

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES CITY OF NOBLESVILLE



Noblesville, Indiana
February 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Program Boundaries.....	3
Developmental History.....	4
Guide to Commercial and Public Architectural Styles.....	6
Glossary of Terms.....	8
Design Elements.....	10
Storefronts.....	10
Doors and Entrances.....	13
Awnings and Canopies.....	15
Signage.....	17
Exterior Lighting.....	20
Windows.....	21
Cornices and Friezes.....	23
Colors.....	24
Balconies, Balustrades and Railings.....	25
Roofs and Parapets.....	26
Wall Surfaces and Treatments.....	27
Outdoor Furniture and Accessories.....	29
Additions and New Construction.....	30
Project Partners.....	32

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

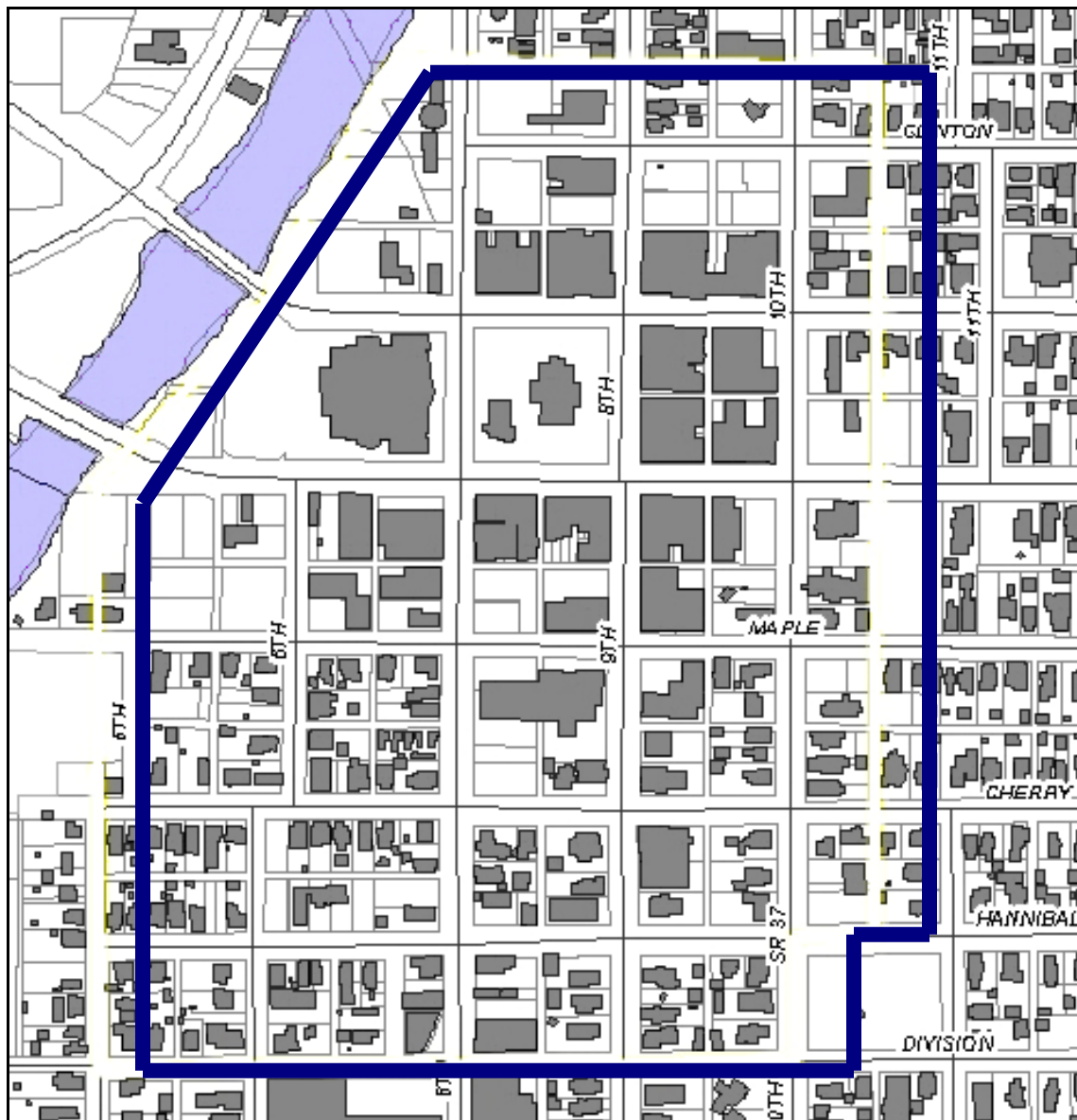
Design guidelines are a tool used by local governments, historic preservation commissions, and other review bodies to assess proposals for alterations to the exterior of historic properties in order to ensure the buildings' historic fabric and character are maintained. While they are intended to help maintain and preserve the historic and architectural character of existing buildings, they may also be applied to additions and new construction. The guidelines are also intended to assist architects, contractors, and others involved in maintaining historic buildings to plan and implement rehabilitation projects.

