

Design Guidelines
for the
Brenham Downtown
Historic District

Brenham, Texas

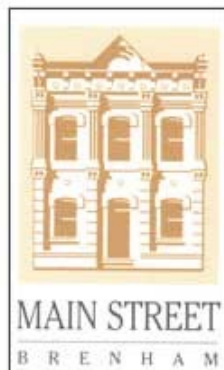


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Introduction

These Guidelines are a mechanism for the maintenance and improvements to the site and buildings of the Brenham Downtown Historic District. It is not the intention of the Guidelines to restrict the use and appearance of each property but rather to preserve the historic character and integrity of the buildings and district through the use of appropriate limits of change. The document is intended to guide the property owner and Historic Preservation Board in making appropriate decisions about maintenance and improvement of the historic structures and surrounding property.

These Guidelines shall be used in conjunction with and shall not supercede the following Codes and Standards:

- All applicable local building codes
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.*
- State of Texas Historic Preservation Ordinances
- Local Historic Preservation Ordinances

A local tax incentive program is available for major renovation projects. There is also an Incentive Grant Reimbursement Program for exterior finishes and signage. More information is available at the Main Street office at (979) 337-7384.

Many of Brenham historic downtown structures are contributing resources to the Brenham Downtown Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. In order to be considered contributing, properties must exhibit the applicable National Register criteria:

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Properties that have been altered or destroyed since their designation may not be considered as a contributor and will lose eligibility for grants and incentives. A copy of the National Register Application may be viewed at the Main Street office at City Hall.

Properties that are currently listed are eligible for tax incentives. For more information, contact the Texas Historical Commission.

Purpose

The purpose of these Guidelines is to preserve the historic character and integrity of the Brenham Downtown Historic District established in 2004. The structures in the district should be preserved in accordance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.

The intent of which is to identify, retain, and preserve “the form and detailing of those architectural materials and features that are important in defining the historic character.” It is expected that the property owner will protect and maintain materials and features that are historically significant, repair when character-defining materials warrant additional work, and replace features with new materials where the level of deterioration or damage precludes repair.

This document may be used to guide both the maintenance and improvement of the historic structures. Each of the historically significant features and materials of the structures is outlined in the Guidelines. In conjunction with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, these Guidelines provide specific direction for the replacement of damaged or deteriorated features and other improvements, which are necessary updates for contemporary use and are consistent with the historic character of the original structures.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic 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. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic 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. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color and texture.
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.

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/stand.htm>

Planning for Preservation and Rehabilitation

1. Inspect the existing condition of the structure. Note features and materials that need maintenance or repair. Determine the priorities for work. It is recommended that structural components and integrity of the exterior envelope (roof, walls, windows, doors) be given priority for work prior to proceeding with other repairs or alterations.
2. Confirm features and materials that are character defining and contribute to the historic qualities of the property.
3. Consider the requirements and options to achieve the functional, structural, and aesthetic alterations and additions desired. Choose the options which best preserve the historic character of the property.
4. Confirm applicable codes and standards for the proposed scope of work. Verify impact of codes and standards on the intent of the alterations and consistency with preservation of the historic character of the property.
5. Contact local and state historic preservation offices for further assistance with project compliance.

