King Street Façade Guidelines
City of Kitchener 2009
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1.0 PREAMBLE

1.1 Why Have Façade Guidelines?

The intent of the King Street Façade Guidelines is to inform the design decisions of landowners, store owners, developers, prospective businesses and design professionals wishing to make changes to a King Street façade.

In developing these guidelines, significant efforts were made to research, analyze and understand current retail, restaurant and façade design practices, as well as consumer preferences. By illustrating a range of storefront design possibilities, these guidelines should assist merchants and owners with:
- Renovating their storefronts;
- More successfully attracting consumer spending; and,
- Realizing the potential each façade possesses.

Similarly, the existing conditions of upper storey facades have been analyzed. Advice is provided as to which elements require attention and improvement.

1.2 What Are the Goals of the Guidelines?

The overall goals of these guidelines are to:

1. Encourage high quality storefronts which respect the architectural elements of the buildings they reside in;
2. Achieve consistent, high quality signage;
3. Conserve and restore upper storey facades, including significant architectural details; and,
4. Implement the City’s downtown design policies, which specify that the City Centre District shall evolve into a high quality, contemporary urban setting, while the Market District shall evolve into a high quality, traditional village setting.
1.3 Where Do They Apply?

These guidelines apply to all buildings which front onto King Street in Downtown Kitchener, between Francis Street and Cedar Street. For buildings between Francis Street and Frederick/Benton Streets, refer to the ‘City Centre District’ section. For buildings between Frederick/Benton Streets and Cedar Street, refer to the ‘Market District’ section.

1.4 How Will They Be Implemented?

The City’s Official Plan (Part 2, Section 9) provides legislative authority for the City to implement these guidelines in the following ways:

**Financial Incentives** – Only those projects which meet the general intent of these guidelines shall be eligible for any form of financial incentive from the City of Kitchener;

**Sign Permits** – Prior to the issuance of any sign permit, applicants will be required to meet with City staff to discuss how their proposed sign meets the general intent of these guidelines;

**Zoning** – Prior to the issuance of zoning compliance, applicants will be required to meet with City staff to discuss how their proposed building improvements meet the general intent of these guidelines.

**Site Plans** – Applications for infill development must meet the general intent of these guidelines, prior to the issuance of site plan approval.

In addition, these guidelines will be implemented in the following ways:

**Inquiries** – early dialogue is key. The City will attempt to clearly articulate design expectations at every initial contact, so that prospective businesses and developers can make more informed design decisions, prior to submitting any application.

**Awareness** – The City will make every effort to promote and communicate the role of these guidelines to existing merchants, existing land owners, the development industry, real estate agents, design professionals, etc.
2.0 CITY CENTRE DISTRICT

Within the City Centre District, King Street runs from Francis Street to Frederick/Benton Streets. As outlined in the City’s Official Plan, this section of King Street is expected to evolve into a contemporary urban setting. Upper storey facades will be preserved, while storefronts and signage will utilize contemporary design principles – the simplification of form, maximizing window sizes, wide entry ways, the use of steel and brick, and the introduction of creative and artistic signage.

2.1 Goal

The goal of the King Street Façade Guidelines, specific to the City Centre District, is to introduce high quality contemporary storefront and sign designs into the streetscape, while conserving architecturally significant features of the lower and upper facades.

2.2 Storefront Design

Within the City Centre District, each storefront has been classified as one of the following three types (as identified on the Storefront Type Map, page 6):

1) Type 1 storefronts have an existing wood fascia sign box and columns that are architecturally significant and in good condition. In these instances, section 2.2.1 shall apply.

2) Type 2 storefronts have significant architectural features (such as brick columns or decorative lower cornices) that can frame the storefront. In these instances, section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 shall apply.

3) Type 3 storefronts have no existing significant storefront features, thus a new contemporary storefront can be introduced. In these instances, section 2.2.3 shall apply.
**Storefront Type Map**

- **Type 1** – Existing wood fascia sign box and columns in good condition (refer to section 2.2.1).
- **Type 2** – Significant architectural storefront features (refer to sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3).
- **Type 3** – No significant architectural storefront features (refer to section 2.2.3).
2.2.1 Type 1 - Existing Wood Fascia Sign Box and Columns in Good Condition

Every effort should be made to preserve the existing storefront as follows:

Features and Sign Location

- Preserve the sign box and columns, but introduce a new base colour (preferably dark tones); and,
- Do not place box signs in front of these fascias. Instead, introduce appropriate signage, such as individualized lettering.

Windows

- Maximize the height of display windows by minimizing the size of the kick plate; and,
- Minimize the number of window frames – if multiple panes are required, seam the panes together;
- Use glass etching to add store name or slogans; and,
- Do not glaze or frost large portions of windows.

Storefront Lighting

- Window displays should be appropriately lit at night;
- Illuminate columns or pilasters; and,
- Appropriately illuminate any doorway recessions.
2.2.2 Type 2 - Significant Architectural Storefront Features

Certain buildings have been identified as possessing significant architectural features. The significant features are listed in section 2.6. Every effort should be made to preserve these features and integrate contemporary storefront designs as follows:

- Do not cover significant features (brick columns, cornice, etc.);
- Where possible, repair and refurbish significant features to their original state and form;
- Locate new signage between any columns and below the cornice; and,
- Adhere to section 2.2.3 for all other storefront features.
2.2.3 Type 3 - Contemporary Storefront Design

Where no significant architectural features exist, introduce a high quality contemporary storefront.

