

# Design Guidelines for East Market Street

October 2014 | TOWN OF GEORGETOWN, DELAWARE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Title Page	1
2.	Table of Contents	2
3.	Acknowledgements	3
4.	Letter from Steering Committee	4
5.	Introduction	5
6.	Short History of Georgetown	7
7.	Design Theory	9
8.	Map Showing Boundaries of These District Guidelines	10
9.	Anatomy of a Main Street Building	11
10.	Where Do I Begin?	12
11.	Upper Facade & Cornice	14
12.	Storefront Entrances and Doors	16
13.	Storefronts	18
14.	Upper Story Windows	21
15.	Signage	23
16.	Awnings and Canopies	37
17.	Security	39
18.	Paint Colors	40
19.	Landscaping	42
20.	New Construction in Downtown Historic Districts	43
21.	Additions to Downtown Historic Buildings	44
22.	Glossary of Terms Used in These Guidelines	45
23.	Secretary of the Interior's Standards	48
24.	Bibliography and Resources	49
25.	Credits and Photo Credits	50



*"Market Street, Looking West," from 16 Miles From Anywhere: A History of Georgetown, Del. William J. Wade. Countian Press, 1975.*

*Cover Page Historic Photographs (clockwise from top left):*

- 1. "Market Street, Looking West," from 16 Miles From Anywhere: A History of Georgetown, Del. William J. Wade. Countian Press, 1975.*
  - 2. "Looking Toward the Circle on East Market," Ibid.*
  - 3. "Looking Toward the Railroad on East Market," Ibid.*
  - 4. "'The Crystal Restaurant,' East Market Street," in From Crossroads to County Seat: A Bicentennial Look at Georgetown, Delaware, 2007.*
  - 5. "Sussex Theatre on East Market Street, about 1930s (Courtesy of John Purnell)," Ibid.*
- Current photographs by R. Lindsey Uhl, March 2014.*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

Downtown Delaware provided a technical assistance grant to the Town of Georgetown to hire Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, to work with a Steering Committee to create these Design Guidelines. Steering Committee members reviewed drafts, wrote some sections of this report, found historic photographs of the downtown, and took contemporary photographs to illustrate the text.

## *Steering Committee for the Design Guidelines for Georgetown DE*

Sue Barlow, Council Member, Town of Georgetown

Linda Dennis, Council Member, Town of Georgetown

Gene Dvornick, Town Manager, Town of Georgetown

Eric Evans, Resident, Member – Board of Adjustment, Town of Georgetown

Andy Givens, Resident, downtown property owner

Jocelyn Godwin, Administrator, Planning and Zoning, Town of Georgetown

Rick Greenberg, Resident, downtown property owner

Chris Lecates, Resident, property owner, Member – Planning Commission, Town of Georgetown

Charles Mead-e, The Upper Crust, downtown business owner

Patrick Ryan, French & Ryan Architects, downtown business owner

## *Consultants*

Donna Ann Harris, Heritage Consulting Inc.

R. Lindsey Uhl, Heritage Consulting Inc. Intern

Laura DiPasquale, Designer, Heritage Consulting Inc.

# LETTER FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

---

Thank you for your interest and commitment to the East Market Street Business District.

These guidelines have been developed with the following in mind:

- Making the East Market Street Business Area attractive;
- Creating a sense of place – where people gather and enjoy the downtown; and
- Fostering a “Welcome Home” feeling – for residents and visitors alike.

These guidelines are applicable to new construction, and also for adding to the visual appeal of existing structures, and should be viewed as a reference for developers, building owners, tenants and Town Staff.

These Design Standards combined with smart business development, appropriate marketing, quality branding and a welcoming presentation, all work together to help maintain the integrity and vitality of our downtown.

Whether interested in coming to the downtown, or already here, we hope you find these guidelines a useful tool.



# INTRODUCTION

---

Though unique to Sussex County, the Town of Georgetown has a downtown similar to many small towns across America. Over the years, as the community grew, many of the services and businesses located in the downtown area slowly disappeared.

Efforts to refocus on the downtown began in late 2012. In early 2013, the Town Council passed Resolution (2013-01), authorizing participation in the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO)'s Downtown Delaware Commercial District Affiliate Program, with a focus on revitalization of the commercial district, increased entrepreneurship and innovation, and enhancement of quality of place.

In September 2013 the Town Council passed Resolution (2013-05) creating a Historic District Study Committee for the purpose of reviewing permitted uses in the Historic District; Design Standards for building materials within the Historic District; and the feasibility of expanding of the Historic District.



*Aerial view of the Circle, circa 1975, from Remember When... A Hundred Years of Pictorial History of Georgetown, Delaware. Marceline, MO: Heritage House Publishing, 1999*

The information presented in these Design Guidelines complements other initiatives within the Town, specifically the Blueprint Communities and Downtown Merchant Association.

These design guidelines are a result of a six-month committee process funded by Downtown Delaware.

---

## *What are design guidelines?*

Design Guidelines address appearance issues that business and property owners face in planning commercial and retail improvements. In general, they are intended to provide ideas, stimulate thinking, and promote good design among the many participants in downtown revitalization. They address the physical aspects of supporting a healthy downtown district through storefront design and building maintenance. By establishing these guidelines, the Town of Georgetown encourages several important public and private objectives.

Design guidelines are meant to provide easily understandable and practical advice for property owners and tenants who wish to make changes to their buildings. According to the National Park Service, design guidelines “provide a basis for making fair decisions, consistency in design review, offer incentives for increased investment, property value enhancement, and a tool to educate people.”

It is the intent of these design guidelines, for East Market Street from The Circle to Layton Avenue in Georgetown, (with potential expansion into other areas in town), to:

- Improve the quality of physical alterations to downtown buildings.
- Enhance the quality of the pedestrian experience in a downtown district by providing a pleasant shopping experience for residents and customers.
- Enhance economic investment for business and property owners.
- Protect and conserve neighborhood architectural character.
- Promote community awareness of the physical environment, and
- Encourage flexible and individual creativity rather than anonymous uniformity.

General guidance on preservation for property owners can be found online:

*The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties With Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings* <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-guidelines.pdf>

# SHORT HISTORY OF GEORGETOWN

---

Shortly after the boundary dispute between the heirs of William Penn and Lord Baltimore was settled in 1775, and Sussex County was expanded to its present borders, two petitions signed by the 979 inhabitants of Sussex County were presented to the General Assembly in hopes that the county seat would be removed from Lewes and be more centrally located.

On January 29, 1791, an act was passed authorizing the removal of the county seat from Lewes to a new site at “James Pettyjohn’s old field,” near the center of the county. The same act named George Mitchell, Robert Houston, William Moore, John Collins, Nathaniel Young, William Perry, Rhoads Shankland, Woodman Stockley, Daniel Polk, and Thomas Batson as commissioners and charged them to purchase up to 100 acres of land and construct a new courthouse and jail.

On May 9, 1791, the commissioners met at the house of Abraham Harris and negotiated the purchase of 50 acres from him, buying also 25 acres from Rowland Bevins and one acre from Joshua Pepper. Commissioner Rhoads Shankland began to survey “the town” the same day by laying out “a spacious square of 100 yards each way.” Eventually the town was laid out in a circle, one mile in diameter and centered on the original square surveyed by Shankland.



*“Judges, West Market – one of the original homes in Georgetown.” From 16 Miles From Anywhere: A History of Georgetown, Del. William J. Wade. Countian Press, 1975.*



*The Sussex County Courthouse, built in 1837, replaced the original frame structure that had served as the Courthouse since 1791. Courtesy of the Delaware Public Archives (DPA-10-1636P).*

As the commissioners had directed, a County Courthouse and Jail were built in the southeastern section of the town circle and as a result, the Seat of Justice was officially moved on October 26, 1791, and named Georgetown in honor of the lead commissioner, George Mitchell. The new county seat location proved a much better administrative center because of its strategic geographic setting. Georgetown is, in fact, said to be “sixteen miles from anywhere” in Sussex County.

Building upon its role as a county seat, new businesses were established on the Town’s primary streets—Bedford, Market, and The Circle. These businesses included stores, banks, hotels, and taverns. The early homes included varying styles: Greek Revival; Queen Anne; Italianate; Gothic Revival; and Colonial, many of which are well-maintained today.

During the Civil War, Delaware was a key border state where slavery was legal. There were varying sympathies among residents between the north and the south, and at times, there were northern and southern sympathizing militias practicing military exercises in the same field outside of Town. However, Delaware did not leave the Union and slavery was not ended until after the end of the Civil War.





*Railroad Ave and Market Street, Georgetown, Delaware. From 16 Miles From Anywhere: A History of Georgetown, Del. William J. Wade. Countian Press, 1975*

In 1869, the Delaware, Maryland and Virginia Railroads were extended to Georgetown. The railroad opened up opportunities for sale of many types of products, such as fresh fruit, and the establishment of several industrial canneries followed.

The mass production of chickens started in Sussex County in the 1920s, and the related poultry processing industry has grown to be a major part of the economy of Georgetown and surrounding areas. The Town has also grown commercially (particularly along Route 113) and residentially in many directions. Georgetown also has become a center for State government activities, and a hub for educational opportunities.

The Town became a crossroads for County residents— where residents paid their taxes, bought and sold goods, and exchanged information. The center of all Town activity is still heavily concentrated on The Circle, where Town Hall, the County’s Administrative Offices, and the Old Courthouse built in 1839 are

located. “The Circle” is listed in the National Historic Register of Historic Places.

Unique to Georgetown is “Return Day,” an event that evolved from this historical exchange of information. Two days after the biennial General Election, Sussex County residents gather in Georgetown to hear the town crier announce the election results from the courthouse steps. The winning and losing candidates parade around The Circle - together - in open, horse-drawn carriages (housed at the Nutter D. Marvel Museum in Georgetown,) and ceremonially “bury the hatchet” amid much celebration and feasting on ox roast sandwiches.

Today, the tradition continues and Return Day remains integral to the character of Georgetown, has been declared a holiday for all State and County workers in Sussex County, and is recognized by the United States Congress as a “Local Legacy.”



*“Mabel Lambden, Herman Roach and Harry Veasey look like they had a terrific time as part of the parade (1950). (Courtesy of The Sussex Countian),” in From Crossroads to County Seat: A Bicentennial Look at Georgetown, Delaware, 2007.*

Source: “Blueprint Community Report,” February 1, 2013, Georgetown DE, and Greater Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, History of Georgetown.

<http://www.georgetowncoc.com/discover-georgetown/history-heritage>



# DESIGN THEORY

---

## *Why good design makes downtowns stronger*

The physical design of a downtown district contributes greatly to the overall image of the community. Each downtown has its own unique cultural qualities to attract residents, customers and visitors. The distinctive characteristics of buildings of varying ages make Georgetown's downtown interesting and enjoyable for both visitors and residents.

