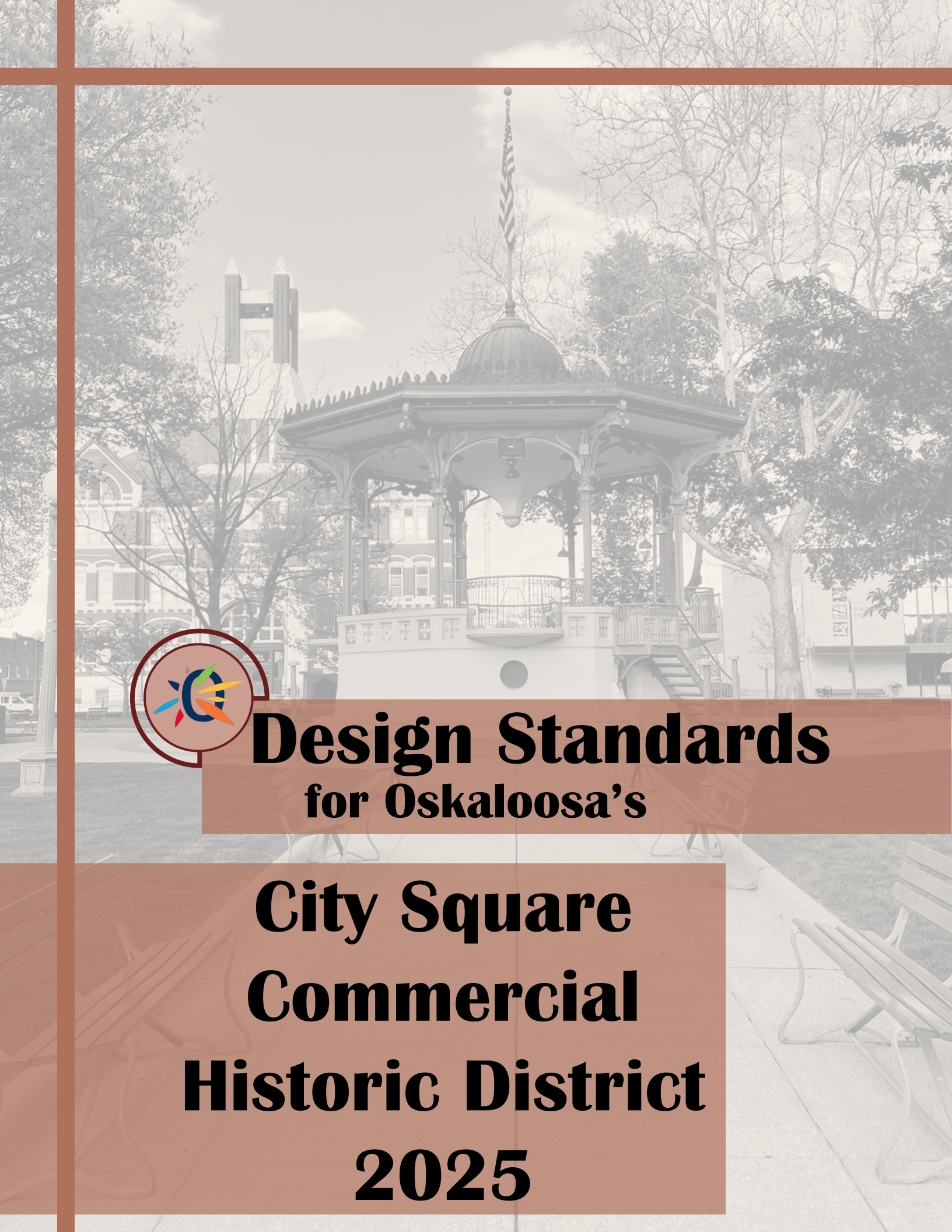

Design Standards
for Oskaloosa's
City Square Commercial Historic District
2025

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The City Square Commercial Historic District

Introduction

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

This document's primary purpose is to provide guidance and standards to property owners in the historic district when they plan exterior alterations to existing buildings or new construction. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will also use the design standards when reviewing the approval of exterior alterations, structure additions, proposed new construction, and demolition within the district.

The City's Preservation Goals

The intended result of historic preservation and design review is to preserve the integrity of historic resources in the district and ensure that new construction and alterations to existing buildings will complement the historic character in both scale and design. The City of Oskaloosa has identified seven community historic preservation goals.

These goals are to:

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

The standards reflect a basic preservation philosophy: to encourage the preservation and careful treatment of the district's historic resources while recognizing the need for contemporary economic use. They are intended to balance existing structures' historic qualities with modern uses' demands.

What are Design Standards?

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

Will Complying With These Standards be More Expensive?

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

The Historic Preservation Commission

Under Chapter 2.84 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Oskaloosa, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established to protect, enhance, and perpetuate structures, districts, and elements in the city of historical, cultural, and architectural significance. This same ordinance gives the HPC the authority to draft these design standards. Please note that this document is not the ordinance nor intended to replace it; instead, its only purpose is to guide the HPC and property owners when work is proposed in a designated historic district. The HPC consists of seven volunteer members appointed by the city council. It includes members of the community who demonstrate a positive interest in historic preservation or expertise in history, architectural history, archaeology, planning, or architecture.

The Scope of the Design Standards

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

- The erection, movement, reconstruction, restoration, or alteration of a structure within a historic district
- The alteration of any exterior features of a historic building or structure within a historic district
- The removal or demolition, in whole or in part, of a historic structure or structure within a historic district

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

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

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

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

Projects that require a COA include altering any exterior feature of a historic structure or structure within a historic district. For example, removing upper-story windows, as has happened here, would be considered inappropriate.

How to Use This Document

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

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

It is also essential to recognize that, in each case, a unique combination of the design variables is at play, and, as a result, the degree to which each relevant design standard must be met may vary. Suppose any of the design variables are configured to be similar to traditional features. In that case, greater flexibility in variations of other elements may be considered, and an overall design that is compatible with the historical context will still be produced. For example, in the case of a new building, if the proposed structure is built of brick that is quite similar in color and scale to those used traditionally, its significant features align with other structures and are of a similar height. Perhaps greater variation in the details of the new design may be considered. Thus, the HPC can respond to each proposed project's unique combination of design variables while applying a consistent design standard set.

This document is organized into seven chapters and four appendices. The introduction provides the foundation and understanding for preparing it.

- *Chapter 1: Historical Overview of the City Square Commercial Historic District* and
- *Chapter 2: Architectural Styles and Building Types* provides a basic history of the area and describes the different architectural styles found in the district.
- *Chapter 3: Design Standards for Historic Properties* presents design standards that apply to all historic properties in the district.
- *Chapter 4: Design Standards for New Construction* provides design standards for all new construction in the district.
- *Chapter 5: General Design Standards* includes design standards that apply to all projects, including rehabilitation, new construction, and site work. All users should read it.
- Finally, the *Appendices* provide supplementary information, including an interpretation of terms related to compliance, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, recommendations for ongoing building maintenance, a glossary of important terms, and Design Guidelines for Environmental Resistance and Sustainability.

Design Standard Components

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

Design Element

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

Background Information

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

Design Standard

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

Additional Information

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

Illustrations

Design standards are further explained using photographs and illustrations. Examples given should not be considered the only appropriate options. In most instances, numerous possible solutions meet the intention of the design standard, as well as the needs of the property owner.

✓'s and ✗'s

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

It is important to note that all the elements of the design standards (i.e., the introductory and informational sections, standards, subpoints, and illustrations) constitute the material on which the HPC will determine the appropriateness of a proposed project.

Sample of the guideline format used in this document.

Replacement of Character-Defining Features

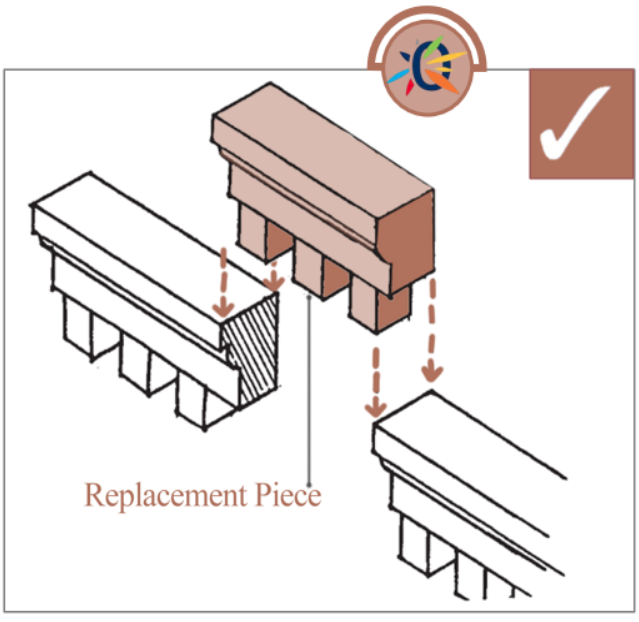
While restoration of the original feature is the preferred alternative, in-kind replacement is also an option. If replacement is necessary, the new material should match the design, color, texture, and other visual qualities that are being replaced. Replacement should occur only if the existing historic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

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

- Replace only those portions that are beyond repair.

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

- Physical or pictorial evidence should support the design to avoid misrepresenting the building's heritage.
- Using the same kind of material as the original is preferred. However, a substitute material may be acceptable if the size, shape, texture, and finish convey the visual appearance of the original material.



Recommended Submittal Documents

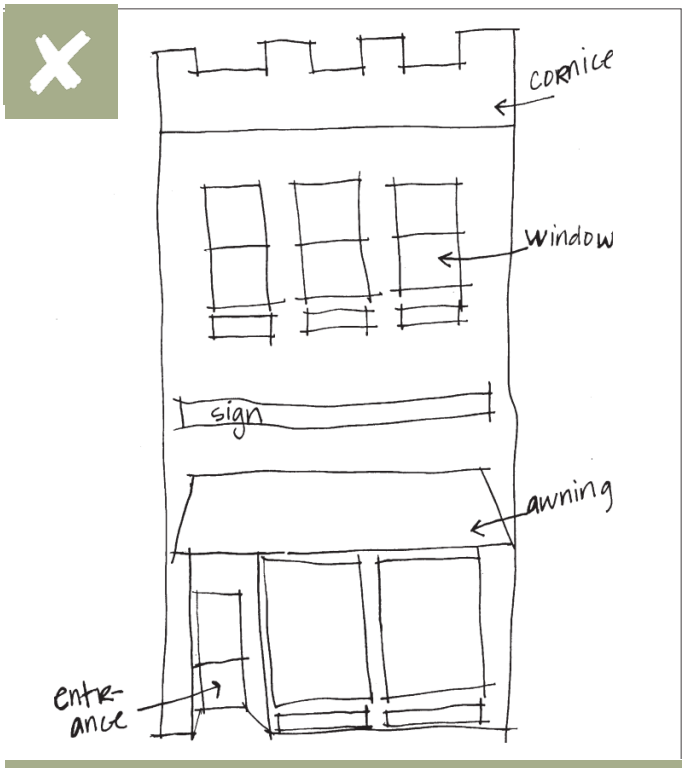
Adequate documentation is essential to provide a complete understanding of the work proposed. Applicants are encouraged, and may be required, to submit the following documentation:

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

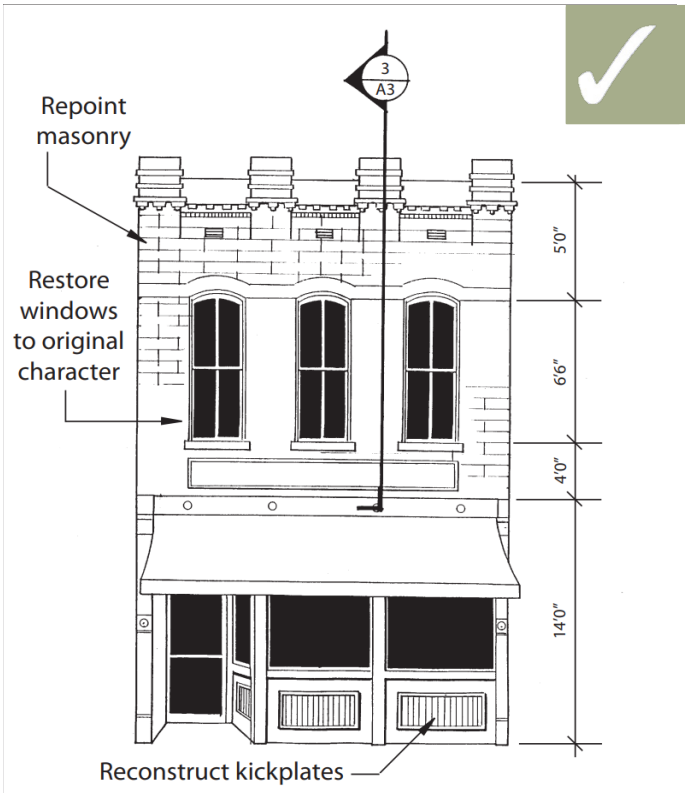
If a drawing is to be included in the submittal package, it should be drafted to scale and executed to depict the character of the proposed work. At the same time, a professionally produced drawing is encouraged but not required, as the following sketches illustrate.

