



Downtown Revitalization Project

Contents

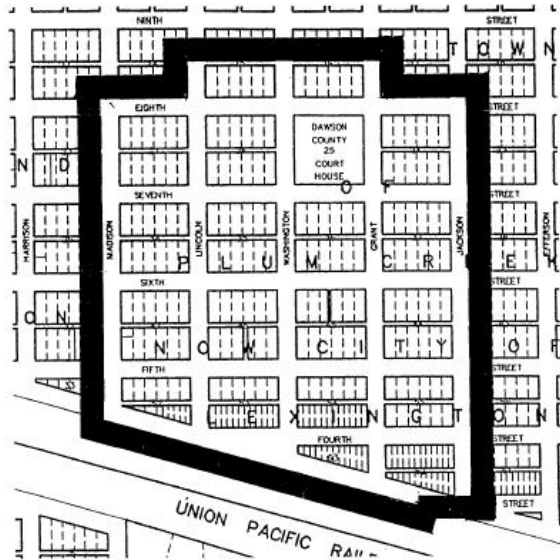
- [Background](#)
- [General Guidelines \(includes Commercial Rehab, Façade, and Energy Efficiency\)](#)
- [Architectural Barrier Removal Guidelines](#)
- [Grant Application \(Commercial Rehab, Façade, Energy Efficiency, Architectural Barriers\)](#)
- [Revolving Loan Program](#)
- [Loan Application Form](#)
- [U.S. Citizenship Attestation Form](#)
- [Design Standards](#)



Downtown Revitalization Project

Background

The City of Lexington (City) has received funding through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for Downtown Revitalization (DTR), namely CDBG 09-DTR-104.



Phase One of the Project – the Design Phase – was completed in early 2010 and approved by the Lexington City Council on April 27, 2010. The City worked with consultant RDG Planning & Design of Omaha, Nebraska. A copy of the 88-page approved Revitalization Plan can be found at <http://www.cityoflex.com/index.aspx?page=100>.

The City has organized a volunteer DTR Committee comprised of citizens who want to help bring about the improvement of Lexington’s Downtown. This Committee has developed these guidelines for businesses who wish to apply for grant funding to improve properties in the DTR area (left).

Anyone wanting more information may contact Assistant City Manager Dennis Burnside at 308-324-2341, or dburnside@cityoflex.com.

The following are guidelines for local business owners/tenants to access this funding for building rehabilitation, façade, energy efficiency improvements, architectural barrier removal, and/or street/sidewalk repair.



Downtown Revitalization Project

General Guidelines (Including Building Rehab and Energy Efficiency)

A business may apply for grant funding for one or more of the following improvements:

- Commercial Rehab (other than facades; includes improvements to structure, plumbing, wiring, and fire prevention systems)
- Façade Renovation (includes sidewalk areas)
- Energy Efficiency Improvements
- Architectural Barrier Removal

Applications: Applications will be accepted from business owners/tenants in the Downtown Revitalization District (map attached to these guidelines). The DTR Committee will begin review of applications as soon as they are received. Allocation will be done until all monies are committed.

The City of Lexington and the DTR Committee reserve the right to deny any application for any reason other than on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, handicap or familial status. Since federal money is involved, however, each applicant is required to fill out a U.S. Citizenship Attestation Form, which is included with these Guidelines and Applications.

The Application must consist of the appropriate, complete program Application Form(s) (attached to these guidelines), a picture of the building that the tenant/owner is requesting monies to rehab, drawings of the work to be completed, firm estimates of cost for construction, and a narrative answering questions on the application form. Note: the Application Forms provide additional guidance details.

The cost of the rehab project will not exceed 50% of the assessed value of the building. Once an Application is approved by the City and DTR committee, an environmental review will be completed on the property to be rehabbed. After all reviews are completed satisfactorily, the Application will be considered complete and ready to begin construction.

Grants and Loans

The business owner has two options from which to choose: (1) a grant; or (2) a grant with a loan.

Grant: 50% of the total project (up to a maximum of \$12,500) may be granted to the business owner/tenant (applicant). The applicant must pay the other half, and all or part of that other half may come from other sources of funding (see "Match" below). All grant funding to projects will be in the form of reimbursement following the successful completion and reporting for each project. Before reimbursement, the applicant must provide documentation that all bills have been paid. Or, upon request, the grant funding may be paid directly to the contractor(s). Invoices will be required.

