State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan Historical Center
Department of History, Arts, and Libraries

Creating Design Guidelines for the Historic Commercial District

Written by: Mary Jo Byrnes
Assisted by: Bryan Lijewski, Megan Melinat, Amy Arnold

Michigan Historical Center
State Historic Preservation Office

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INTRODUCTION

Design guidelines are among the most useful tools available for preserving community character in a traditional commercial district. The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has prepared *Creating Design Guidelines for the Historic Commercial District* for the growing number of Michigan communities interested in protecting the feel, or "sense of place," of their historic Main Street. Many of these same communities are also seeking ways to revitalize commercial activity on Main Street and take advantage of new development opportunities that promise solid economic growth. What often distinguishes communities that achieve both goals -- preserving the best of the past and attracting desirable growth -- is their awareness of and dedication to preserving community character.

Since the movement first gained attention in the Unites States more than 25 years ago, historic preservation has emerged as an effective partner in downtown revitalization strategies. Cities like Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Holland include solid economic gains among the many social and cultural benefits they've experienced since actively engaging in preservation activities. By protecting the distinctive qualities of the traditional commercial district, preservation enhances the downtown environment, strengthens community identity, and promotes Main Street as a unique tourist and shopping destination.

Historic preservation programs can take many forms: the creation of an official local historic district; private rehabilitation of vacant historic buildings for modern uses; community funded economic development projects that rehab and reuse "white elephant" properties as business incubators or job training centers; targeted revitalization programs like "Michigan Main Street;" or facade improvement campaigns among local merchants to "spruce up Main Street." Design guidelines have been used successfully in programs like these and others to guide growth and arbitrate a community-supported balance of tradition and change.

The process of creating design guidelines can transform passive citizens into proactive community stakeholders and effective advocates for quality public space. The design guideline process builds community awareness and participation by recounting town history, building awareness of urban design principles through education events, setting up community information networks, and providing opportunities for

public discussion, feedback, and consensus building. The process culminates in a publicly defined and supported vision of the future. Design guidelines empower citizens to manage change and growth by providing an objective framework for evaluating a proposed design's potential for enhancing the qualities described in that collective vision.

Creating Design Guidelines for the Historic Commercial District assists communities with the crucial first steps: identifying the character-defining traits of the built environment, and creating effective design guidelines to preserve and strengthen them.

Part I: Preserving Community Character

CHAPTER 1: DESIGN GUIDELINES AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

1. A Tradition of Change

More than any other part of town, Main Street has a strong tradition of change and adaptation. Though upper stories often remain the same, few of the commercial structures found on Main Street possess their original storefronts. Main Street is a collage of period styles conjured by constantly changing tastes and advances in building technology. Less glamorous but nonetheless powerful realities like climate and geography, an owner's financial limits, and the skill of local craftsmen shaped this flickering array as well.

However different the individual buildings may be from one another, each was designed for the same purpose: to bring the customer face-to-face with the merchandise. A bit of street theatre, storefronts of every era promised shoppers a respite from the ordinary and a chance to be an important player in a sophisticated and fashionable world. In the scramble to succeed on Main Street, merchants embraced change to distinguish themselves from the competition and to bolster their image as trendsetters.

Property owners still expect storefronts to be functional, attractive and inviting, to protect merchandise from the elements, and to direct customers inside. New building materials and merchandising techniques continue to change the look of Main Street as retailers strive to stand out from the crowd and successfully compete in a changing marketplace.

2. What is Community Character?

What comes to mind when you think of your downtown? If you were to tabulate the responses from even a handful of your neighbors, you would find points of agreement, differing opinions, and some startlingly fresh and provocative impressions. The variety of responses is testimony to the richness and complexity of the forces that have combined to create this distinctive place. Community character is found in all the separate elements of the surrounding streetscape that together provoke a sense of place unique to that location.

Community character is historic and dynamic at the same time. The buildings of Main Street are the

surviving record of the people and events that shape a town, a shared memory of the principles and traditions that guided its establishment and sustain its survival. The significance of Main Street exists simultaneously in the past, present and future. More than any other place, it is the embodiment of the community's soul and the face it presents to the passing world.

3. What are Design Guidelines?

Design guidelines are a consistent set of criteria used to evaluate proposed changes in the appearance of the built environment of a designated area. The criteria help communities decide whether new buildings or alterations to existing buildings and landscapes are desirable and appropriate at a particular location. They are typically created to protect the features that contribute to the community's identity.

Design guidelines are usually developed for neighborhoods with distinct architecture and ambience, whether fine or humble, ceremonial or uncomplicated. They may be areas with buildings and streetscape features that capture the essence of some important aspect of community character. The erosion of the character, and hence viability of such a district, represents a costly, inefficient, and sometimes irreplaceable loss of community resources. These areas can be particularly vulnerable to changing development pressures, economic downturns, and neglect. Design guidelines stabilize and secure by protecting the character-defining traits of an area, shielding it from inappropriate development, and protecting district properties from harmful neglect or insensitive alterations. By maintaining what was significant and worthwhile from the past, design guidelines safeguard a valuable community resource and help sustain or revitalize commercial viability.

Some communities decide to incorporate a review process in their programs to further insure that any change proposed for a building or streetscape in a commercial district, whether rehabilitation of an existing building or new construction, is compatible with the criteria outlined in the design guidelines. A Design Committee of seven to nine local volunteers, including some with specialized knowledge of building design and community history, employ the guideline criteria to evaluate the project's potential impact on the district's appearance and ambience. Whether committee opinions are binding or simply advisory, design guidelines provide a fair, systematic, and rational method for evaluating development in terms of its impact on community

character and support of stated community goals.

4. How Do Design Guidelines Preserve Community Character?

Design guidelines help communities evaluate proposed changes as they relate to the scale, proportions, materials and other characteristics of existing architecture and streetscape. These characteristics contribute to the unique sense of place created over many years, and have significant impact on the experience of inhabiting that place, or what is often called "quality of life." Based on a careful survey of the character-defining traits of the district, the guidelines address each significant quality individually and describe appropriate methods for preserving these traits in existing buildings and encouraging their appearance in new construction.

Change to the physical environment also occurs within a context of established community values. **Communities that take the time to define the aspects of community life they value most and to develop a plan for preserving them are best equipped to encourage growth that furthers community goals and improves quality of life. Design guidelines empower communities to direct change rather than become unwitting victims of blind market forces and thoughtless expansion.**

By taking care that new additions or alterations to the landscape do not diminish existing historic properties, design guidelines encourage the dynamic interaction of old and new traditions. By encouraging the creation of new buildings that contribute equally enduring examples of contemporary design to the historic streetscape, design guidelines invigorate and enrich community character.

Safeguarding Community Character

The small scale of Main Street stores is one of its most distinctive characteristics. The appearance of large-scale buildings can diminish the historic character of the shopping district.

Design guidelines can help prevent incompatible differences in scale by describing the existing ratios of height to width that determine scale, and suggesting solutions for harmoniously incorporating new construction in the historic streetscape.

Guidelines encourage the preservation of community character by identifying historic building materials unique to certain localities. Guidelines can offer specific suggestions for incorporating historic materials in renovations of

existing buildings and in new construction.

5. Design Guidelines and Economic Growth

Today historic commercial districts face the tremendous challenge of competing in a changing market place. The struggle for commercial viability is fierce and historic traditions are often sacrificed in a market hungry for "the next big thing." But after decades of preservation activity in this country, many retailers have learned that the distinct community identity developed over generations on Main Street can actually strengthen market position for local retailers. In a sense, historic preservation provides a blueprint for a more effective competitive strategy.

Preservation-based revitalization programs in many cities throughout the country have successfully employed design guidelines and other development strategies to strengthen community identity and bring robust commercial activity back to Main Street. Design guidelines protect and encourage the authentic and unique qualities of a neighborhood. They help Main Street merchants achieve their number one goal: to distinguish themselves from the competition. Of course, design guidelines are only one tool in a comprehensive strategy of community development that includes supporting the efforts of local merchants to create a distinct and profitable niche in the commercial market place. The process of creating design guidelines expands the discussion about change and growth to include the impact of community aesthetics and quality of life on economic development. These issues are rarely considered when evaluating development proposals, yet they are of great consequence to promoting growth in local economies.

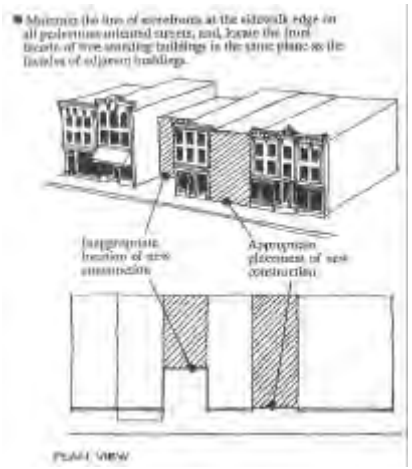


Figure 1:
New construction guideline example that suggests methods for maintaining the historical setbacks on Main Street. The drawings and text work together simply and effectively to explain the concept and its purpose.

Check out reports that detail the economic benefits of historic preservation at: **www.nationaltrust.org**

6. The Sources of Authority: Community, History, Streetscape

Where does the vision of community character come from and what makes it compelling? The most effective design guidelines are firmly grounded in local history and existing historic resources and grow out of a community-driven desire to protect and enhance community life. Every citizen has a stake in preserving community character and the quality of the public spaces they inhabit and support through paying taxes. The commercial district is a public space. Communities that provide numerous opportunities for public education, discussion and consensus building throughout the process are more likely to create design guidelines that are a legitimate reflection of community values.

When communities recognize the significance of community character and understand the forces that threaten its integrity, they are ready to write effective guidelines to protect it. This doesn't happen overnight; planning and public outreach initiatives are essential. The process of creating design guidelines builds community awareness and appreciation of how the elements of environmental design are uniquely expressed on their own Main Street. The development of design guidelines instructs local design committees and the community at large in the vocabulary and fundamentals of design, and cultivates their ability to evaluate the impact of proposed development on the quality of public spaces. Design guidelines that facilitate a broad historic view of the effect of incremental changes to the built environment help communities develop a thoughtful, intelligent, and flexible strategy for encouraging growth that strengthens the community and improves the quality of life.

The success of design guidelines depends on community support. The Design Committee builds public support through education and advocacy initiatives that effectively convey the intent of the guidelines, the value of historic resources to community identity, and the importance of building functional, aesthetically pleasing, and safe public spaces to the welfare of the community. The Design Committee's most important job is to provide the information, background perspective, and opportunities **the public** requires to articulate a shared vision of community character that brings legitimacy to the process of creating design guidelines.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORIC BUILDING TREATMENTS AND THE STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. Historic Building Treatments

The Secretary of the Interior has defined four treatment approaches for historic buildings: preservation, restoration, reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Secretary defines the precise nature of these different treatments and has created specific sets of standards for each. The design guidelines discussed in this publication are based on the *Standards for Rehabilitation*, but the four complete sets of standards can be found in Appendix C.

Preservation

Preservation is a word often used to describe any work done to historic buildings. In the technical sense, preservation means keeping a building in its current form while at the same time taking measures necessary to prevent further deterioration of the structure. Work includes ongoing maintenance and repairs, as well as fortifying structural members or patching openings in the exterior envelope of the building if necessary.

Preservation means taking measures necessary to keep a building in its current form and prevent any further deterioration.

Restoration

Restoration means returning a building to its appearance and condition at a particular point in time. Extensive documentation of the building during this period is required in the form of architectural drawings, photographs, or contemporary accounts to protect the historical integrity of the building. Restoration is expensive and demanding and usually involves some compromises. The treatment is usually reserved for buildings of outstanding historical or architectural interest that function as museum pieces. Alterations and additions that occurred after the "target" time period are reversed or removed, and all missing features that can be documented as existing at that time are recreated. Sensitive but minimal upgrades to the structural and mechanical systems are allowed to make buildings functional.

Restoration returns a building to its appearance at a particular point in time and is usually limited to buildings with significant architectural or historic interest.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction involves building an exact replica of a non-surviving structure as it appeared during a specific period in time in its historic location. Available historic material is often not adequate to properly document a building, and because of the potential for historical error, reconstruction projects are rarely undertaken.

Reconstruction means recreating a building that no longer exists. Adequate documentation of the original building is required to build a replica with the degree of historic integrity required by the Standards.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the most common treatment for historic buildings and the one that is applicable to commercial buildings on Michigan's Main Streets. Many people are confused about the distinctions between restoration and rehabilitation and the terms are often used interchangeably. Rehabilitation is the process of returning a property

to a state of utility through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use. Rehabilitation includes a wide range of approaches toward improving an older structure from an exterior paint job to extensive interior reconstruction. Treatment standards permit the introduction of non-historic elements if they relate well to the older parts of the building. The treatment allows repairs and improvements to accommodate new uses compatible with the building's structural and functional capabilities. The standards suggest methods for protecting building features with the most historic, cultural, and architectural significance.

Rehabilitation standards are followed in design guideline programs. It is the treatment most often applied to Main Street's commercial structures and permits a wide range of improvements compatible with the building's historic appearance and functional capabilities to accommodate new uses.

2. The Standards

The United States Secretary of the Interior has developed *Standards for Rehabilitation* that serve as the authority for evaluating the most appropriate alterations and additions to the historic resources in the traditional commercial district. Experience has proven that occupied and functioning historic buildings are in less danger of demolition and permanent loss to the community than those that remain empty or underused for decades. The *Standards* help property owners make the best choices for preserving the historic integrity of their buildings as they consider construction methods and materials during rehabilitation, as well as proper maintenance techniques throughout the life of the building. By following the *Standards*, owners of qualifying properties can become partners with the state and federal government in preserving valuable historic resources and can apply for significant tax credits for the cost of rehabilitation. (See Appendix B for more information on tax credit programs.)

The complete text of the ***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*** should be included in your design guidelines:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Part II: The Origins and Architecture of Main Street

CHAPTER 3: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SETTLEMENT FORM

Michigan communities today wrestle with many of the same basic questions that faced American settlers in New England and the Northwest Territory:

- What form should a town take?
- How to manage growth?
- How to enhance community life?

The design guideline process represents a unique opportunity for communities to reflect upon the attitudes that drive Michigan commercial development in the 21st century in comparison with earlier American settlement history.

Figure 2: Main Street is a distinct district within a town where commercial activity and other specialized services are concentrated. It is marked by groups of storefronts standing closely together at the edge of a major transportation corridor.

1. Survey Systems and Settlement Patterns

Cultural geographers call the arrangement of buildings, sidewalks, and streets that most Americans recognize as Main Street a "settlement pattern." Michigan's familiar settlement pattern is the result of the adoption of the Land Ordinance Act by the United States Congress in 1785. This act established a new surveying system that imposed an orderly grid of equal sized sections on the land of the Northwest Territory. Known as the township and range system, it replaced old world survey methods, such as metes and bounds, used in the

Figure 3: The Northwest Territory was opened for settlement in the years following the American Revolution to raise money for the struggling new government.

early settlement of New England. The township and range system provided a simple, accurate method of assigning a parcel of land an identifying number. The system facilitated the sale of land and led to the rise of land speculation in the Midwest, an important factor in the settlement of the American frontier. Under the Land Act, Michigan was divided into townships of 36 square miles each. This size was chosen because a man could easily walk six miles in one day.

Michigan's earliest communities were simple crossroad settlements in central locations in a township. They typically included a township hall, a church, an inn and/or a store. Evidence of these early township-based, crossroads settlements can still be found throughout rural Michigan.

2. The New England Influence

The opening of the Erie Canal led to a rapid migration of New Englanders to Michigan in the 1830s. As New Englanders migrated west, they brought their town planning traditions with them. A typical New England town plat often included a central "green" or "commons," used for grazing livestock, and a mix of houses, churches, schools and businesses surrounded the green. This pattern reflected the agrarian lifestyle of the times. The town plats of Michigan's earliest settlements adapted the New

Figure 4: All the characteristics customarily held to distinguish one property from another were expressed in the metes and bounds deed. At the same time, the litany of people and landmarks once vivid and familiar connected a property to its neighbors all around, unequivocally positioning it within the community and securing it to its unique place on earth.

The switch to land descriptions that measured purely rational values rather than traditional uses or connections signaled a shift toward a more detached, commercial attitude about land ownership. The efficiencies of the ***township and range*** *system and the abundant supply of cheap land opened the market to an unprecedented number of people and generated intense speculative trading.*

England pattern for a new environment. Since land was plentiful, a commons was not needed. The commons became a formal town square or a central park surrounded by commercial and civic properties. Residential houses were separated from the commercial area and clustered in adjacent neighborhoods. These early towns were usually located on a river where there was water power to run a saw or gristmill.

*The township and range system assigned each territory a **meridian** to measure vertical distance on the grid, and a **baseline** to determine horizontal distance. County and township dividing lines often developed into major roads as well, and can be detected today by names such as "Meridian Road," "Baseline Road," and "County Line Road."*

3. The Rise of Railroad Towns

When the railroads became the dominant mode of transportation in the late nineteenth century, the Midwest saw the rise of "railroad towns." Many towns were actually platted by railroad companies and/or speculators to encourage expansion into unpopulated territories. These railroad towns typically had a linear orientation. The commercial buildings often ran along a road that paralleled one side of the rail line. Other towns grew up at key points along the tracks where they served as distribution centers for the surrounding rural area. These prosperous towns were less likely to spare valuable land in the downtown commercial district for parks and greens. Thus, the idea of the town square was abandoned, replaced by the densely built, continuous line of storefronts that we see on most Michigan Main Streets today.

In the early twentieth century, electric railways, or interurbans, connected small towns across the state. America's first suburban residential neighborhoods, which were often accompanied by their own small commercial strip, developed at interurban stations on the outskirts of established towns. Interurban companies often built elaborate parks outside of towns to entice residents to utilize their services.

4. The Automobile Shapes the Land

Figure 5: Settlement form continues to evolve. Today's urban patterns reflect the challenges presented by the automobile and our changing responses to its demands.

Main Street flourished and held to its original pattern for more than 125 years. While advances in building technology and the development of different styles would superficially change the look of Main Street, nothing altered the traditional commercial district as profoundly as the automobile. The growing importance of the automobile in American life after World War II created a radically different way of living on the land.

The automobile presented Americans with boundless opportunity and yet this new freedom came with its own set of demands that posed fundamental challenges to how Americans functioned in familiar urban settings of every scale. Within a few decades, super highways crossed the nation and new satellite towns developed beyond older suburbs on farmland that had traditionally surrounded and separated towns and cities. These suburbs represented an entirely new pattern, neither urban nor rural, and their car-friendly qualities easily trumped the appeal of the centrally located, densely developed city core. Traditional town centers lost residents and businesses as the new suburbs expanded, steadily filling scattered farm fields with non-farm homes.

CHAPTER 4: COMMERCE SETTLES ON MAIN STREET

1. Commercial Architecture Arrives

The pattern of twenty to twenty-five foot wide contiguous buildings set back an equal distance from the street is common to most Main Streets and is directly related to early construction practices and available technology. In the early nineteenth century, the efficient single span of a wood joist was about twenty-two feet and this was reflected in the width of the typical storefront. The sidewalls were one foot thick masonry structures designed to limit the spread of fire between buildings. These technical specifications were more or less universal and dictated the scale of commercial architecture on Main Streets everywhere.

