

CHAPTER 5: GUIDELINES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION



Authenticity is an essential characteristic of any historic district. Surviving historic construction in Mansfield's historic districts should be easily differentiated from new construction and modern additions. New construction should help reinforce the authenticity of a historic district by clearly referencing the time in which it was built, and convey the evolution of the area through building design.

This chapter provides suggestions to developers of infill and redevelopment projects on the design of new buildings in historic areas. It includes general guidelines for the architectural character, building orientation and materials of all new construction projects as well as design standards for parking structures.

These guidelines can also be used for improvements to existing non-historic structures to ensure that they remain compatible with the overall historic context. The general preservation principles and design standards in Chapters 2 and 3 do not apply to new construction or to existing non-historic structures.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

New infill construction should be scaled to promote a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. New development should build on the heritage of Mansfield's historic built environment.



Incorporate a bulkhead, display window and transom in a new storefront design. New designs for windows, storefronts and architectural features provide visual interest while indicating that the building is new.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

New buildings in Mansfield's historic districts should be distinguishable from historic buildings, and appear as a contemporary product of its own time while maintaining general compatibility with the surrounding context.

5.1 Design a new building to reference the time in which it built, while respecting key features of the surrounding historic environment.

- New buildings should reflect the basic mass and scale of surrounding historic buildings while incorporating compatible design features.
- Use of historic building materials is encouraged.

5.2 Consider incorporating contemporary interpretations of traditional designs and details into a new building.

- Incorporate a bulkhead, display window and transom in a new storefront design as illustrated in "Key Features of Historic Commercial Façade" on page 24.
- Design storefront components and upper story windows to be similar in height, depth, profile and proportion to traditional historic buildings.

5.3 Do not imitate historic styles in the design of a new structure.

- Design a structure in a contemporary style to avoid blurring the distinction between old and new, which makes it more difficult to visually interpret the architectural evolution of a historic district.
- Design a structure using a contemporary interpretation of a historic style that is authentic to the environment while ensuring that it is distinguishable as being new.



Although the parapet on this modern storefront resembles the parapet of an older building in the same location, the storefront elements (bulkheads, display windows, doors and transoms) are distinguishable as new construction.

BUILDING ORIENTATION

Traditionally, the primary entrance of a building faced the street as can be seen on the historic buildings on Main Street. The entry was often recessed on commercial buildings. New buildings should be oriented to continue this traditional pattern.

5.4 Maintain the traditional orientation of a building to the street.

- Locate the primary entrance to face the street.
- The setbacks for new construction should match the setback of other buildings on the block. Where historic buildings abut the sidewalk, new buildings should do the same.



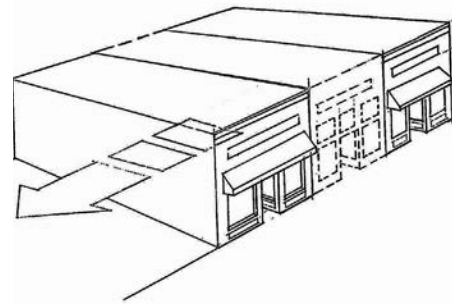
Maintain the traditional orientation of a building to the street.

MATERIALS

Building materials used in new construction should contribute to the visual continuity of Mansfield's historic districts.

5.5 Use building materials appropriate to the surroundings.

- Use brick as the primary exterior building material.
 - Brick was typically the dominant construction material on historic commercial buildings in Mansfield.
- Building materials should have a modular dimension similar to that used traditionally.
- All wood details should have a weather-protective finish.
- Traditional stucco, metal cladding, and composite panels may be considered as an accent material on upper floors of larger buildings.



Where historic buildings abut the sidewalk, new buildings should do the same.

