

## History & Background



# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## History Of Downtown

### **McMinnville, Tennessee**

Established in 1810, the city of McMinnville was named in honor of Joseph McMinn, the speaker of the state senate and later governor. McMinnville was never a city of logs. However, the original town village actually sat about one mile southeast of the present location in an area known as Tanyard Springs. There a log community did spring up after the creation of the county by an act of the Legislature in 1806.

By 1809, some of the founding fathers decided that the Spring City area was not suitable for a county seat. Hence a 41-acre site was purchased for \$100.00 from lands belonging to Robert Cowan, Joseph Colville, and John Wilson. Consequently, town lots were laid out and a contract was let for the erection of a courthouse in the center of what is today City Park. Captain William White of Jackson County was employed and by the fall of 1811, the two-story brick courthouse was completed.

By 1825, the city had several hundred citizens and a flourishing commercial center that stretched along Main Street from Chancery to Sparta Street. The architectural styles were eclectic, but Federal influence abounded with many stately homes converted to retail and hotel establishments early in the city's history. Trees lined the unpaved streets. A few brick sidewalks existed, but most were plank and split log. Elaborate gardens lay behind most of the homes and hotels. Later, the intense horticultural rivalry resulted in many of the local residents competing for the most beautiful and ornate gardens in town. This was especially true along West Main Street to Post Road.

Many believe that this competition led directly to the creation of the garden clubs, which still dominate local society circles. The coming of the railroad in the 1850's brought a new prosperity to the area. Not only could luxury goods from New Orleans and the East be easily shipped to McMinnville, but textiles, apple jack brandy, hogs, and mules could now be shipped out to eager markets. Consequently, the city flourished with many new commercial buildings being constructed downtown. These included a new courthouse on the square and the Cumberland Female College facility located at the end of College Street.

The Civil War brought devastation and economic ruin to Warren County. Occupying Union forces burned very few of the Main Street buildings, with most of their efforts being concentrated on residences, barns, the depot facilities, and mill sites. Most commercial activity came to a standstill.

Surprisingly, the post-bellum era was prosperous. McMinnville rebounded rather quickly with an influx of northern capital, which concentrated upon the lumber and mineral resources of the region. The rebuilding of the textile industry by the Faulkner family added to that prosperity.

The 1875-1920 period created a building boom for downtown. Several of the town's leading banks were established at this time, providing capital for much of the expansion. Commercial development on Main Street included several substantial office buildings that still exist today. William Houchins, a black entrepreneur, constructed an opera house during this period, which quickly became a Mecca for social activity downtown. To accommodate a growing population, the Methodists, Baptists, and Church of Christ all erected substantial structures. By 1900, the new courthouse was occupied, but without a clock for its imposing Norman-style tower. Residential expansion along Chancery, Spring, Sparta, and West Main Streets extended the city limits and the tax base for a growing community. A few of the rambling Victorian homes still exist today. It was also at this time that Riverside Cemetery was established in Depot Bottom to alleviate the overcrowding in the old city graveyard on South High Street.

With the turn of the twentieth-century, a renewed interest in downtown beautification began. The old City Park was revitalized with paved walkways, benches, fountains, and the now-famous statue of Hebe. Mayor and entrepreneur Jesse Walling led the effort to bring power, water, and new city services to McMinnville...including sidewalks and streetlights. Even though Walling and several other businessmen had automobiles, Main Street remained unpaved until the 1920's. It was not until the late 1920's that the city got its first modern fire department. That happened only after a devastating fire destroyed the world-famous Southern School of Photography in 1928. By the 1920's, McMinnville was named the richest city of its size in the U.S. No doubt the expanding lumber industry and the extension of the railroad into White and Van Buren Counties helped to fuel the prosperity.

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## History Of Downtown (continued)

The Great Depression hit hard, but it did not prohibit the building of a modern hospital, a number of office and commercial structures, and a beautiful movie theater along Main Street. A Greyhound Bus Station was built on the corner of West Main and High Streets, which began the push toward commercialism in former residential areas of the city. The post-war building era gave McMinnville the look that it has today. Many of the older buildings were replaced with brick and the Victorian cornices were removed. Metal awnings replaced the canvas ones along the street. New paving, sidewalks, streetlights, and parking meters completed the modern look. It was during this period that the City Park was destroyed as the highway was cut and paved right down the middle of the court square.

An effort to modernize the city in the 1960's brought urban renewal in the East Colville and East Main Street areas of town. Scores of homes, churches, and businesses were destroyed in what had been the black section of the city. The high-rises on East Main Street and the large parking area along Colville Street are both results of that renewal program.

The decline of downtown was apparent at this time. The Main Street merchants felt threatened as businesses relocated along Chancery and Sparta Streets. With the building of the Plaza Shopping Center and several strip malls, the end of downtown looked near. Consequently, a plan was devised to widen Chancery Street to four lanes in order to alleviate the congestion along Main and Morford thoroughfares. However, instead of bringing customers downtown, it created exodus routes to the new shopping centers. The tree-lined street, old brick sidewalks, and dozens of historic homes became casualties of more "progress".

Since the 1970's, the decline of downtown has continued. Government, legal, and banking services dominate the business activity now. Retail business has been fighting a battle to survive.

Renewed interest in economic revitalization continues today, with much interest shown in the Main Street Program, Historic Districting, and restoration of the Park downtown. It is hoped that planning and design guidelines will enhance the integrity of downtown and encourage the redevelopment of business along Main Street.

