

# SEC.2 Storefronts

## [A] Visual access:

Visual access is one of the most important and often overlooked aspects of commercial storefront design. By providing clear views inside a commercial space, neighbors and would-be customers passing by a commercial space can answer the following questions:

- Is this business open?
- Is this business safe or inviting?
- What is for sale here?

All of these questions are most easily answered when a storefront maintains unblocked window openings across the majority of its street frontage. Anywhere from 40-70% of the ground floor level should be clear glass, depending on your specific village's zoning requirements.

By maintaining a 5' minimum zone of visual access into storefronts, you can quickly communicate to the public your shop is safe, open, and . Avoid using displays and signs that prohibit views in and out, including large shelving units with their backs facing the window.

Blinds and window tinting should be discouraged over the use of awnings and fixed shading options.

In the case of ground floor office and professional spaces, things like waiting rooms and communal areas should be kept up front. The use of low walls, screens, and plants can help to create a sense of privacy for workers further inside the building, while not entirely blocking views.

At night, storefronts should be lit from the interior to provide light and safety to the pedestrian realm, as well as showcasing products and displays to the public. Lighting should be selected to optimize the display of goods or services being sold within the business.

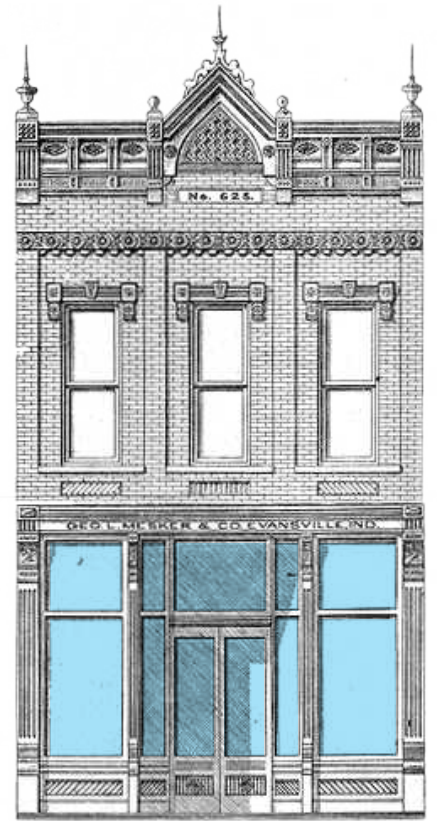
- **Is this business open?**
- **Is this business safe or inviting?**
- **What is for sale here?**



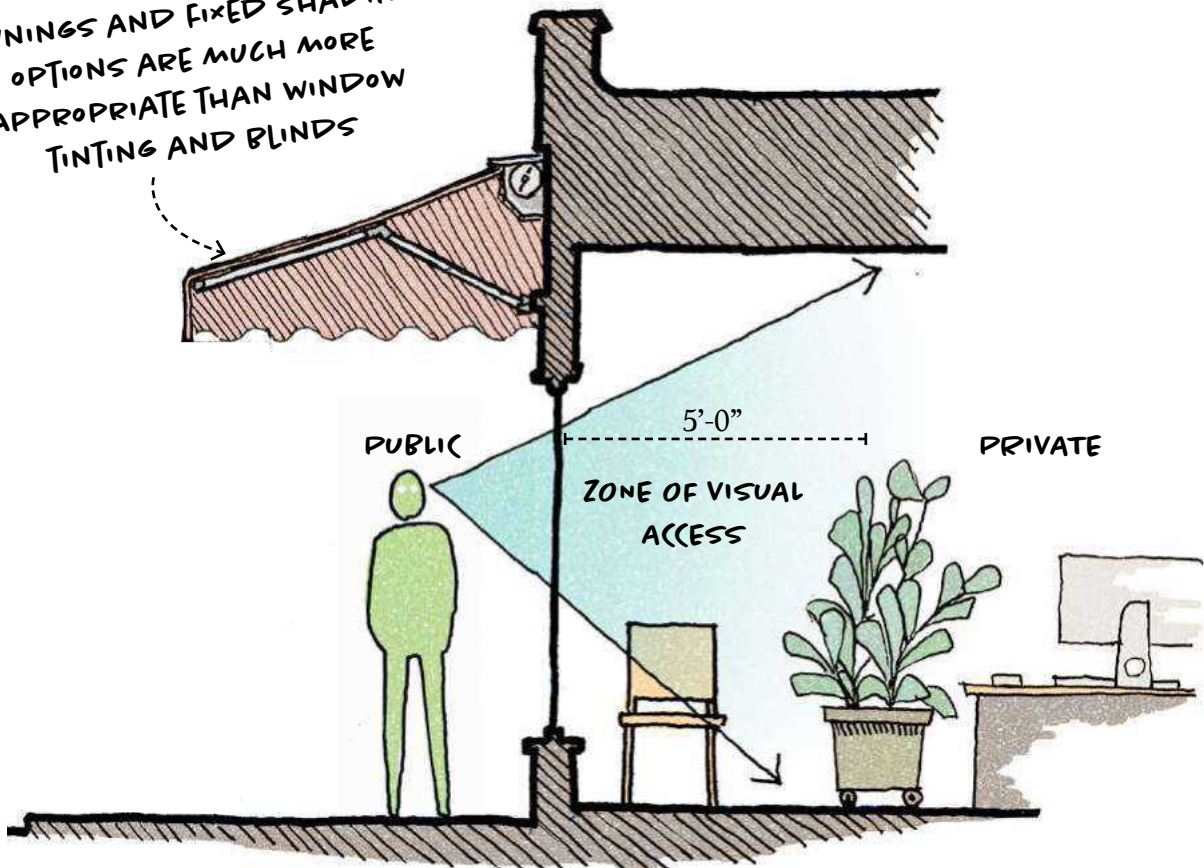
Showcase products, branding, and specials in well-lit storefront windows.



