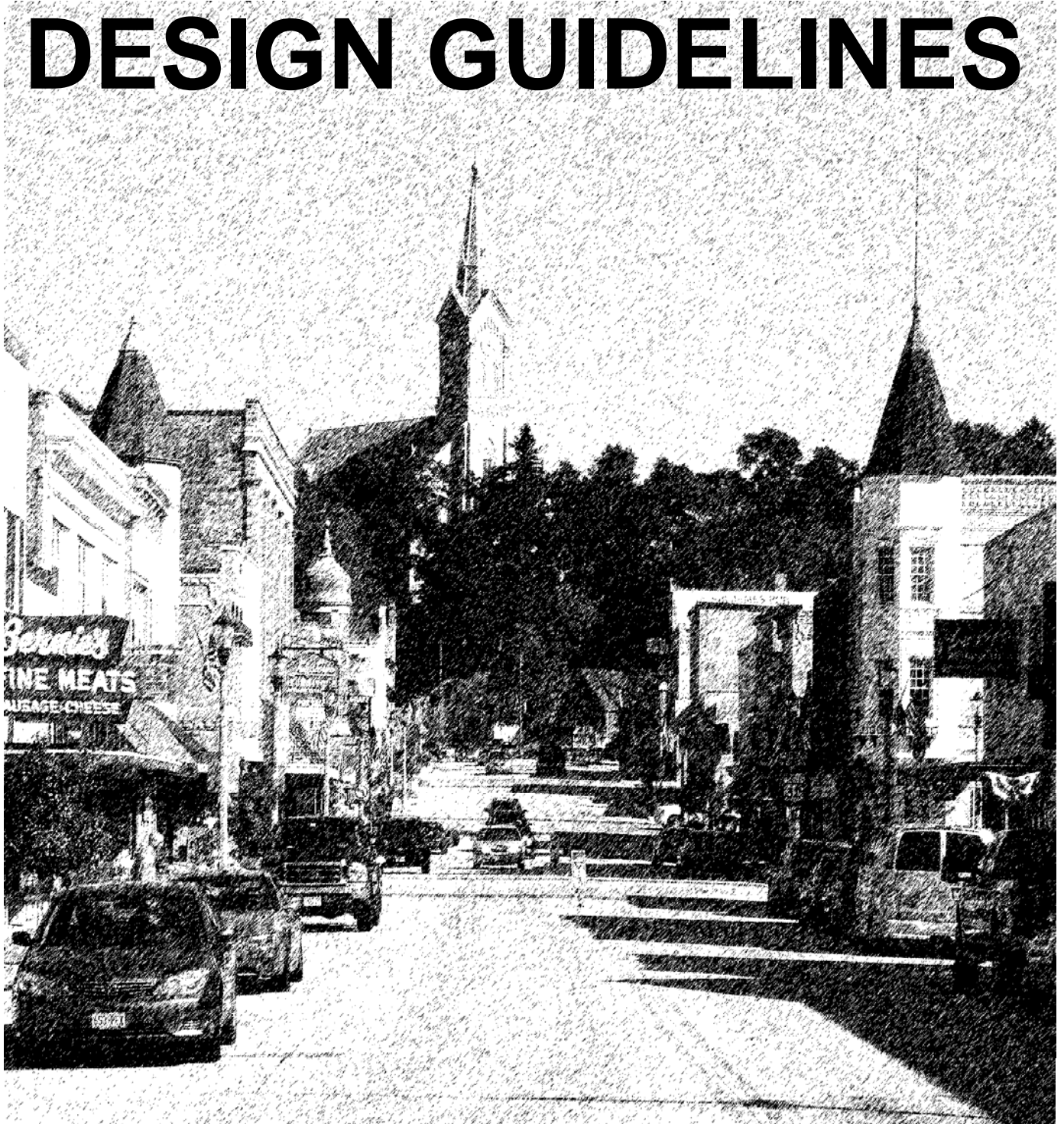




**DOWNTOWN  
PORT WASHINGTON**

**DESIGN GUIDELINES**



## **Table of Contents**

- 3. Introduction/The Main Street Approach**
- 4. History of Port Washington**
- 7. Downtown Port Washington District Identification**
- 8. Design Guideline Goals**
- 9. Site**
  - Street Orientation
  - Parking Areas
  - Public Areas
  - Service Areas
  - Fences, Gates and Retaining Walls
  - Landscaping
  - Exterior Lighting
- 16. Building Design**
  - General
  - Scale & Massing
  - Heights & Proportions
  - Materials
  - Colors
- 24. Facades**
  - Traditional Storefront/Facade Components
  - Doors and Windows
  - Awnings and Canopies
  - Architectural Features
  - Storefront Design
- 27. Signage**
  - Sign Placement
  - Sign Boards
  - Awning Signs
  - Projection Signs (Hanging Signs)
  - Display Window Lettering
  - Plaque Signs
  - Sign Lighting
- 30. Definitions**

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Historic Photos of Downtown Buildings
- Appendix B: Case Studies

## Introduction – The Main Street Approach

The Main Street Approach combines historic preservation and downtown development to create a business center that reinforces the historic nature of our downtown and works to rekindle the economic vitality and values that make it the unique commercial and social heart of the community.

The Main Street Approach deals with the full spectrum of interrelated issues affecting traditional commercial districts and has been successful in more than a thousand towns throughout the country.

The keys to the success of the Main Street Approach are:

**Organization:** Getting everyone with a stake in the district working toward the same goal.

**Promotion:** Marketing the image and unique characteristics of the district to shoppers, investors, new businesses and visitors.

**Design:** Creating an inviting Main Street atmosphere by getting it in top physical condition to capitalize on its historic buildings and traditional layout.

**Economic Restructuring:** Helping existing businesses expand and recruiting new businesses to convert unused space into productive property.

The process is designed to improve both physical and psychological aspects of the downtown. Strengthening public participation, improving economic management, rehabilitating old buildings and recruiting new business all combine to make downtown a fun place to visit.

People are more inclined to do business in architecturally attractive buildings that feel inviting and exhibit their traditional details and character. Building on downtown's inherent assets of rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values, the Main Street Approach has earned national recognition as a practical strategy that is appropriately scaled to each community's local resources and conditions.

Set up in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to stimulate economic development within the context of historic preservation, the Main Street Program now involves over 1200 communities nationwide. Wisconsin has been involved since 1988, with 37 cities participating as of 2009. Port Washington was selected in 2009.

## History of Port Washington

Port Washington is the county seat of Ozaukee County and is located on the Lake Michigan shoreline at the point where Sauk Creek flows into the Lake, this point being located some eighteen miles north of the city of Milwaukee. Port Washington owes its existence to its location because the creek provided a source of waterpower for milling and industry and ships plying the Lake provided a means of transporting goods and people in the days before railroads or reliable roads existed to serve the early settlers. Topography also played a role in the layout of the city. Since the mouth of the creek was originally hemmed in on three sides by bluffs, the only land suitable for development in the city's earliest days was the outwash area that surrounded the mouth of the creek. It was on this gently sloping land that the first plat of the Village of Port Washington was laid out and it was here that the downtown portion of the original settlement developed, which includes the area that now comprises the Main Street District.

