

DESIGN GUIDE

for Downtown
Laurel, Delaware



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This Design Guide is intended to be used to encourage and guide retail storefront design and development in downtown Laurel.

This document will serve as a tool for building owners, store owners, and developers to create high quality storefront designs that provide an energetic, vibrant, and exciting shopping experience in the downtown, while maintaining the historic character of the area.

Property owner investment in downtown Laurel's historic buildings is critical to our future. Even small improvements to signs and awnings can make a lasting improvement in the downtown. Our commercial district is unique and we must protect its architectural character by encouraging quality improvements and building maintenance throughout the downtown.

We invite you to explore this Design Guide to understand how it can help you enhance the character of your historic property in downtown Laurel.



Thank you for your interest and commitment to the revitalization of downtown Laurel.

This design guide provides advice for property owners and tenants that wish to make improvements to their historic downtown buildings.

This Design Guide is voluntary. The advice provided is not required to obtain a building permit in the Town of Laurel. However, the Design Guide Steering Committee believes that these recommendations about maintenance and improvements to historic buildings make common sense. The Steering Committee encourages any developer, building owner, tenant, and Town Staff to follow the Design Guide if they wish to invest in any historic downtown building.

The Town of Laurel is considering the creation of a Façade Improvement Matching Grant Program. If you receive matching grant funds from that program, your project will be judged according to this Design Guide



The former Waller Theater, about 1920, with its marquee. Today, this building has been rehabilitated for use as the Laurel Senior Center. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

and must meet the requirements set forth in this guide. If your grant funded project in the downtown district involves new construction, this design guide is also applicable.

This Design Guide, combined with smart business development, appropriate marketing techniques, quality branding, and a welcoming presentation work together to help maintain the integrity and vitality of Laurel's downtown.

Whether you are interested in coming to the downtown or you are already here, we hope you find this Design Guide a useful tool.



Still in use, this magnificent building has an important role as a Senior Center in downtown Laurel.

Downtown Delaware provided a technical assistance grant to the Town of Laurel to hire Heritage Consulting Inc., a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, to work with a Steering Committee to create this Design Guide for Laurel. Steering Committee members reviewed drafts, provided feedback, and offered encouragement throughout. We want to especially thank Norma Jean Fowler, who wrote the brief history of Laurel, identified books on the history of Laurel to include, and found a wealth of excellent historic photographs of the downtown to illustrate this document. We thank all the Steering Committee members for their participation in the development of this document.

This Design Guide for Laurel, DE was funded by Downtown Delaware through a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development.

Steering Committee for the Design Guide for Laurel, DE

Brian Shannon, Laurel Redevelopment Corporation

Scott Rukowicz, Bank of Delmarva representative

Debbie Mitchell, local resident, business owner, and property owner

Norma Jean Flower, resident, and Laurel Historical Society volunteer

Cheryl Martin, local resident and property owner, Council Member Ward 4, Town of Laurel

Alexis Oliphant, Operations Manager, Town of Laurel

Jamie Smith, Town Manager, Town of Laurel

Consultants

Donna Ann Harris, Principal, Heritage Consulting Inc.

Philip Green, Designer, Heritage Consulting Inc.



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Downtown Delaware
Building Business Opportunity in Delaware's Commercial Districts

The town of Laurel has a rich history reaching back centuries. Named for native bushes growing along Broad Creek, a tributary of the Nanticoke River in southwestern Sussex County, the area known today as Laurel dates back to the time when Native Americans roamed the dense pine forest, fished the numerous streams, and trapped the plentiful game.

The site of present day Laurel was formed from two early land patents known as “Bachelor’s Delight” and “Greenland.” Boundaries of both of these tracks were described as beginning at the “Wading Place on Broad Creek,” which tradition says is between Delaware and Central Avenues. From the earliest days of European settlement, the area was considered part of Maryland, whose General Assembly laid out a three-thousand-acre reservation here for the Nanticoke Indian populations in 1711. By 1768, the native population had been displaced by encroaching white settlement, and the land became available for sale. At the same time the Penn family of Pennsylvania and Maryland’s Lords Baltimore each considered this area to be under their jurisdiction. Settlement from Pennsylvania had begun along the coastal areas of the Delaware River and Bay, while Maryland colonists had traversed the Chesapeake Bay and settled along the peninsula’s western rivers and streams.

Boundary disputes caused confusion over taxation and land ownership well into the late 18th century. The drawing of the Mason Dixon line in 1767 helped, but this dispute was not finally settled until the time of the American Revolution when Delaware was



The Globe Building, seen in this historic photo from the early 20th century. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



The State Register newspaper office in downtown.
Source: Laurel Historical Society.

recognized as a separate entity. The people of the area were slow to relinquish their Maryland heritage and, today, cultural traditions and styles still reflect a more southern way of life.

As for the town itself, Laurel had its beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century when a shipping point developed at the headwaters of Broad Creek. Reaping the rewards of abundant forests and water powered grist and sawmills, the town was laid out into streets and lots in 1802 by an early land developer, Barkley Townsend. Tradition has it that he called his new town Laurel Town because of the abundance of native laurel bushes that grew on the banks of the creek.

As the population grew, further development occurred in 1859 when the southern expansion of the Delaware Railroad came to Laurel and brought enhanced opportunities for the export of local products, as well as the monetary means to bring back the cultural city trends of the Victorian fashions and traditions. By the time the town was incorporated in 1883, Laurel was the largest town in Sussex County and was considered among the finest in the state, smaller only in size to Wilmington and Dover. Newspapers of the day also indicated that the personal and real estate values per capita were among the highest statewide. Laurel had been the home of several governors and the town exerted influence over state politics that was far greater than its size would suggest. Originally oriented to the Chesapeake Bay markets, when the railroad came through, the market orientation shifted to Philadelphia and the manufacture of lumber products and the shipping and canning of fruits and vegetables. The growth and prosperity in Laurel at that time was due in part to the Marvil Package Company founded by Governor Joshua H. Marvil, who patented the baskets and crates needed for shipping produce to city markets. This prosperity was reflected in the large Victorian homes that sprung up on Central Avenue and West Street. Even the smaller worker homes displayed millwork that was distinctively handsome for the times, resulting in a well-developed town of streets, homes, businesses, and prosperity by the end of the nineteenth century.

In June of 1899, a disastrous fire in the business section completely consumed the wooden heart of this town of about four thousand residents. The resulting rebuilding into four, corner brick anchor structures set the stage for twentieth century Laurel as it is remembered today. Laurel continued to be an economic distribution center for southwestern Sussex County as well as a manufacturing center with canneries, basket and crate factories, planing mills, shirt factories, and other businesses in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1921, the DuPont family made a major contribution to the Laurel education system with the erection of the first modern school buildings for both white and black children.

With the massive construction for the new DuPont Nylon plant in neighboring Seaford in 1939, jobs and economic improvements spilled over into Laurel's pocketbooks as well. Rte. 13, the "Ocean Highway to Florida," which was opened in 1925, made travel easier for all and introduced the heart of Laurel to the world. Not until after World War II and America's love affair with the family car did that highway become a dual highway, which unfortunately contributed to the demise of the downtown shopping area. Recognizing this effect, local historians worked to save the historic nature of the town. In 1988, the area south of Broad Creek was awarded a district nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (see the map of the historic district in Chapter 10 below).

While no longer a shopping or manufacturing center, today's Laurel is still at the center of a natural system of greenways and waterways. It is also the gateway to the Nanticoke River in a green and historical corridor defined by special places for tourist interests such as Bethel, Portsville, Phillips' Landing, and the Woodland Ferry on the west, and Record's, Chipman's, Trussum and Trap Ponds on the east. Still capitalizing on the natural beauty of the area, Laurel's newest industries of environmental tourism and recreation today capture the hearts of visitors and residents alike.



The historic Peoples National Bank, in a photo from the 1920's, now houses the Bank of Delmarva. The Bank of Delmarva does an excellent job of maintaining this building today.
Source: Laurel Historical Society.

What is a design guide? Who is it for?

This Design Guide for Laurel's downtown addresses appearance issues that business and property owners face in planning commercial and retail improvements. In general, a design guide is intended to provide ideas, stimulate thinking, and promote quality design among the many participants in downtown commercial district revitalization. Design Guides address the physical aspects of supporting a healthy commercial district through storefront design, improvements, and building maintenance. By establishing this Design Guide, the Town of Laurel encourages several important public and private objectives.



The train station from an historic photo. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

This Design Guide helps:

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

The Town of Laurel, in commissioning this voluntary design guide for the downtown property owners, hopes to influence the choices made by private property owners.



The Laurel Heritage Museum, located in the former train station, was beautifully restored and has been well maintained.

What is a design guide? Who is it for?



The 1937 former fire house now houses the Laurel Municipal Building, and it has been very well maintained over the years. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



Town Hall, at 201 Mechanic Street, is a former firehouse that has been adapted for use as the municipal building. The Classical Revival style building retains its historic character and has been well maintained over the years.

What is a design guide? Who is it for?



The People's National Bank built this handsome bank building which the Bank of Delmarva now lovingly maintains as its local branch bank. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



The Bank of Delmarva is proud of its Classical Revival style historic building, which continues to be superbly maintained by its owner and remains a landmark in downtown Laurel.

What is a design guide? Who is it for?



The current M & T Bank at 101 East Market Street is housed in the former Sussex Trust Bank as seen on this old post card. Note the original windows on the front and side elevations. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



The M & T Bank is the current tenant in this historic bank building on East Market Street.

