

INTRODUCE DESIGN CONCEPTS AND GOALS THAT WILL  
INCREASE BUILDING

SECURITY

AND  
PROMOTE PEDESTRIAN

INTEREST FOR STORES

KENSINGTON  
AVENUE

## FACADE DESIGN GUIDELINES



IDENTIFY  
AVAILABLE  
FUNDING  
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

ESTABLISH A BLUEPRINT  
FOR A MORE COHESIVE  
COMMERCIAL  
CORRIDOR  
WITH A GREATER

PRESENCE

TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS



PREPARED FOR: OFFICE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

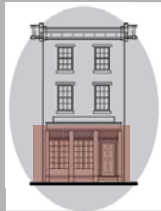


Kensington Avenue Facade Design Guidelines

Prepared by BAU Architecture

# INTRODUCTION:

## TABLE OF CONTENTS



### STOREFRONT: Page 4

Entrance and display space. Most active business portion of the building. Also the pedestrian zone.



### SIGNAGE: Page 6

Historic and contemporary sign ideas, locations, and restrictions.



### UPPER LEVELS: Page 7

Upper portion of the building including windows, cornices, and architectural details.



### CASE STUDIES: Page 8

Examples of specific building types common along Kensington Avenue and suggested fixes for common problems.



Diagram showing the basic architectural rhythm present in the typical Kensington Avenue row building.

## INTRODUCTION TO KENSINGTON AVENUE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Kensington Avenue is a vibrant and diverse commercial corridor that extends 22 blocks through the city's Kensington and Port Richmond neighborhoods. While the full length of Kensington Avenue is an important element of the city; these design guidelines will be focusing on the southern gateway corridor. This encompasses the 2400 through 2600 blocks of Kensington Avenue. The recommendations made in the following pages will also prove helpful to the remaining corridor portions not represented in the gateway.

### How will you benefit from reading these guidelines?

This guide was created with you, the business owner, in mind. You will be provided with tips and information on how to utilize and upgrade your building to help grow your business.

### Why were these guidelines created?

Kensington Avenue is a diverse and engaging community. Because the Market Frankford line runs through the heart of the commercial corridor, Kensington Avenue is in a unique position having the potential to attract business from other neighborhoods in the city. These guidelines offer suggestions about changes you can make to help improve your business' competitive advantage.



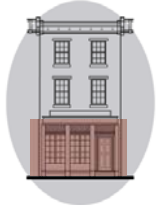
# NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS:

- Two Market Frankford El stops lie within commercial corridor
- Community Center
- (4) neighborhood schools
- Community garden with potential to grow food locally.
- Social services
- Historic vacant buildings that new business ventures can occupy.
- Diverse business base along corridor serves many needs of area residents.
- Public art and mural presence that can be expanded.
- Transitional Housing
- Temple Episcopal Hospital Campus
- Visitation Blessed Virgin Mary Church
- Mixed Use-Residential and Industrial





# STOREFRONT: ELEMENTS



## AWNINGS

### Variety

There are a variety of awning styles available on the market. Careful consideration should be given to deciding which style best fits your business image.

### Fabric

Using Sunbrella fabric on your awnings is recommended. Long term this material is more durable than vinyl, and is better guaranteed against fading and tearing.

### Text & Graphics

Keep text and graphics on your awning to a minimum, as this makes it easier for people on the street to quickly learn what your business is all about.

## TRANSOMS & DOORS

### Maintain

Replace transoms over doors and windows that have been boarded up or filled in over the years. This helps restore the historic integrity of the corridor.

### Light

Transoms allow more natural light into your business, creating a pleasant environment for customers, and saving on energy costs by reducing lighting electricity needs.

### View

Entry doors should have glass viewing panels. This allows customers to see inside, and increases safety by preventing the door from opening into another person.



## SECURITY GRILLS

### Open Grills

Open security grills like those shown are recommended instead of solid gates.

