

MAINTAINING AN ATTRACTIVE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT  
DURING THE OFF-SEASON:  
GUIDELINES FOR VACANT AND CLOSED STORES



This store on Newtown Lane maintained a window display while closed during the off-season. The posters, placed four feet in from the window, provide visual interest while screening the interior.

Village of East Hampton



THE HOOK MILL  
ONE OF THE EARLY LONG ISLAND MILLS  
USED BY EARLY SETTLERS TO GRIND WHEAT,  
CORN AND OTHER GRAIN. BUILT IN 1808,  
IS STILL OPERATED OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

# VILLAGE OF EAST HAMPTON

*Settled 1648 - Incorporated 1920*

86 MAIN STREET

EAST HAMPTON, N.Y. 11937-2730

WWW.EASTHAMPTONVILLAGE.ORG

631-324-4150

FAX 631-324-4189

OFFICE OF

MAYOR



"HOME SWEET HOME"  
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN HOWARD  
PAYNE AND HIS FAMOUS SONG "HOME SWEET  
HOME". MAINTAINED BY THE VILLAGE AS A MUSEUM.

June 7, 2010

Dear Commercial Property Owner or Tenant:

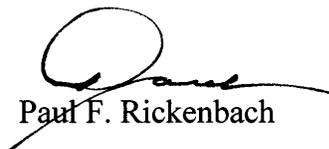
The Village is dedicated to maintaining the character and attractiveness of our commercial districts for the benefit of residents, store keepers and property owners alike. Our sign code, as administered by the Design Review Board, seeks to control signs so that they are a tasteful secondary element of the streetscape and do not detract from the overall ambience. The Village's philosophy is that no one business should stand out among its neighbors but that all businesses benefit from the overall attractiveness of a commercial area and of the Village as a whole.

The treatment of a vacant store or of a store that is closed during the winter can detract from the overall character of an area and can degrade the setting of neighboring businesses that remain open. Papered-over windows and disheveled empty storefronts diminish the life and vitality of the street.

These guidelines illustrate ways in which tenants and property owners can maintain attractive storefronts when a business is vacant or temporarily closed. The guidelines include options that close off the store interior from public view when desired.

The Village is available to assist in this effort.

Sincerely,



Paul F. Rickenbach

PFRJR

Encl.

