

DOWNTOWN HERITAGE DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Adopted
May 25, 2004

Character-Defining Features

The following drawings illustrate the form of typical early 20th-century commercial buildings, including the individual features that define the building. Notice that while size and scale play a significant role, architectural features, rhythm of openings and storefront elements are important parts of the whole. These drawings merely represent the typical commercial building common to the era that most structures in downtown Plano were built. They are intended to illustrate the features of historic commercial buildings only. Because every building is unique, decisions should be case specific. However, these guidelines form the foundation for review.

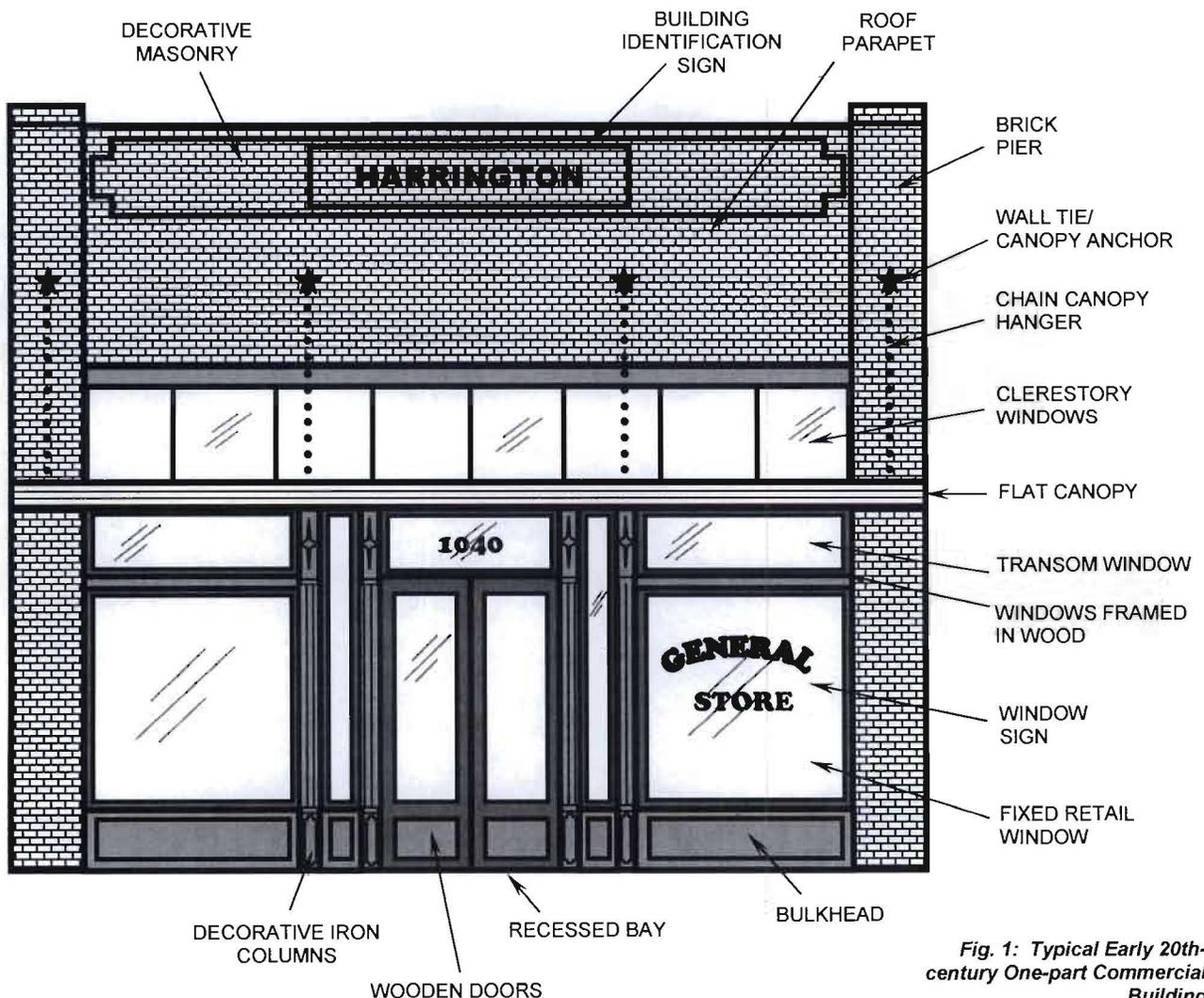


Fig. 1: Typical Early 20th-century One-part Commercial Building



Fig. 2: Typical Early 20th-century Two-part Commercial Building

Preservation

The following guidelines refer to the renovation of existing buildings. Although these guidelines apply primarily to contributing buildings, changes made to non-contributing buildings must be reviewed and following the spirit of these guidelines. Preservation and restoration materials and methods used should comply with the Preservation Briefs published by the United States Department of the Interior. The Heritage Commission may approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for work that does not strictly comply with these guidelines providing that: a) the proposed work is historically accurate and is consistent with the spirit and intent of these guidelines; and/or b) the proposed work will not adversely affect the historic character of the property or district.

General

- 1.1. Preserve, stabilize and restore building form, ornament and materials. Replace missing or deteriorated elements with replicas of the original. Ensure that roof, window, cornice and parapet treatments replicate the original building. Preserve the original masonry features, mortar joint style and mortar composition and color.
- 1.2. Preserve older renovations that have achieved historic significance and have been deemed contributing. This is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Older structures may have, at some time, been renovated with such care and skill that the renovation itself is worthy of preservation.
- 1.3. Remove *non-historic* alterations. Often, "modern" renovations merely conceal the original façade details. If not, the original style should be recreated through the use of historic photographs.

- 1.4. Where replication of original elements is not possible, a new design consistent with the original style of the building should be used. Reconstruction of building elements should reflect the size, scale, material and detail of the original style.

***Facades /
Storefronts***

- 2.1. Maintain original elements and style of the storefront -- cornices, transoms, display windows, kick plates, spandrels and upper story windows.
