



Design Guidelines

A GUIDE TO REHABILITATION,
RENOVATION, AND NEW CONSTRUCTION



130 W. Larrabee St.

Omro, WI 54963

920-685-7005 ext. 22

Fax 920-685-0384

www.futureomro.org

Table of Contents

Intent (1)	Lighting (22)
Introduction to Main St. Approach (2)	Awnings (23)
Design Assistance (3)	Maintenance and Repair
History of Omro (4)	Masonry (24-27)
Definitions (5)	Wood (28)
Building Assessment (6)	Architectural Metals (29)
The Commercial Façade (7)	Windows (30-32)
Design (8)	Doors (33)
Storefront Materials (9)	Painting (34)
Color (10)	Building Concerns (35)
Blank Sidewalls of Buildings (11)	Appendix (36)
Store Backs (12)	City/State Building Req (36)
Landscaping (13)	Basic Guidelines for Building Rehabilitation (36-37)
Visual Screening (14)	Historic Preservation & Rehabilitation Websites (38)
Pedestrian Access (15)	Historic Tax Credit Info (38)
New Construction (16-17)	
Signage (18-20)	
Size (21)	
Lettering (21)	

Intent

PHILOSOPHY OF FUTURE OMRO DESIGN COMMITTEE

When Omro Main Street began operating as Future Omro in 2014, its Design Committee came together with a common goal for the district: to improve the physical appearance of the area, while preserving the historical integrity of its buildings. The physical appearance of a downtown portrays an image of the entire community. A series of quality building restorations, attractive signage and pedestrian amenities gives the impression of a unified commercial/retail district, and in turn affects the decisions that residents, visitors, consumers and investors make about the district.

The Design Guidelines for Future Omro and the Main Street District are one of the many ways in which the organization is

able to assist developers, owners, and tenants in improving the visual qualities of their buildings. These guidelines focus on the concepts and issues surrounding historical restorations, building rehabilitation, and new construction within the district.

The design policies of Future Omro, as well as general information and suggestions, are highlighted in this booklet. It addresses topics ranging from the façade of a building, to awnings and signage, to maintenance and repair. Future Omro also provides assistance in the form of grants, signage/façade design and color selection, information on City codes and ordinances, and development guidance.



Introduction

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH



This five-story clock and bell tower was once a combination municipal building, fire station, jail. It remains Main Street's most prominent landmark today.

Future Omro has adopted the Main Street Approach, a locally based effort which combines historic preservation with economic development to restore a working, growing, and aesthetically pleasing business region that works to reinforce and rekindle the economic vitality and values that Main Street stands for – making downtown once again the unique commercial and social heart of the city.

The Main Street Approach builds on a downtown's inherent assets of rich history, architecture, independent specialty retailers, personal service, traditional values, government and downtown cooperation. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy that is appropriately scaled to each community's local resources and conditions.

The approach advocates restoring the historic character of a Main Street while pursuing traditional development strategies—such as business recruitment and retention, real estate development, and market analysis. Historic preservation restores pride in downtown and enhances its' image as an enjoyable place to shop, socialize and do business. People are more inclined to do business in architecturally attractive buildings that feel inviting, such as

the Downtown buildings that exhibit their traditional details and character, not buildings that are run-down or uncared for. In this respect, historic preservation compliments and guides economic development.

Managing the design changes that take place in a Main Street District is a critical part of successful revitalization strategies. In order to reach these goals, the physical changes that take place downtown - building revitalization, new construction, upgrading public improvements - must respect the existing architectural environment and the emotional, economic and historic values it encompasses.

The process is a practical approach designed to evoke positive change in downtown with benefits that are both tangible and intangible. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to Omro's success as is recruiting new business, rehabilitating old buildings, and expanding parking. The Main Street approach can and does produce highly visible short-term results, while creating changes in attitude, leadership and the economy that lead to long-term success.

Design Assistance



Future Omro offers guidance to business and property owners in the program area, as well as tenants, who are interested in doing rehabilitation, renovation, or new construction. Examples of possible improvements, color schemes, signs, paint and awning samples, and technical information about how to get the work done, may be available.

Recognizing that each building is unique, these design guidelines serve as a framework for various projects. They suggest ways in which property or business owners and developers can become a part of and add to the diverse charm and history of Omro's Main Street district.

There are a few simple steps to follow in applying for individual design assistance:

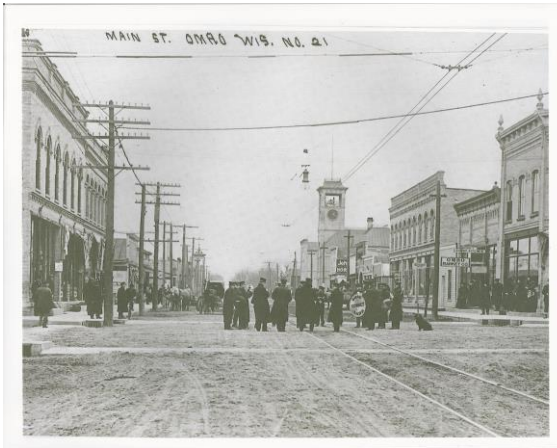
1. Contact the Future Omro office for information, guidelines, and an application.
2. Complete an application and review the requirements for the district.
3. Meet one-to-one with a Future Omro representative and Main Street Architect to collect information, which can then be applied to drawings of the project's goals.

4. Receive input and additional assistance from the City Building Inspector.
5. Submit completed application and drawings to Future Omro Design Committee for approval.

Future Omro
Dana Racine - Director
130 W Larrabee Ave
Omro WI 54963
Phone: (920) 685-7005 ext. 22
www.futureomro.org

History of the Main St. Area

The site of present day Omro was Winnebago Indian territory when it was first visited by French explorers in 1639. A fur trading post was established in the area by Charles Omereau, a French trader and blacksmith, who gave his name to the future city. What was a settlement by 1847, became a Village in 1849, and from there developed thriving commercial and industrial districts by 1857.



Omro's location on the Fox River gave it two early advantages: a position on one of the few natural transportation and communication routes of the time, and an abundant water supply for industrial use. By 1880, Omro had become a stop on the railroad line, grown to more than 2,000 inhabitants, and was home to the county fairgrounds, several mills, machine works, and carriage and glass factories. Eventually, most of the manufacturing activities in Omro either relocated to nearby Oshkosh or faded away. By the turn of the century Omro had become a quiet trading center for the surrounding countryside. In 1944, Omro became a city.



