



Storefront Design Manual



ROME
MAIN STREETS
design



Contents

Storefront Design Manual.....	1
Introduction.....	3
Overall Goals.....	4
General Guidelines for New Construction	4
Façade Anatomy.....	5
Storefront System	6
Entrance Door	8
Display Window.....	10
Awnings.....	12
Signage.....	14
Upper Façade	16
Colors	18
Lighting	20
Landscaping	22
Architectural Details	24
Before and After.....	26
About Main Streets.....	32
More Information.....	32

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Introduction

Rome's Commercial History

For thousands of years, the area occupied by the city of Rome, New York enjoyed great strategic and commercial importance. The city is located in an area the Six Nations, Haudenosaunee people knew as Deo-Wain-Sta, or The Great Carrying Place. This referred to a portage road or path between the Mohawk River and Wood Creek, leading to Lake Ontario. This portage path was located within what is now the Rome city limits.

Rome was strategically important in the French and Indian War and the American Revolutionary War. The British erected Fort Stanwix to guard the Carrying Place portage during the French and Indian War. The Americans reconstructed Fort Stanwix during the Revolutionary War. The American victory that took place at the Fort directly contributed to the defeat of the British at Saratoga in 1777.

On July 4, 1817 the first shovel of earth was turned in Rome for the construction of the first Erie Canal. This gave impetus to significant commercial growth in the city. In 1801, Paul Revere founded a brass and copper works at Rome. Descendant businesses of the Revere Copper Company still operate today: Revere Copper Products, Inc. is one of the oldest manufacturing companies in the United States. In 1851 America's first cheese factory was established in Rome.

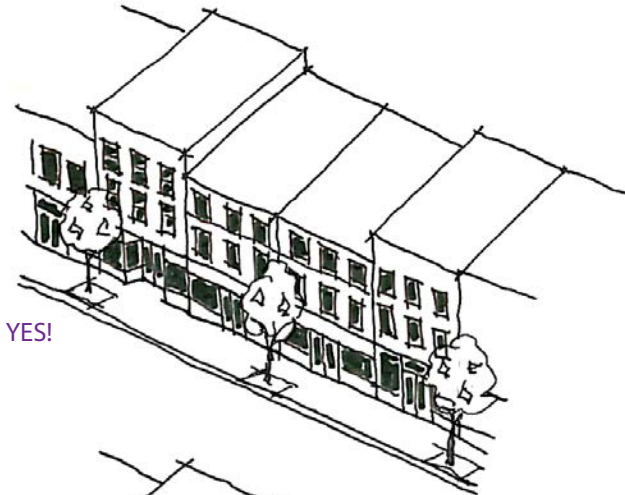
Much of Rome's rich cultural history is reflected in its historic architecture. Building uses have changed over time, but each historic building has its own treasured legacy. In 2002 the National Trust for Historic Preservation conducted a strategic assessment of Rome's downtown. Three Main Street corridors were identified through the study – East Dominick Street, West Dominick Street and James Street. The Main Streets Program is one of Rome's most influential and important initiatives designed to revitalize the city's downtown.

Overall Goals

The overall goal of the storefront design manual is to provide ideas and inspiration for good design by property owners and shopkeepers. This document discusses the physical aspects of the public face of the building and how to improve and enhance the overall quality of the commercial corridor.

General Guidelines for New Construction

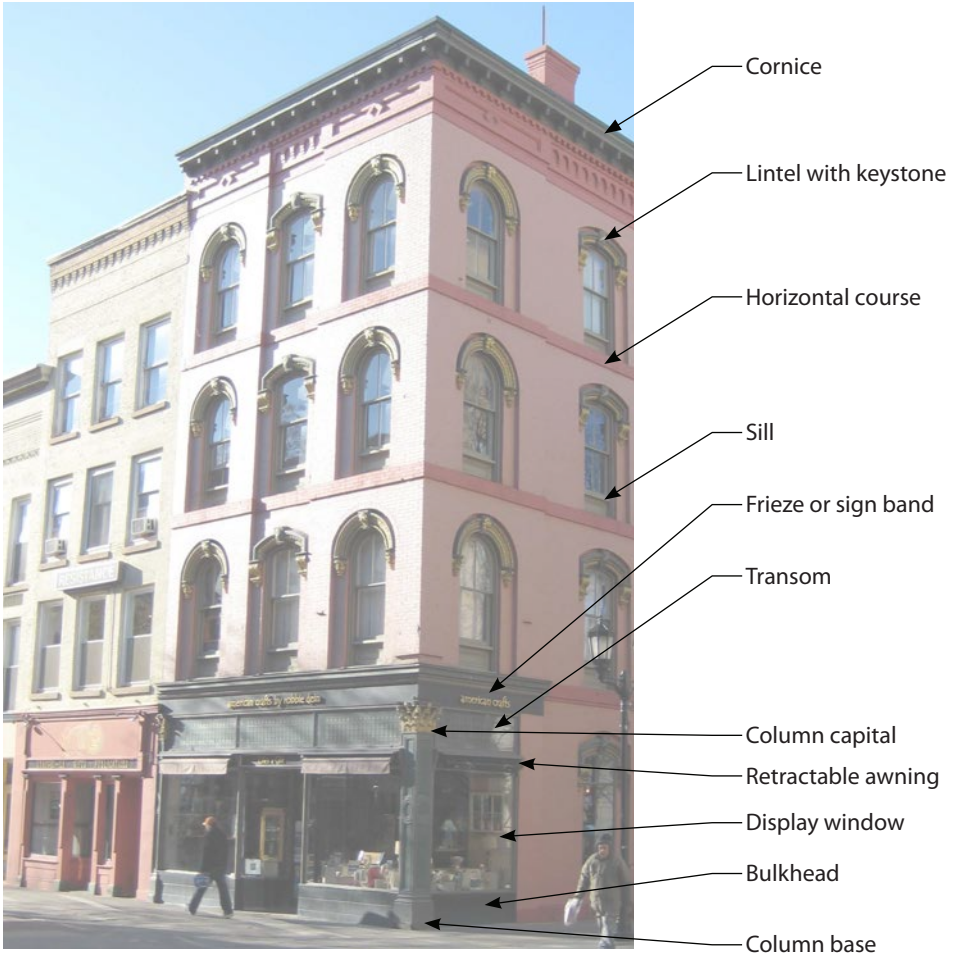
1. Building façades should align with the existing streetwall and be set back no more than 5 feet from the sidewalk.
2. Corner lots should be built out to the sidewalk on both sides.
3. Infill buildings should extend the full width of the lot with no gaps between existing and new construction when possible.
4. Building proportions should be consistent with the adjacent properties including height, width, and spacing of openings.
5. Planting new street trees should be considered with any new construction.



Façade Anatomy

It is important to evaluate the entire building and understand the common components that contribute to the overall character of the storefront. Not every building is historic like the one shown below but most contain some form of these common elements.

By studying historic features of storefronts we can strive to create a commercial corridor with a form, rhythm, and character consistent with neighbors and reflecting our past.



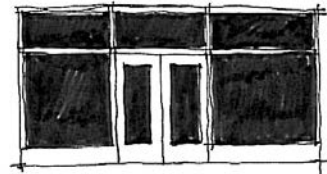
Objective: Create an inviting relationship to the street which provides a framework for tenants to express their unique identity, and respects the architectural character of the building.

Storefront System

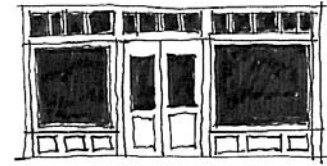
Analysis of Existing



1. Vinyl siding is an inappropriate material
2. Storefront windows are too small with awkward proportions
3. Entries are not handicap accessible
4. A/C units are visible from the street



Aluminum Storefront



Traditional Wood Storefront



Things to avoid:

1. Painting the brick
2. Leaving the vinyl siding in place
3. Installing a continuous awning
4. Not addressing the upper facade
5. Not considering handicap accessibility

DO NOT:

- ▶ Install imitation materials
- ▶ Remove existing storefront elements that contribute to the original character of the building
- ▶ Paint natural wood or brick materials that have never been painted

Better Design Solution

1. Install larger aluminum storefront glass in full masonry opening
2. Install separate awnings for each storefront
3. Provide an elevated walkway with handrails, steps, and a handicap ramp
4. Replace second story windows with historic windows that fill the masonry opening and match the color of the storefront

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General Considerations:

- ▶ Express individual identity
- ▶ Complement the existing structural frame and proportions of the building
- ▶ Repair or restore storefront materials
- ▶ Install durable materials such as real stone, brick, hardwood, or metal for window bases that are no more than 24" +/- above the sidewalk.

Objective: Create a welcoming, accessible entrance which prepares the customer, by way of transparency, durability and identity, for the experience within.

Entrance Door

Analysis of Existing



1. Not enough glass on doors
2. No signage to distinguish primary entry
3. Threshold is not accessible
4. Satellite dishes detract from facade



Things to avoid:



1. Infilling one entry with cedar shakes even though the material is used elsewhere on the building
2. Replacing or simply painting the solid 6-panel door



DO NOT:

- ▶ Add new doors not required by code or inconsistent with the storefront system
- ▶ Close off existing doors with any material
- ▶ Obstruct entries with merchandise, planters, or other clutter
- ▶ Install residential-grade doors or solid doors with no glass

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Refer to pg. 15 for better sign and widown design solutions.

1. Remove satellite dishes
2. Install handicap ramp around side
3. Install full glass door with sidelight for primary unit
4. Install half glass door for secondary unit

General Considerations

- ▶ Provide a direct connection to the sidewalk
- ▶ Make the entryway unique and identifiable by distinguishing the tenants' brands
- ▶ Recess entryways to prevent doors from swinging into the public right-of-way
- ▶ Install commercial grade doors that are at least half glass (doors with a full pane of glass are preferable)
- ▶ Make entryways accessible for wheelchairs
- ▶ Install doors made of insulated aluminum or wood with double-pane insulated glass



Objective: Restore or replace storefront display windows to showcase products and services.

Display Window

Analysis of Existing



1. No display of products in the windows
2. Interiors appear dark and unwelcoming
3. Out-dated signage that could be more integrated with the display window



Things to avoid

1. 8-1/2x11 paper signs
2. Clutter in front of window that is unrelated to the products or services
3. Signage that is too large and does not allow visibility into the store

DO NOT:

- ▶ Cluttering window displays with unorganized merchandise and/or obstructing the view to the interior of the store
- ▶ Covering or removing original window trim
- ▶ Using less durable Plexiglass
- ▶ Failing to repair broken or boarded windows
- ▶ Using the display space as storage
- ▶ Keeping the display space empty

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1. Thoughtful arrangement of products and accessories that still allow a view into the store
2. Interior lighting that makes the space feel bright and welcoming
3. Window decals or attractive signage on the window
4. Awnings to conceal A/C unit and help distinguish two separate storefronts



General Considerations

- ▶ Use the full extent or expand the percentage of transparent glass
- ▶ Make the display original and fun
- ▶ Change the display frequently
- ▶ Use the upper story windows for displays
- ▶ Preserve historic elements including the frame and moldings
- ▶ Install insulated wood or aluminum in colors that compliment the store's branding



Objective: Provide protection from the elements, reduce glare, conserve energy, emphasize the entrance, display signage and add texture and interest to the streetscape.

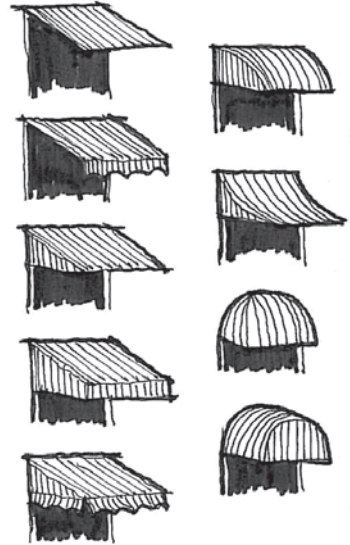
Awnings

Analysis of Existing



1. Two storefronts in a single building
2. No awnings installed
3. Sign band does not relate to the building form, materials or color
4. No historic details to contend with

Types of Awnings



Things to avoid

1. Single awning spanning entire facade.
2. Single color of awning spanning entire facade.

DO NOT:

- ▶ Use vinyl or rigid plastic awning materials
- ▶ Install backlights that internally illuminate the awning
- ▶ Display large signage on the sloped part of the awning
- ▶ Install soffits that conceal existing details such as transom windows or woodwork

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General Considerations

- ▶ Remove awnings that detract from the historic character of the building
- ▶ Install fabric awnings made of canvas or similar weatherproof materials in colors that complement the building
- ▶ Use individual awnings no wider than the masonry opening for each storefront with a consistent size, location and form
- ▶ Set the height at 7' to 8' above the sidewalk
- ▶ Install retractable awnings to prolong the life of the fabrics
- ▶ Use creative awning shapes that complement the building form
- ▶ Locate signage on the valance



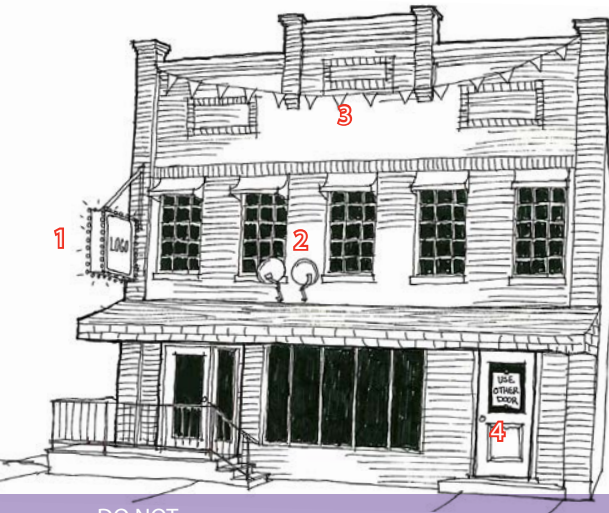
Objective: Identify the place of business and add graphic interest to the streetscape.

Signage

Analysis of Existing



1. Wall mount sign armature exists and may be re-used but location may not be ideal
2. Satellite dishes are focal point of overall facade
3. No street address is visible



Things to avoid

1. Backlit plastic sign with animated lights blocks view from upper story window
2. Not removing satellite dishes
3. Flags are inappropriate for this facade
4. Informal paper directional signage is unprofessional

DO NOT:

- ▶ Install more than one sign per business on the signage band
- ▶ Cover windows or architectural details with signage
- ▶ Using long complicated messages
- ▶ Attach paper or other unprofessional signs to windows
- ▶ Install air conditioning equipment in the signage band

Better Design Solution

1. Install projecting wall sign so it does not obstruct view from upper story windows
2. Install signage on the valance of a fabric awning
3. Identify primary entrance with repeated logo
4. Identify secondary entrance with street address number



General Considerations

- ▶ Install signage consistent in scale with other buildings on the street and located in the traditional signage band, awning valance, and/or display windows
- ▶ Use distinctive fonts and colors that provide good contrast and legibility
- ▶ Include logos and simple tag lines to identify the type of business
- ▶ Illuminate signage at night with internal backlighting of individual letters or, preferably, spot lights
- ▶ Preserve the integrity of historic signage band materials or details
- ▶ Integrate signage with existing mechanical equipment



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aged Plum Ovens Bakery



Objective: Include the upper façade in improvement plans and use the form and details of the building as a guideline for the storefront.

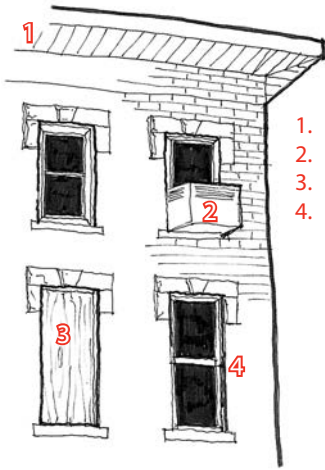
Upper Façade

Analysis of Existing



1. Deteriorating soffit with no articulation
2. Storm windows that do not fill entire masonry opening
3. Painted brick and stone lintels

Things to avoid



1. Repairing or replacing the vinyl soffit with no articulation
2. Window A/C units
3. Plywood panels
4. Exterior storm windows

DO NOT:

- ▶ Cover the façade with materials inconsistent with the original character such as faux brick veneer, stucco, aluminum, or vinyl siding
- ▶ Fill in openings
- ▶ Remove architectural details
- ▶ Use any materials that reflect inaccurate historical values, i.e., as Victorian shutters on modern windows

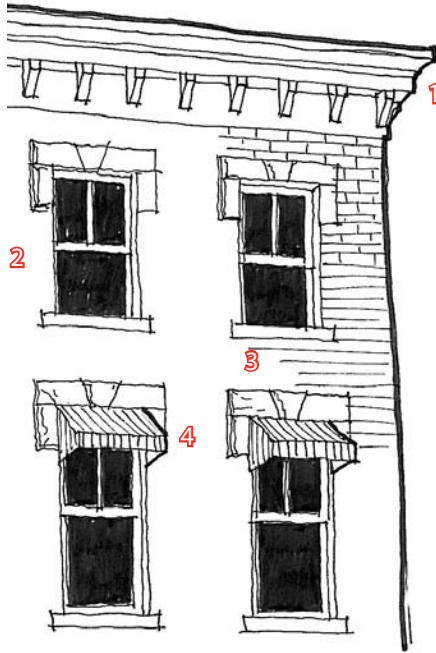
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1. Add decorative cornice
2. Install historic windows with interior storms
3. Strip and repoint brick
4. Add fabric awnings

General Considerations

- ▶ Restore significant architectural details to include window sills, frames, sashes, lintels, pilasters and cornices
- ▶ Preserve/repoint unpainted masonry or strip paint with non-toxic methods
- ▶ Light to enhance architectural details
- ▶ Use interior storm windows to improve energy efficiency and preserve historic windows
- ▶ Soften blank walls with signage, murals, art, lighting, or projected pilasters

Objective: Convey the individuality and attitude of a store with respect for the building's inherent character and the context of the streetscape.

Colors

Analysis of Existing



1. Brick has been painted in a wide stripe across front of facade
2. Storefront is natural unpainted aluminum
3. No other colors to create a sense of identity or character



Things to avoid

1. Repainting the stripe
2. Painting the aluminum storefront which doesn't coordinate with the adjacent tenant
3. Painting any of the natural brick details that have never been painted
4. Painting or replacing only some of the upper story windows with different colors
5. Too many bright and uncoordinated paint colors

DO NOT:

- ▶ Use more than 3 colors
- ▶ Paint arbitrary stripes or graphics which have no relation to the architectural lines
- ▶ Paint masonry that has not been painted
- ▶ Fail to maintain faded or flaking paint
- ▶ Select colors that draw more attention to the color than to the business identity or products

Better Design Solution

1. Install awnings that coordinate with the storefront color
2. Both tenants having the same aluminum storefront system color
3. Use a black awning and door color to make the secondary apartment entrance recede
4. Paint all of the upper story windows to match the storefront system color
5. Establish a unique identity for each tenant with complimentary awning colors

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General Considerations

- ▶ Select colors which coordinate with the signage or products being sold
- ▶ Accentuate architectural details such as recessed panels, columns, dentils, etc.
- ▶ Limit color palette to 3 colors
- ▶ Use creativity to introduce bright colors without being garish



Objective: To create a lively, inviting and secure streetscape that highlights the identity of the store and the character of the building façades.

Lighting

Analysis of Existing



1. Single fluorescent lamp over entry door
2. Contemporary style building
3. Deep overhang in lieu of awnings



Things to avoid

1. Installing flood lights which create too much glare
2. Replacing cover of existing fluorescent lamp
3. Installing generic neon signs
4. Installing traditional wall sconces on a contemporary building

DO NOT:

- ▶ Use flashing or moving lights
- ▶ Create glare or over-illuminate the façade or sidewalk
- ▶ Use neon lighting especially for national brands – creative custom uses of neon for signage may be appropriate
- ▶ Install light fixtures that do not coordinate with the architectural style of the building façade

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1. Install signage above the door that is illuminated by contemporary recessed can lights
2. Install contemporary wall sconces consistent with the style of the building
3. Install recessed can lights to illuminate display windows



General Considerations

- ▶ Light display window signs and architectural details including after business hours
- ▶ Use fixtures that complement the history and overall style of the façade
- ▶ Light upper façade windows to increase the liveliness of the street
- ▶ Install timers to turn lights on at dusk and off at midnight or dawn

Objective: Enliven the façade and sidewalk with natural plant materials that thrive in urban conditions.

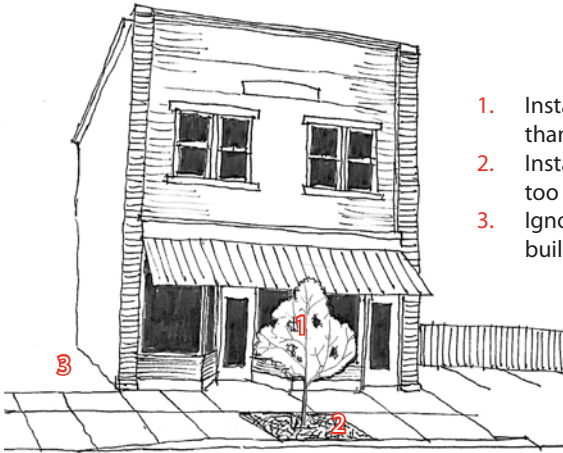
Landscaping

Analysis of Existing



1. Sidewalk is wider than necessary
2. No street tree
3. Side alley is paved up to side of building

Things to avoid



1. Installing street trees smaller than 2" caliper
2. Installing trees in pits that are too small
3. Ignoring a visible side of the building

DO NOT:

- ▶ Fail to adequately water, prune, or dead-head plants
- ▶ Fail to remove litter and debris from containers or mulch areas
- ▶ Use exotic or invasive species not suitable for the climate
- ▶ Obstruct the public sidewalk with container plants

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1. Installing large shade trees at the street
2. Excavating lawn panels/mulched tree pits as large as possible
3. Installing foundation plants along visible sides
4. Installing shrubs to soften fence in parking area
5. Installing window boxes for seasonal interest

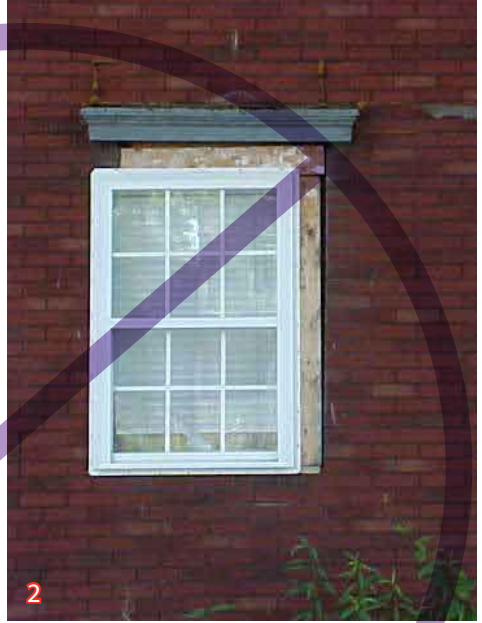
General Considerations

- ▶ Install landscaping for shade and wind protection
- ▶ Plant street trees with upright-arching canopies to preserve visibility of storefronts
- ▶ Install flower boxes at windows
- ▶ Install sturdy container plants to define entryways
- ▶ Rotate plants with the seasons: annual flowers in summer, mums in the fall, bulbs for spring, evergreen containers for winter



Objective: To distinguish the building and present a well crafted durable and articulated façade.

Architectural Details



DO NOT:

- ▶ 1. Infill existing openings creating a patched effect
- ▶ 2. Relocate windows or use exposed plywood
- ▶ 3. Install undersized windows in existing openings
- ▶ 4. Install decorative details from different/inconsistent time periods, install vinyl siding, aluminum siding or use plastic sheathing



General Considerations

- ▶ Use a simple palette of traditional materials such as brick, wood, and metal
- ▶ Include at least one masonry material: brick, stone, split faced concrete or stucco
- ▶ Restore or install cast or molded details such as crowns, coves, dentils, corbels, or brackets
- ▶ Use decorative address numbers and matching hardware
- ▶ Install banding, pilasters, bays or other protecting elements to articulate the façade

Before and After

Main Streets Design Renovations

414 North James Street



Before Renovations



After Renovations
Near Completion

418 North James Street



Before Renovations



After Renovations

Before and After

Main Streets Design Renovations

601 E Dominick Street



Before Renovations



After Renovations

801 E Dominick Street



Before Renovations



Artistic Rendering



After Renovations



After Renovations

Before and After



711 E Dominick Street Before Renovations

Artistic Rendering



After Renovations

405 North James Street



Before Renovations



Artistic Rendering



After Renovations

About Main Streets

In 2002, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center was commissioned by the City of Rome to conduct a comprehensive assessment of Downtown Rome. As a result Rome defined its downtown corridors as East Dominick Street, James Street, and West Dominick Street. Today, Rome is proud to be one of only a few National Main Street Center-recognized programs in all of New York State. And... the Main Street Alliance, with both volunteer and municipal support has established itself as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization.



Exciting things are beginning to happen all over Downtown Rome as a result of the Main Streets Program. To ensure lasting community change, the program must continue to be driven and supported by the community as a whole. Successful downtown revitalization does not occur instantly, but with an entire community's commitment to the success of the program, positive and sustainable change is inevitable for future generations!

More Information

Reviewing this guide and assessing your own storefront is just the first step toward making improvements. Many of the changes discussed will require city approval. Contact the office of Community and Economic Development at (315) 339-7643 or online at www.romenewyork.com for more information about the approval process.