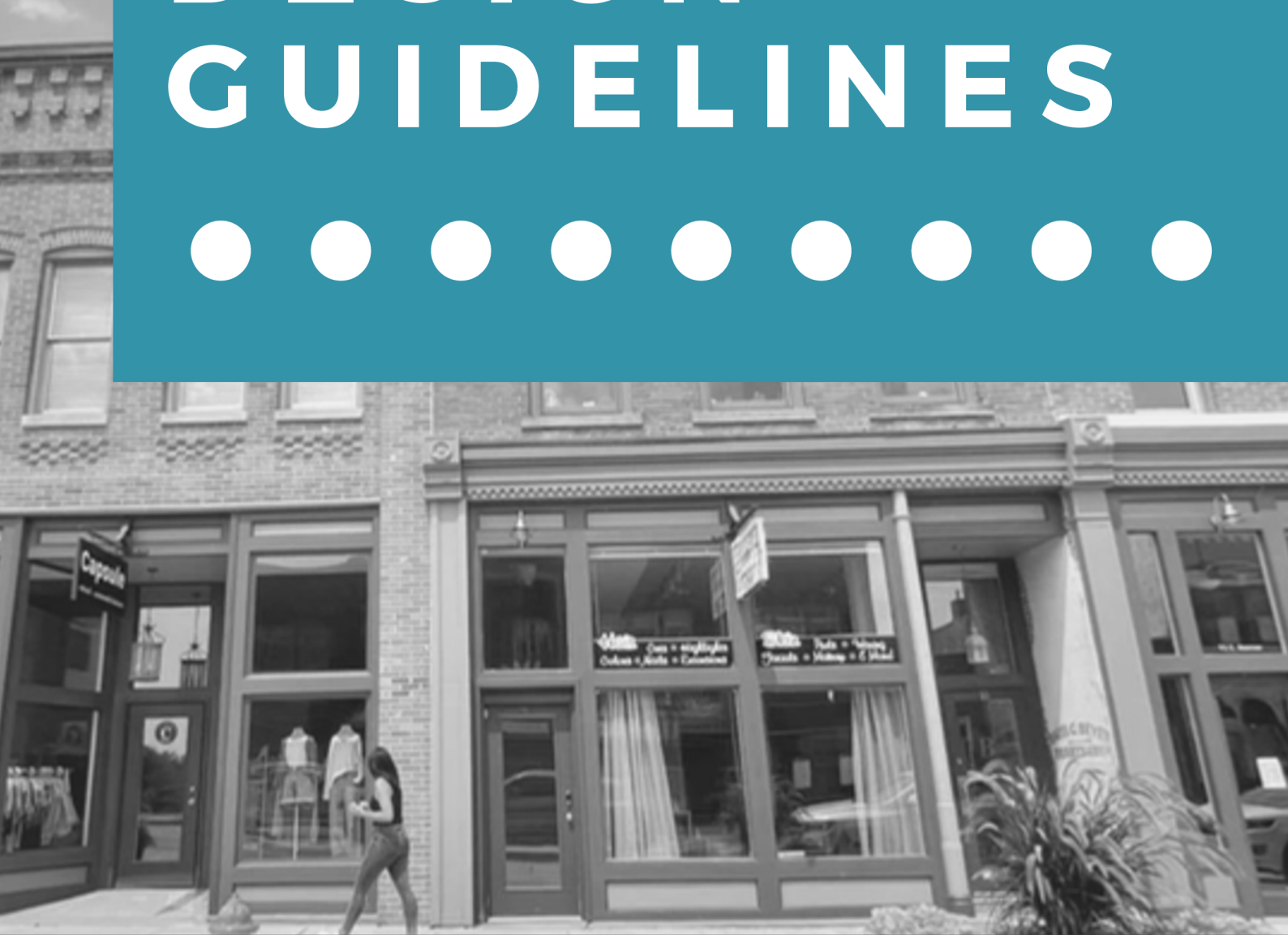


WAVERLY'S DESIGN GUIDELINES



A GUIDE TO RENOVATION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS IN WAVERLY

Created By The Waverly Chamber of Commerce & Main Street
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USING THE GUIDELINES

Overall Objective:

The main goal of these guidelines is to provide guidance for improving properties through revitalization, which helps achieve a cohesive and harmonious visual impact. We ask that you use the guidelines to enhance the visual and historical integrity of your property. These guidelines do not dictate the solutions; instead, they define a range of appropriate responses to a variety of design issues. Read through this information and become familiar with what's recommended when it comes to updating and rehabilitating structures in our downtown and community. Also, please note that Waverly has a historic downtown commercial district. Find the link with more information and map [here](#).

The guidelines can also assist in the following ways:

- Encourage property owners to come together as a community while retaining the historical aspect of individual buildings within the Main Street District and Community.
- Enhance property values and curb appeal.
- Educate property owners prior to engaging in a building project by outlining best practices and guidelines for the community of Waverly.

GETTING STARTED

- Identify which recommendations are applicable to your project and seek additional information if a certain topic is of importance to your building.
- Base your design decisions on the history of your building. [Discover historic photos of your building at the Waverly Public Library](#). Conduct research to avoid creating a “false past” of your building. You never know what you will learn and uncover.
- Use the photos in these guidelines as a starting place. Pictures included demonstrate a recommended approach or outcome. There is no historic building that is absolutely perfect. We ask that you avoid short-term fixes to the best of your ability and aim to honor the historic character and long-term viability of your building.
- All businesses located in the downtown Waverly Main Street district are welcome to take advantage of expert design assistance available through Main Street Iowa. All assistance will be coordinated through the Chamber office. Please contact the Waverly Chamber of Commerce & Main Street Program at (319) 352-4526 or waverly@waverlychamber.com to set up an appointment.



LOCAL RESOURCES & TOOLS

There are several resources available for property owners or tenants looking to make improvements. Please do not hesitate to reach out to local staff and talk through your project during the planning phases, thus ensuring there will be no surprises, and saving you time and money.

- Waverly Planning & Zoning (319) 352-9208
- Waverly Chamber of Commerce & Main Street Program (319) 352-4526
- Waverly Economic Development Office (319) 352-9210
- Waverly Public Library (319) 352-1223
- Waverly Historic Preservation Commission DRobinson@co.bremer.ia.us

DESIGN ASSISTANCE

As a designated Main Street Iowa community, we are eligible for a limited number of façade renderings annually on behalf of property owners or businesses within our district. Contact Waverly Chamber of Commerce & Main Street Program for details and to determine if your project is a good fit for this service.



FAÇADE

Downtown Waverly is similar to other Iowa communities in that the buildings consist primarily of multi-story structures that have housed a variety of uses over the years. District attributes include shared lot lines, prominent buildings on corner lots, first-floor retail with large display windows and upper-story living. Façade repair and care is critical in preserving your historic asset. Most masonry (brick) façades are designed to last a lifetime. However, they must be maintained properly.

THE DO'S:

- Use mortar that matches the existing in color, texture, style and compressive strength.
- Clean brick (or remove paint) with the gentlest means possible.
- Address moisture issues prior to beginning masonry repairs.
- Consider using a color that is close to the original brick color to minimize the appearance of chipping if your building has been previously painted and needs new paint.
- Use historic and complimentary color palettes when selecting paint. A coordinated color palette compliments the existing brick color and highlights architectural details.

THE DON'TS:

- Sandblast or power wash brick, as it can remove the hard outer shell, leaving the inner core exposed to the elements.
- Tuck-point existing brick with mortar that is harder than the bricks, or brick failure can result.
- Paint brick that is unpainted. Paint can prevent the brick from shedding necessary moisture.
- Paint your building bold or bright colors. These colors may be appropriate for accents and storefronts, but not as the main color.
- Apply stucco or siding to the exterior of a brick building. It is always better to repair the existing wall than to conceal it.



STOREFRONTS

There are several components that, when totaled, create a complete and cohesive storefront. Special attention should be paid to these areas when rehabilitating, restoring or uncovering storefront elements. Likewise, alterations to district buildings that have an overall detrimental effect should be avoided.

THE DO'S:

- Windows- Pay attention to the style, location and scale of windows which play an important role in commercial buildings from any time period. Buildings from the late 1800s to 1930s used large storefront windows to capture daylight and provide pedestrians a view inside.
- Transom windows- Pay attention to their locations and sizes. They maximize the amount of daylight that filters into a building.
- Doors- Doors into a retail or business typically had glass in them, creating a welcoming effect. If your new or existing façade has a door that leads to a second floor, it may be a solid door. When replacing doors, pay attention to their style, location, and size.
- Storefronts of the early 20th century were usually wood frame. Some of them included cast iron columns that provided structural support as well as architectural decoration.
- Incorporate decorative details and highlight them with accent paint colors.
- Think ahead of time about signage, specifically type and placement. Allow enough room for signage above awnings, but keep the proportions in scale with the building/façade.
- Limit the amount of utilities on the front of your building. Try to keep these items on side or back of the building.

