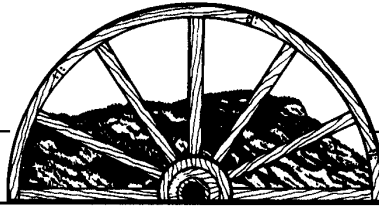


---

CITY OF



LA GRANDE

---

THE HUB OF NORTHEASTERN OREGON

---

LANDMARKS COMMISSION • P.O. Box 670 • 1000 Adams Avenue • La Grande, OR 97850  
Phone: (541) 962-1307 • Fax: (541) 963-3333 • Web: [www.planning.cityoflagrande.org](http://www.planning.cityoflagrande.org)

## **La Grande Downtown Historic District Standards Preservation Code Update**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL for Historic Preservation Consultant**

Issued: June 17, 2021

Due date: July 23, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. PST

#### **Project Summary**

In 1999, the City of La Grande established its downtown Commercial Historic District. As part of the listing of the Historic District, the City hired an outside consultant to create an inventory of the District's buildings and a Historic District Guidelines document for the District. In 2009, the City renamed and slightly modified the guidelines document and readopted it as Historic District "Standards". The purpose of this adoption was to change the guidelines from an advisory document that encouraged historic preservation to become standards with regulatory power. However, the document was still written from a guidelines approach and includes "may" or "should" statements meant to encourage a specific standard or outcome, but in some cases it is unclear what is actually required.

Since 2009, the City has used this Standards document to review modifications to properties in the Historic District. The City has experienced a number of situations where the Standards do not offer clear or specific direction. This lack of clarity has been confusing and frustrating for property owners, City planning staff, and volunteers serving on the City's Landmarks Advisory Commission.

La Grande's Commercial Historic District includes 57 Historic Contributing resources, 20 Historic Non-Contributing resources, and 15 Non-Contributing resources. Under the current Standards, modifications to all properties are treated the same whether the resource is contributing or not. This lack of distinction in the Standards between contributing and non-contributing resources creates further confusion among downtown property owners, who do not see why a 1974 bank or a 2011 medical office building is held to the same historic modification requirements as a National Register property.

Though La Grande is working to be a leader in preservation for Eastern Oregon, the east side of the state continues to have a lack of preservation design resources, architects, and contractors

familiar with preservation practices. Property owners in La Grande by default pursue a design/build approach with local contractors, and the current standards do not adequately prepare owners or contractors to plan building modifications for City review.

Finally, the District has changed over the past 20 years of its existence. Because the Standards document does not provide clear direction and does not reflect evolution in the District over the past 20 years, the institutional memory of City staff and Landmarks commissioners becomes the prime approach to project review. Relying on memory, rather than clear standards, creates inconsistent implementation and inequity in the review process.

Oregon Certified Local Government (CLG) grant funding has been awarded for an update of the City's Historic District Standards. The City's Landmarks Advisory Commission has established the following goals for the Standards update project:

1. The new Standards document must provide clarity to both the process and preservation requirements. The result must be a Standards document that is more clear, not more cumbersome, and creates a more predictable outcome for applicants going through the Landmarks review process. The new Standards document should be concise and user-friendly for a non-architectural audience.
2. The update of the Standards must be a public process that includes engagement and input from Historic District stakeholders, including but not limited to property owners, businesses, contractors, and preservation/history advocates.
3. The new Standards document must include a distinction between a) National Register and Historic Contributing resources; 2) Historic Non-Contributing resources; 3) Non-Contributing resources; and 4) New construction in the Historic District.
4. The new Standards document must be in accordance with Secretary of the Interior preservation standards to preserve the integrity of the District and allow for property owners to participate in preservation grant and incentive programs.

The City is seeking to hire an outside consultant to assist in improving and rewriting the Standards and to facilitate a strong public process. The consultant would ideally be an unbiased, neutral party experienced in historic preservation, standards updates, with strong public engagement and facilitator skills and an understanding of the needs of rural communities.

The Standards update project may not exceed \$22,000 and is anticipated for completion by May 31, 2022. Public engagement meetings are desired to take place during Fall/Winter season 2021/2022; we hope by then COVID-19 restrictions will be loosened and allow for in-person meetings. City staff and Landmarks commissioners would be responsible for outreach to potential stakeholders for inclusion in the public process. There are six meetings anticipated. As listed in the Scope of Services, some meetings may be virtual to reduce costs from travel time.

*This project is being funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Preservation Fund, National Park Service,*

*Department of the Interior. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1201 Eye Street, NW (2740) Washington, DC 20005.*

## **Scope of Services**

The consultant's scope of work would be as follows:

### **Task 1: Kick-off – Late summer to early Fall 2021.**

1. Review current standards and goals for update project.
2. Meeting 1 – Virtual meeting with City staff and Landmarks Advisory Commission to discuss current standards and process deficiencies.

### **Task 2: Public Engagement – Fall and Winter 2021/2022.**

1. Meeting 2 – In-person in La Grande
  - a. Consultant to prepare material for and facilitate meeting.
  - b. Communicate goals, timeline, and process of update project to stakeholders.
  - c. Provide an introduction to the La Grande Commercial Historic District – architectural styles, period of significance, contributing vs. non-contributing definitions, etc.
  - d. Provide an introduction to Secretary of the Interior preservation standards and priorities.
  - e. Prepare and circulate a survey on perceived deficiencies and strengths in current standards.
2. Meeting 3 – In-person in La Grande
  - a. Consultant to prepare material for and facilitate meeting.
  - b. Discuss survey results and Gather additional feedback on deficiencies in current standards and ideas for improvement
  - c. Discuss changes to District over the past 20 years since the District was established
  - d. Discuss community priorities for Historic District
3. Meeting 4 – In person in La Grande (or virtual if budget is limited)
  - a. Consultant to prepare material for and facilitate meeting.
  - b. Review draft recommendations for changes to Standards document and discuss feedback

**Task 3: Draft of new Standards document – Winter 2021/2022.**

1. Rewrite standards to provide clarity to requirements. Eliminate hold-over language from being “guidelines” and make the standards more definitive as requirements.
2. Include distinction in approach between a) National Register and Historic Contributing resources; 2) Historic Non-Contributing resources; and 3) Non-Contributing resources.
3. Incorporate public process feedback into Standards document.

