

# CITY OF TOPEKA

## DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Draft Annotated Outline

February 8, 2016

The following outline provides an overview of the City of Topeka's proposed Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines and was prepared for review and discussion with Planning staff, the Landmarks Commission, stakeholders, and the Kansas Historical Society. Following discussion and input, each chapter will be filled out in detail reflecting the comments received.

## **Chapter 1 – Introduction and Overview**

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Topeka's Downtown District

- Topeka's Downtown Revitalization Initiative: Overview of the downtown initiative; Role of Downtown Topeka Inc.; Business Improvement District; Streetscape improvements (public/private initiative; D1 zoning).
- Historic District: Importance of the district's historic character in creating sense of place; 2012 Survey; 2013 Preservation Plan; Rehabilitated buildings and buildings independently listed on the National Register; 2015 Nomination; Purpose – to preserve resources, enhance character, and facilitate the use of rehabilitation tax credits to help make projects financially viable, attracting and supporting investors and businesses

#### 1.2 Four Types of Project Review (introductory overview)

- Tax Credit Review: State and Federal tax credits; KSHS/NPS review; Application of the Standards; Rigorous review with substantial financial benefits; Preferred option for projects involving contributing buildings within the district.
- Kansas Historic Preservation Act: Review in accordance with KSA 75-2724; Review undertaken by Landmarks Commission on behalf of KSHS as a CLG; Review of all projects within the historic district – contributing buildings, non-contributing buildings, and new construction; Same review standards as for tax credits – impact on integrity of individual buildings for contributing buildings and impacts on adjacent buildings/historic district with respect to non-contributing buildings and new construction; Certificate of Appropriateness issued for project determined to be in compliance.
- Request for Review under the Preservation Act: Request for review by the local governing body of projects found by the Landmarks Commission not to be in compliance with the

Standards by under the Preservation Act review above; Review undertaken by City Council with recommendation by Planning staff.

- D1 Zoning Review: Standard zoning review by Planning staff for all projects; The historic district is within the D1 zoning district, and these guidelines will apply to zoning review within the historic district.

### 1.3 Goals and Principles for the Design Guidelines

#### Goals:

1. An active, appealing, and prosperous downtown center
2. Recognition, preservation and enhancement of the Downtown District's historic character as a significant component of downtown revitalization
3. Support for private sector investment in downtown projects through the use of rehabilitation tax credits
4. Preservation and appropriate treatment of historic building fabric

#### Key Principles:

- Recognize the diversity of building types and styles.
- Encourage uses that historic buildings are able to accommodate without dramatic alterations.
- Identify, preserve, and appropriately treat historic building fabric from all periods.
- Promote new design that complements and enhances existing historic character.
- Create places that are friendly to people and promote an active and vibrant streetscape.
- Encourage quality and creativity.

### 1.4 Use of the Design Guidelines

- Property Owners, Developers, and Investors: Outline of goals, processes, approach, and preferred treatments for projects within the Downtown District
- Architects and Designers: Outline of design principles and preferred treatments for buildings and historic building fabric
- Landmarks Commission and Planning Staff: Criteria and guidelines in working with applicants and undertaking project review
- City Council: Basis for assessing impacts and benefits with respect to downtown revitalization

## **Chapter 2 – Character of the Downtown District**

Introduction – the character of the Downtown District is based upon the diversity and variety of building types, forms, periods, and styles; layers of change; no one period dominates; all are significant; all contribute.

## 2.1 Periods of Development

Based upon the 2012 Downtown Survey and 2015 NR nomination outline of history and development highlighting the nature of change within each period

- Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Establishment: Founded in December 1854 following passage of the Kansas Nebraska Act the previous May; Location crossing of the Kansas River along the Oregon Trail; Early development of the commercial streetscape; primarily one and two story stone and wood buildings from the river south to 6<sup>th</sup> Street; Admitted to the Union in 1861, establishment of Topeka as state capital; mills along the river; Masonry buildings (stone side and rear walls; brick fronts) erected throughout the 1850s and 1860s infilled the streetscape of Kansas Avenue (p39-40).

- Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Boom: Improvements made in the 1860s and 1870s laid the foundation for the exponential growth during the 1880s (p41); Graded Kansas Avenue, laid curbstones 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, paved the gutters. Gas illumination 1870, electric illumination 1882; The streetscapes in the original town site filled in with one- and two-story masonry buildings constructed to house the wide range of the commercial businesses and civic organizations needed to sustain a growing town; Sanborn maps from 1883 show extent of development; 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, both sides of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues; Facades primarily brick but also of limestone; Iron columns and beams introduced for storefronts; Jackson, Quincy, and 900 block of Kansas primarily residential; also liveries associated with hotels especially along Jackson;

Building boom in 1880s with unchecked speculation and interest from outside investors; In addition to miles of sidewalk and street pavement laid throughout the city in 1888, three thousand new buildings were erected; Speculative commercial structures; High style; Thacher Building 112 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Davis Building 725-727 S. Kansas Avenue; Ended with the national economic Panic of 1893 and subsequent depression. (p41-42)

- Twentieth Century Growth: By the turn of the twentieth century, Topeka's economy had recovered and was growing again but at a slower pace. The state government and railroad, once the AT&SF regained its footing, provided steady employment, which in turn attracted private businesses that supported the needs of the city's residents. This relatively stable economy and a location roughly near the center of the country attracted banking institutions and insurance companies, many of whom established headquarters in Topeka. The city experienced a relative building boom during the first decade of the new century. (p43) Several substantial and well-designed new buildings; numerous façade alterations – simpler brick facades, sometimes incorporating Classical ornament, replaced fussy Victorian facades with peaked cornices.

The 1910s and 1920s saw the construction of buildings taller and larger than their nineteenth century neighbors. New construction filled gaps along the commercial streetscape, converted previously residential blocks to commercial use (Quincy, Jackson,

900 block), and demolished earlier buildings to combine multiple lots for larger structures. Especially in the 1920s, hotels, offices, banks, and larger commercial businesses.

- Great Depression: The presence of the state government and related institutions in Topeka helped limit distress and stabilize the local economy. City Hall and Municipal Auditorium constructed in 1938 using PWA funds. The commercial core continued to remain strong through the early and mid-twentieth century. Art Deco façade (705); filling station and garage 1935 (7<sup>th</sup> & Quincy).
- Mid-Century Growth and Urban Renewal: Post war growth and development; numerous storefront renovations; Urban renewal planning between 1956 and 1964; Purchase and clearing of property for I-70 in 1961; Beginning in 1964, private companies purchased sites within the area (north of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue) for new buildings; The new development changed the scale and character of South Kansas Avenue north of the District; Had an impact on the overall function of buildings along Kansas Avenue; shift of commercial retail to move suburban areas.

Philosophy and development associated with urban renewal influenced new development within the district; A series of large new structures between 1961 and 1973 including high-rise and low-rise offices, department stores, banks, and parking garages; Significant demolition and loss of earlier 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings; New buildings were often free-standing commercial blocks employing Modern Movement design features and materials such as concrete and glass; In general, these new modern buildings respected the sidewalk though incorporated recessed entrances; A number of remaining smaller retail buildings were renovated with façade coverings.

Subsequent similar demolition and new construction in the early 1980s (611, 612-18, 712); single and three-story buildings; some set back from the street.

- Contemporary Revitalization: After another construction hiatus in the 1990s, two mixed use new commercial and residential buildings (719, 825); Caused additional demolition, but move toward downtown revitalization; Use of rehabilitation tax credits for several significant historic buildings (five buildings within the historic district, the most recent in 2010).

## 2.2 Current Conditions

Based upon historical information in the Survey and NR nomination and review in the field.

District-wide Character:

- Considerable change over time – c1880 to 1965 to present
- Diversity in period of construction
- Diversity in architectural style
- Diversity in building size and form
- Many buildings have multiple periods, styles and treatments

## 2.3 Building Types

A considerable number of historic buildings have been changed or lost in downtown Topeka over the decades, and many of the changes or new buildings replacing them are now considered historically significant. The character and integrity of existing remaining buildings varies and are relevant to the approach to their future treatment. In general, remaining buildings can be organized into ten groupings.

1. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Building Remnants: The rhythm and character of the streetscape was established by the original lot configurations in the layout of early Topeka. This rhythm is evident historically and at present. The remnants of early buildings are embedded in remaining buildings today, especially in limestone side and rear walls and possibly in interior configurations and structure. (examples- stone walls; rhythm of smaller retail buildings)
2. Larger Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: Several larger historic buildings remain from the period of Topeka's building boom in the 1880s. These buildings retain historic integrity and should receive priority for preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse. Some of the buildings have been rehabilitated. Others are underutilized. Three are vacant, inadequately maintained, and threatened. (examples- Thacher, Davies, Celtic Fox, SE 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue)
3. Smaller Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: Most of the smaller late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings within the Downtown Historic District have been replaced or substantially modified. A few, however, retain their exterior character and integrity, despite later changes to their first floor storefronts. These buildings should receive priority for preservation and appropriate treatment. (examples- 900 block, west)
4. Larger Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: From 1900 through the 1920s, a number of large, substantial, and significant buildings were constructed in downtown Topeka, including hotels, offices, and governmental structures. With one exception, these buildings have been well treated over the years and are in good condition and have high integrity today. They are key landmarks within the district. While not considered threatened, these buildings should continue to be used and preserved in accordance with best practices of historic preservation. (examples- Memorial, AT&SF, Jayhawk, Kansas)
5. Smaller Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: A number of smaller buildings of high quality were constructed downtown during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and also survive in good condition and with high integrity. These are also landmarks and contribute substantially to the historic character of the district. While not threatened, they should also receive priority for appropriate treatment. (examples- Elks, IOOF, Bank, others)

6. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings with Contributing Changes: Most late 19<sup>th</sup> century retail buildings were substantially modified or reconstructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In subsequent decades, continuing changes occurred especially to storefronts. Many storefront modifications from the 1920s and 1950s are of particularly high quality. Rehabilitation of many of these buildings will be undertaken as the Downtown District develops. Care should be taken to identify and preserve contributing historic building fabric, especially storefronts. (examples)
  
7. Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings with Non-contributing Changes: Inappropriate changes were made to a number of smaller retail buildings within the Downtown District. These include the removal of open storefronts and replacement with brick as well as a variety of other treatments that are in conflict with the basic character of a retail streetscape. Some inappropriate changes are simply of poor quality or design. Despite these inappropriate changes, the buildings retain their overall character and are still considered contributing. As buildings are rehabilitated, inappropriate changes should be reversed. It will be important to clearly distinguish which changes are considered contributing and non-contributing to a specific building. New elements should be complementary to the historic character of the building but should be contemporary, creative, and of high quality. (examples)
  
8. Early and Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Facades: In the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a number of buildings within the Downtown Historic District received completely new facades. In the 1920s into the 1950s, these facades do not differ dramatically from the general character of earlier buildings but may vary in window sizes and types, use of materials, and detailing. The most substantial changes were undertaken in the 1960s and later when entire facades were covered with modern designs without windows. Building fronts became large sign panels. While in dramatic contrast to the character of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century retail streetscape, these buildings are still within the historic district's period of significance and are considered contributing. These buildings will continue to be under pressure to change in the future. Care should be taken to preserve contributing historic character whenever possible. (examples)
  
9. Contributing Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: Several prominent Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern buildings were constructed within the historic district during the period of urban renewal in the 1960s. Some of these buildings are large in scale. Several buildings from the late 1960s, outside of the current 50-year cutoff for consideration as contributing to the historic district, will be considered contributing when they reach the 50 years in age. These buildings are not considered threatened and should be recognized and preserved. (examples)

10. Non-contributing Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings: A number of Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century Modern buildings are not considered contributing. Primarily, these buildings have been modified in later years and lost some degree of historic integrity, even when the later changes were of high quality. Several retail buildings within the district were considered non-contributing because their designs could not be confirmed as being within the 50-year cutoff date. Of these, a few should be considered vulnerable because they are underutilized, not well maintained, and not appreciated. These buildings could be reassessed and considered contributing based upon additional investigation and research. Care should be taken in determining their future treatment. (examples)

### 2.3 Rehabilitation Approach

- Find an appropriate use
- Identify authentic historic fabric from all periods
- Adapt building to new use retaining historic features and fabric
- Apply appropriate treatments to historic fabric
- Reverse previous inappropriate treatments where possible
- Design new features to be contemporary and compatible

## Chapter 3 – Review Processes and Procedures

Introduction – The four types of review processes relevant to Topeka’s Downtown Historic District are outlined below. All are aimed at preserving and enhancing the historic character of the Downtown District in support of its revitalization. All use the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards to encourage the appropriate treatment of historic building fabric.

