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## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

Why Preserve Old Buildings? .....	1
Purpose .....	2
Applicability .....	3
Historic Preservation Background .....	4
Local Research Resources .....	6
Preservation Principles .....	7
Urban Village Historic Buildings & Districts .....	8

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Character Defining Features .....	12
Design of Alterations .....	12
Historic Commercial Buildings .....	13
Additions to Historic Commercial Buildings .....	19
Historic Residential Buildings .....	23
Additions to Historic Residential Buildings .....	26
Glossary .....	28

### INTRODUCTION

#### Why Preserve Old Buildings?

Most of Bellingham's urban villages contain historic buildings and districts that provide a tangible link to the past and express diverse architectural styles and episodes in the city's history[1]. The City of Bellingham encourages property owners to preserve and rehabilitate their historic buildings and has created the Historic Design Guidelines ("*Guidelines*") to help provide direction and predictability in the permitting process.

Collectively, historic buildings create an interesting setting for pedestrians. Historic districts are attractive to businesses, residents, shoppers and tourists, and contribute to an area's commercial vitality.

History is dynamic, and historic preservation is not about freezing a building in time. It is about making thoughtful and informed decisions regarding changes to existing buildings – their materials, window and door openings and configurations and height -- and whether to repair, replace, replicate or reinterpret damaged or lost features.

The goal of the *Guidelines* is to help property owners make informed decisions regarding their historic buildings, and as feasible retain their authenticity and architectural features. Even buildings that have been altered over time may have historic value, and with thoughtful planning may be restored to their original character.

[1]Barkley Urban Village was initiated in the 1990s by a private developer and as of 2022 had no historic buildings.



#### HISTORIC BUILDINGS:

- **Provide a link to the past and help tell the story of a place;**
- **Invigorate the economy by creating a distinctive market image;**
- **Support heritage tourism strategies**
- **Reduce waste in landfills; and**
- **Can be quickly and/or incrementally made available for occupancy**



### PURPOSE

#### Of the Historic Building Guidelines

The City of Bellingham encourages property owners to take steps to preserve and rehabilitate their buildings and has created these Historic Design Guidelines (“*Guidelines*”) to provide direction and predictability.

The *Guidelines* establish a baseline for historic preservation and design and help guide the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of and additions to historic buildings in Bellingham’s urban villages.

The goal of the *Guidelines* is to help property owners make informed decisions and as feasible retain their authenticity and architectural features of their historic buildings.

Proposals are reviewed for compliance, to the greatest extent feasible, with the intent of applicable guidelines. The City offers financial incentives, as well as flexibility in land use and building code compliance, for eligible projects that meet the intent of the *Guidelines*.

#### Early Consultation

Property owners, developers, and builders are strongly encouraged to enlist the assistance of qualified design and planning professionals, including architects and preservation consultants, for the best possible outcome.

Early consultation with Planning and Community Development Department staff is recommended for any project involving a historic building. Call, email, or visit the Permit Center and ask to meet with a Historic Preservation Planner.

**Email:** [planning@cob.org](mailto:planning@cob.org)

**Place:** Permit Center, First Floor City Hall, 210 Lottie Street.

**Phone:** (360) 778-8300

**TTY:** 711 (Washington State Relay)

### PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

**Your historic building may be eligible for:**

#### Financial Savings

Special Tax Valuation

Federal Tax Credits

#### Alternative Land Uses

Adaptive Use Permit

#### Building Code Flexibility

International Existing Building Code

Owners of the Elks Building at 1414 Cornwall Avenue in Downtown Bellingham received a 10-year reduction in their property tax through the Special Tax Valuation program.



## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### APPLICABILITY

For the purposes of these *Guidelines*, historic buildings are defined as those:

- Listed in the Bellingham Local Historic Register, Washington State Heritage Register and/or the **National Register of Historic Places**; or
- Potentially eligible to be listed in the Local, State and/or National Historic Registers\*; or
- Listed or potentially eligible to be listed as a contributing building in a Local, State or National Historic District.

*\*Generally, a property must be at least 50 years old and retain architectural features expressive of its period of historic significance to be considered eligible for historic designation. In some cases, buildings and structures less than 50 years old may be considered historic.*

**Contact the City of Bellingham Planning and Community Development Department (PCDD)** to determine if your building is considered historic, and if your project will require a Certificate of Alteration. Technical assistance is available and applicants are encouraged to review the *Guidelines* and contact staff early in their project to ensure an efficient and streamlined review process.

**NOTE:** Changes to properties listed in the Bellingham Local Historic Register or as a contributing property to a Local Historic District may require a **Certificate of Alteration** under **Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 17.90.060**.

**AND:** The *Guidelines* apply to exterior modifications. Except in some cases for buildings listed in the Bellingham Local Historic Register, interior changes do not require design review.



Photo courtesy of the National Parks Service.

The Montague and McHugh Building at 114 W. Magnolia in the Downtown Urban Village is listed in the Local, State and National Historic Registers. Local listing requires that some alterations may be subject to design review under **Bellingham Municipal Code (BMC) 17.90.060**.







### HISTORIC PRESERVATION BACKGROUND

#### Federal

Background policies and legislation at the federal level began with the **1966 Historic Preservation Act**. This created the **National Register of Historic Places**, the list of **National Historic Landmarks** and the **State Historic Preservation Offices**. The National Park Service oversees these programs. The Secretary of the Interior's **Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings** were developed by the National Park Service to be applied to rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. The Standards are neither technical nor prescriptive but instead meant to promote responsible preservation practices that would help protect the nation's irreplaceable cultural resources. The Standards serve as the philosophical foundation for these Historic Design Guidelines.



#### State

The **Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP)** provides information and technical assistance for the state's historic buildings and the archaeology, including how to nominate properties to the State and National Register of Historic Places; offering funding to local governments; technical assistance on preservation of buildings, sites, districts and objects; and many other services.






#### Local

The City of Bellingham has supported the preservation of its historic and cultural resources since 1986 when it adopted the Landmark Preservation Ordinance to recognize and protect its historic landmarks. Today, the ordinance has been updated, and **Chapter 17.90 Historic Preservation Ordinance** further provides for the identification, evaluation, designation, and protection of designated historic resources within the boundaries of the City of Bellingham. The City also offers incentive for the preservation and rehabilitation of eligible historic properties through a property tax incentive (Special Tax Valuation), the allowance of adaptive uses, and flexibility in the building code.



## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES



	Applies To	Designated By	Regulatory?	Incentives
 <b>National Register of Historic Places</b>	Buildings Structures Objects Sites Districts	<b>National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior</b> The Keeper of the National Register	<b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Honorary Designation</li> <li>- No protections from demolition</li> <li>- Federal funding may trigger Section 106 for listed and eligible properties</li> <li>- Demolition triggers SEPA for listed and <i>eligible</i> properties</li> </ul> <i>*Including National Register Historic Districts</i>	<b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Federal Tax Credits for Income Producing Properties</li> <li>- State Special Valuation Tax Relief</li> <li>- Improves eligibility for Federal &amp; State grant funds</li> <li>- Property values may increase</li> <li>- Adaptive Use - permitting leniency</li> </ul>
 <b>WA State Register of Historic Places</b>	Buildings Structures Objects Sites Districts	<b>WA State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)</b> Washington State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	<b>NO</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Honorary Designation</li> <li>- No protections from demolition</li> <li>- Demolition triggers SEPA for listed and <i>eligible</i> properties</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improves eligibility for State and Local grant funds</li> <li>- Property values may increase</li> </ul>
 <b>Local Register of Historic Places</b>	Buildings Structures Objects Sites Districts	<b>City of Bellingham</b> Historic Preservation Commission	<b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listing places a restrictive covenant on a property, requiring a Certificate of Alteration for some alterations (BMC 17.90.090)</li> <li>- Deterrent to demolition</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special Valuation Tax Relief</li> <li>- Adaptive Use - permitting leniency</li> <li>- Offers protection for perpetuity</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### LOCAL RESEARCH RESOURCES

Historic photographs, plans and articles are an essential source of information for a historic building project.

Historic research materials and assistance are available at the following:

**Whatcom Museum Photo Archives**

**Center for Pacific Northwest Studies**

**Bellingham Public Library**

**Northwest Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives**

For additional guidance on specific topics, refer to the National Park Service's series of **Preservation Briefs**. To learn more about the visual character of your building refer to **Preservation Brief #17: Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character.**



Originally built as Fire Station #1, the Syre Center houses the **Whatcom Museum Photo Archives** at 201 Prospect St. is open to the public and has photographs, articles, building plans, and other information instrumental for planning a rehabilitation project.

Photographs from the past helped inform the rehabilitation of the Dahlquist Building storefront at 1311 N. State Street. Often the ground floor of a building is made available for use before the upper stories can be rehabilitated, as is the case with this important downtown building.

Photos from left to right: early storefront with original cloth retractable awnings; changes made mid-20th century to the two storefronts; and the rehabilitated storefronts in 2022. The upper floors of the building await rehabilitation and a new use. The rehabilitation was incremental, with one storefront being repurposed at a time, using combination of treatments. Elements that remained of the original design were preserved and restored, and new elements were adapted to be compatible with the old. (Photo courtesy Whatcom Museum, City of Bellingham, Graham Baba Architects)



## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

The Guidelines provide a basis for making decisions about the appropriate treatments of historic buildings and are philosophically based on the Secretary of the ***Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation***. The Standards embody two **basic principles**:

1. Minimize disturbance to historic building materials, and
2. To the greatest extent possible, maintain and protect a building's distinguishing character defining features

#### Historic Building Treatments

Depending on the condition and remaining features of a historic building, one or more of the following treatments may be appropriate:

**Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.

**Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

**Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

**Reconstruction** re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property.

#### Treatment goals:

- Preserve rather than replace features that remain in good condition.
- For those features that are deteriorated, repair is preferred over replacement.
- When replacement is necessary, it should be done in a manner similar to what existed historically.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### ADAPTIVE USE

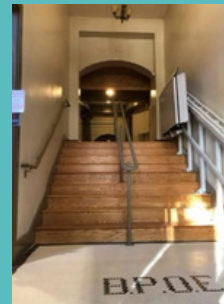
The best use for a historic building is that for which it was designed. Because this is not always possible, determining a new use that is compatible with the existing layout and structure of the building, and does not adversely affect its historic integrity and character is important. Every effort should be made to provide a new use that will require minimal alteration to the building and its site.



Originally built as the Exchange Building, 1248-60 N. State Street was repurposed twice in its lifetime - as the Henry Hotel in 1923, then again as the YMCA in 1942.



In the late 1990s the "modernized" façade was removed and the building was restored to its original appearance.



The Elks Building (above) provided an internal lift to meet ADA requirements. (RMC Architects photo.)

#### ACCESSIBILITY

As applicable, historic property owners should comply to the fullest extent possible with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provisions, while also preserving the integrity of the character-defining features of their buildings and sites. Design alterations to improve access for persons with disabilities while minimizing adverse effects on historic character and materials.





### HISTORIC BUILDINGS & DISTRICTS IN URBAN VILLAGES

The Old Town, Samish Way, Fountain and Waterfront Urban Villages have significant historic buildings that provide each district with a distinctive image.

Some of these buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Washington State Heritage Register, and / or the Bellingham Local Historic Register, and many others that are not listed are eligible for one or all of these designations.

Whether part of a historic district or not, historic buildings in urban villages add character and help tell the story of how Bellingham developed and grew over time.



#### Samish Way Urban Village

Boomer's Drive Inn on Samish Way has operated as a restaurant since it was built, and while no longer providing car-hop service it has retained the and is expressive of the auto-oriented architecture of Old Highway 99.



#### Fountain District Urban Village

The Fountain Animal Hospital, built in 1940 in the Art Moderne style, has become a landmark on Meridian Street.



#### Old Town Urban Village

Old Town Urban Village.  
The Burlington Northern Passenger Depot is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



#### Waterfront Urban Village

The Granary Building on Roeder Avenue awaited adaptive reuse for decades and is now an anchor building in the Waterfront District. (Photo courtesy [bellinghamdowntownwaterfront.com](http://bellinghamdowntownwaterfront.com))

## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### A NOTE ON HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Both Fairhaven and Downtown have designated National Register Historic Districts at their core, and a portion of the Eldridge National Register District is located in the Fountain District along Elm Street. The goals of the City, the Fairhaven Association and the Downtown Bellingham Partnership is to encourage owners of historic properties to preserve their buildings so as to maintain and enhance the quality of these districts.

The Department of the Interior National Park Service defines National Historic Districts as possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”

The National Register designation provides no protection for buildings but does offer a basis of information that clarifies the significance of buildings on an individual and collective basis. Additionally, contributing buildings in a National Historic District may be eligible for tax savings, as well as land use and building code flexibility.

Visit the City of Bellingham's Historic Buildings Interactive Map to see if your building is listed on the Local, State or National Register, or located in a National Historic District.

\*NOTE: In 2022 no Local Historic Districts are listed in Bellingham. BMC 17.90.050 provides a mechanism for listing districts to the Local Historic Register.



Fairhaven National Historic District was designated in 1977.



The Downtown Bellingham National Historic District was designated in 2012.



## APPENDIX B | HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Fairhaven Historic District

Boundaries for the Historic District DRA are identical to those of the Fairhaven National Historic District. Historic "contributing" buildings are numbered on the map at left, with corresponding images for reference. Street addresses and built dates are taken from the National Register district nomination.