### Visibility & Security

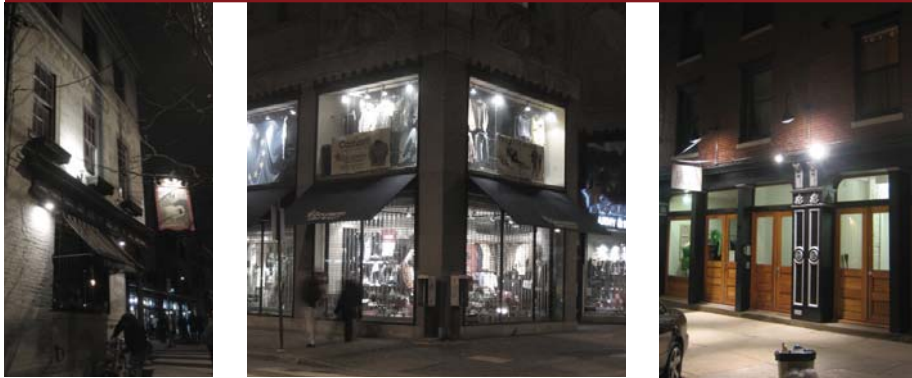
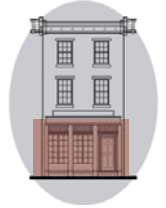
Open grills increase security by providing visibility into and out of your business. Open grills are also less likely to be hit with graffiti. Most graffiti artists prefer to tag solid surfaces where their images will show clearly.

### Hidden Housing

Security grill cases should be placed up inside awnings whenever possible. This creates a sleeker and more inviting storefront look.



# STOREFRONT: ELEMENTS



## LIGHTING

### Visibility

Adding exterior lighting to your business creates visibility after hours, highlights unique architectural features, deters crime, and increases safety for sidewalk traffic.

### Direct Down

Select light fixtures that are similar in style to those on other buildings along the corridor, and direct light down towards the sidewalk or building face. Avoid fixtures that spread a lot of light in all directions, this creates light pollution.

### Environmental Cost

Outfit light fixtures with compact florescent or LED bulbs to save energy costs.

## ACCESSIBILITY

### Rails

Provide sturdy railings at steps leading into your building. This makes it easier for seniors, and those with limited mobility, to enter and give you their business.

### Space

Avoid placing display racks or merchandise where it will encroach on the building entrance. This is a safety issue and can make it hard to enter and exit your business.

### Ramps

Provide ADA compliant ramps whenever possible. Ramps like those at right have a shallow 1:12 slope; making it easy for individuals to travel up and down them.



## EXTERIOR DISPLAY ELEMENTS

### Retractable Awnings

Retractable awnings provide a simple solution for protecting merchandise, such as produce or mobile clothing racks that are outside temporarily, and increase customer comfort while looking at merchandise. These awnings also work well for outdoor dining.

### Security Grill Display & Awnings

An innovative design solution, (shown at far left) created by Agoos/Lovera Architects with the Community Design Collaborative, creates a clean comprehensive storefront display and security system. Parts of the grill, that cover the window after hours, fold out and up to form a protective awning and display space for merchandise. Meanwhile, the door grill opens out and becomes a message center for neighborhood activities.

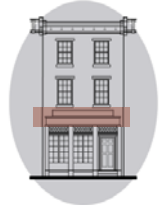


Courtesy of Community Design Collaborative and Agoos/Lovera Architects





# SIGNAGE: ELEMENTS



## BUILDING SIGNAGE

### Architectural Details

Avoid placing signs over architectural details. This detracts from your building's natural character, making it look less appealing.

### Maintenance

Keep all signage in good repair, and set up a maintenance schedule. Investing in quality materials when purchasing new signage contributes to less frequent replacement over time.

### Exterior Illumination

Avoid using internally lit plastic box signs. Instead, hang signs and illuminate them with attractive exterior lights. This adds a cohesive element to the corridor.

## WINDOW DISPLAY SIGNAGE

### Open

Completely covering windows with advertisements is against code and makes the business less inviting to potential customers. Leave the majority of the window area clear.

### Clean & Clear

Signage in windows should be clean, easy to read, and memorable. Leave room around the text or graphics to allow people passing by to see into the business.

### Protect

Graffiti resistant coatings can be applied to glass to make it easier to clean if it does get tagged; saving business owners time and money.



## MURALS AS SIGNAGE

### Appeal

Murals can be a fun and bold way to advertise the nature of your business, while also increasing the aesthetic appeal for the entire neighborhood.

### Local Artists

Hire or involve local artists whenever possible, select artists with a strong knowledge of mural making and the local community. The City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program is a great resource.

### Community

Be creative. Use designs that reflect Kensington's unique history and character.

## Kensington Avenue Facade Design Guidelines

Prepared by BAU Architecture

# UPPER LEVELS: ELEMENTS



**CORNICE:** *A decorative moulding found along a building's roof or above a storefront*

## Restore

Cornices should be restored and repaired whenever possible. This maintains the historic character of the neighborhood.

## Color

Carefully selected complimentary colors add a lot of appeal to your business.

## Replace

Placing siding or plywood over existing cornices that are in poor repair detracts from the building's character, and interrupts unity along the corridor. Damaged cornices should be replaced with new ones that reflect the style of surrounding original cornices.

