

Design Guidelines for Newton Main Street Historic Districts I and II

Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission
Newton, Harvey County, Kansas





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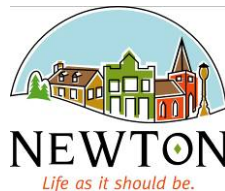
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Introduction

For over one hundred and forty years, the social, civic, and commercial center of Newton/North Newton, Kansas has been located among the buildings and streets that make up the cities' downtown. From the “roaring cattle-town” period of the 1870s to today, downtown Newton has been the place where generations of business owners, residents, civic leaders, professionals, and visitors have met, traded, socialized, worshiped, and engaged in the myriad of everyday activities that form the basis of a vital community.

Built and cared for in various stages and to various degrees over time, the buildings of downtown Newton form the physical and cultural contours of the city. While there is diversity of individual structures, collectively the downtown buildings work to establish Newton’s character. They act together to form the unique architectural community that defines what we mean when we say, “*downtown Newton.*”

The physical features of downtown Newton are key components of Newton/North Newton’s historic, economic, and cultural fabric.

The downtown corridor contains two designated Main Street Historic Districts, each listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The districts encompass a remarkable collection of historic buildings that stand as tangible links to Newton’s past. Of equal importance, the central business corridor remains the primary focus for development activities in the future. The downtown districts are more than just indelible physical expressions of the community’s heritage; they are the basis of future aspirations for downtown. They represent investments that residents and city leadership have agreed are worth protecting.



A Design Review Overview

The communities of Newton and North Newton are dedicated to fostering positive change and development in the downtown area. An important objective is to maintain and preserve the downtown as the focus of commercial, cultural, and political life in the community, while honoring and sustaining its rich architectural character. To meet that objective, provisions for *design review in designated historic districts* were established by ordinance in 1998.*

In downtown Newton, design review is the process whereby changes to properties are evaluated for their potential impact before changes are made. Impact may be assessed on an individual building, or on the character of the district as a whole. The process is administered by the Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), as established under the city ordinance.

The intent of design review is to ensure exterior improvements or alterations to existing buildings, as well as demolition and new construction projects, are undertaken in ways that *sustain and enhance* downtown Newton's existing architectural qualities: its historic materials, massing, setbacks, styles, details, fenestration patterns, and inviting pedestrian scale.

More information about how Design Review works in downtown Newton is available in the section entitled, "The Design Review Process."

Communities across the country establish design review because doing so contributes to community livability and quality of life, protects property investments, minimizes negative impacts on the environment, and yields economic rewards.



Main Street in Newton, Kansas, ca. 1909.

*NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 4278-98 (10/27/1998), NORTH NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 429 (11/9/1998): A JOINT ORDINANCE OF THE CITIES OF NEWTON AND NORTH NEWTON RE-ESTABLISHING THE JOINT HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION AND PRESCRIBING ITS DUTIES, ETC. Please see the Appendix for more information.

Goals for Design Review in Downtown Newton

The citizens of Newton/North Newton have long recognized the character of development in the downtown is of *community*, not just individual, interest. This is especially true in recent years as a result of several important planning initiatives undertaken by city leadership, including the *ReNewton Project 2010-2030* and the *Redevelopment Master Plan of the Downtown District (2009)*, each adopted by the city.

As a result, the city recognizes the following goals of design review for the downtown districts:



Aerial view. Photograph by George Krievins.

1. To foster and maintain Newton/North Newton's economic viability and quality of life by preserving the existing fabric of the downtown area while encouraging development and/or improvements that complement its historic character.
2. To protect investment in rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures in the historic districts.
3. To regulate exterior scale, massing, design, arrangement, texture, and materials within the downtown area in order to promote compatibility with the downtown's existing character.
4. To preserve and protect the historic and/or architectural value of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Register of Kansas Historic Places, and the Newton/North Newton Register of Historic Places.
5. To maintain and enhance the unique identity of downtown Newton.
6. To meet the requirements of Kansas State Law as set forth in K.S.A. 75-2724 and any amendments hereafter, and local ordinance no. 4278-98 (10/27/1998), and any amendments hereafter related to designated historic structures.
7. To build upon historic character and foster creativity while meeting objectives to maintain an interesting, walkable, and commercially viable downtown area, found in the *Redevelopment Master Plan of the Downtown District (2009)* and the *ReNewton Comprehensive Plan Project (2010)*.

The Main Street Historic Districts: Character and Background

Downtown Newton contains two areas within the central business corridor that are recognized at national, state, and local levels for their distinctive architectural character and continuity. In 2003, *Newton Main Street Historic District I* and *Newton Main Street Historic District II* were named to the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the U.S. National Park Service (see maps, page 13 and 14).

These districts represent commercial, civic, and other structures that span the architectural history of Newton's rail town, market, settlement, and transportation center heydays. In addition, they reflect historical building patterns, construction methods and materials, and organizational concepts that are shared throughout the region, the state, and the nation as a whole. Because downtown Newton has retained its historic buildings, forms, materials, and



Postcard by the E. C. Kropp Co. showing downtown buildings, ca. 1907. The pattern of two-part commercial block buildings in rhythmic procession facing Main Street is shared throughout the districts.



Downtown Newton in the 1950s. The pattern of buildings remains intact and is a distinguishing characteristic of the downtown business district.

patterns to a high degree, its commercial corridor provides residents and visitors with a glimpse of the past and a sense of Newton's character that can be conveyed in no other way.

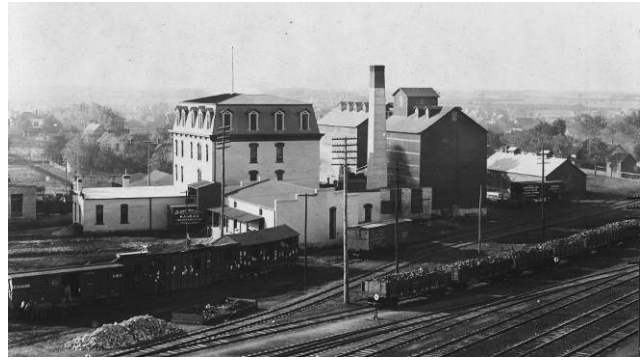
Today, Newton's districts continue to express the prevailing architectural forms and pedestrian-oriented scale of some 100 years ago. Most buildings date from the 1880s to the 1930s, a "boom" period ushered in when Newton was a dynamic railhead, trailhead, and settler destination.



The Carnegie Library under construction, 1903.



The Carnegie Library, 2011.



View of the Newton Milling & Elevator Company (Warkentin Mill) and Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway cars and tracks. Photo ca. 1905. Below is part of the Old Mill Plaza today.



With Main Street as its continued focal point, the historic setting remains intact.

Both District I and District II present organized patterns of brick and stone buildings oriented to the east and west facing Main Street, on rectangular lots generally 25 feet wide by 150 feet deep. Building setbacks are zero lot line in the 200, 400, 500, 600 and 700 blocks. On the West 300 block the Warkentin Mill complex has varied setbacks, while the 800 block has varying lot setbacks that reflect the unique historic configuration of the 1920's-era Enns Super Service building, an early automobile showroom.

The districts are primarily comprised of two-story commercial storefront buildings, but there are notable departures from this ubiquitous historic form. Examples include civic buildings such as the Old Railroad Savings and Loan building (500 Main Place), the Carnegie Library (Harvey County Historical Library & Museum), and the former Newton Post Office at 725 North Main. The Fox Theater, situated near the middle of the East 500 block, has long offered downtown entertainment while 722-726 North Main and the First Methodist Episcopal Church provide worship facilities. Important corner anchors include the Hanlin-Penney Building (601 North Main), the Masonic Lodge building (700 North Main), and the J. S. Dillon and Sons Grocery building (200 North Main).

Of the 88 buildings that are situated in the districts, 67 of them define—or *contribute to*—the



A bustling streetscape at Hanlin's Mercantile, or the Hanlin-Penny building, at 601 North Main. This photo shows Hanlin's as it appeared before a 1921 facade renovation. The Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission presented an award in 2004 to the group that restored the brick facades of the building by removing false metal facades which had been in place for more than 40 years. Below is 601 North Main today.



character of the districts as a whole. Additionally there are four standout properties that are *individually* listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Warkentin Mill complex (Old Mill Plaza), the Santa Fe Depot, the Old Railroad Savings and Loan building, and the Carnegie Library. Further, many buildings are associated with prominent citizens of Newton's past and present. Overall, the area retains a high degree of *integrity* despite alterations to individual structures and the presence of some modern structures.

Every building, and indeed every district, experiences some degree of change over time. Downtown Newton is no exception. There are several cases where modern infill, reconfiguration, and new design have left an imprint on

downtown Newton. Examples include the presence of three modern banks, rear and side additions to some properties, and the appearance of several empty lots where historic buildings once stood. The bulk of these changes occurred prior to 2003 when the districts were listed on the National Register.

While downtown Newton has seen the loss of distinctive structures such as the Ragsdale Opera House, there have also been improvements over the years stemming from revitalization and restoration work. In recent years, several false metal facades have been removed from buildings, restoring their upper stories to their original historic appearance. Examples include the McCall's Shoe Store building at 506 North Main and the building at 607-609 North Main.



The Ragsdale Opera House, destroyed by fire in 1915 (left). This corner is now occupied by simpler two-part commercial buildings built circa 1915, at 701, 703, and 705 North Main. While less ornate than the Ragsdale Opera House, these early 20th century buildings (below) play a strong part in establishing the pattern for the block.



