

Turn of the Century Styles Commercial Vernacular



Most “Main Street” commercial buildings from the first quarter of the twentieth century can be categorized as “commercial vernacular.” Typically of brick construction with finished red, buff, or brown brick used in the facade, these buildings were one to three stories and could be free - standing or contiguous with buildings on either side. They consist of three parts: a ground level of storefronts, a middle level of windows illuminating the commercial or residential uses of the upper story(s), and a top, either a parapet or a cornice.

Often detailing was derived from many Revival styles and was executed either in differently colored brick or in brick patterns, terra cotta, or cast stone. Storefronts were usually composed of a bulkhead (wood in the earliest examples, tile or bakelite in later eras), display windows, a glazed entry, and a transom which banded the entire composition. Upper story windows could be flat headed or have segmented arches.



Commercial Vernacular - *Common character defining features*

Windows (pg. 53)

- Four-over-four, Six-over-six
- Rectangular tops
- Arranged in pairs or threes
- Shutters

Porches/Balconies (pg. 62)

- Relatively restrained
- Small in size
- Square or round columns

Doorways (pg. 58)

- Single
- Rectangular

Roofs (pg. 66)

- Side gabled

Building Materials (pg. 74)

- Shingles
- Clapboard