

Facade Improvement Guidelines



For Knoxville's Early Commercial Districts

Architectural Provisions for Adaptive Reuse in the Scruffy City

By: Royal Starr / Master of Architecture Candidate / Spring 2017

Facade Improvement Guidelines

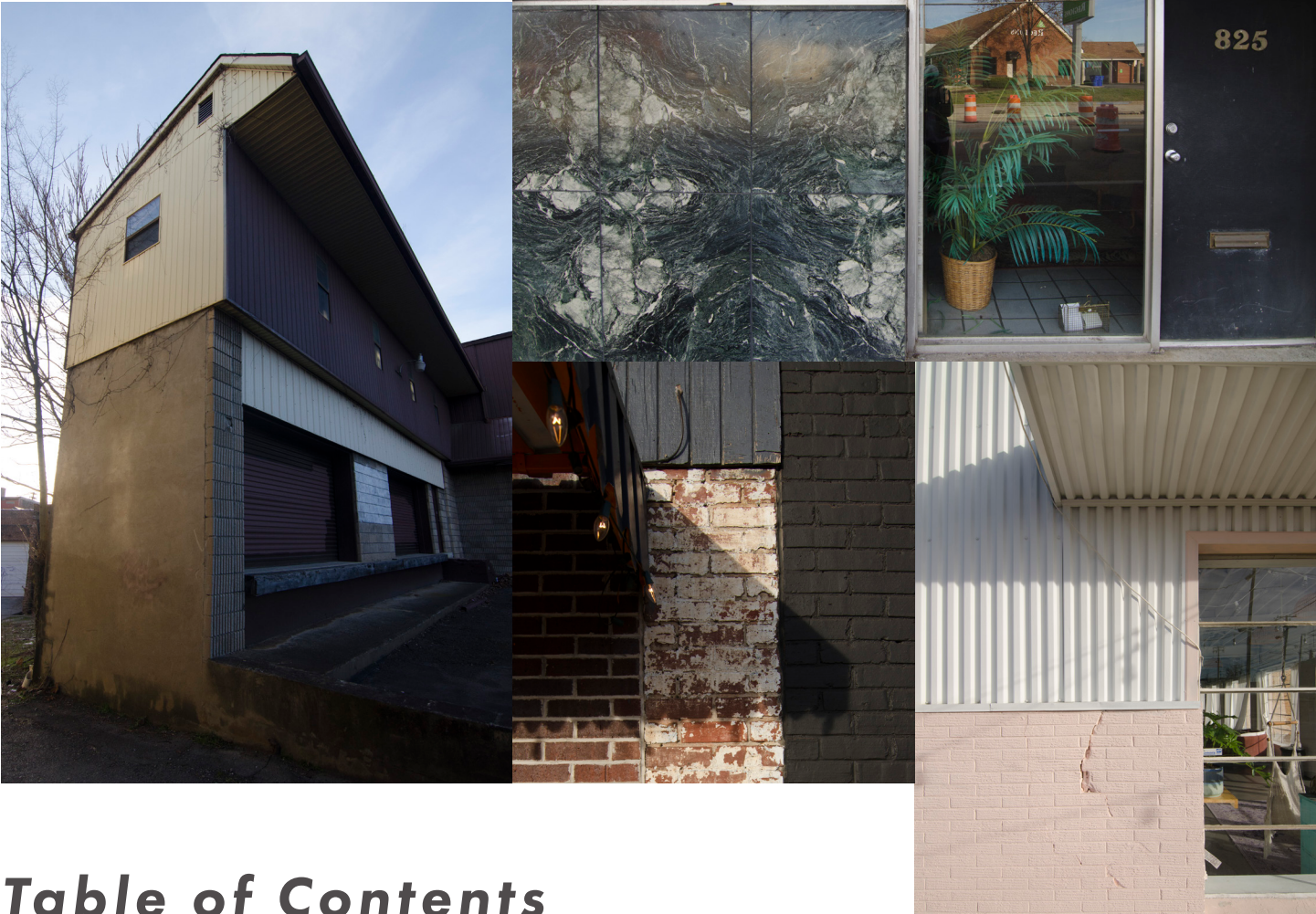


Table of Contents

Introduction.....pg. 3

Reference Materials.....pg. 7

1. Existing Conditions & Recommendations.....pg. 9

2. Guidelines for Shopping.....pg. 10

3. Guidelines for Windows.....pg. 11

4. Guidelines for Doorspg. 12

5. Guidelines for Signs.....pg. 13

6. Guidelines for Awnings.....pg. 14

7. Guidelines for Painting & Cleaning.....pg. 15

Introduction

Abstract: Design as a Layered Process

Adaptive architecture affords an amazing opportunity to embrace a lineage of unpredictable twists and turns, all potentially taking place within a singular building! Early commercial buildings, or multigenerational buildings, contain the unique potential to authentically represent multiple distinct eras of time if carefully yet critically preserved. In Knoxville, a well-designed facade is not the result of applying

a single style to building, but of a sensibility towards the time-driven layering of materials on a structure's outer surface. Therefore, property owners should be allowed to update their building's facade on the basis of utility as opposed to style or period specificity. This creates a natural opportunity for a city to demonstrate its complex architectural history through an uninhibited process of aesthetic stratification.

