



DESIGN GUIDELINES

Downtown Turners Falls &

Millers Falls

November, 2000



AVENUE A, TURNERS FALLS, MASS.

CHAPTER TWO

Design Principles and Objectives

There are several principles for façade design that can help any building to be a good neighbor in the downtown streetscape. In the case of existing facades, improvements should restore or be reminiscent of the original appearance. New buildings are often most successful when they try to contribute to the overall streetscape without mimicking historic buildings.

I. Rehabilitation of National Register Properties

When rehabilitating properties that are listed on the National Historic Register, such as those located in the Turners Falls Historic District, the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties should be followed. These standards are based on some very basic historic preservation principles that influence all subsequent design decisions. The ten standards are:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive 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. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
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. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new fixture will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
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.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

II. Rehabilitation of Existing Historic Structures

Buildings of historic merit should be respected when doing alterations of any kind, from hanging a sign to constructing large additions. The building elements that make up the type and style of a building cannot be removed, covered up or 'modernized' without having a significant adverse impact on the whole building. This also applies to making the building look historic by adding elements that are not part of the building's genuine historic character.

Historic buildings are an invaluable resource and should be treated with sensitivity. Changes to them should be harmonious in form, style, and color to the original structure in order for the alteration to have a natural fit. On historic existing buildings or properties that have been altered with inappropriate additions or façade 'improvements', a priority for building owners should be to remove these elements and restore the building either to its original appearance or to that which will be harmonious with its style.

II. New Additions or Infill Construction

When designing new buildings or additions to historic properties there are several general criteria that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

- **Building Height** - Downtown buildings generally share a similarity in height. The infill construction should respect this. A new façade which is too high or low can interrupt this consistent quality.
- **Building Width** - The infill building should reflect the characteristic rhythm of facades along the street. If the site is large, the mass of a façade can be broken into a number of smaller bays.
- **Proportion** - The characteristic proportion (the relationship between height and width) of existing facades should be respected.
- **Relationship to Street** - The new façade should have a relationship to the street which is consistent with its neighbors.
- **Roof Forms** - The type of roof used should be similar to those found on adjacent buildings. On Main Street, this means a flat roof not visible on the front façade.
- **Composition** - The composition of the infill façade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.
- **Rhythm** - Rhythms which carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new façade.
- **Proportion of Openings** - The size and proportion of window and door openings should be similar to those on surrounding facades.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN GUIDELINES

I. SITE DESIGN - BUILDINGS AND PARKING

The location of buildings on their site, their relationship to adjoining buildings and the street, and the edge treatment of open sites define the physical character and create the first impression of a downtown. Preserving an even setback close to the sidewalk provides a strong edge for the pedestrian environment. On streets like Avenue A in Downtown Turners Falls and Main Street in Millers Falls, buildings historically were densely placed side-by-side right up to the sidewalk, with only a few narrow gaps between structures, resulting in an almost unbroken image as one looked down the street. This pattern formed a street wall, and it was the dominant character in Downtown Turners Falls for nearly 100 years. It provided the main street with a strong image that appealed to the pedestrian as it created continuous visual interest along its length.

Today that strong street wall character is fragmented along portions of Avenue A in Turners Falls, particularly where development has occurred in the last 30 years (i.e. Food City/Brooks strip mall; Couture Paint Supply and Greenfield Savings Bank), where incursions of vehicle-oriented uses have started to fragment the relationship between buildings and the street edge. Fortunately there are few other examples in Downtown Turners Falls, and none in Millers Falls, and this street wall has been preserved amazingly in tact. New building development should line the sidewalk in order to continue and enhance this street wall character.

Private parking should be sited in off-street lots behind or underneath buildings. Where existing private parking is located in front of or next to a building, such as the Food City Mall in Turners Falls and Carroll's Market lot in Turners Falls, every effort should be made to mitigate its visual impact. Landscaping and fencing can greatly improve the character of these lots by preserving the street edge and screening off bleak expanses of asphalt. Sidewalk should be provided to move people safely from lots to businesses. Careful consideration should also be given to lighting in parking lots, to ensure sufficient visibility without glare into public ways and adjoining properties. Landscaping of private parking areas is also advisable.