10. Dos Padres and Fairhaven Pharmacy, 1111 and 1115 Harris (1929)



11. Morgan Block, 1000 - 02 Harris (1890)



12. Old Post Office, 1304 - 05 11<sup>th</sup> (built c. 1890, but reconstructed in late 20<sup>th</sup> century)



13. Nelson Block, 1100 - 02 Harris (1900)



14. Chuckawut Motors, 1112 - 14 Harris, 1300 12<sup>th</sup> (1919)



15. Mason Block, 1200 - 05 Harris (1890)



16. Waldron Block, 1308 - 14 12<sup>th</sup> (1890)



17. Grad Building, 1410 11<sup>th</sup> (1880)



1. Kulehan Club, 1121 11<sup>th</sup>, 1120 Finnegan Way (1909)



2. Carnegie Library, 1105 12<sup>th</sup> (1904)



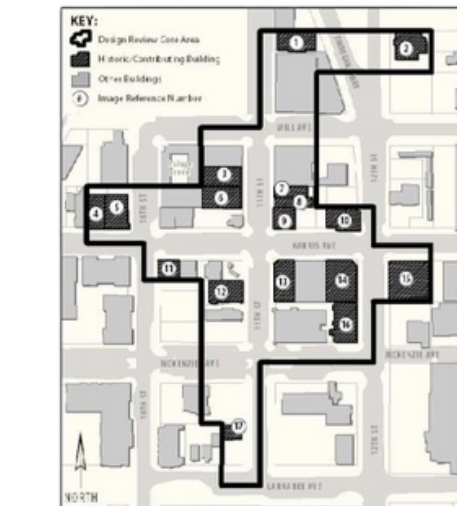
3. Fairhaven Cash Grocery, 1204 - 05 11<sup>th</sup> (built c. 1908, renovated & 2<sup>nd</sup> story added late 20<sup>th</sup> century)



4. B'ham Bay Hotel, 909 - 11 Harris (c. 1900 - 1903)



5. Scherling Block, 913 - 15 Harris (1903)



6. Knights of Pythias Bldg, 1208 - 10 11<sup>th</sup> (1891)



8. Monahan Building, 1209 11<sup>th</sup> (1890)



7. E.M. Day Building, 1211 11<sup>th</sup> (c. 1890)

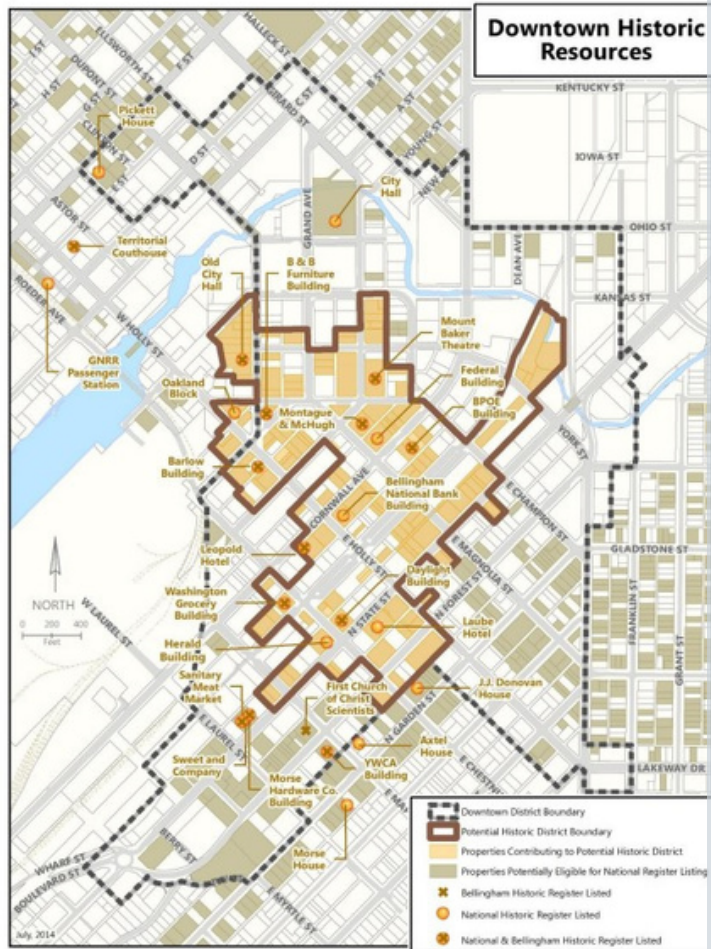


9. Terminal Building, 1101 - 03 Harris (c. 1890 - 1890)

Detail of Fairhaven National Historic District Design Review Area, showing contributing buildings and those individually listed on the National, State and/or Local Registers.



## Downtown Historic District



Map of the Downtown Bellingham National Historic District within the Downtown Urban Village boundary, showing contributing buildings and those listed individually on the National, State and/or Local Registers.



The Cascade Laundry Building, 203 - 207 Prospect Street in Downtown Bellingham was adapted to house a performance space, artist studio, a cidery and restaurant. As a contributing building to the Downtown National Historic District the owner was able to reduce their property taxes for 10 years through the **Special Tax Valuation** program. Photo at right shows the original design of the building (photo courtesy Whatcom Museum Photo Archives).

<b>Site ID:</b> 120	<b>Address:</b> 207 Prospect St.	<b>Historic Name:</b> Bellingham Bay Furniture Co. Warehouse, Cascade Laundry
<b>Classification:</b> Historic, Contributing	<b>Builder:</b> Unknown	<b>Style:</b> Spanish - Mediterranean
<b>Built:</b> 1923	<b>Architect:</b> Unknown	

**Description:** 207 Prospect Street was built in 1923 (according to a *Bellingham Herald* article) in the Spanish – Mediterranean style. The two-story reinforced concrete building features a rectangular plan and has a flat roof with parapet. The concrete walls are clad in corrugated metal and brick veneer. The original plan and parapet are intact. There are slight changes to the original cladding and moderate alterations to the original street-level windows. The storefront received a midcentury remodel, with aluminum framed doors and display windows.

**Cultural:** Constructed in 1923, the building at 205 and 207 Prospect was originally a warehouse for the B. B. [Bellingham Bay] Furniture Company. The building permit was recorded in the *Bellingham Herald*, August 29, 1923, p. 10: "One [permit] was issued to the B. B. Furniture Company for a two-story block at 209-211 Prospect Street that will cost \$15,000. It will be chiefly for display and storage purposes." B.B. Furniture's store during that time was the Hamilton Building ("Flatiron Building"), built in 1907, at 1313 Bay Street. When that building burned on April 28, 1924, the then new warehouse on Prospect served as the furniture company's "Temporary Office and Salesroom" while the Hamilton Building's interior was being completely rebuilt. Cascade Laundry, Inc. became the tenant in 1930 and continued to occupy the building up until 2007.

Buildings that are "contributing" to the Downtown Bellingham National Register District may be eligible for property tax reductions. [Click here to view the Downtown Bellingham National Register Nomination for specific building information.](#)



### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Guidelines for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and additions to historic buildings are explored in the following pages.

#### Character Defining Features

Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise a building's appearance. Character-defining features include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment.

Character-defining features collectively provide interest, a human scale and add detail to the streetscape. Whenever possible, preserve a building's architectural character-defining features.

Visit the [Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation](#) for more information on character defining features.

**INTENT:** Historic buildings in urban villages and National Historic Districts retain features that contribute to the story of the place.