Figure 6: Growing American demand for retail goods gave birth to the commercial storefront, a new architectural form. The narrow buildings with their large front windows and central doors provided

- *valuable street frontage to as many merchants as possible,*
- *were immediately distinguishable from other public buildings,*
- *prominently displayed merchandise, and skillfully led customers inside for the sale*

Local conditions affected how building forms were expressed in Michigan in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Joinery techniques and decorative motifs often revealed a builder's cultural background and building materials reflected local geography. These "region specific" factors combined to create what is known as **vernacular architecture.** Michigan's limestone and sandstone quarries produced the distinctive stone materials found throughout hundreds of Main Street buildings. The state's dense forests supplied timber to frame and finish the many structures built in Michigan throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century. Local craftsmen chose traditional styles for building houses, barns, and churches. As the need for commercial buildings became apparent, builders lent distinctive local details and materials to storefronts as well. Many Michigan communities are fortunate to have surviving examples of local building traditions that vividly express deep connections to time, place, and ancestry.

Figure 7: Michigan vernacular architecture

The authority of vernacular building traditions began to fade as simultaneous advances in technology brought new influences to shape the appearance of commercial architecture. Improvements in printing and transportation technology provided broad access to the stream of new products made possible by improvements in manufacturing processes. In addition, the emergence of the professional architect as a source of design ideas made town building less dependent on local attitudes and conditions than ever before.

This remarkable convergence of technological advances gave commercial architecture a more democratic and cosmopolitan approach to high style than residential or institutional architecture had yet managed to achieve. Architects published high style pattern books consulted by storeowners from Detroit to Iron Mountain, Boston, New York and beyond. Mail order catalogues began to appear everywhere, selling complete iron storefronts cast in a factory and shipped wherever the rapidly developing network of railroads could carry it. Produced, delivered and installed at a fraction of the cost of traditional building methods, manufactured storefronts provided merchants of considerable or modest means the privilege of dressing their buildings in style. The same trains delivered steel framing members to local builders. Soon, taller buildings began to appear on Main Street. Their steel skeletons permitted less space to be devoted to structural support and more attention given to the extravagant details of popular styles.

Figure 8: Trains brought stylish mail-order storefronts like this one to towns throughout Michigan. Arriving in town on Monday morning, the one-piece storefront could be swiftly assembled and operational before the week's end. Commercial property owners were important consumers of high style architecture.

The development of commercial architecture provides perhaps the first demonstration of the phenomenon of popular culture on a national level. Powerful new technologies united Americans in a common cultural experience that in the nineteenth century gave rise to the concept of fashion in architectural forms. In the past, access to high style architecture was limited to important public institutions or the private homes of the very wealthy. The growth of commercial trade in the nineteenth century and the simultaneously occurring manufacturing and transportation advances allowed large numbers of ordinary people to not only experience stylish architecture but influence fashion trends as well.

These were momentous changes. The demands and limitations of tradition, geography, climate, natural resources, local labor, time, and space were challenged and overcome to an unprecedented degree for an extraordinary number of people over a huge area at a breathtaking pace!

Early Michigan town builders were now offered choices that freed them from some of the most fundamental concerns that had traditionally influenced the creation of architectural forms. Fashion trends that arose in the east might take decades to play out across the country, but they inevitably appeared in even the most remote frontier towns and villages on the way west. Empowered by technological ingenuity, and driven by market forces as no other form of architecture, commercial architecture catered to public taste and produced constantly revised and perfected visions of high style that captured the vigorous optimism of a youthful, rich, and growing nation.

2. The Anatomy of a Commercial Building

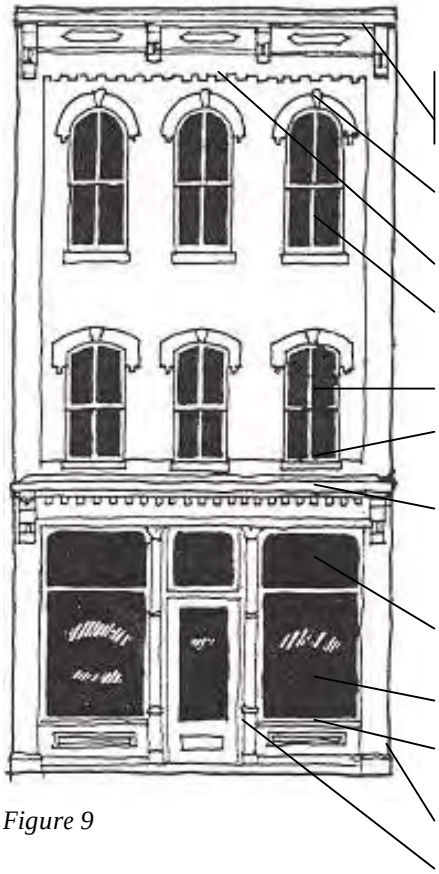


Figure 9

What is it called?	What is it made from?
Parapet Cornice	Galvanized sheet metal, brick, wood
Lintel	Stone, brick
Masonry corbelling	Brick
Window	Wood double-hung sash
Muntins	Wood
Sill	Stone, brick
Storefront cornice	Galvanized sheet metal, wood
Transom	Glass/ wood
Display window	Glass
Bulkhead	Wood millwork
Column	Brick, cast iron/ millwork
Pilaster	Brick, cast iron/ millwork

Facade

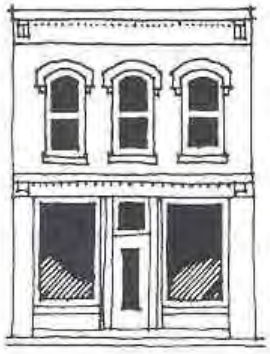


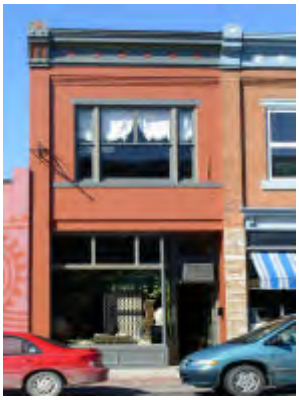
*Figure 10: **Façade**: The front of a building; also any side of a building facing a public way or space.*

Regardless of age, the **facades** of almost all downtown commercial buildings are divided into three sections. Beginning at the bottom they include the **storefront**, the **upper facade**, and the **cornice**. Most changes in the design of downtown commercial buildings have taken place because of improvements in the way glass is manufactured and the introduction of new materials like cast iron, steel, aluminum and

structural pigmented glass. Despite these technological advances, the commercial building's three basic design elements have remained the same for over a century. They give Main Street buildings visual cohesiveness. Each element is closely related to the others and together they create a balanced architectural composition.

Figures 11 & 12: As American manufacturers learned to make larger sheets of glass, or plate glass, display windows grew larger, occupied more of the storefront, and offered unobstructed views of merchandise.

Figures 13 & 14:
Advances in cast iron and other metal technologies created storefronts with elaborate details.



Figures 15 & 16:
Improvements in the manufacture of structural steel members allowed wider openings between walls.

Figures 17 & 18:
Structural pigmented glass, aluminum, and neon lighting made new details possible.

The Storefront

Figure 19: ***Storefront****: The front of a shop at street level, usually having one or more windows for the display of goods.*

The *storefront* is the street level section of the front façade. To a Main Street merchant, the storefront is the most important part of a building and the point of opportunity to grab a customer's attention. As the focus of intense marketing efforts, it's not surprising that storefronts typically undergo many modifications during the life of the building. The storefront is also the most complex part of the building, consisting of many different design elements that have a great impact on the appearance of the individual building and the entire streetscape.

The Parts of a Storefront

Figure 20:
A ***structural beam*** *spans the storefront The beam is often exposed on the outside of the building and might be decorated or used as a background for sign lettering.*

Figure 21:
In other instances, the structural beam may be concealed by a decorative cornice running the width of the storefront opening. This is often called the ***storefront cornice****.*

Figure 22:
***Transom windows** are smaller windows above the large **display windows** that allow daylight to enter deep into the interior space. Today many transom windows are concealed, or have been removed during a previous storefront remodeling.*

Figure 23:
*The major feature of the storefront is the large glass **display windows**.*

Figure 24:
***Bulkheads** below the display windows function to protect the window by raising the glass area to a safer height and, historically, provided ventilation at the street level.*

Figure 25:
***Bulkheads** also make viewing merchandise easier for pedestrians by elevating items. Historically, materials have included wood panels, marble and ceramic tile.*

Figure 26:
***Entries** are typically recessed to provide more area for display space, to emphasize the store entrance, and to provide a sheltered transition to the store interior.*

Figure 27:
***Entry doors** use large glass panels to create a sense of openness and invite visitors inside.*

Figure 28:
*The **double entry door** was a typical feature of storefronts until modern aluminum framed doors became available.*

Figure 29:
***Signs** appear in various shapes and sizes, usually in the storefront area, but they can appear elsewhere on a building.*

Figure 30:
*The most common signs are **flush mounted,** applied directly to the wall surface.*

Figure 31:
*Because **window signs** are easier to access and many can be easily changed, window signs are often used to announce special sales events.*

Figure 32:
***Hanging signs** just above eye level grab the attention of pedestrians. Representational Signs (in the shape of the advertised merchandise) are especially prized.*

Figure 33:
*The **awning**, **canopy,** and other devices that shelter the sidewalk area in front of the storefront are considered optional accessories today, now that air conditioning controls interior temperatures. They are still useful as protection from the fading effects of direct sunlight.*

The Upper Facade

The upper façade is the area above the street level storefront opening. It contains both wall material (typically brick, wood, or stucco) and windows.

Figure 34:
A typical upper facade of a 19th century commercial building. Note the different shapes of the tops of the windows from floor to floor.

Figure 35:
Upper facades are often made of a contrasting material to the storefront.

Figure 36:
Upper facades often use decorative brickwork or other elements in contrasting materials to create patterns that emphasize the horizontal lines of the building.

Cornice

Figure 37: ***Cornice:*** *The exterior trim of a structure at the meeting of the roof and wall.*

The entire façade – storefront and upper façade together – is capped by a decorative cornice at the top of the front wall. The cornice might be made of elaborate wood moldings, pressed metal, terra cotta, brick, or other materials, and gives the building a visual termination.

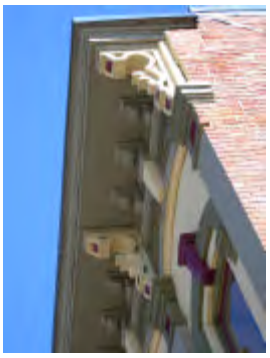


Figure 38:
A cornice made of elaborate wood moldings. Notice how it is attached to the building.

Figure 39:
A pressed metal cornice conceals the roofline of this building.

Figure 40:
Cornices can also be constructed of other materials. The example here is terra cotta.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, many buildings lost their delicate, decorative cornices. As merchants began modernizing their stores after World War II, elaborate cornices were considered old-fashioned and high maintenance, and were routinely removed or never replaced if damaged.

Figure 41:
Most commercial structures have flat roofs hidden by the extension of the front wall plane.

Figure 42:
If this vertical extension is low, it is known as a ***parapet.***

Figure 43:
If the vertical extension is great, perhaps doubling the height of the building, it is known as a ***false front****.*

Figure 44:
Rooflines are often embellished with cornices or other decorative details including arched or ***stepped sections****.*

Figure 45:
Often the brickwork seen today at the top of a facade wall is not the original roofline treatment but a modern fix to repair wall damage or replace a missing cornice.

The significance of these elements goes beyond their importance to the composition of individual buildings. Regardless of its age, a downtown building's components help it blend in with surrounding buildings and the entire block. The storefront, upper facade, and cornice create a pattern that repeats from one building to the next, tying the streetscape together and creating a visual rhythm that provides orientation to pedestrians and motorists. Through this repeated pattern, the streetscape itself takes on design characteristics as distinctive as those of individual buildings. In Part III we'll discuss these design relationships in greater depth because they comprise the details that are a significant source of our perception of community character on Main Street.

CHAPTER 5: MICHIGAN COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Figure 46: Main Street is a collection of styles popular during different periods of the town's development. A predominance of fine buildings of a particular style or period may be evidence of an era of prosperity and optimism in a town's history.

The typical Michigan Main Street today is made up of small-scale commercial structures, many of which date from the nineteenth century. The lively variety in style so common on America's Main Streets was made possible by continued perfecting of steel and concrete framing elements, the manufacture of larger, clearer, and stronger sheets of glass, and the invention of the elevator, the electric light, and air conditioning systems. The importance of the storefront extended well beyond the need for shelter and functional space and became a crucial component of creating an identity that distinguished a business from its competition. As merchants became more aware of its usefulness as a marketing tool, the storefront was frequently altered to accommodate the most fashionable architectural styles and technological advances. The following glossary of architectural styles provides a historical context for the variety of styles that appear on Michigan Main Streets.

The Greek Revival Style (1820 – 1860)

Greek Revival Style can be considered the first true commercial style because it was during this period that buildings used solely for retail trade first appeared. As a young nation the United States identified closely with the ancient democracies of Greece. Classical Greek architecture was a source of ideas for many public and private buildings. The Greek Revival style was also a tremendously popular choice for homes in Michigan and more of these survive than their commercial counterparts.

Figure 47:
Greek Revival (1820 - 1860)

- Gable end forms triangular pediment facing street
- Temple fronts
- Heavy cornices
- Bold, simple moldings
- Column and pilaster details
- Smooth wall surfaces

Italianate (1840 – 1880)

In response to the abundance of formal classical styles, many architects advocated a more natural and picturesque architecture, which came to be called Italianate. The style has a diversity of sources and interpretations: the asymmetrical villas of the Italian countryside, the solemn palaces of Rome and Florence, and the rhythmically arcaded Renaissance palaces of Venice. All of these forms are frequently applied to commercial buildings. This is probably the most common style found on Michigan Main Streets.

Figure 48:
Italianate (1840 - 1880)

- Overhanging eaves with elaborately carved brackets
- Square, blocky buildings
- Heavy cornices
- Smooth wall surfaces often include corner **quoins**
- Brick and stone typical exterior

Second Empire Style (1860 – 1885)

In communities across the Midwest the Second Empire style may be found in many commercial buildings originally built in the Italianate style, whose owners merely added Mansard roofs above the cornice line in order to keep up with fashion.

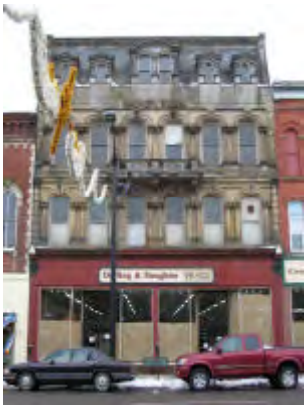


Figure 49:

Second Empire (1860 - 1885)

- Steeply pitched roof with dormers
- Deeply projecting cornice at base of roof
- Richly sculpted window surrounds
- Classical details
- Slate roofing material

High Victorian Gothic (1865 – 1895)

A lively combination of materials and shapes achieve an ostentatious display of visual effects in this exuberant style. In Michigan today there are more surviving homes in this style than commercial buildings.

Figure 50:

High Victorian Gothic (1865 - 1895)

- Numerous dormers and towers
- Thick moldings, pointed and banded arches, intricately carved columns surround windows and doors
- Window openings are pointed with decorative **tracery** on the upper part
- Colorful exterior materials include red, black and yellow brick; colored granite, limestone, sandstone, terra cotta, and ceramic

*Figure 51: **Tracery:** Curvilinear openwork shapes of stone or wood creating a pattern within the upper part of a Gothic window; or an opening of similar character formed by the decorative treatment of mullions.*

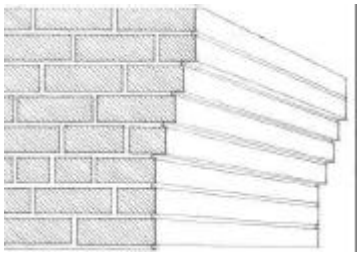


*Figure 52: **Corbelling:** In masonry, a series of projections, each stepped progressively farther forward with height; anchored in a wall, story, column, or chimney; and used to support an overhanging member or ornament.*

Queen Anne (1880 – 1890)

The diversity of forms and materials employed by practitioners of the style made it especially popular in all regions of the country during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Both residential and commercial buildings exhibit a variety of floor plans, roof shapes, wall surfaces, and materials.

Figure 53:

Queen Anne (1880 - 1890)

- Rounded or polygonal towers
- Decorative brick patterns including **corbelling**, bands of molded brick or terra cotta, inset panels with a sunflower or sunburst motif
- Windows of many shapes; upper panes often feature border of small squares of tinted glass
- First floor walls of brick or stone with contrasting wood, stucco or shingles on upper stories

Richardsonian Romanesque (1880 – 1900)

Many fine Michigan courthouses, railroad stations, and churches were built in this very popular style. The style emphasizes the massive horizontal proportions of the thick stone walls with deep-set doors and windows surrounded by heavy bands of decorative stone often in a contrasting color or pattern.

Figure 54:
Richardsonian Romanesque (1880 - 1900)

- Massive horizontal emphasis
- Deep-set windows of leaded glass and massive wood doors with rounded arches
- Commercial building roof hidden behind large cornice or parapet wall; other building types have slate-covered, hipped roofs and towers
- Windows often grouped in an arcade between columns
- Carved intertwining floral details appear across facade material

Colonial Revival (1890 – 1920)

The Colonial Revival was a conscious attempt to adapt the forms of Federal and earlier colonial architecture to contemporary needs. The style is characterized by rectangular floor plans and symmetrical facades. In Michigan downtowns it often appears in monumental city halls, schools, churches, newspaper buildings, and banks.

Figure 55:
Colonial Revival (1890 - 1820)

- Typically built of red brick with stone trim and wood moldings
- Flat roofs with balustrades or hipped roofs with dormers and a cupola
- Center of facade may project slightly forming a pavilion framed by pilasters rising to a pediment
- Fanlights above doors; Palladian windows and double hung sash with small panes

Beaux Arts Classicism (1890 – 1920)

The Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 largely influenced this style and gave rise to the City Beautiful movement. Visitors reveled in the grandeur and beauty of these impressive buildings and subsequently the style appeared in small cities and towns across America. The City Beautiful movement successfully promoted the style as a desirable choice for public buildings such as courthouses, libraries, and museums, as well as for railroad stations, theaters, and movie palaces. Cladding for these large, formal buildings include brick, stone, and stucco. The City Beautiful movement encouraged clusters of civic buildings around parks and advocated for distinctive entryways into towns, usually via decorative bridges and tree-lined boulevards.

Figure 56:

Beaux Arts Classicism (1890 - 1920)

- Symmetrically composed with dramatic contrasts of light and shadow
- Prominent paired columns or pilasters run the full height of the building
- Large arched openings and grand stairways
- Abundant amounts of decorative urns, swags, medallions, balustrades, and statuary

Renaissance Revival (1890 – 1920)

The Renaissance Revival style was another attempt to bring simplicity and order to architecture that had become so elaborate in the High Victorian period. More restrained than Beaux Arts, these buildings emphasize the rectangular form and horizontal lines of the Renaissance palazzo and are much larger than the Renaissance Revival buildings of the early nineteenth century.

