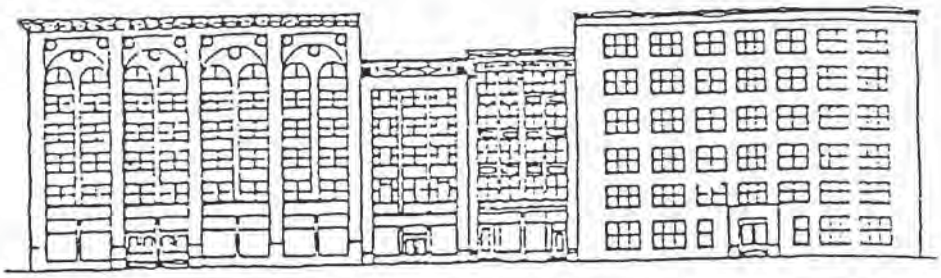
LOWERTOWN HERITAGE
PRESERVATION DISTRICT

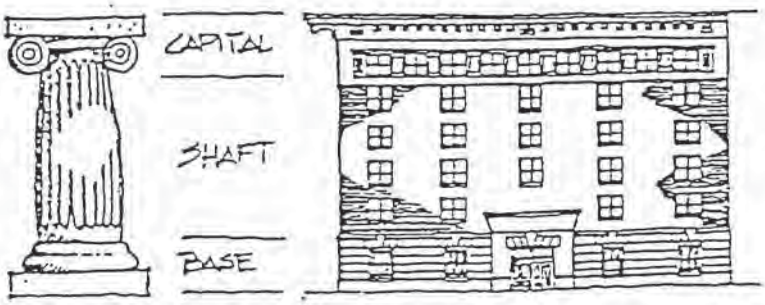
ARCHITECTURAL
CHARACTERISTICS



The purpose of designating the Lowertown Area as a Historic Preservation District is to protect and enhance the unique architectural, visual and historical character of Lowertown, a remarkably intact warehouse district dating from before the 1880s. There are 44 buildings in the 16 block proposed district, all but four of which have been classified as either pivotal or supportive to the district.

Most of the buildings of the district were constructed between 1880 and 1920. Although the area went into a period of gradual decline from the 1920s until the 1970s, the uses of the buildings remained basically the same--warehousing, wholesaling and commercial

Stylistically, the buildings in the area include the Italianate, Queen Anne, Richardsonian, Romanesque, Beaux Arts and Classical Revival styles. Most of the buildings in the area are faced in brick, projecting a sense of balance and continuity. In general, those buildings constructed before 1900 are four to seven stories tall. Many of the pre 1900 structures have cast-iron storefronts and most incorporate Victorian ornamentation. Those built after 1900 are generally large utilitarian buildings which incorporate Classical Revival detailing. They are generally taller and more massive than the Victorian period structures and were built using reinforced concrete and structural steel.



The facades of most buildings in Lowertown have a distinct rhythm, both vertically and horizontally, set off by piers, string courses and fenestrations. The major design features can better be understood in relation to the components of a column: the base, shaft, and capital. The base generally encompasses the bottom floor or two, the shaft is the body of the building, and the capital includes the roof, cornice area, and possibly the top floor.

A major focal point within the district is Mears Park. This park serves as the major public open space for the Lowertown Community. The snug compatibility among the buildings strengthens the ties of community focused on this central open space. It is this character and atmosphere we hope to enhance in the historic Lowertown District.

GUIDELINES FOR DESIGN REVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines for design review will serve as the basis for the Heritag Preservation Commission's permit review decisions in the proposed Lowertown Heritage Preservation District. The guidelines define the most important elements of the Lowertown district's unique physical appearance and state the best means of preserving and enhancing these elements in rehabilitation or new construction. These guidelines are not hard and fast regulations. They are flexible criteria. Their purpose is to provide assurance to property owners that permit review will be based on clear standards rather than the taste of individual Commission members The guidelines will be interpreted with flexibility depending on the particular merit of the building, part of the building, or area under review. Consideration will be given to the availability of historical materials. When applying the guidelines, the Commission will also be considerate of clearly defined cases of economic hardship or deprivation of the owner of reasonable use of his/her property. Decisions of the Heritage Preservation Commission are subject to appeal to the City Council within ten days by anyone affected by the decision.

