STOREFRONTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION • NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES • HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Storefronts are important and prominent street-level features of historic commercial buildings, and must be treated with care. Every effort should be made to preserve and rehabilitate existing storefront installations and surviving fragments that are significant. Please note that some later features, although not original, can acquire significance in their own right and must be repaired. Examples include, but are not limited to: Colonial or Classical Revivals, Art Deco or Streamlined Modern. They may include proprietary storefront systems composed of metal and glass, ribbed prism glass, opaque structural glass and other materials installed as late as the 1930's and 40's. While these later storefronts may differ in style from the original building, they reflect the shifts in popular taste and document the changes over time within an historic district and should be treated with sensitivity. Removal of storefront installations is not generally appropriate, even where no commercial use is proposed in the new plan. The following approaches to storefront rehabilitation are appropriate.

1. Repair of significant materials should occur where they remain; "fragments" should be incorporated into new proposals. Removal of original or later features to install new material is not appropriate, even where restoration of a documented earlier appearance is proposed.
2. Where no significant storefront elements exist, the restoration of an original configuration is appropriate providing it is based on conclusive historic, photographic, or physical evidence rather than conjecture or the availability of features from other buildings.
3. The use of simple, generic, compatible storefront features is also appropriate where no significant fabric remains, and is preferred where no conclusive basis for restoration is available. These elements include: simple framing and panel; large glass areas and transom units; cornices; signboards; simple doors. Appropriate materials, configurations and proportions will vary depending upon the style and significant features of the structure and the historic district.

These neutral solutions should be compatible with the building and district in: scale and proportion; materials and finishes; configuration and the relationship of framing elements, mullions, entries, sill heights, and cornices. "Arcading" of storefronts originally at the sidewalk perimeter is not appropriate.

Additional Information Request

1. Existing-condition photographs detailing original and later materials, and narrative describing the layering, the extent, and the general condition of these materials.
2. Existing-condition storefront elevation drawings annotated to detail the extent and condition of historic materials.
3. Storefront plan and elevation rehabilitation drawings annotated to detail proposed materials and finishes.
4. Conclusive documentation of the historic, photographic, or physical evidence used as a basis for your proposal. Photocopies are not an acceptable substitute for photographs.
5. Photographs of existing storefront conditions throughout the neighborhood, graphically keyed to an historic district map.

Please Note

Inappropriate storefront proposals may be grounds for project denial for tax credit or state/federal funding purposes. Please telephone the Historic Preservation Office at (609) 292-2023 if you require assistance.

Suggested Reading

Interpreting the Standards. Washington, DC.

National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division, as follows:

80-003: "Storefront Alterations"

82-027: "Removal Significant Earlier Exterior Alterations"

82-030: "Creating Recessed Arcades Where Commercial Storefronts Formerly Existed"

82-049: "Inappropriate Storefront Alterations"

84-053: "Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts for Noncommercial Use"

84-061: "Alterations to Non-Original 20th Century Storefronts"

84-062: "Replacing Altered Features of an Historic Storefront: Compatible Contemporary Design"

85-067: "Options for Replacing Missing Historic Features"

Hensley, Tom, "Preservation Brief 12: The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass" (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass) Denver, Colorado Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, 1981.

Jandl, H. Ward, "Preservation Brief 11: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts" Washington, DC Technical Preservation Services, 1981.

Mintz, Norman, "A Practical Guide to Storefront Rehabilitation," *Technical Series No.2.* Albany, NY Preservation League of New York State, 1977.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. U.S. Dept. of the Interior Washington, DC National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division, 1983.

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