



HAGERSTOWN SIGN AND FACADE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Summary

The goal of the Hagerstown Sign and Façade Grant Program is to provide an incentive to businesses and property owners to enhance their building's presentation to the public with improved sign systems and storefront designs to contribute to the overall enhancement of the City Center.

Grant Amounts

The program provides a 50% matching grant to approved projects for the following amounts:

- Sign - \$300
- Façade - \$1,000 (Minor: Painting, Awnings)
- Façade - \$5,000 (Major: Repair or Restoration of Building Elements)

Eligible Applicants

All properties must be in the City Center – Mixed Use Zoning District (CC-MU), include commercial or institutional storefronts, or be office buildings.

Ineligible Activities

- Grants will not be provided for window signs, unless the business already has a projecting sign
- Grants will not be provided for internally illuminated signs
- Grants will not be provided for animation, bare-bulbs, or flashing illumination or imagery
- Grants will not be provided for roof mounted signs or temporary portable street signs
- Grants will not be provided for temporary signs or banners

Application Process

STEP 1: Apply for the Grant through the Historic District Commission (HDC) and Partners in Economic Progress (PEP)

All improvements must be approved by the Historic District Commission (HDC) to ensure that the grant-funded work will contribute to the historic character of City Center Hagerstown, as well as the Partners in Economic Progress (PEP) Committee to determine if the proposed project will be a good use of City funds. Once your sign or façade grant is approved and you received your approval letter:

STEP 2: Apply for a building permit through Planning and Code Administration

STEP 3: Apply for reimbursement through Planning and Code Administration

Applicants must then submit the Approval Letter from the HDC, scaled drawings of the sign, copies of paid invoices, and the proposed timeline for the installation or the actual installation date.

Click on the following link for an [Application Form](#).

GENERAL SIGN GUIDELINES

In the following pages you will find detailed guidelines that should be presented to your sign specialist or graphic artist. This will help ensure the sign design proposal meets specifications and will help facilitate a successful review process. These basic guidelines help to define the materials, placement, lighting, and design of signage in the Downtown district.

Sign Material: The most important concept to grasp when designing your sign is that signage material should be compatible with the materials of the façade. In general, painted wood or metal is the preferred background. In addition to this, the following should also be taken into consideration:

- Lettering may be painted, carved into the wood, or individually mounted.
- Plastic may be used if it is carefully designed and is fabricated with another finish.
- Signs should be made in a professional manner.
- Mass produced signs do not blend with the character of the historic district nor the overall streetscape, and as such, they are discouraged.
- National franchise signs should be compatible with the building and the streetscape.
- Glossy backgrounds that reflect glare and reduce legibility should be avoided, unless the material is appropriate to the façade.



Sign Placement: When deciding on the placement of your sign, it is important to remember that all signs for storefront tenants and single-occupant buildings should be located below the second floor of the building. Multiple tenant buildings should locate a shared directory beside the entrance doorway. In addition, the following guidelines should also be considered:

- If there is historic precedent (during the architectural period of the building) for upper floor signage on the building, upper floor tenants may place signs above the first floor. These signs must meet these guidelines and follow those listed in the Zoning Ordinance.
- Signs should be suspended at a 90-degree angle or placed flat against the building in the signage area that is defined in the lines and panels detailed by the architecture.
- Signs should not obscure the existing architectural detail.
- Painted signs on storefront windows are allowed provided the business already has a projecting sign.
- Placement of a new sign should take into consideration any existing sign line in the streetscape.
- Signs may not project above the parapet wall or cornice of the building.
- Signs may not be placed on the roof of a building.
- No sign shall project more than 52 inches from the building wall or within two feet of the curb line



SIGN GUIDELINES Continued

Sign Lighting: Lighting of signs is an excellent way to show the artisanship of the sign and illuminate the place of business at night. Lighting also provides a very important effect along the streetscape. When considering the lighting of your sign, it is important to keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Indirect light should be used to illuminate signs.
- Incandescent, rather than florescent lighting should be used to achieve a truer color rendition. Gooseneck lamps are an appropriate and attractive lighting solution.
- Flashing or blinking lights are prohibited.



