

DOWNTOWN CHEYENNE

HISTORIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

Checklist-Based Review Tool & Illustrated Appendices

A practical framework for preserving historic character while supporting compatible reinvestment, accessibility, energy performance, and continued use of downtown buildings.

Prepared for the Cheyenne Historic Preservation Board

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose, Scope & Applicability

Use this page first to understand what the guidelines do - and what they do not do.

These guidelines are intended to help property owners, tenants, design professionals, City staff, and the Historic Preservation Board (HPB) make consistent decisions about exterior work on historic commercial buildings in Downtown Cheyenne. They translate accepted preservation principles into clear, project-focused review questions while allowing contemporary uses and code-compliant improvements.

National Register listing recognizes historic significance but does not, by itself, restrict ordinary alterations. Under current City information, HPB approval is required for demolition or relocation of contributing structures in Cheyenne's historic districts. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for new construction, significant alterations, and improvements within the Governor's Mansion Protective Area. If these downtown guidelines are adopted as regulatory standards, the adopting ordinance should clearly define jurisdiction, exemptions, staff-level approvals, notice, appeals, and enforcement.

How the guidelines should be applied

- 1 **Start with significance.** Confirm whether the property is contributing, identify its period of significance, and review the applicable survey or National Register nomination.
- 2 **Use evidence.** Historic photographs, Sanborn maps, physical evidence, original drawings, and neighboring intact buildings should guide restoration or reconstruction.
- 3 **Prioritize the public view.** Give the greatest weight to primary facades, corner elevations, rooflines, and features visible from streets, sidewalks, public plazas, and important alleys.
- 4 **Apply a reasonable standard.** Evaluate the project as a whole, considering technical and economic feasibility without sacrificing the features that convey historic character.
- 5 **Document decisions.** Board findings should cite the applicable guideline, identify the character-defining feature at issue, and state how the proposal meets or does not meet the standard.

Relationship to other requirements

These guidelines supplement - but do not replace - adopted zoning, building, fire, accessibility, energy, sign, and public-way requirements. When a code requirement affects a historic feature, the applicant should coordinate early with the Building Official and preservation staff to identify the least visually disruptive compliant solution. Adopted law controls if a conflict occurs.

INTRODUCTION

Contents & Quick Start

1	Purpose, Scope & Applicability	2	11	Masonry, Wood, Metal & Materials	12
2	Contents & Quick Start	3	12	Awnings, Signage, Lighting & Color	13
3	Cheyenne Historic Context	4	13	Roofs, Parapets, Cornices & Equipment	14
4	Core Preservation Principles	5	14	Rear Elevations, Accessibility & Energy	15
5	Project Planning & Submittal	6	15	Additions, Infill, New Construction & Demolition	16
6	HPB Checklist - General & Storefronts	7	16	Appendix A - Facade Anatomy	17
7	HPB Checklist - Openings & Materials	8	17	Appendix B - Storefronts & Windows	18
8	HPB Checklist - Details & Determination	9	18	Appendix C - Materials & Character Areas	19
9	Storefronts & Entrances	10	19	Findings, Glossary & Resources	20
10	Windows, Doors & Transoms	11			

Quick start for property owners

1	Confirm status	Obtain the applicable survey or nomination entry.
2	Photograph	Document the full facade, details, context, and hidden conditions.
3	Use least intervention	Maintain and repair before replacing.
4	Submit details	Show dimensions, profiles, materials, colors, attachments, and lighting.
5	Consult early	Discuss complex storefront, masonry, window, rooftop, or addition work before ordering.

KEY REVIEW QUESTION

Will the proposed work preserve the materials, proportions, rhythms, craftsmanship, and visual hierarchy that allow this building - and the surrounding block - to be understood as historic?

CHEYENNE CONTEXT

Historic Development & Architectural Character

Cheyenne was established in 1867 in direct association with the Union Pacific Railroad. Its commercial center grew rapidly as the community became a territorial capital, state capital, regional trade center, and transportation hub. Fires, redevelopment, and repeated economic cycles reshaped the downtown, but the surviving building stock still expresses the city's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century growth.

The Downtown Cheyenne Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, followed by boundary increases in 1980, 1988, and 1996. Collectively, the nominations recognize resources associated with commerce, settlement, transportation, government, entertainment, and architecture. The district includes a varied collection rather than a single architectural style.

Recurring downtown characteristics

Two- to five-story commercial blocks placed at or near the sidewalk edge.

Narrow storefront bays organized within wider masonry facades.

Transparent ground floors with display windows, transoms, recessed entries, and low kickplates.

Upper stories that are more solid, with vertically proportioned window openings and repeated bays.

Brick as the dominant wall material, often combined with sandstone, terra cotta, cast stone, pressed metal, structural glass, or decorative tile.

Strong horizontal terminations created by cornices, parapets, belt courses, and storefront sign bands.