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

Appropriate drawing: While in free-hand, this drawing adequately conveys the scale and character of the proposed work.



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



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

The Concept of Significance

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

The Period of Significance

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

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

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

Many additions or alterations to buildings in the district over time are evidence of the history of the building and its neighborhood and may, therefore, merit preservation.

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

For example, metal siding may presently obscure the original masonry. Removing this alteration and restoring the original material is strongly encouraged. Most alterations less than fifty years old lack historical significance.

The Concept of Integrity

A property must also be from a historical period and have integrity. A sufficient percentage of the structure must date from the period of significance. Most of the building's structural systems and materials should also date from the period of significance, and its character-defining features should remain intact. These may include architectural details and the overall mass and form of the building. These elements allow a building to be recognized as a product of its own time.

Choosing a Preservation Approach

City Square Commercial Historic District has a wealth of architecture remaining from its period of significance. Character-defining features of the buildings must be preserved. Such preservation projects may include various activities, such as maintenance of existing historic elements, repairing deteriorated historic elements, replacing missing features, and constructing new additions. When planning a preservation approach, consider the definitions of the following terms:

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

Compare the bottom photo with the historic street scene in the top photograph. Although changes have occurred, the overall historic character of this building can still be seen.

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

Planning a Project

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

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

In essence, the least level of intervention is preferred. Following this tenet will maintain the highest degree of integrity for the property.

Significance and Benefits of the Historic District Today

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

Construction Quality

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

Adaptability

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

Livability and Quality of Life

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

Environmental Benefits

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

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

By "reusing" older materials in a historic building, pressure is also reduced to harvest new lumber and other materials, which may negatively affect the environment in other locales where these materials are produced. Older buildings are often more energy-efficient than new construction, so they reduce heating and cooling needs when properly used.

Economic Benefits

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

The condition of neighboring properties also affects the value of one's property. People invest in a neighborhood as much as in the individual structure itself, and in historic districts where investment is attracted, property owners recognize that each one benefits from the commitment of their neighbors. The success of historic preservation indicates that the number of designated districts across the country has increased due to local support, such that an estimated 1,800,000 properties, both as individual landmarks and in historic districts, are under the local jurisdiction of more than 2,500 preservation commissions.

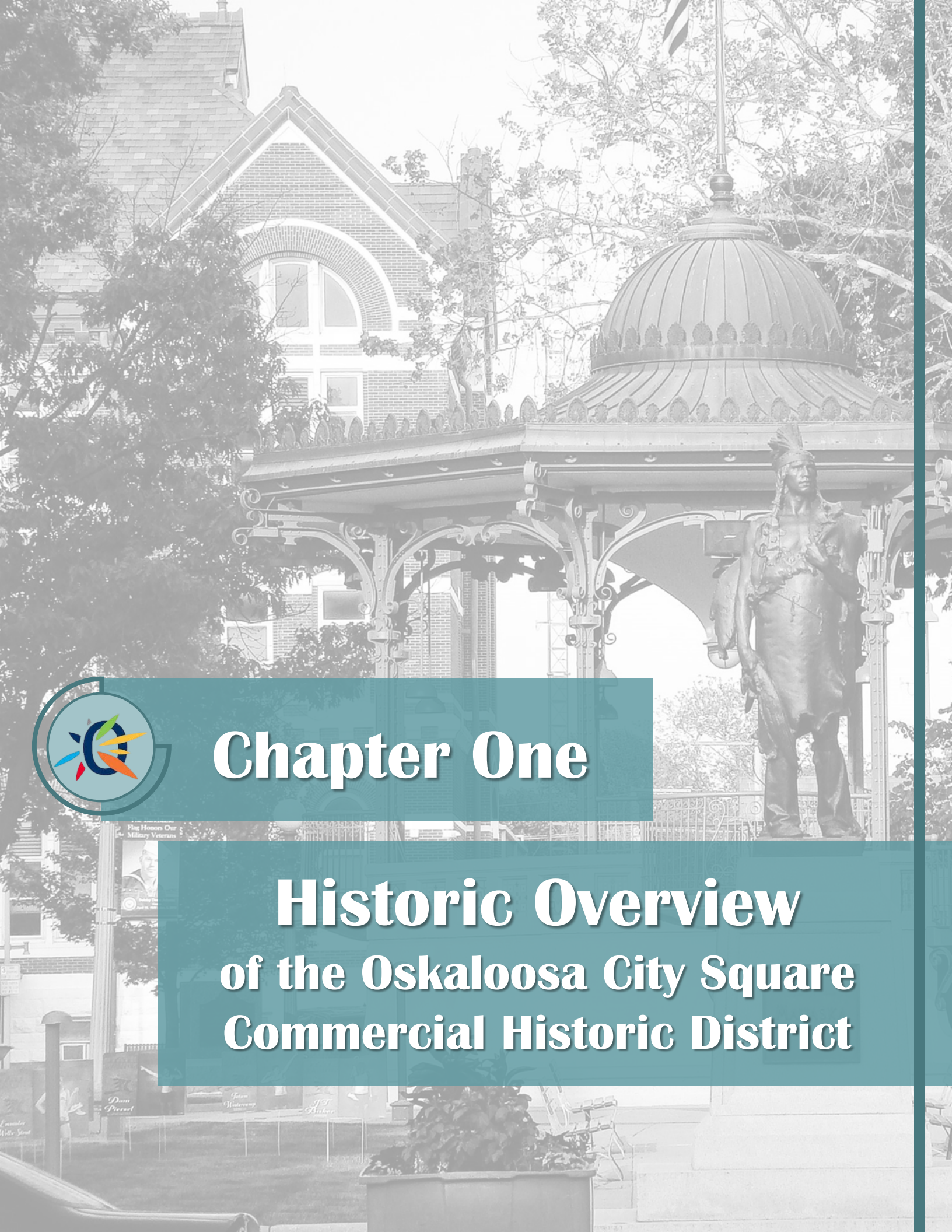
Rehabilitating a historic building can also cost less than constructing a new one. The standards for rehabilitating historical structures presented in this document promote cost-saving measures. They encourage smaller and more straightforward solutions, which in themselves provide savings. Preserving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

What design standards apply to your project?

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

Proposed Work	Introduction	1. Historic Overview	2. Architectural Styles	Design Standards	3. Standards for **Historic Properties**	4. Standards for **New Construction**	5. Standards for **All Projects**
	Use These Chapters						
Renovate or alter historic property	✓		✓		✓		✓
Renovate or alter a non-historic property	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Add on to an historic property	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Add on to a non-historic property	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Construct a new building	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Alter an existing or install a new sign	✓	✓	✓				✓
Site Improvement	✓	✓	✓				✓

In addition to these chapters, there are appendices which address the following:
Appendix A: Interpretation of Terms Related to Compliance
Appendix B: The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings
Appendix C: Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance
Appendix D: Glossary
Appendix E: Environmental Resistance and Sustainability Guidelines



Chapter One

Historic Overview
of the Oskaloosa City Square Commercial Historic District

Introduction

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

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

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

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

From 1905 to 1925, the district's final building type emerged: the twentieth-century commercial brick style. The thirteen remaining structures in the district are distinct from the pre-1900 structures.

By faithfully maintaining themselves throughout time, these buildings have survived the ravages of weather and economic forces. The variety of building types and their intactness provide Oskaloosa with a valuable resource that recounts the evolution of Midwestern commercial architecture.

This chapter reviews the district's historical economic development and describes the types of architecture it contains.

Historic Overview of Development

Between 1844 and 1925, the city of Oskaloosa transformed from a virtually uninhabited virgin prairie to a county seat of over 10,000 citizens. The center of activity in Oskaloosa has always been the town square and its surrounding commercial district. It has been the center for local and regional trade, city and county civic functions, and local gatherings, celebrations, and entertainment. The commercial district developed around the open public square, which was planted with trees early on and later graced with a bandstand. The City Square Park is a local landmark, a source of pride for the city, and the center of the City Square Commercial Historic District.

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

The heart of activity in Oskaloosa has always been the town square and its adjacent commercial district, as illustrated in this photograph from 1902.

Early Settlement Period

The early settlement period in Mahaska County was organized in 1844 and authorized by an act of the Legislature of the Territory of Iowa. By this same act, three commissioners from outside the county were appointed to select a location for the county seat. In May 1844, these three men chose the area known as The Narrows for this new seat of government. The site selected a one-quarter section in the area, which was soon given the name Oskaloosa and was laid out that spring by the county surveyor. The first sale of lots took place in June of 1844.

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

(Manoah Hedge, Past and Present of Mahaska County, 1906.)

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

Historic photographs of the district from 1864 show a growing Oskaloosa. The square's four sides, facing the wood-fenced-in central park, with its new trees planted in rows, were dirt streets with commercial buildings encompassing the surrounding area. Pedestrians used wooden plank sidewalks to traverse the town while dodging wooden posts that held up storefront awnings. Two- and three-story brick buildings and single-story frame buildings with boom town facades surrounded the square. The brick buildings, varying in architectural design, were attached to create a uniform facade wall. The storefronts were generally tall with large display windows and appeared to be of cast iron.

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

In the late 1850s, local financiers turned down an offer from the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad to locate a transcontinental line through Oskaloosa. This decision posed a great loss to the town's potential growth.

> *"...the moneyed men in Oskaloosa failed to see the immense value to be gained by the offer..."*
>
> *(Hedge ,1906.)*

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

Post-Civil War Period

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

The first Sanborn map of Oskaloosa was completed in 1885. By then, the city had at least 45 brick buildings or blocks within the district's presently set boundary. (The boundary includes only the core of the larger commercial area in 1885.) The new courthouse on the northeast corner of the square is also near completion at this time.

In 1885, the brick buildings in the commercial area were two or three stories tall at their front facades and nearly 100 feet to 120 feet deep. The area consisted mainly of High Avenue, with commercial buildings lining both sides of the street for two blocks west of the square. West First Avenue blocks contained workshops, a large grocery warehouse, and a lumber yard several blocks west of the square. This street was less densely developed than High Avenue and had a much different character.

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

Post 1880s Period

Sanborn maps from 1891 and 1896 show the district continuing to grow, with downtown commercial blocks continuing to fill in. By 1896, every building facing the square and on the diagonal quarter blocks was of brick, each two- or three-story height. New buildings were generally more than one 20-foot bay wide and were built 120 feet deep. Based on Sanborn map information, the busiest years for construction within the district between 1885 and 1927 were 1891 and 1896. The style of commercial buildings was changing from the ornately decorated late Victorian type to a new one influenced by the contemporary style of Chicago architecture and the work of H.H. Richardson. At the turn of the century, Oskaloosa grew, prospered, and considered itself a thriving city. The central commercial area was the main activity center and the town's identity.

The Twentieth Century

The district's 1902, 1910, and 1917 Sanborn maps recorded increasing commercial development and density, particularly along the streets tangent to the square. In 1909, the new Fire Department building was constructed along East Second Avenue, and in 1911, City Hall was added to the west.

In 1912, the present bandstand in the center of City Square Park was built to replace the 1892 wooden bandstand. The old wood fence around the park was removed, and the diagonal walks with benches crossing the park appeared, as they do today. The statue of Chief Mahaska had been installed in the park in 1909, dedicated in a gala celebration that drew as many as 20,000. Seasonal festivals occurred in the park, and bands played regularly from the bandstand throughout the summer.

The first Sanborn map of Oskaloosa was completed in 1885. At that time, the new courthouse on the square's northeast corner was near completion.

In 1918, an accident occurred in which the twelve-hundred-pound weight of the Mahaska County Courthouse clock tower had broken loose and crashed through the ceiling of the third floor. There was damage left over from the more than fifty-foot drop from the weight's original location. During major renovations in 1934, the old clock tower was removed and replaced with an Art Deco style. Four corner posts were included in the design of the new clock tower, and the entrance was remodeled with the ornate old gabled entry removed.

