



D o w n t o w n
St. Charles



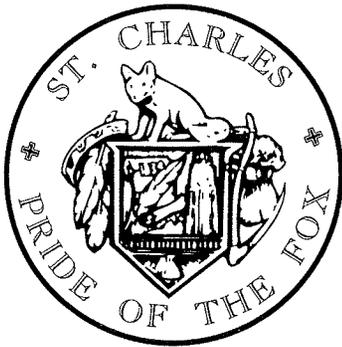
**Design
Guidelines**





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Approved by St. Charles City Council
on May 20, 1996

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Introduction

When historic preservation is combined with downtown development to create a working, growing, and aesthetically pleasing business center, the economic vitality and values that the downtown stands for are reinforced and rekindled—solidifying the image of a downtown as the unique commercial and social heart of the city.

Improving the visual appearance of Downtown St. Charles helps to make the area a fun place to visit and is as critical to the success of the area as are improving economic performance, strengthening public participation, recruiting new businesses, and expanding parking.

Most of Downtown St. Charles lies within the officially designated Historic District. Each individual building facade plays an important role in the makeup of the district. Storefronts, window displays, signage, color, canopies and architectural details all play an integral part in the successful design of individual buildings. Rehabilitating your Downtown St. Charles building can be mind-boggling:

- ◆ What materials should I use?
- ◆ What colors are best?
- ◆ Is an awning appropriate?
- ◆ What kind of sign would look best?

MAIN STREET ST. CHARLES AND THE
CITY OF ST. CHARLES
MUNICIPAL BUILDING,
VIEWED EAST.



"The goal of all building improvements should be to make each building the best possible expression of itself that it can be."

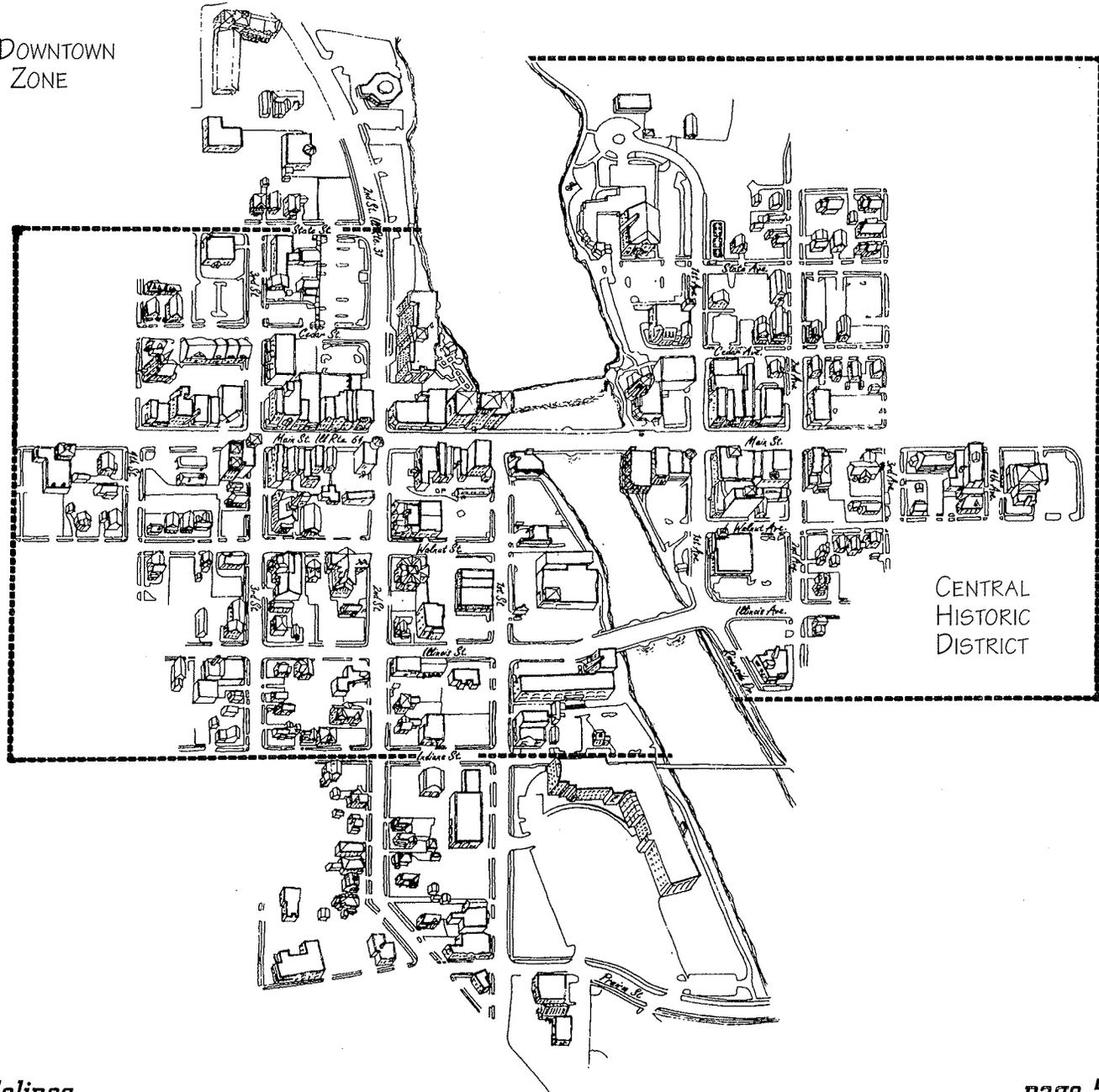
Property owners or tenants who wish to improve their buildings should begin by assessing the current visual condition of the entire facade:

- ◆ How could storefront improvements relate to the entire visual impact of the building?
- ◆ How does the building relate to neighboring buildings?
- ◆ How does a storefront improvement relate to the historic upper portion of the building?
- ◆ What changes are needed to improve the appearance and integrity of the upper portion of the building?

Fortunately, many of these questions can now be answered within the contents of these design guidelines. While local building codes must be complied with, and more information regarding them is available from the City of St. Charles, these guidelines can help take the guesswork out of your rehab project by providing you with examples of challenging areas and possible solutions. Paint, awnings, signs, windows and doors are just some of the areas where information is offered to assist you in your project.

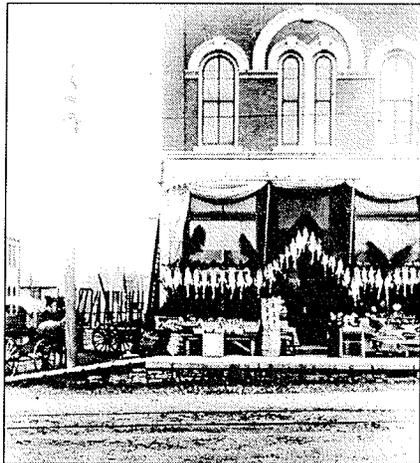
The goal of all building improvements should be to make each building the best possible expression of itself that it can be. These design guidelines serve as a guide for various improvement projects, still keeping in mind that each building is unique. The guidelines are intended to suggest ways in which property/business owners can take advantage of Downtown St. Charles' unique charm and history.

