

# Assessment and Recommendations: Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District

Beckley, Raleigh County, West Virginia  
2015



Prepared by Preservation Alliance of West Virginia  
421 Davis Ave. No. 4, Elkins, WV 26241

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places — the official list of the nation’s historic places deemed worthy of preservation by the National Park Service. It is part of a national program to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archaeological resources.

In March of 2015, the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia placed the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District on its 2015 list of endangered properties due to the district’s loss of historic integrity. The West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office had previously warned on many occasions that the district was in danger of being removed from the National Register due to a loss of integrity, the result of years of neglect, inappropriate alterations, catastrophic damage (weather, fire, etc.), and demolitions performed with and without the approval of the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission. In order to remain on the National Register, such a historic district must retain its integrity — its ability to convey its significance through its physical features. If a district contains so many alterations or new constructions that it no longer conveys the sense of a historic environment, it is no longer eligible for listing on the National Register.

In April 2015, after placing the district on its Endangered Properties List, the Preservation Alliance surveyed the district in an effort to provide:

1. An assessment of the condition of the district in accordance with the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission’s “Architectural Review & Summary Guidelines”
2. A list of suggestions to maintain the district’s integrity and prevent its removal from the National Register
3. Examples of other West Virginia communities that maintain successful revitalization efforts in their historic downtowns
4. Recommendations for the revitalization and overall improvement of the district

### **OVERVIEW**

The Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District is a contiguous area of approximately eight city blocks surrounding the Raleigh County Courthouse in Beckley, West Virginia. This district predominantly consists of private commercial buildings, though there are also a number of public buildings, such as churches, banks, and government buildings.

### ***Boundary***

The majority of the district's buildings are located on the main streets of Neville, Main, Prince, Kanawha, and Heber. Buildings within the district are also located on First, Alaska, Woodlawn, Earwood, Ramey, Fayette, McCreery, and Howe.

### ***Period of Significance***

The period of significance is 1900 to 1945.

### ***Areas of Significance***

The National Park Service deemed the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District significant based on its association with historic events and its distinctive physical characteristics. As the 1994 National Register nomination states: "...the district is significant for its development from a small village to county seat and town, to a city and major business community for local, state and federal needs in the southern coal fields of West Virginia." In addition, "...the district embodies a large, cohesive group of commercial buildings from the first half of the 20th century, with an emphasis [on] and large grouping of public buildings."

### ***Character-defining Features***

- Private commercial buildings of local sandstone and brick with simple architectural details
- Public buildings (i.e. banks, churches, government buildings) of local sandstone, brick, and limestone with heavy architectural details; more classical in design
- Building orientation with primary entrances facing the street
- Buildings sited close to the street

### ***Findings***

While surveying the district in April 2015, the alliance research team noted that the current occupancy of each property appeared to be higher than the occupancy rate when the district was nominated to the National Register in 1994. As of April 2015, 88.7% of all properties within the Beckley Courthouse Square District were occupied, compared to 86.4% in 1994.

However, since the district was listed in the National Register in 1994, significant demolitions and inappropriate alterations have jeopardized its historic integrity and have placed it at risk of being removed from the National Register. Removal would consequently eliminate state and federal financial assistance and other considerations now being made to restore, preserve, and otherwise enhance properties within the district. Of the inappropriate alterations that the team encountered within the district, the majority fall under the following four categories:

- **Inappropriate storefronts** — notably the infill or addition of non-historic storefronts

- **Inappropriate doors, windows, and window openings** — notably the infill or addition of windows or door openings and the replacement of historic windows and doors with incompatible styles
- **Inappropriate brick & stone surfaces** — notably the painting of brick and stone surfaces, the use of synthetic stucco, and the replacement of original brick and stone surfaces with faux brick and stone products
- **Inappropriate character of awnings** — notably the installation of expressly incompatible awning styles

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In answer to the immediate threat of removal from the National Register, several business and property owners have taken steps to protect the district and encourage revitalization. Significantly, the formation of the Downtown Beckley Business Association has been an integral part of this process, and its workshops have presented downtown investors with excellent opportunities that allow them to benefit from their location within a historic district.

While there has been progress in the private sector since the district’s selection as an Endangered Property in March, additional steps must be taken to prevent the district from being removed from the National Register and to help the district become a dynamic center of culture, commerce, and community. Much of this effort depends on the willingness of the city’s historic landmark commission to uphold its governance.

We would remind members of the commission that the standards and statutes that established — and which now direct the commission — are not unique or accepted without precedence. They were enacted based on established principles and within the bounds of state and federal statutes, and much case law and reference material exists to help the commission direct its governance. Individually and as a body, members are responsible for continually educating themselves regarding the authority with which they have been entrusted.

Specifically, the Preservation Alliance advises that the following steps be taken to preserve the district and steer it away from a removal from the National Register.

- To enforce its by-laws, the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission must hold regularly scheduled and advertised monthly public meetings to review proposals for any and all exterior changes to public and private properties within the district.
- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission is required to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for any proposed change in the district based on its “Architectural

Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and, as referenced in its guidelines, based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Each issue or denial of a certificate should cite the passage or passages in the standards or guidelines upon which the decision was based.

- Members of the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission are municipal officials and must attend all regularly-scheduled meetings of the commission. Members not able to perform their duties should resign their commission.
- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission should engage the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S Department of the Interior, and other legal, architectural, and professional advisory sources and authorities for new commission member and returning commission member training and for guidance in planning and project implementation.
- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission should ensure the city zoning office and its staff and all members of the city government who may be engaged in the district and in permitting work therein have reviewed the “Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and organize staff and city government to attend the monthly landmark commission meetings.
- The owners or managers of public and private properties in the district should consider engaging the services of architects or qualified professionals in the field of historical rehabilitation before proposing work on a property within the district. Each should request and keep a copy of the “Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and become familiar with construction and rehabilitation issues, such as those provided online by the National Park Service through its “Preservation Briefs.”
- The owners and managers of properties in the district should take all steps necessary to satisfy the legal requirements of owning and developing property in the historic district and to familiarize themselves with the local, state, and federal statutes that protect and influence governance in the district.
- The Downtown Beckley Business Association should continue its work by using the Main Street Four-Point Approach as a model for the development of its organization and continue to engage the West Virginia Department of Commerce, which supports the development of downtown commercial historic districts.
- The Downtown Beckley Business Association should apply to become a West Virginia ON TRAC organization, the predecessor for a West Virginia Main Street organization.

# **THE CITY OF BECKLEY**

## **HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**

Established in 1990 pursuant to Chapter 8, Article 26-A of the W.Va. State Code, the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission was entrusted with the study, identification, preservation, and protection of the City of Beckley's historic resources. In 1992, the city further entered into an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office to increase the commission's initial responsibilities by declaring it a "Certified Local Government." A nationwide initiative, the national Certified Local Government program engages three levels of government — federal, state and local — in a preservation partnership that supports the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. This designation secures preservation as a public policy through passage of a historic preservation ordinance. The ordinance establishes a historic preservation board to develop and oversee the functions of its historic preservation program. In Beckley's case, that function was provided through its historic landmark commission.

In addition to reviewing local nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission was designated as an architectural review board and entrusted to review proposed changes to properties in the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District. As a requirement of the Certified Local Government program, the commission must meet at least four times annually (though it is recommended that it convene, as per its bylaws, for regular monthly public meetings).

### ***The Design-Review Process***

In an effort to revitalize downtown Beckley by investing in the existing cityscape, the commission established a design review process. In order to complete any exterior reconstruction, restoration, or alteration on a property within the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District, a property owner must submit a proposal to the commission requesting a permit, also known as a "Certificate of Appropriateness." The commission meets monthly to review pending proposals and issue certificates when the scope of work is in line with its "Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines," in effect since the early 1990s. This review ensures that proposed changes are complementary to the property and the district. To save time and money, property owners and developers are encouraged to contact the commission early in the planning process and to obtain information on compliance with guidelines.

The HLC's "Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines" is based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings, which presents ten brief standards published by the National Park Service. These standards are nationally

accepted and promote historic preservation best practices — see the appendix for a copy of the Standards.

The architectural review by the Beckley HLC delves more deeply into each of the Standards by providing clear and detailed guidelines that apply to each of the following elements:

- Front Facade
- Storefronts
- Side and Rear Facades
- Windows, Window Openings, and Doors
- Building Signs
- Architectural Details
- Brick and Stone Natural Surfaces
- Equipment, Utilities, and Machinery
- Other Considerations

A complete copy of the City of Beckley Historic Landmark Commission’s “Architectural Review & Summary of Guidelines” is appended to this report.

