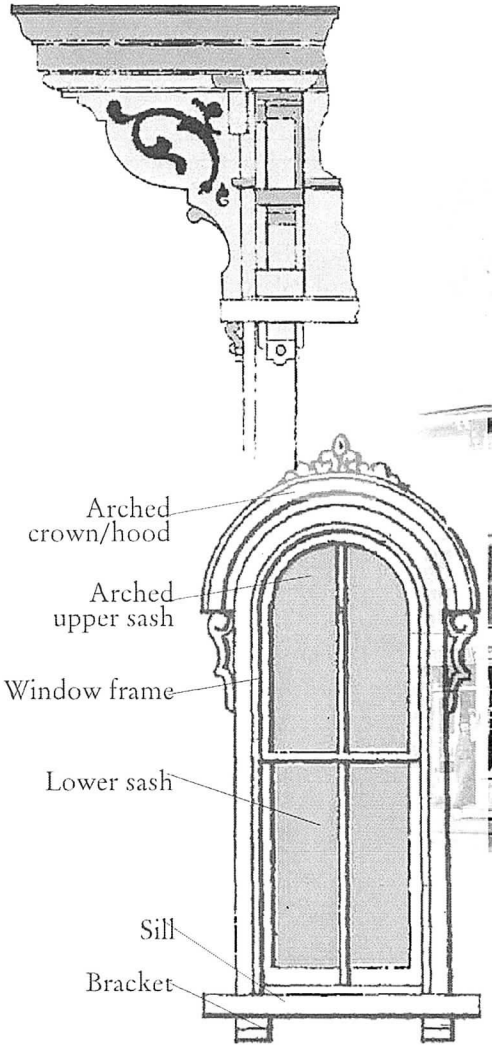
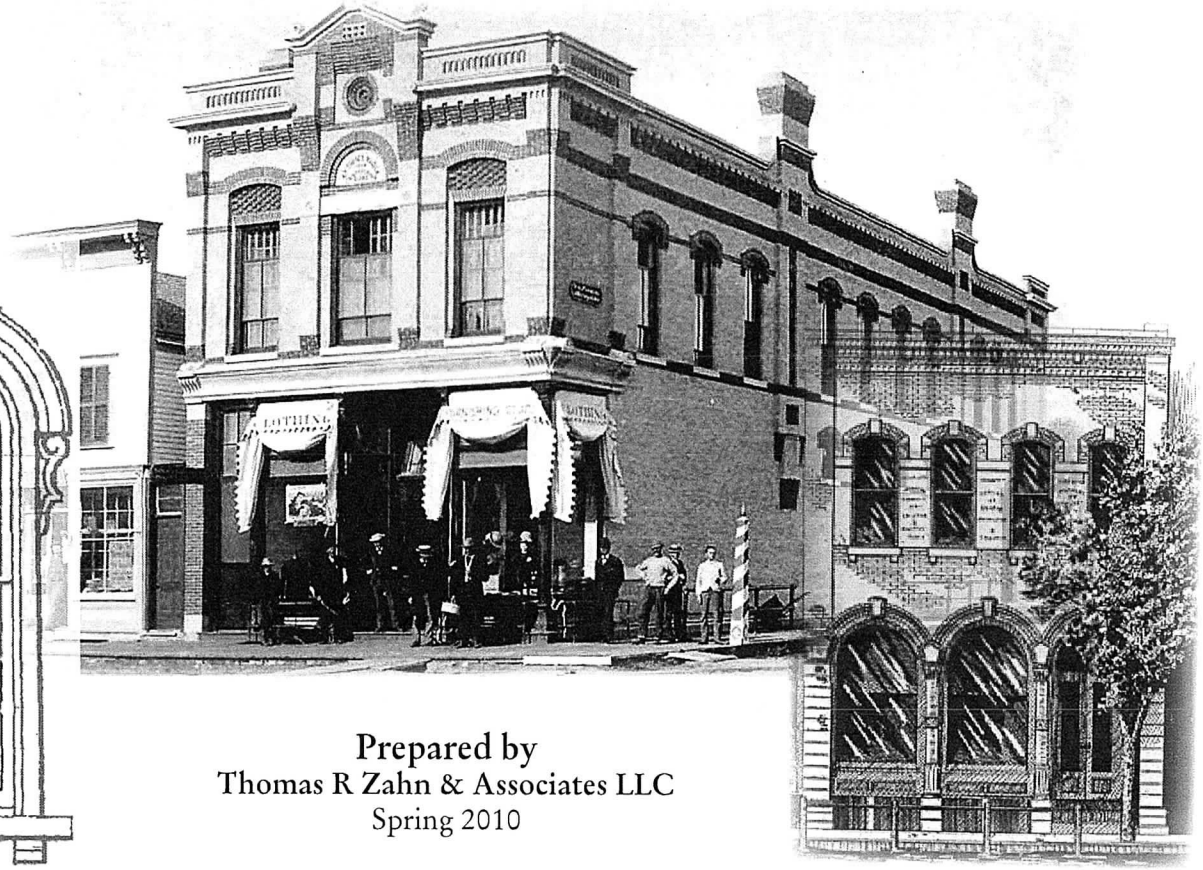
MN-09-006

Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines for the City of Litchfield Minnesota

Prepared for
The City of Litchfield





Prepared by
Thomas R Zahn & Associates LLC
Spring 2010

Credits

A special thanks to the City of Red Wing and Miller-Dunwiddie-Associates, Inc. who developed the *Red Wing Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines*; Carver-on-the-Minnesota, Inc., and the MacDonald and Mack Partnership for their work on *Carver Historic District, Design One: Architecture*; the Minnesota cities of Faribault, Little Falls, Lake City, Chatfield, New Ulm, St. Cloud, Breckenridge and Carver, which all contributed to the refinement and expansion of historic downtown guideline development; and the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development which developed the Main Street Program Downtown Revitalization Action Guide.

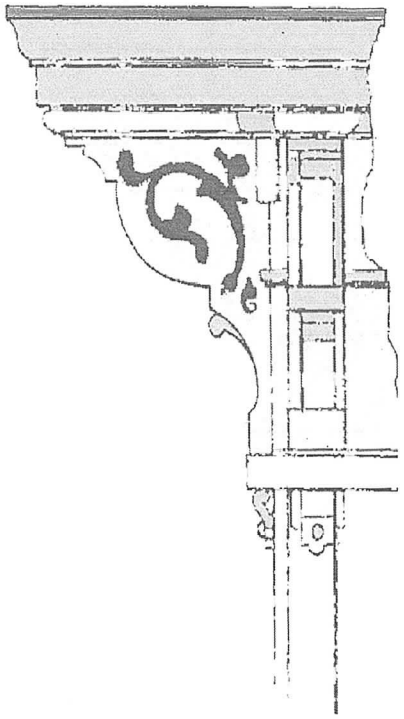
Historic photographs included in this report are from the collections of the Meeker County Historical Society, Litchfield Public Library, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

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COVER:
Photograph of the Brown Building in the 1880's, graphic of the 100 Block of Sibley Avenue (1889), and a collection of illustrations from Minnesota's rich history of design guidelines manuals

Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines for the City of Litchfield Minnesota



Prepared for
The City of Litchfield

Mayor
Vernon Madson

Litchfield City Council
Barbara Altringer
Steve Black
Ron Dingmann
Connie Lies
Vern Loch, Jr.
Gary Walz

Litchfield Heritage Preservation Commission
Darlene Kotelnicki, **Chair**
John Boughton
Brian Danielson
Ruth Schrum
Judy Holmes
Sherron Reilly
Connie Lies, **Council Member**

Prepared by
Thomas R Zahn & Associates LLC
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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

Brief History of Litchfield's Downtown 2

Commercial Historic District Map 4

PLANNING FOR A PRESERVATION OR REHABILITATION PROJECT 5

Evaluating Your Building 5

Setting a Budget 5

Deciding on an Approach 5

Applying the Design Guidelines 5

Building Project Categories 6

Financial Incentives for Property Owners 7

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS GUIDELINES 8

Masonry 8

Wood Elements 10

Metals 12

Other Materials 13

HISTORIC COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE GUIDELINES 14

Basic Commercial Architectural Design in Litchfield 14

Storefronts 14

Historic Building Types in Litchfield 15

Historic Building Styles in Litchfield 16

General Storefront Design Considerations 18
Doors, Windows and Awnings 20
Architectural Details 22
Paint Colors 22
Rear Entrances and Alleyways 24
Signage and Lighting 24
General Sign Guidelines 26
General Lighting Guidelines 27
New Downtown Constructions 28
New Building Materials in Storefront Design 29
Phasing A Rehabilitation Project 30

APPLYING THE GUIDELINES 32

APPENDICES 58

Appendix I–Glossary of Architectural Terms Found in the Guidelines 58
Appendix II–Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation 61
Appendix III–Historic Preservation Tax Credits 63
Appendix IV–Survey of the Historic District 64
Appendix V–Public Signage in Historic Districts 66

Introduction to the Litchfield Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines

The City of Litchfield is pleased to present the *Commercial Historic District Design Guidelines*. This publication provides building preservation and rehabilitation information for property owners within the downtown Litchfield Historic District.

One of downtown Litchfield's greatest resources is its unique concentration of historic and architecturally interesting buildings. This manual is designed to demonstrate how using guidelines can often uncover and preserve a building's hidden historic or architectural value.

The Litchfield Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and City Staff have answered many questions from property owners about improvements or repairs to their buildings since the establishment of the Litchfield HPC, ranging from the proper treatment for doors, windows and signs, to dealing with deteriorating masonry. The written guidelines and visual examples within this manual are meant to aid those desiring to reuse or recycle an historic property. The illustrations, comprehensive in nature, represent the ideal. However at times, due to financial constraints, a property owner may incorporate only part of the plan or undertake long-term phasing of the plan, which is also discussed in this manual.

This guide is part of a continuing effort to encourage downtown building improvements. It provides information on programs designed to encourage the rehabilitation and preservation of Litchfield's commercial architecture. The City has resources available including: the "Preservation Briefs," National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior to assist property owners with restoration and rehabilitation projects; and copies of early insurance maps which in "plan view" map the evolution and growth of Litchfield's commercial district. Additional programs and financial assistance may be available. For more information, contact the Litchfield City Offices at (320) 693-7201 and visit the HPS (Heritage Preservation Services) website of the National Park Service at: *www.nps.gov/history/hps*

Brief History of Litchfield's Downtown



Sibley Avenue North ca. 1906

In the mid-nineteenth century, the area now know as Sibley Avenue was covered with prairie grasses and wheat fields. Established in 1869 along the tracks of the St. Paul and Pacific railroad, Litchfield would come to be the central city of Meeker County, serving as its seat of government and principle trading center. Named for three brothers who were large shareholders in the railroad, Litchfield was highly dependent upon and influenced by the granger railroad line and much of the original plat was owned by the railroad.

By the late 1860s Litchfield saw simple wood commercial structures being built on 25 foot by 140 foot deep lots north of the railroad line (later, Great Northern and now, Burlington Northern). And according to the earliest insurance maps (1887), by that time Sibley Avenue was densely populated with wood and brick commercial structures from Depot Street to Third Street and across from the "Public Square" between Third and Fourth Streets. Early growth of the city was rapid, increasing its population from 353 in 1870 to 2,098 in 1885.

The time between 1886 to 1919 is considered the "Building Boom" era of downtown Litchfield. With many new structures being constructed of local brick from the Ames brickyard, the downtown area began to see nationally popular architectural styles rendered along, and adjacent to, the city's main commercial street. Italianate and classically influenced storefront architecture formed a nearly continuous commercial wall defining Sibley Avenue for two-and-a half blocks north from the railroad tracks.

After the "Building Boom" and the establishment of a well defined and handsomely designed downtown, Sibley Avenue served as the heart of Litchfield's retail and banking services throughout the 20th century. And like most Minnesota communities of its size, Litchfield's downtown architecture experienced many modifications to "modernize" it storefronts to reflect the "current" fashion. However good these improvements may have seemed at the time, often these changes were made to the detriment of the building's historic and significant features — in the long run potentially diminishing the inherent value of the property.

Fortunately, Litchfield has retained a good deal of its historic commercial fabric. The early history of Litchfield and its pattern of growth are clearly reflected in these historic resources. A small selection

of the community's historic places has been honored by listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). In 1975, the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, an 1885 memorial hall built as a tribute to the Union soldiers in the Civil War, and Trinity Episcopal Church, an excellent 1871 example of the Gothic Revival board-and-batten style, were first to be listed on the National Register. In 1984, the Renaissance Revival styled Litchfield Opera House joined the list for its important contributions to the community's social life. Finally, in 1996 a more than two-block stretch of Litchfield's business district containing 46 buildings was conferred with National Register designation.

Following a threat of demolition to the historic Opera House, which had long served as city offices, Litchfield formed a Heritage Preservation Commission in 2008 to offer local advocacy for the city's unique historic character, helping to assure the continued protection and preservation of its significant properties. Becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 2009, the HPC can now proactively pursue survey and designation activities, as well as opportunities for public education and the development of design guidelines, such as those provided in this document.

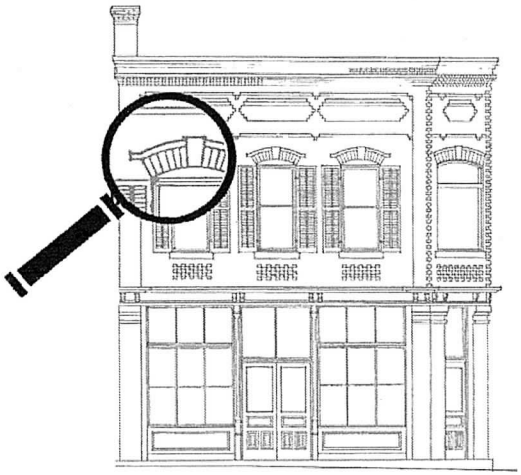
Thirty-five years have passed since Litchfield's first historic property was documented and designated, and many changes have taken place since then. In order to bring the previous documentation up to date, the Litchfield HPC requested that the three National Register-listed buildings and one historic district be updated and re-surveyed, and that revised Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory forms be prepared for each building. The purpose of the re-survey project was to provide the Litchfield HPC with updated inventory forms for each of the National Register-listed properties to reflect current conditions to enable the HPC to make informed decisions for design review requests. Individual inventory forms were prepared for the HPC and for the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The new inventory forms reflect the current building exterior conditions, remaining architectural integrity, expanded histories, location mapping, and current digital photographs of each property.

With the completion of the of the survey and inventory forms and the development of these design guidelines, the planning process in Litchfield has a solid foundation upon which to build future preservation initiatives.

Commercial Historic District Map



Planning for Preservation or Rehabilitation Project



If you are planning to begin some improvements to the exterior of your historic property, the following discussion should help you make sound, and economically wise decisions in that renovation process.

Evaluating Your Building

Look closely at your building. It's often clear to see where changes have been made. Look at similar buildings along the street that may not have had major alterations. Look for historic photographs. Photographs and insurance plat maps may be found at the local and state historical societies. Search through storage areas, basements, and attics for missing facade elements.

Setting a Budget

Once you have a good idea what your building originally looked like, you will need to decide what you can afford to do about it. Don't feel that you have to do everything at once. While your plan should reflect an overall approach, you may want to complete the actual work in phases. Keep in mind that there are potential sources of assistance. Federal tax incentives, accelerated depreciation, or tax credits may also be available and should be explored as part of your budget planning. Some of these incentives are discussed on the following page under ***Financial Incentives for Property Owners.***

Deciding on an Approach

Let your budget and your building be your guides. Pay special attention to the impact of your plans on neighboring buildings and on the whole streetscape.

Applying the Design Guidelines

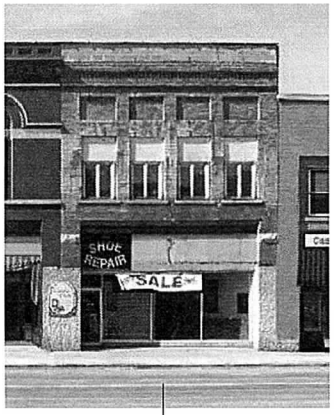
The HPC, with these guidelines and applicable building codes and ordinances, can provide design direction for building improvement projects that impact the historic character of the community's commercial district. Keep in mind, city review may consider the scale, material, character and environmental impact of your building when evaluating a request for a building permit.