Architectural influences that include Commercial Victorian, Italianate, Early Commercial, Beaux Arts, Chicago School, Classical Revival, Art Deco, Moderne, and later twentieth-century commercial design.

Secondary elevations and alleys that reveal loading, service, warehouse, and railroad-related functions.

Character-defining relationships

Pattern	Why it matters
Street wall	Continuous or closely spaced facades frame the sidewalk and create a walkable commercial corridor.
Vertical rhythm	Pilasters, upper-story windows, and storefront bays establish a repeated cadence along each block.
Base-middle-top	Storefront base, upper-story wall, and cornice/parapet create a legible facade hierarchy.
Transparency	Display windows and glazed doors communicate active uses and support pedestrian interest.
Variety within continuity	Buildings differ in age and style, but generally share compatible scale, alignment, materials, and proportions.

DESIGN OBJECTIVE

Preserve the authentic variety of Downtown Cheyenne. Uniformity, imitation 'Old West' themes, and conjectural ornament are not the goal; compatibility and retention of real historic fabric are.

PRESERVATION FRAMEWORK

Core Principles for Review

These principles are adapted from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and tailored to downtown commercial work.

- 1 **Use compatible uses.** Continue the historic use when practical, or select a new use that requires minimal change to significant exterior features, spaces, and structural systems.
- 2 **Retain historic character.** Preserve the overall form, facade organization, materials, openings, craftsmanship, and relationships that convey the building's significance.
- 3 **Avoid false history.** Do not add conjectural features or borrow details from unrelated buildings. New work should be identifiable as new upon close inspection.
- 4 **Respect significant change.** Later alterations may have acquired significance. Evaluate their age, design quality, and contribution before removal.
- 5 **Repair before replacement.** Use maintenance, consolidation, dutchman repairs, selective splicing, repointing, and component replacement before replacing an entire feature.
- 6 **Match when replacement is necessary.** Replacement should match the historic feature in design, dimensions, profile, texture, finish, and visual qualities; matching materials are preferred where feasible.
- 7 **Use gentle treatments.** Begin with the least aggressive cleaning or paint-removal method and test in a small, inconspicuous area. Avoid treatments that erode or seal historic materials.
- 8 **Differentiate and remain compatible.** New additions and exterior alterations should be compatible in scale, massing, materials, and proportion without creating a false historic appearance.
- 9 **Protect reversibility.** Attach new signs, awnings, equipment, and accessibility features so they can be removed with limited damage to historic material.
- 10 **Plan for long-term stewardship.** Select repairs and new work that manage moisture, allow maintenance, and support the building's continued productive use.

PREFERRED TREATMENT SEQUENCE

Maintain → Stabilize → Repair → Limited in-kind replacement → Compatible replacement → Evidence-based reconstruction. Full replacement is not the starting point.

PROJECT PLANNING

Evaluate, Document & Submit

1. Determine the appropriate project approach

Before selecting products or finishes, determine how much of the original or historically significant design survives. A building may contain intact features beneath later panels, dropped ceilings, signs, or applied cladding. Investigate carefully before demolition.

Existing condition	Recommended approach
Original design largely intact	Preserve and maintain. Repair deteriorated components and avoid unnecessary redesign.
Original design altered but legible	Restore missing or changed features when evidence is available; otherwise use a compatible, simplified contemporary solution.
Original design significantly altered or concealed	Remove incompatible coverings when feasible, document surviving evidence, and reconstruct only when substantiated. A compatible new storefront may be preferable to an unsupported replica.
Non-contributing or new building	Improve compatibility with the district through scale, rhythm, materials, transparency, and placement without copying historic ornament.

2. Address urgent building needs first

Stop active water entry and stabilize unsafe masonry, parapets, roofs, and structural elements.

Correct drainage, flashing, downspout, and grade conditions that are causing deterioration.

Protect historic materials during construction; do not remove sound features merely for contractor convenience.

Coordinate hazardous-material testing, life-safety work, and temporary protection before opening concealed assemblies.

3. Recommended application materials

☐ Completed project information and checklist.	☐ Typical details at storefront framing, window profiles, trim, cornices, parapets, attachments, and transitions to historic materials.
☐ Current color photographs of the full building, each facade affected, close views of the work area, and neighboring context.	☐ Product data, finish samples, mortar analysis or mix, paint colors, glazing information, lighting specifications, and sign dimensions.
☐ Historic photographs, survey forms, Sanborn maps, original drawings, or physical evidence when restoration or reconstruction is proposed.	☐ Written description of deterioration and why repair is or is not feasible when replacement is proposed.
☐ Dimensioned elevations or annotated photographs showing existing and proposed work.	☐ A construction protection plan for significant masonry, windows, storefronts, and public-facing features on major projects.

EARLY CONSULTATION

Applicants should seek a conceptual review before ordering custom windows, removing masonry coatings, finalizing structural interventions, or completing a design that depends on a variance or code alternative.

