



Interpreting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Subject: Designing Compatible Replacement Storefronts

Applicable Standards:

2. Retention of Historic Character
6. Repair/Replacement of Deteriorated or Missing Features Based on Evidence
9. Compatible New Additions/Alterations

Issue: A storefront is often the primary factor in defining the character of a historic commercial building. When planning the rehabilitation of a commercial building, regardless of the new use, it is important that the commercial character of the building be retained. In the case of a storefront that has been altered, any one of the following three treatments will meet the Standards: the existing, non-historic storefront may be retained; a new storefront may be designed that is compatible with the historic character of the building; or the missing storefront may be accurately recreated based on historic photographic documentation or physical evidence.

Application 1 (Compatible treatment): These three buildings constructed in 1868 are part of a three-story commercial block. The storefronts had been remodeled prior to rehabilitation, each somewhat differently, although the original cast iron pilasters that separated the storefronts remained and all the entrance doors were in their original locations.



The three buildings prior to rehabilitation.

The rehabilitation of these buildings for retail/commercial use on the first floors and residential use on the upper floors included installing compatible new storefronts. As part of the rehabilitation the original cast iron pilasters were retained and repaired. The new replacement storefronts are painted wood and consist of a lower panel and large glass display windows. The new doors are simple in design and feature transoms above. Although the original storefront windows could have included transoms, the new full height, undivided showcase windows without transoms are compatible with the historic character of these buildings. Accordingly, this rehabilitation project meets the Standards.



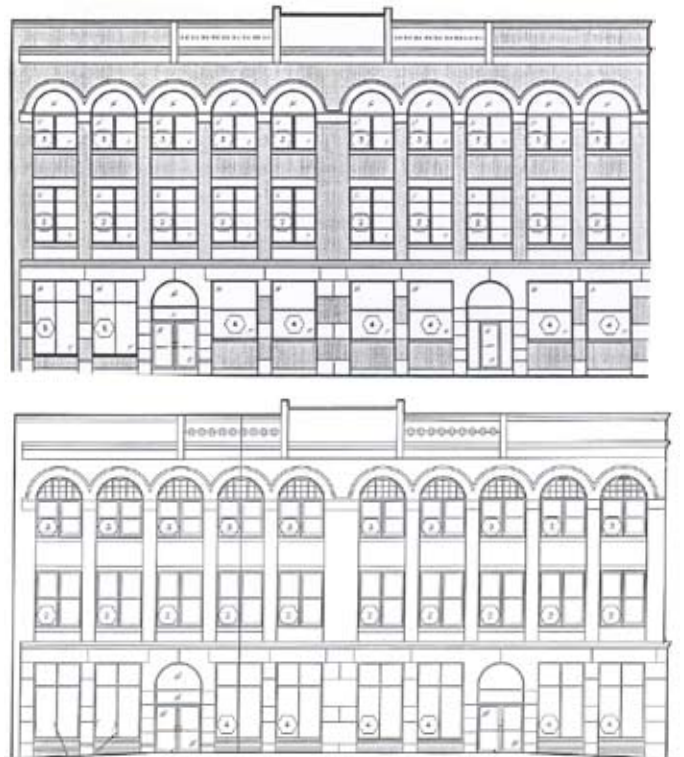
Details of existing storefronts prior to rehabilitation.



The buildings with compatible new storefronts after rehabilitation with detail of new storefronts.

Application 2 (Compatible treatment): This 1912 hardware warehouse was rehabilitated for low-income housing. Over the years, the first floor storefront openings had been altered. A single door, surrounded by green spandrel glass sidelights and transom, filled in the entrance. Brick infill had reduced the size of the window openings, especially those on the right side of the façade. The historic storefront windows themselves had been replaced with smaller unpainted aluminum windows with green spandrel glass transoms.

Compatible new storefronts were installed as part of the rehabilitation. Each of the storefront windows was replaced with a correctly-proportioned lower panel with a display window and a two-light transom above. Simply-designed double doors with a two-part transom were installed in the two entrances. This treatment meets the Standards.



Above: Drawings of storefront elevation before (top) and after (center) rehabilitation. Below: The warehouse with compatible new storefronts after rehabilitation.



Above: The warehouse storefronts had been changed prior to rehabilitation.

Right: Detail of altered storefront window.



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These bulletins are issued to explain preservation project decisions made by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The resulting determinations, based on the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#), are not necessarily applicable beyond the unique facts and circumstances of each particular case.