cc. Board of Trustees

## MAINTAINING AN ATTRACTIVE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

### DURING THE OFF-SEASON:

### GUIDELINES FOR VACANT OR CLOSED STORES

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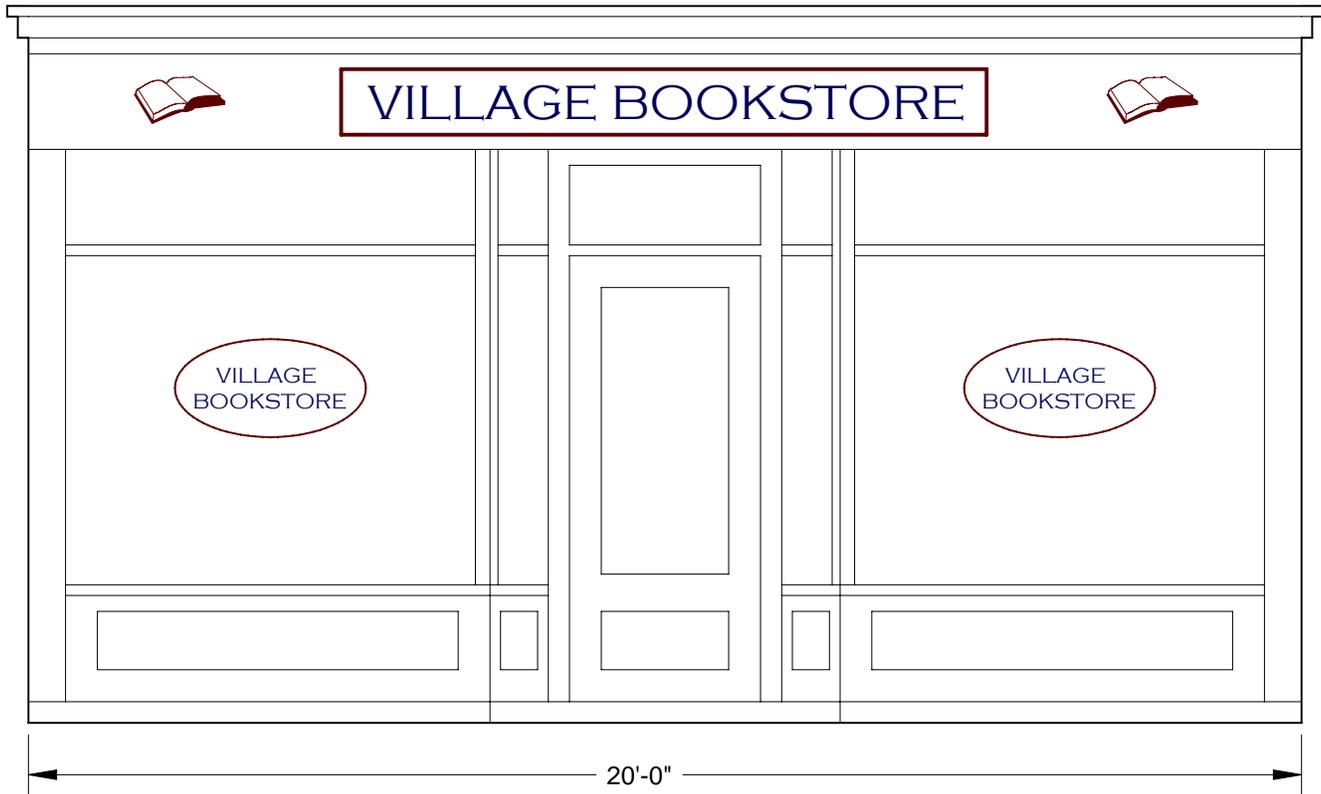
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## VILLAGE SIGN CODE: STOREFRONT SIGNS



The Village Code pertaining to signs for commercial buildings is summarized below. The sign code can be accessed on the internet by clicking the "Village Code" tab at [www.easthamptonvillage.org](http://www.easthamptonvillage.org). and then selecting Section 278 Zoning and subsection 278-4 Signs.

**PERMIT REQUIRED:** Approval for any sign must be obtained from the Design Review Board before the sign is installed. The sign application is available at Village Hall or on the internet by clicking the "Permits & Applications" tab at [www.easthamptonvillage.org](http://www.easthamptonvillage.org).

**DEFINITION OF A SIGN:** Any advertising structure, display board, screen, structure, shadow box, poster, mannequin, banner, pennant, cloth, bill, bulletin, painting, printing or other device or object or part thereof used to announce, identify, declare, demonstrate, display or in any manner advertise or attract the attention of the public by means of letters, words, figures or colors.

**DEFINITION OF A WINDOW SIGN:** Any sign placed on the inside (within no more than four feet) or outside of any window or door of any building which is visible from a sidewalk, street or other public place, not including merchandise on display.

**SIGN AREA:** A storefront may have a total sign area not exceeding one square foot for each horizontal foot of the storefront. Window signs shall occupy no more than 25% of the window area. The area of a sign shall be measured by the area of the largest rectangle required to enclose the sign. The storefront illustrated above, which is 20' wide, has the maximum sign area of 20 square feet. The principal sign is 9 s.f., each window sign is 4.5 s.f. and each book logo is 1 s.f.

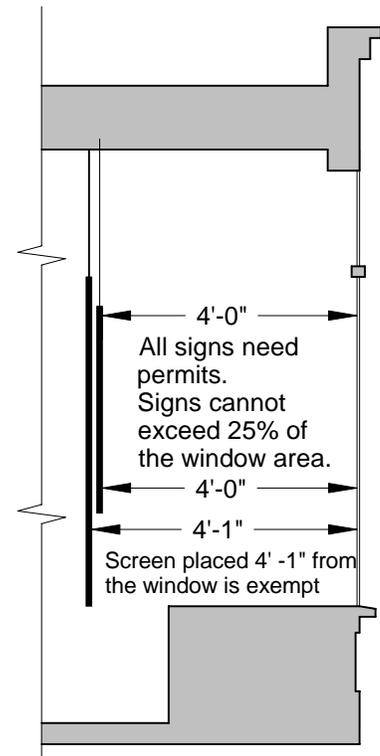
# VILLAGE SIGN CODE: WINDOW PAPER WITH GRAPHICS



