

Downtown Grimsby

Design Guidelines



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Downtown Grimsby Community Improvement Plan

The Grimsby Downtown Improvement Area and the Town of Grimsby, together with other community groups, initiated a Community Improvement Plan (“CIP”) for Downtown Grimsby in December 2008. A CIP is a planning document that provides a guiding framework for re-development and improvements within a defined area. A CIP allows a municipality to acquire, rehabilitate and dispose of land; provide grants and loans to owners and tenants; and undertake infrastructure and public space improvement. The need for a CIP originated from a comprehensive review of conditions in Downtown Grimsby and the preparation of the *“Blueprint for Action”*, a comprehensive action plan that outlined and prioritized a series of projects for the revitalization of Downtown Grimsby.

This “Downtown Master Plan” produced as part of the Downtown Grimsby CIP process, a background report to the CIP, provides the overall design strategy for improvement to Downtown Grimsby. It outlines the recommended design treatment for a number of elements within the downtown area, including buildings, streetscapes, utilities, parking, gateway features, signage, and heritage assets, among others. As part of the Downtown Master Plan, a comprehensive set of design guidelines were developed (see Section 6.0 of that document) to provide guidance to property owners, business owners and developers when designing and developing new buildings or making improvements to the facades of buildings. *This document, the “Downtown Grimsby Design Guidelines” is a stand-alone excerpt from Section 6.0 of the Downtown Master Plan.*

Why Design Guidelines?

Downtown Grimsby is characteristic of a small town Ontario “main street”. Main Street between Christie Street and Elm Street from a visual and aesthetic perspective is the focus of Downtown Grimsby. This traditional core block primarily defines Downtown Grimsby and is generally recognized most by the community as what is Downtown Grimsby. Buildings are generally multiple storeys (largely two stories) in height and frame the streetscape to create a comfortable pedestrian space. The architecture of the traditional core is mixed in terms of style, with brick a common material throughout the block particularly on some of the more



notable buildings. There are a large number of buildings in the traditional core area that are listed on the Town's heritage inventory as being noteworthy of conservation.

However, more recent additions to Downtown Grimsby outside of the traditional core have been of a contemporary design and appearance and generally lack the strong pedestrian feel expected from a small town main street. Buildings are predominately single storey in height, generally setback further from the street with off-street parking areas separating buildings from the street, and façades feature more modern materials and treatments. This strip form of development along the Downtown's principal streets has significant effects on the pedestrian nature and feel of the streetscape as one leaves the traditional core.

As part of the CIP process, two particular existing conditions related to the physical form of buildings within Downtown Grimsby were identified as weaknesses or threats to the improvement of the area. First, the general condition of the façades and business signage on existing buildings within Downtown Grimsby was identified as being worn and dated, generally giving a "tired" impression to visitors. Second, more recent developments and additions to Downtown Grimsby were identified as unsympathetic or not in keeping with the historic main street character of the area. These two conditions were the principal reason for the preparation of Design Guidelines.

What do the Design Guidelines contain?

The Design Guidelines provide specific guidance to the design and development of projects within Downtown Grimsby, from both the public and private sector. The design guidelines express the expectations during the development review process and are intended to facilitate high quality urban design within Downtown Grimsby. They provide "mid-level" guidance for design, operating between the general policies and principles of the Town of Grimsby Official Plan and the specific details and plans of the development review process, including Site Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment applications.

The Design Guidelines provide guidance on four principal components, as follows:

- Building form: guidelines for the scale and positioning of buildings on a property;
- Façades: guidelines for the elements and features that comprise the front façade of the exterior of a building;
- Site Planning: guidelines for the organization and function of all elements on a property; and
- Façade Improvements: guidelines for the improvements that are made to an existing building façade



Who should use these Design Guidelines?

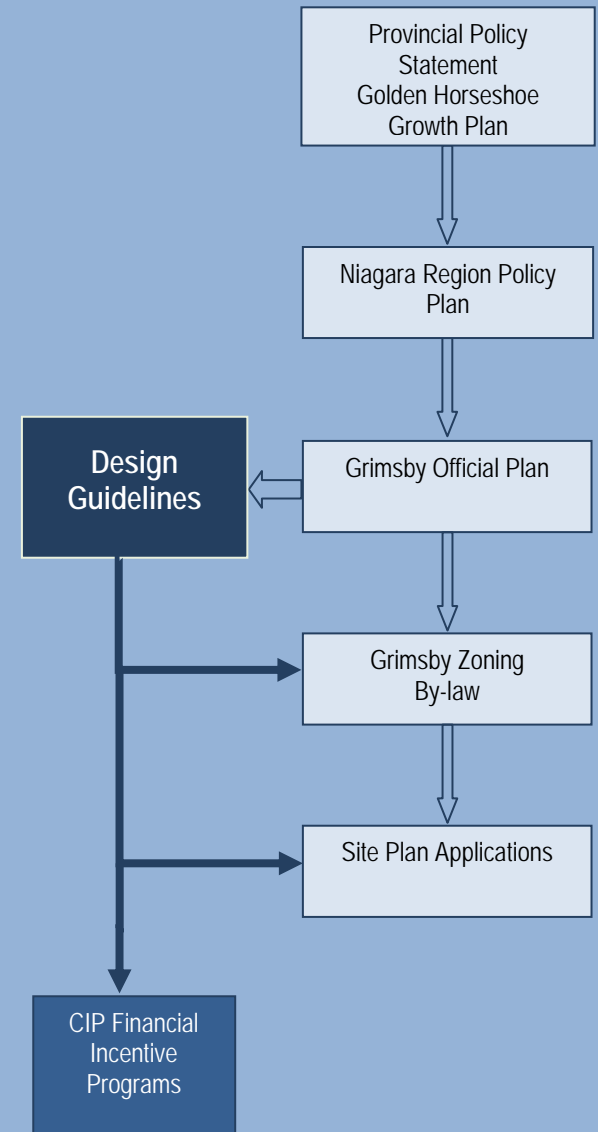
The Design Guidelines are intended be used by a number of different participants in the design and development process, including:

- a) The Town of Grimsby in reviewing planning applications and when designing municipal works projects;
- b) The Region of Niagara when designing municipal works projects and streetscape improvements/redevelopment;
- c) Developers and consultants in designing new development and redevelopment;
- d) Landowners and business owners in undertaking site and building improvements; and
- e) The Grimsby DIA in promoting development and encouraging high quality design in Downtown Grimsby.

