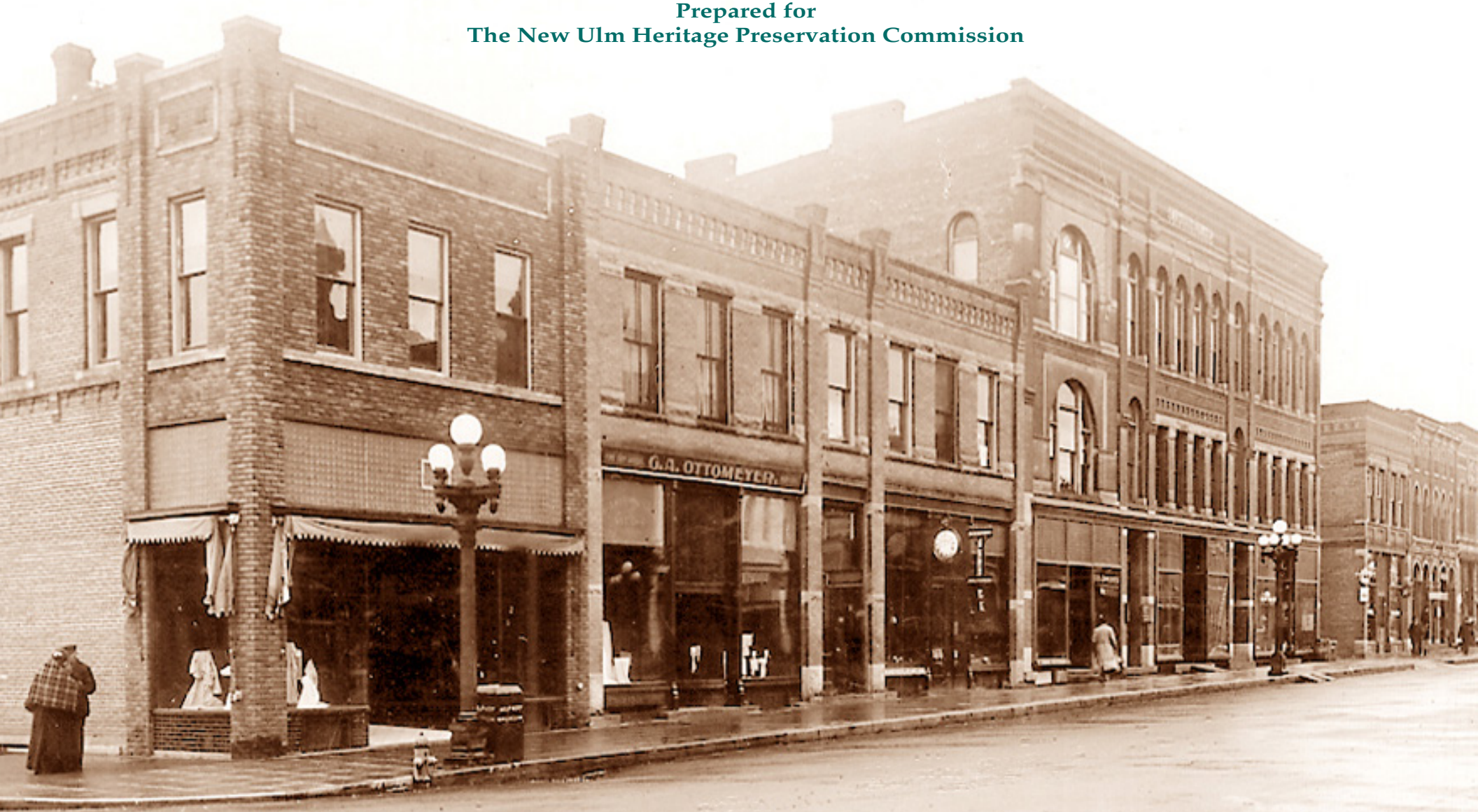
City of New Ulm
Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines

Prepared for
The New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission



Prepared by Thomas R. Zahn & Associates
Spring 2018

Credits

A special thanks to Daniel Hoisington for his past reports on New Ulm and the 2005 *New Ulm Commercial Center Historic District* nomination; the City of Red Wing and Miller-Dunwiddie-Associates, Inc. that developed the *Red Wing Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines*; the cities of Faribault, Little Falls, Lake City, Chatfield, St. Cloud and Northfield 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 Brown County Historical Society, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

This project has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior, through the Minnesota Historical Society under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendations by the Department of the Interior.

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Cover Photograph: *Early 20th-century photograph of Minnesota Street looking North from Center Street.*

City of New Ulm Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines

Prepared in 2006
with the support of the City of New Ulm

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Preface



Turn-of-the-century photograph of the northwest corner North Minnesota and Center Streets

The City of New Ulm is pleased to present the City of New Ulm Downtown Preservation Design Guidelines. This publication provides building preservation and rehabilitation information for property owners within the downtown New Ulm Historic District.

One of downtown New Ulm'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 New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) and City Staff are available to answer questions from property owners about improvements or repairs to their buildings. These include providing useful information on the proper treatment for doors and windows, awnings, and signs, to painted or 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. At times, because of financial constraints, a property owner may incorporate only part of the plan or undertake long-term phasing of the plan.

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 New Ulm's commercial architecture. These guidelines are based on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Hisotric Properties*, and proposed rehabilitation and preservation work within the historic district needs to meet the *Stanadrds*. The City has resources available , such as the "Preservation Briefs," National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior to assist property owners with restoration and rehabilitation projects. Additional programs and financial assistance may be available. For more information, contact the New Ulm Engineering and Inspections Office at (507) 359-8245 and visit the HPS (Heritage Preservation Services) website of the National Park Service at:
https://www.nps.gov/history/preservation.htm

New Ulm Commercial Historic District



National Register New Ulm Commercial Historic District Boundaries

New Ulm Commercal Local Historic District Boundaries

The New Ulm Commercial Historic District is comprised of seventy-five properties, located primarily along Minnesota Street between 3rd North and 1st South. Within the National Register District there are sixty buildings that contribute to the historic fabric of the district.

In 2005 the above collection of buildings was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. In 2006 the New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) with City Council approval designated a larger downtown local historic district. With the designation the HPC can provide design review services to property owners within this local district. The general boundaries of the entire district range from the Glockenspiel (4th North) to the Heritage Tree (1st South) and include properties on some of the side streets between Minnesota and German and Minnesota and Broadway.

In addition to the historic properties within the district boundaries, there are fifteen properties that do not currently contribute to the historic nature of the district. They are considered "non-contributing" either because their architecture has been dramatically altered, or they have been built after the district's "period of significance" (1861-1953).

Exterior modifications to these "non-contributing" buildings should still follow the general precepts outlined in these guidelines. Late 20th century buildings within the district, if modified, should better relate to other buildings within the district, while still remaining true to their period of construction.

Infill structures within these areas should follow the general precepts outlined in the New Downtown Construction section (page 29) of this report.



The National Register New Ulm Commercial Historic District is defined by the light shaded area. The local New Ulm Commercial Historic District for which these guidelines apply is defined by the red outlined area. Those properties indicated by address and darker shading were selected by the Heritage Preservation Commission to appear in the *Applying the Guidelines to New Ulm's Buildings* chapter of this manual. The "before" and "after" renovation chapter begins on page 32 of this manual.

Introduction



Nineteenth-century photograph of downtown New Ulm, 100 North Minnesota Street block

New Ulm has a well-earned reputation as a "German" town, confirmed by the 2000 census. It reported that sixty-six percent of the city's residents claimed at least some German ancestry—the highest percentage of ethnic identification for any city of more than 5,000 in the country.

The city was founded in 1854 by the Chicago Land Company, an association of German-Americans under the leadership of Frederick Beinhorn. Beinhorn came to the United States from Braunschweig, Germany, in 1852, bringing with him the hope of organizing a colony in the west. With little money, though, he looked for work, first in Milwaukee, then in the rapidly growing city of Chicago, Illinois. Following a common model of the time, they planned a joint venture financed by membership dues. Working together, they hoped to raise the necessary cash to buy the land, then build enough reserves to carry settlers through the difficult first years on the frontier. Eighteen people attended the meeting and three days later, they formed the Chicago Land Society. In late 1854, a party of company members embarked from Chicago and settled in the vicinity of present-day New Ulm.

With the influx of new settlers in the mid-nineteenth century, businesses began to appear on the natural terrace just west of the Minnesota River. Geography, ideology, and regional economic development combined to create a vibrant commercial district. Industry and transportation did not intrude on the residential or commercial space-having much the same effect as zoning laws. To reach their place of employment, workers had to pass through the downtown, stopping at a bakery on the way to work, picking up groceries when heading home-or lingering at one of the many local saloons at the end of a hard day. The commercial district was further enhanced by the establishment of government offices including the post office, the municipal building, and later, the Brown County Historical Society. Public halls such as Schell's, Gebser's, and Arbeiter's drew people downtown as did movie palaces such as the American and Grand Theatres. These activities generated foot traffic at local stores and restaurants.