PART I - REVIEW TOOL

HPB Checklist: Project, General Compliance & Storefronts

PROPERTY / DISTRICT	Address: _____ District: _____
BUILDING STATUS	☐ Contributing ☐ Non-contributing ☐ Not determined
PRIMARY FACADE / WORK	Facade(s): _____ Work: ☐ Storefront ☐ Windows ☐ Doors ☐ Signs ☐ Awnings
OTHER WORK	☐ Masonry ☐ Roof ☐ Equipment ☐ Addition ☐ New construction ☐ Other: _____

A. GENERAL COMPLIANCE

☐	Work and affected public views are clearly identified.
☐	Contributing status, period of significance, and survey documentation are identified.
☐	Historic photographs and physical evidence are included when restoration is proposed.
☐	Character-defining features are retained and protected during construction.
☐	Maintenance and repair are considered before replacement.
☐	Replacement is limited to deteriorated components and supported by condition documentation.
☐	New work is compatible, distinguishable on close inspection, and reversible where feasible.
☐	The proposal is coordinated with building, accessibility, sign, and fire requirements.

Finding: ☐ Compliant ☐ Compliant with Conditions ☐ Not Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

B. STOREFRONT REVIEW

☐	Historic storefront opening, bay divisions, and alignment with the upper facade are retained.
☐	Display windows remain clear and are not reduced or permanently covered.
☐	Recessed entries, transoms, kickplates, pilasters, columns, and sign bands are preserved.
☐	New framing is appropriately scaled and located within the historic opening.
☐	Interior walls and dropped ceilings are pulled back from glazing and transoms.
☐	Materials are compatible; opaque infill, faux-historic cladding, and bulky residential systems are avoided.

Finding: ☐ Compliant ☐ Compliant with Conditions ☐ Not Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

HPB NOTES / STOREFRONT CONDITIONS

PART I - REVIEW TOOL

HPB Checklist: Windows, Doors & Materials

C. WINDOWS

- ☐ Historic windows are retained and repaired unless deterioration is beyond practical repair.
- ☐ Replacement matches opening size, operation, sash pattern, muntins, profiles, depth, and finish.
- ☐ Historic openings are not reduced, enlarged, combined, or infilled on primary facades.
- ☐ Divided lights have dimensional exterior profiles; flat between-glass grids alone are avoided.
- ☐ Glazing is clear or minimally reflective; dark tint and mirrored glass are avoided.
- ☐ Storm windows, screens, and energy upgrades are visually subordinate.

Finding: ☐ Compliant ☐ Compliant with Conditions ☐ Not Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

D. DOORS & ENTRANCES

- ☐ Original entrance locations and recessed configurations are maintained.
- ☐ Historic doors, transoms, sidelights, hardware, and thresholds are retained where feasible.
- ☐ Replacement doors are compatible in material, glazing, proportions, and finish.
- ☐ Security, access control, closers, and operators are integrated with limited damage.
- ☐ Accessibility work preserves significant openings and entrance features to the greatest extent feasible.

Finding: ☐ Compliant ☐ Compliant with Conditions ☐ Not Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

E. MATERIALS & MASONRY

- ☐ Historic brick, stone, terra cotta, tile, structural glass, wood, concrete, and metal are retained.
- ☐ Cleaning uses the gentlest effective method and an approved test area.
- ☐ Sandblasting, high-pressure washing, grinders, and damaging chemicals are not proposed.
- ☐ Mortar matches historic strength, permeability, color, aggregate, texture, and joint profile.
- ☐ Hard cement-rich mortar is avoided where it could damage softer masonry.
- ☐ Previously unpainted masonry remains unpainted unless a documented technical need exists.
- ☐ Synthetic siding, EIFS, faux masonry, and other coverings do not conceal significant materials.
- ☐ Replacement matches the visual qualities of the historic feature and limits removal of sound material.

Finding: ☐ Compliant ☐ Compliant with Conditions ☐ Not Compliant ☐ Not Applicable

HPB NOTES / MATERIAL CONDITIONS

PART I - REVIEW TOOL

HPB Checklist: Details, Equipment & Final Determination

F. AWNINGS & CANOPIES

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | Awning shape, slope, and dimensions fit the individual storefront or opening. |
| ☐ | Fabric is used unless historic evidence supports a metal canopy or marquee. |
| ☐ | Awnings do not cover transoms, pilasters, cornices, decorative masonry, or upper windows. |
| ☐ | Internal illumination, plastic forms, shingles, and faux mansards are avoided. |
| ☐ | Mounting uses mortar joints, existing holes, or reversible locations where feasible. |

Finding: ☐ **Compliant** ☐ **Compliant with Conditions** ☐ **Not Compliant** ☐ **Not Applicable**

G. SIGNAGE & LIGHTING

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Sign type, size, location, and quantity are scaled to the storefront bay and facade. |
| ☐ | Wall signs fit architectural panels and do not cross pilasters or cover details. |
| ☐ | Projecting signs maintain clearance and use attachments that minimize damage. |
| ☐ | Materials and lettering are durable and compatible; large cabinet signs are avoided. |
| ☐ | Lighting is external or carefully integrated, shielded, warm, and not excessive. |