Loan: 25% of the total project (up to a maximum of \$6,250) may be loaned to the business owner/tenant by the City of Lexington. The loan will be up to a five (5) year term with 2% annual interest on the loan principal. The loan payment will be amortized on a monthly basis. The City will secure this loan by a mortgage against the property receiving rehabilitation. All filing fees will be paid by the applicant. A Certificate of Title will be obtained on the property and will be paid for by the applicant when agreements for rehabilitation are executed.

Match: The applicant (business owner/tenant) will be required to provide at least 25% match of the total cost of the rehab project. This match may be achieved by applicant's cash contribution or labor/supplies provided by the applicant at an approved cost by the City of Lexington/or the DTR Committee. If applicant is providing their own labor as a match for a portion of the project, the amount approved for applicant's labor shall equal the cost as if said labor was performed by a qualified contractor. An estimate of that labor from a qualified contractor must accompany the application. Applicants who will be doing their own labor must be pre-approved by the DTR Committee.

Construction Time Frame: When the building owner/tenant receives notice from the City of Lexington or the DTR Committee that their application is complete and approved, the project must be completed within twelve (12) months, or before the end of the Downtown Revitalization Program (August 11, 2012), whichever is sooner. A City of Lexington building inspector from time to time may visit construction sites and review work as it progresses. A final inspection will be completed when the project is complete.

Energy Efficiency Improvements: Any improvements must demonstrate lower energy consumption within the business. Generally this entails replacing old technologies with newer ones. Examples of improvements include: insulation, high-efficiency heating and/or air conditioning, high-efficiency lighting, and energy-efficient windows. Note: cash incentives are available from the City and Nebraska Public Power District, which can be used to offset the business match obligation. Contact the Assistant City Manager for more information. In addition, the federal government offers tax credits for many energy efficiency upgrades. Visit www.energystar.gov for more information.

Façade Improvements / Design Standards: Any improvements must comply with the Lexington DTR Design Standards. Applications that do not comply risk non-approval by the DTR Committee.

Estimates: If a project is completed at a lower cost than the estimate, reimbursement will be based on actual costs (the lower amount).

Changes: While a project is in progress, the applicant may submit modification requests in writing to the DTR Committee. All changes are subject to review and approval by the Committee. Once reimbursement has been requested, no modifications will be accepted.

Eligible businesses include but are not limited to: Storage, warehousing, distribution, or sale of tangible personal property; retail trade businesses; the conducting of research, development or testing for scientific, agricultural, animal husbandry, food products or industrial purposes; the performance data processing, telecommunications, insurance, or financial services; the assembly fabrication, manufacture, or processing of tangible personal property; the administrative management of any activities, including headquarter facilities relating to such activities; or any combination of the above activities, which include value-added enterprises.

Tourism attractions which are expected to draw 2,500 additional visits annually from origins of at least 100 miles away. Tourist attractions are sites and facilities, which draw visitors from a distance because of their scenic, historic, cultural, scientific, and/or recreational attributes. Examples of eligible attractions are: historic restorations, museums, participatory sports facilities, and convention centers.

Ineligible businesses include: gambling operations; liquor stores; production agriculture, generally including crop and livestock production; petroleum production; and owner-occupied residential property.



Downtown Revitalization Project

Architectural Barrier Removal Guidelines

Lexington's Downtown Revitalization Project has budgeted \$35,833 for Architectural Barrier Removal, which can be used by a combination of City and business projects. A business may apply for grant funding to remove or correct impediments to handicapped persons. Examples include:

- Handicap ramps / Removal of step-up/step-down features
- Improving restrooms for handicap/wheelchair access
- Adapting doorways to improve accessibility
- Braille signage
- Handrails
- Accessible door handles
- Buzzing or flashing devices (for people with visual/hearing impairment)

Applications: The grant provides a modest amount of extra funding to improve access for handicapped people. This primarily includes people confined to wheelchairs, but can also include improvements to accommodate disabilities such as blindness, deafness, and temporary disabilities that might restrict an individual to a cane or crutches.

