

*DESIGN  
GUIDELINES*

*FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS*



## Main Street Morgantown

### Forward

MAIN STREET MORGANTOWN, INC. is a non-profit organization that is devoted to the continued revitalization of downtown Morgantown. A group of civic leaders chartered this organization in January 1984, upon returning from a seminar at the National Main Street Center in Washington, D.C. The national Main Street program is housed within the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Through a four-point approach, over 700 towns in over 32 states have an active Main Street program in place to revitalize their downtowns. Main Street Morgantown's foundation is based on the national Main Street program's four points: organization, promotion, economic restructuring, and design.

In July 1990, Morgantown became a state Main Street town and an active member within the West Virginia Main Street program. Its affiliation with the state program has provided the organization with numerous technical and consultant services. Some of those services include a state reconnaissance visit, goals and objectives seminars, resource visits conducted by downtown revitalization professionals, and technical visits.

In September 1990, Main Street Morgantown recruited over sixty volunteers who serve on four committees. These committees are governed by the organization's Board of Directors. Main Street Morgantown employs one staff person and utilizes interns from West Virginia University and West Virginia Career College.

### MISSION STATEMENT

Main Street Morgantown, a non-profit organization, is dedicated to the continued revitalization of downtown Morgantown. Because of the presence of the basic institutions of government (City, County, and Federal), education (West Virginia University), finance, and religion; because of the presence of numerous personal and business services; because of the rich historical and architectural traditions associated with the city; and because a city's downtown is the focal point which projects an image of the kind of people who live and work in that city, Main Street Morgantown is dedicated to creating

- an attractive and meaningful physical design of our inner city
- an active promotion of the offerings of downtown businesses and services
- an active restructuring of all facets of downtown interests to pursue, retain and recruit goods, services and culture
- an effective, well-represented organization to meet the goals of Main Street

We recognize the uniqueness of a downtown university campus, and we accept the challenge this presents to us.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR MORGANTOWN

The primary goal of the Main Street Morgantown Design Committee is the enhancement of the visual qualities of the downtown by attending to buildings, facades, signage, green space, window displays, pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns, safety and accessibility. This set of design guidelines has been compiled for the city and county government to follow when making improvements.

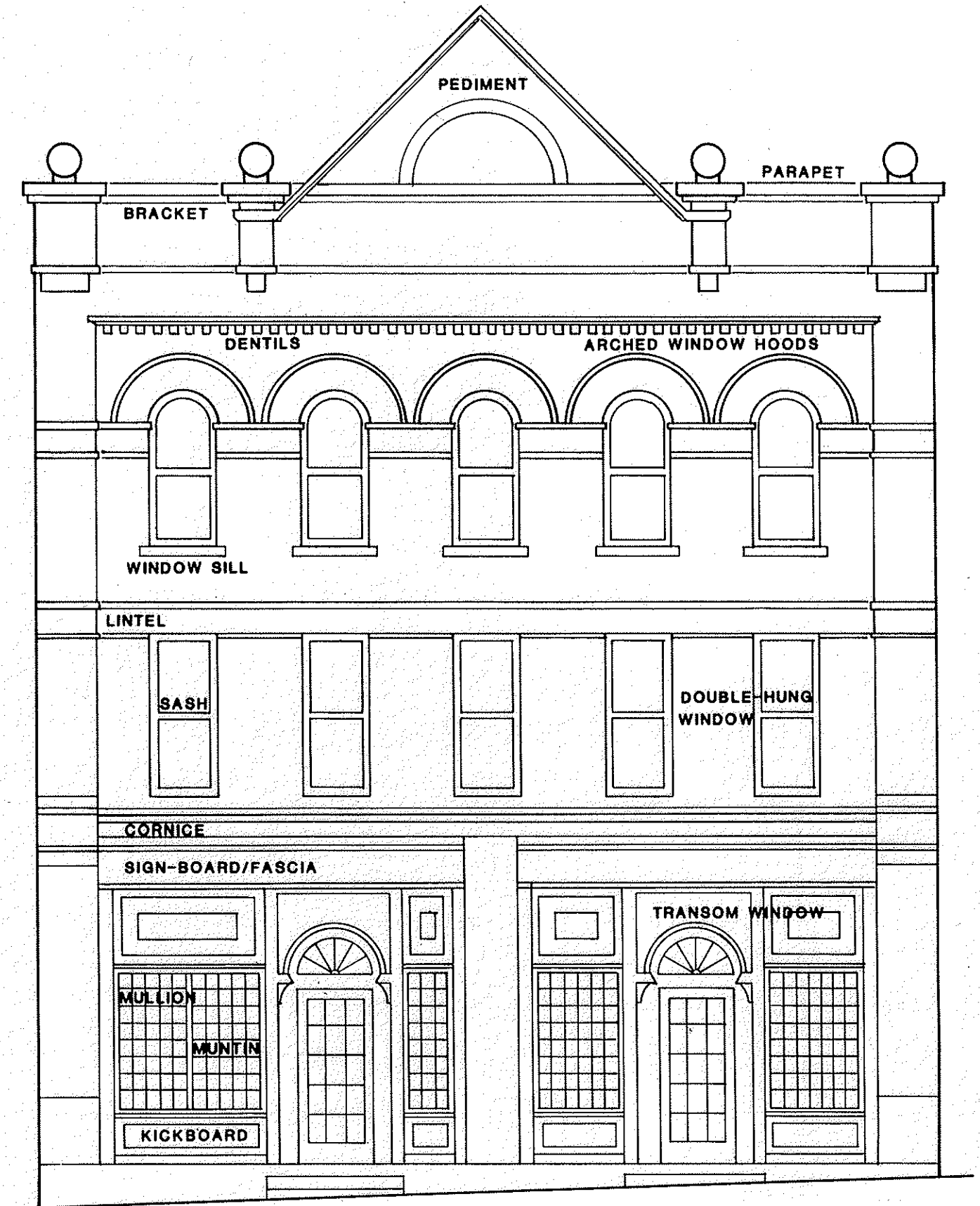
Design guidelines cannot regulate growth, control non-exterior changes, nor guarantee professional designs. However, design guidelines can provide a framework for making objective decisions, serve as a teaching tool, enhance the quality of physical change, protect investment values, retain existing architectural character, increase public awareness of architectural quality, and incorporate new construction within the existing architectural context.