Definitions

Cladding

A protective or insulating layer fixed to the outside of a building or other structure.



Awning

A cover typically made of cloth over a metal frame that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

Bulkhead

Cladding of storefront base below windows.

Canopy

A fixed, roof-like covering that extends from the building as protection from the sun and rain

Corbelling

A bracket of stone, wood, brick or other building material, projecting from the face of a wall and generally used to support a cornice or arch.

Cornice

Any projecting ornamental molding along the top of a building or wall, architecturally finishing or crowning it.

Façade

The face or front of a building.

Lintel

A horizontal beam bridging an opening.

Muntins

Secondary framing members or dividing bars in windows.

Pier

A vertical, structural element framing the storefront, which is usually made of masonry.

Soffit

The exposed under-surface of any overhead component of a building (arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel or vault.)

Streetscape

The urban public space that includes the street and sidewalks and is bounded by the buildings on each side of the street.

Transom

A small often hinged window above another window or door.

Building Assessment

RENOVATION,
RESTORATION, AND
NEW CONSTRUCTION



Omro's Main Street District, like many commercial and residential areas, was built in blocks of similar construction creating a consistent "fabric." The consistency of building design (in form, materials and function) gave a strong visual image particular to Omro Main Street. It also helped create an attractive, prosperous place for customers to do business.

As in many downtowns, the Omro Main Street District experienced a deterioration of its urban fabric. Some buildings were lost due to age or changing technology; others were changed to accommodate new retail trends and styles. The majority of the physical modifications to the buildings took place within the retail component. These changes were primarily superficial and additive: for example, covering up the original façade or infilling windows. Of the buildings remaining, many still have the original storefront intact; others may need some reconstruction or restoration.

Property owners, tenants or developers who wish to renovate or restore their buildings should begin by assessing the

current visual condition of the entire façade. Some critical questions to ask oneself may include:

1. How could improving the storefront relate to the entire visual impact of the building?
2. How does the building relate to adjacent and nearby buildings?
3. How does a storefront improvement relate to the upper portion of the building? Is the percentage of glass versus wall balanced between the storefront and upper stories? Is signage appropriately placed?
4. What changes are needed to improve the appearance and integrity of the building? Are windows their original size and shape? Is the cornice in need of repair or replacement? Do window hood moldings need repair?

Many of the existing buildings in the Main Street district are original in their historical charm, and preserving that character is an essential part of the revitalization process. They are an integral part of telling the downtown story.

The Commercial Façade



The basic commercial façade consists of three parts: 1) the storefront, with entrance and display windows; 2) the upper office/residential façade, usually with regularly spaced windows; and 3) the cornice, which caps the building. Although there may be variation in the shape and style of the components, they are the fundamental elements of a commercial façade.

The storefront opening is bound on each side by piers, which are usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded above by the storefront cornice, which is the structural member supporting the upper façade, and bound below by the sidewalk.

In the past, the storefront was composed almost entirely of windows, which used clear glass. The large glazed opening displayed goods or services available inside. It also allowed natural light deep into the store and minimized the need for artificial light sources.

The storefront's visual openness is important to the overall proportion system of the façade. In the traditional façade, there is more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper façade.

Beyond the aesthetic appeal of consistency, maintaining the shape, form, and function of the elements within a historical façade can have a significant economic impact if the building is a historic restoration. Removing historic materials is a frequent reason why the National Parks Service rejects tax credit projects. Consistency is

also important for newly constructed buildings. While they do not want to mimic historical facades, it is important to maintain the continuity of the district.

Storefront restoration should return the façade to its original character, not conceal it. The following guidelines will help you achieve a beautiful façade:

1. Display windows minimum of 60% transparent. 30% on rear facades.
2. Original size, division and shape of display windows within the overall storefront frame should be preserved.
3. Reflective glass is prohibited.
4. Mirrored or heavily tinted glass on the first floor or street level should not be used.
5. Commercial entry doors use large, glass panels with vertical proportions to aid a sense of invitation and openness to the business.
6. Solid or residential-type doors with small areas of glass should be avoided.
7. Openings containing double entry doors should be retained.
8. Painted wood doors/framing preferred
9. Avoid infill building, window frames should be wood, or appropriately colored aluminum or vinyl clad.

Design



When designing a building, the opening of the storefront should be recognized and maintained. The storefront should maintain a clear distinction between the first floor and upper floors.

The basic storefront design should include large windows with thin framing members. The storefront should be set back 4 to 12 inches from the masonry piers and include a recessed entrance with an overhead transom; a storefront cornice; an exposed structural element or a horizontal sign panel at the top of the

storefront to separate it from the upper façade; and low bulkheads at the base to protect the windows and provide window display platforms. The basic configuration can be constructed from traditional or contemporary materials and achieve the same result. However, if working with an existing building, restoration is preferred and is required for federal tax credit eligibility. Storefronts that are newer than the building, but over fifty years old, can themselves be considered historic and be maintained.

Contact the Future Omro office (920-685-7005 ext. 22) or the Omro Area Historical Society (920-859-0339) to see if there are early photographs of your building or a similar building. They can be a valuable visual tool in determining the original design, materials, and signage used on your building. The photos or drawings can also be used as art once the building is completed. When using early photographs to aid in the restoration of a building, there are various elements to look for:

1. The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration.

2. The storefront should be primarily clear glass. Window treatments, such as blinds or curtains, may be used if the business requires some privacy, and can assist in energy conservation.
3. Storefront bulkheads should be restored or rebuilt.
4. Transom windows that are blocked in or covered should be opened up and restored to their original appearance.
5. If it is practical, original or historic elements such as cast iron columns, storefront cornices, entry doors and lighting fixtures should be restored.
6. Signage, lighting and awnings should be integrated into the storefront design.
7. Inappropriate historical themes should be avoided. Copying colonial or other periodic design elements, for example, is not acceptable. Stay true to the period during which the building was constructed and its original style. If constructing a new building, do not imitate the historical theme of adjacent buildings, but try and find a balance between the historical feel of the Omro Main Street district and a new innovative design.