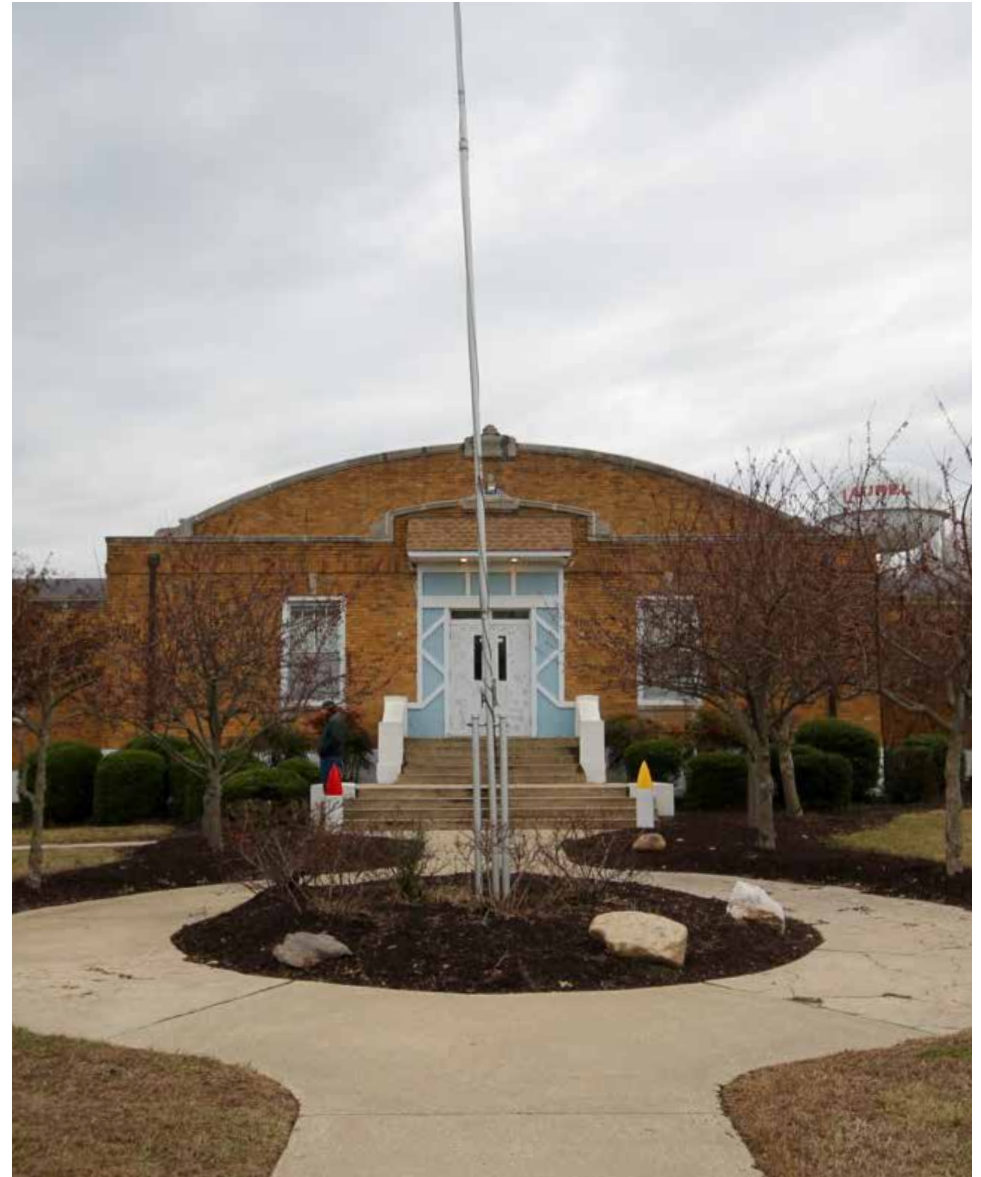
This Design Guide uses the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard for Rehabilitation as a baseline for this document. These Standards provide common sense advice about how to treat historic buildings in our downtown. Most of Laurel’s downtown is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see map in the next chapter).

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, codified as 36 CFR 67, are regulatory for the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program. See <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>. The Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, which assist in applying the Standards, are advisory.

Rehabilitation projects must meet the following Standards, as interpreted by the National Park Service, to qualify as “certified rehabilitations” eligible for the 20% rehabilitation tax credit. The Standards are applied to projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The Standards apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes. They apply to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building’s site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction.

We recommend that any property owner review the standards before planning their downtown rehabilitation project.



The former Armory has been adaptively used for a high quality and active community use

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

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

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 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. Documentary and physical evidence will substantiate replacement of missing features.
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 a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Four Approaches to the Treatment of Historic Properties

From: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm>

The National Park Service provides these definitions of the four treatments of historic buildings, and we provide these definitions here because they are used throughout this document.

The choice of treatment depends on a variety of factors, including the property's historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, and intended interpretation. Historic buildings are used as an example below. The decision-making process would be similar for other property types.

1. **Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.
2. **Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.
3. **Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.
4. **Reconstruction** re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

The physical design of a downtown commercial district like Laurel contributes greatly to the overall image of the community. Every downtown has its own unique cultural qualities that attract residents, customers, and visitors. The distinctive characteristics of buildings of varying ages make commercial districts interesting and enjoyable for both visitors and residents.

In a downtown like Laurels, buildings built in the 19th century may exist alongside those built in the mid- 20th century. Often, 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 building's appearance shows quality craftsmanship and is pleasing in proportions, composition, and detail, then the façade is a valuable visual resource for the downtown. Thoughtful design improvements reinforce the positive identity of a community's retail core and create a "sense of place" that is distinct to the downtown Laurel.



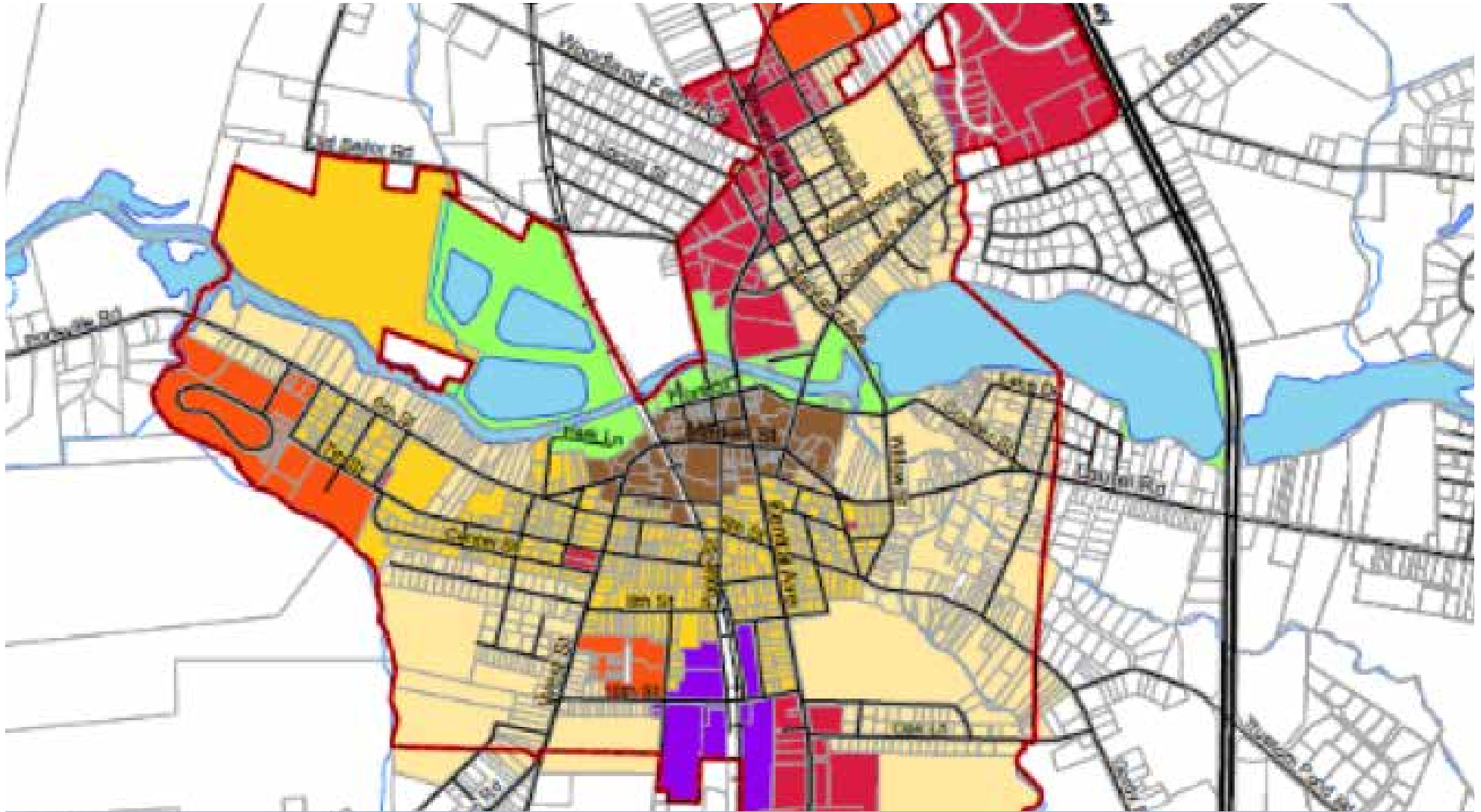
East Market Street in downtown Laurel in the late 1950s or early 1960s had a full array of shops, restaurants, and convenience stores. Retaining the historic resources that remain in downtown Laurel is the goal of this design guide. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



The same view of East Market Street in downtown Laurel during a local fireman's parade for their convention in the 1930s. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

