

## 5.2 Introduction

### 5.2.1 Historic Overview of Washington

Located on the southern bank of the Missouri River about fifty miles southwest of St. Louis, Washington was advantageously sited at a natural ferry landing which was in use long before the town was officially platted in 1839. Although there exist records of land claims and scattered settlement in the Washington area dating to the late 18th century, it was only after the War of 1812 that promise of town development appeared. Steady migrations of native Americans (chiefly from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia) into the Missouri River Valley contributed toward early development. The organization of Franklin County in 1818 and the admission of Missouri into the United States three years later, were incentives to homesteading which prompted a flurry of land claims.

The founders of Washington were pioneer Southerners William G. Owens and his wife Lucinda who came to Franklin County in 1818. With steamboats navigating the Missouri River by 1819 and a rich agricultural trade developing in the countryside, Owens foresaw the potential for a booming river town. He purchased the town site, already known as Washington Landing, in 1826. Town sites were sold as early as 1829, however the town was not officially laid out until 1839. The original town of Washington consisted of a regular grid of twelve whole and thirteen fractional blocks extending from the riverfront south to Third Street, and from Lafayette Street on the west to Locust on the east. Washington is one of Missouri's few river towns in which the original river orientation survives.

A part of the "German Belt" which extended along both sides of the Missouri River from St. Louis, Franklin County and its principal town, Washington, were areas of early German settlement. By 1840, approximately one-third of the county population was German. Washington's substantial German population can be attributed to the influential writings of Gottfried Duden, a German who came to Missouri on a fact

finding mission to provide prospective immigrants with firsthand information. In the 1850's and 1860's Washington reaped great benefits from the upheaval in Germany following the failure of the 1848 Revolution, Washington received a steady stream of prosperous, educated Germans who made significant contributions to the town's commercial, industrial and cultural growth as well as its architectural development. Washington continued to attract new German immigrants throughout the 19th century. A survey of the 1900 census showed approximately one-third of the heads of households were German-born, and possibly as much as a third more had German parentage.

The 1850s were a period of rapid growth and maturity for the town of Washington. The City was favorably situated on high terrain with excellent commercial prospects including lively steamboat traffic, proximity to St. Louis markets, and a thriving county trade. With the construction of the Pacific Railroad connecting Washington to St. Louis, and eventually to Jefferson City, Washington developed into a prosperous and stable community. Washington matured institutionally through the efforts of its German citizens who organized and transplanted cultural activities familiar in their homeland. Such activities included the creation of a drama club, bands, an orchestra, social clubs, the construction of a theatre, and the bilingual publication of Washington's first newspaper in 1856.

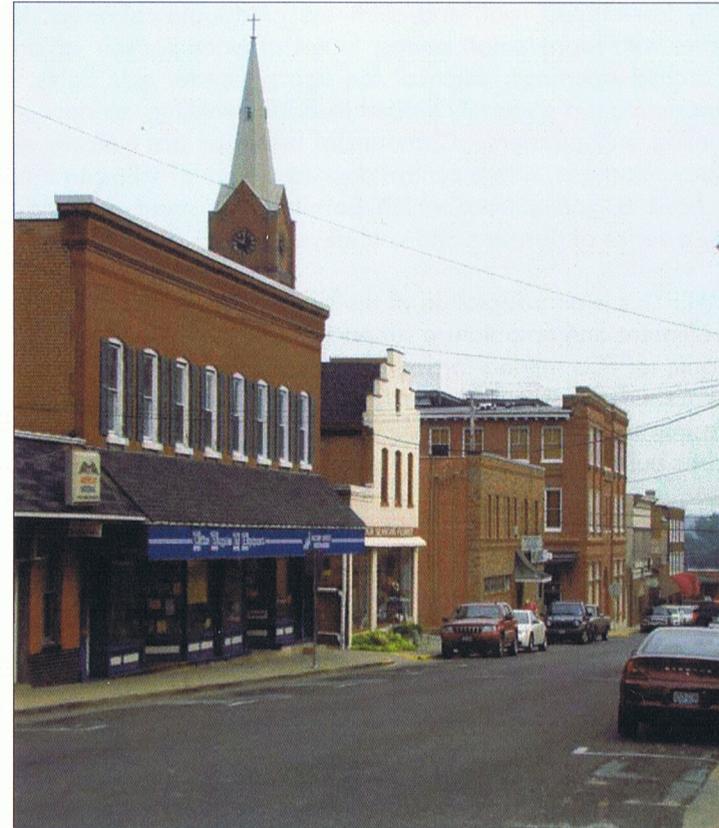
During the Civil War years Washington became a hotbed of Radical Unionism, staunchly opposed to slavery. Numerous local Germans, many trained in the German army, answered the call to arms. The City itself suffered little damage from the war. A one-day confederate raid in 1864 destroyed some property and took two lives.

