DOWNTOWN TOPEKA DESIGN GUIDELINES

City of Topeka, Kansas



Heritage Strategies, LLC

September, 2016

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CITY OF TOPEKA

Topeka, Kansas

Prepared for the

Department of Planning

City of Topeka

Prepared by

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The City of Topeka has prepared design guidelines to support the revitalization of its downtown district. Since 2011, the city and private sector partners have been actively working on the revitalization of a four-block area of South Kansas Avenue that includes much of the community's historic core. These design guidelines are intended to provide property owners, city officials and staff, and private sector partners with information on the character of the downtown district and guidelines for strengthening and enhancing that character.

The success of Topeka's downtown revitalization initiative depends in part upon taking advantage of the unique character of downtown historic buildings to attract residents and visitors to South Kansas Avenue businesses close to the state capitol. Diversity in the size, type, period, and style of these historic buildings is the hallmark of Downtown Topeka's character, which has evolved over one hundred and sixty years. Downtown buildings embody the many layers of change that illustrate Topeka's history.

Going forward, new development should embrace Downtown Topeka's history and character, preserving the authentic historic building fabric that remains while adding new elements that work with and enhance it. Quality and creativity should be emphasized in new design, building upon the diversity that is already present.

These design guidelines support such an approach and provide information to help make it a reality. While prepared specifically for the portion of the South Kansas Avenue under revitalization, its principles and guidelines are applicable to buildings and development throughout Downtown Topeka.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines are divided into nine chapters. The first three chapters provide background on Downtown Topeka, the character of downtown buildings, review processes and procedures, and preservation approach. The final six chapters provide guidelines for the treatment and maintenance of historic building fabric, including with respect to rehabilitation and new design.

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Overview. Provides background on the revitalization of Downtown Topeka and outlines goals and guiding principles for projects being undertaken.

Chapter 2 – Character of the Downtown Districts. Summarizes the character of building design during different periods of Topeka's development, reviews conditions today, and provides an overview of historic building types and key issues related to their preservation and treatment. Chapter 2 reviews the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and an overall approach to the treatment of historic buildings.

Chapter 3 – Review Processes and Procedures. Outlines the processes for different types of project review for Downtown Topeka provides priorities and criteria for consideration. Best-practices steps for the identification of character-defining features for a building is presented.

Chapter 4 – Roofing Systems. Emphasizes the importance of roofing and flashing systems to the ongoing condition and integrity of historic buildings.

Chapter 5 – Exterior Walls. Reviews the appropriate treatment of different types of exterior walls, including brick, stone, terra cotta, and other types of materials.

Chapter 6 – Storefront, Doors and Windows. Focuses on specific issues related to design and treatment of historic storefronts and decorative features from various periods along with the treatment of windows on upper floor levels.

Chapter 7 – Interiors. Outlines priorities and a zoned approach to the design and treatment of interiors undergoing rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Chapter 8 – New Construction. Discusses guidelines for appropriate new construction within Downtown Topeka's historic context reflecting character-defining aspects and emphasizing quality and creativity.

Chapter 9 – Signage and Public Art. Reviews the role of signage in enlivening the streetscape as well as advertising businesses and provides guidelines for sign characteristics and placement.



TOPEKA'S DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

Downtown Topeka includes a large area at the center of the city that extends from the Kansas River south to 12th and 13th Streets and from Topeka Boulevard on the west to Adams Street and the adjacent rail yards on the east. Historically, commercial development started in the mid-1850s at the foot of the slope adjacent to the floodplain around 1st Street and spread south along Van Buren over the decades, reaching the State Capitol in the early twentieth century. Residential neighborhoods developed around this growing commercial area and spread west, south, and east.

Construction of the Kansas Statehouse began in 1866 and over the years created a distinctive capitol district within the larger downtown area. Establishment of Topeka as a railroad hub, particularly as headquarters for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, increased manufacturing and warehousing activity around the northern and eastern edges of the downtown area as well as commercial development along South Kansas Avenue.

In the mid-twentieth century, the impact of the automobile and urban renewal strained Topeka's downtown. Retail and other businesses began to relocate to commercial corridors at the city's edges. In the 1960s, large areas of downtown Topeka were demolished to make way for expected new modern development, only some of which actually occurred. Interstate 70 was constructed along the eastern and northern edges of the downtown area.

In the process, a large number of historic buildings were demolished, even along South Kansas Avenue. Downtown Topeka ceased to be the central focus of the city's economic activity or the community's identity.

Capital Business Improvement District / Downtown Topeka, Inc.

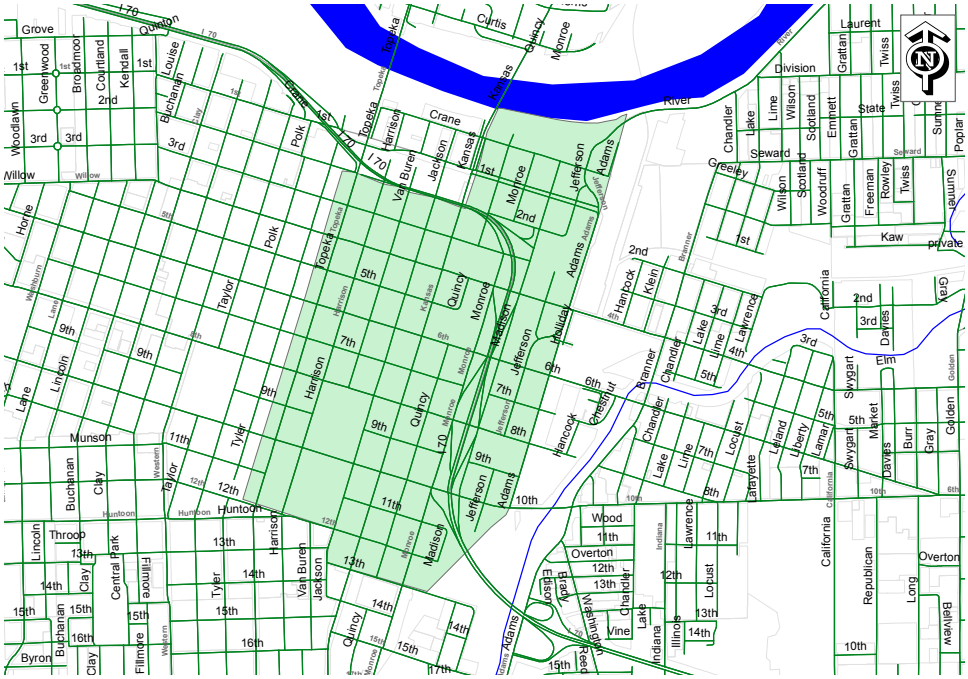
By the 1980s, the need to undertake measures that would strengthen Downtown Topeka was recognized. With support from downtown businesses, the Capital Business Improvement District (BID) was established in 1986 by ordinance to enable business owners to fund the provision of additional services within the district not otherwise provided by the City. The BID extends from the Kansas River to 13th Street and from Topeka Boulevard to Adams Street.

Since 1995, the City has contracted with Downtown Topeka, Inc. to provide the administrative services necessary to manage the BID. A nine-member BID Advisory Board comprised of business owners advises City Council on the annual program of services to be provided through the BID and on its annual budget. Current services include:

- Marketing and promotion of Downtown Topeka;
- Organizing special events downtown;
- General maintenance and cleaning of the district;
- Maintenance of district amenities such as benches, kiosks, and trash receptacles;
- Coordinating placement of banners and decorations;
- Coordinating care of trees and plantings;

- Snow removal from sidewalks along Kansas Avenue and side streets; and
- Maintaining an inventory of available buildings downtown.

Downtown Topeka, Inc. works to attract new businesses to downtown, help facilitate private sector projects, and addresses issues of concern to local businesses. In addition to general promotion, Downtown Topeka, Inc. organizes numerous events for downtown each year, including concerts, festivals, walks, runs, parades, movies, fundraisers and celebrations.



Topeka's Capital Business Improvement District

Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan

In 2000, the City of Topeka and city-wide partners undertook preparation of a Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan. The overall goal of the plan was to:

> *Reestablish Downtown Topeka as a family-oriented, economically sound, culturally vital and visually attractive regional destination – the center and symbol of Topeka and Shawnee County.*

Planning was completed with input from a local advisory committee, the academic community, private sector consultants, local businesses, and the public. The plan reviewed existing conditions, established a vision and goals, and outlined urban design strategies for a comprehensive program of downtown revitalization. Broad in scope, the plan addressed the entire downtown area as a set of interrelated districts emphasizing a mixed-use approach that seeks to reintroduce residential housing throughout the downtown area. The use of design guidelines and performance standards were recommended to help implement the mixed-use concept and assure quality control.

The Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan was adopted as part of the city's comprehensive plan. In the following years, several of the actions recommended in the plan were implemented. Among these were the preparation of new

downtown zoning districts to encourage mixed-use development (discussed below), creating a unified process for code review and compliance for proposed downtown projects, implementation of a facade improvement program, marketing and promotion, and planning for landscape and streetscape improvements. The revitalization plan remains relevant and important for its vision and far-reaching strategies.

Downtown Zoning Districts

While the Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan recognized that existing uses would predominate in different portions of the downtown area, it recommended that the city zoning ordinance be modified to encourage introduction of a mixture and variety of new uses that together would help create a living community. The revised code would help guide future development in ways that would support revitalization. Design guidelines and performance standards would be used to shape development, defining general limitations but allowing latitude for expressive designs.

The City of Topeka subsequently created a set of downtown zoning districts intended to implement the recommendations of the revitalization plan. Unique to the downtown Topeka area, the downtown districts encourage compatible mixed-use activity. Three types of downtown districts were developed:

The **D-1 District** was created to facilitate a compatible mixed-use activity center within the core area of downtown Topeka. This district is predominately composed of state offices along with commercial and retail uses. The D-1 District includes compatible residential, office, civic, and commercial retail/service uses which complement and support a high density of activity and facilitate pedestrian usage.

The **D-2 District** was created to integrate a compatible mixed-use activity with urban residential neighborhoods. It includes a balance of compatible residential, office, cultural, and neighborhood commercial retail/service uses of low-to-moderate intensity that complement and support neighborhood residential areas and pedestrian usage.

The **D-3 District** was created to reestablish the linkage between downtown and the Kansas River through intensive redevelopment of the area north of Crane Street to the Kansas River. The district includes housing, commercial, and office uses that emphasize the relationship between downtown and the river, as well as expand cultural opportunities in the general downtown area.





The existing C-5 zoning district in Downtown Topeka (black line) to become a D-1 district, and the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District - discussed below - within it (white line)

The South Kansas Avenue Project

In 2011, the City of Topeka began working on a conceptual design for streetscape improvements in a four-block area of South Kansas Street between 6th and 10th Streets. These streetscape improvements have begun to put a physical dimension to the work of many advocates for downtown revitalization over many years.

The South Kansas Avenue Project is a pubic/private partnership in which the City of Topeka is constructing road and utility improvements while private partners are providing funding for public enhancements. The City's portion of the work has included a new water main, water and gas services to properties along the street, storm water infrastructure, street paving, curbs, and sidewalks with a cost of approximately $5 million.

Over $2 million in private investment has been provided for streetscape amenities, pocket parks, and aesthetics. Focal points of the design are mid-block crossing points, two of which feature large metal truss arches that frame the street and provide stage backdrops for public events.



Streetscape improvements under construction, November 2015

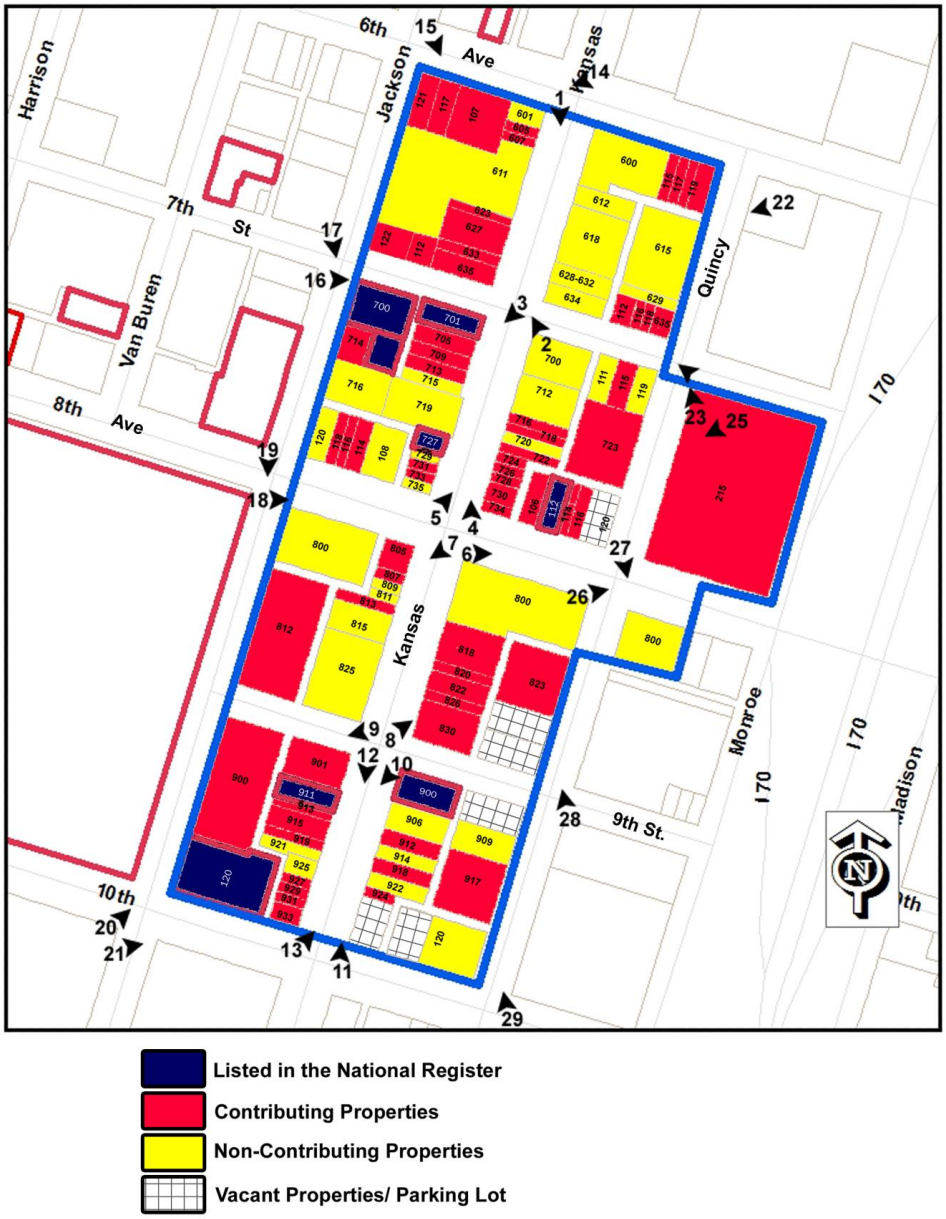
In addition to decorative paving, landscaping, and streetscape amenities along the curb lines, enhancements include small plazas at street corners and mid-block as well as eight pocket parks – two in each block – each of which is sponsored by a local business. Designs for the small plazas and pocket parks feature activity areas, public art, creative structures, seating, lighting, and landscaping. Life-sized bronze statues of notable Topekans produced by prominent artists are located at special places along the sidewalk. In addition, eight locations are provided for interchangeable and rotating public art installations.

The South Kansas Avenue Project is a major initiative that is transforming the downtown streetscape and spearheading the revitalization of Downtown Topeka.

Downtown Topeka Historic Districts

In 2012, the City of Topeka contracted with Rosin Preservation, LLC to undertake an intensive-level survey of historic buildings along North and South Kansas Avenues. The survey of South Kansas Avenue, south of the Kansas River, extended from Crane Street to 10th Avenue. The survey of North Kansas Avenue extended from Norris to Gordon Street.

The survey assessed historic buildings with respect to period, style, and integrity with the goal of identifying buildings that might be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or Register of Historic Kansas Places. Historic contexts were prepared for the historical development of Topeka's downtown commercial district that would make it easier to prepare National Register nominations for buildings in the future.



Map of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District from the National Register nomination prepared by Rosen Preservation, LLC (Rosin South Kansas Avenue 2015: Figure 3)

The survey found that there are concentrations of historic resources that could form the basis for designation of National Register Historic Districts. Specifically, the study recommended that National Register Historic Districts be created for South Kansas Avenue between 6th and 10th Avenues, North Kansas Avenue between 1st and Crane Streets, and North Kansas Avenue between Norris and Gordon Streets on the north side of the river.

Following through on the recommendations of the 2012 survey, affirmed by the City's 2013 Preservation Plan, the City of Topeka contracted again with Rosin Preservation for the preparation of National Register Historic District

nominations for the two proposed districts on the south side of the Kansas River. The nominations were completed and the two districts were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 7, 2015.

Listing on the National Register directly supports downtown revitalization by qualifying historic buildings within the historic districts for use of state and federal rehabilitation tax credits. These Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines are prepared specifically to support rehabilitation work within the two historic districts.

The **South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District** encompasses the commercial core of Downtown Topeka and includes ten city blocks roughly bounded by 6th Avenue on the north, 10th Avenue on the south, SW Jackson Street on the west, and SE Quincy and Monroe Streets on the east.

The historic district includes 103 individual resources of which seven were previously listed on the National Register. Sixty-three additional buildings were found to be contributing to the historic district, while thirty-three buildings were found to be non-contributing. Of the thirty-three non-contributing buildings, fifteen were constructed outside of the historic district's period of significance, which ends in 1965. Fourteen had lost integrity due to substantial alterations.



Aerial photograph showing the Mill Block Historic District from the National Register nomination prepared by Rosin Preservation, LLC (Rosin Mill Block 2015: Figure 2)

At the north end of Kansas Avenue, the **Mill Block Historic District** was designated to encompass five historic warehouse buildings on the west side of North Kansas Avenue between W 1st Avenue on the south and NW Crane Street on the north. The five warehouse buildings date from the late nineteenth century to the first quarter of the twentieth century and have good integrity as examples of early-twentieth century warehouse and light industrial buildings located with access to Topeka's rail lines. Three of the historic buildings had been renovated and have been determined eligible for use of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits. The remaining two buildings, both significant and substantial in size, have yet to be rehabilitated.

The following chapters of these design guidelines look at the character of historic buildings in these two Downtown Topeka National Register Historic Districts and provide information and guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and for new construction within them. Use of rehabilitation tax credits will help make projects financially feasible. In addition, appropriate design and treatment of buildings within the historic districts will reinforce their character and sense of place, attracting residents and visitors, attracting investors, and supporting local businesses.

FOUR TYPES OF PROJECT REVIEW

In addition to providing general guidance for the rehabilitation of historic buildings in Downtown Topeka, these design guidelines will be used by the city's Landmarks Commission and planning staff in undertaking project review as required by state and city ordinances.

The purpose of design review is to help ensure the appropriate treatment of historic buildings downtown, and that new projects are consistent with the character of Downtown Topeka. Four types of project review are addressed by these design guidelines. The background, processes, and procedures related to these reviews are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, *Review Processes and Procedures*.

The four types of project review include:

Rehabilitation Tax Credits – Historic buildings that have been identified as contributing to the historical significance of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District in their National Register nominations are eligible to take advantage of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits. Review of projects utilizing federal rehabilitation tax credits are undertaken by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. Review of projects utilizing Kansas state rehabilitation tax credits is undertaken by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

The use of rehabilitation tax credits has substantial financial benefits and is encouraged for historic buildings within the historic districts. The districts were created specifically to facilitate rehabilitation by providing the benefits of tax credits to property owners and investors.

Chapter 3 outlines the general process and requirements with respect to tax credit review. The design guidelines in Chapter 4 through 8 provide guidance for

the treatment of historic building fabric that should be helpful in the design of projects undergoing such review.

Review for rehabilitation tax credits generally requires professional design consultants familiar with the process and its requirements. Review is undertaken through the application of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings as applied to the building's character-defining features. In general, the preservation and appropriate treatment of both interior and exterior historic building fabric is required, and the review is focused on the specific characteristics of the building itself, rather than on the character of the district as a whole.



The historic Thacher Building (1888) on SE 8th Avenue, rehabilitated using federal and state rehabilitation tax credits

Kansas Preservation Act – The Kansas Preservation Act (KSA 75-2724) requires the review of projects for properties included in the National Register of Historic Places or Register of Historic Kansas Places to ensure that the proposed work will not damage or destroy the historic properties. Generally, such review is undertaken by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office. However, in Topeka the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office delegates its review to the city's Landmarks Commission and planning staff through Topeka's designation as a Certified Local Government in accordance with the state and federal Certified Local Government program.

Within a National Register Historic District, reviews are undertaken for any project requiring a government action, such as issuance of a building permit. Projects reviewed include those related to contributing historic buildings as well as non-contributing buildings and new construction. For contributing buildings

and non-contributing buildings, impacts may be on interior or exterior historic features. For new construction, impacts may be on adjacent historic buildings or the historic district as a whole.

In determining whether a project will or will not "damage or destroy" an historic property or the district, the Landmarks Commission has some latitude in rendering its interpretation. The ordinance language of "damage or destroy" infers a somewhat different threshold than that which might be applied to a tax credit review in that impacts and effects are accumulative, rather than applied to every individual feature. The Landmarks Commission must determine whether negative impacts rise to the level of "damage or destroy." The beneficial or positive economic impacts that a project might have for the economic revitalization of downtown cannot be taken into consideration.

Request for Review under the Preservation Act – Should the Landmarks Commission determine that a proposed project will damage or destroy a historic property under the Kansas Preservation Act, the statute states that the project shall not proceed. However, the applicant may request further review by the local governing body, which in Topeka is City Council.

Following consideration, City Council may uphold the Landmark Commission's decision or may determine that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposal and that the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic property. In the latter case, City Council may allow the project to proceed. In making its determination, City Council may take additional information into account that was not within the purview of the Landmarks Commission. These design guidelines outline the process and suggested criteria in making such determinations.

D-1 Zoning Review –The D-1 District ordinance includes design guidelines to promote appropriate urban, mixed-use development for downtown. The review of projects with respect to compliance with the D-1 design guidelines is undertaken by the city planning staff.

Within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial and Mill Block Historic Districts, however, these Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines will be substituted for those within the D-1 ordinance, with the review processes performed by Landmarks Commission and City Council under the Kansas Preservation Act outlined above.



Like the D-1 District, the South Kansas Avenue and Mill Block Historic Districts facilitate compatible mixed-use activities within the core of Downtown Topeka.

GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

These goals and guiding principles have been adopted for the Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines, and should be used as projects are proposed within the South Kansas Avenue and Mill Block Historic Districts. These goals emphasize the role of historic preservation in downtown revitalization, and include:

Goal 1: Create an active, appealing, and prosperous downtown center.
The underlying purpose of this project is the successful revitalization of Downtown Topeka. As the historic and symbolic center of Topeka, an active and prosperous downtown is not only a subject of community pride but also an integral component of the city's long-term economic strategy. A prosperous downtown contributes to the quality of life for residents and helps attract new business. Downtown revitalization demonstrates that Topeka is capable of successfully undertaking and achieving visionary, long-term initiatives in the public interest.

Goal 2: Recognize, preserve, and enhance Downtown Topeka's historic character as a significant component of downtown revitalization
Downtown Topeka's historic buildings are central to its character and appeal. The downtown revitalization initiative makes use of historic character in creating a distinctive place where residents and visitors will want to be. As outlined in Chapter 2, diversity, variety, and quality are contributing elements of downtown's historic character – the city's history can be read through its buildings. Future change should strengthen and enhance historic character.

Once damaged, destroyed, or lost, authentic fabric cannot be reclaimed. Authenticity and appropriate care and treatment should take precedence over other design issues.

Goal 3: Provide support for private sector investment in downtown projects through the use of rehabilitation tax credits.
Private sector initiative and investment is essential to successful downtown revitalization. Conditions should continue to be established to encourage private investment in as many ways as possible. The substantial investment by local companies in the streetscape enhancements along South Kansas Avenue demonstrates commitment to Downtown Topeka by the private sector.

The use of state and federal rehabilitation tax credits is an important financial incentive that makes many private sector projects possible. Tax credit projects are held to the highest standards and exemplify the high quality desired in Downtown Topeka. The South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District were created to facilitate the use of rehabilitation tax credits, as are these design guidelines.

Goal 4: Encourage the preservation and appropriate treatment of authentic historic building fabric.
The preservation of authentic historic building fabric is the fundamental concept behind historic preservation. As such, the treatment of authentic historic building fabric should be of primary concern in any project being undertaken in Downtown Topeka. Once damaged, destroyed, or lost, authentic fabric cannot be reclaimed. Authenticity and appropriate care and treatment should take precedence over other design issues. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties complies the best thinking and approach to the treatment of historic building fabric that has been developed over the years.



Interesting decorative historic building fabric, including masonry conservation issues, typical of the historic districts.

In addition to these four goals, the following guiding principles should be considered when undertaking projects in Downtown Topeka:

- **Recognize the diversity of building types and styles.**

  Downtown Topeka developed over one hundred and sixty years through many periods of economic expansion and decline, architectural styles, and technological change. Downtown Topeka has evolved dramatically over that time. Though laid out in a pattern of blocks and lots established at the city's founding, buildings have been built, demolished, rebuilt, and modified, some many times. Buildings from every period of the city's development remain, resulting in great diversity, contrast, and juxtaposition. These are all part of Downtown Topeka's character and should be recognized as such.

- **Encourage uses that historic buildings are able to accommodate without dramatic alterations.**

  Key to the successful preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings is finding uses which the buildings can accommodate. Many of Downtown Topeka's older buildings are small in size and have limited interior square footage. This is especially true for mid-twentieth century storefronts that were divided for small retail operations. Finding modern businesses that can operate with such limited space can be difficult. Similarly, many medium and larger historic buildings have interior configurations of stairs, halls, and rooms that present similar challenges.

  Matching prospective businesses to spaces of appropriate size, configuration, and character is part of the task of revitalization. Downtown Topeka cannot

afford more loss of historic buildings. Historic buildings should not be sacrificed to the need to attract new businesses.

- **Identify, preserve, and appropriately treat historic building fabric from all periods.**

  All periods of Downtown Topeka's development are significant, and buildings from all periods should be preserved and respectfully treated. Most buildings downtown have experienced multiple campaigns of change and modification which can be seen in their facades. In general, this record of change should be retained and recognized as an attribute of the building's character. Like the diversity of building types and styles overall, diversity of periods and styles within a single building or façade is part of the richness of Downtown Topeka.

- **Promote new design that complements and enhances existing historic character.**

  The diversity of buildings and architectural expression downtown calls for creative new design that expresses the present time while respecting what has gone before. New designs within an existing building or adjacent to existing buildings should complement their contexts and play off of them creatively. The design guidelines below suggest ways in which this might be accomplished, but overall, it depends upon a good eye, respectful approach, and creative spirit.

- **Create places that are friendly to people and promote an active and vibrant streetscape.**

  Downtown Topeka is people-oriented, and the streetscape should be alive with activity. Downtown design should be friendly and comfortable; it should attract people because people will like being there. Human scale and proportion, color and texture, shade, partial enclosure, street trees and understory trees, comfortable places to sit – the streetscape can be made friendly and appealing in many ways.

  Not all architectural styles historically were friendly or comfortable, and sometime new interventions are necessary to help make them so. Creating a people-friendly streetscape downtown should be a priority. The South Kansas Avenue Project implements this principle, but it should be kept in mind going forward as well.

- **Encourage quality and creativity.**

  Above all, encouraging and requiring high quality in everything that is done downtown will go a long way in breeding success in revitalizing Downtown Topeka. Quality should be its hallmark. Creativity is an aspect of a high quality approach to downtown design.

  Quality and creativity cannot be legislated, and design guidelines cannot proscribe them. Successfully achieving quality and creativity will require a common commitment and intelligent assessment and decision-making by property owners, designers, reviewers, and community leaders over time.

USE OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines are a resource and guide to the preservation and enhancement of historic character within Topeka's downtown historic districts. The design guidelines outline the character-defining qualities and features of downtown buildings and provide guidelines for accommodating change while preserving and building upon those qualities and features.

The design guidelines emphasize best practices of historic preservation and specifically address the preservation and stewardship of Downtown Topeka's historic buildings. Maintenance and the appropriate treatment of authentic historic fabric is a key aspect of stewardship. Recognizing that change will continue to occur downtown, the design guidelines provides guidance for new design and construction as well as for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

The design guidelines are tools to inform decision-making about change over time. Rather than providing an answer for every situation, the guidelines outline concepts and principles important to the character of downtown buildings and suggest how they may be applied. Every situation presents a combination of issues and opportunities that may differ depending upon their context. The information and guidelines included here will help designers appreciate and respond appropriately to varying issues and contexts.

The chapters of the plan can serve as a checklist outlining items that should be considered when contemplating change within Downtown Topeka's historic context. They provide a strong philosophical foundation that is nonetheless flexible and adaptable to varying circumstances. Guidelines can often inspire creative and sensitive solutions that were not envisioned when a project was first proposed. The best outcomes are those that meet the needs of Downtown Topeka's businesses while preserving the elements that define historic building character. Users will include:

- Property Owners, Developers, and Investors: The design guidelines outline the goals, processes, approach, and preferred treatments for new design and construction projects in the Downtown Topeka.

- Architects and Designers: The design guidelines outline the design principles and preferred treatments for buildings and historic building fabric within the historic districts.

- Landmark Commission and Planning Staff: The design guidelines outline concepts, criteria, and guidelines in working with applicants and undertaking project reviews within the historic districts.

- City Council: The design guidelines provide a basis for assessing impacts and benefits of projects with respect to downtown revitalization.
- General Public: The design guidelines outline expectations for projects being undertaken downtown in creating a vital community center in Downtown Topeka.



CHAPTER 2 – CHARACTER OF THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

The character of Downtown Topeka is complex. This chapter reviews downtown's character by discussing the characteristics of buildings during each period of the city's development, reviewing what remains from each period, and grouping surviving historic buildings into ten basic types. Each of the ten types has different priorities for preservation and approaches to treatment, which are summarized.

This chapter also outlines a general approach or process for the rehabilitation and treatment of historic buildings throughout the downtown district. It then reviews the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and their use in decision-making about the treatment of historic buildings and historic building fabric. The discussion of character and building types can be used to appreciate what is important about any particular building within the downtown historic districts.

When renovation and rehabilitation work is being planned, designers should identify the building's character-defining features and devise appropriate treatments that preserve historic building fabric from all periods of its development.

When renovation and rehabilitation work is being planned, designers should identify the building's character-defining features and devise appropriate treatments that preserve historic building fabric from all periods of its development.

The *Downtown Topeka Historic Resources Survey* prepared in 2011 by Rosin Preservation, LLC provides a history and overview of historic contexts for Downtown Topeka's development as well as a discussion of architectural styles and building forms. The two National Register nominations prepared for the

South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic Districts and Mill Block Historic District in 2015 summarize and build upon the information in the Survey. They also include individual building descriptions and summaries for each building within the two historic districts. Survey data was recorded in the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory. This information should be consulted when beginning to think about work on a building.

PERIODS OF DEVELOPMENT

The following discussion is based upon the historical information in the Survey and National Register nominations as well as field observation. It illustrates the nature of change during each period in order to highlight the character of Downtown Topeka and its individual buildings today.

Mid-Nineteenth Century Establishment

Topeka was founded in December 1854 following passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act the previous May. The site chosen for the city was the location of a crossing of the Kansas River along the Oregon Trail. The street grid for the new city was established along a relatively straight and shallow section of the river where the trail crossings were made (Rosin SKA 2015:40).

Rectangular blocks were created with their long sides running roughly north-south, perpendicular to the river. Deep, narrow lots were laid out along the north-south streets. Alleys were created mid-block running parallel to the north-south streets.

The hierarchy of streets included (1) east-west avenues 130 feet wide, (2) north-south streets 100 feet wide, (3) east-west streets 80 feet wide, and (4) the mid-block alleys 20 feet wide. Topeka Avenue was first identified to be the city's main street, but Kansas Avenue near the east boundary of the community emerged as the primary commercial thoroughfare and was established as the east-west dividing line. This off-center location of the new city's primary commercial core set the development pattern of southward and westward expansion that continues to define Topeka today (Rosin SKA 2015:40).



South Kansas Avenue in 1867 believed to be looking north between 8th Avenue and 7th Street (KHS Kansas Memory)

The **early pattern of blocks, streets, and lot lines** is central to the character of Downtown Topeka. The grid of rectangular blocks is fixed and regular. Streets are

wide and open. Individual lots are narrow and created a **tight rhythm of facades** lining the street. Over the years, buildings have changed, but the tight rhythm of their facades have remained a constant. In later years, lots were combined for the construction of larger buildings, but the tight rhythm of smaller buildings remains a character-defining feature of the downtown streetscape and should be recognized, preserved, and reflected in new construction.

The earliest buildings constructed in Topeka were of wood, but **limestone masonry** quickly became the preferred building material. Over the first couple of decades, **one- and two-story masonry structures** were constructed south along Kansas Avenue and Quincy Street from near the river south to 6th Avenue, just north of today's South Kansas Avenue Historic District (Rosin SKA 2015:40).

Over the years, buildings have changed, but the tight rhythm of their facades have remained a constant.

The tight rhythm of smaller buildings remains a character-defining feature of the downtown streetscape and should be recognized, preserved, and reflected in new construction.

Kansas was admitted to the Union in 1861, and Topeka was established that year as the state capital. The Union Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroads were introduced to Topeka in 1866 and 1868, and added significant accomplishments for the future commercial development of the city.

Late Nineteenth Century Boom

Topeka grew rapidly after the Civil War. The city graded Kansas Avenue, laid curbstones from 3rd Street to 8th Avenue, and paved the street's gutters. Gas illumination was introduced along Kansas Avenue in 1870 and was replaced with electric illumination in 1882. The city experienced a significant building boom in the 1880s, fueled by speculation. New **masonry buildings of one- to four-stories** in height filled in the streetscape. Sanborn maps from 1883 show the extent of development, with commercial buildings lining Kansas Avenue from 3rd Street to 8th Avenues.

Many buildings were constructed with **brick fronts** and **limestone side and rear walls. Iron posts and beams** were introduced to permit longer spans for windows and doors on commercial fronts. Three thousand new buildings were erected in Topeka in 1888 along with miles of sidewalk and street pavement. The building boom ended with the national depression in 1893 (Rosin SKA 2015:41-42).

Most buildings that survive from Topeka's period of early development between 1854 and 1900 were modified in later years, such as 607 and 605 South Kansas Avenue pictured below. However, the **footprints, exterior side and rear walls, and overall forms** of these buildings retain integrity to this early period and are character-defining features that should be preserved. The **pattern of small one- and two-story buildings on narrow 25-foot lots** is characteristic of the district's mid- and late-nineteenth century development and persists in many locations today.

Several **large three-story buildings** survive intact from the 1880s and retain their historical integrity. Two of these buildings are individually listed on the National Register, the Thacher Building at 112 SE 8th Avenue, and Davis Building at 725-727 South Kansas Avenue. These buildings are a high priority for preservation and are discussed further in the following section.



607 and 605 South Kansas Avenue in 1858 (right two buildings) and 1868 (second and third from right) (KHS Kansas Memory)



607 (left) and 605 (right) South Kansas Avenue today. The façade of 607 was modified c.1888 and the façade of 605 was modified in 1911.

Twentieth Century Growth

By the early 1900s, Topeka's economy had recovered from the national depression of the 1890s and was growing again at a reasonable pace. The state government and railroads provided steady employment, which in turn attracted other private businesses. Topeka's relatively stable economy and location near the center of the country attracted banking institutions and insurance companies, several of which established headquarters in the city (Rosin South KSA 2015:43).



Substantial new early twentieth century buildings included the 1907 Elks Club (left; 122 SW 7th) and c.1921 International Order of Odd Fellows (right; 122-19 SW 6th)

Topeka experienced a significant amount of new construction during the first decades of the new century. Several **substantial and well designed new buildings** were constructed. The Elks Club and IOOF, pictured above, are examples. **Façade alterations** were performed on many earlier nineteenth century commercial street-fronts. In general, the new facades were designed with simpler brick fronts, larger windows, more restrained and sophisticated ornament. The façade of 605 South Kansas Avenue, pictured above in the previous section, was modified in 1911 and is an example.

The 1910s and 1920s saw the construction of buildings that were substantially **larger, taller, and more sophisticated** than their nineteenth century predecessors, made possible through the introduction of steel structural framing and elevators. New construction filled gaps along the commercial streetscape, converted previously residential blocks to commercial use (Quincy, Jackson, and the 900 block of Kansas Avenue), and saw the demolition of smaller, earlier buildings to combine lots for construction of larger structures. By the mid-1920s, **large hotels, banks, office buildings, banks, and department stores** dominated the streetscape with their size (Rosin South KSA 2015:44).



On the corner of South Kansas Avenue and 9th Street, the Hotel Kansas replaced earlier two-story commercial structures in 1924.

Great Depression

The depression era began in 1929 and lasted until World War II. The presence of the state government and related institutions in Topeka helped stabilize the local economy during the Great Depression and was a modifying influence on the degree of distress experienced by some residents relative to other places.

With substantially decreased economic activity, however, new construction during the depression was limited. A **few new buildings** were built, and a number of façade renovations were undertaken. This period is noted for introduction of modern architecture, particularly the **Art Deco**, to Topeka.

The federal government provided funding for new civic projects across the county. In Topeka, residential, commercial, and civic buildings in the block between 7th and 8th on the east side of Quincy Street were demolished in 1938 for construction of a large new **City Hall and Municipal Auditorium** complex using federal Public Works Administration funding.





The W. T. Grant Building (705 South Kansas) and the former service station on the corner of 7th and Quincy both date to 1935 and represent the Art Deco in Topeka.





The City Hall and Municipal Auditorium complex, also Art Deco, were completed in 1939 with federal funding.

Mid-Century Change and Urban Renewal

Topeka's commercial core continued to remain strong into the mid-twentieth century. Several larger department stores served as anchors, while smaller retail shops lined the streets in the storefronts of older buildings in between.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many of these **storefronts** were renovated with new, modern designs. Though exact dates have not been determined, it appears that during the 1950s a number of storefronts were renovated within the frame of the older historic buildings (see images of 727 South Kansas Avenue and 114 SW 8th Avenue below). The **quality** of these storefront designs and materials was very high and featured **modern materials** such as aluminum, Vitrolite glass panels, large glass windows with seamless joints, and decorative terrazzo or tiled floors.

A slightly later trend appears to have been the **covering of entire facades** with bold modern designs featuring large lettering and making the façade into a two-story sign. This trend appears to begin in the early 1960s and continues into the 1970s and perhaps later, dramatically altering the historic buildings beneath as well as the character of the streetscape.



Storefronts of two late-nineteenth century buildings modified with 1950s/60s designs, 727 South Kansas Avenue (left) and 114 SW 8th Avenue (right)

The four two-story buildings at 729-735 South Kansas Avenue, shown below, exemplify this modern development. In the photograph from 1935, the four buildings can be seen retaining their late nineteenth (729, 731, and 735) and early twentieth century (733) character. In the photograph from 1980, 735 at the corner of 8th and South Kansas Avenue has been demolished and a new building constructed with a two-story façade sign. The other three historic buildings have been covered with modern materials effectively making them two-story signs as well. Their storefronts at the street level have also been fully modernized.



Façade alterations to 735, 733, 731, & 729 South Kansas Avenue between 1935 (left) and 1980 (right). (KHS Kansas Memory)



Today, the façade coverings at 733 and 731 have been removed.

Today, the façade coverings have been removed from two of the buildings (731 and 733) and their upper level historic facades restored. Historic detailing has been lost from 731, however. The sign letters have been removed from the two others (729 and 735).

The most dramatic change that occurred in Downtown Topeka in the mid-twentieth century was participation in the national program of urban renewal. Provisions in the Federal Housing Act passed in 1954 enabled state authorities to design redevelopment programs that would accomplish the federal mission of preventing the physical deterioration of good neighborhoods in urban areas as well as addressing blighted neighborhoods through rehabilitation where possible and/or clearance and redevelopment where necessary. The goal was to use federal and municipal funds to acquire deteriorated urban areas, clear older buildings, and encourage and facilitate new, private redevelopment (Rosin SKA 2015:46).

In June, 1956, a City committee approved a redevelopment program allowing the mayor to appoint an Urban Renewal Authority to apply for federal funding. The federal monies were anticipated to cover two-thirds of project costs for implementing the urban renewal plan for downtown.

The urban renewal area, finalized in 1961, extended north-south from Crane Street to 6th Avenue and east-west from Adams Street to Kansas Avenue. The area included the designated path for a new interstate highway, I-70, through the east side of downtown and across the north side at 2nd Street. Purchase of properties and clearing of land for the interstate began in 1961. By the end of 1962, seventy additional acres within the urban renewal area were made available for private purchase and redevelopment. From 1964 through the remainder of the decade, private companies purchased lots and constructed new commercial, warehouse, and light manufacturing facilities (Rosin SKA 2015:46-47).

Urban renewal **dramatically changed** Downtown Topeka. Along South Kansas Avenue from Crane Street to 6th Avenue and to the east many historic buildings were demolished. Where new buildings were constructed, their scale and character was different than what had existed before – larger, spread out, automobile oriented rather than pedestrian oriented, and predominantly suburban in character. Many lots remained undeveloped.

Today's South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District between 6th and 10th Avenues is the majority of what remains of the historic South Kansas Avenue commercial corridor. The historic district is a relatively small area compared to the large size of former downtown, and it is important to preserve what is left. A few significant isolated buildings that were not demolished remain along South Kansas Avenue south of 6th Street as well, including those of the Mill Block Historic District between 1st and Crane Streets.

The clearing and development for urban renewal along with the increased influence of the automobile had a dramatic impact on the overall **function of buildings** and the types of businesses downtown. The downtown core lost its role as Topeka's primary retail shopping center to growing suburban roadside commercial areas around the city's edges. Older downtown department stores

closed or relocated to suburban shopping centers. Remaining buildings in Downtown Topeka gravitated to **office and other similar uses**.

The approach to urban renewal appears to have influenced new construction within the historic district as well. Between 1965 and 1973, groups of older buildings were demolished along South Kansas Avenue, SW Jackson Street, and SE Quincy Street for construction of a number of **large, new modern buildings**. Unlike their predecessors from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the new modern structures were freestanding commercial blocks employing Modern Movement design features and materials, such as concrete and glass. The new construction included offices, banks, and modern parking garages. Although many of the buildings had recessed entrances, they often respected the historic street-wall (Rosin SKA 2015:47). Construction of these large, modern buildings resulted in significant demolition and the loss of many earlier nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings.



Kansas Power & Light Company (left; 818 South Kansas Avenue) and Topeka Savings Association (right; 800 SE Quincy Street)

The era of urban renewal ended in the early-to-mid-1970s. The amount of demolition that occurred in Downtown Topeka was extensive, both in the core along South Kansas Avenue and to the east and west. It is not entirely clear how or when **so much urban fabric was lost**, particularly on the west, where blocks of older historic neighborhoods were demolished. The result was to leave the core of downtown, including the Statehouse, offices, and remaining businesses along South Kansas Avenue, isolated from the surrounding residential fabric of the city.

Throughout the last decades of the twentieth century, Downtown Topeka continued to struggle, while suburban commercial areas around the edges of the city and at interstate interchanges grew. In the early 1980s, several new construction projects in the downtown historic district replicated the pattern of removal and redevelopment from the 1960s. New buildings constructed at 611, 612-618, and 712 South Kansas Avenue involved the demolition of historic buildings, combining of lots, and design of new buildings that did not continue the historic role of an active sidewalk or streetscape. One to four stories in height, the new buildings have areas of **blank walls and office windows** fronting the sidewalks, rather than storefronts. 612-618 South Kansas is set back from the

sidewalk with a garden and historic stone wall remnant in front. These treatments reflect the **changed role of downtown** by this time. Two large parking garages were also constructed during this period at 615 SE Quincy and 612 SW Jackson Streets, removing historic buildings and not providing an active sidewalk.



611 South Kansas Avenue (left) from 1984 and 612-618 South Kansas Avenue (right) across the street and built in 1986. Together, the two developments altered the historic character of the 600 block.

Contemporary Revitalization

As outlined in Chapter 1, steps to strengthen Downtown Topeka were undertaken in 1986 with establishment of the Capital Business Improvement District and in 1995 with creation of Downtown Topeka, Inc. to manage, market, and promote the downtown core. The Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan was completed in 2000.

After a construction hiatus during the 1990s, two major new mixed-use buildings were constructed in 2002 and 2009 at 825 and 719 South Kansas Avenue. Like their predecessors, both building required the demolition of historic buildings and combining of lots. However, both buildings attempted to implement the **mixed-use approach** to downtown revitalization laid out in the Downtown Topeka Revitalization Plan.



825 South Kansas Avenue (left) constructed in 2002 and 719 South Kansas Avenue (right) from 2009

825 South Kansas Avenue combines offices, parking, and street-level commercial uses. Its rhythm of vertical pilasters recalls the historic rhythm of narrow lots along the street. 719 South Kansas Avenue introduces much-needed residential units to downtown on its upper floors along with street-level commercial units. *While significant in scope and investment and consistent with the 2000 revitalization plan, neither project is a suggested model for future development within the historic district.*

A small number of recent projects have included the **rehabilitation and adaptive reuse** of historic buildings within the downtown area. Federal historic preservation **tax credits** first became available in 1976 and have been widely used for downtown revitalization across the country. However, before the turn of the twenty-first century, only the Jayhawk Hotel in 1982 appears to have successfully taken advantage of their use in Downtown Topeka.

In 2002, the Columbian Building, located just outside of the historic district at 112-114 SW 6th Avenue, was rehabilitated using federal tax credits. This was followed with rehabilitation of the Veale Building at 909-911 South Kansas Avenue using tax credits in 2003. More recently, two major projects have been assisted financially through the use of tax credits: the Gordon Block, a significantly located four-story commercial office building at 900 South Kansas Avenue, and the Thacher Building, a three-story stone building dating to 1880 and located at 110-112 SE 8th Avenue. Within the Mill Block Historic District, the renovation of 121-129 North Kansas Avenue has recently qualified for the use of tax credits. All five of these projects are of high quality.



The Veale Building, Gordon Block, and Thacher Building, all rehabilitated using federal tax credits

Additional adaptive reuse projects have been undertaken without the use of tax credits. The Central National Bank at 701 South Kansas Avenue, listed on the National Register in 1976, has been rehabilitated for its continued use as a bank. The Palace Building at 709-711 South Kansas Avenue has been renovated to create lofts on its upper floors, adding an important residential use downtown. The building's primary façade and street-level commercial areas have not yet been rehabilitated.

The former Shawnee Federal Savings & Loan Building, constructed in 1960 at 906 South Kansas Avenue, was rehabilitated for offices and street-level commercial uses in 2014. The south bay of the Minney Building at 931 South Kansas Avenue was rehabilitated as ground-level commercial use with a loft residence above. A number of other smaller commercial buildings have recently been renovated with appropriate storefront changes as well.



Central National Bank, former Shawnee Federal Savings and Loan, and Minney Building, all rehabilitated

DISTRICT-WIDE CHARACTER

Downtown Topeka's historic character is impacted by every period of the city's development and includes a wide range of building types. The following briefly summarizes key defining aspects of the downtown character and provides a basis for the design guidelines and treatment approach.

Considerable change over time – Downtown Topeka has experienced considerable change over time, from the city's founding in 1854 to the present. Layers of change have been superimposed upon the urban landscape. Earlier buildings and blocks of buildings have been replaced by later construction, in some cases multiple times.

Going forward, diversity and change should be expressed in ways other than the demolition and replacement of historic buildings.

Buildings and historic fabric from all periods should be preserved to the maximum extent possible.

Diversity in period of construction – Buildings remain from all periods of the city's development. There is no single period of downtown's historical development. All periods are significant representing downtown's story of evolution and adaptation.

Diversity in architectural style – Given the diversity of period, downtown also has diversity in architectural style. Many styles are represented, and some styles contrast with and are dramatically different from others.

Diversity in building size and form – Buildings from different periods are diverse in size and form. Downtown buildings range from one and two-story retail buildings on narrow lots to eight, ten, and twelve-story office towers. Buildings of dramatically different size are juxtaposed side-by-side.

