by:
    1) use of trim;
    2) adding awnings, eaves, windows, or other architectural ornamentation;
    3) use of combinations of complementary colors;
    4) special pedestrian access to the ground floor level of large buildings;

5) usable and visual street furniture, seating, plazas; and
6) entryways designed to human proportions.

c. Buildings facing onto major urban spaces should be designed to include retail or commercial activities at the street or pedestrian levels. Interiors should be made visible from the outside to heighten pedestrian interest and suggest security. Avoid blank walls and reflective or opaque glazing at street grade. Frequency of building entries is encouraged to heighten the level of pedestrian movement and activity. Buildings with extensive frontage should include variations in form and texture which avoid monotony and increase visual interest.

3. Sensitivity to Context:

a. Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on the roof or ground should be screened from public view with harmonious materials.
b. Average height and width should be compatible with surrounding buildings.
c. Facades and their parts should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street. If the building is large, it can be broken into smaller bays to reflect neighboring rhythms.
d. Proportions of building elements such as windows, doors, bases, and cornices should reflect those already existing in the immediate neighborhood.
e. Additional stories higher than neighbors should be set back from the wall plane and be as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.
f. Building materials, their textures and colors should be carefully selected to be compatible (not necessarily identical, however) with those in the immediate surrounding neighborhood.
g. Buildings should preserve significant views.
h. Open areas should be landscaped where possible with trees, shrubs and grass. Paved areas, such as parking lots and loading docks, should be screened from adjacent streets with fencing and landscaping.

C. Summary:

There area a number of regulatory considerations to be taken into account when planning and designing for new construction, including building codes, zoning regulations, life safety code, and accommodations for the handicapped. The Town Planner and Building Inspector can provide information on these requirements and on the procedures for obtaining building permits and other permits and inspection.

Building owners and prospective developers are required to obtain the services of an architect in the design of a new industrial or commercial building. Plans and specifications, signed and sealed by a registered architect, are required for obtaining a building permit in these cases.

In the event that new construction will require the removal of an existing structure, several other considerations are important. The local Building Inspector should be consulted as to the law regarding demolition and permits required. Additionally, the Amesbury Historical Commission should be contacted to verify that the building to be demolished is not protected by historical designation. The safety of passersby and the structural stability of neighboring building should always be considered.

IV. RENOVATION, REHABILITATION & RESTORATION

A. Design

A design plan should begin with a careful analysis of the existing building and its neighbors. Find as much historical documentation as possible about the building's origins.

Building rehabilitation should be sensitive to the proportions of the original design wherever possible. Elements added or replaced should have proportions which are consistent with the original design so the final composition will be unified in appearance. The rules of proportion apply to overall building facades, as well as openings, windows, elements of windows and even building decoration.

In choosing materials for the rehabilitation of an existing building, it is important to respect the original nature of the building and its surroundings. Both the choice of materials and the way they are used are extremely important to preserving the overall character of the environment. The insensitive use of materials or the selection of inappropriate materials or colors can have a significant adverse impact. In fact, building materials are probably the single most important parameter in the rehabilitation of a building.

Observe neighborhood buildings for their vertical and horizontal proportions as well as color and detail. These buildings should play a role in determining the renovation design of your structure. Though neighboring buildings may not be exactly alike, the designs should be complementary.

The design of new buildings should reflect both the preferences of the building owner and the character of the neighborhood. For renovation or new construction it is vital to have a well thought-out plan which recognizes the scale and character of existing surrounding buildings.

B. General Recommendations

1. **The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure or site and its environment should be inventoried and evaluated.** The removal or alternation of any historic material or distinctive architectural feature should be avoided when possible.

2. **All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time.** Alterations which seek to create an earlier appearance are encouraged where appropriate.

3. Changes that may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.

4. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure or site should be treated with sensitivity.

5. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication rather than conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

6. The surface cleaning of structures should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage building materials should be avoided.

7. Every reasonable effort should be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by or adjacent to any rehabilitation project.

8. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties should not be discouraged when such alternations and additions reflect significant historical architectural or cultural elements and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.

C. Summary

As with new construction, there are many building codes, local zoning, and utility company requirements to be considered in the renovation of an existing building. The Town Planner and local Building Inspector's office is a good place to begin the research of these requirements. The historical status of a particular building should also be taken in to account. The Amesbury Historical Commission should be able to provide this type of information.

As mentioned, one of the most important steps to be taken in the planning of a renovation project is to do some research on the history of the building and site. The local library will have various sources of information, including annual town directories, and other historical references. Land records will provide information on the previous owners of a building. ***knowing something about a building's history and architectural style can make a great difference in the approach taken in renovation.***

A professional architect or designer can provide a wealth of advice about cost factors as well as design elements. He or she can help point out important architectural features. A building contractor experienced with historic renovation can also provide assistance. These people can help lead to a design solution that will preserve the architectural heritage while remaining economically feasible.

Be sure to select an architect and contractor well versed in the quirks of older buildings and who are familiar with preservation techniques. Many architectural firms have developed specialized skills and knowledge for practical preservation techniques. Other firms, however, are still of the "tear-it-down" or "cover-it-up" school. Select your professionals with care. Ask them for examples of previous work on older buildings and question them about practical solutions to the problems of older structures. The choice of an architect may be one of your most important decisions.

Older buildings almost invariably require modifications to their mechanical and electrical systems in order to comply with present-day building codes. These codes may also, in some cases, necessitate the addition of an elevator or staircase. A building should also be evaluated for its structural integrity. The services of a structural engineer familiar with historical structures will be invaluable in the investigation of these aspects of a renovation. An architect will be able to obtain and coordinate these services for a building owner or developer.

For a more detailed discussion of actual renovation techniques, refer to "Downtown Design Guidelines" shown in Section V.

V. DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

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KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

What makes for a successful "Main Street" business? It can't be measured exactly; there is no single success formula. Product, price and display, service location, and market all play a part. So too does the appearance of the store, the outside image of the business.

Yet experience shows, time and again, that appearance is important to a healthy downtown. With merchants working together to create an attractive image, downtown as a whole can benefit.

Through the Main Street Project, the National Trust for Historic Preservation seeks to demonstrate the value of keeping up appearances. Without gimmicks or themes, its purpose is to build upon resources which already exist.

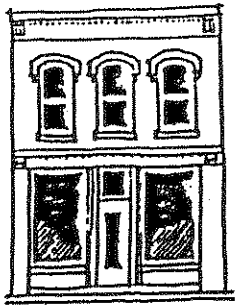
This *Building Improvement File* is one step toward that goal. It is intended as a working guide to help you maintain and improve the looks of your building.

RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM

The twentieth century brought changes for Main Street. With the automobile, grew new competition from commercial strips and shopping centers. Downtown merchants turned their attention to passing cars, erecting shiny new storefronts and eye-catching signs. Main Street stores tried to imitate their modern competitors.

In many ways, the result has been a mixed bag. Downtown now appears as a curious mix of older historic buildings, some renovated and some not, and newer infill buildings. It presents a confused image to the public, and is not conducive to a vibrant shopping environment.

THE MAIN STREET ARCHITECTURAL TRADITION



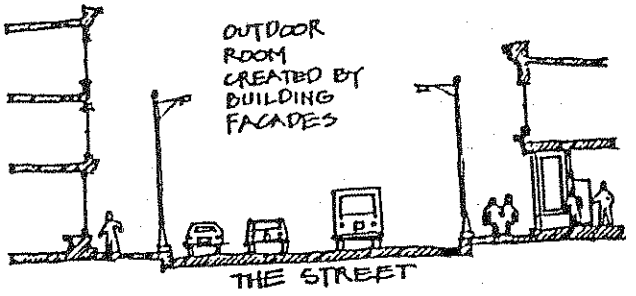
This is the basic building block of downtown – the traditional street-front commercial facade. It was built in many sizes, shapes, and styles (see below), but was always essentially the same facade.

Facades of this type lined Main Street on both sides. One next to another, they formed strong and solid blocks, marked by the rhythm of repeating parts.

Because it was composed of similar facades, the block had a consistent, organized, and coordinated appearance. Any given facade was visually related to its neighbors (see the discussion of "visual relatedness").

With these blocks facing each other, the street took on its own distinct character. Compared to the typical residential street, a person felt totally contained on Main Street. The street became an outdoor room, filled with activity.

The sidewalk (the "pedestrian street") was a window shopper's delight. One after another, the store windows form one continuous display case of Main Street merchandise.



Thus, the appearance of downtown today is largely the result of a strong architectural tradition. Beginning with the early buildings of the mid-1800s and continuing up to about 1930, this tradition controlled how Main Street looked.

The consistency of this building tradition brought about a unity which strengthened Main Street as a whole. If downtown today is to benefit by this unity, then changes to buildings must respect this tradition.

ORIGINAL FACADES

A Note of Emphasis:

The idea of "visual relatedness" is crucial to the goal of an integrated downtown. Historically, Main Street facades complemented and reinforced one another.

Compare the drawings above and below. Notice how the remodeling of the old facades has destroyed their continuity. They are no longer visually tied together. Each facade is unrelated to the next, and the character of the building group, as a whole, suffers.

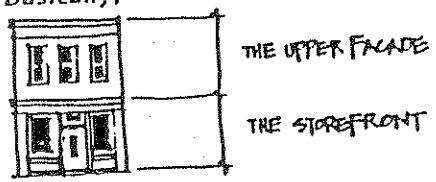
UNDESIRABLE REMODELED FACADES

THE TRADITIONAL FACADE

THE TRADITIONAL FACADE

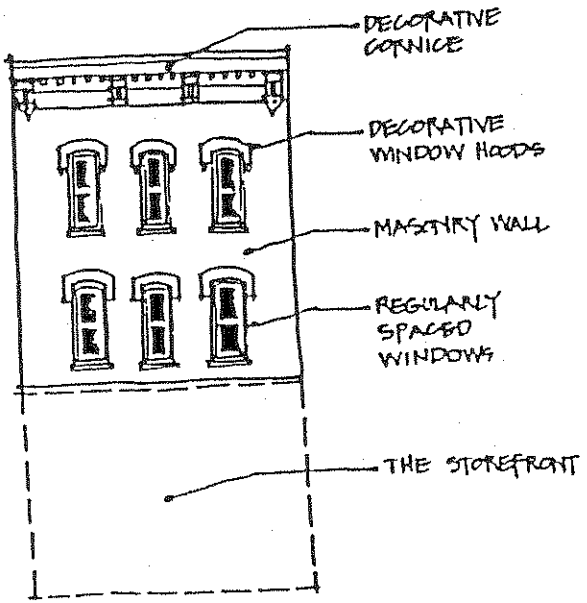
We have looked at the facade as the building block of Main Street. Now it can be considered in itself. Aside from consistency, what were the typical characteristics of the traditional facade?

Basically, the facade had two parts.

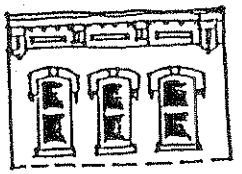


1. THE UPPER FACADE

The upper facade was a flat masonry wall (brick or stone). This wall had window openings cut into it and decoration applied to it.

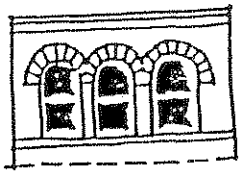


TYPICAL UPPER FACADES



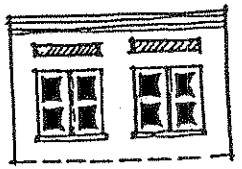
Mid to late 1800s

- BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE AND WINDOW HOODS.
- NARROW WINDOW OPENINGS.



Late 1800s to early 1900s

- CORBELED BRICK CORNICE
- LARGE WINDOW OPENINGS.
- ARCHED WINDOW OPENINGS

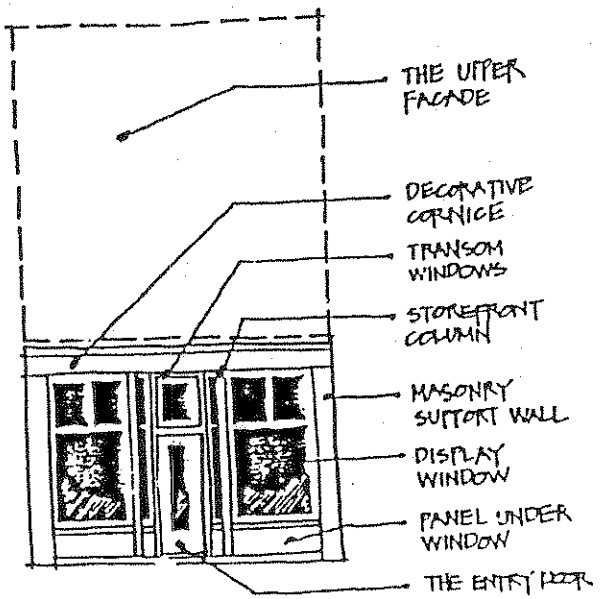


Early 1900s to 1930s

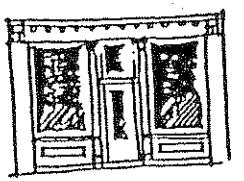
- CORBELED BRICK CORNICE
- LARGE WINDOW OPENINGS WITH MULTIPLE WINDOW UNITS.

2. THE STOREFRONT

The traditional characteristics of the storefront are in marked contrast to the more substantial upper facade. The storefront was rather delicate in appearance and was composed primarily of large display windows.



TYPICAL STOREFRONTS



Mid 1800s to early 1900s

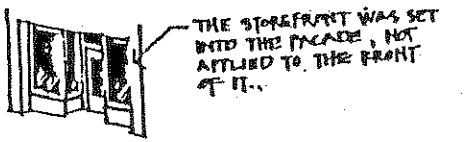
BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE. CAST IRON COLUMNS. LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS.

Early 1900s to 1930s

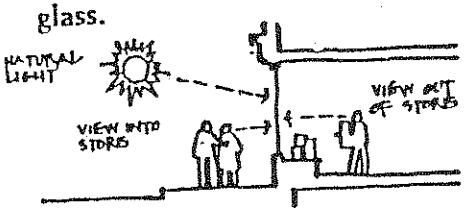
- SIMPLIFIED CORNICE.
- TRANSOM WINDOWS OVER DISPLAY WINDOWS.
- METAL WINDOW FRAMES.

Another Note of Emphasis:
Sensitive storefront change is essential to improving the appearance of Main Street. The following qualities should be remembered as important to the traditional storefront:

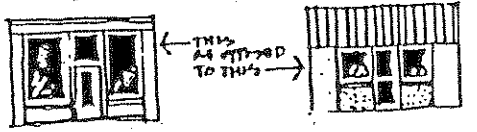
- The storefront was visually contained by the facade.



- The storefront was almost all glass.



- The storefront emphasized the display windows.



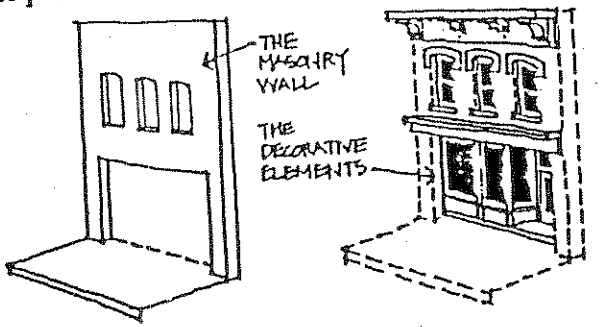
FACADE CHANGE AS EVOLUTION

The existing Main Street environment is the product of an evolution which began with construction of the first building and has continued ever since. Facades change; this is natural, inevitable, and often desirable.

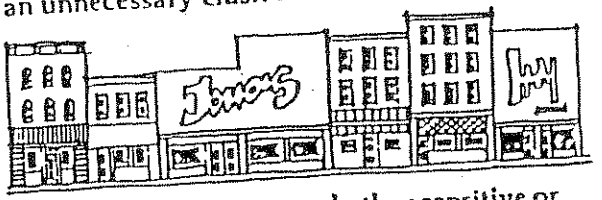
The goal of these guidelines is not to prevent or control change, nor is it to return a facade to its original appearance. Rather, the goal is to encourage sensitive and appropriate change.

THE QUALITY OF CHANGE

When it was first constructed, the typical Main Street facade exhibited some basic inherent qualities. It had an architectural style characterized by its decoration. It was built of certain materials. It was a unified visual composition. Its parts looked related.



These qualities came together to form a visual resource. *Sensitive change* accepts these facade qualities and builds upon them. The result is a harmonious blending of new changes with the existing facade. *Insensitive change*, on the other hand, ignores and often negates the qualities of the original resource. The result is an unnecessary clash between new and old.

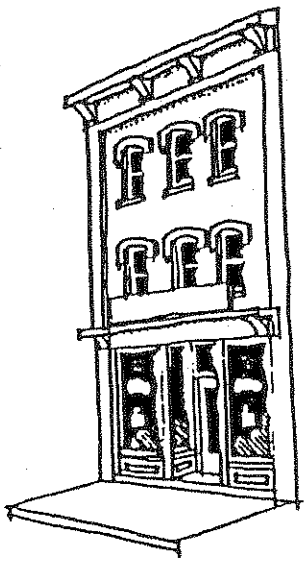


The quality of change, whether sensitive or insensitive, depends on the individual. There needs to be an awareness of what is being changed and a willingness to see existing values.

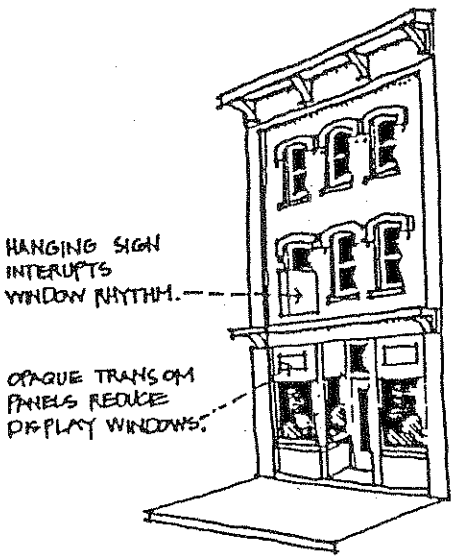
AN EXAMPLE OF CHANGE

The series of drawings (below and on the reverse side) show how one typical facade might have changed over time. Consider the effect which changes have had on the original resource.

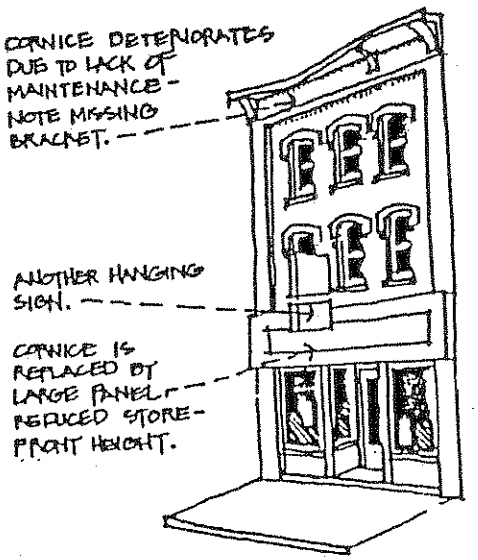
1. THE ORIGINAL FACADE— THE VISUAL RESOURCE



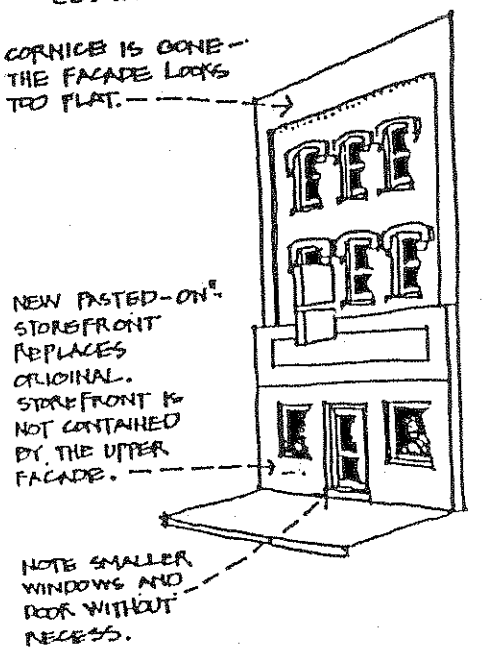
2. MINOR FACADE CHANGE



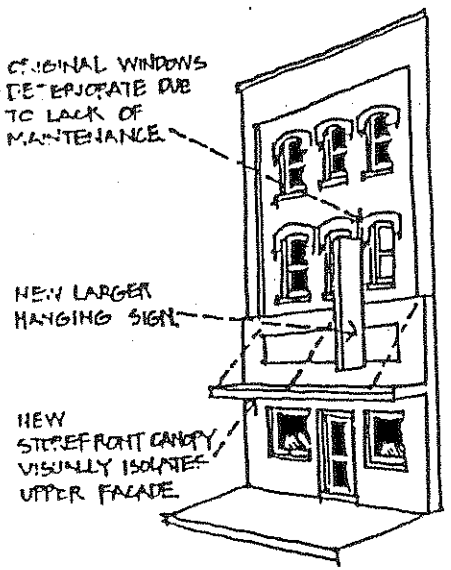
3. MORE MINOR FACADE CHANGE



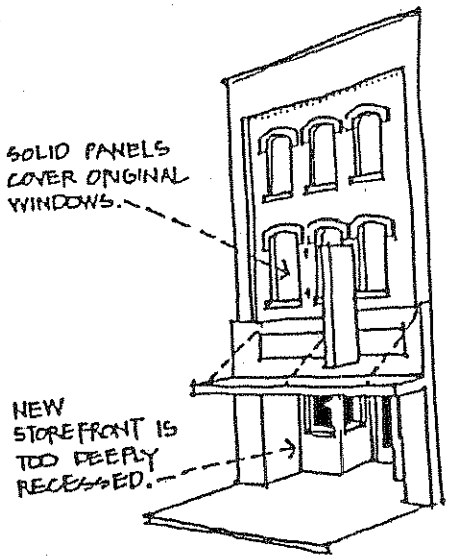
4. STOREFRONT REMODELING— THE FACADE LOOKS CUT IN HALF.



