

City of Sturgis

Downtown Design Guidelines

Revised and adopted by Downtown Development Authority 8/2/19

I. INTRODUCTION

Downtown Sturgis is composed of a variety of architectural characteristics from the late 1800's, early 1900's, and appropriate alterations of later time periods. It is the intent of the Sturgis Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to preserve these unique, authentic features.

The appearance of individual buildings, storefronts, signs, window displays, sidewalks, parking lots and alleys, establishes the visual character of the downtown and plays a major role in the marketing success of the business district.

Presenting an attractive image is simply good business.

Improvement and maintenance is essential to strengthen the appeal of individual properties and the image of the downtown and the community at large.

The following guidelines have been developed to enhance the individual character of each building while strengthening the overall image of downtown. They do not advocate the theme approach. It is the opinion of the DDA that a long-term, pleasing treatment can be accomplished by examining each building individually and taking advantage of its historic and architectural qualities. The intent is not necessarily to reproduce the appearance of a building exactly as it appeared when it was constructed. A building can be improved by using what exists, minimizing the less attractive features and adding simple and many times inexpensive, elements to emphasize positive features. Removal of inappropriate alterations, simple maintenance, the addition of well-designed signs or awnings, and care in the selection of colors and materials, can give any building very appealing visual results. Such improvements are good, lasting investments both in terms of cost and customer relations. By coordinating improvements, merchants can maintain their business identities while strengthening the image of the downtown as a whole.

These guidelines present an opportunity to preserve Sturgis' commercial heritage and to enhance and promote the unique atmosphere that the downtown can provide. Successful implementation will result in a stronger downtown Sturgis and a stronger community for the greater Sturgis area. The DDA will provide advice and incentives to encourage use of the guidelines. However, the design success of downtown relates directly to the commitment and support of property owners and building tenants.

Purpose of Guidelines:

1. To provide basic, common sense advice on enhancing the characteristics of buildings in downtown Sturgis.
2. To provide a written framework for visual improvements that can be followed for years to come.

3. To provide direction towards design compatibility among individual buildings and the entire downtown.
4. To provide direction towards a quality image for downtown Sturgis.
5. To preserve those architectural features that are unique to the heritage of the Sturgis community.

II. BUILDING FACADES

With proper design and maintenance, the commercial facades of downtown properties present owners and merchants with a rare opportunity. Many of the buildings have visually interesting and historically important architectural features. Due to the era in which they were produced, they have basic warmth and a human scale which is difficult to duplicate today.

Most facades downtown are two stories high, with commercial space located at ground level and offices, residential, or storage above. Visually this arrangement divides the façade into two basic parts: the upper façade which is usually a flat masonry wall with regular spaced window openings and applied decoration; and the storefront, or lower façade, which is composed primarily of large display windows and the entry. Unfortunately, some storefronts have been changed drastically as they were “modernized”. The end products of such modernizations have frequently been out of scale with the entire building and incomplete with the original façade material remaining. Some building facades, on the other hand, have fared better and have escaped inappropriate modernization. In this latter case, the original façade should be preserved and repaired with little or no further alteration. Where the original façade is covered up, or no longer exists, any improvement should respect the historic character of the building as well as that of its neighbors.

A. STOREFRONTS

The lower façade of the building, the storefront, has usually been altered in the years since its original construction. The net result of these changes is normally an erosion of its original character.

Every traditional commercial building façade has a well-defined opening which the original storefront filled. Many of the problems with storefronts today are that they no longer look like an integral part of the building; rather, they appear pasted on, and do not reinforce the character of the entire façade. The traditional storefront usually had a recessed entry for the front door, flanked by display windows at the property line. This configuration accomplishes two important things. First, it located the display windows next to the sidewalk in full view of the passerby. This allowed potential customers a full view of the merchandise on display and a view of the stores interior. Secondly, it

emphasized the door and entryway. The intimacy of the enclosed and sheltered doorway provided a pleasant sense of inviting the customer inside.