Wine production and beer brewing, two occupations usually associated with Germans in Missouri, were also evident in Washington. Two brewers were already working in Washington in 1850, but the primary brewery was not established until

1854 when John B. Busch, older brother of Adolphus Busch, began production. In 1870, a Wine Exposition was held in the City; five years later the *Missouri Gazette* noted wine was growing in importance and being manufactured by local firms.

By the close of the 19th century, Washington was indeed the "busy little city" as described by the *Washington Journal*. Celebrating the town's growth and prosperity, as well as its quality of life, the paper reported that Washington's numerous manufacturing interests resulted in its high employment rate. Included in its industries were two large steam flour mills and Washington's unique industry—the manufacture of corn cob pipes. During the first quarter of the 20th century, Washington's economy was given a significant boost by construction of two large shoe factories, which employed over 1,400 workers. In 1917 the Missouri Valley Creamery also began production. These concerns were the impetus for population growth which more than doubled between 1910 and 1940.

Today, Washington appears much as it did 50 years ago: a Downtown with brisk commercial activity, well-maintained homes, flourishing churches and schools, and a proud German heritage. As in its beginning, Washington has a wide diversity of industries that provide relative economic stability. Washington boasts several industrial parks and many new industries attracted to the area by the reliability and sturdy character of the available work force. Serving an area with a population of over 75,000, Washington continues its role as a regional center, by providing the largest shopping center between St. Louis and Jefferson City.



Elm Street in Downtown Washington, view to the north.

punctuated by a series of dormers and chimneys.

**GREEK REVIVAL:** This is an adaptation of the classic Greek temple front, with a low-pitch pediment and entablature supported by columns and pilasters of the Doric, Ionic or Corinthian orders. Emphasis is on form, line and proportion. Polished or smooth-faced stone is the typical medium, although brick is commonly seen. The style is frequently seen in courthouses, churches and other public buildings.

#### ITALIANATE/SECOND EMPIRE, 1865-1900

**ITALIANATE:** Inspired by the architecture of Italian city-states, this style is marked by rectangular verticality, with tall, narrow, slightly-arched windows, grouped within structural bays. Lintels sport half-round, or segmentally-arched hoods. The formal balance of the style is accentuated by pronounced moldings and details, such as string courses, rusticated quoins and lunettes. The shop facade is usually arched, and a low-pitch hip roof with very wide eaves is supported by large decorative brackets and a projecting cornice.

**SECOND EMPIRE:** Made popular by renovations carried out in Paris by Napoleon III in the 1860s, the Second Empire style is a blending of Renaissance and Italianate architectural forms. Buildings are imposingly square with a projecting central pavilion, often extending above the rest of the structure. The distinguishing feature is the mansard roof of slate or tin



Greek Revival Style: Fitzer Building



Federal Style: Foss House



Second Empire Style:  
Schmidt Building



Italianate Style: Jesson Hall



## *Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri Building and Streetscape Design Guidelines*

## Washington, Missouri

### 5.2.2 Architectural Styles

#### FEDERAL/GREEK REVIVAL, 1849-1895

**FEDERAL:** The Federal style is characterized by flat, undecorated wall surfaces; usually of local brick or wood weatherboarding, a low-pitch gabled or occasionally low-hipped roof, and chimneys; or double chimneys, large glazed windows with many small panes; lintels of brick voussoir or simple stone slabs, arched openings; elliptical fan lights, slender side lights, and restrained ornamentation generally limited to brick dentilling, stringcourses, recessed paneling and pilasters. Commercial buildings are typically either three- or five-bay structures, with a central doorway. Federal style commercial blocks often have a gabled roof which parallels the street and may be



plates, supported by brackets and elaborate cornices. Quoins, belt courses, window enframement, and other decorative elements are classical in derivation, and are characterized by great depth and use of variously colored and textured materials. Windows may be pediment, but more frequently they have flat-arched window hoods and classical surrounds.