The McCall's Shoe Store building at 506 North Main (left) was recently renovated. A 1950s-era metal covering that obscured the upper story fenestration was removed, revealing the historic three-part fenestration separated by brick pilasters. This has helped to re-establish the rhythm of that part of the block.

Purpose of the Design Guidelines

These Design Guidelines are a tool intended to help property owners, the city, and the HPC protect the quality and character of downtown Newton. They are a platform for assessing the impact of proposed changes to the exterior and interiors of properties within the downtown districts, while enhancing and preserving downtown Newton's unique identity. The guidelines are also intended to be followed by property owners. Property owners should use the Design Guidelines as a basis for making informed design or material choices when alterations to properties are needed. It is the cities' conviction that abiding by the principles set forth in these guidelines will enhance and maintain the historic character of downtown Newton while promoting increased values and growth.

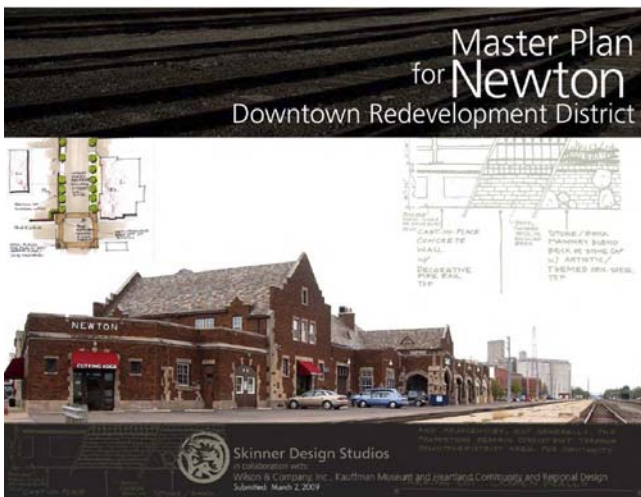
The guidelines provide a common set of rules and principles for evaluating decisions that could affect the character of individual properties or the historic district. They are not intended to dictate design choices or to prohibit creative or contemporary design alternatives. Rather, they seek to provide clarification, encouragement, and direction for positive change in downtown Newton by enhancing and building on its unique character.

The Design Guidelines are intended to meet the following goals:

1. To specify the criteria by which the HPC evaluates the impact of proposed projects.
2. To establish clear design review standards and policies.
3. To foster predictability and fairness in HPC actions, minimizing decisions based on individual tastes or arbitrary preferences.
4. To ensure the consistency of the HPC in its review of applications.
5. To be easily approachable and usable by property owners when formulating plans for alterations to properties within the districts.
6. To illustrate the geographic boundaries within which proposed projects are subject to design review.
7. To ensure compliance with relevant local and state regulations.
8. To augment the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* (included in the Appendix).

“Our town has an authentic character, which is found in our people, neighborhoods, churches, schools, Newton Main Street Historic District, and business community. This is our strength, our identity, and our heritage.”

—from *The ReNewton Project 2010-2030*



Design Guidelines Basics

Where do the guidelines apply?

Within the districts: By ordinance, the Design Guidelines and the design review process are mandatory for all properties located within the boundaries of the two Main Street Historic Districts (see map, page 13).

When is design review required?

You must apply for, and obtain, a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) issued by the HPC prior to any construction, alteration, reconstruction, repair, or demolition if all of the following conditions are true:

- The property is located within the boundaries of a Main Street Historic District.
- Your project requires a building or demolition permit.
- Your project will result in interior or exterior changes to the property.*

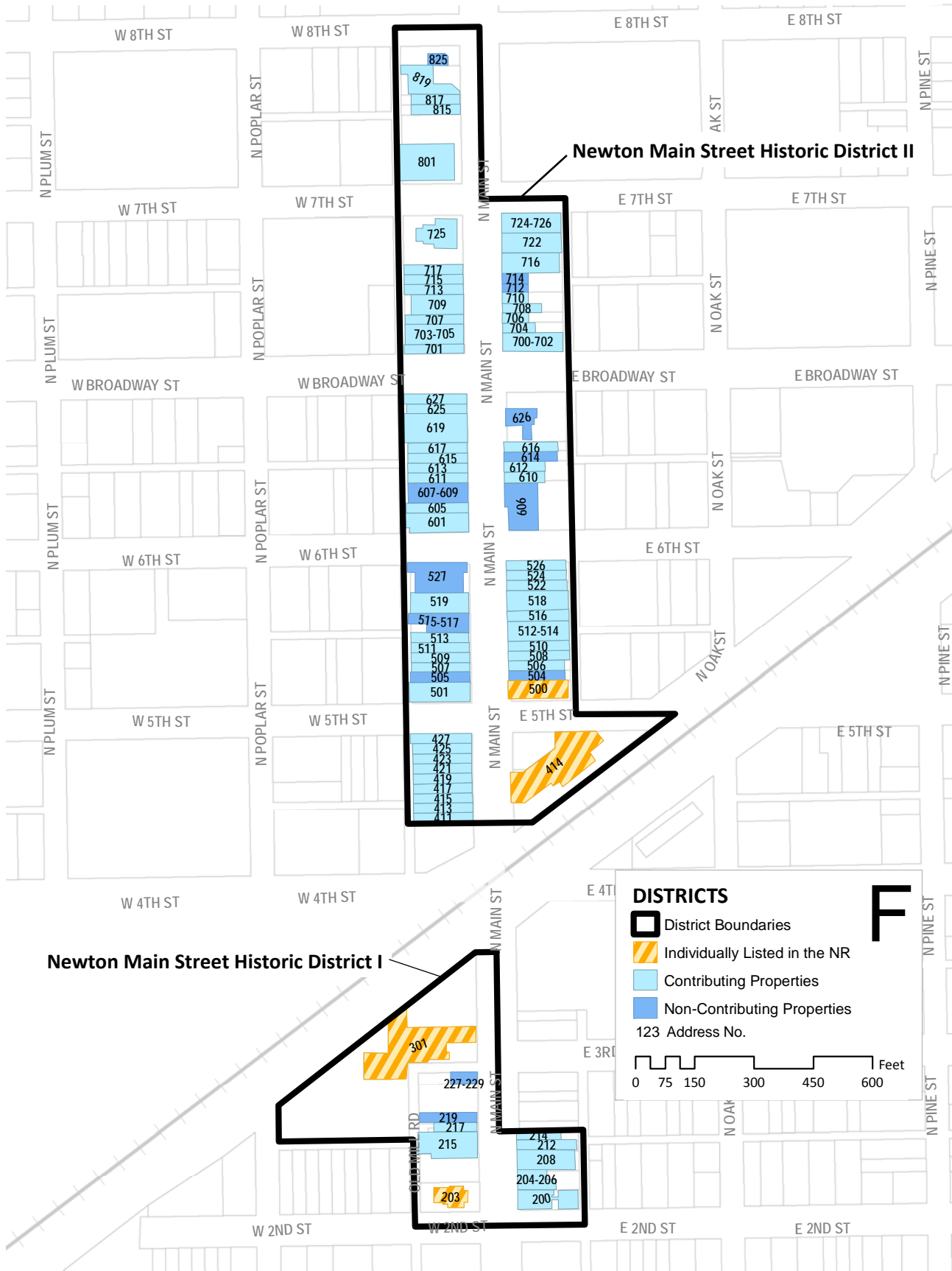


To what do the Design Guidelines apply?

- Contributing and non-contributing buildings, both modern and historic.
- *Exterior & Interior* building elements or features such as materials, scales, setback, and massing. Interior applies only to contribution properties.
- Street, block, and landscape surface elements.
- Signs, awnings, canopies, lighting, utilities, safety, and accessibility features.
- Infill and new construction.

*Only contributing/individually listed properties are on the National Register will require interior review.

Map of the Downtown Historic Districts



The Design Review Process

Design review process describes the method by which the HPC evaluates exterior and interior changes to buildings or properties (historic or not) located inside the Main Street Historic Districts. All changes to contributing and individually listed properties are subject to design review. Treatments that are considered “ordinary maintenance or repair” are not. The review process allows the HPC to assess the impact of proposed alterations (i.e., construction, renovation, demolition) with respect to the effect on the character of individual properties or the districts. Design review ensures that any changes made are *appropriate* to the individual property or its surroundings, by requiring that a *Certificate of Appropriateness* be obtained prior to commencing work.

A property owner must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPC before commencing any work if it involves exterior or interior changes to a property within the design review coverage area, and if a building permit is required.

Obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness

A property owner must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPC before commencing any work if it involves interior/exterior changes to a property within the design review coverage area, and if it requires a building permit.

Initial Review by HPC Staff:

Applications for proposed work that trigger a building permit are examined by the city building inspection staff for compliance with other zoning and building code regulations, then sent to the HPC for review. HPC staff will review the project and determine the extent to which it is likely to have substantial impact on the integrity, appearance, materials, or form of a building or property. Decisions made by the HPC may not overrule those of pre-existing code regulations, nor may pre-existing code regulations allow a design change that is not approved by the HPC.

Projects Not Requiring HPC Design Review: Minor Maintenance and Repair Work

In the case of *minor or maintenance work*, or work where the intent is to repair or replace a building feature with like materials and form, HPC staff may determine the proposed project is likely to have little or no impact on the integrity of the building or the district. An example would be spot masonry repointing or replacement of roof materials. In such a case, HPC staff may simply issue a Certificate of Appropriateness without requiring a full design review meeting. This is called “administrative authorization.” Once the COA is issued, work may proceed.

