

## MARION REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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5 June 2024

FOR City of Marion Design Review Board (DRB)

STAFF REPORT: Façade at 176 S. Main St., a.k.a.: Someplace Else Bar

1. **Applicant:** Sherry Morgan, Owner, DBA Someplace Else Bar.
2. **Owner:** S & R ENTERPRISES LLC
3. **Location:** 176 South Main Street, Parcel #124020000200
4. **Request:** Certificate of Appropriateness for façade redesign and guidance on implementation.



Figure 1: Work in progress at 176 S. Main. 4 June 2024.

5. **Immediate Background:** Owner has taken initiative to perform necessary repairs to the building. The owner's plan was to put up black aluminum siding on the entire front to create a "modern" look. Review Board Chair, Scott Crider, noticed the work taking place, informed them that they were in the City's Design Review District and

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would need to go through the Design Review Board before altering the façade of the structure. The owner did not know that they were subject to the Design Review process. The owner has halted work on the façade and is attempting to cancel the order of aluminum siding and other materials in a concerted effort to learn and comply with the intent of the Design Review Standards.

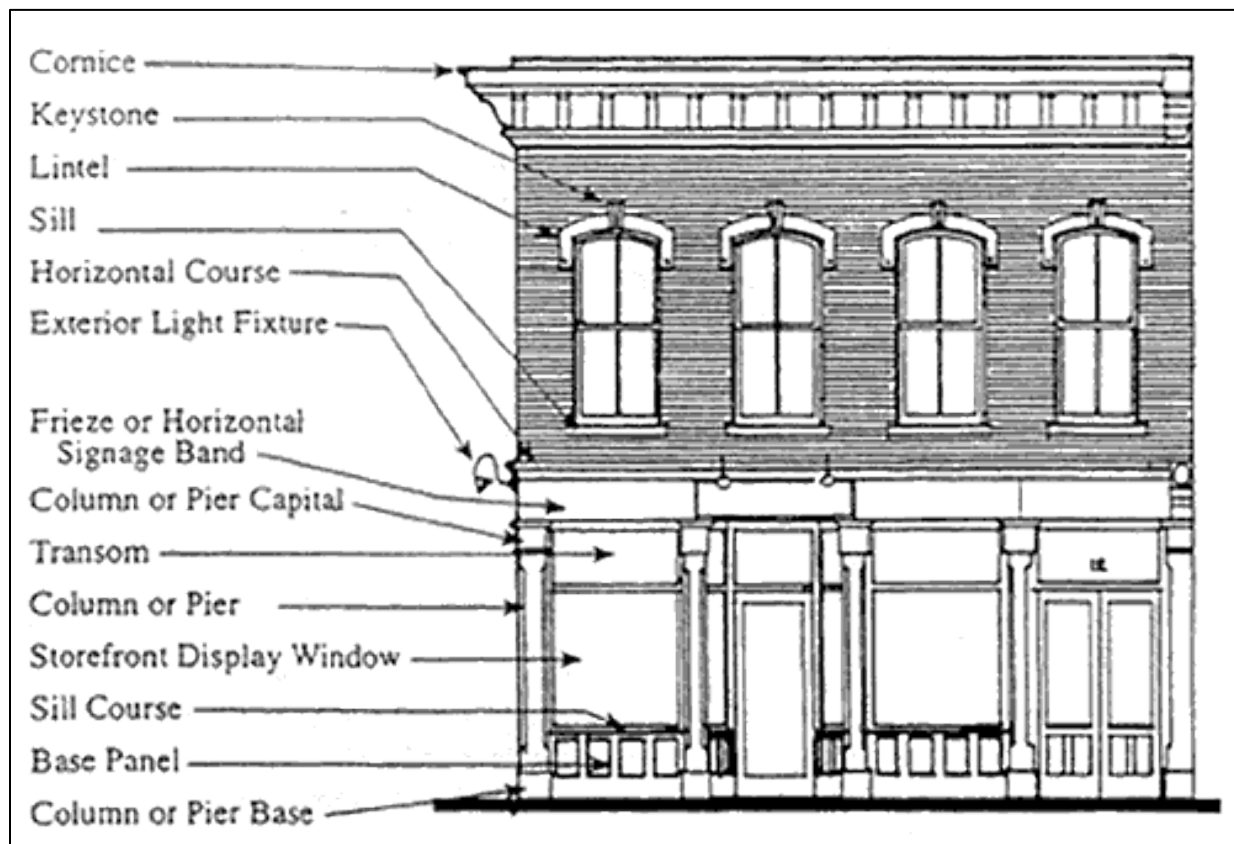


Figure 2: Diagram of facade terminology. Source: <https://talent.municipal.codes/TMC/18.140.040>.

