

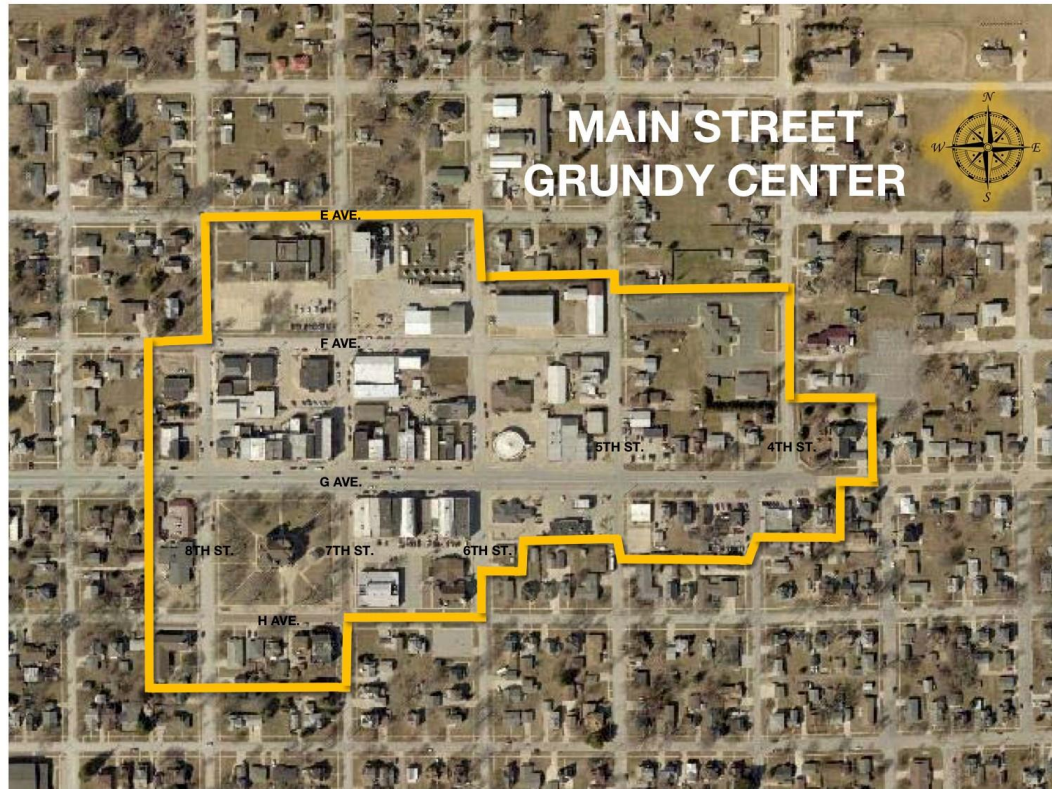
Grundy Center Chamber-Main Street
Design Guidelines
To Enhance the Downtown District

Developed by Main Street Grundy Center
Design Committee
And adopted by the City of Grundy
Center September 9, 2019



Introduction

The following design guidelines are put forth in an effort to aid the future development of the Grundy Center Downtown area by identifying desirable aesthetic qualities, which also maintain Grundy Center's rich heritage. Guidelines provide consistency and avoid arbitrary design; thereby giving the tools and advice needed to integrate new construction and remodeling into



the surrounding community.

Main Street Success

What makes a Main Street business successful? There is no single formula. Product, price, display, service, location, and market all play a part. So does the outward appearance of the business. Many store owners regard appearance as secondary to the more immediate concerns of price, product, and service. Too often the building itself is neglected or mishandled. Yet experience shows, time and again, that appearance is extremely important to a healthy commercial district. When merchants work together to create an attractive image, the downtown as a whole can benefit.

Through the National Main Street Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has demonstrated the value of keeping up appearances. Without gimmicks or themes, it has shown how to build on resources and strengths that already exist in traditional commercial centers across the country. The time-tested methods for keeping up appearances are presented in this publication.

