

# **Common Issues and Options for Treating Older Buildings in Downtown Bloomington**

Prepared for

**Downtown Bloomington Commission, Inc.**

Prepared by:

**Center for Historic Preservation  
College of Architecture and Planning  
Ball State University**

as part of

**The Main Street Assistance Project**

of the

**Indiana Main Street Program  
Indiana Office of Rural Affairs**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

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Twenty years ago the city of Bloomington began its serious commitment to preserve and revitalize its historic commercial center by forming the Downtown Bloomington Commission. This important member-driven organization “seeks to facilitate public and private partnerships and to provide unified leadership in order to strengthen and support downtown Bloomington.”

The revitalization effort began on the one central realization: that its historic commercial center is too valuable to neglect as an economic, social and cultural resource. To this date, the revitalization program has progressed through diverse public and private partnerships, implementing several strategies of financing, marketing, and design treatment. *Common Issues and Options for Treating Older Buildings in Downtown Bloomington* has been produced to help facilitate all of the revitalization goals by focusing on issues pertaining specifically to design issues regarding historic commercial buildings.

*Common Issues and Options for Treating Older Buildings in Downtown Bloomington* has been produced by the Design Assistance Project of Indiana Main Street, under a cooperative agreement with the Center for Historic Preservation at Ball State University. It offers time-tested approaches that make the most out of a commercial area’s historic character. Most of these approaches have been used by Main Street organizations across the country. These organizations form a loose national network of communities that struggle with the same issues that are being addressed in the historic commercial center of Bloomington.

A set of treatment options that specifically addresses historic design issues begins by looking at the existing historic features within their context. The development of Bloomington’s central commercial district reveals a substantial and distinct historic identity through its building types and their changes over time. These treatment options go on from there to identify common issues and appropriate options for addressing them. Overall, the issues that involve historic features in the Bloomington commercial center are straightforward and do not require major rehabilitation. The solutions tend to be basic and practical.

Compared to a set of general design guidelines, which may address many issues, such as new construction, building set backs, and sign regulation, *Common Issues and Options for Treating Older Buildings in Downtown Bloomington* is restricted to guidance for strengthening the historic character within general concerns. It does not address local zoning ordinances or building codes. All treatment programs should defer to any regulations that apply.

Some of these treatment options are already being embraced in the Bloomington downtown, and some space is devoted to looking at their examples. Finally a few suggestions are offered on how to make good decisions and where to go for assistance.

## **PROJECT PARTNERS**

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*Downtown Bloomington Commission, Inc.* The Downtown Bloomington Commission is a member-driven, nonprofit organization whose primary goal is to assist in the revitalization of downtown Bloomington. The DBC boasts twenty years of development activity. As a member of the Indiana Main Street program, it organizes part of its mission around the approach established by the National Main Street program. Its primary goal in this project is to demonstrate the positive achievement of proper façade rehabilitation in the traditional downtown.

*Indiana Main Street Program, Indiana Office of Rural Affairs.* Indiana Main Street promotes the revitalization of historic downtowns across the state, using the Main Street four-point approach that develops (1) economic restructuring, (2) proper design, (3) community and business promotion and (3) effective community organization. Each year, qualifying Indiana communities compete for technical assistance given by Indiana Main Street through the Main Street Assistance Project. Overall supervision for this project was provided by Mark McConaghy, Director of Indiana Main Street, 2004-5; Jenelle Collins, Associate Director, 2004-5; and Annie Hernandez, Acting Director, Indiana Main Street Program, 2005. Overall guidance was given by Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Skillman.

*Ball State University - Center for Historic Preservation.* In continuing partnership with Indiana Main Street, the Center for Historic Preservation at Ball State University developed this set of guidelines and recommendations for the Downtown Bloomington Commission. The Center for Historic Preservation is the outreach arm of the Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, in the Department of Architecture, College of Architecture and Planning. During the academic year of 2004-2005, the Center provided the services of a graduate assistant, Kent Abraham, under the direction of Project Coordinator Susan Lankford and Center Director Dr. James Glass.

## **IN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This project has been funded in part by the Indiana Main Street Program, Indiana Office of Rural Affairs, under a cooperative agreement with the Center for Historic Preservation at Ball State University.

This project has also been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

This program has received federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the State of Indiana. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

This report has been financed in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. However, the contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

This project was also made possible by a matching grant by the Building Better Communities Fund at Ball State University.



## **METHODOLOGY**

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The partners for the project followed standard procedures of research, consultation and product development, beginning in September of 2004.

1. The partners met with staff and members of Downtown Bloomington Commission, Inc., to develop the concept and goals of the project.
2. The Ball State staff executed a street survey of the Bloomington Courthouse Square Historic District in order to gain an understanding of the historic context, the types and styles of buildings, and the common design issues to be addressed in the document.
3. The Ball State staff researched appropriate guidelines, primarily developed by the National Main Street Center (National Trust for Historic Preservation) and individual Main Street communities.
4. The Ball State staff prepared drafts for review and consultation with the partners.
5. The final product was completed based upon consultation and presented to the partners in April of 2005.

## **HISTORIC CHARACTER & STYLES**

Understanding a building's predominant architectural type and style helps an owner make good choices when undertaking repair and rehabilitation projects. Leaders of new construction projects can also find guidance by understanding the historic character of surrounding buildings.

Architectural styles and building types reflect the tastes and values of society during the time of their popularity. Historic buildings can reflect their time in many ways. Their scale, floor plans, rooflines, construction materials, window and door arrangements, and decorative ornamentation all reveal trends about the period when they were built. When all the usual features of a particular style are present, a building is called a *high style* example. Many buildings contain elements of more than one style, and some do not belong to any style. All buildings, though, have features that represent their period and provide a "sense of time and place" to the street. Most of them offer opportunities for gratifying, productive uses.

### **Bloomington as a Historic Commercial Center**

Just as important as understanding the historic characteristics of individual buildings is knowing their historic context. The historic context inspires enthusiastic use and commitment to good decisions that have chance for long-term success.

In 1990, an area formed by the several blocks immediately adjacent to the Monroe County courthouse square was listed as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. This listing recognizes the historic importance and integrity of the buildings that create the city center of Bloomington. The Bloomington downtown rightfully boasts one of the most cohesive and intact collections of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings in the state, and nearly every building residing within the district contributes to a dense fabric of evolving history.

From the very earliest days of its pioneer settlement, Bloomington existed as a regional hub of society and commerce. Its local prominence, however, was guaranteed with its designation as the county seat of government. To gain the seat of county government was the greatest prize that a pioneer settlement could obtain. The designation at least assured some stability created around the workings of local politics and government. In turn, the lucky town usually reflected its privileged status by creating a formal space for government. The courthouse square was duly set aside for the location of government offices and, in most cases, became the focus of commercial life, as well.

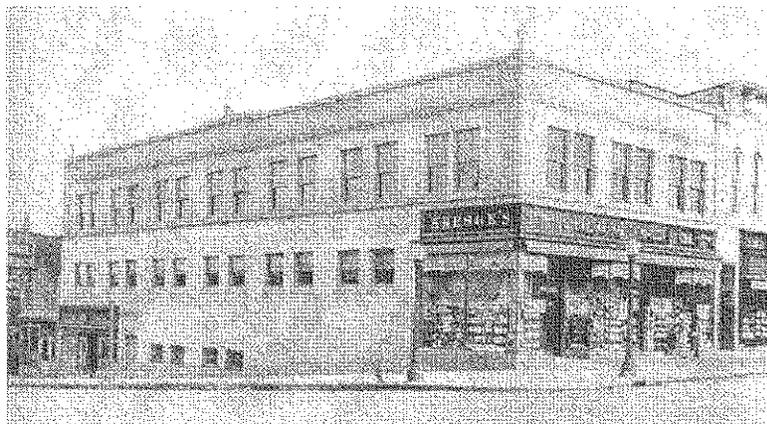
Bloomington also gained early fortune in being awarded the location of a state seminary. Few of the pioneer residents in Bloomington probably foresaw the significance of the seminary, but it seems that the Bloomington commercial center has always benefited from the robust society and culture that the future Indiana University would foster.

Other important factors determining Bloomington's commercial health were the railroad's early arrival, the subsequent growth of manufacturing, and finally the exploitation of the best quarried limestone in the world. All of these factors contributed to creating a noteworthy commercial and social center. By the end of the nineteenth century, the courthouse square area had achieved the material density and type that is seen today. Most of the early wooden structures were replaced by masonry structures at least two stories in height. The outcome was a fairly uniform urban core in terms of building size, scale and material.

In the first years after 1900, the local limestone industry reached its peak and promoted a building "renaissance" in the county seat. In this period the county courthouse that stands today was erected, as well as several important civic and commercial buildings. The formal expression of limestone was the perfect match for the dignified Classical style that was in fashion. To keep up with the trend, a veneer of limestone was applied to older buildings, which still exists on many of them today.

Like all commercial downtowns, Bloomington's changed with the fashions throughout the twentieth century. In some cases, the changes to old buildings have become historic features in themselves. Many poor changes, though, occurred generally during the period of decline and neglect suffered by Midwest downtowns after World War II. The Bloomington city center was no exception. Many buildings were subjected to indifference and misguided attempts to revive commercial value.

The most recent years have been characterized by a serious and thoughtful effort to revitalize and sustain the commercial health of the Bloomington commercial center. Public and private partnerships have formed to apply a wide range of professional knowledge and deliver resources to the business of generating long-lasting revitalization. This effort has been characterized by new formulas to create commercial viability in a traditional downtown. Most of these new formulas begin with an appreciation of the city center's rich historic fabric, encouraging careful attention to good practices that can realize its best modern use.



