

# Blytheville Downtown Historic District

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## Design Guidelines Manual



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Where not directly cited, historic photos are from the public domain.

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## Key Points

It is intended that these design guidelines be user-friendly and easily understood. However, because of their detailed nature, it is important to keep the following in mind.

**The Historic District Commission is here to help.** The overall goal of the Historic District Commission is to ensure the preservation and maintenance of historic buildings in downtown Blytheville. Thus, work that ensures the survival of historic structures is encouraged. And, though the Historic District Commission serves as a permitting body, their desire is to assist developers through the permit process and help coordinate design assistance when needed.

*This handbook contains guidelines that are intended to be applied flexibly. They are not standards that mandate or stipulate strict rules and requirements.*

These design guidelines are intended to be applied with flexibility. Because most guidelines cannot be written in a manner to accommodate every conceivable scenario, they are intended to be interpreted and applied with flexibility by the Historic District Commission. Only by allowing for a degree of flexibility can the best design solutions be realized.

### The "R's" of Historic Preservation

Historic preservation terminology can be, at times, confusing. But, there are some important terms to know.

**Restoration:** The process of renovating an historic property to depict a particular period of historical significance. This involves the removal of all building features from other time periods, and the complete reconstruction of all missing features from the time period.

**Rehabilitation:** The process of reusing a historic property by repairing, altering, and adding to the structure while preserving its character-defining historic features.

**Reconstruction:** The building of a non-historic structure to depict a destroyed historic structure at a certain period of historical significance.

These guidelines apply only to the exterior of structures. The interior renovation of buildings is not reviewed by the Historic District Commission. And, unless demolition of a building is requested, the Historic District Commission does not consider the structural integrity of buildings.

These design guidelines don't impact zoning or building codes. Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness does not

preclude any necessary zoning approvals, building permits, or sign permits that may be required. Prior to beginning a project, contact the Historic District Commission for assistance in the permitting process.

Contact the Historic District Commission prior to commencing work. Though not all work on the exterior of your structure requires the Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness, it is important to make sure before beginning work. If a Certificate of Appropriateness is required, you could face fines if you don't seek approval before changing the exterior of your building.

These design guidelines are applied more flexibly to non-historic buildings than to historic buildings. "Historic" buildings are those 50 years or older and considered to be contributing to the district's overall character and architectural significance. Buildings that are non-historic or non-contributing because of their age or alterations will have more flexible consideration than historic structures.

## Introduction

This manual serves as a guide to the maintenance, rehabilitation, and construction of historic and new structures within the Blytheville Commercial Historic District, located in downtown Blytheville. The document represents guidelines which are intended to be employed flexibly, and apply to all building renovations, new construction, and building additions that affect the exterior architectural features of a structure in the historic district.



### Purpose of the Historic District Commission

Ordinance 1645, adopted May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007, establishes the purposes for the protection and preservation of the Historic District. These are to:

- Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of such areas and improvement and of districts which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history;
- Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such areas;
- Stabilize and improve property values in such districts;
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;
- Protect and enhance the city's attractions to tourists and visitors;
- Strengthen the economy of the city;
- Promote the use of the historic districts and landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the city.

### Importance of Preservation

Why preserve old buildings? This is an important question for anyone with even a fleeting interest in a downtown, and the reasons to preserve are both value and economically oriented.

From one standpoint, the preservation of old buildings downtown provides us with a connection to the past and a sense of place. Landmarks such as the Kress Building,

Greyhound Bus Station, or Mississippi County Courthouse give Blytheville a sense of identity and shared history in a way that buildings like a Wal-Mart or conventional big box store simply can't. Indeed, as a collection, the historic

*"Virtually every example of sustained success in downtown revitalization – regardless of the size of the city – has included historic preservation as a key component of the strategy." – The Economics of Historic Preservation – Donovan Rypkema*

buildings of downtown define a good deal of what is unique about Blytheville and serve as physical expressions of the city's rich and colorful history.

While the intrinsic value of preservation is important, it is far from the only reason to preserve historic structures. Though challenging, the preservation approach is also economically sound. Research shows the preservation of historic structures can raise property values. In addition, the character conveyed through appropriately restored structures makes them more attractive to the retail businesses and customers that flock to downtowns. In fact, aggressive rehabilitation and restoration programs for historic buildings are often used as a successful catalyst to revive struggling downtowns.

*While preservation has intrinsic value, Federal and State tax credits make rehabilitation of historic structures economically attractive.*

Tax incentives also exist to aid the rehabilitation or restoration of historic structures. These include the 25% State income tax credit (up to \$125,000 on commercial structures) for rehabilitation of structures. In many cases, rehabilitation projects which qualify for the 25% State income tax credit may also qualify for either a 10% or 20% Federal income tax credit.

### Map of the District

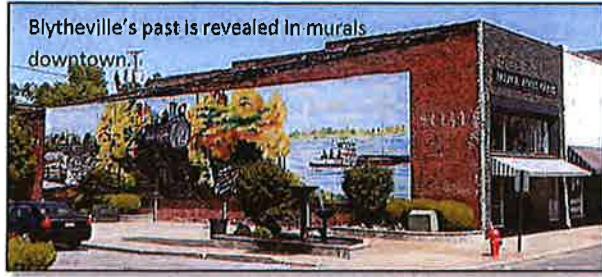
The map below depicts the boundaries of the Blytheville Commercial Historic District. These guidelines and the city's historic preservation ordinance only apply within the boundaries of this district.



## History

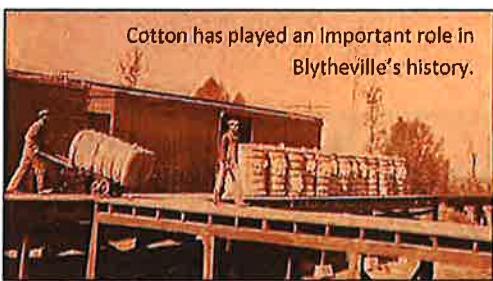
This history is adapted from the Blytheville Commercial Historic District nomination documents and “Reverend H.T. Blythe and the Downtown He Founded” by Jonathan Abbot and Marcy Thompson.

Mississippi County was established nearly five decades before its second county seat, Blytheville, was founded in the 1880s. Originally formed from 160 acres owned by Reverend H.T. Blythe, the town is situated between the historic settlements of Chickasawba and Clear Lake. Mr. Blythe, a Methodist Episcopal minister, moved to Mississippi County in 1853 from Tennessee. Originally residing in the Crooked Lake community (now Armorel), he purchased the lands that would become Blytheville in the late 1860s.



Although the community had already begun to coalesce, Blythe began selling the property that would form downtown in 1881. However, it was not until sometime between 1889 and 1892 that Blytheville was officially

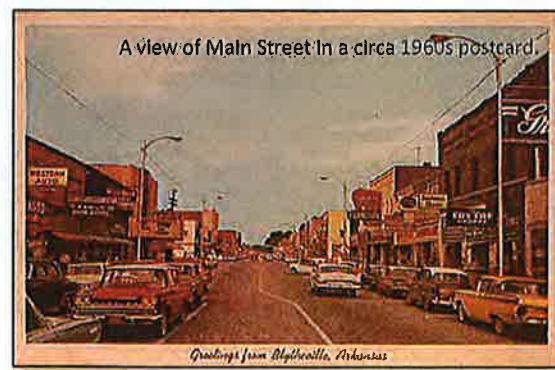
incorporated. However, by 1901 Blytheville became Mississippi County's second county seat.



Early on, the city's growth was fueled by the timber industry. Mississippi County was originally heavily forested, and rebuilding efforts after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 created demand for the emerging local lumber industry. The arrival of the railroad and Chicago Mill and Lumber's 100-acre mill in the early 1900s fostered accelerated growth in the community as Blytheville went from a population of 302 in 1900, to over 6,000 by 1920.

As the county's forests were cleared, agriculture supplanted forestry as the chief local industry. The shift allowed for the continued growth of the city, eclipsing 10,000 by 1930. It also signaled a definable change in downtown. Prior to the 1920s, many of downtown's businesses catered to the transient lumber workers. Downtown had pool halls, boarding houses, saloons, and houses of ill-repute. However, with the ascendance of agriculture, downtown changed. New businesses such as dry goods, seed, and hardware stores opened to cater to the more permanent farming community.

Although 1930s and the Great Depression proved difficult for Blytheville, the city received another boon with the arrival of World War II. An Army Air Field was established outside Blytheville in 1942. Though it closed in 1945, it was reestablished as Blytheville Air Force Base in 1955. For some, the 1950s was seen as a high water mark for downtown. Downtown was the true retail and governmental center of the community and a hub of public and social activity. Still in the segregation era, Ash Street served as parallel downtown for the African-American community.



The last fifty years have seen continuing changes in the community. The closure of Eaker Air Force Base dealt the city a hard blow that has been softened by its redevelopment into the Arkansas Aeroplex and the emergence of the local steel industry. Mississippi County is now one of the largest steel producing areas in the country. If the community's history is any indication, it's certain Blytheville will remain an adaptive and vibrant community.

### Blytheville Commercial Historic District

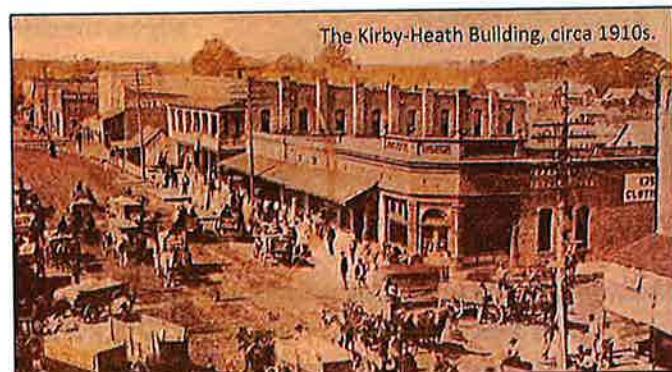
The oldest remaining buildings in downtown Blytheville date to 1890. The organization and development of a Main Street did not begin until the 1880s. The first period of construction in Blytheville includes the buildings dating from 1890 until 1919. This period of development reflects the years that Blytheville was growing as a lumber town mainly sending their supplies north to Chicago as that city recovered from the Great Fire of 1871.

The second period of development includes buildings constructed between 1920 and 1939. The rise of cotton and crop farming brought different types of businesses and sustaining population growth. Buildings dating from this period are reflective of resulting social trends and agricultural needs.

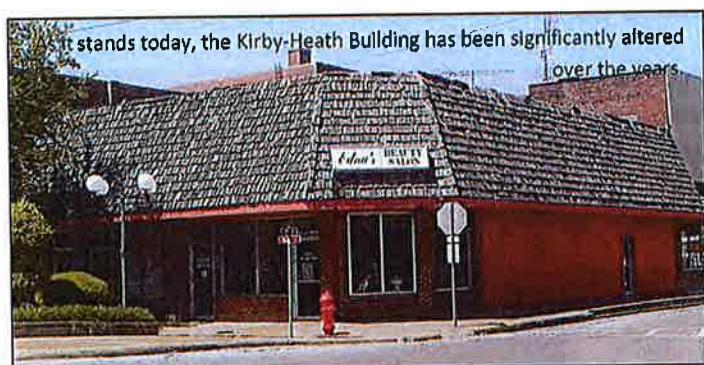
The final period of significance for downtown Blytheville is 1940 to 1956. This period saw the construction of the smallest number of buildings. However, it is nonetheless significant to the history of the town.

#### **1890-1919**

The architecture of downtown Blytheville through this earliest period is dominated by plain traditional commercial architecture. Surviving structures are of primarily brick construction and one to two stories in height with rectangular plans. The notable exception to this trend is the Kirby-Heath Building (200-204 W. Main St.), constructed in 1901. This one-story structure with a beveled corner is an anchor around which much of downtown developed.



Many of the buildings from this period can be found on the blocks between 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and Broadway on Main Street.

