DOWNTOWN PRAIRIE DU SAC

FACADE DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Design Guidelines

for the Downtown Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin

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(*Historical Sketches of Prairie du Sac*, Walter G. Doll)

Currently Locktight Satellite & Security
Formerly Anna Glarner Prader Gasser Moore Shop

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Village of Prairie du Sac

Shawn Murphy, Village Administrator

Economic Development Committee
Paul Dietmann, Chair
Bill Curran

Downtown Merchants

The following downtown merchants participated in the workshops conducted in the first phase of the project:

Michael Bunch, Bunch Engineering

Brad Jonas, Hometown Hardware

Pam Ziegler, Ziegler Photography

Louise Back, HomeSpun Fabrics

Paula Bunch, Water Street Gallery

Steve Edelstein, Bonham Theater

Ruth Duval, Bonham Theater

Jennifer Gjertson, Heart Realty

Donna Stehling, Tripp Memorial Museum

Steve Ploetz, Bank of Prairie du Sac

Most downtown merchants participated in a survey that was conducted in the first phase of the project. The survey gathered information on buildings, operations, and opinions about public investment in the downtown.

(Historical Sketches of Prairie du Sac, Walter G. Doll)

Currently Culver's Franchising System, Inc.
Formerly Schmalz Garage, Anlauf's Appliance Store, Ploetz'z Law Office

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These design guidelines represent the results of a project commissioned by the Village of Prairie du Sac and the Economic Development Committee. Project participants from theVillage included members of the Economic Development Committee, Village staff, and various downtown business and property owners.

This document is intended to assist downtown property owners in Prairie du Sac to properly rehabilitate the exteriors of their commercial buildings in order to fit the character of the existing historic commercial district as well as the image the community wishes to create. This book is for all downtown buildings, both old and new. For old buildings, the guidelines are intended to facilitate an historically sensitive rehabilitation. For new buildings, the guidelines demonstrate ways to fit modern architecture in an historic district.

Most of the ideas presented here are not unique solutions for the Village of Prairie du Sac. However, this particular collection of general guidelines is in response to the ideas and concerns of project participants from workshops and meetings. In other words, the content of each guideline is not necessarily new, but the choice of including one accepted guideline over another has been guided by the workshop participants.

The intention of this booklet is to focus the discussion of improvements and new construction on design issues that contribute to the success of individual properties and to the overall appearance and success of the downtown area.

The guide book is divided into two main sections: Design Guidelines and Schematic Facade Designs. The Design Guidelines are further divided into two subjects: Building Within the Urban Framework and Preservation of Building Character. The first section deals with physical characteristics of the building that have a greater impact on the downtown as a whole. The second section deals aesthetic issues of buildings on more of an individual basis.

The Schematic Facade Designs are case studies of specific buildings within Downtown Prairie du Sac that were used to explore the concepts to be included in this guide book. They are meant to represent examples of what the guidelines can produce. These designs are not the only way to interpret the guidelines.

What are Design Guidelines?

There are many codes, including a variety of building and zoning codes, that have a major, but often unintentional, impact on the aesthetics of buildings. The standard building and zoning codes are written to regulate safety and general welfare, usually without anticipating any aesthetic result, especially not a negative one. However, the reality is that many codes encourage bad design and often make good design features illegal.

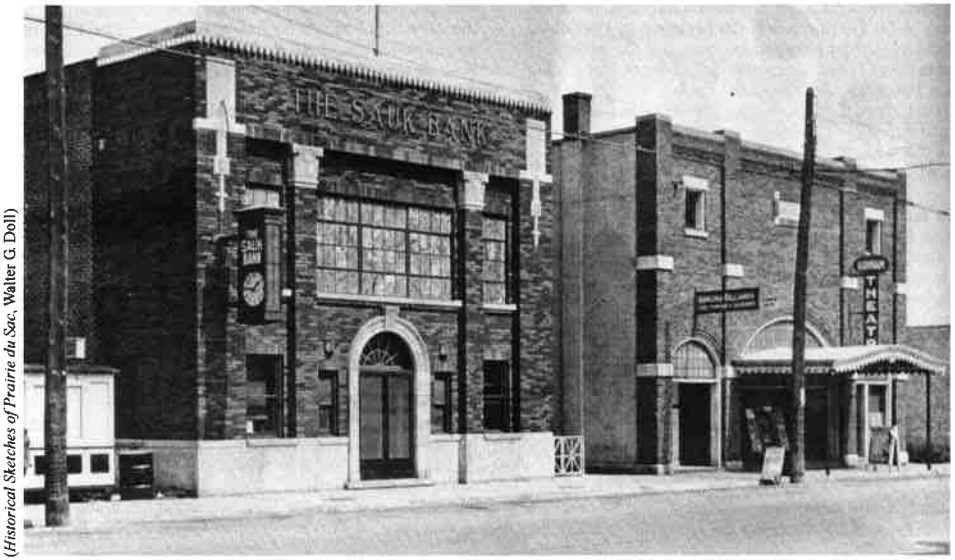
Design guidelines, sometimes called performance standards in a slightly different form, are put in place to attempt to reverse the negative effects of zoning. They are generally attached in some way to zoning ordinances, perhaps as an overlay, merely adding another layer of regulation on top of what the ordinance already calls for in a zone.

(from *Prairie du Sac Downtown Improvement Project*, Lisa L. Kennedy and Russell E LaFrombois, III, 1983)

"The rolling hills and prairie land around Prairie du Sac was inhabited long before the white man came to the area. The Saukie or Sac Indians had villages throughout the area with a major settlement where Sauk City now stands. The land around the villages had good, rich soil and the forests had good hunting. This helped develop the Saukies strong and stable culture. Even though the tribe was known to have great warriors, they greeted Louis Joliet and Father James Marquette with friendly warnings of the dangers which awaited them on their journey to the Mississippi, and advised them to turn back.

"It was more than 150 years from the time when Joliet and Marquette claimed the land in the name of King Louis XIV to the war with the Winnebagos in 1838 which ended in the removal of most of the Indians from the area. Within a year the first white settler (besides trappers), James Alban, came to the Prairie du Sac area and by the beginning of 1840, about 40 people lived in the area. This number may not seem that large, but considering that most of this part of the country was uninhabited by white settlers this was a large population. The major reasons for this growth were the settlement's location on the Wisconsin River and its relative closeness to the Madison area. It became a point of departure westward into the territory and to the Mississippi.

"In 1840, Calvin Frink, David Crocker, and John LaMesuere laid out the village of Prairie du Sac and started work for the formation of Sauk County. It was also in this year that David Crocker opened the first store west of Madison and Joshua Abbott opened the first hotel and tavern in the area. The rich soil and good location attracted many people to Prairie du Sac, especially from the New England area, and the village along with Sauk City, grew into a major business and agricultural district. In 1844, the first meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was held at the home of Joshua Abbott, and the county was organized with Prairie du Sac as the county seat. This, however, was moved to Baraboo two years later."



(Historical Sketches of Prairie du Sac, Walter G. Doll)

Currently Masonic Temple & Bonham Theater
Formerly The Sauk Bank & Bonham Theater

(Historical Sketches of Prairie du Sac, Walter G. Doll)

Currently Tripp Memorial Museum
Formerly Tripp Memorial Library

BUILDING WITHIN THE URBAN FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The following design guidelines for buildings are intended to help owners, developers, and architects for new and existing buildings alike understand the fundamental building characteristics of this historic downtown. The guidelines were derived by systematic and rational analysis of the volumetric nature and external character of typical small downtown commercial buildings in Prairie du Sac and elsewhere.

The guidelines are intended to help the architect generate compatible new design work. They are general enough to allow great latitude of individual response yet ensure that new buildings will fit in with the unique ensemble of existing buildings.

Imitating an earlier style or period of architecture is not implicitly suggested by these guidelines. The architect should seek contemporary expression within the general outline presented. This is particularly appropriate when the new construction has a completely contemporary function.

In particular, avoid the temptation to "early up" a building, that is, to design a structure in a strictly functional way then "paste on" stock colonial, early American, or other mass produced details. The architect should strive instead to integrate the building's systems and use ornament where systems meet or where it helps to subdivide the facade into the sections suggested by these guidelines. Ornament can also be used to add richness of detail as described in section three.

Despite the formula-like appearance of these guidelines, it remains a significant test of design skill to integrate them so as to compose a sensitive modern expression within this historic setting.

CHARACTER

New Building Types
Variety and Similarity
Building Facades

FORM

Facade Heights
Exposed Building Sides
Exposed Building Backs

COMPOSITION

Building Elevations
Silhouette
Expression Lines

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

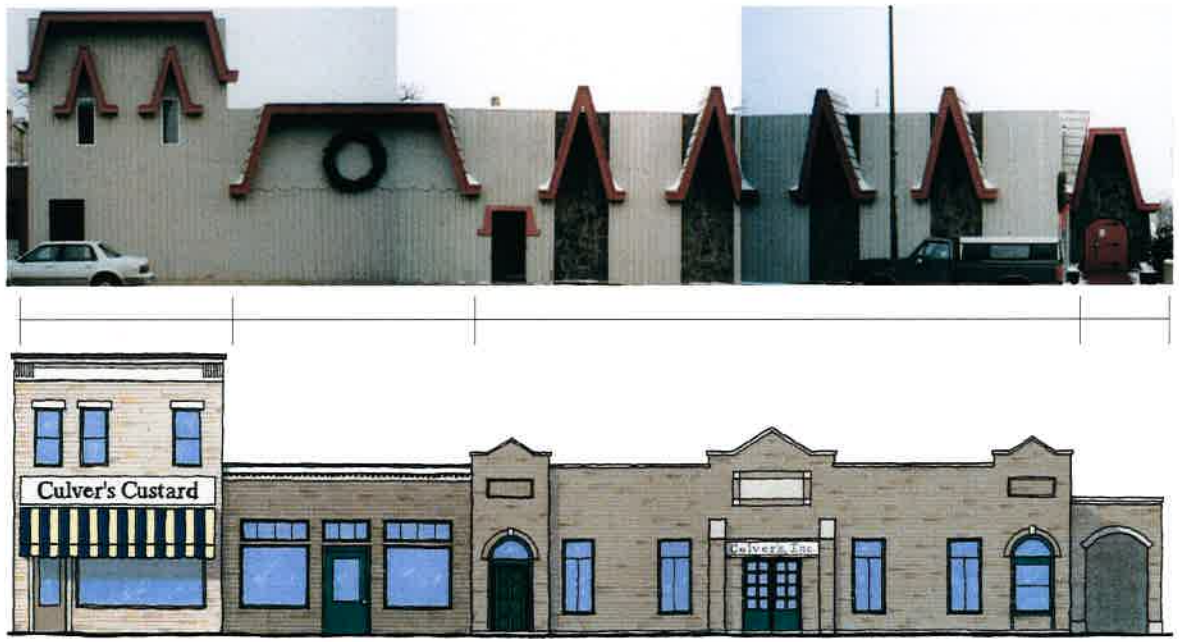
Rhythm
Proportion
Solid and Void
Scale

Design Objective: All elevations of newer buildings should express a building module similar to the typical historical lot sizes of Downtown Prairie du Sac.

Traditional lot sizes were a fundamental characteristic of the parceling of the Downtown and therefore became a determining factor in the footprint of the original buildings. The footprints in turn affected the scale and rhythm of the facades, creating a unique and lively street elevation.

Newer buildings that are currently in the Downtown have generally been built on more than one historic lot. The facades on these buildings have less richness in detail than the historic facades resulting in large blank walls. The change in scale of the building has a profound effect on the scale of the Downtown and on the quality of the visual environment.

New buildings (as well as any buildings that have been built after World War II) in Downtown Prairie du Sac that are built on a site larger than a single historic lot should express the original lot sizes in the facade. To achieve this, it may be appropriate for the structural system of new buildings to relate to the lot sizes. However, it is also possible for existing buildings to simply divide the facade into historically sized units that have distinct, but complimentary, design and articulation.



The former Firehouse Restaurant (top) was a combination of three buildings. The proposed adaptive re-use design for the Culver's corporate headquarters attempts to distinguish the three historic buildings. Hometown Hardware (below) needs a similar treatment.

All downtown buildings should have transparent windows on the ground level to help bring more life to the street like these buildings.

Design Objective: Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

All facades shall be pedestrian friendly with activity facing the street. The treatment shall be predominately windows along the primary facade(s) and a mix of windows and solid mass along secondary facades. The visual connection to the interior activities contributes to the overall image and character of the Downtown.

Primary and secondary facades are determined by where customers enter. Primary is the "front" entrance, secondary is the side or back where customers can see into the interior and may have additional access and/or where service may be accommodated.

The majority of the surface on the primary facade should be windows to allow visual access in and out of the space. Quality display windows should be considered as essential as an attractive sign. Display windows typically frame the entryways and should be designed to attract customers.

The secondary facades should include a large amount of glass for display, but less than on the primary facade in order to accommodate service entrances and necessary storage on the interior.

Blank walls should be avoided or, if unavoidable (left building), should be subdivided and articulated to make them more attractive. The building on the right needs more windows and existing windows should be transparent.

Design Objective: Buildings should express their own identity while respecting the mass, rhythm, height, pattern, and ornamentation of neighboring buildings.

There is no predominant architectural style among the buildings of Downtown Prairie du Sac. In some cases, styles are mixed within the composition of a single building. There is, however, a more general level of similarity in the structure and organization of the buildings. Most structures are masonry construction, predominantly brick. Their heights are basically consistent and their mass, controlled by the historic lot sizes, remains similar, with a few exceptions.

Where similarity comes in the basic structure and principles of historic design of commercial buildings, variety can be expressed in the details. These details can include window treatments, color, materials, height, ornamentation such as a cornice, and many others.

Proposed new buildings and renovations of existing buildings should respect the prevalent characteristics elaborated within these guidelines without mimicking any particular building. Following these guidelines should lead to new buildings and renovated facades that fit comfortably into the downtown and yet express their own individuality and time.

Neo-Classical

Utilitarian

Victorian Gothic

German / Swiss Block-and-Stack

This group of downtown buildings has a nice variety of heights. The building on the far right, about 14 years old, looks somewhat awkward next to the tallest building to its left.

These two buildings were given a continuous treatment on the second floor resulting in an unattractive uniform height.

Design Objective: Buildings should not be made to appear to be exactly equal in height to adjacent buildings.

The height of buildings in the downtown are generally one or two stories. Heights were often a function of building use, available construction technologies, code constraints, and general economic issues of land value and property taxes.

For a variety of reasons, buildings in the downtown area, although of a similar height are very rarely exactly the same height. This characteristic can be attributed to a desire for individual expression, to avoid construction complications in joining two adjacent buildings, or as a result of slight differences in floor-to-floor heights.

The characteristic skyline that results from the relative differences in building heights throughout the downtown coupled with the difference in treatment of the tops of facades provides a character that is desired.

To further reinforce this characteristic, new buildings should not be built at the same height as their neighbors. This design principle not only aims to maintain the historic skyline character of the downtown, but also offers new building projects the opportunity for individual expression. In addition, according to the Zoning Ordinance no building can exceed 40 feet in height.

Design Objective: Where there are exposed sides of buildings, the side elevation should be treated as a facade compatible with the street facade.

There are some vacant lots in the downtown area where buildings have been razed. This has resulted in the exposure of the sides or party walls of remaining buildings. These sides were not designed to be seen from the public streets and so were utilitarian in nature, generally unfinished in character, and often built with no windows or doors.

As the trend to adaptively reuse existing buildings for other purposes continues, and if infill building on the vacant site is not anticipated, side faces will likely be altered. In these circumstances, the design of side facades should be carefully considered with respect to the street facade. This does not imply that the side facade should attempt to replicate the street facade but that they should be visually organized and unified. This may involve painting or other surface treatment.

Materials should be compatible with the front facade, but will rarely match exactly. If the front facade is brick, the side facade should be some type of masonry, stone or concrete. If the side facade is a very plain and utilitarian masonry, such as exposed concrete block, it can be made more compatible by painting to match the front brick or even adding regularly spaced brick pilasters. Materials that should generally be avoided inlcude asphalt shingles, vinyl, aluminum, or other less permanent material.

Where new openings are created, respect for existing lintel heights, floor lines, window proportions, window types, and scale should be evident.

The building on the left was designed to be immediately adjacent to a building similar in height. The wall is designed as a "party wall." Now that it is exposed, it should be given a similar treatment of windows as the front facade or at least an attractive paint job or mural.

