



MICHIGAN MAIN STREET

DESIGN ASSISTANCE DESCRIPTION

State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
702 W. Kalamazoo Street
P.O. Box 30740
Lansing, MI 48909-8240

Historic preservation of our downtowns and traditional commercial districts is one of the primary cornerstones to long-term and sustainable economic development within our communities. In order to help maintain, strengthen, and capitalize on a community's historic resources, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) offers Michigan Main Street (MMS) communities in the Selected and Master Levels the opportunity to provide design assistance to individual property and business owners.

The design assistance provides important information and recommendations on exterior façade improvements that will improve the appearance and visibility of the building and business while also maintaining the historic integrity of the building and making it functional for the owner's current needs. The design assistance includes either an on-site visit at the building or phone interview with the property/business owner and the local Main Street manager (or design committee representative). All recommendations follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation as developed by the National Park Service and could help qualify property owners for financial incentives to complete improvements.

In order to be eligible to receive design assistance, a property/business owner's building must be within the local Main Street area and be zoned for commercial or mixed-use. The building does not have to be considered "historic" in order to be eligible. Individual owner-occupied or rental residences are not eligible to receive design assistance.

Types of Design Assistance Available

Depending on the needs of the property/business owner, there are several different types of design assistance available from the State Historic Preservation Office:

Preservation and Design Consultation – Either on-site visit or phone interview with the property/business owner, local Main Street manager (or design committee representative), and MMS Design Specialist discussing: short-term maintenance and repair needs, historically-sensitive design solutions, paint colors, awnings, and signage. This service is intended to be a "quick response" for property/business owners who will begin work on their buildings in the very near term but are seeking some basic guidance.

- Deliverables: Minimal, if any – a brief summary of the discussion, a quick sketch, paint samples, and/or any requested follow-up information could be provided depending on the project. Delivery time will vary between one day to one week.
- Limit: None

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Design Services – An on-site visit with the property/business owner, local Main Street manager (or design committee representative), and MMS Design Specialist discussing: short and long-term façade improvements, major and minor maintenance and repair needs, paint colors, awning, signage and lighting options. This service is intended to be more detailed and has the potential to be used in grant applications, fundraising plans, real estate marketing materials, business recruitment packages, and design education and awareness projects.

- Deliverables: Design package that includes: schematic color façade drawing, paint samples, example photos, and technical or supplemental information to support the recommendations shown in the drawing. Delivery time will vary at different times of the year so please allow 6-12 weeks after the on-site visit.
- Limit: Up to three (3) per year with a maximum of fifteen (15) provided to the MMS community

Historic Tax Credit Assistance – Either on-site visit or phone interview with the property/business owner, local Main Street manager (or design committee representative), and one of the SHPO's historical architects that would be involved in the tax credit review process. The meeting will discuss the feasibility of utilizing historic tax credits, the application process, potential design concerns, and financing/budget factors.

- Deliverables: None – a brief summary of the discussion and any requested follow-up information could be provided depending on the project.
- Limit: None

Applying for Design Assistance

In order for a property/business owner to receive design assistance, he/she must complete ALL of the following: a) a "Design Assistance Request Form" and return it to the local Main Street manager, b) attend a basic design/historic preservation training (either provided locally or by the MMS Design Specialist), c) seek approval by the local design committee (if needed), and d) fulfill any other requirements the local Main Street program may have in place. The local Main Street manager, in correlation with the MMS Design Specialist, will determine which type of design assistance will best suit the needs of the property/business owner.

Once all design assistance requirements are met, the local Main Street manager (or design committee representative) will send the request form to the MMS Design Specialist and coordinate either an on-site visit or phone interview.

Follow-Up

After design assistance has been provided, the MMS Design Specialist will be available by telephone or email to answer any questions regarding the project from the property/business owner or the local Main Street manager. After completion of the project, the property/business owner is required to submit photos of the completed project and final project costs to both the local Main Street program and the Michigan Main Street program.