In addition to a new outlook on preservation, the revised edition of the Facade Design Guidelines aims to demonstrate a sense of process in the chosen images. Essentially, the notion of static and unchanging building is set aside in favor of a logic that promotes qualities of time, weathering & ownership in Knoxville's early works of commercial architecture.



Facade design as a layering process: decades worth of material, both formal & informal, have gathered to create complex authentic masterpieces.





Process

Applicants are subject to review before the Council for Scruffy Buildings. The council can approve, reject or ask that modifications be made to proposed designs. The council will make every effort to work with an applicant to create an appropriate design that meets the following guidelines.

General Information

For the purpose of the program, the facade is defined as the primary public or street side of the building in its entirety from the sidewalk or grade level to the uppermost portion of the roofline. Corner buildings are considered to have two facades. Facades may be composed of multiple storefronts, which should be recognized in any redesign.

Rules

For Participants should refer to current zoning requirements regarding yard, building setback and related provisions in developing their projects. Other considerations including the supplemental regulations covering signs, awnings and similar features. Zoning changes or variances may be warranted to achieve appropriate setbacks.

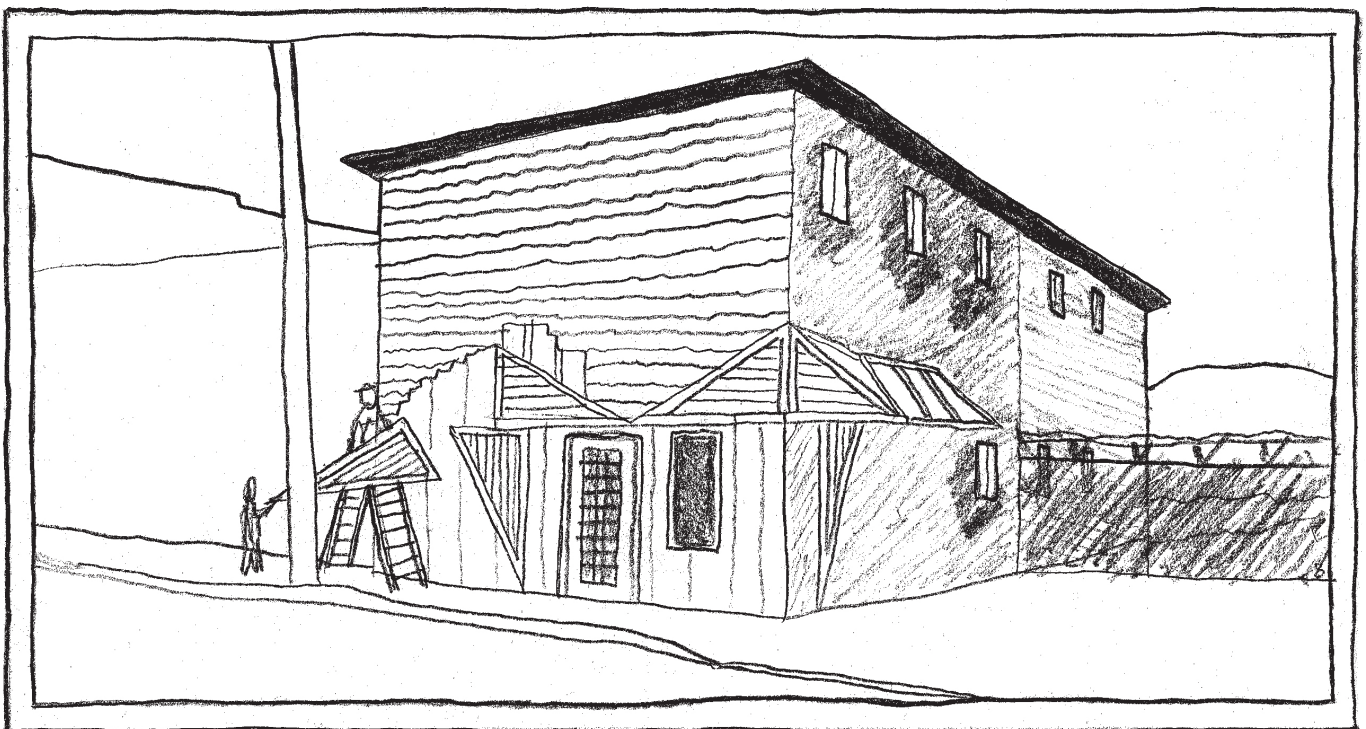
Eligibility

Examples of eligible work include:

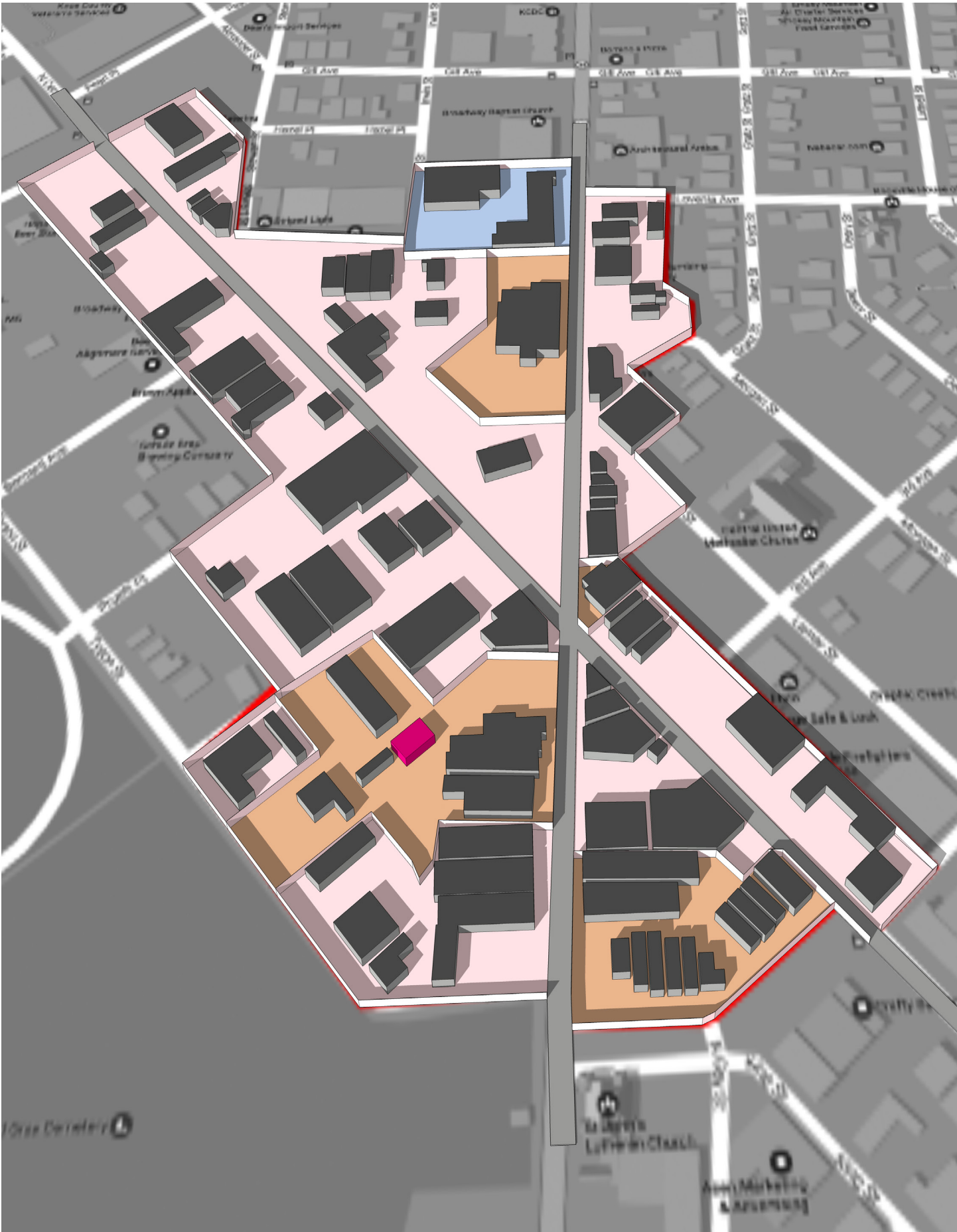
- Developing the outermost layer in a manner which alludes to the past appearance of the building.
- Replacing or repairing storefronts, doors, windows, parapets, and cornices as fit for use.
- Adding lighting and awnings fit for use.
- Painting as fit for current use.
- Installing or improving signage.

Examples of ineligible work include:

- Building entrances that do not relate strongly to the sidewalk.
- Interior improvements or roof repair, not visible from the street.
- Removal of architecturally important features
- Sidewalk repair.
- Repetition of the same design for buildings that are in a row.
- Interior repairs or construction.
- Landscaping or parking lots.
- Reuse projects where the final design scheme is so contemporary that any trace of historic quality has been erased.



These early commercial buildings have become great through their history of use as demonstrated through materiality