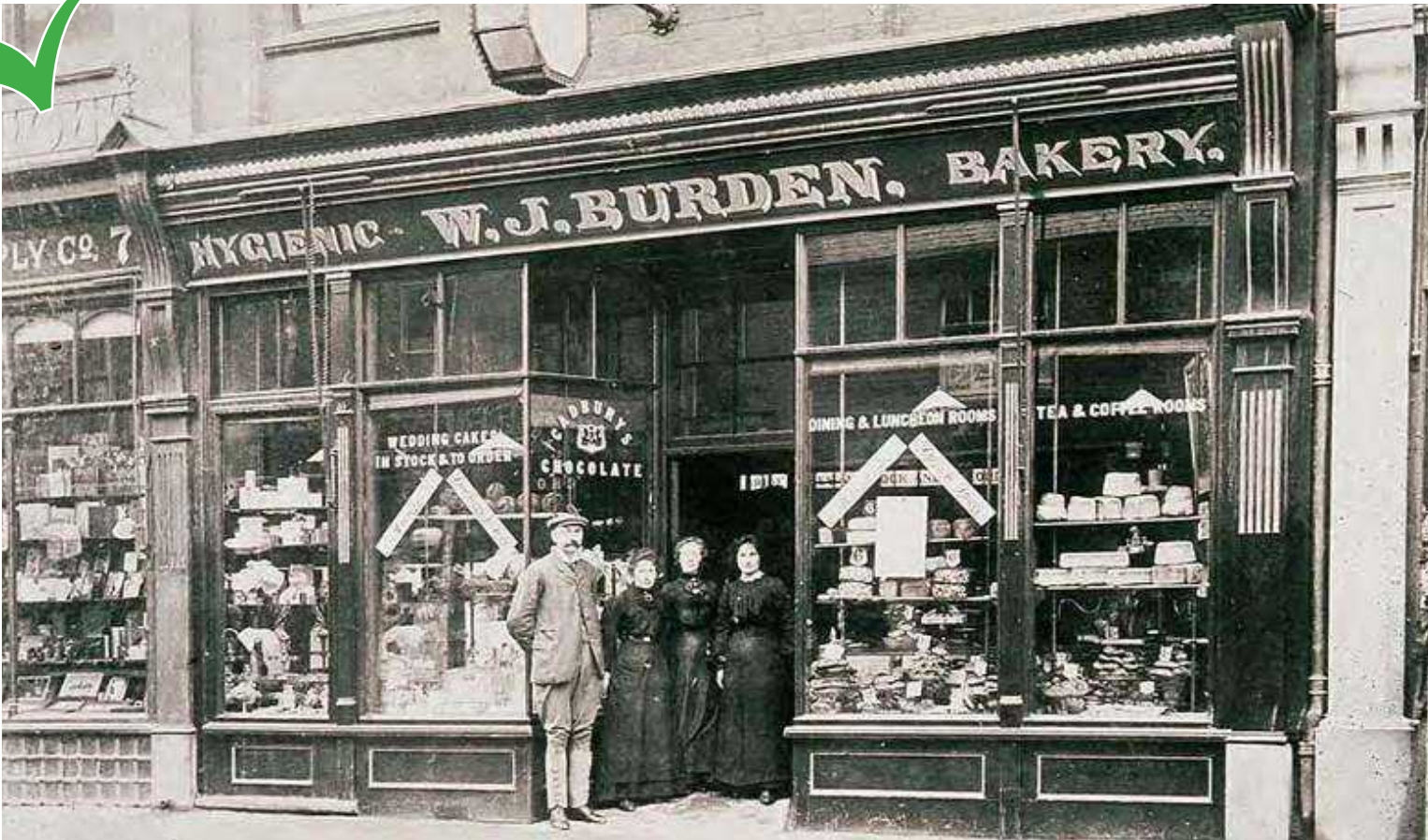
Create and maintain large, glass, street-level storefronts with 80% or more of their area open. Limit window obstructions to de-clutter windows and provide interior views. Recessed entryways offer protection from the elements.