The building on the right was designed to have an exposed side wall. Lower quality brick is used, but the window treatment makes it a much more attractive alternative to a blank wall.

This group of buildings (above left) presents a generally attractive rear facade on this public street. However, the windows and doors should be made more transparent, and, if possible, semi-public rear entrances should be created. Equipment like air conditioners and tanks should be moved to an appropriate and less visible location. The picture on the right shows a fence enclosure for mechanical equipment. However, this type of enclosure is less successful if it does not completely obscure the equipment.

The backs of these buildings should be made more attractive to enhance the semi-public space that is created. In general, more permanent materials should be used. Windows or a mural could be put in on the blank wall to the left. The two-story porch should be removed from the next building. Signs could be placed on each business to make the public or semi-public rear entrance more inviting.

Design Objective: Where there are exposed backs of buildings that are visible from a public right-of-way, the back facade should be treated with the similar design attention as the front facade.

There are several instances in the downtown where the backs of buildings are exposed to a public right-of-way. Often these backs were never meant to be so prominently visible. They are generally utilitarian in nature, unfinished in character, and were sometimes built without doors or windows.

There are several steps that should be taken to make these building backs more attractive and, if desired, potentially accessible to the public as an additional entrance. They do not need to be identical to the front facade or nearly as spectacular in terms of detailing. They can still retain their utlitarian appearance, but should be orderly and maintained.

Service components that are stored in the back (or side, if applicable), such as waste containers should be visually screened from view either with a fence or some kind of landscape treatment. In addition, steps should be taken to reduce any odors that result from waste storage.

If a back public or semi-public entrance is desired, the facade should be treated as a secondary entry with a small sign and some minimal storefront treatment. Doors should be at least partially transparent and there should be a minimum of one transparent window on the facade. If a back entry is not desired but there is still access, the entry should be designed to appear private. However, some transparency should still be included to animate the public way and as a safety measure for pedestrians.

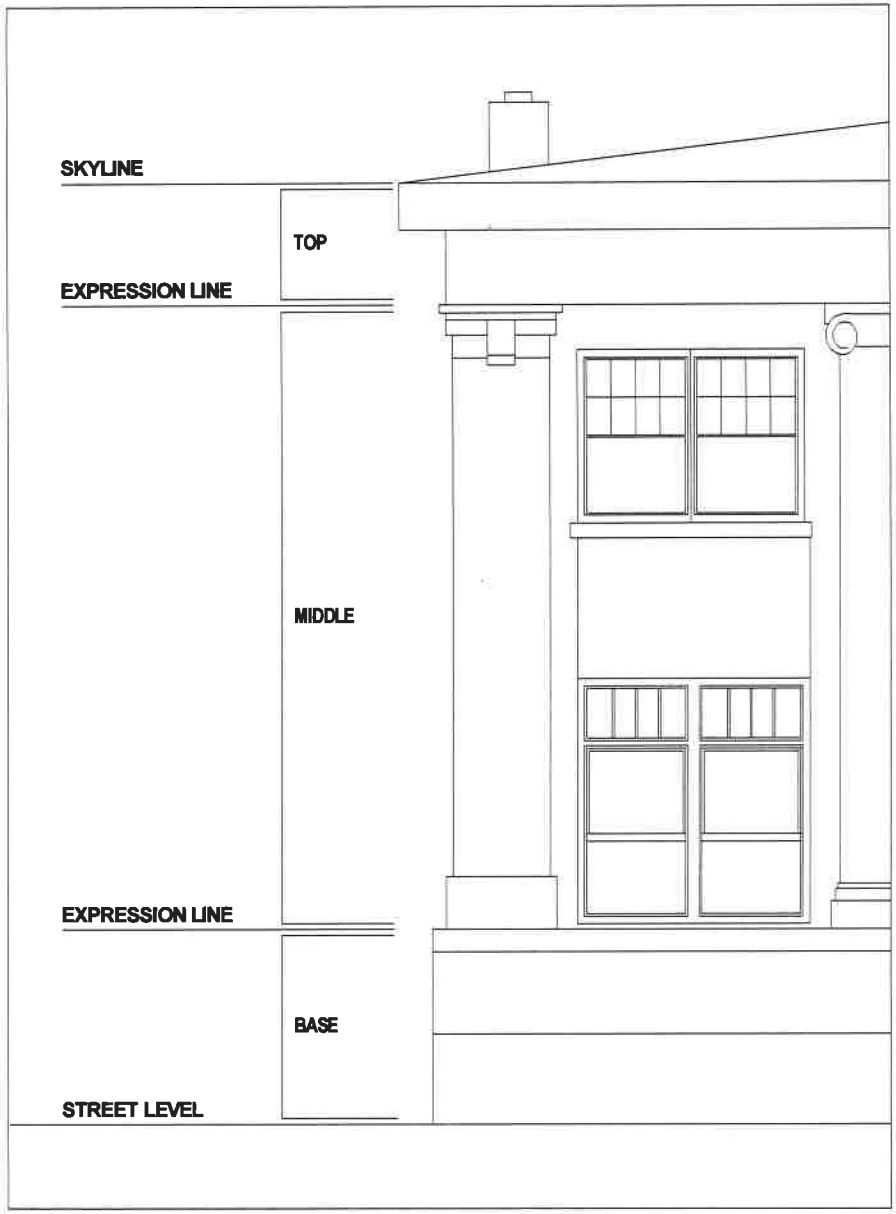
Design Objective: The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

One of the tenets of architectural composition is the idea of a building having a base, a middle, and a top. This has been borne out in the history of architecture. Most existing buildings in the downtown clearly display this characteristic.

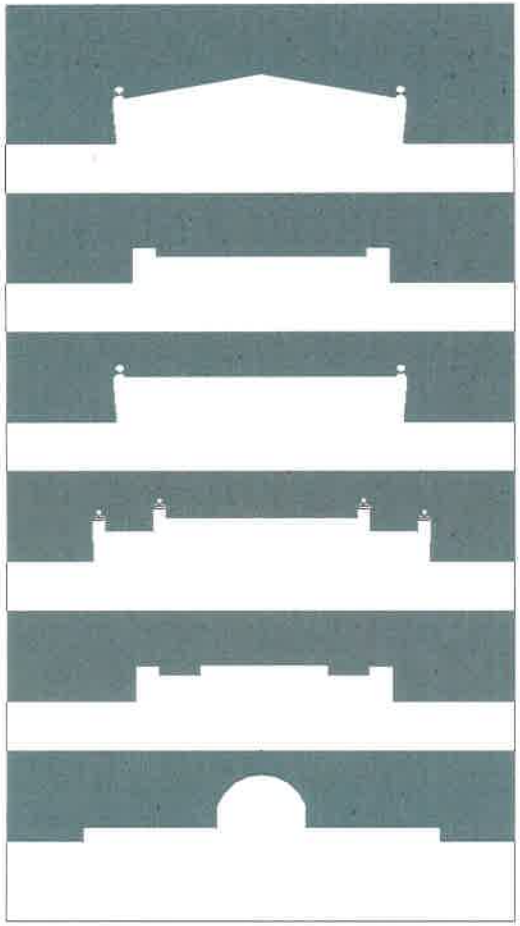
The top of the building terminates the building and produces a silhouette against the sky; the middle abstractly communicates the building's function or use; and the base firmly anchors the building to the ground at the same time providing a close range interaction with people. It is particularly important in the downtown area that new buildings and modifications to existing buildings respect this tripartite composition.

The transition between the base and the middle or the middle and the top is often articulated with contrasting materials and ornamental elements. The horizontal bands created by these transition elements form expression lines that give scale and character to a facade.

This historic building has a very clear distinction between base, middle and top. Modern buildings can be more subtle, but the division should still be easily recognized..



Some examples of typical silhouettes



Downtown Prairie du Sac has a variety of silhouettes. However, some buildings have lost distinctive silhouettes that should be restored.

Design Objective: The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

The drawings to the right were prepared from photographs of existing buildings in historic downtowns from several Wisconsin communities. There were essentially two ways that historic building tops were completed: an articulated parapet or a projecting cornice. Architects and builders of historic commercial buildings saw the top of a building as an opportunity for expressing individuality by varying the concept used.

Where projecting cornices create an element that terminates the building wall, the articulated parapet seeks to provide a unique silhouette against the contrasting bright sky.

New buildings should provide a modern interpretation of these historic concepts by completing the facade in a way that uniquely meets the sky. Modifications to existing buildings should aim to maintain the richness that cornices and parapets add to the building and to the street.

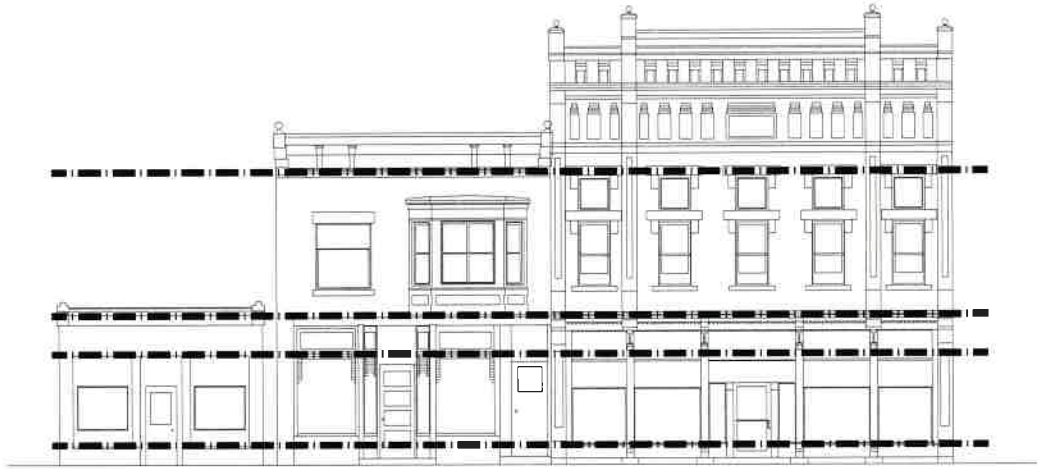
Inappropriate silhouette

Design Objective: Expression lines within existing building facades should be integrated into all new and modified facades.

Expression lines can be defined as vertical or horizontal linear elements on a facade. These elements vary in both form and visual strength. The degree to which the element projects from the facade (or surrounding elements recess) is important to its visual strength because of the resulting shadow line. Vertical expression lines determine the rhythm of downtown facades.

Floor-to-floor heights and overall building heights of structures in the downtown are invariably different due to the variety of original building uses as well as the lack of standardized building materials. However, as a result of careful design attention paid to the composition of neighboring historic buildings, there exists strong horizontal expression lines that run throughout the downtown.

Careful analysis of historic downtown structures reveals a grid of horizontal and vertical expression lines which should direct the composition of alterations to any existing facade as well as the composition of new or modified adjacent facades.



This group of existing downtown buildings (above) demonstrates strong horizontal expression lines. The group of recommended facades (below) shows efforts to reinforce some existing horizontal expression lines.

This group of downtown buildings, with significant recommended changes to the building in the middle, reestablishes the historic structural rhythm.

Design Objective: New buildings should express a structural rhythm on the street facade consistent with that evident in existing historic buildings.

In architectural composition, rhythm refers to the regular or harmonious recurrence of building elements.

With respect to facades in the downtown, the most obvious rhythm is the recurring width of the storefronts derived from historic building lot widths. Rhythms are also evident in the individual facades.

The patterns vary from building to building resulting in a variety of visual rhythms that are also visually united. The simplest is an even spacing of repeated columns and "bays" (the space between columns). Often the end bays were given special identity by varying their widths to be either wider or narrower than typical bays. Sometimes structural rhythm relates to special functional restraints of the building's use. This often creates more complex rhythms.

The variation and complexity of rhythm from one building to another reaffirms the individuality of each building. The recurrence of an overall rhythm in a group of buildings helps to unify the downtown. Designers of new buildings should incorporate a structural rhythm of building elements that is consistent with the rhythm created by existing buildings.

Design Objective: Each structural bay on the street facade should have the same vertical proportion (height greater than width).

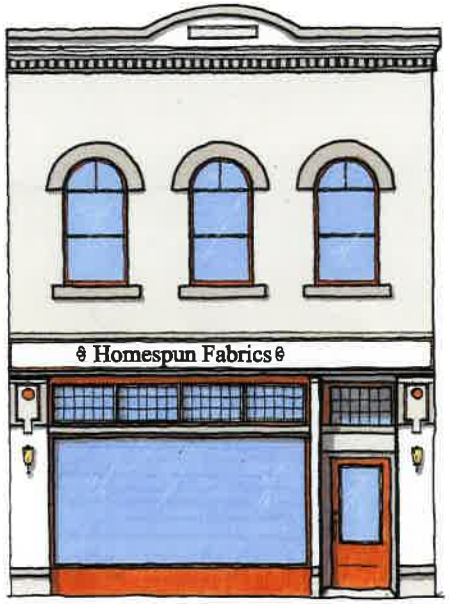
Proportion is the numeric ratio of two opposing dimensions of a form or space, such as the ratio of height to width, or the ratio of width to depth, etc.

The intent of all theories of proportion is to create a sense of order among elements of a building. For example, in designing a building facade, a proportioning system can be established that is based on a characteristic ratio that is reflected in individual elements, the spacing between elements, and groupings of elements. The same proportion may also be evident in the ratio of the overall facade.

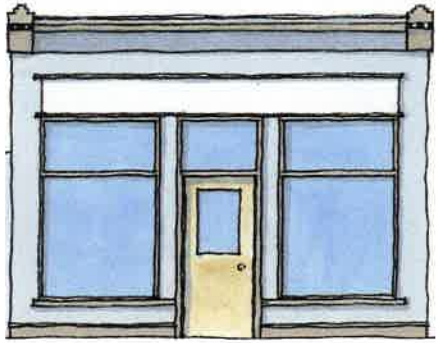
Within the downtown area such underlying ratios are evident. The overall organization of most facades establishes a building pattern with a greater height than width, thereby creating a vertical proportion. This same ratio is then transferred to other facade elements (windows, for example) to further emphasize the overall vertical pattern.

The designer of any existing or new facade must demonstrate through a diagram similar to the one shown at right that a consistent proportion has been carried through multiple building elements. The proportion should generally have a vertical orientation (greater height than width). For buildings with a horizontal orientation (one story, wide), the facade should be clearly subdivided into sections with a vertical orientation. When only cosmetic repairs are being made to existing historic facades, this diagram will not be necessary.

A horizontal proportion (above) and a vertical proportion (below) can be discovered repeating in many of the elements of the facade.



These two buildings have recommended facades that effectively restore the historic storefronts by making the majority of the surface area void (windows). This change creates views of activity from the street that is crucial to showing signs of a vibrant downtown.



Design Objective: The majority of the surface area of the base of the building (first floor) on the street facade should be void (windows). Inversely, the majority of the surface area above the base of the building on the street facade should be solid (wall).

Historically, commercial buildings had retail uses on the first floor and, if more than one story, residential or office uses on upper floors. The retail uses desired maximum exposure to advertise their goods, and therefore strived for as much clear window area as possible. The only parts that were not clear windows were for structural purposes. Upper floors generally had smaller windows because there was not a need or a desire for exposure and it was more costly to heat.

