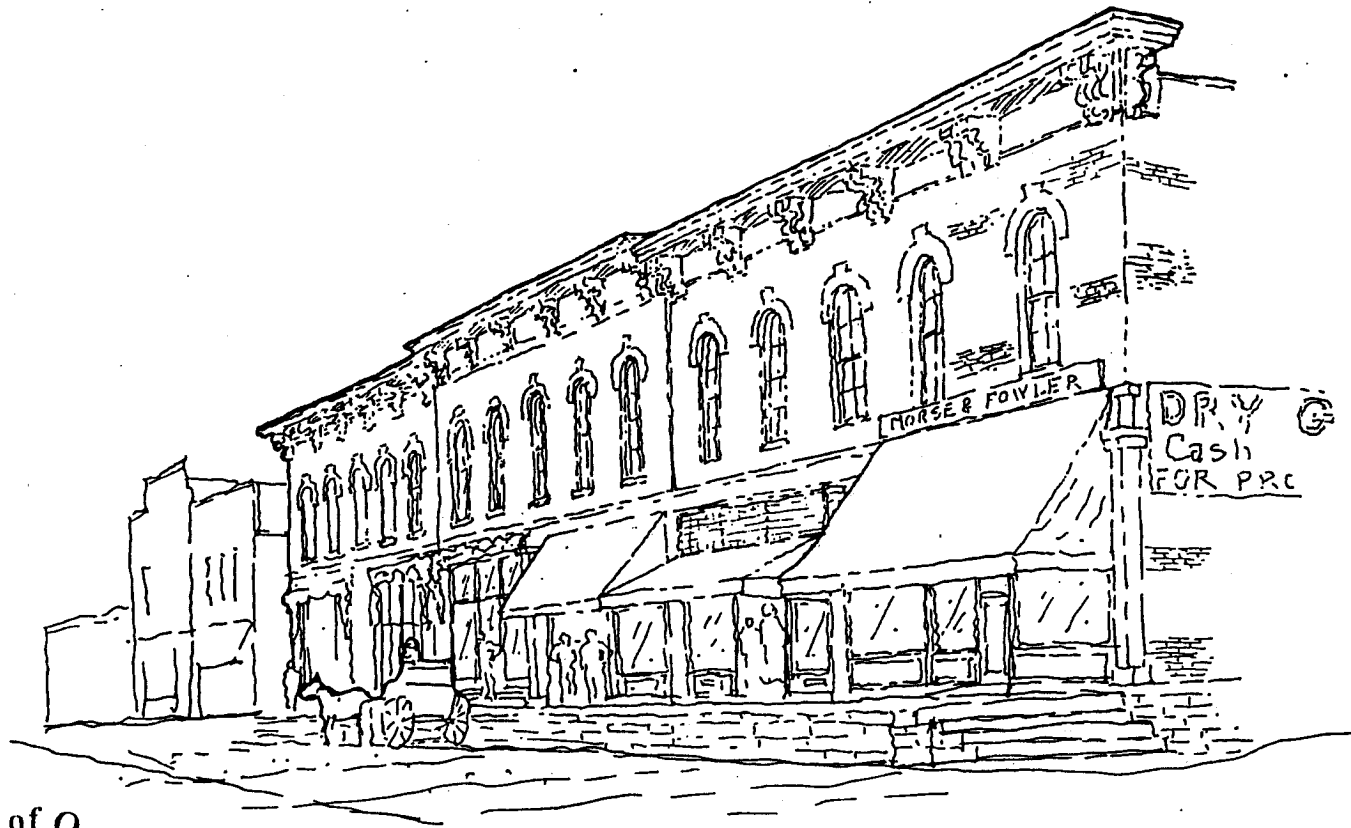


Downtown Oswego Design Guidelines



Village of Oswego • Illinois • USA

Facilitated by
LANE ALLEN
ARCHITECTS
INCORPORATED

in association with

Downtown Professionals Network
Marketing • Management • Planning

Forward

In the fall of 1997, the Oswego Economic Development Corporation (OEDC) asked the Oswego Village Board of Trustees to undertake a comprehensive planning process for the downtown. The goal of the plan was to preserve the history, architecture and character of the downtown while creating opportunities for new business investment. The Village appropriated funds to hire a planning firm that would draft the comprehensive plan. A committee, which included representatives of the Village, the OEDC and the Oswegoland Park District, reviewed proposals from several firms. Planning Resources, Inc. was selected, and with significant input from the community, submitted the plan in late 1998. In February 1999, the Village Board of Trustees approved the plan without a dissenting vote.

The Comprehensive Downtown Plan has since been incorporated into an overall comprehensive plan for the Village. The plan emphasizes that while some downtown buildings need to be renovated or restored, the goal should be to preserve the architectural integrity of the structures. Throughout the country, downtowns are being restored and redeveloped, creating destinations for visitors and shoppers. The Comprehensive Downtown Plan was the first step toward preserving Oswego's important downtown and encouraging economic development within that area.

In the spring of 2001 in an effort to implement the Comprehensive Downtown Plan, the Village hired Lane Allen Architects, Inc., in association with Downtown Professionals Network, to develop design guidelines for improvements that are made to downtown buildings. These professionals have worked closely with the Village's Community Development Department, and community and business leaders, in drafting this document.

These guidelines are an important resource for our downtown neighborhood. They are intended to create opportunities for new investment in the downtown through restoration and renovation of existing buildings. These guidelines will also influence new development in the downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods by offering suggestions on the appropriateness and design of new construction and infill development, and converting residences to businesses. Together with the Comprehensive Downtown Plan, the Downtown Oswego Design Guidelines will focus efforts in the downtown neighborhood toward good design/maintenance and preservation with economic development.

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Introduction

As Oswego continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that the unique position of our downtown as the heart of the community is supported by careful maintenance, wise rehabilitation, and exciting additions to its important stock of historic Oswego buildings. The visual appeal of Downtown Oswego is as critical to the success of the neighborhood as is improving economic performance. Improving that appearance will not only support economic expansion, but will also enhance the experience of each Oswego resident, and each Oswego visitor, who visits this vital core of our community.

Each individual building plays an important role in the makeup of our downtown neighborhood. Storefronts, window displays, signage, color, canopies, and architectural details all play an integral part in the successful design of individual buildings, and, ultimately, in the design, appearance, atmosphere, and success of the entire Downtown Oswego neighborhood. In our historic downtown, each individual building is unique, making solutions and answers that work on the building next door not necessarily the right solutions and answers for your unique downtown building!

Making design decisions regarding improvements to a downtown building can consequently be frustrating, confusing and time-consuming. These guidelines are offered not to impose restrictive rules, but as a tool to assist property and business owners; they can help take the "guesswork" out of deciding which improvements, and what approach to them, will ensure the most positive impact for each investment made in a downtown rehabilitation project.



A Brief History of Downtown Oswego

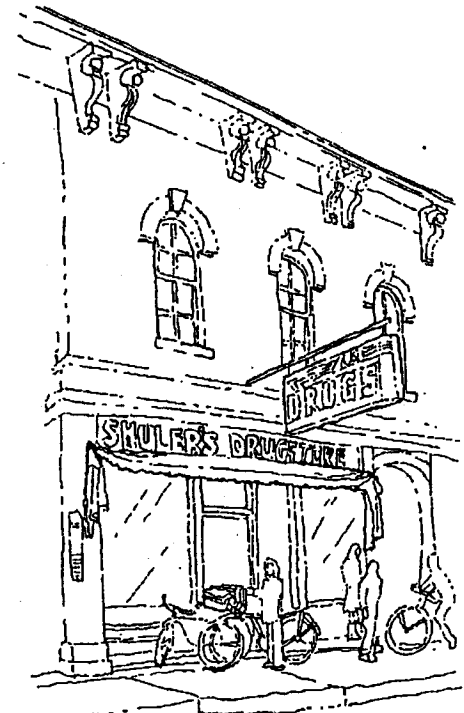
At a time of extensive growth and development in the Village of Oswego, it is essential that every effort be made to retain and enhance the unique nature of the downtown area as an integral component of the history and identity of Oswego.

When George Hollenback, one of Kendall County's earliest settlers, drove his claim stake among the hazel brush near the Fox River in 1831, he did so along the Indian trail that was destined to become Oswego's modern-day Main Street. Hollanback was soon followed by William Wilson and the Pearces from Ohio and the Wormleys, from New York, who settled near Waubensee Creek and the development of Oswego – and Downtown Oswego – began in earnest.

While most early settlers staked claims close to groves, which provided lumber and fuel, the confluence of the creek and the Fox River provided a convenient gathering place for the community. Both the creek and the river furnished an important source of power for Oswego's earliest industry, supporting the needs of flour and saw mills.

Merchants set up shop along both banks of the Fox River as well, with Downtown Oswego counting a blacksmith, a livery stable, a hotel and a post office among its earliest businesses, with a few residences interspersed as well. This early business district was given a boost in 1845, as the county seat was relocated to Oswego from Yorkville and, by 1847 Oswego contained three hotels, seven general merchandise stores, two groceries, several blacksmiths, a wagon shop, cooper, cabinet shop, two tailor shops, two shoe shops, a saw mill, a brewery, burning of lime for mortar, and other industries.