- 2.2. Maintain recessed entries where they exist. They provide weather protection, protect passing pedestrians from opening doors, and add attractive detail to the storefront.
- 2.3. Integrate access to upper story offices or other uses with the historic features of the building.
- 2.4. Where backs of buildings are used for commercial purposes, preserve the utilitarian character of the architecture and site. The backs of buildings were areas where service and loading were handled, but now these areas are being used as additional entries and potentially, for food service and other activities. These areas should be improved and treated as secondary entrances. However, the general architectural style and utilitarian character should be preserved. Exception: additions made to the rear of buildings on the north side of 15th St. may extend to the rear property line; the new wall facing 15th Place *may* be treated as a front façade, rather than a rear façade. The use of period commercial light fixtures and small painted signs is encouraged. The improvement of the rear of all buildings, including those on the south side of 15th Street is strongly encouraged.

- 2.5. Sandblasting and other highly abrasive methods should not be used to clean historic brick. Old brick is soft and its mortar is crumbly. Always begin with the gentlest means possible, working up to detergents and chemicals if necessary.
- 2.6. When tuck pointing an historic brick wall, mortar should match the historic lime mortar composition. Old bricks are softer than new bricks and will crack if pointed with a modern cement mortar.
- 3.1. Historic doors and windows should remain intact, except when replacement is necessary due to excessive damage or deterioration.
- 3.2. Doors and windows that have been altered and no longer match the historic appearance should be replaced with appropriate ones.
- 3.3. Replacement doors and windows should express muntin (the wooden divisions between each pane of glass) and mullion (the frame of each window sash) size, light configuration, and material to match the historic.
- 3.4. Decorative ironwork and burglar bars over windows are not appropriate to the age and character of the district. Interior mounted burglar bars may be used where appropriate and necessary. If used, interior bars should be a "swing away" style so they are not visible in the window during operating hours.
- 3.5. Glass and glazing should match historic materials as much as practical. Films and tints or reflective glass are not appropriate.

***Windows
and Doors***

- 3.6. New door and window openings in facades should only be made where safety of life is threatened or where evidence exists of historic openings that, over time, have been filled or altered.
- 3.7. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should be referred to for acceptable techniques to improve the energy efficiency of historic fenestration if necessary.

