

TOWN OF BERLIN

FARMINGTON AVENUE DESIGN STANDARDS



MARCH 2008

TPA
DESIGN GROUP



❧ Farmington Avenue Design Standards ❧

Purpose

The purpose of these standards is to establish benchmarks for specific elements of site and building design that will guide applicants during the site plan application process. By communicating its expectations, the Town is intent on eliminating the guesswork typically associated with the process while improving the appearance and function of the corridor with the overriding goal of establishing a traditional New England image.

The Town's Plan of Conservation and Development adopted in June 2003 set out a number of policies and strategies to accomplish compatible economic development including developing design standards to guide new and expanded retail and commercial development. In September 2003 amendments to the Berlin Zoning Regulations that included Outdoor Lighting provisions and Architectural Requirements for Commercial Buildings were adopted. These Design Standards complement the provisions of the Berlin Zoning Regulations.

Geographic Limits

These guidelines pertain to the following streets that are zoned CCD 1 and CCD 2, PS-A, OP and GC as designated by the Town of Berlin Zoning Regulations: Farmington Avenue, New Britain Road, Massario Drive, Porter's Pass, Chamberlin Highway, High Road, Main Street-Kensington, Brook Street, Kensington Road, Harding Street, Burnham Street, Mill Street and Wester Square Road – southwest of Route 9.

Objectives

- Create an aesthetically pleasing appearance to enhance commercial corridors and encourage a visually cohesive town center.
- Encourage and improve pedestrian mobility and safety within and among properties.
- Reduce the impacts of large scaled buildings, impersonal or outdated facades and visual clutter.

Fundamental Design Principles

- Reflect and enhance the positive attributes of the corridor through proportion, massing, scale, architectural style, materials and/or colors.
- Achieve compatibility and consistency with existing desirable character and context.
- Provide for a safe and inviting pedestrian friendly environment.

I. SITE RELATED GUIDELINES

ACCESS AND PARKING



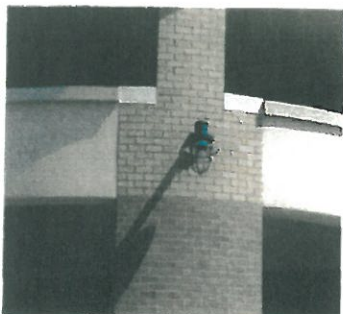
- Create a strong architectural edge by locating the majority of parking at the rear of buildings and the remainder within the side yard.
- When parking in front yards cannot be avoided, intermittent vegetative screening and berming between the road and parking areas should be used.
- Landscaping, berms, fencing, or other methods of screening parking areas that are visible from public view is encouraged.
- Vehicle barriers (curbs, bollards, or low walls/fences) should be provided where needed to protect (but not obstruct) adjacent walks, or where required for other safety purposes (e.g. grade changes, traffic lanes, trees, etc.).
- Six-inch concrete or granite curbs are preferred in front yards.
- The use of wheel stops in parking spaces should only be in areas with no pedestrian movement or adjacent to landscaped areas.
- Consider the need for snow placement and removal in addition to the required parking.
- Medians should be utilized in major entrances and landscaped and have ornamental lighting.
- Covered parking should be compatible in scale, character, and detail with the architecture that it serves.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION



- Continuous internal pedestrian walkways shall be provided from the public sidewalk or right-of-way to the primary customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site.
- Pedestrian connections between adjacent properties shall be provided where feasible and should be properly maintained.
- Internal pedestrian walkways shall be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of durable, low maintenance surface materials such as pavers, bricks, or scored concrete to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort, as well as the attractiveness of the walkways.
- For properties abutting public or private open space, pedestrian connections shall be provided between the two destinations.
- Sidewalks at least 5 feet in width shall be provided along frontage of public or private rights-of-way and should be constructed of durable pavers or concrete.
- Crosswalks at minimum should be striped; preferably they should be built with an impressed concrete pattern or interlocking pavers.
- At entrances, the sidewalk material and width should continue across the driveway width.

