

COTTON PORT HISTORIC DISTRICT



DESIGN GUIDELINES

**City of West Monroe, Louisiana
2011**

Heritage Preservation Commission

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Historic Photographs are courtesy of the City of West Monroe

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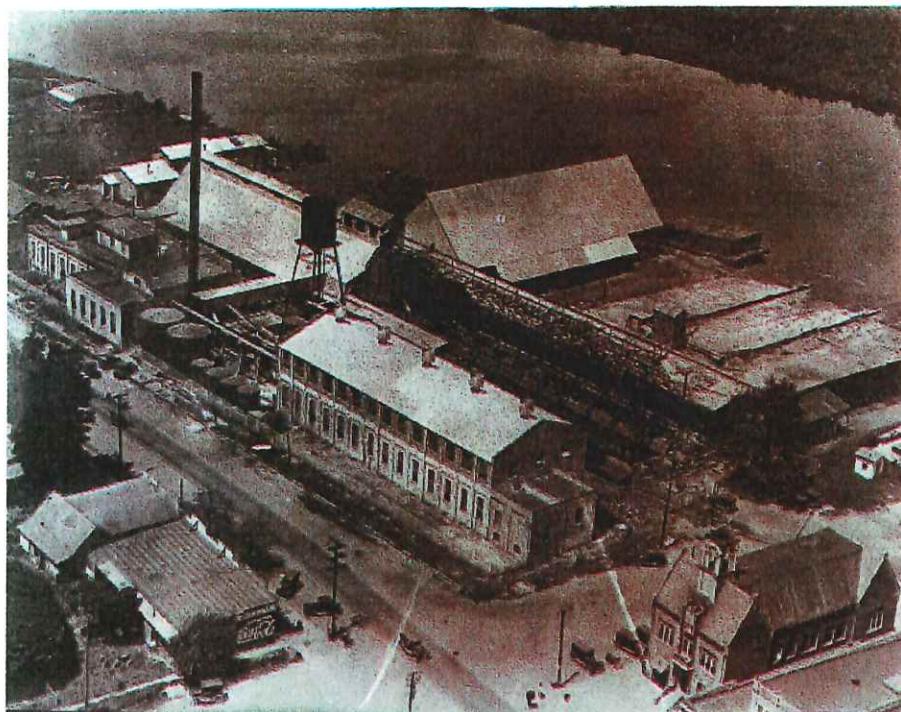
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A Brief History of the Cotton Port Historic District

French settlers traveled up the Ouachita River as early as 1780 and one of the most important early residents was Don Juan Filhiol who established Fort Miro on the east bank of the river. The fort became the center of an important trading and shipping point on the river and the settlement was later named Monroe in honor of President James Monroe. In 1815, a ferry was established to connect to the west bank of the river as new residents moved into the area and began large scale farming. Cotton became the dominate crop along the Ouachita River and by the 1830s increased commerce led to the creation of a landing by William Trent on the river's west bank. Over time this landing was the center of several stores and warehouses and the community of Trenton was established in 1851.

The 1850s also witnessed the construction of the Vicksburg, Shreveport and Texas Railroad from the west bank of the Mississippi River opposite Vicksburg to Monroe. The building of the railroad led to increased commerce and speculation in the area and the west bank of the river opposite the railroad's terminus at Monroe was platted for development in 1859 by a group of investors. The community was named "Cotton Port" and it was anticipated that a railroad bridge would be constructed to continue the railroad on to Shreveport. The Civil War halted construction and the railroad line suffered extensive damage. Following the war, the railroad was rebuilt and a bridge was finally built across the river in 1882.

The construction of the railroad bridge spurred the development of a substantial commercial district next to the railroad. The rival community of Trenton to the north had been adversely affected during the 1870s by a fire and flood and Cotton Port became the center of commerce by the 1880s. The name of the community was changed from Cotton Port to West Monroe in 1883 and a series of brick buildings were erected during this decade. In addition to the commercial buildings, the Union Cottonseed Oil Mill was built next to the river and employed dozens of workers. The growth of the community resulted in the chartering of West Monroe in 1889.

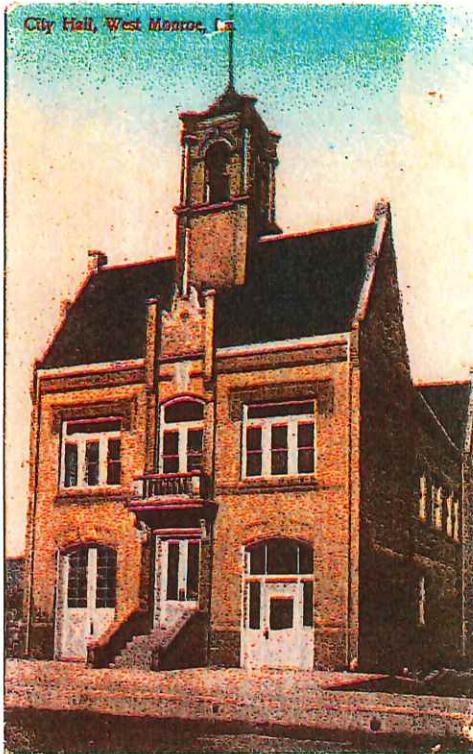


The Union Cottonseed Oil Mill occupied a large tract on Trenton Street. This view is from ca. 1920.



The Mitchell-Cason Hardware Store ca. 1900 at 311 Trenton Street.

By the 1890s, several blocks of Trenton Street were lined with a series of one- and two-story brick and frame commercial buildings. Additional buildings and warehouses were constructed on the adjacent blocks of Cotton and Commerce Streets. Businesses such as grocery stores, hardware stores and dry goods shops were operated by merchants such as William L. Morris, Green Berry Haynes and J.W. Mitchell. A pedestrian bridge was finally built in 1899 connecting Monroe and West Monroe and in 1901 West Monroe was officially incorporated. In addition to the commercial center along Trenton Street, substantial residential neighborhoods developed in the city to west and south. What was left of the town of Trenton was absorbed into the city in the 1900s.



A new City Hall was built on Trenton Street in 1907. The building was later razed but the bell tower was preserved on the building's site.



View down Trenton Street from Natchitoches Street, ca. 1930.

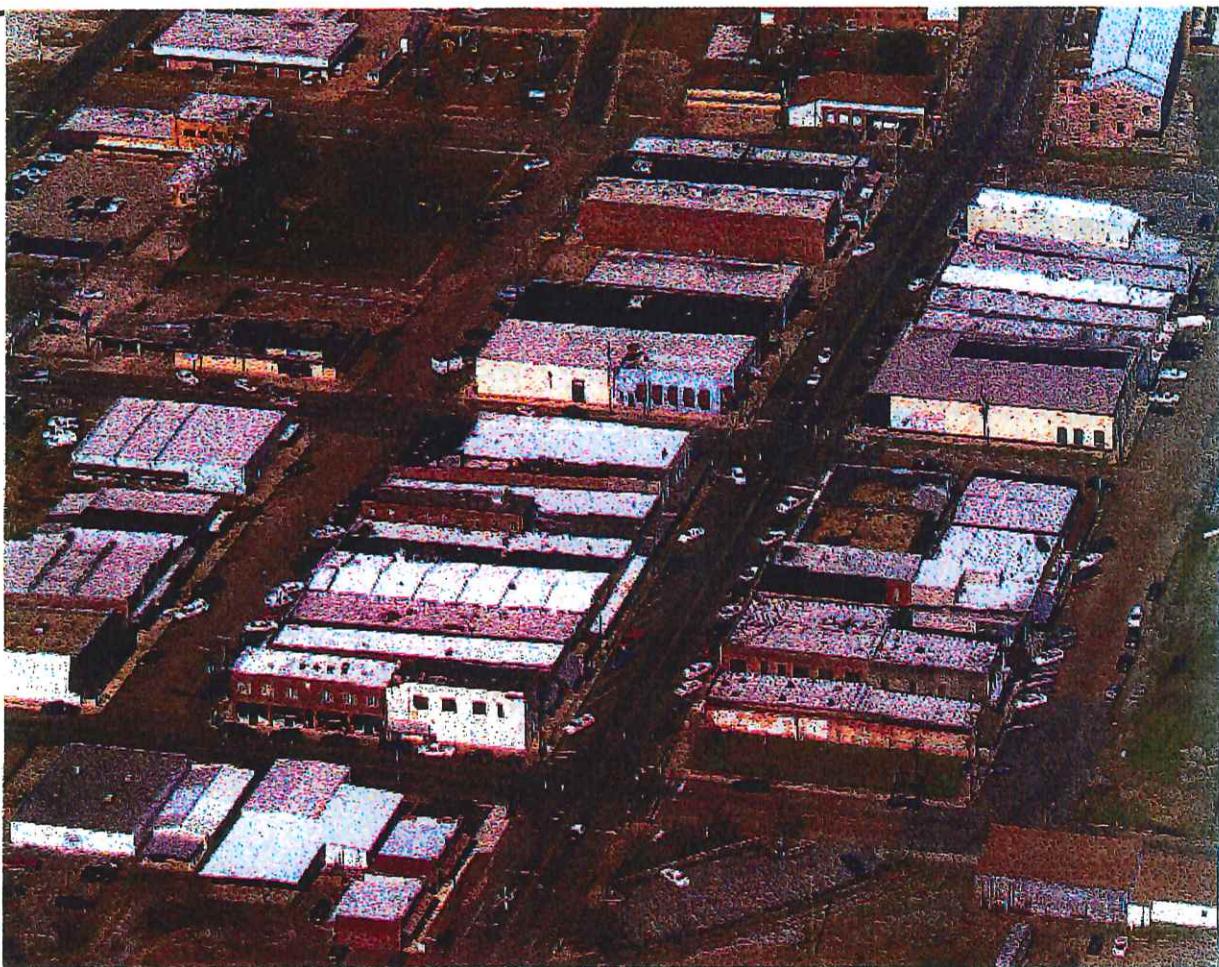
The early 20th century was a time of prosperity for the community and many new brick commercial buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1925. These include the two-story buildings at 214-216 Trenton Street and 109-113 Commerce Street, both built in 1909. Most of these buildings were built with detailing common to commercial buildings of the period with large storefronts and decorative brick cornices at the roofline. In 1907 a new city hall was built at the corner of Trenton and Pine Streets and modern amenities such as telephone and electric service were introduced downtown. By the mid-1920s the downtown area of West Monroe was a bustling center of commerce and its present appearance largely dates to this period. The Strand Theater built in 1929 on Cotton Street was one of the last major buildings constructed before the Depression.



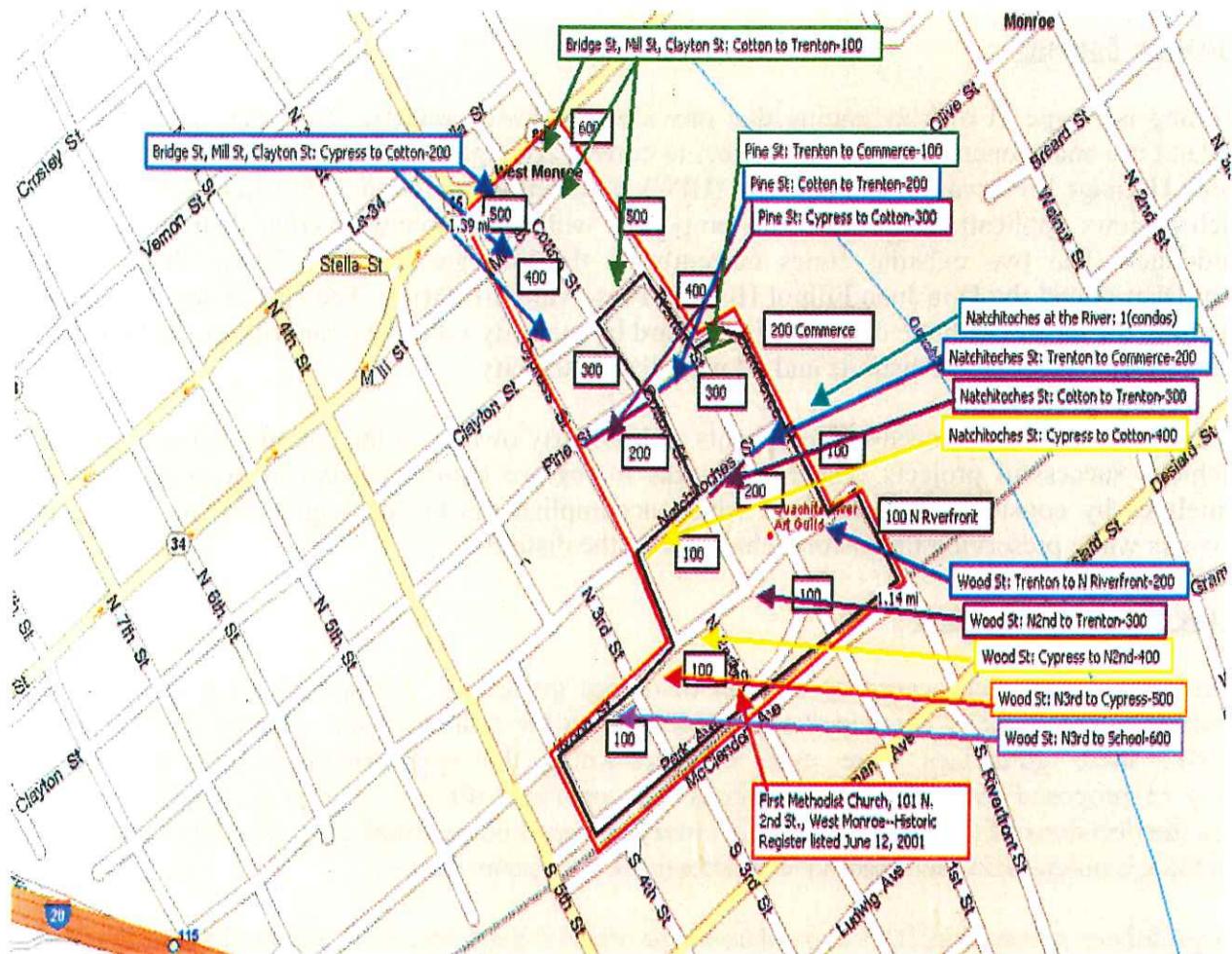
Street scene at Trenton and Natchitoches Streets in 1936.

Throughout its history West Monroe was affected by floods from the Ouachita River. The 1932 flood was especially destructive and as a result a new sea wall was built east of the commercial district by the late 1930s to help protect the city. Other improvements included the construction of a new highway bridge across the river in 1935. The old city hall was deemed to inadequate after World War II and a new city hall was built in 1949 at the corner of Natchitoches and Cypress Streets. Another major building constructed that year was the Masonic Hall on Trenton Street with modest Art Deco detailing.