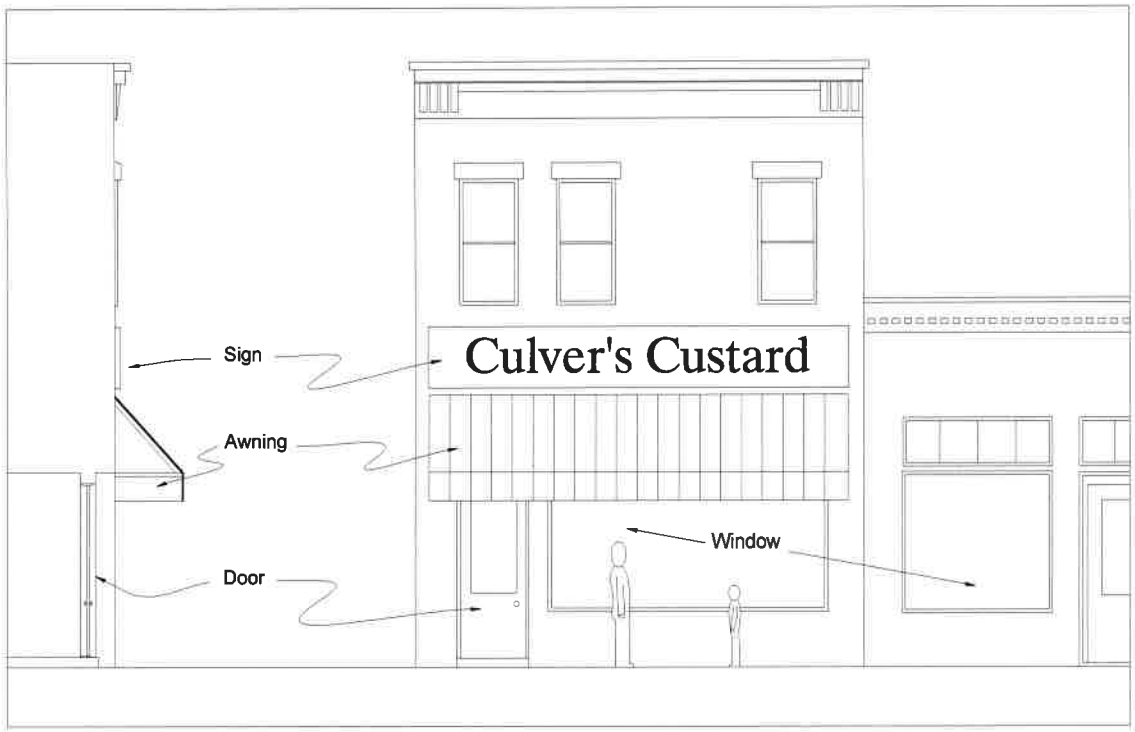
The resultant solid to void relationship is characterized by the lower floor having a majority of its surface as void or window, and the upper floors having majority of their surface as solid wall.

There has been a tendency over the years, as buildings change first floor uses to offices or other non-retail uses, to reduce the size of the windows at street level, or even eliminate them altogether. This type of modification should be resisted. Every effort should be made to provide a continuous line of windows (whether retail or otherwise) to animate the street and show signs of a vibrant downtown.

Design Objective: The base of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale. These should include doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings and canopies, ornament, etc.

Human scale in architecture is based on the human body. It is very common for people to rely on visual clues to get a sense of how big a building or space is by relating overall dimensions to a familiar dimension. Elements such as steps, doors, door hardware, etc. help people judge the size of a building and make them feel more comfortable walking next to it. The relative size of elements on buildings also combine with other characteristics to convey the building's importance and use.

Generally, the goal of commercial buildings is to attract customers and to make them feel comfortable. To accomplish this goal, the scale of the building and its elements need to relate to the human scale. This recognition of human scale permeates Prairie du Sac's older buildings, making them well-suited to their commercial use. Special attention should be given to the base of the building and articulated in a way that breaks down the monumental scale.



This recommended facade for the new Culver's corporate headquarters custard stand includes a number of elements that relate to human scale, making it more comfortable for pedestrians.

PRESERVATION OF BUILDING CHARACTER

Introduction

As stated in The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, "rehabilitation" is defined as the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible and efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

Before any changes are made to an historic building it is important to thoroughly understand the contribution of the existing conditions to the integrity of the historic structure.

To this end there is a need for building owners to undertake the necessary research to establish how the building was originally designed and constructed. This should be the starting point for all future changes.

The guidelines which make up this section reflect the preservation issues most influenced by incremental changes over time. They are generally characterized in building details such as openings, storefronts, signs, canopies, and awnings. Guidelines are also presented for facade details related to surface treatment, ornamentation, painting, and color.

BUILDING DETAILS

Doors and Windows
Storefronts
Cornices, Ornamentation, and Trim
Building Signs
Canopies and Awnings

MATERIALS & MAINTENANCE

Surface Treatment and Finishes
Color and Painting
Cast Iron and Sheet Metal
Masonry Surfaces
Wood
Doors and Windows

Design Objective: The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

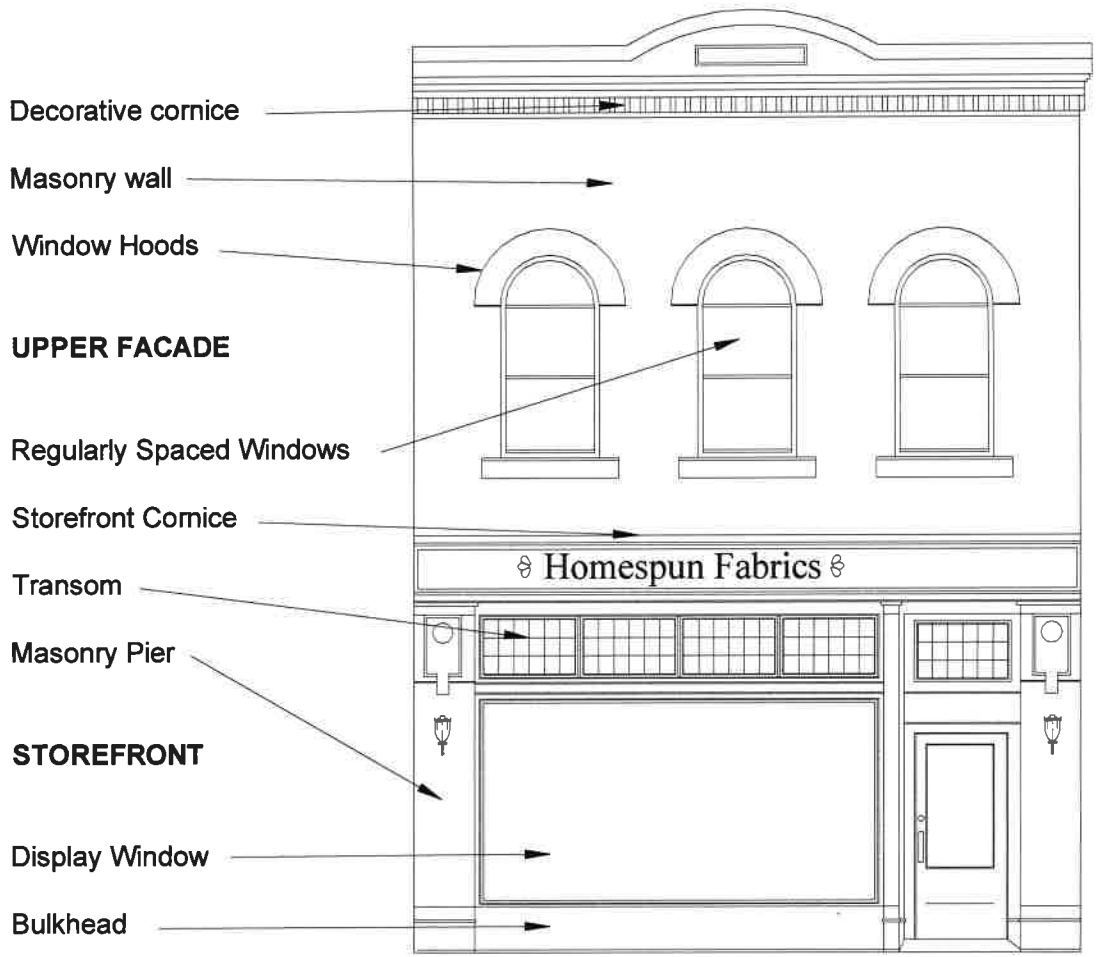
Design Objective: The blocking up of window openings, door openings, or any portion of the opening on the street facade should not be permitted.

Design Objective: Window air conditioners should be relegated to secondary facades or back facades of the building.

The wide variety of design, placement, size, and trim make windows and doors one of the more highly visible architectural elements within the downtown. In addition, doors are also more conspicuous because of their proximity to passersby. Historically, they were often rich in detail, establishing human scale relationship with people.

Windows and doors as well as their openings on the facade, should preserved and protected from insensitive alteration and elimination. The proper designing of windows and doors and their interior and exterior trim can add substantially to the visual quality of a building.

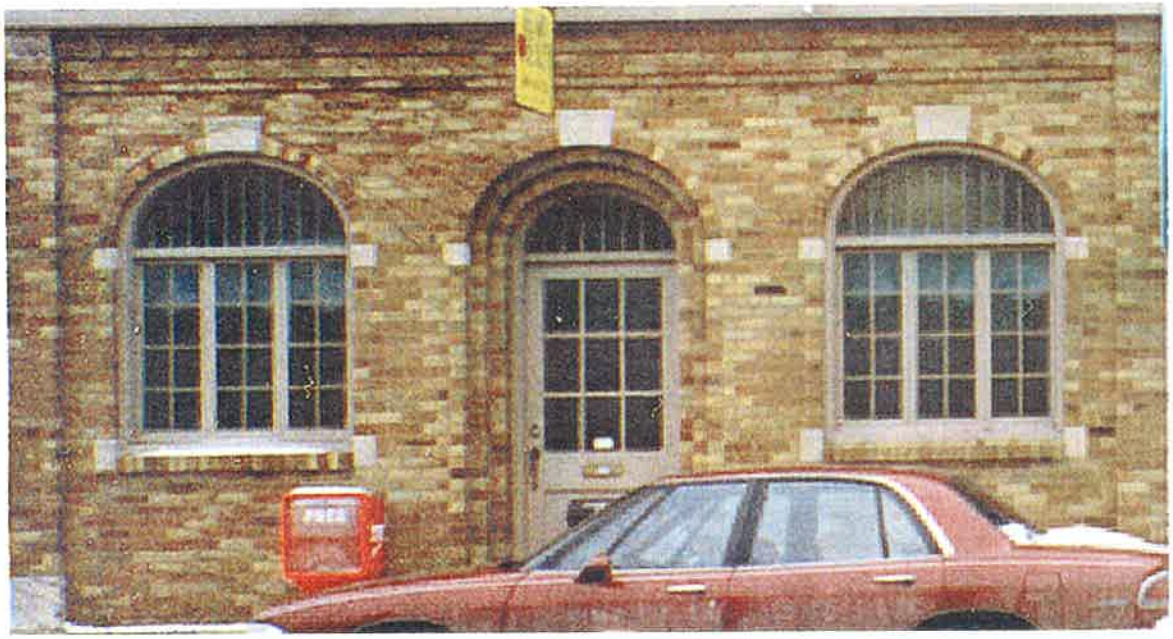
The accompanying details the create windows and doors should also be retained. For windows, this includes the window sash, glass, lintel, sill, architraves, pediment, hood, and all hardware. For doors, this includes the door frames, transoms, sidelights, glass panels, lintels, sills, steps, architraves, pediments, hoods, and all hardware. Owners of buildings whose windows, doors, and their openings have been altered in the past to



Parts of the building facade

their openings have been altered in the past to reduce the glass area, to provide larger picture windows, or to eliminate or relocate windows or entrances should be encourage to restore these openings to their original size and placement.

Replacement windows should replicate the original in design and materials. When necessary, aluminum doors and windows may be used for replacement as long as they match the original cross-section and color. Natural, or unfinished, aluminum color should not be used.



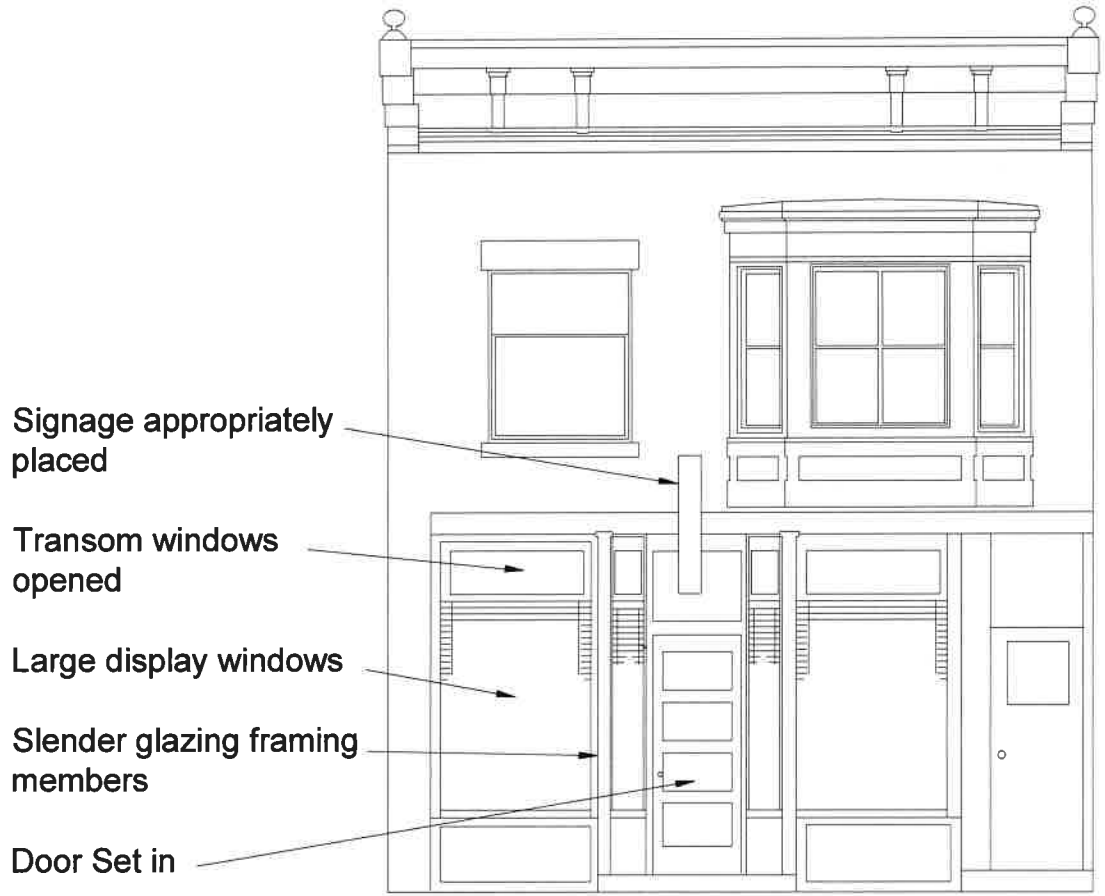
The wood and fiberglass door surround, below, is covering a nice arched window that should be restored. The aluminum doors can be retained, but should be painted a trim color. The residential-style door, right, should be replaced with a commercial door with more transparency. The office facade, below right, should have its translucent windows replaced with transparent ones.

Design Objective: New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

Visual richness depends on the presence of visual contrasts in the storefront surface. At close range, richness is achieved by small-scale elements and ornamentation. Typically, historic storefronts included many design and building elements that served to reinforce the importance of the storefront and to attract customers. These include:

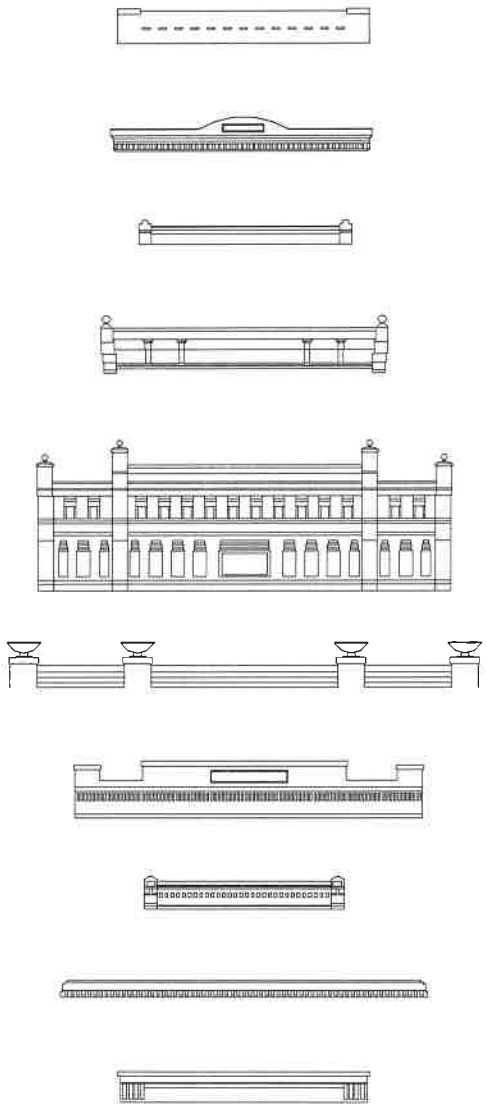
- store entry door
- upper level entry door
- store windows
- transom fanlights
- bulkhead panels / windows
- entry sidelight
- steps
- canopies
- awnings
- name of store
- sign
- street number
- size of opening
- depth of entrance
- multiple entrances
- layering of openings
- ornamentation / details trim / molding
- door / window hardware
- lighting fixtures
- lighting quality

Richness is achieved by considering each of the preceeding elements and organizing them in a visually pleasing manner. The number of elements is important to creating richness, but it is equally critical that the elements work together, that they are well proportioned, that they are compatible in style, material, texture, and color. They also must be carefully detailed in terms of how they are applied to, or articulated on, the surface of the building.