AWNINGS AND FIXED SHADING  
OPTIONS ARE MUCH MORE  
APPROPRIATE THAN WINDOW  
TINTING AND BLINDS



Using privacy panels and screening can allow visual access into the public areas of an office, with private areas hidden from view. Make sure panels are 5' or more from windows.



Use historically appropriate sash and sill profiles when replacing storefront windows.



Uncluttered windows and storefront displays provide visual interest for pedestrians.

APPROPRIATE INTERIOR LIGHTING CAN CALL  
ATTENTION INTO YOUR SPACE WHEN PAIRED  
WITH GOOD VISUAL ACCESS.



Large windows and plenty of lighting draw attention into the storefront - attracting customers into an inviting space.

## [B] Windows:

When selecting window packages, colors and sash profiles should be selected to compliment existing architectural character. Frame and sash profiles should be sized within existing window openings when possible - matching the size and dimension of historic or existing windows. Large openings should be broken up with smaller windows to create visual interest and repetition and avoid large uninterrupted surfaces.

Transom windows are typically horizontal bands of windows placed above the door height that continue across a storefront. These type of windows provide extra daylighting deeper into the storefront, as well as provide opportunities for signage, lighting, detail, and depth within the composition. **Existing transom windows that have been removed or covered up should be restored when possible.**



Historic doors, windows, and storefronts can have long lasting lifespans with the proper care and maintenance.

**Uncover and restore existing transom storefront windows.**

For commercial storefronts, **use of wood or aluminum-clad wood windows is preferred.** Anodized-aluminum windows can be specified to many historically sensitive colors, and dimensioned with appropriate sash and sill profiles.

**Vinyl windows are prohibited for all commercial renovations.** Vinyl windows are a residential product, typically come in limited colors, often have thin and flat sash profiles, and are less durable.

**Windows that have been tinted or treated with reflective coating are prohibited.** Glazing should be transparent and allow for daylighting and visual access.

Environmental considerations should be made during the selection of window units. When needed, **look for double paned insulated glass and provide thermal breaks to optimize energy performance within your commercial space.** Avoid using inefficient window systems that increase air infiltration and decrease energy performance.



Use a variety of window patterns and sizes on replacement windows to bring down the scale of large openings.



Do not use floor to ceiling windows or tinted glass.



Avoid long, uninterrupted, plain surfaces that don't establish a rhythm.  
Also avoid interrupting an existing horizontal or vertical rhythm.

Do use transom windows to add horizontal lines that break up height.  
Do establish a rhythmic pattern to break up storefronts with horizontal and vertical elements.



AVOID PUTTING UNSIGHTLY THINGS LIKE  
SATELLITE DISHES AND HVAC UNITS IN  
MAIN STREET FACING WINDOWS.



New window replacements should be sized to match existing opening sizes to maintain historic visual access



Restored transom windows can be used as signage.



Window displays can be changed seasonally, to showcase sale items or create a theme for your space. Keep your lights on during the night for additional curb appeal and street safety.



## [C] Doors

A door is the first interaction your customers will have with your business - so care should be taken to ensure a welcoming and inviting experience.

Uninterrupted full-glass and half-glass doors allow for visibility in and out. Do not use blackout windows, or windows treated with reflective coatings that prohibit views within and without.

Exterior doors that lead to residential second floors may be stile-and-rail doors without glass. The goal is that half-glass doors, and doors without glass should appear as “secondary” doors to pedestrians as compared to the full glass doors that lead to ground floor businesses.