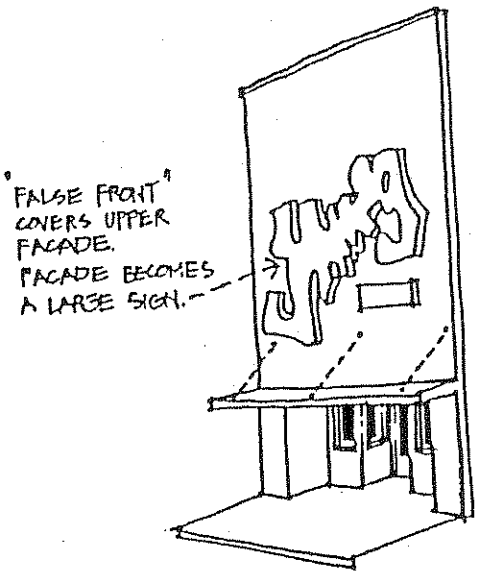
5. MORE STOREFRONT CHANGE



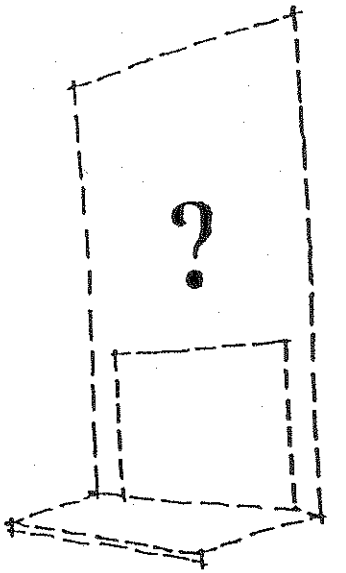
6. ANOTHER STOREFRONT REMODELING



7. DRASTIC FACADE CHANGE—THE ORIGINAL FACADE IS GONE



8. THE FUTURE— WHAT DIRECTION WILL FUTURE CHANGE TAKE?

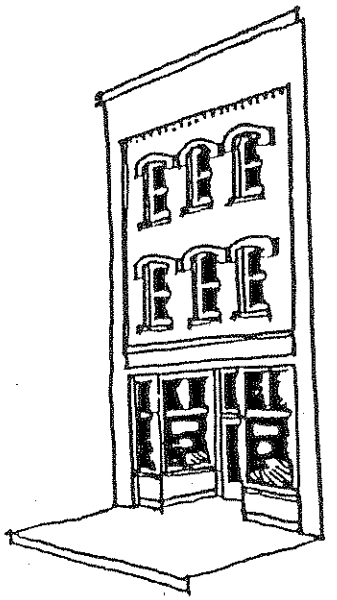


Some Observations on the Facade Change:

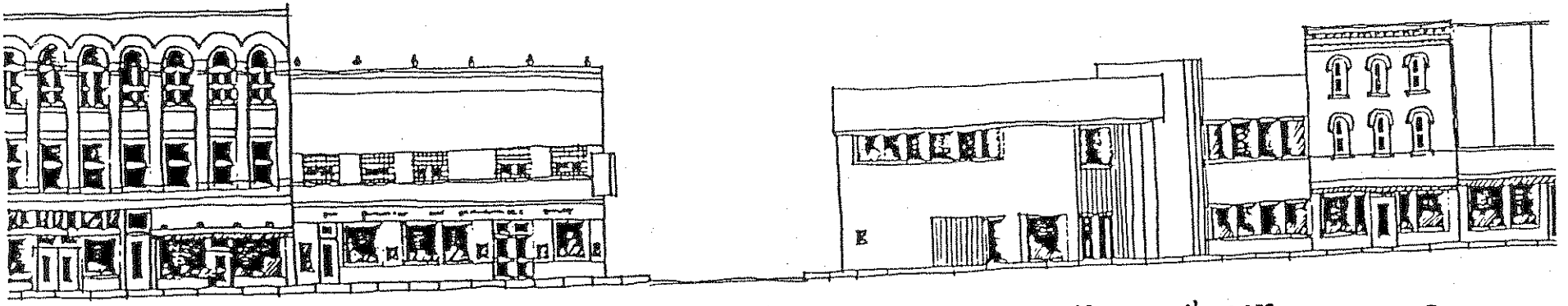
- Note how changes to the facade happen gradually and have a cumulative effect on its appearance. While some are hardly noticeable on their own, change upon change over the years has completely transformed the original facade.
- Note the changes in signs and the effect on the facade. As they get bigger and more numerous, they begin to dominate the facade. Eventually the facade becomes a sign, obscuring the familiar building pattern.
- Throughout the evolution, note how the qualities of the original facade have been ignored. Various new storefronts and signs have been applied without respecting the resource.

An Example of Sensitive Change:

- Note the facade drawing to the right. It shows the same building front as in the sequence above. In both, the existing facade has been remodeled. But here, unlike the others, change has complemented the qualities of the old facade.
- Upper facade retains its traditional character.
- Signs are subtle and well-placed.
- New storefront fits inside the original storefront opening. It is also similar in design to original storefront.



ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY

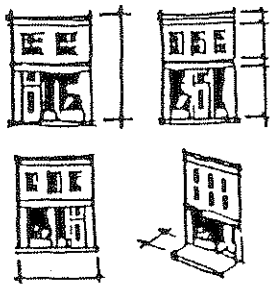


The traditional commercial storefront building can be considered the cornerstone of Main Street. Dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, these buildings share a remarkable similarity, a consistency which has strengthened Main Street as a whole.

With respect for its historic buildings, the traditional strength of Main Street can work yet today. But what about "less historic" buildings? Or changes already made to buildings? Do they necessarily detract from the character of downtown?

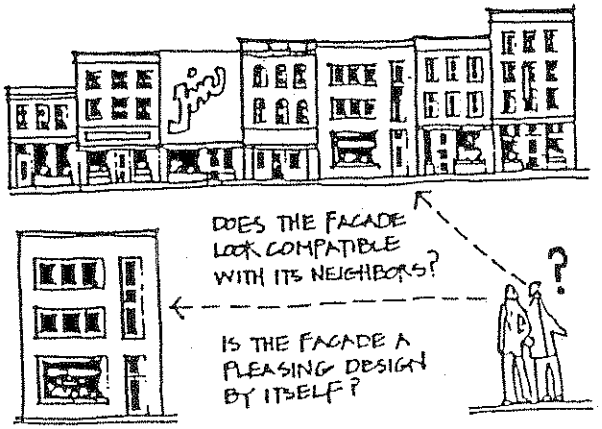
That depends. You will note that recommendations for new buildings (see guidelines sheet—NEW "INFILL" CONSTRUCTION) call for contemporary design, not fake history. In the same way, we would expect changes made over the years to mirror their own times. This reflects the growth and vitality of Main Street.

New buildings are evaluated as they relate to their surroundings, as well as for the design itself. Height, width, relationship to the street, roof forms, proportion, composition, rhythm, proportion of openings, materials, and colors—these are ten criteria which should be considered in the design. By relating to the existing buildings, new construction can be a welcome addition to Main Street, rather than an unwanted intruder.

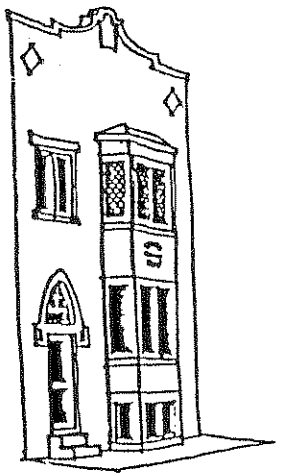


Similarly, the variety of architectural styles which exists along Main Street should be judged on their own qualities, not by age. Before you set out to make changes because your building is not "historic enough," see it for what it is and learn to recognize its own particular values.

The same ten criteria can be applied to any existing facade to gauge its appropriateness with its neighbors. This compatibility is an important measure by which to judge the value and success of a Main Street facade.

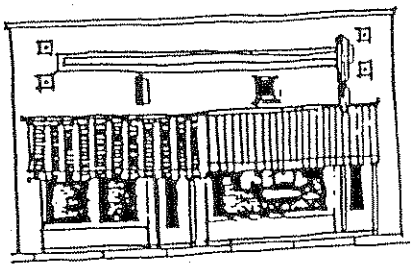


However, there are other criteria as well. For instance, an unchanged historic facade is highly valued because it retains its original integrity. The same holds true, perhaps sometimes to a lesser degree, for an unchanged facade of any age. The 1940s and 1950s are as much a part of Main Street as the 1890s.

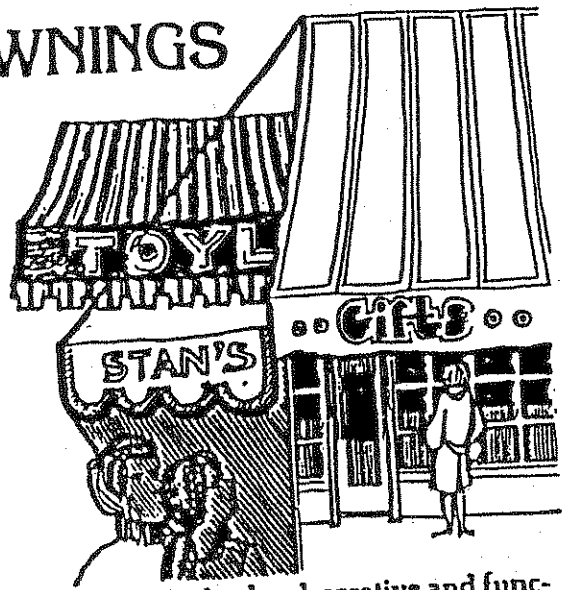


In most cases, regardless of age, many changes have taken place. If the resulting appearance is pleasing in proportions, composition, and details, then the facade is a visual resource for Main Street. It is not necessary to change a facade simply because it doesn't look historic.

NEW CANVAS AWNINGS AND REMODELED STOREFRONTS FLATTER THE EXISTING FACADE.

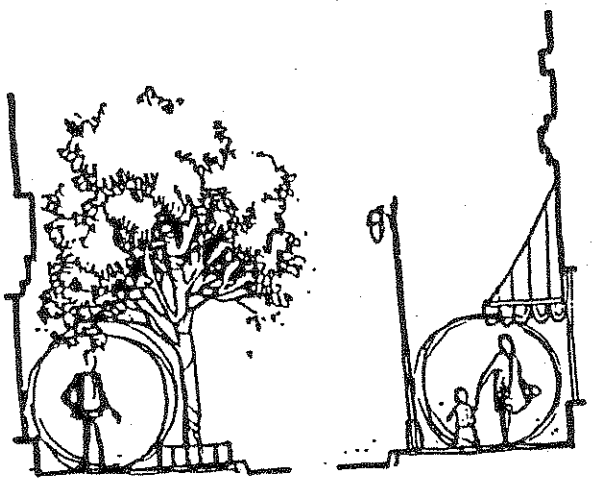


AWNINGS

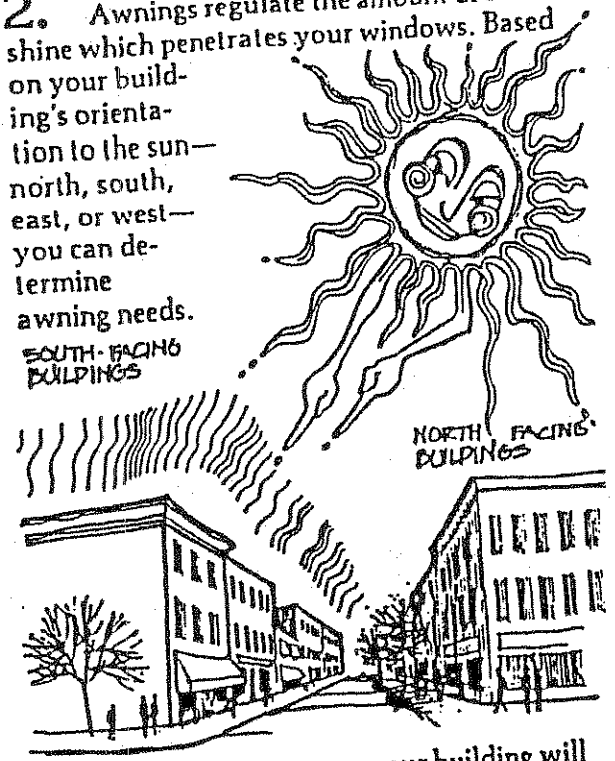


An awning can be both a decorative and functional addition to your storefront. Colorful and bright, it also serves as an energy saver by regulating the amount of sunlight that enters your window. Under an awning, shoppers are enticed to stop, look, and step inside.

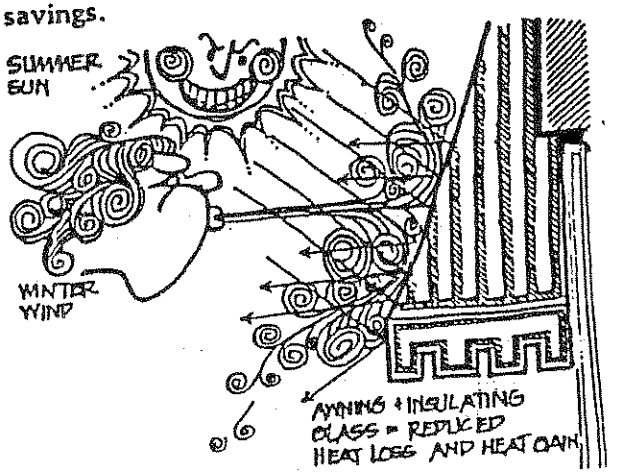
1. An awning creates a pleasant space in front of your building, like a city tree. It provides shade and shelter for busy shoppers, a resting place where pedestrians can stop away from the flow of traffic.



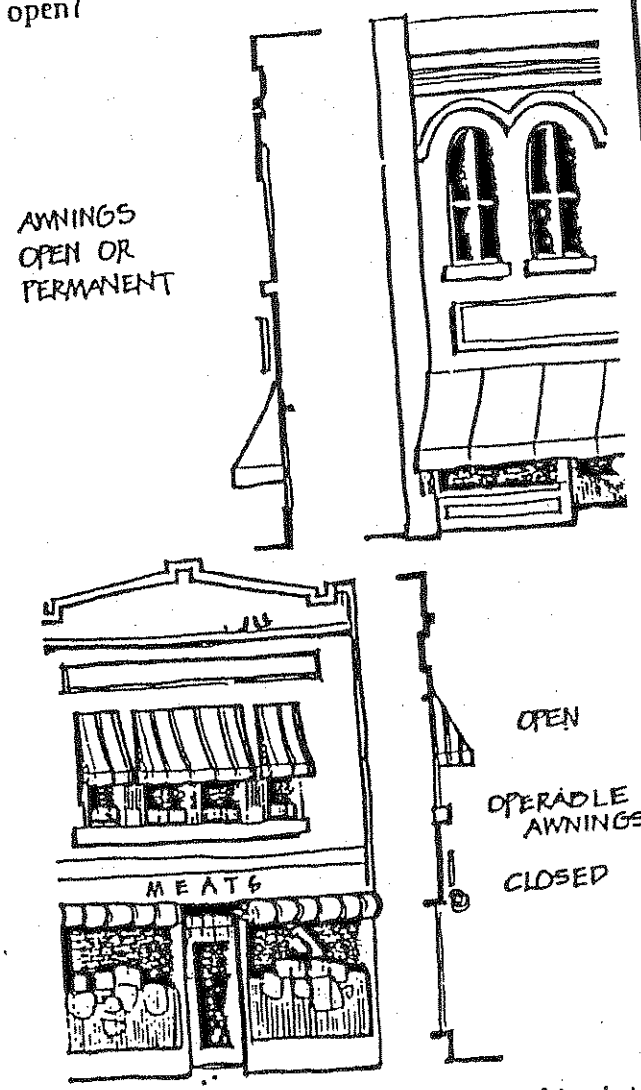
2. Awnings regulate the amount of sunshine which penetrates your windows. Based on your building's orientation to the sun—north, south, east, or west—you can determine awning needs.



With a northern exposure your building will probably not require an awning. For a southern window, however, an awning can be an excellent climate control device. A combination of insulating glass plus an awning will make a significant difference in your energy savings.



3. The installation design will determine in large part how energy effective the fixture will be. Do you want an operable awning which can be opened and closed? Or do you want a fixed awning which remains permanently open?

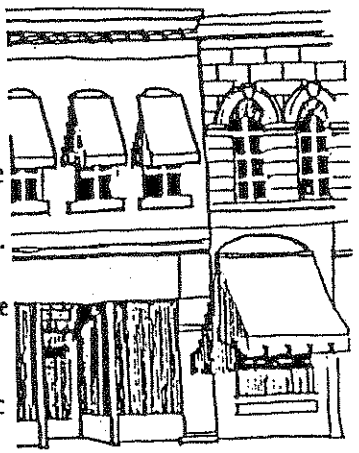


An operable fixture allows the sun to shine into your store on cold days. It shades your window when it is sunny outside. An inoperable, fixed awning is primarily decorative. Although less expensive to install, it does not always fulfill the major function of an awning.

4. As a visual element, an awning can add character and interest to your storefront. You should think about how it will appear in relation to the scale of your building. How will it relate to existing architectural features? Will it

overpower the proportions of your windows and facade? Look at your neighbors' buildings and imagine how the addition of an awning will affect the character of the streetscape.

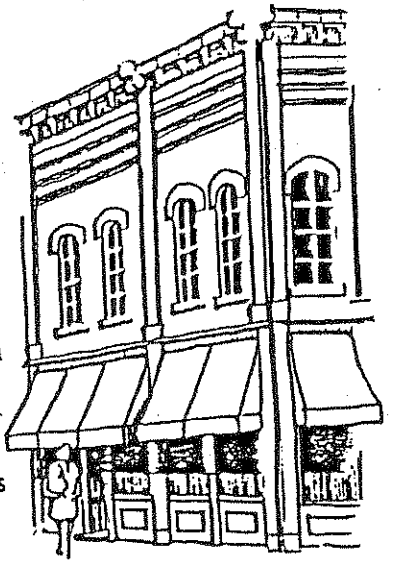
5. Awnings can be constructed from several materials. Canvas is traditionally popular. It is flexible, but must be weather-treated prior to installation. Although initial installation costs are lower, they may require more maintenance than plastic and aluminum.



6. Plastic creates a more contemporary effect. A vinyl awning can be very handsome, if designed with consideration for the rest of the building. This material is flexible, and generally requires less maintenance than fabric.