Since the 1950s construction in downtown West Monroe has been limited and the commercial area reflects much of its turn of the 20th century heritage. Several buildings have been lost to fire or demolition but overall the area is an intact collection of period commercial buildings. In recent decades downtown West Monroe has become the tourism center known as "Antique Alley" and contains numerous antique and specialty shops. In recognition of the significance of this area the West Monroe Heritage Preservation Commission was formed in 1993 to provide design review and encourage rehabilitation and new construction in keeping with downtown's historic character.



The Cotton Port Historic District includes most of the downtown commercial area.



Map of the Cotton Port Historic District. The black line shows the original boundary and the red line is the expanded boundary of the district.

What is Historic Zoning?

Historic Zoning is a type of overlay zoning that provides for design review. Historic zoning does not affect base land use and property owners are subject to current zoning and building code regulations. The West Monroe Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), a citizen commission, is the architectural review board which reviews applications for work on properties within the zoning overlay districts based on design guidelines. The two existing zones currently in the city are the Old Cotton Port Historic Preservation District and the Don Juan Filhiol Historic Preservation District. The HPC's seven members are appointed by the mayor with the consent of the board by majority vote. The majority of the HPC must reside in the historic preservation districts and all must live in the city.

The HPC recognizes the unique needs of merchants and property owners in the commercial area and will work to achieve successful projects. The HPC works to resolve conflicts between proposals and the design guidelines by considering alternatives which accomplish the business goals of merchants and property owners while preserving the historic character of the district.

What are the Design Guidelines?

Design review is administered according to a set of design guidelines. The guidelines are criteria and standards which were originally developed by the HPC when the ordinance was adopted in 1993. From 1993 to 2011 these guidelines were used in determining the appropriateness and architectural compatibility of proposed projects. The guidelines also provided direction for project applicants and ensured that the decisions of the HPC were not arbitrary or based on personal taste. The HPC recognizes that each project is unique and each may have a different set of circumstances.

The design guidelines prepared in 2011 expand upon the original guidelines with additional text, drawings and photographs to illustrate more directly the unique character of the district along with recommendations for rehabilitation and new construction. The guidelines protect the district from alterations to historic structures that would lessen their architectural significance, new construction not in character with the district, and the loss of architecturally or historically important buildings. Image captions within this document provide suggestions and interpretations. By state and local law, guidelines for historic zoning districts must be in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, (The Secretary's Standards)* -- standards developed by the National Park Service and used by private and public preservation organizations throughout the country. *The Secretary's Standards* are reprinted in the appendix of this document.

Getting Approval for Your Project

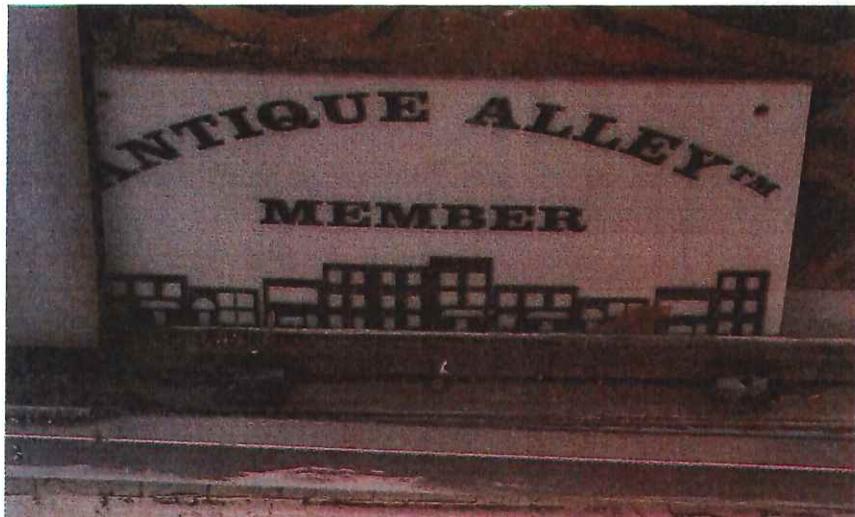
If you are planning to:

REHABILITATE the exterior of an existing structure,
BUILD a new structure,
ADD to an existing structure,
DEMOLISH all or part of a structure, or
ERECT any exterior **SIGNAGE** or **AWNING**,

1. Contact the West Monroe Planning and Zoning Office at City Hall, 2305 North 7th St. (318) 396-2600 to obtain an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). There is no fee for a COA.

2. Complete the COA with all requested documentation and return it to City Hall (City Secretary). In some cases, especially for minor work, the application may be approved administratively. If not, then the COA will be reviewed by the HPC. If the application is approved the COA is issued and the applicant can then obtain a Building Permit. If the COA is denied then the applicant can revise the application, take no further action or appeal to the West Monroe Board of Aldermen.

NOTE: Work done without a Certificate of Appropriateness is in violation of Section 12-7041 of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Work done without prior review and approval by the HPC is subject to fines and other penalties.



Preserving the Cotton Port Historic District's architecture supports its marketing and promotion as "Antique Alley."

II. REHABILITATION

Street Level Facades

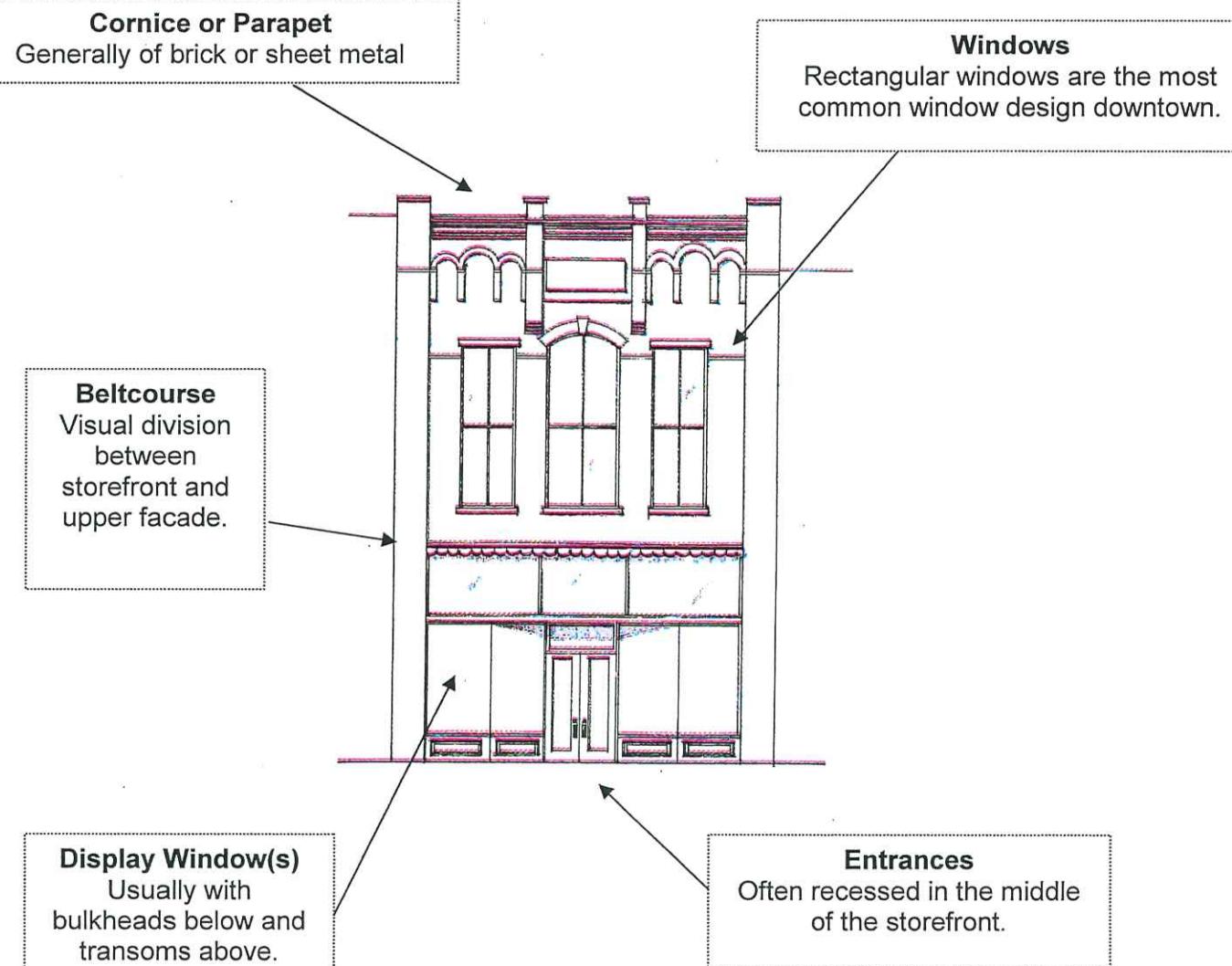
General Principles

Original street-level facades, including storefronts, doors and entryways, display windows, transoms, bulkheads, and pilasters and columns, should be retained, and if needed, repaired using historically appropriate materials and methods.

Replacements of street-level facades should be in keeping with the style and period of the building.

The use of contemporary materials for the replacement elements of street-level facades may be appropriate if they possess characteristics similar in scale, design finish, texture, durability, and detailing to historic materials and meet *The Secretary's Standards*.

FACADE COMPONENTS



Guidelines: Storefronts

1. Historic storefronts, their component elements, and other aspects of appearance including the original entrance configuration, plane, and recess should be retained.

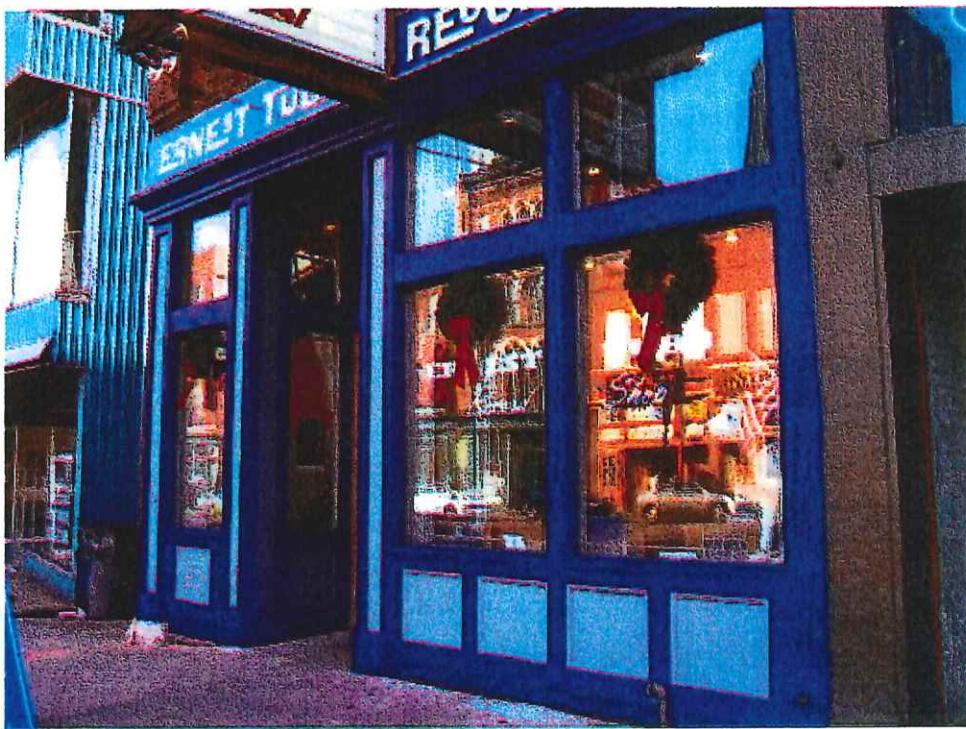


Historic storefronts such as this storefront at 204 Trenton Street should be retained and, if needed, repaired using materials that match the historic materials.

2. Deteriorated or damaged storefronts or component elements should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement storefronts or component elements are necessary, replacements should be compatible with the materials, composition, design, texture, and general appearance of the original. Replacements should use physical or photographic evidence to replicate the original appearance. If evidence is not available, the replacement storefront should use arrangement, features, materials, and proportions typically found on buildings of the same style and period of the building involved.



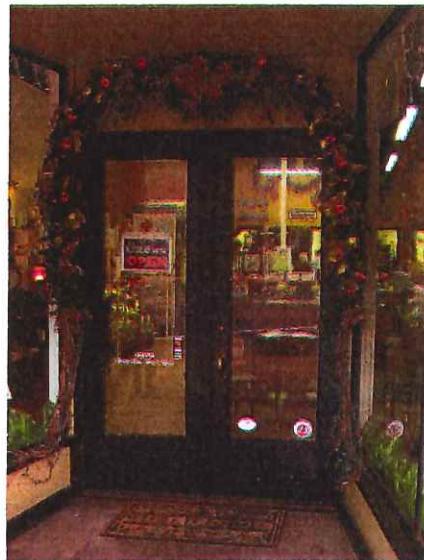
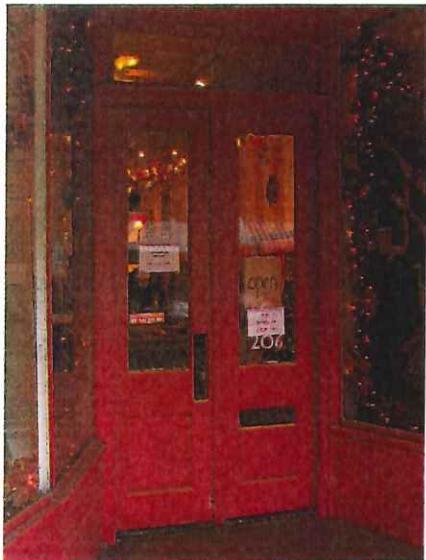
This original storefront at 303 Trenton Street retains its original bulkheads, transoms, recessed entrance and cast iron pilasters. This storefront will always be appropriate for the building and should be maintained, preserved and not altered.



If the original storefront is missing, adding a new storefront based on traditional designs is recommended. The new storefront shown above has appropriately sized frame bulkheads along with display windows, transoms and a recessed storefront.