The Main Street Approach

The key to improving appearances lies in recognizing a simple fact: The traditional business district is neither a shopping mall nor a commercial strip and should not pretend to be either. With its buildings, history, settings, and place within the community, Downtown Grundy Center is unique and special. It makes sense to acknowledge these resources and take full advantage of them — to develop the

Qualities that are already present downtown — qualities a mall or strip will never have.

In 2015, Grundy Center was designated a Main Street Iowa Community. This designation is part of a state and national revitalization program that is intended to help make the most of a location, whether it is on G Avenue or elsewhere in the Main Street District.

The four-pronged Main Street revitalization program consists of: organization, promotion, economic vitality, and design. This guide addresses Main Street Design.

Design enhances the visual appearance, attractiveness, and traffic management of the business district. Historic building rehabilitations, street and alley clean-ups, parking and traffic calming issues, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting all improve the physical beauty of the downtown as a quality place in which to shop, work, walk, invest, and live.

Taking Advantage of Main Street

The Main Street revitalization program is intended to help property owners make the most of their location. While organizational, promotional, and economic vitality questions are also important to the Main Street revitalization program, this guide is designed to offer advice on the care of property.

What improvements can make a building work better? How can it be more attractive to shoppers? The following pages present suggestions for improving appearances, as well as ideas for prolonging the life of old buildings. The practical advice offered here for restoration, rehabilitation or simply better maintenance could be augmented by more comprehensive guides listed in the reference section of this publication. Also consult knowledgeable professionals in our community. Other sources of information and expertise include the State Historic Preservation Office, Main Street Iowa, and the National Main Street Center.

Please refer to Appendix A for a detailed history and descriptions obtained from the *Building Improvement File* from the Main Street National Trust.

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Intent and Purpose

The design review process is established to encourage the pursuit of the historical community significance, along with the best professional design for individual identity.

The ultimate goal is to enhance property values within the city and develop a distinct historical personality that is visually harmonious with surrounding sites and structures.

The intent is to establish guidelines, which will enhance the environment for trade, entertainment, and leisure through basic principles of design such as building texture, color, rhythm, and pattern.

The result will be to develop a satisfactory visual impact within the Downtown area. This will also help preserve taxable values, promote public health, safety, and welfare.

In addition to these Guidelines, please refer to all codes and ordinances adopted by the City of Grundy Center.

<http://www.grundycenter.com/city-of-gc/code-of-ordinances>

Applicability

Architectural and design guidelines shall be applicable throughout the Downtown District. All new buildings, structures, and physical site improvements shall be subject to design review, despite any permit that might be required. Physical improvements and site developments include, but are not limited to: parking and loading area, driveways, retaining walls, signs, fences, garbage and trash enclosures, sidewalks, and utilities.

Projects within the Downtown District that are exempt from architectural/design guidelines include single family homes and multifamily structures containing no more than six (6) dwelling units.

In addition to these Guidelines, please refer to other Business Resources.

<https://www.grundycentercms.org/>

<http://iowasbdc.org/>

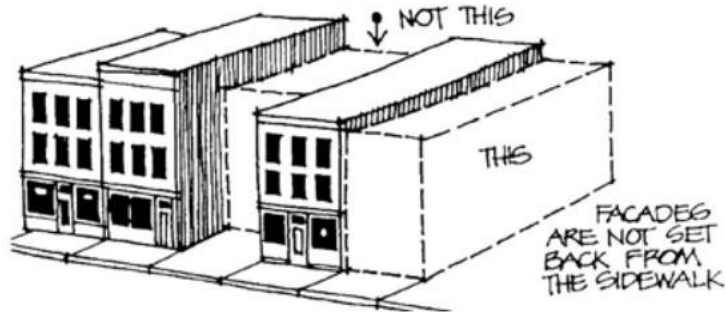
<https://cbgi.uni.edu/>

Architectural Standards

A. Site

Maintain existing predominant building setbacks. Place parking areas so as not to be the focal point of the building. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1



B. Materials and Construction

Appropriate materials and combination of materials on a building façade have a substantial impact on the aesthetic quality, value, durability and maintenance of a building. Material used for building facades should be sympathetic to the adjacent context and enhance the overall character of the area. The following limits are intended to achieve meeting these goals.