The design guidelines in this manual cover most of the issues likely to arise in the course of preservation and renovating the exterior of your property. This manual is also intended to illustrate the kinds of renovation approaches and details most likely to require city review and approval. Your community should be able to give additional guidance in special situations. Remember that the goal is to promote and to preserve the historic character of your town, enhance the value of your property, and in the downtown area serve as a sound economic development tool.

Building Project Categories

Like the commercial district's historic structures, each downtown building project is unique and full of hidden dimensions. However, most work falls into one of the following categories:

Altered and in need of maintenance



Restoration



New Renovation Storefront



Preservation–For buildings that have experienced little change through time

Preservation is essentially retaining and properly maintaining the existing historic aspects of a building. Buildings that retain and reflect the historic character of the district serve as the backbone among new and altered structures. It is impossible to overstate the importance of maintenance. As buildings weather, deteriorate, age, and erode, maintenance is easy to postpone. Simple preventative measures such as caulking windows, repainting exposed and worn surfaces, and guarding against water leakage are time proven money savers.

Restoration–For buildings that have architectural significance, but have gone through some change

Litchfield has buildings that are historically and/or architecturally significant, but have been altered. Restoration is the process of returning the structure to its original appearance. Restoration, however, does not imply the creation of a precious museum piece. The structure must have an economically feasible use in order to justify restoration.

Renovation–For buildings that have been modified extensively

Many buildings benefit from some degree of renovation using modern materials and techniques that convey the character of missing original features. But it is important to preserve the integrity of an aged building. Renovation often involves the undoing of previous generations of maintenance, such as removing layers of old paint, peeling off applied wood siding, and uncovering original floors. This process involves stripping away one or more layers of "modernization."

Recycle–For buildings that have outlived their original use

New uses can be found for single purpose older buildings. Railway stations, warehouses, hotels, and banks are all examples of single-use structures. Here, the challenge is to recycle buildings, whose original use is obsolete, by finding new uses that add to the economic vitality of the downtown.

Redesign–For buildings which are basically sound but do not enhance the streetscape

Inevitably there will be a certain number of buildings which are basically sound, but do not enhance the historic character the city wishes to express. These buildings can be redesigned to support the historic downtown. There is often much latitude in the redesign of such structures. However, it is important that the new facade appear appropriate and compatible in the context of the overall streetscape.

New Construction–For filling gaps in the streetscape

An important element in a historic downtown is the quality of infill construction. The desired effect of new construction in a district is to complement existing structures. It is important that new construction not be allowed to dominate or overpower its more historic neighbors. Its basic design elements (size, mass, material, color) must be compatible with surrounding structures. These guidelines will suggest ways of achieving this.

Financial Incentives for Property Owners

While there are many reasons to preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and recycle older buildings, financial incentives can be the most tangible. Financial incentives for rehabilitation have been developed on the local, state, and national levels. With the implementation in 2010 of the Minnesota rehabilitation program, improvements to historic commercial properties has never been more feasible for the property owner.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available to building owners interested in substantially rehabilitating historic buildings. Commercial, industrial and rental residential structures that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or within a National Register district qualify for a 20% investment tax credit.

Minnesota Historic Preservation Tax Credits

In 2010 the State of Minnesota enacted a 20% historic preservation tax credit program. Minnesota's state historic preservation tax credit will allow a state income tax credit equal to 20 percent of the cost of rehabilitating a qualifying historic property. The program mirrors the federal rehabilitation tax credit, a provision that has been in place since 1976. Projects are eligible to claim the state credit if they are allowed the federal credit, a program which requires properties to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places or within a National Register district.

For further information go to *Appendix III • Historic Preservation Tax Credits* on page 62.

Older Building Tax Credits

Substantially renovated buildings that do not qualify for Historic Preservation Tax Credits, are eligible for a 10% investment tax credit for non-historic buildings put into service before 1936.

Local Incentives

In some communities, business owners may qualify for low-interest loans or other financial incentives for capital improvements to real property located within designated zones or districts. Check with your city officials to see if your community offers local incentives.

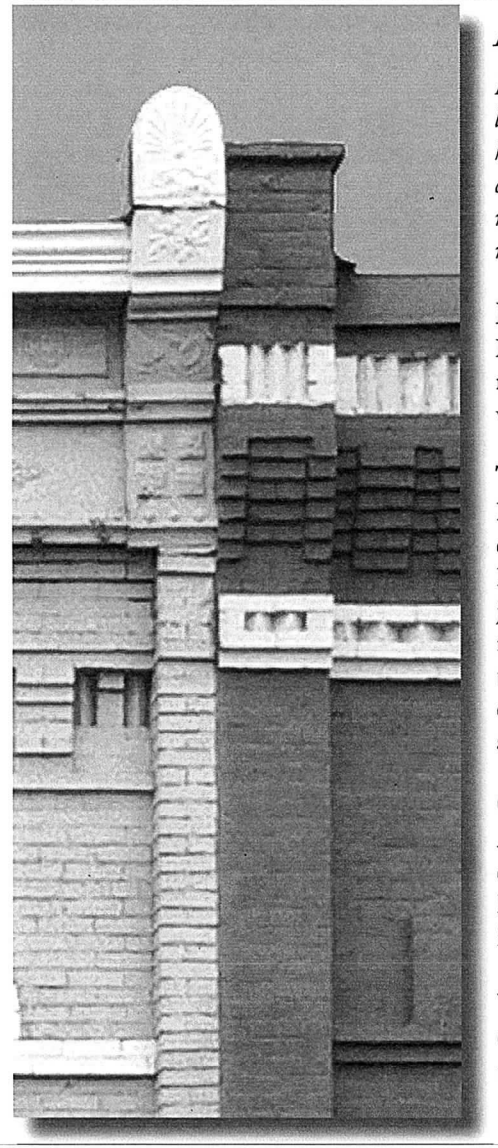
Facade Easement

A commercial building facade can be donated to a preservation organization such as the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, and leased back to the building owners to provide tax benefits. The program is most beneficial for historic buildings requiring major investment. For more information contact the Minnesota State Historic Preservation office or the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

National Trust Loan Fund (NTLF)

NTLF specializes in pre-development, acquisition, mini-permanent, bridge and rehabilitation loans for residential, commercial and public use projects. Eligible borrowers include not-for-profit organizations, revitalization organizations or real estate developers working in designated Main Street communities, local, state or regional governments, and for profit developers of older and/or historic buildings.

General Construction Materials Guidelines



Masonry

Masonry is the most popular construction material in most historic downtowns. Brick, stone, and to a more limited extent, stucco and concrete block are used as structural and exterior finish materials in commercial historic structures throughout the state. Regionally quarried stone is also a material found in many historic districts in Minnesota. Its strength and rugged beauty are its chief assets. Concrete block and stucco are relatively recent additions, and the use of these materials in new construction and in work on historic buildings is not recommended.

Moisture

Masonry should be checked regularly for moisture penetration. Moisture can enter masonry through leaky roofs, gutters or down spouts, poor drainage, or a condition known as rising damp. Rising damp occurs when moisture is drawn up from the ground through brick by capillary action.

Tuckpointing

Repair masonry walls and other masonry features by repointing the mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration, such as disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, or damaged plaster work. Remove deteriorated mortar by carefully hand-raking the joints to avoid damaging the masonry. New mortar joints should match the original in style, size, mortar composition, and color. It is especially important to repoint with a mortar of the same hardness as the original, usually two parts sand to one part lime - with up to 20 percent of the lime combined with cement. Harder modern mortars with a high content of Portland cement will resist the warm weather expansion of the brick, causing cracking and spalling of the brick surface. In cold weather, this same inflexibility may cause cracks to open up as the historic bricks contract.

Cleaning

Although cleaning masonry can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a building, it should nevertheless only be done to halt deterioration, and not merely to attain a 'new' facade. Cleaning generally requires knowledgeable cleaning contractors. The Minnesota State Historic Preservation Offices can provide some information on qualified cleaning contractors who operate within the region.

Whether owners hire professionals or decide to clean the masonry themselves, masonry should always be cleaned by the gentlest possible method. In many cases low pressure water washing (no more than 220 psi), together with scrubbing with a natural bristle brush, may be sufficient.

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

Sandblasting is never an appropriate cleaning method for historic masonry.

Sandblasting

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

Painting

In general, exposed masonry should not be painted. Unless the surface was painted from the beginning, as was sometimes the case with very soft brick, cleaning and tuckpointing of the masonry is usually preferable. A previously painted surface should be chemically cleaned to remove the paint. Only if chemical paint removal proves impracticable (due to a cementitious paint coat causing strong bonding, for example) should previously painted brick or stone be repainted.

Some buildings in the region are constructed of locally-manufactured soft brick. When reviewing the application of new paint over a soft brick exterior, the city, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, should determine if such an application will benefit or hinder the preservation of the structure under review.

References

The following publications contain more detailed information about masonry.

Preservation Brief #1–The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings

Preservation Brief #2–Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings

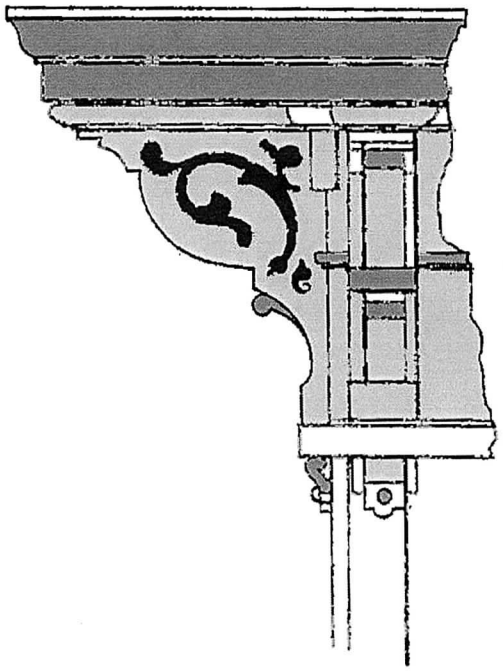
Preservation Brief #6–Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings

Preservation Brief #38–Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

Introduction to Early American Masonry: Stone, Brick, Mortar, and Plaster by Harley J. McKee, FAIA., National Trust/Columbia University Series on the Technology of Early American Buildings Vol I. New York

Masonry: How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone by Mark London, Preservation Press, Washington D.C.

All *Preservation Briefs* are from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Heritage Preservation Services—and are available online at:
nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm



Wood Elements

One of the most popular building materials in commercial historic districts is wood. Its popularity is due to its structural flexibility, economy, and strength. Storefronts, cornices, brackets, and other decorative facade elements were often made of wood. These original exterior woodwork elements should be retained wherever possible. Regular maintenance will prevent deterioration.

Preventative Maintenance

Check periodically for soft, rotted areas, splits, dampness, and pest infestation. Damaged or decayed sections can usually be repaired by renailing, caulking, and filling. Epoxy pastes and epoxy consolidants can also be very effective in repairing even seriously rotted wood. DO NOT caulk under individual siding boards or window sills - this action seals the building too tightly and does not allow the building to 'breathe.' Also, for long-term maintenance it is a good idea to remove vegetation that grows too closely to wood.

Surface Preparation and Painting

Keep all surfaces stained, or primed and painted to prevent wood deterioration from moisture. If a new coat of paint is necessary, it is vitally important to clean the wood before any work is done. Remove dirt with household detergent and water to allow new paint to adhere to the wood. Hand scraping and sanding is recommended for removing damaged and deteriorated paint. Only in extreme cases should all paint down to the bare wood be removed, such as where the paint has blistered and peeled. Use electrical hot air guns on decorative wood features and electric heat plates on flat wood surfaces when additional paint removal is required. Chemical strippers may be used to aid in the cleaning process - be certain to follow directions to thoroughly neutralize the chemicals after use; otherwise, new paint will not adhere to the surface. When painting, use an oil-based primer. After the primer has thoroughly dried, a latex top coat may be applied.

Paint Colors On Painted Wood

When painting, the wood elements within the historic district, the Historic Color Palette should be followed. Care must be taken to select and coordinate colors to improve, and not detract, from the building and adjacent buildings. The colors represented in the Historic Color Palette represent a selection of colors found commonly in commercial buildings in the early 1900s. More information on the palette and the appropriate application can be found under *Paint Colors* on page 22.

Wood Replacement

Severely rotted or missing pieces may be reproduced by a good carpenter or millwork shop. When replacing woodwork, try to match or at least complement the existing details in width, thickness, profile and texture. While matching wood is preferable, some new building products such as quality fiber cement siding may be acceptable for repairs on secondary elevations or on accessory buildings.

Resurfacing

Buildings originally clad in wood should not be resurfaced in brick, stucco, artificial stone, high-density fiberboard, or with vinyl or metal siding. While wooden shingles were often used as decorative feature on gable ends of some styles of Victorian houses, surfaces that were originally clad in horizontal wooden siding should not be resurfaced with wood shingles.

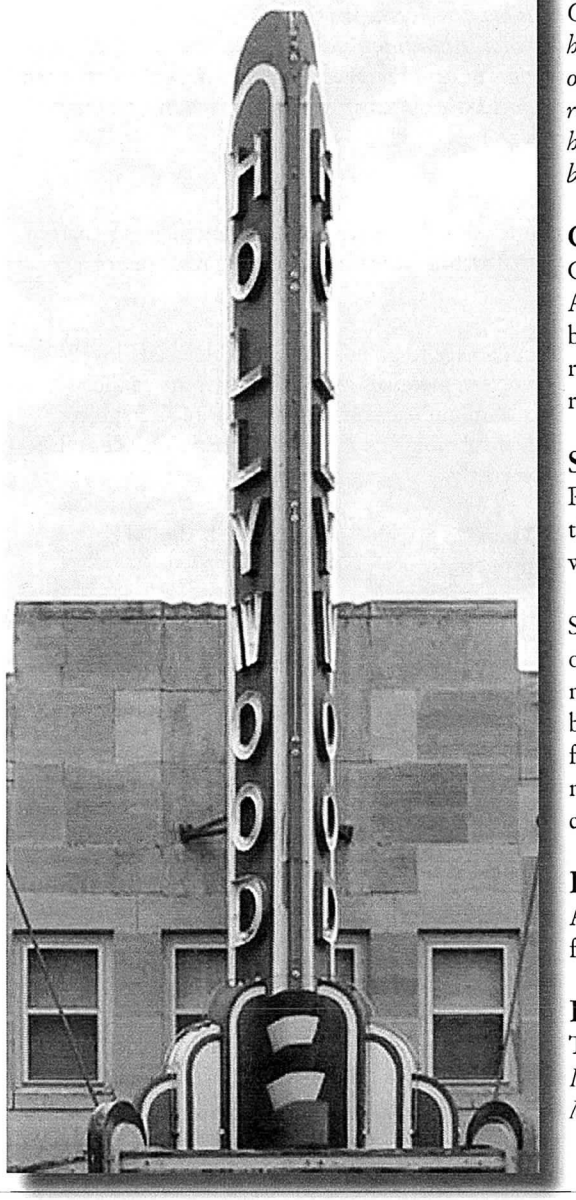
References

The following publications contain more detailed information about wood.

Preservation Brief #10–Exterior Paint and Problems on Historic Woodwork

Preservation Brief #37–Appropriate Methods for reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing

Respectful Rehabilitation-Answers to Your Questions About Old Buildings by the Preservation Press, Washington D.C.



Metals

Cast iron, bronze, brass, copper, and sheet metal are used in ornamental and practical roles in the downtown's historic buildings. Intricate detail was reproduced in cast iron or stamped sheet metal as an architectural ornament at low cost, while practical hardware such as fences, gutters, down spouts, structural supports and roofing were done in metal as well. The decorative or utilitarian components in metal give buildings their human scale and liveliness. These architectural elements are essential to the character and appearance of your building. They should not be removed unless absolutely necessary.

Cast Iron

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

Sheet Metal

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

Stamped metal ornamentation may be composed of sheet copper, which requires no surface protection, or of sheet iron, usually coated with zinc or lead to retard rusting. Galvanized or lead-coated sheet metal should always be kept painted. If stamped metal is to be cleaned, a chemical paint remover should be used. Dry grit blasting, while usually safe for cast iron, should never be used on the thinner, more flexible pressed metal. Reproductions of missing pressed metal ornaments can often be made by a sheet metal shop. In some cases, pressed metal decorative items, stamped in the original molds, are available commercially.

