

5.0 FACADE GUIDELINES

Facade Guidelines are intended to provide visual identification and continuity to the commercial core of each settlement area, and to clearly establish the Township's expectations for private development. These guidelines are based on the principle of maintaining the heritage character and pedestrian scale of each settlement area.

Building design should emphasize individual building characteristics but provide for a common massing relationship of streets, heights, and avoidance of large expanses of blank walls.

Tay Township's settlement areas should create an attractive, comfortable and safe atmosphere which is both functional and visually appealing. Each settlement area has a unique character and should be defined as a distinct community within the Township.

5.1 Building Façades

Designs need to reflect the following guidelines to be eligible for the façade grant. The Municipality has produced a Tay Township Façade Guidelines Booklet for further assistance.

5.1.1 General Storefront Design

In general, building façade designs shall reflect the built history of the community.

- A Storefront design should be in keeping with a building's overall design. Façade elements, such as entrances, windows and signage should provide clarity and lend interest to the storefront. A distinction between individual storefronts and the whole of the building facade is important.
- Individual storefronts should be clearly defined by architectural characteristics such as storefront cornices, sign boards, pillars, or separations of glass and base panels.
- A horizontal band at the top of each storefront can serve as an appropriate location for business signage. Back lit signs are discouraged and may not be permitted by the Sign By-law.
- Storefront windows should be consistent in height and design with storefront doors to create a cohesive appearance.
- To add to the pedestrian experience, displays should be provided in both retail and non-retail storefront windows that add color, texture, information, and/or visual activity.

5.1.2 Historic Buildings

Historic buildings are important visual anchors in commercial districts and establish the architectural character of the community. Facades and storefronts of historic buildings should be repaired and well maintained. Original features and material such as base panels, transoms, and window framing should all be maintained. Deteriorated original features should be repaired whenever possible, and missing features should be replaced to match the original.

5.1.3 Newer Buildings

New buildings and alterations to non-heritage buildings should be in keeping with the massing and scale of neighbouring buildings. They should, where

possible, be in line, having similar setbacks as neighbouring buildings. Elements such as windows should be sized in line with adjacent buildings where those buildings meet the façade guidelines.

5.1.4 Storefronts

1. Do keep/restore the original width of historic storefront openings which have been filled in or covered over. Do keep/restore the original height and display window area in historic buildings.
2. Do keep/replace storefront windows with large sheets of clear glass to allow view into the retail space.
3. Do keep/replace transoms windows (the small windows above a door or window) and recessed entries in historic buildings. Add transom windows to new building design.
4. Do keep/replace/add base panels (the low wall area under a storefront window).
5. Don't change the building's overall pattern and spacing of piers/columns and storefront openings in historic buildings. Do create storefronts in newer buildings that reflect the sizing and spacing of the historic buildings in the community. Base panels shouldn't be more than 0.6 metres high.
6. Don't reduce the size, cover over, block or fill in original storefront openings in historic buildings.
7. Don't use sheets of glass with less than a 1.5 metre width in storefront display windows.
8. Don't use solid doors, glass block or tinted, opaque or mirrored glass.

In general, storefronts should incorporate such typical architectural features as recessed entries, display windows, and base panels, in keeping with the original design of the building. Storefronts in the same building should have a consistent design and relate to the entire building as a whole.

In some older buildings, transom windows were part of the original design and should be used for storefront windows. Window framing systems should be as thin as possible, and glass should not be deeply recessed into the frame. Framing systems should generally be painted dark colors, and anodized bronze and aluminum finishes should be avoided.

5.1.5 Wall Materials

1. Do repair or replace original building materials with matching materials in historic buildings. Do use materials that compliment adjacent buildings in newer buildings.
2. Original wall materials such as brick and stone should be repaired and maintained. Dry-vit and other imitation stucco (EIFs) or siding materials should all be avoided on brick and stone buildings.
3. Don't add false fronts or mansard roofs that cover or obscure the facade of historic buildings.

