

CHAPTER 6

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL BUILDING COMPONENTS



Introduction

This chapter presents design guidelines for the treatment of individual building components that make up the exterior of an historic structure. They are organized into nine design topics, of which the first four apply to commercial buildings and the last three apply to residential buildings. The others apply to both types of structures.

Preserving all key building components is a high priority for “Essential” buildings. Preserving those that exist and reconstructing missing ones are high priorities on facades visible from the public way for “Contributing” buildings. On “Supporting” buildings, preserving existing features is also a priority and reconstructing missing ones is strongly encouraged for primary facades.

Topics Discussed in this Chapter:

1. Commercial Storefronts
2. Recessed Entries
3. Canopies
4. Cornices
5. Windows and Doors
6. Roofs
7. Porches
8. Building Foundations
9. Chimneys and Stovepipes

References:

- ☞ Other building components may be addressed in Chapter 5: Preservation of Architectural Features.
- ☞ For alterations to non-historic buildings and for new construction, see Chapter 13.
- ☞ Also consult *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*.
- ☞ Also consult *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Illustrated Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*.

1. Commercial Storefronts

Commercial buildings typically have a clearly defined primary entrance and large windows that display goods and services offered inside. The repetition of these standard elements creates a visual unity on the street that should be maintained.

All storefront components should be preserved. Large plate glass display windows are typically supported on a bulkhead, or kickplate. In most cases, a second, horizontal band of glass, or transom, is mounted above the main display window.

A. Preserve the historic character of a storefront, when it is intact.

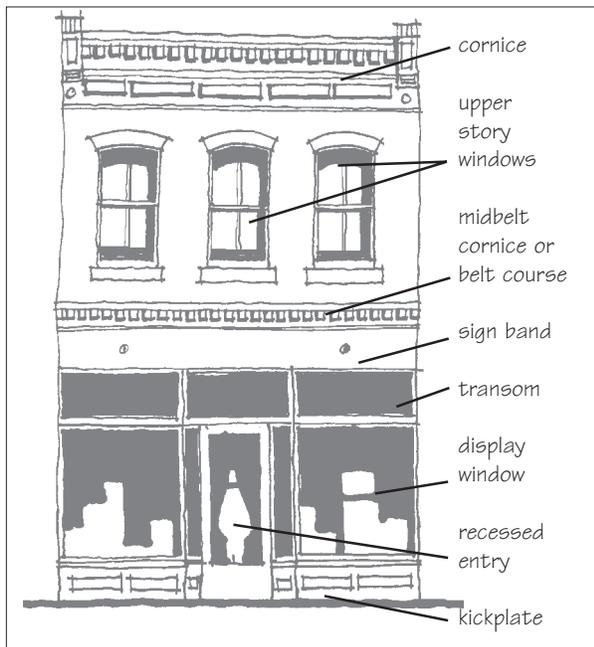
- 1) See the procedures for maintenance in Chapter 5.

B. If a storefront is altered, restoring it to the original design is encouraged.

- 1) Historic photographs of Truckee should be used when determining the original character of a storefront design.
- 2) If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar storefronts.



If a storefront is altered, restoring it to the original design is preferred.



Typical commercial storefront components that should be preserved.

C. Where an original storefront is missing, reconstruct it to match the original design.

- 1) The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's genuine heritage.

D. Where an original storefront is missing, and no evidence of its character exists, an alternative design is appropriate.

- 1) An alternative storefront design should continue to convey the characteristics of typical storefronts, including the transparent character of the display window, a recessed entry and cornices.



Where an original storefront is missing, reconstruct it to match the original design. (Compare with the two photos of the same building below.)



Using historic photographs can help in determining the original character. (Compare with below.)



This rehabilitation preserves surviving details and reconstructs missing ones.

E. Retain the kickplate as a decorative panel.

- 1) The kickplate, located below the display window, adds interesting detail to the streetscape and should be preserved.
- 2) If the original kickplate is covered with another material, consider exposing the original design.