Site Design Guidelines:

(A) VEHICULAR ACCESS

- Minimize new curb cuts on public ways
- Where possible share curb cuts/access roads with adjacent properties
- Provide access by rear or side street if possible to avoid principal roadway

(B) PARKING

- Locate parking to side and rear of buildings.
- No parking in front yard setback, nor closer to street than principal building structure.
- Wherever possible, share parking with adjacent businesses.
- Include provisions for parking of bicycles in locations segregated from automobile traffic.
- Design parking lots to minimize direct views of parked vehicles from streets and sidewalks by utilizing topography and landscaping.
- Include adequate provision for on-site retention and treatment of storm water.
- Provide perimeter fencing, planting or landscape treatment around any parking lot which abuts a residential area (or is greater than ___ spaces).
- Use pedestrian scale light fixtures in all parking lots.
- Provide interior landscaping for larger parking lots (greater than ___ spaces); use landscape islands at least ___ feet in width, and minimum of 1 shade tree per three parking spaces.

(C) PEDESTRIAN ACCESS.

- Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian access
- Provide pedestrian walkways to ensure safe passage between parking lots and destinations.

(D) LANDSCAPING/SCREENING

- Provide perimeter landscaping or fencing around any parking lot which abuts a residential area.
- Provide ___ feet of perimeter landscaping or fencing between a parking lot and street or public way.
- Landscape with an opaque screening of evergreen or compact hedges.
- Provide landscape buffers adjacent to abutting uses.
- Parking lots over ___ spaces must provide landscaping around perimeter. Street trees should be spaced not more than 20 feet apart.
- Large parking areas (greater than ___ spaces) shall be separated by landscape islands at least ___ feet in width. A minimum of ___ shade tree for every ___ parking spaces.
- Exposed storage areas, machinery, garbage dumpsters, service areas, loading areas, utility buildings and structures should be screened from abutting properties and streets using plantings, fences and other methods compatible with the goals of this regulations.
- An approved plan for maintenance of landscaped areas shall be provided.

(E) LIGHTING

- Any outdoor lighting fixture newly installed or replaced shall be designed so it does not produce a strong, direct light beyond the property boundaries.
- Exterior lighting should be in a white light spectrum and fixture shall be consistent with the historic character of the area. Low pressure sodium and other non-white spectrum lamps are not appropriate.
- Cut off fixtures that direct light downwards should be utilized to reduce light pollution.

II BUILDING REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION

(A) GENERAL

When undertaking a building rehabilitation or restoration project within Downtown Turners Falls or Millers Falls, it is important, first, to identify and preserve the important architectural features which contribute to the quality of the building and downtown as a whole. Such features include columns, cornices, lintels, transom windows (a window band sometimes located above the shop window and door), panels, parapets, and copper and slate roofs. Distinctive original features of the building such as architectural brickwork and exterior woodwork trim should not be covered up; they are an asset. Remove later façade elements that conceal such features. In general, these additions were made to eliminate the maintenance of more ornate details and to keep up with changing fashions. Most construction and facing materials of the 19th and 20th century buildings, however, are sturdier than today's materials. Rehabilitation and proper maintenance are a cost-effective investment. Besides, owners of income-producing buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for a 20% federal income tax credit for rehabilitation work on their property. The rehabilitation must conform to the Secretary of Interior's Standard for Treatment of Historic Places. As the Turners Falls Historic District is currently listed on the National Register, its property owners are eligible to benefit from the historic tax credit.

(B) A HISTORY OF THE TRADITIONAL STREET FRONT FACADE

The basic building block of Main Street is the traditional street front commercial façade. It was built in many sizes, shapes and styles, but was always essentially the same façade (see Figure). Facades of this type lined Main Street on both sides. One next to another, formed strong and solid blocks, marked by the rhythm of repeating parts. Because it was composed of similar facades, the block had a consistent, organized, and coordinated appearance. Any given façade was visually related to its neighbors. The idea of visual relatedness is crucial to the goal of an integrated Main Street. Historically, Main Street facades complemented and reinforced one another. Thus, the appearance of Main Street today is largely the result of a strong architectural tradition. Beginning with the early buildings of the mid-1800's and continuing up to about 1930, this tradition controlled how Main Street looked.