These early commercial growth patterns defined the area that now comprises New Ulm's Commercial Historic District. The district is comprised of seventy-five properties, most located along Minnesota Street, a north-south street that runs roughly parallel to the river. These properties represent downtown New Ulm's remaining concentration of intact historic commercial structures, encompassing parts of nine city blocks. Asphalt-paved alleys bisect the blocks, providing rear service entrances to the buildings.

The properties in the district include sixty contributing buildings, one contributing object (the electric clock at 117 North Minnesota), and fifteen non-contributing buildings. Four buildings are listed

in the National Register of Historic Places: the United States Post Office, the Boesch Hummel Maltzahn Block, the Grand Hotel, and the Kiesling House. The majority of buildings were built for commercial use as retail stores, banks, office buildings, and hotels, with living quarters, offices, or lodge halls on the second and third stories. In addition to the commercial structures, the district also includes two public buildings, the U.S. Post Office and the New Ulm Municipal Building.

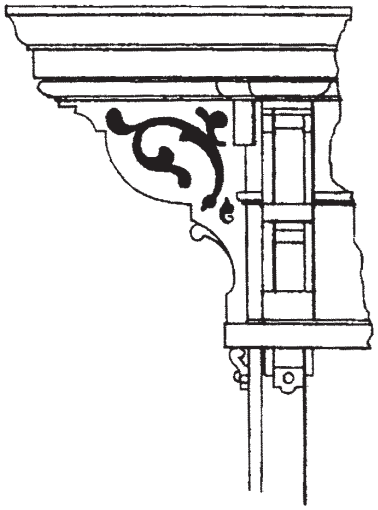
Only two properties predate 1862, when much of New Ulm was destroyed during two battles with Dakota Indians—part of the larger conflict that enveloped southwest Minnesota now referred to as the Dakota Conflict. Most buildings were built between the early 1880s, after a cyclone swept through town, and 1948, as the city's businesspeople responded to better economic times following the Depression and World War II. Three buildings in the district are non-contributing because they were built after 1953, postdating the period of significance.

The district's buildings showcase the work of local architects, contractors, and brickmasons. Buildings exhibit a wide range of historic architectural styles popular in the United States and the Upper Midwest during the district's period of significance from 1861 through 1953. The main facades of many structures are finely detailed above the storefront level with ornate cornices and parapets, carved stonework, decorative brick, and terra cotta.

Most structures are built of brick, typically relying on locally manufactured products by the New Ulm Brick and Tile Company, the Stoeckert brickyards, and nearby Springfield's Ochs Brick Company—founded by Casimir Ochs, a local architect/builder who constructed the Meridian Block on Minnesota Street in 1886. American Artstone is evident in primary building materials, such as the Arbes Store and the Retzlaff Service Station. In addition, it was used for decorative work on George's Ballroom, Retzlaff Auto, the City Meat Market, and the South Side Garage. Several Artstone facades have been obscured or demolished, including the Erd/ Eibner building and a series of 1936 storefronts altered by State Bank and Trust.

As a group, the buildings retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Many have few alterations except for changes to their storefronts and additions to the rear. Several non-contributing buildings maintain elements of the original design, obscured by heavy layers of stucco. They represent buildings that may be considered as contributing to the district's significance in the future if their exterior alterations are reversed.

Excerpts from the New Ulm Commercial National Register Historic District nomination
by Daniel Hoisington



Building Project Categories

Like the commercial district's historic structures, each downtown building project is unique and full of hidden dimensions. However, work that follows the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* falls into one of the following four treatment categories:

Preservation is defined as *the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project. However, new exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment.* The *Standards for Preservation* require retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric along with the building's historic form.

Rehabilitation is defined as *the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.* The *Rehabilitation Standards* acknowledge the need to alter or add to a historic building to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the building's historic character.

Restoration is defined as *the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by removing features from later periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.* The *Restoration Standards* allow for the depiction of a building at a particular time in its history by preserving materials, features, finishes, and spaces from its period of significance and removing those from later periods.

Reconstruction is defined as *the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.* The *Reconstruction Standards* establish a limited framework for recreating a vanished or non-surviving building with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.

The purpose of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* is to provide guidance to historic building owners and building managers, preservation consultants, architects, contractors, and project reviewers prior to beginning work. It is always recommended that preservation professionals be consulted early in any project. Choosing the most appropriate treatment for a building requires careful decision making about a building's historical significance, as well as taking into account a number of other considerations:

Level of Significance. National Historic Landmarks, designated for their "exceptional significance in American history," and other properties important for their interpretive value may be candidates for **Preservation** or **Restoration**. **Rehabilitation,** however, is the most commonly used treatment for the historic buildings in New Ulm's commercial center. **Reconstruction** has the most limited application because so few lost resources can be documented to the degree necessary to accurately recreate the property as it appeared at a particular point in history.

Physical condition. **Preservation** may be appropriate if distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and convey the building's historical significance. If the building requires more extensive repair and replacement, or if alterations or a new addition are necessary for a new use, then **Rehabilitation** is probably the most appropriate treatment.

Proposed use. Many historic buildings can be adapted for a new use or updated for a continuing use without seriously impacting their historic character. However, it may be very difficult or impossible to convert some special-use properties for new uses without major alterations, resulting in loss of historic character and integrity.

Code and other regulations. Regardless of the treatment, regulatory requirements must be addressed. But without a sensitive design approach such work may damage a building's historic materials and negatively impact its character. Therefore, because the ultimate use of the building determines what requirements will have to be met, some potential uses of a historic building may not be appropriate if the necessary modifications would not preserve the building's historic character. This includes adaptations to address natural hazards as well as sustainability.

Excerpts from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.



Early 20th Century photo of Minnesota Street looking north from First Street North

Planning for Rehabilitation

Evaluate Your Building

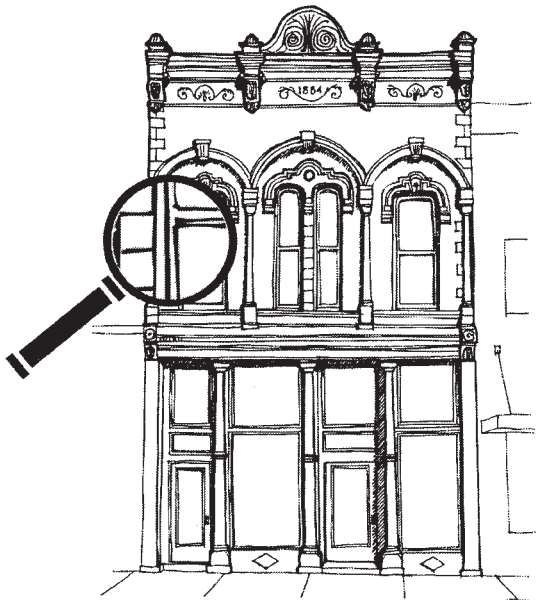
Look closely at your building. It's often clear to see where changes have been made. Look at similar buildings along the street that may not have had major alterations. Look for historic photographs. Downtown area photographs may be found at the New Ulm Historical Society, or the Minnesota Historical Society. Search through storage areas, basements, and attics for missing facade elements.

Set A Budget

Once you have a good idea what your building 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. (See page 10)

Decide On An Approach

The previous section described four typical facade improvement options. Your project may fit into one of these categories or it may straddle categories. 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.



Apply the Design Guidelines

The New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission is responsible for preserving and enhancing the historic character of the downtown's New Ulm Historic District and, in that capacity, provides design review for building improvement projects that impact the historic character of New Ulm's downtown district.

The design guidelines in this manual cover most of the issues likely to arise in the course of facade remodeling. They are intended to illustrate the kinds of renovation approaches and details most likely to require Heritage Preservation Commission approval. The HPC and the City will be able to give additional guidance in special situations. Remember that the goal is to promote and to preserve the historic character of the downtown commercial district.

Approval Process for Exterior Alterations

The Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) is pleased to assist property owners in improving commercial property in a historically appropriate manner. The following information explains the HPC's approval process for exterior alterations to properties located within the New Ulm Commercial Historic District.

Statement of Charge

The New Ulm City Council has charged the New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission with the review of any exterior changes to building facades within the New Ulm Commercial Historic District.

Scope

The HPC will take into consideration the size, scale, color, material, character and adjacent environment of your building when reviewing a request for modification.

Philosophy

If your building is within the downtown Historic District, and you are planning modifications to the facade of your property, the HPC encourages you to discuss the plans with the HPC prior to your application for a building permit. At this informal discussion the HPC can answer questions regarding preservation techniques, and offer advice regarding appropriate exterior modifications for your property.

A formal building review will take place at a regular scheduled meeting after a building permit has been requested and the New Ulm Commercial Center Historic District Alteration/Building Permit has been completed. A complete application includes:

- property owners and applicant signatures,
- exterior construction design plans depicting design of roof, windows, storefronts, and facade treatments, drawn to scale on sheets no larger than 11" x 17." Design plans shall note all exterior finish materials,
- exterior building materials samples and paint chips of proposed colors,
- current photograph of the exterior sides of the building or sites where the work will take place,
- short description of the work to be done and how this work will affect the historic architecture of the building.

