

# Downtown West Bend Design Guidelines

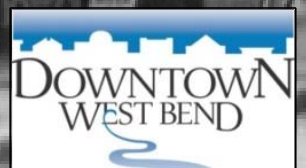
Adopted by the West Bend Plan Commission  
on June 5, 2001 and Downtown West Bend  
Association on March 7, 2001

SHOP  
FURNISHINGS

SHOP

OLIVIA DE HAVILLAND  
THE MALE ANIMAL

THE MALE ANIMAL  
TODAY



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## AREA OF DOWNTOWN WEST BEND



The downtown is that area bounded on the north by Washington St., (except the building frontages facing West Washington St.) on the west by 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Washington Street to Hickory Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Hickory Street to Chestnut Street, on the south by Chestnut Street from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Kilbourn Avenue and the Milwaukee River, and on the east by Auxiliary Court, Water Street and Wisconsin Street.

## **Introduction – The Main Street Approach**

The Main Street Approach combines historic preservation with downtown development to create a working, growing, and an aesthetically pleasing business center. This center works to reinforce and rekindle the economic vitality and values that Main Street stands for—making it once again the unique commercial and social heart of the city.

The process is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown for tangible—and intangible—benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to West Bend's success as is recruiting new business, rehabilitating old buildings, and expanding parking.

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. Building on downtown's inherent assets of rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values, the Main Street Approach has earned national recognition as a practical strategy that is appropriately scaled to each community's local resources and conditions.

Set up in 1977 by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to stimulate economic development within the context of historic preservation, the Main Street Program now involves over 1200 communities nationwide. Wisconsin has been involved since 1988, with 37 cities participating as of 2009. West Bend was selected in 1999 and participates through the Downtown West Bend Association (DWBA).

## **History of West Bend**

Situated in the beautiful Kettle Moraine and located on a westward bend of the Milwaukee River, the city of West Bend is a prosperous, thriving community. It is dedicated to providing its residents with affordable living, excellent schools, a wide variety of industrial and retail businesses, parks and recreational areas, and a friendly hometown environment.

In 1845, The Wisconsin Territorial Legislature authorized the building of a road between Fond du Lac and Milwaukee. A point half way between the two cities was needed to accommodate travelers. Two commissioners, Bryon Kilbourn and James Kneeland, and a surveyor, Jasper Vliet, set out to find a mid-point. On Wednesday, November 17, 1845 the three men met at a westward bend on the Milwaukee River and decided that it would be an ideal place for a village. At that time an area west of the river was set aside to be later designated as a park. That land is now Regner Park. In addition, the men also agreed to allot one full block to the county for a future courthouse, to save two lots for a jail, and to set two other lots aside for two schools.

Hurrying back to the Milwaukee land office, Kilbourn, Kneeland, and E.N. Higgins, a man already occupying some of the land to be named West Bend, purchased 720 acres of land for \$1.25 per acre on November 28, 1845 for a total of \$900. A third commissioner, E.B. Wolcott, who had not accompanied the other two, was also interested and became a partner when he agreed to build a gristmill and sawmill—the first two necessities of a frontier community.

Now that the land was purchased, the area needed a name. Kneeland and Kilbourn discussed many options. Kilbourn preferred something simple and suggested that because there was already a South Bend and a North Bend that West Bend would be perfect. And so it was named.

By 1860, fifteen years after its founding, West Bend had grown to 28 city blocks. Cedar Street was the main east-west street and River Road (what is currently Main Street) was heavily traveled. By 1882, there were 238 families and a population of 1409 people. 195 of the families were German, and the rest were English, American, French, Irish, and Bohemian. On March 19, 1885 West Bend was incorporated and became a city.

West Bend became a bustling community. Sidewalks were installed, the first mayor, John Potter, was elected, and schools and City Hall were built. One of the first grocery stores, Pick's, was purchased by John Pick and his wife Mary Goetter Pick in 1873 from Mr. Vollner and was located where the Tri-County building is today. Another grocery store, Peter's, was operated by William Peters and was located in the former Sears building. Peter's store is most noted for having the first bananas and ice box in the city. The first bakery opened in 1861 and was owned by Francis Schreiber. Mr. Junghut established one of the first meat markets in 1851. Pierre De Tuncq owned the first furniture store. His business became so prosperous that he was able to obtain a Main Street location just south of the former Sears building.

Other famous downtown businesses include Haebig's and Fuge Plumbing and Heating. Ed Haebig owned a tailor shop on Sixth Avenue that was started in the 1890's. A.C. Fuge worked at Wilmot Hardware and in 1869 he became the owner. Later his two sons ran the store and they moved their location to 143 South Main Street. A fire cost them their stock but they rebuilt and became the largest hardware store in the county. During the depression the store went bankrupt, but it was not the end of the Fuges. Herbert Fuge started a small plumbing and heating shop, and by 1924 he was so successful he moved to the 143 South Main Street address again. Today Herbert's sons run Fuge Plumbing and Heating.

The first major chain store to come to West Bend was JC Penney. Other stores along Main Street consisted of a jewelry store, a funeral parlor, a bath house (which no longer exists today), a greenhouse, and Culligan, specializing in water softeners.

More than sixty years later West Bend boasts large businesses including the West Bend Company, Gehl Company, Serigraph, Inc., and West Bend Mutual Company. In addition, there are 4 hotels, two unique high schools (West and East High Schools are in the same building), numerous industrial parks, and a wide variety of retail and service businesses.

However, what makes West Bend so special are its residents and the downtown. Well known for its beautiful red brick sidewalks, the downtown is a quaint place to shop for unique gifts, enjoy a delicious meal, and capture the flavor of the city. Buildings such as The Washington House, the Pilot (where a newspaper once resided), and The Washington County Jail and Courthouse still stand today as a testimony to the history of the city. They also provide the community with excellent examples of the beautiful architecture West Bend is capable of preserving for future generations to enjoy.

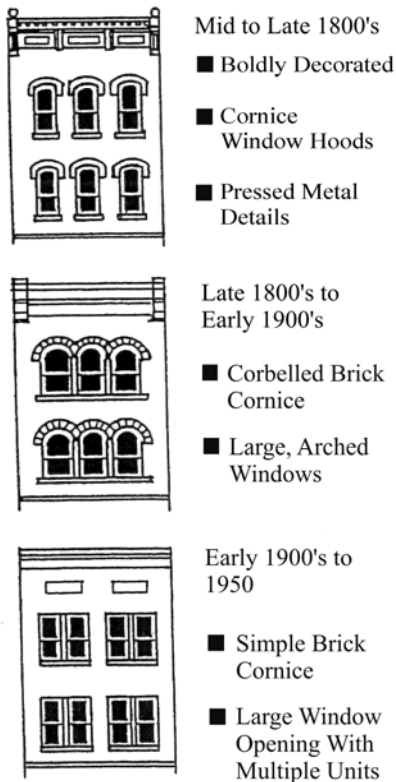
## Design Issues

The Downtown West Bend Design Guidelines are intended to suggest ways in which property and business owners can take advantage of downtown's charm and its history. Each individual building façade plays an important role in the makeup of the downtown district. Storefronts, window displays, signage, color, canopies, and architectural details all play an integral part in the successful design of individual buildings.

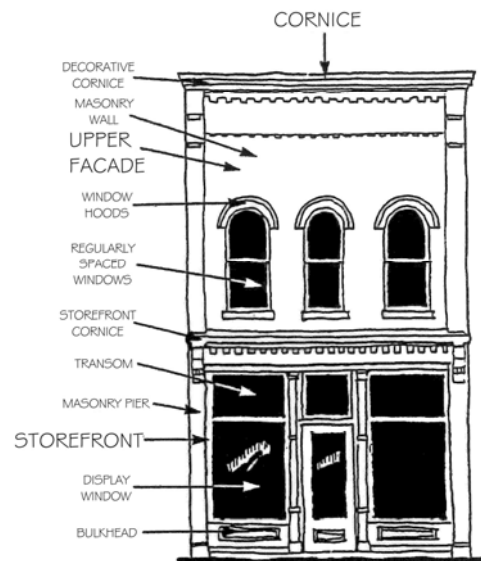
### *Traditional Façade*

The traditional commercial storefront can be considered the most important element that sets these buildings apart and gives historical significance and character to downtown West Bend. The majority of our historical buildings date from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. When originally constructed, our downtown buildings shared a consistency in design and proportion that was key to creating a strong visual image. This consistency was and is still important in conveying how the client who seeks goods and services here perceives our downtown. A visually unified downtown can go a long way in attracting people to our downtown, as well as to the individual shops and businesses that are located here.

### Typical Upper Facades



### Traditional Façade Components



The basic commercial façade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and large display windows, the upper masonry façade with regularly spaced windows, and the decorative cornice that caps the building. These components may appear in various shapes, sizes and styles but the result is essentially the same façade. In the downtown business district of West Bend, the typical building façade is a two-story masonry construction.

Various "modern" changes have occurred to Main Street Buildings over the years in response to merchandising trends, the influence of corporate design and signage promotions, new building material technologies and automobile accessibility. Too often downtowns have tried to copy the typical highway oriented strip commercial center usually with limited success. Despite this trend, original downtown storefronts are still in place and are simply covered over or in need of maintenance and repair. The Design Guidelines promote the traditional aspects of storefront design and do not recommend the use of strip commercial elements.

### *Storefront Design*

The traditional West Bend building façade has a well-defined opening that the original storefront filled. The opening is bounded on each side

by piers, which were usually constructed of masonry. It is bounded on top by the storefront cornice that is the structural member supporting the upper façade, and bounded below by the sidewalk.

The storefront was composed almost entirely of windows. The large glazed opening of the storefront served to display goods the store or business had to sell, as well as to allow natural light deep into the store to minimize the need for artificial light sources.

The visual openness of the storefront is also important because it is part of the overall proportion system of the façade. The proportion of window to wall areas in the traditional façade calls for more glass and less wall at the storefront level, balanced by more wall and less glass on the upper façade. When these buildings were built, their owners recognized the importance of maintaining these proportions so that the downtown would have a consistent design theme, thus making it an attractive place for its customers to do business.

### ***Storefront Improvements***

When considering improvements to the storefront, it is very important that the original opening be recognized and maintained. The remodeled storefront should be designed to fit inside the original opening and not extend beyond or in front of it.

The basic storefront design should include large windows with thin framing members, a recessed entrance with overhead transom, a storefront cornice, an exposed structural element or horizontal sign panel at the top to the storefront to separate it from the upper façade, and low bulkheads at the base to protect the windows and act as a platform for window displays. The basic configuration can be constructed from traditional or contemporary materials, achieving the same results.

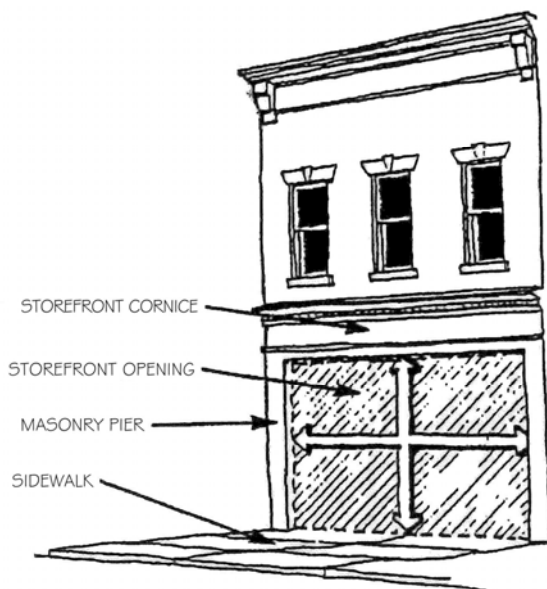
### **Traditional Storefront Design**



### **Key features to consider:**

- The storefront should be composed almost entirely of glass. If glass is not appropriate for the business, consider the use of window treatments as a solution.
- The entry should be maintained and restored in its original location and configuration. If the original entry is gone, the new entry should be designed and placed considering traditional design themes according to any available photographs and its relationship to the overall building façade and symmetry.
- Transom windows that are covered or blocked should be reopened and restored.
- Storefront bulkheads should be restored or renovated.
- Original elements such as cast iron columns, storefront cornices, entry doors, and lighting fixtures should be restored.

## **Storefront Boundaries**



- Signage should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Lighting should be integrated into the storefront design.
- Awnings, if required, should be integrated into the storefront design.

The storefront design must be true to the time period in which the building was constructed. Renovation of late 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, such as those in West Bend, with colonial motifs and mansard roofs is certainly inappropriate.

When planning the renovation of a storefront, it could be very helpful to contact the local museums or the West Bend Downtown office to see if there are turn-of-the-century photographs available of your building. Old photographs can be a valuable tool to help determine original design, materials, and signage used on your building.

### ***Storefront Materials***

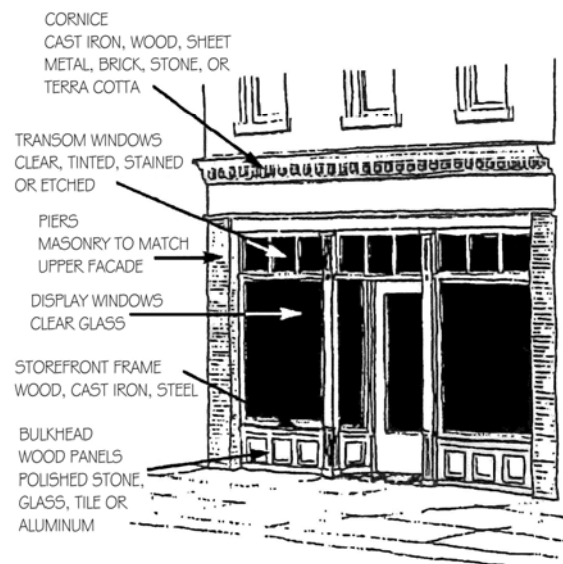
When designing a new storefront or renovating an existing storefront, remember that the goal should be a transparent façade. Keeping the storefront materials simple and unobtrusive will help you achieve this goal. There is no need to introduce additional types of building materials to those that originally existed on your building. Whether building new storefronts or renovating existing ones, use materials that perform their intended function well and use these materials consistently throughout the design. By doing so you accomplish simplicity in the design and uniformity in the overall storefront appearance. Always try to utilize existing materials. It is better to repair them than to replace them.