5.6 Ensure that any new materials are similar in character to historic materials.

- New materials should appear similar in scale, proportion, texture, color and finish to those used traditionally.
- Using new materials as an accent is appropriate to help convey individual building modules or units.
- Do not use imitation or synthetic materials, such as aluminum or vinyl siding, imitation brick or imitation stone and plastic.
- Avoid highly reflective materials, such as unfinished metals or those without a matte finish.



Use building materials appropriate to the surroundings. This red brick resembles the brick used on nearby historic buildings.

NEW COMMERCIAL BUILDING DESIGN

Historic Mansfield is composed primarily of traditional commercial buildings with storefronts along the ground floor and upper story office or residential uses. New commercial buildings are encouraged as infill development, especially in the historic downtown district.

MASSING

Traditionally commercial buildings in Mansfield were mostly one to two stories in height, with articulated masses reflecting 25' lot widths, building widths that typically averaged from approximately 25' to 50', employed parapet details and pedestrian-scaled street fronts that contributed to a sense of human scale. A new building should continue to provide a variety of pedestrian-friendly scales and visually appealing masses. A new building should also reflect the traditional mass, scale, size, proportions and form of neighboring historic buildings.



A new building should be designed with a pedestrian-scaled street front.

5.7 Maintain the traditional size of buildings as perceived at the street level.

- The height of a façade of a new building facing the street should follow the historic context of the area and respect the traditional proportions of height to width.
- Floor-to-floor heights should appear similar to those of the surrounding historic buildings, especially those at ground level.

5.8 Establish a sense of human scale.

- Use vertical and horizontal articulation design techniques to reduce the apparent scale of a larger building mass.
- Incorporate changes in color, texture and materials to help define human scale.
- Use architectural details to create visual interest.
- Use materials that help to convey scale in their proportion, detail and form.



A new building should reflect the traditional mass, size, proportions and form of existing buildings seen along the street in historic Mansfield.

5.9 Maintain traditional spacing patterns created by the repetition of uniform building widths along the street.

- A new façade should reflect the established range of the traditional building widths seen downtown.
- A change in design features may be used to suggest traditional building widths.
- Changes in materials, window design, façade height or decorative details may be used to reflect traditional façade widths in the design of a larger new building.
- Provide variations consistently throughout the structure, such that the composition appears to be a composition of smaller building modules.

5.10 A new building should incorporate a base, middle and cap.

- Using a base, middle and cap on a new building helps reinforce the visual continuity of the area.



A new building should incorporate a base, middle and cap.

BUILDING AND ROOF FORM

Having a similar appearance in building and roof forms is a unifying element in a commercial area. New construction should be designed with simple forms.

5.11 A rectangular form should be dominant on a commercial façade.

- The facade should appear as a flat surface, with any decorative elements and projecting or setback articulations appearing to be subordinate to the dominant form.

5.12 A roof form should be similar to those used traditionally.

- Flat roofs are appropriate.
- Non-traditional roof forms, such as pitched roofs, A-frames and steep shed roofs, are inappropriate.



The facade should appear as a flat surface, with any decorative elements and projecting or setback articulations appearing to be subordinate to the dominant form. The decorative pilasters on this building project just enough to define the storefronts but are clearly subordinate to the overall rectangular building form.

COMMERCIAL FAÇADE CHARACTER

Historic commercial building facades incorporate a regular pattern of transparency and proportion. Traditional patterns should be incorporated into new construction whenever possible.

5.13 Maintain the traditional spacing pattern created by upper story windows.

- Use traditional proportions of windows, individually or in groups.
- Headers and sills of windows on new buildings should maintain the traditional placement relative to cornices and belt courses.



Maintain the distinction between the street level and the upper floor.

5.14 Maintain the distinction between the street level and the upper floor.

- The first floor of the primary facade should be predominantly transparent glass.
- Upper floors should be more opaque than the lower floor.
- Highly reflective or darkly tinted glass is inappropriate.
- Convey a distinction in floor heights between street levels and upper levels through detailing, materials, fenestration and a belt course.



Incorporate traditional building components into the design of a new storefront.

