

## **APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

# Architectural Design Review Guidelines\*

for

## Commercial and Mixed-Use Developments

in the following sections of the zoning bylaws

- ♦ [Town to input relevant section(s)]

## APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES TEMPLATE

*\*These Design Guidelines are a supplement to the **Zoning Bylaw Section [Town to input relevant section(s)]***

Architecture and planning can either enhance or undermine the quality of life. Well-designed buildings in well-planned communities can bring people together and make life better. Alternatively, bad architecture in a poorly planned place can separate people and make life less attractive. The goal of these guidelines is to help improve the design quality of Hamilton's retail districts, helping to attract customers to the area and encourage economic revitalization.

This handout does not dictate rules, such as the buildings setbacks and heights that are found in the bylaws. Instead, it suggests the elements of what the Town of Hamilton considers beautiful functional design for the commercial area and illustrates these elements with photos taken around town and surrounding areas. The intent of these illustrations is to serve as inspiration and general guidance for the designs of future buildings in Hamilton.

## **Purpose of the By-Law**

- ◊ **Preserve and enhance the New England character of the Hamilton's commercial centers and thoroughfares.**
- ◊ **Promote attractive development of commercial areas.**
- ◊ **Streamline the approval process for commercial development.**
- ◊ **Relate commercial properties both visually and physically to surrounding land uses.**
- ◊ **Facilitate a more walkable and healthier suburban atmosphere that integrates the needs of pedestrians with those of drivers.**
- ◊ **Protect property values by enhancing the town's appearance.**

## **The Top 10 Elements for Successful, Pedestrian-Friendly Commercial Buildings in Hamilton Are:**

- ◊ **A modest building scale.**
- ◊ **An orientation toward the street, with maximum frontage on the street.**
- ◊ **Close proximity to the street.**
- ◊ **Parking behind the buildings.**
- ◊ **A place for pedestrian amenities such as plazas and benches.**
- ◊ **Big windows on the ground floor, with no blank walls.**
- ◊ **A broken-up roof-scape.**
- ◊ **Use of natural materials such as wood, brick, or stone.**
- ◊ **Camouflaged large parking areas, storage spots, and mechanical equipment.**

## Types of Architecture That Are Encouraged

### Examples of Single Structure Commercial Buildings

Hamilton has many examples of single-structure commercial buildings, many of which used to be residential buildings that are now used commercially. These buildings reflect New England heritage, as they represent specific architectural styles that existed throughout Hamilton history, such as Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian. Many *new* single structure commercial buildings respect these styles as well.

### Relevant Examples: **Federal and Greek Revival Architecture**

## APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES TEMPLATE



Figure 4: Commercial Building, Route 1A



Figure 3: Package Store, Route 1A



Figure 2: Senior Center, Route 1A



Figure 1: Firehouse Place, Willow Street



## Types of Architecture That Are Encouraged

### Examples of Single Structure Commercial Buildings

Relevant Examples: **Corporate Architecture that Respects Traditional New England Heritage**



Figure 5: Shopping Plaza, Walnut Road



Figure 6: Lahey Clinic, Willow Street



Figure 8: People's United Bank, Railroad Avenue



Figure 7: Dunkin Donuts, Lexington MA



## Types of Architecture That Are Encouraged

### Examples of Commercial Blocks

People continue to be attracted to traditional commercial streets for many reasons: one-of-a-kind stores and restaurants, window shopping, the historic architecture, and perhaps most importantly, the people. Main streets are great public gathering spaces; one of the things that makes these streets so special is their intimate character. The street-space is well defined by the building facades, which are lined up along the edge of the sidewalk, enclosing the street like the walls of a great outdoor room. Visual interest is created by large shop windows, architectural details, signs and awnings, the streetscape, outdoor dining areas, and the people on the street. The suggested architectural styles below are meant to recreate and enhance the traditional commercial district of the Town.

## APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES TEMPLATE



Figure 9: West Concord Village MA



Figure 10: Railroad Avenue



Figure 12: Downtown, Wellesley MA



Figure 11: Downtown Burlington VT

## Types of Architecture That Are Encouraged

### Examples of Commercial Blocks

#### Mashpee Commons, Mashpee, Cape Code Case Study

Unlike some of the examples of older or historic commercial blocks, Mashpee Commons is an example of a more recent development. Mashpee Commons on Cape Cod is an impressive transformation of a conventional shopping center into a walkable, traditional town center. Prior to 1986, it was a 62,000-square-foot shopping plaza. Built in 1960, the tenants at the center were a food store, a home furnishing/hardware store, a bank, a restaurant and a theatre. Today the Commons has a gridded, walkable street pattern fronted by buildings abutting the sidewalk in a traditional, downtown New England manner. Parking lots are relocated to the rear of the buildings.

Architectural styles of the Commons are represented in historic buildings of New England (e.g. Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival) with a touch of Cape Cod vernacular architecture, such as Cape house.



New Seabury Shopping Center, today Mashpee Commons, was a 62,000 square foot shopping center (1960-1986)



Mashpee Commons Today, designed by New Urbanist urban designers Duany/Plater-Zyberk

## Types of Architecture That Are Discouraged



- Avoid expansive parking lots fronting the street
- Avoid strong horizontal emphasis in facades which contain multiple stores, which can obscure the identity of individual stores



- Avoid monotonous walls with little architectural detailing on the side of the building fronting the street



- Avoid structures whose architecture does not reflect New England character
- Do not recess the display windows



## Design Guidelines

### Design, Massing, Scale & Proportions

Building design should incorporate features that add *visual interest* to the building while reducing the appearance of bulk or mass. Buildings should avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roofs on their visible facades. They also should avoid long expanses of repetitive architectural elements. Whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, the buildings' facades should be *balanced in their composition*.

With the objective of maintaining a small-town character, buildings should appear to be *modest in scale*, relating to the scale of the immediate surroundings. The massing of larger commercial buildings should be deemphasized by the use of projecting and recessed sections, to reduce their apparent overall bulk.

Reduce the apparent scale of the building by introducing small-scaled *architectural features*, creating an irregular, albeit balanced, footprint and breaking the roof-scape with dormers, gables, or changes in roof direction (see “*Roof Types*” below). Use architectural elements like openings, sills, shutters, chimneys, columns, and other features to establish human scale at the street level (see “*Architectural Style and Detail*” below).



- Example of active retail block that is visually interesting, balanced, modest in scale and with many architectural elements



- Example of a balanced and well-proportioned building

## Design Guidelines

### Architectural Style and Detail

Buildings may be either traditional in their architectural character or a contemporary expression of traditional styles and forms.

Buildings should articulate the line between the ground and upper levels with a cornice, canopy, balcony, arcade or other architectural features. The cornice and/or parapet is an area where architectural detail and materials are important, as they can add distinctiveness and visual emphasis to a building, but they should be consistent with the body of the design in scale and detail.

The use of special architectural elements, such as but not limited to towers & turrets, muntins & window shutters, chimneys and dormers etc., is encouraged at major street corners to accent structures and provide visual interest.



**Figure 13: Visually appealing facade in Greek Revival architectural style**



**Figure 15: Cupola**



**Figure 14: Visually interesting roof of a commercial building**

## Design Guidelines

### Storefront

Well-designed storefronts add vitality to the streetscape, encouraging pedestrian as well as vehicular traffic. Retail storefronts should make generous use of glass, face the street or sidewalk and not be obstructed by piers or other features that block view of the display windows. Carefully designed awnings coupled with appropriately scaled signage and lighting will further enhance the storefront's appearance.



### Roof Types

It is characteristic of traditional New England architecture that smaller- scaled structures have roofs that are *sloped* and *articulated* with dormers, chimneys, gables, cupolas, fascias etc.



Larger structures likewise can benefit from similar treatment that breaks up the massing into appropriately scaled elements. Avoid large flat-roofed areas, or conceal them behind parapets or sections of sloped roof.



### Windows

Fenestration (arrangement of windows on the wall) should be architecturally related to the style, materials, colors, and details of the building. Windows and door openings should be proportioned so that verticals dominate horizontals. To the extent possible, upper-story windows shall be vertically aligned with the location of windows and doors on the ground level, including storefront or display windows.



**Figure 16: Vertically-aligned windows and entrances**



Upper stories should incorporate window patterns and designs that are compatible with and complimentary to existing upper-story window patterns on the block.

