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2) Architectural Elements

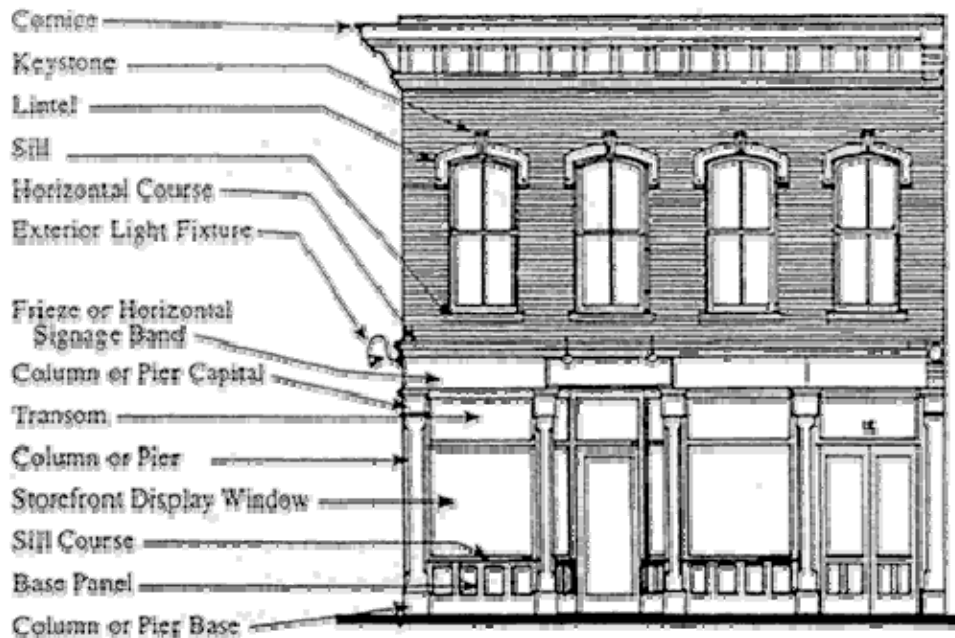
Architectural Elements in West Concord's Commercial areas include features such as doors, dormers, porches, balconies, bays, and decorative trim (corner boards, brackets, shutters, pediments, columns, railings, etc.) which make a building interesting and memorable. These elements contribute to the building's character and help to define its style. As such, they are important to take into consideration both in designing new construction and when considering possible renovations to an existing building. Existing structures that are consistent with the Village's period of significance should be retained or restored. New alterations should be designed in such a way that they do not damage or hide any original architectural elements. When original elements have been removed or substantially altered, contemporary treatments may be a suitable alternative. However, they should not appear to be of poor quality, of temporary nature, or ill-suited to the area (e.g., vinyl or aluminum siding).

When considering new architectural elements on an existing building, it is important to complement the new element to the design, color, texture, and material of the existing elements on the building. Care should also be taken to ensure that new features are in scale with the new structure itself. The same concerns are true for new construction, where architectural elements can add character to the design of the building and help to blend the new structure into an existing streetscape so long as the elements chosen are in harmony with the building and its surroundings. In both cases, architectural salvage yards can be a good source for period architectural elements.

The architectural elements defined below are drawn from West Concord's existing Commercial area, and so it may be assumed that the recommendations made here apply only to the renovation or restoration of West Concord's current commercial building stock. However, this is far from the case. The suggestions made in this section apply equally to new construction, reconstruction, significant renovations and all other forms of development which may be proposed within West Concord's Commercial area. The features discussed below are some of the key elements which have created the Village's unique and diverse character, and any proposed new construction should consider and reference these architectural elements whenever possible. In no way, though, should it be inferred that copying existing buildings is the only, or even preferred, goal of these guidelines. On the contrary, part of West Concord's special character is its variety. Property owners are highly encouraged to use creativity in the design, placement, and detailing of new structures. Fresh and new designs should be used to discover ways to incorporate contemporary needs and designs into the existing landscape. In summary, the design guidelines are not intended to preserve a homogenous or "historic" village appearance, but to encourage future change and development which both respects the existing structures and adds positively to the community.

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a) Anatomy of a Building Façade



b) Awnings

Awnings are a traditional element of West Concord's streetscape which can provide an opportunity to add color and detail to a storefront. Awnings provide a secondary location for signage, emphasize display windows and entrances, and serve to protect pedestrians and display windows from the sun and rain.