5.15 Incorporate traditional building components into the design of a new storefront.

- Use a bulkhead, display window and transom in a new storefront design.
- Storefront components and upper story windows should be similar in height and proportion to traditional historic buildings.
- When portions of a storefront are folding, all of the storefront components should still be visible.



Consider recessing the primary entry door from the front facade to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians, typically four feet.

5.16 Incorporate recessed entries along the street, where appropriate.

- Consider recessing the primary entry door from the front facade to establish a distinct threshold for pedestrians, typically four feet.
- Where entries are recessed, the building line at the sidewalk edge should be maintained by the upper floor(s).
- Use a transom over a doorway to maintain the full vertical height of the storefront.
- Oversized (or undersized) interpretations are discouraged.

CHAPTER 6: SIGNS



Signs are important visual elements in historic Mansfield. Balancing the functional requirements for signs with the objectives for the overall character of the area is a key consideration. Orderly sign location and design can make fewer and smaller signs more effective.

These design guidelines promote the use of signs which are aesthetically pleasing, of appropriate scale, and integrated with surrounding buildings in order to meet the community's desire for quality development. This chapter provides design standards for the treatment of historic signs, and the design of new signs. All signs throughout the city are subject to the requirements of Chapter 155 of Mansfield's Code of Ordinances, which provides the legal framework for a comprehensive and balanced system of signage.

TREATMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNS

Historic signs contribute to the downtown character. They also have individual value, apart from the buildings to which they are attached. Historic signs of all types should be retained and restored whenever possible.

Historically, most signs were relatively small in scale. Many were suspended below the canopies, to be read by pedestrians. Others were mounted flush with the building face, often fitting within architectural frames or sign bands that were built into the façade

ALL HISTORIC SIGNS

While all historic signs should be retained whenever possible, it is especially important when they are a significant part of a building's history or design.



Retention is especially important when a sign is integral to the building's design or physical fabric.

6.1 Consider history, context, and design when determining whether to retain a historic sign.

- Retention is especially important when a sign is:
 - Associated with historic figures, events or places.
 - Significant as evidence of the history of the product, business or service advertised.
 - A significant part of the history of the building or the historic district.
 - Characteristic of a specific historic period.
 - Integral to the building's design or physical fabric.
 - Integrated into the design of a building such that removal could harm the integrity of a historic property's design or cause significant damage to its materials.

HISTORIC WALL SIGNS

Historic painted wall signs, or "ghost signs" should be left exposed whenever possible, and should not be restored to the point that they no longer provide evidence of a building's age and historic function.



Historic painted wall signs, or "ghost signs" should be left exposed whenever possible, and should not be restored to the point that they no longer provide evidence of a building's age and historic function.

6.2 Leave historic wall signs exposed whenever possible.

6.3 Do not over-restore historic wall signs.

- Do not restore historic wall signs to the point that all evidence of their age is lost.
- Do not significantly re-paint historic wall signs even if their appearance and form is recaptured.
- It is acceptable to restore a ghost sign to some degree and it still would be historic.
 - If they are so faded that the content is being lost, retouching with a diluted paint is recommended over 100% full coverage.

DESIGN OF NEW SIGNS

Whether it is attached to a historic building or associated with new development, a new sign should exhibit qualities of style, permanence and compatibility with the historic building and surrounding area.

SIGN CHARACTER AND LIGHTING

A sign should be in character with the materials, colors and details of the building. Illumination sources should be shielded to minimize glare and light pollution.

6.4 Design the sign to be subordinate to the building.

- Design a sign to be simple in character.
- Locate a sign to emphasize design elements of the facade itself.
- Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features, such as the sign frame or sign band, using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of the building.
- All sign types should be subordinate to the building and to the street.

