# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of Appropriateness Process</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Context</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Renovation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storefront Design</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural Details</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display and Store Windows</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awnings and Canopies</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandising</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Building Construction - Storefronts</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix and References</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

These guidelines are intended to be used to encourage and guide retail storefront design and development in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District (“the District”). This document will serve as a tool for building owners, store owners, and developers to create storefront designs that provide an energetic, vibrant and exciting shopping experience in the District. Building owners, developers and merchants proposing improvements to storefront retail will be able to use this document as a guide for all aspects of their design.

Following these guidelines will streamline and facilitate the design, discussion and Township and Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) approval process for renovations to storefronts and building facades within the District, provide for consistent application of existing regulations, and allow the implementation of context appropriate design characteristics throughout the District that advance the goal of making Ardmore a distinctive upscale shopping destination.

Organization

The Guidelines are organized by the major features of the storefront. Appropriate Storefront Types are illustrated for reference. A general description indicates the goals for a particular feature, and specific items are recommended to support and implement those goals. The guidelines recommend or discourage the implementation of certain features, work or activities in order to promote the goals.

Certificate of Appropriateness Process

Working with HARB

The Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) is a public advisory body created by state and local laws. HARB considers the effects of proposed exterior changes to buildings in local historic districts and comments on the appropriateness of each proposal. Once their review is completed, their recommendations are forwarded to the Lower Merion Township Building & Planning Committee who in turn approves, amends or denies the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) to the Board of Commissioners.

HARB reviews all proposed exterior changes to buildings and structures that are visible from a public street, sidewalk or public way within the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District in addition to several other districts. This includes any additions, new construction, alterations, renovations, major repairs, material replacement, the erection of signs and awnings and the relocation or demolition of historic buildings or sites.

HARB does not review interior changes to structures unless they affect the exterior appearance of the building. They also do not review paint colors when the proposed work is limited to repainting. However, it is strongly encouraged that paint colors be chosen that are compatible with the historic context of the surrounding buildings.

Area Plan

Kiku Obata & Company has been retained to study the portion of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District (‘the District’) in a roughly four-block area of Lancaster Avenue, bounded by Ardmore Avenue at the northwest and Simpson Road at the southeast. The Storefront Design Guidelines are based on the storefront conditions and character of this study area.
Project Review

The HARB architectural review is guided by the principles contained in the Secretary of the U. S. Department of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. These common-sense guidelines for appropriate and sensitive rehabilitation encourage the guiding recommendations listed within the box at the right. The full text of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation can be found in the Appendix.

The HARB reviews each application to determine whether the changes proposed are appropriate to the individual property as well as to the district as a whole. The review extends to architectural style, general design, arrangement, location and materials. The types of work reviewed include the following:

- Repairs and replacements
- Alterations and renovations
- Adaptive reuse of structures
- Additions and new construction
- Demolition and building relocation
- Fences, walls and garden structures
- Signs and Awnings

Generally, applications will fall into one of the four following categories:

- Additions and New Construction
- Renovations and Alterations
- Repairs and Replacements
- Signs and Awnings

Submission checklists, the Certificate of Appropriateness application, District maps and other additional helpful information can be downloaded from the Lower Merion Township website at www.lowermerion.org. Go to the scroll bar on the home page and click on Advisory Boards and then Historic Preservation. You may also contact the Building and Planning Department for additional information at 610-645-6200.

Please note that in addition to HARB review, each application is subject to Building and Planning Department review for compliance with zoning, building and safety codes. The Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) in addition to any required permits must be obtained prior to the commencement of work on the property.

HARB Recommendations & Review

Identify, retain, and preserve the form and detailing of architectural features important to your building.

Protect and maintain important architectural features. This usually involves the least degree of intervention and often prevents the need for further, and often more expensive work.

Repair rather than replace deteriorated physical features where possible. If repair is not possible, then the HARB encourages property owners to replace the features in-kind.

Replace rather than reconstruct. If it is necessary to replace a deteriorated feature, and in-kind materials or techniques are unavailable, then use compatible new materials and techniques that match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Reconstruction of missing features is only appropriate if based upon physical or documentary evidence, such as photographs or drawings.
Certificate of Appropriateness Process

Review Timetable
HARB meets monthly on the second floor of the Township Administration Building generally on the first Tuesday of each month with applications heard beginning at 8:30 AM. A minimum of four to six weeks should be expected by the applicant from the date of application submission to the issuing of a building permit. To help expedite the permit approval process, you may submit plans for review of the interior renovations while your HARB application is pending.

Step 1 - Application
The application is submitted to the Township Building and Planning Department on the first floor of the Township Administration Building where staff will review it for completeness. Providing a complete application will assist the applicant in securing a timely review of their application. If the application does not meet required Township deadlines or lacks required information, the application will be returned to the applicant by staff. Applications are due by 4:00 PM on the Monday two weeks (15 calendar days or the third Monday of each month) prior to the HARB meeting.

