

Fact Sheet

Storefronts in Historic Districts

Storefronts are a vital part of New York City's streetscapes. The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) regulates changes made to storefronts on designated buildings. This fact sheet provides resources for business owners seeking a permit from LPC for work on historic district storefronts and related installations to help speed up the approval process.

How can I find out if my storefront is on a designated building?

You can search for the building on the [Discover NYC Landmarks map](#). If an individual landmark, see NOTE. If in a historic district, see below.

How does LPC regulate changes to storefronts in historic districts?

LPC has rules that establish the criteria for staff to review and approve permit applications for proposed storefronts in historic districts. They allow staff to issue permits for storefront proposals that do not involve the removal of historic materials. The design can either replicate the historic storefront or it can be contemporary as long as it is based on relevant historic features within the district and includes typical storefront elements like large display windows, bulkheads and transoms. For more information, see Section 2-12 of the [LPC Rules](#).

There are also specific [rules and master plans](#) for the following historic districts, as well as a separate review process for buildings with individual master plans.

- Fieldston Historic District
- Douglaston Historic District
- Jackson Heights Historic District
- Stone Street Historic District
- Madison Avenue storefronts in the Carnegie Hill, Carnegie Hill Extension, Metropolitan Museum, and Upper East Side Historic Districts

NOTE:

Different rules apply if any of the below conditions exist:

1. The property is an individual landmark
2. The property has a Warning Letter or Notice of Violation for removing a storefront without permits. Use the [Violation Search tool on LPC's website](#) to search for Warning Letters and Notices of Violation.
3. The property has more than three uniform storefronts and one of them contains most of the building's historic elements.

Contact LPC to find out how to receive approval in these cases.

Call (212) 669-7817 or email info@lpc.nyc.gov.

Permit applications that meet master plan requirements can be approved faster by staff. If they do not meet the rules and requirements, staff may suggest alternatives or the proposal may be presented to the full Commission for review at a Public Hearing. LPC staff can guide you through the process.

Business Express Service

LPC has created a dedicated team to serve as a one-stop shop for business owners in landmark buildings. We offer pre-application consultations to support businesses in storefronts and other street-level commercial spaces in the City's designated buildings and historic districts. You can learn more about [LPC's Business Express Service on our website](#).

Applying for a Permit

Before you begin work on your property, you must get a permit from LPC. All LPC permit applications are now filed and processed through [Portico](#), the agency's new web-based permit application portal.

By logging into Portico, owners of designated landmarked properties can apply online for LPC permits, upload supporting documents, track the progress of their applications in real-time, and seamlessly download final permits. LPC no longer accepts any filings or related materials outside of Portico. You can learn more on LPC's website about the [process of applying for a permit using Portico](#).

In order to obtain faster approval, make sure your application is complete. A complete application includes:

1. Color photos of the property
2. Written specifications, drawings, and/or samples that fully describe the proposed work

For a detailed checklist, please refer to the applicable chapter of the [LPC Permit Guidebook](#).

Only complete applications can be processed. If the application is incomplete, staff will send you a checklist via your Portico Dashboard showing what materials are missing.

Links to Additional Resources

[LPC Permit Guidebook](#)

[Guide to Researching Historic Buildings](#)

[SBS Guide to Storefront Improvements](#)

When do I need a permit?

Any changes to the exterior of a storefront require a permit. Common work types include:

Storefront Installation

You need a permit to restore or install a storefront. See our [Guide for Storefronts in Historic Districts](#) and [Storefronts](#)

Awning Installation

You need a permit to install or replace awnings. See our [guide for Awnings and Sidewalk Canopies](#).

Signage and Lighting

You need a permit to install or replace signs and lighting. See our [guide for Signage](#).

Painting

You need a permit to: change the paint color, power wash, or use a chemical solution to remove paint. See our [guide for Restoration](#).

Sidewalk and Roadway Cafes

LPC does not require permits for sidewalk and roadway cafes as long as the installations comply with [all relevant DOT rules and regulations](#).