THE DON'TS:

- Painting original brick, stone and other natural material
- Removing or covering up cornices, panels, columns, or original materials
- The addition of details that are not original or appropriate to the building period (shutters, wood shakes, boarding up windows, etc.)
- Signage that is out of scale
- Reducing or increasing original window size/removal of original windows.



ENTRIES

An entry is the front door to a building. It creates a first impression and tells a customer where to enter. It can also play other roles for a building and storefront. A unique awning sets you apart from your neighbors and appropriate signage tells people who you are and what's inside. Signage needs to be large enough to be read from the street, but small enough that pedestrians can get a clear view inside as well. It shouldn't overpower the beauty of the building.

THE DO'S:

- Make your first impression count
- Refer to historic photos for original designs
- Retain historic doors, sidelights and pilasters
- Preserve original openings, restore as needed
- If one building has multiple tenants/store fronts create unity with a common paint color
- Keep up on routine maintenance



THE DON'TS:

- Use materials or products that don't match original or remaining materials
- Neglect the exterior of your building. It can affect your property value and that of those around you
- Alter or remove historic character of the building
- Add or remove entryways from your façade



Thumbs Up Symbol Shows Great Examples

WINDOWS

Windows are a significant part of any building. Maintaining the original arrangement, number, cadence, shape, style and material is important. "Wood or vinyl windows" is a common question. Many window manufacturers advertise that a new "green" window is better for your pocketbook and the environment. The truth is that not only can historic windows be made energy efficient, they also maintain the overall original appearance of the building. When you rehabilitate and restore an original wood window it is more cost effective than a replacement. When you install weather stripping, sealants and a properly fitting storm window the payback is approximately 3-7 years. When you install a new commercial replacement window the payback can be more than 100 years.

THE DO'S:

- Honor original window locations and openings.
- Maintain window components like frames, sills, sashes, hardware, glass and paint.
- Glass should be clear without tint and non-reflective.
- Original hardware, glass, window surrounds, sash and sill should be preserved if possible.
- Windows that have been reduced in size or modified should be restored to their original dimension and style.
- Closed or infilled window openings should be reopened. Window treatments can be used to prevent an unoccupied appearance.
- Deteriorated windows can often be repaired. If a window has deteriorated beyond repair it should be replaced with one that matches the original material, dimensions, style, etc.

THE DON'TS:

- Do not install tinted or reflective glass. Clear glass should be used to allow for easy viewing and merchandise and interior space.
- Don't reduce the size of an original window opening
- Don't install shutters that are not historically accurate
- Avoid infill windows or boarded up windows at all costs
- Do not install replacement window components that are not historically accurate
- Don't install new windows that are not appropriate to the scale of the building



Thumbs Up Symbol Shows
Great Examples



AWNINGS & SIGNAGE

Awnings serve multiple functions. Historically, they were used to prevent direct sunlight from fading merchandise in display windows. They also provide protection from weather. Many awnings also provide an additional opportunity for signage and pedestrian appeal.

Signs identify and act as signatures. With one or a few words or symbols they reflect the brand of the business or convey the atmosphere you may encounter inside. Signage and awnings, like entries, provide a first impression. They should enhance, rather than detract from, the front façade. Pick one that is in harmony with your building and the district as a whole. Also, please note when adding signage you will need to get a City Sign Permit through Waverly Planning & Zoning (319) 352-9208.

THE DO'S:

- Determine if an awning or sign style is appropriate for the age of your building. Research historic photos if possible.
- Investigate to see if there is any original awning or signage hardware left on your building.
- Size your awning to match window and storefront widths.
- Compliment, rather than compete, with the style, color and height of other awnings in the district.
- Triangular awnings with a front valance are the most appropriate. Consider adding your business name to the valance for additional signage.
- Opt for quality over quantity of signage. Too many signs can be confusing, especially to those in vehicles.
- Consider sign readability and placement for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

THE DON'TS:

- Don't oversize your awning or sign so that it dominates the façade. Be sure signage is adequate but not overpowering.
- Don't use awnings that are not appropriate for your building style.
- Don't cover up unique building features or architectural details with an awning or sign.
- Don't install a contemporary awning on a historical building. Check with your local sign company for more information.



Thumbs Up Symbol Shows
Great Examples



MURALS

Because each mural is an individual work applied to a specific building, they often require an individual, case-by-case approach to maintenance. Historically, murals had an advertisement or were purely aesthetic. Some were and still are used to hide certain flaws or adorn an otherwise plain secondary façade. In recent decades, murals fall more into the realm of public art. It is important to balance the application of murals with a defined plan and funding for long-term maintenance. Murals often stand as a first impression to a building, district, or even a community.