It should be noted that the guidelines of a Historic Landmark Commission are not used to determine if a property or historic district is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation is used to determine National Register eligibility. However, following the City of Beckley Historic Landmark Commission’s “Architectural Review & Summary of Guidelines” helps maintain the integrity of the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District — and, as previously mentioned, a historic district must maintain its integrity in order to remain on the National Register.



## ASSESSMENT OF DISTRICT CONDITION

To assist with the preservation of the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District, the Preservation Alliance has completed this assessment of the district's condition using the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission's "Architectural Review & Summary Guidelines," which are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. Since 1994, when the district was surveyed, a prerequisite to its nomination to the National Register, many properties have been demolished, and others have been altered contrary to the guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Referring to the alphabetized passages in the guidelines, the majority of inappropriate alterations relate to storefronts (B); windows, window openings, and doors (D); brick and stone natural facades (G); and the use of awnings (H5).

A handful of properties have suffered significant alterations to their storefronts that have no basis in the historic appearance of these buildings. For example, two adjoining properties have created an entirely new storefront with a dentilled cornice and segmented storefront windows with stained glass. Many others have infilled their historic storefronts.

Particularly common in the district is the replacement of original windows and doors with styles and materials that are not similar to those originally used in the buildings. For example, one building has replaced the original paired 1/1 sash windows with 2 two-story, 12-pane asymmetrical muntin windows. A few buildings have not retained their original window and door openings by bricking over them. When replacing original windows and doors, one should search for a replacement which retains as much of the character of the historic feature as possible (e.g. type of wood, characteristics of glass, configuration of window panes). Good sources for acceptable replacements include building supply firms, local woodworking mills, carpenters, suppliers of historic building materials. Local historic associations and the state historic preservation office may also be good sources of information. Where original windows remain (such as a good portion of the buildings on Prince Street), it can be quite practical and simple to rehabilitate and weatherize historic windows to preserve an important element of the building's integrity.

There is also a high concentration of buildings that have inappropriately altered their original stone or brick facades. These changes include painting brick facades despite their original lack of paint and adding aluminum siding or faux brick and/or stone siding. Painting stone and/or brick facades is a very damaging treatment with expensive consequences. In addition, a number of buildings have awnings that are not compatible with the building. For example, one property that

was not historically a commercial property has a highly visible bubble awning obscuring important features of the facade. Removing awnings or replacing them with historically appropriate styles is a simple step to retain historic integrity.

In addition, the guidelines state that: “Vacant sites or portions of the site should be planted with materials which complement the surrounding architecture” (I2). There are now several vacant lots in the historic district — notably on Neville Street, the site of former property No. 21, which was demolished by fire. While these sites sit vacant, the commission or the Downtown Beckley Business Association might consider maintaining the lots as community gardens or mini-parks to contribute to a more inviting streetscape.

# PRESERVATION SUGGESTIONS

The following preservation suggestions for the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District are pulled directly from the National Park Service’s Preservation Briefs. The briefs provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic buildings. These NPS publications help historic building owners recognize and resolve common problems prior to work. The briefs are especially useful to Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program applicants because they recommend methods and approaches for rehabilitating historic buildings that are consistent with their historic character.

A good number of the Preservation Briefs are relevant to properties within the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District. However, only the briefs that will be of use to the majority of property owners within the district will be discussed here. Access to all 47 NPS Preservation Briefs can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>.

## ***Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings & Proper Cleaning Methods***

The majority of buildings within the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District are masonry construction — brick, stone, and concrete block. Although generally considered “permanent,” masonry is still subject to deterioration. Aside from normal wear, great injury can be inflicted on the mortar, bricks, and/or stone in the short and long-term when improperly repaired. In cases where masonry needs repointing, the best suggestion is to take a sample of the mortar for testing and have the formula recreated. Portland cement should **never** be used as mortar. Any areas of the masonry needing attention should then be repointed by a professional. It is very important to use the same mortar as was previously used to prevent wholesale damage to the stone.

In addition to improper repointing, inappropriate cleaning and coating treatments are a major cause of damage to historic masonry buildings. Historic buildings often need cleaning to:

- Improve the appearance of the building by removing unattractive dirt, soiling materials, and/or non-historic paint from the masonry
- Slow deterioration by removing soiling materials that may be damaging the masonry
- Provide a clean surface to accurately match repointing mortars or patching compounds
- Conduct a condition survey of the masonry

However, if not selected carefully, these cleaning and coating treatments can be very destructive to historic masonry.

General nature and source of dirt or soiling material on a building must be identified to remove it in the gentlest means possible—that is, in the most effective and least harmful manner. Soot and

smoke, for example, require a different cleaning agent to remove than oil stains or metallic stains. Other common cleaning problems include biological growth such as mold or mildew, and organic matter such as the tendrils left on masonry after removal of ivy.

Masonry cleaning methods generally are divided into three major groups. Each has potential hazards that must be considered:

- **Water Cleaning:** Despite the fact that water-based methods are generally the most gentle, even they can be damaging to historic masonry. Before beginning a water cleaning project, it is important to make sure that all mortar joints are sound and that the building is watertight. Otherwise water can seep through the walls to the interior, resulting in rusting metal anchors and stained and ruined plaster.
- **Chemical Cleaning:** Since most chemical cleaning methods involve water, they have many of the potential problems of plain water cleaning. If not carefully chosen, chemical cleaners can react adversely with many types of masonry. Obviously, acidic cleaners should not be used on acid-sensitive materials; however, it is not always clear exactly what the composition is of any stone or other masonry material. For, this reason, testing the cleaner on an inconspicuous spot on the building is always necessary. While certain acid-based cleaners may be appropriate if used as directed on a particular type of masonry, if left too long or if not adequately rinsed from the masonry they can have a negative effect.
- **Abrasive Cleaning:** Generally, abrasive cleaning methods are not appropriate for use on historic masonry buildings. Abrasive cleaning methods are just that—abrasive. Grit blasters, grinders, and sanding discs all operate by abrading the dirt or paint off the surface of the masonry, rather than reacting with the dirt and the masonry which is how water and chemical methods work. Since the abrasives do not differentiate between the dirt and the masonry, they can also remove the outer surface of the masonry at the same time, and result in permanently damaging the masonry. Brick, architectural terra cotta, soft stone, detailed carvings, and polished surfaces, are especially susceptible to physical and aesthetic damage by abrasive methods.

Preservation Alliance of West Virginia recommends reading the preservation brief in its entirety and speaking with a professional prior to conducting any masonry repointing and/or facade cleaning. NPS Preservation Brief #2, Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings, can be accessed at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/2-repoint-mortar-joints.htm>. For further assistance, PAWV offers workshops in historic masonry to the owners of West

Virginia Endangered Properties. To organize a workshop, contact Lynn Stasick, Statewide Field Services Representative, at [lstasick@gmail.com](mailto:lstasick@gmail.com).

### ***Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings***

Sound energy improvement measures must take into consideration not only potential energy savings, but also the protection of the historic property's materials and features. This guidance is provided in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to ensure that the architectural integrity of the historic property is preserved. Achieving a successful retrofit project must balance the goals of energy efficiency with the least impact to the historic building. Planning must entail a holistic approach that considers the entire building envelope, its systems and components, its site and environment, and a careful evaluation of the effects of the measures undertaken. With careful planning, the energy efficiency of historic buildings can be optimized without negatively impacting their historic character and integrity.

One of the greatest effects on energy use is user behavior. Once an energy audit has established a baseline for the current energy use in a building, operational changes should be identified to control how and when the building is used to minimize the use of energy-consuming equipment. The following changes are recommended to reduce heating and cooling costs:

- Install programmable thermostats
- Close off rooms that are not in use and adjust the temperature in those rooms
- Do not air condition rooms that do not need to be air conditioned, thereby reducing the thermal envelope
- Use insulated shades and curtains to control heat gain and loss through windows
- Use operable windows, shutters, awnings and vents as originally intended to control temperature and ventilation
- Take advantage of natural light
- Install compact fluorescent lights (CFL) and light-emitting diode (LED) lights
- Install motion sensors and timers for lighting and local ventilation, such as bathroom exhaust fans
- Reduce "phantom" electricity loads by turning equipment off when not in use
- Clean and service mechanical equipment regularly

The following list includes the most common measures proposed to improve the thermal performance of an existing building with minimal alteration:

- Reduce air leakage
- Add attic insulation
- Install storm windows
- Insulate basements and crawlspaces

- Seal and insulate ducts and pipes
- Weather strip doors and add storm doors
- Add awnings and shading devices where appropriate

For more information, NPS Preservation Brief #3, Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings, can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/3-improve-energy-efficiency.htm>

***Funding a Historic Building Rehabilitation:***

Although obtaining funding for a historic building rehabilitation is not covered in the NPS Preservation Briefs, it is vital step in the rehabilitation process. A few possibilities for funding include federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits, state historic preservation development grants, and federal energy efficient tax deductions. There are two separate **Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits**—a 20 percent tax credit of the capital investment in historic buildings listed on the National Register as an individual or contributing property, and a 10 percent credit of the capital investment in historic buildings placed in service before 1936 but not listed on the National Register. A **West Virginia Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit** for 10 percent of the capital investment in historic buildings listed on the National Register is also available. In addition, there is a **West Virginia Historic Preservation Development Grant**, which can be used for the preservation, protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and/or stabilization of resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This includes contributing properties of a historic district. For more information on historic rehabilitation tax credits or the development grant, contact the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office at 304-558-0240.