**Task 4: Standards document review and finalization – Spring 2022.**

1. Provide draft of revised Standards document to City staff and Landmarks Advisory Commission for review and comment.
2. Meeting 5 - Virtual meeting with City staff and Landmarks Advisory Commission
  - a. Review and discuss draft of revised Standards.
3. Update draft document based upon City staff and Landmarks commissioner comments.
4. Meeting 6 – In person (or virtual if budget is limited) with City Council, Landmarks Commission and Staff
  - a. Present and discuss revised final draft of Standards.
5. Update and finalize Standards document as needed based upon City Council comments.
  - a. The final Standards document shall be provided in an editable Microsoft Word format.

## **Evaluation Process / Content for Evaluation**

The consultant’s proposal content shall be evaluated by the Landmarks Commission with points assigned based upon the qualifications content listed below. The Landmarks Commission will select one firm for performing the requested services.

The Landmarks Commission will invite recommended finalists for Zoom interviews based solely upon its evaluation of selection criteria 1-5. The evaluation committee, at its sole discretion, may forego the interview process.

1. Firm profile and background – 10 points
2. Historic Preservation experience – 20 points
  - a. Discuss the firm’s experience working with rural communities, specifically those with populations of less than 50,000 people.
  - b. Provide three (3) examples of historic preservation codes or standards prepared by the firm, preferably in downtown commercial districts within communities with a population of less than 25,000 people.
3. Staffing – 10 points
  - a. Resume of key personnel.
  - b. Describe key personnel’s experience with facilitating public meetings.
4. Project Schedule and Costs – 10 points

- a. Provide a fee proposal with breakouts per task as described in the scope of services. The project may not exceed \$22,000, inclusive of reimbursables and travel.
  - b. Provide a draft project schedule. The project schedule should reflect completion by May 31, 2022. (It is understood that the schedule is estimated at this point and is to be refined and finalized later).
5. References (Zero points – for information only)
- a. Provide three (3) references for the firm’s prior or current work.
6. Interview – 20 points
- TOTAL POINTS FOR SCORING = 70 points

## Selection Schedule

June 17, 2021	RFP Issued
July 23, 2021	Proposals due
August 5, 2021	Landmarks Commission meets to review proposals
August 6, 2021	Finalists contacted to schedule Zoom interview
August 9-12, 2021	Zoom interviews with selected finalists
August 13-14, 2021	Notification of selected consultant / Intent to Award

## Submittal

Any questions or comments on this RFP please send via e-mail to Kendra VanCleave, [KVanCleave@cityoflagrande.org](mailto:KVanCleave@cityoflagrande.org).

Interested consultants shall submit a proposal to address the content requirements listed above. Proposals shall not exceed fifteen (15) letter-size (8.5x11”) pages, single-sided (not including the three (3) examples of historic preservation codes or standards prepared by the firm requested above).

Proposals are due by July 23, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. PST. A digital copy in PDF format is to be e-mailed to Kendra VanCleave, [KVanCleave@cityoflagrande.org](mailto:KVanCleave@cityoflagrande.org).

Proposals shall be addressed to:  
City of La Grande Landmarks Commission  
P.O. Box 670  
1000 Adams Avenue  
La Grande, OR 97850

CITY OF LA GRANDE  
RESOLUTION NUMBER 4557  
SERIES 2009

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LA GRANDE, OREGON, ADOPTING  
THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES MANUAL FOR HISTORIC REHABILITATION AND  
PRESERVATION

WHEREAS, the Standards and Guidelines Manual, attached hereto and by this reference incorporated herein as if fully set forth, is an amendment to and replacement of the Historic District Design Standards, which is referenced in the Land Development Code Ordinance, but not adopted as an enforceable document; and,

WHEREAS, the Standards and Guidelines Manual does not contain specific "land use" regulations; but, rather, architectural design elements and is not required to be incorporated into the Land Development Code Ordinance; and,

WHEREAS, the Standards and Guidelines Manual is intended to evolve and be updated on an "as needed" basis, as the conditions within the Downtown Historic District change as a result of having an active Main Street program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of La Grande, Oregon, that the Standards and Guidelines Manual for Historic Rehabilitation and Preservation, dated May, 2009, shall be and hereby is adopted.

PASSED and EFFECTIVE ON this Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) day of June, 2009, by five (5) of five (5) Councilors present and voting in the affirmative.

ABSENT EXCUSED

Colleen F. Johnson, Mayor

Steve Clements  
Steve Clements, Mayor Pro Tem

ABSENT EXCUSED

Les Balsiger, Councilor

Gary Lillard  
Gary Lillard, Councilor

Kelly McGee  
Kelly McGee, Councilor

Mary Ann Miesner  
Mary Ann Miesner, Councilor

Jessie Zimmerer  
Jessie Zimmerer, Councilor

ATTEST:

Alexandra Norgan Lund  
Alexandra Norgan Lund  
City Recorder

## **STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES MANUAL FOR HISTORIC REHABILITATION AND PRESERVATION**

The Standards and Guidelines Manual for Historic Rehabilitation and Preservation for La Grande, Oregon will provide rehabilitation parameters to owners of buildings in the National Register Commercial Historic District as well as establishing criteria for new construction within the District. Property owners can also use these standards to assist in developing viable applications to the City Landmarks Commission for major alterations and new construction within the District. These design standards will also provide assistance to the City as they review alteration, demolition, and new construction requests within the downtown Historic District. The design standards are meant to encourage owners of historic properties and La Grande residents to appreciate and preserve the local architecture and history which helps define the unique character of the community.

*Note: For an understanding of the Design Review Process see Article 3.5 of the Land Development Code.*

### **HISTORIC VIEW OF LA GRANDE**

The La Grande Commercial Historic District encompasses significant buildings in the City's history which date from 1891 to 1948. The District has a concentrated collection of buildings reflecting the early development of La Grande as a leading trading and transportation center in Northeastern Oregon. Downtown La Grande also served as a regional division point for operations of the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company and catered to the railroad traffic. Downtown La Grande not only served the local community, but also handled the regional trade of the farmers and ranchers who came to town to ship their commodities, shop for goods, and conduct business.

