

City of Eden
Economic Development
Department
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**BUILD REHABILITATION
GRANT PROGRAM
Design Guidelines**

The City of Eden Economic Development Department is charged with assisting the city's downtown revitalizing efforts. One of the missions of this effort is to rehabilitate commercial buildings to promote the Main Street mission of historic preservation in the context of economic development in Eden's traditional downtown areas of Leaksville, Draper, The Boulevard, and Cook Block. As part of this effort, these design guidelines give direction to building and business owners seeking to make overall improvement and rehabilitation to their buildings. The following guidelines do not supersede local or state codes and ordinances, but rather are intended to give guidance on development standards.

Building upgrades and improvements for Eden's Rehabilitation Grant (BRG) Program matching grant applications are available from the City of Eden Economic Development Department or online at www.edennc.us Any questions should be directed to the Eden Main Street Manager.

The City encourages property owners, merchants and residents to recognize, enhance, protect, and promote the downtown areas' unique character and identities. To assist business and property owners in improving their storefronts as part of this revitalization process, the City of Eden has created these guidelines in conjunction with its BRG, which offers matching grants. The program seeks to develop a more coherent, creative, and attractive appearance within the Eden traditional downtown areas. These guidelines provide general information about the renovation of existing buildings and considerations for new development. Additional guidance is available through the Eden Main Street Manager.

The economic vitality as well as the aesthetic quality of each business enterprise is important, and both are linked in part to the success of surrounding commercial establishments. **Studies have shown that thoughtful design improvements often lead to greater sales for a business.** Similarly, the physical character of the Main Street downtown areas contributes greatly to the overall image of the community for its residents, customers, and visitors. By establishing these guidelines, the City of Eden hopes that several important public and private objectives can be met, including:

- Enhancement of the commercial success of the Eden traditional downtown areas by ensuring a pleasant experience for business patrons.
- Preservation and enhancement of Eden traditional downtown areas' historic buildings, streetscape, and architectural features.
- Recognition that the Eden traditional downtown areas comprise communities with unique qualities and characteristics, which should be reinforced by planning and improvements specific and appropriate to this place.

Overall Goals

The goal of the BRG is to revitalize Eden's Main Street and traditional downtown areas. The BRG is to make these areas and their buildings better versions of themselves, not to mimic malls, suburbs or even other commercial districts. The BRG encourages renovations and improvements that create a unique and attractive image for each business while respecting the original design parameters of its facade as well as those of its neighbors.

The City of Eden values high design standards and creativity. They also encourage solutions, which achieve these goals affordably so that business and property owners are benefited rather than burdened by the revitalization process.

In general:

- All improvements must be compatible with applicable zoning codes, satisfy permit requirements, and conform to any other regulatory restrictions.
- Creativity is always encouraged within these guidelines.
- If a building has historic or aesthetic merit, improvements shall be designed to reveal the building's original style, form, and materials, whenever possible.
- A building's distinguishing elements shall be identified and preserved.
- Previous renovations are sometimes evidence of a building's history and use. In instances where alterations have acquired their own significance and contribute a positive visual quality to the building and the district, they shall be recognized and preserved. However, when they are not integrated into the building's design, added elements should be removed.
- In the case where original building elements have been previously removed or substantially altered, contemporary treatments respecting the original and historic details are suitable. However, they shall not appear to be of poor quality, of temporary nature, or ill-suited to the area (e.g., vinyl or aluminum siding).
- Individuality within a standardized or unified appearance is encouraged for single buildings containing multiple storefronts. Separate buildings – even in cases where several adjacent to each other are occupied by a single tenant or owner -- shall remain visually distinct.
- Colors of exterior materials, signs, window frames, cornices, storefronts, and other building features shall be coordinated. Choice of colors shall be determined by the nature of the building. The exterior colors of historic buildings should be chosen with their historic character in mind. More contemporary designs may allow for a larger range of colors. BRICK SHALL NOT BE PAINTED (unless it already has been)
- Facades should relate to their surroundings and provide a sense of cohesiveness in the district without strict uniformity.
- Facades should present a visually balanced composition according to the original architectural intent.
- High-quality materials shall be used in order to convey substance and integrity.