Finding: ☐ **Compliant** ☐ **Compliant with Conditions** ☐ **Not Compliant** ☐ **Not Applicable**

H. UPPER FACADE, ROOF & NEW WORK

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | Cornices, parapets, decorative masonry, upper windows, and historic roof forms are retained. |
| ☐ | Rooftop additions and equipment are set back and screened from key public views. |
| ☐ | Conduits, vents, meters, louvers, dishes, and alarm devices use secondary locations where feasible. |
| ☐ | Additions and infill maintain compatible setback, height, rhythm, scale, and transparency. |
| ☐ | Removal of significant features is supported by documented condition and an applicable finding. |

Finding: ☐ **Compliant** ☐ **Compliant with Conditions** ☐ **Not Compliant** ☐ **Not Applicable**

HPB DETERMINATION ☐ **Approved** ☐ **Approved with Conditions** ☐ **Denied** ☐ **Continued**

GUIDELINES CITED

MOTION / CONDITIONS

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Storefronts & Entrances

The storefront is the most frequently altered portion of a downtown building and the part experienced most closely by pedestrians. It should read as a transparent, finely scaled frame within the larger masonry facade. Storefront work should preserve the relationship among pilasters, display windows, transoms, entries, kickplates, and the sign band.

Guidelines

1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Retain the opening. Keep the historic storefront width, height, bay division, and structural bays.
	Preserve transparency. Maintain large areas of clear glass. Interior display windows should not create a permanently blank facade.
	Maintain recessed entries. Preserve historic recesses and terrazzo, tile, or stone. When an altered storefront is redesigned, consider re-establishing a recessed entry block.
	Keep transoms visible. Repair prism glass, clear glass, leaded glass, structural glass, or other materials. Pull dropped ceilings back from the glass line.
	Retain kickplates and framing. Repair historic wood, metal, tile, or masonry. Make durable, visually solid, and proportioned to the display window.
	Use compatible replacement storefronts. Where the historic storefront is missing, base new storefronts on the building's dimensions and surviving evidence rather than a generic design.
	Integrate accessibility. Use the existing primary entrance when feasible. Operate sensitively; place ramps or lifts where they preserve the storefront's character.
Recommended	Avoid
Repair and reuse historic cast-iron columns, wood framing, structural glass, tile, transoms, and recessed entries.	Removing an entire storefront because a limited portion is deteriorated.
Use clear glazing and narrow-profile framing appropriate to the building's period.	Dark tinted, mirrored, highly reflective, or opaque glazing on the pedestrian level.
Place interior walls and ceilings several inches behind glass so the historic opening remains legible.	Building walls, shelving, or dropped ceilings directly against storefront glass.
Design security grilles as open, internally mounted, and retractable where security is necessary.	Solid roll-down shutters, exterior bars, or permanent opaque security panels.
Use a contemporary but compatible storefront when historic evidence is insufficient.	Inventing ornate details or applying a false 'Old West' facade unrelated to the building.
	EVIDENCE MATTERS A reconstructed storefront should be based on photographs, drawings, physical examples. Without evidence, use a compatible simplified design that does not imitate.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Windows, Doors & Transoms

Windows and doors establish the scale and rhythm of historic facades. Their value is not limited to the sash or door leaf; openings, lintels, sills, frames, trim, hardware, recesses, and glazing patterns collectively define the feature. Historic windows can often be repaired and upgraded for continued service.

Historic windows

Complete a window-by-window condition survey before proposing wholesale replacement.

Repair deteriorated joints, replace broken sash cords, consolidate localized decay, splice damaged wood, replace glazing putty, and weatherstrip operable sash.

Retain historic glass where feasible. Wavy, cylinder, plate, prism, leaded, and decorative glass contribute to character.

Use interior or low-profile exterior storm windows when energy or comfort improvements are needed and the installation does not obscure frames or trim.

When replacement is unavoidable, match the historic window's operation, sash dimensions, frame depth, meeting rail, muntin profile, glazing pattern, exterior finish, and relationship to the wall plane.

Doors and entrances

Retain historic doors, sidelights, transoms, vestibules, thresholds, and hardware whenever they can be repaired.

Use commercial doors with proportions and glazing appropriate to the storefront; avoid residential six-panel doors unless documented historically.

Locate new service doors on secondary elevations and keep primary entrances oriented to the public sidewalk.

Integrate closers, panic hardware, card readers, and automatic operators with limited alteration of historic fabric.