Sign Design and Size: The overall design of your sign should reflect the architectural period of the building on which you are locating the sign. In addition, the following should be considered:

- Trademarks should cover no more than 25% of the sign face.
- The number of colors used should be limited to colors that complement the colors on the building's façade.
- Under the Zoning Ordinance, projecting signs for individual businesses in the downtown CC-MU district must be no larger than eight square feet and must not exceed two inches in thickness. A vertical clearance of at least eight feet is required, and no portion of the sign for storefront tenants can extend higher than 12 feet above the sidewalk or public thoroughfare.
- Projecting signs for single-use buildings and projecting signs to be shared by multiple upper floor tenants may be up to 36 square feet in area, when vertically oriented. Only one such sign is permitted per street frontage.
- The length of a flat, wall-mounted sign shall not be more than two-thirds of the overall leased facade area.



WALL SIGNS

In addition to these general guidelines, wall signs on the front facade should be located directly above the storefront and not extended above the first floor. Signs on side façades may be placed on or above the first floor. The sign should fit within the lines and panels of the storefront as defined by the building frame and architectural detailing. Signs should not obscure any detailing or building element and should be compatible with the architecture of the building. **Flat, wall-mounted signs** shall not project more than six inches from the building. For multi-tenant buildings, the preferred method of listing tenants is a single wallboard on the front of the building.



HISTORIC MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE

Many older buildings still display the names of their original owners who were proud of their contributions to the community. These names are usually located on the upper part of buildings or above the doorways at the street level. Some are formed in sheet metal on fascia and cornices but most are incised in stone panels or molded in terra cotta relief. These should be preserved as part of the Downtown's history and character.



SIGN GUIDELINES Continued

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies are traditional methods to advertise businesses. They also protect pedestrians from the weather and guard merchandise from the sun. They are part of the historic character of Downtown; however, when designing your awning, it is important to consider these guidelines:

- Heavy canvas and vinyl material should be used for awnings. Plastic and aluminum are not recommended.
- Awnings can be retractable or built on permanent pipe frameworks.
- A clearance of eight feet above the sidewalk is required by the Building Code.
- The valance of the awning should be free to move and be between ten and twelve inches high. The valance is the appropriate area for store identification.
- Awnings for upper story windows should extend at least half way down the windows and should complement the street level awnings in color and style.
- Signs painted or printed on the awning are permitted, but should have color schemes compatible with the awning and building facade.



GENERAL FACADE GUIDELINES

STOREFRONTS

Many of City Center's storefronts are original to the building: others are more modern after alterations during some point in the buildings history.

Historic Storefronts:

- Preserve original materials or details and leave them uncovered. Preserve the original form of the storefront.
- Replace missing original elements or repair existing elements. If elements are irreparable, replace them with like materials and design.
- Retain, maintain, and/or uncover the original kick plate material, marble bases, and ceramic tile entryway floors whenever possible.
- Occasionally, leaded glass transoms are in their original state. Restore these via careful cleaning and treatments.
- When physical or photographic evidence exists for the original storefront, restore the storefront to its original form if the altered front has not achieved historical significance of its own.
- When attempting to restore and/or clean historic details or building elements, do not use harsh abrasives or treatments.



Non-Historic Storefronts:

- Relate the design of first floor storefronts to design details of the upper levels of the building façade. Design new storefronts to fit within the first floor building openings as formed by columns, piers, and cornices. Repeat the window and door rhythms that already exist on the building.