In the early 1880s, the community developed around the proposed OR&N Co. Railroad (later the Union Pacific). Before the railroad workers commenced to lay the tracks, commercial enterprises relocated from "Old Town" La Grande in the southwest section of town to the proposed tracks and depot site. Three streets paralleling the tracks are now a part of the Historic District – Jefferson, Adams, and Washington Avenues – between Fourth and Greenwood Streets and Cove Avenue. This commercial area was originally comprised of wooden structures. A significant fire in 1891 destroyed many blocks of businesses and subsequent construction was of masonry. Many historic resources of the 1890s reconstruction era remain.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, La Grande had established itself as the trading center for Union County and the railroad was still the focus of the community's activities. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought many changes as the Progressive era began. Substantial buildings were constructed in La Grande's business district. Large two-story, brick buildings became anchors on many prominent corners and mingled with the smaller 1890s brick structures. Many businesses focused on Depot Street and Adams Avenue. Warehouses and businesses supporting the railroad faced Jefferson Avenue.

The automobile era ushered in a new period of development in the town. In the 1910s and 1920s, many new types of businesses evolved - service stations and car dealerships – and La Grande established itself as the center of the auto industry in Union County Oregon. Located along the south side of Jefferson Avenue and on Adams Avenue east of Fir Street, these auto-related businesses were generally one-story buildings constructed of hollow clay tile or concrete.



***Depot Street, c. 1927, looking southwest from Adams Avenue. Observe the original lampposts and awnings. Contrast the changes in the building facades to the existing storefronts.***

This era also ushered in a new look for many facades along La Grande's downtown streets. More progressive and modern styles were sought to reflect this prosperous period. Older buildings underwent face-lifts whereby the Queen Anne elements of the 1890s were stripped and windows replaced to create smooth, blocky edifices with squared openings common in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

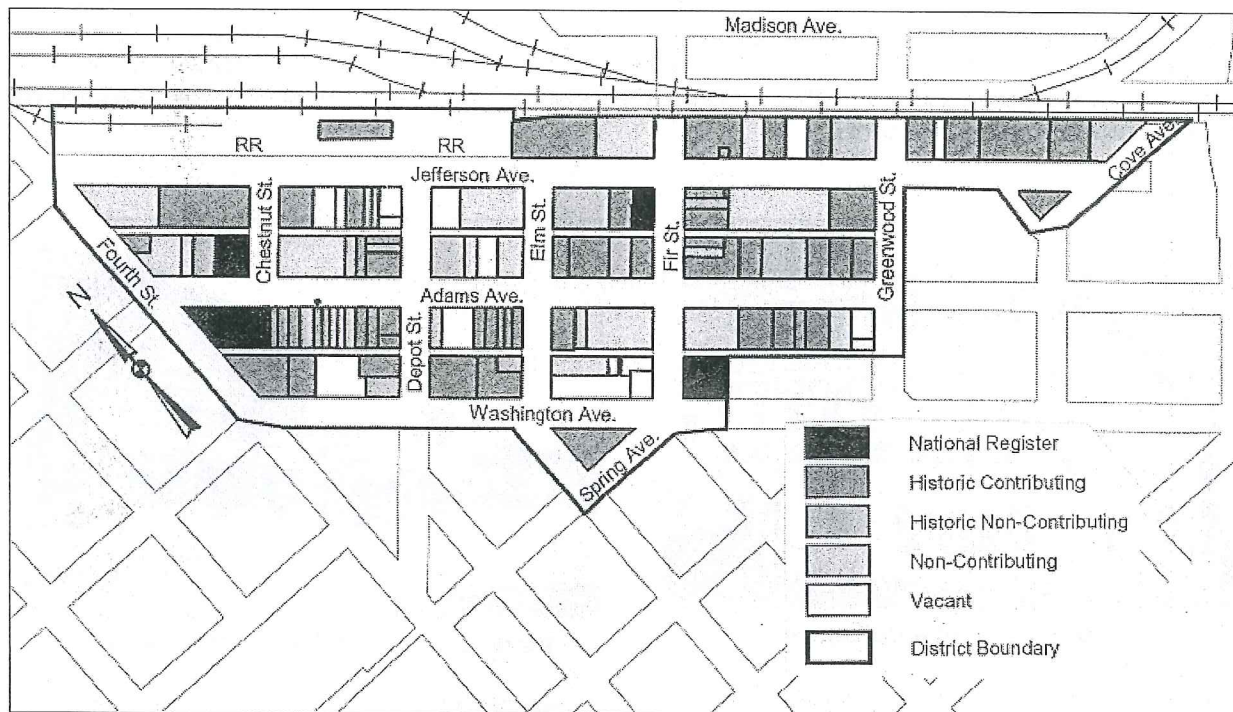
At the end of the 1920s, the Union Pacific Railroad constructed the present depot with the grand opening in 1930. This final act of the progressive era ensured La Grande's prominence as a railroad town, though the Depression of the 1930s affected this community as well as many others across the country. Building in downtown virtually stopped until after World War II. In the late 1940s, a few other automobile dealerships opened in downtown La Grande.

In the 1960s, the Interstate Highway system began to adversely affect La Grande's downtown business district. Highway 30 – Adams Avenue – lost its position as the major route through town. Interstate 84 and associated strip-commercial development gradually drained business from downtown. Although many storefronts have evolved and upper stories vacated, downtown La Grande still remains a busy population center and provides vital services for the community.



### LA GRANDE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The La Grande Commercial Historic District encompasses 42.7 acres and covers portions of sixteen city blocks running east-west from Fourth to Greenwood streets and Cove Avenue; and north-south from Jefferson Avenue to Washington Avenue (see map). The district is significant for its history of development as a community center and its architecture which reflects early La Grande as a leading trading and transportation center of northeastern Oregon.