Once the application is found to be complete, it is reviewed by the HARB Historic Architecture consultant for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards and with these Design Guidelines. The consultant will contact the applicant within the two week period prior to the meeting if there are questions regarding the proposal. It is strongly recommended that the applicant or a project representative attend the meeting to answer any questions that HARB members may have about the application.

Step 2 - HARB Review
There are three possible actions that can be taken by HARB on an application. At the meeting, changes to the application may be recommended by HARB and agreed to by the applicant. In this case, the application will be recommended for approval subject to the agreed upon conditions. Alternatively, if additional information is requested or design changes are needed, the application will be tabled by agreement with the applicant. Typically, the application will be heard at the next HARB meeting if all requested information is submitted in a timely manner. Finally, the application may be denied.

Step 3 - Building and Planning Committee Approval
The HARB recommendation for approval or denial will then be placed on the agenda of the next scheduled Building and Planning Committee which is a committee of the whole of the Township Board of Commissioners. This meeting is typically held on the second Wednesday of each month, usually starting between 6:30 and 7:30 PM in the Board Room on the second floor of the Township Administration Building. Please check the Township website for the approximate starting time of the meeting on the scheduled date. Attendance at this meeting and the Board meeting described below is optional.

Step 4 - Board of Commissioners Approval
Once the recommendation is approved by the Building & Planning Committee, the recommendation is moved to the final Board of Commissioner’s agenda for consideration at the next scheduled meeting. This meeting is typically held on the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 8:00 PM in the Board Room. If the Board of Commissioners denies the application, their decision may be appealed to the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas.

Step 5 - Building Permit Application
Once approved by the Board of Commissioners, the COA will be issued by the Building & Planning Department if all conditions have been met. The applicant can then obtain a building permit from the Building and Planning Department provided the application complies with all applicable Township codes. The Building Department Inspector will review the work
for compliance with the approved COA and building permit. If any changes are proposed after the COA has been issued, you must contact the Building and Planning Department Inspector who can determine if additional HARB review is required. Please note that work completed that is not in compliance with the approved COA is subject to fines and possible removal.

Guidelines and Checklists
To assist applicants in providing completed applications, informational guidelines and checklists in addition to the COA application can be found on the Township website. There are checklists available for each of the four categories noted above. The information required includes but is not limited to the following:
• Two copies of the COA application
• Historic District Map with building location circled
• 4”x6” (or larger) labeled photographs showing all public views of the existing and surrounding structures as applicable
• Copies of scaled drawings
• Samples or catalogue cuts of materials to be used
• Samples of colors to be used
• Any additional information requested by HARB consultant or staff

Importance of Historic Preservation
An historic district is a group of resources (buildings, structures, objects or sites) possessing historical and architectural significance. Historic districts can be classified as either Federally designated National Register Historic Districts or municipally regulated districts under the Historic District Act of the General Assembly, El. 282, No. 167 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of June 1961, amended April 1963. In 1980, Lower Merion Township adopted Ordinance No. 1902 to create two local historic districts that include the Ardmore Commercial District. The Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) was then appointed to regulate the districts.

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

There are 80,000 listings on the National Register. These listings are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:
• Recognition that a property is of significance to the Nation, the State, or the community
• Consideration in the planning for Federal or Federally assisted projects
• Eligibility for Federal tax benefits
• Qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available
Historical Context

District Character
The District has an intact street façade line that has retained the scale of Lancaster Avenue’s historic commercial character. This differentiates Ardmore from other Main Line commercial areas; instead of individual shop buildings or smaller isolated groups, Ardmore retains a sense of community place, of town center rather than commercial strip. However, individual properties and storefronts have been neglected and the retail area is unattractive. Updating or maintaining properties in a manner consistent with the prosperity of the area is necessary so that Ardmore can fulfill its potential. Ardmore can once again be a community-oriented, energetic and walkable town center. Storefront Revitalization that enhances the historic scale and varied architecture of the District will create an eclectic, charming and vibrant retail experience.

This list of terms describes the desired character for the District:

- Revitalized
- Intimate
- Walkable
- Eclectic
- Charming
- Energetic
- Hip
- Current
- Vibrant
- Community-oriented
- Personal

Do: Interesting storefront displays, good signage and street connections such as sidewalk cafes or restaurants help create pedestrian-focused shopping streets
Historical Context
Building owners, store owners, and developers should become familiar with the history, historical context, and the existing structures adjacent to their project. It is one of the goals of these guidelines to create an identifiable character throughout the District; projects should respect the context of the existing area and maintain the historic nature of Ardmore. Enhancing the historical nature of the built environment will help to create a unique atmosphere for retail to thrive.