Recommended	Avoid
Maintain the original opening and repair frames, sash, trim, sills, and lintels.	Reducing an opening to fit a stock-size unit or infilling upper-story windows.
Use true divided lights or high-quality simulated divided lights with exterior muntin profiles and compatible spacers when historically appropriate.	Flat snap-in grids or between-glass grids that lack exterior dimension.
Match the visual weight of historic frames and sash.	Bulky vinyl frames, applied cladding, or profiles that substantially reduce visible glass.
Use clear glass or minimally reflective energy-efficient glazing.	Mirrored, bronze, gray, or black glazing that changes the facade's transparency.
Maintain historic transom height even when interior ceilings are lowered.	Covering transoms with signs, panels, insulation, or ceiling construction.

REPLACEMENT DOCUMENTATION

A replacement request should identify each unit proposed for replacement, describe deterioration, explain why repair is not feasible, and provide a profile comparison showing the existing and proposed frame, sash, muntin, and glass setback.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Masonry, Wood, Metal & Exterior Materials

Historic exterior materials are both structural systems and irreplaceable records of craftsmanship. In Cheyenne's climate, successful repairs must manage moisture and freeze-thaw exposure while remaining physically compatible with older brick, stone, mortar, wood, terra cotta, concrete, and metal.

Masonry

- Identify the cause of deterioration before repointing, coating, or replacing masonry. Common causes include failed flashing, leaking roofs, blocked drainage, rising damp, incompatible mortar, corrosion, and trapped moisture.
- Repoint only open, cracked, or deteriorated joints. Remove mortar with hand tools or carefully controlled methods that do not widen joints or damage masonry arrises.
- Match the historic mortar in strength, vapor permeability, color, aggregate, texture, and joint profile. Mortar should generally be softer and more permeable than adjacent masonry.
- Clean only when necessary for material preservation or removal of harmful soiling. Start with low-pressure water and non-ionic detergent; use approved test panels and allow adequate evaluation time.
- Do not sandblast, dry-grit blast, use high-pressure water, or apply harsh acids that remove the protective fired surface of brick or erode stone.

Wood, metal, terra cotta, tile & structural glass

- Repair wood with epoxy consolidation, dutchman repairs, splices, and selective component replacement before replacing complete assemblies.
- Preserve pressed-metal cornices, cast-iron columns, steel windows, decorative railings, and historic hardware. Remove corrosion carefully and use compatible protective coatings.
- Retain terra cotta, glazed tile, prism glass, Vitrolite/Carrara glass, and decorative concrete. Use specialists familiar with the specific material.
- Match replacement pieces in dimension, profile, finish, sheen, and color. Use substitute materials only when the historic material is unavailable or technically infeasible and the visual result is compatible.

Recommended	Avoid
Leave historically unpainted brick and stone unpainted.	Painting sound, previously unpainted masonry solely to create a new color scheme.
Repaint previously painted masonry with a breathable system after correcting moisture problems.	Applying impermeable elastomeric or waterproof coatings without a hygrothermal assessment.
Use limited matching units or carefully selected salvaged material for localized repairs.	Replacing an entire facade to achieve a perfectly uniform appearance.
Route new attachments through mortar joints where feasible.	Drilling repeated anchors through decorative brick, stone, terra cotta, or cast stone.

CHEYENNE CLIMATE

Water management is the first preservation treatment. Sound coping, flashing, sealant joints at dissimilar materials, roof drainage, and proper grade conditions are essential to limit freeze-thaw damage.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Awnings, Signage, Lighting & Color

Awnings, signs, and lighting should identify and support a business while remaining subordinate to the architecture. These elements are often temporary; their design and attachment should preserve the facade for future uses.

Awnings and canopies

Fit each awning within an individual storefront, door, or window opening. Do not stretch one awning across pilasters or multiple unrelated bays.

Use sloped fabric awnings with open or minimally enclosed sides. A loose or narrow valance may carry small-scale lettering.

Align the top edge with the storefront framing below the transom or with another historically appropriate horizontal line.

Preserve historic metal canopies and marquees. New fixed metal canopies may be appropriate where supported by evidence or the building's period and character.

Avoid plastic, internally illuminated, shingle-covered, barrel, bubble, or faux-mansard awnings.

Signs

Select a sign type appropriate to the facade: sign-band, projecting/blade, window, awning-valance, suspended, painted wall sign where historically appropriate, or freestanding directory at a secondary entrance.

Place wall signs within architectural panels and keep lettering clear of cornices, pilasters, windows, decorative masonry, and upper-story features.

Coordinate multiple tenant signs through a shared location, dimensions, materials, lighting, and attachment strategy.

Use painted or finished metal, wood, routed or dimensional letters, durable composite panels, glass, or other high-quality materials compatible with the building.

Externally illuminate signs with small, shielded fixtures. Internally illuminated channel letters may be considered only when the scale, returns, brightness, and mounting are carefully integrated; large cabinet signs are not appropriate on significant historic facades.

