



DOWNTOWN INCENTIVE PROGRAM DESIGN GUIDELINES

HISTORIC BUILDING STYLES IN MANCHESTER

Buildings of a similar type provide continuity for the downtown streetscape. Differences in style create visual variety and help to distinguish one building from another. These differences result from what was popular at the time of construction, the use of the building, or the whim of the designer, builder, or owner. Learning about the style of one building can help answer many preservation questions, including those about original treatments, color schemes, and what should replace missing elements.

The majority of the historic buildings in Downtown Manchester were constructed during the late 1870s and 1880s. During this time most commercial buildings in the United States were a derivation of the Italianate style. Common elements distinguishing this style are large, heavily bracketed cornices, ornate window caps and brackets, decorative window hoods, and semi-circular or segmental arch-headed windows. (The former C & S Store and Don's Hardware are good examples). Although high-style examples exist, most Italianate commercial buildings were essentially vernacular, meaning they were constructed in a culturally accepted method and form, on which standard (and sometimes prefabricated) decorative elements were placed.

While there are no pure examples of the Romanesque Revival Style in Downtown Manchester, the Delaware County Courthouse has Romanesque features. This style's name came from the extensive use of the rounded arch in early Roman construction. The American architect Henry Hobson Richardson in the mid-nineteenth century began using heavy masonry construction and rounded arches. The style quickly developed throughout the country, especially in the construction of warehouses and office buildings. This style was primarily built in brownstone or brick.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING FAÇADE - MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION

MASONRY

- **Moisture**

Brick and stone are exceptionally durable building materials, but they can and do deteriorate. Most often water infiltration is responsible. Moisture can enter through the top of a wall or where the wall meets the roof. Check roof, flashing, and wall copings periodically for soundness. Gutters and downspouts should also be inspected periodically for leakage.

- **Tuckpointing**

The sand and high lime mortar commonly used in older masonry buildings gradually erodes as water runs over the wall surface and with freeze/thaw cycles. Joints should be inspected periodically for crumbling or missing mortar. If mortar joints have recessed more than about 2 inch, they should be repointed with new mortar to prevent water infiltration and ensure the integrity of the wall. New

mortar joints should match the original in style, size, mortar composition, and color. It is especially important to repoint with a mortar of the same hardness as the original. The softer historic mortar compresses as the bricks expand in warm weather and flexes as they contract in cold weather. It is by design the sacrificial element of the wall and gradual erosion is to be expected. Harder modern mortars with a high content of Portland cement will resist the warm weather expansion of the brick, causing cracking and spalling of the brick surface. In cold weather this same inflexibility may cause cracks to open up as the historic bricks contract.

- **Cleaning**

Masonry cleaning can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a building. Most historic masonry buildings have never been cleaned and accumulated dirt may be obscuring the original masonry color. Dirt may also hold airborne pollutants which can erode the surface of the masonry.

Masonry should always be cleaned by the gentlest possible method. In many cases low pressure water washing (no more than 250 psi), together with scrubbing with a natural bristle brush may be sufficient.

If paint or heavy grime must be removed, a chemical cleaner may be required. There are a wide range of chemical cleaners available and a qualified cleaning contractor should be consulted to evaluate your building and recommend a treatment. Whatever treatment is selected, a test patch should first be tried and allowed to weather for a few weeks or months. If the results of the test are satisfactory and no damage is observed, it should be safe to proceed.

- **Sandblasting**

Sandblasting is especially harmful to brick surfaces, eroding the hard outer layer to expose a softer, more porous surface that will weather rapidly. You should be aware that sandblasting will disqualify a project from consideration when applying for federal tax credits.

- **Painting**

In general, exposed masonry should never be painted. Unless the surface was painted from the first C as was sometimes the case with very soft brick C cleaning and tuckpointing of the masonry is always preferable. A previously painted surface should be chemically cleaned. Only if chemical paint removal proves impracticable (due to a cementitious paint coat, for example) should previously painted brick or stone be repainted.