**6. Further Background:** The building has suffered losses over time including its entire cornice, all lintels and sills, many of its windows, and its storefront display windows. The cornice was removed due to damage, but the brick underneath still needs tuckpointing to avoid collapse. The awning and signage band are also being removed. However, upon learning the historic significance of the cornice and the need for further work needed regardless of the cornice being in place or not, the owner will attempt to reclaim the cornice before ultimate disposal. If not possible, the owner has indicated interest in replacing with a replica cornice made from modern, lighter, cheaper materials.

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Figure 3: Google Streetview image of 176 S. Main taken Sep 2019. © 2024 Google.

**7. Intent & Authority:** To work with the property owner to quickly identify a solution to retard further building deterioration, improve the overall look of the building for business purposes, and to keep with the scope and intent of the design review. The building as it stands is already nonconforming with portions of the Design Review Regulations (§1185). The City cannot require the owner to improve the current level of nonconformity per §1125.04, but per the same, the City can and does require the owner to not increase the degree of nonconformity. However, the City and DRB would welcome any voluntary actions of this or any property owner to restore characteristics of their building to more match the intent of the Design Review Regulations and the DRB and RPC staff, as well as interested non-profits such as the Marion County Historical Society stand ready to advise in such undertakings.

**8. “Façade Change as Evolution”:** *Please refer to enclosure of the same name for reference for this paragraph.* The National Main Street Center provides the enclosed leaflet which serves as a general concept illustration of what has happened, is happening, and what the DRB is trying to prevent.

- a. The structure in 2019 (shown in Figure 3) fits under illustration #3 in the leaflet.
- b. The building as it stands today (shown in Figure 1) after having lost its cornice and other defining features probably best fits under illustration #4.

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c. The intent of RPC staff and DRB is not to force a return to something like illustrations #1-3, but to prevent further evolution to something akin to illustrations 5-8. However, RPC and DRB would encourage any actions to reintroduce elements from illustrations #1-3.