THE DO'S:

- Contact the original artist prior to any alterations or rework.
- Apply/maintain protective coating to inhibit wear and tear.
- Schedule regular inspection of the mural at a minimum of once per year.
- Trim or remove surrounding vegetation to prevent damage.
- Remove and clean surface grime without the use of detergents and with minimal water pressure to avoid damage.



THE DON'TS:

- Don't attempt to restore or retouch a mural on your own. First consult the artist, and then hire a professional to complete the work.
- Do not leave paint completely exposed or seal the mural with a non-commercial grade sealant.
- Don't obstruct, cut through or partially alter murals without proper approval/notification of the artist.
- Do not commission so many murals or such large murals that proper upkeep cannot be performed.
- Don't put a mural on a primary or front facade.



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Great Examples

COLOR

Color selection can be a sensitive topic. Not everyone sees color the same, and favorites rise to the top for various reasons. When considering color within a district, take the team approach and have a unified color palette that can create cohesiveness, but honor a building's individuality. The color used on a building should be consistent with the building.

THE DO'S:

- Select colors that will enhance the historic feel of the building and appeal of the overall district.
- Use colors that are historically appropriate.
- Where appropriate, consider using colors with shade differences (darker or lighter) on features including, but not limited to, windows, doors, moldings and cornices.
- Use a color scheme to emphasize details.
- Leave brick and stone unpainted whenever possible.

THE DON'TS:

- Don't apply paint or other coatings to metal or other finishes that were meant to be exposed.
- Avoid tinted glazing.
- Don't remove paint from historically painted surfaces.
- Don't paint unpainted brick, stone or concrete.
- Don't modernize with contemporary or trendy paint colors.
- Don't minimize detail and character with paint scheme.



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Great Examples

ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Architectural elements are the small and large elements that give a building its unique personality. From rosettes on steel lintels to elaborate cornices, these details are important to the overall character of the community. Other architectural elements include: window headers, pediments, iron storefronts, and carved details. Elements can be made of stone, metal, terracotta and even wood. Take extra measures to restore and preserve these details that tell the building's story.

THE DO'S:

- Highlight architectural details with complimentary paint colors.
- Pay attention to neighboring buildings for indications of period-appropriate elements.
- Use appropriate materials such as brick, stone and wood.
- Create a unique identity with special details appropriate to your building's era.



THE DON'TS:

- Don't neglect maintenance of historic architectural details. They can be more expensive to replace rather than repair.
- Do not camouflage elements by applying a monochromatic paint scheme over various materials and textures.
- Don't apply elements from different eras to your façade or apply re-used elements from another building without first consulting an architect or historian.



Thumbs Up Symbol Shows
Great Examples

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

Every downtown building will have different needs depending on its architectural character, existing condition and use. Some building improvement projects might consist of small-scale cosmetic improvements, while others may require full scale building rehabilitation. Project planning and an understanding of individual building needs is critical to a project's success.

MAIN STREET IOWA DESIGN CONSULTATION

Main Street Design Assistance is available for projects located within designated Main Street Iowa districts, as mentioned previously. This service is a benefit of the Main Street network and is available at no cost to local property owners. Design and building rehab specialists can provide on-site or virtual technical assistance and provide recommendations on project planning, historic preservation practices and maintenance needs, and develop conceptual design drawings to help visualize building improvements. To schedule a MSI Design Consultation contact the Chamber/Main Street office at 319-352-4526 or email waverly@waverlychamber.com.

SMALL-SCALE IMPROVEMENTS

Many small-scale improvements, repairs and maintenance needs can be completed by hands-on building owners, design committee members or local volunteers. The National Park Service is the standard for guidance on best practices for the preservation of historic properties. Refer to the Preservation Briefs at www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm for in-depth information on various aspects of historic preservation or search by topic for specific needs. Main Street Iowa has also compiled an online resource folder with guidance on a number of topics related to downtown building care and maintenance.

CODES & REGULATIONS

Be aware of different codes and regulations that might apply to building projects depending on your local jurisdiction; many historic building rehabilitation projects will require upgrades to enhance the building's safety. Consult with local officials early on to find out what health, safety, and welfare measures are required, what building codes allow and whether a building permit is required for the scope of work proposed. Zoning regulations might affect permitted uses, allowable signage or parking requirements. Engaging with local officials at the earliest stage of the planning process is key to identifying requirements and achievable solutions.

FUNDING AND FINANCING

There are a variety of funding opportunities available for Main Street Iowa programs and downtown building rehabilitation projects. The listing below represents many, but not all, of the funding tools available for public and private planning, design and rehabilitation projects.