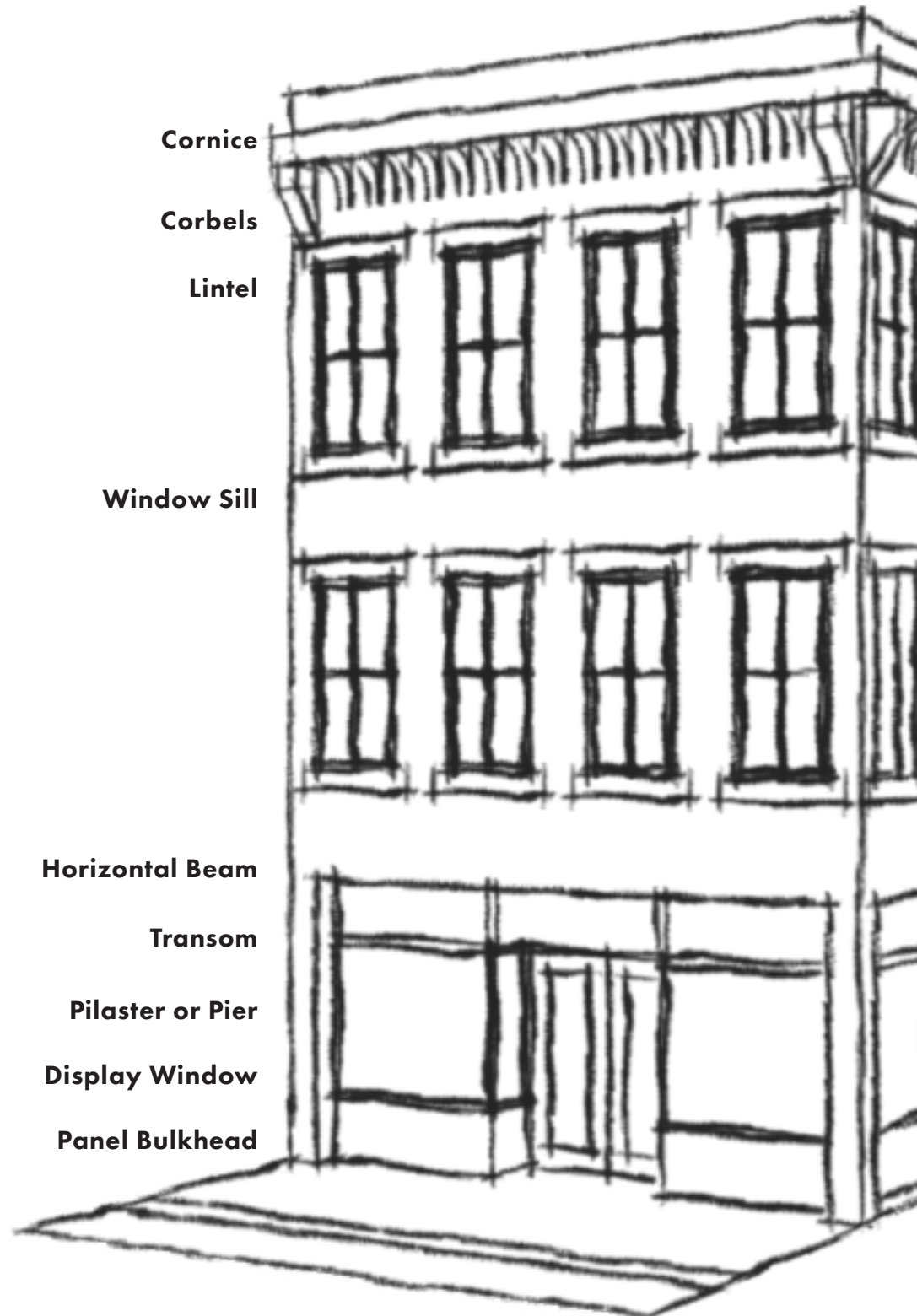


Broadway - Central Facade Program Boundary

Reference Materials:

Facade Elements

Although this illustration is of a Victorian style building, most of these facade elements are typically found on the buildings of Knoxville's early commercial districts. Articulating basic composition and the general identity of these elements can help dictate what a visually balanced facade can look like. Ultimately, facades of this area should be composed in a manner that best reflects the nature of its interior program.



Cornice

The traditional building cornice decorates the top of the building and may be made of metal, brick, wood or other materials. Some cornices project from the building while an ornamental band delineates others. The top of the wall may have a patterned brick band or a coping of brick concrete or metal, severed to visually cap the building, completing its appearance.

Upper Facade

The upper facade is characterized by regularly spaced window openings that repeat on each floor. The size, type and decoration of these windows may vary, but they are usually the same in each floor. Other facade details may also be present on the upper level facades such as corbelling, brick banding, or decorative panels.

Storefront

The first floor of a traditional storefront is composed of large display windows and framed by vertical structural piers and a horizontal supporting beam, leaving a void where the storefront elements fit. The storefront elements consist of an entrance (often recessed), display windows, a bulkhead, transom windows over the storefront and a cornice which covers the horizontal supporting beam.

Important Parts of Individual Storefronts

Most of the commercial buildings found in this area can be distilled down to general storefront elements

Frame -----
Awning -----
Sign -----
Valance -----
Window Signs -----
Display Windows -----
Window Sil -----
Bulkhead -----
Stoop -----



The following elements are encouraged in the context of a comprehensive facade renovation:

- Window replacement and window framing visible from the street.
- Repainting of building aligned with the intent of improving color composition.
- Signs which are attractively integrated into the architecture of the building including the window area, doorway and awning or canopy.
- Additions which clearly reveal the complex nature of a building's material history.
- Infill construction compatible with, but not duplicating, the historic architecture of the area.
- New storefront construction within an existing building.
- Awnings or canopies (cloth or fabric).
- Building facades that innacurately reflect the purpose of their interior space.
- Projects approved by the Design Committee as layer-oriented-design.



The four brightly colored storefronts on Broadway are unique yet harmonious with one another

1. Existing Conditions & Recommendations:

Over time various changes have been made to the buildings in the areas where these facade guidelines are proposed. Most of the changes cover or the original architecture in a kind of magnetic and idiosyncratic way. Embracing the often conflicting material palettes of multi-generational buildings is only in opposition to a purist mentality and devotion to boilerplate style. Therefore, these guidelines serve as a framework for avoiding the pitfalls of predictably stylised buildings, which absolutely have their place outside of this district.

Storefronts

The storefront is the most important architectural feature of historic commercial buildings. An alluring storefront is the greatest asset of a building in terms of attracting business.

Basic storefront design principles are:

1. Windows should be a use driven part of the building's overall design.
2. Materials that cover the original facade should be removed only in part, retaining layers of history is a very important visual factor.
3. Bulkheads, the sign board, door and window frames are not the only features that should be solids in the facade. Windows and doors could be transparent or translucent.
4. A durable base or bulkhead should be constructed below windows at the grade line.
5. Recessed doors are appropriate in most rehabilitation work.
6. Allow for additions to remain in contrast to existing components of the facade, embracing dissonance for the sake of fostering character.



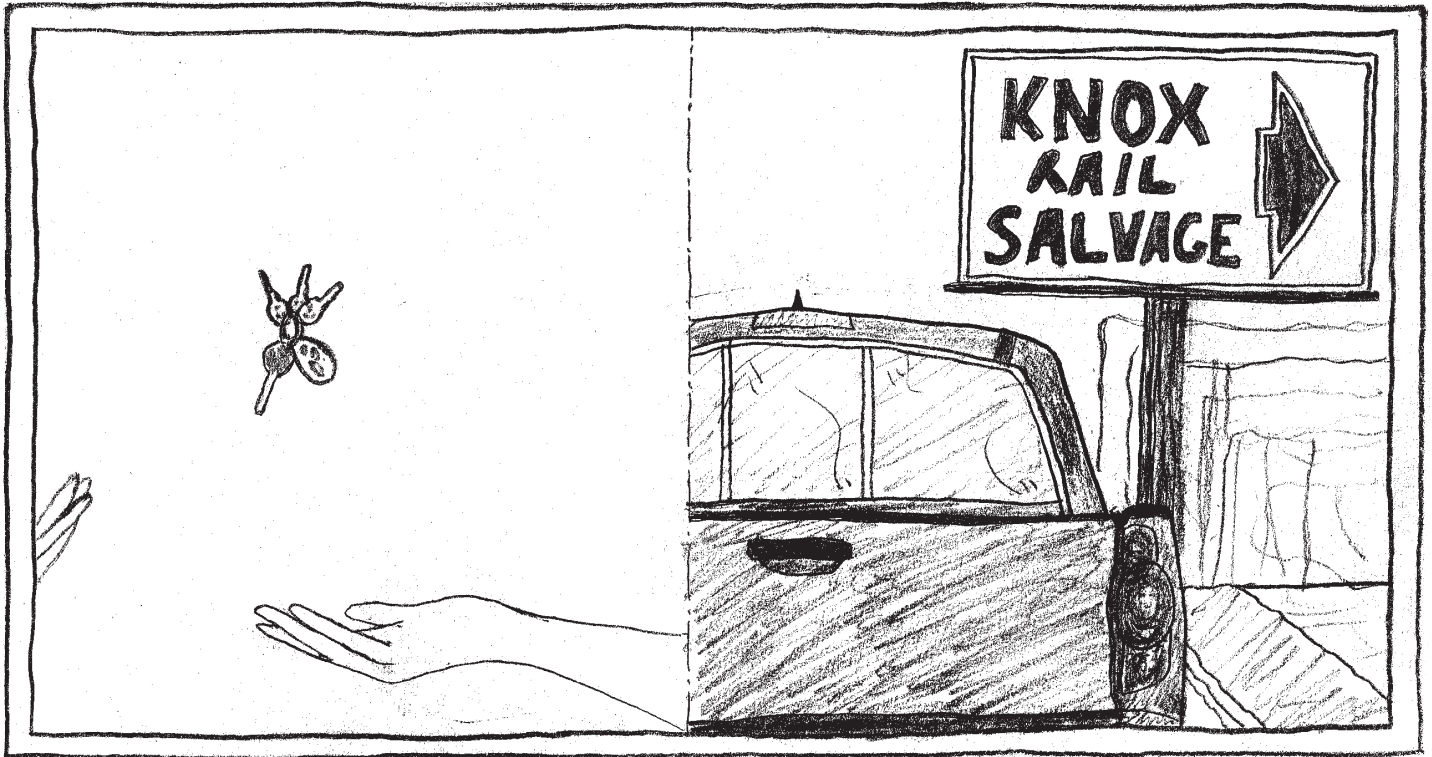
Existing storefront has a patina, yet is devoid of use