II. NEW CONSTRUCTION

The basic principle for new construction in the Lowertown area is to maintain the scale and character of present buildings. New construction refers to totally new structures, moved-in structures and new additions to existing structures undergoing restoration and rehabilitation.

Architectural diversity is characteristic of Lowertown. When first confronted with this variety, it is easy to overlook the overall thread of continuity of the area. Generally, any structure should provide height, massing, setback, materials and rhythm compatible to surrounding structures. The reproduction of historic design and details is expensive, artificial, and is recommended only for some cases of infill or small scale construction. Guidelines for new construction focus on general rather than specific design elements in order to encourage architectural innovation.

A. SETBACK - SITING

There should be no more than a 5% variation in setback from existing adjacent buildings. The proportion of built edge to open space should preserve the plane of the street wall, particularly along the streets facing Mears Park and the Farmer's Market.

B. MASSING, VOLUME AND HEIGHT

The buildings of the district built before 1900 are generally small to medium in volume and up to seven stories in height. Sometimes several buildings are grouped. Buildings constructed after 1900 are generally large in volume and up to eight stories in height, with the Burlington Northern Building being 13 stories. The structures of the district are distinguished by their boxy profiles; preservation of this aspect is the most essential element for maintaining district unity. New construction should be compatible with the massing, volume, height, and scale of existing adjacent structures.

Most buildings in Lowertown have distinct horizontal and vertical rhythms. New construction should enhance these patterns.

Inappropriate new construction. The massing and materials of infill structures should comple ment the existing buildings.

C. RHYTHM AND DIRECTIONAL EMPHASIS

The rhythm and directional emphasis in Lowertown can be found both in the relation of several buildings to each other, and in the relation of elements on a single building facade.

Rhythm between buildings is usually distinguished by slight variations in height, windows and doors, and details, including vertical and horizontal elements. Rhythm may, as in the case of Park Square Court, be accentuated by slight projections and recessions of the facade, causing the scale of the building to match that of its neighbors. The rhythm and directional emphasis of new construction should be compatible with that of existing adjacent structures.

D. ROOFS, CAPS AND CORNICES

New roof, cap, and cornice designs should be compatible with existing adjacent structures. Generally, roofs in the district are flat. It is more important for roof edges to relate in size and proportion, than in detailing.

E. MATERIALS AND DETAIL

The materials of new construction should relate to the materials and details of existing adjacent buildings. New buildings in the district should provide more detailing than typical modern commercial buildings, to respond to the surrounding buildings and to reinforce the human scale of the district. Walls of buildings in the district are generally of brick, or occasionally of stone. Walls are usually natural brick colors--dark red, yellow, and brown. When walls are painted, similar subdued colors are usually used.

F. WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows should relate to those of existing buildings in the district in ter. of solid to opening ratio, distribution of window openings, and window setback The proportion, size, and detailing of windows and doors in new construction should relate to that of existing adjacent buildings. Double-hung windows are traditional in the district, and are preferred for new construction. Window mullions should emphasize their vertical direction. Casement windows and horizontal sliding windows are not historically common, and because they were not usually used in commercial districts are not preferred for new construction. Window and door frames should be wood, appropriately colored or bronzed-toned aluminum or vinyl-clad.

G. PARKING

Parking lots should be screened from street and sidewalk either by walls or plantings or both. If walls are used, their materials should be compatible with the walls of existing adjacent buildings. Walls should be at least 18" high. Walls or plantings should continue the planes of existing adjacent buildings.

H. LANDSCAPING AND STREET FURNITURE

When lots are used for green space or parking, a visual hole in the street "wall" may result. Landscape treatment can eliminate this potential problem by providing a wall of enclosure for the street. Traditional street elements of the area, such as granite curbs, should be preserved. New street furnit should complement the scale and character of the area.

III. RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION

General Principles for Restoration and Rehabilitation:

1. All work should be of a character and quality that maintains the distinguishing features of the building and the environment. The removal of architectural features is not permitted.

2. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event of replacement, new materials should match the original in composition, design, color, texture and appearance. Duplicatio of original design based on physical or pictorial evidence is preferable to using conjectural or "period" designs or using parts of other buildings.

3. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship characteristic of structures of a period should be treated sensitively. Furthermore, if changes in use of a building are contemplated, they should be accomplished with minimum alteration to the structure and fabric.

4. In general, it is expected that buildings will be restored to their original appearance. However, alterations to buildings are sometimes significant because they reflect the history of the building and the district. This significance should be respected, and restoration to an "original" appearan may not always be desirable. All buildings should be recognized as products of their own time and not be altered to resemble buildings from another era.