Most new, contemporary storefronts, particularly those in the fashion and restaurant industries, are utilizing the following basic design principles, which should be incorporated into any storefront improvement:

Detail
- Minimize ornamental details (trim, moulding, etc.) by using straight lines (simple pilasters, sign bands, etc.).

Framing
- Introduce prominent vertical and horizontal lines (pilasters, sign bands, horizontal banding);
- Frame the main entrance way with large pilasters and sign bands or horizontal banding;
- Frame display windows with narrower accent pilasters;
- Integrate signature signs above main entrance;
- Where existing stone or brick columns exist, do not cover them. Instead, introduce trim or narrow pilasters to frame windows.
Height

- Maximize the vertical presence of the store by raising sign boxes, sign bands and cornices as high as possible, and limiting the height of sign bands and boxes to 3 feet. Doing so will maximize the size and street presence of display windows.

Windows

- Maximize the size and height of windows;
- Minimize the height of the kick plate;
- Minimize the number of window frames – if multiple panes are required, seam the panes together;
- Use glass etching to add the store name or slogans;
- Do not glaze or frost large portions of windows.

Entranceways

- Design entranceways to ensure ease of customer access;
- Minimize doorway recessions to accommodate outward swinging doors only;
- Maximize the doorway width – where size permits introduce double doors;
- Use glass doors to encourage visibility into the store.
Materials

- Utilize contemporary materials, such as steel, metal or granite cladding for all storefront columns, pilasters, sign bands, vertical banding and cornices.

Projections

- To create an interesting streetscape, consider introducing architectural elements which project out from the façade (such as projecting signs, awnings, etc.). *Note – certain projecting features may require an easement agreement with the City of Kitchener.*

Storefront Lighting

- Window displays should be appropriately lit at night;
- Illuminate architectural features such as columns or pilasters;
- Appropriately illuminate any doorway recessions.
2.2.4 Examples of Contemporary Storefront Design

Good examples of contemporary storefronts with vertical and horizontal banding:

Good examples of large display windows and large entrances:

Good examples of storefronts using contemporary materials and colours:
Good examples of storefronts integrated into existing architectural features such as columns and sign boxes:

Avoid frosted windows that prevent views in (left); avoid blinds in windows that prevent views in (middle left); avoid covering brick columns with signage (middle right); avoid over-sized signs that could be reduced in height to create larger display windows (right):
2.3 Contemporary Sign Design

All new store signs should adhere to the following modern guidelines, and utilize one of the acceptable sign types listed in section 2.3.1:

Effectively Integrate the Sign

- Signage and text should be integrated into the storefront frame, or integrated into sign boxes carefully located between columns or pilasters;
- Large signs shall not appear tacked on to the façade, dominate the storefront or cover architectural features, such as columns or cornices.

Size & Location

- Signs should be placed as high as possible to maximize the size of windows, but located below the lower cornice;
- To do so, signs should be no more than 3 feet in height;
- Signs shall not exceed 90% of the storefront width;
- Signs between two adjacent storefronts should be separated by a minimum of two feet;
- Contemporary projecting signs are encouraged, but may be subject to an encroachment agreement;
- Perpendicular projecting signs may not project more than 1.5 metres from the façade, while parallel projecting signs may not project more than 0.15 metres.
Colour Scheme, Text & Materials

- Contemporary signs should use highly contrasting text and backdrops. For example, white lettering on dark tone backgrounds (black, dark grey and dark blue being most common), black lettering on silver metallic panels, black lettering on glazed glass panels, etc.;
- If using individualized lettering, uses dark tone letters placed in front of a lighter backdrop (often silver metal paneling, or glazed glass);
- Use high quality materials such as metal - avoid fiberglass signs which are internally illuminated;
- Use high quality materials for awning signs to avoid quick wear and tear;
- Minimize the amount of text and phrases on the sign (store/restaurant name only);
- Locate slogans on windows through minimal glass etching, which should not exceed 15% of the window surface.

Lighting

- Avoid internally illuminated signs, except for metallic sign boxes with transparent lettering;
- Subtle and unobtrusive external lighting is preferred.
2.3.1 Acceptable Contemporary Sign Types

Metallic Box Sign

Individualized Metallic Lettering

Individualized Lettering
Dark Lettering on Glass or Metallic Background

Fascia/Awning Sign

Awning Sign

Artistic Sign

Glass Etching
2.4 Upper Storey Restoration

When repairing, refurbishing or restoring upper storey facades, the following guidelines should be followed and achieved:

- Maintain, clean and repair brick and stone surface materials;
- Maintain, clean and repair existing architectural elements such as cornices, keystones, quoins, sills, lintels, etc;
- Remove any metal siding, paneling or stucco from facades – repair original surface material where possible, or replace with a similar brick or stone material;
- Where possible, add or restore window openings – the spacing of new windows should match the fenestration rhythm of King Street’s traditional upper facades;
- Where windows require replacement, select a window style that is similar to the original windows;
- Introduce accent lighting to showcase columns and key architectural features.

2.5 Dealing with Historically Significant Facades

When making changes to historically significant facades, additional approvals (such as a heritage impact assessment) or considerations may be required, prior to approval of any building permit. The following map identifies those properties that are designated on the Municipal Heritage Registry, and those that are of heritage interest or cultural value.
2.5.1 Heritage Buildings Map

- **Red** Buildings designated on the Municipal Heritage Register.
- **Orange** Buildings Considered to be of Cultural Heritage Value and/or Interest.
2.6 City Centre District Site Specific Design Recommendations

The following section identifies specific design recommendations for every storefront and façade:
Introduce modern signage to frame entranceway.

