

# Façade & Structural Improvement Program Guidelines

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City of Owen Sound  
Community Services Department  
Planning & Heritage Division

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# Program Goals & Purpose

The purpose of this program is to improve the appearance and encourage the restoration and rehabilitation of street-facing exteriors of buildings within the City's River District & Harbour Area.

## This program is intended to:

- Provide a distinctive, attractive downtown and increase community pride.
- Make the River District & Harbour Area a more inviting and interesting place.
- Encourage the revitalization and re-use of deteriorating buildings.
- Protect, promote, enhance and celebrate the unique heritage of the City, and particularly the River District & Harbour Area.



# Program Area

## What is it?

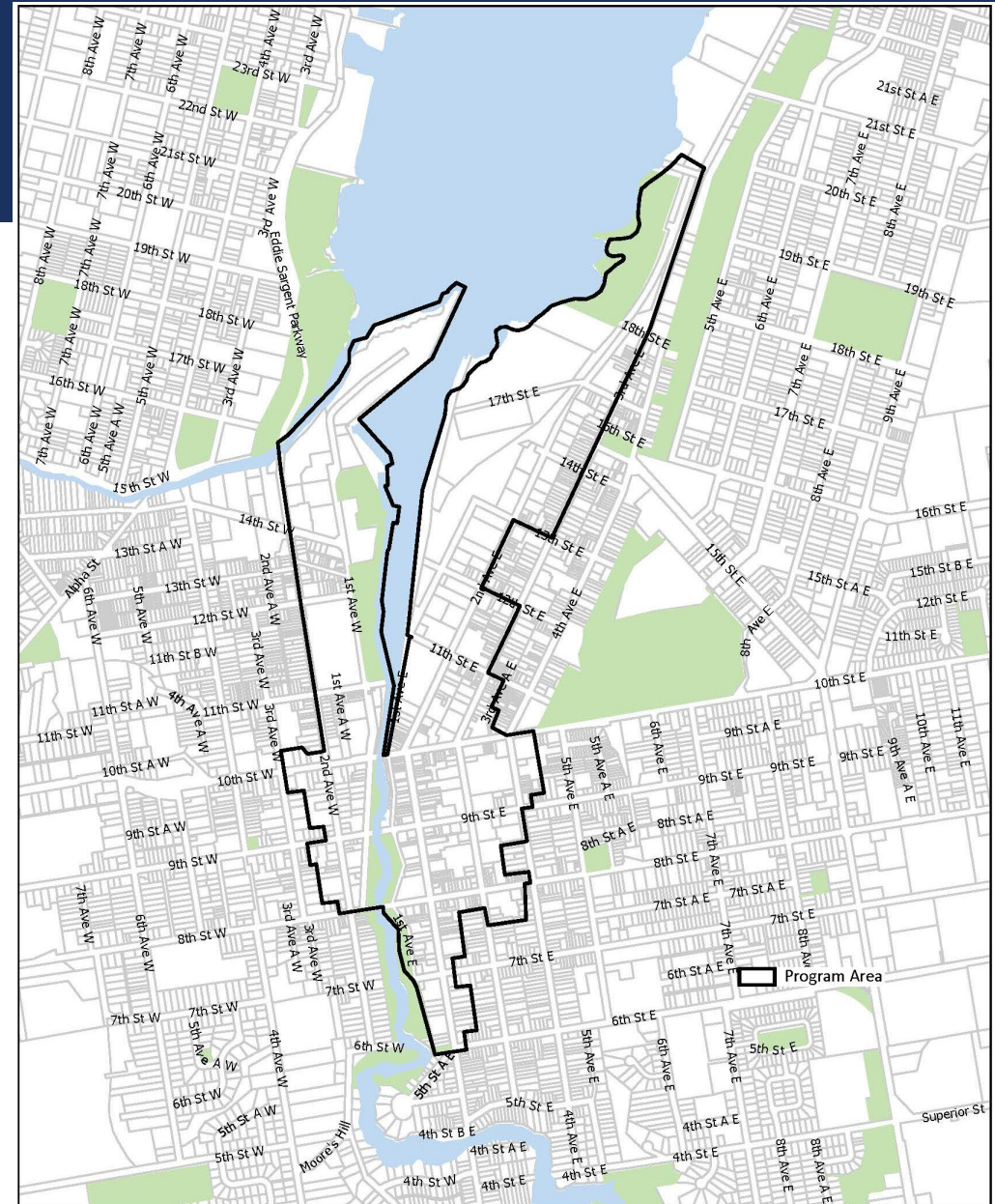
- The Program Area establishes the boundaries for which the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program applies.
- These boundaries are set by the City's Community Improvement Plan, which establishes a framework for the City's support and implementation of programs to encourage private investment and promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the River District and Harbour Area.

## Where is it?

- The Program Area includes the City's River District Commercial Area as well as the East and West Harbour Planning Areas as shown on page 5 of this guideline and Schedule 'B' of the City's Official Plan.
- In addition, all properties within the City boundaries that are listed on the City's Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (the "Heritage Register") and/or designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act are eligible for incentives under this program (see page 18).

# The Program Area

- This map shows the boundaries of the Program Area for which the Façade and Structural Improvement Program applies. The Program Area includes the City's River District Commercial Area, the East Harbour Planning Area, and the West Harbour Planning Area. In addition, all properties within the City boundaries that are listed on the City's Heritage Register and/or designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act are eligible (see page 18).



# Program Area History

- The River District & Harbour Area has played a significant role in the historical development of the City and has a rich Indigenous and Black Heritage.
  - Originally known as the village of Sydenham, 8<sup>th</sup> St E and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E in the River District marks the first street to be cut through the bush, away from the settlement by the Sydenham River. Similarly, the Harbour has strategic importance as a major port and transportation gateway to western Canada.
  - The City forms part of the traditional territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Historic Saugeen Metis who occupied settlements in the area beginning in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - It is also known as the terminus of the Underground Railroad, used by many Black Americans escaping from slavery in the southern United States in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The Program Area has several Heritage Buildings, such as the British Methodist Episcopal Church, that serve to represent the City's important Black history.

