

Additions and Architectural Elements

The most enjoyable places we visit or patronize are generally very comfortable for reasons that we may not readily notice or even think of.

In general, an inviting and engaging downtown has a certain “feeling” created by its design and architecture. The downtown character is created by consistency, coordination and complimentary forms. Originally, the hidden assets built into each property brought the whole town together visually and made it pleasing for customers—window shopping and walking the streets became a stimulating sensory experience. Scale, mass, rhythm, patterns, materials, shapes and colors are some of the ingredients used to define streetscapes and public spaces. This section outlines the uses and appropriateness of architectural designs and features that give commercial districts and outdoor spaces their personality.

Orientation of New Buildings

The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- New buildings should face a street, or other public space. Buildings should not front directly onto parking lots.
- New buildings situated on street corners should have two façades. Both walls do not need to provide their own entrance, but the façade without a door should not be a blank canvas. Rather, it should be an extension of the façade with the entrance—its design should be integrated with the “main” wall of the building.
- Off-street parking areas should be sensitively located to the side or rear of buildings. This layout will reduce the visual impact to and disruption of the streetscape’s continuity.

Scale and Mass of Additions

The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- The overall scale, massing and proportions of new additions should relate to and be compatible with those of adjacent and surrounding buildings.
- Changes in scale and mass, such as offsetting a wall(s), or deviating from the existing roof line should be made in graduated increments.
- Buildings should not have long, uninterrupted flat walls. Designing wall offsets, adding changes in floor levels, including windows and ornamentation to exterior walls should be used to add interest and variety. Flat, unadorned walls are boring and often invite vandalism.
- Roof line offsets, cross gables and dormers should be utilized to vary the massing of the roofs of buildings.
- Visibly exposed sides of new additions should be defined with a base and cap or cornice.

Materials and Details of Additions

The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- All materials, details and colors used with new additions should be compatible with the overall design of the original building, as well as with surrounding buildings. New additions should be well integrated with existing structures.
- Architectural features and motifs of the original building should be retained and repeated in the design of new additions whenever possible.
- When designing additions, the patterns, colors, details and prominence of materials used in adjacent buildings should be taken into account.
- Artificial siding and trim materials should not be used.

Roofs and Walls of Additions

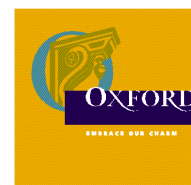
The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- The new roof form (its shape) should be appropriate to and imitate the existing building’s roof.
- In new additions, the use of cross gables, dormers, belvederes, masonry chimneys, cupolas and similar elements is encouraged where appropriate to the design of the existing building.
- Flat roofs should be avoided on one and two story buildings.
- The façade of a building should be emphasized through window patterns and proportions and the enhanced treatment of entrances through details, materials and architectural motifs.
- The design of visible side and rear walls should be compatible with the façade.
- The use of blank, windowless walls is discouraged. However, if they are absolutely necessary, they should utilize surface articulation and architectural elements found in other wall facings.

Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment

The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- Loading areas, waste facilities, air conditioning units, exhaust and vent stacks, elevator penthouses and antennae should be located to the rear of buildings or screened from view.
- The use of interior refuse rooms in lieu of outdoor dumpsters or other methods of waste removal is encouraged. Visible trash receptacles are uninviting and discourage foot traffic.
- Fire escapes should not be visible when viewing the façade.



Recommended

Store Front Entrance Ways

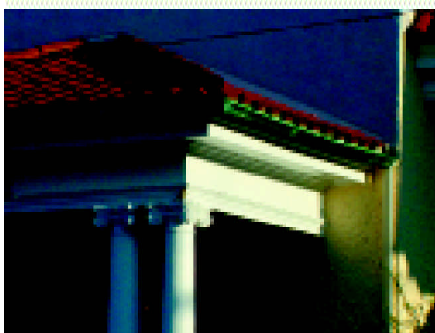
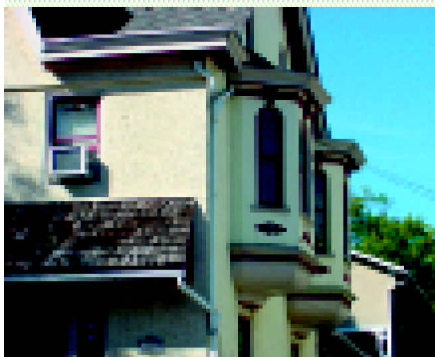
The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- The design of entrance ways and the street-level portion of façades should be compatible with the design of upper floors to retain the overall character of a building.
- Retail stores, service oriented businesses and restaurants should have large pane display windows on the ground level.
- Buildings with multiple storefronts should be visually unified through the use of building materials, colors, architectural details, awnings, signage and lighting.
- The original proportions of display windows and any special features such as transoms or leaded glass should be retained.
- Entrances should be well defined by architectural elements such as lintels, pediments, pilasters, columns, porticos, porches, railings and balustrades, etc.
- Avoid replacing an entire store front when repairing existing materials and surfaces or replacing parts and sections may be all that is necessary.