**Guideline:**

- Preserve character-defining features that are intact.
- Don't remove or damage character-defining features.
- Preserve intact features with appropriate maintenance techniques.
- When disassembly of a historic element is necessary, carefully identify how it will be stored during your rehabilitation project. Store them in a safe place until they are re-installed.

**Guideline:** Repair features that are damaged.

- Use methods that will not harm the historic materials.
- Repair work is preferred over replacement.

**Guideline:** Replace features that are missing or beyond repair.

- Reconstruct only portions that are damaged beyond repair.



The raised metal letters in the cornice work of the Dahlquist Building, 1311 N. State Street, add character to the building.

- Reconstruct the original element, based on adequate evidence, if possible. This is the strongly preferred option.

#### Design of Alterations

*Buildings may undergo alterations over time. New alterations often occur when original material is missing and new interpretations of traditional elements become necessary.*

**INTENT:** Plan alterations to preserve the building's integrity.

**Guideline:** Design an alteration to be compatible with the historic character of the property.

- Avoid alterations that would hinder the ability to interpret the historic significance of the original building.
- Alterations that seek to imply an earlier period than that of the building are inappropriate.

**Guideline:** Avoid alterations that damage historic features.

- For example, mounting a sign panel in a manner that causes decorative moldings to be damaged would be inappropriate.



### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Storefronts

The Guidelines focus primarily on what is thought of as the “traditional” historic commercial building, constructed between the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. This form appears in the Downtown and Fairhaven National Historic Districts, and throughout Bellingham. While distinct in many ways, these buildings share a common architectural language. Most are built of brick and other masonry materials. Designed in a variety of styles, an overall compatibility is expressed through common features, as shown in the diagram at right.

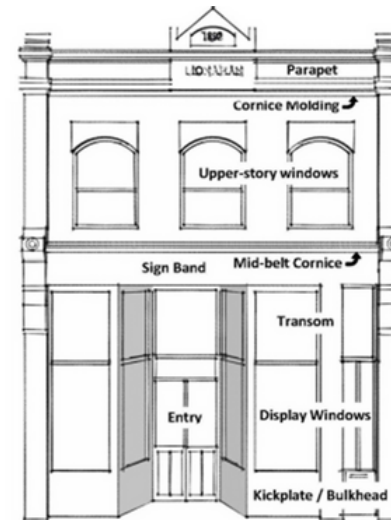
Depending on the placement on a block, a building may have two primary storefront façades with distinguishing features, and more than one primary entrance. Greater flexibility in the treatment of a rear facade may be appropriate if it does not have significant architectural features.

**INTENT:** The primary façade on a historic commercial building is a crucial feature that should be preserved, restored and/or rehabilitated. Repairing or reconstructing missing features is a key goal.

**Guideline:** A rehabilitation project should preserve these character-defining elements of a historic commercial building:

- **Display windows:** The main portion of glass on the storefront, where goods and services are displayed.
- **Transom or Sign Band:** The upper portion of the display, separated from the main display window by a frame.
- **Kickplate or Bulkhead:** Found beneath the display window. Sometimes called a bulkhead panel.
- **Original Entry:** Usually set back from the sidewalk in a protected recess.
- **Upper-story Windows:** Windows located on the second story area. These usually have a vertical orientation and appear to be less transparent as the large expanse of glass in the storefront below.

- **Cornice Molding:** A decorative band at the top of the building. A **mid-belt cornice** may sometimes be found separating some floors (e.g., a storefront from the upper story windows).
- **Parapet:** a low protective wall along the edge of a roof, bridge, or balcony



MAJOR COMPONENTS OF A TYPICAL “TRADITIONAL” HISTORIC COMMERCIAL BUILDING FAÇADE.

Major character-defining features and components of a typical “traditional” historic commercial building façade.

**Guideline:** If a storefront is intact, preserve, restore and/or repair architectural features.

- Do not alter a storefront opening’s size and shape.
- If intact, preserve the storefront glass. If not intact, replace in-kind -- do not use reflective, opaque or tinted glass.
- Repair historic storefront elements by reinforcing historic materials. Use in-kind materials such as masonry and wood when replacement is necessary.

**Guideline:** If a storefront has been altered and information is available, consider restoring the original design.

- Use historic photographs, articles and building plans to determine a storefront’s original design.



### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Consider exposing historic storefront elements that have been covered in past “modernization” episodes. (BARLOW)
- In some cases, an original storefront may have been altered early in the history of the building and taken on significance. It may be appropriate to preserve such changes. (PICKFORD)
- If replacement with a traditional material is not possible, use a compatible substitute that is similar in scale, finish and character, and has proven durability in the local climate.

**Guideline:** If the original façade has been altered and information is not available, a simplified interpretation may be appropriate.

- The new design should convey the character of a historic storefront, relating to the size and transparent character of the display window, recessed entryway, cornice, etc.
- The storefront should be designed to provide interest to pedestrians but should not create a false sense of history.

#### Doors and Entryways

*The repetition of recessed entries along the street creates a rhythm of shadows, establishes a sense of scale, creates visual interest and helps identify business entrances.*

**INTENT:** Doors and entryways are important features that help convey a building's historic character. Whenever possible these elements should be preserved.

**Guideline:** Where they exist, maintain the original proportions, appearance, size and shape of a primary exterior door and recessed entry. Restore those that have been altered.

- Preserve the decorative and functional features of a primary entrance, which may include the door, door frame, threshold, glass panes, paneling, hardware, detailing, transoms and flanking sidelights.
- Repair a damaged historic door to restore its original appearance.

- When a new door is needed it should be in character with the building -- especially on primary facades. If a door must be replaced, use materials and design similar to that of the original, or use a door of the same building style.
- If a door size must be altered, maintain the original opening size and position. This is especially important for primary entry doors.
- Maintain original glass size in display windows, doors and recessed entries and avoid altering their shape. If these elements have been altered, restore them if historic information is available.

**Guideline:** Avoid creating entries that are flush with the sidewalk.

- Where entries were originally designed to be flush, maintain them in their original position, as feasible within code requirements (door width, swing and construction).

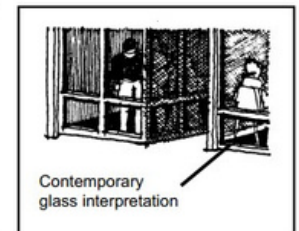
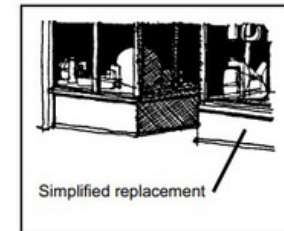
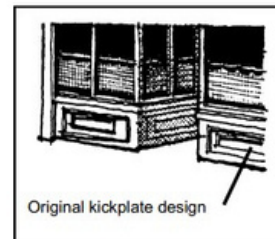
#### Kickplates and Bulkheads

**INTENT:** Designed as a decorative panel located below the display window, a kickplate (or “bulkhead”) adds interest and detail to the façade and should be preserved.