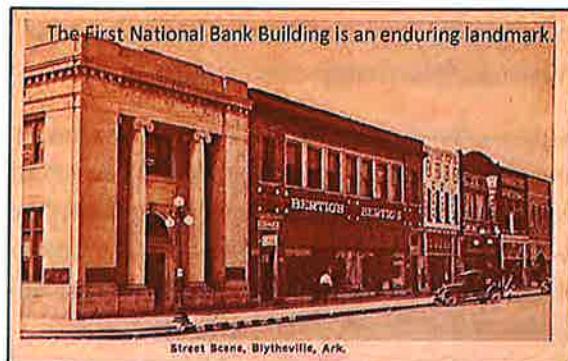


Twenty-three or 74% of structures in these two blocks date from the period. Two of the oldest structures in downtown, 112 W. Main St. and 106 E. Main St., both date to 1890. Many of the original structures functioned to serve a transient population, with many hotels, boarding houses, theatres, and general stores. While some like the Hubbard and Hoke Furniture building (401 W. Main St.), in continuous operation since its construction, reflect the early wealth of the community.

## 1920-1939

Buildings from 1920 to 1939 reflect Blytheville's growing stability and prosperity during the period. Businesses represented on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps from 1921 and 1928, include multiple stores carrying dry goods, jewelry, and hardware as well as drug stores and specialty markets. The majority of construction during this period occurred along Main Street between 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and Franklin St. Fourteen buildings or 57% of structures on these two blocks are from this period. Another area which saw feverish construction during this period was Ash St., south of Main St. Though many buildings have been lost to neglect and demolition, at one time Ash St. rivaled Main St. in the number and types of buildings.

Prosperity in Blytheville during this period can also be measured by the greater variety of high-style architecture constructed in these years. While many buildings of this period also reflect standard twentieth-century commercial design, there are several buildings with distinct architectural styling. The Kress Building is a wonderful example of the Art Deco Style, and The First National Bank Building (201 W. Main St.) is an example of high style neoclassical architecture with two complete façades.



The Ingram Apartment Building is one of Blytheville's more architecturally ornate structures.

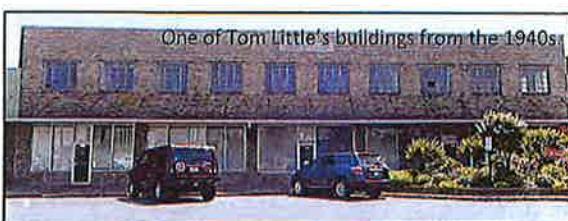
Another corner building with two fully designed façades is the Ingram Apartment Building (101 E. Main St.). This building, constructed in 1926, has a Mediterranean influence as it features a short mansard with green barrel tiles, mosaic tile in the arches above several windows, and small balconies on the second story. The building was named for its architect Mr. Ingram from Conway. It was originally a high-end office and apartment building.

This period also included modifications to some older buildings on Main Street. Several external façades were

remodeled to be reflective of the Art Moderne style that was popular during the period. Carrara Glass, a trade name for a form of pigmented structural glass, was used on structures such as 200-204 W. Main St., 208 W. Main St., and 217-221 W. Main St. Some of this structural glass is still intact.

## 1940-1956

There were only five buildings constructed in the historic district between 1940 and 1956. While much of the construction during this period was less architecturally significant, the existing structures are distinct from those built in earlier periods. Three buildings from the period were built by Tom Little, who went on to be mayor of Blytheville. All the buildings from this period were constructed using buff colored brick, as opposed to more historically common red brick. This feature is one of several that give these buildings a common design theme that set them apart from those built earlier.

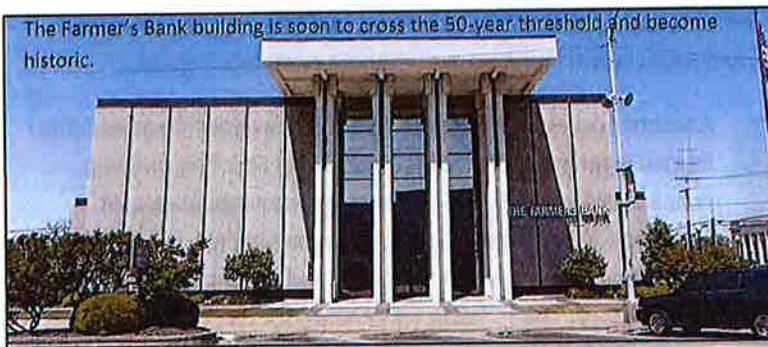
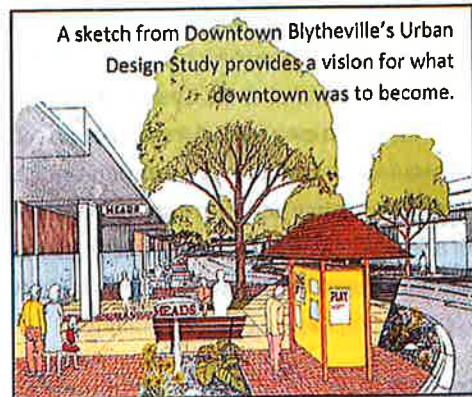


One of Tom Little's buildings from the 1940s.

## 1957-Present

While few structures have been built downtown since 1957, the period has had a significant impact on downtown. Over the last 50 years, downtown has seen decline and attempted resurgence. The rise of the automobile dealt a hard blow to downtown. In response Mayor Tom Little, the Downtown Merchants Association, and the Blytheville Housing Authority acquired urban renewal funding to complete an Urban Design Study in 1969.

The study proposed dramatic changes to downtown to make it compatible in an auto-oriented age. While many of changes were implemented, some were not. Among the proposals were coordinated parking lots, restructuring of traffic patterns featuring chicanes on Main St. and a one-way couplet north and south of Main St., and a dramatic proposed architectural redesign of Main Street's building façades.

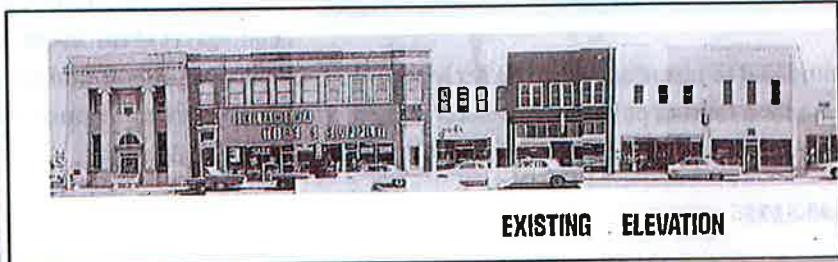


The Farmer's Bank building is soon to cross the 50-year threshold and become historic.

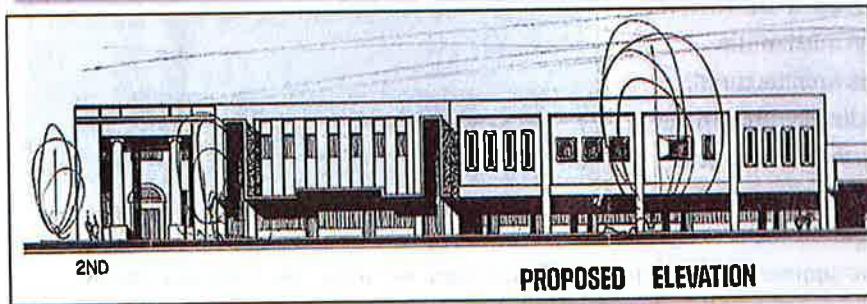
Built in coordination with the urban study was the Farmer's Bank building. The building resulted in the replacement of over a half-block of early twentieth-century commercial structures on Main Street between Broadway and 5<sup>th</sup> St. The building is a striking example of the International style with its large concrete panels and exposed aggregate cladding. While not currently historic

because of age, its architectural significance and relationship to the urban design study will make it a vitally significant historic structure for downtown in the future.

*The Urban Design Study proposed dramatic changes that, if carried out, would have radically altered the historic façades on Main Street. Some, like First National Bank, were too beautiful to alter.*



EXISTING ELEVATION



2ND

PROPOSED ELEVATION

*The study also left valuable photographic evidence of downtown's appearance in the early 1970s.*

## Overview of Architectural Styles

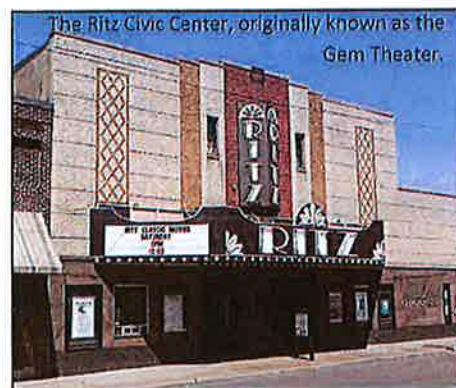
### Art Deco/Moderne



While Art Deco directly takes its name from the 1925 Paris *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs*, both the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles were influenced by the exposition. They are primarily associated with the late 1920s and early 1930s, though the styles persisted until the Second World War. The styles place emphasis on richly colored and geometric patterns, new materials, and styles. They are a decorative approach to modernism.

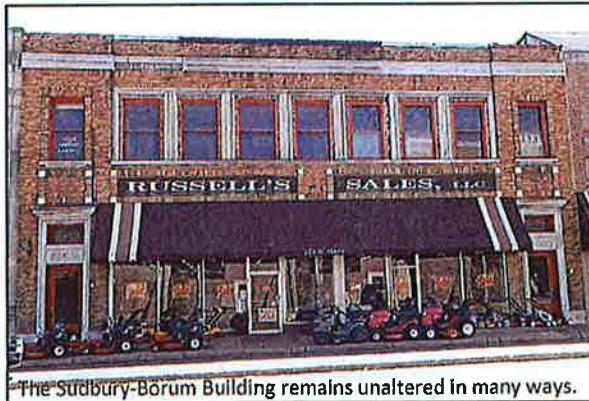
Angular forms and vertical emphasis are trademarks of Art Deco, while rounded forms and horizontal emphasis are more characteristic of Art Moderne. In addition, the styles are sometimes blended.

These styles present a prominent motif throughout downtown Blytheville. The best example of Art Moderne, being the Greyhound Bus Station, lies just outside the historic district. The Kress Building at 210 W. Main St. is downtown's most notable Art Deco structure.



### Classical Revival

Downtown Blytheville has several handsome Classical Revival structures, some of which lie just outside the historic district such as city hall. The



The Sudbury-Borum Building remains unaltered in many ways.

#### Classical Revival

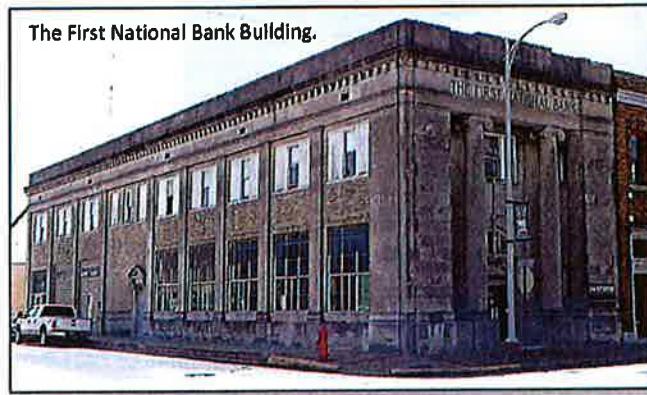
style bases its design upon Greek and Roman forms popularized in the Columbian Exposition of the 1890s. These facades are very formal in character and usually symmetrical in composition. Brick, stone, or concrete walls are common as are large entrances and double-hung windows. Examples of this style include the Sudbury-Borum Building at 203 W. Main St. and the Spanish Colonial Revival blended Ingram Apartment Building at 101 W. Main St.



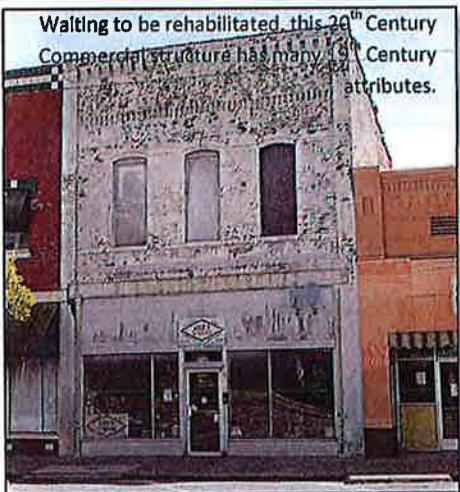
### Other Revival Styles

Other revival styles are common throughout the Historic District as well. Several buildings exhibit touches of the Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style. The most prominent of these is the Ingram Apartment Building at 101 W. Main St. It features tile mosaics and mansards with green barrel tiles.