The Hive incorporates a playful adaptation of color

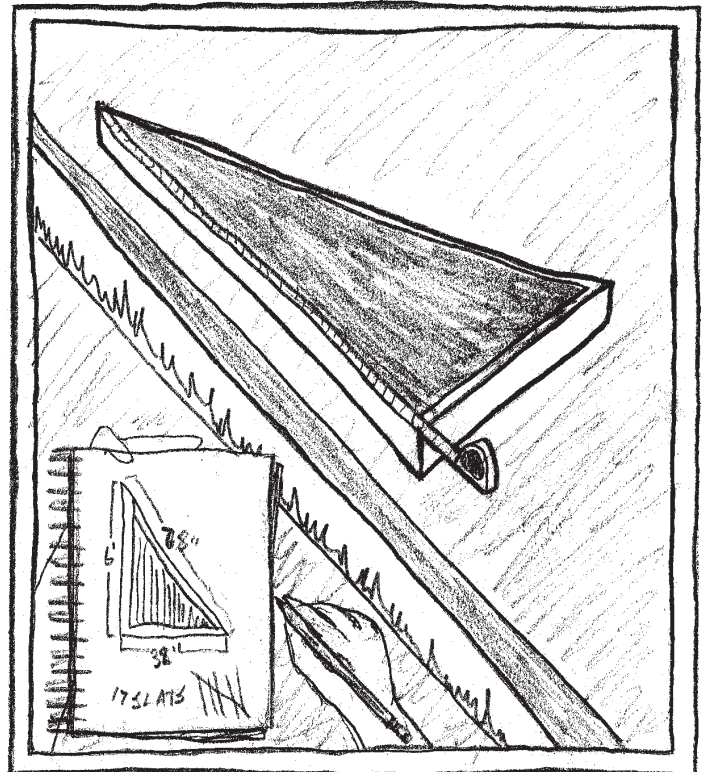
2. Guidelines for Shopping:

Scruffy modification is rooted in qualities of reuse, which should expand beyond the notion of the building alone as a sustainably recycled object. Scruffy shoppers should make liberal use of second-hand resources when modifying buildings, promoting qualities of frugality and resourcefulness that make Knoxville unique.



Basic shopping principles are:

1. Facade elements should be sourced from second hand retailers as often as possible. This includes but is not limited to Salvage Yards, Thrift Stores, Craigslist Transactions & Curbside Finds. Projects that incorporate a large number of secondhand building components are more likely to be approved by the Council for Scruffy Buildings.
2. Successful projects are improvisational in nature, take field measurements of found objects to model and later incorporate into the design as fit.
3. Projects approved by the Council do not shy away from building with a tolerance for loose fit. This demonstrates the flexibility of a project which is ultimately desirable.
4. Please refer to the attached pamphlet entitled "How to Modify Your Scruffy Building" for an extended illustration of the design & shopping process.



Scruffy buildings are shaped by the places like salvage yards, where their unique components are purchased

3. Guidelines for Windows:

Ground Floor Windows

Existing Condition:



- The eclectic composition of this storefront is provocative, however wood does not make a good window for obvious reasons.

Recommended Solutions:



1. Paint and other translucent materials can be applied to windows as a means to establishing provocative contrast within the facade.
2. Irregularity and eclecticism should be used when appropriate, such as the brightly choreographed windows of this Caribbean bar.
3. Accenture can take the form of subtlety as well as novelty, which both have a place in juxtaposing styles of architecture within a singular building.

Upper Story Windows

Existing Condition:



- The unique upper story windows are near irreplaceable, attempting to recreate their sense of character and patina would be futile.

Recommended Solutions:



4. Aesthetically complementary, yet periodically contrasting windows have been added to the upper facade, which is a necessity for many adaptive reuse projects
5. Emulating period specific windows as a means to a historically replicated facade is inherently problematic, for this leaves little room for designers to add contemporary visual layers to these longstanding buildings.

4. Guidelines for Doors:

Existing Condition:



Plywood Prohibits Desirable Transparency of Door

Many of the door openings have been filled or have had their original doors replaced by ones which have no transparency. Business owners should strive to improve connectivity between interior and exterior spaces of their building by way of transparency. Therefore, considering a window for the front door is a worthwhile endeavor.

1. Front doors should be clearly visible from the sidewalk and accentuated by color contrast to the primary color of the facade. Consider painting the front door in an effort to clearly articulate a welcoming public entrance while demonstrating the personality of the business.
2. Doors do not have to be true to the original style of the building, but should provide an interesting contrast to the existing facade as a prerequisite for architectural modification. Consider utilizing many styles of doors if screening is a concern.

Recommended Solutions:



3. Accentuating doors and windows with contrasting color is a great way to improve the clarity of a visitor's architectural experience.