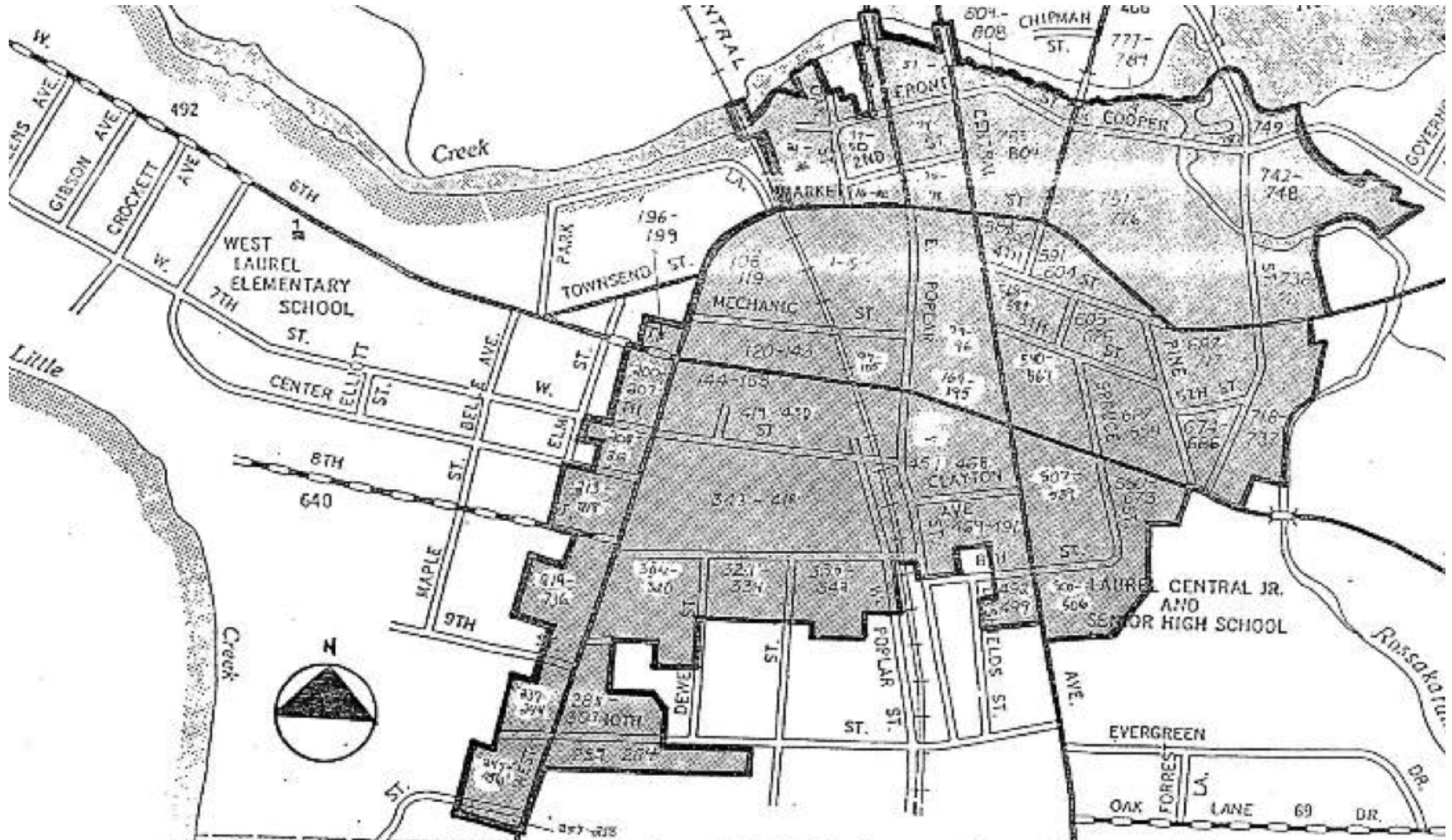


This map shows the outline of downtown Laurel district. Buildings inside this boundary are eligible to participate in the downtown Laurel façade improvement program. Source: Town of Laurel.



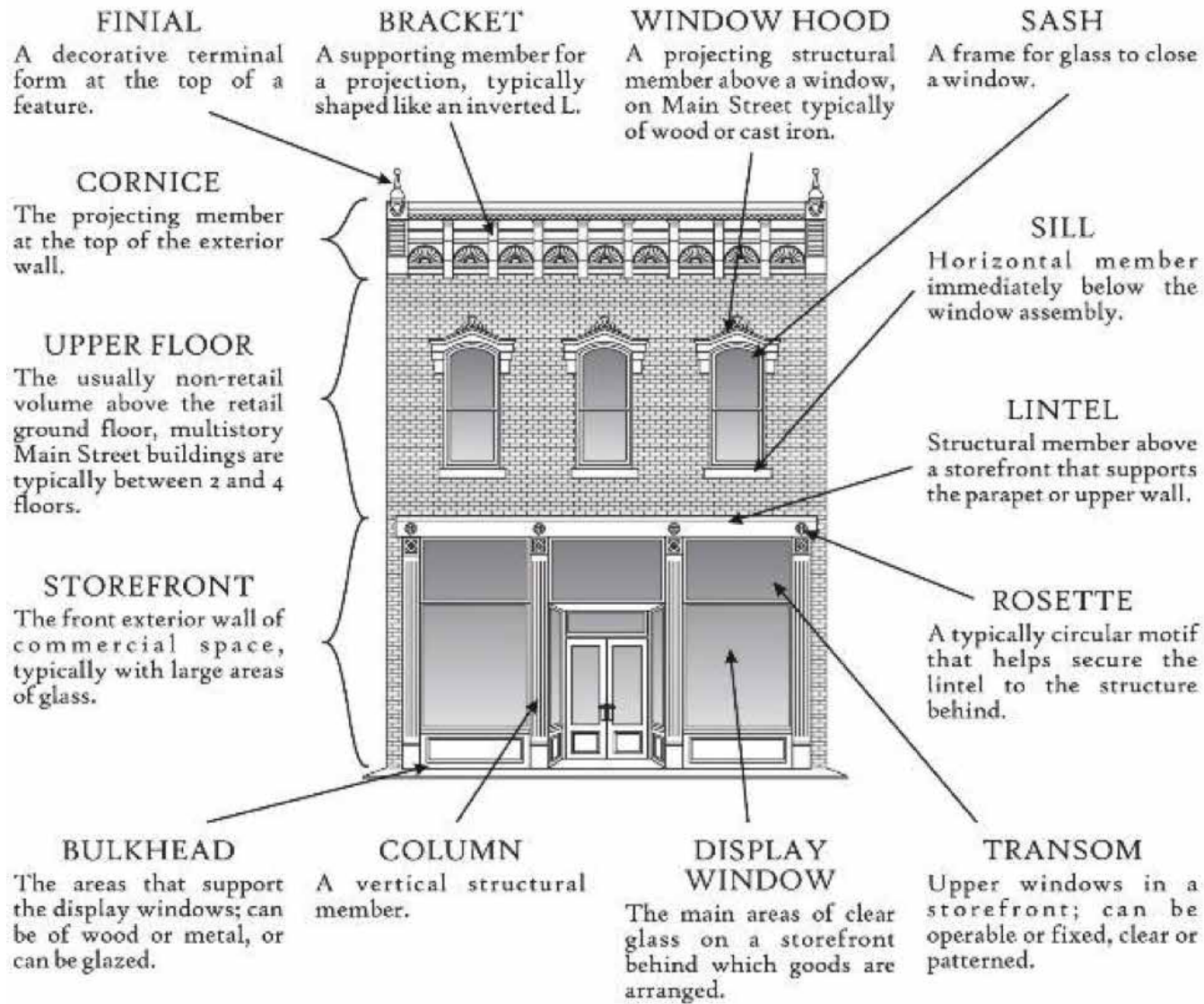
The current zoning map for the Town of Laurel. The downtown is part of three zoning districts:
TC—Town Center Use District --Brown on this map
MR—Marine Resources Use District—Green on this map
CB—Commercial Business Use District—Red on this map
Source: Town of Laurel

Downtown District Subject to Design Guide



This map shows the boundaries of the 1988 National Register Historic District in Laurel which includes all of the commercial district south of the Broad Creek. Source: National Register of Historic Places, Laurel Historic District Nomination. See the entire 309 page National Register Nomination at https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/88001056_text

Anatomy of A Main Street Building



This illustration identifies the common names of parts of buildings seen on downtown commercial buildings.

Source: Illinois Main Street, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/preserve/documents/bldg_anatomy.pdf

Starting a downtown rehabilitation or restoration project can be daunting. We recommend that all property owners begin with a little planning. Contact the Building Code Official at Town Hall for advice before engaging architects, designers, contractors, sign, or awning manufacturers.

Step 1: Evaluate your building's appearance.

It is important to take a good look at a 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 whole building and does not neglect the upper floors. Remember that storefronts should be viewed as a part of an entire building. The goal is to achieve visually distinct facades and storefronts that relate to their surroundings and provide a sense of cohesiveness in the commercial district without strict uniformity.

Step 2: Evaluate your building's surroundings.

An elevated level of upkeep always strengthens the image of a commercial district. 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 windows should be 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.