Cases Where HPC Staff Has the Authority to Administratively Authorize a COA on Behalf of the HPC:

For properties within the boundaries of a Main Street Historic District:

- Maintenance and minor repair to the exterior when using identical or like-kind materials that do not alter the original appearance, design, profile and size of the current feature. This includes all windows, doors, porches, roofing, etc.
- Installation of signs and awnings when not directly connected to a historic property.
- Minor alterations to exterior buildings including the addition of mechanical or electrical equipment when not affecting character-defining of historic properties.
- Installation of fire safety equipment or minor alterations to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Interior modifications that do not affect or remove character-defining elements of interior spaces, including installation of mechanical, plumbing, or electrical systems that require minimal changes to existing features.

Projects Requiring a COA Application and HPC Review: Substantial Alterations

Upon initial review, HPC staff may determine a property owner has proposed alterations that cannot be handled by administrative authorization. Examples are cases where the project involves substantial change in the design, material, or outward appearance of a building or property. When that is the case, staff will recommend to the HPC a formal COA application be submitted and the project undergo a full review meeting of the HPC.

Section 17 of the Newton city ordinance states this formally:

“A certificate of appropriateness shall be required before any of the following actions may be undertaken affecting the exterior architectural appearance of any designated historic structure, site or landmark, or of any structure within a designated historic district:

- a) Any construction, alteration or removal requiring a building permit from the city;
- b) Any demolition in whole or in part requiring a demolition permit from the city; or
- c) Any construction, alteration, demolition or removal affecting a significant exterior architectural or historical feature as specified in the ordinance designating the landmark. However, such requirement shall not apply to such repairs and maintenance measures minimally required to prevent loss or harm to the structure resulting from accidental or natural causes.”



Responsibilities of the Applicant

Where full review is determined the applicant must complete the COA application form in its entirety and submit it to the HPC with details about the intended modifications. The HPC will request, and the applicant should provide, documentation sufficient for its members to evaluate the impact of the proposed project. The HPC may request the property owner provide the following items including, but not limited to:

- A complete and concise description of the proposed project indicating all intended changes, additions, and/or alterations to the property
- Photographs, drawings, and/or specifications
- Architectural plans or elevations

- Plot or landscaping plans
- Plans related to off-street parking
- Plans and specifications for proposed signs
- Elevations of all portions of proposed additions to structures
- Material samples

The COA application and supporting materials must be submitted to the HPC at least seven (7) days in advance of its scheduled monthly review meeting. Application forms for a Certificate of Appropriateness are available online at the City of Newton website.

Responsibilities of the HPC

The HPC conducts public meetings once a month to review applications for COAs and to conduct other business. HPC meetings are open to the public. The HPC will make decisions regarding Certificates of Appropriateness by evaluating submitted proposals in light of the cities' preservation and development objectives and the principles described in these Design Guidelines.

Attendance at the HPC Meeting

Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend the meeting scheduled to review their application for a COA. However, a decision of the HPC could be postponed as the result of a lack of information on the proposed project.

COA Approval

Applicants who propose interior/exterior changes that comply with the Design Guidelines and are compatible with the design, scale, materials, and character of the historic district, will be granted a Certificate of Appropriateness by the HPC.

COA Denial

When projects do not comply with the principles and intent of the guidelines, the COA may be denied. The HPC will provide written notice to the applicant accompanied by a statement of the specific reasons for denial. The commission can make recommendations to the applicant concerning changes, if any, in the proposed project that would cause the HPC to reconsider its denial and will confer with the applicant in an attempt to resolve as quickly as possible the differences between the applicant and the HPC. The applicant may resubmit an amended application or reapply for a building or demolition permit that takes into consideration the recommendations of the HPC.

Schedule and Deadlines

The HPC is obligated to approve or deny a COA application within 30 days. Written notice of the HPC's decision must be provided to the applicant and the building inspection department within seven (7) days following the determination, but is usually done at the time of the decision. The HPC's decision is accompanied by a Certificate of Appropriateness in the case of approval or a written statement in the case of denial.

Appeals

In the case where a COA is denied by the HPC, the applicant may appeal in writing to the city clerk within 14 days of the decision. The City Commission will meet in public hearing and consider the appeal within sixty (60) days of the appeal. The City Commission thus has an opportunity to overrule the HPC decision.

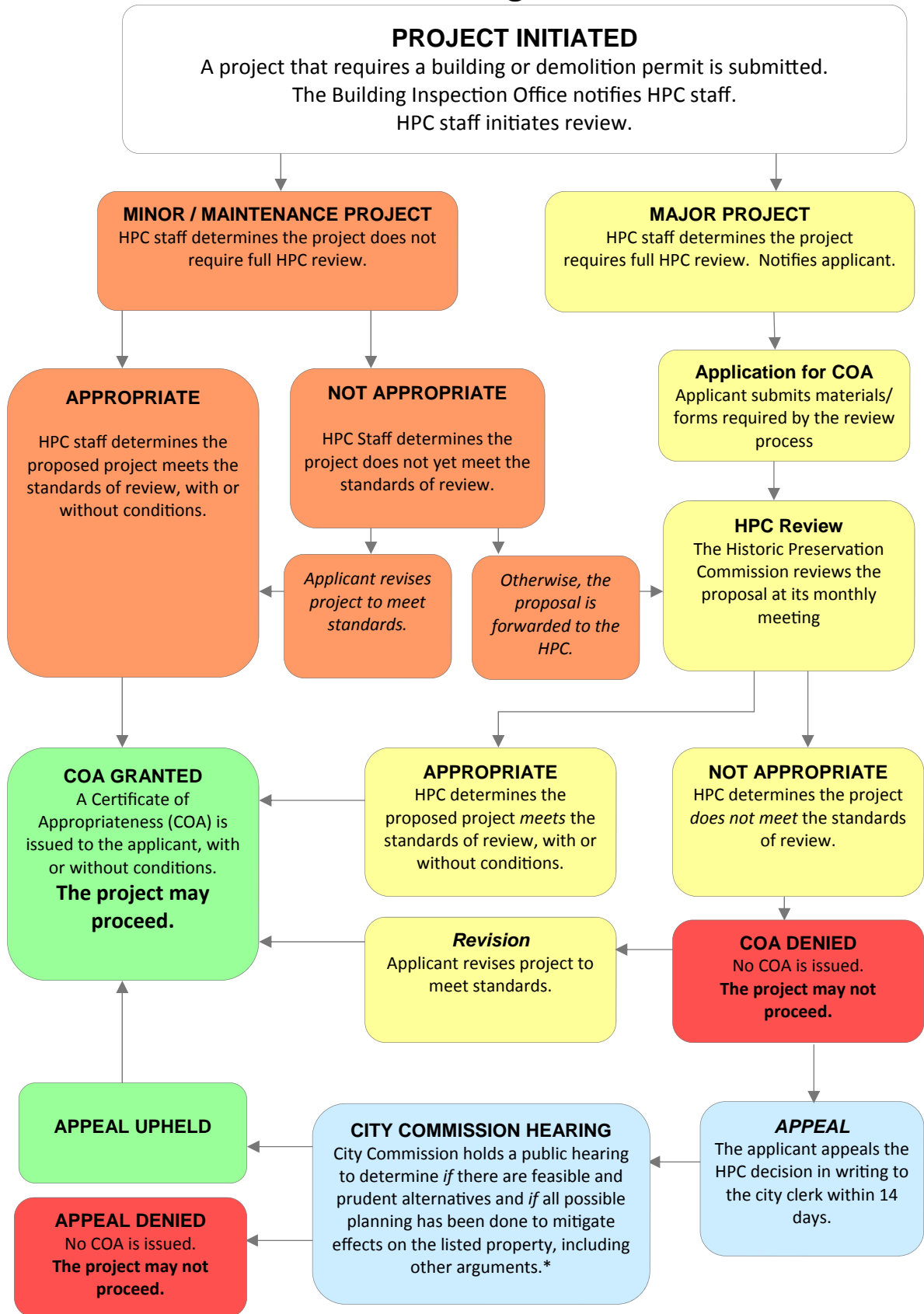
The following page contains a flow chart illustrating the design review process.

More Information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the pertinent sections of the published ordinances.

In particular, see NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 4278-98 / NORTH NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 429, Sections 17 through 27.

Overview of the Design Review Process



* The State Historic Preservation Office may be consulted for its opinion.

Design Guidelines

for Newton Main Street Historic Districts I and II

The Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission
Newton, Harvey County, Kansas

These Design Guidelines will provide rehabilitation parameters to owners of buildings and properties within the National Register Main Street Historic Districts, as well as establishing criteria for new construction within the area.

Property owners can use these standards to assist in developing viable proposals for alterations and new construction within the districts.

These design standards will also provide assistance to the city and the HPC as they review alteration, demolition, and new construction requests.

1. General Principles for Design and Improvement in Downtown Newton

1.1 Proposals shall work to enhance the districts as an inviting place for pedestrian activity.

The intent of these guidelines is to protect and encourage the development of architectural features that are visually interesting, human in scale, and pedestrian-friendly. Historically, these are the characteristics that make downtown Newton a vital forum for business, civic, and social activities. Projects will be reviewed for the extent to which they adhere to this general principle.

In addition to preserving the historic architectural fabric and character of the downtown, projects are expected to meet these community expectations for new development and redevelopment in downtown Newton.