The blue accenture of features has broken beige monotony

5. Guidelines for Signs:

The primary purpose of a sign is to communicate valuable information to the public about what happens inside of a building. The signs of Knoxville's early commercial buildings should be charismatically constructed to draw a pedestrian's attention to the novelties of a structure's current use. Interior / Exterior relationships in architecture can begin to be implied by the style of sign carefully chosen by the occupants.



Remnants of dated signs can supply character to facades

Acceptable designs include:

1. Signs that become significant architectural details.
2. Flat wall signs for commercial buildings that can be located above the storefront, generally on flat unadorned surfaces of the facade
3. Locations within the frieze of a cornice, on a previously covered transom or on the pier that frames display windows
4. Projecting signs (shingle signs)
5. One wall sign per side on facade (although smaller projecting signs, window signs and canopy lettered signs are encouraged)
6. Wall signs that are painted directly on the surface of masonry walls (if the wall has been previously painted)



Remnants of dated signs can supply character to facades

7. Colors that augment the materials and color schemes of the building, including accent and trim colors
8. Both external and internal lighting for signs is allowed, upon the approval of the Design Committee.
9. Sign size that is in direct correlation to the business inside of the building.
10. Signs that are oriented to a pedestrian scale.



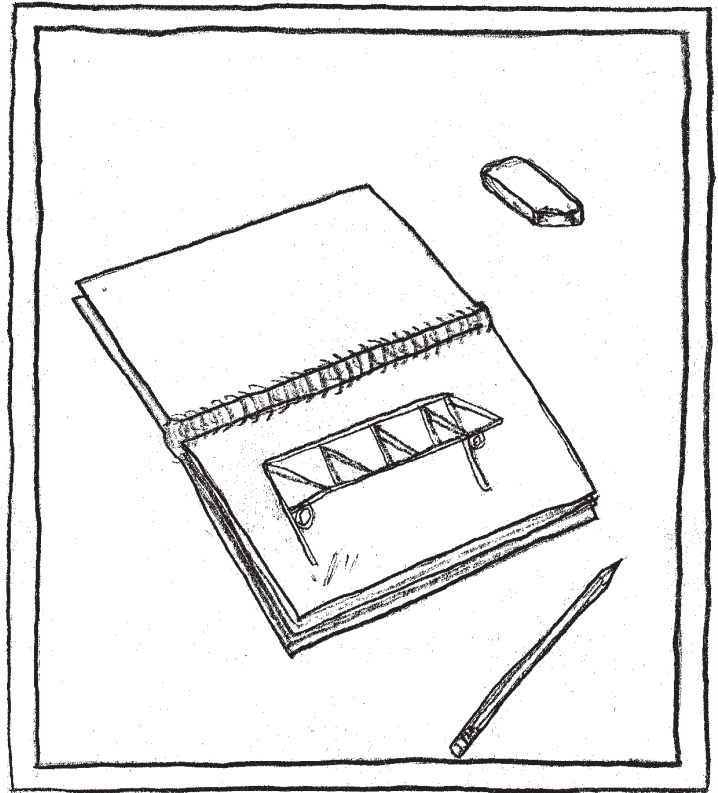
Remnants of dated signs can supply character to facades

6. Guidelines for Awnings:

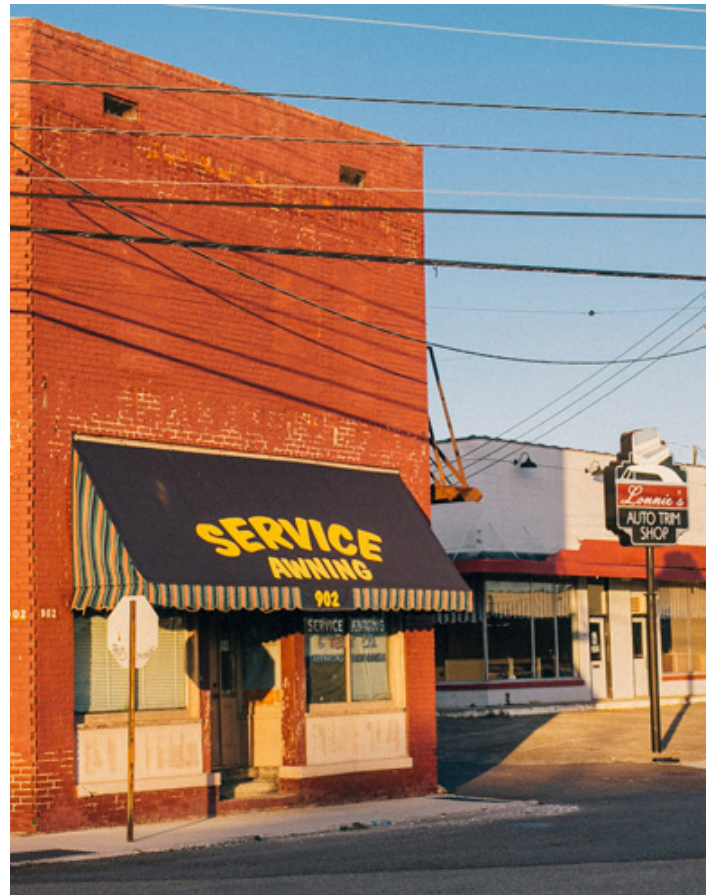
Awnings can contribute to the overall image of the area by providing continuity for an entire block, helping to highlight specific buildings and covering any unattractively modeled transom areas above storefronts. Awnings can distinguish a building from its neighbors in subtle, yet distinct ways.