Many buildings have multiple periods, styles and treatments – A significant number of buildings, especially retail storefront, show evidence of multiple changes. Historic fabric remains from several periods and styles in the same façade. This provides great richness and interest and tells a great story.

There has been much building loss – While diversity and change are defining characteristics of Downtown Topeka, the amount of building loss has been significant and is unfortunate. The city has lost many buildings of great character to the detriment of future generations. Going forward, diversity and change should be expressed in ways other than the demolition and replacement of historic buildings. Buildings and historic fabric from all periods should be preserved to the maximum extent possible.

BUILDING TYPES, PRIORITIES AND TREATMENTS

A considerable number of historic buildings have been changed or lost in downtown Topeka over the decades, and many of the changes or new buildings replacing them are now considered historically significant. The character and integrity of existing remaining buildings varies and are relevant to the approach to their future treatment.

In general, remaining buildings can be organized into ten groupings, which are described below along with general recommendations for their treatment.

1. Mid-Nineteenth Century Patterns and Building Remnants

As discussed in the previous section, the rhythm and character of the streetscape in Downtown Topeka was established by the original layout of blocks and streets along with the narrow lot configurations lining the street. The rhythm of building facades created by the narrow lots is evident historically and remains a character-defining feature of the streetscape today.

Additionally, the remnants of mid- and late-nineteenth century buildings are embedded in the buildings remaining today, especially the limestone side and rear walls, building layouts and forms, and possibly interior configurations and structure. These features should be preserved.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Retain features and characteristics of the of the historic streetscape, especially the rhythm of early facades and lot lines. Preserve buildings that reflect this rhythm.**
- **Minimize the combining of lots.**
- **Use the historic rhythm of facades as a possible design feature in new construction, helping new buildings to reflect the historic pattern of the streetscape.**
- **Identify and preserve historic materials and features from earlier periods of a building's evolution, especially exterior limestone walls.**



Façade rhythm of the historic streetscape – c.1930 and today – east side of the 700 block



Remnant nineteenth century limestone walls

2. Larger Late Nineteenth Century Buildings

Several larger historic buildings remain from the period of Topeka's building boom in the 1880s. These buildings retain historic integrity and are important as rare intact survivors from the nineteenth century in Topeka. They should receive priority for preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.

The buildings include the Davies Building constructed in 1887 (725-727 South Kansas Avenue), Thacher Building constructed in 1880 (110-112 SE 8th Avenue), buildings on SE 7th Street constructed from 1880 to 1888, and the current Celtic Fox building constructed in 1888 (118 SW 8th Street).

The Thacher Building is in very good condition and was rehabilitated in 2011 using federal rehabilitation tax credits. The Davies Building is individually listed on the National Register but has not been rehabilitated. The Celtic Fox is in good condition and is in active use. The three buildings on SE 7th Street are underutilized and vacant on their upper floors. They do not appear to be well maintained and should be considered threatened.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **These larger buildings from the late nineteenth century should be a priority for preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.**
- **Monitor the condition of the Davies Building and three buildings on SE 7th Street on an ongoing, at least yearly basis. Pay special attention to the condition of roofs, flashing, and parapets. Do not permit deterioration due to lack of maintenance or neglect.**
- **Actively work to facilitate and encourage the use of state and federal rehabilitation tax credits in the adaptive reuse of these buildings.**



Larger nineteenth century buildings - Davies Building, Thacher Building, buildings on SE 7th Street

3. Smaller Late Nineteenth Century Buildings

Most of the smaller late nineteenth century buildings within the Downtown Historic District have been removed, reconstructed, or substantially modified. A few, however, retain their overall exterior character and integrity, despite later changes to their first floor storefronts.

Smaller, two-story buildings that retain features and character from the nineteenth century should be identified. These buildings should receive priority for preservation and appropriate treatment. Inappropriate later changes should be removed where possible as new projects are undertaken involving the buildings.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Preserve character-defining features and historic building fabric remaining in smaller late nineteenth century buildings within the historic district. Primarily, these features and fabric are present on the upper story portions of streetscape facades as well as in the surrounds of later storefronts.**
- **Preserve and rehabilitate storefronts from later periods that have been installed and are themselves significant building elements.**
- **Remove storefronts that are inappropriate to the building and do not contribute to the streetscape. Install new contemporary storefronts that are compatible with the overall character of the building.**



Three buildings in the 900 block of South Kansas Avenue that retain their overall nineteenth century character though their storefronts are later changes. The storefront of 921 South Kansas Avenue (center) is inappropriate and should be removed and a new, more appropriate storefront designed.

4. Larger Early Twentieth Century Buildings

From 1910 into the mid-1920s, six large, substantial, and architecturally significant buildings were constructed in downtown Topeka, including hotels, offices, and governmental structures. With some exceptions, the buildings have been well treated over the years, are in good condition, and have high integrity today.

These buildings are landmarks within the historic district. They include the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Building (AT&SF) constructed in 1910 with additions in 1924 (900 SW Jackson Street), Gordon Block constructed in 1911 (900 South Kansas Avenue), Mills Building constructed in 1912 (901 South Kansas Avenue), Memorial Building constructed in 1914 (120 SW 10th Avenue), Hotel Kansan constructed in 1924 (830 South Kansas Avenue), and Jayhawk Hotel constructed in 1926 (700 SW Jackson Street).

The AT&SF and Memorial Building are currently used as state offices and are in very good condition. Memorial Building was listed on the National Register in 1975. The Jayhawk Hotel was listed on the National Register in 1982 and was rehabilitated using federal tax credits. The related Jayhawk Theater is still undergoing rehabilitation. The Gordon Block was listed on the National Register in 2010 and was also rehabilitated using tax credits.

The Hotel Kansan is a potential candidate for future rehabilitation using federal and state tax credits. The Hotel Kansan is used for offices and residential units

and has had inappropriate window treatments. The building nonetheless retains integrity.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **As landmarks within the historic districts, these large and significant buildings should receive the highest standard of historic preservation treatment.**
- **The Hotel Kansan is appropriate for future rehabilitation using federal and state rehabilitation tax credits.**



The AT&SF Building, Jayhawk Hotel, and Hotel Kansan

5. Smaller Early Twentieth Century Buildings

A number of smaller buildings of high quality were constructed downtown during the early twentieth century and also survive in good condition and with high integrity. These are also landmarks and contribute substantially to the historic character of the district.

Such smaller buildings include the Elks Club constructed in 1907 (122 SW 7th Street), the adjacent Aetna Building constructed in 1909 (112 SW 7th Street), International Order of Odd Fellows Hall constructed in 1921 (112-119 SW 6th Avenue), Marks Building constructed c.1922 (801-805 South Kansas Avenue), Veale Building constructed in 1923 (909-911 South Kansas Avenue), and Central National Bank constructed in 1927 (701 South Kansas Avenue). There are others as well.

These buildings survive without substantial alterations. A few of the buildings have retail storefronts that have been modified or replaced, but these changes have not impacted the high quality of their historic facades. The Veale Building is listed on the National Register and was rehabilitated using federal tax credits in 2003.

Like the larger twentieth century landmark buildings discussed above, these smaller buildings should receive the highest standard of historic preservation treatment. The use of rehabilitation tax credits would be particularly appropriate for future projects involving these buildings, which are likely to be of smaller scope.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **As landmarks within the historic districts, these smaller but significant buildings should receive the highest standard of historic preservation treatment.**
- **Facilitate and encourage the use of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits where appropriate. State tax credits would be particularly appropriate for projects of smaller scale.**



The Elks Club, Marks Building, and Aetna Building

6. Early Twentieth Century Facades with Contributing Changes

Most late-nineteenth century retail buildings in Downtown Topeka were substantially modified or reconstructed in the early twentieth century. Some of these early twentieth century facades survive today. As discussed in the first building type reviewed above, the original nineteenth century size, form, and side and rear limestone walls of modified buildings were usually retained despite major modifications to the streetscape facades.

In subsequent decades, continuing changes occurred to many of the buildings, especially to storefronts. Many storefront modifications from the 1920s and 1950s are of particularly high quality. As a result, a number of Downtown Topeka's retail buildings have significant and high quality historic fabric from multiple periods, as noted in the discussion of the downtown's district's character in the previous section.

Renovation and rehabilitation of these buildings will likely continue to be undertaken in future years as the downtown district develops. Care should be taken to identify and preserve contributing and high quality historic building fabric from all periods of a building's evolution, especially storefronts. The use of state rehabilitation tax credits would be appropriate for such relatively small-scale projects.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Identify contributing historic fabric from all periods of a building's evolution before undertaking design for renovations and changes.**
- **Retain, preserve, and appropriately treat contributing historic fabric from all periods when renovations are undertaken.**
- **Remove later changes that negatively impacted the building's historic character.**
- **Encourage the use of state rehabilitation tax credits for retail modifications.**



605 South Kansas Avenue (1911), 813 South Kansas Avenue (c1905) and 117/115 SE 6th Street (1908/1910)

7. Early Twentieth Century Facades with Non-contributing Changes

Inappropriate changes have been made to a number of smaller retail buildings within the downtown district, diminishing their character. Such changes include the removal of open storefronts and replacement with brick, as well as a variety of other treatments that are in conflict with the basic character of the retail streetscape.

Some inappropriate changes are simply of poor quality or design. Despite these inappropriate changes, most of the buildings still retain their overall character and are still considered contributing to the historic district.

As buildings are rehabilitated in the future, inappropriate changes should be reversed. It will be important to clearly distinguish which changes are considered contributing and non-contributing to a specific building during the early design phase. New elements should be complementary to the historic character of the building but should be creative and of high quality. The use of state rehabilitation tax credits is particularly suited to storefront and minor faces renovations.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Identify contributing and non-contributing historic fabric from all periods of a building's evolution before undertaking design for renovations and changes.**
- **Retain, preserve, and appropriately treat contributing historic fabric from all periods when renovations are undertaken.**
- **Remove later changes that negatively impacted the building's historic character.**
- **Encourage the use of state rehabilitation tax credits for retail modifications.**



623 South Kansas Avenue (1905/10), 918-920 South Kansas Avenue (1914), 822 South Kansas Avenue (1905)

8. Mid-Twentieth Century Commercial Facades

In the mid-20th century, a number of buildings within the downtown historic district received completely new facades. In the 1950s, these new facades did not differ dramatically from the general character of the facades of earlier buildings they varied in window sizes and types, use of materials, detailing, and color.

The most substantial changes were undertaken in the 1960s and later when entire facades were covered with modern designs without windows. Building fronts were transformed into two-story sign panels. While in dramatic contrast to the character of the early twentieth century retail streetscape, these buildings are still within the historic district's period of significance and are considered contributing.

These buildings will continue to be under pressure to change in the future. In some cases, it may be desirable to remove façade coverings to expose and restore earlier facades, *if they remain intact*. For the most part, however, these mid-century façade alterations should be retained. Care should be taken to preserve contributing historic character whenever possible.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Determine whether mid-century façade alterations contribute to the character of the streetscape and should be preserved.**
- **Should it be desired to remove a façade covering, first determine the condition of the older façade beneath it and whether the older façade can be repaired.**
- **Appropriately treat façade materials – some mid-century facades used unique materials that are difficult to repair or replace.**
- **Encourage the use of state rehabilitation tax credits for retail modifications.**







807 South Kansas Avenue (alt. c1950), 913 South Kansas Avenue (alt. c1960), 734 South Kansas Avenue (alt. 1964)

9. Contributing Mid-Twentieth Century Buildings

Several prominent mid-twentieth century modern buildings were constructed within the historic district during the period of urban renewal in the 1960s and early 1970s. Some of the buildings are large in scale. Most are offices or banks. These buildings are historically significant. Most are in good condition, have high integrity, and should be preserved and appropriately treated. A few have been modified with later changes.

Several buildings from the late 1960s and early 1970s were outside of the official fifty-year period for consideration as contributing to the historic district when the district's National Register nomination was prepared. However, these buildings are significant and will be considered contributing officially when they reach fifty years in age. They should be recognized and preserved. *For purposes of design review, these later buildings should be treated as though they are contributing now.* Any use of rehabilitation tax credits, however, will need to wait until the fifty-year mark is reached.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Preserve mid-century modern buildings with minimal future changes.**
- **Document original conditions when the buildings were constructed through historic photographs.**
- **Preserve and appropriately treat authentic historic fabric.**
- **Reverse inappropriate later changes when possible.**



Kansas Power & Light Building (1962), Capitol Federal Parking Garage (1961), Topeka Savings Association (1973)

10. Non-contributing Mid-Twentieth Century Buildings

Several mid-twentieth century modern buildings are not considered contributing to the historic district because of changes that they have incurred. In general, these buildings were modified in later years and lost some degree of historic integrity. Most of these non-contributing buildings are none-the-less of high quality, and they add to the character of the streetscape and the historic district. The remaining historic fabric associated with these buildings should be appropriately treated in the future as though the buildings are considered contributing.

Several smaller retail buildings within the historic district were considered non-contributing at the time that the National Register nomination was prepared because their construction dates could not be confirmed. Clearly, however, these buildings are of significance. A few should be considered vulnerable because they are underutilized, not well maintained, and not appreciated. These buildings should be reassessed and considered contributing based upon additional investigation and research. Care should be taken in determining their future treatment.

Treatment Recommendations:

- **Retain and appropriately treat buildings considered non-contributing when they add to the character of the streetscape and the historic district.**
- **Identify historic fabric associated with the buildings and treat the fabric appropriately.**
- **Reverse inappropriate changes to non-contributing buildings when possible.**






Capital Federal Building (1961), Shawnee Federal Savings & Loan (1960), Stanfield Building (1925/c.1965)

REHABILITATION APPROACH

Responding to the character of downtown buildings and the treatment approaches outlined above, the following key points should provide the basis for the rehabilitation of historic buildings in Downtown Topeka.

Minimize future building loss – Downtown Topeka has lost too many historic buildings. In many places, there are large gaps and open areas, even within and adjacent to the historic districts. Once lost, historic buildings cannot be replaced and important aspects of the city's heritage and identity are gone.

Going forward, additional building loss should be minimized. Even marginal buildings should be retained. Future demolition of contributing buildings within the historic district should only be undertaken when the result of the change provides an overwhelmingly positive contribution to downtown character and activity.

Find an appropriate use – As emphasized in the key principles in Chapter 1, finding an appropriate use for an historic building is the best way to ensure its preservation. Appropriate uses are those that the building can accommodate without major changes. Uses come and go. Buildings should not be sacrificed to new uses that require major changes that negatively impact its historic character.

Identify authentic historic fabric from all periods – Downtown Topeka has buildings and character-defining resources from all periods of the city's development. All are historically significant and help tell the city's story. Sometimes historic fabric remains from multiple periods in the same building, adding to the building's richness and complexity. Authentic historic fabric from all periods of the city's development and/or an individual building's development should be identified as a first step when a project is being planned.

Adapt buildings to new uses retaining historic features and fabric – Once identified, historic building features and fabric should be retained. When a building is being adapted to a new use, authentic historic building fabric should be incorporated into the new design. Building fabric that is not from the building's period of significance or that is detrimental to the building's character may be modified, altered, or removed.

Apply appropriate treatments to historic fabric – Historic materials should be treated in ways that respect their character and preserve their physical integrity. Preservation professionals have developed best practices for the treatment of different kinds of historic fabric, many of which are outlined in the later chapters of these design guidelines. Ongoing maintenance is critical for the viability and integrity of many historic building materials and features.

Inappropriate treatments can lead to the physical deterioration of building fabric and expensive work for their eventual repair or replacement. Literature should be consulted and professional conservators should be retained to assist in identifying appropriate treatments when necessary, especially for difficult or exotic materials.

Reverse previous inappropriate treatments where possible – Not all changes and treatments that have been applied to historic buildings are appropriate. For example, an historic upper story window opening that has been infilled and into which a smaller, low quality window has been installed is probably an inappropriate treatment and might be appropriate to reverse. Decisions about what changes are appropriate to reverse should be carefully made and should always work to the best interest of the building's character, integrity, and use.

Design new features to be contemporary and compatible – New design should work with and play off of the character of the building and its historic fabric. New features should be compatible with existing historic fabric but should be contemporary in design and appearance.

It is appropriate to restore missing historic features only when adequate documentation exists as to their appearance and configuration. It is not appropriate to add new features that attempt to create or recreate an historic appearance but are conjectural in nature. These points are discussed further in review of the guidance provided by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, below.



Remnant nineteenth century cast iron column encased by a later 1960s facade

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

Preservation is a practical discipline that can accommodate growth and change while continuing to preserve the characteristics that make a place special. The principles that have been developed in the field of historic preservation in general recognize the importance of preserving authentic historic fabric to the maximum extent possible.[1]

Building uses come and go, but once lost, original historic fabric can never be reclaimed. The maintenance and preservation of original historic fabric, features, materials, and design elements, therefore, is central to a sound preservation approach. The key objective of these design guidelines is to encourage and promote the preservation and maintenance of historic building fabric in the revitalization of Downtown Topeka.

The historic preservation field has defined four basic types of treatment that may be applied to historic buildings. Although sometimes these terms are used loosely in discussion, they have specific meanings that are important to distinguish. The four key preservation treatments include:

- **Preservation** – which retains the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property without change, emphasizing protection, repair, and ongoing maintenance;

- **Rehabilitation** – which is defined as the process of creating a compatible use in a historic property through carefully planned minimal alterations and compatible additions; rehabilitation is often also described as adaptive reuse;

- **Restoration** – which refers to returning a resource to its appearance at a specific previous period of its history through removal of later changes; and

- **Reconstruction** – which is defined as accurately depicting a lost historic property with new construction, replicating its appearance at a specific period of time in its original location.

Preservation is generally applied to buildings and resources of extraordinary significance that should not be altered, such as much of the recently completed work on the Kansas Statehouse. *Restoration* and *Reconstruction* are rarely undertaken. Portions of the Kansas Statehouse that had been inappropriately changed were restored to their original condition and appearance. Reconstruction is a rarely used preservation treatment applicable primarily in educational and interpretive contexts.

Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining historic character. Rehabilitation is the most appropriate treatment for historic buildings throughout Downtown Topeka.

[1] The following discussion has been adapted from Chapter 2 and Appendix A of Topeka's 2013 Historic Preservation Plan.



The Veale Building (909-911 South Kansas Avenue) was rehabilitated in 2003 using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

The ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*** (the Standards) were created by historic preservation professionals to provide guidance in the appropriate treatment of historic resources. The *Standards* were first established by the federal government to provide guidelines for the appropriate treatment of buildings and resources impacted by federal projects.

All federally funded and permitted activities affecting historic resources are evaluated with respect to these standards, including the use of rehabilitation tax credits. The *Standards* were developed specifically to prevent unintended damage to or loss of historic resources by federal actions, such as those that occurred as the result of the wholesale demolition of historic neighborhoods though urban renewal, discussed above in this chapter.

An individual set of standards was developed for each of the four preservation treatments noted above. The ***Standards for Rehabilitation***, however, are most applicable to projects being undertaken for historic buildings in Downtown Topeka.

In the language of community planners, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards* are a list of "best practices" for historic preservation. They are a touchstone for all activities affecting historic buildings and landscapes and help ensure that important issues about the care of historic buildings and landscapes are not forgotten in the process of making decisions about other issues. When the *Standards* are used in the context of a new construction project involving an historic building, they provide a starting point for the discussion of proposed changes to the building's historic character and fabric. They were developed to

ensure that policies toward historic resources were applied uniformly, even if the end result may be different in every case.

All preservation activities, whether they are publicly or privately funded, can be informed and enhanced by understanding the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Because the *Standards* outline a sensitive approach for assessing changes to historic properties, they are often included in design guidelines, preservation plans, ordinances, and regulations that govern activities affecting local historic districts. These *Standards* articulate basic principles that are fundamental to historic preservation. Although they have been modified over the years to accommodate changing views of historical significance and treatment options, their basic message has remained the same.

The durability of the *Standards* is testimony not only to their soundness, but also to the flexibility of their language. They provide a philosophy and approach to problem solving for those involved in managing the treatment of historic buildings, rather than a set of solutions to specific design issues. Following a balanced, reasonable, and disciplined process is often more important than the exact nature of the treatment option that is chosen. Instead of predetermining an outcome in favor of retaining or recreating historic features, the *Standards* help ensure that the critical issues are considered.

For federal projects and federal agencies, the language of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* is codified in 36 CFR Part 68 (the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, *Parks, Forests and Public Property*, Chapter 1 *National Park Service, Department of the Interior*, Part 68). A related federal regulation, 36 CFR Part 67, addresses the use of the *Standards* in the certification of projects receiving federal rehabilitation tax credits.

The *Standards* are published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and are available online, including definitions for the four preservation treatments discussed above (National Park Service 2013).

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are particularly useful in consideration of the appropriate maintenance of historic buildings; the alteration of older buildings as necessary for reuse, safety, and accessibility; and the construction of new buildings in an historic context. The ten standards that comprise the *Standards for Rehabilitation* are quoted below followed by a brief discussion of the implications of each. Additional discussion of the *Standards for Rehabilitation* may also be found online.

STANDARD 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.*

Standard 1 recommends compatible use in the context of adaptive reuse and changes to historic buildings and landscapes. This standard encourages property owners to find uses that retain and enhance historic character, not detract from it. The work involved in reuse projects should be carefully planned to minimize impacts on historic features, materials, and spaces. The destruction of character-defining features should be avoided.

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

Standard 2 recommends the retention and preservation of character-defining features. It emphasizes the importance of preserving integrity and as much existing historic fabric as possible. Alterations that repair or modify existing historic fabric are preferable to those that require total removal.

STANDARD 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.***

Standard 3 focuses on authenticity and discourages the conjectural restoration of an entire property, feature, or design. It also discourages combining and/or grafting historic features and elements from different properties, and constructing new buildings that appear to be historic. Literal restoration to an historic appearance should only be undertaken when detailed documentation is available and when the significance of the resource warrants restoration. Reconstruction of lost features should not be attempted without adequate documentation.

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

Standard 4 recognizes that buildings change, and that many of these changes contribute to a building's historical significance. Understanding a building's history and development is just as important as understanding its original design, appearance, and function. This point should be kept in mind when considering treatments for buildings that have undergone many changes.

Most historic buildings contain a visual record of their own evolution. This evolution can be identified, and changes that are significant to the history of the building should be retained. The opportunity to compare multiple periods of time in the same building lends interest to the structure and helps communicate changes that have occurred within the larger landscape and community context.

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

Standard 5 recommends preserving the distinctive historic components of a building or landscape that represent its historic character. Workmanship, materials, methods of construction, floor plans, and both ornate and typical details should be identified prior to undertaking work.

STANDARD 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 will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.***

Standard 6 encourages property owners to repair historic character-defining features instead of replacing them when historic features are deteriorated or even missing. In cases where deterioration makes replacement necessary, new features should closely match historic conditions in all respects. Before any features are altered or removed, property owners are urged to document existing conditions with photography and notes. These records assist future choices that are appropriate to the property's historic character.



Repair of authentic historic building fabric is almost always preferred over replacement.

STANDARD 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.***

Standard 7 warns against using chemical and physical treatments that can permanently damage historic features. Many commercially available treatments are irreversibly damaging. Sandblasting and harsh chemical cleaning, in particular, are extremely harmful to wood and masonry surfaces because they destroy the material's basic physical properties and speed deterioration.

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

Standard 8 addresses the importance of below-ground prehistoric and historic features. This issue is of most importance when a construction project involves excavation. An assessment of a site's archeological potential prior to work is recommended. If archeological resources are present, some type of mitigation should be considered. Solutions should be developed that minimize the need for excavation of previously unexcavated sites.

STANDARD 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 shall 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.***

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

Standards 9 and 10 are linked by issues of the compatibility and reversibility of additions, alterations, and new construction. Both standards are intended to 1) minimize the damage to historic fabric caused by building additions, and 2) ensure that new work will be different from, but compatible with, existing historic conditions. Following these standards will help to protect a building's historic integrity.

In conclusion, the basis for the *Standards* is the premise that historic resources are more than objects of aesthetic merit; they are repositories of historical information. It is important to reiterate that the *Standards* provide a framework for evaluating preservation activities and emphasize preservation of historic fabric, honesty of historical expression, and reversibility. All decisions should be made on a case-by- case basis. The level of craftsmanship, detailing, and quality of materials should be appropriate to the significance of the resource.



High-quality nineteenth century stonework that has undergone repair



CHAPTER 3 – REVIEW PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The revitalization of Downtown Topeka is focused upon creating a place of distinctive character that is attractive to residents and visitors and good for business. Historic buildings are central to Downtown Topeka's character, and their preservation and appropriate treatment is key to creating an interesting and vital streetscape. It is important that new projects contribute to an enhanced streetscape. Processes have been put in place to facilitate and encourage this end.

Proposed construction projects requiring building permits within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District in Downtown Topeka are subject to design review and approval before permits may be issued and projects may proceed. Review is also required of projects undertaken by the state, county, and city. The purpose of the design review is to assure that proposed work preserves the character of historic buildings within the districts. In most cases, this is accomplished when authentic historic building fabric is preserved and appropriately treated.

Projects using federal or state rehabilitation tax credits, which is strongly encouraged, are reviewed by the staff of the Kansas Historical Society and, in the case of federal tax credits, the National Park Service as well. Other projects within the two historic districts are reviewed by the City of Topeka's Landmarks Commission and planning staff.

These design guidelines are intended to facilitate and assist the design review process by providing information and recommendations to property owners and

designers in the planning of their projects. The design guidelines also provide criteria by which proposed projects under review may be assessed by those undertaking design review.

Chapter 3 outlines the design review processes. Specifically, four types of review are considered:

- **Rehabilitation Tax Credits** – undertaken by the Kansas Historical Society and National Park Service;
- **Kansas Preservation Act** – undertaken by the Landmarks Commission and planning staff;
- **Request for Review of determinations made by the Landmarks Commission under the Kansas Preservation Act** – undertaken by City Council; and
- **D-1 Zoning Review** – within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District, undertaken as part of Landmarks Commission and staff review under the Kansas Preservation Act as noted above.

Project approvals for use of federal or state rehabilitation tax credits are consistent with reviews under the Kansas Preservation Act, and no further review by the Landmarks Commission or City Council is required.

Chapters 4 through 9 of the design guidelines provide information and recommendations on the appropriate treatment of historic buildings and building fabric.

PRE-PLANNING STEPS

No matter what type of project or project review is being undertaken, it is strongly recommended that several important steps be undertaken during the pre-planning stages.

The design of projects within the Downtown Topeka historic districts should be undertaken by **design professionals** (architects and structural engineers) experienced in the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. This is particularly important for the use of federal or state rehabilitation tax credits.

For issues related to the condition and appropriate treatment of historic building fabric, it may be desirable to use the expertise of professional building materials **conservators** who understand historic building systems and the unique problems associated with some historic materials.

In addition:

- Early in the design process, **identify authentic historic fabric** associated with all periods of the building's development, as discussed throughout these design guidelines, and assess their existing conditions;
- Determine how the **new use** might be accommodated within the building;

- Examine **options** for needed changes and how they would **impact** historic building fabric;
- **Meet with city staff and/or staff of the Kansas Historical Society** at an early stage in the design process to discuss the project, design principles, and review processes. In the case of the use of tax credits, early reviews of the proposed work should be with staff of the **Kansas Historical Society**. In all others cases, early reviews of the proposed work should be undertaken with the **Design Committee** of the city's Landmarks Commission along with planning staff.



Downtown street improvements within the historic district.

REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS

Federal and Kansas state rehabilitation tax credits are available to assist property owners with the rehabilitation of historic buildings within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District.

Federal rehabilitation tax credits have been widely used for rehabilitation projects since 1976 and have been a primary factor in the revitalization of downtown areas nationwide. Many important rehabilitation projects would not have been financially viable without them. Kansas state rehabilitation tax credits have been available since 2001 and have been used throughout the state for commercial and residential projects as well as for non-profit, religious, and government owned buildings.

In general, federal tax credits have been used for projects of larger size. State tax credits have been used for smaller projects. Both forms of tax credits are important for the revitalization of historic buildings in Downtown Topeka.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, also known as rehabilitation tax credits, was established in 1976 to foster private sector investment in historic preservation projects and promote community revitalization. It is one of the nation's most successful and cost effective community revitalization programs. Federal rehabilitation tax credits have leveraged over $73 billion in private investment to preserve over 40,380 historic properties nationwide since its inception. Information on the federal tax credit program provided below is drawn primarily from National Park Service publications available online (NPS 2016).

In Downtown Topeka, al properties within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District that are listed as contributing to the historic districts are certified and eligible to use the federal tax credi program.

Federal rehabilitation tax credits are targeted for income-producing properties and require that properties be rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Eligible properties are those that are determined to be **certified historic structures** and include properties that are National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, contribute to a National Register District, or have been determined eligible for the National Register. In Downtown Topeka, all properties within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District that are listed as **contributing** to the historic districts are certified and eligible to use the federal tax credit program.

Rehabilitation tax incentives attract private investment to the historic cores of cities and often provide the additional financing that makes a difficult project viable. The program has been instrumental in the revitalization of urban centers across the country. Through this program, many vacant, partially vacant, and underutilized commercial buildings have been restored to viable economic use in a manner that maintains their historic character.

In Downtown Topeka, eight commercial projects have taken advantage of the use of federal tax credits as of 2015. The projects ranged in eligible construction cost from $227,903 to $3,518,922. The earliest project was the Jayhawk Hotel, which was completed in 1982. The other projects have been undertaken since 2002. Projects include:

- Jayhawk Hotel, 700 SW Jackson Street 1982
- Columbian Building, 112-114 SW 6th Avenue 2002
- Veale Building, 909-911 South Kansas Avenue 2003
- Gordon Block, 900 South Kansas Avenue 2010
- Thacher Building, 112 SE 8th Avenue 2011
- Lux Buildings, 121-129 North Kansas Avenue 2015
- Jayhawk Theater, 700 SW Jackson Street Ongoing

Two projects in Downtown Topeka began the rehabilitation tax credit process but were never completed.

Overview of Financial Benefits and Requirements

Federal rehabilitation tax credits are available to the owners of historic properties and may be taken as a **federal income tax credit** equal to **20 percent of the**

property owner's investment in their historic building's rehabilitation. The tax credit effectively lowers the amount of tax owed—in general, a dollar of tax credit reduces the amount of income tax owed by one dollar.

The tax credit is only available to properties that will be used for a business or other **income-producing** purpose. After rehabilitation, the building must remain income-producing for at least five years.

The work being done on the building must be **substantial** in that the cost of the rehabilitation project must exceed the greater of $5,000 or the pre-rehabilitation cost of the building, known in tax parlance as the "adjusted basis." In general, a building's adjusted basis equals (a) the purchase price of the property, (b) less the cost of the land at purchase, (c) less any depreciation taken for the income-producing property, and (d) plus the cost of any capital improvements made since purchase but before the rehabilitation project is undertaken.

The amount of the tax credit is calculated as 20% of **qualified expenses** associated with the rehabilitation project. Qualified expenses are the costs that are directly related to the repair or improvement of structural and architectural features of the historic building. These include work on features such as walls, floors, structural components, windows, doors, and finishes as well as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other building systems.

Qualified expenses also include soft costs such as architectural and engineering fees, construction management and developer fees, and construction period interest and taxes. Qualified expenses must be made within a 24-month period, or a 60-month period for projects completed in phases.

Qualified expenses do not include costs associated with acquisition, financing, furnishings, landscaping, signage, new additions, and similar non-building features.

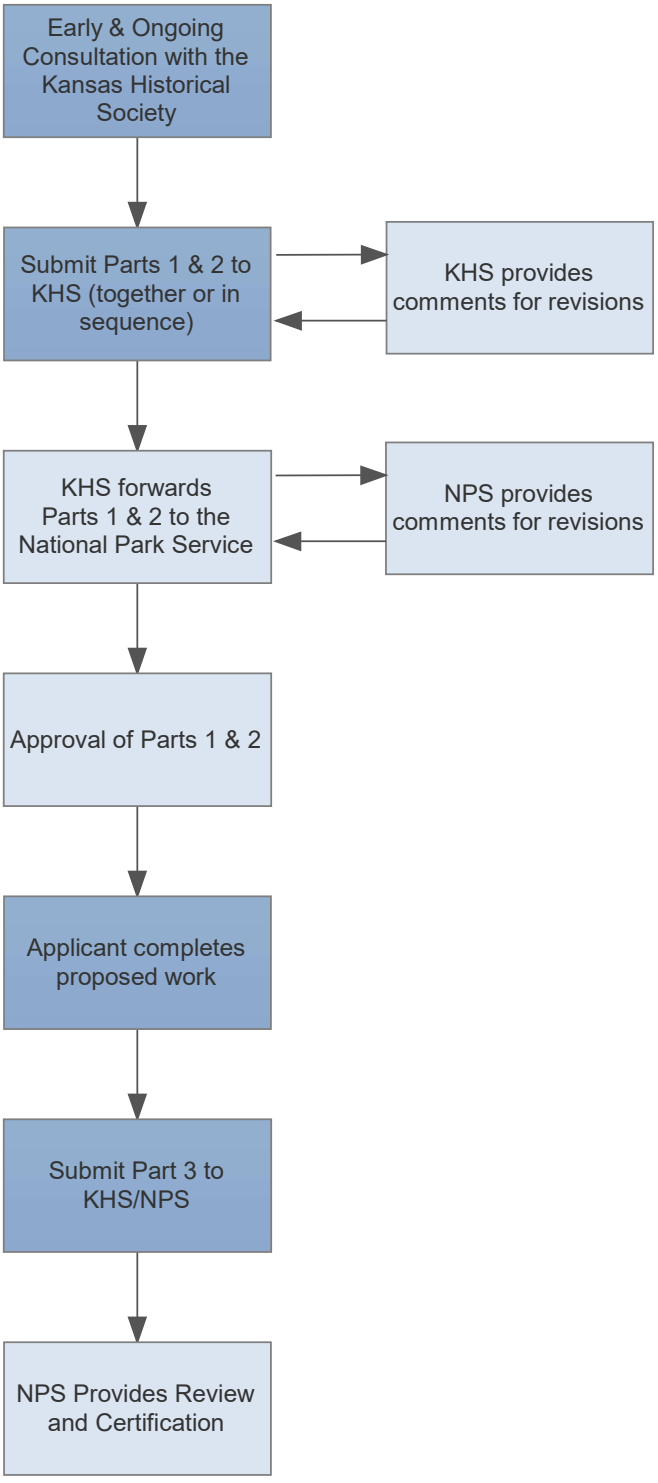
Tax credits used may be carried back one year and carried forward for 20 years. Large rehabilitation tax credit projects are often organized with groups of investors who are interested in taking advantage of the tax credits. A number of restrictions and requirements for investors are in place and are interpreted by the Internal Revenue Service.

Like financing for large projects in general, the organization and use of federal tax credits can be complicated. Property owners undertaking a rehabilitation project using federal tax credits should work closely with professional financial and tax advisors experienced in use of the credit as they plan and implement their projects.

Application and Review Process

The federal rehabilitation tax credit program is jointly managed at the federal level by the National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service and at the state level in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices. In Kansas, the Cultural Resource Division of the Kansas Historical Society serves as the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits



Every tax credit project should begin with a meeting with staff of the Kansas Historical Society to verify that the property qualifies for the program, review the proposed project, and confirm application and review processes. **Early and continued consultation** with the Kansas Historical Society throughout the application and review process is very important for keeping the project on-track and avoiding errors that could jeopardize certification. The use of **professional consultants**—architects, engineers, financial advisors—with experience in using the tax credits is strongly recommended.

The application process involves submission of a **Historic Preservation Certification Application** available from the Kansas Historical Society and National Park Service. Applications are submitted first to the Kansas Historical Society for preliminary review. Two copies of the application and all accompanying materials are required, one for the Kansas Historical Society and one for the National Park Service.

The Kansas Historical Society will make sure that all necessary materials have been submitted and that the application is complete. The Kansas Historical Society will review the application, identify any issues or questions, and work with the applicants if necessary to guide them in making any needed changes.

Ongoing consultation during preparation of the application, mentioned above, will help assure that the documentation requirements are met, that the application addresses the needed topics, and that proposed work and treatments are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

After their preliminary review, the Kansas Historical Society will forward the application on to the National Park Service with a recommendation. State recommendations are generally followed, but by law all certification decisions are made by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. The National Park Service decision may differ from the recommendation of the Kansas Historical Society.

Historic Preservation Certification Applications are divided into three parts. Parts 1 and 2 may be submitted separately or together. Parts of the application are generally submitted separately in sequence as the project is being undertaken. If submitted separately, Part 1 must precede Part 2.

Parts 1 and 2 of the application will each generally be reviewed within 60 days of receipt of a completed, adequately documented application— 30 days by the Kansas Historical Society and 30 days by the National Park Service. Notification of certification decisions is made in writing by the National Park Service. A copy of each notification is provided to the Kansas Historical Society and the Internal Revenue Service.

Part 1 – Evaluation of Significance presents information about the significance and appearance of the building and is used to certify that the building is a historic structure for purposes of the tax credit program. Listing of a building on the National Register of Historic Places is the way in which certification is obtained.

In Downtown Topeka, "contributing" buildings within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District are eligible for use of

the federal tax credit and are identified in the two historic district's National Register nominations.

Owners of proposed projects within the historic districts should submit a Part 1 application form along with photographic documentation of the building's existing conditions. The information must be sufficient to allow the National Park Service to evaluate the historic character of the building, how the building relates to the district, and to verify that the building contributes to the significance of the district. A building is considered contributing to the significance of a historic district if by location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association the building adds to the district's sense of time and place and its historical development.

The Part 1 form requires applicants to provide a description of the building's physical appearance, including major features on both the exterior and interior in their present condition. Changes that have been made to the building over time should be described. The application should discuss how the building relates to other buildings within the historic district in terms of siting, scale, material, construction, style, and date.

Photographs should be provided with the application that show the features described in their existing condition. Photographs should show the site, surrounding environment, all exterior elevations, and major interior spaces and features. Photographs must be in color, printed on photographic paper, labeled, and of sufficient number and quality to adequately portray the building.

Part 2 – Description of Rehabilitation describes the rehabilitation work to be undertaken on the building to certify that the proposed work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Part 2 will not be reviewed by the National Park Service until the Part 1 has been filed and acted upon.

The completed Part 2 application form is submitted to the Kansas Historical Society along with supporting photographs, architectural and engineering drawings, project specifications, and any other supporting materials needed to describe the proposed work. The Kansas Historical Society will review the application, construction documents, and other materials to help guide the applicant through the application process, providing advice and technical assistance when needed.

Kansas Historical Society staff will advise the applicant on appropriate treatments to historic building fabric consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. Discussions of specific issues with National Park Service staff may be undertaken to obtain their guidance. Revisions and changes to the documents may be recommended.

It is important that the ongoing consultation with Kansas Historical Society staff cover proposed work and treatments early enough in the design process such that approaches are agreed upon and confirmed before the construction documents are prepared. At minimum, consultation at the conceptual design and design development phases is strongly recommended. Questions should be directed to the Historical Society staff whenever they arise. Otherwise, time and

expense may be wasted while treatments are discussed and changes to the documents are made, if necessary.

The Part 2 application form is organized in a series of short sections in which the proposed work on each individual feature of the building is addressed. For each feature, a brief description of its character and existing condition is provided followed by a brief description of the proposed work on that feature and the impact of that work. Photographs and drawings are referenced and provided as supporting materials for the discussion of each feature.

The descriptions begin with proposed site work, followed by work on exterior features (including new construction), followed by work on interior features. All of the proposed work that will be undertaken on the property is included, not just the work for which the tax credit will be sought. Treatments and processes such as masonry cleaning techniques are included in the descriptions.

Supporting photographs should show the interior and the exterior before rehabilitation and include the building's site and environment, all of the building's elevations, all major interior spaces and features, and representative secondary spaces and features, including areas where no work is proposed.

The Part 2 includes an estimate for rehabilitation costs for the proposed work which are defined as the project's total estimated Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures. Qualified expenditures are determined in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

It is strongly recommended that the Part 2 be submitted, reviewed, and approved prior to the beginning of construction work. Owners who undertake construction work prior to approval from the National Park Service do so at their own risk.

Part 3 – Certification of Completed Work is submitted after the construction work is completed to document that the work was completed as approved in the Part 2 application. National Park Service approval of the Part 3 certifies that the project meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* and is a certified rehabilitation. The Part 3 certification is required before the federal tax credits may be taken.

Like the Part 2, the Part 3 application form is organized by feature. Photographs of the building are provided to show the rehabilitation work after completion using the same views as in the Part 2 so that comparisons can be made.

The Part 3 records the project completion date, which is the date that all work related to the project was completed.

Both the estimated rehabilitation costs and the total estimated costs, which includes the costs attributable to the rehabilitation plus all other project costs, are also reported on the form. As in the Part 2, the estimated rehabilitation costs are defined as the project's total estimated Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

Criteria and Guidelines

Work proposed for projects taking advantage of the 20% federal tax credit are reviewed by the National Park Service for their conformance with the *Secretary*

of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, discussed in Chapter 2. The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* are a series of best practices for the treatment of historic buildings and historic building fabric. While their interpretation allows some degree of flexibility, interpretation with respect to federal tax incentives can be rigorous because of the substantial financial benefit derived.

In review for the federal tax credit, the *Standards* are applied to the proposed rehabilitation work on the historic building without regard to other considerations that might be beneficial to the overall goals of Topeka's downtown revitalization. For instance, the fact that a proposed project might be good for the overall economic viability of Downtown Topeka is not a consideration. The review focuses specifically on the appropriate treatment of the historic building.

The National Park Service reviews the proposed work for each individual building feature outlined in the Part 2 application described above. The *Standards* are applied to the treatment proposed for each feature individually, and any serious issues related to the inappropriate treatment of any one feature can create a problem with respect to the entire application.

Compliance with the *Standards* is applied to both interior and exterior work. The entire rehabilitation project is reviewed, including any attached, adjacent, or related new construction on the property. The *Standards* are applied in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. Certification is based on whether the overall project meets the *Standards*. To be certified, a rehabilitation project must be determined to be consistent with the historic character of the building as well as to the historic district.

The information provided in subsequent chapters of these design guidelines is based on the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* and should be useful in the design of projects using federal rehabilitation tax credits. As mentioned previously, however, early and ongoing consultation with the staff of the Kansas Historical Society is strongly recommended.

10% Federal Tax Credit

In addition to the 20% tax credit discussed above, the federal government also offers a federal income tax credit as an incentive for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings. The tax credit is equal to 10% of a property owner's investment in the rehabilitation of a qualified non-historic building.

Buildings must be income-producing, have been constructed before 1936, and be rehabilitated for non-residential use (hotels do qualify). Buildings cannot be listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Within Downtown Topeka's South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District, most pre-1936 non-contributing buildings identified in the historic district's National Register nomination would be eligible for the 10% tax credit. Most of these buildings have been determined non-contributing because previous changes have compromised the buildings' historic integrity.

As with the 20% tax credit, rehabilitation projects using the 10% tax credit must be substantial in that the rehabilitation costs must exceed the greater of $5,000

or the adjusted basis of the building, discussed above. Physical requirements for the rehabilitation state that at least 50% of the building's exterior walls must remain in place as exterior walls, at least 75% of the exterior walls must remain in place as exterior or interior walls, and at least 75% of the building's internal structural framework must remain in place.

The 10% tax credit is claimed on IRS Form 3468. There is no formal review process for the program, but within historic districts, applicants for the 10% credit must file a Part 1 to have their building certified as non-contributing.

Kansas State Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credit program has been in place since 2001 and has been used by over 1400 organizations and individuals within the state as of the date of this publication.

The Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credit program has become a national model for the revitalization of historic communities. The application process for use of the tax credit is simpler and faster than the process for use of federal rehabilitation tax credits. Consequently, the Kansas program has been useful for many projects of smaller size and cost than the federal program. In Downtown Topeka, the state tax credit should be a strong incentive for use in small retail and storefront rehabilitation projects. For larger projects, the state tax credit may be used in addition to the federal tax credit.

Like the federal program, the Kansas Historical Society's Cultural Resources Division is responsible for administering the Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credit program. The information below is obtained primarily from publications of the Kansas Historical Society (KHS 2016).

Overview of Financial Benefits and Requirements

The Kansas program provides a tax credit equal to **25% of qualified expenditures** for the rehabilitation of historic properties undergoing rehabilitation. Both income-producing and non-income-producing historic properties are eligible, even private residences. Properties owned by certified 501(c)3 non-profit, tax exempt organizations may be entitled to a **30% tax credit**, which is transferrable.

Tax credits may be taken against the Kansas state income tax, privilege tax, or premiums tax. The privilege tax is a state tax assessed against the net earnings of financial institutions in Kansas. The premiums tax is a state tax on insurance premiums collected in Kansas. The tax credits may be taken by the owner of the historic property or may be **transferred or sold** to other taxpayers. The credits are awarded for the tax year in which the rehabilitation project work is completed and may be **carried forward** for 10 years.

To use the state tax credit, buildings being rehabilitated must be **qualified historic structures**. Qualified structures are those listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Register of Historic Kansas Places, or contributing buildings within a National Register or State Register Historic District.

Kansas Administrative Regulations 118-5-1 for the state rehabilitation tax credit state that **qualified expenditures** against which the tax credit may be taken in

cases where the federal tax credit is being taken are those allowed by the federal government. In cases where the federal tax credit is not being taken, qualified expenditures are costs and expenses incurred by a qualified taxpayer in the restoration and preservation of a qualified historic structure pursuant to a **qualified rehabilitation plan** (Part 2 below). These expenses are deemed to have been incurred when the project is certified by the Kansas Historical Society as a **completed qualified rehabilitation** (certification of Part 3 below).

In Downtown Topeka, buildings listed as **contributing** buildings in the National Register nomination for the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District or Mill Block Historic District are deemed qualified for use of the tax credit. Projects that qualify and are approved by the National Park Service for the 20% federal rehabilitation tax credit will also qualify for the Kansas state tax credit.

Expenses for rehabilitation projects using the tax credit must exceed $5,000. There is no cap on project expenses nor is there a limit to the number of times an owner may apply and take the state tax credit. There is no time limit on a rehabilitation project. A project remains open until closed by the property owner.

Application and Review Process

Applications for the Kansas Rehabilitation Tax Credit are reviewed by the Kansas Historical Society. Applications must be reviewed and approved **before work begins**; the state tax credit cannot be used retroactively. The application forms are in three parts, similar to the applications for the federal tax credit.

The Kansas Historical Society is given **30 days** to review the project from the date of receipt of a complete application, including the Part 1 and Part 2 as noted below. Because of this mandated timeframe and the fact that theirs is the only review, the process is much quicker than that for the federal tax credit.

Like the federal tax credit, every project should begin with a meeting with staff of the Kansas Historical Society to verify that the property qualifies for the program, review the proposed project, and confirm application and review processes.