Downtown also features a few striking Greek Revival structures. Inside the district, the First National Bank Building at 201 W. Main St. represents the style. Despite having two full façades, its two dominating columns facing Main St. provide an impressive primary entrance to the building. The Colonial Revival style is also featured among two small-statured structures, one of which is located immediately South of city hall at 115 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St.



### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial

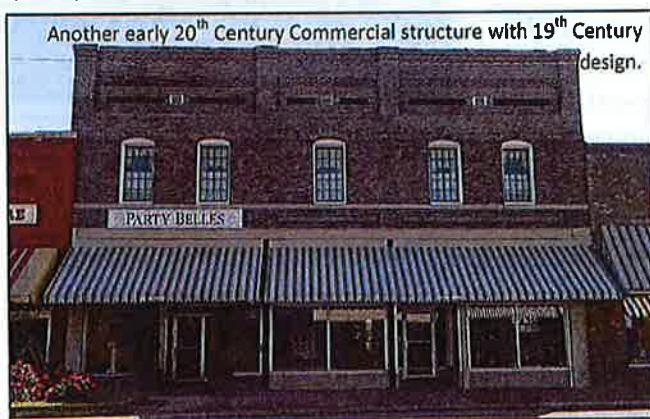


Structures of this variety are primarily two or three stories in height, with a flat roof and a variety of ornamental detailing. The “textbook” storefront has a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows with kick plates/bulkheads, clerestory windows, and transom windows. Cornices are often bracketed with parapets, finials, or decorative panels. There is sometimes a secondary cornice separating the first two floors, which sometimes repeats the pattern of the upper floor cornice. Windows on the upper floors are generally smaller than the display windows, may be arched, and are usually decorated with molded surrounds or plain lintels.

Blytheville has a handful of remaining 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial structures. This is largely due to the fact that the city was not founded until the 1880s and the impermanent nature of its early

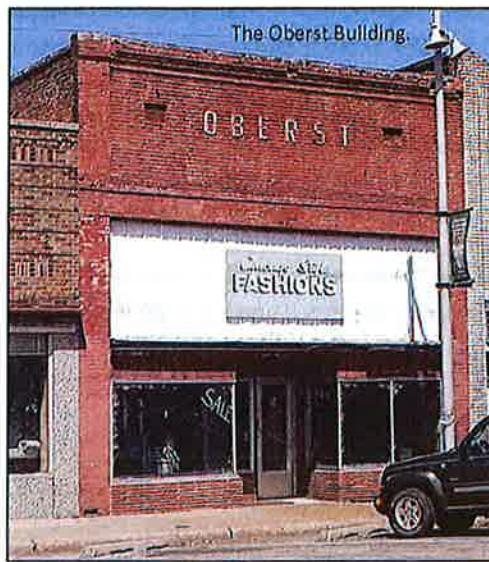
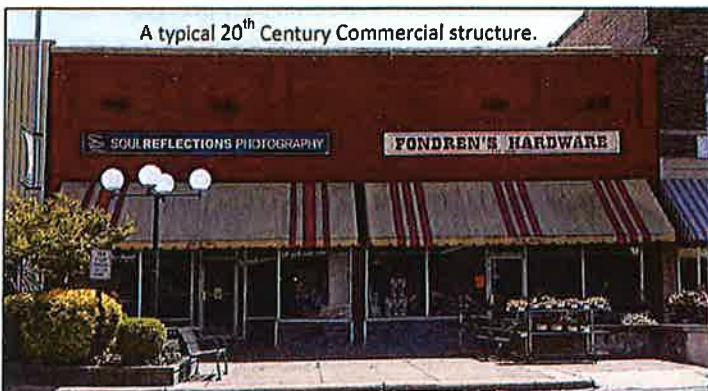
buildings and populace. However, some of the city’s very early 20<sup>th</sup> Century structures reflect 19<sup>th</sup> Century designs. Resultantly, in some areas downtown has a noticeable 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial appearance despite having so few structures from the era.

Many of the historic storefronts for these structures have been lost over time. In some cases, the altered storefronts have themselves become historic, making them worthy of preservation. Recent rehabilitations of several 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial structures reflect this reality, focusing primarily on the upper floor façades.



## 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial

Most of Blytheville's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial structures were built in the period between 1910 and 1930. Many of the structures are of a relatively simple functional single-story design. Others are more ornate, may contain upper floors, or may display touches of numerous revival styles popular before the Second World War. The use of

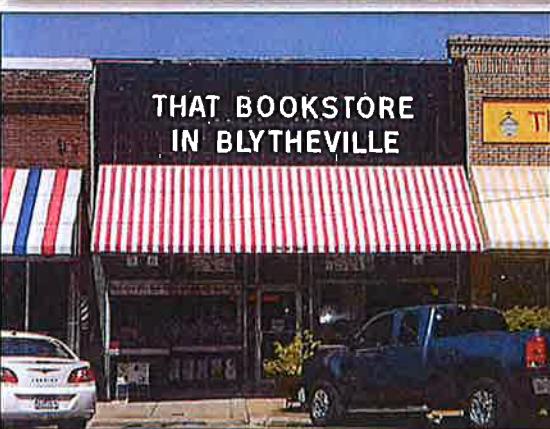


pigmented structural glass, often known by trade names of Carrara or Vitrolite, was common for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial structures in Blytheville. It was often used as a later building modification, and is now considered historic.

As a general rule, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial buildings retain the traditional storefront and some decorative elements such as arched window heads and decorative cornices, like 19<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial structures. Most have been heavily modified over time, and may have distinctive architectural features hiding behind upper façade slip covers or faux mansard roofs with wooden shingles.



*Downtown Blytheville's buildings, monuments, and people give the city a proud legacy and a unique and interesting history.*



## Design Review Process

### Overview

Dealing with public agencies and commissions can be a daunting prospect for a business owner or developer. However, approval of the rehabilitation or alteration of a structure in the District can be an easy process. Although the Historic District Commission is the approving body, they are ultimately here to help.

*No building or structure, including stone walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, and paving or other appurtenant fixtures, shall be erected, altered, restored, moved, or demolished within an historic district until after an application for a certificate of appropriateness as to exterior architectural features has been submitted to and approved by the historic district commission. Arkansas Code, Annotated, § 14-172-208 (a)(1).*

All physical improvements/alterations to the façade and streetscape elements of a property or structure within the historic district fall under the guidance of this handbook and may require a Certificate of Appropriateness. There are, however, some exemptions.

### Exempted Improvements

*Some minor work does not require approval of the Historic District Commission.*

Work categorized as ordinary maintenance does not require approval of the Historic District Commission. The city's preservation ordinance classifies ordinary maintenance as improvements that do not change but simply upgrade a structure, meaning maintenance that does not alter the design, materials, or outer appearance of a façade. Such examples would include repainting a building in the same color or replacing severely deteriorated wood trim with matching materials. While these types of improvements may not require a Certificate of Appropriateness, they may require design review. If you are in doubt, contact the Historic District Commission prior to commencing work.

These guidelines do not prevent the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or demolition of any such feature which the Blytheville Code Enforcement Officer requires for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.

### Pre-Application Meeting

Many prospective applicants benefit from a pre-application meeting to go over their plans and goals for their project. This meeting allows the applicant to become familiarized with the process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness, ask questions about the process, and identify potential design problems before incurring great expense with design professionals. The pre-application meeting also provides an opportunity for staff to work with the applicant to identify what, if any, other approvals may be necessary in the form of Planning Commission authorization or building and sign permits. Not only can a planning meeting head off potential problems, the staff and commission members can offer a wide range of experience and expertise.

*Be sure to meet with the Historic District Commission staff prior to applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness to ensure no other approvals are needed from the Code Enforcement Officer or Planning Commission.*

## Application Submission

1. Obtain and complete an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Main Street Blytheville office.
2. Include all information and documentation required for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
3. Review the application and information with the Historic District Commission staff to ensure no other approvals or permits will be required.
4. File the completed application with the City Historic District Commission staff at least 30 days prior to the next meeting of the Blytheville Historic District Commission. Under no circumstance may an application be submitted for approval less than 20 days prior to the commission's next scheduled meeting. Staff can provide you with a calendar of meetings for the commission.
5. Staff will review the application and set a date for the application's public hearing.
6. Appear, or have a representative appear, at the public hearing to present the application and answer questions.
7. The Commission may approve, deny, or conditionally approve the application. If approved, the Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness.
8. If denied, the applicant may appeal the decision of the Historic District Commission to the Circuit Court of Mississippi County within 30 days.
9. If approved, the applicant may not deviate from the designs approved by the Commission without the re-hearing and approval of any proposed changes.

*Each application is subject to a public hearing to allow the community to speak in support or opposition to an application.*

## Processing of Application

1. The Historic District Commission staff will determine what properties will be affected by the changes proposed in the Certificate of Appropriateness application.
2. The Historic District Commission staff will send, by mail, postage prepaid, to the applicant and to the owners of all such affected properties, a notice of the hearing to be held by the Historic District Commission on the proposed application.
3. The Historic District Commission staff will publish a Notice of Public Hearing at least once in the newspaper, a minimum of 15 days prior to the hearing.
4. At the public hearing, the Commission will hear all persons desiring to present information regarding the application.
5. The Commission will hear from the applicant concerning the proposed application.
6. The Commission will determine if whether the restoration, rehabilitation, renovation, preservation, alteration, construction, moving or demolition proposed will be appropriate to the District.
7. The Commission will determine whether a Certificate of Appropriateness should be issued or not and it will notify the applicant immediately.
8. If the Commission determines that a Certificate of Appropriateness should not be issued, it shall place the reasons for such decision in its records and provide a copy to the applicant.

*You or your representative should appear at the public hearing to present the application and answer questions.*

### **Basis for Determination of Approval**

In making the determination concerning the Certificate of Appropriateness, the Commission shall consider the following criteria.

1. The Commission will consider the spirit and intent of the authorizing ordinance that set up the Historic District Commission to provide a general basis for evaluating applications.
2. The Commission shall consider the architectural or historic value or significance of the building in question and its relationship to the surrounding area.
3. The Commission shall consider the general compatibility of proposed changes to the guidelines contained herein. The design guidelines, however, are simply that: guidelines. They are not regulations nor do they represent legal requirements. The individual applicant may submit any additional supporting documentation that would assist the Commission in determining appropriateness. Alternative, or even contemporary, design shall not be excluded from consideration.
4. The Commission may additionally consider any other factor, including visual and aesthetic that may be considered pertinent by the commission.

When evaluating the general compatibility of alterations to the exterior of any building in the district, the Commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors within the building's area of influence.

Siting	Roof Area	Facade
Height	Entrance Area	Scale
Proportion	Wall Areas	Massing
Rhythm	Detailing	

The Commission will encourage proposed changes that reflect the original design of the structure based upon historical documentation such as photos and written descriptions. Additions to existing buildings shall be judged in the same manner as new construction and shall complement the design of the original building. New construction shall be judged on its ability to blend with the existing district and area of influence.

### **Economic Hardship**

The Commission may determine that failure to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness in a specific instance would involve a substantial economic hardship to the applicant. In making such a determination, the following guidelines shall apply.

1. If the property in question is a significant historic and community resource, the Commission may invoke up to a 90-day delay of the proposed work. During this period of delay, the Historic District Commission shall propose suitable alternatives to the proposed work for the applicant to investigate. The applicant, with the help of the Commission and Historic District Commission staff, will investigate the feasibility of the alternatives, and report their findings to the Commission. Failure to do so will serve as a basis for denial of a Certificate of Economic Hardship.

2. If, after the end of the 90-day delay period, no reasonable use can be found or economic return can be obtained and there has been no substantial detriment to the district, the Commission may issue a Certificate of Economic Hardship approving the proposed work. If the Commission finds otherwise, it shall deny the application for Certificate of Economic Hardship.

