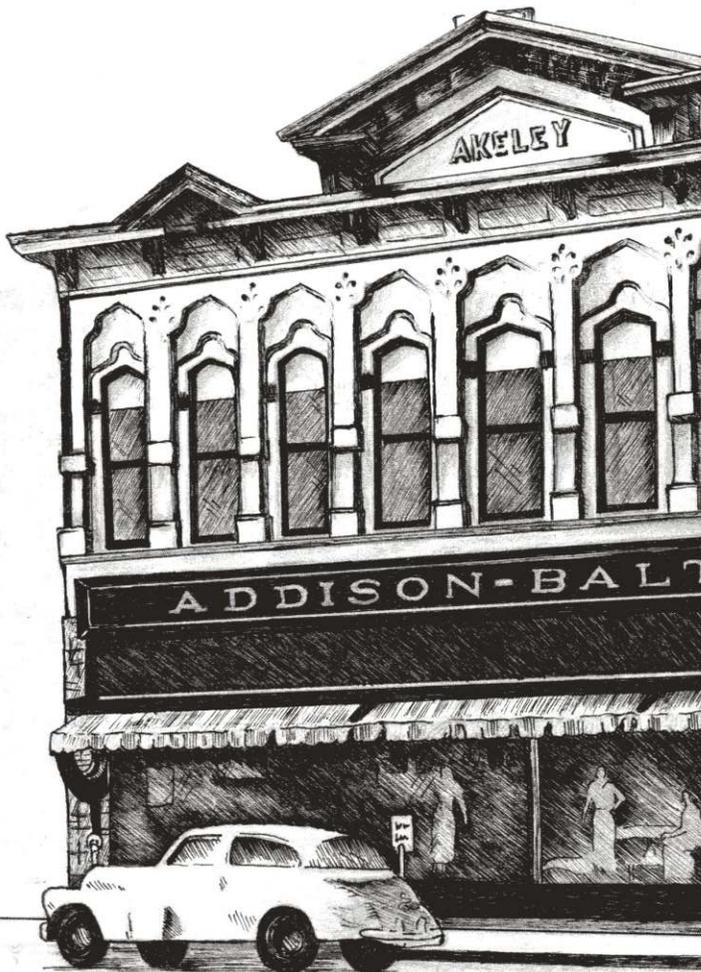




# Design Guidelines



© Carlson 05



Grand Haven Main Street  
Downtown Development  
Authority (MSDDA) Board  
approved.



Thank you to the Design  
Guidelines committee, the  
Tri-Cities Historical Museum  
for providing photographs  
and Barbara Carlson for  
design layout.



# Grand Haven Main Street Design Guidelines

---

## Contents

Overview.....	3
Map.....	4
Existing Buildings & Historic Preservation.....	5
New Construction.....	18
Signage.....	20
Appendix.....	21



# Overview

---

The Grand Haven MSDDA Preservation and Place committee developed this manual to help business owners, property owners and developers throughout the Main Street / Downtown Development Authority District maintain and enhance the historic qualities of their properties that are so important to the community. The guidelines provide property owners the most appropriate methods for preserving the historic integrity of their buildings while continuing to operate them as modern businesses.

A guiding principle in creating the design guidelines is to celebrate the Grand Haven of yesterday and today while looking to tomorrow. The goal is to create an environment that integrates retail, service businesses, the arts and culture, and housing into a dynamic downtown.



# Grand Haven Main Street Downtown Development Authority Boundaries

The Grand Haven MSDDA District encompasses properties in five distinct zoning districts:

- Downtown district
- Centertown district
- Hill top district
- Waterfront district
- Old town district

These five zones are shown on the attached map. For zoning ordinance information, contact the Grand Haven Planning Department.



# Existing Buildings & Historic Preservation

## General Design Guidelines

The primary goal of historic preservation is to keep what remains of the historic character of a building. The character of a building's exterior is expressed through surviving original features such as roof type, doors and windows, cladding, trim, and ornamentation. Maintaining the historic integrity of a building involves the process of identifying, retaining, and preserving those features and qualities that define a building's historic appearance. Where all or most of these features have been changed, the building's integrity is effectively lost.

When working on old buildings, two common mistakes actually damage historic value rather than preserve it. One mistake is to add historic features to a building that never were there. The other is to make an old building look new or modern.

Even in cases where some of the original features of a building have been altered or lost, there are ways to re-establish the building's historic appearance. Reproducing the building's original features or developing a new, compatible design are strategies that can meet historic preservation standards.

The following general guidelines apply to all exterior work and/or interior work that affects the exterior of an existing historic building. They are based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. (see appendix)

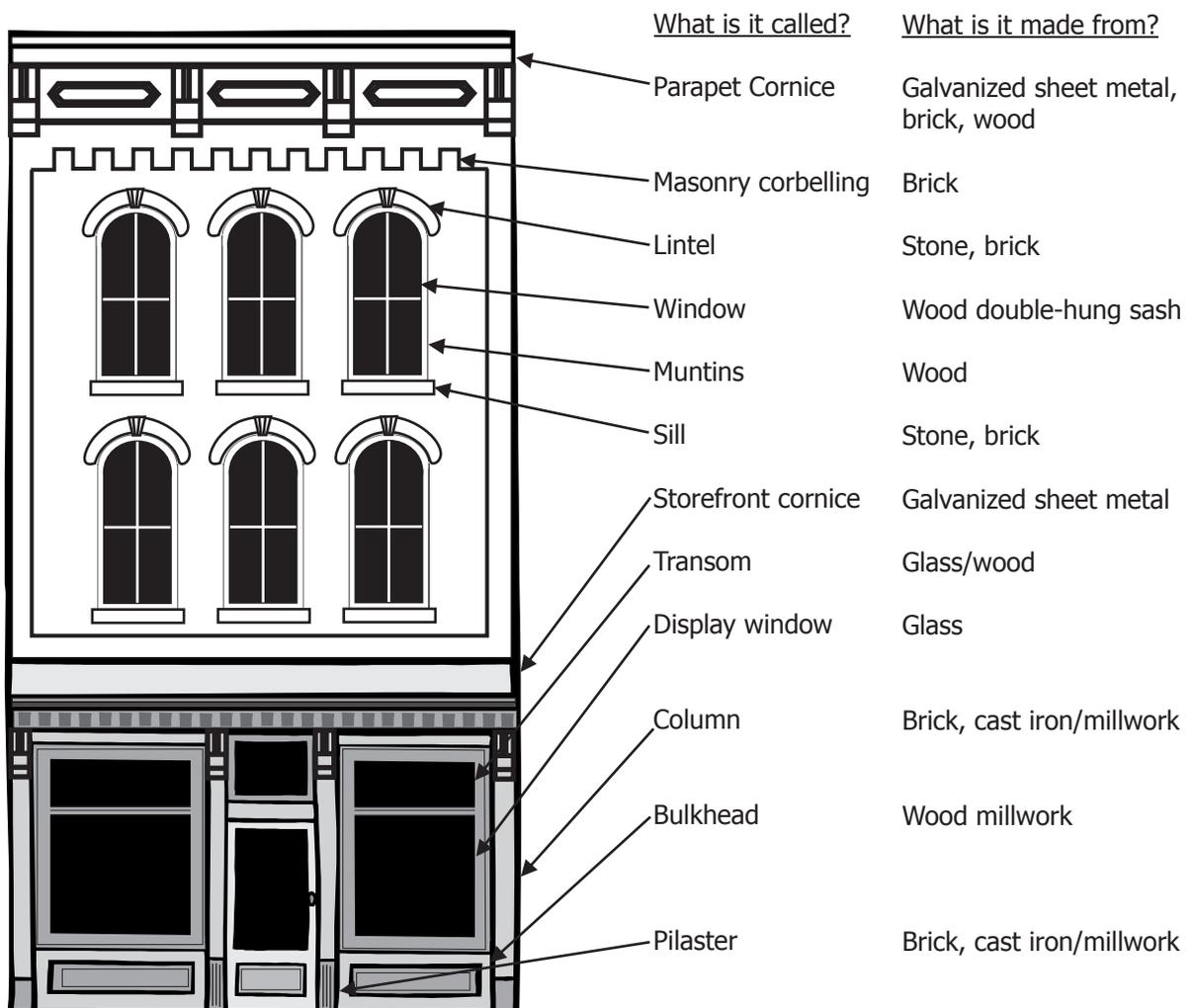


## Exterior Work

If the original feature is intact, retain it as is without altering or covering it. When the original feature is in need of repair, do the repair work in place if possible, using the gentlest methods available to avoid damaging the original materials.

If the original feature has deteriorated beyond repair and must be replaced, replace it with materials that duplicate as closely as possible the original in size, shape, and texture.

Replace missing features with historic reconstructions, or with newly designed elements that are compatible with the building's size, scale, and materials. Where paint is required, consider colors that are appropriate to the historic building or district.



## Masonry

Masonry refers to building materials – stone, brick, concrete block, tile, terra cotta, or stucco – that are used to construct and ornament building walls and architectural elements, such as chimneys, parapets, and steps. As construction material, masonry consists of individual units of brick, block, or stone, and mortar, a bonding material. Mortar primarily plays a structural role, but also contributes to the visual character of the building.

Masonry is a highly durable building material, but it is particularly vulnerable to inappropriate cleaning and repair. Proper assessment of underlying problems, particularly those related to water damage, is critical before deciding on repair and treatment.

### Guidelines

Retain original masonry and mortar whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. Concealing original masonry is not recommended.

Clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration or remove heavy soiling. Use gentlest means possible to prevent damage to masonry surfaces.

Apply paint only to areas that have been previously painted.

Where there is evidence of deterioration, duplicate old mortar in strength, composition, color, and texture. Replace old mortar joints in width and in joint profile.

**Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces using dry or wet grit or other abrasives is strongly discouraged as it will mar, damage, and weaken the masonry. High pressure water and cleaning methods should also be avoided since they can damage and weaken the masonry.**

When necessary, replace masonry units or features of brick, stone, terra cotta, and/or concrete using the same materials, or one that is a compatible substitute material, matching the original in size, color, texture, density, and profile.



## Wood

In the late 1800s, brick and stone replaced wood as the most common construction material for commercial buildings. However, wood still appears frequently as function components and decorative features of many buildings, including clapboard siding, cornices, windows, and storefront framing.

Wood is especially susceptible to the destructive effects of weathering; exposure to moisture and sunlight are particularly damaging. Historically, this is the primary reason all wood was painted, and because of this precedent, all new wood should be painted.

### Guidelines

Replace missing wood features with new elements that have historic precedent.

Resurface wood buildings with new materials that are appropriate or were available when the building was originally constructed. Avoid using metal or vinyl siding.

Consider using new wood siding or cement board of size and texture of appropriate era when replacement of siding material is required. Match proportions and profiles of new material to existing siding, and use smooth-faced, knot-free material.

Install any siding material in a way that does not obscure or damage historic ornament, such as fish scale shingles, window casings, sills, hoods, and corner boards.

Paint surfaces to protect wood from deterioration.

**Vinyl siding is not considered appropriate in most cases.**



## Metal

Architectural metals include both cast and sheet metals. In the district, cast metal was generally used for storefront columns and display window framing systems. Pressed sheet metal was frequently used to form cornices – at the roofline and storefront levels – and window hood moldings.

While cast iron pieces are difficult to repair, sheet metal elements can be repaired fairly easily through patching. For those iron-based materials that will rust, regular painting of metal elements is an essential maintenance technique.

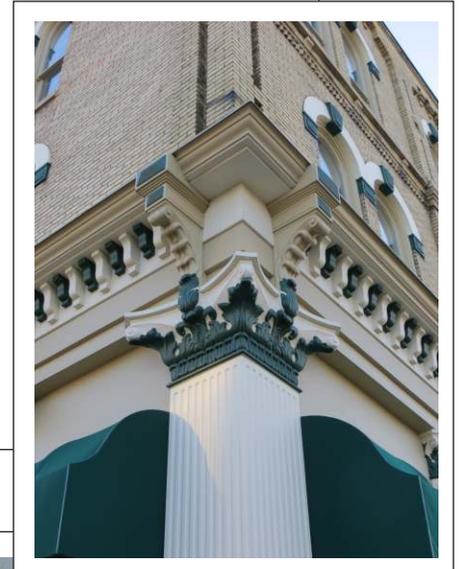
### Guidelines

Retain and repair original metal architectural features such as pressed metal cornices, window hoods, and cast iron columns.

Clean metal features only where such cleaning will not damage historic color, texture, or patina. Any cleaning treatment should use the gentlest means possible, using methods that do not abrade the surface.

Paint will protect metal types such as cast iron or pressed tin. Do not apply paint or other coatings to metals that were historically meant to be exposed, such as copper.

When replacing missing metal architectural features, consult historical photographs or comparable structures in the district for scale, design, and proportion of new features.



## Cornices

A cornice is the uppermost protective portion of a wall that is often treated in a decorative manner. In addition to a primary cornice crowning the top of a façade, commercial buildings often have a secondary, or storefront, cornice that provides a horizontal division between street-level and upper stories.

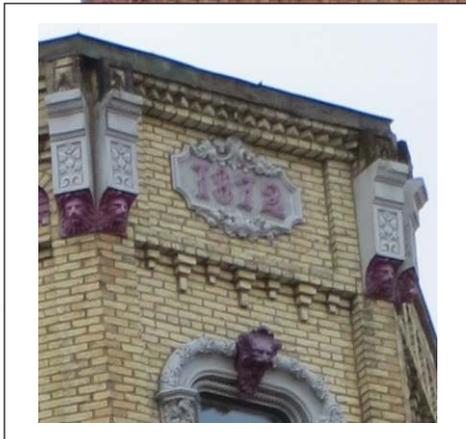
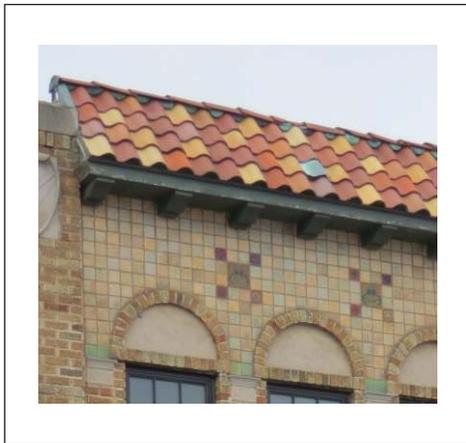
### Guidelines

Repair and retain original cornices whenever possible.

If an existing cornice has deteriorated beyond repair and must be replaced, reconstruct the original design as closely as possible.

When reconstructing a cornice that has been previously removed, consult historical photographs or comparable structures in the district for scale, design, and proportion.

When historical photographs are not available, contemporary replacements should be simple and harmonic with existing scale, materials and size of the building while avoiding a false historic look.



## Doors

Doors are often a visual focus of commercial buildings; thus, the appearance of an entry can be very important in defining the overall character of a building. Doors are architectural elements that are frequently subject to replacement – often needlessly, when simple repair can make them sound and functional.

In the district, doors are of two primary types. Historically, storefront doors almost always had full-height panes of glass, while the doors to residential units or offices on building's upper floors often had half-height glass panels.

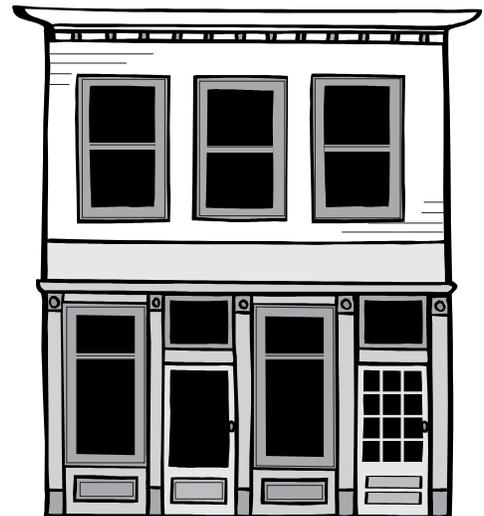
### Guidelines

Retain original doors and door hardware whenever possible.

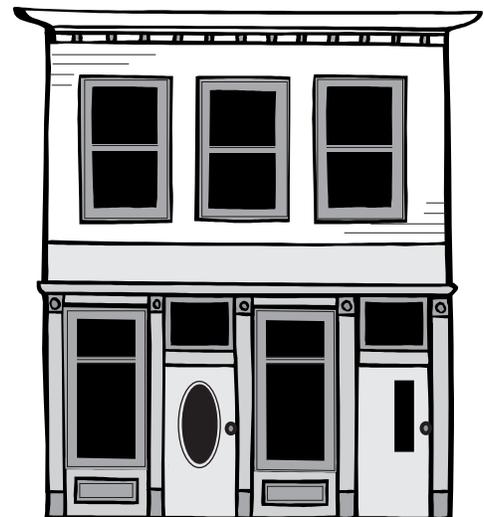
If the replacement of an existing original door is necessary, select a manufactured door or have a new door built with the same design, materials, and proportions as the original.

When no evidence of the original door exists, choose a replacement that is compatible with the proportions, design, and materials of the building. Wood paneled doors with full-height glazing are preferred for storefront door openings. Wood paneled doors with half-height glazing are generally preferred for second floor entrances. Select replacement door hardware that is consistent with historic hardware in design and finish.

Do not reduce the size or proportions of original door openings to install.



Store front with original or acceptable replacement doors.



Store front with inappropriate replacement doors.

## Roofs

Most commercial buildings have roofs that are flat or slightly sloped in profile and are not visible behind parapet walls. Buildings of wood construction frequently have gabled roofs with the end facing the street. Since the surfaces of a gabled roof are visible from the street, replacement roofing for this roof type should be compatible with the original material.

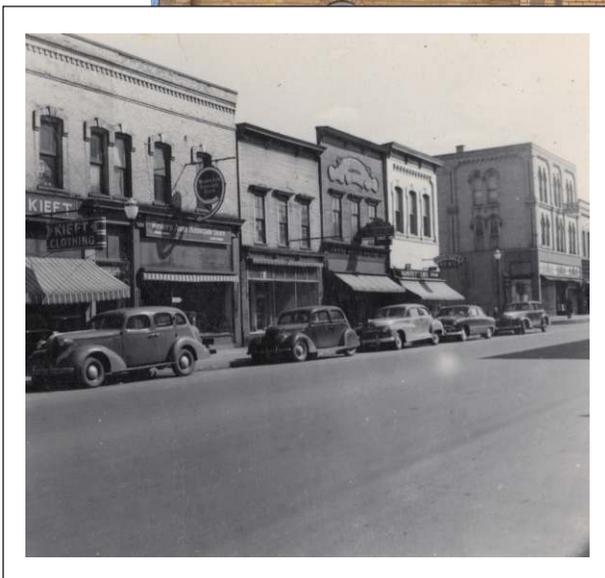
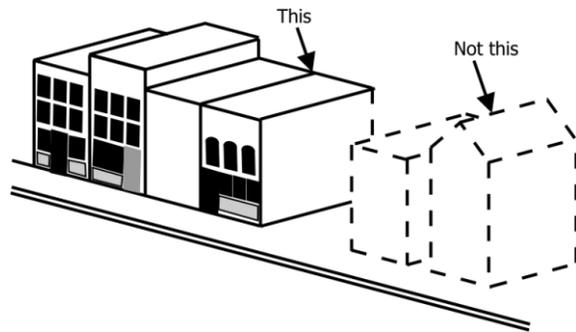
Additional historic roof features present in the district include chimneys, skylights, and roof ventilators. Retaining these existing features is also a preservation goal.

### Guidelines

Replace deteriorated roof coverings that are visible from the street with new roofing that is compatible with historic precedents in the district.

A rubber membrane covering for a flat roof is acceptable. When installing white or light-colored membrane roofing on a flat roof, avoid wrapping the membrane over the top and sides of parapet walls so that the material is visible from the street. Use a dark-colored metal cap, or dark-colored fasteners to secure the membrane.

Take every effort to reduce the visual impact of new roof features such as antennae, satellite transmitters, skylights, dormers, and air condition units.



## Windows

---

Most commercial buildings were designed with large, plate glass display windows on the lower story and smaller, double-hung windows above. Upper-story windows often received decorative treatment – original hoods and moldings are still evident on many buildings. Windows are major design features that frequently have been altered due to the harsh climate and a lack of maintenance. In a number of cases, window replacement has seriously compromised the historic appearance of buildings.

Older windows can often be repaired or retrofitted to match the thermal and operational performance of new windows. Replacement windows can replicate the visual qualities of historic windows.

### **Guidelines**

Do not alter original window openings either to block-in a window, or to install a window that is larger or smaller than the original opening.

Any new window openings required by building code should be located, whenever possible, on secondary facades.

Whenever possible, retain and repair existing windows including the window sash, glass, lintels, sills, hoods, and hardware.

Replace deteriorated window parts by duplicating the materials, design, and hardware of the original window, including the molding, casing, trim, and sash.

Retain and repair existing original windows wherever possible. If windows are beyond repair, then replacement windows should match the design, size, proportions, and profile of the existing original windows. Wood replacements are recommended. Metal-clad replacements with a painted finish are acceptable.

Use sheets of clear, non-reflective and non-tinted glass when replacement is necessary. Double-paned thermal glass is acceptable.

Do not install new floors or dropped ceilings that block the glazed area of historic windows.

Imitation shutters that detract from the historic character and appearance of the building are generally inappropriate.



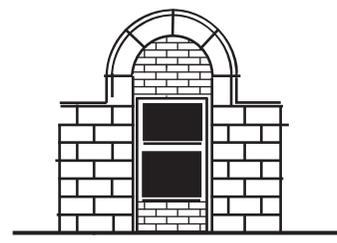
**Original Window**

The original window frame and sash fits the arched opening.



**Inappropriate Replacement Window**

The rectangular shape of the upper replacer sash does not fit the original arched window opening.



**Inappropriate Replacement Window**

The replacement window is too small for the original opening. Do not fill in the original opening to accommodate a smaller-sized window.



## Storefronts

---

Street-level storefronts play a dominant role in conveying the historic appearance and feeling of Grand Haven's downtown district. Appropriate storefront design is also key to the success of businesses in the downtown area. The commercial district has a variety of storefronts, but many show a similar arrangement of these standard components: display windows, bulkheads (the area beneath the display window), recessed entry doors, transoms, and cornices.

In converting downtown buildings to new uses, some of Grand Haven's historic commercial storefronts have been closed in, covered over, or greatly altered. A better approach to accommodating a new first-floor use is through a sensitive rehabilitation that retains the storefront's character-defining features. If needed, interior screens, blinds, curtains, or other materials set back from the window can create privacy without removing display windows or other important storefront elements.

### **Guidelines**

Retain and repair significant historic storefront elements and materials. Attempt to return the storefront to its historic appearance. Do not add architectural details that were not part of the original design.

Do not block in large display windows or reduce the size of the original window area with smaller, inset windows.

Maintain the commercial character of the storefront, even if its use has changed.

If a new storefront design is required, incorporate traditional storefront components that harmonize with the rest of the building and neighboring structures.

Contain new storefront construction within the first floor portion of the facade, maintaining the distinct yet visually compatible relationship with the building's upper stories.

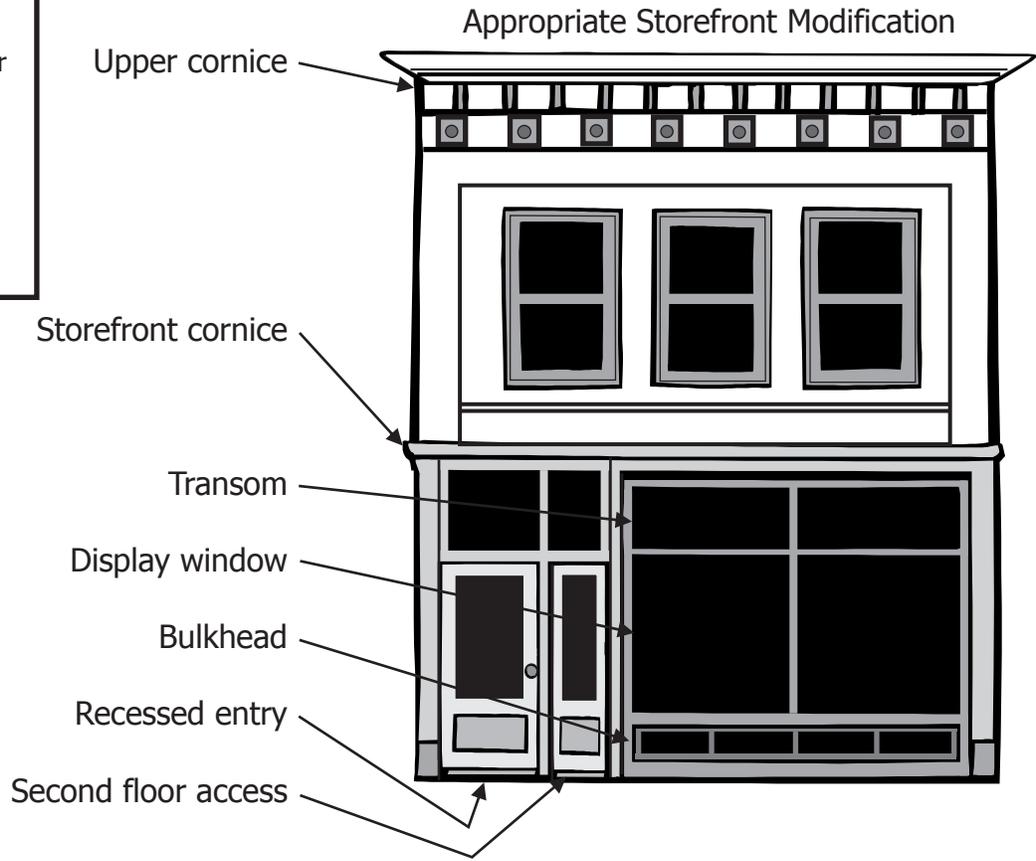
When original elements are missing and/or historic materials are deteriorated, the use of comparable substitute materials may be considered. However, the use of extruded aluminum storefront window framing is not preferred.

Retain historic storm enclosures. New enclosures should be constructed of wood and composed primarily of glass. New enclosures must be removable and their design should be based on historic precedents.

Installation of storefront awnings is encouraged. Awnings must be mounted below the storefront cornice and above display and transom windows. Awnings should be constructed of woven material, and if possible, retractable.

Rehabilitation work should preserve and/or replace character defining features and materials

Right: Components of an historic storefront.

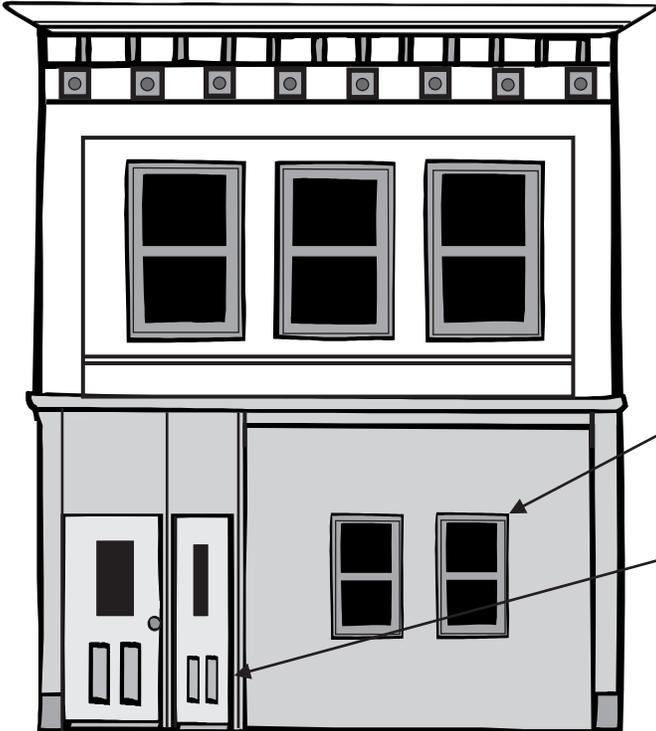


### Inappropriate Storefront Modification

Changes to the building, left, have diminished its historic appearance.

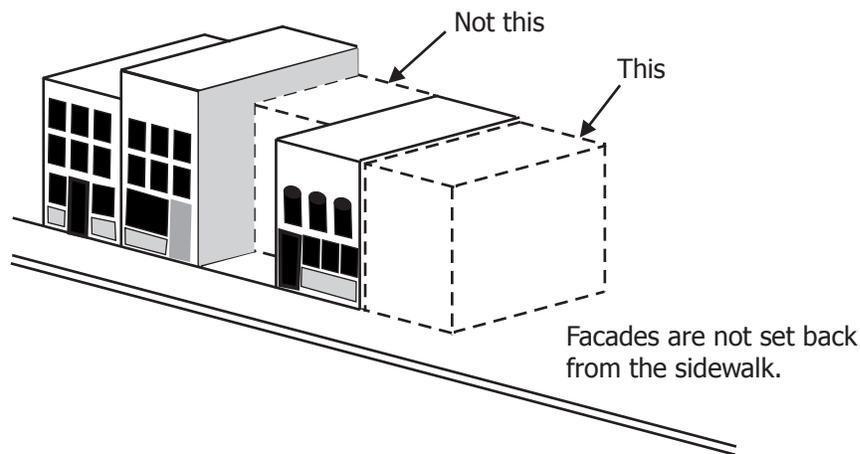
Removal of display, transom and bulkhead windows.

Removal of original door and installation of modern replacement.



## Additions

When additional space is required in a building, it is possible to design an addition that maintains the structure's historic character. In designing additions, make certain that the original historic structure remains the primary building block with the addition seen as a subordinate component. A passerby on the street should be able to determine where the original structure ends and where the addition begins. The goal is to make the addition compatible with the original building but identifiable as new construction. This can be achieved by using similar materials, design elements, and proportions.



### Guidelines

Make it visibly clear that the addition is a secondary component. The existing building must remain dormant.

If the proposed addition cannot be located at the rear of the building and/or is large in relation to the original structure, the addition should conform to the guidelines for new construction.

Building additions should be compatible with the size, scale, material, and character of the original building.

Do not use decorative architectural details or ornamentation that borrow from historical periods not represented in the district, such as "gingerbread" spindles or exterior window shutters.

Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures should be constructed in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the form and historical integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.

## New Construction

---

New buildings constructed on open lots should be compatible with neighboring historic buildings. In the downtown, individual structures form a continuous row of facades that define the street. Any new building should fit into this framework and be particularly sensitive to the design qualities of adjacent buildings.

### Guidelines

Make certain that the intended use and design of the proposed building meets all applicable regulations, including the City of Grand Haven Zoning Ordinance.

Design new construction to be compatible with adjacent historic buildings maintaining consistency in size, proportion, and building materials.

New designs based on, or inspired by, the architectural styles present in the district are encouraged.

Do not add features that might appear historic but were never found on buildings within the district including, for example, applied ornamental shutters and small-paned windows.

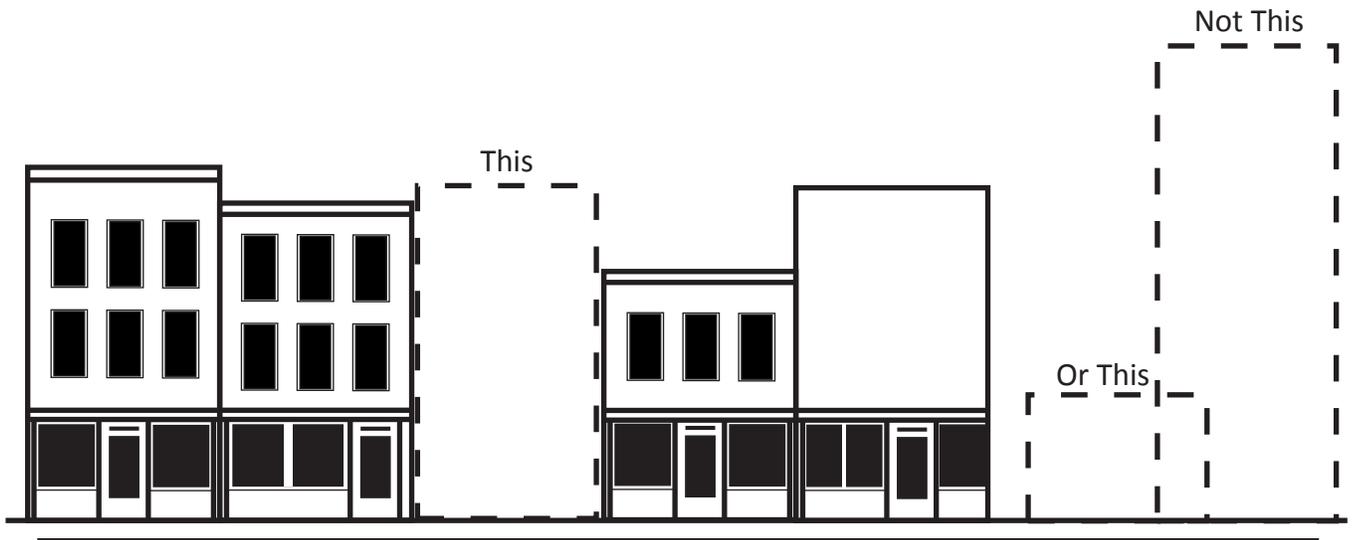


---

The Downtown and Centertown Business Districts are located on Washington Avenue between Harbor Avenue and Beacon Boulevard and on 7th Street from US-31 to Franklin Street. In this area, walkability and pedestrian comfort are top design goals for development. All available on-street parking should be used, and additional parking should continue to be developed to the rear of buildings.

Two-story buildings should be developed, allowing for second story office or residential opportunities. Buildings should be built up to the sidewalk and up to the side lot lines. They should have brick or natural surface facades in colors typical of their composition – earth tones, or other muted colores. Natural surface facades have a fine-grained texture giving buildings a warmth which invite passers-by to pause and look in the windows.

Windows on buildings in these Business Districts should comply with the City of Grand Haven Zoning Ordinance.



---

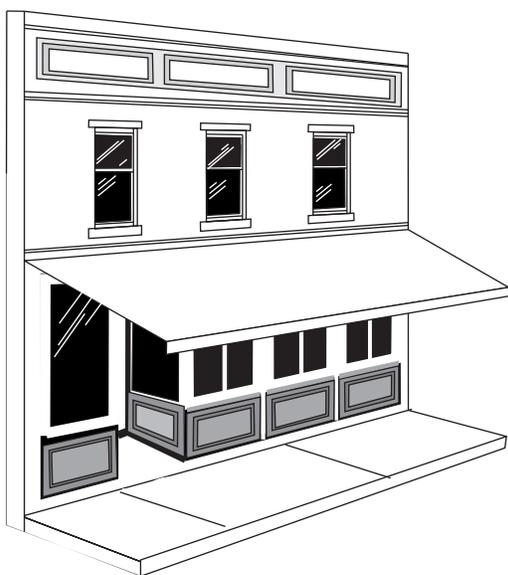
The vertical appearance of two-story or taller buildings should be broken up with horizontal detailing; the goal is for the buildings to define the street space. Detailing, like a storefront cornice and different window design on the upper floors, make two- and three-story buildings more welcoming. Side and rear facades should be finished in complementary manner to the front of the building, but need not be as detailed.

The zoning ordinance allows for canopies and awnings, and the Preservation and Place Committee encourages complementary colors, and sturdy materials and installation as the winds blowing off Lake Michigan can get intense even on the mildest days.

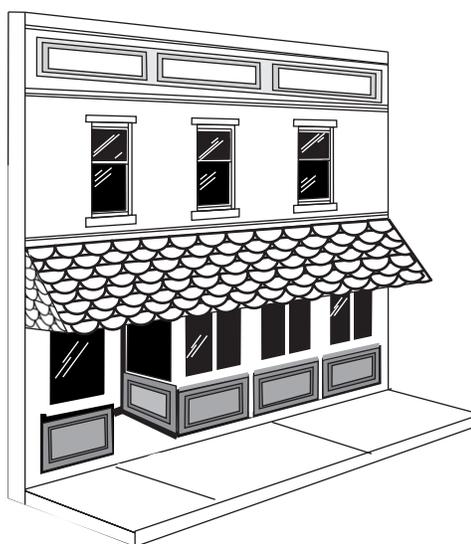
## Signage

Detailed sign design recommendations, including sandwich board sidewalk signs, can be found in the zoning ordinance, but in general, they should be proportional to the building façade, designed to quickly communicate the business identity and products, and use a simple color palate which complements the building. Café seating on the sidewalks is a great way to bring vitality to the public space outside your business. These activities are regulated by the city; call the Building and Planning Department at (616) 847-3490 for more information.

If any of these guidelines conflict with the City of Grand Haven’s zoning ordinances, the city zoning and ordinances must be followed.



Approved Retractable Awning



Inappropriate Fixed Awning

## Appendix

### **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

#### **Introduction to the Standards**

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing standards for all programs under Department authority and for advising Federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Standards for Rehabilitation (codified in 36 CFR 67 for use in the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program) address the most prevalent treatment. "Rehabilitation" is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

Initially developed by the Secretary of the Interior to determine the appropriateness of proposed project work on registered properties within the Historic Preservation Fund grant-in-aid program, the Standards for Rehabilitation have been widely used over the years – particularly to determine if a rehabilitation qualifies as a Certified Rehabilitation for Federal tax purposes. In addition, the Standards have guided Federal agencies in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities for properties in Federal ownership or control; and State and local officials in reviewing both Federal and nonfederal rehabilitation proposals. They have also been adopted by historic district and planning commissions across the country.

The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and interior of the buildings. They also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. To be certified for Federal tax purposes, a rehabilitation project must be determined by the Secretary to be consistent with the historic character of the structure(s), and where applicable, the district in which it is located.

As stated in the definition, the treatment "rehabilitation" assumes that at least some repair or alteration of the historic building will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use; however, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character. For example, certain treatments—if improperly applied—may cause or accelerate physical deterioration of the historic building. This can include using improper repointing or exterior masonry cleaning techniques, or introducing insulation that damages historic fabric. In almost all of these situations, use of these materials and treatments will result in a project that does not meet the standards. Similarly, exterior additions that duplicate the form, material, and detailing of the structure to the extent that they compromise the historic character of the structure will fail to meet the Standards.

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior,

related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

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