These tax credits and grants can be used in combination with the **Energy-Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction**. This deduction can be taken by a commercial property owner that installs (1) high efficiency interior lighting; (2) efficient building envelopes; or (3) efficient heating, cooling, ventilation (HVAC), or hot water systems. A tax deduction of \$1.80 per square foot is available to those properties that are able to reduce their energy and power cost by 50 percent. A deduction of \$0.60 per square foot is available to those that install energy-efficient systems but are not able to reduce their energy and power cost by 50 percent. Since information regarding tax incentives is subject to change, contact an accountant or attorney to discuss your eligibility.

***The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings: Repair, Replacement and New Design***

Awnings provided natural climate control in an age before air conditioning and tinted glass. They are still very relevant to the function and form of historic buildings. By blocking out the sun's rays while admitting daylight and allowing air to circulate between interior and exterior,

they are remarkably efficient and cost effective. Awnings permit window-shopping on rainy days and protect window displays from fading due to sunlight. On the primary facade and near eye level, they are central to a building's appearance.

This Preservation Brief provides historical background information about diverse awning applications in the United States; suggests ways that historic awnings can best be maintained, repaired, and preserved; and recommends the varying circumstances in which replacement in kind, or new awning design may be appropriate for historic buildings. NPS Preservation Brief #44, *The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings: Repair, Replacement, and New Design*, can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/44-awnings.htm>.

### ***Roofing for Historic Buildings***

A weather-tight roof is basic in the preservation of a structure, regardless of its age, size, or design. A failing roof will permit the accelerated deterioration of historic building materials—masonry, wood, plaster, paint—and will cause general disintegration of the basic structure. Furthermore, there is an urgency involved in repairing a leaky roof since such repair costs will quickly become prohibitive. Although such action is desirable as soon as a failure is discovered, temporary patching methods should be carefully chosen to prevent inadvertent damage to sound or historic roofing materials and related features. Then a complete internal and external inspection of the roof should be planned to determine all the causes of failure and to identify the alternatives for repair or replacement of the roofing. NPS Preservation Brief #4, *Roofing for Historic Buildings*, can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/4-roofing.htm>

### ***Temporary Stabilization: Mothballing Historic Buildings***

When funding is tight and all means of finding a productive use for a historic building have been exhausted or when funds are not currently available to put a deteriorating structure into a useable condition, it may be necessary to close up the building temporarily to protect it from the weather as well as to secure it from vandalism. Temporary stabilization or "mothballing" with materials, such as plywood and building paper, can protect the roof of a project until it can be properly repaired or replaced. A simple covering of exterior plywood or roll roofing might provide adequate protection, but any temporary covering should be applied with caution. One should be careful not to overload the roof structure, or to damage or destroy historic evidence or fabric that might be incorporated into a new roof at a later date. In this sense, repairs with caulking or bituminous patching compounds should be recognized as potentially harmful, since they are difficult to remove, and at their best, are very temporary. If a vacant property has been condemned or declared unsafe by building officials, mothballing can help to stabilize the property instead of demolition.

NPS Preservation Brief #31, Mothballing Historic Buildings, can be accessed at the following: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/31-mothballing.htm>. In addition, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia provides guidance on mothballing historic buildings. For more information, contact Lynn Stasick, Statewide Field Services Representative, at [lstasick@gmail.com](mailto:lstasick@gmail.com).

### ***The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows***

The windows on many historic buildings are an important aspect of the architectural character of those buildings. Their design, craftsmanship, or other qualities may make them worthy of preservation. This is self-evident for ornamental windows, but it can be equally true for warehouses or factories where the windows may be the most dominant visual element of an otherwise plain building. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the accompanying guidelines, call for respecting the significance of original materials and features, repairing and retaining them wherever possible, and when necessary, replacing them in kind. NPS Preservation Brief #9, The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows, can be accessed at the following: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/9-wooden-windows.htm>. In addition, Preservation Alliance of West Virginia offers workshops in rehabilitating historic wooden windows for owners of West Virginia Endangered Properties. To organize a workshop, contact Lynn Stasick, Statewide Field Services Representative, at [lstasick@gmail.com](mailto:lstasick@gmail.com).

### ***Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts***

The storefront is the most important architectural feature of many historic commercial buildings. It also plays a crucial role in a store's advertising and merchandising strategy to draw customers and increase business. Not surprisingly, the storefront has become the feature most commonly altered in a historic commercial building. In the process, these alterations may have completely changed or destroyed a building's distinguishing architectural features that make up its historic character.

The following are a few ideas for rehabilitating historic storefronts while maintaining a building's historic character:

1. **Become familiar with the style** of your building and the role of the storefront in the overall design. Avoid stock "lumberyard colonial" detailing such as coach lanterns, mansard overhangings, wood shakes, non-operable shutters and small paned windows, except where they existed historically.
2. **Preserve the storefront's character** even though there is a new use on the interior. If less exposed window area is desirable, consider the use of interior blinds and insulating curtains rather than altering the existing historic fabric.



3. **Avoid the use of materials that were unavailable when the storefront was constructed.** This includes vinyl and aluminum siding, anodized aluminum, mirrored or tinted glass, artificial stone, and brick veneer.
4. **Choose paint colors based on the building's historical appearance.** In general, do not coat surfaces that have never been painted. Contrasting colors may be appropriate for 19th century storefronts, but avoid too many different colors on a single facade.

For additional information, NPS Preservation Brief #11, Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts, can be accessed at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/11-storefronts.htm>

***Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character***

Every old building is unique, with its own identity and its own distinctive character. Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic building. Character-defining elements include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. The purpose of NPS Preservation Brief #17 is to help the owner or the architect identify those features or elements that give the building its visual character and that should be taken into account in order to preserve them to the maximum extent possible.

Using the three-step approach outlined in this Brief, property owners can conduct a walk through and identify the exterior and interior elements and features that help define the visual character of their building. The property owner should make every effort to preserve these elements as their loss or alteration would diminish or destroy the historic character of their building. For additional information, NPS Preservation Brief #17, Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character, can be accessed at the following: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm>.

## **CASE STUDIES:**

### **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN WEST VIRGINIA**

All property and business owners in the Beckley Courthouse Square Historic District are encouraged to join the recently formed Downtown Beckley Business Association. Learn more through their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DowntownBeckley>. The Downtown Beckley Business Association's mission is to meet the needs of investors in the historic district. To assist property owners within the district and encourage downtown revitalization, the association has begun hosting a number of educational programs, which are free and open to the public. They have also increased foot traffic downtown with the inception of the bi-monthly Neville Street Market. In addition to the great work accomplished by the Downtown Beckley Business Association, the historic district would greatly benefit from the following:

#### ***The Main Street Four-Point Approach***

The Main Street Four Point Approach is an economic development tool established by the National Main Street Center, a national organization committed to historic preservation-based community revitalization. The Four Point Approach helps communities leverage local assets to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. Although tailored to communities with a Main Street program, the following can assist Beckley in its revitalization. A number of West Virginia communities have successfully employed the approach to revitalize their historic districts.

**Organization** means getting everyone working towards common goals. The formula of a volunteer-driven program and an organizational structure of board and committees assisting professional management can ease the difficult work of building consensus and cooperation among the varied groups that have a stake in the district. The Downtown Beckley Business Association has stepped up to fill this organizational role.

**Promotion** takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will renew community pride and tell your story to the surrounding region. Promotions communicate your commercial district's unique characteristics, its cultural traditions, architecture, and history and activities to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, and visitors. The Neville Street Market is a form of promotion.

**Design** means getting downtown into top physical shape, preserving historic character, and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors. An inviting atmosphere can be created with signage, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art,

landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials. Popular design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the district's physical appearance through the rehabilitation of historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, educating business and property owners about design quality, and long-term planning.

