



## *Downtown Shenandoah Inc. Special 2021 Façade Guidelines*

### **Overview**

The Downtown Shenandoah, Inc. Façade Guidelines have been developed primarily as a resource for commercial property owners or business owners to encourage restoration projects of building facades and to enhance the overall exterior appearance of the building, thus creating a uniform and consistent Main Street Business District.

These guidelines offer basic information about physical improvements which have proven effective in the revitalization of other Main Street communities. In addition, the Façade Guidelines establish a set of design principles to ensure that the improvements are consistent with the scale, character and history of Shenandoah's Main Street Business District. These principles stress good maintenance and preservation of original architectural elements or building additions with compatible materials that maintain the original architectural character of the building.

Although these guidelines are meant as an aid to owners undertaking renovations or restoration projects, applicants for the Façade Improvements Grants will be required to follow the guidance outlined in this document.

An attractive and uniform Main Street Business District is key to the success of Downtown Shenandoah Inc.'s (DSI) revitalization effort. Implementation of the Façade Improvement Grant will result in a more competitive and economically viable Main Street Business District.

### **Grant Guidelines**

Downtown Shenandoah, Inc. will be offering grants through funding received from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Project funding provides an incentive for private investment in restoration projects within the Main Street District. Grant applications will be accepted for any commercial property within the designated boundaries of the Main Street Business District which is defined as: Main Street between Washington Street south to Laurel Street, and Centre Street between Jardin Street east to White Street.

**Note: After the grant applications from commercial properties within the Main Street District have been exhausted, other properties may be considered.**

### **Important Notes:**

- All projects must be approved by the DSI Board of Directors and Shenandoah Borough Management. Only approved work will be eligible for the Façade Improvement Grant
- There will be no grant issued if Shenandoah Borough Code or Ordinance violations exist
- Project work may not begin until the applicant/property owner receives an *approval to proceed* notice from the DSI Board of Directors
- Once the project is completed the applicant or contractor will send a letter of project satisfaction and all invoices to DSI, 116 N. Main Street, Shenandoah, PA 17976. Once the project is completed and approved by DSI, funds will be released to the contractor.

## Signs and Awnings

*Signs are as important today as they were in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Signs have a dramatic impact on the overall image of our town. Signage greatly affects those who pass by, whether they are current or potential customers, and can leave a great impression. Signs and awnings that are simple, suitably-sized, attractively designed, constructed of appropriate materials, and properly located, will favorably enhance the image of your business and the overall downtown.*

**Sign Types-** *The following are recommended sign types with definitions:*

**Flush Signs** are generally meant to be viewed from a distance. These signs are visible when you are directly facing a structure's façade, or from across the street. Ideally, flush signs should be placed on vacant panels above doors or display windows.



Flush sign example

**Projecting Signs** are primarily meant to attract the attention of pedestrians because they hang over the sidewalk.



Projecting sign example

**Freestanding signs** are appropriate when a structure is set back ten or more feet from the sidewalk. Freestanding signs alert people that a business exists when the structure may be partially hidden from pedestrian or vehicular traffic.



Freestanding sign example

**Window Signs** are applied on the inside of display windows or doors. Generally, the viewer would need to be relatively close to the sign for legibility, but that depends on the window's overall size.



Window sign example

**Sign Basics-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Use display windows for creative signage.
- Locate signs and awnings in such a way that you avoid completely covering or overwhelming architectural details such as cornices, trim, windows, decorative brickwork, or other unique architectural features.
- The orientation of signs should be geared to sidewalk pedestrians and to vehicular traffic.
- Signs should not be so detailed as to be unreadable by vehicular traffic.
- Avoid extraneous information on signs and scale them to attract the attention of vehicular traffic.
- Limit the quantity of signs on storefront display windows and doors. Signs should be scaled to balance, not hide or overwhelm the structure.
- The size of signs must conform to the Borough of Shenandoah Building Code. Call (570) 462-1918 for Code information.

**Construction and Design-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the return to or re-creation of period signage:*

- Utilize lettering fashionable to the mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This type of sign should become the main source of identification in downtown Shenandoah.
- Sign material and design should reflect the period of the building and the original design of the storefront. Additionally, the colors of signs and awnings should compliment the overall color scheme of the building's façade and the downtown streetscape.
- Use artisan-crafted signs and quality sign materials manufactured specifically by the sign industry.
- Use graphic elements and details of the building and architectural motifs as part of the sign design when feasible.
- Lettering should be kept to a minimum size, and likewise, the message should be kept brief. A logo and/or illustration (e.g. a shoe, purse, chair, etc.) can be substituted or included to communicate the nature of the business.
- Avoid using multiple signs when one will be sufficient. However, the following additional signs may be appropriate if they maintain design elements of the main identification sign:
  - Small secondary signs used for directional purposes.
  - Freestanding sandwich signs that advertise daily specials or events.