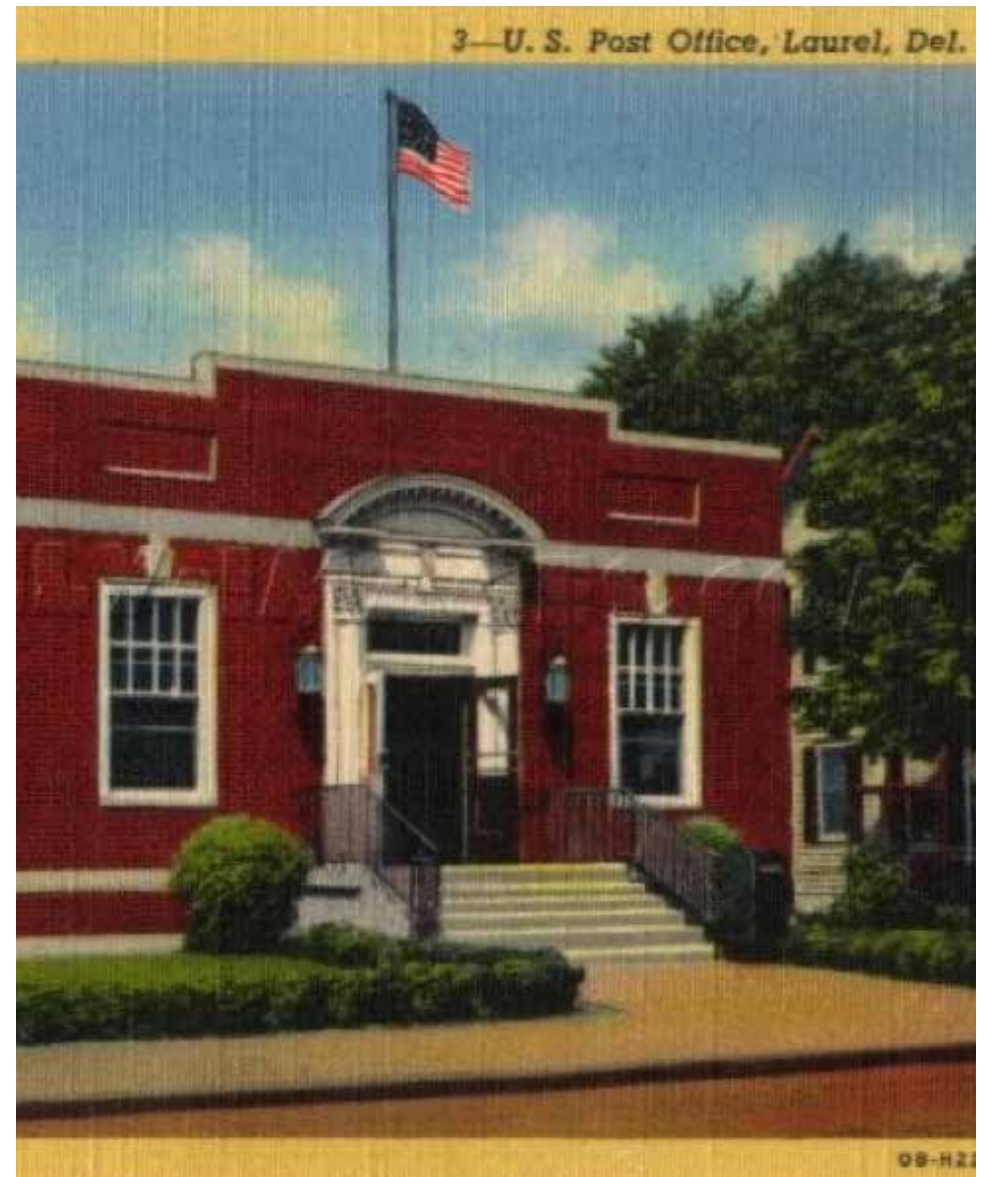
The State Register newspaper office in the 1950s. This historic photo shows the publisher congratulating the winner of a car in front of the office. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

Step 3: Find historic photographs

Determine if there are any historic photographs of your building. The Laurel Historical Society has an extensive historic photograph collection, and they might have a historic photo of your building. Contact the Laurel Historical Society at PO Box 102, Laurel, DE 19956. Check with them before you begin planning your project, as an historic photograph might provide clues about the original colors and missing architectural features of your building's storefront, sign, awning, upper story, and cornice. Use any historic photo to plan your improvements. If you cannot find an historic photograph of your building, determine if historic photos of other, similar buildings to yours are available. You may be able to use similar buildings for ideas about what your building might have once looked like.

Step 4: Get good advice

Work with a qualified architect or contractor to plan and implement your project. They can provide good advice for phasing work and help you save money so that the building can continue to be used while you undergo construction. Contact the Laurel Code Enforcement Officer at Town Hall for advice before submitting any final plans for review, as he/she can help you navigate the Town's approval process.



Close up of a post card from the 1940s of the old Post Office in downtown Laurel.

Step 5: Make needed repairs; establish a maintenance schedule.

Preserve the value of your building by repairing any damage before undertaking any façade work. To prevent major building repairs in the future, a regular maintenance schedule should be established for addressing minor problems, such as painting, cleaning, and repairs. The following are recommended preventive maintenance steps:

- Checking roof to ensure that it is watertight. Cleaning gutters twice a year.
- Scraping chipped and peeling paint and repainting.
- Repointing and patching deteriorated masonry or stonework joints.
- Repairing or replacing weatherproofing agents.
- Repairing cracked sidewalks and broken curbs as damage occurs, rather than waiting until larger repairs are needed.

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. It can be accessed at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/47-maintaining-exteriors.htm>.

Simple maintenance of storefronts and upper stories should be undertaken year-round and enhances the value of historic properties. Regular, routine maintenance prevents larger problems over time, because routine maintenance is fundamentally a preservation activity.



The former post office, now used by Pivot Physical Therapy, at 400 South Central Avenue in the Classical Revival style retains all its historic character and is well maintained today.

Objective

Use the architectural features of the entire building to provide guidelines for the design of the storefront. Incorporate upper floors in façade improvement plans.



The brick cornice at 122 East Market Street is original to the building and should be retained.

RECOMMENDED

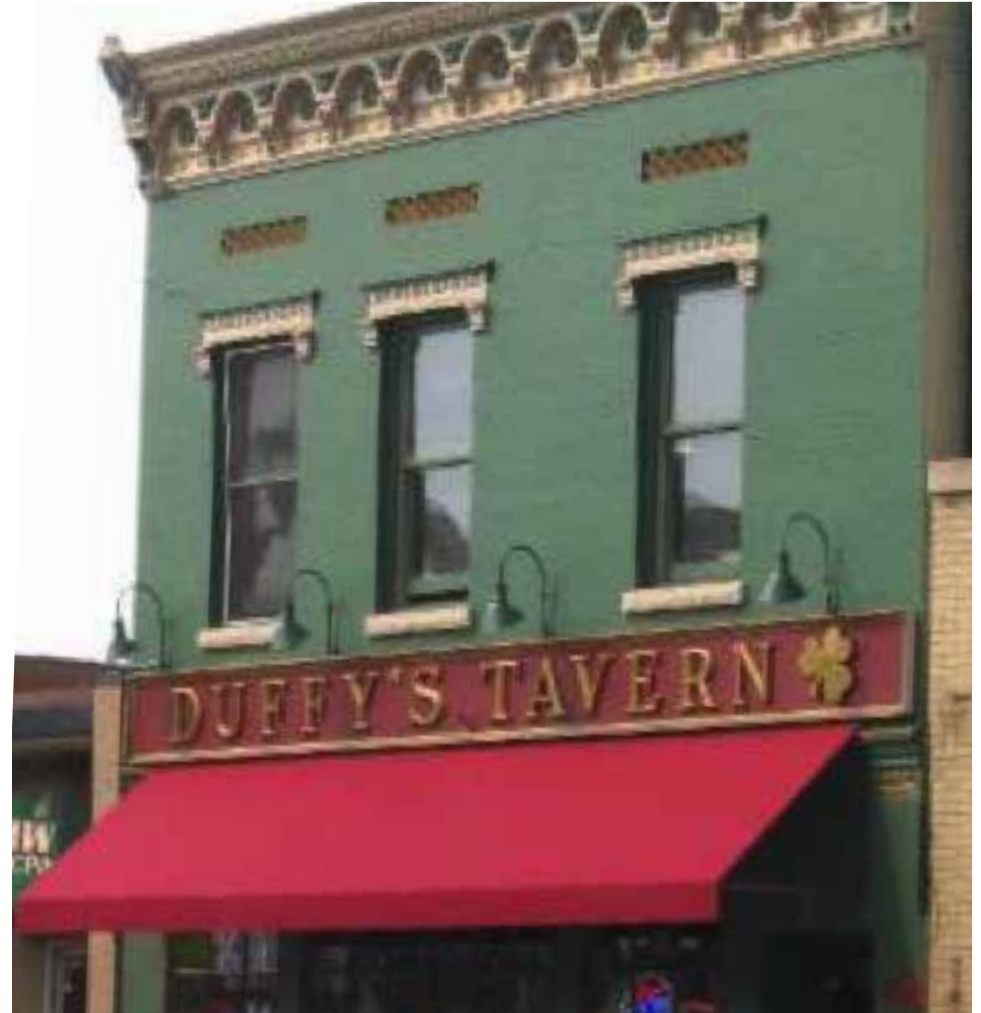
- Preserve and restore historical features of the upper façade and cornice. Repair the upper façade with material that is the same as, or that complements, the existing construction.
- Retain any historic cornice. Keep upper story masonry, wood and metal cornice or parapet treatments intact. Decorative cornices and parapets in Laurel are important to preserve. If they are deteriorated, they should be repaired rather than removed.



Retain any historic cornice like this one at 124-126 East Market Street. This cornice is made of wood with handsome wood brackets that hold up the green terra cotta roof tiles. Keep any original upper story masonry, wood, and metal cornice intact. Decorative cornices in Laurel are important to preserve. If they are deteriorated, they should be repaired rather than removed.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Maintain existing architectural elements around the upper story windows.
- 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, work with your architect or contractor to replace them in kind, so that the new units match the existing in color, texture, and size.