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## Periods Of Development

Historic districts have what is known as a “period of development”. This is the period of time during which an area attained the characteristics that qualify it as a historic district. This may be a long time, spanning from the beginning of the town until recent times due to slow, steady growth, or it may be a short time dating from the boom of a local industry. A downtown may have multiple periods of development. A disaster, such as a fire or flood, could cause one portion of the district to have a different period of development than the rest of the district.

Identifying a downtown’s period of development and the causes of the development helps us to understand and protect the character of the area. Elements such as the layout of the downtown, the types of business located there, the construction materials used, and the size of the buildings are affected by the development period(s) of a place. Towns are influenced by the time and by the people who created them. McMinnville, like other surrounding cities, was laid out according to a classical British model with a courthouse placed in the square and surrounded by commercial and residential buildings. The main commercial district grew mostly eastward with industry concentrated near the river and depot areas.

Transportation networks affected how cities developed and this was clearly the case in McMinnville. When railroads increased access, smaller towns were able to purchase building materials previously unavailable or too expensive due to shipping costs. Cast-iron storefronts and brick became the preferred building materials downtown. Although the transportation network did provide increased access, the use of brick as a building material was primarily a safety factor as its use helped to control fires. As the automobile became more dominant, gas stations and automobile dealerships appeared downtown and fewer downtown buildings contained upper-story living space.

Finally, the architectural styles popular at the time of a downtown’s development affect its character. Architectural styles help to determine the materials used, ornamentation, and even the scale of these buildings.

## Styles Of Architecture

Architectural styles reflect the tastes and values of society at a particular time. Buildings reflect architectural style in their floor plans, rooflines, construction materials, ornamentation, and window and door treatments. When all the defining aspects of a particular style are present, a building may be labeled as a high style example. If only a few stylistic details are present, the building is referred to as having elements of a style. Sometimes buildings contain elements of more than one style, especially when the construction dates to a period of transformation in society’s tastes. In many instances, downtown buildings are in no recognizable style.

Knowing a building’s predominant architectural style helps us date a building when the year of construction is unknown. It also helps owners to deal sensitively with buildings when undertaking repair and rehabilitation projects. An understanding of a structure’s defining features provides a firm basis for appropriate actions when working on a historic building. Projects involving new construction can find design guidance by examining the stylistic elements of surrounding historic buildings.

On the following pages are brief descriptions of a few of the more popular styles found in Tennessee’s downtowns. This is not a complete list of styles, nor does it list every possible feature of each style. It is, however, a starting point for understanding the major styles and stylistic elements in the downtown commercial area of McMinnville.

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## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### FEDERAL

Beginning in the late eighteenth and continuing well into the nineteenth-century, the Federal style reflected the emergence of America as a nation. Somewhat a continuation of Georgian and Colonial influences, the style predominated on the eastern seaboard and well into the frontier areas as settlements expanded the boundaries of the thirteen original colonies. Many of the earliest homes in the area utilized this form including the Black House on East Main Street. No pure example of this style exists in the downtown commercial district today.



#### Common Features:

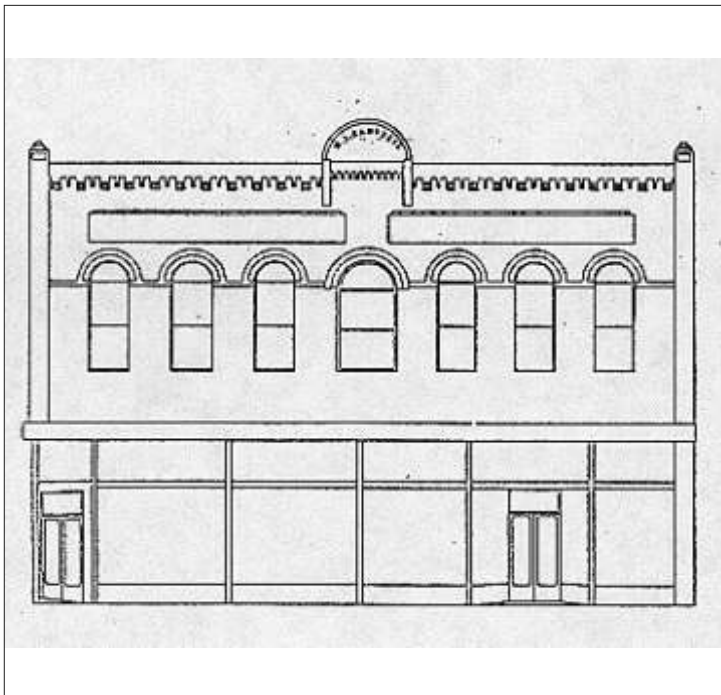
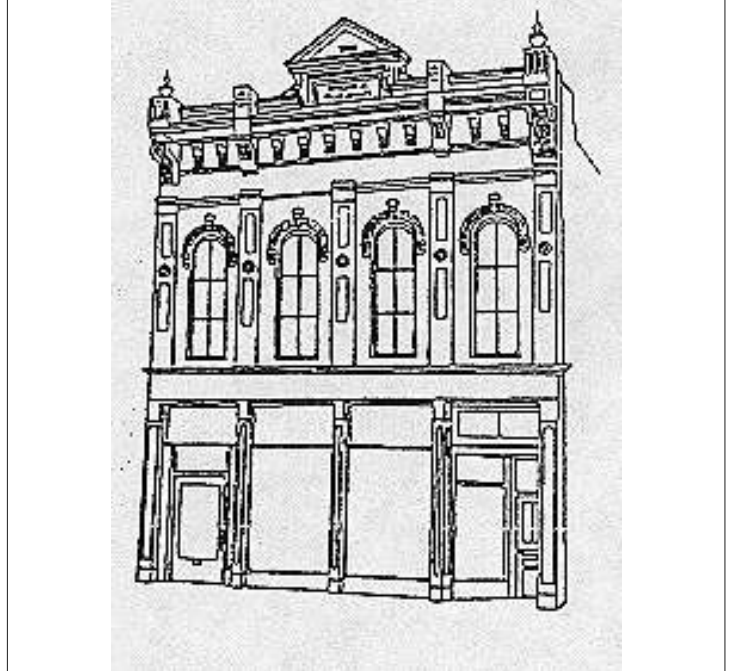
- Symmetrical façade
- Rectangular building shape
- Central doorway, often fan lighted
- Stepped gable roof
- Brick construction
- 9/9 or 12/12 divided-light, double-hung windows
- End chimneys perpendicular to roofline
- Two-story
- May possess shutters

