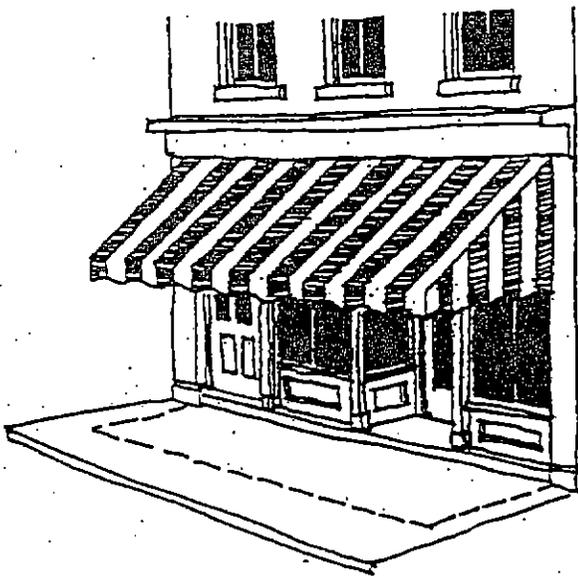


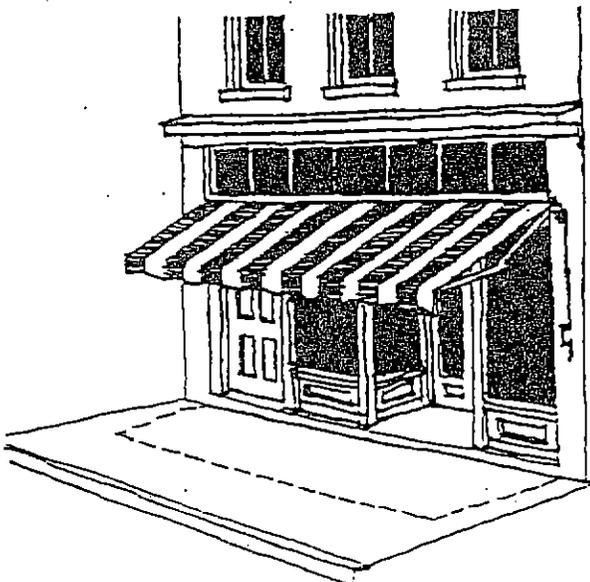
AWNINGS

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provided cover, added color and served as a transition between the storefront and the upper facade. Most buildings that face the sun had awnings. Look at old pictures of your building to see how awnings were used.

A standard street-level awning should be mounted so that the valance is about 7 feet above the sidewalk and projects out between 4 and 7 feet from the building. A 12-inch valance flap is usually attached at the awning bar and can serve as a sign panel.



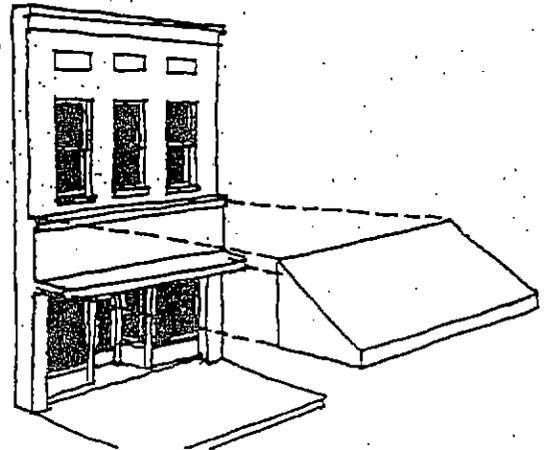
An awning can be attached above the display windows and below the cornice or sign panel. Sometimes it is mounted between the transom and the display windows, allowing light into the store while shading the merchandise and pedestrians from the sun.