Along East Market Street from The Circle to Layton Avenue, buildings built in the 19th century exist alongside those built in the mid-20th century. In some cases, commercial structures started as residences and were later converted into shops. Thus, building features from one period were reconfigured to that of another, simply to keep up with the architectural fashion of the time. If the resulting appearances shows quality craftsmanship and are pleasing in proportion, composition, and details, then the façade is a valuable visual resource for the downtown. Thoughtful design improvements should reinforce the positive identity of a community's retail core and create a "sense of place" that is distinct to Georgetown as a whole.



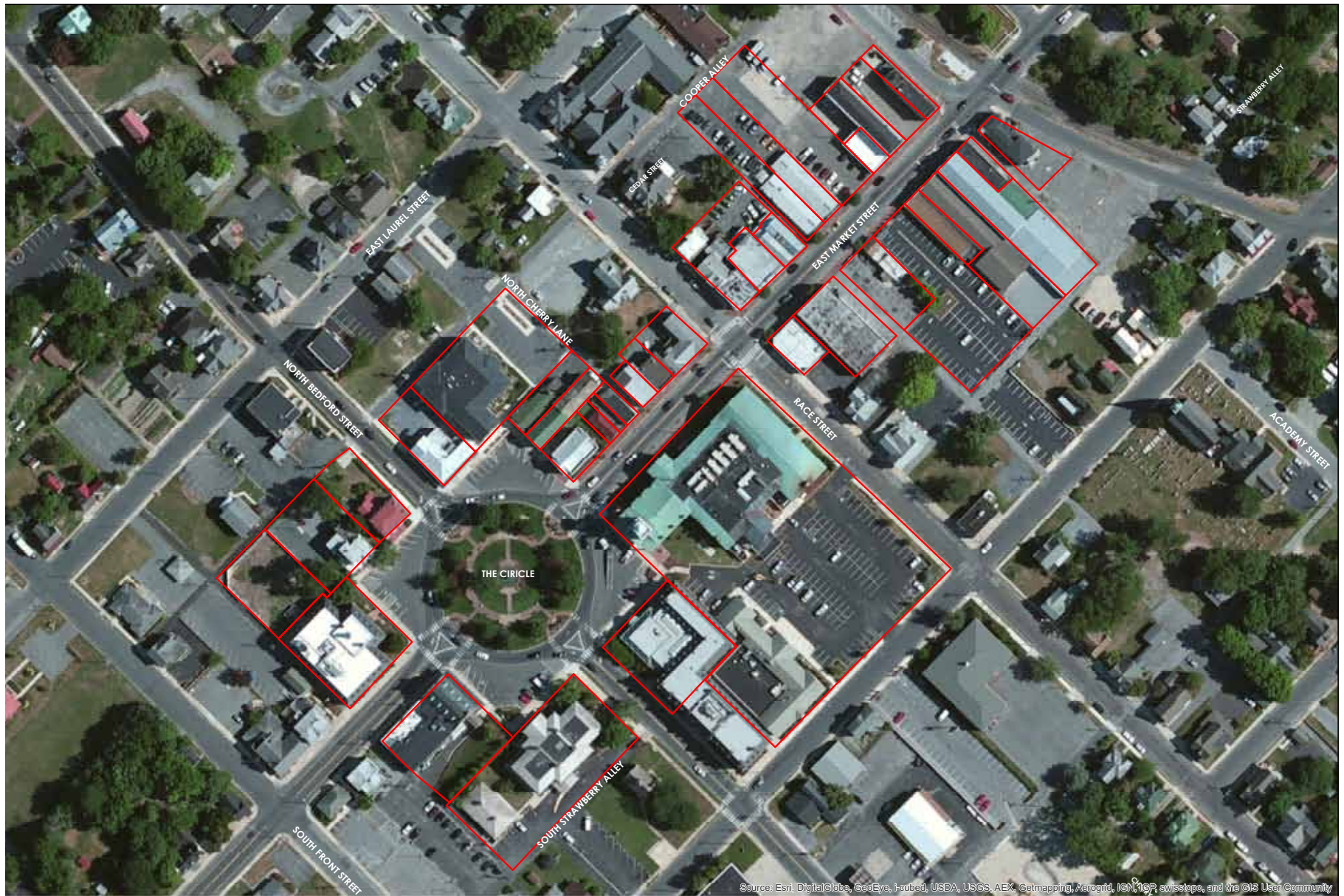
*Downtown Georgetown as it appeared in the early to mid-20th century, looking east down Market Street. Courtesy of the Delaware Public Archives (DPA-C+T133).*



*The Georgetown Antique Market is an excellent example of a downtown building that retains its historic appearance, utilizes appropriate colors, signage and awnings, and has been adapted to suit a modern use.*

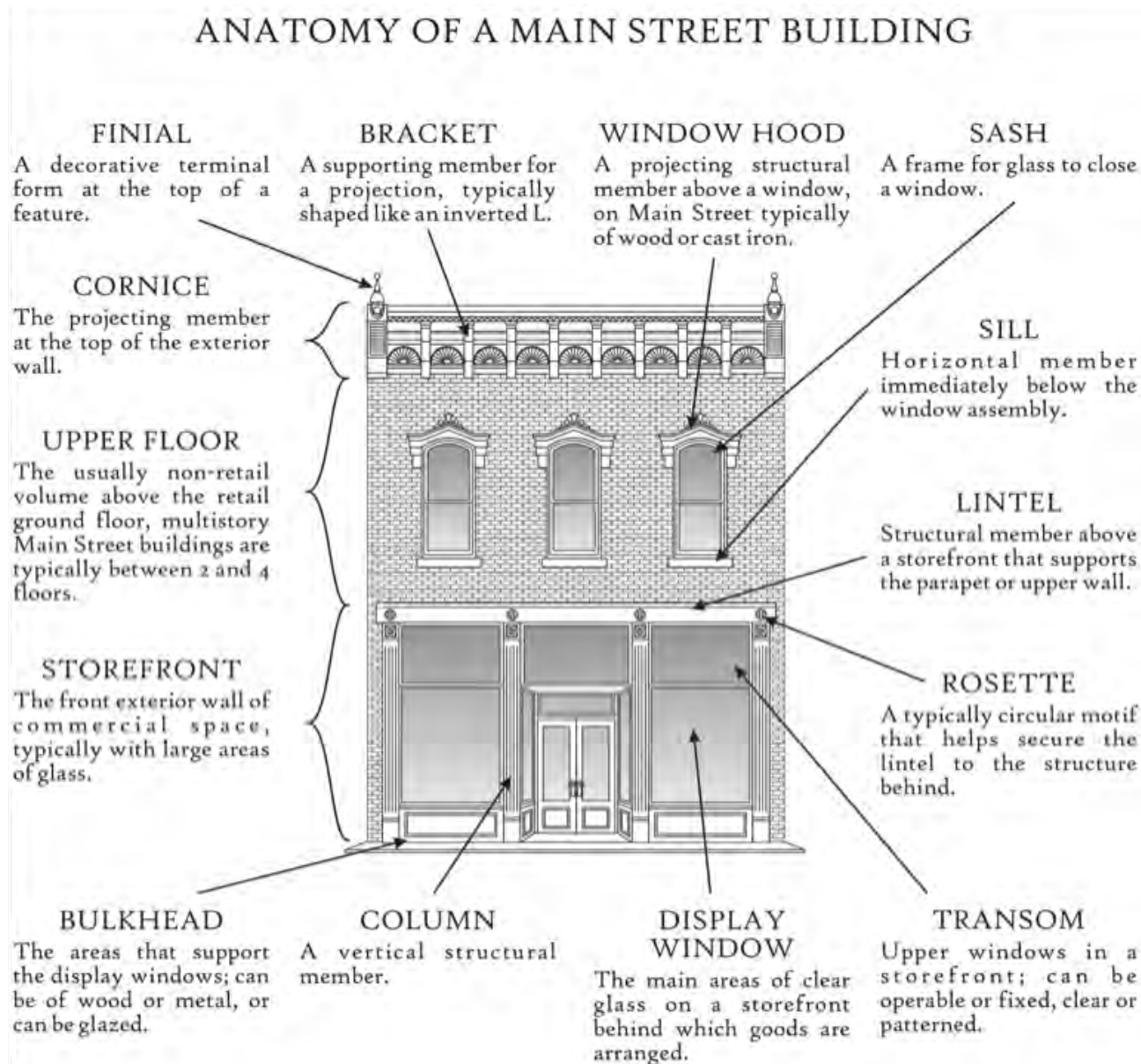


# MAP OF DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



© source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, AeroGRID, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

# ANATOMY OF A MAIN STREET BUILDING



Source: "Anatomy of a Main Street Building," Illinois Main Street [http://www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Documents/bldg\\_anatomy.pdf](http://www.illinois.gov/ihpa/Preserve/Documents/bldg_anatomy.pdf)



# WHERE TO BEGIN

---

## *Step 1: Evaluate your building's appearance*



It is important to take a good look at your building before proposing alterations to its exterior. Consider the windows, doors, and detailing. Note the entire façade, including the upper stories as well as the storefront. A successful improvement strategy is one that treats the building as a whole and does not neglect the upper floors. Remember that storefronts should be viewed as one part of an entire building. The goal is to achieve a visually distinct facade that relates to its surroundings and provides a sense of cohesiveness in the downtown without strict uniformity.

## *Step 2: Consult historic photographs*

Historic photographs provide an invaluable source of information concerning the past appearance of the buildings in downtown Georgetown. Construction details, as well as signs and awnings may be visible so that the property owner and their architect can make judgments about replacing missing elements or restoring the building. Consult the Delaware Public Archives, the Nutter D. Marvel Museum, The Georgetown Historical Society and books about the history of Georgetown to search for images of your building before making rehabilitation or restoration plans.



*"Harvey's Mens Wear, now Givens' Flower Shop. (Courtesy of the Sussex Countian)," from From Crossroads to County Seat: A Bicentennial Look at Georgetown, Delaware, 2007.*

## *Step 3: Evaluate your building's surroundings*

A high level of upkeep always strengthens the image of a downtown district. If the downtown is clean, safe and attractive, people will be more likely to shop there. Well-maintained banners, hanging flower baskets, trees, and flowers around trees or in sidewalk planters, give the impression that downtown property owners and local government care about the image of the downtown. Sidewalk maintenance is the responsibility of the property owner whose property is immediately adjacent to it. The sidewalk should be kept free of debris and washed regularly. Trash generated by the store should be kept in enclosed areas at the rear of the building and must be easily serviced by trash collection trucks.