**La Grande Commercial Historic District**

#### DISTRICT MAP KEY

- ❖ National Register: Properties previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ❖ Historic/Contributing: Historic buildings constructed between 1891 and 1948 that have retained a high degree of integrity.
- ❖ Historic/Non-Contributing: Historic buildings built between 1891 and 1948 that have been altered substantially and do not retain their integrity.
- ❖ Non-Contributing: (1) Buildings that have been substantially altered and the historic character is irretrievable or (2) those buildings constructed after 1948 that do not fit into the period of significance.
- ❖ Vacant: Vacant lots or lots used as parking areas.
- ❖ District Boundary

*Note: All properties within the Historic District are subject to the provisions in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.*

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

**B**uildings of a similar type provide continuity for the downtown streetscape. Differences in the style create visual variety and help distinguish one building from another. These differences reflect what was popular at the time of construction, the use of the building, or the tastes of the owner, builder, or architect.

The historic buildings in the District date from 1891 to 1948, and show the evolution of different building styles. Although primarily vernacular in character, the buildings display elements of various styles including Italianate, Romanesque Revival, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial, American Renaissance, and Modern. Learning about the style of the building can help answer preservation questions including those about the original treatments, color schemes, and what should replace missing elements.



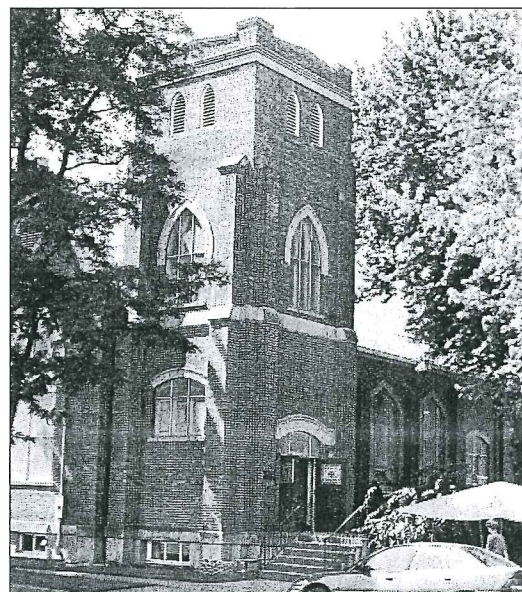
*Slater Building – Italianate*



*West Jacobson Building – 20<sup>th</sup> Century*



*Salvation Army – Mission Revival*



*Presbyterian Church – Gothic Revival*

## DESIGN STANDARDS

**D**esign Standards are written in accordance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation which are used by private and public entities throughout the nation. The Standards should be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. The Design Standards on the following pages help interpret the ten basic rehabilitation standards listed below.

### Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation

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

## REHABILITATION STANDARDS

**R**ehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The first step in determining if a building should be rehabilitated is to evaluate the existing condition, noting the character defining features of the building. Examine the elements which are original as well as document the more recent alterations. These observations will aid in the rehabilitation project.

*Note: Design Standards for "New Construction" such as streetscape, height, width, and materials may also apply to rehabilitation projects. See appropriate sections.*

## GENERAL STOREFRONT REHABILITATION STANDARDS

**W**hen considering a rehabilitation project, respect the original style and period of construction. Storefront rehabilitation projects shall be based on traditional storefront designs. Certain procedures are not recommended in rehabilitation projects: introducing non-historic elements; changing the location of the original storefront doors; and the removal of character defining features, craftsmanship, and/or materials

### General Standards:

- A. Some alterations gain significance in their own right; respect the evolution of the building within the period of significance.
- B. Wherever possible, significant storefronts (original or historic alteration), including windows, sash, doors, transoms, signs, and decorative features, should be repaired rather than be replaced. If repair is not feasible, the element should be accurately reproduced based on historic research or physical evidence.
- C. Avoid creating a "look" that is not based on historic fact.
- D. Base rehabilitation on solid historical documentation such as physical evidence, photographs, or original drawings; do not assume what the building looked like historically.
- E. If no evidence of original storefront exists, it is better to replace the storefront with a design and materials compatible to the period of the building.
- F. Relate the new storefront to the upper stories of the building in materials and details.

### Specific Standards

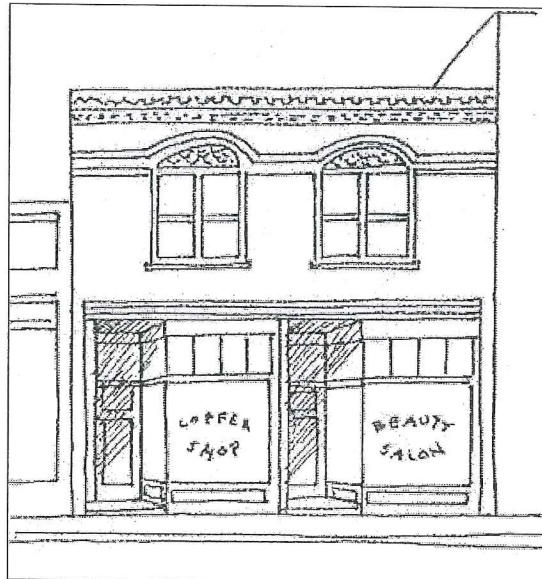
- A. Incorporate large storefront windows into new design; these window types are prominent features on the first floor of a traditional storefront during the period of 1891 and 1948.
- B. Display windows shall be clear glass.
- C. Storefront frames shall be made of wood or metal (non-aluminum finish).
- D. Fit the rehabilitated storefront into original opening; do not extend beyond the opening. The storefront may be set back slightly (perhaps 3 inches) from the plane of the façade to accentuate the sense of containment.
- E. Transom windows shall be clear glass; some types of decorative glass may be permitted.
- F. Entrance doors shall be recessed and have a large glass panel surrounded by a wood or metal frame (non-aluminum finish).
- G. Bulkheads should be made of wood panels, stone, tiles (less than four inches), or concrete.

**CAUTION!!!! Items to Avoid**

- A. Mansard roofs with wooden shingles covering the storefronts.
- B. Wood or metal siding and fake brick or stone veneers.
- C. Inappropriate historical themes should also be avoided such as small window panes and shutters. These represent different building types and styles not found in La Grande.
- D. Newer metal doors with more contemporary designs.
- E. Vinyl windows.



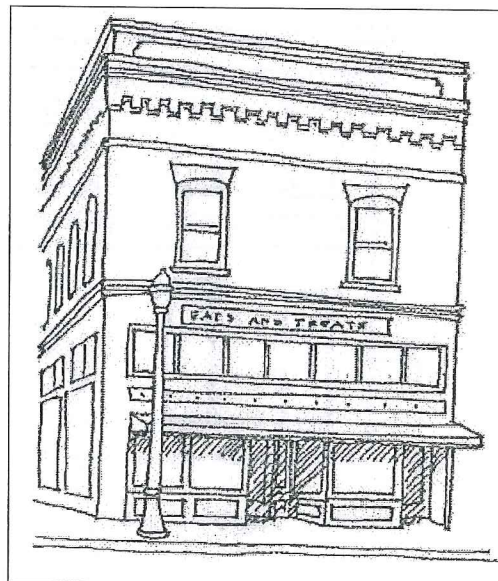
*This building exhibits an original storefront on right with alterations occurring at the left.*



*Rehabilitate the storefront on left using similar proportions and features as its neighbor.*



*The storefront of the former Hotel Paris has been substantially altered.*



*Rehabilitate the ground level of the façade by adding recessed doors, display windows, and transom windows using historic photos.*

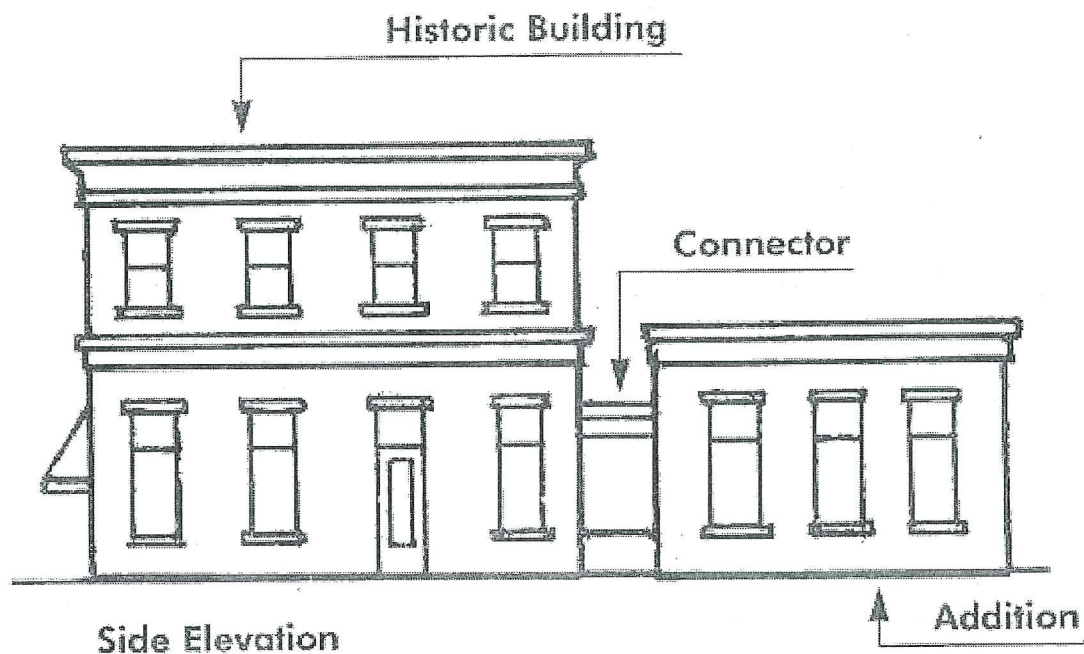
## NEW ADDITIONS

### *to Historic Buildings whether contributing or non-contributing and National Register*

**A** modern addition to a historic building is the most sensitive and difficult design issue to manage. Few of the historic buildings in downtown La Grande have recent additions. However, future growth may increase the need for expansion of these historic structures.

#### Standards:

- A. Preserve significant historic materials and features.
- B. Avoid attaching additions on primary or "public" elevations.
- C. Design the addition to be subordinate to the historic building.
- D. Minimize the loss of historic material by linking the new addition to the historic building by a connector; only the connecting passageway should penetrate the historic wall.
- E. Consider setting the connector back from the historic building's wall plane so the form of the historic building can be distinguished from the new addition.
- F. Protect the historical significance of the building by making a visual distinction between the old and new.
- G. New additions should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the historic building.
- H. Set back an additional story from the roof edge to ensure the historic building's profile is not radically changed.



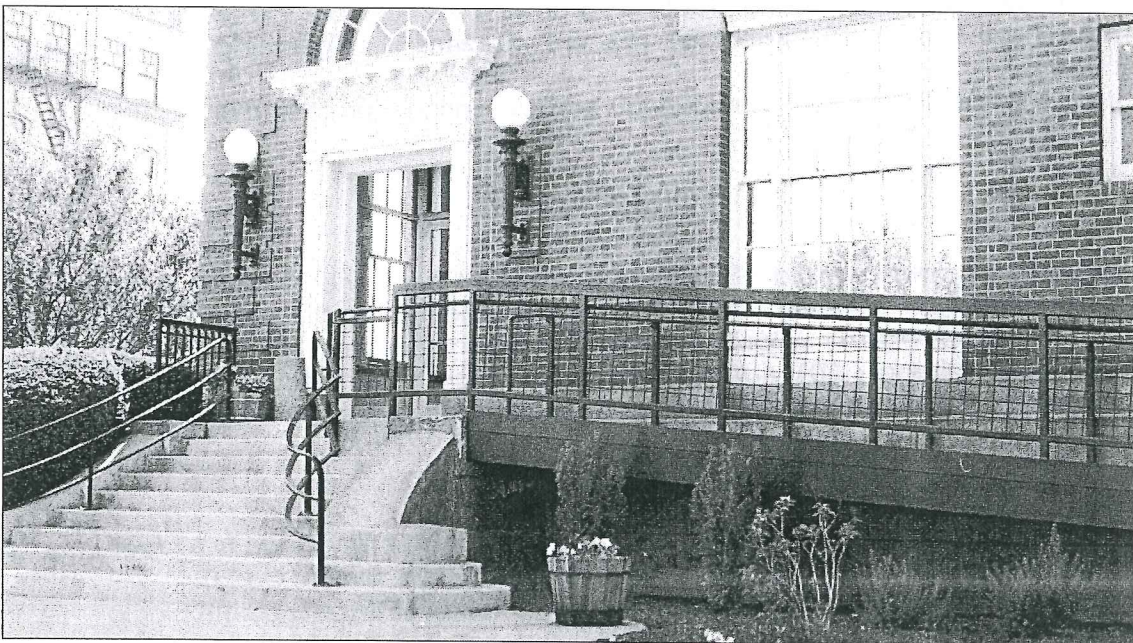
*Example of rear addition to historic building*

## ACCESSIBILITY – AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Properties in the District are not exempt from federal, state, or local laws requiring structures to be made accessible to disabled citizens. However, provisions in the Building Code allows for special consideration for properties designated as historic resources so the impact on the buildings can be minimized. The challenge is to provide accessibility while meeting code requirements, and at the same time, maintaining the historic character of the building or site.