FACADE GUIDELINES Continued

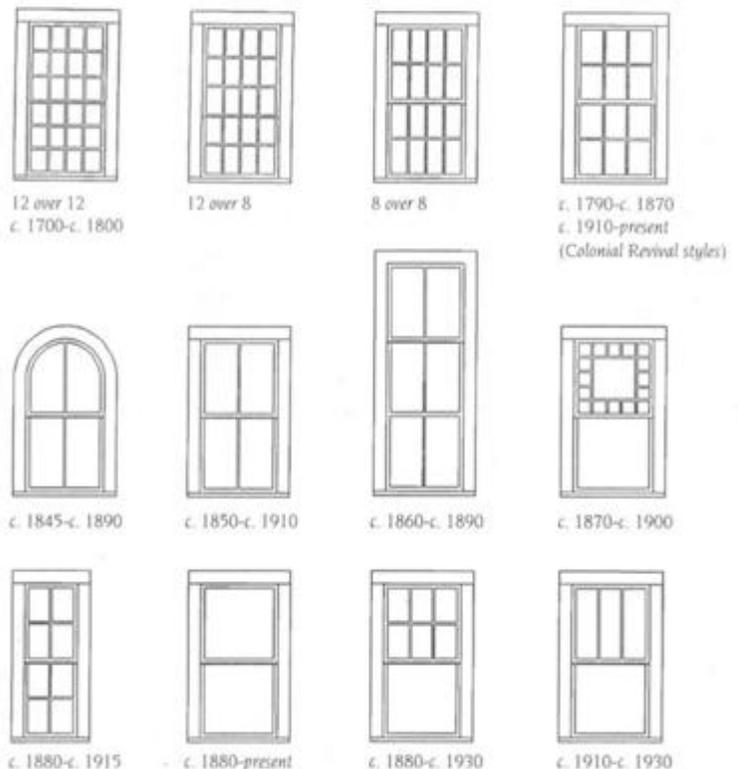
- If appropriate, doorways should be in a recessed entranceway to provide a protected area for customers and to add more window visibility for merchandise displays.
- Doors should contain large glass panels as opposed to solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass.
- Remove non-historic false fronts and siding. This includes metal cladding, fascia panels, pent roofs, and other materials that cover or disrupt the original detailing and materials of the storefront.
- Pent roofs (narrow, continuous shed roof) are a design element added to storefronts in the 1970s as a way to modernize and draw attention to storefronts but are out of character with the historic streetscape. Therefore, these are not acceptable on new additions or modifications to existing storefronts.
- Vinyl siding, aluminum siding, and T1-11 are not acceptable materials for a storefront restoration.
- Do not add trim or details that did not exist on the building during its historic period.
- Primary storefront windows should not be used or opened for the purpose of installing Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) or other similar devices.



BUILDING ELEMENTS

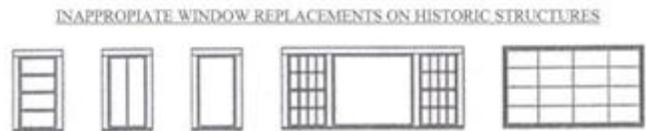
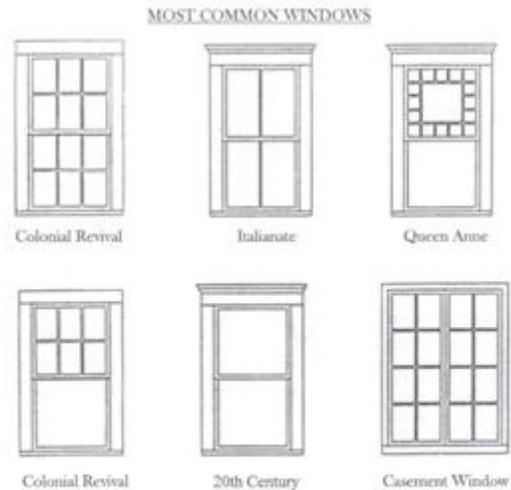
Windows: The windows of many City Center buildings are important to the architectural and historic character of the building, the streetscape, and to the character of the entire district. When windows are inconsistent from one level of the façade to another, property owners should install windows that are consistent with each other and the period of the building.

- Retain and repair original windows, frames, sashes, sills, lintels and trim or replacements that have acquired their own historical significance.
- Replicas or replacements of like design and style are appropriate for those windows that are beyond repair or deteriorated to a point that requires high levels of maintenance.
- The preferred replacement treatment, when feasible, is a wood replacement sash kit with insulated glass panes. Complete unit replacement is also acceptable.