6.5 Use sign materials that are compatible with the architectural character and materials of the building.

- Use permanent, durable materials that reflect the historic context. Materials may include painted or carved wood, individual wood or cast metal letters or symbols, and painted, gilded or sandblasted glass.
- Painted metal or forged signs may also be appropriate if they are compatible with the architectural character of the building.
- Do not use highly reflective materials on a sign.

6.6 Assure that the sign location does not obscure the design features of the historic building.

- A sign should be designed to integrate with the architectural features of a building, not distract from them.

6.7 Use colors that contribute to legibility and design integrity.

- Limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used, although accent colors may also be appropriate.
- Design signs with a dark background and light colored lettering, or a light background with dark lettering, to achieve maximum visibility.
- Sign colors should complement the colors of the building.



Mount a sign to fit within existing architectural features, such as the sign frame or sign band, using the shape of the sign to help reinforce the horizontal lines of the building.



Limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used, although accent colors may also be appropriate.



Use a simple typeface design and colors that contribute to legibility.



Direct lighting towards a sign from external, shielded lamps.

6.8 Use a simple typeface design.

- Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typefaces.
- Use a typeface that is similar to traditional typefaces in the area when possible.
- Do not use more than two or three distinct typefaces on a sign.

6.9 Consider using a compatible, shielded light source to illuminate a sign.

- Direct lighting towards a sign from an external, shielded lamp.
- Do not overpower the building or street edge with lighting.
- Use a warm light, similar to daylight.
- If halo lighting is used to accentuate a sign or building, locate the light source so that it is not visible.
- Back-lit signs are inappropriate.

SIGN INSTALLATION ON A HISTORIC BUILDING

When installing a new sign on a historic building, it is important to maintain its key architectural features and to minimize potential damage to the building façade.

6.10 Avoid damaging or obscuring architectural details or features when installing signs.

- Minimize the number of anchor points when feasible.
- Do not penetrate brick when attaching a sign to a masonry building.
- Install at mortar joints.

DESIGN OF SPECIFIC SIGN TYPES

A variety of sign types may be appropriate if the sign contributes to a sense of visual continuity and does not overwhelm the architecture of the building.

AWNING SIGN

An awning sign is any sign painted or applied to the face, valance, side or top panel of an awning, or any sign made by removing material from an awning.

6.11 Use an awning sign in areas with high pedestrian use.

6.12 Use an awning sign when other sign types would obscure architectural details.

WINDOW SIGN

A window sign is any sign, banner, poster, or display located on the internal or external surface of the window of any establishment for the purpose of advertising services, products, or sales available within such establishment.

6.13 Design a window sign to minimize the amount of window covered.

- Scale and position a window sign to preserve transparency at the sidewalk edge.

WALL SIGN

A wall sign is any sign attached parallel to a wall of a building including individual letters, cabinet signs, or signs painted on the surface of a wall.

6.14 Place a wall sign to promote design compatibility among buildings.

- Place a wall sign to align with other signs on nearby buildings.

6.15 Place a wall sign to be relatively flush with the building facade.

- Design a wall sign to minimize the depth of a sign panel or letters.
- Design a wall sign to sit within, rather than forward of, the fascia or other architectural details of a building.

6.16 Place wall signs to integrate with historic building details and elements.

- Do not obstruct the character-defining features of a building with signage.
- Locate a flush-mounted wall sign to fit within a panel formed by decorative moldings or transom panels where they exist.
- Install at mortar joints.

SIGN EXAMPLES

A variety of sign types may be appropriate if the sign contributes to a sense of visual continuity and does not overwhelm the architecture of the building.



Example of an awning sign.



Example of a window sign.



Example of a wall sign.

SIGN EXAMPLES



Example of a projecting sign.

PROJECTING AND HANGING SIGNS

A projecting sign is attached perpendicular to the wall of a building or structure.

6.17 Design a bracket for a projecting sign to complement the sign composition.

6.18 Locate a projecting sign to relate to the building facade and entries.

- Locate a small hanging or projecting sign near the business entrance, just above or to the side of the door.
- Mount a larger projecting sign higher on the building, centered on the facade or positioned at the corner.