# Historic District Design Guidelines

## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### ITALIANATE

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, some architects reacted against the formal, classical architecture of the time and advocated more natural, picturesque styles. One of these styles was Italianate. Inspiration for the Italianate style came from a variety of sources including country Italian villas and various urban Italian palaces. While the Italianate style was passing out of fashion by 1880, commercial buildings using elements of the style continued to be constructed into the twentieth-century. Mass-produced cornices, window hoods, and cast-iron storefronts allowed merchants to ennoble plain buildings at an economical price.



#### Common Features:

- Round or segmental-headed window and door openings with hood moldings
- Windows often in pairs
- Bracketed eaves
- Deeply projecting cornice
- Often a central pediment at a roofline bearing a name and date of building
- Ornamented with panels, quoins, finials, and pilasters
- Typical exterior materials: brick, cast-iron, pressed metal, wood

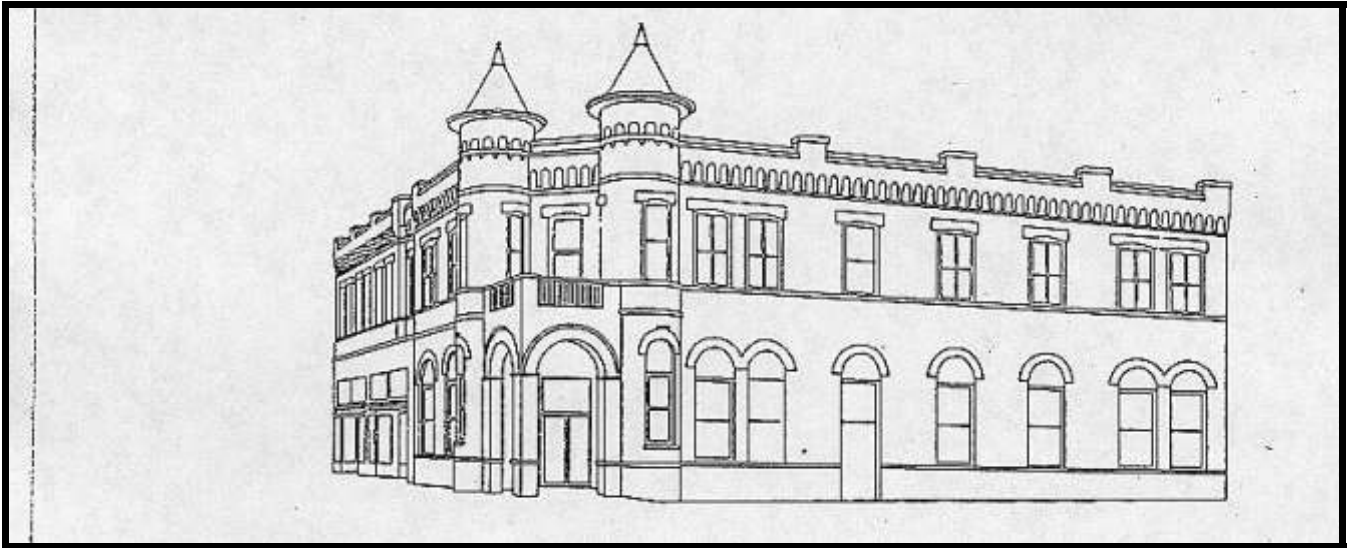
# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### ROMANESQUE

Romanesque Revival buildings patterned themselves after the early Romanesque buildings of Europe. Brick and stone are used extensively. Round arches are used at both window and door openings as well as decorative elements. At the end of the nineteenth century, H.H. Richardson interpreted the Romanesque so uniquely as to create a subset of the style, Richardsonian Romanesque. These buildings use rock-faced stone and heavy arches to create an overall feeling of heavy mass and scale. Romanesque remained a popular style for building, especially for churches, until the turn of the twentieth century.



#### Common features:

- Heavy massing
- Round-arched windows and doors
- Arches and lintels of rock-faced stone of contrasting color from wall material
- Corbel table at eaves
- Typical exterior materials: brick and stone