Primary distinction between review processes:

- Tax Credit and Preservation Act reviews look at appropriate treatment of a specific building alone without consideration of district-wide goals and issues.
- Appeals and D1 Zoning reviews may take into account district-wide issues and benefits with the potential for more flexible interpretation and the mitigation of adverse affects for projects that meet the district’s goals for revitalization but may not fully comply with the Standards with respect to treatment of an individual building.

### 3.1 The Identification and Treatment of Historic Fabric

Downtown Topeka has a complex history. As outlined in Chapter 2, resources represent a wide range of periods and styles, many represented in the same building. Layers of history; Topeka’s story.

The primary purpose of these guidelines is to encourage the identification and appropriate treatment of historic building fabric. At the beginning of any project, designers should identify historic fabric and character-defining features. In the design and implementation of projects, historic features and fabric should be used to evoke the building’s character. New design features should be compatible with, build upon, and enhance that character.

Discussion of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see Appendix A – copy of the Standards and discussion from Topeka's Historic Preservation Plan). Key principles. Primary goal is to retain historic fabric and retain integrity. Buildings with high integrity should be changed very little. Inappropriate previous treatments should be reversed. Non-contributing buildings and buildings with low integrity have the opportunity for more flexible and creative treatments.

Perhaps most important is selecting a use that the existing historic building can accommodate without dramatic change. Compatibility. Quality.

Chapters 4 through 10 below outline issues related to historic fabric in Topeka's buildings and outline recommended approach to treatment. They emphasize retaining authentic historic building fabric and repair of authentic fabric rather the replacement.

Issues to address:

- How do we identify potential anchor sites within the historic district that will support revitalization and make smaller projects viable?
- What degree of flexibility should be allowed for borderline buildings that are currently designated as non-contributing but that arguably could be considered contributing?
- How do we assess compatibility for new construction?
- How do we assess projects that do not fully comply with the KSHS/Landmarks review of the Standards?

### 3.2 Rehabilitation Tax Credits

Topeka's Downtown Historic District and these design guidelines hope to encourage the use of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits to help make projects financially viable for investors and entrepreneurs. Preferred option for projects involving contributing buildings within the district. Underlying requirement is the treatment of the contributing historic features of individual building in accordance with accepted preservation practices and techniques.

- Overview and benefits of the federal rehabilitation tax credit
- Overview and benefits of the Kansas state rehabilitation tax credit
- Discussion of rehabilitation and application of the Standards – emphasis upon the treatment of the individual building and its contributing features
- Review undertaken by KSHS/NPS
- Overview of the review process: Retaining experienced consultants; Initial consultation with KSHS/NPS; Initial consultation with city code team; Part 1 and Part 2; Ongoing consultation as documents are prepared; Review and approval process; Importance of allowing for adequate time; Taking the credit.
- Application of these design guidelines

Issues to address:

- How to make the process clear and efficient to maximize incentive, use, and benefits?
- How to make tax credits applicable to smaller projects within the historic district?

### 3.3 Kansas State Preservation Act

Overview of KSA 75-2724 and its intent. Applied to buildings listed on the National Register and/or State Register. In the case of Topeka, relates to the entire Downtown Historic District, including contributing, non-contributing, and new construction projects.

KSHS is responsible for its implementation, but has delegated review to the City of Topeka's Landmarks Commission due to its status as a Certified Local Government.

Like tax credit review, Preservation Act review is based upon the Standards as applied to the individual building and its contributing features. Intent is the preservation and appropriate treatment of the historic building. A Certificate of Appropriateness is issued for projects determined to be in compliance with the Standards.

With respect to non-contributing buildings and new construction, review looks at impacts upon adjacent buildings and the integrity of the historic district. Cannot take Downtown District revitalization goals into account. However, for all proposed projects, the Landmarks Commission has some flexibility in its interpretation of the Standards within the overall context of state ordinance, especially with regard to detailed treatments.

- Review of the Landmarks Commission review process
- Initial consultations with the Commission's Design Review Committee and city code team
- Application of these design guidelines
- Potential for review of determination

### 3.4 Request for Review under the Preservation Act

A request for review by the local governing body may be made by an applicant for a project found not to be in compliance with the Standards by the Landmarks Commission. The review and decision is undertaken by City Council with recommendation by the Planning staff.