Design

STOREFRONT MATERIALS

APPROPRIATE STOREFRONT MATERIALS

The following is a list of appropriate materials to assist you in designing your storefront. All materials are subject to approval by the Future Omro Design Committee.

Concrete
Glass
Masonry
Metals: Steel, Aluminum
Stone
Tile
Wood



STOREFRONT MATERIALS

Whether designing a new storefront or renovating an existing building, materials should be kept simple and unobtrusive. The goal is to harmonize with surrounding buildings. It is preferable to use existing materials whenever possible and it's almost always better to repair than to replace.

Use materials that perform their intended function well and use them consistently throughout the design. When replacement is necessary, choose materials that best resemble the original materials used. Replacement windows should replicate the original in size, style, materials and operation type. When substituting materials, adhere to their original appearance, matching muntin locations, window proportions, size of sash and framing elements, and window finishes. Artificial, "snap-in" muntins or those sandwiched between double-glazing are not appropriate substitutions. This applies to upper story windows as well as storefronts. Avoid filling in, subdividing, or altering the size, shape, and proportion of upper story windows.

Example: If an aluminum storefront is used in lieu of wood and steel, be sure its color harmonizes with the historical character of the period. A clear aluminum finish is inappropriate for the age of existing buildings in the Omro Main Street area.

Similarly, the use of glass should be consistent with the historical character. Improvement of glass performance dictates the probable use of thermopane glass, but the color should remain clear. Rough textured wood siding, vinyl siding, fake bricks or stone, efis, and gravel aggregate materials are not historically appropriate or acceptable on new or existing buildings.



Design

COLOR

COLOR

As with materials, the color scheme chosen for the façade should be sensitive to the time period during which the building was constructed. To determine a color scheme, consult Future Omro staff for assistance, or consult a professional.

If you have a masonry façade that is already painted and the paint seems to be holding, paint it again. The paint is probably helping to preserve the masonry. If masonry is to be painted, the colors used should be within the natural color range of the material. If the masonry has not been painted and is in good condition, avoid painting it.

Colors should accentuate the architectural details of the building, but do not overdo it! The levels of coloration might be broken down as follows:

Base Color
Accent Colors
Major/Minor Trim Colors



Design

BLANK SIDEWALLS OF BUILDINGS



Sidewalls are more difficult to treat aesthetically because trim is held to a minimum and there generally are few windows, doors or other features. Consult city ordinances and codes regarding sidewall mounted signs, as well as any other modifications. The following treatments can help “dress up” a blank wall.

CONTINUATION OF STOREFRONT ELEMENTS

Aesthetically significant storefront elements can be extended across the sidewall, including façade trim, window head millwork, and wall accent trim or paint color. Their introduction adds a horizontal or vertical rhythm and interrupts a monotonous wall. It also prepares pedestrians for what they will see when approaching the storefront.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

If an exposed sidewall is adjacent to parking or pedestrian access, the introduction of a door can provide convenient access into the building, as well as adding interest. Original openings should be reopened and used. The door should include trim and other physical amenities to invite use and avoid

the appearance of a hole in the wall. The addition of windows visually opens the wall and building’s interior to the pedestrian. Caution should be used to avoid competing with the main entrance. A second entry may also entail some interior remodeling to accommodate traffic flow, as well as security.

LANDSCAPING

If the sidewall is clean and the addition of storefront elements, doors, or windows is not appropriate, landscaping can lend an economical solution.

When professionally designed and installed, landscaping can add rhythm, pattern and concealment. Landscaping can be used in correlation with other treatments as well. However, it is important to note that landscaping will require maintenance and is susceptible to damage. This is also true for any alternate sidewall treatment.

Design

STORE BACKS



Many buildings have expanded over time and the backs of the retail establishments have changed. If the colors and amenities can be redone to match the fronts, the alleys and store backs will visually correlate with the storefront. As in storefront design, maintain a clear distinction between the first floor and upper floors. Keep the same paint colors as on the front of the building and follow the same storefront guidelines for window displays and lighting. Additional lighting may be desired for safety. Rear entry signs can be the same design as the storefront, but on a smaller scale. If there is no rear entry, a sign directing pedestrians to the front entry can be hung, again using the same design as the main sign. Awnings in front and back help unify the building. Use the same colors and design for the rear awning, but on a smaller scale than in the front.

Receptacles should be contained within an enclosed space, which incorporates the design of the building. Also, consolidation of neighboring receptacles into a single concealed area is encouraged when it is possible. This allows the businesses to maximize the available parking space.

Distinguish between public and employee parking: use a sign similar to signs on your building. Provide walkways and plantings when appropriate.



Design

LANDSCAPING

APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPING ELEMENTS

A greenhouse or plant nursery is able to assist you in landscaping your site with the most appropriate plantings. All materials are subject to approval by the Future Omro Design Committee.



Landscaping of the streetscape can help invigorate the pedestrian environment at the street by adding color and life. The city is responsible for the installation and care of street landscaping; however, business owners can supplement what is already in place by providing plantings of their own. Plantings should be placed at rear and side entrances of buildings to make them more attractive. Landscaping is also appropriate to improve islands within parking lots, which also accentuates the surrounding buildings. These plantings can be permanent or in portable planters. Plantings should also be used to enhance trash receptacle sites, non-accessible doorways, or parking areas and to emphasize the architectural features of a building.



It is important to note that landscaping treatments are intended to enhance a building's features, not to hide elements that may be in disrepair. Landscaping should be a secondary element to the overall design scheme. If you do incorporate plantings into your plans they must be maintained. An empty or poorly maintained flower box can be unsightly and shrubbery or trees that are not properly or regularly trimmed become an eyesore.

Consult with a qualified nursery to select plantings that will perform well given the placement and conditions of your site.

Design

VISUAL SCREENING

APPROPRIATE VISUAL SCREENING MATERIALS

The following is a list of appropriate materials to assist you in concealing your equipment from pedestrian traffic. All materials are subject to approval by the Future Omro Design Committee.