LIGHTING



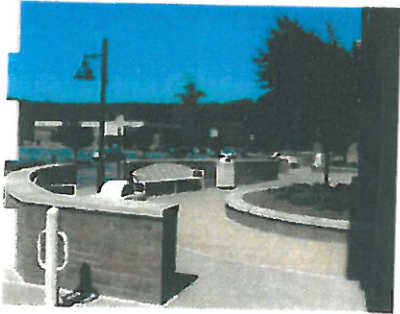
- Light poles and fixtures should be compatible in scale and style with the intended development as well as with public streetscape amenities.
- Indirect lighting of building or pedestal signage is preferred over internally lit signs.
- Extended arm lights such as gooseneck fixtures are preferred.
- If uplighting is necessary it should be sited in an inconspicuous manner and should not cast light beyond the sign nor should it create glare or other types of visual disturbance.
- Fixtures utilized throughout the site, regardless of function, should be compatible with each other.
- Fluorescent sources should be avoided for façade or storefront displays.
- All fixtures shall meet full cut-off or cut-off specifications to eliminate upward scatter.
- Light fixtures should be placed to provide maximum effective illumination and avoid conflict with expected growth of vegetation.
- Shatterproof coverings should be used for fixtures used at lower heights.
- Exposed concrete base foundations to light poles should be minimized to the extent practical.

SIGNAGE

- Signs should be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site to which it principally relates.
- As an architectural element, every sign should have scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to the buildings and surroundings.
- Signage should provide information that is simple and legible, of a size and location that avoids obscuring the architecture of the building.
- Signage should employ colors and type faces that complement the primary architectural style of the building.
- Avoid extremely bright background colors (e.g. bright red, orange, or yellow).
- Avoid a white or off-white color in a large field of illuminated background.
- Signs should be of durable materials compatible with the materials of the building served.
- In a multiple storefront building, the signage should be of a size, location, material and color that relates harmoniously to the overall building. The signs should also reflect a consistent design theme.
- Signs on awnings or canopy fabrics advertising the name of the business or organization are encouraged.
- Avoid repetitious signage information on the same building frontage regardless of the sign area allowed in the zoning regulations.
- Use way-finding signage for projects where circulation is complex and traffic must proceed through the site along a specific path.



LANDSCAPING AND AESTHETIC TREATMENTS



- The incorporation of public plazas, outdoor dining and public art into the development is encouraged.
- Consider plant material as design features and not exclusively as buffers.
- Choose plant materials for their year-round interest (annuals, perennials, deciduous color, spring flower, fruits, or branching patterns) as well as their form, texture and shape.
- Use indigenous plants to establish continuity with surrounding areas and a self-sustaining environment.
- Balance the size and type of on-site landscaping with the scale of the proposed development.
- Avoid unusual cultivars which require continued maintenance.
- Landscaping around buildings should establish continuity within the site, soften the harshness of regrading, and introduce human scale at the sidewalk level.
- Incorporate open space breaks and preserve existing vegetation in large developments with multiple buildings to create identifiable places within.
- Integrate healthy existing vegetation to the extent possible.
- Consider seasonal conditions, mature height and habit when specifying plant materials for required screening.
- Avoid blocking sight lines at intersections and curb cuts, and avoid conflicts with overhead or underground services.

SERVICE AREAS

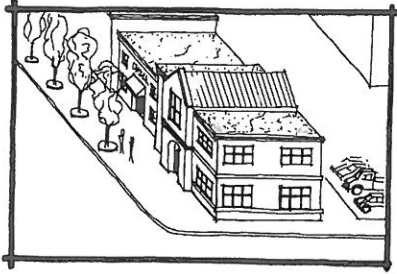


- When screening of loading areas, outdoor storage, service vehicle parking, HVAC equipment, refuse collection and other service functions is required, the landscaping and/or materials utilized should be visually consistent with the principal structures of the site.
- Wood, acrylic polymer and other materials that convey a quality appearance are encouraged. Chain link fencing of any type should be avoided.
- Vending machines of all types should be placed inside buildings.