---

## *Step 4: Establish a maintenance schedule, make needed repairs*

All buildings in downtown Georgetown require regular maintenance every year. Maintenance is a voluntary stewardship action that ensures that the owner's investment in his or her property is protected. Maintenance is fundamentally a preservation activity. Without regular maintenance, buildings show signs of decay that can lead to instability or, if neglected for a long period, may have deteriorated to the point of demolition. Typical signs of neglect include: peeling paint; missing shingles; downspouts that are broken or leaking; rotted wood; leaky gutters; and brick or masonry with open joints. If these problems remain untreated, they can create structural damage to foundations or walls, and can be expensive to repair. The best way to prevent large repair bills is to regularly inspect your building and make repairs while they are small and less costly.

We urge property owners to voluntarily maintain your building in good condition by making sure that it can shed water, as this is the main cause of structural instability. Water can penetrate buildings from the roof, walls and up through the ground. Water can seep in from the roofs or flashing, broken water conduction systems (gutters and downspouts), and rising dampness can be highly damaging to building materials. The best guidance is to take steps to keep water out and moisture away.

*Each building owner should voluntarily adopt a cyclical maintenance program with these goals:*

1. Establish a regular inspection and maintenance routine for your building. The goal is to identify calendar months in which inspection and repairs will occur. The National Park Service's Preservation Brief #47 on Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings by Sharon C. Park, FAIA is a practical guide for historic property owners who want general guidance on maintenance. <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/47-maintaining-exterior.htm>
2. Identify problems early. Regular inspection will help you to see where deterioration is occurring and to take steps before it is too late and repairs are costly.
3. Establish priorities for spending dollars. If there are limited funds for repair, the inspection will tell you where to concentrate your repairs.
4. Keep water out and moisture away from the building. Always seek to identify the source of water getting into the building and solve that problem first before making other repairs. In other words, if there is a water stain on the ceiling, fix the problem outside before making cosmetic improvements to the inside.

# UPPER FACADE & CORNICE

**Objective:** Use the architectural features of the entire building to provide guidance for the design of the storefront. Incorporate the upper floors in any façade improvement plans.



*Respect the entire downtown district by assessing the context of your building in the surrounding streetscape, and ask, “how does my particular building work in the street?”*



*Preserve and restore historical features of the upper facade and cornice.*



*Retain any historic cornice. Keep upper story masonry, wood and metal cornice or parapet treatments intact.*

## *Recommended*

- Respect the entire downtown district by assessing the context of your building in the surrounding streetscape – ask, “how does my particular building work in the street?”
- Preserve and restore historical features of the upper façade and cornice. Repair the upper façade with material that is the same as, or that complements the existing construction.
- Retain any historic cornice. Keep upper story masonry, wood and metal cornice or parapet treatments intact. Decorative cornices and parapets in downtown Georgetown are important to preserve. If they are deteriorated, they should be repaired rather than removed.
- Masonry buildings that are already painted should continue to be painted. Removing paint from masonry is costly, but permitted. Work with your contractor to carefully evaluate the masonry and determine the best method to be used to clean it. Brick was often painted in the past to hide alterations, and removing the paint can expose mismatched brick or other imperfections. If paint removal is desired, work with your contractor and require a test patch first to make sure that the masonry is not damaged in the cleaning process.
- When repointing, match the width and profile of existing mortar joints. Use the same tooling pattern as the original joints. Have your contractor match the color and texture of the new mortar to the existing mortar. Mortar gets its color from the sand used, so choose sand that is comparable in color and texture to the grain used in the original mortar when repointing.
- If you need to replace damaged brick, stone, or other materials such as Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass), work with your contractor to replace in kind, so that the new units match the existing in color, texture and size.
- Preserve original wood siding to the extent possible. If siding is damaged, consider replacing only those boards or pieces that are deteriorated beyond repair with new boards to match the existing in texture, size and profile.
- Use exterior lighting to accentuate the architectural features of the building.

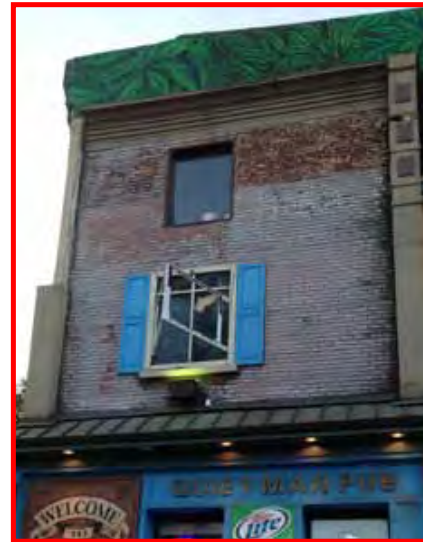


Red box indicates  
not recommended

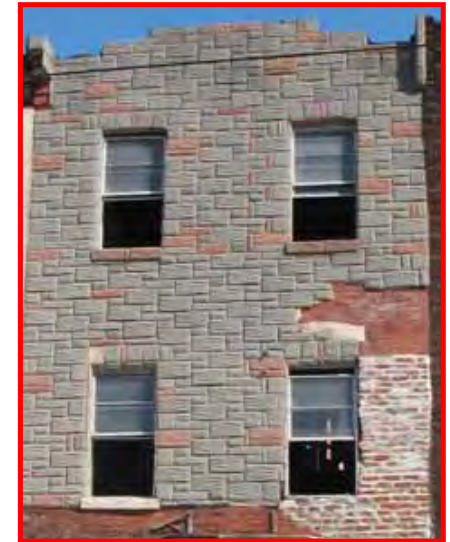
## UPPER FACADE & CORNICE

### *Not Recommended*

- Covering any part of the building façade with aluminum, stucco, false-brick, T1-11 siding, vinyl siding, HardiPlank, Dryvit, veneer, or any other sheet material.
- Removing an historic cornice, whether made of wood or metal.
- Using materials or adding details that simulate a history other than that of the original building. Avoid adding cornices, brackets, window trim, balconies or bay windows to the upper façade, unless historic photographs or other evidence show that these features once existed.
- Creating windowless blank walls or destroying original architectural detail.
- Removing existing quality materials and details from a building.
- Painting brick, stone, tile, stucco or molded concrete block if they have never been painted before, as these unpainted elements have a natural or man-made finish that is important to preserve.
- Resist the temptation to clean historic masonry, such as brick and stone. Keep in mind that older unpainted brick and stone acquire a “patina” over many years that become part of their character. Cleaning a masonry building is not usually necessary for its preservation, and it can cause harm if not done correctly.
- Sandblasting and harsh chemicals are harmful when used to remove paint or dirt from any masonry surface to masonry and brick and are not permitted in downtown Georgetown.
- Allowing new mortar to “feather edge” onto the face of the adjacent bricks.
- Creating the mismatched appearance of brick, stone or Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass), when replacing damaged units.
- Removing original wood trim features from the building. If a trim piece (such as a bracket or molding) is extremely deteriorated, it can be replaced to match with a new piece that has the same visual appearance. A woodworking shop can duplicate decorative wood elements to match the existing.



*Avoid removing or cover over a historic cornice, whether made of wood or metal.*



*Avoid covering any part of the building facade with aluminum, stucco, false-brick, vinyl siding, veneer, or any other sheet material.*



*Avoid creating windowless, blank walls by destroying or covering original architectural details.*



# STOREFRONT ENTRANCES & DOORS

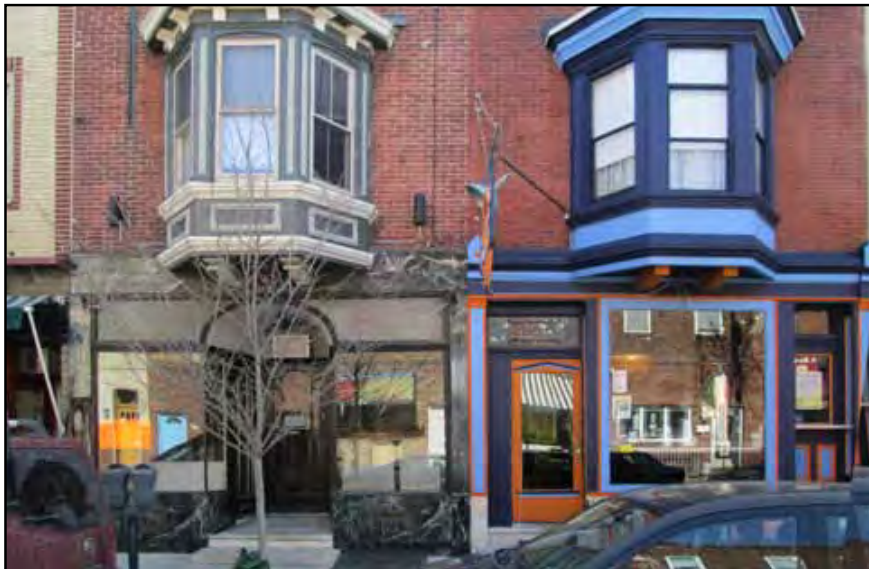
Objective: Make storefront entrances obvious and welcoming.



Utilize doors with glass to promote visibility and position doors and windows in logical locations to make entrances obvious and welcoming.



Choose a door that is compatible in scale, material and shape with the overall facade if a replacement is required.



Use store entrance doors that contain a lot of glass so the shopper can see the items inside. Repair any existing tile work or decorative terrazzo flooring on the exterior entrance flooring.

## Recommended

- Maintain historic doors, their hardware and framing to the greatest extent possible.
- If original doors are missing, research old photographs of the building and the downtown to determine the type or style that was used historically. If no evidence exists, choose a replacement that is appropriate for the age and style of the building.
- Retain original door locations, particularly on the main façade. If interior remodeling or handicapped access means that an entry will no longer be used, leave the door and its features intact on the outside.
- Keep original entry features such as door sidelights and overhead transoms.
- Use store entrance doors that contain a lot of glass so the shopper can see the items inside.
- Doors with glass also encourage shopper safety by promoting visibility.
- Choose a door that is compatible in scale, material and shape with the overall façade if a replacement is required.
- Repair any existing tile work, or decorative terrazzo flooring on the exterior entrance flooring.
- Implement improvements according to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards for handicapped accessibility.