Roofs

- 4.1. Historic slope, massing, and configuration of roofs should be preserved and maintained.
- 4.2. The following roofing materials are appropriate: flat (built-up), metal, single-ply membrane, and composition shingles. The following materials are not appropriate: clay tiles (except on decorative architectural details, slate tiles, terra-cotta tile, wood shingles, synthetic wood shingles, and synthetic clay tile.
- 4.3. Historic eaves, coping, cornices, dormers, parapets, and roof trim should be retained, and should be repaired with material matching in size, finish, module and color.
- 4.4. Mechanical equipment, skylights, and solar panels on the roof should be set back or screened so that they are not visible to a person standing at ground level on the opposite side of the street.

Colors

- 5.1. Colors should be consistent with the age and character of the downtown area and used to embellish façade elements. Color palettes should enhance the attractive details of the building, not disguise them or overpower them.

5.2. Colors should complement neighboring buildings and reflect the original historic color palette. Bright colors should be used cautiously. Metals should not be shiny or highly reflective.

6.1. Flat canopies should be retained if present and replaced where needed. Awnings should be a "drop-front" style. Historically, the most common and appropriate sidewalk covering is the flat, rigid canopy. A building may, however, have cloth (canvas) awnings in appropriate colors for visual interest. Awnings should not be a "bubble" style. Metal awnings may be retained and/or replaced if they have been on a building at least 40 years.

6.2. Awnings should not be continuous, but rather relate to each window or bay. This rhythm of awnings is typical of historic styles, and provides greater interest to pedestrians; long continuous awnings are more appropriate for strip retail centers, which relate to automobile traffic. Flat canopies, however, may be full width or relate to each bay (see figs. 3 and 4).

Canopies and Awnings

Fig. 3: Continuous or Full-Width Canopy Covering All Three Bays

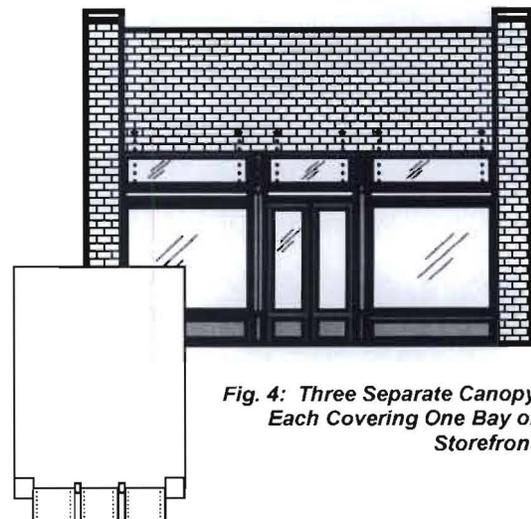
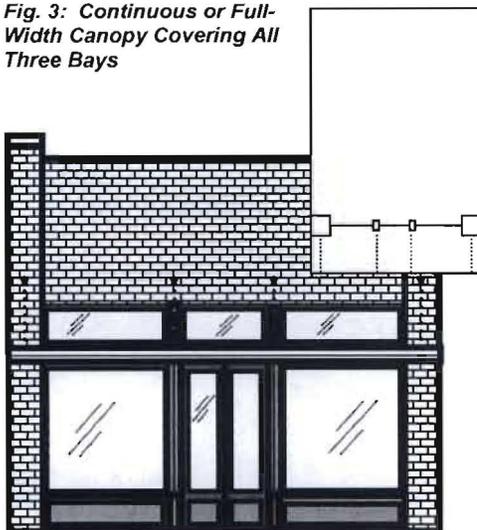


Fig. 4: Three Separate Canopy Each Covering One Bay of Storefront

Lighting

- 7.1. Fully recessed down lights, gooseneck lights or approved historic district fixtures should be encouraged. Lighting is an important element in retail areas. Fixtures should be consistent with the historic character of the area.
- 7.2. Avoid exposed lighting of any kind on the building itself (not referring to signs), unless part of an historic fixture. For example, early 20th-century theaters and diners are examples of building styles where exposed lighting and neon were used architecturally, but other commercial structures should avoid the uses of these lighting styles.