WOOD

Storefronts, cornices, brackets, and other decorative facade elements were often made of wood. These original exterior woodwork elements should be retained wherever possible. Regular maintenance will prevent deterioration. Check periodically for soft, rotted areas, splits, and dampness. Damaged or decayed sections can usually be repaired by re-nailing, caulking, and filling. Epoxy pastes and epoxy consolidants can also be very effective in repairing even seriously rotted wood. When painting, use an oil-based primer followed by two final coats of oil-based paint.

Severely rotted or missing pieces may be reproduced by a good carpenter or millwork shop. Try to match or at least complement the existing details when replacing woodwork.

METAL

Decorative elements of cast iron and sheet metal were frequently applied to brick and stone facades. The ease with which intricate detail could be reproduced in cast iron or stamped sheet metal ornament permitted the appearance of expensive carved or turned work at a fraction of the cost. Needless to say, this kind of architectural ornament became quite popular.

These architectural elements are essential to the character and appearance of your building. They should not be removed unless absolutely necessary.

Cast iron was used extensively for storefront columns and window lintels and is quite permanent. A sound paint coat is essential, though, to prevent rust and corrosion. Rust or paint build-up may be removed by chemical treatment or low pressure dry grit blasting (80-100). If parts are missing, they can be reproduced in fiberglass or aluminum using existing pieces to make a mold. If the missing pieces are relatively free of ornamental detail, wooden pieces might be substituted.

Pressed or stamped sheet metal was most often used to create the sometimes very elaborate cornices that crowned many 19th century commercial buildings. This thin metal cornice was typically nailed to a wooden framework attached to the building.

Stamped metal ornamentation may be of sheet copper, which requires no surface protection, or of sheet iron, usually coated with zinc or lead to retard rusting. Galvanized or lead-coated sheet metal should always be kept painted. If stamped metal is to be cleaned, a chemical paint remover should be used. Dry grit blasting, while usually safe for cast iron, should never be used on the thinner, more flexible pressed metal.

Reproductions of missing pressed metal ornaments can often be made by a sheet metal shop. In some cases, pressed metal decorative items, stamped in the original molds, are available commercially.

All metals requiring painting should first be primed with a commercial metal primer followed by two finish coats of oil-based paint.

GENERAL STOREFRONT - DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Whether you are restoring your storefront or considering a more contemporary treatment, your plan should be based on a traditional storefront design. One characteristic of the traditional commercial facade is a well-defined frame for the storefront. This area is bounded by a pilaster or pier on both sides, the sidewalk below and the storefront cornice above. It is important to contain the storefront within this frame. When the storefront is allowed to extend beyond its frame, it may no longer appear as an integral part of the overall facade design; rather it may appear tacked on. Look at historic photographs of your building or of similar buildings to learn the original configuration of your storefront.

Following are some ideas to consider when planning your storefront renovation. Each originates on the design of the traditional storefront; however, they are not solely historical concepts. They represent sound design principles aimed at enhancing both appearance and accessibility.

CONTAIN THE STOREFRONT

A storefront should be designed to fit within the original facade opening and not extend beyond it. The storefront might be set back slightly (perhaps 3 inches) from the plane of the facade to accentuate this sense of containment.

TRANSPARENCY

Large display windows were a prominent feature of the traditional storefront. As a design element, they are integral to the overall proportioning of the facade. Functionally, the large glass area provides maximum light and display area, while visually opening the facade to the street. As a rule, the storefront should be composed primarily of glass, while the upper facade should be more solid and contained with smaller, evenly spaced windows.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS

The color and texture of the storefront materials should be simple and unobtrusive: (1) The storefront frame can be wood, cast iron, or aluminum with a baked enamel finish; (2) the display windows should be clear glass; (3) transom windows may be clear or stained glass; (4) the entrance door should have a large glass panel and can be made of wood, steel, or aluminum; (5) the aluminum-clad plywood panels; (6) the storefront cornice can be made of wood, cast iron, or sheet metal or sometimes the horizontal supporting beam can serve as the storefront cap; (7) the side piers should be of the same material as the upper facade.