Historic photo of the old Kresge Block, on the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> St. and College Ave., still serving as one of the downtown's diverse commercial buildings thanks to good contemporary treatment. *Shaw Starkes Collection, William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University.*

## The Two-Part Commercial Building

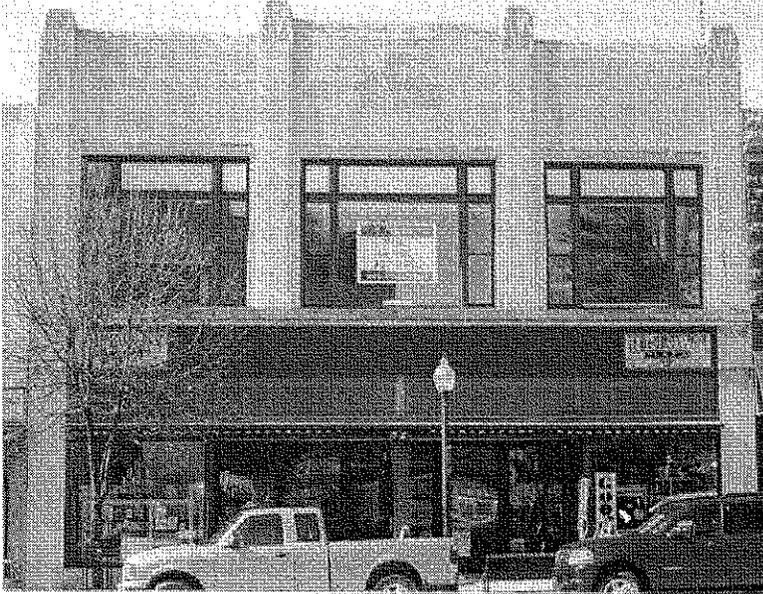
Most of the commercial structures in the Courthouse Square Historic District fall into the category of the *two-part commercial building*. This classification is determined by the building being at least two-stories in height, with the lowest level clearly distinguished for commercial use by a *storefront*. The upper levels usually express more private uses.

The storefront refers to an exclusive component of the commercial building. It historically provided not only the means of access but important design configurations for commercial presentation. The advent of the storefront was greatly assisted with the perfection of architectural cast-iron, creating a supporting frame for the opening. Sometimes the cast-iron exhibited very ornate features. In other cases it was very plain. Two-part commercial buildings built before 1900 featured styles bearing elaborate decoration in the Victorian manner. After 1900, the styles generally became plainer.

In Bloomington, the local access to architectural limestone allowed many commercial buildings to incorporate decorative stonework on the façade. The architectural limestone was applied as a veneer over the structural brick wall. The limestone veneer allowed a rather plain building to suddenly become very elegant. The popularity of the Classical Revival style in the first decade after 1900 provided many buildings in downtown Bloomington with carved details associated with ancient Greece and Rome.



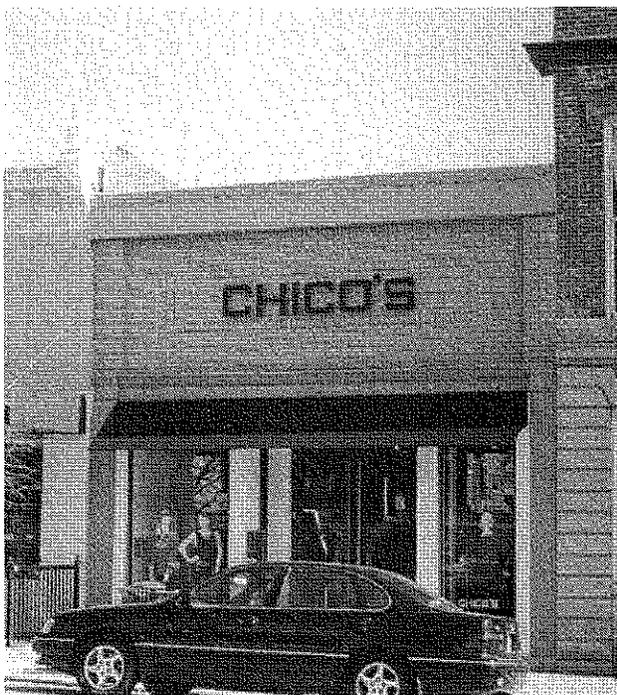
This two-part commercial block on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> St. and College Ave. most likely had two storefront entries originally. The highly decorative cornice and hoods over the upper-story windows are characteristic of the Italianate Style of the late nineteenth century.



The styling of this two-part block favors the Art Deco Style of the 1920s and 30s. The ornamental features on the parapet and upper façade were Art Deco hallmarks. The upper level windows have grown considerably larger since the nineteenth century. They are referred to as “Chicago” windows, first incorporated in the early famous skyscrapers of the city, affording much more light to the interior. This was likely remodeled from an older building.

## One-Part Commercial Building

The one-part commercial building is confined to a single story, exhibiting a single storefront or divisions into several storefronts. They are the exception in the courthouse square district, the density of which favored two-part commercial blocks. They are more common off the square. A few sit on the street curiously attached to historic residential structures, long-since adapted for commercial use. For the most part, the one-part buildings follow the commercial design and style patterns of the two-part commercial buildings. Style choices progressed along with changing fashions.



This one-part block, containing a single storefront, shows plain detailing of the early twentieth century. Notice how the modern signage is contained within the rectangular brick border relief, the likely location of the original placement.

## **DESIGN ISSUES & OPTIONS**

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Design issues, when renovating historic buildings, mostly involve choosing between *preservation* and *rehabilitation*. *Preservation* involves identifying and retaining historic materials and distinctive features. When some or all of these elements are covered up or no longer exist, *rehabilitation* is undertaken to repair the building and make its design compatible with surviving historic features, especially with respect to size, scale, color and materials. *Rehabilitation* does not necessarily entail *restoration*, which involves recreating historic features. *Rehabilitation* does allow the owner to make new choices regarding signage, color and awnings. Yet conserving historic features of the building and its surroundings usually make for good and pleasing decisions.

The guidelines for treating historic buildings developed by the National Park Service\* and features generally recommend:

1. Preserve historic materials.
2. Preserve distinctive features.
3. Create additions that are compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the historic building and its context.
4. Do not create false historical features.
5. Apply signage, awnings and lighting as compatible features of the historic building and its context.

\*See *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

## Storefronts

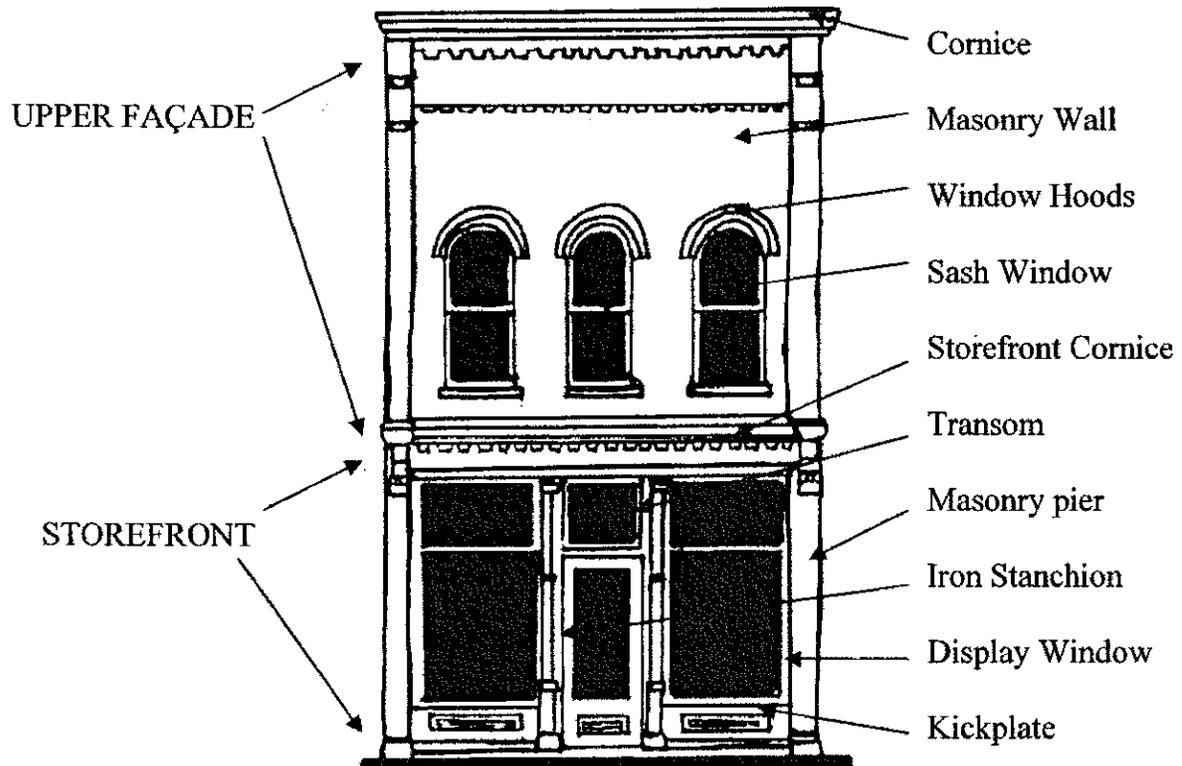
The “storefront” is a key part of the commercial building. It refers to the primary street-level entryway. In historic commercial buildings, windows and openings on the street level were used to meet retailing needs. Display windows opened up the contents of the store to the sidewalk. Before electric lights, display windows also provided natural light to the interior. Transom windows above the main windows could be opened to provide ventilation. Of course, the storefront also contained the entrances to the building. Recessed entries were used to provide shelter at the door, while also creating more display window surfaces. The entryways were especially important features in commercial buildings that housed multiple storefronts. They defined each retail space while creating the overall impression of a thriving commercial block.

