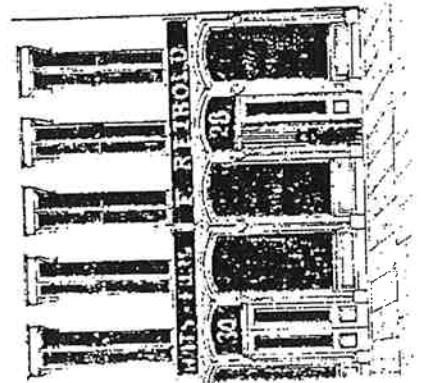
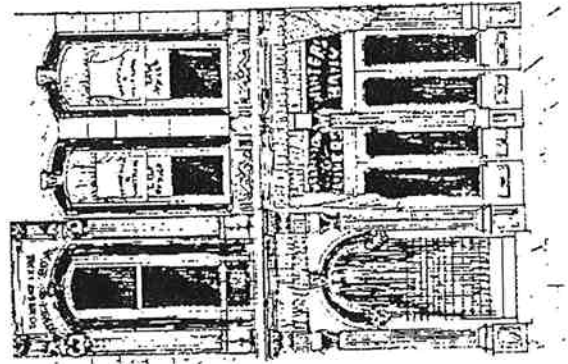
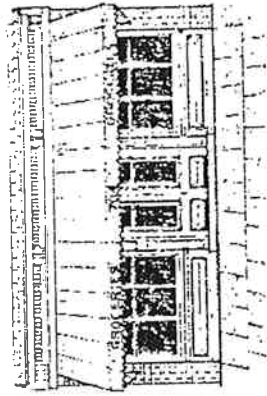
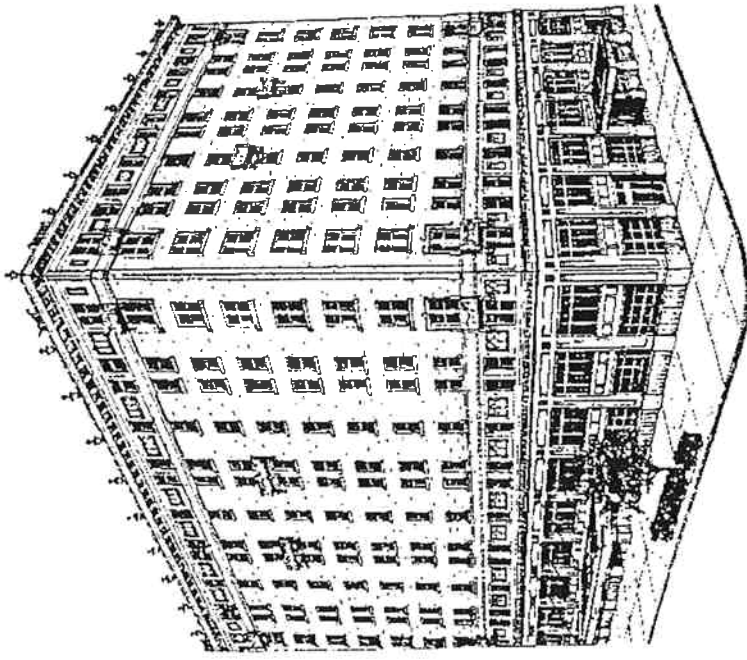


# NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS



# COMMERCIAL



The commercial areas that are located in several of the historic districts serve as "front doors" to the districts since they are situated along important thoroughfares. Built before the widespread ownership of automobiles, these commercial areas were characterized by small shops oriented toward pedestrians and the streetcar trade.

The rise in automobile usage coincided with and contributed to the decline of many inner city commercial districts which were hard pressed to compete with the new suburban strip centers. Typical solutions to this dilemma included the razing of buildings for

more parking, the "modernization" of storefronts, and the installation of large, garish signs to attract attention.

These improvements failed to provide a cure for the decline, however. They may even have been detrimental because the unique character of the historic commercial districts was compromised in order to compete with newer shopping centers which had advantages such as better parking and a more affluent customer base that older areas could not provide.