Design guidelines can be especially beneficial to historic districts, and for evaluating projects seeking financial assistance such as grants, loans, and tax credits. The Downtown Design Guidelines for the City of Noblesville are intended to provide a set of recommended practices that those applying for funding through Noblesville's Façade Improvement Grant Program should follow. While the design guidelines are specific to *commercial properties* that are eligible for the Grant Program, many of the recommended practices may apply to residential buildings and historic properties outside of the designated grant boundaries. Currently, the guidelines are not mandatory; however, the information may be beneficial to any owner or tenant who seeks guidance in caring for their historic building.

These guidelines are based on an analysis of Noblesville's historic characteristics and are intended to enhance those qualities. They are intended to be flexible enough to ensure the individuality of each building while recommending minimum standards. These design guidelines may help strengthen the economy of the downtown through an enhanced attraction to residents, visitors, tourists and developers; stabilize and improve property values; and enhance the visual and aesthetic character and diversity of the city.

PROGRAM BOUNDARIES

Funding through the Noblesville Façade Improvement Grant Program is restricted to commercial properties located within the area bounded on the north by the Alley north of Clinton Street, on the east by the Alley east of 10th Street, on the south by Division Street and on the west by 5th Street and the White River. The map below depicts these boundaries.



Base map provided by the Department of Planning, City of Noblesville, Indiana.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

The following history is adapted from the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Noblesville Commercial Historic District, and from the Historic Sites and Structures Inventory: Hamilton County Interim Report (1992):

The town of Noblesville was laid out by William Conner and Josiah F. Polk on the east bank of the White River in 1823 and was selected as the county seat that same year. Noblesville prospered during the railroad boom when the Indianapolis, Peru and Chicago Railroad laid tracks through the town in 1851, encouraging businesses and industry and increasing the residential population. Other railroads such as the Anderson, Lebanon & St. Louis Railroad (later known as the Midland or Central Indiana) and the Monon Railroad helped bring additional economic success to the town.

In 1887, Noblesville was incorporated, and in 1888 the discovery of natural gas attracted even more businesses and industries to Noblesville. Many of the buildings in Noblesville's downtown business area were constructed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and reflect the prosperity of this period.

Noblesville's historic commercial district surrounds the public square. In the center of the square is located the Hamilton County Courthouse, designed by architect Edwin May and built by A.G. Campfield in 1879, and the Sheriff's Residence and Jail (now a museum), designed by W.R. Parsons and constructed by Williams, Gigger and Durfee in 1876. The square is bounded by Logan, Ninth, Conner, and Eighth Streets. These streets contain solid blocks of historic commercial buildings on the north, east, and south – nearly all of which contribute to the district's historic character. The west side of the square is occupied by the Hamilton County Judicial Center, built in 1992, which helps maintain the urban density that has been present downtown since the late 1800s.

All of the buildings adjacent to the square were historically commercial in function, with the exception of the courthouse, sheriff's residence and jail, and the post office. Although there are a few one and three story buildings, most of the historic commercial buildings in the district are two stories. Most buildings had office space, shops, or apartments located in the upper floors, which were accessed by exterior doorways in the first-floor storefronts. Many of the historic buildings located in downtown possess a high degree of architectural integrity and retain

distinctive features such as patterned brickwork, masonry detailing, cast iron storefronts and original window elements.

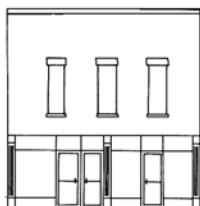
Further from the square, the building use and form is more mixed, with an increase in institutional, industrial, and residential buildings. Several of these buildings have been converted to commercial use, resulting in a larger commercial district. An example is the First Christian Church, which was converted to commercial use within the past twenty years.

Historic downtown Noblesville is distinctive for its surviving historic county courthouse and town square plan, its active role as a county judicial center, its proximity to the White River, the quantity and quality of historic commercial and public buildings that retain their significant historic features, and for its pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that has continued to attract people downtown for more than 150 years.



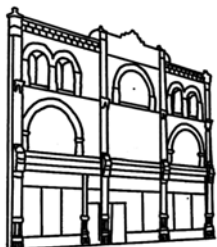
GUIDE TO COMMERCIAL & PUBLIC ARCHITECTURAL STYLES & FORMS

Architecture reflects the fashions and tastes popular among architects and their clients at given points in time. In downtown Noblesville, historic buildings fall roughly into ten styles or forms. Below are sketches of the more prevalent styles, the time period each was popular in Noblesville, and a description of their characteristics.



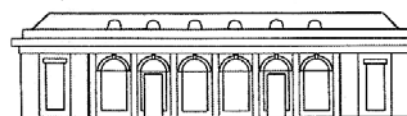
Commercial Vernacular (1850-1915) Commercial Vernacular buildings are not associated with any particular style and are often constructed using local materials such as brick. Decorative elements are usually restrained and might include a simple corbelled brick cornice or other patterned brickwork.

Italianate (1860-1900) The Italianate style is considered the most common architectural style of Midwestern downtown commercial centers. It is most easily identified by projecting cornices supported by decorative brackets (often found in pairs), tall narrow windows capped by decorative stone or metal moldings, and elaborate cast-iron storefronts.

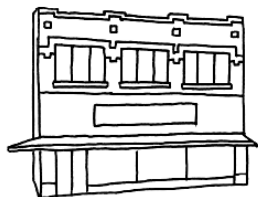


Romanesque Revival (1885-1900) Romanesque Revival style buildings have thick rock-faced stone or brick walls that give the feeling of mass and weight. Other characteristics include large rounded-arch door and window openings, corbelled cornices, parapets, and round towers.