How to use these Design Guidelines?

The Design Guidelines are meant to be a design tool that implements the vision and policies of the Town of Grimsby Official Plan and the Downtown Master Plan. They are intended to be a flexible and comprehensive guide for the design and development of new buildings and façade improvements in Downtown Grimsby. They are to be applied at the Zoning By-law and Site Plan Control phases of the development process, and also through the application of CIP financial incentives programs, should they be offered.

The Design Guidelines are not written as policy, and are not meant to be a “checklist” for the design of new developments and façade improvements. Rather, the design guidelines have been written with the understanding that the guidance offered is to be used on a case-by-case basis, recognizing that context and different situations will affect how the guidelines are relevant and how they will be applied. There is flexibility in the interpretation and application of the guidelines, provided it is keeping with the spirit of the overarching design vision and principles established in Section 3.0 of the Downtown Master Plan.



2.0 Building Form

Description

The built form within Downtown Grimsby contains a variety of commercial, institutional, office and residential uses, primarily contained within one or two storey buildings. Many buildings are of a traditional “main street” style, primarily within the Core District, which provides a clear historic character for Downtown Grimsby. Given this, the Core District provides the design cue for new development within Downtown Grimsby, in respect to character and style; scale and proportions; and orientation and siting.

Although the built form is discontinuous in both scale and setbacks, there are a number of opportunities for infill that can help strengthen the urban form within Downtown Grimsby. By developing these vacant lots and reducing the gaps along the street edge, a more consistent built form can be achieved, enhancing the pedestrian experience. It is appropriate that any redevelopment or infill projects be of the highest quality of design to ensure they are appropriate and contribute to the historic, main street character and identity of Downtown Grimsby.

Objectives

Objectives for the building form guidelines are:

1. A low-rise profile form of development characteristic of a main street environment;
2. A consistent building-to-street edge throughout the downtown;
3. Creation of a continuous building façade wall that frames the street and facilitates a strong pedestrian environment;
4. New buildings that match the scale and massing of the historic main street environment; and
5. Additions to existing buildings that complement the heritage character of the area.

Character and Style

The Core District is, and should remain, the architectural and built form focus of Downtown Grimsby given its history. Considering this, new developments and façade improvements throughout Downtown Grimsby should complement the prominence of the Core District's buildings, either through mimicking the heritage stock or contrasting the heritage stock with contemporary styles to allow them to stand out.

Guidelines:

- a) Use building styles for new buildings that reflect the historic character and theme of Downtown Grimsby and are a "main street" type with commercial or similarly active uses on the ground floor.
- b) Provide additional design emphasis for buildings located at street intersections, gateways or terminating views along visual corridors through façade treatments, architectural elements and materials appropriate for these locations.



Scale and Proportions

The Core District contains a tight building-to-building distance across Main Street as buildings are sited close to the street edge in order to “frame” the pedestrian environment. Such an urban type of environment should be maintained and encouraged in new development in Downtown Grimsby.

Guidelines:

- a) For infill development or additions to buildings within the Core District, align architectural elements with those of the adjacent building to ensure visual continuity.
- b) Clearly define the three façade zones on new buildings and additions to existing buildings through the use of horizontal elements such as sign bands, cornices, and projections.
- c) Design building widths to generally be between 7.5 and 15.0 metres.
- d) For new buildings wider than 15.0 metres, include a symmetrical and balanced pattern of bays, defined by vertical elements, to emphasize the individual units of the buildings.
- e) Delineate bays with vertical elements, such as changes in materials, building projections, columns, or other vertical architectural elements.
- f) For existing buildings in the heritage block, improve any building façades that are wider than 15.0 metres by dividing the larger façade through a symmetrical pattern of bays to emphasize the individual units of the building or divide a large single store’s façade.
- g) Design and situate new buildings to maximize the building frontage along the street, preferably 100% from side property line to side property, not including any frontage required for pedestrian connections or vehicle access points.
- h) For infill development or additions to existing buildings within the heritage block, design the height to be no greater than one storey higher than the height of the tallest immediately adjacent building.
- i) For corner sites within the Core District, design building up to four storeys to punctuate and heighten these prominent locations.
- j) For development within the remainder of Downtown Grimsby, design buildings with a minimum height of two storeys and a maximum height of four storeys.
- k) Consider the use of stepping for upper storeys from the front building line for upper floors that may create undue shadowing impacts on the streetscape.
- l) For corner buildings located at street intersections, locate the tallest portion of the building along the street frontage to punctuate the street corner.
- m) Design the building with taller first floors (at least 4 metres) while still maintaining pedestrian scale.



Orientation and Siting

The Core District contains a tight building-to-building distance across Main Street as buildings are sited close to the street edge in order to “frame” the pedestrian environment. Such an urban type of environment should be maintained and encouraged in new development throughout Downtown Grimsby.

Guidelines:

- a) Orient all buildings parallel to the street right-of-way so that they frame and animate the street and strengthen the street edge’s definition.
- b) For corner sites, buildings can be angled at their corners facing the intersection provided an entrance is located at those corners.
- c) Site buildings as close to possible as the front property edge, ideally with a 0 metre setback, but no greater than 3.0 metres. Arcades or colonnades are not desirable.
- d) Within the Core District, setback new buildings and changes to existing buildings to align with the established setback of the immediately adjacent buildings.
- e) Use deeper setbacks for increased pedestrian access or active outdoor use, such as a courtyard at-grade or patio space accessible from the inside of the building.
- f) Use any setback space between the street right-of-way edge (0 metre) and the building front (3.0 metres) for landscaped areas, amenity areas, seating opportunities, or display areas.



3.0 Façades

Description

Articulated and visually interesting commercial façades contribute significantly to the creation of a comfortable pedestrian environment in a downtown and heighten the overall quality of the experience for visitors. Downtown Grimsby, however, currently has an assortment of façade styles and treatment, which is generally distinguished between the character and form of buildings within the heritage block and the newer conventional buildings surrounding the heritage block.

The Core District in Downtown Grimsby provides the façade design cues for new development and infill development throughout the area. This heritage block establishes a relatively consistent pattern of building façade proportions, scale and rhythm. The facades of these commercial buildings are characteristic of the late 19th century and early 20th century, and are generally comprised of three basic façade sections or zones: (a) the “storefront zone”, (b) the “upper façade zone”, and (c) the “roofline zone”.