**Guideline:** Expose and restore an original kickplate that has been covered with another material.

**Guideline:** If the original kickplate is missing and no information of its historic appearance exists, develop a compatible replacement design.

- Wood or masonry is an appropriate material for a replacement on most styles. Alternative materials may be considered as appropriate.



Retain the kickplate / bulkhead as a decorative panel. If the original is missing, develop a sympathetic replacement design.

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Windows

**INTENT:** Upper-story windows are one of a historic commercial building's most important character-defining features and should be preserved.

**Guideline:** Preserve the position, size, number and arrangement of original windows in a building wall. Do not enclose an original window opening or create a new opening on a primary facade.

- Upper story windows were often designed with a vertical emphasis. Their proportions contribute to the character of a commercial building façade and should not be blocked down or altered in size.
- Consider re-opening windows that are currently blocked.
- Repair rather than replace frames, sashes and decorative features of a building's original windows. Preserve the character of divided light pattern of historic windows.

**Guideline:** If original windows are missing, replace with those that are the same size, shape, appearance, and materials of the original.

- Convey the character of traditional sash divisions in a replacement window by matching the profile of the sash and its components to that of the original. If the original window was double-hung, use a similar replacement, or one that appears as such.
- Match the number and position of glass panes.
- Muntins that divide a window into smaller panes should be either genuine or simulated divided lights, with a depth and shadow line similar to the original. Snap-on "grills" are not appropriate.

**Guideline:** On primary facades, use the same material as the original windows.

- A substitute material may be used if the components are similar to the original in dimension, profile and finish.

- Vinyl and unfinished metals are inappropriate replacement materials for traditional historic wood windows. Aluminum-clad windows may be appropriate.

**Guideline:** New glazing should be clear, to convey the visual appearance of historic glazing.

- Transparent low-e type glass may be used, but metallic and reflective finishes should not.

**Guideline:** If historic windows were previously replaced with 1950's - 1980's aluminum or vinyl windows, it is appropriate to replace these with higher quality, more energy efficient units more in character with the building's original windows.



Covered for decades, the owner of the historic Cottage Hotel at 201 E. Chestnut Street removed 1950s "modernizing" materials and replaced upper-story windows with energy efficient models that referenced the originals. (Top photo Whatcom Museum Photo Archives.)



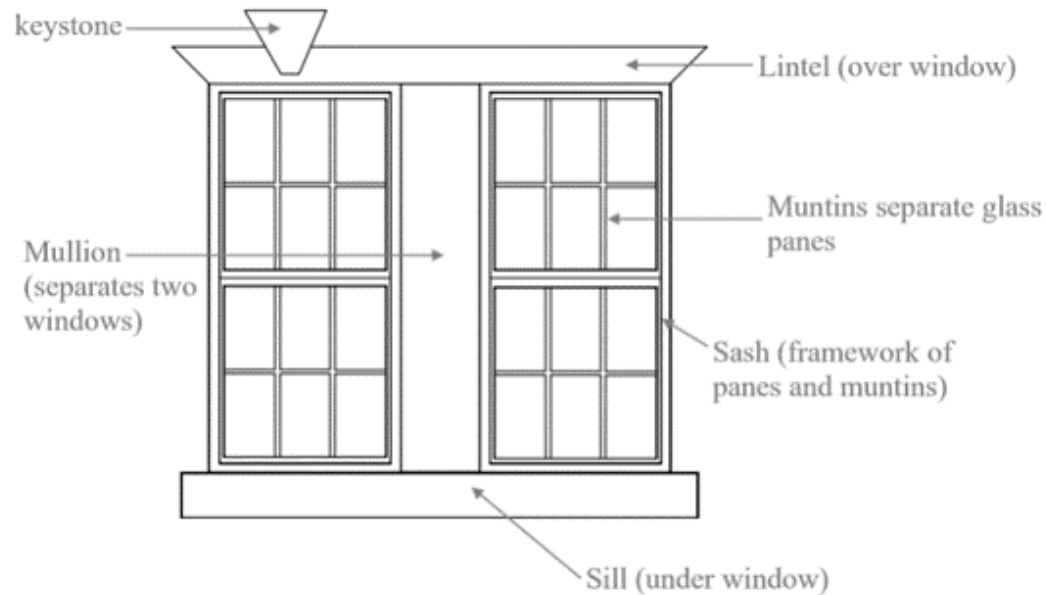




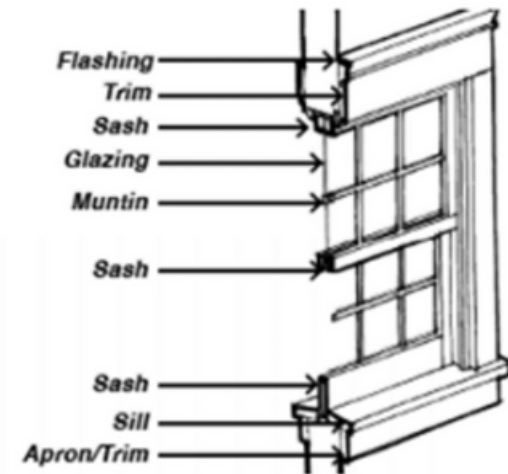
### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

Windows are an important character-defining feature in the façade of a historic building.

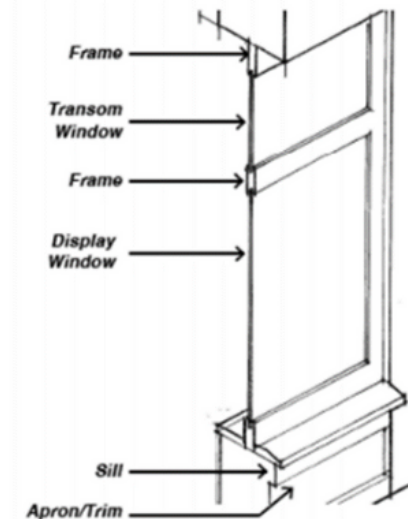
Whenever possible, restore rather than replace original historic windows. If they must be replaced, replace “in-kind.”



Anatomy of a double hung sash window and exterior surround details, typical in upper-story floors of many traditional historic commercial buildings.



Elements of a typical double hung sash window, above.



Typical storefront commercial display window.

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Transoms

**INTENT:** The transom, a window consisting of a horizontally oriented glass band above the ground floor display window or entrance, is an important feature of the overall proportion of a historic storefront. Whenever possible a transom should be preserved or restored in its original configuration.

**Guideline:** Retain the original shape of the transom glass in an historic storefront. Bands of transom windows should not be removed or enclosed.

**Guideline:** If the original transom glass is missing, installing new glass is preferred.

- If a transom must be blocked for use as a sign panel, retain the original proportions and configuration so it might be restored in the future

#### Cornices and Parapets

**INTENT:** Most historic commercial buildings were designed with a cornice, and often a parapet that caps the façade and provides upper-story interest. These elements should be preserved.