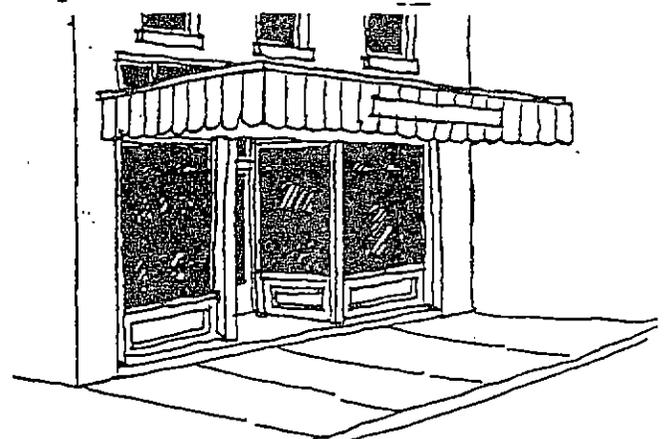
An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront and should not cover the piers or the space between the second-story window sills and the storefront cornice.



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



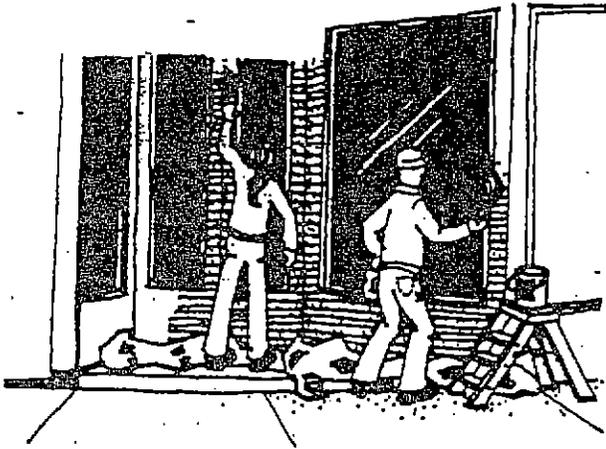
Aluminum awnings or canopies generally detract from the historic character and should not be erected. If a flat canopy exists, it can be dressed up with a 12- to 24-inch awning valance.



Various awning materials offer different colors and patterns. There are several to choose from: canvas, vinyl-coated canvas and acilan, a synthetic material. Each varies in cost and relative durability.

COLOR

Painting can be one of the most dramatic improvements you make to your building. Choosing the right combination of colors can unify the building elements within the facade as well as relate the building to others on the street. Three colors are sufficient to highlight any facade.



The base color appears on the upper wall and piers flanking the storefront. Often this color will be natural brick and will not require paint. If the building has been painted, a color should be selected that relates to the surrounding buildings.

The major trim color defines the decorative elements of the building, tying together the upper facade trim and the storefront. The trim color should complement the base color. If there is a natural stone or terra-cotta trim on the facade, it should serve as a trim color. Major trim elements include the building cornice; storefront cornice; window frames, sills and hoods; and storefront frame, columns and bulkheads (including aluminum framing).

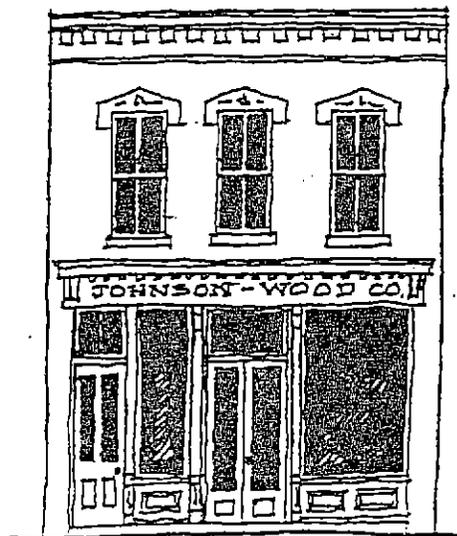
The minor trim color should enhance the color scheme established by the base and major trim. Often a darker shade of the major trim can be used to highlight the window sashes, doors and selective cornice and bulkhead details. Care should be taken not to over decorate the facade.

Color can also be used to minimize facade problems visually. A poorly patched and repointed wall is not as noticeable when it is painted; a missing upper cornice can be re-created with a one dimensional paint scheme; and inappropriate materials can be made more compatible with paint color.