Beaux Arts (1885-1930) The Beaux Arts style is based on French architecture of the late 19th century. Beaux Arts buildings are usually of light-colored masonry and often display classical detailing such as columns or pilasters.



While they have many of the same details found on other classically inspired buildings, Beaux Arts buildings are characterized by their preponderance of surface decoration, which can include decorative garlands, floral patterns, or shield motifs. Roof-line balustrades of masonry are also common.



Arts and Crafts/Prairie (1890-1920) The Arts and Craft and Prairie styles emphasize horizontality, with little ornamentation or detailing added. Often the roof is hipped with wide overhanging eaves and sheathed in tile, or flat with a shaped parapet. Groups of three windows are common.

Neo-Classical (1890-1925) The Neo-Classical style is based on the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. Common features include a symmetrical façade, columns, pilasters, quoins, pediments, and entablatures consisting of a cornice, dentils, and a frieze. Sometimes the style includes the use of a dome.



Tudor Revival (1905-1930) The Tudor Revival style is inspired by English architecture of the 16th century. The signature characteristics include high-pitched gable roofs, projecting gables, and exposed stucco and faux timber framing.

Modern (1935-Present) In the years leading up to and during World War II, construction in the United States was considerably reduced. After the war, buildings based on historical precedent were largely abandoned in favor of modern styles that looked toward the future. Non-traditional forms and geometric shapes are common elements of this style.

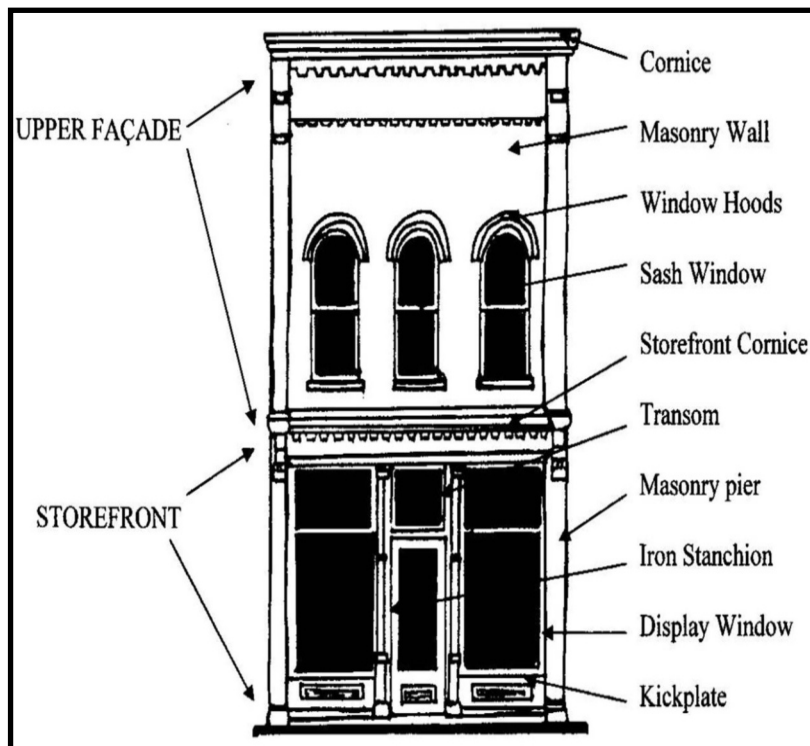


Gas Station/Service Station (1920-Present) The earliest gas stations were built of frame and had a front canopy to give protection to motorists. During the 1920s and 30s, gas stations added service bays to accommodate the repair of vehicles. Historic gas stations can be found in a variety of forms and styles and can be either frame or masonry.

Single Family Residence Converted to Commercial Use (1850-Present) Single family residences from any time period and in any style can be converted to commercial use. When doing so, it is best to retain the residential scale of all elements of the building, including windows, doors, and porches.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Adjacent Property – Any property adjacent to or directly diagonal to the subject property. Properties across a public or private right-of-way are also considered adjacent.

Awning – A roof-like covering of cloth, plastic or other non-structural material that either is permanently extending from a building or can be raised or retracted to a position against a building when not in use.

Balcony – A projecting platform on a building that is either supported from below or cantilevered from the structure. Usually enclosed with a railing or balustrade.

Balustrade – A railing system, as along the edge of a porch, balcony, or roof deck.

Bracket – Any support that sustains the weight of an overhanging member, such as a cornice or eaves.

Bulkhead – The wall-like division that serves as the lowest level of the storefront and supports the display window; also referred to as a kickplate.

Canopy – A roof like structure extending from a building in order to provide protection from the elements, and which is carried by a frame which is supported by the ground.

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) – Certificate issued by a preservation commission to indicate its approval of an application to alter, demolish, move, or add on to a protected resource.

Corbel – A masonry projection or series of projections, each stepped progressively outward with increasing height.

Dentil – One of a series of small, square, toothlike blocks used in ornamentation.

Double-Hung Window – A window having two vertically sliding sashes.

Eave – That part of a roof that projects beyond the exterior wall.

Entablature – A horizontal band and molding that crowns a wall, window, or doorway.

Façade – The primary (usually the front) elevation of a building.

Fascia – Any flat horizontal molding having little projection.