If the permit application is for ordinary repair or maintenance, or for minor changes, the Heritage Preservation Ordinance does allow for a "fast track" which may circumvent the need for full HPC review.

Financial Incentives for Building Owners

While there are many reasons to preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and recycle old buildings, financial incentives can be the most tangible. Financial incentives for rehabilitation have been developed on the local, state, and national levels.

Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Historic Preservation Tax Credits are available to building owners interested in substantially rehabilitating historic buildings. Certified commercial structures that are within a National Register of Historic Places district could qualify for a 20% federal investment tax credit as well as a matching 20% state tax credit.

For more information about the federal tax credits go to: *https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm*
For more information about Minnesota's program go to: *https://mn.gov/admin/shpo/incentives/state/*

Facade Easement

Through the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, a building facade can be donated to the organization and leased back to the building owners to provide preservation tax benefits. The program is most beneficial for historic buildings requiring major investment. For more information contact the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota at *www.mnpreservation.org* or call (651) 293-9047.

National Trust Preservation Loan Fund

The National Trust for Historic Preservation issues grants to increase the flow of information and ideas in the field of preservation, stimulate public discussion, enable local groups to gain the technical expertise needed for particular projects, introduce students to preservation concepts and crafts, and encourage participation by the private sector in preservation. For more information contact The National Trust at *www.nationaltrust.org* or call 1-800-944-6847.

Basic Architectural Design in New Ulm

Many of the early builders in New Ulm tried to establish a sense of stability and permanence in the community, constructing solid buildings made first of wood and then materials such as stone and brick. Most of the key buildings within the downtown Historic District were built before 1895 and many of them remain relatively intact, architecturally. 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 New Ulm's 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.

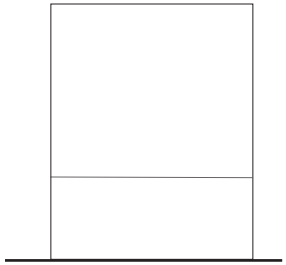


Early photograph of the Boesch Hummel Maltzahn Building in downtown New Ulm

Historic Building Types in New Ulm

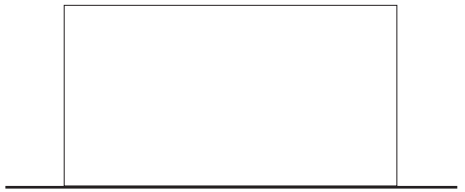
The Two-Part Commercial Block

The most common building type in downtown New Ulm is the two-part commercial block. This building type, ranging from two to three 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, walk-in office, 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. Most of the commercial structures in downtown New Ulm fall into this building type. A good examples of this is the Weig and Hauenstein Building, constructed in 1899 at 123 North Minnesota.



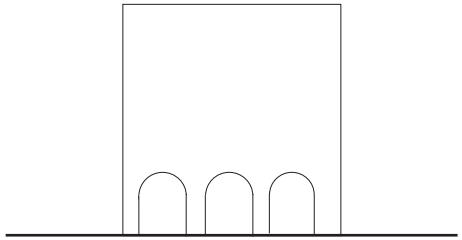
The One-Part Commercial Block

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 20th century, the one-part commercial block often housed a bank or other financial institution. In downtown New Ulm, this type is represented historically by the 1920 Grand Theatre at 212 North Minnesota , and the South Side Auto Garage built in 1911 at 21 South Minnesota.



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 20th century; however, in New Ulm fine examples predate the turn-of-the-century. The arcaded block is illustrated in New Ulm by the Grand Hotel at 210 North Minnesota, constructed in 1876, and on the upper level by the Masonic Block at 9-13 North Minnesota, built in 1891 in the Romanesque Revival style. Early photographs demonstrate that the original storefronts of 110 -114 North Minnesota Street (now part of Herberger's department store) were made up of a series of arched doorways and windows. See historic photograph on page 42.



Historic Building Styles in New Ulm



Italianate window detail on the Grand Hotel built in 1876

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.

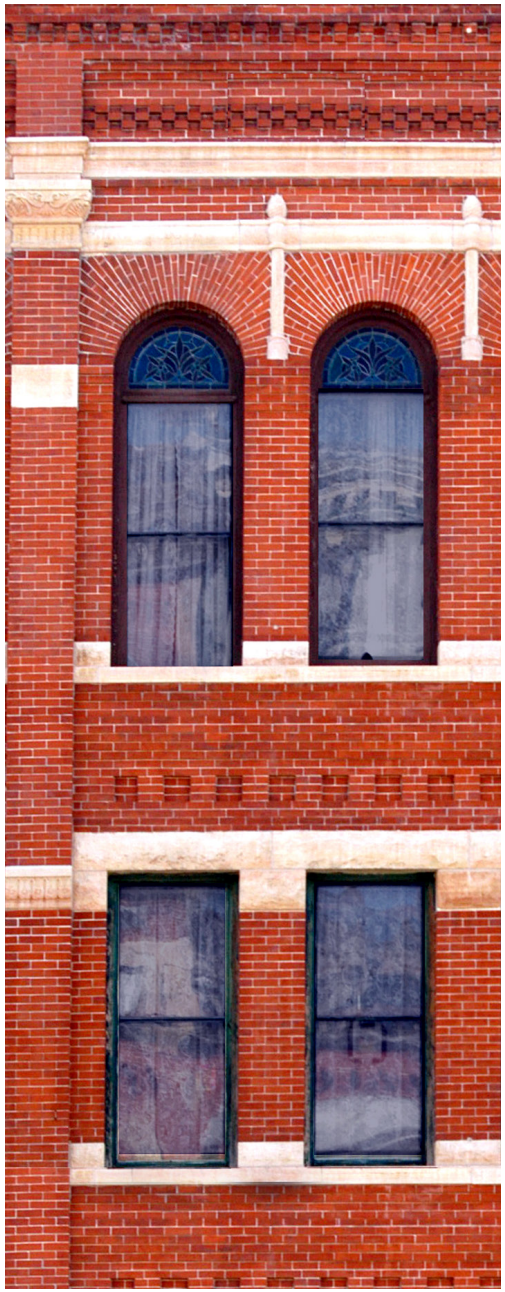
The majority of the historic buildings in downtown New Ulm were constructed during the 1870s through the 1910s. During this time, most commercial buildings in smaller communities throughout the United States were a derivation of the Italianate style. Common elements distinguishing this style are large, 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 Crone Brothers Clothing (1869), at 110 North Minnesota is an example of the Italianate vernacular in downtown New Ulm.

While there are no pure examples of the Romanesque Revival style in downtown New Ulm, the Masonic Block displays many traits of this style. 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-19th century began using heavy masonry construction and rounded arches. The style quickly developed throughout the country, especially in the construction of warehouses and office buildings. This style was primarily built in brownstone or brick.



The simple, but elegant entrance to the Grand Theatre, constructed in 1920

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 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. While the more elaborate Classical Revival buildings throughout the country included columns and pilasters, a modest New Ulm example is the Grand Theatre constructed in 1920, with its basic symmetry, entry surround detailing, and the bas-relief panel on the front facade with its elaborate cartouches and swags.



Masonry

Masonry is the most popular construction material in downtown New Ulm. Brick and stone are widely used as structural and exterior finish materials. Regionally quarried stone is also a material found in downtown New Ulm. Its strength and rugged beauty are its chief assets. Concrete block and stucco are more recent additions to the district, 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.

Repointing

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 Historical Society maintains a list of qualified cleaning contractors in the ***Preservation Specialists Directory*** at:
http://www.mnhs.org/preservation/directory

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

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 does disqualify a project from consideration when applying for federal tax credits.

Sandblasting is never an appropriate cleaning method for historic masonry.

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 repointing of the masonry is usually preferable. A previously painted surface should be chemically cleaned. Only if chemical paint removal proves impracticable (due to a cementitious paint coat, for example) should previously painted brick or stone be repainted.

Most buildings in the downtown New Ulm Historic District are constructed of soft brick. When reviewing the application of new paint over a soft brick exterior, the HPC, 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.

If masonry must be painted please refer to page 23 in these guidelines for details regarding appropriate paint colors.

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 at the New Ulm Planning Office—or online at:
https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm

Wood

One of the most popular building materials in the district is wood, 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.

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.'

Keep all surfaces 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 followed by two final coats of oil-based paint.

Severely rotted or missing pieces may be reproduced, or repaired in place using consolidants, by a good carpenter or millwork shop. Try to match or at least complement the existing details when replacing woodwork. It is a good idea to remove vegetation that grows too closely to wood.

References

The following publications contain more detailed information about wood.

P*reservation Brief #10—Exterior Paint and Problems on Historic Woodwork*

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 district'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 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.

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.

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 downtown New Ulm 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 loss of original detail is the most obvious problem encountered with synthetic sidings. 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 buildings in historic downtowns. Wherever possible, such materials should be removed in the course of maintenance and improvements to properties.