We have looked at the façade as the building block of Main Street. Now it can be considered in itself. Aside from consistency, what were the typical characteristics of the

traditional façade? Basically, the façade had two parts – the storefront and the upper façade. (Diagram)

The upper façade was a flat masonry wall (brick or stone). This wall had window openings cut into it and decoration applied to it. Upper facades typical of the period (Mid to late 1800's) in which both Downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls developed were characterized by boldly decorated cornices and window hoods, with narrow window openings. (Figure).

The traditional characteristics of the storefront are in marked contrast to the more substantial upper façade. The storefront was rather delicate in appearance and was composed primarily of large display windows (Diagram). Storefronts designs typical of the Mid 1800s to early 1900s were boldly decorated cornice, cast iron columns and large display windows. Traditional storefronts also were always visually contained by the façade, that is, they were set into the façade and not applied to the front of it. The storefront of this period were almost all glass and emphasized the display windows.

(C) REHABILITATION STANDARDS

In general, property owners undertaking rehabilitation of historic buildings, whether they are formally listed on the National Register, or not, should seek to meet the following broad guidelines:

- Preserve and enhance facades and architectural features of historical and high quality buildings.
- Remove additions and inappropriate materials, which are covering up distinctive original features of a building.
- Wherever possible, replace missing elements of the building's original architecture and materials with in kind elements and materials to match.
- When in kind replacement is not possible, use contemporary design and quality materials to offset and highlight the original structure and details.
- Use building materials and colors that are compatible with the distinctive character of surrounding commercial buildings.

Property owners who are contemplating rehabilitation of a historic building are also strongly encouraged to read the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1995, which are contained in Appendix

(D) BUILDING REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

(1) BUILDING WALLS

Building walls provide the basic framework for our perception of buildings. The building wall's organization, patterns, details, fenestration and color are the bulk of what informs us of its use, its structure, and its style. As the downtown areas in both Turners Falls and Millers Falls were constructed over a short time frame (one as part of a planned industrial community and the other following a tragic fire), both possess a strong sense of

architectural integrity. This integrity can be easily damaged by the use of incompatible building materials or colors in a new or rehabilitated façade. Whether undertaking a restoration of an existing structure or constructing a new commercial building in Downtown Turners Falls or Millers Falls, a property owner should take to insure that:

- Building fenestration should be sympathetic to adjacent buildings
- Major horizontal courses and bands should complement the adjacent buildings.
- Colors used on the façade should be complementary to the natural materials used on the building and the buildings immediately adjacent to it.
- Building elements such as awnings, storefronts, doors, bays, sills and lintels, signage, lighting etc. should complement the adjacent buildings
- For all buildings within the Downtown core areas, with the exception of one and two family residential structures, an effort should be made to provide continuous pedestrian interest along street facades and facades facing parking and public spaces.
- Blank walls without any visual content or interest along a pedestrian sidewalk and areas should be avoided.

(2) BUILDING MATERIALS

Building materials are also a very important part of the design of new construction or façade renovation in Downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls. The character of the area, which developed over time, is the biggest factor in choosing what materials are appropriate. Regardless of which of the wide variety of materials available is used in any project, one of the fundamental ideas to remember is that the materials should help the buildings or improvement relate favorably to its surroundings. Of foremost importance is the consideration of materials in row or dense street wall situations where buildings, right next to one another, must achieve a certain harmonious relationship. They must complement one another.

The following guidelines attempt to address the need for harmony within the downtown areas of Turners Falls and Downtown Millers Falls, by encouraging the selection and use of materials that are compatible with the historical character of the districts. The Victorian era around the end of the 19th century developed a number of commercial styles in both Downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls. In Turner Falls, most of these styles incorporated masonry as the major wall material. Most of the brick used in this construction came from the Thomas brickyard, and was made from clay mined in Montague City. As the intricate architectural detailing of the brickwork of the Bank Block (Crocker) attests, the cohesive material image that formed did not lack a variety of masonry materials, color, texture, and pattern between neighboring structures. Diversity in masonry expression did not come at the expense of creating streets of complementary buildings. Buildings were harmonious neighbors. Perhaps owing to limitations on the availability of large quantities of brick in 1895 (following the great fire), or just personal preference of individual builders, commercial buildings in Millers Falls include a mix of masonry and wood frame structures.