## WINDOWS

### Pattern

Looking down the length of Kensington Avenue, it is easy to see a historic window pattern appear.

### Replace

Boarded up and in-filled windows make a business look unwelcoming to the public and to potential customers. Such windows should be replaced.

### Light & Ventilation

Windows provide natural light and ventilation to the building interior, and also increase security by allowing police and passersby to see inside.



## MATERIALS

### Brick

Kensington Avenue has an abundance of brick buildings. This brick is beautiful when properly maintained. It is a reminder of Kensington's history and visually unifies the Avenue.

### Paint & Stucco

Invest in cleaning and repointing brick instead of painting or stuccoing over it. Paint and stucco may look nice for a short time, but can deteriorate much faster than brick.

### Maintain

A maintenance schedule for cleaning, re-painting, etc. should be established for all exterior materials to maximize your investment and keep your business looking its best. Using historically sensitive materials in new construction is recommended.





# CASE STUDY: THREE STORY ROW BUILDING



## BEFORE:



This building has a lot of promise. The original roof and storefront cornices are still intact. In addition, the brick is in good shape and just needs some cleaning. The biggest challenges are the missing upper story windows and the storefront that needs to be entirely replaced. Restoring the storefront in a similar style to what was originally there helps reestablish this building's historic integrity. The renovations also lend an inviting and eye pleasing feel to the facade.



Historic architectural **cornice** is clean and freshly painted to coordinate with the rest of the facade.

Boarded up **windows** have been replaced and trim repainted. This makes the building look much more welcoming.

**Brick** has been preserved and cleaned up.

Original **cornice** above the storefront has been preserved. This is an important building characteristic to maintain.

**Glass front door** makes it easy to identify the entrance.

**Historic storefront** has been restored. Allows room for display and gives passersby a view into the store, attracting new customers.



# CASE STUDY: GROUP OF ROW BUILDINGS



## BEFORE:



This Case Study focuses on what can be done when a series of adjacent row building are owned by the same individual. As they stand, nothing ties these three buildings together.

The owner replaced the existing shingle and aluminum awnings with new matching fabric ones. He also painted the cornices and window headers attractive, bold colors across all three buildings. The new colors highlight the historic architectural character of these structures. These changes will increase these business' street presence.

- Attractive contrasting **cornice** and lintel colors across all three buildings increase the business' street presence and highlights original **architectural details**.

- Matching **Sunbrella fabric awnings** increase pedestrian interest and create a unified look. Simple, clear text on the awning faces makes it easy to locate and identify the businesses inside. The awnings also hide the housing for the store's security grills.

- Exterior **lights** highlight the buildings' storefronts while increasing store security and pedestrians safety.

- **Brick** on all three buildings has been maintained and repointed where necessary. Details like star anchor bolts have also been preserved and not covered up.



- Open store **windows** allow ample room for display space and invite customers to enter.

- A simple, graphic **mural** on the side of the building, done by a neighborhood artist, advertises the services offered while playfully dressing up a vacant wall adjacent to an empty lot.

# CASE STUDY: BIG BOX BUILDING



## BEFORE:



A Large “box” type building like this offers a great opportunity to create a stronger street presence. Re-opening covered or bricked in windows makes a more pleasant and engaging environment on the street.

Adding colorful graphics to windows in storage areas helps advertise the business inside, hides unsightly contents behind windows and unifies the overall design. It is important to invest in see-through window graphics in place of opaque window graphics to maintain visibility and natural light inside your building.



● ● ● ● ● Exterior **lighting** highlights the new graphic over the existing window.

● ● ● ● ● **Awning** protects customers from weather while open, clear doors and transom make an inviting entrance. A level transition from the sidewalk into the store makes this business universally accessible to the public.

● ● ● ● ● Bricked over **windows** have been replaced. This energizes the streetscape for pedestrians, increases safety, and encourages customers to enter.





# CASE STUDY: SINGLE STORY BUILDING



## BEFORE:



This Case Study focuses on the unique single story buildings that occupy the corridor. These buildings differ from the traditional three story row-buildings with stores at street level.

While in good repair, this building gives passersby little clue as to what sort of services it offers. It also appears that additional protection from the elements is desired. The slope of the sidewalk in this area creates a step between sidewalk and floor level. These types of steps can be hard to see and makes it easier for individuals entering and leaving the building to trip.



- Retractable **awning** provides cover for merchandise and pedestrians outside of the store. Durable fabric is printed to match the mural on the building's front, this creates a clean, cohesive look when the awning is open.

- A locally sourced **mural** gives this building a strong street presence while doubling as advertising for the flower and produce store inside.



- Open store **windows** allow ample room for display space; making it easy to identify the business inside. Decorative boxes above the windows hide security grills when the awning is closed.

- **Glass shop door** allows views inside and encourages pedestrians to enter. The sidewalk has also been gently sloped up to the entrance to make the store fully accessible.

# CONCLUSION:



## SUMMARY

### Focus

In the fall of 2009 BAU Architecture was retained to establish a set of design guidelines for the gateway portion of Kensington Avenue's commercial corridor; specifically the 2400, 2500, and 2600 blocks. The focus of the guidelines was to establish a road map for business owners and community members to follow when planning renovations and construction projects along the corridor. BAU met with the Kensington Avenue Business Association to discuss owners' primary concerns and desires for the corridor's future.

### Goals

Main goals were established as a means to unify the corridor and promote this vibrant area as a destination to the surrounding neighborhoods:

Increase foot traffic

Increase security through open grills and decorative exterior lighting

Deter loitering

Maintain and enhance Kensington Avenue's historic character

Unify the corridor

### Conclusions

These guidelines outline BAU Architecture's final conclusions after studying the Kensington Avenue gateway region and its unique assets and opportunities. This region has the potential to share in the revitalization, and popularity that neighboring communities have experienced in recent years. By investing in upgrades and improvements to their buildings' facades; business owners can take an active hand in bringing this growth to the corridor. Both the businesses and surrounding community will profit from these efforts.

## SPECIAL THANKS:



ARCHITECTURE  
PLANNING  
RESEARCH  
DESIGN

7913 Park Avenue  
Elkins Park  
Pennsylvania 19027  
USA

Project Team: David Kratzer  
Melissa Van Slett  
Jennie VanDuyne



# APPENDIX A: RESOURCES:



## FUNDING SOURCES

### Storefront Improvement Program Philadelphia Department of Commerce

A City program that reimburses business owners for up to 50% of the cost to make approved storefront improvements. The program can reimburse up to \$8,000 for a single commercial property or up to \$12,000 for a corner property or multiple address business.

Requirements can be found at online at: : <http://business.phila.gov/Documents/Guidelines.pdf>

Contact: 215-683-2025  
One Parkway Building  
1515 Arch Street, 12th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

### GreenWorks Small Business Energy Efficiency Program Philadelphia Department of Commerce

A program that encourages business owners to improve the energy efficiency of their operations; resulting in lower operating costs and increased competitive advantage in the local marketplace. The program reimburses owners of commercial buildings and businesses who make energy efficiency improvements up to 50% of the cost of eligible improvements, up to a \$10,000 limit.

Contact: Jeremy Thomas  
Program Manager  
[jeremy.thomas@phila.gov](mailto:jeremy.thomas@phila.gov)

## DESIGN RESOURCES

### Office for Community Development Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Community resource for design development of facade improvements, and finding funding with which to make improvements. Also a good resource for help completing the design review and funding application process.

Contact: Mary Zagar-Brown  
Corridor Development Manager  
2646 Kensington Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19133  
215.425.4856  
<http://www.oed-phl.org/>

### Design Guidelines for Commercial Facade Improvements Philadelphia City Planning Commission

Design Guidelines issued by the City of Philadelphia to guide business owners through the design and implementation of building improvements.

A copy of the guidelines can be found online at: <http://www.philaplaning.org/plans/designguide.pdf> Paper copies can be obtained at the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

### Mural Arts Program City of Philadelphia

Excellent resource for mural information and planning. Call 215.685.0750 or visit <http://www.muralarts.org>

## CODES /ZONING/ PRESERVATION

### City of Philadelphia Licenses & Inspections (L&I)

For all questions regarding zoning, permits, construction, inspections, signage, etc. L&I can assist you.

Municipal Services Building  
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, 11th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
Call 311 inside Philadelphia or 215-686-8686 from outside of the City.  
Online at: <http://66.179.23.19/DP1/Metroplex/Philadelphia/customerservice/selectby-servno.asp>

### Community Preservation Program Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission.

For questions regarding renovations and revisions to historic buildings.  
Contact: Michel R. Lefèvre (Southeastern PA) 717.787.0771  
Online at: [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/phmc\\_home/1426](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/phmc_home/1426)

### Nation Parks Service Historic Preservation Guide

Excellent guideline for renovations and restorations of historic buildings.

[http://www.nps.gov/hps/TPS/standguide/preserve/preserve\\_storefronts.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hps/TPS/standguide/preserve/preserve_storefronts.htm)

# APPENDIX B: 2500 BLOCK CASE STUDY:

AFTER:



BEFORE:





# APPENDIX B: 2500 BLOCK CASE STUDY:

AFTER:



BEFORE:

