



Moline Centre Design Guidelines

Core Business District - Fall 2007



Moline Centre Design Guidelines

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Moline Centre Partners and the City of Moline have created a set of design guidelines intended to preserve and enhance the historical quality of the downtown and to attain a consistent visually pleasing image for the downtown area. The guidelines are prepared to provide both aesthetic and economic objectives consistent with sound land use, urban design, and economic revitalization principles. The Moline Centre Master Plan written in 1991, and revised in 2001 called for such guidelines. The administration of these guidelines will ensure long-term progress and broad participation for restoration, renovation, remodeling and new construction activities within Moline Centre.

Recognizing the Problem

Most downtowns had their beginnings more than 150 years ago as the heart of their communities. They grew in times very different than today when merchants along Main Street directed their attention to the walking trade, and the fastest moving vehicle was the horse-drawn carriage.

The 20th century brought changes to Main Street. With the advent of the

automobile competition grew from the development of commercial strips and shopping centers. Downtown retailers turned their attention to passing cars, erecting shiny storefronts and eye-catching signs. Main Street stores tried to imitate their competitors.

In many ways, the result has been a sorry one. In too many communities, the downtown now appears as a curious cross between neglected old buildings and a commercial strip. It presents a confused image to the shopping public, satisfying neither the pedestrian nor the driving customer.

The key to improving appearances lies in recognizing a simple fact: the traditional business district is neither a shopping mall nor a commercial strip and should not pretend to be either.

With its buildings, history, setting and place within the community, the downtown is unique and special. It makes sense to acknowledge these resources and take full advantage of them, to develop the qualities that are already present downtown - qualities a mall or commercial strip will never have.

Moline Centre Design Guidelines

The Moline Centre District Design Guidelines are intended to implement the urban design recommendations of the Horizon 21/Moline Centre on the Mississippi Plan, adopted by the City of Moline on July 16, 1991 by preserving and enhancing the historical quality of the downtown, and by attaining a consistent visually pleasing image for the downtown area. As emphasized by the said Plan, this district is designed to forward both aesthetic and economic objectives of the Plan by controlling the site design and appearance of development within the district in a manner which is consistent with sound land use, urban design, and economic revitalization principles. The application of these standards will ensure long-term progress and broad participation toward these principles. Noting the importance for a shared commitment to revitalization, the business owners in downtown Moline formed the Moline Community Development Group in 1998. After noted success the organization learned of the Main Street program and decided in 2004 to evolve their organization into the newly formed Main Street initiative known today as Moline Centre Partners.

The Main Street Program's Success Formula:

Historic Preservation Equals Economic Development

The Main Street program uses a comprehensive four point strategy which can be tailored to meet the needs of individual cities. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. Because it is a locally-driven program, all initiatives stem from local issues and concerns. Design Guidelines have been a common tool used by Main Street communities to mandate stricter appearance standards for special design districts.

The Main Street Four Point Approach:

Design: Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging compatibly-designed new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and creating long-term planning.

Organization: Building consensus and cooperation among the many groups and individuals who have a role in the revitalization process.

Promotion: Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors.

Economic Restructuring: Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities and challenges from outlying development.



15th Street Completed



15th Street Conceptual

IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES/STANDARDS

The following design recommendations are presented in the form of guidelines to help establish appearance standards for the Moline Centre District. These guidelines are offered to help the property owner and developer make sound investment decisions in building improvements while enhancing the area's historic character and establishing a unified theme. Creating a more visually pleasing downtown business district is a key economic development strategy that will benefit the individual property owner, the Moline Centre District, and the community.

It is not the intent of these guidelines to restrict individual expression but rather direct that expression towards a standard of quality. When applied, these guidelines will ensure against fragmented or incompatible developments and reduce the visual impact of past unconscious design decisions.

These guidelines strive to enhance the intrinsic architectural qualities of the Moline Centre's older commercial, residential and public buildings. Property owners are encouraged to maintain, preserve, restore or reconstruct those special architectural features. Alterations which would obscure, conceal or detract from the inherent design character of downtown buildings are discouraged.