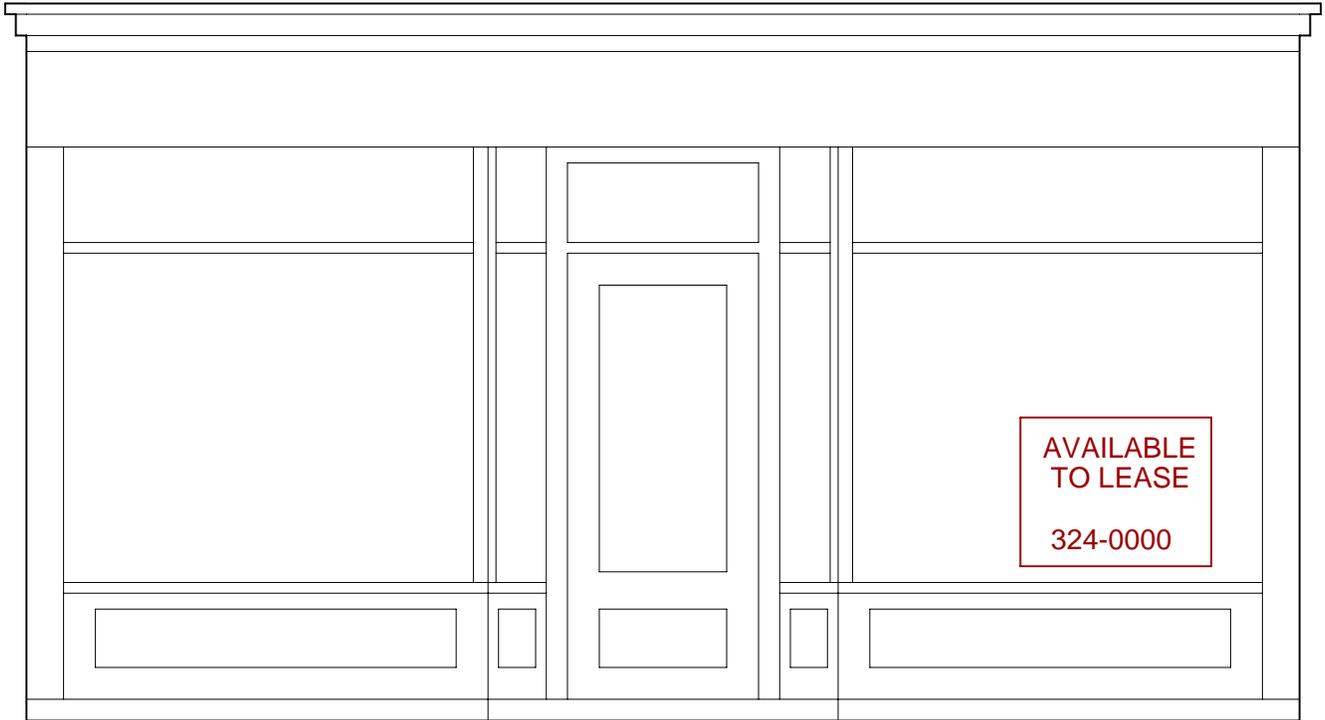
In the above illustration, paper with lettering has been applied to the display windows of a store that is closed during the off-season.

This treatment is not allowed. According to the Village sign code, these sheets of paper with lettering are window signs and are illegal because they cover more than 25% of the window area.

If these sheets with lettering were placed as a screen at a distance greater than 4 feet in from the window they would not need a permit and there would be no restriction in size.



## VILLAGE SIGN CODE: REAL ESTATE SIGNS



A real estate sign may be placed without a sign permit subject to the following restrictions:

- (1) The real estate sign shall not exceed 7 square feet in area.
- (2) Only one real estate sign per property is permitted.

This illustration shows the maximum allowable real estate sign of 7 square feet.