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF TERMS



GLOSSARY

Alignment. The arrangement of objects along a straight line.

Awning. Roof like structures that serve as a shelter over a storefront, window, door, deck, loading dock or other building opening. Awnings are most often fabric.

Awning Sign. Any sign painted or applied to the face, valance, side or top panel of an awning, or any sign made by removing material from an awning.

Bracket. A supporting member for a projecting element or shelf, sometimes in the shape of an inverted L and sometimes as a solid piece or a triangular truss.

Canopy. Roof like structures that serve as a shelter over a storefront, window, door, deck, loading dock or other building opening. Canopies are most often wood or metal.

Certificate of Approval. A signed and dated document stating the approval of the Historic Landmark Commission and any special conditions for work proposed by an owner or applicant within a Historic Landmark Overlay District.

Column. A slender upright structure, generally consisting of a cylindrical shaft, a base and a capital; pillar: It is usually a supporting or ornamental member in a building.

Contributing Property. A property which has been determined to be historically significant because it was present during the period of significance for the district, possesses integrity or is capable of yielding important information about the period.

Cornice. The continuous projection at the top of a wall. The top course or molding of a wall when it serves as a crowning member.

Deconstruction. The process of dismantling a building such that the individual material components and architectural details remain intact.

Doorframe. The part of a door opening to which a door is hinged. A doorframe consists of two vertical members called jambs and a horizontal top member called a lintel.

Double-Hung Window. A window with two sashes (the framework in which window panes are set), each moveable by a means of cords and weights.

Façade. The front or principal face of a building, any side of a building that faces a street or other open space.

Fascia. A flat board with a vertical face that forms the trim along the edge of a flat roof, or along the horizontal, or “eaves,” sides of a pitched roof. The rain gutter is often mounted on it.

Fenestration. The arrangement of windows and other exterior openings on a building.

Flush-mounted Sign. Any flat sign mounted or applied to a building façade.

Form. The overall shape of a structure (i.e., most structures are rectangular in form).

Guideline. For the purpose of this document, the term “guideline” is a criterion with which the Commission will require compliance when it is found applicable to the specific proposal. A guideline is subject to some interpretation when determining compliance.

Hanging Sign. Any sign suspended from an awning, canopy, bracket or brace.

Head. The top horizontal member over a door or window opening.

Historic Landmark Overlay District. A building or site of immeasurable value in preserving the cultural heritage, or an outstanding example of design or a site closely related to an important personage, act or event in history. Such designation marks the site for preservation and restoration to its historical character and is intended to discourage modification which detracts from its historical significance.

Historic District. An area of Mansfield that holds historic significance. Properties within a historic district may or may not be landmarks.

Historic Property. A historic property is one determined to be historically significant because it dates from the established period of significance and possesses sufficient integrity to convey its history, or is capable of yielding important information about that period.

Human Scale. A sense achieved when one can reasonably interpret the size of a building by comparing features of its design to comparable elements in one’s experience.

Integrity. In order to convey significance, a property must retain integrity, with a sufficient percentage of the structure dating from its period of significance. A majority of the building’s structural system and materials and its character-defining features should remain intact.

Interior Illuminated Sign. Any sign designed to be lit from the inside (including awning, canopy, hanging or flush-mounted signs).

May be Considered. The phrase “may be considered” indicates that the Commission has the discretion to determine if the action being discussed is appropriate. This decision is made on a case-by-case basis, using the information specifically related to the project and its context.

Mass. The physical size and bulk of a structure.

Masonry. Construction materials such as stone, brick, concrete block or tile.

Material. As related to the determination of “integrity” of a property, material refers to the physical elements that were combined or deposited in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

Module. The appearance of a single façade plane, despite being part of a larger building. One large building can incorporate several building modules.