# Why The River District & Harbour Area?

- Although the City's days as an active port city have changed, the River District & Harbour Area remains an important piece of history and is a critical resource in the City's role as a regional centre for tourism, recreation and culture.
- Buildings within the Program Area continue to be representative of the original architectural styles reflective of mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century design preferences. Many buildings are constructed of local stone and ornate brickwork, making them unique and worthy of preservation.
- The Program Area can benefit from an incentive program that confirms and maintains consistency in design, honours and enhances the City's unique heritage, and contributes to the vibrancy and attractiveness of the River District and Harbour Area.

# Program Criteria

Applications will be assessed under three main criteria:

1. Consistency with these Program Guidelines and the original architectural design of the building;
2. The extent to which a project addresses life safety and major structural deficiencies, where applicable; and,
3. Overall benefits to the River District and Harbour Area and consistency with the City's Official Plan and other applicable policies.



Source: Grey Roots Museum & Archives



# Program Incentives

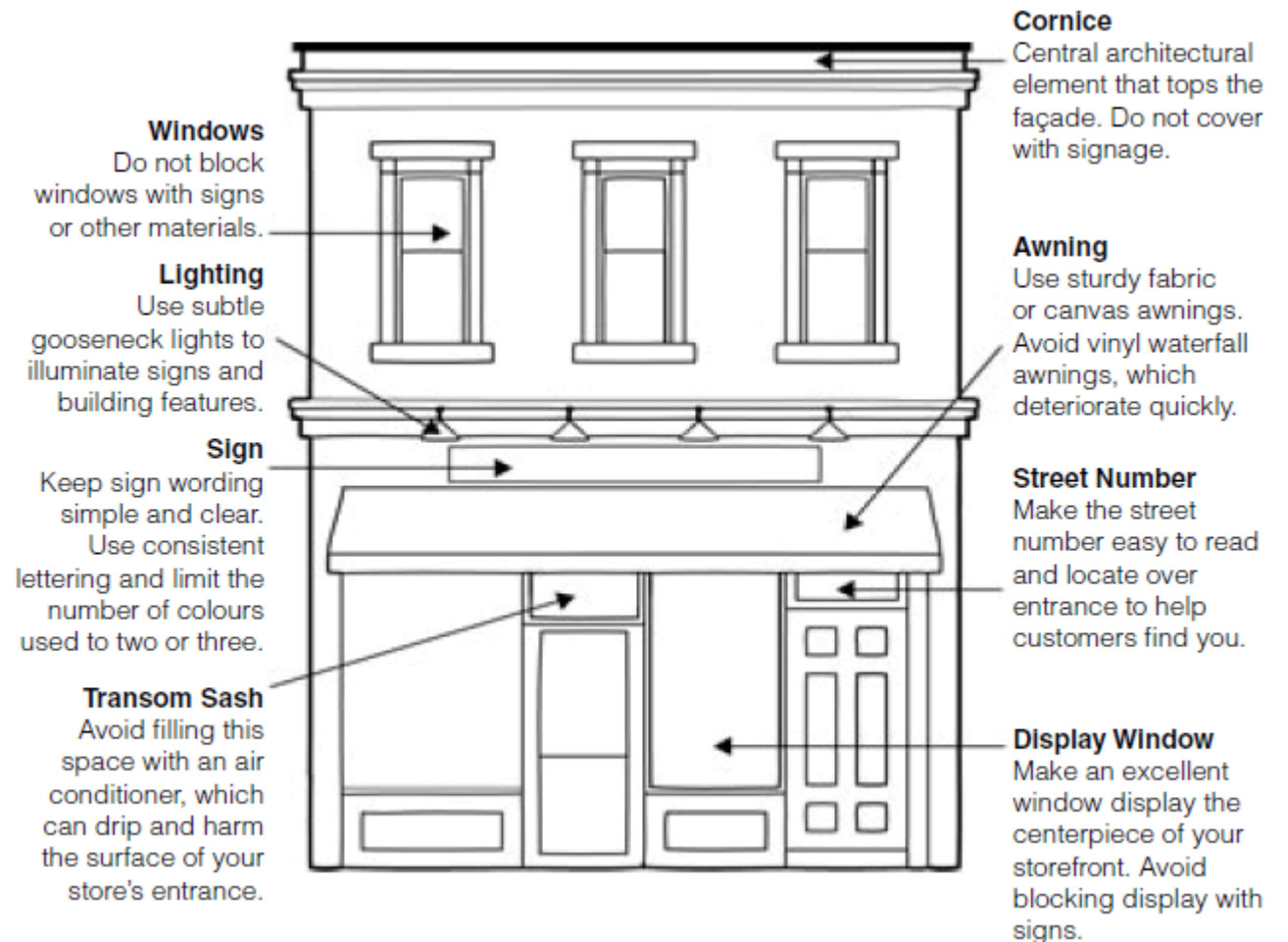
The following incentives may be offered to approved projects under this program:

1. Waiving Building and Sign Permit fees for façade and structural improvements;
2. Capital grant of up to 33 percent (33%) of the cost of single façade and structural improvements that satisfy these Program Guidelines, to a maximum of \$5,000 (per project, per year);
3. Capital grant of up to 50 percent (50%) of the cost of façade and structural improvements that satisfy these Program Guidelines and result in second or double façades, to a maximum of \$7,500 (per project, per year).

Façade and Structural Improvement Program applications are processed on a first come, first serve basis. Single façade improvements must have a minimum project cost of \$3,000 in order to be considered eligible. Improvements to second or double façades must have a minimum cost of \$1,500, for a total of \$4,500.

# Elements of the Façade

- The traditional commercial façade has a variety of sizes, shapes and styles but essentially consists of the storefront, upper façade and cornice.
- The storefront is the lower part of the building around the main commercial entrance at street level.
- The upper façade is the middle part of the building constructed of stone, brick or wood with a regular window pattern.
- The cornice is located at the top of the building, acting to protect the masonry below and decoratively cap the structure.
- Projects that maintain and enhance, or authentically replicate the traditional commercial façade in accordance with these Program Guidelines will be given prime consideration and are encouraged.



# Distinct Façades

- The amount of capital grant funding available for approved projects under this program is based on the number of “distinct façades”.
- The number of distinct façades is determined by staff when processing a program application. Where the number is in question, the final decision will be made by City Council, or its designated approval authority.