Avoid banner signs on facades.

Use more transparent windows on the ground level.
53-61 King Street East

Preserve Art Deco upper story façade.

Consider breaking up large storefront into smaller storefronts. Frame entrance to store with pilasters and accent sign. Reduce the number of window frames to create large picture windows for display.

Remove existing box signs, and replace with modern signage, such as individualized lettering mounted on the existing canopy.

Add accent lighting to highlight key architectural features.

If introducing a second store or entrance, ensure consistency with adjacent store (frame the entrance, use similar signage, reduce number of window frames, etc.)

Avoid reverse display boards inside store which block visibility into the store.

Avoid poster advertising on windows – use windows to showcase store merchandise.
Consider renovating existing stucco façade by introducing a new façade design. Consider removing recessed entrance to the mall to create 3 formal storefronts.

Remodel storefronts using modern, high quality materials. Where possible, introduce large display windows. For restaurant uses, consider windows that can open to the street.

Consider windows on upper level façade. Where not possible, consider false windows to give the building the impression of being two storeys in height.

Introduce consistent signage, such as individualized lettering.
19 King Street East

Maintain the existing modern building façade.
Paint or resurface the existing sign box.
Consider adding a new entranceway at grade.

1 King Street East

Maintain the late Victorian façade, including the original street level façade, by cleaning cornices and surfaces.
Maintain modern signage.
1 King Street West

Continue to maintain this historic, late Victorian brick building and its original street level facades.

Modern storefront features should be limited to signage. Any new signage should fit below the lower cornice, and between existing brick columns. Metallic or wood fascia signs would be preferred.

Maintain transparency of glass – avoid posters or advertising on windows.

Store sign should be improved. Metallic sign with translucent lettering would be appropriate.

Remove advertising from windows in favour of display space for merchandise.

Add lighting to stairway/entrance.
Consider adding new articulation to the upper facades, such as stucco columns. A new central column would break the upper storey in two, matching the façade rhythm of King Street.

The lower storefront should be modernized. Minimize doorway recessions, raise the height of display windows as high as possible, frame individual storefronts, and consider lifestyle imagery to hide central stairway.

If dividing the storefront in two, ensure consistent sign heights and window sizes.

Maintain historic upper-storey facades.

Preserve original sign box and columns but repaint with modern, dark-toned colours.

A good example of a modern storefront, which maximizes the use of windows, minimizes the presence of signage, and use modern materials to create a clear image from the street.

Replace missing tiles on storefront.
A contemporary building with a very transparent façade. Existing sign sizes should be maintained. Consider upgrading the signs from plastic to metallic.

Introduce accent lighting on columns.
Maintain existing awning sign.

Avoid banners on building and advertising in windows - use more formalized signage.

If the ground floor were to convert to a retail or restaurant use, introduce more opaque glass along Ontario Street – incorporate window displays along King Street

Paint and repair upper cornice. Replace windows and paint trim.

Consider returning storefront to its original design (see image on the cover of this document). Or, modernize existing restaurant façade by maximizing the height and size of the front windows, raising the height of the sign, and introducing contemporary signage.

Signage should fit between columns.

Repair and paint upper cornice.

Modernize storefront by eliminating the bay window and replacing it with one large casement window. Sandblast or repaint lower columns.

Raise the height of the windows by minimizing the size of the sign. Signage should fit between lower columns.
Consider returning storefront to its original design (see image on the cover of this document).

Coordinate signage height for these three storefronts. New signs should not extend more than 2 to 3 feet below cornice.

Coordinate replacement or repair of all upper-storey windows.

Repair and paint upper cornice and windows.

Consider returning storefront to its original design. Or, minimize recessed doorway to create one large display window.

Replace plastic sign with modern signage between brick columns.

Maximize the height of the storefront windows by minimizing the size of the sign.

Paint trim on upper windows to match.

Consider returning storefront to its original design (see image on the cover of this document).

Or, consider removing the blue panels from the exterior columns, and returning the brick to its original colour. The storefront could be modernized by framing the doorway with large pilasters, introducing large picture windows on either size, and introducing modern signage.
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<td>Paint trim on upper façade.</td>
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<td>Consider adding concrete facing around the storefront, to match adjacent façade.</td>
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<td>Convert signage from plastic to a more modern material and size.</td>
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<td>Remove window blinds to increase visibility in and light spill out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paint trim on upper façade.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider improving the storefront by minimizing the size of the sign and replacing existing windows with larger picture windows.</td>
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<td>Clean and maintain late Victorian facade, particularly the designated granite frame around the lower façades.</td>
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<td>Enlarge the storefront windows.</td>
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<td>Consider an awning sign to coordinate with adjacent sign.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retain existing awning sign.</td>
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Consider adding landscaping along glass wall, such as contemporary portable planting boxes.

125 King Street West

Maintain existing projecting sign.
Consider replacing stucco with brick trim and a frosted glass or metal fascia, to act as a backdrop for the sign.
Consider minimizing the recessed doorway by replacing it with a large picture window.
Consider increasing the height of the storefront windows by raising the height of the sign to match adjacent restaurant.