Through **economic restructuring**, a community's existing economic assets can be strengthened while diversifying its economic base. Successful communities accomplish this by evaluating how to retain and expand successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Many downtowns also achieve success through creative reuse of historic properties. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. The goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers while maintaining the community's historic character.

Below we will discuss the transformation of three West Virginia communities that have followed the Main Street Four Point Approach — Charleston's East End, Fairmont, and Morgantown — and the programs each community has implemented that may also work well in Beckley.

### **Charleston's East End**

The most historic and diverse business corridor in Charleston, the East End has experienced a complete resurgence over the past ten years thanks in large part to East End Main Street (EEMS). EEMS took a once blighted, avoided district known for crime and vacant storefronts and transformed it into a thriving destination for residents, businesses, and tourists. EEMS is an affiliate program of the newly formed citywide organization Charleston Main Streets, a private 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization focused on the economic development of Charleston's East End and West Side. The organization receives generous contributions from the City of Charleston and the Charleston Urban Renewal Authority to assist in carrying out economic development and commercial revitalization initiatives.

Formed in 2002 and accredited through Main Street West Virginia and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, East End Main Street is a volunteer-driven program devoted to the revitalization and historic preservation of the historic East End of Charleston. Through various projects and programs, EEMS has been the impetus for rehabilitation projects, new construction, and public spaces that continue to create a strong neighborhood and thriving commercial district.

With East End Main Street leading the charge, the East End accomplished the following in 2014:

- 76 rehabilitation projects completed with investment of **\$4,208,157**
- 3 buildings going “green”
- 21,935 promotions event attendance
- **\$4,208,157** total reinvestment
- **4,870** volunteer hours contributed

In conjunction with the Main Street Four Point Approach, East End Main Street has a number of creative programs that have made these impressive accomplishments possible. When demolition of a historic building is unavoidable, EEMS recycles historic architectural salvage back into the community through a program dubbed **LemonAID**. Money from the sale of these historic items goes back to EEMS for design and public art initiatives. EEMS also provides free **interior design consultation services** to East End businesses through a partnership with the University of Charleston Interior Design Department and Contemporary Galleries. In addition, EEMS sponsors a number of public art initiatives and events, such as the East End Bazaar. The Downtown Beckley Business Association might consider a similar program in conjunction with West Virginia University when WVU classes begin on the former Mountain State University campus in the Fall of 2016.

### **Fairmont**

After decades of decline, Fairmont is building itself back up thanks in large part to the work of Main Street Fairmont (MSF). When MSF was founded in 1993, Fairmont had a high unemployment rate, a mass exodus of major employers, and a 15% drop in population. With over 20 years of revitalization work, Fairmont’s population is growing and the downtown is retaining current businesses and attracting new businesses.

With Main Street Fairmont leading the charge, Fairmont accomplished the following in 2014:

- 26 new jobs created
- 3 new businesses opened
- 6 rehabilitation projects completed with investment of \$158,156
- \$387,000 in building sales
- \$5,500 invested in new signs
- 5 public improvement projects completed with investment of \$1,303,800
- 1 new construction project completed with investment of \$2,083,500
- 12,250 promotions event attendance
- \$2,634,156 total private investment
- \$3,937,956 total reinvestment
- 2,117 volunteer hours contributed

In conjunction with the Main Street Four Point Approach, Main Street Fairmont has a number of creative initiatives that have made these impressive accomplishments possible. In 2014, MSF held **Upstairs Downtown**, which brought preservation consultants to Fairmont for a one-day workshop on redeveloping the vacant upper floors of downtown properties. During the same year, MSF held a **Downtown Developers' Tour**. This program brought property and real estate developers to Fairmont to tour a selection of vacant buildings and learn about the financial benefits of redeveloping historic buildings. Although none of the outside developers who took part in the tour have purchased or been involved in the rehabilitation of any downtown buildings, the tour was still a success because it renewed interest in the redevelopment of Fairmont's buildings within the community.

Through the Downtown Developers' Tour, MSF realized that Fairmont must be able to support development from within before relying on outside developers to invest in its buildings. Putting that theory to the test, MSF began redeveloping two historic properties in downtown Fairmont—the old Fairmont Firehouse and the Citizens Building. The rehabilitation of the old Fairmont Firehouse is a joint project between MSF and the City of Fairmont. Once completed, the building will become the Firehouse Arts Center, home to an art supply store and artists' studios. The Citizens Building is being undertaken solely by MSF with funding from the WV Affordable Housing Trust and the National Community Investment Fund. A local bank is providing the remainder of the financing to MSF through a loan. Once completed, the Citizens Building will house two two-bedroom affordable housing units, a satellite office for Senator Joe Manchin, and a business incubator. The building is expected to generate a total of \$56,000 annually.

Both the Firehouse Arts Center and the Citizens Building have spurred further redevelopment in Fairmont. Four downtown buildings are currently being redeveloped by community members. Thanks to this redevelopment spree, downtown Fairmont has transformed from a buyer's market to a seller's market—there is no longer enough move-in ready space for the number of businesses that would like to relocate downtown. In addition, MSF has received inquiries from Pittsburgh-based developers now interested in downtown Fairmont.

### **Morgantown**

Main Street Morgantown (MSM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the continued revitalization of downtown Morgantown and the Historic Wharf District. Downtown Morgantown is an attractive, clean, safe center of commerce, government and education. Since its founding in 1984, MSM has been involved in the creation of 1,300 new jobs, the opening of more than 200 new businesses and over \$126 million dollars in investments. Main Street Morgantown is a “grassroots” organization which works primarily in the areas of historic preservation and economic development.

With Main Street Morgantown leading the charge, Morgantown accomplished the following in 2014:

- 177 full-time jobs created
- 15 new businesses created
- 80 rehabilitation projects completed with investment of \$2,422,353
- \$2,475 invested in new signs
- 4 public improvement projects completed with investment of \$261,336
- 4 new construction projects completed with investment of \$2,765,905
- 8,400 promotions event attendance
- \$3,010,733 total private investment
- \$3,272,069 total reinvestment
- 1,450 volunteer hours contributed

A selection of Main Street Morgantown's recent initiatives include a Downtown Residential Feasibility Analysis and a Downtown Retail Feasibility Analysis. The **Downtown Residential Feasibility Analysis** was conducted to analyze the potential for residential real estate acquisition and development. As a result of the study, Main Street Morgantown now has an inventory of available development sites, an assessment of the market feasibility for downtown housing, and an implementation plan for MSM and the City of Morgantown for the recruitment of large-scale, mixed-use housing. The **Downtown Retail Feasibility Analysis** is a similar project that evaluated the existing retail climate of downtown Morgantown and identified potential additional retail needs. Both of these projects were accomplished through Flex-E Grant funding. For more information about the Flex-E Grant, call the West Virginia Development Office at (800) 982-3386 or (304) 558-2234, or visit:

<http://www.wvcommerce.org/people/communityresources/financialresources/flexegrant/default.aspx>.

In order to spur similar revitalization, Beckley should consider applying to become a West Virginia ON TRAC community. Completion of the two-year ON TRAC program is the first step to becoming a certified Main Street community. ON TRAC program participants receive the following support from Main Street West Virginia:

- Training on the National Main Streets Center's Four-Point Approach
- An assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Access to an online library of databases and resources, such as e-clips, videos and articles
- Attendance to Main Street training workshops
- Action-planning services
- Telephone consultation

- Scholarship and grant information
- Technical design visit(s)
- Participation in the mentoring program

For more information, contact Nikki Williams, WV ON TRAC Coordinator at 304-957-2028 or [mary.n.williams@wv.gov](mailto:mary.n.williams@wv.gov). Or visit:

[http://www.wvcommerce.org/\(S\(4qgcimnnqii2d045v2lnnc45\)\)/people/communityresources/communityrevitalization/ontrac/default.aspx](http://www.wvcommerce.org/(S(4qgcimnnqii2d045v2lnnc45))/people/communityresources/communityrevitalization/ontrac/default.aspx).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In answer to the immediate threat of removal from the National Register, several business and property owners have taken steps to protect the district and encourage revitalization. Significantly, the formation of the Downtown Beckley Business Association has been an integral part of this process, and its workshops have presented downtown investors with excellent opportunities that allow them to benefit from their location within a historic district.

While there has been progress in the private sector since the district's selection as an Endangered Property in March, additional steps must be taken to prevent the district from being removed from the National Register and to help the district become a dynamic center of culture, commerce, and community. Much of this effort depends on the willingness of the city's historic landmark commission to uphold its governance.