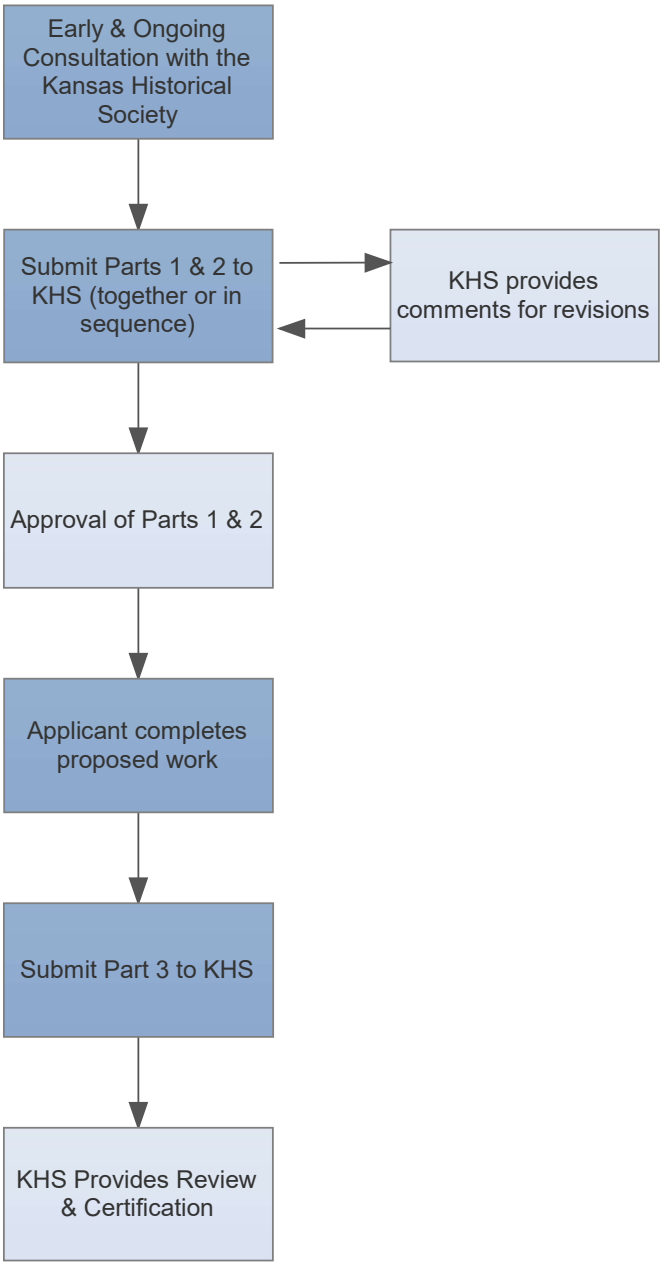
Part 1 – Qualified Historic Structure Certification is a one-page form to document that the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Register of Historic Kansas Places or is a contributing building within a National Register or State Register Historic District. The form includes basic information about the building such as name, address, and ownership. Once reviewed and approved, a copy of the approved and signed Part 1 form is mailed to the property owner. Part 1 and Part 2 applications are often submitted concurrently for state tax credits.

Part 2 – Qualified Rehabilitation Certification is submitted to certify that the proposed work meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Part 2 is the qualified rehabilitation plan for the project. As noted above, the Part 2 must be reviewed and approved before any construction work is begun on the project.

The Part 2 application for state tax credits is similar to that for federal tax credits. Sections are provided in which each architectural feature that is part of the project is described along with the proposed work on that feature. The feature is

identified along with its approximate date of construction and description of its current condition. Photographs of current conditions are provided for review. The rehabilitation work to be undertaken on the feature is then described in detail. The description includes the anticipated effect—visual, structural, or other—that the work will have on the feature.

Kansas State Rehabilitation Tax Credits



Architectural drawings are submitted in PDF or other format to show the proposed work along with the required existing condition photographs. Descriptions should include the materials, methods, and specifics of the project.

Part 3 – Rehabilitation Completion Certification is submitted when all of the work is completed to confirm that the work was completed as approved. Upon review and approval by the Kansas Historical Society, the project is deemed a completed qualified rehabilitation, and the applicant is issued a certificate verifying that they may claim the tax credit.

The Part 3 application form consists of an introductory section with project background information such as the date of start and completion of the work, square footage of the building, and the amount spent on qualifying and non-qualifying rehabilitation expenses. Photographs are then provided showing all completed work. All features addressed in the Part 2 application should have a corresponding Part 3 photo showing that the proposed work was completed as approved.

The Part 3 also includes Schedules I & II required by the Kansas Dept. of Revenue (KDOR) which allows them to verify the project's qualifying expenses. Once the Kansas Historical Society receives the KDOR audit approval, the certification can be issued.

Criteria and Guidelines

As with federal tax credits, all projects are reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, discussed in Chapter 2. The entire rehabilitation project must meet the *Standards* in order to be approved, even portions of the project that are not considered historic and are not qualifying rehabilitation expenses for the purposes of the tax credit. If portions of the project are found not to meet the *Standards*, alternative treatments that do must be identified and documented.

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* have been developed as a series of best practices to guide work undertaken on historic buildings. The *Standards* assume that some repair or alteration of historic buildings will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use. However, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy historic materials, features, or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character.

Like the review for the federal tax credit, the *Standards* are applied to the proposed rehabilitation work on the historic building without regard to other considerations that might be beneficial to the overall goals of Topeka's downtown revitalization. The review focuses specifically on the appropriate treatment of the historic building.



KANSAS PRESERVATION ACT

Projects in Topeka's downtown historic districts not undergoing design review for federal or state tax credits are subject to review under the Kansas Preservation Act. Review is also required of projects undertaken by the state, county, and city.

Chapter 75 of Kansas Statutes Annotated (KSA) addresses State Departments, Public Officers and Employees. Article 27 of the chapter outlines the duties and responsibilities of the State Historical Society. Enacted in 1977 and amended in 1981 and 2013, Article 27 includes sections KSA 75-2701 through KSA 75-2754. Within Article 27, Sections KSA 75-2715 through KSA 67-2725 are officially known as the Historic Preservation Act and informally as the Kansas Preservation Act.

Section KSA 75-2715 of the Kansas Preservation Act declares historic preservation the **policy of the state**. The section declares that it is in the public interest for the state to engage in a comprehensive program of historic preservation and to foster and promote the conservation and use of historic property for the education, inspiration, pleasure and enrichment of Kansas citizens.

In developing this policy, Section KSA 75-2724 of the Act requires the **review of construction projects** for properties included in the National Register of Historic Places or Register of Historic Kansas Places to ensure that the proposed work will not damage or destroy the historic properties. Review is required for both public and private properties, including any construction project requiring a building permit in a political subdivision.

The statute states that no such project shall be undertaken until the State Historic Preservation Officer has been given notice and an opportunity to investigate and comment upon the proposed project. If the State Historic Preservation Officer

determines that the proposed project will damage or destroy the historic property, the project shall not proceed unless further steps are taken as outlined in the next section of this chapter.

The Executive Director of the Kansas Historical Society serves as the State Historic Preservation Officer for Kansas. Reviews of proposed projects involving historic buildings are undertaken under the Executive Director's authority by staff of the Kansas Historical Society's Cultural Resources Division, which serves as the the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office.

In Topeka, however, the Kansas Historical Society delegates its review to the city's **Landmarks Commission** and planning staff as permitted by the Kansas Preservation Act because of Topeka's local historic preservation program. Topeka's designation as a Certified Local Government in accordance with the state and federal Certified Local Government program meets the requirements of the Act in authorizing delegation of project review responsibilities.

In Downtown Topeka, all interior and exterior construction projects requiring building permits within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District undergo review by the Landmarks Commission in accordance with the Kansas Preservation Act.

Within a **National Register Historic District**, reviews are undertaken for any project involving a historic property and/or requiring a government action, such as issuance of a building permit. In Downtown Topeka, all interior and exterior construction projects requiring building permits within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District undergo review by the Landmarks Commission in accordance with the Kansas Preservation Act. Projects reviewed include those related to **contributing** historic buildings as well as **non-contributing** buildings and **new construction**.

Projects within Topeka's four residential National Register Historic Districts are subject to the same review process as the two downtown historic districts. They include National Register Historic Districts in the Potwin Place, Holliday Park, and College Avenue neighborhoods as well as the Church of Assumption National Register District.

Outside of Topeka's National Register Historic Districts, any other buildings in Topeka that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Register of Historic Kansas Places must also be reviewed by the Landmarks Commission under the Act. Any of these projects will benefit from the use of the Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines in their planning and design.

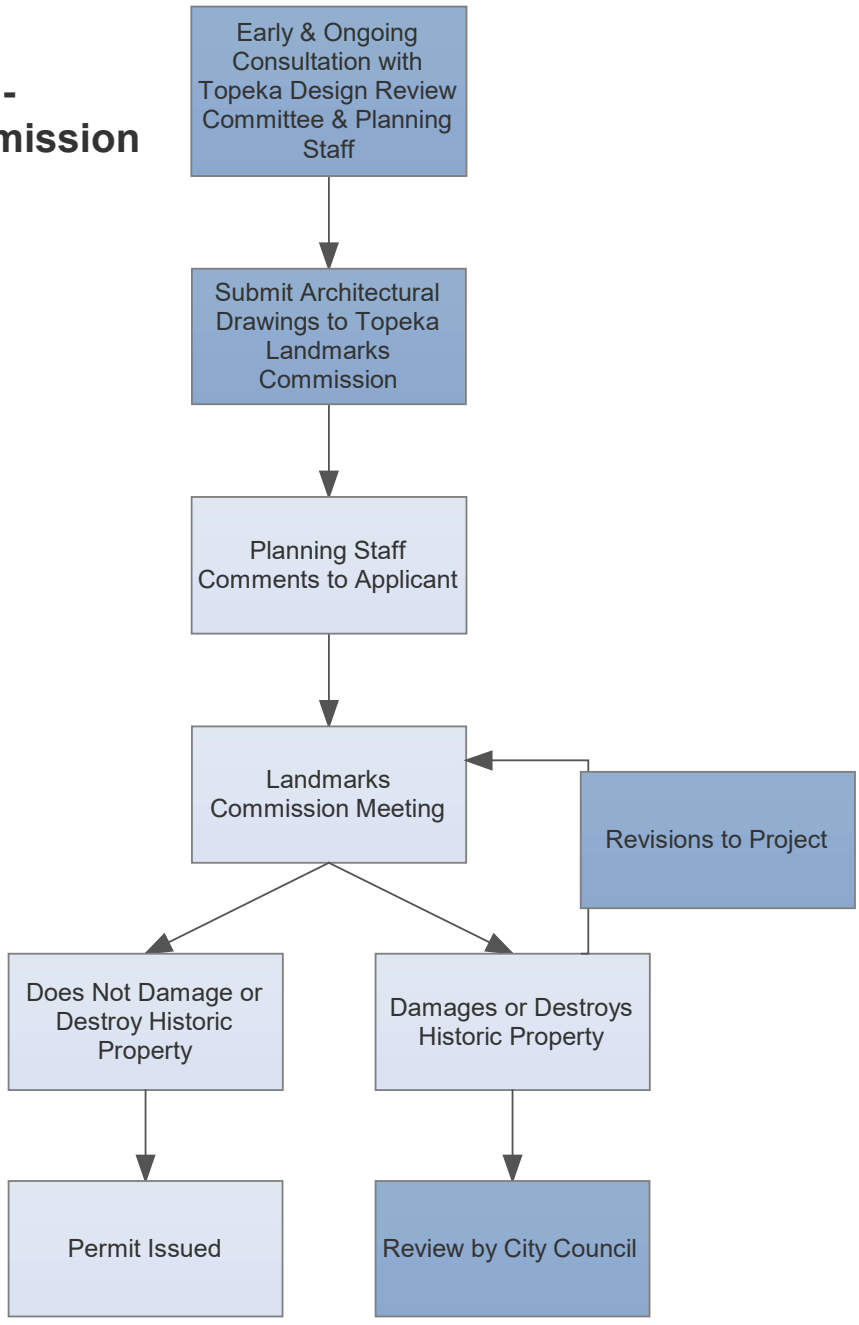
Application and Review Process

Every applicant is strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Landmark Commission's **Design Review Committee** early in the design process to review the proposed project and confirm application and review processes. The purpose of the Design Review Committee is to provide assistance to owners of and potential investors in historic properties in complying with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* and applicable design guidelines.

Informal meetings with the Design Review Committee may be organized on relatively short notice by arrangement through Topeka's Planning Department. Meetings at the conceptual design and design development phases during the preparation of construction documents are strongly encouraged to share information, discuss issues, and obtain guidance. Early informational meetings

with the full Landmarks Commission may also be useful, particularly for large and complicated projects.

Kansas Preservation Act - Landmarks Commission Review



Official application for project review may be initiated through Topeka's Planning Department. Major projects within Topeka's National Register Historic Districts or that are listed on the National or State Registers are referred for review by the **Landmarks Commission** under the Kansas Preservation Act. (Projects designated as Local Historic Landmarks are similarly referred, though with respect to the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance, not the state Act.) *No building permit will be issued until after the Landmarks Commission review process is completed and a positive determination is made.*

Minor projects and repairs may be reviewed and approved by Planning staff and/or the Landmark Commission's Design Review Committee.

In making a submission to the Landmarks Commission, applicant should provide:

- A **transmittal letter** requesting review, identifying the work to be done, and providing the property address and name of the authorized contact person; and
- Complete **architectural drawing**s as required for building permit application, including site plan, floor plans, elevations, wall sections, and details as appropriate.

In addition, the applicant should provide the Planning Department with **photographs** of the project accurately and fully depicting the site and setting of the historic structure, including:

- A general overall view from the street;
- The relevant exterior elevations;
- Detailed close-ups of the specific exterior or interior architectural features, including windows, doors, porches, and stairs, and
- The interior views of rooms that will be affected by the proposed project.

The applicant should consult with the Planning Department on requirements for these photographs. The Planning Department and/or Landmarks Commission may request that additional information on the project be provided by the applicant to answer questions or facilitate the project review.

Project information will be provided to the **Design Review Committee** for their review and written comments and recommendations to be submitted to the project architect in advance of the public meeting. Applicants are encouraged to meet with the Design Review Committee as they undertake their official review to discuss the project and answer any outstanding questions.

Planning Department staff will prepare a project summary, comments, and recommendations for the Landmarks Commission to be presented at the public meeting. All **interested persons** may provide written comments on the proposed project to the Landmarks Commission and/or may appear to make a statement at the public meeting.

The applicant and their design professionals will be invited to make a presentation of the project at the **public meeting**. Planning Department staff will present their project summary and recommendations. The Design Review Committee will present their comments and recommendations. Any interested

persons will be invited to submit comments and/or speak in accordance with meeting procedures.

Landmarks Commission members will review the project with the applicant and their design professionals. The standards and guidelines for making a determination on the project are outlined in the Kansas Administrative Regulations (KAR 118-3-8) and are discussed in the following section. Upon completion of the review and discussion, **the Landmarks Commission will determine** by majority vote of its members that:

- The project **does not damage or destroy** the listed historic property because it meets the standards and guidelines established in KAR 118-3-8; or that
- The project **will damage or destroy** the listed historic property because it does not meet the standards and guidelines established in KAR 118-3-8.

If a positive determination is made, the Landmarks Commission has approved the project, and a building permit may be issued. If a negative determination is made, the Landmarks Commission shall prepare a **response letter** stating why the project will have an adverse effect and outline the standards and guidelines that are not met.

The response letter may also include **suggestions for approval** if in the Landmark Commission's opinion the project could be revised to meet the standards and guidelines. If the applicant incorporates the suggestions for approval in a revised proposal and/or provides additional information to adequately address the concerns of the Landmarks Commission, the revised proposal or additional information shall be submitted to the Landmarks Commission and a new determination may be made.

Depending upon the degree of the issues to be resolved, the Landmarks Commission may authorize Planning Department staff to review and act upon a revised submission on its behalf. In some cases, the outlines of a revised submission may be agreed to by the Landmarks Commission and the applicant at the public hearing, with revised documents to be submitted and reviewed by Planning Department staff for their conformance with the agreement. A Certificate of Appropriateness may then be issued; otherwise, a response letter will be prepared.

Determinations of the Landmarks Commission shall be **reported** to the Kansas Historical Society in accordance with the City of Topeka's agreement with the Kansas Historical Society for the transfer of review authority under the Kansas Preservation Act.

In the case that a determination has been made that that a proposed project will damage or destroy the historic property, a building permit shall not be issued and the project shall not proceed. However, the applicant may **appeal** the determination of the Landmarks Commission to Topeka City Council as authorized by KSA 75-2724 and outlined in the next section of this chapter.

Criteria and Guidelines

The legal criteria that the Landmarks Commission must use in reviewing a project under KSA 75-2724 of the Kansas Preservation Act is whether the proposed project will **damage or destroy** a listed historic property. All proposed projects within a National Register Historic District such as the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and Mill Block Historic District in Downtown Topeka are subject to review, including contributing buildings, non-contributing buildings, and new construction.

For buildings listed as **contributing** to the significance of the historic district, impacts may be on interior or exterior historic features. For **non-contributing** buildings and **new construction**, impacts may be on adjacent historic buildings or on the character of the historic district as a whole. For the purposes of the Kansas Preservation Act, a "listed historic property" can mean an individual building within the historic district or the historic district as a whole.

The standards and guidelines to be used by the Landmarks Commission in making its determination are the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, 1995 edition, as set forth in KAR 118-3-8. In particular, the Secretary's ***Standards for Rehabilitation*** are most relevant with respect to buildings in Downtown Topeka. The *Standards for Rehabilitation* are discussed in Chapter 2 of this document, and its principles are applied to a variety of applications in the subsequent chapters herein.

Unlike in a tax credit review, impacts and effects for the purposes of the Kansas Preservation Act are accumulative, rather than being applied to every individual feature wherein a negative impact on an individual feature can result in a negative determination for the whole project.

Specifically, in undertaking its review, the Landmarks Commission must determine whether negative impacts on a listed property related to a project **rise to the level** of "damage or destroy." Unlike in a tax credit review, impacts and effects for the purposes of the Kansas Preservation Act are **accumulative**, rather than being applied to every individual feature wherein a negative impact on an individual feature can result in a negative determination for the whole project*. In this regard, the Landmarks Commission has some latitude in rendering its interpretation as to the accumulative impact.*

A project does not "damage or destroy" an historic property or historic district when the Landmarks Commission determines that the proposed project meets the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*. In most circumstances, the *Standards* will be met when the project recognizes, preserves, and appropriately treats the **character-defining features** of an historic building and the historic district. Character-defining features are defined in KAR 118-3-1 as "those physical characteristics and elements that indicate the integrity, design, and materials of the listed historic property."

As outlined in Chapter 2, project designers should **identify** the character-defining features and authentic historic fabric of a building at the beginning of every project and should work to preserve and enhance those features in developing their designs. The character of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District as a whole is discussed in Chapter 2 and includes a **diversity** of periods, styles, types, and sizes. Often such diversity is present within a single building. *Designers should identify the character-defining features of the historic district within the **vicinity** of their project and work with that character in their designs just as they should do for the individual features within their buildings.*

Alteration of a contributing historic building within the historic district in which character-defining features and historic building fabric are lost or inappropriately treated with respect to the *Standards* would be grounds for a determination that the project will "damage or destroy" the historic building. The Landmarks Commission must determine that the accumulative effect of the proposed inappropriate treatments, including both interior and exterior features, rises to the level that the proposal will "damage and destroy" the historic building.

A similar determination must be made with respect to the historic district as a whole. While diversity may a be significant characteristic of the district, a proposal could dramatically alter the character of the district in the vicinity of the project in an inappropriate way. *Demolition of a non-contributing building that would create a gap in the wall of buildings along the streetscape might be an action that would rise to the level of "damage or destroy" with respect to the district as a whole.*

Character-defining features are defined in KAR 118-3-1 as "those physical characteristics and elements that indicate the integrity, design, and materials of the listed historic property."

Similar to a review for a rehabilitation tax credit, a review under the Kansas Preservation Act applies the *Standards* to a proposed project without regard to other considerations that might be beneficial to the overall **goals of Topeka's downtown revitalization**. *The fact that a proposed project might be good for the overall economic viability of Downtown Topeka is not a consideration. The review focuses specifically on the appropriate treatment of the historic building and the historic district.*

In identifying character defining features:

- Consider the various periods and styles of construction and change associated with a building—in Downtown Topeka, a single building may have multiple periods of significance;
- Identify the various design characteristics, features, and materials associated with each period and style;
- Determine the extent to which each feature and material retains integrity—loss of integrity occurs when a design, feature, or material has been significantly altered, damaged, or removed such that it no longer retains its original form, character, or appearance;
- Develop approaches and treatments that maximize the preservation and rehabilitation of remaining character defining features.

The following section of this chapter addresses an applicant's right to appeal a decision of the Landmarks Commission should they disagree with its conclusion by requesting review by Topeka City Council.



REQUEST FOR REVIEW UNDER THE PRESERVATION ACT

The Kansas Preservation Act includes provisions by which the determination of Topeka's Landmarks Commission with respect to a proposed project might be appealed to the Topeka City Council. Section 75-2724 of the Act states that when a determination is made that a proposed project will damage or destroy a listed historic property, the project shall not proceed until the governing body of the political subdivision (in this case Topeka City Council) has made a determination that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposal.

Preference to making such an appeal to City Council would be for an applicant to work out revisions to the design of the project with the Landmarks Commission, as discussed above, such that the Landmarks Commission could make a new determination that the project will not damage or destroy the listed historic property. When it is not possible to work out such agreement, the process outlined below should be used.

Following consideration, City Council may approve issuance of a building permit only if the council determines that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the proposal and that the proposal includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the historic property. These design guidelines outline the process and suggested criteria in making such determinations.

Application and Review Process

Request for review of a decision of the Landmarks Commission by City Council with respect to the Kansas Preservation Act should be **made by the applicant by letter** to City Council submitted to the City Manager with a copy to the Director of the Planning Department. The applicant's letter should be submitted after the Landmarks Commission has prepared and issued its **response letter** stating why

the project will have an adverse effect and outlines the standards and guidelines that are not met.

In their letter, the applicant should outline their **reasons for requesting** that City Council make a determination that the project should proceed. Any additional information about the project needed for consideration by City Council should be provided by the applicant at the time the letter requesting further review is submitted.

Upon receipt and in consultation with the applicant, the City Manager will **schedule a review** of the project at a regularly scheduled meeting of City Council. Such review shall be scheduled within a reasonable timeframe that allows all of the interested parties time to prepare for the review. The City Manager may request that the project have a preliminary review at a work session of City Council in advance of a formal meeting.

There are no **timeframes** stipulated in state statutes or regulations with respect to either when an applicant's request for review must be made or within which a review by City Council must be made.

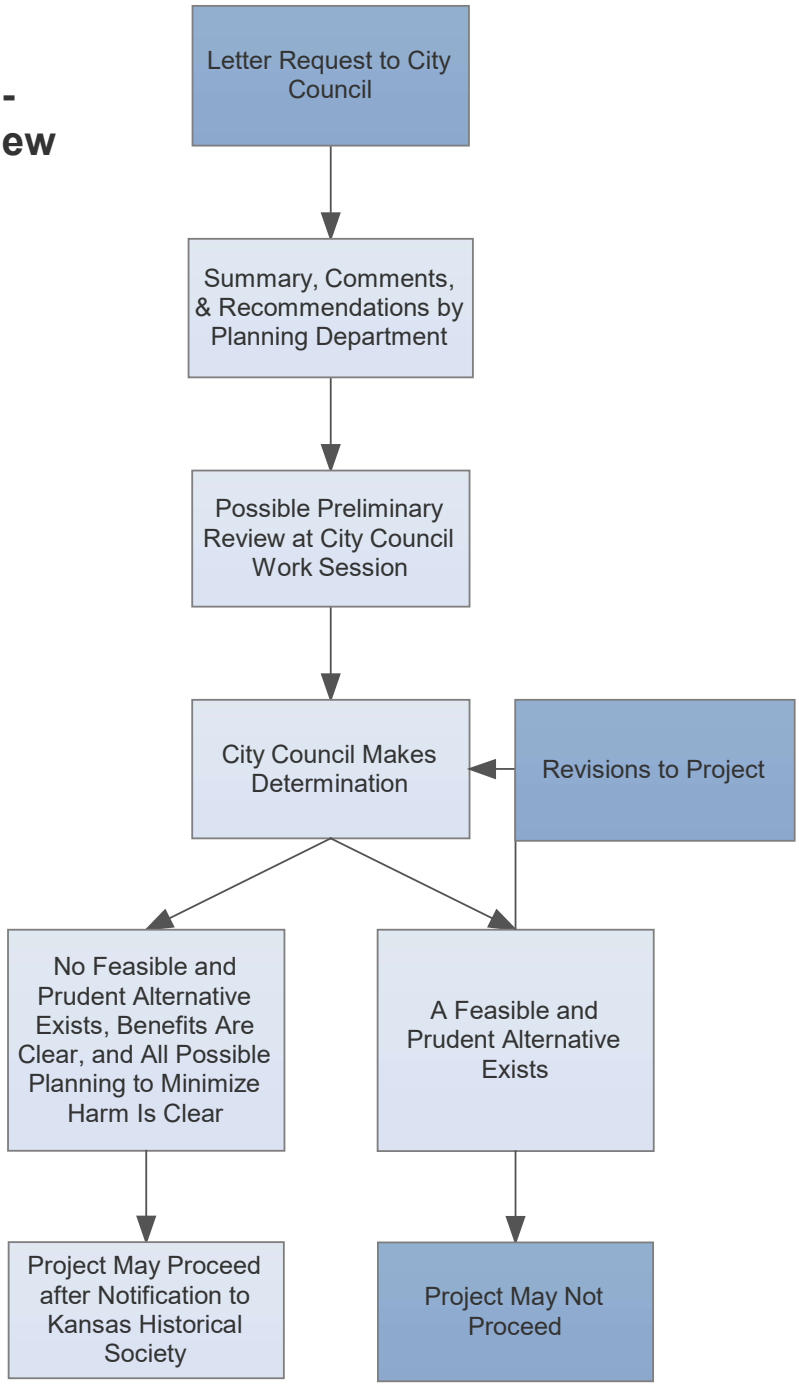
In advance of the meeting of City Council, **Planning Department** staff should prepare a summary of the project with comments and recommendations for consideration by City Council. Such comments and recommendations may differ from those prepared for the Landmarks Commission, taking into consideration additional criteria and guidelines as permitted under the Kansas Preservation Act.

The **Landmarks Commission** may also submit its comments and recommendations in regard to the additional criteria and guidelines, which may differ from the determination in its letter of response. In addition, all **interested persons** may provide written comments on the proposed project to City Council and/or may appear to make a statement at the City Council meeting.

Upon reviewing the project at its public meeting and hearing from the applicant, Planning Department, Landmarks Commission, and other interested parties, City Council shall make a determination as to whether or not the project should proceed. After making its determination, KSA 75-2724 and KAR 118-3-6 and 118-3-13 state that no action relative to the project shall be taken until at least **five working days after notification** of City Council's determination has been given by certified mail to the State Historic Preservation Officer (Kansas Historical Society). The State Historic Preservation Officer will review City Council's findings and make a determination of whether or not further action on the part of the Kansas Historical Society is required.

Should City Council determine that a project should not proceed, the applicant may appeal City Council's decision through the Kansas court system.

Kansas Preservation Act - City Council Review



Criteria and Guidelines

The Kansas Preservation Act states that a project that has been determined will damage or destroy a listed historic property shall not proceed unless the governing body (City Council) "has made a determination, based on a consideration of all relevant factors, that there is **no feasible and prudent alternative** to the proposal and that the program includes all possible planning to minimize harm to such historic property resulting from such use."

Kansas Preservation Act regulations (KAR 118-3-1) define "feasible and prudent alternative" as "an alternative solution that can be reasonably accomplished and that is sensible or realistic." Factors that shall be considered when determining whether or not a feasible and prudent alternative exists include:

- Technical issues;
- Design issues;
- The project's relationship to the community-wide plan; and
- Economic issues.

That the "program includes all possible planning" is defined to mean "that the written evidence and materials submitted by a government entity to the state historic preservation officer clearly identify all alternative solutions that have been investigated, compare the differences among the alternative solutions and their effects, and describe mitigation measures proposed by the project proponent that address adverse effect determination." City Council must meet this requirement in its notification to the Kansas Historical Society after making its determination.

These definitions give City Council latitude in:

- Making a determination that a project is in the best interest of the city in accordance with city plans despite the fact that a historic property will be adversely effected; and
- Negotiating mitigation measures to address adverse effects.

The Landmarks Commission does not have such latitude or authority, and decision to allow a project to proceed despite adverse affects on a listed historic property can only be made by City Council.

In general, it is strongly preferred that all projects be in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Kansas Preservation Act and the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*.

Under some conditions, however, it may be appropriate to allow for implementation of new projects that do not fully comply with the *Standards*. In some cases, projects may be proposed that enhance Downtown Topeka's character and economy while not being in full accord with the *Standards*. A **balance** between the degree of effect on the historic resources and the potential benefits to downtown revitalization must be sought. Such adverse effects should be minimal, while the **benefits should be clear**, including overall benefits to historic character and remaining historic resources. *Downtown Topeka can little afford to lose more historic buildings.*

A basis for such consideration may be the diversity of historic buildings, forms, sizes, and styles in Downtown Topeka. As described in Chapter 2, change has been a characteristic of Downtown Topeka over its history, from the mid-19th century to the present. Some of that change has been dramatic. Some continued comparable change may be acceptable in the future yielding benefits in use, vitality, and enhancement of character.

However, any such changes should not be taken lightly. Mitigation, when allowed, should be designed to minimize adverse effects. When there is clear loss, mitigation to ameliorate that loss should have a clear and strong positive impact. Preservation and appropriate treatment of historic building fabric should be a primary requirement of any approved project.

Recommended **considerations** for approval of projects being reviewed by the City Council under the Kansas State Preservation Act include that the proposed project:

- Is a substantial, contributing use of clear public benefit to revitalization of the Downtown Topeka, either as an anchor project or as a small project with minimal negative impact;
- Enhances vitality in the streetscape and is of benefit to adjacent historic properties;
- Emphasizes historic character and, though not in full compliance with the *Standards*, adequately addresses the preservation and appropriate treatment of existing historic building fabric;
- Is compatible with and enhances the overall character of the historic district;
- Exhibits exceptional design quality;
- Has no negative impacts to the historic district's primary contributing historic buildings of high integrity; and
- Mitigates any adverse effects on other contributing historic buildings.

D-1 ZONING REVIEW

As discussed in Chapter 1, the current C-5 and proposed D-1 districts encompass all of Downtown Topeka and include the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District within them. The D-1 District ordinance includes design guidelines to promote appropriate urban, mixed-use development for downtown. In general, the review of projects with respect to compliance with the D-1 design guidelines is undertaken by the Planning Department staff.

Within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District, however, these Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines will be substituted for those within the D-1 ordinance, and the review processes by the Landmarks Commission and City Council under the Kansas Preservation Act outlined above will be followed. It is recommended that an applicant be familiar with the goals and requirements of the D-1 District in planning their project and review them with Planning Department staff in early stages of design for a new project.



CHAPTER 4 – ROOFING SYSTEMS

Roofing systems are among the most critical elements of a building with respect to proper maintenance and protection from the elements. Providing a weather-tight roof is critical to maintaining historic buildings and should be addressed before any other concern. Roofs not only keep water out of a building's interior, they, more importantly, keep water out of the roof structure and exterior walls.

Providing a weather-tight roof is critical to maintaining historic buildings and should be addressed before any other concern.

If roofing is not properly maintained, damage that can occur to the roof structure and exterior walls may go unnoticed for a long period of time. As a result of water infiltration, wood members will rot (especially at bearing points), metal elements will rust and expand, and masonry will deteriorate and crack when the water within the wall freezes. By the time these conditions become apparent, substantial damage may have occurred, requiring repairs that are much more costly than proper maintenance would have been.

From a visual standpoint, the roofs of most commercial buildings built since the mid-nineteenth century play a less prominent role than they did in buildings constructed before that time. In the early nineteenth century, the roofs of commercial buildings looked much like those of residential buildings. They generally had a similar character and scale, with steeply pitched gable roofs, often behind a false front. Common roofing materials included wood shingles, slate, and sheet metal. The roof forms and types of early buildings in downtown Topeka can be seen in photographs dating to the 1850s and 1860s.



Image of early buildings in Downtown Topeka between 1863-65 (KHS Kansas Memory)

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the scale of businesses increased as their customer base widened. Buildings became larger and more substantial. Businesses needed larger quarters, more display space, and better recognition. In addition, the constant risk of fire led businesses to construct new buildings using fireproof materials, in Topeka using local limestone.

These factors contributed to the creation of specialized commercial buildings. By the 1880s, commercial buildings in Downtown Topeka were larger and taller than surrounding earlier buildings. To create as much usable space as possible, gable roofs were replaced by nearly flat roofs sloping from front to back. The height of buildings was enhanced with the use of cornices and parapets added to the front facade.



Detail of a 1870-75 photograph of the southwest corner of Kansas Avenue and 6th Street (KHS Kansas Memory)

In the early nineteenth century, flat roofs, when they were used, were covered with flat-folded metal, which was expensive and prone to leaks. New roofing technology was introduced around 1830, when asphalt-saturated felt became available. Roofs of this type are commonly called "built-up" roofs, because the roof is composed of layers of material. Continuous rolls of rag fiber were laid on the roof, and then asphalt was applied with a brush. Later, coal tar was often added to the mix, which made it cheaper but less durable. Asbestos felt was used as early as 1900 and became the most common type of roofing material for commercial buildings. After World War II, wood pulp was generally used as the underlying material.

As building styles and designs became more elaborate in the late nineteenth century, special features such as mansards, cupolas, dormers, and complicated cornices were introduced for visual interest. These elaborate forms created valleys, scuppers, and wall intersections that are prone to failure. Since a variety of materials were used to create these features, it is important to understand how they interact. Metal, slate, and terra cotta are commonly found on these decorative elements of commercial buildings. Slate was popular for its durability, fireproof qualities, and decorative applications. Metal features were made of sheet iron, corrugated iron, galvanized metal, tinplate, copper, lead, and zinc. Awareness of these materials and their properties is crucial to the maintenance of any roof.

In recent years, new roofing materials such as rubber membranes have been introduced. Whenever possible, however, traditional materials should continue to be used in locations that are visually important to the character of the building. Replacing historic roof materials with contemporary materials can introduce new problems to a building's structure and historical integrity. Although traditional materials can be more expensive in the short term, they often last longer than contemporary materials. For instance, a slate roof may last more than a hundred years, metal roofs for sixty years, and cedar shingles for fifty or less. The average asphalt shingle roof, by contrast, lasts about twenty years. Proper maintenance and care can prolong the life of any roof.

ROOFING

Buildings in Downtown Topeka tend not to have complex roof elements as character-defining features. Decorative roof-related elements and materials are generally limited to those used in parapets and cornices. The principal features and characteristics of a roof include:

- Type/Shape – Flat, sloped, gable, hipped, gambrel, and mansard
- Roofing Materials – Asphalt, metal, slate, wood, terra cotta, rubber membrane, and other contemporary systems
- Elements – Cornices, flashing, gutters, downspouts, dormers, cupolas, skylights, hatches, and mechanical equipment
- Decorative Features – Finials, weathervanes, and crests

Maintenance

Inspection – When undertaking a rehabilitation project, study the entire roof system, know how it works, and identify any vulnerabilities. Follow the path of moisture from the roof to the ground. Ensure that the roof has the capacity to shed the rainwater it receives.

RECOMMENDED

- Inspect the roof to see that all roof surfaces are **watertight** and draining properly. Inspect to make sure that flashing is intact around chimneys, parapets, dormers, and valleys created by intersecting slopes.
- The roof should be adequately **vented** to prevent moisture condensation.
- If rafter ends and **eaves** have been left open in the past, they should remain open when new work is undertaken. To enclose the eaves would unnecessarily alter the historic appearance of the building.
- Clear any bird or **animal nests** that block vents. Check to see whether insects such as termites have infested any part of the roof.



The roofs of most early historic commercial buildings in Downtown Topeka slope from front to back.

Repair

The repair of existing roofs is a preferred alternative for projects except when the existing roof has reached its life expectancy. Repair, as opposed to replacement, is less critical for roofs that are not visible from the ground.

RECOMMENDED

- **Repair** deteriorated sections of historic roofing materials before considering the complete replacement of a roof.
- Leaking roofs can be temporarily patched or can be temporarily covered completely with plastic tarpaulin or roll roofing nailed in place. Without such ***temporary*** intervention, the deterioration of surviving building materials will be accelerated.

- Whenever possible, make repairs **in-kind**. In other words, use the same types of materials and techniques found on surviving historic sections of the roof.
- When in-kind replacement is not feasible, replacement materials should be **visually, physically, and chemically compatible** with any remaining historic roof material.

Replacement

Preparation – Protect adjacent architectural features and landscape elements from damage when undertaking a roof replacement project.

RECOMMENDED

- When replacing a roof, **remove existing** roofing materials before adding new materials. Removing old layers will prolong the life of the roof and restore the original profile of the roof edge.
- Inspect and repair the existing **roof deck** before installing new roofing.



Rubber membrane is the most common form of contemporary roofing for flat or gently sloping roofs not visible from the street. The membrane adapts to the form of the roof and is secured to the top of the parapet wall with a metal bar and waterproof seal.

Flat or Gently Sloping Roofs – The roofs of most historic commercial buildings in Topeka are gently sloping, front to back. Although roofing material is an important aspect of a building's design, this material is usually not visible from the ground or adjacent buildings on the gently sloping roofs of most commercial buildings.

RECOMMENDED

- If the roof **cannot be seen** from a public way, it is acceptable to use a contemporary roofing system that best meets functional needs. Rubber membrane roofing is the most common roofing material in present use.
- The chosen material must provide adequate **anchorage** against wind and precipitation. Roofs should never actually be flat but should always slope positively to gutters and roof drains.

- Flat and gently sloping roofs should be **regularly inspected** for maintenance issues that may arise.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Ponding** on a roof surface should never be permitted because the water can cuase further deterioration that causes leaks.

Metal Roofing – If possible, replace historic metal roofs in-kind. Traditional metal roofs are typically made of copper, lead-coated copper, terne-coated stainless steel, or terne-metal.

RECOMMENDED

- Replace metal roofing **in-kind** particularly when visible from the ground. Although some contemporary roofing systems that resemble traditional metal roofs are now available, their cost is often equivalent to traditional materials in the long run.
- While copper roofs may be left **unpainted**, terne-metal roofs must be **painted** to avoid deterioration.
- Match the proportion of **seams and trim** on replacement metal roofing to the seams and trim found on the historic roofing being replaced.

Decorative Roof Features – Decorative roof features and details that are visible from the street should be retained and repaired. When replacement is necessary due to the extent of deterioration, they should be replaced in-kind. Such features may include caps, finials, parapets, cornices, mansards, pent eaves, and other small roof-like sections near the top of exterior walls. (Also see Chapter 5, Exterior Walls, and Chapter 7, Architectural Detailing and Trim.)

RECOMMENDED

- Materials used in the replacement of detail roofing features should **match** the materials of the historic features, if possible.
- In recent years, a number of acceptable contemporary synthetic **substitute materials** have been developed that closely resemble the character and appearance of historic materials such as metal, slate, and terra cotta and may be acceptable.
- Contemporary substitute materials, if used, should **closely resemble** the original materials of the historic roof features in color, texture, pattern, profile, and thermal expansion characteristics.



The variety of cornices and associated materials can create complex details at roofs of historic buildings. Water must be prevented from entering the top of the wall.

Insulation – Rigid insulation may be installed over roof decks beneath new contemporary roof materials such as membrane roofing. Follow manufacturer's instructions.

RECOMMENDED

- When new insulation is installed beneath new roofing, minimize any visible changes in **roof thickness** that may be visually apparent.
- When batt insulation is installed in an attic or crawl space, install the batt insulation with a **vapor barrier** that faces toward the interior heated space to prevent the migration of moisture from the heated space into the insulation.
- **Blown insulation** should only be used in attics and crawl spaces where vapor barriers have been installed beneath it. Without such a barrier, moisture can condense within the insulation and roof structure and accelerate their deterioration.



Rooftop structures and attachments are visible on several of Topeka's taller buildings.

Rooftop Structures and Attachments

Rooftop Structures – If rooftop structures such as cupolas, towers, chimneys, penthouses, or dormer windows are present and are too deteriorated to repair, their form and detailing should be used to create appropriate replacements.

RECOMMENDED

- **Reconstruction** of features that have been completely removed or destroyed should only be undertaken if sufficient documentation is available.
- If reconstruction of missing features is desirable or necessary but adequate documentation cannot be found, design replacement features in a **current style** that is compatible with surviving features.
- Replacement structures should be **compatible** with the size, scale, material, and color of the building and adjacent buildings when appropriate. They should not obscure or damage the building's other historic character-defining features.

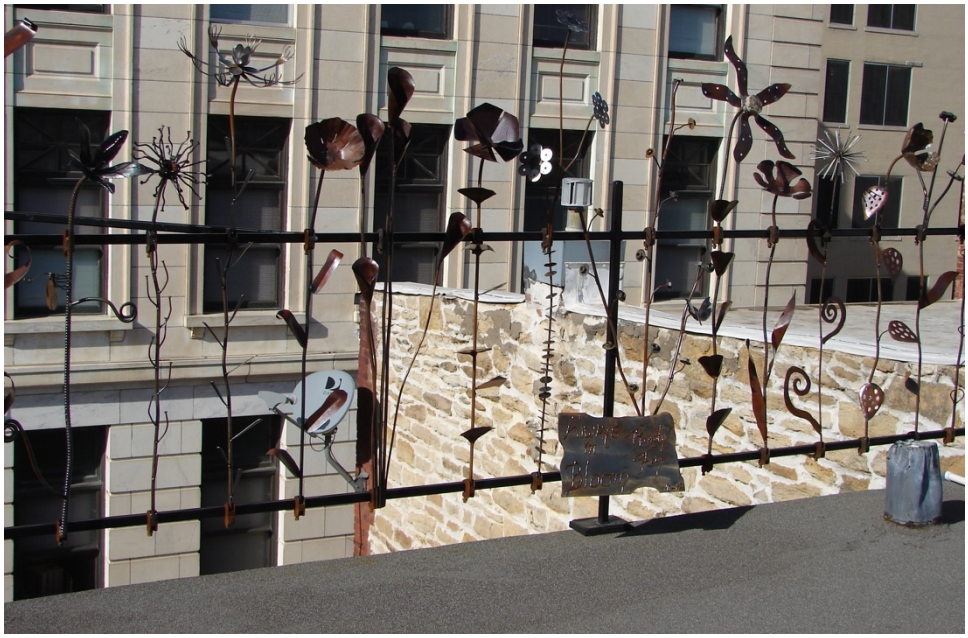
NOT RECOMMENDED

- Designs that create the **appearance of being old** are strongly discouraged because they obscure the character and significance of authentic historic features.

Attachments – Common rooftop attachments include antennas, satellite dishes, electrical transformers, skylights, solar panels, vents, air conditioning units, stairs, decks, railings, and terraces. The roofs of a number of historic commercial buildings in Topeka are used as outdoor decks, which is acceptable and desirable in encouraging residential uses downtown. Topeka is also known for its rooftop signs, which date back to the early twentieth century.

RECOMMENDED

- When installing rooftop attachments, **avoid damaging** the building's historic fabric.
- Whenever possible, install rooftop attachments so they are **not visible** from a public way, especially Kansas Avenue. Visibility from rear alleyways can be more flexible. Rooftop signs, when appropriate and permitted, are an exception (see Chapter 9, Signage).
- Rooftop attachments that are visible should be artistically and appropriately designed to be **compatible** with the character of the historic building and the district.
- The installation of **skylights**, solar panels, and similar features on visible roof areas raises aesthetic and preservation concerns but is not always unacceptable. Where such are installed, they should have a flush design and minimize any aesthetic impacts. The frame should be painted to match the color of the roofing material. The installation should not damage historic materials or detailing and should be fully reversible.



Artistic railing installed along the rear edge of a roof used as a terrace.

FLASHING

Flashing is a continuous metal barrier that acts as a seal at vulnerable roof joints. Standard flashing details have been developed by the roofing industry and should be closely adhered to. In general, flashing is a means of bridging and sealing the gap between dissimilar materials—especially those with different rates of expansion—or incompatible profiles or shapes.

Flashing ensures water-tightness at building and roofing corners, ridges, valleys, intersections, and other changes in plane that are prone to separation due to thermal expansion and contraction. Flashing points are critical to building maintenance and care and are a building's most vulnerable locations. Damaged flashing allows water to penetrate a building's interior and cause damage to walls and structure.

Because flashing locations are not readily visible and are often difficult to access, the quality of their design and installation is important, and a proactive routine of inspection and maintenance should be undertaken.

Maintenance

Inspection – Existing flashing should be inspected when undertaking a new project and as part of a yearly maintenance routine. Identify locations of flashing and note locations of particular vulnerability.

RECOMMENDED

- **Inspect** existing flashing that is to remain. In addition to looking for obvious flaws such as cracks or corrosion, check for small holes. Even pinholes are a sign of trouble, especially at mortar seals.
- If there is any concern about the integrity of a particular area, have a **qualified roofer** or contractor inspect the area to confirm observations.
- If flashing is not in a prominent location, **minor defects** can be immediately addressed on a short-term basis with temporary patches of roofing cement. Roofing cement should not be considered as a permanent repair.

Repair and Replacement

Repair or replace deteriorated flashing as soon as possible. Corroded flashing should be immediately replaced.

RECOMMENDED

- When flashing is deteriorated and repair or replacement is necessary, have a **qualified roofer** or contractor make any needed repairs or replacement using accepted standard industry detailing.
- Repair damaged flashing using materials and methods appropriate to the **existing material** (usually metal).
- Solicit experienced advice regarding the particular **type and gauge** (thickness) of metal that is best suited to building conditions. Common

flashing materials include copper, stainless steel, zinc alloy, terne, aluminum, and galvanized steel.

- It is important that flashing be secured with nails of the same material. **Dissimilar metals** in continuous contact can corrode and stain adjacent surfaces.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- New or replacement metal flashing should not be placed in contact with any other metal with which it has the potential for a corrosive reaction.
- Flashing should not be applied over wall or siding materials where it was not originally placed or was not intended.

GUTTERS, DRAINS AND DOWNSPOUTS

Maintenance

Inspection – The roofs of most early commercial buildings in Downtown Topeka slope toward the rear, where exterior-mounted gutters and downspouts direct surface flow to rear alleyways. Most contemporary buildings have a system of interior roof drains that conveys rainwater to an underground storm water system.

RECOMMENDED

- **Inspect** gutters, drains, and downspouts as part of planning for a new project and as part of a yearly maintenance routine. Optimal function of gutter, drain, and downspout systems under expected circumstances is the highest priority in their maintenance, design, and installation.



Exterior gutters and downspouts on the rear facades of historic buildings.

- Understand how the gutter system works. Make sure that **all areas** of the roof are drained.
- **Regularly clean** gutters, drains, and downspouts, and install gutter and drain guards to reduce the collection of leaves and other material. Failing to maintain gutters, drains, and downspouts can cause damage to roofing, fasteners, sheathing, and the underlying structure and is one of

the most common causes of building deterioration. Regular inspection and maintenance of gutters, drains, and downspouts will help prevent serious problems from occurring and prolong the life of the building and building elements.

- Verify the the system components are **adequately sized**. Observe performance during heavy rain events. Determine where and how the system becomes overwhelmed and what happens to the water.
- Ensure that the system carries rainwater **away from the building** either through surface flow or through underground piping. If surface flow, observe where the water goes and that it is adequately removed.



Through-wall metal scuppers and downspouts at the rear of two larger buildings. The decorative copper scupper on the left is a contributing historic feature. The rough modern metal scupper on the right is not; its downspout is probably undersized for the area of the roof it serves.

Replacement

Materials – When historic gutters and downspouts are character-defining features of the building and their replacement is necessary due to damage or deterioration, replace them in-kind.

RECOMMENDED

- When replacement of gutters and downspouts is necessary, replace them with **matching materials**, shapes, and configurations, assuming they function adequately.
- When **contemporary materials** are used, such as in rear alleyways not subject to view from public streets, use materials and colors that are appropriate to the building and are not overly visible.
- After undergoing a period of weathering, **galvanized** steel gutters and downspouts should be painted because they can rust and stain adjacent building materials.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Vinyl gutters** and downspouts are not appropriate materials because they are poor quality materials and have a short life expectancy.

Design – Design or select replacement gutters and downspouts that work with and do not alter the character of the building or architectural features or trim.

RECOMMENDED

- When replacement is necessary, make sure that the **configuration and placement** of gutters and downspouts works with the lines of the building and does not obscure architectural features or detailing, especially windows.
- On historic buildings, **half-round gutters** and round downspouts are preferred over Type-K (molding-shaped) corrugated gutters and downspouts. These forms were most common in earlier periods.
- Gutters, drains and downspouts should be **sized** to carry the amount of runoff generated by the areas of the roof they serve. Larger roof areas require larger gutters and downspouts. Seek the advice of mechanical engineers. Gutters and downspouts that are too small for the areas they serve are a common problem that leads to roof deterioration.



Gutters and downspouts are rare on the front, primary facades of Downtown Topeka buildings. This one collects water from a pent roof projecting out from the top of the wall. The material choices should have been of higher quality. The downspout should match the color of the brick. The boot should be cast iron, not PVC.