Traditional Storefront Design

The original cornices on these buildings were altered and as a result have lost much of their historic character. They should be restored as part of work on the facades.



Examples of existing and recommended cornices for downtown.

Design Objective: Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

In the past, rich detail and ornament was common and affordable. However, as these items became more obscure and historic buildings began to deteriorate it was general practice to simply remove the deteriorated element. This practice should be avoided in the future. Where original cornices and other building ornamentation are or were in place, they should be repaired or replaced to the extent feasible.

The repair and replacement of deteriorated or damaged architectural ornamentation with new material should attempt to replicate the original as closely as possible. When a complete replacement is necessary the replacement should, even if contemporary in materials and character, retain the architectural style of the building, its meeting with the sky, and its contribution to the richness and variety of the streetscape.

For most new construction, ways must be found to enrich surfaces and details that take advantage of modern production techniques and accept current labor costs.

Design Objective: Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.

Sign ordinances are complex, but often do not address the potential for visual chaos that can result from their enforcement. Signs are certainly an important part of an economically successful downtown. They can also be an element that contributes positively to the character of a community. But they also must be controlled so that they do not detract from the buildings and visually dominate the downtown.

Conventional wisdom makes merchants feel that they must compete for a very small amount of time as potential customers drive by their stores. This persists even in a small town where customers are rarely gained from impulse shopping by drivers. When drivers that are passing through do stop in small downtowns, it's usually because of the character of the community, not because they spotted an individual store's big sign. Tasteful signs can have a positive impact on the downtown's character rather than detract from it.

Sign Message:
Business signs should only include the formal name of the business, the nature of the business, and the address. There should be no advertising of brand names. Avoid an accumulation of outdated service club affiliations, credit card decals, and other sign clutter. Building signs should include the name of the building and the street address of the property. Professional office buildings may list the occupants of the building.

Location and Size:
Signs should be located: (1) on the spandrel panel of the building immediately above the storefront, (2) within the transom of doors or windows, (3) on the glass of doors or windows, (4) on wall areas adjacent to doors, (5) on the valance / skirt of awnings or the edge of canopies, or (6) on projecting signs hung within the base area of the building.

Spandrel panel signs should be contained within a structural bay of the building in terms of width, not exceeding 20 feet. The height of the lettering for the sign should be no more than 75% of the height of the spandrel.

Transom panel signs should not completely obscure the clear glass on the transom of the door or display windows. If the transom is divided into sectioned panels, the sign location should respect and therefore not cross or otherwise obscure those divisions. Signs in the transom should not exceed 65% of the width of the panel or 75% of the height. The height of letters should also not exceed 18 inches.

Display window signs applied directly to the glass should consist only of lettering and / or a logo without an opaque background. On the display window, signs should not cover more than 20% of the total area of glass. Window signs should not obscure the display area. The color of the letters should be contrasting with the display in the background. Light colored or gold-leaf letters with dark borders are generally most effective.

Sign Locations

Banners and projecting signs can be appropriate if they are executed tastefully. Projecting signs should be small (no more than 12 square feet on one side) and mounted onto the structural piers of the building. They should be externally lit with lighting that is shielded to prevent glare from people on the street. No internally lit, flashing, or moving signs should be used. No sign can project past the curbline of the street. All projecting signs shall maintain a minimum height of nine feet to the bottom of the sign.

Awning and canopy signs can also serve as signs with contrasting letters painted or sewn onto the valance or skirt of the awning or painted onto the edge of the canopy. Usually six to eight inch letters are sufficient. Lettering should not be used on any other portion of the awning. Lettering should also not be used that exceeds the height of the canopy edge.

Appropriate internally lit office sign in spandrel location

Freestanding signs can be used at the entry point to parking lots to provide signage for nearby businesses. Signs mounted on single poles are generally discouraged. Freestanding signs on Water St. should be 10 ft. high or less and appear monumental. They should be supported by a substantial structure that utilizes materials found in the building facade. This type of sign should not be used within any vision triangle at street intersections.

Style and Size of Letters:
There are thousands of letter styles available. A letter style should be chosen that is easy to read and that represents the image of the business it is presenting. The maximum height of the letters should not exceed 75% of the height of the background on which they appear.

Inappropriate sign projecting above roofline.

Appropriate awning and projecting signs.

Color:
It is recommended that colors are compatible with the color(s) of the building facade and the nature of the business. No more than three colors should be used, plus white, black or a metallic accent. Fewer than three colors is acceptable and often preferred. Flourescent (day-glo) colors should not be used.

Illumination:
No sign can be illuminated by intermittent, rotating, or flashing lights. Signs can be either internally illuminated or externally illuminated provided that any external light utilizes a hood to avoid any direct view of the light source by pedestrians or passing motorists.

Inappropriate sign location and size.

Design Objective: Canopies and awnings should reflect the door and window openings or structural bays of the building. They should also reflect the traditional shapes and materials commonly used at the turn of the century.

Canopies and awnings are for the protection of pedestrians and for the shading of retail windows. There are several variations of both canopies and awnings. Canopies include hoods (smaller canopies over doors) and marquees (larger canopies over entrances). Awnings include retractable (constructed to permit rolling, folding or collapsing against the face of the building), stationary (rigid structure of aluminum pipe or steel members), and fixed (a rigid, solid non-fabric awning).

A standard street-level awning should be mounted so that the valance is about seven feet above the sidewalk and should project out between four and seven feet from the face of the building. A 12 inch valance flap is usually attached at the awning bar and can serve as a sign panel.

An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront and should not cover the piers or go above the second story window sills. All awnings should employ a traditional sloped design rather than curved, vaulted, or semi-spherical.. Awnings should not be internally lit. They should be made of canvas or fabric impregnated with neoprene. Vinyl awnings should be avoided. The underside of awnings should be open to expose the structure. Soffit panels should not be used.

Existing canopies, hoods and marquees should be retained and restored when possible. New buildings are encouraged to consider the inclusion of a marquee or hood to enhance the entrance bay of a building.

Corrugated fiber-glass and asphalt or wood shingle fixed awnings, canopies or pseudo-mansard roofs should not be used. Standing seam roofs for fixed awnings are preferred to corrugated metal.

These building utilize awnings that are appriate in design and form to enhance their facades.

Each of these buildings have materials that have been applied which are inappropriate and, in the case of the two buildings above, have negatively affected the historic character. The building below should use materials and finishes to enhance the mundane and largely blank facade.

Design Objective: Alterations to existing buildings in the downtown area should use materials which are sympathetic to the historic character. These materials are typically brick, stone, terra cotta, glass, wood, and metal.

Materials that do not relate to those already used on the building facade should be avoided. The technique of production and assembly of historic materials and finishes makes a major contribution to the richness of surface character.

Retain original masonry and mortar whenever possible. Existing surfaces should not be covered with other materials. Where such surface coverings have been previously installed, building owners are encouraged to remove them and to restore the underlying original surface.

When repairing or replacing deteriorated materials with new materials, every effort should be made to duplicate the old as closely as possible. The use of new masonry material should match similar materials used elsewhere on the building in texture, color, size, and coursing. The use of materials such as fiberglass, plastic, concrete block, or concrete formed to imitate either brick or stone should not be used.

The surface cleaning of structures should be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and chemical cleaning to enhance the entrance bay of a building that will damage the building materials should not be used.

Materials that should not be used include aluminum siding, vinyl siding, fiberglass, glass block, filler panels (in existing or former windows), concrete block, and unpainted metal finishes.

Design Objective: The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

Presently, the downtown is characterized by buildings that are painted or that display the color of the material from which they are constructed.

The brick and stone in the downtown that has been maintained as its natural color should generally be left unpainted and cleaned. Details to be painted--window sashes, storefronts, trim etc.--where possible should be repainted based on the original colors discovered by careful removal of outer paint layers with a pen knife.

Intense colors distract from a harmonious design. Light colors bring out details, while dark colors tend to obscure them. For example, using a dark color to paint masonry that has been poorly patched and repointed will tend to hide inconsistencies in the wall surface that have resulted from the work.

Select colors for trim that contrast with the brick or other adjacent materials, for example, dark versus light, but in the same color range. To further enhance the architectural qualities of a building, the number of colors should be kept to a minimum. Three colors are sufficient to highlight any facade.

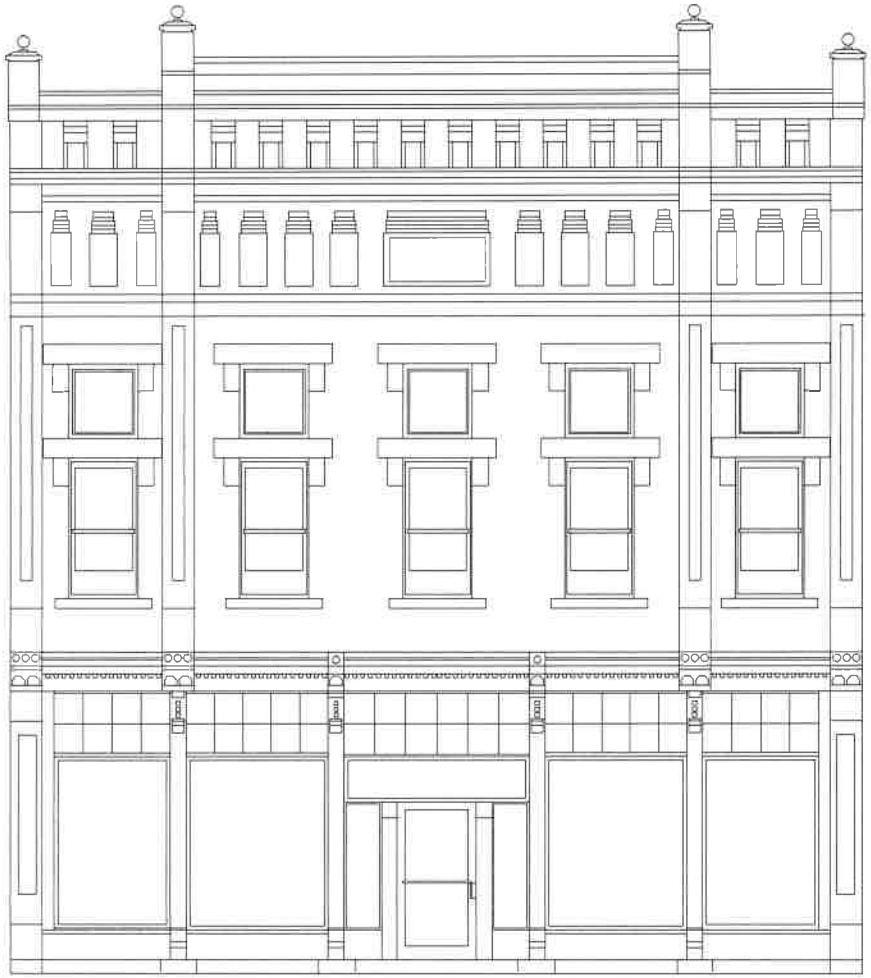
Repainting with colors which cannot be validated through research as being appropriate to the period and style of the historic structure is not recommended.

These facades have paint schemes, in terms of both color and design, which are not compatible with the historic character of the downtown. Similar colors can be used, but they should highlight proper design elements of the facade and not create larger scale statements of their own.

MAJOR TRIM
cornice
window caps
window frames
storefront cornice
storefront columns
bulkheads

MINOR TRIM
window sash
doors
storefront frame
small details on cornices, window hoods, and bulkheads

Highly detailed and complex facades like this masonry one sometimes tempt owners to paint them with a large number of confusing trim colors. This building has masonry that is in good shape and should not be painted. The trim should be painted with a maximum of three colors.



Design Objective: The painting of masonry street facades is not recommended. However, it is recognized that in some instances painting of the surfaces may be advisable.

Some of the existing historic structures in the downtown have been painted. Although this is not ideal it often serves to conceal earlier inappropriate or inadequate maintenance or irreversible changes that have led to unsightly surface conditions. The color of painted masonry should be neutral, resembling the color of natural masonry as much as possible. It should also be compatible with any trim colors.

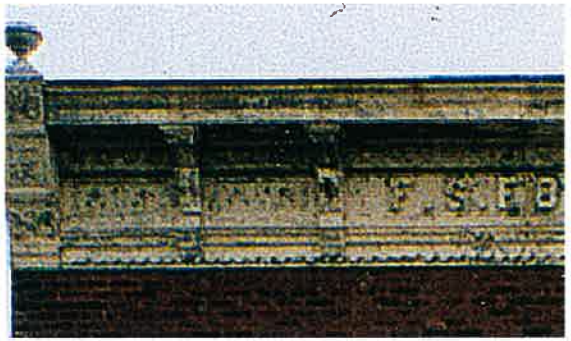
Where masonry requires replacement and the original color or size cannot be matched, painting serves to unify the surface color. Surfaces that are damaged by spalling may require cleaning and patching that again can be unified by painting. Painting of masonry for purely cosmetic reasons is not recommended. Masonry structures or parts of buildings that have been painted for decorative effect and are otherwise in good condition should have the paint removed and the underlying material returned to original color.

Side and rear walls of buildings that show scars of removed adjacent structures or additions should be painted or otherwise treated to minimize this effect. The paint color of side and rear walls should blend with the color of the street facade.

Design Objective: Existing cast iron should be properly cared for and appropriately replaced when necessary. Sheet metal can be used to replicate deteriorated ornament or to create new ornament that is intricate for relatively low cost.

There are many examples on downtown buildings of cast iron and sheet metal. Cast iron was often used for storefront columns and window lintels. Items made from this material should be regularly painted to prevent corrosion. Existing paint or rust can be removed with either a chemical paint remover or low pressure dry grit blasting (80-100 psi). Missing or badly deteriorated cast iron elements can be recast in aluminum or fiberglass from existing elements or substituted by wood pieces.

Sheet metal is typically used for intricate ornament because it bends easily and therefore can be stamped with a repeating design at a relatively low cost from a sheet metal shop. Sheet metal does not have good structural properties, so it usually is supported by a wood frame. In order to resist corrosion, the metal is usually coated with zinc, but will rust quickly if scratched or left exposed. Sheet metal must always be painted. When removing paint, use only a chemical paint remover, never dry grit blasting.



Metal detailing should not be left exposed like this. It should be scraped, repaired if needed, and repainted as soon as possible.

The detailing in these cornices is difficult to recreate. Owners should take particular care of them to ensure they last as long as possible.

Efforts should be made to match masonry and stone as closely as possible when making repairs. Stains and/or dirt should be cleaned with care taken not to damage the surface.

Design Objective: Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

The majority of structures on Water Street have masonry facades with varying levels of deterioration. The most common problems are easily seen from the outside: mortar joints that have fallen apart and crumbling or spalling brick. Once bricks lose their outer shell, they lose all ability to resist moisture and will likely disintegrate quickly. Bricks in this condition should be replaced.

If mold or other discoloration appears on the outside of the building, there may be a moisture problem. Water from rain often penetrates the wall at the top of the parapet or where the roof meets a wall. Building owners should occassionly inspect the roof, wall coping, and the drainage system for water tightness.

Through time and weather, mortar will tend to disintegrate. When mortar joints have recessed to one-half inch or more or when a large number of joints are cracked and crumbling, they should be repointed with new mortar. This will keep out any additional water and give the masonry the proper support it requires to stay in place. For masonry buildings that are left unpainted, the new mortar must be carefully matched to the original joints in terms of color, size, style and composition. Mortar for historic buildings is generally composed of one part Portland cement, two parts lime and nine parts sand. Higher contents of Portland cement create harder mortar that can crack older, softer brick. It is important to find a reputable masonry contractor and inspect other repointing jobs completed by that contractor.

Unpainted masonry can be kept clean of pollutants and dirt with either high pressure water or steam cleaning. Sandblasting or other abrasive cleaning method can result in further deterioration of the masonry, and therefore should never be used. These cleaning methods tend to erode the surface of the masonry allowing moisture to penetrate. Sealants cannot effectively replace the surface of the masonry.

