

Understanding Commercial Blocks in Goderich

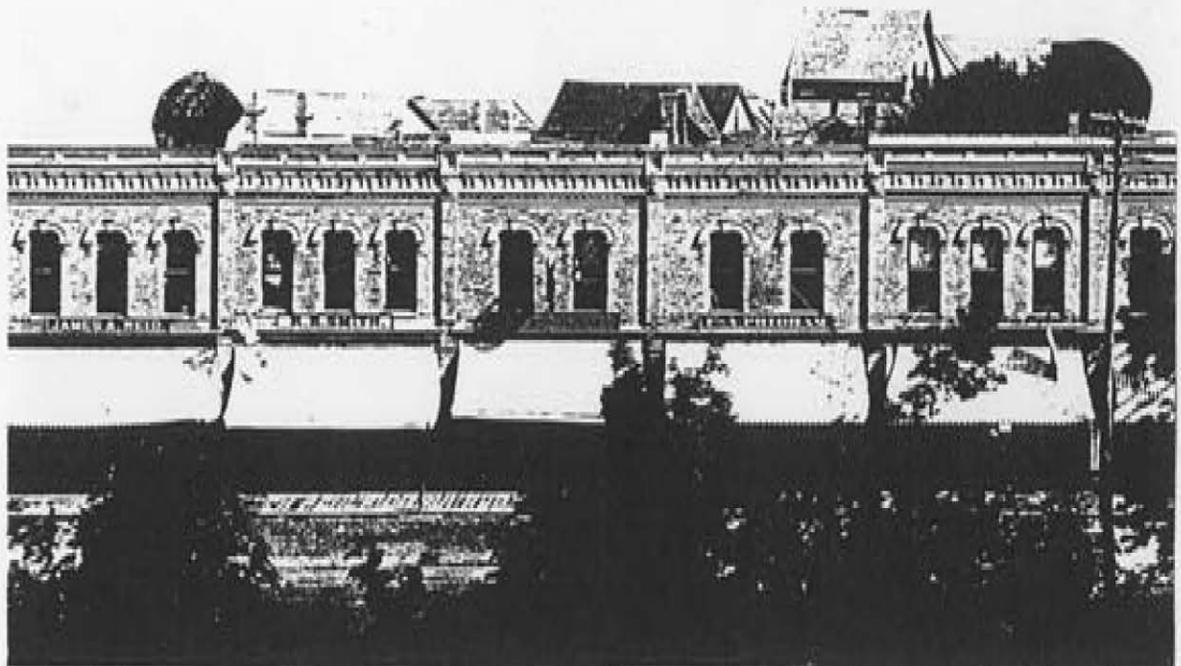


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UNDERSTANDING COMMERCIAL BLOCKS IN GODERICH

INTRODUCTION

In architectural terms, the type of buildings around the perimeter of The Square and along West Street in Goderich are called "commercial blocks". The term "commercial block" refers to an individual building. The term "commercial block" does not refer to each retail store nor does it refer to buildings as a group stretching from one street corner to the next.

This report concentrates on the architectural styles of **commercial blocks** built before 1950 in the Heritage Districts of The Square and West Street in Goderich, Ontario.

There are about twelve identifiable architectural styles within the Victorian period. Almost all of the **commercial blocks** in the Heritage Districts of Goderich can be categorized into three of these Victorian styles: Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire.

This report illustrates how the Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire styles were executed on **commercial blocks** in Goderich.

This report also illustrates how the various parts of these styles of buildings have been fitted together to form the entire façade which faces the street.

Over time various original stylistic elements have been removed or altered inappropriately. Alterations have watered down, blurred, and set up confusion as to how the various architectural elements of these **commercial blocks** were originally designed. The relationship of the original architecture and the inappropriate changes have resulted in a disjointed array of elements which have diminished the character for which these Heritage Districts were established.

In order to respect the original architectural character of a **commercial block** all parts of the façade are to be taken into consideration. The architectural context of The Square and West Street will be maintained if good stewardship addresses all parts of these **commercial block** buildings.

It is hoped that this report will help people understand the original composition of architectural design involved in creating the historic Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire styles of **commercial blocks**.

It is also hoped that this report will help people undertake repairs, modifications, renovations, restorations and additions which will appropriately maintain the original historic context of The Square and West Street.

The information within this report will help to maintain and conserve the architecture of The Square and West Street. In doing this the historic characteristics of Goderich's core area can be re-established which in turn will create a distinctive and unique retail environment. If municipal civic pride and retail prowess are made to work together, then The Square and West Street will be an area that local people and visitors will want to return to.

A STYLISTIC RELATIONSHIP OF THREES

The architectural style of a commercial block can be expressed in relationships of "three" when analysing how the whole building relates to its various parts and how the parts relate back to the whole.

There are about twelve separate identifiable architectural styles within the Victorian period. Almost all of the commercial blocks in Goderich can be categorized into three of these Victorian architectural styles, Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire.

The overall massing, the storefront frame and storefront are the three major components which combine to form the architectural character of each commercial block. If the relationship between plan and section occurs, then the overall composition of the commercial block façade will remain true to its architectural style regardless of its origin.

Whether restoring or modifying an existing commercial block façade or creating a new commercial block façade, remember that the major components and each of their parts work together in "a stylistic relationship of threes" to create the architectural style of any given commercial block.

The **architectural context** of The Square and West Street has three Victorian styles:

1. Georgian
2. Italianate
3. Second Empire

The **façade** has three major components:

1. Massing and Roof
2. Storefront Frames, Pilasters and Cornices
3. Storefronts, Windows and Openings

The **massing** has three parts:

1. Top Cornice or the Roof
2. Upper Storeys
3. Main Floor

The **storefront frames** can be divided into two groups of three parts:

The **columns and pilasters** have:

1. Capital & Bracket (decorative top part)
2. Shaft (main part of column)
3. Base (visible bottom part)

The **entablature** has:

1. Cornice (large moulding across top)
2. Frieze (flat surface in middle)
(the frieze is often called the signband)
3. Architrave (small moulding across bottom)

The **storefront** has three parts:

1. Transom Windows
2. Display Windows
3. Lower Panels

A STYLISTIC RELATIONSHIP OF THREES

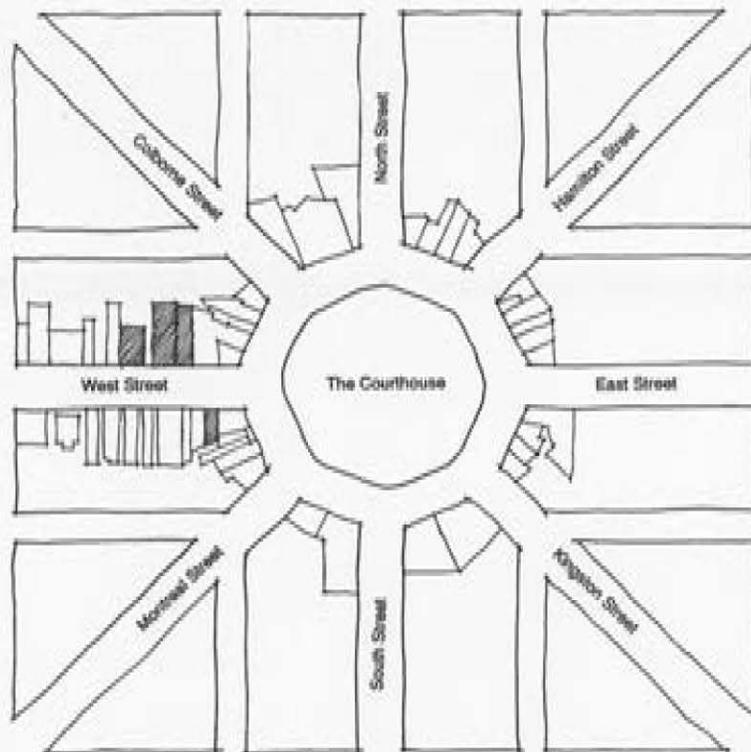


GEORGIAN STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

"plain and well proportioned under a gabled roof"

The four surviving Georgian Style Commercial Blocks are located on West Street at the following addresses:

- 31 West Street
- 36, 38 West Street
- 40, 42 West Street
- 46 - 48 West Street



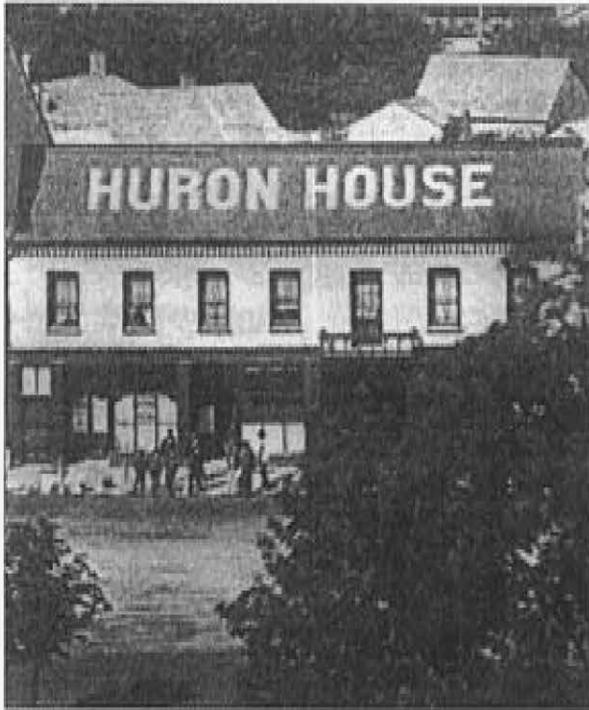
DESCRIPTION

Brought over by the British and the United Empire Loyalists, the **Georgian** style refers to the period of the combined rule of the four King Georges, 1714-1830 and is derived from Palladian Classicism and English Renaissance styles. **Georgian** commercial blocks are known for their plainness, extremely good proportions, and their medium sloped gable roof.