Installation – When installing replacement gutters and downspouts, be careful not to damage and to retain the building's historic architectural detailing.

RECOMMENDED

- Prevent damage to **existing historic fabric** when installing replacement gutters and downspouts. Use fasteners recommended by the manufacturer and appropriate to the material to which the gutter or downspout is being attached.
- Select an **anchoring system** that minimizes damage to the historic substrate.
- Attach gutters and downspouts **securely** to the eave, wall, or other feature using a sufficient number of anchors.
- Install gutters to have a **positive slope** to the downspout or drain.

- Replace any **missing or damaged sections** of gutter or downspouts in existing systems. Uncontrolled roof drainage can result in severe damage to masonry, foundations, and interiors.
- Install **splash blocks** beneath downspouts to carry water away from the foundation and limit soil erosion and subsidence.



Complex configurations of gutters, downspouts, and roof structures in Topeka's alleyways

Built-in Gutters – Existing built-in gutters—gutters incorporated into the roof structure—are usually character-defining features of a building and should be retained whenever possible. This is true even when they are on the rear of a historic building.

RECOMMENDED

- Built-in gutters should only be replaced if repair is not possible. Replace built-in gutters **in-kind** with matching materials, configurations, and design.
- If the existing system does not perform adequately, replace with a **similarly designed** system that is adequately sized and designed, and that approximates the appearance, form, and function of the original.
- If built-in gutters must be replaced with exterior mounted hanging gutters, cover the old built-in gutters with the new roofing material, and attach the new gutters to the fascia at the eaves of the roof. This helps **preserve both the architectural appearance** of the building and the historical record of the box gutter.



Decorative roof edge with copper gutter



Canopy at the Hotel Kansan; marquee at the Topeka Performing Arts Center

CANOPIES AND MARQUEES

Downtown merchants have long been concerned about keeping their customers dry when it is raining and cool in the heat of summer. In the mid-nineteenth century, it became common for shopkeepers to install poles at the edge of the sidewalk and extend a canvas across the walkway. (See the historic photograph of Downtown Topeka at the beginning of this chapter.) In some communities, businesses created a continuous canopy up and down the street by connecting the canopies of individual buildings or even constructing simple but permanent covers over the sidewalk.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as canvas awnings became more common, older-style pole and porch coverings were removed. Canvas awnings were a common feature of pre-air-conditioned retail and office buildings. Most canvas awnings could be rolled and stowed away at night. For a further discussion of awnings, see Chapter 6, Storefronts, Doors, and Windows.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, some types of businesses began to construct permanent canopies over their principal entrances. The availability of electricity inspired opera houses and movie theaters to build canopies because they attracted attention and provided advertising space for their productions. Most incorporated decorative interior and exterior lighting.

As these canopies became larger, they became known as marquees, the traditional term for a covered outdoor display. Marquees are present in Downtown Topeka on the Jayhawk Hotel and the Hotel Kansan. When the Beaux-Arts architectural style became popular in the 1920s, other types of businesses built hanging canopies as well. These canopies were often constructed by skilled craftsmen who worked with metal and glass.

As the more formal and decorative Beaux-Arts style faded in popularity in the 1930s, businesses constructed simpler canopies in the Moderne style. This trend continued into the 1960s. These canopies often feature streamlined aluminum or chrome panels. At that time, downtowns were beginning to compete with new malls and discount stores built outside the downtown core. Canopies of this type

encouraged additional pedestrian traffic by sheltering customers and emphasizing the updated look of the merchandise on display.

Downtown Topeka has a number of metal canopies installed in the 1960s when the storefronts of older historic buildings were modernized. These canopies are simple in design and made of corrugated aluminum, exposed on the top and bottom. Drainage flows to a small trough along the outside perimeter of the canopy leading to a downspout at the wall. In many instances the trough was not adequately sized, causing frequent overflows. The canopies were suspended above the street with chains or metal bars attached to the building's facade.

The canopies remaining in Downtown Topeka are significant architectural features that should be retained, even if their design does not appear to be compatible with the historic building's older facade. The addition of new canopies on historic buildings where none existed before would generally be inappropriate, but might be considered under appropriate circumstances and with adequate high-quality design.



Metal frame of a canopy on Kansas Avenue; modified and missing canopies at the Jayhawk Hotel

Maintenance

Public Safety – Inspect and verify that the structural design and structural components of the canopy are adequate to support its weight and potential snow loads. Assess their structural condition. Pay close attention to the anchors where the canopy supports anchor into the building facade.

Canopy Ceiling – Inspect the ceiling of the canopy to identify historic materials and components and assess their conditions.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain **contributing historic materials**, features, and components of the canopy. Determine original surface treatments. Retain any surface treatments that remain from the period when the canopy was installed if possible. Restore original surface treatments if possible.
- Where **changes** have been made, determine whether removal of later changes is possible or desirable—whether the canopy can and or should be fully restored.
- Make sure that **water** from the canopy roof is not penetrating into the structure and to the ceiling below.
- **Lighting** under the canopy can be altered to meet current technologies, electrical codes, and design needs as long as it does not substantially

change the canopy's appearance. In most cases, lighting is a significant aspect of the canopy's design and should be preserved. (Also see Chapter9, Signage.)

Canopy Roof – In most cases, the roof of the canopy is not visible from the street level, but it is often visible from the higher floors of surrounding buildings. For that reason, roofing material for canopies should be chosen with aesthetic considerations in mind.

RECOMMENDED

- **Retain and repair** existing roofing in-kind if it is in adequate functional condition. Determine the original roofing material and make decisions on repair and replacement based on similarity to the original design and functional intent.
- If roofing replacement is necessary, select an appropriate **replacement material** that approximates the original's appearance and characteristics. An appropriately colored membrane roofing is an acceptable roof treatment for canopies and marquees in most circumstances.
- Corrugated **aluminum canopies** from the 1960s have no additional roofing material and should not be re-roofed.
- Ensure that any **water collected** on the roof of the canopy is carried to the street level. Water should not be allowed to overflow onto pedestrians or wash down the façade the of the building. Be cognizant of the possibility of unsafe winter ice conditions for pedestrians from downspouts that empty at grade.



Mid-century Modern aluminum canopies on the east side of Kansas Avenue

Repair

Treat the structure of the canopy as an architectural feature that has its own significance. Understand the period in which the canopy was constructed and recognize the characteristics of the architectural style it represents.

RECOMMENDED

- **Retain and repair** features, materials, and treatments that were in place when the canopy was first installed.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not try to **alter an historic canopy** to match the facade of a building or storefront that is of a different period or style.




Other Mid-century Modern aluminum canopies

Replacement

In cases where an architecturally significant canopy or a portion of a canopy is damaged beyond repair, replace the canopy or the damaged portion to match that removed.

RECOMMENDED

- In situations where an existing canopy performs inadequately, such as structurally or in the management of rain water, design and install **customized alterations** that address the condition while respecting the character and design of the historic canopy.
- In situations where an **historic canopy has been removed** from a façade that was intended to have one, it may be appropriate to reconstruct the missing canopy. Use historic documentation to reconstruct the missing canopy as accurately as possible. If historical documentation is unavailable, consider building a new canopy in a compatible contemporary style. The scale and proportions of the new canopy should resemble the dimensions of the one that is removed.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Historic canopies should not be **removed**.



Topeka's corrugated aluminum canopies are of similar design. The corrugated roof directs water to perpendicular channels, which then convey water to the U-shaped gutter along the outer edge. The gutters connect to downspouts on the face of the building at each end. The system has limited capacity and is known to overflow, but the canopies are unique and significant contributing features.



CHAPTER 5 – EXTERIOR WALLS

The overall structural integrity of a building depends significantly upon the integrity of its exterior walls. Exterior walls protect a building from the weather. How a building's exterior walls respond to the effects of rain, wind, sun, and temperature is critical to the long-term care of the structure. Water entering a wall from a leak in the roof or cracks in the wall's surface can cause serious deterioration to the wall and interior structure.

In most buildings built before the twentieth century, exterior walls and many interior walls are load-bearing. As a result, the maintenance of these features has important structural implications. In historic buildings, exterior walls are also important to the building's character and appearance.

Although brick is the most common exterior wall material for principal facades in Downtown Topeka, a variety of other building materials are found as well. Local limestone was used extensively for side and rear walls in downtown commercial buildings in Topeka during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is a significant character-defining feature of the downtown historic district.

A number of different types of wall materials were introduced in the mid- and late-twentieth century as new technologies and manufacturing capabilities developed. Different exterior wall materials are often associated with different periods and styles of architecture. Each type of material has its own design and maintenance issues, and these concerns are often multiplied when several materials are in contact with one another. Proper care must be taken to ensure

the long-term survival of exterior walls, even those that are made of the strongest materials.

BRICK MASONRY

Brick is the most common exterior building material for the facades facing streets in Downtown Topeka, a reflection of the fact that many of these historic buildings were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At that time, the use of brick was an important fire safety consideration because many earlier communities suffered devastating fires that destroyed their earlier wood-frame buildings.

Although brick is a material of great longevity, it is still vulnerable to deterioration. To remain in good condition, brick must maintain its structural stability and its ability to deal with moisture. Bricks are baked. Like a loaf of bread, they are comprised of an outer crust and a softer inner core. Without the outer crust, the inner core of the brick is vulnerable to rapid deterioration. Bricks are also porous. Like a sponge, they absorb moisture. Brick walls must be allowed to dry out if they are to remain in good condition.

The quality of the bricks used in historic buildings varies considerably depending upon the quality of the materials being used and the quality of manufacture. Nineteenth century bricks were often produced locally without suitable technological expertise or supervision. Different quality brick was used for different purposes. Often the interior portions of a wall were laid with inexpensive, poor quality brick. Higher quality brick was reserved for the exterior surface. When stressed or exposed to weathering or deterioration, the poor-quality brick on the interior can be a threat to the structural integrity of the wall and the building.



Nineteenth century brick walls used common brick in patterns created largely by variations in surface relief. The overall quality of the brick used was good, with few apparent problems in the deterioration of brick units.

By the early twentieth century, manufacturing standards and techniques had improved, and brick was being produced in large volume by competent manufacturers and shipped long distances by train. Issues of poor quality were less common. Because side and rear walls in Downtown Topeka were most often

constructed of stone, not brick, the issue of poor quality brick is probably not as pronounced in Topeka.

Nonetheless, when undertaking rehabilitation projects, brick walls should be carefully inspected for signs of deterioration. Bricks perform best when they are laid with bricks of a similar type, and when the mortar recipe is carefully matched to the appropriate type of brick.



Early twentieth century brick masonry walls introduced more complex combinations of materials, more sophisticated design, and a higher level of technical execution.

Maintenance

Causes of Deterioration – Moisture penetration and improper maintenance are the most common causes of the deterioration of brick masonry. When water gets into a wall it can freeze, causing cracking in the wall and spalling of the face of the brick. Moisture penetration can be caused by leaking roofs, flashing, and gutters; deteriorated window sills; wall cracks; missing mortar; and rising damp. Improper maintenance usually includes sandblasting or the use of hard pointing and bedding mortars. Both conditions are discussed below.

RECOMMENDED

- I**nspect** brick walls for deterioration caused by moisture penetration. Identify the cause of any deterioration that is found and undertake appropriate repairs.

Rising Damp – Rising damp is a common and serious problem in humid environments and where there is poor drainage. Dampness in the soil or on paving is absorbed by a wall and drawn upwards by capillary action. Since a brick wall "breathes," moisture within the wall gravitates to the exposed surface, resulting in a moist, clammy feeling near the base of a wall. Evidence of moisture is often accompanied by vegetation or mold that stains the brick. Rising damp is apparent in some walls where downspouts empty into alleyways behind Topeka's commercial buildings.

RECOMMENDED

- Rising damp is frequently caused by the failure to drain stormwater away from the building. Depending upon the apparent cause, rising damp can

often be addressed by **re-paving or re-grading**, removing water away from the base of the wall.

- More serious conditions may require installation of a **subsurface drainage** system or the installation of a vapor barrier through the width of the wall at the base of the wall. Such measures are sometimes required when water is penetrating from the soil into a basement wall causing dampness.

Open Joints – Open masonry joints are among the most common problems observed in historic buildings downtown, particularly older buildings with soft mortar that are not being well-maintained. Open joints are particularly dangerous because they allow water to enter the wall and then freeze in cold weather. When water freezes, it expands causing cracking of the masonry and providing more ways for water to enter.

RECOMMENDED

- Inspect brick masonry walls for deteriorated or open mortar joints. **Repair** the joints in accordance with the recommendations for repointing below.



Brickwork in Downtown Topeka buildings is in good overall condition despite conditions such as raised brickwork and projections that could cause problems.

Cracks – Cracks are worrisome for two reasons: (1) they indicate that a building's walls are moving and (2) they provide opportunities for moisture penetration and further deterioration. Cracking may be caused by settlement, structural failure, freezing of moisture within the wall, or the rusting of metal within the wall.

One area that is often vulnerable is located above openings such as windows and doors. Bricks in these locations are susceptible to failure, because they may not be able to adequately span the opening without additional support.

RECOMMENDED

- If cracks are observed in a masonry wall, a **structural engineer** should be consulted to determine the cause of the cracks and the proper means of treating them.

Steel Lintels – In masonry buildings constructed during the twentieth century, it has been common practice to install steel lintels above door and window openings. Frequently, these lintels rust over time. The rusted steel expands, causing cracking and the jacking of the masonry above the opening.

RECOMMENDED

- During rehabilitation, **brickwork over windows** and doors should be inspected for cracking. The cracking often occurs beginning at the top corners of the window or door and has an upward, stepped pattern of cracking away from the window or door. The rusting lintel has lifted the entire section of brick wall over the window or door.
- **Minor cracking** can be repointed and monitored. When the cracking is serious—an open crack that will let water enter the wall—the rusted lintels should be repaired as outlined further below by removing the brick, cleaning and painting the lintels, and reinstalling the brick.



The jacking of rusted steel lintels is a common masonry problem. A significant crack due to jacking can be seen extending from the corner of the window in the picture on the left. On the right, the entire joint between the two windows has widened due to rusting and has been filled with sealant, which only traps the water in the wall.

Cleaning

Sandblasting – Brick walls should never be sandblasted. Sandblasting removes the protective outer crust of the brick and exposes the softer inner core. This inner core was not meant to be exposed directly to the weather and will deteriorate rapidly. Sandblasting can also break mortar joints, which can lead to moisture penetration.

Sandblasting was a common, highly inappropriate practice in the early years of historic preservation, but is rarely seen today due to better information and education. It is a serious problem that should be avoided at all costs.

Reasons for Cleaning – One of the primary reasons for cleaning historic brick is to remove soiling, but other than aesthetics, this only needs to be undertaken if the soiling is contributing to the deterioration of the wall. Soiled areas of brick and stone can remain wet for a long period of time, resulting in chemical reactions and the growth of organisms that contribute to deterioration. Cleaning is also frequently undertaken in preparation for repainting walls that have been painted previously.

Preparation for Cleaning – Prior to cleaning, test proposed cleaning treatments in an inconspicuous area of the building to evaluate potential adverse affects to the masonry.

RECOMMENDED

- Although it is time-consuming, the best way to determine the long-term effects of a cleaning process is to **treat a small portion** of the wall and observe it over a complete seasonal cycle.
- Before cleaning, it is important to **repoint** deteriorated or weak mortar joints to ensure that water does not penetrate the wall during the cleaning process.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not undertake any type of water or chemical cleaning if the weather forecast calls for **freezing temperatures**. Masonry cleaning should not be undertaken unless the temperature will remain above 50 degrees Fahrenheit for three days (72 hours) after cleaning.

Cleaning Methods – Cleaning should use only the gentlest means necessary, such as a low pressure water and natural bristle brushes. Soap may be used if necessary.

RECOMMENDED

- Use the gentlest means possible for cleaning. Use **water pressure** at no more than 300 pounds per square inch (psi). High pressure water spray can have similar damaging effects to those of sandblasting.
- Have realistic **expectations** of how the cleaned masonry surface will appear. The goal of the cleaning process should not be to create the appearance of a new wall. It is better to under-clean than over-clean.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not use **metal brushes**, because they can permanently damage a masonry wall.

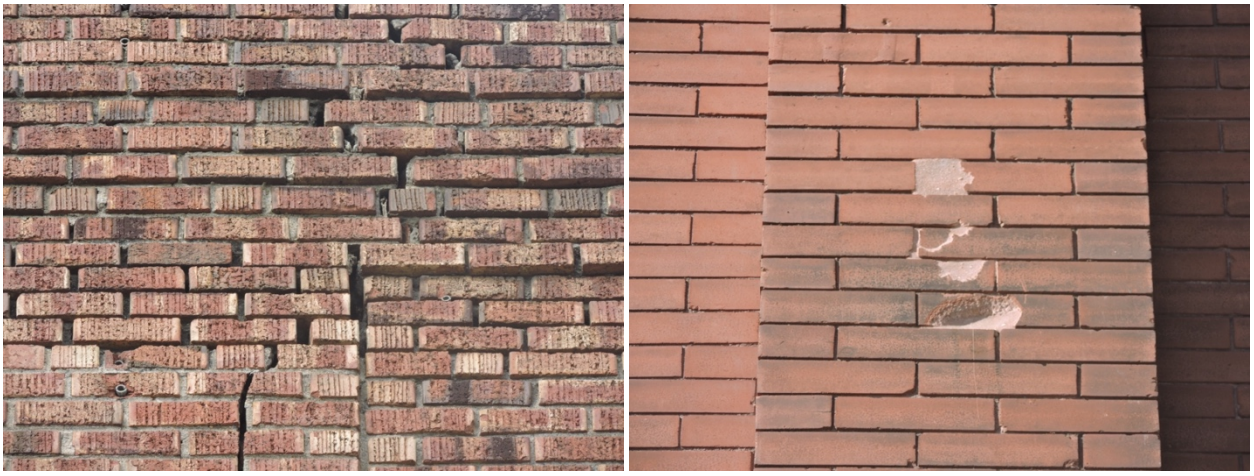
Chemical Treatments – A number of chemical treatments are available for the cleaning of brick masonry if necessary. Various strengths of chemical treatments are available depending upon the magnitude of the cleaning problem.

RECOMMENDED

- As mentioned above, the gentlest means should be used as determined through **test panels**.
- If chemical treatments must be used, obtain the advice of a building **materials conservator** or historic preservation professional on

appropriate products, means, and methods. Consult with the manufacturer's representative for any products under consideration for use. Obtain manufacturer's literature and instructions.

- Understand the physical and chemical **properties of the masonry** before proposing or testing any chemical cleaning treatments. If these treatments are improperly applied, they can result in permanent damage that far outweighs any benefits of cleaning.
- Be sure that those applying the treatment are qualified and follow the **manufacturer's instructions**. Require a test panel for approval prior to undertaking work on the entire building.



Severe cracking has occurred in the brickwork on the left; on the right, the faces of several bricks have spalled.

Repair

Crack Repair – Cracks in brick masonry should be properly diagnosed before undertaking any repair work. Cracks caused by structural stresses should be investigated by a structural engineer to determine their cause and appropriate remedial repairs. Any underlying structural problems must be addressed before performing repairs.

RECOMMENDED

- Cracking through **masonry joints** should be repaired by repointing the affected joints.
- Cracking through **brick units** may require the replacement of the brick with new brick to match that existing. Use mortar and masonry techniques outlined below in the discussion of repointing.

Spall Repair – Bricks where the face of the brick has spalled off should be removed and replaced. Spalling causes the soft inner core of the brick to be exposed to the weather. The inner core is not made to be exposed, and it will absorb water and rapidly deteriorate within the wall.

RECOMMENDED

- Remove spalled brick units and replace with **new brick to match** the existing in size, color, texture, and strength. Use mortar and masonry techniques outlined below in the discussion of repointing.

- If spalling is extensive and serious and due to the poor quality of the brick, install a **masonry painted coating** approximating the color of the historic brick.

Steel Lintel Repair – The long-term solution to the jacking of masonry over windows or doors by seriously rusting lintels is to remove the piece of rusting metal in its entirety.

RECOMMENDED

- **Shore** the window or door using techniques that have been approved by a structural engineer.
- Then remove the **overlying masonry**, a minimum of four courses of brick above the window or door and one foot to either side. The original bricks (or stones in stone walls) should be removed as whole units, cleaned of mortar, and salvaged for use in the masonry repair.
- The **corroding steel lintel** should then be removed and replaced with a new one. The new lintel should be properly flashed, with the flashing cut into the masonry backup at the top, run vertically against the masonry backup for a minimum of eight inches, and then flashed over the steel angle.
- The salvaged brick (or stone) should be used to **reconstruct** the masonry facing over the window or door lintel. It is important that the masonry repair follow the brick (or stone) size, pattern, and row height in the surrounding wall. Replacement mortar should match the original in its thickness, color, texture, and finishing.



Brickwork should not be painted unless there are deficiencies in the quality of the bricks that are causing them to deteriorate, and a painted coating is needed for their protection.

Painted Coatings – Do not apply painted coatings or stucco to masonry buildings as a substitute for repointing and general maintenance. Such treatments may ultimately trap moisture within the walls and should be used only as a last resort in instances where maintenance and masonry repairs have not succeeded in limiting water penetration.

RECOMMENDED

- Painted coatings may be used where **excessive spalling** of brick is occurring due to the poor quality of the brick. Approximate the color of the historic brick.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- In general, **do not paint** brick walls that have never been painted.

Efflorescence – Efflorescence is a whitish stain that is prevalent in newly laid brick walls and sometimes occurs on older walls. It results from water-soluble salts that have crystallized and risen to the surface of bricks and mortar. In recently laid walls, efflorescence is generally the result of a natural process that occurs within the wall, although extensive appearance of this stain may signal a moisture problem.

RECOMMENDED

- When efflorescence appears on an old wall, the **source of the moisture** should be identified and repaired. At that time, any remaining deposits can be removed with a natural bristle brush or with a solution that neutralizes the salt.

Graffiti – Remove graffiti as soon as possible as a quick and consistent response to this issue is often the best deterrent.

RECOMMENDED

- **Remove** graffiti that has been painted on walls.
- A variety of chemical treatments for paint and graffiti removal are available commercially. Choose a distinct section of the wall to undergo cleaning, and begin with the **gentlest means** available.
- **Fully treat** the affected wall. If the cleaning is concentrated directly on the graffiti itself, it may etch a permanent outline into the wall.

Vegetation – The presence of moss or algae on the surface of a brick wall is a sign that potentially damaging amounts of moisture are present within the wall. Moss and algae sometimes occur in locations where downspouts are leaking or where they empty at the base of a wall. This can occur in Downtown Topeka's alleyways where most downspouts are located.

Ivy and other vegetation should not be allowed to grow on or too close to masonry walls. Masonry walls must be allowed to dry out to prevent deterioration caused by the freezing of moisture within the wall. The roots and tendrils of plants that are attached to a wall may expand and contract in ways that contribute to the wall's deterioration. As a root forces its way deeper into an open joint, it creates a channel that allows water to enter the wall. In addition, the irregular surface created by plant material can impede the smooth flow of moisture down the surface of the brick. There are few areas in Downtown Topeka where vegetation is growing near masonry walls.

Exterior Coverings – No type of waterproof material, synthetic stucco, or insulation should be attached directly to the exterior of a masonry wall because it causes condensation within the wall that can damage the wall's integrity.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not apply **waterproof materials, synthetic stuccos, or insulation** to exterior masonry walls. The walls of masonry buildings must be allowed to breathe by allowing water vapor from the building interior to migrate through the wall and evaporate to the exterior.
- Masonry walls can only be insulated from the **interior** with proper vapor barriers as in new construction (see below).



This brick wall was coated in paint and then a thin layer of parging/stucco, both of which are now failing due to the moisture trapped in the wall beneath which is causing them to peel off.

Insulation within Walls – Do not install blown insulation within the exterior walls of wood frame construction. Water vapor is an important factor in the performance of exterior walls. Historic walls were usually installed without any form of insulation.

In a historic wall, water vapor from warm, moist interior air migrates through the wall to the cooler, drier exterior of the building. When blown insulation is installed, the water vapor condenses in the insulation, making it permanently wet. The wetness causes it to lose its insulating characteristics and slump to the bottom of the wall cavity, causes masonry walls to be damp, and promotes the rotting of wood members. Moisture buildup due to blown insulation causes exterior paint to peel and the growth of mildew on the exterior of the building.

RECOMMENDED

- If insulation is installed in exterior walls, it must have a **vapor barrier** on the interior side.
- If there are **no historic interior finishes**, insulation may be installed from the interior as in new contemporary construction.
- Insulation may be installed in **attic floors** with a vapor barrier laid down first.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- In general, do not install insulation in historic walls. Concentrate instead on the more serious thermal problem of eliminating **air leakage** around doors and windows.
- The exterior walls of historic buildings **should not be insulated** if it means the removal of historic interior finishes.



Open joints, dislocated bricks, and deteriorated stone in the walls of two Topeka buildings. The wall on the left is a building parapet; parapets are particularly vulnerable because of their exposure and difficulty to observe.

Pointing and Mortar

Mortar Recipe – Mortar mix is extremely important to the functional needs and aesthetics of a brick or stone wall. Pointing mortar for an historic building should match the historic mortar in strength, color, texture, and finish.

Today's high strength, commercially available mortars are inappropriate for historic buildings because they are much harder than historic mortars. These modern mortars are designed to match the characteristics of the harder bricks that are now used in construction. These new materials are highly destructive to older walls because historic bricks and mortar are much softer.

When repointing mortar is harder than the surrounding masonry, moisture cannot escape through the joints. Trapped moisture, which would normally pass through the mortar, finds it easier to travel through the softer brick and stone.

In historic buildings, soft mortar joints absorb the seasonal expansion and contraction of the wall. Modern buildings control this movement through the use of expansion joints. When hard contemporary mortars are used in pointing historic walls, the mortar is actually harder than the surrounding historic brick. In addition to these functional concerns, modern mortars often have a much brighter and uniform appearance than historic mortars.

Since the brick becomes the weakest link, it is forced to absorb the stress caused by seasonal changes in the wall. As a result, the surface of the brick may spall or pop off. Without their hard outer surface, bricks quickly succumb to moisture damage, and the process begins to feed on itself. Unchecked brick deterioration can result in structural failure of the wall.

RECOMMENDED

- Match repointing mortar to the **strength of the existing mortar** of the historic building.
- For nineteenth and early twentieth century historic buildings, use a soft mortar with a **high lime and sand content**.

- If possible, have a **mortar analysis** undertaken of a sample of the historic mortar to determine its composition. Such an analysis can be performed by a building conservator for a modest cost. Use the mortar analysis to prepare a custom specification for the new mortar matching the materials and mix proportions of the historic mortar.



Topeka's late-nineteenth century buildings are particularly significant and vulnerable. The Davies Building, shown here, combines both brick and stone masonry with complex detailing. The bearing wall construction quality of the period was in transition.

- If matching the historic mortar mix is not feasible, a commercially available **"Class N" cement mortar** is preferred. Type N mortar mix is an industry standard general purpose mortar mix preferred for soft stone masonry. A type N mix is composed of 1 part Portland cement, 1 part lime and 6 parts sand and has a medium compressive strength.
- Pointing mortar for historic building should match the historic mortar in **color and texture**. Sand should be used as the coloring agent, as opposed to commercially available tints.
- Matching the color, texture, and appearance of the historic mortar should be achieved through trial and error using **test panels**. Sand matching that of the historic mortar should be used. Iron oxide pigments may be added to test panels to match the color of historically pigmented mortars. Multiple test panels are usually needed to achieve the right color and texture match.
- It is best to **consult** a restoration professional before undertaking any repointing. Masons trained in current building practices may not have the expertise to address the needs of historic bricks and mortar.



Inappropriate modern mortar used for pointing both brick and stone walls. In addition to not matching the historic mortar joints visually, the hard modern mortar can physically damage the brick or stone.

Repointing Techniques – Repoint only those joints that are no longer sound. Do not remove all joints in an effort to achieve a uniform appearance.

RECOMMENDED

- Repoint open or unsound mortar joints. **Match historic mortar joints** in color, texture, strength, joint size, and tooling. Work to achieve visual continuity between surviving historic material and new patches.
- **Re**move unsound mortar joints with **hand tools** that are narrower than the mortar joint. Do not use power tools, because they can scar adjacent masonry.
- Under special circumstances and careful supervision, a **thin saw cut** may be run down the center of a horizontal joint with the remainder being removed by hand. However, masonry saws should never be used on vertical joints. This work should only be attempted by skilled preservation masons.
- Remove unsound mortar to a **depth** of 2 1/2 times the width of the joint or to sound mortar, whichever is greater.
- Where necessary, **voids** in bedding mortar should be packed with new mortar, and then repointed to prevent face loading of the masonry and consequent spalling.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Mask grouting** is the practice of applying a skim topcoat of mortar over existing joints and is essentially a cosmetic fix. Not only does it hide any underlying existing mortar problems, it changes the appearance of the entire building. This practice should be avoided.



These three late-nineteenth century brick buildings on SE 7th Street are similarly significant and vulnerable. All three have been painted, which is inappropriate but may have helped preserve their brickwork. Proper maintenance would have been better.

Sealant – Waterproof building sealants should only be applied to joints in horizontal wash surfaces at parapet caps, sills, watertables, projecting cornices, and steps. These joints are particularly prone to water penetration.

RECOMMENDED

- Install sealant in the **horizontal wash surfaces** of masonry walls.
- Proper sealant installation involves installation of a **foam backer rod** with the correct diameter for the size of the joint. Sealant must be installed against the backer rod, forming a concave joint between the masonry units. Flush sealant joints that do not have a concave shape have been improperly installed.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not use sealant in joints on **vertical wall surfaces** because it will trap moisture within the wall and lead to deterioration.
- Do not allow sealants to **overlap** the outside face of the masonry, as it will cause the sealants to fail prematurely.

Replacement

Walls – Do not remove or rebuild substantial portions of exterior walls unless it is crucial to a building's structural integrity.

RECOMMENDED

- Only replace substantial areas of exterior walls that are **unstable** and threaten the wall's structural integrity.
- Replace **individual bricks** and small areas of brick masonry that are deteriorated through cracking or spalling as discussed above or are structurally unsound as determined by a structural engineer.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not cut **new openings** into exterior walls on elevations that can be seen from a public way. Creating an opening for an air conditioning unit,

for example, is not appropriate for a facade that is visible from a public way.

Bricks – Replacement brick should match existing historic brick in size, color, texture, and appearance. Make sure that any exterior replacement bricks are suited for exterior use.

RECOMMENDED

- When installing replacement brick, **match the existing historic brick** in size, color, texture, and appearance.
- Match the existing bond (pattern within a row), course (pattern of rows), color, and size of bricks when replacing sections of a wall.
- Bricks should always be toothed-in to existing historic brickwork.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not replace sections of historic brick with brick that is substantially **harder or denser** than the original brick. This can cause the face of softer bricks to spall or pop off as moisture seeks the path of least resistance.



Detail of buildings pictured on the previous page. The brickwork appears to be in relatively good condition despite paint delamination and joint deterioration. Paint will need to be removed and repointing performed, even if they are to be repainted.

STONE MASONRY

Stone is one of the strongest and most enduring building materials. Despite its desirable qualities, however, the expense of quarrying, shipping, and building with stone has often limited its use in construction. As a result, stone most often appeared as a featured material in landmark buildings that were prominent in public life or private industry, such as the Kansas State House; Memorial Building; Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Building; and downtown banks. Common types of featured building stone used in Topeka include limestone, sandstone, marble, and granite.

Limestone was a prominent building material in early Topeka because it is native to the region and was inexpensive and easily accessible, less expensive than the importing of brick or other types of stone. Limestone was used extensively in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for side and rear walls of Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings, and most of these walls are still present in buildings today.

For the most part, these limestone exterior walls are thick load-bearing structures that support interior wood wall and floor framing. Most of the walls are laid with rubble stone. Occasionally, when used in primary facades, the limestone is formed in neatly cut blocks laid in straight rows, known as ashlar masonry. The extent of the use of limestone in early Topeka makes these walls a significant part of the city's architectural history.



Many of Downtown Topeka's exposed limestone rubble side and rear walls have open joints and have been dashed with modern mortar. The side walls were not meant to be exposed, but are rich in character. The modern mortar is not appropriate in texture or color and may be excessively hard and inflexible.

Although relatively few buildings in Topeka used stone exclusively in their primary facades, stone was frequently used as a decorative material for detailing in combination with brick as the basic wall material. Stone was used for lintels, window sills, parapet caps, string courses, steps, street curbs, and sometimes as a paving material for sidewalks and streets.



The early twentieth century saw the use of high quality stone detailing.

In the 1920s and 1930s, high quality limestone imported from other parts of the country enjoyed popularity as an exterior cladding material. In addition to the landmark buildings noted above, limestone was used in Downtown Topeka for facade renovations and several new commercial buildings. The use of limestone continued to increase until World War II, when architects and builders shifted away from the use of stone, toward concrete, glass, and a variety of newly available contemporary materials.

It is important to note that many later buildings that appear to be constructed of stone actually have only a thin veneer of stone that is supported by an interior masonry wall or steel frame. Individual stones are secured to the underlying wall with metal crimps and held in place with vertical pins, instead of being held together by their own weight and the strength of the mortar between them. In this type of construction, the mortar that is visible is merely intended to solidify the wall and prevent water from penetrating the exterior. Even a well-constructed wall is susceptible to water damage, however, because stone is a porous material. Techniques for addressing this damage and other common problems are outlined below.



High quality stone veneer was used for several of Topeka's most prominent downtown buildings.

Maintenance

The issues and recommended treatments for stone are similar to those that are recommended for brick and other masonry materials. Both stone and brick are resilient when properly maintained, but can quickly succumb to water damage when mortar joints deteriorate.

Joints, however, are not the only place where water can enter a masonry wall. Although stone is often thought to be impermeable, many types of stone are actually porous and can absorb water. Like brick, stone must be allowed to breathe or water vapor can become trapped inside the wall.

RECOMMENDED

- **Inspect** stone walls for deterioration and identify the source of any water damage. Leaks, cracks, deteriorated joints, drainage problems, rising damp, freeze-thaw cycles, rock salt, settlement, hard mortar, and plant growth can damage building stone.
- When a **moisture problem** is detected in a masonry wall, the source of the problem must be addressed before any measures are taken to repair the wall surface or repoint the mortar joints.

Open Joints – When mortar joints fail in a stone wall, they allow water to flow into the wall, creating a chain of events that can weaken the entire wall. Variations in pressure caused by water and ice can cause individual stones to move. Cracking along the mortar joints is one indication that the stones are in motion. In veneer walls, rust stains may indicate that the pins and crimps used to hold the stones together have begun to deteriorate.



Open mortar joint and surface delamination in stone veneer walls. The open joint should be repointed. The surface delamination may not warrant repair.

Cracks – Cracks in masonry should be properly diagnosed before undertaking any maintenance or repair work. Cracks caused by structural stresses should be investigated by a structural engineer to determine their cause and appropriate remedial repairs. Any underlying structural problems must be addressed before performing repairs.

Not all cracks in stone masonry require repair. Cracks may simply be a part of the natural weathering process for some stone masonry. Small, hairline cracks on

vertical surfaces of stone masonry should not be repaired unless they are deep enough to allow water to infiltrate into the masonry wall. However, such cracking on horizontal wash surfaces should be patched with a knife-grade patching compound to prevent water infiltration.

RECOMMENDED

- **Diagnose** the cause of cracks observed in masonry walls and determine the appropriate treatment.
- Cracking from a **one-time event**, such as small-scale settlement, may require a cementitious mortar or grout repair.
- Cracking **through masonry joints** should be repaired by repointing the affected joints as outlined below.
- Cracking **through stone masonry units** may require the installation of reinforcement and a cementitious patch or grout repair as outlined below.
- Long, **deep cracks** in a stone masonry unit may be patched using a knife-grade patching compound to prevent further moisture penetration. The visual impact of such a repair should be minimized by using a colored mortar that is similar to the color of the masonry being patched.



Deep masonry cracks in stone and brick piers at the Davies Building.

Veneer Stone – Modern construction techniques for veneer stone-clad exterior walls create a secure wall in the short term, but over time, elements within the wall may begin to deteriorate. Cracking and surface spalls may be caused by the movement of stones and by the freezing of water within the stones.

Water within the wall causes the pins and crimps used in veneer construction to lock the stones together to rust. When metal rusts, it expands, which can cause individual stones to move or crack. The movement of the stones and appearance of cracking create more opportunities for water to enter the wall, and the deterioration process begins to feed on itself.

Pressure on individual stones caused by water damage or hard mortar can also cause flakes of stone to spall or pop off. Any visible damage of this kind can indicate a more serious problem within the wall.

Delamination – Surface deterioration and delamination through the body of stones are problems caused by water infiltration into masonry. Saturation of porous limestone or sandstone caused by water infiltration from above or from the ground can result in surface deterioration in which layers of stone flake away. Surface deterioration is seen in the decorative stone used in late nineteenth century buildings downtown. The local limestone used in Topeka may be particularly vulnerable to this condition because of its porous nature.

Delamination can also occur in stone at the base of entrances and along sidewalks and paved areas. This condition is probably being caused by the use of salts for deicing in winter as well as saturation and freeze/thaw cycles. Sodium, calcium, and magnesium chloride based deicing salts can damage foundation masonry, as well as doors and door frames. The salts are absorbed into the masonry with the water. As the masonry dries, the salt residue forms deep within or on the surface of the masonry causing internal stresses and damage.



Delamination of a stone pilaster at left; spalling of a stone window detail at right.

Washes, Watertables and Parapets – Stone is often used for wash surfaces in masonry walls, such as parapet tops and watertables. A watertable is a sloping horizontal course of stones where a transition from thicker lower walls to thinner upper walls is made. Many watertables in brick masonry walls are design features and made of stone.

Masonry joints on wash surfaces of parapets and watertables are exposed to weathering, and often the mortar deteriorates leaving an open joint. Parapets at the tops of buildings are particularly vulnerable because of their exposure and because they tend to be less visible and not maintained. Most parapets and watertables are intended to prevent water from penetrating the masonry wall below.

Although a watertables and parapets effectively shed most of the water that they receive, a small amount of water is often absorbed by the stone. Deteriorated joints in watertables and parapets allow water to pass into the wall. Plant growth and residue on a watertable can also contribute to the retention of water, which can penetrate down into the wall. When water reaches metal pins and crimps or steel lintels inside the wall, it can cause them to rust and expand.

RECOMMENDED

- Sealant should be installed in stone masonry located on **horizontal wash surfaces**, such as parapet tops, projecting watertables and belt courses, and steps.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Sealant should never be installed on **vertical wall surfaces**. Sealant will trap water within the masonry wall, forcing the water back into the masonry units.



Joints in parapet and the wash surfaces of cornices, watertables, and other stone detailing are particularly vulnerable to water penetration. This cornice is the type of surface that might be subject to cleaning.

Cleaning Methods – Cleaning should use only the gentlest means possible. High pressure water spray may deteriorate mortar and even stone.

RECOMMENDED

- Cleaning should use only the **gentlest means** possible, such as low-pressure water and natural bristle brushes.
- Prior to cleaning, use a **test patch** to assess the impact of proposed cleaning treatments.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Metal brushes** should not be used, because they can permanently damage the wall.

Chemical Treatments – As with brick walls, a number of chemical treatments are available for the cleaning of stone masonry if necessary. Various strengths of chemical treatments are available depending upon the magnitude of the cleaning problem.

RECOMMENDED

- As mentioned above, the **gentlest means** should be used as determined through test panels. During the cleaning process, clean one distinct section of the wall at a time.
- If chemical treatments must be used, obtain the advice of a building **materials conservator** or historic preservation professional on appropriate products, means, and methods. Consult with the manufacturer's representative for any products under consideration for use. Obtain manufacturer's literature and instructions.
- Be sure that those applying the treatment are qualified and follow the **manufacturer's instructions**. Require a test panel for approval prior to undertaking work on the entire building.
- **Remove graffiti** as soon as possible, as a quick and consistent response to this issue is often the best deterrent.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not apply **waterproof coatings**, paint, or stucco as a substitute for repointing and general maintenance.
- Stone walls should not be **sandblasted**.



Severe horizontal cracking of stone window sills. These stones may require replacement.

Repair

Mortar Joints and Cracks – It is best to consult a restoration professional before undertaking any repointing of stone walls because the correct mortar is not only important to the appearance of a stone wall, but to its strength and its ability to withstand seasonal changes.

RECOMMENDED

- Cracks and **deteriorated mortar** in joints should be filled with new mortar that matches the color and texture of existing historic mortar joints. The width and profile of existing mortar joints should be replicated as closely as possible.

- Repoint only those joints that are **no longer sound**. Do not remove sound mortar from existing joints.
- Remove unsound mortar from joints with **hand tools** that are narrower than the mortar joint. Avoid the use of power tools, because they can scar adjacent stones.
- Remove unsound mortar to a **depth** of 2 1/2 times the width of the joint or to sound mortar, whichever is greater.
- Work to achieve **visual continuity** between surviving historic material and new mortar.

Sealants – As discussed above, waterproof building sealants should only be applied to joints in horizontal wash surfaces at parapet tops, watertables, steps, and similar features. These joints are particularly prone to water penetration.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not use sealant in joints on **vertical surfaces** of stone walls because it will trap moisture within the wall and lead to deterioration.

Patches and Dutchmen – Small pieces of masonry lost through spalling or delamination can be repaired with a cementitious patching compound that matches the color and hardness of the primary masonry.

RECOMMENDED

- Where appropriate, patch small pieces of lost masonry with **cementitious patches**.
- Proprietary patching compounds must only be installed by **trained masons**. Many manufacturers offer training courses and product certification for masons.
- Commercially available patching compounds can be either Portland cement-based or natural hydraulic lime-based. It is important to choose a patching compound that is **compatible** with the compressive and flexural strengths and permeability characteristics of the masonry to be repaired. The use of overly hard material can result in further damage to the stone.
- Damaged areas of stone that are too large to patch may be repaired by installation of a **dutchman**. The deteriorated portion of the stone is cut away and a new piece of stone or dutchman is installed matching the existing stone.
- Dutchman repair is a much **more durable** repair than a cementitious patch repair. A cementitious patch may need to be replaced after 10-15 years, while a properly-installed dutchman should last as long as the masonry itself.
- Dutchman repairs require skill to install correctly and should only be undertaken by **experienced** masons.
- Fine masonry details exposed to the weather at some locations have experienced some chipping and spalling of their corners and edges. While

visually detracting, such conditions may not threaten surrounding masonry. It may be advisable to **leave such details** as-is. Repairs may not hold up to the severe conditions that caused the chipping in the first place.



Consolidant used over horizontal cracks in stone at left and roughly over deteriorating stone detailing at right to simply prevent further disintegration.

Consolidation – Consolidation is a common remedy for surface disintegration in silicate-based masonry such as sandstone. Commercially-available consolidants are not appropriate for masonry containing a calcium carbonate binder, such as limestone, the most common stone used in Topeka.

RECOMMENDED

- Consolidation should only be considered in situations where the masonry is friable (prone to crumbling) and exhibits **surface disintegration**. Consolidation works on a microscopic level to strengthen cohesion between grains.
- If the masonry type and deterioration warrants consolidation, the first step is to characterize the masonry through petrographic analysis and materials characterization. **Testing** is performed in a laboratory to investigate how the consolidant treatment affects the physical characteristics of the stone. It is also important to investigate how effectively the masonry takes up the consolidant treatment.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Consolidation is **not appropriate** for delamination, spalling, or large-scale cracking.
- Consolidants must not be used if the masonry is **adversely affected** or if the consolidant is not properly absorbed. If laboratory testing determines that the consolidant is well-absorbed by the masonry and does not significantly alter its physical characteristics, then the consolidant should be tested in field mockups.
- Consolidation is an irreversible treatment and should not be undertaken by **unskilled personnel** or without proper laboratory and field testing.

Lintels and Sills – The failure of structural stone lintels and sills (the upper and lower parts of a window opening) often occurs as a result of deterioration in the surrounding masonry. Such deterioration can be the result of building settlement.

RECOMMENDED

- Damaged lintels can be **reinforced** with a hidden means of support, such as a steel lintel extending 4 to 6 inches beyond the jambs of the openings on each side.
- Cracking in the stone lintel should also be **patched** to prevent further moisture penetration.
- If the break is **long and deep**, grout must be fed into it. The visual impact of such a repair should be minimized by using a colored mortar that is similar to the color of the stone being patched.

Replacement

Resetting and Replacement – Minimize the removal and replacement of historic stone masonry.

RECOMMENDED

- Only remove or rebuild substantial portions of stone masonry walls when such rebuilding is crucial to maintaining a building's **structural integrity**.
- When resetting or replacing a stone wall, **replicate the existing pattern** of stone. Rubble stone is laid randomly, and ashlar (rectangular) stone is laid in neat rows.



Stone sill that will require replacement.

WOOD FRAMING AND STRUCTURE

Wood framing and siding as exterior walls occur only rarely in Downtown Topeka. Due to concerns about fire, most early wood-frame buildings downtown were replaced with brick and stone masonry buildings in the late nineteenth century. Historic masonry buildings, however, make extensive use of wood for floor and roof framing, flooring, doors, windows, and architectural details. Wood floor and roof framing laterally brace exterior masonry walls and are critical to their structural viability. Since many historic buildings contain a significant amount of wood, it is important to understand wood issues and characteristics.

The life of wood structures and elements is highly dependent on the extent and quality of the maintenance they receive. As versatile as it is, wood can only perform satisfactorily when it is protected from the natural forces that weaken and deteriorate it: weathering, rot, animals, and insects. The capacity of wood to resist these forces depends on periodic inspection and immediate response to warning signs. Interior wood components are less susceptible to direct weather-related deterioration, but remain susceptible to leaks, loading, and insect related issues.

Like many processes of decay, the deterioration of wood accelerates rapidly. Early detection and action can avoid more extensive repair costs later on should deterioration be allowed to persist. Visual traces of deterioration may be hard to see from the exterior, as deterioration occurs on the inside and can be extensive.

Each species of wood has characteristics that have been found to make it suitable for particular uses and not for others. This has been especially true historically, when wood was used extensively and craftsmanship was based upon a knowledge of the uses and characteristics of different types of wood. In rehabilitation, the type of wood that building elements are made of should be determined and the same or similar types should be used in repair or replacement. This is especially true for wood structural components.

Availability and cost, however, are also important considerations in the selection of wood species. Care must be taken that the historic material is of the same quality as that available today. Old growth white pine, for instance, that was shipped widely across the country and used extensively for structural framing historically was much denser than the white pine available today, that is not suitable for structural uses.

When replacement of wood elements is necessary, it is generally preferable to use the best contemporary material available for the intended purpose. Cedar, for example, which was not available historically, is preferable for use in wood detailing that will be exposed to the weather, such as trim or railings, because of its resistance to weathering. The following list outlines species that are generally used for various purposes.

Heavy framing – Dense Yellow Pine, Douglas Fir, White Oak, Larch, Spruce
Light Framing, Joists, Rafters – Spruce, Hemlock, Common Yellow Pine, Larch
Outside Finish – White Pine, Cedar, Cypress, Redwood, Western White Pine, Poplar, Spruce

Siding and Clapboards – Cypress, Redwood, Larch, Spruce
Sash, Doors, Frames – White pine, Fir, Western White Pine
Shingles – Cedar, Cypress, Redwood

Maintenance

The maintenance of wood components begins with regular periodic inspections. When rehabilitation and design changes are made to a historic building with wood features, the existing wood elements should be carefully examined before work is undertaken.

Each element should be examined both for its historical significance to the building and its physical condition. Historical significance is determined by relating the feature to the historic period during which it was installed. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, Character of the Downtown Districts, a building may have several periods of significance, as changes to a historic building over time are considered significant as a record of the building's and the community's evolution.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, significant historic building fabric should be **retained and repaired** whenever possible.
- Inspection undertaken during rehabilitation projects should look for signs of **internal deterioration** as well as the condition of exterior building elements.
- With wood, inspections should look for signs of **peeling paint**, surface weathering, water penetration, interior rot, animal nesting, and insects.
- The inspection should always include a careful examination of **structural elements** associated with the walls, particularly floor and roof framing.



Wood is the primary interior structural materials for Downtown Topeka's nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings.

