



DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC OLD TOWN FORT COLLINS



Community Planning & Environmental Services
Advance Planning Department

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INTRODUCTION

The Old Town Historic District is a place with special meaning for Fort Collins. Once the core of business activity, the brick and stone facades provide a link with our past. The ornamental cornices, brackets and lintels are records of the skilled craftsmen that worked to build Fort Collins at the turn of the century.

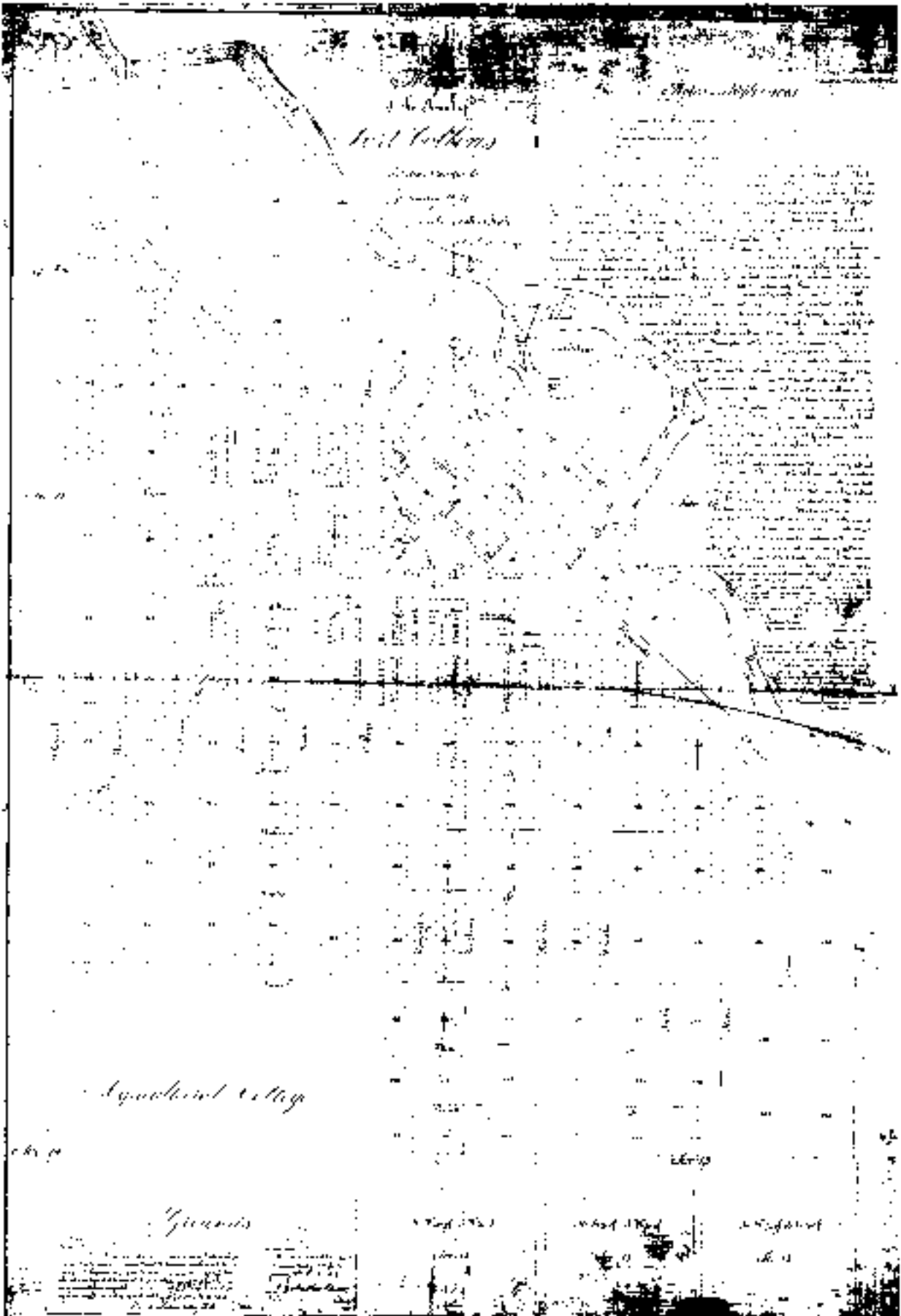
The community recognizes the significance of Old Town as an important cultural resource. We wish to preserve the inherent historic elements of individual buildings as a cultural record for future generations and to maintain the sense of “district” that exists in Old Town as a special place to experience. Responding to this sentiment the City Council has designated the area an official Historic District.

The Landmark Preservation Commission has the responsibility to review the proposed changes in the area and determine their appropriateness. To assist the Commission in its task the city sponsored this book of Design Guidelines. These Design Guidelines are to be used by the Landmark Preservation Commission to review any design changes to the exterior of buildings located within the Old Town Historic District. They are also for designers and owners who are planning design changes.

These guidelines are a set of design concepts that direct design alternatives and indicate the range of approaches to yield results that are compatible with the character of the Historic District. The Guidelines are not intended to unreasonably restrict creativity. They are instead intended to protect the district from designs unsympathetic to the existing historic structures.

When used they will encourage development that contributes to the quality of the District. The Old Town Historic District must be protected from changes that will erode its historic integrity, so that it can be held in trust for future generations to enjoy.

Downing/Leach and Associates produced the Guidelines with assistance from members of the Landmark Preservation Commission, the Historic Old Town Planning Committee, and the staff of the Fort Collins Planning Department. Other citizens active in historic preservation contributed ideas to the document as well.



HISTORY OF OLD TOWN FORT COLLINS

The opening of the Overland Stage Line between Denver and Wyoming, in the early 1860s, necessitated the construction of military forts to protect coaches and immigrant trains from the threat of Indian attacks. Entering the Cache La Poudre River Valley in 1862, the 9th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry set up camp in the vicinity of Laporte, Colorado. In 1864, due to severe flooding of the Cache La Poudre River and a series of military command changes, the outpost, known as Camp Collins, was moved to the area just southeast of the old Fort Collins Power Plant.

The founding of the military post attracted citizens wishing to open mercantile establishments and thereby capitalize on trading with the nearby soldiers. Joseph Mason was the first to obtain permission from the War Department to build a store on the four-mile-square military reservation. His structure was erected in 1865 on land that later became the Linden/Jefferson intersection. Called “Old Grout,” it served as a settler’s store, church, post office, community center, and later as the county offices and courthouse. Old Town claims the site as the foundation of the City of Fort Collins. Two other notable structures built in the area include Auntie Stone’s cabin/hotel and a flour mill.

The establishment of this commercial district necessitated the platting of the town’s first streets. In 1867-1868, Jack Dow and Norman H. Meldrum surveyed the area and set up streets that ran parallel to the major environmental landmark, the Cache La Poudre River. However, the influx of proprietors to Fort Collins, and specifically the Old Town area, was certainly not a stampede because when the fort closed in 1866 (due to a shortage of Indians), there were scarcely a dozen civilians in the town. The subsequent departure of the soldiers put the town’s future in question. The town and its business district languished until the mid- 1870s.

In retrospect, the prosperity of the town was assured in an incident, called by Ansel Watrous in his *History of Larimer County*, as “perhaps the most notable event in the early history of Fort Collins.” In the fall of 1872 the agricultural colony was established.

General R.A. Cameron, originator of the Union Colony in Greeley, spearheaded the drive for Fort Collins’ Agricultural Colony. The purpose of the new commune was for it to be the crop raising group for the settlers at the Union Colony. Working with the earlier settlers of Fort Collins, the officers of the new colony organized the Larimer County Land Improvement Company. The goal of the company was to encourage settlement of the Fort Collins area. Within two months of their arrival, the company had acquired enough land for their surveyor to come in and plat new city streets. For this job, they chose a young New Yorker, Franklin C. Avery, who had also platted the Union Colony. Mr. Avery, utilizing the latest techniques in city planning, laid the streets according to the cardinal points of the compass, rather than along the environmental dictates that guided Dow and Meldrum. By including most of the original surveyed area of Fort Collins, Avery created the distinct triangular shaped lots and streets that characterized old Town.

Spring of 1873 saw an influx of population, and many new business buildings were erected in Old Town. During that year, 68 frame buildings were constructed in Fort Collins, with a majority in the Old Town area, but gusty winds blew several down. The ones that remained were later removed to build the more sturdy brick buildings that stand today. Near harvest time of that same year, a plague of grasshoppers descended upon the crops and devoured them. The businesses of the community suffered along with the farmers, as the grasshoppers made repeat performances in 1874 and 1875. Many families and businesses in Old Town left. Ansel Watrous wrote, “Building was practically at a standstill and business of all kinds was in the dumps.”

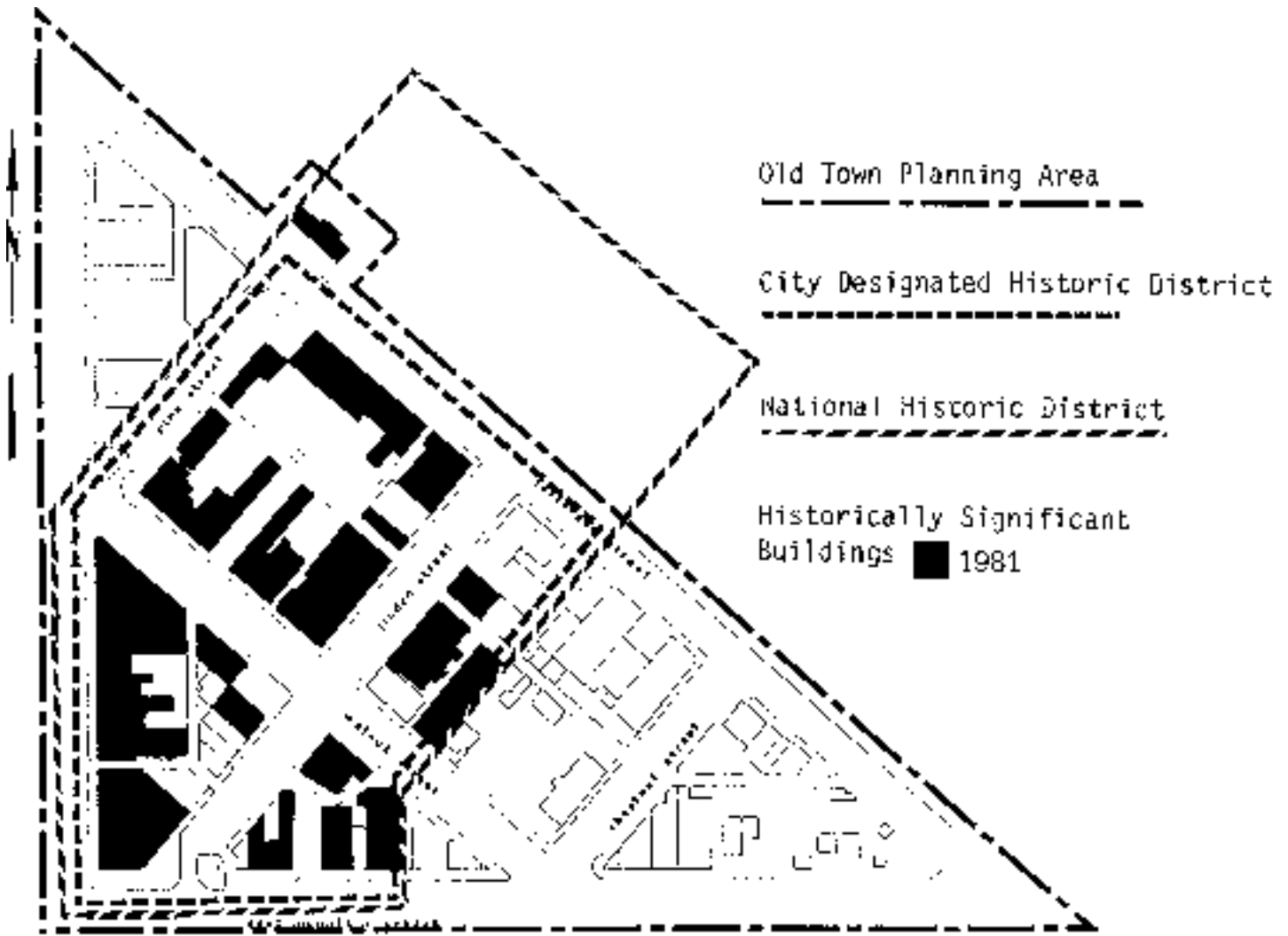
The arrival of the Colorado Central Railroad in 1877, began a new era of prosperity for Fort Collins, particularly for Old Town, as the terminal was in close proximity to the business district. Investments in housing and business buildings rose, as did the spirit of the people who lived and worked in Old Town. The following year saw the building of some substantial brick business blocks in Old Town, and a promise of more to come.

The decades of the 1880s and nineties, saw the addition of ornately decorated buildings like the Miller Block and the Linden Hotel. Other distinctive buildings, like the City Hall/Fire Station, added uniqueness to the area. In 1887, electric lights and the town's first telephone enhanced Old Town's status as the mercantile center of Fort Collins. In 1897 the Avery Building provided the link between Old Town and New Town. An early competition developed between the business people in Old Town and those with businesses near the intersection of College and Mountain. The new Avery Building was a bridge that joined these two shopping areas together. But the competition between the two areas was to remain strong throughout the next century.

The new century, however, brought other problems to Old Town. The Post Office with its accompanying pedestrian traffic and long an institution in one building or another in the triangle, moved to the corner of Oak and College. Mr. Avery crossed Mountain Avenue to build yet another structure for his rapidly expanding First National Bank. The major retail businesses left the interior of the triangle to locate along Highway 287 frontage in the early 1920s in response to the advent of an auto-oriented population. Other, smaller businesses soon thought it was more advantageous to move along College Avenue. By the 1930s, the area was beginning to show signs of aging and decay. Only in the past two decades has renewed interest in Old Town arisen.

The significance of Fort Collins' Old Town lies in this background. There is no better illustration of turn-of-the-century Western Plains life than in this small area. By the 1900s Fort Collins was the well-settled home of Colorado's first land-grant college, the possessor of a notable in-town railway transit system, and a very popular spot in northern Colorado for urbanite and farmer alike. On the direct railroad line between Denver and Cheyenne, the passenger depot on Jefferson Street in Old Town welcomed contented old-timers of the community and diverse newcomers: academic, agricultural and financial. Fort Collins' residents were served well by Old Town, whose offerings ranged from commodities and service to be found in eastern cities, to items more commonly located in agricultural communities. These ranged from hotel accommodations, banks and restaurants to hardware stores, feed, coal and hay shops.

Fort Collins' Old Town is a reminder of its early pioneer settlement. It was established by people who purchased lands from a real estate company in order to ward off the loneliness of the prairies, to profit by the experience and expertise of their new neighbors, and to furnish their families with the social amenities that were long in coming to communities situated further east on the Great Plains. Old Town demonstrates how these people settled a new area and used local materials to decorate it with styles current in the East, to creating a substantial, as well as unique, latter 19th century American community.



PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

For most construction plans in Old Town, you will be considering a renovation. There are two major categories of design appropriateness that you will need to consider if the building is historically significant. First, how should the renovation respect the original features? Second, how should the facade relate to other buildings in Old Town?

A few projects will be for new buildings. These are a different design problem, since preservation of existing detail is not at issue. However, the issue of how the new design should relate to surrounding buildings is the same.

Remember that the Landmark Preservation Commission will review the facade design to determine its appropriateness. They will recognize that your facade design will meet some of these guidelines better than others and will weigh the effect of all these design considerations together. In either case, here are the steps you should follow:

Step One: Determine the Building's Historic Qualities

To gain an understanding of your building's possible historic or architectural value, refer to the building survey that the City of Fort Collins has conducted. This survey indicates on a map those buildings that are historically significant. If your building is historically significant, the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) will want you to take special precautions to preserve, restore and enhance the original architectural features.

If your building is one of those that contributes to the visual character but not the historical character of the district, the LPC will be concerned with how the renovation will relate to other buildings in the area.

Step Two: Review the Basic Characteristics of the District

Here are the most important features that contribute to the visual continuity of the district:

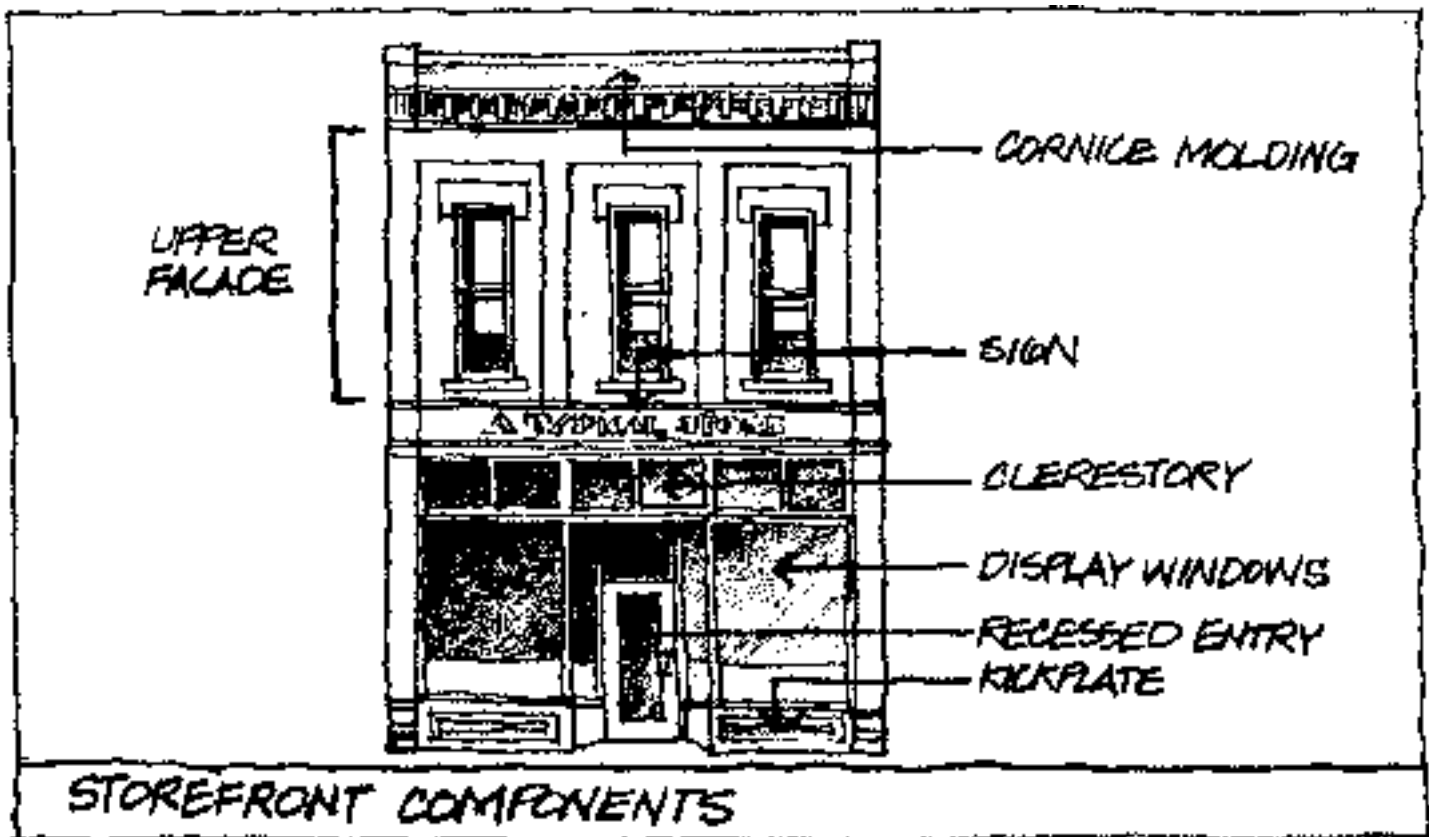
1. Two-story buildings have cornices that align at the same height.
2. Storefront display windows are of the same height and create another line. This is sometimes reinforced with awnings that also align. There is a clear distinction between upper floors and lower floors: the first floor is mostly glass, whereas the upper floors are more solid.
3. Storefronts align at the sidewalk edge. Facades are not set back from the front property line, and entrances are recessed.
4. Second story windows often are spaced the same on nearby buildings, creating a distinct pattern.
5. Similar decorations, such as cornice brackets, are also repeated in patterns. Many details are repeated on different buildings throughout Old Town.

6. Similar building materials, especially brick, create continuity. Sandstone appears frequently as ornamentation. Patterns of stone window sills and lintels are common.
7. Because most buildings are built to a similar width, their facades create a clear pattern along the street.
8. Signs are subordinate to the buildings. Only a few signs overwhelm their storefronts.
9. Buildings at street corners are usually larger than those in mid-block, and they tend to have more ornamentation.

The basic characteristics that were just listed are very important. They form the basis of many guidelines for renovations and new construction, because it is the repetition of similar elements that we interpret as "visual continuity." We wish to preserve the inherent historic elements of individual buildings as a cultural record for future generations, but we also wish to preserve the sense of "district" that exists in Old Town as a special place to experience.

By relating to these characteristics, you can develop many different design solutions that will be compatible with the district. Much of what we associate as a "style" has to do with details and ornamentation. Copying historic details is the wrong way to achieve compatibility with historic structures. Designing with the basic relationships of size, materials and patterns is actually what ties the buildings of the district together.

Avoid copying the details of historic architecture, because they are often copied incorrectly and used out of their original context. This imitation of historic styles also leads to confusion about which buildings are a genuine record of Old Town's early history and can endanger the historic designation of the area. Within the officially designated historic district, we want the real antiques to be distinguishable from the new designs.



Step Three: Look at the Relationships of Surrounding Buildings

You will find similar elements on many of the buildings in your block, that when repeated add to the visual unity of the district. Do cornices align at the same height to form a strong horizontal band along the street? Are second story windows spaced evenly on most buildings to create a pattern that ties the buildings together? What other similarities exist among buildings that contribute to the character of the area?

Now consider how your design might reinforce those existing characteristics. Perhaps awnings could be lined up in your block because most display windows are about the same height. Or maybe signs could be placed in a generally uniform place. (This could help tie the buildings together and also improve legibility, because customers would know where to look to find signs.) Are there colors that reoccur on other buildings that could be repeated to strengthen the unity of your block?

Step Four: Study the Components that Make Up Your Facade

You will probably recognize these:

1. First, there is a **SIGN** (at least one!) that is mounted usually somewhere above the display window. This is one of the first things the public sees, especially from a car.

Does your sign convey a memorable image of your business? Is it coordinated with the rest of the facade, in terms of color and materials, or does it compete with other elements?

2. Next are the **DISPLAY WINDOWS** -- large surfaces of glass for showing goods that you have for sale. The display window is important because it is the link between the public outside of the store and your business inside. The display window is read by pedestrians.

3. A special part of most display windows is an upper portion, called a **CLERESTORY**, that is separated from the main window by a frame. Like a large transom, this extra glass originally allowed more light into the deep store interiors with their high ceilings. Many clerestories were covered when ceilings were lowered inside. Is your clerestory intact, or has it been altered?

4. The next facade element to consider is the **UPPER FACADE** --the mostly solid part of the wall above the display glass. On simple single-story buildings, this may be a plain surface. On others with a second story, there may be a row of windows. Sometimes decorative bands or patterns are found in this area also. This upper facade usually presents the largest surface of color on the building, since the first floor is mostly glass.

Does the upper facade have special decorative elements that could add interest to the street? Is it coordinated with the sign and storefront trim in a single color scheme? Does it help tie all the smaller elements together?

5. A **CORNICE MOLDING** -- that decorative band at the top of the building, was the standard way to cap a building at the turn of the century. If your building is an historic one, it probably was built with a cornice. Is the cornice intact? Or if it has been removed, are there traces of where it was mounted?

6. Sometimes another component is found beneath the display window -- a **KICKPLATE** -- or base, for the display platform. Is the kickplate coordinated with the rest of the facade?

You can plan to use the display window in two ways: it can be something to look through to the display inside, in which case the glass is clear, or it can be something to look at itself. In the latter case, a sign on the glass itself may be useful. Most windows are a balance between display and sign. What is right for your store will depend on the goods or services you want to advertise, and how you want to direct the customer's eye.

Does your window emphasize the display? Does it provide a sign for pedestrians? Does the sign work as a part of the display, or does it compete with it? These are questions to consider when planning a renovation.

7. There is also the store **ENTRANCE** itself, which is usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.

Is the entrance a prominent visual feature? Is your eye led to it after reading the sign and looking in the display window?

You may not find all of these elements on your building. The historic structures that have survived unaltered should have most of them; those that have been altered may have the cornice missing and the clerestory may be blocked.

If your building is not one of those that is designated as having historic value, you will still find that it has some features in common with the historic buildings. Ornamental details may never have existed, but there is still the relationship of the sign to the facade to consider, as well as the display windows and entrance. By developing a renovation design that employs the basic elements in a way that is similar to others in the block, you can create a new facade that is compatible with the historic structures without imitating their historic decorations.

Step Five: Evaluate Your Existing Facade Design

Ask yourself these questions to help organize your thinking about the existing facade design.

* Are the historic features visible and shown to their best advantage? Are details, such as cornice moldings, window arches, and door trim exposed to view or have they been covered? Do the original details need repair? Has maintenance been neglected?

* Do all the components of the facade --signs, windows, entry, etc. --work together as a single composition to present a unified image for the building (and your business)? Does the sign direct your eye where you want it to --such as to the display window or entry? Each component of your facade should be working with the others to create the best image for your business. Plan your facade to direct the customer's eye in a sequence that will convey the information you want.

Step Six: Study the Guidelines

Before developing your design concept, read the guidelines to gain an overview of their intent. Some will be more relevant than others to your particular problem, but it is a good idea to get a feel for all of the guidelines.

Step Seven: Read City Regulations

Obtain City of Fort Collins regulations and understand them and their implications. You might arrange a walk through tour with building and fire inspectors.

Step Eight: Develop Your Preliminary Concept

Sketch your idea, enough to convey the concept without going overboard. Don't spend a lot of time or money working out the details, just the major decisions will do. An architect can help at this stage.

Step Nine: Submit Your Concept to the Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) for an Informal Review

Before you spend a lot of time (and money) developing your design, it is a good idea to submit a preliminary design to the LPC for discussion. This is an informal review and the Commission strongly recommends it.

Step Ten: Refine Your Conceptual Design to Include All the Necessary Details in Final Form

Based on your review with the Commission, and comments from the Building Inspection Office, refine the design in detail. Be sure to include illustrations that will represent your building within the context of the existing surrounding buildings.

Step Eleven: Apply for Approval

The application for approval begins formally with the Building Inspection Office. If your project requires a building permit, Building Inspection will forward your application on to the LPC while reviewing the design for building code compliance.

If your project is one that does not require a building permit, such as doing minor repairs or exterior painting, you still must apply for approval from the LPC. This application is made through the Advance Planning Department.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

SECTION I - RENOVATIONS

These guidelines apply to all existing structures that are designated as historic structures on the map on Page 5. See page 20 for guidelines for new construction and renovations of nonhistoric structures.

Historic Reconstruction Versus Contemporary Redesign

1. Guideline: Reconstruction of portions of original buildings may be appropriate if sufficient documentation exists to assure that the reconstruction is accurate.

Don't misrepresent history by creating what appear to be "historic details" when no evidence of original detailing exists.

2. Guideline: Contemporary modifications may be appropriate where historic elements have already been lost.

Where no evidence of original historic elements such as storefront, upper facade, or cornices exists, contemporary redesigns may be substituted. New designs must be compatible with historic elements defined in the Section I guidelines and the procedural steps.



The Mister Pawn Shop before



and after - a contemporary modification

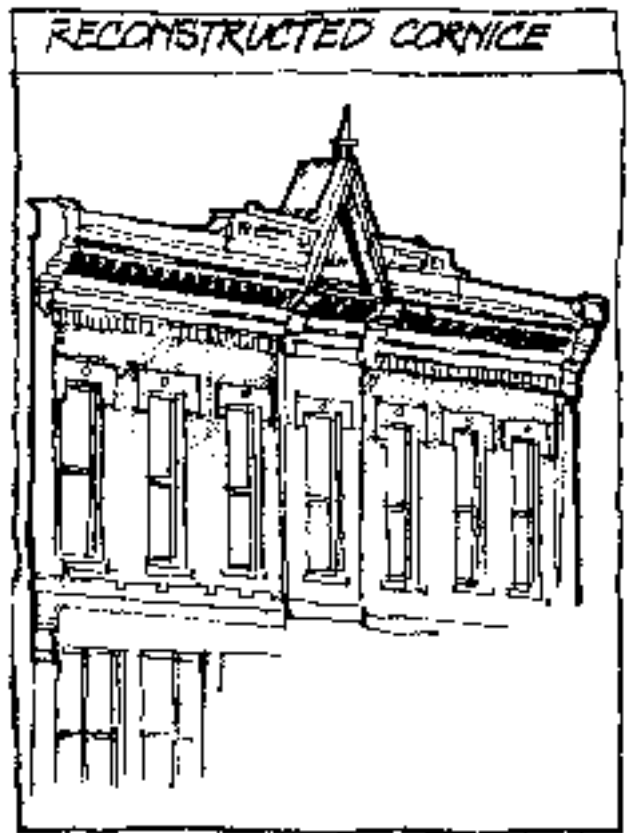
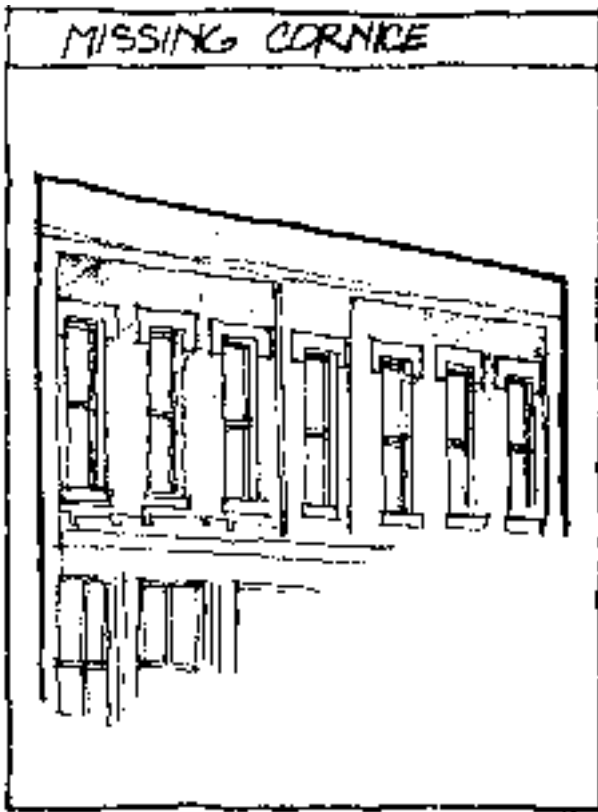
Building Alignment & Height



Linden Street in the 1980s, notice the complementary height and alignment of these buildings.

3. Guideline: Maintain cornice alignment.

Because so many of the buildings in Old Town were built in the same period, they have similar heights which are emphasized by cornices. This line is important to the visual continuity of the area. Some horizontal element on the facade should align with other cornices on the block.



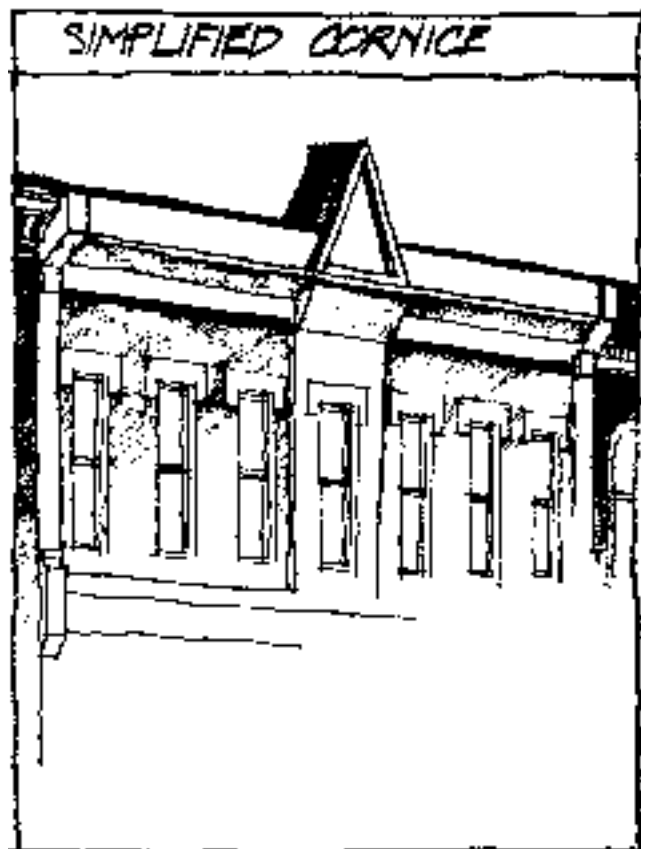
4. Guideline: Reconstruct a missing cornice when photographic evidence of the original is available.

To maintain the character of the district, buildings there need the capping element of the cornice. Substitution of another old cornice for the original is an alternative to reconstructing provided that the substitute is similar to the original.

5. Guideline: Maintain established horizontal lines when using simplified versions of original cornices.

6. Guideline: Maintain the horizontal alignment of the storefront.

The top edge of the storefront is usually defined by a horizontal band at the top of the clerestory. Many of the buildings align at this horizontal band to form a unifying element in the district. Awnings and flush sign panels can reinforce this line.





7. Guideline: Maintain original building heights.

Building additions on the street side should be approximately the same height as the rest of the buildings on the block.

Materials & Colors

8. Guideline: Avoid concealing original facade materials.

Many of the original building materials, especially brick and sandstone, have interesting colors and textures that are an asset. In addition, since these are often repeated along the street, they can contribute to the visual unity of the area.

9. Guideline: Leave brick unpainted unless it has become so weathered that a protective coat is necessary.

This will help to tie together all the elements of the storefront in a single unified image. Remember that periodic maintenance will always be necessary. No facade is maintenance-free.



Do not sandblast or use strong chemical cleaners on building facades.

10. Guideline: Use new materials that have texture and color similar to those used in the original construction.

Brick is by far the predominant material for major building surfaces. The repetition of brick contributes to the visual continuity of the district.

11. Guideline: Do not sandblast or use strong chemical cleaners on building facades.

Sandblasting, once thought to be a good cleaning method, is now known to destroy the weather-protective glaze on brick, so that erosion accelerates. Some chemical cleaners may work without doing damage, but they should be tested in small patches first. A gentle scrubbing with plain water is often sufficient. Test results should be included with the submission to the LPC.

Where the brick has been painted, it is usually best to leave it that way and simply repaint when a fresh look is desired, since most paint-removing techniques will damage the bricks.

12. Guideline: Develop a color scheme for the entire building front that coordinates all the facade elements.

The selection of an appropriate color scheme for your renovation is extremely important in the overall facade design. It can tie signs, ornamentation, awnings and entrances together. It can also help your building better relate to others on the block.

Use muted colors for the larger background surfaces. Reserve the use of strong, bright colors for accents when you want to draw the customer's eye, such as to the sign, to ornamentation, or to the entrance.

If your building was originally plain brick, but was painted sometime in its past, you might consider applying new paint colors that simulate the original brick color.



Consider applying new paint colors that simulate the original brick color.



Where the brick has been painted, it is usually best to leave it that way and simply repaint when a fresh look is desired.

13. Guideline: A maximum of three (3) colors is best for most facades, except where more colors are used in small amounts for trim.

14. Guideline: Background and accent colors should be consistent within separate buildings or where a number of buildings are attached or where unity in theme is desired.

Facade Patterns



15. Guideline: Maintain or reinforce the existing pattern created by upper story windows.

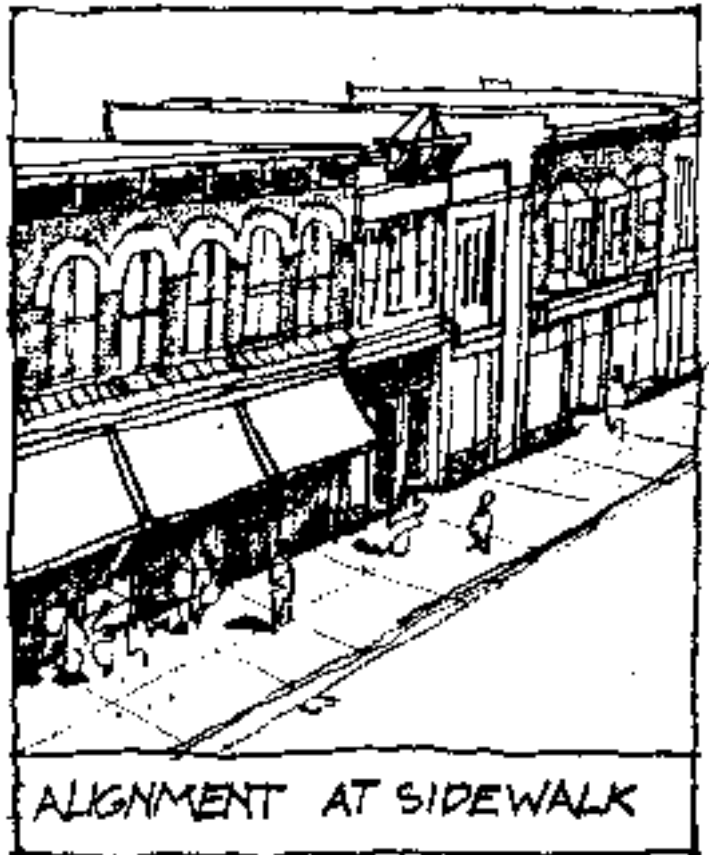
The upper story of your facade may have some details that can add interest to your building, if the upper and lower levels are coordinated in their design. Windows at the second story can be a key element in this regard. They can create a pattern that unifies the width of the building. If they line up with openings below, this unity can be even stronger.

If the windows are now concealed, expose them to reveal the original pattern.

16. Guideline: Maintain the size and shape of original upper story windows.

Many of these commercial structures have second and third floors with windows that are vertically oriented. The windows are usually about twice as tall as they are wide.

Avoid replacing them with smaller stock windows that require altering the proportions of the opening. Preserve the original frames when it is feasible, but when they must be replaced, be certain they have a painted finish, whether metal or wood. Since storm windows can also change the perceived size of the window, use models that will duplicate the number of glass panes found on the originals. Another alternative is to mount the storm windows on the inside of the main windows.



Building Setbacks

17. Guideline: Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk edge.

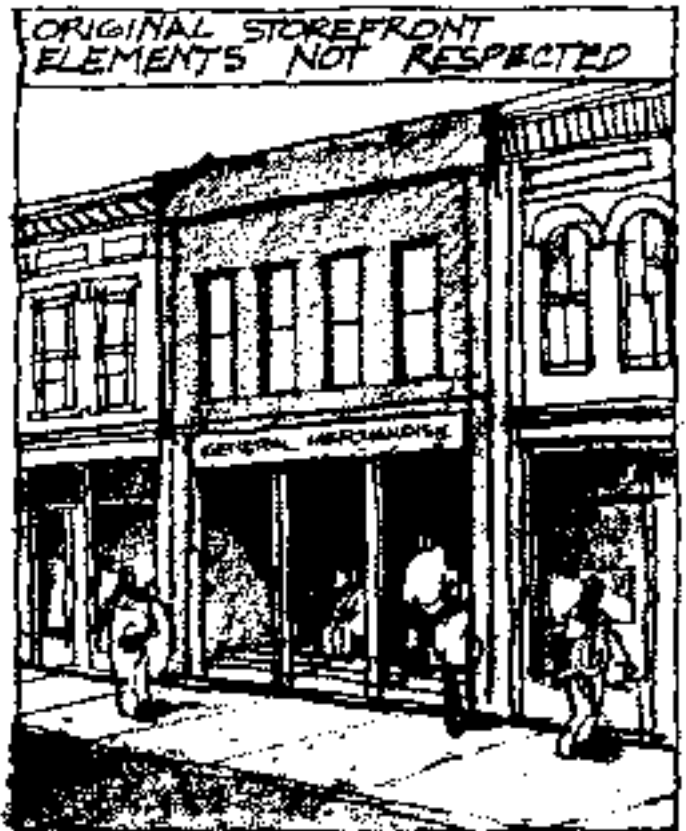
Most of the building fronts in Old Town align at the sidewalk edge; they are not set back on the lot. This creates a “wall” of building fronts that contributes to the visual continuity of the district.

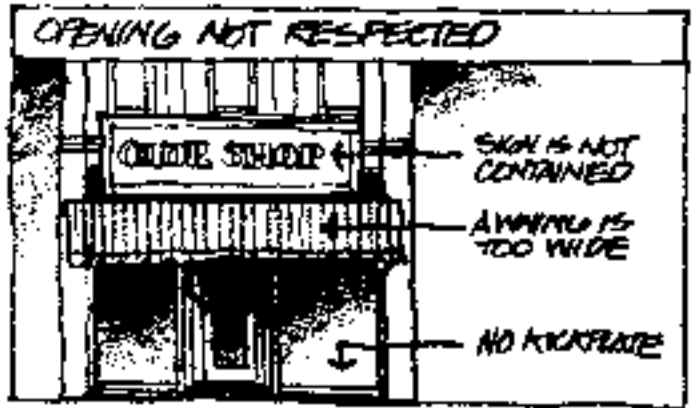
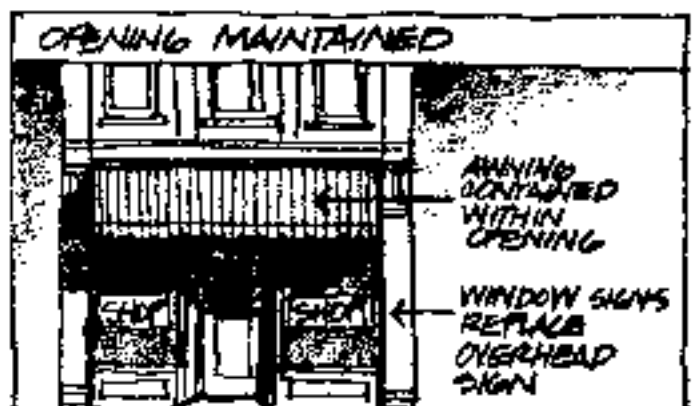
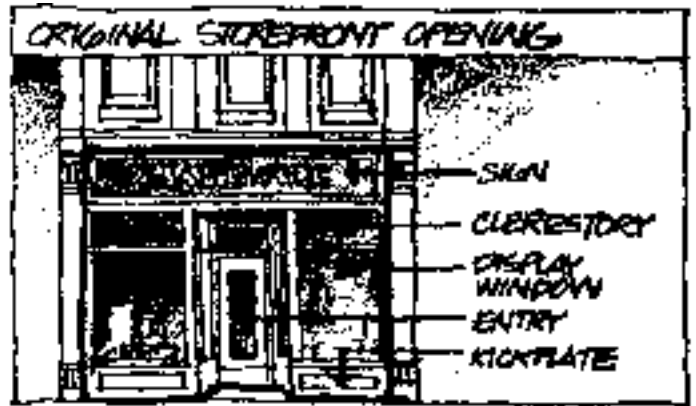
Storefront Elements

18. Guideline: Maintain your storefront in its original dimensions.

Avoid altering its size. If it has already been altered, restore it to its original shape, so it will align with others on the block, if possible.

The overall shape of the storefront establishes the proportions of the building. Be certain to preserve its original lines.





19. Guideline: Restore or retain the overall shape of the original display window.

Your display window is important because it aligns with others on the block and thereby creates a visual continuity to the street. It also establishes the proportions of your own facade.

20. Guideline: Retain the original shape of the clerestory as glass; or as a sign band; or as a decorative panel.

21. Guideline: Where it exists, maintain the pattern created by recessed entrances.

When renovating existing storefronts, preserve the original entryway, or when necessary, develop a new recessed entry.

22. Guideline: Retain or restore the kickplate as a decorative or simple panel, color coordinated with the rest of the facade.



Consider using awnings.

23. Guideline: Consider using awnings to provide color and three-dimensional appearance to a “flat facade.”

Use colors that reinforce the color scheme of your facade and sign. Also consider using an awning color found elsewhere on the block. Awnings should emphasize store widths and entrances, and they should align with others within each building.

Awnings also provide an excellent opportunity to use signs. Signs placed at the edge of the awnings will be visible by motorists.

Alley Storefronts

24. Guideline: Develop back entrances for public access to new commercial uses.

Back entrances offer great potential for new entrances and store display windows. Development of these areas should be in keeping with the style of the main building front and the simple functional quality of the alley.



Awnings also provide an excellent opportunity to use signs.

Architectural Details and Ornamentation

25. Guideline: Preserve original architectural detailing. If original details are presently covered, expose them and incorporate them into the renovation design.

Many architectural details now covered have not actually been destroyed. Uncovering these details offers an opportunity for an interesting renovation. These details make your storefront special. These details also contribute to the historic value of the building and add visual interest to the district.

26. Guideline: Replace decoration where it is known to have existed, if feasible.

A special concern is what to do in a renovation scheme where details are missing. In some cases, a portion of the ornamentation remains from which copies can be made. In other situations, all is missing.

Use remaining portions of details as models if they exist. Also, you should refer to old photographs for information. (The public library maintains a photo file of Old Town.) Simplification of original details is acceptable if they help tie the building in with its surroundings. If you can't find what was there originally, it is best to do something new that will reinforce other patterns and lines along the block.

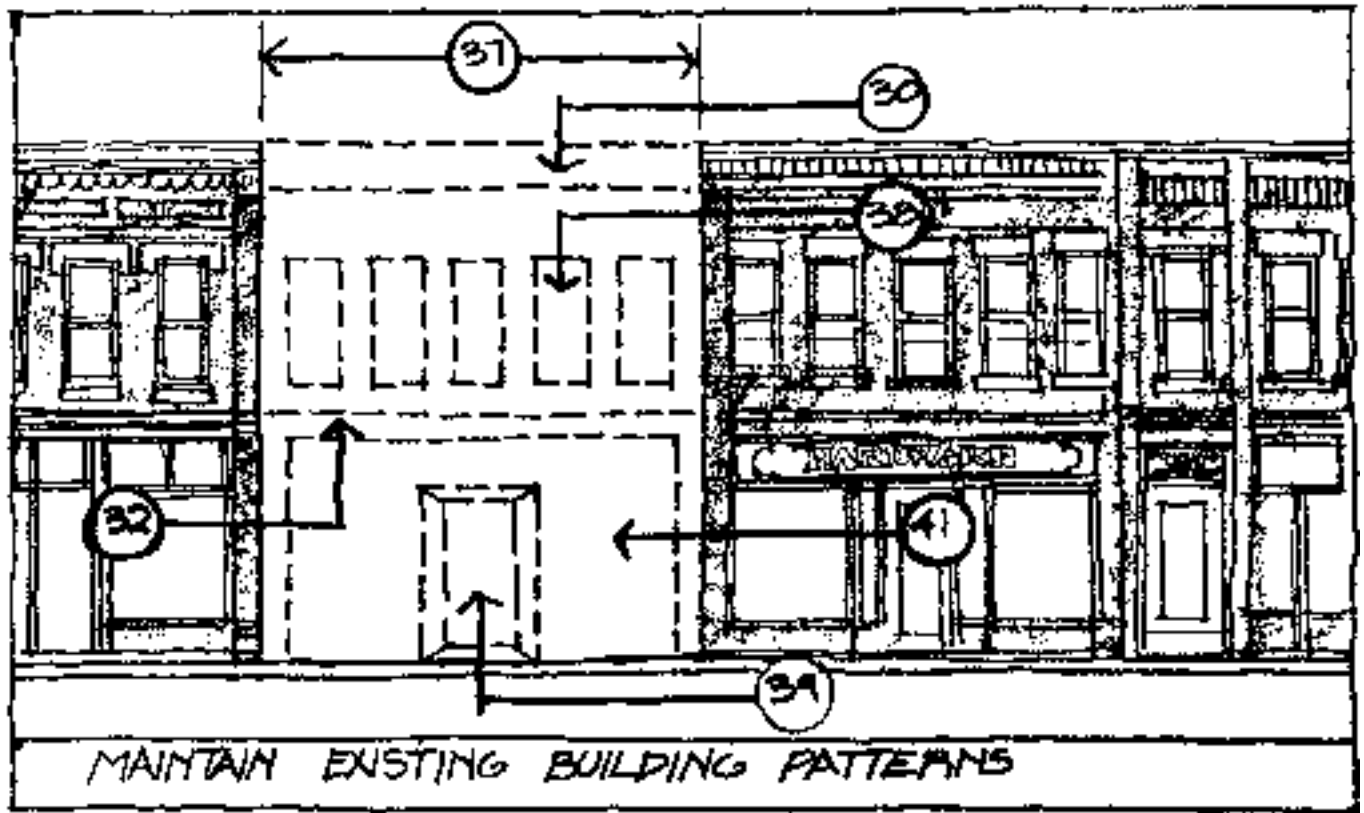
27. Guideline: Trim materials should be subordinate to and work with the major facade material.

Brick is the major facade material in the Old Town district. Large surfaces of plastic, unfinished metal or wood are not appropriate and will compete with the color and texture of the brick. Preserve sandstone trim in good condition by keeping it dry. Maintain eaves, gutters and downspouts in good repair so that water will not wash the building surface since this will cause mortar and stone to erode more quickly.



Security Devices

28. Refer to Section II, New Construction.



SECTION II - NEW CONSTRUCTION

These guidelines apply to all new buildings and to the renovation of existing structures that are not designated as historic structures. A map of historic buildings can be found on page 5.

Historic Imitation Versus Compatible Contemporary Context

29. Guideline: Design new buildings that avoid reproducing the historic architecture of Old Town.

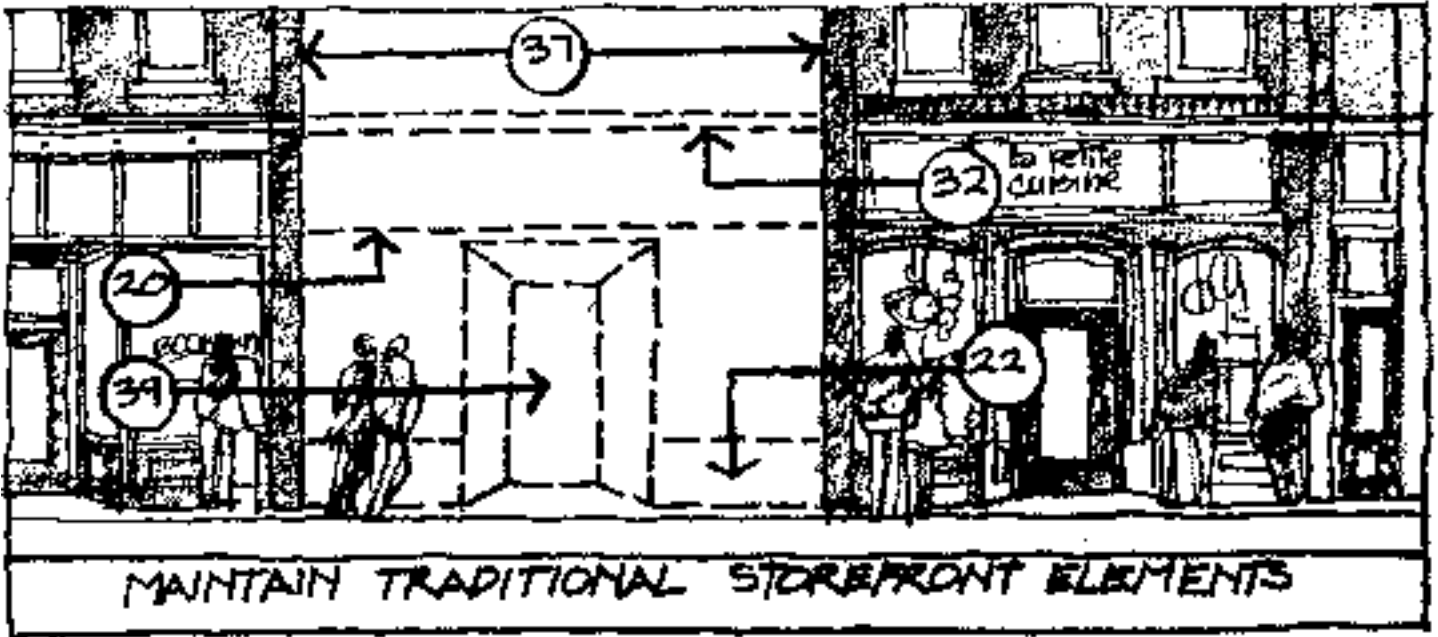
Historic structures have a special value as original period pieces which represent the style and technology of their time. Building new structures next to these authentic “antiques” is a special challenge. The new should be compatible with the old, but at the same time, it should be distinguishable from the old, so we may accurately interpret the evolution of Old Town.

Consider developing contemporary designs that creatively draw upon the important characteristics of the historic district and thus achieve buildings that are compatible with the area. Use the guidelines that follow to help you identify those characteristics you may use.

Building Alignment & Height

30. Guideline: Maintain cornice alignment.

Building heights need not match exactly, but some horizontal element should align with other cornices where feasible.



31. Guideline: Maintain approximately the facade heights established by existing buildings on the block in new construction.

Maintaining similar building heights along the street helps unify the entire block.

32. Guideline: Maintain the alignment of storefronts at the top of the clerestory on existing buildings.

Reinforce the established horizontal patterns in Old Town by aligning the tops of new storefronts with existing ones.

Materials & Color

33. Guideline: Maintain brick as the major building material.

Many of the original building materials, especially brick and sandstone, have interesting colors and textures that are an asset. In addition, since these are often repeated along the street, they can contribute to the visual unity of the area.

Brick is by far the predominant material for major building surfaces. The repetition of brick contributes to the visual continuity of the district. Use brick as a new building material when it is feasible. The Landmark Preservation Commission may consider other materials

when the dominance of brick in the area is not threatened.

34. Guideline: Develop a color scheme for the entire building front that coordinates all the facade elements.

Reserve the use of strong, bright colors for accents where you want to draw the customer's eye -- such as to the sign, to ornamentation, and to the entrance.

35. Guideline: A maximum of three (3) colors is best for most cases, except where small amounts are used for trim.

36. Guideline: Background and accent colors should be consistent within separate buildings, or where a number of buildings are attached, or where unity in theme is desired.

Facade Patterns

37. Guideline: Maintain the established pattern of building widths.

Most buildings in Old Town have similar widths. New buildings should conform to this established pattern. Larger facade designs can be divided into segments to conform.

38. Guideline: Maintain or reinforce the existing pattern created by upper story windows.

The upper story of your facade may have some details that can add interest to your building, if the upper and lower levels are coordinated in their design. Windows at the second story can be a key element in this regard. They can create a pattern that unifies the width of the building. If they line up with openings below, this unity can be even stronger. Other building elements may be designed to maintain the existing window pattern.

39. Guideline: Maintain pattern of recessed entries on the street.

Entrances to most shops are recessed, to shelter the doorway and increase exposure to the display windows. When repeated along a row of buildings, these recessed entrances create a strong pattern that contributes to the visual unity of the block.

Building Setbacks

40. Guideline: Maintain the alignment of facades at the sidewalk edge.

Preserve existing storefront lines on the street when developing new structures. If a new storefront must be set back from the sidewalk, use an arcade of columns, landscaping, or other devices to maintain an edge at the sidewalk.

Storefronts

41. Guideline: Maintain the pedestrian-oriented storefront format established by existing buildings on the street.

The established pedestrian-oriented storefront format has large glass display windows and a recessed entrance at street level with a clerestory above. The new storefront should align with existing storefronts at the belt course, just above the clerestory. The traditional storefront elements may be reinterpreted in new construction, but must fit the overall pattern.

42. Guideline: Maintain the alignment of storefront windows.

Display windows line up at the same height down the street and thereby create a visual continuity in building facades. This strengthens the image of the area.



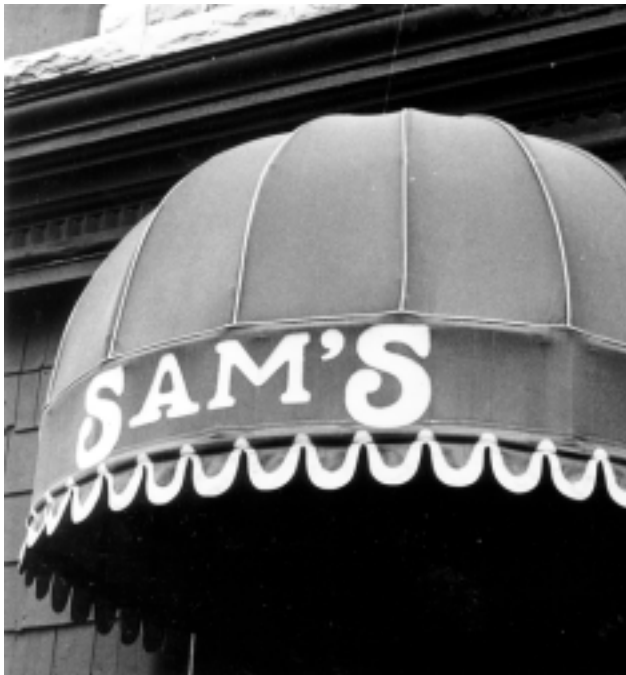
In general, an awning is more successful as a combination sign and weather control device than are horizontal canopies.

For you individually, display windows are also an effective means of advertising, especially when they compliment and do not compete with the rest of the building facade. Remember that the displays should be well-maintained. A well-designed display window will enhance the merchandise.

43. Guideline: Consider awnings to provide a three-dimensional quality to a flat facade.

Colorful awnings are both decorative and functional additions to your storefront. They can help draw attention to your shop entrance, and when they align with others in your block, they can strengthen visual unity.

In general, an awning is more successful as a combination sign and weather control device than are horizontal canopies.



Colorful awnings are both decorative and functional additions to your storefront.

Architectural Details & Ornamentation

46. Guideline: Ornamentation is encouraged, but imitation of historic detail is discouraged.

Ornamentation on new buildings should help define and accentuate the major facade elements described earlier. New buildings that use imitations of historic ornamentation compete and detract from actual historic buildings in the district. Historic ornamentation is also difficult to imitate correctly.

Alley Entrances

44. Guideline: Develop new buildings with public access to commercial uses front and rear.

Alley entrances to new buildings offer great potential for new storefronts and access to other commercial ventures.

45. Guideline: Enhance rear entrances with signs and landscaping when feasible.

As courtyards and alleys behind buildings are developed for public use, rear entrances will become viable commercial entrances. Signs and landscaping will enhance these areas.

Security Devices

47. Guideline: Use security devices that will enhance the area.

Security is a major concern in design, and it is possible to provide adequate protection while also respecting the character of the historic district. The most effective security measures are not physical elements but community action and cooperation. However, some physical elements should be considered.

Lighting and alarm systems are preferred because they will not alter the appearance of the storefront.

48. Guideline: Avoid using permanently fixed bars on storefront windows.

Fixed bars on storefront windows disrupt the character of the historic district.

Parking Lots & Structures

49. Guideline: Use landscaping, walls or fences to provide a buffer strip to parking areas.

Open lots for parking break the continuity of the “wall” that building facades create along the block. These gaps should be avoided when new lots are developed and old ones are updated.

Provide buffer planting strips along the edge of parking lots to screen cars from the street. Include low shrubs and trees where feasible. In large lots, include “islands” of plant materials to break up the paved area. These will also help shade cars in the summer.

50. Guideline: Maintain the characteristic pedestrian orientation at the sidewalk when developing parking structures.

As parking demands increase in Old Town, new parking structures may be built. Parking garages are a new event in the history of the district that should continue the basic characteristics of the area. The most important factor is respect for the pedestrian-oriented storefront on the street level.

Refer to the guidelines on alignment of cornices and upper story window patterns as well.





The Tedmon Block stood on Jefferson Street until it was demolished in 1910 to make way for the Union Pacific Railroad.

SECTION III - DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR SIGNS

Selecting a concept for your sign is one of the most important design decisions for your building, because it is such a prominent part of the business image. First consider what type of signs will be appropriate:

1. Flush on the building
2. On the window
3. Projecting from the wall
4. Awnings over the display window
5. Living signs -- the real product on display
6. Symbol signs

In terms of sign design, the important concept is to improve readability. In general, keep signs simple and place them where they can be seen. This usually means locating a sign on the upper portion of the facade, and, in particular, in display windows themselves. Symbols as signs are encouraged because they add interest to the street, are quickly read, and are remembered better than written words.

Here are guidelines that will help you develop a facade sign design concept.

51. Guideline: Align signs approximately with others on the block when feasible.

Look at your building facade in relation to the adjacent stores and buildings. Could there be some overall order given to the signs? It may be possible for all signs within your building or block to line up. This can establish visual continuity along the storefronts, and at the same time, provide uniform sight lines for viewers. Alignment makes all signs more readable at a glance.

In many situations, aligning signs is just not possible. In these cases, look for other features to determine placement of your sign. Each store sign may relate directly to the store entrance in a similar fashion, or all signs may be placed in windows.

Finally, organizing signs in this way creates a visual continuity that should be emphasized whenever possible.



In general, signs should not overpower the image of the facade as a single composition.

52. Guideline: Your sign should be subordinate in size to the other facade elements.

In general, signs should not overpower the image of the facade as a single composition, and therefore, the signs should be a part of the facade, not cover it. Use a smaller sign than permitted by the sign code.

In general, one flush sign used in conjunction with one special sign -- on glass, on the awning, or projecting -- should be enough. Where several businesses are in one building, consider using a directory to consolidate many individual names.

53. Guideline: Select a sign design that is compatible in color and material with your facade and the street as a whole.

Sign colors strongly influence the sign's readability. When sign colors compete from building to building, visual or perceptual clutter is created, making it harder to see individual businesses. Compatibility of sign colors and facade colors results in a more memorable impression. Light colored letters on a dark colored background are more readable than the reverse.

Sign materials should be sympathetic to the facade materials, the image you wish to portray, and to the sign's wearability.



Sign materials should be sympathetic to the facade materials.



54. Guideline: Position signs so they will not obscure existing architectural details.

Look at your building or store facade. Do any architectural details suggest a location, size or shape for your sign? These could be decorative bands, or brickwork panels indented in the face material. These features can be emphasized by placing your sign to fit within them.



Example of historical signage at the P. Anderson Merchantile Company, 222 Walnut Street.



55. Guideline: Maintain all signs in good repair.

Signs in disrepair portray a bad business image and cause the deterioration of the visual environment.

56. Guideline: Indirect illumination is recommended for signs.

Light fixtures mounted on the front of your building that shine on your sign are called “indirect sources.” These light a portion of the face of your building. Shield these fixtures to prevent glare on the street and sidewalk. This type of lighting emphasizes the continuity of the building surface, and signs become an integral part of the facade.

57. Guideline: Internal illumination may be acceptable under these conditions: when only the letters themselves -- not the background -- are lighted, or when neon is used.

In either case, the intensity of the light source should not overpower others on the street.



SECTION IV - THE PUBLIC SECTOR

58. Guideline: Preserve the original street grid of Old Town.

Since the streets in Old Town were laid out oriented to the river, they are at a 45-degree angle with the north-south street grid that is predominant in downtown. This street orientation is an important historic record of the city's early relationship to the river, and therefore it should be preserved.

Street beautification is anticipated that should enhance the streets, and this is welcomed. New paving materials, traffic diversion islands, and landscaping are all acceptable if they do not effectively obscure the grid.



As a result of the intersection of the two street grids in Old Town, a few buildings have irregular floor plans.

59. Guideline: Preserve irregular building shapes and alley forms as a record of the historic site plan of Old Town.

As a result of the intersection of the two street grids in Old Town, a few buildings have irregular floor plans -- they are not rectangles. Some interesting exterior building shapes and alley forms result from this street plan.

Enhancement of alleys is encouraged. These alley designs should help to dramatize the existing shapes and forms.

60. Guideline: Use contemporary street furniture of materials traditionally used for street furniture in the surrounding area.

61. Guideline: The placement of street furniture should function so as to serve the public.

62. Guideline: Do not use elaborate imitations of historic street furniture.

Historically, street furniture in Old Town was sparse and simple. As pedestrian use increases in the area, a more intense development of street furniture is expected. While this is encouraged, take care to avoid misrepresenting the history of the street with elaborate imitations of historic designs.



Preserve irregular building shapes.