### Suggestions:

1. Original storefronts should be preserved. If the original storefront configuration does not exist in whole or in part, then rehabilitation of current features to harmonize more with the upper story or restoration of missing historic features is appropriate.
2. Rehabilitation or restoration of the storefront should retain the original proportions of the façade’s design and entryway configuration and be completed with in-kind materials.
3. If the original storefront is not visible or distinguishable in the existing facade, the use of similar storefront patterns from the same time period may be used.
4. The original storefront should not be covered.
5. More than one entry can be incorporated into a storefront, but the design should remain consistent with the size and scale of the storefront area.

## Storefronts (cont.)

*Typical Nineteenth-century Two-Part Commercial Block\**: the façade is divided into two basic sections—the upper façade and the lower storefront. The treatment of historic buildings in the Bloomington downtown will pay attention to these features.



\*All drawings produced by Kent Abraham unless otherwise indicated.

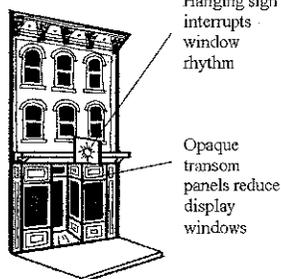
# Evolution of a Facade

The following illustration shows how a historic storefront is altered over time. It suggests what may lie under existing alterations and what the goals of a storefront rehabilitation may be. Understanding how a façade changes over time is helpful to making rehabilitation decisions.

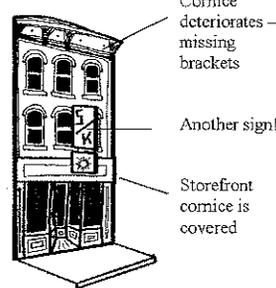
1. Original Facade



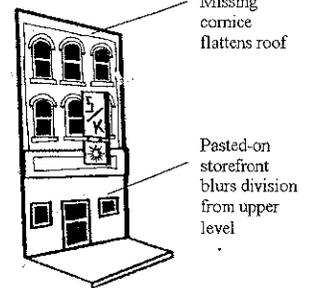
2. Minor Changes



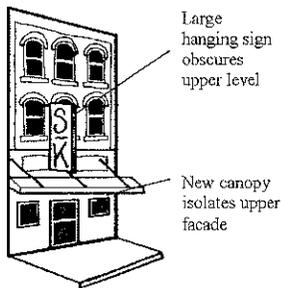
3. More Minor Changes



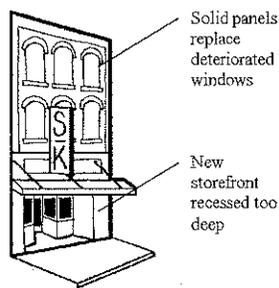
4. Major Remodel



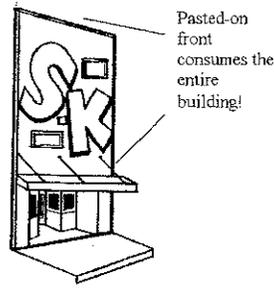
5. More Changes



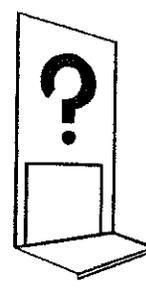
6. More Changes



7. Another Major Remodel



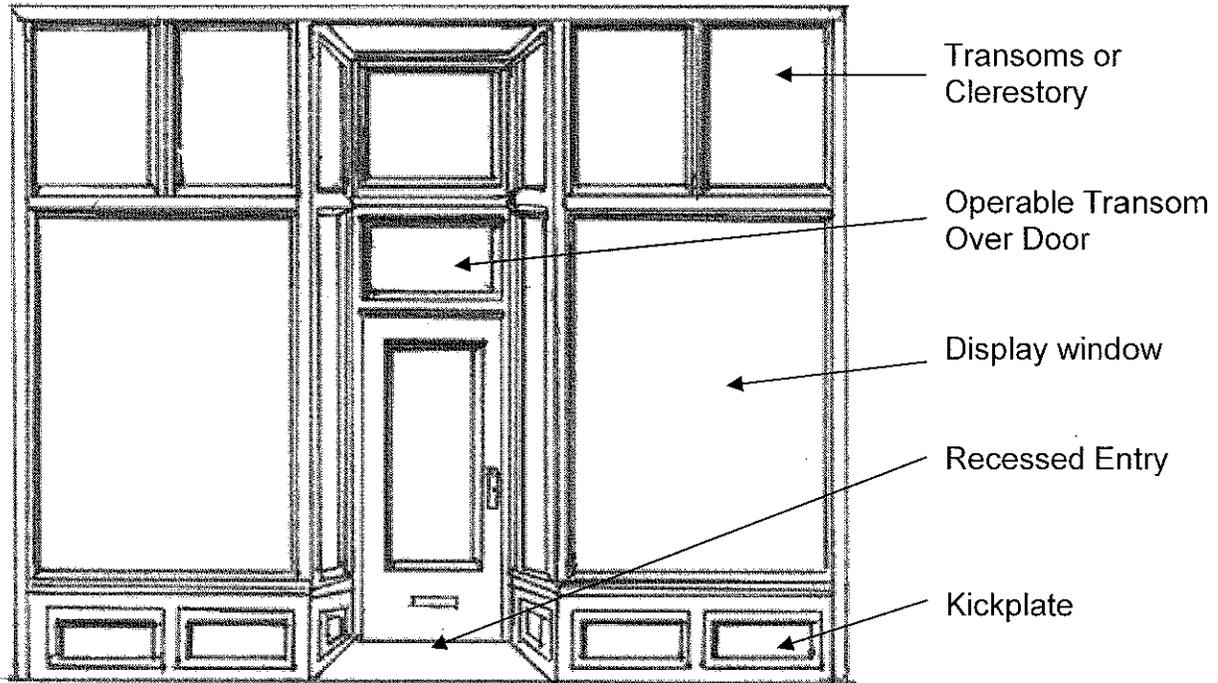
8. Today's Decision



Adapted from *Design Guidelines for Valparaiso, Indiana*.

## Display Windows & Entries

In most cases, retaining the original materials and configurations will provide the most attractive appearance as well as the best creative opportunities to display signage and goods. In some cases, traditional wood framing systems can be economically reproduced in metals that are appropriately painted. The alteration of materials in the storefront can be addressed by either returning to the original storefront design and materials or using a new design that resembles the scale and details of the original.



### Suggestions:

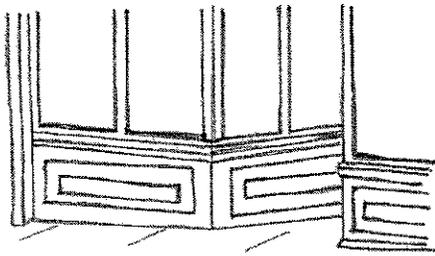
1. Preserve the original materials, size and arrangement of the display windows.
2. Maintain recessed entries where they exist.
3. Avoid moving back storefronts from their original locations.
4. Maintain uniformity of materials and arrangement of windows and entries in buildings with multiple storefronts.
5. Do not cover or reduce the original proportions of the windows in a storefront.
6. Avoid using tinted or reflective glass in storefront windows.

# Kickplates

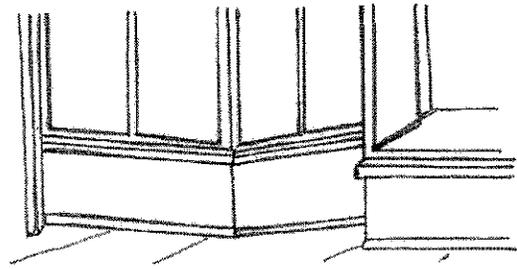
Kickplates are also called “bulkheads.” They are distinct parts of the storefront that sit at the sidewalk level. They are separated from the display windows. Sometimes kickplates are plain, and sometimes they are elaborately decorated with moldings.

## Suggestions:

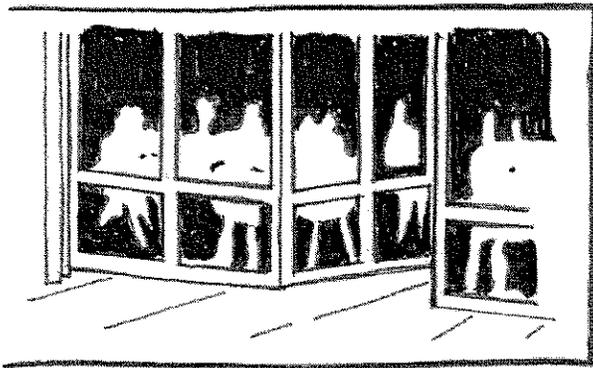
1. Preserve kickplates where they exist.
2. If the original appearance is known, it is preferable to restore kickplates if they have been removed or damaged.
3. Do not install decorative moldings unless clear evidence of such a design exists.
4. If there is not enough evidence of the original kickplate, a replacement kickplate should be similar to the original in its materials and details and harmonize with the rest of the storefront design.
5. Where original storefronts do not exist and glass is preferred in the kickplate area, retain the proportions and arrangements of the kickplate configuration (see illustration below).