Rot – Rot is caused by water penetration that softens and breaks down the fibrous structure of wood and supports the growth of various types of fungi. In the woods, rotting is a natural, healthy process, but it can be fatal to buildings. The growth of fungi is a clear sign that rotting is occurring. To survive, fungi usually require wood to have a moisture content of at least twenty percent as well as the correct temperature range.

Keeping wood dry is the best way to prevent rot. Fungi can substantially weaken the structural integrity of wood, diminishing its capacity to carry loads or its ability to withstand crushing. Without these capabilities, a building's wooden frame can be rendered useless.

The presence of rot indicates that moisture is present. Simply attending to the rotted wood is inadequate unless it also addresses the source of the moisture. If this source is not discovered and eliminated, rot will recur and spread.

Moisture penetration most often occurs for one of the reasons listed below:

- Leaking roof or gutters;
- Inadequate or deteriorated flashing;
- Peeling paint;
- Unventilated spaces;
- Improper insulation or lack of a vapor barrier;
- Poor drainage or rainwater removal around the foundation;
- High watertable or rising damp; or
- Plumbing leaks.

RECOMMENDED

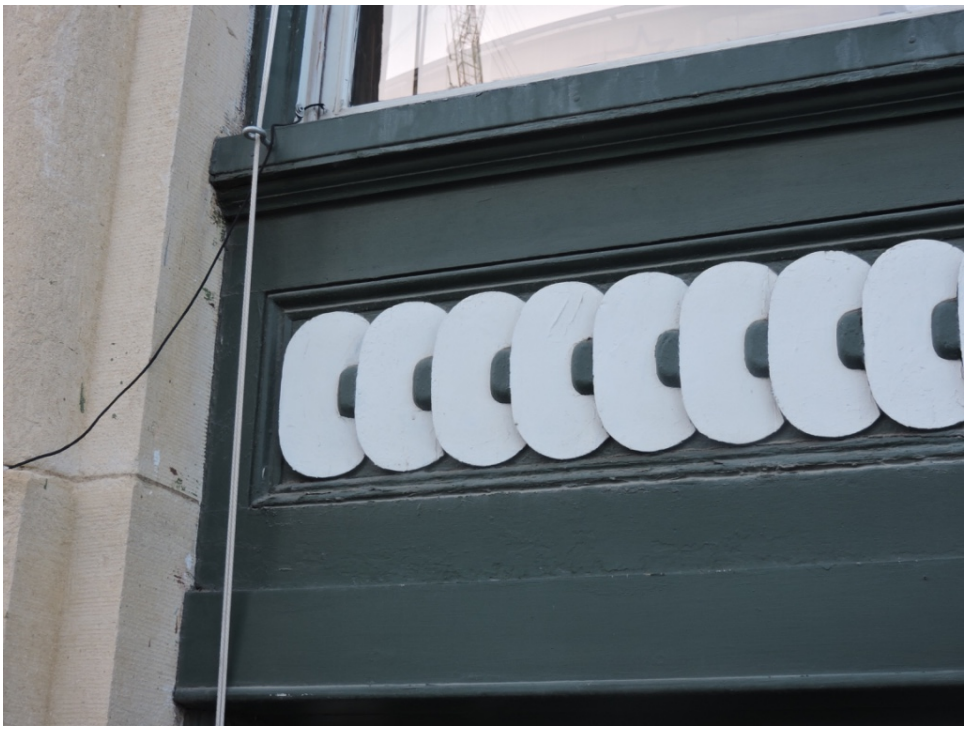
- In general, rotted wood should be **removed and replaced**, particularly if it is structural. It is usually not necessary, however, to remove an entire wood element but only the rotted portion.
- Where limited rot has occurred, commercially available epoxy **consolidants** can be used to give strength to the existing wood and no removal is necessary.
- For more extensive repairs, the deteriorated portion of the wood element can be removed and a wood **dutchman** installed as a patch in the original wood feature.
- For structural elements, a **structural engineer** should be consulted for the nature and extent of the repair required.

Animals – A common problem associated with wood buildings is their attractiveness to animals for nesting. Birds, squirrels, mice, and rats are of particular concern, though other species can also be a problem. Birds and squirrels frequently enter the building through small holes in eaves and gables and at other locations where materials come together. The holes are generally visible from the exterior.

RECOMMENDED

- Once identified, birds and squirrels should be chased out and the **holes repaired**. Extensive damage can be caused by the animals inside the structure, and the holes allow moisture inside the walls causing rot.
- Mice and rats generally enter through holes at grade level and live in basements, crawlspaces, and floor structure. They nest in hidden locations, chewing wood and wiring. Mice and rats should be controlled through periodic inspections by professional **pest treatment** services.

Insects – Some types of insects are natural enemies of wood. They can quietly but dramatically destroy the structural stability of structural wood members in a short period. These insects include termites, powder post beetles, and carpenter ants. In general, insects may be less of a threat in Downtown Topeka's urban environments, with little exposed soil and vegetation, than they are in Topeka's residential neighborhoods.



Wood is also common window framing, door framing, storefronts, and other details.

Termites – Termites, which live in moist soil, enter wood for food and shelter and then return to the soil each day. This constant traffic usually results in mud tunnels and passageways on vertical surfaces. Property owners should look for:

- Half-round vertical mud tunnels on basement walls, foundation walls, piers, pipes, and on other building surfaces near the ground. These tunnels usually form the most direct route from the ground to the food source in the exposed wood. Crawl spaces should be frequently inspected for these tunnels.

- Pathways at horizontal openings where pipes enter a building or its foundation wall.

If termites are suspected, wood features should be investigated for infestation. If a sharp awl can penetrate the wood to a depth of 1/2 to 3/4 inch with only hand pressure, the existence of termites or rot is a strong possibility. To prevent further damage or infestation, take the following steps.

RECOMMENDED

- Remove all **scrap wood** and lumber from basements, crawl spaces, and other locations near a building's foundation. This deprives termites of an appealing living space.
- Retain a professionally qualified firm to **inspect and treat** the infestation. Treatment generally involves the application of chemical poisons. A warrantee should be obtained and routine follow-up inspections should be undertaken.
- If the damage is serious, **structural work** may be required. Work may include shoring up the building, removing damaged wood at least one foot beyond the infestation, and repairs. The same species of wood should be installed to replace the wood that has been removed.

Powder Post Beetles – Wood is especially susceptible to attack by powder post beetles during the process of seasoning and storage, prior to its conversion into lumber. Protection from a beetle attack is an essential preventive maintenance practice for all vulnerable structural wood. Beetles are frequently attracted to wood that has already been softened by rot or fungal attack.

Prevention of moisture penetration and removal of any fungi is an effective preventive maintenance technique for beetles. The appearance of clean, bright exit holes accompanied by piles of fresh bore-dust is a sign of a recent beetle attack.

RECOMMENDED

- Treatment for such an attack is similar to that recommended for termites, and includes **chemical treatment**, repairs, and follow-up inspections.

Carpenter Ants – Like termites, carpenter ants usually attack a building from a crawl space or basement. Fresh bore-dust in basements, crawlspaces, and walls and occasional sighting of ants within the structure are signs of possible infestation. Like the other infesting insects, carpenter ants are also attracted to moist wood. Carpenter ant nests can be extensive and cause serious damage to a structure.

RECOMMENDED

- **Soil-applied fumigants** along the perimeter of the building are usually adequate controls for these insects.

Wood Siding and Detailing

Wood siding is present only in limited, isolated locations in Downtown Topeka. However, wood detailing is present in many buildings, especially from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Wood siding and detailing serve as the

skin of a building and are important character-defining features. Their purpose is to protect a building's underlying structure and interior features from the weather.

When wood siding and detailing is protected from water, it can last for decades. To function properly, exterior wood members must accomplish two tasks: (1) they must shed water from the exterior, and (2) they must allow water vapor to pass between the interior and exterior of a building. Any cladding material that fails to allow the passage of water vapor will encourage deterioration within the wall.



Wood has been used for numerous inappropriate purposes, such as this façade and the closure of windows and storefront transoms.

Wood – Whenever possible, retain original wood siding and detailing. Repair original wood siding and detailing by removing deteriorated pieces and replacing them with new pieces to match.

RECOMMENDED

- If existing wood siding and detailing cannot be maintained, it is preferable to **replace them in-kind**, using wood members with the same width, profile, and appearance as the existing. Match original details.
- If limited replacement of wood siding and detailing is required, the new wood members should **match the species** of existing wood if possible both to give the wall a consistent texture and appearance and because different species of wood have different rates of expansion.
- Wood siding and detailing exposed to the exterior should be protected with properly applied **paint**. A good paint job should last twelve to fifteen years.
- Rather, **clean** exterior wood with TSP and a light water wash before painting.
- Apply paint with a **brush**; do not spray. Brushing results in a thicker coat with better adhesion.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not **power wash** exterior wood components. Power washing causes exposed wood to absorb significant amounts of moisture. The absorbed moisture will cause subsequently applied paint layers to fail.

Synthetic Materials – High quality fiberglass and other similar commercial grade synthetic materials have been used to replace complex historic wood detailing, especially in locations that are difficult to maintain. Synthetic siding and detailing materials are not recommended either over or as a replacement for historic wood siding and detailing. Installation of vinyl and aluminum siding has been popular in recent years due to their low installation costs and because they are considered maintenance-free. Neither material, however, will last as long as properly painted wood. Both materials deteriorate under exposure to the sun's radiation and lose their original aesthetic appearance within a few years. Neither material can be maintained or repaired. When they fail, they must be replaced.

RECOMMENDED

- If existing wood components are deteriorated and must be replaced, appropriate **high quality commercial grade synthetic materials** may be considered but must closely replicate the character and appearance of the original elements.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- In general, do not cover or replace historic wood siding or detailing with **vinyl**, aluminum, or other synthetic materials.



Stucco is a prominent material in several of Downtown Topeka's 1960s renovations.

STUCCO AND CONCRETE

Stucco

Stucco is used as a coating over masonry to give walls a smooth, finished appearance and to protect them from deterioration caused by exposure. Stucco is a form of mortar that has many important applications. Although the installation of stucco has become somewhat standardized in modern construction, it can be an extremely versatile material.

Several historic masonry buildings in Downtown Topeka have been coated with stucco. In some cases, the change was architecturally significant and was accompanied by other stylistic alterations. In other cases, the coating had little architectural value and was an inappropriate treatment.

As a general rule, stucco should not be installed over historic masonry. In some cases, however, stucco is a historically appropriate surface treatment for masonry buildings where the building's underlying brick or stone material is of poor quality and is deteriorating.

RECOMMENDED

- **Retain, repair, and maintain** stucco surfaces that are historically significant to an existing building.
- Where existing stucco is deteriorated it should be **repaired** to match adjacent surfaces. Remove only the deteriorated stucco.
- Before applying the replacement material to a large wall area, use a **test panel** to determine if the color and finish are appropriate. Once a proper recipe has been determined, it should be recorded for any future repairs to the building.
- When repairing stucco, make sure that areas of patched stucco **match** the strength, composition, color, and texture of the original to the greatest degree possible.
- Stucco patch recipes should be **tinted to match** the weathered appearance of the existing material.
- Carry out stucco repairs so that the **dimension** between the surface of the stucco and adjacent finishes remains unchanged.
- In **applying** stucco, begin from the top of the wall. Application should be smooth. Surplus stucco should be washed off with a light stream of water. Allow the stucco to set for 30 to 60 minutes. Using a fine spray of water, etch the surface to match the texture of the earlier stucco.
- When installing stucco in a crack, always cut a **groove** or "key" for receiving the new work. A groove can be cut by using a knife to open up an existing crack. The edges should then be undercut with a hammer and chisel. After applying stucco, it should be kept moist for three to four days to allow curing.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- In general, **stucco, Dryvit, or permastone**-type cladding should not be installed over historic masonry.



Concrete is featured in most of Downtown Topeka's Mid-century Modern buildings.

Concrete

Although concrete is often perceived as a contemporary material, some forms of concrete have been used since ancient times. The recipe for concrete, however, has been influenced by the regional availability of materials and by changing technology. In the past, shells and volcanic ash have been used to make concrete. Early concrete was often used for decorative applications, rather than structural ones.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, engineers and builders began to experiment with concrete as a structural building material. In its early use, however, concrete was not well understood, and many early instances of its use have resulted in significant physical problems over time.

By the mid-1920s, concrete was in wide use especially as an interior floor and structural material in lieu of fire-prone wood. The techniques of concrete construction became better understood and generally well executed. After World War II concrete technology became fully developed, and concrete became widely used both structurally and as a finish material.

Concrete may be cast-in-place or pre-cast. Cast-in-place concrete is formed and poured onsite and is commonly used for foundations, floors, structure, ramps, and walkways. Cast-in-place concrete that predates 1950, before its technology was fully developed and standardized, can be prone to failure from design or installation flaws.

Pre-cast concrete is a finish material that is fabricated offsite under controlled conditions and shipped to the site. In Topeka it begins appearing in the 1950s. During the 1960s it became a featured exterior finish material.

Today, both cast-in-place and precast concrete construction is undertaken to accepted industry standards by professional contractors experienced in their use.

Precast concrete is produced under controlled conditions and can be of very high quality.

Concrete is a common material used in Mid-century Modern style buildings in Downtown Topeka both for new buildings and in the renovation of older storefronts. Most of Topeka's taller modern building made extensive use of concrete.

Concrete Characteristics – Concrete is a conglomerate material composed of a cement matrix that has hardened around the interior addition of coarse and fine aggregate and metal reinforcement. Concrete's compressive strength is acquired from the hydration of the cement which forms a binding paste around the aggregates.

Metal reinforcement gives concrete tensile strength. The alkalinity of sound concrete protects the reinforcement from corrosion by stabilizing an oxide film over the steel. Corrosion is inhibited as long as the oxide film over the reinforcement is not impaired. Since reinforcing bars perform structural tension functions which concrete alone cannot achieve, it is essential that they be preserved from corrosion and that their bond with the surrounding concrete be maintained.

Concrete Deterioration – The deterioration of concrete occurs through cracking or delamination. Cracking can be caused by the shrinkage of the concrete during installation, thermal expansion and contraction, or internal stresses.

The exposure and rusting of metal reinforcing causes cracking as the rusting metal naturally expands. Rusting can occur through the shallow placement of reinforcing bars or when water penetrates inside due to cracking. As the reinforcing bars begin to rust and expand, they cause the surrounding concrete to further crack or spall, allowing additional moisture to enter.



Cast-in-place concrete was used for the floor structure of the parking deck at left; precast concrete panels were used for the exterior of the bank at right.

Delamination, the loss of material in thin sheets, is caused by inherent flaws in the original material, such as too much aggregate in the mix, and is exacerbated by freeze/thaw cycling, salts, and structural stresses.

Little deterioration of concrete was observed during field surveys undertaken for the preparation of Downtown Topeka's design guidelines, though the survey of concrete structures was not as extensive as those of brick and stone. Buildings using concrete appear to be in generally good condition.

Building owners should undertake periodic inspection of buildings where concrete materials are exposed to the weather. Potential causes of deterioration include the freeze/thaw cycle, when water is able to permeate into the concrete; salts or carbon dioxide percolating through concrete causing leaching and deterioration of the concrete; or the corrosion of metal reinforcement.

Concrete Repair – Concrete repair work usually involves removal of the deteriorated material using methods that do not damage surrounding sound concrete.

RECOMMENDED

- Repair deteriorated concrete to industry standards with the **consultation** of individuals specializing in concrete repair. Since reinforced concrete is a complicated material, repairs are best addressed by professionals.
- **Careful cutting** or small, hand-held chipping guns are preferred for removals.
- The surface of the concrete to be repaired must be **properly prepared** and must be clean, free of dust, and roughened to promote a mechanical key with the new concrete.
- **Rusted reinforcement** must be exposed to the full extent of the corrosion, cleaned down to clean metal, and painted with a rust-inhibiting coating.
- **New concrete** can be placed as cast-in-place or by hand-troweling or as grout-injection repairs for smaller areas.
- Repair mixes must be formulated to **match the strength and appearance** of existing material and also have low shrinkage. Test panels should be prepared with various mixes to find the closest possible match in color and texture.
- The **causes and sources** of concrete deterioration should be addressed before patching is undertaken.



Three early twentieth century buildings with glazed brick and terra cotta facades.

Terra Cotta

Terra cotta is a common material used in exterior walls during the early twentieth century in Downtown Topeka. Terra cotta is usually used as a decorative material for special features placed in exterior brick walls. However, there are several prominent and high-quality buildings that use glazed brick and terra cotta for their entire facades. Several of these facades are having serious problems with spalling and delamination. Terra cotta is addressed further in Chapter 6, Storefronts, Doors and Windows.



Open joints, chipping, and movement in terra cotta and glazed brick detailing.

APPLIED FACADES

Precast concrete, stucco, metal, and other contemporary materials occur as facade components in Downtown Topeka, most prominently as storefront renovations or applied facades. As discussed in Chapter 2, Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings have undergone repeated cycles of renovation and renewal in accordance with the prevailing styles of the day. Some buildings originally constructed in the mid- or late-nineteenth century have been renovated in the early twentieth century, 1920s, 1930s, and 1950s or 60s. Consequently,

Downtown Topeka's street fronts are stylistically diverse, and architectural styles from all of these periods are significant to its character.

Storefront renovations are addressed in Chapter 6, Storefronts, Doors and Windows. The term "applied facade" relates to storefront-like changes that were made to the entire facade of a building wherein a covering in a new material is added over an earlier historic facade. Upper story windows were covered in these treatments. This occurred primarily during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, when downtown buildings were struggling to modernize in competition with emerging suburban malls.

The South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District appears to have had at least eleven buildings that were renovated with applied facades in the 1950s and 60s. Five of these renovations used precast concrete, Three used stucco, and three used metal as their applied covering. Two of the buildings, one with metal and one with precast concrete, were restored to their previous appearance in recent years by removal of their applied coverings. One of the buildings may have had its entire earlier facade removed. Of the remaining eight, four have been listed as non-contributing to the historic district because their dates of installation could not be confirmed. However, these should be re-assessed.



Precast concrete applied facades installed in the 1960s; each façade had large sign lettering similar to that on Briman's Leading Jewelers, pictured earlier in this chapter.

Precast Concrete –As applied facades, pre-cast concrete often served as a background for large sign letters that turned the entire two-story height of the building into a contemporary sign. Today, these sign letters are no longer present.

The use of precast concrete is discussed earlier in this chapter. The precast concrete of the remaining applied facades appears to be in good condition. Of concern is the condition of fasteners securing the panels to the underlying masonry of the earlier facade and the repair of holes where sign letters have been removed. If the pre-cast panels are retained, consideration should be given to installation of new signage or artwork similar to that for which the facade was designed.

Stucco – Two buildings using stucco for their applied facades remain in the downtown historic district, Briman's Leading Jewelers and The Merchant. Both

are contributing buildings and both are in good condition. The exuberant decorative pattern of The Merchant's stucco appears to be original. Briman's is reported to have been re-stuccoed, but retains its integrity. Treatment of historic stucco is discussed earlier in this chapter.



Stucco/stone and metal applied facades on South Kansas Avenue.

Metal – Two buildings within the historic district have metal applied facades. A one-story building at 924 South Kansas Avenue has a screen of sheet metal. This small building is in good condition but may be lost to the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of the 900 block. 106-108 East 8th Avenue has a facade of metal panels with what appears to be a baked enamel finish set within an aluminum framework. The blue finish of the metal panels is badly faded. The historic building behind the facade is reported to be in poor condition.

Rehabilitation or Removal – Whether an applied facade should be retained and rehabilitated or whether it should be removed and the underlying historic facade restored needs be made on a case-by-case basis.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, the applied facades of buildings that contribute to the historic district should be **rehabilitated** and should not be replaced.
- Buildings with applied facades within the historic district that are currently listed as non-contributing but that are consistent with the diverse character of the district should be **reconsidered** as contributing even if their dates of construction cannot be confirmed or are younger than the fifty-year cutoff period for consideration.
- Review the **historic appearance and condition** of an applied facade to determine whether significant features such as signage or lighting are missing. Where significant features are missing to the extent that the facade lacks its intended character, the addition of similar new contemporary features should be considered to strengthen the intended character while serving the building's present purpose.
- If it is considered desirable that an applied facade should be removed, first closely **inspect the underlying facade** to determine its condition and integrity and whether the earlier facade can be adequately restored. The

significance, integrity, and quality of the applied facade should be weighed against that of the prospective restored façade. If the underlying facade has been severely damaged or is missing significant features, consider not removing the applied facade.



This applied metal façade is in not in good condition. Unlike others, it retained the window openings of the nineteenth century building beneath. The condition of that building and its original facade needs to be investigated.

CHIMNEYS

The function of a chimney is to safely remove smoke and sparks from a building's interior spaces. As heating technologies have changed, many chimneys have been abandoned as coal is no longer generally used as a fuel for heating systems and oil is being used less. Use of electricity does not require chimneys, and burning of natural gas requires venting rather than a traditional chimney. The use and maintenance of chimneys is therefore often overlooked in historic buildings.

Many historic chimneys have no flue liners and water penetration into the flue has frequently washed away the mortar. Above the roof line, a chimney is essentially a freestanding column that must support its own weight and withstand bending forces in the wind. Deterioration in the chimney can quickly cause a major failure such as cracking and collapse. Deteriorated chimneys may therefore be a serious safety hazard.

Maintenance

Inspection – Although chimneys are subject to the same forces of deterioration that affect other masonry features, problems in chimneys are often neglected, because they are not as visible.

RECOMMENDED

- When a rehabilitation project is being undertaken (and on an annual basis) chimneys should be **inspected** for cracking, leaning, deteriorated bricks, deteriorated mortar and pointing, corroded flashing, buildup of surface soot, and intrusions such as bird nests.
- **Stucco veneers** on masonry chimneys should be inspected for cracks and holes.
- Chimneys without **flue liners** that remain in use should have contemporary flue liners installed.

Leaning – Regularly inspect chimneys to see if they are beginning to lean. Leaning creates tension and ultimately cracking, not only in the mortar joints but in the flue liner if one exists. Simple observation from ground level can be aided by binoculars. Problems can also be identified in the attic, if one exists.

Checking the chimney for plumb is the best test. The chimney should maintain a true vertical regardless of leans and sags in the rest of the building. Steel collars and rods should only be used to stabilize a leaning chimney in the early stages. In the long run, this arrangement places more stress on the top of the chimney.

Flashing – Deterioration in the base flashing of the chimney will be evidenced by water or signs of moisture in the form of rot on the underside of the roof-sheathing boards adjacent to the chimney.





Chimneys are not prominent features and occur primarily on side and rear facades in Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings.

Chimney Caps – Historic chimney caps should be maintained wherever they currently exist, especially if they have decorative detailing that contributes to the building's architectural character.

RECOMMENDED

- Unused chimneys should generally be **capped** to prevent moisture penetration, because water damage to this part of a building can go unnoticed for long periods of time. Masonry and terra cotta caps are generally more appropriate than metal caps.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Decorative chimney caps should **not be added** to buildings that did not have them in the past.

Removal and Replacement

Removal – Chimneys are seldom character-defining features in the commercial buildings of Downtown Topeka. Most brick chimneys on downtown historic buildings are simple functional rectangular structures, located along side and rear walls, and not visible from the street level.

RECOMMENDED

- When a masonry chimney is not a character-defining feature of a historic downtown building and is deteriorated or structurally unstable, the chimney **may be removed** to the roof level and capped.

Replacement – If a chimney is needed for building use or is a character-defining feature of the building and inspection reveals that it is deteriorated, it may be necessary to completely rebuild the chimney above the roofline. It should be kept in mind that the proportions, brickwork, and design of chimneys have undergone continuous stylistic transformations.

RECOMMENDED

- The **style** of a rebuilt chimney should conform to the style of the chimney being removed. In some cases, this style may be different than the dominant style in the rest of the building.
- Stone chimneys should be rebuilt reusing the **original stone**. If a brick chimney is to be rebuilt, consider reuse of as many of the **original bricks** as possible.
- Install sloping **mortar-wash** surfaces at the tops of chimneys to protect the chimney walls.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- If a chimney is a significant part of a building's visual silhouette, stripping down or **simplifying the detail** of a chimney can have a negative impact on the building as a whole and should not be done.



CHAPTER 6 – STOREFRONTS, DOORS AND WINDOWS

Storefronts are the most visible and character-defining feature of Downtown Topeka's historic retail buildings, and their function is critical to the successful rehabilitation of the district. Storefronts contribute to an appealing pedestrian environment. Their character enhances the experience of the streetscape and conveys the nature and identity of the district to customers who are seeking unique or high quality shopping and dining.

Functionally, storefronts advertise the businesses that are within, not just through signage but through their form and character. Large display windows allow customers to see featured items and see the layout and range of products available within the store, making customers comfortable and enticing them to explore. Recessed entrances become part of the streetscape, provide shade and shelter, and invite customers in. The quality of the storefront communicates the quality of both the business and the district as a whole.

Storefronts also convey the history of Topeka and the story of change downtown. Although the basic characteristics of storefronts generally remain consistent—visibility, spaciousness, quality, feel—Topeka's storefronts have been frequently changed over the decades, and their detailing often reflects the distinct characteristics of the historic period in which they were installed.

Many of Downtown Topeka's storefronts that have changed multiple times over the life of their building incorporate remnant features from earlier periods into their new designs. The character of storefronts from the 1920s or 1950s contrasts

with the character of a late nineteenth or early twentieth century building, and features from an earlier storefront contrast with the design of new storefronts.

When it occurs, the layering of design elements from successive periods is a key aspect of a building's character and is historically significant in and of itself. The resulting streetscape is a complex fabric of design elements from the city's entire history in interesting and creative juxtaposition. Like the downtown historic district as a whole, Downtown Topeka's storefronts have great variety, diversity, and quality.

This chapter addresses the treatment of the historic district's storefronts and also discusses doors and upper story windows. Together, these features are critical to the character and integrity of the downtown historic district. The principles related to their treatment are similar. In general, authentic historic fabric from all periods of a building's historical development should be preserved and appropriately maintained. New features, when introduced, should be consistent with the historic building in character and function, but contemporary in expression. Quality is emphasized in all work.

THE EVOLUTION OF DOWNTOWN TOPEKA'S STOREFRONTS

Early photographs of South Kansas Avenue show a number of small, one-story wood buildings that may represent the earliest type of commercial buildings constructed downtown. Several of these small buildings have large wood doublehung windows that take up a considerable portion of the available facade and, though residential in type, function much like later storefronts. None of these buildings remains today.



Photograph of the east side of South Kansas Avenue near the corner of 6th Avenue in 1863-65. The two meat markets have large wood doublehung windows. The saddle and harness shop in the center has large projecting display windows with divided lights. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Over the years, the increased availability and reduced cost of glass led the owners of retail shops to build larger windows to display their merchandise. Within a few

decades, owners maximized the available display space by filling most of the first-floor facade with windows. Eventually, windows and doors were coordinated into a single unit that became known as the storefront. Until artificial lighting and air conditioning became standard in retail buildings, storefronts not only provided display space, but were designed to allow the maximum amount of light into a building's interior. Transom windows near the top of the storefront were particularly helpful in providing ventilation.

By the 1860s, however, more sophisticated commercial buildings using brick and stone were being constructed in Downtown Topeka. These new commercial buildings had complete storefronts in which large display windows take up the entire area of the available facade to allow light into the store. The display windows have large panes of glass with wood divided lights, maximizing the glass manufacturing technology of the time.

Doorways with wood double doors with glass lights are located at the center of the storefront. Cast iron beams span the masonry wall supported on cast iron posts flanking the entrances. Separate entrances from the sidewalk are located to the side of the storefronts to provide separate access to the second floors of the buildings.



The west side of South Kansas Avenue at the corner of 6th Avenue, 1858-63. All three masonry buildings have complete storefronts with central entrances and large display windows to the sides. An independent doorway to the left side of each building provides access to the second floor level. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Over the course of the second half of the nineteenth century, new buildings were constructed and storefronts were updated to take advantage of new technologies and architectural styles. At first, the limitations of masonry construction necessitated the use of brick or stone piers that limited the space available for windows. Other materials used in early storefronts include metals such as bronze, copper, and tin.



The 1888 Thacher Building on SE 8th Avenue uses elaborately designed stone masonry arches and piers to form its openings. The building's wood windows and storefronts may be the only surviving nineteenth century storefronts in Downtown Topeka.

The increasing availability of cast iron and galvanized sheet iron introduced new possibilities for the design of storefronts. Iron columns replaced masonry piers, and iron beams made it possible to install larger windows. Cast iron was also used extensively on the upper facades of some commercial buildings, covering the entire facade except for the windows, though none are documented or have survived in Downtown Topeka.



733 (left) and 731 (right) South Kansas Avenue both have cast iron beams and columns remaining. Both buildings were restored after having had their facades covered (see Chapter 2). The storefront of 733 is metal covered but recreates the spirit of its original storefront. It is possible that original wood remains beneath.

Cast iron beams and columns remain present in a number of nineteenth century commercial buildings along with portions of their associated wood storefronts in some buildings. It does not appear, however, that any nineteenth century storefronts that used cast iron survive fully intact in Downtown Topeka. The only surviving nineteenth century storefront appears to be that of the Thacher Building, pictured above and constructed in 1888, which does not use cast iron. Elsewhere, remnant cast iron elements can be found on other buildings, sometimes incorporated into the designs of later storefronts and sometimes covered over.

When steel was introduced in the early twentieth century and came into common use, beams began to be able to span across an entire facade without the need for intervening columns. This capability freed the entire first floor ground level facade for non-structural storefronts designed of wood, metal, and glass. Some storefronts were set back from the face of the building and its steel support structure, giving owners the freedom to construct almost any type of storefront configuration. Large outdoor vestibules and display islands were introduced around entrances providing more space for shop owners to show their goods.



The Palace Building at 709-711 South Kansas Avenue was constructed in 1908 and altered in 1915. The black glazed tile is a still later alteration. The original building had a center display island, the footprint of which remains visible, that was removed when the tile renovations were made.

Beginning in the 1920s, and especially in the 1930s and 1940s, contemporary composite and laminate materials became available for use in commercial facades. These materials expanded the range of options for decorating storefronts and adjacent facades and in many cases were cheaper and easier to install than natural materials. They reflected the public's growing fascination with the machine aesthetic, which eventually led to the birth of modern architecture. New materials included vitrolite glass panels, terra cotta, polished stone, colored metal panels, and stainless steel.



The colorful storefront of 729 South Kansas Avenue dating to the mid-1960s. The design uses reflective structural glass, aluminum, and clear display glass with sealant joints.

The creative use of new materials and storefront designs continued and accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s. The increased availability of the automobile led to the abandonment and demolition of residential neighborhoods around Downtown Topeka, reducing the base of immediate clientele. Competition from growing suburban shopping malls led not only to reduced shopping downtown but to the less intensive use of downtown buildings.

The new focus on automobile access put the upper floors of historic commercial buildings at a disadvantage. As a result, many of them became used for storage or left vacant. Since the windows on these floors became less important to the function of the building, they were often ignored, covered or infilled with brick, wood, or metal. By the 1960s, the irrelevance of upper floors was so complete that many owners added false facades to cover them.

When modernism began to lose its appeal in the 1970s, many owners took a different approach, adding wood-shingle mansard roofs and other fanciful features. The continuing decline of downtown retail shops also led owners to fill in the storefront display windows to add privacy for non-retail uses. Upper floors in some Downtown Topeka buildings continue to be underutilized and offer great potential for development.

In recent years, increased recognition of the unique styles and features of Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings has led to their rehabilitation and renovation. Historic preservation tax credits have been used for building rehabilitation. Owners have removed false facades and restored windows to their original appearance and use, such as at 731 and 733 South Kansas Avenue,

pictured above and in Chapter 2. The upper floors of historic buildings are being renovated as residential lofts, which is appealing to a growing market in Topeka.



Briman's Leading Jewelers, dating to 1964, is one of Downtown Topeka's most intact commercial renovations. Its storefront is pictured on the first page of this chapter. The Briman family still owns and operates the store.

In the many cases where historic elements are missing, architects have created contemporary facades that are sympathetic with surviving elements of historic buildings. These projects are injecting new life into the downtown historic district and are contributing to making Downtown Topeka an attractive place to live, work, shop, and dine.



Rehabilitated contemporary storefront of the Gordon Building at 900 South Kansas Avenue, a 2009 rehabilitation tax credit project.

THE COMPOSITION OF COMMERCIAL FACADES

The primary facades of commercial buildings are generally divided into the storefront at the first floor level and and the upper facade including the building's additional floors.

The storefront is the street level enclosure of the retail business space of a commercial building. The storefront is usually a largely glass enclosure consisting of display windows, entrance doors, and their supporting structure. The primary characteristic of most storefronts is transparency, in contrast to the more complete enclosure of the upper facade.

The amount of glass in a typical storefront usually far exceeds that of any other material. As noted above, the amount of glass in storefronts has increased over time with the technological capability of producing and supporting large panes. Historically, glass has served the functional purpose of allowing the maximum amount of light and air into the retail space. Glass has also served as an advertisement for and attraction into the business inside by making it more visible and displaying its goods.

The primary characteristic of most storefronts is transparency, in contrast to the more complete enclosure of the upper facade.

Storefront entrances are frequently set back from the face of the building and the sidewalk to increase the amount of display area available and to provide shelter for patrons. Storefronts are complex architectural features and are comprised of distinct elements that have changed over time, including bulkheads, display windows, columns, pilasters, transoms, and a storefront beam or cornice. Other elements of storefronts may include floors, ceilings, steps, ramps, awnings, canopies, lighting, and signage. Most of these features are discussed in more detail below.

The upper facade of a commercial building is generally comprised of a masonry exterior wall with a series of regularly spaced windows. The spacing of the windows contributes to the rhythm of the building's design and the streetscape. The windows in the upper facade often have decorative moldings, sills, and lintels. Decorative string courses of tile or brickwork are sometimes included to add visual interest to the facade.

The top of the upper facade is usually capped with a decorative cornice made of wood, sheet metal, stone, or corbeled brick or a parapet capped with stone or tile. Cornice designs generally became more elaborate during the late nineteenth century and simpler in the twentieth century.

Chapter 5 of these design guidelines addresses the treatment and maintenance of exterior walls, the primary focus of which is the upper facade. Windows in the upper facades of Downtown Topeka's historic buildings are discussed below.



The facade of Hillmer's Leather Shop, one of Topeka's most intact early twentieth century storefronts

Storefront Design Components

Downtown Topeka has a wide range of storefronts that have been installed, renovated, and remodeled over the course of the city's historical development. Regardless of period, style, and materials, storefronts are comprised of a set of standard design components that have remained relatively consistent over time. The components of historic storefronts are discussed below.

Bulkheads – Bulkheads are the portion of the storefront that is located below the display windows. They act as a raised base for the display area above the sidewalk and prevent the glass of the windows from being damaged. Nineteenth and early twentieth century bulkheads are often made of wood and decorated with raised wooden panels. Bulkheads from the 1920s through the 1960s may be of a variety of different materials. Bulkheads take a great deal of wear and abuse from splashing, shoveling, kicking, and and impacts related to sidewalk activity.



Hillmer's bulkhead is solid wood with applied panels. It is set slightly above the sidewalk on a cast iron step.

Display Windows – Display windows usually comprise the largest portion of the area of the storefront. Their purposes are to attract attention, display goods, provide visibility to the interior of the store, and maximize the amount of natural light to the interior. Display windows usually flank both sides of the store's entrance, including the recessed area in front of the entrance door.

Over time, the size of individual glass panes used in display windows has increased with manufacturers' ability to make glass of larger size and with increased structural capabilities. By the 1950s and 1960s, large panes of glass that were self-supporting were being installed in display windows using sealant joints, without wood or metal window frames. Display windows provide the fundamental transparency that is essential to storefront design.



The display window at Hillmer's is comprised of large glass panels set in a in thin copper frame. The painted signage on the glass enabled the current retail tenant, Creative Corners, to preserve the building's historic signage.

Structural Components – Structural components such as masonry piers, cast iron columns, and iron or steel beams carry the weight of the building away from the storefront, allowing storefronts to be open and structurally independent. In early facades, masonry or cast iron columns were generally located on both sides of the entrance door as well as at the two ends of the building, beyond the display windows. Modest cornices were sometimes located at the level of the beam providing a decorative cap to the storefront, but none remain in Downtown Topeka today.

With the technical development of steel and its widespread use in the early twentieth century, beams became capable of spanning the entire width of a facade, such as at Hillmer's. Many earlier storefronts were renovated in the 1920s and later with the installation of steel beams to allow storefronts to be more open. While in earlier periods beams were exposed as design features, in later installations they usually are not.



The cast iron or steel beam spanning Hillmer's storefront resting on its masonry column/end wall

Entrances – The main entrance for a storefront is usually located in the middle of the storefront, between display windows. The entrance door is usually recessed to provide shelter from the weather to customers and to provide more display space. In later periods, especially the 1950s and 1960s, storefronts were often asymmetrical.



Recessed entrance vestibule of Hillmer's storefront with its decorative ceramic tile floor; the gray exterior carpet is temporary.

Aside from the treatment of the bulkhead and display windows, which wrap into the recessed entrance, components of entrances include flooring and ceilings. Tile and terrazzo have been used as the flooring of many entrances from the early twentieth century to the present. Flooring is often decorative and sometimes includes the name of the original store. Ceiling materials may vary.

Many Topeka storefronts have a secondary entrance to the side that provides access to the upper floors of the building, which have a separate office or residential use. Sometimes these side entrances are recessed as well. The character of entrance doors for both storefronts and side entrances is discussed later in this chapter.

Transoms – The area above the building's main entrance and display windows is called the transom, which spans the full width of the storefront. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the transom was usually fitted with glass to allow as much light as possible into the store, if possible reaching to the rear of the interior space.

First floor ceilings were high, and transoms were usually located over the top of canvas awnings mounted immediately above the display windows, as at Hillmer's. The awnings shaded customers and the contents of the display windows, while the transoms above filled the store with natural light. In many cases, transom windows were operable to provide ventilation as well.

Since transom windows were not meant to provide a view into or out of the building, they were fitted with decorative glass that was stained, leaded, or textured. Some types of glass were specifically designed to diffuse the light.

The increasing use of electric lights and the widespread introduction of air conditioning in the 1950s diminished the need for transom windows. The space required for air conditioning ductwork at the ceiling level inside the store took up the space that the transoms had lit and ventilated making them obsolete.

As a consequence, transoms were often filled in or covered with signs when storefront renovations were undertaken. In some cases, original historic transom windows still exist behind more recently installed elements of renovated storefronts. Drop ceilings were installed covering them on the interior. Their presence can be easily seen and investigated. Transom windows that survive should be preserved in place and, if possible, re-opened and featured as design elements. Transoms are integral to historic storefront design, have great character, and have become relatively rare.



Transom with textured glass and signage across the top of the Hillmer's storefront

STOREFRONT TREATMENT AND DESIGN

Topeka's downtown historic district has storefronts from all periods of the city's history and historical development. The period of significance of the historic districts span from the late-nineteenth century to 1965, when the districts were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All of the storefronts installed and renovated over this period are of historical significance and, as discussed below, should be preserved.

Very few Topeka storefronts date to the period of their building's original construction. Many storefronts have been renovated multiple times. The storefront of a building may be of an entirely different period and style from that of the original building. Further, the design components of a particular storefront may include elements of different periods and styles.

Regardless of this apparent conflict, all of these elements remain significant to the building's historical development and should be preserved. Diversity of periods, styles, and materials is a character-defining feature of Downtown Topeka's storefronts just as it is of the historic district as a whole. These various design components, periods, styles, and materials, complex as they may be, tell the building's story and the story of Downtown Topeka.

The treatment of Downtown Topeka's retail storefronts has two overriding goals which should be the basis for design and for the review of proposed renovations:

- The preservation and appropriate treatment of authentic historic building fabric— because this is what gives Downtown Topeka its distinctive character and appeal; and
- Creating a lively and engaging pedestrian streetscape environment— because this is what supports downtown businesses and successful downtown revitalization.

Both of these goals are outlined and discussed in the rehabilitation approach presented in Chapter 2, Character of the Downtown Districts. The first step in the treatment of retail storefronts is the assessment.

Assessment and Approach

Investigation and Assessment – Before undertaking any design work on a storefront within the downtown historic district, undertake an assessment of the existing storefront's historic fabric.

RECOMMENDED

- **Identify and assess** the historic fabric of a storefront prior to design.
- Identify the **design components** of the existing storefront and the various materials of which they are comprised. Use the above discussion of historic storefront design components as a starting point and identify additional components and features as they may exist.
- Investigate the **presence of historic features** and materials that may have been covered with later materials during later renovations. Do not damage existing historic fabric in undertaking such investigations.



929 South Kansas Avenue was constructed in 1888 and is one of a few buildings downtown that appears to retain a significant amount of its original storefront, including the entrance doors within the vestibule, the full transom above, and the door to the upper floor on the right side. These elements should be preserved and appropriately treated as a high priority. The bulkhead and display windows appear to date from the 1950s or 1960s with thin aluminum frames (two different heights for two retail spaces inside) and black structural glass on the bulkhead (visible within the vestibule). Facing the sidewalk, the black glass has been replaced with rustic brick. The 1950s storefront components should be preserved. The brick on the bulkhead should be removed and replaced with a material similar to the black glass.

- Research the **historical development** of the building and the storefront. Consult the Downtown Topeka historic survey, National Register nomination, historic photographs on the Kansas Historical Society website and elsewhere, and other historical information as available.
- Outline the various **periods of development** and change of the storefront and provide whatever documentation is available of its character and the nature of the change during each period. Outline the significance of each period and design to the building and the historic district.
- Identify the period of development under which each **individual design component** and material of the storefront was installed. Outline the significance of each component and material to the period design.

- Determine the physical **condition** of existing components and materials and the type and level of work necessary for their maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation.

Treatment Approach – Prepare a treatment approach for the storefront and its design components. Take the guidelines included this chapter and the principles of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards discussed in Chapter 2 into consideration.

RECOMMENDED

- Prepare a **recommended approach** toward the treatment of the storefront and each design component and material of which it is comprised.
- Identify any topics, issues, and/or recommendations **not consistent** with these design guidelines for review and discussion.
- If the proposed project is using federal or state **rehabilitation tax credits**, include the assessment and approach outlined above in the Part I and Part II submissions to the Kansas Historical Society for their review.
- If the proposed project is under review by the Topeka **Landmarks Commission**, include the assessment and approach in a brief written and illustrated introduction along with the proposed conceptual design submission for discussion and review.

Preservation, Repair and Maintenance

This section relates primarily to historic storefronts in Downtown Topeka from all periods and styles predating 1970 that are substantially intact. It is the basic premise of these design guidelines that authentic historic design components and building fabric of historically significant storefronts of buildings within the downtown historic district should be preserved. As noted above, any individual storefront may contain design components from multiple periods and styles, the historic fabric of which is all significant.

Treatment of Historic and Non-Historic Fabric – In the assessment of the existing storefront discussed above, distinguish between historic and non-historic design components, building fabric, and materials.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, **historic fabric** to be identified is any component or material associated with a period or style of change to the storefront dating before 1965. Multiple periods and styles may be present within any single existing storefront.
- In general, **non-historic fabric** to be identified is any component or material post-dating 1965. Keep in mind that some components and materials that are considered non-historic still may be worthy of retaining due to their character or design quality.
- **Historic storefront design components** and materials from all periods and styles of a storefront's historical development should be **preserved**, repaired, and appropriately treated.



The original 1888 storefront at 931 South Kansas Avenue was entirely replaced with one composed of tile probably in the 1920s. This storefront is nicely designed. Its upper windows reflect the transom next door. The tan tile works well with the nineteenth century brick masonry. The decorative tiles and metal grills add a restrained, high quality decorative flair. A small awning provides shelter at the entrance. This storefront should be preserved in its entirety.

- Existing non-historic storefronts or portions thereof **may be retained** in their entirety even if they are considered inappropriate to the character of the building or the district if no work or only very limited work is being undertaken with respect to them. This guideline may not be applicable when rehabilitation tax credits are being sought.
- Existing non-historic storefronts that are considered inappropriate to the character of a building or the district and/or that conflict with the revitalization goals of the district should be **modified or replaced** when substantial work is being undertaken on the building and/or the storefront.

Storefront Layout, Form, and Configuration – Determine how the layout, form, and configuration of the storefront being addressed relates to the character and design principles of the period or periods of its construction. Identify any conflicts or inconsistencies.

RECOMMENDED

- Develop an **approach** toward the treatment of the storefront and each of its design components and materials that **preserves and reinforces** the principles, character, and style of its period or periods of construction.
- Do not remove **individual design components** that contribute to the historic character of the storefront.
- **Retain** the layout, form, and configuration of historic storefronts.
- The **removal of historic storefront components** may be considered when restoration of an original configuration with adequate documentation is proposed.
- **Remove or replace** non-historic design components or materials that are in conflict with the historic character of the storefront.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Do not demolish or remove** a historic storefront from any period of significance related to the downtown historic district.

Entrances – Preserve the historic entrance configurations and materials of historic storefronts from all periods. Some storefront entrances have recessed vestibules, and some do not.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain historic entrance **vestibules** where they exist.
- Remove **non-historic changes** and alterations that are inappropriate to the character and style of the historic entrance configuration.
- Retain and repair historic entrance **materials** such as decorative floor tile and ceilings.
- When materials such as historic floor tile are **damaged** beyond the possibility of repair, replace the material with new material of similar type, durability, character, and appearance. Contemporary and creative variations that respect historic character are acceptable.

Structural Components – Retain historic structural components related to the period or style of the historic storefront.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain historic structural components such as **cast iron** columns and beams from earlier periods even when the predominant style of the storefront is of a later period.
- Where historic structural components have been covered in whole or in part by later storefronts that are significant and will be retained, they **may remain covered** but should be preserved.
- Alterations to storefronts should incorporate the **historic structural components** that have been covered during earlier alterations.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Do not cover** historic structural components that were designed to be exposed with new storefront materials or signage.



The storefront at 114 SW 8th Avenue, constructed about 1900, has storefronts with components from multiple periods. The overall storefront opening, steel beam at the top with decorative floral medallions, cast iron column on the left side, and masonry pier on the right date from the original construction. The original transom may be presents behind the sign panel and could be exposed. The entrance and display windows date from the 1950s or 1960s and include large glass panels with sealant joints at the entrance vestibule and an aluminum frame elsewhere. The bulkhead is covered with black glazed tile. Both original and 1950s/60s storefront components should be preserved. The transom could be opened. The solid awning with asphalt shingles should be replaced with a canvas awning.

- **Maintain** structural components with coatings that are appropriate to their material. Cast iron should be painted.

Bulkheads – Retain historic bulkheads and authentic bulkhead materials and finishes related to historic storefronts.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain and repair **damaged bulkhead materials** to the maximum extent possible, even when the locations of the damage will be visible. Some historic bulkhead materials, such as period reflective glass, may be irreplaceable.
- Determine the minimum extent of repairs necessary. Patch holes and missing pieces with **new material** appropriate to the specific material of the bulkhead—wood, tile, glass, stone, or other material. Match the color and texture of historic materials as closely as possible.

- Where historic bulkheads have been covered with **inappropriate materials** not characteristic of the historic storefront, such as plywood or red brick, remove the inappropriate material. If possible, expose and repair historic materials below. If not possible, install new contemporary materials appropriate to the character and style of the historic storefront.
- Use new materials and installation techniques that can **withstand** rain, sun, ice, salt, and potential damage from impact.

Display Windows – Retain historic display windows in their entirety, including configurations, glass, frames, sealants, and other components.

RECOMMENDED

- Maintain the **transparency** and open character of historic display windows and their ability to display products and to visibly connect the sidewalk to the interior of stores.
- Replace broken or **cracked glass** that might be a safety hazard with new glass that matches the historic glass in size, configuration, thickness and transparency.
- Repair damage to **historic frames**. Use materials and techniques appropriate to the material of the frame. Ensure that frames are structurally sound. Prevent water from entering the wall or bulkhead from gaps or cracks in the frame.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not install **tinted glass** or tinted coatings on the glass of historic display windows. Do not replace or cover glass with other materials. If shading is necessary, consider using exterior canvas awnings or interior blinds, curtains, or standing screens that are removable.

