Façade Design Recommendations:

Topics covered in this section include:
Sweet Home's Commercial Architecture Style
Traditional Downtown Storefront Features
Façade Rehab Recommendations
- *Hardware Store Rehab*
- *Main Street Blockface Rehab*
- *Solar Way Update*

Sweet Home's Commercial Architecture Style

Sweet Home's downtown commercial district is primarily comprised of small-scaled buildings that are two stories, or less, in height. Many of the storefronts are built out of concrete block - - which means that for the most part, they are very 'flat' and plain in appearance. That said, Sweet Home is fortunate to have some nice, traditional architectural landmarks in downtown, including the Rio Theater and Molly's Bakery building on Main, and the Feed Store on Long. Downtown also has some unique local architectural landmarks on Main Street that include the A&W and walk-up Dairy Queen - - helping to give this largely non-descript commercial district a 'fifties' look and feel. While on-site, the Resource Team considered ways to play on the 50's kitsch, without going overboard. The recommendations that follow show a good variety of building rehab ideas that respect and support elements of good downtown design, while offering some innovative façade rehab ideas.

Before specific façade rehab recommendations are discussed, it is important to understand the features of traditional downtown storefronts and why they are critical to pedestrian movement (and a vital downtown district).

Traditional Downtown Storefront Features

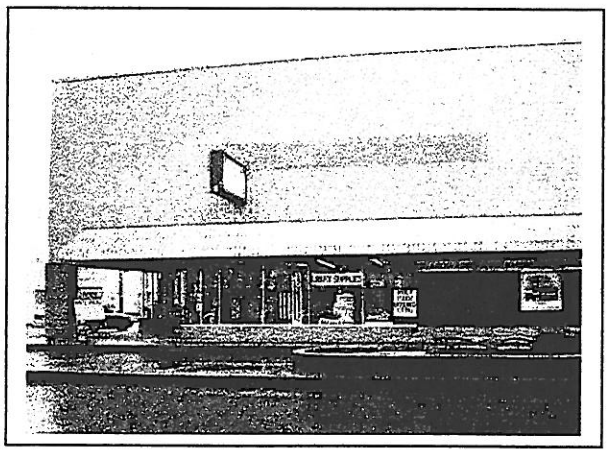
One of the goals of downtown revitalization is to have a continuous line of storefronts that encourage browsing through the design of the buildings, coupled with interesting and appealing shop windows.

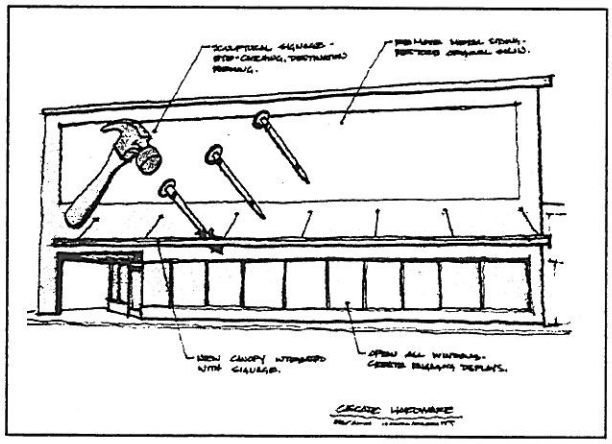
The following is a list of building features that help contribute to walkable, pedestrian friendly downtowns.

Building features that contribute to inviting downtowns include:

- Respect for history: rehabilitating existing historic buildings by keeping true to their original character; and by *referencing* Sweet Home's commercial style in new infill development (but not exactly replicating it).
- Buildings that directly address the sidewalk, rather than set back behind parking.
- Buildings that offer sidewalk protection for pedestrians, i.e. canopies or awnings.
- Transparent storefronts at the street level, i.e. large clean, appealing windows.
- Bulkheads below the storefront windows (visually "anchoring" the building to the site).
- Recessed storefront entries.
- Breakup of the horizontal building lines with vertical structural elements.
- Upper levels of buildings punctuated with rhythmic use of vertically proportioned windows.
- Articulated parapets that vary in height and character from building to building.
- Absence of blank walls or empty lots. Studies show that pedestrians will not walk along long empty lots or blank walls in a downtown setting, they will cross the street or turn around to avoid these areas. For maximum *browsibility*, a downtown needs a consistent, continuous line of storefronts that is not broken up by vacant lots, blank walls, parking lots and drive-thrus.

Hardware Store Rehab





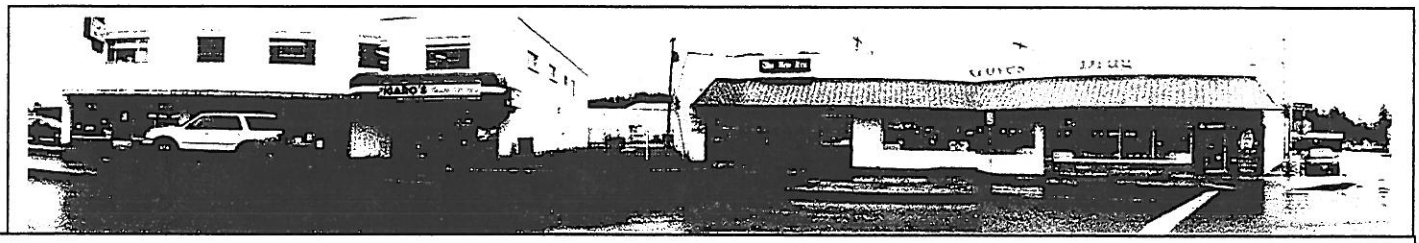
A color version of the 'after' graphic is included in the Appendix.

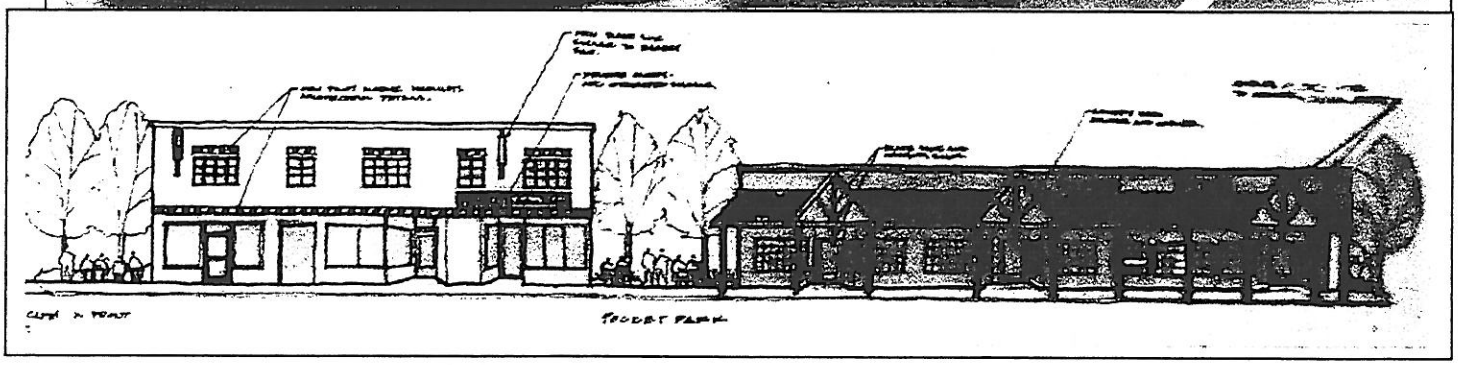
The Resource Team thought this downtown storefront was the perfect candidate for a façade rehab that was interesting and *fun!* As it exists, there is little visual interest to captivate the passerby. The following are recommendations to give this tired-looking façade a new lease on life!

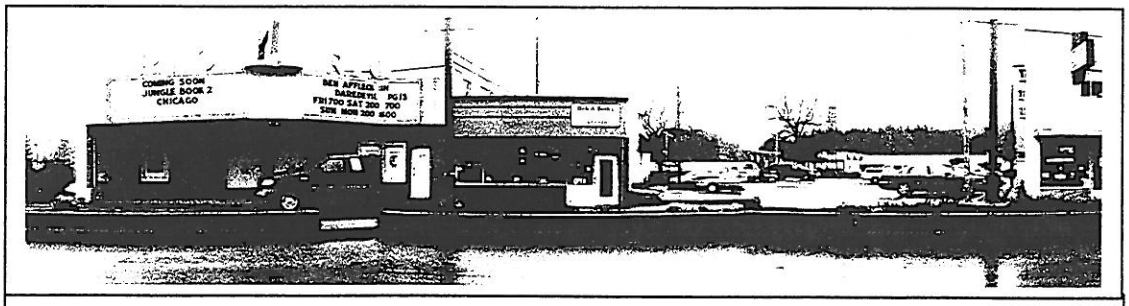
- Remove the metal sheathing covering the top half of the building; restore the original storefront.
- Install three-dimensional sculptural storefront signage that is eye-catching, unique and helps create a new, fun look for downtown.
- Install a new canopy that integrates with new signage.
- Uncover all the ground floor display windows and fill them with engaging store displays.