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

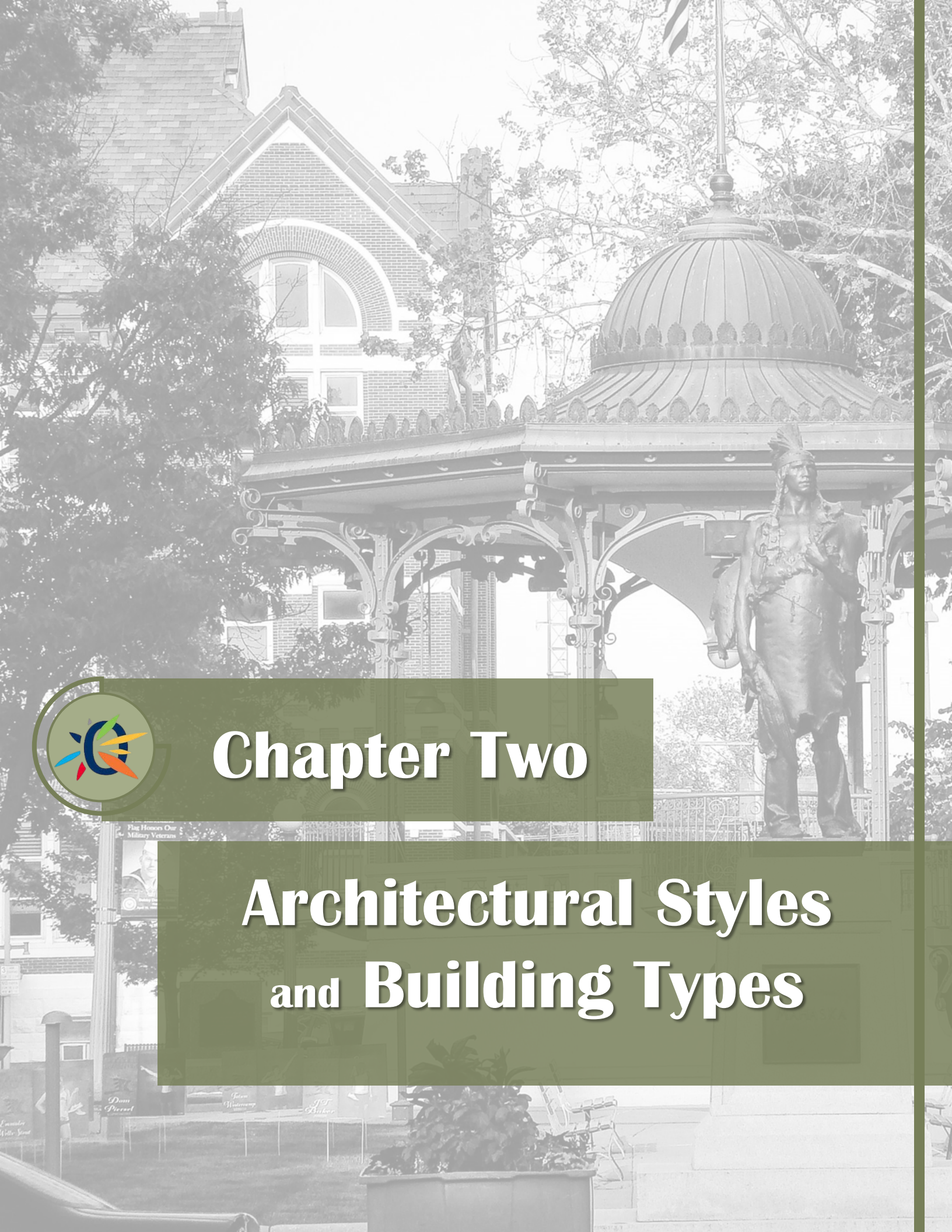
In 1909, the new Fire Department was constructed along East Second Avenue in the block just south of the square. In 1911, City Hall was added to the west.

Since the turn of the 19th century, Oskaloosa has experienced significant change and grown into a much larger urban area, but its population has not increased significantly. It has not become the metropolis its citizens once so hoped for. Today, Oskaloosa has a population of approximately 11,000, remarkably close to the same as it has been for the past 50 years.

As a county seat, Oskaloosa remains the county's commercial center, and City Square Park and the central commercial area are still the heart of the town.

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

While the automobile changed people's lives, it caused Americans to make tremendous changes in their built environment. The urban pattern of the Oskaloosa commercial area already in place when the auto arrived saw little impact.



Chapter Two

Architectural Styles and Building Types

Introduction

The City Square Commercial Historic District includes seventy-eight buildings. The source material for a building's historical architectural style in a small town is often indirect and difficult to trace because buildings of mixed influence are typical. In particular, with commercial buildings, the means and desires of the building's owner, the available building materials, and the skills of the local builders may have had a more direct influence on the design of a building than any recognized architectural style. It is commonly the ornament of a particular style, not the underlying design philosophy, that is copied and applied to a small-town building's major facade.

Therefore, identifying the influence of various architectural styles, as they were applied to these buildings' facades, helps understand this resource. However, of greater importance is the district's urban pattern, the buildings' massing and materials, and their substantial intactness. This district's buildings share a standard material, brick, and a familiar massing and land use. They stand at the physical and symbolic center of the town, enclosing the beautiful town square and housing the town's primary commercial and civic functions.

Commercial building types within the district share a basic two- or three-story boxlike form. They are rectangular in plan with load-bearing masonry walls. Facades and sidewalls are rectangular, and roofs are flat. Individual buildings are attached, often sharing interior sidewalls. A continuous facade line is created at the streetside, with each building being set at the sidewalk edge. The dimensions of the lots and properties have prescribed the width and depth of these buildings. As early as the 1850s, the 120-foot by 120-foot quarter blocks were each divided into six 20-foot-wide by 120-foot-deep properties. While buildings may span several of these 20-foot-wide properties, the 20-foot-wide bay is still expressed internally with columns or bearing walls placed every 20 feet. This can be seen on the facade in the placement of window groupings and ornamental elements. This helps give the town a consistency in scale.

Public buildings are much fewer in number than commercial buildings. Similar to commercial structures, these buildings possess load-bearing masonry but are freestanding rather than attached. Unlike the commercial types with street-level storefronts, each public building includes a raised basement with a stepped approach from the street to the main level. Oskaloosa's two most prominent public buildings are the county courthouse and the City Hall/Fire Department building. These buildings dominate the district in both size and architectural design. One key feature of both buildings is the constructed towers on top of them.

Property owners should review these descriptions carefully. In many cases, the following design standards reference the characteristics of styles presented in this chapter. The property owner is encouraged to use the styles within this section to analyze the overall historic character of their building and distinguish its character-defining features. Ultimately, this should aid the property owner in selecting an appropriate design solution for any proposed work.

Italianate

circa 1860-1885

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

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

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

Characteristics

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

Vernacular Commercial Storefronts

circa 1890-1920

The commercial storefront of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is the most common type of building found today in most commercial districts throughout the country. Usually between two and four stories, this commercial building is divided into two distinct bands. The first floor is more commonly transparent, so goods can be displayed, while the second floor is usually reserved for residential or storage space. The upper floor is typically supported by a steel beam that spans the glass opening. A kickplate is found below the display window, while a smaller band of glass, a transom, is seen above. Also, the main door is frequently recessed. These buildings have stone and brick facades. Ornamental detail exists but is simple, limited to a shallow molding as a cornice. Some cornices were made of masonry, while others were made of stamped metal. Many carry simplified Italianate detailing. In essence, these buildings lack distinctive detail, contrasting them with the revival styles that were also popular during this period.

Characteristics

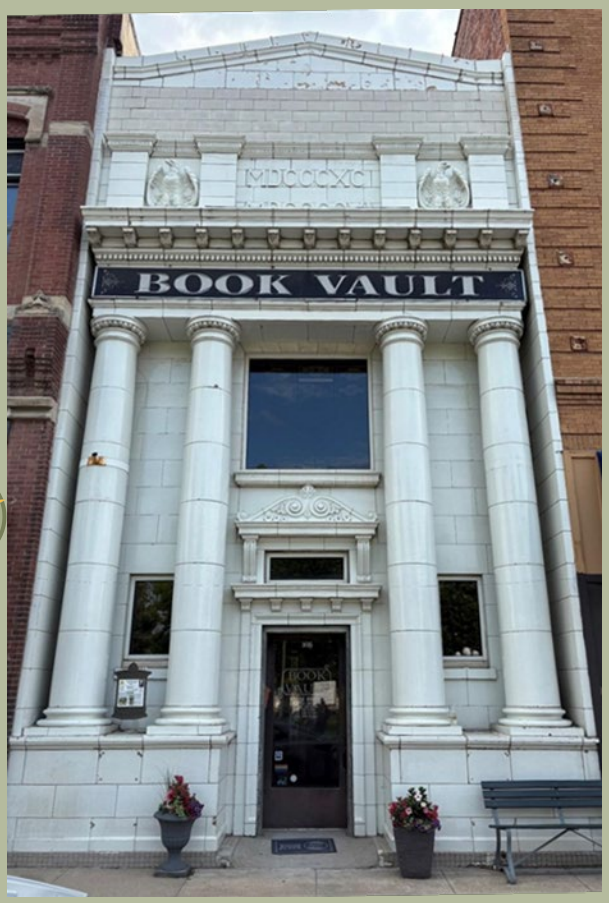
- Cast-iron supported storefronts
- Large display windows
- Transom lights
- Kickplate
- Recessed entry
- Tall second-story windows
- Cornice

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

Greek Revival Influences

circa 1850-1860

The end of the 18th century brought great interest in classical building styles throughout the United States and Europe. The Greek Revival style became quite popular during the middle of the nineteenth century. By 1850, it was seen in almost all settled areas in the nation. Based on classical detailing that originated in ancient Greece, these buildings are known primarily for columns with Doric, Ionic, or Corinthian capitals. Other Greek Revival detailing includes classical entablatures, simple window surrounds, and door surrounds consisting of transom and sidelights.



Characteristics

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

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

Romanesque Revival

circa 1895-1940

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

The county courthouse, built in 1886, followed this style. Throughout the years, it underwent renovations, and in March of 1918, a large weight from the clock broke loose and crashed through the third-floor ceiling of the building. In 1934, major renovations were undertaken, and the old clock tower was removed and replaced with the four posts seen today. This transformed the once Romanesque style into the Art Deco style of the early twentieth century.

Characteristics

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

The Romanesque, or Richardsonian Romanesque, style, developed by the prominent Boston architect Henry Richardson, was commonly used for large public buildings during the 1880s.

The original 1886 bell tower, seen on the right, provides an example of the Romanesque style, while the 1934 Art Deco remodel on the right illustrates a new architectural design

Chapter Three

Design Standards for Historic Properties

Introduction

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

A basic tenet of preservation is that intervention in historic buildings should be minimized. Therefore, it is best to preserve features that remain in good condition. For those that are deteriorated, repair rather than replacement is preferred. When replacement is necessary, it should be done as historically. In this way, the original building fabric will be preserved to the greatest extent possible, which is essential in maintaining the integrity of the property.

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

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

- **For those that are deteriorated, repair rather than replacement is preferred.**
- **When replacement is necessary, it should be done like the one used historically.**

The standards are numbered to indicate their relative position within this chapter and the document. For example, the design standards in this chapter include the letter "H" before the number to indicate that it is part of the standards for "Historic Properties."

Preservation of Character-Defining Features

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

H.1 Protect and maintain significant stylistic features.

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

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

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

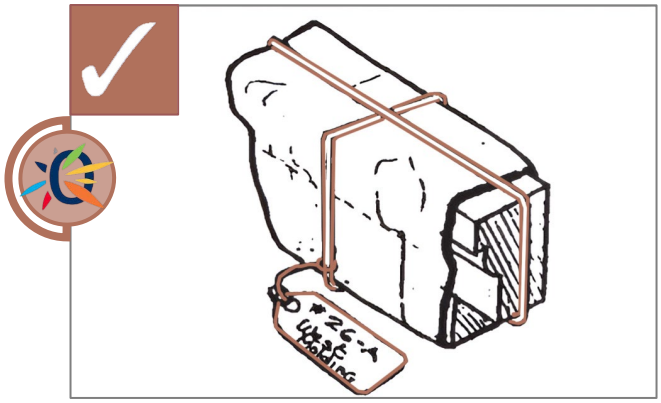
H.3 Avoid adding features that were not part of the original building.

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

H.4 When disassembling a historic feature is necessary for its restoration, minimize damage to the original materials.

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

Preserve character-defining features that are intact.



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

H.5 Repair those features that are damaged.

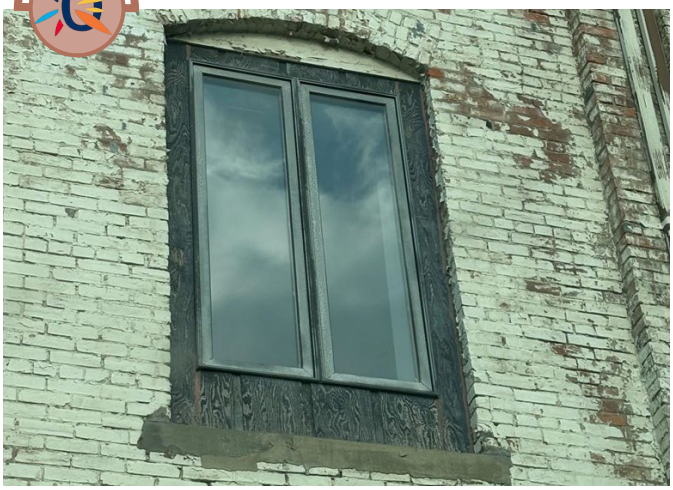
- This method is preferred over replacement.
- Use methods that will not harm the historic materials.