Frieze – A decorative band at or near the top of a wall below the cornice.

Gable Roof – A roof having a single slope on each side of a central ridge.

Glazed Brick – A brick that has been fired in a kiln at a temperature high enough to fuse the clay and sand on its surface, usually forming a glassy coating and rendering it impervious to moisture.

Glazing – The sheets or panes of glass that are set in windows and doors or other openings.

Hipped Roof – A roof comprising adjacent flat surfaces that slope upward from all sides of the perimeter of the building.

Institutional – Public and quasi-public land uses which enhance the community's quality of life, such as schools, churches, libraries, or hospitals, but not including such uses as utility plants or garages.

Lintel – A horizontal structural member that spans the top of an opening such as a window.

Mansard Roof – A hipped roof usually having a double slope or curve on all four sides of the roof.

Marquee – An attached permanent canopy, supported by and projecting from a building providing protection from the elements.

Muntin – A secondary framing member that holds a glass pane within a window frame or glazed door.

Parapet – A low solid protective wall along the edge of a roof or balcony.

Pediment – A crowning material used over doors and windows.

Pilaster – A pier or pillar attached to a wall that projects slightly from the wall.

Portico – A major porch usually supported by a pedimented roof and supported by columns.

Portable Sign – A street sign that is not permanently attached to the ground or a building, or designed to be permanently attached to the ground or building.

Preservation – Protecting a historic building in its present state from further deterioration or damage.

Primary Façade – A building's principle or front elevation that typically faces a street.

Projecting Sign – Any sign suspended from or supported by a building, and extending outward more than 18 inches.

Quoins – Units of stone or brick used to accentuate the corners of a building.

Reconstruction – Replicating through new construction the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving building at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Rehabilitation – Adapting a historic building for modern use.

Restoration – Accurately depicting a historic building as it appeared at a particular time period by removing features from other time periods and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period.

Right-of-Way – A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by transportation facilities, public utilities, or other special public uses. Rights-of-way intended for any use involving maintenance by a public agency shall be dedicated to the public use by the maker of the plat on which such right-of-way is established.

Sash – The framework of a glazed window, either movable or fixed.

Secondary Façade – A building's side and/or rear elevations, usually possessing no primary entryway, limited architectural ornamentation, and no storefront.

Setback – The minimum open space to be provided between the front line of a building or structure and the front lot line.

Sidelight – A framed area of fixed glass, usually comprising a number of small panes, set vertically on each side of a door.

Sign – Any identification, description, display, or illustration which is affixed to, or painted, or represented directly or indirectly upon a building or other outdoor structure or parcel of land, and which directs attention to an object, product, place, activity, business, person, service, or interest.

Signable Area – An area which is free of architectural details on the facade of a building or part of a building in which an activity is located.

Signboard – Signage placed just above a storefront cornice.

Sill – The horizontal bottom member of a window frame.

Stanchion – An upright bar, beam, or post.

Weekend Directional Signs – Signs such as, but not limited to, those which advertise real estate open houses, residential development locations, and auctions. These signs typically are placed out on weekends, however, the definition does include this type of sign when placed out any day of the week.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

In situations where a building's exterior has been altered or modernized, the rehabilitation plan should reflect the typical design for that building's architectural style and age. If historic photographs of the building are available, it is recommended that they be used to recreate the upper story and storefront design. Additionally, physical evidence may be used to guide the restoration efforts.

Storefronts

Overview

The storefront is often considered the most defining feature of a historic commercial building, serving an important function in the advertising and marketing strategy of a downtown business. Due to its highly visible location on the ground level of the primary façade and the significant role it plays in commercial marketing, it is important to retain a building's original storefront and ensure that its design complements the surrounding buildings.

Historic storefronts have often been "modernized" over the years through the installation of new materials over the original, or occasionally, entire replacement of storefronts. These newer storefronts mask the building's original storefront appearance, which traditionally included the primary entrance, display windows, signage, storefront cornice or signboard, and decorative detailing. Defining storefront elements of many of Noblesville's historic commercial buildings include large plate glass display windows with bulkheads (also called kickplates), recessed entryways, transom and/or sidelight windows, cast iron columns and pilasters, signboards and storefront cornices. Sometimes a storefront can contain one or more secondary entrances that provide access to upper story offices or apartments.

Storefront alterations predating the late 1950s, such as Carrara glass (pigmented structural glass), can have historical value in their own right and are often as rare as their nineteenth century counterparts due to twentieth century renovations. Consult with the State Historic Preservation Office to determine the significance of these features.

Recommended:

- Large glass display windows with bulkheads.
- Recessed entryways.
- Transom and/or sidelight windows.
- Maintaining the historic size and location of all storefront openings.
- Repairing or restoring historic cast iron columns, pilasters, and other decorative components.
- Clear glass display windows with café curtains, interior blinds or shutters to provide privacy.
- Repairing or restoring the existing historic storefront cornice using photographic and/or physical evidence.
- Positioning the storefront cornice at an appropriate height and proportion for the building and any adjacent structures.

Discouraged:

- Glass display windows that extend down to the sidewalk without the use of bulkheads.
- Glass display windows that have been decreased in size from their historic appearance.
- Recessed doorways that have been enclosed.
- Transom or sidelight windows that have been covered, enclosed or painted over.
- Storefronts that have been covered or enclosed.
- Replacing or otherwise damaging historic cast iron columns, pilasters and other decorative components.
- Installing highly-reflective, mirrored, or tinted glass.
- Covering, enclosing or removing an existing historic storefront cornice.
- Raising or lowering the original height of the storefront cornice.