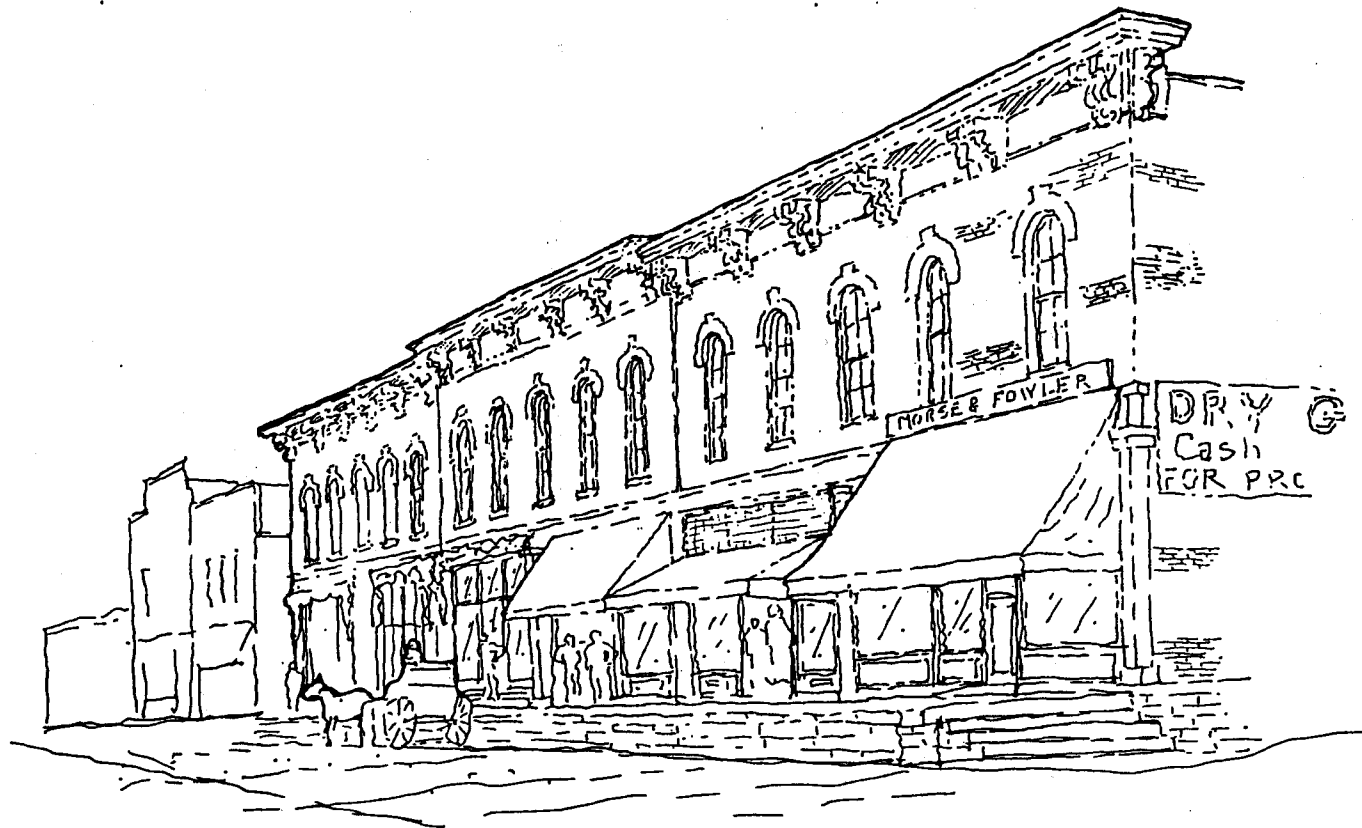
A new courthouse was erected in 1848, where court was held until the county seat was moved back to Yorkville in 1864. Downtown Oswego recovered quickly from a disastrous fire in February of 1867, which burned the main business block on the east side of Main Street and destroyed many businesses. By November of that same year, six brick and stone buildings had replaced those lost and business had resumed along that block of Main Street. Although some predicted that the Burlington Railroad's main line bypassing Oswego in the 1850's would spell the economic death of the community, more building was to occur in the downtown during the early 1900's when several new commercial buildings were added to the neighborhood.



68-70 Main Street

A Brief History of Downtown Oswego

Many early commercial buildings were unfortunately lost in the 1930's and remained as vacant lots in the downtown until another building surge occurred in the 1950's and 1960's. Today Downtown Oswego contains a rich variety of buildings representing several eras of the community's growth and continues to serve as a central gathering place for residents and visitors alike.



60-80 Main Street

Downtown Oswego Architectural Styles

Commercial Row Buildings



73-79 Main Street



64 Main Street

Popular on downtown Main Streets, these buildings most often hold the storefronts of a downtown. General characteristics include:

- Narrow, deep structures,
- Constructed directly next to neighbors,
- Occupy the entire lot space.

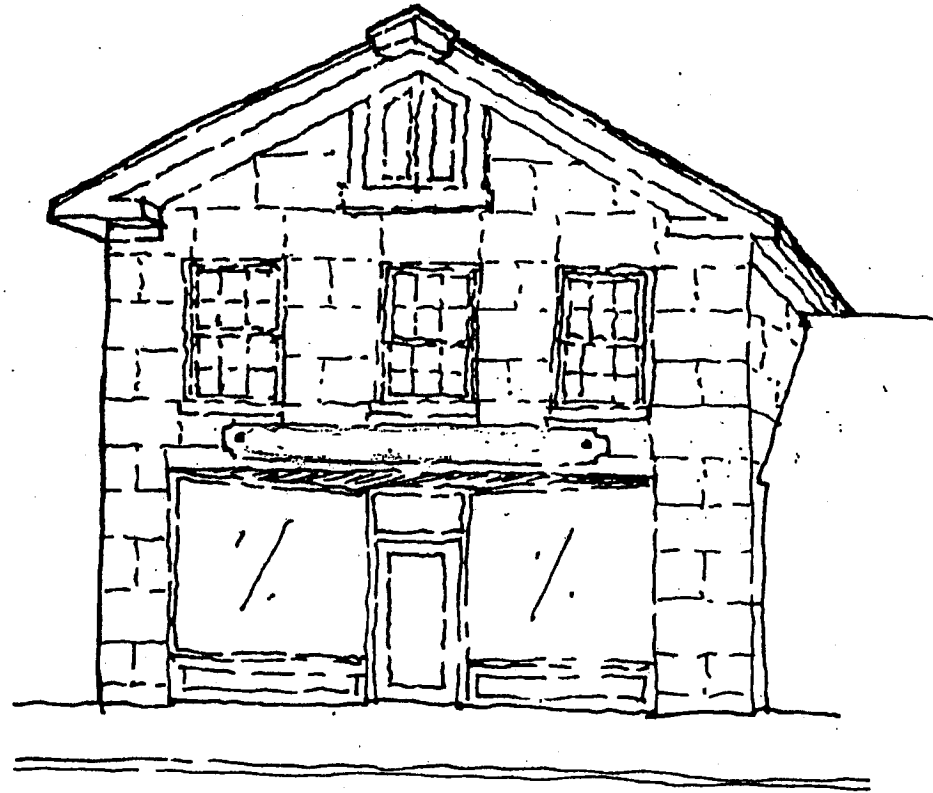
Row buildings can also be seen as a long structure whose facade is broken into individual storefronts.

Downtown Oswego Architectural Styles

Greek Revival

This style was popular in the United States in the 1830's and 1840's. It is a reflection of ancient Greek architecture especially in the widely utilized temple front structures. This style is known for:

- A gabled or hipped roof with a low pitch;
- A wide band of trim beneath the cornice line;
- Often used for banks, institutional and government buildings.



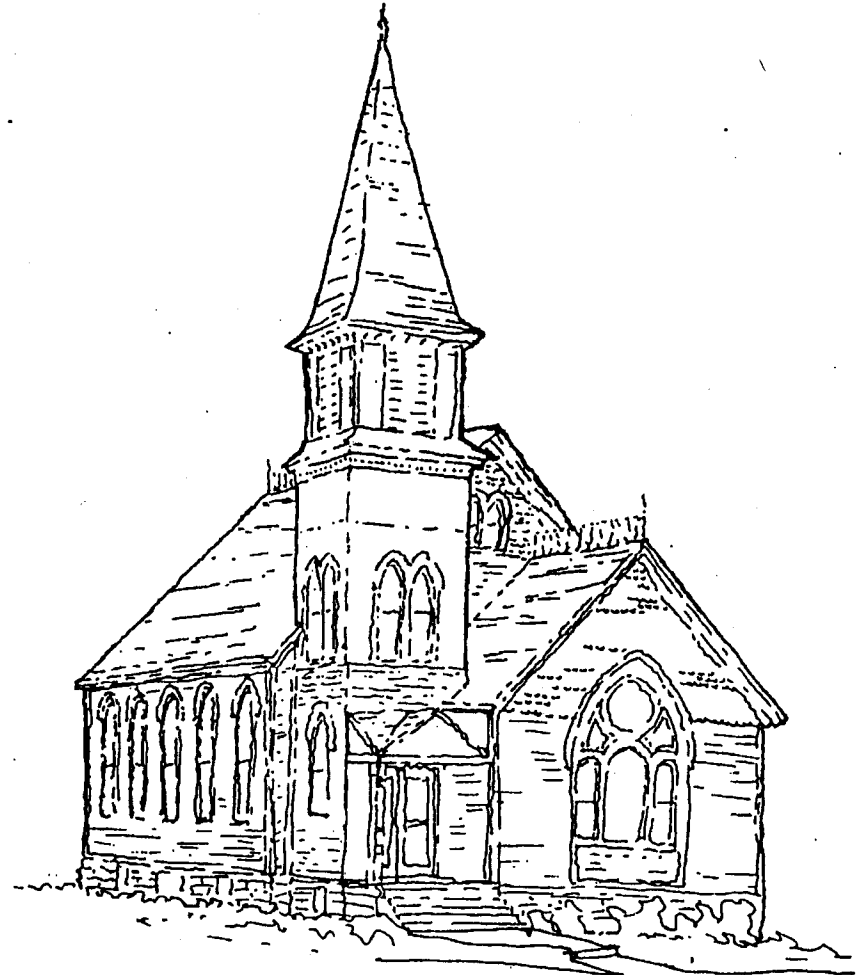
60 Main Street

Downtown Oswego Architectural Styles

Gothic Revival

Popular in the United States beginning in the 1830's, this style is known for its:

- Pointed arches for windows and doorways;
- Steep, gabled roof;
- Carved and turned woodwork;
- Beaded stained glass;
- Bay and oriel windows.



