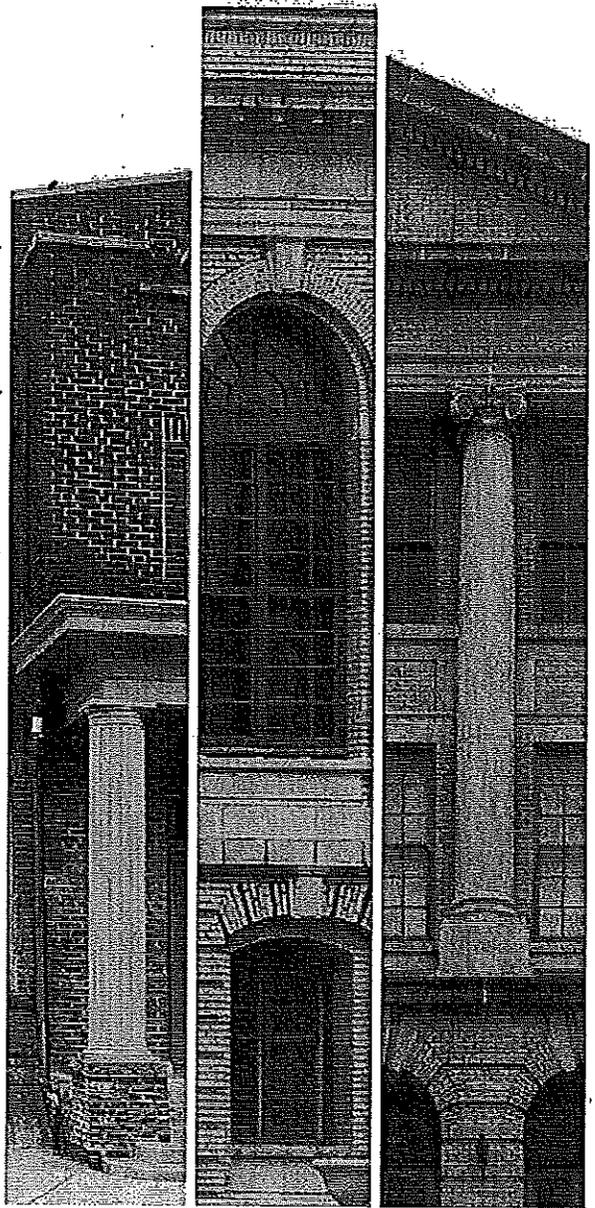


Downtown Bluefield Design Guidelines

*a reference for property improvements
in Bluefield, West Virginia's
Downtown Commercial Historic District*





Contents and Acknowledgements

Overview	3
A History of Bluefield	3
Working with the Landmarks Commission	4
Understanding A Building: Forms, Styles and Features	6
Rehabilitation of a Building	
<i>Storefronts</i>	8
<i>Exterior Walls</i>	10
<i>Basic Architectural Features</i>	11
New Construction: Buildings and Additions	16
Demolition	17
Sources of Additional Information	18
Glossary of Architectural Terms	19

These guidelines for the Downtown Commercial Historic District were prepared in June 2008 with a grant through the Certified Local Government Program to the City of Bluefield. Hill Studio of Roanoke, Virginia, worked closely with the City of Bluefield and the Landmarks Commission to prepare this document.



Overview and History

The intent of these design guidelines for the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District is to celebrate Bluefield's architectural heritage and to help downtown businesses, property owners, and contractors restore and maintain Bluefield's historic buildings, and to ensure that new construction complements the character of the district.

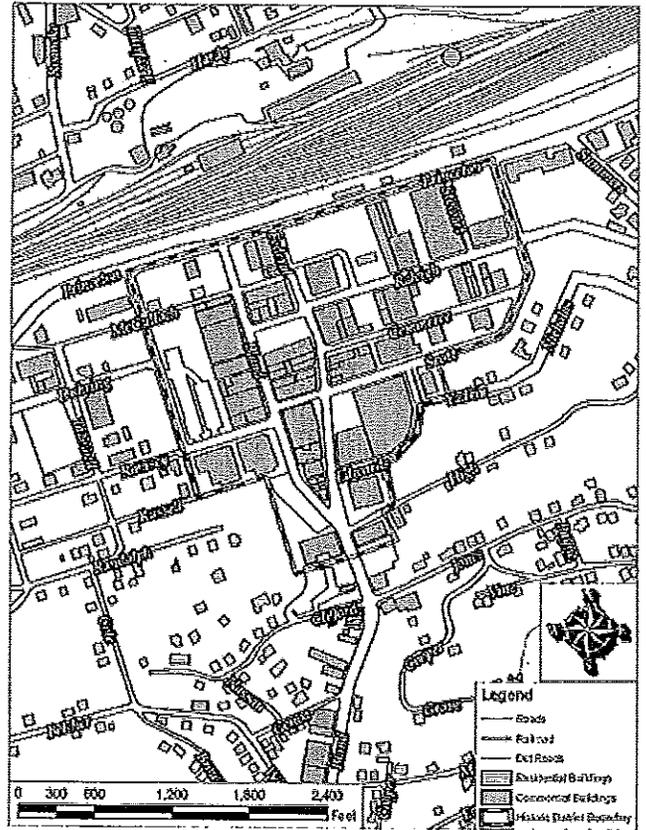
The Downtown Historic District is bounded by Princeton Avenue on the north, Scott Street and Edward Terrace on the east, by Russell Street on the west, and on the south by large open spaces just north of Clifford and Jones Streets.

These guidelines are a planning tool for property improvements. These guidelines will be used to evaluate the appropriateness of proposed work as outlined in the city's zoning ordinance. The guidelines are based on The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, but are written with Bluefield's unique historic identity in mind.

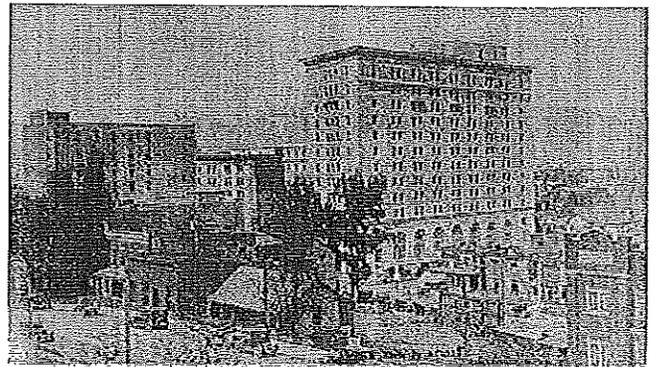
A History of Bluefield

For much of the nineteenth century, Bluefield was a small crossroads community amid vast farmlands. Bluefield can trace its beginnings to the 1881 discovery of the Pocahontas Coalfield, and the first carload of coal on the Norfolk & Western Railway that followed in 1883. The city grew rapidly alongside the southern West Virginia coal industry, and by 1903 the city hosted 13 churches, 4 banks, 2 YMCA's and 2 hospitals. Bluefield emerged as the unofficial hub of the regional coalfield industry.

The oldest portion of the Downtown Historic District can be found along Princeton Avenue near the railroad tracks, where buildings date from the mid-1890s to the 1940s. From Princeton Avenue, the commercial district works its way south, weaving a rich tapestry of buildings that illustrate Bluefield's important architectural legacy, a unique blend of Appalachian mountain history, industrial power, and prosperity that is chronicled through the surviving buildings of the Downtown Historic District, an area placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.



Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District



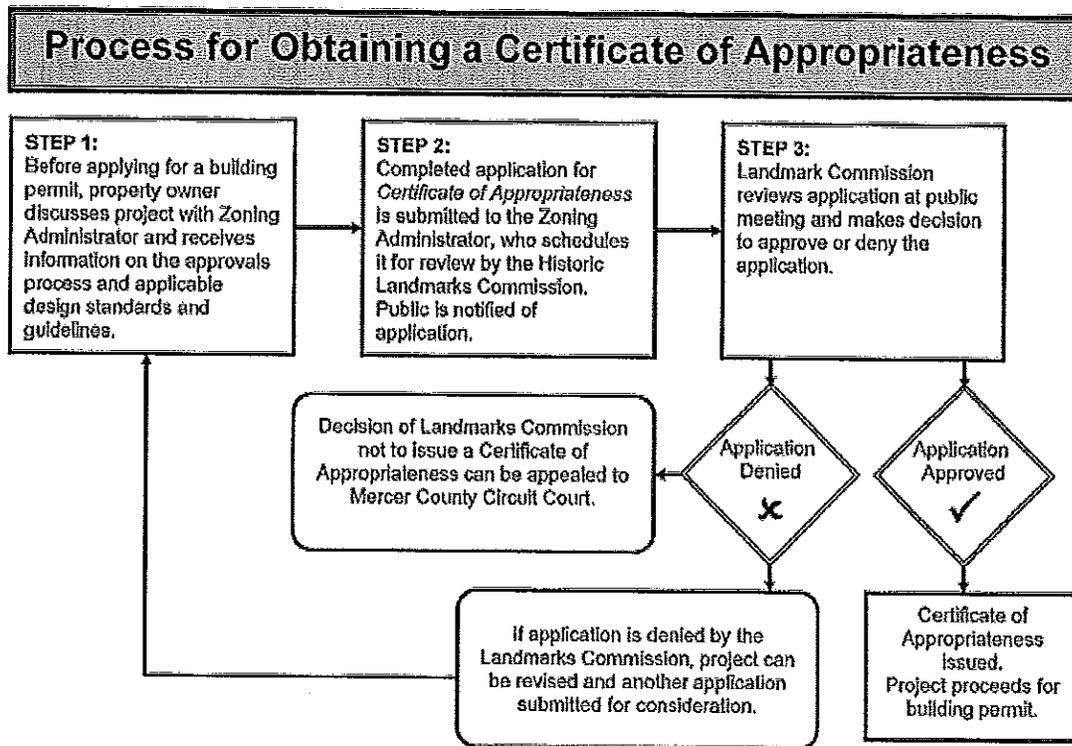
An early photo of Downtown Bluefield



Working with the Landmarks Commission

Established in 1988 by the City's Zoning Ordinance, the Bluefield Historic Landmarks Commission is responsible for reviewing new construction, alteration, and demolition of buildings in the Downtown Commercial Historic District. This work ensures that proposed improvements and undertakings meet the established standards as outlined in the city ordinance. The Commission reviews exterior changes to existing buildings (including paint, signs, and awnings), as well as designs for new buildings and additions. However, ordinary maintenance and repair of exterior architectural features are exempt from review, provided that they do not involve a change in design, material, or appearance. The primary concern of the commission is the designed or public face of the building. It is understood that the rear or service side of a building is utilitarian in design and materials and should be allowed to change with the function of the building.

The Commission has five members appointed by City Council with education or experience in history, architecture, planning, real estate or law. They meet on a monthly basis to consider pending project applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness which must be issued prior to obtaining a building permit. Meetings of the Commission are open to the public and require advance notice to property owners affected by an application. The process for obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness is shown in the chart below.



Considerations for Commission Review

In considering the appropriateness of proposed changes, the commission looks at the:

1. Historical and architectural significance and integrity of the property;
2. Architectural style of the building;
3. Character-defining features of the building (design, arrangement, texture and materials);
4. Compatibility of the proposed work with the surrounding district (its massing, scale, materials, color, ornamentation, architectural style, lighting, and other applicable criteria);

In addition to these general considerations, the Commission reviews the project using the following adopted design standards, based on The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*:

1. A property should be used for its historic purpose or used so that there is minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building, site, and environment.
2. The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. Historic materials that characterize a property should not be removed or altered.
3. Each property should be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of history should not be undertaken (i.e., adding features or architectural features that did not previously exist).
4. Some changes to properties over time acquire historic significance that should be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property should be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where replacement is necessary, the new feature should match in material, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Replacement of missing features should be documented.
7. Chemical or physical treatments that cause damage to historic materials should not be used (i.e., sandblasting). Surface cleaning should be done using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project should be protected and preserved. If resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures should be undertaken.
9. Additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction should not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. New work should be distinguishable from the old and compatible in mass, size, scale, and architectural features.
10. Additions and new construction should be done so that the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be undamaged if the construction is later removed.

Application Contents

As part of a completed application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, property owners should submit applicable building photographs, drawings, specifications, etc. that clearly illustrate the proposed work in terms of design, dimensions, materials and placement. Contact Planning staff to determine what submittals will be needed.

11

Preservation Briefs

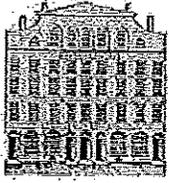
Federal Preservation Series
 National Park Service
 U.S. Department of the Interior

Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts

H. Ward Jandt

- » Historical Overview
- » Evaluating the Storefront
- » Deciding a Course of Action
- » Rehabilitating Metal Storefronts
- » Rehabilitating Wooden Storefronts
- » Rehabilitating Masonry Storefronts
- » Designing Replacement Storefronts
- » Other Considerations
- » Summary

A NOTE TO OUR USERS: The web versions of the Preservation Briefs derive material from the printed versions. Many illustrations are new, captions are provided, illustrations are typically in color rather than black and white, and some complex charts have been revised.



State & Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Programs

Buildings that contribute to the National Register historic district qualify for:

- 25% federal tax credit (income-producing properties only)
- 10% state tax credit (non-income-producing properties also eligible)

Key points:

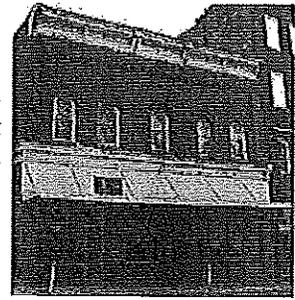
- minimum investment required
- tax credits based on eligible expenses
- all work (interior & exterior) must meet The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*
- administered by the West Virginia Division of Culture and History (www.wvculture.org/shpo/taxcredit.html) and the National Park Service (www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/incentives/index.html). Consult these agencies before beginning your tax credit project
- A Certificate of Appropriateness from the Landmarks Commission does not guarantee qualification for tax credits.