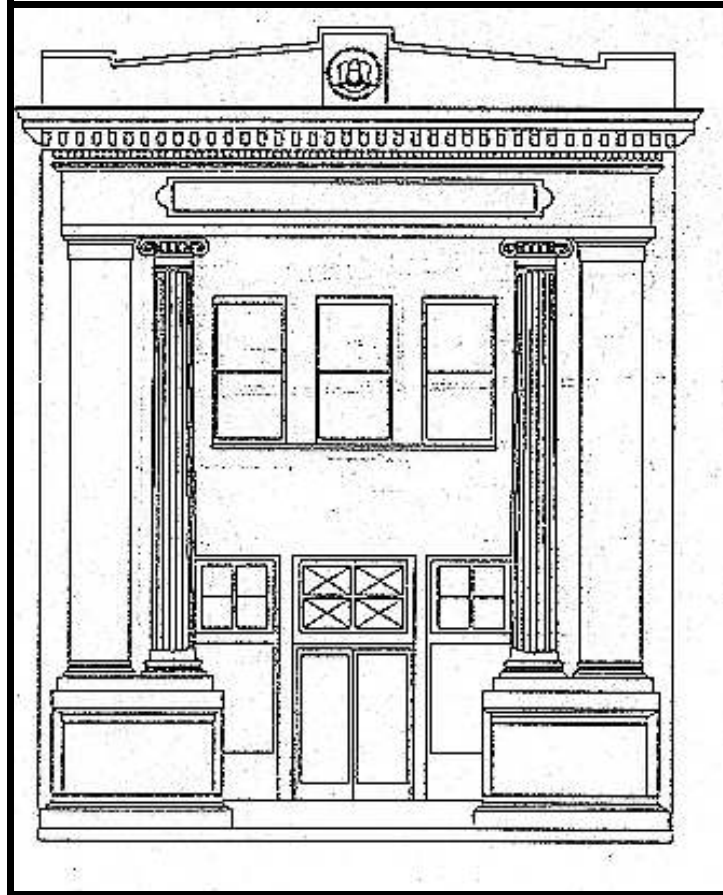
# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL

Along with the Beaux Arts style, Neoclassical was largely influenced by several expositions held around the turn of the century, especially the world Colombian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Neoclassical Revival is based primarily on the Greek and, to a lesser extent, the Roman architectural orders. This style was extremely popular for bank buildings and remained popular through the 1920's.



#### Common features:

- Symmetrical façade
- Cornice with dentils, modillions, and wide frieze band below
- Pedimented porticos
- Large classical columns rising two or more stories at entrances
- Pilasters
- Typical exterior materials: brick and stone

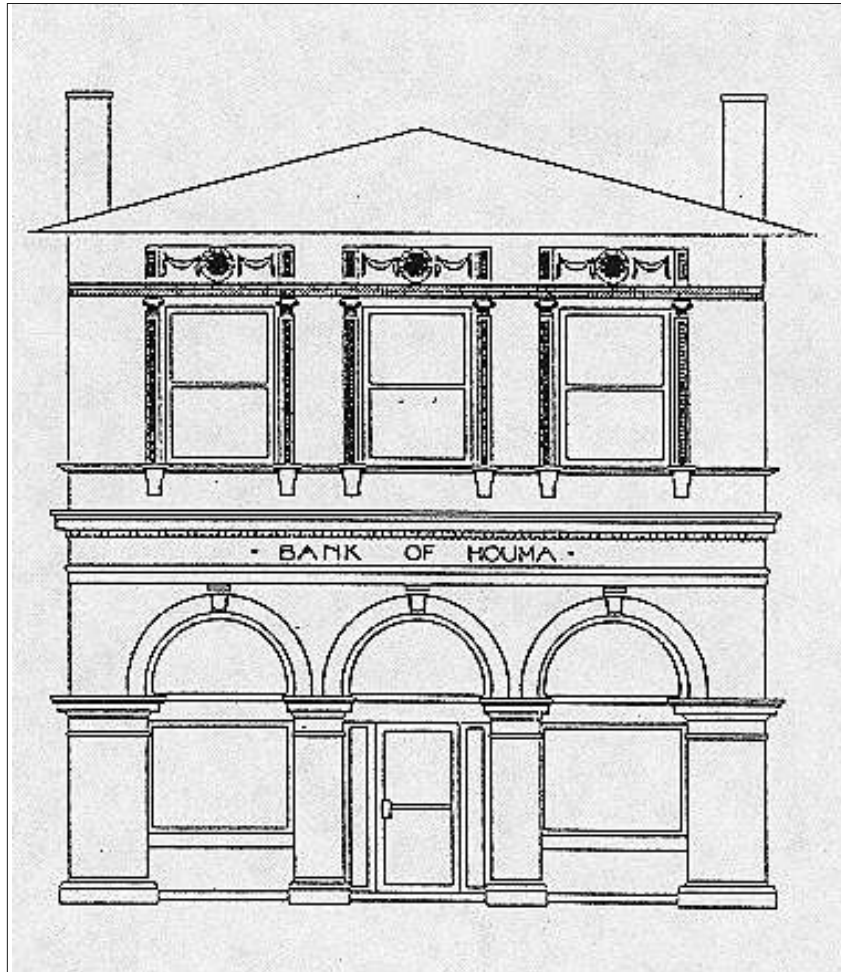
# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Appearing at the same times as the Beaux Arts and Neoclassical Revival, this style was also a reaction to the elaborate Victorian period. However, the Italian Renaissance more truly followed the rectangular form of Renaissance palazzos. As with the Beaux Arts and Neoclassical styles, the Italian Renaissance style favored the use of classical architectural features, which made it popular for banks and public buildings.