Local: Main Street Brenham (979) 337-7384

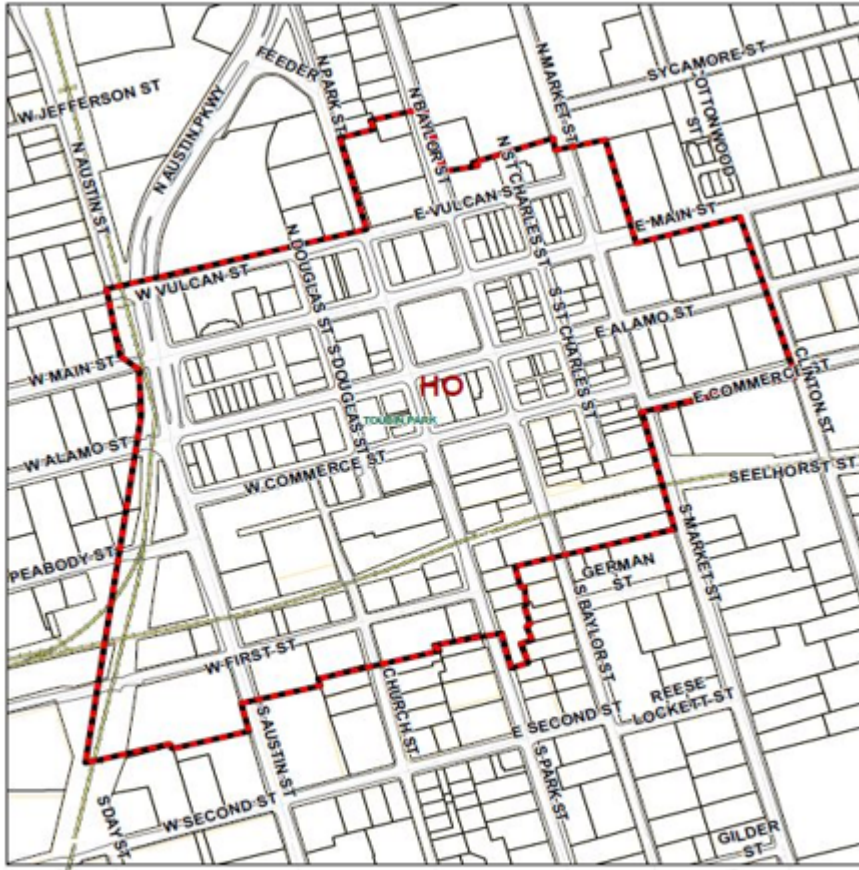
State: Texas Historical Commission (512) 463-6100

Website: www.thc.texas.gov

Email: thc@thc.texas.gov

6. Proceed to develop a plan for project construction in accordance with these Guidelines.

Map of the HPO Overlay District



Downtown Historic Overlay District Map Containing 49.412 Acres

Building Exterior – Masonry

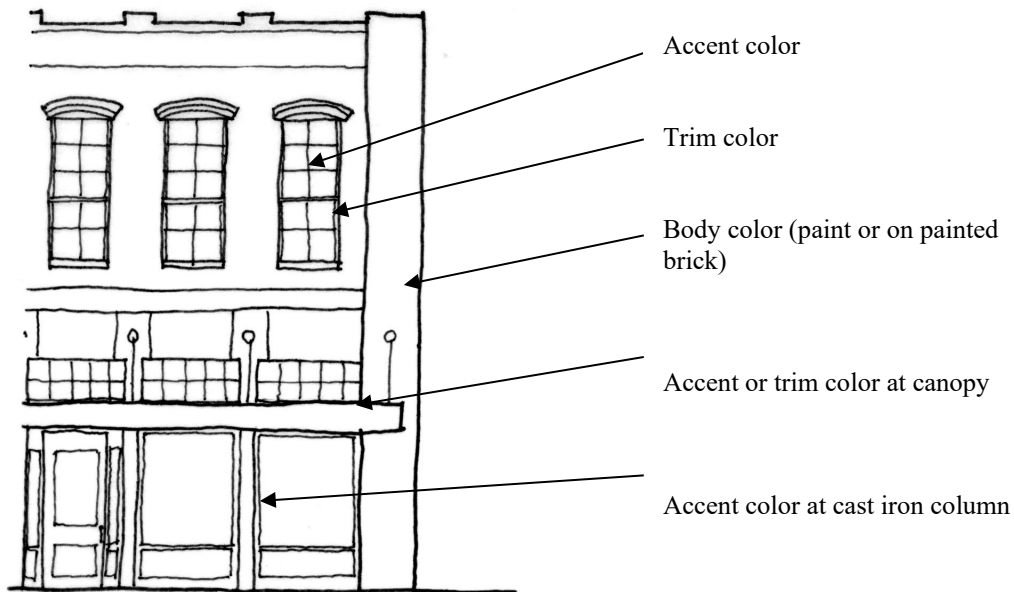
- Existing, unpainted masonry surfaces shall not be painted without receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Existing masonry surfaces shall be maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be replaced with materials that are the same as or, if approved by the Historic Preservation Officer, similar to the existing masonry.
- Existing concrete surfaces shall be maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be patched and repaired such that the coloration and texture is consistent with the existing concrete.
- Existing, unpainted concrete steps, walls, and floors at the exterior may not be painted without receiving a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Proper maintenance of exterior masonry surfaces includes:
 - Cleaning with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.
- Masonry shall be repointed if necessary. Repointing is the repair of cracks or damaged mortar joints and is considered a significant alteration, requiring an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness. The new mortar shall be consistent with the original mortar in type, strength, and coloration. In addition, the joint type and thickness should not be modified.