Figure 57:

Renaissance Revival (1890 - 1920)

- Massive appearance of first floors accentuated by recessed windows and masonry laid with deep joints to create strong shadow lines
- Bold rectangular windows surrounded by crisply detailed moldings or arched openings
- Windows often arranged in a continuous arcade
- Typical exterior materials are stone and marble

Neoclassical Revival (1890 – 1920)

The Neoclassical style is more plain, solemn and weighty in appearance than other revival styles as it was modeled on Greek and Roman temples. It was considered an appropriate style for bank buildings.

Figure 58:

Neoclassical Revival (1890 - 1920)

- Dramatic entrances with pedimented porticos and massive columns rising two or more stories
- Flat rooflines top large expanses of unbroken wall surface
- Windows detailed with classical lintels
- Most often clad in stone or brick

Commercial or Chicago Style (1890 – 1925)

First appearing in Chicago, this was an original style developed in response to pressures for utilitarian buildings with the greatest possible leasing area and interior light. Advances in steel structural systems and the invention of the elevator allowed these buildings to rise from five to sixteen stories. The high ratio of window to wall area and the slightly projecting masonry piers and pilasters give the stripped down façade a skeletal appearance.

Figure 59:

Chicago Style (1890 - 1925)

- Level roofline finished by a bold band of masonry or terra cotta, or by a deeply projecting, but very simple cornice
- Straight fronts that are a careful balancing of vertical and horizontal lines
- Made of brick and terra cotta on a steel frame
- Decorated in pastels or earth tones with gilding

Art Deco (1925 – 1935)

Art Deco's exuberant celebration of the future was an emphatic break with the revivalist tradition in architecture. New materials like structural pigmented glass and neon were exploited for their versatility and glamour. Traditional materials like marble, granite, terra cotta, bronze, steel, concrete, and stucco were fashioned in fresh, original forms. Art Deco reflected America's fascination with speed and was a product of a new field – industrial design – that arose in the 1920s.

Figure 60:

Art Deco (1925 - 1935)

- Bold ornamentation in low-relief geometric designs or very stylized natural motifs
- Fluted piers and pilasters emphasize verticality
- Vividly colored facades

Art Moderne (1935 – 1955)

Where Art Deco stressed the rectilinear, Art Moderne celebrated the sleek and curvilinear. Designers admired speed and the modern machine and chose the most technologically advanced materials of the period, like stainless steel, glass block, porcelain-enameled steel and opaque structural glass to achieve the fullest expression of their modern aesthetic.

Figure 61:
Art Moderne (1935 - 1955)

- Streamline buildings with low horizontal appearance
- Sleek and smooth surfaces without ornament
- Rounded and curved canopies and windows
- Spandrel panels run in unbroken bands of glass and color

International Style (1930 – 1970)

In contrast to earlier designers, advocates of the International style purposely created a sense of separation between their buildings and the surrounding streetscape. The structures often stand alone in a plaza, are elevated on columns, or appear set back from the surrounding line of buildings.

Figure 62:
International Style (1930 - 1970)

- A sleek, clean aesthetic that rejects nonessential decoration
- Roofs are flat
- Windows run in continuous bands, often wrapping around corners
- Typical materials are glass, steel, stucco and reinforced concrete

Post-Modern (1970 – Present)

Post-modern architecture is characterized by a freewheeling adaptation of earlier styles including ornamentation and historical forms.

Figure 63:

Post-Modern (1970 - Present)

- Contemporary adaptation of historic forms
- Facades typically asymmetrical
- Buildings respect their context, often quote details of neighbors
- Exterior walls typically brick, stone, stucco and cast concrete; metal often used for details

Part III: Understanding Main Street: Patterns in the Streetscape

CHAPTER 6: THE BASIC LANGUAGE OF DESIGN

1. Becoming Public Space Advocates

The process of writing design guidelines engages the entire community in a critical evaluation of the physical environment they inhabit. Before this can be done with any authority, participants must become more aware of their unconscious responses to the design relationships between surrounding streetscape elements on Main Street. Learning to look for something you take for granted in familiar territory takes some training and practice. Many people assume they are not capable of such careful observation. Other people fear that they are not designers and therefore cannot participate in design decisions. This is not the case; developing your innate design competence makes you a more discerning consumer of design. As is true in all human endeavors, the creative process is different from the critical process: you may not have the skill to sew a coat, but after years of wearing coats, you know if one is well made.

Participants in the design guideline process advocate for quality in public spaces; they are community stakeholders competent enough to pass critical judgment on the aesthetics of public spaces. Design guidelines empower community members to work with building and design professionals and exercise their aesthetic competence as consumers of public space. Aesthetic competence is based on your awareness of the urban design composition, and your understanding of how the relationships between the elements in a composition impact your response. As human beings we cannot help but respond to our environment; the trick is bringing those responses to the forefront of our minds.

This chapter will prepare you to undertake a design analysis of Main Street. We'll discuss some basic design principles and find out how design relationships appear in the streetscape composition. We'll consider Main Street qualities like the size and shape of buildings, the patterns created by window openings in walls, the color and texture of material, and observe how they operate together (and with others) to

create the particular "sense of place" we experience when we spend time downtown. This brief introduction to design can help participants learn to identify the design relationships active in their hometown streetscape, discover how they work, and write guidelines to protect those that are most significant.

2. Guiding Principles

While there are no hard and fast design rules, there are a few universal **relationships** between the **forms** in a **composition** that designers have **experimented** with throughout history. The relationships are "universal" in the sense that they appear in all the visual arts of all cultures and have endured throughout human history in every corner of the earth. There are two guiding principles that will increase your awareness of design relationships and help you understand basic principles of composition: unity, and unity with variety.

Unity

Designers of all types strive for a harmonious relationship between the separate elements of a composition. Unity in design means that the parts are in accord and are connected to each other in some sort of underlying pattern. There is a reason they are grouped together. Each element plays its part in creating the effect of a harmonious composition. Whether the pattern is very subtle or quite obvious, unity is achieved if the viewer first sees the composition as a unified whole rather than a haphazard collection of separate elements.

Though we may not be conscious of doing so, we look for clues that hint at an underlying organization in every place we inhabit. Usually, we are pleased and interested in the view if we detect the pattern. Humans routinely rely on their ability to read pattern clues to get a sense of where they are and keep themselves oriented in any environment. Some streets display a virtual symphony of patterns that discretely hold buildings of very different size and shape in a unified pattern. Here are just a few of the ways architectural designers make separate elements look as if they belong together.

The Grid

The grid is a form of continuity that is particularly significant to urban design. We discussed grids in Chapter 4 in relation to the Township and Range survey system. The grid system brought order to the task of identifying and dividing thousands of square miles of varying types of land. Unlike previous systems that relied on established community relationships to specify property, the grid imposed regular geometric spatial relationships between the properties and thus brought order to a potentially bewildering process. Grids operate in much the same way in design compositions by establishing orderly visual relationships between disparate elements to create harmony. Planners and architects use grids at every scale throughout a locality to organize and make sense of the built environment, from forty-acre subdivision plats to the control panel of an elevator car. Here are some of the ways the grid operates to bring unity to the streetscape.

Proximity: *Simply putting elements close together is an easy way to make them look as if they belong together. We make sense of letters only when we group them closely together in separate words.*

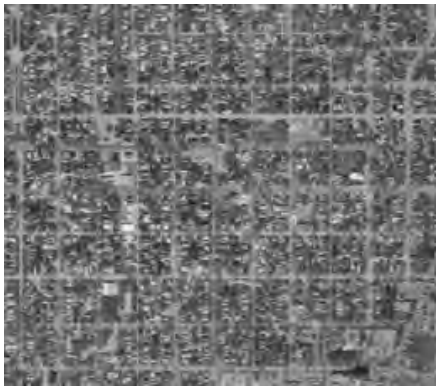
Continuation: *A subtler device than proximity and repetition, continuation carries the viewer's eye smoothly from one element to the next.*

Figure 64:

Repetition: *A widely used device for achieving visual unity in architecture is repetition. A single element such as color, shape, texture, angle -- or even more than one element-- simply repeats in various parts of the design to relate the parts to each other.*

*A **grid** is a network of horizontal and vertical intersecting lines that divide space into a framework of smaller areas. The elements that occupy the area may change, but the basic space division remains the same.*

Figures 65-68:
The Grid: *A grid holds things together and brings a sense of unity to things that are different from each other but exist in a single format, such as a streetscape. Environmental designers use grids at every scale:*



Town

Neighborhood

Building…

-- down to tiny details! This small pattern recalls the larger pattern of the building facade and tells us they are part of the same whole.

The Importance of Unity with Variety

Designers are always performing a balancing act between lively unity and boring uniformity. They work to bring orderliness to a composition, but not so much order that they create visual boredom. Unity with variety is similar to the musical concept of theme with variations and is a basic artistic ideal. In the streetscape, building widths may repeat but in different ratios. Other patterns may repeat but, perhaps, at different scales or in different materials and colors.

Figure 69: Unity with variety

The goal of any design guideline program is to preserve and sustain the ideal of unity with variety on Main Street. The concepts presented here should not be thought of as rules but simply observations about how forms behave together. Unity is a guiding principle, an ideal that designers strive for in their compositions. It has particular relevance for designers of human environments.

CHAPTER 7: THE LANGUAGE OF URBAN DESIGN

Figure 70:
Primary Building Qualities
Design relationships of Main Street buildings that contribute to community character:

- *Height*
- *Width*
- *Setback*
- *Proportion of openings*
- *Horizontal rhythms*
- *Materials*
- *Roof forms*

1. Establishing Criteria for Describing Main Street Design

Urban designers have identified a set of primary attributes that have the greatest impact on the character of an area, or what is called the "sense of place." These primary characteristics are: height, width, setbacks, the proportion of openings to solid wall, horizontal rhythms, roof forms, materials, color and the presence of a unifying grid. As you will see in the following pages, each of these qualities is actually a description of a particular design relationship between the individual buildings or other elements of the streetscape. When these relationships exist in harmony, Main Street's unique character is strongly expressed. As strong determinants of community character, these qualities provide a framework for creating an appropriate set of design guidelines for local commercial districts.

The first step is to observe how these qualities exist in the commercial district. Your observations describe the area in terms of the primary characteristics that are present on your Main Street. The observations are catalogued and become the definition of your community's unique character. Secondly, when written into the Design Guidelines, that definition of community character becomes the objective standard for compatibility when evaluating proposed changes or additions. Let's look more closely at how these qualities appear in the district and their impact on the sense of unity or overall feel of the place.

Figure 71:
Putting the Design Criteria to Work
Consider the effect of height on the sense of unity on a Main Street. If the average height of the buildings is 40 feet (roughly three stories), a new seven or eight-story building could create a sense of disunity because it disrupts the firmly established height pattern.

Figure 72:
However, the architect of this building(corner bay window) chose to manipulate some of the other design relationships present on Main Street that also have a tremendous impact on the area's character.

Figure 73:
The building has a prominent design element across the front of the building at the same height as the storefront cornices of existing buildings.

Height and Width

Height is often a strong characteristic that distinguishes the downtown from neighboring areas. Height and building lot width are usually the most predominant visual qualities of a downtown area. Downtowns were often subdivided into relatively narrow and deep lots to provide street frontage to as many as possible. The parade of uniformly sized buildings creates a powerful rhythm along Main Street that is a strong character-defining trait.

Buildings that cover two or more lots continue the pattern by dividing the facade into bays that repeat the common lot width exactly, or refer to it by breaking down into fractions of the width. When this happens, we see a little variety in the rhythm, but the basic or controlling rhythm is unchanged. This is another good example of unity that allows lively variety and avoids the dangers of sameness.

Figure 74:
Height and Width
The proportions of the height and width of most buildings are relatively constant within a commercial district. Wide buildings are usually divided into separate bays, reinforcing the overall proportions of the streetscape.

Setback

Like height and width, setback is a feature that distinguishes downtown from neighboring residential areas. Commercial buildings are typically set directly on the front lot line, commonly known as zero lot line development. This creates the wall of buildings often associated with urban areas. The effect is exaggerated by the close proximity of the buildings to each other. Filling the entire width of the lot from side to side with storefront takes advantage of valuable Main Street frontage.

Figure 75:
Zero Lot Line Development
Uniform setback creates the impression of a "wall of buildings" enclosing Main Street on both sides. The effect is intensified by the contiguity of the buildings. It is one of the commercial district's most distinctive qualities.

Proportion of Openings

The proportions of door and window openings throughout the downtown area, and especially in adjacent buildings, are relatively constant. The height of upper-floor window placement is also somewhat constant, reinforcing a strong horizontal relationship among upper-story windows along the block.

Figure 76:
***Proportion of Openings** determined by:*
- ***Shape -** Narrow vertically oriented rectangles*
- ***Size -** Similar in length and width*

***Spacing** - Stacked above each other with a width of two or more windows between openings.*

Horizontal Rhythms

The repetition of similar elements on building facades creates a rhythm that strongly characterizes an area. We become aware of this rhythmic quality through horizontal movement. Imagine speeding past miles of regularly placed telephone poles. This is a very common design relationship in urban environments and operates as a strong unifying force. A definite pattern of horizontal rhythm sets up a subtle but sturdy framework that "connects" buildings that may be very different from each other in many other details. It is a major device for creating and maintaining unity in a diverse streetscape. Again, note that this is another design relationship that highlights strong connections between elements, yet at the same time allows for a great variety of expression in terms of materials, forms, styles, etc.

Figure 77:
Horizontal Rhythm
*Our eye is pulled smoothly along the continuous band of cornices and the pattern creates a sense of connection between the buildings. This is a good example of how **continuation** creates unity.*

Figure 78:
Strong visual distinction between the upper and lower floors can be achieved through materials and colors, too. On this city block, the storefront cornices create the strong horizontal rhythm.

Materials

Downtown buildings share a history of local building materials. These common materials help link your town to its geographical setting. Common trims including wood, limestone, terra cotta, ceramic tile, or rounded plaster corners may finish openings.

In addition to their practical uses, building materials are major design elements. Every building material has unique qualities of color, form, and texture. When combined in a single building, relationships between different materials create a lively pattern. For example, the contrast between the red brick walls and the white limestone window trim on the facade of a typical commercial building creates a pattern of light and dark that is repeated all along Main Street. Such patterns are significant features in creating a "sense of place" that distinguishes the traditional commercial district from other commercial areas.

Figure 79:
Materials
Local materials can be an important expression of community character. For example, red sandstone is a prevalent building material in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, as reflected in the construction of Ishpeming's city hall.

Figure 80:
Materials
The color, texture, and form of building materials can help define a building's character. Combining building materials of contrasting colors on the main facade creates a powerful vision on this Main Street building.

Roof Forms

Rooflines are one of the features that immediately distinguish commercial buildings from residential buildings. Most homes have some form of a pitched or sloping roof, whereas most commercial roofs are relatively flat and usually hidden by the vertical extension of the front wall (the parapet).

Figure 81:
Roof profiles *are usually consistent throughout downtown areas. Consistent profiles help create a strong rhythm of design elements along the street.*

Color

Building materials and coatings such as paint provide color to a building facade. Color also plays a powerful unifying role in the streetscape. Colors of buildings on Main Street may differ considerably, depending on the materials used and the climate of the area. (A discussion of historic color palettes is found in Chapter 14.) The placement of colors – rather than the number of colors – best accentuates the architectural detail of a building. Colors should tie the architectural elements together, and this scheme should be consistent throughout the façade's upper and lower portions. Color creates relationships between buildings as well.

Figure 82:
Color *can reinforce or create relationships between elements of an individual building.* ***Color contrast*** *creates a strong differentiation between the ground floor and the upper stories of this building.*

Figure 83:
Repeating color *ties the cornices together in this block and reinforces the horizontal rhythm they create.*

Figure 84:
Categories of color on a building

- *The base often matches the natural color of building materials, such as brick or stone*
- *The major trim color is used to frame the facade, doors, and windows; it also is the primary color of the cornice and major architectural elements.*
- *If a minor trim color is used, it often is a darker shade placed on doors and window sashes.*

2. The Streetscape

Figure 85

Individual buildings are the basic components of Main Street, but an urban environment includes other common elements, built and natural, that together form the streetscape. Elements such as awnings, street furniture, kiosks, and public art all contribute to the overall atmosphere of a downtown commercial district.

Part IV: Writing the Design Guidelines

CHAPTER 8: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

The Design Guideline Process can be divided into four sequential phases: organizing, surveying, writing, and administering. Each phase of the process has its own set of tasks to complete. The focus of this publication is the essential tasks that take place in phase two and phase three to produce the definition of community character that forms the basis for writing the design guidelines. Later in this chapter, Section 4 briefly describes options for organizing the process and administering the guidelines, and directs readers to other resources for those particular issues. The discussion includes examples of successful strategies used by other communities to complete each phase of the process. Communities may expand upon these activities as they see fit. The Design Committee takes the lead for each step and the entire process should take no longer than a year to complete.

1. Phase One: Organization

Tasks:

1. *Establish approach*
2. *Appoint the Design Committee*
3. *Establish timeline and schedule*
4. *Plan public education events*

Establish Approach

Communities will approach the design guideline initiative in different ways depending on their circumstances. Some communities choose to hire an architect or historic preservationist to survey their downtown, analyze the results, compose the design guidelines, and present them to the community at the end of the process. In other cases, the local historic district commission, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), or some other existing committee drafts the design guidelines. In most communities, the mayor or city council appoints a Design Committee to administer the process and perform all the necessary tasks to create the guidelines. At the end of the process, the Design Committee typically dissolves and a committee is formed to administer and enforce the guidelines.

The organization phase is also the time to decide if the guidelines are mandatory or voluntary. If your community decides to make compliance to the design guidelines mandatory, procedures for

administering the guidelines need to be established. These might include project review hearings, appeal procedures, and enforcement. Those issues go beyond the scope of this publication. The National Park Service has more information on administering a design guideline program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON: Administering a design guideline program
www.cr.nps.gov/hps/workingonthepast

The Design Committee

Depending on the size of the community, the Design Committee typically consists of seven to nine members and includes at least one architect, a person familiar with historic preservation principles, and an authority on local history. The committee may work alone and present a finished product to city council for approval. Some communities involve the public from the very beginning and rely on a process of consensus building to define community character and create appropriate guidelines to protect it. Most communities probably use a combination of professional assistance from local architects or consultants, volunteer committee work, and public feedback. The majority of Design Committee members should be familiar with architectural styles, design principles, and preservation practices.

The Design Committee's first meeting should be used to discuss the process and establish future meeting procedures. A frank discussion of the expected time commitment and members' ability to meet those commitments should precede establishing a timeline for the process. Though the committee will do most of the work as a group, individual members can be assigned responsibility for publicity, liaison with city council, public education, or other areas of concern.