When selecting and using materials to be used in restoration or new construction in Downtown Turners Falls and Millers Falls care should be taken to:

- Select building materials that complement the adjacent buildings in the area.
- Pre-cast concrete, concrete masonry units, applied thin brick veneer (less than 4 inches) or materials made to look like brick should not be used.
- The use of masonry under storefront windows or as a base band for the building wall should not be used.
- Brick should not be heavily molded or made to appear old on new structures.
- Building materials and colors that are compatible with the distinctive character of the Turners Falls Historic District area. Use trim details that in the spirit of the old commercial architecture of Downtown Turners Falls.
- Do not use imitation brick, imitation stone, rough hewn cedar shingles, textured exterior plywood, vinyl siding, metal sheeting, unpainted aluminum, opaque or reflective glass.
- All windows and doors should be made of wood or metal. Frames or screens or screen/storm doors should be made of the same material and finish as the primary door and window.
- Metal and metal finish should be either painted galvanized steel, a painted aluminum or an non-clear anodized finish aluminum, a muntz metal (architectural bronze) or other metals with a natural finish or patina. Natural aluminum and glossy stainless steel finishes are not acceptable.
- Vinyl siding, or other solid vinyl-clad product, should not be used.
- Plywood and other wood panel sheathing materials should not be used as finish cladding unless incorporated within a frame. The panel must be durable for exterior use.

(3) DOORS AND ENTRANCES.

Doors signal not only a point of entry to a building but also a point of activity. Entrances are important to the vitality of the street, and they should be located on the street. On Avenue A, in Turners Falls, and Main or Bridge Streets in Millers Falls, this is a key guideline. All primary entrances should be oriented to Main Street or to the building fronts upon so that as much activity is on the street as possible. For buildings which also front on a parking lot, the temptation to put the main entrance off the lot should be resisted. Remember, the idea of main street is to increase pedestrian traffic at the sidewalk.

The image of the door itself is important. If it is on the main street the door should have a generous amount of transparency in order to maximize the pedestrian interest. This is the case for all primary entrances. Fully glazed, stile and rail doors give this transparency, but doors also can be made of wood or metal.

The glazing of the doors is important. In nearly all instances, a single glass or polycarbonate panel will suffice for the transparent panel of the door. Multiple-paned glazing is appropriate only if it is historically accurate for the building.

(4) WINDOWS

Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows – and their functional and decorative features – are important in defining the overall historic character of a building. Such features can include frames, sash, muntins, glazing, sills, heads, hoodmolds, panelled or decorated jambs and moldings, and interior and exterior shutters and blinds.

Windows should serve as building's functions and also respect the neighboring fenestration patterns. Traditional window openings honestly expressed the limits of the rooms behind them: smaller windows in rooms with lower ceilings or grand window bays in rooms of importance. Continuous horizontal or vertical strip windows, popular in conventional office buildings, ignore the wall or floor elements behind them. Their pattern is discouraged since they would not relate to historic surroundings.

Building uses change over time. It is common in the renovation of older buildings that windows that served well for the original purpose are not needed or do not function well for the new use. Before changing or eliminating windows, the overall design of the façade must be considered. More creative ways of adapting windows may be required in order to accomplish a good design.

- Windows with historic multiple panes and muntins (or with that appearance) should be avoided unless it is appropriate to the primary style original to the building.
- Continuous horizontal or vertical strip windows should not be used.
- When a ceiling needs to be lowered below the head of any window in a renovation, a ceiling soffit should be provided to allow the vision glass to be full height.
- Window sills on floors above the first floors above the first floor should be no lower than 18" above the floor, and no higher than 36" above the finish floor.
- Windows should be of similar style and pattern to existing buildings. These are typically double hung or casement windows. Picture windows are not acceptable.
- Provide large display windows along the first floor façade to maintain a strong visual connection between the interior and exterior. Provide a minimum of 70% of the linear frontage of the first floor façade for doors and windows with clear glass. For first floor facades not devoted to retail, the surface area devoted to clear glass can be reduced to 50%.
- The sill of storefront windows should be no higher than 2 feet, and the top of the window no lower than 8 feet.
- Storefront windows should be recessed no more than 6-12 inches.
- Retain and repair existing window openings including sash, glass, lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, and hoods wherever possible.
- Duplicate the material, design and hardware of the older window sash if new sash.
- Install visually unobtrusive storm windows and doors where needed, that do not damage the existing frames and that can be removed in the future.