Kickplate A – original kickplate repaired and preserved.



Kickplate B – None of the original kickplate remained; simple replacement keeps size and material.



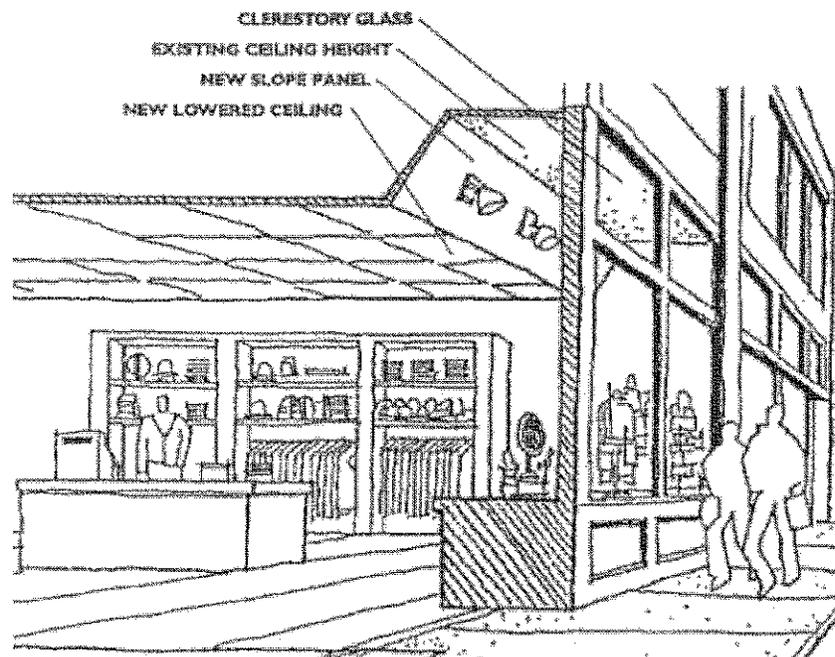
Kickplate configuration is kept when storefront is replaced with glass.

# Transoms

Transom lights (windows) are sometimes referred to as the “clerestory” of the storefront. Sometimes they were operable, allowing for ventilation. Most of the time only the transom light over the door was operable.

## Suggestions:

1. Preserve transom lights where they exist.
2. Where transom lights are covered, it is preferable to uncover them.
3. Where transom lights have been removed, it is preferable to replace them with either a window or solid material that resembles the original. They can be filled with wood panels. For instance, high-quality plain solid wood panels painted to harmonize with other colors of the storefront would be appropriate.
4. Always maintain the original divisions and proportions of the transom configuration.
5. Tinted or reflective glass should not be used in a transom window.
6. If the interior ceiling has been lowered, incorporate a window well to maintain the original appearance of the storefront from the outside and provide more natural light to the interior (see below).



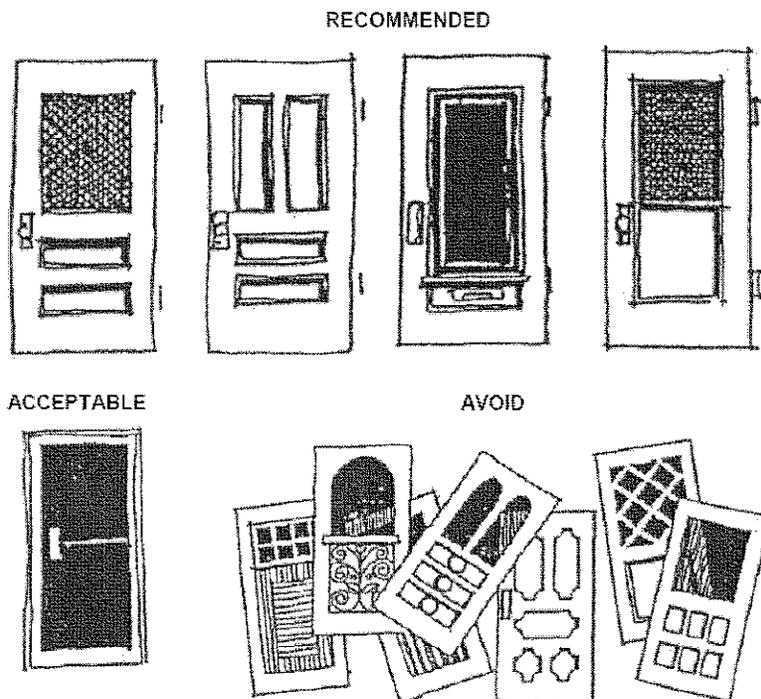
Lowered Ceiling Configuration. *Design Guidelines for Valparaiso, Indiana.*

# Doors

The front door is an important part of the entryway and should be rehabilitated to strengthen the overall historic appearance of the storefront. The same approach should be followed, however, concerning all exterior doors.

## Suggestions:

1. Preserve historic doors where they exist.
2. Where historic doors do not exist, it is preferable to install new doors with materials and styling compatible with the rest of the storefront and building.
3. Preserve the original size and proportions of the original doors.
4. Do not alter the opening to make it fit a different door size than the original.
5. Where a paneled door is used, maintain simple, vertical details.
6. Where glass doors are selected, use a dark anodized finish; avoid bright metals.
7. Avoid decorative grills and odd shapes that were not used in the original doors.



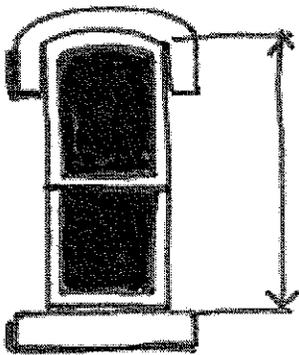
Recommended Door Selections. *Design Guidelines for Valparaiso, Indiana.*

# Upper Story Windows

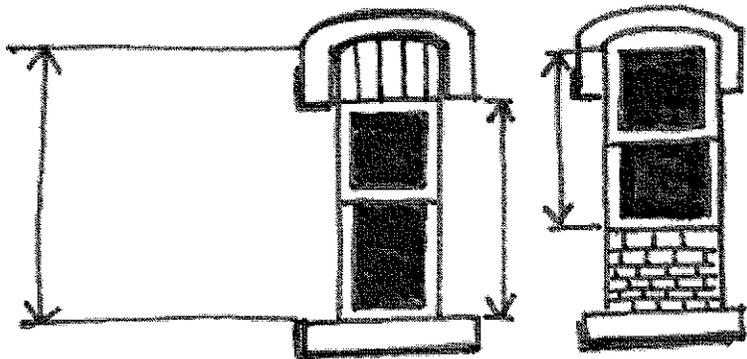
The treatment of upper level windows should be given as much thought as those in the storefront. Upper level openings are just as important to the visual and the functioning of the historic building. Historically, upper level windows were residential in type and scale, consisting of two operable sashes. Some buildings of the early twentieth century incorporated wider windows, sometimes consisting of a central inoperable pane with two operable sash units on the sides.

## Suggestions:

1. Preserve original windows where they exist.
2. Where original windows do not exist, it is preferable to replace existing windows with materials and styling that closely resemble the original configuration.
3. Preserve the original size and proportions of the original window. Do not alter the opening to make another window fit.
4. Never fill in or reduce the size of a window opening. Where such changes have occurred, the opening should be returned to its original configuration.
5. Pay special attention to sashes. Replacements should have real sashes and muntins that hold individual window panes. Do not use windows with sashes different from the original.
6. Avoid use of tinted or reflective glass.



Retain This



Avoid These

## Wall Surfaces

Wall materials are an essential part of the building design. Maintenance and repair of wall materials can be complicated and cause unforeseen damage. Consult professionals who are qualified in working with historic materials.

### Suggestions:

1. Original wall surface materials should be retained and not covered.
2. Brick and other masonry should not be painted. Where already painted, there are appropriate masonry paints that can be used.
3. Never sandblast masonry. Sandblasting takes off decorative details and the outer finishes of bricks and stone, speeding up deterioration of the materials. Consider less abrasive cleaning methods, such as low-pressure washing.
4. Remove added coverings with care, avoiding damage to the original surface.

## Cornice

The façade of the building is often capped with a cornice. Many times the cornice is simple and consists of brick, tile or stone. Sometimes it is elaborate, with pressed metal, stone or wood materials.

### Suggestions:

1. Preserve cornice design and materials elements wherever they exist.
2. Do not add a new cornice or new cornice details without sufficient evidence of the original appearance.
3. Where a cornice has been removed or is in need of major repair, a simplified version can be constructed using similar materials and following basic lines and proportions of the original design.



Full cornice restoration based on sufficient evidence.



Simplified cornice constructed where evidence is insufficient

# Ornament

Original ornaments and decorative trim contribute to the historic appearance of a façade. Trim, especially in the cases of half-timbering in roof peaks and walls, is an important element of the design.

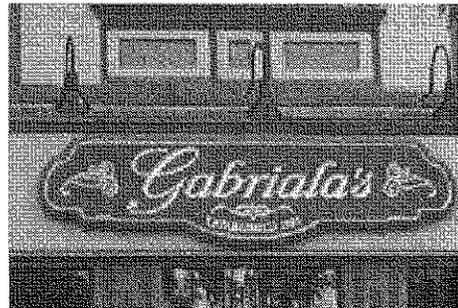
## **Suggestions:**

1. Preserve ornaments and decorative trims wherever they exist.
2. Preserve decorative details around windows.
3. Add new ornament and trim if there is sufficient evidence of its use the original façade appearance.