(a) Storefront Zone

The storefront zone relates to the ground floor of the commercial building. The storefront contains the principal building entrance, the shop display windows, and signage elements of the commercial façade. The design of the storefront zone is important given it is the zone that most interacts with the pedestrian.

(b) Upper Façade Zone

The upper façade zone contains the portion of the façade above the storefront and below the roofline. The upper floor façade for taller buildings typically contains the largest area of the overall façade. Containing upper storey windows, the upper façade zone can contain a variety of horizontal and vertical architectural elements.

(c) Roofline Zone

The roofline zone is located above the upper façade and is the smallest component of the façade in terms of area. The roofline plays an important role of “capping” the building façade. Principally the roofline contains horizontal elements such as cornice or banding treatments.



Objectives

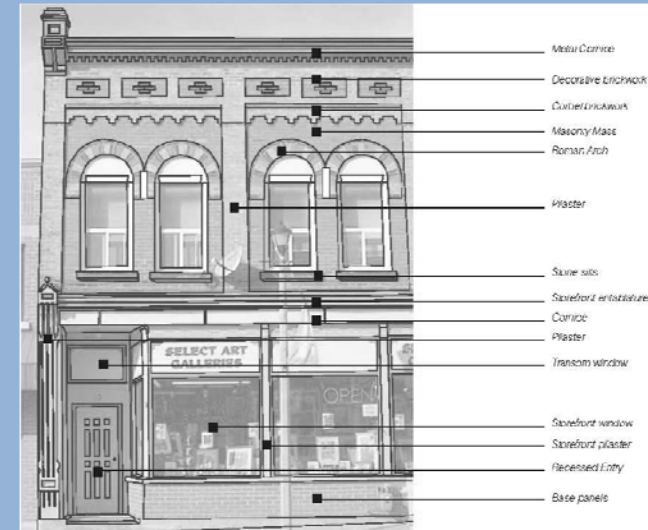
The overall goal for façades within Downtown Grimsby is to enhance, and restore where necessary, the fine-grained, pedestrian-scaled façades of the Core District while ensuring that new construction in the surrounding Districts is complementary to the character of the heritage block. In this regard, complementary does not mean new buildings are to replicate a particular existing building or style, but instead are follow the general façade scale and proportions while allowing creativity for the details such as materials, colours and specific details.

The general objectives for the façade treatment guidelines are:

1. Improved facades for the Core District with retained and restored architectural features;
2. Articulated and visually interesting façades for new buildings;
3. New building façades that complement rather than replicate the heritage main street environment;
4. All buildings, new and existing, to respect the proportions and scale of heritage buildings in the area;
5. Building façades that contribute to creating an attractive, pedestrian-oriented streetscape; and
6. Façades throughout the area that collectively work together to define the entire downtown as a character area.

Generally there are number of key architectural principles for the composition of a façade for a building within a traditional main street. These principles are:

1. Proportion: the ratio and relationship between the length and width of a façade.
2. Rhythm: the qualities that tie the façade into the whole.
3. Scale: the elements that create a human-scaled form.
4. Balance: the arrangement of elements to create unity and individuality.



(Source: Regional Municipality of Niagara Model Urban Design Guidelines, Brook McIlroy Inc.)



Materials

Historically, a limited number of building materials was used in Downtown Grimsby. Red pressed brick traditionally, and remains, the predominant material throughout the Core District, although local stone was also common. The emphasis is the continuation of this practice for additions within the heritage block. For new developments brick, stone and mortar is also the preference, although the range of materials is more varied including more modern and contemporary materials. The desire is that new developments and the use of materials will not compete visually with the character of the Core District and not overshadow the downtown as a whole.

Guidelines:

- a) Use materials that are of high quality, durable, and easily maintainable.
- b) Ensure façade materials are complementary to one another and appropriate for the architectural style of the building.
- c) Limit the number of building façade materials, not including windows and door materials, generally to no more than 3 materials.
- d) For the side and rear elevations that are publicly visible, design in a similar fashion to the front elevation in terms of material use and treatment in relation to façade proportions and horizontal and vertical divisions.
- e) For new developments within the Core District, use traditional materials that are natural and local, preferably pressed brick but also natural rock/stone is acceptable.
- f) For new developments outside of the Core District, use base materials such as pressed brick; natural, local rock and stones; concrete, either poured or block; or plaster or stucco.
- g) Use other materials on the façade only as accent materials to complement the base materials, which may include finished and painted wood trim, copper, or steel.
- h) Throughout the downtown, do not use the following as a base material: materials that mimic other materials ("faux" materials); aluminum, sheet metal, or other siding systems; non-local stone materials (i.e. marble, granite); or textured stucco.
- i) When multiple building materials are used, make a change in material at the point of a recession/projection along the façade, on the inside corners of the recession/project. Along a single, flat building wall, define the change in materials with a pronounced expansion joint.
- j) If using bricks, ensure they are unglazed, earth tone in colour, and in a horizontal orientation. Mortar any brick and stone veneer and wrap around corners to give an appearance of structural function to minimize a "veneer" appearance.

Colour

Colour is a prominent visual element of a building's façade, and is an important component of how a building and its façade fits into a downtown as a whole. Traditionally, colour is used to highlight interesting architectural features. While façade colours are largely determined by personal preferences, consideration needs to be given to avoiding "overcolouring": a building's architectural features, building signage, and overall character of the area needs to stand out, not solely the building colour.

Guidelines:

- a) Use colours that are muted and soft, as compared to bold and bright. If used, such colours should only be used as accent colors on façade elements, such as window and door frames, building trim, sign bands and lettering, and other details.
- b) Limit base colours to no more than two, preferably for defining the vertical distinctions of the building (i.e. storefront versus upper storeys) if using more than one colour.
- c) Limit accent colours to two or three, selected to complement the base colours of the façade.
- d) When painting base materials, such as brick, if necessary, use a matte finish for paint.





Storefront Elements

The storefront is the principal area of a façade that a pedestrian experiences along the street. In traditional development along main streets, the storefront performs a number of functions: it provides an area for display space and encouraging “window shopping”; it allows natural light into shops; and it allows visual communication between the interior of shops and the street. The intent for storefronts in Downtown Grimsby is to assist in creating a visually interesting, vibrant and lively streetscape that is comfortable for retail activities.