Wooden Fences
Masonry Enclosures



Many places of business require outside equipment that often proves unsightly. Trash receptacles, condensing units, electrical transformers, and loading areas

are obtrusive and often impair pedestrian traffic. As essential as they may be, these objects do little to add to the aesthetics of the building. There are several methods of reducing their negative impact:

ELIMINATION

If possible, eliminate these objects. Trash receptacles can be located indoors if space is available without endangering health or creating an odor problem. Air conditioning condensers can be roof mounted and electrical transformers can be installed inside the building. However, this can be a costly procedure, as transformers must be housed in a fire-rated and ventilated area.

PLACEMENT

The most economical method of “screening” is placing unwanted objects away from pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Consideration should be given to access for maintenance and pick-up especially if the objects in question are trash receptacles. Attention should also be given to adjacent property owners and their pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns as well.

CONCEALMENT

In many instances, trash receptacles, condensers or transformers must occupy the same general vicinity as pedestrians. The only option in this circumstance is concealment. There are several visual barriers available on the market, such as wooden fences or masonry enclosures. While these are acceptable, the preferred method is to construct visual barriers with materials consistent with the adjacent building. This creates a screen that is more compatible with the storefront. Another method of concealment is the use of landscaping. With professional assistance, an appropriate pattern and species of plants can be chosen. It should be noted, however, that both landscaping and equipment would require an acceptable level of maintenance. With either method, the consolidation of receptacles between neighboring businesses is the most efficient. A single enclosed space, housing multiple receptacles, allows the businesses to maximize their space for parking and/or landscaping while discretely screening trash and other unsightly objects.

Pedestrian Access



When considering the design of pedestrian access components, it is important to note that public perception and building/business identification are directly related to building access. Accessibility is also important to ensure convenience, safety, and repeat business of the customer. Pedestrian access should be closely related to parking and must incorporate the ADA accessibility requirements.

FRONT ENTRANCES

Front entrances are the most important aspects of the district. Clearly identified entries are important to storefront design and define the street's image, which invites browsing and window-shopping. Canopies, color, signage and proportions of the building can combine with the front entrance to create a strong, recognizable image.

REAR AND SIDE ENTRANCES

In an urban district, rear and side entrances often have more access to parking than front entrances. Design of these elements should incorporate the development of the entire exposed rear and side walls for building identity,

including signage, colors, and materials. The potential impact of these walls is often overlooked. A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called "double fronting."

Advantages of double fronting include:

- 1.Circulation patterns are enhanced.
- 2.Better access to off-street parking.
- 3.Store identity is created on more than one side of the building.

Disadvantages of double fronting include:

- 1.Initial cost of construction is increased.
- 2.Maintenance costs are increased as additional windows, doors and sidewalks are created.
- 3.Security problems increase.

New Construction

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots in the Main Street District is encouraged. The design of new and infill projects, particularly the front façade, creates unique design challenges. Good building designs will vary according to their settings. Buildings should look new, not copy their historic neighbors. Copying detracts from an area's character by compromising what is authentic and historic. However, the new building must be sensitive to the character of its neighbors.

The following criteria may be used to evaluate the visual relationship between an infill building and its surroundings. When followed, these criteria will help create a unified and consistent image.

INFILL

Replacement of an occasional missing building in an otherwise continuous street is known as infill construction. The goal of preserving Future Omro's prevalent image lies in maintaining design consistency. It is important that individual buildings act as part of the whole.

HEIGHT

Single infill structures should respect the heights of existing buildings. Buildings which are significantly higher than their neighbors can cause "snow drifting" onto adjacent buildings, which may not have the structural capacity to support the extra load. Also, a new façade that is too high or low can disrupt the harmonious nature of the block.

WIDTH

The infill building should reflect the characteristic rhythm of the facades along the street. If the site is large, the width of the façade can be divided into a number of smaller bays. The proposed infill building should fill the entire width of the void between adjacent buildings.

PROPORTION

The characteristic proportion (the relationship or ratio between height and width) of existing façade should be respected.

ROOF AND CORNICES

The form of the roof and building cornice should be similar to those on adjacent structures.

New Construction

SETBACK

The new façade's relationship to the street (called the setback) should be consistent with that of neighboring buildings. Street alignment is very important to the image of unity. The strength of urban streets comes from individual buildings standing "shoulder-to-shoulder," creating the total composition of the district.

COMPOSITION

The composition of infill should be similar to surrounding facades. The repetition of similar patterns is important for the sense of unity. For example, window shapes, cornice lines, and brick detail are all important elements for a unified façade. The ratio of solid wall to window in the infill design. Maintain the pattern created by upper story windows taking into consideration rhythm, and horizontal and vertical alignment.

Signage

The following is a list of appropriate materials and signage types to assist you in designing your business signage. All other designs are subject to approval by the Future Omro Design Committee.

Backlit opaque signs
Changeable type signs
Digital signs
Sandwich board signs
Banners
Neon signs



Signs provide advertising, identity, and image. As they are an extremely visible element of the storefront, signs must be used carefully so as not to detract from the façade.

We recommend the following guidelines for business signs:

1. Review the City of Omro Sign Ordinances to insure compliance with requirements and restrictions before going forward with your signage. Many of the ordinances are listed within the Design Guidelines, but they are frequently amended and it is important your sign follows the most recent city requirements.
2. Messages should be simple. The major function of the sign is to introduce the storefront and its contents. Wording should be minimal and slogans avoided. Descriptive words should be used, rather than lists of items to be sold. Simple wording is easier to read by pedestrians and street traffic, without becoming distracting.
3. Windows and door signs are a low-cost way to advertise a business to pedestrian traffic. Paint lettering directly on a window or door glass, or apply vinyl letters. Gold leaf lettering and neon window signs are more expensive, but appropriate and very eye catching.
 - Limit a window sign to no more than 25 percent of the total glass area; do not obscure the customer's visibility.
 - Use a window sign to compliment other signs on the façade.
 - Avoid mass produced signs that are incompatible with the building.
 - Use quality workmanship rather than extravagant materials.
4. Banners and awning signs provide good business identification and advertising. Their cost is relatively low and canvas or canvas with vinyl coating can have a long life span.
 - Mount business sign banners perpendicular to the façade, allowing for pedestrian passage below.
 - Locate sign on vertical portion of an awning for maximum visibility.