Painting

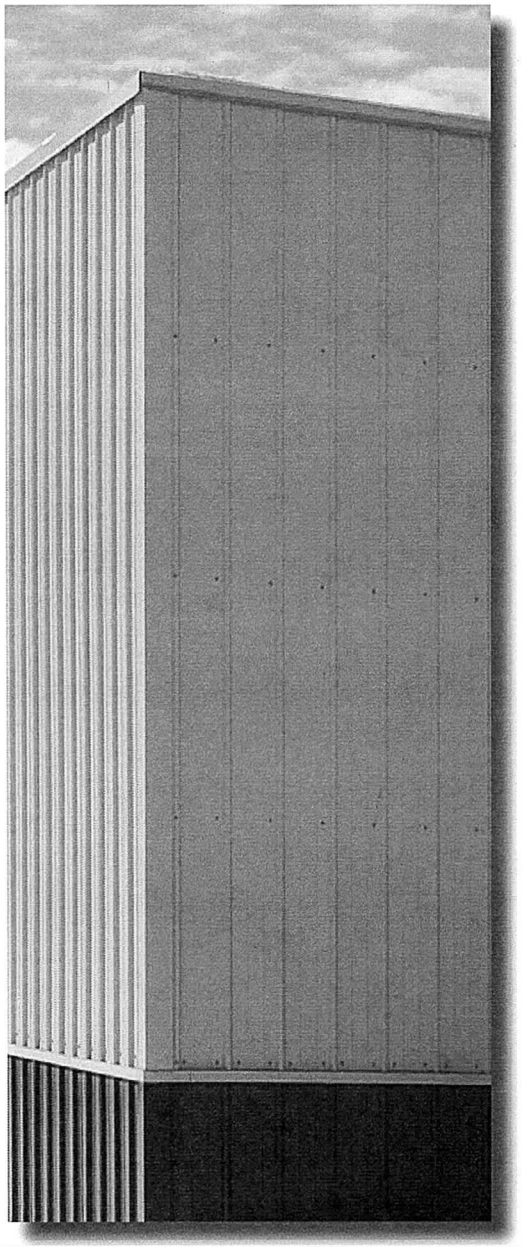
All metals requiring painting should first be primed with a commercial metal primer, followed by two finish coats of oil-based paint.

References

The following publications contain more detailed information about metals.

Preservation Brief #13–The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows

Metals in America's Historic Buildings: Uses and Preservation Treatments by Margot Gayle, David W. Look, AIA, and John G. Waite, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C.



Other Materials

Some buildings in our historic neighborhoods and downtowns have been covered with other materials to modernize their appearance or limit the necessity for maintenance. Aluminum siding and artificial stone are common examples. The materials often obscure important details or cause them to be removed, such as cornices, window trim, or the storefront as a whole. They frequently can cause or intensify internal structural problems, and they reduce the visual interest of a complex wall surface.

The Problems with Metal and Artificial Stone Siding

The loss of original detail is the most obvious problem encountered with synthetic sidings. By their very nature and application, most synthetic siding materials result in original architecture elements being removed or covered, resulting in a loss of detail and visual interest.

An impervious layer of siding can allow serious decay or insect damage to go unseen and unchecked as well. Moisture from condensation or interior water vapor can rot wooden materials or damage masonry in the wall. The energy savings and maintenance cost effectiveness of aluminum and artificial stone are also subject to question. Synthetic sidings by themselves provide very little insulation, and the ongoing maintenance and painting required after the surface has begun to degrade can be costly.

Synthetic siding should not be applied to historic buildings. Wherever possible, such materials should be removed in the course of maintenance and improvements to properties.

References

The following publication contains more detailed information about substitute siding materials.
Preservation Brief #8–Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings

Basic Commercial Architectural Design in Litchfield

Many of the early builders tried to establish a sense of stability and permanence in their communities, constructing solid buildings made first of wood and then materials such as stone and brick. Most of the key structures within the downtowns were built between the 1870s and the early twentieth century, and many of them remain relatively intact. The major changes that have taken place were in response to changing fashions in merchandising and perhaps more significantly in an attempt to be "modern and up-to-date." A constant reminder of the historic material existing today is the wealth of visually interesting details on these buildings at the roof line which have changed less from the forces of commerce and fashion than have the storefronts.

Storefronts

The most important feature of historic commercial buildings is the storefront. An emphasis on transparency is created by the use of thin structural members framing large sheets of plate glass. The large windows display merchandise and facilitate window-shopping. Below the display windows are base panels called bulkheads that are made of stone, wood or metal. The entry door is recessed. This provides cover and prevents disturbance of sidewalk traffic. The recessed door also visually draws customers into the building. Above the entry door and the display windows, and separated by a structural member, is the transom. The transom allows natural light into the store, which originally did not have sufficient artificial light. Often transoms were made of frosted or small glass panels. A cornice caps the storefront. The storefront cornice, often similar in design but smaller than the primary cornice that crowns the building, creates a visual separation between the public and private parts of the building.

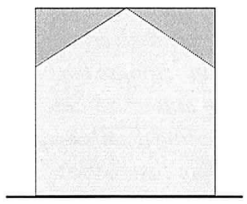
Additional elements may also exist on a building's facade. These include awnings, window hoods, brackets, and columns. These elements are used to emphasize the lines and shapes of the facade. Awnings were used extensively in the original designs to provide protection from the elements, to advertise the business name, and to add color and interest to the historic streetscape.



Line drawing of the storefronts at 223-225 Sibley Avenue North as they appeared in 1889.

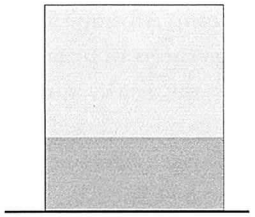
Historic Building Types in Litchfield

While there are many variations on the simple volume and delineation of massing in the Litchfield's historic commercial architecture, most structures, including the mid-20th century commercial buildings fall into one of the following types. The building types should be an important consideration for new commercial construction within the historic downtown.



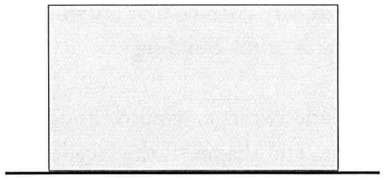
The Boomtown Block

Boomtown architecture refers to the 1-2 story, woodframe commercial buildings built in the late 19th century, which lacked the detailing of a formal style. The Boomtown type usually has a false front upper-facade that conceals the true roofline, giving the building the appearance of more mass, epitomizing the minimum of style, and the maximum of utility. The commercial structure at 208 Sibley Avenue, built ca. 1871, is a well-hidden example of the Boomtown block.



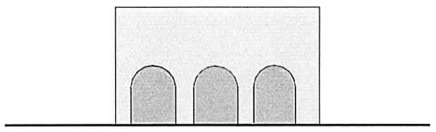
The Two-Part Commercial Block

In most Minnesota historic downtowns, the most common building type is the two-part commercial block. This building type, ranging from two to four stories, has a distinct separation between the first level, or public space, and the upper stories, or private spaces. The lower level of this building type is generally commercial in nature: a store, restaurant, hotel lobby, etc. The upper level is generally private in nature: living quarters, offices, meeting rooms, etc. This commercial block type, dating from Roman antiquity and common during the late middle-ages, was prevalent in the United States from the 1850s to the 1950s. The Masonic Building at 242-244 Sibley Avenue North is an outstanding example of a commercial block with a storefront at the pedestrian level and a fraternal use above.



The One-Part Commercial/Office Block

The one-part block is essentially the storefront level of the two-part commercial block without the private quarters above the store. This building type was sometimes developed as speculative retail development on land of lower value. During the Victorian era and the early twentieth century, the one-part commercial block often housed a bank or other financial institution. The U.S.Post Office at 35 East Second Street is an example of a one-part block.



Arcaded Block

The arcaded block is distinguished by a series of arched openings on a long elevation. Derived from the arcaded porches of the Renaissance, this type was generally built during the early twentieth century. The storefronts at 115-119 Sibley Avenue North originally displayed storefronts of 2 arched display windows adjacent to an arched, commercial doorway. The triple-arch set at 19 Depot Street is a remaining example of this theme.

Historic Building Styles in Litchfield

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

Litchfield's downtown first developed with simple, utilitarian wood and stone stores and shops that often displayed "false-front" main facades, giving a visual impression of greater height and volume. This vernacular "boomtown" elevation is most often associated with the settlement of the west, however, false front structures could be found in early commercial architecture from the east to west coasts. While these structures rarely displayed an architectural "high style," in Litchfield they were generally crowned with a simple cornice with brackets.

The majority of the historic buildings in downtown Litchfield were constructed from the 1870s through the 1910s. During this time, most commercial buildings in smaller communities throughout the United States were a derivation of the Italianate style. Common elements distinguishing this style are large, heavily bracketed cornices, decorative window hoods, and semicircular or segmental arch-headed windows. Although high-style examples exist, most Italianate commercial buildings were essentially vernacular, meaning they were constructed in a locally accepted method and form, on which standard (and sometimes prefabricated) decorative elements were placed.



The Masonic Building, built ca. 1889, displays the influence to Romanesque Revival architecture that became popular in the late 19th Century.

The "Romanesque" style, dating back to the late19th century, was not as widespread in Minnesota as the Italianate. This style's name came from the extensive use of the rounded arch in early Roman construction. The American architect, Henry Hobson Richardson, in the mid-nineteenth century began using heavy masonry construction and rounded arches. The "Romanesque Revival" style quickly developed throughout the country, especially in the construction of warehouses and office buildings. An outstanding example of the Romanesque Revival style is seen in the Masonic Building at 242-244 Sibley Avenue North.

The Philadelphia Centennial Exhibit of 1876 led to a renewal of interest in our country's past and in the development of a national architectural style. This, and the increased influence of the Ecole des Beaux Arts

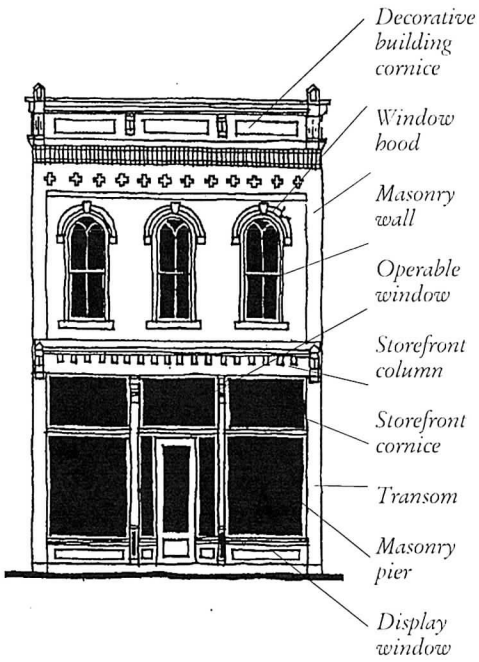


The Meeker Bank as it appeared in 1898.

of Paris on American architecture, developed into the Classical Revival Style. This was a popular style throughout the country from the 1890s to the 1920s. The main characteristic of this style is a more academically correct use of classical forms including cornices, columns and pilasters, and porticos, etc. The Meeker/First National Bank at 201 Sibley is an example of a Classical Revival building that has been modified over time. As built in 1898, the bank structure displayed a heavy cornice and a formal entry flanked by two column sets at the doorway. The intact classical features include the formal rectilinear window pattern and the "egg and dart" motif surrounds and crowns on the upper story windows."



The start of the 20th century saw the introduction of the Art Deco style commercial architecture in Minnesota. Litchfield has a good example of this modern movement in the Hollywood Theatre exterior located at 210 Sibley Avenue North.



General Storefront Design Considerations

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

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

Contain the storefront

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

Transparency

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

Appropriate materials

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

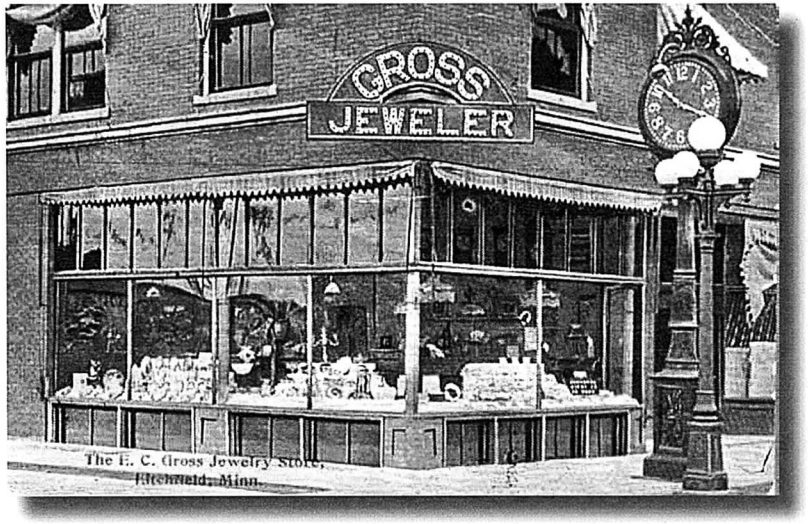
Inappropriate materials

Certain materials and design elements should never be used on a traditional commercial building. A mansard roof with wooden shingles, rough textured wood siding, metal siding, fake bricks or stone, and gravel aggregate materials are not appropriate. Inappropriate historical themes should also be avoided. Small window panes, a colonial door, and storefront shutters are 18th-century elements that do not belong on most 19th- or 20th-century facades. However, shutters on upper-story windows may be appropriate if there is historical documentation that demonstrates that they originally existed, such as through historic photographs or remaining hardware.

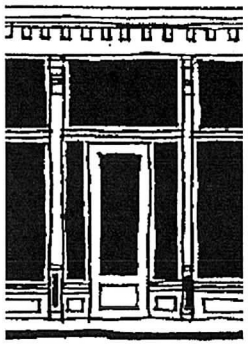
Simplicity

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

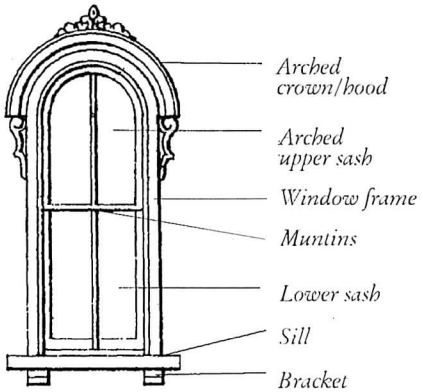
This same basic arrangement will be equally appropriate whether constructed using traditional or modern materials.

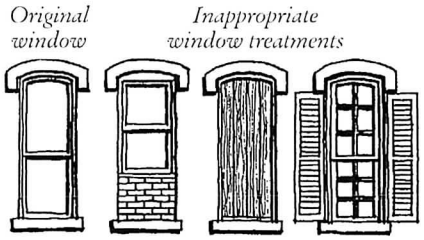


Early postcard of the E.C. Gross Jewelry storefront at 310-305 Sibley Avenue. Large expanses of plate glass were commonly used to provide day-lighting and accommodate large display areas.



Original storefront doors were typically recessed, constructed of wood with a large window above a single or double panel that complemented the bulkhead design below the display windows





Doors, Windows, and Awnings

Doors and windows help to define the architecture of the historic downtowns. The upper story windows establish a rhythm in the streetscape that ties the facades together. The storefront with its large glass area opens the store to the street, inviting pedestrians to look and possibly come inside. Most doors in the downtown were wood frame with a large glass area to match the openness of the storefront as a whole.

Doors and windows should be carefully maintained and repaired. Always retain original doors and windows if at all possible. Replacement of elements should duplicate the original form of the material closely. The original size and spacing of window muntins dividing the sash are particularly important. The size and division of window sashes should be appropriate to each building's style. Hardware is often a troublesome repair problem. Window and door hardware which reproduces turn-of-the-century forms is now readily available. Inoperable decorative metal or plastic shutters are inappropriate for use in the downtown. On buildings that originally featured shutters, make sure the panels exactly match the size and shape of the window opening.