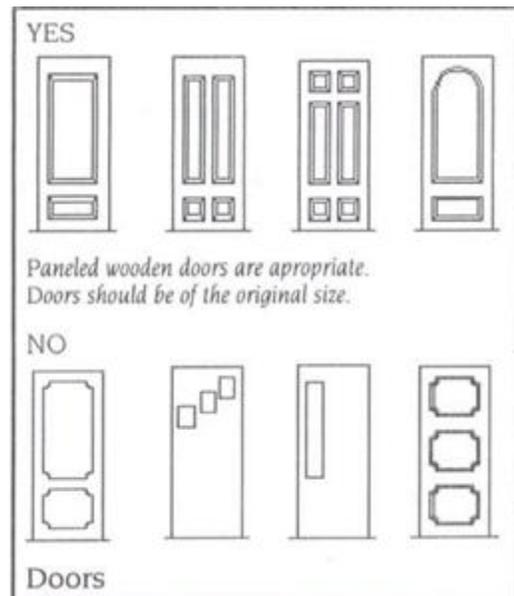
FACADE GUIDELINES Continued

- Attempt to maintain original glass or finishing.
- Choose window frame finishes that fit with the colors and textures of the building.
- Avoid conflicts of style.
- If simulated muntins are used, they should appear on the outside, between the panes and on the inside of the sash. When the existing windows are not historic material, muntins should follow the same pattern as the existing windows or a pattern acceptable to the historic period of the building.
- Blocking down or filling in openings to fit stock window sizes is not acceptable. Restore damaged or filled in window openings.
- Plate glass and safety glass are appropriate glazing materials. Wire glass, textured glass, mirrored glass or plastic/acrylic replacements are not appropriate. Stained glass is acceptable for certain locations such as door transoms, as part of a larger window, or in restaurants.
- While it is preferred to retain or replace-in-kind historic windows on front and other facades visible from a public way, non-wood replacement products shall be allowed if the new window replicates the appearance of the original window in design and in the width and depth of individual window elements. For facades not visible from a public way, replacement windows would not be required to replicate the appearance of original windows.



Doors and Entrances: Doors and entranceways are important to the character of the building.

- Secondary entries should be unobtrusive in design so as not to conflict with the primary entranceway.
- Maintain and repair original doors, frames, sills, lintels, and transoms. Weather-stripping is an appropriate modern change.
- Exterior building hardware should be appropriate to the style and period of the building.
- Replacement doors should be of similar style and finish to the style of the building. Restore covered or missing transoms.
- Replace inappropriate modern doors with replicas of historical ones. Maintain the appropriate style when replacing or adding doors for new uses.
- Retain and repair original windows, frames, sashes, sills, lintels and trim or replacements that have acquired their own historical significance.



FACADE GUIDELINES Continued

Roofing: Roofs are an important characteristic in defining the overall historic character of the building. Roof shape, decorative features and materials all determine the character. They are highly visible from the public ways and are instrumental in determining the historic period and shape of a building.

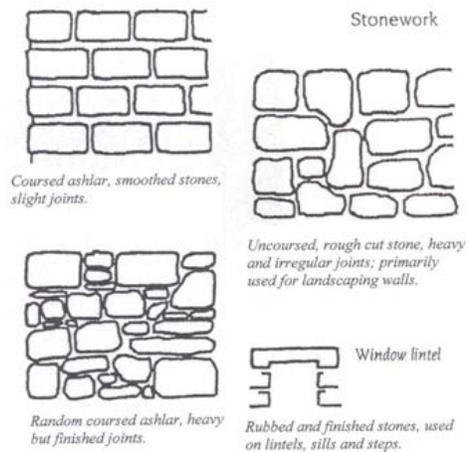
- The roof's original shape, decorative features (dormers, chimneys, balustrades, etc), and roofing should be preserved and maintained during a repair.
- Retain historic roofing material. When necessary, repair damaged sections with materials that match in size, shape, color and texture of shingle. Avoid extreme colors or patterns along rooflines unless historic or photographic documentation exists.
- A variety of modernized substitution materials are available for those historic materials found in the District. The Commission will consider these cost-effective materials if they blend with existing materials and are properly labeled and explained during the application process.
- Dormers and skylights, required by new uses, should be inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and not damage or obscure character-defining features. Avoid adding dormers unless they fit with the architectural style of the building. Repair existing dormers and skylights as needed.
- Lower rooftop mechanical systems below sight lines from the street or screen and paint them a color that blends with the building.
- Appropriate gutter shapes and material include concealed, ogee, and semicircular in galvanized steel, copper, or white aluminum. Downspouts should be circular and located along natural vertical lines and corners of the building.