- The use of traditional building materials is encouraged. Whether using traditional or non-traditional materials, the quality of the design and durability of materials chosen will be factors in the consideration of all designs.

Guidelines Storefront Design and Display

- Most facades consist of an architectural framework designed to identify individual storefronts. Each storefront shall respect this architectural framework and not extend beyond it.
- Storefront design shall be in keeping with a building's overall design. Storefront elements -- such as windows, entrances, and signage -- provide clarity and lend interest to facades. It is important that the distinction between individual storefronts, the entire building facade, and adjacent properties be maintained.
- Individual storefronts shall be clearly defined by architectural elements, such as pillars, piers, or separations of glass.
- A horizontal band at the top of each storefront can serve as an appropriate location for business signage.
- Storefront windows shall be consistent in height and design with storefront doors to create a cohesive appearance.
- Storefronts shall be as transparent as possible allowing customers and pedestrians clear viewing into and out of the store.
- Storefront windows shall display products or services, local business logos, hours of operation, and/or public service messages. Displays in both retail and non-retail storefront windows that add color, texture, information, and/or visual activity to the pedestrian experience are encouraged. Original storefront windows must be maintained in their original site or restored when possible. Where privacy is needed, blinds or shutters may be used inside storefronts but glass must remain transparent and windows should not be permanently altered or blocked off.

Signage

- All signs must be in compliance with City of Eden ordinances.
- Signage shall provide information simply and legibly. Studies show that seven words are the most passersby can effectively read.
- All signs shall be made of durable materials.
- Primary signage shall be limited to advertising the name of a business and its main goods and services. In general, primary signage shall not advertise national brand names or logos.
- Permanently applied or painted window lettering may also be an effective way to advertise a business name, type of business, and/or primary goods and services.
- Window signage shall be limited to covering no more than 15 percent of available window space.
- In general, the number of signs per storefront shall be kept to a minimum. Limit signage to the number necessary to effectively communicate the business

message. Too many signs in one storefront can detract from the overall appearance.

- Signs should be of a size, location, and design that do not obscure a building's important architectural details.
- Signage can employ colors and typefaces that are designed to complement the unique character of a storefront, or they can be used creatively to add visual interest without altering a building's primary architectural style. Creativity in color and style is always encouraged.
- Flat wall signs installed above storefronts should form a clearly articulated sign band and be integrated into the overall facade design. Other locations and types of signs could be appropriate depending on the building design and the business owner's interests. Signs with too much information can be confusing. Secondary information can be put on windows, doors or awning valances. Projecting signs, common in Lenoir's downtown, are encouraged when their scale and design complement the facade.

Awnings and Canopies

- Awnings and canopies add color and interest to building storefronts and facades and can be used to emphasize display windows and entrances. They also serve to protect pedestrians and display windows from the sun and rain and provide signage opportunities.
- Awnings and canopies consistent with local character and building type are encouraged.
- Awnings shall reflect the overall façade organization of a building. Awnings should be located within the building elements which frame storefronts.
- Important architectural details should not be concealed by awnings or canopies. Awnings shall not block transom windows.
- Awnings on a multiple-storefront building shall be consistent in character, scale, and location, but need not be identical. When a building contains multiple storefronts housing different businesses, the signs shall relate well to each other in terms of height, proportion, color, and background value. Maintaining uniformity among these characteristics reinforces the building's facade composition while still retaining each business's identity.
- Awning shapes should relate to the shape of the facade's architectural elements. The use of traditionally shaped awnings is encouraged, when appropriate. Creative or unusually-shaped awnings shall be designed with considerable care.
- Canvas and fire-resistant acrylic are preferred awning materials. The use of vinyl or plastic as awning materials is discouraged.