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

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

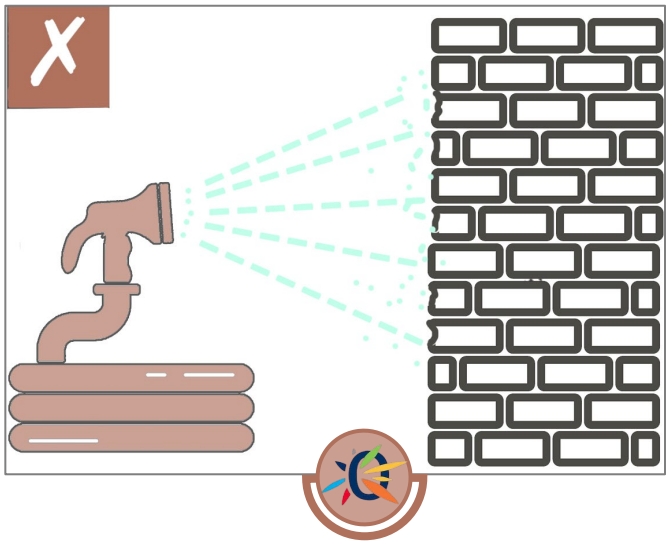
H.7 Minimize intervention with historical elements.

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



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

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



Replacement of Character-Defining Features

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

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

- Replace only those portions that are beyond repair.

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

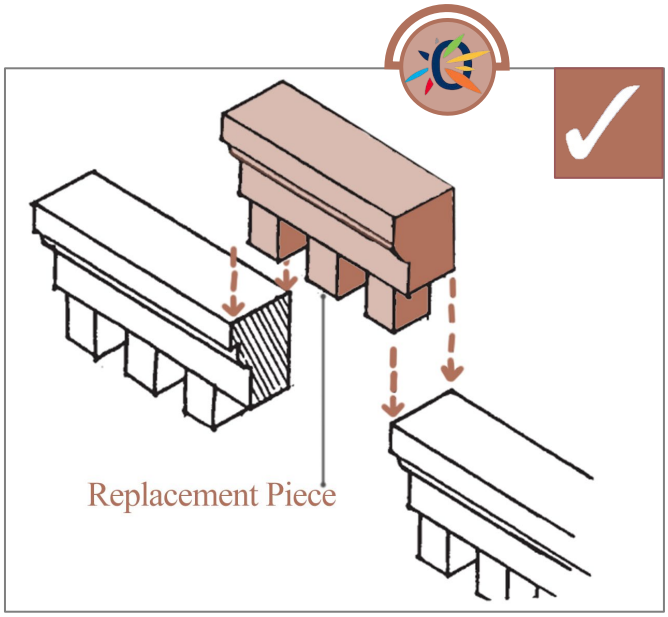
- Physical or pictorial evidence should support the design to avoid misrepresenting the building's heritage.
- Using the same kind of material as the original is preferred. However, a substitute material may be acceptable if the size, shape, texture, and finish convey the visual appearance of the original material.

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

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

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

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



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

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

Preservation of Facade Materials

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

H.12 Retain and preserve original facade materials.

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

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

- If original materials are currently covered, consider exposing them once more. Covering original facades conceals interesting details and interrupts the visual continuity along the street.
- Vinyl, aluminum, and imitation brick are inappropriate as coverings of historical materials.

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

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

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

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

When replacing facade material, use materials that are historically employed when feasible. This brick does not match the original and is inappropriate.

Preservation of Masonry

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

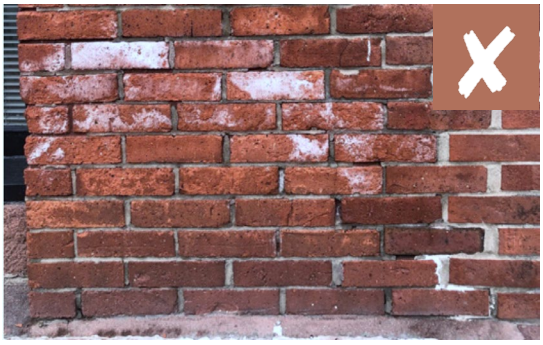
H.15 Preserve masonry features that define the overall historic character of the building.

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

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

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

- The original mortar, which is in good condition, should be preserved.
- Repoint only those mortar joints with evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing.
- Duplicate the old mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, and joint width and profile.
- Mortar joints should be cleared with hand tools.
- Using electric saws &Z hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick.
- Avoid using mortar with a high Portland cement content. This mortar will be substantially harder than the brick and will not allow for expansion and contraction, deteriorating the brick.



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

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

- Masonry naturally has a water-protective layer, or patina, to protect it from the elements. Painting masonry walls can seal in moisture already in the masonry, preventing it from breathing and causing extensive damage over the years.
- It is inappropriate to paint unpainted brick unless it is mismatched or so deteriorated that it cannot withstand the weather.

Bricks that were historically unpainted should remain so. The property owner improperly painted the right half of the building (top photo) along the property line. Compare with the proper restoration in the bottom photo.

Design Alterations

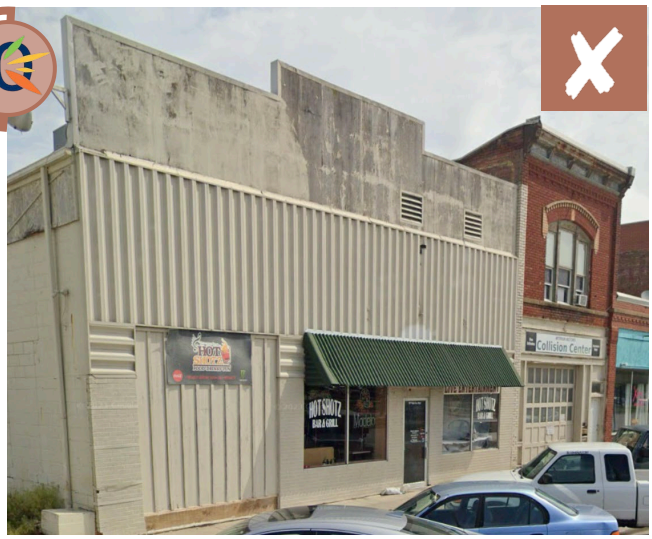
Alterations may be considered for historic buildings; however, these alterations should occur in a manner that will not affect the property's historic integrity and should be reversible for future property owners.

H.18 Design an alteration compatible with the property's historic character.

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

H.19 Avoid alterations that would damage historic features.

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

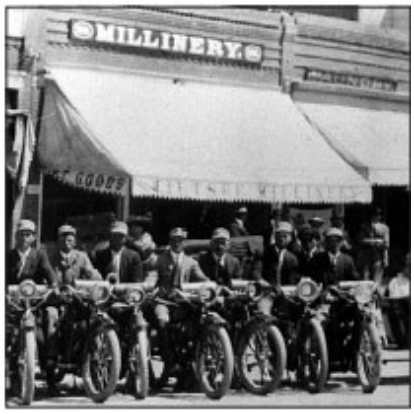


This row of buildings lost some details over time, and a monochromatic color scheme obscured the original design character. Overhead garage doors that had replaced original storefronts were later alterations without historical significance. (Compare to the "after" photo below.)

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

Design Alterations continued...

The windows in this structure were boarded, and architectural details needed repair.



A modest building can also be renovated to be compatible with the context. The original millinery shop form in this photograph had simple moldings at the top

Years later, all original details had been stripped from the building. (Compare with the photos to the right and left)

After renovation, the same building exhibits the more classical features of commercial storefronts, including a pointed cornice, kickplate, and recessed entry.

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

Storefronts

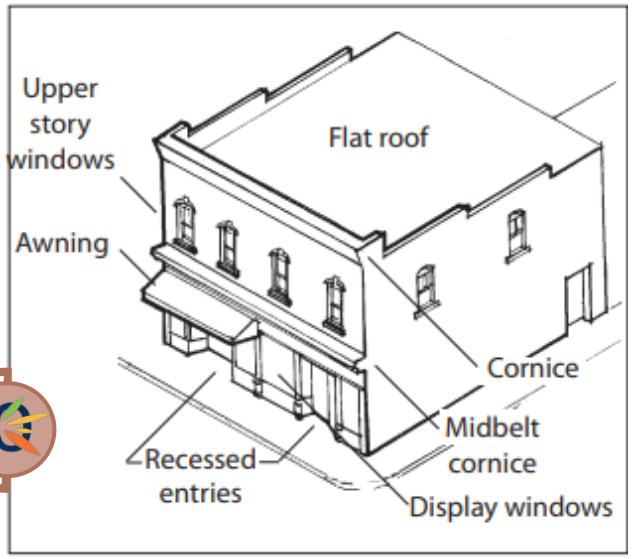
Storefronts in the historic district possess components traditionally seen on commercial buildings. The repetition of these standard elements creates a visual unity on the street that should be preserved.

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

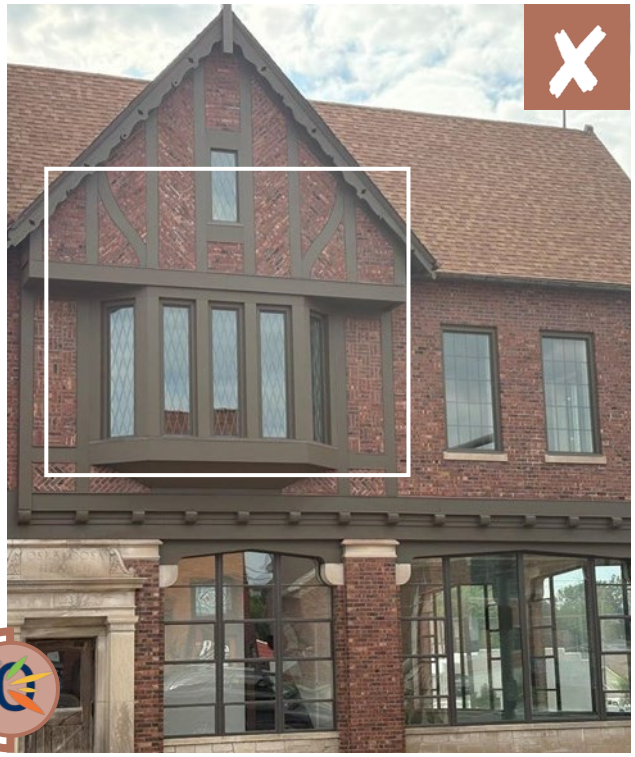
- **Display windows:** The central portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed.
- **Transom:** A frame separates the upper portion of the display from the main display window.
- **Kickplate:** Found beneath the display window, sometimes called a bulkhead panel.
- **Entry:**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

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

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



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



When intact, preserve the historic character of the storefront. This includes the columns or piers (usually brick or metal) supporting the storefront framing, the recessed entry, the storefront glass, and the transom above. These features should not be altered, obscured, or removed.

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

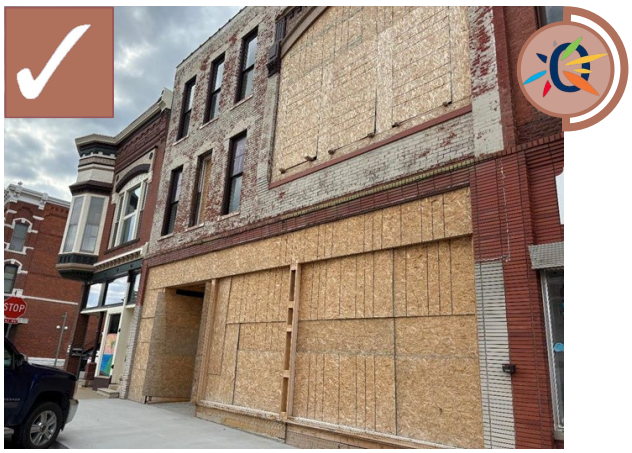
- If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts. The storefront should still be designed to attract pedestrians' attention.

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

- A new design using traditional elements may be considered where the original is missing, without evidence of its character.
- However, the new design must continue to convey the character of a typical storefront, including the transparent nature of the display window.
- Altering the size of the historic window opening or blocking it with opaque materials is inappropriate.
- Note that, in some cases, an original storefront may have been altered early in the history of the building and may itself have taken on significance. Such alterations should be preserved.
- Greater flexibility in the treatment of rear facades is appropriate. However, care should be taken to preserve storefronts on buildings with traditional commercial storefronts on multiple facades, such as a corner building.

If a storefront is altered, consider restoring it to the original design.