147 King Street West

Replace upper-storey windows.
Eliminate lower-storey frosted glass windows, and consider replacing with large picture windows.
Replace plastic sign with more contemporary sign, such as an awning sign.

151 King Street West
Consider eliminating recessed doorway, and introducing large windows for each storefront.

Replace plastic sign with a more modern sign, such as a metallic sign with translucent lettering.

Coordinate signage by locating all signage at the same height.

Consider removing the metal siding from the upper storey, and restoring the brick façade to its original form.

Consider updating the storefront by introducing modern signage above the windows and doorway.

Consider removing the walls behind the window displays to allow views into the store.
An example of a modernized façade with a canopy/awning sign.

Continue to restore upper storey facades, by refurbishing brickwork and painting trim.

A good example of using modern materials (granite) to frame the storefront.

Remove large sign covering windows and architectural features.

Replace plastic signs over doorways and replace with more modern materials, such as metal.
Continue to maintain historic, neo-classical stone façade.

Integrate signage either above doorway or within existing window panes.

Replace lower windows with more opaque windows to allow visibility into the store.

These three storefronts provide a fabulous opportunity to introduce new contemporary storefronts.

Consistent window and sign heights would achieve a cohesive streetscape appearance.

Increase window heights for all, and reduce the number of window panes to create distinct window displays.

Introduce high quality modern materials to replace existing stucco.
215-219 King Street West

- Repair and repaint upper storey window frames.
- Repair and repaint brick on storefront columns, or introduce a more contemporary colour.
- Replace entire storefront with contemporary design (increase height of windows, install picture windows, etc.).

221 King Street West

- Any infill development should incorporate the same rhythmic placement of columns and window openings as other traditional facades along King Street.
- Storefront widths should match adjacent facades.
- Storefronts and signage should introduce contemporary designs and materials.

227 King Street West
Replace ground floor windows with more transparent windows to allow views into restaurant.

Consider adding additional windows on upper façade.

Replace existing windows with more transparent windows to allow views in, to increase eyes on the street, and to allow light to spill out at night.

Clean bricks at base of walls.
259 King Street West

Replace metal siding on upper storeys and replace with brick.

Avoid banner signs on upper facades.

Develop three distinct, yet coordinated storefronts, each with a clear entranceway. Minimize the number of window panes to create large picture windows. Eliminate recessed doorways.

271 King Street West

Maintain upper storey art deco design. Remove signage from upper floors and reduce the visual clutter on the upper balcony.

Use contemporary colours and fonts for awning signs.

Replace wooden paneling on ground floor with stone or brick.

Replace garage door with more contemporary and transparent door.
Conserve 1960s style architecture.

Replace fiberglass sign with metallic sign box or similar.
Introduce consistent, coordinated, high quality signage for all storefronts, such as canopy signs or individualized lettering.

Remove stucco columns to uncover existing brick, or face columns with new brick. Consider resurfacing the entire façade in brick.

Remove majority of stucco from lower façade and replace with large picture windows.
**326-328 King Street West**

- Retain the well maintained brick columns and upper parapet.
- Introduce coordinated, contemporary signage, such as awning signs.
- If possible, reduce doorway recessions.
- Display windows should be enlarged.

**320 King Street West**

- Maintain existing storefront, but introduce contemporary colours.
- Replace existing sign box with individualized lettering or similar high quality signage.

**312 King Street West**

- This façade currently lacks visual interest.
- Introduce a high quality, contemporary night club façade, complete with new surface materials and distinct signage.
- Introduce vertical elements to break up the extensive width of the façade.
Replace stucco fascia with contemporary materials, such as metal paneling.

Simplify the signage by removing existing sign boxes and replace with contemporary signage, such as individualized lettering.

Locate signage over main entranceway.

Minimize the number of window panes to create large picture windows.

Repair or repaint stucco façade. Consider using modern materials such as granite or brick.

Maintain existing awning sign. Consider removing circular awning on the corner of the façade.
Consider extending the lower cornice across the majority of the façade.

Enlarge the storefront windows by removing the existing stucco and replacing it with a glass curtain wall, extending upward to just below the lower cornice.

Introduce a coordinated sign scheme, with consistent sign heights across the entire façade.
A façade improvement project currently underway.
Stucco and metal panels on upper storey facade are being replaced with high quality materials. Window spaces have been maximized, introducing vertical columns to break up the length of the building.

Signage has been coordinated amongst all stores (similar size, height, material, style, etc.)
Clean brick on upper storey façade. Paint trim where needed.

Introduce a high quality lower cornice.

Introduced a more formalized entrance to the building. Enlarge windows to create two large display areas, in front of interior stairwell.

---

Clean brick on upper storey façade. Paint trim where needed. Establish a lower cornice.

Increase the height of the storefront windows by reducing the size of the sign boxes.

Consider introducing brick columns/pilasters between storefronts to match upper storeys.

Coordinate signs (similar size, height, material, style, etc.).

---

Repair damaged lower cornice.

Increase size and height of storefront windows.

Decrease the size of the store signs, integrate new, more contemporary, signs below the stone façade.
Rebuild the façade in brick with new windows.

Remove existing sign box and tile, and replace with high quality signage and/or pilaster.

Introduce vertical columns to better define the storefront.

Maximize the size of storefront window.

Future Centre lock infill development. The rhythm, scale and proportion of the adjacent facades should be embraced in this new façade.
102 King Street West

Remove metal siding and rebuild upper storey facades. Either use brick with horizontal windows, or match with 102 King Street.