### Standards:

- A. Design new ramps or other structures to be unobtrusive and simple as possible.
- B. Minimize the size of the ramp and landings without inconveniencing the users.
- C. Landscaping, the careful choice of building material, and compatible color choices are all suggested ways of reducing the visual impact of the access structure.
- D. Install ramps or other structures so they are reversible in the future and do not harm the character of the historic structure in a detrimental manner.
- E. Design the ramp and railing sensitively to the character, materials, and massing of the building, especially if it is on the front elevation.
- F. Place the access ramp on the side or rear of the building if the impact on the front façade is too detrimental.
- G. Seek common solutions such as ramp or elevator additions that might serve two adjacent buildings.
- H. Consider the use of mechanical lifts or other devices where feasible in lieu of a ramp; these are less intrusive alternatives.



**La Grande City Hall – the historic integrity of the north and west entries has been maintained. The ramp and railing have been added to the secondary elevation of the building at the southwest corner.**

## **NEW CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS**

*Note: The following Standards are also applicable to rehabilitation projects.*

**D**esign Standards for an historic district should not dictate certain styles for new buildings because most areas exhibit an evolution of architectural styles. These design Standards emphasize compatibility, context, and design elements, rather than styles, which allow for a broad and flexible approach to new construction within an historic district. The design Standards for new construction emphasize building characteristics that may be shared with old and new. Attention to these elements encourages the design of buildings that clearly are new, yet do not disrupt the continuity of the historic district. The following are some of the elements to consider when designing new buildings within the downtown Historic District.

## **STREETSCAPE AND SETBACKS**

La Grande's downtown has unique characteristics that define the City's streetscape. The wide streets and sidewalks, low to medium building heights, and small and large storefronts, reflect the historic character of the town. The majority of the historic buildings in downtown La Grande are flush with the sidewalk, abut one another (except where demolished buildings create vacant lots or parking areas), and have recessed entries. City Hall varies from the traditional setback. Some of the warehouses and newer buildings, such as the banks, in the district, also deviate from the traditional setback reflecting the use and period of construction.

### **Standards:**

- A. Front new construction to the street and align with the neighboring buildings.
- B. Abut new construction with the adjacent buildings if neighboring buildings dictate pattern.
- C. Recess entries slightly from the building's edge, creating a protected area.

## **BUILDING HEIGHT**

**T**he buildings in downtown La Grande vary in height from one to seven stories but are generally one to two stories in height. The anchor buildings (on the corners of streets) such as the Foley Building (1011 Adams Avenue), the Roesch Building (101 – 111 Fir Street), and the Bohnenkamp Building (1301 Adams Avenue) are higher than the other buildings in the district. A majority of the commercial buildings have parapets which make the buildings appear higher.

### **Standards:**

- A. The maximum downtown building height allowed in the City Code is 60 feet in height (some exceptions apply, see Article 5.4 of the Land Development Code).
- B. The height should be within the range of heights found on the immediate block.
- C. Encourage the use of parapets in the building design (see "Roof Form" Standards).
- E. Height to width ratio should be similar to other buildings in the immediate area.
- F. Floor to floor height should be similar to other buildings in the immediate area.



### **BUILDING WIDTH**

**D**owntown buildings were often platted into relatively narrow and deep lots; these widths often characterize how a downtown appears. Building widths in downtown La Grande reflect this patterning and vary from 20 feet to 110 feet wide. Generally, the smaller historic one-story buildings range in width from 20 feet to 30 feet, and the larger two and three story anchor or corner buildings are about 60 feet to 110 feet wide.

#### **Standards:**

- A. Build new construction from side lot line to side lot line.
- B. Design new construction that encompasses more than one typical 30' – 60' lot so that the façade appears to be a series of narrow shops.
- C. The height to width ratio should be similar to other buildings in the immediate block.

### **ROOF FORMS**

**T**he roofs of the commercial buildings in the District are generally flat with parapets or gable roofs hidden by parapets or false fronts. This is in contrast to visible pitched roofs in residential areas. Parapets add character to a building, and are often stepped or curved, and are embellished with cornices, special facing material, or decorative details. Parapets are a prominent feature in La Grande's downtown.

#### **Standards:**

- A. Avoid sloped or residential type roofs in the District unless hidden by parapet or false front.
- B. Use of parapets as a decorative feature and to hide the roof plane.
- C. Encourage the use of decorative details on the parapet, using examples from surrounding buildings.

## REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS

The following elements are applicable to rehabilitation and new construction projects.

### OPENINGS – WINDOW TYPES, PROPORTIONS, AND STOREFRONTS

The buildings in downtown La Grande were designed to house a variety of enterprises. These businesses often had central recessed entries that provided more window display space and shelter from the elements, along with emphasizing the entrance from the sidewalk. Large display windows usually flanked the entries and low wooden, tile, or masonry kickplates were built below the storefront windows. A band of horizontal transom windows was generally built above the storefront windows and entries. Historically, the entries were usually composed of single paired doors made with large, glass panes with wood surrounds.

The upper story windows in multi-story buildings are either paired or single, double-hung windows which are vertically oriented. Generally, these windows have enough space in between the windows for one or two window widths. The lower stories were often separated from the upper stories by a strong horizontal band created by such elements as a change in building materials, decoration, texture, and/or awnings and canopies.