A. MASONRY AND WALLS

Use of Materials:
Original masonry and mortar should be retained whenever possible without the application of any surface treatment. A similar material should be used to repair or replace, where necessary, deteriorated masonry. New masonry added to the structure or site, such as new foundations or retaining walls, should be compatible with the color, texture and bonding of original or existing masonry. Formstone, stucco, wood or metal siding, or paneling should not be used.

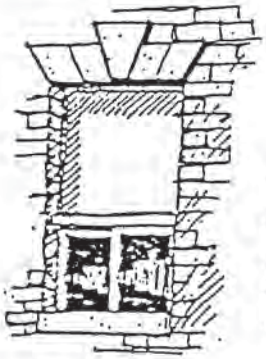
Cleaning:
Masonry should be cleaned only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove graffiti and stains and always with the gentlest method possible such as low pressure water (under 300 psi) and soft bristle brushes. Brick and stone surfaces should not be sandblasted with dry or wet grit or other abrasive This method of cleaning erodes the hard surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. Chemical cleaning products which could have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry material such as acid on limestone or marble should not be used. Chemical solvents should not be used at all except for removing iron and oil stains. It is preferable to use water with a non-ionic bio-degradable detergent. Mortar should be repointed and window frames should be caulked before cleaning. Waterproof or water repellent coatings or surface consolidation treatments should not be applied unless required to solve a specific technical problem that has been studied and identified. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive, and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry.

Repointing:
Repointing should only be done on those mortar joints where there is evidence of moisture problems or when sufficient mortar is missing to allow water to stand on the mortar joint. Using pneumatic hammers to remove mortar can seriously damage the adjacent brick. Vertical joints should be hand chiseled. When repointing, it is important to use the same materials as the existing mortar. This includes matching the color, texture, coefficients of expansion and contraction, and ingredient ratio of the original mortar mix, creating a bond similar to the original. A professional mortar analysis can give this information. Repointing with Portland cement mortar may create a bond stronger than is appropriate for the building materials, possibly resulting in cracking or other damage. Old mortar should be duplicated in joint size, method of application and joint profile.

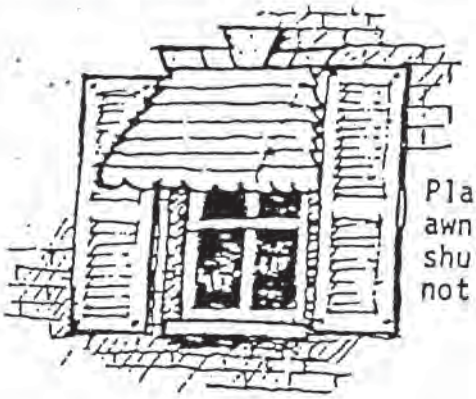
Painting:
The original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces should be retained, including early signage wherever possible. Brick or stone surfaces may have been painted or whitewashed for practical and aesthetic reasons. Paint should not be indiscriminately removed from masonry surfaces as this may subject the building to damage and change its appearance.

B. WINDOWS AND DOORS

Openings:
Existing window and door openings should be retained. New window and door openings should not be introduced into the principal elevations. Enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit stock window sash or new stock door sizes should not be done. Infilling of window openings may be permissible on minor facades if standard sizes approximate the size and proportions of the opening. Generally, a minor facade will be considered as any facade not facing the street and not having the ornamentation and higher quality materials usually associated with street facades.



Reducing window openings to fit stock window sizes should not be done.



Plastic or metal awnings, and fake shutters should not be used.

Panes, Sashes and Hardware:
It is desirable to retain original windows and doors, but they may need replacement for functional reasons. Replacement is clearly acceptable for functional reasons if new materials closely match original materials. Different materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis. Window panes should be two-way glass. No reflective or spandrel glass is permitted. The stylistic period or periods a building represents should be respected. Shutters are generally inappropriate in the district. Missing or irrepairable windows should be replaced with new windows that match the original in material, size, general muntin and mullion proportion and configuration and reflective qualities of the glass. Replacement sash should not alter the setback relation between window and wall. Heating and air conditioning units should not be installed in the window frames when the sash and frames may be damaged. Window installations should be considered only when all other viable heating and cooling systems would result in significant damage to historic materials. Window installations may be acceptable in minor facades.