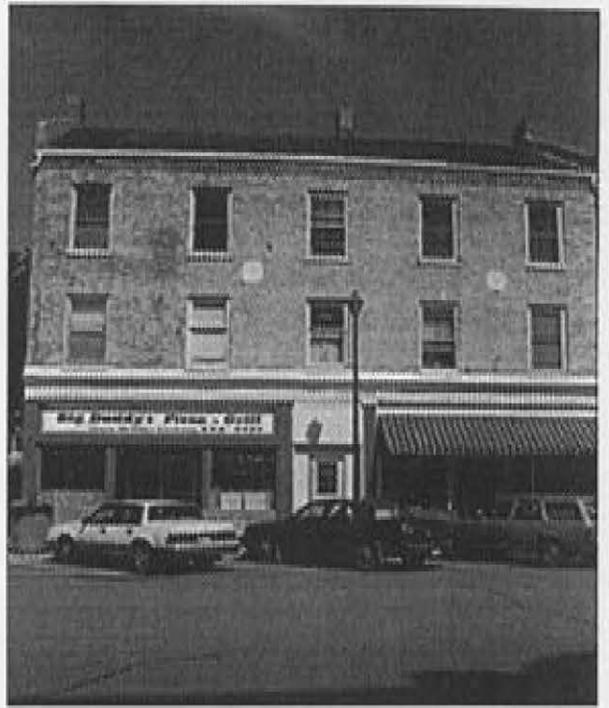
At one point in Goderich's history, the dominant architectural style of Goderich's main and residential streets was **Georgian**. This is due to the fact that Goderich was established earlier than other towns in Huron County. Local examples of **Georgian** buildings include houses, banks, hotels and commercial blocks. However, because most were built from wood, they often succumbed to fire and were replaced by sturdier brick buildings of other architectural styles. Only a few **Georgian** brick and frame buildings remain in Goderich.

The **Georgian** style should not be confused with Neo-Classical style which has more classical detailing with eave returns, and applied classical pilasters. Local examples of these two styles can be seen at the top of the Harbour Hill on West Street; The Park House, is originally **Georgian** in style, while across the road Hands Bakery, is Neo-Classical in style.

GEORGIAN STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS



52, 54 The Square (demolished)



40 West Street



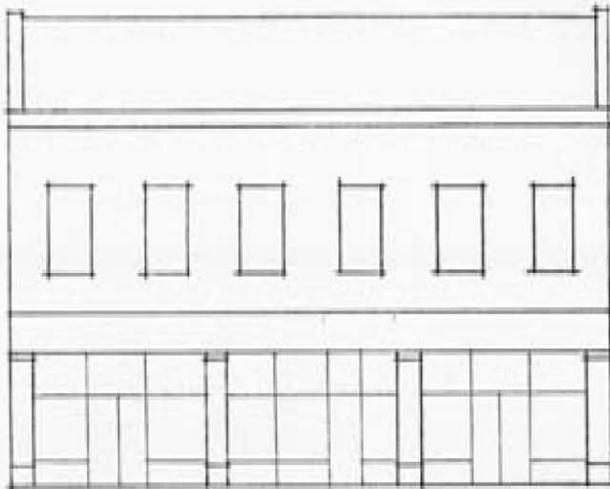
166, 168 The Square (original façade)



36, 38 West Street

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE GEORGIAN STYLE

This visual analysis subdivides the front façades of the buildings into the categories of Façade, Massing and Roof, Storefront Frames, Pilasters and Cornices, and Storefronts, Windows and Openings which explain how all of the various components are related to each other and how they group themselves together to form the geometric patterns we see every day.



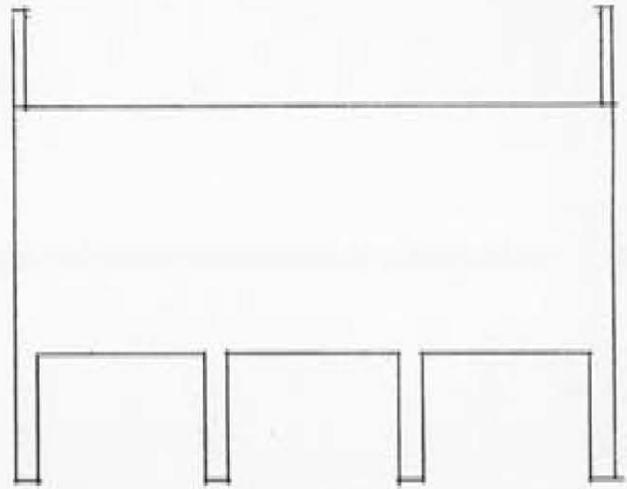
FAÇADE

The **Georgian** style consists of simple balance, uniformity, plainness and an overall horizontal emphasis.

The façade is composed of a series of horizontal layers where each layer visually sits on top of the one below it:

- a row of pilasters on the main floor holds up the entablature
- the entablature holds up the unarticulated plain upper floors
- an upper cornice holds up the gable roof

Originally these buildings were of wood frame construction; later being constructed of load-bearing brick.



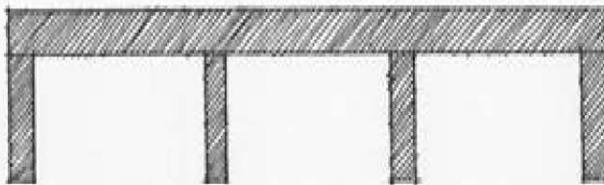
MASSING and ROOF

The massing of the **Georgian** Style consists of:

- a two or three storey brick building
- large openings on the main floor for two or three storefronts per building with the ends of the brick walls separating each store and being visible between each storefront.
- extended brick gable ends flanking a visible sloped gable roof. These extended brick gable ends are firewalls.

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE GEORGIAN STYLE

When trying to identify each style, determine how many of the original components are still in place and how many are missing. This will indicate how true the existing façade is to its original architectural character and what components may need work in order to renovate the commercial block to be more in keeping with its original character.



STOREFRONT FRAMES, PILASTERS and CORNICES

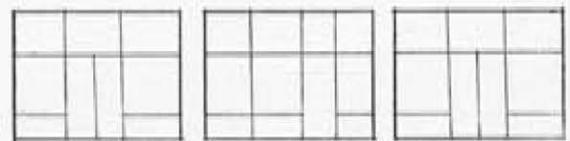
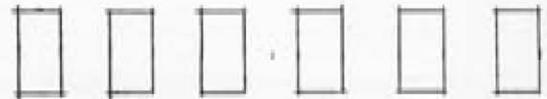
The **Georgian** style storefront frame (shown shaded) consists of:

- a series of columns which hold up an entablature or cornice band in a simple post and beam relationship.

The upper floors have:

- flat unarticulated walls with no vertical pilasters.
- a simple, small and thin corbelled brick cornice below the roof overhang.

The storefront frames and upper cornices project forward into the street from the masonry mass of the building.



STOREFRONTS, WINDOWS and OPENINGS

The **Georgian** style storefront usually comprises:

- two or three openings per commercial block.
- an opening stretching from column to column and from sidewalk to underside of the entablature over the main floor.

Storefronts were originally framed in wood, and contained doors, transoms, display windows and wood panels.

Storefronts were always recessed inward from the masonry mass away from the street.

Windows on the upper levels:

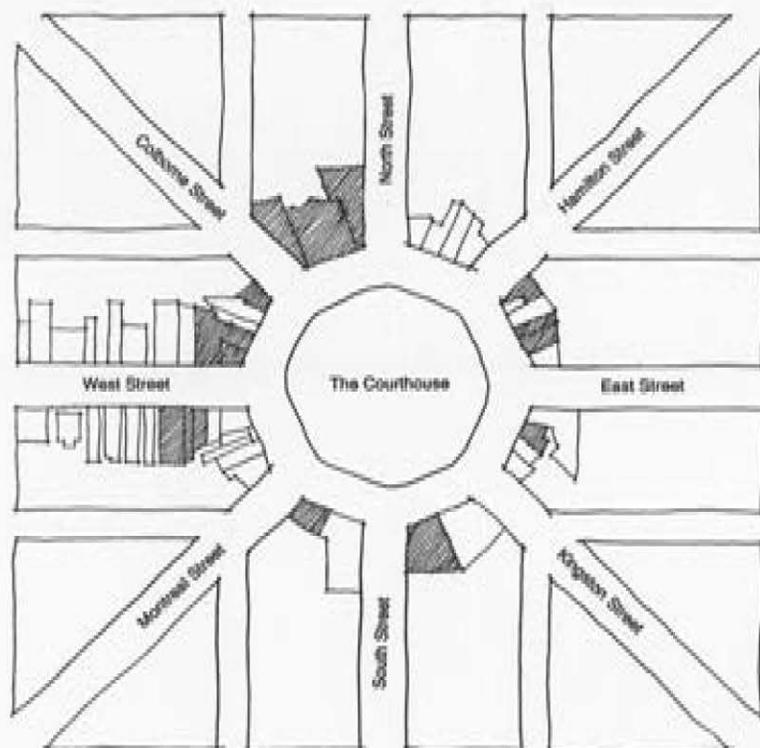
- were double hung originally divided in small equal panes forming 12 over 12, 9 over 9, or 6 over 6 patterns.
- were proportionally twice as high as they were wide.
- occur in evenly spaced single rectangular openings topped with plain segmented flat brick arches.

ITALIANATE STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

"elaborate and bracketed under the sky"

The sixteen surviving Italianate Style Commercial Blocks are located around The Square and on West Street at the following addresses:

- 2, The Square
- 4, 8, 10, 14, 16 The Square
- 18 The Square
- 24 The Square
- 34, 36 The Square
- 40 The Square
- 68, 70, 72, 74, 76 The Square
- 92, 94 The Square
- 122, 124 The Square
- 140, 142 The Square
- 150 The Square
- 32, 34 West Street
- 33 West Street
- 35 West Street
- 37, 39, 41 West Street



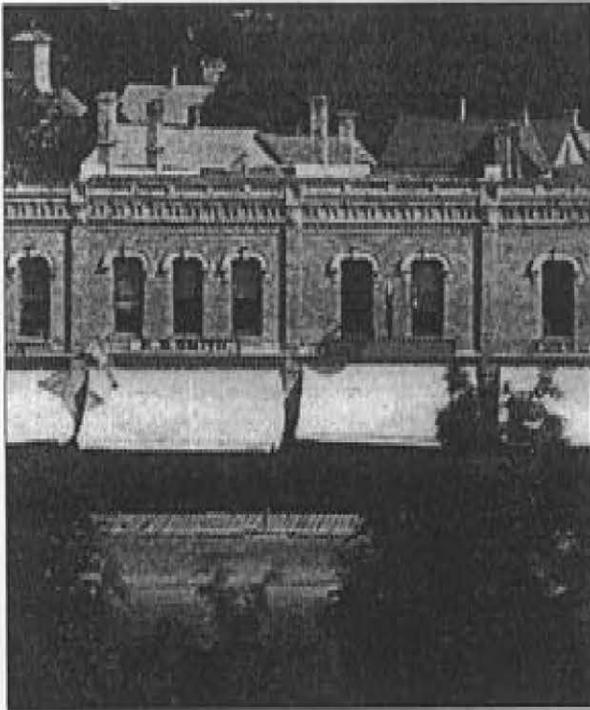
DESCRIPTION

The **Italianate** style was popular in Ontario from the 1830's until the end of the 19th century. Although its actual origins are unclear, the style was influenced by the Renaissance architecture of Italy and was adapted to Victorian taste. The imposing features of **Italianate** commercial block buildings are their very elaborate, oversized and bracketed entablature and cornices.