#### Common Features:

- Each floor articulated
- Rusticated first floor
- Arcaded entrances and windows
- Bold rectangular windows surrounded by detailed moldings
- Typical exterior materials: brick and stone

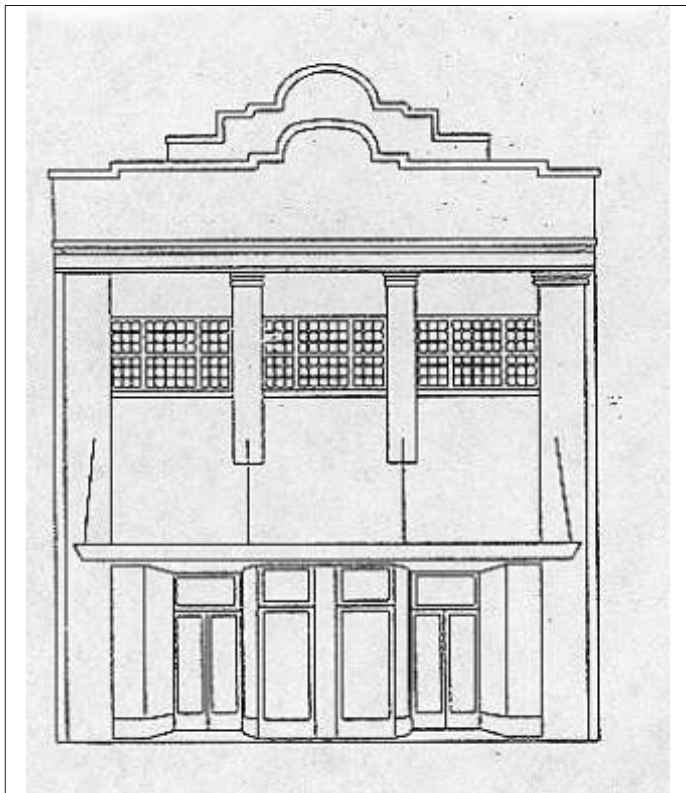
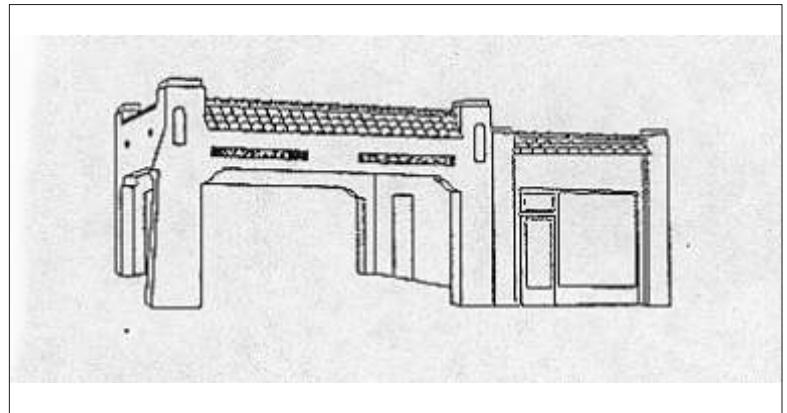
# Historic District Design Guidelines

## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### MISSION AND SPANISH REVIVAL

Mission and Spanish Revival styles have been referred to as the California counterpart of the Colonial Revival in the Northeast. Spanish or Mediterranean Revival buildings draw inspiration from the entire history of Spanish architecture. Inspired by the themes of various World's Fairs held prior to World War I, especially the Panama-California Exposition of 1915, the style more precisely imitated Spanish prototypes. Also influential was the rise of Hollywood as the movie capital of the world during this time. Mission and Spanish Revival architecture is frequently found on movie theaters, early gas stations, and other commercial buildings.

The Mission Style is loosely based on the early California missions, especially in the use of shaped parapets and arcades. Some Mission style buildings also borrowed elements from the contemporary Craftsman and Prairie movements.



#### Common Features:

- Clay tile roofing
- Curvilinear parapets
- Plain string course outlining arches and parapets
- Glazed tile surface ornamentation
- Typical exterior materials: stucco and red clay tiles

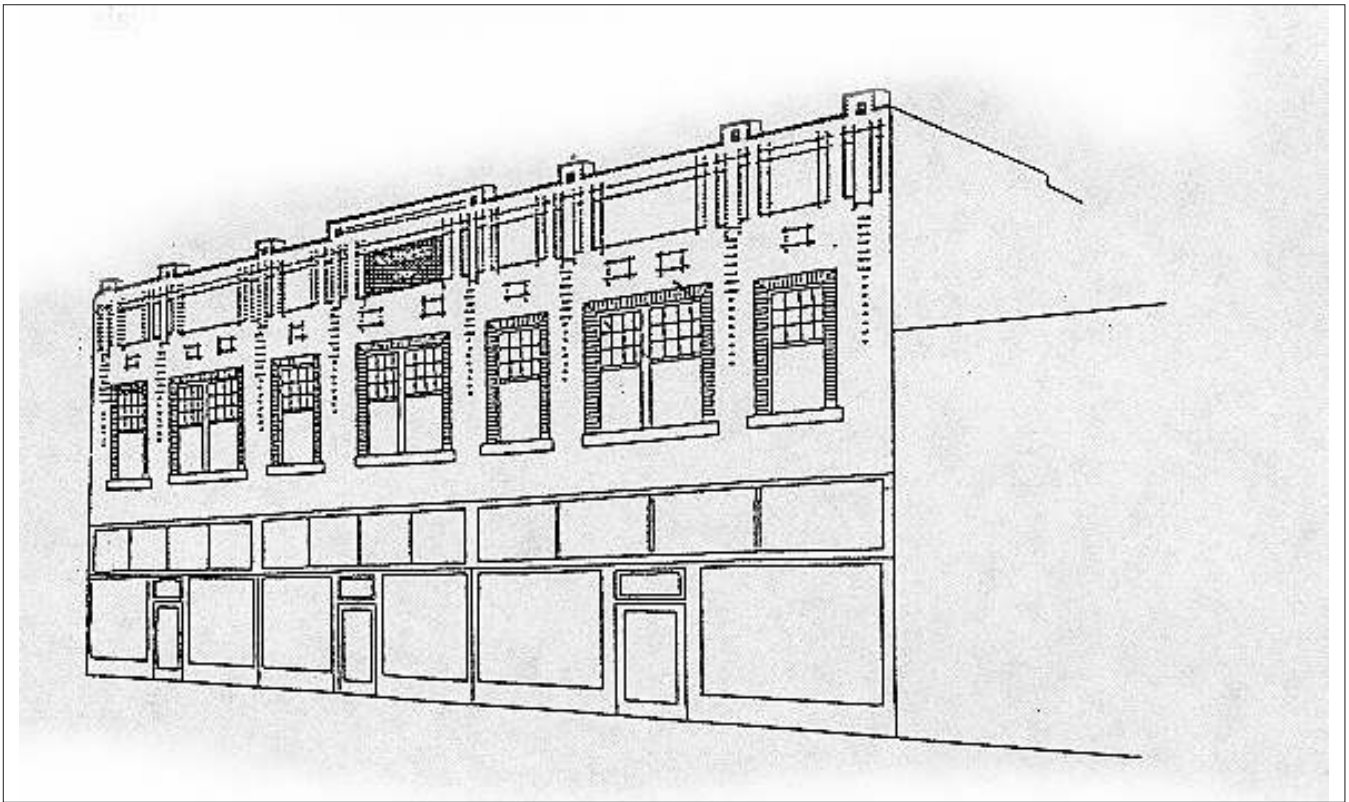
# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### ARTS AND CRAFTS