Masonry buildings that are already painted, like this one in Illinois, should continue to be painted. The property owner has used paint effectively to highlight architectural details in the cornice and window hoods to showcase the architectural detail of this handsome building. The colors on the high quality wooden sign and red canvas awning harmonize with the entire building, providing a quality presentation for this tavern.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Preserve and retain 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 wood boards to match the existing in texture, size, and profile.
- In older buildings, consider installing a storm window on the inside of the original window so it will not be seen.
- Use exterior lighting to accentuate the architectural features of the building.



Repointing of the historic train station on Mechanic Street was done with great care to match the mortar color and texture and to ensure that the tooling matched the original.



When repointing, match the width and profile of existing mortar joints, as seen here on Town Hall at 201 Mechanic Street. Use the same tooling pattern as the original joints. Your contractor should 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.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Covering any part of the building façade with aluminum, stucco, asbestos siding, simulated brick, surface applied brick and stone, T1-II siding, vinyl siding, Dryvit or other exterior insulation finish systems, veneer, or any other sheet material.
- Removing an historic cornice, whether made of wood, masonry, or metal.
- Filling in existing window openings with smaller windows, creating windowless blank walls or destroying original architectural detail.



Filling in existing window openings with smaller windows, as seen here in a building in Illinois, is not recommended in Laurel.



It is not recommended to cover any part of the building façade with aluminum, stucco (seen here), asbestos siding, aluminum siding, simulated brick, surface applied brick and stone, T1-II siding, vinyl siding, Dryvit (exterior insulation finish system), veneer, or any other sheet material. The windows on the second floor of this building in Philadelphia have been infilled with glass block, which is not recommended in Laurel.

NOT RECOMMENDED CONT.

- 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. Review Preservation Brief #1 “Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings,” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/1-cleaning-water-repellent.htm>.
- Sandblasting and harsh chemicals are harmful to masonry and brick when used to remove paint or dirt from any masonry surface and are not permitted in downtown Laurel. Review Preservation Brief #6 Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings,” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/6-dangers-abrasive-cleaning.htm>.



Filling in existing window openings, as seen here on a building in Gloucester City NJ, is not recommended on upper facades.



It is not recommended to paint brick (see above), stone, tile, stucco, or molded concrete block if they have never been painted before, as seen on this building from Philadelphia. The unpainted elements have a natural or man-made exterior finish that is important to preserve.

NOT RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Allowing new mortar to “feather edge” onto the face of the adjacent bricks. See Preservation Brief #1 “Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings,” <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/1-cleaning-water-repellent.htm>.
- Creating the mismatched appearance of brick, stone 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.



Sandblasting (see results above) and cleaning with harsh chemicals are harmful to masonry and brick when used to remove paint or dirt from any masonry surface and are not permitted in downtown Laurel. Photo from a building in Philadelphia.



The pointing in the upper left-hand portion of this brick building in Philadelphia has been pointed correctly, while the brick pointed on the right side has been poorly applied. The right side shows where the new mortar has been permitted to “feather edge” onto the face of the adjacent bricks, which is not recommended.

Objective

Make storefront entrances obvious and welcoming.

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 doors that contain a lot of glass, so the shoppers can see the items inside.
- This also encourages safety by promoting visibility.
- Choose a door that is compatible in scale, material, and shape with the overall façade.



The entrance to the Police Department at Town Hall in Laurel retains the original lighting fixtures on either side of the entranceway, and these should be retained.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- 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.



This handsome Art Deco storefront in downtown Milford DE retains its existing decorative tile floor in the entranceway.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Using doors that are opaque or that include no glass. Doors that are more suited to residential use should be avoided for commercial entrances.



It is not recommended to use doors that are more suited to residential use for commercial entrances like this one shown here from West Orange, NJ.

NOT RECOMMENDED CONT.

- 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.
- Filling in any door(s) with any material.



It is not recommended to make entrances complicated or difficult to get through by crowding them with merchandise, as seen in this building in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

Objective

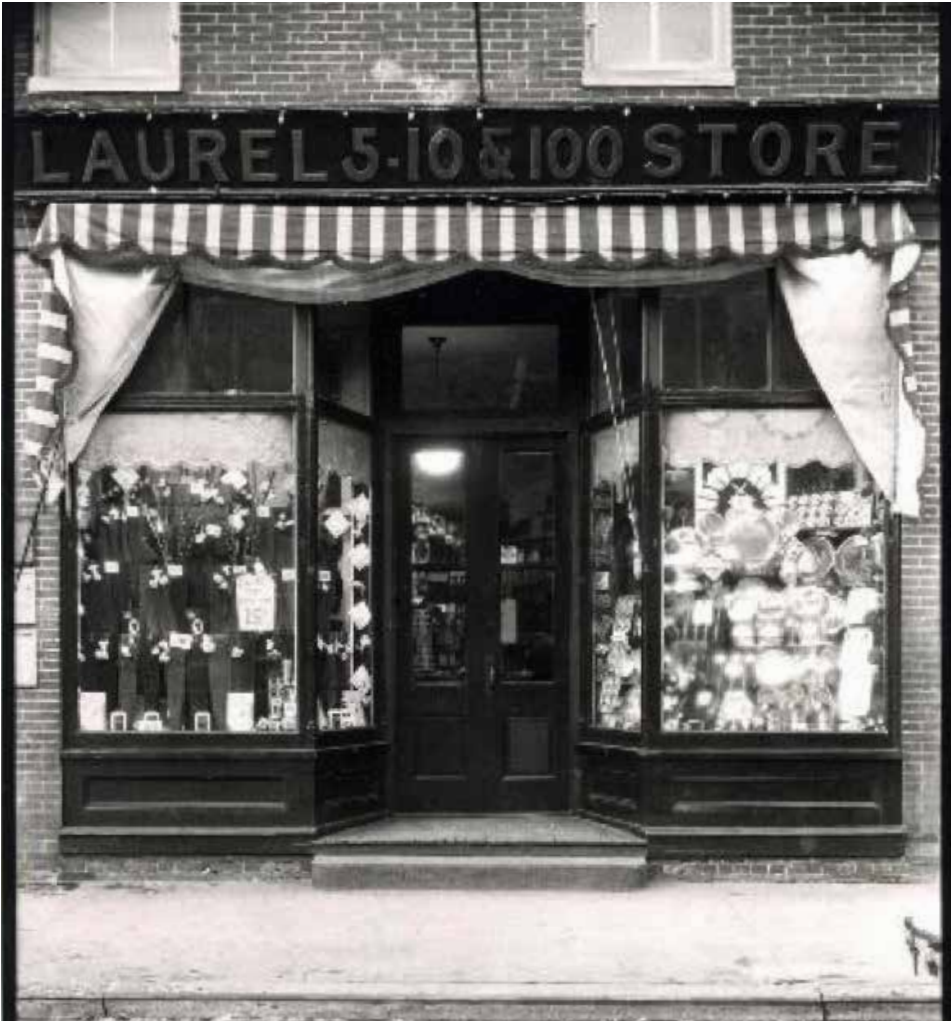
Attract attention to the products or services within the store; lighting of storefront windows to make the street feel lively, inviting, and secure.

RECOMMENDED

- Storefronts that have acquired historic significance shall be retained and preserved.
- Retain existing large historic storefront windows, their hardware, and framing, as they provide the maximum visibility into the storefront.



The Laurel Five and Dime on the north side of Market Street in downtown Laurel in the early 20th century showing how interior lighting of display windows can draw attention to the shop during the early evening hours. Light the store front 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. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



This Laurel 5, 10 & 1.00 store has been lost to time. This historic photo shows a typical storefront display in the early 20th Century. Note the retractable striped canvas awning, the transom windows above the doors and window displays, and double wood and glass entrance doors make the storefront display exciting, fun, and original for the store. Here the shop owner has a busy display showing the merchandise for sale inside. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



Proud business owners standing in front of their 126 East Market Street Drug Store in the 20th century. Note the retractable awning, the paneled wooden bulkhead below the display windows, and the double wood and glass entrance doors. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Keep 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 transparent glass rather than tinted.
- Use transparent glass for easy viewing into the store front.

- 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.



This storefront at 122 East Market Street retains all its original features including a wooden bracketed cornice, transom window over the door, transom windows the storefront glass, and an original glazed wooden door.



This storefront of the historic Globe Building located at 124-126 East Market Street retains its original bulkhead under the large glass storefront windows and the original transom above the glass. Illuminated signs like this one that says open are permitted behind the storefront glass.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Use windows to display merchandise by using the full extent of the glass.
- Make the storefront display exciting, fun, and original for your store.
- 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.