These guidelines are offered to help the property owner and developer make sound investment decisions in building improvements while enhancing the area's historic character and establishing a unified theme.

Common Design Features to Preserve

A number of building styles and common design features can be found in the Moline Centre Design District, which represent the period from the 1860's through the early decade of the 20th Century. [The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture](#), by Richard Longstreth and published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (1987), provides an excellent description of these and other historic commercial building styles. Most buildings in this district are two and three story brick, stone or frame structures with commercial space on the first floor and living or storage space above. One of the visual strengths of these buildings is the rhythmic patterns created by their regularly spaced window openings and doorways and the harmonious relationship between buildings. Many of the buildings in the downtown have the following common features:

- Predominantly brick, stone or wood materials.
- Generally preserved upper story character with regular window placement and a detailed cornice design.
- Simple but rich detailing in masonry coursing, window detailing, and ornamentation.



The Carnegie Library - 5th Avenue and 17th Street



General Design Guidelines

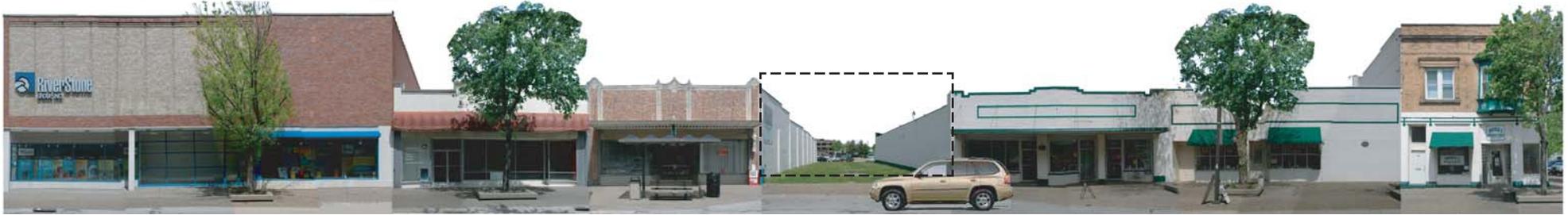
The following general guidelines are to be used when evaluating restoration, renovation, remodeling, and new construction activities within the Moline Centre District. These guidelines have been expressed in an easy-to-read format with explanatory graphics. It is recommended that property owners seek professional design advice concerning the application of these guidelines in their future development projects. These guidelines have been adapted from The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects, 1979 and The Design for the Business District, by Robert Hartraan, 1980.

- *The mass, volume and height of new infill structures should be compatible with existing buildings in the immediate area.*
- *Facade modifications should maintain a compatible relationship with those of adjoining structures in terms of window sill or header lines, proportion of window and door openings, horizontal or vertical emphasis, and architectural detail.*

- *The selected building materials and colors should complement and be compatible with existing buildings in the immediate area.*
- *Exterior remodeling should be designed to consider the entire building facade. The ground floor exterior should be designed to harmonize with the upper stories.*
- *Storefront window display areas should be considered an important part of the retail marketing strategy in the downtown area. Large street level display windows should be retained as part of remodeling or new construction.*
- *Existing buildings and structures should be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations which have no historical basis are discouraged.*

Property owners should first discuss their project or any improvement suggested by these guidelines with local building and zoning officials.

Call the Building Division at 309.797.0470
Call the Zoning Department at 309.797.0475



Infill should be designed to complement the adjoining buildings

5th Avenue between 17th Street & 18th Street

- *New infill construction should be designed to honestly reflect their specific use and architectural period while maintaining a unified appearance with adjoining buildings. Contemporary designs that copy historic appearance are discouraged. Avoid blank facades or facades with very little detail when designing for new infill construction.*
- *If the storefront has been altered substantially, attempt to bring back original historic proportions through the use of design elements, even if they are not a restoration of the original. Avoid altering, concealing or removing historic details when renovating existing older buildings.*
- *The sizing and placement of signs should fit the building. If demolition occurs, the subsequent void should be designed to maintain the rhythm and character of the streetscape pattern.*
- *Commercial alleys and the rear sides of existing buildings that are used as retail entrances should have an attractive visual appearance. All off-street parking and service areas should be landscaped and screened. All vacant storefronts and lots visible from public right of way should be maintained in an attractive appearance.*

In most situations, a building permit will be required and plans should be submitted for review and approval. In other situations, such as with awnings and/or signs to be placed within public right-of-way, a special permit or license may also be necessary.

Call: The City of Moline Building Division at 309.797.0470

WORKING TOGETHER:

The Moline Centre Partners Facade Committee and the City's Project Management Team (PMT) will help ensure compliance of the proposed guidelines. All property owners proposing exterior renovation or new construction within the Moline Centre District should obtain a copy of the Design Guidelines from Moline Centre Partners or Moline City Hall, or online at www.molinecentre.org or www.moline.il.us for guidance during their project. Those who will apply for city funding must provide plans that comply with these approved design guideline standards. Applications will be reviewed for approval by the Facade Committee vested with the responsibility to interpret these standards.

The minimum plan submission that accompanies an application for a building permit should include building elevations, exterior architectural drawings, and material samples that adequately convey the developer's intent related to building style, exterior materials, and relationship to adjoining buildings, colors, and signage. Follow-up inspections during and after the construction should be required to ensure compliance.

The Design Guidelines include detailed explanations for the following:

- Exterior Materials and Surface Features
- Windows and Doors
- Entrances and Porches
- Roofs
- Painting/Colors
- Signage
- Awnings
- Lighting
- Window Displays
- Exterior Surface Features
- Rear Entrances/Side of Buildings
- Utilities
- New Construction



Specific Guidelines

The following specific guidelines have been included to provide a more detailed explanation of the general guidelines:

1. Exterior Materials and Surface Features

- a. Resurface wood frame buildings with wood lap siding to match the original style. Replicate the original narrow clapboard whenever possible. Concrete board siding is also an acceptable alternative to maintain the narrow clapboard style. Heavy gauge vinyl siding which replicates the original clapboard may be used if available. Avoid using light gauge vinyl siding that would not replicate the original appearance.
- b. The use of asbestos siding or sheet asphalt siding is inappropriate. The use of T1-11 siding (textured wood panels with vertical grooves) is not acceptable.
- c. Retain original masonry and stone whenever possible. When tuck-pointing, duplicate original mortar color and joint profile. In-fill and new construction should match original brick and stone as close as possible. Cast stone in place of limestone is an acceptable alternative and may be less expensive but the use of the two materials in the same facade should be avoided.
- d. Clean original masonry and stone when necessary using a medium pressure washer that generates a maximum of 2000 PSI. Avoid higher pressure water blasting as this may loosen mortar in older masonry walls. Avoid the use of chemical cleaners unless performed by a qualified tradesman. Avoid painting of masonry or stone walls unless there are no other alternatives.
- e. Random cut stone, either real or artificial, is inappropriate to the architectural time period in which the district was created and should be avoided. Artificial stone or brick should be avoided in favor of using actual cut stone or brick veneer (standard 4" thickness).
- f. Retain significant architectural features and, if possible, replace missing features such as cornices, moldings, decorative coursing, etc.
- g. Avoid the use of building materials such as E.I.F.S. (exterior insulation finish systems) on major facade components. Smaller components, such as the replacement of original stone cornices or moldings at the tops of the facade walls, may be acceptable two or more stories from the ground level.



WaterMark Corners Historic Block District - River Drive & 15th Street

2. *Windows and Doors*

- a. Retain, and repair or duplicate existing window and door designs to match original, whenever possible. Retain significant architectural features such as lintels, sills, architraves, shutters, pediments, hoods, and hardware.
- b. Do not alter the size, proportion and rhythm of windows and doors.
- c. Avoid the use of shutters or awnings when they detract from or obscure the character and appearance of the building.
- d. When using aluminum window frames, select a frame color that complements the colors of the facade and the architectural style. The use of dark frames (i.e. anodized bronze) is generally acceptable when replacing storefronts and upper story windows. Avoid clear aluminum finishes on facades and storefronts unless it would be appropriate to the architectural style.
- e. Window replacements should fill the original openings. Where all or part of the window must be blocked, use a dark opaque panel behind the window to preserve the appearance of the opening. Do not brick in or otherwise conceal window openings.

3. *Entrances and Porches*

- a. Retain entrances, porches and steps that are appropriate to the building and its development.
- b. Remove or reconstruct entrances and steps that are inappropriate to the building's development and style.
- c. Do not enclose entrances and steps if it detracts from the character and appearance of the building.

4. *Roofs*

- a. Strive to preserve the original roof shape and the character of the original roofing materials when these elements are visible features of the building. Alteration to the roof design, if necessary, should be compatible with the scale, proportion and character of the building.

- b. Preserve the architectural features that give the roof its essential character such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, weathervanes, etc.

5. *Painting/ Colors*

- a. Painting of wood façade components is a quick and cost-effective way to improve the building's appearance and provide maintenance to protect against deterioration. Painting can visually unite the various features of the individual facade or blend several buildings within the business district.
- b. Paint only the trim features of masonry and stone buildings. Buildings of those materials should rely on their natural appearance for distinction with accent trim colors used to complement the natural materials.
- c. Coordinate colors with adjacent buildings. Select from a range of colors that will harmonize and be appropriate for use on structures. Select colors in daylight.
- d. Avoid primary colors/loud colors.
- e. Use high quality paint products designed to be used in exterior applications. Use semi-gloss paints when painting over large areas or areas with imperfections and irregularities. Thoroughly clean, repair and prime surfaces to ensure lasting quality.
- f. Keep the color schemes simple with no more than two or three colors. The color scheme should be used consistently throughout both the upper and lower portions of the building facade to unify the exterior appearance.



5th Avenue Arcade

6. Signage

- a. Signs are a necessary part of any business district. The common problems with signs in most commercial areas are their excessive size and inappropriate placement on buildings. Selection of the type and size of signs and their placement on buildings should compliment the visual character of the building and adjoining streetscape.
- b. Avoid concealing significant architectural features when locating signs.
- c. Sign lighting should be unobtrusive and should not overpower the facade or the streetscape. Flashing signs should not be used.
- d. Custom designed neon signs are acceptable as long as they are not flashing.
- e. Customize/personalize the sign design to complement the building character and its streetscape environment. Avoid manufactured or brand name signs such as pop or beer signs. Avoid plastic signs.
- f. Avoid large projecting signs and roof-mounted signs. Small personalized and well-designed projecting signs can provide interest and variety and should be allowed.
- g. Freestanding signs should not be higher than the roofline of the building and should be designed to compliment the architectural character of the building. The sign message should be unified with coordinated colors and lettering styles. Avoid contemporary features and displays (i.e., digital clocks) that will detract from the traditional streetscape environment. Provide floral displays and landscaping at the base of freestanding signs.
- h. Signs should be constructed with durable, long-lasting materials such as high quality sign enamel paints and decay resisting woods.
- i. Avoid placing signs on the upper stories of buildings. These signs tend to draw attention away from the storefront areas, which should be the focal point of a downtown business district.

7. Awnings

- a. Awnings are both visually and functionally appropriate for many commercial storefronts. Awning size, color and placement should complement the architectural character of the building.
- b. Avoid concealing significant architectural features with awnings.



Before



After

Dead Poets - Historic Block (good design example)



Before



After

Lagomarcino's - 5th Avenue (good design example)

- c. Select soft, weather-treated canvas or vinyl materials which allow for flexible or fixed installation. Avoid aluminum awnings or suspended metal canopies.
- d. Signage applied to awnings should be simple, durable and attractive. Messages should be removable (i.e., sewn on letters) so that signage can be changed when the retail tenant changes without damaging the awning.
- e. Backlit awnings should be avoided.
- f. Avoid loud, primary colors.

8. Lighting

- a. Exterior lighting is an important element of facades and careful consideration should be given to the type of lighting, the size and placement.
- b. Façade lights should include shades so as to direct the light to the sign or other areas of interest. Exposed light bulbs that glare at the street level should be avoided.
- c. Arm mounted mercury vapor lights; metal halide or high-pressure sodium wall packs are not acceptable on the front facades of buildings.



Consumers Warehouse 1998

- d. Down-lighting to illuminate entrances and walk-paths are recommended along with up lighting to accent building features.

9. Window Displays

- a. Display windows are important features in the streetscape environment and essential elements for business advertising by attracting the interest of the passing viewer.

10. Exterior Surface Features

- a. Avoid cluttering the primary building facade with sign brackets, wiring, meter boxes, gutters, downspouts, etc. If these features are necessary, they should be painted in a color that blends with the building and neutralizes their appearance.
- b. Avoid cluttering the facade with cheap or extraneous ornamentation that will detract from the character of the building.
- c. All vacant storefronts should be maintained in an attractive appearance.



Heart of America Building - 15th Street and River Drive

11. Rear Entrances/Side of Buildings

- a. All visible facades of the building should be maintained in an attractive appearance.
- b. Sidewall colors and materials should blend and not detract from the front facade.
- c. Signage on the side of buildings should contain artistic details or contribute to the historic character of the building.
- d. Rear entrances and pedestrian alleyways to rear entrances should be well lit and maintained in a safe and attractive appearance.
- e. Screen trash areas, air conditioning units, and utility areas from view. Paint and renew exterior materials to present a clean appearance.
- f. Pave and landscape all private parking areas related to rear entrances.
- g. The selection of signage, colors and materials for rear entrances should follow the guidelines established for the front facades.
- h. All vacant lots visible to the main streets and rear entrance areas should be maintained in an attractive appearance free of weeds and trash.



Historic Block Alley

12. Utilities

- a. Whenever possible, locate gas regulators and meters and electric meters at the rear or side of buildings so as not to interfere with the look or function of the front façade. Pavement level electrical transformers should be located in a manner so as not to interfere with aesthetics or function of the building or the public way. Transformers should be landscaped so as to soften their appearance.
- b. Telephone and communication junction boxes should not be located on the front of buildings if possible.
- c. Cable television entrances and junction boxes should be located on the rear of buildings. Cables that run across the face of the building are not acceptable. All cable runs should be made interior to the buildings or be directed across the roof.
- d. Satellite dishes are not acceptable on building facades. Dishes should be located on rooftops so they are not visible from the street level.
- e. Security cameras should be concealed and not interfere with the look of the façade.



Moline Centre Alley

13. New Construction

- a. New infill construction should be carefully designed to relate to adjoining buildings and streetscape environment in appearance, scale and setback.
- b. The facade design of new buildings should complement adjoining buildings in rhythm, proportion, material selection and color.
- c. Maintain the "storefront" image including large display windows for continuity and pedestrian interest.
- d. The design of building features on all facades visible from public areas should be accomplished according to the guidelines previously presented
- e. Use only high quality building materials.



John Deere Pavillion - River Drive



River Station - River Drive

Property owners and developers should first discuss their new projects suggested by these guidelines with local building and zoning officials.

Call the Building Division at 309.797.0470
Call the Zoning Department at 309.797.0475

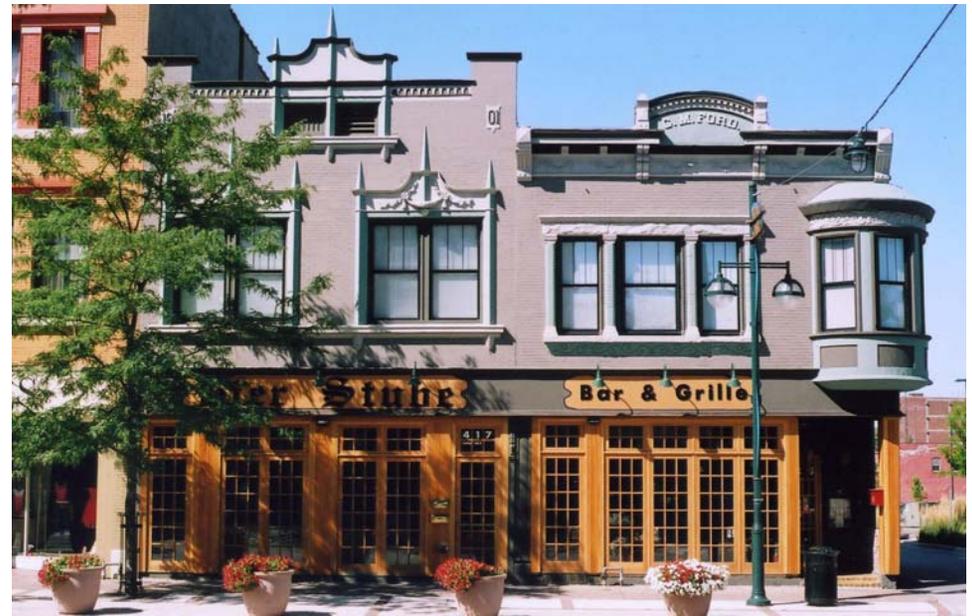
STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLES

Before and after photographs of storefronts, Bier Stube (below) and the Heart of America Building (page 10) have been prepared to show how the proposed design guidelines can be practically applied. These examples represent different building types, scales, historic character and relationship of buildings to the street. It is not the intent of the guidelines to mandate wholesale reconstruction of non-conforming storefronts and buildings to establish an historic theme for Moline Centre. Rather, private property owners are encouraged to examine their individual storefronts to determine how well their buildings meet the guidelines objectives. Facade

changes should be made within the context of the building's structure, materials, and scale to present a more unified and pleasing appearance. Suggestions presented in these illustrative examples represent one way of interpreting the guidelines. These suggestions should be considered as a starting point and should not restrict individual expression and interpretation of the guidelines.



J. Gatsbys -1994 - 15th Street - *Before*



Bier Stube - 2006 on 15th Street - *After*

CONCLUSION

Since 1991, Moline Centre has experienced an overwhelmingly successful redevelopment and reinvestment from both public and private sectors of the community. Downtown Moline is alive with excitement once again. New shopping and dining destinations line its downtown streets. Civic venues and lodging attract visitors from the entire region. Cultural attractions, entertainment and recreational activities continue to expand on the riverfront for residents and tourists alike.

The goal of the City of Moline, its private redevelopment partner Renew Moline and its Main Street program initiative Moline Centre Partners is to build on this success. Focus is now directed toward the area's history, its buildings, and setting that makes downtown Moline so unique. These design standards are provided not as a means to mandate immediate improvements within Moline Centre. Rather, these standards are provided as a service to help encourage appropriate property improvements at such time that property owners and tenants choose to reinvest in their buildings and/or spaces. Individuals are encouraged to refer to these guidelines when planning an improvement project as a means to incorporate improved design that will enhance not only individual structures but the entire downtown.

Moline Centre Partners' Façade Committee review would be triggered by projects that request one or both of the following:

Tax Increment Financing - In order for a project to qualify for TIF financing, the developer has to prove that without public assistance the project would not move forward. There must be a number of impediments that make the project impractical without public assistance. A project proforma along with other studies such as a market analysis and economic impact study can demonstrate the need for TIF financing.

Façade Improvement Program - The program assists property owners refurbish the exterior of buildings with the intention of emphasizing and highlighting the building's historic character through a forgivable loan.



**Please contact the City of Moline
Economic Development Division
for more information at 309-797-0705.**