Guidelines:

1. Storefronts will be designed to fit the original openings and not extend beyond it. View the storefront as a framed painting with the windows and doorway acting as the subject, and the storefront cornice, piers and bulkhead acting as the frame.
2. Storefronts will be designed with the largest possible window area which is in keeping with the original opening. Emphasis should be placed on the display windows and entry door. Avoid introducing or changing the location and size of windows and doors that alter the original architectural character of the storefront.
3. Storefronts will respect the integrity of the building as a whole and relate to the building's original character. Storefronts should be compatible with the scale, materials, color and texture of the original building.
4. Where storefronts have been covered up with incompatible material they should be revitalized by removing the covering material.
5. Use simple and unobtrusive materials in revitalizing storefronts. Avoid garish patterns, textures or colors which are not appropriate to the character and function of the storefront.
6. Where the original storefront remains, it should be preserved and repaired with as little alteration as possible.
7. If restoration of the original storefront is undertaken, it should be based on accurate duplication of features substantiated by historical, physical or pictorial evidence.
8. Avoid historically incorrect architecture.
9. Avoid introducing a storefront which significantly alters the original character of the building. Avoid introducing a storefront which significantly alters the relationship of the building to the street.
10. Avoid the use of mirrored or tinted glass.
11. Avoid unpainted aluminum window frames. If existing aluminum frames are to be retained, they should be painted.

Typical Storefronts by Era:

Early to Mid 1800's

Post and beam frame
Divided display windows
Simple Decoration

Mid to Late 1800's

Boldly decorated cornice
Cast iron columns
Large display windows

Late 1800's to Early 1900's

Simple Cornice
Transom windows
Recessed entrance

Early 1900's to 1920's

Metal window frames
Structural glass
Recessed entrance

B. UPPER FACADES

From a distance, the image of the front is heavily influenced by its upper story appearance. Typically, windows in the upper facades are positioned at regular intervals and act to establish a visual rhythm for the exterior design of the building. Their shape, size, placement and decorative trim constitute a major element in creating the character of the building and contribute to many important aesthetic principles. The window openings, along with the material, color and texture of the wall surface, contribute to the overall visual character of the street.

Guidelines:

1. Inappropriate materials covering upper facades and windows will not be permitted.
2. If the original window openings have been altered, restore them to their original configuration and detail. Avoid blocking window openings.
3. If possible, save and restore the original windows and frames. Replace missing, rotting or broken sash, frames, mullion, muntings, etc., with similar material. Replacement windows should reflect the design and material of the original.
4. Where unpainted aluminum frames have previously replaced the traditional frames, they should be painted.
5. If a new interior ceiling must be dropped below the height of existing window openings, a recessed setback, or similar device, must be used to allow the full opening to be retained without alteration of exterior appearance.
6. If storm windows are used to improve thermal performance, they should resemble the existing window as closely as possible in shape, appearance, and color. Storm windows should be sized to fit the entire window opening.

7. Avoid storm windows that allow moisture to accumulate and damage the window frame.
8. Avoid through-wall or through-window heating/air conditioning units.
9. Avoid tinted glass. Replacement glass should be similar to the original. Mirrored glass will not be permitted.
10. Avoid the use of shutters except where clear evidence indicates their historic presence. If shutters are used, they should be functional.
11. Avoid substituting one type of operable sash for another.
12. Avoid storing material directly in front of windows. Wash upper story windows regularly and install curtains or other suitable devices to give a "live in" appearance to vacant spaces.