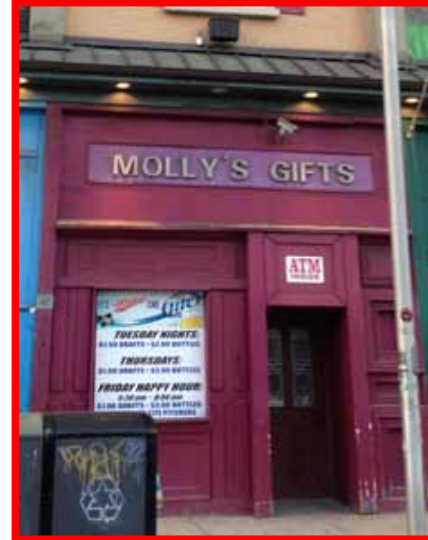


Red box indicates not recommended

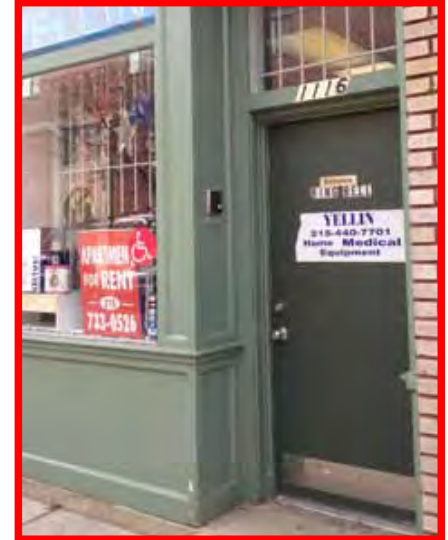
# STOREFRONT ENTRANCES & DOORS

## Not Recommended

- Filling in any door(s) with any material.
- Adding sidelights and transoms to doorways that never had them.
- Adding “faux colonial” features or doors that have an abundance of stained or leaded glass.
- Using doors that are opaque or that include no glass. Doors that are more suited to residential use should be avoided for commercial entrances.
- Pulling back the entrances from the building façade. This takes away precious retail space and creates unusable outdoor space that often collects rubbish and provides space for loitering.
- Setting store merchandise behind one door of a double door entrance.
- Closing a part of an entrance or making the entrance door smaller than the original door.
- Use of slippery materials on walking surfaces.
- Removing historic tile work, decorative terrazzo or other flooring features in the entrance to the storefront.
- Making entrances complicated or difficult to get through by crowding them with merchandise.
- Adding shutters to doors, as these were not used historically.
- Narrow or medium style aluminum doors and frames.
- Curtain wall construction.



Avoid pulling back the entrances from the building façade, and making the entrance door smaller than the original door.



Avoid using doors that are opaque or that include no glass.



Avoid adding “faux colonial” features or doors that have an abundance of stained or leaded glass.

# STOREFRONTS

**Objective:** Attract attention to the products or services within the store; lighting of storefront windows to make the street feel lively, inviting and secure.



Retain existing large historic storefront windows, their hardware, and framing, as they provide the maximum visibility into the storefront.



Use clear glass for easy viewing into the storefront.



Use windows to display merchandise by using the full extent of the glass, and change the display often to keep shoppers interested.

## *Recommended*

- Storefronts that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
- Retain existing large historic storefront windows, their hardware, and framing, as they provide the maximum visibility into the storefront.
- Keep traditional storefronts as transparent as possible and retain the existing glass storefront windows whenever possible. If window glazing is being replaced, make sure that the new windows are clear glass rather than tinted.
- Use clear glass for easy viewing into the storefront.
- Maintain existing architectural elements around the storefront windows.
- Bulkheads can be made of wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile or aluminum-clad plywood panels.
- Clean storefront glass regularly.
- Use windows to display merchandise by using the full extent of the glass.
- Make the storefront display exciting, fun, and original.
- Change the display often to keep shoppers interested and to continually draw in potential customers.
- Display small merchandise at the front of the window or at eye level.
- If an original storefront is missing altogether and an incompatible modern store front exists in its place, rehabilitation can follow one of these recommendations.
- Make cosmetic improvements: An incompatible storefront can often be improved with low-cost cosmetic solutions. Painting storefront materials such as window frames, cornices and bulkheads, to blend with the building, adding an awning to soften a harsh storefront, or re-opening windows that have been closed up are three low-cost modifications that can enhance the overall appearance of a storefront that has been changed.



# STOREFRONTS, CONT.



*If no historic photographs exist of a property, a new compatible storefront can be designed. The best solutions are those that use a simple and straightforward storefront design.*



*Light the storefront window internally, and keep the store front lights on during the early evening to show the store merchandise to potential customers. Shop fronts that are lit in the evening make the street feel lively, inviting, and more secure for pedestrians.*

## *Recommended*

- Reconstruct the missing storefront: This is possible when old photographs or physical evidence are used to carefully guide the reconstruction of the historic storefront design. New materials can be substituted for the old, but they should match the appearance of the historic material closely in photographs.
- Build a new storefront design: If no historic photos or physical evidence exists, a new compatible storefront can be designed. The best solutions are those that use a simple and straightforward storefront design that blends with the building in terms of form, style and material, but does not pretend to be a historic storefront.
- Light the storefront window internally, and keep the store front lights on during the early evening to show the store merchandise to potential customers. Shop fronts that are lit in the evening make the street feel lively, inviting and more secure for pedestrians.
- For further guidance consult Preservation Brief #11 “Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts,” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/11-storefronts.htm>



Red box indicates not recommended

# STOREFRONTS

## Not Recommended

- Adding features that would not have been used on storefronts historically, such as wood-shingled mansard coverings, novelty sidings, T1-11 siding or varnished wood storefronts
- Inappropriate historical theme designs that create a false sense of history, such as “wild west,” “colonial,” or “frontier” designs are prohibited
- Curtain wall construction
- Narrow or medium style aluminum doors
- Aluminum storefront assemblies
- Using of tinted, opaque or smoked glass in storefront windows
- Covering storefront windows with too much signage or attaching paper signs on the inside or outside of storefront windows
- Bulkheads made of fake brick, brick veneer, and gravel aggregates (such as Ambrico or EZ Wall thin brick systems)
- Use of ground floor window space for storage
- Cluttering window displays with too much merchandise or disorganized displays that prevent customers and pedestrians from seeing inside the store
- Keeping storefront display windows empty



Avoid covering any part of the building facade with aluminum, stucco, false-brick, vinyl siding, veneer, or any other sheet material.



Avoid removing or covering over a historic cornice, whether made of wood or metal.



Avoid covering storefront windows with too much signage or attaching paper signs on the inside or outside of storefront windows.

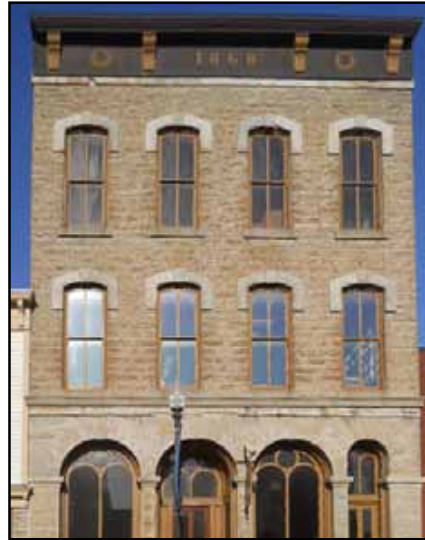


# UPPER STORY WINDOWS

**Objective:** Complement the historic storefronts with appropriate commercial or residential upper story windows and protect existing historic fabric.



Retain any upper story windows as windows, and re-open any windows that have been blocked in



Retain historic upper story windows, their hardware, and framing,

## Energy Conservation

For energy conservation, consider installing storm windows in the upper story windows or any on the first floor side elevations if they are non-storefront windows. Make sure that the muntins in storm windows line up with those on the historic window. A good solution is to use a full-view “invisible” storm that fits the opening exactly. Early storm windows were made of wood for exterior use, and these can still be ordered or custom made today. Aluminum storms are common, with pre-finished colors to match the window.



## Recommended

- Retain any upper story windows as windows, and re-open any windows that have been blocked in.
- Retain historic upper story windows, their hardware, and framing.
- Use the second and even third floor windows for displays (as appropriate).
- Retain any decorative features around upper story windows. If deteriorated, make repairs to decorative window hood molds (wood, brick, or metal features over the windows).
- If original upper story windows are missing, consult old photographs to determine the type or style that was used historically. If no evidence exists, choose a replacement that is appropriate for the age and style of the building. Seek guidance from Preservation Brief #9 “The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wooden-windows.htm>
- If a deteriorated upper story historic window is being replaced, the new window should replicate the appearance of the old as closely as possible, including number of panes of glass. If the original window has multiple panes (such as six over six lights), then the most authentic choice would be to use true divided lights (separate panes of glass) in the same pattern. Many companies today sell windows with the appearance of multiple panes of glass created by a grid laid over the window. If this is done, make sure that the grid’s muntins have three dimensions and are not laid flat against the glass or placed between layers of glass.
- The best choice for replacing a historic wood window is to use a new wooden window. Wood is extremely long lasting and a good insulator. The wood should be painted to protect it from the elements.
- If historic windows are completely missing, it may be acceptable to use an alternative window material, such as composite, aluminum, or aluminum-clad wood, if it can be affirmatively demonstrated that the appearance of the window will match the characteristics of a historic wood window.
- Make sure that replacement windows are sized to fit the entire opening. In particular, avoid installing windows that are too small for the opening, and then make them “fit” by filling in the gaps with other materials.



Red box indicates  
not recommended

## UPPER STORY WINDOWS

### *Not Recommended*

- Reducing window size to an area smaller than the original.
- Boarding up or closing upper story windows in any fashion.
- Vinyl windows that are inappropriate replacements for a historic building's windows.
- Use upper floor window space for storage.
- Adding picture windows, projecting bay windows, or greenhouse type windows on the main façade if none were there historically.
- Insert or pop-in muntins.
- Adding window shutters unless there is some evidence that they were used historically. If they are to be added, the best choice is to use shutters of wood or metal that has the appearance of painted wood. Make sure that the shutter is proportionate to the opening (in other words, if the shutters are closed they would fill the entire window opening).



*Avoid reducing window size to an area smaller than the original.*



*Avoid boarding up or closing upper story windows in any fashion.*



*Avoid window shutters unless there is some evidence that they were used historically. .*

# SIGNAGE

**Objective:** Communicate the name of a store and add visual interest to the streetscape experience.

This section on Signs has been prepared to help business owners and property owners, along with their sign makers, develop signs that meet the objectives of the Historic District Zoning Ordinance, and to facilitate the Planning Commission's implementation of the ordinance.

This document is intended to serve as a guide and is not regulatory. Note that all of the signs depicted here are considered to be high quality signs that conform to the goals of these guidelines.

The Town of Georgetown encourages signage within the Historic District that is handsome, distinctive, and creative. At the same time, it should also be pedestrian-oriented, restrained in character, and harmonious with the sensitive nature of the district. Large, bright, and conspicuous designs may be suitable on commercial corridors, such as DuPont Highway (Route 113), that are geared to motorists, but such designs are not appropriate within the downtown Historic District.

