

DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Kingsport Economic Development Board
City of Kingsport

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DOWNTOWN FAÇADE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Downtown Façade Design Guidelines outline the standards, which should be followed when renovating buildings using a façade grant. These design guidelines take into consideration a building’s historic significance in determining what would be an appropriate treatment. Projects that affect city-designated historic buildings also require a separate review by the [City of Kingsport Historic Zoning Commission](#).

These guidelines will also assist property owners in understanding the context of the built environment in Kingsport’s Downtown, and to help owners when they are faced with decisions about alterations and new construction. Also, for property owners faced with decisions about the repair, maintenance, rehabilitation and demolition of a building. These guidelines are not a rigid set of rules, rather, their purpose is to provide information to property owners and tenants about buildings, their distinct characteristics and suggest various appropriate ways to address design, repair, and rehabilitation issues.

The Design Guidelines are further explained through the use of photographs and illustrations. Examples given should not be considered the only appropriate options. In most cases, there are numerous possible solutions that meet the intention of the design guidelines, as well as the needs of the property owner. Simply because a design approach is not listed or illustrated does not mean that it is not acceptable.

How are the Design Guidelines Used?

Property owners, agents, developers, tenants and architects should use these guidelines when considering applying for a Façade Grant. This will help establish an appropriate direction for design. The applicant should refer to the guidelines at the outset to avoid efforts that later may be inappropriate.

The guidelines are employed in two ways during the grant review process:

- The Façade Grant Review Committee will use the guidelines when considering the appropriateness of grant monies to be expended for the application
- The Façade Grant Review Committee will also use the guidelines when considering level of grant funding awarded.

While it guides an approach to certain design problems by offering alternative solutions, it does not dictate a specific outcome and it does not require a property owner to instigate improvements that are not contemplated. The committee will consider the proposed projects on a case-by-case basis to determine if an adequate number of the relevant guidelines have been met. However, there is no set number of guidelines that must be met to gain approval. In making its determination, the committee’s overall goals are to ensure that the proposed work complies with the goals of the program and that the overall character of the Downtown is enhanced. The design guidelines provide an objective basis for determining that these goals will be achieved.

Façade

The façade is the entire exposed exterior surface of a building that fronts a public street and contains the building’s principal entrance. Any elevation not containing the main entrance but fronting on a public street exposed to public view will be considered a secondary elevation. Secondary Elevations may also be eligible for façade grants.

Storefronts

It is the intent of these guidelines that most buildings should have storefront-type glazing facing the street. When alterations are made to the first floor levels of buildings that presently have more opaque wall treatments, the façade grant program will usually require that storefront type glazing be installed that could accommodate retail uses in the future.

If an existing storefront is to be replaced, the new storefront should be traditional in character and include an appropriately designed bulkhead panel; large, undivided areas of clear glass display windows; a glazed transom surmounted by a storefront cornice; and a traditional, fully glazed storefront floor. The new storefront should fill the full height of the original masonry opening. Display windows should be of clear glass in pieces as large as is practical. Tinted or reflective glazing is not recommended.

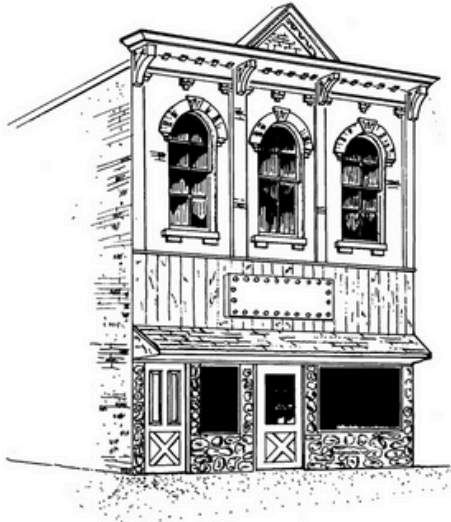
For historic buildings, all structural and decorative elements should be repaired or replaced to match or be compatible with the original materials and design of the building to the greatest extent possible.

Buildings, that are an integral element of a historic streetscape, should reflect and complement the character of the surrounding area to the greatest extent possible.

See the following for Pictorial example:



Storefront Before and After



BEFORE

1. UPPER CORNICE
2. BRACKET
3. CORBELLED BRICK DECORATION
4. WINDOW HOOD MOLDING
5. DOUBLE HUNG WINDOW UNIT
6. STOREFRONT CORNICE
7. SIGN ZONE
8. TRANSOM WINDOW
9. DISPLAY WINDOW
10. MASONRY PIER
11. DOUBLE LEAF ENTRY DOOR
12. DOOR TO UPPER FLOOR
13. BULKHEAD
14. ENTRY RECESS



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER

Masonry

Unpainted brick, stone or terra cotta should not be painted or covered. Previously painted masonry may be painted. If it is necessary to remove paint or clean unpainted masonry, use the gentlest methods possible. Sandblasting and other abrasive cleaning methods are not recommended. Repaint defective mortar by matching the original in color, style, texture and strength. Repair or replace deteriorated masonry with new masonry that duplicates the original material as closely as possible.