Most masonry surfaces can be sufficiently cleaned with low pressure water (600 psi or less), a natural bristle brush and a mild detergent. In severe cases, a chemical cleaner might be suggested, particularly if paint needs to be removed. Make sure to ask the contractor whether the chemical they use is alkaline or acidic. Acidic products should never be used on limestone or marble. Also, remember never to clean a building if there is a chance of frost because the moisture may crack the masonry when it freezes.

Masonry should only be painted if it is necessary to protect the surface from additional deterioration. To prepare the surface, remove any loose mortar and repoint as necessary, and remove any loose paint with a wire brush. When this is complete, the building may be cleaned with a low pressure wash. A masonry primer should be used on the entire area first, then one or two coats of outdoor latex paint.

Design Objective: Wood detailing is very susceptible to deterioration when neglected, but should be retained, repaired, or replaced whenever possible to retain historic character.

Wood was, and still is, often used for cornices and storefront details, and sometimes even upper wall surfaces. Original exterior woodwork should be retained whenever possible. Materials which try to replicate the look of wood (aluminum, vinyl, etc.) are not successful in achieving the same character and tend to look very conspicuous with age. Deterioration can be prevented with regular maintenance, and rotted portions of wood can be successfully repaired.

Generally, wood can be repaired by renailing, filling and caulking and then by using an oil primer and painting the wood with latex or oil-based paint. Recent advances in technology has even made it possible to reconstruct a portion of very badly rotted wood with special expoxies in order to save as much of the original good material as possible. However, sometimes it will still be necessary to have certain pieces that are completely rotted or missing entirely reconstructed from new wood. Replacement pieces should match or at least complement existing profiles and details.

Wood needs to be diligently cared for in order to prevent deterioration. In the above example, the wood should be thoroughly inspected after scraping to repair any rotted parts before repainting.

This wood facade, although not appropriate in character for the downtown or this historic structure, has been well cared for.

These two historic facades have lost significant character because of the vinyl siding used to cover deteriorated wood. The wood should have been repaired, if possible, and better maintained afterward.

These examples show windows and doors that may not necessarily be original, but appear historic in character and are appropriate replacements.

Design Objective: Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

If the original doors cannot be used, there are three basic options for replacement: (1) Have a new door built with the same design and proportions of the original, (2) Find a manufactured wooden or steel door that resembles the traditional store door, or (3) Use a standard aluminum commercial door with wide stiles and dark anodized or baked enamel finish.

Many doors in downtown Prairie du Sac have already been replaced by standard aluminum and glass commercial doors. Although these are much preferred over wooden or aluminum residential style doors, the natural silver color of the aluminum frames detract from the historic character of the facade. This problem can be easily and relatively inexpensively remedied by painting the aluminum to match one of the trim colors.

One option for painting aluminum is a zinc chromate primer or metal primer followed by appropriate finish coats as recommended by the paint manufacturer. New aluminum should be exposed to weather for at least two months before painting with this method. Another option is on-site polyester powder-coating. In this process, the metal is first charged with electricity, causing the sprayed polyester paint to adhere to it instantly and completely. This method can be utilized on new aluminum without exposure to weather. For older aluminum, both methods require cleaning and appropriate preparation.

Window maintenance checklist:

1. Inspect the wood frame of the window for portions that are soft, cracked, or split. This is particularly prevalent on window sills and at the bottom of window sashes where water has collected. If sashes or frames are deteriorated, the window glass can potentially fall out, a safety hazard.

2. Proper maintenance calls for all deteriorated wood to be replaced with new pieces and old paint removed. All cracks should be filled with caulk, wood putty, or special epoxy and the surfaces sanded. Glazing putty should be replaced if found to be loose or missing. The wood frame should be primed with an oil-based primer and painted with one to two coats of either exterior latex or oil-based paint.

3. The joints between the window frame and the surrounding masonry (if applicable) should be inspected. Loose caulk should be removed and new caulk placed in the joints to prevent air and water infiltration.

If windows must be replaced, the new window should match existing or original windows as closely as possible. At minimum, the new window should match the shape of the original by filling the entire opening. Also, the type of window should be the same. Double-hung windows should not be replaced by a single fixed pane of glass. Avoid using windows or window treatments that are not consistent with the style of the facade. If storm windows are used on the outside, they should match the color and shape of the existing window.

SCHEMATIC FACADE DESIGNS: WATER STREET

Introduction

The following section include schematic facade designs for select buildings in the downtown. The designs should not be considered final schemes for any of the buildings. They are merely a collection of ideas for a given facade that are consistent with the guidelines presented in this document. There may even be differences in our design between the line drawing and color rendered drawing as we explored multiple options for each facade.

There can be many interpretations of the guidelines as well as many different levels of investment in a facade rehabilitation. Owners that decide to invest in their buildings, and prefer a project that is either more or less ambitious than the ideas shown here, are encouraged to read the guidelines and develop their own unique interpretation. If painting is part of the project, owners should have test patches of possible colors painted onto the building to assist in choosing.

We also encourage communicating with your neighbors beginning before the project and continuing throughout to keep them informed and head off any confusion. Before starting any project, it is also important to know if your neighbors are planning any projects for their buildings to ensure that the results will all be reasonably compatible.

The guidelines which precede this section can also be applied to other downtown buildings that are not specifically addressed here.

Bonham Theater & Video
Bunch Engineering & Water Street Gallery
Coach's
Culver Franchising System, Inc.
Eagle Inn Restaurant
Heart of the Country Realty & Cup of Joy
HomeSpun Fabrics
Hometown Hardware
Locktight Security & Satellite
Lukens Realty
Making Waves
Marquardt, Carlson, Koeck, & Kirk, Ltd.
Mary Bear's Laundry & Cloverworks
Masonic Temple
Medicine Shoppe & Rural Insurance
Meyer Electronics
Prairie Schooner
Sandy's Floral Shop
Sauk Prairie Power Co.
State Farm Insurance & One Hour Photo
Sy's Place
Tom's Pit Stop
Tony's
Ziegler Photography

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

This building has some nice historic detailing and retains a large amount of transparency on the base so that it helps activate the street. The trim color should be painted a brighter color than the current dark maroon (appears brown from a distance). The aluminum trim around the doors should be painted the trim color as well. The top has nice articulation as it is, but becomes a real event when topped with the recommended urns. The arched windows within each outer bay of the building should be come translucent again and possible lit up like lanterns at night. The marquee should have a larger section of trim added to the top to hide the mechanical equipment on top. The recommended design also shows an addition of more detailing on either side of the entry.

This building appears to be in good condition and certainly has all the elements that you expect in a historic downtown commercial building. The recommended design shows a different color scheme that makes the building more attractive. The current scheme does not flatter the building and its detailing very well. The entry should be painted a lighter color to make it stand out more from the rest of the base. The air conditioner should be moved to another location if possible, not on the front of the building.

Wood detailing is very susceptible to deterioration when neglected, but should be retained, repaired, or replaced whenever possible to retain historic character.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.

This building is basically in good shape and does not have much on the facade that is inappropriate. Our recommended design shows a heavier cornice to compliment the heaviness of the stone facade. The awnings are replaced and coordinated with the color of the door to present a consistent color scheme that adds life to the building. All windows should be transparent. In general, people tend to avoid solid blank doors or frosted windows that do not allow a view before entering. The building owner may even consider adding a window in the door to make it more inviting to passersby to stop in and take a look.

The former Firehouse restaurant was sold during the course of this project to Culver's to be used for their administrative office and headquarters. PDI's design attempts to break the larger building into its constituent historic building modules while still maintaining a cohesive facade. Windows are provided throughout the facade to add to the life and activity on the street. The entry is housed in a recessed addition on the far right of the building. The recommended design attempt to create an entry portal directly on the street so that the entry addresses the street. The two-story section of the facade is intended to be a small custard stand.

Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

The majority of the surface area of the base of the building (first floor) on the street facade should be void (windows). Inversely, the majority of the surface area above the base of the building on the street facade should be solid (wall).

The base of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale. These should include doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings and canopies, ornament, etc.

All elevations of newer buildings should express a building module similar to the typical historical lot sizes of Downtown Prairie du Sac.

Alterations to existing buildings in the downtown area should use materials which are sympathetic to the historic character. These materials are typically brick, stone, terra cotta, glass, wood, and metal.

Culver's Custard
Culver's, Inc.

FACADE DESIGN/ EAGLE INN RESTAURANT

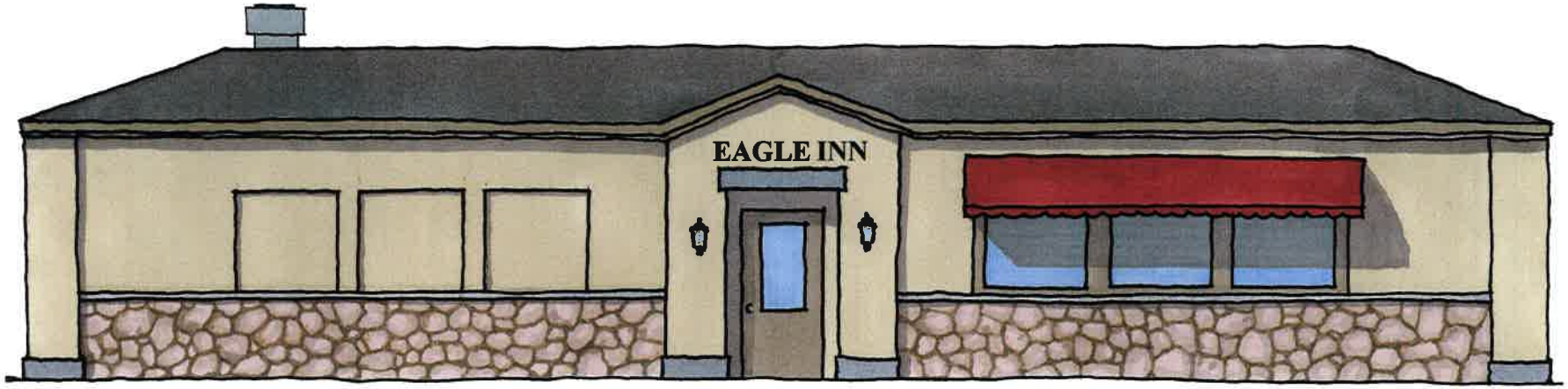
This restaurant building is located on a prominent corner and is very visible. The left half of the building is the kitchen and bathrooms and therefore does not have windows. We recommend applying materials to the facade to articulate that blank portion of the facade. The oversized wood cornice is removed and replaced by a smaller cornice with a richer articulation. The entrance is highlighted by pulling it out from its recessed position and pushing up the roof line over the door.

New buildings should express a structural rhythm on the street facade consistent with that evident in existing historic buildings.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.


EAGLE INN

Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

Buildings should not be made to appear to be exactly equal in height to adjacent buildings.

Expression lines within existing building facades should be integrated into all new and modified facades.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

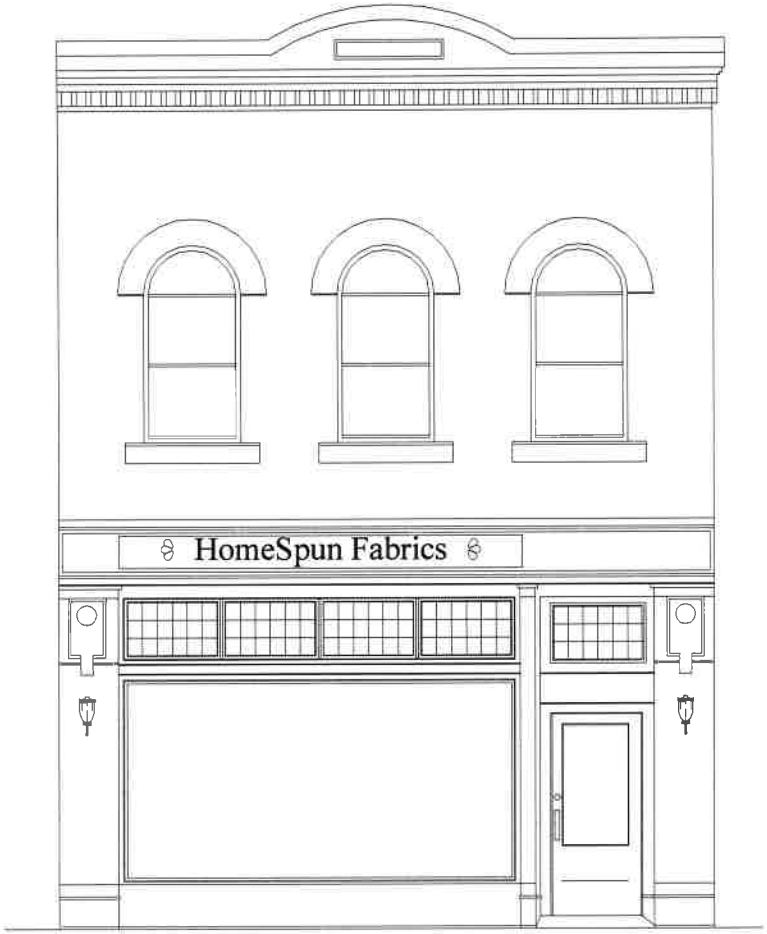
At some point in these two buildings' past, the upper floor was given a continuous treatment. The existing windows on the second floor are inappropriate for the historic nature of the first floors as well as the rest of the downtown. The most important action is to remove the second floor treatment on both buildings. The building on the left should have a brick treatment and compatible windows and cornice installed. The building on the right should be treated with a painted or permanently colored material, compatible windows and an articulated top.

New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

Expression lines within existing building facades should be integrated into all new and modified facades.

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.



The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Where there are exposed backs of buildings that are visible from a public right-of-way, the back facade should be treated with the similar design attention as the front facade.

The majority of the surface area of the base of the building (first floor) on the street facade should be void (windows). Inversely, the majority of the surface area above the base of the building on the street facade should be solid (wall).

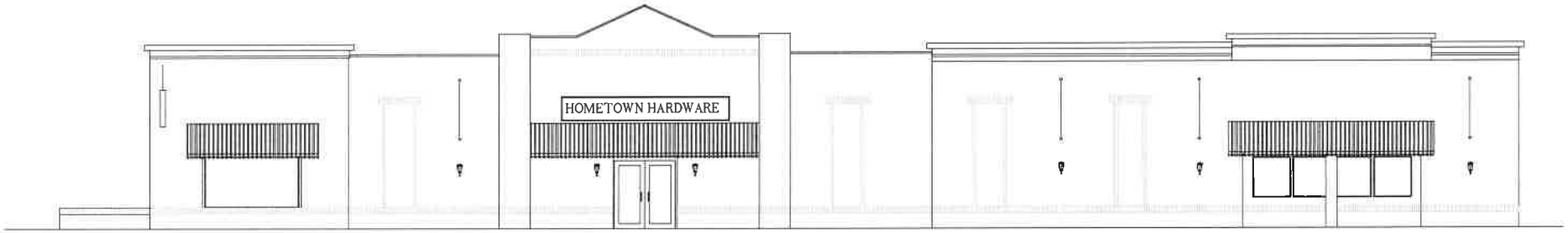
This building has undergone a series of significant alterations and renovations over the years that have left it drab and understated. The goal of the proposed design is to restore it not to its exact original design, but at least its former glory as a respectable commercial building. A cornice is placed on top that approximate the original. A new paint job is recommended that includes warmer colors. The storefront design includes a much larger storefront windows and detailing that adds a richness that is currently missing from the building.

Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

All elevations of newer buildings should express a building module similar to the typical historical lot sizes of Downtown Prairie du Sac.

New buildings should express a structural rhythm on the street facade consistent with that evident in existing historic buildings.



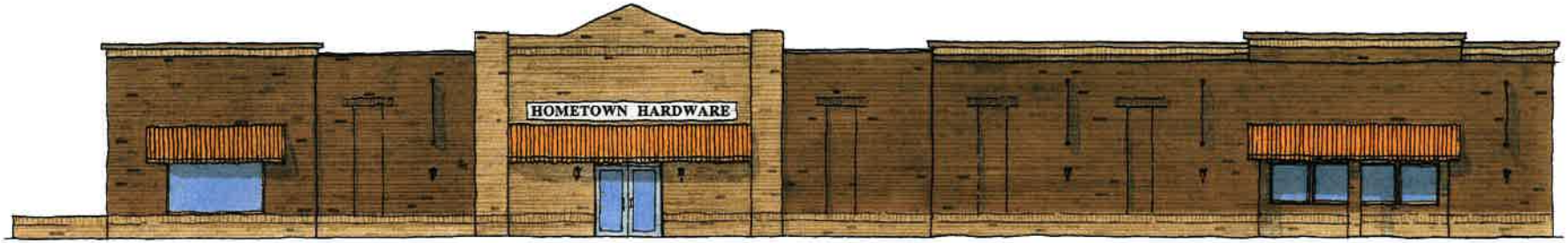
Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Canopies and awnings should reflect the door and window openings or structural bays of the building. They should also reflect the traditional shapes and materials commonly used at the turn of the century.