- Repair window frames and sash by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing.
- When historic windows (frames, sash and glazing) are completely missing, use accurate restoration using historical, pictorial and physical documentation; or be a new design that is compatible with the window openings and the historic character of the building.

III STOREFRONT REHABILITATION

(A) STOREFRONTS: GENERAL

The storefront and the elements that frame it are key items in the design of buildings that make an understandable downtown commercial environment. The storefront establishes the identity, the individuality and the character of the activity that takes place behind the glass. It is one of the easiest ways to establish common themes that help create a cohesive quality to a row of buildings.

The building elements frame the storefront opening: the vertical piers (or similar elements) at the sides define the bay width, the horizontal band or frieze is at the top, and the base panel or sill course define the bottom edge. To maintain the storefront's appearance properly, all of these elements must be strong and visible and not be obscured by oversized signage or similar additions.

The vertical elements, such as brick piers, cast iron columns, or a heavy wood post or mullion, have the important job of defining the storefront bay. In addition to their function in defining the bay, these vertical elements also define the proper limits of a canopy, restricting the canopy to their inside edges. Traditionally they have been the focus of more decorative treatment than other elements. Within the appropriate design for its building style, decorative treatment for vertical elements is encouraged.

The horizontal band or frieze at the top of the storefront, separating the lower storefront zone from the upper zones, is the most important element in defining the building type. It provides the boundary between the retail and other commercial use below, and the (usually) more private uses above. It is the traditional band for placement of signage. Its clear horizontal form should be kept in tact in existing buildings and developed in newer ones.

The base panel or sill course for the storefront provide a visual base for the display window to rest upon. The material for these elements should be the same or harmonious with the storefront finish. It should not be so high so as to cut down on the display potential. Even if the ground floor is not retail, consideration should be given to providing a storefront character consistent with the retail and restaurant uses. Non-retail uses can provide the same storefront appearance and yet deal with light or privacy issues particular to their businesses. These storefronts should not preclude a more retail-oriented use in the future.

Storefronts should be open and welcoming and help to establish an individual identity for the store. The storefront and its frame are the key elements in the design of the first floor façade. They provide an opportunity to establish the individuality and character of each business by drawing attention to it and the goods and services it provides. By providing a clear separation between stores, the frame allows each store to establish its own special character and identity.

General Guidelines:

- Building elements, which frame storefront openings, should be harmonious with the rest of the building.
- Design the storefront to fit inside a framed opening and not extend beyond it. To accentuate the sense of containment, a storefront can be set back slightly (6" to 12") from the front surface of the building.
- Use changes in color, materials or alignment to distinguish the storefront from the frame and establish an individual identity for each store
- Ensure that the frame elements are the color and texture throughout the building. (Where masonry is used as the frame material it should only be painted under special circumstances.)
- In the case of a larger storefront, use a frame to create divisions within the storefront.
- Establish an individual identity for each storefront.
- Vertical building elements, such as piers, columns and heavy mullions, should define storefront bays and the limits of awnings. A simple decorative treatment detailing a base, middle and top of the vertical elements will be encouraged.
- A horizontal band or frieze should be incorporated at the top of storefronts to terminate the storefront level. The incorporation of signage in this band is strongly encouraged.
- At the storefront base, there should be a base panel and sill course. The panel and sill course should continue across the entire storefront bay width but will terminate at the vertical elements framing the storefront bay.
- Base panel and sill course should be no higher than 30 inches above the sidewalk.
- For commercial facades facing a street, storefronts or other glazed opening should make up at least 2/3 of the building façade length at the sidewalk level. (Marlborough)
- Recessed entryways: recess doorways where possible; do not recess windows. (Natick) (Note: the traditional storefront had a recessed entry at the front door. This configuration accomplished two important things. First, it kept the display windows right next to the sidewalk in full view of passers-by. Then, with the entry recess, it emphasized the door. The intimacy of the enclosed and sheltered doorway seemed to invite the pedestrian inside. KUA)

(B) STOREFRONT SYSTEMS

Storefront design should always emphasize transparency. Glass is the dominant material and it must provide clear vision glass to see the storefront displays inside. The traditional storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. For very functional reasons it was

designed to be as transparent as possible. This allowed a maximum of natural light into the typically narrow, windowless store space and relieved the closed-in feeling. It also allowed the potential customer a full view into the store, both of the merchandise displays and the interior space. With the minimal barrier between store and sidewalk, the two seemed to melt into one. The store space became part of the public space, readily accessible to shoppers. Glass that is tinted is not only uncharacteristic of traditional storefronts but is also inappropriate since pedestrians will find it difficult to see through and is also a non-traditional material.