Guidelines:

- a) Design façades with a combination of traditional “main street” storefront elements, including display windows; window bases or “kickplates”; transom windows; and storefront cornices.
- b) Ensure the design and location of storefront elements, including entrance doors, storefront windows, signage, and stairs/ramps, are consistent with barrier-free accessibility standards (see Facility Accessibility Design Standards from the City of London for reference).
- c) Ensure at least 70 percent of the storefront zone is transparent surfaces, either storefront windows or doors, using opaque glass to provide clear views to and from the street and allow natural surveillance opportunities.
- d) Do not use mirror, tinted or spandrel glass for any storefront windows or doors.
- e) Ensure that vertical framing elements, such as building piers or columns, used on the storefront façade appear as “structural” elements for the upper storeys.
- f) Use recessed entrances and/or display windows, where desired, to accommodate outdoor sitting areas or display areas.
- g) Ensure the sides of recessed entrances have opaque surfaces to enhance comfort and visibility.
- h) Ensure that all door hardware (such as handles, pulls or latches) as well as the entrance thresholds to shops enable barrier-free accessibility (see Facility Accessibility Design Standards from the City of London for reference).

Awnings

Awnings are common features on the commercial storefronts along main streets and in many downtowns. They can serve a number of different purposes including providing protection from the weather and enhancing pedestrian comfort, providing additional opportunities for building signage, controlling the amount of sunlight entering storefront windows, and adding visual interest to the storefront façade. While multi-purpose in function, awnings need to be designed properly to avoid dominating the storefront façade and diminishing other architectural features.

Guidelines:

- a) Limit the entire height of awnings to no more than two-thirds the depth of the awning and limit the front faces of awnings, the valance, to no more than 0.5 metres in height.
- b) Use awnings that are square or triangular in shape, rather than rounded or bubbled. Ensure all awnings on a building have a consistent pattern of size, shape, and placement.
- c) Mount awnings in the storefront zone of the façade, not in the upper façade zone. Ensure that awnings do not cover storefront display windows, piers, columns, pilasters, clerestory windows, architectural expression lines or details.
- d) Size awnings to span the façade's window openings, and not span the entire façade from side-to-side.
- e) Use retractable awnings given they can accommodate to different seasons and weather patterns.
- f) Use fabric awning materials rather than synthetic materials, such as plastic or metal.
- g) Design awnings with shapes and colors that are compatible with and complement those of the façade and its signage. Incorporate signage on awnings, where desired, in keeping with the design guidelines below in Section 6.3.2.3.6 (c).
- h) Use multiple awnings for larger building frontages rather than a single continuous awning. For multi-tenanted buildings, use different colors and patterns to represent the different businesses in the building if desired.





Upper Storey Windows

The location, spacing, size, shape, divisions, and framing of windows in an upper storey of a building are important features in the façade's composition. Upper storey windows provide visual interest on a building's upper storeys of a building that contribute to creating a high quality streetscape and animation of upper storeys.

Within the heritage block, upper storey windows are generally spaced in a manner that establishes a consistent rhythm. These were historically, double-hung windows with openings that are rectangular or arched in shape. Decorative architectural features, such as ornate cornices or lintels, emphasize some upper storey windows. While most buildings in the heritage block retain their original window openings, the windows and sashes may be changed to modern fixtures that do not reflect the original composition.

Given their visual importance, existing upper storey windows should be restored to the original form and composition, while upper storey windows in new development should respect the general proportions, scale and size of those in heritage buildings.

Guidelines:

- a) Use transparent glass surfaces for upper storey windows. Do not use mirrored, tinted or spandrel glass for upper storey windows.
- b) Use windows that function and can open to encourage natural ventilation.
- c) If using shutters, ensure they are proportional to the size of the window opening (i.e. have a width that would enclose the entire window), and preferably are functional in nature.
- d) Incorporate window openings that have distinct lintels and sills to provide visual interest on the upper storeys.
- e) Orient upper storey window openings to have a vertical, rectangular orientation. For square or horizontal orientations for window openings, use windows and windowpanes should have a vertical orientation.
- f) Recess upper storey windows into the wall surface to assist in articulating the facade and creating interesting shadow patterns.

Signage

Signage provides business identification and is a primary element that defines the character of a business, given it provides the first impression to that business. Effective signage is an important part of the built environment and historical references of Grimsby, and should reinforce the historical sense of place and theme of the area. Appropriate signage reflects a community's character, and needs to be balanced between the needs of pedestrians and motorists, keeping in mind Downtown Grimsby as a whole.

There are a wide range of sign types available to businesses in Downtown Grimsby, which are commonly assembled as part of an overall sign package for a business. These sign types include:

- a) Storefront signs;
- b) Projecting signs;
- c) Awning signs;
- d) Window signs;
- e) Portable signs; and
- f) Ground signs.

While the Town's Sign By-law regulates the general size and location of a variety of sign types, it does not speak to the character or appearance of signs. Given this, the following guidelines provide specific design guidance for each particular type of sign. The overall goal is to encourage signage in Downtown Grimsby that is designed and located to be compatible with the scale of the respective building so that it does not detract from or overpower the building's design and its façade features. Having said this, the Town's Sign By-law

There are a number of sign types that are not appropriate, and thus discouraged, as part of existing and new buildings in Downtown Grimsby. These include

- Pole mounted or pylon signs;
- Billboards;
- Inflatable or windblown signs;
- Signs that produce smoke or sound;
- Signs with animated or moving characters;
- Changeable letter marquee signs;
- Roof mounted signs;
- Permanent sidewalk signs; or
- Monument signs.



Signage: Storefront signs

Storefront signs, or fascia signs, come in a variety of different forms, types, and sizes, designed to fit within a façade's composition. A well-designed, appropriate, and character sign provides a significant enhancement to the building façade and actively promotes a business.

Storefront signs were traditionally, and preferably, located on the horizontal section which divides the storefront windows from the upper façade, referred to as the sign band. These business signs were commonly displayed in a single line of lettering large enough to be read by people walking on the street.