Site / Landscaping

- 8.1. New driveways, sidewalks, steps and walkways should be constructed of brick, brick pavers, concrete, asphalt or other material deemed appropriate. Artificial grass, exposed aggregate concrete, artificially-colored concrete and outdoor carpet are not appropriate.
- 8.2. Landscaping should enhance the structure and surroundings and not obscure significant views of protected facades.
- 8.3. Any new mechanical equipment should be erected on the roof or in the rear yard, and should not be visible from the public right-of-way. It should also be screened with a brick or stucco wall or natural screening if placed on the ground and screened by architectural metal or a building parapet if placed on a roof.
- 8.4. Fences should be limited to the rear of a structure and should not exceed six feet in height. Fences less than three feet tall and at least 70% open, constructed of metal pickets, may be used where necessary for sidewalk service at restaurants. Fences should be

constructed of brick, cast stone, iron, a combination of these materials, or other appropriate materials. Plastic, vinyl and chain-link are not appropriate. Fences should be 70% open. Wooden privacy fences are not allowed. Solid masonry fences/walls are appropriate only when screening is required by the zoning ordinance (i.e., for dumpsters or mechanical equipment).

- 8.5. Patios and outdoor dining areas are appropriate at the rear of a building and appropriate in front (on existing sidewalks) where ample right-of-way and an agreement with the City of Plano exist.
- 8.6. Patio and porch floors should be brick or concrete. Brick or concrete patio floors should not be covered with carpet.
- 9.1. Signs in this district must follow the City of Plano Development Regulations (Ordinance 86-3-14, as amended) for downtown signs.
- 9.2. The building itself should be considered part of the sign. Avoid garish colors or patterns, but use the detail and style of the building's architecture to enhance the building's identity. Locate signs so that they relate to architectural features of the building. Signs should not cover transoms or historic building features.
- 9.3. Focus on merchandise, not signs. Signs that compete for attention detract from the retail district as a whole. Avoid visual clutter and limit the number and size of signs (see Ordinance 86-3-14).
- 9.4. Awning, projecting, hanging, window and cornice signs are the most appropriate sign types in downtown. Such

Signs

signs should be constructed of high quality material consistent with its historic style.

- 9.5. Sign lettering should be consistent with the style of architecture. Generally, serif styles for Italianate, Germanic/Federal and Revival buildings, and sans serif for Art Deco and buildings from the later modernism movement are recommended.

New Construction and Additions

The following guidelines refer to new infill construction in the historic district and additions to existing buildings. Demolition in the Downtown Heritage District is firmly discouraged. However, were a building to be seriously damaged or destroyed, new construction would be encouraged and must meet these guidelines. Also, several buildings in the heritage district present opportunities for expansion. This is also encouraged if compatible. New buildings do not have to replicate an old building but must respect the same patterns of building line, window and door placement and rhythm, mass, height, architectural design, etc.

- 10.1. All new construction should reflect the architectural character of the downtown district, reflecting existing buildings in form, scale, rhythm, materials, color, roof form, shape, solid-to-void ratio, detail and general appearance, paying particular attention to the elements pointed out in the first section of these guidelines.
- 10.2. New buildings should abut the sidewalk. The setbacks for all new construction should match the setback of other buildings on the block. Infill buildings between historic buildings should be similar in setback, roof form, cornice line, and materials, to nearby buildings.

- 10.3. Horizontal additions are appropriate on the rear of buildings, where feasible. Vertical additions to historic buildings in the district are discouraged but may be appropriate if set back to the rear of the property and not visible to a person standing on the opposite side of the street to which the building faces.
- 10.4. Maintain the height and rhythm of buildings along the street face. New buildings and additions should respect both the height and bay spacing of adjacent buildings. They should also ensure continuity of cornice lines and windows. The height of an addition and the height of a new building should not exceed the height of the tallest building on the block. New buildings or additions along the south side of 15th Place may exceed the height of the tallest building as long as it cannot be seen by a person standing on the south side of 15th Street.
- 10.5. Downtown buildings almost exclusively have brick or plaster-over-brick facades. The sides of corner buildings also reflect this construction. Any other materials should be used cautiously and should be compatible with the style and character of existing buildings. Brick should be uniform in color with little to no variation. Aluminum siding, wood siding, metal, stucco (other than traditional smooth coat cement plaster stucco), synthetic stucco and vinyl cladding are not appropriate.