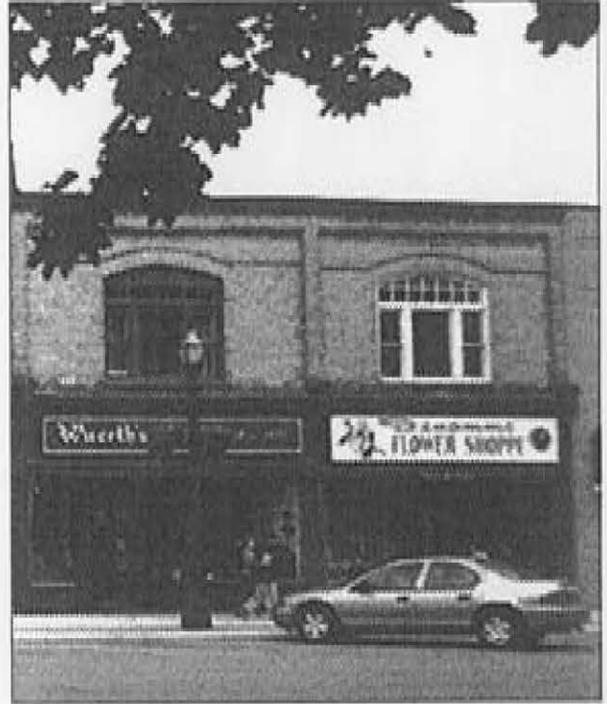
Italianate buildings gained immediate popularity and have endured because they were constructed of brick, a more lasting material than the wood of previous Georgian buildings. Goderich has many examples of **Italianate** commercial block buildings although they are less elaborate than those found in other towns around this area.

The **Italianate** can easily be confused with the Second Empire style. Although the two styles are similar, the main difference with **Italianate** style is the appearance of a flat roof top (the roof itself is not visible from the front), while the Second Empire style has a very visible, steeply pitched mansard roof forming the third or fourth floor of a commercial block.

ITALIANATE STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS



4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 The Square



140, 142 The Square



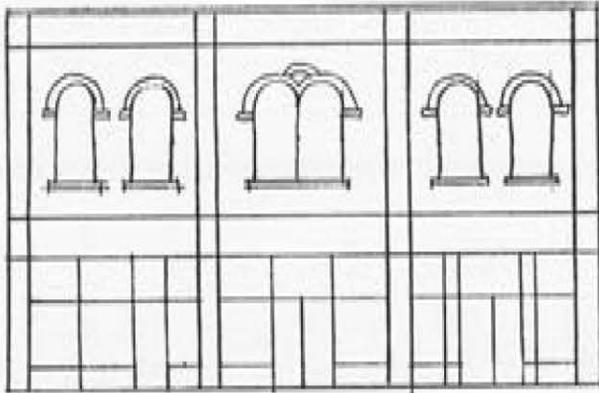
68, 70, 72, 74, 76 The Square



36 The Square

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIANATE STYLE

This visual analysis subdivides the front façades of the buildings into the categories of Façade, Massing and Roof, Storefront, Pilasters and Cornices and Storefronts, Windows and Openings which explain how all of the various components are related to each other and how they group themselves together to form the geometric patterns we see every day.



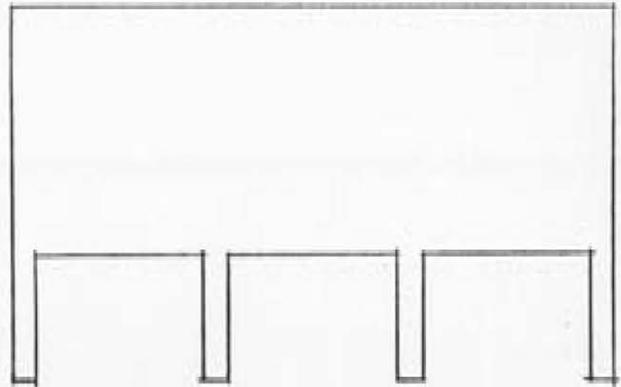
FAÇADE

The **Italianate** style consists of rhythmic uniformity, elaborate detailing and combined horizontal and vertical emphasis.

The façade is composed of a pattern of intersecting vertical and horizontal frames:

- vertical brick pilasters extend from the street up to the eaves.
- horizontal entablatures and cornices cross over the vertical pilasters.
- at each crossover or intersection of horizontal cornices and vertical pilasters a decorative bracket usually occurs.

Because no part of the roof extends above the top of the front wall, the façade appears flat-topped.



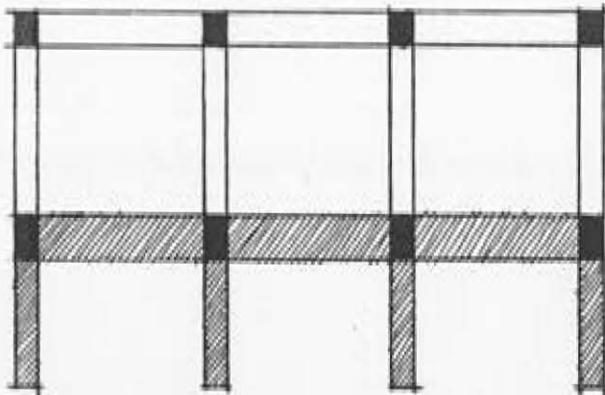
MASSING and ROOF

The massing of the **Italianate** style consists of:

- a two or three storey brick building
- large openings for two or three storefronts per building with the ends of the brick walls which separate each store visible between each storefront
- a more horizontal outline is created due to the lack of a visible roof

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE ITALIANATE STYLE

When trying to identify each style, determine how many of the original components are still in place and how many are missing. This will indicate how true the existing façade is to its original architectural character and what components may need work in order to renovate the commercial block to be more in keeping with its original character.



STOREFRONT FRAMES, PILASTERS and CORNICES

The **Italianate** style storefront frame (shown shaded) consists of:

- a series of pilasters extending upward from the street to a brackets (shown black) at the points of intersection with the horizontal entablature.

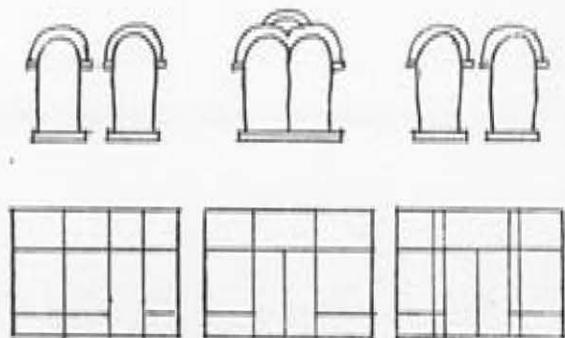
Historically the storefront frame almost always consisted of wood pilasters, entablatures and brackets applied out over the brick.

The brick pilasters:

- continue upward to a single or paired bracket at the point of intersection with the upper cornice or cornices at various floor levels.

Historically, the upper cornices and upper brackets were made from stone, wood, pressed metal or elaborate corbelled brickwork.

The storefront frames, pilasters and cornices all project forward into the street from the masonry mass of the building.



STOREFRONTS, WINDOWS and OPENINGS

The **Italianate** style storefront usually comprises:

- two or three storefront openings per commercial block.
- an opening extending from column to column and street to the underside of entablature or cornice on the main level.

Storefronts were originally constructed of wood and contained doors, transoms, display windows and wood panels.

Storefronts always recess inward from the masonry mass away from the street.

Windows on the upper levels:

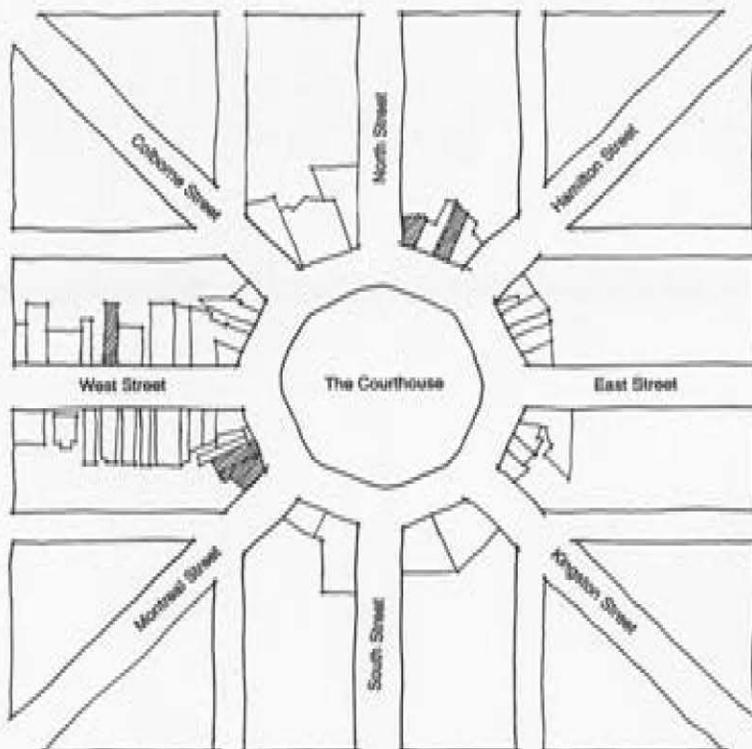
- occur in regular or grouped patterns across the façade or are placed symmetrically about various centerlines along the building's façade.
- have round headed, semi-circular or arched tops decorated with large ornate stone, concrete, brick or cast iron arches and keystones.