## EXAMPLE: 868 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E (Fulford Hardware)

In the example above, 868 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E has four (4) “distinct façades”. If eligible improvements were made to all four (4) façades, the owner or authorized tenant could receive four (4) single façade grants valued at 33 percent (33%) of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$20,000 (\$5,000 per façade).

# Rear Façades

- Rear façades tend to be utilitarian. They are often areas reserved for garbage receptacles or loading areas; however, they provide the most room for improvement as they are frequently forgotten.
- This program encourages the improvement of rear façades that are in full view to the public and have frontage on a municipally owned road, laneway, or parking area. Rear façades along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave E and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave W that directly face the Sydenham River or inner harbour will be given top priority.
- Examples of rear façade improvements may include, but are not limited to, improved exterior lighting and signage, a garbage enclosure, new low maintenance windows and doors provided the original openings are maintained, and cleaning or repairs to masonry.
- Projects that improve rear façades may stand alone. For clarity, a project that improves a rear façade will be considered eligible even if the front façade is not improved.

# Second Façades

- This program provides an additional incentive for projects that result in improvements to a second façade of an existing building. Projects that result in improvements to a second façade are eligible for a capital grant of 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$7,500.
- This enhanced incentive is provided where the front façade, typically containing the main entrance, and a second façade, typically at the side or rear of a building, are both improved. This enhancement is different from the number of “distinct” façades eligible for capital grant purposes.
- A second or double façade is often located at the side or rear of a building and must have frontage along a municipal road or laneway, or abut a municipally owned parking lot, the Sydenham river or the inner harbour. For clarity, a second or double façade must be in full view to the public.
- Eligible improvements to a second or double façade must satisfy these Program Guidelines.

# Eligible Projects

There are several methods for undertaking façade improvements. For the purposes of this program, these may include:

Improvement Type	Description
Redesign	Redesign refers to the complete reconstruction of the façade. The intent of redesign is usually to acquire a different or more modern design. There are instances in the Program Area where redesign may be appropriate due to significant disrepair or alteration. In all cases, redesign shall respect heritage attributes of the surrounding/adjacent façades and the streetscape and materials selected shall be appropriate and consistent with these Program Guidelines. Where a façade proposed to be redesigned is in proximity to a building designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, a Heritage Impact Assessment may be required.

# Eligible Projects

Improvement Type	Description
Restore	Restoration includes the process of restoring an existing façade to a particular point in history, typically when the building was original constructed. Restoration often produces the most attractive and long-lasting results. There are instances in the Program Area where original building materials are hidden under layers of newer material therefore, restoration may be possible and economically viable.
Renovate	Renovation is often the most practical route for façade improvement. It focusses on restoring the original strengths and design of the façade but does not require the building to be entirely modified. In renovation, original elements are enhanced and maintained but complete historical accuracy is not required.

Redesign, restore, and renovate have been provided as examples of façade improvement approaches and are not intended as an exhaustive list. In all cases, applicants should discuss the most appropriate option for façade improvement for their respective project with City Staff.



# Eligible Projects

## Structural & Life Safety

- Many buildings within the Program Area are over 100 years old. It is important to ensure buildings are properly maintained and all life safety and structural issues are addressed.
- Grant funding under this program will be directed towards significant structural improvements necessary to ensure the long-term viability of a building and address life safety concerns.
- Projects that address structural and life safety issues with a building and result in façade improvements will generally be given top priority.
- Projects that correct serious structural and life safety issues to avoid demolition of a building may also be given priority even though the façade is not improved.
- All structural and life safety improvement projects must comply with the Ontario Building Code and other applicable legislation.
- The following types of projects are considered ineligible:
  - Projects that improve the façade of the building but do not address major structural problems;
  - Interior structural and life safety improvements including, but not limited to, fire doors, sprinkler systems, fire alarms, and fire escapes.

# Eligible Projects

## Heritage Buildings

- Heritage Buildings means buildings and properties that are listed on the City's Heritage Register or designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- All heritage buildings within the City limits are eligible for incentives under this program.
- Notwithstanding these Program Guidelines, City Council, as its sole discretion, may consider other projects which have heritage merit and meet the overall intent of the program.



# Eligible Projects

## Heritage Buildings

- Improvements to Heritage Buildings will generally be given highest priority under this program in order to encourage the maintenance, restoration and rehabilitation of heritage buildings and façades for the benefit of the entire community.
- Improvements to properties designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act must be consistent with the designation by-law. Improvements and conservation efforts should employ cultural resource management best practices including, but not limited to, the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
- Projects that remove or detract from the heritage attributes of a Heritage Building will not be considered eligible.