The base of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale. These should include doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings and canopies, ornament, etc.

This building spans four historic lots and generally presents a very boring and lifeless facade to the street. There is little indication from the outside of the building that this is one of the most active retail establishments on the street. The solution to this problem is to put more and larger windows on the facade. This solution is not fully presented here because the owner does not feel that it is possible given his internal shelving limitations. However, more windows is the most important change that could be made. The other most important action, shown below, is to take steps to subdivide the building into smaller components. This can be accomplished by adding elements to the facade that create vertical expression lines. The most prominent component should be the entry.



Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

Wood detailing is very susceptible to deterioration when neglected, but should be retained, repaired, or replaced whenever possible to retain historic character.

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

Alterations to existing buildings in the downtown area should use materials which are sympathetic to the historic character. These materials are typically brick, stone, terra cotta, glass, wood, and metal.

This building is one of the oldest in the downtown, and remains very similar to its historic form. The most important changes that should be made to this building concerns the signage. The sign on top of the building should be removed, and a new signage band should be created above the windows and door. This signage band should be able to accommodate all the signage that is required for the business except for the occasional small window sign. In addition, steps should be taken to subtly distinguish between the commercial portion of the building and the residential portion. This includes painting the trim on the commercial portion a darker color to make it more prominent.

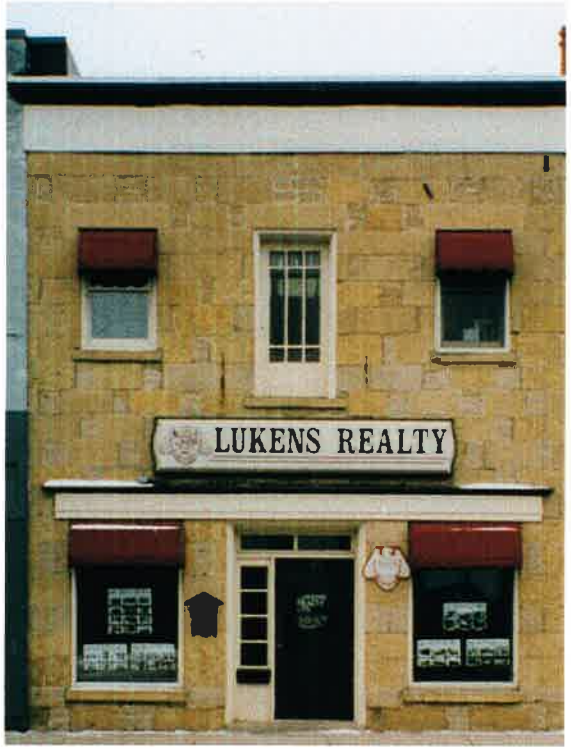
The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

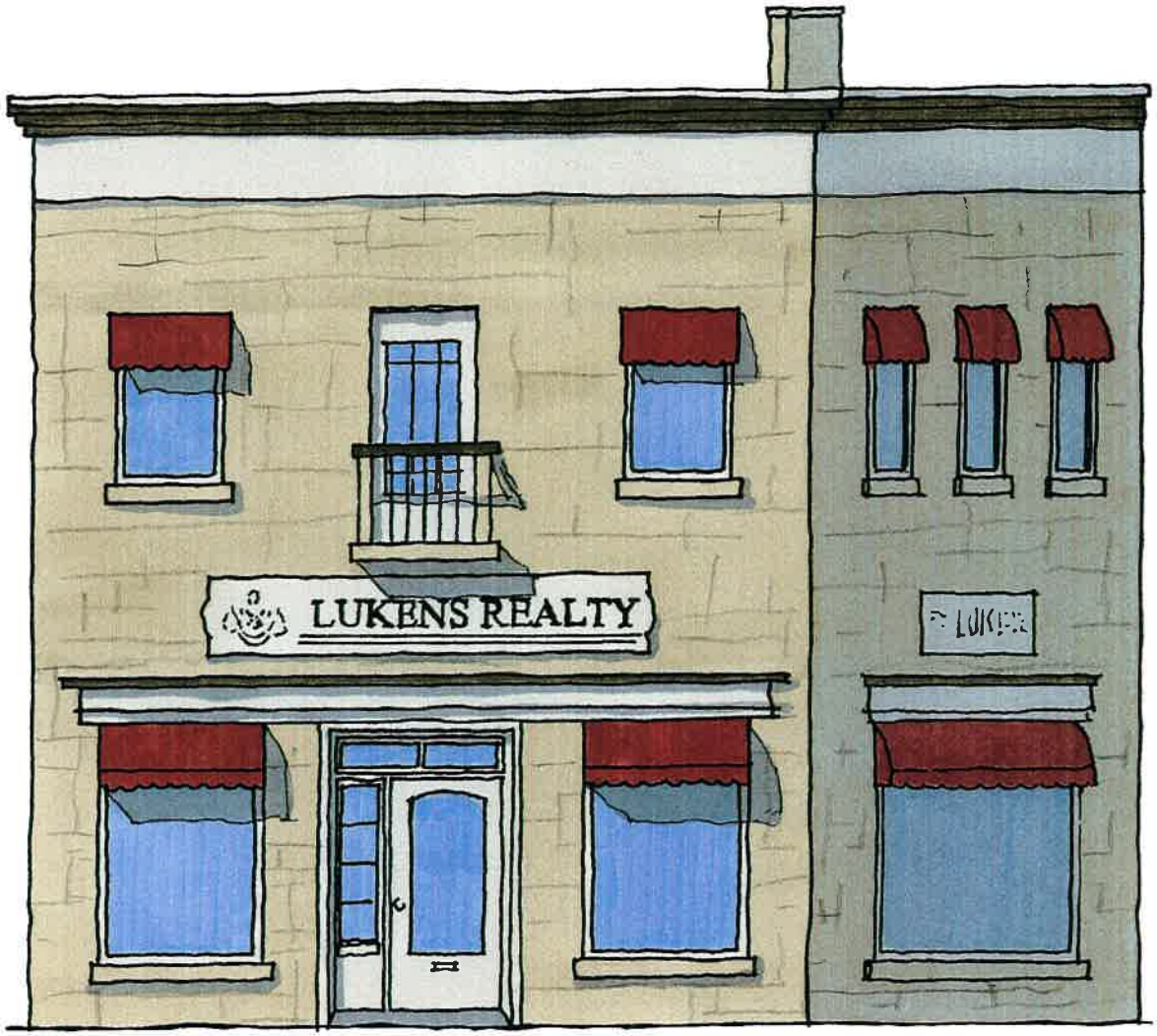
Wood detailing is very susceptible to deterioration when neglected, but should be retained, repaired, or replaced whenever possible to retain historic character.

Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

This is certainly one of the nicest looking historic buildings in the downtown. It has been very well maintained over the years and requires very little alteration. The design shows the addition of a small railing in front of the second story door. This is not so much for aesthetic purpose as much as to allow the door to be opened for ventilation and still remain safe. The stone appears to be in good condition, but some of the staining could be spot cleaned to improve the appearance without compromising the aged quality. This is a judgement call the owner should make and is not crucial to facade improvements.





The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

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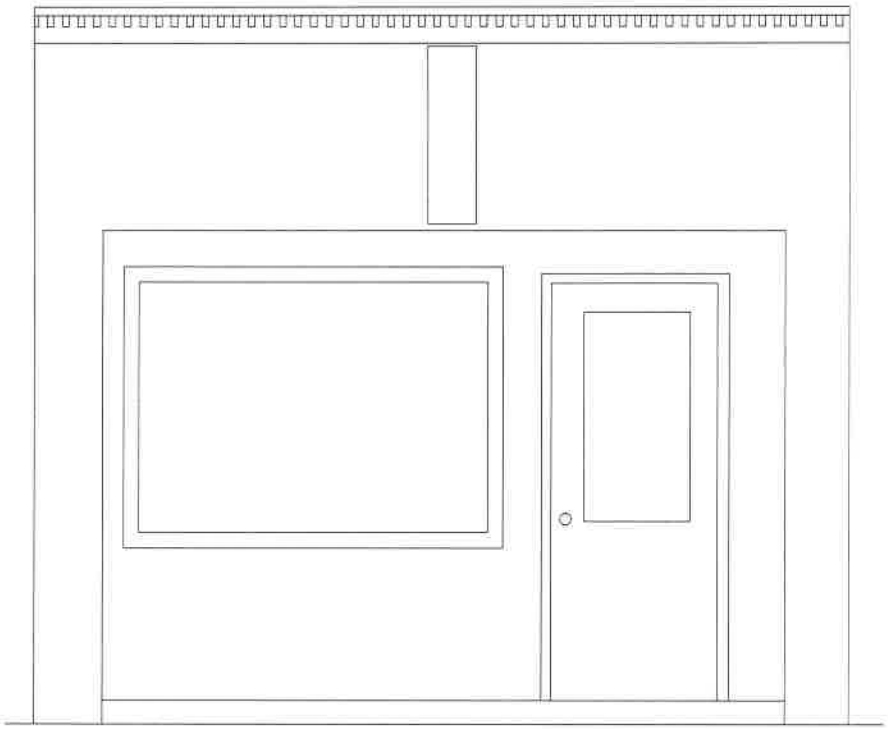
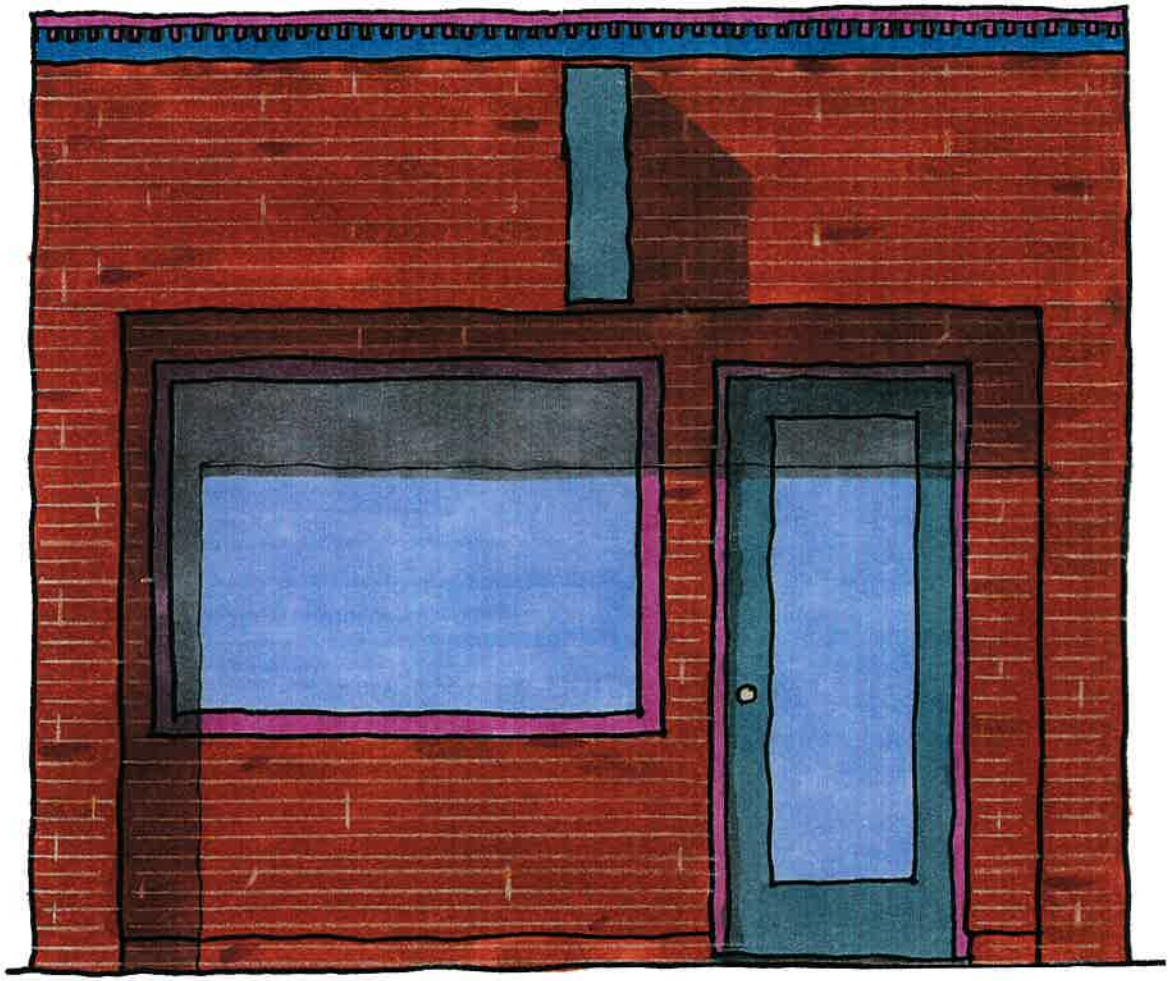


Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.

New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

This small commercial building has looked very similar as now for quite some time. Most of the elements are correctly placed, but a few slight alterations are appropriate. The residential style door should be replaced with a commercial one. The storefront window needs to provide a view to the interior during the day. The sign should be lowered to not project above the top of the building. The design also shows the addition of a simple cornice to top the building.



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All elevations of newer buildings should express a building module similar to the typical historical lot sizes of Downtown Prairie du Sac.

The base of the building should include elements that relate to the human scale. These should include doors and windows, texture, projections, awnings and canopies, ornament, etc.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

Buildings should express their own identity while respecting the mass, rhythm, height, pattern, and ornamentation of neighboring buildings.

Each structural bay on the street facade should have the same vertical proportion (height greater than width).

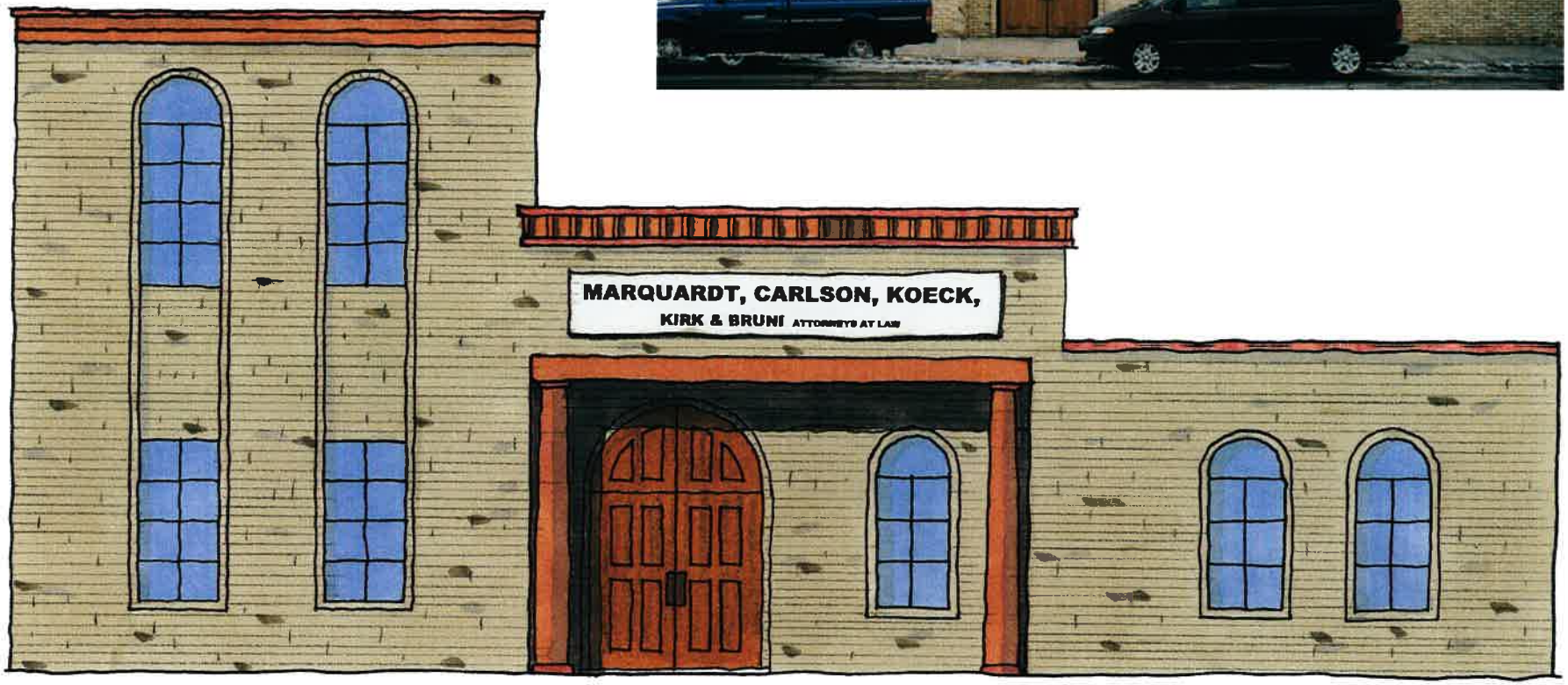
Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

New buildings should express a structural rhythm on the street facade consistent with that evident in existing historic buildings.