**Guideline:** If remaining, preserve or restore a building's cornice and parapet.

**Guideline:** If a cornice or parapet is missing, consider reconstruction if historic design information is available.

- Match replacement elements to those of the original, especially in overall size and profile.
- Appropriate materials may include stone, brick and stamped metal, wood or a durable synthetic. Fiberglass may also be appropriate.

**Guideline:** Addition of a new cornice, parapet or building name where none originally existed is not recommended.



Although obscured with a sign band, the storefront transom windows of the Knights of Pythias building remain intact and could be uncovered and restored in the future.



Although portions of the Knights of Pythias building's ornate parapet are missing, the building still presents a powerful presence in the Fairhaven National Historic District. What remains has been preserved and provides a reference to the original design. (Photo at right courtesy Whatcom Museum Photo Archives.)

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Facade Materials

**INTENT:** Historic exterior building materials provide a sense of scale, texture and character to the streetscape, as well as conveying the work of skilled craftspeople. These qualities should be preserved and/or restored.

**Guideline:** Brick, stone and wood were the main building materials and should be restored, repaired or replaced in-kind.

- Do not cover or obscure original façade materials.
- If the original material has been covered, expose it if feasible.
- Do not paint natural colored masonry. However, if masonry was painted historically, it may be appropriate to repaint.

**Guideline:** If material replacement is necessary, use materials similar to those used historically.

- Masonry, either brick or stone, and wood were the primary wall material for most buildings in this region.
- Wood and metal were used for window, door and storefront surrounds.
- Substitute materials may be used if they closely match the original in appearance, finish and profile.

**Guideline:** Protect historic material surfaces. Don't use harsh cleaning methods that damage the finish of historic materials.

**Guideline:** Protect masonry from water deterioration. See **Preservation Brief #1 for more information.**

- Provide proper drainage so water does not stand on flat surfaces or accumulate in decorative features. Provide a means to drain water away from foundations.
- Use a sealant, or clear coat, to protect masonry only when necessary. A sealant will prevent proper breathing and cause moisture to be trapped inside the masonry.



*If feasible, remove added material and restore the original façade.*

*If the original façade materials exist, restore rather than covering with new material.*

The owner of the 1892 Barlow Building at 211 W Holly St. removed the 1960s “modernizing” materials and restored the original façade.





### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Additions to Historic Commercial Buildings

An exterior addition to a historic building should be considered only after determining that a new use cannot be accommodated by altering non-significant interior spaces.

#### Designing the Location of an Addition [2]

**INTENT:** Additions are often made over time to historic commercial buildings, as uses change or more space is needed. In planning a new addition, the goal is to minimize loss of a building's historic character and significant features. Opportunities for addition placement may be limited. There are two types of additions: ground level additions, which involve expanding a structure's footprint, and roof additions.

**Guideline:** Locate ground level additions to the rear or side of a building where they create the least impact to historic character.

**Guideline:** Design a roof addition to be simple in character and set back from the front plane of a building.

**Guideline:** Design additions to be compatible with the original building and not detract from the original material, character or scale.

- The addition's materials, window size and placement, and alignment of architectural elements should align, relate, and be compatible with those of the existing structure.

**Guideline:** An addition should appear subordinate to the main structure, and should be similar in mass and form, yet be distinguishable from the original building.

[2] Refer to **NPS Preservation Brief #14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns** for more information about the location of additions.

- Design an addition so that the character of the original building can still be interpreted.



The YMCA was able to expand by purchasing the adjacent one-story building and create a climbing wall by setting-back the roof top addition.

**Guideline:** Design an addition so the historic character of the original building can still be interpreted.

- A new addition that creates an appearance inconsistent with the historic character of the building is inappropriate. For example, an addition that is more ornate than the original building would be out of character.
- An addition that seeks to imply an earlier period than that of the building is also inappropriate as it creates a false sense of history.

**Guideline:** An addition should be subtly distinguishable from the historic building.





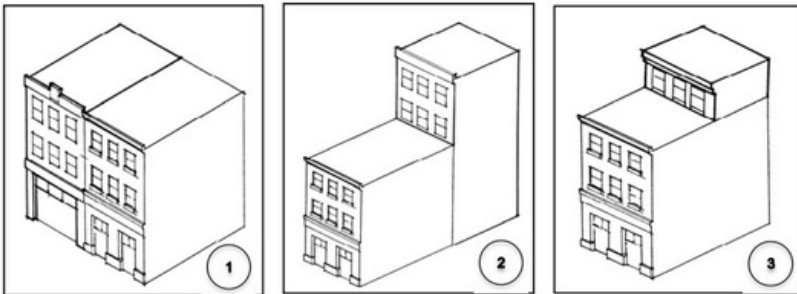
### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

- An addition should be made distinguishable from the historic building, even in subtle ways, so that the character of the original can be interpreted.

**Guideline:** An addition made to the side of a building should maintain the alignment of storefront elements, moldings, cornices and upper story windows of the existing building.

**Guideline:** An addition made to the roof of a building should maintain the historic building's street presence as related to its height, mass and character.

- A roof addition should be set back from a primary, character-defining facade, to preserve the perception of the historic scale of the building.



The three images above illustrate how additions can be made to existing buildings. The first shows an addition placed to the side of an original three-story building, the second shows the addition placed to the rear, and the third shows a roof addition that has been set back from the front of the building.

### Addition of Handrails and Balconies

**INTENT:** The addition of handrails may be necessary to address accessibility and life / safety issues but should not detract from the character of the original building.

**Guideline:** A new railing or an addition to an existing railing should be simple in design. Simple metal work and wood are appropriate for new railings.

- A railing should appear as mostly transparent, with equal or lower ratios of solid-to-void of baluster-to-opening.

**Guideline:** If a taller railing than the original is required by building code, add a railing above the original to achieve a greater overall height without changing the appearance of the original.

- Design the new railing to be visually subordinate to (thinner and less detailed than) the original.

**INTENT:** The addition of balconies can increase use options and long-term viability for historic commercial buildings.

**Guideline:** Design a balcony addition to be in character with the original building, yet simple in design.

- The balcony should appear mostly transparent. Achieve solid-to-void ratios with balusters and rails.
- Simple metal work with a dark matte finish is most appropriate on commercial buildings.
- Heavy timber and plastics are inappropriate materials, as are glass and plexiglass.

**Guideline:** Mount a balcony to accentuate character-defining features. Where possible, locate a balcony within existing openings. Balcony supports should align with existing building elements.

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Awnings and Canopies

**INTENT:** Awnings promote sidewalk activity and protect pedestrians from the weather. Both operable and fixed metal type awnings are appropriate, but regardless of type, an awning's design should relate to the building's architecture, and not obscure character defining features.

**Guideline:** Design an awning or canopy to be in scale with the building and streetscape.

**Guideline:** Mount an awning or canopy to accentuate character-defining features. Locate so as to fit into existing building openings.

**Guideline:** Awnings should not overwhelm the façade and should be a subordinate feature.

**Guideline:** Appropriate supporting mechanisms for metal awnings include wall-mounted brackets and chains consistent with the style of the building.