Wooster Harrison and his company landed on this site on September 7, 1835 and during the fall laid out a town on 16 acres of gently sloping land at the mouth of Sauk Creek where it emptied into Lake Michigan. Harrison, like so many other town founders of that time, settled along a river or stream because it provided both a reliable source of water and the only readily available means of generating power for industrial purposes. He settled on the shore of the Lake for a similar reason; the ships that sailed it provided the only reliable means of transporting large numbers of people and goods in the days before roads and railroads had been developed. After creating lots to sell, Harrison and his fellows set about building six or seven modest new buildings for their own use and to impress visitors. These were built out of milled lumber that had arrived by ship rather than the logs that were abundant on site. The first name of the new community was Wisconsin City, but, finding that there was already a city of that name in the territory, they renamed it Washington City.

The area continued to grow when in 1847 an effort was made to name Port Washington as the county seat of what was then still Washington County. This led to a battle between Port Washington and other area communities for the honor of being the county seat. It was not ultimately resolved until 1852, when an exasperated state legislature finally divided the county in two and made Port Washington the seat of the newly created Ozaukee County.

In 1848, the same year that Wisconsin became a state, Port Washington received its village charter and became officially the Village of Port Washington. Most of the village's earliest settlers were transplanted Yankees and persons of English descent, but by 1848, the first members of what would soon prove to be the dominant ethnic group arrived in the village in large numbers from Germany and Luxembourg. The coming of the latter two groups was accompanied by the creation of the Port Washington congregations of both the German Lutheran and the German Methodist churches in 1853.

By 1855, Port Washington had a well-established business core centered at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Franklin Street, and residential plats were beginning to be established to the north and west. Most of this development was concentrated within the area bounded by Sauk Creek to the south, Milwaukee Street to the west, Jackson Street to the north, and the Lake to the east, which amounted to, an area that corresponded to the original plat of the village. Some of the new businesses in this core also marked the beginnings of an industrial base in the village over and above those such as milling, that were practical necessities in that day.

By the beginning of the Civil War, the village had begun to grow outside of the boundaries of the original plat. The government lighthouse that had been built in 1849 on the top of the bluff overlooking the city had been joined in that same year by the first St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. Both buildings were replaced in 1860, the church with a new and larger stone building (non-extant) and the lighthouse with a new brick Greek Revival Style building (311 N. Johnson Street), which is a local landmark and a museum today. In the opposite direction, the new South Addition to the original plat that was located on the south side of Sauk Creek was at first known locally as "Canada" because of the population of immigrants of Irish origin who had come there by way of Canada and Newfoundland.

After the Civil War there were local efforts to secure a railroad for the village. Recounting the whole story is beyond the scope of this work, but the effort was ultimately successful and by 1873 the newly created Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western Railroad had been built from Milwaukee to Port Washington and on north to Sheboygan and Manitowoc. Soon thereafter, growth began in the vicinity of the depot on the near Westside.

By 1882, the village had reached a point where another advance in its governmental status was deemed necessary, so application was made and permission was given to reincorporate Port Washington as a city, which it has remained to this day. One of the most important events in the history of Port Washington occurred at the end of the decade in 1889, when a group of local men formed the Wisconsin Chair Company and erected the first portions of their factory just to the east of North Franklin Street flanking the inner harbor. The creation of the Wisconsin Chair Company was an event of special importance because this locally owned company was to become the principal employer in Port Washington for the next sixty years. Beginning in 1889, the company eventually became one of the nation's largest producers of school furniture and at one time employed a sixth of the population of Ozaukee County. Not surprisingly, this company was also of enormous economic importance to the city of Port Washington up until the mid-1950s.

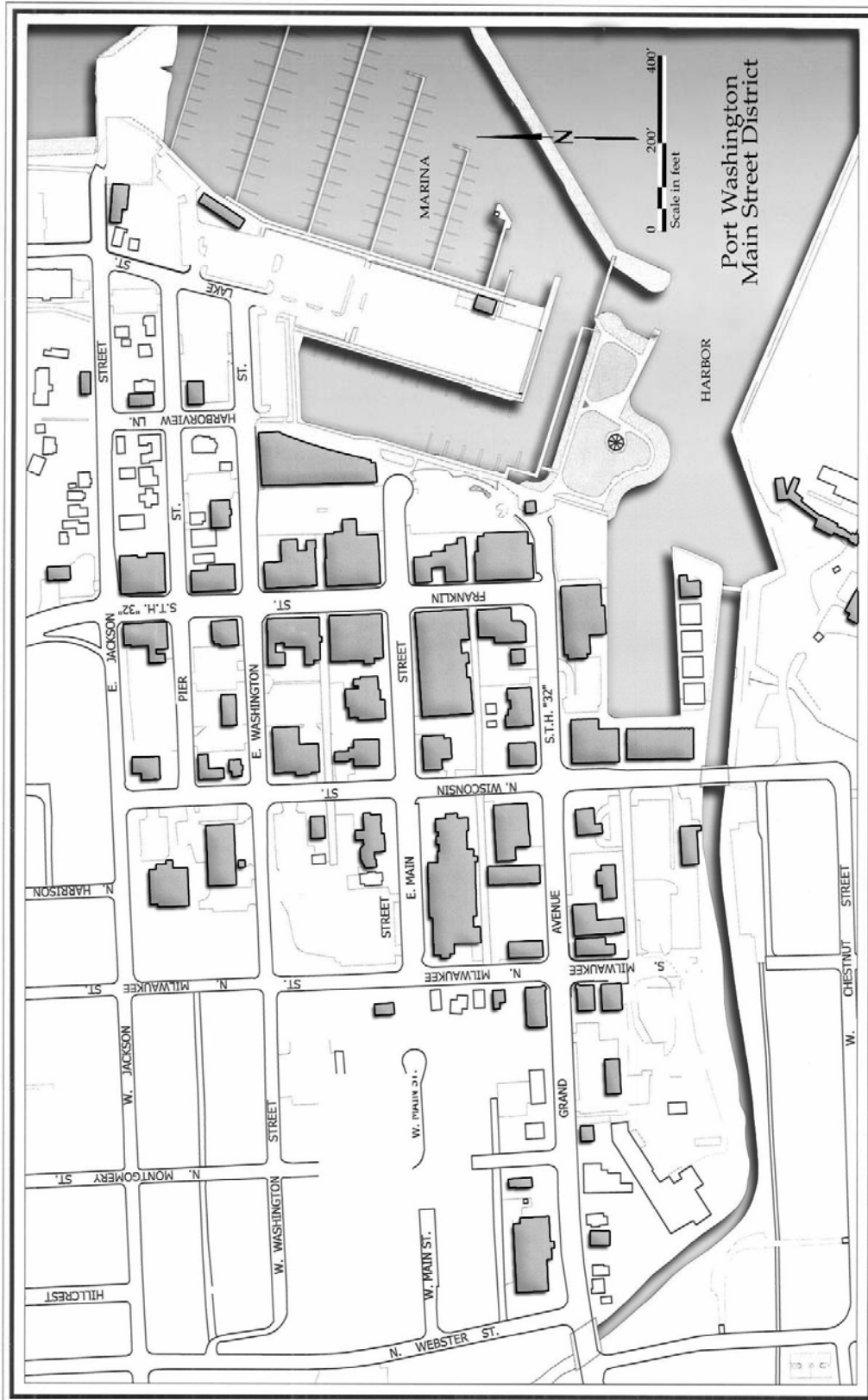
The effects of this new industry on Port Washington were profound and can be seen in every part of the older portions of the city. Within two years of its opening, new cream brick hotels and commercial buildings began appearing on both West and East Grand Avenue and on North Franklin Street. The city's brickyards, which were already busy supplying hundreds of thousands of their well known cream bricks for the Chair Company's new buildings, had the resources to satisfy the sudden demand within the city for new residential construction as well. In 1899, a disastrous fire would totally destroy the Chair Company factory, which ringed the inner harbor. Fortunately for the city, the factory was rebuilt in Port Washington, and by the first year of the new century, the company's new and enlarged factory was again working to full capacity.