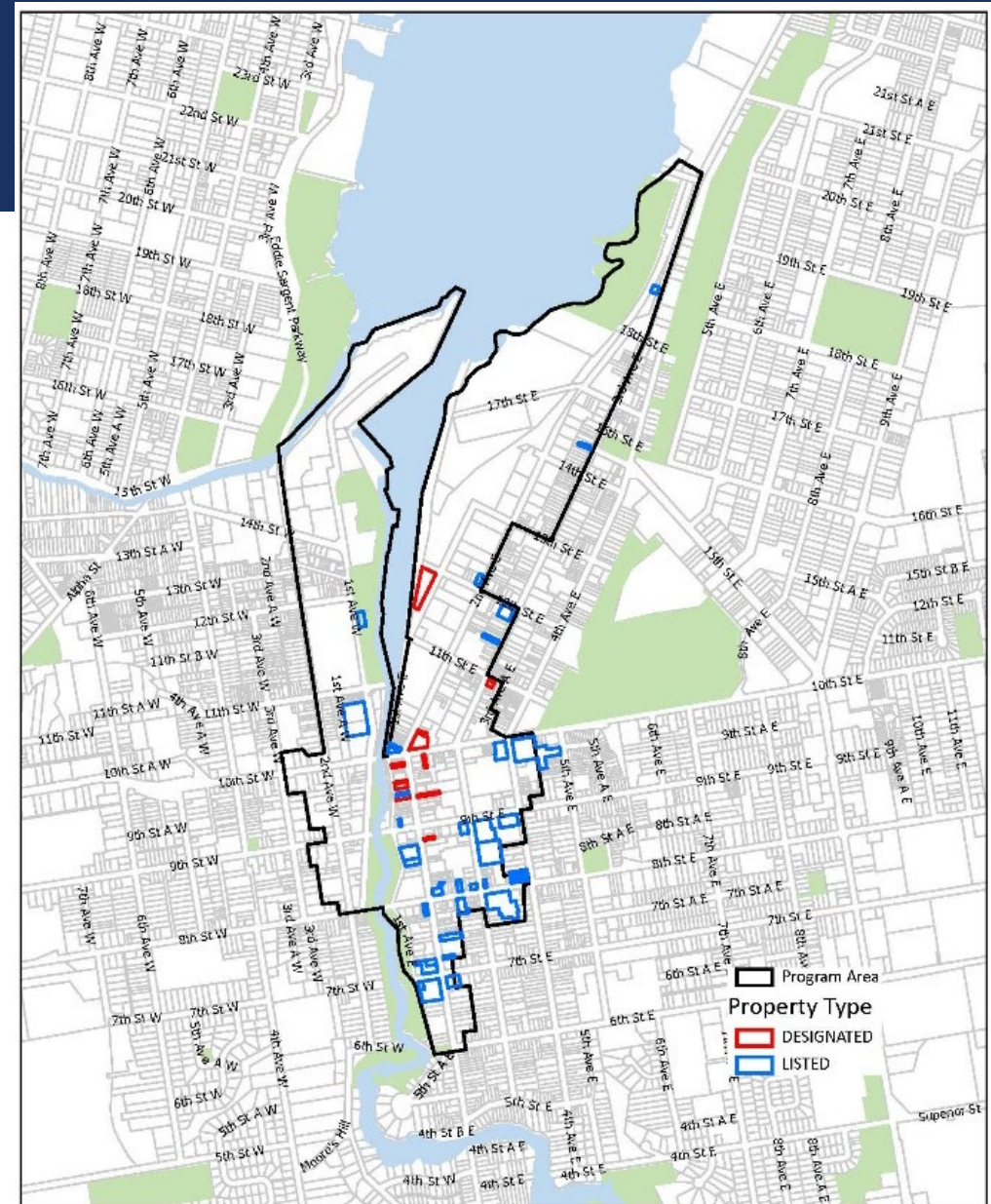
# Eligible Projects

## Residential Heritage Buildings

- Many Heritage Buildings within the Program Area are residential dwellings (e.g., single and semi-detached dwellings) and will be considered eligible under this program. Existing residential dwellings within the Program Area that are not listed or designated will not be considered eligible.
- Residential façades are more variable than traditional commercial façades. The front façade of a residential building is the side of the structure which faces the adjacent street and typically contains the front entrance.
- To be eligible for enhanced incentives under this program, a residential Heritage Building must have a second façade, which has frontage on a municipal road or laneway or is entirely visible from a municipal parking lot, the Sydenham river or the inner harbour.
- Eligible improvements to a residential Heritage Building must satisfy these Program Guidelines. Projects which conserve or restore the original architectural elements of the residential heritage building and employ original materials will be given top priority.
- Projects that remove or detract from the heritage attributes of a residential heritage building will not be considered eligible.

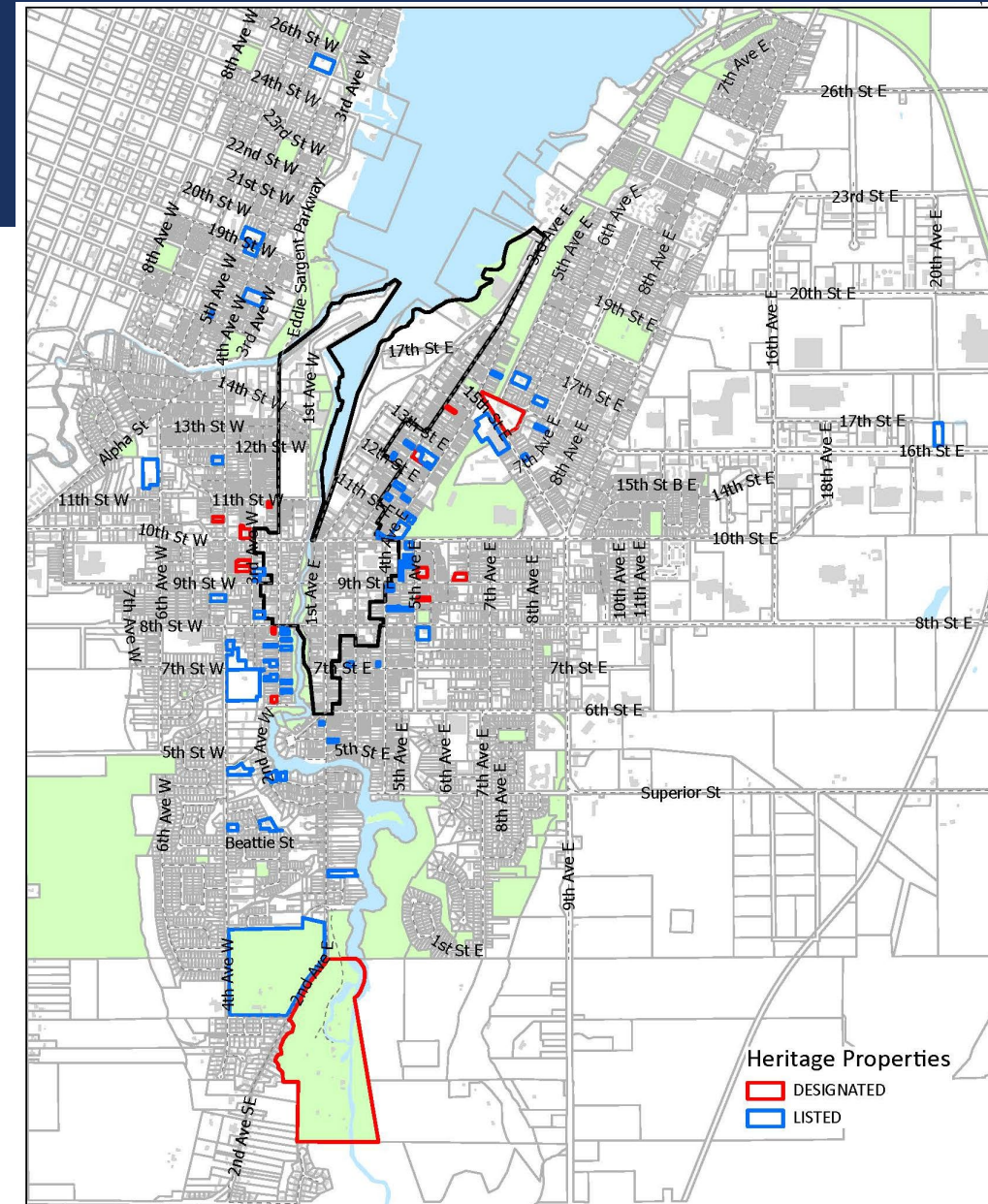
# Heritage Buildings within the Program Area