1.2 Projects shall work to complement the form of traditional, existing buildings.

Historic buildings combine to establish a sense of continuity while also accommodating variety in design and detail. As properties are improved, they should enhance the overall image of the area as a place to do business while respecting Newton's traditional, historic forms and materials. Each building can help contribute to this visual continuity of the downtown while also meeting individual owners' needs.



Attractive, easily-accessible ground-level amenities for pedestrians are critical to maintaining economic and social vibrancy in the downtown.

1.3 Projects shall seek to maximize walkability and access.

Downtown Newton must remain a place in which shoppers, workers, and visitors may conveniently walk, drive, bike, or ride to destinations within the downtown area. Proposals that promote walkability while also ensuring accessibility for all residents and visitors, including those with disabilities, are preferred.

1.4 Proposals shall seek to maintain an emphasis on retail uses at the street level.

Creating a walkable, mixed-use, high-density, downtown area with retail uses at the street level supports sustainable development and is critical to the Cities' economic vitality. Developers are expected to make compromises that will maintain the downtown character and quality desired.

1.5 Projects shall focus on adaptive reuse and support the preservation of historically significant buildings.

Downtown Newton includes historically significant buildings that should be incorporated into new development projects. Proposals that encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of significant buildings are preferred.

1.6 Projects shall encourage creativity, architectural diversity, and exceptional design.

The design review process is intended to be flexible, encouraging creativity and high-quality design while discouraging uniformity. Because the most successful and memorable urban environments are those in which walking down the street is appealing, streetscapes, alleyways, and other public spaces should be comfortable and inviting. Buildings fronting those spaces should be active and visually interesting at the pedestrian level. Within the limits of these guidelines, the city encourages diversity in the range of square footages and building frontages.

1.7 Projects shall emphasize strong, mixed-use core activity development along Main, Oak and Poplar Streets, and along the numbered east/west streets.

The HPC prefers projects that allow for high-density, mixed-use development such as combinations of retail, office, institutional, and residential uses, while also preserving the downtown's established scale and character. Densities are expected to be greater along Main Street and less dense along peripheral streets.

1.8 Projects shall maintain existing downtown vehicular, streetscape, and pedestrian traffic patterns.

The sidewalk, curb, and street-front edges along Main Street should be maintained as a commercial, pedestrian-oriented corridor, while the center of the street defines the major vehicular movement patterns. The numbered east/west streets, in addition to the alleys flanking Main between



Historically significant buildings are important in defining the character of the district. The J. S. Dillon and Son's Grocery building has provided retail services at street level since 1909.



The brick stack at the Warkentin Mill is a unique example of a distinctive, character-defining feature of the district. Such iconic elements should be retained to every feasible extent.

Poplar and Oak Streets, should be used as the primary corridors of separating service and deliveries from the Main streetscape. Projects which adhere to this principle are preferred.

1.9 Projects shall promote safety and appeal through appropriate boundaries and transitions.

The city encourages the use of gateways, markers, curb treatments, low walls or railings, decorative pavers, planters, select trees, lighting, and other landscaping elements that serve to visually and physically separate use spaces (e.g., between parking areas or between institutional and commercial properties). Projects that include such buffers to enhance safety and aesthetic appeal are preferred.

2. Treatment of Windows, Doors, Transoms

A building's individual pattern of windows, doors, and transoms - its fenestration - is one of its most distinguishing features. Likewise, original windows and doors contribute significantly to the overall character of a historic building and shall be preserved or reintroduced whenever possible.

- 2.1 Historic windows, doors, and transoms shall be retained when feasible.
- 2.2 The location and size of historic doors, windows, transoms, or other openings should not be changed.
- 2.3 Enclosing, covering, or bricking in of windows, doors, or transoms is not appropriate on elevations that front Main Street or a numbered street. Exceptions may be considered on rear and non-primary facades, on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4 If a historic window or door opening on a primary facade has been covered by metal, wood, or other material, every effort should be made to reveal or reintroduce the historic window opening. New covering material shall not replace existing covering material.
- 2.5 If the replacement of a historic window or transom is necessary, it should be replaced with one that matches the original as closely as possible in size, design, materials, lights, and configuration.
- 2.6 If the replacement of a historic door is necessary, it should be replaced with one that matches the original as closely as possible in size, design, and material.
- 2.7 If a window or door which is not original to the building is replaced, the design of the replacement window or door should be appropriate to the overall character of the building. A close match to the original is best. Historic photos should be consulted for design assistance.



Windows, by their proportion, shape, positioning, pattern, and size, contribute significantly to a building's historic character and are particularly indicative of stylistic periods. Projects that seek to retain existing window patterns and materials are preferred.



This replacement window does not match the height of the original, causing the top portion to be enclosed. Treatments with these results will not be favorably reviewed.

2.8 Shutters should not be used on buildings where there is no historic precedent for their use. If original shutters are missing and are to be replaced, they should be replaced with shutters of a design and material that is appropriate to the overall character of the building.



BEFORE: Example of deteriorated window conditions.

2.9 Storm windows and screens should match as closely as possible the size of the historic windows. Storm windows should have a finish to match the color of the historic frame. The meeting rails of storm sash must align with those of the existing windows. Care shall be taken not to allow the storm window to conceal details of the sash window. Interior storm windows should be considered in cases where a lower-profile is warranted.



AFTER: Cleaned stonework and matching replacement windows after rehabilitation.

2.10 Storm doors and screen doors that obscure the architectural character of historic doors are not appropriate.

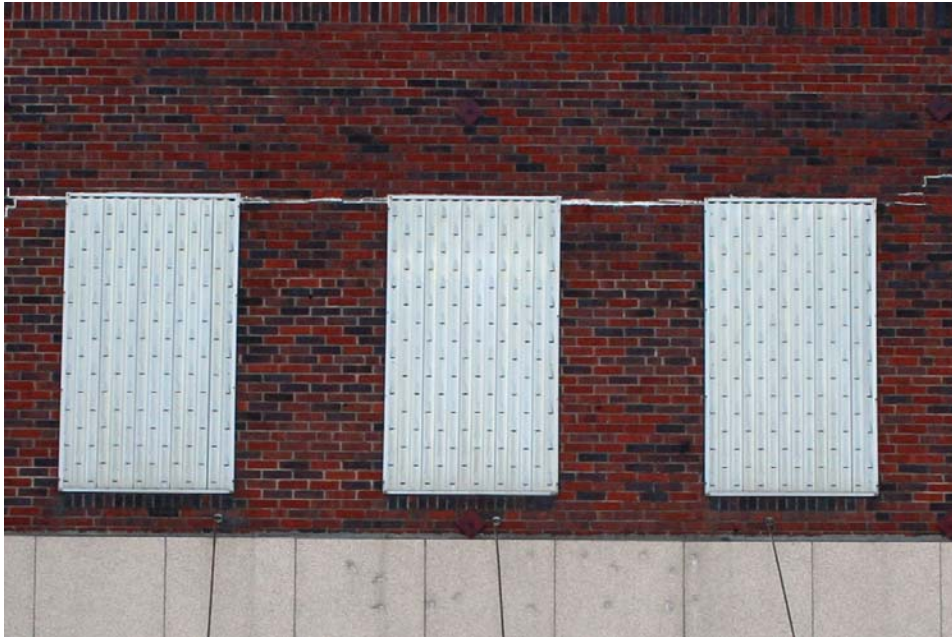
2.11 Tinted or mirrored glass is not an appropriate replacement for transparent glass.

2.12 The replacement of multi-paned doors or window sashes with thermal sashes using snap-in false muntins, or muntins between the glass is not appropriate.

2.13 The use of steel fire doors or blank slab doors on the primary, or historically significant facades, of a building is not appropriate.



Inappropriate replacement doors and windows detract from the character of historic architecture and diminish the street-level appeal that distinguishes downtown Newton.



In downtown Newton there are window and door openings that have been covered. The HPC prefers projects that seek to reveal the historic windows or window openings, or to reintroduce windows into existing openings. Where window, door, or transom openings are currently covered, new covering material must not replace existing covering material.



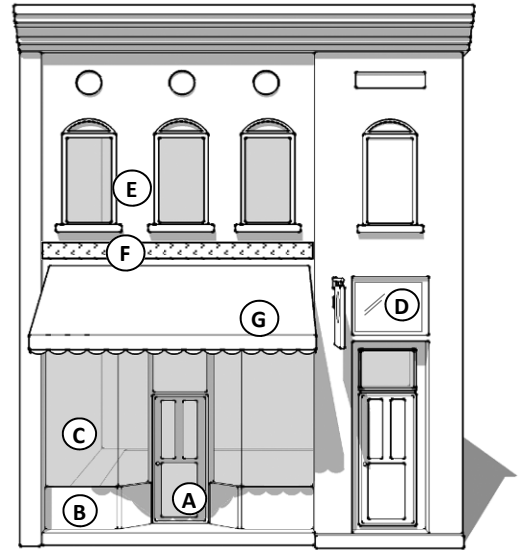
The important visual effect of regularly-spaced patterns of windows, doors, and transoms is demonstrated in this postcard photo of the west side of the downtown 600 block, circa 1911.

3. Storefronts and Street-Level Elements

The street-level storefront is the single most identifying characteristic of historic commercial facades in downtown Newton. Storefronts define the spaces in which pedestrians interact with buildings. They are typically composed of large display windows, recessed entryways, bulkheads, and architectural detailing that act together to create an inviting space for the flow of customers. The design intent of historic storefronts should be maintained, even as those storefronts experience change over time.

