

Neighborhood Ventures FACE FORWARD FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAM - 2008 DESIGN GUIDELINE BOOKLET EXAMPLES

External Materials



Take a look at your building before you begin planning alterations to the exterior. How does it fit in and reflect the character of surrounding buildings and the character of the neighborhood? Look at your building as a whole, and plan renovations that address all front façade elements. The goal is to achieve visually distinct facades that relate to other commercial structures in the area without creating strict uniformity.

A building façade facing a street should primarily consist of brick, masonry, or wood siding. Maintain architectural elements that reflect the character of surrounding buildings and contribute to the rest of the street. Notice how the building materials complement the entire building.

Entry and Exits



Main building entrances and exits should be located on the side of the building that faces the primary street. Recessed entryways should be maintained and not altered to sit flush with the front of the building.

Doors that allow passersby to see inside are inviting and add to the quality of the commercial corridor. Choose a door that is compatible in size and scale to the rest of your building. Your front door is many times your first point of contact with your customers – make it as inviting as possible!

Street Level Façade



When replacing or “opening up” windows, the first story façade facing a street should have the same ratio of glass to non-transparent building materials as existing or former storefront buildings, as originally designed, in the same district.

Windows shouldn’t be higher than those in existing buildings on the same block, or as is typical for traditional storefront buildings.

Windowless and/or door-less street facades that face a street aren’t permitted. Exterior steel barriers or other visible security bars are not permitted. Interior security bars shouldn’t be visible from the outside during business hours.

Windows



Windows should encourage or increase visibility, or “transparency”, into the business. Existing windows should be kept open and used to display merchandise or compliment the pedestrian activity of the street.

Transparent windows attract attention to the products or services of the business, increases available display space, and add to the attractiveness of the commercial corridor.

Glass should be clear for easy viewing into the business, and cleaned regularly. The use of reflective, coated, smoked, covered, or other non-transparent or semi-transparent glass is prohibited.

Covering windows with too much signage or attaching paper signs in windows detract from the attractiveness of your building.

Awnings



Attractive awnings frame buildings, provide shade to cool the interior of buildings, and shelter pedestrians from inclement weather.

Traditional angled awnings made of canvas or acrylic fiber, without a surface sheen, are only permitted over windows and doors. Barrel-shaped, plastic, and backlit awnings are prohibited.



Awning supports may not be attached to the sidewalk. Notice the use of attractive supports for this awning.

Consider the character of your building and business – use your awning to best suit your building character and business. Using your awning as your only marketing tool may result in too many unattractive and inappropriate graphics on the awning, sending mixed messages to your customer.

Awnings



Simple awnings complement the rest of the building and helps create a welcoming commercial corridor. The size of the awning should be scaled to the size of the building, and have a simple shape.

Retractable awnings are appropriate to use and may be more flexible in changing weather. Awnings can be used to cool interiors and save energy.

Awnings may also be used as signs. Designs or logos should be simple and appropriate to the business. Always check with the zoning department for sign regulations before completing your plans.



Great awnings can draw attention to businesses without cluttering the façade with too many graphics and words. Notice how the color of these awnings draws attention to this convenience store without clutter and mixed messages.

Signs



Good signage communicates the name of the business and may add visual interest to the streetscape experience.

Contact the City's Zoning Department (456-3159) for information regarding the allowable signage for your building; sign permits can be obtained from the City's Development Center at 1120 Monroe Ave. NW.

Use distinctive lettering and colors that represent the store, and are easily legible. Artwork, icons, logos, and messages should be simple and sized according to zoning regulations. Signs should be consistent in scale with other signs on the corridor, and should complement a buildings' architecture.



Unique signage that reflects the spirit of the business and the character of the neighborhood will attract customers and represent the business well.

Signs

Appropriate signage should be professionally made from materials such as metal, plastic, glass as well as wood or stone, or some combination of these materials.



Designs and logos should be clean, simple and uncluttered. Incorporating illumination of the sign at night should be an integral part of the sign's design.



Good signs convey the character of the business, without using excess interior window signs, leaving more space for good window displays.

Lighting



Attractive exterior lighting illuminates the front façade of the building and draws attention to decorative details. Lighting increases safety perception, highlights decorative details of the building, and illuminates merchandise displayed in storefront windows.



Great lights provide decorative details and perform a necessary function. Adequate illumination of storefronts cut down on opportunity for crime-related activities, illuminates the front of the building at night, and creates a pedestrian friendly atmosphere at night, too.