Under some conditions, it may be appropriate to allow for implementation of new projects that do not fully comply with the application of the Standards as required under tax credit and State Preservation Act review as noted above. Those reviews apply predominantly to the treatment of individual contributing buildings within the district. In some cases, projects may be proposed that meet the goals of preserving and enhancing historic character while not being in full accord with the rigorous application of the Standards as required above.

The basis for consideration of such projects is the diversity of historic buildings, forms, sizes, and styles within the Downtown Historic District. As described in Chapter 2, change has been a characteristic of Downtown Topeka over its history, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Some of that change has been dramatic. Some continued comparable change may be acceptable in the future yielding benefits in use, vitality, and enhancement of character.

However, any such changes should not be taken lightly. Requirements should be as rigorous as the application of the Standards to individual historic buildings, but in this case applied to the character of the district as a whole. Preservation and appropriate treatment of historic building fabric should be a primary requirement of any approved project.

- Criteria for approval of projects being reviewed by the local governing body under the Kansas State Preservation Act. The proposed project:
  1. Is a substantial, contributing use of clear benefit to revitalization of the Downtown Historic District, either as an anchor project or as a small project with minimal negative impact;
  2. Creates vitality in the streetscape of benefit to adjacent historic properties;
  3. Emphasizes historic character and though not in full compliance with the Standards adequately addresses the preservation and appropriate treatment of existing historic building fabric;
  4. Is compatible with and enhances the overall character of the historic district;
  5. Exhibits exceptional design quality;
  6. Has no negative impacts to the historic district's primary contributing historic buildings of high integrity;
  7. Mitigates any negative impacts on other contributing historic buildings.
- Review by City Council with recommendation by Planning staff after input from the Design Review Committee, stakeholders, and the public
- Review process
- Application of these design guidelines

### 3.5 D1 Zoning Review

The D1 zoning district has recently replaced the former C5 district that encompassed the core of downtown Topeka, including the Downtown Historic District. The D1 district ordinance includes design guidelines that are in basic accord with these design guidelines. Within the Downtown Historic District, however, the ordinance defers to these guidelines as adopted by City Council because of the importance of historic buildings and historic character to the revitalization strategy for downtown.

In most instances, D1 zoning review will be perfunctory, with the review processes above taking precedence. Standards and criteria for approval are similar to those for the appeals process discussed above. *The importance of the D1 review and approval is to establish a parallel local approvals process to that of the Kansas State Preservation Act within the City of Topeka municipal ordinance meeting city goals for revitalization in case state law is changed in the future.*

- Criteria for approval concurrent with the D1 ordinance, these design guidelines, and criteria similar to that for the Appeals Process outlined above
- Review by Planning staff with input from the Design Review Committee; management by the Zoning Enforcement Section of the Department of Neighborhood Relations (??)
- Review process
- Appeal to Board of Zoning Appeals (??)
- Application of these design guidelines

## Chapter 4 – Roofing Systems

Roofing systems are critical to the preservation of historic buildings. Inappropriate maintenance, treatments, and neglect can lead to structural deterioration and the need for expensive future repairs. In downtown Topeka, most buildings appear to have roofs that are in good repair and that are well maintained. A few exceptions related to vacant and underutilized buildings require special attention and possible intervention.

### 4.1 Roofing

Most roof within the historic district are flat or gently sloping and have built-up or EPDM roofing systems. Roofs of individual buildings were not field reviewed in the preparation of these design guidelines, but evidence of roofing problems often becomes visually evident in the condition or masonry parapets and other features in exterior walls.

General roofing guidelines for historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

### 4.2 Flashing

Flashing is a critical component of the roofing system. General flashing guidelines for historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

### 4.3 Gutters, Drains and Downspouts

Most buildings within the historic district have internal drains. General guidelines for historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

### 4.2 Canopies

Several buildings have canopies at the first floor level that are contributing historic features. Most appear in good condition and are well maintained. Canopies introduced to several buildings during the 1960s are very similar, do not function well, yet are contributing features and survive intact. They should be preserved. General guidelines for historic canopies with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

## Chapter 5 – Exterior Walls

Exterior walls are the most important visual feature of a historic building. Within the Downtown Historic District, periods, types, materials, treatments, and conditions vary considerably building by building. Each must be reviewed and assessed individually. Exterior systems vary by type and period with respect to appropriate conservation treatment. Storefronts and windows, though important parts of the exterior, are discussed in below separate sections.

