

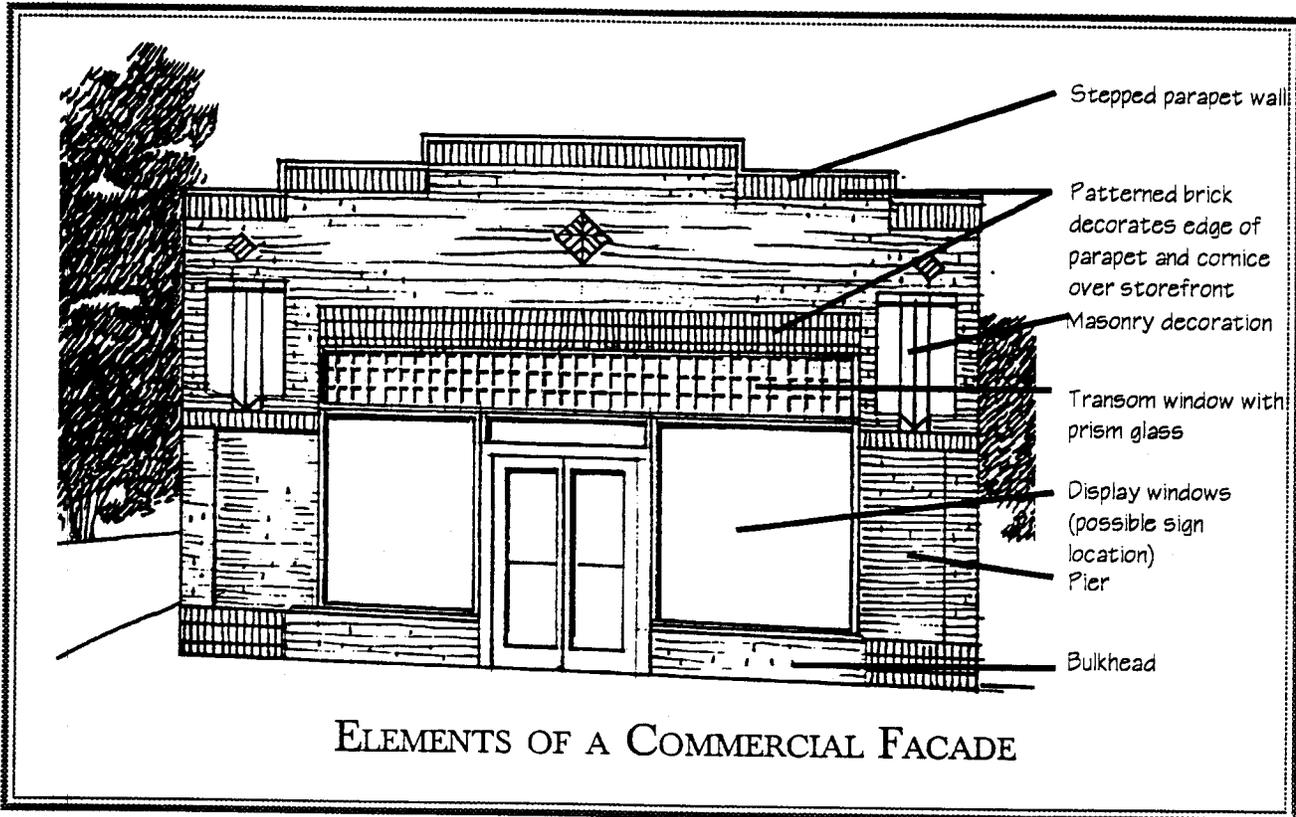
*Martin Grocery opened on Johns Road in 1888 and was demolished in 1992.*

### Table of Contents

Commercial Building Design  
 Planning a Facade Improvement  
 New Commercial Construction  
 Signs  
 Awnings

**M**ost of Summerville is a residential historic district but there are several instances of small neighborhood commercial areas on Monte Sano and at the base of Kings Row. In addition to these few traditional commercial buildings, Summerville has a number of residences that are zoned for business use. Projects on these buildings should review these guidelines as well as those in Chapter II: Guidelines for Building Site and Chapter III: Guidelines for Residential Rehabilitation.

## Commercial Building Design



Most historic commercial buildings contain a ground floor retail business that requires display windows and on the upper floors space for housing, storage, or office space. Generally, commercial buildings are one story in Summerville and lack the upper story uses. The primary elevations—or facades—of historic commercial buildings have a predictable appearance with three distinct parts that give the facade an overall unified appearance. These are the storefront, upper level areas and cornice. The buildings are generally built up to the property line and adjoin neighboring buildings.

## Commercial Building Design



Commercial buildings at the foot of Kings Row.