The Lexington DTR will consider any application to alleviate such barriers, over and above the amount allowed for building rehab, up to \$1,000 per building. As with a general rehab project, the applicant is responsible for at least 50% of the project cost. For example:

Note: Your barrier removal may also qualify your business for federal tax credits. The Barrier Removal Tax Deduction, established under Section 190 of the Internal Revenue Code, allows a business of any size to expense up to a maximum of \$15,000 per year of items that normally must be capitalized (depreciated). This deduction may be used for expenses associated with the removal of architectural or transportation barriers in association with a trade or business that complies with applicable accessibility standards. The DTR Committee cannot help you with this, rather recommends businesses research the appropriate tax code and/or consult with a tax consultant.



Downtown Revitalization Project

Return completed applications to Dennis Burnside at 406 East 7th Street (PO Box 70), Lexington, NE 68850. If you have any questions, please contact Dennis at 308-324-2341.

Application: Commercial Rehab, Façade Renovation, Architectural Barrier Removal, and Energy Efficiency

Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Business Address: _____

Business Phone Number: _____

DUNS Number: _____

Who is initiating this project? *Check One* PROPERTY OWNER TENANT
(IF THIS PROJECT IS NOT BEING INITIATED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER, PLEASE INCLUDE A SIGNED LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM THE OWNER.)

Is the building listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places? YES NO

Grant **Loan** requested for: *(mark all that apply)*

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Efficiency Updates (e.g., heating, A/C, insulation, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Interior Improvements (e.g., flooring or wall treatment) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sidewalk Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Lighting and/or Electrical Updates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Barrier Removal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exterior Paint/Siding | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Windows and/or Doors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Please Attach:

1. A detailed description of the project including materials, size and colors along with a before picture and drawings that include proposed changes.
(No new flat metal awnings will be eligible)
2. Narratives that explain:
 - a. how you think this project will improve the aesthetics and/or efficiency of the property;
 - b. how this will project improve your business;
 - c. the effect will your project have on neighboring businesses; and
 - d. the estimated project costs, timeframe(s) and amounts requested.
3. A copy of a valid City of Lexington Building Permit, if applicable
4. A completed U.S. Citizenship Attestation Form

Program Guidelines: See Program Guidelines for more details.

I fully understand the rules of the Downtown Revitalization Community Development Grant Project. I also understand that if the rules and regulations are not fully complied with, I will not receive reimbursement of grant money to assist me in the renovation of business and/or building.

Signed:

Applicant

Building Owner (If Different than Applicant)

Date

Date

United States Citizenship Attestation Form

For the purpose of complying with Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 4-108 through 4-114, I attest as follows:

I am a citizen of the United States.

— OR —

I am a qualified alien under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, my immigration status and alien number are as follows:
_____, and I agree to provide a copy of my
USCIS documentation upon request.

I hereby attest that my response and the information provided on this form and any related application for public benefits are true, complete, and accurate and I understand that this information may be used to verify my lawful presence in the United States.