Lighting and color

Recommended	Avoid
Use warm, shielded, pedestrian-scale lighting that highlights entrances, signs, and selected details.	Exposed conduit across primary masonry, unshielded floodlights, color-changing facade washes, or excessive brightness.
Use one restrained base color with coordinated trim and limited accent colors.	Painting every architectural element a different color or using high-intensity brand colors over large wall areas.
Base colors on historic materials, paint analysis, early photographs, or compatible period palettes.	Assuming every historic building was originally brown, red, or 'Western' themed.
Treat murals and large graphics as site-specific public art located on appropriate secondary walls.	Covering character-defining masonry patterns, ghost signs, windows, or primary facade ornament.

ATTACHMENT PRINCIPLE

Where feasible, attach brackets and conduit through mortar joints, existing holes, or reversible mounting systems. Provide attachment details with the application.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Roofs, Parapets, Cornices & Mechanical Equipment

Although many downtown roofs are not visible from the sidewalk, parapets, cornices, coping, rooftop profiles, and equipment strongly influence the skyline and can be critical to weather protection. Work at the roof should preserve both the building's silhouette and the durability of historic masonry.

Roofs, cornices and parapets

- 1 Retain the historic roof form.** Preserve flat-roof parapet profiles, visible slopes, historic towers, dormers, monitors, skylights, and rooftop features.
- 2 Repair cornices and coping.** Stabilize and repair masonry, stone, terra cotta, wood, or metal cornices. Match missing components based on evidence and provide concealed, durable flashing.
- 3 Preserve the skyline.** Do not add false mansards, oversized pent roofs, or unrelated roof forms that obscure historic parapets.
- 4 Manage water.** Slope roofs to drains or scuppers, maintain overflows, extend downspouts to safe discharge points, and avoid routing water across masonry facades.
- 5 Integrate rooftop work.** Set new stairs, elevators, decks, railings, and rooftop additions back from primary elevations and keep them below significant sight lines when feasible.

Mechanical, electrical and communications equipment

Locate condensers, air handlers, exhaust fans, vents, solar equipment, antennas, dishes, meters, transformers, and utility lines on roofs or secondary elevations where they are least visible.

Use parapets as screening when adequate; otherwise provide compact, visually quiet screening compatible with the roof and building rather than tall decorative enclosures.

Group penetrations and routes. Avoid scattered conduits, line sets, junction boxes, and vents across primary facades.

Do not cut decorative masonry or significant cornices for louvers or ducts. Use existing openings or secondary elevations when feasible.

Paint exposed conduit, guards, and equipment to blend with the adjacent material when concealment is not feasible, but do not paint historically unpainted masonry as camouflage.

Recommended	Avoid
Use low-profile equipment and locate it behind parapets or away from public viewpoints.	Placing rooftop units at the front edge where they project above the cornice.
Install solar panels in compact arrays set back from primary elevations and aligned with roof geometry.	Tilting panels above parapets or mounting them on visible historic roof slopes without analysis.
Use existing penetrations and route services through interior or secondary locations.	Cutting new openings through decorative masonry for convenience.
Screen trash, grease containers, and service equipment at rear or alley locations with durable, simple enclosures.	Attaching tall faux-historic screens to primary facades or significant masonry.

SIGHT-LINE DOCUMENTATION

For rooftop additions or equipment, submit street-level photographs or a simple sight-line study from the opposite sidewalk and key public approaches.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Rear Elevations, Alleys, Accessibility & Energy

Rear and secondary elevations

Rear elevations and alleys may be less formal than primary facades, but they often contain historic loading doors, industrial windows, masonry openings, ghost signs, fire escapes, and service patterns. Where alleys serve as public entrances or pedestrian routes, improvements should be welcoming without erasing the utilitarian character.

Retain significant openings, loading features, fire escapes, masonry, and ghost signs.

Use rear entrances for shared customer and service access when appropriate, with clear lighting, compatible doors, and coordinated small-scale signs.

Cluster trash, grease, utility, and mechanical equipment; screen it without blocking historic openings or required access.

Place new exterior stairs, ramps, and egress components on secondary elevations and design them as simple contemporary interventions.

Accessibility and life safety

Provide an accessible primary entrance whenever feasible. Evaluate threshold adjustments, door hardware, automatic operators, and interior floor modifications before adding prominent exterior ramps.

When a ramp or lift is necessary, locate it to preserve significant storefront components and design railings, landings, and guards with simple compatible materials.

Coordinate code alternatives, equivalent facilitation, and the International Existing Building Code with the Building Official; preservation review does not waive accessibility or life-safety obligations.

Locate new exit doors and stairs where historic materials and primary facade composition are least affected.

Energy efficiency and resilience

Recommended	Avoid
Begin with air sealing, roof insulation, mechanical controls, storm windows, weatherstripping, and repair of existing windows and doors.	Replacing intact historic windows as the first or only energy measure.
Insulate where assemblies can dry and historic masonry is not exposed to freeze-thaw risk.	Adding interior insulation to mass masonry without moisture and thermal analysis.
Use interior shading, UV films with low reflectivity, and discreet storm systems where needed.	Applying visibly mirrored films or covering historic glass.
Locate flood, snow, wind, and hail resilience measures where they preserve historic materials and appearance.	Using impermeable coatings or incompatible sealants that trap moisture.
Coordinate roof drainage, overflow, and snow/ice management before finish repairs.	Treating recurring moisture damage as only a paint or mortar problem.