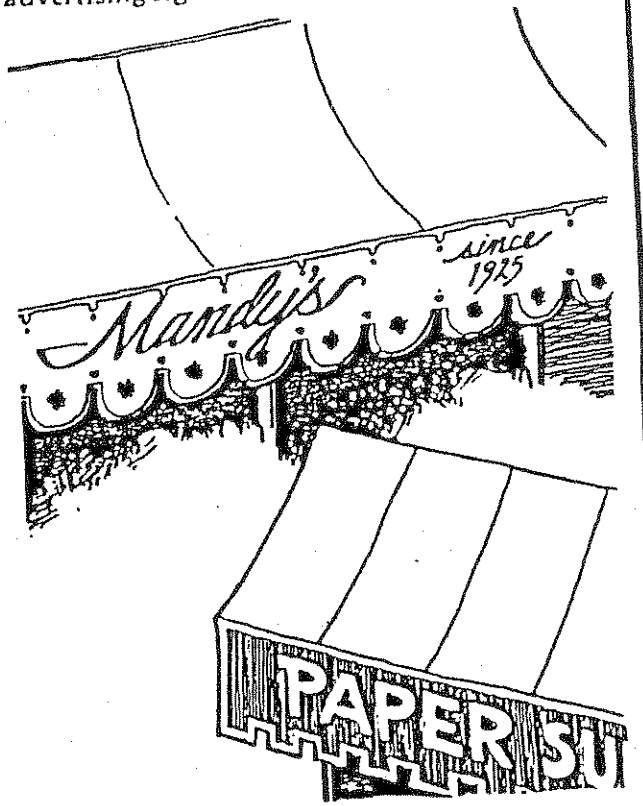
7. Aluminum is unacceptable. These awnings are usually unattractive and inappropriate in a downtown area. A flat aluminum canopy particularly detracts from historic character.

8. To decide on a color for your awning, take a look at the entire building. One with minimal architectural detailing can be "jazzed up" with a bright accent color. A more decorated facade should be complemented with a subtle shade. Choose the color so that your awning enhances the existing features.



9. Pattern is important too. Plain and simple, striped, or a bold solid—what image do you want to create? Again, choice of a pattern (or no pattern at all) should depend on the character of the facade.

10. Awnings have long been used to display advertising signs. Two types are:

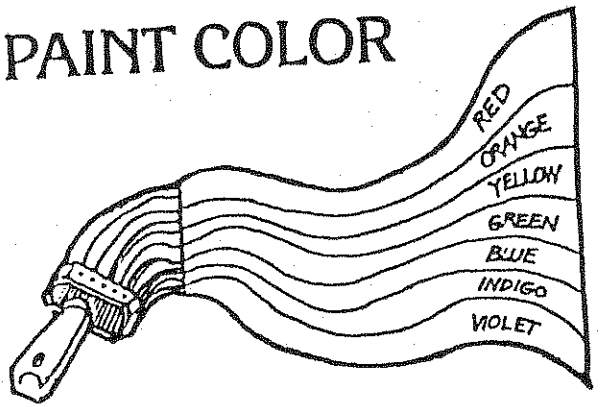


If you choose to incorporate a sign onto your awning, keep the message simple and directed toward identification.

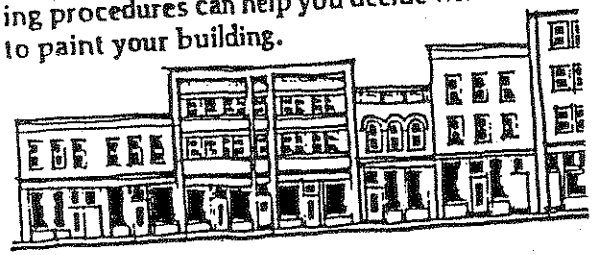
11. Make sure the awning you choose is guaranteed to be weather-resistant. Most fabric-type awnings are chemically treated to retard deterioration by rain or snow. Sun bleaching is another problem to consider—particularly in choosing a color that will not fade significantly.

12. An awning is not the solution to every storefront design. But a well designed and appropriately placed awning can save you money, spruce up your storefront, and create a pleasant sidewalk space for shoppers.

PAINT COLOR

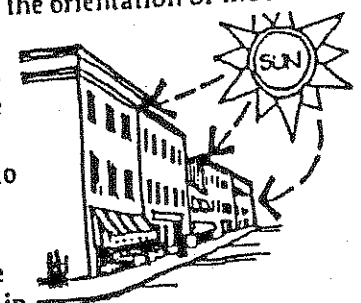


The color you paint your building, window trim, or door is a personal decision. It is an expression about yourself and your commercial establishment. However there are other people and things to think about. The following procedures can help you decide what colors to paint your building.

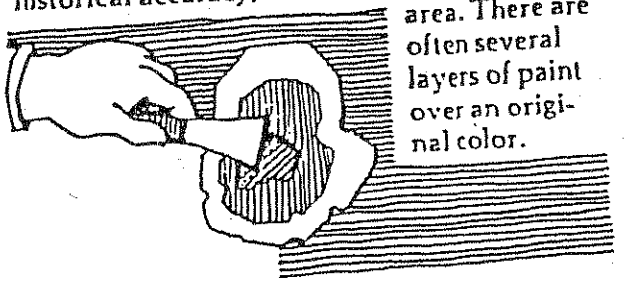


1. Be a good neighbor and look at your building in relation to the entire block or the entire downtown. The color of your building can affect the overall character of Main Street.

2. Think about the orientation of the sun and your building. The amount of sun can change the hue of the paint color. Take a paint chip to your building on both cloudy and sunny days. To be really sure, invest in a quart of the color you choose and actually apply it. The effect of colors differs from a small chip to an entire wall.

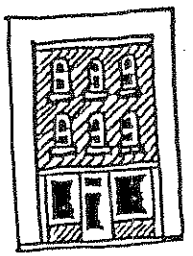


3. Decide if you'd like to return your building to its original paint colors. If you seek historical accuracy, carefully scrape a small area. There are often several layers of paint over an original color.

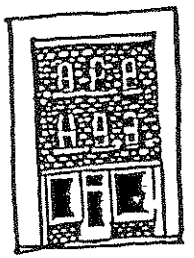


Please note, over time the original color may have changed slightly. To get a better idea of the true color, wet the original surface. The base color will appear more accurately when moist.

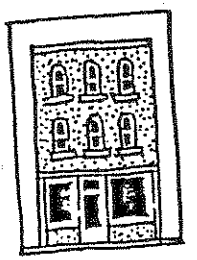
4. Different color schemes were popular at various times. In the mid 1800s, soft, neutral tints were encouraged. Toward the end of that century, darker, richer shades were promoted. Then, tastes changed again at the beginning of the 1900s to lighter, calmer colors.



MID 1800'S SOFT, NEUTRAL TINTS



LATE 1800'S DARKER, RICHER SHADES



EARLY 1900'S LIGHTER, CALMER COLORS

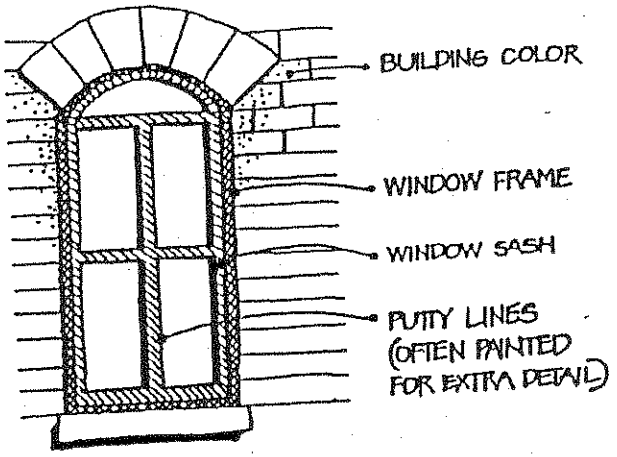
5. It is important to realize that white paint was not so widely used during the Victorian period as it is today. White seems to be too glaring and does not blend in readily with the environment.

WHITE

NON WHITE

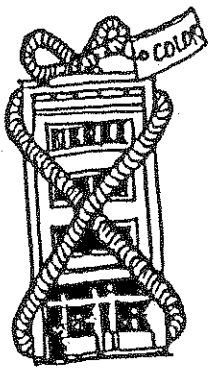
6. Traditionally, building trim was painted in a decorative manner, many times a contrasting shade lighter or darker than the main building color (which often was natural brick).

This paint treatment defined the trim, but it was not so loud that the trim colors overpowered the building.



7. Aluminum frames have often replaced the traditional wood frames. The shine and metallic color of the aluminum does not complement historic buildings. If possible, paint these frames a more neutral color or purchase darker anodized aluminum frames.

8. Color should be used to tie all building parts together, elements like the cornice, windows, storefront, and doors. In order to do this, it is necessary to restrict the number of colors you use. Try to choose similar colors.



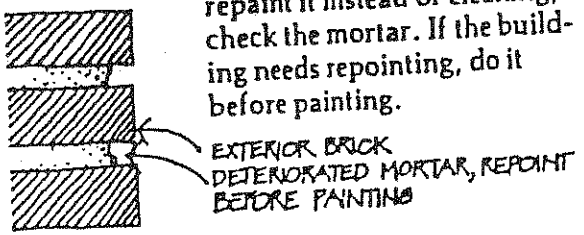
9. With these procedures in mind, express yourself in painting. This adds to the richness and variety of Main Street.

PAINTING YOUR BUILDING

Painting can be one of the most dramatic improvements you make to your building. But be sure you know what steps to take. The following procedures will help smooth the way for a successful paint job:

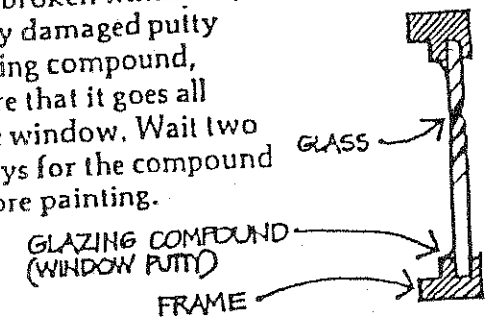
1. Determine what you need to do to prepare for painting. Check all the wood. Is it sound or rotting? Replace any rotting wood.

If you have a masonry building and want to repaint it instead of cleaning, check the mortar. If the building needs repointing, do it before painting.

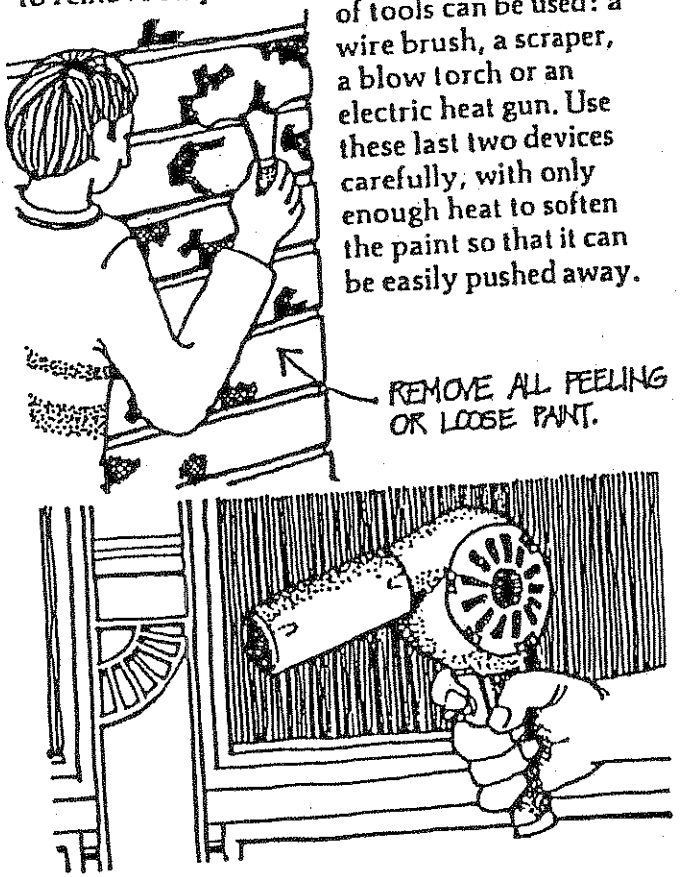


2. Plan your painting schedule. Some times of the year are better for painting than others. Good weather usually makes for a better paint job. Ask your local paint dealer for assistance.

3. Check the condition of your windows. Reglaze all broken windows (install new glass). Replace any damaged putty with a glazing compound, making sure that it goes all around the window. Wait two to three days for the compound to dry before painting.

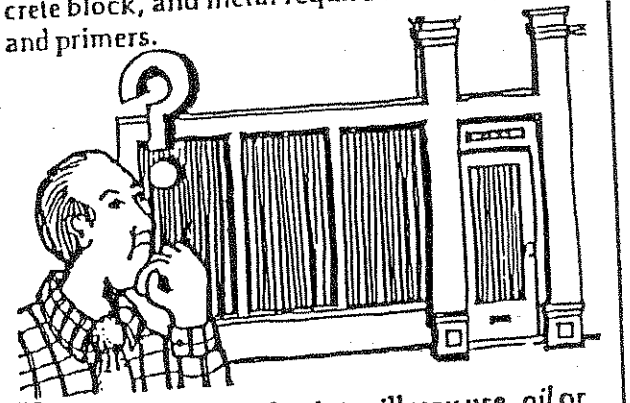


4. Prepare the surface adequately. Be sure to remove all peeling or loose paint. A variety of tools can be used: a wire brush, a scraper, a blow torch or an electric heat gun. Use these last two devices carefully, with only enough heat to soften the paint so that it can be easily pushed away.



5. Consider using a primer for the first coat. On older buildings, a primer will help the final coat adhere. Mix a little of the finish coat paint in with the primer.

6. Determine the type of paint brushed for your building. Stone, brick, wood, concrete block, and metal require different paints and primers.



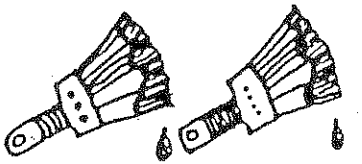
7. Which kind of paint will you use, *oil* or *latex*? There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

- More durable
- Some feel it helps to preserve wood and adheres better
- Harder clean-up

- Less durable
- Easier to apply
- Easier clean-up

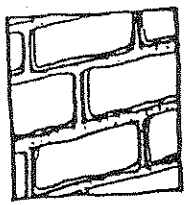
One important thing to remember is that once you use latex, you must continue to use latex. It's very difficult to switch back to oil. If you have been using an oil base, it is best to continue with oil.

8. Be aware that there are three degrees of shine for paint: gloss, semi-gloss and flat or matte.



9. Remember that quality paint will last longer than cheaper paint. It will not fade or peel as quickly and usually gives better coverage.

MASONRY CLEANING



CLEAN BRICK

The decision to clean the surface of your building is partly a matter of taste. Cleaning can give it a new visual life, restoring the natural qualities of the brick or stone.

DIRTY BRICK

There are however functional reasons for cleaning masonry. Dirty areas on brick or stone remain wet for a longer period of time. This dampness can promote chemical reactions which lead to deterioration. Harmful microorganisms can also thrive in the dirt, in time, damaging the building surface.

PAINTED BRICK

Masonry cleaning can also lighten the load of building maintenance. An owner who cleans the paint from his or her building, opting for the natural color of brick or stone, eliminates the periodic chore of repainting.

But a word of caution—improper cleaning can result in further acceleration of masonry deterioration. This can, after several years, affect the structural stability of your building.

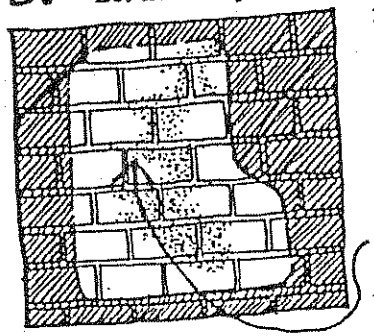
Cleaning masonry is a very technical subject upon which the National Trust for Historic Preservation has accumulated much material. Do not hesitate to ask the Main Street Project Manager for advice.

The following is a list of steps to think about if you want to clean your building:

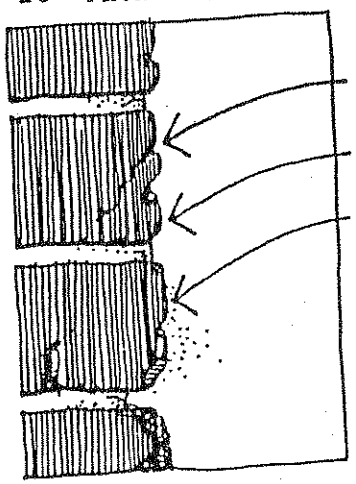
1. Consult an expert who can help you investigate the surface of your building and determine the safest, most efficient method of cleaning.

2. To be on the safe side, pay for a test patch. Evaluate the effectiveness of the cleaning method. Some dirt or paint is difficult to remove.

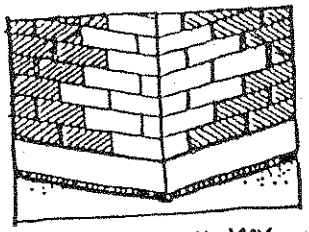
3. Let the test patch weather for several months. Any problems with the cleaning method will show up. Residue from the cleaning should not be left on the brick.



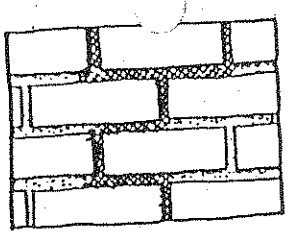
4. After the test, examine your brick. Note if there are too many pock marks. Are the edges too rounded? Does the face of the brick rub off? Some brick may be too soft to clean.



5. Check alterations to the original building. Methods used to fill in old unused doors or to change windows may be unsightly. The infill brick may be a different color. Perhaps the building was first painted to conceal these differences and should be repainted.

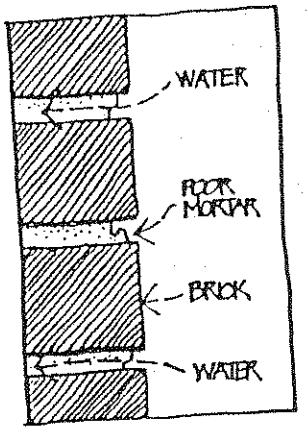


A PATCHED AREA MAY NOT MATCH THE ORIGINAL BRICK.



REPOINTING MORTAR MAY NOT MATCH OLD MORTAR COLOR OR TEXTURE.

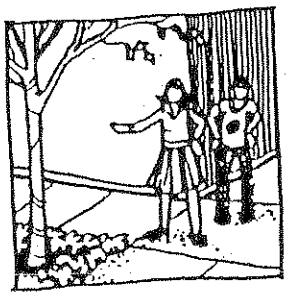
6. Investigate the condition of the mortar between the brick. Poor pointing could let water (used in cleaning) into the building and could cause interior damage. An expert can help you decide whether to tuckpoint before or after cleaning. (Be sure that the appropriate mortar type is used, for the wrong choice can lead to visual and/or structural problems.)



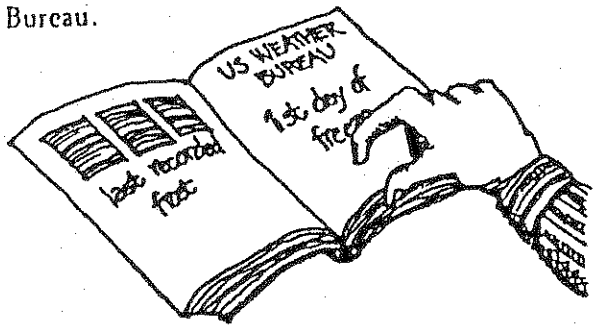
7. After the test patch, look at the original color of the brick. Do you like it?

8. Make certain the company you choose has a good reputation. If possible, investigate examples of their previous work for yourself.

9. Look at the area surrounding your building. Shrubs, trees, or ground cover will need protection. Be sure that whoever does the cleaning agrees to cover both the plant material and earth around the plants. Use a water resistant material.

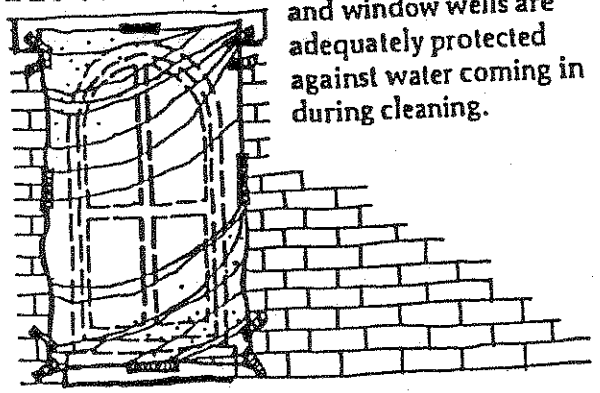


10. Think about the weather when you decide to clean your building. Avoid wet cleaning operations when a danger of frost may exist. Verify freeze dates with the U.S. Weather Bureau.



If you are doing more than one maintenance task on your building, plan out a work schedule. Some work should be done before cleaning. Other work is best left until after. For example, there will be a need to wash windows after the cleaning process.

11. Make sure that all entrances, windows, and window wells are adequately protected against water coming in during cleaning.