Transoms above doors to second floors should be restored to allow for light to enter into the stairway.

For standard commercial storefronts, doors should be wood or steel, and match the building in profile and character. **Vinyl is not an acceptable alternative.**



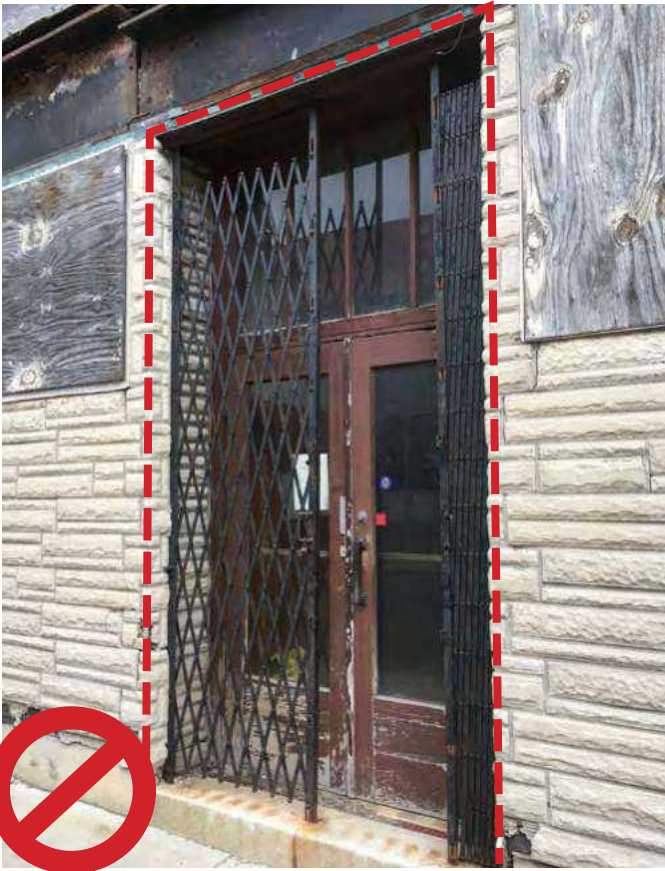
Stile and rail doors communicate a residential entry - ensure the style of the door is compatible with the building.

**Residential entry doors should appear secondary to commercial entries.**

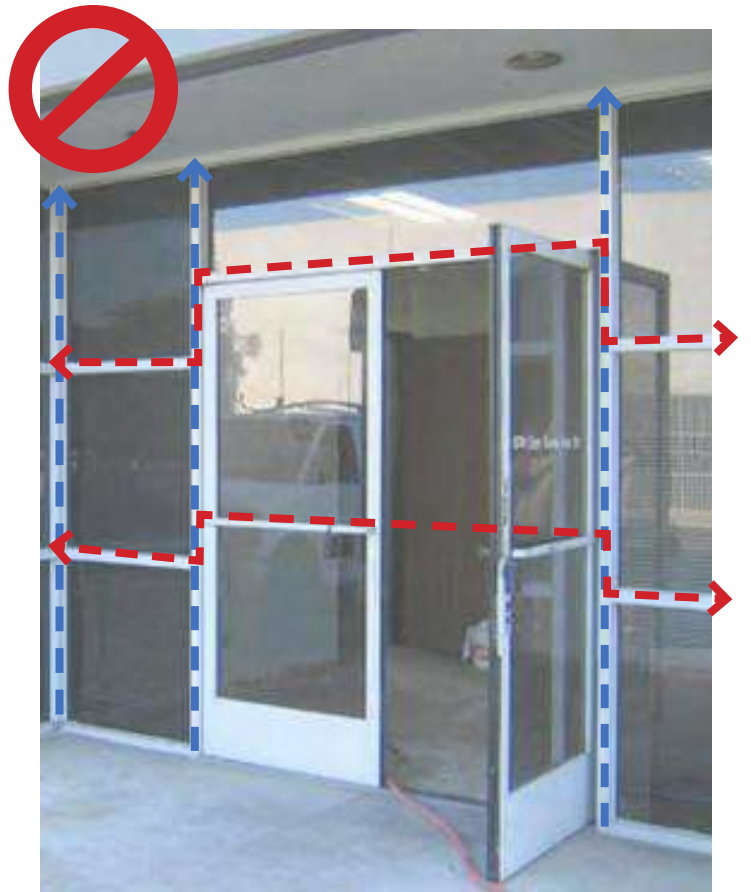
Under no circumstances should doors be covered by exterior rolling shutters or gates of any kind. These “safety” solutions only increase the appearance of crime without any regard for real statistics of commercial break-ins. Security alarms, cameras, and guards can offer alternative methods of alleviating crime that do not detract from the appearance or perceived safety of the area.



Do provide clear signage when doors are not in use.



Don't use rolling shutters or retractable "safety" gates, they create the appearance of crime.



Don't use aluminum storefront and door systems with different size profiles, or blackout windows.



Do use full glass entry doors for storefronts.



When half-glass doors are used for apartments, use an address number or door signage to help indicate residential use.

**A**



**30**

**B**



**REGINALD'S**  
**CAFE & BISTRO**

**C**



**HOURS**  
M-F: 8AM-10PM  
SAT: 8AM-12PM  
SUN: CLOSED

**D**



**REGINALDSCAFE.COM**  
**585.123.7654**

# Full glass door signage template

Door signage is often the most information heavy sign on a storefront, indicating the name of your business, hours of operation, website and phone number. Typically signage is a vinyl decal, which is ideal as it is both inexpensive and easy to replace if information changes. The following guide will go over some general rules of thumb when designing a door sign:

**Color** - Lettering on a full glass door should typically be white or a light color. This helps the lettering to be legible by contrasting with the often dark tones of unlit glass during the daytime.

**(A) Street Number** - Important for first time customers looking for your business, the street number should go at the top of the door. In instances where there is a transom window above the door with no awning present, the street number can also be placed there. Lettering should be a minimum of 4" tall.

**(B) Store logo and name** - The logo/name of your business should be at eye level so customers can easily see it when looking for the entry. To create a hierarchy of information, the logo and name should be larger than the rest of the information. If your business has a tag line, this should go underneath the logo.

**(C) Store Hours** - for ease of use, store hours should be consolidated to as few lines of text as possible. Try to keep "closed" days at the bottom of the list, with open hours at the top for easy reading. Hours should be located near the center of the door close to the handle/pushbar.

**(D) Contact information** - As the lowest piece of information in the hierarchy, the contact information should be on the bottom quarter of the door. Contact information is less important on a door because your customer has to already be there to read it - making contact relatively easy.



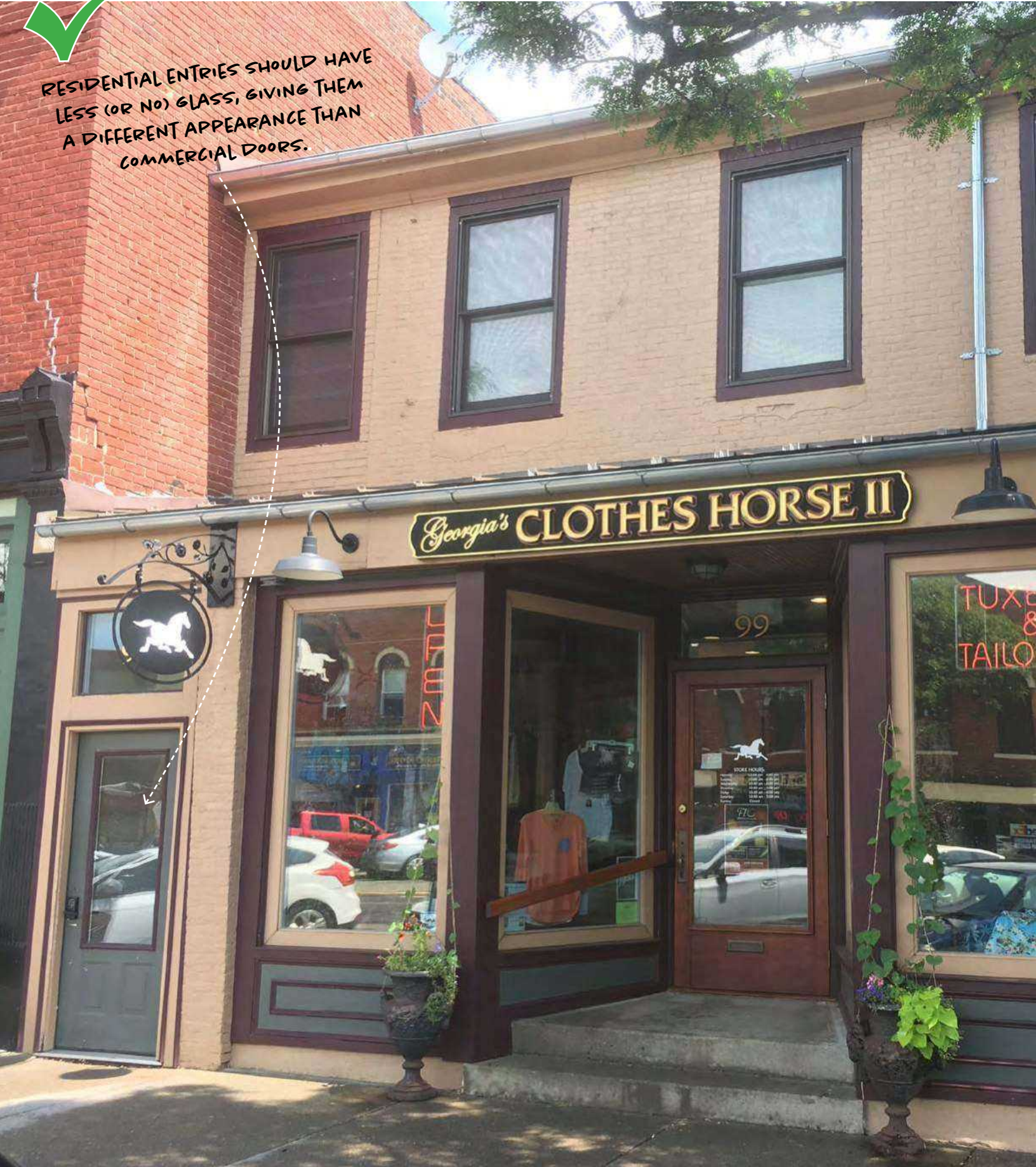
Simple, legible door signage with hierarchy and contrast.