ST. CHARLES DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION ZONE





MAIN STREET ST. CHARLES, VIEWED NORTHEAST FROM 1ST AVENUE. CIRCA 1900s.



AWNINGS WERE USED TO PROTECT WARES FROM SUN AND WEATHER.

Photos courtesy of the St. Charles Heritage Center.

A Brief History of St. Charles

At a time in St. Charles' history when we are seeing it reach the limits of physical growth and become an integrated part of the Chicago metropolitan area, it is essential that the downtown area remain a core representation of the unique charm and history that has made St. Charles such an attractive destination for so many newcomers.

The Early Years

The Indian peace treaty after the Blackhawk War of 1832 opened up the Fox River Valley for settlement. The area offered fertile soil and water power. Local gravel deposits, clay, limestone and timber provided building materials.

In 1833, Evan Shelby and William Franklin, two Indiana men originally from New England, laid claim to land east of the river. There they built the first log cabin in St. Charles in 1834.

The first dam across the Fox River was constructed in 1836 and provided energy for a saw mill, grist mill and carding mill. The first blacksmith shop opened in 1835, and the first general store opened in 1836. By 1840, St. Charles had five hotels serving travelers between Chicago and the Mississippi River.

The entrepreneurial spirit, in combination with a dedication to quality service, was evident early on in St. Charles. The Anderson family operated an early dairy business in town, which they expanded after 1905 to produce that new taste sensation—ice cream. The company is still in operation today under the name "Colonial Cafes & Ice Cream."

John Colson came in 1853 and worked his way up to a partnership—and later the ownership—of a dry goods store. Colson's was one of the few businesses to survive fire, floods and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Except for a slowdown during the Depression, St. Charles has experienced continuing economic growth.

In 1856, the town annexed a four-square-mile area toward the southwest and spent the next 100 years filling it in. Not until the 1950s did further annexation begin.

The 1960s produced large-scale industrial development east of town. From the 1970s to the present, residential development and annexation have been dominant as more and more people seek out the small-town setting and unique historical charm St. Charles offers.

The history of St. Charles, as preserved by the St. Charles Heritage Center, shows that its residents and business people always have taken pride in their homes, businesses and community and have prized the “home town” atmosphere to be found here, as well.

This zealous guarding of the St. Charles small-town charm was evident even in 1848 when residents deferred the opportunity to welcome the railroads to neighboring Elgin. They reasoned that the railroads would carry people through the town without stopping.

Although Elgin prospered financially and grew at an astounding pace, St. Charles was able to retain its friendly reputation, unique historical charm and small-town atmosphere while still offering opportunities to entrepreneurs, who included quality service on their list of important business assets.

And, although St. Charles now encompasses industrial parks and shopping malls, these prized qualities are most evident in the downtown area—the true “heart” of St. Charles.

MAIN STREET ST. CHARLES, VIEWED
SOUTHWEST FROM 1ST AVENUE.
CIRCA 1912-1913.

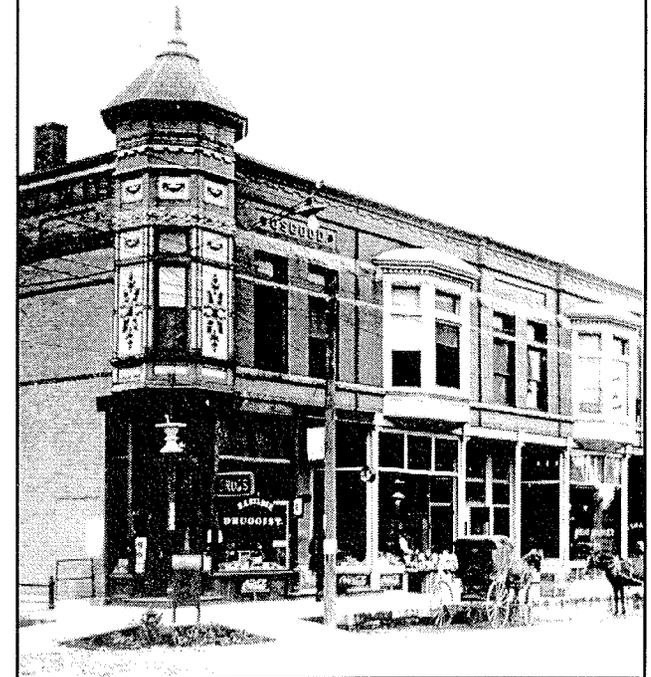
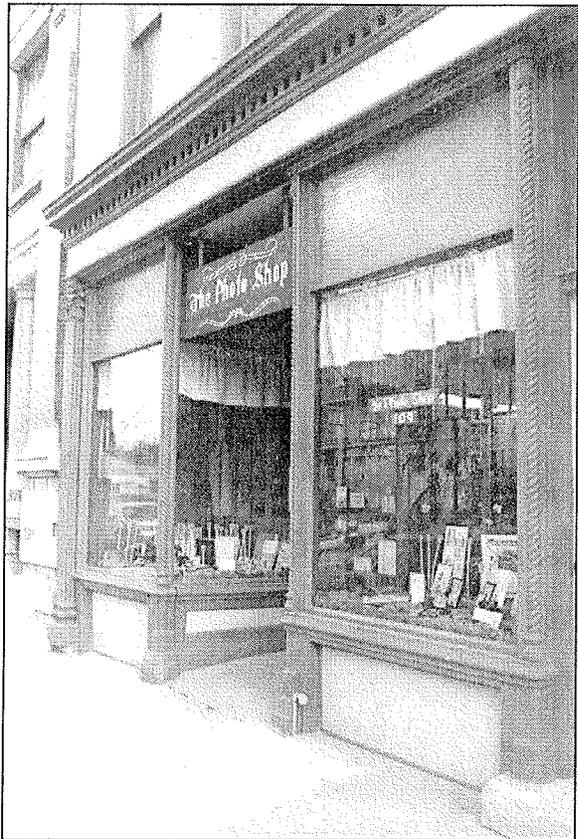


Photo courtesy of the St. Charles Heritage Center.



Photos courtesy of Mike Dixon.

Storefront Design

Traditional Facade

The traditional commercial storefront can be considered the most important element that sets apart and gives historical significance and character to the downtown. The majority of our historic buildings date from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. When originally constructed, our downtown buildings shared a consistency in design and proportion that was a key element to creating a strong visual image. This consistency was and is still important in conveying how our downtown is perceived by the customer seeking goods and services. A visually unified downtown is a powerful tool for attracting people to our downtown, as well as to the individual shops and businesses that are located here.

Changes have occurred to our buildings during the years in response to various merchandising trends, technology and changing tenants. In most cases, the changes affected the storefront area while the upper facade remained intact. In some of these cases, the original storefronts may still be in place but covered over or in need of maintenance and repair.

The traditional commercial facade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and large display windows; the upper masonry facade with regularly spaced windows; and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles, but the result is essentially consistent with the traditional facade. In the Downtown St. Charles business district, the typical building facade consists of a two-story masonry construction.

Design

The traditional downtown building facade has a well-defined opening that the original storefront filled. The opening is bounded on each side by piers, which were usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded on top by the storefront cornice, which is the structural member supporting the upper facade, and bounded below by the sidewalk.

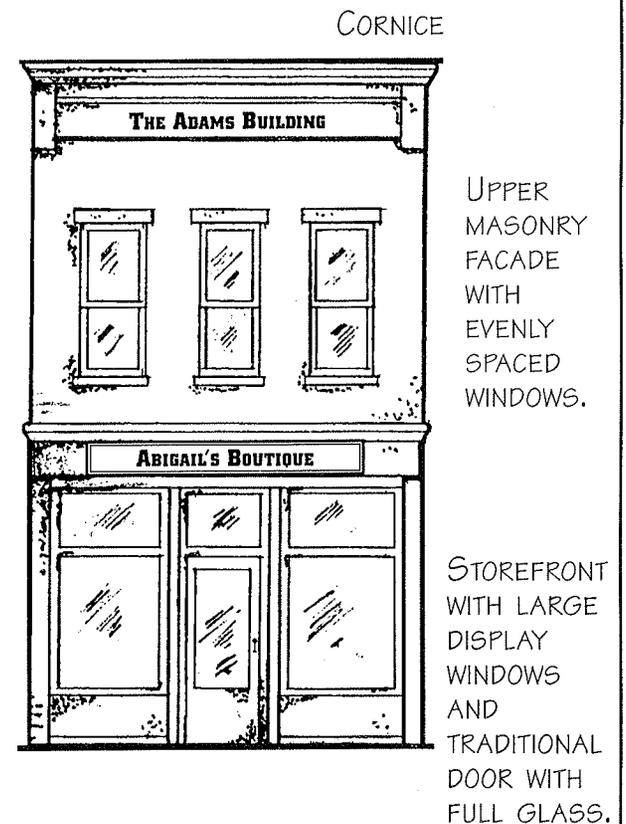
The storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. The large glass opening served to display goods the store or business had to sell, as well as to allow natural light deep into the store, thus minimizing the need for artificial light sources.

The visual transparency of the storefront also is important because it is part of the overall proportion system of the facade. The proportion of window-to-wall areas in the traditional facade calls for more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper facade. When these buildings were constructed, the importance of maintaining these proportions so that Downtown St. Charles would be unified by a consistent design theme was recognized, thus making it an attractive place for customers to do business.

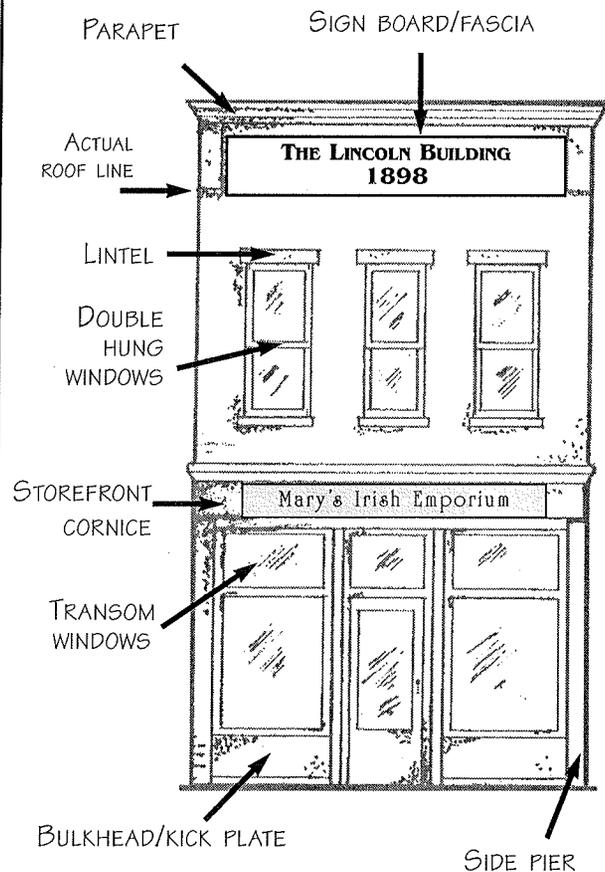
Improvements

In considering improvements to the storefront, it is very important that the original opening be recognized and maintained. The remodeled storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond or in front of it.

THE TRADITIONAL, COMMERCIAL FACADE CONSISTS OF THREE PARTS, AS SHOWN.



FACADE SHOWING UNIFIED, DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE WHOLE.



Key Points to Consider:

- ◆ The storefront should be composed almost entirely of glass. If glass is not appropriate, consider the use of window treatments as a solution, such as blinds or drapes.
- ◆ The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed with consideration to traditional design themes and their relationship to the overall building facade and symmetry.
- ◆ Transom windows that are covered or blocked should be reopened and restored.
- ◆ Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated.
- ◆ Original elements should be restored, such as cast iron columns, cornices, entry doors and lighting fixtures.
- ◆ Signage should be integrated into the storefront design.
- ◆ Lighting should be integrated into the storefront design.
- ◆ Awnings, if required, should be integrated into the storefront design.

The storefront design should be true to the time period in which the building was constructed. Renovating late 19th century buildings, such as we have in St. Charles, with colonial motifs and mansard roofs is certainly inappropriate.

When planning the storefront renovation, it could be very helpful to contact the St. Charles Heritage Center, the Downtown Partnership and the Historic Preservation Commission for information regarding your building. Old photographs can be valuable tools in determining original design, materials and signage used on your building.

Storefront Materials

When designing a new storefront or renovating an existing one, remember the goal should be a transparent facade. Keeping the materials simple and unobtrusive will help you achieve this goal. There is no need to introduce additional types of building materials to those that originally existed. Whether building new or renovating existing storefronts, use materials that perform their intended function well, and use them consistently throughout the design. Utilizing this approach will enable you to achieve simplicity in the design and uniformity in the overall storefront appearance.

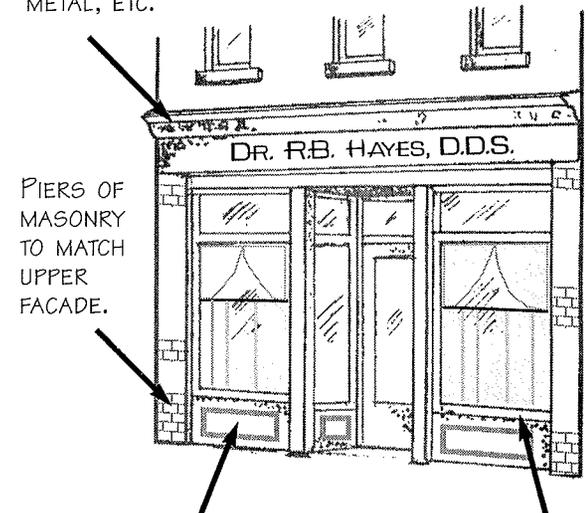
Utilize existing materials whenever possible, repairing rather than replacing. Typical examples of materials and their location on the storefront include:

- ◆ Storefront Frame—wood, cast iron, anodized aluminum.
- ◆ Display Windows—clear glass.
- ◆ Transom Windows—clear, tinted, stained or etched glass.
- ◆ Entrance—wood or aluminum with a large glass panel.
- ◆ Bulkheads—wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile, metal-clad plywood panels.
- ◆ Storefront Cornice—wood, cast iron or sheet metal.
- ◆ Side Piers—should be the same material as upper facade, typically brick or stone.

Certain materials never should be used on the traditional, commercial building where they have no relationship to the original design themes and, therefore, violate the consistency of the building's appearance and the downtown area. Such inappropriate materials may include: Cultured stone, imitation brick, rough textured wood siding, wooden shingles on mansard roofs, gravel aggregate and/or stucco materials.

COMMON STOREFRONT MATERIALS.

CORNICE OF
CAST IRON,
WOOD,
SHEET
METAL, ETC.



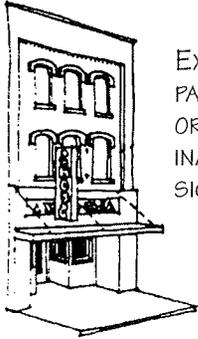
PIERS OF
MASONRY
TO MATCH
UPPER
FACADE.

BULKHEAD OF
WOOD, POLISHED
STONE, TILE OR
ALUMINUM PANELS.

STOREFRONT FRAME
OF WOOD, CAST
IRON OR STEEL.

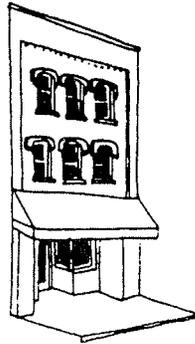
DISPLAY WINDOWS OF CLEAR, FULL GLASS
SHOWING USE OF CURTAINS WHERE OPEN
VIEW WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE.

THREE APPROACHES TO FACADE IMPROVEMENTS.



EXISTING FACADE SHOWING PAST CHANGES FROM THE ORIGINAL, INCLUDING INAPPROPRIATE AWNING & SIGN.

MINIMAL REHABILITATION SHOWING APPROPRIATE AWNING.



MAJOR RENOVATION SHOWING PARTIAL RESTORATION OF STOREFRONT.

RESTORATION SHOWING REPRODUCTION OF ORIGINAL CORNICE, STOREFRONT CORNICE, STOREFRONT WINDOWS & BULKHEAD.



What to Do?

Depending on the building's condition and the amount of money you have budgeted, there are three basic approaches you may want to consider.

Minimal Rehabilitation:

This preservation approach to rehabilitation requires basic maintenance, necessary replacement, removal of extraneous materials and simple design improvements. Cosmetic treatments can help to unify the building by covering a time-worn storefront with an awning or painting a contemporary storefront a dark receding color to minimize its effect.

Major Renovation:

This approach retains the facade's existing original elements while using contemporary and traditional design and materials for replacement of inappropriate elements. In all major renovations, care must be taken to insure that the design of improvements is understated so as not to compete with the overall character of the facade. For instance, when installing a new storefront, any of these alternatives would be appropriate:

- ◆ A contemporary design in wood or anodized aluminum.
- ◆ A simplified version of a traditional storefront in wood or aluminum.
- ◆ A traditional period storefront constructed in wood.

Restoration:

This approach restores the facade to its original condition. It involves the exact duplication of the original storefront, including its architectural detail, color scheme and sign placement. If a building has undergone only minor alterations, restorations may be relatively inexpensive and most desirable.

Rear Facade

Available parking in Downtown St. Charles, particularly for Main Street businesses, is so often located behind buildings that rear or side entrances are warranted. Areas behind buildings often are forgotten or neglected. Customers tend to avoid rear entrances because these areas can be unkempt and unattractive. The rears of most buildings are commonly thought of as service areas where deliveries are made or the garbage is picked up. However, a large percentage of existing and developing parking lots are located adjacent to or abutting these entrances. The rears of the buildings are coming into full and open view. The appearances of rear block areas are especially important to St. Charles because of their high visibility from side streets.

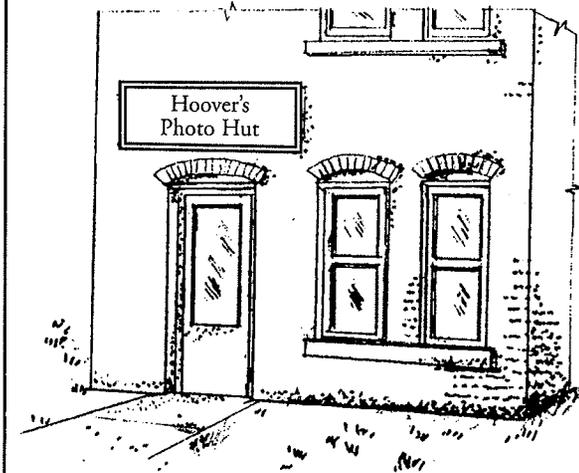
A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called "double fronting." There are certain advantages to this, including:

- ◆ Enhanced circulation patterns.
- ◆ Better access to off-street parking.
- ◆ Store identity created on more than one side of the building.

Double fronting may, in isolated cases, create disadvantages, including increases in:

- ◆ Initial cost of remodeling.
- ◆ Maintenance costs of additional doors, windows and sidewalks.
- ◆ Security.

REAR FACADE SHOWING AN INVITING ENTRANCE WITH LARGE DOOR WINDOW.



REAR ENTRANCE VIEW OF FOX ISLAND SQUARE (ILLINOIS STREET) DEMONSTRATING AMPLE PARKING AND WELL-MAINTAINED LANDSCAPING.



Photo courtesy of David Behrens.

If you do not have an attractive, “customer friendly” rear entrance but are considering improvements, ask yourself these questions:

- ◆ How would added, walk-through traffic help my business?
- ◆ Would a rear entrance be an added convenience for my customers?
- ◆ What changes would I have to make to my store for an attractive rear entry?
- ◆ How would I handle security, displays and circulation through the store?
- ◆ Where do my customers typically park?

Like the storefront, the rear entry should respect its neighbors. An attempt to make your entrance compatible with surrounding businesses should be a priority. Look at the back entrances next to yours before you make any changes. Work with your neighbors to create unity in this all-too-often ignored area.

The rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance, but like the front, the back entry requires identification. A rear-door window panel is one way to identify and open your store to customers. A small sign on or near the door is another identifier. Be sure to keep it small and do not clutter the area with too many signs. An awning is a pleasant addition and a convenience to shoppers during inclement weather.

Normal service activities, such as trash collection, loading and shipping, also must occur with ease. It is possible to accommodate these functions and make the rear spaces enjoyable “people places” at the same time. Pick a central location for trash collection, which will serve several stores efficiently. Simple enclosures can be constructed to hide dumpsters and to prevent clutter. Before construction, be sure you consult the collection agency to ensure that your design will not disrupt pick-up services.

Plantings either can add or detract from a rear building area. If there is enough sun, planter boxes may be utilized as an attractive buffering element, but only if you are committed to caring for them properly. Weeds are a detracting and visually negative element in poorly paved and unattended areas. Planting ground cover in exposed soil areas can help choke out weeds. For a better image, keep all plantings under control and consistently well maintained.

Snow removal is as important to a rear entrance as it is to a front entrance. Customers are unlikely to come into a business that does not take the time and care to shovel all walkways.

With good design and proper maintenance, these rear entrances can become attractive and convenient for shoppers and highly beneficial to Downtown St. Charles businesses.

"The rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance. .

. .however, with careful planning, execution and continued maintenance, rear entrances can become an attractive and convenient asset to the store, its customers and to Downtown St. Charles."



Photo courtesy of Mike Dixon.

Windows

Windows are an important component of the facade; they open the building with light and offer a proportional continuity between the upper floors and the storefront. Often, deteriorated windows have been inappropriately replaced or simply neglected, thereby diminishing the overall character of the building. Every effort should be made to retain and preserve each window, its function and any decorative details still remaining.

Protect and maintain the wood and metal of the window and its surrounds with appropriate surface treatments, such as cleaning or rust removal. All bare wood should be primed with a high-quality, oil-based primer and painted with one or two coats of latex or oil-based paint. Loose or broken window panes can be fixed easily by any qualified glazier. Make windows weather tight by recaulking and replacing or installing weather-stripping.

Check the overall condition of window materials and window features to determine if repairs are required. Check all wood parts of the window for decay, cracks or splitting. Pay particular attention to the sills and window sash bottoms where water may collect. Repair window frames and sashes by patching, splicing or reinforcing. Replace all parts that are deteriorating or missing. Cracks should be filled with caulk, wood putty or epoxy reinforcement and the surface sanded. Do not replace the entire window when limited replacement of parts is appropriate.

If a window is missing or deteriorating beyond repair, replace the window with one that matches the original. Use the overall form and any detailing still evident as a guide. Use the same type of material as the original or a compatible substitute. Always fill the entire original window opening, even if part of the opening previously had been filled in.

Doors

The entry into a storefront often can be the focus of an historic facade. Maintaining a traditional entry door or pair of doors can contribute to the overall character of the facade. Traditionally, the entrance door was made of wood with a large glass panel. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair an original door.

If a door is to be replaced, consider one of the following options:

- ◆ Have a new door built with the same design and proportions as the original.
- ◆ Find a manufactured wood or steel door that resembles the traditional storefront door.
- ◆ Use a standard aluminum, commercial door with wide stiles and a dark anodized or baked enamel finish.

Avoid doors that are residential in character or decorated with moldings, crossbucks, or window grilles.

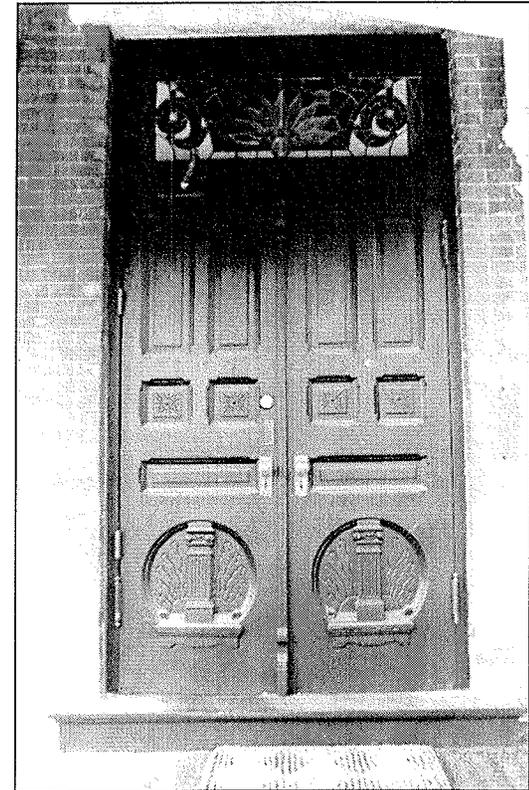
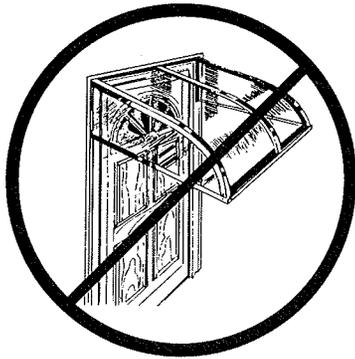


Photo courtesy of Mike Dixon.

MAIN STREET ST. CHARLES, VIEWED NORTHWEST FROM 2ND AVENUE. CIRCA EARLY 1900s.



Photos courtesy of the St. Charles Heritage Center.



EXAMPLE OF AN INAPPROPRIATE, PLASTIC-STYLE AWNING & RESIDENTIAL-TYPE DOOR.

Awnings & Canopies

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provided shelter, added color and served as a transition between the storefront and the upper facade. An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront window, but should not cover the piers on either side. It should be attached below the sign panel—the space between the second-story window sills and the first-story facade. In some cases, the awning may be mounted between the transom and the display windows, thus allowing light to enter while shading pedestrians and merchandise.

Where possible, retain and repair awning fixtures and canopies that originate from the building's earlier historical periods. Whenever appropriate and possible, new awnings should be complementary in placement, proportion and color to the building's original fixtures and to existing awnings and canopies of adjacent buildings. New awnings should be constructed of cloth material. Vinyl, plastic or metal are inappropriate to historic facades and generally detract from the historic character of the building and those surrounding it. Consider replacing inappropriate awnings and canopies with traditional canvas-type fixtures.

A standard street-level awning should be mounted so the valance is a minimum of 7 feet above grade and projects no closer than 12 inches from the curb. A canopy (any awning with vertical support that reaches the ground) should be mounted so the valance is a minimum of 8 feet above grade and projects no closer than 2 feet from the curb. A 12-inch valance may be attached at the awning bar and can serve as a vertical sign panel with a simple message to identify the storefront business.

Inappropriate storefront alterations can be effectively disguised by mounting an awning over the alterations while maintaining the proportions of the original storefront.

Signs

Signs are a vital part of any downtown area, providing businesses with advertising and identity. Appropriate signs also contribute to the overall image of Downtown St. Charles. Because they are such a visible storefront element, signs must be designed, selected and utilized appropriately so as not to detract from the facade. With a little forethought and careful planning, signs can fulfill the business owner's needs and enhance the image of Downtown St. Charles.

Placement and Number

Each storefront should be limited to two signs—one primary and one secondary. The primary sign should be located on the building facade above storefront display windows, but below the sills of second floor windows. Turn-of-the-century buildings often used a continuous brick ledge, or corbelling, to separate the storefront from the upper stories. This space is ideal for sign placement, as it often was created for this purpose.

The secondary sign can be a small hanging sign that identifies the business for the pedestrian, or a sign painted on a door or display window. This sign generally is oriented toward pedestrians. A sign in a window should not obscure the display area and should occupy no more than 25 percent of the glass area.

Signs or lettering on awnings or canopies may be appropriate as primary or secondary signs. If used for signage, awnings and canopies should follow the design guidelines found in the "Awnings & Canopies" section. Lettering can be painted or sewn on to the valance. In most cases, 6- to 8-inch letters are sufficient.

"The City of St. Charles has ordinances that control the size, height and placement of signs.

"Before investing money in a sign, determine whether it will comply with the applicable requirements and restrictions. A City permit is required prior to installation for most types of signs."



Photo © courtesy of Stapleton Photography.

THE SIGN'S STYLE, SIZE AND LETTERING SHOULD COMPLEMENT A BUSINESS'S PRODUCT OR SERVICE.

Size

Big does not necessarily mean powerful. Signs should be visually integrated with the storefront to produce a consistent and unified statement about the business within. A sign that overpowers the storefront does not communicate a positive image to the customer. Signs should always be in scale with their surroundings. Actual size may vary, but in general, a wall-mounted sign or sign board should be no more than 2 1/2 feet high and should not extend across more than 3/4 of the building. Lettering should be 8- to 18-inches high and occupy between 50 and 65 percent of the sign board.

Lettering and Graphics

There are hundreds of lettering types available from sign contractors and designers. The building owner should select a style that expresses the business message and is compatible with the building and Downtown St. Charles. Decorative, serif and sans serif styles can all be used in the downtown area but should be selected for compatibility with the type of business and type of building.

In most cases, signs should be limited to a maximum of three colors, two materials and one lettering style. Use available information about the colors, materials, lettering style and placement of the original signs on the building when designing new ones. Sign colors should complement the building colors.

Wooden signs with raised letters, metal signs, painted signs and neon and gold leaf are all appropriate downtown, though not for every building.

Nationally distributed or mass produced signs should be avoided; they typically do not express the character of Downtown St. Charles or its unique businesses.

Content

Signs should express an easy-to-read, direct message: "Keep it simple." Wording should be minimal, limited to the name of the business and, if necessary, a word or two that expresses its character. Simple wording is easily read by pedestrians and motorists without creating a distraction.

Sign Lighting

Illuminated signs may be appropriate downtown if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the other sign design guidelines. Use lighting that provides a true color rendition. The light source should be designed as part of the sign or hidden from view. Exposed lights that produce glare are unpleasant for customers and neighbors. Electrical fixtures, conduits and wires should be concealed. Exposed neon letters can be effective, adding color and vitality to the street, if appropriate to the architecture of the building.

Sign Design and Construction Services

Choose a professional sign maker carefully. Quality of workmanship and construction is as vital as quality of design. Ask the contractor where you can see examples of previous work.

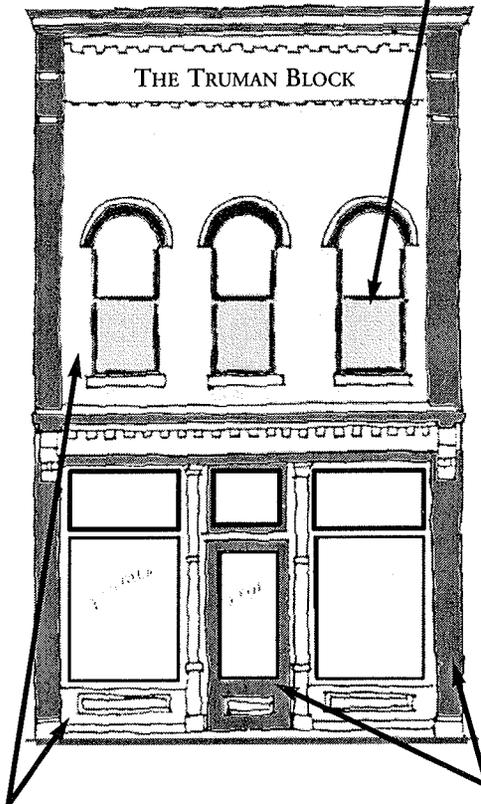
City Ordinance Requirements

In addition to these design guidelines, the City of St. Charles has ordinances that control the size, height and placement of signs. Before investing money in a sign, determine whether it will comply with the applicable requirements and restrictions. A permit is required prior to installation for most types of signs.

"Signs are a vital part of any downtown area providing businesses with advertising and identity. .

. .appropriate signs also contribute to the overall image of Downtown St. Charles."

MINOR, DARKER TRIM
SHADE IS USED TO
ACCENT WINDOW
SASHES AND DOORS



BASE COLOR
OFTEN MATCHES
THE NATURAL
COLOR OF THE
MASONRY

MAJOR TRIM COLOR IS
USED TO FRAME THE
FACADE, DOOR AND
WINDOWS

Colors & Paint

The placement of colors—rather than number of colors—best accentuates the architectural details. Colors are distributed into three categories: base, trim (major and minor) and accent. The base often matches the natural color of building materials, such as brick or stone. The major trim color is used to frame the facade, doors and windows. It also is the primary color of the cornice and major architectural elements. If a minor trim color is used, it often is a darker shade placed on doors and window sashes. An accent color is used in limited doses to highlight small details. Colors should tie the architectural elements together, and this scheme should be consistent throughout the facade's upper and lower portions.

Boutique Color Scheme

This non-historical color scheme uses bright trim and accent colors in dramatic contrast to the base color of a building. A building must have an extremely ornate architecture to pick out details successfully with multiple-accent colors. Too many colors on the wrong elements will detract from the building's character and that of its neighbors. Taken to an extreme, boutique color schemes can create a building that looks as though a carnival were taking place inside.

Historical Color Scheme

This scheme uses body, trim and accent colors from a particular time period. Historical color schemes are more appropriate for the style and character of buildings designated as landmarks or situated in designated historic districts. The colors should complement the schemes on adjacent buildings. Colors may be chosen based on paint chip analysis of a building's original color or based on colors used on other buildings of the period. Color guides of documented historical hues from selected paint manufacturers are an aid to historical color selection. Old photos of the building or a similar one can establish light versus dark color placement.

Painting

The purpose of paint is to seal the building surface from the elements and to prevent deterioration of materials from temperature and humidity extremes. Generally, wall surfaces that have not been painted should remain unpainted, such as brick, terra cotta, cast concrete block and stone. Soft, porous brick that was originally painted should remain painted. Always select paint that is formulated for the particular surface application planned. A primer coat seals the surface and enhances the bond with the compatible top coats. On unsealed wood and metal surfaces, use oil or alkyd primers. Unsealed masonry requires a specialized primer/sealer. When repainting over an existing top coat, continue to use the same paint formulation—oil or latex. If a formula change is necessary, or if the original paint type cannot be determined, then prime with a first coat specifically made for the top coat planned. Finally, apply two top coats to provide the most durable finish.

Surface Preparation

Proper surface preparation of wood, metal and masonry prior to repainting will maximize the longevity of the top coat. The following steps will prevent premature paint failure:

- ◆ Thoroughly remove dirt, mildew and paint chalk with a mild detergent.
- ◆ Remove failing paint on wood with electric heat, scraping or sanding.
- ◆ Remove failing paint on metal or masonry with an approved chemical application or with scraping or sanding.

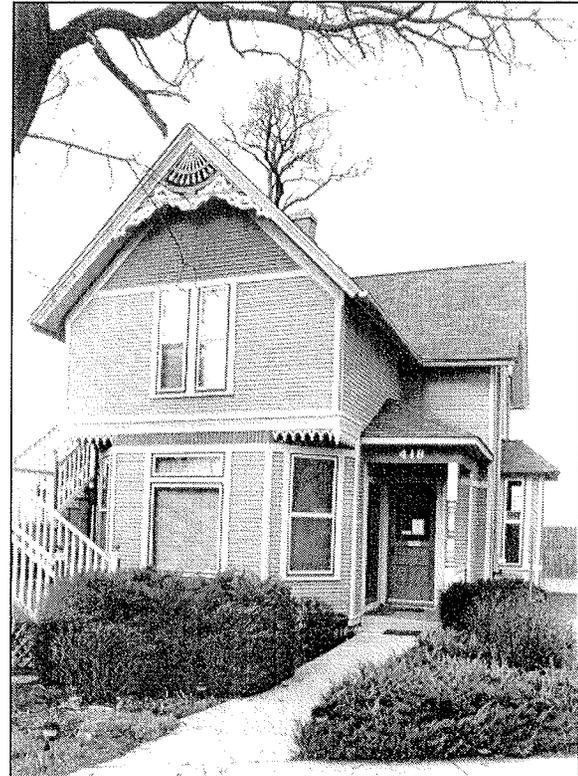


Photo courtesy of Mike Dixon.

"The placement of colors—rather than number of colors—best accentuates the architectural details.

"Colors should tie the architectural elements together, and this scheme should be consistent throughout the facade's upper and lower portions."

Sandblasting, high pressure washes or other abrasive paint removal methods should never be undertaken. Well-documented evidence shows that these methods do irreversible damage to wood and masonry surfaces. Sandblasting removes the hard, glazed surface from kiln fired masonry and exposes thinner, more porous material to water infiltration and accelerated deterioration. Sandblasting also severely pits the surfaces of masonry and wood, and with the latter, opens the grain to moisture, dirt and mildew infiltration.

Following the proper surface cleaning, significant architectural elements should be retained, repaired or preserved whenever possible. As a last resort, damaged material should be replaced with similar, matching material only. Weathered and cracked wood should be treated with consolidates, preservatives and/or fillers, then sanded prior to sealing.

Masonry

As in most communities, many buildings in St. Charles consist of brick masonry. Some structures also consist of stone, concrete block and marble. Masonry is a strong, durable building material and, when well maintained, can last for centuries. Two very common repair activities are masonry cleaning and repointing. While both may improve the appearance of a building, care must be taken to determine the proper techniques used so that no harm is done to the masonry.

Masonry Cleaning

It should not be assumed that all masonry needs cleaning. Surface stains generally cause few problems and can even enhance the charm of an older building. However, evidence may indicate that heavy dirt and other pollutants are now harming the masonry. It is, therefore, reasonable to clean masonry only where it is necessary to halt deterioration or to remove unsightly and heavy soiling while taking care not to destroy the natural characteristics that come with age.

Some Questions to Consider:

- ◆ How clean of a surface is desired or necessary?
- ◆ What is the nature of the soil and how tightly is it adhering to the surface?
- ◆ What is the masonry type and what are its characteristics?
- ◆ How is the surface constructed; are there any metal attachments that could rust?
- ◆ How can the environment and the public's and workers' health best be protected during the cleaning?

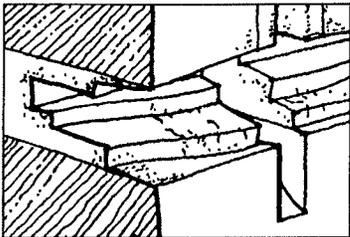
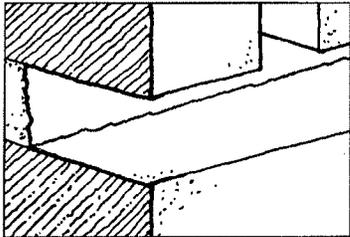
"Why should a gracefully aged building look brand new?"

"More damage can be done to a masonry surface in one day's cleaning with improper and harmful techniques than one century's normal weathering.

"Unless there is evidence that dirt, paint or stains are destroying the masonry, it should be left alone."

PREPARING THE JOINT FOR REPOINTING.

BELOW: A WELL-RAKED JOINT WITH EVEN SURFACE AND SCRAPED TO A DEPTH OF APPROXIMATELY 2 1/2 TIMES THE HEIGHT OF THE JOINT.



ABOVE: UNEVEN SCRAPING WITH THE USE OF A RADIAL SAW. IF MORTAR CAN BE REMOVED ONLY WITH THE USE OF POWER TOOLS, THEN IT PROBABLY SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN REMOVED IN THE FIRST PLACE.

The basic principle in cleaning masonry is to select the gentlest method possible to achieve an acceptable level of cleanliness. Working with a professional helps to ensure that the method chosen is right for your building.

The 3 Major Cleaning Methods:

- ◆ **Water:** This method ranges from hand scrubbing to pressure washing to steam cleaning. It softens and rinses dirt deposits from the surface. Water cleaning generally is the simplest, gentlest, safest and least expensive method.
- ◆ **Chemical:** Chemical cleaners include acids, alkalines or organic compounds in either liquid or vapor forms. The chemicals react with the dirt and/or the masonry to hasten the removal process. However, when used improperly, the chemical methods can cause serious damage to the environment from run-off, including plants, animals and rivers.
- ◆ **Abrasive:** Abrasives include grit blasting, grinders or sanding disks to remove dirt or stains. *All abrasive methods are inappropriate ways to clean old masonry.*

To select the best cleaning technique, a patch test should be performed and the results observed for a sufficient time period (all four seasons, if possible) to determine the immediate and long-range effects of the cleaning method.

Repointing

Repointing is the removal of deteriorating or failing mortar from masonry joints and replacing it with new mortar. Repointing can restore the visual and physical integrity of the masonry. Generally, it is better to clean the masonry with gentlest method possible before resorting to repointing, unless the mortar is badly eroded.

Some obvious signs of deterioration may assist in the decision to repoint the mortar, including:

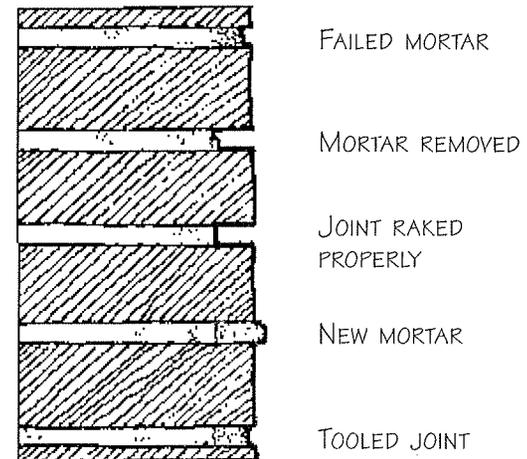
- ◆ Disintegration of mortar.
- ◆ Cracks in mortar joints.
- ◆ Loose bricks, cornice sections or decorative elements.

