

Downtown/Riverfront

Facade & Signage

Design Guidelines

Atchison, Kansas

May 2000

Purpose - Description - Elements - Project Review

Purpose:

In 1996 the City of Atchison adopted a *Comprehensive Strategic Plan* to guide development, celebrate its heritage, maintain beneficial community characteristics, and in general preserve the quality of life the City provides. A major element of the *Strategic Plan* was to develop the riverfront and downtown areas, highlighting their location and historical significance. To that end, a *Downtown/Riverfront Master Plan* was developed in 1998. Based on the *Master Plan*, the Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing (KDCH) awarded the City a grant to implement their development. To implement the *Master Plan*, it is necessary to formulate a set of design guidelines. The guidelines will further historic preservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of properties within the targeted district, and create a consistent architectural character that becomes a recognized theme for the designated area.

Property owners and tenants are strongly encouraged to use these guidelines to assist them in maintaining the historic integrity within the district. The guidelines are intended to supplement and compliment other sources of information to assist property owners. The City Codes Inspector can provide additional guidance concerning building codes, and the Design Review Committee can suggest alternatives in determining appropriateness for many aspects of a project. If these guidelines are found to be in conflict with adopted building codes the more stringent shall apply.

*The guidelines as presented are obligatory for any new construction, and strongly encouraged for rehabilitation projects. The guidelines are **not intended** to be restrictive or limiting, but rather to be helpful by "[promoting] the revitalization of Atchison's Downtown and Riverfront area by focusing on the City's heritage to encourage commercial growth and enhancement of the quality of life".* The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) defines rehabilitation as:

“...the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.”

Furthermore, "Standards for Rehabilitation" as published by the Department of Interior and presented in 36-CFR-1208 are adopted by reference, and available in the Atchison Public Works office in City Hall.

Additionally, for the purpose of these facade guidelines, a wholly new structure, or any change in location or extension to any facade, shall be considered as new construction.

Description:

The limits of the Downtown/Riverfront district are generally bounded by Kansas and Santa Fe Avenues on the north, the railroad tracks south of Main Street on the south, Tenth Street on the west, and the Missouri River on the east. An area map that more clearly outlines the boundaries is attached.

The predominant periods of construction activity in the district were the turn of the century, when Atchison was experiencing its fastest period of growth, and immediately after the flood of 1958 when the city was rebuilding its downtown. Nearly 50% of the existing structures in the district were built between 1865-1920 (late Victorian period). The next most active period of construction was from 1960-1980 with the rebuilding of the downtown and the construction of the mall.

The guidelines as presented are **summary guidelines**, i.e., broad enough in scope to accommodate historic preservation and economic development, yet still establish a consistent architectural character that becomes a recognized theme for the designated area.

Elements:

- Facade: in this context is intended to include the entire face of the subject wall, and any and all appendages thereto; such as windows, doors, cornices, portico(s), color, etc. In addition, elements of new construction or rehabilitation that pertain to structural repair and utilities, including plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and weatherization will also be included.
- Alignment of building facades should be closely approximated within each development. Consistent or systematic roof lines and/or elevations should be maintained. No structure should be more than 50 ft. in height.
- New construction architecture shall be American Victorian commercial style. Rehabilitation/renovation architecture should reflect the era of the American Victorian commercial style, or be of a style consistent with the original era of the building, as long as it is compatible with neighboring properties that have been constructed to meet these guidelines-
- Construction materials used in this era include stone, brick, block masonry, non-reflective glass, and architectural metals. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a structure or site and its environment should not be destroyed, removed, altered, or concealed. All buildings within any given development should use similar material, whether on attached or detached structures.
- Unpainted brick or natural stone should not be painted. Painting of these surfaces should be considered only if necessary to conceal unsightly structural conditions or to

prevent deterioration of the brick or stone. Application of waterproof or water repellent coatings should not be applied. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry. Repointing of mortar joints with high Portland Cement content or other dissimilar material can seriously damage the adjacent brick, due to differing coefficients of expansion, cohesion, or porosity.

- Original wood siding must not be covered over or removed, except to remedy a deteriorated condition. If residing is required, the structure must be resided with wood siding of the same type and size as that of the original insofar as it is practical to do so. The use of asphalt or asbestos siding is prohibited. The use of simulated wood siding, such as aluminum or vinyl clad steel, is strongly discouraged in rehabilitation/renovation projects, and prohibited in new construction. If it is absolutely necessary to use this type of siding, it must conform to the size and type of the original wood siding and original trim, and details must be recreated or left exposed.
- Recommended color schemes for the buildings in the district are as follows:

1860-1880	Dark Tones
1880-1900	Light Earth Tones
1900-	Pastels

Structures should have no more than (3) colors; a primary color for the body, a secondary color for major trim, and a tertiary color for minor trim, the scheme of which should be comprised of the above colors-

- Signage should be subordinate to the structure. Signs should fit within the existing features of the facade, replicate the era of the architecture, and should not cover architectural elements. Signs or other facade extensions should have a minimum height of (10) feet to the bottom of the extension. Signs should not exceed 50 square feet in area. No signage should be displayed on the roof of a building or other structure. Signage should relate only to services provided or products sold upon the premises, or to the name of the business.
- Awnings should remain within a proper scale with the building to achieve visual balance, and be of a complimentary color. Awnings should be made of canvas, and not obscure other architectural elements of the building.
- Building or structure utilities (trash receptacles, electric/telephone lines and meters, downspouts, etc.) should be separated from anticipated pedestrian activity areas and screened to an extent practical.
- Any light sources should be hidden from view, with no exposed conduit or wire. Lighting shall be directed at the building to provide security or accent a feature.