Building public support for the guidelines is essential for establishing an effective program that truly represents a shared vision of your community's future. Communities that invest time and effort in involving the public in every step of the process are more likely to succeed at creating an authoritative set of Design Guidelines that enjoy widespread community support. Public outreach activities should include explaining the purpose of the design guidelines, gaining public input on a definition

of community character, demonstrating design principles and their impact on Main Street, and publicizing the Design Committee's activities and progress. The National Main Street Center website provides examples of public outreach activities developed by other communities engaged in a design guideline process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON: Public outreach activities
www.mainstreet.org

2. Phase Two: Inventory

Tasks

1. *Determine boundaries*
2. *Windshield survey*
3. *Sidewalk survey*
4. *Analysis, refine boundaries*
5. *Define community character*

Figure 86

Once the committee and the organizational details are established, the first job is to determine the boundaries of the area to be protected by design guidelines. The designated area is often referred to as the project area, or the protected area. The Design Committee will take an inventory of this area to observe and list the character-defining features. It is important to assess the qualities present in the downtown in order to determine exactly what specific traits the guidelines are intended to protect and encourage. The inventory, or survey, provides a "baseline" measure of existing conditions.

Two different types of surveys are required. A windshield survey is essentially a "drive-through" evaluation of the area that provides a clearer sense of how the commercial district fits within the larger context of the town and surrounding area. Once this broad overview is completed, the Design Committee is ready to narrow their focus to the design relationships present in the project area by conducting a sidewalk survey.

The sidewalk survey provides a detailed visual assessment of the traditional commercial district by carefully noting the significant

features of existing historic and non-historic buildings, the streetscape, and the natural landscape. In addition, the sidewalk survey evaluates the historic character of the area: Are the historic resources intact? Has the historic integrity of the area been preserved? The sidewalk survey orients the committee and apprises them of existing resources and conditions.

When the surveys are complete, the analysis begins. Through a series of committee workshops and/or public forums led by a design professional and skilled facilitator, the Design Committee takes stock of the information they've gathered. Any necessary adjustments to the project area boundaries are made at this time. Finally, through a process of careful observation and discussion, a consensus list of Main Street's unique qualities takes shape.

3. Phase Three: The Design Guidelines Publication

Tasks

1. *Establish the context and create a set of criteria from the consensus list of character defining traits.*
2. *Write guidelines that provide suggestions for maintaining harmony in the streetscape.*
3. *Decide what other information to include in the guidelines.*

Begin by establishing the purpose and context for the design guidelines in your community. Draft an illustrated history that identifies significant characteristics and features of the district, such as buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes.

Under the leadership of the design professionals and preservation specialists who are committee members, or are hired as consultants, the committee identifies the qualities they wish to preserve and writes suggestions for preserving those qualities. The design guidelines are the compilation of best practices for protecting and preserving the character defining features of a district.

It is a good idea to review guidelines developed by other communities to avoid "reinventing the wheel." Choose basic elements that apply to your own historic district and adapt them to yours. Note which methods of illustrating preservation concepts and design relationships are clear, concise and easy to understand. Some communities create two sets of guidelines: one that addresses additions or alterations to existing buildings and a separate guideline for new construction.

The use of photos and drawings throughout to reinforce key points is essential. Provide information on materials maintenance, repair and replacement. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* should always be included in a design guidelines publication.

Figure 87

Sample Design Guideline

Here is an example of a design guideline: Horizontal Alignment of Adjoining Buildings

Maintain the horizontal lines of the original storefront and the block by:

- maintaining cornice alignment and height
- maintain upper window pattern
- maintain major horizontal line at signboard area
- maintain pattern of recessed entries
- maintain bulkhead at traditional height

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON: Administering a design guideline program

www.cr.nps.gov/hps/workingonthepast

www.mainstreet.org

Design Guidelines Checklist:
What to Include

- ❑ The purpose of the guidelines
- ❑ How the guidelines are applied and enforced
- ❑ Projects subject to review
- ❑ Detailed boundary description of the area to be protected
- ❑ Maps that show the boundary of the area subject to design review
- ❑ Historic photos of the area
- ❑ The guidelines
- ❑ Photos and drawings to illustrate the concepts discussed in the text
- ❑ History and description of the area
- ❑ Commercial architecture styles
- ❑ A glossary of terms
- ❑ A discussion of exterior materials, signage, lighting, color, street furniture and landscape
- ❑ Maintenance information and instructions for performing routine building inspections and maintenance tasks.
- ❑ Contact information for state and local regulatory agencies, such as fire and building code enforcement, zoning, city ordinances, etc.

4. Phase Four: Administering a Guideline Program

Tasks:

1. *Establish a design review process*
2. *Develop administrative procedures for conducting the business of the Review Board*
3. *Arrange for a periodic review of the guidelines*

Phase Four involves setting up the administrative framework for running a design review program. It includes setting up a design review procedure, appointing a review committee, and other tasks to ensure the goals of the program are carried out effectively. The program should also include periodic reviews of the design guidelines themselves, as well as an assessment of the program's successes and shortcomings. Public participation and education is an important component of all phases of the design guideline process. More information on Phase Four activities can be found at the National Park Service website, and through the Main Street Program.

CHAPTER 9: THE WINDSHIELD SURVEY

1. On the Lookout for Context and Connections

The Design Committee will use two different types of surveys to describe the physical context of the traditional commercial district and identify its urban design elements: the windshield survey and the sidewalk survey. The windshield survey comes first and its purpose is to identify the setting, boundaries, major characteristics and large-scale patterns found in the natural and built environment surrounding Main Street and the larger community.

Every town exists as a system of smaller interconnected neighborhoods and districts, and likewise the districts are made up of groups of individual streets, which comprise individual blocks. The town can be seen as a system of interlocking units; every unit exists within a larger unit. A windshield survey highlights the context of each unit and calls attention to relationships and connections between the units up and down the scale. In contrast to the "close-up" view of the sidewalk survey, the windshield survey takes a wide angle view and considers how each unit exists and functions in relation to the larger unit it lies within, and the smaller units it holds.

The survey helps clarify whether current traffic and land use patterns foster or hinder Main Street's function as a central commercial area. The survey leads to better insight into whether Main Street's current appearance adequately promotes it as an attractive and viable place for shopping and socializing, with unique qualities that positively distinguish it from other commercial venues in the community. The observations made during the windshield survey and the analysis and discussions that follow provide a foundation for planning improvements and critiquing the impact of future development.

Notice natural features of the landscape:

As they head toward Main Street, the Design Committee survey team should note the dominant geographic features of the landscape that are important to community identity and question how they impact community life (lakes, shorelines, hills, vistas, etc.).

- Are important natural features currently used to their best advantage?
- How do they relate to the downtown commercial area?

Be particularly aware of how you know you have arrived on Main Street.

- What are the clues?
- Are they adequate? Positive? Negative?
- What is your first impression?

2. The Windshield Survey Form

The Windshield Survey	
Observations:	**Evaluation**
1. How do you know you have arrived on Main Street?	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
2. Where are the key entrances to downtown? (How do you know?)	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
3. How do you know when you have left downtown?	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
4. What gives the core downtown its unified image?	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
5. What are the important natural features? Are natural features used to their best advantage? Are the natural features well connected to the downtown?	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
6. Are there important vistas or "view sheds"?	**Does the area receive the full benefit of these unique features? What needs improvement?**
7. Is there a view to the downtown from this area? The navigator should chart locations that offer views to Main Street.	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
8. Is this an older, well-established area, or has it been more recently developed? How long has it existed in its current use?	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**

9.	**What features offer clues to its age?**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
10.	**What is the dominant street pattern in this area? (A regular grid of intersecting streets, limited access streets, cul-de-sacs, other types?)**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
11.	**Is there one "main" street or two, or is there a small central grid of major streets?**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
12.	**Are the streets predominantly curvilinear, or straight? Are they hilly or flat?**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
13.	**Is the area well connected to other neighborhoods? How? By roads, pedestrian walkways, other means? How do most people travel from this area to other neighborhoods?**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
14.	**How has this area's connections to other areas affected its growth and development over the long term?**	**Which qualities are positive? Which qualities are negative?**
15.	**How is this area connected to Main Street? By roads, pedestrian walkways, bike paths, other means? How do most people travel from this area to Main Street?**	**What affects current transit alternatives? What would expand transit options here?**

CHAPTER 10: THE SIDEWALK SURVEY

The boundaries of the area you plan to designate as protected by design guidelines need to be precisely defined and this can be done with greater confidence after completing the windshield survey. Upon agreement about the extent of the Main Street area, the Design Committee conducts a sidewalk survey of the entire district on foot.

1. Looking for Patterns

The sidewalk survey takes a finer look at Main Street by focusing on the relationships between building design elements and identifying the patterns they create in the streetscape. As with the windshield survey, we look for these relationships at different scales. We begin by looking for design relationships between significant features of individual buildings and search for repetitions of these relationships that produce a perceptible pattern across the group of building facades contained in one block.

By noting patterns at the scale of a single block, we broaden our view to include the adjacent blocks and look for patterns that repeat from block to block and extend the length of Main Street. Just as all the details in a well-designed building work together to create a unified whole or an impression of belonging together, the separate elements of a well-designed streetscape must work together at a larger scale to create a unified composition. Breaking down the streetscape into individual blocks is one way of becoming more aware of how this is achieved. Keep in mind though, that the individual blocks are not as important as the composition as a whole. Remember the idea of *unity with variety* discussed in Chapter 7, and think of the blocks and individual buildings as opportunities for variety within a unifying framework or grid of repeating design elements.

Looking for Patterns

The sidewalk survey looks for repeating patterns in the streetscape, which might include:

- Prominent cornice lines at the same height
- Similar patterns of window openings on the upper facades of adjacent buildings
- Strong sense of an uninterrupted wall of buildings

2. Methodology

Members of the Design Committee should be prepared to walk from one end of the designated area to the other. A design professional or other knowledgeable person should accompany the Design Committee to facilitate the discussion and point out building components, styles and patterns. (But remember, this is not an exercise in identifying period styles.) If there are enough people available, divide the Design Committee into teams and be sure each team has a clipboard, copies of the survey, and a camera. A measuring tape can be useful for documenting patterns of height, width, setback, etc. A pair of binoculars helps members observe details of the upper facade.

The images will be assembled into a photomontage of Main Street blocks later during the analysis of survey findings. It is important that the photos show a high level of detail and a complete view (top to bottom, side to side) of the individual buildings if they are to be useful for this analysis.

Sidewalk Survey Methodology

1. Equip survey team with:

- **Map of the project area**
- **One survey form for each survey block**
- **Clipboard**
- **Camera**

Optional: measuring tape, binoculars, tripod

2. Observe, question, record

- **Take a head-on shot of each block**
- **Take a head-on shot of each building on the block. Be sure to keep a log that identifies each shot for later reference.**
- **Try to position camera at the same height and distance from the subject for each shot.**

Look for design relationships and answer survey questions 1 through 26 for each block.

3. Test Boundaries

As teams reach the furthest boundary of the project area, test the established boundaries by observing whether a significant number of important patterns continue with the same intensity and concentration beyond this point.

Ask whether the established boundaries seem appropriate, or whether they should be adjusted. Document the reasons.

Creating a Large Scale Photomontage

1. **Photomontage is an old technique that combines bits and pieces of different photographs to create a new picture. It is very useful for creating wide panoramic views that are difficult to photograph without specialized lenses. Creating a photograph of the entire streetscape provides a useful tool for analyzing design elements.**
2. **Piecing together individual photographs of each building or block avoids the problems of distortion that can occur when shooting a wide area with most readily available lenses. The photomontage provides a more accurate, "straight-on" view of how the streetscape qualities of height, width, etc., actually appear at the site.**
3. **With the conveniences of digital photography, most amateur photographers can produce a montage very economically and with little trouble. Before taking any pictures, check to see if your digital camera comes with software for creating panoramic photos. Most programs provide recommendations on the best methods for shooting pictures that will seamlessly "knit" together into a panoramic view with very little distortion.**
4. **Digitally created panoramic views may call for slightly different shooting positions and framing techniques than those a photographer would use for photos assembled into a montage by the "cut and paste" method. But again, don't try to cover too wide an area from the same position. The montage will have less distortion and provide more details if the photographer consistently shoots from a position that is perpendicular (or very close to perpendicular) to the subject.**

Taking the Photograph

1. **Equipment and Position**
   - **The camera should be positioned at the same distance from the building and at the same level from the ground when shooting all the photos in the montage. It's a good idea to start with the tallest building to establish that position.**
   - **Use a 35 mm camera with a 28 or 35 mm lens that allows you to get as close to the building as possible to get a complete top to bottom and side-to-side view of the building without endangering your safety. Choose a reasonably close, convenient, and safe position.**

   If available, a tripod is a handy tool to steady the camera and help insure that all the pictures are taken at the same level from the ground. Most cameras (film and digital) have a threaded hole on the bottom of the camera for attachment to a tripod.
2. **Taking the picture**

   Stand directly in front of the building and frame a complete view of the facade. Establish a uniform distance from the subject and a uniform level from the ground for shooting all photographs, if possible. The camera lens should be perpendicular to the plane of the building facade to cut down on distortions and show relative proportions and building details more accurately.
3. **Record all buildings and other significant features of the team's assigned survey area. Move on to the next building and position the camera directly in front of the building, the same distance away from the facade and at the same height from the ground as in the first picture. You can use the edge of the sidewalk or some other consistent measure to assure proper positioning as you continue down the street.**

Assembling a Large Scale Photomontage

1. **The photomontage is a large-scale image suitable for display and public viewing. Print the photos at an appropriate scale that clearly shows the details and design relationships the committee is evaluating. The committee should print smaller scale images for reproduction and distribution and to keep as permanent records of existing conditions.**
2. **Splice the photos together (or edit them digitally) to create a composite picture of all the buildings on the block.**
3. **Label each block by street and orientation.**
   Example: ***North side of Main Street between Pleasant and Central.***
4. **Mount completed sections of the montage on sturdy illustration board, mat board, or foam core. Assemble the boards together in the proper order and hang them on a wall to recreate the Main Street streetscape.**
5. **The montage can be completely assembled, displayed, and disassembled at different locations for use by the Design Committee, at design education events and other public presentations, as well as at future design review sessions.**

Look for unifying design relationships

Use the questions provided to guide your attention to significant features and relationships. Don't be satisfied with one-word answers to each question. Take the time to explain your reasoning to other members of the design committee. Carefully describe what you see. The sidewalk survey is a cumulative process. After discussing the design relationships observed on the first block, move on to the next block. Record the team's observations as you consider each survey question again for the building elements on this block. Step back and view both of the blocks together and observe differences, similarities, and connections between the blocks. Repeat this procedure on every block, each time observing differences and similarities and paying special attention to the patterns that appear on every block. After the first few blocks you'll learn what to look for and patterns will begin to emerge. Continue down the street until you reach the agreed upon boundary.

Test the boundaries

When the team reaches the furthest boundary of the project area it's important to "test" the boundary. Look carefully at the block just beyond the boundary. Decide if the patterns you've observed so far continue into this block with the same intensity. The team needs to reach a consensus as to whether the boundaries previously established by the Design Committee make sense, or if they should be adjusted. Whether you think you should add or drop a block, or two, take pictures of the block in question and write down

your reasons for revising the original boundaries. The team will present their evaluation of the boundary during the analysis phase.

3. The Sidewalk Survey Form

Design Committees can adapt the survey questions to better accommodate local conditions if necessary. Survey forms suitable for copying and distributing to teams can be found in the Appendix. Make a copy of the form for each block in the survey area.

The Sidewalk Survey	
1.	**What are your first impressions of this block?**
2.	**What makes this group of buildings a block? What holds it together?**
3.	**What are the dominant visual characteristics of this block?**
4.	**Are there vacant lots between buildings?**
5.	**Is there a dominant architectural style or a mixture? To what period do most buildings date?**
6.	**What are the significant historic features on this block?**
7.	**Have these features undergone alterations that have compromised their historic integrity?**
8.	**Are there strong horizontal elements common to most of the buildings that tend to unite them?**
9.	**Are buildings primarily one, two, or more stories?**
10.	**Are most of the buildings of similar width?**
11.	**Is there a common pattern of window or door openings?**
12.	**Are rooflines primarily flat or pitched?**
13.	**Are rooflines visible? Are there common ways of decorating the rooflines, i.e. cornices or other special forms?**
14.	**Are the buildings clad in similar materials? What are the most common materials?**

15.	**Are doorways and window openings trimmed in contrasting materials? Describe materials and color contrasts.**
16.	**What materials are used for decoration? (Glass block, terra cotta, cast iron?) Is one material more commonly used than others?**
17.	**Are storefront entries generally recessed, or flush with the sidewalk?**
18.	**Is there a common height from the sidewalk to the sill of the display window?**
19.	**What happens above the display window? Are storefront cornices common? Are they distinct from the rest of the storefront? What makes them stand out? Note transom windows or any other features above the display window.**
20.	**Are awnings or canopies common? What materials are they made of? Do they occur on both sides of the street? At a common height? On which blocks?**
21.	**What patterns from previous blocks are also expressed on this block?**
22.	**Do new patterns emerge on this block that are carried over to subsequent blocks? Describe how this happens.**
23.	**Note streetscape elements other than the buildings on this block. (Such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, etc.)**
24.	**Note signage on the block. Are there way-finding signs? Describe.**
25.	**Note signs that advertise businesses, merchandise, or special events. Circle the types of advertising signs that appear on this block and note which are most common.** ▪ **Flush mounted** ▪ **Hanging** ▪ **Window signs**
26.	**Describe natural landscape features, such as flowers, trees, shrubs, grass, etc.**

CHAPTER 11: THE ANALYSIS

1. Finalizing the Boundaries

The Design Committee's first task after the surveys are completed is to produce a base map that outlines the extent of the area protected by design guidelines. The Design Committee established preliminary boundaries for the project area early in the process to organize the work that followed and to focus the committee's attention and energy most efficiently. Now that the committee has carefully studied the proposed area, they are in a better position to finalize boundaries.

Deciding which blocks to include within the design guideline district may be a very obvious choice in some communities, and more difficult to judge in others. Ideally the only criteria for inclusion are the patterns, building elements, and other characteristics that repeat from block to block. Do not allow any holes or blanks in the districts, but rather choose a contiguous group of blocks with strong connections to each other. Traditional boundaries, or "official boundaries," such as those pictured in a zoning map, should not confuse the Design Committee's own evaluation of the compatibility of the blocks within the proposed boundaries.

*Figure 88: **Zoning Map**: A zoning map applies a municipality's zoning districts to particular areas of the community. Different rules apply to different districts, but within each district local governments typically regulate the use of land or buildings; the intensity of that use, and the height and bulk, or extent of that use. Zoning maps assign each property a code number that refers to the particular set of rules that regulate its use. Zoning regulations and districts are established through the adoption of a municipal ordinance.*

Though the committee has yet to undertake the careful analysis that will determine the local definition of community character, they've gained enough information through completing the surveys to make an informed judgment at this point as to which blocks comprise the traditional commercial district. Now is the time to reevaluate the boundaries proposed earlier and make any necessary changes. Provide clear evidence of linkages between blocks and it will be easier to reach a consensus on where the boundaries should be drawn.