#### **Typical examples of materials and their location on the storefront:**

- Storefront Frame – wood, cast iron, anodized aluminum
- Display Windows – clear glass
- Transom Windows – clear, tinted, stained or etched glass
- Entrance Door – wood or aluminum with a large glass panel
- Bulkheads – wood panels, polished stone, glass, tile, metal clad plywood panels
- Storefront Cornice – wood, cast iron, sheet metal
- Side Piers – should be same material as upper façade (typically brick and stone).

Certain materials should never be used on the traditional commercial building because they have no relationship to the original building's design themes and therefore flaw the consistency of appearance of the building and the downtown area. Such inappropriate materials include: cultured stone, fake brick, rough textured wood siding, wooden shingles on mansard roofs, gravel aggregate materials, and stucco materials.

### **Common Storefront Materials**





## Color

As with materials, the color scheme chosen for the façade should be sensitive to the time period in which the building was built. To determine the color scheme to be used, consult a professional or go to the local paint store and ask to see color cards for historic paint colors and their combinations.

### Color Usage



#### Base Color

- Wall Surfaces
- Storefront Piers
- Cornice - When same materials as wall

#### Major Trim Color

- Cornice
- Window Hoods and Frames
- Storefront Cornice, Columns & Bulkheads

#### Minor Trim Color

- Doors
- Window Sash

#### Accent Colors

- Small Details on Window Hoods, Cornices, Columns & Bulkheads

Masonry facades should not be painted nor have sealants applied. If you have a masonry façade that is already painted and the paint seems to be holding – paint it again using colors that are within the natural color range of the material.

Colors should accentuate the architectural details of the building – but don't overdo it! The levels of coloration might be broken down as follows: Base Color • Major Trim Color • Minor Trim Color • Accent Color.

## Awnings and Canopies

The canvas awning was an important design element in the traditional storefront. It provided shelter for pedestrians from the sun and rain, added color, and acted a transition between the storefront and the upper façade. The awning can also be used as a location for building signage.

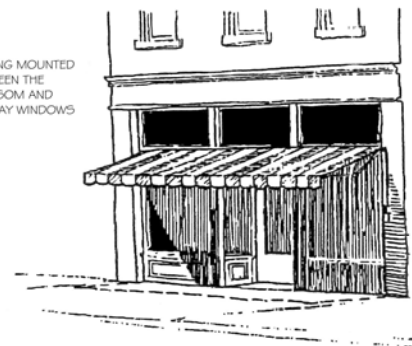
If an awning is to be used, its shape should reinforce the frame of the storefront opening. It should be attached below the storefront cornice or sign panel and should not cover the piers on either side of the storefront. The standard street level awning should be mounted such that its valance is approximately seven

feet above the sidewalk and it projects out between four and seven feet from the building.

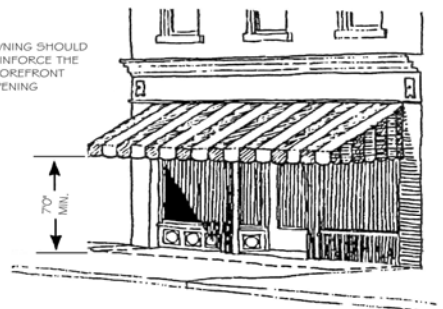
The awning can also be a useful tool to disguise inappropriate storefront alterations while maintaining the proportions of the traditional storefront.

Awnings are available in several materials and colors of varying cost and durability. They are also available in a variety of profiles. However, the traditional commercial awning material is canvas and its profile is the watershed design. Other profiles such as the typical "plastic" look found on commercial buildings in highway strip centers are too contemporary and out of context

AWNING MOUNTED BETWEEN THE TRANSOM AND DISPLAY WINDOWS



AWNING SHOULD REINFORCE THE STOREFRONT OPENING



when placed on a traditional façade. Awning color should be selected to insure compatibility with the building and adjacent buildings.

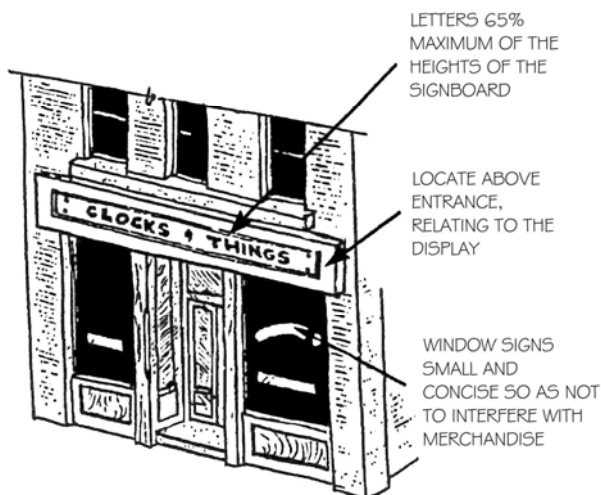
## Signage

### General

Signs are important to the storeowner for reasons of 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 facades. Signs must be integrated into the architecture of the building upon which they are placed. With a little forethought and careful planning, signage can embrace storeowners' needs and West Bend's image. It is the intent to promote signage which is compatible and complimentary to the historical nature of downtown West Bend.

Actual size may vary, but the total area of all signage on any one building wall shall not exceed 10% of the area of the wall. Big does not necessarily mean powerful. Primary signs of proper size can combine with the entire storefront to become more meaningful than just the sign itself. The sign must be subordinate to the building, not the opposite.

## Signage Guidelines



### Lettering Styles

Calisto MT  
**Claren**  
 COPPERPLATE GOTHIC  
 Denbigh  
 Eurostyle  
 Helvetic  
 Lucida  
*Lucida Calligraphy*  
 Obodoni Open  
**O COPPERPLATE**  
 OPDelphin  
**Times**  
*Virginia*  
 Palatino  
**Franklin**  
*Bookman*  
 Souvenir

Materials and letter styles are numerous and vary tremendously. The storeowner should have no problem finding a period vintage style representing the desired image. Choose a material and color that complements the building as well as 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 a sign or advertising company be utilized.

Messages should be kept 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 providing listings of items to be sold. Simple wording is easily read by pedestrians and street traffic without becoming distracting.

Installation of signs is subject to the City of West Bend Municipal Code (Sections 17.47(4)(d) and 17.48) and the 2008 National Electric Code. Property owners and tenants are encouraged to contact the Department of Community Development prior to developing sign sketches in order to reduce the likelihood of non-conforming sign plans.

The West Bend Theatre sign at 125 N. Main Street is exempt from the code.

### ***Primary Wall Signs***

Primary wall signs shall be limited to one per business directly facing the street on the ground level (plus one building identification sign, if applicable). The maximum area of a wall sign shall not exceed 32 square feet on any wall. The primary wall sign should be located above the storefront display windows but below the sills of second floor windows. On many examples of turn-of-the-century buildings a continuous brick ledge or corbelling is used to separate the second floor and 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, such as the West Bend Savings Building at 143 S. Main Street, which was constructed in 2005 (see photo inset). This location is acceptable on new buildings but should be avoided if possible, as a great majority of West Bend's buildings were designed to accept signage above the display windows.

Another option for a primary sign location can be an awning, provided the awning is properly integrated with the building. Awning signs may consist of eight-inch letters, and are often an integral part of the awning pattern and style. Awning signs shall not exceed 10% of the area of the wall. Signs shall be constructed of fabric material (preferably canvas), shall not extend more than six feet outward from the structure or building fascia and shall have a minimum ground clearance of eight feet.

### ***Secondary Non-Wall Signs***

In addition to a primary wall sign, one secondary non-wall sign is allowed on the front of the building. Types of secondary signage include projecting, window, awning, or any non-wall sign that is located below the primary sign.

Projecting signs shall be limited to one per business directly facing the street on the ground level. If a projecting sign is planned, placement will be critical to avoid interference with adjacent signs and architecture of the storefront itself. These signs (including fixtures) should be placed so the bottoms are no less than eight feet above the sidewalk and do not extend more than six feet outward from the structure or building fascia to which they are attached. The maximum area of each sign shall not exceed 24 square feet. Sign fixtures shall be made of wrought iron or be compatible with sign colors.

Window signs should consist of a material and color that contrasts with the display, while being small enough to not interfere with the display area.

### ***Signage for Additional Public Entrances and Riverfront Facades***

A second wall sign and projecting sign are encouraged on the rear or side building wall when there is a another public entrance.

Buildings with rear facades that are adjacent to the Milwaukee River are allowed a second rear building wall sign and projecting sign even if they do not have a rear public entrance. Signage on riverfront facades is intended to create a sense of place along the Riverwalk and visually connect the buildings to new development on the east side of the river. (See Riverfront Parkway section for further information.)

### ***Ground Signs***

Ground signs shall be limited to one per parcel. Multiple businesses on a parcel should share a sign. The maximum area of a sign shall not exceed 48 square feet and the sign shall not exceed 10 feet in height.

### ***Window Signage***

Temporary window signs shall not exceed 25% of the total window area and shall not be placed on door windows.

### ***Signboards***

Temporary signs are limited to “sandwich” style signboards that will be placed indoors when the business is closed. Signboards should not exceed two and a half feet high. This size is appropriate for distances the sign will be read from in a downtown setting. Letters should be between eight and eighteen inches high. Lettering should account for at least fifty and no more than sixty five percent of a signboard.

### ***Prohibited Signs***

Signs that cannot be used are: internally illuminated, animated, flashing, moving, swinging, painted wall signs, or roof signs. Floodlit signs are also prohibited unless the lights are shielded from view. Signs that resemble official traffic signs are not allowed to be used.

## **Lighting**

Lighting on the building façade 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. Storefront lighting should be tastefully done, including the materials and style used, either to highlight your product, your building, or your signage. Flashing lights, flashing signage, or excessively bright lights are not appropriate.

To attract attention to the storefront area there are a couple of traditional methods of lighting:

- Well lit display windows
  - Attracts attention to items in the window
  - Residual light washes the sidewalk and attracts pedestrians
  - Good for security
- Light over the recessed entry door
  - Provides entrance recognition
  - Good for safety
- Lighted signage
  - Gooseneck lighting on signs
  - Neon

## **Four-Sided Architecture**

(Blank Sidewalls of Building)

The introduction of vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes, as well as adjacent building demolition will create a potential problem of exposing sidewalls. (Infill construction in vacant lots should be encouraged when possible to avoid exposed sidewalls.) These walls are more difficult to aesthetically treat because there is less to work with. Trim is held to a minimum, and there generally are few windows, doors, or other features to treat. However, there are several treatments that can be used to help "dress up" a blank wall.

### ***Painting and Cleaning***

If it is determined that the wall in question contains sufficient architectural elements to leave unaltered, cleaning and painting may be satisfactory. Cleaning, painting, and repair of wood and metal trim will complement the remainder of the wall.

### ***Graphics***

Non-advertising graphics are permitted by the City of West Bend; however, wall graphics can easily be visually unappealing if done incorrectly. Too many colors, colors used incorrectly, poor proportion, and the type of graphic can become distracting and sometimes worse than a blank wall. We strongly urge the following:

1. Submit a colored and correctly scaled drawing of the graphic and side wall for review and approval by the Downtown West Bend Association and City of West Bend.
2. If the graphic relates directly to the store's product or function, the graphic is considered a sign and the city sign ordinance applies.

### ***Continuation of Storefront Elements***

Strong storefront elements can be copied and extended across the sidewall. Examples are façade trim, window head millwork, wall accent trim, or paint color. The introduction of these elements adds a horizontal or vertical rhythm and interrupt an otherwise monotonous wall. This also prepares the pedestrian for what they will see when approaching their storefront.

### ***Doors and Windows***

When a sidewall is exposed and is adjacent to parking or pedestrian access, the introduction of a door would serve not only as an entrance, but would add interest to the wall as well. 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 buildings interior to the pedestrian. Caution should be used when adding doors, window, and their amenities to avoid competing with a main entrance.

### ***Landscaping***

If the sidewall is clean and not bland enough to warrant the addition of storefront elements or doors or windows, landscaping is an economical solution. When designed and installed professionally, landscaping can add rhythm, pattern and concealment. Landscaping can be used in conjunction with other treatments. It should be noted that landscaping requires maintenance and is susceptible to damage.

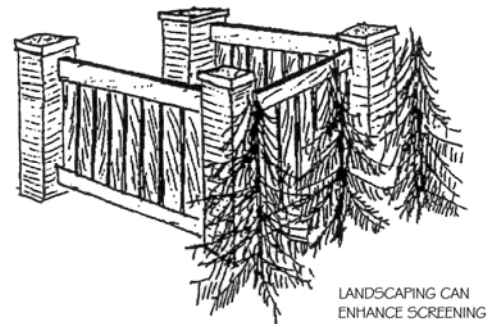
Trees, shrubs, and groundcovers should be sized appropriately for their proposed location. Consider vertical and horizontal sight lines, maintenance, safety, scale, signage, circulation, relationship to other plants, color, texture, flowers, seasonal interest, disease resistance, water and nutrient requirements,

screening unsightly views such as dumpsters, parking, etc., and hardness for the site. Consult with a professional landscape architect or horticulturist for assistance.