PRINT NAME	<hr/> (first, middle, last)
SIGNATURE	<hr/>
DATE	<hr/>

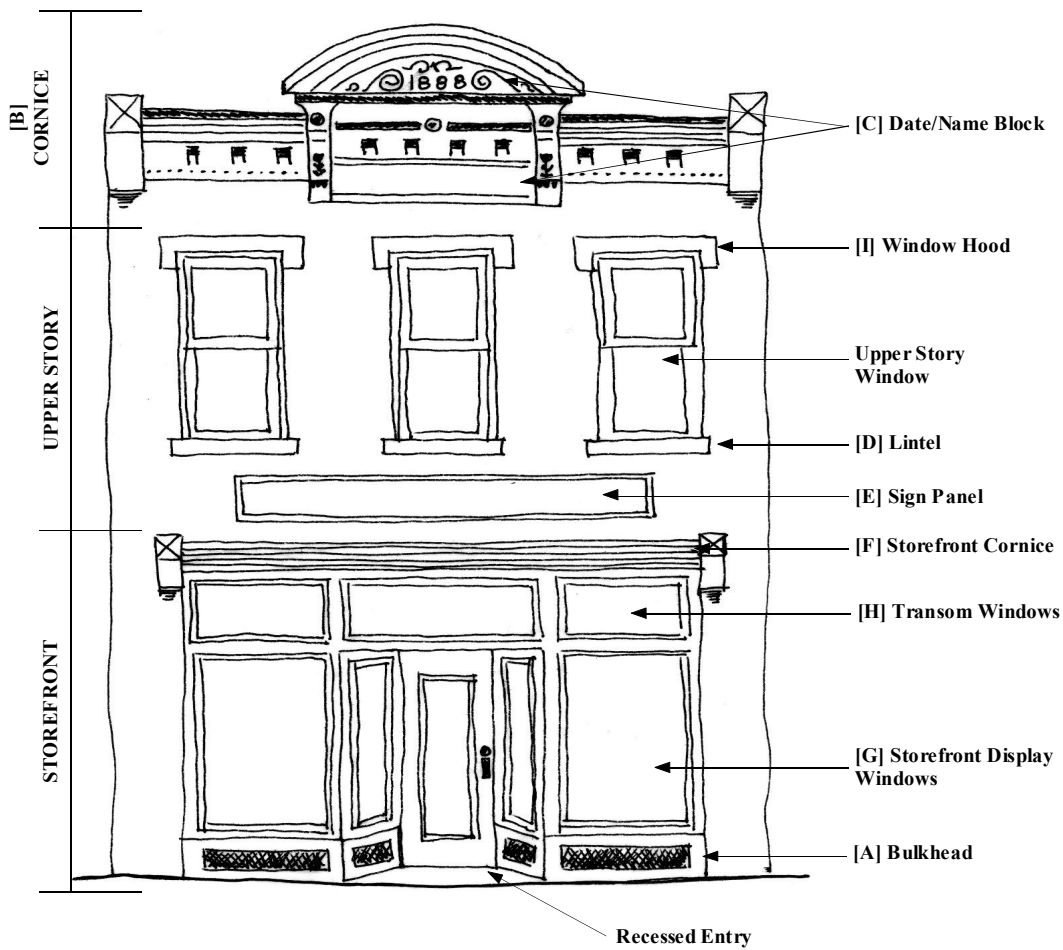


Downtown Revitalization Project

Design Guidelines & Standards

Dennis Burnside, *Coordinator*
406 E. 7th Street (City Office)
Lexington, NE 68850
(308) 324-2341

Downtown Commercial Building Features & Definitions



[A] Bulkhead: Located between the sidewalk and storefront window, the bulkhead raises the display area for better viewing and provides a base that can withstand pedestrian traffic for the storefront windows. Bulkheads were often constructed of wood. Because bulkheads are very vulnerable to weather and damage, many have been replaced with more durable materials like tile, stone and brick.

[B] Cornice: The cornice tops the main façade of a building. This feature is typically made of decoratively formed metal or patterns of brick, sometimes terra cotta or stone in larger commercial buildings in urban areas.

[C] Date/Name Block: The date block and sometimes a name block can be found within the design of the cornice or below the cornice on the upper part of the façade. It contains the date that the building was built and/or the name of the original building owner(s).

Façade: The main, or front, exterior face(s) of a building.

[D] Lintel: Horizontal piece located at the bottom of a window, door, or other opening.

Rehabilitation: Improving a property through repair or alteration which makes possible for a contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural values.

Restoration: Accurately bringing a property back to its original condition and use by using original materials and fixtures.

[E] Sign Panel: Located above the storefront, this area or space for signage was traditionally defined with a brick frame.

[F] Storefront Cornice: Not as elaborate as the cornice that tops the building, a storefront cornice is simple and is used to cap the top of the storefront opening. It also serves as a structural element that carries the weight of the upper façade wall.

[G] Storefront Display Windows: Originally used to bring natural light into the building, storefront windows provide an excellent opportunity for product and merchandise displays.

[H] Transom Windows: The window area directly above storefront display windows. Transom windows filter light back into narrow traditional commercial buildings, illuminating the interior.

[I] Window Hood: A decorative piece located at the top of a window, door, or other opening.

Part I - General Considerations

When alterations to a building are being considered, the original style and period when the building was built should be respected. Restoration of the original façade is recommended and encouraged whenever possible, and an emphasis of these guidelines. Repair and renovation of the façade should be based on original drawings or photos. Historical information on some buildings is available at the Dawson County Historical Museum. Historic preservation is recommended when possible but not per se required by Lexington DTR program. However, buildings with historical significance must be reviewed by the Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office. SHPO has the authority to reject applications that may not retain historical properties.

