

Date: April 25, 2023

As part of the City’s Façade and Building Improvement Grant Program, several basic design principles have been identified to preserve and enhance the architectural character of downtown Horicon. Whether your project is the restoration or rehabilitation of a façade, an addition, or a new infill building, reading and understanding the following principles should assist you in your design process and in meeting the requirements of the Façade and Building Improvement Grant Program.

The guidelines below will be applied to each project and decision associated with potential funding under the Façade and/or Building Improvement Grant program. Approvals will be based on overall consistency of the project with these guidelines and the overall appearance of the project. Any interested business or property owner should attempt to meet as many of the guidelines as possible. If a project is unable to meet one or more guidelines, the applicant shall provide justification for that deviation from the guidelines in writing associated with the application.

Overarching Guidelines

- Preserve as much of the historic exterior configuration, structure, materials, and details as possible. Repair, clean, and maintain these original components and materials.
- Restore the exterior of your building to the original configuration where possible. Replace missing façade elements with original or reproduction components and materials.
- Where preservation and restoration is not possible, rehabilitate the façade with respect to the historic character of the building and with respect to the surrounding context.
- Adapt the functions of your building to respect and compliment the historic building configuration, size, and character.

To accomplish this and maintain the integrity of the original design of your building:

- Do not apply other architectural styles over the original design.
- Work with the original structural pattern and bays on all building levels.
- Choose colors and materials that complement and highlight existing historic brick and other exterior materials.

Active Building Facades:

Your building façade plays a very important role in how your street, block, and downtown looks and feels as a whole. In part, people decide how safe, interesting, alive, commercially healthy, and functional your street is by looking at your façade. Open up your façade so that the activity (and services, products, or merchandise) of your building is visible to the street and both its automobile and foot traffic.

- Maximize the amount of transparent windows and doors within the storefront and masonry openings.
- Use interior lighting to highlight activity and merchandise.

Simpler is Better:

In order to help bring out the downtown's historic character, don't allow new improvements to outshine the building's original features. New construction should be visually secondary to the historic original structure and its character. Use new elements that are simple and highlight the character, details, and patina of the building.

- Specify simple forms and details.
- Use new components and detailing that are simpler and more neutral than the original components.

For infill projects and non-historic buildings, any improvements should be developed so as to retain a harmonious character that supports, respects, and complements the historic character of downtown Horicon.

Design Guidelines: Façade Restoration and Rehabilitation

Facade restorations and rehabilitations have a major impact on the character, image, and appearance of downtown. The following guidelines have been developed to guide you in your design process and project decision-making. They are organized by design issue and include a clarification of the design issue, broad recommendations, and specific "do" and "don't" recommendations.

These guidelines are specifically applicable to facade restorations and rehabilitations and will be reviewed in your project approval process. If your project involves an addition or new building, the following guidelines may also apply to individual components of your design.

Storefronts:

When renovating your storefront, be sure it is compatible with the historic façade and enhances visibility of activity in the store.

Do...

- Preserve as much of the original building fabric as possible
- If possible, restore to match original (configuration, materials, and details)
- Retain original composition of structural elements, kick panels, large shop windows, entryways, upper transom, and storefront cornices
- Maintain/construct pilasters and columns to match original dimensions and proportions
- Include transparent windows in at least 75% of the lower storefront
- Limit height of kick panel at the base of the storefront to 30 inches
- Use durable metal or finished wood for trim and kick panels
- Locate any new exterior storefront wall on the historic alignment

Do not...

- Destroy original storefront building fabric
- Close in the storefront opening with opaque walls
- Apply building components with architectural styles other than the original
- Use faux materials, vinyl, plastic, or rough-sawn wood

Signage:

It is important that signage enhance, not detract from, the building and streetscape. When locating your signage, work with the building's character and composition. Design your signage so that it is compatible with the building and does not dominate or detract from the building's face.

Do...

- Integrate signage with architectural composition and character of the building façade
- Locate in signage band (above transom and below storefront cornice), on windows, or on awnings
- Utilize wall signs, traditional projecting signs, and awning signs designed and oriented at a pedestrian scale
- Use quality materials such as wood, metal, canvas, and etched glass in signage
- Light signage with a shielded external source
- Use colors that complement the façade
- Coordinate signage types between multiple tenants
- Meet the requirements of the sign code

Do not...

- Locate signs above the storefront cornice line
- Use internally lit signs
- Use pole or monument signs
- Cover architectural details or storefront transoms
- Use obtrusive lighting or colors

Doors and Windows:

When renovating doors and windows or adding new ones, be sure they are compatible with the existing historic façade, work with the existing openings, and match historic configurations. They should enhance visibility and allow light to enter the building.

Do...

- Restore or renovate original doors and windows where possible
- If replacing, match configuration and style of originals
- Fill masonry openings to match original configuration of doors and windows
- Match or simplify original door and window frame profiles
- Use vertically proportioned windows
- Use full-view doors at street-level entries, especially for street-level uses
- At entries to upper stories use full, three-quarter view, or paneled doors
- Use clear or slightly tinted glazing

Do not...

- Use reflective, smoky, or heavily tinted glass, or non-transparent glass

- Use doors and windows of architectural styles other than the original building
- Use unarticulated full-panel doors

Wall Treatments:

When renovating your building, preserve the structure and surface integrity of the exterior walls, maintain as much of the original material as possible, and do not obscure historic wall surfaces.

Do...

- Preserve as much of original building fabric as possible
- Use brick and match size and color of predominant downtown buildings
- Use durable materials at areas subject to wear from use or abuse
- Maintain original masonry openings
- Use consistent color scheme throughout the site and building facades
- Use a limited palette of colors (e.g. three or less)
- Restore painted brick with care
- Match downtown palette of materials when modifying existing buildings designed in a more contemporary style
- Follow guidelines for all facade elements when modifying existing buildings designed in a more contemporary style

Do not...

- Use cleaning techniques that are damaging to wall materials
- Fill in original window openings
- Cover original wall surfaces with other materials or “decoration”
- Use exposed cinder or concrete block
- Use “false” materials
- Use obtrusive colors (e.g. day glow)
- Paint exposed brick
- Emphasize proportions and features (with new modifications) of existing buildings designed in a contemporary style (not of “turn of the century” era)

Details:

Make sure to preserve, repair, and replace existing historic detailing. New construction should highlight historic detailing, not distract or compete with it.

Do...

- Retain, repair, and replace original architectural features
- Preserve original signage bands, cornices, transoms, headers, sills, bases, and storefront detailing
- Repair damaged detailing to prevent further harm from weathering
- Replace missing portions of detailing to match existing

Do not...

- Remove original details
- Cover original detailing or fill original masonry openings
- Use new detailing that detracts or “outshines” the original

Design Guidelines: Building Additions and New Infill Construction

Additions to existing buildings and new buildings placed on vacant properties of downtown sites have a major impact on the character, image, and appearance of downtown. In addition to the design issues for facades expressed above, additions and infill construction involve major site planning and design issues.

If your project involves an addition or new building, the following guidelines apply to your design. Guidelines for individual design components described above, if involved in your project, also apply.

Building Location:

When locating a new building or addition, align it with existing building location patterns. Locate your more public and active spaces at – and any on-site parking away from – street frontages.

Do...

- Match setback of adjacent buildings at street frontage
- Locate building to maximize the continuity of the blockface
- Locate building to maximize exposure of active spaces and to screen “back of house” activities
- If a corner site, match historic pattern of building location at corner

Do not...

- Locate parking in front of the building
- Locate “back of house” activities within the building adjacent to the street frontage
- Locate building at the rear of the site

Building Scale and Proportion:

When designing your new building or addition, establish the building height to match, or nearly match, that of adjacent structures and block faces. Create proportions in your new building or addition, and the major components, that are compatible with the historic pattern of the street.

Do...

- Match the height and width of the dominant trend of adjacent structures
- Match proportions of facade components of adjacent structures (e.g. vertically proportioned windows)
- Match the proportions of both the storefront and upper stories of adjacent structures
- If designing a building wider than the dominant trend of adjacent structures, divide the street facade into structural bays to match the existing width

Do not...

- Build facades, structural bays, or major building components that do not match similar proportions of the dominant trend of adjacent structures.

Façade Pattern and Rhythm:

In the row of facades in the blocks of downtown Horicon, there are consistent patterns and rhythms of structural bays, windows, masonry openings, and other design components. When designing your building or addition, first note these existing patterns and rhythms within your block. Utilize these to compose your facades, establish structural dimensions, and align architectural components.

Do...

- Create a distinction between the street level and the upper levels of the facade
- At street-level front facades, use historic pattern of large storefront window, low kick panels, transom windows, side pilasters, and cornices
- Use vertically-proportioned, regularly spaced upper floor windows
- If a corner site, articulate the corner portion of building

Do not...

- Introduce façade patterns and rhythms that are not compatible with the dominant trend of adjacent structures

Roof Form:

The roof form and cornice line of a building creates its silhouette and affects how people perceive the scale and character of the block and streetscape as a whole. When designing your new building or addition, incorporate a roof form that is compatible with adjacent structures. Match general characteristics of adjacent roof forms such as slope and shape.

Do...

- Use a “flat” roof (or gently sloped roof not visible from street)
- Incorporate a parapet cap or cornice at top of street-facing facade
- Align top of building with the dominant height of adjacent buildings

Do not...

- Use mansard or other exotic roof shapes
- Use roof form or cornice of a different architectural style than the original

Materials and Colors:

There is strength in coherence and consistency in the presentation of downtown buildings with regard to materials and color of facades. When designing your building or addition, select materials and colors that are compatible with the historic palette of the existing downtown buildings.

- Use brick and match size and color of predominant downtown buildings
- Use durable materials on all areas subjected to wear and damage from use or abuse
- Use clear or slightly tinted glass
- Use same materials on additions as front and side facades of original building

- Use consistent color scheme throughout the site, existing building, and addition
- Use a limited palette of colors (e.g. three or less)
- Use colors that complement the existing downtown brick colors

Do not...

- Use reflective, smoky, or heavily tinted glass
- Use large scale materials such as large concrete or metal panels
- Use exposed cinder or concrete block
- Use “false” materials
- Use obtrusive colors

Details:

The details of a new building or addition affect how well it fits in with the existing structures. Details also determine the visual interest of a façade and affect its overall character. Integrate details that are compatible with and do not detract from the original structure. If you are designing a new building, scale and integrate detailing that articulates building facades, but does not detract from adjacent historic facades.

Do...

- Incorporate signage bands, cornices, transoms, headers, sills, and bases to articulate your facade
- Use detailing in areas of the facade (e.g. cornices, window sills) where detailing occurs on adjacent structures
- On an addition, use new detailing that continues the patterns of the existing, but does not detract from original (e.g. recessed, simple, neutral colored)

Do not...

- Construct large, unarticulated surfaces
- Use reproduction historic detailing on new building component
- On an addition, use new detailing that detracts or “outshines” the original