Historic color schemes varied by availability of pigments, the stylistic preferences of a particular period and by regional differences dictated by climate. To get an idea of which colors were appropriate to your building, use a sharp pen knife carefully to scrape away the layers of paint from small areas where the base color and trim colors may have been. Lightly sand the scraped area and wet the surface. These colors can serve as a guide when choosing new colors.

MINOR TRIM

- WINDOW SASH
- DOORS
- STOREFRONT FRAME
- SMALL DETAILS ON CORNICES, WINDOW HOODS AND BULKHEADS



MAJOR TRIM

- CORNICE
- WINDOW CAPS
- WINDOW FRAMES
- STOREFRONT CORNICE
- STOREFRONT COLUMNS
- BULKHEADS

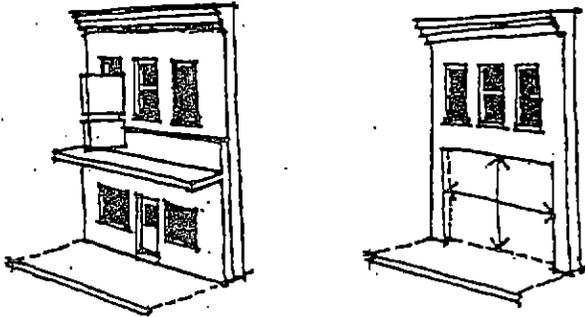
BASE COLOR

- WALL SURFACES
- STOREFRONT PIERS

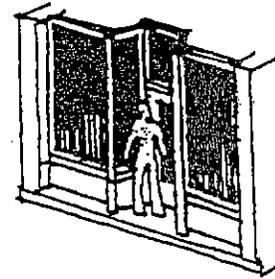
STOREFRONT DESIGN

Every traditional Main Street facade has a well-defined opening that the original storefront filled. The area is bounded by a pier on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom, and the lower edge of the upper facade on top.

Many problems with facades today are a result of this fact: The storefront has been allowed to stray out of its natural place within the facade. It no longer looks contained; instead it appears pasted on.



To emphasize this feeling of containment, a storefront might be set back slightly (6 to 12 inches) from the front.



• *Make It Transparent*

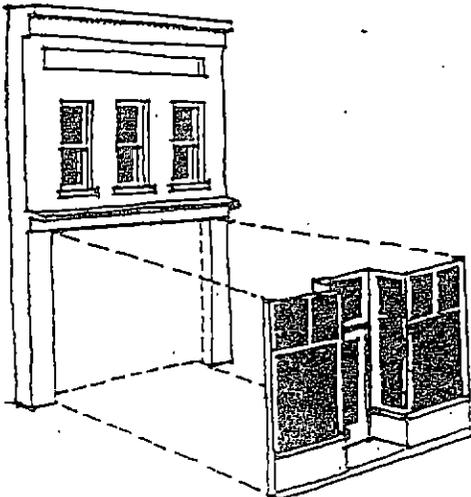
The traditional storefront was composed almost entirely of windows, providing maximum light and display. This large glass area creates a visual openness that is part of the overall proportional system of the facade and is as valid today as it was in the past.

Whether you are considering a restoration or more contemporary treatment, the storefront should be based on a traditional storefront design. The basic configuration can often be derived from old photographs of the building.

The following ideas suggest ways to think about a change in your storefront. Each is founded in the design of the traditional storefront; however, these ideas are not historical in nature. They are functional and make the storefront more attractive and accessible to shoppers.

• *Contain the Storefront*

A general rule for future remodeling can be stated as follows: A storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond it.



With the storefront closed in, the building on the right looks disjointed. The storefront does not relate to the facade; it is pasted on. As a result the building is not as inviting.

The traditional ratio of window to wall area is significantly less than it should be. Generally there should be more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper facade.