Typical Upper Facades by Era:

Early to Mid 1800's

Simple cornice
Lintels over windows
Small window panes

Late 1800's to Early 1900's

Corbelled brick cornice
Large, arched windows

Mid to Late 1800's

Boldly decorated cornice
Window hoods
2 over 2 windows

Early 1900's to 1930's

Simple brick cornice
Large window openings with multiple units

C. DOORS AND ENTRIES

Doors are one of the primary elements which create individual character in the exterior appearance of a building. Historically, the storefront entry was more than just a door. Its design and appearance reflected its commercial importance. The storefront door was tall in proportion, built of wood and glass, and looked substantial, yet inviting to the customer.

The typical downtown building often has two additional doors: a second door on the front façade permitting access to the upper floors, and a rear door used as both a service and customer entry. Compared to the storefront entry, these were traditionally modest in design.

ATTRACTIVE ENTRANCES ARE ESSENTIAL AND CUSTOMERS OR CLIENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO FEEL WELCOME AS THEY APPROACH THE DOOR.

Guidelines:

1. Original doors should be retained, repaired and refinished. Attractive hardware, such as brass door pulls and plates, add visual value to the entrance and should be retained.
2. Where unpainted aluminum doors are to be retained, they should be painted and continually maintained.
3. Consider using subtle decorations on new and replacement doors. A handsome knob or pull, or an attractive molding can make a door special and inviting.
4. Rear doors should reflect the character of the rear façade. Avoid a highly decorated door that would look out of place. If rear doors serve customers as well as delivery, they should incorporate glass panels of an appropriate design.
5. New doors should be compatible with the character of the façade. Avoid fake “historic” doors which are incompatible.
6. Avoid tinted glass doors. Avoid windowless wood or metal doors except for service and residential entries.
7. Avoid storm doors which are inappropriate in size, color, material and texture with the original door or which require replacement of the original door.

D. EXTERIOR WALLS

The texture and color of masonry walls are among the most dominant visual features of the downtown area. They are an integral part of the character of downtown, and as such, should be restored and enhanced by uncovering, maintaining and preserving them in the appropriate manner.

A number of the original walls have been covered up with aluminum, fake rock or obscured with large, out-of-scale signs. The end result of such “modernizations” are walls which are out of character with other details of the building, and with the downtown as a whole. In addition, these “modernizations” have obscured the historic and architectural individuality of the buildings.

Guidelines:

1. Original building wall material will not be covered with any form of inappropriate siding. Where this has already occurred, the inappropriate siding should be removed and the original wall material restored.
2. Wall surfaces that have not been painted should remain unpainted.
3. Damaged walls will be repaired or replaced with material which duplicates the original as closely as possible.
4. Avoid scarring walls with holes for attaching signs, etc.
5. Avoid removing wall materials and features that are essential parts of the buildings character.

E. BUILDING DETAIL, DECORATION AND CORNICE

One of the most striking aspects of the traditional building façade is its appealing detail. Many of the buildings downtown offer a blend of architecture and sculpture, craftsmanship and materials which would be difficult and expensive to produce today. Architectural decoration and detail help make downtown special, and is an asset that should be preserved.

Many materials are used in decoration and detailing; for example:

- 1) Masonry. Decorative masonry includes both brick and stone work ranging from corbelled cornices and arches window heads to storefront piers.
- 2) Terra Cotta. Decorative terra cotta was commonly used from the 1880's to the 1930's; most commonly as a veneer or as a masonry unit in combination with brick or stone.
- 3) Cast Iron and Sheet Metal. Usually found in buildings constructed before 1900, cast iron and sheet metal were used for cornices, window surrounds or entire facades.
- 4) Wood. Wood details are often subtle; as the moldings around windows, and are important in creating the total façade effect.
- 5) Decorative Glass. Beveled, leaded, etched, Carrara and spandrel glass are all forms of decorative glass used in the buildings downtown.

One of the strongest visual elements on a façade is the continuous molded or projecting cornice. It not only protects the façade from the elements, it also provides a strong visual "cap" or termination to the vertical composition of the façade. The cornice is often decorated with fine details that give scale to the buildings. As a major design element, cornices should be retained, repaired or replaced. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that most downtown buildings need a cornice to be architecturally complete.