Doors and Entrances

- Primary entrances should be clearly marked and provide a sense of welcome and easy passage from exterior to interior. Whenever possible, they shall be located on the front of buildings.
- Side entrances should be located as close to the street front as possible.
- Recessed doorways are encouraged; they provide cover for pedestrians and customers in bad weather and help identify the location of store entrances. They also provide a clear area for out-swinging doors and offer the opportunity for interesting paving patterns, signage, and displays.
- By federal law, new store entrances must be accessible to the physically disabled. Renovation of existing entrances is encouraged.
- Loading and service entrances should be located on the side or rear of buildings, whenever possible. They should be screened from public ways and adjacent properties to the greatest extent possible.

Windows

- Whenever possible, a building's original window pattern should be retained. Avoid blocking, reducing the size, or changing the design of windows.
- Windows should be used to display products and services, and maximize visibility into storefronts.
- Commercial storefront windows traditionally tended to be large at the ground-floor level. During renovation or new construction, this approach is encouraged.
- If ceilings must be lowered below the height of storefront windows, provide an interior, full-height space immediately adjacent to the window before the drop in the ceiling. This lets more light into the storefront and allows the retention of larger windows.
- Retain or increase window transparency whenever possible. Replace reflective or dark tinted glass with clear glass. In general, dark glass alienates pedestrians from the business activity inside a storefront and reduces the impact of window displays.
- Avoid installing opaque panels, such as metal, wood, and/or other materials, to replace clear glass windows.
- Windows with multiple, small-paned windows should be avoided unless they are historically appropriate to the building style, or integrate well into the overall design.
- Do not use Plexiglas or other replacement materials instead of glass.
- Fix broken windows immediately. Broken or boarded windows negatively impact business and the district.

Exterior Lighting

- Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs, or other distinctive features rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself. Lighting that attracts

attention to itself, such as neon tubing surrounding display windows, should be avoided.

- In order to maintain an attractive image, exterior building lighting should be appropriate to the building's architectural style.
- Building lighting should provide an even illumination level.
- Avoid lights that glare onto streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties.
- Provide indirect lighting whenever possible.

Exterior Materials

- Facade design should be complementary to a building's original materials as well as to those of adjacent buildings.
- Terra cotta, brick, and stone convey permanence and should be used when architecturally appropriate.
- When using new brick, care should be taken to match the color and type of original brickwork.
- Use of decorative concrete block, applied false-brick veneer, vinyl or aluminum siding is not acceptable.
- Materials used near sidewalks and adjacent to building entrances should be highly durable and easily maintained while compatible with other exterior building materials.
- The surface cleaning of structures should be done by the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods, such as chemical washes, that will damage exterior building materials and features should not be undertaken.

Building Walls and Roofing

- The size and configuration of doors and windows should be in proportion to the overall building. Attention should be paid to window heights, glass types, and doors.
- In order to provide clear design intent, the number of exterior colors should be limited to three.
- Building elements, such as awnings, signs, doors, windows, and lighting fixtures, should complement each other.
- Blank walls, if visible from a public way, should be softened by incorporating elements such as signage, murals, art, lighting, pilasters, and the like.

Building Systems

- A building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems should be concealed completely from view from the street or sidewalk. If such equipment cannot be concealed, efforts shall be taken to minimize their visual impact on building facades. Rooftop equipment shall be hidden by a screening device so as not to be visible from the street and sidewalk.

- Avoid placing air-conditioning units in windows or any other openings facing onto the street. Units located in non-window openings are acceptable if they are flush with building walls. They should be screened with a decorative grill or any grill appropriate to the storefront design. Air-conditioning units should not drain onto pedestrians passing below.
- Downspouts and other drains should be piped underground and not allowed to drain in the sidewalk. They should be kept clear and well-maintained.

Trash Receptacles

- Trash placed outside the building should be in proper containers. Dumpsters should not be visible from the street or sidewalk. They should be located behind barriers that blend into the streetscape.