Storm Windows:
Storm windows and doors should be compatible with the character of the building and should not damage window and door frames, or require removal of original windows and doors. Exterior storm windows should be appropriate in size and color and should be operable.

Awnings and Canopies:
Awnings and canopies should not be used when they conceal richly detailed entries and windows. Aluminum or plastic awnings should not be used. Large or garish lettering should not be used on awnings.

Lintels, Arches and Sills:
Lintels, sills, architraves, pediments, hoods and steps should be retained or repaired if possible. Existing colors and textures should be matched when repairing these elements.

Storefronts:
Existing storefronts should be retained and repaired including windows, sash, doors, transoms, signage, and decorative features where such features contribute to the architectural and historic character of the building. Where original or early storefronts no longer exist or are too deteriorated to save, the commercial character of the building should be retained through: (1) contemporary design which is compatible with the scale, design, materials, color and texture of the historic buildings; or (2) an accurate restoration of the storefront based on historical research and physical evidence. Storefronts or new design elements on the ground floor, such as arcades, should not be introduced which alter the architectural and historic character of the building and its relationship with the street or its setting or which cause destruction of significant historic fabric. Materials which detract from the historic or architectural character of the building, such as mirrored glass, should not be used. Entrances through significant storefronts should not be altered.

C. ROOFS, CORNICES AND DETAILS

Roof Shape:
The original roof shape should be preserved. New skylights and vents should be behind and below parapet level. When the roof is visible from street level, the original material should be retained if possible, otherwise it should be replaced with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color and texture.

Cornices and Other Details:
All architectural features that give the roof its essential character should be preserved or replaced. Similar material should be used to repair/replace deteriorating or missing architectural elements such as cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, steps and chimneys, whenever possible. The intricacy of detail is least important for new elements at or near the roof line. The same massing, proportions, scale and design theme as the original should be retained.

IV. SIGNS AND ACCESSORIES

Signs should be compatible with the character of the District, and blend with the character of the structures on or near which they are placed. Signs should not conceal architectural detail, clutter the building's image, or distract from the unity of the facade; but rather should complement the overall design.

A. MATERIALS

Sign materials should complement the materials of the related building and/or the adjacent buildings. Surface design elements should not detract from or conflict with the related structure's age and design in terms of identification symbol (logo), lettering, and related patterns or pictures. Materials used should be the same as those used for signs during the period of the building's construction, such as wood, wrought iron, steel, and metal grill work. Newer materials such as extruded aluminum and plastics may not be appropriate.

B. TYPES

The sign type should enhance the building's design and materials. There are a number of types of signs which may be used: (1) single-faced; (2) projecting, double-faced; (3) three-dimensional; (4) painted wall signs; and (5) temporary signs. New billboards are not permitted in the Lowertown District.

C. LOCATION AND METHOD OF ATTACHMENT

There should be no sign above the cornice line or uppermost portion of a facade wall. Signs should not disfigure or conceal architectural details. Painted signs may be permissible on glass windows and doors. The facade should not be damaged in sign application, except for mere attachment. The method of attachment should respect the structure's architectural integrity and should become an extension of the architecture. Projecting signs should have a space separating them from the building. (Protection of architecture in method of attachment shall be regarded as a basis for granting variance of the normal zoning code prohibition against guy wire supports for projecting signs.)

D. LIGHTING

Location of exterior lights should be appropriate to the structure. Signs should generally be lit from on the site. There should be no flashing, blinking, moving, or varying intensity lighting. Subdued lighting is preferred. Backlit fluorescent or exposed neon are generally inappropriate.

E. GRILLS, EXHAUST FANS, ETC.

Grills, exhaust outlets for air conditioners, bath and kitchen exhaust fans should be incorporated into filler panels, if possible. They may be painted the same color as the filler panel.

V. DEMOLITION

The Heritage Preservation Commission will follow the guidelines stated in the Heritage Preservation Ordinance (#16006), Section 6 (1)(2), when reviewing permit applications for demolition:

"In the case of the proposed demolition of a building, prior to approval of said demolition, the Commission shall make written findings on the following: architectural and historical merit of building, the effect on surrounding buildings, the effect of any new proposed construction on the remainder of the building (in case of partial demolition), and on surrounding buildings, the economic value or usefulness of building as it now exists, or if altered or modified in comparison with the value or usefulness of any proposed structure designated to replace the present building or buildings."