Building Exterior – Wood

- Existing wood surfaces shall be maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be selectively replaced with wood siding and trim that maintain the dimensional, texture, and detail characteristics of the existing materials.
- Proper maintenance of exterior wood surfaces includes:
 - Cleaning surfaces with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.
 - Frequently inspecting painted wood surfaces to ensure that the paint will protect the wood from the elements.
- Wood siding and trim may not be replaced or concealed by synthetic wood surfaces such as:
 - Vinyl siding and trim
 - Aluminum siding and trim
 - Cementitious siding and trim

Building Exterior - Paint

- Existing painted surfaces may contain lead. Prior to undertaking any necessary paint removal, refer to the National Park Services *Health and Safety Considerations* for more information.
- Existing painted surfaces shall be maintained. Damaged or deteriorating paint may be removed using the gentlest methods possible. Refer to *Health and Safety Considerations* for more information on paint removal.
- Original masonry surfaces shall be maintained and not painted, unless severe deterioration of the brick or stone can be shown to require painting. If color or texture of replacement brick or stone cannot be matched with existing, painting may be an appropriate treatment.
- Proper maintenance of exterior painted surfaces includes:
 - Cleaning with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.
 - Frequently inspecting painted wood surfaces to ensure that the paint will protect the wood from the elements.



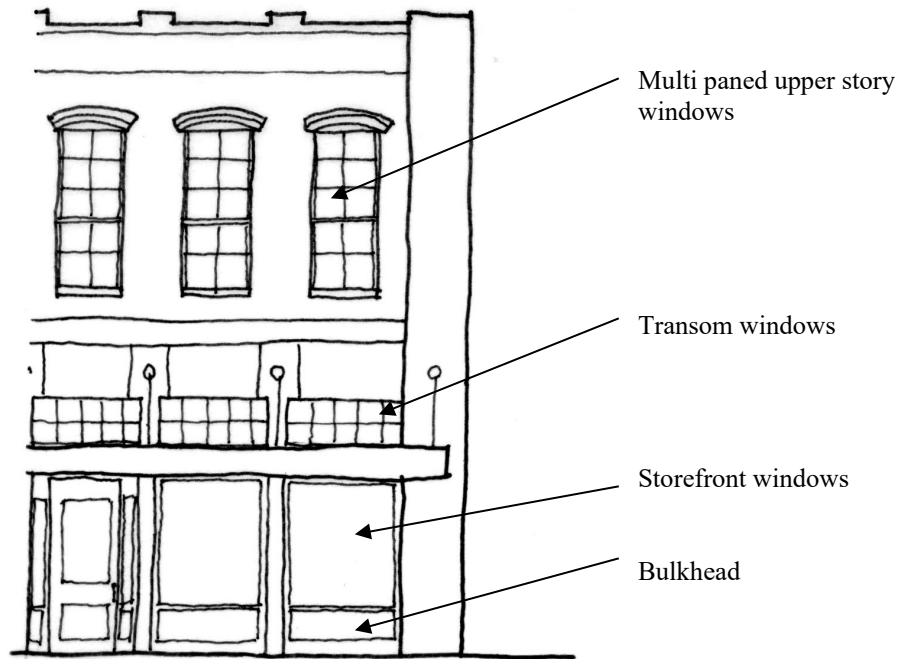
Building Exterior – Architectural Metals

- Existing metals, including gutters and downspouts, decorative railings, and flashings, shall be preserved and maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be replaced with materials that match as closely as possible to the original metalwork.
- Existing exposed copper gutters and downspouts should be cleaned regularly for proper maintenance. If replacement of components is necessary, existing materials, forms, and finishes should be matched.
- Existing concealed gutter and downspout systems shall be retained in their original design and operation. Systems shall be cleaned regularly for proper maintenance. If repair is required, care shall be exercised in the removal and replacement of trim, flashings, and other components. Gutters and downspouts shall be replaced with components of the same material and size to prevent conflicts between incompatible materials.
- Existing decorative metal railings should be repaired and maintained. If replacement is needed, railings may be removed or replaced with metal or wood railings that meet local building code requirements and preserve the historic character of the structure.
- Existing metal flashings, shall be maintained. If new flashings are required to prevent water penetration, the new material shall match the old in type, size, thickness, and installation pattern.
- Proper maintenance of metal surfaces includes:
 - Cleaning with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.
- Decorative metals shall be painted with an appropriate coating to protect the element from corrosion.