SECOND EMPIRE STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

"elaborate and bracketed under a mansard roof"

The four surviving Second Empire Style Commercial Blocks are located on The Square and West Street at the following addresses:

56, 58 The Square
162, 164 The Square
172 The Square
50 West Street



DESCRIPTION

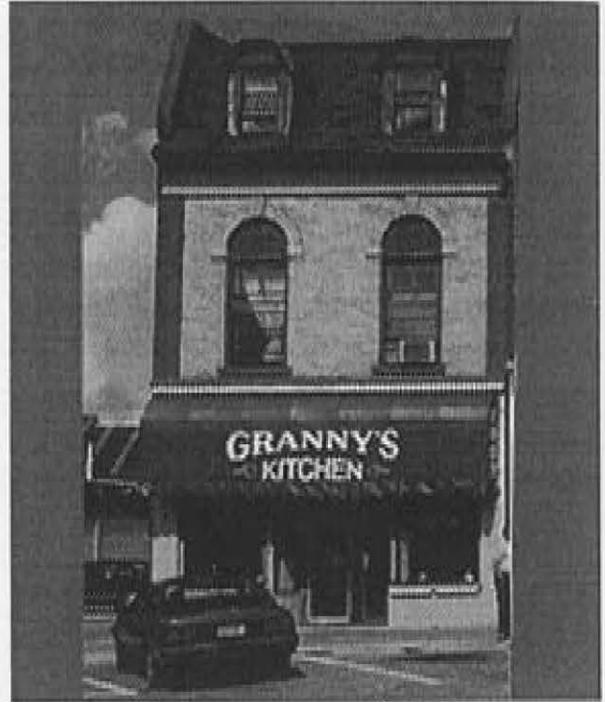
The **Second Empire** style refers to the style in France during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III, 1852-1870, when he undertook a major redevelopment of Paris. Because of its bourgeois appeal, the **Second Empire** style quickly caught on throughout Canada in the late 19th century. The most prominent feature of this style is the mansard roof, developed by Louis Mansard, architect to Louis XIV.

Because **Second Empire** buildings are a synthesis of French Renaissance, derived from Italian Renaissance, and Classical French Architecture, it is easy to see the overlap between the Italianate and Second Empire styles. With similarities such as the elaborate bracketed cornices, full sized pilasters and similar-size openings, the **Second Empire** differs from Italianate commercial block buildings mainly in the addition of the mansard roof forming the third or fourth floor of the building.

SECOND EMPIRE STYLE COMMERCIAL BLOCKS



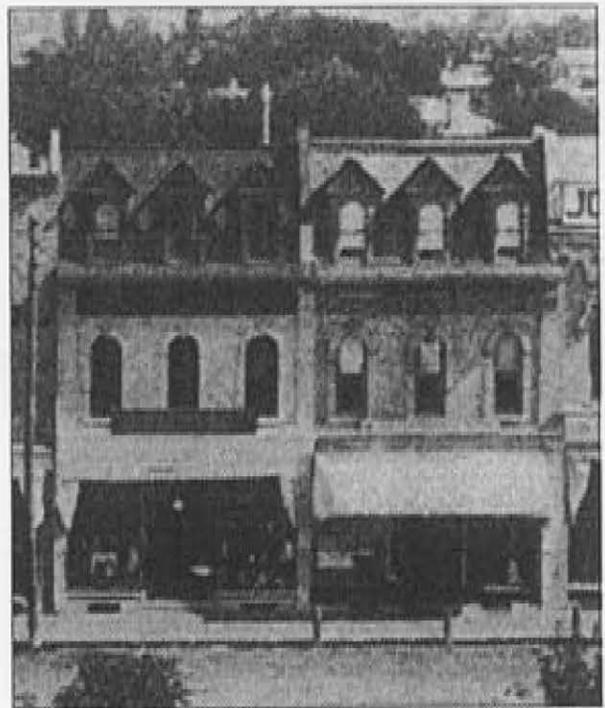
56, 58 The Square (demolished)



50 West Street



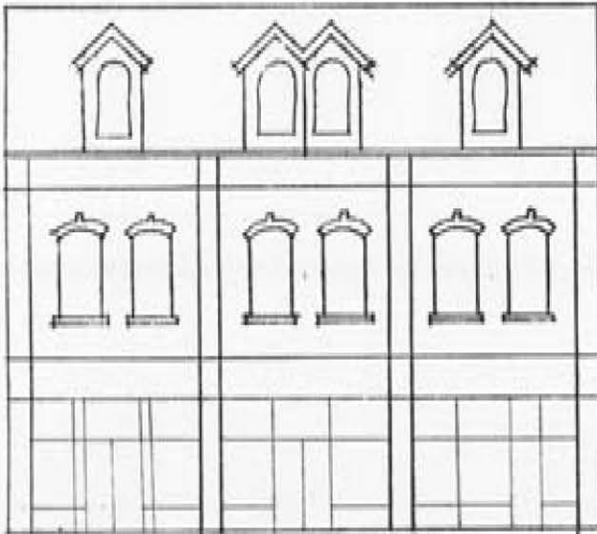
172 The Square



162, 164 The Square

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE STYLE

This visual analysis subdivides the front walls of the buildings into the categories of Façade, Massing and Roof, Storefront Frames, Pilasters and Cornices and Storefronts, Windows and Openings which explain how all of the various components are related to each other and how they group themselves together to form the geometric patterns we see every day.



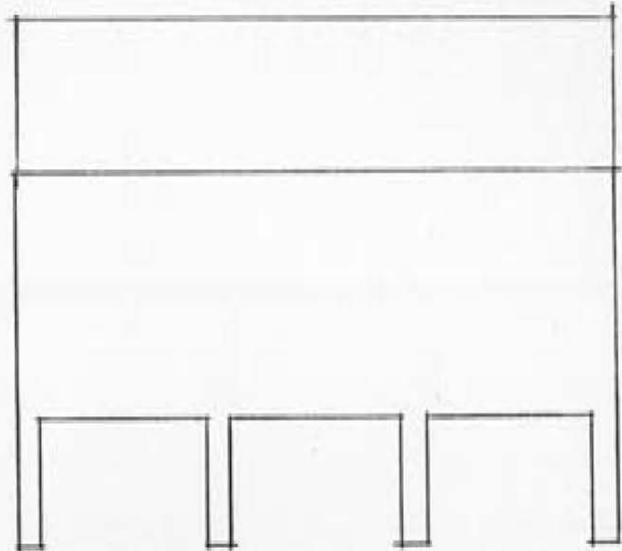
FAÇADE

Built of load bearing brick construction, the **Second Empire** style consists of varied rhythmic patterns, elaborate detailing and the added vertical emphasis of its mansard roof.

Like the Italianate, a pattern of intersecting vertical and horizontal frames is set up across the façade:

- vertical pilasters extend from the street up to the eaves.
- horizontal entablatures and cornices cross over the vertical pilasters.
- at each crossover or intersection of horizontal cornices and vertical pilasters a decorative bracket usually occur.

The façade itself rests solidly below a steeply pitched mansard roof. A series of single and/or paired dormer windows projects from the mansard roof.



MASSING and ROOF

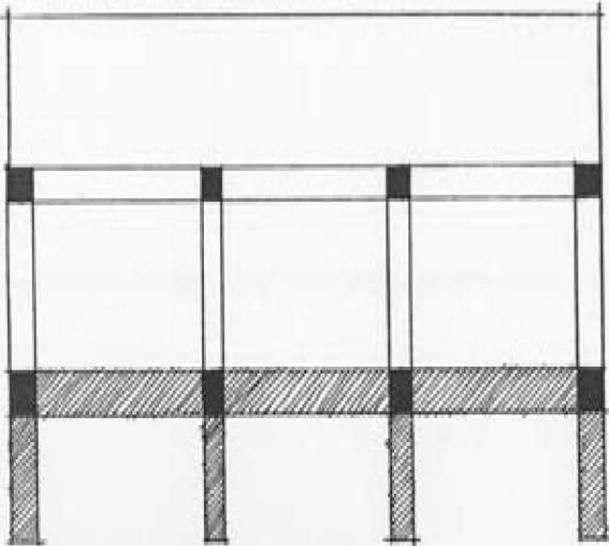
The massing of the **Second Empire** style consists of:

- a two or three storey brick building
- large openings for two or three storefronts per building with the ends of the brick walls which separate each store visible between each storefront.
- a steeply pitched mansard roof
- extended brick gables often subdivide the mansard roof

The combination of the masonry mass topped with a mansard roof gives these buildings a solid, taller appearance.

GEOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE STYLE

When trying to identify each style, determine how many of the original components are still in place and how many are missing. This will indicate how true the existing façade is to its original architectural character and what components may need work in order to renovate the commercial block to be more in keeping with its original character.



STOREFRONT FRAMES, PILASTERS and CORNICES

The **Second Empire** style storefront frame (shown shaded) consists of:

- a series of applied columns on brick pilasters extending upward from the street to brackets (shown black) at the point of intersection with the entablature.

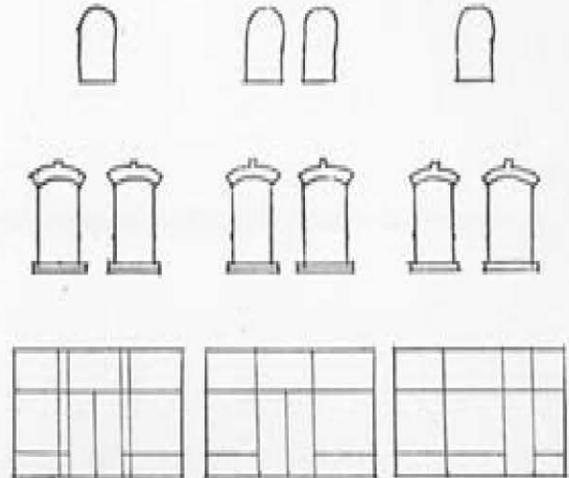
Historically the storefront frame was almost always made from wood.

The brick pilasters:

- extend upward to form a single or paired bracket at the point of intersection with the upper cornice.

Historically the upper cornices and brackets were made from stone, wood, pressed metal or elaborate corbelled brickwork.

The storefront frames, pilasters and cornices all project forward into the street from the masonry mass of the building.



STOREFRONT, WINDOWS and OPENINGS

The **Second Empire** storefront comprises:

- two or three storefront openings per commercial block.
- an opening extending from column to column and street to the underside of entablature or cornice on the main level.

Storefronts were originally constructed of wood and contained doors, transoms, display windows and wood panels.

Storefronts always recess from the masonry mass away from the street.

Windows on the upper levels:

- occur in regular or grouped patterns across the façade or are placed symmetrically about various centerline along the buildings façade.
- have round headed, semi-circular or arched tops decorated with large ornate stone, concrete, brick or cast iron arches and keystones.
- have small single or paired windows in the dormers causing a hierarchy of openings.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF THE SQUARE AND WEST STREET

The commercial blocks previously mentioned within this report can be analysed by using the descriptions of the **Georgian**, **Italianate** and **Second Empire** architectural styles. However, these stylistic descriptions cannot be applied directly to all commercial blocks. As well as the three main categories, this listing also includes other architectural styles which exist around The Square and along West Street regardless of the age of the building.

THE SQUARE

North Street to Colborne Street

- 2 The Square - Italianate
- 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 The Square - Italianate
- 18 The Square - Italianate

Colborne Street to West Street

- 24 The Square - Italianate bank block with doors and windows on the main floor instead of storefronts and storefront frames.
- 30 The Square - original Italianate façade has been renovated to a Modern style.
- 32 The Square - original Italianate façade has been extensively renovated.
- 34, 36 The Square - original Italianate façade has been extensively renovated.
- 40 The Square - Italianate bank block with doors and windows on the main floor instead of storefronts and storefront frames. Note that the surround at the corner is classical in design.

Note: 34, 36, 40 The Square and 32, 34 West Street were originally all one commercial block. The corner part of this block burned down and was rebuilt in the same architectural style but using more classical influenced details.

West Street to Montreal Street

- 44 The Square - Modern
- 52 The Square - Modern
- 54 The Square - Modern
- 56, 58 The Square - Second Empire

Montreal Street to South Street

- 68, 70, 72, 74, 76 The Square - Italianate
- 80 The Square - Modern

South Street to Kingston Street

- 92, 94 The Square - Italianate Hotel Block with a combination of doors, windows and storefronts on the main floor.
- 104, 108 The Square - Georgian with Italianate influences.

Kingston Street to East Street

- 112, 114 The Square - Georgian with Italianate influences.
 - 116, 120 The Square - Georgian with Italianate influences.
 - 122, 124 The Square - Italianate
 - 128 The Square - Modern
-

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES OF THE SQUARE AND WEST STREET

The listing is organized block by block. A commercial block may consist of one or more addresses. For example:

- 50 West Street is one commercial block
- 68, 70, 72, 74 and 76 The Square are all one commercial block

East Street to Hamilton Street

- 138 The Square - a new block designed with an Italianate influence
- 140, 142 The Square - Italianate
- 144 The Square - Italianate
- 146 The Square - Italianate with large second floor windows done in a later Chicago style
- 148 The Square - Georgian with added pilasters and Italianate windows
- 150 The Square - Italianate

Hamilton Street to North Street

- 158 The Square - original Italianate and Second Empire with the main floor renovated in a Modern style
- 162, 164 The Square - original Second Empire style extensively renovated
- 166, 168 The Square - original Georgian style façade has been renovated to a mixture of Georgian and Italianate styles.
- 172 The Square - Second Empire

WEST STREET

North Side

- 32, 34 West Street - Italianate
- 36, 38 West Street - Georgian
- 40, 42 West Street - Georgian
- 46, 48 West Street - Georgian bank block with doors and windows on the main floor instead of storefronts and storefront frames.
- 50 West Street - Second Empire
- 54 West Street - Modern *
- 56, 58, 60, 62 West Street - Modern *
- 64 West Street - Modern *
- 68 West Street - Modern *

South Side

- 31 West Street - Georgian
- 33 West Street - Italianate
- 35 West Street - Italianate
- 37, 39, 41 West Street - Italianate
- 43 West Street - Vernacular *
- 45 West Street - Vernacular *
- 49 West Street - Neoclassical *
- 53 West Street - Neoclassical *
- 57 West Street - Romanesque Revival *
- 65 West Street - Spanish Revival *

* Note: These addresses are not commercial blocks.

STOREFRONTS AND STOREFRONT FRAMES

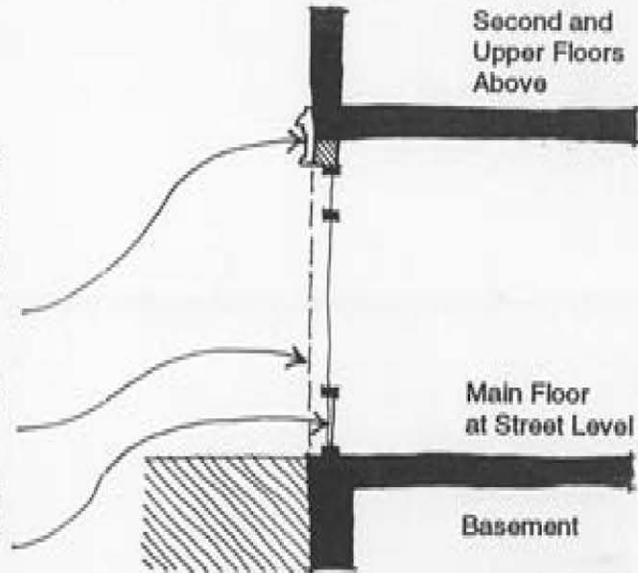
These diagrams illustrate the relationship between the storefront frame, the storefront and the mass of the building. This relationship applies to the **Georgian, Italianate, Second Empire** and other styles of commercial blocks.

SECTION

entablature of store front frame projects forward from the brick wall into street. The entablature's original purpose was to protect the timber beam (shown shaded) which originally supported the brickwork of second the floor.

broken line indicates outer face of the brick wall projected down from the upper floors.

exterior face of storefront originally recessed inward from the exterior surface of the brick wall above.



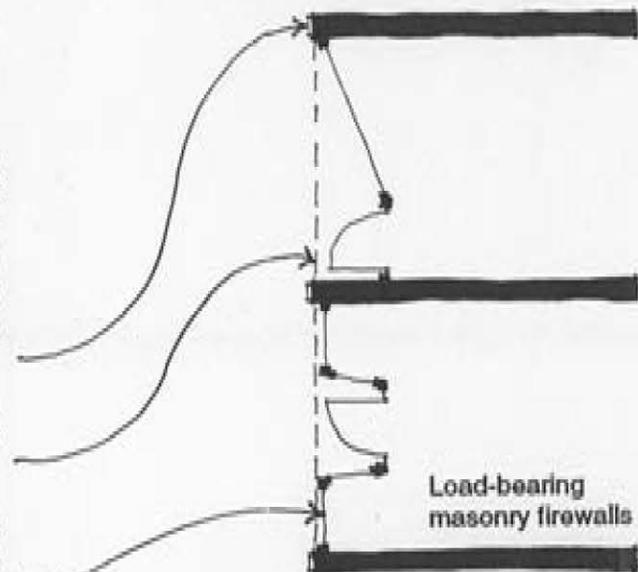
SECTION

MAIN FLOOR PLAN

applied pilasters of storefront frame project forward from brick wall. If there were no applied pilasters, the ends of load-bearing masonry firewalls were often left visible and were projected forward from the brick wall to form pilasters which extend upward on to the upper floor walls.

broken line indicates outer face of the brick wall projected down from the upper floors.

exterior face of storefront originally recessed inward from the exterior surface of the brick wall above.

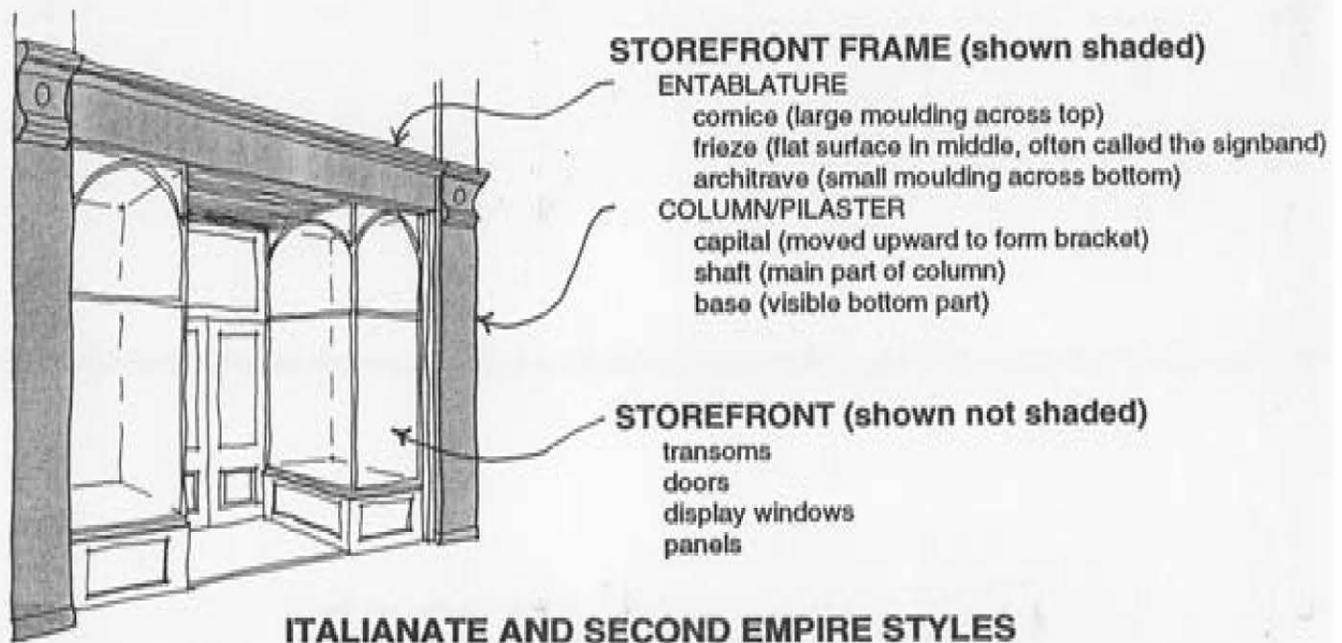
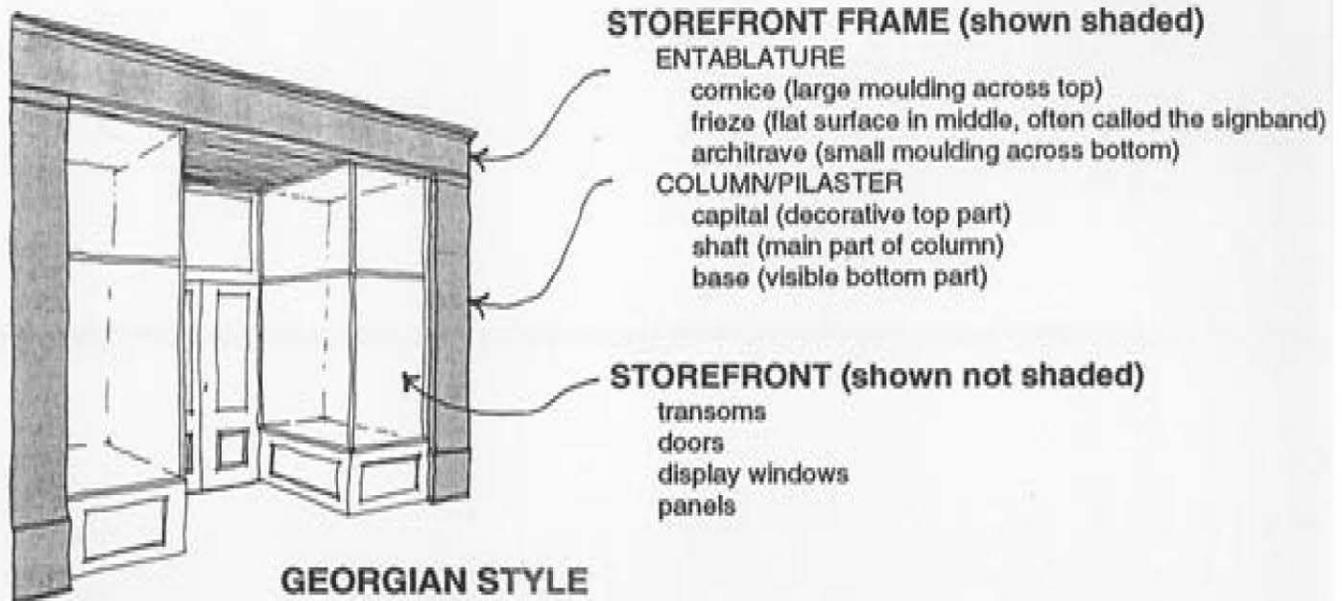


MAIN FLOOR PLAN

The original architectural character of these commercial blocks will be respected provided the storefront frame projects forward from the exterior of the brick wall and the storefront recesses inward from the exterior of the brick wall, whether the style be **Georgian, Italianate, Second Empire** or a newer style.

STOREFRONTS AND STOREFRONT FRAMES

These diagrams show the relationship between the storefront frame and storefront for the **Georgian**, and **Italianate** and **Second Empire** styles.



The original architectural character of these commercial blocks will be respected provided a separate storefront frame surrounds the storefront, whether the style be **Georgian**, **Italianate**, **Second Empire** or a newer style.

CONSISTENCY OF STOREFRONT FRAMES

As a general rule, all storefront frames should be of the same architectural style and detailing across the front of a commercial block.

In order to achieve, maintain and preserve the original architectural style of any given commercial block, all parts of the front façade need to be coordinated. The architectural detailing and proportioning of the storefront frames need to be regular and consistent in order to be in harmony with the original architectural style of the entire commercial block façade.

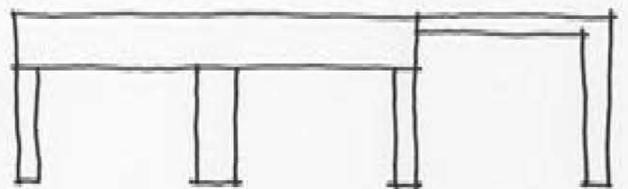
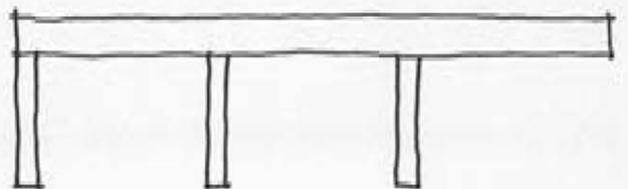
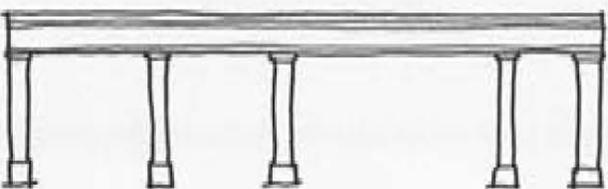
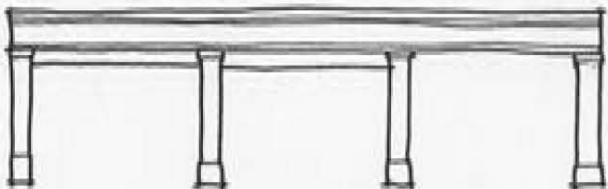
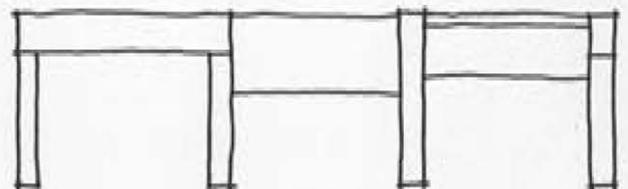
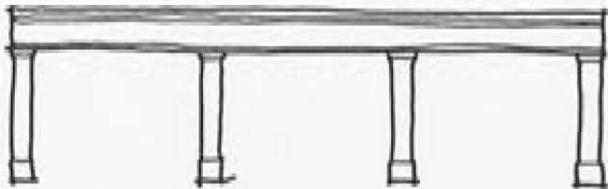
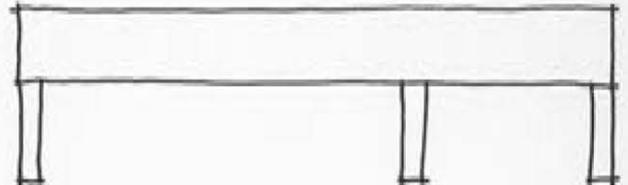
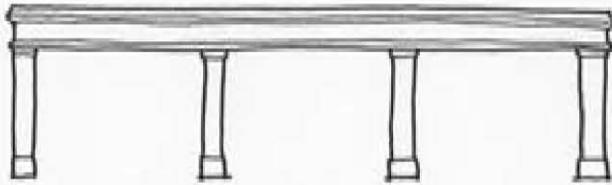
When one of the major components of a commercial block is missing or has been inappropriately modified, the original architectural character falls short in presenting an honest, unified and integral front to the street. Many of the original storefront frames within commercial blocks on The Square and West Street are either long gone or have been altered inappropriately. Because so many of the storefront frames are missing or altered, this section of the report will try to clarify some appropriate and inappropriate modifications to the storefront frames of the Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire styles.

It is recommended that a commercial block façade not be changed from one style to another unless research has determined that a mixture of styles existed originally. Elements of Italianate and Second Empire styling have and can be successfully combined together. The essence of the Georgian style, however, is changed too much if Italianate and Second Empire detailing is added.

CONSISTENCY OF STOREFRONT FRAMES GEORGIAN STYLE

APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE



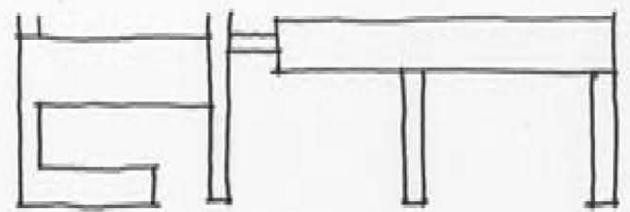
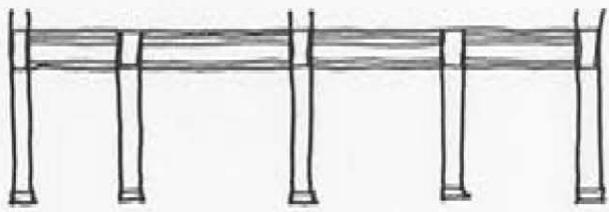
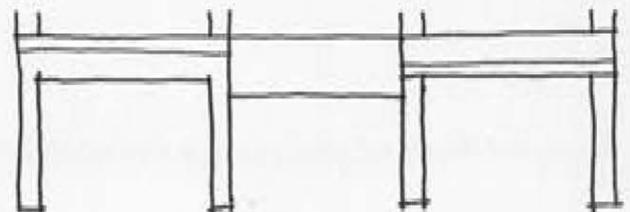
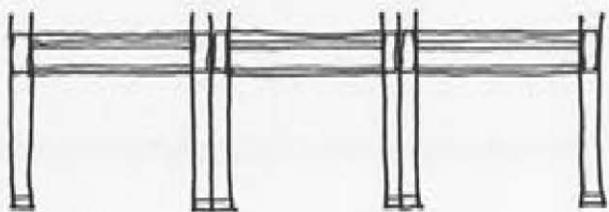
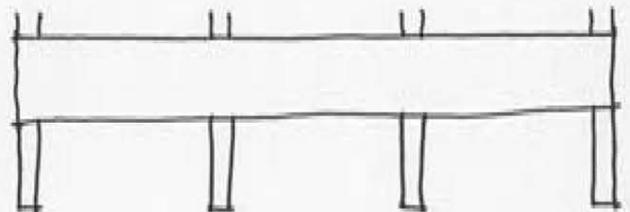
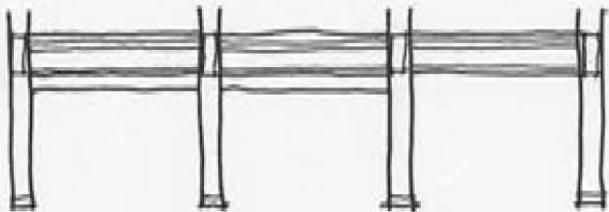
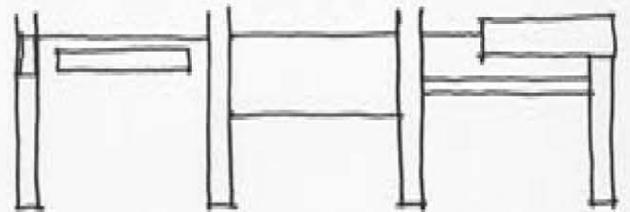
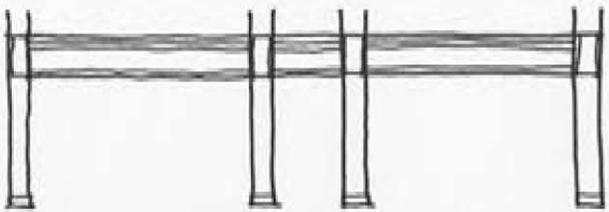
APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

