

Storefront Improvements

Cornice

The cornice is a significant decorative and unifying piece of the storefront. Be sure to preserve existing materials.

Signage

Signs provide the best space to advertise the name of a business. Effective signs are simple; they are not too large and fit within the scale of the building.

Transom Window

Transom windows allow for more light to enter the store. Keep them clear of opaque materials like cardboard or air conditioning units.

Display Window

Display windows provide a great opportunity to show off merchandise. Be sure to limit the amount of signs and posters. Small decals are an effective and inexpensive alternative.



Windows

Upper floor windows should be kept clear of signs and existing detail should be preserved and maintained.

Lighting

Lighting is used to illuminate signage and display windows. Good lighting is both eye-catching to shoppers and enhances safety.

Awning

Awnings add depth to the storefront and protect shoppers and window displays from sun and bad weather. They should fit appropriately above windows and doors and not project too far over the sidewalk.

Security

Security is important for protecting businesses and making customers feel safe. Open-grille security gates can be installed on the interior or exterior of the store. Interior is preferred, as it allows for a clean storefront and greater visibility.

Bulkhead

Bulkheads create a defined platform for window displays and are located at the base of the storefront. They should be proportionate to the size of the building.

Following these guidelines will help business owners attract customers, save money, promote a safe and appealing neighborhood, and follow City regulations.

Learn more at:
nyc.gov/storefronts



careers
businesses
neighborhoods

Top 10 storefront design tips

1 Less is more

The simpler the design, the better. Too much clutter makes it difficult for shoppers to see your business and take notice. One well-placed sign will grab the most attention.

2 Rethink security gates

Replacing your security gate with an electronic security system will increase the visual appeal of your business. If you must have a gate, an open-grille gate mounted on the interior of your store will improve nighttime security and allow customers to window shop after hours.

3 Choose quality materials

Cheap materials break down and often need replacing. If your storefront is in disrepair, shoppers will be discouraged from entering.

4 Know who you're hiring

Most storefront work, including installation of awnings and large signs, requires a permit from the NYC Department of Buildings. Architects, engineers, and sign hangers must be licensed and insured.

5 Don't forget maintenance

Clean windows and awnings regularly, and keep signs, bulkheads, and lighting in good repair. A fresh coat of paint is a good investment as is regular repair of brick or masonry.

6 Show your building's history

Beautiful historic buildings are often covered by layers of modern materials. Removing these layers may reveal historic detail that will add character and draw attention to your store.

7 Know your neighborhood

Each neighborhood has its own unique character. Ensure the look of your storefront emphasizes this character and appeals to local customers.

8 Make it easy to see into your store

Let your merchandise speak for itself. Clear windows with minimal signage invite customers into stores and make for a more secure environment.

9 Use inviting lighting

Install lighting to showcase signage, window displays, or other building details. It makes the storefront and the rest of the street more pleasant.

10 Remember: Keep it simple!