As a general rule, only repoint where there is deterioration and repointing should only be done by an experienced professional.

Further Points to Consider

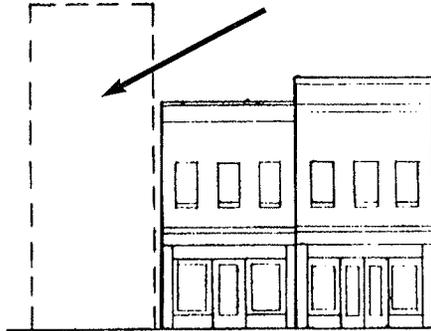
- ◆ Duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
- ◆ The joint should be raked carefully to an even face and uniform depth, preferably with the use of hand tools.
- ◆ Duplicate old mortar joints in width and in profile.

THE REPOINTING PROCESS.

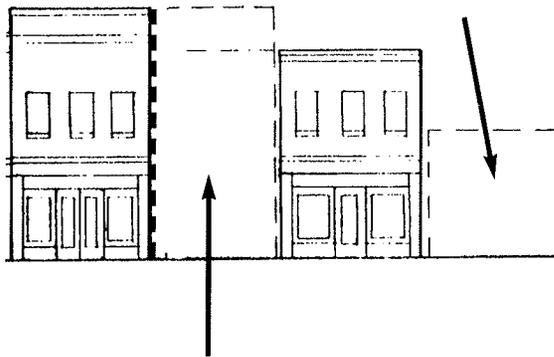


PROPORTIONS OF AN INFILL CONSTRUCTION.

THE HEIGHT OF THIS INFILL WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE TO ITS NEIGHBORS.



THIS INFILL BREAKS THE RHYTHM OF THE EXISTING FACADES.



THIS INFILL MAINTAINS THE EXISTING RHYTHM OF ITS NEIGHBORS.

Infill Construction

Infill—the construction of new buildings on vacant lots—is encouraged. The design of an infill building is a special challenge, particularly its front facade, which should be designed to look appropriate and be compatible in relation to the surrounding buildings.

What constitutes good infill design? There is no absolute answer; a good design will vary according to its setting. Because an infill building is new, it should look new. However, the appearance must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors without mimicking them. There are several ideas that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

Proportions of the Facade

The average height and width of the surrounding buildings determines a general set of proportions for an infill structure or the bays of a larger structure. The infill building should occupy the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street. If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be broken into a number of smaller bays to maintain a rhythm with the surrounding buildings.

Composition

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

Proportions of the Openings

The size and proportion of window and door openings of an infill building should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.

Detailing

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

Materials

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

Color

The colors chosen for an infill facade should relate to the neighboring buildings.

Building Setback

The new facade should be flush to its neighbors.

Roof Forms

The type of roof used should be similar to those found on adjacent buildings. Usually, the upper cornice will cover the visibility of a flat roof from the front facade.

BEFORE INFILL CONSTRUCTION &
FACADE IMPROVEMENT TO BUILDING
ON RIGHT.



AFTER INFILL CONSTRUCTION
MAINTAINING THE RHYTHM OF
NEIGHBORING FACADES.

Appendix A

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

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

Definitions

Awning: A framework covered with fabric or metal projecting from the facade of a building located on a storefront or individual window openings. The primary purpose is to shade the interior of the building and provide protection to pedestrians. Awnings can be supported by poles or brackets.

Bulkhead/Kick plate: The wood or metal panel located beneath the display window in a typical storefront.

Canopy: A flat metal and/or wooden structure used to shelter pedestrians on the sidewalk that projects out from a storefront at a right angle and is usually suspended with chains or rods.
(Note: St. Charles ordinance defines a canopy as any awning with vertical supports that reach the ground. See "Awnings & Canopies" section.)

Cornice: A projecting molding that crowns the top of a storefront or facade.

Double Hung Windows: A window with two sashes that slide up and down.

Facade: The front face of a building.

Lintel: A horizontal structural element over a window or door opening that supports the wall above.

Parapet: The portion of the wall of a facade that extends above the roof line.

Sash: A frame designed to hold the glass in a window.

Sign Board/Fascia: A horizontal panel either of wood or an inset in a brick wall located immediately below the cornice. It is usually an ideal location to place a sign.

Storefront: The first story of a facade of a commercial building, usually having display windows.

Transom Window: A small horizontal window located above a door or display window.

Window Hood: An exterior projecting molding on the top of a window, located in the upper facade.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Architecture

- ◆ *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945.* John J.G. Blumenson. American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) Press, 1981 (2nd Revised Edition).

Preservation-General

- ◆ *Historic Preservation: The Magazine of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.* Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- ◆ *Historic Preservation in Small Towns: A Manual of Practice.* American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) Press, 1980.
- ◆ *Landmark Yellow Pages: All the Names, Addresses, Facts and Figures You Need in Preservation.* Pamela Dwight, editor. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1993 (Second Edition).

Resources: Services and Supplies

- ◆ *The Fix-it Book: A Pocket Guide to Restoration Services and Suppliers in the Kane County Area.* Preservation Partners of the Fox Valley and the Kane County Historic Preservation Commission, 1992.

Restoration, Rehabilitation and Repair

- ◆ *The Old House Journal Guide to Restoration.* Dutton, 1992.
- ◆ *This Old House.* Bob Vila. Dutton, 1981.
- ◆ *This Old House Guide to Building and Remodeling Materials.* Bob Vila. Warner Books, 1986.
- ◆ *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.* United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, 1992.
- ◆ *Traditional Details for Building Restoration, Renovation and Rehabilitation: from the 1932-1951 editions of "Architectural Graphic Standards."* Charles Ramsey and Harold Sleeper. Wiley, 1991.

Restoration-Exterior

- ◆ *Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings, 1820-1920.* Roger W. Moss. American Life Foundation, 1981.
- ◆ *Masonry: How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone.* Mark London. The Preservation Press, 1988.
- ◆ *Repairing Old and Historic Windows.* The Preservation Press, 1992.

- ◆ Available at the St. Charles Public Library.

Acknowledgments

The Downtown St. Charles Partnership is truly appreciative of the efforts and time put forth to develop these guidelines by a great number of individuals and volunteers working with the Partnership's Design Committee. We especially wish to acknowledge the following for their major contributions:

- ◆ Lisa Bennett
- ◆ Shannon Brady
- ◆ Mike Dixon
- ◆ Bob Hupp
- ◆ Tom Mahaffey
- ◆ Jay Schlinsog
- ◆ Steve Smunt

The following references were invaluable to the Downtown St. Charles Partnership in the production of these guidelines:

Celebrating History: A Pictorial Essay of St. Charles, Illinois. The St. Charles Historical Society, 1990.

Commercial Storefront Design Guidelines. The West Chicago Historical Preservation Commission.

Design Guidelines. Main Street Marshfield, Inc.

Masonry: How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone. Mark London. The Preservation Press, 1988.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, 1992.

So You Want to Paint a Building? Main Street Nevada, Nevada, Missouri.

Notes:

