8.0 COMMERCIAL FAÇADE DESIGN GUIDELINES

8.1 Purpose

The Commercial Façade Design Guidelines express the Town’s design expectations for development review and are meant to assist in raising the standard for high quality, well-designed projects that support the small scale and pedestrian-oriented character of the Vineland CBD. Building on the land use and design policies of the Lincoln Official Plan and the Vineland Secondary Plan, the design guidelines provide design guidance for improving existing or creating new facades for commercial and mixed-use developments within the Vineland CBD. The Guidelines are intended to be a flexible guide to property owners and business owners when making improvements to existing buildings within the area as well as to property owners during the redevelopment of properties within the area. Also, they are intended as a design tool to be used by the Town when reviewing applications for new developments or applications under potential CIP façade improvement incentive programs.

8.2 Design Policy Direction

The Town of Lincoln Official Plan envisions the Vineland CBD to be maintained as the primary commercial area within the Vineland community, providing a range and variety of business and commercial functions to meet the needs of residents. Further, the Vineland Secondary Plan envisions King Street transformed “into a thriving mixed use centre that will be an attractive centre piece in the Twenty Valley/Jordan Harbour Tourism Area”. From a design perspective, the Official Plan has three principal design themes for new development and redevelopment in the Vineland CBD:

1. Provide a strong street presence with buildings occupying at least 50% of the main wall occupying the street frontage and situated within 0 to 3 metres of the front lot line.

2. Provide attractive façades with elements such as display windows, articulated entrances, glazed areas, and wall plane variations; roofs that provide visual interest; special architectural treatment along both street frontages for corner buildings; and, roof top mechanical units screened and integrated with the architectural form and treatment of the building.

3. Maintain a main façade prominence with principal building entrances and primary elevations facing the public street, entrances that are flush with the public sidewalk, and, loading and service doors on rear building walls.
8.3 Design Guidelines

Nine design principles form the foundation of the Commercial Façade Design Guidelines. These principles are meant to provide the general, higher level direction for commercial facades, while organizing the specific design guidelines for particular design elements. While the application of the guidelines are flexible and are meant be interpreted and applied on a case-by-case basis, façade improvements and new facades within the Vineland CBD should be consistent with all of the design principles.

1. Building facades should be designed to follow good “main street” principles of design, rather than replicating a particular architectural style.

The Vineland CBD generally has a relatively contemporary age and form as compared to the traditional form and style seen in many downtowns and main streets throughout the region. Given this, building design and façade improvements should not attempt to create a “fake” history, but rather should take cues from traditional main street buildings regarding the alignment and arrangement of architectural elements found on such buildings (either within the area, within the Town, or elsewhere), albeit with a more contemporary fashion. This includes taking cues from the rhythm and pattern of windows and door openings on façades; the ratio of window and door area to solid wall for the façade as a whole; and, the location of traditional elements such as cornice lines, sign bands, window bases (“kickplates”), transom windows, columns or piers, and other elements.

A building façade that follows good “main street” principles utilizing a contemporary style and palette of materials.
2. The ground floor of the building façade should be scaled and oriented to the pedestrian walking along the street.

The Lincoln Official Plan requires street presence with the main wall of new buildings situated within 3 metres of the front lot line and occupying at least 50% of the property’s street frontage. Working with this principle, façades should be comprised of pedestrian-scaled proportions characteristic of a traditional main street. Generally, traditional storefront widths generally are up to 7.5 metres in width, so new buildings with storefronts wider than 7.5 metres should include a series of bays that are defined by vertical elements, such as changes in materials, building projections, columns, or other vertical architectural elements, to emphasize the individual units of the buildings and maintain the traditional small scale feel of the storefront façade.

Buildings with narrower widths for storefronts are associated with traditional main streets, which provides a fine-grained division of storefronts that are more supportive of a comfortable pedestrian setting.
3. **The ground floor of the building façade should be transparent to maximize interest, views, and comfort pedestrians walking along the street.**

A large proportion of the ground floor façade should be comprised of transparent windows and doors. Building design should consider a balance between transparency for visibility into stores and energy conservation, so an appropriate ratio of transparent-to-solid materials on the façade is generally 40 to 60%. Storefront windows should use transparent glass to provide an area for display space and that encourages “window shopping”, to allow natural light into shops, and to allow visibility between the interior of shops and the street. The sides of any recessed entrances should have transparent surfaces to enhance comfort and visibility as well. Commercial doors for storefronts that are principally transparent glass should be used for buildings, and not residential doors that prevent visibility (other than secondary doors to any residential units on the upper storeys).

Façades with large proportions of transparent glass on windows and entrance doors assist with creating vibrant and visibly interesting streetscapes.
4. The upper storey portion of the building facade should complement the ground floor in terms of treatment and details.

While the ground floor of building façades should be a focus for pedestrian oriented details, the upper storeys should carry a complementary design treatment so that the overall façade reads as a single, unified unit. This may be accomplished through similar materials, similar colours, and architectural elements (such as columns or projections/recessions) that extend from the ground floor to the upper storeys; or, through different, yet complementary materials and colours with distinct horizontal lines that separate the upper storeys and emphasize the ground floor. Regardless of the approach taken, the design for new buildings and façade improvements should consider upper storey window patterns in traditional façades, where upper windows generally are rectangular in shape, with decorative architectural features, such as comices or lintels for emphasis, and these windows should be recessed into the wall surface to assist in articulating the facade and creating interesting shadow patterns on the upper storeys. Upper storey windows should have transparent glass surfaces and should be able to be opened to encourage natural ventilation.

A range of different options are appropriate for connecting the ground floor with the upper storeys on a building facade, whether a consistent approach or a complementary approach.
5. **Rooflines of buildings facades should appropriately cap the top of the building façade.**

Rooflines should terminate and punctuate the top of the building’s façade, providing a visually interesting streetscape particularly for those passing at a distance or from across the street. Rooflines may include detail, such as material changes, cornice, parapets, and other features, to provide an appropriate “cap” to a building, and should complement existing roof lines in the area, as applicable and as warranted. Given the context of the Vineland CBD, roofline details should be simple and contemporary rather than overly ornate attempting to replicate traditional buildings. Generally, flat roofs with a parapet or cornice are traditionally used for commercial forms of buildings, while sloped roofs combined with a roof parapet are used for residential forms of buildings. Visible gutters, downspouts or vents should be painted to match the trim or the colour of the base materials on the overall façade.

Simple rooflines that cap the top of the façade are a better fit with the Vineland CBD rather than more ornate details.
6. **Signage on the building should be visually attractive and not overpower the overall façade composition.**

While many types of signs are permitted under the Town’s Sign By-law, three types should be specifically encouraged as part of new buildings or façade improvements:

- Fascia signs should be located in a sign band that divides the storefront windows from the upper façade; should be attached parallel and flush with the building wall, located to avoid obscuring façade elements such as windows, doors, storefronts, building entrances, cornices, columns; and preferably should use raised lettering that provides depth to the signage.
- Hanging signs should be located and sized to provide safe passage by pedestrians underneath; should be installed perpendicular to the façade and hang from a mounted wall brace; and, should be limited to one per business frontage.
- Window signs on storefront windows should be installed so as to maximize visibility to and from the interior of the store (no more than 25% of a window’s surface area) with etched glass on the windows or using paint that is durable and fade resistant to ensure their quality over time.

Regardless of type, all signs within the Vineland CBD should be constructed of durable materials that complement the material palette of the overall façade. Lighting for signage should be down light only, to limit intrusion of lighting. Neon, electronic messages, or fluorescent lighting for illumination should not be used for any sign type. Signs should only be located on the ground floor portion of the façade, and not on the upper storeys.

There are a number of different sign styles that are appropriate within the main street setting, given their design character, materials, and location.
7. **Colours on the building façade should be used to accent architectural elements and display the individuality of different businesses.**

Façades should have a pattern of principal “base” colours and secondary “accent” colours. Base colours should be limited to two colours, and should be used preferably for defining the vertical distinctions of the building (i.e. storefront versus upper storeys) if using more than one colour. Accent colours should be limited to two or three maximum, selected to complement the base colours of the façade, and should preferably be used to accent architectural features (such as window or door frames, pillars or columns, sign lettering) on the façade. In terms of colour selection, a range of colours should be encouraged. More vibrant colours are certainly encouraged, however, they should be muted and soft in nature as compared to bold and bright, and should be limited to accent colours, such as window and door frames, building trim, sign bands and lettering, and other details, rather for the principal colour of the façade in order to avoid “overcolouring” a building’s façade.

![Image of Colour Used Appropriately](image-url)
8. **Materials selected for the building façade should take cues from those existing materials in the surrounding area.**

Materials selected for a building’s façade should be high quality, durable, and easily maintainable; complementary to one another; and appropriate for the building’s architectural style. The palette of materials used should be based on a series of principal and accent materials. Principal “base” materials should be limited to one or two materials on the façade. Pressed unglazed brick, local stone, mortar, concrete and wood should be the preferred base materials, while materials that mimic other materials (“faux” materials), aluminum or sheet metals, other siding systems, or non-local stone materials should not be used. Secondary “accent” materials should be limited to two or three materials on the façade. A more varied range of materials, such as wood trim, copper, steel, or other metals, can be used for the accent materials. Materials that mimic other materials (“faux” materials), aluminum or sheet metals, other siding systems, or non-local stone materials should not be used. When multiple building materials are used, changes in material should be at the point of a recession or projection at inside corners, or defined with a pronounced expansion joint along flat building walls, so as to avoid the look of the material as a “veneer” on the façade.

Brick and stone are amongst the preferred base materials for facades, while there are a range of appropriate accent materials that can provide a distinct look to façades.
9. **Outdoor spaces that complement the overall façade and provide activity along the space.**

Outdoor spaces should be considered, where possible, to provide “spill-out” space from the business to help animate the street. Cafés or patios should be designed and located to ensure they do not detract from the visual quality of the streetscape and do not impede movement for all users along the sidewalk. Flowerpots and planter boxes on or near building entrances should be considered to add colour and variety to the landscape. These include potential locations such as overhangs, columns or posts, balconies, and below windows.

Where retractable awnings above storefront windows and doors are desired for weather protection, they should be a traditional square or triangular shape and should be fabric material rather than synthetic materials. They should span the façade’s window and door openings only and not the entire façade, mounted in the storefront portion of the façade and not covering architectural elements (such as piers, columns, pilasters, clerestory windows, architectural expression lines). Multiple individual awnings should be used for larger frontages rather than a single continuous awning.

While not part of the design of the façade, outdoor spaces and landscape treatments should work with the overall façade in creating a positive image along the streetscape.
8.4 Application

The Commercial Façade Design Guidelines are intended to apply to commercial or mixed-use buildings (residential above commercial or commercial above commercial) in the Vineland CBD. They are intended to be used by the various participants involved in the design process, as a guide for designers, landowners, and business owners involved in designing new buildings or façade improvements, as well as a tool by the Town when evaluating development applications and when reviewing incentive program applications, should they be offered. The Commercial Façade Design Guidelines are meant to provide design guidance with the understanding that they are to be applied on a case-by-case basis as the specific situation warrants, and not as a "checklist" in that every guideline applies.