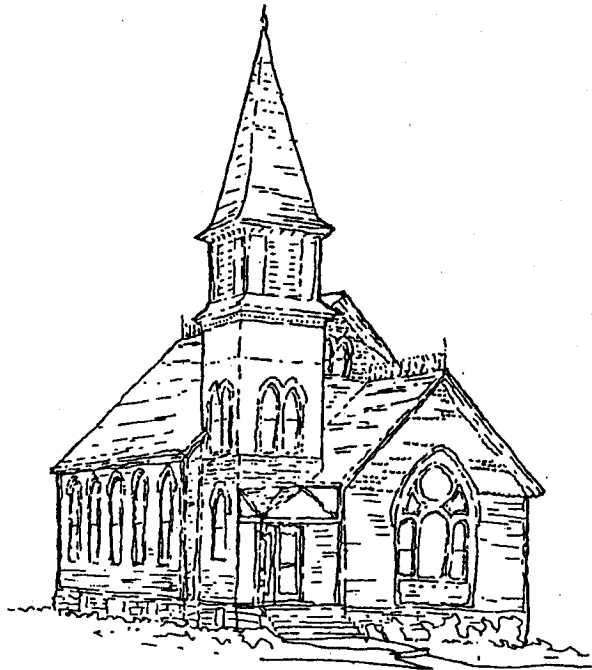
5 Washington Street

Downtown Oswego Architectural Styles

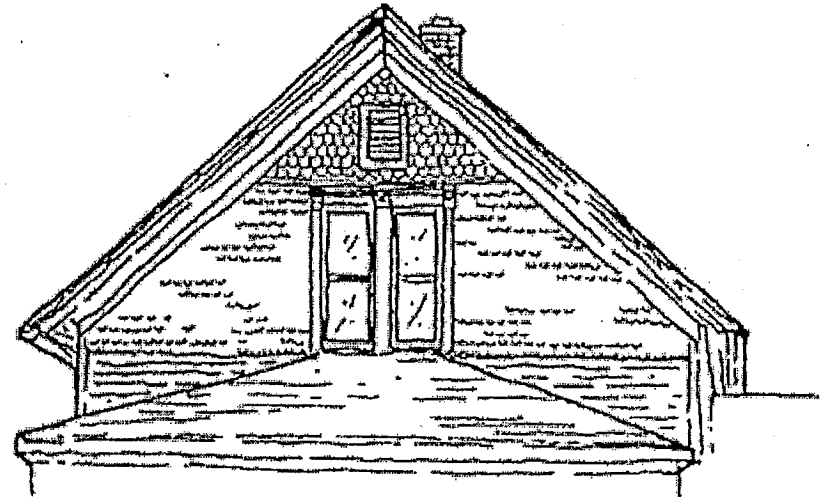
Shingle Style

The Shingle Style is characterized by:

- A more rural style of architecture
- A contrast to more controlled styles, such as Greek Revival
- Texture on a variety of wood.



5 Washington Street



5 Main Street

Downtown Oswego Architectural Styles

Residential Style

As Oswego's downtown grew, it enveloped buildings that were originally residences. Those buildings are now being used for commercial purposes.

Characteristics include:

- Deep setbacks,
- Less window to wall ratio,
- Gabled roofs,
- Exposed chimneys,
- Asymmetric massing and components.



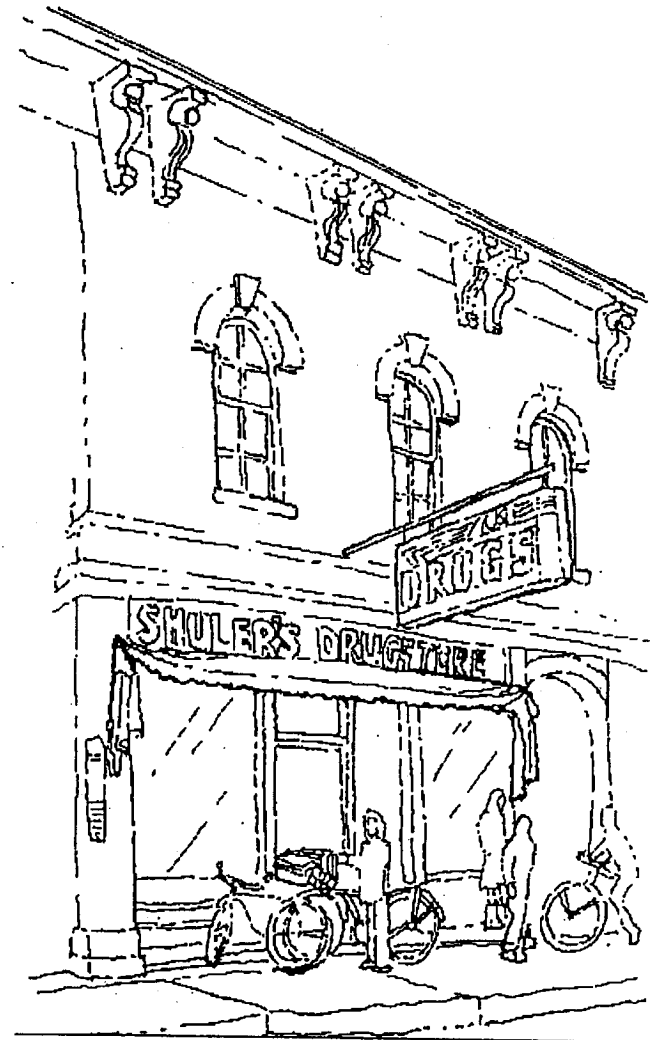
20 Main Street

Facade

Traditional Facade

The traditional commercial storefront can be considered the most important element that sets apart and gives historical significance and character to downtown. The majority of our historic downtown buildings date from the 1800's to the early 1900's. Changes have occurred to our buildings during the years in response to merchandising trends, technology and changing tenants. In most cases, the changes affected the storefront area while the upper facade remained intact. In some of these cases, the original storefronts may still be in place but covered over, partially obscured with inappropriate additions such as mansard canopies, or in need of maintenance and repair.

The traditional commercial facade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and large display windows; the upper masonry facade with regularly spaced windows, and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles, but the result is essentially consistent with the traditional facade.



68-70 Main Street

Facade

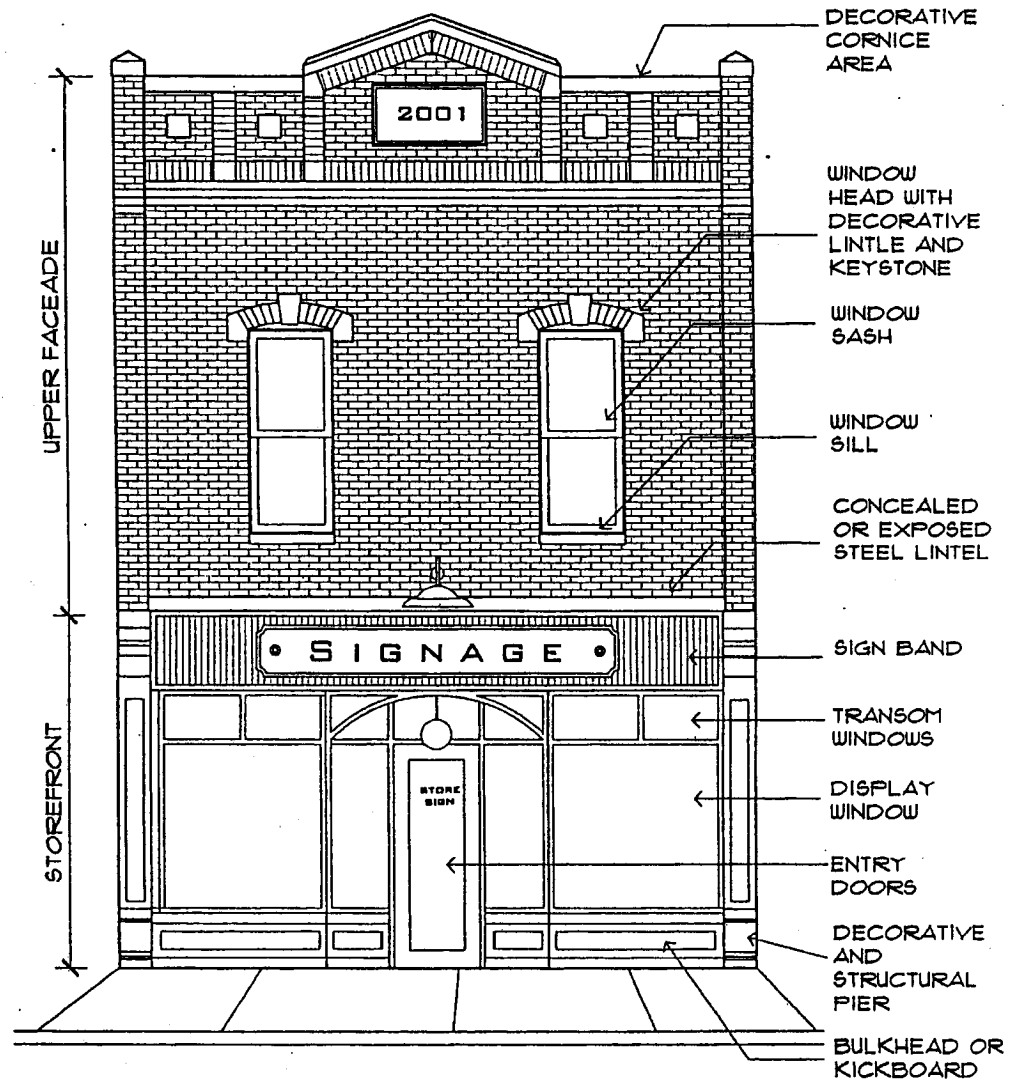
Design

The traditional downtown building facade has a well-defined opening that the original storefront filled. The opening is bounded on each side by piers, which were usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded on the top by a structural lintel or cast iron columns, which supports the upper facade, and bounded below by the sidewalk.

The storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. The large glass opening served to display goods the store offered for sale, as well as to allow natural light deep within the store, thus minimizing the need for artificial light sources.

The visual transparency of the storefront is also important as a component of the overall proportion system of the facade. The proportion of window-to-wall areas in the traditional facade calls for more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper facade.

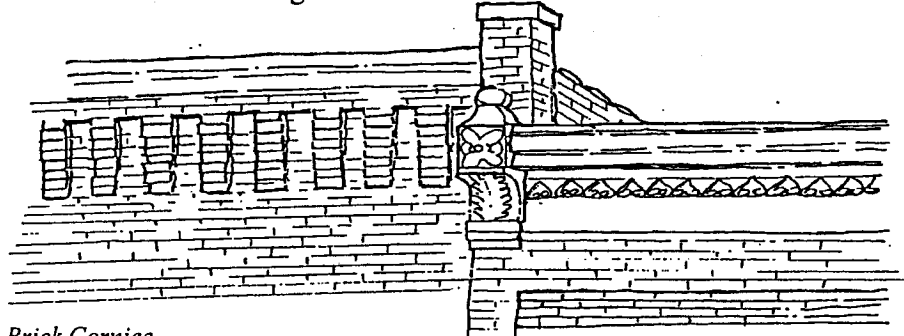
These traditional design components bring focus of the storefront display to the pedestrian. Welcoming passers-by and inviting them into the retail store is the main design criteria for a traditional storefront.



Facade

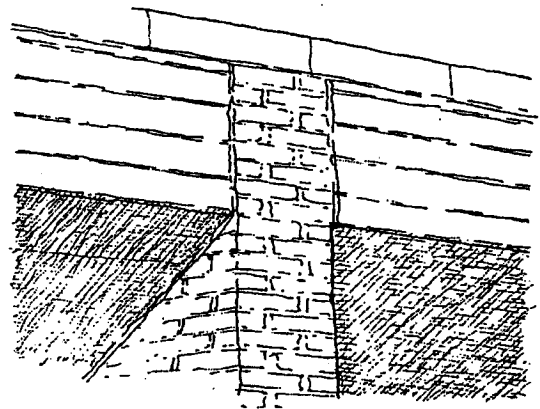
Divine Details

Traditional commercial row buildings in Downtown Oswego, as in most downtowns, were most often rendered unique by the investment of design and craftsmanship in detailing. These details were a reflection of the materials, styles and tastes that were popular at the time the building was designed. These individually detailed buildings, when taken as a group, contribute to the unique sense of place that is Downtown Oswego.



Brick Cornice

Metal Cornice



Contemporary Detailing

Building owners and designers should plan to invest considerable effort into the inclusion of contemporary details for new Downtown Oswego buildings.



Ornamental Detailing

Facade

Improvements - Materials

When designing a new facade or renovating an existing one, remember the goal should be a transparent, inviting and low-maintenance facade. Keeping the materials simple and unobtrusive will help you achieve this goal. There is no need to introduce additional types of building materials to those that originally existed. Whether building new or renovating existing storefronts, use materials that perform their intended function well, and use them consistently throughout the design. Utilizing this approach will enable you to achieve simplicity in the design and uniformity in the overall storefront appearance.

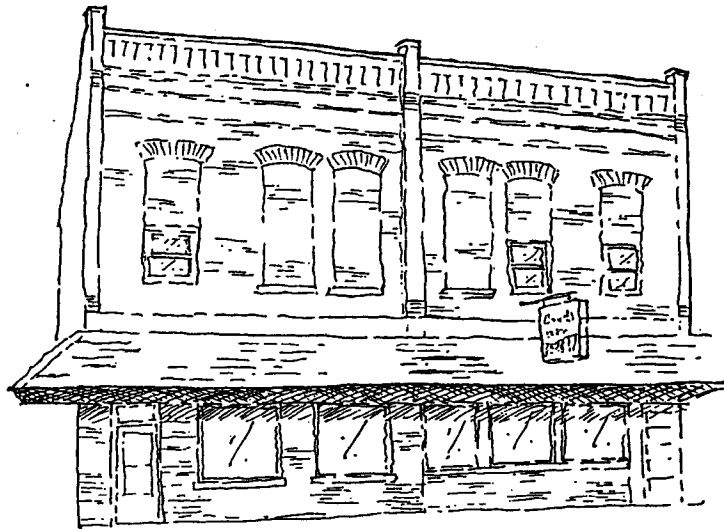
Utilize existing materials whenever possible, repairing rather than replacing. Typical examples of materials traditionally used and their location on the storefront include:

- Building - Brick or local limestone
- Storefront Frame-steel or aluminum
- Display Windows-clear glass
- Transom Windows-clear, diffused glazing, stained or etched glass
- Entrance-wood, or aluminum, with a large glass panel
- Bulkheads-painted wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile, metal-clad plywood panels or brick
- Storefront Lintel-exposed steel lintel, painted
- Side Piers-brick, stone, typically same material as upper facade
- Sign Panel-wood

Certain materials should be avoided on the traditional, commercial building where they have no relationship to the original design themes and, therefore, violate the consistency of the building's appearance and the downtown area. Materials that might not be appropriate include: cultured stone, imitation brick, rough textured wood siding, wooden shingles on mansard roofs, gravel aggregate and stucco materials, including synthetic stucco.

Facade

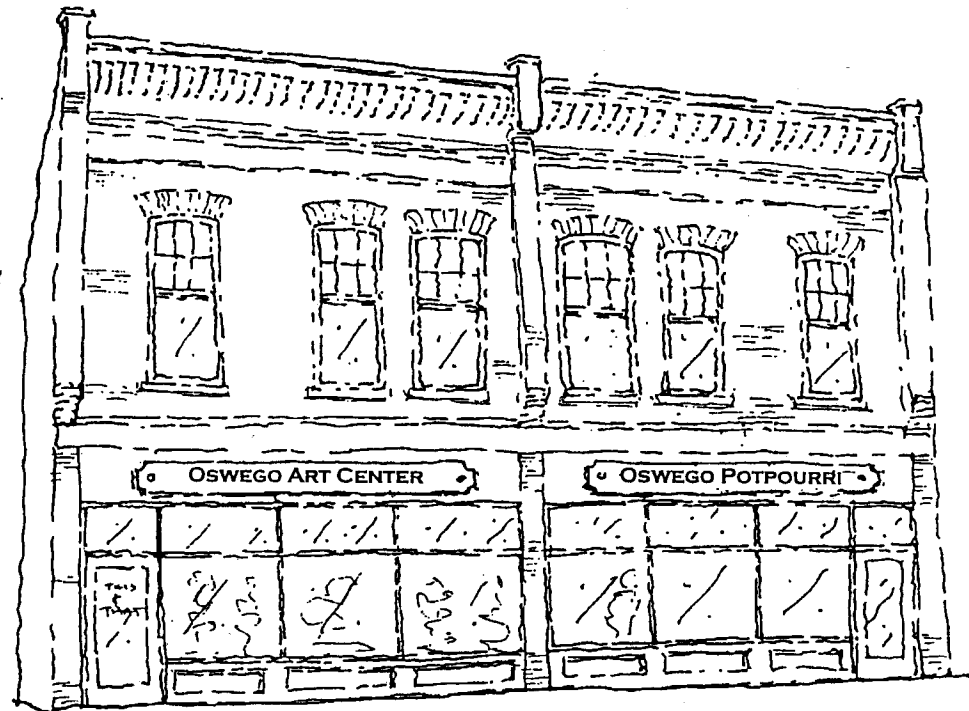
Improvement Decisions



69-71 Main Street

When planning the storefront renovation, it could be very helpful to contact the Oswegoland Heritage Association for information regarding your building. Old photographs can be valuable tools in determining original design, materials, awnings and signage used on your building.

The Storefront design should be true to the time period in which the building was constructed. Adding colonial motifs and mansard roofs to late 19th Century buildings is certainly inappropriate.



Facade

Improvement Decisions

Depending on the building's condition and the amount of money you have budgeted, there are three basic approaches you may want to consider:

Maintenance:

This approach requires necessary repair, and/or replacement of deteriorated building materials and components to ensure that the building is watertight, stable and less likely to suffer further deterioration.

Minimal Rehabilitation:

This preservation approach to rehabilitation requires basic maintenance, necessary replacement, removal of extraneous materials and simple design improvements. Cosmetic treatments can help to unify the building by covering a time worn storefront with an awning or painting a contemporary storefront a dark receding color to minimize its effect.

Major Renovation:

This approach retains the facade's existing original elements while using contemporary and traditional design and materials for replacement of inappropriate elements. In all major renovations, care must be taken to ensure that the design of improvements is understated so as not to compete with the overall character of the facade. For instance, when installing a new storefront, any of these alternatives would be appropriate:

- A contemporary design in anodized or painted aluminum
- A simplified version of a traditional storefront in aluminum
- A traditional period storefront constructed in aluminum, that adheres to traditional proportions

Restoration:

This approach restores the facade to its original condition. It involves repairing or the exact duplication of the original storefront, including its architectural detail, color scheme and sign placement. If a building has undergone only minor alterations, restoration may be relatively inexpensive and most desirable.

Facade

Improvement Decisions

Whenever improvements to the storefront are planned, it is very important that the original opening be recognized and maintained. The remodeled storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond or in front of it.

Key Points to Consider:

- The storefront should be composed almost entirely of glass.
- Inappropriate additions to a building's facade, such as shake-shingled mansard canopies, should be removed.
- "Clutter," such as utilities entering the building, air conditioners, burglar alarms, vents, etc., should be reduced in scale whenever possible, and should always be located to the rear of buildings away from public view.
- The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed with consideration to traditional design themes and their relationship to the overall building facade and symmetry. Primary entries should face the street.
- Transom windows that are covered or blocked should be reopened and restored.
- Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated. Long-term maintenance of this area suggests the use of high-quality materials and finishes.
- Original elements should be restored, such as cast iron columns, exposed lintels, entry doors and lighting fixtures.
- Signage should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Lighting should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Awnings, if required, should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Verify all flashing details.

Rear Facade

Available parking is so often located behind buildings that rear or side entrances are warranted. Areas behind buildings are often forgotten or neglected. Customers tend to avoid rear entrances because these areas can be unkempt and unattractive. The rears of most buildings are commonly thought of as service areas where deliveries are made or garbage is picked up. However, a large percentage of existing and developing parking lots are located adjacent to or abutting these entrances. The rears of the buildings are coming into full and open view. The appearances of rear block areas are especially important to Oswego because of their high visibility from side streets.

