

Preservation Design Guidelines Valley City, North Dakota

The city recognizes that the historical character of our town is seen as a community asset; one worth preserving and promoting. Building renovation or rehabilitation is recognized as one of the critical components of the revitalization process used to strengthen this asset. With the heightened sense of appreciation given to historic buildings and heritage tourism, it is important to also ensure that the inevitable changes that occurred or will occur for reasons of modern efficiency, comfort levels and regular maintenance do not cause irreversible harm nor obscure the character details that make them valued in the first place. To the extent possible, historical and cultural elements of the Downtown District shall be preserved and enhanced.

Maintenance:

Good maintenance prevents undue deterioration and will save money in the long run. It is often deferred maintenance that contributes to the shabby appearance of a central business district. Simple cleaning, painting and/or repair can transform a building or a block overnight.

Height:

Renovation or new construction should respect the height of the surrounding buildings. Any additions or new construction shall not exceed the height of the tallest building on the same block.

Width: The new construction shall reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street.

Setback:

Valley City's commercial buildings are typically set directly on the front lot line, creating a wall of buildings. It is critical to maintain the alignment of facades along the sidewalk edge.

Windows and Doors:

Maintain the proportion and spacing of doors and windows of the surrounding buildings. If windows and doors are not repairable and must be replaced, all efforts should be made to find replacements that match the original units. Do not alter the existing openings to fit the new windows or doors; instead, make sure windows or doors fill the original openings. If you must use aluminum or metal-clad replacement windows, a dark anodized finish is preferable to a light metallic color. The number of glass panes and the profiles of the sash rails and muntins should match the original as closely as possible. Avoid modern-looking doors and windows that do not fit the style of your building. Do not add features such as shutters to your windows. Re-establish windows that have been covered by paneling or boards. When a second story is not in use, curtains or blinds should be used instead of enclosing windows.

Horizontal Rhythms:

Respect common horizontal elements found among commercial buildings. If there is a strong horizontal banding between floors, maintain a clear visual division between street level and upper floors.

Materials:

Downtown buildings share a history of similar building materials. Valley City's streetscape is almost entirely clad in brick. All subsequent renovations, additions and related structures built after the construction of an original building shall be constructed of materials comparable to those used in the original construction and shall be designed in a manner conforming to the original architectural design and general appearance. Use finish or trim materials that are compatible in quality, color, texture, finish and dimension to those in the surrounding buildings. Aluminum siding, metal panel siding, mirrored glass (does not include Vitrolite and Carrara Glass), raw cinderblock or concrete, and plastic or vinyl siding will not be permitted. The application of EFIS materials will not be permitted unless a stucco finish is already present on that building. Original historic and

character defining materials shall be retained when renovated, and repaired instead of demolished if in disrepair. If restoration is not possible due to advanced deterioration, replacements should match original in size, shape, material and finish.

Roof Forms:

If the roof of any building is to be replaced or in the case of new construction, we strongly encourage that the roof plane is hidden from view on the front façade. The roof form should be similar to the surrounding buildings.

For buildings on which the roof form is visible, the decorative details, materials and general shape are important stylistic elements. In addition, by design, they function to protect the entire structure from the destructive effects of the weather. Repair rather than replace original architectural elements such as dormers, chimneys, etc. Identify and preserve these details. Replace severely deteriorated roofs with historically appropriate materials, so as not to impact the visual integrity of the historic façade.

Color:

Paint color can greatly enhance the historic feel of a building. The use of multiple, appropriate colors can provide additional character and appeal throughout the district. Colors shall coordinate with neighboring buildings and not create a visual distraction. Brick and stone elements like headers and sills should be kept unpainted and cleaned. Painting brick that has never been painted will not be permitted. Primary colors should not be used on the entire building or storefront. Avoid bright hues and use more natural tones.

Guidelines for selecting colors include:

- Use a paint analysis to identify the historic paint colors
- Select colors that are historically appropriate and compatible with the building and surrounding structures
- Use contrasting colors a shade lighter or darker on the doors, window frames, molding, and cornices when appropriate
- Colors should emphasize details; avoid dark colors that obscure them and use gloss or semi-gloss paint for easy cleaning

Alterations:

Respect the original period and style of the building, and work with it. Avoid an artificial historical look. Restoration of the original look of the storefront is strongly encouraged. Do not cover up the architectural details which give your building its character.

New Additions:

When planning a new addition, preserve significant historic materials and features. Building finishes used for the addition should be similar in material, quality, color, and dimension to those used on the existing structure. New additions should not compete visually with the rest of the building.

Preserve the character of the original building. The scale (size and proportion) of the addition should be compatible with the original building. Take into consideration the style and date of construction of the original.

Storefronts:

Storefronts should be designed to fit within the original opening and not extend beyond it. The owner shall determine if the existing storefront is the original or a later alteration. Preserve original materials or details and the shape of original openings, otherwise the proportions of the façade will be lost. Replace missing original elements if possible.

Entries:

Commercial storefront's entries were typically recessed. This provided more area for display space, a sheltered transition area to the interior of the store, and emphasized the entrance. Recessed entries should be retained if altering an older building and required in new storefront construction. Solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass will not be permitted. Openings containing double entry doors shall be retained. Do not destroy an historic entry if you use a different entry. The original belongs to the historic fabric of the building and streetscape as a whole.

Display Windows:

The original size, division and shape of display windows within the overall storefront frame should be preserved. If less light or more privacy is desired, window coverings are acceptable. If window covering are used they should add to the historic character of the building and not be garish or use fluorescent colors. Condensation problems can be alleviated by having a fan and good air circulation inside the building.

Kickplates:

The kickplate is the area below the display window. The original kickplate material shall be retained, maintained, or uncovered.

Transom Windows:

Transom windows shall be restored if they still exist behind exterior cover-ups or under drop ceilings or be exposed if they still exist behind applied storefront coverings.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):

The ADA, signed on June 26, 1990, has basically redefined disability to encompass anyone with "permanent or temporary physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life function." Accessibility requirements under this act apply to public accommodations, commercial facilities, and state and local government entities. It is important to determine whether your building falls into one of these categories in order to determine what actions are necessary to make your building accessible.

The ADA requires that any new building designed or constructed after Jan. 26, 1993 and any buildings that are altered after Jan. 26, 1992 must, "to the maximum extent feasible, be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities." An alteration is any change to a building that affects or could affect its usability. Thus, alterations that will help bring a historic property into compliance with public accessibility standards should be a high priority in applications for preservation funding incentives.

In cases where the alteration or removal of barriers would destroy the historical significance of a building certain minimum accessibility standards may be applied. Consult an architectural professional, the City of Valley City, and the State Historic Preservation Office early in your planning process to determine what will be necessary for your building to comply with the ADA.

Signs:

Guidelines for selecting the style of signage for your property:

Flush mounted signs which include signboards or individual die-cut letters placed on the face of the building. Flush mounted façade signs usually fit within a "transom area" above the shop windows but below the upper floor windows, and are usually "contained" within the building framework of columns and other architectural trim. The sign should "fit" within certain building proportions.

- Keep typeface of one style and match it to the image of the business and/or district.

- Letters should generally be less than fifteen inches (15") tall, filling no more than sixty percent (60%) of the sign surface.

Hanging or projecting signs which are mounted perpendicular to the sidewalk, especially icon or graphic signs that illustrate by their shape the nature of the business within. They are the oldest type of commercial sign and are the easiest signs to read and are well-suited to both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

- Projecting signs are best when limited to ten to fifteen (10-15) sq. ft. area.
- Projecting signs should have a clearance of at least seven feet (7') with a sturdy uncluttered bracket.
- The use of shapes and forms indicative of the type of business helps to reinforce the message.

Window signs which are painted directly on the window. These are especially indicative of Americana charm and can be very attractive. It is recommended that a professional sign painter be used to achieve the most historic and professional look.

- Window lettering should be appropriately placed to be both readable while not blocking the view of merchandise or store interior.
- Window lettering should be applied to the interior of display windows
- An appropriate alternative to window applications may be interior hung panels with a carefully chosen color, size, and contrast and should be removable.
- Window signs should have a minimum opaque background.
- Window signs should not fill up more than twenty percent (20%) of the window area and has letters between four to eight inches (4-8") high.
- Simple designs, professionally created, using a minimum of lettering styles and clear graphics will create a powerful image to pull customers inside.

Lighted signs include neon and signs that are lit internally or externally by bulbs, lamps or LEDs. If internally lit, black or dark color backgrounds with light lettering or individually illuminated letters are encouraged. They are more legible from a distance and project less glare. For externally illuminated signs, the light should be contained within the sign frame and not spill over to other portions of the building. Neon and bare bulb signs are becoming quite rare, and their continued use and maintenance are encouraged.

- Sensitively designed neon signs add to streetscape vibrancy. Avoid stock franchise trademarks and insist upon carefully designed neon by a professional sign designer.
- Keep the overall design and number of colors simple for neon signs.

Signs should relate in placement and size to other building elements. Do not obscure other building elements such as windows, cornices or decorative details. Sign material, style and color shall complement the building façade. Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, placement on the building, and lettering style. Lighting signs require careful selection of fixtures and placement. 'Goose neck' lamps are ideal for price and general effects. Halo signs, raised letters backed with neon, provide dramatic but soft illumination. Another acceptable type of illumination is a sign that is lit by a projecting box situated just below the sign panel. This box fits a fluorescent tube, which is shielded from the eye by the woodwork, yet floods the sign. The above listed sign types demonstrate carefully shielded lighting that is subtle and attractive. Avoid bare bulbs, backlit plexiglas sign boxes, or internally illuminated plastic awnings.

"Historic" and ghost signs (remnants of "historic" painted signs on building faces) shall be preserved and incorporated in building renovation design.

Non-historic signs that advertise a business that no longer exists or has moved from the property must be removed within thirty (30) days. The building sign area shall be repaired and restored

with respect to the installed sign anchors and sign area restored to match the color of the remainder of the building.

Sidewalk Coverings:

If shelter or shade is wanted on the front of your building, consider using awnings or canopies. Original awnings or canopies found on buildings shall be maintained, be structurally sound, and shall not be removed from the building. If found not to be structurally sound, replace with like materials. Placement of awnings should occur at the top of openings. Awning shapes should relate to the shape of the top of the opening. Consider the cumulative effect of all awnings or canopies existing along the street or multiple awnings on neighboring buildings when designing your awnings or canopies. Metal or wood canopies are not encouraged unless they were original to the building.

- Awnings have become another type of sign device. Lettering applied along a valance should be no more than twelve inches (12") tall.
- Awnings shall use traditional awning designs and colors. Wild colors and trendy shapes that have nothing to do with the architecture of the building will not be permitted. When individual window canopies are more appropriate, keep the colors and style subdued. Simply designed lettering may be applied to create composition.
- Awning canopies should serve a function as well as an aesthetic purpose. They can shade the storefront while identifying the business. They can also serve as enlivening the streetscape and accenting the building.
- Awning canopies shall be made of high quality materials such as acrylic-based canvas. Plastic and vinyl awnings shall not be permitted.

The Barnes County Historical Society has many historic photos of Valley City and can be a wonderful resource as to the original design and character of our historic buildings.