Large glass areas are encouraged in the target areas. In the event that ceilings are being lowered for air handling needs or other considerations, a successful strategy would be to create a ceiling soffit at the storefront display window in order to allow the dropped ceiling to stop and allow the full height of the glass. This strategy was employed in the design of a storefront restoration for Rist Insurance Company in Turners Falls.

Storefront System Guidelines

- Storefronts should be as transparent as possible.
- A minimum of 70% of the linear frontage of the first floor façade should be comprised of doors and windows with transparent glass.
- Sill heights should not exceed two feet above street level, and the tops of windows should be a minimum of eight feet above grade.
- Storefront window design should emphasize vertical height.
- Storefront windows shall be recessed no more than 6" to 12".
- Glass areas with historic multiple panes and muntins (or with that appearance) should be avoided unless it is appropriate to the style original to the building.
- When a ceiling needs to be lowered below the head of any storefront in a renovation, a ceiling soffit should be provided to allow the vision glass to be full height.
- Opaque panels, such as painted metal or spandrel glass, should be not be used to replace vision glazing in storefronts.
- Storefront doors should be as transparent as possible. At least 50% of the area of entrance doors should be glass.
- When storefront heights allow, a glazed transom should be incorporated above the door.
- Storefront window transoms should be consistent with the transom of the door.

(C) STOREFRONT DISPLAY

Displays in storefront windows may be the most direct form of advertisement to attract the pedestrian. The continuous pedestrian interest that leads one down the street is the responsibility of all who have storefronts on the street. Creative storefront displays that are appropriately updated add another element of color, texture or visual activity to the pedestrian experience. It is important that all storefront owners provide some level of pedestrian interest at their windows. The window should display one of the following:

- Display of products either made or sold at the location.
- Display of a service available at that location.
- A sign painted on the glass that states the name and type of business or organization located there.
- Public service messages or displays.
- A view of human activity. This ideally should be an activity that highlights the making, selling or buying of goods, or the providing of a service, but it could also include the reception area or waiting room of a service provider.

Good storefront displays for service or other non-retail storefront owners, some of which require privacy for their activities can be a challenge. Creative window treatments such as low curtains, shutters or blinds allow pedestrians to have cues to the activities or services provided. Low walls can also provide a place to display a signboard or other graphics that provide some storefront identity. These walls should not be full height so that light and activity is still evident from the street. A painted sign and logo on the storefront glass could also provide information on the business at the premises. What is important to remember is that a level of both activity and information must be present to enhance the pedestrian interest.

Display Guidelines

- Organize window displays around clear themes and change them frequently.
- Use repetition in display of merchandise for impact.
- Create the visual focus of your display at eye level.
- Light the window display. Use strong, incandescent lights (preferably movable) to highlight displays. Consider using low-voltage track lights.
- Display either a product or service available on the premises, a sign with the name of the organization, business logo and hours of operation, public service messages or displays, or a view to an activity in which people are involved frequently during the hours of operation.
- Avoid placement of items in display windows that block views to internal activity.
- For non-retail businesses or organizations, partial screening of storefront views to internal activity can be used if a portion of the window opening remains unobstructed.
- Use only clear glass for storefront display windows. Glass should have very low daylight reflectance and should not be obscured by applied films.

(D) STOREFRONT LIGHTING AND SECURITY.

Storefront display lighting should concentrate on highlighting elements in the display and not be an element in itself to distract attention from the display. The fixtures used should be recessed or contribute to the design of the display.

The attractiveness of the storefront is important both during the business hours and at night. Security grates, roll up doors and bars all detract from the overall storefront image. They should be avoided, but if necessary they should be mostly hidden or recessed during daytime hours.