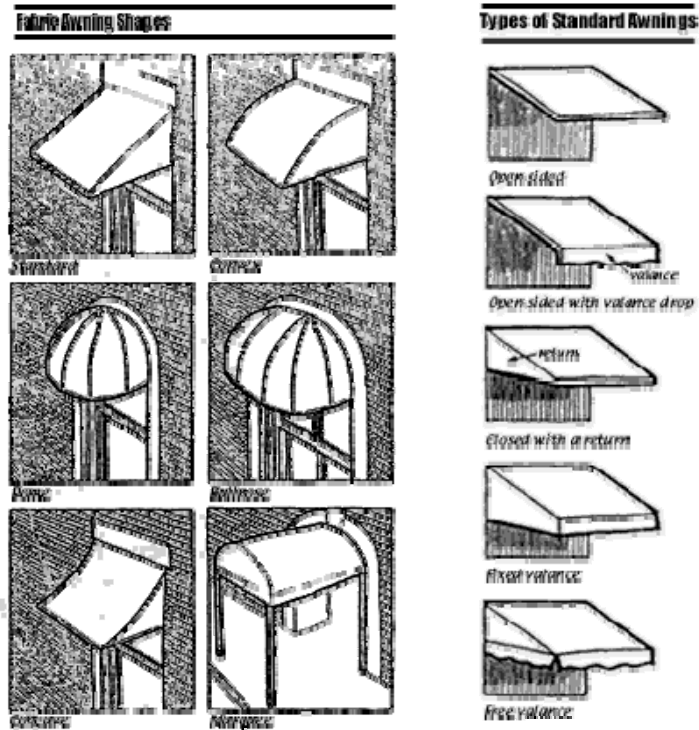
For both Existing Structures and New Construction

Awnings should be chosen to be in harmony with the color schemes and styles of surrounding buildings, and care should be taken to avoid detracting from the form of the building or obscuring its details. Whenever possible, awnings should reflect the overall façade organization of a building and be located within the building elements that form the storefront. Where there are multiple storefronts in one building, the awnings should be consistent in character, scale, and location, but need not be identical to one another. Care should also be taken to ensure that any awnings are attached in a way that permits later removal without damaging the materials to which they are fastened.

Property owners are encouraged to use canvas awnings and to avoid the use of vinyl or plastic awnings. The shape of the awning should relate to the shape of the façade's architectural elements. While traditionally shaped awnings are generally encouraged

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for both new and existing buildings, creative or unusually-shaped awnings which have been carefully designed to work with the building and streetscape may also be an option. Common awning styles include:



c) Doors and Entrances

Existing Buildings

In West Concord Village, the main entrance typically faces directly onto the street and is centered on the façade, often with storefront windows on either side. Most typically, the main door will have one or more panes of glass to increase the visibility of the interior, but the style of the door itself can vary depending on the style and period of the building. Contrasting paint colors may also be used to call attention to the door and add character to the front façade.

The renovation of existing entrances is always encouraged. Property owners should note that by federal law, new store entrances must be accessible to the physically disabled. Several West Concord businesses have found creative means of installing accessible entrances to their stores which are in keeping with the streetscape and the character of the Village. Each building will have its own unique challenges to providing this access, so it is important for property owners to carefully consider

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possible options before making permanent changes to original building features. Planning Division staff is available to assist in reviewing potential options.

New Construction

As noted above, the entrances to West Concord's existing commercial buildings are an important part of the streetscape and any new buildings should draw from the features noted above. In general, primary entrances should be clearly marked and designed to provide a sense of welcome and easy passage from exterior to interior. Recessed doorways are generally encouraged as they provide cover for pedestrians and customers in bad weather and help to identify the location of the store's entrance. They also provide a clear area for out-swinging doors and offer the opportunity for interesting paving patterns, signage, and displays.

When a side entrance is necessary, it should be located as close to the street front as possible. Loading and service entrances should be located on the side or rear of buildings and should be screened from public ways and adjacent properties to the greatest extent possible.

d) Exterior Materials/Siding

Existing Buildings

The predominant exterior material in West Concord's Commercial area is wood clapboard siding. Property owners are encouraged to use and maintain this material whenever possible as it is both essential to the architectural character of the individual building and plays a strong role in the visual appeal of West Concord Village. In general, property owners of existing structures should maintain the original exterior material of their building (brick, stucco, wood, etc.) in a manner which is consistent with its historic appearance. For example, wood shingles or clapboard should be maintained as a painted surface, while property owners should avoid painting architectural features which were never designed to be painted, such as masonry or brick.