PROCESSES

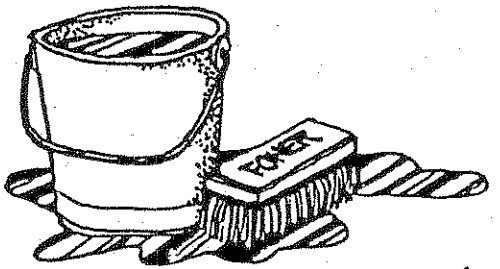
There are several different methods used to clean buildings. Choosing one method over another should be based on

- the amount of soil.
- the amount and type of paint to be removed.
- the original composition and current condition of the masonry.

It is *most important* to understand how your building material will interact (chemically and physically) with the cleaner. If you don't know, don't hesitate, ask for help. Be sure to take your time and learn about the various processes.

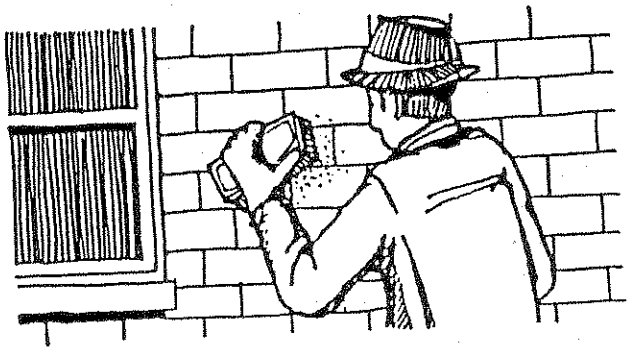
Water Cleaning

Cleaning with water sounds easy and it can be the most economical way to clean a dirty building. But do watch for potential problems. For instance, ask about the mineral composition of your city's water supply. Some minerals could leave stains on your building; check with the cleaning company.



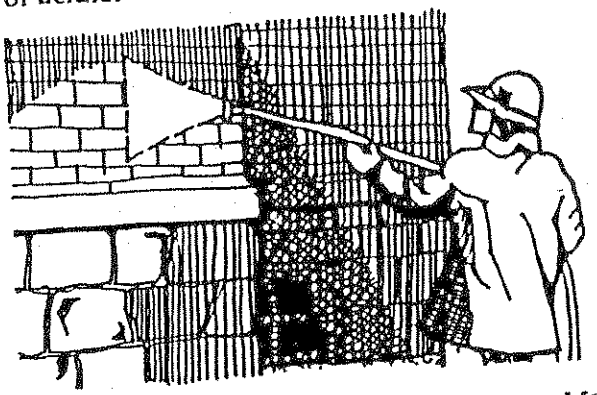
Some especially dirty areas may require a good deal of manual scrubbing and strong detergent. The increased work hours can raise the total cost of the job.

Be sure to use only bristle brushes, not metal. Metal can disturb the mortar and damage masonry.



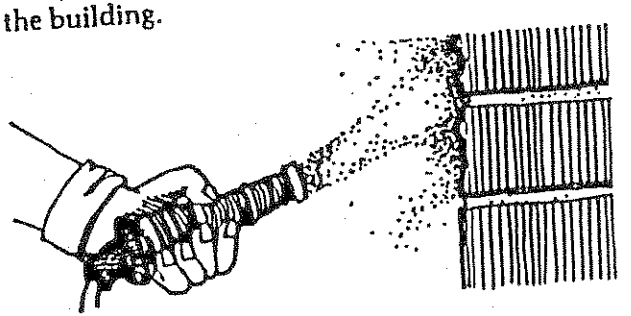
Chemical Cleaning

Finding the right chemical for the job is the biggest challenge. Every company seems to have a secret formula. One thing to remember is that chemical cleaners can be either alkaline or acidic.



Be sure to choose the right kind of chemical for your building. Acidic products should never be used on limestone or marble buildings.

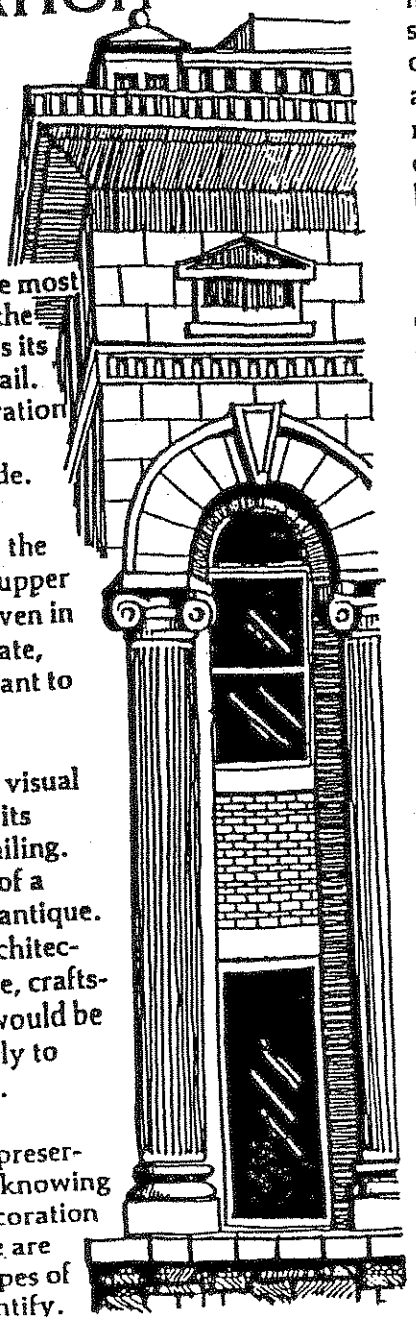
The masonry is usually pre-wet to soften any dirt. Then the chemical is applied and allowed to remain on the building surface. Finally, it is rinsed off, usually with water. At rinse-off time, make sure *all* the chemical is washed off the building.



Abrasive Blasting

Sounds tough? It is! Fine particles, such as sand, are forced with air (sometimes water) through a nozzle. It is never recommended because it can damage or erode the building surface.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION



Certainly one of the most striking aspects of the traditional facade is its eye enchanting detail. Historically, decoration was freely used to embellish the facade.

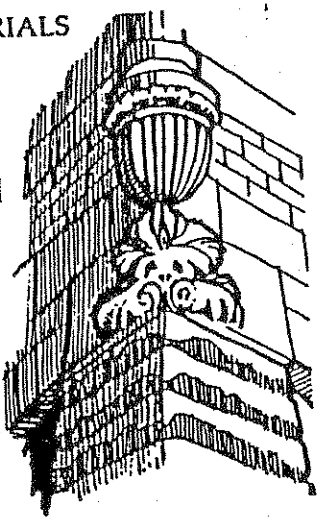
Often today, only the decoration of the upper facade remains. Even in this incomplete state, details are important to preserve.

Much of a town's visual character rests in its architectural detailing. You might think of a decoration as an antique. It is a blend of architecture and sculpture, craftsmanship which would be difficult and costly to reproduce today.

The first step in preserving detailing is knowing what kind of decoration you have. There are basically five types of materials to identify.

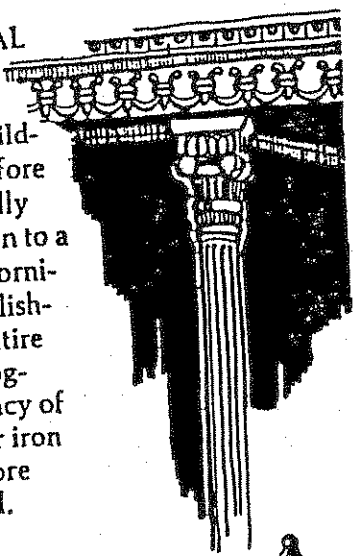
IDENTIFYING MATERIALS

1. MASONRY



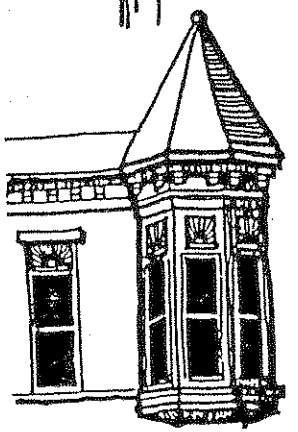
Decorative masonry includes both brick and stone work. It is found on buildings of almost any date. In detail, it ranges from elaborate corbeled cornices and bold window arches to decorated storefront piers.

2. CAST IRON AND SHEET METAL



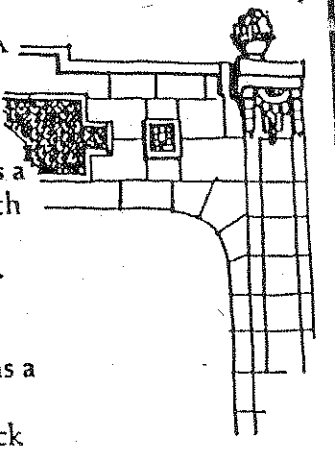
Metal decoration is usually found in buildings constructed before 1900. It was generally applied as an add-on to a masonry facade. Cornices, window embellishments, and even entire facades can be recognized by the intricacy of the detail. Metal or iron decorations are more durable than wood.

3. WOOD

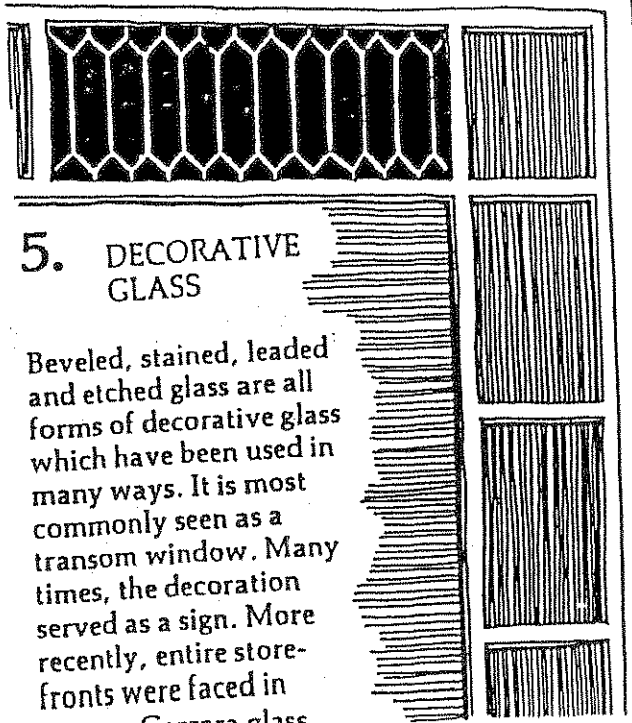


Wood was used for decoration in a variety of ways. Wood details are often subtle, like the moldings around windows. These less ornate details are nevertheless important to the total facade.

4. TERRA COTTA



Decorative terra cotta was commonly used from 1890 to 1930. It is a ceramic material, which offered flexibility in form, color and detail. Terra cotta was most commonly used as a decorative veneer or as a masonry unit used in combination with brick or stone.



5. DECORATIVE GLASS

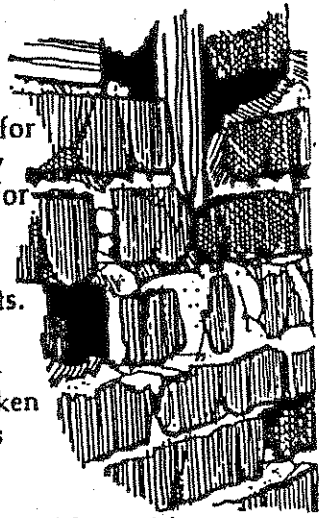
Beveled, stained, leaded and etched glass are all forms of decorative glass which have been used in many ways. It is most commonly seen as a transom window. Many times, the decoration served as a sign. More recently, entire storefronts were faced in opaque Carrara glass.

The next step is identifying both visual and structural problems with the decoration. It is strongly recommended that a local professional or tradesman be consulted for the best solution. Be sure that your concern for the preservation of the details is clear to him or her!

R13

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

1. MASONRY PROBLEMS

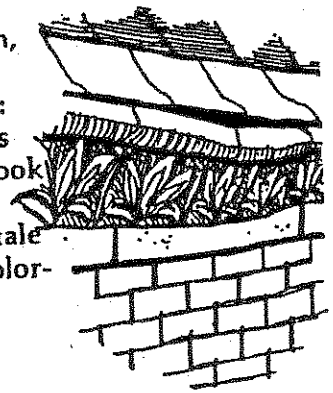


The problems to look for in decorative masonry are the same as those for masonry in general—deteriorating mortar joints or masonry units.

In making repairs, extreme care must be taken to prevent an obvious and unsightly patch.

Heavy paint is often a problem with masonry decoration. While one coat covers the warm, natural color of the stone or brick, several layers of paint can obscure the detail.

2. CAST IRON AND SHEET METAL PROBLEMS

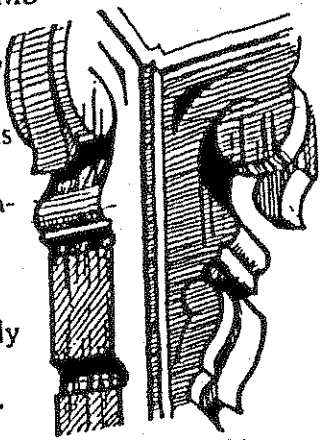


With metal decoration, look for the obvious signs of deterioration: corrosion, tears, holes and missing pieces. Look also for more subtle evidence, such as telltale rust and surface discoloration, often a sign of deterioration from within.

A sagging cornice can mean deterioration in the support framing. Since this decoration is applied to the surface, check the anchoring of the piece to the wall.

Minor deterioration problems can be quickly solved by properly prepari priming, and painting the decoration. For more extensive repairs, a local tradesman should be consulted. But again, remember to communicate your concern for the decoration.

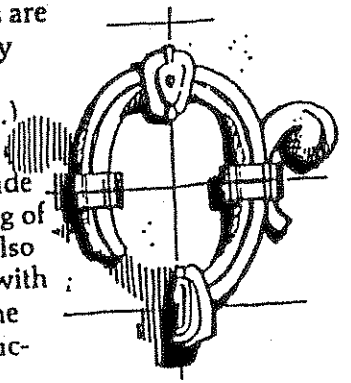
3. WOOD PROBLEMS



Wood decoration is very susceptible to deterioration. However, problems are easy to prevent through regular maintenance. In checking for problems, look for soft, dry, or split areas in wood surfaces, especially where frequently exposed to harsh weather.

Up to a point, these problems can be fixed by filling and caulking the wood, then priming and painting it. When a repair becomes impossible, consult a local millshop for a replacement piece which matches (or at least complements) existing detail.

4. TERRA COTTA PROBLEMS



Since terra cotta is actually masonry, many of its potential problems are the same as previously discussed. (See MASONRY PROBLEMS.)

Other problems include cracking and chipping of the glazed surface. Also watch for problems with loose anchoring of the terra cotta to the structural wall.

Since it is the most difficult material to work with, an expert should be contacted for terra cotta maintenance and repair. Great care should be exercised whenever dealing with it, for replacement terra cotta is extremely hard to find.

5. DECORATIVE GLASS PROBLEMS

One of the problems with glass decoration is that, many times, it is covered up. Look for it in transoms or behind plywood window covers.

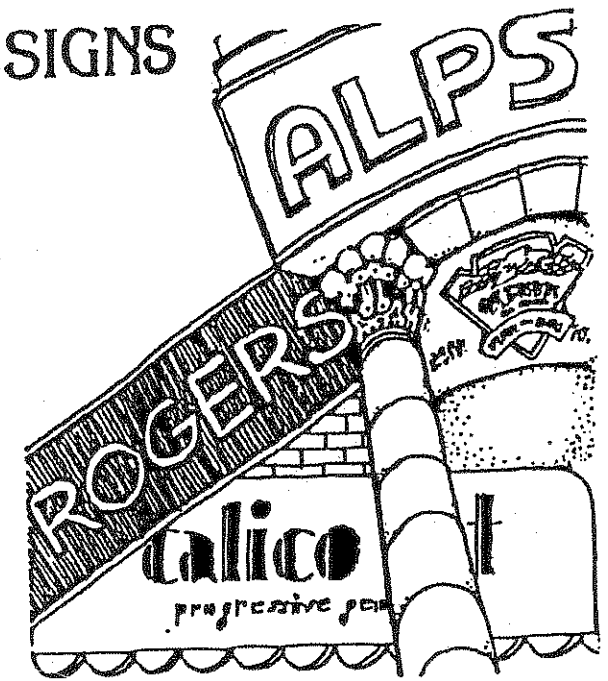
Sagging, if any, means that the glass and frame need to be reinforced with a brace. Other problems often exist with old leaded or stained glass. The metal between the glass pieces, called the "came," may be either zinc or lead. Always use the same metal in making repairs.

A GENERAL APPROACH

Any historic detail should be treated with care. First, maintain what you have. If necessary repair or replace the detail, duplicating or complementing the original.

The addition of any fake "historic" decoration to make a facade look old is not recommended. This will inevitably cheapen and detract from the quality of the facade.

SIGNS



Signs are a vital part of any downtown. With a sign, you call attention to your business and create an individual image. But it's often forgotten that signs contribute to an overall image as well. Merchants try to out-shout one another with large, flashy signs.

If Main Street is to work together as a whole, its signs must serve both of these images. Consider the following guidelines in selecting your sign:

1. Stand back and question the purpose of your sign.

Is it merely an identification?

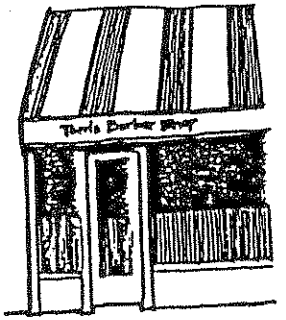
Do you want to let the personality of your store or office shine through?

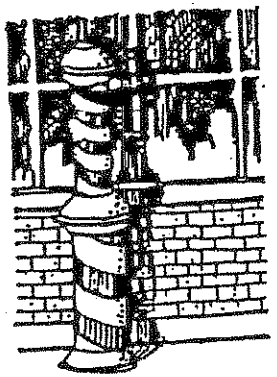
Is it necessary to provide information about your products on a sign?

What kind of public are you trying to attract?

2. Consider the type of sign you want.

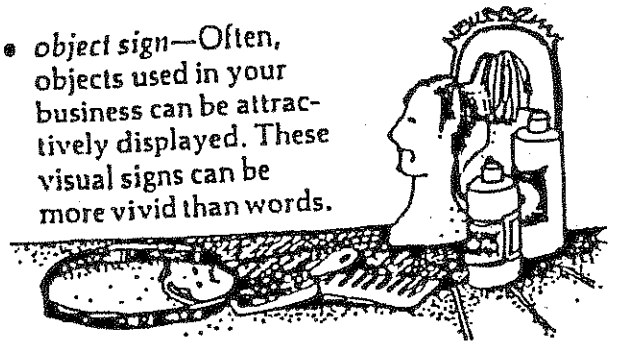
- *word sign*—This sign uses words to describe your business.





- *symbol sign*—Many times a recognizable symbol is more expressive than words.

- *object sign*—Often, objects used in your business can be attractively displayed. These visual signs can be more vivid than words.



Perhaps you'll want a word sign and a symbol sign, or any combination.

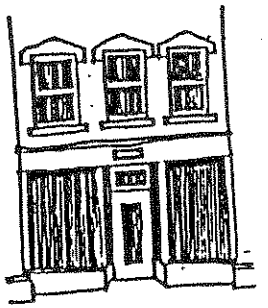
3. Consider all the possibilities for using different materials. Each has unique qualities which can be exploited for the type of sign most appropriate to your needs.

Signs can be made from wood, metal, plastic, stone, canvas, paint on glass, paint on brick, etched or stained glass, and more.

4. You should look at pictures of how your building looked in the past. This will give you ideas about how signs were related to historic architectural details.

5. Visualize how your sign will appear in relation to the entire facade. The sign should not dominate; its shape and proportions should fit your building just as a window or a door fits.

For example, a sign hung under the cornice complements the architecture and therefore presents a strong image.