- Storefront lighting should be confined to highlighting signage and display windows.
- Unobtrusive and indirect spotlights are recommended for highlighting displays.
- For storefronts, overhead roll down security grates and doors are appropriate only if all components are completely concealed or recessed during business hours.
- Security grates and bars on storefronts are appropriate only if they can be completely removed during business hours.

(E) AWNINGS

An awning is a traditional and relatively inexpensive way to embellish a storefront or building. It can be both a decorative and functional addition to a storefront. Colorful and bright, it also serves as an energy saver by regulating the amount of sunlight that enters the storefront window. A combination of insulating glass plus an awning will make a significant difference in energy costs. An operable, retractable fixture allows the sun to shine into the store on cold days and keep the interior cooler on hot days.

Awnings also convey merchant's concerns for their buildings, their customers, and their business district. An awning creates a pleasant space in front of a building, like a city tree. It provides shade and shelter for busy shoppers, a resting place where pedestrians can stop away from the flow of traffic. Under an awning, shoppers are enticed to stop, look and step inside.

As a visual element, an awning can add character and interest to a storefront. In choosing an awning, think about how it will appear in relation to the scale of your building? How will it relate to existing architectural features? Will it overpower the proportions of your windows and façade? Look at your neighbor's buildings and imagine how the addition of an awning will affect the character of the streetscape.

Awnings can be constructed from several materials. Canvas is traditionally popular. It is flexible, but must be weather-treated prior to installation. To decide on a color for your awning, take a look at the entire building. One with minimal architectural detailing can be "jazzed up" with a bright accent color. A more decorated façade should be complemented with a subtle shade. Choose the color so that the awning enhances the building's existing features.

Pattern is important too. Plain and simple, striped, or a bold solid – what image do you want to create? Again, choice of a pattern (or no pattern at all) should depend on the character of the façade.

Awnings have long been used to display advertising signs. If you choose to incorporate a sign into your awning, keep the message simple and directed toward identification.

Awning Guidelines:

- The use of awnings in the Turners Falls and Millers Falls commercial districts is historically appropriate and should be encouraged.
- Only traditional, retractable awnings; or fixed awnings that have the same traditional profile; should be used on buildings with framed storefronts.
- All awnings belonging to a multiple storefront building should be of the same type.
- Traditional profile awnings should be located within the building elements framing storefront openings.
- Awnings should not conceal important architectural details of the building.
- Fixed awnings of a round or bull nose shape should be used only for single door or window openings that are not part of a framed storefront.
- For fixed awnings and for extended retractable awnings the rigid framework should be no lower than eight feet above the sidewalk under it.
- Suspended fabric panels of awnings should not be lower than 7 feet above the sidewalk.
- No portion of the awning or its hardware projecting more than 4" from the building wall next to a walkway should be no lower than 80" above that walkway.
- Backlit or internally illuminated awnings are not encouraged.
- Awning color and style should be coordinated with the storefront and building façade.
- The use of a single awning for all stores within a multiple storefront is discouraged.

IV SIGNAGE

Signs serve a vital function in downtown areas. They announce the goods and services available in the area. As well as being an integral part of doing business, they are also an important design element. The collective display of signs in the commercial districts can produce either the most positive or negative visual impact. Sign renovation plays a large role in the revitalization process. Improvements of signs can create the largest visual impact for the least amount of investment.

Signs should be compatible with their building, neighboring buildings and the character of the business district. This is particularly critical in historic areas, such as the Turners Falls Historic District, which is listed on the National Register. It is equally important in areas such as Millers Falls, where attempts are being made to bring out or enhance the historic character of the village. All signs should be carefully located within the sign band, where one exists, to avoid obscuring important architectural features. Signs should also be designed to present a clear message about the business they serve. With careful consideration and high quality design, signs can add a new level of visual refinement to the street. Signs are also one of the most effective ways to enhance a storefront.

Signs for a row of storefronts in the same building should also be of similar size, material and proportion. They should be located similarly on the building. While it is not necessary for them to be all the same color or design, they should look like a family – in this way they reinforce, rather than compete with, each other.

