

STORE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Whether restoring a storefront or considering a more contemporary treatment, your plan should be based on a traditional storefront design. One characteristic of the traditional commercial façade is a well-defined frame for the storefront. Look at historic photographs of your building or of similar buildings to learn the original configuration of your storefront. The same basic arrangement will be equally appropriate whether constructed using traditional or modern materials.

DOORS, WINDOWS, AWNINGS, SIGNAGE & PAINT

Doors and windows help to define the architecture of the downtown area. The storefront with its large glass area opens the store to the street, inviting pedestrians to look and come inside. Most doors were wood frame with a large glass area to match the openness of the storefront as a whole.

Storefront Entry Doors

Storefront entry doors should present an attractive appearance and be visually appropriate for your storefront. Original doors should be retained if possible.

Awnings

The Sleepy Eye Economic Development Authority (EDA) has guidelines and programs for awnings. Suggested basic awning styles are wedge style awnings and waterfall style awnings. Suggested awning colors are burgundy, green, dark blue or others pre-approved by the EDA Board. Please check with the EDA for current information.

Rear and Side Entrance

In planning downtown improvements, the backs and sides of buildings should be considered for potential secondary business entrances.

Signage

Signage is an essential element in any commercial district. A business sign is important not only as an identifier, but equally significant as an expression of an image for the business. Do not underestimate the value of quality signage. A clear message, presented with style, will encourage passersby to venture in.

In Sleepy Eye, signs that are flat on exterior walls need no prior approval. Signs that are perpendicular to exterior walls need prior City Council approval. Consult the local EDA for further guidelines and grant programs.

Paint Colors

The City of Sleepy Eye strongly recommends that property owners regularly keep their buildings painted. There is no clear rule for paint colors in a stylistically mixed group of buildings like those in the downtown area, other than to avoid bright or unusual colors. Building owners may need to work with a design consultant to choose appropriate colors for their building.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

☐ **Original Detail:**

Architectural details should be retained on existing structures within the historic downtown. These features are crucial to the historic and architectural character of the building.

It is essential that architectural detailing be carefully maintained in order to ensure its long term survival

☐ **New Construction Details:**

New construction should mirror existing details or display contemporary details that harmonize with its neighbors. Modern artificial siding frequently covers cornices or window trim and involves the destruction of much architectural detail. This practice is not appropriate.

☐ **Added Elements:**

Necessities such as electric meters and boxes, condensing units, gas meters, solar panels, air conditioners, television antennae and satellite dishes are contemporary features. They can seriously impair the visual qualities of historic architecture if improperly located. All added elements should be located on the roof or to the rear of building and screened by appropriate plantings or fencing. Solar panels and television aerials should be situated as far out of public view as possible.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If your building will remain vacant while planning and preparation is in progress, we strongly recommend that you cover the windows facing Main Street with inexpensive curtains or install a simple window display. This dramatically improves the streetscape while you prepare for a renovation.

We strongly recommend not using your building for storage. If you must do so, cover the windows to block the view from the street. Also be aware that the Fire Marshall may inspect and require you to comply with the fire codes.

References:

Preservation Briefs are available on the National Park Service website. Preservation Briefs provide information on **preserving**, **rehabilitating**, and **restoring** historic buildings.

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>