Guidelines:

1. Deteriorated details, decorations and cornices should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the original material in composition, design, color and texture. Repair or replacement of missing architectural decorations and details should be based on accurate duplications, substantiated by historical, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural design.
2. Heavy or numerous coats of paint that obscure architectural decorations and details should be removed before repainting.
3. Sagging details, decorations and cornices must be firmly re-anchored.
4. When replacing or repairing masonry details, decorations or cornices, care should be taken to prevent an obvious and unsightly patch. Materials joints, etc. must match the original as closely as possible in composition, color and texture.
5. Corbelling should be retained and restored whenever possible. (Corbelling: a piece of stone, wood, etc. projecting from a wall, to support a cornice, arch etc.)
6. Care should be exercised whenever dealing with terra cotta for replacement is difficult. Repair cracked or chipped glazed surfaces as closely as possible.
7. Metal and cast iron which has signs of corrosion, tears, holes, or missing pieces should be repaired or replaced as closely as possible to the original.
8. Soft, dry or split areas in wood surfaces should be filled, caulked, primed and painted or stained to match the original.
9. Replacement glass should resemble the original as closely as possible.
10. Where the original cornice has been removed or altered, it should be replaced or restored with a duplication of the original.
11. Avoid unnecessary changes in cornice height.
12. Avoid fake "historic" details, decorations and cornices.

F. PAINT SCHEMES AND COLOR

Painting can be one of the most dramatic and least expensive improvements to a building. Painting at regular intervals is also an essential part of maintenance and upkeep. This protects vulnerable wood surfaces from deterioration. Painting is also a practical way to visually tie together individual building facades in the downtown area. Attention should be given not only to selection of appropriate colors, but also to the preparation of the surfaces, choice of paint type (oil or latex base) and finish (gloss, semi-gloss or matte).

Paint by Era:

<i>Mid 1800's</i>	Soft, neutral tints
<i>Late 1800's</i>	Darker, richer shades
<i>Early 1900's</i>	Lighter, calmer colors

A sample palette of historical colors is available at the City of Sturgis Community Development Department for reference.

Guidelines:

1. Color applied to side and rear walls will not vary from that on front walls. A building will be treated visually consistent on all sides.
2. When repainting, consider using the original painting scheme and color palette.
3. Color should be used to tie building elements, such as details, decorations, cornices, and storefronts together. Not counting the natural colors of brick and masonry, a **maximum of four colors may be used**. For the purpose of maintaining the historical significance and appropriate period architectural appearance of the downtown, a three color scheme is desirable. The introduction of a fourth color will in all cases require Planning Commission approval through the Design Review process.
4. The color palette should be consistent throughout both the upper and lower portions of the building's front façade.
5. Color palettes and paint schemes on adjoining buildings should be compatible.
6. Color palettes should generally be lighter on the south side of the street, which is normally in shadow, than on the north side, which is normally in sun.
7. The color used on the cornice should offset the color of the sky.
8. Normally, the previous paint type (oil or latex base) should be used in repainting. Generally, use oil base paint for wood and latex base paint for masonry.
9. Avoid the use of bright primary colors which are usually incompatible with the buildings downtown. Bright colors are also highly susceptible to fading.
10. Please note that a permit is necessary from the City of Sturgis for exterior painting.

G. AWNINGS

Awnings are both visually and functionally appropriate for many commercial storefronts and upper façade windows. As a visual element, an awning can add character and interest to a façade. An awning on the storefront creates a pleasant space in front of the building, providing shade and shelter for customers and a resting place for pedestrians. Awnings on windows also reduce glare and serve as energy savers by controlling the amount of sunlight which penetrates to the interior. The use of awnings

downtown with appropriate design, colors and materials, can provide attractive and functional additions to the building facades.