Do remove non-original siding materials, false fronts and mansard roofs or canopies in historic buildings. Use quality materials in new buildings and design consistent with historic buildings in the area. Do tuckpoint masonry with mortar that matches the original in color, consistency and joint profile.

4. Don't sandblast, water blast masonry, or tuckpoint masonry with portland cement.
5. Do clean masonry with the gentlest possible method, such as with low velocity water, steam or chemical cleaning for historic buildings.
6. Don't use materials not otherwise found on the historic building.
7. Don't use imitation stucco or siding materials such as Dry-vit, aluminum or vinyl siding or metal panels on any building.
8. Do use materials that were used historically in the community such as brick or wood siding.

5.1.6 Doors and Upper Storey Windows

1. Do restore the original size of any filled in or covered over upper-storey window openings and repair/replace windows in like kind to match.
2. Do remove security grilles.
3. Don't fill in or cover over upper storey window openings. New windows and doors should be sized to fit within existing openings, and not require the openings to be partially in-filled in historic buildings.
4. All broken and missing windows should be replaced with new glass, and window frames and sashes should be repaired in all buildings. Storefront doors should have glass panels and be commercial-looking in character in all buildings.

5.1.7 Lighting

In all storefront buildings, the use of gooseneck lighting fixtures over awnings and signage is recommended. Accent lighting to illuminate

building facades is also encouraged and may be done with projecting (gooseneck) or concealed fixtures. Such fixtures should be compatible with the building's design. In general, the entire facade should not be washed in bright light, but lighting should be used to accentuate individual building features.

5.1.8 Signs

1. Do establish a consistent location and size for all signs on the same building.
2. Do use neon or simple external lighting like gooseneck fixtures when illuminating signs.
3. Do conceal electrical transformer boxes, conduit and electrical raceways.
4. Do reuse and restore historic signs on historic buildings when possible.
5. Don't mount signs in areas where they cover up windows or decorative features of the building.
6. Don't size or locate signs so that they extend above, below or beyond storefront openings, sign panels or sign bands (the wall area above the storefront window).
7. Don't install roof signs, signs with moving or flashing parts, or projecting signs that project more than 1.5 metres from the face of the building or extend above the roof line.
8. Don't use letters more than 0.76 metres high.
9. Don't clutter the building with too many signs; attach paper flyers to storefront windows or use material that are not high quality and durable, such as plywood, plastic or Styrofoam.
10. Don't use freestanding signs or poles more than 4.5 metres high or that project over the public right-of-way.

The major purpose of a commercial sign is to identify a business and its merchandise and services. Signs should not be large and overbearing or cluttered with excessive information. They should be simple and coordinate with other neighboring signs. Randomly located signs, signs containing too much information, too many signs, and signs that are too large for individual shops and compact neighborhood shopping areas are often hard to read and easily missed by pedestrian shoppers and drivers. Such signs can give local shopping areas a cluttered, confusing and unattractive image. Simple signs with a consistent size and location from one storefront to the next make locating businesses easier. Moveable, flashing signs should also be avoided and are not permitted pursuant to the Township's By-law.

Signs on the same building should have a consistent location, size, and overall pattern and be compatible with one another.

Signs may be illuminated using external lighting fixtures such as gooseneck lamps, but the fixture should be simple, unobtrusive and not obscure the graphics of the sign.

Signs with individual letters (e.g. channel, cutout, and neon letters) are encouraged, and individual letters should generally not be more than 0.76 metres high. Large projecting signs can overwhelm a building and should be avoided. Small projecting signs, however, can create visual interest and are encouraged.

Signs for prior businesses, illegal signs, roof signs, billboards and unused structural sign supports should all be removed. Portable signs and large signs on upper facades should be avoided. Rooftop signs on or above the parapet or cornice of buildings, billboards and other outdoor advertising signs painted or mounted on structures should be strictly avoided.

Temporary signs should advertise short-term sale promotions only, and paper signs should generally be avoided. Temporary signs should not be placed on any part of the building except in display windows, and should not occupy more than 25% of a window area. It is easier for shoppers to read a few simple, well-placed sale signs than to try to read a display window cluttered with many signs.