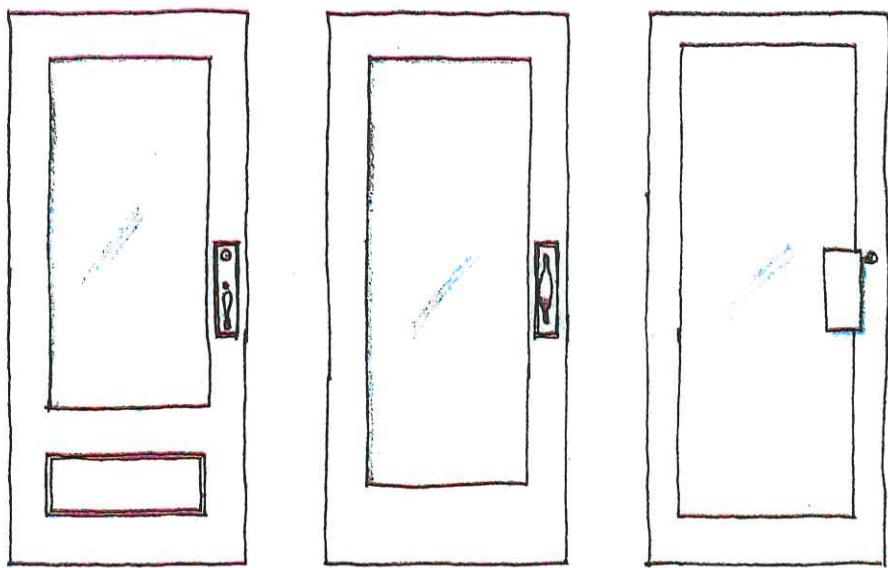
Guidelines: Doors and Entryways

1. Original doors, entryways, and related elements should be retained.



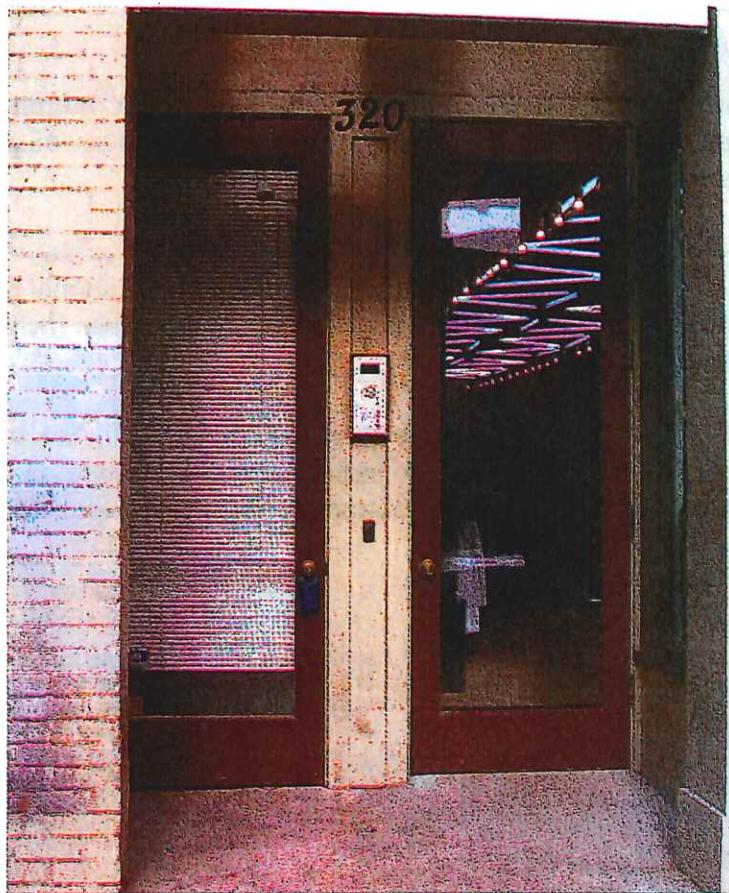
These and other historic doors should be retained. If repairs are needed, materials such as wood or wood epoxy should be used so that they continue to have their historic appearance.

2. Deteriorated or damaged doors or entryways should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement doors are necessary, replacements should replicate the originals. If original doors do not remain, replacement doors should be of wood and the proportion of glass to door should be comparable to the proportion of display windows to storefront.
4. If doors or entrances do not conform to building or accessibility codes, the originals should be retrofitted to conform. If this is not feasible, replacement doors should be compatible with the original storefront. Variances to building codes may also be sought when the building meets the intent of the code requirements.
5. If wood replacement doors are not feasible, or were not original to the building, dark or bronze anodized metal doors with a wide stile may be appropriate. Raw metal doors and doors without a glass pane are not appropriate. Glass used in replacement doors should be clear.



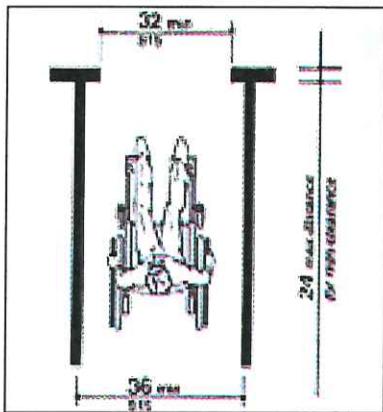
Appropriate replacement storefront door designs.

6. Generally, new entryways should not be introduced to public facades, unless needed for access to an upper floor or a secondary building use. If a new entrance is needed, it should be compatible with the style and period of the building.



If the original door is missing, replace it with a new single-light glass and wood door as shown above.

7. When retrofitting doors to allow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, maintain historic doors; do not widen door frames on facades. If historic doors are missing, widening the entrance is a possibility. Typical guidelines require a minimum of a 32" clear opening with manageable door opening pressures. Ideally, retain and upgrade historic doors with a device to reduce door pressure.



Most commercial buildings in the Cotton Port Historic District have entrances that are 32" in width and meet ADA compliance. The use of push plates as shown on the right to open doors is an option if needed.



The use of lever handles on new doors is recommended to assist with ADA compliance.

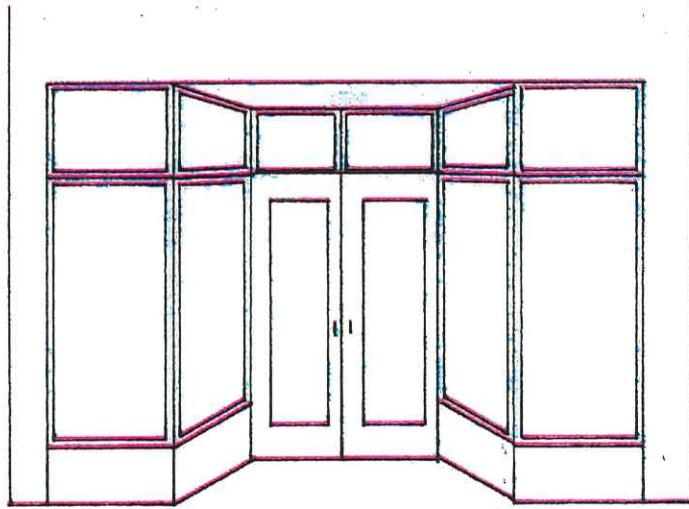
Guidelines: Display Windows

1. Original display windows and their component elements should be retained.



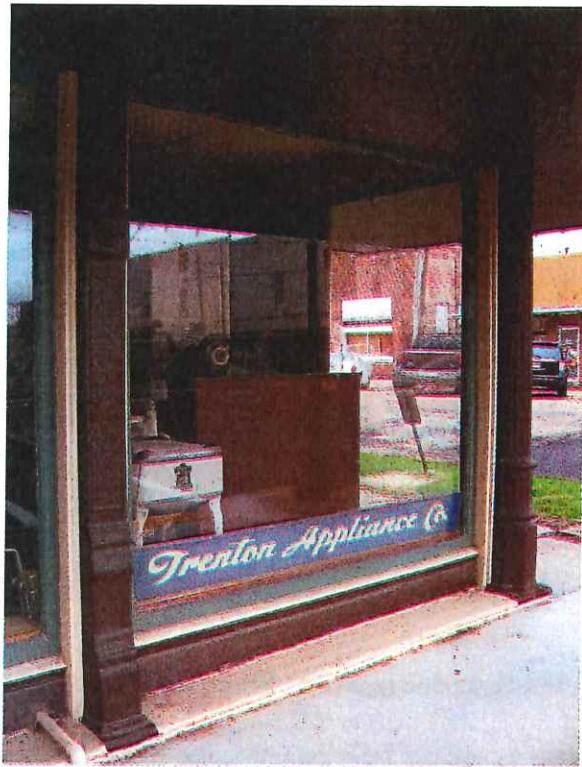
Original display windows like this one at 210 Trenton Street should be retained and, if needed, repaired using materials that preserve their historic appearance.

2. Deteriorated or damaged display windows should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement display windows are necessary, replacements should replicate the originals. If original display windows do not exist, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period.



New storefronts should have appropriately sized and configured display windows.

4. Appropriate replacement elements include individual or grouped single-light clear-glass panes and simple wood, copper, bronze anodized aluminum, or baked-enamel aluminum frames.
5. Glazing should be clear glass. Ornamental, frosted, spandrel, or stained glass display windows are not appropriate.



This original display window retains original signage and is located at 300 Trenton Street.

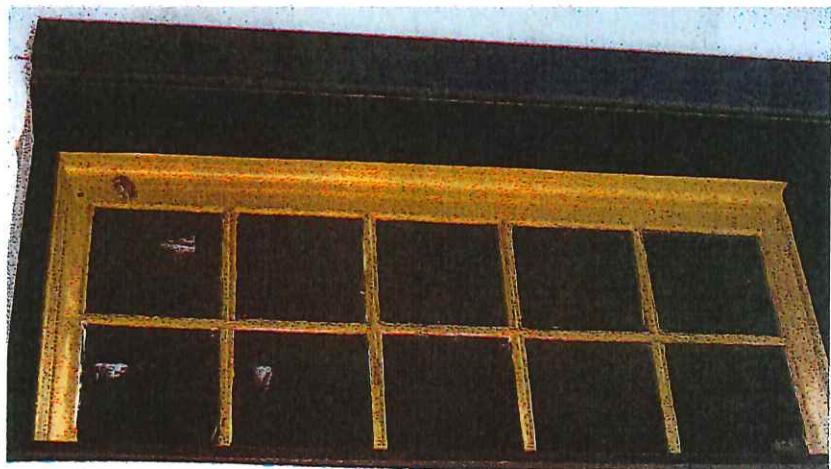
6. Display windows should remain visible and not be concealed or enclosed.
7. If privacy or shade other than that afforded by awnings is needed, interior shades or blinds are appropriate.



New display windows should be appropriately designed and with clear glass such as shown above.

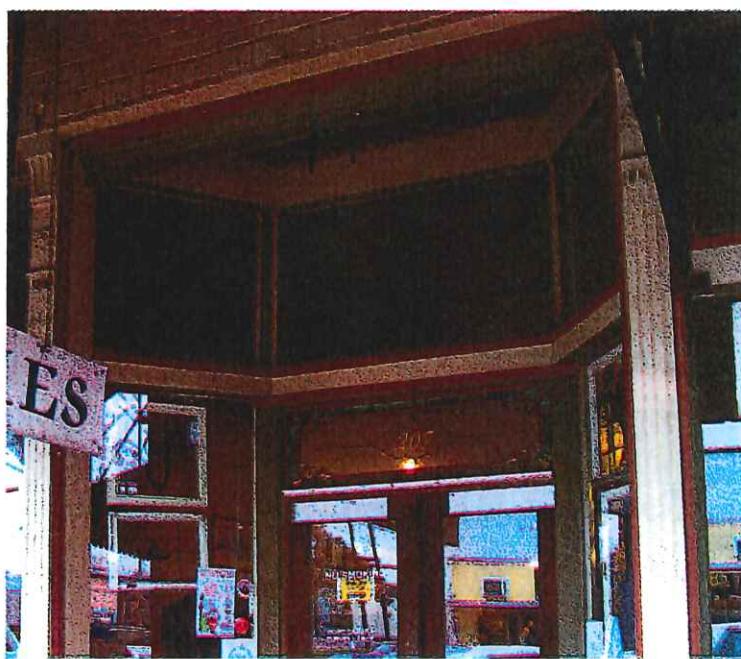
Guidelines: Transoms

1. Original transoms and their component elements should be retained.



Historic transoms such as this ten-light design at 303 Trenton Street should be retained and preserved.

2. Deteriorated or damaged transoms should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement transoms are necessary, replacements should replicate the original. If original transoms do not exist, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period.
4. Appropriate replacement elements include single or multi-light clear-glass panes and simple wooden or metal frames.

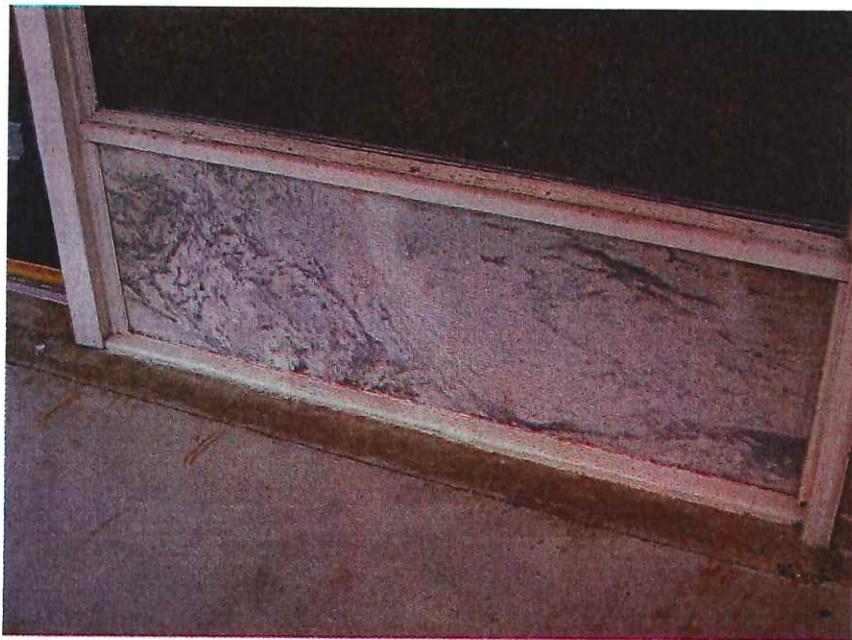


The large single-light transoms at 207 Trenton Street are essential to the historic storefront's design.

5. Historic transoms should remain visible and not be covered or enclosed.

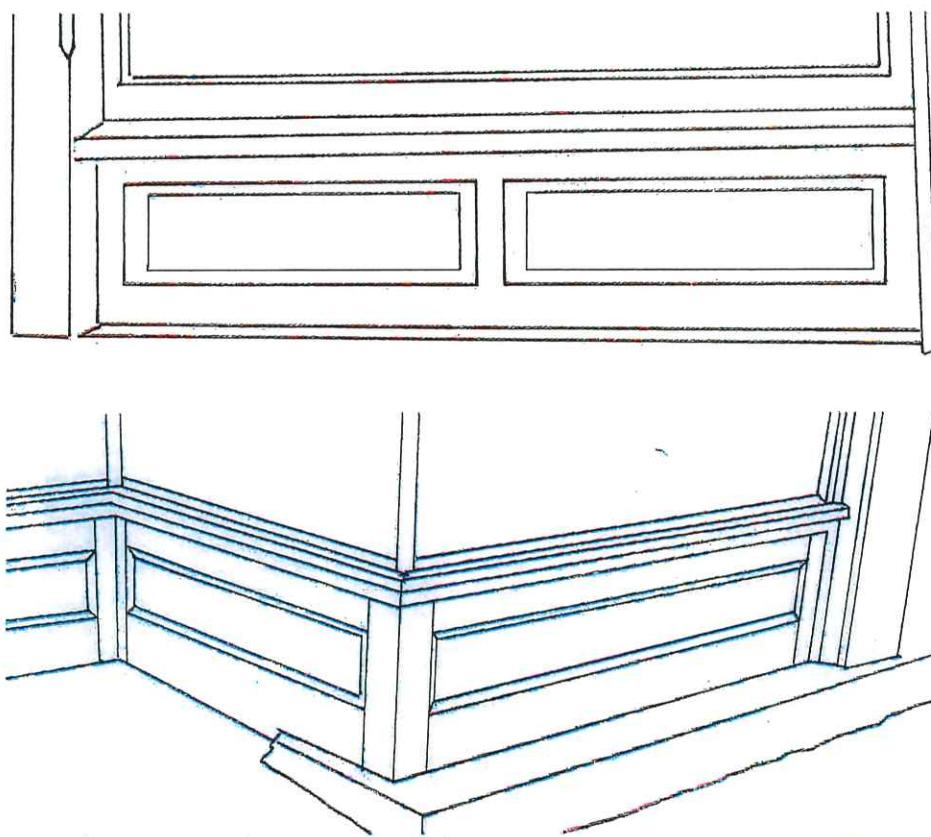
Guidelines: Bulkheads

1. Original bulkheads and their component elements should be retained.



Both the original frame bulkhead and marble bulkhead at 310 Wood Street are historic. These materials should be retained and preserved. If needed, they should be repaired using materials that allow them to retain their historic appearance.

2. Deteriorated or damaged bulkheads should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement bulkheads are necessary, replacements should replicate originals. If original bulkheads do not exist, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period of construction.



Appropriate designs for frame bulkheads if original bulkheads are missing.

4. Appropriate replacement elements include paneled and painted wood, brick, and metal.

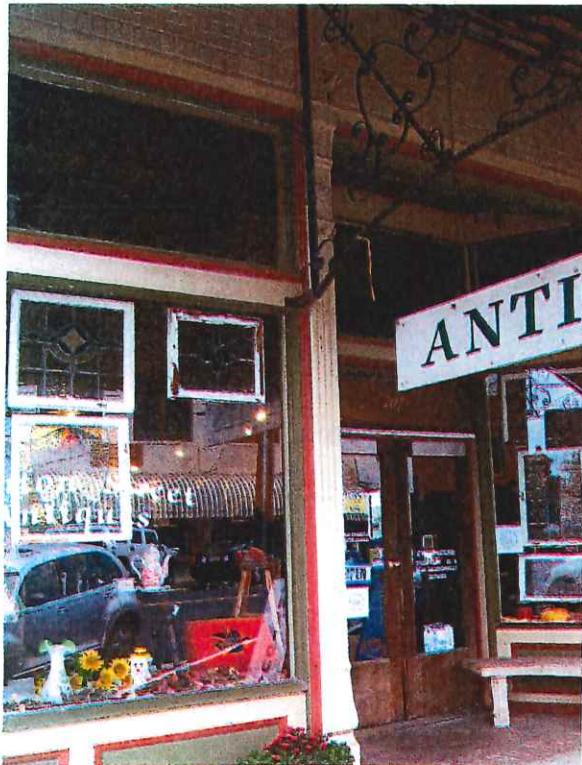


The painted, paneled wood at 207 Trenton Street is an appropriate modern bulkhead design.

5. Historic bulkhead materials should remain visible, not concealed beneath added materials.

Guidelines: Cast Iron Pilasters, and Columns

1. Original pilasters and columns should be retained.
2. Applying paint or another surface treatment is an appropriate preservation measure.

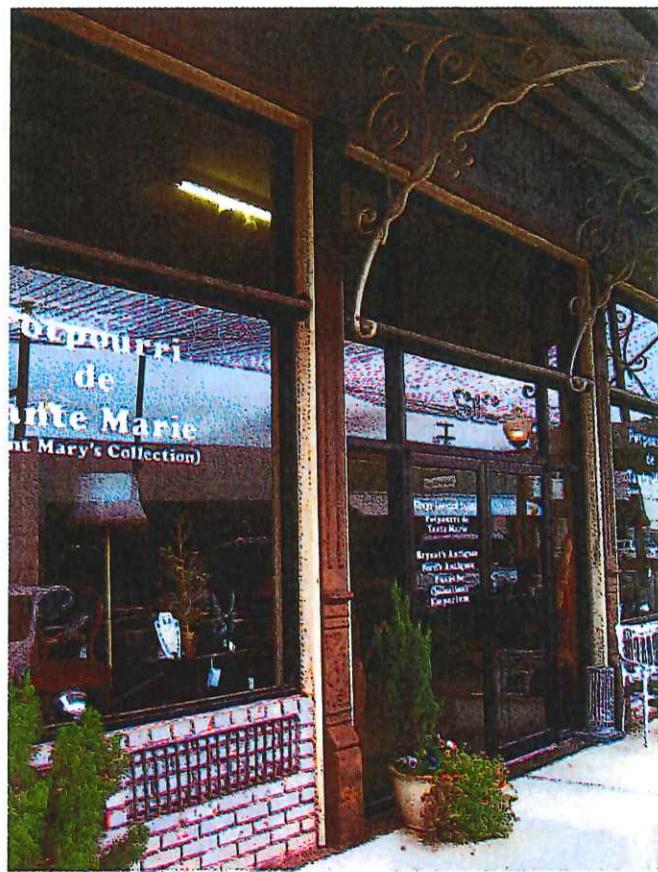


The cast-iron pilaster at 207 Trenton Street are important structural and design elements to the building.

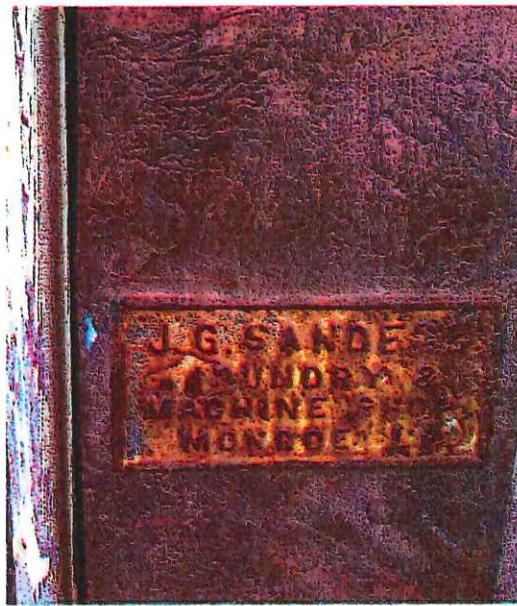


Cast-iron pilasters should be painted to highlight their decorative features such as at 323 Trenton Street.

3. Deteriorated or damaged columns and pilasters should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
4. If replacement pilasters or columns are necessary, replacements should replicate originals.
5. Appropriate replacement materials include wood, cast iron, and stone.
6. Owners are encouraged to replace pilasters and columns that were original to the building but have been removed.



Cast iron was widely used downtown such as at 312 Trenton Street...



...some of which was manufactured across the river in Monroe by the J.G. Sanders Foundry and Machine Shop.

Guidelines: Cornices

1. Original brick and tile cornices and other detailing should be retained.
2. Deteriorated or damaged cornices or other detailing should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement cornices are necessary, replacements should replicate the originals. If original cornices do not exist, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period.



Most buildings in the district have simple corbelled brick cornices and these should be preserved and not covered or concealed (312 Trenton Street).

4. Owners are encouraged to replace cornices that were original to the building but have been removed. If photographic or physical evidence exists, the rebuilding of sheet metal cornices is appropriate.



Several buildings in the district have cornices of clay tile. These materials are important to defining the age and character of the building and should be preserved and repaired if necessary with compatible materials (323 Trenton Street).

Facades

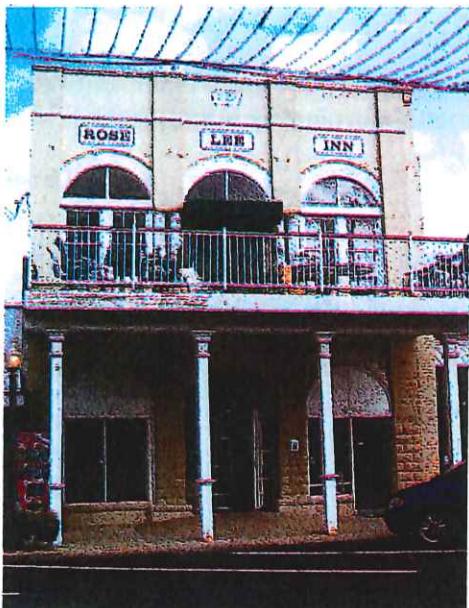
General Principles

Original façades and their component elements should be retained and, if needed, repaired using historically appropriate materials and methods.

Replacements to facades should be in keeping with the style and period of the building.

The use of contemporary materials for the replacement elements of facades may be appropriate if they possess characteristics similar in scale, design finish, texture, durability, and detailing to historic materials and meet *The Secretary's Standards*.

Interior changes that affect the exterior appearance of upper facades including changing original floor levels should be avoided.



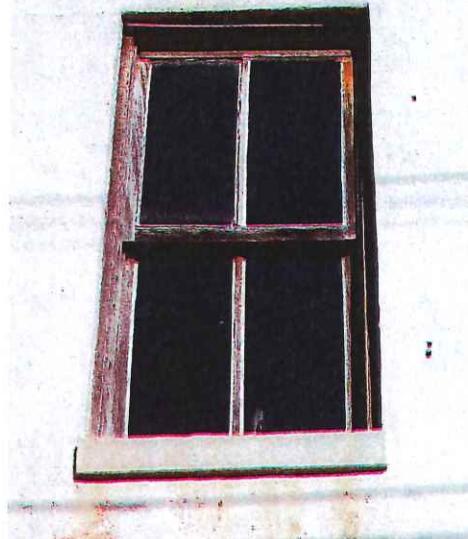
The Cotton Port Historic District displays several two-story buildings with a variety of upper façade designs from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Guidelines: Windows

1. Historic window openings, windows, and window surrounds should be retained.

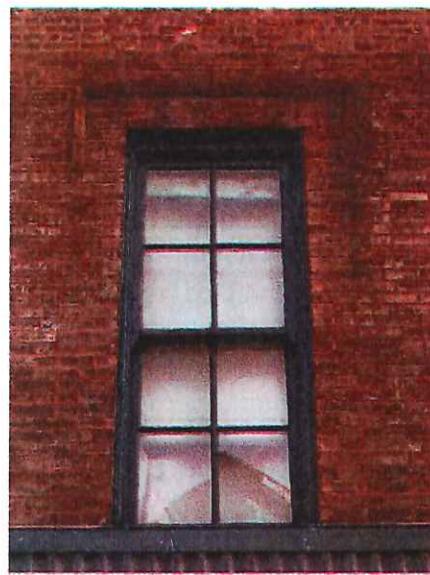


This historic metal window should be repaired as needed and retained (301 Trenton Street).



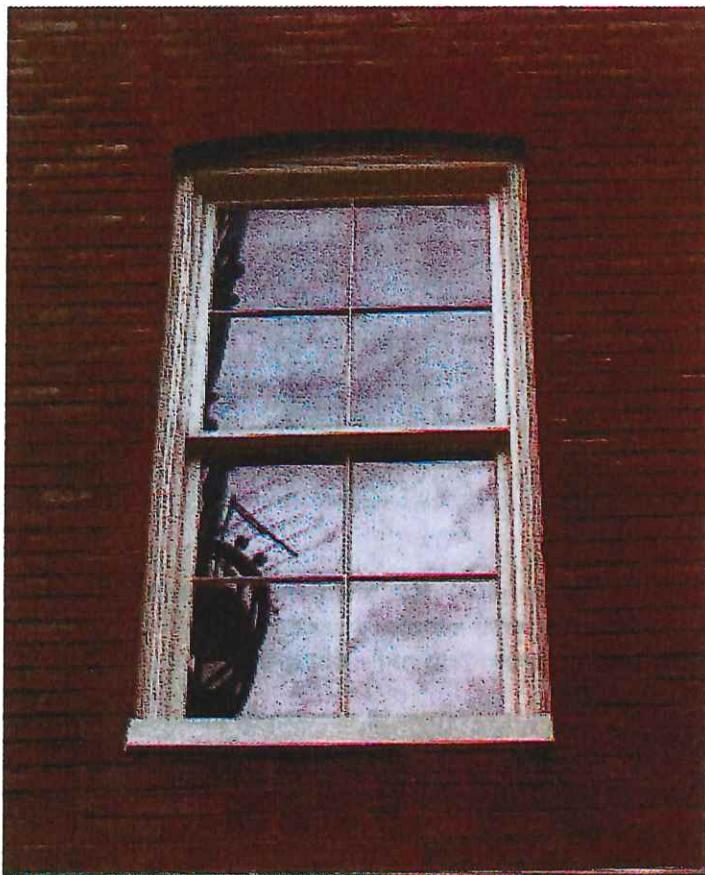
Original two-over-two window at 214-216 Trenton Street. Historic windows and window components should be preserved and retained.

2. Deteriorated or damaged window openings, windows, and window surrounds should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. If replacement windows or window surrounds are necessary, replacements should replicate originals. If original windows do not exist, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period.