Storefront entry doors

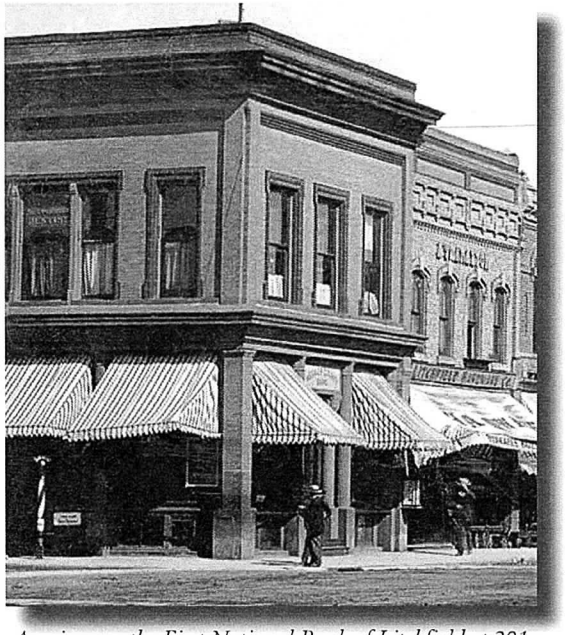
Storefront entry doors should present an attractive appearance and should be visually appropriate for your storefront. Original doors should be retained if possible. If a new door is to be installed it should closely resemble the design and proportions of the original door. Wood is the preferred material,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

Replacement windows

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

Storm windows

Storm windows may be desirable on upper story windows for energy conservation. An exterior storm window can also serve to protect and upgrade older wooden sashes. They should conform with the size and shape of the existing sash and be painted to match as well. Interior storm windows are a good choice where original windows might be obscured by the addition of exterior storm sash.



Awnings on the First National Bank of Litchfield at 201 Sibley in the first half of the 20th Century.

Awnings

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

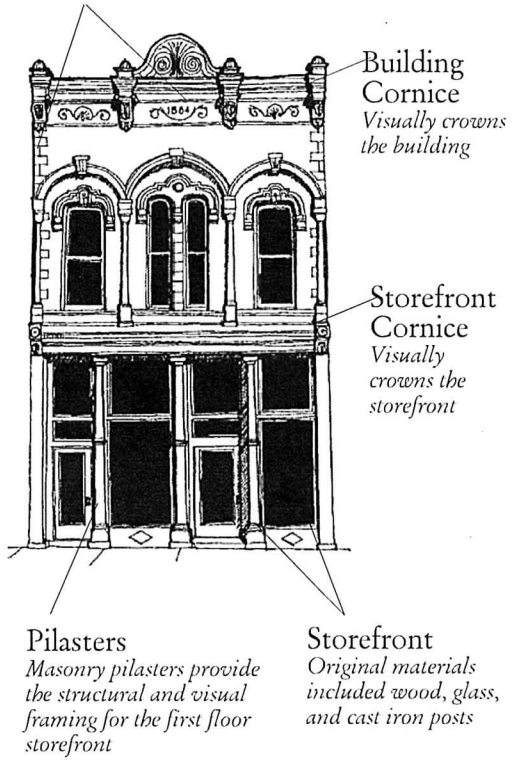
Select awnings that closely follow historical precedents in shape and design. Awning sizes and mounting height should be based on the original storefront design, and be operable, unless evidence of a building's original awning suggests otherwise. Always fit the awning within the storefront opening. Awnings should never extend continuously across several storefronts. Choose a water-repellent canvas or vinyl-coated canvas material; aluminum awnings or canopies are generally inappropriate. A wide variety of canvas colors are available, and you should pay special attention to choosing a color or color combination that coordinates with your building and its surroundings.

To be historically appropriate, and to allow ample clearance above the sidewalk areas, awnings may need to cover or conceal decorative transoms containing prism glass or stained glass. The use of bubble, concave, or convex awning forms were not common to early storefront design and should be avoided. Vinyl coated fabric, fixed metal, transparent or opaque vinyl or wood awnings are inappropriate. Awnings that are backlit are not acceptable.

References

The following publications contain more detailed information about windows.

Preservation Brief #3–Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings
Preservation Brief #9–The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
Preservation Brief #10–Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
Preservation Brief #11–Rehabilitation of Historic Storefronts
Preservation Brief #13–The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows



Architectural Details

Architectural details are among the most distinctive elements which identify the different styles in the downtowns. Brackets, bulkheads, cornices, columns, pilasters, decorative moldings, and window hoods were used extensively to embellish buildings. These features are crucial to the historic and architectural character of the building.

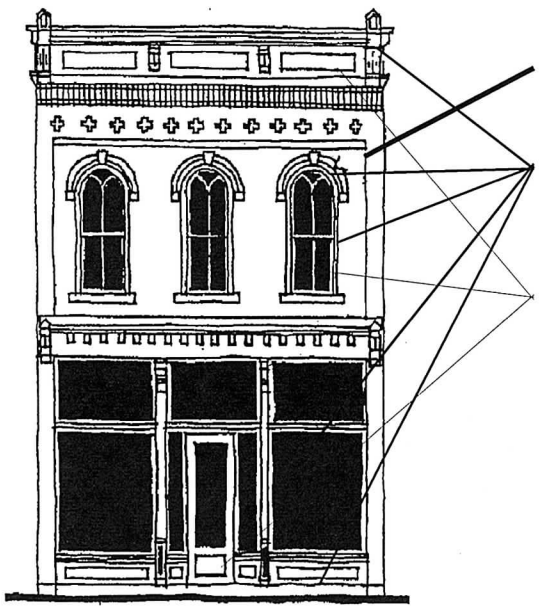
Architectural details should be retained on existing structures within the historic downtown. New construction should mirror existing details, or display contemporary details that harmonize with its neighbors. It is essential that architectural detailing be carefully maintained in order to ensure its long term survival. Modern artificial siding frequently covers cornices or window trim and involves the destruction of much architectural detail. This practice is not appropriate.

Added Elements: Necessities such as electric meters and boxes, condensing units, gas meters, solar panels, air conditioners, and television antennae are contemporary features in the downtowns. They can seriously impair the visual qualities of historic architecture if improperly located. All added elements should be located on the roof or to the rear of buildings in the district and screened by appropriate plantings or fencing. Solar panels and television aerials should be situated as far out of public view as possible.

Paint Colors

Painting is the traditional method used to protect wooden and some metal and masonry buildings from the attack of moisture and other destructive environmental factors. It is more often thought of as a decorative element. Paint should provide the district's buildings with both a strong protective and a decorative surface layer. Oil based paints have traditionally been used on the district's wooden trim elements, and it is generally the best policy to continue using these paints on wood, however, improvements in good-quality exterior latex paints have made them a viable option for finishing coats. Colors used originally vary with the age and style of the building. Earth tones (greens, dark reds, pale yellows and browns) were popular in the latter half of the 19th- century; lighter shades predominated in later decades.

It is recommended that the elements of a building be painted to utilize colors consistent with an integrated design for all material and color choices of the entire exterior. To assist the building owner in selecting appropriate colors when repainting, the Litchfield Heritage Preservation Commission developed a color palette, painting principals and painted element definitions for the district.



Paint Color Hierarchy

Definition of Terms

Base Coat This is the color of the walls. It includes the color of the brick, walls, and/or stucco on the storefronts and walls.

Major Trim Defines decorative elements of the building and can coordinate the storefront and upper story of the building. This includes the cornice and/or parapet, window caps, window frames, storefronts and bulkheads.

Minor trim This color should coordinate and compliment the base color and major trim. This color could be used on the window sashes, door, and portions of the cornice/parapet.

Signage Colors for signage differ from building colors. They are meant to be accents and to draw attention to the building. The sign colors are the same as the palette except for the addition of metallic and pearl colors.

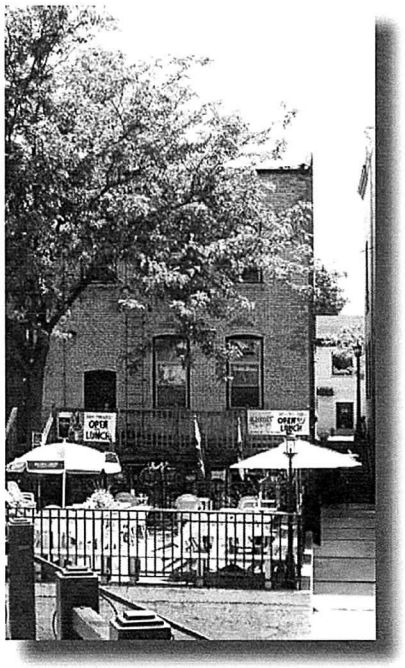
Principles

1. Painting historic buildings can significantly improve the appearance. Care must be taken to select and coordinate colors to improve, and not detract, from the building and adjacent buildings. The colors here represent a selection of colors found commonly in commercial buildings in the early 1900s.
2. Color choice varies with the period of the building. By using this palette, it is hoped that bright and obtrusive colors will be avoided.
3. Painting a building, or part of a building, requires a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HPC. The application should include color samples.
4. If the applicant wishes to use a color not on the palette, a sample should be included with the application. The HPC will review and act on the request.
5. Brick that has not been painted should not be painted. If it is painted, it should reflect a color similar to the original color of the brick.
6. Paint sheen is not addressed here.

References

The following publications contain more detailed information about painting.

Preservation Brief #10–Exterior Paint Problems of Historic Woodwork
Paint in America : The Colors of Historic Buildings by Roger W. Moss (Editor), Preservation Press, Washington D.C.



Rear Entrances and Alleyways

When implementing design improvements to secondary facades, property owners should be aware of the main (street) facade elements that give identity to their building or business. Any improvements should reflect the design elements associated with their building—signage, awnings, paint colors, use of materials, etc. should be coordinated on all public facades of a business. However, it should be considered that sides and backs of buildings usually have different details, window sizes, various wall heights, and different brick colors, all of which clearly indicate a distinctive character without being repeats of the front facades.

To make the rear facades, alleyways and walkways between buildings as attractive as possible, these areas should be cleared of unnecessary open storage, cleaned and maintained by the adjacent property owners, and the refuse containers should be screened by appropriate fencing or plantings.

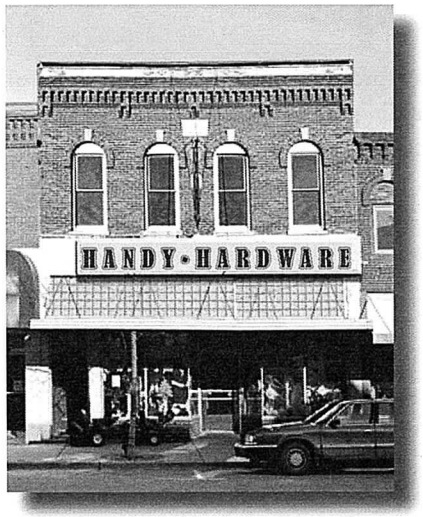
Signage and Lighting

Signage is an essential element in any commercial district. Anonymity is clearly not good for business. Unfortunately, signage has often been one of the most disfiguring elements in the urban landscape. A visual clutter of oversized and ill-positioned signs presents a negative image for the entire street. A business' sign is important not only as an identifier, but equally significant as an expression of an image for the business. Don't underestimate the value of quality signage. A clear message, presented with style, will encourage passersby to venture in. Money spent on quality signage is usually money well spent. When thinking about signage, consider the following:

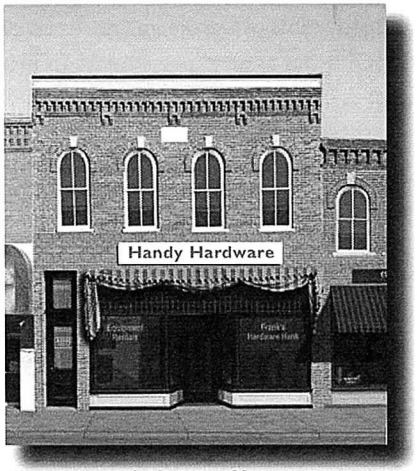
Size and placement

In a densely built downtown area, signage should be directed at and scaled to the pedestrian. Don't assume that the largest sign is the best. Pay particular attention to how your sign relates to your building. Look for logical signage locations on your facade.

The best location for signage is at the continuous flat wall areas above storefront display windows and below the upper level windows. Where such space is limited by the location of the storefront cornice, signage can be mounted directly on top of the cornice, even with a slight tilt downward as shown by the historic photographs for some buildings. Don't cover windows, doors, or architectural ornament. A



Backlit plastic signs and underlit awnings with lettering are inappropriate for historic buildings.



Flat signboards, low-profile projecting signs, painted lettering on the display windows and awning valance are appropriate.

good sign looks like it belongs where it was placed. It should be an extension of the overall design of your facade.

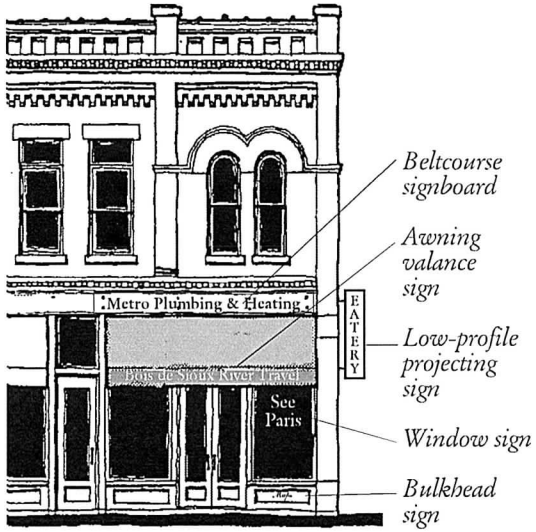
Message and design

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

A good sign can take many forms. It may be painted on a flat panel, or it might have a sculptural quality. Individual letters might be applied to the facade. Logos or lettering can be painted, stenciled, or engraved on windows. Even the valance of an awning can be an excellent signboard. Sign design that brings additional identity to storefront businesses, by using three-dimensional signs, symbols, or representations of the business (mortar and pestle, scales of justice, barber poles, etc.) is encouraged. Small two-sided signs that project over the sidewalk are excellent for communication for pedestrians. Neon signs inside shop windows are usually appropriate and possess a charm that can be very attractive, if not overused. Neon signage is not appropriate on the building exterior, however, unless it was an original feature of the building.

Inappropriate signs

Certain sign types are generally considered inappropriate in an historic commercial district. These would include large projecting signs, rooftop signs, and internally illuminated awnings and backlit plastic signs. Replacement of these kinds of signs should be strongly considered in planning for rehabilitation. To address this issue, many Minnesota cities have adopted sign ordinances that regulates signs within the historic downtown area.



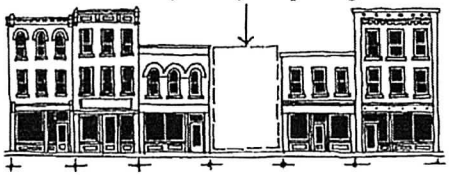
General Sign Guidelines

- Signs should made be of traditional materials such as wood or metal panels with painted or ornamental metal lettering.
- Signage should be sized appropriately and in proportion to its building.
- Signs and graphics should have colors that are coordinated with the overall building colors and the colors of the adjacent buildings.
- Signs should have a lettering type face generally of the era of the building, such as letters in a serif or script style for the earliest buildings, and with the possible use of more modern sans-serif style lettering for more recent buildings.
- Signage should be placed at traditional sign locations including the storefront beltcourse, upper facade walls, hanging or mounted inside windows, or projecting from the face of the building.
- Signs should not conceal any architectural features.
- Signage mounting brackets and hardware should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
- Signs which are lit should have concealed lighting—spot or up-lit lighting for signs is recommended.
- Internally-lit or flashing signs are not appropriate for historic commercial districts.

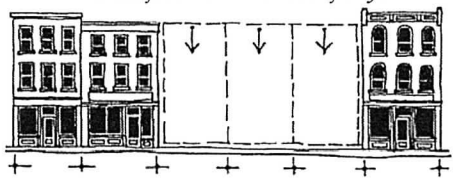
General Lighting Guidelines

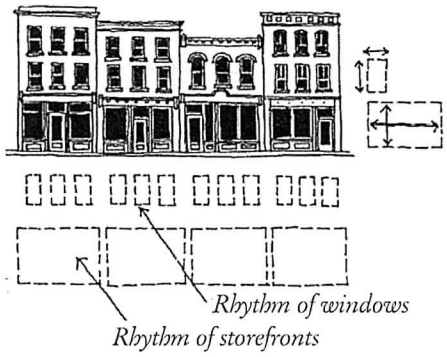
- Commercial sign lighting fixtures should be simple in design or concealed.
- Concealed light fixtures or fixtures appropriate to the building's period are encouraged.
- Spot or up-lit lighting for signs is recommended.
- Light fixtures should be low profile and have minimal projection from building face.
- Lighting should not conceal any architectural features.
- The light source should not be visible from the public right-of-way.
- Energy-efficient, exterior bulb illumination is the most appropriate light source for historic commercial signage.
- "Historic" theme light fixtures such as "Colonial" coach lanterns are not appropriate to the historic downtowns.
- Internally-lit plastic signs and awning are not appropriate.
- Flashing lights are not appropriate for historic commercial districts.
- Light fixture mounting brackets and hardware should be anchored into mortar, not masonry.
- Neon signage is generally not appropriate on the building exterior, unless it was an original feature of the building, has in itself become a distinguishing feature identified with the building or its use, or is of special artistic merit as a symbolic or representational sign.