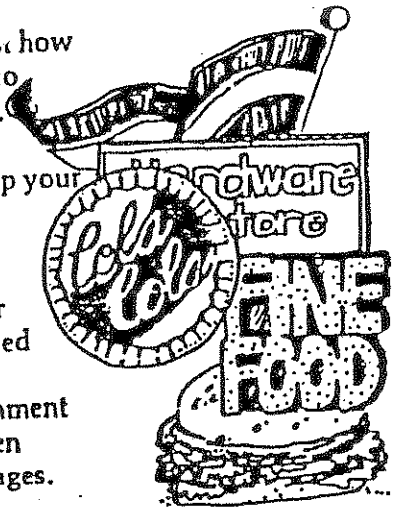


6. Decide where you want to put your sign. There are several options in deciding the placement:

- under the lower cornice
- painted on glass
- on the side of the building
- hanging from the building
- on the awning flap

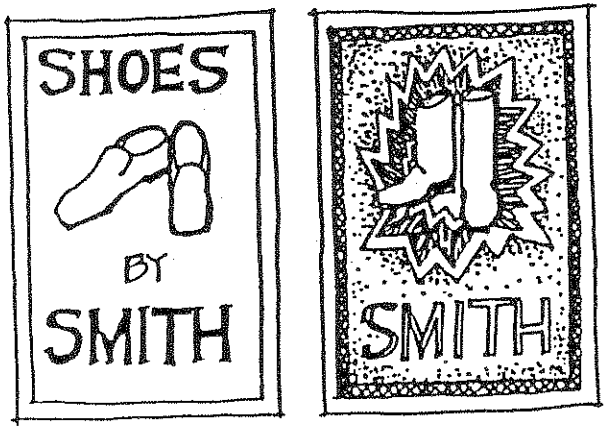
Some types of signs are *not* appropriate, including large hanging plastic signs and oversized signs placed on top of the building or applied over the upper facade.

7. Decide just how much you want to say on your sign. It is important to keep your message simple and to the point. Remember, your sign will be viewed as part of a very complex environment filled with written and visual messages.



8. Now step back and take a look at the color of your building and the colors you see on the surrounding structures. Take hints from these in selecting a color for your sign.

You will usually get the best results if you opt for a simple color scheme—a range of three colors. Avoid flashy, Day-Glo colors,

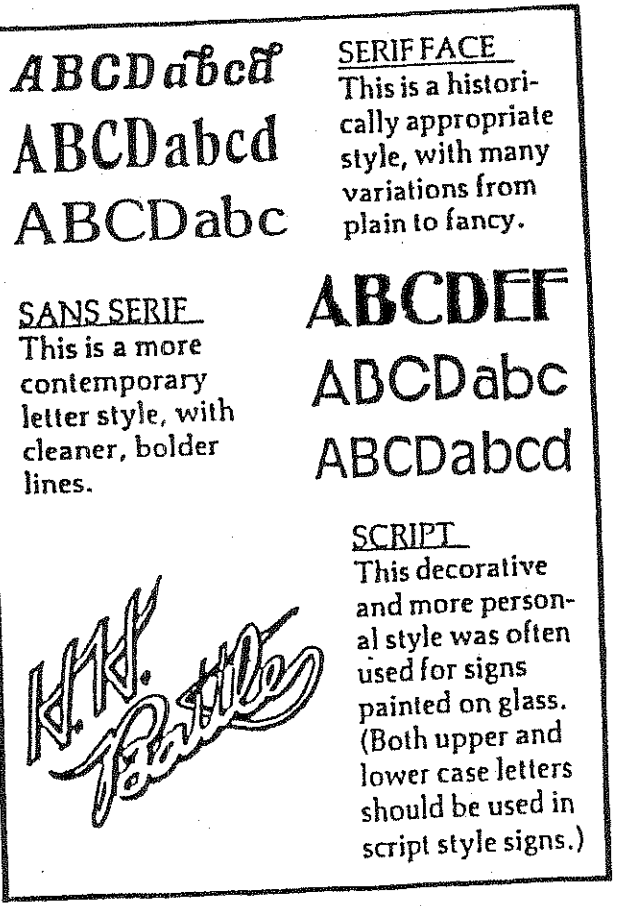


9. Along with colors, lighting is important. If you illuminate your sign at night, the light source should be as inconspicuous as possible.

Avoid flashy or gaudy lighting techniques which are merely a distraction.

10. Express the persona[illegible] of your establishment in the lettering style you select. To get an idea about various styles, look at other signs around town. Think about what each style expresses about the business or product it advertises. Then you can define the image you want your sign to project.

There are three basic styles of type, with numerous variations of each. A sign designer can help you choose a style for your sign.



11. Quality of workmanship and construction is as vital as any of these basic considerations. A simple, well-made sign speaks far better of your establishment than an ex[illegible]ra-gant sign that is sloppy in appearance. Choose a sign maker carefully. Ask to see samples of previous work.

12. Signs provided by national distributors are not appropriate. They don't reflect the individuality of your store and usually appear as add-ons to your storefront advertising. The signs you display should advertise your *personal* business messages.

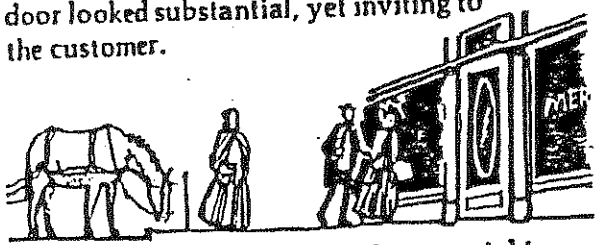
13. Now consider this idea. Your entire building presents an image that acts as a sign. The appearance of your building is more subtle than a word sign, but it can be more effective.

YOUR BEST ADVERTISING!

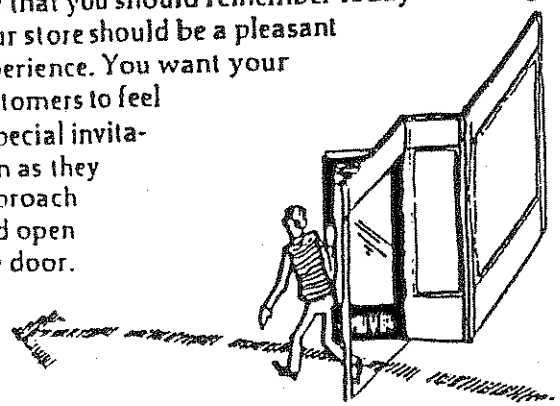
DOORS

THE FRONT DOOR

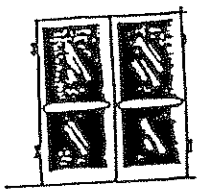
Historically, the storefront entry was more than just a door. Its design and appearance reflected its commercial importance. Tall and stately in proportion, and built of wood with a large glass panel, the traditional storefront door looked substantial, yet inviting to the customer.



The idea of making the front door special is one that you should remember today. Entering your store should be a pleasant experience. You want your customers to feel a special invitation as they approach and open the door.

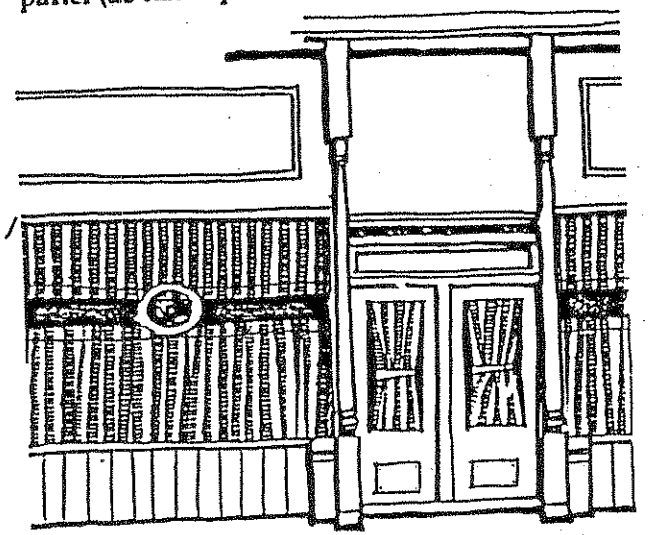


Original storefront doors along Main Street have become scarce. They have been replaced by the standard aluminum and glass commercial door. Although lacking in historical character, this modern door cannot be considered inappropriate. Its simple appearance makes it unobtrusive. However, if you want to enhance the personality of your storefront, you should consider other options open to you.



1. Your front door should look compatible with the rest of your storefront. It should be significant, but not outspoken.

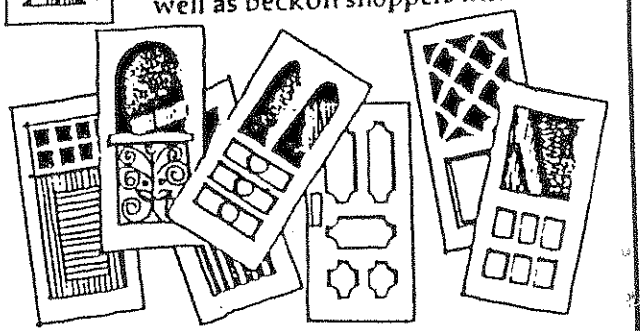
2. If your storefront retains its original character, a traditional wood door with a glass panel (as tall as possible) will reinforce this



appearance. Try to find a salvaged older door to fix up or use a new door of the same design.

3. If traditional appearance is not a concern, make a careful choice of a door based on the total design of your storefront. Many door sizes and designs are available in both wood and metal. If you choose the standard aluminum and glass door, consider a dark, anodized finish rather than the metallic color. These are some new door designs which may be appropriate.

4. Avoid overdecorating your door. Most fake "historic" doors are decorated with designs, moldings, and window grilles that look out of place on Main Street. The same holds true for many contemporary door designs. The door should reinforce the character of your building, as well as beckon shoppers inside.



Consider s : decorations on the door. A handsome door knob or pull, a brass kick plate, or an attractive painted sign on the window is enough to make your door something special.

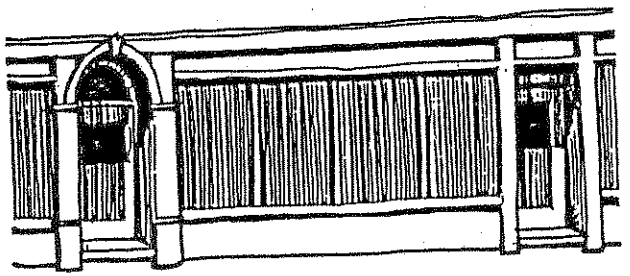
THE SECONDARY DOORS

The typical Downtown building often had two additional doors: a second door on the front permitting access to the upper floors and a back door.

Compared to the main entrance, they were modest in design. If you are selecting new doors for these locations, you may find the following ideas helpful:

1. If you choose to r tain a traditional appearance, an old wood panel door is most appropriate.

2. Whatever your choice, these doors should be visually understated. The second front door should fit with the overall facade without drawing attention to itself. The back door should be practical in style to reflect the unadorned character of the rear facade. A fancy door would look out of place in these surroundings.



MAIN FRONT ENTRANCE

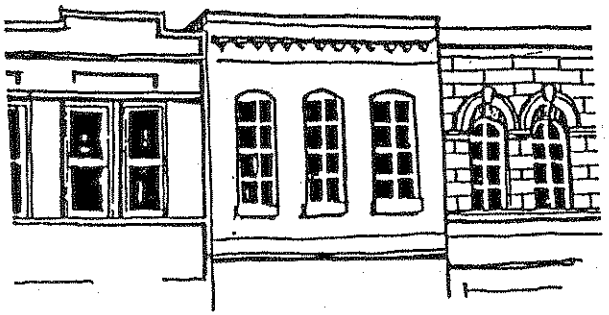
SECONDARY ENTRANCE

3. If you want to develop your back door as a customer entrance, think again about its appearance. No longer merely a service access, its design should reflect the change in function. The addition of a glass window will lend a new look for shoppers and passers-by. A cast iron grille can provide security and pleasing design.

A NOTE ON MAINTENANCE

If any of the doors in your building are old, but workable, you should certainly consider keeping them. If they are wood, maintenance is very important. Keep them clean and in good working order. Since wood doors share many problems common to wood windows, see the guidelines sheet, UPPER STORY WINDOWS, for maintenance suggestions.

UPPER STORY WINDOWS



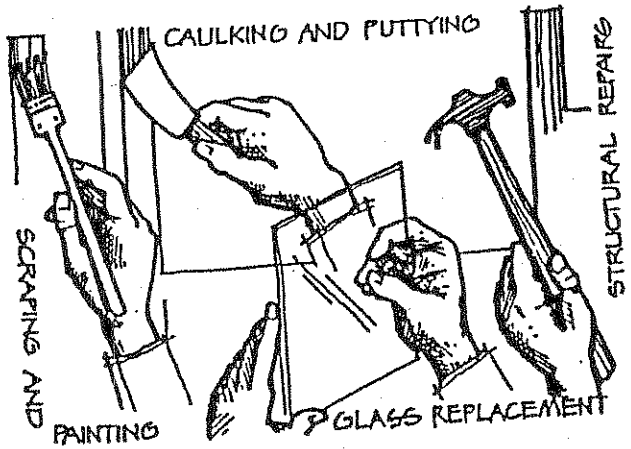
The visual importance of upper story windows is evident in their steady march down Main Street. They create a repeated pattern that helps to tie together the facades.

Often, however, they have deteriorated, been replaced inappropriately or boarded up. This treatment changes not only the character of the building but of the streetscape as well. Proper treatment and maintenance of the existing windows can prevent this. It's easier than you may think.

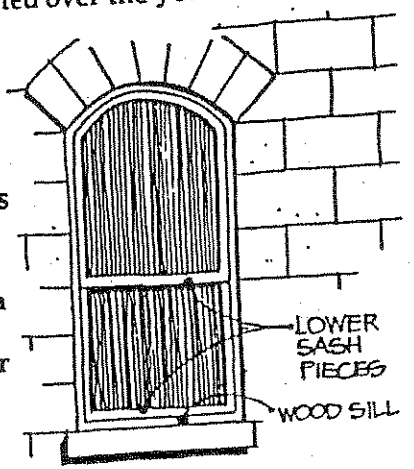
Before discussing any specific window problems, a note of caution is in order. Various maintenance and repair materials (putty, caulk, primer, paint, etc.) are mentioned in the following paragraphs. Be aware that there are many specific types of products. Consult a local expert to determine which will best solve your particular problems.

WINDOW MAINTENANCE

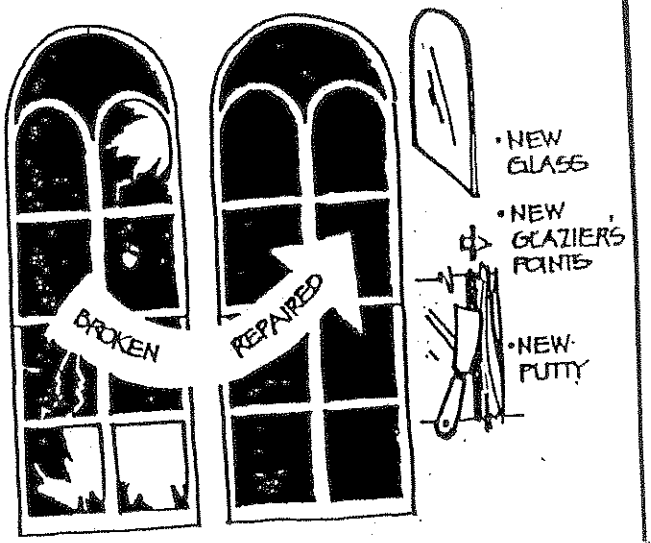
Set up a maintenance schedule for upper story windows. Many problems can be solved and others prevented through regular care. Make a checklist of window maintenance problems.



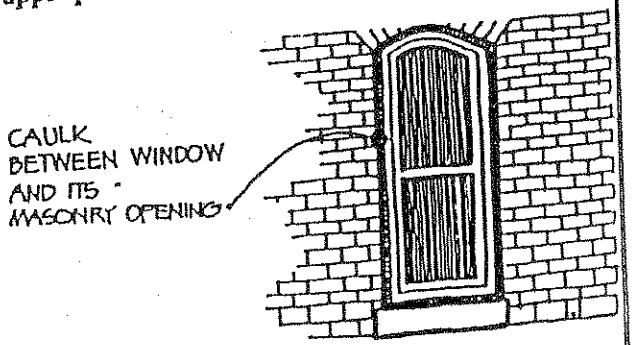
1. Check the wood parts of the window. Are there portions which are soft, cracked, or split? Pay particular attention to the window sills and the bottom of the window sashes where water has collected over the years.



Minor problems can be easily solved. Proper treatment and a fresh coat of paint can repair wood and prevent further deterioration. Proper treatment requires first scraping off the old paint from the wood. Fill the cracks with caulk or wood putty. Then sand, prime, and paint. (See guidelines sheet—PAINTING YOUR BUILDING.)



2. Loose or broken window panes are easily fixed. First remove all broken glass and old glazing putty. Find new glass to match existing panes. Install the window using the appropriate glazier's points and putty.

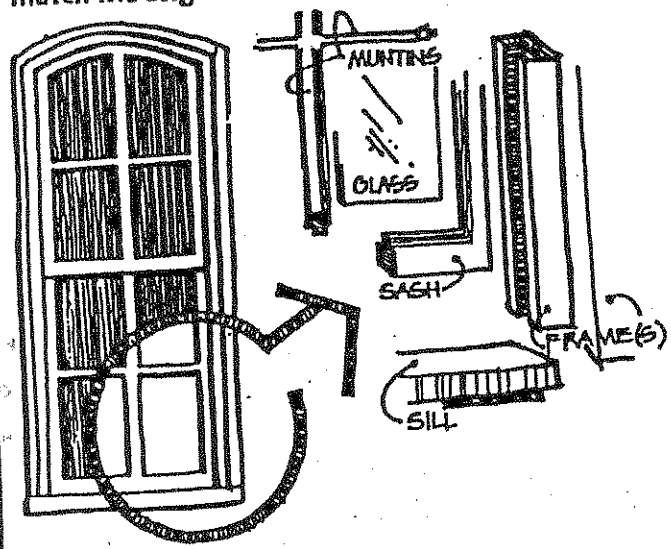


3. Check the joints between the window and its masonry opening. If these joints are loose or open, they should be caulked to prevent air and water infiltration. Be sure to use the proper caulking material.

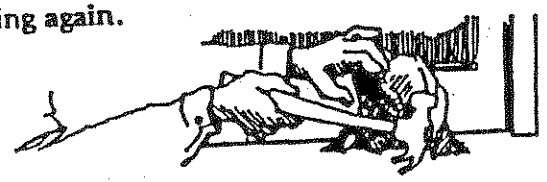
WINDOW R... AIR

If simple maintenance is not sufficient to solve your window problems, more extensive repair may be required.

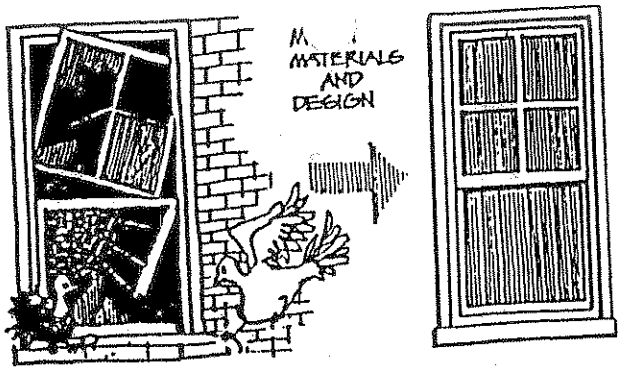
1. A wood part may be badly deteriorated. Most likely, it is the sill or bottom of the sash. These parts can be replaced without replacing the whole window. Check with your local lumber supply store or millshop for pieces to match the original window.



2. If your window doesn't operate like it used to, it may be that the window is just painted shut. Tapping the sash with a hammer wrapped in cloth may be sufficient to get it working again.



3. Another common malfunction is a broken window mechanism. If the sash locks, cords, or weights are broken, consult a window dealer or builder. He or she can show you the simplest way to fix the mechanism without changing the window.

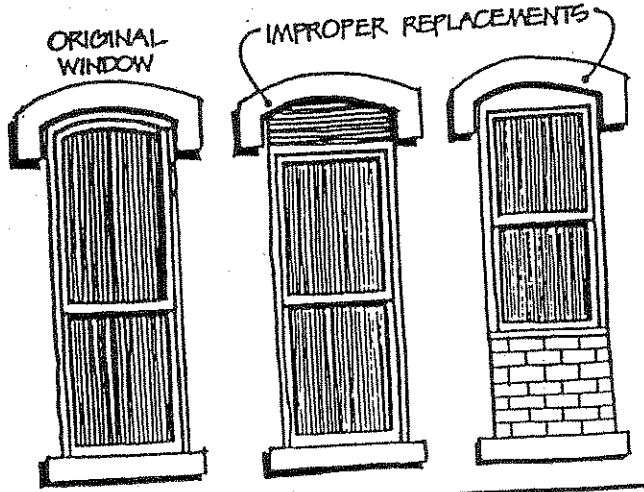


WINDOW REPLACEMENT

If all other efforts at maintaining and repairing your windows have failed, consider replacing the entire window unit. In the long run, this may be the best, most economical alternative.