However, these competitive disadvantages can be partially overcome by

playing on the districts' unique historic and architectural character. To bring out this character, though, means changing the standard approach to commercial building alterations. It means removing inappropriate attempts at modernization and restoring much of the original buildings' hidden details. Improving the appearance of businesses gives a favorable impression to outsiders, some of whom may become interested in conducting business or even living nearby. This, in turn, would benefit existing businesses by improving sales and triggering further cycles of improvement.

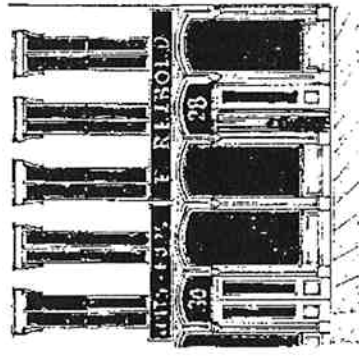
The street facade is the most recognizable portion of most commercial buildings. Almost everything one needs to know about what occupies the building can be found by looking at the facade. This is where the main entrance and storefronts are usually found as well as signage and other indications of life.

The street facade is also where most of the decorative detailing can be found. This detailing serves the function of making the building look less ordinary, thereby attracting both tenants and customers. However minor it may seem in individual cases, the sum total of this detailing gives the block a comfortable feel that separates it from plainer areas that may exist nearby. Such a unique identity is important to the health of the commercial district, hence, the importance of maintaining these features.

The information presented in this section describes construction elements of commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings. Only elements which vary from those for residential buildings are addressed in this section. Standards which pertain to architectural elements common to all building types

are covered in individual sections, i.e. *Shutters, Windows*, and so on.

## STOREFRONTS



In the 1840's, business buildings acquired a character of their own with the innovation of the storefront. This first story treatment featured large display windows and a formal entry while upper stories retained residential characteristics.

The shop windows were flanked by vertical supports, or pilasters. Constructed of wood, stone, or cast iron, these pilasters—capped by a horizontal support or cornice—provided an inviting frame for the displayed articles. The business entry was frequently recessed to avoid competition with the display area.

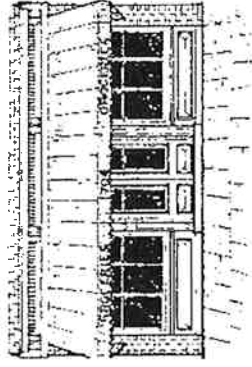
Throughout the late nineteenth century, storefronts underwent several changes. Glass expanses became larger and exhibited fewer divisions. Art glass was sometimes used for design detail and as a means of providing visual interest.

Horizontal panels (knee walls), begun at ground level and rising a couple of feet, served as the practical conclu-

sion to the storefront display area. Constructed of wood or iron, they were immune to breakage and weather damage and provided the visual fourth side of the glass frame.

Canvas awnings were most extensively used over commercial storefronts. Serving as an advertising medium with signs, they provided shelter for shoppers and extended the display surface; merchandise could be set under the awnings to be viewed by passersby and simultaneously could be protected from summer sun and rain.

Awnings may extend the length of the storefront facade, or they may cover only a portion of that facade such as the display windows or the entry. Also, separate awnings may be used across the facade with breaks at the structural supports.



The early twentieth century witnessed the construction of one-story flat-roofed commercial buildings which relied on large expanses of clear-vision glass for openness. Detailing was minimal, frequently limited to decorative brick or stonework incorporated into the structural configuration of the building.

Repairs to storefronts frequently consist of replacing glass, guidelines for which can be found in the *Windows* section. Replacement of damaged horizontal panels can be accomplished by removal

of the window section and replacement in kind of the deteriorated material. Panels were usually one inch (1") thick boards with molding or trim added to the facing. In cases where storefront treatment was cast iron, iron covered the wood panels. This iron can be replicated commercially, if damaged.

Likewise, a damaged pilaster can be duplicated if necessary as most were simple in design. If the plaster is of limestone and is severely damaged, the weight it supports can be transferred with a jack while the plaster is replaced. A new pilaster can be fashioned from wood in the design of the original stone pilaster.

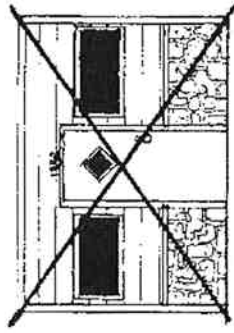
Cast iron storefronts consisted of non-structural metal covering unadorned wood to provide great detail to the surface. The iron was always painted, often to simulate limestone—light gray/white—or sandstone—dark red/brown. Paint also served to protect the surface from rust.