New facade fills openings

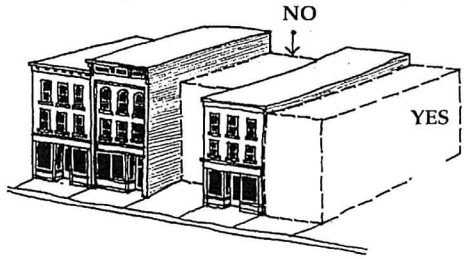


New facades as a series of bays





Facade is set on the same plane as the adjacent buildings



New Downtown Construction

Much has been written (and argued) on the issue of new construction in historic downtowns. However, the general principle to follow is that new buildings should look new. B. Clarkson Schoettle of the Main Street Center has most succinctly summarized the other basic design considerations as follows:

Proportions of the Facade

The average height and width of the surrounding buildings determines a general set of proportions for an infill structure or the bays of a larger structure.

Composition

The composition of the infill facade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades. Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new facade.

Proportions of the Openings

The size and proportion of window and door openings of an infill building should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole. If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be broken into a number of smaller bays, to maintain a rhythm similar to the surrounding buildings.

Detailing

Infill architecture should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shapes, cornice lines, and brick work.

Materials

An infill facade should be composed of materials similar to adjacent facades. The new building should not stand out from the others.

Color

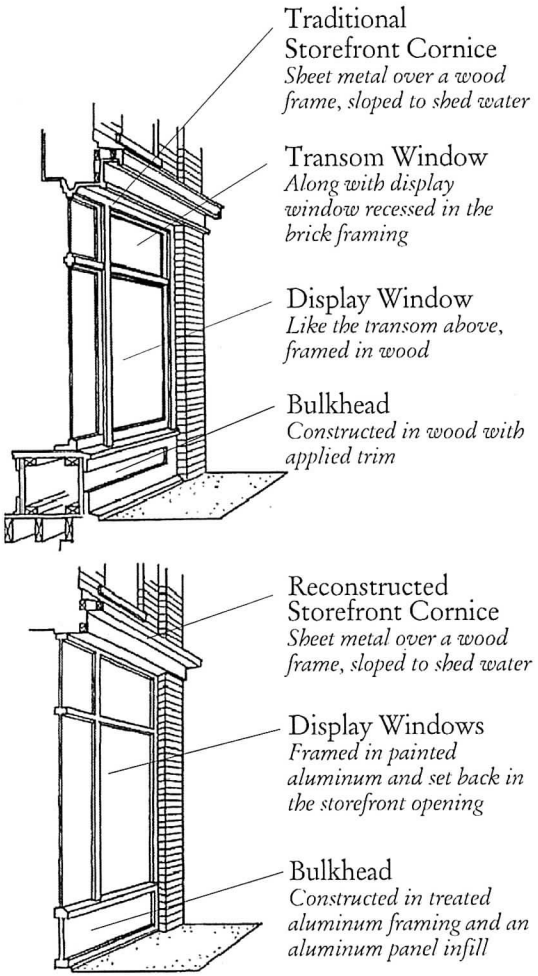
Colors utilized should relate to each other in a coherent and consistent design, and also be selected in response to the existing materials and colors of surrounding buildings. Color selections for each building will include all the visible elements on the exterior, in order to achieve an integrated and coordinated design approach; and, thus it will include such elements as: the wall materials, accessory items such as flashing and hardware, all the trim components around doors, windows, at cornices and applied panels; the painted or pre-finished components such as windows and doors; and for awnings, signs and exterior lighting fixtures.

Building Setback

The new facade should be flush with its neighbors.

New Building Materials in Storefront Design

While the commercial property owner is encouraged to use traditional materials in the reconstruction of missing or altered building elements, often it is economically infeasible. Therefore, the owner may consider using newer building materials that emulate the appearance of the traditional elements.



When designing a new storefront for your commercial property, you should meet with city staff to determine what contemporary building materials are acceptable and available

The traditional storefront is generally constructed of a combination of materials, such as wood framing, wood moldings, metal flashing, and plate glass. The typical elements of the storefront were the metal-clad window crown or cornice, the wood framed transom window, the wood framed display window, and the wood or metal bulkhead. The window and bulkhead are generally set back in the storefront opening at least six inches.

The reconstructed storefront can create the same "look" using newer building materials such as insulating glass and aluminum framing. However, the proportions and placement of the different elements need to closely match the elements of the original storefront.*

*Excerpts from *Keeping Up Appearances* from the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Phasing A Rehabilitation Project

When planning the renovation of your storefront, remember that it may make financial sense to phase the project over time. The completion of each phase will increase the aesthetic and actual value of your building, while getting you one step closer to the completion of your project. The following example demonstrates how the phasing could be implemented.

Existing Condition

The brick has been painted an inappropriate color for a historic building.

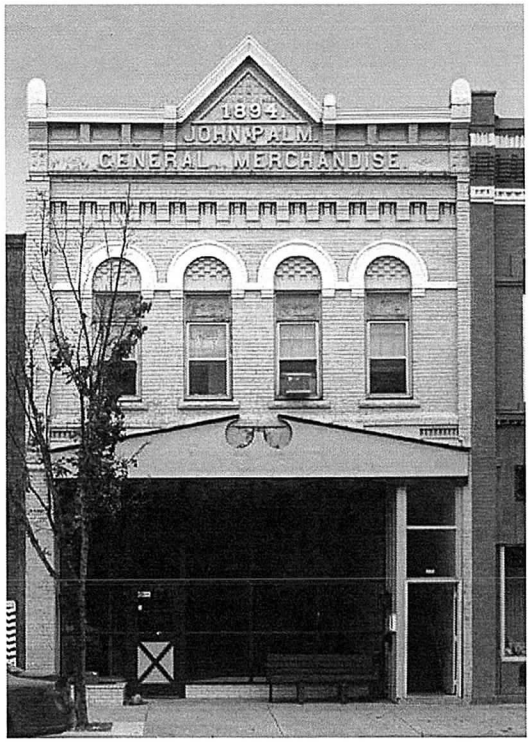
The classical metal cornice needs cleaning, repair and painting.

The second-story windows have been down-sized with plywood infill.

The upper story brickwork needs cleaning and repair.

The signboard area has an inappropriate architectural "broken pediment" form.

The storefronts have been modified with modern treatments and materials.



Phase 1

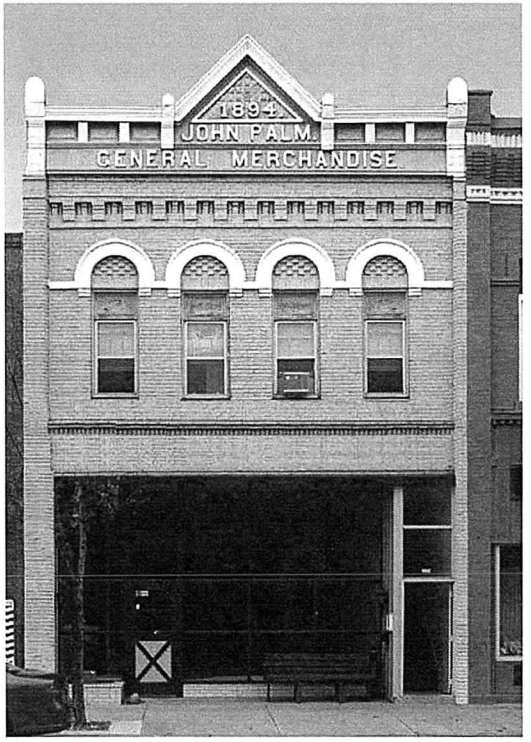
This phase may include:

Repairing, cleaning and repainting the decorative cornice.

Stripping the paint from the front facade brick.

If that is not possible, repainting the brick an appropriate, compatible color.

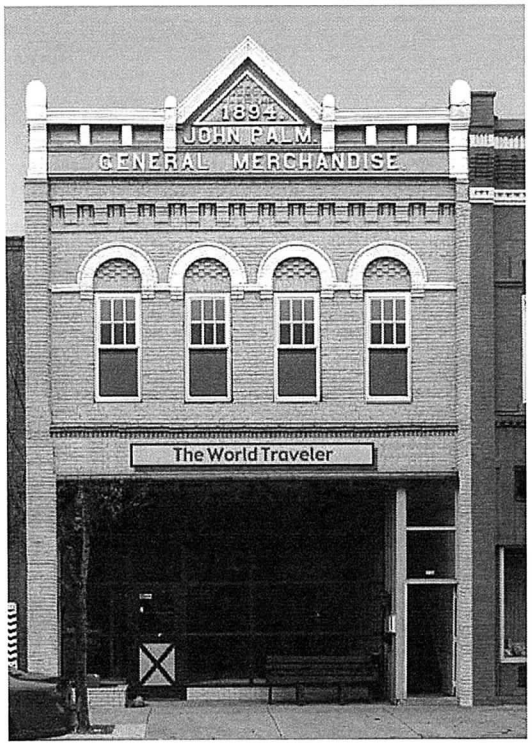
Removing the pediment plywood form over the storefront.



Phase 2

Returning upper story windows to their original 6-0ver-1 configuration.

Apply appropriate signage on a flush signboard above the storefront.



Phase 3

Rebuild storefronts as originally designed with large display windows with transom above and a bulkhead below.

Place retractable canvas awnings over the new display windows.



Applying the Guidelines to Litchfield's Buildings

The following examples were selected to illustrate the applications of the design guidelines. These examples display the variety of architectural styles found in downtown Litchfield and can be used as a guide to what type of improvement might be appropriate for other buildings that are similar in design.

East Depot Street

21 **Herman Furniture**–This one-story, commercial building has had its original storefront removed and replaced with a variety of modern finishes including a recessed porch with railing, a projecting pent roof, infill panels with small downsized windows, and vinyl cladding.

19 **R. Welch Building**–This one-story, commercial building retains much of its original 1906 appearance with the exception of the brick infill in the original storefront windows.

Sibley Avenue North
East Side

100 **Wells Brothers General Store**–A two-story, brick, commercial block that dominated the major intersection of Depot Street and Sibley Avenue North. While the building has lost the decorative crown of its corner cornice nameplate, most of the upper story remains as built in 1892.

202 **Brown Block**–This is a richly ornamented, two-story, Italianate style building constructed of cream-colored brick with contrasting red-brick trim. It is one of the most ornate buildings in the historic district and stands at the northeastern corner of Sibley Avenue and Second Street.

208 **Fransein's Cafe**–This simple two-story, wood frame building, constructed in ca. 1871, has a stucco-covered false front that hides its gabled roof. This structure was selected for the illustrated guidelines to demonstrate how a non-contributing building can be transformed to contribute to the historic downtown district.

242-244 **Masonic Building**–This ornate two-story, brick Romanesque Revival structure was constructed in 1889 on a prominent corner across the street from Central Park. The building is constructed of cream brick with dark-red contrasting brick trim detailing. The building occupies a lot that is 50 x 100 feet in dimension.

Sibley Avenue North
West Side

109-113 **Meeker County Offices, Farmers and Merchants Bank**–This two-story commercial building has two, twin commercial bays. The cream-colored brick building was constructed ca. 1882 and retains most of its architectural integrity. Modifications include the removal or covering of the upper story windows, and modernization of the 2 storefronts.

127-129 **Langren Furniture**–This Italianate style, two-story brick structure was built ca. 1885. Like other building sets along Sibley Avenue, this building is composed to two commercial bays. While the upper story remains intact, the lower storefronts have been modified with a variety of modern materials and treatment.

201 **First National Bank**–This two-story, Classical Revival style, brick commercial block was constructed in 1898. The building retains its bay and window opening configuration, but the upper story windows have all been infilled, the first story windows along 2nd Street have been down-sized, and the once-elegant bank entrance has been covered with a frame box of inappropriate wood clapboard and faux stone facing.

207 **Wahlberg's Five and Dime Store**–This two-story building, constructed ca. 1895 is faced with reddish-brown brick and was designed in a commercial version of the Queen Anne style. It has been altered considerably at the first story with a circa 1980 brick storefront and a brick-faced concrete block addition to the north.

215 **Palm General Merchandise**–The brick Italianate style building, built in 1894, retains its metal cornice and its upper-story window openings. Over time the building has seen its second-story windows downsized, an inappropriate architectural "broken pediment" installed over the storefront, and its original storefront removed and replaced with a modern treatment and materials.

231-239 **City Drug Store**–Constructed in the mid-late 1800s, this two-story, cream-colored brick building is composed of three commercial bays. While the brick color and texture differs on the three bays, showing the progression of time in the initial construction of the block, the fenestration on the upper stories matches. Unfortunately, the storefronts on all three bays have been modified with modern designs and materials.

Existing Condition

21 East Depot Street
Herman Furniture

Constructed in 1917, this one-story commercial style building is faced with reddish-brown brick. It has subdued decorative brickwork at the cornice level. The storefront has been altered, and now has a recessed porch and balustrade, down-sized modern double-hung windows, vinyl siding covered by a pent roof. The east and north walls are covered with corrugated metal siding.

There is an unused electrical cable projecting from the brick facade.

Over time the cornice brick has suffered some damage especially at the upper eastern corner.



Proposed Renovation

This structure is the first historic downtown building one sees when they approach the downtown travelling west on Highway 12. It should be a welcoming introduction to the central commercial district.



Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair brick work on cornice.

Clean and tuckpoint brick as necessary.

Place signage over transoms and awnings.

Hang retractable canvas awnings over display windows.

Build storefront with recessed doorway, large display windows, transoms above, and bulkheads below.

Replace modern door with wood and glass door.

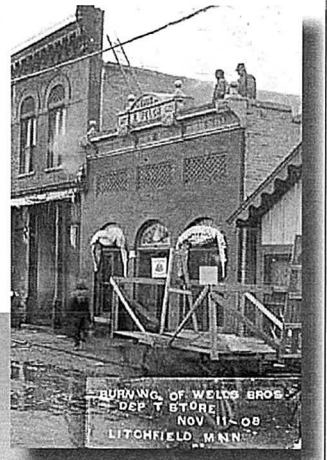
Existing Condition

19 East Depot Street
The R. Welch Building

Constructed in 1906, this building is a small, one-story building faced with reddish-brown brick. At the top of the building is an ornate metal cornice with egg-and-dart molding. There is lettering in the cornice that reads "R. Welch 1906." The three-bay main façade has rounded arched window and center-door openings. Above these openings are three rectangular panels of checkerboard brickwork. While the window openings remain, they have unfortunately been infilled with white brick and downsized aluminum framed window units.

Here again, this is one of the first historic commercial buildings you see when entering the district from the east.

In November of 1908, two years after construction of the R. Welch Building, there was a fire next door in the Wells Bros. Department Store. This photograph shows the building's original fenestration with retractable awnings.





Proposed Renovation



Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair, clean and tuckpoint brick as necessary with special attention to areas that show water damage on upper corners.

Remove all infill of 3 arched openings.

Repair, restore or replace as necessary arched transom windows. Original windows may still be in place and were cut and colored glass.

Install large, insulated display windows in side openings.

Paint commercial signage on display windows.

Install retractable canvas awnings above display windows as seen in early photograph.

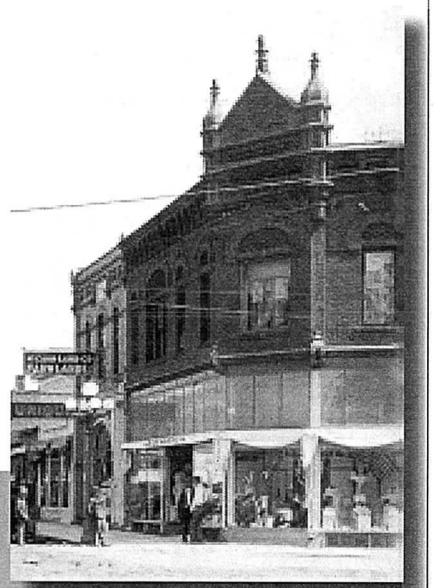
Reconstruct original recessed entrance wood and glass door with sidelights and transoms.