Building Exterior – Roofs

- Existing exposed roofing materials that are visible from the right of way, shall be maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be replaced with materials that are the same as or, if approved by the Historic Preservation Officer, similar to the existing roof.
- Roof slopes and profiles may not be altered. Damaged or deteriorated roof framing and decking shall be repaired and replaced with materials and methods consistent with the original roof framing system.
- If a new roof is required, the original roof shall be removed in its entirety. No layering of roofing materials will be accepted. Roofing selection shall be appropriate to the roof configuration and slope.
- Replacement roofs may include the following: Color limitation and types are noted as well.
 - Wood Shingle
 - Clay tile – Tile should match existing in size, shape, texture, and coloration.
 - Asphalt Composition Shingle – Composition shingle roofs are not historic in nature but will be accepted as a lower cost, low maintenance, durable roofing product that does not detract from the historic character of the structures.
 - Standing Seam Metal – Metal is an excellent choice for those roof areas that do not achieve the slope required for shingle roofs. New Metal roofs may be used as the main roofing material. Roof framing should be examined for structural integrity.
 - Membrane Roofing – Existing roofs concealed by a parapet wall may be replaced with PVC or TPO membrane roofing. Ensure that parapet caps are retained such that the appearance from the street has not been altered or compromised.
- Proper maintenance of roofing materials includes:
 - Cleaning with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.

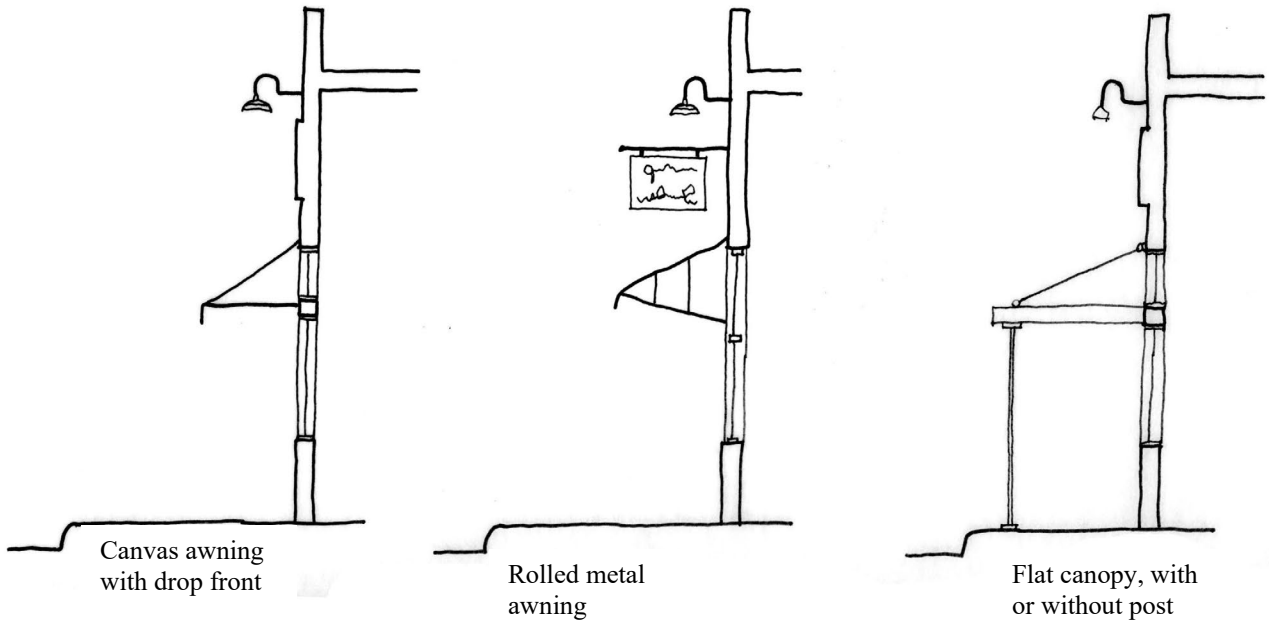
Building Exterior - Windows



- Existing historic windows shall be maintained. Damaged materials, when removed, shall be selectively replaced with materials and components that are the same as, or if approved by the Historic Preservation Officer, similar to the original glass and finish.
- Maintain original elements of the storefront design: cornices, transoms, display windows, cast iron columns, kick plates and spandrels. Maintain recessed entries where they existed. They provide weather-protection, protect pedestrians from opening doors, and add attractive detail to the storefront. Do not recess entire storefront.
- Multiple paned windows are important elements of upper story windows, while storefront windows shall consist of larger sheets of glass to maximize visibility of merchandise. Dark tinted glass is inappropriate for retail space (refer to “Windows,” pg 21).
- If replacement windows are required, they shall match the existing windows in size, operation, configuration and appearance. New windows shall utilize the rough openings of the existing windows. Piecemeal infill of the existing openings is not acceptable. Windows should have the same light patterns and muntin bar dimensions as the original windows. The finish of new and existing windows shall match in coloration.