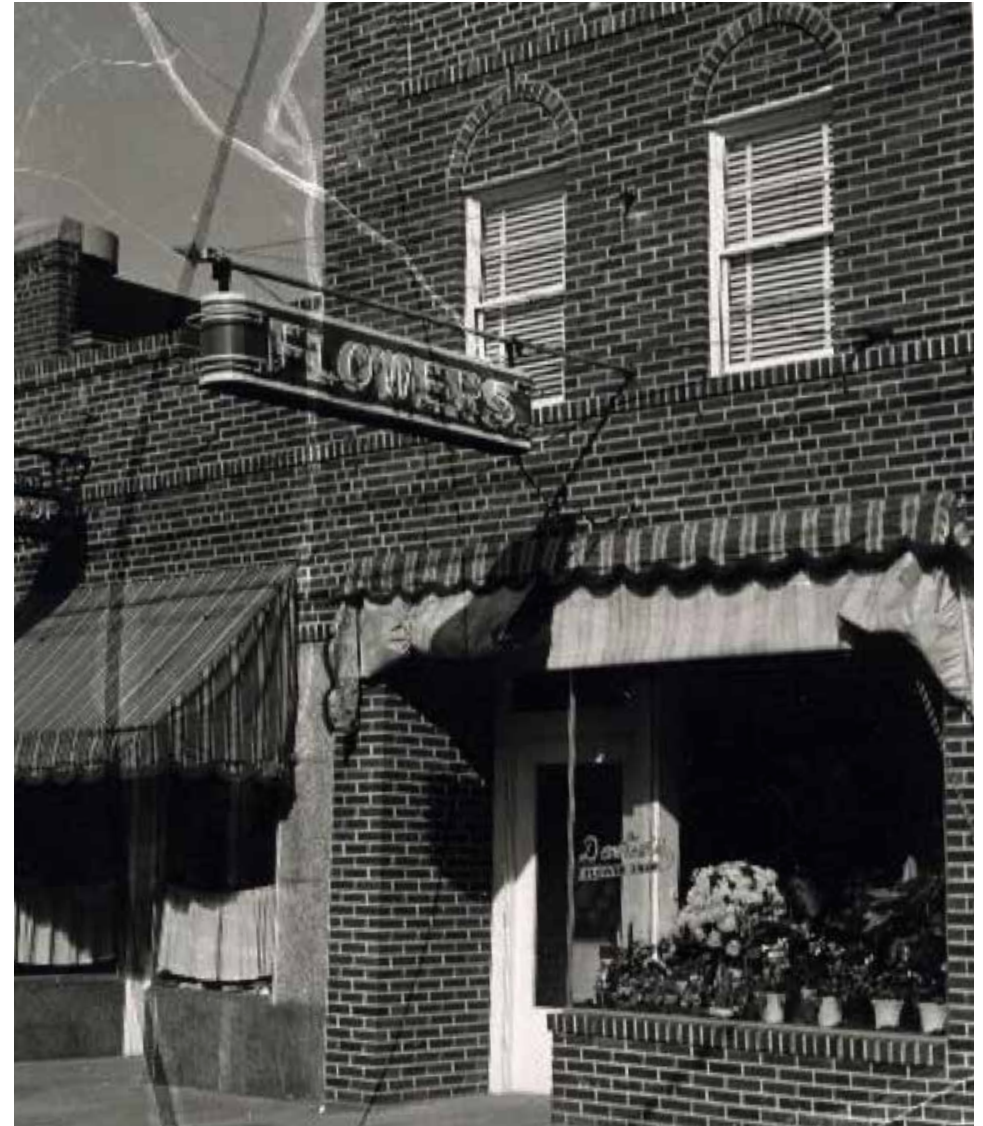
Use store entrance doors that contain a high percentage of glass (like the one shown here in West Orange, NJ) so the shopper can see the items inside.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Light the store front 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.



Display small merchandise at the front of the window or at eye level, like this merchant in Burlington, NJ.



Now the Laurel Coffee Shop, this building at 217 E. Market Street has had many tenants over the years, including this floral shop. Here plants are displayed at the front of the window, at eye level. Source: Laurel Historical Society.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- 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 are three low-cost modifications that can enhance the overall appearance of a storefront that has been changed.
 - 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.



Make the storefront displays exciting, fun, and original. This merchant in Burlington, NJ uses colorful umbrellas and kites to showcase what is sold in the shop.



This storefront replacement window in Philadelphia uses a large amount of glass and a simple, straightforward design that blends with the building in terms of form, style, and material.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- For further guidance consult Preservation Brief #11 “Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts,” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/11-storefronts.htm>.



Simple buildings like this one in Milford, DE that have been painted in the past can be painted in attractive colors like this store shown here.

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 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.
- Reducing window size to an area smaller than its original.
- Bulkheads made of fake brick, brick veneer, and gravel aggregates.
- 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.



It is not recommended to cover storefront windows with too much signage or to attach paper signs on the inside or outside of storefront windows as seen here on a building in Geneva, NY.



Keeping storefront display windows empty is not recommended as seen here on a building in Vineland, NJ.

Objective

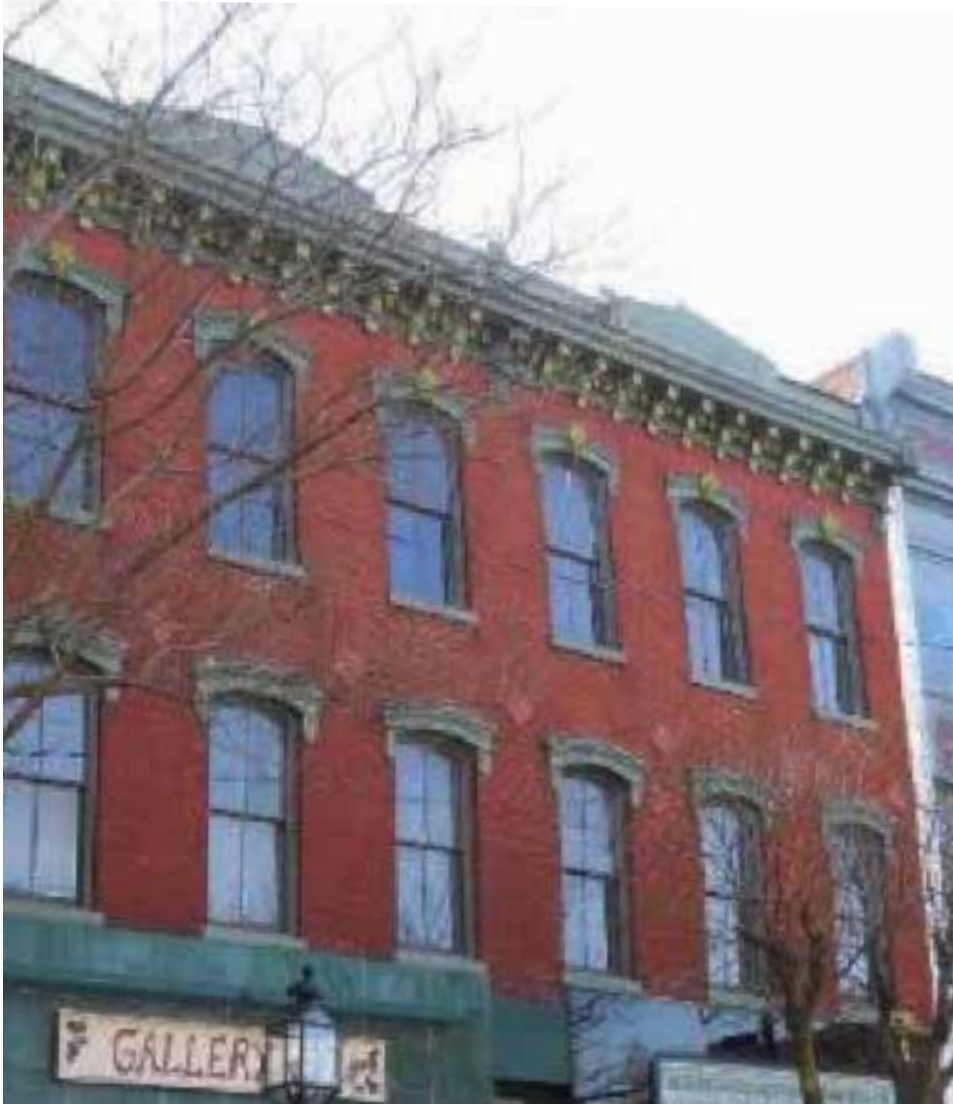
Compliment the historic storefronts with appropriate commercial or residential upper story windows and protect existing historic fabric.

RECOMMENDED

- Retain any upper story windows as windows. See advice from Preservation Brief #9, “The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows,” <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wooden-windows.htm>.
- Retain historic upper story windows, their hardware, and framing.
- Re-open any windows that have been blocked in.
- 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>.



This mixed use commercial and residential use building at 124-126 East Market Street retains all the wooden upper story, one over one wooden windows.



Retain any decorative features around upper story windows, as seen here in a building in Bridgeton, NJ. If deteriorated, make repairs to decorative window hood molds (wood, brick, or metal features over the windows) shown here.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- 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 lights 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 muntin's have three dimensions.
- The best choice for replacing a historic wood window is to use a new wooden window. The wood should be painted to protect it from the elements.
- Vinyl clad wooden windows are an acceptable alternative to a wooden window.
- 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. Avoid installing windows that are too small for the opening, and then make them "fit" by filling in the gaps with other materials.
- 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 satisfactory 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.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Reducing window size to an area smaller than the original.
- Boarding up or closing upper story windows in any fashion.
- Use of 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 muntin's.
- 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).



It is not recommended to reduce the window size to an area smaller than the original, as seen here on a building in Prophetstown, IL.



It is not recommended to board up or close upper story windows in any fashion, as can be seen here on a Philadelphia commercial building.

Objective

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

The Town of Laurel's sign ordinance applies to the downtown district. There are general guidelines for all signs in Article 8 -Signage of the zoning code. There are also specific regulations for each of the three zoning districts in the downtown. Please refer to the zoning map included in Chapter 10 of this design guide to determine the zoning district where your property is located.

The Town of Laurel encourages signage within the downtown 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 Sussex Highway, Route 13, that are geared to motorists, but such designs are not appropriate within the downtown.