Sensitive storefront alterations to accommodate a building's particular function are appropriate. Closed interior shutters or blinds and pulled shades guarantee privacy. Exterior shutters affixed to the window openings and presenting an appearance of closed shutters can be used when security is warranted; however, a first alternative would be to use tempered or safety glass.

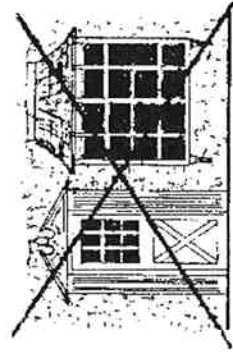
## PROHIBITIONS

Attempts at "modernization" such as the installment of metal wall panels and the reduction or elimination of window space distracts from the historic function of a building and has a deadening effect on a street that is detrimental to the

continuing prosperity of nearby businesses. Such "improvements" either must not be undertaken or should be reversed by their removal. Usually, such a removal will reveal that the original, hidden facade is surprisingly intact and requires only minor repairs to bring it back to its former state.

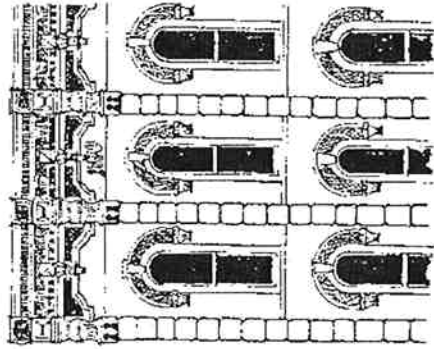


Treatments which would alter the proportion and scale of the storefront by the removal of the windows, pilasters, and/or horizontal panels shall not be used. Storefront treatments utilizing few visible supports and large uninter-rupted expanses of glass, metal, vinyl, or wood are not appropriate.



Aluminum, steel, and vinyl awnings are prohibited; only canvas awnings are permitted. See *Awnings* section for additional related information.

## UPPER FACADES



The portions of commercial buildings located above the first story or street frontage usually emulated residential buildings of the same era. Early and mid-nineteenth century buildings featured plain, symmetrical facades with multi paned, elongated, double hung windows flanked by operable shutters. When ornamentation became fashionable, upper facades incorporated decorative window hoods and heavy, bracketed and paneled cornices.

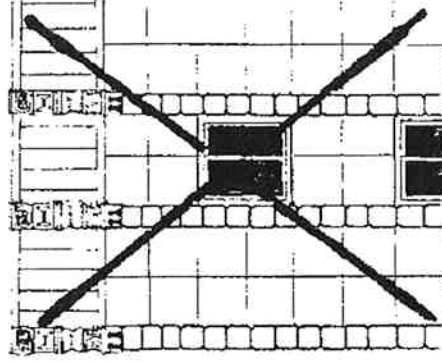
The asymmetry of the Queen Anne style was attempted to a small degree on commercial buildings through the incorporation of towers, turrets, and dormers on upper facades.

A few years later, flamboyant detailing executed in terra cotta added interest to commercial buildings which included large windows throughout the building as a prominent design element. The terra cotta provided a material which permitted great depth of detail to be exhibited and allowed the execution of minute elements to be made effectively.

Damage to upper facades (regardless of the material), including the cornice, is comparable to that found on residential buildings, and repairs can be accomplished similarly, also. Reference can be made to the appropriate sections.

## PROHIBITIONS

Removal or alteration of window and door openings, detailing, and materials on a prominent facade is prohibited as it has a direct and strong impact on the design, massing, and scale of the building itself as well as how it relates to those buildings surrounding it. Closed shutters can be used in a window opening where glass is not desired so as to maintain the balance of the building. Covering upper facades with metal, vinyl, wood, and glass is not permitted. Other concerns can be found under individual building element sections, i.e. *Windows, Walls*.