Guidelines:

- a) Limit storefront signs to the storefront zone of a building, preferably with a maximum total sign area no more than 20% of the storefront area.
- b) Utilize durable, weatherproof materials that complement those of the building façade. Do not use internally lit, neon or plastic materials.
- c) Avoid obscuring or covering façade features, including windows, doors, storefronts, building entrances, cornices, and columns, with storefront signs.
- d) Locate storefront signage only on facades that have building entrances. Design any building signage associated with secondary building entrances from rear parking areas relative to the scale of the primary storefront sign.
- e) Use simple lettering typefaces that are clear and easy-to-read and complement with graphics or symbols that relate to the business function.
- f) Use lettering colours that provide an accent to the overall façade and that enhance readability of the sign relative to the base colour of the sign.
- g) Use lettering and images on signs that provide depth to the sign, such as raised lettering or using individually cut or carved lettering.
- h) Attach storefront signage so that it is parallel and flush with the building wall and is not angled from the façade.



Signage: Projecting signs

Projecting signs, or hanging signs, are installed perpendicular to the façade and hang from a mounted wall brace. Projecting signs may be the sole signage for a business, depending on the width of the façade, but typically they are a secondary to the primary wall signage. They can add to the character of a downtown through their creative design and are principally oriented to pedestrians walking down the sidewalk adjacent to the building.

Guidelines:

- a) Design projecting signs to complement the form, colours, and lettering of the primary wall signage.
- b) Use simple lettering typefaces that are clear and easy-to-read and complement with images relating to the business function.
- c) Locate projecting signs so they are at least 2.5 metres (8 feet) from the ground, with their top below the upper façade windows.
- d) Limit projecting signs to no more than 1.0 square metre (10 square feet) in surface area.
- e) Design and locate projecting signs so that they do not project more than 0.6 metres (2 feet) from the façade.
- f) Limit the number of projecting signs to one per façade, mounted near the storefront entrance. For wider façades with multiple entrances, one projecting sign per storefront entrance on the façade may be appropriate.
- g) Where lighting of projecting signs is desired, use externally illumination mounted lights to illuminate letters, images, and symbols.
- h) Use mounting hardware for projecting signage that is attractive, durable, and forms part of the sign design, either simple or more decorative.



Signage: Awning signs

Awning signs are those printed or mounted on the surface of an awning located above a building's storefront. Awning signs are a signage form traditionally found in downtowns, which perform to identify a business while providing weather protection for store users.

Guidelines:

- a) Design the signage lettering and colours to be consistent with the primary building signage style.
- b) Use a simple lettering typeface, similar to the style of the primary building signage, that is clear and easy-to-read and that is sized to the pedestrian scale.
- c) Limit awning signage to the front face, or valance, of the awning, and generally no more than 0.30 metres in height.
- d) Limit the width of the signage to no more than 75% of the width of the awning and no more than 30% of the surface area of the awning.
- e) Provide at least 2.5 metres (8 feet) of clearance for any awning signage over public sidewalks.



Signage: Window signs

Window signs are signs that are placed on a window or door of a storefront. They may either be permanent or temporary. Window signs may include advertisements and sales, product merchandise posters, open and closed signs, and painted or etched business names and logos. Windows signs are not typically the primary signage for a business, but are intended to complement the primary signage, either long-term or short-term in nature.

Guidelines:

- a) Use windows signs only on windows in the storefront zone, and not in windows in the upper façade.
- b) Limit the surface area of windows signs to no more than 20 percent of a window's surface area. Ensure that window signs do not obscure the primary function of the storefront windows to display goods and to allow a viewline into the building.
- c) Use etched or painted glass for signage on the windows or signs that are attached to the glass or displayed directly behind it. Materials and paint should be durable and fade resistant to ensure their quality over time.
- d) Use in store lighting or an externally mounted light to illuminate window signs. Avoid using any neon or fluorescent lighting for illumination or accent around the signage or the window frame.
- e) Limit any electronic signs to a single, non-flashing "Open" sign in a storefront's window.
- f) Use a simple lettering typeface, similar to the style of the primary building signage, that is clear and easy-to-read and that is sized to the pedestrian scale.
- g) Use lettering typefaces and colours that are match or complement that of the primary building signage.



Signage: Portable signs

Portable signs are small signs, typically temporary or seasonal in nature, that are placed at-grade along the streetscape in front of stores as advertisement space. These small portable signs can add visual interest and animation to the streetscape in front of storefronts, while advertising for daily events such as menus or sales. The key consideration for utilizing portable signs is that they are visually attractive, add to the character of the streetscape, and do not impact pedestrian movements along the sidewalk.

Guidelines:

- a) Limit portable signs to sandwich boards or A-frame styles of signs.
- b) Limit the size of portable signs to no more than 0.75 square metres of surface area.
- c) Limit the number of portable signs to one per store frontage. For larger store frontages, limit the number to no more than two portable signs.
- d) Consider the location of portable signs to avoid the “cluttering” of the streetscape.
- e) Utilize durable, weatherproof materials that complement those of the building façade. Do not use internally lit, neon or plastic materials.
- f) Design projecting signs to complement the form, colours, and lettering of the business’ primary store signage.
- g) Locate portable signs so that they are outside of the primary pedestrian route in front of stores, with a minimum clearance of 1.2 metres for pedestrians.
- h) Ensure portable signs are only used during the hours of operation of the business.



Signage: Ground signs

Ground signs are signs that are permanently, or relatively permanently, installed on a site to advertise a single business or a multi-tenanted development in the form of tenant directory signs. They are more commonly found with residential buildings converted to commercial uses. The key design consideration for such signs is that they complement the character of the primary business signage and do not overpower a site in terms of treatment or size.

Guidelines:

- a) Limit ground signs to one per property.
- b) Limit the size of ground signs to no more than 1.0 square metres in surface area.
- c) Limit the size of ground signs to no more than 1.5 metres in height.
- d) Utilize durable, weatherproof, high quality materials that complement those of the building façade. Do not use internally lit, neon or plastic materials.
- e) Use externally mounted light to illuminate ground signs. Do not use any neon or fluorescent lighting for illumination or accent around or on the sign.
- f) Design the signage lettering and colours to be consistent with the primary building signage style.
- g) Use a simple lettering typeface, similar to the style of the primary building signage, that is clear and easy-to-read and that is sized to the pedestrian scale.