## Sign Types

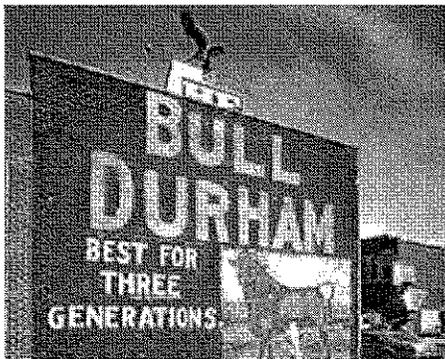
Signs have always played an important role in commercial buildings and areas. Signs change over the course of a building's life because of business relocation, new fashions and advances in technology. In the case of present-day choices, signage is an opportunity to advertise wares and services, as well as create liveliness and distinction. Overall, the choices for signage are numerous and most of them acceptable when handled appropriately. Before making a decision regarding signs, a building owner should understand historic sign types:

Wood - Wood is the oldest and most common material for signs. Wood panels were placed in windows. They were placed also placed above the storefront, flush to the wall or projected from the storefront. Lettering and images were then applied to the panel, sometimes carved but mostly painted.



Wood Signs: hanging in window (left), flush exterior mounted (right).  
National Main Street Center, *Signs for Main Street*.

Direct Application – Signage was applied directly to surfaces of the building. Lettering and images were painted directly onto wooden and brick surfaces (usually broad, blank side walls). Signage was also applied directly to glass surfaces of display windows, doors and upper story windows, either painted or with the use of decals.



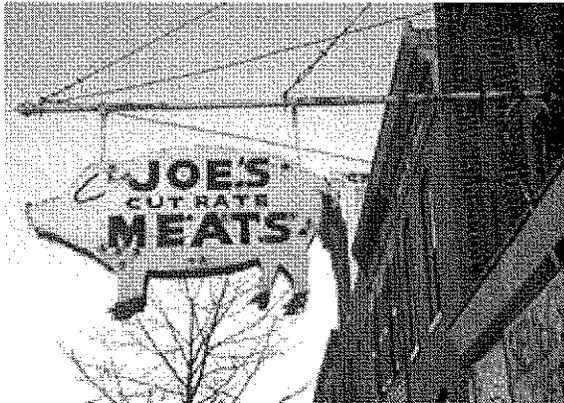
Applied Sign: exterior painted,  
National Park Service,  
*Preservation Brief 25, The  
Preservation of Historic Signs.*



Applied Sign: painted window surface,  
National Main Street Center, *Signs for  
Main Street.*

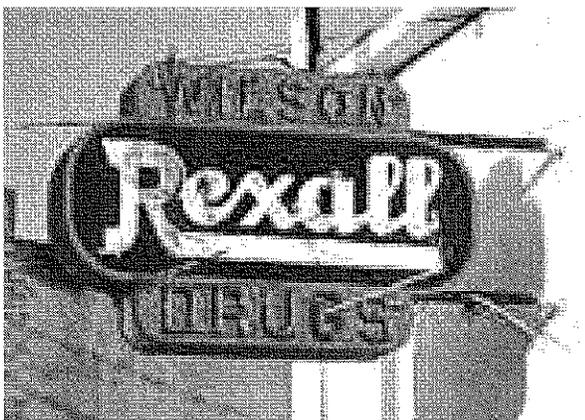
## Sign Types (cont.)

Painted Metal - Painted metal became available toward the end of the nineteenth century. Metal signs were often shaped and molded with raised letters and images, sometimes finished with enamel surfaces. Commercial products took advantage of the more sophisticated processes and thus arrived the modern era of national branding. Painted metal signs were often projected from the exterior wall surface.



Creative projecting metal signs advertised in words and symbol. National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 25, The Preservation of Historic Signs*.

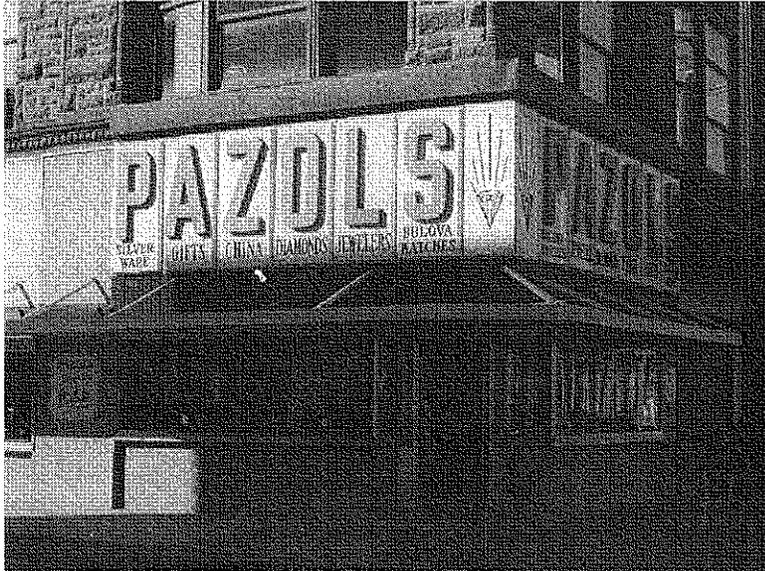
Neon - With the arrival of plentiful electricity, the neon sign began to light up the commercial streetscape. The neon sign gained prominence in the 1920s and was popular through the middle twentieth century. Lettering and images were often formed by the neon tubing itself. Sometimes it complimented background lettering and images. Neon signs were displayed in windows, while most were exterior installations.



This projecting metal sign for a national brand is highlighted with neon tubing. *National Main Street Center, Signs for Main Street*.

## Sign Types (cont.)

Plastic - The plastic molded, internally illuminated sign soon eclipsed the neon sign and is still a popular choice. Three-dimensional plastic lettering is part of the same category.



This contemporary photograph shows a plastic molded sign incorporated into a corner storefront remodeled around 1960.

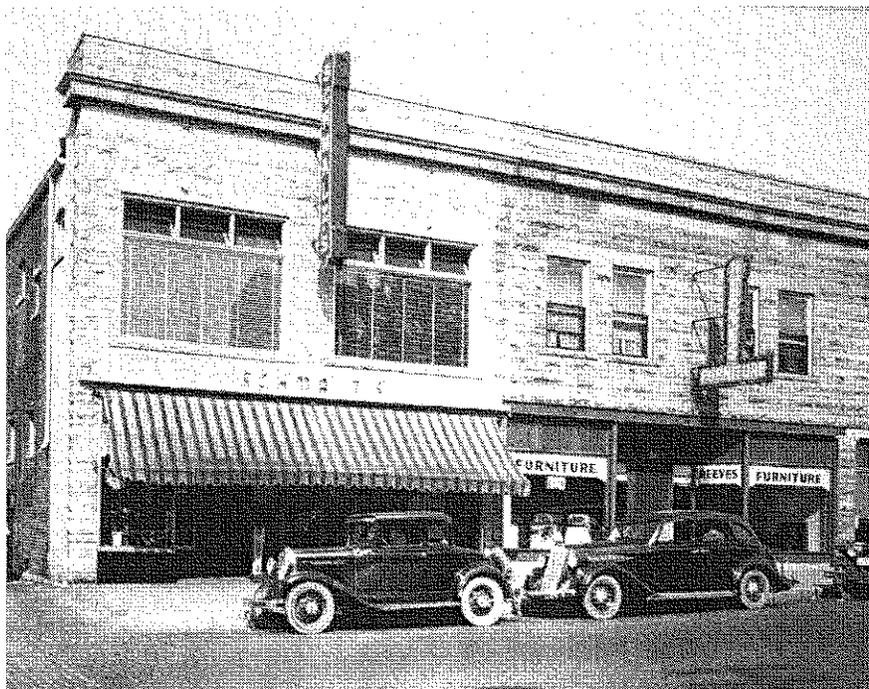
Pazoli's Jewelry Store, Muncie, Indiana.

## Appropriate Sign Types

Generally all of the historic sign types can be in the Bloomington downtown district. The historic features of the building, however, should be carefully regarded when adding signage. City of Bloomington Planning Department should be contacted at the beginning of your process to ensure that your plans will meet their zoning requirements. They can be reached at 349-3423.

### Suggestions:

1. Consider the retention of historic signs when appropriate to business application.
2. In most cases, appropriate material types are wood, metal and composite resin materials that replicate the texture of wood.
3. Plastic, internally illuminated molded signs were not used in the historic period before 1960 and generally should not be applied to buildings dating before that.
4. Sign designs of national brands can be used as long as the general treatment suggestions for signage are followed. Fluorescent colors should not be used.
5. Flashing and rotating signs should not be used, unless they were used historically at a particular building, such as a movie theater.



The old Batman Block on North Walnut Street shows how individual storefronts were treated with awnings and signage. It is also one of the many buildings remodeled with a limestone façade in the Neo-classical fashion. *Shaw Starkes Collection, William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana University.*

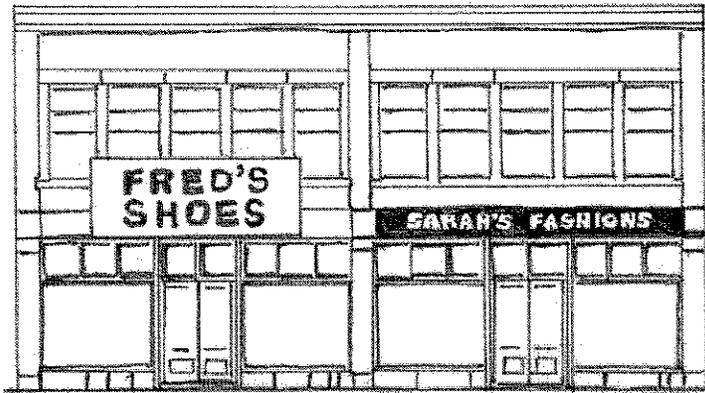
## Sign Placement

There are traditional locations in historic buildings for signage that should be used. The number and size of signs depends on the size and design of a particular building.