1. If you're not changing every window, find replacements that match the existing units. Standard wood windows are relatively easy to buy or have made. More unusual styles are generally custom-made, but not as expensive as you might think.

2. If the new windows do not match the originals, make your choice carefully. First, consider the window opening. Do not alter the existing opening to fit the new windows.

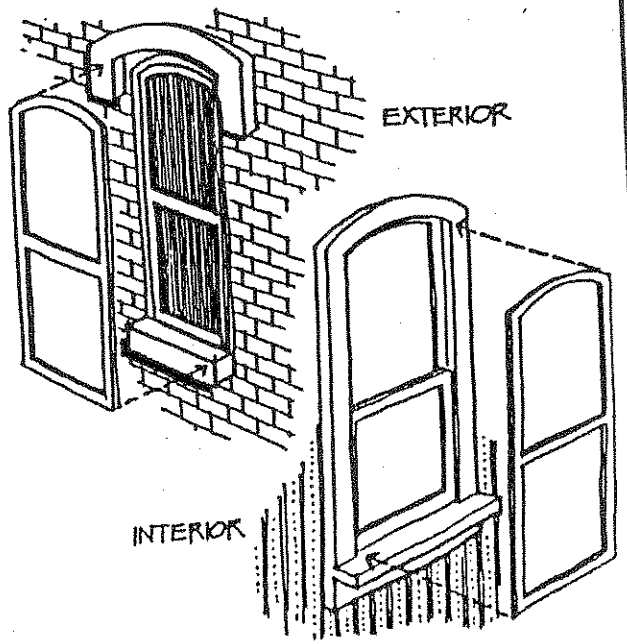


3. Consider also material and col... If you must use aluminum, a dark anodized ...umin-um is preferable to a light metallic color.

4. Window design may be a more personal choice. Appropriate styles range from the original pattern of detail to the simplicity of a fixed pane of glass. But avoid fake "historic" windows not in keeping with the style of your building.

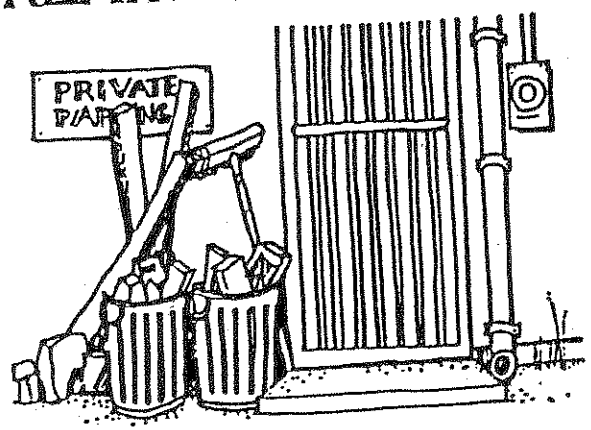
STORM WINDOWS

Insulating storm windows are a good idea for conserving heat and energy. However, they often look inappropriate on an older facade. For this reason, consider installing them on the inside of the windows where they will not be seen.



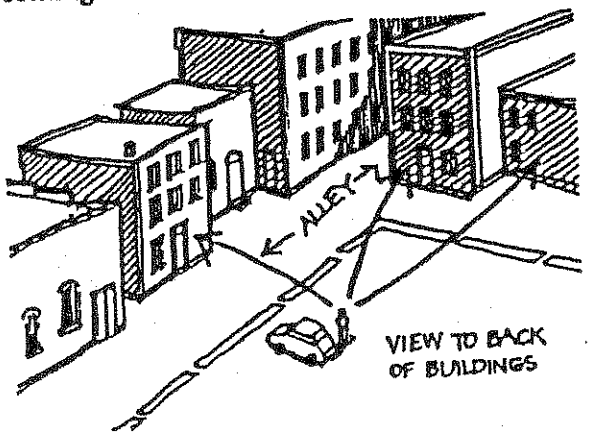
If storm windows must be installed outside, choose them on the same basis as any window. Think about shape, color, and overall design. An anodized or baked-on finish is less obtrusive than plain aluminum and will be more compatible with the appearance of the building.

REAR ENTRANCES



Spaces behind buildings are often forgotten. People tend to avoid them because they are usually unkempt and unattractive. Too often, these spaces have been strictly thought of as service areas, where deliveries are made or the garbage is picked up.

However, more and more parking areas are being developed behind the stores, in the middle of the block. The backs of the buildings are coming into full and open view.



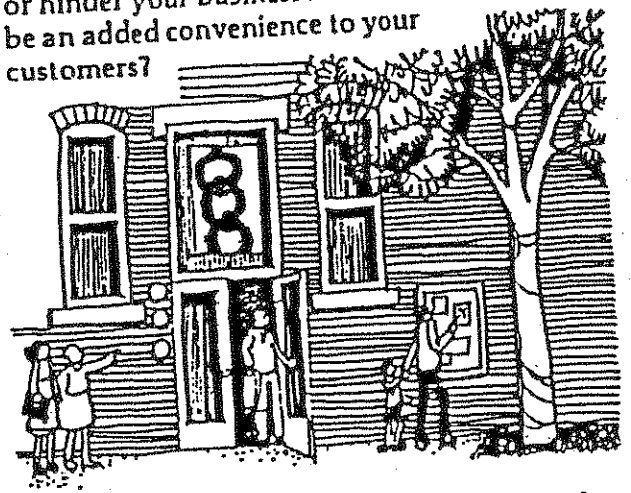
This suggests two things:

The appearance of the back areas is important to the commercial district.

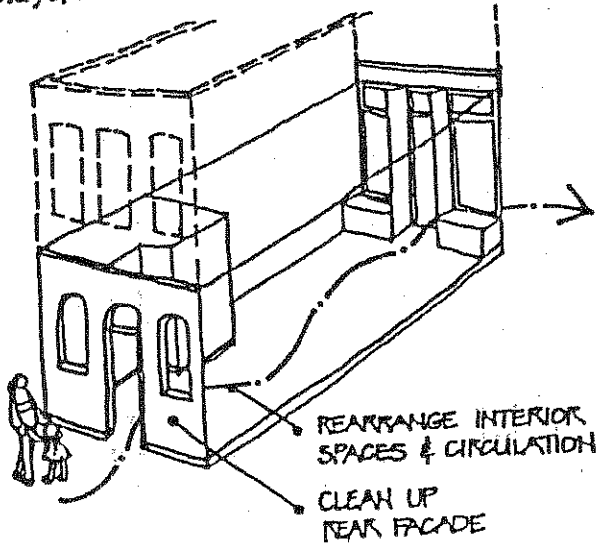
Rear entrances can potentially benefit all businesses. They allow direct entry from the parking lot to the stores. A customer does not need to walk all the way around the block to reach the store.

If you don't have an attractive rear entrance to your store, but are considering improvements, think about these issues.

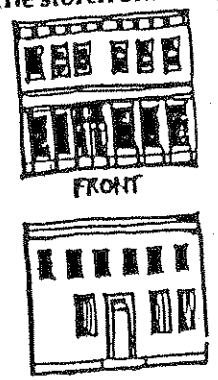
1. Would added walk-through traffic help or hinder your business? Would a rear entrance be an added convenience to your customers?



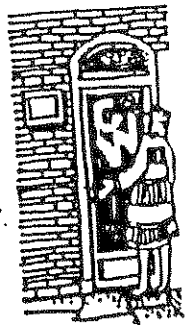
2. What changes would you have to make to your store to get an attractive rear entry? How would you handle the circulation, displays, and security through the building?



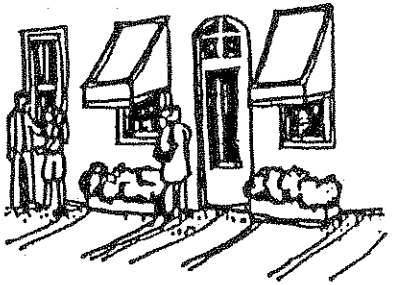
3. Although the two are similar, the rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance. In most cases, the entrance should occupy a relatively small part of the rear facade and retain more of a utilitarian character. Still, it should be maintained and developed to support the overall appearance and convenience of the commercial district.



4. Like the storefront, the rear entry requires identification. It should be inviting and attractive. A window panel in the back door is one way to open your store to potential customers. A small sign on or near the door is another way to identify your store. Be sure to keep it small and don't clutter the area with too many signs.



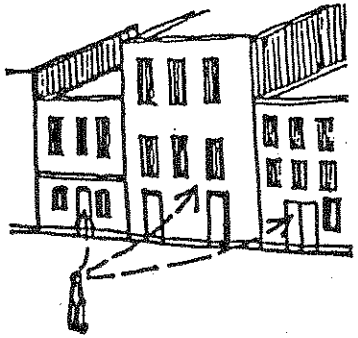
Open up a back window and use it for display..This too will help attract people to your door.



An awning can be a pleasant addition and a convenience to shoppers during inclement weather. If there is enough sun, planter boxes might also be added, but only if you attend to them properly.

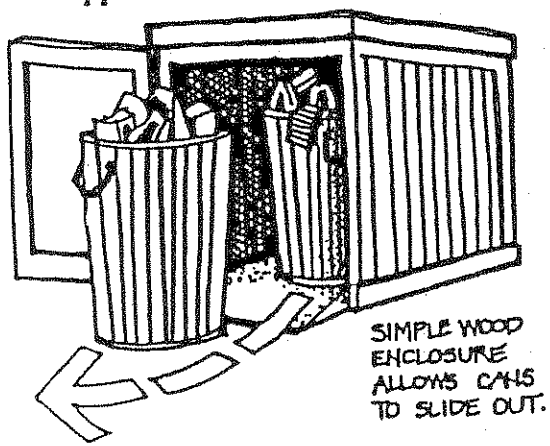
5. Like the storefront, the rear entry should respect its next-door neighbors. Try to make your entry compatible with neighboring stores. Look at the back entrance next to yours.

It might be wise for you and your fellow merchants to get together and plan out an attractive approach to the rear facades.



6. Normal service activities, such as trash collection, loading, shipping, and storage must also occur with ease. It is possible to accomodate these functions and at the same time make the rear spaces more enjoyable people places.

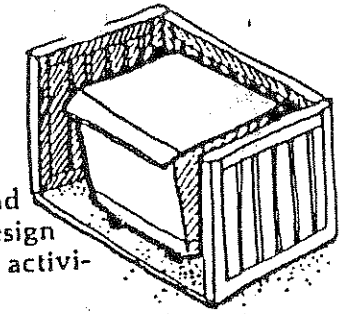
7. If possible, pick a central location for trash collection which will serve several stores efficiently. Grouping the containers makes them appear less cluttered.



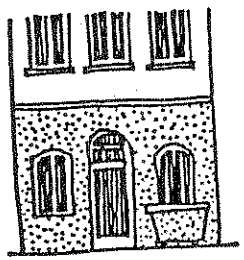
SIMPLE WOOD ENCLOSURE ALLOWS CANS TO SLIDE OUT.

8. Simple enclosures can be readily constructed to hide refuse containers and prevent clutter. These enclosures should open from the front, allowing for easy removal of full, heavy cans.

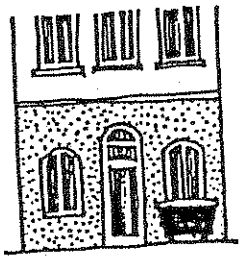
Dumpsters can also be screened from view. Before construction, be sure to consult the collection agency and ensure that your design will not disrupt their activities.



A neutral color should be used to paint or stain these enclosures. Bright or loud colors will draw attention to the screens and containers, when the purpose is to camouflage them. Choose colors that blend in with those of the rear facade.



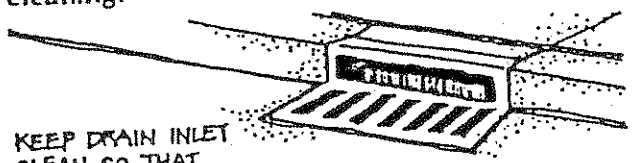
COLOR BLENDS WITH SURROUNDINGS.



COLOR DOES NOT BLEND.

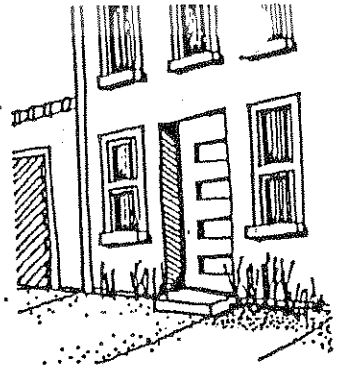
9. Don't forget about the paved areas behind the buildings or in the alleys. Many times the paving is full of potholes, which is both bothersome and dangerous for pedestrians.

In addition to paving, watch out for drainage problems. Poor drainage causes puddles and other hazards for pedestrians. Make sure there is adequate drainage away from your building. Also check the drain inlet regularly for cleaning.



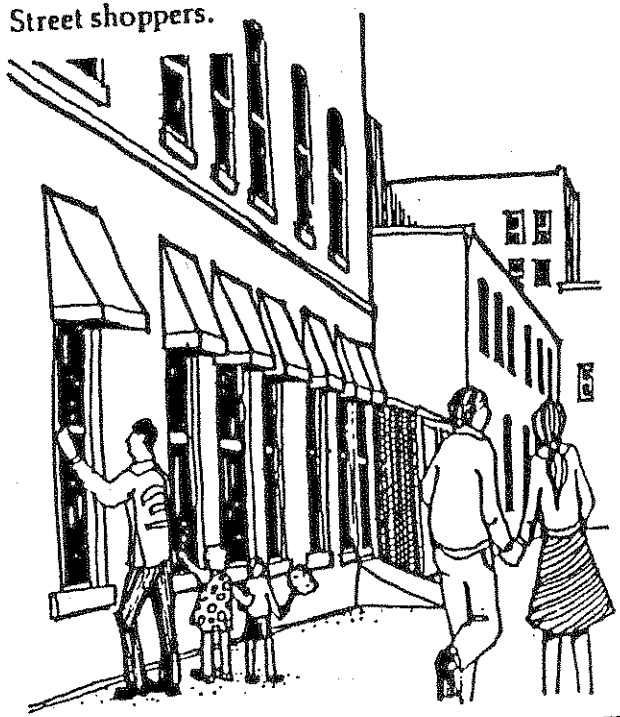
KEEP DRAIN INLET CLEAN SO THAT PUDDLES DO NOT FORM.

Weeds can also become a problem in poorly paved areas. Weeds are tenacious and will grow wherever they can. For a better image, keep them under control.

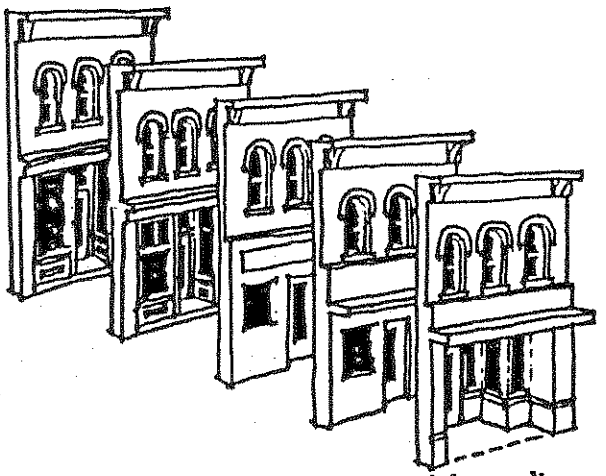


10. Snow removal is another consideration. Just as front walks need to be shoveled, remember to clear snow at back entrances.

11. The rear facades of commercial buildings have been ignored and neglected for a long time. Masonry has been left to deteriorate or has been poorly patched. Windows are ill-kept, boarded up or unwashed. With good design and proper maintenance, these rear entrances can become attractive and convenient for Main Street shoppers.



STOREFRONT DESIGN



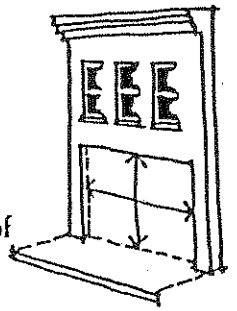
We have looked at the evolution of the traditional Main Street facade and seen that changes have been, and will be, concentrated on the storefront. Generation after generation, storefronts change while the upper facade stays the same or deteriorates or is hidden behind a screen.

Because of its relatively permanent nature, the upper facade is primarily a maintenance/repair problem. The storefront, on the other hand, is a design problem.

If you wish to restore the original storefront, a little research may turn up historic photos of your building. A good place to start is at the local library, or by asking previous owners, or even by searching the building itself.

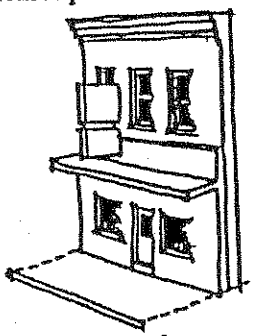
However, you need not necessarily recreate the exact historic appearance. The following are ideas to think about as you plan a change in your storefront. Each is founded in the traditional storefront; however, these ideas are not "historic" in nature. They are functional and aimed at making the storefront more attractive and accessible to shoppers.

1. KEEPING THE STOREFRONT IN ITS PLACE

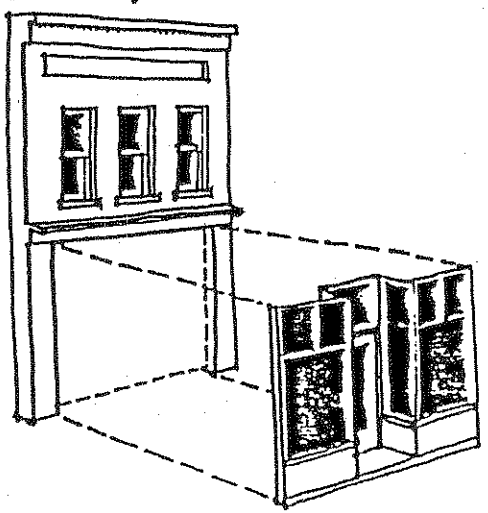


Every traditional Main Street facade has a well defined opening which the original storefront filled. It is the area bounded by a wall on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom, and the lower edge of the upper facade on top.

Many problems with the facades today are a result of this fact: the storefront has been allowed to stray out of its natural place within the facade. It no longer looks contained; instead it appears pasted on. One senses that the storefront is "out of control" in that it dominates the facade as a whole.

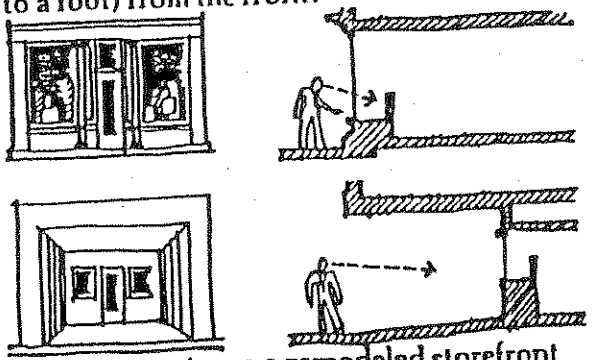


A general rule for future remodeling can be stated as follows: a storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond it.



2. THE SLIGHTLY RECESSED STOREFRONT

To emphasize this feeling of containment, a storefront might be set back slightly (six inches to a foot) from the front.

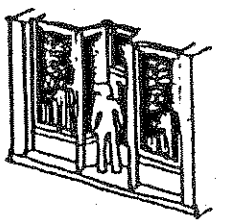


It is common to see a remodeled storefront recessed as a whole, but pushed far back (three to fifteen feet) into the facade.

A setback of this distance begins to isolate the storefront from the activity of the street. The pedestrian is not so tempted to stop, look in the windows, and step inside.

3. THE RECESSED ENTRY

The traditional storefront had a recessed entry at the front door.

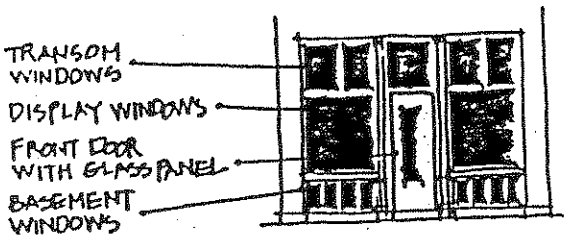


This configuration accomplished two important things. First, it kept the display windows right next to the sidewalk in full view of passers-by. Then, with the entry recess, it emphasized the door. The intimacy of the enclosed and sheltered doorway seemed to invite the pedestrian inside.