We would remind members of the commission that the standards and statutes that established — and which now direct the commission — are not unique or accepted without precedence. They were enacted based on established principles and within the bounds of state and federal statutes, and much case law and reference material exists to help the commission direct its governance. Individually and as a body, members are responsible for continually educating themselves regarding the authority with which they have been entrusted.

Specifically, the Preservation Alliance advises that the following steps be taken to preserve the district and steer it away from a removal from the National Register.

- To enforce its by-laws, the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission must hold regularly scheduled and advertised monthly public meetings to review proposals for any and all exterior changes to public and private properties within the district.
- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission is required to issue or deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for any proposed change in the district based on its “Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and, as referenced in its guidelines, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Each issue or denial of a certificate should cite the passage or passages in the standards or guidelines upon which the decision was based.
- Members of the Beckley Historic Landmark Commission are municipal officials and must attend all regularly-scheduled meetings of the commission. Members not able to perform their duties should resign their commission.



- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission should engage the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, the U.S Department of the Interior, and other legal, architectural, and professional advisory sources and authorities for new commission member and returning commission member training and for guidance in planning and project implementation.
- The Beckley Historic Landmark Commission should ensure the city zoning office and its staff and all members of the city government who may be engaged in the district and in permitting work therein have reviewed the “Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and organize staff and city government to attend the monthly landmark commission meetings.
- The owners or managers of public and private properties in the district should consider engaging the services of architects or qualified professionals in the field of historical rehabilitation before proposing work on a property within the district. Each should request and keep a copy of the “Architectural Review Program & Summary of Guidelines” and become familiar with construction and rehabilitation issues, such as those provided online by the National Park Service through its “Preservation Briefs.”
- The owners and managers of properties in the district should take all steps necessary to satisfy the legal requirements of owning and developing property in the historic district and to familiarize themselves with the local, state, and federal statutes that protect and influence governance in the district.
- The Downtown Beckley Business Association should continue its work by using the Main Street Four-Point Approach as a model for the development of its organization and continue to engage the West Virginia Department of Commerce, which supports the development of downtown commercial historic districts.
- The Downtown Beckley Business Association should apply to become a West Virginia ON TRAC organization, the predecessor for a West Virginia Main Street organization.

## **APPENDIX A: Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings**

Rehabilitation projects must meet the following Standards, as interpreted by the National Park Service, to qualify as “certified rehabilitations” eligible for the 20% rehabilitation tax credit. The Standards are applied to projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The Standards apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes. They apply to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building’s site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

**CITY OF BECKLEY**  
**HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION**  
**ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PROGRAM**  
**AND SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES**

# CITY OF BECKLEY HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION

## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PROGRAM AND SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

### 1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of these Architectural Guidelines is to assure that the exterior remodeling of existing buildings and land areas and the construction of new buildings in the Project Area takes place in a way that is harmonious with other buildings in the area and with overall redevelopment plans.

This process represents a community effort to revitalize the City, particularly its commercial areas, in a way that respects the existing cityscape and stresses the quality and character of architectural heritage. It is a conscious effort to reduce clutter and to prevent haphazard changes to buildings and signs. Consideration for the overall environment, not just the single storefront, is of paramount concern.

Design review provides the method by which merchants, property owners and citizens can work with City agencies to respond to this concern and thereby produce an attractive environment.

To produce a good commercial facade renovation, it is vital to recognize that storefront and other exterior changes affect both the individual building and the overall streetscape. Facades, the exterior building walls, form the edge between the shops and the sidewalk. The display windows and entrances to each storefront, in combination with street trees, benches, lighting, and sidewalk paving, form the streetscape. The qualities and characteristics of the building establish the shopping district as a recognizable and special place. Renovation efforts that are compatible which enhance this streetscape can stabilize and strengthen property values. Consequently, thoughtful design can be a good investment in both your property and in the community.

The Design Review Standards apply to all changes <sup>text</sup> subject to design review and are used to review proposals. They are not inflexible requirements, but are general principles that can be met in a variety of ways.

These criteria are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation, or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles that can result in creative solutions that will develop a satisfactory visual appearance within the City, preserve taxable values, and promote the public health, safety, and welfare.

Before undertaking any improvements in the facade of an older commercial building, the owner should closely examine the building to determine the building's good characteristics and to spot any later alterations that may have changed the building's original character. If no photographic or other documentation can be found to document a building's former appearance, the next step

should be to compare the building to nearby buildings of similar age and style. In addition to these common sense steps, this guide has included in the following pages some guidelines that pertain in more specific problems in the renovation or restoration of an older commercial building.

The following summary of Historic and Architectural Guidelines is provided as a framework for understanding the key design elements in the rehabilitation or new construction of buildings in the downtown area. The overall objective is to promote a downtown character which is unique and appropriate to the history of the City.

The process of review and certification of exterior remodeling is also included in this text as an important adjunct to the design issue.

## **2. AREA OF APPLICABILITY**

The Renewal Plan shall use these City of Beckley Historical Landmark Commission Guidelines (hereafter referred to as: H. L. C.)

The Guidelines shall apply to any construction, reconstruction, restoration, or alteration of any building within the designated Courthouse Square, as defined in the previous text.

## **3. ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The H. L. C. shall be designated to review all applications for Certifications of Appropriateness for reconstruction, restoration, and alteration of exteriors within the Courthouse Square (B-3 Zone). Any new construction within the said district will remain under the review and approval process of the City of Beckley Code Enforcement Department.

## **4. CERTIFICATION OF APPROPRIATENESS**

The Certification of Appropriateness form can be obtained at the Code Enforcement Department, lower level, Municipal Building, 409 South Kanawha Street.

No structure shall be reconstructed, restored, or altered, without a Certification of Appropriateness first being approved from the H. L. C., established under the provisions of these Guidelines. This requirement applies to all property located in the Courthouse Square. This requirement shall not apply to interior remodeling of above the ground floor. The requirement does apply to murals and other supergraphics that may be painted or erected on the outside of a building. The determination of appropriateness shall consider economic feasibility and tenant needs, as well as architectural guidelines and standards.

## **5. SCHEMATIC PLANS**

Schematic plans drawn to scale, showing the exterior of the proposed construction work, shall be submitted to the H. L. C. The Commission has adopted uniform rules requiring information

necessary to evaluate an application for Certification of Appropriateness. Those are as follows:

Description of Function to include:

Photograph of Existing Facade

Elevations to Scale and Plans of Facade showing:

Signage

Materials List

Lighting

Colors (actual samples)

Texture

Proposed Schedule of Construction

Intended use of the building

Application to be submitted *1 week prior to the H. L. C. meeting.*

The Commission will use the following Check list to evaluate for appropriateness:

Major Items Design Standards Committee should Rule on:

PROPORTIONS: SCALE

ADVERTISING: SIGNAGE - SIZE, LOCATION, DESIGN COLOR TEXTURE,  
LIGHTING, AND MATERIALS.

HERITAGE: MAINTAIN CHARACTER AND HISTORY OF BUILDINGS AND  
THE AREA OR ACHIEVE HARMONY WITH SURROUNDING  
FACADES

DETAILING:

MATERIALS:

AWNINGS:

EXTERIOR LIGHTING:

ENTRIES:

EGRESS:

TEXTURE:

COLOR:

MAINTENANCE:

## 6. SUMMARY OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

Detailed information on applicable Historic and Architectural Guidelines is available through the H. L. C. Guidelines have been developed to support the City's Main Street Program and to support the Secretary of the Interiors "Standards for Rehabilitation". Those standards are included by reference as a part of this series of Guidelines. The following is a summary of major items addressed.

### A. FRONT FACADE

1. Original overall proportions of the building shall be retained.
  - Stories shall not be added or removed from the original building.
  - Portions of the original front facade shall not be demolished.
2. Existing original window and door openings will be retained.
  - Existing original openings will be retained.
  - New opening will not be created.
3. Existing architectural details are to be restored and repaired when possible.
  - Lintels, sills, cornices, downspouts, brackets, moldings, and other architectural appointments.
4. Existing roof pitches are to be maintained when visible from the street.
  - Existing dormers, chimneys, and other roof appointments are to be restored and repaired when possible.

### B. STOREFRONTS

Traditional storefronts usually fit within a well-defined area in the building's facade. This area was bounded by a wall on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom, and the second floor on top. Many storefront alterations have resulted in the storefront extending across the facade of the building to cover the masonry supported walls or cast-iron pilaster which provided the original



buildings with its visual and structural support. Inappropriate storefront alterations of the type give the new storefront a pasted on appearance.