These guidelines are available to assist you in making design decisions that will result in a unified and consistent downtown Morgantown. Please contact our office if you are planning any rehabilitation projects or have any questions.

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# I. TYPICAL FACADE COMPONENTS & DEFINITIONS



## DEFINITIONS OF SOME COMMON ARCHITECTURAL TERMS

Arched window hood: an arched projecting molding.

Bulkhead/kickboard: the panel framing the bottom of the storefront.

Bracket: a decorative projecting member which supports a cornice or window head.

Cornice: a molded projection which crowns or tops a wall.

Dentils: a row of small rectangular blocks forming a molding.

Double-hung window: a window with two sashes that slide up and down.

Facade: the front or face of a building.

Lintel: a horizontal structural element over a window or door opening which supports the wall above.

Mullion: a vertical member dividing a window into sections.

Muntin: a narrow horizontal element dividing a window into sections.

Parapet: a low protective wall at the edge of a roof.

Pediment: a triangular or segmental-curved gable.

Sash: a frame designed to hold the glass in a window.

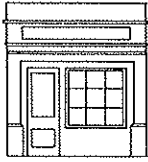
Sign-board/Fascia: a horizontal band which is part of an entablature often used to advertise a business.

Storefront: the street-level facade of a commercial building, usually having display windows.

Transom window: a small window located above a door or other window which allows natural light into the rear of the storefront.

Window sill: a horizontal structural element at the bottom of an opening.

## II.



## STOREFRONTS & FACADES

1. Where the original storefront or facade remains, it should be preserved and repaired with as little alteration as possible.
2. Where only part of the original storefront or facade remains, it should be repaired, maintaining historic materials where possible, including the replacement of extensively deteriorating or missing parts with new parts based upon surviving prototypes such as transoms, bulkheads, pilasters or signs.
3. Where the original storefront or facade is completely missing, it is recommended to reconstruct it based upon historical, pictorial and physical documentation, or to design a new storefront or facade which is compatible with the size, scale, materials and color of the existing building:

**Scale:** consider the scale and proportion of the existing building in the new storefront or facade design.

**Materials:** select construction materials that are appropriate to the given storefront or facade and materials which were available in that era when the building was built.

**Cornice:** respect the horizontal separation between the storefront and the upper stories; a cornice or sign board traditionally serve as a frame for the building's sign.

**Frame:** maintain the historic relationship between the storefront and the building's facade.

**Entrances:** differentiate the entrance to the commercial use on the first floor from the secondary entrance to the upper floors; entrances should be placed where original entrances existed, especially when delineated by architectural detailing.

**Windows:** the storefront should be as transparent as possible with the utilization of glass in the doors, transoms and display areas to allow for visibility into and out of the building.

4. Some replacement storefronts or facades have acquired historic significance in their own right and should be retained.
5. Decorative detail should be retained and restored whenever possible.

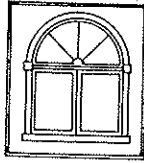
### III. DOORS

1. The original doors should be retained, repaired and refinished; attractive hardware, such as brass door pulls and plates, add visual value to the entrance and should be retained.
2. New and replacement doors should be compatible with the character and design of the building.
3. Where bare aluminum doors are to be retained, they should be primed and painted.
4. Consider using subtle decorations on new and replacement doors; a handsome knob or pull or an attractive molding can make the door special and inviting.

### IV. AWNINGS

1. Consider enclosed side awnings on the upper facade windows and slanted fixed awnings on the storefronts or facade as a unit; when canvas awnings are used on both the upper and lower facades, they should be of compatible color, material and design.
2. The color of all awnings should complement the building.
3. If signs are incorporated into an awning, the message should be simple and clearly identify the storefront business; avoid the use of signs in upper facade awnings.
4. Avoid stock, unpainted metal awnings which are inappropriately related to the character of the building.
5. The use of cloth or canvas awnings over an unarticulated building may help to relate it to the surrounding buildings.
6. The awnings should fit within the window openings.
7. Awnings at street level should not interfere with pedestrian traffic and plantings, and should be compatible with all other existing exteriors.

## V.



## WINDOWS

Before altering the windows of a building, it is necessary to understand the impact of windows on the building facade. Considerations include:

- the size, shape and pattern of the opening
  - the proportions of the frame and sash
  - the spacing and rhythm of the windows
  - muntin profiles
  - type of materials used
  - paint color
  - type and characteristics of the glass
  - related details such as hoods and lintels
1. Retain the original window opening proportions. If the existing ceiling has been lowered, pull the dropped ceiling back into the room, away from the original window.
  2. If possible, save and restore the original windows and frames. Replace missing, rotting or broken sash, frames, mullions and muntins with similar material.
  3. If the original window openings have been altered, restore them to their original configuration and detail. Avoid blocking or filling window openings which are critical to facade design, and for natural light and ventilation.
  4. Avoid storing material directly in front of windows. Wash upper story windows regularly and install suitable window coverings to give the building a finished appearance.
  5. Avoid substituting one type of operable sash for another. It is best to keep all windows the same type (casement, sash/double-hung, awning, etc.).
  6. Avoid the use of exterior shutters except where clear evidence indicated their historic presence. If shutters are used, they should be functional.

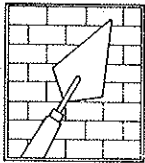
## VI.



## PUBLIC ART / MONUMENTS

1. Public art or monuments should be located in open spaces, rather than on sidewalks or in parking lots, so that they will not impede pedestrian or vehicular sight lines. Art or monuments can be viewed and appreciated more in larger spaces, such as mini-parks.
2. Public art or monuments should relate visually to the downtown buildings and street improvements, and be constructed of compatible materials.
3. Public art and monuments should be designed and produced professionally.

## VII.



## EXTERIOR TREATMENTS

1. Wall surfaces that have not been painted should remain unpainted, and those which were originally painted often utilize a soft brick and should remain painted for the protection of the building material.
2. Sandblasting, high-pressure water treatment and other abrasive cleaning methods absolutely should be avoided .
3. Masonry repair should use approved mortar mix and method, including proper routing of existing joints to allow for a good bond and strike profile.
4. Silicone waterproof coating is not an appropriate treatment for an exterior.

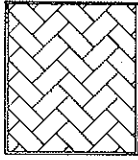
## VIII. NEW CONSTRUCTION & ADDITIONS

1. A new building facade or addition should not attempt to be historic through the use of false historic details. This will only detract from the character of the downtown by compromising what is actually historic.
2. New structures should respect the surrounding buildings with respect to height, setback, spacing, materials, detailing, rhythm and scale.
3. A new structure should reflect the existing rhythm, proportion, scale, massing, decoration and detail of the buildings in the area and their relationship to the site.
4. The type of roof and cornice treatment of the building should utilize material, textures and colors which complement adjacent facades.

## IX. STREET FURNITURE

1. Street furniture is the term used to describe items such as benches, trash receptacles, telephone enclosures, vending boxes planters, light standards, bollards, drinking fountains and similar improvements. These elements should form a coordinated system that can unify the appearance of the downtown area.
2. Street furniture should be integrated into the overall design for the downtown. Their design and color should be compatible with each other and with the downtown lighting. Planters, benches, trash receptacles and telephone booths should be painted to harmonize with existing fixtures.
3. Street furniture should be positioned so that it does not impede or interrupt pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
4. Whenever possible, various street elements should be clustered to eliminate visual clutter in the downtown. Such items as light standards, planters, traffic light standards, and other elements on poles should be installed in clusters to avoid repeating the same element and forming unnecessary pedestrian barriers.

X.



## SIDEWALKS & PAVING

1. Sidewalks should have safe and level walking surfaces. Sidewalk areas that have settled should be repaired and/or replaced to provide an even, level and safe surface.
2. Sidewalk areas that are replaced or repaired should be done with material that matches the adjacent material in color, texture, design and tooling whenever possible.
3. Obstacles, such as obsolete sign posts, parking meter standards, etc., should be removed from the sidewalk and post holes repaired. Additionally, where street furnishings or plantings occur, sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate both those improvements and pedestrian traffic.
4. Where sidewalk patching or replacement previously has occurred and does not match the adjacent material in color, texture, design or tooling, it should be removed and replaced with material that matches whenever possible.
5. Points of potential conflict between vehicles and pedestrians, such as crosswalks, alleys, and parking lots, should be clearly identified by a contrast in color and/or texture and/or material as appropriate.
6. Historic sidewalk paving materials should be retained and repaired rather than replaced.

# XI.



# PLANT MATERIALS

The use of plant materials can be an effective means of unifying the appearance of the downtown area. A coordinated plan of street trees can link diverse architectural elements visually. The creation of expanded green spaces is very important in highly developed areas which have a concentration of buildings and pavement.

1. Effective guidelines must be based upon a master plan for general design treatment for both street trees and massed planting areas.
2. Street trees should be located in accordance with the master plan. The basic objective is to achieve a uniform effect and to enhance the buildings and other elements in the downtown. Trees and other tall plantings should be placed to frame building facades, to break up windowless expanses of wall, and not to block storefronts.
3. New construction should allocate areas for planting in conjunction with the facade.
4. Off-street parking areas should allocate a minimum of five percent (5%) of the gross area for planting. These planting areas should provide a visual buffer between the parking and the street, as well as shade.
5. Plantings must be located so that they do not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
  - a. street trees should be set back two feet from the curb.
  - b. street trees should be spaced to coordinate with parking meters and other designated on-street parking spaces.
  - c. street trees must be pruned sufficiently to allow pedestrian movement under the canopy.
6. The Main Street office will maintain a list of approved plant materials, standard planting details and specifications, and details and specifications for related tree grates and tree guards.
7. Plant materials should be selected from the list of approved materials and in accordance with the master plan. This list is to be based upon the following criteria:
  - a. plants selected should be tolerant of urban conditions.
  - b. plants selected should require minimum maintenance.
  - c. plants selected should be hardy species chosen on the basis of their height, form, color and visual interest. Plant materials should visually complement the building facades and public improvements.
  - d. plants selected should have deep root systems to avoid damage to road and sidewalk pavement.

8. Plant materials should be planted in accordance with the approved planting guidelines and specifications.

## XII.



## SIGNAGE

Signage is a source of information and communication for both residents and visitors to our city. When it is done properly and in a restrained fashion, signage can be both effective and attractive. Large garish signage, which attempts to compete for our attention through "one-up-manship" with existing signage can be disastrous. Uncontrolled increases in size, color and lighting intensity of signage create visual clutter, which is unacceptable.

1. Informational signs and traffic control devices/signs should strive for simplicity, ease of comprehension and high immediate visual impact. All such signage should be uniform and consistent in design and color.
2. Traffic signs and control light standards should be part of the unified system of street furniture downtown.
3. Public information signs should be clustered to eliminate visual clutter. Whenever possible, signs and lights should share the same standard.
4. Traffic and public information signs should use international symbols whenever possible.
5. Special signs are encouraged which identify entrances to the downtown shopping district, or which identify desired historic features of the downtown.
6. Uniform informational signs which indicate the location of public parking lots should be provided at the entries to the downtown.

### XIII.

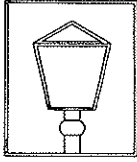


### MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is the first step to take in making changes to existing buildings, public spaces, parking lots and streetscapes. It is often deferred maintenance that contributes to the shabby appearance of central business districts. Simple cleaning and repair can transform a building or a block overnight, allowing it to be rediscovered.

1. It is necessary when dealing with the issue of maintenance to determine the party responsible for maintaining the property. Maintenance within a downtown is the responsibility of both the public and private sector, and often can be a coordinated effort. It will be necessary to develop a realistic maintenance program for existing street improvements involving both the public and private sector.
2. No private or public improvements should be made which cannot be maintained. Before any new street improvements are executed, a full maintenance program should be developed with a realistic budget and responsibilities.
3. All property should be cleaned periodically according to materials and method recommended for a particular building. Windows also should be included in the cleaning process.
4. Sidewalks, streets, vacant lots, parking lots, alleys and public spaces should be cleaned on a regular basis.
5. Repairs and/or painting should be done to all facades when needed. It is important that the building facades be well-maintained and have a fresh look, as they are the "windows" of the downtown business community. Awnings, light fixtures or any ornamental fixtures attached to the property should be in good repair.
6. Safety of the pedestrian and motorist should be considered at all times, and provisions need to be made in the maintenance program to provide for their safety. It is crucial that street lights, crosswalk lights, sidewalks, curbs and streets are well maintained.
7. Greenspaces needs to be carefully maintained so that they can mature properly and still provide enjoyment and visual pleasure for our downtown.

## XIV.



## LIGHTING

There are three kinds of lighting commonly found in downtown areas:

- pedestrian lighting is localized and scaled low.
  - street lighting should provide general light for vehicular traffic but should not be expected to function as pedestrian or amenity lighting.
  - accent or amenity lighting is focused on buildings or landscape features.
1. Existing lighting standards and bases should be unified by painting them a common color, which should match other street furnishings.
  2. Lighting fixture styles should be consistent throughout the downtown area.
  3. All electric wiring and conduits should be consolidated and concealed from view whenever possible.
  4. Nuisance glare shall be minimized by restricting the direct illumination from outdoor lights only to those areas for which it is intended.
  5. All parking lot lighting shall be integrated with the landscaping.

## XVI.

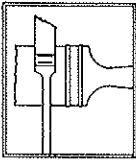


## COLOR

When repainting, the following criteria should be considered in selecting colors:

1. The use of the original painting scheme and color palette should be considered.
2. The color palette should be consistent throughout the upper and lower portions of the building facade and should tie building elements (cornice, signs, storefronts, etc.) together.  
Usually a maximum of three colors is recommended.
3. The color palette and paint schemes of adjoining buildings should be compatible.
4. The use of bright primary colors or very dark colors, except where historically appropriate, usually should be avoided as they seldom are compatible with buildings downtown.
5. The application of paint to buildings which historically were not painted should be avoided.

## XV.



## SURFACE PREPARATION &amp; PAINTING

The quality and durability of any refinishing depends on proper surface preparation and the use of appropriate paints. The following are some general guidelines for renovating surfaces. More detailed information is available from the Main Street office.

1. All surfaces to be painted should be washed.
2. Peeling and blistering paint should be removed by scraping, wire brushing, sanding and/or the use of chemical paint removers.
3. If paint is stripped to bare wood, a primer and two finish coats should be applied.
4. Paints should only be applied to dry surfaces, and joints between wood trim and masonry should be caulked before painting.
5. Sandblasting, high pressure water washing and other abrasive cleaning methods should not be used on historic buildings as they can damage the structure.
6. Generally, stone, terra-cotta, brick or tile should not be painted.
7. Masonry repair, such as repointing, should use an appropriate mortar mix and should include proper routing of existing joints to allow a good bond and striking profile.

## XVII.



## ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility for consumers with functional limitations is important in order to increase pedestrian traffic and goodwill. Exterior and interior barriers as well as attitudinal barriers need to be addressed in order to achieve full accessibility.

1. Exterior physical barriers include things such as: parking, curbs, sidewalk condition and obstructions, distance from parking to the building entrance, steps, phone booths, and exterior door width and height.

Interior physical barriers include things such as: floor surface, interior steps, spaces between aisles, counter height, drinking fountains, restrooms, and telephones.

2. Attitudinal barriers are ways of thinking, feeling, and perceiving individuals with disabilities that may negatively influence the relationship between the office and the consumer. Such barriers often prevent public offices from successfully identifying and meeting consumer needs.
3. In many cases minor modifications can be made at minimal cost to correct physical barriers. Attitudinal barriers can be addressed through training sessions for office members and employees.
4. Public accommodation for all persons with disabilities has been mandated as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed July 26, 1990. Initial compliance was to be achieved by January 26, 1992. Compliance must be reached by January 26, 1993 for new construction.
5. For assistance in better understanding current requirements, please contact:

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