Molding. A decorative band or strip of material with a constant profile or section designed to cast interesting shadows. It is generally used in cornices and as trim around window and door openings.

Muntin. A bar member supporting and separating panes of glass in a window or door.

Mural. A painting located on the side of the building.

Non-Historic Property. A “non-historic” property lacks historic significance either because it is not yet 50 years old or because it has been so substantially altered that it no longer retains its integrity.

Non-Contributing Property. A “non-contributing” building is a more recent property (less than 50 years old), or an older building that has been substantially altered that does not retain its historic integrity.

Orientation. Generally, orientation refers to the manner in which a building relates to the street. The entrance to the building plays a large role in the orientation of a building; whereas, it should face the street.

Panel. A sunken or raised portion of a door with a frame-like border.

Pedestrian Sign. Any sign oriented to pedestrians at street level visibility (including window, awning or hanging signs, as well as nameplates, plaques or sandwich boards).

Pediment. A triangular section framed by a horizontal molding on its base and two sloping moldings on each of its sides. Usually used as a crowning member for doors, windows and mantles.

Post. A piece of wood, metal, etc., usually long and square or cylindrical, set upright to support a building, sign, gate, etc.; pillar; pole.

Preservation. The act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity and material of a building.

Projecting Sign. Any sign attached to and placed perpendicular to or at an angle to a building façade.

Property. Area of land containing a single historic resource or a group of resources.

Quoin. (pronounced koin) Dressed stones or bricks at the corners of buildings, laid so that their faces are alternately large and small. Originally used to add strength to a masonry wall, later used decoratively.

Reconstruction. The act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific time and in its historic location.

Rehabilitation. The process of returning a property to a state that makes a contemporary use possible while still preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values.

Remodeling. The process of changing the historic design of a building.

Restoration. The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features and character of a property as it appeared in a particular time period.

Sandwich Board. Any sign designed for placement on the sidewalk, of A-frame construction, generally two-sided.

Seasonal Banner. Any sign generally designed for temporary, long-term or seasonal use mounted to a light standard.

Scale. The size of structure as it appears to the pedestrian.

Shape. The general outline of a building or its façade.

Shall. Where the term “shall” is used, compliance is specifically required if applicable to the proposed action.

Should. The term “should” indicates that compliance is expected, except in conditions in which the Heritage Preservation Commission and/or Heritage Preservation Officer finds that the guideline is not applicable, or that an alternative means of meeting the intent of the guideline is acceptable.

Side Light. A usually long fixed sash located beside a door or window; often found in pairs.

Sidewalk Furniture. Any item used to embellish the façade of a building or the streetscape (including statues, planter boxes, pots or vases, benches, trash receptacles, art or signs).

Siding. The narrow horizontal or vertical wood boards that form the outer face of the walls in a traditional wood frame house. Horizontal wood siding is also referred to as clapboards. The term “siding” is also more loosely used to describe any material that can be applied to the outside of a building as a finish.

Sill. The lowest horizontal member in a frame or opening for a window or door. Also, the lowest horizontal member in a framed wall or partition.

Stile. An upright structural piece in a panel or frame, as the edge of a door or window.

Streetscape. Generally, the streetscape refers to the character of the street, or how elements of the street form a cohesive environment.

Traditional. Based on or established by the history of the area.

Transom Light. A window band supplying natural light over a door or other feature.

Transom Window. A small window or series of panes above a door, or above a casement or double hung window.

Visual Continuity. A sense of unity or belonging together that elements of the built environment exhibit because of similarities among them.

Wall Sign. Any sign attached parallel to, but within 18 inches of a wall of a building including individual letters, cabinet signs, or signs painted on the surface of a wall.

Window Sign. Any sign, picture, symbol, or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale or service that is placed inside within one foot of the inside window pane or upon the windowpanes or glass and which is visible from the exterior of the window.



Detail from the 1933 Sanborn Insurance Map for Mansfield, Texas