The majority of the surface area of the base of the building (first floor) on the street facade should be void (windows). Inversely, the majority of the surface area above the base of the building on the street facade should be solid (wall).

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

This building is really housed in three historic structures that have been altered to appear as one. The alterations create an awkward grouping. The design shown below attempts to minimize the awkwardness by adding elements that distinguish between the three sections. The elements, cornices and a beam and columns to frame the doorway, are intended to be the same in material and finish as the large oak doors. The interior of the building has very little visual connection to the street. The windows should be more transparent and two more are added to avoid the blank wall.



Expression lines within existing building facades should be integrated into all new and modified facades.

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The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

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Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

These two buildings make a nice pair and remain relatively intact. The building on the right has changed uses since this photo was taken and now houses a retail operation. The new design for that building shows even more transparency on the storefront and a replacement of the residential-style door with a more appropriate commercial door. The signage for both buildings should be placed in a defined area above the storefront. The building on the right needs a new paint job and some minor maintenance on the cornice.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

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This prominent building used to house the bank, and significant alterations have been made since that time. This building is a very good candidate for a modified restoration because it is in such good shape and contains a lot of rich detail. The most important alterations that should be made is to strip off the metal around the door and restore the arched doorway, and to strip away the second story wood paneling and restore the upper windows. Because of its unique current use, this building has great potential as a downtown community center, providing space for a large variety of activities.

Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.

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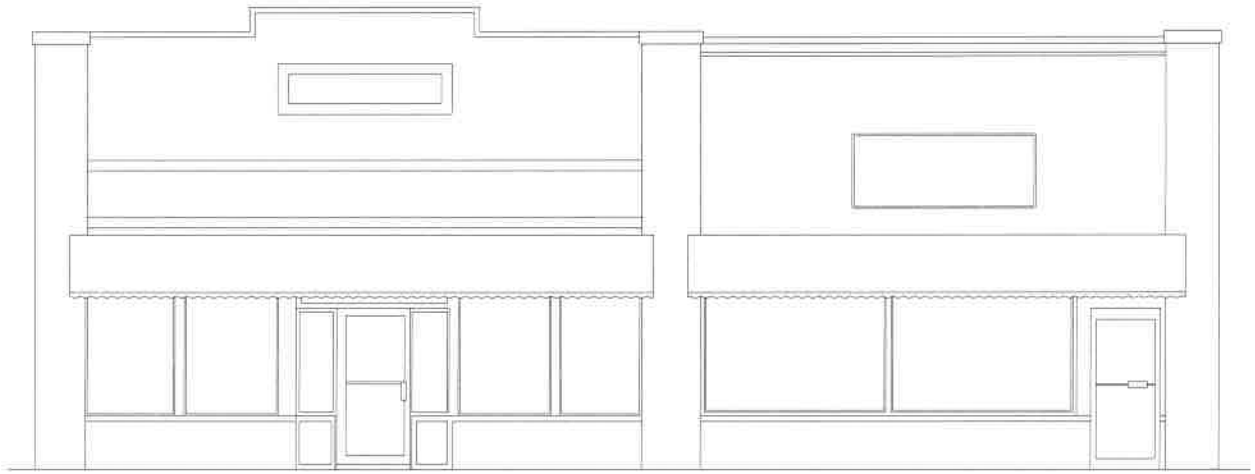

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All elevations of newer buildings should express a building module similar to the typical historical lot sizes of Downtown Prairie du

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

Canopies and awnings should reflect the door and window openings or structural bays of the building. They should also reflect the traditional shapes and materials commonly used at the turn of the century.

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

The majority of the surface area of the base of the building (first floor) on the street facade should be void (windows). Inversely, the majority of the surface area above the base of the building on the street facade should be solid (wall).

FACADE DESIGN/ MEYER ELECTRONICS

The most important design move for this building is to place the entrance on the Water St. facade. It is important that all buildings have front doors that address the street. This building is larger than one historic lot, and therefore should be more clearly subdivided into separate sections. The warehouse portion of the facade should have articulation that avoids the look of a large blank wall.

There are two concepts shown for the storefront portion of the facade. The line drawing below shows a more involved renovation that includes adding traditional storefront windows around a centrally positioned entrance. The color rendering shows a simpler version that keeps the existing windows and replaces one with a door.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

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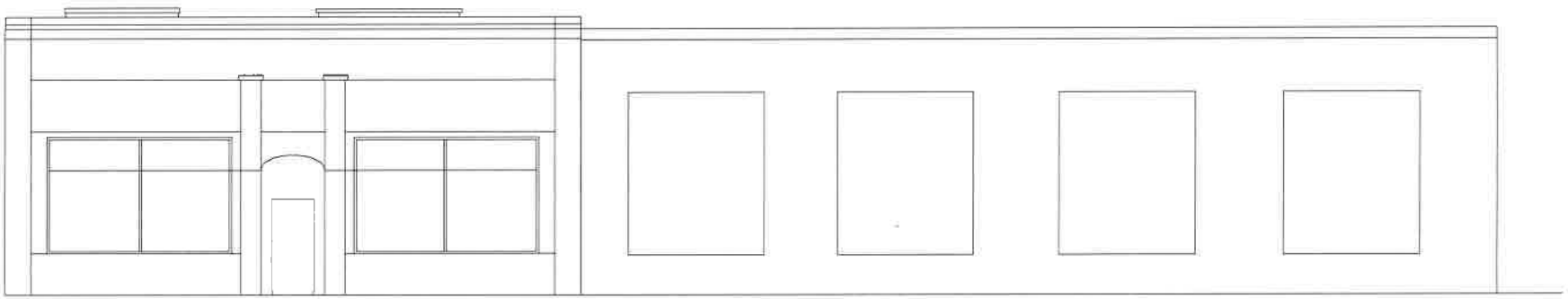
Each structural bay on the street facade should have the same vertical proportion (height greater than width).



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Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

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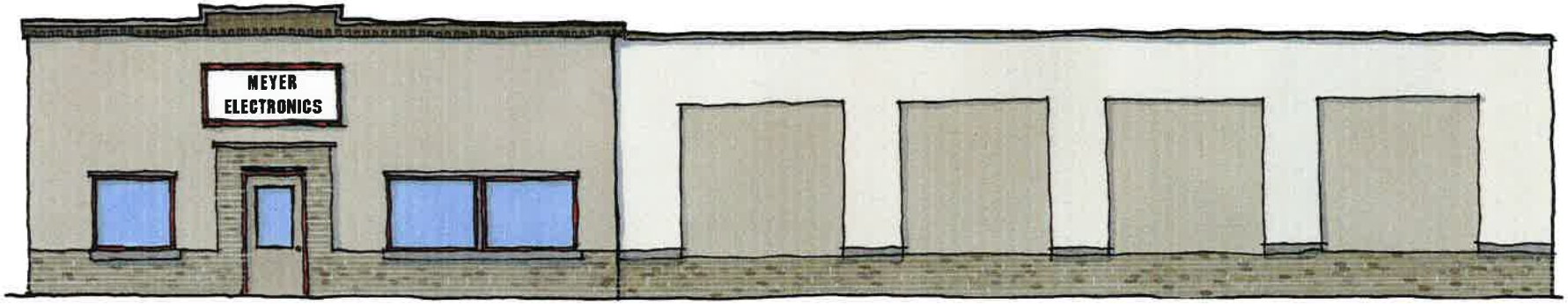
The most important alteration that should be made to this building is something that will clearly divide between the two historic facades. In addition the facade on the right should have storefront windows installed on the street to allow pedestrians to view the activity within. Signage should be placed above each storefront with small projecting signs used as supplemental signage. The drawing shows awnings added to lend a degree of detailing a richness to an otherwise very simple facade. The tops of the buildings are treated differently from the other to make the distinction more clear.

MEYER
ELECTRONICS


MEYER
ELECTRONICS

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Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

This bar has the common problem of too little visual connection with the street. The remedy is to open up more windows in the facade. The rendering to the right shows one option for using existing openings and changing the door to one with glass. The line drawing shows a more involved solution that includes creating a larger storefront window opening. The current window openings on the second floor are adequate, but the drawings show a couple of different options that will better fit in with the each strategy for the first floor windows. The designs also show the addition of a more traditional location for signage between the first and second floor.

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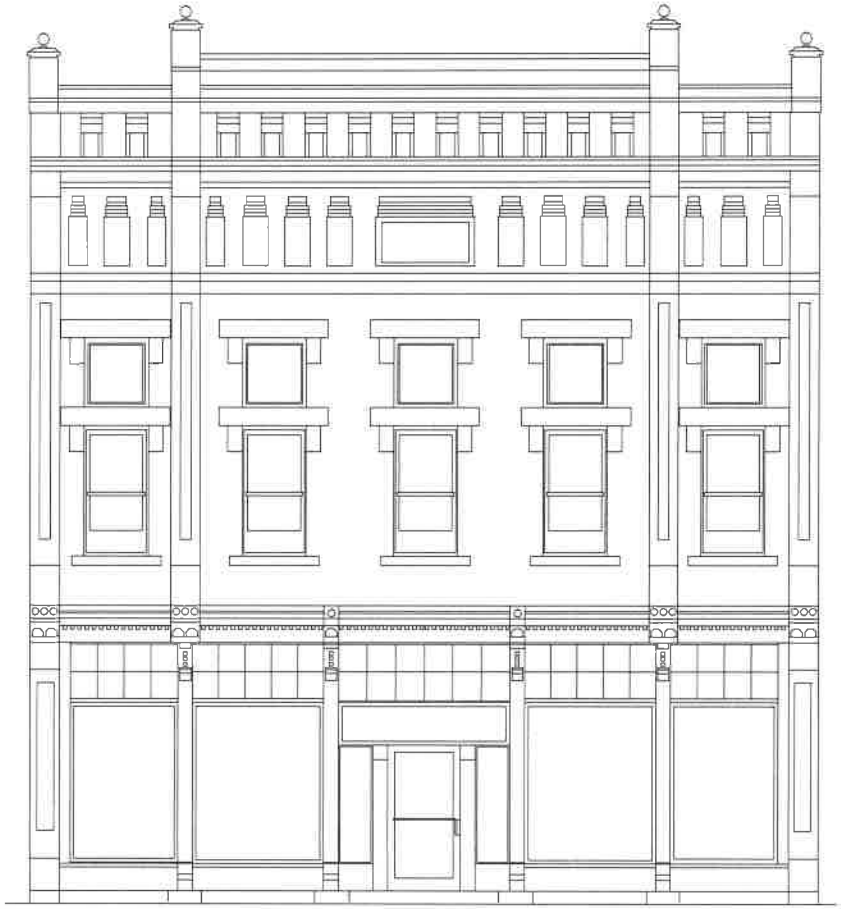


Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

Existing cast iron should be properly cared for and appropriately replaced when necessary. Sheet metal can be used to replicate deteriorated ornament or to create new ornament that is intricate for relatively low cost.

This is the most prominent of the remaining commercial buildings in downtown. It has been relatively well cared for and looks very good for its age. The owner should consider having the metalwork inspected to explore any preventative maintenance that could be done to head off future deterioration. The recommended scheme also shows replacing some of the window filler panels with glass on the first floor in an appropriate historic pattern. Also, any exposed aluminum should be painted.

Wood detailing is very susceptible to deterioration when neglected, but should be retained, repaired, or replaced whenever possible to retain historic character.

Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

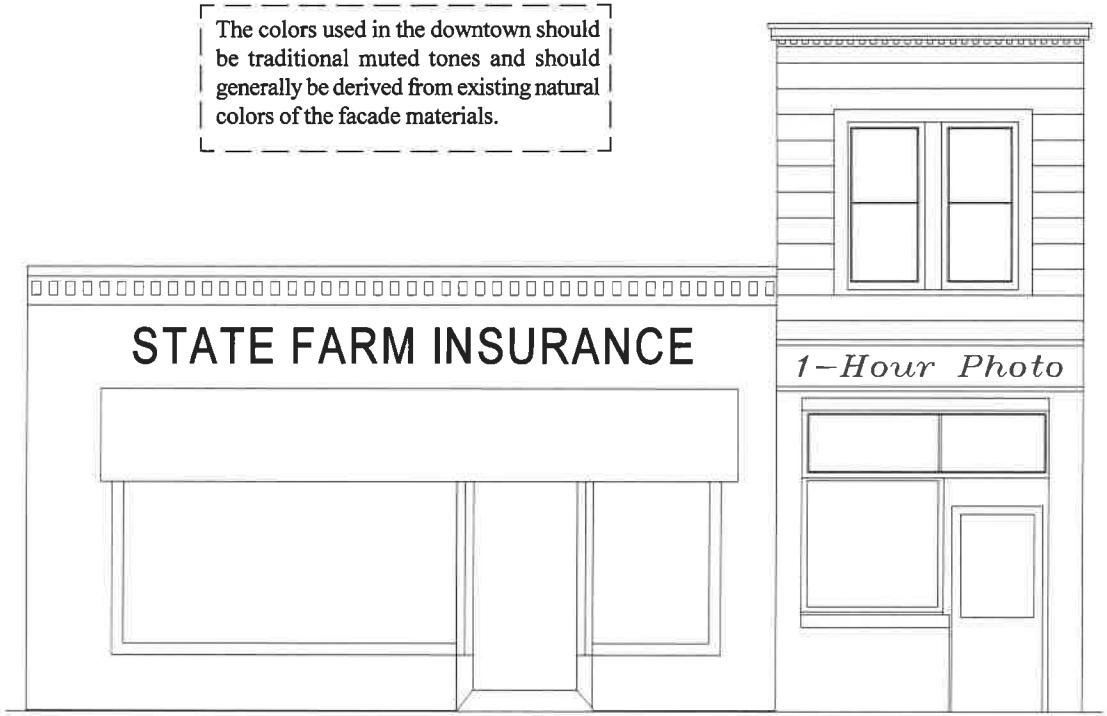
Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

Existing cast iron should be properly cared for and appropriately replaced when necessary. Sheet metal can be used to replicate deteriorated ornament or to create new ornament that is intricate for relatively low cost.

In terms of historic detailing, this is one of the best preserved buildings in downtown. The most important action that needs to be taken as soon as possible is basic maintenance and repair of the exterior materials. The brick needs to be cleaned, repairs need to be made to any deteriorated wood or sheet metal, and a new coat of the paint needs to be applied.

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.



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The replacement of windows and doors, and window openings and door openings should replicate the original pattern of solid (wall) to void (opening).

Expression lines within existing building facades should be integrated into all new and modified facades.

Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting.

Both of these buildings have the basic elements of an appropriate historic storefront in place. However, some of the details need some attention. Both buildings need cornices articulating their tops. The building on the left in particular needs more appropriate signage. A large, internally lit sign for an insurance agent seems overdone. A different color is shown on the upper level of the building on the right merely for comparison. The existing white is perfectly acceptable.

Existing cornices, ornamentation, and trim of the building should be preserved. Restoration or recreation of historic building elements is encouraged, but should be handled properly.

The architectural composition of building elevations shall express base, middle, and top articulation on all street facades.

Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

New or altered entries and storefronts should display a visual richness of detail to add interest to the base of the building.

The top of the street facade should be articulated to provide a unique silhouette to the building when seen from street level.