A major event in the life of the city, but one whose effect on the built environment is much harder to discern, was the arrival in 1905-1907 of the Milwaukee Northern Railway. An interurban electric-powered train service based in Milwaukee that operated an interurban train that ran between the cities of Milwaukee and Sheboygan. This train service existed until the end of World War II. Another major event occurred in 1930 when a site was chosen at the foot of the south bluff for the new electric power plant of The Milwaukee Electric Railway & Light Co. (TMER&L), the first quarter portion of which would be completed by 1935 and would for many years be the most efficient coal-burning power plant in the world. The plant would be expanded in 1943 and later converted to clean-burning natural gas beginning in 2007.



Today the city has changed; there is no more commercial fishing fleet, it has been replaced by a charter boat industry. Many of the old industries that began here such as Gilson, Bolens, Simplicity, and the Wisconsin Chair Company are gone. Tourism focusing on the modern downtown marina and lakefront has become a major industry. One thing that does remain intact is a downtown commercial district. In 2000, eight city blocks containing forty-six buildings became a National Historic District and in 2008, the city became a Wisconsin Main Street community.

# Downtown Port Washington District Identification



The Main Street District buildings include those shaded on the map above.

## **Design Guideline Goals**

The Design Guidelines are intended to assist property and business owners in maintaining and enhancing the city's physical character by encouraging improvement and development proposals that strive for high-quality design that fits the character of Port Washington.

These Design Guidelines are intended to suggest ways property and business owners can take advantage of Port Washington's charm and history. While not attempting to reconstruct the past, the intent is to help understand the elements of design that reflect the historic nature of the community and allow the business district to maintain continuity and visually cohesiveness.

Each individual building facade plays an important role in the makeup of the downtown district. Furthermore, each element of a buildings facade plays an integral role in the successful design of individual buildings.

By encouraging the use of these guidelines, the downtown business district will create an atmosphere that is pleasant and vibrant, attracting both physical and economic development.

# Site

## Street Orientation

Buildings in the downtown should be located at the back of the sidewalk unless space between the building and sidewalk is to be used for pedestrian features such as plazas, courtyards, or outdoor eating areas.

Building and business identity are important considerations to the store owner. Points of access must also be considered to insure convenience, safety and repeat business of the customer. Pedestrian access must be associated with parking and a clear identity of entry points.

The front entrance is the most important element of the building. Front entrances are integral to storefront design and give the street a "hometown" image, which invites browsing and window-shopping.

Some building locations may warrant rear and side entrances. These entrances are conveniently accessible to more parking than entrances in the front. For this reason, rear and side entrance treatments should include the entire exposed rear and sidewalls for identity. The potential positive impact of these walls is often overlooked.

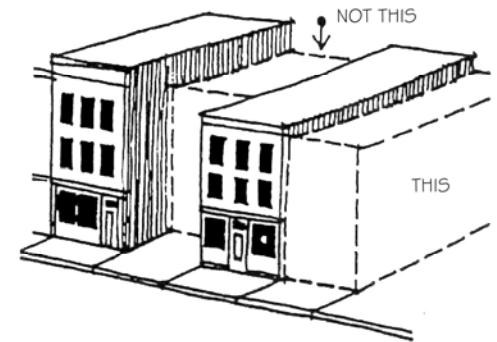
A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called "double fronting." There are certain advantages to double fronting:

1. Circulation patterns are enhanced
2. Better access to off street parking
3. Store identity is created on more than one side of the building

Double fronting can also create disadvantages:

1. Initial cost of remodeling is increased
2. Maintenance costs are increased as additional doors, windows, and sidewalls are created
3. Security problems increase

## Relationship to Street



Facades are not set back from the sidewalk.



## Parking Areas

Parking lots should be designed to be equally pedestrian and vehicular friendly.

**Location and design of parking.** Parking should not be the dominant visual element of a site. Large, expansive paved areas between the building and the street are to be avoided in favor of smaller multiple lots separated by landscaping or buildings, or located to the sides and rear of buildings.

Parking areas in front of buildings are prohibited, except for street parking.

Mid-block parking lots should be limited to avoid breaking up the shopping streetwall.

Dedicated parking for single businesses is discouraged. Shared parking shall be considered to minimize the visual impact of land devoted to parking and to provide more efficient parking.

Parking curb cuts along the street shall be minimized and businesses encouraged to share access points.

Accessory surface parking lots for apartment buildings should be adjacent to the building when feasible, shall include clear signage to delineate who is permitted to park in the lot and during which hours, and shall include additional screening between the lot and adjacent residential buildings.

**Landscaping.** Parking areas should include substantial landscaping as required by the Municipal Code. Extensive landscaping throughout parking areas and the project site is highly desirable because landscaping can soften the appearance of large structures; assist in energy conservation by reducing unwanted summertime heat gain by buildings adjacent to large asphalt areas and make walking around the site a more pleasant experience for pedestrians.

**Pedestrian routes.** Safe and direct pedestrian routes should be provided through parking areas to primary entrances.

**Pedestrian pick-up or drop-off areas.** Areas should be provided where pedestrians may be picked-up or dropped-off in a safe manner.

Other public spaces in downtown sites should be designed as extensions of the public sidewalk by providing pedestrian amenities such as benches and fountains, and by continuing the pavement treatment of the sidewalk.