#### **Standards: (Where architectural elements exist)**

- A. Recess primary entries and orient to the street rather than the side or rear.
- B. Use large panes of glass in the entry doors (paired or single); the use of solid doors is not recommended on the primary or street facades.
- C. Incorporate transom windows above entries or uncover existing.
- D. Use large, clear plate glass in display storefront windows on street level with transom windows above and kickplates below.
- E. Generally use double-hung windows either paired or singly for the upper floor windows.
- F. Maintain a clear visual division between the lower and upper stories by a change in material, surface texture, architectural detail, or use of awnings or canopies to define the horizontal division.
- G. Maintain the rhythm and spacing of the window pattern and the ratio of the solid surface or wall area to window area.

### MATERIALS

The building material used in the construction of the historic buildings downtown was predominantly brick; cast iron, concrete, hollow clay tile, and local stone were used to a lesser extent. The sense of cohesiveness and continuity of the District derives in part from the consistent use of these building materials. The earliest buildings were constructed of brick and stone; the later buildings are almost all concrete or concrete block structures. Common trim materials used historically include wood, sheet metal, and concrete. The windows were generally constructed of wood. See Appendix C.

#### **Standards:**

- A. Use materials in rehabilitation projects that are compatible with existing, and neighboring historic buildings in quality, color, texture, finish, and dimension.
- B. Use reclaimed materials from original building where possible.

**CAUTION !!!! Materials to Avoid**

- A. Vinyl siding or trim, vinyl windows
- B. Aluminum siding
- C. Wood, vinyl or composition siding consistent with residential construction
- D. Rustic wood shakes, barn wood
- E. Corrugated metal
- F. Corrugated fiberglass
- G. Modern imitation rock, wood, stone, or brick veneers
- H. Metalized reflective or "smoked" glass
- I. Wood shingle façade coverings or canopies

**AWNINGS**

**A**wnings provide protection from the elements and create a sense of enclosure to the street. The historic photographs of La Grande show the awnings were plain in design, generally fit within the window opening, retractable, and usually striped or solid in color (most likely white) with scalloped or straight edges.

**Standards:**

- A. The use of historic photographs is recommended for reference in replacement or adding new awnings. Historic photographs can illustrate the style and detail of historic awnings.
- B. For upper story windows, awnings should fit within window bays and not overlap multiple window openings.
- C. Awnings should not detract from or conceal the building's architectural details or features, such as transom windows, ornamental brickwork, ghost signs, iron work, leaded glass, etc.
- D. Canvas awnings are required unless they are flat; horizontal metal and/or wood canopies suspended by chains or rods may be permitted if original to the period of the building.
- E. Slope of no more than 45 degrees is recommended.
- F. Choose awning colors that are compatible with the color of the building; avoid brightly colored or "busy" patterns.
- G. Text and/or graphics on awnings should be located only on the vertical edge and not on sloped or curved sections of the awning; graphics or logos (without text) may be applied to the curved or sloped portions of the awning.

## SIGNAGE

Signage has always played an important role in the appearance of commercial buildings. Typical signs located on commercial buildings are flush mounted, hanging, window signs, icon or graphic signs, and painted "billboard" style signage. Flush mounted signs are signboards or individual letters placed on the front of a building, hanging signs are hung from sidewalk coverings or mounted perpendicular to the sidewalk, and window signs are generally at eye level and are displayed in the storefront windows. Icon or graphic signs illustrate the type of business they are advertising. Billboard style signs were large advertisements painted on the sides of taller buildings, visible from the alley or side street. Historic lighted signs include neon and internally lit signs.

*Note: Signage is subject to the provisions of La Grande's Land Development Code Ordinance.*

### **Standards:**

- A. The use of historic photos is recommended for reference in replacement or adding new signage.
- B. Relate signs in placement and size to other building elements.
- C. Elements such as windows, cornices, or decorative details should not be obscured by signage.
- D. Complement the sign material, style, and color with the building facade.
- E. Individual shop signs in a single storefront should relate to each other in design, size, color, placement on the building, and lettering style.
- F. Night lighting of signage needs to be subtle and in keeping with the architectural style.
- G. The use of gold leaf window signs at an appropriate scale is recommended.
- H. The use of plastic faced or electric signs are not permitted unless historically appropriate for that building.
- I. Murals are not recommended on unpainted masonry buildings. Murals should depict the historic character of La Grande's history. Applied panels with painted murals are acceptable also.
- J. Neon lights on the interior of the storefront windows are considered compatible signage. Historic neon signs are becoming rare and their preservation should be encouraged.

## COLOR

**P**ainting a storefront can be one of the most dramatic improvements to a building. Some of the commercial buildings in the District are plain in design, making them suitable for subtle color choices and a simple color scheme.

**Standards: The use of historic photos is recommended, when available.**

- A. Avoid using intense hues and a number of vivid colors on the building. Use not more than three colors.

## ALLEYSCAPES AND REAR ENTRANCES

**A**lleys and rear entrances should not be overlooked when planning downtown improvements. Often dirty, neglected and shunned, alleys can be turned into attractive secondary corridors through the business district. Development of rear entrances (double fronting) improves customer access from parking areas and can substantially improve pedestrian circulation throughout the downtown area. Alleyways contain a more intimate scale being removed from the bustling noise of traffic and surrounded by the warmth of the red brick walls of the buildings. Elements such as arched door and window openings, steel bars, faded signs, downspouts, tie bolts, and fire escapes contribute to the visual character of the alleyways. Alley entries offer opportunities for residential access to upper level apartments. Open alleyways – alleys that have been exposed to view by the removal of other buildings – offer opportunities for developing inviting rear entrances in the enhanced "alleyscape" – to the benefit of the whole streetscape. Alleys in the Historic District run east-west and generally provide ample width for improvements while retaining access for service vehicles.

**Standards:**

- A. Focus attention on alleys which are exposed to public view.
- B. Rehabilitate rear facades by repairing windows, doors, and downspouts.
- C. Cleaning and painting greatly improves appearances.
- D. Minimize the clutter caused by dumpsters by using storage bins and screening walls.
- E. New pavement textures, landscaping, and the undergrounding of utilities are needed alley improvements.
- F. Plant material within alleyways can easily be incorporated; use planters to enhance alley entrances.
- G. Materials and colors shall be designed similarly to the street façade for customer recognition and creating a cohesive design.
- H. Rear signage and lighting shall be a smaller version of these street façade elements.
- I. Consider using murals, historic maps/graphics on alley walls to give interest.