We provide the following guide for the T-C Town Center district in addition to the requirements of the Town of Laurel sign ordinance with regard to window signs, wall signs, projecting signs, ground signs, awnings, sandwich boards, and signs already permitted in Article 8 of the Laurel Zoning Code. See Chapter 9 for the zoning map for Laurel.

The signs depicted in this chapter illustrate "good signage," though each individual sign does not necessarily exemplify all the desirable features that are discussed in this document.



A handsome metal sign located at 314 South Central Avenue in Laurel.

RECOMMENDED

- The Town of Laurel's Zoning Ordinance notes that in the T-C Town Center District, the total display area of all signs, including window, wall, ground, and awnings and existing sandwich signs permitted on a single lot shall be 1.5 square feet of display area for each lineal foot of building frontage facing the main street or highway.
- In both the CB Commercial Business District and the M-R Marine Resources District, the total display area of all signs, including wall, projecting, ground, pole, pylon, roof, canopy, awning, and window, permitted upon a single lot shall be two (2) square feet of display area for each lineal foot of building frontage facing the main street or highway.



This plain vernacular storefront in downtown Laurel is well maintained. The storefront has the name of the shop on the window glass itself, and is not cluttered with paper signs, which permits shoppers to see into the store. Visibility both inside and out with uncluttered storefront glass promotes security for both the shop owner and the pedestrian. The sign band above the store also contains the name of the store using handsome painted lettering.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Pedestrian scale signs that are consistent with other signs in the downtown, and that compliment a building's architecture.
- Type fonts and colors that are legible.
- Distinctive lettering styles that represent the store. Artwork, icons, logos, and simple messages.
- Lettering may be painted or applied to the window glass itself.
- Professionally fabricated signage in metal, wood, glass, or some combination of these materials, as well as in stone or wood.
- Externally illuminated signs are permitted.
- Incorporating illumination of a sign at night as an external part of the sign's design.
- Illuminated signs such as neon are permitted behind the store-front glass.



A high quality free standing wooden sign for the Laurel Heritage Museum. The type fonts and colors are legible, and three colors are used to create an attractive and useful sign.



Quality signage and exterior lighting as seen on this sign in West Orange, NJ can enhance the downtown.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Signs should be mounted no more than one story above the sidewalk level.
- Pedestrian scale signs that are consistent with other signs in the downtown, and that compliment a building's architecture.
- Type fonts and colors that are legible.
- Distinctive lettering styles that represent the store. Artwork, icons, logos, and simple messages.



Commercial buildings typically have a long, thin (typically less than three feet wide) area above the storefront called the sign band, where a sign would be traditionally located, like this tattoo parlor in London. This is an appropriate location for signage today.



The free-standing sign for the Police Department at Town Hall is made of wood and has gold lettering on a white background, which makes the sign easy to read for the public.



This carved wooden sign is made of high quality materials, and is located in West Orange, NJ. The simple and straight forward design is recommended. The lettering is carved into the sign. The gold leaf and white lettering placed against the darker brown background makes the sign highly legible.



Signage for stores does not need to be complex to be effective, as seen here in Elgin, IL. This store sign identifies the business in a straight-forward way using white applied lettering on a dark brown background.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Using many signs that are confusing to read. One or two signs work best.
- Covering building elements such as windows or doors with signs.
- Covering an aggregate of more than 25% of all the window and door glass with painted or paper signs on the glass.
- Attaching paper signs to the window glass.
- Using long, complicated messages.
- Internally illuminated signs.
- Using large projecting signs that require a metal armature being attached to the building.
- Flashing, moving or animated signs, even if located behind the glass of a storefront.



Signs made of banner like materials, as seen here on a building in Westfield, NJ, are not recommended in downtown Laurel.



Covering more than 25% of the window, as seen here on a building in Wilmington, DE, with painted or paper signs on the glass is not recommended in fashion, as can be seen here on a Philadelphia commercial building.



Internally illuminated plastic signs like the one seen here in Bridgeton, NJ are not recommended in downtown Laurel.



Flashing, animated, or moving signs, even if located behind the glass of a storefront, as seen here on a building in Philadelphia, are not recommended for downtown Laurel.

Objective

Awnings add color to an exterior building element that serve a practice, purpose, and enhances the store's appearance, if appropriate for your building.

RECOMMENDED

- Assess your building for the appropriateness of an awning.
- The size of the awning must be scaled to the size of the building and its context in the commercial district.
- Use an awning that has a simple shape.
- Use weather resistant fabric material. Consider using retractable awnings.



Much of downtown Laurel was made of brick in the 19th and 20th century. These small-scale buildings, most often two or three stories tall, create a pedestrian scale, walkable downtown made for window shopping. Note the many canvas awnings along this street. Source: Laurel Historical Society.



Traditionally, awnings were either solid colors or striped like this chocolate brown striped awning in Crystal Lake, IL. This property owner used a striped awning to enhance an otherwise plain building.

RECOMMENDED CONT.

- Use awnings to create pleasant, shaded spaces. Use awnings to cool interiors and save energy. Use awnings to mask security grilles.
- Use awnings as signs.
- Use larger awnings to provide a covered place for outdoor merchandise display and sales on the sidewalk.
- Maintain awnings in good condition, wash and repair them as needed.



Awnings can be used for building signage along the valance, or side panels of the awning, seen here in West Orange, NJ.



Let the design of the building determine the number of awnings to be used. A building with separate windows and doors may need separate awnings that correspond to those divisions, like this Philadelphia shop with two bold colored striped awnings.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Use of back lit or internally lit awnings.
- Use of aluminum, plastic, or vinyl materials.
- Covering architectural elements with continuous or overscale awnings.



Maintain awnings in good condition, wash and repair them as needed. This awning needs to be washed or replaced.



Use of back lit or internally lit awnings like the one seen here from Georgetown, DE are not recommended in downtown Laurel.

Objective

To promote creativity while maintaining harmony and historic feeling for the downtown through the use of paint.

The Town of Laurel does not regulate specific colors for the re-painting of already painted historic buildings in the downtown. However, if you plan to use the Façade Matching Grant Program administered by the Town of Laurel, then the paint colors recommended here will apply.

Please note that the historic paint palettes from commercial paint companies noted here include more than 500 different colors, so we are certain that you can find colors that will work for your project.

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 that owners consider a scheme utilizing three colors: base, trim, and accent.



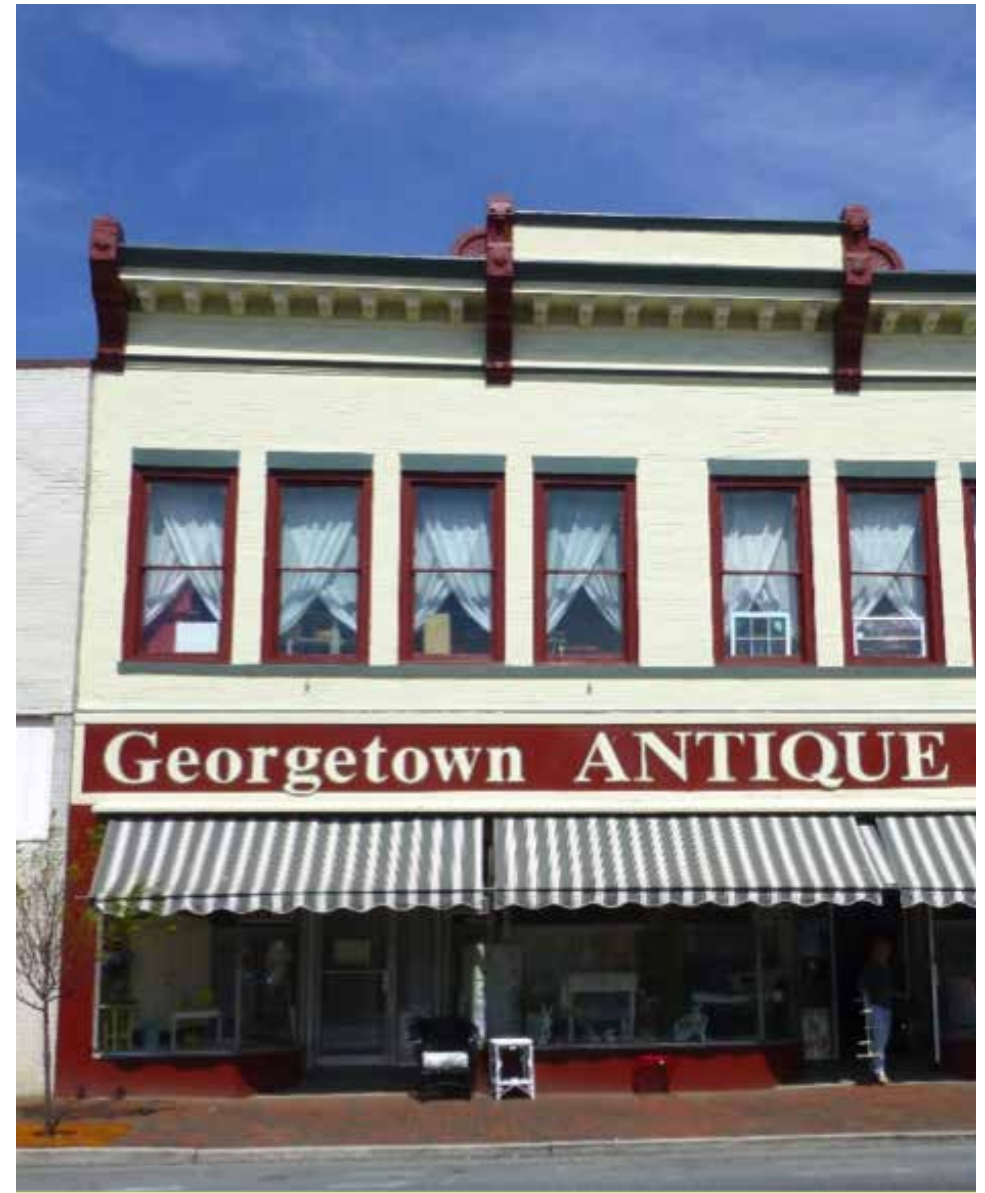
This handsome brick building had been painted several times, but the current three-color combination highlights all of the Victorian historic details on this façade in Geneseo, IL.