• *Storefront Materials*

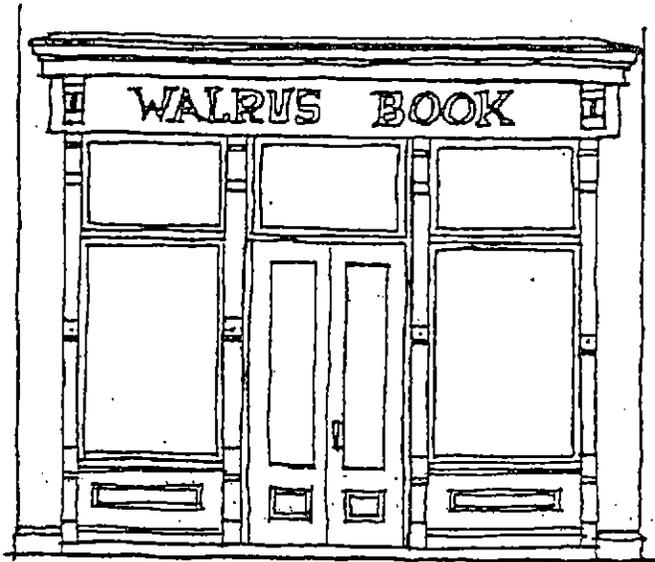
The color and texture of the storefront materials should be simple and unobtrusive: (1) The storefront frame can be wood, cast iron or anodized aluminum; (2) the display windows should be clear glass; (3) transom windows can be clear, tinted or stained glass; (4) the entrance door should have a large glass panel and can be made of wood, steel or aluminum; (5) the bulkheads can be wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile or aluminum-clad plywood panels; (6) the storefront cornice can be made of wood, cast iron or sheet metal or sometimes the horizontal supporting beam can serve as the storefront cap; (7) the side piers should be the same material as the upper facade, or stuccoed and painted to look the same.

Certain materials and design elements should never be used on a traditional commercial building. A mansard roof with wooden shingles, rough textured wood siding, fake bricks or stone and gravel aggregate materials are not appropriate.

Inappropriate historical themes should be avoided. Small window panes, a colonial door and storefront shutters are 18th-century elements that do not belong on most 19th or 20th-century facades.

low bulkheads at the base to protect the windows and define the entrance.

This basic configuration can be constructed from traditional or contemporary materials, achieving the same result.



TRADITIONAL STOREFRONT



INAPPROPRIATE HISTORICAL THEME



CONTEMPORARY STOREFRONT

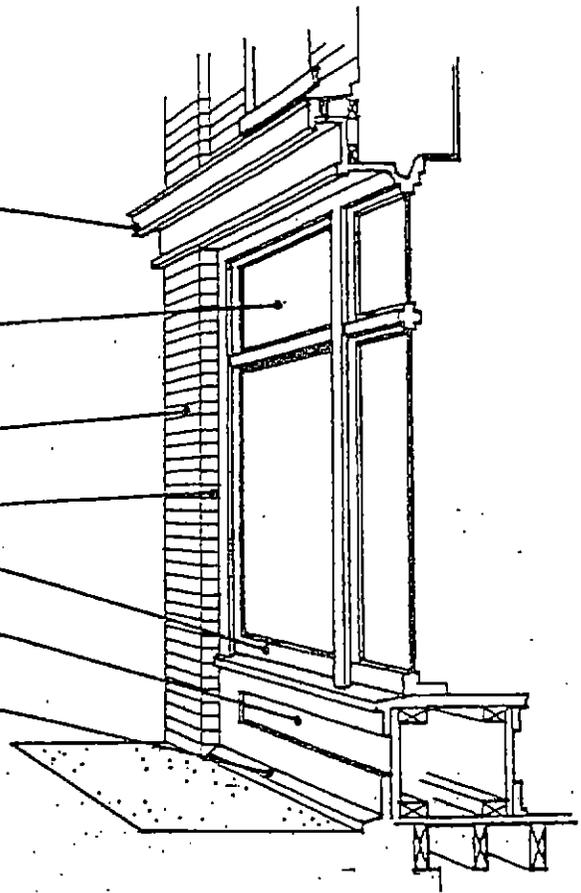
• *Keep It Simple*

When designing a new storefront or renovating an existing storefront, remember the emphasis should be on transparency. The basic storefront design should include large display windows with thin framing, a recessed entrance, a cornice or a horizontal sign panel at the top of the storefront to separate it from the upper facade and

The following page illustrates the construction techniques for a traditional wooden-framed storefront and for a more contemporary aluminum-framed storefront.