These limits may be waived in part or whole for (1) restoration projects as deemed necessary by the review committee to preserve the valuable historic character of the building, or (2) to accommodate a unique design of outstanding merit, which clearly enhances the aesthetic value of the surrounding buildings.

Unlimited Usage –

The following materials may be used in unlimited quantities on building facades:

- Brick
- Stone
- Terra cotta

In addition, comply with all codes and ordinances adopted by the City of
Grundy Center

<http://www.grundycenter.com/docs/default-source/code-of-ordinances/grundy-center-planning-zoning-code.pdf?sfvrsn=4>

Limited Usage –

Wood-Finish Stock/Dimension Lumber/Plywood/Solid Wood Panels –

Wood may be used on the first story (storefront level) in unlimited quantity for architectural elements (i.e. pilasters, cornices, decorative raised panels, etc.). Wood used above the first story is limited to architectural elements such as: cornices, trim boards, bracket, lintels, etc. Wood should not be used as general siding material.

Stucco/Plaster/EIFS –

Includes any material similar in texture and perception, either synthetic or natural. These materials should not be used as the only other finish material besides glass on a façade. The amount, proportion, and location should be carefully considered.

Concrete Block/Glazed Block/Ceramic Tile –

Concrete blocks may be used in combination with other materials such as brick or stone. Facades constructed of only concrete block besides the window materials must use more than one texture and color of block. Glazed block or ceramic tile to be used only as accent material.

Concrete and Precast Concrete –

Site poured or preformed concrete items. Use is limited to architectural elements such as window hoods, cornices, column, capitals, etc.

Metal Flashing and Architectural Elements –

Shall be limited to metal flashing and other architectural metal-formed elements such as cornices and moldings.

Structural Steel –

Standard structural preformed steel may be exposed for aesthetic purposes at lintels and columns, etc. in a manner similar to existing historic structures.

Glazing and Glass Block –

Glazing includes all window, doors, spandrel, and vision panels made of glass. Glazing and/or glass block shall comprise a minimum of 50% of the area of the storefront, but no more than 50% of upper stories. Window openings should have similarities to surrounding buildings.

Fabric Awnings and Canopies –

Natural or synthetic fabric material constructed over a framework for sun or moisture protection. Awnings and canopies to be used only at window areas, except at the storefront level where extended use may be appropriate. (See Figure 2).

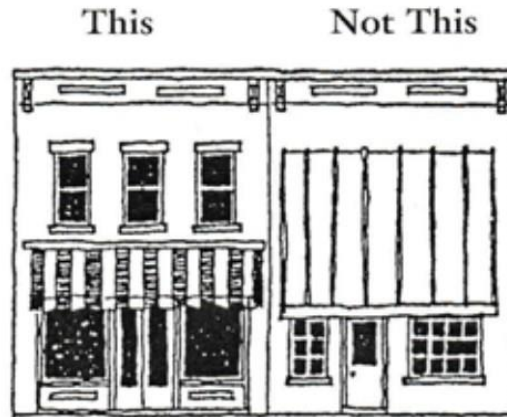


Figure 2

Prohibited –

The following materials are prohibited from use where they may be visible to the public on building facades, fences, etc.:

- Metal
- Aluminum, or vinyl siding and preformed panels
- Porcelain or baked enamel metal panels
- Asphalt or wood shingles or siding

Exceptions –

Building elevations that don't face main streets; delete glazing requirements. Material restrictions are intended to create and support building sizes and proportions and described in the following section.

C. Building Size & Proportions (See Figure 3)

Building height should be comparable to adjacent structures (a one story building would not be appropriate in a block of two, three, and four story buildings).

Define a distinct cornice (top of building) by use of a minimum of one of the following elements; a horizontal projection or series of projections from the plane of the wall surface, a contrasting change in color, and a change in pattern or texture from the wall surface.

Establish a storefront cornice comparable to adjacent structures.

The size and proportion of window and door openings of a building should be similar to those on surrounding exemplary facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the façade as a whole.