- This map shows buildings and properties within the Program Area that are listed on the City's Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. These properties will generally be given highest priority under this program.
- This map is provided for information purposes only. Heritage Buildings within the City are subject to change without an amendment to these Program Guidelines.



# Other Heritage Properties

- This map shows other properties within the City limits that are listed on the Heritage Register and designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. These properties are also eligible for incentives under this program.
- This map is provided for information purposes only. Heritage Buildings within the City are subject to change without an amendment to these Program Guidelines.



# Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects are considered ineligible for incentives under this program:

## New Construction

- New construction, which may include but is not limited to, a building addition or the redevelopment of vacant lands, is not eligible for incentives under this program.

## General Maintenance

- Projects considered to be general maintenance or life cycle replacements, including but not limited to, the repair or replacement of asphalt, flat roof or metal roof treatments, are not eligible for incentives under this program.
- Exceptions may be made at the discretion of City Council, or its designated approval authority, for Heritage Buildings.

# Exterior Materials

Many buildings within the Program Area have original brick and stone façades. In many cases, these original elements are still in place, hidden beneath layers of newer materials.

This program encourages the restoration of the original façade appearance where possible and economically feasible.

Often, the repair of original architectural features turns out to be more economic than its replacement, and far more visually pleasing.



299 8<sup>th</sup> St E – Before



299 8<sup>th</sup> St E – After



# Exterior Materials

## Brick/Masonry

- Traditional brick performs best in its original condition. Painting previously unpainted brick or stone surfaces is not considered eligible.
- Cleaning of brick and stone buildings is encouraged and should be employed using gentle, non-abrasive cleaning methods.
- Repointing of brick and masonry is encouraged and should be performed by qualified masons, preferably with experience in heritage masonry.
- Cladding with materials such as masonry cultured stone is not considered eligible. It tends to give a massive appearance of the façade and removes the heritage look of the streetscape.

- Stucco cladding is not considered eligible as a new façade treatment. Repairs to existing stucco may be considered eligible at the discretion of City Council or its delegated approval authority.

## Siding

- Exterior siding shall be compatible in type, texture and colour with the original materials of the subject building and that of the surrounding area.
- Wood sidings with appropriate exterior finishes, such as paint or stain, are encouraged and can be implemented in a wide variety of styles, textures and finishes.
- Installation of new siding in contemporary materials such as vinyl and aluminum is not encouraged. Vinyl and aluminum siding on Heritage Buildings is not considered eligible.

# Windows

Original windows should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Projects that remove original windows will generally not be considered eligible.

Replacement windows should be the same size and configuration as the original windows they replace.

Windows should not be boarded off. Original window openings shall not be reduced in size.

## Display Windows

- Display windows are the largest element of the façade and establish the character of the storefront. They are an effective way for the store owner to advertise their product.
- First floor windows should be as large as possible. Window heights should be aligned, and window sizes should be unified to create a consistent look for the entire storefront.
- Transparent glass rather than tinted, textured or dark glass is preferred.
- Historic features, such as decorative mouldings, stained glass and original frames, should be preserved where possible.

## Transom Windows

- Transom windows are often divided panes found near the top of display windows or entry doors. They focus more attention to the display areas while allowing a maximum amount of natural light into the store.
- Transom windows may be comprised of stained or coloured glass.

## Upper Storey Windows

- Upper storey windows should be in harmony with the character, design and proportion of the building façade and should reflect the repetitive, vertical pattern along the street.

Window replacements shall generally be completed in combination with other improvements. Standalone window replacements on non-heritage buildings are considered life cycle replacements and will generally not be considered eligible for grant funding.

# Doors

- Doors should provide a clear point of access to the storefront while also upholding the design of the building.
- Doors with large glass panels are recommended. Solid doors for storefront entries will not be considered eligible.
- Door replacements should generally be the same size as the originals. Existing door openings should generally not be reduced in size.
- Recessed doorways and entryways are encouraged and provide many benefits including:
  - Creating a defined entryway.
  - Giving space to outward swinging doors.
  - Providing shelter from the elements for patrons.
- Where a residential door is located on the front of the building, this door should be visually separate from the storefront. Solid doors are recommended for residential entries.



# Base Panels

Base panels provide a visual and functional base for the storefront by separating display windows from the sidewalk.

Materials of the same colour, type and texture as the rest of the building façade should be utilized for the base panels.



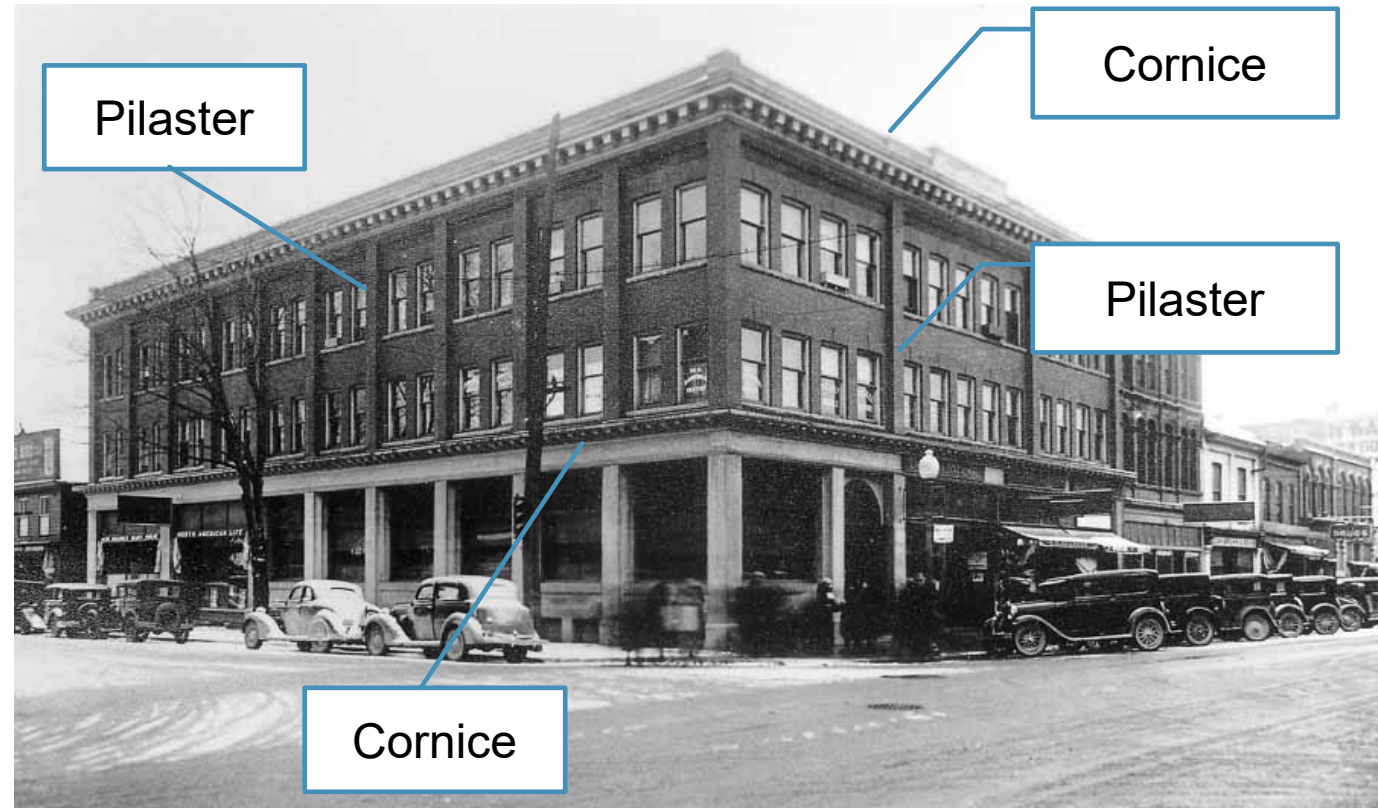
# Pilasters & Cornices

## Pilasters

- Pilasters are the primary vertical elements of the façade. They often “cap” either end of the storefront and line the upper storeys.
- Original pilasters may be made of wood, masonry or cast iron. This program encourages the restoration of these elements to their original condition where feasible and economically viable.

## Cornices

- Cornices are decorative elements that cap off the top of the building or storefront. They create a strong, continuous line on the street uniting various buildings.
- A building will look less significant if the cornices are removed. This program encourages the restoration of original wooden cornices.