- 3.1 Historic storefronts and storefront features such as recessed entryways, large display windows, doors, transoms, corner posts, piers, and pilasters shall be retained and preserved.
- 3.2 Covering or removing architectural details and ornamentation associated with storefronts is not appropriate.
- 3.3 If replacement of a deteriorated storefront or storefront feature is necessary, replace only the deteriorated components and leave any uncompromised materials in place. Replacement components should match the original as closely as possible in size, scale, proportion, material, texture and detail.
- 3.4 When original or early historic storefronts no longer exist or are too deteriorated to save, or when an alteration to a storefront is necessary, choose a contemporary design that preserves, at minimum, the original design intent of the historic storefront.
- 3.5 Whenever changes are required to meet building codes, they must be done in a way that is the minimally intrusive to the facade and without destroying or obscuring historic materials and features.
- 3.6 Buildings where multiple storefronts span a larger, wider facade should extend design compatibility from storefront to storefront.

TRADITIONAL STOREFRONT ELEMENTS



- A. Recessed entryway
- B. Bulkheads
- C. Display windows
- D. Transom (also located under awning)
- E. Upper facade
- F. Sign frieze area
- G. Awning



Historic storefronts that retain their display windows, recessed entryways, and bulkheads are welcoming and instantly recognizable as invitations for customers to enter and do business. The key to a successful rehabilitation of a historic commercial building is planning and selecting treatments that are sensitive to a storefront's distinctive character.

3.7 Intact bulkheads should be preserved and repaired as necessary. If replacement is needed, the original shall be replicated as closely as possible. Plywood or rough wood paneling should not be used to replace original wood bulkheads.

3.8 Vinyl, aluminum, plastic, wood, stucco, and imitation brick or stone veneers are not appropriate and shall not be used on storefront facades.



Some contemporary elements and materials have been used in the rehabilitation of this historic storefront, and the transom has been covered while retaining the overall design intent. An improvement would involve reintroduction of the transom glass.



While the bulkheads and recessed entryway remain, this storefront has lost character due to the use of inappropriate covering bricks over the display windows.



The design of this remodeled storefront has obscured original tiled entrance floor.

- 3.9 Display windows historically extend from the bulkhead up to the transom, and are framed by piers. They are essential and character-defining elements in a storefront. Existing display windows should therefore be preserved, along with defining elements and materials such as trim, reveals, and muntins.
- 3.10 Should replacement of the display window become necessary, the new window should match the original in size, material and configuration.
- 3.11 Display windows should never be fully or partially filled, blocked off, or concealed. Glass block is not compatible with the original function and design of display windows.
- 3.12 Existing transoms shall be preserved, along with their character-defining elements such as trim and material. If replacement is necessary, the replacement should match the original in all character-defining aspects and be consistent with existing transom windows.
- 3.13 Transoms should not be fully or partially filled, blocked off, or concealed, and this will not be approved. Glass block and masonry filling are generally not appropriate and will not be approved.
- 3.14 Entryways are found in downtown Newton that are flush with the facade or recessed to provide shelter from the elements. If an entrance originally was recessed, this feature shall be retained. Major alterations to entrances are unlikely to be approved, however the HPC recognizes that modern needs and uses may sometimes require alterations. These are handled on a case-by-case basis.



A ribbon of historic transom windows defines the break between the street-level commercial uses and upper-story functions for this historic building.

*“A ttractive historic storefronts enhance the down-
Town experience for pedestrians and encourage
shoppers to visit the area.”*

4. Facade Materials

The surface materials and textural qualities of buildings in downtown Newton are key factors in its appearance and its relationship to adjacent buildings.

- 4.1 Original building materials, whether located on primary, secondary, or rear facades, shall be retained to every extent possible. If the original material has been overlaid or obscured by such coverings as metal, wood, or stucco, these alterations should be removed and the original material maintained, repaired or replaced with similar materials during rehabilitation work.



Stone, brick, and in some cases terra-cotta and cast iron are typical materials for downtown.

- 4.2 Building materials shall be traditional building materials consistent with the existing traditional building stock. Brick and stone shall be the primary facade materials for buildings fronting along Main and the numbered streets. The use of terra-cotta, glazed brick, or cast iron detailing is also encouraged.
- 4.3 Materials should be compatible between storefronts or street-level facades and upper levels.
- 4.4 The secondary facades of buildings shall be composed of building materials consistent with the existing traditional building stock brick, stone, terra cotta, stucco, etc.
- 4.5 While permanent materials should be considered in the case of party-wall construction, other materials which meet associated building and fire code requirements will be considered.
- 4.6 Masonry walls, except in rare instances, shall not be clad with stucco, artificial stone, parging, metal panels, wood, or EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems).



The facade at 611 North Main provides an excellent example of how brick, stone, wood, glass, and terra-cotta materials may be combined to create an effect of high visual interest.



Historic building materials should not be covered.



Cast-iron posts and wooden materials such as the ones that enframe these display windows are a common feature of historic storefronts. Existing storefront elements in downtown Newton should be retained.

5. Upper Story Elements

Most commercial buildings in Newton were designed, and still used for, commercial purposes on the street level and office, residential, or other uses on the upper levels. Upper story building elements are typically distinct from, yet visually and compositionally related to lower levels by pattern and symmetry of design.

- 5.1 Historic upper-story facades and facade details such as corbelled brick, string or belt courses, cornices, windows, terra cotta, and stonework shall be preserved, repaired, and/or maintained to every extent feasible.
- 5.2 The covering of upper facades is not appropriate. Whenever possible, remove metal or other non-historic covering from upper facades.
- 5.3 Maintain the pattern created by upper-story windows and their vertical-horizontal alignment.
- 5.4 Existing windows on conforming upper facades shall not be eliminated or decreased in size or shape.
- 5.5 Window replacement in existing buildings should replicate original window patterns and finishes.
- 5.6 New window openings that disrupt the existing balance on facades visible from the street shall not be introduced.
- 5.7 Upper-story facade elements should reflect a building's historic window to wall surface ratios.
- 5.8 Alteration of existing upper story elements should not significantly alter the proportion and/or balance of the existing building.
- 5.9 When reconstructing a historic facade 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, must be used.
- 5.10 If new construction of an upper facade is necessary, the design shall be compatible with the existing structures in the district including size and spacing of windows or other fenestrations, proportion, scale, and detailing.



Retention of historic upper facade features increases visual appeal, establishes structural rhythm, and creates continuity within the context of other buildings along a block.

6. Architectural Details, Ornamentation, and Cornices

Architectural details are the decorative flourishes such as ornate window hoods, sculpted friezes, corbelling patterns, or decorative pilasters that are applied to buildings to enhance their basic form. Details contribute immensely to a building's character and historic value and are of critical importance in downtown Newton.

- 6.1 Retain and preserve historic architectural details such as corbelled brick, stringcourses, cornices, windows and window detailing, moldings, columns, pilasters, and stonework.
- 6.2 The covering or removal of architectural detailing is not appropriate.
- 6.3 If the replacement of a deteriorated architectural detail is necessary, replace only the deteriorated portion of the feature, matching the original in size, scale, proportion, material, texture, and detail.
- 6.4 Existing ornamentation such as curved glass displays, terra cotta detailing, cast iron pilasters, transoms, ornamental brickwork, brackets, decorative cornices, quoins, columns, etc., shall be maintained.



Features such as roof cornices with modillions and dentil moulding, as well as facade elements such as brick corbelling, should be retained. These should not be covered or removed.



- 6.5 If original detailing is presently covered, exposing, restoring, or repairing the features should be undertaken when feasible.
- 6.6 Existing identifying details such as inset or engraved building names, markings, dates, etc., should be preserved.
- 6.7 Cornices and other features shall not be removed unless such removal is required as a result of a determination by the Building Inspection Office that the feature poses a safety concern.
- 6.8 Original cornices should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, the new cornice should reflect the original in design.



Details such as historic stonework, slate roof tiles, inset wooden panels, brick arches, and finials add variety and appeal and should be retained to every extent feasible.

7. Rooflines and Parapets

- 7.1 Historic rooflines and parapets of buildings shall be maintained.
- 7.2 Alterations or modifications that substantially change, damage, or destroy a roof's defining historic characteristics are not appropriate.
- 7.3 New additions such as skylights, antennas, and mechanical equipment should be installed in such a manner that they are screened or not visible from the public view.
- 7.4 The replacement of a historic roof structure with one of a different type (for example, replacing a flat roof with a gable roof) is not appropriate.
- 7.5. Retain and preserve historic roofing material if it is visible from the public right-of-way. New materials that duplicate the look and character of original roofing materials may be substituted.
- 7.6 New roofing materials should not cover existing, historic, architectural features or details.
- 7.7 Gutters, downspouts, and mechanical roof features should be located so that they are as inconspicuous as possible.



The rhythmic pattern of rooflines along the historic streetscapes in downtown Newton reinforces rhythm and creates visual interest.



8. Secondary and Rear Elevations

Many buildings in downtown Newton have secondary elevations that can be seen from public streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and alleyways. As with the primary facade, these secondary elevations can be important character-defining elements of the downtown historic district. Usually, these elevations exist on corner buildings that front on two streets, but can also occur mid-block where the adjacent property is vacant or is an alleyway. Rear elevations provide access for merchants, employees, and in some cases, customers. Frequently they continue the same general material treatments as front and side facades. More often than not, rear entrances on downtown commercial structures serve as a service entry and, as a result, are the location of any necessary mechanical or utility equipment, garbage receptacles, etc. The HPC acknowledges that this typically translates into a less detailed design with a more private appearance than front and side facades that face public rights-of-way.