First-floor window and display design should create a feeling of *transparency* on the ground floor of the building. This contributes to a sense of safety and is welcoming to pedestrians. The viewing zone of the first floor façade should be made up of approximately 75% transparent non-reflective glass. Window displays are encouraged, but visibility into the building from the sidewalk should be maintained.



Figure 18: Window with muntins



Figure 17: Window with shutters

With the exception of retail storefronts, modestly scaled, vertically proportioned windows articulated with *muntins* (dividers of panes of glass) are most appropriate to the local building vernacular. *Shutters* are also an appropriate element to include on windows.

## Entrances

Architectural detail should be incorporated into the ground-floor façade to create an easily identifiable and welcoming entrance. As one of the most important parts of the façade, the main entrance should be easily identifiable. Doors and entryways should follow a traditional storefront design (usually recessed) and should be compatible with the architectural style of the structure. The entrances should also address the primary street or pedestrian pathway.

When rear parking is provided, the provision of secondary *rear entrances* and pleasing rear facades is strongly encouraged. The design of the rear entrances and facades should be appropriately detailed to provide an attractive appearance, but should not be overly embellished to compete with the main storefront.

Where a new building is to be located on a *corner*, each side visible from a street should be considered a primary storefront façade and incorporate these fenestration patterns, unless doing so would unduly obtrude into a primarily residential street.



Figure 19: Greek Revival entrance



Figure 20: Victorian Entrance



Figure 21: Corner building with attractive entrances and windows facing both streets

## Design Guidelines

### Materials and Colors

The Town strongly prefers authentic natural materials such as *wood, brick, and stone* for the exterior of structures and landscape features. Construct windows, storefronts and public doorways of wood where possible. Synthetic materials should be as close in appearance and detail to the natural material it simulates. Vinyl siding is discouraged as it is environmentally damaging during its manufacturing and disposal stages.

All sides of the building should use materials consistent with those on the front if visible from public streets or neighboring properties, and should be carefully designed with similar detailing, comparable quality, and compatible materials.



### Awnings

Awnings that are functional for shade and shelter are encouraged. These awnings should be made of canvas or a canvas-like material, should fit the shape and scale of the window or door they are sheltering, and should be designed to be compatible with and complimentary to building signage and design. Awnings should break at the vertical divisions of the structure (i.e., the break between the display windows and the entrance).

The color and pattern of awnings affect the entire building and therefore should be carefully chosen. A facade with minimal architectural detailing can be enhanced with bright colors and patterns, while a more decorated facade may be complemented with a plain, subtle shade. The shape of awnings



should be designed to fit the building's architecture and relate to other awnings that exist along the street.

## Design Guidelines

### Other Elements that Add to New England Heritage

#### Shade Trees

The aesthetics and functions of shade trees are very important to Hamilton residents. Shade trees are large deciduous trees with spreading canopies, with the most popular being oaks, maples, ashes, elms, and lindens. In addition to aesthetic qualities and commercial appeal of these trees, they also have more practical benefits such as reducing heating and cooling costs, reducing heat reflected from paved areas, attracting and sustaining wildlife, converting carbon dioxide to oxygen, helping prevent soil erosion, increasing property value and much more. Therefore, preservation and protection of old shade trees as well as planting new ones is strongly encouraged.



#### Plantings/Landscaping

Thoughtfully designed landscaping appropriate to the context of a small New England town should include the careful use of stone walls, wood fencing, paving materials and plantings. These features can tie a structure to its landscape, define spaces and make for a pleasant pedestrian experience. Preserve mature plantings, stone walls and other historic features where possible and minimize modifications to the natural topography of the site.



#### Lighting

The exterior lighting scheme is important to the success of a storefront design. Lighting that highlights the sign and display area is often more effective than general lighting of the entire store. When a larger building has a number of storefronts, exterior lighting should be coordinated. Energy efficient lighting is also encouraged. Hamilton encourages energy conservation through the use of energy-efficient bulbs and the elimination of extraneous light that can spill offsite or cause glare. Select pedestrian-scaled light fixtures appropriate to building type and location. Avoid the use of floodlighting, wall packs, and tall light posts intended for lighting large areas.



#### Signage

In buildings with multiple storefronts, a coordinated approach to signage throughout the building is particularly important. Use signs of similar size, proportion, and materials on each store. Varying the color of individual signs can add variety. Signage should be appropriately scaled to the



building or surface onto which it is placed, should not obscure important architectural features, and should be readable by both pedestrians and drivers approaching the site.