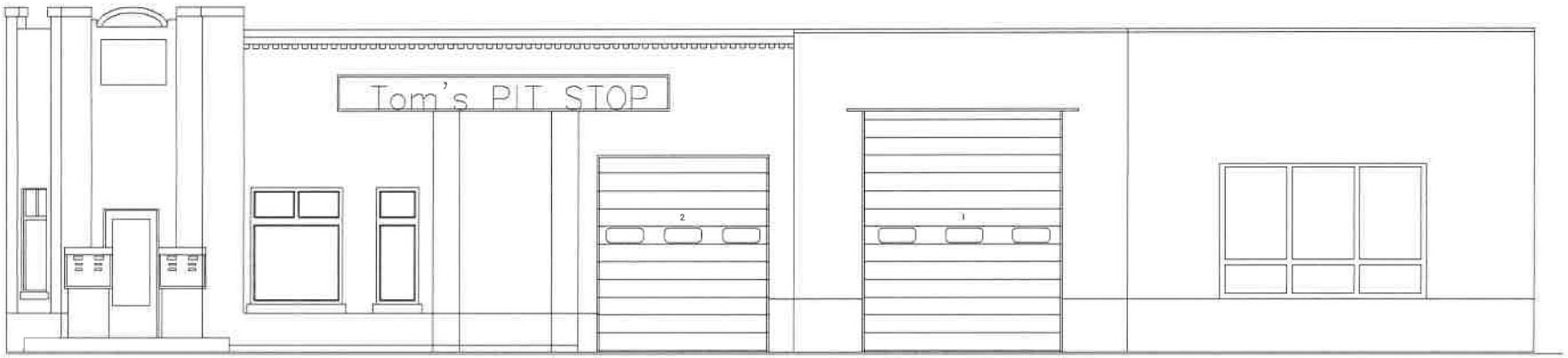
Compared to other downtown taverns, this building has more transparent windows in the base than most. Although we would typically like to see more, the current first floor windows seem to meet the minimum standard. The most important project to improve the aesthetics of the building is to construct a cornice for the top of the facade. The cornice will have the greatest impact if it has an interesting shape and is painted to complement the rest of the facade.

FACADE DESIGN/ TOM'S PIT STOP

The most important action that should be taken to improve this building is exterior painting. The red-white-blue scheme is not appropriate for the historic nature of the building or the downtown. A more appropriate scheme is shown that uses similar basic colors and utilizes the painting to break up the scale of the building.

Building facades should bring life to the street on all sides of the building that are public.

Buildings should express their own identity while respecting the mass, rhythm, height, pattern, and ornamentation of neighboring buildings.



Exterior signs should be located within the base of the building with attention paid to appropriateness of location, size, color, and lighting. (pg. 32)

The colors used in the downtown should be traditional muted tones and should generally be derived from existing natural colors of the facade materials.

The painting of masonry street facades is not recommended. However, it is recognized that in some instances painting of the surfaces may be advisable.

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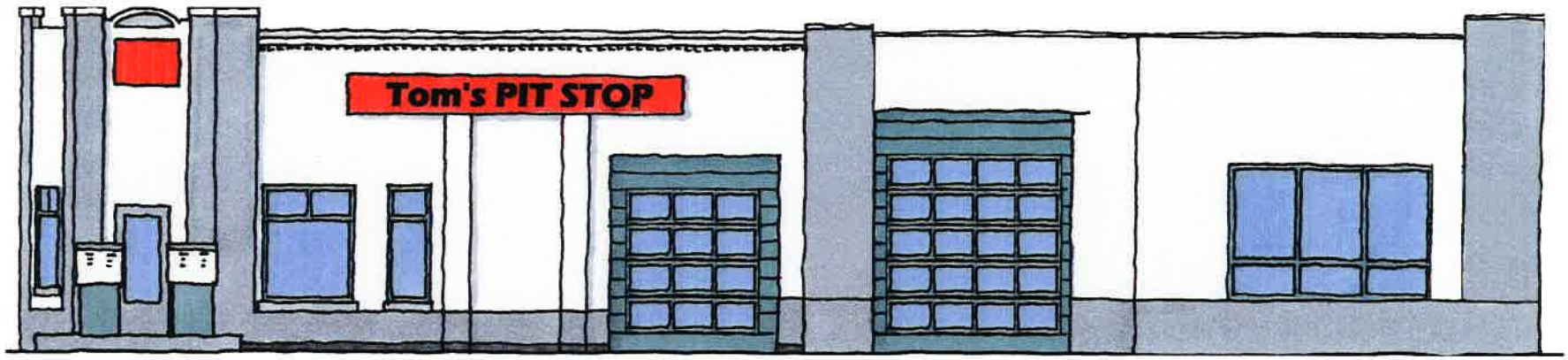
Tom's PIT STOP

Alterations to existing buildings in the downtown area should use materials which are sympathetic to the historic character. These materials are typically brick, stone, terra cotta, glass, wood, and metal.

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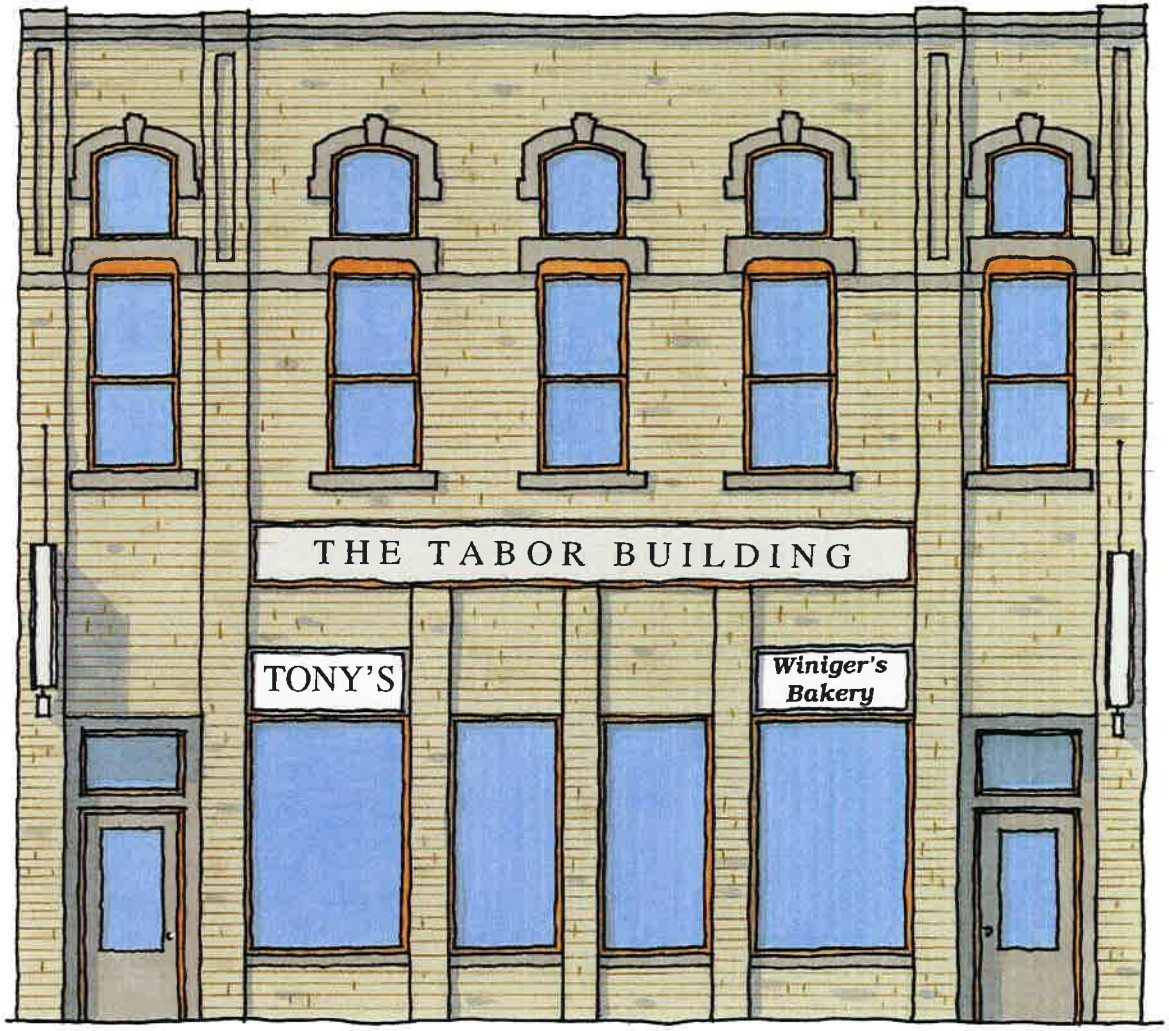
Every effort should be made to maintain and repair original doors and windows. If this is not possible, replacements should maintain the historic character in terms of size, shape, transparency, mullion size and placement, etc.

Canopies and awnings should reflect the door and window openings or structural bays of the building. They should also reflect the traditional shapes and materials commonly used at the turn of the century.

Masonry is susceptible to moisture, pollution, and age, but can be very durable if properly cared for and maintained.

This building has a lot of potential. The most important action to take is to find tenants for the building and open up the front to activate the sidewalk outside. The building seems to lend well to two first-floor tenants, but could also work well for one. The most important action for the aesthetics of the building is to restore the brick base.



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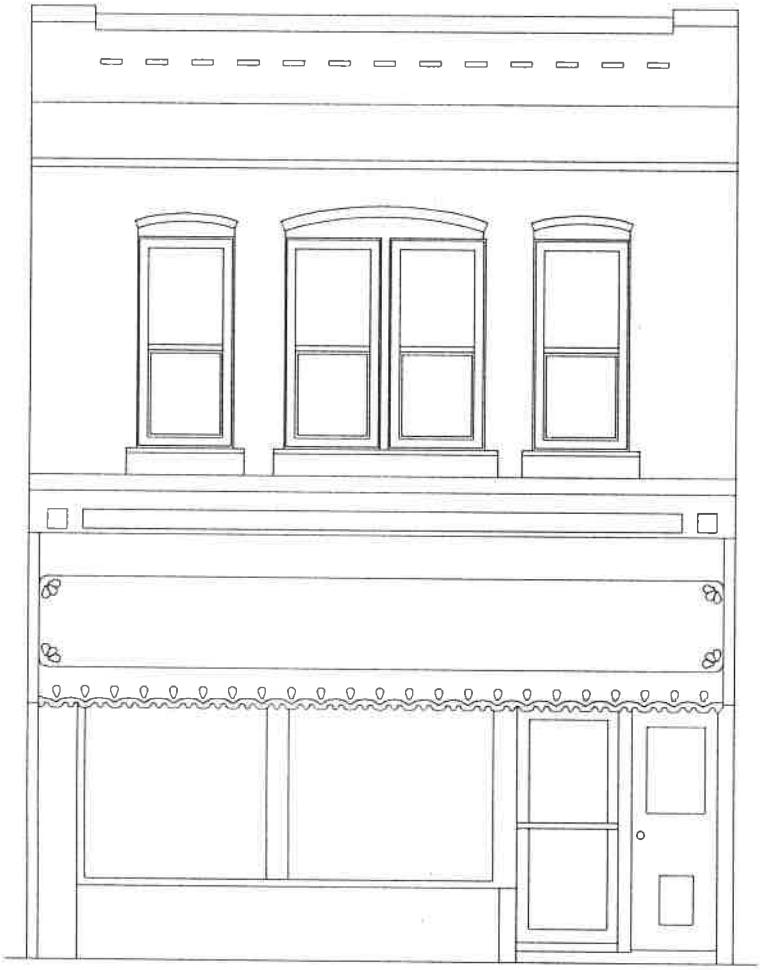

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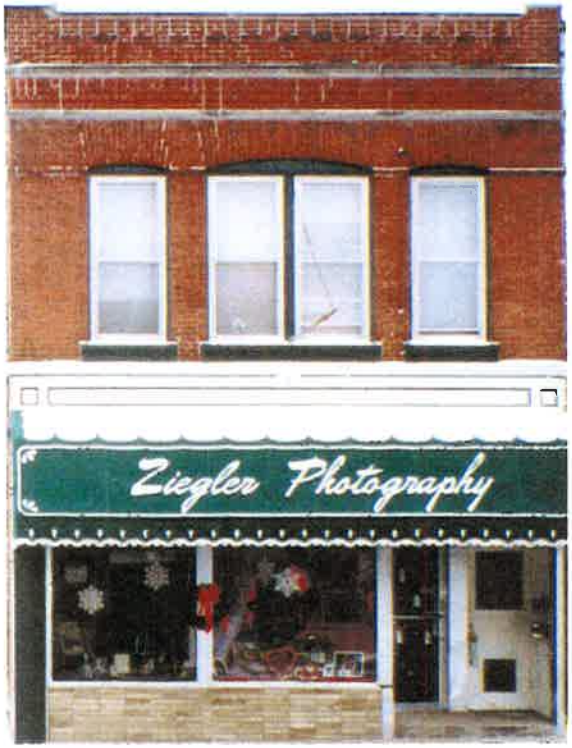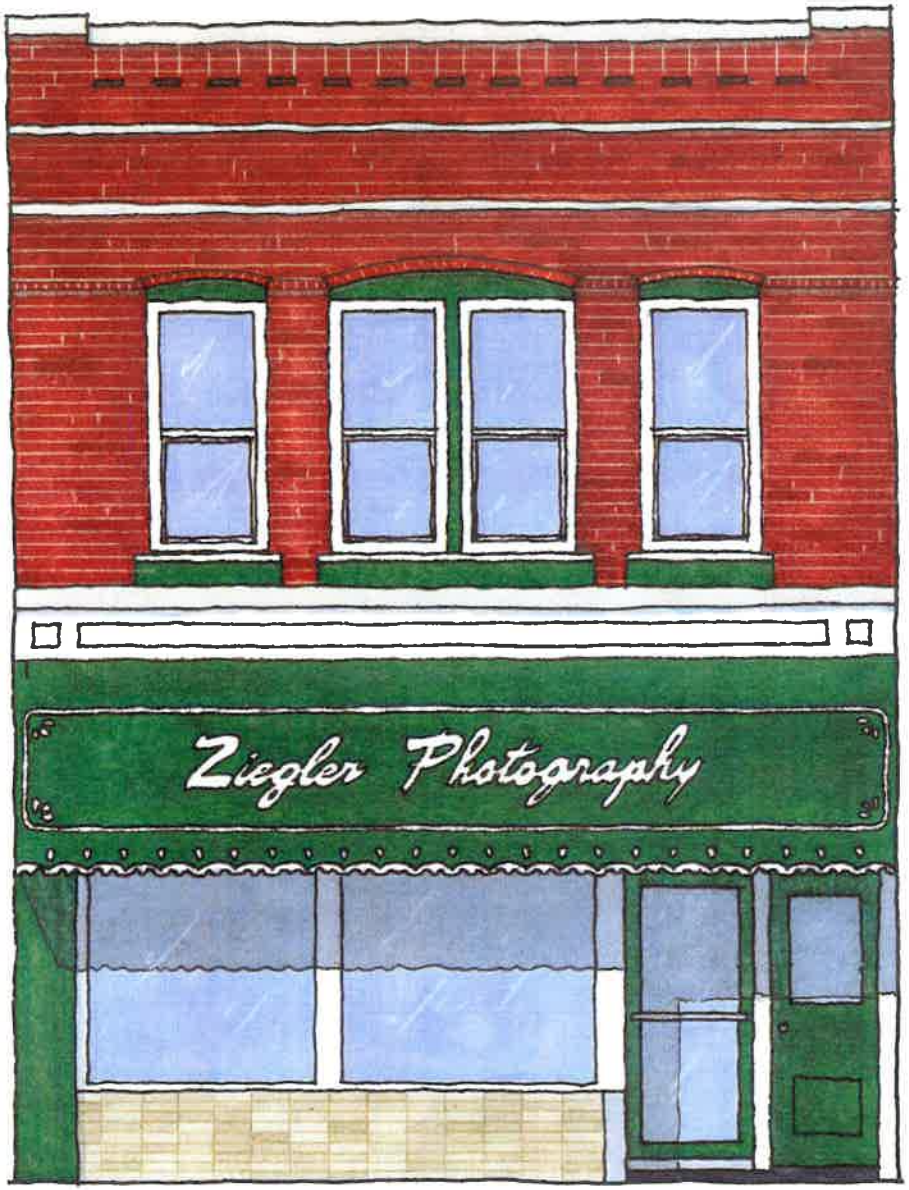
This historic commercial building has generally been well-maintained over the years. It also has many of the elements in place that are desired for downtown facades. The single most important action that should be taken is to allow people a view into at least a portion of the interior. Photo studios often have a more public area that is visible from the street and contains an extensive display of framed photos. The most important action to take to improve the aesthetics of the building is to clean the masonry.