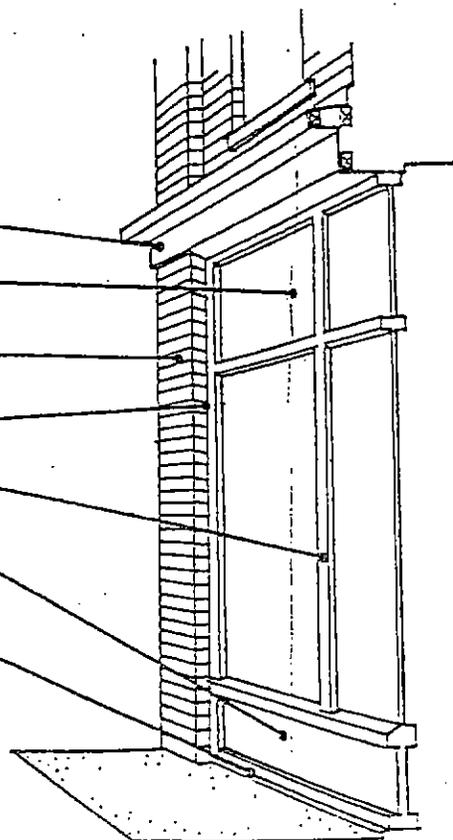
STOREFRONT WITH TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

- A cornice can be constructed with wood framing, plywood and moldings with a sloping sheet metal cap to shed water. The cornice spans the top of the storefront, often covering a structural beam or unfinished brick.
- Transoms are optional design elements that help to break up the massive effect of very large sheets of glass. Transom windows can be clear, tinted or stained glass.
- Masonry piers are uncovered and match the upper facade.
- The storefront is recessed 6 inches into the opening.
- The storefront and windows are framed in wood. The sill slopes forward for drainage.
- The bulkheads are constructed with wood framing and a plywood back with trim applied to it.
- The storefront rests on a masonry or concrete base to prevent water damage.

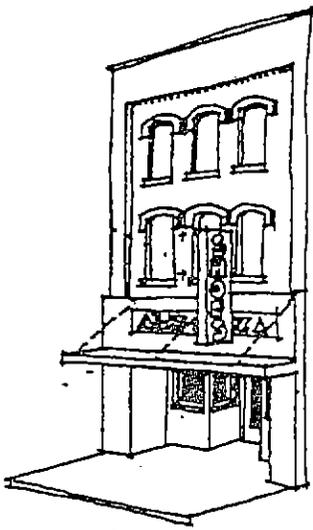


STOREFRONT WITH CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS

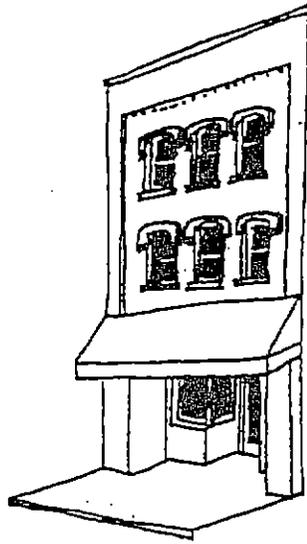
- A cornice is made with sheet metal over a wooden frame.
- Optional transoms can be stained glass, clear glass or opaque.
- Masonry piers are uncovered and match the upper facade.
- The storefront is recessed 6 inches into the opening.
- The storefront and windows are framed with dark anodized aluminum or painted aluminum.
- Bulkheads are constructed of aluminum framing and a plywood panel clad with aluminum.
- The storefront rests on a masonry or concrete base.