#### **Demolition by Neglect**

The owner or legal custodian of any building within the district shall be responsible for keeping the structure safe and properly maintained. The owner or legal custodian shall be responsible for the repair and upkeep of a structure if it is found to be subject to deterioration, including but not limited to:

1. The deterioration of exterior walls or other vertical supports.
2. The deterioration of external chimneys.
3. The deterioration of roofs or other horizontal members.
4. The deterioration or crumbling of exterior plasters or mortar.
5. The ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, or foundations, including broken windows or doors.
6. The peeling of paint, rotting, holes, and other forms of decay.
7. The lack of maintenance of surrounding environment such as fences, gates, sidewalks, steps, signs, ancillary structures, and landscaping.
8. The deterioration of any feature so as to create or permit the creation of any hazardous or unsafe condition or conditions.

The Commission shall notify the property owner of any violations of these maintenance requirements by mail, giving details of the violation along with a time period for remedy of the violation and consequences for failure to remedy the violation.

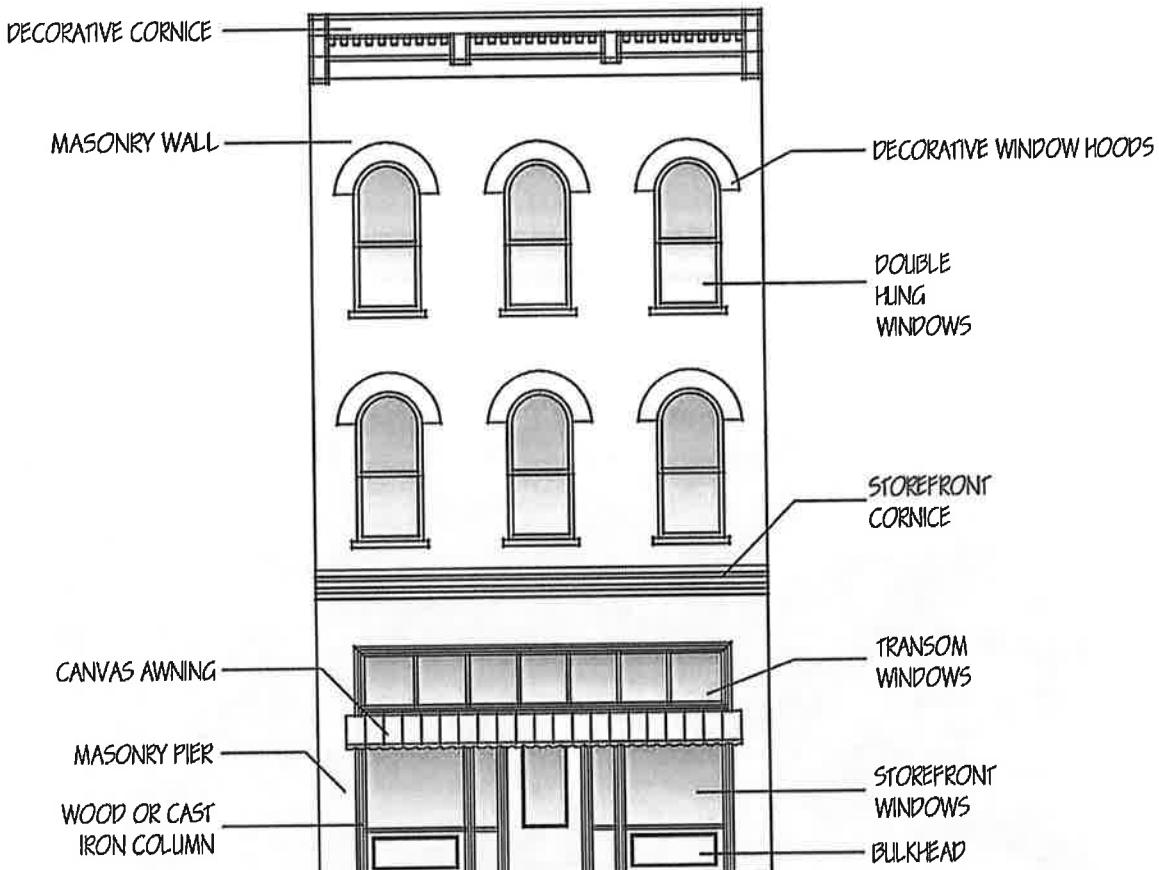


## Anatomy of the Traditional Façade

Most commercial storefronts found in the historic district date from the 1890s through the 1930s. Although styles and appearances evolved over the years, the traditional façades remained unchanged in their basic form and proportions. This similarity and consistency of form creates a strong and coordinated, visual image.

Over the years, technological developments and changing trends led to frequent storefront changes, while the upper façade remained unaltered, deteriorated, or was hidden behind an aluminum shell.

The basic commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefront, with an entrance and display windows; the upper façade, usually with regularly spaced windows; and the cornice, which caps the building. Although these components appear in many shapes and styles, the result is essentially the same traditional façade.



## Standards

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Below are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These are the controlling standards of the historic district, and represent the threshold criteria that all Certificate of Appropriateness applications must meet for approval. All guidelines contained in this handbook are derived from these standards. Where uncertainty exists in the application of the guidelines, these standards should be used to help determine the appropriate action or treatment.

### The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

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 feature 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 shall 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.

## Guidelines

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### General Recommendations

The building façade and exterior should, after treatment, contribute to the historic character of the district. It should reflect the time period in which it was constructed and retain the distinctive materials and features that provide its historic character. The following general recommendations offer an overall guide to rehabilitating structures in the district.

1. It is preferable to preserve by maintenance rather than to repair original features of the building.
2. It is preferable to repair original architectural features than to reconstruct them.
3. It is preferable to reconstruct original architectural features than to have them removed.
4. ***Do the building no harm.*** Before removing, defacing, or altering any element that may be architecturally distinctive or historically significant, consult with the Historic District Commission or its staff.
5. Help maintain a coherent image of the historic district. Relate the improvements to other buildings to the greatest extent possible. The building is not just part of the historic district, but also a part of a downtown shopping, entertainment, and business district.
6. Use the historic character of the building to attract and keep customers. The unique historical features of downtown buildings are part of what draw people downtown. Don't hide or mar architectural features that make your building interesting and unique.
7. Maintain a sense of balance. Make efforts to attract customers and visitors, but remember that much of the appeal of the area rests in a neat and orderly appearance. Remember that if every personal whim of each business owner were manifested in the façade of each business, the result could be a level of chaos that could repel, rather than attract, customers and visitors. Maintain window and outdoor displays so they provide visual interest instead of chaotic clutter.
8. Help encourage strolling. Concentrate on orderly and non-obtrusive displays of merchandise.
9. Don't negatively impact a neighbor's ability to attract business. A collection of healthy businesses makes for a healthy downtown. Being surrounded by successful businesses can be great help for your business.
10. Contemporary design can be compatible where it complements and harmonizes with the historic components of the district.
11. Seek help. Professionals are available to help with your project's design. Remember, however, that not every architect is skilled in historic preservation. When in doubt, ask an expert.

## Brick and Masonry

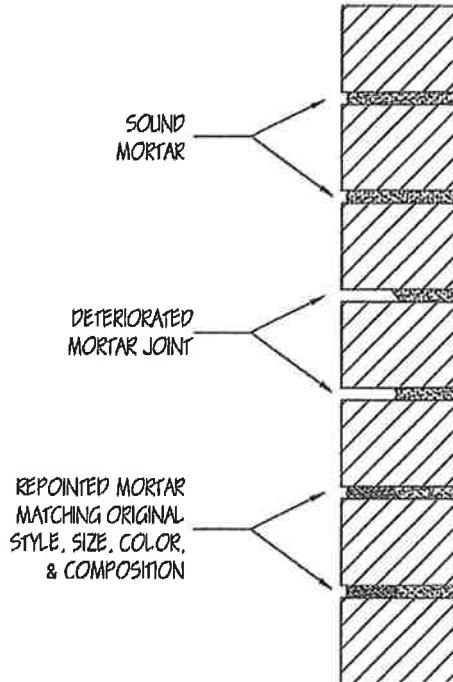
Most structures in downtown Blytheville feature some type of masonry or brick. By definition, masonry includes brick, stone, concrete, and terra-cotta. Architectural styling and material of the masonry work will vary between historical periods. However, treatment of these materials should remain consistent in the district. The following guidelines will apply to the treatment of most brick and stonework.

### *General*

1. Materials original to the building should be preserved.
2. Where replacement of materials is necessary due to extensive deterioration, new brick and masonry should follow the original bonding and joint patterns of the original materials.
3. Masonry features such as brick cornices and piers, stone window hoods, and terra-cotta brackets should be preserved and maintained.
4. Although masonry is one of the most durable historic building materials, it is also very susceptible to damage by improper maintenance and repair techniques.
5. Improper cleaning, repair, and maintenance can damage both the aesthetic and long-term structural integrity of the building.

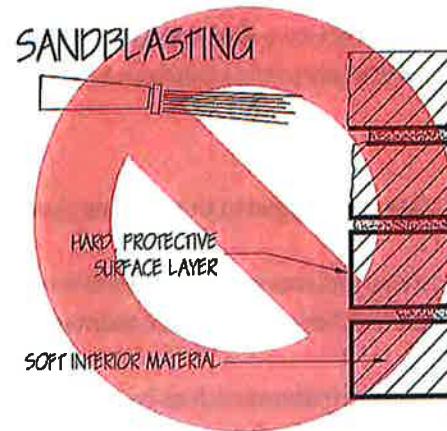
### *Repointing Masonry*

1. Masonry walls and other surfaces should be repaired by repointing the mortar joints where there is evidence of deterioration such as disintegrating mortar, cracks in mortar joints, loose bricks, damp walls, or damaged plasterwork.
2. Repointing should be done with original or like compounds that allow the expansion and contraction process.
3. Deteriorated mortar should be removed by hand tools to avoid damage to the masonry.
4. Old mortar joints should be duplicated in strength, composition, color, and texture as well as in width and joint profile.
5. Sealant should be used only when it can be determined that its use will not change the appearance of the masonry nor will it trap moisture that will contribute to further deterioration.



### *Cleaning Masonry*

1. Masonry should only be cleaned when necessary to remove heavy soiling and to stop deterioration.
2. Masonry surfaces should be cleaned with the gentlest means possible, such as low-pressure water and masonry detergents, using natural bristle brushes. High-pressure water (450 p.s.i. and above) can damage masonry surfaces and joints.
3. If cleaning masonry, pick a small, inconspicuous area to observe the effects of the cleaning method before use on the entire façade.
4. **Do not sandblast masonry surfaces or use other highly abrasive cleaning methods.** These methods can destroy the hardened outer layer of the masonry and accelerate deterioration of the brick.



### *Painting Masonry*

1. Historically unpainted masonry should not be painted.
2. Paint should not be removed from historically painted masonry.
3. To avoid damage to the masonry, only damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed prior to repainting masonry.

### Architectural Metals

Architectural metals include cast iron, steel, pressed tin, zinc, copper, and aluminum. The majority of the surviving examples of architectural metals in the Historic District are confined primarily to its 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings. In several of these buildings, only the cast iron columns remain original to the storefront. For those visible or which can be uncovered, the following guidelines apply.

#### *Cleaning Architectural Metals*

1. Architectural metals should be cleaned when necessary to remove corrosion prior to repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings.
2. Cleaning shall be done with gentlest methods available. Particular care should be taken when cleaning soft metals like lead, tin, copper, and zinc.



- | 3. Sandblasting should only be used on cast iron.
- 4. Metal surfaces prone to rust should be kept painted. Metals such as copper, bronze or stainless steel should not be painted.

#### *Replacing Missing Pieces*

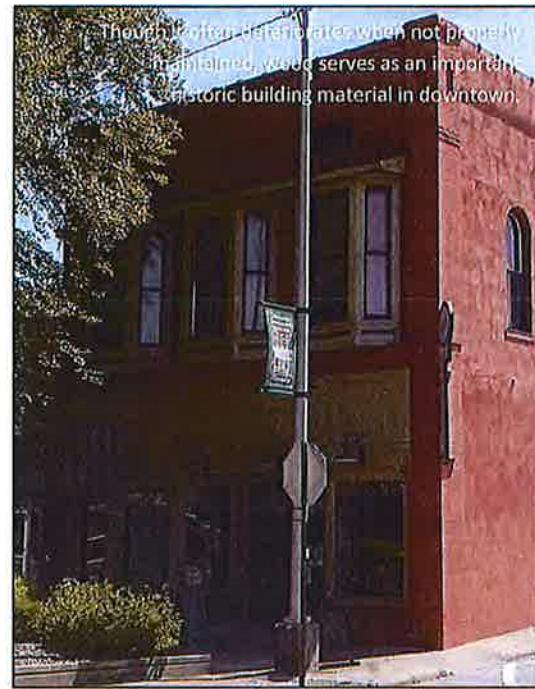
- 1. Missing pieces or parts damaged beyond repair can often be fabricated; however, they may also be recast in aluminum or fiberglass from existing pieces or substituted by wood, if necessary.
- 2. Dissimilar metals should be buffered from each other to avoid the potential problems of electrolysis.