Textured Masonry Surface or Brick in a Vertical Bond



Brick or Terra Cotta



Stone Patterns



Upper Story Windows

Retain original upper story window openings that are visible from the public right-of-way. Retain the present configuration of window panes and sashes except when historic photographs indicate a more original condition. Avoid making additional openings or changes in the principal elevations by enlarging or reducing window-opening sizes. The intent is to restore the original window configuration not to create new designs. If the replacement of a window sash is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the appearance and design of the original window sash to the extent possible.

Avoid the filling-in or covering of openings with materials like glass-block. Avoid using modern style window units such as horizontal sliding sash, or fixed sash in place of double hung sash. Do not replace round head windows with square top windows.



Note the use of rounded top windows in the second story although they are painted



Note the difference in the second story windows and use of fixed glass versus the sashed windows in the adjoining building

Trim and Ornamentation

Retain and repair or replace character giving trim ornamentation including, but not limited to, window caps, carved stone work, ornamental plaques, storefront cornices and eaves cornices. Replacement should attempt to match the design, dimensions and material of the original trim and ornamentation.

Note the Detailed cornices at the Entrances



Additional Option for New Construction Projects



Awnings

Awnings should be crafted to complement the age, style and scale of the building. Generally, traditional shed awnings are appropriate for most historic window, door, and storefront installations. It is preferable that these awnings should be made of canvas or neoprene impregnated fabric instead of shiny vinyl with free-hanging valances, the flapping bottom pieces are characteristic of historic awnings. Fabric or fixed metal awning materials may be acceptable. Quarter-round awnings, modern mansard awnings, and other contemporary commercial designs with distended, fixed valances have no precedent in traditional awning design and are usually inappropriate for historic buildings. Backlit awnings and dome awnings are usually inappropriate.



19th-century styles included:

- Striped Awnings: Striped patterns in combinations like red and white, blue and white, or green and white were a hallmark of 19th-century awnings.
- Valance Awnings: These had a decorative flap or valance hanging from the front edge, often embellished with scalloped or ornate designs.
- Fringed Awnings: Some awnings featured fringe along the edges, which added a whimsical decorative element.
- Canvas Awnings with Painted Lettering: Commercial awnings displayed painted company names, logos, or other information.
- Dome Awnings: These made their debut in the late 19th century. They had a distinct rounded canopy, often with scalloped edges.
- Retractable Awnings: While not as common as fixed awnings, retractable awnings emerged in the late 19th century. They could be rolled up or folded back for storage.



Signage

All signage must be approved by the City of Kingsport Planning Department before a permit can be issued.

Neon signage is generally discouraged.

Fascia signs, placed on the fascia or horizontal band between the storefront and the second floor, were common nineteenth century signage. The fascia is often called the "signboard," and as the word implies, provided a perfect place for a sign--then as now and such signs usually gave little more than the name of the business and perhaps a street number. Modern internally lit box signs are not recommended.



Signs in the form of plaques, shields, and ovals were used on many nineteenth-century buildings. Such signs had the advantage of being easily replaced as tenants came and went. They also easily incorporated images as well as lettering.

Hanging Signs are signs that project from a building's wall and are supported by metal brackets. These signs can come in all shapes and sizes and are sometimes made in the likeness of objects and symbols associated with an actual type of business. These signs should project no more than four feet from the face of the building and should not obscure the signage of other nearby businesses. The signs and brackets should be designed to complement the architecture of the building and mounted in the mortar joints of masonry buildings. All projecting signs should be hung within the base zone of the building or parallel to the second story window. Internally lit and moving projecting signs are not recommended.



Display Window Lettering, is another common type of storefront signage that is painted on or etched into the interior side of display windows and glazed entry doorways. These signs should consist of lettering and/or a logo, and should not cover more than 1/5 of the area of the glass panel, and should not obscure the display area.



Transom Signs, are typically made of leaded glass letters that are built into the transom above the storefront display window or door. This can be illuminated at night with backlighting or illuminated from the lower interior part of the store lights. These signs can be made today by leaded glass craft workers and can be made as easily to remove panels.



Awning Signs, allow the fringe or skirt of the awning, as well as the panel at the side as typical placement for a name or street number. Lettering on the main part of the awning is generally not permitted.



Security Gates and Bars

The installation of exterior, permanent or retractable security gates or bars is highly discouraged. They are out of character with the architecture; create an impression that the area is unsafe, and ultimately hurt business. Less obstructive retractable interior security gates, security devices, alarm systems or unbreakable glazing material are preferred alternative security measures. Please note, the listed items are **not** considered as an eligible façade cost.

Exterior Lighting

Spot or flood lighting to highlight the architectural detailing of a building should be inconspicuous and blend with the wall on which it is mounted. No lights should move, flash or make noise.



Other Exterior Elements

Existing exterior fire escapes, ladders, standpipes, vents, etc. should either be painted to blend with the wall on which it is mounted.



Landscaping & Fencing

In some projects landscaping and fencing will be considered. Simply installing fencing around a parking lot or a portion of the parking lot will generally not qualify for a façade grant. If fencing is part of a larger renovation project, it will be considered only if the fence has extraordinary architectural character such as a wrought iron fence with masonry piers. Common fences such as stockade, bound-on board, picket and chain link would not be eligible for a façade grant. Planter or retaining walls should be built of materials of the adjacent buildings. Generally, brick or other suitable masonry units would be considered while certain types of interlocking concrete block, landscaping timers, sidewalks, and curbs would not be eligible.