Local Funding: Consult with your local Chamber, Main Street or City Economic Development office regarding local funding opportunities for downtown building projects. Local funding tools might include local Main Street or economic development grant programs, city incentives, small business tax abatement, revolving loan programs, local bank partners or community foundations grants. The Chamber's annual Façade Improvement Grant falls into this category. It's an annual 50/50 matching grant that awards up to a total of \$4,000 each year to eligible projects.

Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants: Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants are available for brick-and-mortar building projects that contribute to the development of designated Main Street Iowa districts. Challenge Grants support comprehensive building projects that add to the local district economy, incorporate quality design and preservation-based strategies, and support local revitalization efforts.

Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program: The Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program assists communities with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community.

Downtown Housing Grant: The Downtown Housing Grant provides financial assistance for projects supporting local downtown revitalization through new and renovated housing opportunities in communities with populations under 30,000.

Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG): Federal CDBG funds are administered through the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and support a number of planning and infrastructure purposes.

The Downtown Revitalization Fund provides assistance for exterior rehabilitation of blighted downtown buildings.

The Upper Story Housing Conversion Fund program provides assistance for the conversion of existing downtown building space into new residential units.

FUNDING AND FINANCING CONTINUED...

State Historic Preservation Tax Credits: The State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a state income tax credit for the sensitive, substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings. It ensures character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained and helps revitalize surrounding neighborhoods. The program provides an income tax credit of up to 25% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures (QREs). Check with your accountant to see if this program is right for you.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits: A 20% income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings. Buildings must be certified historic structures by the National Park Service and rehabilitation work must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Check with your accountant to see if this program is right for you.

Historical Resource Development Program: HRDP funding helps preserve, conserve, interpret, enhance, and educate the public about Iowa's historical assets. The Historical Resource Development Program provides funding for documentary collections, historic preservation and museums.

Brownfields & Grayfields Redevelopment Tax Credits: Redevelopment Tax Credits are available for properties known as brownfield and grayfield sites to promote the economic health of communities by reducing potential environmental hazards, cleaning up eyesores, creating new jobs and boosting tax revenue.

Workforce Housing Tax Credits: The Workforce Housing Tax Credit program provides tax benefits to developers providing housing in Iowa communities, with a special focus on projects using abandoned, empty or dilapidated properties. A 'Small Cities' set aside for this program is available to eligible projects within the 88 least populous counties in the state.

Empower Rural Iowa Innovation Grants: The Rural Innovation Grant program supports creative, non-traditional ideas that focus on current issues and challenges faced by rural communities associated with the themes of community investment, growth and connection.

Paint Iowa Beautiful Grants: Paint Iowa Beautiful provides free paint to a variety of public service projects through a partnership between Keep Iowa Beautiful and Diamond Vogel Paint of Orange City.

Tax Incentives for Improving Accessibility: The Disabled Access Credit provides a non-refundable credit for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities. The Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the elderly.

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCES

[Iowa Downtown Resource Center](#): The Downtown Resource Center helps communities learn more about the importance of downtown development and specifically how your community can implement strategies to make it's downtown more viable.

[State Historic Preservation Office \(SHPO\)](#): The Iowa SHPO office identifies, preserves, and protects Iowa's historic and prehistoric resources. It also administers state and federal historic preservation programs and maintains a survey and inventory collection of historic properties in Iowa.

[Main Street America](#): Main Street America, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is a network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America provides education, outreach, resources and funding opportunities to assist its network members with downtown revitalization efforts.

[National Trust for Historic Preservation](#): The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded nonprofit organization, works to save America's historic sites; tell the full American story; build stronger communities; and invest in preservation's future.

[National Park Service](#): (NPS) Historic preservation programs of the National Park Service help communities protect and preserve the nation's historic resources. NPS administers the National Register of Historic Places, federal historic preservation tax incentives and many other federal programs that provide services, financial assistance, education, guidance, and technical information in support of historic preservation.

[Preservation Iowa](#): Preservation Iowa is a statewide nonprofit organization with a mission of building partnerships that enhance our economic and cultural future through the preservation of Iowa's historic resources. Annual advocacy programs include the Most Endangered Properties listings and the Preservation at its Best Awards.

[Iowa Arts Council](#): The Iowa Arts Council empowers Iowa to build and sustain culturally vibrant communities by cultivating creativity, learning and participation in the arts. Resources and funding opportunities are available to strengthen vitality and sustainability of arts and culture, film/media, history and historic preservation efforts across Iowa.

DESIGN GUIDELINES UPDATED 2026

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