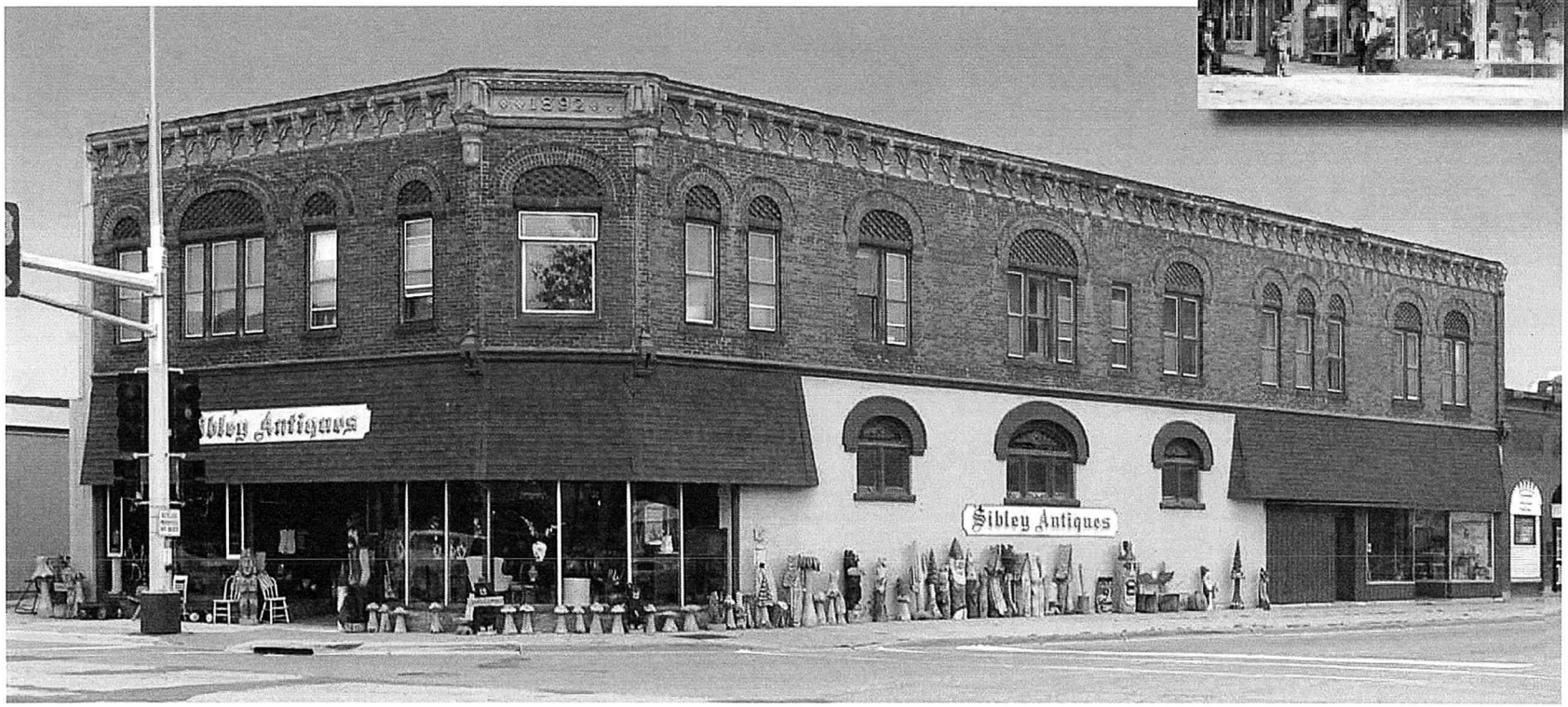
Existing Condition

100 Sibley Avenue North
The Well Brothers General Store

Constructed in 1892, this two-story building has a prominent site at the northeastern corner of Sibley Avenue and Depot Street and displays the Queen Anne style. The building is faced with medium-brown brick and has a canted southwestern corner. The west and south facades have an ornate brick-and-metal cornice which was originally topped by decorative cresting. The cornice above the southwestern corner contains the date "1892."

The most prominent changes to the building appear at the cornice and pedestrian levels. The elaborate metal cornice crown once at the southwest corner has been removed. The center brick portion of the south-facing facade at street level is painted a bright mustard color. Tall, shallow-projecting pent roofs cover the south and south/west facing storefronts.





Proposed Renovation

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair, clean and repaint the cornice.

Tuckpoint, repair and clean brick .

Repair and repaint existing upper-story windows
Replacement windows should have double-paned glazing and match the original window design in dimensions and profile.

Pent roofs over storefronts should be removed.

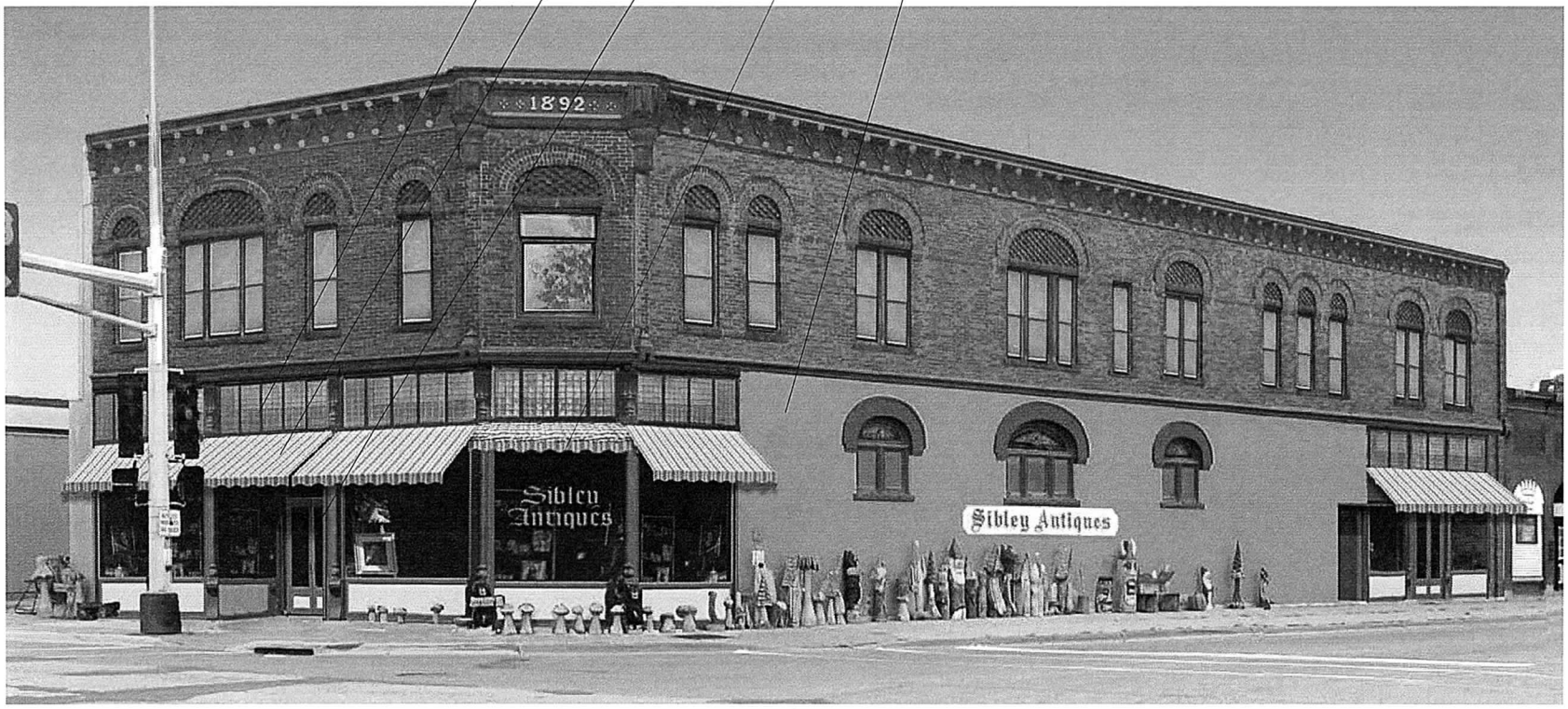
Original storefronts, on south and south/west facades should be reconstructed with transoms, large display windows, bulkheads, and central wood and glass entry doors.

Hang retractable canvas awnings over display windows and store entrances.

Replace modern doors with wood and glass doors, and transoms above.

Store signage could be on south facade, on display windows, on awning fringe, or over awnings on transom glass on west facade.

The south-facing wall should follow HPC color guidelines.



Existing Condition

202 Sibley Avenue North
The Brown Block

Constructed in 1884, this is a richly ornamented, two-story, Italianate style building constructed of cream-colored brick with contrasting red-brick trim.

The Brown Block as it appeared in 1899.



The decorative metal cornice remains intact, but is in need of repair and repainting.

The elegant, double-hung windows on the upper-story and south-facing facade of 1st floor have been boarded over.

While the building retains its storefront configuration, the original storefront has been covered or removed and replaced with a brightly painted "modern" variation.

The entrance to the second floor from Sibley has been covered over.

Window air conditioners project out of openings on the south facade.



Proposed Renovation



Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair and repaint decorative cornice and decorative metalwork.

Tuckpoint, repair and clean brick as necessary.

Remove from facades any obsolete hardware or wiring, and projecting window air conditioners, if possible.

Remove plywood infill and restore or replace the windows to reflect the original fenestration in dimensions and profile. New windows should be double-insulated.

Hang canvas, retractable awnings over display windows and store entrances.

Reconstruct storefront with large display windows, centered recessed doorway, transoms above and bulkhead below.

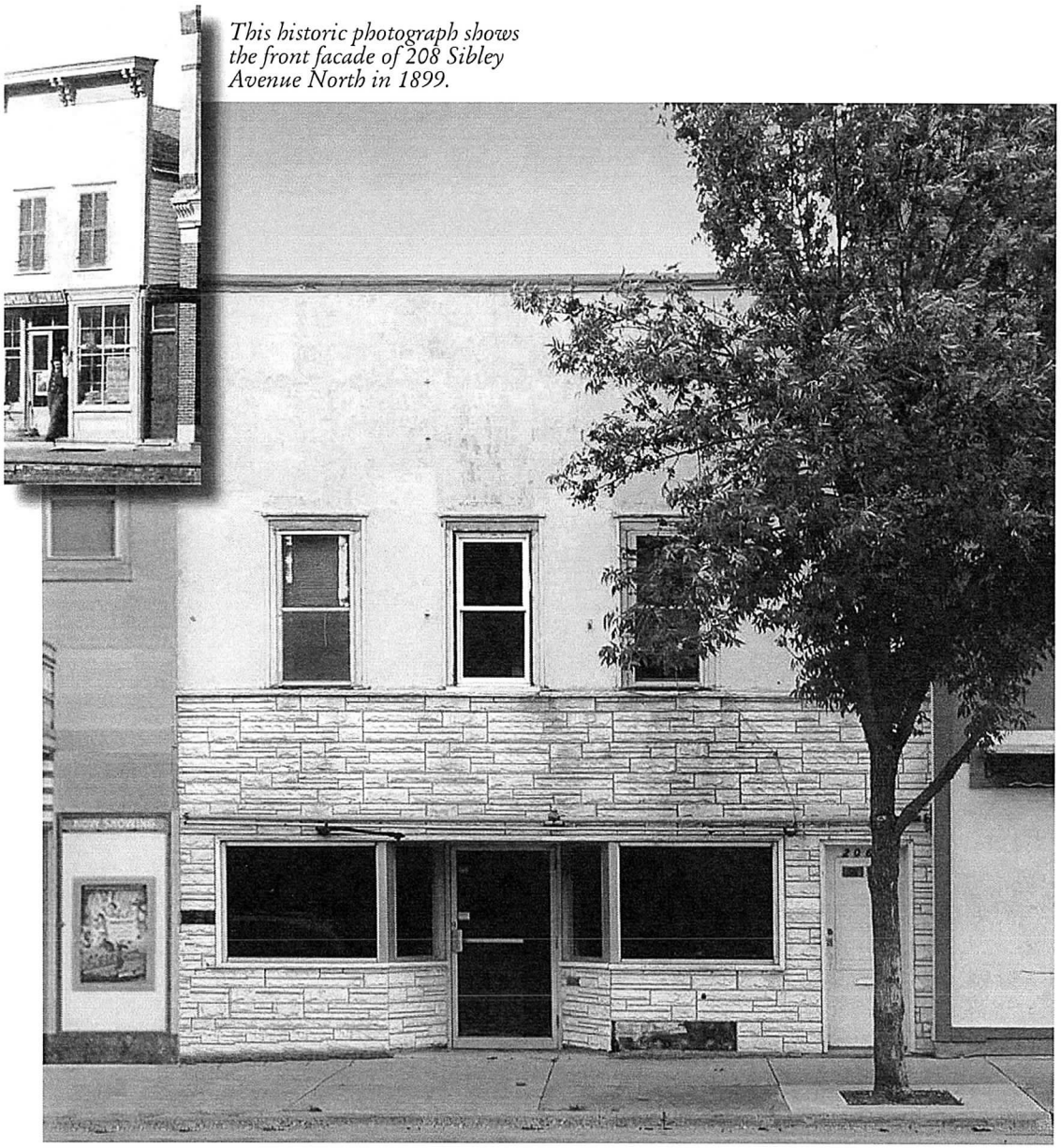
Add more appropriate doors and transoms to entrances on 2nd Street.

Existing Condition

208 Sibley Avenue North
Fransein's Cafe

Built in 1871, this two-story, stucco-covered, wood-frame building has a gabled roof behind its "false front" facade. The original lapboard siding has been covered with stucco and the storefront has been covered with artificial stone and aluminum-framed windows and door. However, the original symmetry has been retained with the display windows framing a central door. The access door to the second floor is to the south of the storefront.

Although this building is listed as non-contributing in the National Register designation, it could become contributing with some modifications to its facade. A new cornice, painting the stucco, removing the applied artificial stone, and a signboard above the storefront would dramatically improve the building's appearance and fit within the historic district.



This historic photograph shows the front facade of 208 Sibley Avenue North in 1899.

Proposed Renovation



Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Install new wood crown to front facade.

Test an area of upper facade to see if clapboard under stucco is in good condition. If stucco can be removed, lapboard should be repaired or replaced and painted following the paint guidelines established by the HPC.

If stucco cannot be removed, it should be cleaned and repainted following HPC guidelines.

Repair or replace and repaint upper-story windows, and consider re-hanging operable shutters. New 1-over-1, double-hung windows should be double-insulated.

Install signboard over storefront.

Hang canvas, retractable awning above storefront.

Remove artificial stone cladding and modern display windows and door.

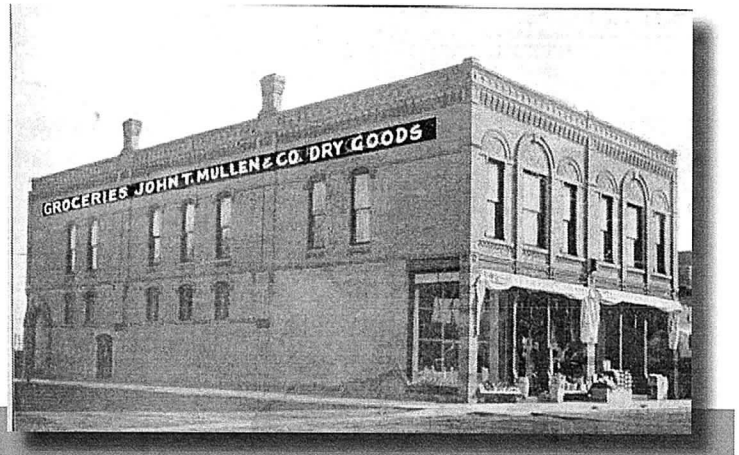
Reconstruct original storefront with large display windows, center doorway with transoms, and bulkheads below.

Replace 2nd-floor entry door with wood and glass door that compliments new storefront. Design of secondary door should suggest different use than commercial door set.

Existing Condition

242-244 Sibley Avenue North
Masonic Building

Built ca. 1889, the Masonic Building is a two-story Romanesque Revival style building constructed of cream-colored brick and is 50 feet wide by 100 feet deep. It has dark-red contrasting brick trim which includes an ornate brick cornice with corbelling and checkerboard brickwork and heavy brick window hoods.



This vintage photograph shows the Masonic Building as it appeared at the turn of the century with its double-hung windows and 2 store fronts intact..

Original upper-story windows have been infilled with glass block.

Back-lit plastic signage does not contribute to historic nature of downtown.

Storefront has been replaced with modern aluminum-framed windows and stock metal doors.



Proposed Renovation

Reopening the upper story windows and storefronts that have been downsized or removed over time brings new life and vitality into the downtown's beautiful architecture.