Materials and Color
The historical materials of the District are brick, stone, wood and glass. Stucco and wood siding also appear on commercial buildings, though less often. There is a variety of natural color provided by these materials, and a rich palette of historical paint colors complements the range of material.

Existing materials should be matched to the fullest extent possible in renovations. New construction projects should utilize materials, proportions and scale appropriate to the historical nature of the District and adjoining properties.

Colors used in renovations and new construction in the District should be appropriate to the historical and existing palette of materials and colors. Historical colors should be reproduced where evidence of the original color exists. Where there is no information, colors should be complementary to the building materials.
Building Renovation

Evaluate Existing Renovations
Renovations should respect the history of Ardmore, while recognizing the need for retail design to be current and appropriate to the time. Renovations can build on the existing historic building fabric of the District by being sensitive to the level of craftsmanship, the scale of historic features, and the context provided by adjacent buildings. Existing quality renovations that are historically significant on their own, and that reference different eras in the life of the building should be maintained as contributing to the history of the District. Renovations of poor quality, using inappropriate materials that conceal or otherwise obscure historic building elements, or that are not sympathetic to the scale and proportion of the original building, should be removed or reworked in order to regain the historic character of the building.

Historic Renovation and Tax Credits
Federal and State tax credits may be available for historic renovation. Contact the National Park Service (www.cr.nps.gov/buildings.htm) and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (www.phmc.state.pa.us) for further information. Do not proceed with any work before obtaining the approval of the appropriate tax credit review authority, where State or Federal historic tax credits are sought. These guidelines may conflict with the requirements for historic tax credits.

Do: Appropriate sign location, lighting and awning location
Do: Signage is appropriately located at sign band (although each store should only have one main sign), storefronts create large areas of glass and transoms have been restored to fill storefront bays
Do: Storefronts and transom windows are restored consistently across bays; Appropriate blade sign locations
Before: Existing transoms are covered with paneling; Left storefront bay is infilled with siding; Awning does not fill bay; Storefront glass is divided inappropriately with mullions; Historic roofing material was removed and replaced with asphalt shingles.

After: Paneling has been removed; Awnings span entire storefront bay; Storefront glazing fills bays in large panels; Historic roofing has been restored.

Before: Existing transoms and projecting windows are covered with siding; Storefronts are inappropriate aluminum; Storm windows and door are inappropriate; Historic detail has been removed.

After: Siding has been removed; Transoms are restored to original glazing pattern; Storefronts are appropriate wood construction; Trim and panel details have been restored at façade.
#### Storefront Design

**Goals**
The goal of the Ardmore Guidelines is to create well-designed, dynamic and upscale storefronts throughout the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District, to enhance the historic character of the District, and define the area as an attractive destination for shopping, entertainment and socializing.

**Approach**
- Dynamic and inviting storefronts attract clientele and establish the unique identity of the space.
- Creating transparency at the storefront in conjunction with well-designed and maintained merchandising make the quality and offerings of the retail establishment apparent to shoppers and pedestrians.
- Quality signage and detailing of storefront construction contribute to the perception of high quality retail goods and services.
- Consistent lighting will make the District comfortable for all age groups. Keeping display windows and buildings lighted after regular hours allows pedestrians to window shop and explore the District in comfort and safety.
- Appropriate storefront design should enliven restaurant and café storefronts with activity at the window. Visible activities, dining, conversation and visual connection of spaces with the sidewalk will promote and enhance the shopping experience along the street.

**Do:** Proper display and transparent storefront, signage lighting, seasonal decorations and lights

**Do:** Consistent sign band and large display windows are preferred

**Do:** French doors make a connection with the street, pots and plants provide interest and a buffer for pedestrians
Composition

Transom – The transom consists of transom windows and a transom bar. This area may contain signage, infill panel(s) or be covered by awnings.

Display Window – The display window should provide maximum transparency; tinted or mirrored glass is not allowed.

Sill – The sill inside can be configured as a shelf or cabinet for merchandise display. A shelf is not necessary at restaurant locations. The sill should be a maximum of two feet tall.

Sign band – the sign band can be a panel with decorative moulding above the transom, a panel constructed with the same material as the storefront, or a decorative inset in the building facade above the storefront. Lighting for signage is usually installed directly above the sign band and below any second-story window; sometimes the lighting is mounted on the sign band below the sign.
Storefront Design

Existing Buildings
In order to enhance the historic character of the District, existing original or historic features should be preserved and repaired whenever possible.