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



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

This rehabilitation preserves surviving details & reconstructs missing ones.

Windows and Transoms

Original windows are important features that help convey a building's early character. Their size and shape contribute to the integrity of historic commercial buildings, so they should be preserved when feasible.

H.24 Maintain historically significant windows.

- When these elements have already been altered, consider restoring them.
- Do not alter the size of windowpanes or sashes. Such changes destroy the building's scale and proportion.

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

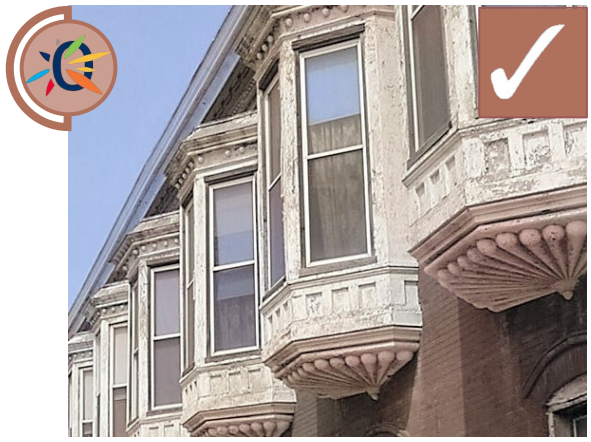
- Transoms, the upper glass band of traditional storefronts, introduced light into the depths of the building, saving on light costs. These bands should not be removed or enclosed.
- The shape of the transom is essential to the proportion of the storefront, and it should be preserved in its historic configuration whenever possible.
- If the original glass is missing, install new glass when possible. If you must block the transom, maintain its original proportions. Consider using it as a sign panel or decorative band.

H.26 Preserve historical upper-story windows.

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

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

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



Maintain historically significant windows and doors

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

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

Recessed Entries and Doors

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

H.28 Maintain historically significant doors.

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

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

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

H.30 Maintain recessed entries where they are found.

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

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

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

Recessed entries should be maintained where they are found. Repeating recessed entries provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale.

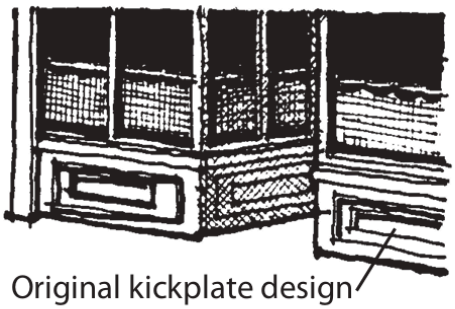
Kickplates

H.32 Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

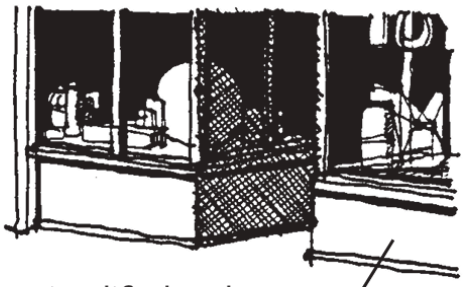
- The kickplate below the display window adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.
- If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

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

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



Original kickplate design

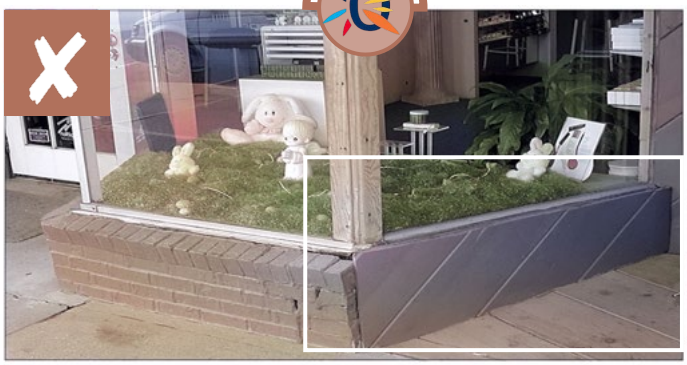


simplified replacement

contemporary glass interpretation

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

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



If the kickplate is concealed by another material, think about revealing the original design.

Cornices

H.34 Preserve the character of the cornice line.

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

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

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

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

- Appropriate materials include stone, brick, and stamped metal.

Preserve the character of the cornice line.

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

Reconstruct a missing cornice when historical evidence is available.

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

Additions to Historic Buildings

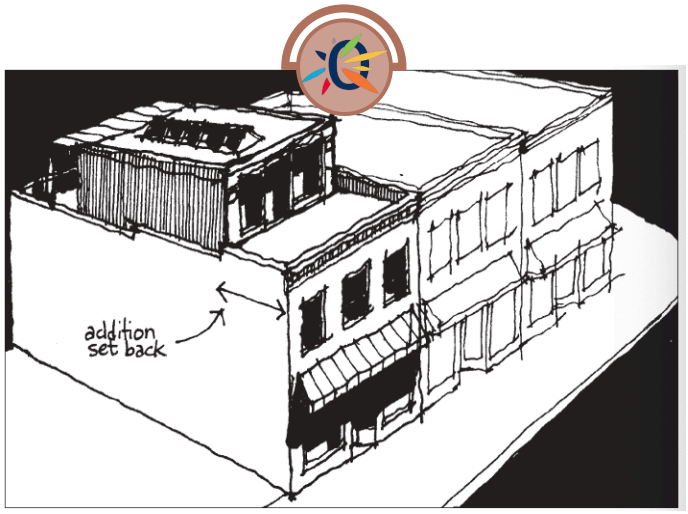
H.37 An addition should be compatible with the main building's scale, materials, and character.

An addition should be similar to the historic building in mass, scale, and form, and designed to remain subordinate to the main structure. A pitched roof is inappropriate.

- The addition should be subtly distinguishable in its design from the historic portion and have simplified details.
- An addition to the front of a historic building is inappropriate.

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

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



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

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

Technical Repairs

Many historic building elements survive, and they should be maintained to preserve their integrity as character-defining features.

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

- Perform a test patch (in an inconspicuous place) to ensure that the cleaning method will not damage the material's surface. Many procedures can have an unanticipated negative effect on building materials, accelerating deterioration or causing a loss of character.
- Abrasive methods such as sandblasting and water blasting are strongly discouraged, as they permanently erode building materials and finishes and accelerate deterioration.
- If cleaning is appropriate, a low-pressure water wash is preferred. If a test patch is first reviewed and adverse effects are not found, chemical cleaning may be considered.

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

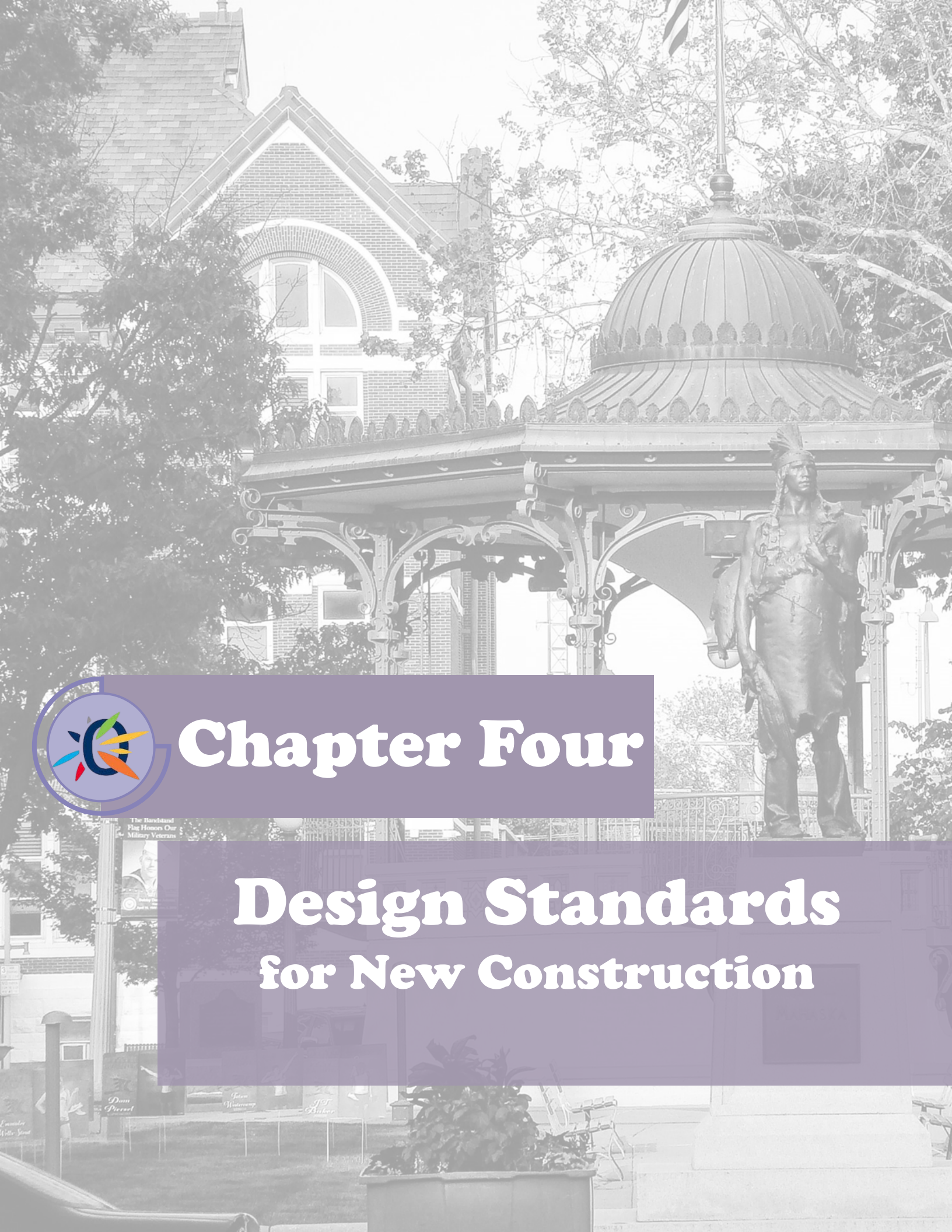
- Avoid the removal of damaged materials that can be repaired.
- Consolidants can stabilize or fix isolated areas of damage. Epoxies and resins may be considered for wood repair, and special masonry repair components may also be used.

H.41 Plan repainting carefully.

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

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

Plan to repaint carefully.



Chapter Four

Design Standards
for New Construction

Introduction

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

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

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

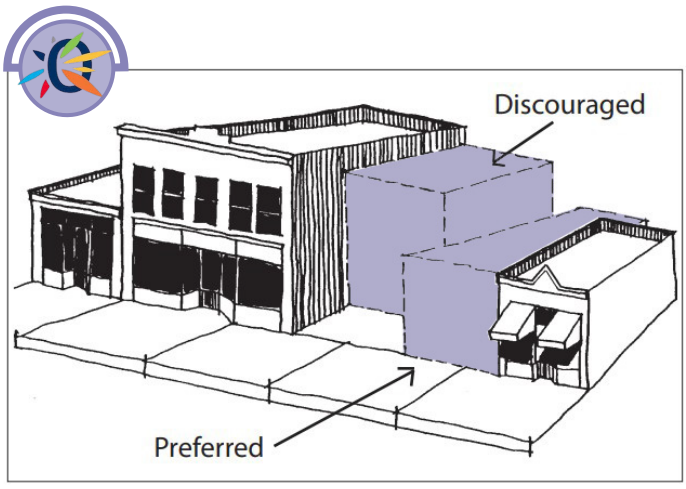
Before: New buildings should be compatible with the historical context. Creative new designs compatible with the district's design goals are especially encouraged. Here, a vacant lot awaits compatible infill. (See below.)

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

Note: This chapter provides examples of compatible new construction in other historic districts throughout the country (such as those above from Ft. Collins, Colorado) to illustrate its design principles.

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

A new design that incorporates the fundamental similarities of older buildings in the area without replicating them is preferred.



Align the building front at the sidewalk edge.

Architectural Character

While new buildings and alterations must be compatible with the historical context, they do not need to imitate older building styles. Stylistically distinguishing new buildings from their older neighbors in the historic district is preferred when the overall design reinforces the traditional development patterns of this chapter.

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

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

Site Plan Standards

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

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

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

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

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

N.4 Respect the town grid in new construction.

- A new building should be oriented parallel to its lot lines, like a historic building, but not at an angle.
- Orient the primary facade toward the street.

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

Mass and Scale

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A new building should align horizontal elements along the block.

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

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

N.7 Consider dividing a larger building into "modules" similar in scale to buildings seen historically.

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

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

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

N.9 Floor-to-floor heights should resemble those historically observed in the block.

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

Facade Materials

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

N.10 Simple material finishes are encouraged.