### THREE AREAS OF A FACADE

#### Storefront

The first-floor storefront is transparent and is framed by vertical structural piers and a horizontal supporting beam, leaving a void where the storefront elements fit. The storefront elements consist of an entrance (usually recessed), display windows, a bulkhead under the display windows, transom windows over the storefront, and possibly a cornice which covers the horizontal beam. The first floor also may contain an entrance to the upper floors. More recent commercial buildings in Summerville lack several elements of traditional storefronts such as transom windows, or many decorative details.

#### Upper Floor Area

Upper floors are characterized by smaller window openings that repeat on each floor. These windows may vary in size, type, and decoration but usually are the same for each floor. In Summerville, it is not unusual to find the upper facade may consist of only masonry since there is not a second floor.

#### Cornice

The cornice decorates the top of the building and may be made of metal, masonry, or wood. Some decorative cornices project from the building while others are delineated by an ornamental band. The top of the wall may have a patterned brick band or may have a coping of brick, concrete, stucco or metal.

## Planning A Facade Improvement

Over time commercial buildings are altered or remodeled to reflect current fashions or to eliminate maintenance problems. Often these improvements are misguided and result in a disjointed and unappealing appearance. Other improvements that use quality materials and sensitive design may be as attractive as the original building and these changes should be saved. The following guidelines will help to determine what is worth saving and what should be rebuilt.



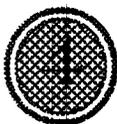
1 Conduct pictorial research to determine the design of the original building or early changes.



2 Remove any inappropriate materials, signs, or canopies covering the facade.



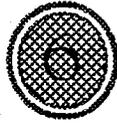
3 Retain all elements, materials, and features that are original to the building or are sensitive remodelings, and repair as necessary.



4 Restore as many original elements as possible, particularly the materials, windows, decorative details, and cornice.



5 When designing new elements, conform to the configuration and materials of traditional storefront design.



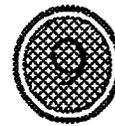
6 Reconstruct missing original elements (such as cornices, windows and storefronts) if documentation is available, or design new elements that respect the character, materials, and design of the building.



7 Avoid using materials that are incompatible with the building or district, including textured wood siding, unpainted wood, artificial siding, and wood shingles.



8 Avoid creating false historical appearances such as "Colonial," "Olde English," or other theme designs that include inappropriate elements such as mansard roofs, metal awnings, coach lanterns, small paned windows, plastic shutters, inoperable shutters, or shutters on windows where they never previously existed.

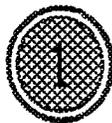


9 Maintain paint on wood surfaces and use appropriate paint placement to enhance the inherent design of the building.

---

## New Commercial Construction

### Monte Sano and Kings Row Areas



New commercial buildings should be one story tall and have a facade design with the three-part composition including a storefront, upper facade area and a cornice of some variety.



The setback should be limited to zero to five feet to relate to the existing neighboring setbacks. Spacing between buildings should be zero to five feet as well.



Traditional primary building materials in Summerville's commercial areas include brick or stucco and new construction projects should use them.



A shed roof behind a parapet wall is appropriate for this type of new commercial construction.

### Wrightsboro Road Area

If a new construction project is to occur in the Wrightsboro Road area where there are a large number of existing surrounding residential structures, the design of the new commercial structure should follow the Guidelines for New Construction outlined in Chapter III.

## Signs



Signs are a vital part of a commercial building. A balance should be struck between the need to call attention to individual neighborhood businesses and the need for a positive image of the entire district. Signs can complement or detract from the character of a building depending on their design, placement, number, and condition.

There are a number of different types of signs that can be used. Choice depends on the location of the business, the design of the building, owner budget, and type of business. These general types include flat wall signs, projecting signs, freestanding signs, window signs and awning signs.

### General

Signs should be executed by sign professionals who are skilled at lettering and surface preparation. Many signs are not readable or simply do not convey an image appropriate for the business or the building. Often, sign painters or graphic designers can assist with sign design.



Flat wall signs for commercial buildings can be located above the storefront, within the frieze of the cornice, on covered transoms, or on the pier that frames display windows or generally on flat, unadorned surfaces of the facade or in areas clearly designed as sign locations.



Freestanding signs, in general, are not an appropriate sign type in a traditional commercial district except for use in the front yard of a residence that has been converted to commercial or office use.



Projecting signs for commercial buildings should be at least 10 feet from the sidewalk, and no more than 3 feet from the surface of the building. They should not be placed above the cornice line of the first floor level unless they have a clearance of less than 10 feet from the sidewalk.