Signage



Backlit opaque sign

Digital sign

5. Applied signs that are flat and fixed to a wall should relate carefully to the building façade.
 - Chain stores should implement city codes and adapt to the unique environment in which their business is located. This can include adjusting the sign's design and/or materials.
 - Limit signs to two per storefront.
 - When two signs are used they should complement each other in shape, color, size, and lettering style.
 - Locate directly above store entry, if possible.
 - The primary sign should be located above the storefront display windows but below the sills of second floor windows. On many turn-of-the-century buildings, a continuous brick ledge or corbelling is used to separate the second floor and floors above from the storefront below. This space is ideal for sign placement, as it was often created for this purpose. In some instances, newer buildings contain areas above the highest windows for signage. This location is acceptable, but should be avoided if possible.
6. Small projecting signs that use an icon and a minimal amount of lettering are effective and attractive, such as a barber's pole or shoe, for example. When placed near the businesses entrance, these signs clearly identify the store's purpose and entrance for the pedestrian. When used by several stores along the block, small hanging signs provide a pleasing visual rhythm.
 - Apply the wall sign to the lintel strip or other flat surfaces that are free of architectural details.
 - Limit the size of a wall sign to no more than 18 percent of total area of the first floor façade.
 - Avoid portable, lit up signboards.
 - Face hanging signs toward pedestrians.
 - Coordinate the size and placement of a hanging sign with its façade.
 - Locate signs at least 8 feet above the sidewalk to permit pedestrian passage, and no more than 12 feet above the sidewalk
 - Limit the size of a hanging sign to no more than 8 square feet.

Signage

7. Changeable type signs can be appropriate within the downtown, they will be approved on a case by case basis.
 - All changeable type signs must be engaged with the ground or visually tied to the ground.
 - The changeable type signs can only take up 50% of the sign area, not including supports.
 - The size of the sign should be appropriate to the scale and aesthetics of the building. Keep in mind that the district is geared to be pedestrian friendly, so signs should be human scale.
 - Copy can be no larger than four inches.
 - Face-lit signs are preferred.
 8. Please see the current City ordinances for specifications and allowances of digital signs. Digital signs are not allowed in the historic district and no variances will be granted for such.
 9. Use illuminated signs for businesses that are open after dark and for round-the-clock advertising to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
 - Design the light source to be part of the sign or hidden from view.
 - Use lighting that provides a true color rendition.
 - Avoid exposed lights that produce glare.
 - Hide the electrical fixtures, conduits and wires. This can be done by incorporating them into the sign or painting them to match the background.
 10. Use colors, materials and lettering size to harmonize with the building façade.
 - Limit each sign to a maximum of three colors, two materials, and one lettering style.
 - Use available information about the colors, materials, lettering style, and placement of the original signs on your building when designing new ones.
 - Wooden signs with raised letters, metal signs, painted signs, and neon and gold leaf are all appropriate for a downtown, though not for every building.
 11. Neon signs should reflect the character of the building and business. Often a muted approach works well for these purposes as it respects the historical nature of the area, yet helps a business define its' image.
 - If neon is an appropriate style for the business, it should be used for borders, logos, or verbiage and should not exceed 25% of the window.
 - The use of neon will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- and gold leaf are all appropriate for a downtown, though not for every building.
- Decorative, sans serif and serif lettering are all appropriate for business signs, though not for every sign and building.
 - Scale lettering to occupy no more than 65 percent of the signboard surface (between 8 and 18 inches tall). The sign should also be scaled to match its location. Again, review the City of Omro Ordinances to insure compliance with the requirements and restrictions.

Signage

SIZE

LETTERING

SIZE

When it comes to signage, big does not necessarily mean powerful. Primary signs can combine with the entire storefront to make a more meaningful statement than a large sign would make alone. The size should be appropriate for distances from which the sign will be read in a downtown setting.

LETTERING

Lettering styles are numerous and vary tremendously. The storeowner should have no problem finding a style that carries the desired image. Letters are also available in many colors. Choose a color that compliments the building and contrasts with the background of the signboard. Light letters on a dark background provide the easiest reading. Because of the large variety of letters and letter types, it is recommended that an advertising or sign company be consulted to assist in the selection of a type style and overall letter size.

LETTERING EXAMPLES

The following are font examples that may be utilized when creating business signage. When choosing a font it is important to consider its style in relationship to the image of the business, its readability for pedestrians, and its size in comparison to the façade.

COPPERPLATE GOTHIC BOLD

COPPERPLATE GOTHIC LIGHT

Eras Bold

Garamond

Gill Sans Bold

GOUDY STOUT

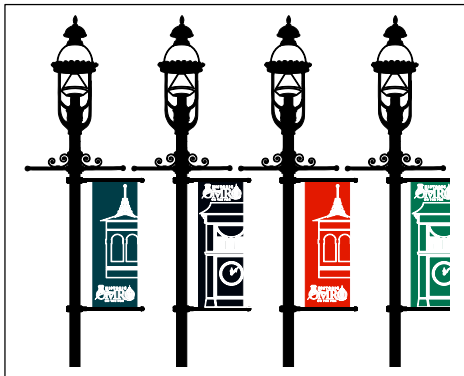
High Tower Text

Palatino Linotype

Pristina

Times New Roman

Lighting



Lighting building facades is an important element when considering visibility in the evening hours. Generally, the street lighting installed by the city provides good illumination of the overall building façade. However, you may wish to enhance the façade lighting to make your storefront more visible.

To attract attention to the storefront area itself, there are a couple of traditional methods of lighting. Well-lit display windows attract attention to the items being displayed and the residual light washes the sidewalk and attracts pedestrians. Lights over the recessed entry door and lit signage in the window may also be incorporated, which may enhance security.

Storefront lighting should be done tastefully, to highlight the product, the building or the signage. Flashing lights, flashing signage, and excessively bright lights are not appropriate.

Awnings

The following is a list of appropriate materials to assist you in designing your awning. All other materials are subject to approval by the Future Omro Design Committee.

Canvas
Acrylic Coated



The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provides shelter for pedestrians from sun and rain, stops heat build-up within the building, adds color, and acted as a transition between the storefront and the upper façade. The awning can also be used as a location for business signage.

If an awning is to be used, its shape should reinforce the frame of the storefront opening and compliment the window design. It is also important that the awning does not detract from the building appearance or its overall character. It should be attached below the storefront cornice or sign panel and should not cover the piers on either side of the storefront. The standard street level awning should be mounted so that its valance is approximately 7 feet above the sidewalk and projects 4 to 6 feet from the building.

The awning can also be a useful tool in disguising inappropriate storefront alterations while maintaining the proportions of the traditional storefront.

Awnings are available in several materials and colors with varying durability and cost. Canvas or acrylic-coated fabrics are the suggested materials for awnings, as they look attractive on the façade and are very durable. They are also available in a variety of shapes, with the traditional commercial awning having a watershed profile. Other profiles tend to be too contemporary when placed on a traditional façade. On buildings in the Omro Main Street District, aluminum awnings or canopies generally detract from the historic character and should not be erected. If a flat canopy exists, it can be dressed up with a 12 to 24 inch awning valance. Awning color should be selected to ensure compatibility with your building and with the color of adjacent buildings.

Maintenance and Repair

MASONRY



As in other Wisconsin cities, many of Omro's buildings are constructed of brick masonry. With proper care, a brick building can last for hundreds of years – but older bricks can be easily damaged. Such damage can cut short the building's life. Gentle methods of cleaning and tuck-pointing are especially important, because the damage caused by careless cleaning and tuck-pointing cannot be reversed.

Do not assume that all masonry needs cleaning. Masonry cleaning should be done to remove excess dirt and layers of paint; the goal should not be to make the bricks appear new or remove the patina of change. Minor staining, "ghosts" of painted signs and other discoloration can add character to a structure, and should be allowed to remain. If masonry is badly soiled and needs to be cleaned, several safe methods may be used. Since bricks differ in hardness, be sure you or your licensed contractor cleans a test patch in an obscure area so that you can discover any potential problems before work begins on the whole building.

WATER CLEANING

Washing with water and a mild detergent is the simplest and safest of all methods and is successful on lightly soiled masonry. This method is probably the easiest for an amateur, although it can be very time consuming. Water cleaning involves two steps. The first step is to presoak the masonry to remove dirt that is not tightly bonded to the surface. The second step involves scrubbing with a pad or power brush. Special care must be taken in water cleaning. Small cracks in walls, between bricks and around openings may allow water to seep into the wall, leading to interior water damage. Brick cleaning should be done before finishing the interior so that any damage can be spotted in time. Avoid water cleaning in cold weather, since absorbed water will freeze, expand and cause the bricks to fracture. Test washing a small area of the wall will help you determine how long the project will take.

Maintenance and Repair

MASONRY



HIGH PRESSURE WATER CLEANING

This method uses special equipment that develops enough hydraulic pressure to “force-spray” masonry. The high pressure actually injects water into crevices on the surface of the masonry, forcing out dirt and staining. Even though this process uses less water, interior damage can still happen, since the pressure forces water into tiny openings that would not otherwise leak. High-pressure water cleaning should be done by professionals with experience cleaning older buildings.

CHEMICAL CLEANING

Due to the large variety of chemicals available, their potential toxicity, the difficulty and expense of properly disposing of them, and the need for specialized equipment, you will need professional help for any chemical cleaning.

Chemical cleaning works best for paint removal and eliminating deep stains. Care must be taken in the use of acids – even in a diluted solution, acids can permanently damage limestone, marble and many other materials.

SANDBLASTING

Sandblasting, grit blasting, high-pressure grit washing and any other process that uses a high-pressure abrasive spray should NEVER be used on brick, wood, stone, or pressed metals. Blast cleaning of any type will rip off the protective surfaces of bricks and other materials, exposing their soft interiors to the elements and drastically accelerating the building’s deterioration. Even “safe” blasting that uses walnut shells or glass beads will not be safe for many buildings in the Omro Main Street District. There is no way to fix the damage sandblasting does.

Sandblasting buildings on the State and National Register of Historic Places is illegal under Wisconsin State law; and a blast-damaged building cannot receive federal or state investment tax credits, even if it is otherwise eligible.

Maintenance and Repair

MASONRY

TUCK-POINTING

Weathering takes its toll on masonry mortar joints. Years of freeze-thaw cycles eventually weaken mortar and masonry cleaning can aggravate this problem. Removal and replacement of unsound mortar is called tuck-pointing. Old mortar is removed and new mortar added and finished to match the depth, style, texture, and color of the original joint. You will probably want to use a professional experienced in tuck-pointing historic buildings to make sure the results are satisfactory and that the bricks are not damaged in the process.

New mortar should contain enough hydrated lime to make it softer than the masonry. When mortar joints are repointed with Portland cement, which is often harder than the old bricks, this can cause severe damage to the bricks. Bricks expand when hot and contract when cold, and mortar should be pliable enough to allow this to happen. When the mortar surrounding the bricks does not allow it to expand and contract, the faces of the bricks crack and fall off. This is called spalling, and, like sandblasting, there is **no way to repair damage**. A reasonably soft

mortar should contain at least as much hydrated lime as Portland cement, and preferably two to three times as much lime. A useful rule of thumb is that mortar used in pre-1875 buildings should contain a two-to-one ratio of lime to cement, and post-1900 buildings' mortar should contain equal parts lime and cement.

Since you will not replace all of the mortar, the new joints should match the color, texture, and tooling of the original mortar. To be sure that the new mortar will match the original, you should require a test patch. This test patch should be inspected over the course of several months, since it will change in appearance as it dries and cures. Make sure that no mortar is stuck to the face of the brick, that the contractor did not damage the bricks (no broken corners or cuts into the bricks) in the process of tuck-pointing, and that the contractor agrees to do the entire building according to the approved method.

Maintenance and Repair

MASONRY

MASONRY OPENINGS

Where new openings are required in masonry walls, or existing openings must be enlarged, remove the masonry to the next vertical joint and build back the opening to the desired size. “Toothing” allows a new opening to blend in and look like the original.

PAINTING MASONRY

If the masonry has historically been unpainted, **do not paint it** – the paint will not stick for a variety of reasons. If the masonry has been painted, and the paint appears to be holding well, don’t remove it – the paint is probably protecting the soft bricks, and you may damage the bricks if you try to remove the paint. If the building is painted, but the paint is coming off, you will need to remove as much as possible and carefully examine it to determine whether or not a new coat of paint will hold.

MURALS

If your building is fortunate enough to have a painted mural on the exterior, take great care in the preservation and restoration of it. Please contact Future Omro for guidance and assistance prior to beginning such a project and your mural will be a showpiece for years to come.

Maintenance and Repair

WOOD



The Omro Main Street District's historic buildings use wood on the exterior primarily for window and door framing, trim cornices, brackets and other details. Although masonry dominates most commercial buildings, maintaining and repairing wood features is essential to preserving the building's original design and appearance. Wood accents the masonry, and is one of the materials people come in contact with most often.

REPAIRING WOOD

If wood features are in need of repair, replace or patch the piece whenever possible. Replacing an entire window frame, for example, is not necessary if just one part of the frame is damaged. Replace the damaged part with same species of wood, if possible, for uniform finishing. In some cases, damaged areas can be replaced with a wood repair compound, which can be applied in places where a wood patch cannot be easily used and blended into the surrounding wood. When using these methods to repair wood elements, it is important to test the patch and make sure it can be easily finished to match adjacent wood. Some

patches and/or repair compounds do not stain well and, as a result, will be highly visible.

PAINT AND REFINISHING

Refinishing wood should not be patch job – the entire piece should be refinished. Paint or stain can be removed using several methods, including sanding, scraping, and chemical stripping. DO NOT sandblast wood –it will splinter, become pitted and “fuzzy,” which will damage its appearance and speed up the wood's disintegration.

Maintenance and Repair

ARCHITECTURAL METALS

Architectural metals, such as cast iron, galvanized steel, aluminum, copper, zinc, and tin are used for decorative cornices, window hoods, roof parapets, storefronts, and other details. Aluminum is used primarily for flashing, windows, and doors.

CLEANING

Any metal encountered can be cleaned. As with masonry, be careful to use the gentlest method possible, because most metals can also be damaged. DO NOT sandblast any metal except for cast iron – again, sandblasting will cause serious, irreversible damage. Cast iron is the only material on most buildings that can be safely sandblasted; be sure the metal to be cleaned is cast iron before you start. Be careful to sandblast only the cast iron elements; make sure other adjoining materials are protected from the spray.

PAINT

Metals such as iron, steel, and others containing iron should be painted to protect against rust. Copper, stainless steel, and other similar metals were intended to be exposed and should not be painted. Aluminum can be left exposed, painted, or finished with a baked enamel coating.

REPAIR

Most damaged metals can be repaired or replicated by a professional. Metals damaged beyond repair may also be replaced by fiberglass, epoxy, or other metals fabricated to match the original. If you use dissimilar metals next to each other, you will need to isolate them from each other to prevent electrolysis, a natural chemical reaction that can cause both metals to deteriorate.

Maintenance and Repair

WINDOWS



Windows are among the most prominent and important element of your building's façade. Unfortunately, windows are often the most altered and neglected building features. Though sometimes expensive, good windows are worth the cost and should possess several attributes.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Replacement windows should contain insulated glazing and "thermally broken" frames. Both glazing and frames will contain an air space and gaskets to eliminate frost and moisture condensation. A clear glaze must be used on the windows, as tinted windows are not appropriate for a storefront design. If the original windows exist, use storm windows to get a similar effect at a much lower cost.

LIGHT QUALITY

Properly sized storefront windows will enhance the amount of natural light entering the building. Glass is rated according to its ability to control the type of light entering – for example, E-rated glass blocks light waves that can discolor merchandise.

AESTHETICS

Window manufacturers offer a wide variety of colors, shapes and styles in standard sized units. With some additional cost, custom units can be made to fit any opening or building style.

If windows are completely replaced, new units should maintain the same proportions as the originals. This is not to be confused with replacement units that may be presently installed. Always use the entire original window opening, even if it was partially infilled during another remodeling. A building with a blocked-in storefront or windows will appear out of proportion, especially compared to those that have been done properly. Drapes or screens can be used to limit the interior's visibility, if desired.

UPPER-STORY WINDOWS

The visual importance of upper-story windows is evident in their steady march down Main Street. They give buildings the appearance of vitality and use, even if the upper floors are vacant. They create a repeated pattern that helps tie the facades together.

Maintenance and Repair

WINDOWS

Omro Masonic Temple



Before

After

Deteriorated upper-story windows have often been inappropriately replaced or boarded up. This treatment cheapens not only the character of the building, but the streetscape as well – a negative image that can be avoided through proper maintenance.

If windows have been infilled, the building owner should consider re-opening them for a variety of reasons. In addition to adding to the aesthetic quality of the building, windows that are infilled are an added hazard. For example, during fires they do not allow heat to escape and make it hard for people trapped in the building to find alternate exits. They also pose a greater security risk, since police patrolling the area cannot see what is going on inside. If it is not feasible to open up a window, it can be painted to simulate one, which will prevent the building from looking vacant.

WINDOW MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Check the wood parts of the window. Are there portions that are soft, cracked or split? Pay particular attention to the windowsills and bottom of the window sashes where water has collected. If sashes

or frames are deteriorated, window glass can fall out and endanger pedestrians below.

To maintain the windows properly, all deteriorated wood should be replaced with new pieces and the old paint scraped off. All cracks should be replaced and the frames primed and painted according to manufacturer's suggestions.

Loose or broken windowpanes can be easily fixed. First remove all broken glass and old glazing putty. Replace the glass with new panes similar to the existing glass and re-glaze using glazier's points and putty.

WINDOW REPLACEMENT

If a window has deteriorated beyond repair or is missing, the replacement should match the original window. Replacement windows should always fill the entire opening and duplicate the original pattern. For example, a double hung sash window should not be replaced by a single fixed pane of glass. Avoid the use of windows and shutters that are not in keeping with the style of the building.

Maintenance and Repair

WINDOWS

If possible, match the material as well as the design of the original windows. Standard wood windows are relatively easy to buy or have made. They may not be as expensive as you might think. More unusual styles may be custom ordered. Many window manufacturers have double hung replacement systems for only the parts requiring replacement. In some instances, double-glazed aluminum framed windows may be desired. If aluminum must be used, it should duplicate the design of the original window. It should be in a dark anodized or baked enamel finish rather than a light metallic color.

The joints between the window frame and the masonry opening should also be checked. Loose caulk should be removed and the joints re-caulked to prevent air and water infiltration.

STORM WINDOWS

Storm windows are a good idea for conserving heat and energy, especially on upper floors. When mounted on the exterior, these windows should be painted to match the color of the window sash and should duplicate the shape. On the front

of the building, it may be desirable to install storm windows on the inside where they will not be seen. Care must be taken that they are ventilated to prevent moisture from accumulating and damaging the wood.

Every storefront has a door or pair of doors entering the place of business. Traditionally, the entrance door was made of wood with a large glass panel. Every effort should be made to maintain and repair the original door.

PAINTING ALUMINUM

Many original doors have been replaced by standard commercial aluminum and glass doors. Although lacking in historical character, they are generally not a distraction either. Aluminum doors and storefronts can be made more compatible by using dark anodized or baked enamel finishes. An exposed aluminum surface must be cleaned and prepared for a zinc chromate primer or metal primer, followed by appropriate finish coats as recommended by the primer manufacturer. Use a factory finished, enameled or anodized aluminum frame, when possible.



Maintenance and Repair

DOORS

DOOR REPLACEMENT

If a door is to be replaced, there are three basic options:

1. Have a new door built with the same design and proportions of the original.
2. Find a manufactured wooden or steel door that resembles the traditional store door.
3. Use a standard aluminum commercial door with wide stiles and a dark anodized or baked enamel finish.

Do not use doors decorated with moldings, cross bucks or window grills. These doors are more residential in character and look out of place on commercial buildings.



Maintenance and Repair

PAINTING

One of the most important visual impressions of a downtown area is the composition of the building colors. This composition provides the most practical way of unifying a downtown area. These colors should be based on the prevalent stone or masonry existing in the area. The painting of historic building materials, particularly brick and stone, which has not been previously painted, is discouraged. This also goes for clear masonry sealers, many of which actually trap moisture and can contribute to the deterioration of historic building materials.

In general, you will want to choose your base color first, and then pick complimentary colors for the building's trim and contrasting, but not clashing, color for the storefront. Keep your building to four or five colors, at most. An architect's colored drawing can help you decide what combinations to use.

SURFACE PREPARATION

To protect your investment and provide a fresh appearance of the downtown, painting should be considered a regular maintenance issue. Prior to painting any existing surface, remove all loose paint and sand the surface smooth. Sandblasting cast iron work such as lintels, columns or railings, is an appropriate method of removing loose or weathered paint, but sandblasting will seriously damage anything else. Special care should be taken in distinguishing ironwork from pressed-coated metals. Sandblasting coated metal will remove the protective coating and ultimately lead to severe rusting. Use the appropriate primer recommended by the finish coat manufacturer.



Sample façade rendering

Maintenance and Repair

BUILDING CONCERNS

It is always important for building owners to continually maintain their buildings and keep them in compliance with both state and local building codes. In the Main Street District, this includes giving consideration to asbestos and lead paint, since many of the buildings were constructed before the materials were discovered to be hazardous. It is both unhealthy and unlawful to remove certain forms of asbestos. If asbestos or materials containing asbestos are suspected, notify an architect or building inspector. They can verify its presence and recommend a certified asbestos removal company.

Heating, ventilating, and electrical systems are also cause for concern in today's energy-conscious society. It is essential that licensed contractors or engineers inspect all systems, to assess their efficiency and safety. Expansion of the store area also dictates an investigation of the system's capacity. Storeowners should also be aware that spending more money on efficient systems would mean cost savings on a daily basis. Again, all systems must satisfy both the Wisconsin State Building Codes and the City of Omro regulations.

Appendix

CITY/STATE BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING REHABILITATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM WEBSITES

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT INFORMATION



CITY/STATE BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

It is important to contact the City of Omro and review the current city/state codes and ordinances, before beginning the construction or renovation of a building. While the Future Omro Design Guidelines incorporate many of the standards, they are continually being updated and all buildings must comply with the most recent amendments. Permits and inspections must also be obtained through the Omro Building Inspector before construction can begin.

For more information regarding this topic, please visit the City of Omro's website, or call Future Omro (920-685-7005, ext. 22)

www.omro-wi.com/e-gov/Omromunicipalcode

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING REHABILITATION

Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing standards for all programs under Departmental

authority and for advising Federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The standards for Rehabilitation address the most prevalent treatment. "Rehabilitation" is defined as "the process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values."

Listed are the 10 standards established by the Secretary of the Interior:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Appendix

CITY/STATE BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING REHABILITATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION/ REHABILITATION WEBSITES

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT INFORMATION



3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
 4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
 5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
 6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
 7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
 8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
- For further information on the Rehabilitation Standards, please contact Future Omro (920-685-7005 ext. 22), or visit:
- www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/tax/rehabstandards.htm.

Appendix

CITY/STATE BUILDING REQUIREMENTS

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING REHABILITATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION/ REHABILITATION WEBSITES

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT INFORMATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM WEBSITES

National Trust for Historic Preservation
<http://www.nationaltrust.org>

Wisconsin Historical Society
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org>

Wisconsin Trust
<http://www.wthp.org>

Advisory Council of Historic Preservation
<http://www.achp.gov>

Online Education
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/onlineed.htm>

HISTORIC REHABILITATION WEBSITES

Wisconsin Historical Society: Research the History of Your Building
<http://www.ala.org/practicing/groups/kc/AIAS075441>

Wisconsin Historical Society Frequently Questioned Answers
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/hp/buildings/faq/asp>
<http://wisconsinhistory.org/preserve-your-building>

HISTORIC TAX CREDIT INFORMATION

There are substantial tax incentives to rehabilitate historic buildings. For owners of properties listed in either the state or national register of historic places, Wisconsin provides two rehabilitation income tax credits. The first is a 5% investment tax credit for a depreciable, or income-producing historic building rehabilitated under the federal investment tax credit program. The other is a 25% investment tax credit for the approved rehabilitation of a historic owner-occupied personal residence. In addition, for depreciable, or income-producing properties listed on the national register, the federal government offers a 20% investment tax credit. Matching development sub-grants are also sometimes available to owners of historic and prehistoric properties for rehabilitation, restoration, and stabilization. Persons interested in the tax credits or the availability of grants should contact Future Omro (920-685-7005 ext. 22) before beginning rehabilitation plans.