



## Interpreting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

### Subject: Replacement of Missing or Altered Storefronts

#### Applicable Standards:

2. Retention of Historic Character
3. Recognition of Historic Period
6. Repair/Replacement of Deteriorated or Missing Features Based on Evidence
9. Compatible New Additions/Alterations

**Issue:** A first floor storefront is often the primary factor in defining the character of a historic commercial building. When planning the rehabilitation of a commercial building, regardless of the new use, it is important that the commercial character of the building be retained. In cases where a storefront has been previously altered, any one of the following three treatments will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation: the existing, non-historic storefront may be retained; a new storefront may be designed that is compatible with the historic character of the building; or the missing storefront may be accurately recreated based on historic photographic documentation or physical evidence.

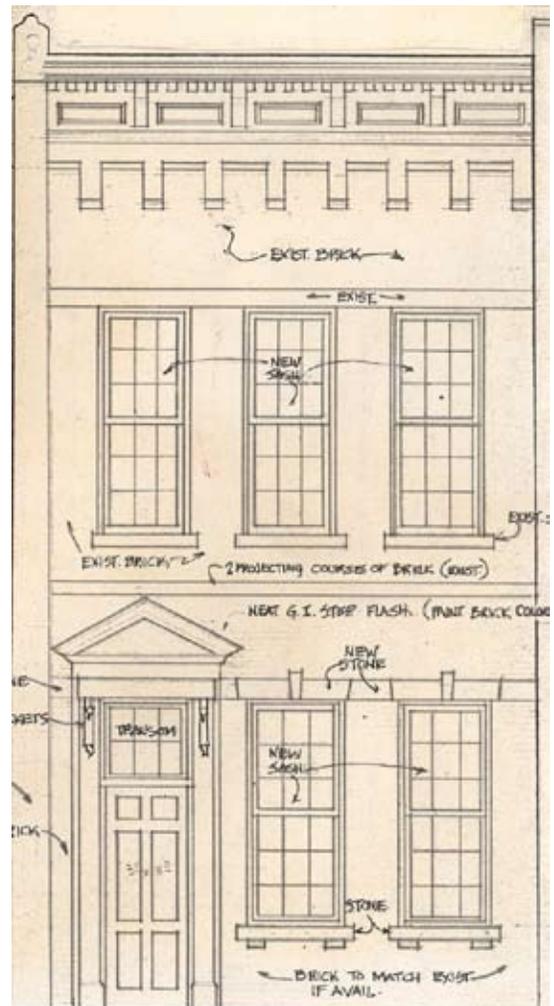
**Application 1 (*Incompatible treatment*):** This late-19th century, two-story, brick commercial building was rehabilitated for office use. The existing storefront, which was not original, was in poor condition but could have been retained and repaired. The owner did not wish to keep the non-historic storefront and could find no information to document its historic appearance. Instead of designing a compatible new storefront, the owner constructed three separate arched openings that copied the arched windows on the second floor. Generally, the first floor of a historic commercial building did not reflect the design of the second floor openings, but typically featured a storefront with large glass windows to display merchandise. Replacing the storefront with residential-type openings resulted in a loss of the historic commercial character of this building. The project does not meet the Standards.

**Application 2 (*Incompatible treatment*):** Another historic commercial building constructed c. 1900 with a 1950s storefront was to be converted into offices. This rehabilitation also proposed to replace the storefront with residential-type openings, but with nine-over-nine windows, keystone lintels and a pedimented doorway in an 18th century



*The storefront on this Victorian building prior to rehabilitation was a later replacement (left). During rehabilitation the storefront was removed and replaced with three residential-type openings that are incompatible with the building's retail character (right).*

“Georgian” style inappropriate for this early-20th century building. (The one-over-one sash on the second floor windows was proposed to be replaced with nine-over-nine sash to match the new first floor windows.) Not only is installing residential-type openings to replace a storefront an incompatible treatment, but removing original windows and replacing them with historically inaccurate windows is also not a compatible rehabilitation treatment. Accordingly, this proposal does not meet the Standards.



*Prior to rehabilitation this early-20th century commercial building had a 1950s storefront (left). Rehabilitation plans proposed replacing the storefront with 18th century-style residential-type openings, inappropriate for this commercial building and its period of construction (right).*

Adapted by Anne Grimmer, Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service

These bulletins are issued to explain preservation project decisions made by the U.S. Department of the Interior. The resulting determinations, based on the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](#), are not necessarily applicable beyond the unique facts and circumstances of each particular case.

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