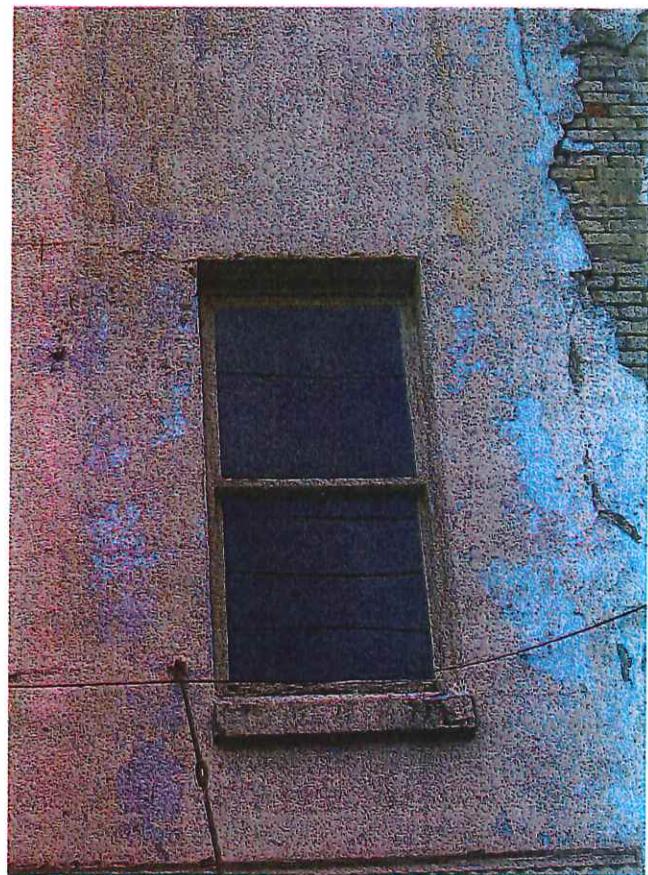


This modern replacement window is an appropriate design for this building and has a wood frame, clear glass panes, and a double-hung four-over-four configuration.

4. If the original windows are missing, replacement windows should use wood, anodized aluminum, or baked-on-enamel aluminum frames and should have single-light or multiple-light clear-glass panes to match the style and period of the building. Steel windows should be replaced with steel or aluminum designs that replicate the appearance of the original window.



Appropriate modern four-over-four sash replacement window.



Adding a full-view or one-over-one storm window would be an appropriate energy saving method for this original window at 229 Trenton Street.

5. Window openings, surrounds, or other elements not original to a building should generally not be introduced to the public facades of the building. The installation of such window openings on the rear of the building may be appropriate.
6. Should storm windows be desired, their dimensions should match window dimensions in order to conceal their presence. Frames should be set within the window opening and attach to the exterior sash stop; if aluminum, they should have an anodized or baked-on enamel finish.
7. Self installed snap, clip or glue type muntins on windows are not permitted. Muntins set within the vacuum between glass panes on windows are not approved.
8. Window grilles and balcony rails are not appropriate window treatments. Shutters are only appropriate when they replace original wood shutters and should be operable.

Guidelines: Walls

1. Original walls, including plane, openings, recesses, detailing, and ornamentation, should be retained.



Original façade walls should be retained without the addition of balconies or other non-historic building elements.

2. Balconies should not be added to public facades unless based on photographic or physical evidence.



The Cotton Port Historic District has buildings facing two primary streets. While the main orientation is towards Trenton Street, the elevations facing Cotton and Commerce Streets are also important. For example, the Masonic Building elevation at Cotton Street also displays structural glass blocks and other Art Deco elements in its upper façade.

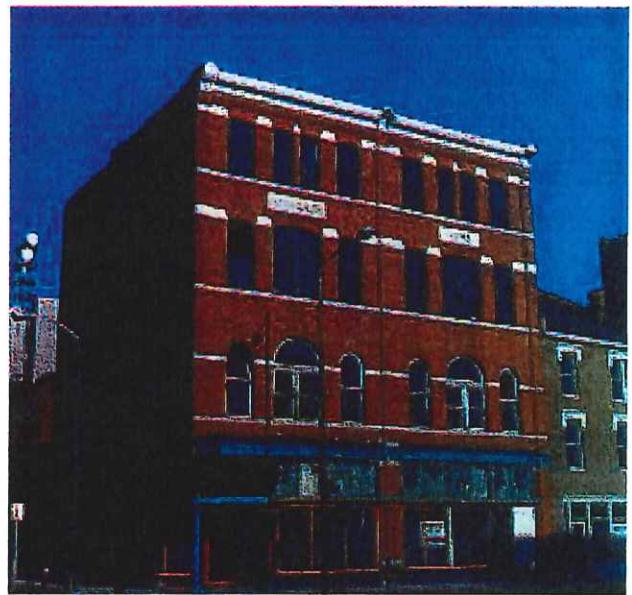
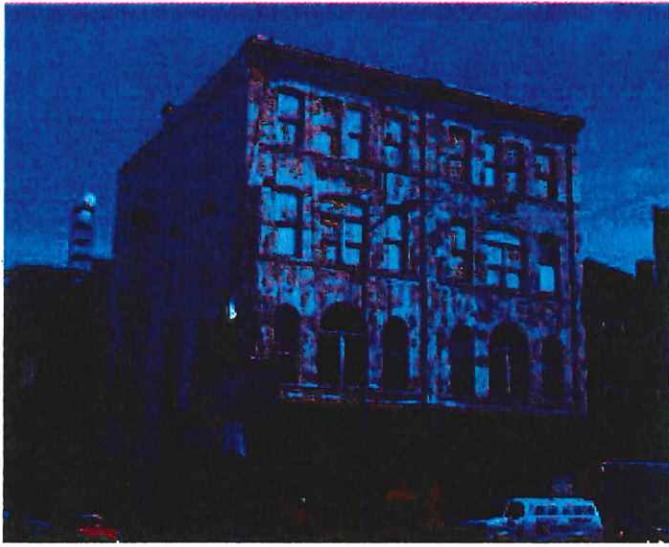
Guidelines: Brick, Stone, and Other Masonry

1. Historic masonry (brick, stone, and terra cotta) should be retained.



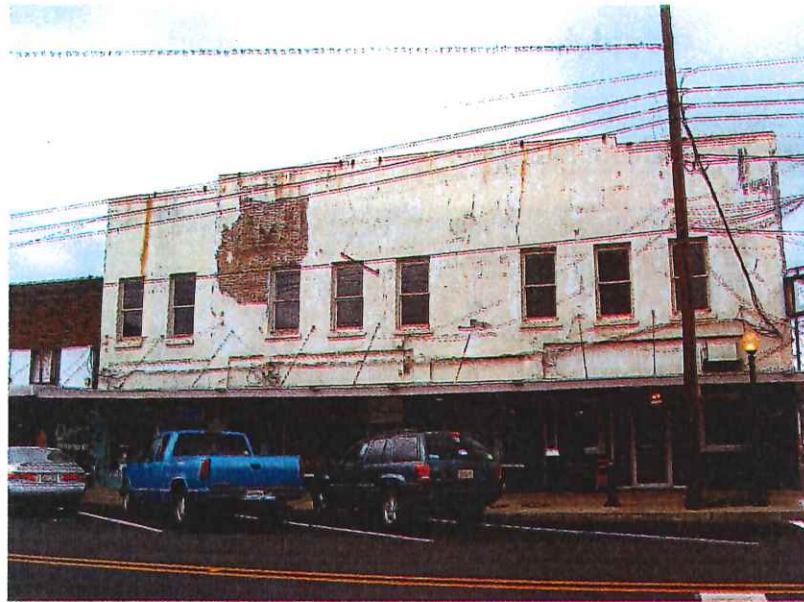
Preserve and maintain historic masonry such as brick and concrete (230 Trenton Street).

2. The use of detergent cleaners and chemical stain and paint removers to clean masonry or remove paint is appropriate under most conditions. Abrasive or high-pressure cleaning methods are destructive and should not be used.



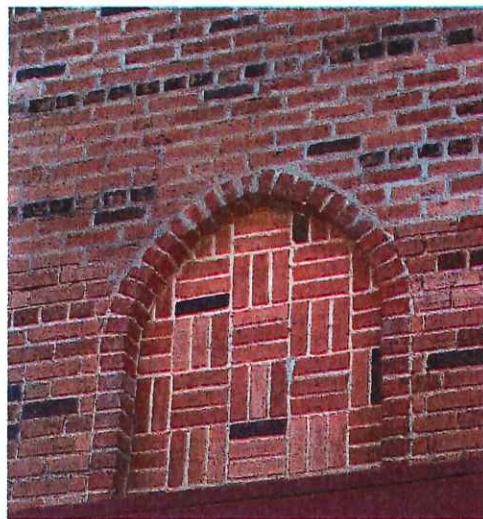
Paint and stains may be removed from masonry surfaces through chemical cleaning methods.

3. Silicone-based water sealants are not recommended for use on historic masonry.
4. Historic masonry should remain visible and not be concealed or obscured.



Property owners are encouraged to remove added surfaces such as stucco and restore the original brick beneath (229-233 Trenton Street).

5. Deteriorated or damaged brick and stone should be repaired with materials that match the original.
6. Repointing with a hard (Portland cement) mortar is destructive to historic brick and masonry. Flexible mortar, made from mixing hydrated lime cement and natural sand, should be used when repointing is necessary.
7. Mortar used in repointing should match the historic mortar in width, depth, color, raking profile, composition, and texture.
8. Bricks should be the same color and size as those of the historic wall and should be laid, jointed, tooled, and mortared in the same way as the historic wall.



Decorative brickwork on the upper facades of buildings should be preserved and repointed as necessary with brick and mortar to match the original (111 Cotton Street).

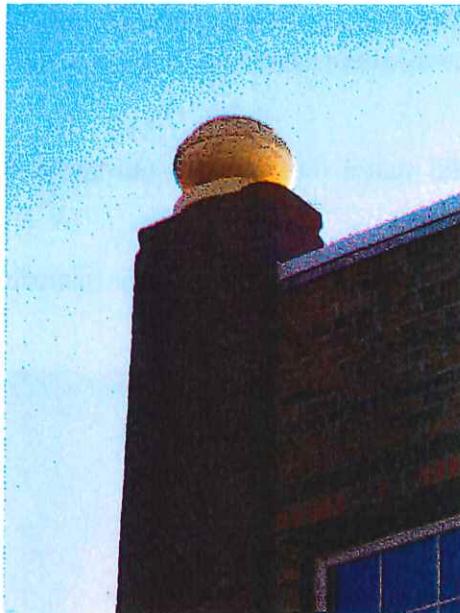
9. The guidelines for paint should be followed for work to brick, stone, and other masonry.

Guidelines: Decorative Elements

1. Original decorative elements such as cornices, brick corbelling, datestones, brackets, balconies, and detailing should be retained without alteration.



Decorative shield datestone at 310 Wood Street.



Decorative concrete urn at the roof of 111 Cotton Street.

2. Deteriorated, damaged, or missing decorative elements should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.
3. Owners should not add decorative elements to a building, unless there is physical or pictorial evidence.
4. Decorative or ornamental detailing should not be added to buildings unless there is physical or photographic evidence that shows the detailing was original to the building. New designs should be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

Guidelines: Roofs and Chimneys

1. Historic roofs, chimneys, and related elements should be retained.



Almost all of the buildings in the historic district have flat roofs or sloping roofs with few visible chimneys above the roof line.

2. Guidelines for brick and mortar should be followed for chimney maintenance.
3. Deteriorated or damaged roofs and chimneys should be repaired using historically appropriate materials and methods.
4. Guidelines for brick and mortar should be followed for chimney repair.
5. If replacement roofs or chimneys are necessary, replacements should be appropriate for the building's style and period.
6. Appropriate roof coverings include standing seam metal, composite asphalt, rolled roofing, and rubber membrane roofing. Most rooflines in the Cotton Port district are flat or sloped while a small number retain original gable roof forms. These roof forms should not be altered unless based on historical documentation.
7. Rooftop locations concealed from pedestrian view are appropriate places for climate control and other mechanical systems. Mechanical systems should be located at the rear façade and screened.

Paint

General Principle

The painting of wood and metal surfaces is not reviewed by the HPC. Unless needed to cover mismatched or damaged masonry, or as a preservation measure for pitted brick, masonry not previously painted or stained should remain unpainted and unstained.

Guidelines: Paint

1. Building owners are encouraged to remove paint from masonry. Gentle, non-abrasive chemical cleaning is an appropriate way to remove paint.
2. Painting of stone and brick is generally not appropriate.



Unpainted stone and brick should remain unpainted unless it was historically painted or if painting becomes needed to preserve the materials (311 Natchitoches Street).

3. The painting or staining of masonry may be appropriate if: brick has previously been painted; or if brick has been sandblasted or otherwise damaged and is too deteriorated to withstand weather. A brick color approximating the original color of the building's brick should be used.
4. Historic painted signage on exterior brick walls should be maintained.
5. Brick sealers are not recommended for exterior brick as it may cause damage to the brick face over time.

Rear Elevations

General Principle

Most buildings facing Trenton Street in the Cotton Port Historic District also have important elevations facing Cotton and Commerce Streets. While Trenton Street is the primary façade, the elevations along Cotton and Commerce Streets are also significant and should not be overlooked. Rear elevations are generally more service-oriented and are the locations for infrastructure elements such as gutters and downspouts, mechanical systems, and fire stairs. Despite their less public nature, original materials and features should be preserved and maintained on these elevations. Methods to coordinate designs with adjacent buildings as well as centralize and coordinate trash receptacles should be considered.

Guidelines: Rear Elevations

1. Generally, original materials and features on rear elevations should be preserved and maintained.
2. The appearance of rear elevations can be enhanced through the screening of infrastructure elements and the use of signage and awnings.
3. Rear elevations are appropriate locations for mechanical systems, meters and fire stairs.



Rear elevations such as at 312 Commerce Street are traditional locations for mechanical units, gutters and downspouts and secondary entrances.



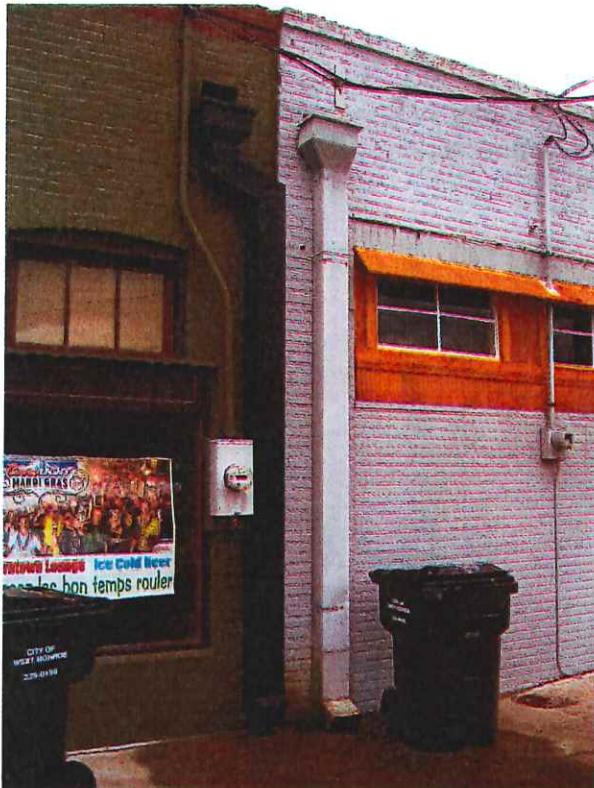
This building elevation facing 120 Cotton Street displays an original storefront that could be enhanced through more appropriate doors, awnings and paint colors.