- All replacement glazing shall be clear. No tinting or reflective film will be accepted.
- Windows should not be replaced solely for energy conservation. Refer to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* for strategies to enhance the solar and thermal performance and utilize the existing windows.
- Proper maintenance of windows includes:
 - Cleaning with the gentlest method possible to remove dirt and other deleterious materials from the affected surfaces.
 - Ensuring that all surfaces drain properly such that water does not accumulate on any of the surfaces.

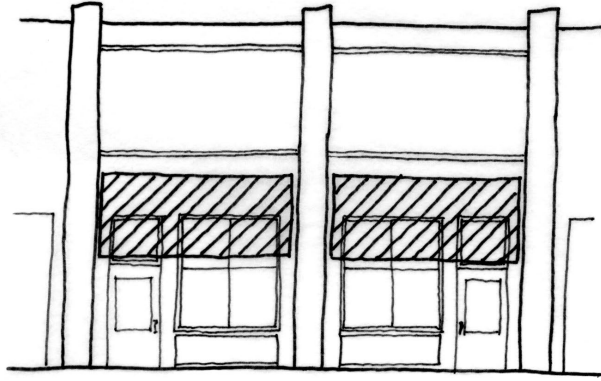
Awnings and Canopies



- Rolled or flat metal canopies, similar to styles formerly seen in Brenham, may be used. Awnings or canopies may be attached either above transoms or between the transoms and display windows.
- Awnings shall be made of canvas or other fabric material. Canvas awnings are typical of historic buildings. Plastic or backlit awnings may not be used.
- Awnings may be a “drop-front” style.
- The modern bubble design, often used on commercial buildings, detracts from historic architectural styles and is typically not appropriate for commercial structures.
- All awnings or canopies shall provide at least 8 feet of clearance above grade.
- Canopies shall be made of metal or wood. Plastic components or other synthetic materials shall not be used.

Awnings and Canopies

- Awnings shall not be continuous across a facade, but rather relate to each bay or window.



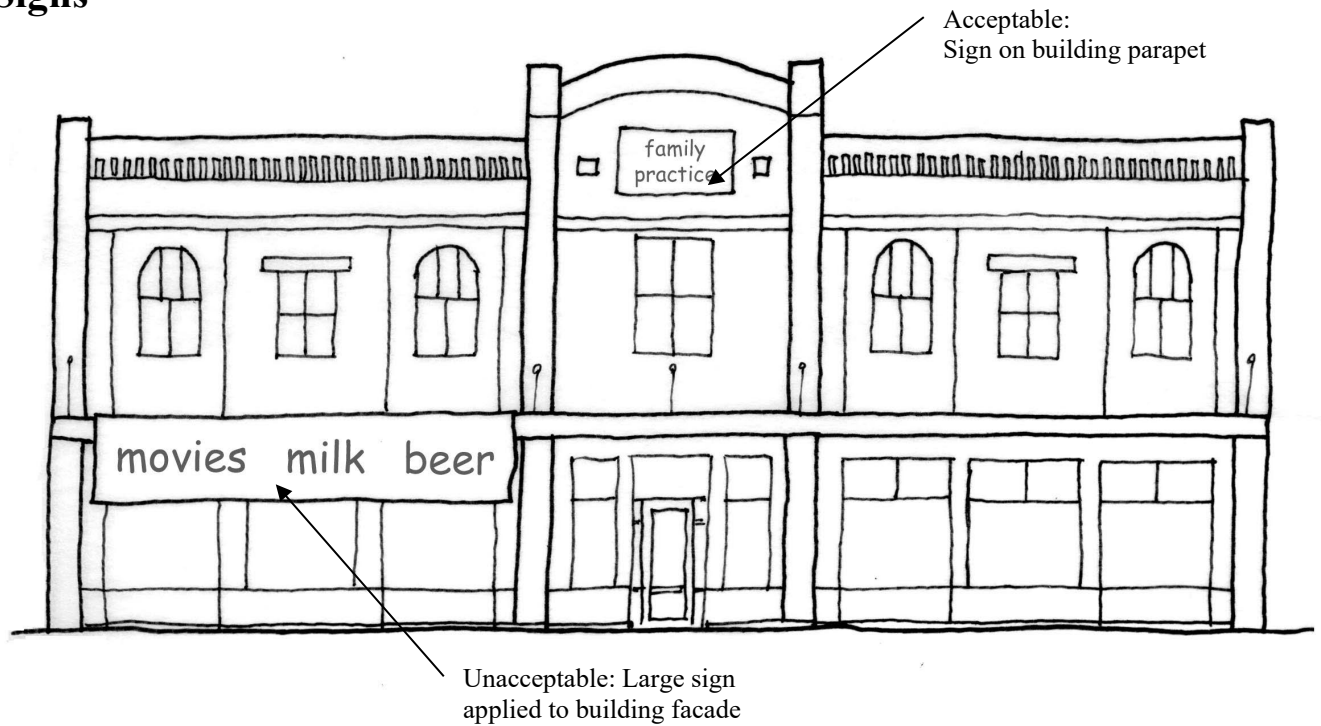
The rhythm of awnings at left is typical of historic commercial styles, and provides greater interest to pedestrians.



This continuous type of awning is unacceptable.

Commercial Awning Rhythm

Signs



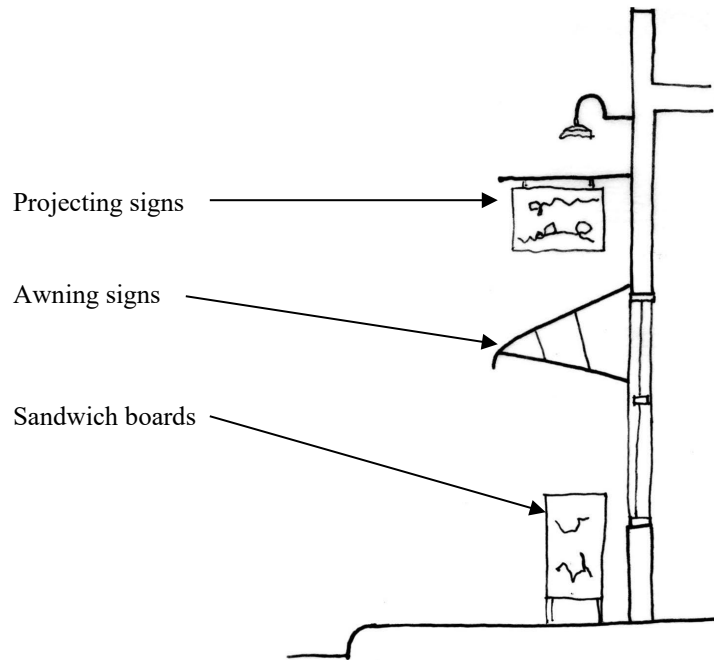
- In retail areas, focus on merchandise, not signs.
- Signs which compete for attention detract from the Historic District as a whole. Signs shall not cover transoms or historic building features.
- Avoid clutter and limit the number and size of signs.
- In commercial areas, the building itself may be considered part of the sign. The use of awnings and projecting signs are encouraged.
- In general, signs may be small and limited to one per business on buildings with multiple tenants. Avoid garish colors or patterns, but use the detail and style of the building's architecture to speak for the business. Locate signs so they relate to architectural features of the building.
- Typical signs at commercial buildings in the past included parapet signs above storefronts within panels of the parapet and signs painted on windows. Signs for businesses located in residential style buildings with generous front yard setbacks may use an appropriately scaled monument sign. These shall be encouraged.

Signs

- No roof signs, off premise signs, flashing signs and plastic backlit signs may be used. Free-standing signs may be used in front yard areas, when appropriately

scaled and placed to minimize visual interference with the significant features of the property.

- Signs must be constructed of painted wood or metal. Plastic signs or letters may not be used. Lighting of signs can be done with incandescent bulbs on the sign, or gooseneck front lighting using fixtures appropriate to the style and period of the building.



- Awnings and projecting signs were common in 19th and early 20th century Brenham. Small projecting signs, at an appropriate scale in relation to the building and the adjacent area are encouraged.
- Sidewalk sandwich boards are typical of the historic retail style, but they must be well maintained and removed after business hours. No changeable letters on tracks may be used. Chalkboards may be used for daily changing messages. Sandwich boards may not be wider than 24", or be placed to extend more than 24" from the building face. The height is restricted to 35". No more than one per building will be allowed.
- Where several businesses share a building, signs may be coordinated and shared.