F. If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

- 1) Wood is an appropriate material for replacements on most styles. However, metal and masonry may also be considered when appropriately used with the building style.



If the original kickplate is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design. The replacement board-and-batten kickplate in the top photo is inappropriate; whereas, the simple painted wood design in the bottom photo is appropriate.

2. Recessed Entries

Many primary entrances to commercial buildings are recessed, providing a shaded area that helps to define doorways and to provide shelter to pedestrians. The repetition of recessed entries also provides a rhythm of shadows along the street, which helps establish a sense of scale. Entrance doors were also traditionally topped with transom windows that extend the vertical emphasis of these openings. These features should be preserved.

A. Maintain recessed entryways.

- 1) Avoid adding a door that is flush with the sidewalk, especially those that swing outward.

B. Restore an historic recessed entry if it has been altered.

- 1) In some cases the historic door was not recessed. While retaining this position is preferred, it may be necessary to relocate the door to an inset position in order to comply with building codes.



Historically, as seen in this circa 1913 image, canopy supports were slim wood posts. Some had modest moldings and ornamental brackets.

3. Canopies

Historically canopies were noteworthy features in downtown Truckee and their continued use is encouraged. There were several types of canopies seen historically.

A. Preserve a canopy when it is intact.

- 1) A metal or wood canopy is appropriate in many historic style buildings in Truckee.

B. If a canopy is altered consider restoring to the original design.

- 1) Historic photographs of Truckee should be used when determining the original character of a canopy design.
- 2) If evidence of the original design is missing, use a simplified interpretation of similar canopies.

C. Where an original canopy is missing, reconstruct it to match the original design.

- 1) The design should be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence to avoid creating a misrepresentation of the building's genuine heritage.

D. Where an original canopy is missing, and no evidence of its character exists, an alternative design is appropriate.

- 1) An alternative canopy design should continue to convey the characteristics of typical canopies seen on buildings in the area.
- 2) Design of a new canopy should be compatible with the character of the structure.
- 3) A canopy should reflect the dimensions of the facade width.

References:

- ☞ More information regarding the treatment of cornices and ornamentation can be found in Chapter 5: Preservation of Architectural Features.

4. Cornices

Cornices are projecting ornamental moldings at the upper portion of a building wall or storefront. They are most apparent on late 19th century commercial structures, when several ornate, bracketed types were used. Mid-20th century buildings were, as a rule, less decorated and had simpler ornamentation. In each case the character of the cornice is an important feature that should be preserved.

A. Preserve an original cornice.

- 1) See Chapter 5 for preservation procedures.



When a building is missing its cornice, consider reconstruction or replacement with a new design.



A simplified interpretation may be considered for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.

B. Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

- 1) Replacement elements should match the original details, especially in overall size and profile.
- 2) Use historic photographs to determine design details of the original cornice.

C. A simplified interpretation may be considered for a replacement cornice if evidence of the original is missing.

- 1) Appropriate materials include stone, brick and stamped metal and fiberglass.



Reconstruct a missing cornice when historic evidence is available.

5. Windows & Doors

Windows and doors are some of the most important character-defining features of an historic structure. They give scale to a building and provide visual interest to the composition of individual facades. Distinct window and door designs, in fact, help define many historic building styles. Because window and door designs so significantly affect the character of an historic structure, their treatment is a very important consideration.

Many early residential windows were vertically-proportioned. Another important feature is the number of “lights,” or panes, into which a window is divided. The design of surrounding window casings, the depth and profile of window sash elements and the materials of which they were constructed are also important features.

The manner in which windows and doors are combined or arranged on a building face also may be distinctly associated with a specific building style. All of these features are examples of elements in historic window and door designs that should be preserved.