Electrical transformer boxes, conduit, and raceways should all be concealed from public view. If a raceway cannot be mounted internally (on the inside of the building), the exposed metal surfaces of the raceway should be finished to match the background wall or integrated into the overall design of the sign. Unused electrical equipment should be removed.

5.1.9 Awnings

1. Do mount awnings within individual bays or storefront openings.
2. Do use retractable or traditional shed-type awnings; for storefront windows with transoms, awnings should be mounted on transom bars.
3. Do use awnings of woven cloth or linen fabric, and limit signs on awnings to the valence (the awning flap) or small logos on the awning itself.

4. Don't use awnings that extend up to the building wall, cover decorative features, or stretch continuously across masonry piers or arches.
5. Don't use bubble awnings, exaggerated-shaped awnings, elongated bull nose entrance canopies or canopy support attached to the sidewalk.
6. Don't use metal, vinyl or rubber awnings that are internally illuminated or covered with signs, phone numbers, etc.

Awnings should be mounted in a location that respects the original design of the building, such as storefront bays, piers and columns, decorative moldings, and window and door patterns. In general, awnings should not obscure piers, columns and decorative features. Awnings should be designed to project over individual window and door opening and not be a continuous feature extending over masonry piers or arches or up the facade of the building. Awnings should be mounted within the actual window or door opening, on the wood or metal framing (not on the wall surrounding the opening). In storefronts with transom windows, awnings were often mounted on the horizontal framing bar separating the lower and upper portions of the window. Awnings should have a minimum clearance of 2.3 metre above the sidewalk.

Retractable awnings and shed-type awning are strongly encouraged. Awnings without end panels are more transparent and allow better views into the storefronts. Awnings should project out at least 0.9 metres and not be steeply pitched. Convex or box awnings should not be used. Awnings should be of woven cloth baric, not vinyl, metal or rubber. Bubble awnings or awnings that extend up the front of a building that cover decorative features, or that have exaggerated scale, should not be used. Elongated bullnose entrance canopies and canopies with sidewalk supports should not be used.

5.2 Site Plan Design

Site Plan Design shall be based on the following principles:

1. Orientation of buildings to public spaces including parks squares and public streets which should be parallel to these areas.
2. Ensuring suitable grade related uses such as residential and commercial be oriented so as to provide for active and safe streets.

3. Ensuring design and grading of sidewalks and entrances is co-ordinated with adjacent owners through the development process.
4. Ensuring that the foot-print of new buildings be located close to the front property line, street or public space and that generally no parking should be permitted in front of the building, other than street parking.

5.3 Landscaping

Landscaping is an effective form of enhancing the appearance of businesses and attracting clientele. Landscaping should be used to define specific areas by focusing on things such as, entrances to buildings, parking lots and public walkways. Any form of landscaping should be in scale with adjacent structures and be of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended purpose.

According to a study by Professor Joel Goldstein, landscape amenities had the highest correlation with occupancies of any other architectural and urban design variables evaluated. His conclusion was “landscaping amenities pay back the developer as evidenced by the higher occupancies (and rents) clearly justifying the investment.”

According to Laurie Saunder, Director of Marketing & Communications Manager at ALCA, “The advantages of a professionally installed and maintained landscape go beyond curb appeal and head straight for the bottom line. A well designed landscape invites customers in the door producing higher occupancy rates, increased rentals and lower vacancies. However, the savings go beyond occupancy when you consider that the proper selection and placement of plant material can lower heating and cooling costs by as much as 20% while creating a healthier environment. The use of landscape to lower noise levels, reduce crime and enhance unpleasant views are economical alternatives that add up to increased profits.”

In a recent Wall Street Journal article by Lucinda Harper, entitled “Landscapers Help Spruce Up Main Street”, several revitalization efforts around the nation were cited where landscape was key to creating a sense of community and bolstering the local economy. Research by the City of Seattle Economic Development Department indicates that people prefer to shop in business districts with trees. Recognizing this, the Township of Tay has invested in hanging baskets, planters and downtown landscaped park development. In order to really make a difference we need our businesses to do their part.