Recommended



This early twentieth-century storefront maintains its recessed entry, large display windows, and unusual mosaic bulkheads.



This storefront has retained its original display windows, bulkheads, transoms and recessed entry. The storefront space allows the store owner to advertise the goods sold within.

Discouraged



This storefront and storefront cornice have been encased in wood veneer and the bulkheads replaced with modern masonry.



Covering up doorways and large sections of glass on a historic storefront detracts from the appearance of the building and is discouraged.



This storefront has altered the size of its display windows and encased the storefront and storefront cornice in wood veneer.

Doors and Entrances

Overview

Original entrance doors on historic storefronts were usually large and narrow, constructed of wood, and contained glass in the upper half. In addition, most doors had glass transoms and/or sidelights. Pairs of narrow double doors were common in the nineteenth century and were usually decorative. Side and rear entrances were less ornate and often utilized metal fireproof doors.

Recommended

- Repairing and maintaining original doors and door openings whenever possible, including side and rear entries.
- If doors must be replaced, retain the size and shape of the original door opening, and replace with a similar door of the same material.
- Retain the size and shape of all transoms and sidelights in historic doorways.

Discouraged

- Replacing double doors with single doors.
- Installing metal frame glass security doors.
- Installing residential hollow core wood or metal replacement doors.
- Installing doors that do not have any glazing (panes of glass).
- Installing replacement doors having decorative details that do not correspond to the historic storefront or building.

Recommended

Pairs of tall, narrow wooden doors lit by large panes of glass were commonly found on historic storefronts from the nineteenth century.



This doorway retains its historic wood and glass door with kickplate and a transom above.

This type of wood, lit by a single pane of glass and having a brass kickplate, was commonly used on historic storefronts.

**Discouraged**

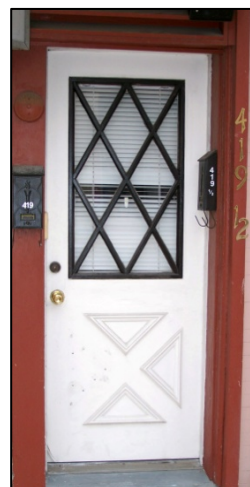
This modern residential replacement door has features that are inappropriate for a storefront. The transom has also been covered.



This recessed entry has been enclosed with a modern metal frame glass door, sidelights and transom.



This hollow core replacement door is residential in appearance and is inappropriate for a historic storefront.



Awnings, Canopies, & Marquees

Overview

Historically, awnings were applied to windows and doors to provide shade for a building's interior. Awnings are commonly visible on commercial storefronts and are considered appropriate for the historic downtown. Canopies are appropriate for larger outdoor areas, such as outdoor dining spaces. Marquees, such as those often found projecting from movie theatres from the early twentieth century, have achieved significance in their own right and should be preserved.

Recommended

- Awnings and canopies that are made of canvas or a similar woven material.
- Awning and canopy colors that complement the colors of the building.
- Awnings that project no further than three feet from the façade on the upper floors.
- Awnings on upper floors should fit within the masonry openings. The height of the awnings should not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ the height of the masonry opening, and the width of the awning should fill the masonry opening but not extend past it.
- Awnings, marquees, and canopies on the first floor may extend to within one foot of the vertical plane of the curb.
- Signage on awnings, canopies and marquees can include letters, numbers, or symbols and may be attached to or painted, stenciled, or otherwise placed on these special signs.
- Historic marquees that are an important part of the storefront design, such as those covering the entrances to historic movie theaters, should be maintained and preserved whenever possible.

Discouraged

- Awnings and canopies constructed of plastic, wood, or metal.
- Awning and canopy colors that conflict with the color scheme of the building
- Awnings that span more than one vertical level on a building.
- Awnings and canopies that interfere with or cover decorative building details such as cast iron columns and pilasters, storefront cornices, and window hoods.
- Internally lit awnings are prohibited in the downtown.
- Metal marquees which are not historic or otherwise significant.

Recommended



Canvas awnings appropriately scaled to the storefront and that do not obscure the signboard or other decorative elements are recommended.

These canvas awnings, installed on upper story windows, are appropriately sized and do not obscure the brick window moldings.



These historic awnings are important design features of the building and should be retained.



These awnings divide the storefronts and add personality and color to the historic building facades.

Discouraged



Molded plastic awnings that obscure the storefront cornice and signboard are discouraged.



These metal awnings, installed on upper story windows, extend outside of the masonry openings and obscure decorative details.



Replacement metal awnings are not recommended, especially when they cover the storefront signboard or cornice.



This fixed wood awning is a late twentieth-century addition and is not recommended.

Signage

Overview

A sign is defined as any device, structure, painting or visual image designed to be seen by the public. Signage can incorporate letters, numbers, graphics or symbols for the purpose of advertising or identifying any business, product, good or service. While signage is an important part of a historic commercial district, it can become obtrusive visual clutter if not handled properly. Signage for historic commercial storefronts should be compatible with the scale, style, design theme, materials, and period of the building and the surroundings where it is to be located. Some signs predating the mid-twentieth century, such as painted wall signs and neon signs, are now considered historically significant. These should be retained and repaired whenever possible to recognize change in a community over time. All signage should be in accordance with Article 11 of the Noblesville Unified Development Ordinance.