In most buildings that have been altered, the storefront is generally the portion of the building which has suffered the most change. If no documentation is available concerning a storefront's original appearance, or if a building owner does not wish to restore his storefront to its former appearance, then the following guidelines should help property owners arrive at a satisfactory design solution to improve their altered storefront.

SEE DIAGRAM

1. Inappropriately designed or scaled storefronts are to be replaced with new storefronts which are appropriately designed with respect to the original architectural style of the buildings. It is the intent of these guidelines to match the original storefront as it originally appeared on the front of each facade.
  - Scale, materials, proportions, color, and relative quantity of window openings shall be considered when designing the new storefronts.
2. Non-original storefronts which have their own unique or historic character may be repaired and retained when the overall design is consistent and respectful of the character of the adjacent architecture. H. L. C. shall have the authority to determine those designs which are consistent and respectful regarding adjacent architecture.
3. In repairing and replacing storefronts, "imitation historic" appointments will not be used.
  - "Lumber Yard Colonial" detailing such as coach lanterns, and inappropriately scaled moldings and window openings will be avoided.
4. The storefront shall be designed with large quantities of clear glass.
  - Approximately 75 percent (75%) of the storefront area should be constructed with clear transparent glass.
  - When less window area is desired due to new interior uses, blinds and interior curtains shall be used.
5. Storefronts shall be located in the plane of the front facade.
  - Storefronts which have major projections beyond the front facade of the building are inappropriate.
  - Storefronts which are deeply recessed from the front plane of the building are also inappropriate.
  - The entry to the building should, however, be slightly recessed to provide sheltered/protected entry to the building.

STORIES SHOULD NOT BE ADDED OR REMOVED



RESTORE  
EXISTING  
DETAILS

EXISTING OPENINGS  
SHOULD BE  
RETAINED

FRONT FACADE

6. Appropriate materials shall be selected to repair and replace storefronts.

--New materials such as vinyl and aluminum siding shall not be used.

--Where aluminum window frames are used to replace those that were originally wood, exterior surfaces shall be painted. Clear anodized aluminum will not be used. If it currently exists, it shall be painted.

--Storefront glass shall be clear or lightly tinted. Mirrored or heavily shaded glass will not be used.

7. When a building sign is used in the storefront, it shall not be an appendage, but integral with the overall design.

--Signs on the storefront cornice are appropriate.

--Signs painted on windows are also appropriate.

8. Colors should be selected based on the individual building's historic appearance.

--Materials such as brick and stone which were not painted will not be painted, unless large expanses of brick or stone cannot be repaired, then painting may be allowed by the H. L. C. The Committee will have the authority to recommend or reject painting of facades.

--Whenever possible, original photographs shall be used to determine colors and/or shades of color of the original design.

--In general, simple patterns of one or two soft colors were used in early 20th Century buildings.

9. The proportions of the elements of the storefront should be sensitive to the overall design of the adjacent buildings as well as the original storefront.

--Vertical proportions are much more common than horizontal.

--Proportions of the storefront cornice, the window elements, and the door openings are all important considerations, and these individual elements were often constructed of similar proportions.

SEE DIAGRAM

10. Storefronts will not be provided on buildings, or portions of buildings, that did not originally contain storefront elements.

--Major municipal buildings often had first floor designs that were similar to the upper floors; storefronts will not be added to this type of building.

OPENING  
CUT INTO  
PLANE OF  
WALL

SIDE WALL  
FORMS  
EDGE

SIGNS ON  
WINDOWS  
OR DOORS



CORNICE OFTEN  
WITH SIGN

TRANSOM  
GLASS OR  
WOOD

WINDOW—  
LARGE GLASS  
AREA

SPANDREL PANEL—  
WOOD, GLASS,  
OR METAL

FRONT DOOR(S)  
WITH GLASS PANELS

# ELEMENTS OF A TRADITIONAL STOREFRONT

11. Storefronts is almost exclusively confined to the first floor of the building.

--Storefronts shall never be enlarged to encompass additional floors, unless it can be determined that this was the original design of the building.

12. Design of the modern buildings existing in the historic area requires special attention.

--Most of the guidelines illustrated above are not directly applicable to this type of building.

### C. SIDE AND REAR FACADES

1. The side facade of corner buildings which face two principal streets or major pedestrian alleyways on permanently maintained public open spaces should be designed as a front facade. The guidelines listed under the section entitled Front Facade will be reviewed in this instance.

2. On buildings in which the side facade faces a service alley or minor pedestrianway. More freedom exists in rehabilitation. The guidelines in this section apply to these facades as well as rear facades. These guidelines are designed to provide the building owner with an opportunity for altering the building to meet the changing needs and requirements of contemporary uses.

3. New additions may be made to the existing building.

--New additions shall be designed with massings, materials, and scale sensitive to the original building.

4. Portions of the original building or additions may be removed in order to accommodate new additions which better meet the present building objectives.

--Dilapidated structures or portions of structures must be restored or removed.

5. Mechanical equipment, television antennas, ventilation stacks, and other modern conveniences may be visible on the rear or side facade of the building. However, to the greatest extent possible, these elements should be integrated into the overall design.

### D. WINDOWS, WINDOW OPENINGS, AND DOORS

Among the most important architectural elements which lend character to a commercial building are its windows and doors. Original shopfronts were designed to contain large expanses of glass for the display of merchandise. Likewise many original storefront doors contained large single panes of glass that would allow pedestrians to view into the store. Windows on the upper stories of buildings often expressed much of the building's architectural style through the use of ornamental hood moldings, decorative lintels, keystones, etc. . . The size and placement of window and door openings are very important to the visual rhythm of a commercial block. The following guidelines should be considered before making improvements to windows and doors.

1. The window openings on the front facade of all buildings should be retained and provided with appropriately designed windows.

--New replacement windows or the existing windows shall be used.

--Replacement windows shall be made to fit the original openings. Minor infilling of openings (less than 1 to 1.5 inches) are permitted to allow the use of standard sized pre-manufactured windows.

--Large areas of glass in storefront windows shall not be divided inappropriately to the original design. The scale of glass area and proportion of their relationship to the original storefront shall be retained.

--Window and door openings will not be changed or covered by a false facade. If an original opening has been changed, open the blocked window or door to the intended height and width and install a window or door appropriate to the style of the building.

2. Windows used on the side and rear facades shall be of original size and proportion whenever practical.

--Infilling of openings to permit standard sized windows is permitted, but not encouraged.

--The design of windows used on the side and rear facades should complement those used on the front facade whenever possible.

3. Window and door styles should be similar to those originally used in the building.

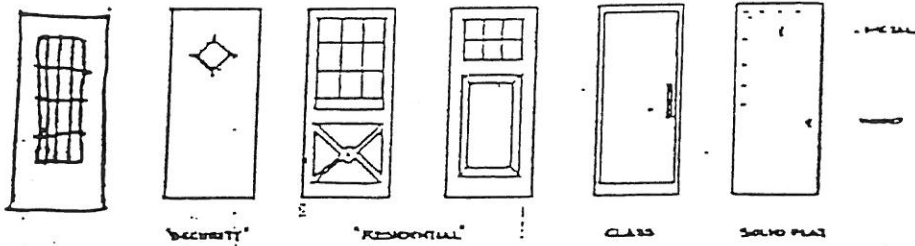
SEE DIAGRAM

--Replacement windows and doors in older commercial buildings should have wood frames and sash but if new aluminum windows or doors must be installed, avoid the clear unfinished aluminum frames. A medium or dark anodized finish is preferred to new aluminum frames and also for storm doors and windows. A replacement door shall be simple and not overly decorative.

--Many different types of muntin patterns are found in Beckley. These patterns (one over one, six over six, etc), are all permitted. The Commission will not allow divided light multiple muntin windows to be used unless historic photographs or existing conditions should direct the owners and designers to the appropriate choice.

4. The window materials used on the front facade shall be appropriate to the original design of the building.

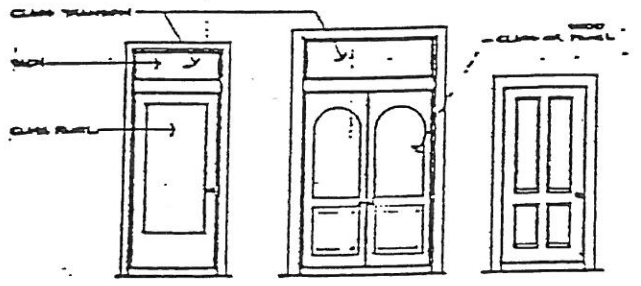
--The glass shall be clear or lightly tinted. Reflective or heavily tinted glass will be avoided.