This row of trash receptacles along the 100 block of Cotton Street are unsightly and consolidation or interior storage should be considered.

Guidelines: Gutters and Downspouts

1. Generally, gutters and downspouts should not be located on the public façades of buildings. Such elements should be installed on the rear elevations of buildings.
2. The installation of gutters and downspouts should not result in the removal or obstruction of historic building elements.



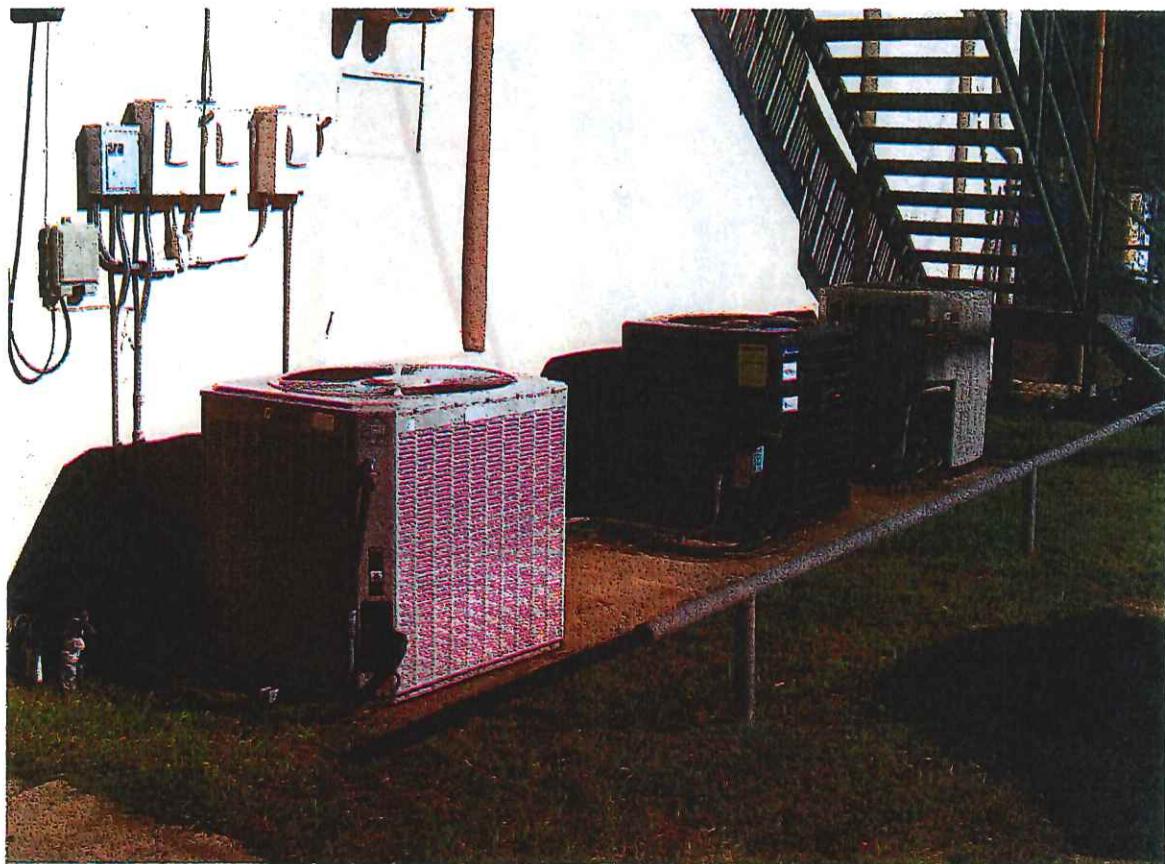
Downspouts should be in dark colors or painted to blend with the paint or masonry color (114-116 Cotton Street).



Downspouts should channel water away from the building foundation.

Guidelines: Mechanical Systems

1. Equipment such as condensers, air conditioners, meters, and conduits should not be visible from the street. Rear elevations and roof locations that are not visible from the public rights-of-way are appropriate locations for this equipment.
2. The installation of mechanical systems should not result in the removal or obstruction of historic building elements.
3. Landscape elements such as fencing or low masonry walls should be used to shield ground-level equipment from view and still allow service access.



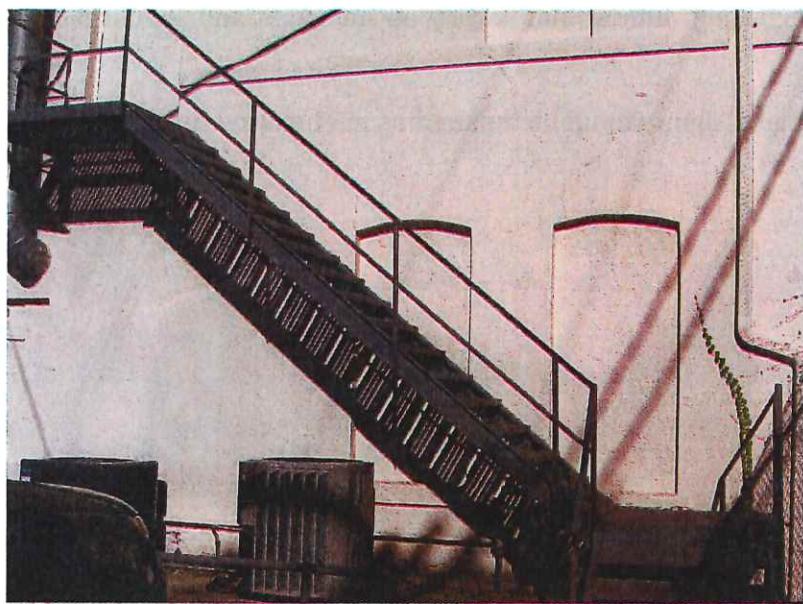
Mechanical units such as these condensers at the rear of 101 Cotton Street should be screened through landscaping or fencing.

Guidelines: Fire Escapes

1. Fire escapes should be located on rear elevations. Their installation on public facades is not recommended.
2. Fire escapes may be either open or enclosed as required by fire codes.
3. If enclosed, their surfaces should be of wood siding, brick veneer, or stucco.
4. If open, they should be of metal or wood.



Wood staircases are most appropriate for the historic district such as at the rear of 318 Trenton Street.



Metal fire escapes may also be appropriate for rear elevations (101 Cotton Street).

III. SIGNAGE AND IDENTITY

Signage

General Principle

Flexibility in placement, materials, and design has historically been typical of signage in the Cotton Port Historic District. Placement, materials, and design used should replicate those typically used between 1850 and 1960. Review is required only for permanent signs that are mounted on the exterior of buildings or anchored freestanding on the property. Signage within display windows, transoms, and upper-story windows, and temporary signs are not reviewed.

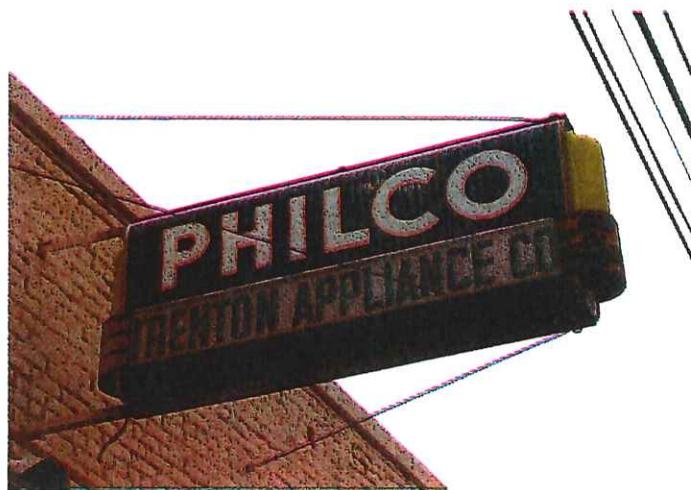
Guidelines: Signage

1. Historic signs or reproductions and their component elements should be retained.

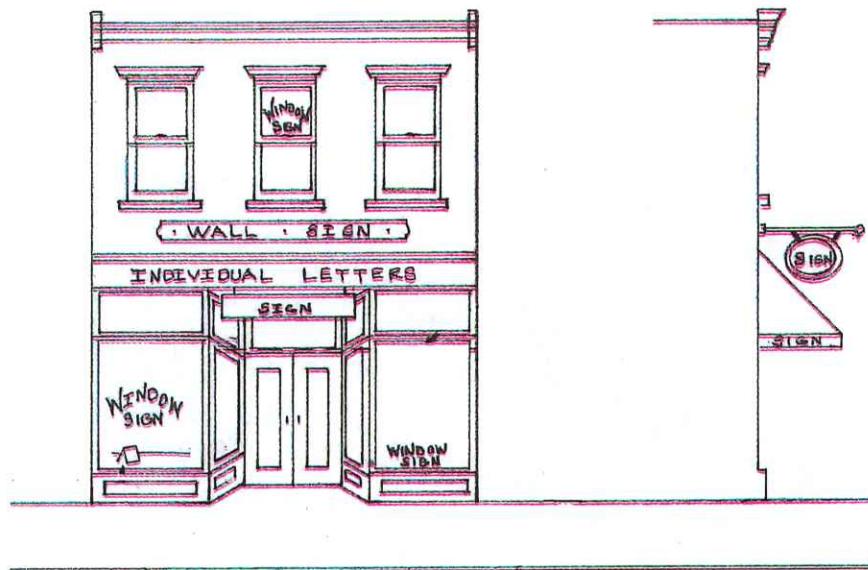


Downtown has several reproduction wall signs based on historic designs such as this Coca-Cola sign at 300 Trenton Street. These signs add interest and variety on the street and should be retouched as needed and retained.

2. Deteriorated or damaged signs should be repaired using historically appropriate materials.

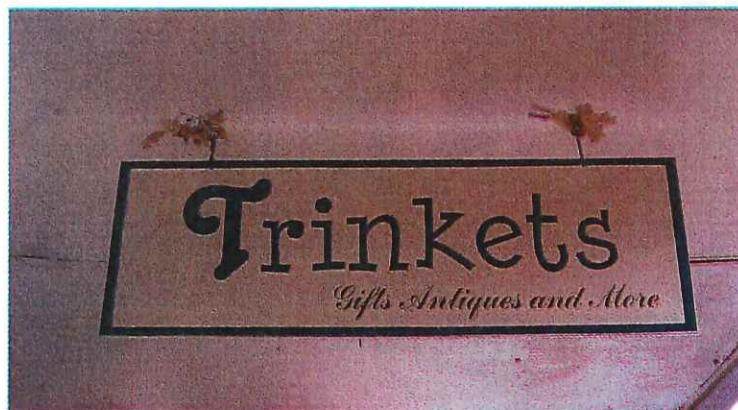


Historic signs should be preserved and maintained (310 Commerce Street).



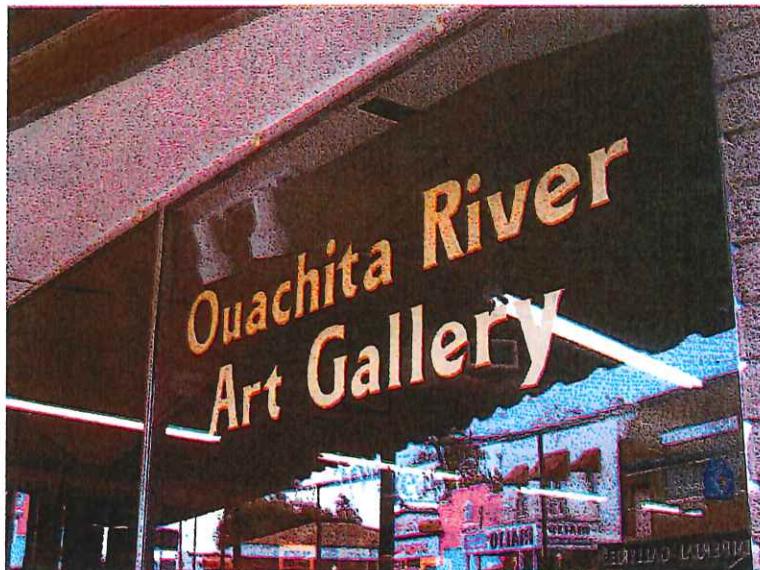
Appropriate signage placement.

3. Signage should be placed in locations historically used for signage and should not obscure transoms, columns, cornices, decorative elements, or architectural features.
4. The number of signs permitted on a parcel shall be limited to the number of primary building entrances on the parcel plus one for each public street on which the parcel has frontage. Window signs are not reviewed.
5. Projecting or blade signs on the upper façade should be limited to one-story in height and should be vertical in orientation.
6. The projection of signs should be proportional and appropriately scaled to the building. At a maximum, signs should not project more than seven feet from the building.
7. Storefront-level signage, flush or projecting, should be pedestrian oriented. It should be appropriately scaled so that its style, size, and placement relates to overall storefront design.



This hanging sign at 229 Trenton Street has appropriate size, scale, and materials for the district.

8. Signage materials and design should approximate materials and design typically used between 1850 and 1957. These may include materials such as wood, metal, and neon.
9. Signage painted on storefront display windows is appropriate.



Appropriate painted window sign at 308 Trenton Street.

10. Signage mounted on poles or pylons is discouraged when opportunities exist to appropriately design and place monument or building-mounted signage. Ground-mounted signs may only be permitted when a building face is set back from the public right-of-way a distance of at least twenty feet or when a parcel is vacant.
11. Upper floor window graphics and lettering are appropriate.
12. Signage painted on brick side walls may be appropriate. Its size and placement should be compatible to historic examples in the district.



Appropriate projecting sign at 303 Trenton Street.

13. Concealed, indirect, or spot lighting is appropriate for exterior signage. Visible fluorescent or incandescent bulbs are not appropriate.
14. Backlit or internally illuminated signage, other than neon, is not appropriate.
15. Neon may be used as backlighting for reverse channel letters, which have a translucent face. The depth of channel letters should be kept to a minimum.
16. Flush mounted neon box signs are not appropriate. Neon transformers should be located within the building, not within a sign box.
17. String, flashing, or racing lights are not appropriate.
18. Banners and flags that use placement, mounts, and materials compatible to the building may be used. Plastic is not an appropriate material.
19. Signage applied to the glass within display windows or transoms and temporary signs such as sandwich boards, temporary sale advertising, and real estate signs are not reviewed by the HPC.



Sandwich boards are also appropriate for the historic district as long as they are sized correctly and do not block sidewalks.