A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called “double fronting.” There are certain advantages to this, including:

- Enhanced circulation patterns
- Better access to off-street parking
- Store identity created on more than one side of the building

Double fronting may, in isolated cases, create disadvantages, including increases in:

- Initial cost of remodeling
- Maintenance costs of additional doors, windows and sidewalks
- Store security

If you do not have an attractive, “customer friendly” rear entrance but are considering creating one, ask yourself these questions:

- Would additional walk-through, traffic help my business?
- Would a rear entrance be an added convenience for my customers?
- What changes would I have to make to my store for an attractive rear entry?
- How would I handle security, displays and circulation through the store?
- Where do my customers typically park?
- How do I communicate to customers that the rear entrance, with parking, is available?

Like the storefront, the rear entry should respect its neighbors. An attempt to make your entrance compatible with surrounding businesses should be a priority. Look at the back entrances next to yours before you make any changes. Work with your neighbors to create unity in this all-too-often ignored area.

Rear Facade

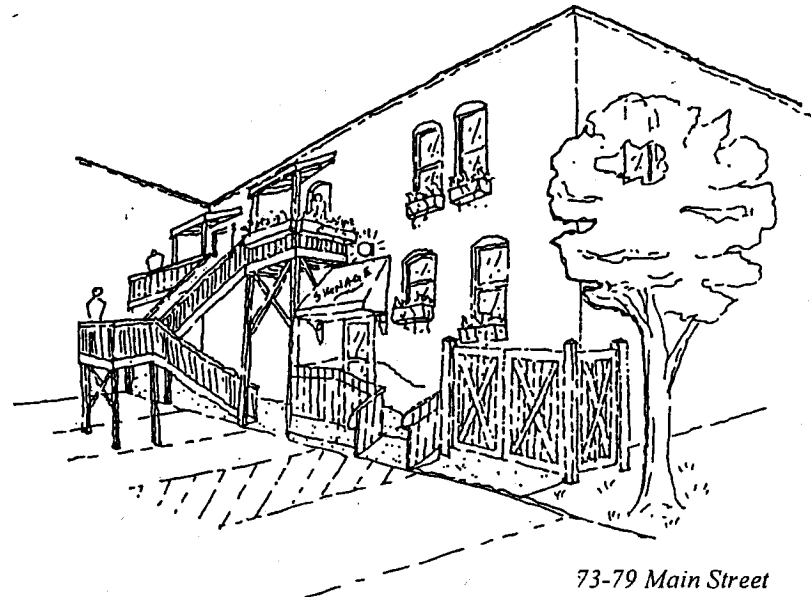
The rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance, but like the front, the back entry requires identification. A rear-door window panel is one way to identify and open your store to customers. A small sign on or near the door is another identifier. Be sure to keep it small and do not clutter the area with too many signs. An awning is a pleasant addition and a convenience to shoppers during inclement weather.

Normal service activities, such as trash collection, loading and shipping, must continue to occur with ease. It is possible to accommodate these functions and make the rear spaces enjoyable for customers at the same time. Pick a central location for trash collection, which will serve several stores efficiently. Simple enclosures should be constructed to hide dumpsters and to prevent clutter. Be sure you consult the collection agency before construction to ensure that your design will not disrupt pick-up services.

Plantings can either add or detract from a rear building area. If there is enough sun, planter boxes may be utilized as an attractive buffering element, but only if you are committed to caring for them properly. Weeds are a detracting and visually negative element in poorly paved and unattended areas. Planting ground cover in exposed soil areas can help choke out weeds. For a better image, keep all plants under control and consistently well maintained.

Snow removal is as important to a rear entrance as it is to a front entrance. Customers are unlikely to come into a business that does not take the time and care to shovel all walkways.

With good design and proper maintenance, rear entrances can become attractive and convenient for shoppers and highly beneficial to Downtown Oswego businesses.



Rear Façade Enhancements

- Clean Inviting Parking
- Safe Lighting
- Inviting Awning/Signage
- Enclosed Dumpster
- Second Floor Residence Deck
- ADA Access

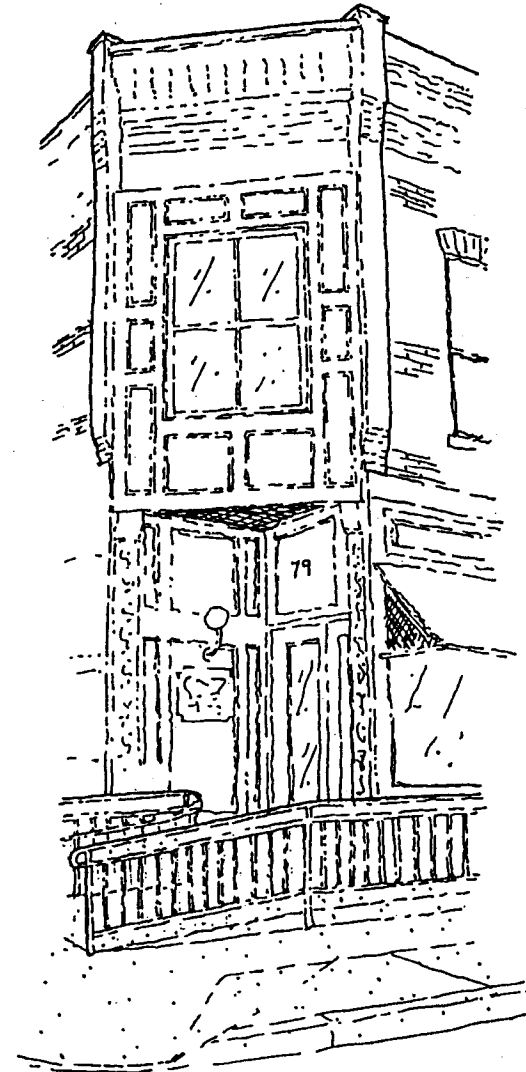
Doors

The entry into a storefront is often the focus of an historic facade. Maintaining a traditional entry door or pair of doors can contribute to the overall character of the facade. Traditionally, the entrance door was made of wood with a large glass panel. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair an original door.

If a door is to be replaced, consider one of the following options:

- Have a new door built with the same design and proportions as the original
- Find a manufactured wood or steel door that resembles the traditional storefront door
- Use a standard aluminum, commercial door (at least three feet) with wide stiles and a dark anodized or painted finish with at least a twenty-year warranty paint.

Owners of commercial buildings should avoid doors that are residential in character or ones that are decorated with moldings, cross bucks, or window grills. Attention should also be afforded current ADA standards when creating ramps and modifying doors at the front or rear entrances to the building.



79 Main Street

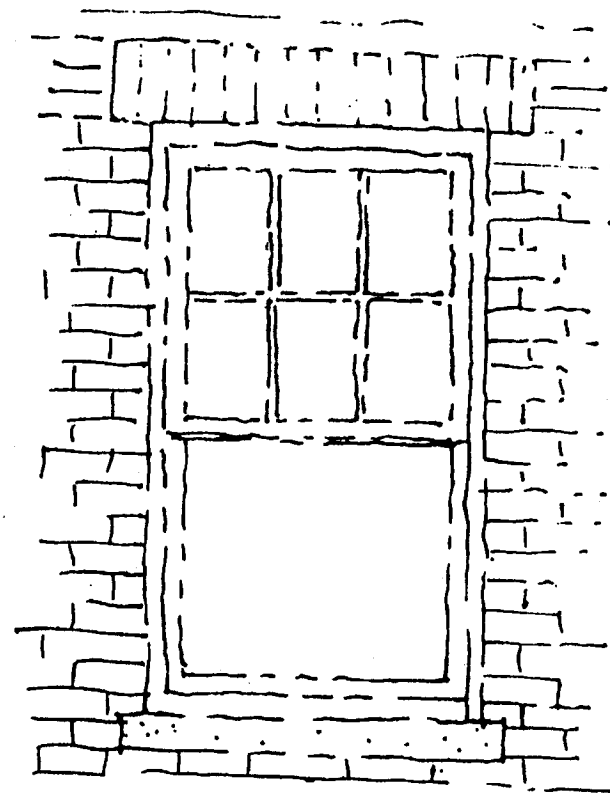
Windows

Windows are an important component of the facade, opening the building with light and offering a proportional continuity between the upper floors and the storefront. Frequently, deteriorated windows have been inappropriately replaced or simply neglected, thereby diminishing the overall character of the building. Every effort should be made to retain and preserve each window, its function and any decorative details still remaining.

Protect and maintain the wood and metal of the window and its surrounds with appropriate surface treatments, such as cleaning or rust removal. All bare wood should be primed with a high-quality, oil-based paint. Any qualified glazier can fix loose or broken windowpanes easily. Make windows weather tight by re-caulking and replacing or installing weather-stripping.

When repairing windows:

- Check the overall condition of window materials and window features to determine if repairs are required,
- Check all wood parts of the window for decay, cracks or splitting,
- Pay particular attention to the sills and window sash bottoms where water may collect,
- Repair window frames and sashes by patching, splicing or reinforcing,
- Replace all parts that are deteriorating or missing,
- Fill cracks with caulk, wood putty or epoxy reinforcement and sand the surface,
- Do not replace an entire window when limited replacement of parts is an option.



Traditional double-hung window

Windows

If a window is missing or deteriorating beyond repair, be sure to:

- Replace the window with one that matches the original, including the same number of panes.
- Use clear, un-tinted glass.
- Use the overall form and any detailing still evident as a guide.
- Remove the old window to the rough opening before replacing.
- Use the same type of materials as originally used, such as zinc-coated steel or copper, or use a compatible substitute.
- Always fill the entire original window opening with window, even if part, or all, of the opening previously had been filled in.

For new buildings in the downtown, double hung windows and clear, un-tinted, glass are preferred.