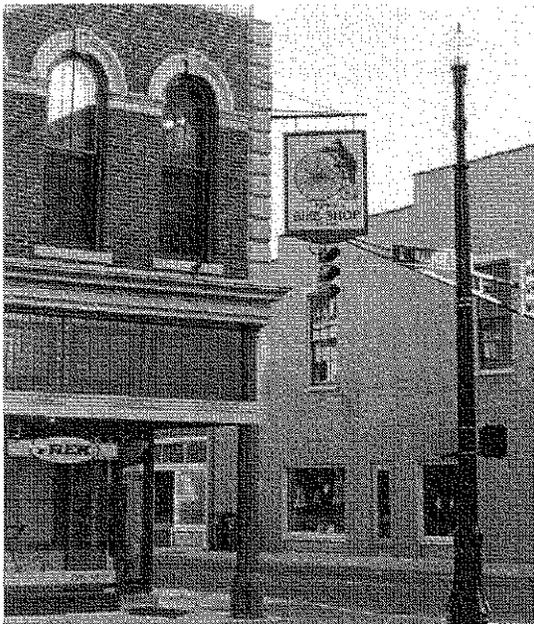
### Suggestions:

1. Signs of any type should fit the original historic size and placement of signs.
2. Signs should not compete for attention with the design of the building and should fit within the architectural features, such as the lintel band above the storefront. Signs should not cover original features of the façade.
3. Windows and transoms should never be filled or covered to create surfaces for signage (although, if a transom is already closed, it can be used as a sign surface if the sign material harmonizes with the façade materials).
4. Window signs can be created by direct application (paint or decal) to the glazing or with a detached panel hung in the window.
5. Signs should be limited in number to avoid clutter on the facade. Generally window signs should cover no more than 20 percent of the window area and should appear only once.
6. Lettering and colors should harmonize with the architectural design of the building.
7. Illumination, when desired, should be provided by indirect sources (unless other lighting effects were part of the historic appearance of the building).
8. Projecting signs on traditional commercial street fronts should be mounted least 8 feet above the sidewalk, protruding no more than half-way to the curb. Projecting signs should be mounted no more than 15 inches from the wall.
9. Generally signs should be mounted no more than 25 feet above grade level.
10. Rooftop signs and billboards attached to the building are not appropriate.

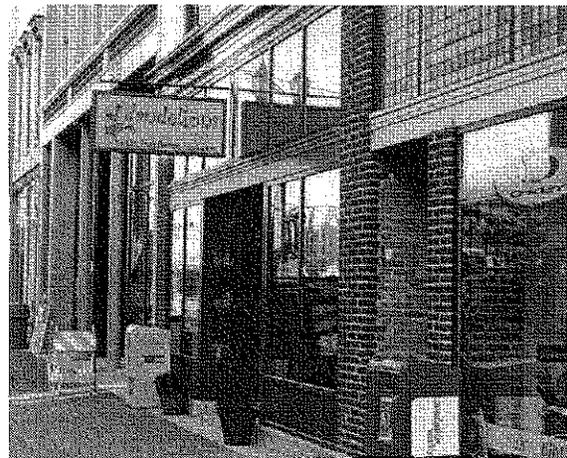
## Sign Placement (cont.)



Comparison between poor good sign size and placement (left) and good size and placement (right).

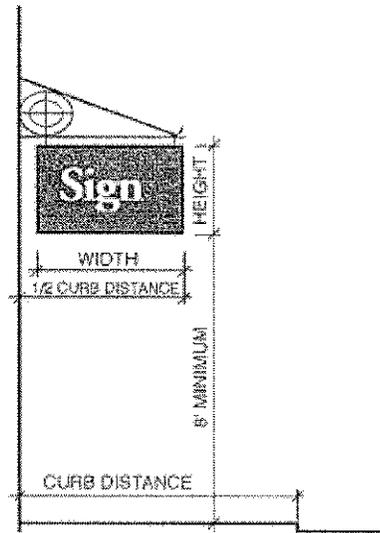


Kirk's Bike Shop; Walnut St., Muncie.



Dandelion's Shop, Walnut St. Muncie.

Examples of appropriate approaches to projecting signs. Notice the decal application in the display windows.

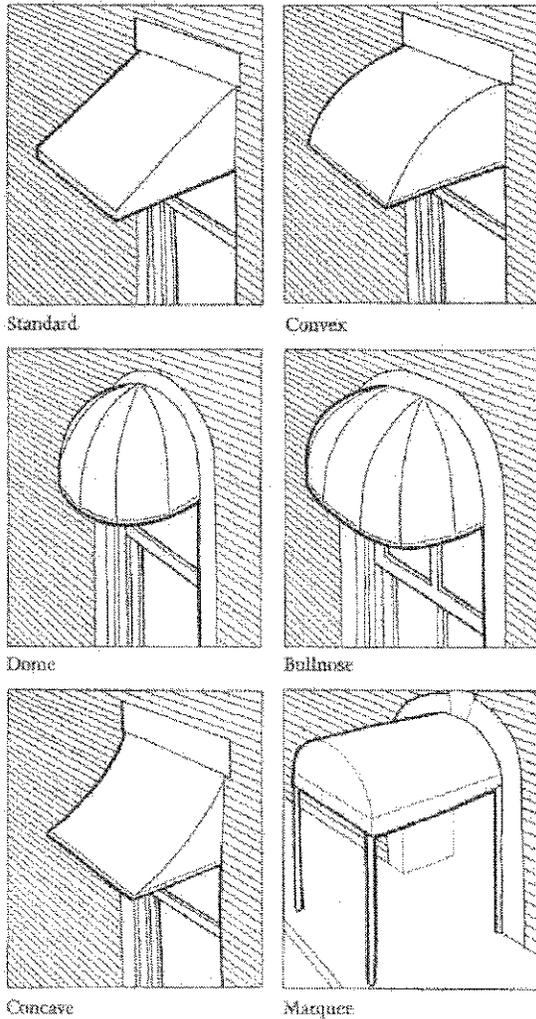


# Awnings

Awnings historically served several purposes — a decorative element, a surface for signage, a form of protection for the storefront against sunlight and a form of personal shelter at the entryway. Awnings continue to serve those same purposes. They can add distinction to the building and provide an alternative surface for signage. They can be used to bring a splash of vitality to the building and the streetscape. Yet they should be coordinated with the building features and style.

## Suggestions for Types:

1. Cloth material is encouraged, as other materials stand out unfavorably against the building's historic materials. Vinyl and plastic generally should not be used.
2. Rigid materials should be avoided.



Shapes and styles that fit openings and building character.

*"Awnings and Canopies on Main Street," Main Street Guidelines,* National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# Awnings (cont.)

## Suggestions for Size and Placement:

1. Awnings should not compete for attention with the design of the building or cover up architectural features.
2. Awnings should fit the original historic scale of the storefront.
3. Generally awnings should extend far enough to shelter at least two passing pedestrians.
4. Awnings can be used in the upper levels but should follow all treatment suggestions for applying awnings to storefronts. Upper level awnings should fit within the window openings and not cover architectural features.



Above: two illustrations of appropriate awning size and scale.



This

Not This

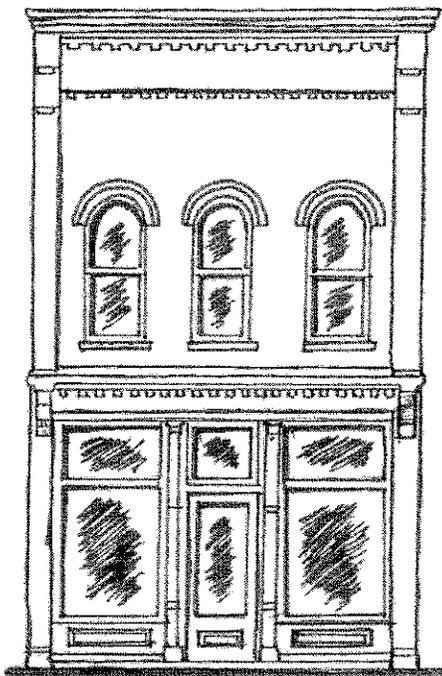
## Applied Color

When applying colors to a building, all elements of the building should be carefully considered. Sometimes careful attention to original details on the facade will provide opportunities for creativity. The brickwork, for instance, might contain colors that can be brought out in trim applications. Contrasting color schemes can be applied to separate elements of the storefront. In a multiple storefront situation, different tasteful colors can be used to individualize each of the storefronts.

Historic paint color professionals can be hired to take samples of the original paint colors and recommend correct colors based on their findings. However, modern paint manufacturers provide a trustworthy palette of historically appropriate paints that can be selected to meet the needs of most buildings.

