A font behind the font

A house font rarely covers every character a document has to draw. Without a second font behind it, a character it has no glyph for comes out as the empty box below.
A chain hands that character to the next font instead, so the line is set in as many fonts as it takes and every mark is drawn.

The house font alone: what it has no glyph for, it cannot draw.

✓ Paid · □ Priority · □ Weather hold · □ Refused

The house font, with a second one behind it.

✓ Paid · ★ Priority · ☂ Weather hold · ✗ Refused

The line above is cut into 7 stretches, drawn by two fonts: IBMPlexSans, then DejaVuSans. The words are in the first; the marks it lacks are in the second.

Mark	Status	Drawn by
✓	Paid	IBMPlexSans
★	Priority	DejaVuSans
☂	Weather hold	DejaVuSans
✗	Refused	DejaVuSans

The house font alone, told three ways what to draw for what it lacks:

the box every font carries	✓ Paid · □ Priority · □ Weather hold · □ Refused
nothing at all	✓ Paid · Priority · Weather hold · Refused
“?” in its place	✓ Paid · ? Priority · ? Weather hold · ? Refused
told to draw what it lacks as the character it stands for	273 K

The house font's figures, drawn by the house font, by the second font, then by the second font set smaller and raised to sit like the house font's:

its own figures	0123456789
the second font's figures	0123456789
the second font's, smaller and raised	0123456789