Rooflines

Rooflines perform the function of terminating and punctuating the top of a building's façade. They are important given they are most evident to those passing by from a distance or from across the street. Traditional rooflines provide visual interest and vibrancy along the upper portions of a façade through the use of detail, such as material changes, cornice, parapets, and other features, that provide an appropriate "cap" to a building.

Guidelines:

- a) Design rooflines for infill development or additions to the existing buildings within the heritage block to match or complement existing roof lines in the area, either immediately adjacent or elsewhere on the block.
- b) Ensure roofline forms, slopes, details, materials, and overall design is compatible with the building's overall style and character.
- c) Use a flat roof with a parapet or cornice or a sloped roof combined with a roof parapet as the preferred roofline style for new development.
- d) Ensure any gutters/downspouts match the trim or body color of the façade and are inconspicuously located.
- e) Use appropriate roof materials that are durable and fit with the overall façade character.
- f) Paint vent pipes that are publicly visible to match the color of the roof to make them less conspicuous.
- g) Use a cornice or parapet to define the top of the facade. Coordinate roofline cornices with those distinguishing the storefront façade.
- h) Locate mechanical equipment and servicing away from the roofline edge, either the front, side or rear edges. Alternatively, screen such equipment with features, such as parapets, that complement and fit with the overall façade design.



Murals

Murals are large scale graphics applied to the exterior of a building, typically on the blank side of a building. They are typically either painted directly on a building's exterior or on a material that is attached to the exterior. As expressions of public art, they can significantly contribute to the visual interest along a streetscape.

Guidelines:

- a) Ensure that any murals are public art completed by a qualified professional artist, and are not commercial advertising of any sort.
- b) Use themes are related to Grimsby's history, tourism, features, character, or any artistic expression.
- c) Locate murals only on exterior walls that do not contain the primary building entrance.
- d) Ensure that the colours used are consistent with the building and do not overshadow the respective building or the surrounding area.
- e) Properly prepare surfaces for mural prior to installation including cleaning, scraping debris, and filling holes to ensure a high quality and durable finish.
- f) Use high quality, durable, graffiti-resistant, and weather resistant materials for murals.
- g) Design murals so that they are consistent with the building style and do not obscure the building's architectural details.
- h) Minimize the amount of the surface area of the mural that is dedicated to acknowledging the mural's sponsor, if applicable.
- a) Light murals, where appropriate, with fixtures consistent with the primary building lighting to provide emphasis at night.



4.0 Site Planning

Description

While the Built Form and Façade Elements guidelines deal with the form, composition and appearance of buildings on a site, this Section deals with the arrangement and functioning of the other, non-building elements on a site. These elements include parking, lighting, service areas, and patios or open spaces.

Objectives

Objectives for the site planning guidelines are:

1. Provision of a visually interesting and attractive interface between buildings and the street edge;
2. Inclusion of design treatments that are durable and easily maintained;
3. Incorporation of structural site elements that are in keeping with the character of the downtown;
4. A safe and secure pedestrian environment on a site for all users.
5. Incorporation of green treatments and activity that liven the streetscape;
6. Provision of appropriate transitions between properties within and outside the downtown; and
7. Minimization of the extent, visual appearance and impacts of parking and service areas.

Parking

Parking within Downtown Grimsby is provided through a series of public and private parking areas, including both on-street and off-street parking spaces. While it is recognized that there is the need to accommodate parking for automobiles, private off-street parking areas for developments need to contribute a pedestrian-friendly and visually attractive downtown environment.

Guidelines:

- a) Locate the parking for any new developments at the rear of the development and not between the front or side of a building and abutting public street right-of-way.
- b) Locate the access to an off-street surface parking lot from the secondary street, whenever possible, particularly where parking areas for individual properties can be coordinated.
- a) Where parking in the front yard is unavoidable, screen such parking areas with fences/walls and landscaping to minimize the visual impact on the streetscape.
- b) For longer blocks or properties, create central pedestrian connections that connect parking areas to building entrances. Design such connections with weather-protection and tree plantings, where feasible and where necessary.
- c) Orient parking aisles to be perpendicular to the building's primary entrance in order to minimize the number of potential pedestrian-vehicle movement conflicts.
- d) Coordinate parking areas across several properties, or within one larger property, as much as possible particularly regarding access in order to limit the number of interruptions of the streetscape and public sidewalks.
- e) Divide larger off-street parking areas both visually and functionally into smaller parking areas through the use of landscaped islands to minimize the visual extent of the paved area.
- f) Ensure pedestrian routes through off-street parking areas are safe, convenient and clearly demarcated. Ensure they are a similar size to a public sidewalk, are barrier-free, and are served by adjacent shade trees and pedestrian lighting.



Plantings

Plantings can be use a key visual element to connect a building or development with the streetscape and the surrounding context. It performs a number of functions, including screening areas like servicing or parking areas and providing visual interest and colour along a streetscape.

Guidelines:

- a) Landscape and regularly maintain the following areas on a site:
 - Yards that are visible from streets, sidewalks, and/or other public spaces;
 - Yards that are abutting adjacent residential properties;
 - Common outdoor areas within the site; and
 - Private and public surface parking lots.
- b) Use tree and shrub species that are native, low maintenance, and salt tolerant to survive urban conditions.
- c) Trees that provide a canopy of shade in the summer and that do not drop heavy cones, sap, fruit, and seedlings are encouraged along sidewalks, walkways, and near parking spaces.
- d) Ensure trees have an adequately sized planting area based on the amount of room needed for tree roots. Root barriers, tree guards, and tree grates are encouraged for trees are planted near sidewalks and walkways.
- e) For parking lots, aim to plant one tree planted per four parking spaces.
- f) Provide seasonal interest through the use of coniferous and deciduous plant materials throughout the site.
- g) Maintain and trim shrubs and perennials adjacent to the public right-of-way so that they are no more than 0.9m in height to avoid the creation of hiding spaces and be respectful of pedestrian safety.
- h) Ensure raised planters are at least 0.40m in height to promote informal seating areas along a street frontage. Use high quality materials for raised planters that complement the character and style of the development.
- i) Ensure that any screening methods for parking be well-maintained to avoid unsightly conditions that negatively impact the pedestrian safety and the area's character.
- j) Use flowerpots and planter boxes that are compatible with the architecture style of the building to add color and variety to the landscape. Potential locations include overhangs, columns or posts, balconies, and below windows.