While it is always good to remove obsolete wires and hardware from the building faces, be sure to preserve and maintain significant features such as the vintage Masonic Order frame and signage.

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair, clean and tuckpoint upper story brick as necessary.

Remove infill glass block and replace with double-hung, insulated windows.



Place painted horizontal signboards over the storefront and on the north side of the building at signboard height.

Hang a canvas, retractable awning over the display windows and the store entrance.

Build a compatible period storefront with larger display windows.

Replace the modern metal doors with wood-and-glass doors.

Existing Condition

109-113 Sibley Avenue North
Meeker County Offices, Farmers and Merchants Bank

This two-story, Italianate style building, constructed ca. 1882 is faced with cream-colored brick. It has a very ornate brick cornice with corbelling and a brick medallion at the center over an intact tall arched center window.

Ornamental brick cornice-crown at central bay has been removed over time.

Upper story windows have been infilled with plywood panels.

Existing signboard, while in right location, are over-sized to cover transom windows over display windows.

Original storefronts have been infilled with modern treatments.



Proposed Renovation



Consider rebuilding masonry cornice crown over center bay.

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Repair, clean and tuckpoint brick as necessary.

Remove wood infill in upper story windows.

If they exist, repair and repaint 2nd-story windows, and install new, operable storm windows.

If original windows don't exist or are in very bad condition and cannot be repaired, replace them with new insulated double-hung windows.

Place properly proportioned signboards over transom windows on both storefronts.

Hang canvas, retractable awnings over display windows.

Reconstruct original storefronts with display windows, recessed entry doors, transom above and bulkhead below.

Existing Condition

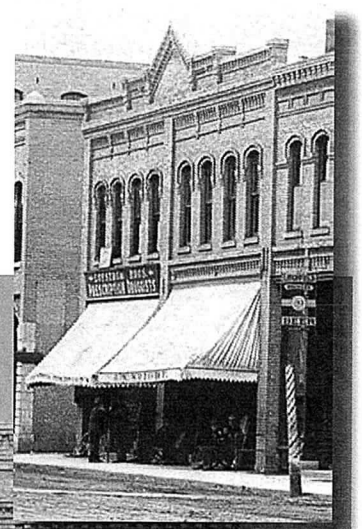
127-129 Sibley Avenue North
Langren Furniture

This two-story, Italianate style, cream-colored brick building was built ca. 1885 and displays an ornate brick parapet and pedimented crown. The commercial structure has a symmetrical main façade which is divided into two halves with two storefronts.

While the brickwork is in need of maintenance, the original 2-over-2 pane, double-hung arched windows on the 2nd floor appear to be in operable condition.

First floor storefronts and framing piers have been reconstructed with newer brick that does not match upper-story cream brick.

Both storefronts have gone through considerable change with a variety of modern materials and treatments. These include cedar shakes, vertical wood siding, a pedimented storefront bay, and extruded-aluminum display window framing.



The Lofstrom Drug Store and John W. Wright Furniture and Undertaker business (in foreground) as they appeared ca. 1903.



Proposed Renovation

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Clean and repair brick as necessary.

Repair and repaint existing upper story windows and install compatible operable storm windows.

Consider painting piers that frame storefronts to create a unifying and coordinated appearance.



On 127 Sibley:

Place signboard over storefront. Signage can also be painted on display windows.

Hang canvas, retractable awning over display window and store entrance.

Reconstruct original storefront with transoms, display windows, recessed center doorway, and bulkhead below display windows

On 129 Sibley:

Reconstruct original storefront with transoms, display windows, recessed doorway of wood and glass, and bulkheads below display windows

Existing Condition

201 Sibley Avenue North
First National Bank

Built in 1898, the First National Bank is a two-story, Classical Revival style building that stands on the northwest corner of North Sibley and West Second Street.



The Meeker County Bank as it was originally constructed in 1898 was a much larger structure with additional bays stretching to the west along 2nd Street.

Bank structure has subsequently been truncated, losing a few west bays.

Large upper and lower cornices have been removed.

Upper story windows have all been infilled with wood panels.

Original storefront and pedestrian level bays along 2nd Street have been infilled with brick and downsized window openings. Subsequently, windows were downsized again with wood panel infill above.

Once elegant double-columned entrance and bays on Sibley Avenue have been completely encapsulated in an application of horizontal wood siding and faux-stone facing. Entrance has also been shifted to northern bay.

Proposed Renovation

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Clean and repair brick as necessary.

Consider reconstructing the crowning and secondary cornices.

Remove infill panels from the 2nd story window openings.



If double-hung windows exist, repair and repaint them, and install operable new storms over original windows.

If original windows don't exist or are in very bad condition and cannot be repaired, replace them with new, insulated double-hung windows. Replacement windows should match original window design in dimensions and profile.

Remove modern storefront and infill in all bays and reconstruct bays with large display windows, transoms above and bulkheads below.

Hang canvas, retractable awnings over bays and store entrance.

Awning are also appropriate for upper-story windows. *(see historic photograph)*

Rebuild store entrance in center bay of Sibley facade.

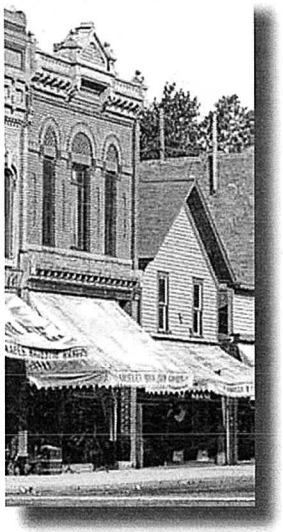
Signage can be placed on glass, awning skirt, or in transom area above display windows.

Existing Condition

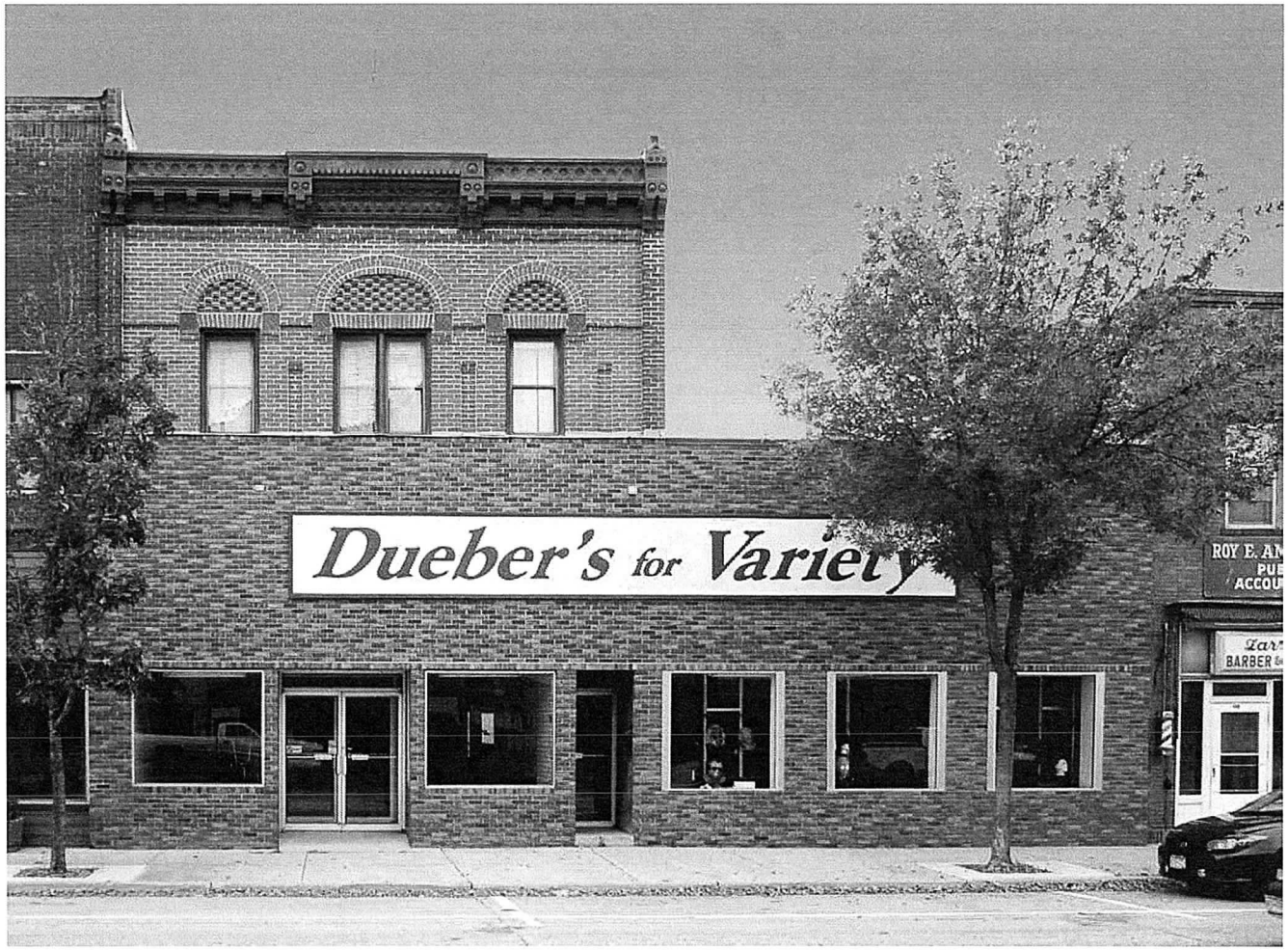
207 Sibley Avenue North
Wahlberg's Five and Dime Store

This loss of structural form and architectural integrity was a common occurrence in 20th century historic downtowns as larger store footprints attempted to create a business identity by combining two or more storefronts into one, uniform design.

This two-story building, constructed ca. 1895 is faced with reddish-brown brick and was designed in a commercial version of the Queen Anne style. It has been altered considerably at the first story with a circa 1980 brick storefront and a brick-faced concrete block addition to the north.



207 Sibley and adjacent structure in 1915.



Proposed Renovation

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Clean, tuckpoint and repair brick as necessary.

On the southern portion: Consider adding secondary cornice under upper windows, and "painting out" newer brick below to help give the Victorian building some shape and continuity.



Place commercial signage on flush signboard over transom level.

Add retractable canvas awning over entrance.

Remove modern brick facing and construct new storefront with central entrance, large display windows with transoms above, and bulkheads.

Replace 2nd floor entry door with wood-and-glass door that compliments new storefront. Design of secondary door should suggest different use than commercial door set.

On the northern portion:

Add decorative cornice to tone-story structure.

Introduce simple, but compatible storefront with signboard above.

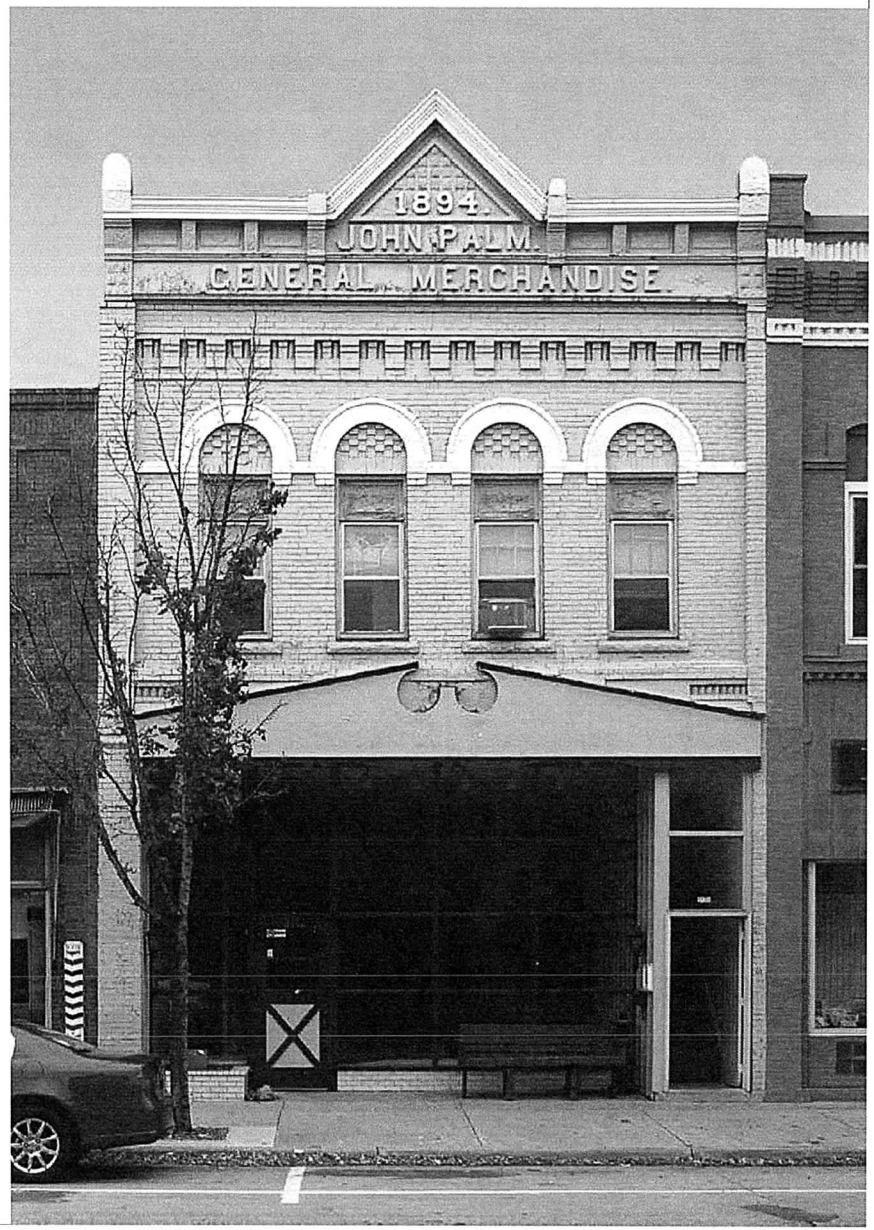
Existing Condition

215 Sibley Avenue North
Palm General Merchandise

The metal cornice at the top of this two-story, brick, Italianate style building reads "1894, John Palm, General Merchandise." The cornice has finials and a central pediment projection, and rises above a row of brick corbelling.

While the structure has basically retained its elaborate cornice and decorative upper story brickwork, the 2nd-story windows have been partially infilled with wood panels, and the original storefront has been removed and replaced with an architecturally inappropriate "colonial broken pediment" crowning a multi-paned curtain wall.

To further distinguish the building from its neighbors, what remains of the original main elevation has been painted a light violet with white trim.



Proposed Renovation



Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Clean and repair brick as necessary.

If paint cannot be removed, consider painting facade more appropriate base and trim colors following HPC color guidelines.

Remove infill and determine if existing 6-over-1 windows can be retained. If so, they should be cleaned, repaired and repainted, and new, custom storm windows should be installed over them.

If they cannot be retained, they should be replaced with new, insulated, 6-over-1 double-hung windows. Replacement windows should match original window design in dimensions and profile.

Remove pediment and hang flush signboard over new storefront.

Add retractable canvas awning over entrance.

Reconstruct storefront with transoms, display windows, recessed doorway and bulkheads below the display windows.

Install at 2nd-floor entry wood-and-glass door that compliments new storefront. Design of secondary door should suggest different use than commercial door.

Existing Condition

231-239 Sibley Avenue North
City Drug Store

Built ca. 1885, three storefronts are located in this large, two-story, Italianate style, cream-colored brick building located at the southwestern corner of Sibley Avenue and Third Street.

While the upper story generally retains its architectural integrity, the lower storefronts have gone through a variety of changes over time. In an attempt to create individual commercial identities, the storefront compositions of cedar shakes, horizontal wood siding, brightly painted wood panels, infill modern brick, and modern extruded-aluminum framed windows and doors have destroyed continuity at the pedestrian level.



Proposed Renovation

Inspect roofing, coping and flashing.

Clean and repair brick as necessary.

Remove infill and install full-height 1-over-1 insulated windows in upper south bay.

With other upper windows, determine if they can be retained. If so, they should be cleaned, repaired and repainted, and new custom storm windows should be installed over them.

If upper windows cannot be repaired, they should be replaced with new, insulated, 1-over-1, double-hung windows. Replacement windows should match original window design in dimensions and profile.

Remove variety of modern storefront treatments.

Place flush signboards over storefronts.

Add retractable canvas awning over entrances.