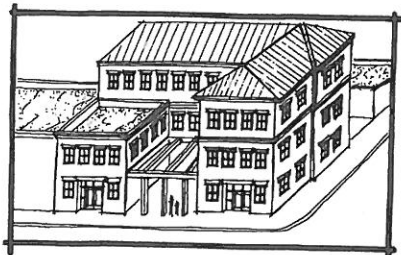
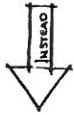
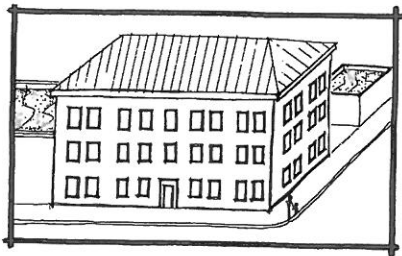
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II. BUILDING RELATED GUIDELINES

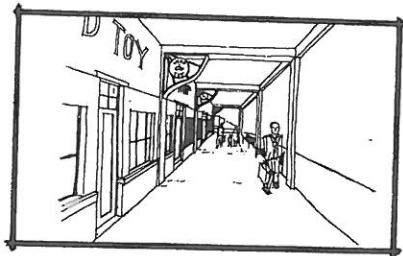
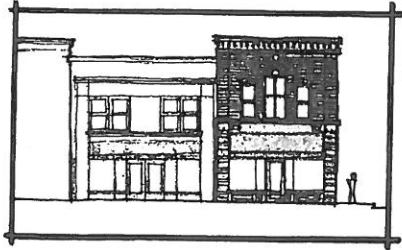
A. ORIENTATION AND SCALE



- Buildings shall have their primary orientation toward the street rather than the parking area.
- Building entrances shall be oriented toward the street and shall be accessed from a public sidewalk.
- Buildings should be sited in a manner that maintains the existing streetwall unless providing for plazas, outside eating areas, pocket parks or similar spaces.
- Walls facing public streets, plazas or other public spaces should include glass, windows, display areas or other features that diminish the appearance of a blank wall.
- A building setback from a public sidewalk should be minimized unless used for a plaza, outside eating area or other public space.



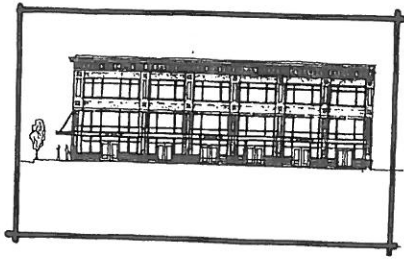
- Buildings shall incorporate lighting and changes in mass, surface or finish to give emphasis to entrances.
- Buildings shall incorporate arcades, roofs, alcoves, porticoes or awnings that protect pedestrians from the rain and sun.
- Developments shall divide large building masses into heights and sizes that relate to human scale by incorporating changes in building mass or direction, sheltering roofs, a distinct pattern of divisions on surfaces, windows, trees, and small scale lighting.
- Banding of exterior materials and/or architectural details should be incorporated at eye-level to break up large facades and create human scale elements;



B. FAÇADE DESIGN

ARTICULATION

- Additions or alterations to existing structures should be compatible with and enhance the existing design features.
- The building's predominant architectural identity should be recognizable from the roadway.
- A human scale should be achieved near ground level on all buildings and along street facades and entries through the use of such scale elements as windows, recessed or projecting entrances, columns, cornices, decorative lighting, street furniture and similar details.
- The overall shape, scale and massing of a building should complement and not detract from nearby buildings.
- The bottom six feet of all façade walls should be of the highest quality material being used on the building. To avoid damage from shopping carts, vehicles or vandalism, the use of exterior insulation finish systems, vinyl, or other easily damaged building materials should not be used within this area;
- If covered pedestrian passageways or arcades are utilized, benches, decorative pavement, ornamental lighting, display windows or other attractive elements should be provided. Signage should be incorporated beneath the arcade in such a manner to be easily recognized by pedestrians.
- Wall plan projections or recesses should be utilized along with color, texture and/or material changes in order to achieve visual relief of blank walls or extended facades.
- Extensive building frontages should be avoided or should include changes in relief by incorporating offsets, jogs or other distinctive changes in the building façade and changes in relief such as cornices, bases, fenestration, fluted masonry.