Part II - The Façade

Most of the façades in downtown Lexington are one to three stories in height, with commercial space at ground level, and storage, businesses, or residences on the upper floors.

Upper Façade

The upper façade of a building is usually comprised of a flat wall with regularly spaced window openings and applied decoration.

Windows

- Boards and other inappropriate materials covering windows should be removed.
- If the original window openings have been altered, restore them to their original configuration and detail. Find replacements that match existing ones. Do not change the size or shape of window openings—a single window should completely fill the entire opening.



Example of an appropriate window replacement



Example of an inappropriate window replacement

- Look at repairing windows before considering replacements. Re-glaze all loose or broken window panes, and repair all window parts to working order.
- Avoid fake historic windows that do not fit the style of the building.
- Avoid installing opaque panels such as metal, wood, and/or other materials to replace clear glass windows. Do not use plexi-glass or mirrored glass.
- Do not add shutters to windows.
- Storm windows can be applied to either the interior or exterior of the building. Exterior installations should match existing window configuration. Interior installations preserve the original exterior appearance.
- It is recommended to retain upper story windows even when those floors are vacant. Use curtains or open blinds to conceal vacant spaces or to hide storage that can be seen from the ground level looking up. Avoid storing things directly in front of windows.
- Avoid window heating/air conditioning units in windows on the main façade.
- If a new interior ceiling must be dropped below the height of the existing window openings, a recessed setback or similar means should be used to allow the full window opening to be retained without alteration of the exterior appearance.

Building Details

- Deteriorated building details and ornaments should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. If a replacement is necessary, the new material should match the original material in composition, design, color, and texture. Replacement of missing details and ornament should be

based on accurate duplications based upon remaining details and ornaments, or through historic photographs.



Terra cotta building detail on the Barmore Pharmacy Building; Stone detail on the IOOF Building; Beehive Building cornice detail.

- Hidden details and ornament should be uncovered.
- Exposed details and ornaments should not be covered up by awnings, slipcovers, or other features.
- Multiple coats of paint from past work that obscure details and ornament should be removed before repainting.
- Soft, dry, or split areas in wood surfaces should be filled, caulked, primed and painted.
- Avoid fake historic details and decoration.

Cornice

- It is possible to repair or replace a cornice if it has been damaged or is no longer there. You can duplicate the original or find a replacement that is similar to the original. Any design for a new or replacement cornice should be based upon historic photographs or existing pieces of the cornice.
- Traditional and replacement cornices are made of sheet metal, brick, wood, cast stone, terra cotta, and fiberglass.

Storefront

The storefront is comprised of large display windows and the building entrance. For buildings where the original storefront is still in place, it is recommended that the storefront be repaired and left alone without any alterations.

For buildings where the original storefront has been changed, it is recommended that improvements be made to the storefront that respect the historic character of the building which may include replacing the entire storefront with a more appropriate one. Sometimes the storefront has been covered up with inappropriate materials. Before removing inappropriate coverings, careful research needs to be done to make sure that what is behind that covering can be saved. If what is behind the covering cannot be saved, it is best to hire a professional to design a compatible new storefront before any covering is removed or demolition be done.

If restoring the storefront to the original look or similar, do your research. Look at historic photos and plans. The new storefront should be designed to fit in the existing opening, no longer, no smaller, no taller, and have the same or similar look to the original. Original materials and details should be preserved if at all possible, or substitutions used that resemble original materials and details. Attention to these details will retain the proper proportions of the façade. This standard will be used in the upper façade, as well as the ground floor. Avoid historically incorrect storefront replacements (i.e. a Colonial style storefront on a 1920's Plains Commercial building).



Appropriate storefront replacement. The style, size, proportions and materials are consistent with the original storefront.



Inappropriate storefront replacement. The style, size, proportions, and materials are NOT consistent with the original storefront. The color selection is also inappropriate.

Transom Windows

As in other instances, the original design of a building is the best guide for any restoration and renovation projects. Transom windows are smaller windows above the storefront display windows. They were designed to let in light and to improve ventilation. Often transom windows still exist but are covered with building materials on the outside and dropped ceilings on the inside. Transom windows should be retained and restored in the process of rehabilitation. Consult with a local and knowledgeable stained glass professional for assistance and suggestions for repair, replacement, removal, and reinstallation. Transom windows were often translucent, and this is acceptable to maintain.



Example of a decorative stained glass transom window.



Example of a simple/plain transom window

Lighting

- Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself.
- Lighting should provide an even illumination level.
- Exterior lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building's architectural style.



Example of good exterior lighting. The simple style of the lighting fixtures matches the simplicity of this simple commercial building.

Doors and Entryways

Downtown retail building storefronts often have recessed entries to provide shelter and more display window area. Recessed storefronts also emphasize the building entrance. Many of the buildings in the Downtown Revitalization District have retained their original recessed storefront entryways. In renovation, building owners are encouraged to maintain these entries. If the recessed area has been changed in an earlier remodeling, owners are encouraged to restore the recessed area. Also, new construction is encouraged to incorporate the recessed entry in the front façade. Doors should resemble what was originally in place. Solid or residential style doors with small areas of glass are not appropriate for commercial/retail buildings.



Example of an appropriate historic commercial door.



Example of an inappropriate commercial replacement door.

Part III - The Building

Building Materials

There are four types of traditional materials used to construct commercial buildings: masonry, metal, wood, and glass. Although there is some variation in building materials in the buildings in the Lexington Downtown District, the primary material used is brick. Therefore, brick should be considered for use in any new construction.

- Visible sides of buildings should be consistent with storefronts, and if there is a break between buildings, it should be screened.
- If a new building is constructed of metal, the façade and visible sides would be made of brick.
- New and existing brick should not be painted. If brick has been painted in the past, it should be maintained as a painted surface.
- DO NOT do any sort of sand or other blasting as it destroys the hard fired finish on brick and mortar and will cause your building to crumble.
- In the past, the dominant corner buildings were often constructed of a darker brick than center of the block buildings, and this pattern should be maintained when possible.
- When using new or replacement brick, match as closely as possible to the original brick. It should be compatible in texture, scale, and color to the original.

Inappropriate Building Materials

None of the materials listed below should ever be used on the exterior of a historic commercial building. These were never used as traditional building materials in downtown commercial districts and they detract from the historic character that Lexington is trying to re-establish. Most of these materials are not of the same quality as traditional building materials and have not been time tested for durability and longevity. Other materials made to either imitate exterior finish materials or used to cover original architectural features is also discouraged.



a. cedar planks or cedar shake shingles



b. metal, shake shingle or asphalt shingle awnings



c. molded stone (a.k.a. permastone)



d. rough cut logs



e. enamel coated masonite panels



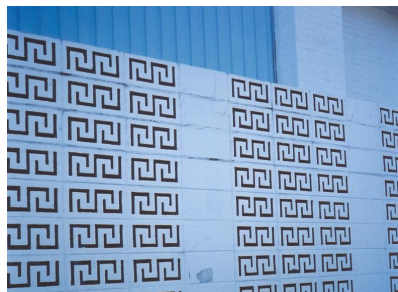
f. applied false brick veneer (a.k.a. z-brick)



g. aluminum slipcovers



h. vinyl, aluminum or plastic siding



i. decorative concrete block

Paint Schemes/Color

If a building owner is considering painting the brick façade and sides of a building, paint color should be carefully chosen to **be compatible with adjoining buildings and others on the block**. This is not to say that colors should “match” other building colors, but a balance should be maintained. Location and size of buildings should be taken into consideration in selecting colors. Larger and plainer buildings should use more subtle colors than smaller, more ornate buildings, do. Colors on the south and west appear “warmer” than if placed on the north or east sides. Color choice really affects the unity and individuality of the downtown business buildings. Both should be carefully and jointly considered in color choice.

Paint was originally used to highlight the architectural details of the building including the details in the cornice, the storefront, the window frames, and sometimes the hoods over the windows. Paint was also used on early buildings to protect the soft-fired brick of buildings built before 1900. White paint was not used much in the past because it causes a lot of glare.