WHOLE-BUILDING APPROACH

Energy work should be evaluated as a coordinated system. Air leakage, moisture movement, solar exposure, occupant use, and mechanical operation affect both performance and preservation.

PART II - DESIGN STANDARDS

Additions, Infill, New Construction & Demolition

Downtown will continue to evolve. Compatible new work can strengthen the historic district when it respects established urban patterns while remaining identifiable as a product of its own time. Compatibility is achieved through relationships - not through copying ornament.

Additions and rooftop construction

Locate additions at the rear or on secondary elevations where feasible and preserve the historic building's form from primary public views.

Use a connector or setback to distinguish a major addition from the historic building and to reduce removal of significant material. Keep additions subordinate in height, footprint, and visual complexity. A rooftop addition should be set back enough to remain minimally visible from key street-level viewpoints.

Use compatible materials, proportions, and colors without replicating historic detailing exactly.

Infill and new buildings

Maintain the established street wall and place active ground-floor uses and entrances along the sidewalk.

Relate overall height, floor-to-floor expression, cornice lines, bay widths, and facade rhythm to nearby contributing buildings.

Provide a transparent, pedestrian-scaled ground floor and a more solid upper facade.

Divide long facades into bays that reflect historic parcel widths and building rhythms.

Use durable, high-quality materials with depth and shadow. Contemporary design is appropriate when it responds to context.

Place parking, drive-through functions, blank walls, and major service areas away from primary pedestrian frontages.

Demolition and removal

Demolition is an irreversible action and should be considered only after the resource's significance, integrity, physical condition, structural feasibility, reuse options, stabilization measures, and potential economic assistance have been documented.

Applications should distinguish between selective removal of non-significant additions and demolition of a contributing resource.

Recommended	Avoid
Document existing conditions and evaluate stabilization, mothballing, sale, relocation, and adaptive reuse.	Using deferred maintenance alone as proof that demolition is necessary.
Retain significant facades, structures, and materials when an integrated rehabilitation solution is feasible.	Facade-only retention that removes the building's meaningful form and structure without justification.
Design replacement construction as part of the demolition review when required by adopted procedure.	Creating long-term vacant lots or surface parking gaps in the historic street wall.
Salvage reusable historic materials only after documentation and approval of removal.	Removing features or materials in advance of a decision.

COMPATIBILITY TEST

A successful new design can be contemporary. It should align with the district's scale, placement, rhythm, transparency, material quality, and base-middle-top organization without imitating a historic building.

PART III - ILLUSTRATED APPENDICES

Appendix A: Understanding a Historic Commercial Facade



Figure A-1. Typical facade anatomy. Actual buildings vary; identify the parts and relationships specific to the subject property.

KEY MESSAGE

Historic commercial buildings are composed as a whole. Changing the storefront, reducing a window, covering a transom, or removing a cornice can disrupt the proportions and visual hierarchy of the entire facade.

Reading the building before designing

Base	Storefront, entrances, kickplates, bulkheads, transoms, columns, and sign band. Usually the most transparent and most frequently altered zone.
Middle	Upper-story wall and windows. Usually more solid, vertically proportioned, and repetitive.
Top	Cornice, parapet, coping, pediment, or roof edge. Terminates the facade and contributes to the skyline.
Bays	Vertical divisions created by structure, pilasters, window groupings, and storefront modules.
Details	Masonry patterns, lintels, sills, brackets, tile, metalwork, ghost signs, and crafted finishes that distinguish the building.

PART III - ILLUSTRATED APPENDICES

Appendix B: Storefront & Window Do / Don't

DO

Retains transparency, proportions, and recessed entry

DON'T

Infill and opaque panels erase the historic storefront rhythm

Figure B-1. Preserve storefront opening proportions, transparency, transoms, recessed entries, and kickplates.

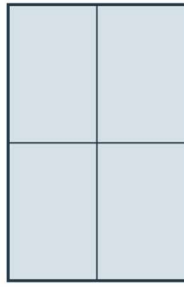
Recommended	Avoid
Keep storefront openings open, transparent, and aligned with historic bays.	Fill display windows with opaque panels, masonry, siding, or permanently closed blinds.
Retain or re-establish recessed entries when compatible with evidence and the block pattern.	Move the door forward and erase the historic entry recess solely to gain floor area.
Repair upper-story windows and preserve vertical openings.	Install horizontal sliders, reduce openings, or use visibly bulky frames.
Pull ceilings and interior walls back from storefront and upper-story glazing.	Build ceilings, walls, or shelves directly against glass.