The committee will need maps of the area and **aerial photos** are helpful too, if they are available. The city planning department is the best source for these resources and they should be able to supply detailed maps at a variety of scales. There are also many online sources for aerial photos and maps. In addition, the city library may have a series of **Sanborn Maps**, old fire insurance maps that show the **footprint** of existing buildings on a street. Sanborn Maps are a terrific source of information on a building's age and construction. They graphically illustrate the pattern of growth and development in a town over many decades. The Library of Michigan in Lansing has a large collection of maps that includes Sanborn maps on microfilm for many Michigan communities.

Figure 89: ***Aerial photo:*** *A photo taken from an aircraft or satellite. An aerial survey maps an area through aerial photography, photogrammetry, and the like.*

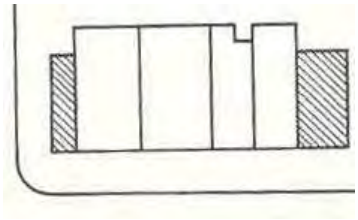


Figure 90: ***Building footprint:*** *The area on a plane directly beneath a structure that has the same perimeter (or outline) as the structure.*

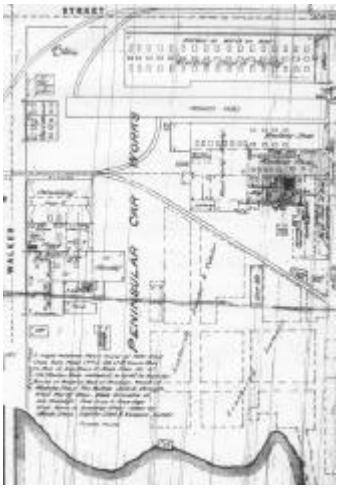


Figure 91:

Sanborn Maps

The Sanborn Map Company made these maps to provide fire insurance companies with detailed information on the buildings in a community. Street maps show the footprint of the building and details on the building's size and shape, construction, occupancy, and street address. More than 300 Michigan towns from 1884 to 1989 are represented in the Library of Michigan's microfilm archive.

For more information go to:
www.michigan.gov/hal
Click on Services & Collections

Study the maps and agree on specific boundaries that are easy to understand and recognize. There is no need for a legal description, but do avoid vague references. Most communities use street names to define district boundaries. Create a base map at a reasonable scale that shows the individual blocks and draw the boundaries very clearly. Write a clear and concise definition of the boundaries to accompany the map.

Sample boundary description:
"The design guideline area includes all the blocks within the area bounded by First Street to the north, Elm Street to the east, Lincoln Street to the south, and Maple Road on the west.

2. Identify common elements

The Design Committee will use the montage of block images to determine how dominant certain characteristics are in the streetscape. Display the assembled montage of the project area on the walls of the committee's meeting room. Prepare multiple copies of each block image at a smaller scale and place them at the center of a large table and let committee members randomly choose at least three different images from the pile. Provide felt tip markers and lots of trace paper, or rolls of architect's sketch paper.

Instruct committee members to place the trace paper over the photomontage and use a felt tip marker to trace the common elements noted on the tour. Look for the influence of the primary streetscape qualities on the overall image of the block. Do patterns of height, width, proportion of openings, roof forms, and horizontal and vertical rhythms tie the buildings together and create a sense of unity? Outline the tops of the buildings on a block, their windows, the height of cornices and other common elements. Have each member trace several block images on their own before repeating the exercise as a group.

Clues for finding design relationships

Recall the relationships that create unity in a composition. One of the most basic is **proximity**. Positioning buildings close together creates an unbroken wall of storefronts that makes us feel they belong together. Gaps in the wall are disruptive.

Consider each of the primary streetscape qualities in turn and trace its appearance in a single block. For instance, outline a dominant building width. The obvious pattern of similar widths creates a strong horizontal rhythm all along the block and demonstrates the unifying power of **repetition**.

The line traced over the projecting storefront cornices on the block often reveals the use of **continuation** to tie the buildings together.

After everyone has had an opportunity to trace patterns on their own, turn to the large-scale montage hanging on the wall and refer to the sidewalk survey results gathered during the walking tour of the project area. Discuss the appearance of the primary streetscape characteristics on each block and their role as unifying design relationships. An architect or other professional design consultant can lead the exercise and trace a "master" outline over the large montage to demonstrate how dominant certain elements may be on the block, and perhaps call attention to qualities that were not apparent on the tour.

3. Develop a consensus list

Review the discussion of streetscape qualities in Chapters 6 and 7. As you consider different criteria, try to reach an informal consensus on how important that characteristic is to the look of the block. To stimulate discussion, ask:

- What would happen to the visual continuity of the block or areas if this characteristic were absent?
- Is it found elsewhere in the project area, or only on a specific block?
- Does this characteristic appear in historical photos of the area? Was it mentioned in written descriptions of the town?
- Was this characteristic mentioned often during the tour or group discussions?

Again, a professional consultant can help the group determine the relative importance of the design relationships. The list provides a definition of community character that directs and informs the writing of the guidelines.

4. Applying the criteria

Guidelines provide a set of standards for judging compatibility of elements in an urban setting. Evaluating compatibility requires a definition of the attributes that predominate and have the greatest impact on the sense of harmony, or unity, within the streetscape. The Design Committee's goal for the survey and analysis phase is to develop a consensus list of characteristics they feel contribute most significantly to the look and feel of Main Street and are strong determinants of compatibility, or harmony in the streetscape. The list developed after analyzing survey results provides the framework for design guidelines by first establishing a definition of community character. The definition is nothing more than the relationships of elements found on the consensus list. Once the list is established, it provides an objective set of criteria for evaluating compatibility between elements in the streetscape. In Chapters 13 & 14, we apply the criteria to additions or alterations to existing buildings as well as to new construction.

The Consensus List of Streetscape Qualities

After analyzing survey results and tracing design relationships over a photomontage of Main Street, this community added these qualities to their list of character defining traits.

Height and Width
The Design Committee agreed that the similar height and width of the buildings on Main Street was a strong unifying relationship that had a powerful impact on the feel of the district. They will write guidelines to protect this character-defining trait.

Proportion of Window Openings create strong Horizontal Rhythms
Upper floor windows on this block were uniformly tall and narrow. The decorative moldings around the windows were different from building to building but their prominence emphasized the window pattern and created a strong horizontal rhythm down the street. Guidelines will address the importance of maintaining these patterns.

(continued…)

The Consensus List of Streetscape Qualities (con't)

Color

The Design Committee found a great variety in the color of buildings on Main Street and could not agree on the presence of a dominant color pattern that would merit suggesting a preferred color palette for the district. They decided not to include color on their list of common elements.

Color reconsidered

The local architect serving on the Design Committee agreed it was unnecessary to suggest a color palette in the guidelines. However, the architect traced a pattern of strong color contrast between storefronts on the ground floor and elements on the upper stories of Main Street buildings.

Committee members noticed this pattern on nearly every block. Color contrast emphasized the break between ground and upper floors that set up a strong unifying relationship by **continuation** of a horizontal line.

Communities define community character in terms of the primary characteristics found on Main Street.

Height
Width
Setback
Proportion of Openings
Horizontal Rhythms
Roof Forms
Materials
Color

These qualities interact to create powerful unifying relationships that bring harmony to the streetscape and determine the sense of place that distinguishes your Main Street from all others.

CHAPTER 12: DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATING HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Change is part of the continuing evolution of downtown. Most construction on Main Streets occurs as alterations or additions to existing buildings. Guidelines instruct property owners on the most appropriate methods for preserving the historic integrity of their buildings while continuing to maintain and operate them as modern retail establishments.

The methodology described in this chapter and the sample guidelines included provide a useful template for writing a unique set of guidelines for your community. Because of the different issues involved, it is a good idea to create two sets of guidelines: one that specifically addresses the rehabilitation of existing buildings and another for new and infill construction.

Sample Guidelines for Main Street

1. Setback

The row of adjoining buildings placed at a uniform setback from the street is one of the most distinctive traits of the traditional commercial district. The consistent line of facades at the edge of the sidewalk creates a powerful unifying relationship between buildings of different styles and helps bring harmony to a streetscape of disparate elements. Design guidelines should encourage property owners to maintain this pattern.

2. Exterior Materials

As the most visible portion of the building, careful rehabilitation of cladding materials (the primary materials on the building exterior, i.e. wood siding or brick) is especially important. Recommendations for owners to retain, repair, and/or replace historic materials should be included for each exterior material.

Masonry Guidelines

- **Retain original masonry and mortar whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. If new bricks are required, match the existing brick in dimension, composition, color, texture, and profile.**
- **Do not apply waterproof or water repellent coatings or surface consolidation treatments unless required to solve a specific technical problem that has been studied and identified by a building preservation specialist.**
- **Only repoint mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when enough mortar is missing to allow standing water in the joint.**
- **Avoid the use of electric saws and hammers to remove mortar.**
- **Replicate exactly the original mortar in composition, color, texture, joint size, method of application, and joint profile.**
- **Do not repoint with mortar that has a high Portland cement content. This creates a bond that is often stronger than the building material and will cause deterioration due to the differing coefficients of expansion and the differing permeability of the material and mortar.**
- **Repair stucco with a mixture that replicates the original in appearance and texture.**
- **Use the gentlest means possible to clean masonry. *(Figure 92)***
- **Do not sandblast. Doing so erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Do not use chemical cleaning products that may have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry. *(Figure 93)***
- **Do not paint unpainted masonry. Preservation Brief #1, "The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings," and Preservation Brief #2, "Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings" offer more detailed information and are available online at www.nps.gov.**

Figure 92

Figure 93

Wood Guidelines

- **Do not install inappropriate new siding on wood buildings or siding that was not available when the building was constructed (i.e. artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, and plastic or aluminum siding.) Such materials could enhance the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insects.**
- **Maintain the same clapboard siding exposure (width of board showing) when replacing deteriorated material.**
- **Maintain paint film to protect wood material from deterioration.**
- **Do not sandblast or otherwise employ abrasive cleaning techniques. These cause irreversible damage to the surface of the material.**
- **Consider epoxy consolidation of material for stabilization.**
- **Retain architectural features such as cornices, brackets, windows and doorway pediments. These are usually an essential part of a building's character and appearance.**

Metal Guidelines

- **When required, clean metal using non-abrasive methods.**
- **Conceal metals intended to be protected from the environment.**
- **Avoid the use of cleaning methods that alter the color/ texture of the metal.**

3. Alterations to Existing Storefronts

Over time a storefront can accumulate many unsightly changes that bear little relation to the building's original form. Design guidelines can help maintain historic integrity while allowing for modern alterations to the storefront.

Historic Storefronts

Figure 94

Early 19th Century

- *Construction is heavy timber*
- *Display windows are divided*
- *Detailing is simple*

Figure 95

Mid and Late 19th Century

- *Cornice is elaborately adorned*
- *Cast iron is used for columns*
- *Display windows are undivided*

Figure 96

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

- *Detailing is simple*
- *Display windows have transom windows above*
- *Entrance door is set back*

Figure 97

Early 20th Century

- *Display windows have metal framing*
- *Entrance is set back*
- *Glass grid is above display windows*

An architect or preservation specialist can help owners determine if the existing storefront is the original or a later addition. Stand across the street from the building and look for shared elements, materials, or similarities in appearance between the upper and lower floors. Guidelines can provide useful information on how best to preserve any existing historic integrity.

However, some property owners prefer to restore the original storefront as much as possible to its original condition. Though it is not necessary for these improvements to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration of Historic Buildings, local design guidelines can incorporate suggestions that recall historic details without creating a false historic look. Many original Main Street storefronts are covered by later remodeling that altered the simple design pattern of the historic storefront in fundamental ways. Later remodeling often included such aspects as using inappropriate materials, covering the windows, making the entry door flush, or destroying the bulkhead. If there is little relation between upper and lower facade, a complimentary modern design or restoration of the original storefront is in order.

Occasionally, a remodeled storefront is of equal or greater value architecturally than the original. Include a guideline that acknowledges this possibility and provides guidance for storeowners who may have a historically significant storefront that is of a different era from the original building.

Changes to Existing Storefronts

- ***Restoration* of the storefront to its original design must be based on historic descriptions or photographs. *Rehabilitation* is also acceptable, in which a traditional design is developed that harmonizes with the rest of the building and neighboring structures.**
- **The design should incorporate the three-part storefront configuration, but should not include undocumented historic detailing that presents a misleading historic appearance.**
- **Contemporary designs are acceptable if they harmonize with neighboring buildings, do not damage the historic structure, and are "reversible." (Reversible means that a return to the historic storefront remains possible.)**
- **Retain alterations to storefronts that are significant and well-designed.**

Your design guidelines should address the specific issues surrounding alterations to the common elements of historical storefronts: the entry, doors, bulkhead, display windows, transom windows, the horizontal area for a canopy or sign, and the cornice. Suggestions for preserving the historic integrity of those elements undergoing repair or remodeling include the following:

Entries

Commercial storefront entries were typically recessed to provide more display area in the window, to emphasize the store entrance, and to provide a sheltered transition to the store interior. Commercial entry doors use large glass panels to create a sense of openness and invite visitors inside. Guidelines should encourage preserving these qualities.

Changes to Storefront Entries

- **Recessed entries should be retained.**
- **Solid or modern residential-type doors with small areas of glass should be avoided.**
- **Openings containing double entry doors should be retained.**

Doors

Historic commercial buildings typically include two types of doors: the storefront door and the upper entry door. Historically, the storefront door was a wood door or pair of doors containing a large window, usually recessed between the display windows. The upper entry door was also of wood, and may have featured a glass panel. It was located flush with the front wall to one side of the storefront.

Figure 98

Historic Commercial Doors

- **The best solution is to retain the original doors and repair them where necessary.**
- **Appropriate options for replacing doors include:**
  - **Build a new door with the same design and proportions of the original**
  - **Find a manufactured wood or steel door that matches the traditional door in design**
  - **Select a compatible contemporary door.**
- **Do not use doors that are residential in character, such as those decorated with moldings or window grills.**

Display Windows

The display window is the link between the pedestrian environment outside and the business inside. Glass should be transparent to be open for pedestrian viewing. If offices or bars are located in storefront buildings, owners should be encouraged to preserve the display windows and find other means to create privacy.

Figure 99

Changes to Display Windows

- **The original size, division, and shape of display windows within the overall storefront frame should be preserved.**
- **Consider using blinds or cafe curtains in display windows to create a sense of privacy in storefronts used as offices or bars *(Figure 99).***

Bulkheads

The bulkhead functions to protect the display window by raising the glass area to a safer and more easily viewed height. In some buildings, bulkheads brought light and air into the basement area. Historically, materials have included wood panels, marble and ceramic tile and glass. Newer storefronts can have simplified bulkheads in similar or smooth materials, or have an all glass storefront that retains a bulkhead line and proportion by use of a framing bar. Write guidelines that cover

preserving existing storefronts and suggest how to create the sense of a bulkhead in newer display windows.

Changes to the Bulkhead

- **The original bulkhead material should be retained, maintained, or uncovered when possible.**
- **In new display windows, or in cases where nothing remains of the old bulkhead, use paint or framing materials to suggest the height and proportions of the historic bulkhead.**
- **The bulkhead contributes to the overall proportions of the building and provides a solid connection between the building and the sidewalk.**

Transom Windows

Transom windows are smaller windows above the display windows that provided natural light and ventilation to the interior of the building. Historically, they allowed daylight to enter deep into the interior space. Transoms also continue the transparent quality of the storefront above the display windows and are therefore an important element in the proportion of the building front. Often transom windows can still be found in downtown buildings underneath dropped ceilings and exterior cover-ups. Write guidelines that encourage preserving these important storefront elements.

Guidelines for Transom Windows

- **Replace missing transom windows.**
- **If the ceiling inside the store has been lowered, the ceiling could slope up 2 - 3 feet back to meet the transom.**
- **Dark painted panels can be placed behind transom windows to simulate transparency and depth if the interior ceiling has been lowered.**

Cornices

The storefront cornice is the topmost element of the storefront portion of the facade. Though it is secondary to the upper cornice in the overall design of the facade, the storefront cornice traditionally played an important role in creating a distinct image for a merchant. It also served to clearly demarcate the storefront from the upper facade. The individual storefront cornice remains an important opportunity for establishing a unique image and a significant factor in creating a sense of unity in a streetscape.

Figure 100: Most historic commercial buildings originally had two cornices, the upper cornice and the storefront cornice.

Both cornices were constructed of a variety of materials including masonry, metal, wood or terra cotta. They are a significant character-defining trait of Main Street architecture and local design guidelines should protect and encourage their continued appearance.

Guidelines for Storefront Cornices

- **If the cornice was previously removed, it can be reconstructed based on historic photographs.**
- **Contemporary replacements of storefront cornices should harmonize with existing scale, materials and size of the building, while avoiding a false historic look.**

Awnings

Retractable canvas awnings were a traditional feature of historic storefronts. They provided a covered space in front of the store to protect customers from the weather, shaded the interior of the store on hot summer days, and protected merchandise in the display window from sun damage. Awnings contribute color and variety to the building design and can soften the transition between the lower and upper portions of the facade.

Guidelines for Awnings

- **A street-level awning should be mounted so that the valance is about eight feet higher than the sidewalk and extends four to seven feet from the building face. A valance flap can be attached at the awning bar to serve as a sign panel.**
- **The awning may be attached just below the storefront cornice or between the transom and display windows.**
- **The awning should fit within the storefront opening.**
- **Metal or fiberglass awnings or curved fixed-frame awnings should not be used in a historic context, due to their contemporary appearance.**

Signs

Signage is an important part of any business and many options are available that will communicate the merchant's message while remaining compatible with the building's character. Signs on commercial buildings need to conform to city sign ordinances and design guidelines should provide information on local ordinances and/or methods for contacting appropriate city offices.

Signs

- **Select signs that fit into the façade.**
- **If more than one sign is needed, each should be small and visually related to the others, but avoid too many signs.**

Figure 101

- **Good choices for signs in the traditional commercial district include:**
  - **Small flat signs hanging perpendicular to the façade wall**

Figure 102

- **Long, horizontal flat signs under the storefront cornice**

Signs *(continued)*

Figure 103

- **Canvas awning with lettering on its front flap**

- **Window display**
- **Painted or etched lettering on windows or doors**
- **Moveable signboards or placards for special announcements**

4. Alterations to the Upper Facades of Existing Buildings

Changes to the upper facade of historic buildings should follow the same principles outlined in guidelines addressing changes to the storefront.

Upper Facades

Figure 104

Early and Mid19th Century

- *Cornice is unadorned*
- *Windows have stone lintels*
- *Windows are divided into multiple panes*

Figure 105

Mid and Late 19th Century

- *Cornice is extravagantly adorned*
- *Windows have decorative hoods*
- *Windows have single vertical muntins*

Upper Facades *(continued)*

Figure 106

Late 19th and Early 20th Century

- *Cornice may have brick corbelling*
- *Windows are arched and have one large pane per sash*

Figure 107

Early 20th Century

- *Cornice is brick, unadorned*
- *Large openings contain multiple windows*

Windows

The goal in window rehabilitation is to retain the size and shape of the original openings so that the configuration of the façade is unchanged. It is preferable to retain, repair or duplicate the original materials of the existing windows rather than replace them.

Guidelines for Windows

- **Retain and repair existing window sash, glass, lintels, sills, architrave, shutters, hoods, and all hardware wherever possible.**
- **Do not introduce new window openings into the principal elevations or enlarge/reduce openings to fit stock window sash sizes.**
- **Where window part replacement is required, duplicate the material, design, and hardware of the older window.**
- **Install replacement windows in the same relationship as the original sash to the exterior wall.**
- **Install inconspicuous storm windows that do not damage existing frames and can be removed in the future.**
- **Do not install inappropriate new window features such as:**
  - **Insulating glass that requires the removal of original windows**
  - **Plastic awnings**
  - **False shutters that detract from the appearance of the building.**

Upper Cornice

Most commercial buildings had an upper cornice and a lower, storefront cornice. The upper cornice was clearly dominant and was often a means for elaborately expressing a building's individuality. At the same time, a line of buildings with ornate cornices at approximately the same height can tie buildings together by emphasizing their common height and creating a pronounced horizontal rhythm that continues down the street.

Design guidelines should suggest appropriate maintenance techniques, as well as suggestions for cornice replacements.

Guidelines for Cornices

- **If the cornice has been previously removed, it can be reconstructed based on historic photographs.**
- **Contemporary replacements of the upper cornice should harmonize with existing scale, materials and size of the building, while avoiding a false historic look.**

Figure 108

Roof Forms

Original rooflines should be maintained as much as possible. Guidelines should encourage only those alterations that are harmonious in materials, scale, quality and detail. Historic photographs and other building documentation can provide some clues to a roof's original appearance, but keep in mind rooflines were usually not seen in nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings. If no documentation of the original roofline is available, a simple modern treatment compatible with the rest of the building is appropriate. Suggested treatments for preserving the historic integrity of the roofline when constructing an addition on the top of an existing building are provided in Section 6 below.

5. Rear Entrances

Because large parking areas are often located behind commercial building blocks, rear facades are noticed more often than in the past. They are an opportunity to harmonize the additional entry design with the casual atmosphere of the surrounding rear facades, alleys, and parking lots.

Guidelines for Rear Entrances

- **The rear door should be simply designed.**
- **Trashcans and dumpsters should be concealed.**
- **Signs and lighting should be modest.**

6. Additions

In some cases property owners will want to make a new addition to an older building. The addition should not alter the historic character of the original structure. The National Park Service addresses this sensitive design issue in **Preservation Brief #14,** "New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns," and offers three general criteria to consider when planning a new addition. Local design guidelines can add specific suggestions for achieving these goals based on local conditions.

Guidelines for New Additions

- **Preserve significant historic materials and features.**
  - **Avoid constructing the addition on the primary or other character-defining façade**
  - **Minimize loss of historic material on exterior walls.**
  - **Building finishes used for the addition should be similar in material, quality, color, and dimension to those used on the existing structure.**
  - **Locate satellite and mechanical equipment such as air conditioners in an inconspicuous location.**
- **Preserve the character of the building.**
  - **The scale (size and proportion) of the addition should be compatible with the original building.**
  - **An additional story on an existing building with a characteristic roofline can be set well back from the roof edge to ensure that the building's profile is not radically changed.**

Guidelines for New Additions *(continued)*

- **Make a visual distinction between the old and new.**
  - **Avoid a false historical look.**
  - **Additions should be sympathetic to the base building, yet be a product of its own time.**
  - **Have shared elements create a sense of visual relatedness.**
  - **If the building is an important one in the community, consider a visual separation between the addition and the original building, to preserve the identity of the historic building.**

CHAPTER 13: DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

Over the course of history, both natural and man made events have caused the loss of historic fabric in the continuity of the Main Street district. Fire, severe weather, and demolition have led to the loss of a few or several buildings in the district. This has resulted in vacant parcels, parking areas, or inappropriate development in the Main Street district. In some cases, the contiguous character of the district is compromised. In these situations, the most appropriate response is to work toward building contemporary infill. Suitable infill projects can "fill the gap" in a commercial Main Street district and provide additional life and vibrancy to the street.

In the language of infill construction, a proposed building can be described by its character-defining qualities including height, width, setback, horizontal rhythms, materials, facade organization, roof forms, sidewalk overhangs, signs, and color.

1. Height

Height is often a compelling characteristic that distinguishes the downtown from neighboring areas. If the Design Committee observed a strong similarity in the height of the buildings on Main Street, write a guideline to protect this important neighborhood characteristic. Depending on your particular streetscape, there are several approaches to creating guidelines for height. Study the outlines drawn on the photomontage of your street and decide how strong the similarities in height are.

Figure 109

General Guidelines: Height

If the buildings are essentially the same height, the guideline could read:

Maintain the alignment of building cornices or rooflines.

If there are slight variations in height, the guideline might suggest:

Additions or new construction should fall within a range of 10 percent of the mean building height found in the block.

Height on Transitional Blocks

Transitional blocks, often on the edges of a district, may show a greater variety in building height. If there are such blocks in your project area write:

Height of the building should be within the range of heights found on the immediate block.

Height of Corner Buildings

Corner sites are often an opportunity for treatments that accentuate the prominence of a corner location, or landmark architecture. For instance, you may find that corner buildings are larger and more elaborate than mid-block structures. If this is so, suggest:

Figure 110

Buildings on the ends of blocks should be similar in height to buildings on adjoining corners.

2. Width

Along with height, building or lot width is usually the most prominent visual quality of downtowns. Most commercial buildings in traditional districts are roughly 25 feet wide and bring a distinct rhythm and small, pedestrian scale to the wall of storefronts facing Main Street. Repetition of the dominant width is a powerful unifying device and another strong determinant of community character.

General Guidelines: Width

Determine what the primary lot width is in your downtown and suggest that building alterations or additions that cover two or more lots:

Respect the primacy of this width by designing a rhythmic division of the facade to maintain the progression.

The Wall of Buildings

If the streets of your downtown are defined by a wall of buildings, encourage infill construction to:

Maintain the existing building wall by building from side lot line to side lot line.

Figure 111

3. Setback

The third primary characteristic of the urban streetscape is setback. Unlike residential buildings, commercial buildings are directly on the front lot line, a pattern known as zero lot line development. Along with the practice of building from side lot line to side lot line, the pattern of uniform setback creates the characteristic "wall of buildings" so typical of the traditional commercial district.

General Guidelines: Setback

If this is the dominant pattern in your downtown, include a guideline to:

Maintain the alignment of facades along the sidewalk edge.

Figure 112

Parking lots often disrupt unifying patterns and create gaping holes in a streetscape. By placing strong design elements at the common setback line, property owners can help maintain the setback pattern around the edges of parking lots.

Setback Patterns and Parking Lots

Suggest methods to maintain the pattern of facade alignment established in adjacent blocks.

Parking lots should emphasize the sidewalk edge with plantings, columns, fences, or other vertical projections.

Figure 113

In some Michigan towns there is no alignment at the front lot line, but a strong uniform setback is found. A guideline appropriate for this situation might read:

Maintain the uniform setback of buildings and align the facades.

4. Proportion of Openings

Refer back to the photomontage of your downtown district and note the pattern of window openings in the upper floors of neighboring buildings. Look for similarities in size, spacing, and window shape. Even streets with a variety of building heights will exhibit patterns between the openings on the upper floors. Note the differences between upper story openings and storefront or street level openings. Usually there is a much greater transparent area at the storefront level for pedestrians to have a better view of the displayed merchandise.

Proportions of Openings

If you have identified a prevalent pattern of openings on your downtown blocks, write a guideline to have new construction:

Maintain the proportion and spacing of openings.

Figure 114

5. Horizontal Rhythms

Moving past repeated similar elements on building facades creates a rhythm of elements that strongly characterize an area. Recall the discussion in Chapter III about the different ways to achieve unity. Many depend on patterns of strong horizontal rhythms.

Commercial buildings typically have a decorative storefront cornice or some other feature separating the lower floor from the upper stories. In streets where all or most of the buildings have such a prominent feature at the same height our eye is quick to recognize the pattern. By pulling our eye smoothly along the continuous band, we have the sense of a connection between the buildings. This is a good example of how **continuation** creates unity.

Horizontal Rhythms

If your Main Street has a strong pattern of horizontal rhythm created by a continuous band of projecting cornices like the photo at the left, a guideline might suggest that new construction:

Maintain the pattern of strong horizontal design elements appearing at storefront cornice height.

Figure 115

Strong visual distinction between the upper and lower floors is a significant trait of the traditional commercial district and many streetscape qualities combine to reinforce the difference. It can be achieved through horizontal rhythms as explained above, or through the use of materials, colors, and scale. If this distinction between street level and the upper stories of buildings appears in your downtown, write a general guideline that encourages continuance of this pattern. However, be sure to address the range of methods that have been used in the downtown area to create this visual distinction and suggest acceptable means for incorporating this pattern in new construction.

General Guideline: Horizontal Rhythm

A general guideline covers many different methods for creating distinctions between ground and upper floors.

Maintain a clear visual distinction between street level and upper floors.

Figure 116

6. Materials

Design guidelines that address materials are often more specific than other guidelines, particularly if certain materials are more prominent than others in the district. Most Main Streets in Michigan feature a variety of nineteenth and twentieth century building materials that include wood, brick, stone, enamel metal panels, and structural glass.

General Guideline: Materials

Determine what original building or finish materials are used most often in downtown buildings. If the variety of materials is limited enough to influence the overall appearance of Main Street, a design guideline might suggest:

Encourage the use of common building materials traditionally used throughout the district.

Figure 117

General Guideline: Materials

If a strong visual distinction between the storefronts and upper facades of the buildings is achieved through the use of specific building materials, write a guideline that suggests methods for maintaining this pattern.

Maintain the contrast in color between upper facade building materials and those used on the storefront.

- **Use red brick for the walls of the upper facade**
- **Upper facade window openings should be framed in a dark material.**
- **Use dark painted wood elements to frame storefronts.**
- **Doors and doorframes should be made of dark materials.**

In some cases, building materials in newer sections of town may be very different from those found in the oldest section. In this case, or for any other reasons that the appearance of a variety of building materials becomes a significant district characteristic, a guideline could be written that lists what materials are commonly found and how they are distributed within district boundaries. New building materials may differ in scale and surface appearance from historic materials, and should be carefully incorporated into the traditional streetscape.

One of the traditional commercial district's most distinctive traits is the proportions and rhythms of elements on the building facade. Often the unit size of the building material, such as the dimensions of the brick that is used, is responsible for establishing these proportions. Modern building technology produces materials with a greater variety of scale and surface textures. Care must be taken to sensitively incorporate these qualities into a historic setting. New construction guidelines should address the issue of scale and appearance of building material but with a flexible attitude that maintains the historic character of the area while allowing new technologies to take their appropriate place on Main Street.

Here are two design guidelines from Ann Arbor's *Downtown Design Guidelines* handbook that could be adapted easily to most local situations and demonstrate methods for encouraging compatibility in districts where the choice of building materials is a significant character-defining trait.

General Guidelines: Materials (from Ann Arbor Guidelines)

To address issues of **scale** and **rhythm** in building materials, a guideline might read:

Use materials that are familiar in their dimensions and that can be repeated in order to establish rhythm and scale on the building facade.

The list of appropriate materials can be adapted to any local setting where **texture** plays an important role in district appearance.

Use materials that are similar in texture to those established in the downtown. The following materials are encouraged in historic areas:

- **Unit masonry such as brick, stone tile, and terra cotta.**
- **Wood in traditional horizontal patterns**
- **Glass**
- **Concrete, a material that can be formed and textured.**

Materials that are inappropriate include contemporary, suburban or residential construction materials, such as:

- **Vinyl and aluminum siding**
- **"Z" brick or cultured stone**

In some towns a particular local building material may appear quite often on Main Street buildings. These local materials can be an important expression of community character. The common materials help link your town to its geographical setting and a shared history of development. Guidelines can be very general to simply encourage the use of local materials, or if necessary, the guideline could specify the local material and how it is applied.

General Guideline: Materials

In an Upper Peninsula town where locally quarried red sandstone creates a distinctive look by appearing in specific facade elements of downtown commercial buildings, a guideline might read:

Encourage the use of red sandstone as decorative trim on storefronts and cornices of Main Street buildings.

Figure 118

Another characteristic of building materials that should be considered is quality. Quality can vary widely, particularly from one period to another. Often the quality of finish materials and their application determine compatibility.

General Guideline: Quality of Materials

If the committee determines that quality of materials, or their skillful application are important determinants of compatibility, a guideline might read:

Materials that are compatible in quality, color, texture, finish, and dimension to those listed as being common in the district, are strongly encouraged.

7. Facade Design

New construction guidelines should encourage the continuation of existing facade patterns of scale and materials. The organization of facade elements such as the storefront, doors and windows and the distinctions between storefronts and upper facades should be similar to surrounding buildings. Characteristics of the upper facades of existing buildings are often overlooked but have a tremendous impact on the district's sense of place.

General Guideline: Façade Design

New construction should incorporate the existing distinctions between street level storefronts and the upper facade.

Maintain the distinction between upper and lower floors by incorporating existing patterns of scale and proportion on upper and lower facades.

General Guidelines: Façade Design: Street Level

On pedestrian streets, maintain a majority of the first floor facade as glass, thus developing the first level with visual interest to pedestrians.

Figure 119

Provide direct access from a public sidewalk to all retail shops; avoid forcing shoppers to enter the internal lobbies of office buildings in order to enter shops.

To allow good visibility into storefront windows and to create pedestrian interest, shade the storefront glass by appropriate means such as awnings. Avoid tinted glass.

General Guideline: Façade Design: Upper Façade

New construction should reinforce the established pattern of upper story windows.

Use similarly proportioned windows to those in adjacent buildings or consider using other architectural elements to establish a similar rhythm of the facade of adjacent buildings.

8. Architectural Details

The large scale of new commercial buildings is very different from that of the nineteenth and twentieth century storefronts found in most historic commercial districts throughout Michigan. Architectural details can be used to make large buildings feel more human-scaled and appropriate for Main Street.

Treatment of facade elements like doors, trim, hardware, light fixtures, signs and awnings are a few of the details that can be arranged to create a pedestrian scale. Conversely, monumentality in a building is achieved with over-scaled or minimal detailing.

General Guidelines: Architectural Details

Use standard-sized building components that help establish pedestrian scale, especially in:

- **Doors**
- **Hardware**
- **Kickplates**
- **Moldings**
- **Light Fixtures**

Incorporate traditional facade components in new designs:

- **Display Windows**
- **Transoms**
- **Recessed entries**
- **Sign boards**
- **Cornice Lines**
- **Awnings**

9. Roof Forms

If consistent rooflines are found in your community, consider writing a guideline that encourages compatibility with existing rooflines, and if appropriate, suggest the decoration of the roofline by use of special materials, forms, or decorative details, using examples from surrounding buildings as a guide.

General Guidelines: Roof Forms

Avoid roof forms that are not typical in the district.

Roof plane should be hidden from view on the front facade. *(See Figure 43, page 28)*

Encourage use of any detailing of the roofline that is prevalent in your community.

10. Sidewalk Overhangs

Awnings and canopies have a major visual impact on the streetscape and encroach upon public space. Because they are such a popular item in the remodeling of storefronts, you may want to address sidewalk overhangs in your guidelines, even if they are not particularly common in your downtown. Awnings and canopies are used for practical reasons, like protecting pedestrians from the rain or as part of the merchant's commercial identity. A guideline that offers suggestions on choosing sidewalk overhangs that are compatible with existing streetscape elements can be of great help to shop owners who might be considering some type of awning or canopy to improve their storefront.

Determine which overhang device is most commonly found in your downtown and how pervasive this form is along your major streets. Decide how strongly you want to encourage the continuity of this form. Summarize any awning or encroachment ordinances your city may have regarding overhangs for property owners.

General Guidelines: Sidewalk Overhangs

Original awnings or canopies found on buildings should be maintained, be structurally sound, and should not be removed from the building.

Figure 120

Cloth awnings are encouraged on south facing storefronts.

Placement of awnings should occur at the top of openings.

Consider the cumulative effect of all awnings existing along the street or multiple awnings on neighboring buildings when designing your awnings.

To discourage the use of arched awnings on straight windows, write a guideline that suggests:

Awning shape should relate to the shape of the top of the opening.

Figure 121

11. Signs

Most cities have sign ordinances that specify the size and type of signs allowed. Be sure to reference these rules or reproduce the full text of the ordinance as an appendage to your guidelines. The guidelines written by the Design Committee should address visual concerns not found in your ordinance and encourage the use of pedestrian-oriented signs.

General Guidelines: Signs

Signs should relate in placement and size to other building elements.

Do not obscure other building elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details.

Sign material, style, and color should complement the building facade.

If there are a number of large buildings on Main Street that contain different shops, write a guideline that suggests:

Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, placement on the building, and lettering style.

Signs:

- Way-finding signs

Figure 122

- **Flush mounted** signs are signboards or individual die-cut letters placed on the face of the building.

Figure 123

Signs:

- **Hanging signs** are hung from sidewalk overhangs or mounted perpendicular to the sidewalk and can be easily read by pedestrians.

Figure 124

- **Window Signs** are designed to leave the majority of display area open for pedestrian window-shopping.

Figure 125

- **Lighted signs** are lit internally or externally by bulbs or lamps.

Figure 126

- **Neon signs** use gas-filled glass tubes to create a variety of colors and forms.

Figure 127

National Chains and Local Design Guidelines

An abundance of national brands or chain store signs can quickly destroy any sense of unique community character in the commercial district. It becomes a controversial issue if design guidelines are perceived as discouraging new businesses from locating in your community.

Unfortunately, when national chains locate on Main Street, communities often feel the familiar signs that come with them are incompatible with the traditional commercial district and overpower the streetscape. Avoid this problem by establishing sign guidelines before the big chains come knocking and don't be intimidated. Understandably you may encounter resistance, but compromise *is* possible and worth pursuing. More and more towns are successfully requiring large national chains to adapt their graphics to meet local guidelines and ordinances. Go to www.mainstreet.org for case studies of communities that have managed to welcome national chain stores and preserve community character on Main Street.

CHAPTER 14: COLOR COMPATIBILITY ON MAIN STREET

If your community decides to address color selection for Main Street buildings in the design guidelines, focus on the general concerns that influence color selection in any architectural setting. Guidelines can be used to raise awareness of color's importance as a design element and suggest methods for using it effectively in a commercial setting. Keep in mind that color was used in the past in much the same way it is used today: to protect building materials, to make the building more attractive, and to distinguish one merchant from another. Color should complement and enhance, not compete with the retailer's merchandise or services being offered. Information on color in design guidelines should strive to be a source of inspiration for property owners seeking the many benefits of a judiciously applied and sensibly chosen coat of paint.

General Guidelines: Color

Guidelines should include a flexible approach to color guidelines that emphasizes information and education rather than regulation.

Provide basic information on the uses and effects of color in three-dimensional designs.

Provide information on historic color palettes through bibliographies of books available at local libraries and bookstores.

Local paint stores may have educational and promotional material from companies that manufacture paints in historic colors.