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

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

- Masonry was the traditional material and is preferred for new construction. This includes stone and brick.
- Wood and metal surround windows, doors, and storefronts, a practice that should continue in new construction.
- New materials may be considered, but they should resemble those used traditionally in the district. For instance, bricks should be identical in size to those used historically, and stucco, cast stone, and concrete should be detailed to provide a human scale.
- New materials should be demonstrated to be durable. For example, some facade materials used in new construction are more susceptible to weather and do not last as long as stone or brick.

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

Materials should resemble those used historically. Masonry, including stone and brick, is the traditional material preferred for new construction.

Upper-Story Windows

Along the streets in the historic district, a pattern of evenly spaced, similarly sized upper-story windows repeats, giving a building a sense of human scale. Using window sizes and proportions familiar to pedestrians helps them relate to the overall size of a building. These upper-story windows' alignment and similar scale are part of a typical building style that should be continued.

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

- A typical upper-story window is twice as tall as it is wide. These proportions are limited, so upper-story windows in new construction should follow historical proportions.
- Windows should align with others in a block. Windows, lintels, and trim elements should align with those of adjacent historic buildings.

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

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

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

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

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

- The first floors should be more transparent than the upper floors.
- The upper floors should appear more solid than the first floors.

The solid-to-void ratio should resemble those traditionally found on commercial storefront buildings in the district.

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

Entries

The repetition of recessed building entries along the street in the historic district creates a rhythm of shadows, helping establish a sense of scale and inviting pedestrians to enter the area. This trend should be continued in new construction.

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

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

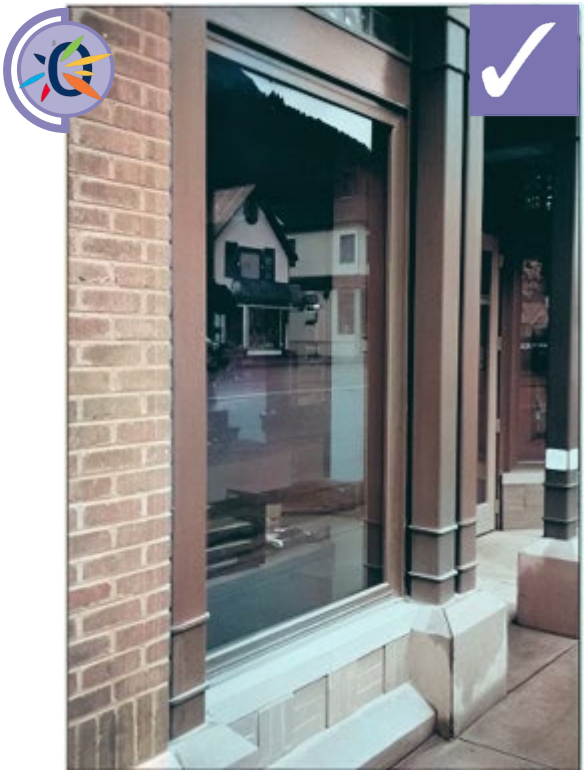
N.17 Locate the primary building entrance to face the street.

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

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

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

Clearly define the primary entrance facing the street.



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

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

If offering a storefront at street level is not practical, consider utilizing display cases that showcase the goods and services available inside or nearby.

Pedestrian Interest

The historic district should continue to develop as a pedestrian-oriented environment. Streets, sidewalks, and alleys should encourage walking, sitting, and other outdoor activities. Buildings should also be visually interesting to invite pedestrian exploration. Existing pedestrian routes should be enhanced. A building should express human scale through traditional materials and forms. This is important because pedestrians can experience buildings nearby.

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

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

Public art is an effective way to create pedestrian interest along a street.

Chapter Five

Design Standards
for All Projects

Introduction

These design standards apply to all City Square Commercial Historic District projects, including specific site improvements, alterations to existing structures, and new construction.

Accessibility

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

A.1 The standards introduced herein should not prevent compliance with accessibility laws.

- All new construction shall comply completely with ADA.
- Owners of historic properties also should fully comply while preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings.
- The law contains special provisions for historic buildings that allow some alternative solutions to meet the ADA standards. For example, some building owners have placed ramps within interior spaces to prevent interference with the historic storefront.
- Consult the State Preservation Architect of the State Historical Society of Iowa for more information about compliance or alternative solutions to comply with the ADA.

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

Color Scheme Design

The following section includes guidance from the 2020 Main Street Iowa and Iowa Economic Development's Downtown Design Guide. Additionally, from the National Parks Service Preservation Brief 10.

A building's color scheme should be carefully considered for appropriateness and impact. Colors in muted tones are strongly encouraged. Colors in these tones maintain historic charm, emphasize architectural features, and promote building cohesion.

A.2 MUTED COLOR PALLETS

- Muted colors possess a lasting quality that transcends trends and changing design preferences. Unlike bold or highly saturated colors that quickly become dated, muted tones maintain their appeal over time. These colors help buildings look appropriate and well-maintained as years pass. Property owners can experience savings in costly repainting projects and promote the district's character.
- Muted colors enhance a building's architectural elements. These tones act as a neutral backdrop, allowing key features such as trim, window frames, cornices, and ornate details to stand out more prominently. By not competing for attention, muted colors highlight craftsmanship and historic significance, bringing the natural beauty and intricate design of each building to life.
- A muted color palette creates a consistent and balanced aesthetic. Applying these tones enables new buildings, renovations, and maintenance efforts to blend seamlessly with historic architecture. This reduces visual discord, preventing new structures from clashing with existing structures. The created visual harmony contributes to a sense of place and belonging, enhancing the overall experience within the historic district.

A.3 CHOOSING A COLOR SCHEME

- Look at neighboring buildings and the street as a whole when choosing colors. Colors don't need to match your neighbors, but should be compatible with the overall environment and not be jarring when looking down the street. ·
- Bright or neon hues are generally inappropriate for historic buildings.
- Use 3-4 colors max (including the base brick color) to highlight the façade details sufficiently.
- Coordinate with awnings and existing brick or stone colors.
- Colors specific to individual businesses can be used as accents or in signage.

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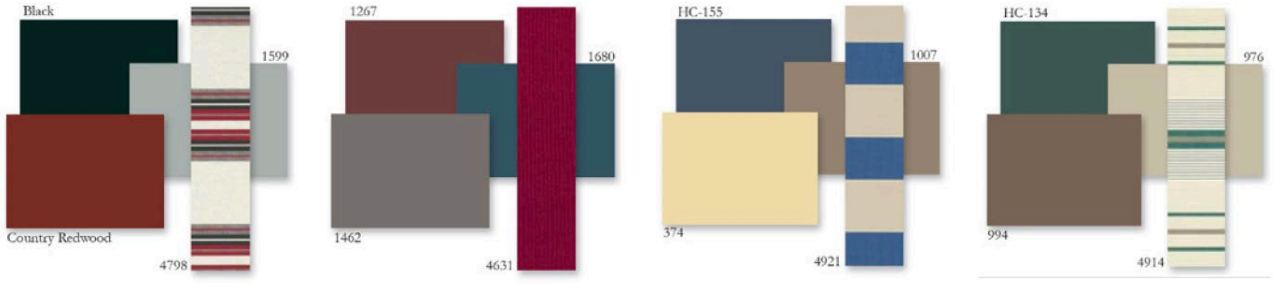


Examples of complimentary paint color patterns for a downtown historic district

Color Scheme Design Ideas

This page contains examples of paint combinations using the techniques mentioned in A.2 Muted Paint Pallets and A.3 Choosing a Color Scheme. This is not an exhaustive list but examples from which to base paint color decisions. Proposals should use complementary colors and refer to painting professionals for further guidance.

Body	Trim	Accent
SW 0009 **Eastlake Gold**	SW 2829 **Classical White**	**Curio Gray** SW 0024 **Downing Slate** SW 2819

Body	Trim	Accent
SW 0052 **Pearl Gray**	SW 0050 **Classic Light Buff**	**Colonial Revival Stone** SW 2827 **Mulberry Silk** SW 0001

Body	Trim	Accents
SW 2819 **Downing Slate**	SW 2813 **Downing Straw**	**Rookwood Antique Gold** SW 2814 **Rookwood Medium Brown** SW 2807

Body	Trim	Accent
SW 2824 **Renwick Golden Oak**	SW 2813 **Downing Straw**	**Roycroft Vellum** SW 2833 **Deepest Mauve** SW 0005

Body	Trim
SW 2822 **Downing Sand**	SW 2811 **Rookwood Blue Green**

Body	Trim	Accents
SW 0014 **Sheraton Sage**	SW 2822 **Downing Sand**	**Rookwood Antique Gold** SW 2814 **Fairfax Brown** SW 2856

Professional paint companies such as Sherwin-Williams and Benjamin Moore maintain historic paint colors.

Examples of complementary paint color patterns for a downtown historic district are taken from the Sherwin-Williams Craftsman Style Exterior Paint Color Collection

PAINT APPLICATION STANDARDS

Remember these things when undergoing a painting project:

A.4 METHODS FOR PAINT REMOVAL

- When limited paint removal is needed to address issues such as intercoat peeling, solvent blistering, and wrinkling, scraping and hand sanding should be employed. Scraping is usually accomplished with a putty knife, a paint scraper, or both.
- Thermal methods should be applied when exterior surface conditions necessitate the total paint removal. Such conditions may include widespread peeling, cracking, or alligatoring. Appropriate devices for this process include the electric heat plate and heat gun. These tools have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in removing paint from various wooden elements of historic buildings.
- Chemical methods should be used when preparing historic exterior woodwork for repainting. Solvent-based or caustic strippers are highly recommended, as they are particularly effective in removing paint residue from intricate decorative features and hard-to-reach cracks. Additionally, chemical strippers help remove remaining paint from window muntins and strip varnish from exterior doors once primary layers have been removed through thermal methods.

A.5 GENERAL BEST PRACTICES

- Do not paint a portion of a building that has not been painted historically. In particular, do not paint historic masonry, as it can damage the surface of the brick.
- Always choose compatible exterior-rated paint for exterior areas. Latex paint is not recommended over oil because it has poor adhesion qualities and is, therefore, more likely to fail. The paint manufacturer can verify the substrate's compatibility with yours
- Ensure the area is dry and clean before painting to ensure good adhesion and prevent moisture from getting trapped behind the paint. Avoid removing paint before applying a new layer. If the paint has failed and conditions warrant it, remove it to the next sound layer through the gentlest means possible.
- Always protect adjacent areas before painting to ensure that no historical materials are damaged as part of a painting project.
- Always paint a sample of colors in a small, inconspicuous place before painting a large area. Colors can appear different depending on the base coats, sheen (flat to high gloss), natural and artificial light levels, and substrate texture.

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

Operable awnings are encouraged on historic buildings.

Awnings & Canopies

Awnings and canopies have historically been noteworthy features of buildings in the historic district, and their continued use is encouraged.

A.6 A fabric awning is encouraged.

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

A.7 A fixed metal canopy may be considered where evidence demonstrates that one existed historically.

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

A.8 Internal illumination in an awning is inappropriate.

A.9 Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features.

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

A rigid awning or canopy that is permanently affixed to the building's facade and conflicts with the building's style is not appropriate.

Building and Street Lighting

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

A.10 Use lighting for the following:

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

A.11 Use lighting as it was used historically in the district.

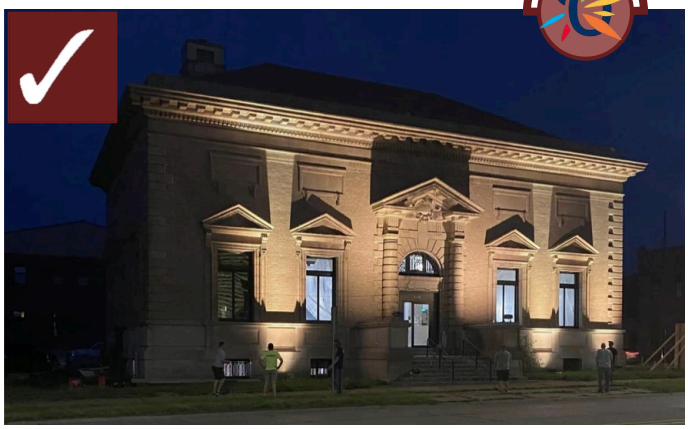
- Shielded lighting is preferred.
- Lighting should not dominate a facade or the street.
- Washing the entire facade with light is inappropriate.

A.12 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.

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

A.13 Prevent glare by using shielded and focused light sources.

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



Lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building and its surroundings regarding style, scale, and illumination intensity.
Photo credit: Musco Lighting

All outdoor lighting should be low-lumens.
Photo credit: Ayrton Breckenridge, The Oskaloosa Herald

Mechanical Equipment and Services Utilities

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

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

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

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

A.14 Minimize the visual impact of mechanical equipment on the public way.

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

A.15 Minimize the visual impacts of utility connections and service boxes.