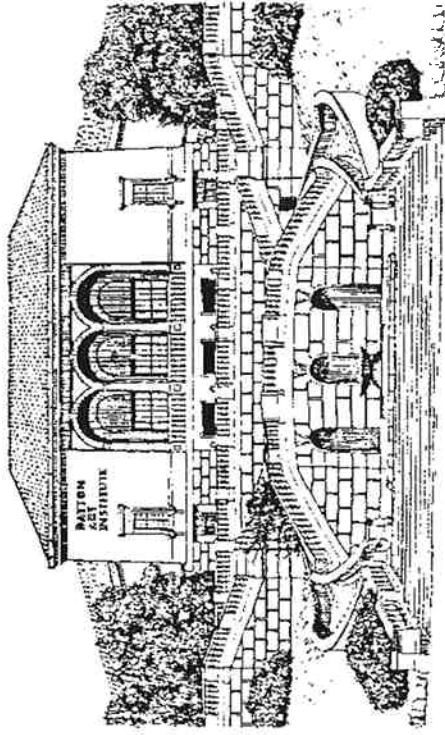
## FOR MORE INFORMATION

"Old Storefronts, 1870-1920," *Mara Glebloom, The Old House Journal* Vol. VI No. 7, March 1978.

Richmond Architectural Renovation, The Downtown Development Office, Richmond, Virginia.

Combination Atlas, Map of Montgomery County, Ohio, L. H. Everts, 1875.

## INSTITUTIONAL

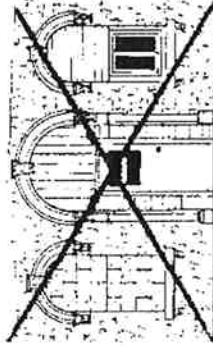


Institutional buildings are primarily churches and schools. The latter were built in styles and with detailing similar to residences constructed during the same era—but on a grander scale. Churches were frequently built in the commanding Gothic or Romanesque styles. Both churches and schools were executed almost exclusively in masonry—frequently brick with stone trim.

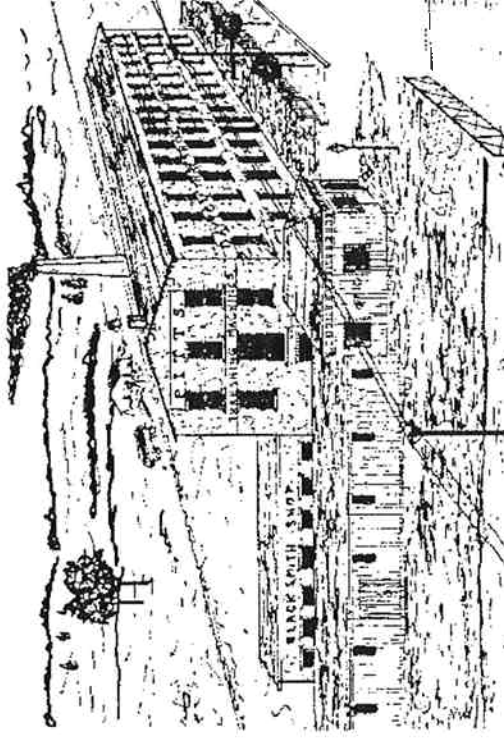
Standards for appropriate repairs and alterations to institutional structures correspond to those specified in individual sections of this manual.

### PROHIBITIONS

As in previously discussed sections, the removal or alteration of window and door openings, detailing, and materials on a prominent facade is not permitted. Additional prohibitions can be found under individual building element sections, i.e. *Windows, Doors*.



## INDUSTRIAL

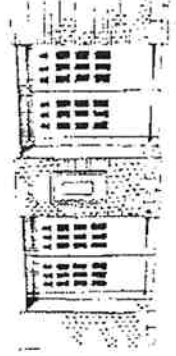
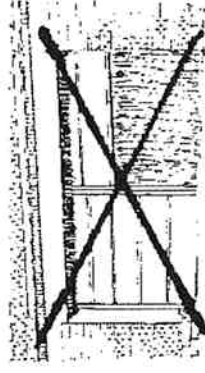


Industrial structures were usually large, multi-story buildings devoid of a public entryway. They had few, if any, architectural details. Industrial buildings were often constructed of masonry and were symmetrical in design.