### Suggestions:

1. Develop a comprehensive color plan for the building.
2. Use softer, muted colors to establish a uniform background. Reserve brighter colors for small accents to emphasize entryways or highlight structural ornamentation.
3. In general, use one color on similar elements such as window frames to show that they are all part of the same facade.
4. The levels of coloration might be broken down as follows:



#### Base color

- Wall Surfaces
- Storefront Piers
- Cornice –when same material as the wall

#### Major Trim Color

- Cornice
- Window Hoods
- Window Frames
- Storefront Cornice
- Storefront Columns
- Storefront & Kickplates

#### Minor Trim Color

- Window Sash
- Doors

#### Accent Colors

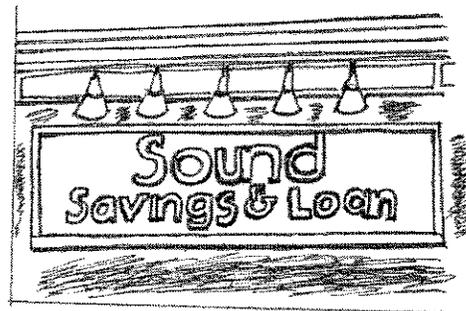
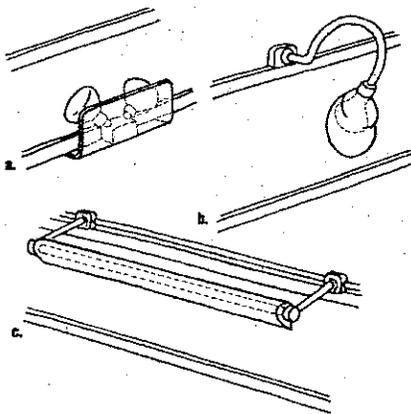
- Ornamental Details on Cornices, Columns, etc.

# Lighting

The character and level of lighting that is used on a historic building is a special concern. Traditionally, exterior lights were simple in character and used to highlight entrances, walkways and signs. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight. They were relatively low in intensity and shielded with simple shade devices. Although new lamp types can be considered for special situations, the overall effect of producing modest, focused light should be continued.

## Suggestions:

1. Light should originate from fixtures that are in keeping with the historic character of the building on which they are mounted.
2. Lighting should be minimized so that it does not compete for attention with the building design. Lighting should be directed toward signage and entrances, or used to accent building features.
3. Lighting should be directed only on the building that it is intended to serve. General floodlighting of any exterior building surface should be avoided.
4. Lighting should be used to provide an adequate level of personal safety, while at the same time making the building more attractive. Lighting of sidewalk surfaces should be generally discouraged except near dining areas of restaurants. Even near dining areas, lighting should be kept at a low level.
5. Use standard lighting that is not gaudy, flashing, colored, or too intense.



Lamps directly light this sign.

External light types: a. Spotlights.  
b. Gooseneck. c. Fluorescent tube.  
*Signs for Main Street, Main Street  
Guidelines. National Trust for  
Historic Preservation.*

## **BEST PRACTICES OBSERVED**

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Some good choices are already being made in the Bloomington Courthouse District. These examples range from substantial rehabilitations to cases of good maintenance and careful attention to the building.

### **Vance Music Center**

Some simple and respectful choices has made this two-part block an admired example of a recent rehabilitation on the square's north side. The recessed storefront has received especially good treatment. The upper level windows retain historic proportions, while being metal replacements. A further improvement might consider restoring them with wood material. The rectangular eyebrow windows just below the cornice could be opened again. With these extra steps, in due time this could be an outstanding historic building facing the historic courthouse.



Cornice retained

Windows open; proportion retained

Signage restricted to historic placement

Leaded glass transom units retained

Cast iron stanchions left exposed

Recessed entries retained

Display window proportions retained

Storefront uses wood framing and kickplate panels

Vance Building, 110 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street

### Kresge Block/Talbot's

Rehabilitation of the old Kresge block makes use of its basic form and features. The original storefront contained two recessed entries. The rehabilitation shows how the basic storefront is restored to a single entry, while retaining basic design proportions. The entry is recessed, retaining transom light. The display windows are divided to mimic the separation of transom units. A next step would be to restore the upper level windows with true sash-type units.



Historic building sign proudly retained

Classical ornament retained

Windows remain open

Original sign panel filled with wood panel of proper proportion

Modern signage contained to historic locations

Storefront maintains recessed entry

Display windows mimic historic design proportions

Kresge Building, 101N. College Avenue

## **MAKING THE CALL**

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It should now be clear that the treatment of historic buildings and their environment is much more about choices than restrictions. There is plenty of room for variety and creativity. Choices, however, are based on carefully considering the historic character of the building and its surroundings.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Understand the original features and styles of the building as well as the neighborhood.
2. When renovating a building, consider its intended use. A pub or tavern is going to present itself differently from a shoe store. A theater is going to have a different image from a barber shop. Yet these images can complement each other and create an interesting and attractive streetscape.
3. Address the simplest changes first. For instance, if upper story windows have been closed, open them up following the appropriate treatment suggestions. Make the storefront the next step in the rehabilitation.
4. Be a good neighbor. Consider how your own objectives can contribute to the downtown district as a whole—its commercial health, vitality and attractive design.



Poor choices of signs, awnings and façade closures speak for themselves when compared to basic and wise choices that respect a building's character.

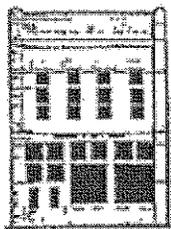
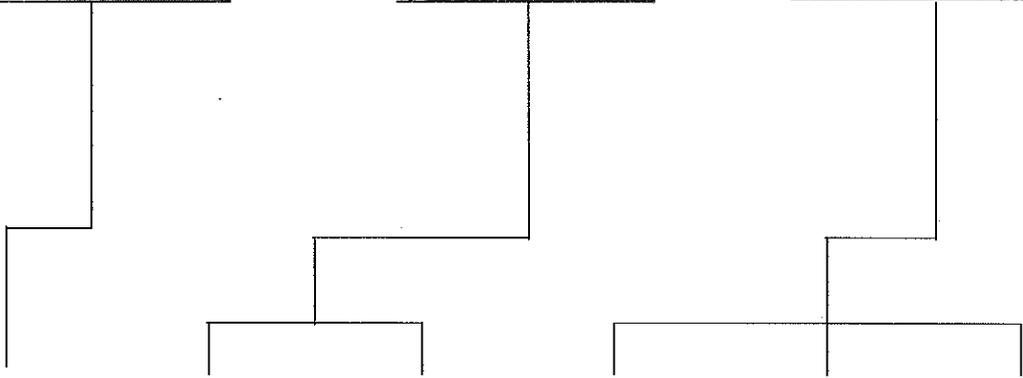
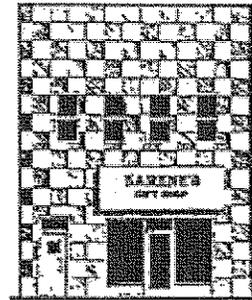
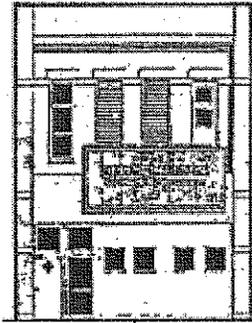
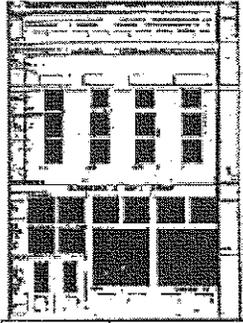
# TREATMENT DECISION TREE

LOOK AT YOUR BUILDING

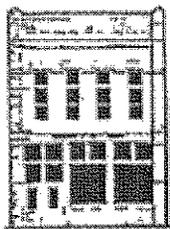
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MODERATELY ALTERED

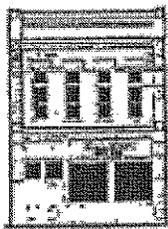
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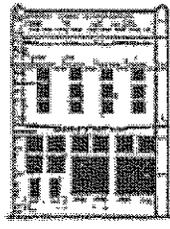
PRESERVATION



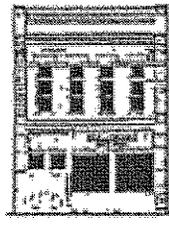
FULL RESTORATION



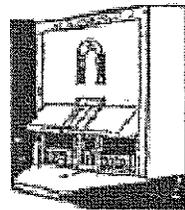
SELECTIVE RESTORATION



FULL RESTORATION



SELECTIVE RESTORATION



SIMPLE RESTORATION

MAKE YOUR CHOICES

Adapted from *Design Guidelines for Valparaiso, Indiana*.

## **HELP AND REFERENCES**

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The building owner can seek help and guidance from a very large network of agencies and experienced property owners, including the Downtown Bloomington Commission, Inc. All of them have long experience in getting the most out of investments into historic buildings and neighborhoods. Professional practitioners, specializing in historic architecture and design, can also provide valuable insights into satisfying and cost-effective choices.