RECOMMENDED

- Color should be considered in the context of the entire commercial corridor.
- When choosing color for your building façade, consider how sunlight strikes your building. This will determine how the color really appears to the eye.
- Color should be used to bring together the elements of the entire façade, from the cornice to the entrance door.
- Color should complement, respond to, and enhance the architectural character and detailing of a building.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Using more than three colors, because it will make your façade less composed and coherent.
- Painting arbitrary lines, bands, or graphics directly on the façade that have no regard for the building's character or details.
- Do not paint any masonry that has never been painted before.



This property owner in Georgetown, DE has used a handsome color palette to pick out the historic details in this prominent downtown building.

Recommended color types for exteriors:

- Nature blending colors
- Earth tone colors
- Neutral colors
- Pastel colors

Historic Paint Palettes from Commercial Paint Companies

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

Valspar

National Historic Trust Colors

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| • American Classics | 4 palettes | link |
| • Traditional Heritage | 4 palettes | link |
| • Victorian | 4 palettes | link |
| • Modern Dwelling | 3 palettes | link |
| • Mediterranean Eclectic | 4 palettes | link |

Benjamin Moore

| | | |
|------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Historical Collection | 191 colors | link |
|------------------------------|------------|----------------------|

Sherwin Williams

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Historic Palettes | link |
|--------------------------|----------------------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| Exterior Historic Colors | link |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| • America's Heritage | 65 colors, 16 palettes | link |
| • Suburban Modern | 70 colors, 16 palettes | link |

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Interior Historic Colors* | link |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| • The Classics | 7 colors |
| • Colonial Revival | 7 colors |
| • Arts & Crafts | 15 colors |
| • Late Victorian | 23 colors |
| • The Jazz Age | 5 colors |
| • The Streamlined Years | 7 colors |
| • Suburban Modern | 6 colors |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| Historic Hues | 15 colors | link |
|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Color Through the Decades | link |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| • 1830s - 1910s | 12 colors, 2 palettes | link |
| • 1880s - 1910s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1920s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1930s - 1940s | 7 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1950s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1960s | 7 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1970s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1980s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 1990s | 6 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 2000s | 8 colors, 1 palette | link |
| • 2010s | 7 colors, 1 palette | link |

**Contains colors that work for both interior and exterior. Color count only includes paints that can be used on the exterior.*

Objective

Strengthen the appeal of your business and the character of the downtown district.

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.



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

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 downtown in areas that can be seen from public rights-of-way.



Using flowerboxes and urns as ashtrays is not recommended in downtown Laurel.

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.

In downtown Laurel, now filled with traditional buildings and storefronts, 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 of Laurel Planning and Zoning Department staff for advice in advance of submission of any preliminary plans. The following design factors should be considered:

RECOMMENDED

- 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 by maintaining the existing street wall.
- 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 and solid (wall) to void (window) relationships as neighboring buildings.
- The appeal of older buildings is often their use of quality materials and detailing. New construction should continue the use of established neighborhood materials.



This new building in a neighborhood commercial district in Chicago, IL maintains the street wall, is similar in scale to neighboring buildings, uses similar brick material, and maintains the same rhythm and solid (wall) to void (window) relationship as seen on other buildings in the district.

NOT RECOMMENDED

- Buildings with elements out of scale with the surrounding buildings, such as over-sized doors or windows.
- Buildings with elements incompatible 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.



This row of buildings actually screens a seven-story parking garage in downtown St. Charles, IL. While the intent was honorable, these building facades look fake and pasted on.

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. 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: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/successful-rehab/additions.htm>

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>.



This high quality and handsome new building in Metuchen NJ fits within the context of the downtown, but is clearly modern, and is not a reproduction of an historic building in town. This building maintains the existing street wall, is comparable in height, massing and materials to others on the street. The second story windows are much larger than others along the street, but they maintain the rhythm of its neighbors along the street. The storefront has large storefront windows, a retractable awning and the sign fits within the traditional sign band above the storefront and below the second floor windows.

Providing barrier-free access to historic structures is socially responsible, but accessibility to certain historic structures is also required by three specific federal laws: The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

These requirements apply to maintenance, change of occupancy, additions, and alterations to existing buildings, including those identified as historic buildings. Federal rules, regulations, and standards provide guidance on how to accomplish access in historic areas for people with disabilities to provide the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Appropriate interventions will provide barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled person to the highest degree practicable, while preserving significant historic features.

Where a determination has been made that alterations to qualified historic buildings or facilities to comply with accessibility requirements would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility, alternative requirements may apply.

Definitions

Per IBC 2012, Section 202, Existing Construction is defined as any buildings and structures for which the start of construction commenced before the effective date of the community's first

flood plain management code, ordinance, or standard. Existing construction is also referred to as existing structures.

Per IBC 2012, Section 202, Existing Structure is defined as a structure erected prior to the date of adoption of the appropriate code, or one for which a legal building permit has been issued.

Per IBC 2012, Section 202, Historic Buildings is defined as buildings that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or designated as historic under an appropriate state or local law. Much of Laurel's downtown is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See the map in Chapter 9.

More information about barrier free access

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards - Adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice (2010) and the U.S. Department of Transportation (2006) - <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-ada-standards>.

Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Standards - <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-aba-standards>.

ICC A117.1-2009 - Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities Standard.

Jetser, Thomas C., and Sharon C. Park, Preservation Briefs 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible. Washington DC: Technical Preservation Services, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior - <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/32-accessibility.htm>

State of Delaware Architectural Accessibility Standards - <https://dfm.delaware.gov/aab/documents/aabstand.pdf>

Terms taken from the Design Guide used 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 GUIDE: Written advice that is adopted by a municipality to serve as a visual and graphic aid in describing acceptable alterations for downtown properties within the boundaries. They are usually generously illustrated and written in a manner that would be understood by most property owners.

DISPLAY WINDOW: The main areas of transparent 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.

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

FACADE 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.

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 manmade 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 for interpretive purposes.

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.

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.

STREETWALL: The vertical plane along a street that is created by the facades of buildings.

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.

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

“Design Guidelines for Downtown Newark DE,” 4th Edition, 2016, found at <https://newarkde.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9611/DNP-Design-Committee-Revised-Design-Guidelines-2016>

“Design Guidelines for Torresdale Avenue in Tacony” for the Tacony Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia PA, 2013 found at <http://heritageconsultinginc.com/images/images/final-design-guidelines.pdf>

“Design Guidelines for East Market Street in Georgetown DE”, for the Town of Georgetown DE, 2014, found at https://imageserv11.team-logic.com/mediaLibrary/286/Georgetown_Design_Guidelines__FINAL_2014-10-15_.pdf

Further reading

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings Revised (2017) by Anne E. Grimmer from Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer (1995) The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

National Park Service. Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/index.htm>

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. 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.

History of Laurel publications

Further information on the history of Laurel is available from the Laurel Historical Society and at the Laurel Public Library. Use these books to learn more about the history of Laurel. Hancock, Harold. The History of Nineteenth Century Laurel. Otterbein College Print Shop, Westerville, Ohio; 1983 by the Laurel Historical Society. 439 pgs. Illus.

Sesqui-Centennial Laurel Delaware Booklet. Published by the Laurel Sesqui-Centennial committee and printed by the State Register Printing Company, 1952. 96 pgs. Illus.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Delaware 1609-1888. Reprinted by Delmarva Roots, 217 Schley Ave., Lewes DE 19958. 2001. Originally published Philadelphia, 1888. 2 vols. Illus.

Find these books at the following locations:

Laurel Public Library
101 E. Fourth St.
Laurel DE 19956

Laurel Historical Society
PO Box 102
Laurel DE 19956

Credits

Donna Ann Harris, Principal of Heritage Consulting Inc., wrote these design guidelines and provided photographs. Norma Jean Fowler wrote the history of Laurel section and provided historic photos from the Laurel Historical Society collections. Philip Green designed the document and provided photographs. Helen Gassmann edited the document.

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 fourteen 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 23 states. She has spoken for the last twelve 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, and a second edition is forthcoming in 2019. 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*.

Philip Green is dedicated to broadening economic opportunities and fostering community connectedness across the Philadelphia region. He is a freelance business and nonprofit consultant, graphic designer, and photographer.

He was the Program Co-Director, Corridor Development Manager for the North 5th Street Revitalization Project from 2011-2017. He is currently the Main Street Manager for the Ardmore Initiative, where he uses a grassroots and creative placemaking approach to drive equitable development.

Philip holds a Bachelor of Arts Magna Cum Laude in Sociology from Portland State University. He has presented at numerous economic development conferences and in 2015, he accepted the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations' Rising Star Award for that year. In his spare time, Philip pitches an 18-foot tall teepee that he made himself in parks across Philadelphia so that the public has a tranquil space to enjoy.

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Philip Green: 1, 2, 3, 5, 13, 15, 25, 32, 37 left and right, 42, 43, 47, and 69.

Laurel Historical Society: 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 (left), 13, 14, 17, 18, 23, 24, 35, 36 left and right, 39 right and 53 right.

Town of Laurel: 19, 20 and 21.

Illinois Main Street: 22.