#### Wood

Wood is a common material for architectural features such as cornice, brackets, bulkheads, storefronts, and window framing. These features are important in defining the overall historic character of the building and the district. Wood requires proper maintenance and the preservation of wooden architectural elements is of particular importance in rehabilitation projects.

#### *Protecting Wood*

- 1. Retain coatings such as paint that help protect wood from moisture and harmful light rays.
- 2. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration and as a part of an overall maintenance program that involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings.
- 3. Paint should be removed with the gentlest of methods possible when it is necessary to do so.
- 4. Wood surfaces should never be sandblasted.



Though often deteriorates when not properly maintained, wood serves as an important historic building material in downtown.

#### *Repair and Replacement of Wood*

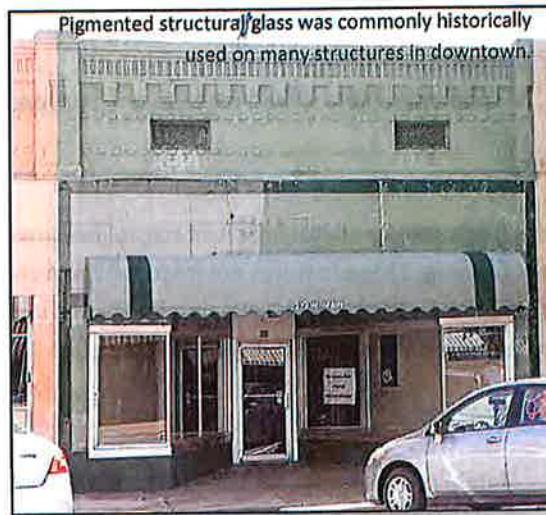
- 1. Deteriorated or damaged wood architectural elements should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible.
- 2. Replacement of deteriorated wood features should be limited to patching or piecing-in only the irreparable portions whenever possible, rather than removing the entire feature and replacing it with new material to create a uniform or “improved” appearance.

## Pigmented Structural Glass

Panels of structural glass are appropriate where evidence suggests its historical use. Several structures in the Historic District currently have historically featured structural glass. Special care should be taken to preserve existing structural glass. Contact the Historic District Commission staff for information on sources of replacement structural glass and/or compatible substitutes.

### *General*

1. Pigmented structural glass, marketed under the names Carrara glass, Sani-Onyx, and Vitrolite, became a popular commercial glass construction material in the 1930s and 1940s. Pigmented structural glass veneer played a major role in the growth of the Art Deco, Streamline, and Modern styles of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
2. The material was used as a way for designers to update buildings in a modern style. This was common in Blytheville, and these often Art Deco/Moderne inspired additions are now historic themselves.
3. Pigmented structural glass rarely deteriorates. However, it is prone to failure because of the way in which it is bonded to the wall.



### *Repair*

1. Cracked or open joints should be repointed, particularly where glass meets concrete.
2. Any glass pane that can be repaired should not be replaced.
3. If the bonding material has deteriorated, the glass panels should be carefully removed and reattached using fresh hot-melt asphalt. This is the traditional bonding material.
4. When replacement glass cannot be found to replace damaged and missing panels, a compatible substitute may be considered if it conveys the same visual appearance as the historic material.

## Windows

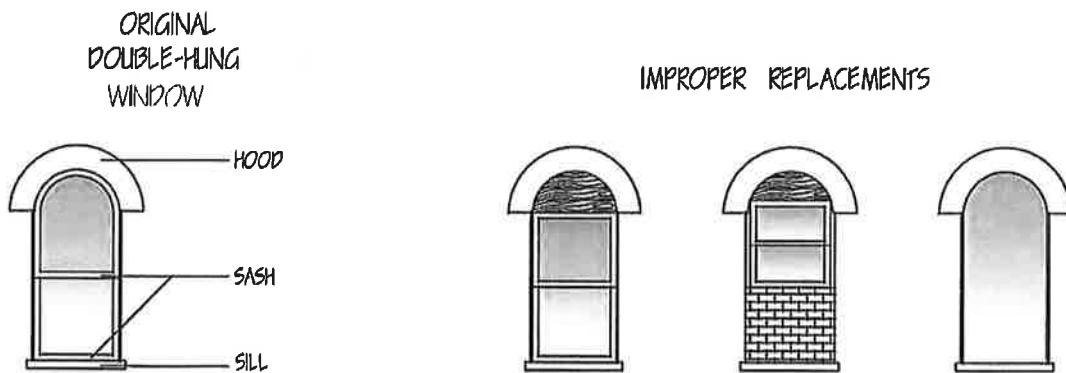
Windows carry great visual and functional importance, yet they are the most frequent victims of neglect and insensitive alterations that are visually and physically destructive. Careful consideration is required when windows are repaired or replaced. The functional and decorative components of windows that should be preserved, maintained, or duplicated include frames, sash, muntins, glass, sills, and hoods.

### *Upper Story Windows and Transoms*

1. Upper story windows historically had a strong vertical emphasis, and their placement often places a defining role in setting the rhythm and character for buildings along a block.
2. Historic proportions of a building's upper story windows should be retained and preserved.
3. Upper story windows should not be blocked. Existing blocked windows should be re-opened and restored.
4. Do not alter the shape of the original window openings.
5. Many transom window openings throughout the Historic District have been blocked or covered. Transom windows are an additional important element that conveys the rhythm and character of buildings on a block, as the window openings often align. If the original transom windows are covered, they should be uncovered and damaged glass replaced.
6. If the original transom windows have been blocked, they should be reopened. They may also be used for signage or awning space, but the original proportions of the openings should be retained.

### *Replacing Windows*

1. If windows must be replaced entirely, the new windows should convey the same visual appearance of the original windows.
2. New windows should fully fit the opening of the original windows, and contain the same detailing (ex. Arched double-hung windows should be replaced with arched double-hung windows).
3. Mirrored glass or tinted glass should be avoided.
4. Residential features should not be used for commercial structures.
5. Window materials that convey a historical period not keeping with the original design of the structure should be avoided. (ex. Colonial-era small-paned windows)



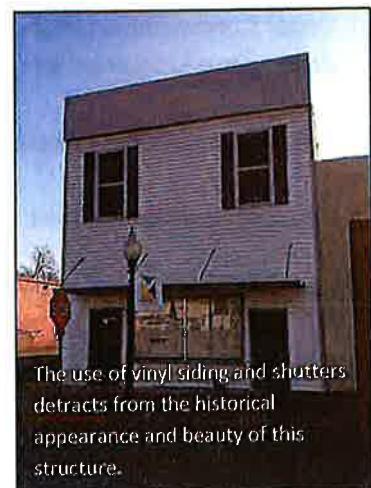
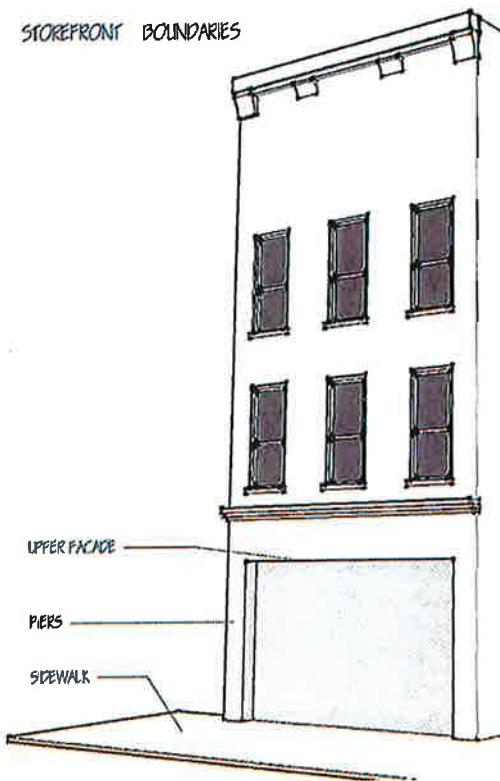
## Storefronts

Along with entrances and doors, the storefront forms the primary area of visual and physical interaction between the pedestrian and a building. Accordingly, it is essential that the storefront design and rehabilitation treatment are sensitive to the historical integrity and provide visual interest for customers and visitors to downtown. By convention, the traditional storefront is confined to the first floor of the commercial structure.

Within Blytheville, the original storefronts for most buildings are gone, having been lost to deterioration or previous building modifications. This leaves the property owners few options. One option would be complete reconstruction of the historic storefront. This should only be pursued when based upon documented evidence, using historically appropriate materials. In many cases, it may alternatively be best to leave the existing storefront intact. However, whenever historic materials can be safely uncovered, they should be.

### General

1. The original and historic storefront elements should be preserved and maintained with their functional and decorative features intact and not covered.
2. Elements that obscure or cover the building's original or historic storefront elements may be removed.

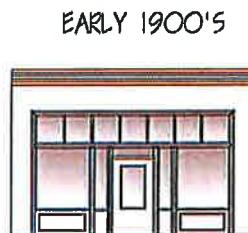


*Storefront Design and Materials*

1. The storefront should fit within its original opening and not extend past its traditional boundaries, maintaining a clear distinction between the first floor and upper floors.
2. The storefront should consist primarily of glass and provide visual openness.
3. False historical themes should not be introduced in the storefront elements. Colonial design elements should be avoided.
4. Where all original and historic storefront elements have been removed, contemporary designs may be acceptable.
5. Contemporary designs should maintain the traditional proportions of storefront elements, relate the scale of its design to compatible neighboring storefronts, and use materials compatible to the historic character of the structure.



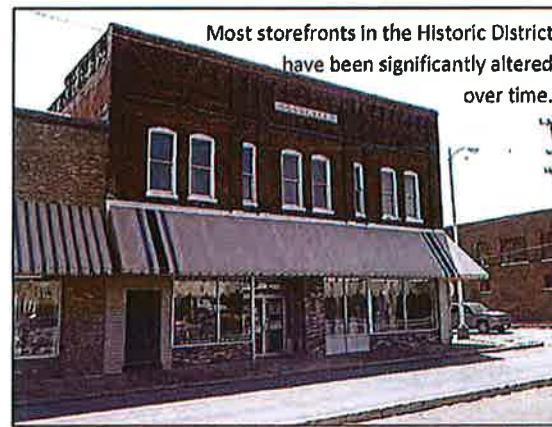
LATE 1800'S



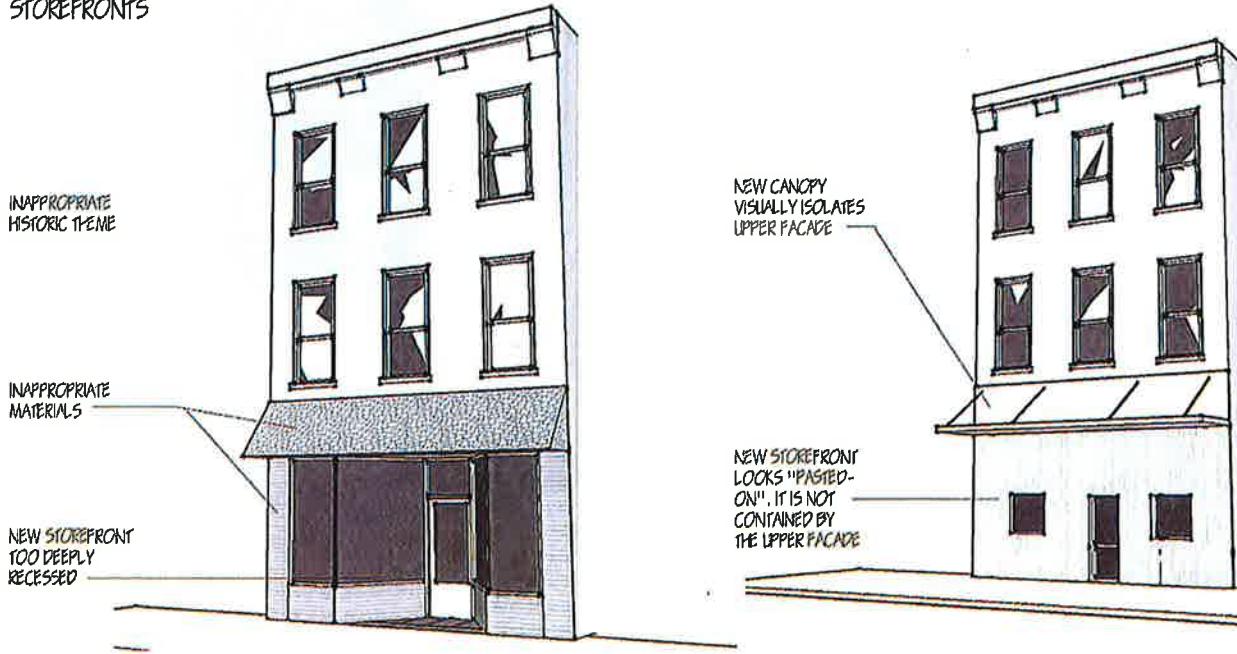
EARLY 1900'S

- DECORATED CORNICE
- CAST IRON COLUMNS
- LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS

- SIMPLE CORNICE
- TRANSOM WINDOWS
- RECESSED ENTRANCE



**INAPPROPRIATELY ALTERED  
STOREFRONTS**



## COMMON STOREFRONT MATERIALS

CORNICE: CAST IRON, WOOD,  
OR SHEET METAL, BRICK, STONE,  
TERRA COTTA, ETC.