The Arts and Crafts movement sought to eliminate the use of fake ornamentation of the Machine Age and return the use of elements of true craftsmanship. Durable natural materials with natural finishes were emphasized. On commercial buildings, this often meant brick frames around doors and windows, panels of geometric brick patterns, and the use of colored glazed tile. This style's simplicity and low cost made it popular from the turn of the century through the 1940's.



#### Common Features:

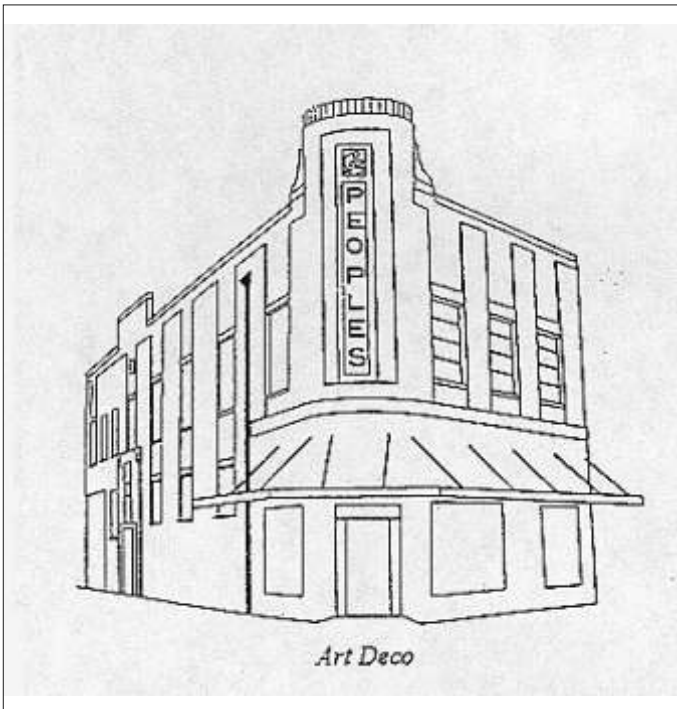
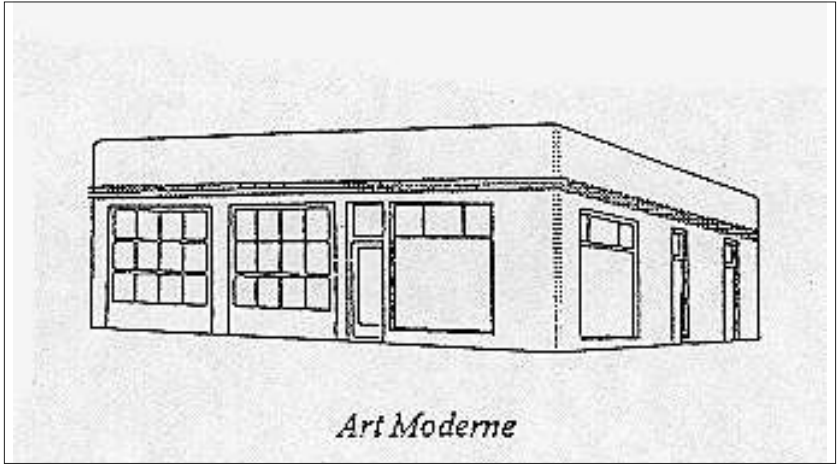
- Brick form frames at openings and signboards
- Geometric patterns
- Multi-light transoms
- Double-hung or casement windows
- Typical exterior materials: brick and glazed tile

# Historic District Design Guidelines

## Styles Of Architecture (continued)

### ART DECO AND ART MODERNE

The Art deco and Art Moderne styles were a result of early twentieth-century designers wishing to break from the past and express the fast-paced technological excitement of their own times. The ornamentation and forms used for these styles are visually linked to The Machine Age. Buildings in the Art Deco style are characterized by a linear, hard edge or angular composition, often with vertical emphasis and highlighted with stylized decoration. Art Moderne buildings emphasize horizontality and streamlining to portray a sense of movement and speed. Art Deco and Art Moderne are frequently found on certain types of commercial buildings such as gas stations, movie theaters, cafes, and drugstores-the latter two often receiving a "modern" update from an earlier style. New government buildings of this era were often built in these new styles as well. Art Deco was popular from the late 1920's through the 1930's. Art Moderne buildings are typically from the 1930's and 1940's.