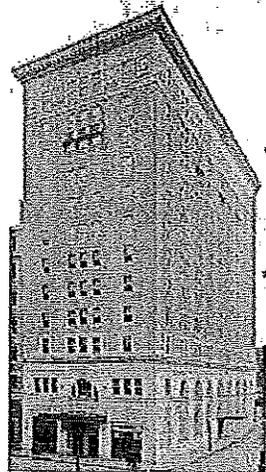
Understanding a Building

Building Forms:

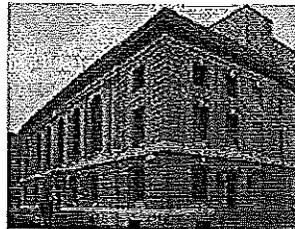
The Bluefield Downtown Historic District includes a variety of building types and styles that represent the late-19th and early-20th centuries. As the downtown district is a densely developed area, the most common commercial building form is the rectangular commercial building (*top right*). This type abuts the public sidewalk and the adjacent buildings, occupying almost the entire lot. Typically, these buildings have only one designed elevation, the façade. The side elevations were expected to be obscured by adjacent buildings and the rear elevation was utilitarian in design, materials and function.



Bluefield is unique in that it features several large-scale buildings comprising the second building type (*center right*). These taller buildings, often located on corner lots with two or more designed elevations, are divided into three sections. The base section is one to three stories and relates to the street level. The intermediate shaft is typically simpler in detailing and dominated by windows. The the capital or roof level section features a decorative cornice that relates to the skyline.



Although less common, there are also several free-standing buildings (*bottom right*) in Bluefield that make up the third building type. These buildings sit back from the sidewalk, often occupying an entire block. Free-standing buildings, which typically have more than one designed elevation, are usually built for governmental or institutional purposes, such as courthouses, post offices, city hall or a school.

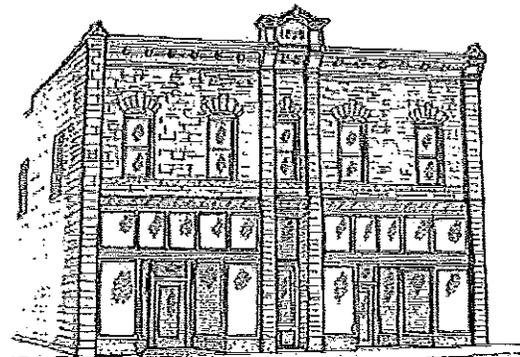


Architectural Styles:

A diversity of late-19th and early-20th century styles are found throughout the Downtown Historic District; these styles include Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, Art Deco and International. These styles often influence the detailing of the building where only the front elevation is visible to the public while they influence the entire building form and multiple elevations of the larger, free-standing buildings found in Bluefield.

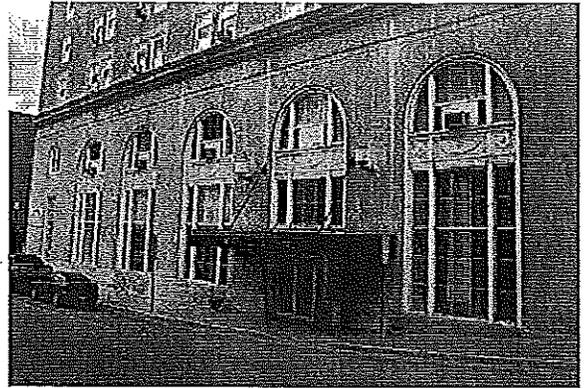
The Italianate Commercial style was popular between 1850 and 1900 and is characterized by:

- Heavily decorated cornices, often with brackets.
- Rounded windows.
- Decorative window surrounds.



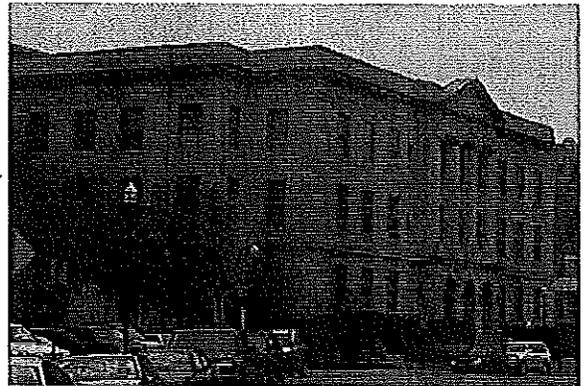
The Renaissance Revival style was popular around the turn-of-the twentieth century, especially for large buildings such as libraries, courthouse and banks. The style is characterized by:

- Use of classical details and ornament, such as arches and dentils.
- Distinct horizontal divisions on the elevations.
- Arched windows.
- Classical detailing on window and door surrounds.
- Rustication or corner quoins.



The Classical Revival style is characterized by:

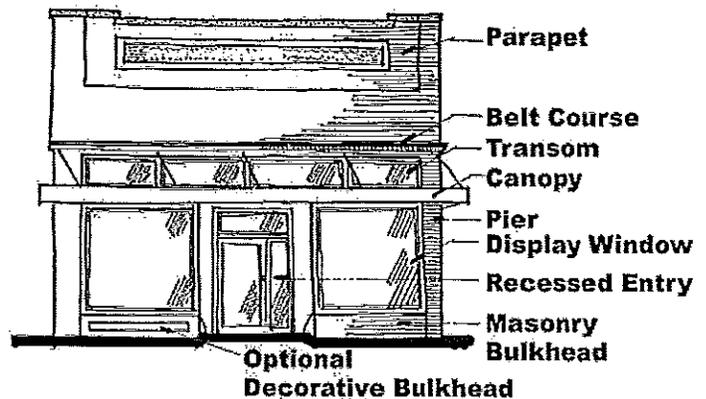
- Symmetrical in form
- Dominant entrance, often with a portico.
- Classical details, such as columns, pilasters, pediments, dentils.
- Strong cornice lines.
- Arched or rectangular windows.
- Strong horizontal divisions.



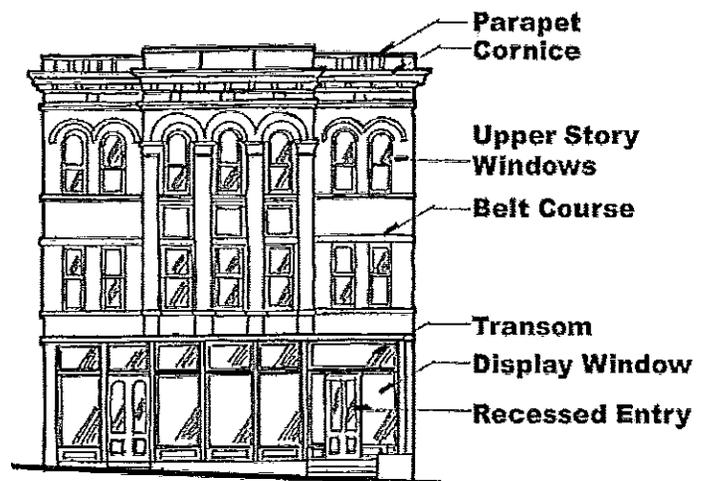
Building Features:

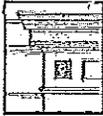
The features of a building, as identified in sketches on the facing page, are important in understanding what gives a building its architectural character or style. Particularly in those buildings that abut adjacent buildings and have only one designed elevation, these features give the building its style. In order to determine what should be retained and preserved in a historic building, it is important to be able to identify these "character-defining elements."

Those features of a building that are identified as historic and "character-defining" should always be retained in order to preserve the building's architectural character or integrity. Features should be maintained properly, repaired when needed, and replaced in-kind if deteriorated beyond repair or missing.



Features of a typical one-part commercial building (above) and a two-part commercial building (below).