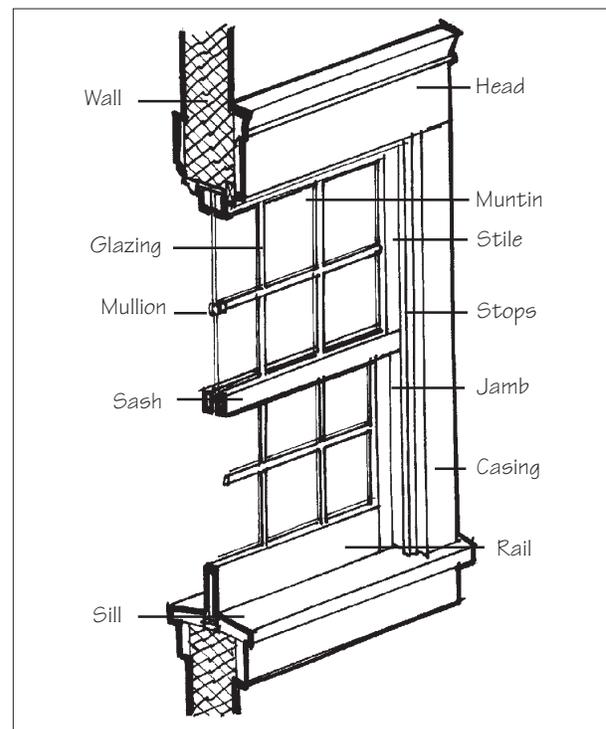
Windows and doors in masonry buildings are often inset into relatively deep openings or they have surrounding casings and sash components which have a substantial dimension that cast shadows.

A. Preserve the functional and decorative features of original windows and doors.

- 1) Repair frames and sash by patching, splicing or reinforcing.
- 2) Avoid the removal of historic windows and sash.
- 3) If replacement is necessary, replace with a similar design, to match the original.

B. Avoid changing the position of historic openings.

- 1) This applies to all key facades of *Essential* and *Contributing* properties.
- 2) Windows and doors on the fronts of *Supporting* buildings should be preserved as well.
- 3) Avoid creating an additional opening or removing existing ones on facades that are visible from the street.



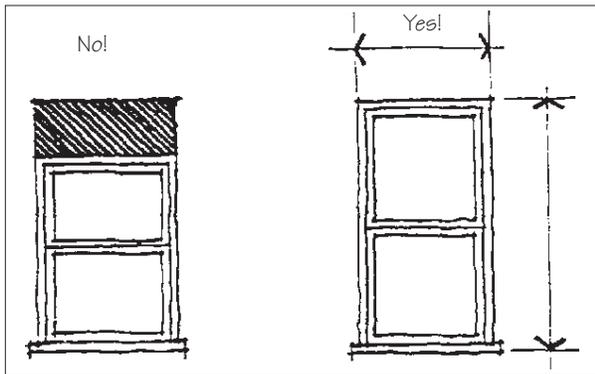
Typical double-hung window components.

C. Maintain original window and door proportions.

- 1) Altering the original size and shape is inappropriate.
- 2) Do not close down an original opening to accommodate a smaller window.

D. Restoring an original opening which has been altered over time is encouraged.

- 1) Consider reconstructing windows and doors that no longer exist in a primary facade.
- 2) Such reconstruction should occur only if it can be substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence.



Maintain original window and door proportions.



Maintain original window and door proportions.

E. Maintain the historic subdivisions of window lights.

- 1) Replacing multiple panes with single pane or operable window with a fixed one is inappropriate.
- 2) Replacing true divided lights with snap-in muntins is also inappropriate.



Preserve the functional and decorative features of original windows and doors.



Maintain the historic subdivisions of window lights.