Guidelines:

1. Cloth or canvas awnings were traditional on most buildings downtown. Consider box awnings on the upper façade windows and slanted awnings on the storefronts. When canvas awnings are used on both upper and lower facades, they will be of compatible color, material and design.
2. The color of all awnings should complement the building. When a building contains more than one storefront, each with a different awning color, the colors should be related.
3. If signs are incorporated into an awning, the message should be simple and directed towards identification.
4. Avoid materials, colors and designs which detract from the character of the building.
5. Avoid stock, unpainted metal awnings which are inappropriately related to the character of the building.
6. Please note that a permit from the City of Sturgis is necessary for the installation of an awning.

H. SURFACE CLEANING AND PAINT REMOVAL

Cleaning the exterior facades is one way to bring new life to the appearance of a building. There are also functional reasons for cleaning, particularly masonry surfaces. Dirt on bricks or stone when combined with water will accelerate masonry deterioration. Cleaning should always be done in a least abrasive manner possible. Improper cleaning and paint removal can also result in the acceleration of the deterioration of the exterior material.

Guidelines:

1. Water or steam cleaning is usually the safest method by which to clean buildings. A low pressure water (500-700 psi) or steam method, when accompanied by manual scrubbing and a mild cleaner, will cause the least damage.
2. Paint may be removed with water-rinseable alkali and solvent-based chemicals applied by brush and removed with medium water pressure or steam spray. Ascertain chemical reaction of paint removal on material surfaces before proceeding.
3. If a brick façade was originally painted, a soft brick was probably used in construction. These surfaces should remain painted.

4. Avoid cleaning or paint removal by blasting with sand, grit, chips, shells, beads or other abrasive substances. Blasting will erode surfaces and remove details and may accelerate the deterioration of the fabric.
5. Avoid using chemicals which adversely affect the building fabric.
6. Avoid wet cleaning when frost is expected.

I. MAINTENANCE

All buildings require periodic maintenance, yet many buildings in the downtown area have been allowed to deteriorate over the years. Many times, new life and vitality can be brought to a building by performing simple, routine maintenance. The quality of maintenance of a building is a subtle signal telling a customer something about how much a particular owner of merchant cares about his or her building, business and the customer. Every visible exterior aspect of a building should be examined periodically for maintenance needs. Successful promotion of the unique architectural features will depend upon the proper maintenance of these features.

III. REAR FACADES

The rear facades of buildings are often a neglected and forgotten resource downtown. The rear facades offer customer as well as service entries. By being able to enter directly from a parking lot, via an attractive entry, the customer is made to feel welcomed. The visibility of the rear façade from the parking lots increases the need to revitalize these surfaces. Like the storefront, the rear entry requires identification and should be made attractive and inviting. This does not, however, imply an elaborate or expensive undertaking. Rather, since the rears of buildings are usually plain and unadorned, the revitalization can be undertaken in a simple, straightforward manner. In general, the same recommendations apply to the rear as to the front facades.

Guidelines:

1. The rear façade should be clean and well-maintained. The intent is to welcome customers, not threaten them. Although the two are similar, the rear entry should not compete with the storefront in importance. In most cases, the entrance should occupy a relatively small part of the rear façade and retain more of a utilitarian character. Still, it should be maintained and developed to support the overall appearance and convenience of the commercial district.
2. Like the storefront, the rear entry requires identification. It should be inviting and attractive. A window panel in the back door is one way to open the store to potential customers.