Fences and Walls

Fences and wall work with landscape plantings to physically and visually demarcate an area from another, such as a parking area from the streetscape. They should be considered extensions of the respective built form in terms of style, materials, and details.

Guidelines:

- a) Use a landscaped area of plantings in conjunction with walls or fences to provide separation of off-street parking areas from adjacent land uses or establishments.
- b) Ensure fences and walls should be compatible with the architecture of the building on the site.
- c) Limit any pergolas or entrance arbors on fences/walls to 2.5 metres in height.
- d) Use fences and walls that are articulated with regularly spaced posts, changing the height, and using different building materials at the base, posts, or the cap of the fence or wall.
- e) Use materials such as wood, natural stone or brick (unpainted), wrought iron, concrete masonry, or similar materials
- f) When painted, ensure fence and wall colours match or complement the color of the building.



Site Lighting

Lighting of the site for safety and security purposes should be included in the design of parking lots. The type of lighting should be in conformance with lighting standards that are established for the entire core area, i.e. pole style and colour, bulb type, mounting height, etc. and adhere to the “dark skies” design principles.

Guidelines:

- a) Ensure that buildings and sites are not over-lit to in order to maintain a desirable nighttime setting and environment.
- b) When comprehensively planning lighting for a site, balance the need for safety and security with the reduction of energy consumption and nuisance impacts
- c) Light areas on the site used by pedestrians at night, including surface parking lots; building entrances; sidewalks and walkways; garbage disposal areas; and other areas.
- d) Locate and direct building and sign lighting to light the intended area of illumination and limit off-site glare impacts on adjacent buildings or properties.
- e) Incorporate lighting at regular intervals to prevent the creation of light and dark pockets to ensure visibility into and out from all areas on the site requiring lighting.
- f) Design lighting poles and fixtures to be consistent with and complement the architecture of the building and the site.
- g) Direct light downward wherever possible to avoid spillover to surrounding areas.
- h) Use pedestrian-scaled lighting, such as low profile fixtures, along pedestrian routes through an off-street parking area.
- i) Coordinate the location of lighting and lighting fixtures with pedestrian routes and plantings.



Service Areas and Equipment

Services areas include those areas with mechanical equipment or those devoted to the operation of the associated building, such as garbage disposal areas. These areas can have significant visual impacts on the streetscape and the public realm, and their careful location, design and screening, where necessary, needs to be considered.

Guidelines:

- a) Locate building utility meters in less visible locations such as the rear of building, or screen them with an appropriate design that complements the overall façade building design.
- b) Locate service areas, including areas for loading/unloading and garbage, in locations that are not directly visible from a public street, such as in the rear yard of building.
- c) Coordinate and share service areas between buildings or within developments as much possible to prevent disruptions to vehicular or pedestrian flows.
- d) Ensure such service areas are screened appropriately, through landscape materials, fencing or building design, from the views of adjacent properties or from the upper stories of the building to which they serve.
- e) Design any screening structures so that they complement the character form, materials, and colours of the building.
- f) Locate the accesses to service areas from secondary streets or the rear of buildings wherever possible to reduce the number of driveways on Main Street/Livingston Avenue.
- g) Site all rooftop equipment, such as HVAC equipment, so that they are setback from the roof edge and/or screened through roofline design elements.



Sidewalk cafes/patios

Sidewalk cafes or patios are grade-level spaces along, or within the public right-of-way, that associated with businesses that serve food or beverages. They can contribute to a downtown's character by enhancing the vitality and interest along the streetscape. However, careful design and location of such spaces is important to ensure they do not detract from the visual quality of the streetscape and do not impede movement for all users along the sidewalk.

Guidelines:

- a) Locate cafes/patios ensuring that at least a 1.5 metre unobstructed route on the public sidewalk is maintained.
- b) Maintain at least a 1.0 metre direct and unobstructed route through a café/patio to the primary entrance of the business.
- c) Ensure that the public sidewalk's alignment remain straight within the right-of-way, or alternatively, angled following the configuration of the bump-out along the street.
- d) Design any structures, such as railings or walls, to complement the building's design using materials that allow visibility to and from the space. Ensure such structures can be easily removed and stored elsewhere.
- e) Ensure the café/patio does not extend beyond the frontage of the respective business.
- f) Ensure that any awnings associated with the café/patio do not extend past the extent of the projection into the right-of-way.
- g) For cafés/patios entirely on private property, use surface materials that complement those in the public right-of-way, although distinctive enough to define the boundary.



Description

Downtown Grimsby benefits from the existing stock of high quality heritage buildings, particular within the Core District, to build on and provide cues to new development. Physically, most buildings are in relatively good physical condition and appear to be well-maintained. However, with the exception of a few recently updated façades and some existing facades, façade improvements are warranted for many buildings within Downtown Grimsby given the general tired and dated look of their façade and signage.

There are a wide range of façade conditions in Downtown Grimsby that warrant improvement:

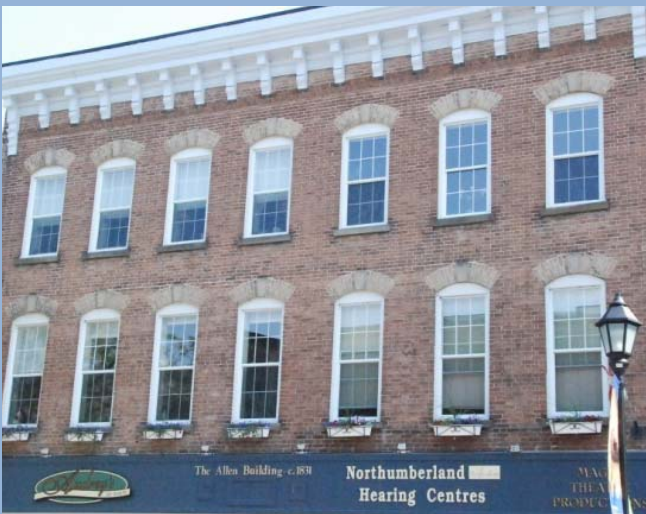
- Façade widths and proportions that are not consistent with a traditional main street character;
- Façade colours that are distracting and that overshadows building features;
- Disproportional storefront signage with synthetic materials and not in a desirable location;
- Deteriorating architectural features such as ornate brickwork or roofline;
- Inappropriate signage types in a main street environment and signage that is weathered and dated;
- Installation of upper storey windows that do not respect original window openings;
- Covering of façade with contemporary, synthetic material; and
- Blocking of visibility into and from shops through non-transparent materials or glass treatment.