#### Common Features:

#### DECO:

- Vertical appearance
- Low relief geometrical designs and stylized floral motifs
- Typical exterior materials: structural pigmented glass, terra cotta, steel, concrete, stucco

#### MODERNE:

- Horizontal appearance
- Curving walls, windows, and canopies
- Decorative horizontal bands
- Typical exterior materials: structural pigmented glass, glass block, porcelain-enameled steel, and concrete

# Historic District Design Guidelines

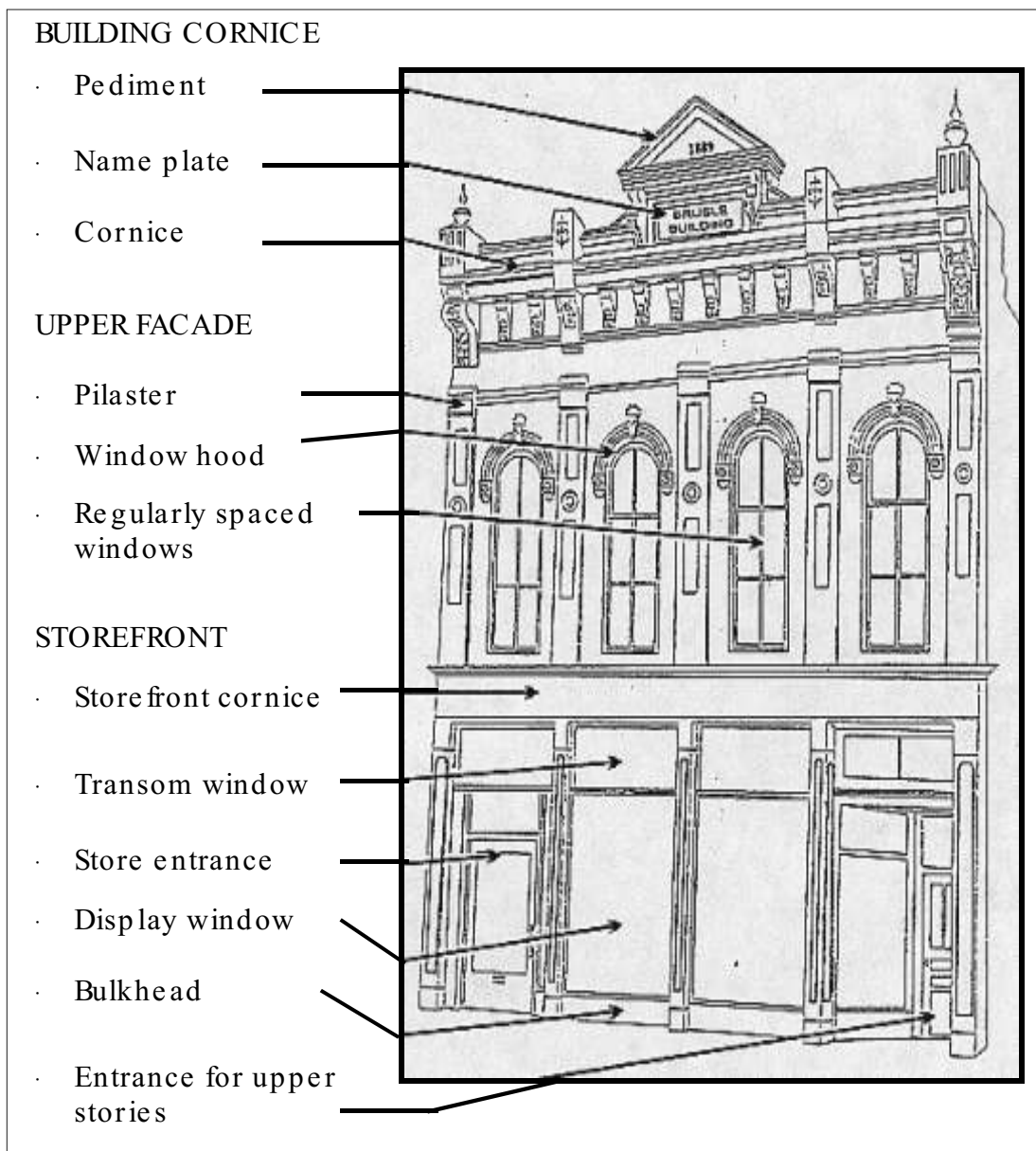
## Components Of A Downtown Commercial Building

A downtown commercial district gains its distinct character from the similarity of the buildings located there. Commercial façades of differing styles, ages, and sizes use certain basic components in a coordinated manner to achieve a cohesive appearance. These basic components are the cornice, the upper façade and the storefront.

The cornice serves to cap the building visually. This is usually accomplished through the use of decorative brick, wood, metal or terra cotta. The cornice punctuates the height of the building and draws together the building's vertical bays. A pediment may serve to distinguish the building from others in a block by disrupting the established pattern.

The upper façade is usually somewhat solid in appearance, pierced by windows at regularly spaced intervals. Ornamentation may surround the windows or divide the bays vertically.

The storefront is much more open in character compared to the more solid upper façade. This division between the ground floor and the upper stories scales the streetscape to a pedestrian level. The continuous line of display windows mirrored in the buildings across the street creates a feeling of an outdoor room.



# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## The Secretary of The Interior's Standards For Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Glossary

<b>Baluster</b>	Vertical member, usually wood, that supports the railing of a porch or the handrail of a stairway.
<b>Balustrade</b>	A railing or parapet consisting of a handrail on balusters, sometimes also including a bottom rail.
<b>Bargeboard</b>	A board, often decoratively carved, that hangs perpendicular from the projecting edge of a roof gable.
<b>Bay Window</b>	A window in a wall that projects angularly (or semi-circularly) from a main wall and from the ground up.
<b>Beveled Siding</b>	See Clapboard.
<b>Board and Batten Siding</b>	A wood siding consisting of vertical boards with narrow vertical strips (battens) placed over the joints.
<b>Bracket</b>	A projecting member, often decorative, that supports an overhanging weight, such as a cornice or roof eave; usually in the shape of an inverted L or triangle.
<b>Bulkhead</b>	In commercial buildings, the area below the display windows at the sidewalk level.
<b>Capital</b>	The head of a column or pilaster; usually decorative.
<b>Casement Window</b>	A window that swings outward on its side hinges.
<b>Clapboard</b>	Tapered wood siding that overlaps for weather protection, applied horizontally on buildings of frame construction.
<b>Column</b>	An upright structural member, circular in plan supporting storefronts, porches and balconies; may be smooth or fluted.
<b>Corbel</b>	A bracket form produced by courses of wood or masonry that extend in successive stages outward from the wall surface.
<b>Cornerboard</b>	A board used to cover exposed ends of wood siding to give a finished appearance and help make the building weather-tight.
<b>Cornice</b>	The projecting uppermost portion of a wall, sometimes treated in a decorative manner with brackets and moldings.
<b>Dentil</b>	One of a row of small blocks used as part of the decoration in a frieze or cornice.
<b>Dormer</b>	A structural extension of a building's roof, intended to provide light and headroom in a half-story; usually contains window(s) on its vertical face.
<b>Double-hung Window</b>	A window with two balanced sashes, with one sliding vertically over the other to open.
<b>Eaves</b>	The lower portion of the sloping surface of a roof, especially the part overhangs the building's wall.

# Historic District Design Guidelines

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## Glossary (continued)

<b>Exterior Architectural Features</b>	This term, often used in design review guidelines, refers to the architectural treatment and general arrangement of the exterior design of a structure and its appurtenant fixtures, including type, color, material and texture.
<b>Facade</b>	The architectural “face” of a building, usually referring to the front.
<b>Fascia</b>	A flat horizontal wooden member used as a facing at the ends of the roof rafters and in the cornice area.
<b>Fenestration</b>	The arrangement or placement of openings on a facade.
<b>Frieze</b>	A wooden member found just below the point where the wall surface meets the building’s cornice or roof overhang.
<b>Gable</b>	The triangular section of the end wall of a gable roof.
<b>Gable Roof</b>	A roof that has two slopes on opposite sides of a ridge.
<b>Gingerbread</b>	The highly decorative wood work applied to the exterior of a building.
<b>Hipped Roof</b>	A roof that has a slope on all four sides of the building.
<b>Hood Mold</b>	Decorative, projecting element placed over a window (or door); may extend down the sides as well as surround the top.
<b>Jamb</b>	A vertical member at each side of a door frame, window frame, or door lining.
<b>Lintel</b>	Horizontal structural element at the top of a window or door; it carries the load of the wall above and may be of wood, stone, or metal.
<b>Mansard Roof</b>	A roof that has a double slope on all four sides, with the lower slope being quite steep or nearly vertical.
<b>Modillion</b>	A horizontal bracket or scroll that appears at the building or porch cornice. Known as a block modillion if a flat block.
<b>Molding</b>	An element of construction or decoration whose surface is manipulated to provide variety in contour and outline.
<b>Mullion</b>	A vertical piece that divides window sash, doors or panels set in a series.
<b>Muntin</b>	The pieces that make up the small subdivisions in a multiple-pane glass window.
<b>Ornamentation</b>	Decoration, usually non structural, that is applied to a building to increase its visual interest.
<b>Panel</b>	A portion of a flat surface recessed or sunk below the surrounding area, distinctively set off by moldings or some other device. Often used on doors and bulkheads.
<b>Parapet</b>	The portion of an exterior wall that rises entirely above the roof, usually in the form of a low retaining wall; the parapet may be shaped or stepped.
<b>Pediment</b>	The triangular face of a roof gable; or a gable that is used in porches or as decoration over windows, doors or dormers.

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## Glossary (continued)

<b>Pilaster</b>	A flat pier that is attached to the surface of the wall and has little projection; the pier may be given a base and cap and may be smooth or fluted.
<b>Pillar</b>	A square post.
<b>Pointing</b>	In masonry, the finish treatment of joints by troweling of mortar into joints.
<b>Porch</b>	A structure attached to a building to shelter an entrance or to serve as a semi-enclosed space; usually roofed and generally with open sides.
<b>Rafter</b>	One of a series of sloping structural members which make up the roof structure.
<b>Ridge</b>	The horizontal line at the connection of the upper edges of two sloping surfaces.
<b>Sash</b>	Framework of a window; may be fixed or move in any direction: slide, move vertically or horizontally, or pivot.
<b>Scupper</b>	An opening in a parapet wall that allows water to drain.
<b>Sill</b>	The horizontal member at the bottom of a door or window frame which rests on or is part of the structure.
<b>Soffit</b>	The exposed underside of any overhanging or exposed surface.
<b>Stoop</b>	A platform or small porch, usually the entrance to a house.
<b>Transom</b>	A glazed opening above a door or window; can be fixed or operable.