



Chapter 6:

Commercial, Institutional & Religious Facilities

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Chapter 6: Commercial, Institutional & Religious Facilities

The commercial, institutional and religious buildings and uses are part of the character of the districts and each must be reviewed based on its individual architecture and functional needs. In general, the interpretation of the Design Guidelines must evaluate the content of a project on the merits of its relationship to the commercial, religious and /or institutional building and property. As stated in the “District Setting and Site Features” section, these are of critical significance in preserving the neighborhood character and any potential impact it may have on the district as a whole.

In interpreting the Historic District Design Guidelines for their applicability to commercial, religious and institutional properties there are two factors that must be considered when reviewing an application. 1) The functional needs of the commercial, religious and institutional property owner must be considered. The property owner should be allowed to use the property in the manner needed, as long as it maintains the character of the historic district. 2) The architecture of the building should be valued and preserved in its own right, and any changes should respect the original contributing building on the property. Modifications that are consistent with the architectural style of the building are appropriate when required to meet a functional need. Often a balance between function and architectural appropriateness must be struck in order to meet the objectives of both the property owner and the intent of the guidelines. Do no unalterable harm.

Institutional Facilities



Mitchell College Main Building

Religious Facilities



Western Ave Baptist



Broad Street Methodist

Commercial Facilities



Riddle Bicycle Shop



Bonita's Alterations



Western Ave

A. Commercial Storefront

The storefront is the single most identifying characteristic of the historic commercial façade. Turn-of-the-century commercial buildings commonly included storefronts with large display windows, transom bars or windows, and recessed entryways.

The combination of these features; while attractive, are also quite functional in that they create an area for the display of goods and allow light to enter into the store. Other architectural features found in these storefronts include bulkheads below the display windows, columns or pilasters to support the façade above the storefront, and awnings.

Guidelines

Preservation

1. Retain and preserve historic storefronts and storefront features such as entryways, display windows, doors, transoms, corner posts, etc.
2. Whenever possible, retain and preserve historic materials. Avoid the removal of historic materials or architectural features.
3. Whenever repairing or renovating, it is recommended that any non-historic storefront or façade treatments including metal cladding or other non-historic alteration be removed.

Reconstruction

4. If replacement of a deteriorated storefront or storefront feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
5. When reconstructing a historic storefront, base the design on historical research and evidence. Maintain the original proportions, dimensions and architectural elements.
6. Whenever changes are required to meet building or accessibility codes, they should be done in a way that is the least intrusive to the façade and without destroying historic materials and features.

New Design

7. Where original or early storefronts no longer exist or are too deteriorated to save, retain the commercial character of the building through contemporary design which is compatible with the scale, design, materials, color and texture of the historic buildings.

B. Building Facades Treatment

The most architectural details can be found on the upper story façade of an historic commercial building. Most commercial, religious and institutional buildings in the historic district are visible from all sides. As with the primary front façade, these side elevations are important character-defining elements of the historic districts. The side façade generally carries the same design elements and details as the main elevation including fenestrations, brickwork, etc. The rear elevation on a commercial building provides access for merchants, their workers, and in some cases, customers; however on institutional buildings the rear is used for building maintenance entry/exit and loading and unloading areas. It also continues the same general material treatments as front and side façades. The rear entrances are where the mechanical equipment and garbage receptacles are typically located.

Guidelines

Preservation

1. Retain and preserve historic façade details and materials on the front, side and rear elevations.
2. The covering of upper façades is not appropriate. Whenever possible, remove metal or other non-historic covering from upper façades.
3. It is not appropriate to remove or replace original upper façade windows with modern materials. The enclosing or bricking in of windows shall not be permitted. When upper floor windows must be replaced, match the original in configuration and materials.
4. Historic painted advertisements represent an important historic element for some commercial buildings. While not required, it is recommended that they be preserved whenever possible.
5. It is encouraged that any unnecessary or unused utility lines, mechanical equipment, pipes, etc. be removed. When introducing new utility or service features such as mechanical units and garbage receptacles, they are to be screened from public view with fences, low walls, or landscaping.

Reconstruction

6. If replacement of a deteriorated façade feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated element to match the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail. It is only appropriate to use alternate materials when all the original features are unknown, have been destroyed, or are not available.
7. When reconstructing a historic façade or feature, base the design on historical research and evidence. Maintain the original proportions, dimensions and architectural elements. If no evidence of the design of the feature exists, a new design, compatible with the overall character of the building, should be used.
8. Buildings with rear access should use small signs or awnings to provide for visual identification.

New Design

9. If new construction of a façade is necessary, make sure that the design is compatible with the existing commercial or institutional structures in the district including size & spacing of windows or other fenestrations, proportion, scale, and detailing
10. Whenever possible, new designs for rear façades should provide access to the public from rear parking areas and alleyways.

C. Architectural Details & Ornamentation:

Architectural details include everything from simple masonry treatments such as corbelled brick and stringcourses to very detailed ornamentation like cast iron, stone relief, and wooden and masonry cornices. Variations in material, fenestration, and paint color all contribute to the level of ornamentation on the individual structure.

Institutional



Mitchell College

Religious



1st Presbyterian

Commercial



The Bicycle Shop

Guidelines:

1. Retain and preserve any architectural features and details that are character defining elements of downtown structures, such as cornices, columns, piers, brickwork, stringcourses, quoins, etc.
2. If replacement of an architectural element is necessary, use new materials that complement the historic materials in composition, size, shape, color, pattern, and texture. Consider substitute materials only if the original materials are not technically feasible.
3. It is not appropriate to remove or cover any original detail or ornamentation. If original features are currently covered, it is encouraged that these features be uncovered, exposed, and repaired.
4. If the entire architectural detail is missing, design the replacement feature based on historic documentation. If there is no documentation, but evidence that the element was originally on the building, any new design should be compatible with the historic character of the building and district.

All of the following items are related to commercial, institutional and religious guidelines please refer to Chapter 3: Changes to Building Exteriors:

- Masonry
- Wood
- Architectural Metal
- Paint
- Accessibility and Life Safety considerations
- Utility and Energy retrofit

***Note: Please reference the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code.

For all commercial, institutional and religious new construction please reference Chapter 4: New Construction and Additions and Appendix G: New Construction Materials Guide.