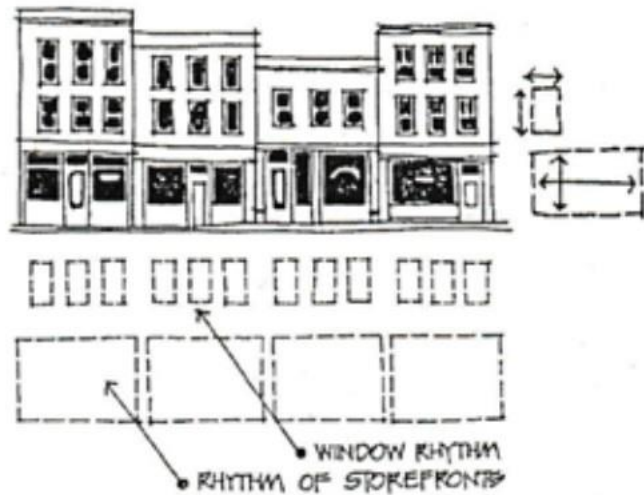


Figure 3

D. Mechanical & Electrical Items

Locate all mechanical and electrical items, such as electrical conduit, piping, vents and ductwork out of public view as much as possible. Any items that require exposure should be painted to match existing materials or screened with an enclosure architecturally integrated with the building.

Signage Standards

Signs are a secondary design element to the building they are placed on and/or the surroundings they are placed within. When designing signs for this district, the signs must fit within the environment. Signs have the ability to enhance, or detract from the qualities of designed architecture and environment. (See Figure 4).



Figure 4

A. Requirements

Signs within this district should meet the following criteria:

1. Signs must meet all city codes.
2. Sign types should fit within the architecture details of the building they are placed on. The building should frame the sign. The size of any sign should not destroy the continuity of the building.
3. Signs should relate to the architecture in at least one or more of the following categories; material, shape, and color.
Example: A sign placed on the first story of a building might be repeated in the arched tops of the second story windows.
Example: A dark green awning placed above a window could have trim to match stone lintels of the building.
4. Use only one projecting sign per building.

B. Location and Size

Sign location and size are important aspects of good sign design. When selecting a design, the most important thing to remember is that bigger is not necessarily better.

Although a sign must be clearly visible, it should never dominate the building façade nor obscure its architectural details.

Regardless of the sign location you choose, it is important to keep the following design guidelines in mind:

1. Avoid overly large signs

Remember that unlike modern highway strip development, Downtown Grundy Center buildings and streets were built at a human scale, oriented to pedestrians, not cars. Consequently it is not necessary to depend on overly large signs to attract customers.

2. Do not obscure or destroy architectural details.

Arches, glass transom panels, and decorative brickwork are just a few of the features found on many downtown buildings which reflect a quality of workmanship difficult to duplicate today. This detailing greatly enhances our downtown atmosphere.

3. Coordinate the placement of signage on adjacent storefronts.

Placing higher or lower than adjacent signs may not increase readability, but instead create visual confusion. However, if the adjoining signs are over scaled or badly positioned, the only solution is to do what is best for your storefront and wait for neighboring merchants to follow your example.

On corner buildings the signage area allowed on each street façade is calculated separately. The total allowed signage may be split between several signs. The area of each sign is calculated as the largest rectangle or the other geometric shape necessary to surround all lettering, working, and accompanying design and symbols, together with the background signboard.

C. Types of Signs

1. Roof Signs

Roof signs shall be allowed on multi-story (three or more stories) buildings as long as they identify only the building or business therein. No roof sign shall project more than 16 feet above the roofline.

2. Wall/Window Signs

Wall signs shall not exceed 10% of the wall area, and in no case shall wall signs exceed 10% of the area of the first 15 vertical feet of wall area. The length of all wall signs shall not exceed 2/3 of the building wall length. Further regulations contained herein are applicable. (See Figure 5). All window signs shall not exceed 25% of first floor window area.



Figure 5

3. Billboards

Prohibited.

4. Banner signs

The use of exterior banner type signage shall be allowed on a temporary basis not to exceed 60 cumulative days within one year. A calendar year shall be defined as being from January 1 to December 31.

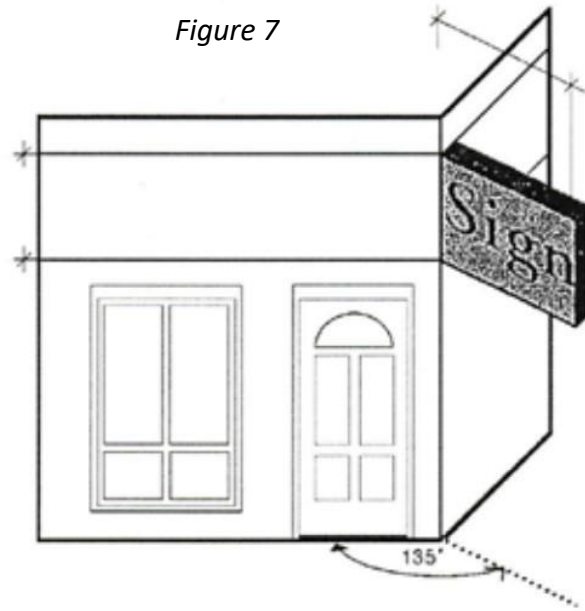
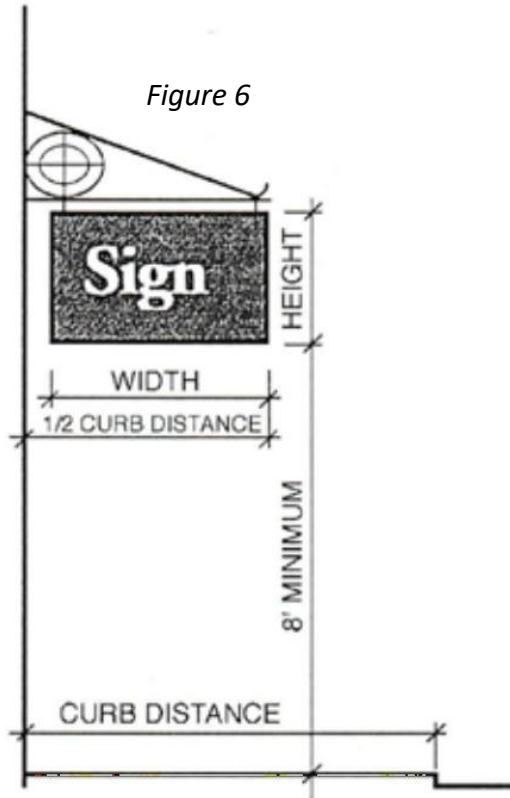
5. Murals

Signs painted directly onto a building are prohibited. Murals intended to serve an artistic and/or historic function rather than advertising function are not considered signs and are allowed. Mural advertising is not allowed.

6. Projecting Signs

Projecting signs may not project over public property more than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) the distance from the building to the curb, and may not project into a public alley or public parking lot. A sign may not project over the street line.

- A. Projecting signs must be a minimum of eight (8) feet above the ground and must be no larger in size than 1 square foot for each linear foot of the side of the building to which the sign is attached, not to exceed 40 square feet per face. (See Figure 6)
- B. Corner projecting signs are those that are visible from two or more intersecting streets, and shall be allowed as long as they do not exceed 40 square feet per face. The use of corner projecting signs shall preclude the use of any other signs. (See Figure 7)



7. **Pole Signs**

One pole sign shall be allowed as long as the pole and sign are located entirely on private property.

8. **Abandoned Signs**

When a business ceases operation, the on premise signage shall be removed by the owner according to the following schedule:

- Sign and/or cabinet – within 30 days
- Supporting structure – within 180 days

When off-premise advertising is bare or in disrepair for a period of 90 days it shall be removed. If it is bare or in disrepair for a period of 180 days, the structure shall be removed.

9. **Maintenance**

All signs together with all of their supports, braces, guys, and anchors, shall be kept in good repair and in proper state of preservation and working order. The display surfaces of all signs shall be kept painted or posted at all times.

10. **Non-Conforming Signs**

If a sign is enlarged or relocated, it must comply with the code. If it is repaired or changed in any other way and the costs to do this exceed 35% of replacing the sign, it must be replaced and all code requirements must be followed.

- **Color**

Color Selection is one of the most crucial aspects of successful sign design, for it is the contrast in color between lettering and background which make a sign easy to read. Because a sign should complement, rather than clash with its surroundings, sign colors must also be compatible with the building façade and adjacent signs.