F. Maintain the historic ratio of window openings to solid wall.

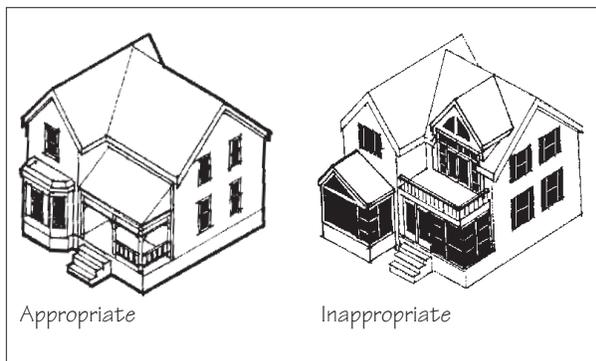
- 1) Significantly increasing the amount of glass will negatively affect the integrity of a structure.

G. When replacing a window or door is necessary on an historic structure, match the original design as closely as possible.

- 1) Preserve the original casing, and use it with the replacement.
- 2) Use the same material (wood) as that used historically.
- 3) Vinyl clad and aluminum windows are inappropriate on *Essential* and *Contributing* properties. They only may be considered on secondary facades of *Supporting* properties.
- 4) Match the number and size of divided lights and panels.
- 5) Glass in a window or door should be clear. Any type of tinting is inappropriate.

H. A new window or door may be considered on a secondary facade only.

- 1) A new opening should be similar in location, size and type to those seen traditionally.
- 2) A general rule for a window opening is that the height should be twice the dimension of the width.
- 3) Windows should be simple in shape, arrangement and detail.



Preserve the historic ratio of window openings to solid wall. The shaded areas on the sketches represent the amount of glass on a wall surface.

I. Windows and doors should be finished with trim elements similar to those used traditionally.

- 1) This trim should have a dimension similar to that used historically.
- 2) Divided lights should be formed from smaller mullions integral to the window. Pop-in muntins and mullions are inappropriate.

6. Roofs

The character of the roof is a major feature for an historic structure. The roof pitch, its materials, size and orientation are all distinct features that contribute to the character of the building. Typical residential roof shapes are gabled, hipped and shed. Gabled roofs are the most frequent. Most commercial buildings have gently sloping, almost flat, roofs, but some have gable and shed roofs. The historic character of a roof should be preserved.

A. Preserve the original roof form and its details.

- 1) Avoid altering the angle of the roof.
- 2) Place crickets or other snow guard devices in such a way that they do not alter the form of the roof as seen from the street.
- 3) Preserve decorative roof accessories such as cresting, ridgecaps and finials.



Historically, gable roof forms were the most typical for residential type structures.

B. Preserve the original eave depth.

- 1) Shadows created by traditional overhangs contribute to one's perception of a building's historic scale and therefore these overhangs should be preserved.
- 2) Cutting back roof rafters and soffits or in other ways altering the traditional roof overhang is inappropriate.
- 3) Boxing in exposed roof rafters is inappropriate.

C. Preserve an historic roof by regular maintenance and cleaning.

- 1) Inspect the roof for breaks, or holes in the surface, and to check the flashing for open seams.
- 2) Watch for signs of accumulated dirt and retained moisture which can lead to damaged roof, gutter or downspout materials.