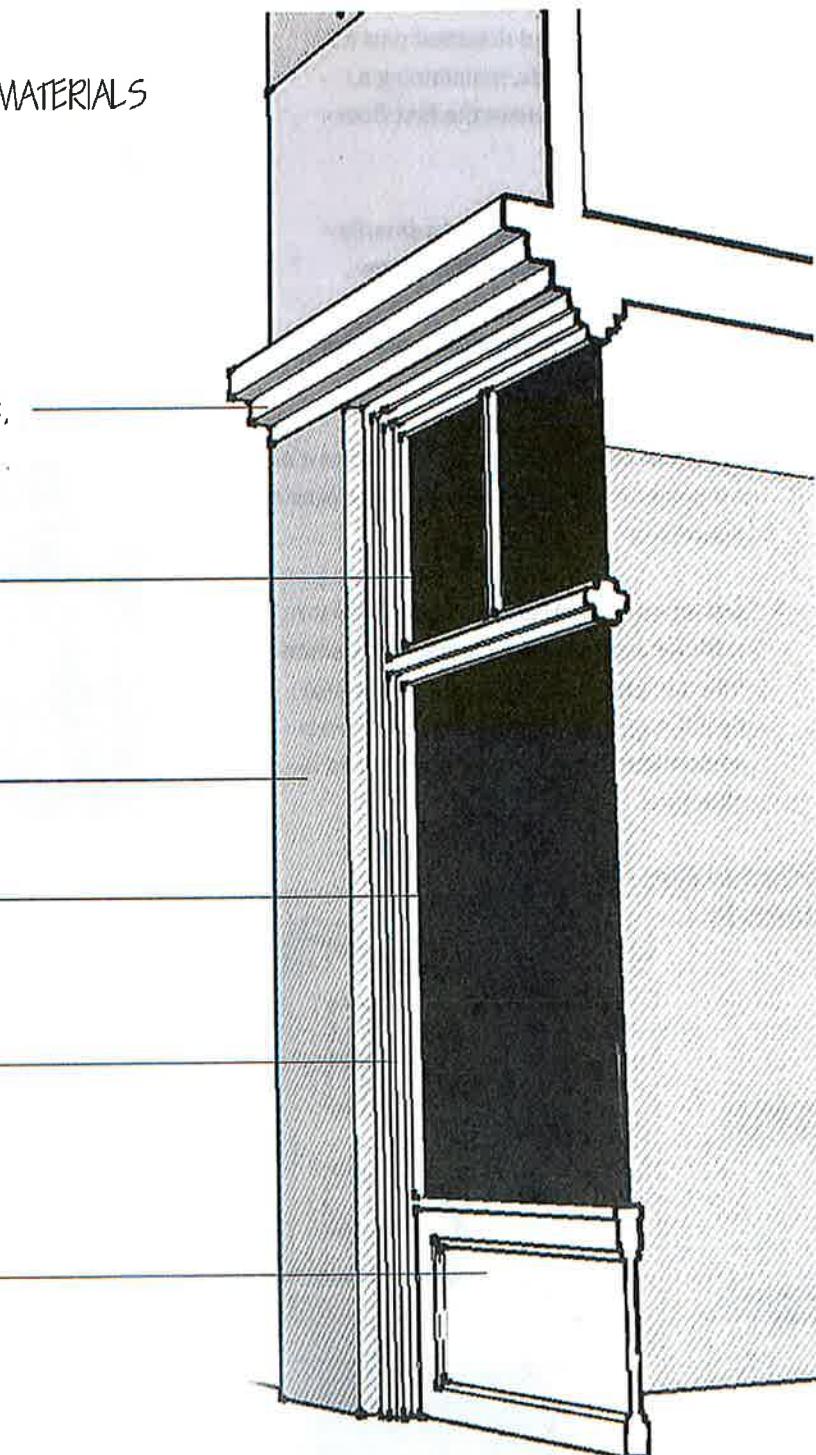
TRANSOM WINDOW:  
CLEAR, TINTED, OR  
ETCHED GLASS, ETC.

PIERS:  
SAME MATERIAL AS  
UPPER FAÇADE

DISPLAY WINDOWS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CLEAR GLASS

STOREFRONT FRAME:  
WOOD, CAST IRON, OR  
ALUMINUM, STEEL, ETC.

BULKHEADS: WOOD PANELS,  
POLISHED STONE, GLASS,  
TILE, OR ALUMINUM



## Entrances and Doors

Entrances most often form the focal point for the front façade of historic commercial buildings. This gives their treatment a high degree of importance on any work proposed for a historic structure.

### *Entries*

1. To the extent possible, the original entrance to the building should be defined and maintained.
2. New entrances to existing buildings should be avoided. As an example, do not remove an existing entry and replace it with an entry that does not maintain the same proportions and alignment as the historic entry.
3. Both the function and decorative features of an entrance define the historic character of the building and should be retained and maintained.
4. Where the entire entry to a building must be replaced due to deterioration, use physical and photographic evidence to guide reproduction of the historical features.
5. Where new entries are constructed, maintain the relationships and proportions of the historic elements with the replacement elements. As an example, do not replace a recessed entry with a flat-faced entry.

*Whether recessed or flat, entrances should remain true to their historic form.*

### *Doors*

1. Original doors should be preserved and maintained.
2. If replacement is necessary, new doors should be of the same style as the original door of the building.
3. Where the style of the historically used door cannot be determined, it should be replaced with a door compatible to the architectural style of the building. Solid paneled and contemporary decorative doors common to residential structures should be avoided.
4. As a general rule, doors should consist primarily of glass with either a wooden or metal frame. If historically used and part of a historic storefront, wooden frame doors are preferable over metal frame doors.

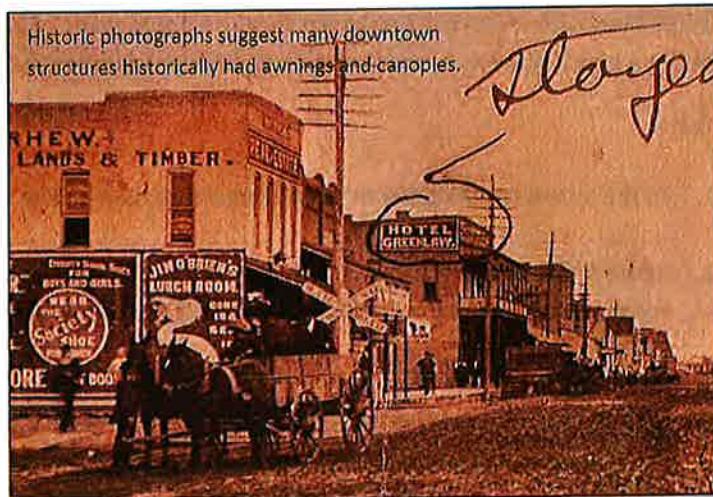


## Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies are common features among both historic and contemporary structures in the Historic District. These features help reinforce the human-scale of buildings in a downtown and can encourage pedestrian traffic. They additionally provide protection from weather and the sun. However, awnings and canopies should be carefully designed to reinforce the character of the Historic District.

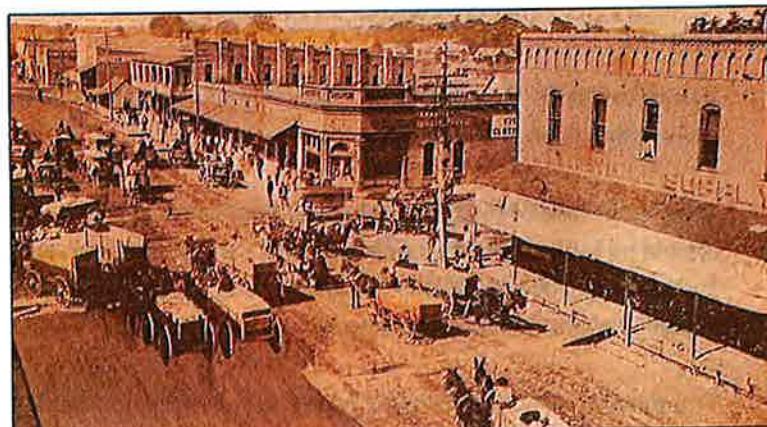
### *Canopies*

1. Canopies are encouraged where evidence demonstrates their historic use.
2. Canopies should be properly supported with appropriate mechanisms such as wall-mounted brackets, chains, or posts. Materials consistent with the historic nature of the structure should be used for posts.
3. Canopies should be mounted in a manner that highlights character-defining features of the façade.



### *Awnings*

1. Awnings should not obscure important architectural features of the building such as transom windows, and should reinforce the frame of the storefront.
2. The awning should mimic the shape of the bay it is covering (ex. Semi-circular awnings for arches).
3. Canvas or fabric awnings should be maintained, and the material replaced when faded or worn.
4. Metal awnings should only be used where they remain as an intact and historically used feature of the structure.
5. If not historically used on a building, awnings that are worn may be removed.



## Walls

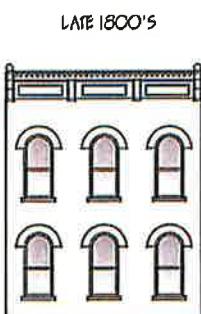
Exterior walls should reflect the original history of the structure in a modern setting. Improvements should identify and retain the features of the building that relate to its original design or historic period. Historically, brick is the near universal building material in the Historic District.

### *General*

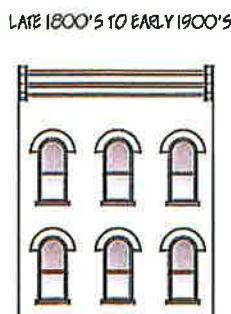
1. Preserve the original façade materials. Materials original to the building should be repaired rather than replaced.
2. When replacement of façade materials is necessary, the new should match the original in scale, color, texture, and finish.
3. Maintain paint and coatings to prevent deterioration.
4. Do not cover or obscure the original façade materials. Covering these materials often hides unique and interesting historical details, and disrupts the visual flow and harmony of the street.
5. Uncover original façade materials, when feasible.
6. If the original façade materials must be obscured, cover and protect them from damage rather than remove them. This may allow restoration in the future.
7. Removal of original and historic façade elements such as windows, masonry, doors, columns, and others is discouraged.
8. New materials should not be attached directly to the original wall materials in a manner that may cause damage to the historic materials.