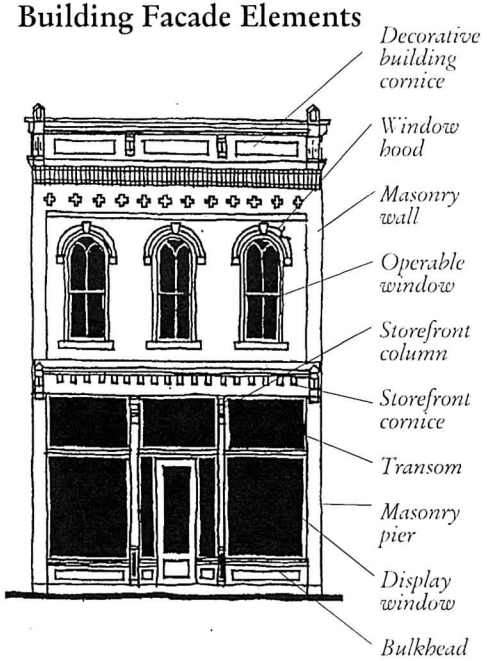
Reconstruct the original storefront with transoms, display windows, recessed doorway and bulkheads below the display windows.

Install at the 2nd floor entry wood-and-glass door that compliments new storefronts, yet suggests different use than commercial doors.

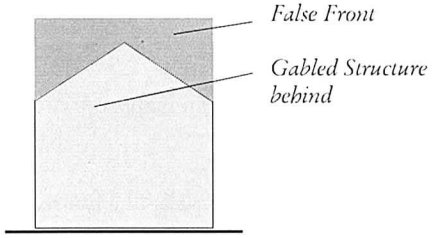


Appendix I • Glossary of Architectural Terms Found in the Guidelines

Building Facade Elements

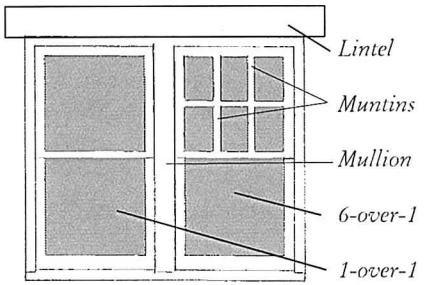


False Front Facade



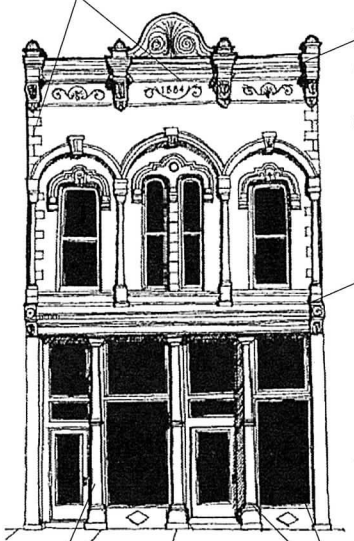
Arch	An architectural structural system for spanning a door or window opening. Arches are often constructed of wedge-shaped stones or bricks, and are designed to bear the weight of the materials above.
Belt Course	A horizontal board across a building usually flat with a molding.
Bracket	A projection, sometimes decorative element, which supports or appears to support a projecting cornice, lintel, sill or roof.
Bulkhead	The storefront member that forms a base for the display windows and side windows of a commercial entry. In historical downtowns these are often decorative with raised or recessed panels.
Clapboard	Narrow, horizontal, overlapping wooden boards, usually 4 to 6 inches wide, used as siding. *(pronounced "kla'berd")*
Crown Molding	Any molding member forming the crowning or finishing member of a structure.
Column	A perpendicular supporting post, circular or rectangular in section.
Coping	The cap for covering the top of a wall.
Elevation	Any of the sides of a building. The east elevation faces east, the south elevation faces south, etc.
Facade	The face or chief elevation of a building.
False Front	A front wall which extends above the roof behind. (As seen at 208 Sibley Avenue.)
Fenestration	The arrangement, proportions and pattern of window and door openings on a facade.
Flashing	A thin impervious material used to prevent water penetration between a roof and wall.
Gable	The triangular portion of the end wall of a building.

Double-hung, Operable Window



Architectural Details

Decorative Detailing
Corner quoins, metal scrollwork, and date block all add texture to the upper facade



Building Cornice
Visually crowns the building

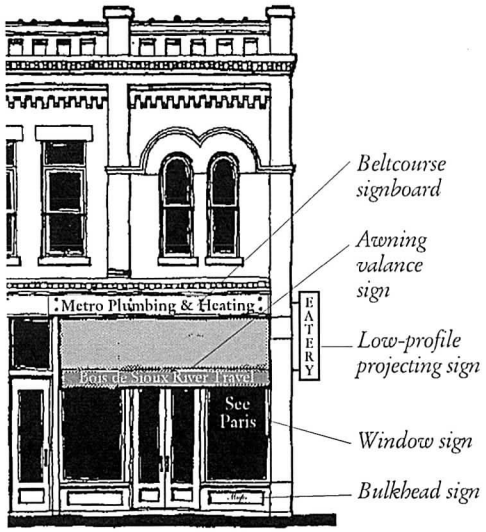
Storefront Cornice
Visually crowns the storefront

Pilasters
Masonry pilasters provide the structural and visual framing for the first floor storefront

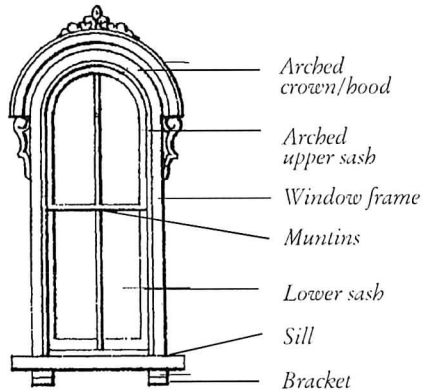
Storefront
Original materials included wood, glass, and cast iron posts

Lintel	A horizontal structural member that supports the load over an opening such as a door or window.
Masonry	Wall construction using stone or brick with mortar.
Molding	A member of construction or decoration used to introduce varieties of outline or contour in edges or surfaces.
Mullion	A slender bar or pier forming a division between panels or units of windows, screens, or similar frames.
Muntin	The members dividing the glass or openings of window or door sash.
Parapet	An extension of the wall above the roof line.
Pier	A member or column designed to support the weight from above, usually in the form of a thickened section placed at intervals along a wall providing lateral support.
Pilaster	An engaged pier or pillar, often projecting from the wall, that frames the fenestration of a building.
Pediment	A low, triangular architectural feature formed by horizontal and sloping cornices, often found above the main entry or windows.
Pent Roof	A short, hood-like roof section between the first and second floor.
Quoin	In masonry, a hard stone or raised brick suggesting a stone block, creating a decorative pattern often at the front corners of a building. (An example is seen in the piers at 231-239 Sibley Avenue.)
Sash	The framework that holds the glass in the window.
Shake	Any thick hand-split shingle. Often made of cedar and used as an inappropriate design addition to historic storefronts.
Shingle	A thin piece of wood or other material used to cover the roof or walls of a house.

Storefront Signage



Window Elements



Shutters A movable screen or cover used to cover a window opening.

Signboard A display board or surface used to advertise a business with the use of text and graphics. Signage can also be place on the awning valance, on a low-profile projecting board, painted on the display window or on the bulkhead.

Storefront The pedestrian level of the main facade of historic commercial "downtown" buildings. See elements in illustration.

Stucco An exterior finish composed of Portland cement, lime, and sand mixed with water.

Symmetrical A design system where elements are exactly the same on each side of the center of a façade (or face of a building). Asymmetry is the lack of symmetry.

Transom Window A sheet glass or glass block window that is generally stationery, but sometimes operable, that is located above a display window or above an entry door in a storefront.

Window Hood or Crown The projecting wall element at the top of a window opening. (As seen in the crowns on the upper story windows of 109-113 Sibley Avenue.)

Window Sill A wood, stone or brick horizontal member of a window frame.

Appendix II • Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The following standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Resources

The following publications contains more detailed information about the Standards.

Weeks, Jay D. and Anne E. Grimmer, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Illustrated Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstruction of Historic Buildings. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Preservation Services, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1995. 188 pp.

Birnbaum, Charles A., FASLA, and Christine Capella-Peters, Editors, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes. Washington, D.C.: Heritage Preservation Services, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1996. 148 pp.

Appendix III • Historic Preservation Tax Credits

While there are many reasons to preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and recycle older buildings, financial incentives can be the most tangible. Financial incentives for rehabilitation have been developed on the state and national levels. With the implementation in 2010 of the Minnesota rehabilitation program, improvements to historic commercial properties has never been more feasible for the property owner.

Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program Benefits

The Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program benefits the owner, the occupants, and the community by:

- Encouraging protection of landmarks through the promotion, recognition, and designation of historic structures
- Increasing the value of the rehabilitated property and returning underutilized structures to the tax rolls
- Upgrading downtowns and neighborhoods and often increasing the amount of available housing within the community.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available to building owners interested in substantially rehabilitating historic buildings. Commercial, industrial and rent producing residential structures that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places or are a "contributing" structure within a National Register district qualify for a 20% investment tax credit. Buildings not currently on the National Register can use tax credits if they become listed.

Federal Program Provisions

To quality for the Investment Tax Credit, a property owner must:

- Have a certified historic structure. To be certified, the building must be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or be a contributing part of a historic district that is either listed on the National Register or certified as eligible for the National Register
- Use the building for an income-producing purpose such as rental-residential, commercial, agricultural, or industrial
- Rehabilitate the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" and "Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings." The National Park Service (NPS), with advice from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, determines whether a project meets the standards.
- Spend an amount greater than the building's adjusted basis (roughly the current depreciated value of the building not including land value) on the approved rehabilitation project
- Complete the work in a timely manner. Projects must meet the minimum expenditure test within a two-year measuring period, but applicants may take up to five years to complete a phased project if the plans and specs are approved in advance of construction.
- Pay a fee to the NPS; the fee shall be no less than $250 and no greater than $2,500 and shall be based upon the qualifying rehabilitation expenditures.

Minnesota Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

In 2010 the State of Minnesota enacted a 20% historic preservation tax credit program. Minnesota's state historic preservation tax credit will allow a state income tax credit equal to 20 percent of the cost of rehabilitating a qualifying historic property. The program mirrors the federal rehabilitation tax credit, a provision that has been in place since 1979. Projects are eligible to claim the state credit if they are allowed the federal credit, a program which requires properties to be listed in the National Register of Historic Preservation to qualify. Minnesota currently has over 1,600 listings in the National Register representing almost 7,000 individual properties. Projects must be income-producing to use the credit, therefore, homesteaded residential projects are not eligible.

The Minnesota program allows the project proposers to choose either a certificated, refundable credit or grant option. The state grant, like the tax credit, comes at the completion of the project, and is equal to 90 percent of the allowable federal rehabilitation tax credit. The grant option may have some advantages in the syndication of tax credits, and widens the investor pool by allowing individuals, teams, and/or non-profit organizations to participate in the state program.

Minnesota Program Provisions

The state provisions are the same as the federal provisions, with the exception that the tax credit would be available for a property that is any of the following:

- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Certified as a contributing element of a National Register Historic District.
- Certified as historic by local heritage preservation commission or Certified Local Government.

Appendix IV • Survey of the Historic District

As part of this study, the consultant team completed a survey of the commercial district and Litchfield's three National Register sites. The survey and inventory forms were completed for each parcel to update and revise information to: reflect current (2010) conditions and integrity reflect recent research conducted by the Litchfield HPC; provide a brief conditions assessment; and provide current digital photographs of the inventory. The following chart is intended to provide the disposition (contributing or non-contributing to the district) of each address, and a cross reference of the address to the 2010 survey number and the city's parcel number.

Contributing Properties

Address	Survey Inventory #	Parcel #

Depot Street East – North Side

21	ME-LTC-0164	27-0826000
19	ME-LTC-0019	27-0826000

Sibley Avenue North – East Side

100	ME-LTC-0006	27-0825000
126	ME-LTC-0173	27-0811000
130	ME-LTC-0175	27-0810000
202	ME-LTC-0138	27-0728000
210	ME-LTC-0009	27-0726000
214	ME-LTC-0182	27-0725000
218-222	ME-LTC-0184	27-0724000
226-230	ME-LTC-0188	27-0722000, 27-0723000
234	ME-LTC-0005	27-0721000
236	ME-LTC-0192	27-0720000
242-244	ME-LTC-0004	27-0718000

Sibley Avenue North – West Side

109-113	ME-LTC-0169	27-0805000, 27-0806000
115-119	ME-LTC-0171	27-0803000, 27-0804000
127-129	ME-LTC-0174	27-0797000, 27-0798000
201	ME-LTC-0007	27-0745000
205	ME-LTC-0178	27-0744000
213	ME-LTC-0181	27-0747000
215	ME-LTC-0002	27-0748000
217	ME-LTC-0183	27-0749000
219	ME-LTC-0185	27-0750000
225	ME-LTC-0187	27-0752000
227	ME-LTC-0189	27-0753000
229	ME-LTC-0190	27-0754000
231-239	ME-LTC-0191	27-0755000, 27-0756000, 27-0757000
301-305	ME-LTC-0194	27-0675000
309	ME-LTC-0195	27-0676000
311	ME-LTC-0196	27-0677000

Contributing Properties

Address	Survey Inventory #	Parcel #
East Second Street		
12	ME-LTC-0155	27-0815000
18	ME-LTC-0156	27-0808000
26	ME-LTC-0017	27-0820000
35	ME-LTC-0016	27-0729000
West Second Street		
25	ME-LTC-0160	27-0796000

Non-Contributing Properties

Address	Survey Inventory #	Parcel #
Sibley Avenue North – East Side		
108-110	ME-LTC-0168	27-0823000
112	ME-LTC-0170	27-0822000
120	ME-LTC-0172	27-0812000
134	ME-LTC-0176	27-0807000
208	ME-LTC-0180	27-0727000
240	ME-LTC-0193	27-0719000
Sibley Avenue North – West Side		
105	ME-LTC-0167	27-0802000
135	ME-LTC-0177	27-0799000
207	ME-LTC-0179	27-0746000

Vacant Lots within the District Properties

Address	Survey Inventory #	Parcel #
23-25 East Depot Street	ME-LTC-0165	27-0828000
106 Sibley Avenue North	ME-LTC-0008	27-0824000
116 Sibley Ave N	N/A	27-0813000
132 Sibley Ave N	N/A	27-0809000

Appendix V • Public Signage in Historic Districts

Few communities in Minnesota have addressed the issue of public signage within or around historic districts. The community must balance the desire for a visually appealing downtown with the necessity to maintain the public's safety and to effectively direct traffic flow. As a rule, public signage should be clear and use conventional shapes, colors, and reflectivity. Public signage falls into three categories: traffic signs, limit signs, and directional/informational signs.

Traffic Signs

Traffic signs are the most critical to downtown vehicular circulation. They ensure a smooth and orderly flow of traffic and minimize the possibility of accidents. They must conform to the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MMUTCD) from the Minnesota Department of Transportation. While considerably limited, there is some latitude in the design of these signs. Determining minimum requirements and reducing redundancy is necessary to making downtown signage more attractive.

Limit Signs

Limit signs, such as parking limits, handicap, and no parking zones, although not as critical to safety, still need to be visually pleasing. These signs also have more latitude in their design. They should be uniform in style. They should be prominently displayed and large enough to be easily read, but should not overpower their surroundings. Using professionally designed signs and posts and placement, the public signage can enhance the overall appearance of the downtown.

Directional/Informational Signs

Informational signs include historic district directions and announcements, public parking, and other directional information to guide people to key areas in the downtown. These signs have little regulation and, therefore, the most latitude in design. They still need to be professionally designed, clear, and uniform with the other signage in downtown.

- Less is more. Using the least required signage in downtown will help keep the appearance from being cluttered or overpowering. Researching the minimum requirements and potential waivers is imperative for controlling the proliferation of public signage.
- All public signage within an historic district needs to be uniform and of high quality design and construction.
- Signage can be effectively placed on existing decorative light posts and on well designed sign posts.
- Signage, as well as banners and other temporary displays, should be color coordinated with a limited palette of colors complementary to those used for the store awnings. Turn-of-the-century colors tended to be muted and earth-tone based. Most major paint companies have paint chip charts of "historical" colors.
- Uniform signage should be developed to identify all public parking lots. Signs should be large enough and prominently displayed, but not overpower the surroundings. Using an easily identifiable logo helps the motorist find their way to the lots.
- Temporary banners on the outside of commercial buildings should not be permitted.