- **Illumination**

Illuminated signs are permitted, with restrictions, under the sign code. External illumination must be provided by a continuous light source that is installed to prevent direct light from shining onto the street or adjacent properties. Flashing or moving lights are not permitted.

The light source selected may be incandescent or fluorescent, but should emit white light. Spot, track, overhang, or wall lamps are all acceptable light sources. Avoid high intensity light sources, as they often produce excessive glare.

The use of internally lit signs (back-lit plastic) is acceptable, under these restrictions: signs shall illuminate only the copy, logo, or other graphic detail and decoration, but not the background format of the sign. Frames and exposed support for these illuminated signs shall be painted to blend with the architecture of the building.

In addition, comply with all codes and ordinances adopted by the City of
Grundy Center
<http://www.grundycenter.com/city-of-gc/code-of-ordinances>

Landscaping & Site Standards

Comply with all adopted city codes and ordinances.

Provide screening enclosures compatible with the architectural character of the building for any trash storage, mechanical/electrical units, and general exterior storage.

Design Review Board & Procedure

A. Application Process

The design review process is initiated by filing the following documents with the Main Street Grundy Center Director.

- Completed application form
- Fully dimensioned site plan, and drawings, renderings, or sketches describing work.

The fully dimensional site plan shall show the locations of existing and proposed structures, all building appurtenances and drives, parking areas, walks, fences, open spaces, and property lines. Architectural drawings, renderings, or sketches shall be drawn to scale showing elevations of proposed improvements and describing exterior materials. Architectural drawings shall also identify the proposed screening of all exterior mechanical equipment and exterior lighting fixtures.

Any banner, flag or signage of any kind to be attached to the light poles must be cleared and approved by the Design Review Board and meet with City Code and Regulations.

B. Design Review Board

The Design Committee appointed by Main Street Grundy Center ("MSGC") Board of Directors shall be responsible for reviewing all applications required under this section.

The Design Review Board shall meet periodically upon call by the MSGC Executive Director. Meetings shall not normally be convened more than twice monthly nor less than once every six months. The Design Review Board shall have the power to approve applications with or without conditions, or to disapprove applications. A minimum of three Design Review Members must act upon each application. If and when a tie vote occurs, the designated chairperson of the Design Committee shall cast the deciding vote.

Glossary

Architectural Element - A permanently affixed or integral part of the building structure, which may be decorative and contributes to the composition of the façade. For example: cornices, trim boards, brackets, lintels, dentils, columns, capitols, etc.

Cornice - A projecting horizontal feather that crowns an architectural façade or composition.

Dentil - A small block used in rows, resembling a row of teeth.

Façade - The visible side (exterior) of a building.

Glazing - Translucent glass material

Lintel - A horizontal architectural member spanning and usually carrying the load above an opening.

Muntin - A strip of wood or metal separating panes of glass in a window.

Pilaster - A flat column against the face of a wall.

Setback - Distance at which the building is placed from the street curb or property line.

Sheathing - Any durable material covering the original façade of the building.

Sill – A horizontal piece that forms one of the lowest members of a framework or supporting structure; for example: the horizontal member at the base of a window.

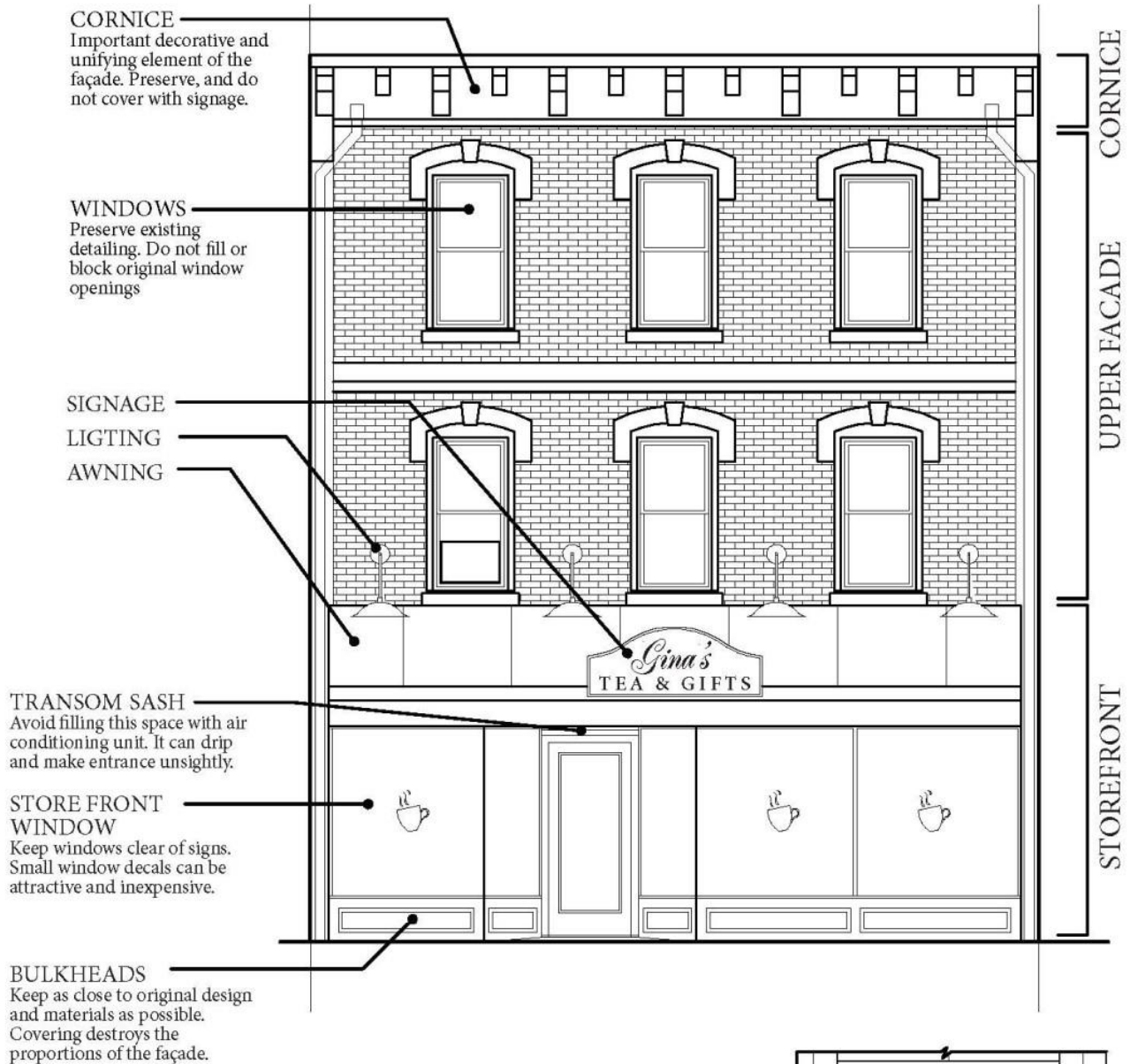
Spandrel Glass – Colored or reflective opaque glass material.

Transom - A small window that is above a door or larger window.

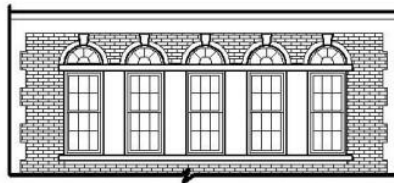
Vision Glass - Translucent glass material.

Figure 8

TRADITIONAL FAÇADE

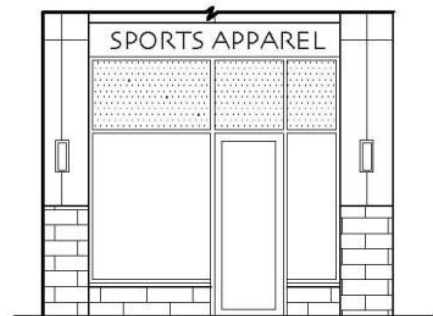


Flat trim with multiple window units



Arched windows with brick corbeling

TYPICAL UPPER FAÇADE TYPES



CONTEMPORARY
STOREFRONT

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