## RECOMMENDED: WINDOW DISPLAY AND A SCREEN

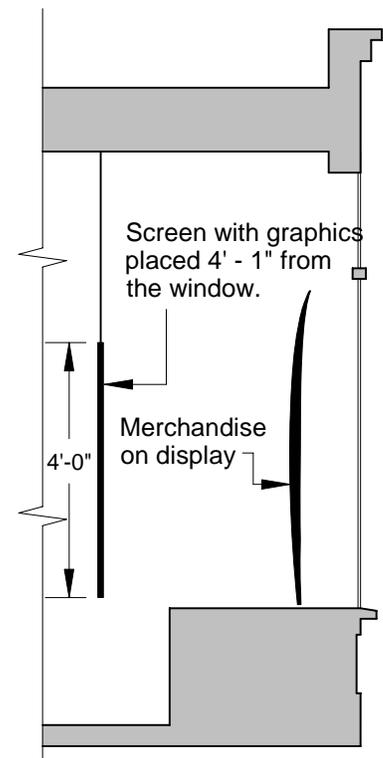


In the storefront illustrated above, merchandise is left on display while the store is closed during the off-season.

A screen placed at a distance greater than 4 feet from the window contains graphics.

A glazed door may be screened by a roller blind.

By keeping merchandise on display, the storefront has visual interest and continues to contribute to the life of the business district.



## RECOMMENDED: WINDOW SIGNS AND A SCREEN



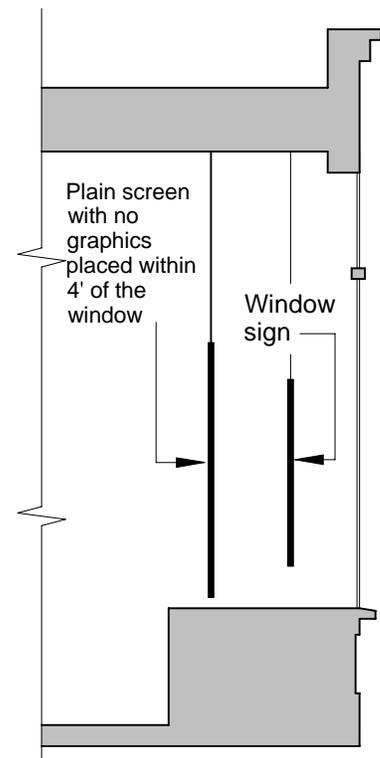
In the storefront illustrated above, signs that meet the Village sign code are placed in the window while the store is closed during the off-season.

In this example, the permanent store sign is only 4 square feet while the maximum allowable sign area for the storefront, which is 20' wide, is 20 square feet. The difference of 16 square feet may be applied to window signs. Each display window is 32 square feet in area allowing a maximum window sign of 8 square feet (25% of 32 s.f.).

The above window signs illustrate the maximum size of 8 square feet that is allowed in each display window.

In this example, a plain screen, 4 feet high, is positioned behind the signs to further close off the view of the store interior.

The window signs give the storefront a visual focus and allow the store to remain a positive presence in the business district.



# RECOMMENDED: POSTERS PLACED 4 FEET IN FROM THE WINDOWS

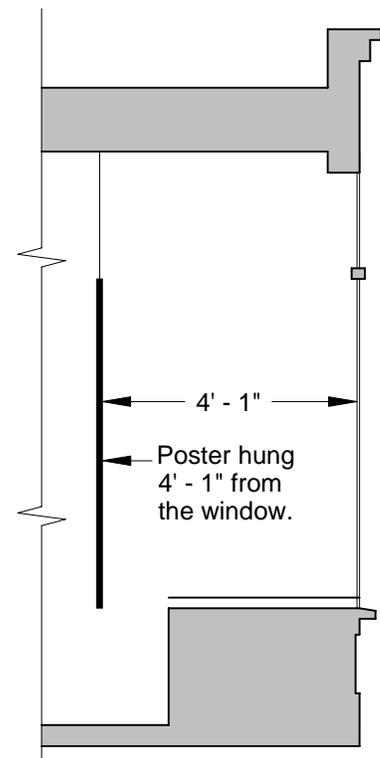


In the storefront illustrated above, posters (approximately 4 feet square) are placed within the store at a distance from the window that is greater than 4 feet.