Windows and Shutters

The Oxford Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following.

- New windows should be compatible with the style, size, material, color and detail of windows on the existing building.
- Whenever possible, windows on upper floors should align vertically with windows and entrances on the first floor.
- The rhythm of windows and façade openings and decorative window trim should be consistent with that of the original building. New windows should match the original ones in size, material and style.
- When appropriate to the design of a building, shutters should be provided on all windows. Proper hardware should be used for the installation of shutters.



Any addition to this building would need to imitate woodwork such as this around new entrance ways. Otherwise, the addition would merely be an ancillary appendage—in stark contrast with the main structure and visually detached.



New buildings like this one, or additions, should continue the visual vocabulary of buildings built between 1830 and 1930. The dormers, gables, masonry patterns, and cornice work illustrated here are exemplary of how the design of and material selection should return to the period style.



This addition copied the bay window design from the opposite end of the building, unifying the entire structure, adding depth to the streetscape, and creating visual interest above the first story.

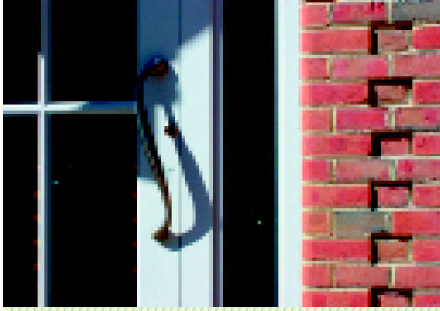


On order to make this entrance more grand and recognizable as the main entrance, this portico was added. Its design and material composition duplicate that of the original, main structure.



While this entrance may seem to be rather grandiose for Oxford, it is a good example of choice materials and composition. The level of detail achieved and sense of being a much older structure are goals to attain—a well-conceived concept.

Recommended



→ This new display window increases the storefront's street presence by projecting into the street and utilizing details, colors and millwork that imitate the original structure.



April Emms-Peterson



← Details make the difference! This exquisite door handle, the recessed brick ends, and the incised mortar give this building the feeling of a much older structure.



These progressively smaller additions add visual interest to the whole picture and perfectly blend into the overall design by their repetition of forms and architectural details.



Without the bay window, the porch that it supports, and the accompanying dormer, this roof and roof line would be run-of-the-mill. A distinctive "old world" charm is captured in this unique design.



This service area for trash cans is well-designed because it organizes and hides an otherwise unsightly mess. Adding doors would be an even greater improvement. Moss may look attractive between these old cobblestones, but weeds should be pulled on a regular basis.



The addition of shutters on the second floor windows is just one design choice that prevents this façade from being bland. The consistent use of an historic color palette unifies the multiple entranceways and levels of the overall structure. Potted shrubbery and flowers create an inviting atmosphere.



The complete historical restoration of this entranceway compliments the adjacent porch and creates a cohesive look to the double-wide structure without totally imitating the plan of the porch structure.



This porch is well-integrated with the overall façade. The matching roof pitch, eave treatment, shingle style and color, and millwork details make this porch appear as if it has always been a part of the larger structure. Even though they are set at different levels, the replacement windows are of consistent size and design across the front as well.



To take advantage of this building's corner location and create visibility from two directions, this corner entrance was "cut" into the structure.

The historic, detailed architectural elements create a definite focal point and sense of historical significance to the overall street scene.



Discouraged



This newer building has nothing in common with its surrounding structures. Compared to the overall streetscape and the age of other buildings, this business looks like it belongs in another location.



Detail of the building above. This façade and entranceway don't follow any guidelines for architectural re-creation of any period style.



Great idea to hide the mechanicals behind an appropriately designed structure, however, this projection looks too much like the main entrance! In fact, the too difficult-to-read sign points to the real entrance to the left. A slightly different design could have eliminated this problem and hidden the air conditioners.



The addition on the left of this building attempts to create a unified façade with the running overhang roof above the first story. However, the renovation obliterates the original architectural character that is still visible above the first story. The “modern” looking addition is incongruous with the original upper floors and roof design.



This left-end addition should have continued the same gable roof for continuity on the second story. Notice how the running overhang above the first story accomplishes this goal. The color break on the first floor is distracting and the inclusion of brick flower beds should have utilized another building material—the stone step of the right-hand door should have been imitated instead.



This “modern” entranceway on the façade looks attached rather than integrated into the overall design. There is no relationship from one element to another and the signage was definitely an afterthought.



If at all possible, vents, mechanical systems, air conditioners, trash receptacles, and the like should be hidden from street view. Even the tidiest, well-kept area seems unsightly on this charming street.



During the design phase of this restoration, there should have been an attempt to create more unity between these two buildings. A design connection is evident on the second stories but absent on the visually prominent first story. Door and window selection, the addition of wood details, and a simple, yet charming awning would have continued the historical nature of this streetscape.



The brown paper in the window is quite unattractive as well. Instead, a colorful, eye-catching sign on white paper could be announcing the arrival of the new business.