FACADE IMPROVEMENTS



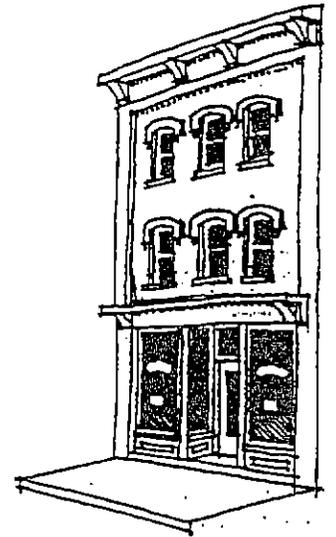
EXISTING FACADE



MINIMAL
REHABILITATION
\$3-5,000



MAJOR RENOVATION
\$8-15,000



RESTORATION
\$10-20,000

What to Do?

If you wish to improve your storefront, a good place to start is by finding old photographs of the building and studying how it originally looked. Determine what changes have been made and how they have affected the appearance of the facade. Investigate to see if the original storefront and facade elements have been covered over or removed. (Sometimes parts may have been removed and stored in the basement or on the upper floors.)

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

Minimal Rehabilitation

This preservation approach to rehabilitation requires basic maintenance, necessary replacement (missing windows), removal of extraneous materials (over-sized signs, and tacked-on storefront coverings) and simple design improvements (properly proportioned sign, new paint scheme and new awning). Cosmetic treatments can help unify the building by covering over a blocked down storefront with an awning or painting a contemporary storefront a dark receding color to minimize its effect.

Major Renovation

This approach retains the existing original elements of the facade while using contemporary as well as traditional design and materials for replacement of inappropriate elements. For instance, when installing a new storefront any of these three alternatives would be appropriate: (1) a contemporary design constructed in wood or anodized aluminum; (2) a simplified version of a traditional storefront in wood or aluminum; or (3) a traditional period storefront constructed in wood. In all major renovations, care must be exercised to insure that the design of any improvement is understated so as not to compete with the overall character of the facade.

Restoration

This approach requires that the facade be brought back to its original condition. It involves the exact duplication of the original storefront, detailing, color schemes and sign placement. If a building has undergone only minor alterations, restoration may be inexpensive and desirable.

In considering each of the above approaches, always remember to retain as much of the original facade as possible and to analyze carefully the effects of any improvement both to your building and to the streetscape.

INFILL CONSTRUCTION

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots in downtown should be encouraged. The design of a new infill building, particularly its front facade, is a special problem. The new facade should be designed to look appropriate and compatible in the midst of the surrounding buildings.

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

There are several ideas that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

• Proportions of the Facade

The average height and width of the surrounding buildings determines a general set of proportions for an infill structure or the bays of a larger structure.



The infill building should fill the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.

If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be broken into a number of smaller bays, to maintain a rhythm similar to the surrounding buildings.

• Composition

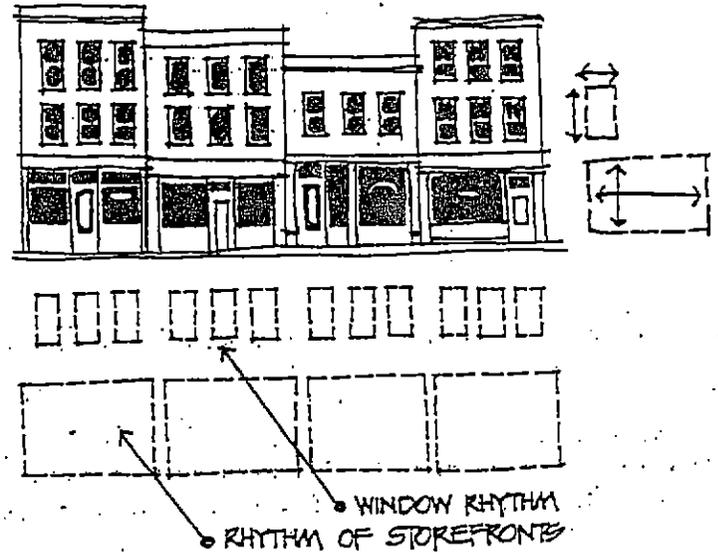
The composition of the infill facade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.

Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new facade.

• Proportions of the Openings

The size and proportion of window and door openings of an infill building should be similar to those on surrounding facades.

The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.



