

City of Minot

Façade Improvement Forgivable Loan Program Design Standards

Adopted by City Council: July 6, 2021
Revised: Nov. 15, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

These criteria are applicable to program guidelines adopted by the Minot City Council (hereinafter “City”) for the Minot Façade Improvement Program.

Façade improvements are meant to address the attractiveness of multiple downtown properties in order to renovate old or decaying building stock. It may also assist designated historic districts to complete the renovation, restoration or adaptive reuse of a class of buildings found principally along Main Street and other downtown facades.

The City’s approach is to provide incentives to completely renovate the entire façade so that it doesn’t require more work in the near future. The City is avoiding a band-aid approach.

GENERAL DESIGN CRITERIA:

1. To return buildings close to their original design. True-to-period design and materials are important.
2. Make certain the façade is repaired for the long term (10 years and beyond).
3. Allow for adaptive reuse and ADA accessibility.
4. Return windows to original sizes (fenestration), mounted and fitted close to the opening size. This may include display windows.
5. Consider interior storm windows and repairing and restoring some windows if cost savings are possible over replacements. This is especially important for historic buildings. Replacing windows should be the last element to be calculated. Inexpensive vinyl replacements, mirrored, tinted, smoked or glass block windows are not permitted unless historic.
6. Provide energy-efficient windows and plate glass display windows.
7. Light all display windows with energy-efficient LEDs.
8. Locate signs in sign bands where feasible. We recommend perpendicular/blade signs that pedestrians use over vehicular use.

9. Use historically appropriate signs where appropriate to the architecture. Externally lit signs are encouraged.
10. Improve/restore street access to upper floors whose reuse must be accommodated.
11. Use of durable materials is important. PVC Lumber is preferable to real wood due to its durability. Smooth surfaces resemble real wood more than faux raised grain.

ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE IMPROVEMENTS:

See Program Guidelines.

PERMITTING AND CODE REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants or their contractor(s) must secure required building permits and complete the project in accordance with all applicable codes, ordinances, and standard engineering practices. Contractors must be licensed with the City of Minot Inspections Department. Applicants and contractors shall follow all federal, state, and local codes.

DESIGN STANDARDS:

Downtown Main Street and the design of its buildings developed organically, grown from within the fabric of what was there at the time from 1889 until about 1920. Renovation efforts should follow the original intent and avoid making statements at the expense of the original work. At the same time, reasonable accommodations for ADA access and more functional materials can be given without abandoning period-appropriate design. Applicants should refer to Section 4.2-7 of the Minot Land Development Ordinance as adopted April 5, 2021 (subject to revision). Applicants will have to following the design standards listed below to be eligible for a forgivable loan:

Building Materials

1. Should be compatible with and complement existing and adjacent buildings.
2. Should be appropriate for the size and architectural style of the façade.
3. Use of too many materials on a single building should be avoided.
4. Inappropriate building materials, damaged or inferior materials that have been added over time should be removed.
5. For historic buildings, building materials and elements from an earlier time or different architectural style should not be added to create a false historical appearance.
6. Use of durable materials is required. We encourage lasting repairs so that fewer repairs are required in the future.
7. Use of PVC lumber is encouraged if replacing wood and mouldings, and properly replicating historic mouldings.
8. EFIS (Exterior Foam Insulation System) cannot be used on the front façade.
9. No use of plywood as an exterior surface or faux stone except as needed for restoration.
10. Respect the original materials.

Durability and Maintenance

1. Building materials should be aesthetically and structurally durable.
2. Where appropriate, substances which resist graffiti should be applied to reduce maintenance requirements.
3. Building textures and their combinations should add continuity.
4. Texture should be appropriate for the size, proportion, and architectural style of the building.
5. Reflectivity, durability, and color of the texture should be considered.

Building Colors

1. The selection and use of colors should be coordinated and compatible with each other and with adjacent buildings.
2. The use of multiple colors may be appropriate on a building elevation. However, no more than three different colors should be used on one plane.
3. The color choice should be appropriate for the building material. Bright, vibrant colors are usually more appropriate as building accents or as accent colors on signs.
4. Preserve and restore “ghost signs” wherever possible.

Architectural Details

1. Architectural details include cornices, roof overhangs, lintels, sills, molding, brick patterns, shutters, entrance decoration, chimneys, and any other decorative indentations, projections, or additions.
2. These details add materials, textures, and colors to the architecture, create shadows or highlight building focal points, and divide or define structural masses.

Windows

1. Respect the original window openings (fenestration).
2. The number, size, style, and type of windows should be appropriate for the architecture of the building.
3. The rhythm, patterns, and ratio of walls to windows should be proportional to the building and its surroundings. Masonry openings are usually the guide to window size.
4. Too many different window variations on a building should be avoided.
5. Window design should be compatible with details such as sills, sashes, lintels, depth of reveal, decorative caps, and shutters.
6. If shutters are proposed they should fit the window opening.
7. The color of the glass and its reflective quality should be carefully considered for its overall effect on the design. Highly reflective glass or darkly tinted glass is not appropriate at street level or most other street façade applications.
8. Specifications of windows and doors must be provided to board and staff including brand and model. No substitutions. The approved quality of window or door must be installed although the board may approve windows of identical specifications.

9. *(Added by the City Council on consent calendar on November 15, 2021)* It is a façade program goal to balance design that engages the street and provides natural lighting with the restoration of historic display windows. Some of the area above the first-floor façade windows may occasionally be needed to provide a sign band for modern era wall signs. Display windows that respect the original, period-appropriate fenestration may include suitably designed trim and panels above and below the glazing constructed from durable, period-appropriate materials or like-for-like replacements. All display windows should be installed at a suitable viewing and display height that would have existed on the building or other same-period structures in the vicinity. Photographs and architectural drawings from the period of construction may be used for guidance.

Display Windows

The large array of display windows inset from the sidewalk most often were not part of the original design, they were added in the late 1940s. They allowed shoppers to come in out of the rain and snow but do take up lots of space. Reducing the size of the cut-in saves energy, increases interior space, allows for reconfiguring entrances to the upstairs, and saves money that can be directed to other restoration.

Street Level Windows

“Abundant” windows are considered to engage the street and connect interior and exteriors and the persons both inside and out.

Wooden Windows

Frequently, their repair and renovation are not only more cost-effective but also reasonably energy efficient when either glazing is replaced with double pane/low-E glazing or exterior or interior (preferred) storms are added. Counterweights are usually replaced by more energy-efficient mechanisms at the same time.

Accessibility Ramps

1. Where possible, ramps should be located so that they are sensitive to primary building elevations.
2. The design of ramps should relate to building architecture and exterior building materials.
3. A ramp’s base and its railings should be of appropriate materials and finish to complement the building.
4. Unpainted or unstained wooden ramps are discouraged.
5. Landscaping may be used for screening.
6. A preference is given to grade modifications that allow for access through the building’s primary entrance, as opposed to separate ramp facilities.
7. All ramps must meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Signs

1. Hanging signs are desirable because they minimize long-term damage to the building as users change and update signs.

2. Box signs are not appropriate. No vinyl banner, backlit banner or translucent box signs to be included in the design or execution.