## Town of Hamilton History and Character

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## Architectural Styles of Hamilton

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Architectural Style	Quick Identifying Features
Colonial, First Period 1670 - 1720	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Always faces south;</li> <li>◊ Massive central chimney;</li> <li>◊ “Saltbox” slanted rear roof;</li> <li>◊ Small windows with small panes.</li> </ul> <p>Example: [Town to input if relevant along with photo]</p>
Colonial, Second Period (also called Georgian after English King George) 1720 - 1790	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Even spacing between doors and windows;</li> <li>◊ Doorways emphasized by pediments, pilasters etc.;</li> <li>◊ Gambrel or hipped roof with multiple, symmetrically placed large chimneys;</li> <li>◊ Larger windows with pediments or other architectural emphasis;</li> <li>◊ Pilasters or quoins sometimes used on corners of house.</li> </ul> <p>Example: [Town to input if relevant along with photo]</p>
Federal 1790 - 1825	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Arched fanlight above door;</li> <li>◊ Large flattened chimneys on end walls or back</li> <li>◊ Window tops close to eaves;</li> <li>◊ Often has hipped roof and brick end walls.</li> </ul> <p>Example: [Town to input if relevant along with photo]</p>
Greek Revival 1820 - 1850	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◊ Doors flanked by sidelights, sometimes headed by oblong transom light;</li> <li>◊ Corner blocks above doors and windows;</li> <li>◊ Greek columns and motifs;</li> <li>◊ Pilasters used on corners;</li> <li>◊ Houses with gable ends to main street;</li> <li>◊ Large, flattish chimneys similar to Federal;</li> <li>◊ Second-story windows set well below eaves;</li> <li>◊ Floor-length windows.</li> </ul> <p>Example: [Town to input if relevant along with photo]</p>

APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES TEMPLATE

Victorian (many styles loosely called Victorian) 1840 - 1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◇ “Gingerbread,” fancy brackets, fancy shingles;</li><li>◇ Gables, turrets, bay windows, porches with turned p</li><li>◇ Skinny little chimneys;</li><li>◇ Fancy shingles;</li><li>◇ Mansard roof;</li><li>◇ Windows with 4 large panes.</li></ul> <p><i>Example: [Town to input if relevant along with photo]</i></p>
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## Results of Visual Preference Survey

In 2009 Cecil Group, an urban planning consulting firm, conducted a visual preference survey, that is, using use images to help people understand and clarify their preferences for various environments in order to inform their choices for the future.

The key results of the survey were:

- **Scale:** After viewing one, two, and three-story structures with different types of building designs, the participants did not seem to make preference distinctions based on scale, but rather on the architectural character of the overall building composition.
- **Architectural Styles** – There appeared to be some clear preferences expressed about architectural styles. Contemporary architecture styles tended to score poorly. The example of an art-deco era diner also scored poorly.
- **Materials** – Wood frame and shingle or clapboard sided buildings seemed clearly to be preferred relative to masonry or other materials.
- **Forms** – Buildings with relatively simple pitched roofs seemed nearly uniformly preferred relative to flat-roofed buildings.
- **Streetscape** – The streetscape images tended to receive similar scores, with one exception. Images of broad sidewalks received very positive responses.
- **Landscape Character** – The responses to the landscape and open space images are difficult to interpret. In some cases, relatively formal plantings gained a positive response, while in other cases they were poorly received. Contemporary design and more “urban” examples of spaces and planting seemed less compelling than other images, as well.