Rebuild storefront facades to introduce a new contemporary design, with large windows and high quality signage.

96-98 King Street West

Remove metal siding and restore original facade. If necessary, introduce appropriate new surface materials.

If original façade and form can not be salvaged, introduce a high quality, contemporary night club/theatre façade.

90 King Street West
**82-86 King Street West**

- Remove false stucco front and restore original brick façade.
- Modernize signage by removing canopy and box signs, and replace with more contemporary signage, such as new awning signs or individualized lettering.
- Eliminate large recessed doorway to 86 King Street.

**76 King Street West**

- Repair and repaint brickwork, cornices and sills for entire upper storey facade.
- Replace windows with double hung style that closely matches original windows.
- Remove existing box sign and replace with awning sign to match adjacent sign.
- Maximize the size of the picture windows facing King Street.

**72-74 King Street West**

- Clean or replace awning sign. If replacing, decrease the size of the awning, so that display windows can be increased in height.
- Remodel storefront to increase the size of the windows, and create one formal entranceway.
- Use more transparent windows.
54-68 King Street West

A contemporary building, using stone, marble and glass, in good condition. Preserve the original street level façade.

Consider replacing existing fibreglass sign with metallic sign.

48 King Street West

A recently refurbished façade in good condition.

Maintain existing awning sign.
A new contemporary theatre.

Continue to place banners along façade to create visual interest.

Any future improvements should contemplate adding windows to the lower façade.
Integrate effective modern signage above or around doorway, or through glass etching.

Clean brick facade as necessary.
Consider adding horizontal windows to upper façade.
The entire upper façade should be restored to its original appearance. Remove paint from bricks, replace windows, repair sills, etc.

Remodel the lower façade by recreating the traditional wood sign box and cornices, maximize window space, and provide a new contemporary doorway.

Recreate the traditional wood sign box to match the façade of 10 King Street East. Retain individualized lettering for signage.

Introduce large picture window to allow views into the store.

Remove paint from bricks on upper façade.

Remodel entire storefront with new contemporary design which matches the proportions, sign sizes, height of signs, etc., of adjacent storefronts.

Consider introducing projecting signs for all storefronts.
20 King Street East

Remove false stucco façade and restore upper storey façade to its original appearance, including new windows, sills, etc.
Add high quality materials to storefront, such as new tile below the windows.

24-26 King Street East

Remove artwork from upper storey façade, remove awnings over windows, repair bricks and replace windows with a style that matches original façade.
Coordinate high quality signage for all three stores/restaurants.
Paint or replace railing with higher quality finish.

30 King Street East

Remove paneling and stucco sign box from upper façade - restore to its original appearance.
Remodel storefront with a contemporary design which matches adjacent proportions.
Preserve building materials, including metal ailerons (fins).

Introduce appropriate signage (scale and type) such as individualized lettering.

Introduce lighting to accent architectural details, such as the fins.
3.0 MARKET DISTRICT

Within the Market District, King Street runs from Cedar Street to Frederick/Benton Streets. As outlined in the City’s Municipal Plan, this section of King Street is expected to evolve into a traditional village setting. Storefronts and signage will utilize traditional main street design principles – the use of decorative and ornamental forms, the use of brick, stone and wood as preferred materials, and the introduction of decorative and artistic signage.

3.1 Goal

The goal of the King Street Façade Guidelines, specific to the Market District, is to introduce high quality traditional storefront and sign designs into the streetscape, while conserving architecturally significant features of the existing façades.

3.2 Traditional Storefront Design

Most new storefronts that are designed in the traditional style, typically utilize these basic design principles, which should be incorporated into all new Market District façade designs:

**Design Components**

The basic components of a traditional storefront include:
- An expression line separating the upper and lower stories, such as a cornice;
- A frieze and/or transom windows;
- A large transparent display window;
- Decorative trim which punctuates the display windows, such as columns and sills;
- A bulkhead or kick plate, often with decorative moulding or trim.

**Façade Materials**

- Use traditional materials, such as brick, stone and wood, for all storefront articulation;
- Artificial cladding, such as metal siding or tiling, should be removed, exposing the original brick façades;
- The original brick should be repaired or replaced where possible;
- Avoid adding non-traditional materials, such as metal siding and plastic, to the exterior;
- Existing stucco façades should be refaced with brick materials;
- Avoid painting original masonry, such as brick, concrete and stone.
Decorative Articulation

- Introduce an expression line above the storefront, such as a cornice and frieze;
- Where no frieze is used, introduce transom windows;
- Frame the entire storefront with columns on each side;
- Frame display windows with decorative wood trim or columns;
- Incorporate large kickplates/bulkheads with decorative moulding below the storefront windows;
- Consider introducing small decorative light fixtures on columns, and where appropriate, shutters on upper facades.

Colour

- Colour is a predominant feature of any traditional storefront design – earth tones are most common, such as beige, dark brown, dark red, dark green and black;
- The Base Colour is the main colour of the building façade (typically the colour of the brick);
- The Major Trim Colour, used on wood columns, window frames, shutters, doors, wood cornices, mouldings and bulkheads, should complement the base colour. Red brick buildings should incorporate beige/white major trim colours;
- The Accent Colour, used on signage and awnings, should enhance the major trim colour. Often the accent colour is a lighter or darker shade of the major trim colour and reflects the store’s branding.
Windows
- Multi-frame windows are common with traditional storefronts. Single pane picture windows are encouraged for retail stores;
- If introducing new multi-frame windows, select vertical windows to maximize the perceived height of the storefront. This will enhance the visual appeal of window displays;
- Avoid placing banners in display windows or transom windows. Instead, use glazing to etch the store name or slogans on windows – no more than 15% of windows should be glazed.