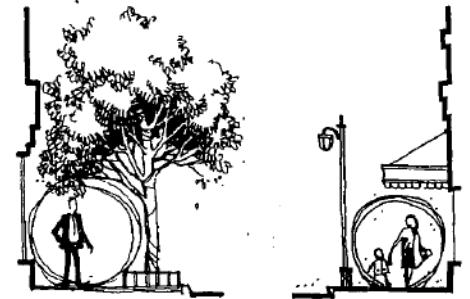
## Public Areas

Plazas and courtyards are encouraged within the downtown.

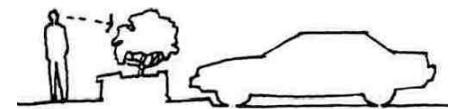
Primary access to public plazas and courtyards should be from the street.

Secondary access may be from retail shops, restaurants, offices, and other uses.

Shade trees or architectural elements that provide shelter and relief from direct sunlight and soften the “hardscape” common in downtown should be provided.



Courtyards should be buffered from parking areas or drive aisles by low walls, landscaping, or other features to clearly define the edges of the pedestrian space.



Ample seating should be provided.

Bicycle parking should be provided.

Sandwich signs, where they impede pedestrian traffic, are discouraged.

Decorative planters shall be placed in plazas and along pedestrian paths and sidewalks where they will not impede safe flow of pedestrians.

Decorative paving such as brick, clay pavers, stone, or stamped concrete shall be considered when designing the hardscape for new plazas and open spaces.

Existing and future open spaces should incorporate special features such as fountains, artwork, plantings, and other elements.

Outdoor cafés/seating areas are encouraged to make the District more active and enhance its overall pedestrian-oriented character, especially in areas identified as key commercial/retail/restaurant locations.

Outdoor cafés are required to maintain at least 5 feet of sidewalk clear space to maintain a clear pedestrian zone.

Second-story terraces and recessed café spaces for outdoor dining are encouraged where sidewalk space is limited. They shall be integrated into the design of restaurants and the overall building.

For outdoor cafés, tables, chairs, and other equipment should be kept out of the pedestrian zone. The pedestrian zone also should be clear of street trees, tree grates, and other landscaping.

A temporary or seasonal barrier or edge is encouraged to define outdoor cafe spaces and ensure a pedestrian clear zone. The barrier should be a simple decorative railing, fence, planters, or a similar element. The design of the barrier should reflect the style of the Building or coordinate with City streetscape.

## **Service Areas**

Accessory service areas behind buildings are not always designed in a manner consistent with the front or sides, and are often visible to pedestrians. Loading, trash, and utility areas shall be incorporated into site plans and building designs.

Loading, trash, and utility areas shall be enclosed and screened from street and sidewalk views. Screening materials should complement the building, as well as adjacent buildings and be effective in every season.

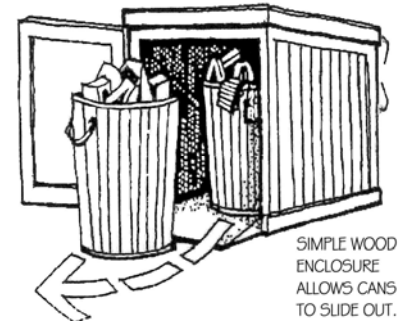
Separate areas for loading, trash, and utilities for individual businesses are discouraged. Shared service areas between businesses should be considered for ease of maintenance and improved aesthetics.

Loading, trash, and utility areas shall be designed to accommodate snow removal and storage.

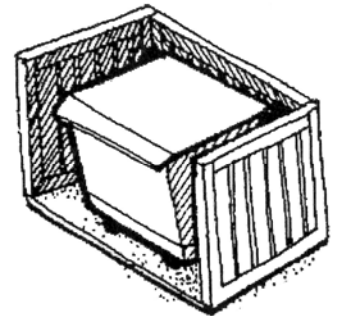
## Fences, Gates and Retaining Walls

If possible, eliminate trash receptacles, condensing units, electrical transformers, and other obtrusive objects from public view. Trash receptacles can be located inside if there is a space available without endangering health or creating an odor problem. Air conditioning condensers can be roof mounted and electrical transformers can be installed inside the building. However, this is a costly procedure because transformers must be housed in a fire-rated ventilated area.

The most economical method of "screening" is placing unwanted objects away from pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Consideration should be given to access for maintenance and pickup especially if the objects in question are trash receptacles. Attention should also be given to adjacent property owners and their pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns.



In many instances, trash receptacles, condensers, or transformers must occupy the same general areas desired for pedestrians. In this situation the only option is concealment. There are many visual barriers available, such as wood fences. These are acceptable, but a preferable method is to construct visual barriers with traditional materials consistent with the adjacent building. A blending of traditional materials is more compatible with the storefront.



Another method of concealment is the use of landscaping or a combination of landscaping and visual barriers made of traditional materials. With professional assistance, the proper pattern and species of plants can be realized. It should be noted, however, that landscaping will need maintenance.

Brick, stone, or decorative metal shall be used for fencing. Fence height shall be a maximum of 30 to 40 inches in height. Fences shall be considered an extension of building architecture and shall make an attractive transition between the building mass, the natural forms of a site, and the public "realm" of streetscape.

Common fences such as stockade, bound-on board, picket and chain link are not allowed.

Planter or retaining walls should be built of materials of the adjacent buildings.

Generally, brick or other suitable masonry units should be considered while certain types of interlocking concrete block, landscaping timers, sidewalks and curbs would not be desired.

The installation of exterior, permanent or retractable security gates or bars is prohibited. They are out of character with the architecture, and create an impression that the area is unsafe, and ultimately hurt business.

## Landscaping

Landscaping of the downtown streetscape can help to soften the pedestrian environment at the street by adding color and life. The city is responsible for the installation and care of street landscaping; however, business owners can supplement what is already in place by providing plantings of their own.

Landscaped areas should be planned as an integral part of the overall project and not simply located in "left over" areas of the site. Landscaping should be used to help define outdoor spaces, soften a structure's appearance, and to screen parking, loading, storage, and equipment areas. The use of on-site pedestrian amenities (such as benches, shelters, kiosks, drinking fountains, lighting, trash receptacles, etc.) is encouraged. These elements should be provided in conjunction with on-site open spaces and be integrated into the site plan as primary features.

Trees shall be used in parking lots to help visually break up large expanses of paving and to provide some shading. Tree species should be selected with rooting and canopy patterns to fit the spaces provided them. In general, species with messy fruits, pods, and seeds that will drop on the surfaces below are not good choices.

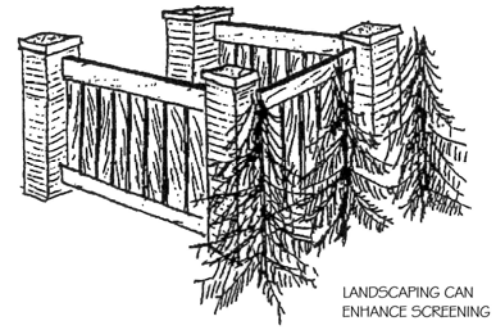
Landscaping that complements and is in scale with the building should be provided adjacent to structures. Landscaping should include evergreen trees, shrubs and ornamental landscaping (and berms where appropriate) with all landscape areas having a minimum recommended width of six feet.

Landscaping should be used to create a focal point near front building entrances. Sidewalks and other walkways should also be integrated with landscape areas around building base and in parking lot areas. Trees should be planted in notable clusters within larger planting areas, and not exclusively in lines along building facades.

Plantings can be used at rear and side entrances of buildings to make them more attractive. These plantings can be permanent or in planters which are portable. Plantings should be used wherever possible to screen trash receptacles, non-accessible doorways, and parking areas.

Plantings must be maintained; an empty or poorly maintained flower box can be unsightly. Shrubbery or trees that are not properly or regularly trimmed could be an eyesore.

Landscape plans are required by the city as a part of any new construction or redevelopment of an existing property. The Planning and Development Office has copies of the required standards found in the Municipal Code.



## Exterior Lighting

Site lighting shall incorporate principles advanced by the International Dark-Sky Association to limit “light pollution” and preserve the nighttime environment.

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.

Lighting shall provide a sense of safety without having a negative affect on neighboring properties and shall be located, aimed, or shielded to minimize glare, sky glow, and stray light trespassing across property lines.

Pedestrian-level lighting is encouraged along sidewalks and on buildings to enhance area safety and character.

All exterior lighting shall be designed in a consistent and coordinated manner for the entire site.

Light poles shall be located within landscaped areas and not free-standing in parking lots.

Lights in gas pump island canopies shall be recessed.

# Building Design

## General

Building design in the District shall be oriented toward pedestrians. To maintain an active pedestrian environment, buildings shall be oriented toward streets, sidewalks, and/or public plazas.

Architectural design shall articulate and enhance buildings, especially those at street corners, because of their prominence and visibility. Where appropriate, features such as a cupola, atrium, clock tower, and/or varying rooflines should be considered to add visual interest to the District.

Building orientation, setbacks, and design elements shall encourage visual continuity between developments.

Retail and other active uses are strongly encouraged at the ground level.

Building entries should be clearly defined and articulated. On mixed-use commercial buildings, residential or office entrances/lobbies should be distinguished from the storefronts/entrances.

Rear building entrances and façades shall be designed in a manner consistent with the front and side façades, especially when parking is located behind buildings.

Ground-level retail or office space shall include clear glass windows that allow views into building interiors to reinforce an active shopping and business environment.

Primary access to individual commercial storefronts, including restaurants, must be from the street/sidewalk and not from inside lobbies and hallways.

Unarticulated, flat-front, all glass, or all-metal buildings are prohibited.

A building base, middle, and top shall be strongly articulated through materials, details, and changes in the plane of the wall.

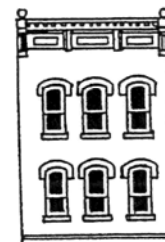
A change in materials or stepbacks (from 6 inches to 10 feet) shall be incorporated to articulate the ground or first floor from upper floors. Stepbacks and patios can also be incorporated on upper floors to further articulate the building.

Storefront facades shall be horizontal, contiguous, and harmonious with adjacent and facing structures.

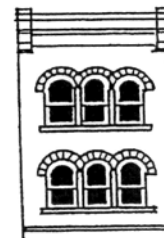
## Proportional Openings



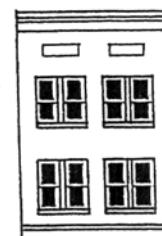
## Typical Upper Facades



- Mid to Late 1800's
- Boldly Decorated
  - Cornice Window Hoods
  - Pressed Metal Details



- Late 1800's to Early 1900's
- Corbelled Brick Cornice
  - Large, Arched Windows



- Early 1900's to 1950
- Simple Brick Cornice
  - Large Window Opening With Multiple Units

Facade elements shall be utilized to provide a change in plane, creating interest in light and shadow. Facades shall be proportioned to respect the human scale.

Facades shall be articulated to express vertical rhythm related to structural columns and bays.

At least 60% of the first-floor primary facades (facades facing streets, plazas, and parking lots) shall be clear, non-tinted windows or entrances. At least 25% of upper floors shall be windows or doors. At least 25% of first-floor facades facing rear parking areas or alleys used by pedestrians shall be windows or doors.

Solid walls necessary to the function of a building shall incorporate cloth awnings, display windows, material and color variations, arches, piers, columns, murals, high-quality graphics, landscaping, and other elements to reduce perceived building scale and add visual interest.

Storefront windowsill or kneewalls are required.

“Corporate” architecture and architecture used for advertising purposes are not allowed.

Renovated and new gas station buildings and gas pump canopies shall be designed in a more “traditional,” small-scale, pedestrian-oriented manner.

New gas station buildings shall be massed at the corner where feasible, with pumps in the rear.

Infill architecture should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shapes, cornice lines and brick work, but should not mimic it completely.

Retain and repair or replace character giving trim ornamentation including, but not limited to, window caps, carved stone work, trim, ornamental plaques, storefront cornices and eaves cornices.

Replacement should match the design, dimensions and material of the original trim and ornamentation.

Original window openings should be recognized and maintained.

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

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots in downtown is encouraged. The design of a new infill building, particularly its front façade, creates unique design challenges. New facades should be designed to look appropriate and compatible in the midst of the surrounding buildings. Because an infill building is new, it should look new. However, its appearance must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors without copying them.

## Scale & Massing

Building scale and massing should be determined by the relationship of the site to adjacent structures. Buildings shall maintain the streetwall rhythm and relate to secondary building facades. Renovations and additions to existing buildings shall also respect these relationships and contribute to the overall continuity of the streetwall.

Recessing of residential components of mixed-use development above the first floor is encouraged in new development, with a maximum setback of 10 feet.

New development shall be designed to provide a seamless transition between differing uses and adjacent buildings through the use of setbacks, building design elements, landscaping, and/or screening.

Infill buildings should fill the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.

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

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

Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new façade. Maintain a clear distinction between the first floor and the upper floors. First floor should have large areas of glass, and upper floors should have an emphasis on solid wall, with less window area.



## Heights & Proportions

Building heights within the District should be consistent with the zoning ordinance, with heights varying according to location and adjacent uses.