SECURITY      RESIDENTIAL      GLASS      SOLID PANEL

TYPICAL UNDESIRABLE FRONT DOORS

UNACCEPTABLE



SINGLE      DOUBLE      RAISED PANEL/SOLID

TYPICAL DESIRABLE FRONT DOORS

ACCEPTABLE

--The window frames and sash shall be constructed of the material originally found in the building. The majority of buildings in Beckley were originally constructed with wood windows.

5. When storm windows are required on the front facade, they will be used on the interior rather than the exterior of the building.

--Insulated glass is recommended in lieu of storm windows.

6. "Metal burglar bars" or other types of metal screens and grates are not permitted on the exterior of front facades.

--If necessary, these devices can be constructed on the interior of the building.

7. The placement of windows within the wall plane of the facade shall be carefully considered.

--Deep window recesses or projections shall be avoided, when not part of the original design intent of the building.

--In general, most windows in the Beckley area were placed within four inches of the plane of the facade.

--Windows shall not be added to facade that were not part of the original design.

#### **E. BUILDING SIGNS**

1. Building signs including signs on awnings, shall be designed in a way which meets advertising requirements yet is respectful of the historic architectural character.

2. Building signs shall be integrated with the overall design of the building. They shall complement the architectural character of the building.

--Building signs were often an integral part of the design of the buildings. They shall complement the architectural character of the building.

--Larger municipal-type buildings did not originally have signs as part of the design. In rehabilitating this type of building, extreme caution should be used in placing signs as to not compromise the original historic character of the building.

3. Larger signs applied to the upper facade of the building will not be permitted.

--Signs are permitted but not encouraged to be on the pediment or building cornices.

--Most signs should be placed on the storefront portion of the building.



4. Pendant signs which hang from the upper facade of the building and protrude perpendicular to the face of the building are not permitted. If pendant signs are used, they are subject to the following guidelines:
  - Logos or business names only are permitted on pendant signs. These signs shall not contain other product advertisements.
  - Pendant signs shall not be internally lighted. Although most small businesses can function without a lighted sign (window display lights are usually sufficient), some businesses depend on evening traffic. Signs shall be lighted by an external source such as a small spotlight or floodlight.
  - Brackets which hang the sign shall be appropriate to the scale of the sign and to the building period when the building was originally constructed.
  - Size and positioning of pendant signs shall be carefully considered. Size and position shall interfere as little as possible with neighboring buildings.
5. Window signs painted on the inside of the window shall be at eye level and in proportion to the scale of the window (overly large letters will not be allowed).
6. Signs which cover great portions of the building facade or which obscure building details will not be permitted.
  - Large signs which cover large portions of the glass area of the storefront are also not permitted.
  - Signs are to be in proportion to other details of the facade.
7. The type styles used on signs shall be sensitive to the historic character of the area.
  - Extremely loud, bold, or exaggerated type faces will not be used. Simple and straight forward is best.
  - Imitation "historic" or "cute" type faces are not allowed.
  - The size of the type shall be selected to be visible from pedestrian rather than vehicular traffic. The original scale and character of the area was not vehicular.
  - Lettering shall be painted on rather than applied.
8. Color should be selected which are appropriate to the original historic character of the building and the area.
  - Loud fluorescent colors are inappropriate.

--Earth tones are acceptable and can be designed with subtle combination and variations of color:

--Contrasting colors may be appropriate but avoid too many colors on a single sign. Colors of adjacent signs may be considered.

9. New signs shall not be painted or otherwise applied to blank common walls, side facades, or rear facades. Retention of historic signs is, however, encouraged.

## F. ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

1. Architectural details are what distinguish the buildings of Beckley and establish their unique and important architectural heritage. Utmost care should be taken to rehabilitate the existing detail and ornament.

SEE DIAGRAM

2. Existing original architectural details and ornaments on the front facade of buildings will be retained and repaired.

--These elements shall be retained and repaired on the side and rear facades of buildings whenever possible.

--These elements include but are not limited to building cornices, storefront cornices and details, downspouts, columns, decorative masonry, window sills, heads and jams, etc. . .

3. When it is impossible to repair existing architectural elements on the front facade or if portions of the original features are missing, then those elements shall be replaced with similar and compatible elements.

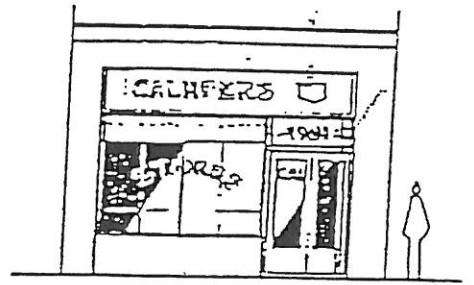
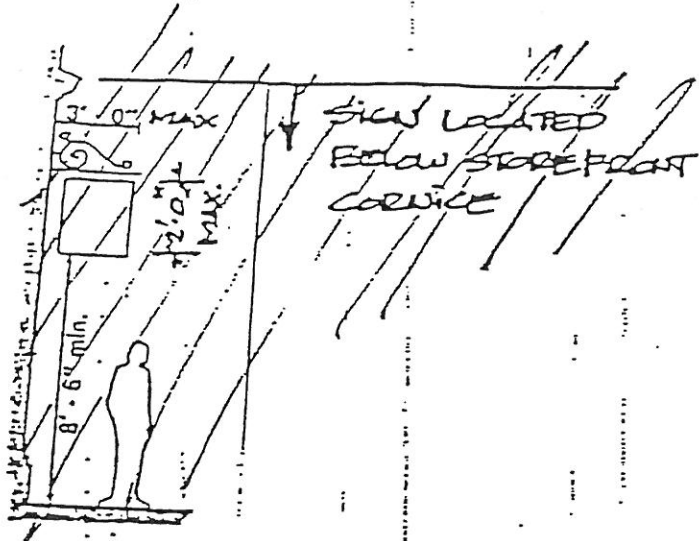
--When these features are replaced with "off-the-shelf" elements, extreme caution should be taken to ensure that these replacements are appropriate in scale, material, texture and overall design to the original.

--Imitation "historic" architectural appointments will not be allowed.

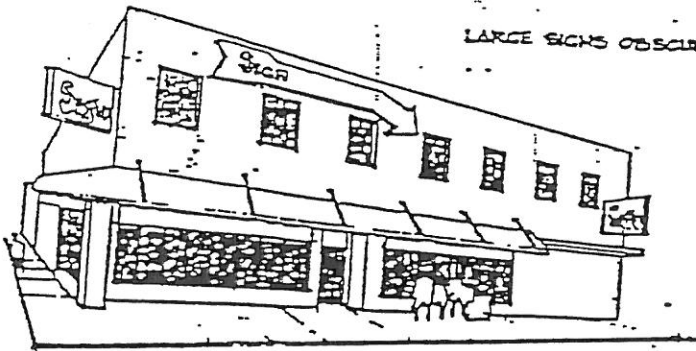
4. The building cornice is often the most distinguishing and most important element of the facade. The rehabilitation or replacement of the building cornice should receive careful design attention.

--When the original building cornice is deteriorated beyond repair or missing, it should be replaced with a newly designed cornice appropriate in scale, material, proportion and accuracy of detail. The design shall be based on the original building and the original cornice.

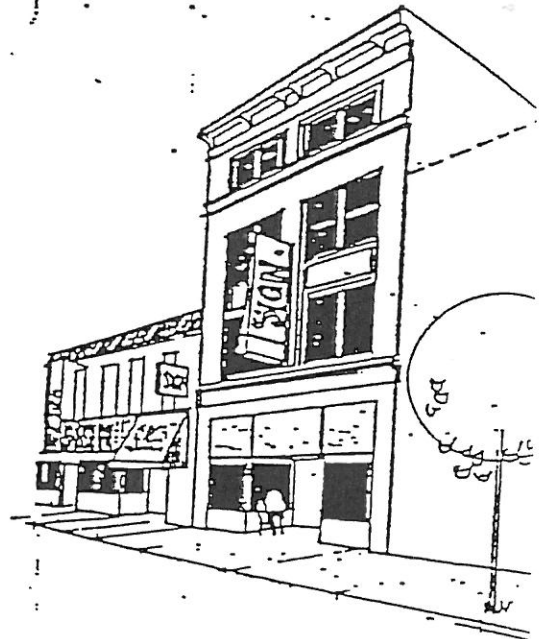
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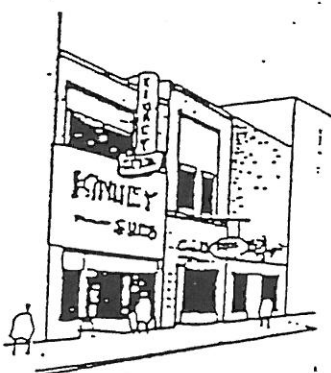
ACCEPTABLE STOREFRONT SIGN PLACEMENTS