Certain materials and design elements should never be used on a traditional commercial building. A mansard roof with wooden shingles, rough textured wood siding, metal siding, fake bricks or stone, and gravel aggregate materials are not appropriate.

Inappropriate historical themes should also be avoided. Small window panes, a colonial door, and storefront shutters are 18th century elements that do not belong on most 19th or 20th century facades.

SIMPLICITY

Whether you are renovating an existing storefront or designing a new one, remember that the emphasis should be on transparency. The fundamental design should include large display windows with thin framing members, a recessed entrance, a cornice or a horizontal sign panel above the storefront to separate it visually from the upper facade, and low base panels to protect the windows and define the entrance.

This same basic arrangement will be equally appropriate whether constructed using traditional or modern materials.

WINDOWS & DOORS

Windows and doors are essential design elements in the historic commercial building. Upper story windows establish a rhythm in the streetscape that ties the facades together. The storefront with its large glass area links the facade to the pedestrian scale of the street.

Always retain original doors and windows if possible. Often normal maintenance C replacement of broken panes, caulking, and a good paint job C will be all that is necessary to preserve them. Uncover boarded-up windows and repair or replace the original sash as necessary. Small areas of rotted wood can be repaired using an epoxy paste filler. If a window or door is missing or has deteriorated too severely, replacements should be sought that closely match the originals in material and configuration. Openings should never be enlarged or partially blocked to accommodate a replacement window or door.

- **Replacement Windows**

If more energy efficient double-glazed wood or aluminum windows are to be used for replacement, they too should match the original wood windows in size and profile. Never replace a multi-pane window with a single large pane of glass. Aluminum windows should be in a baked enamel finish rather than the color of clear unfinished aluminum.

- **Storm Windows**

Storm windows may be desirable on upper story windows for energy conservation. When mounted on the exterior, they should match the size and shape of the existing sash and they should be painted to match. Interior storm windows are a good option where original windows might be obscured by the addition of exterior storm sash.

- **Shutters**

Shutters are seldom an appropriate window treatment for historic 19th and 20th century commercial buildings. In general they should be avoided unless they were an original feature of the building. Shutter panels should exactly match the size and shape of the window opening.

- **Awnings**

Canvas awnings were a familiar feature of 19th century storefronts. Apart from their primary function of sun and glare protection, they also offer shelter to pedestrians and can be an attractive addition to the storefront. Additionally, the valance can serve as a sign panel for your business. Naturally, if your building faces north, they will be of lesser practical benefit.

Select awnings that closely follow historical precedents in shape and design. They may be either operable or fixed. Always fit the awning within the storefront opening. Awnings should never extend continuously across several storefronts. Choose a water-repellent canvas or vinyl-coated canvas material; aluminum awnings or canopies are generally inappropriate. A wide variety of canvas colors are available and you should pay special attention to choosing a color or color combination that coordinates with your building and its surroundings. Back-lighting of awnings is not acceptable.

- **Storefront Entry Doors**

Storefront entry doors should present an attractive appearance and should be visually appropriate for your storefront. Original doors should be retained if possible. Wood panel doors with large glass panels were typical of the turn-of-the-century commercial storefront. If a new door is to be installed it should closely resemble the design and proportions of the original door. Wood is the preferred material, but steel or aluminum with a baked enamel finish may also be used. Colonial or Early American style aluminum doors and other very decorative door designs should be avoided.

ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENT

Architectural ornament includes a variety of decorative features characteristic of early commercial storefronts. Window hoods, cornices, columns, brackets, and decorative moldings are examples of the ornamentation most often seen in Downtown Manchester. These features are often crucial to the historic and architectural character of the building. Given the similarity of many downtown commercial facades, these elements were often the architect=s or designers only opportunity to express an architectural style and to give the building a unique appearance. These ornamental features should never be removed or altered unless it is absolutely necessary. If they have already been removed, every effort should be made to replicate them.