Changes in architectural styles often dictated color selections for building materials. In many instances, the style of a building will determine the most appropriate color choices. For example, moving into the 20th century, color schemes moved away from the aggressive, multicolored schemes of the Victorian era toward lighter colors. Also at the turn of the century, color selection for buildings was greatly influenced by the buildings at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, and

the White City approach, which had a European influence through Beaux Arts Classicism. This color and style influence can be found in municipal structures, banks, and important civic buildings from the early part of the century.

1. Choosing a Color Scheme

Popular methods for determining appropriate color choices for historic architecture generally fall into three categories:

- The *scientific approach* that involves a careful analysis of any surviving layers of paint and is used most often for the accurate restoration of museum houses or landmark buildings.
- The *historic approach* that limits paint selections to those colors that were available during a certain period and considered appropriate for a particular style and type of building.
- The *"painted lady"* approach. The name refers to the Victorian houses of San Francisco and the flamboyant color schemes popular during the 1970s and 80s. The wealth of architectural detail found on these 19th century beauties inspired owners to highlight a home's most charming features through the use of lively and imaginative color combinations.

2. General Guidelines to Encourage Color Compatibility

Guidelines dealing with color are best when they address general concerns. Avoid specific statements and do tell property owners the obvious color choices to avoid. Here are some examples of guidelines that maintain a loose, flexible approach but provide useful information. It might be helpful to provide photos that illustrate the "dos and don'ts" of color choices, as shown below.

Color: Design Considerations

A very general color guideline might raise the issue of color coordination.

Be a good neighbor; coordinate with other colors on your block.

Be careful in selecting the dominant color; consider how it will relate to the other parts of the building, such as doors, windows, cornices, signs, and other architectural details, and also be concerned with how it will relate to the street or neighborhood.

The orientation of your building affects the appearance of colors. Inform owners that:
Colors on south and west facades appear warmer than if placed on north or east sides.

Size of a building can also influence color choice:
The larger and plainer the building is, the more subtle the color.

Again, an example of a guideline that encourages the use of color but avoids specific suggestions:
Use color to accent architectural details and entrances.

Keep bright colors for focal points such as signage or the front door.

Color: Choices to Avoid

Guidelines can address color choices that should be avoided. The use of “Do” and “Don’t” photographs might communicate the idea most effectively.
Avoid the more intense hues of a color.

Avoid using more than one vivid color per building.

Avoid using colors that are disharmonious with colors found on adjacent buildings.

Do not use too many colors.

3. Color of Building Materials

Liveliness is often achieved through the natural color differences of various building materials found in the streetscape. Nature is a reliable source for color ideas, and choosing colors that harmonize with the most common local building materials is often a foolproof method for deciding upon an attractive color palette that enhances the historic nature of the downtown area. Instead of recommending specific color hues, consider guidelines that encourage paint choices that maintain existing patterns that rely on color contrast or close similarity of color between different building materials for effect.

Color:

Relate paint colors to natural material colors found on your building, such as brick, terra cotta, stone, or ceramic tile.

Reinforce existing color patterns created from the natural differences of color between building materials.

Part V: Maintaining the Historic Commercial Building

CHAPTER 15: THE INSPECTION PROCESS

Simple maintenance measures are among the first and most cost-effective means for protecting the value of a property and improving the appearance of a downtown shopping area. Establishing a plan for performing routine maintenance tasks provides the best defense against preventable building emergencies that end up costing significant amounts of time and money and can disrupt daily business operations. A regular cycle of inspection, maintenance and repair extends the life of the building, protects its value, and ensures it operates efficiently as an attractive and inviting place.

Preservation experts have known for a long time that a productive historic commercial building is far more likely to survive than one that is vacant or otherwise neglected.

Design guidelines keep historic buildings operational by advising owners on proper rehab techniques, as well as routine maintenance tasks. This section lays out a simple plan for routinely inspecting and maintaining your building. The general checklist provided can be adapted to fit specific cases. The checklist examines the major building systems separately and provides information on proper functioning, care of materials, and suggestions for maintenance and repair. A comprehensive evaluation of a building's condition requires the services of a qualified professional, but design guidelines can provide property owners with sufficient information to maintain their buildings and recognize early signs of trouble before they progress to major problems.

Scheduling

Building owners should schedule an inspection of all building systems at least twice a year. Planning the inspection in early spring and then again in mid to late fall provides a useful overview of building conditions before undertaking seasonal maintenance tasks like installing storm or screen windows, insulating exposed plumbing, weather stripping, and caulking around doors. Complete the inspection of the entire building first before beginning any maintenance chores.

One person can inspect a typical commercial building in an afternoon; two people could probably do it in a few hours.

Equipment
An inspection will take you from the roof of your building to the basement and involves indoor and outdoor observations. You will undoubtedly encounter dirt and cobwebs, so dress in old clothes. You may need a ladder tall enough to inspect elements like the storefront cornice. A flashlight and binoculars will be helpful. A screwdriver or other tools for poking or scraping will help you judge the condition of wood, mortar, and other building materials. In addition, you may want to photograph trouble spots in order to track changes over time.

Using the checklist
The checklist can be used for conducting bi-annual building inspections, or inspecting a property prior to acquisition. It is important to learn the appropriate terms so that you can communicate more effectively with building professionals should you find a problem that needs repair.

This checklist is not intended to take the place of an evaluation by a professional building inspector, architect, engineer or contractor. If you discover problems through the use of the checklist, such persons should be consulted for professional assistance in correcting building faults.

The checklist begins outside with a walk around the building for a general overview of conditions. The checklist divides the building into separate systems and directs your attention to important elements, noting the condition of each in turn from top to bottom: roof, exterior walls, building grounds, interior spaces, heating and ventilating, electrical, and fire safety.

Don’t be alarmed or discouraged if you identify a number of faults. The checklist will help you recognize potential problems, set priorities, schedule work and control the costs of maintaining your building. Remember that it is cheaper in the long run to repair and maintain an older building on a regular basis than ignore maintenance issues until they become a major crisis. Consistent quality care of your building frequently yields dramatic returns upon appraisal or resale.

Getting into the Routine:
Scheduling inspection appointments, creating a "kit" of inspection equipment, and developing an inspection checklist to cover specific elements of your building will help you get in the habit of regular, thorough building inspections.

Scheduling:
- Twice a year inspections in spring and fall
- Choose dates you will likely remember and write them on your calendar.
- Treat inspection appointments as you would any other important check-up; arrange your time accordingly and if something comes up, be sure to reschedule.
- Inspect the building completely before beginning maintenance tasks.

Equipment:
Create an inspection kit that includes:
- A ladder
- A carpenter's apron to hold your tools
- A flashlight
- Binoculars
- Tools for poking and scraping
- Gloves
- Clipboard and pencil
- Checklist and paper for drawing
- Camera

1. The Inspection Checklist: Building Grounds

Begin the inspection with a walk around the building.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Building Grounds

1. Do all downspouts have splash blocks to divert rainwater away from the base of the building?
2. Do lawn sprinklers spray the building?
3. Is there vegetation in contact with the walls or foundation of the building? *Vegetation can hold moisture in wood and masonry walls and foundations and should be cleared away.*
4. Does the grade around the building divert water away from the foundation? *The grade should be such that the water flows away from the foundation.*
5. Are the hose faucets working properly?
6. Are all drains, including floor drains, working properly?

2. The Inspection Checklist: Roof

The roof is typically the first line of defense against water infiltration. Its maintenance is critical. Water from rain, snow, or ice dams can often travel great distances down the interior of walls and along construction surfaces and cause damage far away from the source. If left unchecked, a leaking roof can cause corrosion and rot, and destroy historic materials, finishes, and eventually the structural components of a building.

All roofs require periodic inspection and maintenance in order to perform as designed and to provide a long and effective service life. If you are only able to inspect your roof once a year, spring is the preferable time to identify and make all necessary repairs. Though the roofs of most commercial buildings are flat, owners should exercise caution when walking on a roof. Inspecting the roof with binoculars from the roof access point can usually determine if an up-close inspection by a professional roofer is necessary. If you are uncomfortable with heights or cannot find a safe way to access the roof, do not hesitate to hire a building professional to perform a thorough inspection at least once a year.

The Commercial Building Roof

The most common type of roof found on Michigan Main Streets is the **flat roof**. **Pitched roofs** also appear on commercial buildings, but are not common.

Common Materials: Flat Roofs

In Michigan, flat roofs are commonly made of:

- Tar and gravel (expected to last from 7 - 15 years)
- Asphalt roll roofing (10 - 15 years)
- Membrane or EPDM roof: a rubbery roof coating significantly more expensive than tar and gravel. (50 years.)

Common Materials: Pitched Roofs

- Asphalt shingles (15-30 years depending on quality and installation.)
- Wood shingles/shakes (10-25 years depending on quality and installation.)
- Standing Seam Copper (75-100 years)
- Standing Seam Galvanized Steel (50-75 years)
- Corrugated Metal (20-25 years)

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: General Roof Details

7. Are there loose, rotted or missing gutters or downspouts?
8. Do the gutters slope uniformly, without low areas, to downspouts?
9. Are gutters clean and free flowing?
10. Is there loose, missing, or rusted sheet metal flashing at chimneys, valleys, ridges, parapet walls, roof penetrations or other roof terminations?
11. In addition to looking for obvious flaws such as cracks or corrosion, check for small holes. Even pinholes are a sign of trouble, especially at mortar seals.
12. Are bricks, stone, or mortar cracked or missing at chimneys or

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Flat Roof

13. Does any portion of the roof sag? Some permanent deflection is normal, but excessive deflection should be checked by a contractor or structural engineer.
14. Are there bubbles, blisters, or cracks in the roof surface or membrane? Roofing should be tight to the deck and not move or feel soft underfoot. Pay particular attention to areas around pipes, vents, skylights, and other roof penetrations.
15. Look for bubbles, blisters, or cracks in the roofing surface near areas where water tends to pool, and near any cracks in the parapet wall.
16. Is the connection between the roof and parapet walls sound?
17. Is the coping, metal flashing covering the parapet, in good condition?
18. Are the roof drains and scuppers clear of debris?
19. Are the drain holes in the parapet wall clear of debris? Is there standing water?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Pitched Roof

20. Does the edge of a pitched roof sag? Some permanent deflection is normal, but excessive deflection should be checked by a contractor or structural engineer.
21. Asphalt shingles: Are shingles missing, curling on the edges, or losing mineral coating (granules)?
22. Are there too many layers of shingles? More than two can create problems. Consult with a local roof installer if uncertain.
23. Wood shake/shingles: Are shingles missing, curling or cupping on the edges?
24. Standing seam metal: Is the roof material rusting?
25. Corrugated metal: Are there holes or loose or missing fasteners? Are nails raised, loose, or sticking above the sheet metal?
26. Check the edge of the roof overhang for evidence of ice dams, and observe the eaves and soffit for evidence of deterioration and water

Gutters and other roof details

Both pitched and flat roof systems employ gutters and downspouts to drain away surface water and protect lower building walls from moisture damage. Gutters appear at the roofline either attached to the exterior wall, or may be set within the roof itself. This type is known as a box gutter and they are very common on commercial buildings. Water collects in the drains and gutters at the roof level, travels down the side of the building via the downspouts, and is carried safely away from the building by the downspout extension and the backsplash at ground level, or by a buried drain pipe. The idea is to prohibit water from standing on the roof, running down the wall, or pooling at the foundation and thus penetrate the building at any of these points. Prolonged contact with water is damaging to building materials.

Regularly clean gutters, drains and downspouts, and install gutter and drain guards to reduce the collection of leaves and other material. Ensure that gutters carry rainwater away from the building by running water through the system or observing its performance in a rain event. Failing to maintain gutters, drains, and downspouts can cause damage to roofing, fasteners, sheathing, and the underlying structure and is one of the most common causes of building deterioration. Regular inspection and maintenance of gutters, drains, and downspouts will help prevent serious problems from occurring and

prolong the life of the building and building elements.

Flashing is a continuous metal barrier that acts as a seal at vulnerable roof joints. It is a means of bridging and sealing the gap between dissimilar materials (especially those with different rates of expansion), or incompatible profiles (shapes). It insures water tightness at building corners, ridges, valleys, or other changes in plane that are prone to separation, such as the joint between an addition and the original structure.

Flashing should be inspected at least once a year and corroded flashing should be immediately replaced. Property owners should solicit experienced advice regarding the particular type and gauge (thickness) of metal that is best suited to their needs.

If you were able to access the roof for this inspection, check the cornice at the top of the front wall before descending to inspect the exterior walls.

3. Inspection Checklist: The Exterior Wall System

The Cornice

The inspection of the exterior walls assesses the condition of walls, windows, decorative trim and the foundation. After completing the roof inspection, walk over to the front of the building and take a look at the condition of the cornice and its fastenings. If you don't have safe access to the cornice, you can conduct the cornice inspection from the ground using binoculars.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Cornice

27. Check the condition of the hardware connecting the cornice to the wall. Is it firmly attached to both the wall and cornice and functioning properly? Are fasteners firmly anchored in the mortar?
28. Are any parts of the cornice damaged or missing? Do you see any loose parts that may fall or other unsafe conditions of potential hazard to pedestrians below?
29. Is the framework, or structural system of the cornice functioning properly? Are all the cornice elements held together securely by the framework and is the framework firmly fastened to the wall of the building?
30. Look for signs of animal or insect nests and clean away.
31. Wood Cornice: Is the paint flaking or peeling?
32. Wood Cornice: Is there evidence of rotting from water damage or insect infestation?
33. Metal Cornice: Are there signs of rust or corrosion?
34. Metal Cornice: Is the paint adhering to the surface?

The wall system

Questions 35 through 39 cover general wall conditions and are intended for all types of walls, whether clapboard, shingle, or masonry. Questions 40 through 43 address conditions specific to walls made of brick, stone, or other masonry materials.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - General

35. Is the paint peeling, blistering or cracking (alligatoring)?
36. Is the wall out of plumb or unlevel? Are there bulges?
37. Is wood trim sound, firmly attached and painted?
38. Are there open joints around door and window frames or woodwork?
39. Are the walls water stained?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Masonry

40. Are there any major cracks in the masonry? *Hairline and horizontal cracks usually do not represent a problem. Vertical cracks through masonry units and mortar joints or diagonal cracks signal problems and should be checked by a mason or a structural engineer.*
41. Are any masonry units missing, loose, or deteriorating?
42. Is the mortar soft and crumbling?
43. Are any bricks spalling or crumbling?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Wood

44. Are any portions of the wood soft or damp?
45. Are all wood components painted?
46. Is there any evidence of mold, mildew or rot?
47. Is there evidence of insect damage?

The following sets of questions review the other components of the exterior wall system, the foundation, windows, and attic. Some of the points require inspection of the interior space to determine if the exterior wall has been breached by water, animals, or other destructive forces.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Foundations

48. Is there vertical or diagonal cracking in the concrete or masonry?
49. Is the concrete or masonry spalling, crumbling, or deteriorating?
50. Is the mortar in the masonry loose or crumbling?
51. Is there any wood, especially structural members, within six inches of the ground? *Also look for areas where rain splash back hits the wood.*

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Windows

52. Are all wood window components, exterior and interior, sound and painted?
53. Is any wood at the exterior sill, frames or sash decaying? *Sills are particularly vulnerable.*
54. Is there evidence of excessive moisture penetration around the sash or at the sills on the interior?
55. Is the putty around the panes of glass firm and painted?
56. Does the sash operate smoothly?
57. Are sashes loose in their frames?
58. Are sash cords broken or missing?
59. Does condensation build on interior or exterior storm sash during the winter months? *Some condensation is normal, but high amounts of condensation can deteriorate wood quickly.*

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Exterior Walls - Attic

60. Is there evidence of water leaks? *Leakage is very common at chimneys and eaves. It's best to look during or soon after a steady rain.*
61. Are there signs of vermin infiltration (usually pigeons and bats)?
62. Is there insulation in the ceiling or roof rafters?
63. Is the attic vented?

1. Inspection Checklist: Decks, Porches, and Balconies

Decks, porches, and balconies are exposed to the elements to a greater extent than most other parts of a building and are therefore more susceptible to deterioration. Routine inspection and maintenance of these building elements saves money in the long run and preserves important characteristics of your building's style.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Decks, Porches, and Balconies

64. Are there loose or deteriorated structural or decorative components?
65. Are masonry or concrete piers plumb and sound? *Make sure that structural connections to the building are secure and protected against corrosion or decay.*
66. Are the exterior stairs and railings in good condition? Check wooden steps and railings for proper support and strength and for rot. Inspect steel stairs and railings for rust, strength, and attachment. *Deteriorated stairs or railings should be repaired or replaced.*
67. Are there signs of excessive deflection and deterioration on the porch floor?
68. Is there a positive pitch of the porch floor or deck away from the exterior wall (so water can drain away from the building)?

2. Inspection Checklist: Interior spaces

The inspection of interior spaces includes all rooms within the building including the basement and crawlspace. The inspection also involves checking plumbing systems in any of these spaces.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Interior Spaces - General

69. Is the plaster on the walls or ceiling damp, loose, or cracked? *Water damaged plaster below windows and diagonal stress cracks originating at the tops of window openings are very common.*
70. Is there any evidence of water infiltration (stains) on the ceiling, around windows or on the lower walls?
71. Are walls bulging or out of plumb?
72. Does any portion of the floor sag? *Some permanent deflection is acceptable, but excessive or progressive deflection may indicate structural failure and should be checked by a contractor or structural engineer.*
73. Do floors deflect (sag or bounce) when walked on or loaded? *Excessive "live load" deflection can indicate undersized structural members and should be checked by a contractor or structural engineer.*
74. Do doors open and swing freely on hinges? *Binding may indicate uneven settling in walls or floors.*
75. Are stairs sound and stable with an appropriate handrail?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Interior Spaces – Cellars and Crawlspaces

76. Do the walls and floors show signs of excessive moisture?
77. Is there evidence of standing water or periodic flooding?
78. Are there signs of vermin infiltration or insect damage?
79. Is there any wood, especially structural members, within six inches of the ground?
80. Are unheated basements and crawlspaces vented?
81. Are floors above unheated basements and crawlspaces insulated?
82. If a dirt floor, is there a vapor barrier (plastic sheeting) covering it?
83. Does the area smell of mold or mildew?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Interior Spaces – Plumbing

84. Is there any evidence of leakage underneath the sinks or toilets?
85. What is the water supply pipe material? *Brass and copper are the best. PVC pipe has not been around as long as copper or brass, but performs well. Galvanized steel or iron pipe will not last as long as any of the above. Lead poses a potential health risk.*
86. Is there good water pressure? *Test by flushing the toilet and running all faucets at the same time.*

6. Inspection Checklist: Heating and Ventilation

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Heating and Ventilation – Steam Heat

87. Is the boiler tank leaking?
88. Is there evidence of leaking pipes? Look for stains and rot on floor around pipes. *Rusted pipes, broken traps or valves and pipes clogged with mineral scale build-up generally cause leaking. The boiler's water level should be monitored periodically. In addition, the low-water cutoff should be flushed once a month to prevent buildup of mineral scale.*
89. Obstructions? Remove any drapes, furniture or other objects blocking radiators. *These obstructions interrupt airflow and decrease your system's efficiency.*
90. Are the steam pipes insulated with asbestos? If the asbestos is damaged, call an abatement contractor. *Damaged asbestos can release fibers that can become a health hazard.*

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Heating and Ventilation – Forced Hot Water Heat

91. Is the boiler tank leaking?
92. Is there evidence of leaking pipes? Look for stains and rot on floor around pipes. *Rusted pipes, broken traps and pipes or pressure relief valves clogged with mineral scale build-up, generally cause leaking.*
93. Check the temperature pressure relief valve by lifting the valve lever and allowing a small amount of water to flow into a bucket. Replace if no water flows from the valve.
94. Obstructions? Remove any drapes, furniture or other objects blocking radiators or baseboard units. These obstructions interrupt airflow and decrease your system's efficiency.
95. Are hot water pipes insulated with asbestos? If the asbestos is damaged, call an abatement contractor. *Damaged asbestos can release fibers that can become a health hazard.*

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Heating and Ventilation – Forced Hot Air Heat

96. What is the date of the last furnace inspection or service? *Yearly inspection is recommended.*
97. Are all belts tight and in good condition?
98. Do filters need to be replaced?
99. Does the motor and fan need to be oiled?
100. Are any registers blocked by furniture or inadvertently closed?