3. A small sign on or near the door is another way to identify the store. Be sure to keep it small and do not clutter the area with too many signs.
4. Original doors or window openings which are now blocked should be reopened to their original dimensions and filled with appropriate doors or windows.
5. Compatible display windows should be provided at ground level.
6. An awning can be added for visual identification and convenience.
7. If there is enough sun, planter boxes might be added.
8. Like the storefront, the rear entry must respect its next door neighbors. Make the entry compatible with neighboring stores. It would be wise for merchants to get together and plan out an attractive approach to the rear facades.
9. Service entries should be clearly marked to avoid confusion.
10. Normal service activities such as trash collection, loadings, shipping and storage must occur with ease. It is possible to accommodate these functions and at the same time make the rear spaces more enjoyable people spaces.
11. If possible, pick a central location for trash collection which will serve several stores efficiently. Grouping the containers makes them appear less cluttered.
12. Simple enclosures can be constructed to hide refuse containers and prevent clutter. Before construction, consult the refuse collection company to ensure that the enclosure will not disrupt their activities.
13. A neutral color should be used to paint or stain refuse enclosures. Bright or loud colors will draw attention when the purpose is to camouflage. Choose colors that blend with those of the rear façade.
14. Weeds can be a problem and should be kept under control.
15. Snow removal is yet another consideration. Just as front walks need to be shoveled, remember to clear snow at back entrances.

IV. BUSINESS SIGNS

Signs are a vital part of downtown as they are among the most prominent visual elements and are an integral part of doing business. Signs create an individual image, but it is often forgotten that they contribute to an overall image of the downtown as well.

Common problems with many signs downtown are their excessive size and inappropriate placement on buildings. Large, flashy signs may be appropriate for the highway strip, but are out of place in the pedestrian scaled downtown. These signs produce visual clutter and tend to cancel each other out. As a visual element, each

business sign should enhance the image of the entire downtown as well as the individual business.

Some existing signs do not respect the area's character. For example, large vacuum formed signs pay no attention to local tradition, relate poorly to the character of downtown and detract from its inherent quality and image. These signs, or other types of mass produced national advertising, also shift the emphasis away from local, personal service and ownership.

A good business sign should express a simple, clear message. Graphic symbols are generally effective means of communication. Lettering styles and sign materials should relate harmoniously to the façade on which the sign is placed. In addition, size, location and the design of the sign are important in effectively communicating to the customer.

For more information on allowable signage contact the City of Sturgis Community Development Department.

A. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BUSINESS SIGNS:

1. Stand back and question the purpose of the sign.
 - Is it merely identification?
 - Will the sign let the personality of your store or office shine through?
 - Is it necessary to provide information about products on a sign?
 - What kind of public is the business trying to attract?
2. Consider the type of sign that is necessary.
 - Word Sign – this sign uses words to describe the business.
 - Symbol Sign – many times a recognizable symbol is more expressive than words.
 - Object Sign – often, objects used in the business can be attractively displayed. These visual signs can be more vivid than words.
3. A sign should express an easy to read, direct message: **KEEP IT SIMPLE**
4. Consider all the possibilities for using different materials. Each has unique qualities which can be exploited for the sign most appropriate to each need. Signs can be made from wood, metal, plastic, stone, canvas, paint on glass or wood, etched or stained glass, and more.
5. Examine pictures of how the building looked in the past to give ideas about how signs were related to historic architectural details.
6. Visualize how the sign will appear in relation to the entire façade. The sign should not dominate; its shape and proportions should fit the building just as a window or a door fits. For example: a sign hung under the lower cornice complements the architecture and therefore presents a strong image.

7. Decide where the sign is to be positioned. There are several options including:
 - Under the lower cornice
 - Painted on glass
 - On an awning flap
8. Consider this: the entire building presents an image that acts as a sign. The appearance of the building is more subtle than a word sign, but it can be more effective.
9. Choose a sign maker carefully. Quality of workmanship and construction is as vital as any consideration discussed in this section. Ask for examples of previous work.
10. A permit is required for all signs.

B. WALL SIGNS

The location and size of signs on any building should relate to the architectural character of that particular structure. A sign should never be so large as to overpower a façade, nor obscure a building's architectural features. Usually, the sign and the building's façade should work together to advertise the business. A sign will best communicate its message if it is compatible with its surroundings.