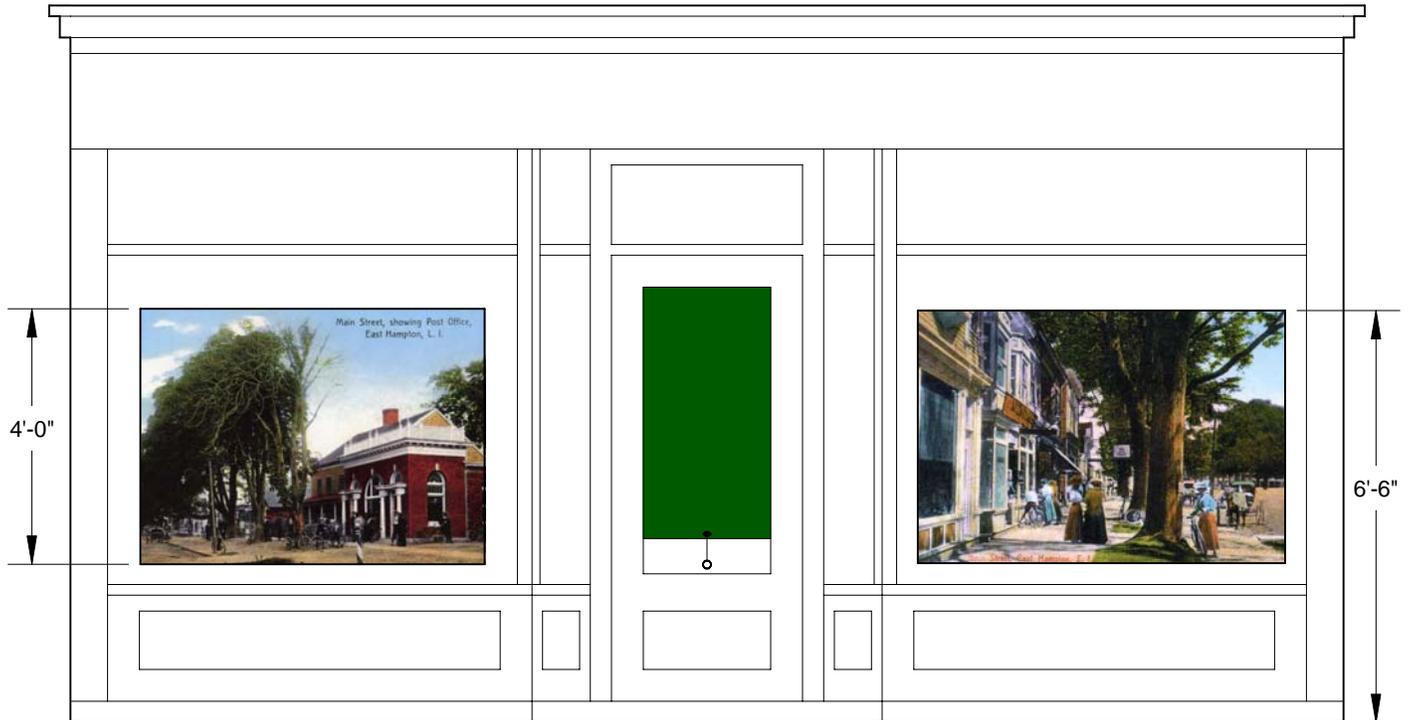
A similar option is to display graphics on a pull-down screen set more than four feet from the window.

Posters or screens at this location are not considered window signs and do not require a sign permit as they would if placed within 4 feet of the windows.

These large posters both provide a visual focus for the storefront and adequately screen the store interior.