## *Signage Regulation in Georgetown*

All signs in the downtown Historic District must receive approval from the Planning Commission before beginning construction.

- Signage in the Downtown Historic District must adhere to the following requirements:
  - Town of Georgetown DE, Chapter 230. Zoning Article XVIII, HD Historic District Zoning,
  - Town of Georgetown DE, Chapter 230 Zoning, Article XXII Signs, § 230-173, Signs permitted in HD Districts, and
  - Town of Georgetown DE Development Design Standards.
- Many sign types are prohibited in all districts in Georgetown, see Town of Georgetown DE Chapter 230 Zoning, Article XXII Signs, § 230-175, Prohibited Signs.
- For a list of signs that are permitted in all districts in Georgetown see § 230-176, Signs permitted in all districts. And for general regulations about signs in all districts, see § 230-177, Sign regulations for all districts.

These guidelines are provided to help clarify the intent of the Historic District Ordinance. The Planning Commission may stipulate requirements that are stricter than the Sign Ordinance. Because every building and every application is unique, these guidelines do not specify precise expectations. Rather, the Planning Commission uses its reasonable judgment in applying them.



*The signage for the building above is appropriate in size and material, compatible in color to the building, and utilizes attractive lighting.*



# SIGNAGE, CONT.

---

The Planning Commission does not have purview over the specific words or message of a sign. Where terms such as “should,” “appropriate,” “encouraged,” “desirable” and “preferred” are used, the Planning Commission may require conformance with the provision to the extent that it is applicable, practical and reasonable in a given situation.

The signs depicted in this section illustrate “quality signage,” though each individual sign does not necessarily exemplify all of the desirable features that are discussed in this document.

## *Overview of Signage*

The following aspects of a sign are subject to review by the Planning Commission:

- A. OVERALL DESIGN
- B. SIGN LOCATION
- C. SIZE AND SHAPE
- D. COLORS
- E. SIGN ILLUMINATION
- F. MATERIALS
- G. TYPEFACES
- H. BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNS
- I. PROJECTING SIGNS
- J. AWNING AND CANOPY SIGNS
- K. WINDOW SIGNS
- L. FREESTANDING SIGNS



*Pedestrian scale signage, and signage that is harmonious with the character of the building with which it is associated, in terms of form, design, scale, and proportion is encouraged.*

# SIGNAGE: (A) OVERALL DESIGN



*Historically significant signs should be retained, repaired, and reused.*



*High quality designs and materials should be used.*

## *Recommended*

- Historically significant signs should be retained, repaired, and reused. For advice, please review Preservation Brief #25 “The Preservation of Historic Signs.” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/25-signs.htm>
- Pedestrian scaled signage that is consistent in scale with other signs on the downtown historic district and that compliments the building’s architecture.
- Signage that is harmonious with the character of the building with which it is associated, in terms of form, design, scale, and proportion, keeping the pedestrian in mind.
- Understated Signage is encouraged. Creative but appropriate use of signage on historic buildings can lend interest and liveliness to the streetscape. Buildings that are architecturally or historically significant, however, should have signs that are somewhat understated to allow the building to be the primary visual element.
- Simple and legible sign design.
- High quality of design and materials.
- Reuse of existing vintage signs. These can create a memorable image for a new business. Reuse of existing historic signs can create a sense of longevity and permanence for a business, even if it is new in downtown Georgetown.

# SIGNAGE: (B) SIGN LOCATION



Commercial buildings typically have a long, thin area above the storefront where a sign would be traditionally located.




The appropriate zone for signage is generally above the storefront windows and below the sills of the second floor windows.

## Recommended

- Signs should be mounted in such a way so as to minimize damage to historic materials.
- On masonry buildings, it is preferable that bolts extend through mortar joints rather than through masonry units.
- Generally, the appropriate zone for signage, including the brackets for projecting signs, is above the storefront windows and below the sills under the second floor windows.
- Commercial buildings typically have a long, thin (typically less than three feet wide) area above the storefront where a sign would be traditionally located. This is an appropriate location today for signage. Large display windows also provide an appropriate location for signage.
- Building mounted signage is more pedestrian oriented than free-standing signs.
- Free-standing signs within a historic district should be carefully designed, located, and scaled in order that they do not undermine the scale and character of the district.
- Where multiple signs are used on one site, they should be compatible with one another and part of an overall sign plan for the building.

## Not Recommended

 Red box indicates not recommended

- Covering building elements such as windows and cornices with signs.
- It is preferable that freestanding signage not be used but it is allowed if there is sufficient space and it is desired by the applicant.



Covering building elements such as windows is discouraged, as is using paper signage.



# SIGNAGE: (C) SIZE AND SHAPE



*Ground signs are more pedestrian oriented when they are small and vertical.*



*Signs in the Historic District should be scaled and oriented to relate to pedestrians as well as passing motorists.*



*While most signs are rectangular, non-rectangular shapes add variety and interest and can be appropriate, where rationalized by the nature of the business.*

## *Recommended*

- Signs within the historic district should be significantly smaller than those situated on highways and strip shopping centers.
- Signs in the Historic District should be scaled and oriented to relate to pedestrians, as well as passing motorists.
- Projecting, flush-mounted and window signs are appropriate for historic buildings in Georgetown.
- Signs appropriate for historic buildings often take cues from the building itself. Signs should be sized to the scale of the building, the storefront, and the street.
- Generally, wall signs should not exceed one square foot in area for each linear foot of building frontage nor two feet in height.
- Generally, detached ground signs should not exceed ten square feet or eight feet in height, though smaller signs are preferable.
- Wall signs are typically horizontal and projecting signs are typically vertical.
- Ground signs are more pedestrian oriented when they are small and vertical.
- Most signs are rectangular. Non-rectangular shapes add variety and interest and can be appropriate, but use of strange or highly irregular shapes, where not rationalized by the nature of the business, should be avoided.

# SIGNAGE: (D) COLOR



Colors for signs should be chosen to complement the color of the building



With a dark background, gold leaf can bring much beauty to a sign.



The use of high intensity color palettes is discouraged.

## Recommended

- Colors for signs should be chosen to complement the color of the building.
- In general it is best to use no more than three colors on a sign: one for the background, one for the lettering, and a third color for accent (such as for borders, motifs, logos or shading). A fourth color might be used for illustrations if applicable. It is preferred that dark or medium colors be used for the main, background part of the sign and that light colors be used for the lettering. Many signs use gold leaf for lettering. With a dark background, gold leaf can bring much beauty to a sign.
- Use of the following colors is encouraged for signage:
  - Nature blending colors
  - Earth tone colors
  - Neutral colors
  - Pastel colors
- The following colors are generally best limited to accent areas:
  - Bright colors
  - Primary colors
  - Metallic colors
- Suggested background colors are:
  - Burgundy red
  - Forest green
  - Chocolate brown
  - Black
  - Charcoal
  - Navy blue
- Suggested letter colors are:
  - Ivory
  - White
  - Gold

## Not Recommended



Red box indicates not recommended

- Colors on signs that clash with the historic building.
- Using long, complicated messages.
- Reflective signs and illuminated signs.
- Use of the following color palettes is discouraged:
  - High intensity or saturated colors
  - Fluorescent colors
  - Neon colors
  - “Day glow” colors
- Use of white or light colors for the background is discouraged, especially for larger signs.



# SIGNAGE: (E) SIGN ILLUMINATION



Gooseneck lights provide a good source of indirect lighting for building signage.

## Recommended

- Lighting is an important factor in a sign's character.
- Illuminated signs shall use an indirect lighting method, such as overhead or gooseneck lights.
- Often street lights or other area lights provide sufficient lighting, such that the sign need not be lit at all.
- For signs that are externally lit, the light housing should not obscure important features of the building.
- Signs may be externally illuminated by one or more shielded, stationery bulbs projecting onto the sign.
- Neon signs, exposed tubes filled with a gas that glows when electrified, are permitted if located behind the storefront glass.
- Where there is a need for changing advertising, portable signage may be a good solution like an A frame or chalk board.




Internally lit signs are prohibited on the exterior of buildings in the historic district because they create a plastic feel.



Flashing signs of any kind and time period are prohibited.

## Not Recommended

 Red box indicates not recommended

- Flashing signs of any kind and time period are prohibited.
- Internally lit signs, fluorescent lighting or spotlights are prohibited for signs on the exterior of buildings in the historic district. The plastic feel of internally illuminated signs is inappropriate in a historic district.
- Neon lighting for signs on the exterior of buildings is discouraged.
- Use of changeable copy signs is strongly discouraged.
- Electronic message signs are highly inappropriate in a historic district



# SIGNAGE: (F) MATERIALS



Signs in the Historic District should have a “solid” feel rather than a “plastic” feel. Metal and wood are traditional materials that are appropriate for historic buildings.

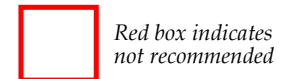
## *Recommended*

- Metal and wood are traditional materials that are appropriate for historic buildings. Attractive signs are made of cedar, redwood and mahogany (though teak, cypress and others are sometimes used). These woods are resistant to rot and decay and take paint and varnish well.
- Various newer synthetic products achieve the desired look of hand-crafted traditional signage. Urethane, a synthetic material, is used increasingly. It is durable and easy to work, and, when painted, it resembles wood.
- Materials should have a matte finish.
- Signs should have a “solid” feel rather than a “plastic” feel.



Signs made of sheet plastic and other thin, flimsy materials, or those which have reflective or translucent finishes are discouraged.

## *Not Recommended*



- Signs made of:
  - Sheet plastic
  - Plastic substrates
  - Interior grade wood
  - Unfaced plywood
  - Plastic in its entirety
- Signs that use reflective or translucent finishes

# SIGNAGE: (G) TYPEFACES



Carefully select typefaces that are harmonious with the building and nature of the business.



Simple graphics are recommended to encourage readability and ease of identification.

## *Recommended*

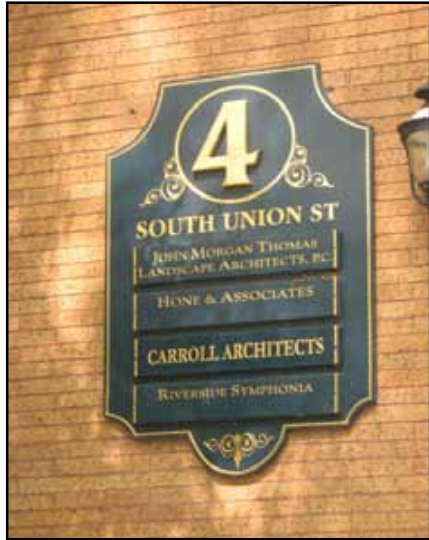
- A sign utilizing easily recognized symbols and clear, crisp lettering. This will identify a business or activity effectively and will enhance and complement the general appearance of the street.
- Carefully selected typefaces that are harmonious with the building and nature of the business.
- Generally use no more than two lettering styles, to increase legibility.
- Simple graphics to encourage readability and ease of identification.
- Symbol signs. These are especially effective.
- Signs with fewer words, this is more effective in conveying store or businesses message.