### REVIVAL STYLES, 1888-1925

With a few exceptions, the Revival Styles are expressed principally by distinctive detailing on commercial buildings. Frequently an ornamental pressed brick or metal cornice is the sole Revival feature; otherwise the buildings maintain the standard planar, segmentally arched brick facades. Some specific Revival Styles found in Downtown Washington are:

**ROMANESQUE REVIVAL:** Romanesque buildings are noted for their heavy, round arches. Usually brick or stone, these buildings often sport a profusion of towers, gables, balconies and bays creating an involved roof line. Variations within the Romanesque category range widely from extremely simple and symmetrical to highly convoluted and asymmetrical forms. A sense of solidity and heaviness and the frequent occurrence of arches, either singly or in groups, are basic to Romanesque structures.

**QUEEN ANNE REVIVAL STYLE:** Borrowing various details from medieval and classical architecture, Queen Anne is one of the richest and most varied of the 19th century styles. The composition is asymmetrical, featuring gables, towers, turrets, tall chimneys, bays and oriel windows. Highly textured wall surfaces are frequently inset with decorative panels, strong lines of horizontal banding are emphasized by the cornice and window-sash lines, inset patterns highlight circular or sunburst windows, and railings often have an Elizabethan flavor.

**CLASSICAL REVIVAL STYLE:** Tripartite divisions of the facade into areas of grouped windows are common to many of these buildings. Pediments, columns and pilasters (borrowed from classical Greece and Rome) embellish the wall surfaces. The window openings of this style reveal a transition to a more "modern" aesthetic. The smaller windows of earlier buildings are replaced by larger groups of windows, thus diminishing the proportion of building mass to window opening.



Romanesque Revival: The Otto & Co. Building



Queen Anne Revival Style: Waterworks



Classic Revival Style: U.S. Post Office

**EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, circa 1905-1940**

These buildings are simplified versions of the traditional commercial storefront, which show the influence of progressive 20th century design traditions, including Craftsman, Art Deco and Moderne. Cornices are defined by a simple band of corbelled brick or decorative terra cotta. Upper floor windows are large and are sometimes set in pairs or larger groupings. On the first floor, the store front occasionally features copperclad metal window frames and deeply-recessed store entries. Some buildings of this period feature prism glass in the transom area, designed to cast light back into the store.

**CRAFTSMAN:** The Craftsman style is recognized by overhanging eaves supported by large wood brackets and rectangular openings. Windows typically have a tripartite upper sash and facades with glazed brick or terra cotta patterning are typical; Terra cotta string courses and cornice coping may be found.

**ART DECO:** Flat planes and geometric shapes are characteristic of Art Deco buildings. Decorative detail is either a stylized version of natural elements or simple abstract linear patterns subtly outlining the building. Brick, tile and glass are the predominant materials. The hard glazed surfaces of the tile and glass add a sleek planar quality to the later buildings of the period.

**ART MODERNE:** Curved masonry or glass that wraps around corners and the virtual elimination of surface ornament is typical of Art Moderne buildings. This style is an extension of Art Deco concepts into an emphatically streamlined look.



Craftsman Style: 1923 Depot



Art Deco Style: St Francis Borgia Parochial School

### 5.2.3 Existing Character of Downtown

Downtown contains a rich collection of historic buildings that chronicle the history of the community. They provide visual interest as well as help establish a background for conducting healthy business. The area appeals to local residents and visitors because of the variety of architecture and the interesting pedestrian experience found there. Although built over many decades, most buildings Downtown share common characteristics that help establish a sense of continuity on the street. These features should be preserved and even enhanced. The predominance of brick as a building material is one example of an element that many buildings have in common. The large expanse of glass at the street level of most buildings is another.

### 5.2.4 Benefits of Rehabilitation

#### THE BENEFITS OF REHABILITATING YOUR BUILDING

Rehabilitating your building helps extend its life and reduce long-term maintenance costs. This will help protect and enhance property value while improving Downtown as a market place.

#### WHY IMPROVE YOUR BUILDING FRONT?

A good design will extend the life of your building's front, improve the market image of the businesses housed inside, and enhance the overall character of Downtown. Consciously or unconsciously, people react to the visual quality of their environment. Buildings and storefront windows constantly provide clues about the character and the purpose of Downtown businesses.



Existing Farmers Market building reflects the character of downtown.  
(Washington, Missouri)

### 5.2.5 Choosing a Rehabilitation Approach

#### ESTABLISH A GENERAL APPROACH:

Before getting into detail, stop a moment and decide on an overall approach for your building improvements. The primary objectives of a rehabilitation plan should be:

- Preserve important or "character-defining" architectural materials and features of the building;
- Provide a safe and efficient modern use for the building;
- Develop a cost effective design.

#### DETERMINE THE CONTENTS OF YOUR REHABILITATION PLAN:

The plan should contain strategies for these three types of repair work:

- Protection and maintenance of building features that survive in generally good condition.
- Repair of materials and features that are in a deteriorated condition.
- Replacement of materials and features with new materials when deterioration is so extensive that repair is not possible.

#### YOUR PLAN MAY ALSO INCLUDE STRATEGIES FOR:

- Alterations to the exterior of the historic building.
- Additions of new rooms or spaces to the exterior of the historic building.

#### FOLLOW THESE STEPS IN PLANNING YOUR PROJECT

##### STEP 1: CHECK FOR CRITICAL MAINTENANCE OR SAFETY ISSUES.

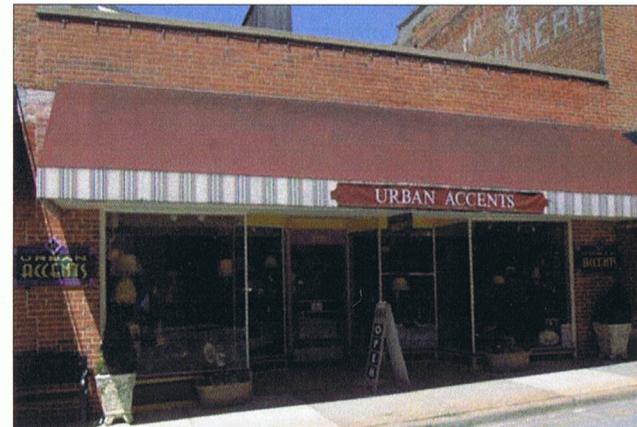
If the roof leaks, if floors are sagging, repairs to the structure or weather-protective systems may be a priority before facade renovation.

##### STEP 2: EVALUATE THE CONDITION OF THE BUILDING FRONT.

Does the original design survive intact? If so preservation and maintenance of the existing design should be your overall approach.



Rehab that preserved ornamental cornice work at the top of the building .  
(Washington, Missouri)



Example of a well maintained storefront.  
(Washington, Missouri)

Does the original design survive, but with some alterations? If so, restoration of the original combined with new compatible alterations should be your overall approach.

Is the facade significantly altered, or totally lacking detail? If so you may have two options: one is to reconstruct the original design, if it has merits; two is to develop a totally new design that fits in with the character of Downtown. (These conditions are defined in the Design Section.)

**STEP 3: CONSIDER HOW THE DESIGN OF YOUR BUILDING FRONT AFFECTS THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS.**

A well-designed building front is an asset to the property owner and to building occupants. A building rehabilitation plan should present the best image from the street to enhance marketing.

**STEP 4: DETERMINE WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPROVEMENTS**

Building owners are usually responsible for improvements to the building itself. These often include repairs to cornices, cleaning of masonry, painting or remodeling of store windows and entrances. Each situation is different, however, and specific responsibilities are often negotiated on an individual basis between tenant and owner.

**STEP 5: DETERMINE WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ON-GOING MAINTENANCE.**

In many cases, the business tenant is responsible for maintenance of signs. They may also be responsible for maintenance of fabric awnings. Building owners are usually responsible for maintenance of metal canopies and for directory signs that are shared by several businesses.

**STEP 6: PLAN YOUR PROJECT TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN PHASES.**

Some projects require implementation in stages, to meet budgets and business plans. If you must phase your rehabilitation, plan the work so each step builds on the previous ones, and undoing of recent work is minimized. For example, start with a simple fix-up scheme that can later be incorporated into a more major rehab.

Here's an example of one building owner's rehab schedule:

**Phase 1 - First Year**

Execute maintenance and repairs that stabilize the building from water intrusion, such as patching the roof and repairing downspouts. Washing the building front and replacing broken glass and lights might also be included.