### 5.1 Brick Masonry

Brick is the most common exterior material for the walls of historic buildings within the Downtown District. Most of the brick used appears to be of good quality and to be in good condition. The appropriate treatment of brick masonry has received great attention in preservation, is well understood, and is straightforward.

General guidelines for brick masonry with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Cleaning
- Repair, especially mortar and pointing
- Replacement

### 5.2 Stone Masonry

A number of contributing historic buildings with the district have stone exterior walls. They range from monumental structures such as the Memorial Building, AT&SF, and Central Bank to significant late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings such as the Thacher and Davies Buildings. Many historic buildings have stone detailing at parapets, copings, string courses, and window and door openings. In general, stone masonry within the historic district is in good condition and is well maintained. There are, however, several noticeable exceptions where lack of maintenance is threatening the buildings.

Limestone interior party walls and rear walls are significant historic features dating to the early development of the historic district and should be retained, respectfully treated, and even featured in some instances.

General guidelines for stone masonry with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair, especially mortar, pointing, and use of sealants for horizontal and projecting elements
- Replacement

### 5.3 Terra Cotta, Tile, and Glass Panels

Several significant early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic buildings within the district have terra cotta exteriors. Others use terra cotta or tile as decorative treatments. Some of the existing terra cotta and tile have deteriorated due to spalling. In other cases, they have received inappropriate treatments that have damaged their surfaces. During the 1950s, several buildings within the district were modernized with the installation of glass panels covering

their facades, both at storefronts and at upper walls surfaces. These are high quality but vulnerable materials that require special expertise.

General guidelines for terra cotta, tile, and glass panels with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

#### 5.4 Stucco

Stucco has been used minimally within the historic district, and is seen both in storefronts and at upper walls. Where it has been used it has often been an inappropriate treatment that would be desirable to reverse. The infill of historic window openings on upper walls is an example.

General guidelines for the assessment and treatment of stucco on historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Removal or replacement

#### 5.5 Concrete

Concrete emerged as a featured exterior material in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century especially with respect to Mid Century Modern architectural design. Concrete is used both as cast-in-place and as precast panels. It appears both in large monumental buildings from the 1960s within the district as well as in a surface covering for smaller retail buildings.

Concrete is seen in both contributing and non-contributing buildings, as its use continued beyond the current period of significance (1965) both in larger buildings and as a covering for smaller retail buildings. In general, concrete appears to be in good condition. Metal attachments are a potential unseen vulnerability for concrete panels.

Whether to keep concrete panels as a covering for non-contributing buildings is a question to be considered and may be flexibly addressed based upon the desire of the building owner in combination with the condition and proposed treatment of the underlying material should the concrete panels be removed. This will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

General guidelines for concrete in historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Removal or replacement

#### 5.6 Metal and Other Contemporary Materials

Metal is used as a façade covering in some mid 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. It is also a decorative element in earlier buildings, such as in its use for cornices. Other contemporary materials have been used for buildings as well.

General guidelines metal and other contemporary materials in historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

## **Chapter 6 – Storefronts, Doors and Windows**

Storefronts are the most visible and important features of the commercial streetscape. Windows on the upper floors of historic facades are also important.

### **6.1 Storefronts**

The approach to storefront design has evolved over time, as the desire for visibility and display increased and the use of new materials and building systems were introduced. Downtown Topeka has a rich variety of types and styles of storefronts. Only a few early 20<sup>th</sup> century storefronts remain, and they should be a high priority for preservation and appropriate treatment. A few cast iron features dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century remain in several buildings and should be preserved.

Most downtown buildings have seen several campaigns of change with regard to their storefronts, and most buildings show layers of change with multiple styles, periods, and treatments. This diversity should be embraced, and authentic historic storefront building fabric should be identified and preserved wherever possible. Storefronts from the 1920s and 1950s tend to be of high quality and should receive special attention for preservation.