There are some instances in downtown where the rear facade serves as public or semi-public access. Usually, the design of these facades reflects this public utility resulting in an elevation with similar detailing to its primary facade that is more inviting to the consumer or general public.

- 8.1 Secondary facades shall be maintained and developed to support the overall appearance of downtown Newton. Broad, unarticulated expanses of blank wall or covered windows and doors shall be avoided.
- 8.2 Secondary facades should provide sufficient architectural features, such as window and door openings, to provide textural and compositional articulation to the building facade.
- 8.3 Rear and side entrances on buildings that face public-parking areas are encouraged.
- 8.4 In addition to entrances, secondary elevations on corner buildings shall contain secondary display windows and/or secondary storefronts. These may be simplified in terms of design and composition but shall reflect traditional forms.
- 8.5 Secondary facades shall contain upper story windows.
- 8.6 Secondary facades should be balanced in design and shall provide a distinction between lower and upper sections of the building.



The windows on this ground-level side elevation have been bricked in and an awning installed across the window openings. The result is a loss of visual appeal. Careful treatment of building facades, even at the sides and rear, is important to retaining the districts' character.

- 8.7 While rear facades on older structures are more symmetrical in their design, more recent buildings may provide a more utilitarian design approach. In most cases, rear entrances and openings should occupy a relatively small part of the rear facade and exhibit more of a utilitarian character.
- 8.8 Pedestrian-level window and door openings may be covered with security features such as screens or bars. However, every effort should be made to maintain the visual appearance on rear facades which face surface parking areas.
- 8.9 Existing windows on rear facades should not be eliminated or decreased in size or shape.
- 8.10 While not encouraged, upper windows on rear facades that do not face parking areas may be closed in a reversible, but not permanent, manner with compatible material.



An excellent example of secondary facades and pedestrian-friendly entryways along East 5th Street.



Rear and secondary entryways may be architecturally interesting but should not compete with the primary facades of buildings.



Rear and side entrances on buildings that face public-parking areas are encouraged.

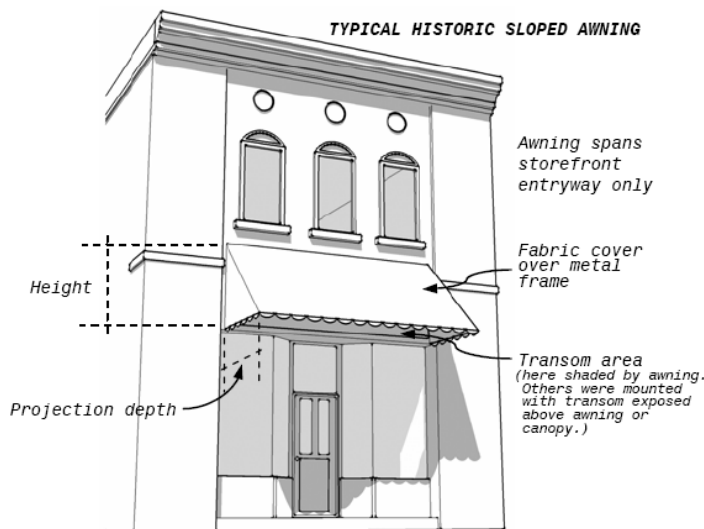


Secondary and rear facades should retain their patterns of window and door openings.

9. Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees

Awnings provide shelter for pedestrians and shade interior spaces from the heat of the sun. Downtown storefront buildings traditionally had projecting awnings, canopies, or marquees to provide pedestrians with protection from the elements, to enhance aesthetic appeal, and to serve as a place upon which to affix signage. The installation of awnings is encouraged, unless a structure is unsuited to accommodate one.

- 9.1 All effort should be made to retain and restore historic canopies, awnings, and marquees.
- 9.2 Awnings should be mounted in a manner that does not obscure or damage historic architectural features of the building.
- 9.3 In general, awnings should span window and door openings, and should be located on the first floor of buildings. Awnings are not appropriate on upper stories unless there is evidence to support their previous existence.
- 9.4 Awnings shall be narrow in profile and shall not comprise design elements such as mansard roof forms or shake shingle cladding.
- 9.5 Back-lit or illuminated awnings or canopies are not appropriate in the downtown districts. These awnings, because of their high visibility, function more as signs than a means of providing comfort and protection for pedestrians.
- 9.6 Canopies and awnings shall reflect the door and window openings or structural bays of the building. An awning, canopy, or marquee that spans continuously across more than one structural bay or storefront is not appropriate.



Fabric awnings or horizontal rigid canopies were used historically on commercial buildings to provide shelter and sun protection.

- 9.7 If a building facade contains a transom area, awnings should be installed in such a way as not to obscure or damage it.
- 9.8 Awnings should be of the traditional sloped configuration rather than curved, vaulted, or semi-spherical.
- 9.9 Metal awnings are generally not appropriate, but will be considered on a case-by-case basis if they are compatible with the historic character of the building.
- 9.10 Vinyl or plastic awnings are not appropriate.

9.11 Awnings mounted at the storefront level should not extend into the second story of building facade.

9.12 Awnings should not obscure character-defining features such as arched transom windows, window hoods, cast-iron ornaments, etc.

9.13 Awnings should be mounted or affixed in such a way as to avoid damage to the building's distinctive architectural features.



Awnings were always a dominant feature of historic downtown Newton, as the photo at left demonstrates. Today there are several variants of awnings including sloped awnings and flat canopies. These still serve as clear identifying features for the downtown business district, while providing shelter for pedestrians and shoppers. Installing appropriate awnings or canopies is encouraged.



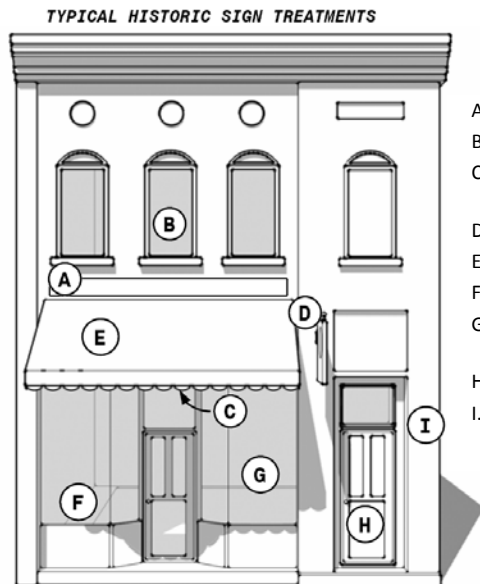
Rigid canopies, affixed to the building by rods, provide an appropriate element from which to suspend identifying signage.

10. Signs and Signage

Effective signage is both noticeable and complementary to the historic character of the districts. Signage is one of the most important features of a commercial facade. Inappropriate signs, more than any other single feature, can detract from even the most attractive storefront. Signs in downtown Newton should be designed, sized, and placed with an emphasis on attracting the notice of pedestrians as opposed to people moving in vehicles. All signage must be in compliance with existing city codes and regulations.

- 10.1 Signs in downtown Newton shall be pedestrian-oriented in size, scale, and placement, and shall not be designed primarily to attract the notice of vehicular traffic.
- 10.2 Whether they are wall-mounted, suspended, affixed to awnings, or projecting, signs must be placed in locations that do not obscure any historic architectural features of the building or obstruct any views or vistas of historic downtown.
- 10.3 Signs illuminated from within, such as LED or neon, are not appropriate. Lighting for externally illuminated signs must be simple and unobtrusive and must not obscure the content of the sign or the building facade. Neon may be considered appropriate for buildings constructed between 1930 and 1960.

- 10.4 Permanent sign types that are allowed are: awning, hanging, projecting, wall, and window signs. Permanent, freestanding signs are considered inappropriate except in cases where a detached building is set back from the street.



- A. Cornice or Belt Sign
- B. Upper-floor Window Sign
- C. Transom or Frieze Sign (below awning)
- D. Hanging "Blade" Sign
- E. Awning Sign
- F. Lower Display Window Sign
- G. Central Display Window Sign
- H. Glazed Door Sign
- I. Wall Sign for Upper Floor Tenants

- 10.5 Temporary (e.g., sidewalk, easel-mounted or freestanding) signage is permitted as long as it is in compliance with other city codes and does not obscure significant streetscape vistas or architectural features.

- 10.6 Wall signs must be flush-mounted on flat surfaces and done in a way that does not destroy or conceal architectural features or details.
- 10.7 Signs identifying the name of a building, the date of construction, or other historical information should be composed of materials similar to the building, or of bronze, brass, or other durable material. These building identification signs should be affixed flat against the building and should not obscure architectural details.

- 10.8 Storefront signs should not extend past the “belt” line above the transom area and below the upper facade. Storefront signs are typically located in the transom or frieze area and shall not extend into the storefront opening.
- 10.9 Existing signs of particular historic or architectural merit should be preserved. Signs of such merit shall be determined at the discretion of the HPC.
- 10.10 Wall-mounted signs on friezes, lintels, spandrels, and fascias over storefront windows must be of an appropriate size and fit within these surfaces. A rule of thumb is to allow twenty (20) square inches of sign area for every one foot of linear façade width.
- 10.11 A hanging sign installed under an awning or canopy should be a maximum of 50 percent of the awning or canopy’s width and should be perpendicular to the building’s façade.
- 10.12 A new projecting sign shall be no more than fifteen square feet in size with a maximum sign height of five feet.
- 10.13 A window sign should cover no more than approximately 30 percent of the total window area.
- 10.14 Sign brackets and hardware should be compatible with the building and installed in a quality manner.