Utilize easily recognized symbols and clear, crisp lettering.



# SIGNAGE: (H) BUILDING MOUNTED SIGNAGE



Group multi-tenant signs and unify the graphic design or use a building directory.



Generally, the appropriate zone for signage is above the storefront windows and below the sills of the second floor windows.



Avoid signs that obscure architectural features, including windows.

## *Recommended*

- Building mounted signs – including wall signs, projecting signs, awning signs, and canopy signs – should be located in the most appropriate location on the building. There is frequently a horizontal band or panel, or an open section on the wall that is clearly the most logical location for a sign.
- Generally, the appropriate zone for signage, including the brackets for projecting signs, is above the storefront windows and below the sills under the second floor windows.
- It may be appropriate to place an understated wall sign identifying a building on the band under the cornice (uppermost crown) at the top of a multistory building.
- Window signage on upper stories, advertising businesses located on the upper stories, is appropriate provided it is not unduly prominent.
- Signs should be placed where they respect an existing sign line established by the signs on adjacent establishments.
- Wall signs should be affixed to the building, parallel to the building with one face showing.
- Group multi-tenant signs and unify the graphic design or use a building directory.

## *Not Recommended*



Red box indicates not recommended

- Signs that obscure any architectural features, including the windows, of the building.
- Using many signs that are confusing to read – use one or two signs.
- Paper window signs that are attached to the inside or outside of the window glass and that cover more than 15% of the window area.
- Roofs signs. These are highly inappropriate, except on one story buildings where there are few. Otherwise, signage placed above the second floor sills is discouraged, but may be approved if the design is suitably understated and is compatible with the building



# SIGNAGE: (I) PROJECTING SIGNS



Projecting signs should be mounted so as not to impede any pedestrians walking on the sidewalk.

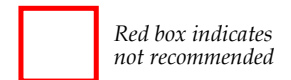


Projecting signs should be placed perpendicular to the building and should have two faces.

## *Recommended*

- Projecting signs should be placed perpendicular to the building and should have two faces.
- Projecting, flush-mounted and window signs that are mounted so as to not impede any pedestrians walking on the sidewalk.
- Projecting signs that are vertical rather than horizontal in form.
- Sign brackets made of painted wood or pre-finished, pre-painted metal.
- Guy wires, if needed, should be as inconspicuous as possible.
- Temporary signs such as a banner, flag, pennant, feather sign, balloon or windblown display are permitted.
- Banners or flags that say “OPEN” are permitted and should be mounted so as to not impede any pedestrians walking on the sidewalk.

## *Not Recommended*



- Using large projecting signs that are secured onto a building by metal armatures.
- Feather signs mounted on the sidewalk, impeding pedestrians
- “Vertical hotdog” (inflatable) signs are also prohibited except for temporary use.



Avoid using large projecting signs that are secured onto a building by metal armatures.

# SIGNAGE: (J) AWNING AND CANOPY SIGNS

---



Lettering should be limited to the name of the store and street number.



Lettering should be placed on the front valence.

## *Recommended*

- Lettering should be placed on the front valence and on the side panels if these are installed.
- Limit the lettering to the name of the store and street number.
- See the section on awnings below regarding materials, placement and size.



# SIGNAGE: (K) WINDOW SIGNS

---



Window signs may be painted onto the window.



Window signs should cover a minimal area so as not to block the view into the establishment or appear cluttered or chaotic.

## *Recommended*

- Window signs may be painted on, attached to, or suspended behind the window.
- There should be a minimal area covered – under 15%—so that the signage does not block the view into the establishment nor appear to be cluttered or chaotic.
- It is best that lettering be placed either at the top and/or bottom of the window, or centered in the window.



Window signs may be suspended behind the window.



# SIGNAGE: (L) FREESTANDING SIGNS



Only one A-Frame board sign is permitted for each business in the district. Follow Georgetown DE Zoning Regulations for guidance.



Freestanding signs should be supported by two wood, metal, or granite posts that generally are square in cross section.

## Recommended

- Use of building signage is preferred in the Historic District but freestanding signs may be used if desired by the applicant.
- Freestanding signs should be small in area and low in height to reinforce the pedestrian character of the district.
- Larger freestanding signs should be further set back from the sidewalk in order not to overwhelm the pedestrian.
- Freestanding signs should be supported by two wood, metal, or granite posts that, generally, are square in cross section.
- A freestanding sign may be hung from a bar cantilevered off of one post.
- Only one A-Frame/Sandwich Board sign is permitted for each business. Follow the guidelines in Town of Georgetown DE Chapter 230 Zoning, Article XXII Signs for specific details.




Avoid large signs that disrupt the pedestrian character of the district.



Avoid blocking the sidewalk with large freestanding signs.

## Not Recommended

 Red box indicates not recommended

- Large pylon type signs.
- Use of round steel poles to hold signs up.

This section on signs was modeled on Rochester NH Historic District Sign Guidelines.

[http://www.rochesternh.net/sites/rochesternh/files/file/file/historic\\_district\\_guidelines\\_-\\_signage\\_april\\_2010.pdf](http://www.rochesternh.net/sites/rochesternh/files/file/file/historic_district_guidelines_-_signage_april_2010.pdf)

# AWNINGS & CANOPIES

**Objective:** Add an exterior building element that serves a practical purpose and enhances a store's appearance.



Consider using retractable awnings.



Canvas is the most appropriate awning material for the historic district.



Let the design of the building determine the number of awnings to be used. Fit window awnings within the window opening so that architectural details are not covered up.

## Recommended

- Assess your storefront for the appropriateness of an awning.
- Consider using retractable awnings.
- Use larger awnings to provide a covered place for outdoor merchandise display and sales on the sidewalk.
- Unless deteriorated beyond repair metal awnings that have historic significance should be retained.
- Use awnings to mask security grilles and window air conditioners if installed.
- Awnings can be used to create protection for the pedestrian, to help with environmental control, and to add color and interest to the building and streetscape.
- **Materials:** Canvas awnings are the most appropriate.
- **Shape:** Use the traditional triangular awning shape, with either closed or open sides, for locations fronting the street. An awning with a loose valance along the bottom edge of the awning has a more traditional appearance than one that either has no valance or is fitted to rigid piping.
- **Color and pattern:** Traditionally, awnings were either solid colors or striped. In choosing a pattern, be guided by the building itself. A striped or bold awning may enhance a plain building, while a more decorative building may require a solid color awning in a subtle shade.
- **Placement and size:** Storefronts and display windows are the most logical places to add an awning. In a traditional storefront, awnings may be placed above or below transom windows (if they exist). Fit window awnings within the window opening so that architectural details are not covered up. Scale the size of the awning to the building.
- **Number:** Let the design of the building determine the number of awnings to be used. A single storefront (without structural divisions) will usually require a single awning. A building with separate windows and doors may need separate awnings that correspond to those divisions.
- **Signage:** Awnings can be used for building signage along the valance or side panels of the awning (if installed). See the previous section on signage as it relates the awnings.





Red box indicates  
not recommended

## AWNINGS & CANOPIES

### *Not Recommended*

- Back lit or internally lit awnings.
- Awnings made of aluminum, vinyl, plastic, wood, wood shingles, concrete, fiberglass or other non-traditional materials.
- Bubble or rounded awnings on main facades, as these were not typical and tend to hide important architectural features.
- Covering architectural details with continuous awnings or oversized awnings.
- Retaining the metal armature of an awning attached to a building without its canvas covering.



*Internally lit awnings, those made of vinyl or plastic, and bubble or rounded awnings on main facades are not recommended.*



*Avoid retaining metal armature of an awning attached to a building without its canvas covering.*

Further information is available from the National Park Service, Preservation Brief #44 “The Use of Awnings on Historic Building: Repair, Replacement and New Design” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/44-awnings.htm>



# SECURITY

**Objective:** Provide overnight building security in a visually pleasing way.



*Use open security grilles installed inside the window display glass to allow lighted window displays to be seen at night.*



*Make sure the interior security grilles and grill box/housing can be completely concealed during regular business hours.*

## *Recommended*

- Use open security grilles installed inside the window display glass to allow lighted window displays to be seen at night.
- Make sure the interior security grilles and grill box/housing can be completely concealed during regular business hours.
- Conceal grille box or security grate housing unit under awnings and signs.
- Keep security grilles clean and well maintained.
- Explore various types of transparent security grilles and find one that best fits the look of your store.

## *Not Recommended*



*Red box indicates not recommended*

- Use of opaque, solid security grates installed on the exterior of the storefront.



*Avoid using opaque, solid security grates.*

# PAINT COLORS

**Objective:** To promote creativity while maintaining harmony and historic feeling for the town center through the use of paint.



Consider using three colors: base, trim, and accent.



Already painted buildings may be re-painted with the original paint scheme, if known, or a scheme appropriate to the period of the building.



Recommended color palettes include earth tones and neutral colors.

## Recommended

The Town of Georgetown does not regulate specific paint colors for the painting of already painted, downtown historic buildings. Instead, the Planning Commission recommends that property owners and tenants use the following historic paint palettes from commercial paint companies when considering colors for their historic building.

New paint schemes should match the original, if known, or should be appropriate to the period of the building. Lacking microscopic paint analysis to uncover the original colors of an historic building downtown, the Planning Commission recommends the following.

- Consider a scheme utilizing three colors: base, trim and accent.
- Recommended colors types:
  - Nature blending colors
  - Earth tone colors
  - Neutral colors
  - Pastel colors

There are many paint companies that have created historic American paint palettes, we have identified three nationally known brands below. These paint palettes offer literally hundreds of colors for downtown property owners to consider. Some of the paint palettes identify colors for interiors as well as exteriors of buildings.