- Locate them on secondary walls when feasible.

A.17 Locate standpipes and other service equipment so that they will not damage historic facade materials.

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

A.18 Minimize the visual impact of trash storage and service areas.

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

Landscaping

Landscaping in the City Square enhances the pedestrian experience downtown and encourages continued use.

A.18 Landscaping is encouraged where space allows.

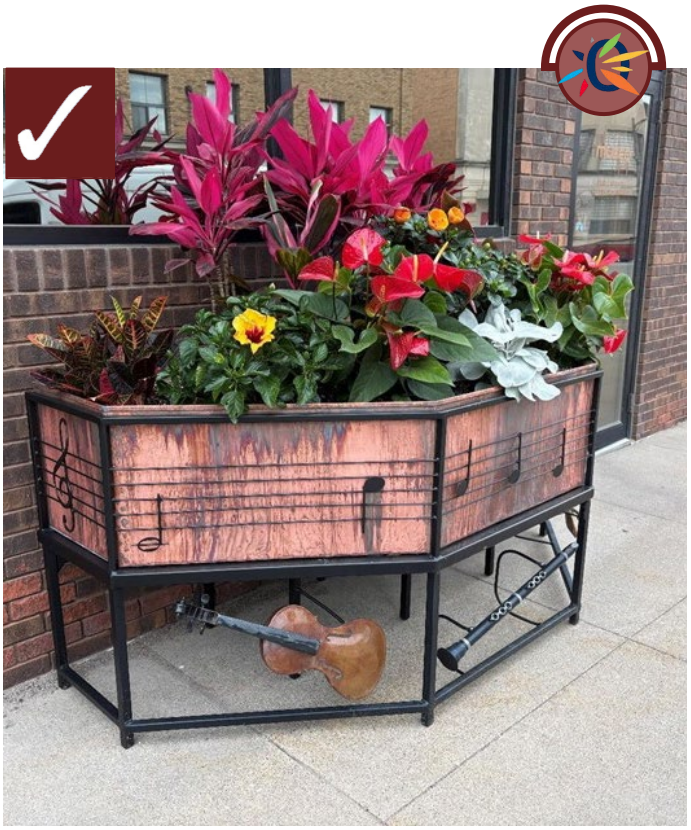
- Landscape features such as parks, gardens, streetlights, signs, benches, and walkways that traditionally link buildings to their environment should be retained.
- Storefronts should continue to define the sidewalk edge, however.

A.19 Planting trees is encouraged.

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

A.20 New trees, plants, flowers, and shrubbery should be used, as they are well adapted to the Iowa climate.

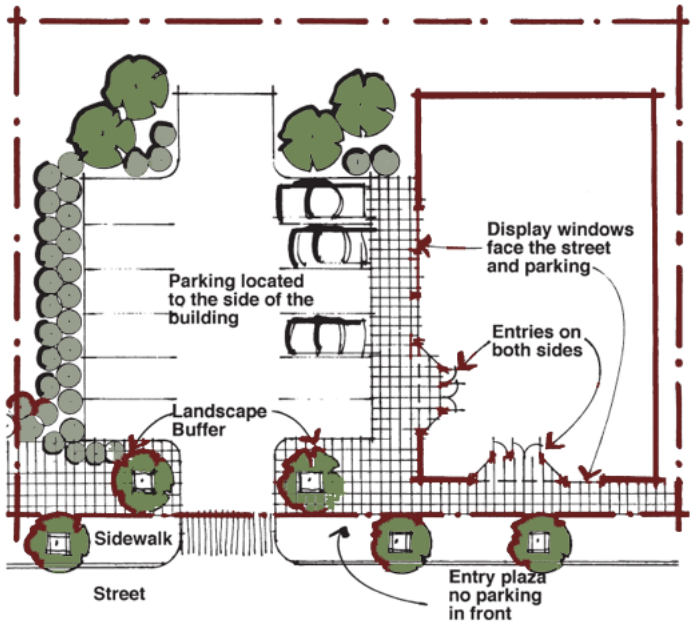
- While many plants can grow in the Iowa climate, those that are better adapted and require less water are preferred.



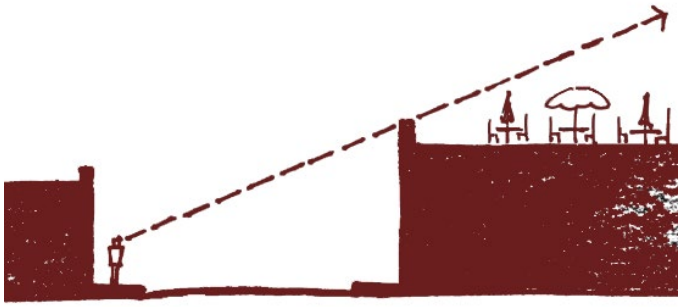
Landscape features such as gardens that traditionally link buildings to their environment should be retained.

Landscaping in the City Square enhances the pedestrian experience downtown and encourages continued use.

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



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



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

Parking

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

A.21 Minimize visual impacts of off-street parking, as seen from the public way.

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

A.22 Large areas of off-street parking are discouraged in the historic district.

- Minimize the number of new curb cuts.

A.23 Where appropriate, design a parking area to be accessed from an alley rather than the street.

A.24 Locate parking that will be subordinate to other site features.

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

Rooftop Uses

A.25 Minimize the visual impact of rooftop uses from the street.

A.26 Set activities back so they are not visible from the sidewalk across the street.

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

Signs

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

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

Historically, signs mounted on the exterior advertised a building's primary business. These signs typically occupied a space at street level or the upper floors. Window signs were the only ones used for businesses above. Sizes varied, but most were a few square feet in area.

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

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

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

Signs can be informative as well as historic in appearance.

Historic street signs add to the overall character of an area.

Sign Context

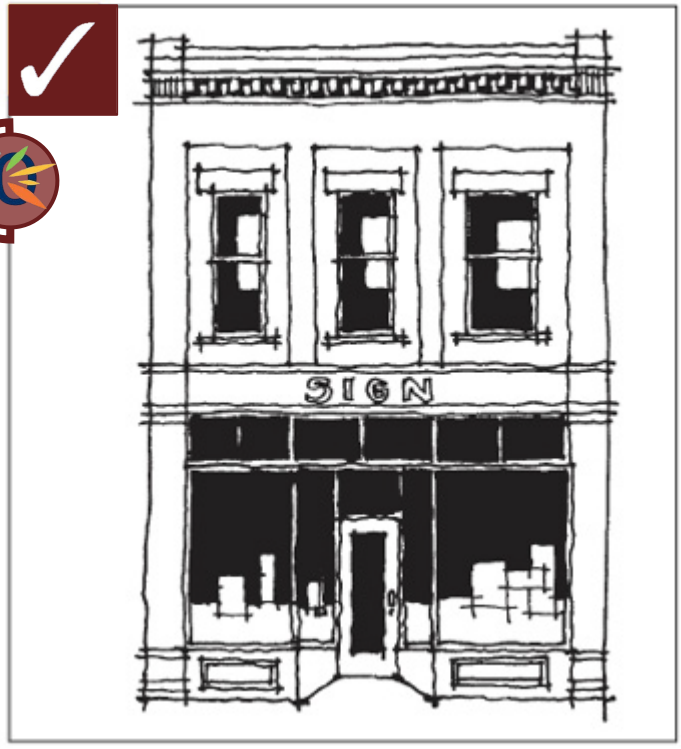
A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, and second, to convey information, essentially identifying the business or services offered. If well designed, the building front alone can serve the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information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

A.27 Consider the building front as part of an overall sign program.

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

A.28 A sign should be subordinate to the overall building composition.

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



The overall facade composition should be cohesive, incorporating ornamental details and signage. Signs should also be proportional to the building to ensure they do not overwhelm the appearance.

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

Appropriate Sign Types

A.29 Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered.

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

A.30 Projecting signs may be considered.

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

A.31 A window sign may be considered.

- A window sign may be painted on a window.
- A window sign should follow the city's ordinance on the total allowable window area.
- It may be painted on the glass or hung just inside a window.

A.32 A directory sign may be considered.

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

Sign Materials

A.33 Sign materials should be compatible with those of the building facade.

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

Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered

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

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

Sign Content

A.34 Symbol signs are encouraged.

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

A.35 Use colors for the signs that are compatible with those of the building front.

A.36 Simple sign designs are preferred.

- We encourage typefaces that are similar to those that have been used in the area historically. We also recommend avoiding sign types that appear too contemporary.
- Also, limit the number of colors used on a sign to three.

A.37 Select letter styles and sizes compatible with the building front.

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

Sign Lighting

A.38 Indirect lighting is preferred for a sign.

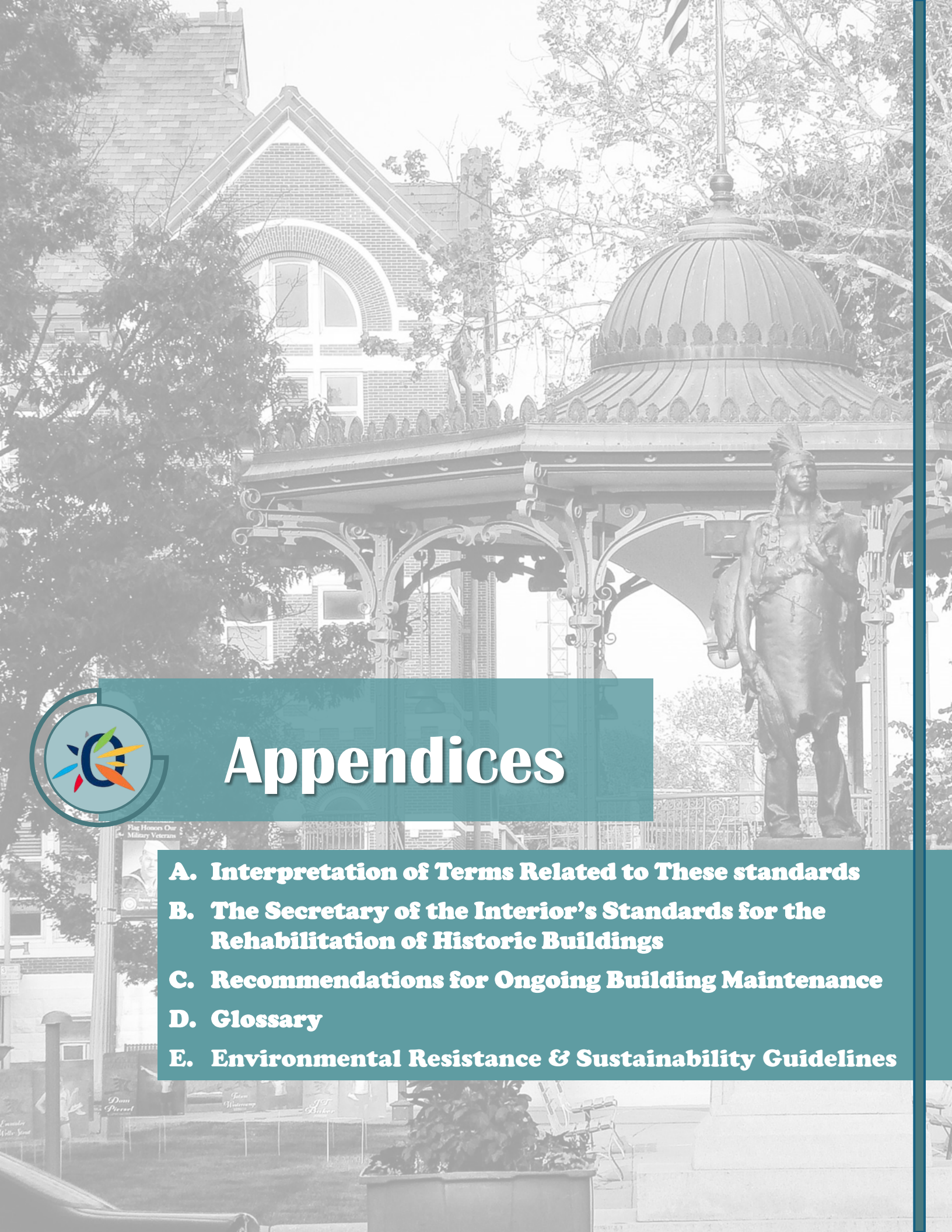
- Indirect lighting, that which is directed at a sign from an external, shielded lamp, is preferred.
- A warm light, similar to daylight, is appropriate.

A.39 If internal illumination is used, it should be designed to be subordinate to the overall building composition.

- Internal illumination of an entire sign panel is discouraged. A system that backlights sign text only is preferred if internal illumination is used.
- Neon and other tubular illumination may be considered. However, neon should be used in limited amounts to avoid becoming visually obtrusive.