COLOR SELECTION

Painting can have a dramatic visual impact on your building. A carefully considered color scheme can unify the facade and enhance the streetscape. Color choice is a matter of personal preference, but you should generally choose colors that were available at the time your building was constructed and that complement the natural brick or stone color. Earth tones (greens, dark reds, pale yellows and browns) were popular in the latter half of the 19th century; lighter shades predominated in later decades. The Manchester Area Chamber of Commerce can recommend businesses that have historical color samples available to help you with your selections. If you are restoring your building, you will want to take paint samples from the major facade elements in order to duplicate the original colors. Even if you are not restoring, the original colors are always appropriate. Pay special attention to the relationship of your color scheme to those of adjacent buildings.

Keep your color scheme simple. A typical color scheme might use 2 or 3 colors: a base color, a second color for major trim, and sometimes a third color to highlight the minor trim. Most often the base color will be the natural brick or stone of your building. The major trim color should be chosen to complement the base color. If your facade has natural stone or terra cotta trim, the major trim color might match these. The minor trim color should enhance the effect of the base and major trim colors, serving as an accent on minor trim details. Often a darker or lighter shade of the major trim color is an effective choice.

When painting wood or metal, always prepare the surface by removing all loose paint and sanding all rough edges that remain. Prime the surface with a high quality oil-base primer and follow with two finish coats of oil-based paint.

SIGNS AND GRAPHICS

Signage is an essential element in any commercial district. Anonymity is clearly not good for business. Unfortunately, signage has often been one of the most disfiguring elements in the urban landscape. A visual clutter of over-large and ill-positioned signs presents a negative image for the entire street.

A business sign is important not only as an identifier, but equally importantly as an expression of an image for the business. Don't underestimate the value of quality signage. A clear message, stylishly presented, will encourage passersby to venture in. Money spent on quality signage is usually money well spent. When thinking about signage, consider the following:

SIZE & PLACEMENT

In a densely built downtown area, signage should be directed at and scaled to the pedestrian. Don't assume that the largest sign is the best. Pay particular attention to how your sign relates to your building. Look for logical signage locations on your facade. Continuous flat wall areas above display windows or above upper story windows are typically good choices. Don't cover windows, doors, or architectural ornament. A good sign looks like it belongs where it was placed. It should be an extension of the overall design of your facade.

MESSAGE & DESIGN

A good sign is simple and direct. Don't be tempted to say too much. Choose a letter style or graphic treatment that projects your image and is clear and easy to read. Coordinate sign colors with the colors of your building. Remember that visual clutter will only dilute your message.

A good sign can take many forms. It may be painted on a flat panel, or it might have a sculptural quality. Individual letters might be applied to the facade. Logos or lettering can be painted, stenciled, or engraved on windows. Even the valance of an awning can be an excellent signboard. Neon signs inside shop windows are usually appropriate and possess a charm that can be very attractive, if not overused. Neon signage is not appropriate on the building exterior, however, unless it was an original feature of the building. Lighting for other kinds of signage should be limited to direct illumination by incandescent lamps.

Certain sign types are generally considered inappropriate in an historic commercial district. These would include large projecting signs, rooftop signs, and internally illuminated signs and awnings. Replacement of these kinds of signs should be strongly considered in planning for rehabilitation. To address this issue, the City of Manchester has adopted a sign ordinance that restricts oversized signs within the historic district.

REAR ENTRANCES

Alleys and rear entrances should not be overlooked when planning downtown improvements. Often dirty, neglected and shunned, alleys can be turned into attractive secondary corridors through the business district. Development of rear entrances (double fronting) improves customer access

from parking areas and can substantially improve pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown area.

Open alleyways that have been exposed to view by the removal of other buildings offer opportunities for developing inviting rear entrances in an enhanced alleyscape to the benefit of the whole streetscape. Naturally, this kind of project is best approached as a cooperative effort among adjoining store owners.

The design of improvements to your alley facade should closely follow the conventions you have established on the street facade of your building. You have already developed a readily identifiable image. You should follow through with it here.