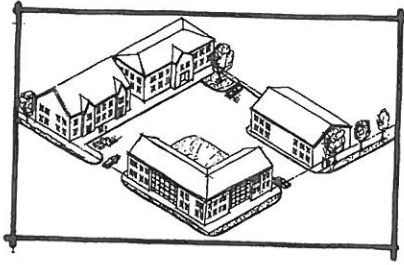


- Exterior facades, including eaves, columns, pilasters, cornices, windows and window surrounds, canopies, fascia and roofs, shall be proportionate with the building and compatible with the balance of the 'center' as well as the surrounding neighborhood.
- Architectural elements such as arcades, display windows, entry areas, awnings, or other such features should account for at least 60% of the horizontal length of the ground floor façade.
- Building facades should incorporate vertical and horizontal changes in color, texture, materials, or structural bays at frequent intervals.

MATERIALS AND COLORS

- Predominant exterior building materials should be of high quality. Siding materials shall be stone, wood, wood/cementitious, clapboard siding, brick, or tinted/textured, concrete block. The use of Dryvit or other Exterior Insulating and Finish Systems as a predominant material is discouraged.
- Exterior insulation finish systems, smooth-face concrete blocks, tilt-up concrete panels and pre-fabricated steel panels should not be used.
- Predominant exterior building materials should be non-glossy and have subtle, neutral or earth tone colors. The use of high intensity, metallic or fluorescent colors or black is discouraged. Bright or neon paint colors used extensively to attract attention to the building or use are discouraged.
- Roofing materials exposed to view shall be asphalt shingles, standing seam metal or wood shingles. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, including primary colors, but not neon tubing features.
- In buildings with multiple tenants or uses, exterior building elements such as doors, windows, materials, storefronts, signage, lighting should be compatible (but not necessarily identical).
- Buildings may not incorporate glass as a majority of the building skin.

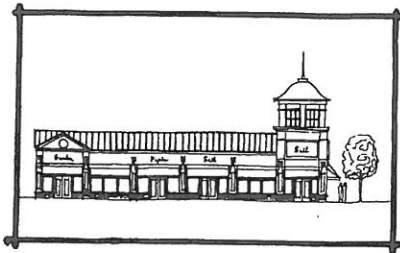




ROOFLINES

- Individual buildings within one site should be compatible with one another in terms of height, materials, colors, roof form and detailing.
- All accessory structures, screen walls and exposed areas of retaining walls shall be of similar type, quality and appearance as the principal structures.

ENTRANCES



- Parapets featuring three dimensional cornice treatments to conceal flat roofs and rooftop equipment are encouraged but should not be excessive in height.
 - Overhanging gables or eaves are encouraged
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- At least one entrance should be located on all façades of the building that directly face an abutting public street.
 - Principal buildings should include three or more of the following elements:
 1. canopies or porticos;
 2. overhangs;
 3. recesses/projections;
 4. arcades;
 5. raised, corniced parapets over the door;
 6. peaked roof forms;
 7. arches;
 8. outdoor patios;
 9. display windows;
 10. architectural details such as tile work and moldings integrated into the building;

11. integrated planters or wing walls that incorporate landscaped areas and/or places for sitting.

C. EQUIPMENT AND SERVICE

- Rooftop mechanical or electrical equipment should be completely screened by a building parapet that matches the style and scale of the building.
- Air conditioning units should not be placed into windows or any other openings visible from the street.
- Units located in non-window openings are not permitted within the storefront or front façade or front building wall.
- Utility feeds and metering devices should be screened and may not be located on the building's front facade.
- All mechanical equipment, whether on the roof or mounted on the ground, shall be visually screened from contiguous properties and adjacent streets. Screening shall be compatible with the architectural treatment of the principal structure and should utilize a combination of quality materials and vegetation.
- New utility service systems should be installed underground, and all existing above ground services buried when renovating.

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