D. If a portion of the historic roofing material is damaged, replace it in-kind.

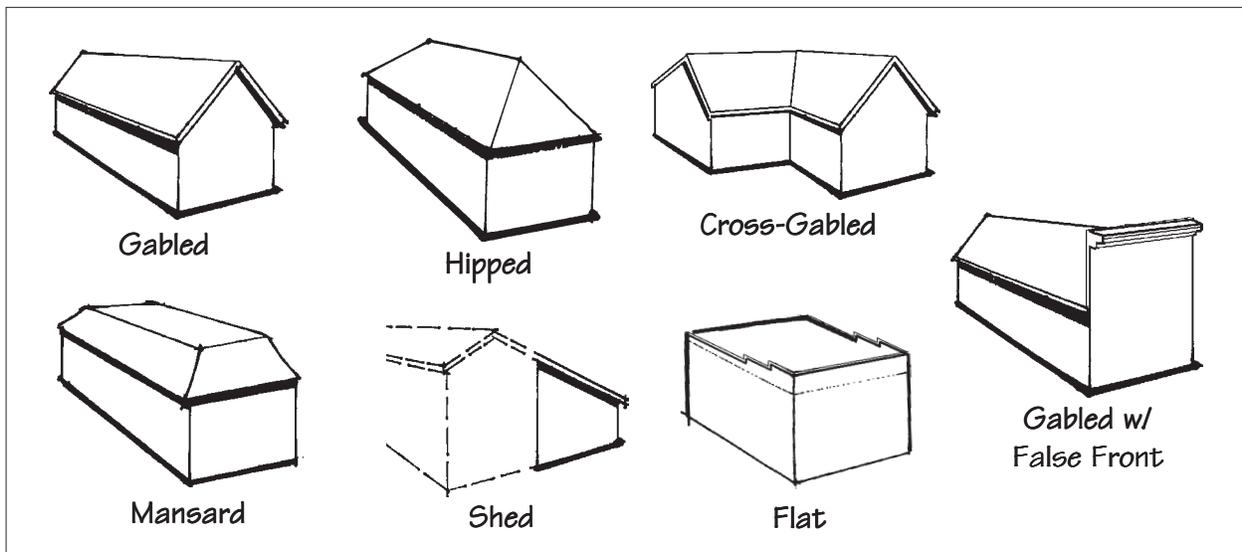
- 1) Avoid removing historic roofing materials that are in good condition.
- 2) If replacing some shingles is necessary, match the color, material and pattern of the original as closely as possible.

E. For an entirely new replacement, the roof materials should appear similar to those used historically.

- 1) A replacement roof material should be in keeping with the character of the architectural style of the historic structure.
- 2) Composite shingles and metal may be considered as alternatives to wood shingles.
- 3) Roof materials should be earth tones and have a matte, non-reflective finish.

F. If it is to be used, a metal roof should be applied and detailed in a manner that is compatible with the historic character of the building and does not detract from its appearance.

- 1) Metal roof materials should be earth tones and have a matte, non-reflective finish.
- 2) Seams should be of a low profile.
- 3) The edges of the roof should be finished similar to that seen traditionally. The edges of historic standing seam metal roofs were simply bent downward at the edges of the roof with a very slight overhang.



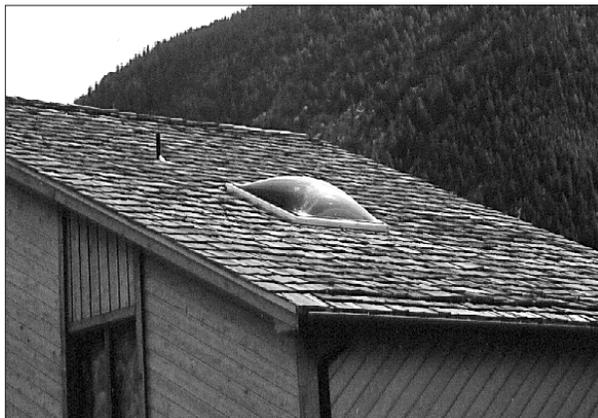
Typical roof shapes seen throughout downtown Truckee.

G. Water from gutters and downspouts should drain away properly.

- 1) A downspout should empty onto a metal or concrete splashblock that slopes downward and away from the building.

H. Minimize the visual impacts of skylights and other rooftop devices.

- 1) Locating a skylight or a solar panel on a front roof plane should be avoided.
- 2) Skylights and solar panels should not be installed in a manner that will interrupt the plane of the historic roof. They should be lower than the ridgeline.
- 3) Flat skylights that are flush with the roof plane may be considered on the rear and sides of the roof. Bubbled or domed skylights are not appropriate.



Bubbled or domed skylights are not appropriate.

7. Porches

Porches differ in height, scale, location, materials and articulation. Some are simple one-story structures, while others may be complex with elaborate details and finishes. These elements often correspond to the architectural style of the house and therefore the building's design character should be considered before any major rehabilitation work is begun. Historic porches should be preserved and they should receive sensitive treatment during exterior rehabilitation.