Landscape plans must be approved by the city as a part of any new construction or redevelopment of an existing property. Check with the Department of Community Development prior to developing a landscape plan to insure compliance with the Municipal Code (Section 17.40).

## Visual Screening

Many places of business require outside appurtenances that often prove unsightly. Trash receptacles, condensing units, electrical transformers, and others 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 effects.



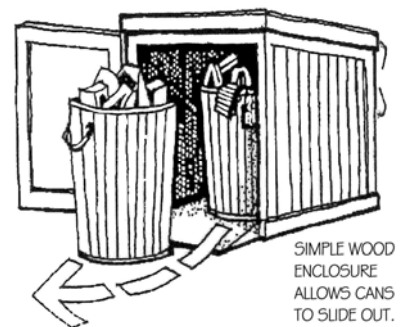
### 1. *Elimination*

If possible, eliminate these objects from public view. Trash receptacles can be located inside if there is a space 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 is a costly procedure because transformers must be housed in a fire-rated ventilated area.

### 2. *Placement*

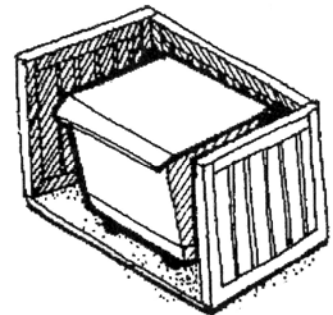
The most economical method of "screening" is placing unwanted objects away from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

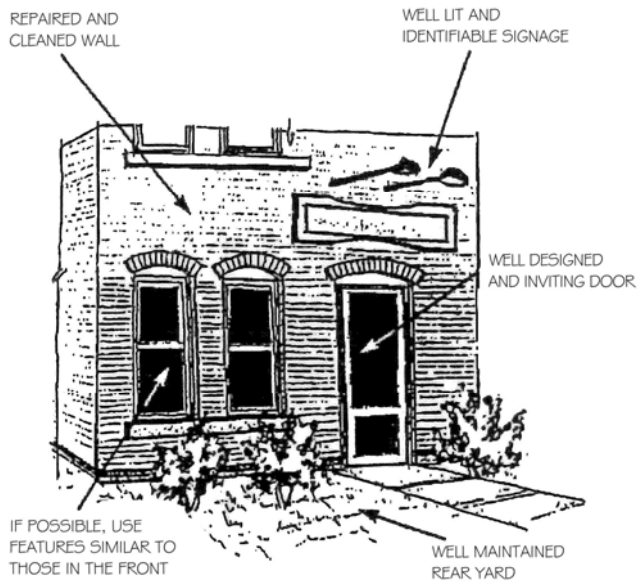
Consideration should be given to access for maintenance and pickup especially if the objects in question are trash receptacles. Attention should also be given to adjacent property owners and their pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns.



### 3. *Concealment*

In many instances, trash receptacles, condensers, or transformers must occupy the same general areas desired for pedestrians. The only option is concealment. There are many visual barriers available on the market such as wood fences. These are acceptable, but a preferable method is to construct visual barriers with traditional materials consistent with the adjacent building. A blending of traditional materials is more compatible with the storefront. Another method of concealment is the use of landscaping or a combination of landscaping and visual barriers made of traditional materials. With professional assistance, the proper pattern and species of plants can be realized. It should be noted, however, that landscaping will need maintenance.





## Pedestrian Access

Building and business identity are important considerations to the store owner. Points of access must also be considered important to insure convenience, safety and repeat business of the customer. Pedestrian access must be associated with parking and a clear identity of entry points.

### *Front Entrances*

If possible, the front entrance should be the most important. Front entrances are integral to storefront design and give the street a "hometown" 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 image.

### *Rear and Side Entrances*

Some of West Bend's busy streets, particularly portions of Main Street, are busy enough to warrant rear and side entrances. These entrances are conveniently accessible to more parking than entrances in the front. For this reason, rear and side entrance treatments should include the entire exposed rear and sidewalls for identity. The potential positive impact of these walls is often overlooked.

A combination of front entrances with side or rear entrances is called "double fronting." There are certain advantages to double fronting:

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

Double fronting can also create disadvantages:

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

Front, side or rear entrances must share the common characteristic of presenting an attractive door to the pedestrian. Usually, the best doors are the original units properly maintained and repaired. If these are beyond repair, new doors can be made to closely resemble the original doors. Another option is to use simple, cleanly designed aluminum doors that will not detract from existing wall treatment. The so-called Colonial, Georgian, or Early American doors are poor representations of their namesake.

## Maintenance and Repair

Many of West Bend's existing downtown structures contain two favorable qualities. One is that they are structurally sound. Modifications that may have been done are superficial, affecting features such as windows, doors and facades. A second quality is the survival of the building's original design features and materials. It is fortunate that we can easily see what the original structure's appearance was. Alterations usually consist of materials that are attached to existing walls rather than maintenance and

repair to the buildings. With a few exceptions, we can transform "Main Street" into an accurate semblance of what it was in the past.

Exterior materials will be addressed more extensively than interior materials because business related items such as image, display and theme often dictate interiors. However, considerable attention should be made in inviting the original building design to work both inside and out. With this in mind, Main Street West Bend is offering design assistance for both exterior and interior renovation projects.

Before considering any repair or remodeling, materials should be examined by an architect or contractor as to their actual condition and potential for cleaning or repair. Once evaluated, cleaning and repair may proceed. All work should be professionally done so proper equipment, working experience, and basic knowledge can be utilized. We will briefly describe repair and maintenance for the store owner's basic familiarity.

### ***Masonry***

As in most downtowns, a large number of West Bend's buildings consist of brick masonry. There are also some structures consisting of stone, concrete block and marble. Several buildings have already been cleaned and repaired, and others were never painted. Untreated, natural brick, marble and stone should not be painted or otherwise concealed. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that all masonry needs cleaning. Minor staining or discoloration can sometimes add character to a structure, or simply remain as an acceptable condition. If, however, the masonry is unacceptable, several cleaning methods may be used:

#### ***Water Cleaning***

Washing with water and a detergent is the simplest of all methods and is successful on lightly soiled masonry. This method is probably the easiest for the amateur, but is also time consuming. Water cleaning involves two steps. The first is spraying to presoak the masonry and remove dirt deposits not tightly bonded to the surface. The second step is time consuming and more difficult; it involves scrubbing with a hand or power brush. Whether done by an amateur or professional, care must be taken to use water efficiently. Cracks in walls or around openings can lead to interior water damage. Brick cleaning should be done before finishing the interior of that particular wall. Water cleaning should be avoided in cold weather because absorbed water can freeze and fracture surfaces. Test washing a small area of the wall will determine how long it takes and who will finish the job.

#### ***High Pressure Water Cleaning***

A newer method is to utilize special equipment that develops enough hydraulic pressure to "force spray" masonry, forcing out dirt and staining. Even though less water is used in this process, interior water damage is a concern because pressure can force water into openings. High pressure water cleaning should be done only by professionals and should not exceed 1,000 p.s.i.

#### ***Abrasive Cleaning***



#### ***Chemical Cleaning***

Due to the large variety of chemicals used, potential toxicity, cleanup, and specialized equipment, professional help must be seriously considered before chemical cleaning a building's exterior. Chemical cleaning is best utilized for paint removal and elimination of deep stains. Care must be taken in the use of acids. Even in a diluted solution, acids can harm limestone and marble.



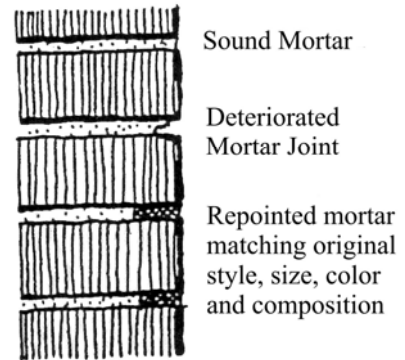
### ***Sandblasting***

Sandblasting is the most detrimental method of removing paint, stains and deposits, especially when considering brick. Sandblasting removes the outer surface of the brick, exposing the softer inner surface. This leaves the brick more susceptible to weathering. Sandblasting also pits the surface, leaving horizontal areas and pockets for moisture and dirt to collect. We do not recommend sandblasting be used on masonry.

### ***Tuckpointing***

Weathering of masonry involves the mortar joints. If masonry is to be cleaned, the addition of new mortar to the joints is necessary. This is called tuckpointing. The joints are first thoroughly cleaned out to existing sound mortar. Then, new mortar (never harder than brick) is filled in and finished to match the depth and style of the intended original joint. Mortar can be pigmented to match any existing color. After tuckpointing, the surrounding masonry must be cleaned because it is impossible to fill joints without touching them with mortar.

### **Tuckpointing**



### ***Toothing***

An occasion may arise when an opening must be cut into or enlarged in an existing masonry wall. As the opening is cut into the wall, every masonry unit is cut back to the adjacent vertical joint. This allows new masonry units to be set in such a way as to blend in with existing masonry while creating a stronger joint.

### ***Wood***

West Bend's existing buildings use wood on the exterior primarily for window and door framing, trim, cornices, bracing and brackets. Although masonry dominates storefronts, maintenance and repair of wood is essential in restoring original building design and integrity. Wood accents the masonry and is the material with which customers have the most contact.

If wood is found to be in need of repair, replace or patch that particular piece of wood. Replacing the wood frame, for example, is not necessary if just one section of the frame is damaged. If possible, replace with the same species of wood for uniform finishing. Conversely, refinishing wood should not be a patch job. Rather, the entire frame, for example, should be refinished. Paint or stain can be removed by several methods; these methods include sanding, melting, or dissolving with chemicals. Sandblasting should not be used because it pits and separates the grain.

## **Architectural Metals**

Architectural metals such as cast iron, galvanized steel, aluminum, copper, zinc, and tin are used sparingly at the roof parapet, flashing, cornices, columns and lintel beams, etc. Aluminum is also used for flashing, but mainly for window frames and doors.

Any metal encountered can be cleaned. As with masonry, care should be taken to avoid damage to metals by using gentle cleaning methods. Sandblasting should be avoided except in the case of cast iron. Softer metals can be cleaned with solvents or sanding.

Ferrous metals (metals with an iron content) such as steel doorframes should be painted. Copper, stainless steel, or other similar metals are meant to be exposed. Aluminum can be left unfinished, painted, or factory finished with a baked coating.

Most metals, if deteriorated beyond repair, can be fabricated and replaced. West Bend boasts of competent craftsmen and contractors that can do the job. Wood, fiberglass, epoxy, or other metal can replace metals damaged beyond repair. Dissimilar metals must be insulated from each other to avoid galvanic action, a naturally occurring reaction that can corrode metals.

### ***Windows***

Windows are one of the most prominent and important features of storefronts and upper facades. Unfortunately, they are often the most altered and neglected of the storefront materials.

Original windows should be repaired when possible. Wood framing used in historic windows has better insulating value than metal or vinyl and is relatively easy to repair. Repairing, reglazing and recaulking historic windows and adding a wood storm window will give you a window of equal or greater insulating value than any new metal or vinyl window.

If repair is not an option, good replacement windows contain several attributes:

**Energy conservation.** Modern units contain insulated glazing and "thermally broken" frames. Both glazing and frames contain either an air space or gasketing to eliminate frost and moisture penetration. If original units are beyond repair, custom fabricated storm units can be installed to achieve the same results.

**Light quality.** Proper sizing of the storefront window can enhance the amount of natural light that enters the store and reduce the amount of electricity needed for artificial lighting and heating. Glass can also be rated to control the type of light entering the store. For example, E-rated glass lessens the discoloring of merchandise. This can be valuable to the storeowner for merchandise display but using awnings and changing displays frequently are better options.

**Aesthetics.** Window manufacturers offer a wide variety of colors, shapes, and styles in standard units. Custom units can be made to fit any opening or building style. Properly designed windows will enhance the original character of the buildings.

If windows are completely replaced, the new units should contain the same proportions as the original. (This is not to be confused with replacement units that may be presently installed.) Consideration should be given to horizontal and vertical mullions that provide design continuity throughout the building. Always use the entire original window opening, even if the opening was partially filled in from previous remodeling.

### ***Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing***

Heating ventilation, and electrical systems are becoming more sophisticated as energy conservation is foremost in the mind of today's society. It is essential that all systems be installed and inspected by licensed contractors or engineers. Existing systems may have been altered into a condition that is impossible to properly evaluate by a layperson. Expansion of store area also necessitates an investigation of the system's capacity. Storeowners should also be aware that spending more money for efficient systems will mean cost savings on a daily basis. All systems must satisfy both the Wisconsin State Building Code and regulations of the City of West Bend.

### ***A Word of Warning***

Maintenance and repair of existing buildings often require removal of undesirable or damaged materials. West Bend's buildings were constructed before asbestos was discovered to be a hazardous material. Not only is it unhealthy to remove certain forms of asbestos, it is unlawful. If asbestos or materials containing asbestos are suspected, notify the architect or contractor. They can verify its presence and recommend a certified asbestos removal company.

## **Landscaping**

Landscaping of the streetscape can help to soften the pedestrian environment at the street by adding color and life to an otherwise hard and somewhat noisy area. 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. Planting can be used at rear and side entrances of buildings to make them more attractive. These plantings can be permanent or in planters which are portable. Plantings should be used to screen trash receptacles, non-accessible doorways, and parking areas.

If you do incorporate plantings into your plans they must be maintained. An empty or poorly maintained flower box can be unsightly. Shrubbery or trees that are not properly or regularly trimmed could be an eyesore.

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

Landscape plans must be approved by the city as a part of any new construction or redevelopment of an existing property. Check with the Department of Community Development prior to developing a landscape plan to insure compliance with the Municipal Code (Section 17.40).

## **Riverfront Parkway**

During the early days of West Bend's history, the rivers were not appreciated and were considered a dumping ground for all types of waste. Now people know better and the citizens of West Bend have undertaken the monumental task of cleaning up the rivers and brownfields, acquiring and protecting sensitive environmental corridors, and developing the Riverfront Parkway to further appreciation, education, enjoyment, and preservation. When complete, the parkway system will link parks, neighborhoods, and commercial areas in an emerald necklace of green open space and riverfronts.

This is not enough, however. In order to become the vibrant hub of commerce that it used to be, downtown merchants and business people need to take advantage of the Riverfront Parkway. Other communities have done just that, turning their attention and business to these corridors. Our parkway is an under utilized opportunity for generating new shoppers and clients. As more sections are developed, more people are using the parkway, and more people are passing by your stores. Business owners can take advantage of this to increase business. The following suggestions could help make the backs, or other front doors, of a business more noticed by the thousands of people a year who will use the Riverfront Parkway:

### **Taking Advantage of Rear Entrances**



- Install a second wall sign and/or projecting sign on the rear building wall if it is adjacent to the river.
- Provide a space for outdoor dining. (Contact the City of West Bend for permits.)
- Screen dumpsters with fences and shrubs.
- Plant trees and shrubs where appropriate.
- Take down unsightly signs, ads, etc.
- Paint and stain appropriately.
- Design and install inviting entrances.
- Use the building codes to your advantage.
- Add bike racks and trash receptacles on your property, space permitting.
- Screen other unsightly views if possible, such as air handling equipment.
- Replace inappropriate materials with appropriate, traditional or period materials and furnishings for a consistent look.
- Water, prune, and fertilize plants.
- Adopt a portion of the parkway.
- Report deficiencies in publicly owned facilities quickly.
- Install safe, barrier free access.
- Screen parking with shrubs.
- Use the Riverfront Parkway creatively in your marketing and advertising, make a visit to your place of business an event or part of a day experience.
- Keep store/business hours during periods of peak trail use.
- Be a part of Downtown events, planning, and other efforts.
- Landscape transformers and utilities where appropriate.

West Bend and out of town residents use the Riverfront Parkway on a regular basis. Sculpture is being created for downtown regularly, beautification efforts are on going, and many community events are taking place. People are drawn to the tranquil river and the verdant green plantings. Benches, picnic tables, and bike racks invite them to stay. Expose potential customers to your services and products as part of an overall pleasant and inviting experience that encourages them to return often. Adherence to these suggestions in other communities has created increased traffic through traditional downtowns.

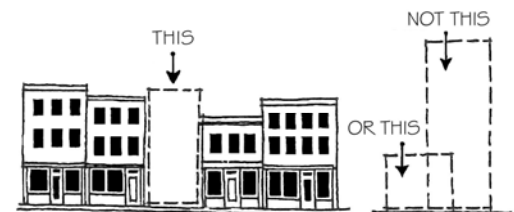
Remember before you do any work or break any ground, call Digger's Hotline at 1-800-242-8511 and follow their directions exactly. Contact individual utilities as needed.

## New Construction

The construction of new buildings on vacant lots in downtown is encouraged. The design of a new infill building, particularly its front façade, creates unique design challenges. New facades should be designed to look appropriate and compatible in the midst of the surrounding buildings.

What is good infill design? There is no absolute answer; a good design will vary according to its setting. Because an infill building is new, it should look new. However, its appearance must always be sensitive to the character of its neighbors without copying them.

### Proportional Height



A new facade that is too high or low can interrupt a natural flow.

There are several ideas that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

### ***Proportions of the Façade***

The average height and width of the surrounding buildings determines a general set of proportions for an infill structure or the bays of a larger structure.

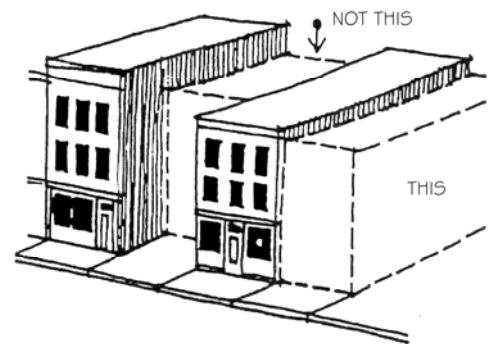
The infill building should fill the entire space and reflect the characteristic rhythm of façades along the street.

If the site is large, the mass of the façade can be broken into a number of smaller bays, to maintain a rhythm similar to the surrounding buildings.

### ***Alignment***

Maintain the alignment of the new façade even with the existing façades.

### **Relationship to Street**



Facades are not set back from the sidewalk.

### **Proportional Openings**

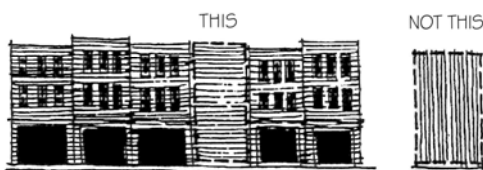


### ***Composition***

The composition of the infill façade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding façades.

Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new façade. Maintain a clear distinction between first floor and the upper floors. First floor should have large areas of glass, and upper floors should have an emphasis on solid wall, with less window area.

### **Consistent Materials**



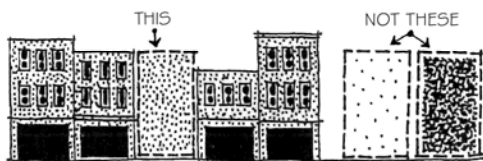
### ***Proportions of the Openings***

The size and proportion of window and door openings of an infill building should be similar to those on surrounding façades.

The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the façade as a whole.

Maintain the horizontal alignment of the transom and display windows of the first floor.

### **Compatible Colors**



Maintain the pattern created by upper story windows, considering rhythm, horizontal and vertical alignment.

### ***Detailing***

Infill architecture should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shapes, cornice lines and brick work, but should not mimic it completely.

### ***Materials***

Brick is the primary building material used downtown although other masonry materials, as well as wood, metal and terra cotta are also present.

The existing distribution of materials used in neighboring buildings should be considered when choosing materials for new construction.

New buildings and additions should use materials that are compatible in size, scale, texture, and color with the existing color materials. The colors chosen for an infill façade should relate to the buildings' neighbors.

## **City Building and Design Codes**

All new building construction, alterations, and renovations are regulated by various City of West Bend codes. Building construction plans including electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilating, and air conditioning plans are required to be approved by the City of West Bend Building Inspection Office at (262) 335-5140 prior to the start of work.

Many modifications require one or more permits, and often need or require the services of trained, experienced, and licensed professionals including engineers, architects, landscape architects, interior designers, surveyors, and others. Drawings and specifications by such persons must often be stamped with their state license number and profession, and signed and dated over that stamp. Check that all professionals carry enough insurance to cover errors, omissions, general liability, and other unforeseen problems. The initial investment of retaining professionals in your project can be more than offsetting problems down the road - they can help you avoid City and State regulation problems.

An architect can advise you on the scope and content of these regulations. In many cases construction plans must be approved by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce prior to building construction. Building permits cannot be issued until all local and State approvals are obtained.

The City of West Bend through its zoning code also regulates the urban design elements of the property. Building architecture, parking lots, signage, landscaping, and lighting are regulated through the City of West Bend's adopted *Manual of Urban Design Standard (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Most of the design guidelines in this report are requirements of the City of West Bend's zoning code. Design plans must typically be approved by the City of West Bend's City Plan Commission, which meets monthly, so communicate with the Department of Community Development early in the process. As with the building construction plans described above, building permits cannot be issued until all local urban design elements are approved. For further information call the West Bend Department of Community Development at (262) 335-5122.

## **Assistance Programs**

**Contact the Downtown West Bend Association (DWBA) Executive Director at (262) 338-3909 to inquire about the following programs:**

### ***DWBA Sign Grant Program***

Grants are available to assist with the installation of signage that recaptures the historic flavor of downtown West Bend.

### ***Façade Grant Program***

The DWBA Façade Improvement program offers up to \$5,000 in matching funds and, in certain cases, design assistance to businesses in the DWBA Business Improvement District (BID) in order to improve the appearance of individual building facades, signs and awnings, as well as the overall look of the Downtown BID.

### ***Reinvestment Loan Program***

Reinvestment loans are available for improvements to the exteriors of commercial properties within the Downtown BID. Applicants for these loans will work with their chosen lender for financing of the project. They will also work with a representative of the DWBA, who will assist in developing a plan that meets the approval of The DWBA's Design Committee.

### ***West Bend Commercial Revolving Loan Fund***

The West Bend Commercial Revolving Loan Program is designed to provide an incentive for private sector improvement of commercial businesses in the Downtown. The program combines low equity requirements with fixed rate, moderate to long-term financing. Using a combination of private and public funds, the City of West Bend uses public Community Development Block Grant funds to target business improvements in order to promote the revitalization of the Downtown. This revitalization promotes job growth, building renovation and an increase in property values.

### ***DWBA Main Street Design Assistance Program***

It is the DWBA's goal to assist property owners in designing and financing quality facades and building improvements that will enhance their buildings and the image of West Bend's historic Downtown. The Main Street Program has a design specialist who is available to work with downtown business and property owners who are interested in doing exterior and interior renovation projects. The program can help take the guesswork out of a rehab project by providing sample drawings of possible façade improvements. Color schemes, paint and awning samples, and signs, as well as technical information about how to get the work done, are some of the solutions that the program offers. Assistance is also available for sign design.

Applications for design assistance are processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. When a project recommendation is complete, it is sent to the building owner and the Executive Director. The Executive Director then works with the owner until the project is complete. Following is a suggested procedure for obtaining information on and assistance through the Design Assistance Program:

#### ***Where to Start***

- ☐ Determine the features of your building that are significant to the character of your building. Ask:
  - How could storefront improvements relate to the entire visual impact of the building?
  - How does the building relate to neighboring buildings?
  - How does a storefront improvement relate to the historic upper portion of the building?

What changes are needed to improve the appearance and integrity of the upper portion of the building?

- ❑ Get old pictures of your building through the Washington County Historical Society, The West Bend Community Memorial Library, the City of West Bend Department of Community Development or another source. Historic photos can help you determine what features of your building are historic and significant to your building's character and which are not. They can show you what you may not be able to determine or visualize on your own.
- ❑ Determine which functional improvements you want to make.
- ❑ Determine which aesthetic improvements you want to make.
- ❑ Identify what maintenance and repair work needs to be done.
- ❑ Establish a budget for those improvements, repairs, and other work you want to do. This budget will most certainly change a little bit, but it is a good idea to get a "ballpark" figure of what your restoration work will cost.

***On the road to design assistance***

- ❑ Before spending money on other types of building and design assistance, meet with the DWBA's Executive Director to discuss the scope of your project. The Executive Director will be able to tell you what free or very low cost assistance is available through the DWBA and steer you in a helpful direction. You are invited to bring any photos, ideas and improvements you have up to this point. The Executive Director can also show you color pictures of many other rehabilitation and renovation projects that may help you to generate more ideas for your own building.
- ❑ If any of the Design Assistance Programs that the DWBA offers are a good match for you and your project, you will receive an application to fill out. Design assistance is available on a first come, first serve basis – so once the funding has run out, no more applications will be accepted. It is in your best interests to call the Executive Director as soon as you decide that you want to renovate – if you wait, you could lose out on valuable assistance for your project.
- ❑ Depending on the availability of funds and the type of project, the Main Street Design Specialist may assist you with color drawings and/or advice such as appropriate designs, color schemes, etc. The DWBA can recommend different contractors who are familiar with renovation work, sign companies who understand historic signage, and other contractors who are skilled in your building's special type of renovation work. You could be eligible for a grant or low interest loan offered through the DWBA and the City of West Bend. There are many forms of assistance available.
- ❑ If your plans are not in keeping with the DWBA's Design Guidelines, you may be asked to revise them and resubmit them. If they feel that the modifications you submit are satisfactory, and the type of support that is best for your project is available, you can still receive assistance.
- ❑ When developing detailed plans, all drawings should be done to scale, colors should be indicated where appropriate. Also indicate which façade elements are existing and will be retained, which are to be altered and which are to be new construction.



### ***Beginning Renovation and Improvements***

- ❑ You should provide the contractor(s) and other professional you will hire to do your renovation work or develop signage with a copy of the DWBA's Design Guidelines. If they have questions regarding the guidelines and need clarification, encourage them to contact the Executive Director of the DWBA. This is very important - questions are easier to handle and less costly than mistakes.
- ❑ Approval from the DWBA *does not* guarantee approval from the City of West Bend or other agencies. Check to see that your plans conform to local and state building codes and other regulations. It is advisable to visit the City of West Bend Building Inspection Department and Department of Community Development who can check conformance of your plans with the following:
  - Urban design regulations
  - Sign ordinance
  - Landscape requirements
  - Building and fire codes
  - Any other applicable regulations
- ❑ Once the DWBA and other agencies approve a plan, it must be adhered to. However, due to unforeseen circumstances in remodeling and renovation work, plans sometimes have to be modified. These modifications, if significant, may require approval from the DWBA's Design Committee. A good way to keep yourself and your project on track is to keep an open line of communication between the DWBA, the City of West Bend, and yourself. If any substantial changes come up, or if there are any questions regarding a change in plans, contact the DWBA and/or the City of West Bend.