Use light colored or white lettering to ensure contrast with the dark tones of glass.



RESIDENTIAL ENTRIES SHOULD HAVE LESS (OR NO) GLASS, GIVING THEM A DIFFERENT APPEARANCE THAN COMMERCIAL DOORS.



Use full size glass doors for commercial entryways on storefronts.



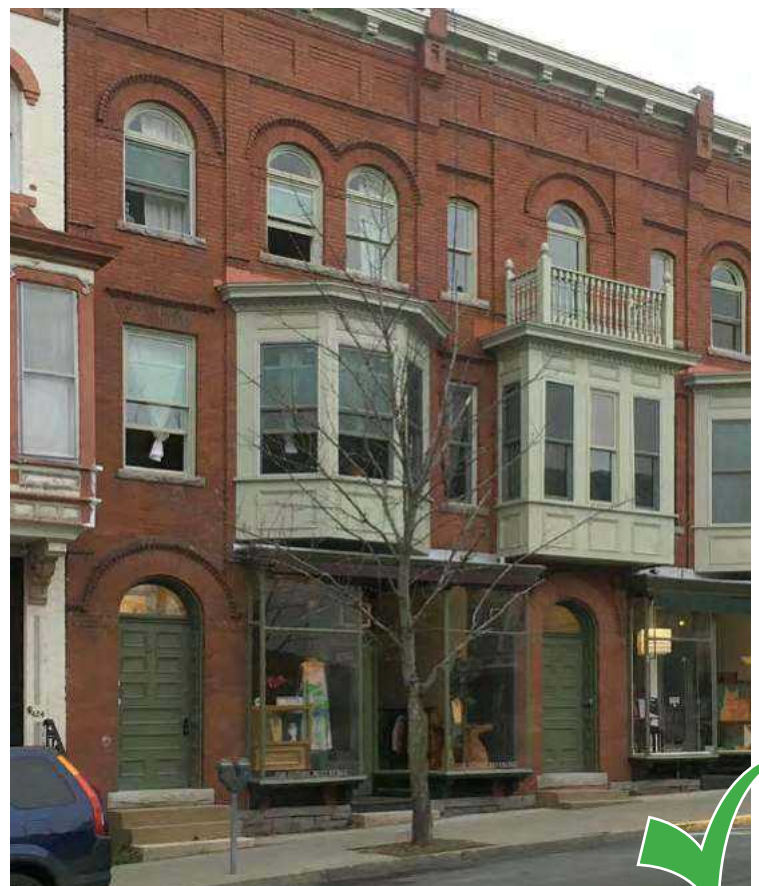
Restore and maintain historic entry doors.



Doors can accentuate and enhance historical detailing.



Detailing and colors from the storefront can be added to doors.



Access to residential floors should use solid or semi-transparent doors to avoid being mistaken for commercial doors.