Recommended

- Preserving historic signage whenever possible.
- Fascia and wall signs.
- Awning signs consisting of letters, numbers, or symbols attached to or painted, stenciled, or otherwise placed on awnings, marquees, and canopies.
- Signage painted on display windows or doors and window glazing. The size and scale of the signs should take into consideration the overall size of the window opening.
- Sandwich signs.
- New signage composed of traditional materials such as wood and metal.
- New signage located at traditional sign locations, such as upper facades, storefront cornices, projecting from the face of the building, or hanging in windows.
- Signage incorporating or resembling business logos and symbols that are compatible with the building in their design and colors.
- New signage anchored into mortar joints or in such a way as to prevent any damage to the building.

Discouraged

- New signage composed of plastic, plywood or highly reflective materials.
- Internally-lit plastic signs.
- New flashing signs.
- New signage installed in such a way as to cause damage to the building, such as anchored directly into masonry.

- Signage that obscures or overwhelms significant architectural features of the building.

Prohibited according to Article 11 of the Noblesville Unified Development Ordinance.

- Signs attached to light poles.
- Off-premise signs.
- Signs that move or give the appearance of moving.
- Signs containing running lights.
- Roof signs.
- Signs placed on parked vehicles.
- Inflatable signs.
- Pole signs.
- Signs located in the public right-of-way.
- Weekend directional signs.

Recommended



This sign is located in the signboard portion of the storefront and is appropriately scaled to the building.

Discouraged



This large internally-lit plastic sign overwhelms the storefront and is not compatible with the style of the historic masonry building.

Recommended

Appropriately scaled signage can be located on the upper façade of a building.



These new projecting signs are composed of traditional materials, are pedestrian scaled, and are designed to be compatible with the building.



Mid-twentieth century neon signs have often acquired significance in their own right and should be preserved.

Appropriately scaled signage applied to storefront windows is encouraged.

**Discouraged**

This excess signage is not in scale with the building.



Internally-lit plastic signs, similar to the example above, are discouraged.



Large internally-lit plastic projecting signs that are out of scale with the building are discouraged.



In this example, the signage is out of scale with the rest of the storefront. A large sign obscures the storefront cornice, and the painted window signage overpowers the display windows.

Exterior Lighting

Overview

Lighting for commercial storefronts can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a building at night, and can create a more interesting and inviting environment that encourages commercial and social activities after business hours. Lighting should not overwhelm the façade, and new lighting should be subtle and well-placed to illuminate entries and signage and to provide a welcoming and safe atmosphere for downtown patrons.

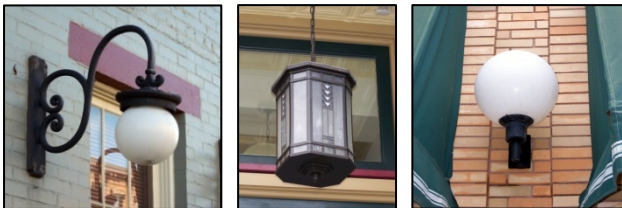
Recommended

- Retaining and repairing original light fixtures whenever possible.
- Appropriately scaled exterior lighting that does not overwhelm the façade.
- Installing new lighting that is either inspired by period lighting, or is simple and unobtrusive in design.

Discouraged

- Removing original light fixtures that are able to be repaired.
- Long fluorescent tube lighting.
- Lighting that is residential in scale and/or style or is otherwise incompatible with the style of the building.

Recommended



The retention of historic exterior light fixtures is encouraged. New period lighting that is compatible with the style of the building can be used when historic fixtures are missing.

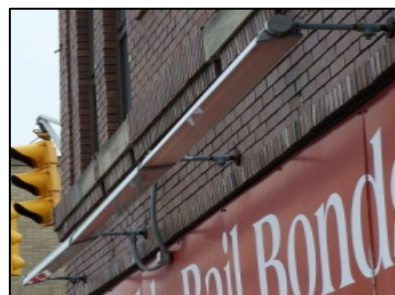
New lighting that is simple and unobtrusive in design can be effectively used to light a storefront.



Discouraged



The use of light fixtures intended for residential buildings is discouraged on commercial buildings.



Long fluorescent light fixtures are inappropriate for historic facades.

Windows

Overview:

Common features shared by most of the late nineteenth-century commercial buildings in Noblesville are the tall, narrow window openings on the buildings' upper stories. These windows, often capped with pressed metal window hoods, brick or stone arches, or other decorative features, contribute to and define many buildings' symmetrical upper story facades.

Recommended:

- Retain historic window openings and configurations (including size, shape, dimensions, and rhythm).
- Retain and repair whenever possible original window hardware, hoods, lintels, pediments, sash, muntins, shutters and sills. If it is not possible to repair damaged components, they should be replaced with in-kind or compatible materials that mimic the size, shape, design and materials of the original element.
- If the entire window sash and/or frame is missing or extensively damaged and requires total replacement, the new window should replicate the historic window in size, shape, design and material.
- If the upper story of a building is vacant or used only for storage, appropriate window treatments may be installed over the windows on the interior of the building to disguise empty spaces and provide the appearance of occupancy. Appropriate window coverings include interior blinds or curtains, and exterior shutters (if they are kept closed, are appropriate for the building's architectural style and age, and are sized to fit within the original masonry opening).