When repair or replacement of exterior materials is necessary, property owners should use the same type of exterior cladding and, whenever possible, consider the use of natural materials. Property owners are strongly discouraged from replacing wood shingles or clapboard siding with aluminum or vinyl siding as the change in material does not adequately replicate the appearance of the original materials and requires the loss of original architectural details and character defining features which make the building unique. Further, these materials will age and weather differently than natural materials, giving the building a worn or faded appearance which can quickly appear shabby or "cheap" and will detract from the streetscape. Vinyl, aluminum, or other synthetic sidings may be cheaper up front, but the loss of detail and the obvious change in quality of the building can have negative impacts in the long run as pedestrians and shoppers are more likely to be drawn to establishments which have well maintained and attractive appearances.

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Today there are many new materials on the market which purport to mimic the appearance of natural materials without the expense of regular maintenance. Many of these products, such as Azek or Hardiplank, are composite materials which may provide reliable alternatives to the original building materials, while others may be less successful. Property owners are encouraged to carefully research these products to ensure that they can adequately replicate the original exterior appearance of their building before making any change in an original exterior material or architectural element.

New Construction

These same recommendations are also applicable to new construction. Natural materials are key to the character of West Concord, and their use in new construction can help to tie those designs into the overall streetscape. Property owners should consider the materials used in the buildings immediately surrounding the potential development, and take these elements into consideration when developing the overall plan and design of any new structures.

e) Fire Escapes - Existing Buildings Only

Fire escapes are conspicuous additions to an existing building which can detract from the style and architectural character. However, as a second means of egress is a current building code requirement which can be difficult to meet within the interior of an older building, and in certain circumstances a fire escape may be necessary. As a general rule, every effort should be made to accommodate this access on the interior of the building. When this is not possible, fire escapes should be located on the rear or side façades of a building, or in an area with as little public visibility as possible. If the use of a prominent façade is unavoidable, then the fire escape should be designed to blend in with the building as much as possible.

f) Gutters, Downspouts and Drainage

Existing Buildings

Gutters and downspouts are important mechanisms for diverting water away from a structure, without which water would splash off the roof onto exterior walls, soaking potential customers and potentially leading to future structural problems. At a minimum, gutters and downspouts should be large enough to handle the discharge and installed at a sufficient pitch to carry the water off quickly. Drainage should be dealt with in such a way that it is contained on site where possible and does not flow into the public sidewalk or path.

In addition to their mechanical importance, gutters and downspouts can be integral to the design of a building's architectural trim (cornice details) or roof. When this is the case, care and consideration should be taken before making a change in their material or design. Where original gutters are missing or the original design unclear, then an

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effort should be made to match the style of the existing building and/or to make the new gutters as unobtrusive as possible.

New Construction

New Construction projects should take into consideration all of the points noted above when deciding how best to deal with water and drainage issues on site. However, far more flexibility is available in the design, materials and methods used to accommodate water and drainage issues in new buildings, and property owners should consider creative ways to address these issues which are either invisible to the streetscape or add to its character and design. In particular, property owners are strongly encouraged to consider green solutions such as those noted in Section 1 (f) *Green and Sustainable Design*.

g) Modern Equipment

Existing Buildings

Modern equipment is a necessary component of today's built environment but incorporating it into an existing structure or landscape can be difficult. West Concord Village's form and character were established long before many of these now common elements became standard, and often the most convenient location is not necessarily in keeping with the streetscape. Modern equipment encompasses utility and other mechanical equipment such as antennas, cellular towers, satellite dishes, propane and other tanks, dumpsters, utility meters, alarm systems, HVAC equipment (including air conditioners and condensers, heating units, ducts, fans, and solar collectors or panels) and associated mounting devices, strapping, fasteners, cables and related equipment.

Property owners should make every effort to keep modern equipment as small and inconspicuous as possible. Installations should be made in areas that are not visible from the public way, or are well screened by existing or proposed structures or vegetation. Any installations on the front façade of the building are strongly discouraged. When equipment is to be located on the roof of a building it should be situated in such a way that it is not visible from the ground. This could include placing it at the center of a flat roof, on a rear slope, behind a parapet, or within a chimney or cupola. Solar panels and skylights should be located on the least visible portion of the roof if possible. Flat profile skylights are encouraged whenever possible in order to minimize their impact on existing buildings and the streetscape. Flues and vents should also be similarly located and screened.

Every effort should be made to run electrical wires and other cables on the inside of the building. Utility wires should be located underground where possible.

When the equipment must be placed in a visible location, then it should be painted to blend in with surrounding structures. Vents in the side of buildings should be painted

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to blend in with the rest of the wall. Whenever possible, seasonal air conditioning units should be located on the side and rear façades.

Example of equipment placed on a front façade and roof in a highly visible area:



New Construction

New construction has the advantage of being able to face the challenges of masking or hiding modern equipment noted above by building these needs into the design of the new building. Property owners should consider how modern equipment will be used in their new construction and develop ways to accommodate them within the structure while still meeting the goals outlined above. In many cases, modern equipment can be harmoniously integrated into the design of a new building and new technology can even allow their “stealth” installation in visible locations - for example, new solar collectors which can be applied as a coating to a window, embedded in a window frame, or installed as part of an awning may be an acceptable additions to the streetscape.

h) Paint Color

Existing Buildings

West Concord Village’s Commercial areas have a wealth of buildings that utilize distinctive paint palettes and color schemes to emphasize their design. These examples show how paint color not only adds further variety to the streetscape, but also enhances the building itself. Property owners are encouraged to consider choosing paint colors which complement the style and design of their existing building, but also to consider colors which are compatible with surrounding buildings and the overall village.

Property owners are also encouraged to use contrasting paint colors to differentiate trim and accentuate distinctive architectural details on their buildings. Many buildings in West Concord Village have used this technique to highlight the unique style of their building; two examples are shown below.

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New Construction

It is unlikely that any new structure within the Commercial area would be designed to closely replicate the architectural trim details and paint palette typical to the Village's distinctive late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial structures. Nor should it, as any new construction is encouraged to draw from but not mimic West Concord's existing structures. That is not to say, though, that the use of distinctive paint colors cannot be part of the design of a new building or that the wide variety of colors and paint combinations currently visible in West Concord should not be considered as part of the planning process. Property owners should consider the design of their new building as well as those of neighboring structures when considering how best to address this issue.

i) Roofs

Existing Buildings

There are predominantly two roof forms found in West Concord Village—flat roofs and gable roofs. Flat roofs are commonly found on those buildings originally constructed as commercial structures—the mixed use, multiple story triple and double decker buildings and industrial structures of the late 19th century; the single story, continuous commercial blocks of the early 20th century; and the commercial “big box” developments of the late 20th century. Designed to minimize the amount of unusable interior space, these buildings commonly include a decorative pediment or cornice detail at the front and sides of the building to screen the flat roof from view.

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Flat Roof with Cornice Detail



Flat Roof with Pediment

Gable roofs are more commonly found on West Concord's early to mid-19th century buildings which are more likely to have been constructed as residences and later converted into commercial use as the Village grew and prospered. This traditional roof form is made up of two roof slopes which meet at a peak and create a triangular wall section at either end known as a gable. A gable roof is one which presents the roof slope and the widest side of the building to the street, while a gable-end roof sits with the narrow, triangular end wall to the street and is typically found on longer, narrower buildings. These buildings are part of West Concord's unique character, and both types of gable roofs are important to the form and design of the building.



Gable End Style Roof



Gable Roof

Comment [S1]: SF - I think this example would be clearer if the picture was taken from an angle somewhat closer to the front. LK - Done.

New Construction

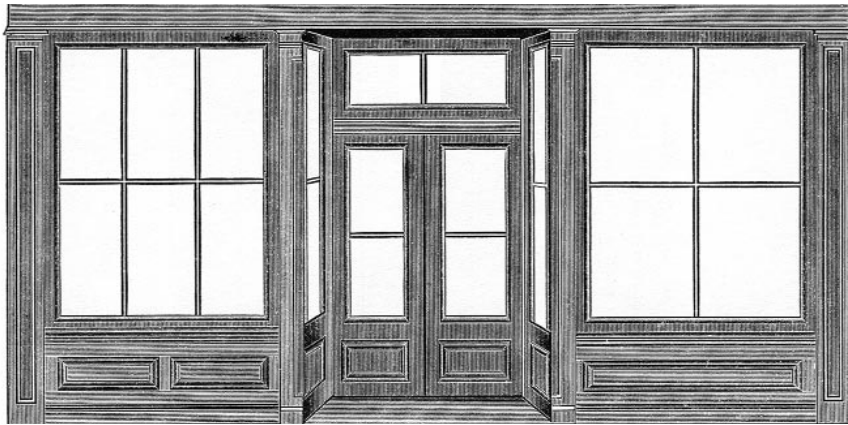
Property owners should carefully consider the predominant architectural styles ifound in West Concord's commercial areas when considering new construction. New buildings which integrate these common roof styles are more likely to blend in well with the general character of the area.

j) Storefronts

Existing Buildings

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West Concord's Commercial area streetscape is largely defined by the late 19th and early 20th century commercial structures and storefronts which line Commonwealth Avenue and Main Street, and so the form and detailing of each existing and proposed storefront is important to the character of the area. Each of the existing storefronts has its own unique style, yet most follow a common form. Storefronts typically stretch across the entire first floor of the structure, with a significantly higher ratio of window to wall area throughout. These windows are typically large single or multi-paned glass windows trimmed in wood paneling or, particularly in the 20th century examples, masonry. Entrance doors are incorporated into the storefront's design and are substantially glass and recessed. Storefronts are commonly aligned with those of adjacent structures to present a continuous pattern of trim and cornice line along the street.



Example of a wood storefront showing two alternative designs for multi-paned windows from a millwork manufacturer's trade catalogue originally published in 1893 (the Muliner Catalogue of 1893, 1995). Simple wood storefronts with either four or six light windows were common from the mid-nineteenth century right into the 1930s.

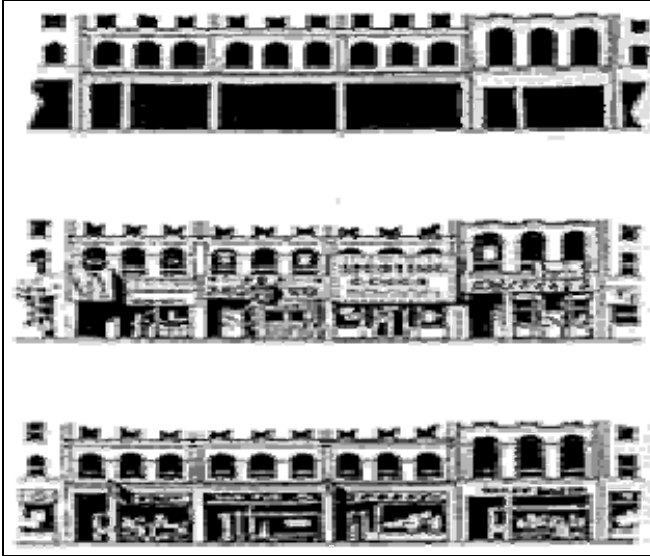
When altering an existing storefront, every effort should be made to maintain established façade patterns and proportions and to continue the relationship of solid wall to openings (doors and/or windows) seen in surrounding structures. Storefront windows should be consistent in height and design with storefront doors to create a cohesive appearance. And while the storefronts should be in keeping with the overall building, it is important that the distinction between individual storefronts, the entire building façade, and adjacent properties be maintained. As noted in "Doors and Entrances," new entrances must also meet accessibility requirements. Please refer to "Doors and Entrances" for further information on this issue.

The use of ornamentation and architectural detailing is encouraged, as is any example of craftsmanship that relates to or reflects the character of the area. When considering a new storefront, or renovating an existing one, it is important that the new façade does not obscure the basic architectural framework or details of the building. Most façades

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consist of an architectural framework designed to identify individual storefronts. Each storefront should respect this architectural framework and not extend beyond it. Property owners should also consider utilizing the horizontal band at the top of each storefront for business signage.

Comment [S2]: SF - Following figure needs to be much bigger to be clear. LK - Figure adjusted.



This block of stores
(top)
has been transformed
from chaos (center)
to order (bottom)
by the thoughtful use
of signs, windows and
storefront frames

New Construction

When designing a storefront for a new structure in the Commercial area, it is important to develop a design which is consistent with the style and character of the new building while still respecting the storefronts of surrounding buildings. New storefronts should be both in keeping with the overall building, and yet maintain a distinction between the individual storefronts, the entire building façade, and any adjacent properties. New storefronts should open directly onto the sidewalk and be of a human, pedestrian scale which is consistent with those surrounding structures. As part of retaining this consistency, every effort should also be made to continue the relationship of solid wall to openings (doors and/or windows) seen in those surrounding structures. In addition, storefront windows should be consistent in height and design with storefront doors to create a cohesive appearance with the existing streetscape.

Comment [S3]: SF - How does ADA compliance fit into this? Many existing storefronts have a raised step... I see that you mention this in the section on Doors and Entrances, above, but perhaps these sections should be cross-referenced? LK - Additional language added to paragraph.

In short, new storefronts should maintain the overall envelope and form found in existing structures while incorporating design and architectural features which are consistent and complimentary to the new structure as a whole.

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k) Commercial and Business Displays

For both Existing Buildings and New Construction:

In many ways, West Concord's Commercial area derives its unique identity from the businesses behind the storefronts which enhance the Village's overall integrity and identity. The most successful storefronts are those that work with the architecture of the building and are designed to reveal the building's original style, form and materials. These storefronts simply and clearly market the name of the business and the type of services offered through a display of products or services, local business logos, hours of operation, and/or public service messages. Generally, storefronts that remain open and transparent to allow potential customers visibility into the store and include displays that add color, texture, information, and/or visual activity to the pedestrian experience are strongly encouraged. The overall goal is to create an attractive display, i.e., one which attracts interest and persuades customers to enter the business. Creating an "attractive" display may require that a portion of the storefront be wholly or partially blocked, in which case care is particularly needed to insure that the lack of visibility is mitigated by an exhibit which enhances the pedestrian experience.

In contrast, storefront windows which are covered or completely obscured with display cases that prevent customers from seeing inside are discouraged as they limit the pedestrian experience and appear to be closed and shuttered. "Transparent" storefronts may not be necessary for some businesses, such as professional offices, but it is still preferable to maintain the size of the original storefront windows over permanently blocking them. In these cases, an attractive window display or blinds can be installed for a solution which contributes to the vitality of the streetscape and is more flexible to future changes.

l) Windows

Existing Buildings

When considering new windows, it is important to look at both the style of the building and the location of the window. While West Concord's does not have one typical window form that would be appropriate in every location, there are some general guidelines which apply to the majority of the Village's commercial structures. First floor windows along Commonwealth Avenue and Main Street are most commonly found in storefronts. These windows are located on either side of the entrance, usually across the full width of the façade, and are large, single-paned glass panels. Typically these are set above a solid (often wood) panel and reach to the ceiling of the first floor. Second or third floor windows are more typically double hung windows which are in keeping with the style and period of the building. The number of panes in these windows—six-over-six or two-over-two being most common—will depend on the age and style of the building. Plexiglas and other replacement materials should be avoided and broken or damaged windows should be repaired as soon as possible.

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Property owners are encouraged to maintain the existing window pattern in their building. Because windows are a significant factor in how a building is perceived and understood, owners should consider repairing or restoring original windows if possible. With storefront windows, it is important to create sight lines into the store, and so multiple, small-paned windows should be avoided unless they are historically appropriate to the building style, or integrate well into the overall design. Storefront windows are also an important tool for displaying products and advertising services, and so every effort should be made to avoid blocking, reducing the size, or changing the design of windows. Property owners should also avoid installing opaque panels (metal, wood, and/or other materials) in place of windows on the front façade of the building. If the interior configuration requires that a ceiling must be lowered below the height of the existing storefront windows, consider providing an interior, full-height space immediately adjacent to the window before the drop in the ceiling. This will allow more light into the storefront and will allow the retention of the larger windows. Where it is necessary to block a window on a side elevation, the property owner may consider leaving the frame of the window in place and filling in the opening with whatever siding is used elsewhere on the building, opaque glazed panels, or other alternative materials.

New Construction

When considering the window design of a new building, it is important to relate the size of the windows to those in surrounding buildings. Windows should be proportionate to the scale of the building, and their material and style should be consistent with that of the overall building and of surrounding structures. When choosing a window material with a factory finish, it is important to integrate the color of the frame with the color scheme of the building. All windows should use clear glass whenever possible in order to increase window transparency; avoid using reflective or dark tinted glass as these can alienate pedestrians from the business activity inside a storefront and reduce the impact of window displays.