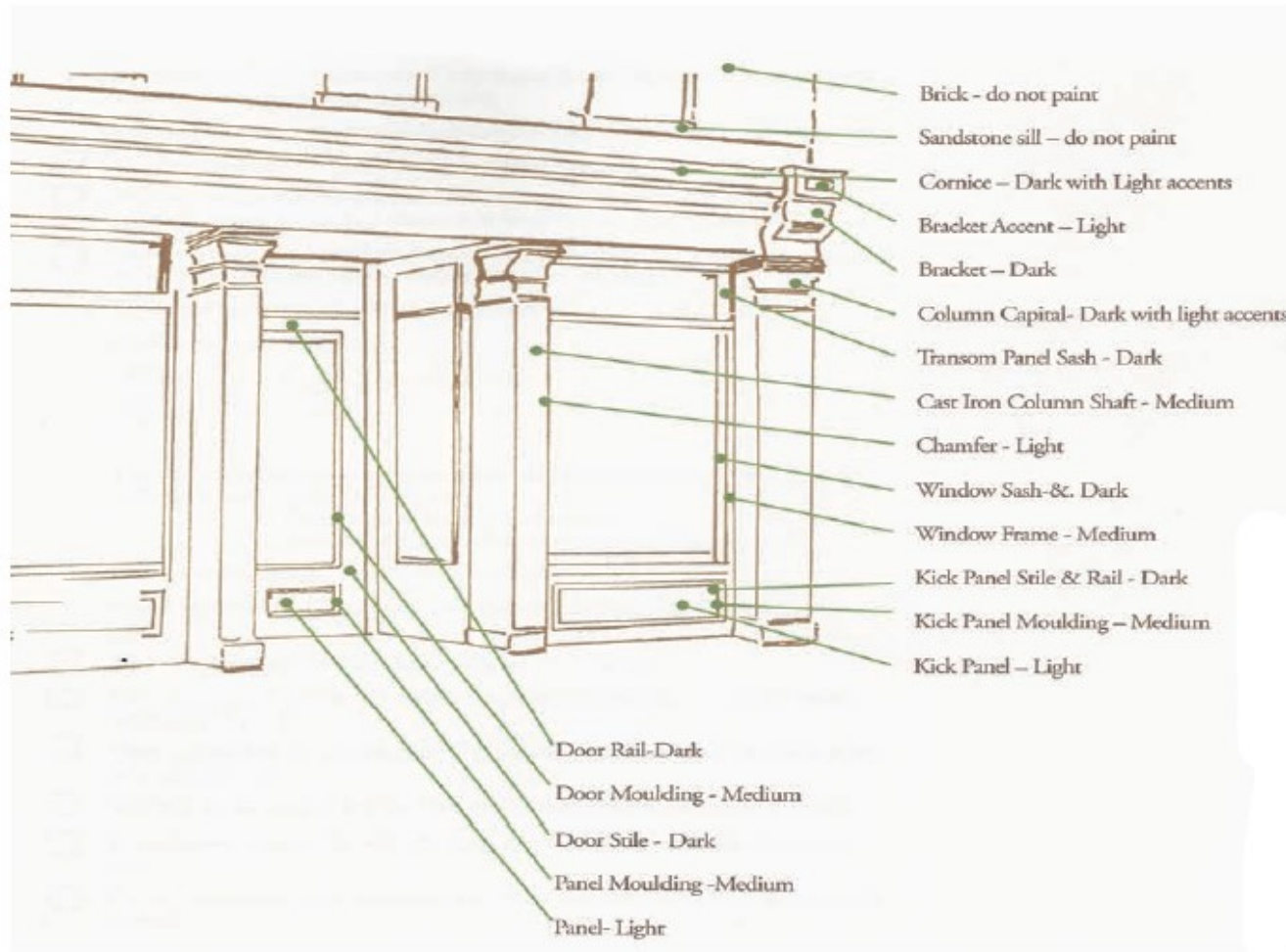
# Paint & Colour

- The use of paint on the exterior of a building provides a protective layer that original wood and metal materials require to withstand the forces of weathering. It also contributes to the vibrancy of the façade.
- The use of appropriate colour can reveal and emphasize the building's original style and appearance and make the storefront an interesting place to walk by and shop.
- Colour should be chosen to compliment a building style and age, as well as those of the overall streetscape.
- The use of a limited number of colours is recommended. Three-colour paint schemes tend to be the most successful in combination on a façade.
- A list of materials, colours and finishes are required to be included on all plans when submitting a Façade and Structural Improvement Program Application.
- The painting of previously unpainted masonry (brick and stone) will not be considered eligible under this program.

# Colour Examples



# Recommended Colour Placement



Source: Town of Moosomin, Saskatchewan  
Heritage Façade Improvement Guide

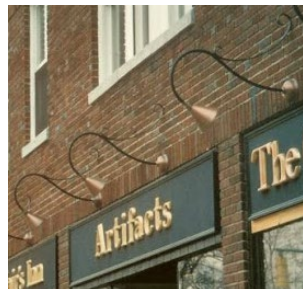
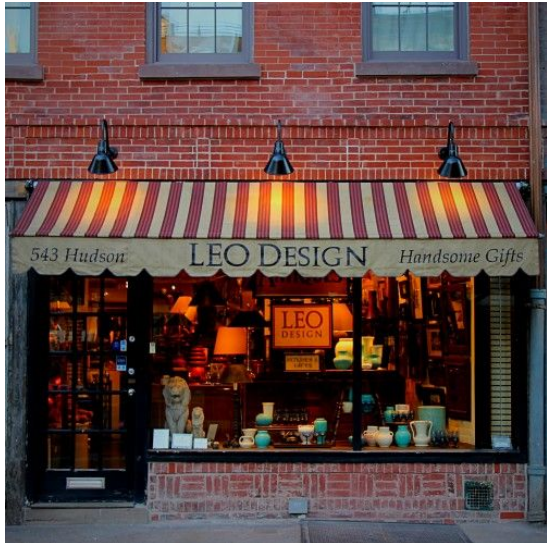


# Exterior Lighting

- Improvements to exterior lighting are encouraged to illuminate the business, attract attention to signs, store information and building details, and to discourage crime.
- Projects that install gooseneck style lighting are highly encouraged and will be given top priority.
- The scale and style of light fixtures should be in keeping with the storefront's design. Lighting should always be downward facing so as to not direct excessive light or glare onto adjoining properties.
- Lighting should produce an effect similar to daylight. Florescent lighting will not be considered eligible.



# Lighting Examples



# Signage

Well designed signage contributes to the vitality and creates a positive impression of the commercial health of the downtown. This program encourages new or replacement signage that improves the appearance of the façade, in combination with other improvements (e.g., exterior lighting). Projects that only propose to replace or install new signage will not be considered eligible.

- When replacing signage, all old sign materials should be removed. Projects that propose to install a new sign face within or on top of an existing sign box will not be considered eligible.
- Types of eligible signs generally include projecting signs, fascia signs, mounted lettering signs, and window graphics.
- Historic signs should be restored where possible if they are a contribution to the character of the building.
- Read-o-graph or static electronic message display (EDM) signs, flashing signs, neon signs, backlit signs, and temporary signs such as paper signs or banners, will not be considered eligible.
- Durable, quality materials such as wood and metal should always be used for projecting, fascia and mounted lettering signs. Window graphics may be vinyl.
- All signage must comply with the City's Sign By-law.

# Eligible Signs

The following types of signage will generally be considered eligible under this program:

## Projecting Signs

- A projecting sign is a sign that is attached to the building face but projects from the building wall and is hung perpendicular to the sidewalk.
- Projecting signs with wood or wrought iron details are highly encouraged and will be given top priority under this program.

## Fascia Signs

- A fascia sign is a sign that is mounted on a building face and runs parallel to the building wall. A fascia sign may also project slightly from the wall on which it is mounted.
- Fascia signs must comply with the City's Sign By-law. Generally, one fascia sign per storefront is permitted.



# Eligible Signs

## Mounted Lettering Sign

- Mounted lettering signs refer to individual letters that are mounted to the face of the building, sign or awning. They may appear similar to a fascia sign.
- Mounted letter signs that employ natural materials, such as wood, are highly encouraged under this program and will be given top priority.

## Window Graphics

- Window graphics are applied directly to display windows or transoms to advertise the business and may include details such as logos, store hours and services offered.



# Sign Placement

- Signs shall be positioned in a way that respects the architecture and scale of the building façade as well as the overall streetscape.
- Wording shall be kept simple and concise.
- Phone numbers, email and street addresses on projecting, fascia and mounted lettering signage are discouraged. These details are more appropriate for window graphics and can be placed on entry doors, display windows or transoms.
- Sign colours, fonts, shapes, materials and scale shall be historically appropriate.
- Generally, only one fascia sign or mounted lettering sign is permitted per storefront.