### **Resources for Help**

*Downtown Bloomington Commission, Inc.*  
302 South College Avenue  
Bloomington, IN  
812-336-3681  
E-mail: [downtown@downtownbloomington.com](mailto:downtown@downtownbloomington.com)

*Bloomington Restorations, Inc.*  
PO Box 1522  
Bloomington, IN 47402  
E-mail: [bri@bloomington.in.us](mailto:bri@bloomington.in.us)

*Bloomington Historic Preservation Commission*  
Housing and Neighborhood Development  
PO Box 100  
Bloomington, IN 47401  
[www.bloomington.in.gov](http://www.bloomington.in.gov)

*Indiana Main Street Program*  
Indiana Office of Rural Affairs  
One North Capitol, Suite 600  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-232-8909

*Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology*  
402 W. Washington Street, W274  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2739  
317-232-1646  
E-mail: [dhpa@dnr.in.gov](mailto:dhpa@dnr.in.gov)

*Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana*  
Western Regional Office  
643 Wabash Avenue  
Terre Haute, IN 47807  
812-232-4534  
E-mail: [west@historiclandmarks.org](mailto:west@historiclandmarks.org)

Center for Historic Preservation  
Ball State University  
650 West Minnetrista Blvd.  
Muncie, IN 47304  
765-213-3540, ext. 228  
E-mail: preservation@bsu.org

## References for This Document

"Awnings and Canopies for Main Street." *Main Street Guidelines*. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, c. 1987.

*Design Guidelines for Retail Signs in Historic Downtown Goshen, Indiana*. Goshen, Indiana: Face of the City, 1998.

*Design Guidelines for Valparaiso, Indiana*. Valparaiso, Indiana: Main Street Center, n.d.

Fitch, James Marston. *Historical Building Facades: The Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation*. New York: The New York Landmarks Conservancy, 1997.

Foulks, William G. *Historic Building Facades*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987.

National Park Service, *Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*  
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/rhbl/index.htm>

National Park Service, Preservation Services Program, *Preservation Briefs*  
<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

"Signs for Main Street," *Main Street Guidelines*. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, c. 1987.

U.S. Department of the Interior. *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Washington, DC: Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, 1990.

## **Brief Guide to Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available from a variety of sources. Some are appropriate to for-profit building owners. Others are reserved for qualifying non-profit organizations. Some require a partnership between the two. The following is a brief summary of the most commonly used forms of assistance in active commercial settings. It is followed by a brief summary of programs available to non-profit partnerships that would be appropriate for more creative and ambitious projects.

### Assistance to For-profit Owners

#### *Federal Historic Rehabilitation Investment Tax Incentives*

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program is administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the State Historic Preservation Officer (Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Department of Natural Resources).

A 20% tax credit is available for the approved rehabilitation of certified historic structures. "Certified" buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places either individually or as a contributor to a designated historic district. The rehabilitation must follow the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. A 10% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic (certified) buildings built before 1936. Qualifications and procedures mostly follow those of the 20% tax credit. Most of the buildings in the downtown commercial area would be certified historic structures.

This program offers tax credits on a portion of the total cost of rehabilitation on income-producing properties that meet specific criteria. Income-producing buildings are "depreciable." Qualifying buildings must be put "into service" within a minimum amount of time after rehabilitation begins. The rehabilitation must be deemed "substantial" — the rehabilitation expenditure must exceed the greater amount of \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the building and its structural components. The adjusted basis is generally the purchase price minus the cost of the land, plus improvements minus the depreciation already taken.

Several projects in downtown Bloomington have already benefited from these tax credits. Local agencies can help start the process, as well as the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The complete details of both federal tax credit opportunities and all applicable forms are available at:

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/brochure2.htm>.

### *Tax-deductible Preservation Easements*

The donation of a preservation easement can provide significant financial benefits to a building owner. The donation of the easement is made to a non-profit organization like Bloomington Restorations. The easement gives certain rights to the organization for protecting the building exterior from alterations that would diminish the historic character. The building owner retains title to the property, subject to the terms of the easement, remaining free to use, lease or sell the property.

Donations of qualified easements are eligible for a federal income-tax gift deduction. The value of the easement is the difference between the fair market value of the property before and after the donation of the easement, as determined by a professional appraiser. A description of how easements work can be found at:

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/easement.htm>

### *Indiana Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit*

The state of Indiana offers an income tax credit equal to the 20% of a rehabilitation investment. The credit is limited to commercial properties listed on the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures. Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places are automatically listed on the Indiana Register. Each project can receive a maximum of \$100,000.

The provisions of eligibility, standards and procedures are similar to those of the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit. The minimum rehabilitation investment is \$10,000. Qualifying buildings must be at least 50 years old. The state caps the total credit amount annually, therefore limiting its availability. At present, receipt of the credit is about twelve years out, but qualifying projects can be undertaken immediately.

The process starts by contacting the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The complete details of both tax credit opportunities are available at:

<http://www.state.in.us/dnr/historic/commercial/commtaxcredits.html>.

### *Local Assistance: Bloomington Restorations, Inc.*

Bloomington Restorations, Inc., is a local, non-profit, historic preservation organization. Besides general activism and support, the organization may be able to assist through:

Preservation Easements: Bloomington Restorations, Inc., accepts tax-deductible preservation easements on certified historic structures.

Revolving Loans: Low-interest loans are available to save or restore endangered historic buildings. Bloomington Restorations, Inc., often pairs its loan money with similar loan funds from Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana.

Bloomington Restorations, Inc., can be contacted by telephone at 336-0909 or by e-mail at [bri@bloomington.in.us](mailto:bri@bloomington.in.us).

*Local Assistance: Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association*

The Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association is a nonprofit agency that encourages the improvement of the economic, physical, and social environment within the Urban Enterprise Zone for its residents and businesses.

Grants: A limited number of \$10,000 façade grants are available for investment properties located within the zone and also listed in the City's 2001 Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. Low interest construction loans are also available.

The Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association can be reached at 349-3805 or by e-mail at [abbottl@bloomington.in.us](mailto:abbottl@bloomington.in.us).

*Local Assistance: Mayor's Office of Economic Development*

Tax Abatements

Projects are eligible for Tax Abatement if the project site qualifies as an Economic Revitalization Area under Indiana state law. This is determined on a project-by-project basis.

According to the guidelines, one goal, among others, of awarding tax abatements is to encourage the rehabilitation, preservation, and restoration of historic properties.

A project is ineligible for abatement if the project involves demolition or removal of structures listed on the local Historic Register/eligible for individual listing on the National Register/ contributing structures within a nationally or locally designated historic district. There are also certain types of facilities that are ineligible for abatements (e.g. massage parlors, auto sales/ service). Most retail projects and some residential projects have specific requirements that must be met.

Contact Ron Walker or Danise Alano in the Mayor's Office of Economic Development at 349-3406.

### Business Investment Incentive Loan Fund

One of the many considerations in determining eligibility of a loan or grant from this fund is the projects compatibility of facade projects or new construction in the Downtown Development Opportunity Overlay (DDOO) district with the historic character of downtown Bloomington. Projects involving the demolition or removal of structures listed on the Local Historic Register, or eligible for listing on the National Register or that are contributing structures listed within a nationally or locally designated historic district will not be considered.

One of the many permissible uses of funds from a BIL loan or grant is the renovation of buildings.

Contact Ron Walker or Danise Alano in the Mayor's Office of Economic Development at 349-3406.

### Other Grants and Programs Available to Non-profit Partnerships

The Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, administers two federal programs available to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. The *Historic Preservation Fund Acquisition and Development Grant* is a 50% matching grant, from the Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, directed to the purchase, preservation, rehabilitation, or restoration of historic sites or buildings that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places — either individually or as a contributor to a designated historic district. Endangered properties receive top priority. The rehabilitation must follow the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology also administers *The Architectural and Historical Grants*, also through the Historic Preservation Fund of the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. This assistance is primarily directed to funding surveys, National Register nominations, education programs, feasibility studies and preparation of architectural and engineering plans. It is also awarded on a matching basis.

The complete details for these grant opportunities are available at:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/grants.html>

The State of Indiana offers a series of other grants and incentives related to historic preservation objectives, administered by other departmental agencies. Links to this information are available at:

<http://www.in.gov/mainstreet/resources/index.htm>.

### *Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana*

Historic Landmarks Foundation is a statewide nonprofit preservation organization. It offers several assistance programs to qualifying applicants.

*Indiana Preservation Grants:* These grants are offered to nonprofit organizations for executing professional architectural feasibility studies of up to \$2,500. The funds may not be used for any physical restoration. Grants are awarded on a matching basis.

*Heritage Preservation Education Grants:* This program is a collaboration with the Indiana Humanities Council. It funds up to \$2,000 for projects that promote preservation, including educational programs, lectures, workshops, and publications.

*Legal Defense Grants:* These grants assist communities in taking legal action to defend historic buildings and sites. Grants are awarded on a matching basis.

*Statewide Revolving Loans:* Loans are made to qualifying nonprofit organizations to purchase, preserve, restore and rehabilitate endangered historic structures. The low-interest loans are limited to \$60,000. Priority is given to properties listed on eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana provides details for these programs and links to other funding opportunities at:

<http://www.historiclandmarks.org/help/grants.html>

### *National Trust for Historic Preservation*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nationwide nonprofit preservation organization. It offers several assistance programs to qualifying applicants.

*Preservation Services Fund:* Nonprofit organizations and public agencies may apply for matching grants to fund preservation planning and education programs. Funds can be used for obtaining consultation in the areas of architecture, engineering, land-use, planning, law and fundraising. Typical grants range between \$1,000 and \$1,500.

*Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation:* Grants assist nonprofit agencies in projects that preserve or restore a community's authentic sense of place. Funds may also be used for consultation, workshops and education programs.

*Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors:* Grants aid nonprofit organizations in the preservation or restoration of historic interiors. Funds may be used for consultation and education programs.

*National Preservation Loan Fund:* Loans are made to nonprofit organizations to develop or augment local revolving loan funds and purchase, stabilize or rehabilitate structures. Properties must be certified national, state or local historic structures or sites.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides details for these programs and links to other funding opportunities at:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org/help/grants.html>