Avoid enclosing a front porch. Compare the character of the enclosed porch on the left to that of an original porch on the home to the right.

A. Preserve an original porch.

- 1) Replace missing posts and railings where necessary, with wood ones (unless a different material is documented as being a part of the historic character).
- 2) Match the original proportions and the spacing of balusters in the railing.
- 3) Avoid using wrought iron posts and railings.

References

- ☞ More information regarding roof materials can be found in Chapter 6: Design Guidelines for Historic Building Materials.

B. Maintain the open, transparent character of a porch.

- 1) When a porch must be enclosed, glass should be used and detailed in a manner that retains the historic sense of openness.
- 2) Enclosing a porch with opaque materials that destroy the openness and transparency of a porch is inappropriate.



When a porch must be enclosed, glass should be used and detailed in a manner that retains the historic sense of openness.

C. If a porch is missing, consider reconstructing it to match the form and detail of the original.

- 1) Use materials similar to the original.
- 2) Avoid decorative elements that are not known to have been used on the building.



If a porch is missing, consider reconstructing it to match the form and detail of the original.

8. Building Foundations

The foundation and other structural elements of an historic resource is essential to the stability and integrity of a building. Sometimes well-meaning actions can result in foundation damage or weakening, but lack of good maintenance practice is probably the biggest problem. More than anything else, water is the most damaging destructive agent a foundation must face.

Many of Truckee's historic houses and sheds were built on stone foundations. While some of these have deteriorated and must be replaced, many are simply deteriorated and in need of shoring to make them structurally sound again. When replacement is necessary, however, a new foundation should be consistent with the original.

It is a common misconception in preservation projects that original building elements can be removed and replaced with new replica elements, and then call it rehabilitation. This is an inappropriate approach. Any time original building materials or features are removed from an historic resource, the overall integrity of the structure is diminished. Again, as previously discussed in *Chapter 4: Preservation Principles*, only after all other rehabilitation or restoration efforts have failed should an original building feature be replaced with one that is the same or similar in character. And then only that portion that is beyond repair should be replaced.

A. Preserve original foundation walls and structural elements.

- 1) Retain a substantial portion of the original structural elements including structural supports and exterior foundation wall.
- 2) Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Any replacement materials should match the original in color, texture, size and finish.

B. When replacing a foundation wall, design it to be compatible with that seen on similar historic buildings.

- 1) The form, materials and detailing of a foundation wall should be similar to the original foundation and of nearby historic buildings. Match the mortar in strength, detail, composition and color.
- 2) New foundation walls should not increase the height of the structure to the degree that the historic character or alignment of building fronts are compromised.
- 3) If it is necessary to install windows and window wells in the foundation for egress, avoid placing them on the street facade, especially on historic structures.

C. A chimney should be regularly checked for deterioration.

- 1) Chimneys are subject to the same forces of deterioration as all other character-defining features. However, because of their location, chimney problems are more often neglected.
- 2) Annual chimney inspections should be conducted for leaning, cracking, deteriorated pointing or brickwork, deteriorated flashing, deteriorated flue liner, build-up of surface soot and intrusions such as nests or debris.

D. A stovepipe, on any building, should have a matte, non-metallic dark finish.

9. Chimneys and Stovepipes

Chimneys and stovepipes are integral parts of most residential construction in Truckee. Any major deterioration of a chimney compromises its purpose, with many implications for the comfort and safety of the building's inhabitants. The proper maintenance and repair of historic chimneys is therefore important.

A. An historic chimney should not be removed.

- 1) A chimney is an important exterior design element.
- 2) Re-line and repair an historic chimney rather than replace it, when feasible, or maintain it as a non-functioning feature if necessary.

B. If replacement is absolutely necessary, a chimney should be replaced in the historic style.

- 1) The chimney shape should match that of the historic one being replaced.
- 2) The brick laying pattern and mortar should match that of the historic chimney being replaced.