**Lighting Signs-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Use external lighting fixtures rather than internally lit plastic frames.
- Avoid using flashing lights of any kind.
- Sign lighting should be directed to the sign itself and not be used to light the surrounding area; separate fixtures should be used for area lighting.
- Lighting fixture designs should be consistent across the façade and compliment the architectural period of the building.
- Neon signs are **not** a good substitute for well-lit, well-designed signs that reflects Shenandoah's historical character.



**Recommended** - external lighting, directed to sign



**Not Recommended** – internally lit, plastic frame



**Awnings**- Awnings are both functional and decorative. They provide sun control for merchandise in display windows and shelter for pedestrian shoppers. An added feature of awnings is that they bring the tremendous appeal of color and pattern, not only to individual buildings, but to the entire downtown streetscape. Both fixed position and retractable awnings are acceptable.

**Awning Basics**- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Awnings may display the name and nature of the business on the front face and/or side facings. Use simple letter designs and keep the message brief.
- Awnings may be used on street level and upper stories as long as they are appropriate to and maintain the architectural style of the façade.
- Select weather-treated canvas or natural looking material when shopping for awnings. **Plastic awnings or backlit awnings are NOT allowed.**
- The awning should not be oversized- it should fit within the storefront area and not cover architectural elements.



**Recommended** – fixed position awning



**Recommended** – retractable awning

## Exterior Painting and Restoration

*The condition of Shenandoah's commercial buildings is a true indicator of the town's economic vitality and a reflection of the pride and professionalism of the town.*

All buildings within Shenandoah's commercial district should be restored to their original architectural period. Modifications which use colors, details, and architectural motifs from other eras should be avoided. Cosmetic "face-lifts" which cover and/or obliterate the original architectural character of a façade should be avoided.

The original materials used for wall facings such as brick, sheet metal, cast iron and the colors themselves, give buildings their special character and identity. The materials provide visual harmony to the entire streetscape and downtown atmosphere. Covering original materials and details of just one building with inappropriate substitutes like aluminum or vinyl siding and stucco destroys the architectural character and identity of the entire commercial district. **No vinyl siding allowed. Composite such as Mason Board etc. are permitted with committee approval.** Repair and proper maintenance of original exterior surfaces and decorative features is the best solution to the problem of a deteriorating façade. By taking advantage of the quality of original materials and design, the life of a building will be indefinitely prolonged, and its commercial value increased.

**Painting**- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- All wood structures and wood trim should be prepared for painting by manually scraping old paint to reveal the original architectural details.
- Wood should not be cleansed by sandblasting or by using pressurized water or steam.
- Paint color(s) should be chosen from colors which are appropriate to the period of the building and should be applied to architectural features in a period-appropriate fashion.
  - In many cases the original colors used on any building can be determined in the process of scraping old paint. You should be able to uncover the original coat of paint and match it to samples provided by local paint suppliers.
- Use historically accurate color palettes (for most of Shenandoah's buildings, the period between 1870 and 1930). Local paint suppliers can help you select colors from their historical collections in conjunction with your DSI Design Committee.
- The placement and quantity of accent colors and the relationships of lights to darks should be in keeping with the building character.

- Avoid single-color, monochromatic, and contemporary color schemes for early buildings. For example, Victorian buildings should not be painted with

earth tones, bright oranges or a palette of only creams and whites.

- Avoid large areas of stark, bright white as it is often not historically accurate and shows dirt faster than most colors.

### **Sheet Metal Work** - *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Clean all sheet metal using chemical paint remover.
- Never sandblast or use abrasives on sheet metal.
- Repair or replace damaged areas with sections duplicated by a commercial sheet metal shop.
- Automobile fiberglass compounds can be used to fill in and patch small voids and dented areas.
- Properly prime and paint sheet metal with oil-based paint to prevent rusting.

### **Cast Iron Work**- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Use wire brushes and steel wool to remove loose or deteriorating paint and rust.
- Chemical paint removers should not be used on cast iron.
- Heat or low-pressure sandblasting may be used to remove paint from cast iron.
- Missing cast iron parts can be recast in aluminum, fiberglass or reinforced gypsum polymer cements.
- Properly prime and paint cast iron with rust inhibitive paint made for use on exterior metal surfaces.