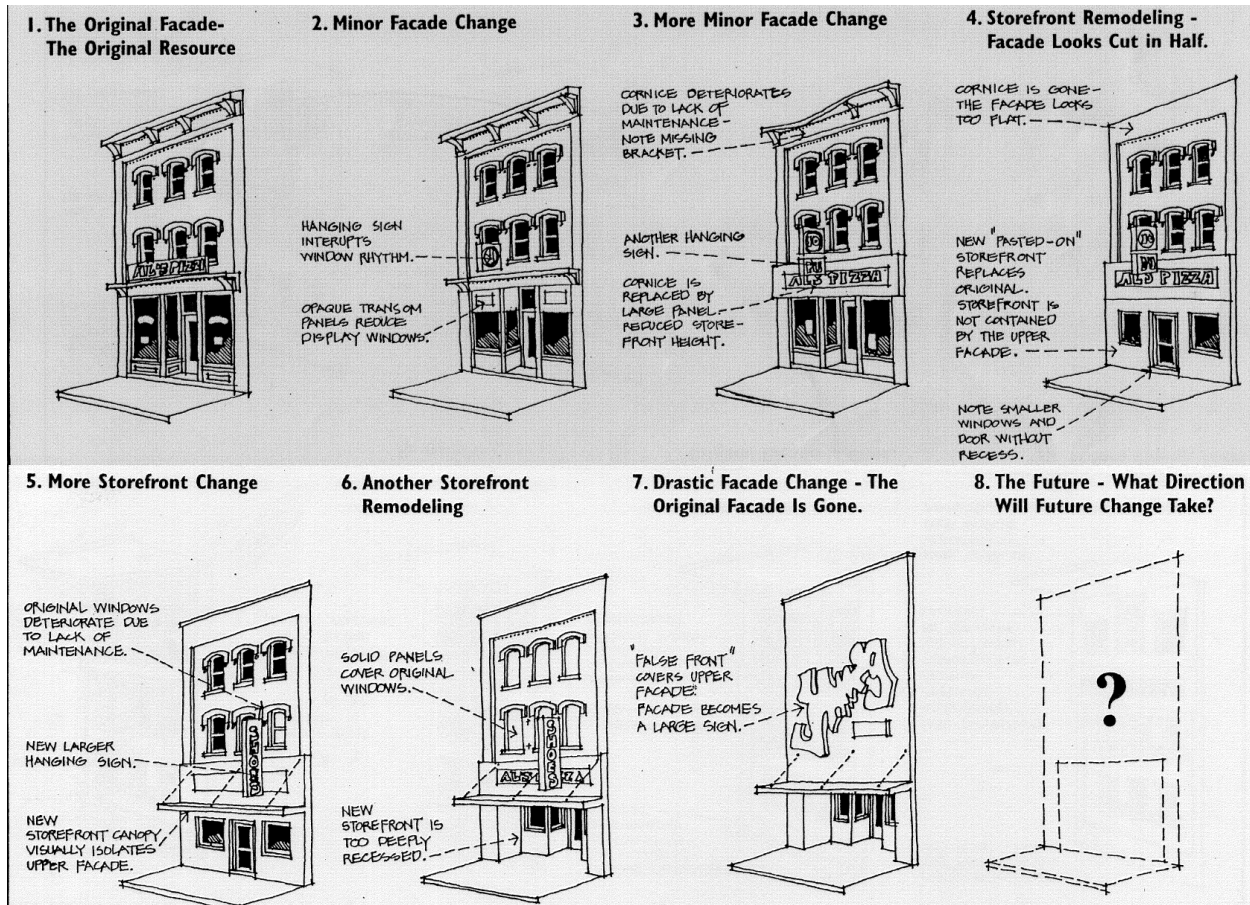


Figure 4: Graphics from "Façade Change as Evolution" leaflet.

**9. Staff Recommends NOT APPROVING Current Plan:** We find that it violates §1185.07(C), Subparagraphs:

a. 7. Sense of Entry. "Entries in downtown Marion typically face the street and are flanked by storefront windows. ... it is common to have a recessed entrance ... Consideration should be given to which type of entry is most appropriate."

b. 9. Roof Shapes. "the presence of cornices and friezes are common decorative features at the top of many downtown buildings. These decorative elements are an important crowning feature, and should be maintained whenever possible. ... new construction should be designed to incorporate a comparable feature at the top of the



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proposed building, at a minimum a decorative corbelled brick pattern or a series of crown molding should be used to allude to a cornice.”

c. 10. Rhythm of Openings. The alteration of wall areas with door and window elements as well as width to height ratio of bays in the façade create the rhythm of a building. ... Buildings with large expanses of windowless walls, or bricking in existing windows disrupt the rhythm of the openings, and should be avoided.”

d. 11. Windows. “Storefront windows should contain clear glass to allow visual access of the interior space. Smoked and mirror glass should be avoided. Repair of original windows is preferable to replacing them with windows of different size or material. Unused windows should not be closed or covered by bricks, metal or wooden boards.”

e. 12. Materials. “Care should be given especially when altering first floor storefronts, not to use modern, incompatible materials such as vinyl and aluminum siding, mirrored or tinted glass, woodshake shingles, artificial stone and brick veneer.”

f. 16. Awnings. “Fixed aluminum canopies, awnings made of plastic or wood shingles or those simulating mansard roofs are generally incompatible with older commercial buildings. Awnings should look traditional and be made of soft canvass or vinyl.”

**10. Staff Recommendations for potential options for Store Front maintenance/improvements:**

- a. Keep door and window locations and install vertically oriented wood paneling.
- b. Install solid, large, horizontally oriented signboard above both storefronts.
- c. Use false columns for piers at corners and storefront separations.
- d. Recess north doorway for improved sense of entry and match the south.

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Figure 5 (L): 181 N. Main St. Good: ground floor windows and doors create rhythm; vertical elements in ground floor; separation between storefronts. Not So Good: Siding on upper floor; windows too small; no lintel or sill on windows; no cornice; no transom; no signboard. Compare to building next door with nice cornice and simple details on windows.

Figure 6 (R): 158 N. Main St. Good: typical store-front windows, doors, and base panel; acceptable use of wood panels for transom. Not So Good: Large aluminum roof/siding.

## 11. Staff Recommendations for potential options for upper windows maintenance/improvements:

- a. Install new windows to full fill window space.
- b. Paint current wood paneling to look like windows or install false windows.
- c. Shutters or other “window-alluding” materials could be considered for a stop-gap compromise.
- d. If possible, restore or install lintels and sills.



Figure 7: Though not preferred, the shutters on 187 W. Church St.'s upper story windows maintain the "eyes" of the building and still create life on the streetscape. Using shutters creates an appearance that the windows are still there, and the “occupants”

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*just haven't woken up yet. Their placement also maintains symmetry about the building. The cornice is not original and was done with tin and paint. The sign-band was also added during restoration with non-original materials.*

**12. Staff Recommendations for potential options for Roof/Cornice maintenance/improvements:**

- a. Tuckpoint brick to ensure future stability regardless of ornamentation
- b. Restore the original cornice after tuckpointing
- c. Produce a replica of the original cornice.
- d. Design and produce a new cornice.
- e. Install a small cornice the same as or similar to the cornice on the building adjacent.
- f. Use a different style brick or paint to create the effect of a cornice.
- g. Continue the paint pattern on existing upper story wall to any roof/cornice or replica.



Figure 8: 135 S. Main. A modern cornice made just from wood.

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Figure 9: 288 E. Church. Owner used commercially available wood trim, paint, and stencils to return designs of lintels/cornice to a residential structure.

### 13. References:

- a. Marion City Code, Part Eleven – Planning and Zoning Code
- b. “Façade Change as Evolution.” Leaflet. National Main Street Center. (1995)
- c. Morton, W. Brown III, et. al. *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation*. (1991). <https://www.nps.gov/crps/tps/rehab-guidelines/rehabilitation-guidelines-1997.pdf>.
- d. Google Street View. (2024).

14. The point of contact for this staff report is Regional Planning Director Evelyn Warr-Omness at 740-223-4143 or [ecummings@co.marion.oh.us](mailto:ecummings@co.marion.oh.us).

Encls.  
Marion Design Review Board Guidelines  
Design Review District Map  
“Façade Change as Evolution”



# Marion Design Review Board Guidelines

## ***Purpose:***

*In addition to using the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, when evaluating applications for Certificate of Appropriateness, the Design Review Board has adopted the following general design guidelines. The purpose of these policies is to help business and property owners, and design professionals undertaking construction, demolition and rehabilitation projects in the Design Review District by identifying guidelines intended to preserve the architectural integrity of the district by promoting sensitive renovation and compatible new construction.*

## **1. Site Development/Setback:**

On blocks where no front yard set back is present, development will be required at the property line. Maintaining the historic facade lines of the streetscape will be achieved by locating the front walls of new buildings in the same place as the existing buildings. Storefronts should be contiguous to produce non-stop impulses for the pedestrian to keep moving. Putting buildings in front or behind the existing setback or at odd angles to the street should be avoided.

## **2. Directional Expression:**

Buildings should be oriented or have a facade character similar to the pre-dominant directional expression of other buildings on the block and in the near vicinity. Special attention should be given to corner lots, which face more than one street. Corner buildings should announce the block by being larger or having a dominant building element that sets them off from the rest of the street, such as a corner entrance, corner tower, canopy or cupola. All facades that are visible to the public, including approaches from parking areas, shall be treated in a sensitive manner. Side and rear walls may remain plainer, but should relate to the main elevation by color, material and detail as much as possible.

## **3. Parking Lots:**

Parking lots should not be in front of the building. Zero setback from the street is preferred in areas where it is common, such as on Center Street. Instead parking should be to the rear of the building or the side of the building wherever possible. Side parking shall incorporate pedestrian scale fencing or landscaping to screen the parking area. Thus the open lot will be less likely to create an uncharacteristic gap or void along the streetscape. Parking areas shall be treated with decorative elements, building wall expansions, plantings, berms, or other innovative means to screen parking areas from public ways. Signage should clearly and neatly identify whether or not the lot is open to the public or for a specific use.

**4. Height:**

Buildings should relate the overall height of new construction to the average height of existing adjacent buildings. Downtown Marion has many two- and three- story buildings. It is preferred that new structures are comparable in height to maintain the character of the district.

**5. Scale:**

Size and proportion of new structures shall be related to the scale of the adjacent buildings. Height, width, and or massing create the rhythm of the streetscape. New construction should compliment the existing rhythm.

**6. Massing:**

Variety of form and massing are important elements in establishing the character of an historic streetscape. For example, it is common on N. Main Street to have a 2 or 3 story building which is taller than it is wide, and has a flat roof line. A one story, horizontally oriented building with a gabled roof would be an example of a different, inappropriate massing.

**7. Sense of Entry:**

Entries in downtown Marion typically face the street and are flanked by storefront windows. The Italianate buildings common along Center Street have their entrances at grade level. For example, in typical Italianate commercial buildings, it is common to have a recessed entrance which allows enough space for the slight incline between the sidewalk and the higher main floor level. Meanwhile, some buildings found on South Main Street were originally residential in nature, and may have raised porches with entries a few steps above grade. Consideration should be given to which type of entry is most appropriate.

**8. Projections into the required yards:**

Section 1151.065 of the zoning code eaves, cornices, window sills and belt courses may project into any yard a distance not to exceed three feet. If a proposed building or renovation will project into the street or alley right-of-way, it may be necessary to obtain an easement from the City before proceeding with said project.

Section 1161.025 states that no part of any accessory sign may project beyond the property line except in the C-3 district, where signs may project into the street right-of-way as follows:

A. Projecting signs may extend into the street right-of-way no more than three feet and the bottom thereof shall be no less than ten feet above the grade of the sidewalk beneath it.

B. Awnings, canopies or marquees extending beyond the property line may have signs upon them, which shall be affixed flat to the surface thereof, unless extending vertically beneath such awning, canopy, or marquee, complying with height limits

of Section 1161.026.(E).

C. Wall signs may project into a street right-of-way no more than twelve (12) inches.

**9. Roof Shapes:**

Applicants should relate the roof form of new buildings to those found in the area. Using similar shapes, pitches and materials on roofs new construction and rehabilitation projects makes the buildings more compatible to the overall district.

Similarly, the presence of cornices and friezes are common decorative features at the top of many downtown buildings. These decorative elements are an important crowning feature, and should be maintained whenever possible. Removing these features results in a unfinished look to the building. Maintaining and repairing is preferred to removing them. If possible, new construction should be designed to incorporate a comparable feature at the top of the proposed building, at a minimum a decorative corbelled brick pattern or a series of crown molding should be used to allude to a cornice.

**10. Rhythm of Openings:**

The alternation of wall areas with door and window elements as well as width-to height ratio of bays in the facade create the rhythm of a building. When this rhythm is found in series of adjacent buildings, it creates a rhythm to the streetscape. For example, it is common in downtown Marion for first floor storefronts to consist of large store front windows on the first floor and a series of narrow, tall, rectangular, double- hung windows on upper stories. The facades are often symmetrical in nature. Buildings with large expanses of windowless walls, or bricking in existing windows disrupt the rhythm of the openings, and should be avoided.

**11. Windows:**

The Italianate style became popular in the 1860's. It emphasized vertical proportions. The tall, narrow, double-hung window were used in upper stories. The exceptions are store front display windows. Storefront windows should contain clear glass to allow visual access of the interior space. Smoked and mirror glass should be avoided. Repair of original windows is preferable to replacing them with windows of different size or material. Unused windows should not be closed or covered by bricks, metal or wooden boards.

**12. Material:**

Care should be given especially when altering first floor storefronts, not to use modern, incompatible materials such as vinyl and aluminum siding, mirrored or tinted glass, wood-shake shingles, artificial stone and brick veneer. Materials shall be selected for suitability to the type of building s and the design in which they are used. Buildings shall have the same materials or materials that will be architecturally harmonious, for all walls and other exterior components wholly or partly visible from public ways. Materials shall be of durable material.

**13. Storefront Signage:**

Preserve and maintain historic signage on the building. Historically, commercial signage was pedestrian oriented. A sign band was often found between the lintel between the first floor and the second story. Locating wall-mounted fascia signs or projecting signs in this space or placing signage in the storefront windows is preferred. Ensure that size and placement of signage compliments the building's architectural style. Place signage where it cannot obscure significant architectural detail or block the view of buildings beyond either side. For new signage, use external illumination as opposed to internal.

While content is not regulated, signs that are small, easily read with simple messages are preferred to large signs that are visually cluttered with multiple messages. Duplication of message should be avoided. Signs that are most effective focus the primary sign on identifying the building name or business name. Secondary information such as tenant lists, services or brand names of products offered should be smaller and located in a less prominent location. Restraint in the number of colors and letter styles used on signage is urged. Buildings with multiple tenants or storefronts should develop an overall sign plan for the entire building to create a neat, balanced, complimentary appearance and prevent information overload and visual disorder.

Do not install large scale wall signs on massive buildings. Instead, add a small plaque-style wall or small projecting sign scaled to the size of the entrance. The top and bottom of an awning may also be used to provide signage. It is not uncommon to see a business name or address printed on the front panel or lower flap of a canvas awning.

Use a detached sign whenever signage was not an integral part of the structures original use. For example, in residential area with a front yard setback, consider using a low ground sign or a pole sign in the front yard. Portable, trailer-mounted temporary signs and large scale billboards are not desired within the district. Existing billboards may remain, but new ones will not be permitted in the district. The City permits small sandwich boards signs to be placed on the sidewalks provided they do not impede pedestrian movement and are taken indoors every evening. It is suggested that they take up no more than one quarter of the width of the sidewalk.

In order to create a signage system for visitors that is user friendly, uniform appearance of directional and parking signs throughout the district is desired. Parking signs should clearly indicate whether the spaces are open to the public or are reserved for private use.

Patriotic flags are not regulated under the zoning code. However, decorative and seasonal flags as well as flags used as signs with business names and/or graphics are not permitted within the district.

**14. Lighting:**

Exterior lighting, where permitted, can enhance the building design, signage and landscape. Lighting shall be restrained in design and excessive brightness shall be avoided.



**15. Building Site:**

The relationship between a building and its site features help define the historic character and should be considered an important part of the design of a rehabilitation or new construction project within the design district. Site features can include, but are not limited to driveways, walkways, streetscape features, lighting, fencing, benches, landscaping, planters, fountains, terraces and the visible presence of mechanical units, loading docks and dumpsters. Attention to detail, especially scale and material, should be given when removing, adding or drastically changing such site features. For example, chain-link or tall, wooden privacy fences shall be discouraged, while smaller iron or brick fences may be more appropriate.

**16. Awnings:**

Awnings were commonly used in the downtown. They act as a transition between the building, the sidewalk and the street. They also shelter pedestrians and reduce glare. Fixed aluminum canopies, awnings made of plastic or wood shingles or those simulating mansard roofs are generally incompatible with older commercial buildings. Awnings should look traditional and be made of soft canvass or vinyl. Install awnings with a fixed or retractable pipe frame construction having a canvas cover in an opaque muted color. The color should compliment the building and not clash with properties in the near vicinity. Awnings should be installed in a way that does not damage the building or obscure important architectural features. Place a low level light above, rather than underneath it. Do not try to use an awning to replace a porch that has been removed from a residential building. Awnings should be mounted high enough to provide adequate clearance beneath them and to minimize potential vandalism.

**17. Street furniture:**

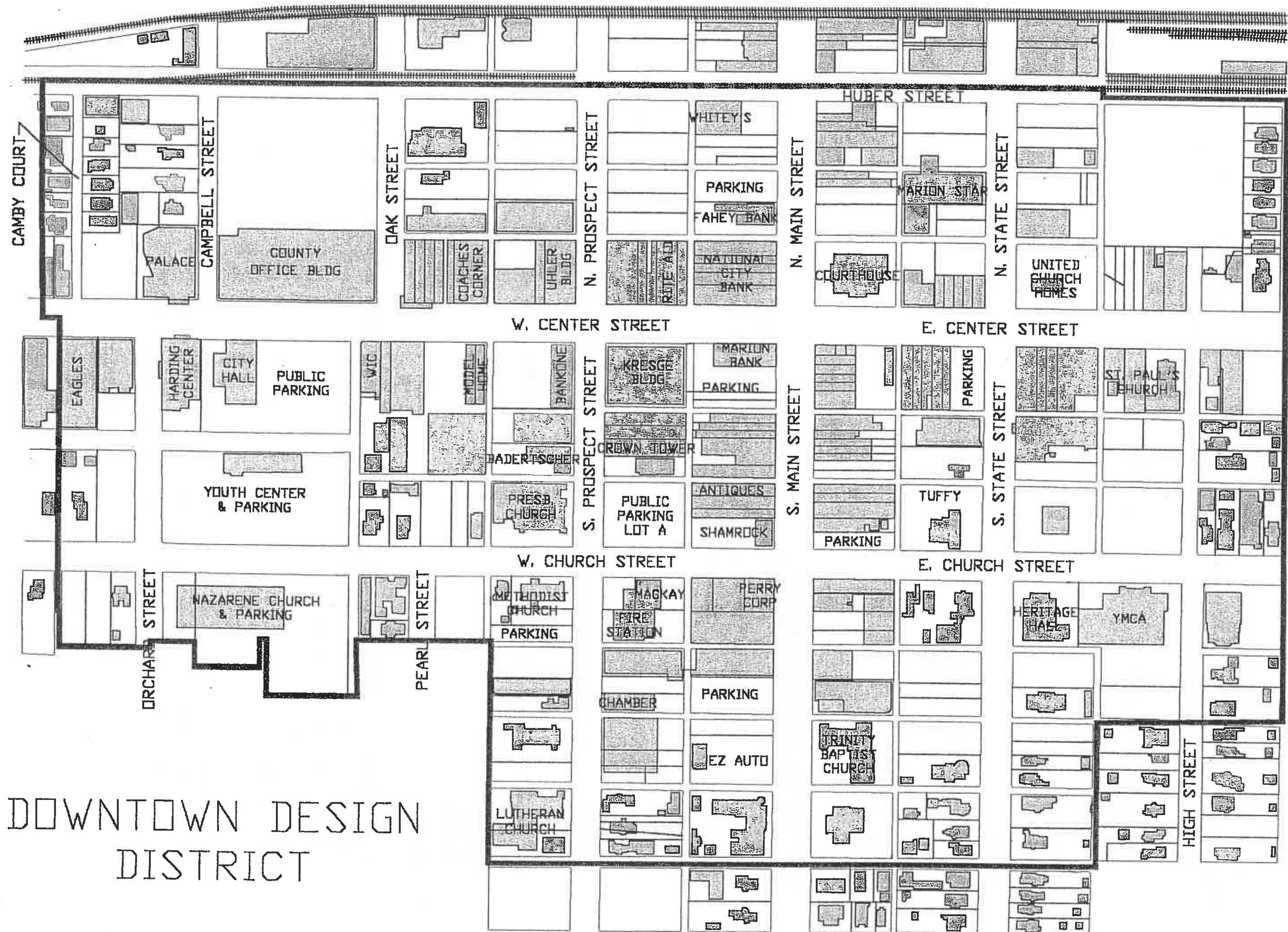
Generally, street furniture should be simple in style. Placement should not hinder pedestrian movement or visually conceal important architectural features.

**18. Patios and decks:**

Decks are a feature of suburban development and not appropriate in an historic commercial district. Porches and patios are more acceptable in residential section of the district. When appropriate, brick pavers are the preferred materials for patios.



# DOWNTOWN DESIGN DISTRICT





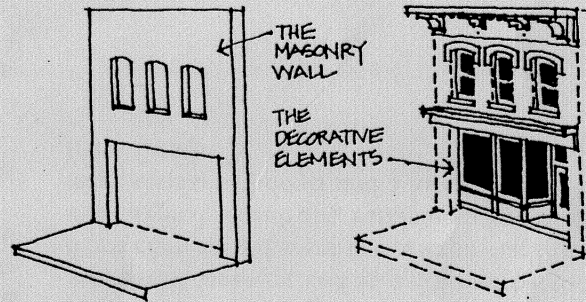
# FACADE CHANGE AS EVOLUTION

The existing Main Street environment is a product of an evolution that began with the construction of the first building and has continued ever since. Facades change; this is natural, inevitable and often desirable.

The goal of this publication is not to prevent or control change, nor is it necessarily to return a facade to its original appearance. Rather, the goal is to encourage sensitive and appropriate change.

## The Quality of Change

When it was first constructed, the typical Main Street facade exhibited some basic inherent qualities: (1)



an architectural style characterized by its decoration; (2) certain construction materials; and (3) a unified visual composition in which the parts looked related.

These qualities came together to form a visual resource. *Sensitive change* accepts these facade qualities and builds on them. The result is a harmonious



blend of changes and existing elements. *Insensitive change*, on the other hand, ignores and often negates the qualities of the original resource. The result is an unnecessary clash between new and old as the drawing at top of this column illustrates.

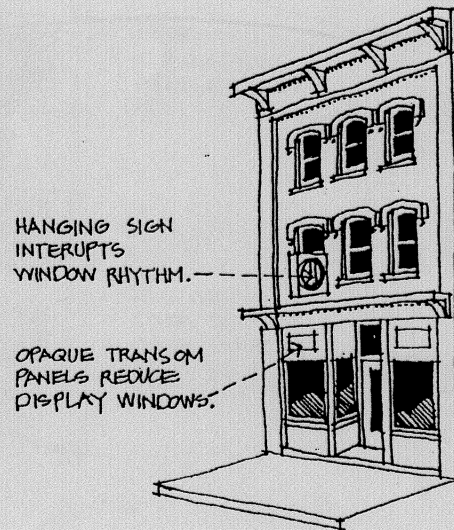
## An Example of Change

The series of drawings (below and on reverse side) shows how one typical facade might have changed over time. Consider the effect that changes have had on the original resource.

### 1. The Original Facade- The Original Resource



### 2. Minor Facade Change



### 3. More Minor Facade Change

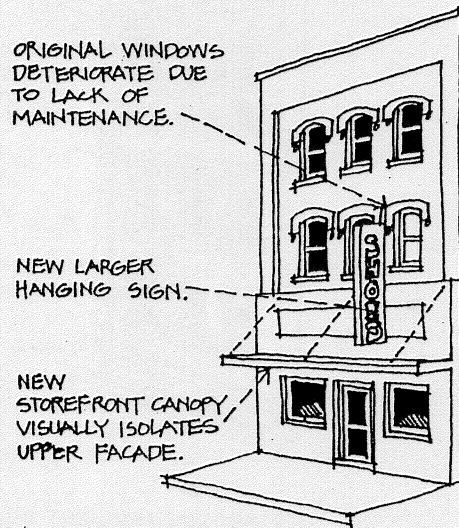


### 4. Storefront Remodeling - Facade Looks Cut in Half.





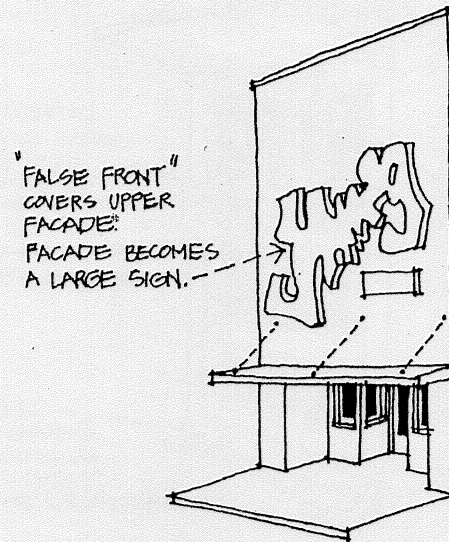
## 5. More Storefront Change



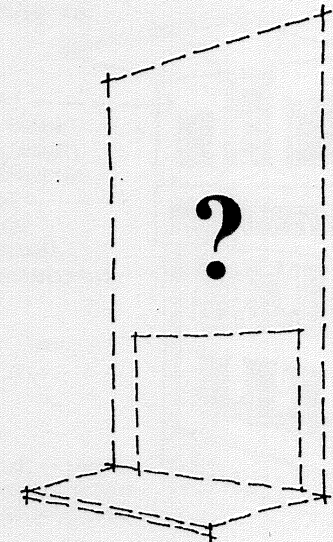
## 6. Another Storefront Remodeling



## 7. Drastic Facade Change - The Original Facade Is Gone.



## 8. The Future - What Direction Will Future Change Take?



## Some Observations on the Facade Change

Note how changes to the facade happen gradually and have a cumulative effect on its appearance. While some are hardly noticeable on their own, change upon change over the years has completely transformed the original facade.

Note the changes in signs and the effect on the facade. As they get bigger and more numerous, signs begin to dominate the facade. Eventually the whole facade becomes a sign, obscuring the familiar building pattern.

Throughout the series of facade evolution drawings, note how the qualities of the original facade—its rhythms, proportions, materials and composition—have been ignored. Various new storefronts, extending beyond the enframing piers and storefront cornice, and signs have been applied without respecting the original resource.

## An Example of Sensitive Change

The facade drawing at right shows the same building facade as in the sequence above. In both, the existing facade has been remodeled. But here, unlike the others, change has complemented the qualities of the old facade.

The upper facade retains its traditional character and window openings. Signs are subtle and well placed. The new storefront fits within the original storefront opening and is enframed by the storefront cornice and piers. It is also similar in design to the original storefront, retaining a recessed entry, large display windows and a kickplate. (See "Storefront Design.")