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Heating and Ventilation – General

101. Is heat distributed evenly?
102. Do thermostats work correctly to control room temperature?
103. Do you have electric baseboard heat? *Although cheaper to install than gas or oil heat, in Michigan they are substantially more expensive to operate.*

7. Inspection Checklist: Electrical

Unsafe wiring can be deadly. It can cause shocks, fires, and other electrical hazards. However, a visual inspection of wire insulation on accessible circuits will usually determine whether an electrician should perform additional tests.

INSPECTION CHECKLIST: Electrical

104. Is the main electrical service to the building adequate? 100 amps is minimum by modern standards.
105. Does the building have circuit breakers or fuses?
106. Are the breakers or fuses the correct size? *Generally 20 amps for new wiring. For older wiring, no more than 15 amps is recommended.*
107. Is the insulation frayed on existing wires or are bare wires exposed in an unsafe location?
108. Is there any substandard aluminum wire, surface mounted lampcord or extension cord or "knob and tube" wiring in active use?
109. Are there GFI (ground fault interruption) type receptacles or circuit breakers installed in laundries, kitchens, and bathrooms? If so, test their operation. *These types of receptacles were not required before 1990, but are easily installed as replacements.*
110. Do all light switches and lights attached to walls work properly? Turn on all light switches and lights that are permanently attached to walls.
111. Does the building have functioning smoke detectors? Remove existing batteries and replace with fresh ones. Ideally, detectors should be wired to a power source and also contain a battery.
112. Are there fire extinguishers on the premises? Are they fully charged?

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Cover	Calumet	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
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Figure 1		ARCHITECT'S FOUR, INC. Downtown Design Guidelines: A handbook for preservation, new construction and loft re-use. June 1989. Page 85
Figure 2	Calumet	www.mainstreetcalumet.com
Figure 3		www.sd4history.com
Figure 4		www.softree.com/images
Figure 5	Detroit	www.bcw.mit.edu/OcwWeb/Civil-and-Environmental-Engineering/
Figure 6	Grand Haven	Ewing, Wallace, et al; *Images of America: The Grand Haven Area 1860-1960;* Arcadia Publishing; Chicago, 2002, p. 59
Figure 7	Laurium	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 8		www.nbm.org
Figure 9		National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Building Improvement File"; 1995
Figure 10		National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Building Improvement File"; 1996
Figure 11	Williamston	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 12		www.signaturewoodworking.biz/storefront
Figure 13	Farmington	www.co.oakland.mi.is/peds/program_service/main_street
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Figure 49	Marshall	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 50	Dearborn	www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso
Figure 51		Ching, Francis D.K. *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture.* John Wiley & Sons, 1995. Page 275
Figure 52		Ching, Francis D.K. *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture.* John Wiley & Sons, 1995. Page 155
Figure 53	Detroit	www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso
Figure 54	Mason	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
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Figure 65	Saginaw	Crary, Joanne, Saginaw Future. Downtown Revitalization Conference. "Health Care Industry as a Downtown Economic Anchor." October 2004
Figure 66	Grand Rapids	Sturtevant, Dennis, Dwelling Place. Downtown Revitalization Conference. "Avenue for the Arts Inititative". October 2004
Figure 67	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 68	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 69	Niles	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 70	Holland	www.downtownholland.org
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Figure 79	Ishpeming	www.mcgi.state.mi.us/hso
Figure 80	Allegan	2005 Michigan Main Street application
Figure 81	Monroe	www.historicmonroe.org/downtown
Figure 82	Boyne City	2003 Michigan Main Street application
Figure 83	East Jordan	www.mlui.org
Figure 84	Boyne City	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 85	Niles	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 86	Marshall	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 87	Bay City	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 88	Fenton	2005 Fenton Michigan Main Street application
Figure 89	Traverse City	www.waterwinterwonderland.com
Figure 90	Linden	Preservation Planning; *Linden Village Center: Guidelines for Conservation* ; McNaughton & Gunn; Franklin, Michigan; 1978, page 4
Figure 91	Detroit	www.michiganrailroads.com

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Figure 93		National Park Service
Figure 94	Traunik	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 95	Grand Haven	Ewing, Wallace, et al; *Images of America: The Grand Haven Area 1860-1960;* Arcadia Publishing; Chicago, 2002, p. 47
Figure 96	Portland	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 97	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 98	Howell	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 99		www.raybial.com
Figure 100	Evart	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 101	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 102	Howell	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 103	Clare	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 104	Marshall	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 105		Michigan State Historic Preservation Office file
Figure 106	Allegan	2005 Michigan Main Street application
Figure 107	Saginaw	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 108	Calumet	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 109	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 110	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 111		National Trust for Historic Preservation
Figure 112	Boyne City	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 113	Ishpeming	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 114	Grand Rapids	www.rockfordpropertymgt.com
Figure 115	Old Town, Lansing	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 116	Midland	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 117	Hancock	www.cityofhancock.com
Figure 118	Calumet	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 119	Lansing	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 120	Holly	www.mainstreetholly.com
Figure 121		National Trust for Historic Preservation
Figure 122	Grand Haven	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 123	Howell	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 124	Boyne City	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 125		National Trust for Historic Preservation

APPENDIX A

Image Credits

	Location	Source
Figure 126	Clare	Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Figure 127	Detroit	www.reuther.wayne.edu

APPENDIX B

FEDERAL AND STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

Historic buildings are tangible links with the past. They help give a community a sense of identity, stability and orientation. The federal and state governments encourage the preservation of historic buildings through various programs including federal and state income tax incentives to support the rehabilitation of historic and older buildings. Nationally, historic preservation tax incentives have proven to be one of the most successful and cost-effective community revitalization programs. These tax incentives reward private investment in rehabilitating historic properties. **The federal preservation tax incentive program is targeted at income-producing properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Michigan preservation tax incentive program is available to both income-producing and personal residential properties that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Sites, or are located in local historic districts.** Both the federal and the state programs are administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

A tax credit differs from an income tax deduction. An income tax deduction lowers the amount of income subject to taxation. A tax credit, however, lowers the amount of tax owed. In general, a dollar of tax credit reduces the amount of income tax owed by one dollar.

FEDERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

Since 1976, the National Park Service (NPS) has administered the program in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and SHPO's. Current tax incentives for preservation, established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 (PL 99-514; Internal Revenue Code Section 47) include:

- **10% tax credit for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936.**
- **20% tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of certified historic structures, and may include buildings built after 1936.**

For both credits, the rehabilitation must be qualified as substantial and must involve a depreciable resource. The two credits are mutually exclusive - only one applies to a given project. Which credit applies depends on the building - not the property owner's preference.

10% Rehabilitation Tax Credit

- Individual buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places are not eligible. Buildings located in National Register-listed historic districts or state or local historic districts are presumed to be historic and are therefore not eligible for the credit.
    - Owners of buildings in these historic districts may claim the tax credit only if they file Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application with the NPS and receive a determination that the building does not contribute to the district and is not a certified historic structure
- The tax credit applies only to buildings - not ships, bridges or other structures.

- The rehabilitation must be qualified as substantial - exceeding either $5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater.
- The property must be depreciable.
- The tax credit applies only to buildings rehabilitated for non-residential use.
- Projects undertaken for the tax credit must meet three specific physical tests for retention of external walls and internal structural framework. The three standards for retention are:
    - At least 50% of the building's walls that exist at the time the rehabilitation begins must remain in place as external walls when the work is concluded.
    - At least 75% of the building's existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls.
    - At least 75% of the building's internal structural framework must remain in place.
- The tax credit is claimed the tax year in which the rehabilitated building is placed in service.
- Rehabilitations denied certification for the 20% tax credit may not claim the 10% tax credit.
- There is no formal review process.

20% Rehabilitation Tax Credit

The U.S. Department of the Interior and the Department of the Treasury jointly administer the federal historic preservation tax incentives program. The NPS acts on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, in partnership with the SHPO in each state. The IRS acts on behalf of the Secretary of the Treasury. Certification requests are made to the NPS through the appropriate SHPO. Comments by the SHPO on certification requests are fully considered by the NPS. NPS issues all approvals for the 20% tax credit.

- The tax credit applies to any project that the Secretary of the Interior designates a **certified rehabilitation** of a **certified historic structure**.
- The tax credit applies only to buildings – bridges, ships, railroad cars, dams and other structures do not qualify.
- The tax credit is available for buildings rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for buildings used exclusively as the owner's private residence.
- To be eligible for the tax credit, a project must also meet the basic tax requirements of the Internal Revenue Code:
    - The building must be depreciable – it must be used in a trade or business or held for the production of income.
    - The rehabilitation must be substantial – exceeding either $5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building, whichever is greater.
    - The property must be returned to use.
- The tax credit is claimed for the tax year in which the rehabilitated building is placed in service.
    - If a building remains in service throughout the rehabilitation, then the credit may be claimed when the building has been substantially rehabilitated.
- Unused tax credits can be "carried back" one year and "carried forward" for up to twenty years.
- Tax credits are subject to recapture. Ownership must be maintained for five full years after completion of the rehabilitation.

    - If the building is disposed of within one year after it is placed in service, 100% of the credit is recaptured.
    - The recapture amount is reduced by 20% per year for buildings held between one and five years after it is placed in service.
- The NPS or the SHPO may inspect a rehabilitated property at any time during the recapture period. The NPS may revoke certification if work was not done as described in the Historic Preservation Certification Application, or if unapproved alterations were made after certification of the rehabilitation.

A certified historic structure is a building that is:

- Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places; or
- Located in a registered historic district that has been certified by the NPS as contributing to the historic significance of that district.
    - A registered historic district is any district listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
    - A state or local historic district may also qualify as a registered historic district if the Secretary of the Interior certifies the district and the enabling statute.

A certified rehabilitation is a rehabilitation that is approved by the NPS as being consistent with the historic character of the building and, where applicable, the district in which it is located.

- The NPS assumes that some alteration of the historic building will occur to provide for an efficient and contemporary use.
- The project must not damage, destroy, or cover materials or features, whether interior or exterior, which define the building's historic character.

Qualified rehabilitation expenditures include:

- Costs associated with the work undertaken on the historic building;
- Architectural and engineering fees;
- Site survey fees;
- Legal expenses;
- Development fees; and
- Other construction-related costs, if such costs are added to the basis of the property and are determined to be reasonable and related to the services performed.

Qualified rehabilitation expenditures do not include:

- Cost of acquiring or furnishing the building;
- New additions that expand the existing building;
- New building construction; or
- Parking lots, sidewalks, landscaping, or other facilities related to the building.

To qualify for the tax credits, applicants must complete the Historic Preservation Certification Application. The application consists of three parts.

Part 1 – Evaluation of Significance.

- Owners of buildings within historic districts must complete Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application. The owner submits this application to the SHPO. The SHPO reviews the application and forwards it to the NPS with a recommendation for approving or denying the request. The NPS then determines whether the building contributes to the historic district. If so, the building then becomes a "certified historic structure." The NPS bases its decision on the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Evaluating Significance within Registered Historic Districts."
- Buildings individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places are already certified historic structures. Owners of these buildings do not need to complete the Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application.
- Buildings that are not yet listed in the National Register of Historic Places nor located in registered historic districts may use Part 1 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application to request a preliminary determination of significance. A preliminary determination of significance allows the owner to proceed with the rehabilitation project while the process of listing a building or a district continues.

Part 2 – Description of Rehabilitation.

Owners seeking certification of rehabilitation work must complete Part 2 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application. The application is submitted to the SHPO for review. The SHPO provides technical assistance on appropriate rehabilitation treatments, advises owners on their applications, makes site visits when possible, and forwards the application to the NPS, with a recommendation. The NPS then reviews the rehabilitation project for conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and issues a certification decision. The entire project is reviewed, including related demolition and new construction, and is certified, or approved, only if the overall rehabilitation project meets the Standards for Rehabilitation.

Part 3 – Request for Certification of Completed Work.

After the rehabilitation work is completed, the owner submits Part 3 of the Historic Preservation Certification Application to the SHPO. The SHPO forwards the application to the NPS, with a recommendation as to certification. The NPS then evaluates the completed project against the work proposed in Part 2 –Description of Rehabilitation. Only completed projects that meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are approved as certified rehabilitations for purposes of the tax credit.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES

In January of 1999, two amendatory laws were passed that authorized a new tax credit program in the State of Michigan. These credits are available to encourage investment in Michigan's historic resources. The state tax credit program is closely modeled after the federal program. The State

Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administers the program in partnership with the Michigan Department of Treasury.

Michigan resource owners and long-term lessees who undertake qualified rehabilitations of certain historic resources can apply for a credit against their state general income tax or single business tax of up to 25% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures. The purpose of the tax credit program is to provide incentives to homeowners, commercial property owners, and businesses to rehabilitate historic commercial and residential resources.

- The resource to be rehabilitated must be located in the State of Michigan.
- The resource must be a **certified historic resource**.
- The work must be a **certified rehabilitation**.
- Qualified rehabilitation expenditures must be equal to or greater than 10% of the State Equalized Value (SEV) of the property.
- The tax credit is taken in the tax year in which the Part 3 application is certified. If the tax credit exceeds the taxpayer's liability, the remainder may be carried forward for up to ten years.
- If the resource is sold, or alterations not meeting the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are made within five years after the tax credit is claimed, the tax credit will be subject to recapture.
- An authorized representative of the SHPO may inspect a resource at any time during the five-years after the tax credit is initially claimed. Certification may be revoked if the rehabilitation work was not completed as described, or if unapproved alterations not conforming to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* were made. If certification is revoked, the entire tax credit will be subject to recapture by the State of Michigan.

An eligible resource is defined as any historic building, structure, site, object, feature, or open space that is:

- Located in a local unit of government with a population of 5,000 people or more *and* is a contributing resource in a local historic district established under Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act (Public Act 169 of 1970, as amended); or
- Located in a local unit of government with a population under 5,000 people *and* is a contributing resource in a local historic district, *or* is listed in the State Register of Historic Sites or the National Register of Historic Places.

An eligible resource is designated a certified historic resource by the SHPO after the resource is reviewed and a determination of the resource's historic significance and character are made.

A certified rehabilitation is the rehabilitation of a certified historic resource that the SHPO has affirmed as being consistent with the historic character of the resource and, where applicable, with the district in which the resource is located.

- The rehabilitation must conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.* All projects are reviewed and evaluated in accordance with these standards.
- Certification of the rehabilitation is based on whether the entire project meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

State tax credits may be taken on qualified rehabilitation expenditures. **Qualified rehabilitation expenditures include:**

- Costs due to rehabilitation work undertaken on the resource;
- Architectural and engineering fees;
- Site surveys;
- Legal expenses; and
- Development fees.

Qualified rehabilitation expenditures do not include:

- Costs of acquiring or furnishing the resource;
- New additions that expand the volume of the existing resource;
- Construction of new facilities related to the resource; and
- Most site improvements.

To qualify for the tax credits, applicants must complete the Historic Preservation Certification Application. The application is composed of three parts.

Part 1 – Evaluation of Eligibility.

Certified historic resource status is obtained by completing Part 1 of the application. The SHPO reviews the application and determines whether the resource is a certified historic resource. Additionally, if the resource is located in a local historic district, this must be verified and a Declaration of Location form must be submitted.

Part 2 – Description of Rehabilitation.

To ensure that a planned rehabilitation is consistent with the historic character of the resource, Part 2 of the application is submitted to the SHPO for review and approval. The SHPO evaluates the rehabilitation project for conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. If necessary, the SHPO advises applicants, and provides technical assistance and literature on appropriate rehabilitation treatments. To determine if the amount of the rehabilitation expenditures is sufficient to qualify for the state tax credit, a Verification of the State Equalized Value form must be submitted.

Part 3 – Request for Certification of Completed Work.

Certification of the project is obtained when the rehabilitation work is completed. Part 3 of the application is submitted to the SHPO for review and approval. A project designated by the SHPO as a certified rehabilitation is approved for purposes of the tax credit and both the applicant and the Michigan Department of Treasury are notified.

The historic preservation tax incentives programs have spurred the rehabilitation of historic structures of every period, size, style and type. They have been instrumental in preserving the historic places that give cities, towns and rural areas their special character. New private investment is attracted to the historic cores of cities and towns. The preservation tax incentives also generate jobs, enhance property values, and augment revenues for state and local

governments through increased property, business and income taxes. The preservation tax incentives also help create low and moderate-income housing in historic buildings. Through this program, abandoned or under-utilized schools, warehouses, factories, churches, retail stores, apartments, hotels, houses, and offices throughout the country have been rehabilitated in a manner that maintains their historic character.

APPENDIX C

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards

Rooted in over 120 years of preservation ethics in both Europe and America, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are common sense principles in non-technical language. They were developed to help protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices.

The Standards may be applied to all properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places: buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts.

The Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations; as such, they cannot, in and of themselves, be used to make essential decisions about which features of a historic property should be saved and which might be changed. But once an appropriate treatment is selected, the Standards provide philosophical consistency to the work.

There are Standards for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties – preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The placement of intact or repairable historic 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. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.

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.

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.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Distinctive historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Restoration depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.

2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period 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.

7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.

8. 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.

9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Reconstruction re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.

2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.

4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.

5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.

6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

APPENDIX D

Survey Field Form

The following form may be reproduced as a field from for recording data for later incorporation into electronic records. Completing the city/village and township sections in the field is useful when the survey includes more than one local governmental unit. It is important to record the sources of historical information, including the date of construction – such as cornerstones and inscriptions or other informants – obtained in the field.

MICHIGAN ABOVE-GROUND SURVEY FIELD FORM

ADDRESS
Number Direction Street City/Village
Township

SURVEYINFO
Survey Date Surveyor

NAME
Historic Name
Common Name

DATE/PROPERTY TYPE/STYLE
Date Built Source of Date
Style Property Type

MATERIALS
Foundation
Walls
Roof

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES

OTHER BUILDINGS/FEATURES

HISTORY

COMMENTS

PHOTOINFO
File Name
Roll No. Frame No.
Photographer