CONSISTENCY OF STOREFRONT FRAMES ITALIANATE AND SECOND EMPIRE STYLE

APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

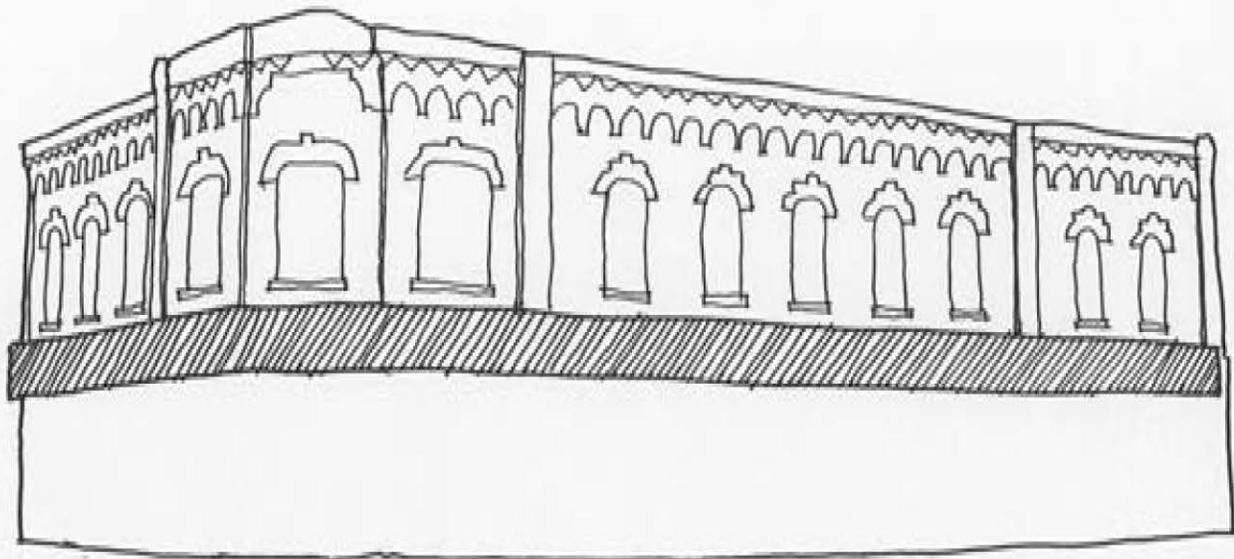


APPROPRIATE

INAPPROPRIATE

CORNER COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

Eight streets radiate from the octagon shape of The Square. These eight streets create sixteen corners which originally had sixteen commercial blocks or hotels. The Square's architectural context is greatly affected by the fact that the sides of the corner commercial blocks are totally visible. The side façades of the corner commercial blocks are as important as the front façades in the overall architectural character of The Square.



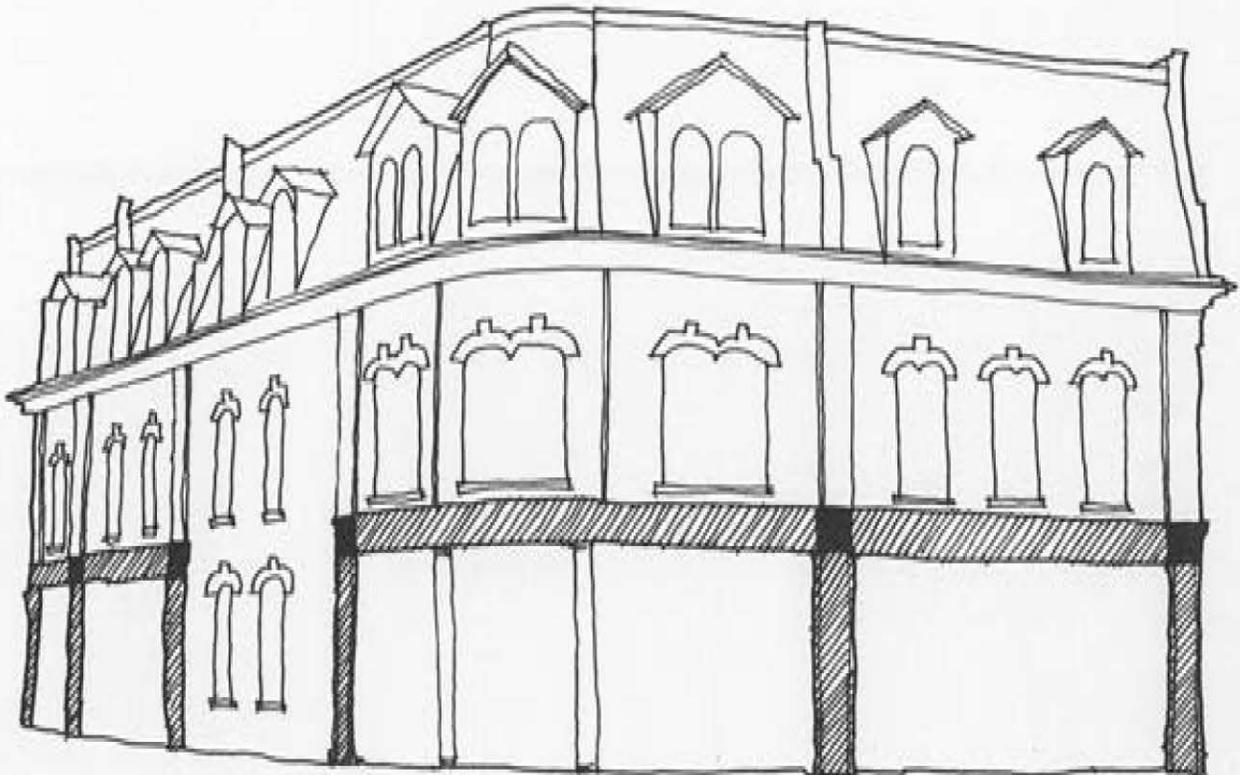
A SKETCH SHOWING 158 THE SQUARE

This contemporary style of entablature extends continuously and **inappropriately** along the front façade and all the way down the side façade of this corner commercial block.

The main floor façade of this building is over simplified. Its modern style has left out many of the components and parts required for the storefront frames and storefronts to be sympathetic to the Italianate style. However, all is not lost here as the second floor façade has its ornate Italianate style well preserved.

CORNER COMMERCIAL BLOCKS

Originally, a storefront frame wrapped around the corner with two iron columns flanking the corner door. This gave the front façade and side façade an impressive centerline which gracefully turned the corner. Storefront frames extended along The Square and only wrapped a short distance around the corner. From here the next bay had doors and windows, indicating a stairway up to the second floor, instead of a storefront and entablature. More storefronts and storefront frames often occurred further down the side toward the rear of the corner commercial block.



A SKETCH SHOWING 56 AND 58 THE SQUARE

This sketch indicates how and where the original storefront frames were placed on the front and side façades of corner commercial blocks. Note that the sketch adds two storefront frames near the rear of the block and that one of the two windows, in the bay which does not have the entablature, was originally a door.

The corner commercial blocks at:
18 The Square
68, 70, 72, 74, 76 The Square
112, 114 The Square
and
53 Hamilton Street
in Goderich
are original examples of
how commercial blocks architecturally "turn corners".

A FEW WORDS ABOUT STOREFRONTS

Storefronts

Located a few blocks north of The Square is one of the best facilities in Ontario to research the Victorian architectural styles of commercial blocks. Georgian, Italianate and Second Empire are three of the Victorian architectural styles. The Huron County Museum has an extensive archival collection of photographs from this area which can establish accuracy of detail for historic restoration and provide ideas for historically sympathetic renovations and modifications. As well as archival information, the museum has recreated a Victorian Main Street inside the museum using actual buildings and building fragments, saved from demolition, from Main Streets throughout Huron County. The accuracy to original detail at the Huron County Museum is commendable and should be used as a resource for anyone who is interested in historic architectural styles and detailing.

Historically, **storefronts** were tall, large screens of glass which were recessed inward from the brick mass of the commercial block. Extending from pilaster to pilaster and side walk up to the underside of the large timber or iron beam which held up the upper floors and their front wall, **storefronts** gave inviting views inward to the wares of the store and beyond into its interior. The **storefront** was and should be a giant window between the world outside the store and the world inside the store. **Storefronts** were completed with ornate panels of wood below raised display platforms. Large glass windows were topped with taller glass transoms above the windows. Tall double doors often sat propped open welcoming customers into the store. The doors into the store also had glass transoms above them. Iron columns were often placed inside or outside of the **storefront** to help hold up the beam above the **storefront**. The details and craftsmanship of these wood and glass screens were as varied as the skills of the wood workers who made them and the shop keepers who ordered them.

Many variations of **storefronts** can be created to be historically sympathetic with the original architectural styles of these commercial blocks. There is room for individuality. Each storefront within a commercial block can vary from one another. Coordinated colour schemes can be established to emphasize the different businesses within a commercial block. Individual signage on each storefront, coupled with how a business names and graphically expresses itself, goes a long way to convey the identity of each business within the rigours of an architectural style.