## STANDARDS FOR BUILDING FAÇADE MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION

### Masonry

#### **Moisture**

Brick and stone are exceptionally durable building materials, but they can and do deteriorate. Most often water infiltration is responsible. Moisture can enter through the top of a wall or where the wall meets the roof. Check roof, flashing, and wall copings periodically for soundness. Gutters and downspouts should also be inspected periodically for leakage.

#### **Repointing**

The sand and high lime mortar commonly used in older masonry buildings gradually erodes as water runs over the wall surface and with freeze/thaw cycles. Joints should be inspected periodically for crumbling or missing mortar. If mortar joints have recessed more than about 1/2 inch, they should be repointed with new mortar to prevent water penetration and ensure the integrity of the wall. New mortar joints should match the original in style, size, mortar composition, and color. It is especially important to repoint with a mortar of the same hardness as the original. The softer historic mortar compresses as the bricks expand in warm weather and flexes as they contract in cold weather. It is by design the sacrificial element of the wall and gradual erosion is to be expected. Harder modern mortars with a high content of portland cement will resist the warm weather expansion of the brick, causing cracking and spalling of the brick surface. In cold weather this same inflexibility may cause cracks to open up as the historic bricks contract and water may infiltrate.

#### **Cleaning**

Masonry cleaning can have a dramatic impact on the appearance of a building. Most historic masonry buildings have never been cleaned and accumulated dirt may be obscuring the original masonry color. Dirt may also hold airborne pollutants which can erode the surface of the masonry.

Masonry should always be cleaned by the gentlest possible method. In many cases low pressure water washing (no more than 250 psi), together with scrubbing with a soft, natural bristle brush may be sufficient.

If paint or heavy grime must be removed, a chemical cleaner may be required. There is a wide range of chemical cleaners available and a qualified cleaning contractor should be consulted to evaluate your building and recommend a treatment. Whatever treatment is selected, a test patch should first be tried and allowed to weather for a few weeks or months. If the results of the test are satisfactory and no damage is observed, it should be safe to proceed.

#### **Sandblasting**

Sandblasting is especially harmful to brick surfaces, eroding the hard outer layer to expose a softer, more porous surface that will weather rapidly. You should be aware that sandblasting will disqualify a project from consideration applying for federal tax credits.

#### **Painting**

In general, exposed masonry should never be painted. Unless the surface was painted from the start - as was sometimes the case with very soft brick - cleaning and repointing of the masonry is always preferable. A previously painted surface should be chemically cleaned. Only if chemical paint removal proves impracticable (due to a cementitious paint coat, for example) should previously painted brick or stone be repainted.

### Wood

Storefronts, cornices, brackets, and other decorative facade elements were often made of wood. These original exterior woodwork elements should be retained wherever possible. Regular maintenance will prevent deterioration. Check periodically for soft, rotted areas, splits, and dampness. Damaged or decayed sections can usually be repaired by re-nailing, caulking, and filling. Epoxy pastes and epoxy consolidants can also be very effective in repairing even seriously rotted wood. When painting, use an oil-based primer followed by two final coats of oil-based paint.

Severely rotted or missing pieces may be reproduced by a good carpenter or millwork shop. Try to match or at least complement the existing details when replacing woodwork.

### Metals

Decorative elements of cast iron and sheet metal were frequently applied to brick and stone facades. The ease with which intricate detail could be reproduced in cast iron or stamped sheet metal ornament permitted the appearance of expensive carved or turned work at a fraction of the cost. Needless to say, this kind of architectural ornament became quite popular.

These architectural elements are essential to the character and appearance of your building. They should not be removed unless absolutely necessary.

Cast iron was used extensively for storefront columns and window lintels and is quite permanent. A sound paint coat is essential, though, to prevent rust and corrosion. Rust or paint build-up may be removed by chemical treatment or low pressure dry grit blasting (80-100 psi). If parts are missing, they can be reproduced in fiberglass or aluminum using existing pieces to make a mold. If the missing pieces are relatively free of ornamental detail, wooden pieces might be substituted.

Pressed or stamped sheet metal was most often used to create the sometimes very elaborate cornices that crowned many 19th-century commercial buildings. This thin metal cornice was typically nailed to a wooden framework attached to the building.

Stamped metal ornamentation may be of sheet copper, which requires no surface protection, or of sheet iron, usually coated with zinc or lead to retard rusting. Galvanized or lead-coated sheet metal should always be kept painted. If stamped metal is to be cleaned, a chemical paint remover should be used. Dry grit blasting, while usually safe for cast iron, should never be used on the thinner, more flexible pressed metal.

Reproductions of missing pressed metal ornaments can often be made by a sheet metal shop. In some cases, pressed metal decorative items, stamped in the original molds, are available commercially.

All metals requiring painting should first be primed with a commercial metal primer followed by two finish coats of oil-based paint.

## GLOSSARY

CORNICE - Any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a building or wall.

DOUBLE HUNG SASH WINDOW - A window with two sash, one above the other, arranged to slide vertically past each other.

ELEVATION - The external faces of a building or drawing thereof.

FACADE - The front of a building; part of a building facing the street.

FENESTRATION - The arrangement of windows.

HISTORIC DISTRICT - Any commercial or residential area which includes or encompasses historic sites, landmarks, buildings, structures, or objects determined by the local Historic Preservation Commission to be appropriate for historic preservation.

PARAPET - A low, solid, protective wall or railing along the edge of a roof or balcony.

PILASTER - A shallow pier attached to a wall; often decorated to resemble a classical column.

POINTING - The outer portion of mortar in the joints of a masonry wall.

REHABILITATION - The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.

RESTORATION - Returning a building to some specific date (often the date it was supposedly built) replacing all changes made after that date with copies of what might have been there, and removing all work of a later period.

TRANSOM - An upper band of windows above the storefront display windows that admit light to the center of a lofty room.