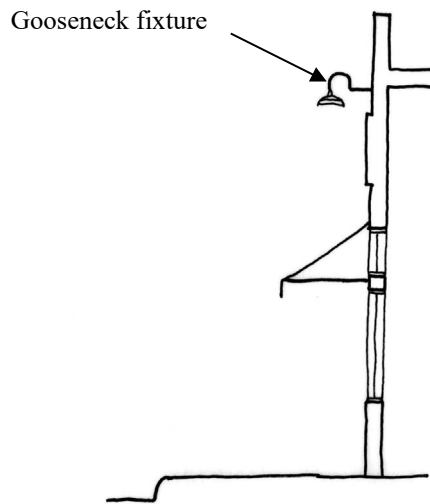
Signs

- Neon can enhance a retail and restaurant area by creating a sense of fun and festivity, but excessive use can also detract from a district. Neon shall be used inside windows only, and occupy a limited amount of space within that window, exception: theatrical uses. Neon marquee signs are allowed only for buildings with theatrical uses.
- Banners of no more than 30 square feet may be hung for a period of no more than 3 months awaiting completion of permanent signs or no more than 2 weeks to advertise special events.

Murals

- Plans for proposed murals including drawings, size, sample colors, must apply for an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness with the Historic Preservation Officer.

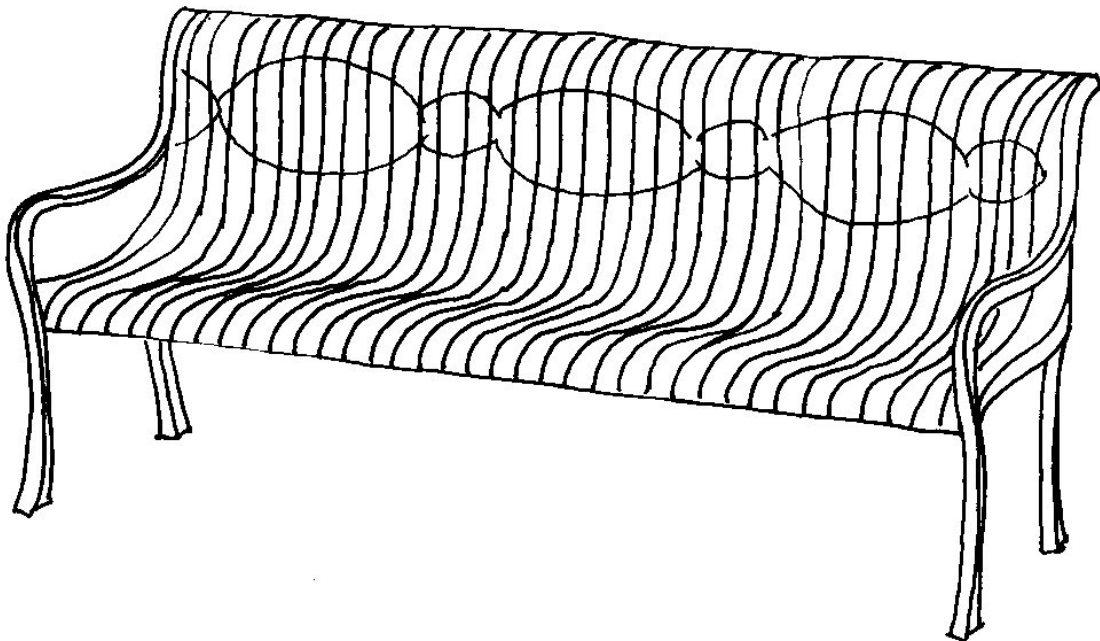
Lighting



- Lighting is an important element in commercial areas. Fixtures shall be consistent with the historic character of the area.
- Fully recessed down lights, gooseneck lights or other incandescent fixtures appropriate to the style and period of the district may be used.
- Avoid exposed lighting of any kind.
- Lighting fixtures are supported in front of the building and may cast light on a sign and highlight the building or offer lighting for pedestrians on sidewalks. The fixtures should be shielded to prevent glare on the street and sidewalk.
- A well-designed window display illuminated at night is more desirable than an illuminated sign.

Sidewalk Furniture

- Includes benches, planters, statues, trash receptacles and objects for sale. Objects on the sidewalk should increase the overall attractiveness of design without impeding the flow of pedestrians on the sidewalks with too many objects, oversized objects or objects placed in the pathway.
- Advertising or promotions on benches is not allowed under any circumstance.
- Planters should match the building architecture in style. Attractive and well-maintained plants should be in the planters. No artificial plants will be allowed. Statues appropriate to the architecture of the building can enhance a building.
- Main Street Brenham will provide a specification for benches, trash cans, planters, and other equipment to match existing downtown sidewalk furniture.



Special Considerations - Energy Conservation

Equipment

The installation of new, more efficient, mechanical equipment, including water heaters, can make the most significant impact on the reduction of energy costs. Solar collectors may be installed in a manner that does not compromise the historic character of the structure nor destroy or obscure any character defining elements.

Windows

The thermal efficiency of the historic windows can be improved through the following methods:

- Regular inspection and maintenance to ensure weather tightness and good operation.
- Installation of insulation at the rough opening. (Trim should be carefully removed and reinstalled.)
- Maintenance and replacement of caulk at joints and openings.
- Installation of weather stripping at all doors and windows.
- Installation of appropriate storm windows as detailed in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

Windows shall not be tinted or covered with reflective foil or film.

Insulation

Thermal insulation may be installed in attics and basements to increase the efficiency of the mechanical systems. Appropriate materials shall be selected such that historic character defining elements are not concealed or destroyed during installation. Insulation may be added at exterior walls if done so in a manner that does not damage the wall finish at the interior or exterior of the wall.

Special Considerations - New Additions and Infill

Alterations

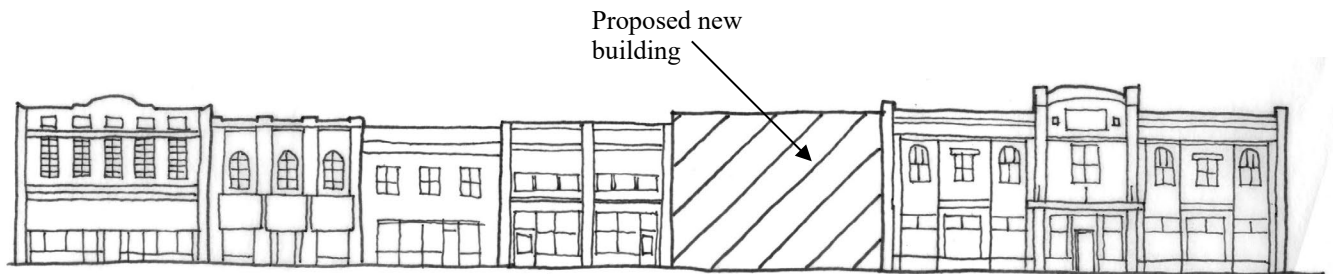
- Removal of previous additions may be undertaken. New exterior finish materials shall match existing in texture, dimension, etc. Detailing of alterations should be such that there is a clear differentiation between the new work and the historic fabric of the structure.

Additions

- Additions shall be subordinate in scale to the existing structure.
- Exterior additions should not be undertaken if the non-character defining interior spaces can be reconfigured to meet the needs of the new use.
- New additions should not obscure or remove character-defining elements such as porches, pediments, etc.

Infill

- New construction proposals and rehabilitation of non-historic buildings will be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Officer and based on these Criteria. Judgment will be based on the compatibility of the design within the context of the property's adjacent and nearby historic buildings.
- Infill construction shall be encouraged. Construction should respect both the height and bay spacing of adjacent buildings. They shall also ensure proportion and continuity of the texture of façade treatments, in terms of cornice lines, window lintels and sills, and kick plates. Flat roofs shall be hidden from view by parapets. The building should be of similar form and materials, but not an actual replication.



Special Considerations – Accessibility Concerns

All commercial properties in Texas must comply with the Texas Accessibility Standards. Copies of the Standards are available through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. In addition, residential units available for lease may be required to be accessible. Check federal fair housing standards for guidelines.

New barrier-free features may be added but should not alter, damage, or destroy the historic character defining features of the structures.

Ramps

If required, a ramp may not replace an existing main stair access to the entrance but rather shall be installed in such a manner that is subordinate in appearance, scale, and location to the main entrance.

Elevators

Elevators may be added provided they do not alter, damage, or destroy historic character defining elements and spaces at the interior or exterior of the structure.