## SHERWIN WILLIAMS

- **All Historic Palettes:**  
<http://www.sherwin-williams.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/historic-palettes/>
- **Classical/Colonial Exterior (8 colors, 3 palettes):**  
<http://www.sherwin-williams.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/historic-palettes/classicalcolonial-exterior/>
- **Arts & Crafts Exterior (16 colors, 7 palettes):**  
<http://www.sherwin-williams.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/historic-palettes/arts-and-crafts-exterior/>
- **Victorian Exterior (24 colors, 5 palettes):**  
<http://www.sherwin-williams.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/historic-palettes/victorian-exterior/>

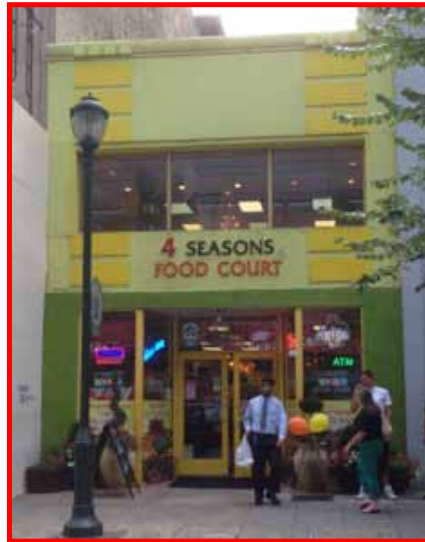


# PAINT COLORS CONT.

**Objective:** To promote creativity while maintaining harmony and historic feeling for the town center through the use of paint.



*Metallic colors are not recommended for historic district buildings.*



*Neon/Fluorescent/"Day glow" colors are not recommended for historic district buildings.*



*Bright, fully saturated colors are not recommended in the downtown historic district.*

## *Recommended, Cont.*

- **Suburban Modern Exterior (16 colors, 7 palettes):**  
<http://www.sherwin-william.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/historic-palettes/suburban-modern-exterior/>
- **Historic Hues Color Palette (16 colors):**  
<http://www.sherwin-williams.com/architects-specifiers-designers/color/find-and-explore-colors/color-collections/designer-expressions-palettes/historic-hues/>

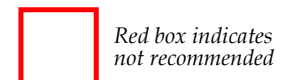
## VALSPAR - NATIONAL TRUST HISTORIC COLORS

- **Georgian (4 palettes):**  
<http://www.valsparpaint.com/en/explore-colors/find-ideas/national-trust-historic-colors/georgian.html>
- **Neoclassical (4 palettes):**  
<http://www.valsparpaint.com/en/explore-colors/find-ideas/national-trust-historic-colors/neoclassical.html>
- **Southwestern (4 palettes):**  
<http://www.valsparpaint.com/en/explore-colors/find-ideas/national-trust-historic-colors/southwestern.html>
- **Victorian (4 palettes):**  
<http://www.valsparpaint.com/en/explore-colors/find-ideas/national-trust-historic-colors/victorian.html>

## BENJAMIN MOORE

- **Historical Colors (174 colors):**  
[http://www.benjaminmoore.com/en-us/for-architects-and-designers/color-gallery/#&ce\\_vm=2&ce\\_col=HC](http://www.benjaminmoore.com/en-us/for-architects-and-designers/color-gallery/#&ce_vm=2&ce_col=HC)

## *Not Recommended*



*Red box indicates not recommended*

- Bright, fully saturated colors
- Metallic colors
- High intensity colors
- Fluorescent/Neon/"Day glow" colors



# LANDSCAPING

**Objective:** Strengthen the appeal of your business and the character of the downtown district.



Water the plants in window boxes and urns regularly, and replant flowers seasonally.




Well-tended, pedestrian-scaled window boxes and urns planted with live, seasonal flowers are encouraged.

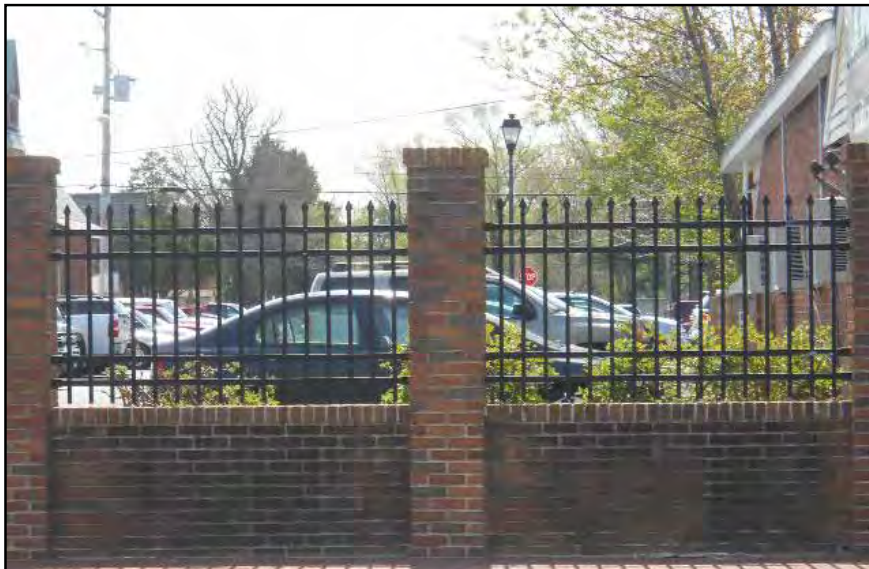
## Recommended

- Well-tended, pedestrian-scaled window boxes and urns planted with live, seasonal flowers are encouraged.
- Water the plants in window boxes and urns regularly, and replant flowers seasonally if window boxes and urns are installed.
- Materials and detail for walls and fences in the downtown should be wood, brick, stone, or wrought iron.
- Decorative fencing is encouraged in downtown to differentiate between public and private spaces, parking areas, etc.
- Fences, low walls and hedges can define walkways and give pedestrian scale to the street. They create a transition between public and private spaces, and they can screen and mitigate the effects of service areas, dumpsters, recycling and other garbage receptacles, parking lots, and other vacant space.

## Not Recommended

 Red box indicates not recommended

- Using flowerboxes and urns as ashtrays.
- Not watering or replacing flowerbox or urn plants when they wither or die.
- Using fake flowers or other fake greenery in flowerboxes or urns, rather than living plants.
- Vinyl fences, chain link fences, non-historic welded wire and concrete block walls are not permitted in the district in areas that can be seen from public rights-of-way.
- Masonry walls that were historically unpainted should not be painted.



Decorative fencing is encouraged downtown to differentiate between public and private spaces, parking areas, etc... and should be constructed of wood, brick, stone, or wrought iron.

# NEW CONSTRUCTION IN DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

**Objective:** New construction is important to fill in “gaps” in the streetscape. Working with the existing historic environment will help with the successful integration of the new buildings and any new businesses that will inhabit them.



The three-dimensional form of a new building and its roof shapes should be similar to the surrounding structures.



New buildings should be within a few feet in height of the neighboring structures, with similar heights in cornices, window heads and sills, and first floor elevation above ground.

## Recommended

On East Market Street, now filled with traditional buildings and storefronts like Georgetown's, a new structure can easily result in a loss of visual continuity and cohesiveness. New buildings must be designed to fit into the context of their site. A registered architect familiar with the intricacies of historic and infill building design should be consulted. Also consult with the Town Planning and Zoning Department staff for advice in advance of submission of any preliminary plans. The following design factors should be considered:

- The three-dimensional form of a new building and its roof shapes should be similar to the surrounding structures.
- Any new building should have the same relative placement on the lot as the existing, older structures with an equal setback.
- New buildings should be within a few feet in height of its neighboring structures, with similar heights in cornices, window heads and sills, and first floor elevation above the ground.
- The proportions of height-to-width of the façade and its components should be consistent with adjacent buildings.
- New construction should respect established rhythms of the streetscape.
- The appeal of older buildings is often their use of quality materials and detailing; new construction should continue the use of established neighborhood materials.

## Not Recommended

- Buildings with elements out of scale with the surrounding buildings, such as over-sized doors or windows.
- Buildings with elements incomparable to the surrounding buildings, such as differing floor-to-floor heights or cornice lines.

This section is derived from Design Guidelines Manual: A Handbook for the Preservation and Improvement of Delaware's Historic Commercial Architecture, Delaware Main Street 2009.

# ADDITIONS TO DOWNTOWN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

---

**Objective:** Any historic district needs the ability to expand itself for modern needs; appropriate additions to historic structures can add character and business opportunities as they mark the passage of time.

Much has been written about making additions to historic buildings and the best source of advice is from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Buildings*. Section on Alterations/Additions to Historic Buildings, found here: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/>

Another excellent source of advice is the chapter on *New Additions to Historic Buildings*, also by the National Park Service, found here: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-guidelines.pdf>



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

---

Terms taken from the guidelines above.

**ALTERATION:** An act or process that changes one or more historic, architectural features of an area, site, place or structure, including but not limited to the erection, construction, reconstruction, or removal of any structure.

**AWNING:** Retractable or fixed mounted shading devices, usually constructed of fabric and metal pipe. Awnings can often be ornamental.

**BAY (BUILDING):** A measurement of building width usually determined by the distance between major load bearing walls and/or windows and doors.

**BELT COURSE:** A horizontal band usually marking the floor levels on the exterior facade of a building.

**BRACKET:** A supporting member for a projection, typically shaped like an inverted L, often made of wood, stone or metal.

**BULKHEAD:** The areas that support the display windows; can be of wood, stone or metal, or can be glazed.

**CANOPIES:** A more permanent, i.e. not fabric, version of an awning. In historic buildings of the 18th century, these shingled versions are called pent eaves.

**COLUMN:** A vertical structural member, can be made of wood, metal or stone, often round.

**COPING:** A type of stone or concrete block that is used to cap off and waterproof the top of a stone or brick wall. Modern metal version is referred to as “cap flashing.”

**CORBELING:** Masonry term describing the parts of a wall or chimney that “step out” progressively to create a shadow line or rain protection, or to support what is above.

**CORNICE:** A continuous, projecting, horizontal element that provides the transition between building wall and roof, or between storefront and upper stories.

**CORNICE LINE:** Usually refers to the top of a flat roofed facade.

**CUPOLA:** A small, roofed structure crowning a ridge or turret, originally domed, sitting on a circular or polygonal base.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES:** A set of guidelines adopted by a municipality to serve as a visual and graphic aid in describing acceptable alterations for designated properties, they are usually generously illustrated and written in a manner that would be understood by most property owners.

**DISPLAY WINDOW:** The main areas of clear glass on a storefront behind which goods are arranged.

**DORMER:** A projecting vertical structure on the slope of a roof which provides light and headroom to the interior space.

**DOUBLE-HUNG:** A window consisting of two sashes, one above the other, both of which slide vertically on separate tracks.

**DRIVIT:** A brand name for a particular exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS) that resembles stucco.

**EAVE:** Refers to the part of a facade where a gabled roof meets the exterior wall, i.e. where gutters and soffits are found.