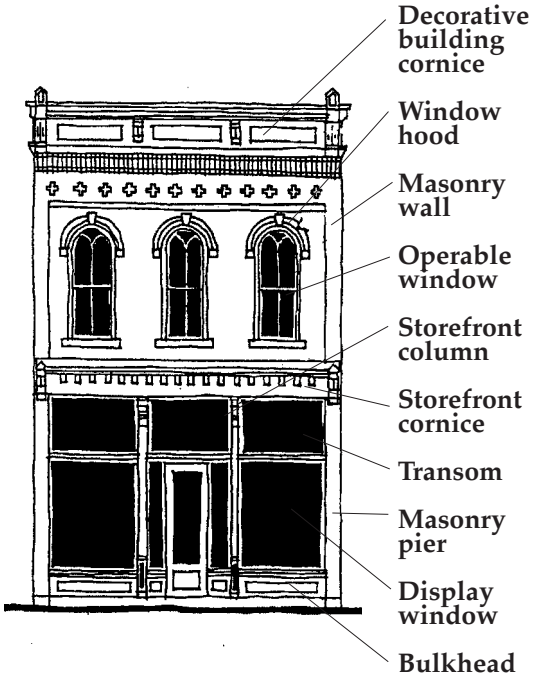
References

The following publication contains more detailed information about substitute siding materials.

Preservation Brief #8—Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings

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.



The 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 or appropriate colored anodized 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 or appropriate colored anodized 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

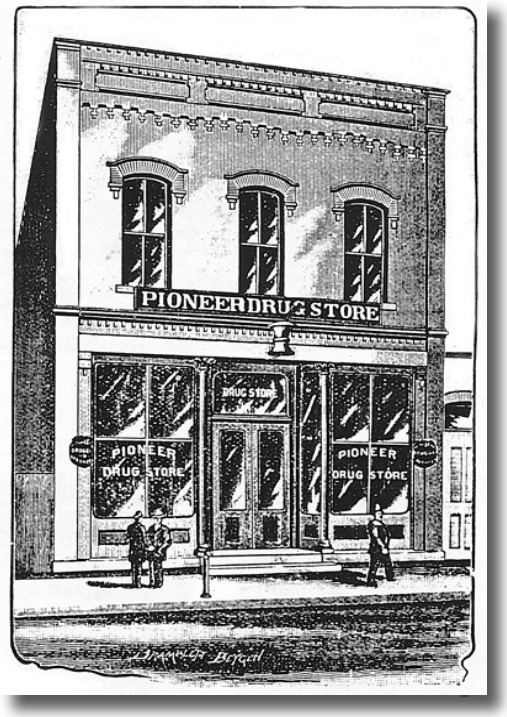
Certain materials and design elements should never be used on a traditional commercial building. A mansard roof with wooden shingles, rough textured wood siding, metal siding, fake bricks or stone, and gravel aggregate materials are not appropriate. Inappropriate historical themes should also be avoided. Small window panes, a colonial door, and storefront shutters are 18th-century elements that do not belong on most 19th- or 20th-century facades.

Although commonly found in mid-late 20th-century replacement commercial doors and windows, raw "extruded aluminum" framing is generally inappropriate for buildings constructed within the historic district's period of significance (1861--1953). The exception to this rule, however, would apply to some "Art Deco" construction or renovations that occurred in the second quarter of the 20th-century. Art Deco architecture often expressed was streamlined, modern expression with the use of raw, but polished aluminum banding and the use of advertising lighting. This style and application can be seen in the in the historic photograph of the Retzlaff Hardware at 21 North Minnesota Street, as seen on page 38.

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.



Note the large, oversized display windows, the bulkhead below and the signboard above on this early graphic of 125 North Minnesota Street.

Doors, Windows, and Awnings

Doors and windows help to define the architecture of historic downtown New Ulm. 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 come inside. Most doors in the district 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, plastic or wood shutters are inappropriate for use in the district. On buildings that originally featured shutters, make sure the panels exactly match the size and shape of the window opening.

Storefront entry doors

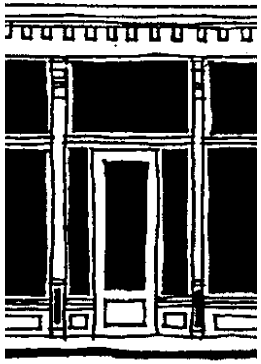
Storefront entry doors should present an attractive appearance and should be visually appropriate for your storefront. Original doors should be retained if possible. If a new door is to be installed it should closely resemble the design and proportions of the original door. Wood is the preferred material, 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

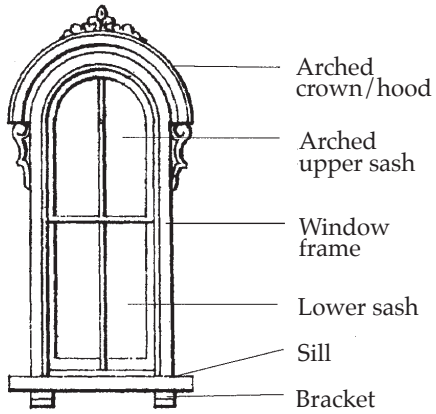
When more energy efficient double-glazed aluminum or wood windows are to be used as replacements, they should match the original wood windows in size, profile and style. Never replace a multi-pane window with a single large pane of glass. Aluminum windows should be in a baked enamel finish or an appropriate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

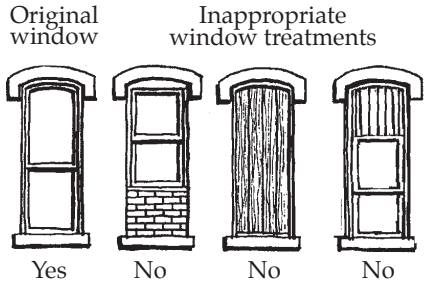
Storm windows

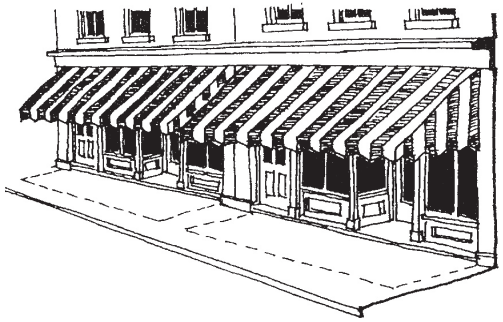
Storm windows may be desirable on upper story windows for energy conservation. An exterior storm window can also serve to protect and upgrade older wooden sashes. They should conform with the size and shape of the existing sash and be painted to match as well. Interior storm windows are a good choice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



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







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 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 are not allowed. Vinyl coated fabric, fixed metal, transparent or opaque vinyl or wood awnings are inappropriate and must be avoided. 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



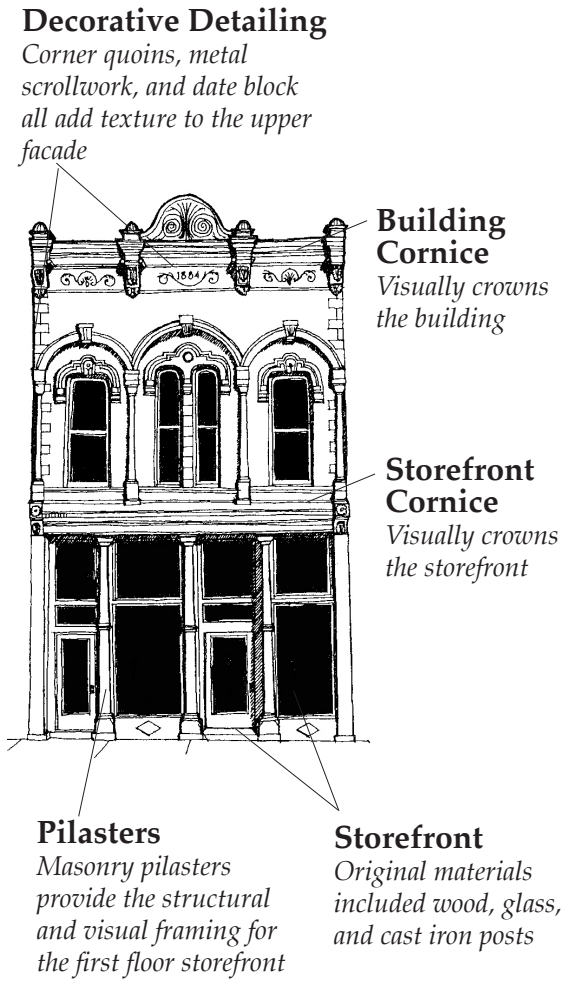
This early 20th-century photograph shows the extensive use of retractable canvas awnings in New Ulm's commercial district. The application of appropriate new canvas awnings is encouraged.

Architectural Details

Architectural details are among the most distinctive elements which identify the different styles in downtown New Ulm. 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, television antennae and satellite dishes are contemporary features in downtown New Ulm. 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.



