

## 6.4.2 Storefronts



Commercial storefronts have architectural components which set them apart from residential or office spaces above.



Although these storefronts have different design elements, they all exhibit traditional storefront features, like shop windows, clearly marked doorways, and signage placement.



Traditional storefronts are built right to the edge of the sidewalk to provide maximum exposure to passing pedestrians and also frame the pedestrian space.

### PURPOSE AND INTENT

The most common feature defining historic commercial buildings is the storefront. While some more monumental historic commercial structures, such as banks, may not have classic storefronts as a ground floor feature, the majority of structures within the commercial areas of Los Angeles' HPOZs are defined by their storefronts. Although storefront character varies from area to area, there are features common to almost all storefronts. The most typical historic storefront configuration consists of a low base, known as a bulkhead, upon which large panes of glass are set, with a main store entrance located in the center or to one side of the storefront. Above the largest panes of glass, or the storefront glazing, there is often a band of narrow, horizontal panes known as transoms or clerestory glazing. The store's signage was historically located on awnings over these windows, was painted on the glass itself, or was located in a sign area just above the clerestory or transom glazing. Often, storefronts will include a second, less prominent door leading to second story offices or apartments.

### GUIDELINES

- .1 Historic commercial entryways should be preserved, both in their form and their individual components.
- .2 If windows or doors on an historic storefront must be replaced, they should be replaced in kind, matching the materials, dimensions, and glazing of the originals.
- .3 If an original storefront or its details are missing, replace them with new details in the same design as the originals if the original design is known. If the design is not known, the design of the storefront or storefront details should be compatible with the size of the opening, and the style of the building.
- .4 The transparency of first floor storefront and transom windows should be maintained. Painting or mirroring storefront or transom windows or entrydoor glazing is inappropriate.
- .5 Fixed bars or prominent roll-down gates are inappropriate on historic storefronts.
- .6 External signage should not be installed over storefront windows, doors, or transom areas.
- .7 Internal signage which substantially blocks the transparency of storefront windows is inappropriate.
- .8 Awnings should be similar in materials, design, and operation to those used historically.

## PRESERVATION PLAN WORKSHEET PAGE THIS SIDE WILL NOT BE PART OF FINAL DOCUMENT

### Notes on text:

Review these guidelines as you think about those appropriate for your HPOZ area. You may delete those that do not apply or rephrase/reverse them to meet your needs. Additional guidelines may be developed and listed here as well. As you think about appropriate guidelines, it may be helpful to make a separate list of areas of concern regarding work in this section, and then draft a guideline for each item. After doing so, compare your list with those to the left and remove/rephrase/delete/add as appropriate.

Clear and specific guidelines will help convey the expectations for specific types of projects within the HPOZ and provide certainty and predictability to the process for both the applicant and project reviewer.

When customizing guidelines in this section, please remember that a range of guidelines are listed on these pages to foster discussion and debate regarding the key points. A full assortment of topics and issues are listed, you may wish to cross many out, and add many more. You will find that some may not apply in your HPOZ, and others may be contradictory to those that do. Guidelines that do not apply may be deleted, reversed, or rephrased. General guidelines may be developed in more detail to suit the character of your HPOZ. You may find it helpful to make a list of topics you feel are important, and then draft guidelines to address each one.

Make use of a hierarchy of verbs and phrases to convey the general importance of each particular guideline. The use of the words 'are encouraged', 'are strongly discouraged', 'may', 'should', 'shall', etc. indicate how strongly the HPOZ board will, and the applicant should, adhere to a particular guideline. Each guideline listed on the left is only a draft concept, the verbs and phrases can be modified to meet local expectations.

### Additional graphics:



The transparency of storefront windows should be preserved. Mirrored finishes are inappropriate.



Filling in storefront windows dramatically changes the character of a commercial building



Traditional storefronts are built right to the edge of the sidewalk to provide maximum exposure to passing pedestrians and also frame the pedestrian space.

## 6.4.2 Storefronts



*Fixed bars like these are inappropriate on historic storefronts.*

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

#### EXEMPTIONS

.1

#### WORK REVIEWED BY PLANNING STAFF

- .1 The review of ordinary maintenance and repair applications as defined in Section 12.20.3.G for work solely within this section shall be delegated to the Director of Planning.

### GENERAL BACKGROUND AND ADVICE TO THE APPLICANT

Preserving the character of historic storefronts is essential to maintaining the character of historic commercial areas. Sometimes storefronts have been radically changed over the years through infill of windows, the exchange of doors, and often through an accumulation of signage obscuring storefront features. It is therefore important to carefully analyze the ground floor of an historic commercial structure to ascertain the original configuration of the storefront area before beginning work.

*Please refer to the Appendix for additional assistance and resources.*

## PRESERVATION PLAN WORKSHEET PAGE THIS SIDE WILL NOT BE PART OF FINAL DOCUMENT

### Notes on text:

### Additional graphics:

*List specific types of roof projects, if any, that would benefit from being exempt from the HPOZ review process. This section will be linked to the Exemption section in Chapter III, Function of the Plan.*

*Routine, recurring, and/or simple cases that are easily and effectively governed by the guidelines may be delegated to staff for review and processing. This may create more time for the board to focus on significant projects and speed the review of certain types of projects. Boards may also wish to continue to review all applications. This section will be linked to the Delegation section in Chapter III - Function of the Plan.*

*Finish with any background information or advice that the reader might find useful. A reference section at the end of this document will identify other places to find preservation information.*

*You may wish to include general advice, recurring problems and locally unique solutions, and if desired, even explain the rationale behind a particularly controversial or complicated local preservation issue specific to your community.*

*There will be an opportunity to list preservation resources, contacts, and directories in the appendix. In this way, the appendix may be updated as appropriate without requiring resubmittal of the entire document to the City Planning Commission for approval.*

# 6.4.2 Storefronts



A simple, unornamented two-bay storefront.



Decorative storefront windows are highly significant architectural features.

## ILLUSTRATIVE STYLES



The storefront spans many architectural styles, including this minimal art deco storefront.

PRESERVATION PLAN WORKSHEET PAGE  
THIS SIDE WILL NOT BE PART OF FINAL DOCUMENT

Notes on text:

Additional graphics:

You may notice the the "illustrative styles" page does not appear in every section. This is an optional, educational section. Illustrating common styles in your HPOZ as they relate to particular kinds of work can be helpful to educate applicants and owners. However, if gathering the additional photographs is a low priority, these sections may be omitted.