Brick wall surfaces that have never been painted should be left unpainted. Brick wall surfaces that have been painted, can be maintained and repainted. **DO NOT EVER** sandblast, soda blast, shell blast, bead blast or pellet blast painted wood or brick surfaces. You will cause irreparable damage to the wood or brick.

Painting can be one of the most simple but most dramatic improvements that can be made to a building but it must be done with great care as the color of your building affects the other buildings around you. Attention should also be given to the preparation of surfaces (brick, wood, metal), choice of paint type (oil or latex), and finish (gloss, semi-gloss, or matte). Consult with a painting professional to ensure the appropriateness of your color preferences and type of paint.

To ensure a quality job:

- Catalog all of the building pieces that are to be painted. Since each piece may be of different material, it may require a different type of paint and painting technique. Consult a local professional for advice and assistance.
- Make any repairs to surfaces before starting any work. Replace rotted wood, repair masonry mortar joints, remove rust from metal, etc.
- Carefully prepare each surface according to the paint manufacturer’s instructions.
- Carefully apply paint per instructions.

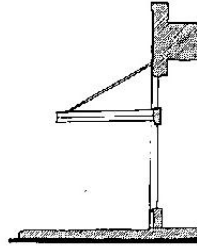
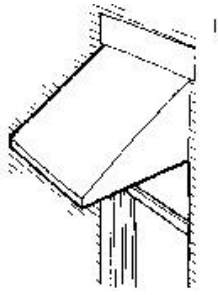
Paint should be used to tie all building elements together. Colors should be coordinated from the signs to the window frames to the cornices to the storefronts and to the building features. Exterior colors should be chosen with historic character of the building in mind.

Be very cautious with a contemporary/modern color palette. The entire building should blend into the existing buildings on the block. Inappropriate color selection makes a building stand out rather than blend in with the neighboring buildings.

- Pay attention to what your building looks like on sunny and cloudy days and use colors that enhance the look of the building on either day.
- Limit color use to no more than 2 to 3 colors and don’t use bold primary or bright or “fluorescent” colors.

Awnings and Canopies

Features such as awnings and canopies can dominate the façade. It is very important to make sure there is a good relationship between the two. Awnings are sidewalk shelters made of fabric. These are preferred for all renovation and construction projects. If an aluminum canopy exists, it should conform in style and color and height to others in the area. Certain buildings may lend themselves to a particular style of canopy or awning. Neighboring buildings should be kept in mind when choosing any such feature.



Examples of an awning (left) and an aluminum canopy (right) typically found on Downtown buildings in Nebraska.

Awnings are decorative and functional but don't necessarily have to be used on every building and are not appropriate for every building.

Awnings and canopies provide a secondary location for signage and add color and interest to the façade of a building. They can also be used to emphasize storefront windows and entrances. They also serve as protection for pedestrians and display windows from the sun and rain.

- Canvas awnings (specifically made from fabric manufactured by Sunbrella and other manufacturers) are colorfast, carry a warranty, and are weather-treated.



Example of a canvas awning with gooseneck lighting and signage.



Metal stock awnings are not recommended. Example of a metal stock awning. These awnings are most commonly found on homes but have been applied to commercial buildings.

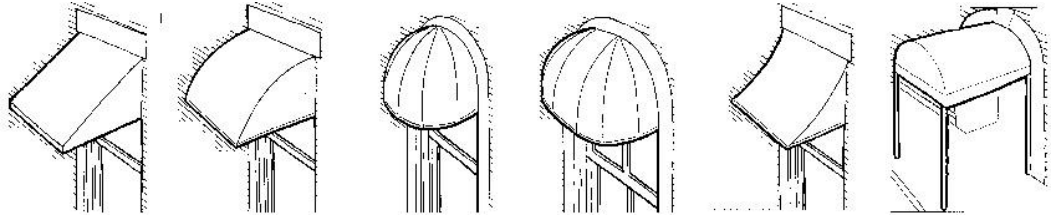
- Plastic or vinyl formed awnings are not acceptable in the district



Example of a backlit plastic awning. This type of awning is unacceptable in the district.