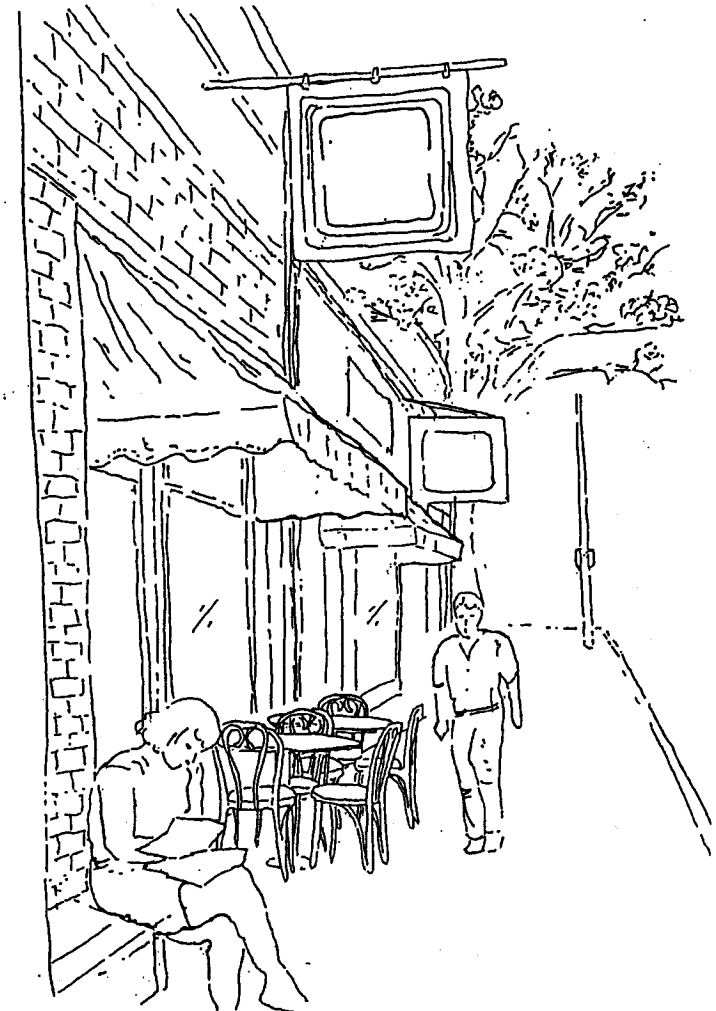
Awnings

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provided shelter, added color and served as a transition between the storefront and the upper facade. An awning should reinforce the frame of the storefront window, but should not cover the piers on either side. It should be attached below the sign panel—the space between the second-story windowsill and the first-story facade. The awning may be mounted between the transom and the display windows, where appropriate, thus allowing light to enter while shading pedestrians and merchandise.

When considering awnings for a downtown building:

- Awning fixtures and canopies that originate from the building's earlier historical period should be retained and repaired where possible,
- New awnings should be complementary in placement, proportion and color to the building's original fixtures and to existing awnings and canopies of adjacent buildings,
- New awnings should be constructed of cloth, or cloth-like material, and should be retractable,
- Shiny vinyl, plastic or metal are inappropriate to historic facades and generally detract from the historic character of the building and those surrounding it,
- Inappropriate awnings and canopies should be removed and replaced with traditional canvas-type fixtures,
- Use galvanized steel rather than aluminum frames,
- Install fasteners into the mortar joints, not the stone or brick.

In some cases, it may be possible to effectively disguise inappropriate storefront alterations by mounting an awning over the alterations while maintaining the proportions of the original storefront.



108-110 Main Street

Signs

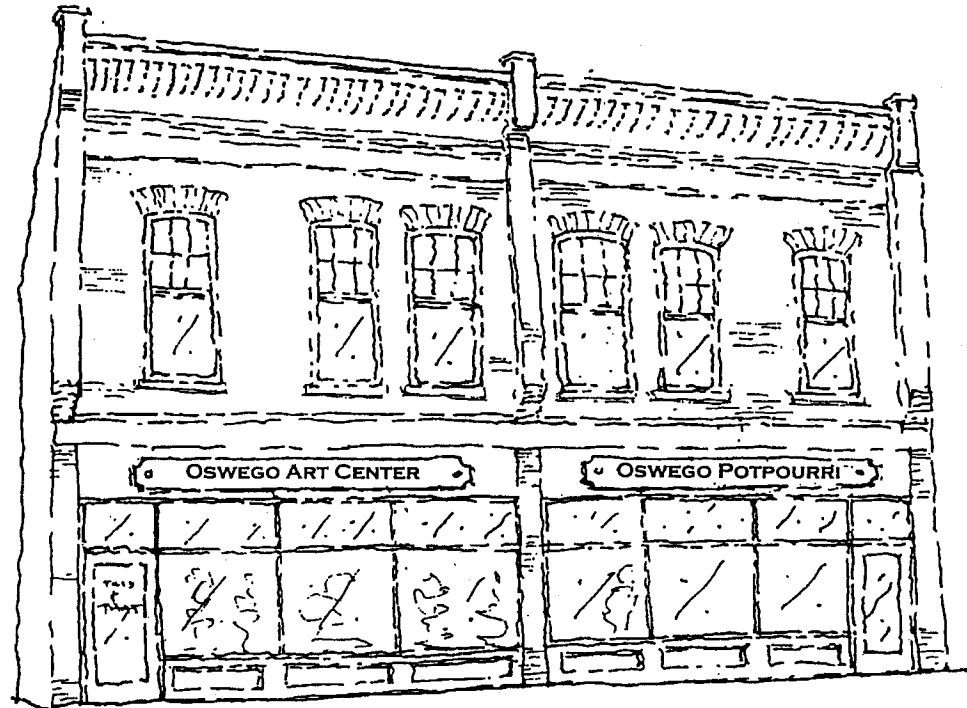
Signs provide businesses with advertising and identity and are a vital part of any downtown area. Appropriate signs also contribute to the overall image of Downtown Oswego. Because they are such a visible storefront element, signs must be designed, selected and utilized appropriately so as not to detract from the facade. With a little forethought and careful planning, signs can fulfill the business owner's needs and also serve to enhance the image of Downtown Oswego.

Placement and Number

Each storefront should be limited to two signs—one primary and one secondary. The primary sign should be located on the building facade above storefront display windows, but below the sill of second floor windows. Turn-of-the-century buildings often used a continuous brick ledge, or corbelling, to separate the storefront from the upper stories. This space is ideal for sign placement, as it often was created for this purpose.

The secondary sign can be a small hanging sign or a sign painted on a door or display window that identifies the business for the pedestrian. This sign generally is oriented toward pedestrians. A sign in a window should not obscure the display area and should occupy no more than 15 percent of the glass area.

Signs or lettering on awnings or canopies may be appropriate as primary or secondary signs. If used for signage, awnings and canopies should follow the design guidelines found in the "Awnings" section. Lettering can be painted or sewn on to the valance. In most cases, 6 to 8 inch letters are sufficient.



69-71 Main Street

Signs

Size

Big does not necessarily mean powerful. Signs should be visually integrated with the storefront to produce a consistent and unified statement about the business within. A sign that overpowers the storefront does not communicate a positive image to the customer. Signs should always be in scale with their surroundings. Actual size may vary, but in general, a wall-mounted sign or sign board should be no more than 2 ½ feet high and should not extend across more than ¾ of the building. Lettering should be 8 to 18 inches high and occupy between 50 and 65 percent of the signboard.

Lettering and Graphics

There are hundreds of lettering types available from sign contractors and designers. The building owner should select a style that expresses the business message, is legible and is compatible with the building and Downtown Oswego. Decorative, serif and sans serif styles can all be used in the downtown area but should be selected for compatibility with the type of business and type of building. Graphics that help describe the type of business they are advertising, or products and services sold, can be an exciting addition to a sign.

In most cases:

- Signs should be limited to a maximum of three colors, two materials, and one lettering style.
- Designers should use available information about the colors, materials, lettering style and placement of original signs on the building when designing new ones,
- Sign colors should complement the building colors.

All of the following may be appropriate downtown, though not for every building:

- Wooden signs with raised letters,
- Metal signs,
- Painted signs,
- Neon,
- Gold leaf.

Nationally distributed or mass produced signs should be avoided, as they typically do not express the character of Downtown Oswego or its unique businesses.

Signs

Content

For maximum impact, signs should express an easy-to-read, direct message: “Keep it simple.” Wording should be minimal, limited to the name of the business and, if necessary, a word or two that expresses its character. Pedestrians and motorists find it easier to read simple wording.

Sign Lighting

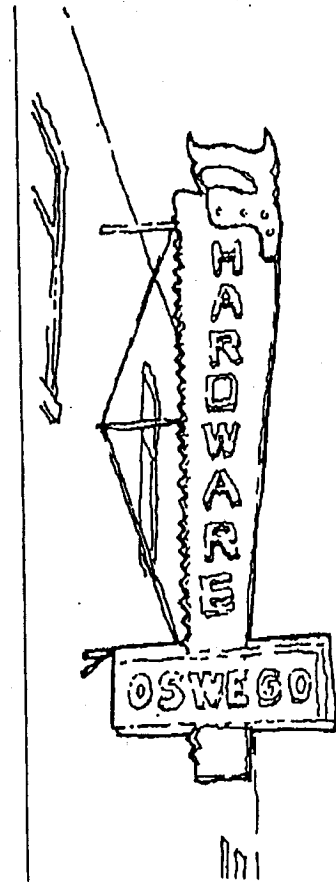
Illuminated signs may be appropriate downtown if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the other sign design guidelines. Use lighting that provides a true color rendition. The light source should be designed as part of the sign or hidden from view. Exposed lights that produce glare are unpleasant for customers and neighbors. Certain styles of backlit signs may be inappropriate for downtown buildings. Electrical fixtures, conduits and wires should be concealed. Where appropriate to the architecture of the building, exposed neon letters and fiber optics can be effective, adding color and vitality to the street.

Sign Design and Construction

Choose a professional sign maker carefully. Quality of workmanship and construction is as vital as quality of design. Ask the contractor where you can see examples of previous work. Where appropriate, restoring a historic Downtown Oswego sign may be a viable and exciting alternative.