**Guideline:** Operable awnings are an energy efficient mechanism for managing interior light and air and are encouraged.

**Guideline:** Internal illumination of an awning is inappropriate, but light fixtures that shed light down onto walkways and features below the awning are encouraged.



The Herald Building at 1146 N. State Street was added to provide pedestrian cover while still allowing light to penetrate to the building.



The Flatiron Building at 1311-1319 Bay Street.



Recommended - mount an awning or canopy to accentuate a building's character-defining features. Photo courtesy of [Professional Tips & Tricks To Simplify Anchoring An Awning](#) ([ecanopy.com](http://ecanopy.com)).

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Building Lighting

The character and level of lighting used on a building deserves special attention. Traditionally, exterior lights were simple in character and were used to highlight signs, entrances, and ground floor details. Most fixtures had incandescent lamps that cast a color similar to daylight, were relatively low intensity and were shielded with simple shades.

**INTENT:** The overall effect of modest and focused building light should be continued. Lighting design should enhance the historic character of the street as seen at night. Lighting should not overwhelm it and should facilitate safety and security.

**Guideline:** Design lighting to accent architectural details, building entries, signs and to illuminate sidewalks.

**Use lighting as it was used historically in the area:**

- Shielded lighting is preferred.
- Lighting should not dominate a facade or the street.
- Washing the entire facade with light in some cases may be appropriate.

**INTENT:** Use building lighting to accent entrances and architectural details, and to illuminate sidewalks and signs.

**Guideline:** Minimize the visual impacts of architectural lighting. Use shielded and focused light sources to prevent glare. Provide shielded and focused light sources that direct light downward.

**Guideline:** Use lighting fixtures that are appropriate to the building and its surroundings in terms of style, scale and intensity of illumination.

**Guideline:** Up-lighting should only be used where an architectural detail, such as an extended cornice or sill, will block the lighting.

**Guideline:** When installing architectural lighting on a historic building, documentation of historic lighting should be used as a basis for the new design. If no evidence exists, use a simplified design that relates to the building style.

**Guideline:** Building lighting should be installed to minimize damage to a building's original material and should be reversible.

**Guideline:** Attach new lighting fixtures to mortar, rather than drilling through bricks on historic buildings.

#### Existing Historic Additions

**INTENT:** Some early additions may have taken on historic significance of their own. Conversely, it may be appropriate to modify or remove more recent additions that detract from the historic character of a building.

**Guideline:** Additions over 50 years old that are similar in character to the original building's materials, finishes, and design, and that may reflect the workmanship of a master should be preserved.



The building which now houses The Pickford at 1318 Bay St. originally housed "The Racket" was updated in the 1920s and has since taken on significance.



### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Historic Residential Buildings

Urban villages have historic residential buildings within their boundaries, some located in commercial zones and/or within National Historic Districts. The age, style, material and forms may vary, but preservation goals are similar. This section provides guidance for the rehabilitation and additions to these residential forms.

#### Form and Facade

**INTENT:** Residential forms and facades add interest and help tell the story of how an area developed over time. It is a goal to preserve the character defining features of these historic residential buildings.

**Guideline:** Preserve the character-defining architectural elements of a residential building. Elements may include:

- **Porches**, which create depth and interest to a building. Typically, these are a one-story covered, unenclosed or enclosed entry element. A porch floor commonly matches the height of the first floor and is supported by columns and has a baluster.
- **Doors**, both primary entrance and secondary, provide character to a historic residential building. Doors are often made of wood, sometimes with partial glazing.
- **Windows** are a major contributor to the character of a historic residential building. Depending on the style and period constructed, windows may be double-hung, casement, sliding, awning, fixed, or glass block – or a combination of these. Divided lights were common on pre-modern buildings.
- **Trim details**, often in wood that covers transition between building elements. This is sometimes a decorative molding.
- **Eaves**, the portion of the roof that overhangs the vertical walls.
- **Exposed rafters**, the structural component at eaves, common in the Craftsman style.

- **Dormer**, a window that projects vertically from the roof or wall and is subordinate to the primary roof.
- **Attic window or vent**, an opening in a gable end.



There are several turn-of-the 20th century historic homes that contribute to the Downtown National Historic District, such as this Queen Anne style home at 214 N Commercial Street which has been preserved and adaptively used as offices. (Left, Assessor Photo).



The Gilbert Flats (aka Avalon Apartments) are a good example of an historic apartment building. Well preserved over the years, it is a contributing building in the Downtown National Historic District.





# HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Doors and Windows

**INTENT:** Preserve original window and door openings, components, and materials.

**Guideline:** Refer to “Windows” section of Historic Commercial Buildings.

## Roofs

**INTENT:** The character of a historic roof should be preserved, including its form and materials. The shadows created by roof overhangs contribute to the perception of a building's scale, and to its architectural character.

**Guideline:** Do not alter the angle or pitch of a historic roof. Maintain the line and orientation of the roof as seen from the street.

**Guideline:** Preserve the original eave depth of a roof. Do not cut back roof rafters and soffits or in other ways alter the traditional roof overhang.

**Guideline:** Preserve original roof materials and decorative elements such as crests, chimneys, roof detailing, gutters and downspouts.

**Guideline:** New roofing materials should convey a scale and texture similar to those used traditionally. Roof replacement material shall be compatible with the architectural style of the structure.

**Guideline:** Composition shingle roofing can be appropriate replacements for wood shingles and should have a color similar to the original. Shingles that contain embedded photovoltaic systems are also appropriate in dark colors. Specialty materials such as tiles should be replaced with a matching material.

**Guideline:** Do not add features to a roof, such as a “widow's walk” (an ornate railing around the roof ridge) where there is no evidence that one existed.

**Guideline:** Minimize the visual impacts of skylights and other rooftop devices.

**Guideline:** A skylight that is flush with the roof plane may be considered where it remains visually subordinate. Skylights be located below the ridge line and not interrupt the plane of the original roof.

**Guideline:** Locate electronic data transmission and receiving devices where they are not visible from the right-of-way.



Historic photo of the Kulshan Club, in its original location on 12th Street in Fairhaven. Built in the Craftsman style as a men's club, the building was moved from its original location and converted to apartments and remains a contributing building in the Fairhaven National Historic District. (Photo courtesy Whatcom Museum Photo Archives).

## Porches

**INTENT:** A porch is one of the most important character-defining elements of a façade. It provides visual interest and influences perceived scale and should be preserved.

**Guideline:** When replacement of a porch is necessary, it should be similar in character, design, scale and materials to those seen traditionally.

**Guideline:** Preserve a porch in its original condition and form, and as possible, maintain the existing location, shape, details and posts of the porch.

### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

**Guideline:** Repair rather than replace deteriorated elements of a porch. Replace missing or deteriorated decorative elements to match existing elements; e.g., match the original proportions and spacing of balusters and porch posts.

**Guideline:** The size of a porch should relate to the overall scale of the primary structure to which it is attached.

**Guideline:** If possible, base the replacement design on the original design. Where no evidence of the original exists, design a new porch to be similar in character to those found on comparable buildings.

