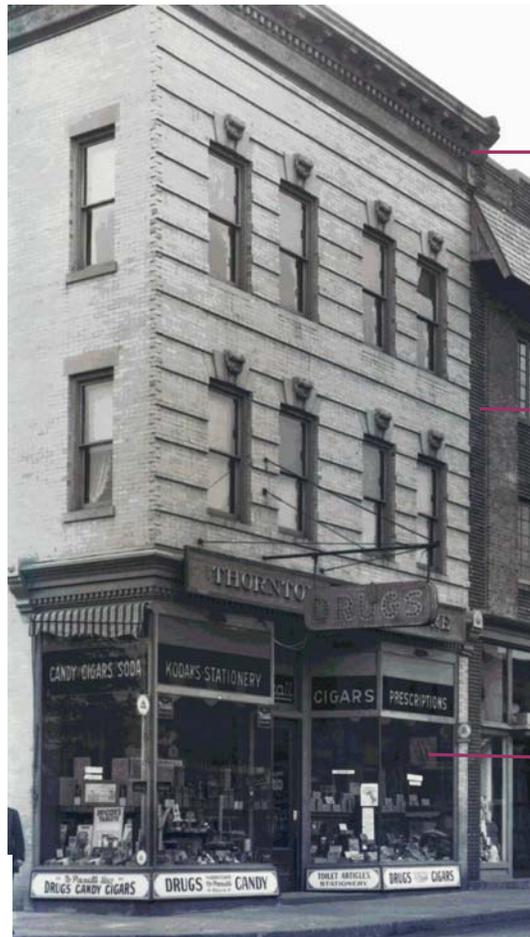


Facade

Definition: The facade is the front elevation of the building facing the street. Corner buildings often have two principal facades and free-standing public and institutional buildings have multiple facades with the principal one more elaborately treated. The facades usually display finer quality building materials than sides and rears.



Capping feature: projecting cornice with modillions, dentil band, plain frieze

Middle part: upper masonry wall with regularly organized windows

Lowest part: storefront, mostly glass

The Thornton Building, 90 East Ridgewood Avenue at southwest corner of Van Neste Square, erected about 1911, photograph circa 1927.

The facade of a typical traditional late 19th- early 20th century commercial building in the Village Center Historic District has a three-part horizontal composition:

- The lowest part has the storefront(s) which have large glass display windows and a doorway frequently with enframing piers and a storefront frieze and cornice. Larger buildings may have several storefronts. The visual openness of the storefront is a key element in the overall character of the facade.
- The middle part is usually brick, stucco, stone, or concrete and typically has regularly spaced window openings. If the building has only one story this part is absent.
- The building is terminated by capping features, usually a horizontally-oriented section composed of a frieze, cornice, brackets, parapet, or pent roof, often in combination. On many buildings in the District the roof is hidden behind this terminating section.

The proportion of window to wall areas in the traditional facade calls for large display windows and less wall at the storefront, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper parts. These façade proportions contribute to the historic Main Street character of the District.

Changes have occurred to the facades of District's buildings over the years in response to various merchandising trends, technology, and changing tenants. In most cases the changes affected the storefront area while the upper facade remained largely intact.

Facade

Guidelines

Identify and preserve the distinguishing elements of the façade(s) of contributing historic buildings, when possible.

Evaluate change to any element of the exterior of a contributing historic building for its impact on the entire façade.

Recommended

For Contributing Historic Buildings

- When original building elements have been removed or substantially altered and good documentary and physical evidence exists for the original appearance, consider accurately replicating original features.
- Preserve renovations which have historical and architectural significance as part of the building's history and use and contribute a positive visual quality to the building's façade and to the District.
- Remove alterations that do not contribute to the building's historic/architectural significance and are not integrated into the facade's design.
- When original building elements have been removed or substantially altered and little evidence exists related to original appearance, consider contemporary treatments. Use the designs of the façades of visually related buildings for inspiration and be compatible in design, size, scale, color, and material with the building's existing original elements and with the building's visually related buildings.

For All Buildings

- For commercial facades, maintain the historic configuration when it exists with a distinction between lower and upper sections and have a significant capping feature.
- Maintain or replicate the original pattern of storefronts, upper level window openings, and horizontal elements.
- Maintain or restore the unity of buildings with multiple storefronts and buildings initially constructed as part of a multi-building block.



This photograph of the Playhouse at 12-16 Wilsey Square shows its facade as built in 1913 to the designs of the architectural firm Davis, McGrath and Kiessling.



Recommended: Installing compatible contemporary features when original features are gone. The façade underwent numerous changes before it was rehabilitated with some original features preserved and others replicated. The storefronts received a visually compatible contemporary treatment with the unity of the building maintained.



Recommended: Renovating substantially altered façades, such as this one, to be more compatible with the streetscape. Above shows building before Renovation; below shows after.

Facade

Recommended (Continued)

- Whenever possible, organize the storefront's elements so that they relate to the design of the upper level.
- For most buildings that provide a separate entrance on the exterior for upper-story users, make the entrance for street-level users the primary focus and have the entrance for upper-story users as a secondary feature.
- Keep separate buildings visually distinct -- even in cases where several adjacent buildings are occupied by a single tenant or owner.
- Coordinate colors of exterior materials, signs, window frames, cornices, storefronts and other features of the façade. Choose the exterior colors with the building's character in mind and how the colors relate to visually related buildings.
- Conceal mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems completely from view from the street or sidewalk. If such equipment cannot be concealed, minimize their visual impact on building facades.



Recommended: Preserve historic facades and coordinate colors of exterior materials. The façade of 53 North Broad Street is a unified design with the 3-part composition of the upper window reflected at the storefront level. The window and door trim color is repeated in the awning and sign.

Resources

National Park Service, *Preservation Brief 1: Architectural Character- Identifying Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*,
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief17.htm>.

NPS, *Preservation Brief 3: Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation*,
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief35.htm>.

NPS, *Preservation Brief 11: Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*,
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief11.htm>.



Recommended: Preserve little altered facades such as this one.



The Old Post Office Building at 36-38 Oak Street soon after it was built in 1929.



Recommended: Preserve little altered facades. Although the building has served many different functions- post office, municipal offices, newspaper offices, and now commercial use—its façade is very well preserved. It is a particularly elegant Renaissance Revival design interpreted in white terra cotta.