**ELEVATION:** Each of the vertical exterior walls of a building, also called façade.

**FAÇADE:** Each of the vertical exterior walls of a building, also called elevation.

**FAÇADE COMPOSITION:** How parts of a façade are organized or articulated to create an overall sense of visual harmony. The traditional system of this is divided into three parts:

**STOREFRONT LEVEL:** Main Floor/Foundation or base.

**UPPER FACADE:** Area of the facade which rests on the base and supports the top.

**CORNICE:** How and where the building expresses its height and stature: the crown/attic.

**FASCIA:** The vertical surface of the horizontal element that encloses a box cornice or covers the outer edge of a porch floor structure.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

---

**FENESTRATION PATTERN:** The placement and rhythm of window and door openings on a building's facade.

**FINIAL:** A decorative terminal form at the top of a feature.

**FLASHING:** Thin metal sheets used to prevent moisture infiltration at joints of roof planes and between the roof and the vertical surfaces or roof penetrations, chimney or abutting walls.

**GABLE:** Triangular shaped wall which supports a sloped roof with two sides.

**GLAZING:** Window glass, often called window panes, most common is six over six glazing in upper story windows.

**HARDIPLANK:** A brand name for a fiber cement siding used to cover the exterior of a building in both commercial and domestic applications. Fiber cement is a composite material made of sand, cement and cellulose fibers.

**HIERARCHY:** A system for organizing the facade so that important parts of the building facade are visually distinguished from those that are not. For instance, important windows are larger than the others, or main entries are centered and recessed and/or have a small porch roof, and the cornice line above the main door is often embellished.

**HEAD:** Top horizontal part of a window..

**LINTEL:** Structural member above a storefront that supports the parapet or upper wall.

**MASSING:** The three-dimensional form of a building.

**MULLION:** A heavy vertical divider between windows or doors.

**MUNTIN:** The wooden horizontal and dividers between panes of glass in a window, the muntins are surrounded by a window sash, the muntins and the sash hold the window glass in place.

**PARAPET WALL:** The part of the facade wall which extends up beyond the roof. By being so, it increases the building's stature, and its shape can help indicate the location of the main entry, and/or help the facade to harmonize with its neighbors.

**PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY:** A street that caters to the many needs of the pedestrian: sun and rain protection, restful sitting area, diminished traffic noise (to allow for conversations), natural beauty (trees and planters), and man-made beauty (attractive architecture, pavement, parks, lighting, benches, and wastebaskets).

**PEDIMENT:** Classical triangular roof like ornament usually found over a main entry.

**PIER:** A vertical structural member, can be made of wood, metal or stone, often square shaped.

**PRESERVATION:** Taking actions to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building, or structure and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site, it may include initial stabilization work as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials.

**RECONSTRUCTION:** Reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building as it appeared at a specific period of time.

**REHABILITATION OR HISTORIC REHABILITATION:** Returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those aspects or features of the property that are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values.

**RESTORATION:** Process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

**ROSETTE:** A typically circular motif that helps secure the lintel to the structure behind, most often made of cast iron.

**RHYTHM:** Refers to a streetscape with an established pattern of similar building widths and heights traditionally interrupted or accented by public buildings, parks and the most important commercial structures.

**SASH:** A frame for glass to close a window.

**SCALE:** A system for evaluating the parts of a building facade and determining if they look too large or too small to fit into the overall facade. Similarly used to determine whether a building is too large, small, narrow, tall, etc., to visually harmonize with its neighbors, or fit into the established streetscape pattern.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

---

**SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS:** The Federal standards established by the US Department of the Interior regarding the preferred treatment for preservation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic properties.

**SIGNAGE BAND:** Location along the top edge of the storefront where signage was located on historic buildings.

**SILL:** Horizontal member immediately below the window assembly, made of brick, wood or stone.

**SOFFIT:** The exposed underside of a component of a building such as a canopy.

**STOREFRONT:** The front, first floor level, exterior wall of commercial space, typically with large areas of glass.

**STREETSCAPE:** The assemblage of building facades, sidewalks, plantings and open space that make up a street; as they are experienced by someone walking down the street.

**T1-11 SIDING:** Grooved plywood sheet siding designed to imitate vertical shiplap siding.

**TRANSOM:** Upper windows in a storefront, or above a door. Transoms can be operable or fixed, and made of clear or patterned glass.

**TRANSITION ZONE:** The area between the street and the building where the pedestrian feels protected by the building without entering it, and/or the sidewalk area where one prepares to enter or look within. On buildings set back from the sidewalk a large planted or paved expanse, this zone may be referred to as a lawn or plaza.

**UPPER FLOORS /UPPER STORY:** The usually non-retail volume above the retail ground floor, multistory Main Street buildings are typically between 2 and 4 floors.

**WINDOW HOOD:** A projecting structural member above a window, on Main Street typically of wood or cast iron.

Source for Glossary terms:

“Design Guidelines for Downtown Newark DE,” 2nd Edition 2007; *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*, “Anatomy of a Main Street Building,” with additions by Donna Ann Harris.



# SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS

---

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

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

From <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>.

# RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

---

We reviewed dozens of design guidelines to create this work for Georgetown DE. Guidelines that we found particularly helpful were:

Downtown Mason (OH) Design Guidelines Handbook, available from the National Main Street Center:

[http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/resources/sample-documents/members-only/mason-oh-design-guidelines.html#\\_U3PcGPIdWF8](http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/resources/sample-documents/members-only/mason-oh-design-guidelines.html#_U3PcGPIdWF8)

\*\* This document requires sign in credentials from the National Main Street Center, contact the Town Manager for assistance.\*\*

“Design Guidelines for Downtown Newark DE,” 2nd Edition 2007 found at:

[http://enjoydowntownnewark.com/~eatdown/sites/default/files/Design\\_Guidelines\\_2ndEdition\\_2007.pdf](http://enjoydowntownnewark.com/~eatdown/sites/default/files/Design_Guidelines_2ndEdition_2007.pdf).

“Design Guidelines for Torresdale Avenue in Tacony” for the Tacony Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia PA 2013 found at

<http://historictaconyrevitalization.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/final-design-guidelines.pdf>

“Rochester NH Sign Guidelines,” Adopted by the Rochester Historic District Commission on February 10, 2010 found at:

[http://www.rochesternh.net/sites/rochesternh/files/file/file/historic\\_district\\_guidelines\\_-\\_signage\\_april\\_2010.pdf](http://www.rochesternh.net/sites/rochesternh/files/file/file/historic_district_guidelines_-_signage_april_2010.pdf).

## *Further reading*

Morton III, W. Brown, Gary L. Hume, Kay D. Weeks and H. Ward Jandl: *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehabilitation-guidelines.pdf>

National Park Service. *Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/>

National Park Service. *Preservation Briefs*.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Tech Notes*

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes.htm>

National Park Service. *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

National Park Service. *Preservation Tax Incentives for Historic Buildings*.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

Rypkema, Donovan R. *The Economics of Historic Preservation*. Washington: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Second Edition, 2005.

Weeks, Kay D., and Anne E. Grimmer. *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Illustrated Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.

[http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/publications/standards\\_complete.pdf](http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/publications/standards_complete.pdf)

## *Further information on the history of Georgetown*

Booth, Iva Short, Martha Torbert Hudson and Paulette Bier, Co-Chairpersons. *From Crossroads to County Seat: A Bicentennial Look at Georgetown, Delaware*. Compiled Under the Auspices of the Georgetown Historical Society, 2007.

*Remember When... A Hundred Years of Pictorial History of Georgetown, Delaware*. Marceline, MO: Heritage House Publishing, 1999.

Wade, William J. *16 Miles From Anywhere: A History of Georgetown, Del.* Georgetown Bicentennial Committee, 1975.

# CREDITS

---

Donna Ann Harris, Principal of Heritage Consulting Inc. wrote these design guidelines and provided photographs. Gene Dvornick wrote the Letter from Committee Members and Introduction section. Laura DiPasquale designed the document. R. Lindsey Uhl provided photos, reviewed the document and wrote the New Construction section. Moira Nadal edited the document. Their biographies are below.

Donna Ann Harris is the principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based WBE consulting firm that works nationwide in three practice areas: downtown and commercial district revitalization, historic preservation and nonprofit organizational development. Prior to starting her firm ten years ago, Ms. Harris was state coordinator for the Illinois Main Street program for two years and the manager of the Illinois suburban Main Street program for four years. During her tenure, Ms. Harris served 56 Illinois Main Street communities, led a staff of 12 and managed a budget of over a million dollars. Ms. Harris focus is on historic preservation and organizational aspects of Main Street revitalization.

Prior to her Main Street career, Ms. Harris spent 15 years as an executive director of three start-up and two mature preservation organizations, each with its own organizational and fundraising challenges. Since starting her firm, Ms. Harris has worked with state and local Main Street programs in 21 states. She has spoken for the last seven years at the National Main Street Center annual conference, and at the International Downtown Association annual meetings in 2013, 2008 and 2009.

AltaMira Press published her book *New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America's Historic Houses* in 2007. In 2011 Heritage Consulting Inc. won the prestigious Grand Jury Award from the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia for its yearlong project Delaware County (PA) Public History Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan. She has also written five feature articles in The National Main Street Center's quarterly journal *Main Street News*, and scholarly articles in the American Association for State and Local History's *History News* and the National Trust's *Forum Journal*.

Laura DiPasquale is a former intern and Associate with Heritage Consulting, Inc., with whom she has worked episodically since 2009. A native of Dover, Delaware, Laura received her B.A. in Art Conservation from the University of Delaware in 2008, and her M.S. in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania in 2012. Laura has experience with numerous preservation organizations in Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, including the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, Milner + Carr Conservation, and Downtown Visions, Wilmington, Delaware's business improvement district and Main Street program, for whom she created a set of design guidelines. Laura also worked previously as an architectural historian for Richard Grubb & Associates in Cranbury, NJ, and is currently employed as a Historic Preservation Planner with the City of Philadelphia.

Moira Nadal is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's graduate program in Historic Preservation. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Bryn Mawr College in the Growth and Structure of Cities. Her interests include neighborhood revitalization, community engagement, and accessible conservation practices. In addition to the research and appraisal work she does for an architectural salvage company in Philadelphia, she is also a Board member for the University City Historical Society. She has been an intern at Heritage Consulting Inc. since May of 2013.

R. Lindsey Uhl earned a master's degree in architecture from the University of Kansas, and is working on her master of science in historic preservation degree at the University of Pennsylvania Design School. Lindsey is a certified LEED Green Associate with three years of experience in the field of architecture working as an intern near Boston, MA. She is passionate about the intersection between people and design, and is exploring consultation as a method by which she can find their unity.

## Photo Credits:

All photos are provided by the following individuals or organizations.

Donna Ann Harris: page 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43

Gene Dvornick: 43

R. Lindsey Uhl: 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29

Laura DiPasquale: 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42