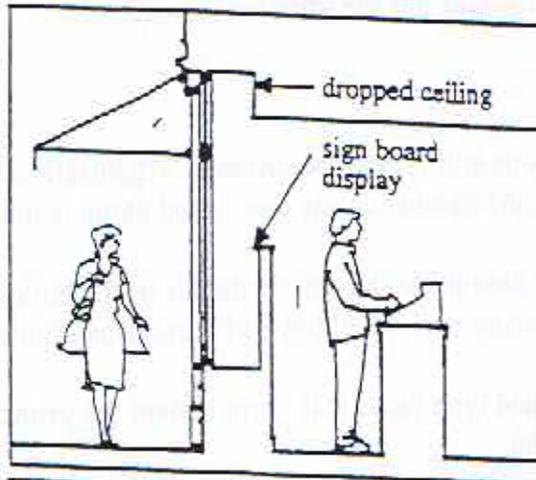
The sign alone should not attempt to convey the entire story a merchant wants to relay. Too many different signs can overwhelm viewers. The end result is that none of the

necessary for them to be all the same color or design, they should look like a family – in this way they reinforce, rather than compete with, each other.

The sign alone should not attempt to convey the entire story a merchant wants to relay. Too many different signs can overwhelm viewers. The end result is that none of the intended messages are conveyed. It is a careful combination of sign, building storefront and window display working together that has the greatest impact.

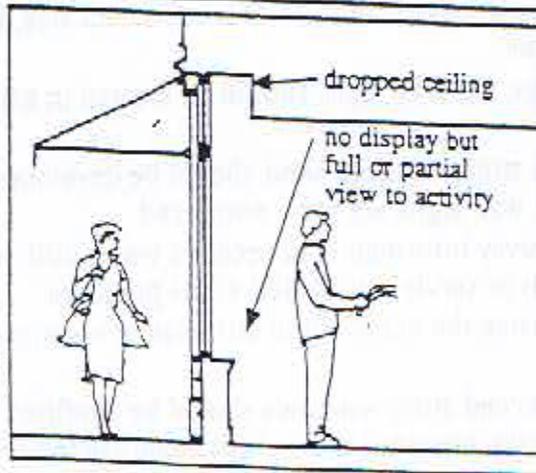
Sign Guidelines:

- Signage should advertise the name and type of business or organization at its location.
- Signage should not advertise brand names, unless that brand name is inherent in the name of the store.
- Signage should not cover up or obscure architectural details of the building.
- Signage should not cover or obscure individual bays of a multi-bay building or storefront.
- Signage should employ colors and type faces that complement the primary architectural style of the building.
- In a multiple storefront building, signage should be of a consistent size, location, and material and of harmonious color.
- In existing commercial buildings, flat wall signs should be located in existing sign bands above the storefront.
- In new commercial buildings, a strong signage band should be developed just above the level of the storefront if flat wall signs are to be employed.
- Projecting signs should try to convey information in creative ways, utilizing images that visually represent the goods or services provided at the premises.
- Signs on canopy fabrics advertising the name of the business or organization are encouraged.
- Signage above the sills of the second story windows should be confined to painted letters on the glass of the windows, provided these signs advertise the organizations therein.
- On free standing signs, list only the name and type of business or organization, or site access information.



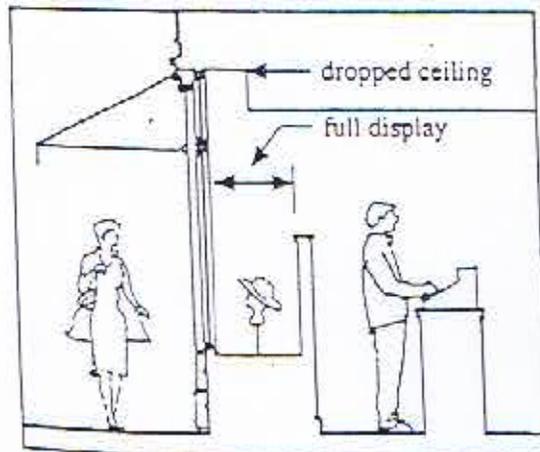
Signboard Display

- Used for retail and non-retail display
- Information display can be simple and direct or more detailed
- Generates a fair level of pedestrian interest



Activity Display

- Good option for restaurants and non-retail uses
- Window treatment can provide levels of privacy necessary for service businesses



Full Display

- Best for retail product display
- Utilizes the maximum benefit of the storefront window
- Generates a high level of pedestrian interest