Building heights in the District should respect the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

All buildings in the downtown should be at least two stories or 30 feet in height, particularly within the interiors of blocks, and should generally not exceed three stories. This height is needed to "enclose" the street so that it provides pleasant space for pedestrians. Multi-story buildings are desirable because they can provide opportunities for upper-floor offices and residential units. Multi-story buildings can increase the numbers of potential customers for ground floor retail uses and assisting in maintaining their viability. Different building heights may be appropriate as follows:

The height and scale of new structures and alterations to existing structures should complement existing adjacent buildings and provide human scale and proportion; one goal is to encourage mixed use projects in the downtown that provide housing on upper floors above the commercial street frontage.

New structures should not be significantly taller or shorter than adjacent structures unless the proposed structure can provide a visual transition from the height of adjacent structures to its higher portions.

New buildings should fit in with the existing vertical scale.

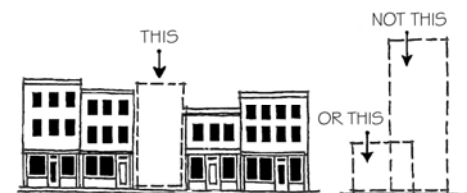
New structures and remodels should provide storefront windows, doors, entries, transoms, awnings, cornice treatments and other architectural features that complement existing structures, without copying their architectural style.

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

**Storefront rhythm.** A new building facade that is proposed to be much "wider" than the existing characteristic facades on the street should be divided into a series of bays or components, defined by columns or masonry piers that frame windows, doors and bulkheads. Creating and reinforcing a façade rhythm helps tie the street together visually and provides pedestrians with features to mark their progress down the street.

The size and proportion of window and door openings of an infill building should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the façade as a whole.

### Proportional Height



A new facade that is too high or low can interrupt a natural flow.

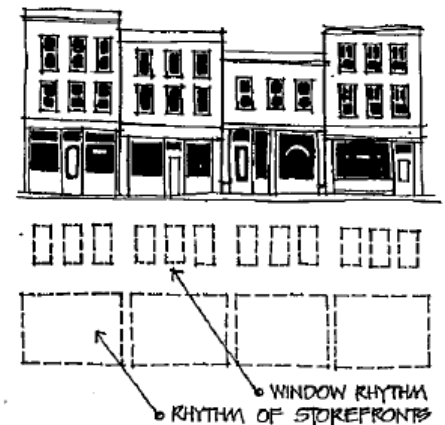


Individual storefront proportions. Storefronts should not overpower the building façade, and should be confined to the area framed by the support piers and the lintel above, consistent with classic “Main Street” architecture.

Maintain the horizontal alignment of the transom and display windows of the first floor.

Maintain the pattern created by upper story windows, considering rhythm, horizontal and vertical alignment.

Maintain the alignment of the new façade even with the existing facades.



## Materials

Infill buildings should be composed of materials similar to the original adjacent facades so it does not stand out against other buildings. Compatibility with similar exterior construction materials in the immediate area is recommended to maintain the distinct character and harmony of the area.

When designing a new storefront or renovating an existing storefront, the goal should be a transparent facade. Keeping the storefront materials simple and unobtrusive will help you achieve this goal. There is no need to introduce additional types of building materials to those that originally existed on your building.

Whether building new storefronts or renovating existing ones, use materials that perform their intended function well and use these materials consistently throughout the design. By doing so you accomplish simplicity in the design and uniformity in the overall storefront appearance. Always try to utilize existing materials. If possible, it is better to repair than to replace them.

Concrete block (smooth or decorative splitface), stucco (smooth or textured synthetic), metal, plywood, sheet pressboard, unfinished pre-cast concrete, or poured-in-place concrete shall not be used on building facades or on walls that are visible from streets, driveways, sidewalks, and/or parking areas.

Wood, brick, stone, stucco accents, and glass are the preferred primary building materials for all structures in the District. New building construction and rehabilitations should be primarily constructed of these high-quality materials. They should be used on all facades, fronts, sides and rears of buildings that are visible from streets and parking areas.

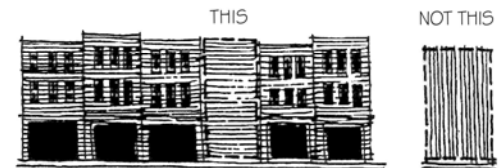
Ground face, or glazed block, synthetic stone, smooth/textured synthetic stucco or plaster, wood trim, and decorative metal shall be used only for decorative accent purposes and limited in their use on building facades and visible walls.

Clear glass is required for first-floor windows in commercial and mixed-use buildings. Windows allow views into the shop, working area, lobby, pedestrian entrance or window display. Display cases may be incorporated into outside walls where open glass storefronts are not feasible.

Dark-tinted, reflective, spandrel, frosted, or smoked glass shall be used sparingly and for decorative or accent purposes only.

Window detailing such as muttons or mullions are encouraged where integrated into the building design. They may be true divided light or simulated divided lights.

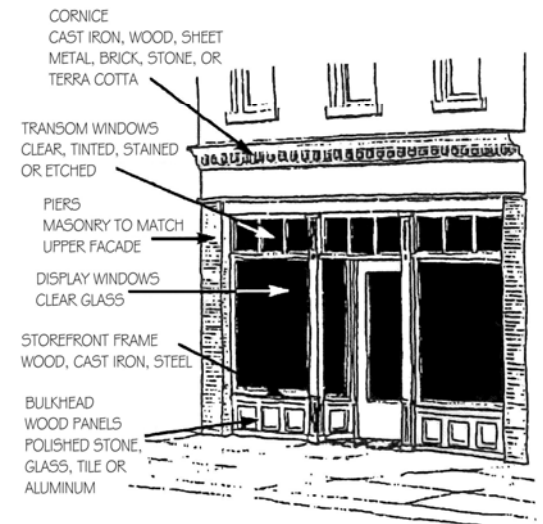
## Consistent Materials



**Typical examples of materials and their location on the storefront:**

- Storefront Frame – wood, cast iron, anodized aluminum
- Display Windows – clear glass
- Transom Windows – clear, tinted, stained or etched glass
- Entrance Door – wood or aluminum with a large glass panel
- Bulkheads – wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile, metal clad plywood panels
- Storefront Cornice – wood, cast iron, sheet metal
- Side Piers – should be same material as upper façade (typically brick and stone).

**Common Storefront Materials**



## Colors

As with materials, the color scheme chosen for the façade should be sensitive to the time period the building was built, the architectural style, materials and relationship to other buildings. To determine a color scheme, consult a professional or obtain color cards for historic paint colors and their combinations.

Building color shall be compatible with the area's character and enhance the building's visual appeal.

Neutral and natural colors (earth tones) shall be used where possible, with contrasting colors acceptable for secondary or accent colors.

Primary, bright, or excessively brilliant colors are discouraged unless used sparingly for subtle trim accents.

Colors for building walls and storefronts shall be compatible for shops that occupy multiple-storefront buildings. The use of different colors to identify individual shops within a single structure is visually disruptive and obscures the overall composition of the façade.