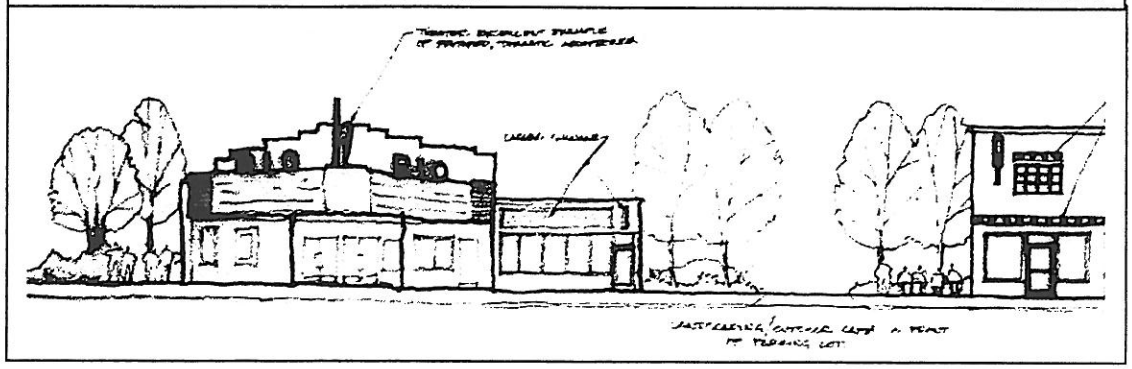
Main Street Blockface Rehab

(Color versions of the 'afters' are in the Appendix.)







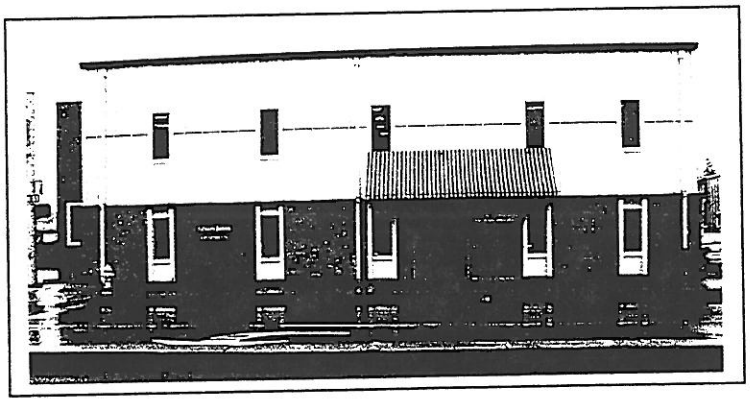


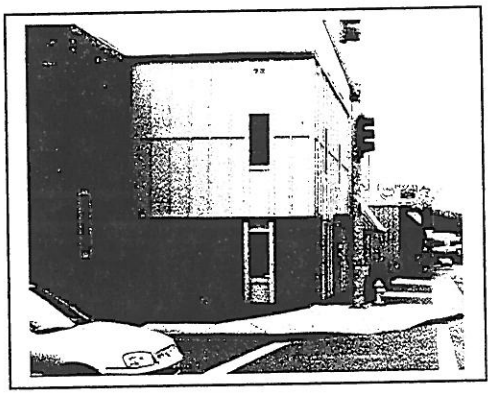
The Resource Team explored façade solutions for a blockface along Main Street, from the Rio Theater to Grove's Pharmacy. The recommended updates for the buildings complement each other. Open spaces between the buildings are addressed by 'greening them up' and making them more people friendly and the street, as a whole, more cohesive.

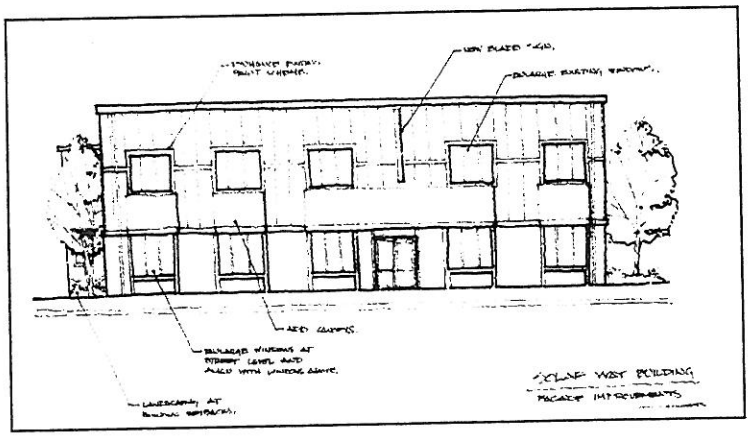
Beginning with Grove's Pharmacy, the recommended blockface improvements include:

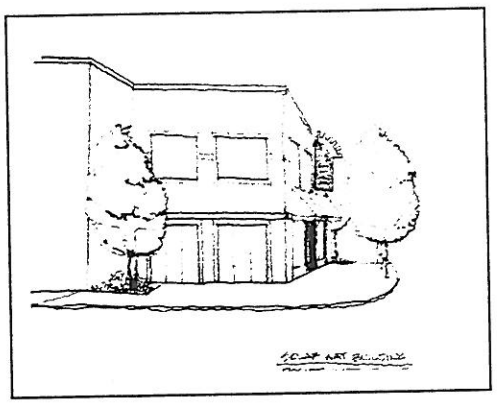
- Add attractive entrance-defining gables (with columns) at each store entrance, including wrapping the gable treatment around the corner of the pharmacy to better address and announce its corner entrance. Articulating the façade with this type of treatment will give it more visual interest and breakup its long, linear look through the use of vertical elements.
- A unified color palette on this building will make it appear more cohesive.
- Larger, storefront windows that are filled with great displays (displays that match from one storefront to the next) will also make this group more cohesive in appearance and 'browser friendly.'
- Attractive blade signs are needed to better announce each business, especially for pedestrians.
- Between the newspaper office and Figaro's is a great opportunity to create a downtown pocket park that includes trees, lighting, a plaza and outdoor seating/dining options. This space could also provide a connection to Long Street, as well as serve as a wonderful open space amenity.
- For the building that houses Figaro's and Mollie's Bakery, the Team recommends punching out an opening on the side of Figaro's facing the pocket park to encourage activity and park use. This will also keep more eyes on this space that has suffered from vandalism in the past.. There is also an opportunity to create an inviting outdoor café/seating area adjacent to the bakery (in front of the parking lot). The addition of street trees and landscaping on both sides of the driveway would help create visual rhythm and continuity and 'green' without sacrificing any of the sidewalk.
- The Team recommends that the original canopy of the entire building be restored. This includes the removal of the plastic, bubble awning at Figaro's.
- A new paint scheme would also improve the looks of this building - - one that better highlights the interesting 'diamond' architectural details through the use of complementary colors that tie into the art deco look of this building. Because of the building's scale and location, it has the potential to be a nice 'bookend' to the Rio Theater -- any rehab of the façade should reflect that opportunity. (The Rio Theater is an excellent example of restored, thematic architecture.)
- New blade signage, similar to Mollie's Bakery, would be a nice addition for Figaro's, along with flat signage over the canopy.
- The recommendation for the storefront adjacent to the Rio, includes the use of larger flat signage that would help announce this great little space, and the addition of perpendicular blade signage.

Solar Way Updates









Downtown Sweet Home has an interesting example of cutting edge solar technology of its time. The Solar Way building was developed in the late seventies. It is very unusual to find these types of energy-smart buildings in small towns, so the discovery of this building during the Resource Team's visit was fun. The development of this building also points to the fact that this community is not afraid of new ideas, or more complex solutions. The Solar Way building offers a good perspective on the history of solar buildings. Its current street front façade is based on 'knowledge of the time,' with small windows on the north side of the street (Main Street). Since that building was developed, there have been advancements in windows and glazing. New and large, inviting storefront windows on this type of building will not lead to heat loss.

Recommended updates to the Solar Way building include:

- Replace existing street front windows with larger, more appropriate sized windows for a downtown district. Tripling the size of the windows, while keeping the original window proportions on both levels, will help make this building more attractive. The existing windows look out of scale and do not promote downtown 'browsability.' When enlarged, the windows on both levels should be aligned.
- Additional canvas awnings over the ground floor windows would also soften the building's appearance and create a more unified street façade.

- The building's appearance would also benefit from enhancing the existing paint scheme.
- A new, interesting blade sign on the building would also better identify it.
- The building could also benefit from landscape plantings at either end, with the potential to create a small pocket green space at the corner where the building steps back. (This area is also designated as a streetscape furnishings zone on the overall downtown plan.)