Awnings have the potential to visually stimulate contrast as accute members in the composition of a proper facade. Color scheme and materiality should first and foremost be a reflection of a building's use and current purpose, with respect to patina. Concerns of context should be handled with a consideration of how a building performs in relation to its neighbors, given its current use and program. A modest sense of scale is important as to not overwhelm pedestrians, keep in mind that awnings are not the only expressive design element in a building's facade.

1. A coordinated color scheme is desirable in many circumstances, but is often misunderstood as something which charges a building to be homogeneously assimilated into the likeness of its neighbors. Complex patterns and bright colors can be used in circumstances where an eccentric color palette is carefully constructed.
2. The appropriation of building elements not commonly known to act as awnings is a favored approach by the Council for Scruffy Buildings.
3. Awning signage can play an important role in illustrating the current use of a building to the public. Therefore, if the occupants of a structure believe in the use of handiwork and irregularity as a reflection of their values, they should be able to paint their own sign. Professionally applied signage is equally as desirable as the DIY alternative and should be used as a reflection of an occupant's aesthetic if appropriate.
4. Frugality is the most important factor in determining the aesthetic value of an awning or canopy modification to a building.



The reuse of discarded awnings is encouraged



Colorful awnings can reveal a building's current use

7. Guidelines for Painting & Cleaning:

Knoxville's early commercial buildings are wonderful indeed, but they are not perfect or even saintly in regards to pure preservation. There are few things in the world that are actually worth an attempt to halt natural change.

Therefore, designers and patrons of design in Knoxville should by all means embrace the messy, layered & scruffy qualities of its urban fabric. Our city did not receive its brand as a compliment, yet decades later, the term scruffy is now quite endearing. Similarly, an embrace of facade design as a process of layering and tactful preservation may not seem pleasant or even right at this point, but this is surely the next step towards authenticity.

Acceptable methods and principles follow:

1. Color choice is left to the discretion of the building owner and designer, although color schemes will be reviewed by the Council for Scruffy Buildings in the context of the entire project.
2. Color schemes should be aesthetically rooted in the driving culture behind a building's current use. A bright or complex color pattern may accentuate elements of novelty as a result of a unique building/owner relationship.
3. Brick may be cleaned as long as the cleaning job is left incomplete, or if the owner intends to partially paint it afterwards. Cleaning brick for the sake of visual sterility can remove decades worth of hard-earned grit. This cannot be replicated by artificial means, therefore, one must realize the architectural value of dirtiness.
4. Older masonry buildings are often painted to mask problem areas, such as mismatched masonry, or to solve a water absorption problem. Unless it is necessary to complete masonry repairs, it is recommended that brick buildings that have historically been painted should be stripped of some amount of paint to differentiate between the front facing facade and other sides of the building.

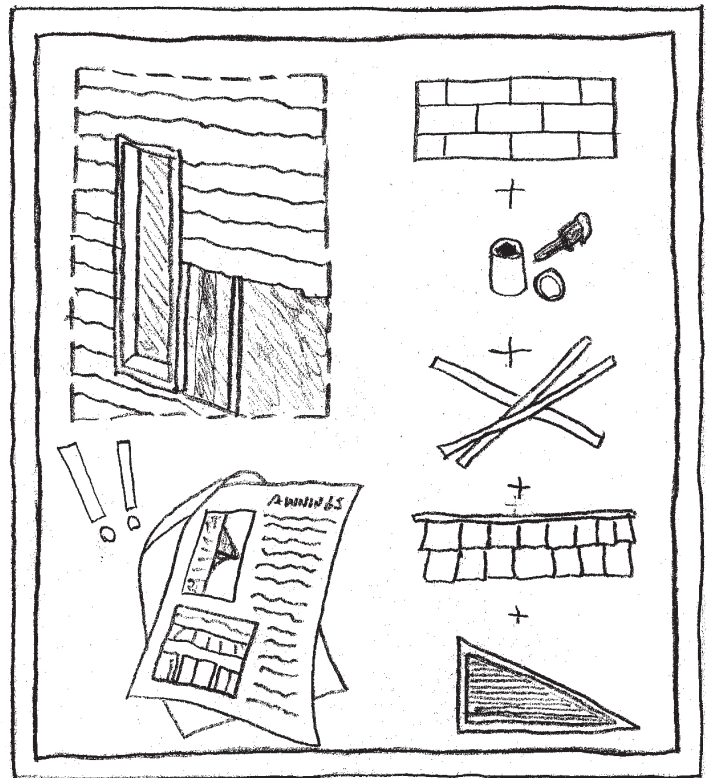


Illustration depicts a layered vignette of a building



This two-colored corner makes the building candid