Guidelines:

1. Wall signs should usually be located above the entry to the store in order to relate to the pedestrian. The best areas for signs are those placed on the façade which contains continuous, flat surfaces which are void of windows, doors, or architectural details. When a building has a lintel strip or sign board as part of its façade, locate the sign directly on it.
2. Signs should be mounted somewhere above the storefront display windows and below the second story window sills.
3. Generally, lettering should be 8 to 18 inches high.
4. AVOID NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED SIGNS.

C. WINDOW AND DOOR SIGNS

Window and door signs can be convenient ways of providing pedestrian-scaled signs downtown. Permanent window and door signs are usually painted on glass or constructed of applied vinyl letters. Gold leaf can also make attractive window and door signs. Quality of workmanship and construction are vital to the success of the sign and its advertised business. A simple, well-made sign speaks for better of an establishment than an extravagant sign that is overbearing or poorly detailed.

Guidelines:

1. Window and door signs should not obscure the display area.
 - The color of letters should contrast with the display background.

- Light colored letters or gold leaf letters with dark borders are effective.
- 2. Permanent window and door signs should complement other signs on the façade.
- 3. AVOID THE USE OF NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED SIGNS WHICH ARE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING.

D. SIGNS ON AWNINGS

Signs on awnings can be viable solutions to providing identification for a business. Considering the cost as well as the life span of modern fabrics used for fabric awnings, these signs can provide effective and long lasting advertising. Signs attached or incorporated into more permanent types of awning materials can also be effective communicators.

Guidelines:

1. Signs on awnings should be color coordinated with the awning and the rest of the building's façade. A building permit is required for signage.
2. Signs on awnings should be located on the vertical portion of the awning for maximum visibility.
3. Usually, 6 to 8 inch letters are sufficient.

E. COLOR, MATERIAL AND LETTERING STYLES

The color, material and lettering style used in signs contribute to the overall character of the facades downtown. If well designed, the color, material and lettering styles will add interest and variety while, at the same time, clearly communicate to the pedestrians and customers.

Guidelines:

1. Signs will use colors, materials, lighting, and lettering styles which related to and compliment the buildings.
2. Where original sign colors, materials, lettering styles and placement can be documented, use the original as a guide in the design of new signs.
3. A wooden sign with raised or painted letters, metal signs, or gold leafing are all appropriate in certain instances downtown.
4. Nationally distributed heat-formed signs are usually inappropriate. If they are used, their color, lettering style and lighting must meet all design guidelines and zoning requirements.

5. There are three types of lettering: decorative, sans serif and serif: each of which may be appropriate. As a general rule, lettering styles should relate to the architectural quality of the building as well as to the type of business being advertised.

F. SIGN ILLUMINATION

Illuminated signs can be appropriate downtown if they respect the proportions of the storefront and the guidelines of this section. Properly done, illuminated signs can greatly enhance a business after dark and attract customers during the evening hours. Lighting of signage may be done internally or externally, but should be harmonious to the character of the building and the downtown in general.

Guidelines:

1. Light sources should be steady and refrain from blinking, flashing, or moving.
2. Lighting should have true color rendition.
3. Portions of an internally lighted sign designed to be illuminated should utilize translucent, not transparent, materials to provide a diffused effect. All other sign materials should be opaque.
4. Exposed neon signs are acceptable if tastefully done.
5. Avoid exposed lights which produce glare.
6. Avoid exposed electrical fixtures and conduit or wire. If this is not possible, paint to match background.

V. NEW BUILDINGS

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots downtown should be encouraged. New buildings should strive for excellence in design whether small, individual infill construction within the existing downtown blocks, or larger, independently sited project. Located within the context of an existing architectural setting, the design of new buildings should respond positively to the physical character of the downtown: both the buildings and the landscape. Since a good new design, which responds positively to its surrounds, can be done in a number of ways, it is not possible to develop specific interpretations, which will apply in all cases. Every site has its own design opportunities.