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

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



Appendices

A. Interpretation of Terms Related to These standards

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

C. Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance

D. Glossary

E. Environmental Resistance & Sustainability Guidelines

Appendix A

Interpretation of Terms Related to These Standards

These definitions apply to terms in the preceding text.

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

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

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

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

Guideline – In this document, the term guideline refers to information heavily encouraged when considering remodels or changes to historic buildings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Should - If the term "should" appears in a design standard, compliance is strongly encouraged, but is not required.

Standard - In the context of this document, a "standard" is a requirement that would be met, in order to be in accordance with the intent of this document.

Appendix B

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

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

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

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

Appendix C

Recommendations for Ongoing Building Maintenance

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

C.1 Maintenance of Streets and Alleys

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

C.2 Maintenance of Upper Story Windows

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

C.3 Maintenance of Storefronts

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

C.4 Maintenance of Roofs

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

C.5 Maintenance of Awnings and Canopies

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

C.6 Maintenance of Signs

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

C.7 Energy Conservation

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

Regular and routine maintenance of a historic building ensures that costly preservation and restoration efforts will not be necessary in the future.

C.8 Other energy conservation tips include:

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

C.9 Structural Systems

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

Appendix D

Glossary

Alignment. The arrangement of objects along a straight line.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frame. A window or door component.

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

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

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

Mass. The physical size and bulk of a structure.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix E

Environmental Resistance & Sustainability Guidelines

This chapter aims to provide guidelines and best practices to incorporate energy-saving technology and environmentally friendly preservation techniques that maintain historical character by using existing materials and reducing waste. Finding new uses for buildings and selecting proper building materials reduces environmental impact from 4 to 46 percent.[1] These techniques and methods consistently outperform new energy-efficient buildings due to the environmental impact of demolition and construction. One study indicated that 10 to 80 years would be needed for a 30 percent more energy-efficient building to overcome the initial environmental cost.[1] These results rely heavily on the materials used during the renovation and preservation process. This chapter will explore and recommend techniques and materials to improve the carbon footprint by preserving the history and character of a building.

Architects redesigned the Balfour Guthrie Building to balance historic preservation and sustainability objectives. They incorporated "high-efficiency heating and cooling systems, exposed structural elements, and an integrated daylighting strategy." The design restored the building's historical aspects while enhancing its performance by 24 percent beyond the energy code.[2]

Photo Credit: Steve Morgan

1. *Preservation Green Lab. (2011). The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse. Retrieved from Living Future: https://living-future.org/wp content/uploads/2022/05/The_Greenest_Building.pdf*

2. *Whole Building Design Guide. (n.d.) Sustainable Historic Preservation. Retrieved from Whole Building Design Guide: https://www.wbdg.org/do/preservation/sustainable-hp.*

Awnings

When thoughtfully designed and maintained, awnings contribute significantly to the sustainability of historic buildings by improving energy efficiency, enhancing comfort, and preserving architectural integrity.

E.1 Energy Efficiency and Climate Control

Awnings are crucial in reducing solar heat gain, lowering indoor temperatures, and decreasing reliance on air conditioning systems. The U.S. Department of Energy notes that awnings can reduce heat gain by up to 65 percent on south-facing windows and as much as 77 percent on east-facing windows. This passive cooling strategy reduces stress on heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems (HVAC), allowing for smaller and more energy-efficient units and lowering energy consumption and costs by up to 25 percent. Additionally, awnings enable windows to remain open, promoting natural ventilation and reducing the need for mechanical cooling.

E.2 Preserving Historic Integrity

Awnings are essential to historic facades, providing shade and weather protection to enhance the building's architectural character. Unlike modern alternatives such as window films or tinted glass, awnings complement the historic aesthetic and help protect original windows and storefronts from sun damage and weathering. When designed appropriately, they align with landmark preservation standards, while offering comparable glare reduction and heat mitigation.

E.3 Design Considerations for Sustainability

To maximize sustainability and visual harmony, awnings should be proportionate to the building's storefront

. Storefront: Awnings should not obscure architectural details or extend far over sidewalks. They should align with the storefront, leaving at least 8 feet of clearance above the sidewalk.

- **Material & Maintenance:** Durable and weather-resistant fabrics or materials should be selected for longevity. Routine cleaning and upkeep help prevent deterioration and prolong the awning's lifespan.
- **Upper-Story Applications:** Awnings can be installed on upper windows to provide shading in some cases, especially where window openings cannot be restored to their full height. However, they should not obscure decorative window hoods or lintels.

By integrating awnings into historic preservation efforts, property owners can achieve energy savings, enhance building comfort, and protect architectural heritage—all while contributing to a more sustainable built environment.

Various types of awnings can align with the historic nature of a building while producing similar benefits

Water Usage

Returning water to its source through green infrastructure prevents the depletion of local watersheds. These strategies align with sustainability goals while maintaining the historic relationship between buildings and their surrounding landscapes.

E.4 Modern water conservation techniques can be integrated into historic structures without compromising character.

- Graywater Recycling Systems: Reusing water from sinks and showers for irrigation or toilet flushing.
- Low-Flow Fixtures: Installing water-efficient toilets, faucets, and showerheads.
- Landscape Water Management: Implementing rain gardens, bio-swales, and efficient irrigation systems to reduce water consumption.
- Net Zero Water Approaches: Striving to balance water demand with natural replenishment.
- Water-Energy Nexus: Reducing potable water use conserves energy required for transport and treatment, leading to cost savings.
- Alternative Water Sources: Utilizing rainwater collection, stormwater management, and reclaimed wastewater can help supplement non-potable uses such as irrigation, cooling, and fire suppression.
- Efficient Irrigation Practices: Methods such as xeriscaping, drip irrigation, and smart irrigation controllers ensure minimal water waste while preserving historical landscapes.

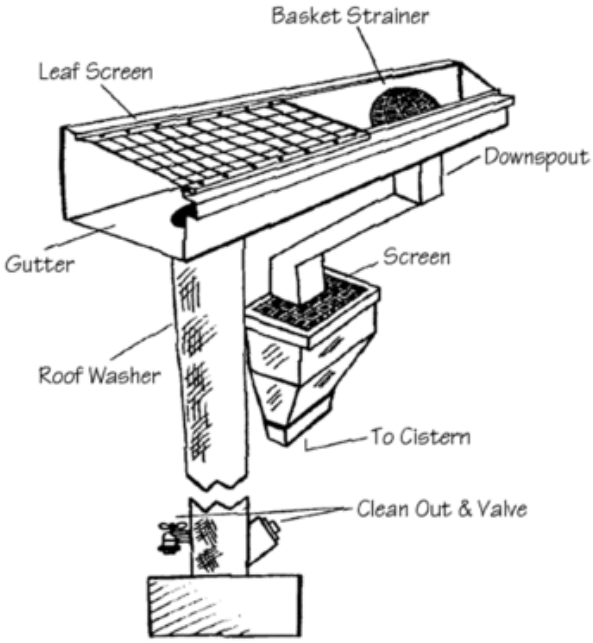


Diagram of a small-scale rainwater collecting system to be used for irrigation or graywater recycling.

Solar and Renewable Energy

E.5 Integrating renewable energy into historic buildings presents unique challenges, but solutions that balance sustainability with preservation exist.

- When appropriately used, shutters can significantly reduce heat gain in summer and prevent heat loss in winter, serving as a natural climate control measure.
- Geothermal energy, for example, provides efficient heating and cooling while having minimal impact on a building's exterior appearance.
- Similarly, small-scale wind turbines or micro-hydro systems can be viable when appropriate.

E.6 When considering solar energy for historic buildings, assessing factors such as roof condition, orientation, and shading from nearby structures or trees is essential.

- Low-profile and non-reflective solar panels can be used to maintain the aesthetic integrity of historic properties.
- Ground-mounted systems or community solar programs offer alternative solutions. When designed with environmental considerations, they can help manage stormwater and create pollinator habitats, contributing to broader sustainability efforts.

Low-profile solar panels installed on a horizontal roof maintain the aesthetic nature of a historic building

Photo credit: Klaus Holl

LEED Initiatives

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program provides a framework for incorporating sustainability into historic preservation. Several LEED rating systems exist, each designed to address different types of buildings and development needs.

E.7 LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance (LEED EBOM)

- Focuses on improving the sustainability of existing structures through enhanced operations and maintenance practices.
- This system mainly benefits historic buildings, allowing for energy efficiency improvements without requiring significant alterations. Strategies include optimizing HVAC performance, improving water efficiency, and implementing sustainable purchasing and waste management policies.
- LEED EBOM helps ensure that historic buildings remain functional and environmentally responsible while maintaining their original character.

E.8 LEED for Building Design and Construction (LEED BD+C)

- Applies to new construction projects and major renovations. When historic buildings undergo significant modifications, this system guides the integration of energy-efficient technologies while preserving architectural integrity.
- LEED BD+C encourages using sustainable materials, high-performance insulation, and renewable energy sources. It also emphasizes indoor environmental quality, ensuring that historic spaces provide healthy, well-ventilated environments for occupants.

E.9 LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND)

- Supports sustainable urban planning by integrating preservation with modern development. Historic buildings often align with LEED-ND principles due to their walkability, existing infrastructure, and connection to public transit.
- This system promotes mixed-use development, green infrastructure, and energy-efficient building practices while preserving historic neighborhoods' cultural and architectural heritage. LEED-ND projects benefit from innovative growth strategies that reduce sprawl and encourage community engagement with historic sites.

Historic buildings often meet LEED-ND criteria due to their walkability, existing infrastructure, and dense street networks. The program's innovative growth principles align well with landmark preservation, ensuring that older buildings remain integral to their communities. Financial incentives, such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), can help offset the costs of energy-efficient upgrades, making sustainability initiatives more feasible for preservation projects.

LEED also recognizes the importance of historic resource preservation through credits for existing building reuse and adaptive reuse. Projects that maintain and repurpose historic structures can earn points toward certification, reinforcing the value of conservation within the broader sustainability movement. Additionally, LEED encourages innovative design solutions that integrate sustainability with historic integrity, ensuring long-term resilience for cultural heritage sites.

Maintaining Building Characteristics

E.10 Ventilation reduces the need for mechanical cooling, and promoting indoor air flow is strongly advised. Traditional techniques include:

- operable transoms
- clerestory windows
- cross-ventilation

Designing spaces to maximize wind-driven ventilation or employing the stack effect—where warm air rises and exits through high openings while cooler air enters from lower points—can significantly improve building efficiency.

E.11 Lighting efforts to reduce the need for artificial lighting and contribute to energy savings.

- Effective strategies include incorporating large windows, skylights, and reflective interior surfaces to maximize daylight penetration
- Maintaining original window openings and using light-colored interior finishes can enhance daylighting while preserving historic integrity.
- Modern lighting upgrades can complement historic preservation efforts. Installing LED lighting with adjustable color temperatures can replicate the warmth of traditional incandescent bulbs while offering energy efficiency.
- Motion sensors and daylight harvesting systems can optimize lighting, reducing energy waste without compromising historic aesthetics.

E.12 High ceilings allow warm air to rise, keeping occupied spaces cooler and reducing reliance on mechanical cooling systems.

- When insulating these buildings, care should be taken to preserve the original volume of space while improving thermal performance.

Historic buildings can retain their inherent sustainability advantages by maintaining original ventilation strategies, lighting techniques, and ceiling heights while benefiting from modern efficiency improvements. These features contribute to energy conservation and preserve the unique architectural character of historic structures.

High ceilings allow warm air to rise, keeping occupied spaces cooler and reducing reliance on mechanical cooling systems.
Photo credit: Channing Rucks/ The Oskaloosa Herald

Window Replacement

Windows are essential character-defining features of historic buildings, playing a significant role in aesthetics and energy efficiency. Maintaining and upgrading historic windows is often more sustainable than replacing them, as original windows were made with high-quality materials, such as dense old-growth wood, which is more durable than many modern alternatives.

E.13 Why Keep Historic Windows?

- Preserving historic windows maintains the building's architectural integrity and prevents unnecessary material waste. Many historic windows were designed with operable elements facilitating natural ventilation, contributing to passive cooling strategies.
- Proper maintenance, including repainting and reglazing, extends the life of historic windows, making them a long-term, sustainable choice over modern replacements.

E.14 Ways to Enhance Window Performance

Rather than replacing historic windows, several retrofitting techniques can improve their efficiency.

- Applying weather stripping and caulking helps to reduce air infiltration,
- Low-emissivity (low-E) glass coatings can also enhance thermal performance by reflecting heat into the building during winter and blocking heat gain during summer.
- Rather than replacing historic windows, several retrofitting techniques can improve their efficiency.
- Replacing historic windows with modern alternatives often results in losing craftsmanship and material quality. Many contemporary window replacements have a relatively short lifespan and use materials that degrade faster than traditional wood or metal frames.

Restoring historic windows maintains the building's architectural integrity. If done properly, it will extend the life of the windows and make a more sustainable decision.