Masonry facades should not be painted nor have sealants applied. If you have a masonry façade that is already painted and the paint seems to be holding – paint it again using colors that are within the natural color range of the material.

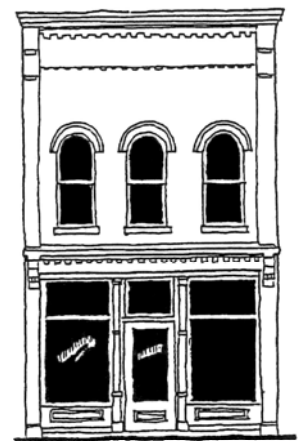
Colors should accentuate the architectural details of the building – but don't overdo it! The levels of coloration might be broken down as follows: Base Color • Major Trim Color • Minor Trim Color • Accent Color.

When placed on a traditional façade. Awning color should be selected to insure compatibility with the building and adjacent buildings.

### Compatible Colors



### Color Usage



#### Base Color

- Wall Surfaces
- Storefront Piers
- Cornice - When same materials as wall

#### Major Trim Color

- Cornice
- Window Hoods and Frames
- Storefront Cornice, Columns & Bulkheads

#### Minor Trim Color

- Doors
- Window Sash

#### Accent Colors

- Small Details on Window Hoods, Cornices, Columns & Bulkheads

# Facades

The Downtown Port Washington Design Guidelines are intended to suggest ways in which property and business owners can take advantage of downtown's charm and its history. Each individual building façade plays an important role in the makeup of the downtown district. Storefronts, window displays, signage, color, canopies, and architectural details all play an integral part in the successful design of individual buildings.

## Traditional Storefront/Façade Components

The traditional commercial storefront is the most important element that sets these buildings apart and gives historical significance and character to downtown Port Washington. When originally constructed, our downtown buildings shared a consistency in design and proportion that created a strong visual image. A visually unified downtown can go a long way in attracting people to our downtown, and the individual shops and businesses that are located here.

The basic commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and large display windows, the upper masonry façade with regularly spaced windows, and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles but the result is essentially the same façade.

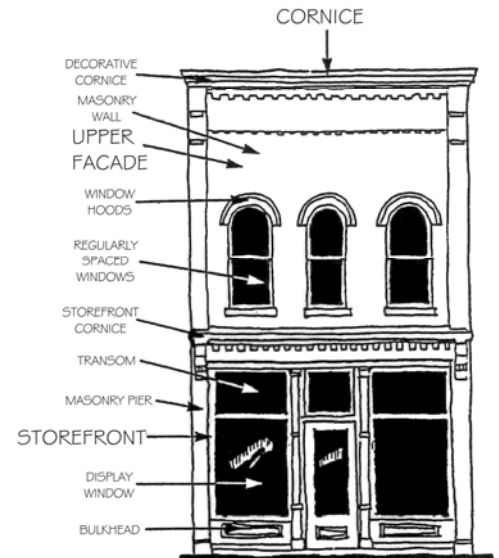
In the downtown business district of Port Washington, the typical building façade is a two-story masonry construction.

The Design Guidelines promote the traditional aspects of storefront design and do not recommend the use of strip commercial elements.

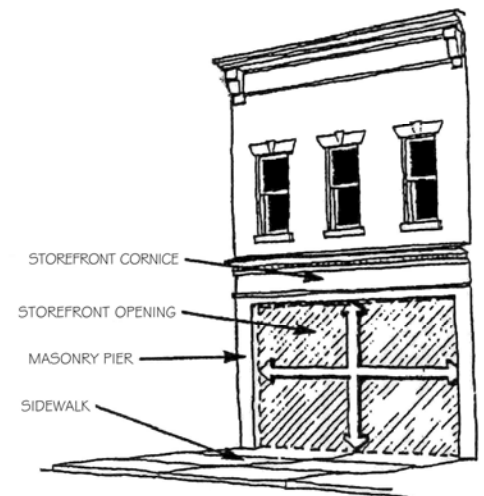
## Doors and Windows

A rhythm of re-occurring patterns of windows and storefronts is encouraged to give the façade balance. Doors, windows, eaves and parapets should be in proportionate scale to one another.

## Traditional Façade Components



## Storefront Boundaries



## Awnings and Canopies

The canvas awning is an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provides shelter for pedestrians from the sun and rain, adds color, and acts as a transition between the storefront and the upper façade. The awning can also be used as a location for building signage.

If an awning is to be used, its shape should reinforce the frame of the storefront opening.

Awnings should be attached below the storefront cornice or sign panel and should not cover the piers on either side of the storefront.

The standard street level awning should be mounted such that its valance is approximately seven feet above the sidewalk and it projects out between four and seven feet from the building.

The awning can also be a useful tool to disguise inappropriate storefront alterations while maintaining the proportions of the traditional storefront.

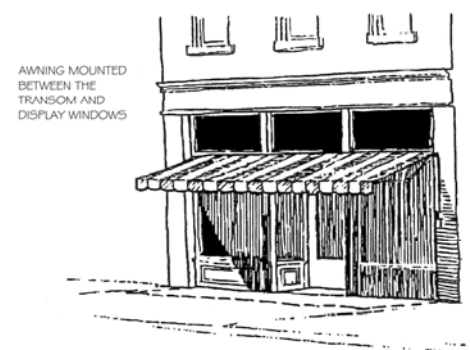
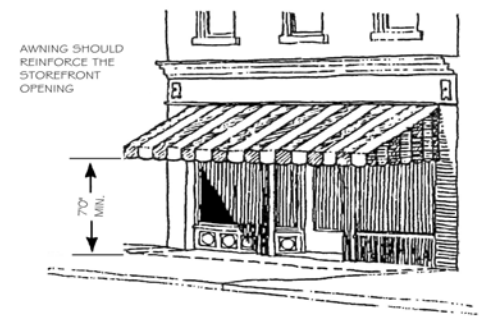
Awnings are available in a variety of profiles, materials and colors. The traditional commercial awning material is canvas and its profile is the watershed design. Plastic or vinyl awnings are not recommended. Awning color should be selected to insure compatibility with the building and adjacent buildings.

## Architectural Features

Characteristic architectural features should never be removed or altered unless absolutely necessary.

Building alterations should restore architectural details of cornices, lintels, brick arches, chimneys, and ironwork of the original building.

Where architectural features have been removed, every effort should be made to replicate the original detailing. New buildings should reflect some of the architectural features of adjacent buildings.



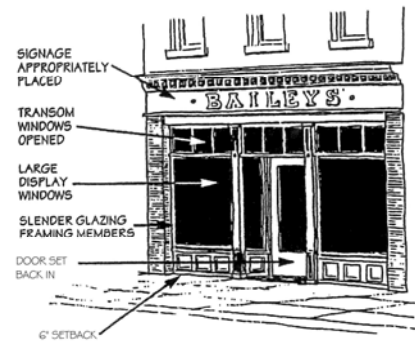
## Storefront Design

The traditional Port Washington building façade has a well-defined opening bounded on each side by masonry piers. It is bounded on top by the storefront cornice that supports the upper facade, and below by the sidewalk.