Awnings and Canopies

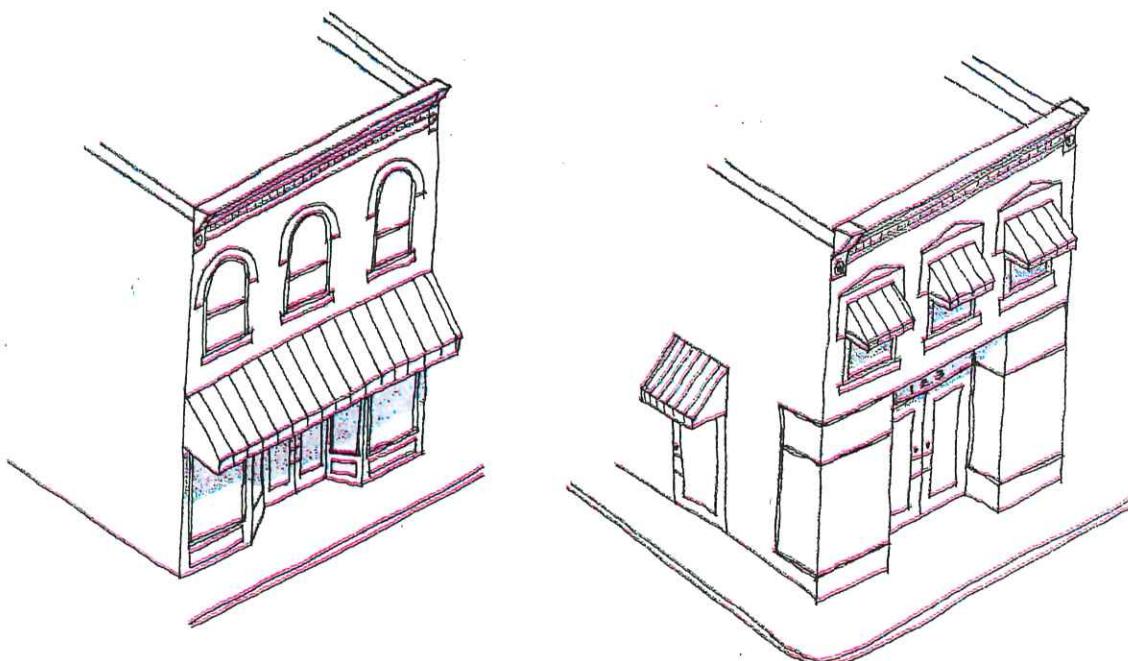
General Principle

Awnings were historically common in the Cotton Port Historic District for both storefronts and upper façade windows. The installation of appropriate awnings is encouraged. Awnings are appropriate when located within existing window and storefront opening and are consistent with the overall character of the building in terms of type, size, placement, color, and material.

Wood canopies anchored by metal rods may be appropriate if the building originally possessed such a canopy and this can be demonstrated through photographic or physical evidence. Such designs should be architecturally compatible with the overall storefront design in terms of size, location, color, and material, and not detract from the character of the building.

Guidelines: Awnings

1. Awnings should be placed in locations historically used for awnings and should not obstruct transoms, columns, cornices, or other architectural features. Appropriate storefront placement is across the storefront above the transom.



The placement of these awnings above the storefront transom, above an existing secondary entrance, and above existing upper façade windows is appropriate.

2. Awnings may be fixed or retractable.
3. Storefront awnings should project no more than seven feet from the building and should cover no more than one-third of a storefront window display height.

4. The most appropriate design for awnings is a shed form. The use of shed awnings for upper façade windows is also appropriate. Curved forms are not appropriate, unless there is historical evidence for their use on a building.



The placement, above the storefront and transom, materials an shed form of this awning are appropriate. As in this example, awnings may include street numbers or signage (113 Cotton Street).

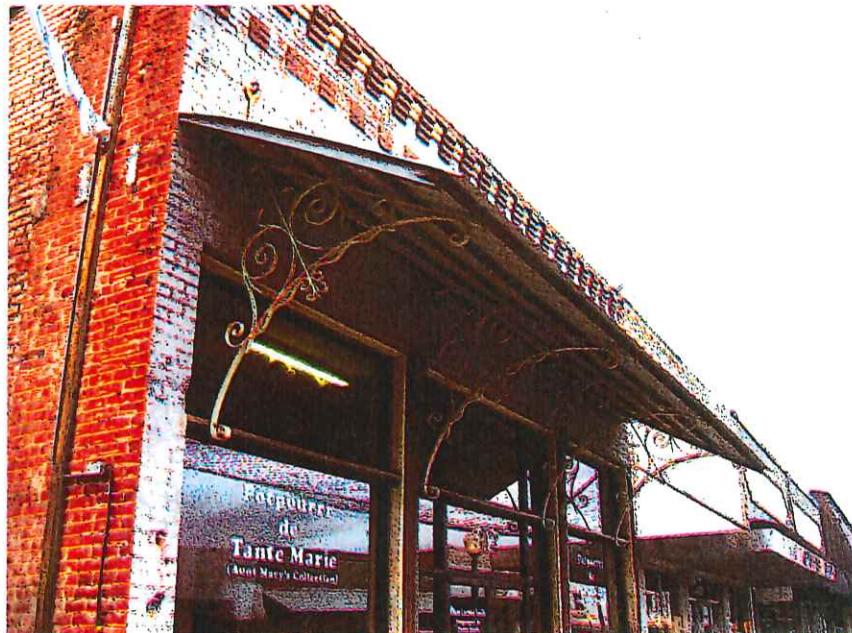
5. Awnings may contain graphics or signage, but may not be backlit. Spotlighting of awnings from above is appropriate.
6. Opaque canvas, cotton duck, or similar natural materials are appropriate for awnings. Plastic or vinyl awnings should not be used.



Awning valences are appropriate locations for signage (209 Trenton Street).

Guidelines: Canopies

1. Canopies should not obscure windows or architectural details.
2. Canopies should be constructed of materials compatible with the storefront of the building, such as metal and wood.
3. Lighting and signage on canopies shall be consistent with guidelines for signage and awnings.



Canopies should not obscure openings or architectural details. They should be constructed of materials compatible with building materials, such as metal and/or wood (312 Trenton Street).

Lighting

General Principle

Light fixtures should be as simple and unobtrusive as possible.

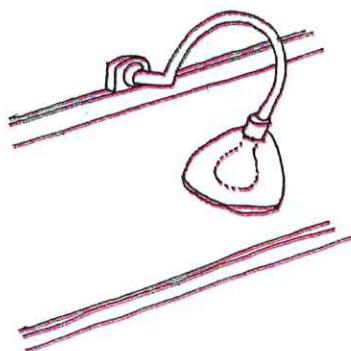
Guidelines: Lighting

1. If lighting is installed, it should be concealed or simple and unobtrusive in design, materials, and relationship to other façade or elevation elements.
2. Light should be directed toward the façade instead of outward. Building facades may be illuminated through uplights mounted above the storefront cornice.
3. Dark metals are appropriate materials for light fixtures.



The simple design, inward direction of the light, and dark metal construction of this light fixture make it appropriate (310 Wood Street).

4. Concealed, indirect, or spot lighting is appropriate for exterior signage. Visible fluorescent or incandescent bulbs are not appropriate.



Modern gooseneck light fixtures based on historic designs are also appropriate for the district.

IV. NEW CONSTRUCTION

New Construction

General Principles

New construction should be consistent with existing buildings along a street in terms of height, scale, setback, and rhythm; relationship of materials, texture, details, and color; roof shape; orientation; and proportion and rhythm of openings.

Because new buildings usually relate to an established pattern and rhythm of existing buildings, the dominance of that pattern and rhythm must be respected and not disrupted.

New buildings must be constructed to a height that is compatible with the height of adjacent buildings. For the Cotton Port Historic District this would ideally be no more than two stories but three-story buildings may also be compatible depending on location and context.

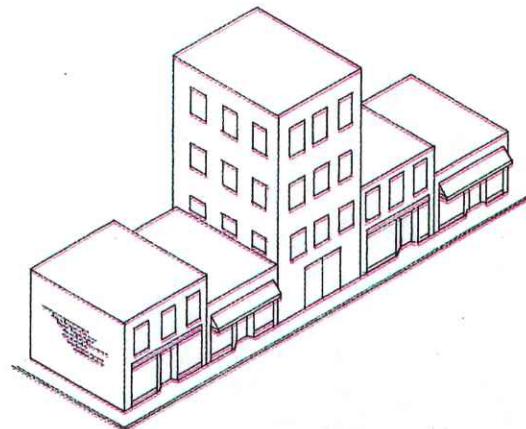
Reconstruction of a historic building which no longer exists may be appropriate if it meets these criteria: it was formerly located on the site on which the reconstruction is proposed; it contributed to the historic and architectural integrity of the area; it was compatible in terms of style, height, scale, massing, and materials with the buildings immediately surrounding the site; and pictorial documentation supports its accuracy.



There are several vacant lots in and adjacent to the Cotton Port Historic District. These lots provide opportunities for compatible infill as part of downtown economic development. This vacant lot is at the corner of Wood and Trenton Streets.

Guidelines: Height

1. Construct new buildings to a height compatible with existing adjacent buildings. New buildings should have the same number of stories and be within ten percent of the average height of existing buildings as seen from the street and publically accessible areas.



NO – The new building in the middle of the block is too tall for this historic district.

Guidelines: Scale

1. The size of a new building, its mass in relation to open spaces, and its windows, doors, openings, and appurtenances should be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.
2. In the event that multiple lots or parcels are assembled within the historic district, buildings shall be designed to be compatible with the adjacent structures. New structures should employ design techniques to break the facades along the right-of-way into multiple vertical elevations as previously described.



A new building constructed across several lots should be subdivided by vertical divisions.

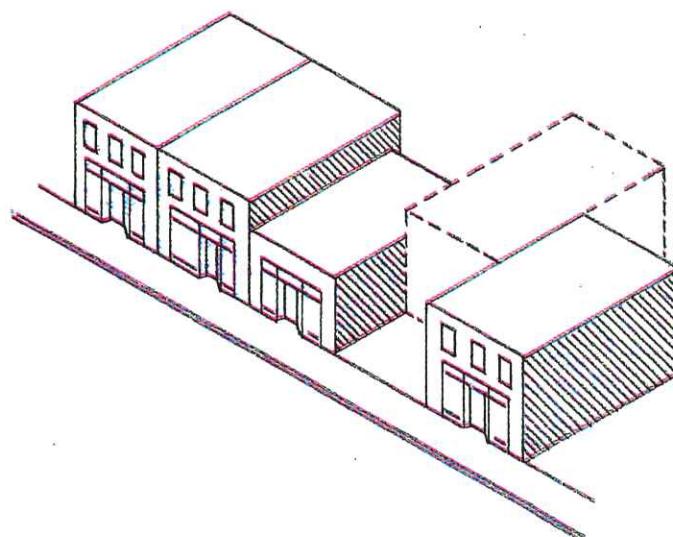
Guidelines: Setback and Rhythm of Spacing

1. The setback from the street and side property lines established by adjacent or contiguous buildings shall be maintained. When a definite rhythm along a street is established by uniform lot, building width, or bay patterns within a building façade, infill buildings should maintain the rhythm.



The infill building on this block appropriately maintained the established setback and rhythm of spacing.

2. New buildings should be constructed in line with adjacent historic structures. Corner buildings should avoid setbacks or open corner plazas that disrupt the continuity of the street wall.



NO – New commercial buildings in the district should be flush with the street and not set back.



New construction should maintain the continuity of street wall as exists in the 200 block of Trenton Street.

3. New buildings shall front 100% of the primary street and, where applicable, a minimum of 85% of the secondary street.

Guidelines: Roof Shape

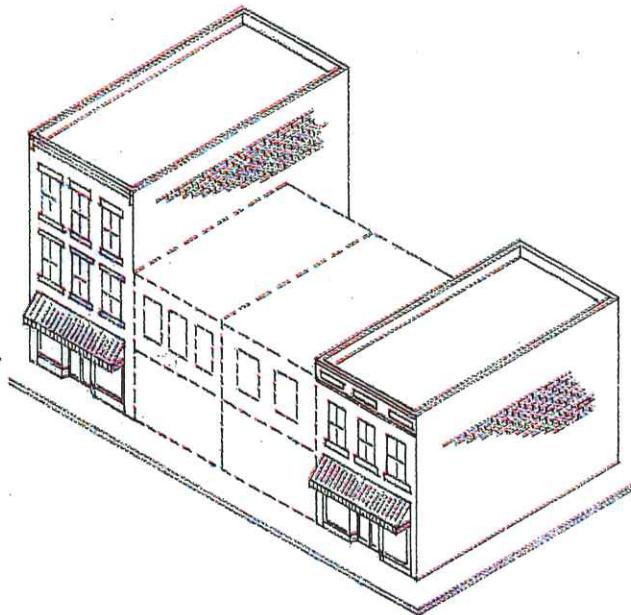
1. The roofs of new buildings shall be visually compatible with the roof shape and orientation of surrounding buildings.
2. The roof forms of buildings within the district are typically flat or have a gentle slope behind a parapet wall.



The roof shapes for new construction should mimic the roof shapes of existing buildings. On this block, as is typical for the district, appropriate roof shapes are flat or very slightly sloped.

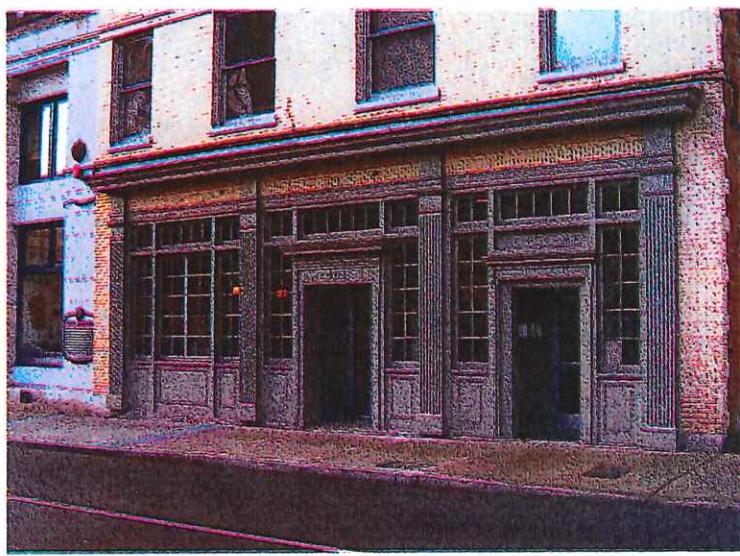
Guidelines: Proportion and Rhythm of Openings

1. The relationship of width to height of windows and doors and the rhythm of solids to voids in new buildings shall be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.