Window signs should be approximately 5.5 feet above the sidewalk at the center point for good pedestrian visibility. Optional locations could include 18 inches from the top or bottom of the display window glass. Window signs should obscure no more than 20 percent of the window glass. Window signs are also appropriate on the glazing of doors.

### Commercial Buildings



Place signs so that they do not obstruct architectural elements and details that define the design of the building. Respect signs of adjacent businesses.

## Signs



The total size of all the signs on a commercial building should not exceed 50 square feet

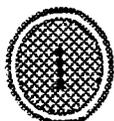


Shape of signs for commercial buildings can conform to the area where the sign is to be located. Likewise, a sign can take on the shape of the product or service provided such as a shoe for a shoe store.



Awning and canopy signs should be placed on the valance area only. The minimum space between the edge of the letter and the top and bottom of the valance should be 1.5 inches.

### Residential Buildings



For residential buildings converted to commercial uses, flat signs attached to the wall at the first floor or suspended from the fascia between porch columns is appropriate.



For residential buildings, small projecting signs attached to the wall at the first floor or porch column are appropriate and should not be located higher than the top of the porch.



Freestanding signs should be no higher than 12 feet.

### Number of Signs

The number of signs used should be limited to encourage compatibility with the building and discourage visual clutter. In commercial areas, signs should be limited to two total and each a different type. A building should have only one wall sign, per street frontage. In addition to the existing permitted signs, each business in a building with rear entrances could have one small flat mounted sign not to exceed 6 square feet.

### Size of Signs



Flat wall signs should not exceed 18 inches in height and should not extend more than 6 inches from the surface of the building. Their size should be 1 and 1/2 square feet per foot of frontage.



Projecting signs should be a maximum of 10 square feet per face.



Average height of letters and symbols should be no more than 12 inches on wall signs, 9 inches on awning and canopy signs, and 6 inches on window signs.

### Materials

Use traditional sign materials such as wood, glass, gold leaf, raised individual metal or painted wood letters, and painted letters on wood, metal, or glass. Wall signs should not be painted directly on the surface of the wall. Window signs should be painted or be decal flat letters and should not be three dimensional. The sign design should fit the character and style of the building.

### Color

Use colors that complement the materials and color scheme of the building, including accent and trim colors. Three colors are recommended, although more colors can be appropriate in exceptional and tastefully executed designs.

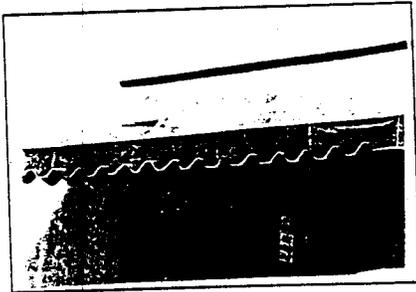
### Lighting

Generally, signs should be indirectly lit with a shielded incandescent light source. Backlight plastic molded signs are not appropriate to the historic district.

### Banners

Banners should be temporary and wall murals should be carefully reviewed for compatibility with the district character.

## Awnings



Awnings can contribute to the overall image of the neighborhood commercial district by providing visual continuity for an entire block, helping to highlight specific buildings, and covering any unattractively re-

modeled transom areas above storefronts. They also protect pedestrians from the weather, shield window displays from sunlight and conserve energy. Several buildings in both of Summerville's commercial areas have awnings.



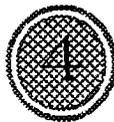
Whether fixed or retractable, sloped awnings are the traditional awning type and are appropriate for most historic buildings, both residential and commercial. Boxed or curved awnings also may be used on simple, more recently constructed commercial buildings.



Place awnings carefully within the storefront, porch, door, or window openings so they do not obscure elements or damage materials.



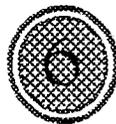
Choose designs that do not interfere with existing signs or distinctive architectural features of the building, or with street trees or other elements along the street.



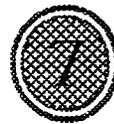
Make sure the bottom of the awning valance is at least 7 feet from the sidewalk.



Coordinate colors with the overall building color scheme. Solid colors, wide stripes, and narrow stripes may be appropriate, but not overly bright or complex patterns.



Use the front panel or valance of an awning for a sign. Letters can be sewn, screened, or painted on the awning fabric; avoid hand-painted or individually made fabric letters that are not professionally applied. (See the Sign section for size and placement requirements for awning signs.)



Flat canopies and marquees, not mansard roofs, can be appropriate for commercial buildings in Summerville. Insure that they fit the storefront design and do not obscure important elements such as transoms or decorative glass.



Aluminum, plastic and backlit awnings are more appropriate for auto-oriented commercial building areas and are not recommended in the Summerville Historic District.