TRANSPARENCY STANDARD

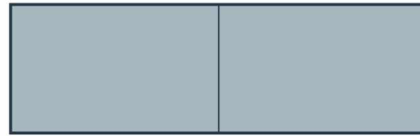
The ground-floor facade should allow pedestrians to see merchandise, activity, or an illuminated interior. Temporary displays are expected; permanent opaque treatments should be limited and located below typical eye level where possible.

PART III - ILLUSTRATED APPENDICES

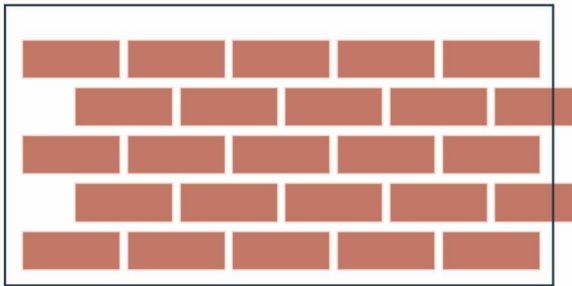
Appendix C: Materials, Signs & Downtown Character Areas

DO: retain vertical proportions

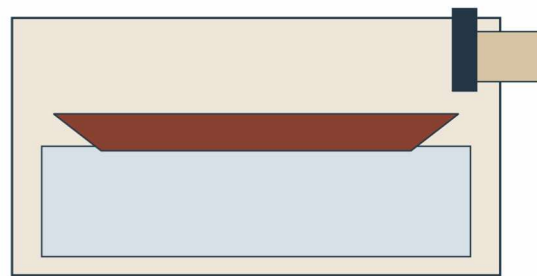
Repair sash; add discreet interior storm windows where appropriate.

DON'T: install horizontal sliders

Do not reduce, widen, or reshape historic openings.

DO: use compatible mortar and gentle cleaning

Test patches first; match mortar strength, color, texture, and joint profile.

DO: fit awnings and signs to the storefront bay

Use external illumination and attachments that minimize masonry damage.

Figure C-1. Preserve opening proportions, use compatible masonry treatments, and fit signs and awnings to the architecture.

Cheyenne-specific character area callouts

Commercial core	Give the highest priority to storefront transparency, continuous street-wall alignment, upper-story window rhythm, cornices, and finely scaled signs.
Capitol and civic approaches	Protect significant view corridors, formal facades, landmark buildings, and transitions between commercial and civic architecture. New work should be restrained and durable.
Depot and railroad edge	Retain transportation-related scale, masonry, loading features, industrial windows, canopies, signs, and broad public views. Avoid screening that erases the historic rail relationship.
Alleys and service corridors	Preserve utilitarian features while supporting safe secondary entrances, public art, lighting, and service screening. Maintain fire access and building ventilation.
Mid-century resources	Evaluate postwar storefronts, neon, structural glass, metal panels, and Modern-era alterations for significance before removal; not every appropriate historic treatment is Victorian.

NOT LEGAL BOUNDARIES

These character areas are a design-review aid, not a map of National Register or local district boundaries. Confirm the subject property's designation using City maps and survey records.

PART IV - ADMINISTRATION

Findings Templates, Glossary & Resources

HPB findings templates

APPROVAL

The Board finds that the property is [contributing/non-contributing] and that the proposed work is consistent with Guidelines [cite sections]. The project retains the identified character-defining features, uses compatible materials and proportions, and will not materially diminish the historic integrity of the property or district. The application is approved.

APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

The Board finds that the proposal can comply with the guidelines if modified. The application is approved subject to the following conditions: [list measurable revisions, required details, samples, staff review, or documentation]. Any material change from the approved documents requires additional review.

DENIAL

The Board finds that the proposal is inconsistent with Guidelines [cite sections] because it would [identify removal, concealment, incompatible material, altered opening, scale, or other impact]. The work would materially diminish the character-defining features or integrity of the property or district. The application is denied. Changes that may support approval include: [list].

Working glossary

Character-defining feature: A material, form, opening, detail, space, or relationship essential to a property's historic identity.	Primary facade: The elevation most publicly visible and architecturally important, generally facing a principal street.
Compatible: Harmonious in scale, proportion, material quality, rhythm, and placement without requiring imitation.	Repair: Work that returns an existing feature to sound condition while retaining as much historic material as possible.
Contributing resource: A building, site, structure, or object that adds to the significance of a historic district.	Replacement in kind: Replacement matching the historic feature in material, design, dimensions, profile, texture, and finish.
Integrity: The ability of a property to convey significance through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.	Reversible: Capable of being removed in the future with limited permanent damage to historic material.

Primary references and technical resources

- [City of Cheyenne Historic Preservation Board](#)
- [Cheyenne City Code, Chapter 15.50 - Historic Design Guideline](#)
- [National Park Service - Secretary of the Interior's Standards](#)
- [National Park Service - Preservation Briefs](#)
- [Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office](#)

Implementation note: Before adoption as enforceable downtown standards, coordinate the final text with City Code, the Unified Development Code, sign regulations, application procedures, and legal review.