• When designing a storefront, maintain the architectural integrity of the existing facade.
• Piers, cornices or columns that have been reclad or covered with inappropriate material should be returned to their original material where possible.
• Preserve existing decorative ornament and cornices. Repair damaged areas to match existing adjacent surfaces. Remove any cladding obstructing existing cornices.
• Limit storefront design to the bays between building columns and other solid features.
• Transom heights and transom bars should be located at the same height at each bay of the building.
• Storefront materials, dimensions and attachments (e.g., awnings) should be consistent for multiple bays of one building.
• Returning a storefront to its original character is the standard; existing original storefronts should be retained whenever possible. Preserving a previous storefront renovation which has gained architectural significance in its own right provides continuity of the building’s history.

Do:
- Renovated storefront shows appropriate sill, full-height display windows, decorative sign band, and lighting
- Intact historic buildings show typical building and storefront elements
- Restored storefront maintains transom windows, large storefront glass area
Inappropriate Modifications
Remove items obstructing architectural features such as added piers, cornices, and spandrels. Remove associated adhesives and mechanical fasteners. Remove inappropriate materials from the transom and sill areas of storefronts. False brick and stone, corrugated metal, stucco infill, wood or vinyl siding, plywood and similar materials should be removed. Remove wrought iron security gates where not integral with the storefront design. Where possible remove stucco when it has been installed over existing decorative piers, cornices, or ornament. If not possible, paint to match adjacent materials. Treat each storefront bay in a similar manner, so transom bars and sill levels align from bay to bay.

DON’T infill storefront bays with solid materials such as paneling, siding, or masonry

DON’T use residential-type materials (doors, windows, decking, lighting) when repairing, replacing or developing new buildings; only commercial-grade materials are allowed

DON’T obstruct architectural ornament or building features with signage or non-original materials

DON’T remove architectural features such as piers, cornices or mouldings from the building facade

DON’T: Improper removal of historic elements and replacement infill of storefronts result in loss of historic character

DON’T: Inappropriate sign bands covering historic elements; Box signage covering transom windows; Improperly placed awning at second-story windows
Storefront Design

Storefront Types
These storefront descriptions represent the storefront configurations that are appropriate to the existing buildings and the character of the Ardmore Commercial Historic District. Original historic storefronts should be retained and restored. Many of the original glass transom areas of the storefronts in the District have been covered with inappropriate materials such as vertical siding, plywood or other panels. These coverings should be removed; the transom should be glazed and can be a location for appropriate signage.

Awnings should be located at the transom as indicated in each Storefront Type. The sill height is roughly at the knees, and should be no higher than 24 inches from the sidewalk. Glass lites in the storefront should be as large as possible; added mullions and small windows are not appropriate. Doors should be recessed from the face of the storefront at least 30”, but not more than 4’. The first 4-5’ of the store interior from the storefront window should be considered the merchandising area. This area should have a display sill and adjustable lighting.

Storefront Type A
This storefront presents a large display window with the entry door to one side, recessed from the face of the building. The glazed transom is divided into smaller, regularly spaced windows and runs across the storefront bay.

A section through a typical storefront shows merchandise and lighting locations

Display Lighting — Merchandise Display Sill — Sign / Sign Band — Signage Lighting — Merchandising area with overhead lighting
Storefront Type B
The center entry provides two merchandising sills at the angled display windows to each side of the recessed entry door(s). A sign band sits above the storefront at the face of the building. Signage should be located at the sign band above the storefront.

Storefront Type C
Another center entry storefront with two smaller display windows flanking the recessed doorway. The transom windows run across the face of the building to unify the storefront bay. Transom windows are often decorative glass divided into smaller window units. Signage should be located at the transom bar, or on the display window glass, to avoid obscuring decorative details.

Storefront Type D
This storefront is composed entirely of French doors. A narrow band of transom windows serves as a unifying element between the French doors and the main entrance. Doors and frames should be wood or metal. Operable windows and doors are perfect for restaurants or cafes and bring activity to the street. An awning provides shade, and should be used for signage.
Architectural Details

Existing decorative ornament and cornices should be preserved throughout the District.

- Remove any added cladding, siding or panels obstructing existing cornices or decorative brick or stone work. Repair damaged areas to match existing adjacent surfaces.

- The scale of details (for example cornices, banding or parapets) and features (for example windows, storefront bays or entry doors) should be similar to adjacent properties in order to create a consistent character.

- New building materials should be appropriate to existing context. Brick, stone, decorative wood trim and mouldings are appropriate.

- New buildings should not attempt to copy historic details, or make a new building look like a historic one. The scale and alignment of details such as cornices, windows and bays should be consistent with the scale of existing adjacent buildings.

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T copy historic details or ornament when developing new buildings

DON’T use EIFS, siding, vinyl or other inappropriate materials when renovating existing buildings, or when developing new buildings

DON’T cover up existing details, transom windows, storefronts, doors or other features

Do: New storefront with appropriate transom proportions

Do: New construction using traditional proportions, materials and features

DON’T: Cover transoms with inappropriate paneling. Inappropriate materials should be removed. Brick sill at storefront is not original.
Doors

The entry to a store should be special, inviting and clearly marked. Entry doors to second floor spaces should be distinguished from the display windows and store entries.

- Doors may be wood or metal frame as appropriate for the building and storefront materials, but entry doors should be mostly glass to allow views into the store and to create comfortable, safe entry and exit for customers.

- Doors should not have window treatments such as shades or curtains, unless these are primarily decorative and do not obscure interior views.

- Doors should not be cluttered with signage. Store name, address and regular hours of operation should appear on the glass of the door. Individual letters are most appropriate and maintain visibility through the glass.

- Products and advertisements should not be posted in the glazing of doors. See the Signage section for more information.

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T clutter the glass at doors with signage, permanent or temporary

DON’T use window-treatments in doors unless they are primarily decorative and do not block views into the glass

DON’T install Security Shutters or gates at doors or storefront windows

Do: Pairs of French doors are used to connect the store with the street and support display of merchandise

Do: Historic doors enhance the storefront and can become a focal point
Display and Storefront Windows

Inviting and energetic storefronts help to establish the character of the neighborhood, and attract the interest of shoppers.

- The merchandising area should be distinct and lighted specifically to highlight retail goods in the display window.
- Storefront display windows should be clear glass and as large as possible for the expanse of window.
- Display windows should extend the entire width of the storefront bay wherever possible (with the exception of the entry door).
- Sills or support walls at the bottom of display windows should be approximately 8-18” high, and generally no higher than 24”.
- Solid materials (brick, stone, siding or paneling) and unit windows that partially infill storefront bays should be removed, and full-width glass storefronts installed.
- If storefront display windows are to have mullions, the mullion spacing should match the proportions and spacing of existing building elements as appropriate.
- Window treatments (e.g., shades, blinds or curtains) are not allowed in storefront windows, unless these are primarily decorative and do not obscure interior views.
- The sill or display shelf of a storefront should be constructed of high-quality durable materials. The surface should be wood, tile or similar hard surface. Carpet is not appropriate in the storefront.
- Merchandise, objects and displays in the storefront display window should be wares or objects available in the store, or related to the use of the storefront.

Do: Large panes of transparent glass allow views into the store

Do: Lighting and people at the storefront window make cafes or restaurants more inviting

Do: The storefront sill allows interesting merchandising displays (left and above)
• Window displays and merchandise should be changed or updated frequently.

• Business uses in storefronts should create displays that relate to services rendered. It is inappropriate for the backs of desks or equipment to face the display window.

• See Merchandising section for additional information.

**Inappropriate Actions**

**DON’T** use solid materials such as brick, cladding, paneling and siding, or window units in a storefront

**DON’T** use window treatments in the storefront window

**DON’T** install intermediate mullions in storefront windows

**DON’T** cover transom windows or block portions of the storefront windows with signage, paneling or other infill materials

**DON’T** install air-conditioning units in any part of the storefront bay

**DON’T:** Blinds, signage covering the transom, and a transom-mounted air conditioner are all inappropriate

**DON’T:** Inappropriate covering of transom; Temporary signage used at top of display window

**DON’T:** Covering of transom, temporary banner used as signage, and multiple signs in the display window create a cluttered and poorly designed storefront
Lighting

Lighting should be used carefully to enhance the pedestrian experience. Exterior lighting should be used to illuminate signage. At retail stores, storefronts should be illuminated with interior spots to highlight merchandise in the display window. Create a “merchandise zone” that is well lighted and draws the eye with great visual merchandising. In restaurants or cafes, pendant or can lights behind the storefront create atmosphere. Storefronts should be illuminated well after the store is closed to create interest along the street and provide a comfortable and safe streetscape at night.

- The lighting effect, not the source, should be visible.
- Shielded light sources should be used to avoid direct glare from both the pedestrian viewpoint and from those who occupy spaces inside the building.
- Recommended light sources are color-corrected metal halide or fluorescent lamps with a color temperature of 3000 degrees Kelvin and a minimum color rendering index (CRI) of 70.
- Surface-mounted flood or spotlights on buildings should be located in a manner that is as unobtrusive as possible. Lamp-holder type fixtures without shields are not allowed.
- Lighting for signage should be placed evenly at the face of the storefront and along the sign. Lighting should be located either above the sign, or below it.
- If the retail use occupies the second story of the building, lighting for signage is allowed (see Signage section for allowable signage above the street level). Signage or other retail lighting is not allowed above the street level with residential use.

Do: Appropriate placement of signage and lighting enhances the rhythm of the building structure

Do: Well-lighted, transparent storefronts create an inviting street

Do: Well-lighted storefronts emphasize the retail zone; Building accent lighting (at second story retail) provides a hierarchy of visual interest
• Gooseneck or stemmed flood or spotlight fixtures are appropriate for lighting signage. The style of these fixtures (modern or traditional) should be compatible with the building style. However, it is acceptable to use small, simple, modern fixtures in most cases.

• Fixtures of a decorative nature should be coordinated with the façade and mounted as appropriate to the design of the building, at piers or over the storefront bay as illumination for signage. Small fixtures are encouraged.

• Building lighting should be consistent in placement and design; develop a lighting strategy that enhances the building and the storefronts.

• Storefront merchandise and display windows should be lighted from the inside, with lighting directed on the display. Windows and storefronts should be lighted until 11pm to maintain pedestrian interest.

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T use bare-bulb type fixtures, or install exposed conduit or other wiring at the building facade.

DON’T use fixtures that are not appropriate to the style of the building.

DON’T use residential-type fixtures; only commercial-grade fixtures are allowed.

DON’T use lighting where the light source is visible from the street / sidewalk; only the lighting effect should be visible.

Do: Directed light sources illuminate signs and building face

Do: Appropriately placed and directed lighting works with the features of the storefront

Do: Small, simple light fixtures are unobtrusive

DON’T: Broken lights or missing lamps should be replaced immediately; Conduit should not be visible at building face
Awnings and Canopies

Awnings and canopies offer shelter from the elements, serve as a colorful complement to the building, help to identify locations of storefronts and public and private entries, and provide locations for signage and graphics.

Awnings are fixed or retractable projections from the storefront bay, that protect from sunlight and weather. When awnings are not necessary for these protections (e.g., when a storefront faces north and does not receive direct sunlight) they are discouraged.

Canopies are permanent architectural features of a building that are only located at building entries.

Awnings

- Locate awnings in each retail bay and use consistent design (profile, color, dimensions) for all awnings at a single building. Awnings should fit the opening of each single bay fully, and the base of the awning should align with the bottom of the transom bar and provide a minimum clearance of 8'-0". Awnings should project a minimum of 3’ and a maximum of 5’ from the building face.
- Awnings should not obscure architectural ornament.
- Awnings should have open sides (no side panels)

Do:
- Appropriate use of signage on awnings. Awnings fit within the storefront bay
- Appropriate signage at awning, signage and display in windows maintains transparency

Do:
- Appropriate signage at awning, sign band used for main store sign, signage and display in windows maintains transparency

Do:
- Appropriate signage at awning, signage and display in windows maintains transparency

- Awnings constructed of canvas should have a diagonal shape (unless the openings are other than rectangular). Canvas awnings can be fixed or retractable.
- Awnings constructed of metal should be flat panels and have a diagonal shape and similar section to canvas awnings. Standing seam, corrugated or other roofing products, or enclosed structures with soffits are not allowed. Metal awnings are fixed.
- Striped awnings should have a minimum stripe width of six inches, and have only two colors.
Canopies

• Canopies are permanent constructions made of materials appropriate to the building construction, such as stone, metal, wood or glass.

• Canopies identify and occur at the major entrance to a building. The entrance canopy should fit the opening of the entrance, be appropriate to the scale of the building, and should not obscure architectural ornament or have any support located on the sidewalk. Incorporate careful, simply designed details on canopies.

- See Signage section for location of signage, graphics, emblems and store names on awnings or canopies.

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T use curved or internally illuminated awnings or canopies

DON’T cover up architectural ornament or building features

DON’T project awnings more than 3’ from the face of the building

DON’T use awnings at building entries; they should only appear across the storefront bay

DON’T use awnings above the street level

DON’T install canopies at retail or commercial bays

DON’T install canopies where none existed before

DON’T use plastic or vinyl for canopies

Do: Canopies emphasize the building entry and reinforce the architectural style of the building
Signage

Signage should be designed to convey the identity of the tenant, enhance the historic features of the building façade and bring delight to the street. Signs should be professionally designed and fabricated to ensure quality. Design signage so that it is not too heavy in appearance. Signs with individual letterforms and graphic elements, or signs hung away from the face of the building create a less heavy appearance than do cabinet signs mounted to the face of the building.

- Signs should be made from durable materials; wood, metal, glass, painted acrylic etc.
- Internally illuminated cabinet signs are prohibited.
- Exposed neon is an appropriate method if used in a limited and tasteful manner.
- Dimensional letterforms (min. 1/2” deep) are preferred to flat, vinyl or painted acrylic.
- Internally illuminated plastic-faced signs are not allowed. Instead use open-face neon channel letters or halo-illuminated letters.
- Temporary paper, vinyl or fabric signs or banners are only allowed to be displayed for a period of time not to exceed 20 days in any 365-day period, by Township Ordinance. A sign permit is required for the erection or attachment of any temporary sign.
- Paper, fabric or adhesive signs in windows are considered temporary and should adhere to the Township sign ordinance. Temporary signs should be removed within 20 days of application.

**Do:** Even subtle graphics make a strong impact at pedestrian level

**Do:** Exposed neon used in limited and tasteful ways conveys a hand-crafted quality

**Do:** Decorative light fixtures enhance the textural quality of the façade
- Permanent signage in storefront windows should be limited to store or business name, hours of operation, and limited secondary signage related to the use of the storefront (e.g., ‘cafe’, ‘fine furnishings’).
- Banners or fabric signs attached between buildings, or to items or features in the public way, are not allowed.

- Signage for non-retail uses should adhere to the same guidelines as retail signage.
- See Merchandising section for additional guidelines within the storefront.

**Do:** Halo illuminated, dimensional letters are an elegant, striking way to sign a storefront

**Do:** Banners or fabric signs identify retail use at upper floors

**Do:** Subtle graphics at pedestrian level are a good way to reinforce the store identity.

**Inappropriate Actions**

**DON’T** obscure architectural ornament, details or storefront windows with signage

**DON’T** use internally illuminated plastic-faced signs

**DON’T** use temporary paper, fabric or adhesive signs in windows where permanent signage is more appropriate

**DON’T** allow temporary signs or banners to stay on display for longer than 20 days, or as indicated by Township ordinance
Signage

Storefront Façade Sign
A Storefront Façade Sign identifies the tenant by utilizing letterforms, logo, and/or graphic elements and is located within the sign zone. If the building has architectural detailing in this area, individual letterforms should be used so that detail is not obscured. Scale signs to fit within the boundaries of the storefront sign zone so that it does not crowd architectural elements or adjacent signs. Secondary messages promoting goods and services should not appear on the storefront façade sign. Instead locate on transoms and storefront windows.

Transom Sign
A tenant identification sign that uses letterforms, logo, and/or graphic elements is appropriate within the Transom Sign Zone as shown in the building elevations below. Transom signs may occupy no more than 50% of the glass area and may not be solid panels. Individual graphic elements or typography should be used.

Blade Sign
Blade signs are used to identify storefronts at pedestrian level as shown in the building elevations below. They should be sized to their mounting area and should be centered on the building pier. Blade signs should not obstruct or obscure other tenant storefronts or signs, or significant Landlord building features. Minimum mounting height is 8'-0” above grade. One blade sign is allowed per storefront.
Awning Sign/Canopy Sign
Awning and canopy signs occur on the faces or edges of overhead protective elements as shown in the building elevations below. On awnings, graphics should be painted, embroidered or silk-screened. Limit signs on awnings to either on the vertical drop (6” copy, max.) or on the sloped top (30% of surface, max), not both. Canopy signs may be pin-mounted to a canopy surface, or stood upright along a canopy edge.

Display Window Graphics & Door Graphics
Display window graphics are tenant identification on the storefront glass as shown in the building elevations below. These graphics should be applied vinyl and should not occupy more than 10% of the storefront glass and not impair the visibility of the storefront merchandise area. Door graphics are tenant hours of operation on the glass surface as shown in the building elevations below and should not occupy more than 10% of the storefront glass.

Banners
Temporary banners may occur on the building face above the first floor and are allowed only if the first floor tenant occupies the second floor. The armature that mounts to the building may project no further than 3’-0” from the face of the building. The overall length will be in proportion to and reflect the scale of the building façade and surrounding architectural elements.
Merchandising

Merchandising and storefront display materials should reflect the energy of the District, and should be designed with an emphasis on transparency and display of merchandise. The first 4-5’ of the store from the storefront window should be considered the merchandising area. This area should have a display sill and adjustable lighting.

- The ceiling of the merchandise area should maintain the original height at the transom and be made of plaster or drywall; dropped ceilings should not be used in this area. Transitions to a lower ceiling height should be unobtrusive.

- Storefront displays should be clean, current, colorful and attract the pedestrian’s attention.
- Displays should incorporate merchandise in a creative manner.
- Seasonal and Holiday decorations accentuate a storefront. Use fresh decorations such as real pine swags or plantings that are seasonally themed with color.
- Solid walls or built structures behind the storefront that create enclosed display windows are not allowed.
- Storefront displays should be constructed of high-quality, durable and interesting materials.

Inappropriate Actions

**DON’T** use solid materials or walls behind the storefront window; views into the store should not be obscured

**DON’T** use carpet, plastic shelving, slatwall or other solid fixtures in the merchandizing zone

**DON’T** obstruct views into the store

**DON’T** use dropped or acoustic tile ceilings in the merchandise zone

*Do:* Simple graphics and clean, appropriately scaled displays keep windows transparent

*Do:* Well-lighted and fresh merchandise invites customers; Cluttered signs and posters should be removed from door glass

*Do:* Large scale displays are eye-catching; Preserve views into store
Landscaping

Planter or flower boxes at second floor windows shall respect the design of the building and not obscure any ornament or conflict with signage.

- Plants included in storefront displays inside or outside the store should be healthy and well-trimmed at all times.
- Dead plants should be removed from display promptly.

Do: Planters and flower displays provide colorful interest

Do: Landscape pots and plants reinforce the rhythm of the structure and enhance the façade

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T allow plants to obscure views into the store
DON’T keep dead or dying plants on display
DON’T use artificial plants
DON’T display wares or items not related to the function of the store
New Building Construction - Storefronts

Storefronts in new buildings and construction should respect the scale and context of the existing buildings in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District. New building storefronts should reflect the scale and facade proportions of adjacent buildings on either side of the development property. Storefront retail and public commercial use, such as restaurants, should be maintained throughout the street level of new buildings.

Typology
First-floor retail in new buildings should use the materials, scale and proportion of existing storefront types as a guide; commercial uses with large, clear glass display windows are the historical standard in the District. It is acceptable for new stores to be wider than typical historic retail bays in the District (generally 25') but storefronts should be broken up by vertical building elements (such as piers, columns, etc.) at the typical retail bay dimension where appropriate, and in no case should the breaks occur less frequently than twice the typical bay width.

Retail Identity
New developments that incorporate multiple stores should create varied storefronts for each store; a single, consistent storefront system is inappropriate for large building developments. Retail tenants should create an individual storefront that addresses the identity and specific merchandising and display needs of the store. Developers creating new retail space without specific tenant agreements should install temporary partitions or board-ups that provide a graphic identity for the project, rather than building standard storefront systems without tenant input.
Materials and Design
Do not attempt to invent or recreate a historic building or storefront. Modern buildings and storefronts using the scale, proportions and materials of the District are appropriate. Use masonry, steel, glass, terra-cotta, stone, cast stone and tile for new storefront façades. Use brick and stone masonry of a shape, color and texture as found within the District. White or tan brick, painted brick, T-111 or similar plywood siding, and E.I.F.S. are not appropriate materials in the District. Oversized brick or concrete block are not appropriate materials in the District.

Neighborhood
Develop buildings with storefronts that interact with the street. Recommended features include operable windows, planted window boxes, retail and restaurants that open onto the street, and storefront windows that offer maximum transparency.

Inappropriate Actions

DON'T use a single, continuous storefront system across the entire façade of a new building

DON'T use inappropriate materials such as EIFS, plywood siding, or painted brick
Maintenance

Clean, well maintained storefronts are critical to the shopper’s perception of value, safety and comfort.

- Canvas awnings should be thoroughly cleaned on a regular basis, to prevent buildup of dirt and other contaminants.
- Replace canvas awnings when they become faded or torn. Paint metal and wood canopies as required.
- Signage for existing retail and restaurant venues must be maintained. All lights on an illuminated sign must be in working order.

- Fix faded or broken items on non-illuminated signs or building-mounted lighting.
- Storefront glass and glazing should be cleaned, inside and out, on a regular basis.
- Wood trim and detailing at the storefront should be painted and kept in good repair at all times.

Inappropriate Actions

DON’T allow trash or dirt to build up at the sidewalk or storefront windows or sill
DON’T keep faded or ripped awnings or banners up
DON’T allow paint or other finishes on the storefront to degrade or fail
DON’T allow broken signs, light bulbs, fixtures or other decorations to remain without repair
Appendix and References

Contacts

Township of Lower Merion
Township of Lower Merion
75 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003-2376
Telephone (main) 610-649-4000

Building and Planning Department
Telephone 610-645-6200

Township Web site:
www.lowermerion.org

Historic District Ordinance:
www.lowermerion.org/twpsec/chap88.html

Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB)
www.lowermerion.org/planning/hp/histpresrv.htm

National Park Service
Technical Preservation Services and links to resources:
www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/online_ed.htm

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
www.phmc.state.pa.us

The Lower Merion Historical Society
www.lowermerionhistory.org

Lower Merion Conservancy
www.lmconservancy.org

Ardmore Initiative
56 East Lancaster Avenue
Ardmore, PA 19003
Telephone 610-645-0540
www.ardmore-pa.org
The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards (Department of Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building’s site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Related Contacts:
Heritage Preservation Services
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW (2255)
Washington, DC 20240
Telephone: 202-513-7270

Web inquiries:
NPS_HPS-info@nps.gov