Discouraged:

- Enlarging or reducing in size historic window openings.
- Infilling, covering, enclosing, or painting over historic windows and window openings.
- Installing highly reflective, mirrored, or tinted glass.
- Installing aluminum or vinyl replacement windows.
- Installation of window air conditioning units on the primary façade. If they are installed, they should be located on a secondary façade with runoff directed away from the building.

Recommended

These double-hung replacement windows mimic the appearance of historic windows in size, shape and material.



These historic windows retain their original arched sash and divided lights (panes).

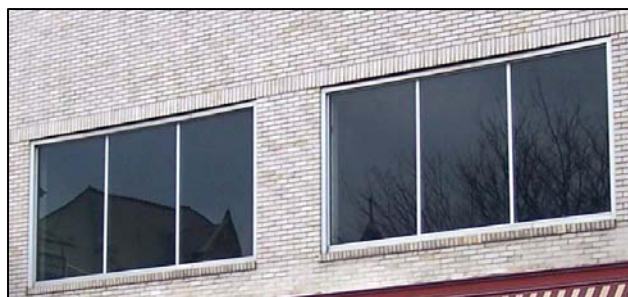
This window on a rear elevation has been preserved and maintained.



These double-hung windows maintain their original ornate details that add character to the building's historic façade.



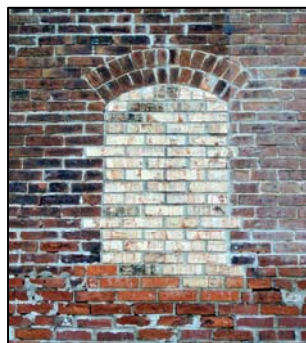
Discouraged



Tinted glass replacement windows are discouraged.



These vacant upper story windows have been covered with plywood.



This window opening on a side elevation has been filled in with brick.



These vinyl replacement windows do not match the size and shape of the masonry openings.

Cornices & Friezes

Overview:

A cornice functions as a decorative cap for the building façade, and is a characteristic feature of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century commercial architecture in Noblesville. The cornice often has unusual decorative elements – including brackets, moldings, dentils, brick corbelling, and panels – that are characteristic of the building’s style. Frequently, cornices were fabricated of pressed sheet metal to create detail; but bronze, cut limestone, brick, and terra cotta were also used. Often a series of commercial facades would align several key elements such as windows, string courses and cornices to create the effect of a “street wall” or single unified façade. As a result, the removal or alteration of a cornice will have a negative impact not only on the building itself, but also on those adjacent to it.

Recommended:

- Preserving and retaining original materials, forms, and ornamental features on the upper cornice of a building.
- Repairing damaged cornices with in-kind or compatible materials to match the original in size, style, and details.
- Recreating missing cornices and cornice features using photographic or physical evidence, or reconstructing the cornice based on designs appropriate to the style of the building.

Discouraged:

- Removing cornice details to simplify building maintenance or concealing them behind new materials such as vinyl siding.
- Recreating entire cornices or cornice elements that are not of the building’s style.

Recommended

Original cornices are defining characteristics of commercial buildings and should be preserved and repaired whenever possible.



Discouraged



Removing decorative cornices or encasing them in modern sheathing, such as wood or aluminum siding, is discouraged.

Colors

Overview

Nineteenth-century commercial buildings often have decorative elements that can be enhanced with an appropriate color scheme. Contrasting paint colors can be used to highlight such elements as window frames and moldings, raised door panels, brackets and cornices, and other architectural details. Almost any color, when used sparingly, can be attractive and effective in highlighting architectural details. Color schemes should be compatible with adjacent buildings.

Recommended

- Using three or more contrasting colors to highlight architectural details.
- Using a color scheme that is compatible with adjacent buildings.

Discouraged

- Painting a building all one color without the use of accent colors to highlight architectural details.

Recommended

In this example, red is an accent color that accentuates some of the building's distinctive architectural details.



Painting a building in several earth tones is a good way to accentuate architectural details.

Discouraged

Painting a building all one color, especially when that color is an intense neon hue, is highly discouraged.



This storefront is painted all one color instead of using several colors to highlight details.

Balconies, Balustrades & Railings

Overview

Balconies, balustrades and railings are often character-defining architectural elements and features of historic commercial buildings. Ornamental balconies are commonly found on the upper floors of commercial buildings. Railings can be found on stairs, balconies and in conjunction with other exterior features. Balustrades can be composed of metal or stone and are sometimes found just above the cornice.

Recommended

- Retaining and preserving historic balconies, balustrades and railings whenever possible, even if no longer in use.
- If necessary, replacing balconies, balustrades and railings with like materials that are identical in size, shape, style and material.
- When necessary, installing metal railings that are architecturally compatible with the existing features of the building.

Discouraged

- Removing historic balconies, balustrades and railings.
- Adding balconies and balustrades that are not compatible with the building.

Recommended

This ornate balcony provides visual interest to this historic building façade and should be repaired and preserved.



Discouraged



This balcony is in desperate need of repair and has the potential to cause injury. Every effort should be made to preserve the character-defining feature of this façade.