Transoms – Retain and feature historic transoms and transom windows where they still exist.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain **remaining historic transoms** and transom windows in their entirety. Where transom windows are exposed, retain the existing configurations, glass, frames, and other components.
- Consider altering interior ceiling configurations within stores to allow historic transom windows to provide **natural light** into the store. Consider making operable transom windows functional.
- Repair **damage** to historic transoms and transom windows using materials and techniques appropriate to the specific material being addressed. Preserve as much authentic material as possible.
- Where transom materials are damaged beyond repair, **replace** the damaged material only. Use new materials that match the historic materials in size, shape, configuration, color, texture, and transparency.
- Where transom windows still exist but are covered, consider removing the covering and **re-exposing** the windows.



This new wood storefront at 919 South Kansas Avenue reflects historic precedents in its transom windows, display windows, and entrance vestibule. Original historic components including the steel beam above and side masonry piers have been preserved. The storefront is a high quality design and installation.

- Where transoms will **remain closed** or covered, retain and feature the exterior shape, configuration, and surrounding materials of the transom opening. Do not cover the beams, columns, or masonry piers surrounding the transom opening. If possible, slightly recess the covering within the transom opening and expose transom trim and edges.

- Infill closed transom openings with **high quality materials** of appropriate character, fully covering the available space. Transom panels may be used for building signage, artwork, or decorative lighting appropriate to the character of the building, storefront, and streetscape.

- Reflecting the **historic divisions** of the original transom window in the form and design of the new covering is appropriate and encouraged.

New Design Components in Existing Storefronts

This section relates to storefronts that have been substantially altered and post-date 1965. It may also relate to storefronts that pre-date 1965 but have been damaged or inappropriately treated to the extent that the storefront has lost integrity and storefront materials cannot be rehabilitated.

Preservation of Remaining Historic Fabric – Preserve and retain remaining historic fabric from historic storefronts even when the historic storefront as a whole has lost integrity or no longer exists and a new storefront will be installed.

RECOMMENDED

- Where **substantial portions** of historic storefronts remain, incorporate the remaining portions into the design of the new storefront.
- Where **fragments** of historic storefronts remain, incorporate the fragments into the new design if possible.
- Preserve, repair, and treat remaining historic fabric in a manner **appropriate to its character** as if it was part of a fully rehabilitated storefront. Design new storefront components to be respectful and compatible.
- If fragments or portions of historic storefronts remain but cannot reasonably be incorporated into the new design, **preserve** the remaining historic fabric in such a way that it could be re-exposed and reused in another design in a future renovation.

Restoration and Reconstruction of Storefronts – As discussed in Chapter 2, "restoration" is when a historic storefront is returned to its appearance at a specific previous period of its history through the removal of later changes. "Reconstruction" is when a historic storefront no longer exists and a new storefront is designed to replicate its documented appearance at a specific period of time.

RECOMMENDED

- The **restoration** of historic storefronts should only be undertaken when the later changes to be removed are themselves not historically significant, post-date 1970, and/or damage the integrity or physical condition of the historic storefront.
- **Changes** to a historic storefront that are themselves **historically significant** should be retained even when they conflict with the overall style of the original historic storefront.
- Storefronts should only be **restored** to an earlier appearance if photographs, drawings, physical evidence, and other means can adequately document their appearance at a particular time.
- When repairing or **rehabilitating** an existing historic storefront or portion of a storefront, use materials that were available at the time the storefront was constructed. When not available, use materials that are similar and result consistent with the the character and appearance of the historic fabric.



A storefront entrance and display windows of current design have been installed set back from the plane of the original building at 724 South Kansas Avenue, constructed about 1905. The steel beam at the top is original as appear to be the two cast iron columns at the two ends. The center column does not appear in historic photographs. A canvas awning covers the location of the former transom window. This is an appropriate current treatment that preserves and features original historic fabric.

- Where non-historic or inappropriate changes are removed, new replacement components should be of **current** but historically compatible and respectful design. This should be the case whether the removals are minimal or substantial.
- If the **extensive deterioration** of a historic storefront requires reconstruction, use the original form and detailing of the storefront as a model. The reconstruction should convey the same visual appearance and use the same materials as the existing storefront. Replicate original detailing.
- If **replication** of a lost historic storefront is desired, use components of contemporary materials and design in configurations that recall historic precedents but do not attempt or pretend to replicate them.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not attempt to replicate missing historic components of a storefront unless sufficient **documentation** exists as to the authentic character, form, material, and configuration of the historic components.
- Do not attempt to **reconstruct** lost historic storefronts unless sufficient documentation exists as to its authentic character, form, material, configuration, and detailing.
- Do not remove an **authentic historic storefront** or authentic storefront fabric from any period of the historic district's significance in order to attempt the restoration or reconstruction of a storefront from another period.

Introduction of New Design Components – Many storefronts in Downtown Topeka are comprised of both historic and non-historic components. The percentage of non-historic components may be substantial and comprise the majority of the existing storefront.

RECOMMENDED

- Remove **inappropriate non-historic changes** that compromise the character and integrity of a storefront and conflict with the goals of making storefronts transparent and engaging with the sidewalk and streetscape.
- **High-quality changes** that are not historic but that respect an historic building's basic form and the rhythm of the streetscape may be retained.
- Remove brick, stucco, wood, and other solid **infill materials** that have been installed where a storefront has been partially or completely removed and that are inappropriate to the goals, character, and purpose of retail storefronts in Downtown Topeka.
- Remove **inappropriate non-historic materials and features** such as red brick for bulkheads, Colonial windows and doors, mansards and roof projections with asphalt or wood shingles, rustic wood paneling, and other modern design components that conflict with the character, appearance, and use of storefronts of the historic district during its period of significance.
- New design components should be of **current** design and should be respectful and appropriate to the overall character of the building, character of the historic district in the vicinity of the building, and any remaining historic fabric of the storefront.
- New design components **may vary** from historic precedents so long as they fulfill the overall goals of connecting retail spaces to the streetscape making the streetscape visible, lively, and engaging. New designs should be respectful of the historic building and context but do not need to replicate lost historic storefronts.
- **Creativity and quality** in the design and construction of new design elements is encouraged.



The W. T. Grant Building at 705 South Kansas Avenue was constructed in 1935 in the Art Deco style. The band at the transom level was a W. T. Grant sign and could remain a sign or be an artistic or decorative element. The contemporary wood panels at the sidewalk level should be removed and replaced with considerably full-sized glass. The steel canopy frame is not original, but is interesting and high quality should be preserved.

- **Diversity and complexity** are characteristics of the existing historic district as a whole and of many individual storefronts and are acceptable in the design of new contemporary storefronts when thoughtfully, respectfully, and well executed.
- Should **public art** be installed on a building, install artwork in a manner that is reversible and does not damage or destroy authentic historic building fabric.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not install new storefront design components with false or **conjectural historic design** or detailing. Avoid the use of storefront elements that are **historically inappropriate**, such casement or bay windows, false muntins, diamond-shaped window panes, Colonial doors, coach lanterns, false mansard roofs, false shutters, and other residential-style features.
- Do not use **inappropriate materials** which include aluminum siding, vinyl siding, artificial stone, textured panels, and plywood.

Design of New Storefronts

In some instances it may be necessary or desirable to design and install completely new storefronts in an existing historic building particularly when infilled storefronts or inappropriate non-historic storefronts are removed.

RECOMMENDED

- As with new components in existing storefronts, discussed above, entirely new storefronts should be of **current** design and should be respectful and appropriate to the overall character of the building, character of the historic district in the vicinity of the building, and any remaining historic fabric of or adjacent to the storefront.
- Maintain the **commercial retail character** of the building and streetscape in the design of new storefronts even if the retail space within the building has changed use.
- Maintain the open and **transparent** character of the storefront area through the liberal use of transparent glass in the storefront's design.
- Use **materials** that are appropriate to downtown commercial retail design and are sympathetic in color, texture, and type to those of the historic building.
- New storefronts should entirely **fill the area** of the lost historic storefront. Do not cover remaining historic columns or piers at the sides of the historic storefront opening or beams or other features at the top of the opening.
- New storefronts may be **set back slightly** from the face of the building's facade. Storefronts were historically set into a building's facade, rather than applied to it, so the appearance of being applied should be avoided.
- New designs should **reflect the character** of historic storefronts along the street through the color, configuration, form, rhythm, and texture of the design components used.
- When the storefronts of large buildings are divided among **different owners or tenants**, an effort should be made to treat the storefront facades in a consistent manner. Separate retail spaces within the facade can be differentiated without harming the integrity of the building or the streetscape.
- Downtown Topeka has storefront configurations and designs from a **wide range of time periods** of the city's historical development. The character of ant and all of these periods may be appropriately reflected in the design of new storefronts, so long as the general character of the existing and immediately adjacent buildings is respected.
- The design of new storefronts **may vary** from historic precedents so long as they fulfill the overall goals of connecting retail spaces to the streetscape in order to make the streetscape visible, lively, and engaging.



The storefront façade at 728 South Kansas Avenue has been entirely covered or replaced. A new wood transom cover has been installed at the top and down the two sides. The new cover is inappropriate. It would be preferable to retain and expose any remaining historic features. Assuming the original transom window has been removed, any new sign panel at the transom level should be the same size of the original transom and slightly recessed into it. The modern Colonial style storefront below with divided lights and a door with oval glass is inappropriate to the style of the building and not an appropriate contemporary expression.

For instance, new storefronts may have window components that open fully to the sidewalk such as might be desirable for a restaurant. New storefronts should be respectful of the historic building and context but do not need to replicate lost historic storefronts.

- **Creativity and quality** in the design and construction of new storefronts is encouraged.
- **Diversity and complexity** are characteristics of the existing historic district as a whole and of many individual storefronts and are acceptable in the design of new storefronts when thoughtfully, respectfully, and well executed.
- Should **public art** be installed on a building, install artwork in a manner that is reversible and does not damage or destroy authentic historic building fabric.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not install new storefront with false or **conjectural historic design** or detailing.

False Historicism

Do not construct new features that attempt to appear historic but are not based upon actual documentation. False historicism confuses our understanding of authentic historic buildings and diminishes the legacy of the past. Authenticity and the preservation of real historic fabric are primary goals in the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Avoid speculation and **conjecture** as to what a building or feature *might* have looked like.
- It is inappropriate to **copy the features** of another existing historic building for use in the rehabilitation of a building that lacks such features even if it is thought that the building might have had something similar at some time.
- It is inappropriate to create a feature that appears to **predate** the actual date of construction of a building, such as introducing a Colonial or Victorian style detail on a 1920s storefront.

EXTERIOR DOORS

The exterior doors of Downtown Topeka's historic commercial buildings are generally located in one of three places. Primary doors are located within the building's storefront. Doors to the upper floors of buildings were often located to the side of the building and storefront with access directly from the sidewalk. Doors were also provided in rear alleyways. Additionally, some stores had sidewalk access doors, but almost all of these doors have been removed, filled, and paved in Downtown Topeka.

In the late nineteenth century, storefront doors tended to be narrow double doors and were located in the center of the storefront. As noted above, entrance doors were often set back within recessed entrance vestibules. Early doors were usually made of wood with large, nearly full-height glass panels. The entrance doors of later modern storefronts were usually metal and may have been off-set asymmetrically in the storefront facade.

Side doors accessing upper floors were similar but only some had glass in their upper section. They were sometimes recessed as well. Visibility to the inside hall and stairs was important for convenience and safety. Doors in rear alleyways were usually wood panel doors without glass for security. Wide wood loading doors were sometimes provided as well.

Today, most storefront doors are contemporary metal and glass doors comprised of standardized metal storefront sections and are installed in storefronts of all periods and styles. These doors are well made, commercial grade, provide full glass panels, and are relatively inexpensive. In some stores, high quality modern



A storefront of current design has been installed within the Pennant Building at 915-917 South Kansas Avenue, constructed in 1927. The building has two storefronts, one of which is is set back, which may not be consistent with the building's historic character. The storefront components are simple and straightforward. Centering the door was appropriate in this symmetrical facade. The colorful Spanish terra cotta surround was retained and featured. The design of the transom area could have picked up the color and motifs of the Spanish tile.

wood-and-glass doors have been installed with natural finishes. Flush metal doors are often used in alleyways.

Few historic wood doors remain today, such as those of 929 South Kansas Avenue on both the sidewalk and rear alleyway. Original wood door frames remain in several buildings where historic storefronts have been retained. Original metal-and-glass storefront doors appear to remain in some 1950s and 1960s storefronts.

Maintenance and Repair

In historic buildings, doors and door frames are more than functional entryways. They are an important architectural element, and special care should be taken to preserve their integrity. The effects of constant use and exposure, however, can lead to rapid deterioration, which is why so many original historic doors have been replaced.

General Maintenance – Where original wood or metal doors and door frames remain, retain and repair as much historic door fabric as possible.

- Missing elements should be replaced in kind, and the door's original size, profile, and configuration should be preserved.
- Regular maintenance for historic doors should include regular cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and the application of appropriate protective coatings.
- Modern weatherstripping may be applied to historic door frames as needed. Installation of weatherstripping around door frames can increase energy efficiency and help to protect a doorway's historic features.

Preservation and Integrity – Although the surface of older wooden doors may show wear, they were usually well built and can remain structurally sound for long periods. However the wear and tear on historic wood and metal doors can be extensive, especially when they have not been well maintained.

- The wood used in older doors is often harder and heavier than the soft woods, stamped metal, and composite materials that are used in new doors.
- Aside from its historic value, the long run repair of an existing historic wood or metal door may be more cost-effective than replacing it with a new one, especially if the new door must be specially made due to size.
- In addition to the door itself, other features that contribute to a doorway's architectural character should be retained. Such elements may include door hardware, transom lights, kick plates, and mail slots.

Replacement

New Doors and Frames – If an existing historic door is deteriorated beyond repair, replace it with a new door that is appropriate to the period and style of the building or storefront.

- Whenever possible, new doors should **match the original** in materials, design, and size.
- Retain historic **door frames** whenever possible even when historic doors have been replaced.
- Do not alter the size of a door frame or doorway to accommodate a new standard sized door. New doors must be made to **fit the accurate size** of the historic door frame. Exceptions may be made where ADA compliance is necessary.
- The use of standard contemporary metal doors and doorframes common to **modern storefront systems** is acceptable where historic doors and frames are no longer present. This approach has been undertaken in most storefronts in Downtown Topeka.



The storefront at the Davies Building at 727 South Kansas Avenue was renovated in the 1950s or 1960s. The display windows have large glass panels with sealant joints at the vestibule and an aluminum frame around. This design and use of materials represents a significant era of Post World War II architecture and contributes to the general character of the surrounding historic district.

- When used, doors and frames of modern storefront systems should not stand out visually. A finish should be selected that **blends** the door into its historic context.
- Do not install solid wood or metal **flush or paneled** doors on storefront doors. Storefront doors should have large glass panels. Do not install residential style doors.

Non-Functional Doors – Historic doors that are non-functional should be left in place and sealed, even in alleyways. Even if certain elements of the doorway are no longer functional, the original appearance of the exterior should be maintained whenever possible.

Screen Doors – Screen and storm doors are not present along the sidewalk historically and are not appropriate. Screen and storm doors may be installed in rear alleyways. When screen or storm doors are necessary, install such doors that are simple with a narrow-frame design that enables the inner door to be seen. Metal screen and storm doors should be painted or finished to match the color of the inner door.

UPPER FLOOR WINDOWS

Fenestration, or the arrangement of windows on a building's facade, is a central component of architectural design. The way in which windows are internally divided is also important to a building's appearance. Windows on all levels of a building should be treated in a manner that is consistent with their role in the design of the facade. When upper floors are mothballed, it is important to treat the window bays in a way that preserves their role as elements of the facade.

Historically, windows were designed to be as transparent as possible, to allow the most possible light to enter a building. Light was a very important commodity in narrow retail spaces that often had a closed-in feeling. The display windows of a storefront played an important role in connecting the retail display with the sidewalk, allowing the two to melt into one. In this way, the retail space became a part of the street.

For centuries, builders and glass makers worked to increase the size of window panes (sometimes called lights). Expense and technology necessitated that most windows were built with multiple panes supported by wood or metal dividers called muntins. These muntins were mounted into sashes and hung on multiple tracks to allow the windows to be opened.

Today, the existence of electric lights and air conditioning makes it difficult to imagine the importance of windows in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Until the mid-twentieth century, the need for light and air demanded that windows be placed throughout most buildings. The close proximity of commercial buildings to one another, however, resulted in most windows being placed on front and rear elevations. As a result, windows on front facades became very significant components of a building's design.

Historic windows should never be replaced unless they are deteriorated to such an extent that repair and rehabilitation are not possible.

Historic windows should never be replaced unless they are deteriorated to such an extent that repair and rehabilitation are not possible. Like doors, windows are character-defining features that contribute to a building's proportioning and rhythm. When properly maintained, windows can last for many decades. Contrary to popular belief, historic wood windows are usually better constructed than new replacement windows, and can easily be repaired to working order. Because they are better constructed, they are more cost effective over the long run because they require less maintenance, can take more abuse, and will not have to be replaced.

Historic windows can also be made as energy efficient as new windows through the installation of weatherstripping and, if desired, storm windows. *Options for repair should be assessed before replacement windows are considered.* Repair is always preferable over replacement. If replacement is thought to be necessary, obtain the input of a professional experienced in historic preservation. Many times windows that look like they are in poor condition are in fact repairable. If replacement windows are necessary, the new windows should be carefully chosen to match the size, appearance, and construction of the historic windows.

Many original historic upper floor windows in Downtown Topeka have already been replaced. In smaller retail commercial buildings, these changes appear to

have often taken place at the same time that storefronts were modified below. Some of these window changes are consistent with the storefront changes, were undertaken during the historic district's period of significance, and are now of significance themselves.



Original historic windows should be maintained and preserved where they still remain.

The primary problem with upper floor windows in Downtown Topeka is that historic window openings have been reduced in size or enclosed entirely as second floor usage had declined. The partial or full closure of historic window openings is never an appropriate treatment, and the goal of downtown revitalization in Topeka is to restore the vitality and commercial or residential use of upper floors. The reopening of enclosed upper story windows enables the reuse of upper levels, which is the is physical manifestation of that goal.

Maintenance and Repair

Preservation – As a high priority, retain and preserve original windows from the date of a building's construction whenever they are still present.

- Retain later **replacement windows** from the historic district's various periods of significance unless the windows negatively impact the character and use of the building.
- Replacement windows from **outside** of the district's period of significance may be retained provided they do not negatively impact the character, integrity, and use of the building.
- Retain the **elements** of preserved windows that contribute to a building's architectural character. Such elements may include frames, sash,

muntins, glazing, hardware, sills, lintels, and other features. Removal of such features diminishes a building's architectural integrity.



Windows that are blocked or covered (left) should be reopened. On the right, the original window opening was reduced in size using tan brick before new windows were installed. This installation should be reversed.

Inspection and Maintenance – Set up a window maintenance schedule. Regularly inspect windows to identify problems before they can damage window elements.

- Make sure that the **joints** where the window frame and adjacent masonry wall meet are tight. Open joints should be sealed to prevent the infiltration of air and water.
- Check to see that the **sills** are tight, masonry joints on wash surfaces are pointed or sealed, and the sills are properly shedding water.
- Carry out regular **window maintenance**, including replacing deteriorated caulk and glazing putty, painting, replacing cracked glass, repairing damaged or deteriorated members, and cleaning and painting corroded metal.

Repair vs. Replacement – Do not replace windows that are significant to the historical development of a building unless they are missing or deteriorated beyond repair.

- *Peeling paint, broken glass, stuck sash, and high air infiltration are all problems that can be remedied and do not constitute valid reasons for replacement.* **Repaired historic windows** will last far longer than most modern replacement windows because of the high quality of their materials and craftsmanship. Over the long term, repair is more cost effective than replacement.
- *Do not replace an entire window if* ***limited replacement*** *of deteriorated parts is possible.* Many elements that are particularly susceptible to weathering can be replaced without replacing the whole window. Replacement elements should be visually, chemically, and physically compatible with the remaining portions of the window.



Replacement windows installed during the period of significance can be of significance themselves. Changes to both of theses upper floor windows were probably made in conjunction with storefront renovations below. The glass block on the left is appropriate for its period, yet full use of the second floor will require its removal. The windows on the right are appropriate to the 1950s storefront below, yet it is unfortunate that the original window opening was reduced at the top.

Repair – Most historic wood and metal windows are easily disassembled for cleaning and repair. Make the windows smoothly operable.

- Repair existing windows with **matching original** materials and fabrication techniques. Replace missing or broken pieces. Epoxy consolidates may be used to strengthen and save deteriorated wood at frames and sills.
- When parts of a window are deteriorated beyond repair, **disassemble** the window and if necessary the sash and replace the deteriorated part in-kind. Use surviving prototypes to reconstruct missing window elements. Reconstructed elements should be constructed of materials for which there is a historic precedent or a compatible substitute material if that is not possible.
- **Match** historic window sash, muntin configuration, reveal depths, glass-to-frame ratios, glazing patterns, frame dimensions, trim profiles, and decorative features.
- Evaluate the option of using appropriate **salvage materials** when replacing window elements that are deteriorated beyond repair.
- Window **mechanisms** often need repair, and such elements as the sash locks, cords, and weights of historic wood doublehung windows can be easily repaired and, if necessary, replaced.

Insulation – Apply weatherstripping to windows if it is needed to reduce air infiltration. Installation of weatherstripping between window frame and operable sash and along the meeting rails of top and bottom sash can dramatically increase energy efficiency.

- *Do not apply reflective or insulating film to window glass.* Blinds or insulating curtains may be added to the interior for privacy and increased thermal performance.

- Windows can also be insulated with interior storm windows without affecting the aesthetics of the facade.

Closure of Window Openings – Do not close or reduce the size of historic window openings by removing windows and filling in openings in whole or in part with new construction.

- **Do not remove** existing windows to close window openings.
- Do not install **outside coverings** over existing windows.
- **Reopen** closed window openings. Remove existing coverings over window openings.
- If existing window openings are **without windows** or have inappropriate windows or other infill construction, remove the inappropriate windows or infill and install appropriate new windows.
- Existing window openings should **not be closed** unless absolutely necessary.
- If window openings must be closed, retain the existing historic window in place and install a temporary **enclosure on the inside** of the window within the window frame opening. Enclosures should be removable for cleaning and maintenance and should be fully reversible.

Transom Windows – Transoms are components of historic storefronts and are traditionally placed above some entrance doors, windows, and in other locations. Before electricity, transom windows were necessary to allow more light into the rear areas of the store and to provide ventilation. Colored, textured, or leaded glass transom panels installed above doorways and storefronts are a consistent feature of historic commercial buildings.

Because of these special materials, transom windows were frequently difficult to maintain. Many transom windows were closed up in the mid-twentieth century, sometimes to provide additional space for signage on the exterior facade. Re-opening closed transom windows and replacing transoms where they have been removed can significantly improve a building's appearance and integrity.

- Preserve historic transom windows where they are present.
- Reopen, expose, and rehabilitate transom windows where they are present but have been enclosed.
- Restoration of missing or lost transom windows where they once existed is encouraged.
- Use historic documentation and physical evidence to restore or recreate transom windows where possible. If insufficient documentation or evidence exists, use detailing that is sympathetic and reflective of the building's and window's historic character.



These modern replacement windows were well done, assuming that the original windows needed to be replaced due to deterioration that could not be repaired.

Replacement

Modification of Window Openings – Windows in the upper stories of commercial buildings help to visually tie the buildings on the street together. Do not alter the number, size, location, or shape of original window openings by making new window openings, removing existing window openings, or blocking existing window openings.

- When replacement of windows in necessary, new windows should match the **full size** of the historic window opening.
- Large window openings should not be filled with **smaller** replacement windows.
- New window openings should **not be added** to primary facades. New window openings, if necessary, should only be added to rear alley or side facades that are not readily visible from the street.
- If new windows **must be added** to a facade, the work should be done in a manner that limits the negative impact to the building's design.

Replacement Windows – Replace severely deteriorated or missing historic windows with new windows that convey the same visual appearance. Historic windows may date to the building's original construction or later replacement windows within the historic district's period of significance that do not negatively impact the building's character and integrity.

- **Match historic windows** as closely as possible. Whenever possible, replacement windows should be accurate reproductions using historical, pictorial, and physical documentation.
- Alternatively, a **similar and compatible window** may be installed that is consistent with the historic character of the building and the district.

- Where historic windows are not present to provide a model, undertake **research** to determine the most appropriate configuration and profile of a new window to be installed in the historic opening.
- It is preferable that, if necessary, historic **wood windows** be replaced with new wood windows. However, certain types of metal, metal-clad, and factory-coated wood replacement windows may be appropriate for installation on some of Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings.
- Historic **metal windows** should be replaced, when necessary, with new metal windows that match historic type, forms, configurations, and profiles as closely as possible.
- **Vinyl and aluminum** replacement windows should not be used because they are of inferior quality and have short life spans.
- Install replacement windows with the same sash **configuration** and that operate in the same way as the historic windows. Doublehung windows should be replaced with doublehung; casement windows should be replaced with casements; awning windows should be replaced with awnings; fixed windows should be replaced with fixed windows.
- If multiple pane historic windows must be replaced, install replacement windows with **true divided lights** to match the pane configuration of the historic window. Do not install windows with applied or snap-in muntins.
- Do not install contemporary windows that are **not appropriate** to the character of the historic building, such as stock residential windows, bay or picture windows, glass block, Jalousie windows, or others.
- New windows should be custom fabricated to the **full size** of the historic window openings. Do not install replacement windows that do not fit the full size of the historic window openings. Original openings should never be blocked-in to accommodate stock windows.

Drop Ceilings – Avoid installation of dropped ceilings that block any portion of historic windows and transom windows. If such an approach is required, the design should incorporate setbacks that allow the full height of the window to be seen unobstructed.

- **Remove drop ceilings** that block portions of historic and transom windows where they have been installed. Reconfigure the existing drop ceiling with a setback that allows the full height of the window to be seen unobstructed.

Storm Windows

Selection of Storm Windows – Both interior and exterior storm windows are appropriate and available for installation on historic buildings should they be desired.

- **Interior storm windows** including fixed and removable magnetic storm windows are inexpensive, fully reversible, and do not affect the exterior appearance of the building. Interior storms and/or storm sash may be

removed and stored during the summer when it is desirable that windows be operable.

- Conventional **exterior metal storm windows** are acceptable for application to historic windows. Exterior storm windows provide thermal insulation and also help preserve historic windows, though they may partially obscure the windows.
- Exterior storm windows should **match** the full size and the shape of the historic window. The size and locations of storm windows and screen rails should match those of the historic window sash behind. Storm window finishes should be selected to match the color of the historic window frame.

Installation – Install interior storm windows with air-tight gaskets, ventilating holes, and/or removable clips to avoid condensation damage to historic windows. Install exterior storm windows in a manner that prevents damage to historic windows or frames.

Vents within Windows – Although windows should generally not be used as vents for air conditioning systems and exhaust fans, this solution is preferable to the cutting of holes in wall surfaces and may be the least intrusive option for a historic building.

- If a **vent or fan** is to be installed in a window, it should only be installed in the window located on a secondary and rear elevation.
- **Minimize** the removal of and damage to historic fabric. Use a visually appropriate material and match the size of the vent to the area available.
- The removed sash or window should be labeled and **stored** in the building for future reinstallation.

Air Conditioners – Wherever possible, window air conditioners should only be installed on a building's secondary or rear elevations.

- **Minimize** the damage to historic fabric due to the installation of window air conditioners.
- If the sash or window is removed to allow the installation of an air conditioner, the removed sash or window should be labeled and **stored** in the building for future reinstallation.

AWNINGS

Canvas awnings were used extensively in Downtown Topeka until the introduction of air conditioning after World War II. Awnings were installed on storefronts above the display windows and below the transoms and reached out over the sidewalk. Though installed building by building, the effect of the wide-spread use of awnings was to provide a fairly continuous shelter up and down the sidewalk. Awnings were also installed extensively on upper floor windows. Both storefront and upper floor awnings were retractable.

In Downtown Topeka's early days, historic photographs show that solid awnings or canopies supported on wood or metal poles mounted at the curb were installed over the sidewalks on a number of buildings. However, solid awnings do not appear to have been present by the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and are not, therefore, considered appropriate for installation today.

Awnings are useful in commercial buildings, because they keep buildings cool in the summer, protect merchandise from sun damage, shelter customers, provide space for signs, and brighten up the facade. They are also an effective way to create a visual link between adjacent buildings that are under the same ownership, and can be used to hide unsympathetic storefront alterations.



Awnings on the west side of the 600 block of South Kansas Avenue in the early 1930s (KHS Kansas Memory)

Materials and Frame – Most historic awnings in the early twentieth century were made of cloth and were secured to buildings by retractable metal frames or rope. Canvas and other natural, flexible fabrics are still the most functional and historically appropriate materials for awnings. Retractable mechanisms offer the most flexibility, because they can be adjusted to changing weather and light conditions.

- **Canvas awnings** on retractable metal frames are preferred, and may be installed along the public sidewalk or on upper floor windows in Downtown Topeka when desired.
- Retractable sidewalk awnings should be mounted on the **storefront** above the display windows and below the transom.

- Awnings with a **triangular** profile are preferred for both storefront and upper floor installation.
- Fixed **half-round awnings** have been installed over the transom areas on a number of Downtown Topeka buildings both where transoms are still present and where transoms have been covered or removed. Fixed half-round canvas awnings over transom areas are acceptable but not encouraged.
- The **colors and patterns** selected for canvas awnings should be appropriate to the character of the building and streetscape. While creativity and artwork are encouraged, awnings should not be visually jarring or disruptive to the character of the streetscape. Matching or sympathetic colors and patterns of the awnings of adjacent and nearby buildings is encouraged.
- **Fixed** plastic, wood, and metal **awnings** are inappropriate to the character of historic buildings.



Contemporary awnings; the storefront has roll-up windows that can open the interior fully to the sidewalk. While not a historic treatment, such contemporary installations can enliven the streetscape so long as any remaining historic fabric was retained.

Display – Sign lettering may be placed on the front lower flap and the side panels of awnings. Lettering and graphics should be scaled to match the size of the space available.

- Lettering should not be placed on the **top surface** of the awning.
- Lettering and graphics on **half-round awnings** installed over transom areas may be used for building signage in place of normal transom signage.
- If necessary, awnings can be **lit from above** with light fixtures attached to the facade.

- **Backlit** awnings are not appropriate for historic buildings.

Installation – When installing awnings, avoid damaging the building's historic fabric.

- Install the awnings so that they may be **removed** in the future without affecting the building's historic fabric or appearance.
- One awning should not traverse the front of two **separate buildings**.
- Awnings should not be installed over **solid wall** areas.
- Before installing awnings on every window of a building, consider the **visual impact**. It is often best to use awnings only on the first floor, above the windows and doors of the storefront.

STOREFRONT MATERIALS

Downtown Topeka's storefronts span all periods of the city's development from the mid-nineteenth century into the late 1960s. These storefronts include many different types of materials related to different styles and technologies that developed over that time. Many of these materials need special consideration and care in their maintenance, repair, and use.

Cast Iron and Other Metals

Metals have played a central role in the fabrication of storefronts and other decorative elements on the facades of commercial buildings in Downtown Topeka throughout its history. Metal is a versatile material that can be cast or pressed into a variety of forms that are useful in construction.

While metals are durable and can withstand years of use, their longevity depends on proper maintenance. Over time, metals weather, oxidize, and corrode. While this deterioration can be harmless to a building, it can indicate more severe underlying problems. Water is the most common culprit in damaging metal features.

Cast-iron was used extensively on Topeka storefronts in the late nineteenth century and had a strong impact on the character of the streetscape. No complete original nineteenth century storefronts using cast iron remain in Downtown Topeka, but cast iron columns and steel beams remain on a number of building facades, sometimes featured and sometimes fully or partially covered by later materials. Some of the cast iron was locally produced, stamped with the names of local Topeka foundries.

Twentieth-century buildings used metal in new ways. Many of the original entrances and storefronts of historic buildings downtown have been replaced with modern glass and metal designs that are also significant to the downtown district.

While metal was rarely used as the primary material on facades, it was and continues to be used extensively for storefronts and decorative details. Metals such as steel, aluminum, and chrome became key elements of storefront and building design, especially in the Mid-century Modern, when metal storefront

systems became more technologically sophisticated. During that period, hanging aluminum canopies were frequently installed in the renovation of some older commercial buildings. Canopies are addressed in Chapter 4, Roofing Systems.

As the popularity of aluminum and chrome waned in the late twentieth century, these materials began to lose their finish and luster, diminishing their visual impact. Refinishing or reproducing these surfaces can be an effective means of improving the appearance of commercial buildings that date from the early- to mid-twentieth century.



Details of cast iron column on one building; a number of cast iron columns and other elements remain.

Metal Deterioration – Corrosion is the major cause of deterioration of architectural metalwork and is exacerbated by the presence of moisture. Corrosion can be caused by structural stress, electrochemical reaction with dissimilar metals, or corrosive environments, such as salt-laden water. Corrosion is accelerated wherever water collects against metal elements, such as at the bottoms of storefront columns and at bulkheads.

Metals undergoing corrosion are slowly reverting to their natural ores, such as iron oxide. This process involves significant expansion of the corroding metal, which can cause extensive masonry cracking, such as the rusting of steel reinforcing in concrete and masonry anchors and supports in stone and brick walls.

Architectural metals can also deteriorate from mechanical failures, such as overloading or fatigue. For example, use of doors, and operable windows can cause metal fatigue over time. Use of posts or railings, such as the railing surrounding areaways in some Downtown Topeka buildings, can slowly work sections loose from their anchors and disrupt the concrete or masonry at the anchor connections.

- **Preserve** metal materials and detailing of historic storefronts and other building components. Incorporate existing elements and details into new designs when new work is being installed.
- In the **rehabilitation** of historic downtown buildings, make sure that metal elements are appropriately treated and any problems with metal deterioration are appropriately diagnosed and addressed.

- Use **professional consultants** experienced in diagnosing and addressing issues and treatments with the specific various types of metals present in the building.

Identification – Identify the types of metal on a historic building before undertaking any maintenance project because the unique characteristics of each metal require different treatments.

- Special care is needed when a feature is constructed of **more than one** material. For instance, copper corrodes in the presence of cast iron, steel, tin, or aluminum.

Inspection – Most metal elements in historic buildings are important character-defining features, and replacement in-kind could be expensive. Ongoing maintenance can prevent the need for replacement of metal features.

- Regularly **inspect and maintain** historic metalwork. Look for signs of corrosion, tears, holes, or missing pieces. Rust and surface discoloration can provide evidence of internal deterioration and sources of water penetration elsewhere in the wall that must be addressed.
- Sanding, priming, and painting (where appropriate) can address **small patches** of deterioration, but more extensive damage may require limited replacement.
- Assess **patterns of use** that may affect historic metal features, and take measures necessary to ensure their long-term protection. Bronze doors features are especially prone to deterioration because they are often exposed to the salt used to melt snow and ice on sidewalks. A lacquer coating may help to protect metal features like these.



Sheet metal cornice needing maintenance at left; at right, the rusting of the base of a steel railing has expanded and fractured the concrete curb in which it is embedded.

Cleaning – Metal features should only be cleaned if the chosen treatment can ensure the retention of historic color and texture.

- Any cleaning treatment should use the **gentlest means** possible, and it should first be tested in an inconspicuous location to assess possible adverse affects.

- Cleaning treatments should be appropriate to the **type of metal** being cleaned.
- **Soft metals** such as tin, lead, copper, terneplate, and zinc should be cleaned with appropriate chemical treatments, because aggressive blasting methods can damage their surface.
- To remove corrosion and paint buildup, **hard metals** such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel should be cleaned with a wire brush.
- **Low pressure grit** blasting may be used only if additional cleaning is required.

Coating and Repairs – Before applying a coating material to metal surfaces, consider the specific properties of the metal being addressed.

- The architectural metalwork of historic buildings can be maintained through proper surface preparation and application of **protective coatings** where appropriate. Some metals must be painted for protection while others should be left unpainted.
- Copper, bronze, aluminum, and stainless steel should generally be left exposed and allowed to **weather naturally** because coatings can increase the rate of deterioration by trapping air, moisture, and sunlight. There are also aesthetic reasons for leaving these metals exposed. Paints and other coatings have difficulty bonding to them, which can lead to discoloration, scratching, and flaking.
- In contrast to these metals, cast iron, steel, and tin quickly corrode without an appropriate coating. **Painting** is one of the most effective ways to preserve metals that corrode. Use colors that are historic to the building and/or appropriate to the character of nearby buildings.
- **Deteriorated paint** on painted metal surfaces should be removed using appropriate methods, including wire-brushing for non-decorative elements exhibiting light rust or chemical paint removal for heavier built-up paint.
- **Severe corrosion** may require that entire sections of metalwork be removed to a shop for repair. Newly-cleaned metal should be immediately protected with a rust-inhibiting primer. Alkyl-based enamel paints are recommended for finishing iron alloys. Latex and other water-based paints are not recommended.

Replacement – Replacement of metal elements should only be undertaken as a last resort, when the element is deteriorated beyond repair.

- Replace only those portions of metal features that have significantly **deteriorated**. Sound portions should be left intact.
- **Missing features** should be replaced in kind whenever possible, matching the existing feature in type of metal and configuration of the detailing using accepted preservation approaches for historic metals.

- If in-kind replacement is not possible, use a visually and physically compatible contemporary **substitute**.

New Features – The reconstruction of missing metal features should be based on historic, pictorial, and physical evidence.

- If such evidence is unavailable, new features should have a compatible **contemporary design**, rather than a conjectural historic one. Compatibility should be judged on the basis of size, scale, material, and color.
- Unless they pose a danger to the public, deteriorated metal features should **not be removed** without being replaced.



Authentic wood storefronts of the Thacher Building, dating to 1880

Wood Storefronts

Most late nineteenth and early twentieth century storefronts in Downtown Topeka were constructed of wood. Portions of some of these storefronts remain, though most were replaced during the 1920s through the 1960s. Wood as a construction material is discussed more extensively in Chapter 5, Exterior Walls.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century builders made extensive use of wood because it was inexpensive and easy to use. Although wooden details can be challenging to maintain, they contribute strongly to a building's character and appearance. Historic storefronts with wood or iron components were always painted. Clear finishes on storefronts were generally not used on storefronts.

The ease with which wood can be used to form design components and details, is also what makes it susceptible to deterioration. The complex design and

execution of wooden details creates many opportunities for water, air, and insects to damage them.

Although wood is a durable material when it is well-maintained, it quickly deteriorates when exposed to weather. Since architectural details often project from the surface to which they are applied, they are particularly prone to damage from exposure. Unfortunately, once they have deteriorated wood details are often removed rather than repaired or replaced.

Inspection and Repair – Regularly inspect woodwork and details for cracks or loose joints.

- Maintain a good **painted surface** on wood components. Caulk open wood joints and paint woodwork on a regular basis as needed. Filling and caulking cracks followed by priming and painting can remedy many minor problems.
- Reduce deterioration by repairing faulty **flashing and cracking** quickly.
- Use recognized **preservation techniques**, such as patching, piecing in, and epoxy consolidation to repair wood features.
- Any replacement of deteriorated elements should be undertaken with **in-kind** materials or compatible substitutes.

Partial Replacement – When only one part of a wooden feature is damaged, replace that part before considering the replacement of the entire feature. Retain historic fabric to the greatest degree possible.

- **Epoxy** consolidation can be used to repair many damaged wood features.
- Whenever possible, use **in-kind** materials.
- If **substitute materials** are used, they should convey the visual appearance of the original feature, duplicating size, shape, texture, and detail.

New Features – When replacing missing wooden features and the original is not available to copy, use historic, physical, and pictorial evidence to accurately restore them. Reconstruction of missing elements should only be based on such evidence and should match the appearance of surviving features in size, scale, material, or color.

- If evidence is unavailable, missing elements may be replaced with **contemporary** elements that are designed to be visually compatible with existing ones.
- Do not replace missing wood features with falsely **historic reconstructions** or with newly-designed elements that are incompatible with the building's style and character.
- If a **new design** is preferred, it should be compatible with the size, scale, material, and color of the historic building.



Fine terra cotta façade detailing that should be preserved and maintained.

Tile and Terra Cotta

Many commercial buildings constructed in the early twentieth century use tile and terra cotta as decorative materials. Tile and terra cotta were also used in storefront renovations during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1950s. Some installations have floral and geometric designs that are glazed with bright colors.

Tile was also widely used as a flooring material for storefront entrances that are set back from the front facade. Entryways of this type are often colorful and frequently incorporate the name of the business that owned the building when the tile was installed. Terrazzo flooring also became common in storefront flooring, especially in the years leading up to World War II. Tile has also been used for bulkheads in retail storefronts.

Terra cotta, a fired clay product, is a common decorative material in commercial buildings. Terra cotta has the ability to be molded into complex shapes and glazed to match the appearance and physical properties of tile. Glazed terra cotta was used on building facades throughout the twentieth century, but was especially common in the 1910s and 1920s.

Terra cotta and glazed brick were used in combination on the entire facades of several Downtown Topeka commercial buildings. Colorful glazed terra cotta detailing and red terra cotta roofing tiles were used in several Spanish style facades constructed downtown. Terra cotta's popularity as a decorative material waned in the 1930s as new types of tile and synthetic materials became available.

Maintenance and Repair – Decorative details made of tile and terra cotta should be treated with as much care as any other part of a building's facade. Some problems related to terra cotta are similar to those related to brick masonry as discussed in Chapter 4, including water penetration, rusting of metal anchors, and mortar deterioration and repointing.

Tile and terra cotta are high quality materials when properly detailed and maintained. Like brick masonry, water penetration is the most serious potential problem. The glazed surface of tile and terra cotta is hard and relatively water resistant. The interiors, however, are soft and readily absorb moisture. When water pressure builds up within a tile or terra cotta unit, it can exceed the strength of the glaze and cause surface spalling or even spalling of the unit.

It is important, then, to regularly maintain buildings to prevent water penetration into walls with tile or terra cotta exteriors. Maintaining proper flashing and joints is critical. Complex details at cornices and other locations are often held in place with metal anchoring systems, as with stone. Water penetration and rusting of this anchoring causes them to expand and can cause cracking of terra cotta units. Proper detailing and regular maintenance are the best ways to prevent water penetration, preserve the material's historic character, and avoid complicated repair and replacement projects.

Surface delamination and spalling have occurred in the terra cotta of several downtown buildings. Once exposed, the vulnerable interior of the terra cotta absorbs water, which will further deteriorate the material and expand and crack the terra cotta unit when it freezes.



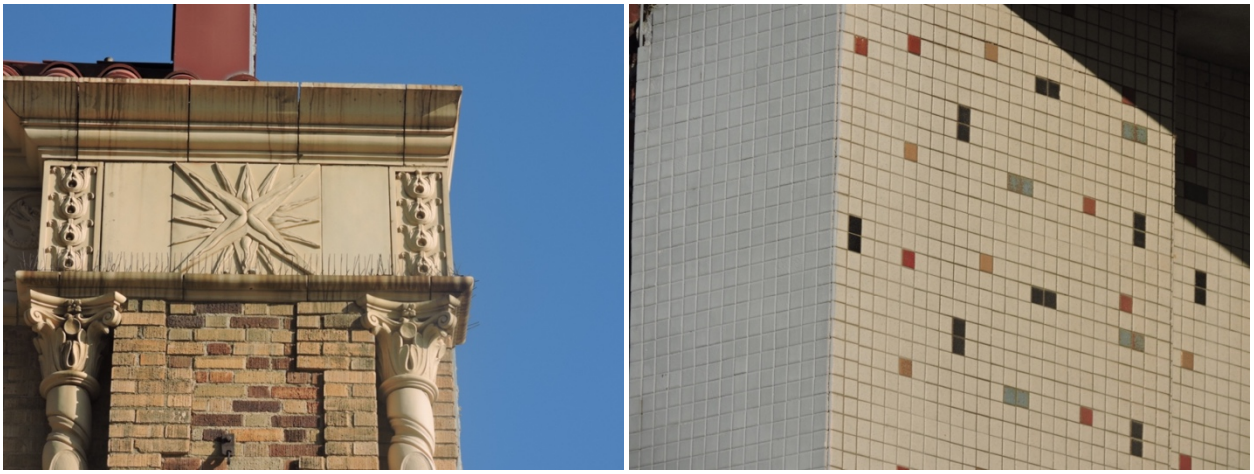
Surface delamination and spalling of terra cotta glazed surfaces probably caused by water penetration and absorption into the terra cotta behind the glaze. Parapets are particularly exposed and vulnerable.

The crazing of terra cotta surfaces (networks of fine random cracks) can appear visually unsettling but is rarely a serious problem that needs to be addressed. Crazing is caused by expansion of the glazed surface due to water absorption and expansion of the entire unit, but unless surface spalling begins to occur, the glazed surface is not usually compromised.

- When building **rehabilitation projects** are undertaken, make sure that appropriate techniques for tile and terra cotta maintenance and repair are undertaken.
- Undertake a general **inspection** of tile and terra cotta materials and details on a regular basis for evidence of cracking, spalling, or other forms of deterioration. Details above and around the wall should be closely

inspected to make sure that water is not entering the wall. Inspect for deteriorated mortar joints.

- When problems are observed or suspected, **qualified professionals** should undertake a **visual inspection unit-by-unit** of the entire wall. Tapping of individual units is also undertaken to identify whether units are whole or cracked. Determine the nature and extent of the deterioration and the actual cause of the problem, which may be at a remote location and unrelated to the terra cotta material.
- Maintenance and repair issues with terra cotta, should be addressed by preservation **professionals** who are familiar with the properties of the material.



The elaborate terra cotta detailing at left has open top joints that are allowing water into the wall and will cause damage. The tile wall at the right was unfortunately painted during a later renovation on its left side while the on the right side the liveliness and color of the original tile, now not visible from the street, remains.

- Many of the recommendations made for the treatment of **masonry details**, such as repointing, also apply to tile and terra cotta. (See Chapter 5, Exterior Walls.) As with masonry walls, **mortars** should be chosen with the utmost care because hard mortar can irreparably damage the historic materials.
- When the **crazing** of glazed surfaces is observed, consult a terra cotta specialist. No action is probably required, but regularly inspect the surface to make sure further deterioration is not occurring.
- When spalling is observed, consult with a specialist and address the issue as soon as possible. Determine the cause of the water penetration and undertake repairs. A breathable masonry paint may be used to coat the exposed interior surface of the terra cotta units. Select a paint color and finish that minimizes visual discontinuity with the original glazing. Continue to inspect on a regular basis.
- Where serious structural cracking and dislocation of units is occurring, damaged or **deteriorated tile or terra cotta** may be removed and patched with new tile to match. Consult a specialist. If possible, remove only the damaged units, leaving or using units that are in good condition. In some

cases contemporary units may be found that are a close enough match to historic tile and terra cotta that must be replaced. In some special cases, it may be necessary to have new custom tiles made, which can be costly and time consuming. Match mortar and grout colors to that which is existing using test panels.

- As with masonry walls, where the rusting of **metal anchoring systems** are involved, units must be dismantled, metal must be cleaned and painted or replaced, and units reinstalled.
- If cleaning is necessary, use water, detergent, and bristle brushes, the **gentlest means** possible. Do not use commercial cleaners, aggregates, or power water washes.



Tile storefront entrance vestibule from about 1908 on the left; terrazzo flooring in a storefront vestibule possibly from the 1950s on the right.

Structural Glass

Structural glass is a surface-applied finish material that became popular with designers in the 1920s and 1930s as the Modern style developed and became widespread across the country. Produced by glass manufacturers under a variety of brand names and in a wide range of colors, structural glass was used extensively in the renovation of commercial storefronts as retailers sought a more modern, colorful image and appeal. A number of historic storefronts in Downtown Topeka were renovated using structural glass. While the exact date of many of these installations is uncertain, it appears that the materials were used here well into the 1950s and 1960s.

Maintenance and Repair – Part of the appeal of the use of structural glass in storefront renovation was its ease of installation. Structural glass was produced as thin rectangular units that could be applied directly to existing masonry or plaster-on-masonry surfaces with asphaltic masonry adhesive. Thin daubs of hot asphalt-based mastic adhesive, 2-to-3-inches in diameter, were applied to back of the glass units and the units were then attached directly to the masonry substrate. Brass or stainless steel shelf angle were used to provide additional support and were installed along the bottom edges of every second course and approximately 18 inches apart horizontally.

Horizontal edges rested on adhesive cork tape to assure uniform thickness and support. Both vertical and horizontal joints were filled with a joint cement to prevent water penetration. Joints abutting dissimilar materials were filled with caulk. Structural glass could therefore be cost effectively applied to almost any existing exterior masonry surface.

The deterioration and failure of historic structural glass is caused by the deterioration of the joint cement, which hardens and cracks over time allowing water to enter the wall behind the glass; the deterioration of the mastic adhesive, which also hardens and loses its flexibility sometimes causing separation from the glass; and damage from physical impact.

Like other special materials used in storefront design and renovation, structural glass is historically significant to the buildings where it was used and to the development of the historic district as a whole.



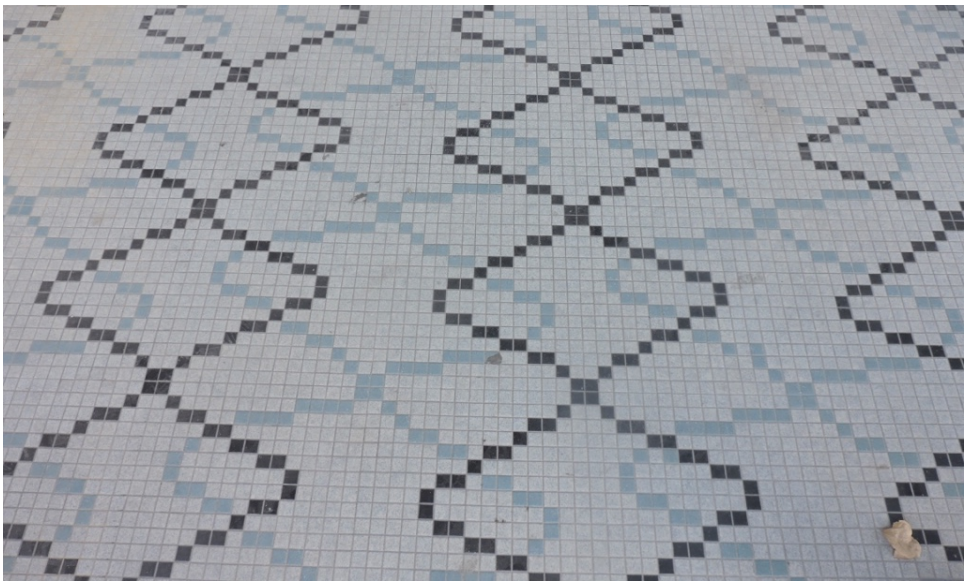
Remnant mastic from a terra cotta surface to which structural tile was applied and later removed; it is possible that the mastic could be softened and removed with solvent. If not, new structural glass or similar material could be applied.

- **Preserve** storefronts and other features that were designed using structural glass in Downtown Topeka.
- Regardless of the size of the installation, preserve the maximum amount of original historic fabric. **Repair** damaged areas unless the deterioration is too extensive and repair is not possible.
- When building **rehabilitation projects** are undertaken, make sure that appropriate techniques for the maintenance and repair of historic structural glass are undertaken.
- Where structural glass features remain but a new overall storefront design will be implemented, preserve and retain the structural glass materials and features and **incorporate** them into a compatible new design.

- **Inspect** structural glass units, surfaces, and materials to identify issues related to their preservation and maintenance. Consult with qualified professionals familiar with their maintenance and repair. Develop a maintenance and repair **approach** that is customized to the issues of the particular installation.
- Horizontal and vertical joints in structural glass can be **repointed** through the removal of joint cement that is hard, cracked, or open and the installation of new joint cement. All joints should be tight to prevent water penetration behind the glass. Present-day joint materials with a longer life-span than the cement used historically may be used.
- **Small cracks** in structural glass can be carefully patched using an appropriately colored, flexible caulk. Use small test panels a determine the appropriate coloring and technique needed.
- When the **backing mastic** is hard and causing the detaching of glass panels, the structural glass can be removed and reapplied using commercial solvents to soften the old mastic and through other special means. Remove and reapply the historic glass units to match the original installation.
- **Small chips and cracks** can be repaired, if necessary, using pieces from less visible locations or using a visually compatible substitute material.
- Large areas of missing glass units can be **replaced** in kind if sources can be identified and obtained, or alternative materials and techniques can be used to fill the missing space, minimizing visual discontinuity.



Remnant black structural glass in a storefront bulkhead that should be preserved at right.



CHAPTER 7 – INTERIORS

The preservation and adaptive reuse of the historic interiors of buildings within Topeka's downtown historic districts is an objective that is as important as the treatment of building exteriors. Proposed projects undergoing review for federal or state rehabilitation tax credits by the Kansas Historical Society and the National Park Service will need to address the treatment of historic building interiors as well as exteriors. Similarly, projects under review by Topeka's Landmarks Commission under the Kansas Preservation Act also need to address historic interiors. Both review processes will benefit by use of the principles and design guidelines for historic interiors outlined below.

Much of the impact related to changes to a historic building occurs on the building's interior. The interiors of historic buildings, though not necessarily public, are significant and can reveal the rich history of a building's use over time. Unaltered interiors with a high degree of historic integrity may exhibit the specific aesthetic of a certain era or owner. Interiors that have been altered by succeeding generations tell the story of change and technological improvements. Unfortunately, many building interiors have been subject to multiple and heavy renovation by new occupants without regard to historic character and are sometimes dramatically altered and stripped of their rich histories.

In Downtown Topeka, retail spaces of historic buildings on the street level tend to have undergone frequent change, as new owners and tenants adapt spaces to suit their operations and upgrade spaces to appear fresh and vibrant to prospective shoppers. Because of the tendency for high turnover in retail spaces

and because the level of investment in retail renovations is often not generous, changes to historic retail spaces can be expedient and intended for short-term impact with little regard for the overall character of the building.

In storefront design, frequent change can lead to interesting and innovative designs intended to catch the eye of shoppers. In Downtown Topeka, many later storefront changes are historically significant in and of themselves. Interior retail renovations, however, tend to be less well planned and thought out. Interior retail changes do not generally have the same level of design quality as storefront changes. Consequently, many historic retail spaces have lost significance and integrity due to renovations.

However, because of the expedient nature of retail renovations, in some cases historic features and finishes have merely been covered over and may be rediscovered and revealed.

The upper floors of historic retail buildings tend to have more historic fabric remaining. In part, this is because of their less intensive use over time. Since the 1950s in particular, many second and third floor spaces in downtown buildings have been underutilized or even left vacant. Low demand and low rents have resulted in less investment, fewer renovations, and less change, preserving historic interior configurations and fabric.

Prominent buildings such as banks, hotels, and large offices tend to have had more consistent use over time and to have preserved more historic fabric, especially in public spaces. In Downtown Topeka, a number of these buildings have been rehabilitated featuring the historic character of their interiors. Later buildings such as Downtown Topeka's Mid-Century Modern offices tend to have retained their principal historic interiors.



High quality interior of the 1927 Central National Bank building, now Equity Bank.

In the future, it is probable that the interiors of downtown buildings will continue to require upgrades for new uses, technologies, and building systems. When change is undertaken, historic configurations, features, and materials should be retained to the extent possible. Wholesale gutting and replacement of historic interiors is not appropriate or desirable. Historic room configurations, circulation patterns, and as much historic building fabric as possible should be retained. The guidelines below outline processes and a treatment approach toward preserving and adapting historic interiors.

ASSESSMENT AND APPROACH

The investigation and assessment of historic interiors should be undertaken with respect to different disciplines looking at integrity and condition. Architectural assessment focuses on the overall configuration, features, materials, finishes, form, and circulation. Structural assessment reviews loads and settlement issues, focusing on foundations, walls, and floor structure. Systems and fixtures assessments involve review of the existing electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems for adequacy, efficiency, and code requirements. Additionally, the interiors must be assessed with a focus on life safety, fire protection, and building code review. Often, a thorough historic interior assessment will require that all of these issues are addressed.

Interior Architectural Assessment

Each of these assessments is important with respect to identifying the changes that will be necessary in a new project. The architectural assessment is most critical in determining treatment approach with respect to historic preservation.

RECOMMENDED

- Before undertaking any design work on the interior of a historic building within the downtown historic district, undertake an **architectural assessment** of the interior, identifying existing conditions, changes that have been made, and remaining historic fabric from various periods of the building's history.
- Identify the original historic **plan configuration** for each floor and any changes that have been made over time. Identify spaces, forms, and features related to the original building and to changes to the floor plan or configuration.
- Identify the **presence of historic features** and materials remaining on each floor level. If changes have been made, relate features (such as partitions and doors) and materials (such as plaster or wood) to the original building and to the various campaigns of change.
- Investigate the possible presence of historic features and materials that have been covered during later renovations but that **still remain** and could be re-exposed. Do not damage existing historic fabric in undertaking such investigations.

- Determine the extent to which the interior retains historic **integrity** to the period of its original construction and the **significance** of various campaigns of change to the overall significance of the historic building.
- Determine whether efforts should be made to **retain and preserve later changes** or whether they can or should be removed in the building's rehabilitation.

Assessment of Physical Condition

The majority of the deterioration to historic interiors is caused by damage to the exterior envelope of the building. Water infiltration is one of the greatest causes of problems on building interiors. Water may be entering the building at points above grade-level, including the roof, walls, wall penetrations, and door and window openings. (Refer to Chapters 4 and 5, *Roofing Systems* and *Exterior Walls*.)

Water may also enter the building from below-grade through rising damp at foundations. This can be exacerbated by poor site drainage. Interior systems may also be the cause of water infiltration. Leaking plumbing pipes and mechanical equipment can cause localized damage. Climate control systems may also cause condensation, which can occur on surfaces where warm humid air mixes with cooler surfaces.

Movement and settlement throughout the building can alter interior finishes. Plaster can crack and detach from the backup lath. Door and window openings may shift, blocking the operation of doors and sash. Floors may sag or buckle. It is important to determine if significant movement is stable or ongoing by consulting a structural engineer.

Inappropriate maintenance and heavy wear may cause extensive deterioration of historic interiors. Updating interior finishes and systems is required for the continued use of many historic interiors. However, improper treatments, insensitive upgrades, and heavy handed alterations cause irreversible damage.

Upgrades for small scale utilities, such as phone and cable lines, can cause multiple, small penetrations in exterior walls. Over time, these can lead to more serious damage. The construction of new bookshelves or cabinets can cause permanent damage to walls, wood trim, and floors.

It is important to methodically inspect, document, and assess the condition of an historic interior noting the causes of deterioration observed and appropriate treatment for their maintenance and repair.

RECOMMENDED

- Determine the physical **condition** of remaining historic features and fabric and the type and level of work necessary for their maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation.
- In some cases, interior materials and finishes may be in such generally poor condition that **substantial removal** is necessary. Where this is believed to be the case, provide **documentation** of the need for substantial interior demolition and removals at the beginning of the

conceptual design phase for discussion with review entities. Demonstrate the extent to which character-defining historic features and materials can be retained.

- Assess **wood flooring** for loose boards, buckling, water damage, wear, scrapes, cracking and splitting, stains, and failed finishes.
- Assess **tile floors** for loose tiles, cracks, chips, loss of glaze, and tile loss or failure of grouting.
- Assess **terrazzo floors** for cracks, loose areas, material loss, disaggregation, and failure of finishes.
- Assess **plaster walls and ceilings** for cracks, failure of finish, delamination, hollow or bulging plaster that is loose from lath, water damage, efflorescence, plaster loss, and mold.
- Assess **wood paneling** and wainscoting for loose panels, cracks, split panels, wear, water damage, insect infestation, and failure of finish.
- Assess **stairways** for structural stability, missing parts, deteriorated details, and sagging or loose stair members—including stringers, steps, hand rails, balusters, and newel posts.
- Assess interior **doors and doorways** for excessive wear at doors, door trim, and threshold; closed or missing transoms; wracking; water damage; broken glass or failed glazing; failed finishes; poor operation of hardware; and sagging or loose doors that do not close.
- Assess **windows** for inoperable sash, broken sash weights, failed glazing, broken panes, missing hardware, failed finishes, and water stains.
- Assess **wood trim** for water damage, excessive wear, scrapes and gouges, failed finishes, material loss, and any replacement wood trim that is clearly not original.

Interior Rehabilitation Approach

Proposed interior construction work should conform to the same principles and processes as for exterior work on historic buildings. Chapter 2 outlines the overall preservation approach in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. It is recommended that a historic preservation professional be included on the design team for projects involving historic buildings.

RECOMMENDED

- When historic interiors are renovated, the **preservation** of as much original historic building fabric as possible is a primary objective. Retain historic building features, fabric, and architectural details whenever possible. The removal or alteration of historic building fabric and architectural details diminishes the integrity and character of the historic building.
- In considering a **new use** for a building, careful planning and evaluation should first determine whether the proposed use is appropriate to the building and whether the degree of change necessary to accommodate

the use can be accomplished without significant impact to the interior's historic character and integrity. *Some historic buildings cannot accept dramatically different new uses.*

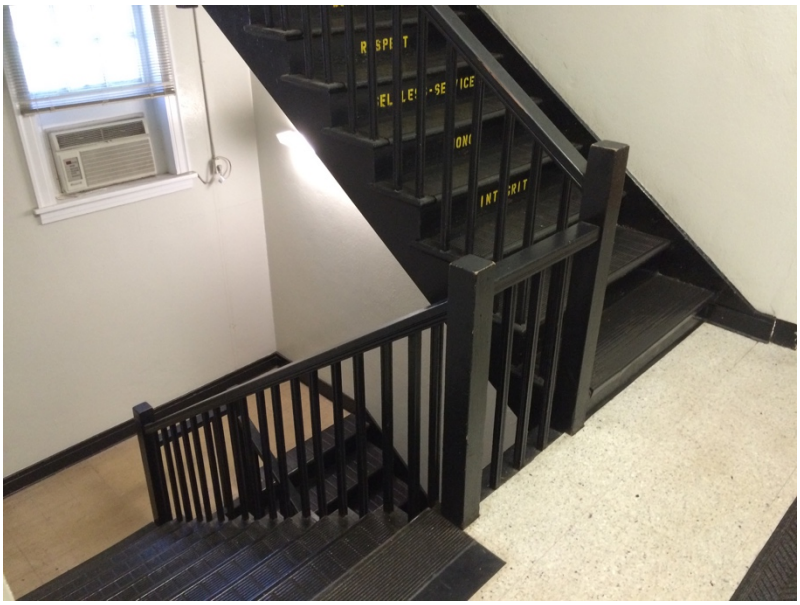
- In planning for interior changes, the historic interior should be divided into a **hierarchy of zones** of sensitivity.



Prominent public interiors like the lobby of the Jayhawk Hotel are obvious examples of a Principal Space that should have a high priority for preservation.

- **Principal and Public Spaces** such as entrances, corridors, stairways, and special rooms should be considered zones of high sensitivity where little or no change should occur.
- **Secondary Spaces** are the occupied rooms of a building that are generally subject to the building's purpose, function, or adaptive reuse. Secondary spaces may include retail spaces, living spaces, or offices and should be zones of moderate sensitivity where moderate change may occur to accommodate the proposed use but as much historic fabric as possible should be preserved.
- **Tertiary Spaces** such as storage spaces, mechanical spaces, closets, attics, and basements are spaces where complete change may occur to support the building's rehabilitation. Building services and service distribution (mechanical systems, plumbing, ducts, conduits, raceways, etc.) should be focused in these spaces to the degree possible to limit impacts on Principal or Secondary Spaces.
- Identify the **character-defining features** and materials of each individual Principal, Secondary, and Tertiary Space within the building.

- Undertake **design** of the proposed project taking the hierarchy of zones of sensitivity under consideration. Demonstrate how character defining features and materials related to Principal and Public Spaces will be preserved, Secondary Spaces will be adapted, and Tertiary Spaces will provide support.
- In some cases, the preservation of historic interior building fabric may **not be practical or possible** due to its generally poor condition and the extent of new work required to accommodate adaptive reuse, in particular the installation of new electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems. In such cases, demonstrate the extent to which substantial removals are believed to be necessary, the extent to which character-defining historic features and materials can be retained, and proposed mitigation measures for the removal of authentic historic building fabric for discussion with review entities.




Less prominent public stairways and corridors are also considered Principal Spaces and often retain original historic features and fabric that should be preserved.

INTERIOR PLAN, CIRCULATION AND SPATIAL CONFIGURATION

The first step in addressing the treatment of the interior of a historic building is to determine the extent to which the interior plan, circulation, and spatial configuration remains intact for each floor level and can be preserved or adapted.

Treatment of Historic Spaces

RECOMMENDED

- Retain and preserve **interior plan and spatial configurations**, including size, layout, proportion, and relationship of rooms and corridors, that are important in defining the historic interior.
- Preserve the entirety of **Principal and Public Spaces** on each floor level to the maximum extent possible.

- Preserve the overall layout and plan configuration of **Secondary Spaces** on each floor level to the maximum extent possible.
- The removal of **non-historic partitions and ceilings** installed during earlier renovations is encouraged in order to restore a room to its original proportions, height, and size.
- The addition of **interior partitions** may be considered in Secondary Spaces to accommodate adaptive reuse and should be placed such that they minimize the impact on character defining spaces, features, and finishes.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not **subdivide** Principal Spaces either vertically, through the insertion of new partitions, or horizontally, through the insertion of new ceilings, floors, or mezzanines.
- Do not **cut through** floors and ceilings where this work would damage character defining interior spaces.

Stairways and Elevators

RECOMMENDED

- Retain and preserve character defining **stairways and elevators** in their historic configuration and location. The installation of alternative fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers or fire-rated glass enclosures, may permit the retention of open historic stairways. See the discussion of building codes and emergency egress below.
- Retain the original material and **architectural features of stairway**, such as steps, hand rails, balusters, newel posts, and decorative materials, wherever possible. If these materials must be replaced, the new materials should match the old as closely as possible.
- Retain and preserve existing **historic elevator cabs** and other character defining elements, such as call buttons or floor indicators, whenever possible. Original cabs can often be upgraded with new elevator systems in order to meet current building codes.
- Install **changes** to historic stairways and elevators required for code compliance, such as enclosures and fire separations, in a manner that minimizes damage to the historic features. See the discussion of building codes and emergency egress below.
- Where **new railings** are required for a historic stairway for code compliance, design the new railing to be similar to that being removed or replaced. If possible, retain the historic railing and add new elements to address identified code deficiencies (height, baluster separation, etc.). *Do not replace historic railings with new railings of an inappropriate design or material.*
- **New stairways and elevators** introduced into a historic interior should be located to work with and minimize the impact on the overall layout and configuration of the floor plan.

INTERIOR FEATURES, MATERIALS AND FINISHES

As noted above under the discussion of architectural assessment, it is important to identify the historically significant and character defining features and materials of each interior space. Overall, historically significant characteristics of an interior space include the room plan and layout, room height and volume, spatial flow, circulation pattern, relationships to other spaces or to the exterior, and quality and sources of light.

Interior historic building features include doors, frames, transoms, hardware, windows, stairways, and other built elements. Certain special interior features may be of particular importance, such as a primary doorway, main stairway, metal ceiling, or ornamental plaster or woodwork.

Other features and materials may be less prominent but, taken collectively, help define the character, style, and feel of the interior. These include general flooring, wall and ceiling finishes, wood detailing and trim, wainscots, decorative elements, and any other remaining historic features and materials.

Keeping in mind the hierarchy of Principal, Secondary, and Tertiary Spaces noted above, each historic space, feature, and material should be assessed for the degree of change it can sustain with the goal of preserving as much historic character and fabric as possible. The following general guidelines provide information for consideration in determining the appropriate treatment of historic interiors.



Many older historic commercial buildings retain features such as original doors and transoms, especially on upper floor levels.

Treatment of Remaining Historic Fabric

RECOMMENDED

- Identify the remaining **character defining features** and materials of each historic interior space as outlined in the discussion of architectural assessment above.
- Develop a **rehabilitation approach** for each historic space that preserves as much original historic building fabric as possible as discussed above.
- The rehabilitation approaches for historic spaces with different **levels of integrity** may vary.
- Where the **historic integrity** of a space is **high** and a good deal of historic building fabric remains, the rehabilitation approach should emphasize preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.
- Where the **historic integrity** of a space is **low** and little or no historic building fabric remains, such as in many of Downtown Topeka's retail spaces, the rehabilitation approach should emphasize new construction of current design that is complementary to the historic character of the building as a whole.
- **Retain** the character defining features of historic interior spaces including floor plan; ceiling height; and distinctive features, materials, and finishes whenever possible.
- **Damaged or deteriorated** historic building features and materials should be **repaired** whenever possible.
- **Repair or replace** interior architectural features and materials with similar in-kind materials. Replacement features and materials should match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. The use of materials that were unavailable when the building was constructed is discouraged, but can be considered of their unavailability can be demonstrated.
- **Replace missing** architectural features based on accurate duplication of the original historic features substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence, not on conjecture.
- If adequate evidence is unavailable, missing features may be replaced with **new elements** of current design that are physically and visually compatible with and complementary to the historic character of the building. The use of materials appropriate to the feature and building is encouraged.
- **Previous changes** to an interior that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be recognized, respected, and retained.
- **Intrusive changes** that have resulted in harm to historic building fabric or in the loss of historical significance and integrity may be reversed as part of a rehabilitation project.
- In some cases, the **substantial removal** of historic interior building fabric

may be necessary due to its generally poor condition and the extent of new work required to accommodate adaptive reuse, in particular the installation of new electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems. *No such removals should be undertaken prior to obtaining approval of the review entity.*

- Even when substantial removals are necessary, retain significant character-defining features to the maximum extent possible. Removal of original or historic walls should leave a **visible remnant** or "scar" to indicate the placement of that historic feature. Visible remnants could be a 6-inch header left in place on the ceiling.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Avoid the removal** or alteration of historic interior features or materials whenever possible.



Retail space of current design and finishes set within a historic retail space in which little or no historic fabric was remaining.

New Interior Construction

RECOMMENDED

- **New alterations** to historic interiors should be recognized as **products of their own time**. New alterations that seek to recreate an earlier, historic appearance but for which there is inadequate historical evidence are discouraged.

- Where integrity is high, **new interior construction** work necessary to accommodate adaptive reuse should be **compatible** with the existing historic character but should be distinguishable from it. The design and materials of new work should respect and reflect the materials, design,

character, and detailing of the original building, but should not be a direct copy. It should be clear to the casual observer that the work is new and not historic.

- The **exact duplication** of historic features and materials in new construction is discouraged to avoid confusion between what is authentically historic and what is new.
- Where **new walls or partitions** are planned, an appropriate approach would be to use new trim and woodwork similar to the historic woodwork in scale, material, and general character, but different in profile and detail. The goal is to ensure that new interior work is compatible and of similar quality without being a direct copy.
- Where **historic integrity is low**, new interior construction should be compatible with the overall character of the building but may be new design, materials, and detailing.

Ceilings

RECOMMENDED

- Retain and preserve the **original ceiling** height, materials, and ornament, whenever possible. Deteriorated ceiling materials should be replaced with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, texture.
- If suspended ceilings are installed in Secondary Spaces, design new ceiling soffits to be well set back from the **windows** so the suspended ceiling does not obstruct the window and is not visible from the exterior.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not install **suspended ceilings** in Principal Spaces, below existing ornamental ceilings, or in spaces where high ceilings are important in defining interior character.
- Do not install suspended ceilings to hide or cover **ductwork** or electrical cables that are of historic character or quality.



Remnant historic light fixture and heating grill that were retained in rehabilitation of public spaces.

Windows and Doors

RECOMMENDED

- Retain and repair **existing window and door** elements and openings, including window sash, transoms, glass, lintels, sills, frames, molding, doors, and all hardware, whenever possible.
- For **fire rating** purposes, building officials may allow the retention of original doors and glazing if equivalent levels of protections are offered through alternate methods such as sprinklers. See discussion of building codes and emergency egress below.
- If new windows and doors must be used in existing locations, they should **duplicate** the size, material, design, and hardware of the older existing doors and windows.
- **Storm windows and doors**, while normally installed to the exterior, may be installed on the interior if they are visually unobtrusive, do not damage existing frames, and can be removed in the future. Storm windows should match the interior trim color. Mill finished aluminum and vinyl frames can be painted.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not introduce **new window or door openings** into the principal room elevations or alter window or door openings to fit new stock windows and doors.

Materials and Finishes

RECOMMENDED

- Protect, repair, and maintain distinctive interior **materials and finishes**, including plaster, wood, masonry, and architectural metals, with appropriate maintenance treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re- application of protective coating systems.
- *Preserve and restore* **historic finishes** such as painting, staining, gilding, graining, and other decorative finishes when they are present.
- *Retain* the original **color and texture** of interior materials and finishes (including early signage or artwork) whenever possible.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Removal** of undamaged historic interior materials is discouraged.

Cleaning

RECOMMENDED

- Clean plaster, wood, architectural metals, and masonry **only when necessary** to halt deterioration, or to remove graffiti and stains. Indiscriminate removal of paint may cause damage.
- Clean architectural metals such as bronze, cast iron, steel, pressed sheet-metal, aluminum, and zinc with an **appropriate method** intended for that purpose. Follow manufacturer's instructions. Do not alter the color, texture and tone of the metal.

- Use the **gentlest methods possible** when cleaning the surface of interior materials and finishes. Cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials are not allowed.
- Evaluate cleaning methods in a small **test area** first in order to assess effectiveness and detect any potential adverse effects.



Interior plaster work of the Jayhawk Theater, which is under rehabilitation.

Plaster

RECOMMENDED

- Retain existing **plaster walls and/or ceilings** where they remain in historic interiors wherever possible.
- Stabilize **loose or bulging plaster** with mechanical fasteners to re-establish connections to lath, particularly at ceilings and surfaces with ornamental plasterwork.
- Repair holes and **missing plaster** with a plaster mixture that matches the original mix in composition, appearance, and texture as closely as possible.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Removal** of historic plaster walls and finishes to expose bare masonry walls is discouraged, and will disqualify a project from the use of historic preservation tax credits.

Masonry, Wood and Architectural Metals

Please see relevant sections of Chapter 5, *Exterior Walls*, and Chapter 6, *Storefronts, Doors and* Windows, for guidelines on the appropriate maintenance and treatment of masonry, wood, tile, terra cotta, and architectural metals.

HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

The introduction of new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems into historic buildings should be handled carefully so that it has the least possible impact on historic character and building fabric. A great deal depends upon the type of system that can be installed. Potential systems should be fully analyzed and selected based upon the extent to which they will impact the historic interior.

A common form of heating and air conditioning installation in rehabilitation projects involves the strategic location of individual air handlers zoned by floor, rental unit, or space and served by common hot/cold water lines from a central heater and cooler service often located in a basement. In such installations, the amount of ductwork is minimized. The installation of building-wide ductwork from one central HVAC unit requires a large amount of space and often requires the use of suspended ceilings, which is not desirable in most historic spaces.

If separate from heating, air conditioning systems can be either building-wide systems or individual room systems. In a building-wide system, a single condenser provides coolant to several zoned air handlers. Cool air is then distributed through ductwork. How the ductwork is run and concealed will be different building-by-building.

In an individual room approach, residential type cooling units are exposed and wall or ceiling mounted in each room, with individual controls and individual coolant lines to ganged condensing units.

If an existing system of steam heating pipes is present and can accommodate future heating needs in a rehabilitation project, it may be appropriate to install new wall-mounted or baseboard radiators in each room that can use the existing piping system. In such cases, air conditioning can be handled as a wholly separate system. New elements such as electric or water radiant heating can be surface mounted and should be carefully installed without altering historic woodwork, plaster, or other materials.



Historic radiators should be retained and can sometimes be incorporated into new heating systems.

RECOMMENDED

- New heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems should be selected and designed to have the **least possible impact** on interior historic building layout, spatial character and configuration, features, and fabric.
- Retain and preserve **visible character-defining** mechanical system elements, such as heat registers, radiators, vents, and fans, where possible.
- In **Principal Spaces** of high historical significance, new mechanical systems should be fully concealed without alteration of historic features, forms, surfaces, and finishes.
- Locate mechanical equipment and distribution systems in the **Tertiary Spaces** of historic interiors that have little or no historic significance to the maximum extent possible.
- Concealment of equipment, ducts, and condenser distribution lines can sometimes be accomplished by locating equipment and ductwork in **basements or attic spaces** and feeding rooms directly from below or above.
- **Existing chases**, channels, and closets should be used to locate, accommodate, and conceal mechanical equipment and distribution systems where possible.
- Installations of new mechanical distribution systems should be **minimized and consolidated** where possible, keeping the impact localized.
- Where necessary, locate ductwork in **soffits** running along the walls and ceilings of Secondary Spaces to serve those spaces and feeding into Principal Spaces. Customize and minimize the size and extent of the needed soffits and the impact on significant features, materials, and spaces.
- Locate new **bathrooms** in Secondary or Tertiary Spaces.
- Exterior **through-wall** HVAC units are not appropriate for use on historic buildings because they require the removal of historic fabric and because they are highly visible on the exterior.
- Design and locate **condensing units** located outside of historic buildings to have a minimal visibility and impact on the character of the historic building. Most condensing units are located on roofs in locations where they cannot be seen or in secure locations in alleyways behind buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Avoid the use of **suspended ceilings** in Principal and Secondary Spaces.

ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING SYSTEMS

The adaptive reuse of historic buildings usually requires the installation of new electrical, telephone, cable, computer, and plumbing systems that must be distributed throughout each floor level. Systems and the means of distribution should be selected to minimize the impact on historic interior spaces and historic fabric. To the maximum extent possible, Tertiary Spaces of little or no historical significance should be used for distribution of building systems.

RECOMMENDED

- New necessary electrical or plumbing systems should be planned to have the **least possible impact** on interior historic building layout, spatial character and configuration, features, and fabric.
- Retain and preserve **visible character-defining** electrical and plumbing system elements, such as switch plates, light fixtures, and plumbing fixtures, where possible.
- New interior **light fixtures** should be an appropriate size and placed in an appropriate location. Avoid selecting oversized fixtures.
- Depending upon the approach and circumstance, new light fixtures may be of **current design** yet compatible and distinguished from the existing historic fabric or **traditional** and located in a historically appropriate location.
- **Existing chases**, channels, and closets should be used to locate, accommodate, and conceal new electrical and plumbing distribution and equipment where possible.
- Installations for new electrical and plumbing systems should be **consolidated** where possible, keeping the impact localized and minimal.
- Locate electrical and plumbing risers and distribution networks in **Tertiary Spaces** with little or no historic significance to the maximum extent possible.
- Use **soffits** installed below the historic ceiling for distribution of electrical and plumbing lines when necessary. Customize and minimize the size and extent of the needed soffits.
- New soffits for the distribution of electrical and plumbing systems are most appropriate when located in **Secondary Spaces** and located such that they will have minimal impact on significant features, materials, and spaces.
- It is sometimes most appropriate to incorporate new electrical, telephone, cable, and computer distribution lines into a **common metal raceway** exposed and surface mounted low on the wall above the baseboards. While visible, such an approach allows for easy installation, access, and change, and is fully reversible.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Avoid the use of **suspended ceilings** in Principal and Secondary Spaces.





Historic hardware should be retained and refurbished whenever possible. The survival of historic bathrooms is rare and their preservation is highly desirable when they exist.

BUILDING CODES AND EMERGENCY EGRESS

Most building codes have provision for the preservation of historic buildings. Many historic buildings do not conform to current codes and trying to make them conform would essentially destroy them. The goal with a historic building is to make it as safe as possible while minimizing the negative impact on historic character.

This usually involves working with city code officials in creating a customized mitigation plan for the building. The mitigation plan identifies code and safety issues and outlines creative solutions to make buildings safe. Mitigation measures might include the installation of fire detection and alarm systems, emergency lighting, smoke barriers to isolate portions of a building, new emergency egress stairways in appropriate locations, and sprinkler systems where possible.

The City of Topeka has adopted the *Uniform Code for Building Conservation* for use with existing buildings and historic structures, which provides flexibility in developing code mitigation strategies for existing buildings. The city facilitates the code review process by bringing together representatives from Development Services, Planning, the Fire Department and other city offices as a redevelopment review team to work directly with property owners and developers on a case-by-case basis.

The team is available to meet with owners and developers onsite early in the planning process to identify and address building code compliance issues. The team works with owners and their architects throughout the design process to find solutions to code compliance issues that adapt to building conditions and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards while protecting public safety.

RECOMMENDED

- When considering a rehabilitation project, meet with the City of Topeka code review staff **early in the design process** to identify and address building code issues.
- Working with city staff, develop a **mitigation plan** customized to building conditions and issues that maximizes public safety while preserving building character, integrity, and historic fabric.

- As the design and **construction document process** progresses, stay in contact with city code review staff to address changes to and refinement of the agreed-upon mitigation plan.

BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), basic levels of accessibility became an affirmative responsibility for almost all properties open to and used by the public. ADA is comprehensive civil rights legislation that applies to employment, telecommunication, public transportation, government, and private property owners.

ADA created an affirmative responsibility for property owners to provide barrier-free access to buildings, sites, and landscapes that are open to the public. New construction and alterations to existing buildings are required to comply; the requirement for existing facilities is based upon their use. The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and local building codes set the standards for barrier-free design.

Flexibility with respect to the preservation of historic building features and characteristics is integrated into the language of most building codes and ADA standards. Property owners and designers must work with city code officials to find the most reasonable way to address ADA requirements without unduly impacting the historic building. As with life safety issues, creative mitigation solutions are often possible. Acceptable ways of accommodating barrier-free access can almost always be found.

RECOMMENDED

- ADA guidelines and principles **should be applied** to publically accessible spaces in Downtown Topeka's historic buildings to the extent possible such that the negative impact upon the historic building is not unreasonable or excessive.
- Work should provide barrier-free access, promote independence for the disabled to the **highest degree practicable** while preserving significant features, materials, and finishes. ADA-related work should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards outlined in Chapter 2.
- Sometimes full **accessibility is not possible** in a historic building or part of a building without potentially destroying the historic character and significance of the structure. This is often due to the small size of the building or the limited amount of space available to accommodate needed changes in elevation. When solutions are not possible, seek **other means** and alternatives by which the needs of disabled individuals might be reasonably accommodated.
- The **treatment chosen** for any specific building feature or space will, of necessity, be based on a number of **factors** including available space, maximizing proposed use, code and accessibility requirements, degree of benefit, the building's physical condition, and operational issues.





Most historic retail spaces are accessible, though they don't fully comply with ADA standards. The store entrance at the left does not meet standards for width. The building on the right has been modified through its ground-floor entrance on a side facade to comply with ADA requirements without destroying historic features.

- Proposed treatments should maximize the preservation of a historic building's integrity and significance by **minimizing alteration** and loss of authentic historic building fabric.
- To the extent possible, the construction of new features should be designed to be **reversible**, such that the improvements could be removed in the future with minimal alteration or loss of historic building fabric.
- New features should be **well-designed** and compatible with the character of the historic building or storefront. The historic character of the building or storefront should not be unduly diminished or sacrificed.
- **Materials** used in the design of new accessibility improvements should be similar to and visually compatible with those of the historic building or storefront.
- When undertaking work required by accessibility or life-safety codes, new features should be designed to be functional but as **unobtrusive** as possible and should not draw attention to themselves.
- Accessibility improvements should minimize **disruption** to the character or appearance of the historic building or storefront.
- Entrance or interior ramps, when needed, should be **designed to be as integral** to the building, storefront, entrance, sidewalk, or landscape area as possible.
- New **stairways, lifts, or elevators** introduced to the interiors of buildings should minimize the impact on the historic plan configuration and the removal of historic features and fabric.
- New **stair, lift, or elevator towers** installed outside of a building's existing footprint should be appropriately located with respect to the building's massing and facade and follow the same guidelines as a new addition to a historic building. New stair or elevator towers should almost never be installed on a building's principal facade.



CHAPTER 8 – NEW CONSTRUCTION

The guidelines and recommendations of most chapters of the Downtown Topeka Design Guidelines refer to work being undertaken on existing historic buildings where the overall form, size, and character of the building will not be altered and new work will be designed to preserve and be compatible with historic building fabric. This chapter relates to projects where substantial new construction will be undertaken, either as new buildings constructed on vacant lots or where substantial portions of existing buildings will be removed and additional new construction is proposed that will alter the exterior form, size, and character of the buildings.

This chapter is therefore divided into two parts. The first part deals with new buildings constructed within the historic district on existing vacant or open lots. It also discusses proposals to demolish existing buildings to create open lots for new construction. The second part of the chapter addresses conditions when owners or developers propose to demolish substantial portions of existing buildings and construct new buildings, incorporating retained portions of the existing buildings.

As discussed in Chapter 2, *Character of the Downtown Districts*, Downtown Topeka is characterized by diversity and variety, both in historic periods and styles and in types and sizes of buildings. The South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District, stretching from 6th to 10th Avenues along South Kansas Avenue and adjacent streets, exhibits such diversity and variety and includes areas with existing vacant lots, most used currently for parking. The Mill Block Historic District at the north end of South Kansas Avenue has a limited number of

buildings of roughly similar period and character and no vacant lots. This chapter, then, relates primarily to issues that may arise within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District.

The period of significance of the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District extends from the mid-nineteenth century to the late 1960s—an entire century of development and change. It includes all of the various types and styles of buildings that were constructed during this long period, of which a great variety still remain today. As discussed in Chapter 2, buildings range from small late-nineteenth century two-story commercial buildings of wood, masonry, and cast iron; to larger early twentieth century commercial buildings of substantial construction and quality design; to high-rise buildings of the mid-twentieth century of concrete, steel, aluminum, and glass—all these periods and types in juxtaposition to each other.

Compounding this overall diversity, street level renovations have been made to the storefronts and interiors of many existing historic buildings such that single buildings are comprised of multiple periods and styles—with different periods and styles at the ground level than on upper levels. All of these periods and styles are significant to the historic district, even when in a single building, and the overall approach to future change is that they are all equally significant and should be retained where possible. This complexity is part of the character and significance of the historic district.

The approach to new construction within the Downtown Topeka historic district allows for reflection of this diversity and variety while emphasizing compatibility with the historic district as a whole and compatibility with the immediate vicinity of the proposed project. Guidelines for this approach are outlined below. As emphasized in the guiding principles noted at the end of Chapter 1, quality and creativity are encouraged in every project.

NEW CONSTRUCTION ON VACANT OR OPEN LOTS

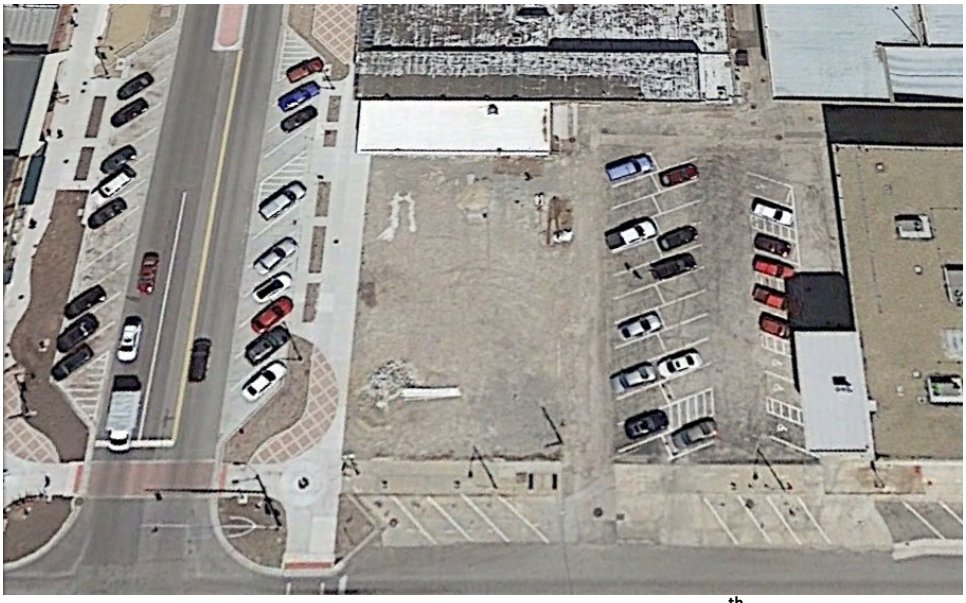
There are a number of locations within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District where existing vacant lots are present and where new construction could be proposed. Most of the existing vacant lots are currently used for parking. Along South Kansas Avenue itself, vacant lots are prominent on the east side of the 600 block and at the South Kansas Avenue corner with 10th Avenue. Along Quincy Avenue, vacant lots are located at the corners of 8th and 9th Streets.

All of these sites are important to the character of the historic district. The open lot at South Kansas Avenue and 10th Avenue is particularly important because of its proximity to existing historic buildings, the length of its street frontage along the east side of South Kansas Avenue, and its function as a corner gateway into the downtown district.

The open lots in the 600 block are less prominent but still important. They are associated with several buildings that are considered non-contributing to the historic district, removal of which would significantly enlarge the amount of open area. Two of the buildings noted as non-contributing in the 2015 National

Register nomination actually should be contributing and were only listed as non-contributing because of a technicality and a lack of sufficient information.

The open lots along Quincy Avenue are all located at significant corner sites. A large number of late twentieth century buildings and/or non-contributing buildings are located in the vicinity of the lots, and the designs of any new buildings here will have an important role in trying to capture and enhance the flavor, character, and appeal of the district.



The vacant lot on the corner of South Kansas Avenue (left) and 10th Avenue (bottom) is important to the character of the historic district. (Google Earth)



View across the vacant lot toward South Kansas Avenue. While buildings along the street-front are low, buildings behind are taller and more massive.

Demolition

Significant issues in Downtown Topeka, both within the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and around it, are the amount of demolition that has occurred, the consequent loss of historic buildings, and the large amount of open space remaining, diluting the character and density of the city's downtown core. The further demolition and loss of historic buildings should be strongly discouraged.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, the demolition of historic buildings that are listed as **contributing** buildings to the National Register historic district will not be permitted.
- The demolition of buildings that are listed as **non-contributing** to the National Register historic district may be permitted, however it is recommended that buildings of high quality that add to the character, spirit, and use of the historic district not be removed.
- Several Mid-century Modern buildings listed as non-contributing in the National Register nomination for the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District were given that designation only because their dates of construction could not be substantiated as being before the 1965 cutoff date for the nomination. Several other buildings were not listed as contributing because they were constructed soon after that cutoff date. Yet all of these buildings are of the same design character and quality as other contributing buildings constructed in the early and mid-1960s.

  Consequently, buildings of **Mid-century Modern design** listed as non-contributing in the National Register nomination should be considered contributing for the purposes of these design guidelines unless clearly proven otherwise.
- In rare circumstances, buildings that are listed as contributing buildings to the National Register historic district may be **considered for removal** when it can be clearly and unequivocally demonstrated that they are deteriorated beyond the reasonable possibility of rehabilitation and optional reuse. The use of the Governing Body under state preservation law shall be encouraged in such instances.
- With respect to the Kansas Preservation Act, decisions by the Landmarks Commission with respect to allowable demolition may be **appealed** to the Topeka Governing Body for reconsideration.
- When demolition is permitted, the building to be demolished should be **documented** in drawings and photographs to the level of detail and standards deemed appropriate by the Landmarks Commission. In some instances architectural details of the demolished structure shall be salvaged for reuse in new construction.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- No demolition or partial demolition of any building will be permitted until such time that the proposed new construction project to be undertaken on the site in place of the demolished building is **fully designed, approved, permitted,** and financed and construction of the entire project is ready to commence.



The 600 block of South Kansas Avenue (left) has several vacant lots and several recent one-story buildings that could be removed. (Google Earth)



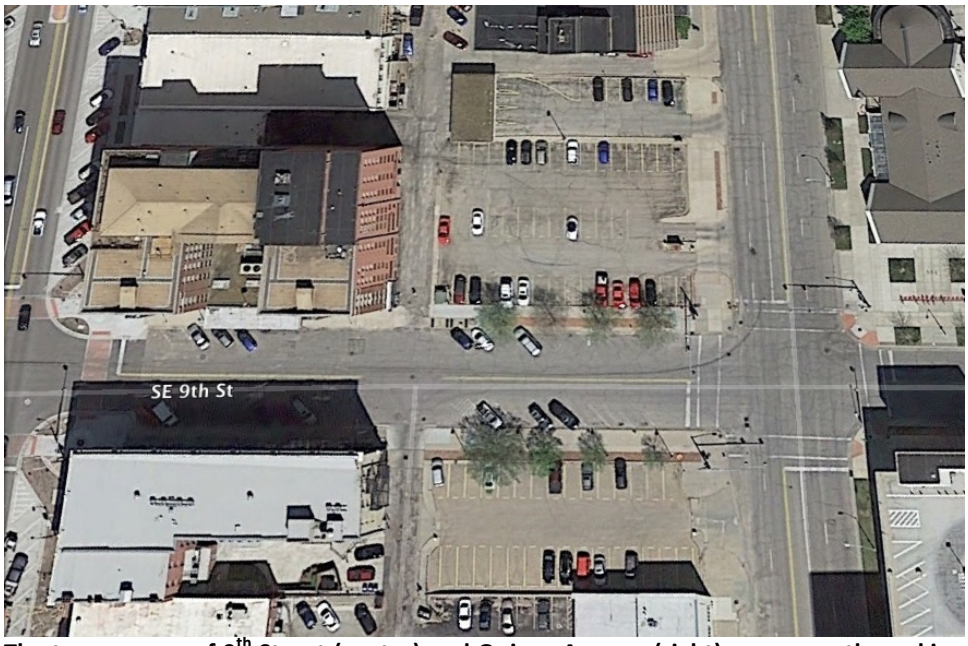
628-632 South Kansas Avenue (center) was constructed about 1925, was renovated about 1965, and is significant to the historic district. To its left is a vacant lot and to its right is a recent one-story building that is inappropriate to the district.

Design Approach

The design of new buildings within the historic district is an opportunity to find creative new expression for the character of the district while filling in open spaces with additional density that should add to the vibrancy and vitality of the downtown core. Chapter 1 outlines overall goals and guiding principles for Downtown Topeka that new construction can help address. Among these is to help make the district an active, appealing, and prosperous downtown center.

In addition to the preservation of historic buildings and historic building fabric, the character of the downtown district can be enhanced with quality new

construction. The guiding principles in Chapter 1 promote new design that complements and enhances existing historic character. Quality new construction can help create places that are friendly to people and promote an active and vibrant streetscape.



The two corners of 9th Street (center) and Quincy Avenue (right) are currently parking lots and could be important future development sites. (Google Earth)



View of the two corners from across Quincy Avenue. The lots are adjacent to several taller buildings of varying periods and styles. The brick Hotel Kansan at center-left was constructed in 1924, and the office building at right was constructed in 1951.

Topeka's D-1 Zoning District –The guidelines of this chapter have been prepared to align with the D-1 District goal of creating a compatible mixed-use core within downtown historic districts and to provide additional detail where appropriate.

RECOMMENDED

- New buildings within the historic district should implement the **urban design and mixed-use goals** expressed in the D-1 zoning ordinance for Downtown Topeka.

- New buildings should use **urban design forms and relationships** focused on activating the downtown streetscape and retail commercial enterprises.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Suburban-style** commercial and residential site design, architectural design, materials, and uses will not be permitted.

Current Design – New buildings constructed within the downtown historic district should be of current, contemporary design that is respectful of the character of the historic district and integrates well within the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the new building, and the existing streetscape.

RECOMMENDED

- Each new building is a **representation of its own time** within the development of Downtown Topeka.
- **Current architectural design** that reflects the present time, place, use, and culture is encouraged in new buildings, provided that the design is compatible with and complementary toward the character of the historic district and the historic buildings in the immediate vicinity of the new building.
- **Quality and creativity** in design and implementation are strongly encouraged.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Designs that radically or **dramatically contrast** with the character of historic buildings within the district are discouraged.
- Designs that incorporate **inappropriate materials** within the overall appearance of the building are strongly discouraged.

Compatible Design – New construction should be visually sympathetic with the character of surrounding buildings. In designing for compatibility within the existing historic context, it is generally advisable to comply with most of the guidelines outlined below in this section on new construction. Materials, massing, form, and rhythm are the most critical elements to which to respond.

Nothing, however, can replace the importance of good design, and good design cannot be achieved through strict regulation. Careful thought, sensibility, and quality help lead to good design. Flexibility is sometimes required to achieve desired results.

RECOMMENDED

- Identify the **character defining features**, forms, scale, sizes, styles, and materials of the surrounding historic buildings and streetscape in the vicinity of the new project. Identify and reflect the spirit and character of those features in the proposed new design. Design new buildings to visually relate to buildings within the proximity of the new project.
- Identify, reflect, and respect the **established design character** and precedent in the immediate vicinity of the new project without directly imitating existing buildings. The choices of materials and colors and the

way that facades relate along the streetscape are of particular importance in creating a compatible design.

- New buildings that are **similar to existing historic buildings** in form, massing, materials, and architectural features are appropriate and encouraged as long as the new buildings can be clearly distinguished from historic buildings as of current design and construction.
- New multi-story buildings should maintain the same **window elevation pattern** established by adjacent properties.
- Work with the guidelines below related to scale, form, features, and materials. In order to clearly distinguish new buildings from older buildings, it may be necessary to **adhere to most guidelines** while clearly and intentionally breaking with others.
- Respectful **creativity and playfulness** that enhances the streetscape experience for downtown visitors is encouraged.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Strict replication of historic features and imagery should be avoided in new construction because **false historicism** diminishes the historic integrity of the downtown district and confuses the understanding what is old and what is new.



The historic district is characterized by a variety of building types and sizes. Early twentieth century commercial buildings are predominantly two and three stories. Taller, more massive buildings were constructed in the 1920s and 1960s.

Site Orientation, Design and Use

New buildings should adhere to established patterns related to lot usage, setback, and building orientation in Downtown Topeka.

Building Setback – To maintain continuity in the downtown streetscape, new construction should follow the established setback pattern. In Downtown Topeka, most historic buildings are located immediately adjacent to the public sidewalk and street, without setbacks. Some variation occurred during the Mid-century Modern era, when the entrances of a few major buildings were recessed back from the sidewalk. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, several buildings designed along South Kansas Avenue varied from the historic pattern by creating

deep setbacks, which altered the character of the streetscape and are not considered desirable.

RECOMMENDED

- New buildings and development should **respect** the existing organization of the city and the street and block patterns that exist.
- Retain established property line patterns and building setbacks along the streetscape. Locate new buildings **immediately adjacent** to the sidewalk to match the predominant placement of historic buildings throughout the historic district.
- Design new buildings to occupy the full **width of the lot** along the sidewalk without gaps between buildings.
- Create a consistent **streetscape facade** the width and height of the new building that reflects and reinforces the setback and facade relationships of historic buildings to the streetscape within the immediate vicinity.
- **Variations** to these setback guidelines may be acceptable in some cases to provide enhanced entrances or desirable outdoor spaces along the sidewalk. Decisions on the approval of such variations should be carefully considered with respect to their impact on the character of the overall streetscape.
- Street-level **setbacks**, plazas, and widened sidewalks from the building line, when permitted, should be strategically placed in accordance with an overall open space plan. The new open spaces should be located to relate to other land uses such as retail, entertainment, and transit routes.

NOT RECOMMEDNED

- New buildings or **pedestrian bridges** should not bridge across or block access to existing streets.



Most buildings throughout downtown are located immediately adjacent to the sidewalk, fill the full width of the lot, are oriented to the street, and create a continuous streetscape facade.

Building Orientation – Most buildings in Downtown Topeka have their principal facade and entrance along the primary street that they face.

RECOMMENDED

- New buildings should have a **similar orientation** and relationship to the street as existing historic buildings in the vicinity.
- New buildings should have their **principal facade and entrance** oriented along the primary street to which they relate.
- Primary entrances and facades should be located, oriented, and sequenced to be consistent with the **pattern of entrances and facades** along the street.

Corner Buildings – The design of new buildings on street corners requires special consideration in the design of their facades and entrances. Corner buildings should function as visual anchors and gateways for downtown commercial blocks.

RECOMMENDED

- The design of corner buildings should reflect the **importance of their location** through a somewhat larger scale and fully detailed exterior treatments that provide visual emphasis and presence to the streetscape.
- In general, the **principal facade** and entrance of a corner building should face the more primary of the two streets to which it relates.
- Create a **clear distinction** between primary and secondary facades and entrances.
- To establish continuity in the streetscape, corner buildings should be considered as **"bookends"** that help frame the block and link adjacent buildings on both sides of the corner.
- Special designs might be created for **corner entrances** in new buildings on the corner of two downtown streets.



The Kresge Building at 635 South Kansas Avenue was constructed in 1926 and designed to respect and turn the corner.

Sidewalks and Streetscape – In Downtown Topeka, the relationship of the building to the sidewalk and streetscape is important in making the pedestrian experience interesting, active, and vibrant.

RECOMMENDED

- Include the relationship to the sidewalk and sidewalk features as an **integral part** of the design of new buildings. Provide sidewalk access to all primary entrances.
- New buildings should contribute to the **pedestrian-oriented** character of the streetscape.
- The street frontage of buildings should contain **public or semi-public uses** such as commercial, retail or entertainment uses with direct entry from the street. Non-public/semi-public uses are appropriate on the first floor if located to the rear of the street frontage use.
- New buildings should express a **principal public facade and entrance** on the adjacent street. Entries to/from parking facilities should be considered as secondary.
- **Retail activities** within buildings should be oriented toward the street and have direct access from sidewalks through storefront entries.
- Ground floor **storefront restaurants** are encouraged to have a strong connection between the interior and street environments.
- **Sidewalk cafes** are generally permitted within the sidewalk right-of-way but should not impair pedestrian circulation or store entrance access.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Curb-cuts** from the street to accommodate drive-through services or parking access is strongly discouraged.



Recent streetscape improvements, under construction as these guidelines were being prepared, are intended to enhance the pedestrian experience. New construction should enhance the relationship between buildings and the sidewalk.

Building Scale and Form

The scale and form of a new building relates to the size, shape, and volume of the overall building envelope. Scale establishes the relative size of the new building in relationship to its neighbors, including height and width. Within the building's facade, the relative size of major architectural features, such as floor heights, windows, wall articulation, and storefront elements, help determine whether the building has a more monumental or more human scale. The form of a new building is related to its shape, massing, proportions, and roof lines.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, the **scale and form** of new buildings within the historic district should be similar to and compatible with the size, shape, and volume of historic buildings within its immediate vicinity. Where there is **variation** of building scale and form within the immediate vicinity, the new building should relate to the overall pattern that is predominant.
- The South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District is characterized by variety and diversity in building size and type. New buildings that are **taller** than those in its immediate vicinity may be permitted and should relate visually in height and to the floor elevations of other taller building within the immediate and adjacent blocks.
- When taller buildings are introduced in an area of predominantly lower buildings, it may be preferred that lower stories reflect the height of other buildings along the street while **setting back upper stories** from the sidewalk or lot line.
- Establish a clear **human scale** for the building and building elements within the lower stories of new buildings to which pedestrians can relate and feel comfortable.



These three-story buildings along Jackson Street are very consistent in scale, form, and massing (proportion of solid to void). There is variation in the rhythm of the window openings, color, and detailing.

- New buildings should be similar to, and should complement the **mass** of historic buildings in the immediate vicinity, including the proportion of solid surfaces (walls) to voids (window and door openings).
- Design new buildings to be **proportional** to surrounding buildings. Consider important building proportions such as floor-to-floor heights, the size and placement of windows and entrances, the scale of articulated elements such as wall detailing, sign panels, transoms, and storefronts.
- In general, **floor-to-floor heights** in new buildings should be as close as possible to the floor-to-floor heights of adjacent historic buildings.
- Respect the characteristic **rhythm** (fenestration, wall articulation, rooflines, etc.) of existing historic buildings within the immediate vicinity.
- Design **rooflines** to be similar to and compatible with those found on surrounding buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Most historic buildings within the downtown historic district are a minimum of two stories in height. **One-story buildings** are generally considered inappropriate.
- Most roofs of historic buildings within the downtown historic district are flat or gently sloping front to back. **Gable roofs** and other similar types of roof forms are generally inappropriate.



These adjacent buildings along South Kansas Avenue are varied in size, form, massing, and rhythm and date to different periods. They demonstrate the diversity of variety of the Downtown Topeka streetscape, which can be picked up in new construction while still being compatible.

Building Facade and Features

The character of the historic district relies heavily upon the visual continuity established by the rhythm and repetition of similarly-designed building facades. Building features such as entrances, transoms, sign panels, storefronts, windows, wall detailing, and roof features add visual interest to facades and break up the building mass. The location, size, and style of these building features helps define the character of the streetscape.

New construction can play an important role in contributing to the character and rhythm of the streetscape. The design of new buildings within the historic district should recognize and be consistent with the features, rhythms, and details established in the facades of historic buildings in their immediate vicinity.

RECOMMENDED

- New buildings should be **open and inviting** in both their principal and secondary facades. Blank walls, or any wall with less than 30% glass, should not be placed along public streets, but may be placed along alleys and service lanes. Walls that are all glass are discouraged.
- **Retail storefronts** are strongly encouraged along the ground floor of all new buildings within the downtown historic district.
- Storefronts should be **visually transparent** to the interior with large areas of window display and should provide for direct entry from the sidewalk.
- Design new storefronts, entrances, and windows to be compatible with the **architectural character** of the facades of historic buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- Decorative and functional elements on street-level facades such as storefronts, entrances, windows, columns, signage, awnings, and ornamentation should be used to create **human scale elements** to further encourage openness and relationships to the sidewalk.
- **Entryways** to buildings and storefronts should be generously proportioned and visually transparent so as to encourage connections to the public realm. Design building entrances to **enhance the connection** between the street and the building interior.
- Respect the **existing pattern** of building entrances along the streetscape when locating new entrances. Design new storefront entrances that are compatible with those of surrounding commercial buildings.
- Arrange the building's **window sizes, bays, and rhythms** in a manner that reflects the facade patterns present in historic buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- Design **windows** to be compatible with the placement, scale, size, type, muntin configurations, and operation of windows and their openings in surrounding buildings.
- Articulate **wall planes** on new facades to capture the general rhythm and character of historic facades along the streetscape. The expression of building structural bays and floor levels is encouraged.

- The **lower floors** of taller buildings should reflect the scale and character of existing historic buildings along the street in the immediate vicinity, while the treatment of **upper floors** may vary in recognition of their relationship to the larger district; nonetheless, lower and upper floors should be related and have consistency in design.
- Use the **width of traditional historic lots** as a potential design element in articulating new facades to help relate new buildings to the historic rhythm of the streetscape. This is especially important in new buildings that are larger and wider than the district's historic buildings.
- Design **roof lines, parapets, and cornices** to be compatible with the height, scale, and articulation of existing roof lines on historic buildings in the immediate vicinity.
- Locate and screen **rooftop features** to minimize their visibility from the street.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- It is neither necessary or desirable to **precisely copy** the patterns, proportions, and details of windows, doors, and storefronts in adjacent buildings, but new designs should generally reflect and play on those patterns and proportions in a sympathetic manner.



The Merchant at 913 South Kansas Avenue was constructed in 1910 and renovated about 1960. Its entrance and lower storefront are consistent with others on the street, but its renovated façade contrasts dramatically with the buildings on either side, another example of the streetscape's diversity.

Materials and Color

The choice of materials and colors of a building's exterior may have the most important impact in how the building relates to the character of its neighbors. Architectural materials and detailing provide visual interest, texture, and quality to a building's facade. Using compatible materials and building details in new construction will promote continuity along the streetscape within the existing historic district.

RECOMMENDED

- Finish exterior walls with **quality materials** that are durable, long-lasting, and compatible with the character of historic buildings within the district.
- Select **building materials** that are compatible with the color, size, texture, scale, and quality of building materials used in historic buildings in the immediate vicinity. Where a particular material is dominant within an area, consider using that material in the new design.
- New **masonry buildings** should use masonry sizes, types, colors, and mortars that are similar to those used in surrounding buildings. Slight variations in size can help differentiate new from historic.
- The use of **traditional exterior building materials** that are widespread within the historic district, such as brick, stone, terra cotta, wood, and aluminum, is encouraged.
- Select **colors** of exterior building materials that are complementary to the colors of the materials of historic buildings in the immediate vicinity.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Materials and colors that **contrast dramatically** with those of historic buildings in the immediate vicinity are inappropriate.
- Avoid materials and features that are **not characteristic** of the historic district, such as concrete block, exterior insulation systems, antiqued brick, jalousie (louvered) windows, picture windows, cedar shakes, unpainted wood, and synthetic siding.



These three similar early twentieth century buildings have an interesting interplay of materials and color.

NEW CONSTRUCTION INCORPORATING EXISTING BUILDINGS

It is possible that owners and developers of historic buildings or groups of buildings where building integrity has been compromised will propose that new construction be undertaken that alters the overall exterior form and character of the buildings. Such projects might propose to demolish portions of existing buildings to construct new additions while retaining portions of the existing buildings.

Such proposals may be compatible with the overall diversity and variety characteristic of and evident in the South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. However, they should only be entertained when the existing historic buildings have been compromised to the extent that the character of the portion to be removed has been clearly and unequivocally lost and/or is of minimal architectural or historical value to the historic district. Portions of the building that do retain character and integrity should be preserved, rehabilitated, and incorporated into the new design. It is most appropriate that such projects be reviewed at the City Council level after being reviewed by the Landmarks Commission.

RECOMMENDED

- Proposals altering the exterior form of contributing buildings should only be entertained when the resulting project fully and completely meets the larger **rehabilitation and use goals** of the D-1 downtown zoning district and downtown historic district and is clearly in the larger public interest.
- New construction that will alter the exterior form of contributing buildings within the historic district may be permitted when a proposed use meeting the goals of the downtown historic district cannot be functionally achieved within the **building envelope** of the existing structure or structures.
- In general, proposals for new construction and additions to existing contributing and non-contributing buildings within the historic district should follow the **guidelines for new construction** on vacant and open lots outlined above in this chapter.
- Decisions on the design of new construction that alters the form of multiple buildings should be based on the **net cumulative impacts** of all proposed changes within the project area to the historic district as a whole, rather than the unique effects on a property or properties in isolation.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Despite the assessment of proposed projects with respect to the net cumulative impacts on the historic district as a whole as noted above, new projects should not substantially **damage, destroy, or alter** the historic integrity of any contributing historic building within the district.

Demolition

Demolition and removals in projects involving historic buildings to be significantly altered should be kept to a minimum.

RECOMMENDED

- Any required demolition necessary for an approved project should be carefully planned to **minimize impacts** on historic features, materials, floor plans, and spatial characteristics that retain integrity and should be preserved.
- In general, demolition and removals should be limited to **secondary areas** of historic buildings that are of minimal architectural or historical value and/or have been compromised with changes that have adversely affected their integrity.
- Limit removals to areas and elements where the removals **cannot be avoided**.
- Historic areas, features, elements, materials, and designs that will be demolished should be **documented** to standards approved by the Landmarks Commission prior to their removal.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- The demolition of portions of historic buildings listed as contributing buildings to the historic district where the portions to be removed **retain their historic integrity** and where their removal will **adversely impact** the overall integrity of the historic building will not be permitted.



These buildings in the 900 block of South Kansas Avenue have been proposed for rehabilitation with new construction. Upper story facades would be restored. New storefronts would be similar to those that were present historically. New taller construction would be set back from the streetscape. The non-contributing building at left would be removed for a new entrance to the complex. The proposed design would relate to the broad architectural character of the district as a whole.

Design Approach

New construction that will alter the exterior form of contributing buildings within the historic district should be designed to be compatible with the **broad architectural character** of the surrounding historic district as well as with the remaining portions of contributing historic buildings within the project, and its vicinity.

RECOMMENDED

- New construction and additions related to existing buildings should be of a design that is **respectful of the character** of the historic district as a whole, the building to which it is related, and buildings in the immediate vicinity as outlined in the guidelines for new construction on vacant and open lots above in this chapter.
- New construction and additions should be of **compatible design** to the building to which it is related as outlined in the guidelines for new construction on vacant and open lots above in this chapter.
- New construction and additions should be designed and constructed to be **clearly differentiated** in design from the historic building. Design new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.
- Design new construction and additions so that there is the **least possible loss** of historic fabric and so that the character-defining features of the existing historic building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
- Retain, enhance, and reinforce the existing historic character and appearance of the **streetscape** in the vicinity of the new project.
- Retain, rehabilitate and appropriately treat **historic facades, storefronts, and interior spaces** that retain historic integrity. Refer to guidelines related to exterior walls, storefronts, windows, and interiors included elsewhere in these design guidelines.
- In an existing historic building, the replacement of non-historic ground-level storefronts with **new storefronts** of current design that resemble and reflect the time-period of the historic building's original construction is encouraged. Refer to guidelines for the design of new storefronts elsewhere in these design guidelines.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Do not remove **character defining features**.
- Do not create **distinctive architectural features** that will detract from the overall character of the building or surrounding district.

Orientation and Alignment

New construction and additions related to existing historic buildings should respect the character, orientation, and alignment of the existing building and its primary facade.

RECOMMENDED

- Orient the **primary facade** of a new addition to the street associated with the primary facade of the existing historic building.
- **Align the key elements** of new construction and additions with their counterparts on the existing historic building. Include key elements such as the plane of the front facade, roofline, transom lines, cornice height, facade rhythms, patterns of masonry courses, and/or others as appropriate.
- The **floor levels and floor heights** of an addition should align with the floor levels and heights of the existing historic building.
- If a **new primary entrance** is designed into an addition, the entrance(s) of the existing historic building should also be retained and preserved.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- In general, it is preferable not to use an addition or secondary facade as a **primary facade or entrance** when an adequate primary entrance exists in the historic building.
- Any differences between new and existing **floor heights** should not vary by more than ten percent. Floor heights of upper stories with no direct relationship with adjacent historic floor levels may vary further.



These adjacent buildings in the 700 of west South Kansas Avenue have different scales, sizes, forms, materials, and window treatments. The building at right would not be allowed under these guidelines because the floors do not align and the windows and balconies are completely different and inappropriate.

Placement, Relationship, and Setback – Additions should recognize and enhance the design concepts inherent in the historic building to which it is related. The organization, siting, materials, massing, scale and character of existing historic buildings should be respected and serve as inspiration and point of departure for the new design.

RECOMMENDED

- New construction and additions should be **complementary and consistent** with the existing building in overall character.
- In general, new construction and additions should **attach to secondary facades** and be placed to the side or rear of or above an historic building. Along the streetscape, however, the alignment of facades creating the **streetscape wall** should be maintained.
- Attach new construction and additions to the historic building in a way that **protects** the historic building's **character defining features**. The placement of an addition should not obscure or destroy the existing building form, principal entrance, or any other key feature, especially the primary facade.
- A clear change should occur at the **point of attachment**, differentiating the addition and preserving the form of the historic building.



The twelve-story Kansas Power & Light Company Building (left, today known as the Westar Energy Building) steps back and creates a gap between the tower and its much smaller two-story neighbors.

- New construction and additions located in **close proximity** to the primary facade should adhere more closely to existing historic character, while additions that are less visible from the front may be more distinct.
- A **limited setback** may be desirable at the ground level to differentiate the facade of a new addition from that of the historic building, especially

when the new facade incorporates a new primary entrance.

- For new construction and additions that are taller than the existing historic building, a **setback of the upper stories** may be desirable to limit the visual impact on and preserve the overall character of the historic streetscape.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- New construction or additions should not replicate the historic building or building elements because **false historicism** diminishes the integrity of the existing historic building and confuses the distinction between old and new.

Building Form and Mass

New construction and additions should be designed to complement the form and massing of the historic building with which they are associated.

RECOMMENDED

- Identify the **predominant characteristics** of the existing historic building related to form and mass – symmetry/asymmetry, receding forms, rhythms of openings, contrasting relationships, etc. Once identified, characteristics that can be reflected in the new construction can be explored.
- In general, additions should be of the **same average height, width, and overall mass** as the existing building.
- Where new construction and additions include building forms that are **taller** than those of the historic building, the design should relate to the broader architectural character of the district and particularly to the form and massing of taller buildings in the vicinity while minimizing any negative visual impacts on the form and mass of the historic building.



A row of two-story buildings in the 900 block of west South Kansas Avenue are juxtaposed against the seven-story office building on the corner that dates to 1912.

- **Roof types** of new construction should be similar to that of the historic building; the roofs of Downtown Topeka's commercial buildings are usually flat or gently sloping from front to back with no real impact on building form.
- New construction should **reflect** the forms, rhythms, and lines of the existing buildings. This reflection should be creative, a point of departure for the new design, and may be more creative.
- Building mass is directly related to the features and materials used on the primary elevations and the proportion of solids (walls) to voids (windows and doors). Current features and materials can easily create a weightless appearance in comparison to the historic masonry used traditionally. It is important to **balance the sense of mass** projected by historic buildings even when new additions are more open and airy.



Buildings along SE 8th Avenue have variation in size, form, materials, and style, including one of the district's few small one-story contributing structures. The vacant lot on the corner at right may be a site for new construction.

Materials and Color

The use of materials and colors that are sympathetic to existing materials in the adjacent historic building is an important way for an addition to achieve a level of compatibility.

RECOMMENDED

- The **palette of materials** used in the historic building should be identified early in the conceptual design process along with the ways in which they are used. Include masonry, trim, window, storefront, door, and decorative elements.
- Identify which existing materials and uses are historic and **character defining** and which are not. Develop a palette for the new construction for review and approval that is **similar to and complementary** with existing materials.

- Materials **need not always be exactly the same**, but they should be of a visually complementary color, size, texture, scale, and level of craftsmanship.
- The use of **brick masonry** is common in Downtown Topeka's smaller historic buildings and is encouraged. Designers should observe how masonry is used in the specific building to which the new construction is related.
- The use of **sympathetic colors** to the materials of the historic building is extremely important even when materials are different. Base colors should provide a unified overall visual appearance, though sympathetic contrasting colors can be included.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- The use of synthetic materials or other materials and colors that **dramatically contrast** with existing materials should be avoided.



Though dramatic contrast may be related to the district's characteristic diversity and variety and is present downtown, in this case a contrast in color, it is not a desirable attribute for new construction going forward.



CHAPTER 9 – SIGNAGE

Signage is an important element of the downtown streetscape. In addition to advertising for downtown businesses, signage enlivens the streetscape, providing interest, light, and color and helping to create a vibrant pedestrian experience.

Like Downtown Topeka's buildings, signage within the downtown historic districts has been characterized by diversity and variety, and a wide range of types of signage have been used. Sometimes the amount of signage that has been present historically has been visually overwhelming.

The objective for new signage within Topeka's downtown historic districts is to find a balance between signage that creates a vibrant streetscape experience and signage that overwhelms the character of historic buildings. New signage should provide opportunities for creativity while acknowledging and respecting the existing historic context. Signage should be considered a form of public art.

HISTORIC SIGNAGE IN DOWNTOWN TOPEKA

Historic photographs of Downtown Topeka show the range of types of signage that has been present over the decades. Topeka's historic buildings and storefronts date from the late nineteenth century through the 1960s. Signage types, formats, and styles have evolved over this long period as well. In general, the types of signage that have been used historically remain appropriate for use today. The appropriateness of the format, design, and placement of any particular proposed sign will need to be made on a case-by-case basis. The range of signs used historically include those discussed below.

Signs Above Transoms – The most common type of sign on retail commercial buildings in Downtown Topeka dating from the late nineteenth century into the 1930s appears to be a long, narrow sign placed above the transom of the retail storefront. Signs above transoms served as many stores' primary sign and usually featured lettering with the name of the business. In some cases, cutout letters mounted on the sign panel were used instead of painted letters. The sign panels span the full width of the building. Occasionally, where two storefronts occupied a single building, the sign panel only spanned across the top of one storefront.

These signs covered the steel beams spanning the storefronts and supporting the exterior masonry walls of the building's upper floors. Today, where these steel beams are present, they are usually exposed as interesting architectural features and sometimes are decoratively painted. Historically, this does not appear to have been the case. Long, narrow signs above transoms are not particularly prevalent today.

During the 1920s and 1930s, several buildings incorporated long, narrow signs similar to the above-transom signs of the late-nineteenth century into the designs of their facades. Like their predecessors, these signs tended to be located above the storefront (though transoms were no longer being installed) and span nearly the full length of the facade. The Kresge Building at 635 South Kansas Avenue, constructed in 1926, and the W. T. Grant Building at 705 South Kansas Avenue, constructed in 1935, are prominent examples.



Above-transom signs are the most common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This photo of the east side of the 600 block in the early 1930s (may be the 1920s), also has a rooftop billboard sign, cornice level sign, second floor level sign, two-building cornice level sign, projecting signs, and awning signs. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Signs Within Transoms – As the transoms above storefronts became less important in providing light to interior retail spaces, the area occupied by the transom was often converted to signage. The practice of installing drop ceilings in stores to accommodate air conditioning ducts and lighting increased the obsolescence of transoms and also covered them on the interior.

Over the years, the transom area has been the most common space used for retail signage, a practice which continues today. Signage in transoms is wider vertically

than above-transom signs and spans the full width of the building or storefront, covering the full area occupied by the transom. Where transoms were present historically, they were often left in place and simply covered with the new signage and may still be present beneath, as discussed in Chapter 6. In more recent construction, the space on the facade above the storefront historically occupied by transoms is now often designed for signage.



This photograph of the west side of the 600 block of South Kansas Avenue from about 1930 shows above-transom signs, an in-transom sign, a cornice level sign, two upper level projecting signs, two in-transom projecting signs, and awning signs. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Cornice Level Signs – Some late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings in Downtown Topeka had long, horizontal signs installed at the cornice level. Buildings in Downtown Topeka tended not to have complicated cornices; many buildings expressed the cornice line architecturally through the articulation of brickwork in the parapet. Cornice signs were located below the top of the parapet at the roofline and usually spanned the full width of the building. (Most buildings, of course, were narrow in width, reflecting the historic lot lines.) In a few cases, large cornice signs were installed spanning across two buildings.

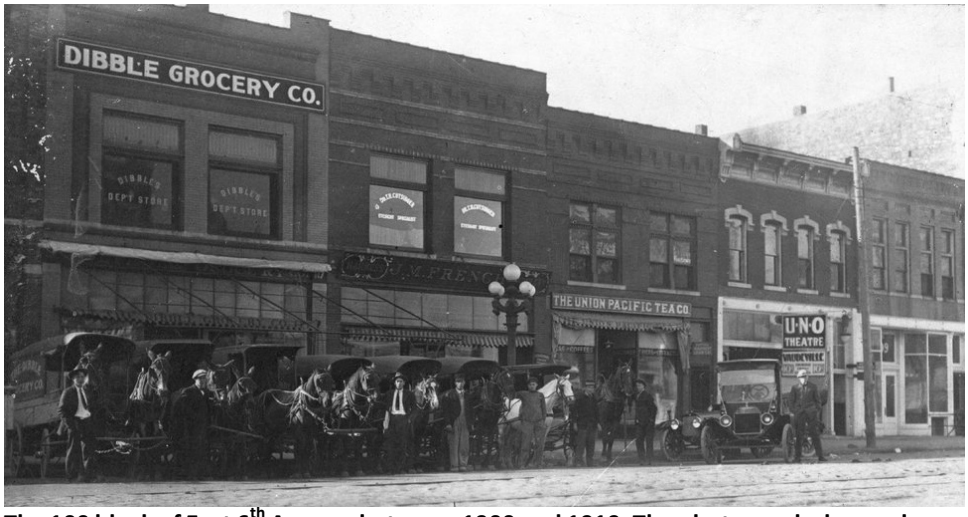
Some cornice level signs installed historically were too large for the buildings they were attached to—out of scale with the facade and obscuring architectural features and details. When cornice signs are installed in the future, they should be proportional to the space available.



This photograph of the east 700 block of South Kansas Avenue includes a two-building cornice level sign that is out of scale with its context. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Signs Between Floor Levels – Similar to above-transom and cornice level signs, a few buildings in early twentieth century Topeka had signs installed at the floor level between second and third floor windows. In a few cases, a cornice level sign on a two-story building also extended across an adjacent building between the second and third floor levels. Most signs placed between floor levels were long and narrow, reaching across the full width of the building. Sometimes these signs were out of proportion with the spaces they occupied.

Small Wall-mounted Signs – Street level photographs of Downtown Topeka show a profusion of smaller signs attached to wall surfaces. Wall-mounted signs were customized in size and shape to the area of available wall space. They were secondary signs with supplementary information about a shop, rather than the shop's name. The signs were placed everywhere and anywhere there was space available. Current sign regulations prevent this kind of sign pollution today. While small wall-mounted signs are fine as a sign type, it is not recommended that the sign pollution be permitted despite the historical precedent.



The 100 block of East 6th Avenue between 1900 and 1919. The photograph shows above-transom signs, a cornice level sign, and four second floor painted-glass window signs. The building to the right of the Dibble Grocery Co. building later became Hillmer's Leather Shop, featured in the discussion of storefronts and commercial facades in Chapter 6. The signage shown today on Hillmer's in Chapter 6 is historic but post-dates and is different than the signage shown here. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Bulkhead Signs – Like small wall-mounted signs, lettering was painted on storefront bulkheads under display windows with secondary information advertising the kinds of products sold within stores. Bulkhead signs added to the sign pollution along the streetscape. While they still may be permitted as a sign type in current construction, the amount of signage permitted today helps prevent sign pollution.

Wall-mounted Lettering – In the 1960s, a number of large Mid-century Modern buildings and smaller renovated storefronts used letters mounted directly on smooth, blank wall surfaces to create large building-scaled signage. Such signage can be seen today on the high-rise Capital Federal Saving and Westar Energy buildings as well as on the renovated storefront of Briman's Leading Jewelers. In these installations, the signage is an integral part of the facade design. Wall-

mounted lettering occurs at both the large and small scales. On some storefronts in Downtown Topeka, such lettering as been removed from 1960s storefronts, and the facades are currently blank. Similar new signage is encouraged in these locations.



South Kansas Avenue looking north from 8th Avenue showing wall-mounted lettering in 1962 on Capitol Federal Savings and Briman's Leading Jewelers. On the left, a series of vertical projecting signs are shown. In the distance, the large roof-mounted sign on the First National Bank of Topeka is pictured. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Painted Masonry Wall Signs – Painted signs on the masonry side walls of buildings appear throughout Topeka's history. In smaller buildings constructed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these side walls were usually stone. In later buildings that were taller, the walls were usually brick. In cases where such signage still exists, it should be preserved. New painted signage on masonry walls complying with the city's sign ordinance is an appropriate option.



South Kansas Avenue looking south from 8th Avenue in 1954 showing multiple projecting signs, portions of three roof signs, lit surface mounted lettering, and a painted masonry sign. (KHS Kansas Memory)

Projecting Signs – Projecting signs are present in many variations and types in historic photographs of Downtown Topeka. Mounted perpendicular to wall surfaces, projecting signs have two surfaces and are more visible from down the street. Projecting signs used as primary retail signs were generally installed on wall surfaces at the second floor level, above the storefront. They were also sometimes mounted on the transom.

Prominent projecting signs of striking design using neon lighting were installed during the 1920s and 1930s. One example still survives on Hillmer's Leather Shop at 115 SE 6th Avenue. Smaller projecting signs with secondary information were often installed at the sidewalk level just above head height.

Awning Signs – Awnings were common on storefronts and upper floor windows before the introduction of air conditioning. Some of these awnings were used for signage. Over storefronts, the broad sloping surface of the awning could accommodate large letters, though it was hard to see from the street and was additional to a store's primary signage. Sign lettering on the hanging flap at the front of the awning was not only visible when the awning was down but remained visible when the awning was rolled up, with the flap appearing as a horizontal strip between the display window below and the transom above. Signage on upper floor awnings was sometimes present, but was not common.

In recent years, awnings have tended to be used as permanent installations, not intended to roll up, but they are still used for signage. Arched forms have been installed on some buildings at the transom level with lettering on the awning serving as the store's primary sign.

Signs Painted on Glass – Signage was frequently painted on the display windows of storefronts and can also be seen on the upper story windows of some facades. Some glass transoms and the glass side doors to second floor stairways had painted signage as well. Painted glass signage can be artistic and is a preferred format for supplementary sidewalk level application.

Entrance Paving and Wall Signs – As discussed in Chapter 6 on storefronts, the names of stores were sometimes designed into outdoor tile entrance vestibules during the early twentieth century. Where such designs survive, they should be preserved. This format could be appropriate for new construction as well. Signage was designed into wall tile and other wall materials on occasion.



Existing entrance paving signs (center and left) and wall sign on tile (right).

Canopies and Marquees – Canopies and marquees are discussed in Chapter 4, *Roofing Systems*. The projecting edges of marquees often have signage, as on the large marquee of the Topeka Performing Arts Center. Historically they often had decorative lighting as well. An example survive in Downtown Topeka in the 600 block of SW Van Buren, outside of the historic district.

Rooftop Signs – Large rooftop signs were prominent in Downtown Topeka dating back to the early twentieth century. Historic photographs show a few billboard signs mounted on top of tall buildings, but most prominent, were large lighted signs such as the one still surviving on the Jayhawk Hotel/Tower. Similar large lighted signs were located on top of the Hotel Kansan, First National Bank of Topeka (near 6th Avenue, now demolished), and on the three-story brick building at 800 South Kansas Avenue (now demolished), which advertised Kansas Power and Light Services.

The Jayhawk Hotel sign is featured in Preservation Brief 25 on *The Preservation of Historic Signs* prepared by the National Park Service in 1991. The brief shows how the sign was preserved when the hotel was rehabilitated for office use, and the word "Hotel" was changed to read "Tower" using three of the original letters and re-creating the other two.



Profusion of signs at the storefront level on the east side of the 500 block of South Kansas Avenue between 1945 and 1949. While present historically, excessive signage is not considered desirable today. Unique designs like the large neon projecting sign would be desirable. (KHS Kansas Memory)

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR SIGNAGE

The character and quality of signage will have significant impact, either positive or negative, on Topeka's historic commercial streetscape. A profusion of discordant, low quality, poorly designed signs can seriously detract from the character of the historic district. Well-designed, high quality, and appropriately placed signs can enhance the streetscape experience. The following set of general principles are recommended in the design of signage for Downtown Topeka's historic districts.

Authenticity – Historically appropriate period signs that reflect authenticity of design, materials, and placement for the architectural style and period of the building it serves are encouraged.

Diversity – Diversity and variety of signage is characteristic of Downtown Topeka. Signage types and styles of later periods can be appropriate for buildings of earlier periods. An example would be the installation of a projecting neon sign characteristic of the 1920s or 1930s on a late nineteenth or early twentieth century building or facade.

Building Character – Regardless of the type or style of a proposed sign, new signage should respect the character of the historic building upon which it is placed in terms of size, placement, materials, and color.

Quality – High quality signage with respect to design, materials, and craftsmanship is always encouraged.

Creativity – Signage should be considered a form of public art. Creative, unique, artistically inspired signage is encouraged even though it may allude to no particular historical type or precedent.

Flexibility – The potential variety and quality that can be achieved from freedom and flexibility of design are more valuable than restrictions that dictate conformity. Sign review should prohibit only those elements that are indisputable detriments to the historic character of the building or the downtown district and should provide support and guidance to property owners in the appropriate design and placement of signs.

Reversibility – New signage should be designed, located, and attached to buildings in such a way that its removal is fully reversible without damage to historic fabric.

Excessive Signage – An excessive amount of signage is not desirable along the streetscape even though there is historical precedent for it.

Signage in the City of Topeka is governed by the Topeka Municipal Code, including specifics on number, size, and placement. The design principles and guidelines included in this chapter are intended to coordinate with and supplement the requirements of the municipal code.

SIGNAGE GUIDELINES

Building on the general principles outlined above, more specific guidelines for the design and placement of new signage are outlined below. Most important is that property owners and designers consider the character and composition of an entire principal building facade in their design and placement of new signage.

The entire elevation of an existing commercial building facade should be considered in the presentation of a business to the streetscape and the public. The design and placement of new signage should work with and complement the design of the facade and should relate to its components—architectural character, signage, storefronts, display windows, and entrances. Signage should be an integral part of the building facade in both design and function regardless of sign type, period, or style.

In Downtown Topeka, many commercial building facades are characteristic of multiple periods or styles and display layers of change. Storefronts are often significant to a different period and style than that of the facade as a whole or of the upper stories of buildings. As noted above, while historically appropriate period signage is acceptable and encouraged, quality and creativity are most important in the design of new signage, and creative concepts of current design will be acceptable so long as the proposed signage is respectful of the building or storefront upon which it is placed. New signage should also be respectful of the immediate surrounding context.

In general, design guidelines for new signage should consider five basic design components—type or style, size, materials, placement, and illumination.



Traditional style above-transom sign over a contemporary storefront facade

Sign Type and Style

Types of signage common historically within Downtown Topeka are outlined earlier in this chapter. Sign styles vary significantly by period. The most important consideration in selecting a new type or style of sign for use on a building is the degree to which the proposed sign respects and is complementary to the architectural character of the facade, even if it is of a different period or style.

Three types of signs are typical within the history of Downtown Topeka. Designers should refer to the code for specific requirements related to each signage type.

Wall signs are signage attached directly to a building wall. Wall signs may include above-transom, transom, cornice, wall-mounted lettering, and other forms of wall-mounted signage as discussed earlier in the chapter. Signs painted directly on masonry walls should also be considered wall signs.

Projecting signs are signage erected or suspended at right angles and projecting out from the walls of a building.

Roof signs are any sign erected or maintained upon a roof or parapet wall of a building.



Historic projecting neon sign remaining on Hillmer's Leather Shop, East 6th Avenue

RECOMMENDED

- Signage **types and styles common** within the downtown district historically are generally appropriate for use for new signage.
- Signage of **current style and design** is acceptable when of high quality, of artistic merit, and when respectful of the character of the building upon which it is mounted.
- Existing **historic signs** should be retained to the extent practicable, including historic signs painted on the masonry side walls of buildings.
- Where necessary for preservation, historic signs should be **conserved** through the implementation of technically appropriate conservation measures.
- Where historic signs cannot be retained, they may be **relocated** or may be removed, labeled, and **appropriately stored** in a safe location within the building upon which they were mounted.
- On historic storefronts with transoms, the use of **above-transom** signage is encouraged allowing the historic transom to be functional.

- Where a historic transom has been removed, it is acceptable to use the **transom area** as a signage panel.
- Where historic transoms are present but have been covered for signage, exposing and **restoring the historic transom** is encouraged provided the existing storefront is compatible with having a transom or a new storefront is being installed. In some instances it would be inappropriate to alter an intact historically significant storefront from a later period to restore a removed or covered transom from an earlier period.
- Surface wall-mounted or **projecting neon signs** mounted at the upper floor level similar to those of the 1920s through 1950s are appropriate particularly when of high quality and artistic design. When considering projecting neon signs, a thorough structural analysis of the exterior façade should be undertaken to ensure its weight-bearing capacity.



Colorful projecting neon signs from another city

- **Panel box signs** illuminated from inside, either surface wall-mounted or projecting, are generally not appropriate within the historic district but may be permitted when of high quality, of artistic merit, and appropriate to the character of the building to which they are mounted.
- **Painted glass** window and door signs are appropriate within the historic district on both ground level and upper level floors.
- **Roof signs** featuring lighting similar to those that existed historically at the Jayhawk Hotel, Hotel Kansan, and elsewhere in Downtown Topeka are appropriate provided they are appropriately located, are of artistic merit, and do not project excessive light on adjacent properties.
- New signs that are painted directly on **masonry side walls** of buildings may be acceptable when they do not damage historic fabric or detract from the overall historic architecture of the building.

- **Electronic message center** signs (EMCs) are governed by provisions on zoning districts and signage within the Topeka Municipal Code. EMCs are most appropriate on the marquees of historic theaters or hotels and other similar locations of public gathering or assembly.
- Painted **murals** on the blank side walls of existing buildings within the historic district are generally acceptable as a form of public art. Though not historic, murals are similar to painted masonry signs and are a means of enlivening the streetscape.
- Murals should be painted by **professional artists** experienced in mural design and execution. They should be creative, fun, and apropos to Topeka.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Historic painted signs on the side walls of buildings should be **conserved**, but in general should not be repainted.
- **Billboard-style roof signs** are not encouraged within the historic district.
- **Ground signs** erected on the site independent of a building are not encouraged and may be permitted only when adequate space exists on the site and when such signs will not hinder, obstruct, or detract from the vehicular and pedestrian circulation. When permitted, ground signs are limited to 25 square feet.



Painted glass signs on a door transom (left) and windows (right)

Sign Size

The square feet of signage permitted per building facade is governed by the Topeka Municipal Code. The appropriate sizes for individual signs will be determined by the location of the signs in relation to the building and building features.

RECOMMENDED

- The size and shape of an **individual sign** should be determined by the type of sign and the location in which it is mounted.

- A sign should be appropriately sized to the **scale and character of the building** or facade upon which it is located.
- A sign should be appropriately sized to the **scale of the architectural feature** on which it is mounted as well as the proximity to and scale of adjacent features, such as window openings, storefront elements, and wall details.
- **Wall-mounted signs** should be sized to fit comfortably within the wall space available for their mounting, not quite fully filling such area.
- **Transom-mounted signs** should fully fill the available transom space to provide a consistent look to the entire transom area even when the actual lettering, logo, or message area is smaller. In such cases, non-message areas of the transom may not be included in the calculation of allowable sign area for the facade.
- The sizes of **projecting signs** should relate to and be compatible with the scale of the surface area upon which they are mounted and to the size and scale of adjacent architectural features on the façade.
- **Painted glass** window and door signs should not exceed half of the available glass area of the window or door upon which they are painted.
- **Roof signs** should be sized proportionally to the height and scale of the building on which they are placed, with signs on lower buildings smaller than those permitted on taller buildings.



Artistically designed box sign and small non-lit projecting sign on the Thacher Building

NOT RECOMMENDED

- New signage of any type or style should not be **out of scale** with the elements of the facade upon which they are located.
- The size of a sign should not be so large as to **compete visually** with other architectural elements of the building or adjacent buildings. Sign size, proportions, ornamentation, and lettering size should relate to and be compatible with the overall architectural composition of the building it advertises and its immediate environment.

- New signage should **not obscure** the signage, merchandising displays, or architectural features of adjacent buildings or storefronts from the vantage point of a pedestrian looking parallel to the building line. If such visual clarity is impaired, either the placement or size of the sign should be revised.
- The sizing of new signage should be sensitive to the possibility that an **over-scaled sign** may overwhelm the visual pattern of elements along the streetscape, including adjacent buildings, and foster competition from neighbors.



Large scale wall-mounted lettering characteristic of the 1960s

Sign Materials

The materials for new signage should be of high quality and meet or exceed industry standards for long-term outdoor use and exposure. Each proposal for new signage within the historic district will be assessed for minimum standards applicable to the type and style of signage being proposed.

RECOMMENDED

- To the extent possible, **traditional materials** used for signage of the various types, periods, and styles used historically in Downtown Topeka are encouraged for use in the design of new signage to be installed on historic buildings.
- The **surfaces and face of wall signs** mounted on buildings are required to be of metal or other approved incombustible material in accordance with municipal code and must meet or exceed industry standards for long-term exterior use. Ornamental moldings or trim surrounding wall signs may be of wood or other combustible materials.
- The **surfaces and face of projecting signs** may be wood, metal, or pressed board in accordance with municipal code and must meet or exceed industry standards for long-term exterior use.
- The exposed **finishes** of all sign materials should meet or exceed industry standards for long-term outdoor use and exposure.

- The general appearance of a **painted wood surface** is preferred for signage replicating historic signage of the early twentieth century, particularly wall-mounted signs. **Colors and textures** should complement the colors and textures of the historic building materials. Contrasting colors are appropriate in measured amounts.
- Metals, plastics, or other synthetic materials used for signage on historic buildings should have **colors and textures** that complement the colors and textures of the historic building materials. Contrasting colors are appropriate in measured amounts.



Smaller scale wall-mounting lettering of high quality, recently installed

- The design and materials of wall-mounted signs should provide a **sense of projection, relief, depth, and separation** from the wall upon which they are secured. Signage should not be excessively flat or flush with the wall surface.
- All wall signs shall be **securely and safely attached** to a building wall as provided by municipal code. Attachment hardware should generally not be visible.
- The mounting of any type of signage on a building within the historic district should be accomplished with **minimum damage** to existing wall fabric. For example, signs attached to brick masonry or tile walls should be secured at joint locations rather than in the face of the brick or tile. Sign installation should be **fully reversible** to the maximum extent possible.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Signage of short-term, **low quality**, or temporary materials not meeting industry standards for long-term exterior use and exposure will not be permitted.
- Signage materials, surfaces, and finishes not customarily intended for exposure or for use in **finish construction** will not be permitted.



Awning signs on two buildings within the downtown district

Sign Placement

In addition to size and scale, the appropriate placement of signage is extremely important to the character of the historic building and historic district. The following general guidelines should be observed regarding sign placement on buildings within the historic district.

RECOMMENDED

- In general, new signage on building facades should be placed in locations where it was **historically intended**, such as the transom level, above transoms, cornices, and other locations discussed earlier in this chapter. Appropriate locations will vary according to a building's or storefront's period or style.
- Signs should be placed where they **best complement** the building or storefront. In general, sign placement should be restricted to flat, unadorned surfaces on the wall of the facade.
- **Large projecting signs** should be located at the upper floor levels and secured to blank vertical wall surfaces between windows. Orient and position signs to relate to existing architectural features, such as centered on blank surfaces and at the mid-point to window openings.
- Projecting signage at the **storefront level** should be oriented principally to pedestrians.
- Minimum **sign clearance** above the sidewalk for projecting signs and maximum length of projection from the building face are governed by municipal code.
- The placement of **roof signs** is governed by municipal code in relation to roof structure and roof access.
- Storefront level signage should conform to general **storefront heights and surface areas** and be easily visible to pedestrians.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Signage should not be placed in locations that **obscure architectural features** or details of the facade or storefront.
- Though present historically, wall signs are generally not encouraged at the floor levels of **upper floors** (third floor and above) of buildings.
- Signage should not interfere with the visibility or architectural features of a **neighboring building** or store. New signage should not obscure adjacent signage from view.
- Painted masonry signs are not appropriate for the masonry surfaces of **primary facades** along the streetscape and, when used, should be limited to the side walls of buildings.
- New **storefront improvements** should not obscure signage or architectural features. For example, a new awning should not be mounted so as to obscure an existing sign or storefront cornice.
- Signs should never be allowed to project to the extent of presenting a **visual or physical hazard** to pedestrians or vehicle traffic. All necessary vehicular sight lines must be maintained.



Non-lit projecting sign with indirect lighting (left) and recent painted masonry sign on a side wall (right)

Sign Illumination

Externally lit signs and self-lit signs such as neon that were commonly used historically in Downtown Topeka are generally preferred for use within the historic district. However, flexible and creative applications that treat sign illumination as a form of public art are encouraged and will be considered.

RECOMMENDED

- Concealed or **indirect lighting** of sign surfaces where the source of lighting is not visible to observers is generally appropriate for signage within the historic district.
- **Light fixtures** providing indirect lighting to a sign surface may be observable and should be of high quality, for exterior use and exposure, and considered part of the overall design of the sign and the facade.

- Internally lit plastic or **translucent signage** or **back-lit** signage appropriate to sign facades of the 1950s and 1960s are appropriate for use on buildings of those periods and may be considered appropriate for buildings of other periods when designed with respect for the character and composition of the building.
- **Neon signs,** surface-mounted or projecting similar to those of the 1920s through the 1950s, are appropriate particularly when of high quality and artistic design.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- **Internally lit box signs** are generally not appropriate within the historic district but may be permitted when of high quality, of artistic merit, and appropriate to the character of the building to which they are mounted.
- The **floodlighting** of the exterior facades of buildings within the historic district is discouraged and may not be permitted.
- Lighting should not be installed in such a way that light sources or light bulbs are directly visible and **glare** in the eyes of pedestrians or motorists.



The historic Jayhawk Hotel/Tower roof sign (left) and a recent roof sign on a historic building in another city (right). The sign at right may be considered out of scale with the size of the low-two-story building.