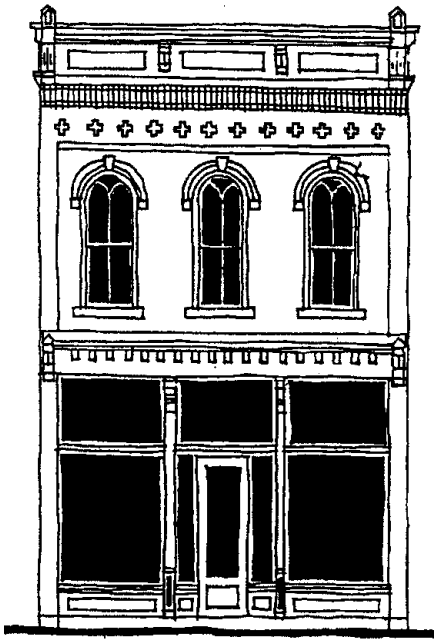
Paint Colors

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, rather than latex paints, unless careful preparations are made. 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. However, there is no clear rule for paint colors in a stylistically mixed group of buildings like those in the district, other than to avoid bright or unusual colors. Those who desire precise guidance can perform, or hire a consultant to undertake, paint analysis to determine paint colors at a specific time in a building's history.

The New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission or the City of New Ulm can provide property owners with a more detailed paint palette.

The City of New Ulm strongly recommends that property owners keep their buildings regularly painted and seek guidance in selecting the type and colors of any paint.

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. Typically, trim elements that have the same function on the exterior receive same or similar colors: for example, all window and door frames are the same color, or cornices use the same or similar colors. The window sash and doors can be painted a darker color than the walls and trim. Do not paint masonry that is not painted. Prepare the surface to be painted by removing all loose paint and sanding all rough edges that remain. Prime the surface with a high quality oil-base primer and follow with two finish coats of oil-base or latex paint.



Paint Color Hierarchy

Minor Trim

- Window sash
- Doors
- Storefront frame
- Small details on cornices, window hoods, and bulkheads

Major Trim

- Building cornice
- Window hoods
- Window frame
- Storefront cornice
- Storefront columns
- Bulkheads

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

In planning downtown improvements, the "backs" of buildings should be considered for potential secondary business entrances. In New Ulm you can see businesses taking advantage of secondary entrances along the alley to the west of North Minnesota Street. These alleyways and pedestrian walkways not only improve customer access from the parking areas, but also significantly enhance pedestrian circulation throughout the Historic Distinct.

Gaps between the historic building fabric can provide access to secondary entrances. These passages can also lead to inviting exterior seating areas along improved alleyscapes. The development of these gaps is best approached as a cooperative effort between adjoining store owners or as public improvements.

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.

Signage and Lighting



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.

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.

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 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. signs inside shop windows are usually appropriate and possess a charm that can be very attractive, if not overused. signage is not appropriate on the building exterior unless it was an original feature of the building such as in the original Art Deco lighting designed for the Retzlaff Hardware storefront in 1940. Lighting for other kinds of signage should be limited to direct illumination by energy efficient "light emitting diode" LED lights.

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 signs. Replacement of these kinds of signs should be strongly considered in planning for rehabilitation. In addition to these guidelines, property owners must also follow the New Ulm sign ordinance.

Sign Guidelines

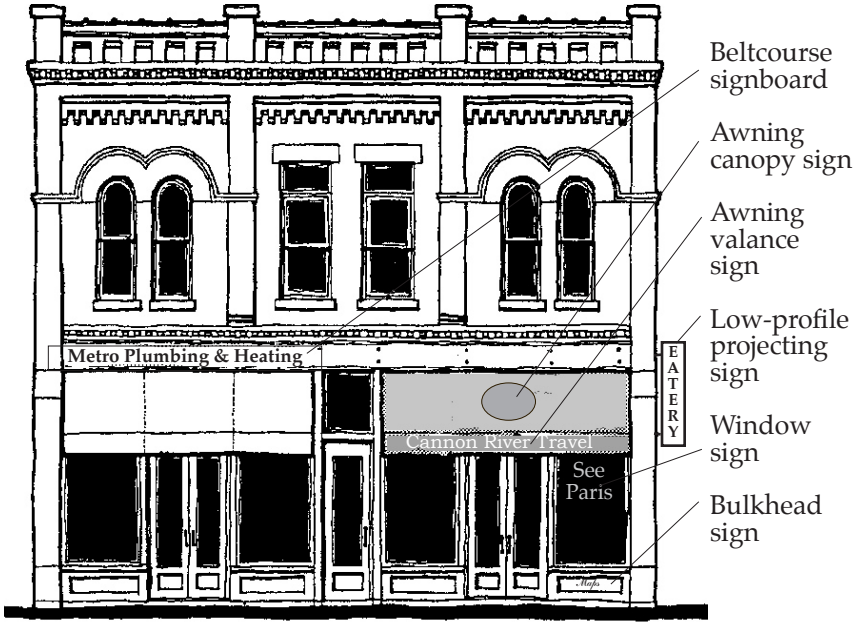
- Signs should made be of traditional materials such as wood or metal panels with painted or ornamental metal lettering. Materials that replicate the look of wood or metal may be acceptable.

- 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. However, each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall not occupy more than 60 percent of the total sign area. Where businesses are required to utilize a corporate image or the sign lettering style and/or color is part of the business identity, the corporate image may be acceptable by utilizing other mitigating historic sign design features such as a raised sign boarder, dimensional letters, small lettering size and scale.

- 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.
- Incandescent and LED illumination are the most appropriate light source for historic commercial signage.
- LED lighting should have a warm “temperature range” around 3000K that is reminiszent of the warm tones of the older incandescent lighting.
- "Historic" theme light fixtures such as "Colonial" coach lanterns are not appropriate to the New Ulm Historic District.
- Internally-lit awning and vacume-formed plastic signs are not appropriate.
- Historically New Ulm’s downtown has displayed some internally-lit glass signs. Framed-glass signage with subdued internal lighting may be acceptable if well-designed and approriately scaled for a historic district.
- 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.

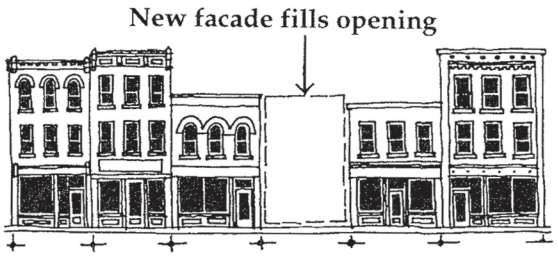


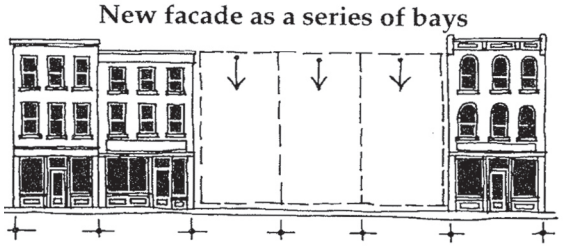
While lighting is generally discouraged, if applied on a well-designed, low-profile sign, it may be permitted.

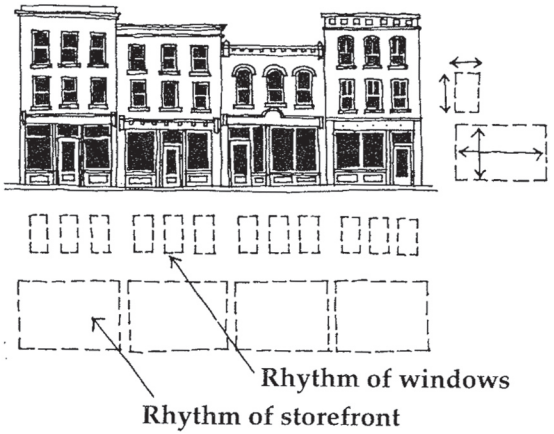
New Downtown Construction

Much has been written (and argued) on the issue of new construction in historic downtowns. An exhaustive discussion of the issue could fill a book and is beyond the scope of this guide. 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.

The infill building should fill the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.

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

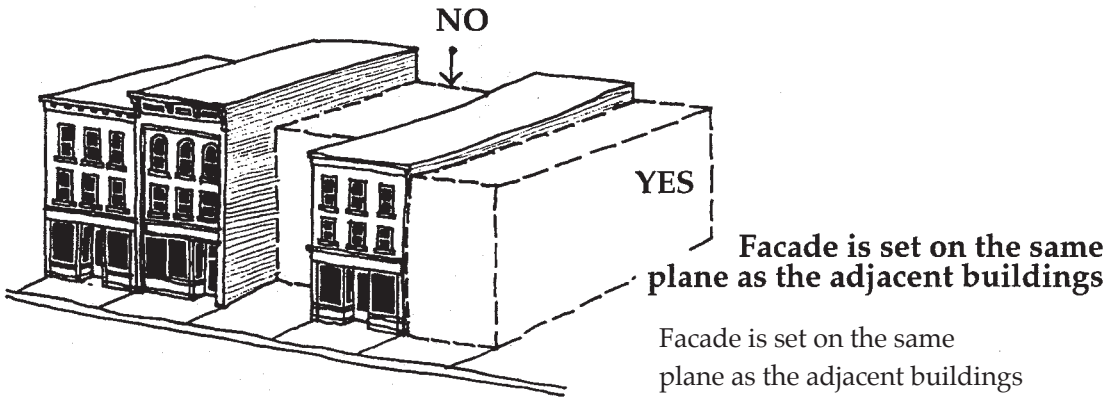
An infill facade should be composed of materials similar to adjacent facades. The new building should not stand out from the others.

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.



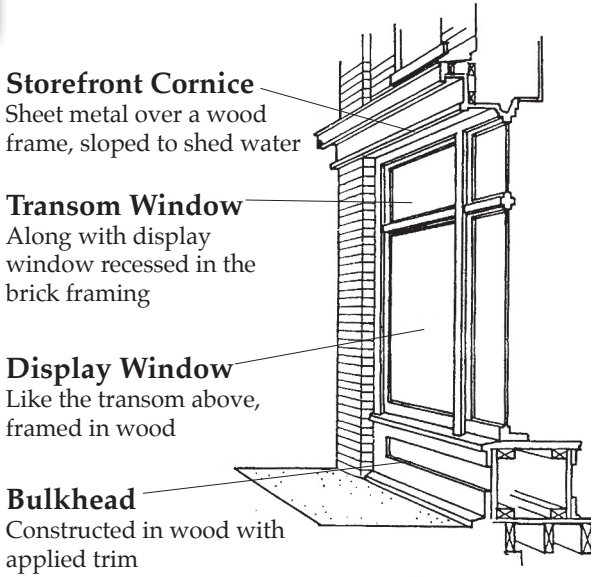
Facade is set on the same
plane as the adjacent buildings

New Building Materials

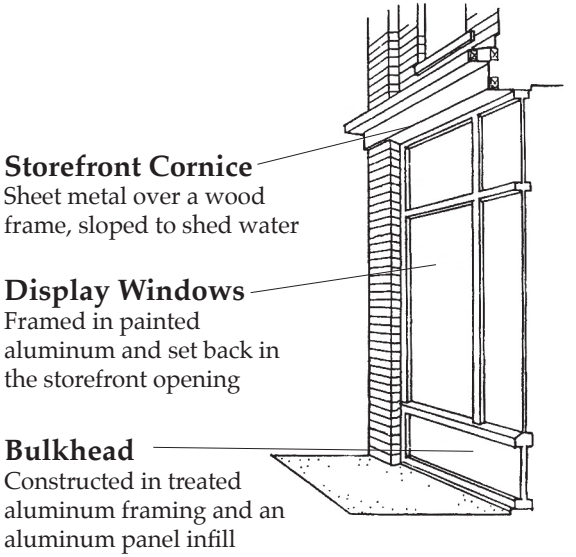
While the commercial property owner is encouraged to use traditional materials in the reconstruction of missing or altered building elements, often it is economically infeasible. Therefore, the owner may consider using newer building materials that emulate the appearance of the traditional elements.

When designing a new storefront for your commercial property, you should meet with the New Ulm Heritage Preservation Commission or the City of New Ulm Building Inspector 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, plywood 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

Applying the Guidelines to New Ulm'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 New Ulm and can be used as a guide to what type of improvement might be appropriate for other buildings that are similar in design.

North Minnesota Street

3-5 **Schoch-Ottomeyer Block (North Storefront)—**Constructed in 1898, this two-story brick commercial block displays its original simple elegance on the second story facade. The double storefront structure was designed to house retail businesses on the first floor and offices on the second floor.

9-13 **Masonic Block—**Built in 1891, the three-story Masonic Block is a good example of a Romanesque Revival style brick building in downtown New Ulm. The structure was built through a joint venture between a prominent local law firm, a hardware business and the New Ulm Masonic Lodge.

21 **Retzlaff Hardware—**This two-story commercial block was built in phases by the Retzlaff family beginning in the early 1890s. After a fire the building was "modernized" in 1940 with concrete panel facing and a streamlined storefront and signage. The name plate in Art Deco style letter reading, "F.H.RETZLAFF 1887" refers to the founding date of the company, not the construction date of the building.

22 **Gebser's Hall—**Constructed in 1894, this elegant two-story brick building was constructed to house a saloon. The upper story was used through time for a variety of assembly uses including the local Unitarian Church, the Ladies of Germania, and the Knights of Pythias.

110 **Crone Brothers Clothing—**This three-story Italianate brick structure, built in 1869, once housed the largest retailer in New Ulm. The Crone Brothers building is the southern component of three buildings now owned by Herberger's department store.

112-114 **Theodore Crone Dry Goods—**Built ca. 1873, this three-story Italianate brick structure is the center of the three building blocks making up the present day Herberger's complex. Like it's neighbors to the south and north, the Theodore Crone Dry Goods building has been turned into a "painted lady" with inappropriate exterior paint application and colors.

116-118 **Stuebe Meat Market/John Neumann Store—**Built in 1898, this two-story Italianate brick building is constructed of New Ulm pressed brick.

117 **Reim Jewelers—**This simple, but handsome brick structure was constructed in 1907. The light cream-colored brick building was designed to house a jewelry store and has been the home to jewelry businesses for nearly 100 years.

201 **Doehne Block—**Prominently located on a corner, this two-story brick commercial building was built in 1887 and originally housed a milling business with medical offices above.

202 **Schell's Hall—**Built in 1894, this handsome two-story brick structure housed a variety of public assembly uses in the second floor meeting hall, including local labor unions, the German American Alliance, and a local socialist organization.

203 **Buenger Furniture Company—**Built in 1920, this two-story commercial structure is steel framed with a dark brown brick and Artstone veneer. It originally housed a furniture company.

South Minnesota Street

13-15 **Schoch Block—**This two-story brick structure was built in 1911. Numerous businesses have resided in the two-bayed building. Most recently the American Legion has been located here.

16 **Engelbert Hardware Store—**The two-story portion of this structure was built in 1902. Ten years later the Engelberts built a one-story addition to house a farm implement warehouse and sales room next to their hardware store.

Existing Condition

3-5 North Minnesota Street
Schoch-Ottomeyer Block

Constructed in 1898, this two-story commercial block retains the second story architectural integrity. The original storefront has been 'modernized" with inappropriate materials and design elements.

Speakers, air-conditioners and other utilitarian hardware should not be visible to the pedestrian

The modern treatment of the southern storefront is jarring and distracting to the streetscape of New Ulm's historic district

Extruded raw aluminum door and window framing are inappropriate for historic storefronts

This storefront is part of a larger building complex and the building's architectural integrity should be respected and the storefronts compatible as seen in this historic photograph of the Schoch-Ottomeyer Block





Potential Renovation



Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung windows

Place commercial signage in a flush signboard over the transoms

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

Return storefront to its original window/door relationship

The design of shop doors and second floor access doors should suggest different uses

Existing Condition

9-13 North Minnesota Street
Masonic Block

Built in 1891, the three-story Masonic Block is a good example of a Romanesque Revival style brick building. While the upper stories retain their original openings, the third floor has had its windows infilled and the storefront level has been modified dramatically with three totally unrelated design treatments.





Potential Renovation

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary

Inspect roofing and flashing

Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung

Place commercial signage on flush signboards over the transoms

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

Return storefront to its original window/door relationship



Existing Condition

21 North Minnesota Street
Retzlaff Hardware



This two-story stone commercial block retains much of its 1940 renovation. However, the inappropriate 'waterfall' awning detracts from and covers the building's original strong, "Moderne" architecture features.

Inappropriate "waterfall" awning extends across the entire main facade

Artstone sheaths the upper story in the 1940's renovation of the two original buildings



Potential Renovation

Inspect roofing and flashing

Replace and/or modify as-necessary and chrome signage on existing Art Moderne canopy



Clean and polish blue and orange "Vitrolite" that remains above the chrome-edged canopy

If renovation of the period signage is infeasible, a traditional retractable, canvas awning with signage on the valance should replace the current "waterfall" fixed awning

In any case, what remains of the original "Vitrolite" and chrome storefront should be preserved

Existing Condition

22 North Minnesota Street
Gebser's Hall

This building was constructed in 1894 with a saloon on the first floor and a meeting hall above. Groups that met here included the Unitarian Church (late 1800s), the Ladies of Germania Lodge and the Knights of Pythias (early 1900s).





The upper story retains its architectural integrity.

The "floating" sign does not fit the historic nature of the building or the downtown.

The original storefront has been totally obscured with the use of inappropriate stone and a shingled shed canopy.

Potential Renovation



Inspect roofing and flashing.

Repoint, repair and clean brick and stone as necessary.

Place signage on a signboard—above the store front and below the upper-level windows. Additional signage may appear on the awning valance.

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows and store entrance. If desired, the awning could stretch across the entire storefront and the side entry.

Reconstruct the original storefront with large display windows, center recessed doorway with transom above.

Coordinate the apartment door with the treatment of the storefront door.

Existing Condition

110 North Minnesota Street
Crone Brothers Clothing



110 **Crone Brothers Clothing—**This three-story Italianate brick structure, built in 1869, once housed the largest retailer in New Ulm. The Crone Brothers building is the southern component of three buildings now owned by Herberger's department store.

112-114 **Theodore Crone Dry Goods—**Built ca. 1873, this three-story Italianate brick structure is the center of the three building blocks making up the present-day Herberger's complex. Like it's neighbors to the south and north, the Theodore Crone Dry Goods building has been turned into a "painted lady" with inappropriate exterior paint application and colors.

116-118 **Stuebe Meat Market/John Neumann Store—**Built in 1898, this two-story Italianate brick building is constructed of New Ulm pressed brick.

While the upper stories retain their original fenestration patterns, the elevations of the three separate blocks have been painted in a common color palette that deemphasizes their individuality. Similarly, the uniqueness of the three original storefronts has been replaced by a monolithic, commercial design treatment.



Potential Renovation

Repoint and repair brick as necessary and then repaint the three unique building blocks with more appropriate and compatible colors

Place commercial signage is a flush signboard over the transoms

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

Inspect roofing and flashing

Repair existing windows or replace with insulated windows

Hang a retractable, and color-compatible canvas awning over the display windows

Return storefront to its original window/door relationship



Existing Condition

117 North Minnesota Street
Reim Jewelry

This simple, but handsome brick structure was constructed in 1907 to house a jewelry store. The storefront has been significantly altered from its original design.

Air-conditioner projects out from main facade interrupting the balance of the upper story

While many of New Ulm's buildings originally had arcaded storefronts, this building had a simple, elegant rectilinear design. The present treatment hides the original beauty of this commercial building.





Potential Renovation



Inspect roofing and flashing

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary

Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung windows

Place commercial signage on glass, awning or over the transoms

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

The design of shop doors and second floor access doors should suggest different uses

Existing Condition

201 North Minnesota Street
Doehne Block

Prominently located on a corner, this two-story brick commercial building retains most of its original upper story detailing. However, the first floor has been "modernized" with inappropriate materials and design elements. A newer element that improved the balance was a display window on the 2nd Avenue North facade.



Note that the chimney, partial parapets and finials have been removed from the cornice top.

Modern vertical wood arches now obscure the original storefront and transom windows.

The original wood and glass double doors on the corner entrance have been replaced with a single contemporary anodized aluminum door.

Potential Renovation



Inspect roofing and flashing.

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary.

Place signage on a signboard—above the store front and below the upper-level windows. Additional signage may appear on the awning valance.

Hang a canvas, retractable awning over the display windows.

Remove modern applied sheathing and reconstruct the original storefront with transoms, display windows, corner double door, and apartment entrance to the north.

Existing Condition

202 North Minnesota Street
Schell's Hall

Built in 1894, this two-story brick structure once displayed a handsome tri-set window combination on the second story. The center window has now been infilled and the storefront completely altered with modern design elements.

Air-conditioner projects out from main facade

The once beautiful arched crowning window has been infilled with wood panels

The first story has had a number of renovations that have hidden its original simple design





Potential Renovation



Inspect roofing and flashing

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary

Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung windows

Restore original center window with arched transom

Place commercial signage on flush signboard over the transom

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with central or side store entrance, large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

The design of shop doors and second floor access doors should suggest different uses

Existing Condition

203 North Minnesota Street
Buenger Furniture Company

Built in 1920, this once elegant structure has had all of its original bays infilled with inappropriate materials and treatments.



Vertical wood panels fill the three window bays on the second story giving the building a blank look.



Infill panels with shallow arches replace the large, traditional storefronts.

Potential Renovation

Inspect roofing and flashing.

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary.

Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung window sets.

Place signage on a signboard—above the store front and below the upper-level windows. Additional signage may appear on the awning valance.



Hang a canvas, retractable awning over the display windows.

Remove modern applied sheathing and reconstruct the original storefront with transoms above, display windows, and bulkhead below.

Existing Condition

13-15 South Minnesota Street
Schoch Block

This two-story brick structure was built in 1911. Numerous businesses have resided in the two bayed building. Most recently the American Legion has been located here.



While the upper story retains its original fenestration and design elements, the bay-defining piers have been inappropriately painted white. The first story bay storefronts have been totally obscured by a monolithic treatment in modern sheathing materials.



Potential Renovation

Remove air-conditioner from main facade

Inspect roofing and flashing

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary and return piers to their original brick color



Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung windows

Place commercial signage on flush signboard over the transom

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with central or side store entrance, large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

Existing Condition

16 South Minnesota Street
Engelbert Hardware Store

The two-story portion of this structure was built in 1902. Ten years later the Engelberts built a one-story addition.



The first story bay storefronts have been totally obscured by vertical wood siding



Potential Renovation

Inspect roofing and flashing

Repoint, repair and clean brick as necessary



Repair existing windows or replace with insulated double-hung windows

Place commercial signage on flush signboard over the transom

Hang a retractable canvas awning over the display windows

Remove modern treatments and restore original storefronts with large display windows, transoms above and bulkhead below

The design of shop doors and second floor access doors should suggest different uses

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 second-story one-over-one double hung windows are in poor condition and need repair or replacement, and painting.
The upper story brickwork needs some cleaning and repair.
The signboard area has been covered with modern panels.
The storefront has been modified with modern treatments and infills.
The storefront windows have been downsized and the doors do not match.



Phase 1

Repair, clean and repaint the upper story double hung windows.
Uncover, renovate and/or replace the upper story arched window.
Repair and repoint the brick as necessary.



Phase 2

Apply appropriate signage on a flush signboard above the storefront.
Hang a retractable canvas awning over the storefront bay.



Phase 3

Rebuild storefronts as originally designed with large display windows with transom above and a bulkhead below.
Also, replace the side entry bay with an appropriate, complementary door with transom.



Examples of Exterior Design Improvements Since 2006

Since the Downtown Preservation Guidelines were first implemented in 2006 there have been many positive storefront improvements made to the New Ulm downtown commercial building stock. Over the past decade, three historic district renovation projects stand out. Through the coordination of downtown building owners and New Ulm's Heritage Preservation Commission these ventures display outstanding examples of good preservation design principals promoted in this manual. The projcts include improvements made to the historic F. H. Retzlaff & Sons building at 518 Center Street, the G.A. Ottomeyer Block at 1 North Minnesota Street, and the Brown County Bank building at 2 North Minnesota Street. The following photogrpahs illustrate and acknowledge those examples of positive, historically sensitive downtown design stewardship.

518 Center Street

F. H. Retzlaff & Sons

Built in 1924, this one-story brick commercial building was constructed with large display windows spanning the Center Street facade. The property housed the Retzlaff Motor Company, an early Dodge automotive dealership in New Ulm. Through time this one-story early 20th-century building retained its original brick facade.

Historic Photograph



Existing Condition (2006)

Note the inappropriate "waterfall" awning extends across part of the western portion of the main facade and the window and transom openings are infilled with modern materials and treatment.



Potential Renovation (2006)



Today

Working from the historic photograph the renovation included the placement of the entry openings to their original lacation at the outer edges of the main, central bay of the commercial storefront.



1 North Minnesota Street

G.A. Ottomeyer Block

Built in 1886, this two-story brick structure building retained its upper-story architectural integrity over the years but displayed multiple modifications at the storefront level.

Historic Photograph



Existing Condition (2006)

Note that the gabled canopy roof over the entrance is inappropriate for a historic storefront and does not relate to any other architectural feature of the building. The transom openings were infilled with modern materials and treatments. Also, signage should relate to the individual buildings and not cross over the interface between two different buildings.



Potential Renovation (2006)



Today

Note that the display windows and new awnings are crowned with a band of transom windows, as originally designed.



2 North Minnesota Street

The Brown County Bank

Constructed in 1871, this prominent brick structure retained its upper-story arched window opening, and its brick exterior on both public elevations.

Historic Photograph



Existing Condition (2006)

The historic picture reveals that the prominent corner building had been modified over time with the storefront display windows and transom windows above on both the Center and North Minnesota elevations infilled with modern materials. Inappropriate undersized, residential-scale windows had been installed on the North Minnesota Street elevation.



Potential Renovation (2006)



TODAY *Note that the original design including display and transom windows have been re-introduced to both the front and side storefront elevations and a new canvas awnings crowns the main storefront display bay.*



Appendix I—*Inventory of New Ulm Commercial Historic District Properties*

The following inventory lists the properties within the New Ulm Commercial Historic District by street, ascending street number, historic name, and year(s) built.