# Sign Placement

- Projecting signs located above the storefront level will not be considered eligible, so as to avoid disrupting the window rhythm of the upper façade.
- A sign shall be in proportion to the building and not dominate or overwhelm the façade. Where possible, signs shall be located within the building's original sign band.
- Sign coverage must comply with the City's Sign By-law. As a general rule of thumb, maximum coverage should be 7% of the overall storefront façade, to a maximum height of 0.6 metres or limited to the sign band area.



Source: Town of Moosomin, Saskatchewan Heritage Façade Improvement Guide

# Sign Examples

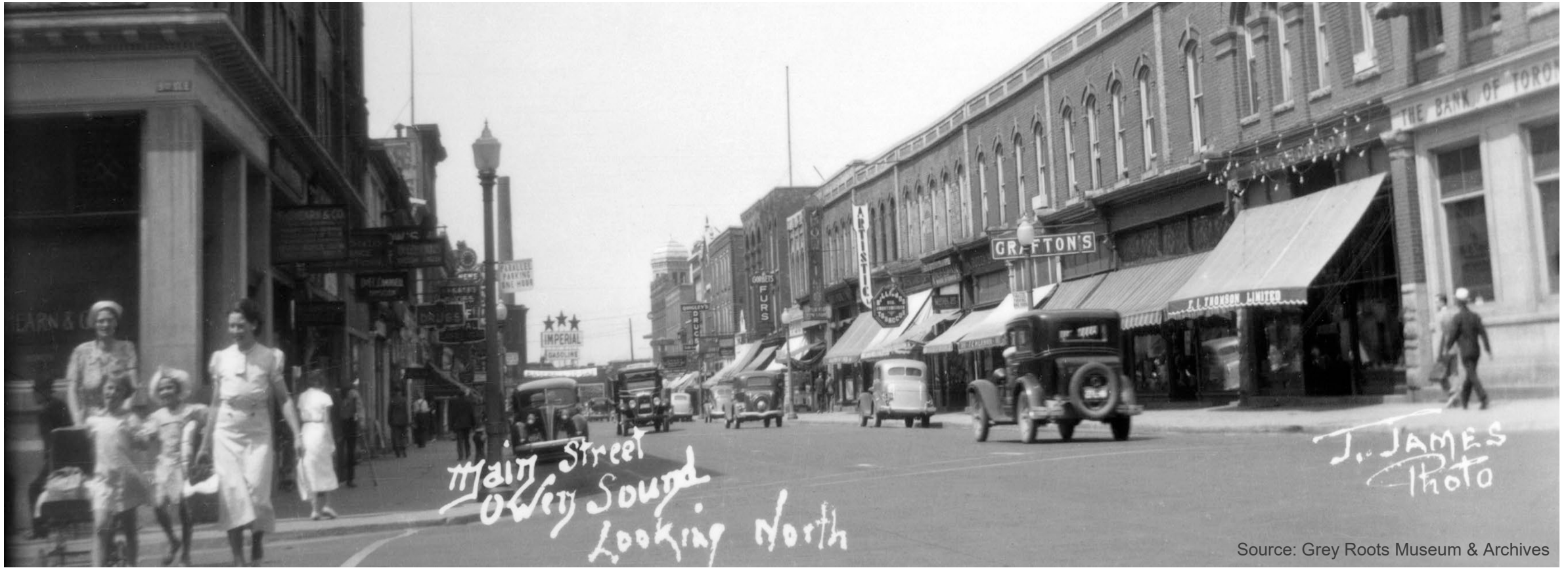




# Awnings

- Canvas awnings were historically common within the program area. This program encourages the installation of awnings with a traditional design and appearance.
- Awnings are beneficial for:
  - Protecting pedestrians, patrons, and window displays from the elements,
  - Providing a secondary location for signage and,
  - Adding colour and interest to building storefront and façades.
- New awnings shall have a traditional profile, be retractable or fixed with a valance, and be made from canvas (or a material similar in appearance).
- All new awnings must meet the minimum clearance height required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- Where an awning is to contain signage, it shall consist of individual block letters.





Source: Grey Roots Museum & Archives

## Traditional awnings within the Program Area

# Contact

For further information on the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program or to discuss your project with a City staff member, please contact:

**Community Services Department**

**Planning & Heritage Division**

808 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East

Owen Sound, ON N4K 2H4

Phone: 519-376-4440 ext. 1250

Email: [planning@owensound.ca](mailto:planning@owensound.ca)

# Image Credits

## Base Panels (page 28):

- <http://sweethousedreams.blogspot.com/2019/06/1890-brick-storefront-with-apartment-in.html>
- <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/536012>

## Colour Examples (page 31):

- <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/142707881921702823/>
- [https://www.kitchener.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/DSD\\_ECDEV\\_DT\\_King\\_Street\\_Facade\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.kitchener.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/DSD_ECDEV_DT_King_Street_Facade_Guidelines.pdf)
- <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/365706432224478903/>

## Exterior Lighting (page 33):

- <https://www.barnlight.com/inspiration/outdoor-sign-lights-spotted-atop-hillbilly-harley/>
- <https://www.zagat.com/r/blackbird-kitchen-and-cocktails-wantagh#gallery>

## Exterior Lighting Examples (page 34):

- <https://hammerworks.com/shop/gooseneck-lighting/gooseneck-sign-lighting/>
- <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/379991287288147308/>
- <https://www.barnlight.com/inspiration/emblem-shades-add-classic-statement-to-disney-restaurant/>
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- <http://lightingandlightfixtures.com/26sign26.html>
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- <https://ar.pinterest.com/pin/748512400551662829/>
- <https://www.dolanhospitality.com/barn-light-outdoor-wall-light-black-with-gooseneck-arm-12-scoop-shade-623534-623534>

## Sign Examples (page 40):

- <https://www.goodwinandgoodwin.com/pages/shop-fascias-london>
- <https://woodensignskeyringsbadgestokens.co.uk/projecting-sign-from-engraved-oak-and-rusty-bracket-suitable-for-house-signs-house-numbers-engraved-into-heavy-duty-thick-oak/>
- <https://www.ucsalt.com/services/cnc-machining>

## Awnings (page 41):

- <https://carolinaawning.com/canvas/>
- <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/469922542346042569/>
- <http://www.thingsthatinspire.net/2013/09/metal-and-canvas-awnings.html>