Façade improvement programs, such as a program that may be recommended in the Downtown Grimsby CIP, encourage business and property owners to enhance and promote the downtown's unique character and identity. The purpose of such programs is to develop a more coherent, creative and attractive appearance within the downtown by offering financial incentive to promote improvements to the exterior of buildings in downtown areas.

Objectives

The overall objective of façade improvements within Downtown Grimsby should be to enhance the pedestrian-orientation and the visual appeal and identity of the area. Façade improvements may include elements such as improvement to signage placement and treatment; design of door and window design and location; awning and canopy installation; façade materials; roofline design and treatment; and pedestrian-oriented lighting. These Façade Improvement guidelines are intended to guide the façade improvement process and meant to be tied to any financial incentive program that may be offered by the Town and/or Region.





Conservation

Conservation efforts are those improvements that are minor in nature. Conservation work typically entails the protection and maintenance of the existing façade, including repainting, cleaning, re-stuccoing, repointing, and other general maintenance activities to preserve the life of the façade.

Guidelines:

- a) When maintaining or preparing existing façade materials, do not use sandblasting, high pressure washes, or chemical treatments that may harm the condition or appearance of the existing material.
- b) Repair, and repoint for brick or stone material, any existing ornamental features or details on the façade.
- c) Repair, rather than replace, upper storey windows where practical and feasible. If replacement is required, use new windows that match the original documented windows of the building, retaining the original openings of the upper façade.
- d) Maintain the natural colors of brick and stone material, wherever possible. Paint existing façade materials where no other feasible option exists, ensuring that the paint used is an appropriate level of gloss (i.e. semi-gloss) and appropriate for the existing material (i.e. masonry paint).
- e) Ensure that any new entrance door hardware installed is appropriate for and complements the original character and style of the façade while enabling barrier-free accessibility.
- f) Use colours that are muted and soft, as compared to bold and bright. If used, such colours should only be used as accent colors on façade elements, such as window and door frames, building trim, and other details.
- g) Limit base colours to no more than two, preferably for defining the vertical distinctions of the building (i.e. storefront versus upper storeys) if using more than one colour. Limit accent colours to two or three, selected to complement the base colours of the façade.
- h) Ensure that the entrance thresholds enable barrier-free accessibility, either through structural changes to the thresholds (such as grinding of existing surface) or creative methods for access (such as removable ramps).

Restoration

Restoration efforts are generally those improvements that are moderate in nature. Restoration work typically entails rehabilitation and recovery of the building form and details as they originally appeared, or thought to appear where documentation does not exist. It may include the replacement of doors, windows, cornices, lintels, shutters, storefront windows, or other features.

Guidelines:

- a) When installing new façade materials, use materials that match original documented materials of the building.
- b) Uncover façades that have been covered with unsympathetic materials (i.e. aluminum siding or non-local stone over brick). Incorporate new façade materials only where they reflect the original façade's design intent.
- c) Re-open blocked upper façade windows where they exist with new windows that match the original documented windows of the building.
- d) Repair, rather than replace, upper storey windows where practical and feasible. If replacement is required, use new windows that match the original documented windows of the building, retaining the original openings of the upper façade.
- e) Replace existing doors with new doors that match the original façade's character and style, including the original style of operation, with door hardware that complements the original character and style of the façade while enabling barrier-free accessibility.
- f) Ensure that the entrance thresholds enable barrier-free accessibility, either through structural changes to the thresholds (such as grinding of existing surface) or creative methods for access (such as removable ramps).
- g) If adding or replicating any details or features to the façade or roofline, ensure the additions adhere to the original building's decorative elements, and complement the surrounding area.
- h) Use colours that are muted and soft, as compared to bold and bright. If used, use such colours only as accent colors on façade elements, such as window and door frames or building trim.
- i) Limit base colours to no more than two, preferably for defining the vertical distinctions of the building (i.e. storefront versus upper storeys) if using more than one colour. Limit accent colours to two or three, selected to complement the base colours of the façade.
- j) Install new storefront signage within the original sign band of the façade, uncovering it if necessary. Where an original documented band does not exist, incorporate one in keeping with the proportions and general location of those on surrounding buildings. Install all signage in keeping with the above signage guidelines above, as they may apply.



Renovation

Renovation efforts are generally those improvements that are major in nature. Renovation work typically entails more significant structural improvements including a significant overhaul of the existing façade, either replicating the original fashion or incorporating a complementary fashion. This work may include installation of a new roofline or restructuring of the storefront zone.

Guidelines:

- a) Replace existing doors with new doors that match the original façade's character and style, including the original style of operation, with door hardware that complements the original character and style of the façade while enabling barrier-free accessibility.
- b) Ensure that the entrance thresholds enable barrier-free accessibility, either through structural changes to the thresholds (such as grinding of existing surface) or creative methods for access (such as removable ramps).
- c) Install new storefront signage within the original sign band of the façade, uncovering it if necessary. Where an original documented sign band does not exist, incorporate one in keeping with the proportions and general location of those on surrounding buildings. Install all signage in keeping with the above signage guidelines above, as they may apply.
- d) Incorporate a regular rhythm of doors and windows along the ground floor to promote the typical heritage storefront configuration.
- e) If new upper storey windows are required, use windows that match the original documented windows of the building, including vertical and horizontal proportions, and while utilizing the original openings of the upper façade.
- k) Use colours that are muted and soft, as compared to bold and bright. If used, use such colours only as accent colors on façade elements, such as window and door frames or building trim.
- l) Limit base colours to no more than two, preferably for defining the vertical distinctions of the building (i.e. storefront versus upper storeys) if using more than one colour. Limit accent colours to two or three, selected to complement the base colours of the façade.
- m) Install new storefront signage within the original sign band of the façade, uncovering it if necessary. Where an original documented band does not exist, incorporate one in keeping with the proportions and general location of those on adjacent or surrounding buildings.
- f) Ensure that the appearance of any vertical elements on the storefront façade, such as columns or piers, appear as "structural" elements for the upper storeys.
- g) Restore or establish a more fine-grained rhythm and pattern of façade for buildings with wider frontages through the use of individual sign bands and awnings, projections and bays, variations in colour, and other vertical elements.