North Broadway

2 United States Post Office (built in 1909)

12 Retzlaff Motor Company (built in 1938)

18 Fesenmaier Service Station (built in 1937)

26 Arbeiter Hall (built in 1873)

100 New Ulm Municipal Building (built in 1919)

Center Street

405 George's Ballroom (built in 1947)

506 Jacob Pfenninger Store (built in 1871)

509 Chrysler Garage (built in 1927)

518 F. H. Retzlaff & Sons (built in 1924)

South Minnesota Street

1-5 City Meat Market (built in 1927)

2 Schoch-Reinhart Block (built in 1905)

6 John Zischka Saloon (built in 1914)

8 F. C. Schnobrich Meat Market (built in 1893)

9 American Theatre (built in 1912)

13-15 Schoch Block (built in 1911)

16 Engelbert Hardware Store (built in 1902)

17-19 Professional Building (built in 1946)

18 Siebenbunner Grocery (built 1931)

20 Chicago House (built in 1884-1889; 1901; 1931)

21 South Side Auto Garage (built in 1911, 1926 [new front])

26 Standard Oil Co. Filling Station (built in 1952)

North Minnesota Street

1 G. A. Ottomeyer Block (built in 1886)

2 Brown County Bank (built in 1871)

3-5 Schoch-Ottomeyer Block (built in 1898)

4 Henry Behnke Building (built in 1871)

6-12 Boesch Hummel Maltzahn Block (built in 1890)

9-13 Masonic Block (built in 1891)

14 Roos and Sommers Block (built in 1871)

15 Amann's Saloon (built in 1894)

16-18 Meridian Block (built in 1886, 1948 [new front])

19 Liebold Building (built in 1881)

20 Charles Gebser Store (built in 1884-1889)

21 Retzlaff Hardware (built in 1892, 1910, 1912, 1940)

22 Gebser's Hall (built in 1894)

24 Wicherski Shoe Store (built in 1890)

27 J. C. Penney (built in 1956)

28 Somsen Block (built in 1915)

100 State Bank & Trust (built in 1936, 1972)

101 Olsen Block (built in 1906)

105 Citizens Bank of New Ulm (built in 1914, 1973)

108 Erd Building (built in 1861)

110 Crone Brothers Clothing (built in 1869)

112-114 Theodore Crone Dry Goods (built in 1873)

115 Baltrusch Building (built in 1873)

116-118 Stuebe Meat Market and John Neumann Store (built in 1898)

117 Reim Jewelers (built in 1907)

119 Backer Harness Shop (built in 1897)

120 Wagner Furniture; Citizens Bank (built in 1878, 1946)

121 Loheyde Shoe Store (built in 1884; 1895 [second story])

123 Weigand Hauenstein Building (built in 1899)

125 Pioneer Drug Store (built in 1868, 1881)

126 Ben Franklin Store (built in 1971)

127 Weiser Block (built in 1916)

200 Farmers & Merchants Bank (built in 1914)

201 Doehne Block (built in 1887)

202 Schell's Hall (built in 1894)

203 Buenger Furniture Company (built in 1920)

204 Theodore Mueller Cigar Factory (built in 1898)

206 Henry Seifert Saloon (built in 1898)

209-213 (209) Weneeda Bakery (211) E. W. Baer Hardware (213) Ulrich Electric (built in 1922)

210 Grand Hotel (built in 1876)

212 Grand Theatre (built in 1920)

214 Arbes Furniture (1918)

(216) Dengler Store (built in 1926)

(217) Epple Meat Market (built in 1871 [ca.], 1918 [new front])

220 Kiesling House (built in 1861)

221 Veigel-Moll Building (built in 1946)

225 Louis Buenger Building (A) (built in 1892)

227 Louis Buenger Building (B) (built in 1902)

301 Lohmann Building (built in 1885)

First Street South

512-514 Graff Garage (built in 1918)

First Street North

504-510 Fritsche Block (built in 1925)

Second Street North

412 Stoll Plumbing (built in 1902)

510-512 Volksblatt-Brown County Journal Building (built in 1897)

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—*Public Signage*

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 New Ulm. 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 New Ulm 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 downtown New Ulm.

Directional/Informational Signs

Informational signs include historic district directions and announcements, public parking, and other directional information to guide people to key areas in downtown New Ulm. 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 the New Ulm Commercial Center 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

Appendix IV — *Guidelines for Demolishing or Moving a Structure*

It is the Heritage Preservation Commission's legal responsibility to protect the historic resources within the New Ulm Commercial Historic District. The demolition or moving of any historic resource within the district constitutes an irreplaceable loss to the Historic District and consequently to the City of New Ulm. The contributing buildings within Commercial Historic District are significant civic assets. Once they are gone, they are lost forever. Because of the downtown's dense development pattern, the loss of even one building could create a noticeable gap in the district's historic fabric. Therefore, a request for demolition of any structure within the Historic District, by ordinance, must be carefully evaluated by the Heritage Preservation Commission before any final approval or denial is given.

New Ulm's Zoning Ordinance defines demolition as the "dismantling or tearing down of all or part of any building and all operations incidental thereto." While the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) will consider most permit applications for partial demolition as exterior alterations rather than demolition, the criteria listed below should be used by the HPC in evaluating requests for total demolition of buildings within the downtown commercial district.

Demolition Request Evaluation Criteria
Section 9.19 of the City of New Ulm Zoning Ordinance establishes the preservation responsibilities of the Heritage Preservation Commission for structures within the city's historic districts. A decision by the Commission approving or denying the permit request for the demolition of historic structures should be guided by:

Historical Factors

- The historic, cultural, aesthetic or architectural significance of the building.
- The importance of the historic structure to the ambiance of a district, contributing or non-contributing.
- Whether or not the proposed demolition could adversely affect other historic buildings, the character of the historic district, or the district's National Register of Historic Places listing.

Architectural Factors

- The difficulty or the impossibility of reproducing such a building because of its design, texture, material, detail, or unique location.
- Whether the historic building is one of the last remaining examples of its kind in the downtown.
- The condition of the structure and its probable life expectancy.

Planning/Economic Factors

- The reason for demolishing the structure and whether or not alternatives exist.
- Whether there are definite plans for reuse of site if the proposed demolition is carried out, and what would be the effect of those plans on the character of the surrounding commercial area.

- Whether reasonable measures can be taken to save the historic structure.
- Whether the historic structure is capable of earning reasonable economic return on its value.
- Whether or not relocation of the structure would be a practical and preferable alternative to demolition.

Civic Factors

- The public necessity of the proposed demolition.
- The public purpose or interest in the land or building(s) to be protected.

An application for demolition may be approved if the preservation of a structure is found to be either physically or economically unfeasible to remain in place. If preservation is found to be physically and economically feasible, then the HPC is authorized under the Zoning Ordinance (Section 9.19 Heritage Preservation) to deny the demolition request and preserve the structure on its original site or through relocation. If the permit is denied, the property owner has a right to appeal any decision of the Heritage Preservation Commission to the City Council and then to the Circuit Court if there are grounds that an error was made in the Commission's findings.

Demolition Guidelines for the Property Owners

1. **Demolish a historic structure only after all preferable alternatives have been exhausted.**
2. **Document the building thoroughly with photographs and measured drawings and file this information with the City of New Ulm Planning Department and the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office.**
3. **Maintain the empty lot appropriately so that it is free of hazards and trash and is well-maintained if the site is to remain vacant for any length of time.**

The New Ulm Commercial Historic District is unique, with a variety of architectural styles that represent the history of commercial development in the city. The moving of any building from its original site within the district should be avoided if at all possible. Once a building has been moved from its original site, it loses its association with the site and its contextual place in time. Moving a building should be considered only after it is determined that, should it remain at its original site, it would meet sure demolition. All other avenues should be explored if the purpose is the preservation of the structure. If there is no other option to save a building from demolition, careful plans should be undertaken to find a suitable site for the structure.

The first choice for relocation should be a vacant site in the historic district. Such a site could allow the building to support the character of the commercial center and hopefully ensure compatibility with neighboring structures. If the building must be moved outside of the historic district, a suitable site should be chosen after consulting the Guidelines Section: *New Downtown Construction*, page 29. In either case, the move's impact on the National Register status of the downtown district must be take into consideration.

Since the relocation of a historic structure is a rare occurrence in a historic district, the following Zoning Ordinance Criteria and Additional Criteria may serve as a guide for both the property owner and the HPC in a discussion of the relocation request.

Moving Request Evaluation Criteria
A decision by the Commission approving or denying a request for the relocation of a historic structure, should be guided by:

Historical Factors
- The historic, aesthetic or architectural significance of the building to be moved.
- The importance of the historic structure to the ambiance of a district.
- Whether or not the proposed move could adversely affect other historic buildings, the character of the historic district, or the district's National Register of Historic Places listing.

Architectural Factors
- Whether the proposed relocation area is compatible with the historical and architectural character of the building.
- Whether the structure can be moved without significant damage to it physical integrity.
- The condition of the structure and its probable life expectancy.

Planning Factors
- Whether there are definite plans for the property to be vacated and what the effect of those plans will be on the character of the surrounding area.
- The effect of the vacant lot on the continuity of the district and its character.
- The view of the structure from a public street.
- Whether relocation the only practical means of saving the structure from demolition.

Civic Factors
- The public necessity of the proposed move.
- The public purpose or interest in the land or building(s) to be protected.

Moving Guidelines for Property Owners

1. **Move buildings only after all alternatives to retention have been examined.**
2. **Seek guidance from the Department of Planning for information about moving buildings and documenting the building on its original site before undertaking the move.**
3. **Contact the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office for assistance prior to moving the building if there is a desire for the district to remain listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**
4. **Photograph the building and the site thoroughly and also measure the building if the move will require substantial reconstruction.**
5. **Assess the building's structural condition in order to minimize any damage that might occur during the move.**
6. **Select a contractor who has experience in moving buildings and check references with other building owners who have used this contractor.**
7. **Secure the building from vandalism and potential weather damage before and after its move.**
8. **Improve the empty lot in a manner consistent with other open space in the historic district if the site is to remain vacant for any length of time.**