## Vocabulary

- ◊ **Arcade:** A range of arches supported on piers or columns attached to or detached from the wall.
- ◊ **Awning:** A roof-like cover extending over or in front of a storefront (as over the deck or in front of a door and/or window) as a shelter.
- ◊ **Bay:** A main division of a structure. A regularly repeated unit on a building elevation defined by columns, pilasters, or other vertical elements, or defined by a given number of windows or openings.
- ◊ **Bay window:** A window or series of windows forming a bay in a room and projecting outward from the wall.
- ◊ **Blank Wall:** An exterior building wall with no openings and generally constructed of a single material, uniform texture, and on a single plane.
- ◊ **Brackets:** Ornamental pieces placed under eaves, cornices, window sills, etc., which appear to provide structural support.
- ◊ **Bulkhead:** A vertical partition separating compartments.
- ◊ **Canopy:** An ornamental projection, over a door, window, niche, etc.
- ◊ **Clerestory:** An outside wall of a room or building that rises above an adjoining roof and contains windows.
- ◊ **Column:** A supporting post—often round in shape—found on storefronts, porches, and balconies; may be fluted or smooth.
- ◊ **Corner block:** A square, relatively flat block of wood, often decoratively carved, placed at the upper corners on each side of the wood framing around a door.
- ◊ **Cornice:** The projecting uppermost portion of a wall, sometimes treated in a decorative manner with brackets.
- ◊ **Cupola:** A small roof tower, usually rising from the roof ridge.
- ◊ **Dormer:** A window set vertically in a structure projecting from a sloping roof.
- ◊ **Eave:** The part of the roof which extends beyond the side wall.
- ◊ **Façade:** The face of a building, especially the principal face.
- ◊ **Fascia:** Any relatively broad, flat, horizontal surface, as the outer edge of a cornice, a string-course, etc.
- ◊ **Fenestration:** The arrangement of windows and other openings in a wall.
- ◊ **Frieze:** The portion of the facade found just below the point where the wall surface meets the building's cornice or roof overhang.
- ◊ **Front Lot-Line:** On a regular lot, the front lot line is the shared line between the lot and a sidewalk/public right-of-way.
- ◊ **Gambrel:** A roof having two slopes on each side of the peak, the lower slope usually steeper than the upper one.
- ◊ **Gable:** The vertical triangular wall between the sloping ends of gable roof.
- ◊ **Gable Roof:** A roof that consists of two sloping planes that meet at the ridge or peak. The planes are supported at their ends by triangular, upward extensions of walls known as gables.
- ◊ **Hipped Roof:** A roof with four sloped sides.
- ◊ **Mansard Roof:** A roof that has two slopes on all four sides.
- ◊ **Massing of the Building(s):** The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. Also called bulk.
- ◊ **Muntin (or Window Bar)** – A short bar used to separate glass in a sash into multiple lights. Also called a windowpane divider or a grille.
- ◊ **Parapet:** The portion of an exterior wall that rises entirely above the roof, usually in the form of a low retaining wall; the parapet may be shaped or stepped.
- ◊ **Pediment:** A low triangular gable above a cornice, topped by raking cornices and ornamented.
- ◊ **Pilaster:** A column partially embedded in a wall, usually non-structural and often decorated to resemble a classical column.

## APPENDIX B: DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES TEMPLATE

- ◊ **Public Right-of-Way:** Includes the street, curb and sidewalk area in front of private property at the front lot line.
- ◊ **Quoin:** Corner treatment for exterior walls, either in masonry or frame buildings.
- ◊ **Roof:** Flat or Pitched. Pitched roofs can be: Hip, Mansard, Gambrel, Gable, and more.
- ◊ **Sash:** (Window Sash) Framework of stiles and rails in which the lights of a window are set.
- ◊ **Scale:** A relative level or degree; to make in accordance with a particular proportion or scale with the surrounding architecture.
- ◊ **Setback:** An architectural expedient in which the upper stories of a tall building are stepped back from the lower stories; designed to permit more light to reach the street.
- ◊ **Shingles:** Thin pieces of wood or other material set in overlapping rows to form a roof or wall cladding.
- ◊ **Side light:** A framed area of fixed glass alongside a door or window opening.
- ◊ **Storefront:** The front side of a store or store building facing a street
- ◊ **Texture:** The visual or tactile surface characteristics and appearance of a building
- ◊ **Transom:** A small-hinged window above a door or another window.
- ◊ **Transparent Glass:** Degree of Tinting: Capable of transmitting light so that objects may be easily seen on the other side.
- ◊ **Turrets:** A small tower that projects from the wall of a building, such as a medieval castle or baronial house. A building may have both towers and turrets; turrets might be smaller or higher but the difference is generally considered to be that a turret projects from the edge of the building, rather than continuing to the ground.
- ◊ **Type A buildings:** buildings originally built for commercial uses and constructed at the sidewalk edge which include commercial uses at the first floor area.
- ◊ **Type B buildings:** buildings of residential character which are now at least partially used for commercial purposes. These buildings, which often occur at the edge of the commercial district, are typically set back from the street line and incorporate landscaped front yard.

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