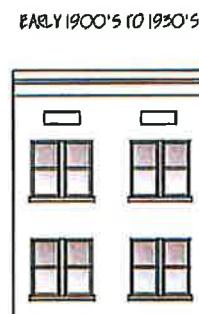
### **TYPICAL UPPER FACADES**



- \* BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE
- \* WINDOW HOODS
- \* PRESSED METAL DETAILS



- \* CORBELLED BRICK CORNICE
- \* ARCHED WINDOWS



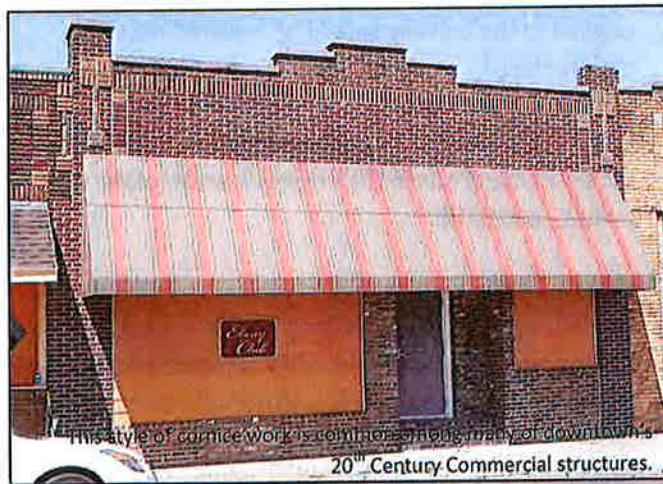
- \* SIMPLE BRICK CORNICE
- \* LARGE WINDOW OPENINGS WITH MULTIPLE UNITS

## Cornices

Most historic commercial structures in downtown Blytheville have cornices to cap their façades. While many are simple, their repetition along the street provides visual continuity along the block. As such, they should be retained and maintained. They may be a straight or stepped parapet.

### *General*

1. Cornices that are intact should be preserved. A cornice may be reconstructed, if missing, when historic evidence of its character is available.
2. When it is not possible to find photographs or evidence of the original cornice, a simplified interpretation is appropriate.
3. Cornice work that extends from the façade of the structure should be regularly inspected to ensure it does not pose a safety threat to pedestrians.



## Roofs

### *General*

1. The historic character of a building's roof line should be preserved.
2. Alteration of an existing historic parapet line is inappropriate.
3. If it will not compromise structural integrity, mechanical and service equipment such as air conditioners and transformers should be placed on the roof.
4. Roof-top equipment should be located in a manner that limits its visibility from the street.
5. Roof vents and plumbing vents should be located in a manner that limits their visibility from the street.

### *Maintenance*

1. Roofs should be maintained and repaired to prevent structural failure and leaks that cause deterioration of the structure.
2. Protect a leaky roof until it can be properly repaired.
3. Gutters and downspouts should be routinely cleaned and any deteriorated flashings repaired or replaced.

4. Roof sheathing should be checked for proper venting to prevent moisture condensation and water penetration, and to ensure that materials are free from insect infestation.
5. When repairing or replacing roofing materials, keep in mind the structural integrity of the building.
6. Check for older layers of roofing materials. The unnecessary layering of roofing materials can add weight that negatively affects the building's structural integrity.

### Paint

Paint color schemes should accentuate the architectural details of the building and adhere to historically used color palettes. Loud paint colors that create visual dominance and provide an eyesore should be avoided. The Historic District Commission can provide assistance in determining appropriate historic colors for your structure. See the Section on Brick and Masonry for guidelines on painting masonry.

### Signs

Signs are a vital part of a coherent historic district. Often store owners try to out-shout each other with over-sized, flashy signs that disrupt the visual continuity of the district and obscure architectural features. These forms of signage can ultimately serve to blight the district, destroy the character that makes downtown unique and marketable, and in the long term drive away customers. Because the district is primarily pedestrian with slow-moving traffic, small signs can serve the needs of businesses, while contributing to both the image of individual buildings and the overall character of the district.



A special signage overlay district applies within portions of the historic district. These regulations are found in Section 10.01.0 of the Zoning Code and are titled "Central Business District Sign Overlay District." *All signage within the historic district shall conform to the zoning code, and must have approval of the Historic District Commission prior to installation.* Any owner who wishes to repair or restore an existing sign or install a new sign must first apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness before applying for a sign permit. After a Certificate of Appropriateness is obtained, the applicant must still apply for a sign permit from the city code enforcement office.

### General

1. Signs should remain subordinate to the building and be sized in proportion to the structure.
2. Signs should not be placed in a manner that covers or obscures character-defining features of the structure.
3. Signs should be placed in locations traditionally used on historic building façades.

## Design and Lighting

1. Wall signs, projecting signs, window signs, and A-frame portable signs are appropriate in the Historic District.
2. New freestanding signs of all types are discouraged. These signage forms are also disallowed on Main Street, per the Zoning Code.
3. Signs incorporated in awnings are appropriate, if substituting a wall sign.
4. A-frame signs should be less than 6 square feet in size, and not obstruct pedestrian movement.
5. Window signs should be designed in a manner that maintains the visual openness of the storefront.
6. Ghost signs should be preserved and not covered.
7. Indirectly illuminated signs are appropriate. Internally lit signs are discouraged unless photographic or physical evidence demonstrates their historic use.
8. Flashing illuminated signs are strongly discouraged and prohibited within the district per the Zoning Code.

## Streetscape

Occasionally, individual property owners may plan improvements beyond the façade of their building or public improvements may be constructed. To the extent that these are within the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission, some general guidelines should be observed.

### General



1. Sidewalks, curbing, benches, trash containers, and street lights follow a consistent theme throughout the Historic District. Any planned improvements should follow the theme and style of current streetscape improvements. Consult the Historic District Commission on details, specifications, and specific models before planning any such improvements.
2. Open display of merchandise on the sidewalk is not specifically prohibited by the Zoning Code. However, displays should maintain a neat and orderly appearance and work to create visual interest along the streetscape.
3. Open displays should not detract from the overall historic character and appearance of buildings or impede pedestrian traffic as to cause a safety hazard.

## Additions

The best way to save historic buildings is to maintain their use. Allowing the evolution of a building over time through additions is sometimes necessary to ensure it remains used. While building additions are generally acceptable in principle, they must be carefully designed to ensure that they do not damage the character of the existing building or Historic District.

*Additions should complement the existing structure while providing a discernible difference between the historic and new portions of the structure.*

### *General*

1. Find alternatives to additions where possible by converting unused interior spaces.
2. Design additions so that existing historic features are not hidden or obstructed.
3. Locate an attached exterior addition at the rear or on an inconspicuous side of a historic building wherever possible.
4. Additions should remain smaller than the original structure.
5. Rear additions should not be visible to the street.
6. Side additions should not exceed the height of the original structure.
7. Design an addition so that it is clear which parts of the building are historic and which parts are new.
8. Design the addition so it is compatible with other historic buildings in the vicinity.

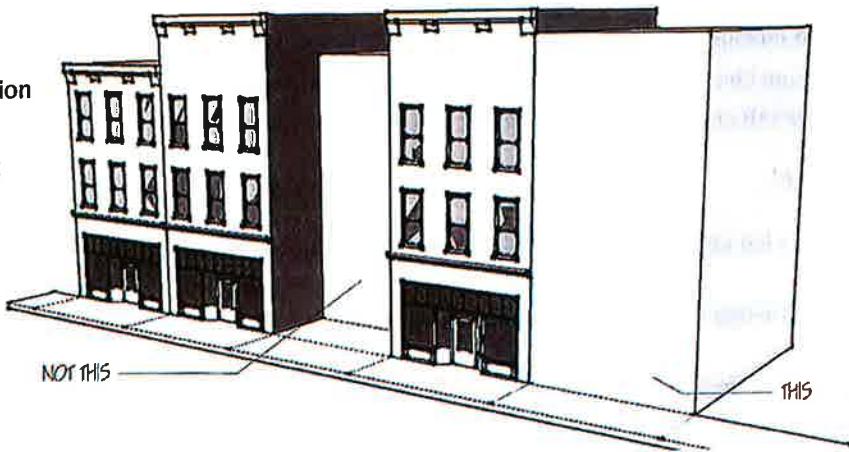
### *Not Recommended*

1. Expanding the size of the historic building by constructing an addition when the new use could be served by altering non-character-defining interior space.
2. Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.
3. Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.
4. Imitating a historic style or period of architecture in new additions, especially for contemporary uses.
5. Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.
6. Using the same wall plane, roof line, cornice height, materials, siding lap or window type to make additions appear to be a part of the historic building.
7. Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

## New Construction

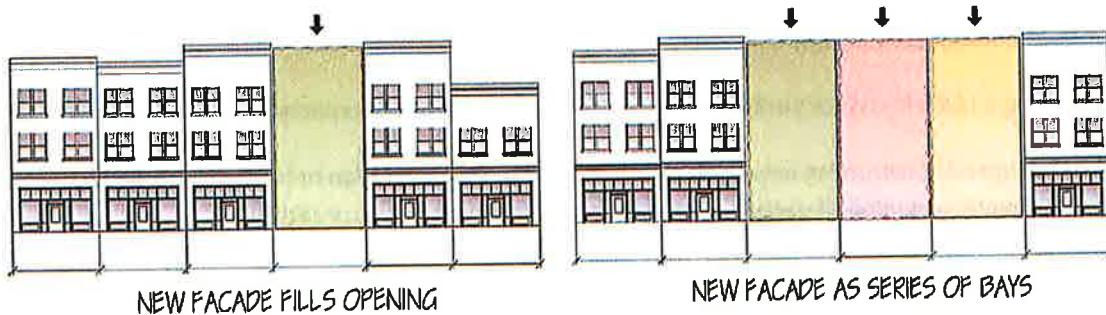
As a general rule, new development in the Historic District should be visually and architecturally compatible with the existing structures and form of downtown. However, new construction should stand as a representation of the time and place in which it is built rather than imitate a bygone era or false historical period. In other words, new development should be architecturally distinguishable from, yet compatible with, the historic structures in the district.

FACADES ARE NOT SET BACK FROM THE SIDEWALKS



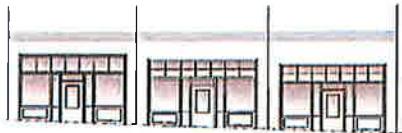
### *Height and Location*

1. Building height should match the height of adjacent buildings or those on the building's block-face, within at least one-story. Almost all structures in the district range between one to three stories in height.
2. New buildings should be multi-story when adjacent to existing multi-story structures.
3. Where ~~and~~ all building heights on blockface match, new building should match the existing height pattern.
4. Buildings should be built to the front property line/back edge of the sidewalk.
5. The front façade of the building should face the street. In the case of corner lots, the front façade should face the primary street unless the front entrance is placed at the corner.
6. Buildings with clipped corners and dual front façades are encouraged on corner lots.



## Storefronts

1. Storefront openings should match the proportions (size, height, and width) and elements (doors, windows, and transoms) of adjacent structures or those on the building's blockface.

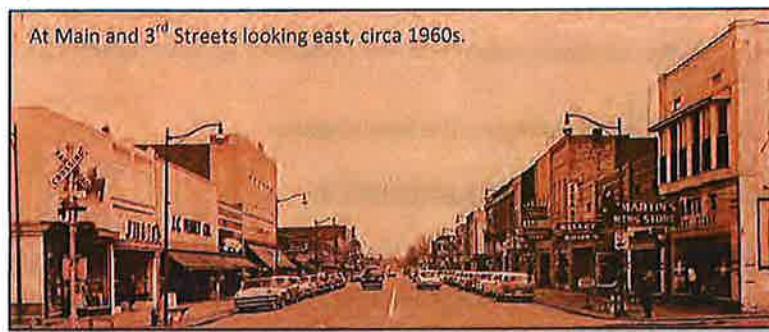


2. Storefront windows and entrances should provide pedestrian interest and be placed in a manner that maintains the rhythm, character, and horizontal alignments of buildings on the street block.

3. Storefronts should be capped by a storefront cornice that matches the vertical alignment of adjacent structures and draws a clear distinction between the first floor and upper story floors.

## Windows

1. Window openings should maintain the same vertical emphasis and alignment as adjacent structures and buildings on the blockface to create a rhythm and harmony along the street.



2. The proportions and horizontal alignment of window openings should match those of buildings on the street block, unless designed to be a defining architectural feature.