- Metal canopies should be repaired or removed depending on their physical condition. Many times, local ordinances do not allow you to re-install a metal canopy once it has been removed. Check with the local government officials before doing any work. Canvas canopy “skirts” can be used to enhance the look of the façade and can also provide another location for business signage.
- Use a canvas color or pattern that enhances, not detracts from the building's façade. Solid colors or patterns can be used for architecturally simple buildings. Those buildings with a great deal of architectural style and detail should avoid patterned canvas awnings and use solid colors.
- Important architectural details should not be hidden behind awnings, canopies, or marquees.

- Don't overpower the proportions of the windows or façade with awnings.
- Awning shapes should relate to the shape of windows, doors, and other openings.



The shapes of these awnings relate to the shape of the opening on the building, whether a window, door or other opening.

Part IV - Signage

In general, signs should not cover windows, cornices, transoms, or other decorative details. They should complement the building exterior and that of adjoining and neighboring buildings. All signs must be installed following the Lexington City Code Section 6-12 and Section 6-14. Call the Building Inspector at the City Office, 324-2341, for more information.

Signs contribute to the overall image of the downtown as well as define and identify individual businesses. They should fit into the general appearance of downtown while creating a positive image for individual businesses.

- Signs should be planned to fit with the building façade
- Signs should be coordinated with all other signs on the building (no more than 2 or 3 signs total)
- A simple well-made sign is far more appropriate than an elaborate sign which is sloppy in appearance (craftsmanship and quality materials)
- Signs can contain words only, graphic icons, or both words and graphic icons.
- Signs should not dominate the façade of the building.
- Handwritten and homemade signs, and signs painted directly on the building, are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Signs should not clutter the front of the building or display windows. Too many signs on a single storefront detract from the overall appearance of the storefront and building.
- Use professional sign companies to design and install your signage. Workmanship and quality are essential.
- Vacuum formed internally lit plastic signage is inappropriate.
- Incandescent lighting should be used to light signs at night most preferably shining down on the sign rather than up so that you avoid light pollution.
- Signage needs to provide information simply and legibly.
- Primary signage should be limited to name and main goods and services.
- Professionally laser cut and applied permanent window lettering can be used on storefront windows and doorways.
- Window signage should not cover more than 15% of available window space.
- Signs should be of a size, location, and design that does not obscure the building's important architectural details.

- Limit nationally distributed signs associated with franchise companies. Work with the company to find a sign solution that fits within the guidelines.
- Pedestrian friendly signs, which include hanging signs and window signs are strongly encouraged in the Lexington Downtown district. These types of signs provide effective advertising and do little or no damage the building. Window signs can be changed with no damage to the windows, and hanging signs can be changed often by using the same or existing brackets.

Signage Types Appropriate in Downtown Lexington

Flush Mounted Sign Panels

Flush mounted signs are sign panels or individual letters that are placed on the façade of the building, generally in a recessed or horizontal band above the transom and below the roofline.



Example of a flush mounted sign panel located above the storefront.



Example of a flush mounted sign panel located on the side of a building. This sign has raised letters and a simple color scheme. It is also lit with gooseneck lamps

Hanging or Projecting Signs

Hanging or projecting signs are hung from the canopies or mounted perpendicular to the sidewalk on the façade. These signs should be installed so the bottom is approximately eight feet from the sidewalk, so as not to interfere with pedestrian traffic.



Example of a hanging or projecting sign.



Example of a pedestrian sign hanging beneath a metal canopy. This type of sign can easily be changed when a business changes.

Storefront Display Window Signs

Storefront display window signs are painted or are laser cut vinyl decals adhered to the window. These signs should be designed so that the display area is open for viewing.



Example of a storefront display window sign. This sign is a laser cut vinyl decal that is adhered to the window.



Example of storefront window band signage also a laser cut vinyl decal. This type of sign subtly lists the types of products found inside the store without overpowering the window with information. This can be done at either the top or the bottom of the storefront display window

Graphic Icon Signs

Other types of signs include icon or graphic signs, which illustrate the business by shape of the sign. Both window signs and hanging signs often use icons related to the type of business.



Example of an icon sign.

Awning and Canopy Signs

An awning or canopy sign includes the name of a business is sewn onto the front of a canvas awning or canopy skirt and is intended for vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic from the opposite side of the street.



Example of an awning sign. Awning signs can also include a businesses logo.



Example of a canopy skirt with signage. The lettering can be sewn directly onto the canvas or it can be screen-printed.