The large glazed opening composing the storefront served to display goods, as well as to allow natural light deep into the store to minimize the need for artificial light sources.

The visual openness of the storefront is also part of the overall proportion system of the façade. The proportion of window to wall areas in the traditional façade calls for more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper façade. These proportions give downtown buildings a consistent design theme, making it an attractive place for its customers to do business.

### Traditional Storefront Design



## Signage

Signs are a vital component which help in the development of a coherent business district for Downtown Port Washington. A quality sign calls attention to a business and creates an individual image. When careful and attentive planning are used, signage can address the visibility and advertising needs of business owners while making a positive contribution to the total design of Downtown Port Washington.

New signage should be traditional in character to complement the valuable, older architecture and aesthetics of Port Washington. There are many types of signs that are appropriate for use on older storefronts. Quality of workmanship and construction should be of vital consideration. A simple, well-made sign can speak more highly of your establishment than a more extravagant sign.

When selecting the colors for your sign, look at the color of your building and the colors on the surrounding structures. This may prove to be the best method in the selection of the colors for your sign. The Port Washington Main Street Committee can also provide information on local contractors that may assist you in the development of an attractive, traditional sign for your establishment.

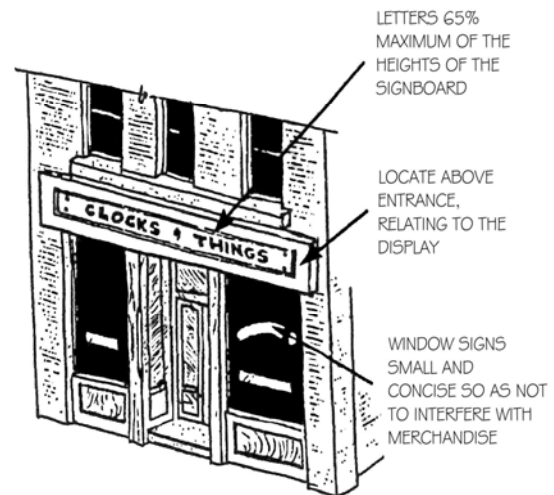
## Sign Placement

Storefronts should be limited to two signs-one primary and one secondary. The primary sign should be located above the storefront display windows but below the sills of the second floor windows. Many examples of turn-of-the-century buildings have a continuous brick ledge or corbelling is used to separate the second floor and above from the storefront below. This creates a perfect location for the sign.

## Sign Boards

A flat signboard with hand painted raised lettering is the most appropriate type of sign for older commercial buildings. These signs should be placed in the narrow band above the storefront. Internally lit signs are not permitted.

## Signage Guidelines



Appropriate



Inappropriate



## Awning Signs

Another option for a primary sign location may be an awning, provided the awning is properly integrated with the building.

Awning signs have lettering on the edge flap or skirting of the awning that remains visible when the awning is either retracted or opened. Lettering on the main part of the awning is generally not permitted. Awning or canopy signs should not extend more than seven feet from the wall of the building to which it may be attached.

### Lettering Styles

## Projection Signs (Hanging Signs)

Hanging signs are signs that project from a buildings wall and are supported by metal brackets. These signs may come in a variety of shapes and sizes and sometimes share a likeness to objects or symbols that might be associated with an actual type of business. Projection signs with exterior lighting are preferred to box- lit signs. These signs serve the same purpose in drawing attention to the business. Projection signs have the added benefit of illuminating the sidewalk in front of the store in addition to the sign and storefront facade. This provides an even higher level of visibility for your business by taking into account a unique design which has a character that compliments the typical Port Washington storefront. Projection signs may also prove more affordable than box lit signs.

These signs should not project more than six (6) 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 compliment the architecture of the building and should be no less than eight (8) feet above the adjoining sidewalk.

## Display Window Lettering

Another common type of storefront signage is lettering that is painted, posted, displayed, or etched on the interior side of display windows and glazed entry doorways. These signs should consist of lettering and/or a logo, should not cover more than twenty percent (20%) of the total glazed area of the glass panel, and should not obscure the display area. Well designed window graphics shall be used in the construction of the sign to attract attention but still allow pedestrians to view the store interiors.

Calisto MT  
**Claren**  
 COPPERPLATE GOTHIC  
 Denbigh  
 Eurostyle  
 Helvetic  
*Lucida*  
*Lucida Calligraphy*  
 Obodoni Open  
**O COPPERPLATE**  
 OPDelphin  
**Times**  
*Virginia*  
 Palatino  
**Franklin**  
*Bookman*  
 Souvenir

## Plaque Signs

Plaque Signs are small versions of wall signs which are attached to surfaces adjacent to shop front entries. The signs should be only be located close to the store entry and may not project more than two (2) inches from the wall face. Plaque signs should include the business name and a business logo. Business owners are encouraged to include unique designs or visually stimulating decorations and may also be irregular in outline shape.

## Sign Lighting

Storefront lighting should have a tasteful blend of style and materials to highlight your product, the architectural detailing of a building, or your signage.

The arrangement of any external spot or flood lighting must be placed so the light source is directed on the sign so it does not shine into adjacent property or result in glare for motorists and pedestrians. Flashing signs or lights and excessively bright lights are not appropriate.

Well lit display windows attract attention to items in your window while the residual light washes the sidewalk while it attracts pedestrians.

Projecting light fixtures, such as shaded goose neck fixtures, used for externally illuminated signs, should be simple and unobstructive in appearance.

The lighting should not obscure the graphics of the sign.

Colored lighting should be avoided, in an effort to promote continuity.

## **Definitions**

### **Awning**

A fixed cover, typically comprised of cloth over a metal armature, that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

### **Bulkhead**

The space located between the pavement/sidewalk and the bottom of a traditional storefront window.

### **Clear Glazing**

A term applied to doors and windows to describe glass that is free from any visual obstruction, such as window tint, stained colors, or other similar effects.

### **Cornice**

The horizontal projection at the top of a wall; the top course or molding of a wall that serves as a crowning member.

### **Double Hung Window**

A window with an upper and low sash arranged so that each slides vertically past the other.

### **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.

### **Ornamentation**

Details added to a structure for decorative reasons (i.e., to add shape, texture or color to an architectural composition).

### **Parapet**

The part of a wall, which rises above the edge of a roof.

### **Siding**

The finish covering on the exterior of a frame building (with the exception of masonry). The term cladding is often used to describe any exterior wall covering, including masonry.

### **Storefront**

The traditional "main street" façade bounded by a pilaster or pier on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom and the lower edge of the upper façade on top, typically dominated by retail display windows.

### **Transom**

A horizontal glazing between a door and the window above it.