# RECOMMENDED: A WINDOW DISPLAY IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

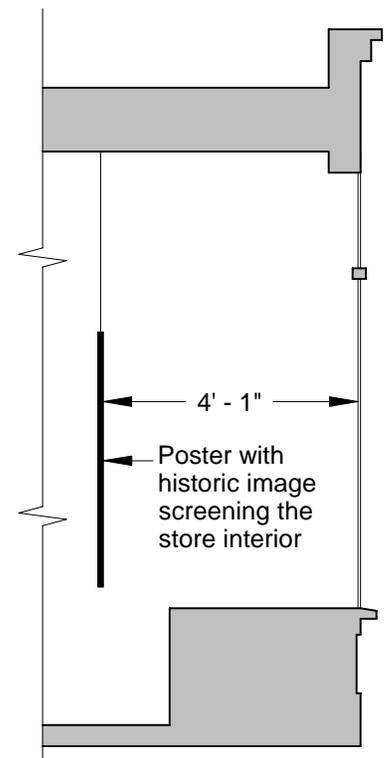


One option for a window display in a vacant store is an exhibit that benefits the public. In the storefront illustrated above, posters of historic photographs are placed in the windows.

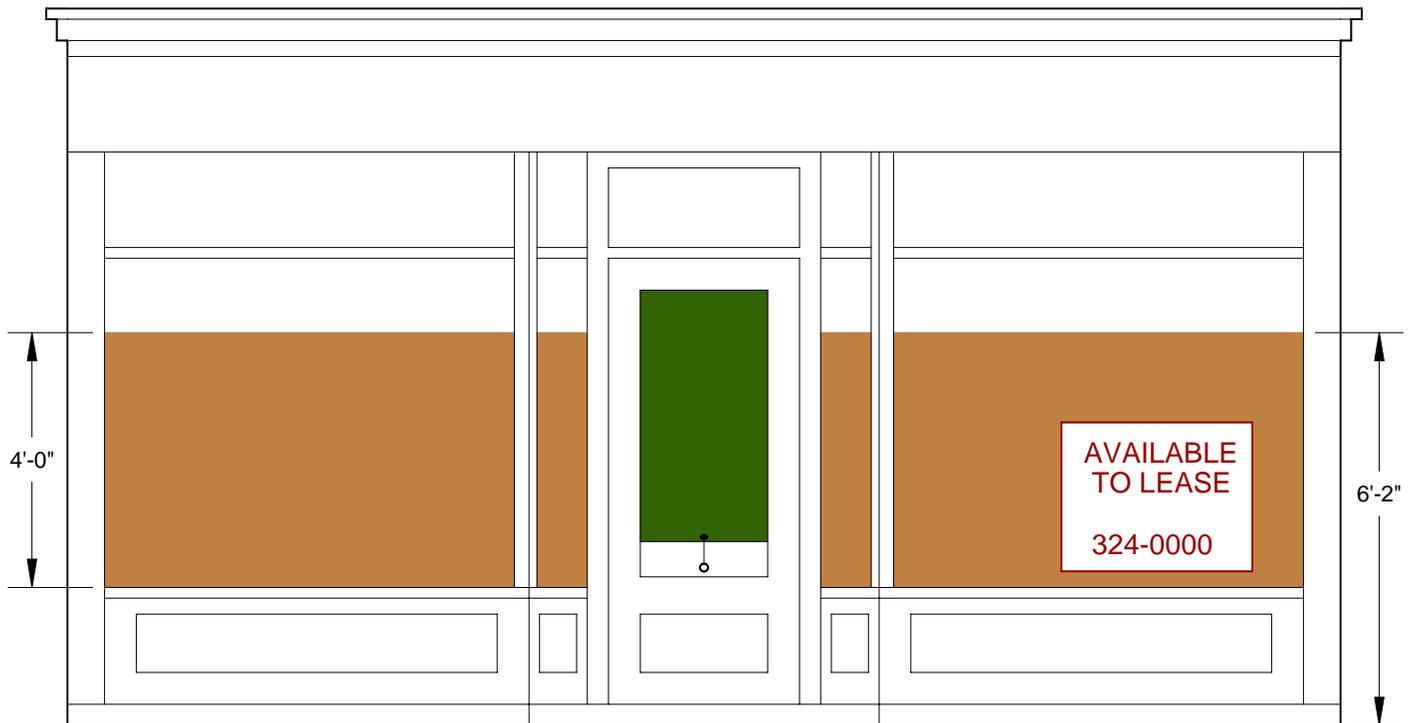
These posters give the storefront an attractive and interesting appearance. The posters, which are 4 feet high, also screen the store interior.

An exhibit of historic objects or of art could also be a display in the public interest.