In many instances, however, more contemporary treatments of storefronts have been inappropriate, removing significant historic fabric and replacing it with elements of lesser design quality. On a case-by-case basis such treatments should be assessed and reversed. In recent years, several such treatments have been removed and replaced with contemporary storefronts of good quality that recall historic configurations. These may serve as models for appropriate future treatments. Quality of design, materials, and execution is most important.

#### Issues to address:

- Some storefronts are so small as it may be difficult to find retailers able to use them. Even some small early 20<sup>th</sup> century retail buildings have been divided into two small separate storefronts. Care must be taken in determining when removal of a historic storefront will be permitted simply to allow for a new larger scale use.

General guidelines for storefronts of historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

## 6.2 Doors

Doors are important features whether in storefronts or in historic buildings without storefronts. Many historic doors throughout the historic district have been replaced with modern doors that are inappropriate to their building's historic character. They should be replaced.

General guidelines for doors in historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

## 6.3 Windows

Windows are a critical component of any historic building and have received a great deal of attention and emphasis in historic preservation. Appropriate treatments are well understood and should receive priority in any new project.

In Downtown Topeka, windows are an important element of upper story facades. Only a few original historic upper story windows remain within the historic district. Where they do remain, these windows should be preserved as a priority in future rehabilitation projects.

Most upper floor windows on buildings within the district have been replaced. In some cases, the replacement windows have been acceptable – fully filling the masonry opening with a new window of reasonable design quality. In many instances, however, the treatment has been inappropriate, infilling the masonry opening and installing new windows of smaller size and/or inferior quality or design. On a case-by-case basis, window conditions should be assessed in any new proposed project. Where inappropriate changes have been made, they should be reversed whenever possible. Further inappropriate changes and treatments should not be permitted.

General guidelines for windows in historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Replacement

## 6.4 Awnings

Awnings were historic elements used widely on buildings before the introduction of air conditioning. There were seen both at the street level and on the windows of upper floors. Awnings continue to be used widely today, especially as an element of the storefront at the location of historic transoms.

General guidelines for awnings on historic buildings with respect to:

- Maintenance
- Repair
- Removal or replacement

## **Chapter 7 – Decorative Elements**

Chapter 7, if needed, will address any decorative historic features or materials not covered under Chapter 5, Exterior Walls, or Chapter 6, Storefronts, Doors, and Windows above. Contents to be determined.

## **Chapter 8 – Interiors**

Interiors of historic buildings are as important as exteriors in the review of proposed projects for federal and state tax credits and review under the Kansas State Preservation Act. Preservation and appropriate treatment of historic interiors should be encouraged under Appeals and D1 zoning reviews as well. Chapter 8 addresses the methodology for assessing, rehabilitating, and adaptively reusing historic interiors.

### **8.1 Space Configuration and Plan Layouts**

The consideration of historic interiors includes not only specific materials and features, but overall spatial configurations and the design and layout of the historic building plan. The preservation of historic spaces and layouts will be required for tax credit compliance. Interior spaces, characteristics, and features will be included among the contributing features itemized for treatment in the Part 2 prepared as part of the tax credit submission. Adaptations for code compliance, life safety, building systems, and general use will be allowed but should minimize the overall impact on historic character and specific features.

### **8.2 Hierarchy of Spaces and Treatments**

In general, the treatment of historic interiors may vary according to significance. Most retail spaces within the historic district have been substantially altered over the decades, while more prominent buildings retain a high degree of integrity on their interior.

Public spaces such as entrances, lobbies, corridors, and stairs are generally considered of primary significance along with special interiors spaces, such as a ballroom in a historic hotel. Such spaces are generally preserved with minimal change and missing or altered features may be restored.

Secondary spaces, such as offices or hotel rooms, may receive special treatment and may be where space for new mechanical systems or other necessary modern features may be located. Support spaces may be considered for a tertiary level of treatment, perhaps even complete alteration.

Each building must be assessed with respect to its character and level of integrity and appropriate treatments applied accordingly.

### **8.3 Building Code Compliance**

Contemporary building codes allow for special consideration and exceptions with respect to existing historic buildings. Building code officials are permitted to use their own discretion

under basic guidelines for life safety. Mitigation measures may be negotiated with the goal of making a historic building as safe as possible without loss of overall historic integrity.

In general, providing an emergency alarm system, safe and efficient means of emergency egress, and prevention of the spread of smoke are key goals, and a variety of creative techniques can be found to make a building as safe as possible. Providing sprinkler is one means of making a building substantially safer.

Early review of conditions and possible approaches with city code officials is important in developing a mitigation package in the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

#### 8.4 Treatment of Contributing Interior Features and Materials

A variety of special materials are found on the interior of buildings that are not found on exteriors, including plaster, wood, metals, tile, glass, and special features and fixtures. Guidelines for their appropriate treatment are available. The assistance of conservators is recommended under special circumstances.

### Chapter 9 – New Construction

Downtown Topeka has a wide variety of building periods, forms, sizes, and styles. New construction will continue to add to this diversity. New construction related to work on an existing historic building will be reviewed under all four types of project review discussed in Chapter 3. The construction of new buildings will be reviewed under Kansas State Preservation Act and D1 zoning review.

Discussion of the Secretary's Standards with respect to new construction and false historicism. Importance of quality in design and materials.

#### 9.1 New Elements in a Historic Building

The design of new features in an existing historic building should be contemporary but sensitive to and compatible with existing materials and features. The removal of inappropriate or compromised storefronts and façade treatments are likely circumstances under which new construction will be seen within the historic district.

Materials, colors, patterns, and textures should be chosen that play off of and are sympathetic to those that are existing. Dramatic context should be avoided. Creativity, however, is encouraged. Historic precedents may be used for design inspiration and creative reference but should not be literal. Restoration of missing features may be desirable in some circumstances where adequate documentation exists.

Successful and unsuccessful current examples.

#### 9.2 Additions and New Buildings

Additions to existing historic buildings should not obscure primary facades and features or overwhelm the historic building. As a rule of thumb, new additions should not be more than

one third the size of the existing building. Form. Rhythm. Materials. Exceptions given the wide variety of existing building sizes and forms.

New buildings may be constructed under a variety of circumstances including on vacant lots and through the removal or non-contributing buildings. New buildings should not be permitted where they would require the removal of contributing historic buildings.

Because of the variety of existing buildings considered contributing to the historic district, ranging from small one- and two-story retail stores to seven, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve-story office towers and hotels, the range of possible new buildings that could be considered appropriate within the historic district is wide. Discussion of D1 zoning standards – building height and lot coverage.

Discussion of contemporary and compatible. Criteria to be considered: size, form, rhythm, materials, color, texture. In general, consider that at least three of six should be compatible while others may contrast. Importance of high quality contemporary design – contributing buildings for the future. Avoid copying historical treatments (Why 700 Capitol Federal is a good example despite loss of authentic fabric; why 825 and 719 are less successful?)

Issue to address:

- Potential for the demolition of smaller historic buildings for construction of new high rise building (825 and 719 are recent examples, though not high rises)

## **Chapter 10 – Signage and Public Art**

The role of signage in enlivening the streetscape. Historical precedents have a lot of variety – many types of signs up to and including large roof-top signs and full facades of the 1960s. Importance of not cluttering. Signage as public art.

Discussion of the applicable existing sign ordinance.

### **10.1 Signage Types**

Variety of possibilities currently allowed within the existing ordinance. Painted on building or glass; façade mounted; projecting; freestanding; awning; etc. Examples.

Emphasis upon neon as a form of public art.

Limitations on internally lit box signs – only when meeting artistic criteria (Gizmo example?)

New electronic message center signs?

To what extent should new roof-top signs be permitted?

Prohibition of billboards.

### **10.2 Signage Placement**

Appropriate sign placement on historic buildings is straightforward and will be outlined and illustrated with examples. Storefronts, transom panels, spandrels, vertical elements, etc.

Signs should be appropriate to the size of the building feature upon which they are placed.

Controlling the number of signs permitted.

### 10.3 Public Art

Discussion. Examples.

#### **Appendix A – Secretary of the Interior’s Standards**

- Copy of the Standards and related discussion from Topeka’s Historic Preservation Plan

#### **Appendix B – Sample Building Assessments**

- Two-to-three-page assessments of selected representative buildings in the Downtown District, summarizing historical development, identifying historic fabric, reviewing integrity, and recommending treatment

#### **Appendix C – References**

- Technical bulletins and other reference documents providing additional information on appropriate treatments for historic building fabric