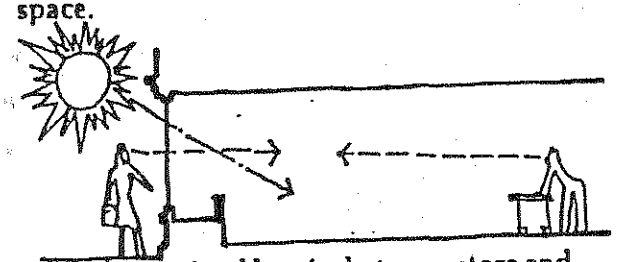
This is a simple and logical storefront design. Regrettably, many storefronts do not retain this form today.

4. THES. OREFRONT WINDOWS

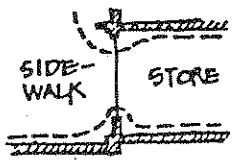
The traditional storefront was composed almost entirely of windows.



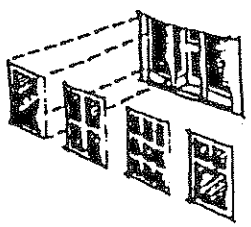
For very functional reasons, it was designed to be as transparent as possible. This allowed a maximum of natural light into the typically narrow, windowless store space and relieved the closed-in feeling. It also allowed the potential customer a full view into the store, both of the merchandise displays and the interior space.



With this minimal barrier between store and sidewalk, the two seemed to melt into one. The store space became part of the public street, readily accessible to shoppers.



Many owners shy away from large storefront windows because of potental glass breakage. But the use of tempered glass can substantially reduce this problem. Further, a large window that is *unobtrusively* divided (into two or three sections) is much less expensive to repair when one pane breaks.

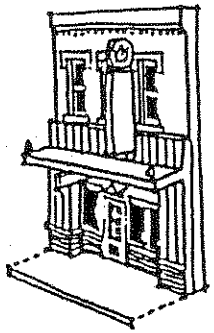


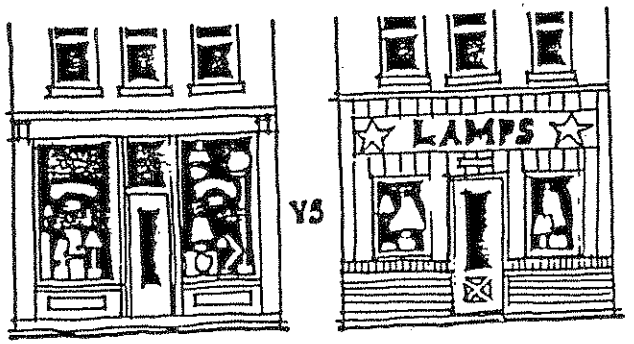
Although often ignored, the idea of a transparent storefront is as valid today as it was in the past. For this reason, it is recommended that future storefronts be designed with the largest possible window area.

5. STOREFRONT DECORATION

The design of the traditional storefront emphasized the display windows and entry door. Because of this, the storefront had only simple decoration. Shoppers were supposed to look through it rather than at it.

At odds with this traditional concept, many remodeled storefronts are heavily decorated. Loud colors, patterns, textures, and signs all grab for the customer's attention. They fight with one another and clash with the older portions of the facade. With all this decoration, a shopper barely notices the display windows.





Merchants are encouraged to adopt a new strategy for storefront design, based on the attraction of the goods and services inside. Less emphasis should be placed on decoration for decoration's sake and more on the potential of the window display. (See guidelines sheet—WINDOW DISPLAYS.)

6. CHOOSING MATERIALS

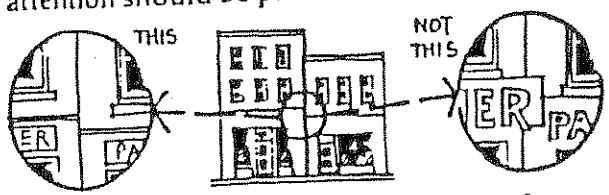
The choice of materials can be critical to the overall success of your storefront design. Again, take a cue from the traditional storefront, whose simple and unobtrusive materials emphasized display windows and the entry door.

Today, many remodeled storefronts exhibit materials which look out of place on Main Street, because of color, or texture, or their combination. Not only do they clash with traditional facades, but often they are not pleasing designs in their own right.

You should carefully consider the visual qualities of any given material when making a choice. Understand that there are subtle variations which may spell the difference between success and failure.

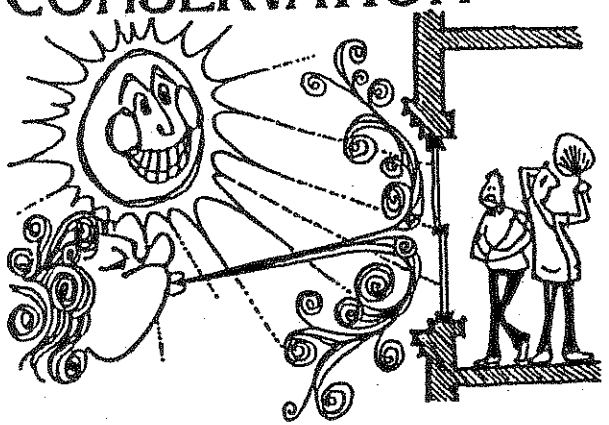
As significant as the materials themselves is the way in which they are used. It is common to see a remodeled facade which appears sloppy and disorganized because materials have been carelessly used. Haphazard combinations can destroy the appearance of an otherwise pleasing design.

This problem becomes particularly evident at the "edges," where the storefront touches the upper facade or adjacent building. If the original storefront opening has been covered (see KEEPING THE STOREFRONT IN ITS PLACE) and cannot be reopened, then close attention should be paid to these edges.



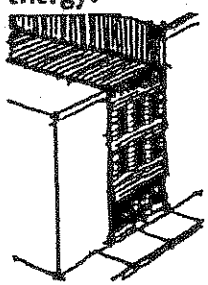
The joint between your storefront and other facades should have a neat and controlled appearance. Remember that the visual impact of the design extends well beyond these limits.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

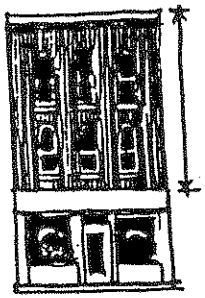


Energy conservation in a building means minimizing its energy needs and maximizing the comfort of its occupants. If properly treated, most old commercial buildings can be as energy efficient as new. The process is not very costly; but it does take a commitment to identify and solve some specific problems.

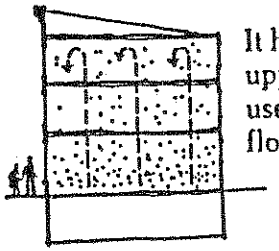
1. The traditional commercial building has some basic characteristics which help save energy.



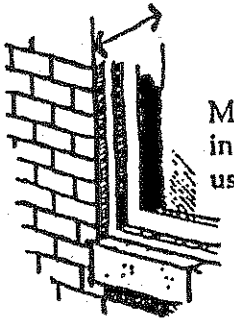
Relatively little of the building is exposed. Sides are usually covered (and insulated) by adjacent buildings.



Above the storefront, windows tend to be small and widely spaced. Compare this to the typical new building facade.



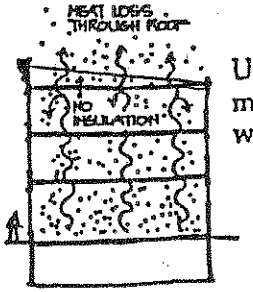
It has several floors. The upper stories trap and use heat rising from the floors below.



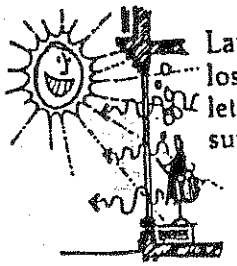
Masonry construction is good insulation. Also the walls are usually rather thick.

2. However, old commercial buildings have some typical energy problems too.

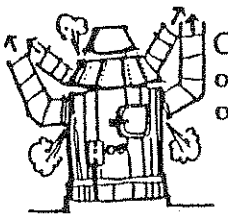
Old windows and doors haven't been maintained. Consequently they leak air and moisture.



Uninsulated flat roof loses much usable heat in the winter.

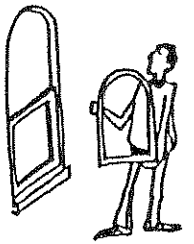


Large storefront windows lose heat in the winter and let in the hot sun during the summer.

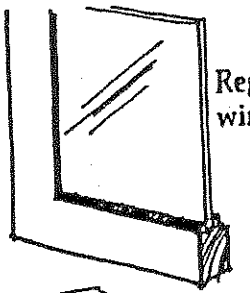


Old heating systems are often inefficient and outdated.

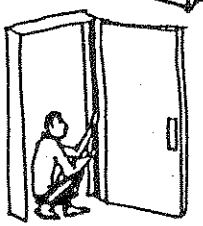
3. WINDOW TREATMENTS—Windows and doors should be sealed as tightly as possible. When closed they should not leak air or moisture.



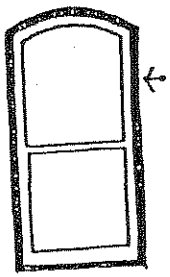
Repair all windows and doors so that all their pieces fit tightly.



Reglaze all loose or broken window panes.

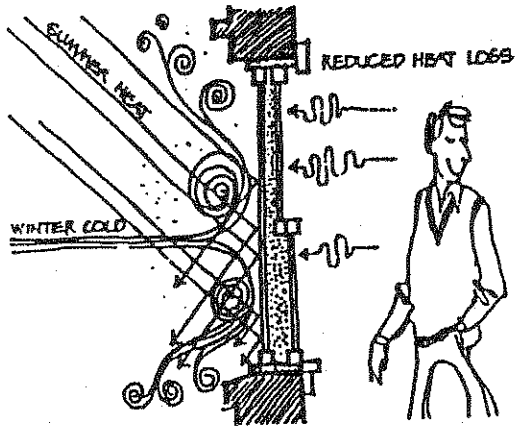


Carefully weatherstrip around all window and door openings.



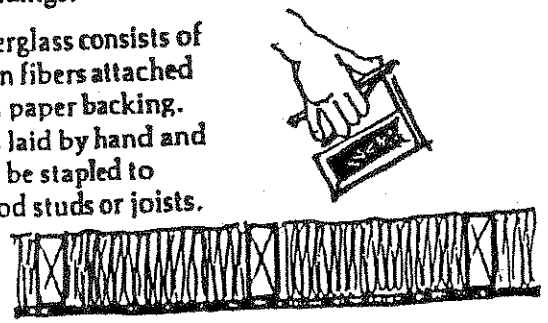
Caulk the cracks between window and door parts (non-moving parts); also those between the window or door and its masonry openings.

4. STORM WINDOWS—Storm windows can greatly reduce winter heat loss through wall openings. While rather impractical for the storefront (the constant opening and closing of the door negates their value), the use of storm windows on the upper facade and the rear and side walls should be considered.

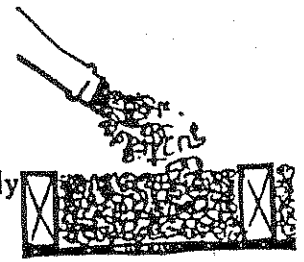


5. INSULATION—Carefully applied insulation can greatly improve a building's energy efficiency. While many kinds are available, two are most appropriate for downtown buildings.

Fiberglass consists of spun fibers attached to a paper backing. It is laid by hand and can be stapled to wood studs or joists.

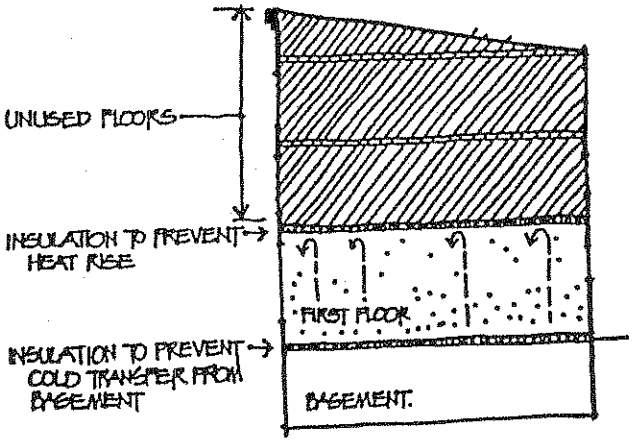


The second kind is cellulose, shredded paper treated with a fire retardant. It is installed using a mechanical blower. This is ideal for relatively inaccessible parts of of the building.



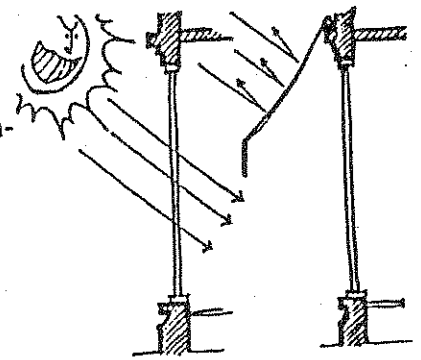
As a general rule, the thi the insulation blanket is, the better. Proper placement of insulation is very important. The roof is a critical location since much of the winter heat loss takes place there.

If the upper floors are not in use, consider temporary insulation of the second floor to trap heat below it. Insulation of the first floor will protect the store from the cold basement space.



6. THE STOREFRONT—With all its glass, the storefront presents special energy problems. It loses heat in the winter and, if exposed to the summer sun, it gains heat.

Where the sun is a factor, an operable awning provides a partial solution. (See guidelines sheet—AWNINGS.) Extended in the summer, it shades the storefront. Retracted in the winter, it can allow the warming sun into the store.



Insulated or tinted glass can also red the inefficiencies of your storefront win . Some of the value of insulated glass will be lost by the opening door, but nighttime protection can be substantial. With tinted glass, remember that the darker the window, the more your storefront will lose in transparency—and visibility from the street.

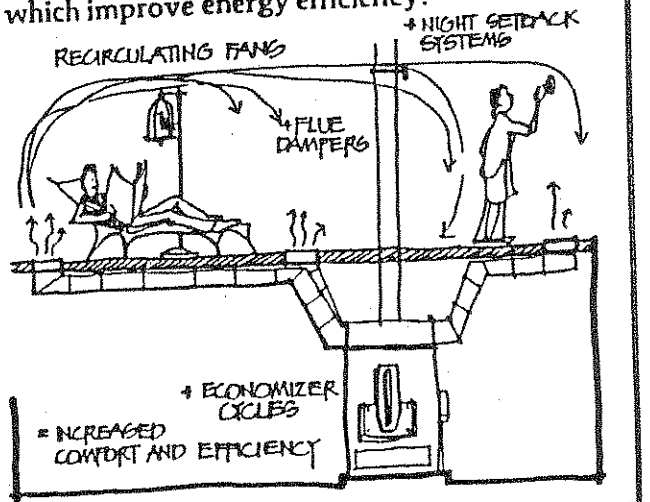
Location of heating vents near the storefront windows can minimize the discomfort of winter heat loss as well.

Because of these special problems, do remember that good weather stripping and caulking of storefront windows and doors is very important.

7. THE HEATING SYSTEM—If your present heating system is old or inefficient, it is probably wasting energy. Have it checked and consider replacing it if possible.

Since a wide variety of systems and heating units are available, look carefully at the benefits and disadvantages of each one.

Are there options for the system which will help you save money in the long run? Economizer cycles, night setback systems, flue dampers, and recirculating fans are all devices which improve energy efficiency.



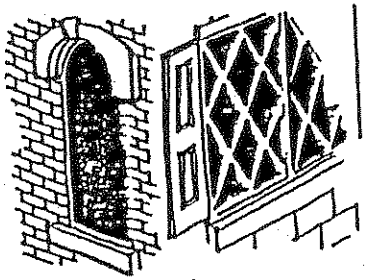
NEW "INFILL" CONSTRUCTION

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots in downtown should be encouraged. Because this type of building fills in a "hole" in the existing environment, it is called *infill construction.*

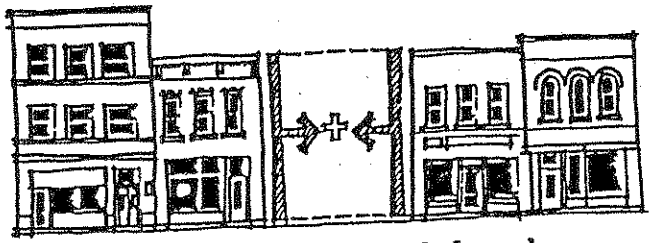
The design of a new infill building, particularly its front facade, is a special problem. It should be designed to look appropriate and compatible in the midst of the surrounding buildings. Otherwise, the new building can look awkward and out of place.

What is good infill design? There is no pat answer; a good design will vary according to its setting. Professionals generally agree that, since an infill building is new, it should look new. However, its appearance must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors.

The infill facade should not pretend to be historic by mimicking too closely older facades. Often, pseudo-Colonial or Victorian details are added on a new building in an attempt to blend with older surroundings. This approach seldom succeeds. It actually detracts from the character of an area by compromising what is truly old and historic.

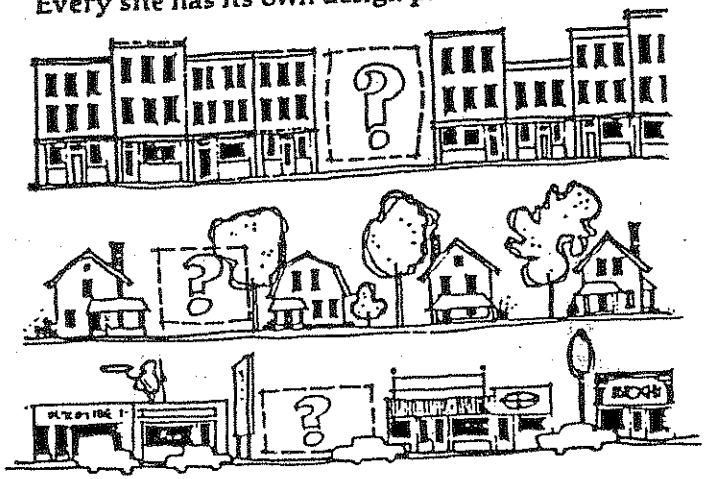


The central idea behind good infill construction is a simple one. To a large degree, an infill facade should be designed by those around it. If the design of the new facade grows out of its neighbors, it is sure to be compatible.



This approach strikes a proper balance between the existing architecture and good contemporary design. The modern designer is allowed the freedom of individual talent—within limits.

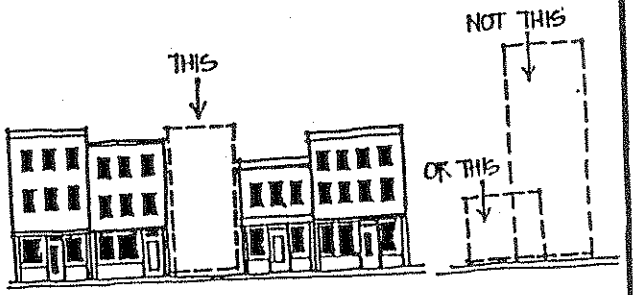
Since a good infill design will respond to its surroundings, it is not possible to develop specific guidelines which will apply to all cases. Every site has its own design problems.



There are, however, several general ideas which should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

1. HEIGHT

Downtown buildings generally share a similarity in height. The infill construction should respect this. A new facade which is too high or low can interrupt this consistent quality.



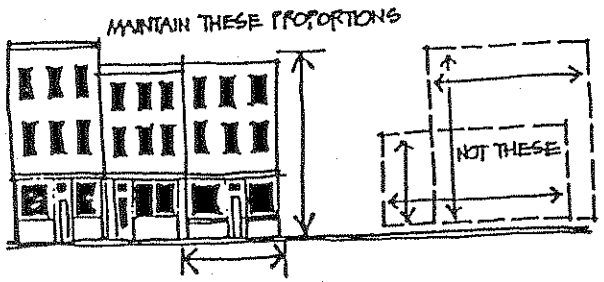
2. WIDTH

The infill building should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.

If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be broken into a number of smaller bays.

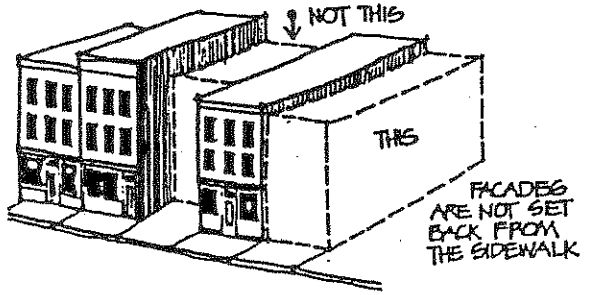
3. PROPORTION

The characteristic proportion (the relationship between height and width) of existing facades should be respected.