Entranceways
- Where architecturally significant, retain doorway recessions;
- Illuminate recessed entranceways thoroughly;
- Use decorative doors that match storefront design and colour, preferably with large glass panels of vertical proportions.

Projections
- To create an interesting streetscape, consider introducing architectural elements that project out from the façade (such as columns, projecting signs, canopy signs, awnings, etc.). Note – certain projecting features may require an encroachment agreement with the City of Kitchener;
- Select canvas awnings that are simple and unobtrusive. Use colours that complement the main storefront colours.

This traditional storefront uses a decorative door with signage above, to clearly identify the entranceway. Flags, a bay window with an awning, and decorative light fixtures project from the façade to add visual interest.
**Lighting**

- External illumination (such as gooseneck lighting) should be used to illuminate signs;
- Window displays should be appropriately lit at night;
- Illuminate any doorway recessions and secondary entranceways;
- Use directional lighting to highlight key features on upper facades, such as columns and arches.

**Landscaping**

- Flower pots, hanging baskets and other similar landscaping should be carefully integrated to soften the storefront and add colour.
- Use moveable planters to delineate patio areas;
- Use appropriate, high quality furniture for outdoor patios and café spaces.
3.2.1 Examples of Traditional Storefront Design

Good examples of traditional storefronts with strong expression lines.

Good examples of traditional storefronts with decorative articulation (mouldings, columns, transom windows, etc.).

Good examples of traditional storefronts that integrate awnings, awning signs, landscaping, etc.
3.3 Traditional Sign Design

New store signs should adhere to the following traditional guidelines, and utilize one of the acceptable sign types listed in section 3.3.1:

**Effectively Integrate the Sign**

- Signage and text should be integrated into the storefront, on the expression line (frieze), on permanent awnings, on projecting signs or through window glazing;
- Signs should not cover up any architectural features, such as prominent columns, cornices or windows;
- Large signs which appear tacked on to the façade, or which dominate the storefront, should be avoided;
- Use individualized lettering on expression lines (frieze);
- Consider framing signs with decorative moulding.

**Location & Size**

- Signs should be located as high as possible to maximize the size of windows, but located below the storefront cornice;
- Generally, signs should be no more than 3 feet in height;
Colour Scheme, Text & Materials
- Coordinate sign colours with the main colours of the building;
- Minimize the amount of text (store/restaurant name only);
- Locate slogans on windows through glass etching;
- Choose a letter style or graphic treatment that projects an appropriate retail image;
- Lettering should account for less than 60% of the signboard;
- Use high quality materials such as metal and wood - avoid fibreglass/plastic signs which are internally illuminated;
- Use high quality materials for awnings to avoid wear and tear.

Projecting Signs
- Where possible and appropriate, incorporate projecting signs over the main entranceway or at the outer edges of storefronts;
- Projecting signs should be minimal in size to avoid interference with adjacent signs and the architecture of the storefront itself;
- Certain projecting signs may require a variance or encroachment agreement.

Lighting
- External illumination (such as gooseneck lighting) should be used to light signs;
- Backlit signs are discouraged; and,
- Decorative lighting fixtures can be added adjacent to signs.
3.3.1 Acceptable Traditional Sign Types

Individualized Lettering

Externally Illuminated Fascia Signs

Externally Illuminated Decorative Wood Fascia Signs
Awning Signs

Glass Etching

Decorative Projecting Signs
3.4 Upper Storey Restoration

When repairing, refurbishing or restoring upper storey façades, the following guidelines should be followed and achieved:

- Maintain, clean and repair brick and stone surface materials;
- Maintain, clean and repair existing architectural elements such as cornices, keystones, quoins, sills, lintels, etc;
- Remove any metal siding, paneling or stucco from façades – repair original surface material where possible, or replace with a similar brick or stone material;
- Where possible, add or restore window openings – the spacing of new windows should match the rhythm of the window spacing on surrounding buildings;
- Where windows require replacement, select a window style that is similar to the original windows;
- Introduce accent lighting to showcase columns and key architectural features; and
- Add shutters to upper façade windows.

Note: When making changes to historically significant facades, additional approvals (such as a heritage impact assessment) or considerations may be required, prior to approval of any building permit.
3.5 Market District Site Specific Design Recommendations
Clean and repair upper cornice. Restore brickwork to its original colour.

Remove cladding from columns and restore original brick material. Introduce high quality façade materials between brick columns.

Remove existing box sign and replace with a well defined expression line and more traditional signage, such as individualized lettering.

Introduce accent lighting on columns.

Introduce decorative details, such as shutters and flower pots.
If possible, return the brick to its original colour.

Repair or rebuild upper cornice and parapet. Replace existing lower cornice with high quality material.

Coordinate signage size, location and style for both storefronts.

Remove existing tiles and uncover original brickworks for storefront.

Consider extending upper story façade to edge of overhang, and introducing windows.

Coordinate signage height and style across building facade.

Modify windows to create picture windows for each storefront.