**Phase 2 - Later in the First Year**

Continue with a fresh paint scheme, install an awning and a new sign. Design the sign so it can be removed and remounted during later stages. Install color-matching window shades in upper windows.

**Phase 3 - Second Year**

Install a new door, restore the cornice, and reopen the transom.

**Phase 4 - Third Year**

Finish off with new lighting, awnings on upper story windows, and a new entrance. Also improve the rear entrance for customers.

### 5.2.6 Basic Design Principles

Now that an overall approach has been determined, how do you proceed with developing a design? Here are some basic principles of good storefront design:

1. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

An individual storefront should have a simple, unified design that serves as a frame for the windows that display goods or reveal services offered inside. If the design and its colors are too "wild," they will detract from merchandising, and if they are too plain, they will not draw enough attention. You must establish a balance that is visually pleasing.

2. RELATE TO OTHERS IN THE BLOCK.

There is strength in numbers. As more and more buildings are renovated, they will improve the overall image of Downtown as a pleasant place to do business. This is especially true when similar design, concepts are applied throughout Downtown, because a sense of visual continuity results. You can help contribute to the visual continuity of Downtown while also developing a design that meets your needs. These guidelines allow room for individual solutions and an overall coordinated plan.

3. USE THE ENTIRE BUILDING FRONT AS YOUR IMAGE.

Coordinate upper and lower floors into a single design concept, even if the upper floors are not a part of the ground floor business. This helps capture attention and can be more effective than a large sign.

4. DEVELOP A CLEAR PRESENTATION TO THE STREET.

A single, clear design concept that avoids clutter and directs the customer's eye where you want it is important. Your design scheme should easily lead the viewer's attention to displays of goods, views of activities inside, and ultimately to the business entrance. Use only a few colors throughout and keep signs to a minimum. Place signs where they will lead the customer's eye to products or activities.

5. RESPECT THE HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF THE BUILDING.

Most of the structures Downtown have historic value, even many of those that have experienced alterations. It is important to consider the significance of basic forms, materials and details when planning improvements. Preservation of Washington's heritage is important to its sense of community and its economic development.



Storefront with a simple and unified design. The storefront windows clearly display the goods and products of the store.  
(Washington, Missouri)

### 5.2.7 Evaluating Facade Condition

#### HOW TO DETERMINE FACADE CONDITION:

Determine how much of the original front exists and evaluate its contribution to the history of Downtown or to the overall business image of the area. Choose your approach from those listed in Step Two On in Section 5.2.5.

#### ORIGINAL DESIGN INTACT

Buildings in this category have changed very little from the time they were constructed. Original ornament and details, if a part of the design, are still intact. Some portions of the facade may require maintenance and repair, but no new design changes are necessary. In this case, preservation of the original design is your preferred option.

#### ORIGINAL DESIGN SLIGHTLY ALTERED

If you can still see the basic character of the original design, but some elements have been removed or changed, your building falls into this category. For example, an ornamental cornice may have existed at the top of the wall, but it is now missing, or upper story windows may now be blocked with plywood panels. The original character is diminished, but it is retrievable. If you are able to find early photographs or original architectural drawings, it may be easier to determine how many changes have been made. Restoration of the original design is one option in this case. Another choice is to restore some details while adding new elements that are compatible with the original. For example, reconstruct the missing cornice, but also build a new shop entrance. The new entrance may not be a copy of the original, but uses the typical elements usually found on buildings Downtown.

#### ORIGINAL DESIGN SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED

These buildings have plain fronts that are without any ornamentation or details. This may be a result of coverings that hide original designs, or because the facades were stripped of all detail. For such situations, the guidelines encourage reconstruction of the original designs, or the development of entirely new designs that are compatible with older buildings.



Original design.



Minor alterations.



Storefront is lost.



Significant alterations.

#### NEWER PLAIN FRONT BUILDINGS

Newer buildings often were designed as simple contemporary designs. As a result, the facades are featureless and they usually fail to relate well to the more historic buildings in the area.

#### AUTO-ORIENTED BUILDINGS

Some newer buildings Downtown are set back from the street, with space in front for parking. These buildings are intended to relate to cars more than pedestrians. Providing landscaping that enhances the site for pedestrians should be the approach for these properties.



Auto oriented building.  
(Kirksville, Missouri)