**Guideline:** A new porch should use materials similar to those seen historically. Alternative materials for porch decking may be considered when similar to the original.

**Guideline:** Unless reconstructing a porch from historic documentation, it is not necessary to replicate the details of the original porch or a design copied from a similar style house. It is important that new details be compatible (similar form, scale and materials) for the design of the porch and the style of the house.

**Guideline:** If a porch has been altered, consider restoring it back to its original design. If the original design of the porch is unknown, base the design of the restoration on other traditional porches on buildings of a similar architectural style.

**Guideline:** If a porch must be enclosed, do so in a way that maintains an appearance of openness.

- Use transparent materials (such as glass) and place them behind the balusters and balustrade to preserve the visual character of the porch. Enclosing a porch with opaque materials is discouraged.



Some historic homes on Elm Street in the Fountain District Urban Village have been converted to offices, are contributing buildings to the Eldridge National Historic District.



Residential homes converted to commercial purposes adds character to the Fountain District on Meridian Street. As possible, it is recommended that these forms be preserved.



### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Additions to Historic Residential Buildings

**INTENT:** Locate additions to minimize the impact to existing buildings.

**Guideline:** If existing buildings are to be joined by a mutual addition, the distinction between the two original buildings shall be retained.

**Guideline:** Additions should be set back from the front facades of buildings that are to be joined.

**INTENT:** Augment the architectural character of the original building when designing additions, upper stories, dormers, and other modifications.

**Guideline:** A new addition should relate to the design, materials, ornamental detail, and follow the roof shapes and slopes of the existing building.

**Guideline:** Window and door proportions (including the design of sash and frames), floor heights, roof shapes and pitches, and other elements of the addition's exterior shall relate to those of the existing building. Windows shall be of similar type, materials, pane pattern and quality as those in the existing building.

**Guideline:** Whenever possible, retain existing siding and features of buildings when making improvements and adaptations.

**Guideline:** A change of materials, colors or textures on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and character.

**Guideline:** A change of materials, colors or textures on different elements is encouraged to provide further articulation and additional variety and character.

**Guideline:** The primary entrance should face the public street.

**INTENT:** Additions to historic residential buildings should be compatible with the primary structure and not detract from the building's original character.

**Guideline:** Design an addition to relate to the mass and scale of the original structure.

**Guideline:** An addition should be simple in design to prevent it from visually competing with the primary facade. For a larger addition, break up the mass of the addition into smaller modules that relate to the historic house. To keep the size of a higher mass as small as possible, use a lower plate height.

**Guideline:** Place an addition at the rear or side of a building or set it back from the front to minimize visual impacts and allow the original proportions and character to remain prominent.

**Guideline:** Design a new roof of an addition to be similar to the slope and design details of the original structure.

**Guideline:** When constructing a rooftop addition, keep the mass and scale subordinate to the primary building.



Four examples showing recommended locations for additions (addition shown as shaded). Each example compliments and is subordinate to the original building.





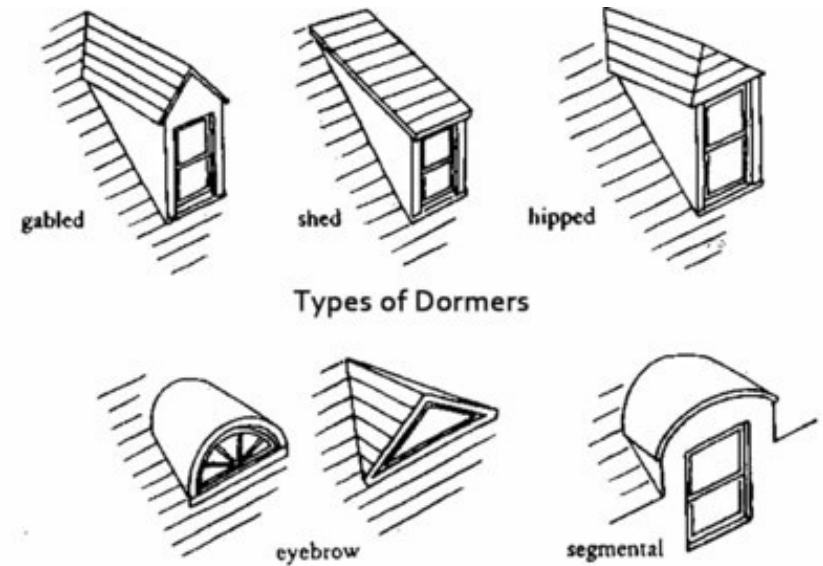
### HISTORIC BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Dormers

**INTENT:** Rooftop dormers are typically added to increase the amount of headroom in an upper floor, adding usable square footage that may improve the use of a building.

**Guideline:** Traditionally, dormers were designed as visually subordinate elements to the overall roof mass, in scale with the historic structure.

- Locate the dormer below the ridge line of the primary roof structure.
- Relate character of the dormer to the primary roof in form, pitch, and materials.
- The number and size of dormers should not visually overwhelm the scale of the primary structure.



Types of dormers. Knopf. Virginia McAlester et al., *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013



### GLOSSARY

1. **Historic Building:** For the purposes of these guidelines, a “historic” building is generally over 50 years old (some buildings under 50 years old may be considered historic) and retains its original architectural features, regardless of their physical condition. A historic building is considered “eligible” for listing in the Local, State, and/or National Historic Registers if it retains integrity of its original design and architectural features. In some cases, a building that has been altered or has deteriorated physical condition can be restored to the extent that it would be considered eligible.

2. **Historic Significance:** Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or cultural of a community, State, or the nation. Significance is achieved in several ways: association with events, activities or patterns; association with important persons; through distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form; or through its potential to yield important information about history or prehistory.

3. **National Register of Historic Places:** The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and/or culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community, state, or the nation. The National Park Service administers the NRHP.

4. **Washington Heritage Register:** The Washington Heritage Register (WHR) is an official listing of historically significant sites and properties found throughout the state. Maintained by the Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, the WHR includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that have been identified and documented as being significant in local or state history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and/or culture.

5. **Bellingham Register of Historic Places:** The Bellingham Register of Historic Places (BRHP) identifies buildings, objects, sites, and districts that reflect special elements of Bellingham's architectural, cultural, archeological,

aesthetic, and historical heritage. Financial incentives and building code and land use relief are a few of the benefits offered to buildings listed on the BRHP. These properties are officially protected under City ordinance. For changes to BRHP-listed properties, a Certificate of Alteration is required, with review under BMC 17.90.060.

6. **Contributing Building:** A “contributing building” is one that is determined to be historically significant within a historic district.

7. **Non-contributing Building:** A “non-contributing building” is one that has been determined to not be historically significant within a historic district.

9. **“Compatible” Design:** Buildings from different eras and styles are considered to be compatible when they share the same underlying principles of space, structure, features, composition, proportion, ornament, and character as neighboring buildings. If these principles are consistent buildings will be compatible, regardless of style.