At this time in the life of The Square and West Street, most of the individual **storefronts** do not detract from the original character of the surviving commercial blocks which were built before 1950.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING

Signage

Signs are as varied as the people who use them. The history of signage is a separate study all by itself. The Huron County Museum and Heritage Goderich LACAC are excellent resources for finding out about the type and placement of **signs** historically. Contemporary marketing trends, technology and personal perceptions all combine to form some interesting juxtapositions which are all too often superimposed overtop of the facades of commercial blocks. This occurrence is not always a bad thing depending upon the look the storekeepers hoped to achieve and the design skills of the **sign** makers. However, some of these juxtapositions are not sympathetic to the original architectural style of the commercial blocks.

The frieze of the entablature of the storefront frame is often referred to as the "signband" but this is not the only place where **signs** occurred historically. Depending on local **sign** bylaws, **signs** that do not detract from the architectural character of the commercial block can be placed:

- flat onto the brick walls of the upper floors of commercial blocks.
- in the frieze or signband of the entablature.
- as part of the shafts of the columns in the storefront frame.
- onto a lower recessed frieze or signband below the entablature and above the transom windows (this can also be used to accommodate a dropped interior ceiling.)
- fitted like a piece of glass into a transom above a display window or above a door.
- as lettering directly onto any glass within the storefront but being careful not to obscure or overpower views into the store interior.
- so that each individual storefront has its own **sign** even if adjacent storefronts are the same business inside. (ie. a retail business which occupies more than one bay should have **signs** for each storefront not one big **sign** superimposed across many storefronts or one **sign** only on the storefront of the main entrance.)

Signage which:

- obscures, covers up, or is superimposed over top of any or all parts of the storefront frame.
 - makes two or three storefronts and storefront frames appear like one wide store.
 - is too big and out of proportion with the proportions of the façade
 - has not found a place compatible with the architectural character.
 - has a signband that extends down to the top of the doors
 - gives an overall horizontal effect to the front façade
- should be avoided.

In short, bigger is not always better and a smaller well placed **sign** can work better with the original architectural detailing toward portraying an image of quality to the general public.

Lighting

During Victorian times, one or two bare **light** bulbs on a building's exterior was considered progressive. Nowadays, we flood entire building façades with **light** or outline various features with decorative **lighting**. Whether there should be next to no **light** or a flood of **light** on buildings in a Heritage District is not easy to determine. The current street **lights** which were installed around The Square during 1997 provide almost full illumination across the front façades of the buildings as well as more than adequate street **lighting**. This being said remember that the main priority of a Heritage District should be stewardship of the original styles of the remaining commercial blocks and that the district itself should be historically appropriate and sympathetic toward the architecture built on The Square and West Street before 1950. Therefore, the focus should be on getting the architecture in good shape before the **lighting** of building exterior and the **lighting** of signage is considered.

RESTORATION, REINTERPRETATION AND PARODY

When contemplating a building project within the Heritage District, all aspects of a building's façade must be taken into account. If any given part is singled out and emphasized then the original architectural context of the building is jeopardized.

Within a Heritage District the original architectural style of the buildings and the architectural context of the area should be respected. In the case of The Square and West Street in Goderich, the original style was Georgian. As almost all of the original Georgian buildings are now gone, the Italianate and Second Empire commercial block buildings, built before 1950, give The Square and West Street their architectural character.

The purpose of a Heritage District is to preserve the original built context and the original architectural styles of the area. This purpose is paralleled with good stewardship. If a community takes enough pride in an area to have it designated as a Heritage District then the extra efforts of restoration or reinterpretation when considering a building project can be justified.

The processes of **restoration**, **reinterpretation** and **parody** play a major role when the original style of a building is being altered.

Restoration is the process of returning a building as nearly as possible to its original form and its original condition.

Examples:

Huron Historic Goal, 1842

Governor's House, 1901

Goderich Central School, 1852

All three are part of the Huron County Museum in Goderich. These buildings have been fully restored and are being preserved as operating museums.

Van Egmond House, early 1830's

Located in Egmondville, at the south end of Seaforth. One of the first brick buildings in Huron County, the home of Colonel Van Egmond has been restored to its original condition, both the exterior and interior.

Edward's Cash Store, early 1850's

Located on Main Street Bayfield, now called Admiral Bayfield. The exterior and interior have been fully restored.

If a **restoration** is adequately researched and skilfully executed, the original architectural style of a building will be preserved. **Eight Guidelines** are provided on page 30 for consideration during a restoration project.

RESTORATION, REINTERPRETATION AND PARODY

Reinterpretation is the process of stylistically reworking a building or creating a new design in terms of all the original parts.

Examples:

The Men's Room storefront

Located at the corner of Montreal Street and The Square in Goderich. The storefront has been recently reinterpreted to be similar to the original storefront. Over time there have been 3 or 4 different storefronts on this corner.

Dinney's Furniture storefront

Located on the Main Street in Exeter. A storefront frame has been recreated, built out of weathered, rusted steel instead of traditional building materials.

The Livery Theatre

Located on South Street, Goderich. The original stone livery building was restored, reinterpreted and converted for use as a theatre. The Goderich Little Theatre now maintains the exterior of the Livery within the guidelines of Heritage Goderich LACAC.

If restoration is not possible, **reinterpretation** will produce favourable results towards preserving the original architectural context of a building within a given area.

Parody is the imitation of an architectural style or styles. Although the result can be favourable, it often changes the original intent of the architectural style.

Examples:

Wingham Feedmill

Located on Josephine Street, Wingham. A timber framed, wood sided mill common to all South Western Ontario towns has been transformed into a more substantial "chateausque" style which appears out of place within the context of the local main street.

Gledhill House

Located in Benmiller. As part of the well know Benmiller Inn, a rural Ontario farmhouse was expanded in such a way that the original style of the farmhouse has been completely changed.

166 and 168 The Square in Goderich

Although this commercial block fits very well into the historic context of The Square, the original front wall was not restored but completely removed with a new façade and built with a combination of Georgian and Italianate details. This inappropriately changed the original Georgian style into a hybrid of Georgian and Italianate; a blending of architectural styles that never occurred previously in Goderich.

Parody can result in a loss of architectural integrity. Within a heritage district, the process of **parody** is not recommended.

EIGHT GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The following guiding principles are statements prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation regarding the conservation of historic properties and are based on international charters which have been established over the century. These principles provide the basis for all decisions concerning good practice in architectural conservation around the world. Principles explain the "why" of every conservation activity and apply to all heritage properties and their surroundings.

1. **RESPECT FOR DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE:**
Do not base restoration on conjecture. Conservation work should be based on historic documentation such as historic photographs, drawings and physical evidence.
2. **RESPECT FOR THE ORIGINAL LOCATION:**
Do not move buildings unless there is no other means to save them. Site is an integral component of a building. Change in site diminishes heritage value considerably.
3. **RESPECT FOR HISTORIC MATERIALS:**
Repair/conservé - rather than replace building materials and finishes, except where absolutely necessary. Minimal intervention maintains the historic content of the resource.
4. **RESPECT FOR ORIGINAL FABRIC:**
Repair with like materials. Repair to return the resource to its prior condition, without altering its integrity.
5. **RESPECT FOR THE BUILDING'S HISTORY**
Do not restore to one period at the expense of another period. Do not destroy later additions to a building solely to restore to a single time period.
6. **REVERSIBILITY:**
Alterations should be able to be returned to original conditions. This conserves earlier building design and technique. e.g. When a new door opening is put into a stone wall, the original stones are rubbled, removed and stored, allowing for future restoration.
7. **LEGIBILITY:**
New work should be distinguishable from old. Buildings should be recognized as products of their own time, and new additions should not blur the distinction between old and new.
8. **MAINTENANCE:**
With continuous care, future restoration will not be necessary. With regular upkeep, major conservation projects and their high costs can be avoided.

GLOSSARY

architrave The lowest part or architrave part of the storefront entablature used as a small decorative finish.

base Lowest and widest visible part of a column.

bay A regularly repeated spatial division on a wall defined by principal vertical supports. eg. pilaster to pilaster.

bracket A decorative member which projects from a wall where a pilaster and an entablature meet.

capital Decorative top part of a column.

column A vertical structural member often subdivided into a base, shaft and capital.

cornice A decorative horizontal projection forming the top of an entablature; or a decorative horizontal projection forming exterior trim of a building where the wall meets the roof or between floors.

datum line Any line which serves as a reference or base for measurements for other quantities.

display window A window in a storefront used to showcase retail products.

double hung A window which has two vertical sliding sashes. Sashes in double hung windows are historically divided into either 6, 9 or 12 panes of glass hence the terminology 6 over 6, 9 over 9 and 12 over 12.

entablature A horizontal board over a beam supported by columns or pilaster. An entablature consists of a cornice, frieze and architrave. The entablature is commonly referred to as a signboard but is not always used for signs.

façade The exterior wall or face of a building.

firewall An interior or exterior wall which has sufficiently high fire resistance and structural stability to restrict the spread of fire to adjoining areas or buildings.

flat arch An arch which is completely horizontal.

gable The triangular wall which encloses the end of a sloping roof from the eaves to the ridge of the roof.

load-bearing Capable of supporting another weight, or load. In the case of load-bearing walls, all parts of the wall are supporting weight.

massing The overall visual outline form and volume of a building.

opening A space in a wall usually for a doorway or a window.

panel A vertical decorative lightweight material which supports the glass display windows in a storefront; usually surrounded by a moulding around all four sides.

pilasters A half or partial column which may be structural or constructed as a projection of the wall itself; pilasters are sometimes found with a capital or bracket, shaft and base.

pitch The slope of a roof expressed as a ratio of vertical rise to horizontal run.

post & beam A type of construction using columns (posts) and beams (lintels) to carry a structural load over an opening.

segmental arch An arch whose curve is less than half the circumference of a circle.

semi-circular arch An arch which is a semicircle.

shaft The middle and longest part of a column found between the base and the capital.

transom A window found above a window or above a doorway.

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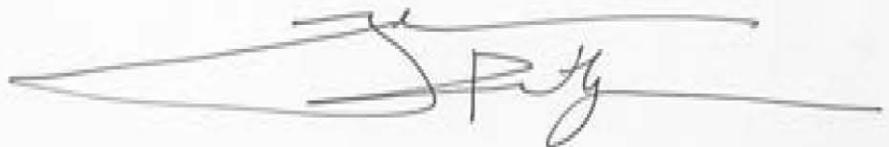
Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties prepared by The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, Province of Ontario.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Rutledge', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

John Rutledge, B. Arch., D. A. T., OAA

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