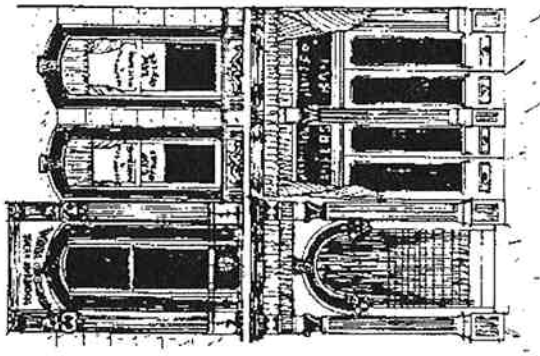
Repairs and alterations to industrial buildings shall correspond to those appropriate for individual elements of residential buildings as described in this manual. Some alterations may incorporate standards which would be appropriate for accessory structures. An example would be a loading bay requiring a vehicular entry door which would correspond to a residential garage door.

### PROHIBITIONS

Again, as previously discussed, removal or alteration of window and door openings, detailing, and materials on a prominent facade is not permitted. Additional prohibitions can be found under individual building element sections, i.e. *Windows, Doors*.



# SIGNAGE



Signs serve the dual purpose of identifying a business and advertising the product or services sold by a particular establishment. They are often the most noticeable elements of a commercial street scene. Historically, business signs were located on the horizontal member over the storefront or hung on iron brackets at the same level and extending over the public sidewalk. Also, signs were painted directly upon a building, particularly for a corner location on the facade which did not feature the storefront. Temporary signs advertising a particular product were made of wood or metal and placed immediately in front of the business on the public sidewalk.

When there is a large concentration of businesses, there is sometimes a tendency to construct ever larger signs in order to remain noticeable. The result is a mish-mash of signs that are difficult to distinguish, dangerous for motorists,

and destructive to the historic character of the area. Paradoxically, such an approach, designed to promote business at a particular establishment, is a detriment to healthy business in the whole district.

It is important, then, to keep signage simple and unobtrusive. The sign should be small and contain only the most basic information. The name of the establishment and its main line of business should suffice, i.e. "Smith's Drugstore."

Contemporary signage should follow the historical pattern. A sign is a design element and should complement the building style and proportion on which it is located. Confusion reigns when signs are mounted in a seemingly random manner on a building. Signs should be limited to the lintel, windows, and the awnings. Projecting signs are permitted only over the main entrance to the store. A large sign should be mounted in front of the storefront cornice while small signs should be located over entryways and hung on iron brackets or other decorative supports. Small temporary signs are permitted when in keeping with the remainder of the signage.

Lettering is also an important aspect of coherent signage. Signs are easier to read if the business owner keeps to one style of lettering rather than an assortment of styles which may reduce readability. Lettering can generally be described as either *serif* or *sans serif* and should be entirely one or the other.

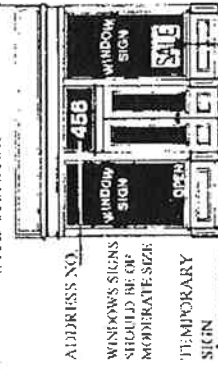
Symbols, such as barber's pole or a mortar and pestle for a pharmacy, are also appropriate forms of signage; however, their size should be common

separate with the scale of the building. The amount of space devoted to symbols will be subtracted from the total allowed for signs.

Identification signs in scale with the building on which they are located are permitted; however, they shall not exceed 100 square feet of total sign area. Sign scale shall be determined by the mathematical ratio of the height and width of the building on which the sign is to be located or that portion thereof. Projecting identification signs may not exceed 32 square feet, or 16 square feet per face. Two or less signs per business use are permitted.

Ground projecting signs are permitted only at parking lots, where the building setback is greater than that established on the street, or in instances where the building set back is consistently deep. Ground projecting signs may also be permitted in cases of multi-tenant commercial usage in lieu of numerous wall mounted signs. Concealed, exterior lighting is recommended. Traffic control and historic district identification signs are permitted.

## APPROPRIATE SIGNAGE



## PROHIBITIONS

Certain types of signs that have traditionally been used on highway oriented thoroughfares are clearly inappropriate to a historic district given

the pedestrian oriented nature of the street. These include moving and flashing signs, plastic signs, billboards, portable signs, advertising signs, and poster panel/billboard signs. Signs extending above the wall of any structure to which they are attached are prohibited.