Above is an example of a unique projecting (or “blade”) sign that has attained historical significance in its own right. Such signage merits retention and preservation.



Above and at left are examples of appropriate and creative signage.





Appropriate signage adds variety and interest to a streetscape while identifying products or services and inviting customers to do business.

11. Exterior Lighting

Lighting design should be considered at the beginning of any project so that it can be carefully integrated into the design of the building changes with minimal impact to historic fabric. All lighting must be in compliance with existing city codes and regulations.

11.1 If original lighting fixtures are present, these should be preserved and repaired. Fixtures should be appropriate to the style and scale of the building and the element to which it is attached.

11.2 Lighting fixtures should be installed to be unobtrusive and should be installed such that they will not damage or conceal any historic architectural features.

11.3 The light for a sign should be an indirect source, such as shielded, external lamps.

11.4 New exterior lighting should be compatible with the historic nature of the structure, the property, and the district. Compatibility of exterior lighting and lighting fixtures is assessed in terms of design, material, use, size, scale, color, and brightness.

11.5 Lighting should not adversely affect neighboring buildings, pedestrians, or automobile traffic. Lighting levels should provide adequate safety, but not detract from or overly emphasize the structure or property.

11.6 Landscape lighting should be located and directed such that there is no infringement on adjacent properties.

11.7 Exterior lighting in parking lots must be directed into the parking area itself, and not onto adjacent properties.



Appropriate light fixtures are unobtrusive and focused only on the area to be lit.

12. Paint and Painting

Painting of historic buildings and details should be undertaken with care. The proper preparation of surfaces is the key to a long-lasting paint job, and the key to preserving historic materials. Paint should not be indiscriminately removed from masonry surfaces, as some brick surfaces originally were intended to be painted. The low-fired and porous masonry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was often painted to prevent water penetration.

- 12.1 Painting previously unpainted masonry structures, or applying stucco and concrete veneers to previously uncoated structures, is not appropriate and will not be approved.
- 12.2 Existing unpainted masonry walls, except in rare instances, shall not be painted. This includes publicly visible party-walls.
- 12.3 It is inappropriate to remove paint from a building that was historically painted. Such projects will not be approved.
- 12.4 Where possible, the original color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained.
- 12.5 The use of colors for which there is no precedent in the district is strongly discouraged.
- 12.6 The architectural character of a historic building shall be enhanced through appropriate placement of exterior paint colors.

Note: The HPC recommends use of the National Trust Historic Paint Colors palette when considering paint colors in the downtown historic districts.

13. Street and Landscape Elements

The existing grid layout of primary and side streets, service alleyways, and other development patterns such as zero-building setbacks were established early in Newton's development and are important characteristics of the downtown. Retaining these patterns is important to maintain the downtown's visual character, identity, and appeal. In addition, care should be taken to encourage the use of benches, small planters, sidewalk tables and chairs, and other decorative or functional features so as to sustain an inviting and comfortable atmosphere for shoppers and pedestrians.

- 13.1 Existing street patterns and layout shall be maintained. Closure of existing streets or alleyways shall not be permitted.
- 13.2 Alleyways shall be maintained for vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic.
- 13.3 Public walkways and sidewalks should be retained for pedestrian use.
- 13.4 Public space improvements to sidewalks should be accompanied by a plan to maintain the design and integrity of the improvement.
- 13.5 The style, design, materials and colors of street furniture such as tables, chairs, benches, trash receptacles, utility poles, etc., should be appropriate to the commercial character of the downtown. Furniture intended for residential use, such as wooden picnic tables, will not be approved.
- 13.6 Street furniture located on sidewalks should not obstruct or impede pedestrian traffic, nor should it obscure views for motorists.

14. Utilities and Service Features

- 14.1 Mechanical equipment, including heating and air conditioning units, should be located in areas and spaces which require the least amount of alteration to the appearance and the materials of the building such as roofs.
- 14.2 Locate ventilators, hardware, antennas, and solar collectors inconspicuously on roofs such that they are not visible from the street.
- 14.3 Utilities and services such as satellite dishes should be located to the rear or side of a property.
- 14.4 Window air conditioner units should be located to the rear or side of properties whenever possible and shall not be located on facades facing Main Street.
- 14.5 Utility or service features that are located in highly visible spaces should be screened from view with appropriately sized and designed fences, walls, or landscaping.
- 14.6 Locate exposed exterior pipes, wires, meters, and fuel tanks on rear elevations or along an inconspicuous side of the buildings. If necessary, use paint to minimize their visual presence.
- 14.7 Solar panels, satellite dishes, antennas, or other structures should be located such that they are not visible from the street.

15. Safety and Accessibility Features

Current codes require safety features which are not original to historic structures. The sympathetic addition of these features ensures that the character of the district is maintained.

- 15.1 Meet health and safety codes and accessibility requirements in ways that do not diminish the historic character, features, materials, and details of the building.
- 15.2 Fire exits, stairs, landings, and decks should be located on rear or inconspicuous side elevations where they will not be visible from the street.
- 15.3 If new fire doors are to be installed, choose replacement items that are as compatible as possible with existing doors in proportion, location, size, and detail.
- 15.4 When possible, comply with accessibility or escape requirements through portable or temporary, rather than permanent ramps or ladders.
- 15.5 When introducing reversible features to assist people with disabilities, the original design of the entryway should not be diminished.

16. Additions to Primary Buildings

- 16.1 Additions to existing buildings should be subordinate to the main massing of the structure.
- 16.2 Additions to a historic building should be located to the rear or on a secondary façade of the building.
- 16.3 The addition of historically incorrect details or ornamentation is inappropriate. The HPC will not approve projects that involve the application of false historic detailing.
- 16.4 Rooflines on additions should be subordinate to the roofline of the main façade and should follow the regulating lines of the main massing of the structure.

17. Infill and New Construction

Few changes will have as significant an impact on the downtown districts and as the demolition of a structure or the building of something new.

The following guidelines are not intended to require particular architectural features or dictate architectural style. Instead, they are generalized in nature and are intended to identify a range of design options that will encourage development compatible with the existing character of the district. Contemporary designs and materials executed in a manner sensitive to the downtown are strongly encouraged. Economic feasibility and durability of proposed improvements, in addition to aesthetic compatibility, should be primary concerns. The primary principle behind new construction is that it should recall historic massing, style, scaling, and detailing, without trying to precisely duplicate any one building or specific element. The challenge is to guide the construction of buildings or additions that are clearly products of the present, while at the same time being sensitive to downtown Newton's design traditions and neighboring buildings.

The following factors shall be taken into account when planning and designing new construction. They apply both to entirely new structures and additions to historic buildings.

When evaluating proposals, the HPC will give special consideration to the following:

- Setback and spacing
- Massing and building footprint
- Complexity of form
- Directional emphasis (i.e., vertical vs. horizontal)
- Height to width ratio
- Scale and orientation
- Rooflines, fenestration, materials and texture
- Architectural detailing and ornamentation

Designs for new and infill construction must generally adhere to the patterns that prevail among nearby or adjacent structures.

The following guidelines for new construction are intended to ensure that the downtown area's architectural and material vocabulary is respected.

- 17.1 On Main Street, infill buildings should be multistory in height, up to three stories maximum. A building's overall proportion (ratio of height to width) must be consistent with existing historic structures.
- 17.2 The height of a new building must be in acceptable proportion to its width, following patterns and proportions established by existing structures; likewise, story-to-story heights must be appropriate. Buildings on corners must be larger in scale than adjacent structures.
- 17.3 The height of new buildings and additions shall relate to the prevailing heights of nearby buildings. New construction that greatly varies in height from adjacent buildings shall not be permitted.

- 17.4 Buildings on the interior of a continuous block face must be no more than one story taller than adjacent structures.
- 17.5 On Main Street, storefront and/or display-style windows must be included in all retail developments at the street level on the primary facade.
- 17.6 In cases of infill construction in a continuous Main Street block or along a numbered street within the district boundaries, the width of a building's facade should fill the entire available space.
- 17.7 Facade widths for new buildings and additions should correspond with other buildings widths in the same block. On Main Street, widths are typically built to increments of 25 feet.
- 17.8 If a site is large, the mass of a new building's facade should be broken by design composition into a number of smaller bays to maintain a rhythm similar to surrounding buildings. This is particularly true for storefront level facade elements.
- 17.9 The size and proportion of window and door openings on a new building must be similar to other buildings in the block.
- 17.10 The ratio of window area to solid wall for new construction shall be similar to other buildings in the block.
- 17.11 New construction shall be built with party-wall construction methods. Exceptions will be made for detached governmental, civic, or institutional buildings and when required by residential egress requirements.
- 17.12 The setback of a proposed building shall be consistent with the setback of adjacent buildings, and/or with nearby buildings fronting on the same street. The setback of the proposed building shall be consistent with the setback of adjacent district buildings or nearby district buildings fronting on the same street. On Main Street, buildings must be built close to the property line to continue the overall building line of the streetscape. Buildings must be placed with the express goal of continuing the overall building line of a streetscape.
- 17.13 Rhythms that carry throughout a block (such as the patterns, placement, sizes, and spans of windows, doors, etc.) shall be sustained and incorporated into new facades.
- 17.14 The distance between the proposed building and adjacent buildings must be compatible with the spacing between existing district buildings.
- 17.15 Buildings should be oriented toward the street; commercial buildings should have main pedestrian access in the front of the building.

- 17.16 The primary facade materials and architectural elements of a new building should be compatible with those of other historic buildings on the block or street. Brick, stone, terra-cotta, glass, and metal detailing shall be emphasized as the primary materials. Aluminum, vinyl, wood, concrete block, stucco, and plastic are not appropriate materials for new buildings or facade treatments.
- 17.17 Contemporary construction that does not directly copy from historic buildings in the district but is compatible with them in height, proportion, roof shape, material, texture, scale, and detail is strongly encouraged.
- 17.18 If parking is to be included in the design of a new construction project, it must be located in the rear of the building or in an interior portion of the block. Access to parking can be from alleyways, side streets, or other parking areas. If possible, allow for pedestrian access from the parking areas at the rear of the building.

18. Demolition

- 18.1 No structure within the districts may be demolished or removed, in whole or in part, until after the application for a building and/or demolition permit has been reviewed by the Building Inspection Office and the HPC and approved by the City Commission.
- 18.2 When the demolition of a structure within the district boundaries is under consideration, appropriate evidence of due diligence must be submitted to the HPC, with proof or demonstration that all potential adaptive use options have been exhausted.
- 18.3 Any demolition request that is not related to public safety shall be accompanied by additional documentation indicating the existing condition of the building and the proposed, post-demolition use for the site. Documentation must include proposed elevations and an explanation of why it is not feasible to use the existing structure.
- 18.4 A permanent record of a significant structure shall be made before any demolition that has been approved. The record shall consist of black-and-white photographs and other documents, such as drawings, that describe and/or illustrate the architectural character and the special features of the building. The HPC determines on a case-by-case basis the precise documentation of a specific building that is required and the person or firm who will be responsible for producing that documentation. The documentation must be submitted for review by the HPC before the demolition may proceed. The record is retained by the city.

Provisions for demolition, as set forth in NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 4278-98 (10/27/1998), NORTH NEWTON ORDINANCE NO. 429 (11/9/1998), are as follows:

- (1) Demolition in whole or in part of individual structures shall ordinarily not be permitted. Exceptions are allowed only if a structure has been substantially damaged through fire, windstorm, flood or deterioration and if there is reasonable proof that it would not be economically or physically feasible to rehabilitate. Other exceptions may be allowed if a structure does not possess the integrity, originality, craftsmanship, age or historical significance to merit preservation. However, demolition of past additions which have not gained historical significance and which have disguised or sheathed original elements or facades are encouraged, as long as the intention is to restore such elements or facades.
- (2) Structures should not be removed from their original site. Exceptions will be allowed only if there is substantial evidence that it would not be practical or economical to utilize the building on its present site. If a structure lies in the path of a public improvement project involving the city, and if the building is worthy of preservation by virtue of its integrity, originality, craftsmanship, age or historical significance, relocation may be considered as an alternative.

19. Rehabilitating Historic Interiors

While the exterior of a property may be its most prominent visible aspect, or its “public face,” its interior can be even more important in conveying the building’s history and development over time.

19.1 Retain and preserve floor plans and interior spaces that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

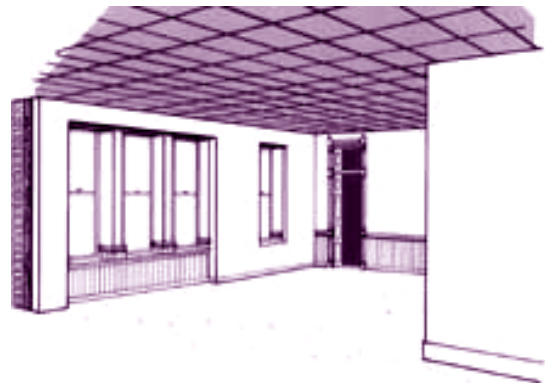
This includes the size, configuration, proportion, and relationship of rooms and corridors; the relationship of features to spaces; and the spaces themselves such as lobbies, reception halls, entrance halls, double parlors, theaters, auditoriums, and important industrial or commercial use spaces. Put service functions required by the building's new use, such as bathrooms, mechanical equipment, and office machines, in secondary spaces.

19.2 Avoid subdividing spaces that are characteristic of a building type or style or that are directly associated with specific persons or patterns of events.

Space may be subdivided both vertically through the insertion of new partitions or horizontally through insertion of new floors or mezzanines. The insertion of new additional floors should be considered only when they will not damage or destroy the structural system or obscure, damage, or destroy character-defining spaces, features, or finishes. If rooms have already been subdivided through an earlier insensitive renovation, consider removing the partitions and restoring the room to its original proportions and size.

19.3 Avoid making new cuts in floors and ceilings where such cuts would change character-defining spaces and the historic configuration of such spaces.

Inserting of a new atrium or a light well is appropriate only in very limited situations where the existing interiors are not historically or architecturally distinguished.



19.4 Avoid installing dropped ceilings below ornamental ceilings or in rooms where high ceilings are part of the building's character.

In addition to obscuring or destroying significant details, such treatments will also change the space's proportions. If dropped ceilings are installed in buildings that lack character-defining spaces, such as mills and factories, they should be well set back from the windows so they are not visible from the exterior.

Furring out exterior walls to add insulation and suspending new ceilings to hide ductwork can change a room's proportions and cause interior features to appear fragmented. The interior character of this school classroom that was converted to apartment use has been destroyed. Drawing: Neal A. Vogel

19.5 Retain and preserve interior features and finishes that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

This might include columns, doors, cornices, baseboards, fireplaces and mantels, paneling, light fixtures, elevator cabs, hardware, and flooring; and wallpaper, plaster, paint, and finishes such as stenciling, marbleizing, and graining; and other decorative materials that accent interior features and provide color, texture, and patterning to walls, floors, and ceilings.

19.6 Retain stairs in their historic configuration and to location.

If a second means of egress is required, consider constructing new stairs in secondary spaces. The application of fire-retardant coatings, such as intumescent paints; the installation of fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers; and the construction of glass enclosures can in many cases permit retention of stairs and other character-defining features.

19.7 Retain and preserve visible features of early mechanical systems that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building, such as radiators, vents, fans, grilles, plumbing fixtures, switch plates, and lights.

If new heating, air conditioning, lighting and plumbing systems are installed, they should be done in a way that does not destroy character-defining spaces, features and finishes. Ducts, pipes, and wiring should be installed as inconspicuously as possible: in secondary spaces, in the attic or basement if possible, or in closets.

19.8 Avoid "furring out" perimeter walls for insulation purposes.

This requires unnecessary removal of window trim and can change a room's proportions. Consider alternative means of improving thermal performance, such as installing insulation in attics and basements and adding storm windows.

19.9 Avoid removing paint and plaster from traditionally finished surfaces, to expose masonry and wood.

Conversely, avoid painting previously unpainted millwork. Repairing deteriorated plasterwork is encouraged. If the plaster is too deteriorated to save, and the walls and ceilings are not highly ornamented, gypsum board may be an acceptable replacement material. The use of paint colors appropriate to the period of the building's construction is encouraged.



Plaster has been removed from perimeter walls, leaving brick exposed. The plaster should have been retained and repaired, as necessary. Photo: NPS files.

19.10 Avoid using destructive methods - propane and butane torches or sandblasting - to remove paint or other coatings from historic features.

Avoid harsh cleaning agents that can change the appearance of wood.

20. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission shall apply the following criteria, developed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, to all proposed projects.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Certificate of Appropriateness Application

Newton / North Newton Historic Preservation Commission



PROPERTY OWNER/CONTACT INFORMATION

PROPERTY OWNER NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY/ZIP: _____

REPRESENTATIVE/CONTRACTOR: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY/ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PARCEL INFORMATION (IF KNOWN)

PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____

HISTORIC DISTRICT: _____ HISTORIC STATUS: LR / SR / NR / NA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NEW CONSTRUCTION | <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE / REPAIR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR REHABILITATION | <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR ADDITION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURAL REPAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> NON-STRUCTURAL REPAIR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR REHABILITATION / REMODEL | <input type="checkbox"/> SIGN / AWNING INSTALLATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: _____ | |

DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION (please use additional pages if needed)

Describe in detail the proposed project including any materials to be removed, new materials to be used, and design elements or features to be affected (i.e. windows, doors, roof, brick, foundation, proposed colors, etc.)

PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR APPLICATION:

- Photographs of your property and the location to be affected by your project. (Please note, city staff may visit the site for additional pictures)
- Site plan/drawings of the proposed work to provide a visual of the finished project.
- Written description of the materials to be used and construction techniques.
- Material sample (if available).
- If your project includes signage and/or awning, please include a scale drawing indicating lettering type, dimensions, materials, colors, locations, and method of illumination (if applicable).

INITIAL YOU HAVE READ & UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:

___ You (applicant) and/or applicant representative are encouraged to attend the meeting of the Newton/North Newton Historic Preservation Commission held on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Newton City Commission Chambers at 201 E 6th Street. Your presence will provide the HPC with a resource for questions regarding the project and will allow you to present additional details not already stated. Should you choose not to attend, review of your project may be postponed to the following meeting at the discretion of the HPC to allow for any adequate information to be provided.

___ Issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness letter does not constitute issuance of a building permit by the City of Newton Engineering Department. Nor does it constitute approval of any Federal or State Tax Credit Application.

___ Any changes to the project after the completion of a review will require a new COA application and presentation.

OWNER OF RECORD SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

OWNER REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

--- FOR OFFICE USE ONLY ---

DATE RECEIVED: ____/____/____

DATE REVIEWED: ____/____/____

DECISION: _____

NOTES/CONDITIONS: _____