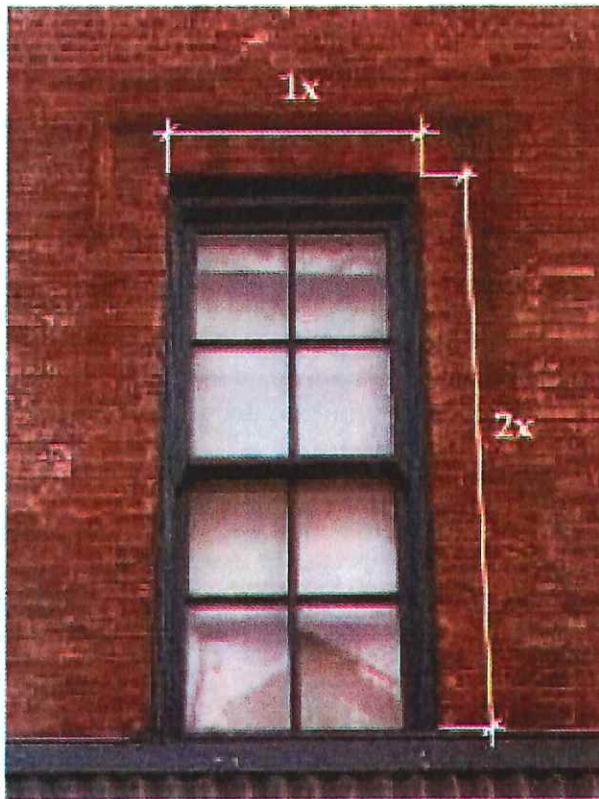
YES - Appropriate vertical rhythm and window alignment is shown on these new buildings.

2. The design of the street level of new buildings is crucial in establishing the commercial vitality. At least 60% of the street level façade of a new building shall be transparent (i.e., doors and windows) to provide visual interest and access for the pedestrian.



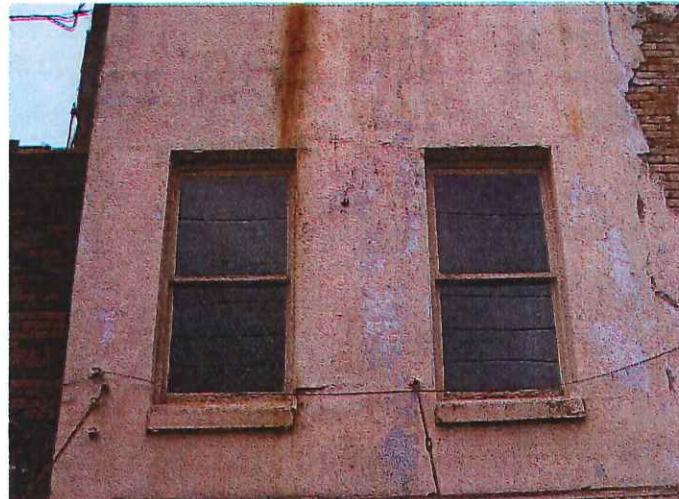
This building has an appropriate amount of transparency in its street-level façade.

3. Define a clear primary entry. Doorways on primary facades shall appear similar to those used historically. The primary entrance should be defined with a canopy or other architectural feature.
4. Upper floor windows should be at least twice as tall as they are wide.



Appropriate proportions for upper-floor windows.

5. Door and window openings should be recessed on masonry buildings, as they are traditionally, rather than flush with the rest of the wall.



These historic precedents established a pattern of recessed door and window openings; the pattern should be maintained in new construction.

6. On corner buildings, glazing shall turn the corner facing the secondary street a minimum of one structural bay or 16 feet, whichever is the greater.

Guidelines: Relationship of Materials, Texture, Details, and Material Color

1. The relationship and use of materials, texture, details and material colors of a new building's public facades shall be visually compatible with or similar to those of adjacent buildings, or shall not contrast conspicuously.
2. Masonry materials were primarily used in the historic district, and should continue to be predominant. Contemporary materials may be used if they possess characteristics similar in scale, design, finish, texture, durability, and detailing to historic materials and meet *The Secretary's Standards*. Exterior Insulation Finish Systems and vinyl are not appropriate exterior materials.
3. Wood, brick, stone, and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds and should be used for new buildings
4. Storefront façade materials may vary in keeping with the materials of the existing buildings. Stone, glazed tile, painted wood, and brick are all appropriate materials.
5. Tinted glass, reflective glass, or colored glass may not be used for windows.
6. Large expanses of featureless materials are not appropriate.
7. The color of new building materials should be compatible with historic buildings within the district.



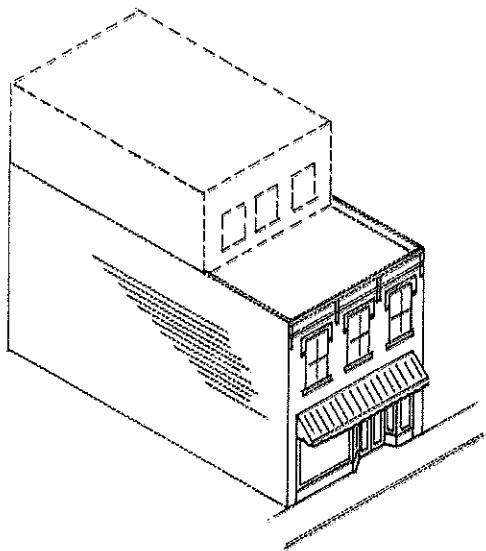
The new building pictured on the right appropriately used materials similar to those of its neighbors in its maroon brick construction, wooden window sashes, clear glass window panes, and wooden storefront.

Guidelines: Orientation

1. The site orientation of new buildings shall be consistent with that of adjacent buildings and shall be visually compatible.
2. Primary building entrances shall be oriented to the primary street.
3. Entrances to buildings should be recessed.

Guidelines: Additions to Existing Buildings

1. Additions to existing buildings should be compatible in scale, materials, and texture; additions should not be visually jarring or contrasting. Additions to historic buildings should be minimal. Additions normally not recommended on historic structures may be appropriate for non-historic buildings, if the addition will result in a building that is more compatible with the district.
2. Rooftop additions should not exceed one story in height and should be set back a minimum of 30 feet from the main façade of the building and 20 feet from the secondary street if it is a corner building.



Roof additions should be set back from the street.

3. Additions should not obscure or contribute to the loss of historic character-defining features or materials.
4. Many of the buildings in the Cotton Port Historic District face major streets on both the rear and primary facades and construction of decks would not be possible. Buildings that do not face a major street may have rear decks as long as they are not readily visible. Decks should preferably be of wood but metal decks are also acceptable.

V. STREETSCAPES

Streetscapes

General Principles

The HPC does not have specific design review over streetscape elements such as parking lots, street furniture and sidewalks. However, they do have an advisory role to improve the appearance of the historic districts. Within the Cotton Port Historic District are various sidewalk surfaces and conditions as well as uniform light standards. The City of West Monroe is encouraged to continue streetscape improvements such as new sidewalks, placing utility wires underground and implementing a unified appearance of plantings and ADA compliant curbing.

Guidelines: Parking Lots

1. Existing and new parking lots should be screened through fencing or landscaping.
2. Additional directional signage to the city's public parking areas is encouraged.
3. Parking lots abutting sidewalks should have some edge definition through landscaping or fencing.



The public parking area at Trenton and Wood Streets is appropriately screened through landscaping. The use of landscaping and fencing for both private and public parking areas is recommended.

Guidelines: Streetscapes

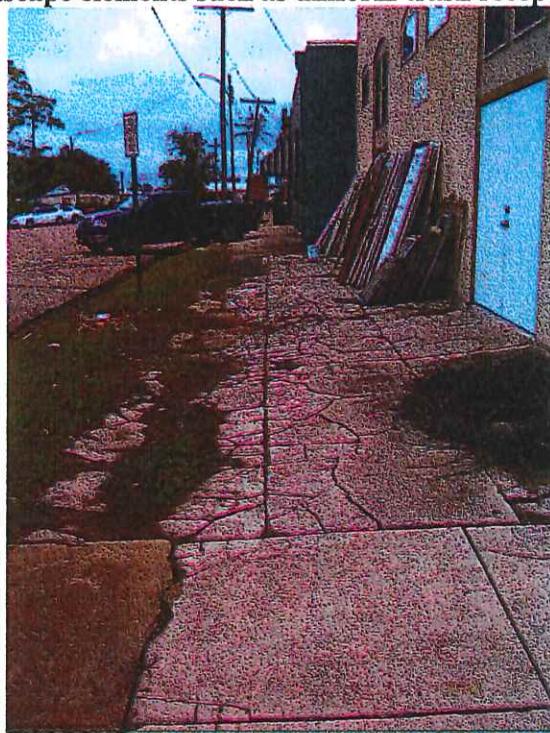
1. The Cotton Port Historic District should continue to be enhanced through streetscape elements such as benches and planters.
2. The existing light standards are appropriate to the downtown area and future installation and maintenance should continue this design.
3. Major streetscape improvements considered in the future should be consistent with the historic character of the downtown area and follow traditional designs.
4. Landscaping should follow historic patterns when possible. Landscaping should not damage historic buildings or other historic elements.
5. Trees and other plants were not historically common in downtown districts. If their presence is desired, they should be of species with limited height and canopies.
6. Outdoor furniture provided by the city should be uniform in appearance, of historically appropriate materials, such as wrought iron or wood, and placed so as not to impede pedestrian flow.
7. ADA compliant curbing should be added throughout the downtown area rather than only on Trenton Street. The existing curb cuts are not consistent with the texture and color of the concrete and an overall design approach for ADA curbing should be considered by the city.



Downtown's period light standards help to reinforce the district's historic character.



Downtown features streetscape elements such as uniform trash receptacles on Trenton Street....



....but some sidewalks are in need of repair such as in the 100 block of Cotton Street.



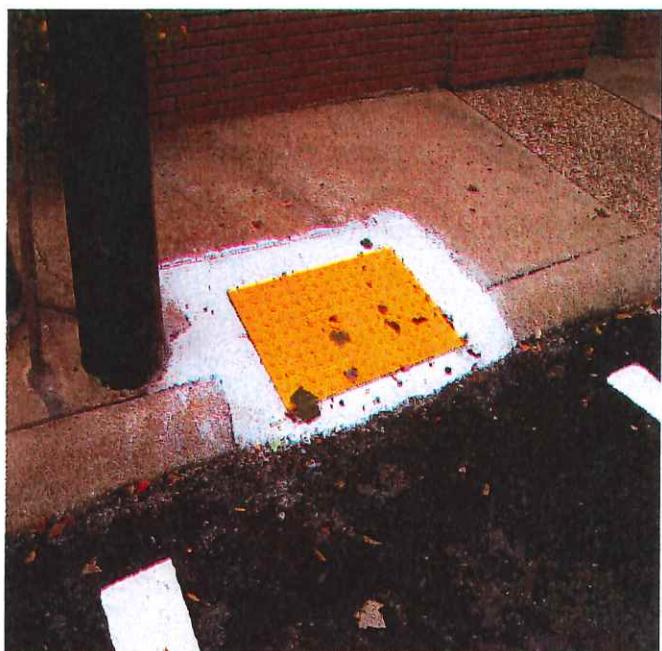
Downtown lacks any uniform planter boxes or landscaping and owners provide their own such as at 312 Trenton Street.



A coordinated approach to planter boxes and overall landscaping would provide more consistency in the appearance, care and maintenance of these streetscape elements (317 Trenton Street).



Downtown should be made as ADA compliant as possible. These types of curb cuts should be added along Commerce, Cotton and Wood Streets as well as along Trenton Street.



The existing ADA compliant curbing should be made more uniform and complimentary to the existing concrete color rather than with the existing contrast and texture.

VI. DEMOLITION

Demolition

General Principles

Since the purpose of historic zoning is to protect historic properties, the demolition of a building that contributes historically and architecturally to the character and significance of the district is not appropriate and should be avoided.

Demolition is considered the removal of any structure or portion of a structure that affects the visual appearance of the building from the exterior. It includes the removal of floors or sections of the building that are enclosed by the original façade.

Guidelines: Demolition

1. Demolition is not appropriate if a building or a major portion of a building contributes to the architectural or historical significance or character of the district.
2. Demolition is appropriate if a building or a major portion of a building does not contribute to the historical or architectural character and importance of the district.
3. Demolition is appropriate if a building or a major portion of a building has irretrievably lost its architectural and historical integrity and importance, and its removal will result in a more historically appropriate visual effect on the district.
4. Demolition is appropriate if the denial of the demolition will result in an economic hardship on the applicant as determined by the HPC in accordance with section 12-7040 of the West Monroe Historic Preservation Ordinance.

VII. APPENDIX

Definitions

Addition: New construction that increases the footprint, height, or building envelope of an existing structure.

Alteration: A replacement or change in a building material; the addition or elimination of any architectural element of a building; a repair that reconstructs any part of an existing building; construction of, or change to, an appurtenance.

Appropriate: Suitable for, or compatible with, a property or district, based on accepted standard and techniques for historic preservation.

Appurtenances: Fences, walls, paving, streetlights, curbs, gravel, signs, satellite dishes, fountains, mailboxes, and other accessory or adjunct permanent built features related to a building or streetscape.

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA): A legal document issued by the Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) confirming review and approval of work to be done on property within the boundaries of an historic zoning district. A COA is required before getting a building permit.

Character-Defining Features: Individual physical elements of any structure, site, street, or district that contribute to its overall historic or architectural character, and for which it is recognized as historically or architecturally significant.

Commission: The West Monroe Heritage Preservation Commission.

Demolition: The tearing down of a building in whole or in part.

Elevation: A scaled drawing that illustrates the view of a side of a building.

Facade: An exterior side of a building.

Historic: A structure or site, usually constructed by 1960 or earlier, which possesses historical or architectural significance, based on the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

New Construction: Any freestanding structure on a lot constructed after the designation of the historic zoning district.

Non-Historic: A structure or site, usually constructed after 1960, which does not possess historical or architectural significance, based on the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Orientation: The directional expression of a building's front façade.

Period of Significance: The time frame in which a neighborhood developed or was platted into building lots and substantially built out with structures, based on the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Public Facade: The exterior faces of buildings that front public streets.

Public Right of Way: A publicly owned and maintained street or walkway.

Public Space: Any area that is either owned, leased or for which there is held an easement by a governmental entity, or an area that is required to be open to the public.

Reconstruction: Construction of an accurate replica of a historic building or portion thereof, based on physical, pictorial or documentary evidence.

Rehabilitation: The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Repair: See alteration.

Shall: What must happen.

Should: What must happen unless circumstances illustrate why an alternative is more appropriate.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal changes 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 historical significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a 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 necessary.
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.