### **Brickwork/Masonry**- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- When cleaning or removing paint from brick or masonry, use steam or low-pressure water.
- Never sandblast or use abrasives on brick.
- Repoint brick and masonry façades when required. Repointing is the process of removing deteriorated mortar from the joints of a wall and replacing it with new mortar. Repointing is required when the mortar begins to break apart and crumble. When repointing, match new mortar to the original compressive strength, color, composition, depth and finishing of the original joints.
- If brickwork is *already* painted, it may be cleaned with a chemical paint remover, but a test should be done to make certain that the brick won't be damaged by the process. Some bricks used in

older buildings were fired from inferior clay and were meant to be protected. In this case, try to match the original paint color that was used to protect the surface; *otherwise, painting brick is not recommended or encouraged.*

- Repair stucco façades by removing only the damaged material and patching with new stucco. Duplicate the strength, composition, color and texture of the original stucco surface.
- Repair decorative brickwork and masonry whenever possible. Only replace decorative masonry features when they are completely missing or too deteriorated to repair. Use existing physical evidence to guide the new work and match the original features as closely as possible.



Good example of renovation fitting a Victorian style building



Good example of three-pointed façade and repaired stucco

## Storefront Entrance Ways and Windows

*The design of entrance ways and the street level portion of façades should be compatible with the design of upper floors to retain the overall character of a building.*

**Storefront Entrance Ways-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Retail stores, service-oriented businesses, and restaurants should have large pane display windows on the ground level.
- Buildings with multiple storefronts should be visually unified in their use of building materials, colors, architectural details, awnings, signage and lighting.
- The original proportions of display windows and any special features such as transoms or leaded glass should be retained.
- Entrances should be well-defined by architectural elements such as lintels, pediments, pilasters, columns, porticos, porches, railings, and balustrades, etc. Avoid replacing an entire storefront when replacing parts and sections, may be all that is necessary.

**Windows & Shutters-** *Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- New windows should be compatible with the style, size, material, color and detail of windows on the existing building. Whenever possible, windows on upper floors should align vertically with windows and entrances on the first floor. The rhythm of windows and façade openings and decorative window trim should be consistent with that of the original building.
- When appropriate to the design of a building, shutters should be provided on all windows. Proper hardware should be used for the installation of shutters.

## Site and Building Enhancements

*The design and use of sidewalk, fences, landscaped areas, and lampposts can dramatically increase the attractiveness of commercial districts to potential shoppers. Conversely, if poorly designed, these elements can leave negative impressions. Well-designed and well-implemented site and building enhancements add value to properties.*

**Paving & Siting-** *Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Quality paving materials should be used on sidewalks, pedestrian walkways, pathways, plazas and courtyards. The materials should be appropriate for the proposed pedestrian function and circulation requirements of such areas. The materials and design should enhance the overall site and be consistent with the building itself.
- The use of asphalt for pedestrian walkways or pathways is not permitted.
- All areas of a site not occupied by buildings, parking facilities, or other improvements should be landscaped with trees, shrubs, hedges, perennial gardens or ground cover.

**Walls & Fences-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Walls and fences should match the architecture and style of the building(s) on the property. The materials used and color of walls and fences should be consistent.
- Avoid the use of highway-style guard rails and stockade or contemporary security fencing such as chain link fences and barbed or razor wire.

**Exterior Lighting-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- When selecting lighting fixtures, use minimum wattage metal halide or high-pressure sodium light sources. Low pressure sodium and mercury vapor lights are discouraged.
- Select decorative lampposts that conform to Shenandoah's lighting standards. Their design should be appropriate to the overall character of the downtown commercial district. Lampposts are especially recommended along façade sidewalks, near gateways and side entrance corridors.

## Additions and Architectural Elements

In general, an inviting and engaging downtown has a certain “feeling” created by its design and architecture. The downtown character is created by consistency, coordination and complimentary forms. Originally, the hidden assets built into each property brought the whole town together visually. Scale, mass, rhythm, patterns, materials, shapes and colors are some of the ingredients used to define streetscapes and public spaces. This section outlines the uses and appropriateness of architectural designs and features that give commercial districts and outdoor spaces their personality.

### New Building Construction and Orientation- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design*

*Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- New building construction must be designed to coordinate and compliment the original scale, mass and architecture of the surrounding buildings. Consistency of architectural design and features must be preserved within the “Main Street” district.
- New buildings should face the street or other public space. *Buildings should **not** front directly onto parking lots.*
- a door should not be a blank canvas. Rather, it should be an extension of the entrance façade. Its design should be integrated with the main “wall” of the building.
- Off street parking areas should be sensitively
- New buildings situated on street corners should have two façades. Both walls do not need to provide their own entrance, but the façade without located to the side of the buildings. This layout will reduce the visual impact to and disruption of the streetscape’s continuity.

### Scale and Mass of Additions- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- The overall scale, massing and proportion of new additions should relate to those of surrounding buildings. Changes in scale and mass, such as offsetting a wall(s), or deviating from the existing roof line should be made in graduated increments.
- Buildings should not have long, uninterrupted flat walls. Instead, exterior walls should incorporate wall/offsets, windows, or other ornamentation to add interest and variety. Flat, unadorned walls often invite vandalism. Roof line offsets, cross gables and dormers should be utilized to vary the massing of the roofs of buildings. Exposed sides of new additions should be defined with a base and cap or cornice.

### Materials and Details of Additions- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- New additions should be well integrated with existing structures. All materials, details and colors used with new additions should be compatible with the overall design of the original and surrounding buildings. Architectural motifs of the original building should be retained and repeated in the design of new additions whenever possible.
- Artificial siding and trim materials should not be used.

### Roofs and Walls of Additions- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- The new roof form (shape) should be appropriate to and imitate the existing building’s roof.
- In new additions, the use of cross gables, dormers, belvederes, masonry chimneys, cupolas and similar elements is encouraged where appropriate to the design of the existing building.
- Flat roofs should be avoided on one and two-story buildings unless necessary to complement existing rooflines.
- The façade of a building should be emphasized through window patterns and proportions and the enhanced treatment of entrances through details, materials and architectural motifs.
- The design of a visible side and rear walls should be compatible with the façade. The use of blank, windowless walls is discouraged. However, if they are absolutely necessary, such walls should utilize surface articulation and architectural and surface elements found in other wall facings.

### Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment- *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Loading areas, waste facilities, air conditioning units, exhaust and vent stacks, elevator penthouses and antennae should be located to the rear of buildings or screened from view.
- The use of interior refuse rooms in lieu of outdoor dumpsters or other methods of waste removal is encouraged. Visible trash receptacles are uninviting and discourage foot traffic.

## Miscellaneous Helpful Hints

### **Flower Boxes-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Add attractive flower boxes to the sills of all windows. Priority should be given to ground floor windows. Flower boxes should be constructed with durable wood and coated with weather-resistant stain or paint. The hardware for hanging or mounting the flower boxes should be decorative- wrought iron and/or copper fixtures are excellent choices.
- Flower boxes should be planted with seasonal flowers. Maintenance is key- water and weed regularly. In the fall and winter, promptly remove dead plantings and add dried flower arrangements or evergreen cuttings. During the holidays, the boxes can be decorated with colorful seasonal trimmings.

### **Flags and Banners-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- Flags and banners are helpful tools to create awareness and advertise your store. Flags and banners move with the winds creating kinetic energy and attract the eye of passersby. Flags and banners can be rotated on regular basis to continuously emphasize “Something new is going on”. Specials and unique events can be advertised through new designs and color schemes.
- Flags and banners should be customized for each store. Purchasing generic designs will give your store a generic look and not create the interest you desire.

### **Construction and Renovation Guidelines-** *The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- While construction and renovation projects are underway, avoid placing plain paper, garbage bags, or unpainted plywood over windows. Keep windows open so that the public is aware of progress and the fact that a new enterprise is coming.
- If covering windows is required, use the covering to advertise. Alert the public with a tasteful “Coming Soon” or “Opening Soon” sign.
- Decoratively patterned or colored paper can also be substituted.
- During the construction and renovation phase, avoid placing dumpsters in the front of the building, whether in the street or on the sidewalk. If at all possible, keep dumpsters and construction rubble out of sight for the sake of both the appearance of the streetscape and the safety of pedestrians.

### **Display Windows-** *Merchandising to the street is essential to attracting customers. The Shenandoah Mainstreet Design Committee encourages and recommends the following:*

- When designing a window display, “Less is more” is a good rule to follow. Allow customers to focus on a few objects and simple concept-visual clutter is overwhelming.
- Handwritten paper signs that cover more than 20% of the display window detract from shop visibility and do not look professional.
- Change window displays frequently and design them to be appropriate to the season. Remember to create intrigue and appeal when decorating your window