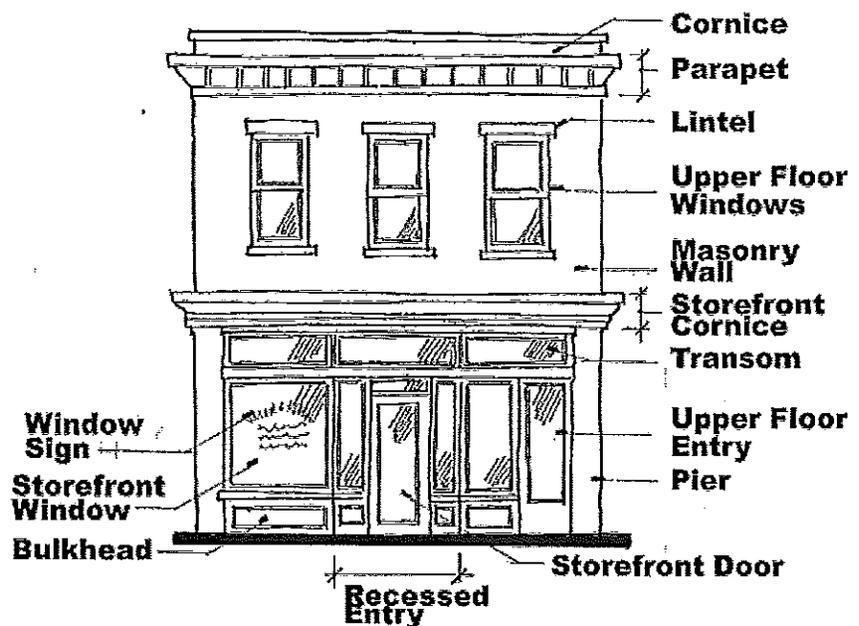




Rehabilitation of a Building: Storefronts

Located for pedestrians, the storefront is the most visible and noticeable part of the building. The original storefront reflects the architectural character and time period of a building's construction. Frequently, storefronts change with tenants and retail trends; sometimes, these changes become part of a building's history. Historic storefronts are primary character-defining features of a building's façade and should be preserved.

Typically, a storefront includes a recessed entrance with a single or double door with full glass, large display windows (with bulkheads below), a glass transom across the top of the windows (often with divided lights), and a decorative cornice (sometimes with space for a sign).



Maintenance and Repair of Existing Historic Features:

1. Retain existing storefront configuration.

- Retain historic entrance; do not enclose or relocate. If an entrance needs to be modified to meet ADA requirements, modify in a manner that has minimal impact on the original location and configuration.
- Retain existing display and transom windows openings. Original windows openings that have been covered or altered often can be restored easily by carefully removing the modern cladding or infill material.
- Retain transom windows to add light to the building. Repair glass and framing using original style materials. Do not paint the transom windows or fill them in.

2. Maintain existing historic materials.

- Remove any modern cladding that covers historic materials.
- Properly paint or seal any wood or metal features, including doors, trim bulkheads and cornice to prevent deterioration and rust.
- Properly maintain and caulk or repoint any joints in brick, stone or other material to protect from water infiltration and deterioration.
- Replace broken glass in display windows, transoms and doors.
- Use interior storm windows or awnings to reduce heat gain and improve energy efficiency.
- If new framing is required for insulated glass, install so that framing matches the exterior profile and material of the existing historic storefront.

3. Replace Missing Features.

- Match the design and material of other features that are intact.
- Look for physical evidence (shadow lines) of missing features.
- Look for evidence of missing features in historic photographs.
- Look for features on similar buildings nearby to replicate.
- When no physical evidence exists, keep the design of the replacement feature simple.

New Storefront Design:

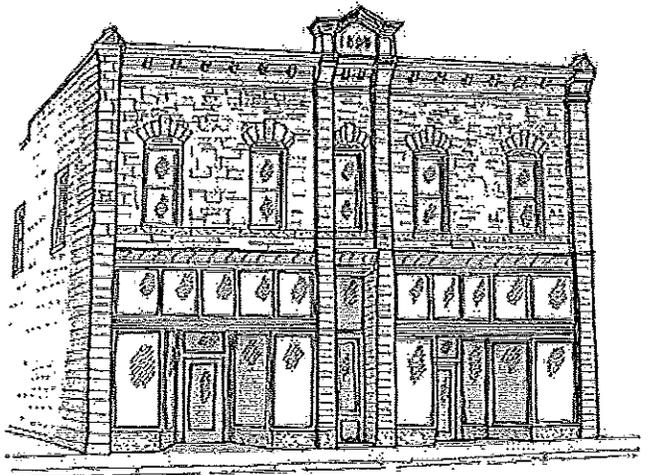
If a historic storefront has been significantly altered or replaced with a modern storefront, it may be best to replace it with a new and more compatible storefront. When building a new storefront, historical research and physical evidence can provide clues for an appropriate reconstruction. If no evidence of the original storefront can be found, a new design should incorporate traditional storefront elements (see graphics at right) that reflect the scale, design, materials, and colors of other district buildings. A new storefront should not imitate another building in order to appear historic.



Replacing an incompatible storefront with traditional features, as in the sketch below, will revive the building's historical character and enhance the appearance of the historic district

Design Guidelines for a New Storefront

- Use a traditional storefront configuration that is either flush with the building or has a recessed entrance with flanking display windows.
- The new storefront and primary entrance should occupy the entire first floor facade.
- Transom windows or sign board panels can occupy the vertical space between the display windows and the storefront or roof cornice.
- Use building materials compatible with the building – masonry (brick, stone veneer, etc.) or wood in the structural piers, the bulkhead and the window framing.
- Display windows should consist of large expanses of glass to allow visibility into the space.
- Use an awning, canopy or low-E glass that is transparent to reduce excessive sunlight and heat gain; do not use tinted or reflective glass.
- Entrance doors should be either single or double-leaf and consist of large expanse of glass to provide visibility. Door frames can be either wood or metal. Doors may include a transom to create an opening the same height as the display windows.





Rehabilitation of a Building: Exterior Walls

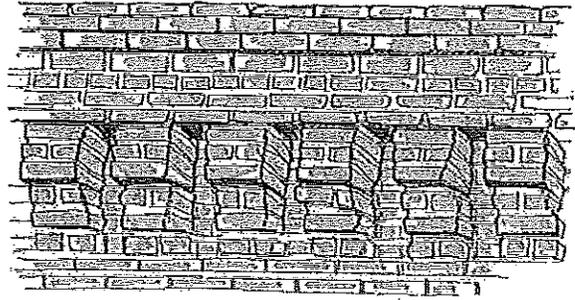
Exterior walls consist of the structural wall, as in a solid brick or concrete building, and cladding materials, such as a brick or stone veneer. The exterior wall may also feature a number of decorative elements such as pilasters, belt courses, corner quoins, and corbelled or patterned brickwork. These decorative features may be of the same material as the wall or of a contrasting material. They provide spatial definition, accent and stylistic embellishment to the wall of a building.