• Detailing

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

• Materials

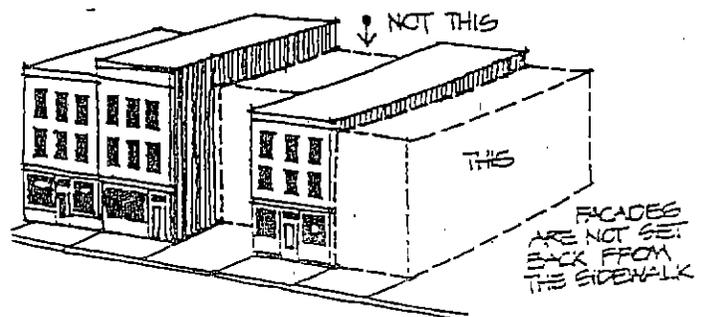
An infill facade should be composed of materials similar to the adjacent facades. The new building should not stand out against the others.

• Color

The colors chosen for an infill facade should relate to the building's neighbors.

• Building Setback

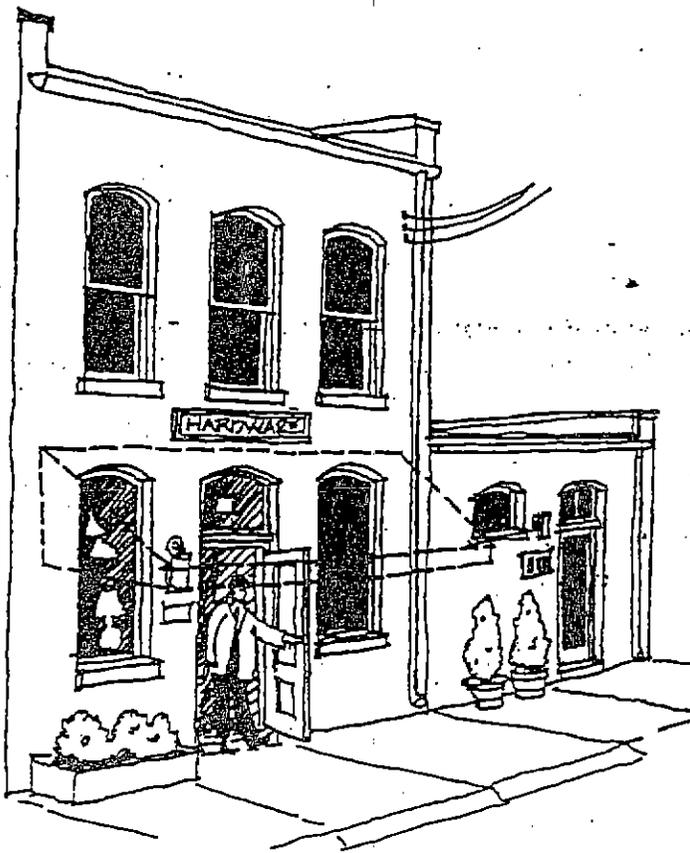
The new facade should be flush to its neighbors.



REAR ENTRANCES

As parking areas are developed behind stores, the backs of buildings are becoming more visually important. By improving the appearances and developing rear entrances, this back facade can serve for more than just deliveries. A rear entrance can provide direct customer access to your store from parking areas as well as improve circulation between the parking lots and the street.

In considering a rear entrance, think about some of these ideas:



- You may have to rearrange your display and storage area to handle the change in circulation.
- The rear facade should be clean and well-maintained. It should welcome customers, not threaten them.
- A small sign at the rear door should identify the store.

- An awning can be added for visual identification and convenience.
- Back windows can serve as secondary display windows.
- If there is enough sun, planter boxes might be added.
- Refuse containers should be hidden with a fence or simple enclosure.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES

These guidelines are not restoration guidelines. They are based on simplicity and quality of design, they are intended to help you make improvements that are appropriate to older commercial districts and can apply to most commercial buildings, both old and new.

You should consult your state historic preservation office and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* when considering a restoration or a project in which you intend to take the 25 percent investment tax credit for rehabilitating a certified historic structure.

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