3. Mirrored glass or tinted glass should be avoided, particularly on the first floor of all structures.

## Canopies and Awnings

1. Canopies and awnings should be compatible with historically used canopies and awnings unless designed as an architecturally defining feature.
2. Traditional metal awnings are strongly discouraged.

*The use of corrugated metal on new structures in the Historic District is strongly discouraged.*

## Cladding Materials

1. Brick and/or masonry such as concrete masonry units are encouraged as a primary building material. Modern or contemporary structures may use other modern architectural materials such as aluminum paneling that may be appropriate to both the district and the architectural detailing of the structure.
2. Materials such as corrugated metal and Dryvit or other forms of exterior insulated finishing systems (EIFS) are strongly discouraged.

## Utilities

### *Recommended*

1. Minimizing the visual impact of mechanical and electrical equipment.
2. Utilizing screening such as lattice panels and planting to screen utilities.
3. Screening utility connections and boxes such as telephone, gas meters, and cable, etc.
4. Locating standpipes and other service equipment so that they will not impact the historic façade materials.

### *Not Recommended*

1. Locating window or through-the-wall air conditioning units on the building's front façade.
2. Cutting channels into or removing historic façade materials to locate utility lines.
3. Locating utility lines on the front façade.

## Energy Conservation and Sustainability

Energy conservation and sustainability are growing concerns in many downtowns and historic districts. It is important to remember there are inherent environmental benefits to utilizing historic structures regardless of any energy conservation measures. As is often quoted, "The greenest building is the one already built." Many historic structures have designed architectural features which help conserve energy such as skylights, awnings, and transom windows. In approaching energy conservation, focus on these elements first.

### *General*

1. If it is determined that retrofitting measures are necessary, then such work needs to be carried out with particular care to ensure that the building's historic character is retained.
2. New energy-efficient features such as solar panels should be placed in areas not visible from the street.
3. Insulation should be installed where possible in attics, basements and exterior walls.
4. Utilize the inherent energy-conserving features of a building by maintaining windows and louvered blinds in good operable condition for natural ventilation.
5. Improving thermal efficiency with weather stripping, storm windows, caulking, interior shades, and if historically appropriate, blinds and awnings, is appropriate.

*Transom windows and skylights are existing energy-saving features common to historic structures.*

*Not Recommended*

1. Removing historic shading devices rather than keeping them in an operable condition.
2. Replacing historic multi-paned sash with new thermal sash utilizing false muntins.
3. Replacing windows or transoms with fixed thermal glazing or permitting windows and transoms to remain inoperable rather than utilizing them for their energy-conserving potential.

**Accessibility**

Historic properties have some special considerations when applying the Americans with Disabilities Act and subsequent regulations. Property owners should acquaint themselves with these considerations.

*Recommended*

1. Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.
2. Complying with barrier-free access requirements in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.
3. Working with local disability groups, access specialists, and historic preservation specialists to determine the most appropriate solution to access problems.
4. Providing barrier-free access that promotes independence for the disabled person to the highest practicable degree, while preserving significant historic features.
5. Designing new or additional means for access that are compatible with the historic building and its setting.

*Not Recommended*

1. Undertaking code-required alterations before identifying those spaces, features, or finishes which are character-defining and must be preserved.
2. Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining features while attempting to comply with accessibility requirements.
3. Making changes to buildings without first seeking expert advice from access specialists and historic preservationists to determine solutions.
4. Making access modifications that do not provide reasonable balance between independent, safe access and preservation of historic features.
5. Designing new or additional means of access without considering the impact on the historic building and its setting.

## **Health and Safety**

Regardless of rehabilitative work, building and property maintenance codes will need to be taken into consideration. Hastily done or poorly designed code-required actions can jeopardize a building's materials and historic character. Care should be taken to avoid damage to character-defining features on the building.

### *Recommended*

1. Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that accessibility code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.
2. Complying with health and safety codes in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.
3. Upgrading historic stairways and elevators to meet health and safety codes in a manner that assures their preservation, i.e., so that they are not damaged or obscured.
4. Installing sensitively designed fire suppression systems, such as sprinkler systems that result in retention of historic features and finishes.
5. Placing a code-required stairway or elevator that cannot be accommodated within the historic building in a new exterior addition. Such an addition should be on an inconspicuous elevation.

### *Not Recommended*

1. Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining features and finishes while making modifications to a building to comply with safety codes is not recommended.
2. Using fire-retardant coatings if they damage or obscure character-defining features is not recommended.
3. Radically changing, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, or finishes when adding a new code-required stairway or elevator is not recommended.
4. Constructing a new addition to accommodate code-required stairs and elevators on character-defining elevations highly visible from the street, or where it obscures, damages, or destroys character-defining features is not recommended.
5. Undertaking code-required alterations before identifying those spaces, features, or finishes which are character-defining and must be preserved is not recommended.

## **Demolition**

### *General*

Preferably, demolition within the Historic District will occur infrequently. There are situations, as described below, in which demolition may be appropriate. In any event, the Commission shall review applications involving demolition carefully. When the Commission determines that a demolition is inappropriate, it may defer action until it has had an opportunity to explore alternatives involving actions such as, but not limited to, the following.

1. The Commission may seek sources of funding for preservation and restoration activities if lack of such funds is the reason for the request to demolish.
2. The Commission may recommend adaptive use changes.
3. The Commission may attempt to find a purchaser for the property who would maintain the building in a suitable and acceptable manner.
4. The Commission may entertain the possibility of moving the building to another appropriate location.
5. The Commission may explore other solutions that might be deemed advisable and in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Historic District Ordinance.
6. The Commission discourages the use of façadism unless no other workable alternatives are available.

*Demolition as an Appropriate Treatment*

Conditions in which demolition may be appropriate include, but may not be limited to, the following.

1. A structure has been damaged by fire or natural forces beyond repair.
2. A structure contributes little or nothing to the character of the Historic District and demolition is proposed in order to provide land for a new development that would enhance the historic character of the district.
3. Demolition is confined to an addition to an existing building and the addition itself is not historically significant.
4. The structure poses an immediate danger to the health, safety and welfare of persons and properties within the district.
5. Demolition is necessary to expose or restore the original architecture of the structure.

## Definitions

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Unless specifically defined below, words or phrases shall have the same meaning they have in common usage.

**ADAPTIVE USE** - Rehabilitation of a historic structure for use other than its original use, such as a residence converted into offices.

**ADDITION** - New construction added to an existing building or structure.

**ALTERATION** - Any project involving change of or addition to an existing building.

**AREA OF INFLUENCE** - The affected area to be notified for a public hearing as determined by a specific type of construction, alteration, restoration, moving or demolition as described in the individual categories found in the guidelines for review adopted by the Historic District Commission.

**BUILDING** - Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls for the housing or enclosure of persons, animals or chattels.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS** - A document awarded by the Historic District Commission allowing an applicant to proceed with a proposed rehabilitation, renovation, preservation, alteration, demolition, or new construction in a designated area or site, following a determination of the proposal's suitability according to applicable criteria.

**CERTIFICATE OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP** - A certificate issued by the Historic District Commission waiving the requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness due to significant financial constraints of the property owner.

**CHARACTER** - The qualities and attributes of any structure, site, street or district.

**CONTEMPORARY** - Reflecting characteristics of the current period. Contemporary denotes characteristics, which illustrate that a building, structure or detail was constructed in the present or recent past rather than being imitative or reflective of a historic design.

**DETAILING** - Architectural aspects that, due to particular treatment, draw attention to certain parts or features of a building.

**DEMOLITION** - Any act which destroys in whole or in part a building or structure.

**DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT** - The destruction of a building or structure through abandonment or lack of maintenance.

**DESIGN GUIDELINES** - Criteria developed by preservation commissions to identify design concerns in an area and to help property owners ensure that rehabilitation and new construction respect the character of designated buildings and districts.

**ELEMENT** - A material part or detail of a site, structure, street, or district.

**ENTRANCE AREA** - The area of access to the interior of the building including the design, location, and materials of all porches, stairs, doors, transoms, and sidelights.

**EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES** - The architectural style, design and general arrangement of the exterior of a structure, including the kind and texture of the building material and the type and style of all windows, doors, light fixtures, signs and other appurtenant fixtures.

**FAÇADE** - A face of a building.

**HEIGHT** - The vertical distance as measured through the central axis of the building from the elevation of the lowest finished floor level to the highest point of the building.

**HISTORIC DISTRICT** - A geographically definable area with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, sites, spaces, or objects unified by past events, physical development, design, setting, materials, workmanship, sense of cohesiveness or related historical and aesthetic associations. The significance of a district may be recognized through listing in a local, state, or national register and may be protected legally through enactment of a local historic district ordinance administered by a historic district commission.

**LANDMARK** - A building, structure, object or site, which is identified as a historic resource of particular significance.

**MASSING** - Volume, magnitude or overall size of a building.

**ORDINARY MAINTENANCE** - Those improvements which do not change but simply upgrade a structure.

**OWNER OF RECORD** - The person, corporation, or other legal entity listed as owner on the records of Mississippi County.

**PRESERVATION** - The maintenance of a property without significant alteration of its current condition.

**PROPORTION** - Relationship of height to width of the building outline as well as individual components.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** - The classified advertisement of an event, such as a preservation commission meeting, that is published in the local newspaper and posted in the city government building in order to notify the general public of the upcoming event.

**REHABILITATION** - The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

**RESTORATION** - The process of returning a building to its condition at a specific time period, often to its original condition.

**RHYTHM** - A harmonious or orderly recurrence of compositional elements at regular intervals, including the location of doors and the placement of windows, symmetrically or asymmetrically and their relative proportion.

**ROOF AREA** - The outside covering of a building or structure extending above the vertical walls including the form, material, and texture of the roof, including the slope, pitch, and spacing of roof covering. Roof area also includes but is not limited to size, design, number and location of dormers; the design and placement of cornices; and the size, design, material, and location of chimneys.

**SCALE** - The relative dimension, size, degree or proportion of parts of a building to one another or group of buildings.

**SITING** - Location of a building in relationship to the legal boundaries and setbacks, adjacent properties, and the natural conditions of the site.

**STRUCTURE** - Any improvement on the land that extends above ground level.

**TEXTURE** - The visual or tactile surface characteristics created by shape, arrangement and distribution of the component materials.

**WALL AREAS** - The vertical architectural member used to define and divide space. This includes but is not limited to kind, texture, and exposure of wall sidings and trims and the location, number, and design of all window and door openings.

Appendix

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ORDINANCE NO. 1734

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL  
OF THE BLYTHEVILLE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT;  
PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF;  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the City Council of Blytheville, Arkansas (CITY), adopted Ordinance No. 1645 on May 15, 2007, establishing procedures for the protection and preservation of the character of and properties within the Blytheville Downtown Historic District and setting forth certain rules and regulations for said district; and

WHEREAS, the CITY acknowledges that it has certain properties located in the Downtown Historic District which should be maintained in their current or improved condition for them to be included in the Blytheville Downtown Historic District; and

WHEREAS, the Blytheville Planning Commission approved the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines on December 11, 2012, at its regular monthly meeting; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission has requested that the CITY adopt the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines Manual by Ordinance in order to provide for enforcement of the Design Guidelines Manual.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHEVILLE, ARKANSAS, AS FOLLOWS:

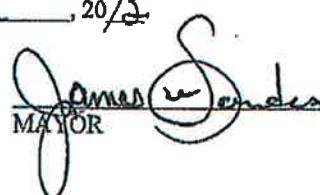
SECTION 1: That three (3) copies of the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines Manual are on file in the Office of the City Clerk of the City of Blytheville, Arkansas, and are open to public examination in the Office of the City Clerk between the hours of 8:30 A.M.

and 5:00 P.M. and is hereby referred to, adopted and made a part hereof, as if fully set out in this Ordinance.

Ordinance No. 1645 is hereby incorporated into this Ordinance by reference for the purposes of enforcement of the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines Manual; that any parts of the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines Manual and this Ordinance which conflict with any previous Ordinances, rules and regulations of the Blytheville Planning Commission and any future Ordinances or rules and regulations of the Blytheville City Council shall control and supercede any conflict with this Ordinance and the Blytheville Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines Manual.

**SECTION 2:** That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect upon passage and publication as required by law.

DATED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2013

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James W. Sanders  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Connie S. Mosley  
CITY CLERK