Roofs & Parapets

Overview

The roof is one of the most important elements of a building and protects the interior from rain and other elements. Neglecting the roof of any building can result in costly repairs; however, historic buildings are even more susceptible to damage by neglect and should be inspected and repaired on a regular basis. Some buildings retain their historic roofing materials, such as slate and wood shingles, which should be preserved and maintained whenever possible. In such a situation, repairs should include replacement with like materials when necessary. The parapet, a low solid protective wall along the edge of a roof, usually supports a decorative cornice. Regular maintenance and repair of both the roof and the parapet is essential for protecting your building and preventing future roof failure.

Recommended

- Retaining the shape and materials of historic roofs and parapets.
- Regular maintenance and repair of all roofing systems and parapets.

Discouraged

- Altering the roofline of a historic building.
- Removing historic roofing materials such as patterned slate and wood shingles.
- Neglecting the roof of any building, which can result in costly repairs or complete replacement.

Recommended



Historic roofing materials, such as patterned slate, and the distinctive shape of this mansard roof are important design elements and should be retained and repaired whenever possible.

Discouraged



Neglecting the roof of a historic building can have disastrous results, as in this example where the roof has completely collapsed. Regular maintenance and repair of any roof is an essential step in protecting a building.

Wall Surfaces & Treatments

Overview

A building's exterior walls are its most important elements. Not only do they protect the interior from the elements, they can also be a defining stylistic feature. Before undertaking cleaning or repair of exterior walls it is advisable to review and follow recommended techniques, as different materials require different treatments. The gentlest means possible should be used when attempting to clean an exterior surface. Brick is highly susceptible to damage from overly harsh cleaning techniques, such as sandblasting, which can remove the hard outer surface and expose the brick to further damage. If brick has been painted, it is advisable to maintain the paint unless the brick has a glaze. Some types of stone react adversely to harsh chemicals. Every treatment should be tested on a small area before being used on the entire building.

Recommended:

- Cleaning masonry or wood using the gentlest means possible.
- Refrain from painting brick that historically was not painted.
- Re-pointing masonry with a mortar that matches the historic mortar.
- Seeking professional advice before undertaking any surface treatment.

Discouraged:

- Sandblasting or using harsh chemicals.
- Painting masonry that is currently not painted.
- Re-pointing brick using a mortar that is harder than the existing mortar.

Recommended



Painted brick in good condition should not be stripped, which has the potential to damage the wall surface.



Cleaning brick or other masonry is recommended using the gentlest means possible.

Discouraged



Sandblasting of brick or other masonry materials will damage the surface and expose softer brick that is highly susceptible to water damage.



The brick on the right has been repointed with a mortar that does not match the existing mortar. The joints have been excessively widened in the process.

Outdoor Furniture & Accessories

Overview:

Outdoor furniture should be compatible with the style of the building and with the rest of the downtown commercial district. Benches, tables, and chairs should be durable, weather-resistant, and well maintained. Window boxes should be compatible in size and scale with the window and should be proportionate to the masonry opening. All outdoor accessories should be attached in such a way as to minimize damage to the building surface, such as attaching to the mortar joint instead of to the brick or other masonry.

Recommended

- Outdoor furniture that is compatible with the overall style of the building and with the district.
- Window boxes that fit within the historic window opening and are proportionate to the masonry opening.

Discouraged

- Attaching window boxes and/or supportive elements to the building's masonry.
- Window boxes that are out of scale with the window and extend past the masonry opening.

Recommended



Outdoor furniture and accessories can be found in a variety of styles and shapes. The table and chairs on the left match the sleek, clean lines of the storefront.

ADDITIONS & NEW CONSTRUCTION

Overall

New additions to historic buildings and proposed infill construction should be compatible with surrounding buildings in height, setback, scale and mass, materials, window rhythm, and ornamental details in order to maintain a consistent look in the downtown commercial district. Rear additions to buildings are a good way to add modern amenities such as elevators without altering the façade. Brick or frame additions are preferable to those constructed of metal or glass since they are more consistent with existing materials. Rooftop additions are discouraged as they alter a building's overall form and massing; however, if a rooftop addition is needed it should be as unobtrusive as possible and not be visible from the street.

Recommended

- Additions to rear elevations.
- New construction and additions of brick or wood.
- New infill construction which has a zero setback and matches that of adjacent buildings.
- Additions and new construction with window size, shape and rhythm that is compatible with adjacent buildings.

Discouraged

- Additions to rooftops.
- New construction and additions that are metal or glass.
- New construction that is taller or shorter than the average downtown building.
- New infill construction with a setback that does not match that of adjacent buildings.
- Window size, shape, and rhythm that is not compatible with adjacent buildings.

Recommended



This addition is an example of new construction that is compatible with the adjacent historic building in both height and setback, and displays decorative features and window openings that reflect the historic character of the downtown.

Discouraged



This example of new construction in a historic downtown is incompatible with adjacent buildings in both height and setback.

PROJECT PARTNERS

This project was completed by the Center for Historic Preservation at Ball State University for the City of Noblesville, Indiana. The Center for Historic Preservation is the outreach arm of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation in the Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Planning.



CONTACT

Noblesville Department of Economic Development

City Hall

16 S. 10th Street, Suite 275

Noblesville, IN 46060

Phone: (317) 776-6345

Fax: (317) 770-1407