Avoid poster advertising on windows. Where necessary, arrange posters to allow visibility in.

Introduce landscaping, such as flower pots, along the street line.
Consider removing all woodwork to uncover existing brick, or resurface the entire façade in brick.

Introduce new articulations to the building, such as lower cornice, to separate the upper and lower storeys.

Utilize high quality signage, such as awning signs with glass etching.

Consider replacing existing roll-back doors with large picture windows.
Coordinate signage size, style and location across the facade. Avoid placing any forms of signage on the upper façade.

Enhance the building’s appearance with flower pots and hanging baskets.

Enhance the visibility of the main level and maintain pedestrian's visual interest from the street, by:

Introducing a lighter-colour material on recessed façades, such as beige brick; and

Consider replacing concrete wall on the main level with decorative railing.
287-289 King Street East

An example of an infill façade which compliments the scale, form and detail of surrounding facades. This design incorporates most of the traditional storefront design principles, with effective decorative detailing.

Restore brick on upper façade. Remove existing tiles and repair original brickwork on lower façade. Consider upgrading the current balcony with high quality fencing, such as wrought iron.

Replace the existing lower cornice with high quality material.

Coordinate size and location of signs. High quality signs should fit between columns.

Introduce traditional storefront elements, such as decorative kick plates and transom windows. Maintain transparency of display windows.
Coordinate signage amongst all stores. (similar size, height, material, style, etc.). Consider removing existing backlit signs with a stucco or brick fascia and individualized lettering.

Consider resurfacing select facades with brick to match the main façade (ex: corner columns, between stores, etc.).

Enhance the streetscape by resurfacing the existing retaining wall and introducing more landscaping along the street line.

Consider improving the courtyard as a prominent semi-public space. Introduce appropriate furniture, landscaping, etc.

Any future infill should follow the infill development guidelines. Consider denser landscaping to screen the existing parking area.
Remove the cladding from the storefront, and replace it with high quality materials, such as brick, wood or concrete.

Locate signage on a rebuilt expression line using individualized lettering.

Introduce decorative details, such as shutters and flower boxes.

Maintain existing modern building façade.

Consider improving the courtyard as a prominent semi-public space. Introduce appropriate furniture, potted plants, etc.

Enhance the landscaping along street line to soften the streetscape. Consider resurfacing existing retaining walls with decorative stone materials.

Provide sufficient lighting to ensure night time safety.
Consider improving the courtyard as a prominent semi-public space. Introduce appropriate furniture, potted plants, etc.

Enhance the landscaping along street line to soften the streetscape. Consider resurfacing existing retaining walls with decorative stone materials.

Provide sufficient lighting to ensure night time safety.
195-197 King Street E

- A good example of a traditional facade which is well kept and coordinated.
- Replace existing sign box with more traditional high quality signage. Avoid placing posters on the sign band.
- Replace storefront windows with large picture windows that allow views in and light spill out.

187-189 King Street E

- Replace current signs with decorative wood signs, or create a prominent expression line with individualized lettering.
- Maintain transparency of large display windows and remove colour films on the window.
- Introduce decorative shutters on upper façade; introduce bulkheads and flower boxes below the storefront windows.

183-185 King Street E

- Clean brick, and repaint window frames and sash. Add shutters to upper façade.
- Replace current signs with more traditional high quality signage, such as individualized lettering or awning signs.
- Consider removing existing metal overhang and replacing it with awning signs.
175 King Street E

Consider resurfacing existing stucco facade with high quality materials, such as brick or stone.

Replace existing metal cornice with a material which complements the new facade material, such as concrete or wood.

High quality traditional signage should fit between the columns and below the lower cornice, such as an awning sign.

Remove banners and bars from windows to allow views in. Consider introducing transom windows in replacement of banners.

165 King Street E

An example of a modernized façade with architectural details.

Introduce landscaping along the street line, such as potted plants or a new planting bed with decorative seat wall, to enhance the visual interest of the streetscape.
157-159 King Street E

Remove existing plastic sign from the upper façade, and keep all signage directly above the storefront. Consider introducing awning signs and glass etching.

Remove tiling from upper façade to uncover existing brick, or introduce high quality materials, such as new brick or stone.

Resurface bulkheads with new high quality materials or decorative detailing.

137-147 King Street E

Repair and restore brickwork, cornice, parapet and sills on the upper façade. Clean and maintain the 1920’s art deco style lower façade.

Coordinate signage amongst all stores (similar size, height, material, style, etc.). Remove signs from art deco façade, and replace with more appropriately sized fascia signs or sign bands that fit within the architectural features.

Avoid posters and visual clutters in favour of attractive storefront displays.

Resurface bulkheads with new high quality materials, such as granite cladding.
This building has a substantial size but lacks visual interest. Provide subtle street treatment, such as flower boxes or furniture, to soften the streetscape. Consider different coloured awnings to break up the length of the façade.

Avoid banners on building and advertising in windows – use more formalized signage, such as window etching.

Use interesting window displays to keep pedestrians’ interest into ground level retails.

For restaurant uses, consider windows that can open, slide or be removed.
100-160 King Street East

This large commercial development is slick and contemporary, but provides limited pedestrian interest at street level and limited reference to the Market District context. To add interest:

Introduce a series of projecting signs along the upper façade.

Use high quality window displays, by avoiding window blinds and posters to increase visibility in and light spill out.