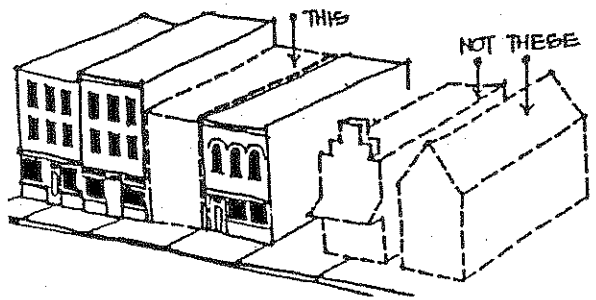
4. RELATIONSHIP TO STREET

The new facade should have a relationship to the street which is consistent with its neighbors.



5. ROOF FORMS

The type of a roof used should be similar to those found on adjacent buildings. On Main Street, this means a flat roof not visible on the front facade.

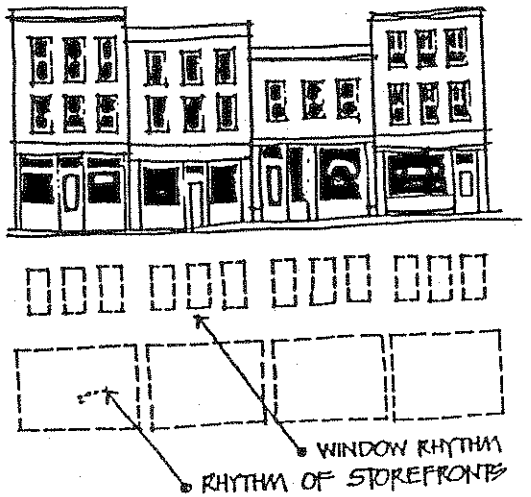


6. COMPOSITION

The composition of the infill facade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.

7. RHYTHM

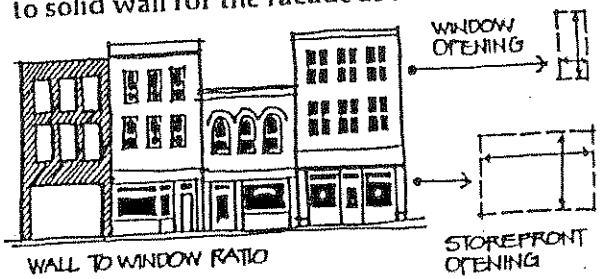
Rhythms which carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new facade.



8. PROPORTION OF OPENIN

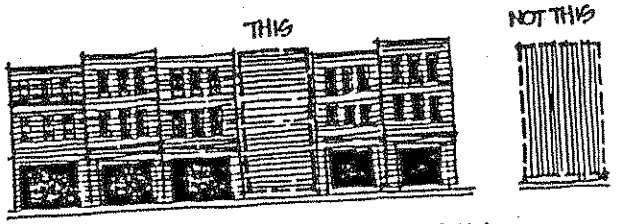
The size and proportion of window and door openings should be similar to those on surrounding facades.

The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.



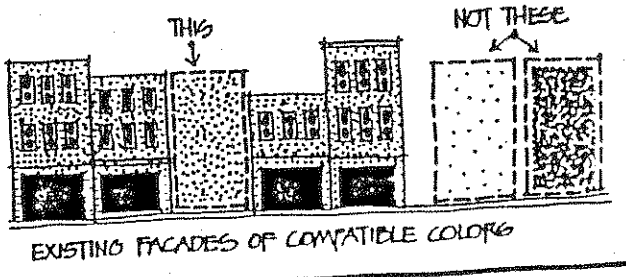
9. MATERIALS

An infill facade should be composed of materials which complement adjacent facades. The new building should not stand out against the others.

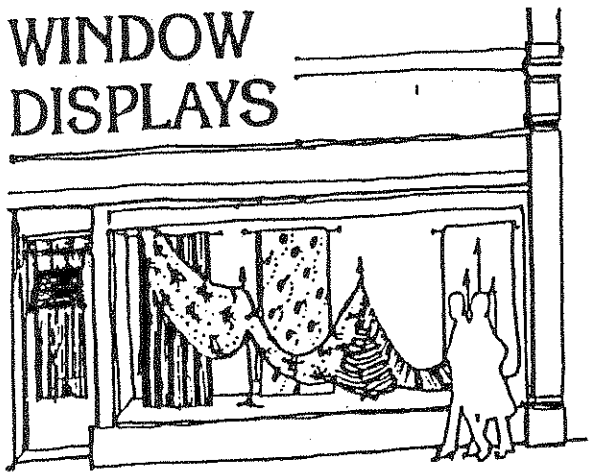


10. COLOR

The colors chosen for an infill facade should tie it to its neighbors.



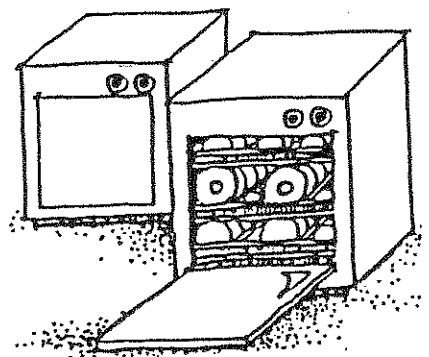
WINDOW DISPLAYS



Window displays can be an attractive part of your storefront—a pedestrian level sign. They can help draw customers into your store. But a little thought and effort is required on your part to create a display that really works for you.

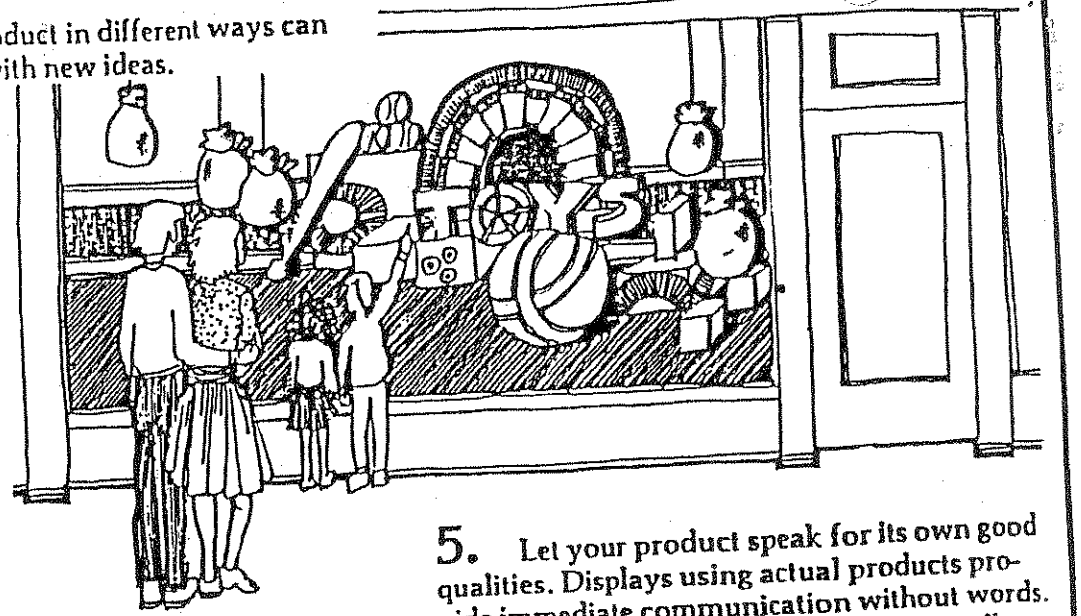
1. First, define your buying audience. Know who your customers are: businesspeople? homeowners? gardeners? Your display should attract those important people on the other side of your window.

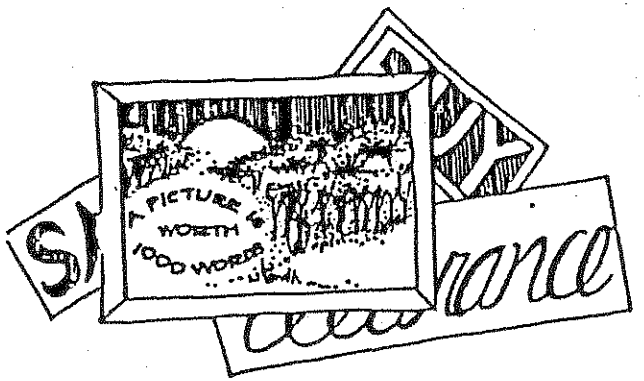
2. Now consider what it is you sell. Is it colorful or bland? Intricate or simple? Large or tiny? Does your product have "eye appeal"? Use your imagination to give your product some life. For example, try taking the door off a dishwasher to show what goes on inside.



Looking at your product in different ways can help you come up with new ideas.

3. Think about the display window as a large picture framed by your storefront. Step back and note how they relate. The building and window create a single unit which should be complemented by the display, in color and proportion.

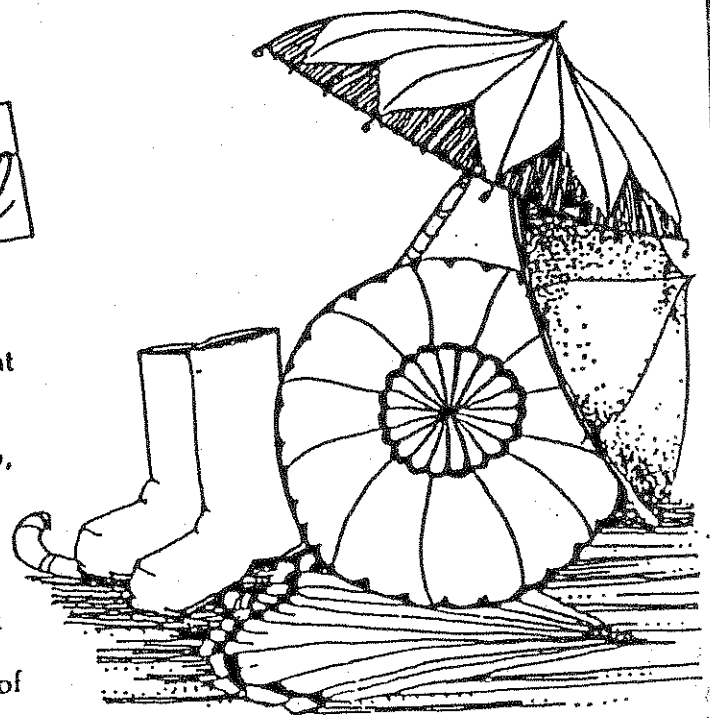




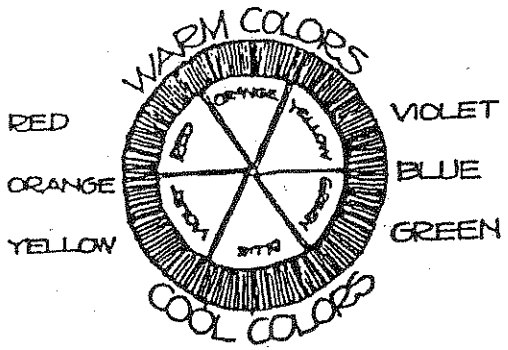
4. Give some thought to the message you want to communicate. How much do you want to say and what is the most effective way of saying it in your "picture window"? Your window welcomes people to come in and shop, but it can present more specific information about your product as well.

Have a clear idea of what you want your consumer audience to know. Decide what is most important and limit yourself to a main theme or idea. Don't confuse people with too much of a good thing.

5. Let your product speak for its own good qualities. Displays using actual products provide immediate communication without words. Colors, shape, size, material, texture, smell, taste, sound—these are the subtle messages that will really get your advertising across.

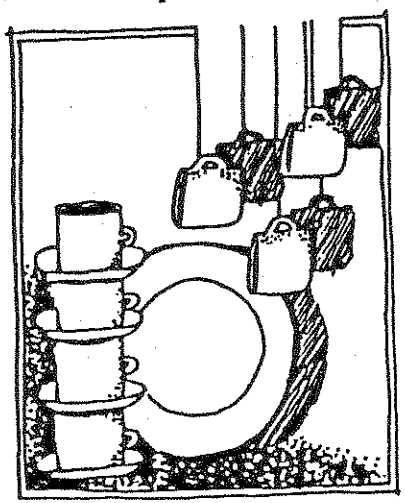


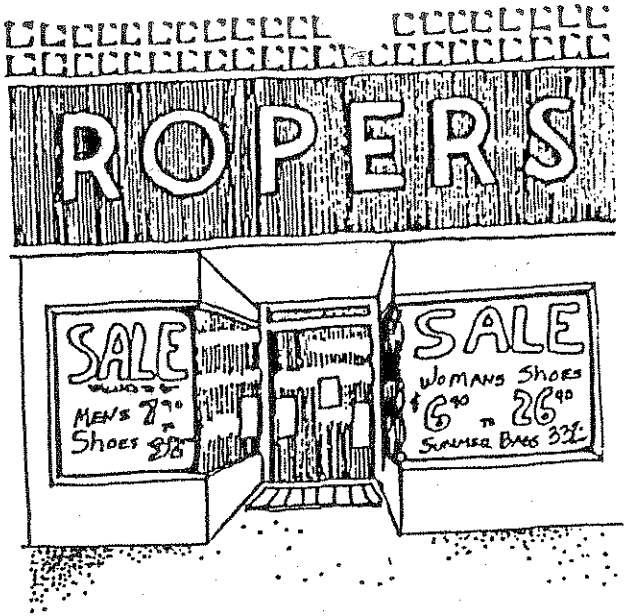
6. Color can help pull together your display. Look at the color of your building; now look at your product. Think about what colors go well with these and decide on a color scheme.



Remember, though, too many colors are confusing; not enough make for a dull picture. Accents like red or yellow can brighten things up, but don't overdo it.

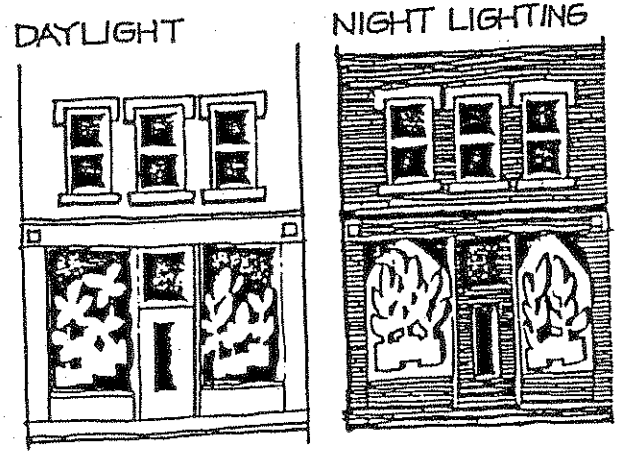
7. Look at your window display as a composition—as if it were a sculpture or an oil painting. Complement or emphasize the shape of your window by using vertical or horizontal elements. Think in terms of a group—how do your products work together? Group similar objects for a message that's easy to "read." Think of size too. A large object will balance several smaller items. Look at different arrangements before you finally decide what looks best in your window.





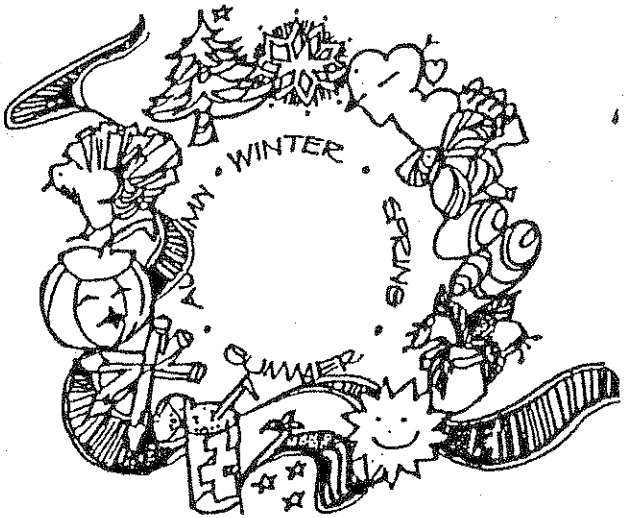
8. If words or prices are part of your display, written signs should also contribute to your overall theme. Select an appropriate type style and color which does not overwhelm your products. For professional quality, have these signs produced by an experienced hand.

9. An attractive display can entice nighttime window shoppers to return during business hours. Remember the importance of lighting. Your display should be well lit to take advantage of this round-the-clock advertising.



10. To keep your audience interes change displays often. Your windows c n change with the season, as well as to reflect holidays and special events throughout the year.

11. Consider investing in a reusable display. Properly stored and protected, a well-built display can be used over a three to four year period. Its cost can be similarly prorated. A memorable display for Easter, Christmas or Halloween will be anticipated by shoppers each year as a traditional part of their holdiay.



12. Rear displays should be more simple in style, but maintain the same regard for quality.

13. Remember, your window display is an integral part of your business, adding to:

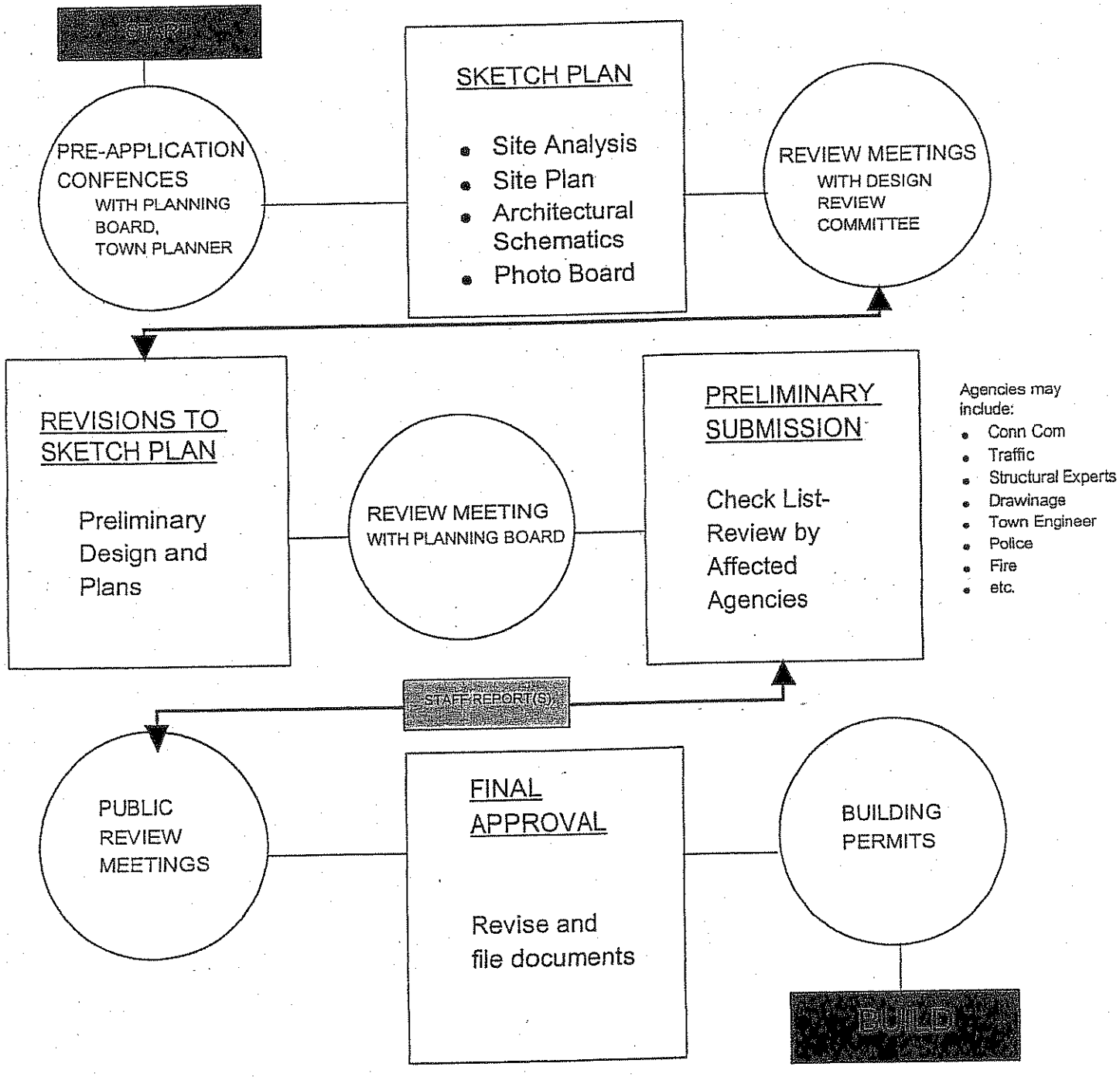
- the character and success of your store.
- the character of your street.
- the character of the business district as a whole.

Your display is an invitation to come inside and shop. Make it a good one.

PROCESS STEP VII:

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

THE APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS

REVIEW :

- ZONING BYLAW
- SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS
- DESIGN GUIDELINES