LARGE SIGNS OBSCURE BUILDING DETAILS



STOREFRONT SIGNAGE SHOULD NOT BE OVERSIZED OR BE AN APPENDAGE



SIGNS WHICH DO NOT REFLECT THE SCALE OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING

## **B. BRICK AND STONE NATURAL SURFACES**

1. The restoration of brick and stone surfaces is of paramount importance. The character and warmth of these natural materials is a major component of the quality of the original urban fabric.
2. All existing brick and stone surfaces and details on the front facade of the building shall be cleaned, repaired and preserved.
  - Cleaning of surfaces shall be accomplished by the gentlest means possible which accomplishes the task at hand.
  - Sandblasting of natural masonry surfaces will not be allowed at any time.
  - Water under pressure, steam and various types of chemical cleaners are acceptable means of cleaning natural surfaces; however, the appropriate choice requires study of the individual circumstance and the advise of professional architects and/or contractors.
  - Extreme care shall be taken to avoid damaging underlying surfaces in the process of cleaning.
3. All non-original existing surfaces such as stucco, aluminum panels, screens, glazed brick and paint on the front facade shall be removed. Remodeled storefronts often contain several different materials such as aluminum, fake brick, wood shingles and plastic which do not complement each other or the materials present in the upper facade. The materials used in a remodeled storefront also shall be compatible with the materials present on the exterior of nearby buildings.
  - Underlying brick and stone surfaces shall be repaired as required.
  - Care shall be taken during the removal of these surfaces to avoid damaging the original brick or stone.
4. If it can be determined by visual inspection or historic photographs that the original masonry surfaces were painted, then this paint should not be removed.
  - It should be noted, however, that the majority of brick and stone buildings in Beckley were not originally painted.
  - Buildings which were not originally painted will not be painted.
  - The removal of paint on masonry surfaces which were originally painted increases the probability of damaging the original surfaces.
5. Repairs to existing masonry work should be done with materials similar in size, shape, color and bonding pattern to the original materials.

--Efforts should be undertaken to preserve the original materials to the maximum degree possible.

--Where it is necessary to provide replacement materials, scrap and salvage yards should be visited to find materials similar to the original. In most instances, it is not possible to exactly match historic brick with contemporary products.

6. Masonry walls should be repointed as necessary.

--Old, soft, weak and deteriorated mortar should be removed and new mortar should be placed in the joints.

--The new mortar used in this repointing shall match as closely as possible the color, texture, strength and joint technique that exists in the original wall.

7. Other wall refinishing techniques are permitted on the side and rear facade of the building. When it is not economically feasible to repair underlying masonry surfaces, painting these surfaces is an acceptable means of repair.

--Rear and side facades can be painted if it is not economically feasible to clean, repair and repoint the underlying masonry surface.

--Stucco is less desirable, but may be used to repair side and rear facades if existing walls are severely deteriorated or in need of substantial quantities of replacement masonry.

#### **H. EQUIPMENT, UTILITIES AND MACHINERY**

1. These guidelines are to assist the owner and designed in minimizing the visual impact of modern building equipment on the original historic character of the building.

2. Externally placed window air conditioning units will not be used on the front facades of buildings. Should economic incentives for facade renovation become available from the private or public sectors, the cost of central air conditioning shall be allowed as a legitimate facade improvement.

3. Power or telephone utility lines shall not be draped across the front or side facades of buildings.

4. All types of equipment and contemporary devices shall not be visible on the front facade of buildings. Should such equipment be required for operation of the business, applicant desiring to retain such equipment shall be required to present alternative treatments for screening such equipment to the Committee for approval. Should economic incentives for facade renovation become available from the private or public sectors, the cost of such screening shall be allowed as a legitimate facade improvement.

--Television, radio or other antennae of an kind shall not be visible for the street.

--Exhaust stacks or other mechanical ventilation equipment shall not be visible from the street.

--Ventilation grills, screens or louvers shall not be visible on the front facade of the building.

5. Awnings were often used on the original buildings to provide protection from the sun and rain for pedestrians and shoppers.

--Awnings are encouraged as part of the overall design concept for the building and shall be installed without damaging the building or obscuring distinctive architectural details.

--Awnings shall be designed and constructed with appropriate materials which respect the original character of the building and the historic character of the area.

--Metal or other rigid awnings shall not be used.

--Awnings shall be constructed of canvas or other pliable material and be designed with colors appropriate to the overall design concept.

--Most awnings used in Beckley were of the retractable or boxed type. No rounded, bubble or back lighted awnings will be allowed.

--Lettering or symbols may be incorporated on the valance, which shall be no less than 80" above the sidewalk.

## I. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

1. The guidelines are intended to assist in the design of complimentary areas of construction not addressed elsewhere in these Guidelines but which would have an effect on the overall visual quality of the rehabilitation.

2. Landscaping of open areas is encouraged.

--Vacant sites or portions of the site should be planted with materials which complement the surrounding architecture.

--Individual plantings should be coordinated with the overall public improvement plan for the area.

3. In general, fences or walls are discouraged. However, if they are required, they shall be designed in a manner which enhances and complements the surrounding architecture.

--Fences shall be designed as an integral part of the overall design.

--Fences shall be constructed of materials such as wood, brick and wrought iron. Chainlink fences and other utilitarian materials should not be used which visible from public streets.

--In general, fences shall have a primarily void or transparent character.

4. Exterior lighting shall be integrated with the overall design of the building.

--Contemporary or "imitation historic" light fixtures will not be added to the front facade of the building unless light fixtures originally existed on the front facade as documented in historic photographs.

--Exterior lighting in the front of the building shall be provided by city street lights.

--Additional lighting at the building entry, if required, shall be minimal and designed in a way which enhances the overall design.

5. The design of the original roof and skyline shall be preserved when viewed from the public street.

--Existing roof pitches, dormers, eaves and other features shall be maintained.

--Modern roofing techniques, materials and roof pitches can be employed when not visible from the public street.

6. New infill construction shall be done in accordance with the spirit and principles illustrated by these Guidelines.

7. Window Displays - the large glass windows in most downtown storefronts originally were intended to draw customers into the store by displaying the business' merchandise or services in an attractive, imaginative manner. In recent years many storefront windows in downtown Beckley have not been utilized successfully to attract customers or to establish a special business image. The following ideas shall be considered by the tenants of downtown buildings in the arrangement of their display window:

--Do not use window display space to store products.

--Exhibit your merchandise or services in attractive, imaginative ways.

--Avoid large or repetitive advertising signs which visually block display windows.

--Display windows in historic buildings renovated for non-retail uses will not be removed, but shall be used for public information or special exhibits of arts, crafts, etc...

## 8. Architectural Materials

- All exterior surfacing materials shall be maintained in good condition and be securely mounted.
- Materials used for alterations shall match existing adjacent in quality and authenticity whenever possible.
- Materials shall be of good quality, durable and low maintenance.
- All work shall be designed and executed to upgrade the City environment.  
Serviceable materials, of quality grade, well designed into the composite elevations shall be maintained in the upgrading process.

## J. SUMMARY

These guidelines are intended to assist in the design of complementary areas of construction not addressed elsewhere in these Guidelines but which would have an effect on the overall visual quality of the rehabilitation.

The approaches to the down town area shall be kept open and inviting. Allowance shall be made for the future incorporation of gracious walks, bicycle paths, lighting and landscaping.

Open space shall be preserved and developed. Mini parks will be developed where possible, utilizing vandal-proof benches and trash receptors, landscaped appropriately.

Walking approaches to shopping and office complexes shall be kept free of encumbrances. Services shall be underground with infrastructure to carry away stormwater, sewage, etc. . . without disturbances to the City aesthetically or functionally.

Massing of new buildings shall be seriously considered as complementary to the existing City. Care shall be taken to design within the theme of the revitalization and new structures shall be of quality design and construction. This is not meant to inhibit economical design but rather to use materials well, the use of which shall be designed to improve rather than deter the overall theme.

Pride of ownership and use shall prevail. Serviceable materials, harmonious colors and textures, appropriate proportions of components shall predominate the review emphasis in this revitalization.

Although restoration is the general theme, it is not intended to limit the architectural expressions to period work or matching a theme that already may exist. Good design is timeless and when properly executed can match and harmonize with all existing themes.