MATERIALS

Masonry: Brick and stone are the most common materials found in the Downtown. The brick ranges from hard-glazed in yellows and browns, to red face brick. Stonework includes granite, limestone, cast stone, and decorative marbles. Other masonry includes exterior plaster and stucco.

- Maintain historic masonry in its original condition. Repair cracks or imperfections in masonry rather than replacing an entire wall. This includes stonework around windows, entrances, chimneys, etc.
- When replacing large segments of masonry, do so with like materials in color, texture, and composition.
- Do not paint masonry unless the masonry was previously painted or historical documentation is available.



FACADE GUIDELINES Continued

- Avoid applying surface treatments whenever possible.
- Avoid applying form stone to any building façade.
- In cases where stucco needs repair, use a mixture that matches the original in texture and color.
- When cleaning masonry, test any cleaning techniques on a small area, out of view from any public way. If the technique damages the masonry, abandon its use.
- When duplicating mortar, joint size, and profile, use like color and similar texture to maintain a consistent wall appearance.
- Use masonry mortar, not Portland cement mortar. Mortar should match the existing in color, texture, composition, and tooling. The roof's original shape, decorative features (dormers, chimneys, balustrades, etc), and roofing should be preserved and maintained during a repair.



Terra Cotta: Terra cotta is a glazed, fired clay, molded into shapes, and then used as decorative elements. Sometimes the glaze contains many colors, while other times it is natural. This material has great historic character and therefore needs to be preserved.

- Avoid removing terra cotta detailing from your historic property. Be careful to avoid cracking or damaging terra cotta during phases of restoration.
- When repainting terra cotta, avoid harsh chemicals that could damage the clay. Painted terra cotta should remain painted, natural should remain natural.



Metal: Some storefronts have been constructed or renovated with porcelain steel, stainless steel, or aluminum panels. Other buildings have cornices, fascias, and other items of trim constructed of sheet metal or cast iron.

- Retain and restore existing metalwork. Repaint surfaces requiring repainting and patch surfaces requiring small amounts of replacement.
- Replacement metal should match existing material in color, width, texture and style. Replacement panels fabricated with sheet metal should match the existing material in color and texture.
- Patch badly deteriorated metalwork with sheet metal pieces. Match these to the same profile as the existing work.
- Reproduce intricate details in materials such as fiberglass and install them to match existing work.
- Avoid adding metal to a building unless it conforms to the architectural style and historic period of that building.



FACADE GUIDELINES Continued

Wood:

- Preserve any historic or original wooden features. Repairs should maintain wooden structures or details. Replacement should occur after repairs are exhausted or a structure becomes unsound.
- Avoid leaving wood in its natural state or stained unless historically documented.
- When replacing wood do so with like materials, color, and texture.

ARCHITECTURE

Decorative Detail: Most commercial façades have some decorative architectural details. Some building details span over the entire length of the building, which establishes a visual continuity.

- Maintain and repair original ornamentation.
- Match repaired portions to original portions to avoid visual inconsistencies.
- Replacement details should match the original. Consult an artist or specialist for examples of adequate replacement designs and materials.
- Uncover details hidden by false fronts, signs, or new additions.
- If damage occurred as a result of any addition, repair the damage.
- Maintain and protect existing decorative elements during all stages of rehabilitation.
- Do not add decorative elements that clash with the architectural style of the building. If existing false ornamentation exists, restoration to the original façade requires historic documentation.



HANDICAPPED ACCESS

When updating your historic property to meet accessibility regulations, it is important to identify the applicable accessibility requirements, to explore alternatives, and to implement solutions that provide independent access and are consistent with preservation standards and guidelines.

- Solutions for accessibility should not destroy a property's significant materials and features, but should increase accessibility as much as possible.
- If new or secondary entrances required for providing accessibility must be located on a primary facade, they should blend with existing entrances or remain unobtrusive and repair original ornamentation.