Consider introducing landscape beds within recessed areas to enhance street presence.
Consider resurfacing existing stucco facades with high quality traditional materials, such as brick or stone.

Introduce subtle landscaping, such as hanging baskets or planters to enhance visual interest.

Consider resurfacing existing stucco with high quality traditional materials, such as brick or stone.

Coordinate signage amongst all stores (similar size, height, material, style, etc.).

Introduce more architectural details to the building, such as decorative bulkheads and lighting fixtures.
Remove the existing sign above entrance and uncover the original window. Resize and design the signage to fit over the entrance door. Consider introducing a projecting sign and glass etching.

Restore brick to its original colour, or to a more traditional earth tone.

Introduce brick columns/pilasters between windows for visual interest. Add shutters to windows on upper façade.

Consider replacing the garage doors with large picture or double hung windows.

Integrate signage on the balcony and within existing window panes. Consider projecting signs to identify each entrance way.
Reduce the height and size of the signage above main entrance way. Consider individualized lettering with accent lighting.

Utilize display windows more effectively by removing visual clutter, eliminating false walls and showcasing products.

Clearly identify entrance ways.

Introduce landscaping, such as potted plants or a decorative planting bed, to enhance streetscape.

Introduce an expression line which visually separates the upper façade from the storefront.

Coordinate signage size and type for both stores.

Introduce a colour scheme to complement the existing building façade.

Add shutters to upper façade. Improve bulkheads by adding decorative moulding.
Remove cladding to uncover original brick, or consider resurfacing the entire façade with high quality materials, such as brick or stone.

Restore point brick (articulated roofline) of the original building design.

Clean or replace existing awning. Remove existing sign boxes and incorporate signage into awnings.

Introduce traditional building elements such as sills, shutters, cornices, flower boxes, etc.

Clean brick, and paint window frames and sash.

Remove the existing sign box. Rebuild original cornice and expression line, and introduce high quality signage, such as individualized lettering. Signage should fit between lower cornice and exterior columns.

Consider repainting the ground level with lighter earth tones to complement existing brick.
Ensure consistent, high quality signage.

Where possible, introduce landscaping, such as flower boxes, along the façade to create visual interest.

Ensure consistent, high quality signage.

Where possible, introduce landscaping, such as flower boxes, along the façade to create visual interest.
4.0 Infill Development

For new buildings on infill lots, the following guidelines shall apply:

- New developments should respect the traditional storefront size, rhythms (such as column and window spacing) and general use of building materials found on King Street;
- Within the City Centre District, the preferred façade height is 2 to 3 storeys, although additional storeys may be permitted at intersections, or if stepped back from the front façade generally at a 45 degree angle;
- Within the Market District, the preferred façade height is 2 storeys;
- Storefront heights should be consistent with adjacent façades;
- Frame the building with large outside columns;
- Break up the building façade with smaller internal columns;
- Maximize the number and size of window openings on upper storey façades;
- Use high quality materials similar to those found on surrounding buildings, such as brick and stone;
- Introduce accent lighting to showcase columns and key architectural features; and,
- Storefronts should be designed in accordance with the applicable section of these guidelines – section 2.2.3 for infill development in the City Centre District; section 3.2 for infill development in the Market District.

An example of an infill design in the Market District which integrates the form, height and materials found in surrounding buildings, while introducing new traditional storefronts.
5.0 Glossary

City Centre District Contemporary Design Terms:

- Upper Cornice
- Column
- Window Sill
- Lower Cornice
- Sign Band
- Column
- Glass Etching/Glazing
- Parapet
- Double Hung Window
- Signature Sign
- Picture/Display Window
- Kick Plate
City Centre District Contemporary Design Terms (continued):

- Horizontal Windows
- Trim
- Single Pane Window
- Primary Pilaster
- Framed Picture Window
- Framed Picture Window
- Framed Entrance
- Framed Picture Window
- Horizontal Banding
- Accent Pilaster
- Primary Pilaster
Market District Traditional Design Terms:

- Upper Cornice
- Expression Line
- Window Trim
- Decorative Trim on Bulkhead/Kick Plate
- Sill
- Storefront/Lower Cornice
- Frieze
- Display/Picture Window
- Columns
Market District Traditional Design Terms (continued):

- Base Colour
- Major Trim Colour
- Accent Colour
- Individualized Lettering
- Transom Windows
- Doorway Recession
Terms:

**Bulkhead/Kick Plate:** A protective plate located below display windows to protect against damage.

**Columns:** Vertical pillars or posts that either support building weight or act as purely decoration.

**Cornice:** Ornamental horizontal moulding that projects out from the façade – often at the top of a building or top of a storefront.

**Expression Line:** Horizontal elements on the façade (cornice and frieze) used to differentiate between upper and lower floors.

**Fenestration:** The design and placement of windows in a building.

**Frieze:** A horizontal band which runs above doorways and windows and below the cornice. The frieze often forms the background for store signs.

**Glass Etching:** Words or symbols carved or frosted into glass display windows.

**Keystone:** The central stone in the curve of an arch or vault.

**Lintel:** The piece of structure over a door or window opening, which supports the weight of the wall above it. Lintels often project out from the façade to create ornamental decoration.

**Picture/Display Window:** A large, usually single-paned window.

**Pilaster:** A projecting flat column built into the face of a wall.

**Quoin:** Dressed stones at the corners of buildings.

**Sill:** The piece of the structure under a window or door opening.

**Transom Window:** A window set above a door or larger window.