The Village may provide information to property owners or tenants interested in placing a display in the public interest in their storefront.



## NOT RECOMMENDED: PAPERED-OVER WINDOWS



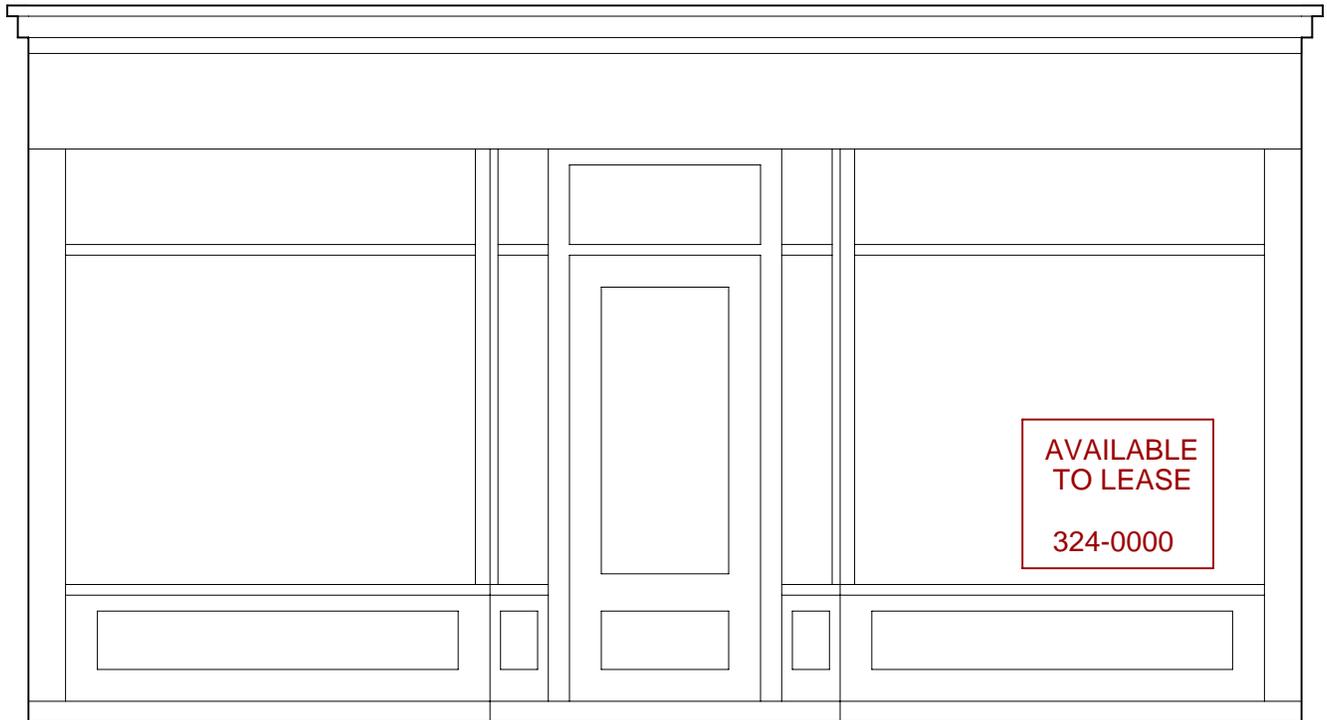
Plain paper of a single color with no text or graphics may be applied to a window without a sign permit.

However, a storefront with papered-over windows detracts from the character of the business district and this treatment is discouraged.

Papered-over windows are appropriate only as a temporary installation while renovation and construction work is underway within a store.

When windows must be papered, they should be covered with a single sheet, which makes a neater appearance than does multiple pieces taped together. Kraft paper is readily available in 4' rolls. In the storefront illustrated above, the windows are covered with paper that is 4 feet wide. This provides a screen that is high enough to block the view of pedestrians.

## NOT RECOMMENDED: EMPTY DISPLAY WINDOWS



In this example the storefront windows are left empty. If the interior is kept clean and orderly, empty display windows are preferable to papered-over windows.

Nevertheless, empty display windows make no contribution to the business district and, like papered-over windows, detract from the life and vitality of the street.