Masonry:

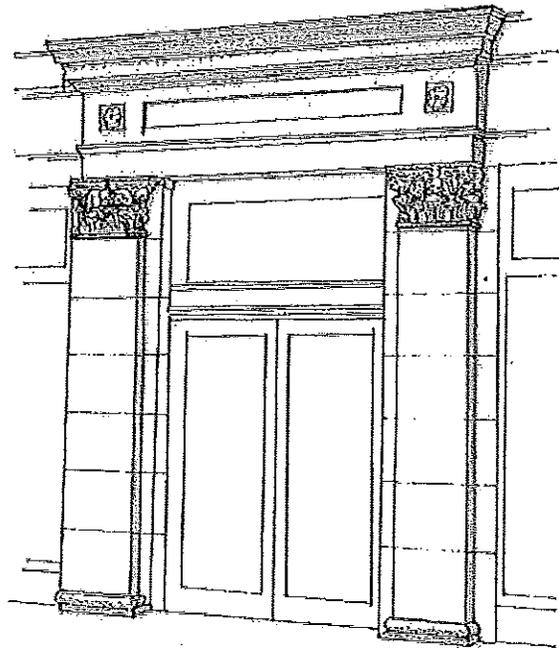
The majority of commercial buildings in the downtown historic district were constructed of masonry, (brick, stone, stucco, terra cotta or limestone). Masonry will last for centuries if it is properly maintained. Different patterns, colors and textures of masonry are also used to accent the building.

When rehabilitating a masonry building:

- Clean masonry using gentle methods, such as water-based cleansers and natural bristle brushes. Acid washes, sandblasting and high-pressure cleaning can damage masonry and its mortar. Use only professionals who are experienced in cleaning historic buildings.
- Keep masonry unpainted. Painting reduces the natural ability of brick and other masonry materials to expand and contract. Removing paint often damages the natural protective finish of the masonry. Do not use waterproof coatings on brick and other natural masonry products.
- Reuse original brick or masonry for repairs whenever possible, especially in prominent locations on the building. Replace seriously damaged or missing masonry with masonry that matches the original in size, shape, color, texture, and pattern.
- When repointing mortar joints, use a soft, lime-based mortar that is low in Portland cement that allows expansion and contraction of the masonry. Also, match the original mortar joints in width, depth, tooling, and color.



Brick corbelling is a common decorative feature at the top of Bluefield buildings.



Pilasters, like these flanking a Bluefield entryway, are partial columns attached to the wall serving as decorative elements.



Rehabilitation of a Building: Basic Architectural Features

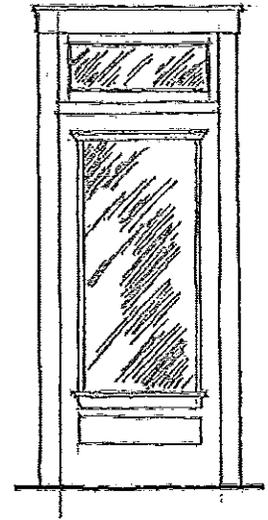
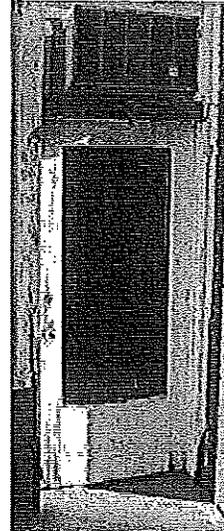
Doors, windows, cornices, parapets, awnings, canopies, paint, signs and lighting all contribute to the architectural character of a building. It is important that these features be retained, properly maintained, and repaired, rather than replaced, in order to maintain the building's architectural style and materials.

Doors:

Doors are important character-defining features; they complement the architectural style of a building and provide attractive, welcoming entrances to interior spaces.

1. Retain and Maintain Existing Historic Doors:

- Retain, maintain and repair original doors and their surrounds.
- Inspect all surfaces for water infiltration, especially at the sill.
- Maintain proper weatherstripping.
- Keep all wood or metal surfaces properly painted or sealed.
- Inspect hardware to maintain functionality.
- If an historic entrance needs to be modified to meet building code or ADA requirements, attempt to accomplish this with the least impact on the historic character of the building and entrance.
- If a historic entrance no longer functions, retain the door in place, make inoperable and remove the hardware, if necessary.



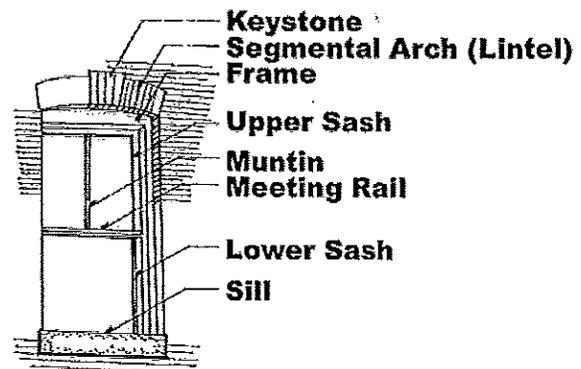
Doors and the decorative features surrounding them are key character-defining building features which should be preserved. Transoms above a door should be preserved with glass to allow in light, but never filled with air conditioning units, as on the right.

2. Replace Non-Historic Doors:

- Match the original design, finish, and materials. Keep the original door location, configuration and size.
- Reference historic photographs. Consider reusing salvaged doors from other (similarly-styled) historic buildings. If the design of the original door is unknown, use a wood door with a simple design and single large glass pane.
- Avoid metal doors, solid wood doors, or doors of another architectural style on storefronts. Do not use metal security grill-work on the primary façade.
- Avoid enclosing or altering the size of the original door opening as this interrupts the building's symmetrical proportions and destroys an important architectural feature.

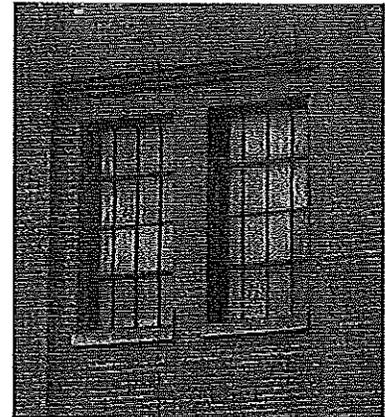
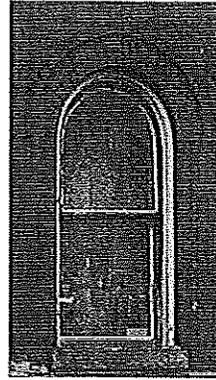
Windows:

Windows and their surrounds reflect the architectural style of a building and are important features that should be maintained. Typically, there are three types of window openings on a building: display windows, transom windows, and upper-story windows. The location, size and style of windows may reflect the interior plan and functional spaces.



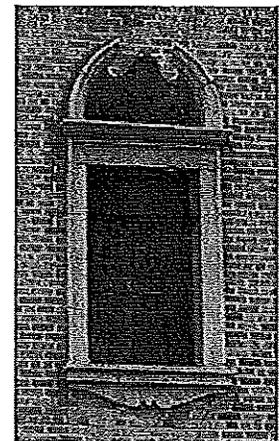
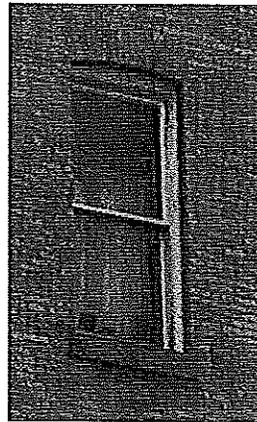
1. Retain and Maintain Historic Windows:

- Preserve original window locations, configurations, glass and architectural styles of windows and their surrounds as they are character-defining features of the building.
- Retain, maintain and repair, rather than replace historic windows or window parts.
- Inspect all surfaces and joints, particularly sills, for water infiltration.
- Keep all wood or metal surfaces properly painted or sealed and all joints properly caulked.
- Replace broken sash cords with new cords or chains as needed to improve window function.
- Install interior storm windows for energy efficiency. In the case of single-light or one-over-one windows, it may be possible to replace glass with double-pane or insulated glass without changing the character of the window. Energy efficiency can also be improved by maintaining proper caulking and weather-stripping. Properly locking windows creates a seal.



2. Replace Missing Features or Non-historic Windows:

- Replace missing windows with windows that match the original in style, size, configuration, profile and materials. Do not use modern aluminum frame or vinyl windows that do not match the detailing.
- Insulated glass may be used in appropriate replacement windows. Be careful to match the exterior profile of existing historic windows when present.
- Avoid tinted or reflective glass as it changes the relationship of solid to void that window openings provide to a building.



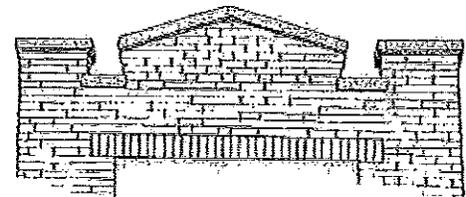
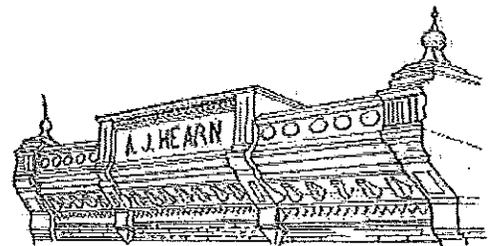
A building's original windows and surrounding detailing are also important to the historic character of a building, whether they are simple or more ornate in style.

Cornices and Parapets:

Cornices and parapets define the roofline of the building and provide visual interest and character. Typically, cornices are made of wood or metal, although stone, concrete and terra cotta are also used.

1. Retain and Maintain Historic Cornices and Parapets:

- Repair any damaged elements of a cornice or parapet. Match the style, dimensions, pattern, color, and materials of the original features.
- Keep the cornice painted and seal joints to prevent water damage.
- Inspect and repair the roof for proper water drainage as this is the most common cause of damage to cornices and parapets.
- Install roof equipment, such as security equipment, satellites, HVAC, cellphone antennae, and others, to the rear of the building to minimize visibility from the street.



An example of an ornate cornice (top) and a brick parapet (bottom) on historic buildings in downtown Bluefield

2. Replace Missing Cornices and Parapets:

- Replace a missing cornice using historic photographs or physical evidence to document the original design and placement.
- Do not add cornice or parapet elements to a building that did not historically feature them.

Awnings and Canopies:

Many commercial buildings include fabric awnings as an economical way to provide customers shelter from the sun and rain and protect building interior from excessive heat and light gain. Some buildings in downtown Bluefield have large metal canopies that are suspended from the building. Awnings and canopies also offer a place to advertise the name of a building or business. It is important that any awning or canopy meet building code and zoning requirements.



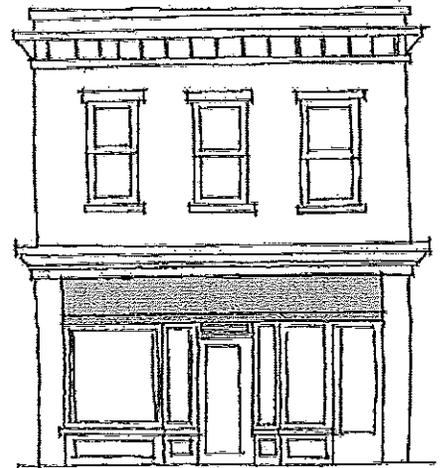
Some buildings in downtown Bluefield have large metal canopies that are suspended from the building

1. Retain and Repair Historic Awnings and Canopies:

- Preserve historic canopies. They are designed as a permanent component of the building.
- Inspect awnings and canopies for deterioration and functionality on a regular basis and repair.
- Ensure that there is proper water drainage away from the building face.

2. Replace Missing or Non-Historic Awnings or Canopies:

- Choose an awning style and color scheme based on the architectural features of the building. Match opening configuration and dimensions. Consider colors that complement the building.
- Locate and attach an awning so that it does not obscure or damage important architectural details and that it is located between corner piers.
- Replace worn awnings.
- Look for photographic or physical evidence of a metal canopy before installing a new one.



Awnings should be located so that they do not cover important architectural details on the building

Painting

Bluefield buildings exhibit a range of natural and painted colors. The application of paint and the choice of color on trim and exterior surfaces dramatically influence the architectural character of a building. Good choices in paint color and application stand out as exemplary building rehabilitation. Poor choices can result in eyesores and adversely affect an entire block. When painting a building, consider the following guidelines:

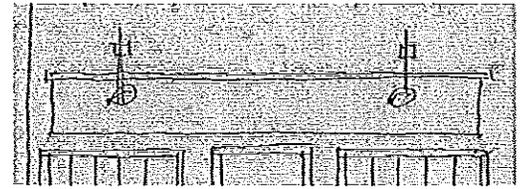
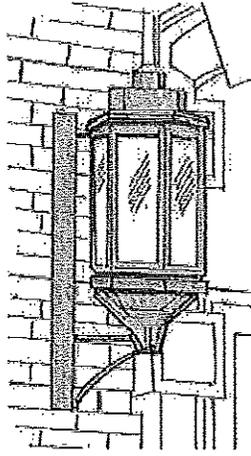
- Do not paint masonry surfaces that have not been previously painted. Painting masonry inhibits the material's natural performance and is difficult to remove without damaging it.
- Choose paint colors that are harmonious with materials and color of the building's exterior and other downtown buildings.

- Murals are appropriate in a historic district only if they previously existed on a wall or are located on a non-primary elevation. The painting of new murals should take place only on building elevations that have no design features. Care should be taken to seal or prepare the masonry wall so that the mural can be removed without damaging the wall. Murals must be frequently maintained to retain their message and aesthetic quality.

Lighting

Exterior lighting promotes a sense of well-being and security and provides identity for a business at night. A well-lit display window, sign or building face can be inviting.

- Maintain and repair any light fixtures that are original or historic to a building. They are character-defining features.
- Select new fixtures that are similar in style and size to original ones.
- Use simple light fixtures that complement the architecture of the building and can be attached without harming the mounting surface.
- Install new lighting in a manner and location that does not obscure or damage any character-defining details of the building.
- Direct and shield lights to prevent glare.
- Consider a simple neon sign that is characteristic of historic downtown. It should not glow or produce glare.
- Do not use plastic, internally illuminated signs.
- Use utility spotlights only on the rear, service area of the building.



Original exterior light fixtures on historical buildings are often ornate fixtures that strongly contribute to the character of a building (left). Where the original fixtures are missing, simple historically-appropriate modern fixtures should be used (above)



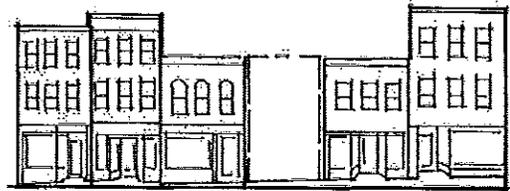
New Construction: Buildings and Additions

To maintain the architectural appeal and integrity of the historic district, new buildings and additions must complement and be compatible with the historic character and architecture of the district. The Bluefield Landmarks Commission reviews and approves construction of new buildings and additions to existing buildings. Applicants are encouraged to coordinate plans for new construction with the Commission as early as possible.

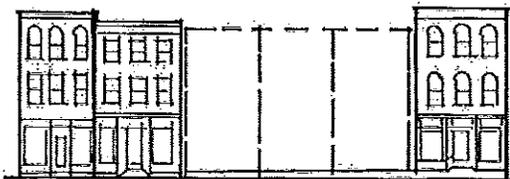
New Buildings

When planning a new building, consider the following guidelines:

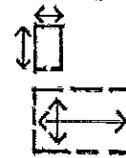
- Design new buildings so that they are similar in mass, scale, design, materials, and orientation to surrounding buildings.
- Orient new buildings close to the street and in line with adjacent buildings. Do not place parking lots in front of a building.
- Use window and door patterns that are symmetrical and reflect the historic patterns found in existing buildings.
- Avoid copying a historic style. Each building should be a product of its own time.
- Consider a contemporary designs for a new building that is in context with surrounding buildings and is complementary in mass, scale, design, and materials.
- Use brick or stone for new construction, rather than materials that were not historically evident in Bluefield.



New buildings in a historic context should reflect the height, mass, scale and rhythm of surrounding buildings (left). A new building's components should also match the general design and pattern of features on existing buildings in the historic district (below).



Proportions



Window Rhythm



Storefront Rhythm

Building Additions

When planning an addition to an existing building, consider the following guidelines:

- Make additions compatible with existing buildings in size, scale, proportions, color and materials.
- Orient additions so that they are subordinate to the primary building. An addition should remain subordinate in location, size and appearance to the main body of the building.
- Do not damage or block existing character-defining architectural features.
- Design an addition so that it can be removed at a later date without compromising the form and character of the original building.



Demolition

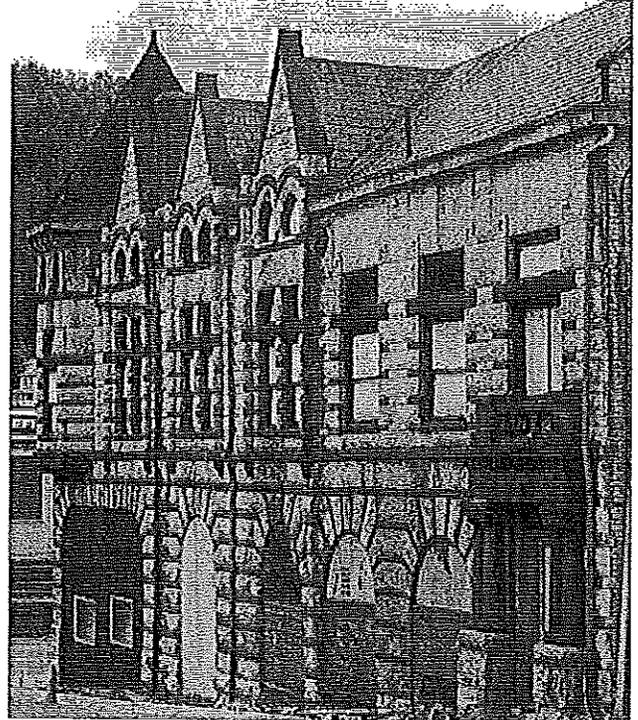
The Landmarks Commission must review and approve the demolition of buildings in the historic district and must make required findings in order to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness.

In reviewing a demolition request, the Commission must consider:

- The building's architectural and historical contribution to the district;
- The reasonableness of meeting the established rehabilitation standards of the district; and
- The economic hardship of the rehabilitation on the property owner.

In general, the following guidelines apply:

- Buildings that contribute to the historic character in a historic district should not be demolished.
- Demolition of a building in a historic district should be considered only as a last resort, when there are no alternatives for rehabilitation, and only if the loss of a building will not adversely affect the historic district.
- Explore the possibility of moving a building to a new location.
- No building should be demolished to create a parking lot.
- Make sure a building has been thoroughly documented if demolition cannot be avoided (see below).



Demolition of a historic building should be considered only as a last resort so that Bluefield's unique buildings are not lost for future generations. (Bluefield People's Bank, demolished in 2007)

Documentation to Mitigate the Loss of a Building:

The thorough documentation of a building is accepted as a means to mitigate the loss of a building through demolition. Any effort to document a property should be coordinated with the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, and all documentation should be submitted to their office for inclusion in their archival collection.

Proper documentation includes:

- Archivaly stable black-and-white photographs of the exterior and interior of the building, including all elevations, major interior spaces and significant details.
- Photographic negatives or CD-ROM of digital photographs saved in a .tif format.
- Site plan to scale, showing the building's relationship to the street, the site (including any significant landscape features) and adjacent buildings.
- Interior floor plan of 1st floor (to scale).
- Brief history of the structure, including its date of construction, owner, builder, architect and any other significant people or events associated with it.



Sources of Additional Information

General Architectural History:

"Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture" by Richard Longstreth. Washington D.C. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1987.

"Identifying American Architecture: Pictorial Guide for Styles and Terms, 1600-1945" by John J. G. Blumenson. Nashville, Tennessee. American Association for State and Local History, 1981.

"American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to Styles" by Marcus Whiffen.

"Learn How to Read a Historic Building" National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Services. (<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/TPScharacter/index.htm>)

Technical Publications:

Association for Preservation Technology Bulletin (www.apti.com)

General Services Administration Readings on Technical Issues (<http://w3.gsa.gov/web/p/HPTP.NSF/Readings+Lists?OpenView>)

Preservation Resource Groups, Inc. (<http://www.prginc.com/pub-index/index.html>)

"Conserving Buildings: Guide to Techniques and Materials" by Martin E. Weaver and Frank Matero. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1993

"Introduction to Early American Masonry: Stone, Brick, Mortar, and Plaster" by Harley J. McKee. Preservation Press, Washington, D.C., 1973.

"Building Construction: Materials and Types of Construction" 2nd edition, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1941.

Preservation Organizations and Resources for Information:

Preservation Trades Network (www.PTN.org)

National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Information" Series: (www.nationaltrust.org)

- Maintaining Community Character: How to Establish a Local Historic District.
- Design Review in Historic Districts.
- Reviewing New Construction Projects in Historic Districts.
- Basic Preservation Procedures.

National Park Service, "Preservation Briefs" Series: (www.cr.nps.gov)

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office: (www.wvculture.org/shpo/)

Bluefield Historical Society: (www.bluefieldhistoricalsociety.org)

City of Bluefield: (www.ci.bluefield.wv.us)



Glossary of Architectural Terms

Arch: A curved or pointed opening in a wall, usually masonry, supporting the weight above an opening.

Architrave: The lowest part of an entablature.

Belt course: A decorative band, often of a contrasting material, accenting a building's horizontal divisions.

Bracket: A supporting or decorative element located under eaves, balconies or other overhangs.

Bulkhead: A solid panel at the bottom of a storefront that supports a display window.

Capital: Decorative cap to a column or pilaster, usually based on Classical Greek and Roman orders

Corbelling: Decorative masonry details that include a projecting course of masonry topped by consecutive projecting courses, creating a stepped brick or stone cantilever that is sometimes found on chimneys, parapets and cornices.

Column: A vertical support that usually consists of a base, a round shaft, and a decorative upper capital.

Coping: A capping to a wall or parapet.

Cornice: An exterior trim found at the top of a wall or above an opening.

Dentils: Small closely spaced decorative blocks sometimes found in the lower part of a cornice.

Eave: The area where a roof projects beyond the wall.

Entablature: In Classical architecture, the horizontal span supported by columns or pilasters, and comprising the architrave, the frieze and the cornice.

Façade: The front wall or "face" of a building.

Frieze: The middle part of a Classical entablature. Usually a horizontal band that may contain decorative patterns, such as a metope, Greek key or other designs.

Hood molding: Decorative trim or molding over a door or window.

Lintel: A horizontal structural element above a door or window, usually carrying the weight of the wall above and often embellished to become a decorative element.

Modillions: Large decorative blocks or brackets sometimes found under a cornice as part of the entablature.

Muntin: The wood trim that divides the panes of glass in a window or transom.

Parapet: A low wall or railing along the edge of a roof, extending above the roofline.

Pier: A vertical structural support that is usually rectangular.

Pilaster: A partial column or post attached to a wall.

Pediment: A low-pitched gable over a portico, or above doors or windows, usually accented by trim, or a cornice, on all three sides.

Pointing: The outer and visible finish of the mortar between bricks or stones of a masonry wall.

Quoin: A stone, brick or wood block that reinforces or accentuates the outside corners of a building.

Rustication: Masonry characterized by roughly finished edges and faces, and set with deep joints.

Sash: The frame around the window glass, either fixed or moveable.

Sill: The lower horizontal member of a door or window opening.

Soffit: The underside of an eave, usually supported by decorative brackets.

Storefront: The street-level façade of a commercial building, usually with display windows and an entrance.

Surround: The framework and trim around a door or window.

Transom: Rectangular or arched glass over a door, window or storefront, to gain additional light or ventilation.



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June 17, 2008

Mr. Shawn Jackson
City of Bluefield, West Virginia
200 Rogers Street
Bluefield, WV 24701

RE: Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District
Design Guidelines
Review of Historic Overlay Zoning Ordinance

Dear Mr. Jackson:

Attached please find a copy of our final draft for the Design Guidelines for the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District. In addition to developing these guidelines, our contract included a request to:

- Evaluate the existing city ordinances as they relate to a historic landmark commission, design review, and any historic preservation planning and zoning issues. Compare to the existing state legislation.
- Make recommendations for revisions to the ordinances, giving options for how to retain the integrity of historic resources within the city. Options would likely include historic overlay districts and other zoning related tools, design review, etc.

Hill Studio has conducted our evaluation of the existing city ordinances and we make the following recommendations to make them consistent with state and local code.

Bluefield Zoning Ordinance (1988 Historic District):

1. **Section 23-79a:** Reference to Board of Directors – is this City Council? The name of the historic district should be consistent with the name of the National Register Historic District.
2. **Section 23-79c:** Authority references reconstruction, remodeling, demolition of any qualifying structure. This is not consistent with state code language. Also, it means that the Commission only has jurisdiction over “qualifying structures” (see definition comments Section 23-81).
3. **Section 23-80a:** Commission membership is not consistent with state code. No qualifications requirements.
4. **Section 23-80b:** Commission meetings and procedures are not consistent with state code. Public notice of affected properties required. Thirty days action should be the minimum.

Community Planning

Landscape Architecture

Architecture

Preservation

120 W Campbell Avenue

Roanoke, Virginia 24011

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5. **Section 23-81:** Ensure that definitions are consistent with state code.
 - a. Local code defines historic structure as over 50 years AND a building that has not be so altered as to have lost substantially all of its architectural details. This is too subjective and severely limits Commission authority and ability to stabilize and improve the historic district.
 - b. Also, non-contributing structure is defined as being less than 50 years old or one that is not capable of being restored without economic waste. Again, this language is too loose, arbitrary and open to wide interpretation.
 - c. Definition for Ordinary Maintenance is needed. Must be specific or otherwise it is too open for interpretation.
6. **Section 23-83:** Procedures should be consistent with state code. The existing section is not consistent with state code.
7. **Section 23-84:** Review *standards* are included in the ordinance. These are NOT guidelines; they are standards that must be followed because they are adopted zoning regulations. Need to ensure that basic standards are in the ordinance as provided for by state code. Must determine what are desired to be *standards* and what are to be *guidelines*. Don't be too flexible – it will get you in trouble. Also, the building code addresses some issues for public safety that need not be repeated in the historic district section (e.g., height of lighting fixtures and canopies) as this can cause confusion and conflict.
8. **Section 23-84e:** Demolition by neglect section is good. It should be revised to be consistent with state building maintenance code and clarified. Penalties should be consistent with state code. Bluefield may want to look at other demolition by neglect ordinances.
9. **Section 23-84f:** Demolition Standards are too weak and arbitrary. They should reflect state code and perhaps be more specific about what findings must be made in order to demolish a building. The existing provisions do not really help preserve buildings. Building code already requires some of the items discussed in the code – this is not necessary to repeat. If a new replacement building is proposed, there is no real evaluation of the architectural contributions of that building to the district.
10. **Section 23-84g:** Appeals are to the courts. Section should be consistent with state code. I would add more specifics as to what should be contained in an appeal and ensure that the Commission procedure is to specify findings in both issuing a Certificate and not issuing a Certificate. This is very important! The courts will rely on what were the requirements, findings, etc. If it isn't clear, it will not be upheld.

Hill Studio, PC

June 17, 2008

Page 3



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11. **Section 23-84h:** Violations are not consistent with state code. Violation is a misdemeanor in Bluefield, punishable by fine and 30 days in jail. State code is harsher!

West Virginia State Code:

1. **Section 8-26A-2:** Definitions should be repeated in the local code for historic district, landmark, site and exterior architectural features.
2. **Section 8-26A-4:** Code refers to Certificate of Appropriateness. This needs to be incorporated into local code along with board requirements, appointments and procedures.
3. **Section 8-26A-5:** Powers of Commission should be reflected in local code.
4. **Section 8-26A-6:** How a property is designated as historic should be included in the local code.
5. **Section 8-26A-7:** Procedures for Certificate should be in local code and be consistent. Note application requirements, public notice, action timeline, findings, consideration of factors, etc. There is a provision for economic hardship. Also, there is reference to ordinary maintenance and definition items.
6. **Section 8-26A-9:** Violation is \$500 or up to 10% of the total project cost or 6 months in jail. This differs from what is stated in the local ordinance.
7. **Section 8-26A-10:** Requires notice of district boundaries to County assessor.
8. **Section 8-26A-11:** Requires annual report to WVA Dept. Culture & History of commission activities.

Please forward these recommendations regarding your local historic district overly ordinance to the City Manager and the Landmarks Commission for their consideration. Hill Studio will be happy to work with the City of Bluefield in a future project to revise the local ordinance in response to these recommendations.

Sincerely,
HILL STUDIO, P.C.

Alison S. Blanton

Alison S. Blanton
Project Manager