Project Review:

A Design Review Committee (DKC) has been established, and can be contacted at City Hall (city inspector/public works). The review board has (6) members, and consists of :

- One commercial/retail representative
- One industrial representative
- One historic representative
- City planner
- City building official (ex-officio)
- Planning Commission representative

The necessary appointments to the DRC are made by the City Manager with advise and consent of the City Commission. The members of the DRC first appointed shall serve respectively for terms of one (1) year, two (2) years, and three (3) years, divided equally or as nearly as possible. Thereafter, members shall be appointed for terms of three (3) years each.

An application for facade improvements is available in the office of Public Works, and should be submitted in the same office. If there is any uncertainty regarding the applicability of these guidelines, city staff can assist in clarification.

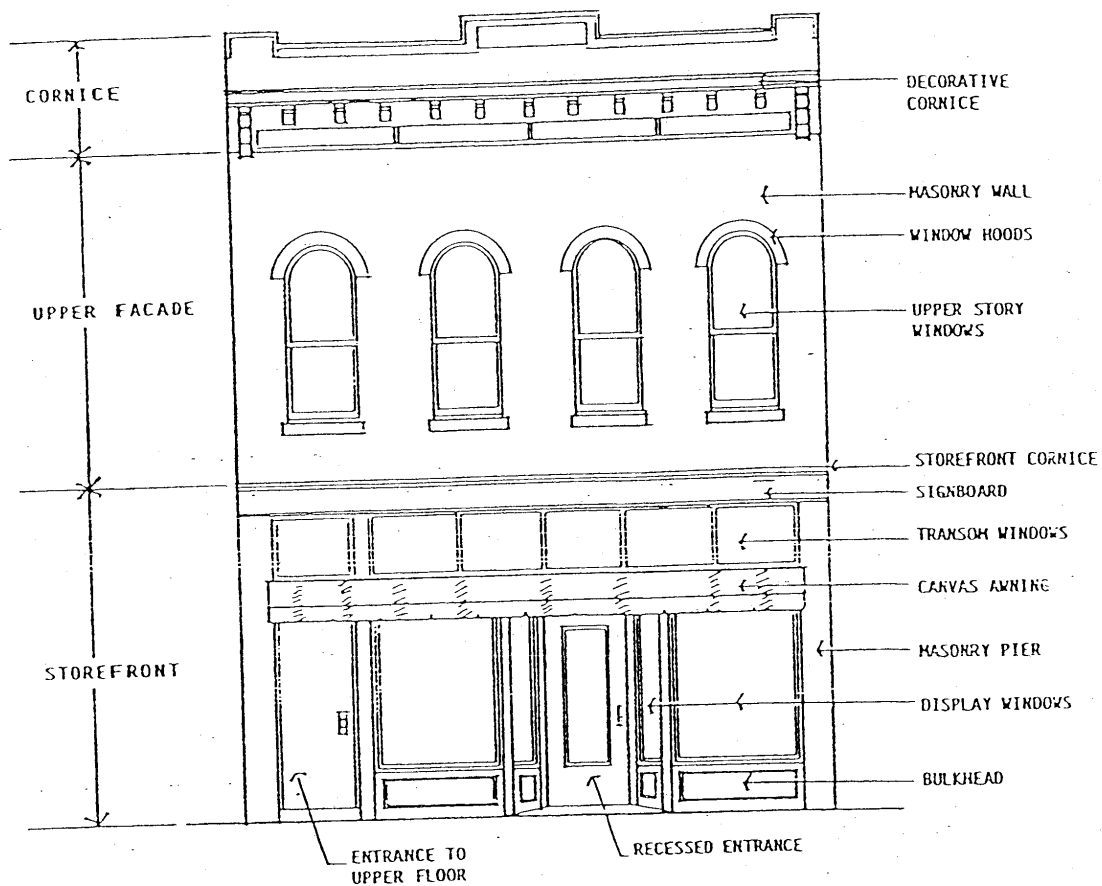
The review process consists of the following steps:

1. Pick-up guideline review applications in the Public Works office.
2. Submit (7) copies of the completed application to the City Building Official. A scheduled submittal time is recommended (but not required) to discuss the application as submitted.
3. A meeting of the DRC will be scheduled for review of applications. Applicants will be notified of the review time and location. Applicants and/or their representative(s) may attend and comment.
4. The DRC may issue a response to the application at the review meeting. However, at the discretion of the DRC, further evaluation may be undertaken, and a response issued within (21) calendar days of initial submittal to the Building Official.

In the event the applicant is unable to comply with the guidelines, the review comments of the DRC may be brought to the attention of the City Commission as an agenda item.

The attached drawings are provided to further identify the intent of these guidelines, and demonstrate their successful implementation. If you would like to discuss these guidelines prior to beginning your project, please contact us at City Hall at 367-5560.

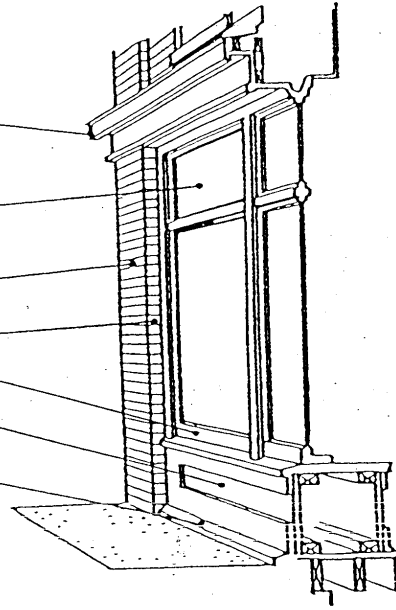
TRADITIONAL FACADE COMPONENTS:



COMMERCIAL STOREFRONTS

STOREFRONT WITH TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

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



STOREFRONT WITH CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS

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