Village Ordinance Requirements

Before investing money in a sign, it is wise to determine whether it will comply with applicable local requirements and restrictions. Permits are required for all signs.



80 Main Street

Paint & Color

Paint, as an impermanent element on a historic building, can offer a fun and exciting opportunity to be expressive with this changeable aspect of your building's facade.

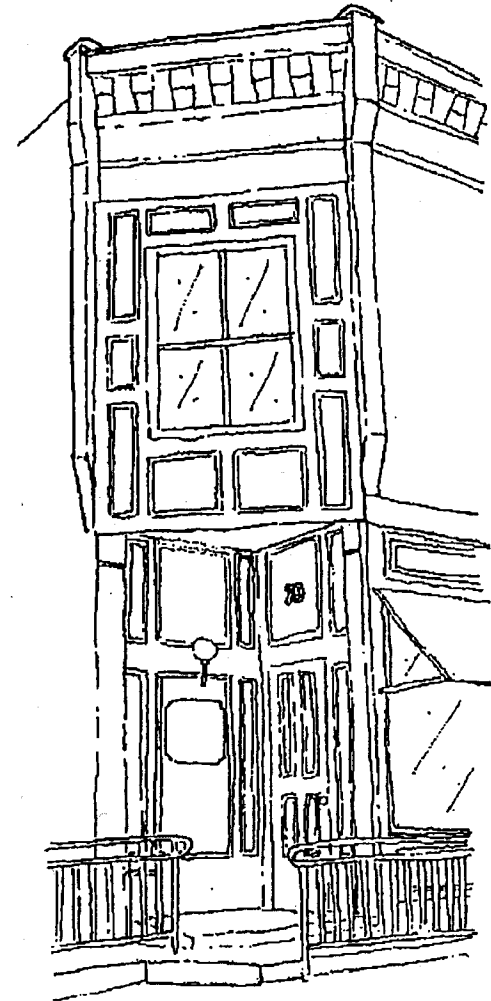
The placement of colors—rather than number of colors—best accentuates architectural details. Colors are distributed into three categories: field, trim (major and minor) and accent. Field color often matches, or is in compliment to, the natural color of building materials, such as brick or stone and is relatively neutral. Major trim color is used to frame the facade, doors and windows. It also is the primary color of the cornice and major architectural elements. If a minor trim color is used, it often is a darker shade placed on doors and window sashes. An accent color is used in limited doses to highlight small details. Colors should tie the architectural elements together, should be consistent throughout the facade's upper and lower portions, and should complement rather than clash with the schemes of adjacent buildings.

Historical Color Scheme

This scheme uses field, trim and accent colors from a particular time period. Historical color schemes are most appropriate for the style and character of buildings designated as landmarks or situated in designated historic districts. The colors should complement the schemes on adjacent buildings. Colors may be chosen based on paint chip analysis of a building's original color or based on colors used on other buildings of the period. Color guides of documented historical hues from selected paint manufacturers are an aid to historical color selection. Old photos of the building or a similar one can establish light versus dark color placement.

Boutique Color Scheme

This non-historical color scheme uses bright trim and accent colors in dramatic contrast to the base color of a building. A building must have an extremely ornate architecture to pick out details successfully with multiple-accent colors. Too many colors on the wrong elements will detract from the building's character and that of its neighbors.



79 Main Street

Paint & Color

Painting

The purpose of paint is to seal the building surface from the elements and to prevent deterioration of materials from temperature and humidity extremes. Generally, wall surfaces such as brick, terra cotta, stone and cast concrete block that have not been painted should remain unpainted. Soft, porous brick that was originally painted should remain painted. Always select paint that is formulated for the particular surface application planned. A primer coat seals the surface and enhances the bond with the compatible topcoats. In unsealed wood and metal surfaces, use oil or alkyd primers. Unsealed masonry requires a specialized sealer. When repainting over an existing topcoat, continue to use the same paint formulation-oil or latex. If a formula change is necessary, or if the original paint type cannot be determined, then prime with a first coat specifically made for the topcoat planned. Finally, apply two topcoats to provide the most durable finish.

Surface Preparation

Proper surface preparation of wood, metal and masonry prior to repainting will maximize the longevity of the topcoat. The following steps will prevent premature paint failure:

- Thoroughly remove dirt, mildew and paint chalk with a mild detergent.
- Remove failing paint on wood with electric heat, scraping or sanding. Extreme caution should always be used when using heat to remove paint.
- Remove failing paint on metal or masonry with an approved chemical application or with scraping or sanding.

Sandblasting, high pressure washes or other abrasive paint removal methods should never be undertaken. Well-documented evidence shows that these methods do irreversible damage to wood and masonry surfaces. Sandblasting removes the hard, glazed surface from kiln-fired masonry and exposes thinner, more porous material to water infiltration and accelerated deterioration. Sandblasting also severely pits the surfaces of masonry and wood, and with the latter, opens the grain to moisture, dirt and mildew infiltration.

Following proper surface cleaning, significant architectural elements should be retained, repaired or preserved whenever possible. As a last resort, damaged material should be replaced with similar, matching material only. Weathered and cracked wood should be treated with consolidates, preservatives and/or fillers, then sanded prior to sealing.

Masonry

Many buildings in Downtown Oswego consist of brick masonry. Some structures also consist of stone or concrete block. Masonry is a strong, durable building material, and, when well maintained, can last for centuries. Two very common repair activities are masonry cleaning and tuck-pointing. While both may improve the appearance of a building, care must be taken to determine the proper techniques to be used so that no harm is done to the masonry.

Masonry Cleaning

It should not be assumed that all masonry needs cleaning. Surface stains generally cause few problems and can even enhance the charm of an older building. However, evidence may indicate that heavy dirt and other pollutants are now harming the masonry. It is reasonable to clean masonry only where necessary to halt deterioration or to remove unsightly and heavy soiling while taking care not to destroy the natural characteristics that come with age.

Some Questions to Consider:

- How clean of a surface is desired or necessary?
- What is the nature of the soil and how tightly is it adhering to the surface?
- What is the masonry type and what are its characteristics?
- How is the surface constructed; are there any metal attachments that could rust?
- How can the environment and the publics' and workers' health best be protected during the cleaning?

The basic principle in cleaning masonry is to select the gentlest method possible to achieve an acceptable level of cleanliness. Working with a professional architect or masonry expert helps to ensure that the method chosen is right for your building.

Masonry

The 3 Major Cleaning Methods

- Water:** This method ranges from hand scrubbing to pressure washing to steam cleaning. It softens and rinses dirt deposits from the surface. Water cleaning generally is the simplest, gentlest, safest and least expensive method.
- Chemical:** Chemical cleaners include acids, alkalines or organic compounds in either liquid or vapor forms. The chemicals react with the dirt and/or the masonry to hasten the removal process. When used improperly, chemical methods can cause serious damage to the environment, including plants, animals and rivers, from run-off.
- Abrasive:** Abrasives include grit blasting, grinders or sanding disks to remove dirt or stains. All abrasive methods are inappropriate ways to clean old masonry.

To select the best cleaning technique, a patch test should be performed and the results observed for a sufficient time period (all four seasons, if possible) to determine the immediate and long-range effects of the cleaning method.

Masonry

Tuck-pointing

Tuck-pointing is the removal of deteriorating or failing mortar from masonry joints and replacing it with new mortar. Tuck-pointing can restore the visual and physical integrity of the masonry. Generally, it is better to clean the masonry with the gentlest method possible before tuck-pointing, unless the mortar is badly eroded. Cleaning the building at the time of tuck-pointing may be appropriate as tuck-pointing can add additional dirt to the face of the building.

Some obvious signs of deterioration may assist in the decision to tuck-point the mortar, including:

- Disintegration of mortar
- Cracks in mortar joints
- Loose bricks at cornice sections or decorative elements

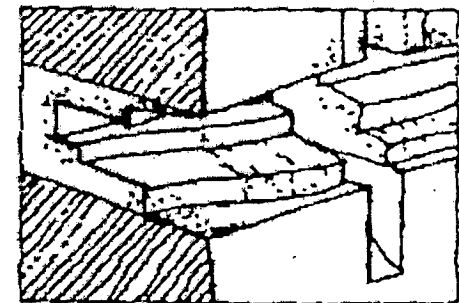
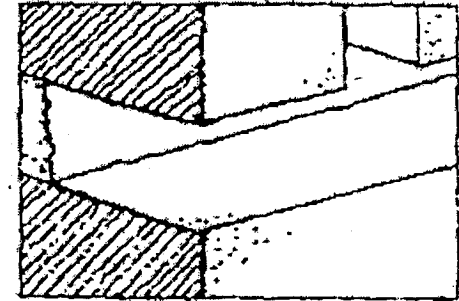
Only tuck-point where there is deterioration. Only experienced professionals should do tuck-pointing.

Further Points to Consider

- Duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color and texture.
- Rake the joint carefully to an even face and uniform depth, preferably with the use of hand tools.
- Duplicate old mortar joints in width and in profile.
- Have an architect make occasional site visits during tuck-pointing work.

