

Checklist — Historic Commercial Buildings

LPC STOREFRONT SUBMISSION

For property owners, retail tenants, and commercial architects
SoHo, Greenwich Village, Tribeca & other landmark districts



Use this checklist to prepare your LPC submission package for a commercial storefront replacement or restoration in a New York City landmark building.

Commercial storefront alterations in most NYC historic districts require a Certificate of Appropriateness — a full commission review with public hearing. Plan for 3–6 months from submission to approval. Open AWD prepares items marked ★ as part of our standard commercial project process.

Who files the application?

Property owner / landlord	Files or authorizes the application. Must sign owner authorization letter.
Retail tenant	Can file the application but must have written authorization from building owner. LPC approval is tied to the building address, not the tenant.
Commercial architect	Typically prepares the submission package and files on behalf of owner or tenant. Architect's stamp may be required.

SECTION 1 — Before You Start

- **Confirm landmark status and district designation** Required

Search at nyc.gov/landmarks. Identify the specific historic district name (e.g. SoHo–Cast Iron, Greenwich Village, Tribeca North). The district designation determines which LPC guidelines apply to your storefront.

→ Open AWD confirms landmark status and applicable district guidelines for all commercial projects.

- **Confirm that a Certificate of Appropriateness is required** Required

Commercial storefront alterations in SoHo, Greenwich Village, Tribeca, and most NYC landmark commercial districts require a Certificate of Appropriateness — not a simpler CNE. This means a public hearing before the full LPC commission is required.

- **Hire a NYC-licensed expediter or preservation architect** Required

Required for Certificate of Appropriateness applications. The expediter or architect files the application, schedules the hearing, and communicates with LPC staff. For commercial projects, this is not optional — the process is too complex to navigate without professional guidance.

- **Obtain building owner authorization (for tenants)** Required

If you are a retail tenant, obtain written authorization from the building owner before beginning any submission work. The LPC will not accept an application without it. Factor this into your timeline — owner authorization negotiations can take weeks.

SECTION 2 — Documentation to Gather

- Completed LPC application form** Required

Available at nyc.gov/landmarks. Must be signed by the building owner (not just the tenant). For CofA: separate owner authorization letter also required.
- Building address, tax lot number (BBL), and lease information** Required

Block, Lot, Borough number from property records. For tenant applications: copy of lease confirming right to alter the premises.
- Photographs of the existing storefront — minimum 4 views** Required

(a) Full street-level view of the building facade. (b) Close-up of existing storefront elements: transom, display window, bulkhead, entrance door. (c) Detail photographs of any original elements to be preserved. (d) Context photographs showing adjacent storefronts in the same block.
- Historic photographs of the original storefront** If available

Strongly recommended for SoHo, Greenwich Village, and Tribeca projects. Sources: NYPL digital collections, Museum of the City of New York, NYC Municipal Archives, LPC designation report for your district (available at nyc.gov/landmarks).
- Owner authorization letter** Required

Signed letter from building owner authorizing the proposed work. Must be on building owner's letterhead. Required for all CofA applications in addition to signed application form.
- Written project description / design rationale** Required

Narrative of 2–4 pages describing: what is being replaced or restored, why, and how the proposed design relates to the building's historic character and district guidelines. For SoHo: must address compatibility with Cast Iron Historic District guidelines specifically.

SECTION 3 — Technical Documentation ★ Open AWD Prepares These

- ★ **Storefront elevation drawing** Required

Full elevation of the proposed storefront showing: overall dimensions, transom configuration, display window proportions, bulkhead treatment, entrance door position and width, and pilaster or pier treatment.
- ★ **Profile cross-section drawings** Required

Cross-section of the proposed frame system showing: face width (sightline), frame depth, thermal break position (if applicable), glazing rebate, and overall dimensions. Drawn to scale and fully dimensioned.
- ★ **Material specification sheet** Required

Frame material (steel / bronze / aluminum), finish color with RAL reference, glazing type and performance data (U-factor, SHGC), hardware specification, and bulkhead material and finish.
- ★ **Physical samples** Required

Frame profile sample (cut section), finish color chip, glass sample. The LPC commission often requests to see physical samples at the hearing. Open AWD provides all standard profile and finish samples.
- ★ **Comparison with historic storefront (if original elements are known)** If available

Side-by-side drawing or photograph comparison showing how the proposed system relates to the original storefront geometry — profile widths, transom proportions, display window height-to-width ratio.

→ ★ Open AWD prepares this comparison where historic data is available.

SECTION 4 — Brand Color & Identity (For Retail Tenants)

Confirm whether your brand color is within the LPC's acceptable palette

If available

The LPC evaluates storefront finish colors based on compatibility with the building's historic character — not brand identity. Dark greens, blacks, deep reds, bronze tones, and off-whites are generally accepted. Bright or non-historic brand colors (vivid orange, corporate blue, neon) will not be approved on the storefront frame.

→ Discuss your brand color with Open AWD before committing to a design — we can advise on likelihood of approval.

Separate signage from storefront frame in your submission

If available

The LPC reviews storefront frame color and signage separately. Your brand identity can often be achieved through signage, interior display, and lighting even when the storefront frame color must follow the historic palette. Make sure your submission clearly separates these two elements.

TIMELINE REFERENCE

CofA submission preparation	4–8 weeks before filing
LPC staff review & hearing scheduling	4–8 weeks after submission
Commission hearing & decision	1–3 months after scheduling
Revision and re-hearing (if needed)	Add 1–3 months
Total: submission to approval	3–6 months typical
Steel storefront fabrication	14–20 weeks from confirmed
Aluminum storefront fabrication	8–12 weeks from confirmed order
Bronze storefront fabrication	16–24 weeks from confirmed order
Total: start to installation	Plan for 9–14 months minimum

• **Beginning storefront construction without LPC approval is a Landmarks Law violation: stop-work orders, fines, and required restoration at owner's cost.**