Preparing the Joint for Tuck-Pointing

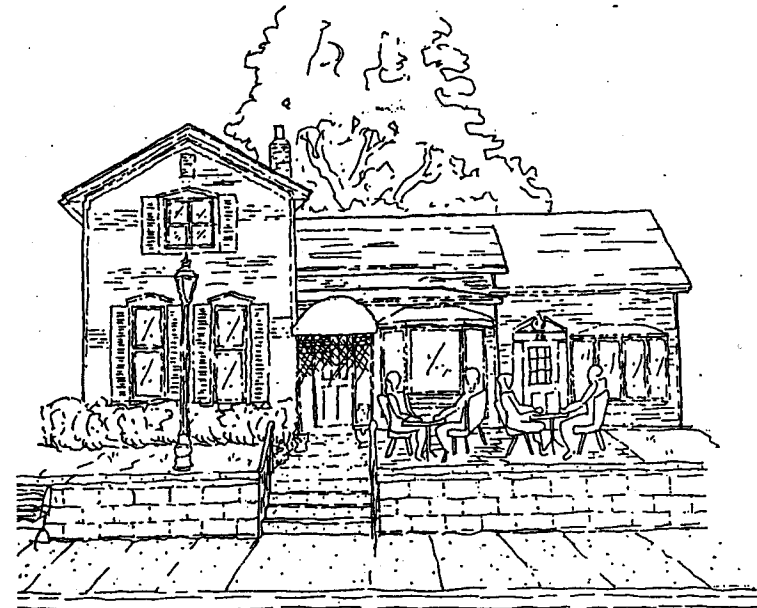
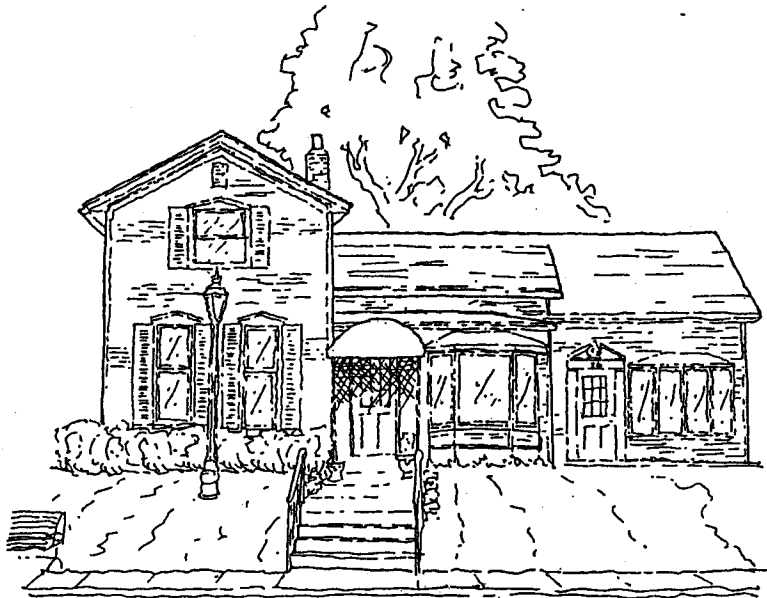
Below: A well-raked joint with an even surface and scraped to a depth of approximately 2 ½ times the height of the joint.



Above: Uneven scraping with the use of a radial saw. If mortar can be removed only with the use of power tools, then it probably should not be removed.

Residential Buildings – Commercial Uses

Minimal modifications can help former residential buildings become better integrated into the commercial district, while respecting their original architecture. Adding elements that strengthen the street edge and invite the pedestrian into the building are appropriate investments.



20 Main Street

Infill & Building Additions

Infill – the construction of new buildings on vacant lots – is encouraged. The design of an infill building is a special challenge, particularly its facade, which should be designed to look appropriate and be compatible in relation to the surrounding buildings.

Infill

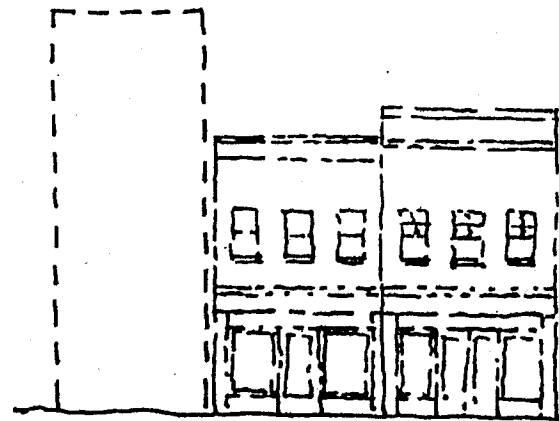
What constitutes good infill design? There is no absolute answer; a good design will vary according to its setting. Because an infill building is new, it should look new. However, the appearance must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors without mimicking them. There are several ideas that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

Proportions of the Facade

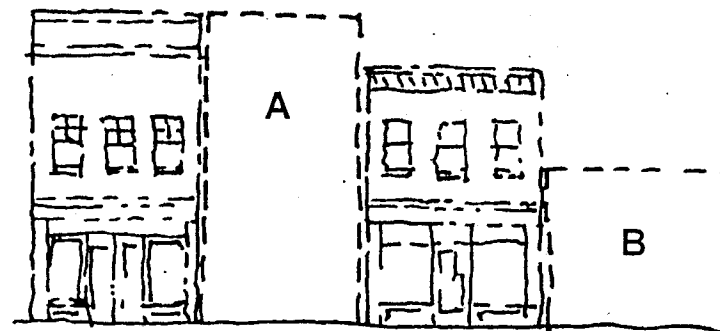
The average height and width of the surrounding buildings determines a general set of proportions of an infill structure or the bays of a larger structure. The infill building should occupy the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street. If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be broken into a number of smaller bays to maintain a rhythm with the surrounding buildings.

Composition

The composition of the infill facade—that is, the organization of its parts—should be similar to that of surrounding facades. Rhythms that carry throughout the block, such as window spacing, should be incorporated into the new facade.



The height of this infill is inappropriate to its neighbors.



The height of proposed building A is appropriate to its neighbors. Proposed building B is inappropriate.

Infill & Building Additions

Detailing

Infill architecture should reflect elements and detailing of adjacent buildings, including window shapes, cornice lines and brick work.

Materials

An infill facade should be composed of materials similar to the adjacent facades, including such options as using brick to complement stone. The new building should not stand out against and in opposition to the others.

Color

Colors chosen for an infill facade should relate to the neighboring buildings.

Building Setback

The new facade should be flush to its neighbors.

Roof Forms

The type of roof used should be similar to those found on adjacent buildings. Usually, the upper cornice will cover the visibility of a flat or gabled roof from the street.

Additions to Existing Buildings

New additions to existing buildings should not destroy or obscure historic materials or architectural details that characterize the property as a whole. New work should be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the original building, should be sensitive to the character of adjacent buildings, and should be generally governed by the guidelines for infill construction.

New Construction/Future Development

Downtown Oswego may consider future redevelopment of larger areas where guidelines to infill buildings are not sufficient. Where areas for redevelopment are large enough that no reference to “adjacent buildings” is available, new developments should apply infill guidelines with reference to adjacent blocks and to the general characteristics of the core area of the downtown. Generally new developments in Downtown Oswego should ensure a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment, in that:

- Primary entrances should face the street
- Building setbacks should be minimal to ensure the creation of a street wall
- Pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streetscape enhancements should be provided for in all new developments
- Parking should be located to the rear of buildings and coordinated with other surrounding buildings
- The facades of new buildings should be composed primarily of glass at street level
- Elements of the traditional commercial facade should be used
- Pedestrian scaled elements, such as planters, benches, banners, bike racks, etc., should be encouraged

New buildings should look new, and existing buildings should not be mimicked. Designers, however, should be respectful of the considerable design and craftsmanship invested in the architectural details of existing Downtown Oswego buildings. Owners and their designers should, therefore, plan to invest such efforts into the inclusion of contemporary details for new buildings.

In new construction, efforts should be made to increase the quality of the building’s detailing. Details achieved with polychromy (two-toned brick work), a diversity of stylized brickwork such as corbelling, soldier coursing, rowlock brickwork, and decorative limestone contrasting materials are examples of traditional detailing that can effectively, and appropriately, be integrated in new construction designs. Decorative, expanded poly-resin is a reasonable alternative to historic metal work. Although it might seem as though contemporary architecture would strip the building of details, good examples of using historical materials in a contemporary and dynamic way can be found in Downtown Oswego today.

Appendix A:

Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation

A full version of these standards is available for review at www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/secstan1.htm or at the Village of Oswego

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 alterations 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; 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 historic 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.
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 alteration, 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.

Appendix B:

Definitions

Awning: A framework covered with fabric or metal projecting from the facade of a building located on a storefront or individual window opening. The primary purpose is to shade the interior of the building and provide protection to pedestrians. Awnings can be supported by poles or brackets.

Bulkhead/Kick Plate: The wood or metal panel located beneath the display window in a typical storefront.

Bay: The portion of a facade between columns or piers, providing regular divisions and usually marked by windows.

Canopy: A flat metal and/or wooden structure used to shelter pedestrians on the sidewalk that projects out from a storefront at a right angle and is usually suspended with chains or rods.

Corbelling: A series of bricks projected beyond points below.

Cornice: A projecting molding that crowns the top of a storefront or facade.

Double Hung Window: A window with two sashes that slides up and down.

Facade: Any one of the external faces or elevations of a building.

Lintel: A horizontal structural element over a window or door opening that supports the wall above.

Parapet: The portion of the wall of a facade that extends above the roofline.

Piers: A solid masonry support, between doors windows and other opening.

Sash: A frame designed to hold the glass in a window.

Sign Board/Fascia: A horizontal panel either of wood or an inset in a brick wall located immediately below the cornice. It is usually an ideal location to place a sign.

Storefront: The first story of a facade of a commercial building, usually having display windows.

Transom: A small horizontal window located above a door or display window.

Window Hood: An exterior projecting molding on the top of a window, located in the upper facade.

Appendix C:

Bibliography and Suggested Reading

Architecture

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Historic Preservation in Small Towns: A Manual of Practice. American Association for State and Local History Press; 1980.

Landmark Yellow Pages: All the Names, Addresses, Facts and Figures You Need in Preservation. ed. Dwight, Pamela. National Trust for Historic Preservation Press. Washington; 1993.

Morton, W. Brown, III et al. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. Technical Preservation Services, U.S. Department of the Interior. Washington, DC; 1990.

Restoration, Rehabilitation and Repair

London, Mark. Masonry: How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone. The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic Preservation; 1986.

Moss, Roger W. Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings, 1820—1920. American Life Foundation; 1981.

Repairing Old and Historic Windows. The Preservation Press; 1992.

Additional Resources

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 500 E. Madison Street, Springfield, IL 62701, (217) 782-4836, www.state.il.us/hpa/

Illinois Masonry Institute, 1480 Renaissance Drive, Park Ridge, IL 60068, (847) 297-6704