

## F. DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

The Town of Farmington's design review process provides a framework for citizens, developers and interested persons to work toward achieving a better-built environment through attention given to fundamental architectural and site design principles. This process is intended to affect how new development or substantially reconstructed commercial development can contribute positively to Farmington's Village District setting and quality of life by preserving, whenever possible, historically and/or architecturally significant structures or reflecting identifiable and exemplary patterns and historic precedents that already exist within the District while encouraging pedestrian orientation and human-scaled amenities that enhance a sense of place.

Design review has three principal objectives:

- To encourage site planning and architectural design that will maintain and enhance the character of the Farmington Village District and ensure that new development sensitively fits into the village;
- To provide guidance and flexibility in the application of development standards;
- To improve communication and participation among developers, neighbors and the town early in the design and siting of new development, reconstruction or redevelopment that falls under the purview of the Design Review Process.

## I. CONTEXT



1. The building and layout of buildings and associated site improvements shall reinforce or enhance the predominant and desired existing development and streetscape patterns as determined by the Planning & Zoning Commission. The applicable patterns are found in publications entitled "Farmington-New England Town Through Time" and "Farmington Connecticut-350 Years In Pictures".

2. The placement of buildings and associated site improvements shall assure there is no adverse impact on the District.

3. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or sight lines of vistas from within the District shall be integrated into the site design.

4. Reasonable efforts shall be made to preserve, restore, reuse or enhance historic structures.

## II. SITE

### A. Pedestrian Circulation

1. Continuous internal pedestrian walkways should be provided from the parking areas to the primary customer entrances of all principle buildings. These walkways should be designed using the principals of universal design and connected to public spaces and other walkways or trails on adjacent properties.

2. Open spaces shall be provided and designed to facilitate safe pedestrian access to adjoining parking areas and developed properties.



3. Internal pedestrian walkways shall be distinguished from driving surfaces by 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.

4. Adequate provisions shall be made for deliveries and loading so as not to interfere with safe pedestrian movement. Dumpsters shall be properly screened and odors from trash properly confined

5. Sidewalks should be designed using the principals of universal design and provided along the frontage of public rights-of-way and should be constructed of durable pavers, concrete, or brick unless otherwise recommended by Architectural Design Review and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

6. In addition to ADA compliant design, the principles of universal design that provide for the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life is encouraged.

7. Private walks from parking areas or between buildings should be compatible with public sidewalk treatments and should be located at sensible points to facilitate movement between these areas and the public spaces.

### B. Access and Parking

1. Proposed streets shall be laid out in a manner that will reinforce the existing character of the area. Their placement and width should be designed to safely accommodate expected traffic with the least amount of impact to existing structures.



2. Offstreet parking shall be located to the rear of the building. If side yard parking is approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission than architectural and/or vegetative screening shall be placed between the parking area and any public road.

3. Vehicular access to buildings and parking areas shall be from streets other than major streets where practicable.

4. Vehicular circulation and the design and placement of parking shall be developed to prevent or reduce vehicular/pedestrian circulation conflicts.

5. Parking over the minimum required by applicable zoning regulations should be discouraged and if allowed should be designed and constructed in accordance with low-impact design principles.

6. Granite curbs in entrance drives and other areas of high vehicular traffic are preferred over asphalt to reduce long-term maintenance costs.

7. Bike racks are encouraged and should be placed in areas of high visibility.

8. In locations directly fronting the street edge within the parking, parking structures should be designed with ground floor uses compatible with neighboring areas in order to blend with surrounding structures and continue rhythm of storefronts along the street, where appropriate.



### C. Landscaping and Aesthetic Treatments



1. The landscape design shall complement or enhance the district's landscape patterns; provide for an appealing streetscape and mitigate the visual impact of streets, parking areas and manmade objects and features through the use of plants and trees, fencing and masonry walls.

2. Decorative site amenities and treatments (benches, trash receptacles, hand railings, light fixtures, etc.) are recommended to establish or enhance a sense of place and should thematically relate to each other, the building's architecture as well as the surrounding character.

3. Incorporate plazas, sitting areas, public art or formal gardens to visually and functionally unify a development with multiple buildings.



4. Low impact development mechanisms such as permeable pavement, grassed swales and bioretention basins should be employed when feasible.

5. Landscaping around buildings should establish continuity within the site, soften the harshness of regrading, and introduce human scale at the sidewalk level.

6. Select species based on intended function and placement such as larger cultivars for shading parking lots and screening buildings and smaller more decorative varieties near the fronts of buildings and entrances. Native species are preferred and identified invasive species are not allowed.

7. Only vegetation reaching suitable height and habit within one year of planting should be considered for screening purposes.

8. Loading areas, outdoor storage, service vehicle parking, ground-mounted equipment, refuse collection areas and other service functions must be screened. Screening materials should be a combination of durable yet high-quality materials and evergreen vegetation and shall also be visually consistent with the development and the surroundings.

9. Additional landscaping or more mature plantings may be required under certain circumstances to mitigate the proposed development.



10. The incorporation of interpretative displays to communicate historic or relevant information about the site or buildings is encouraged.

11. Exterior walls of parking garages visible from public streets within the project and across from other buildings should be concealed with liner structures or should have architecturally appropriate design and cladding facing the street.

## D. Lighting

1. Reproduction or decorative light poles and fixtures should be specified and consideration should be given to scale and style within the context of the intended development as well as with the surrounding properties.

2. All fixtures shall meet full cut-off or specifications to eliminate upward scatter and light encroachment on to adjacent properties.

3. Exposed concrete base foundations to light poles should be minimized to the extent practical.

## E. Signage

1. New freestanding signs are prohibited, with the exception of monument signs constructed with natural materials

2. Signs should be designed as an integral architectural element of the building and site, and should also reflect the character of the surrounding area.

3. There shall not be any internally illuminated signs including halo, channel cut and neon visible from a street or driveway, including interior window signage. Interior window signage shall not occupy more than 20% of the windows overall area.

4. 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.

5. Incorporate way-finding signage when circulation is complex and safe pedestrian movement is of concern or to direct pedestrian movements to adjacent properties of interest.

## III. BUILDING

### A. Orientation and Scale

1. Buildings should be sited in a manner that maintains the existing street wall or creates a strong street wall and shall have their primary orientation toward the street rather than parking area. For properties occupying the corner of two public roads or in cases where a new access is being created off a public road, building placement should reflect the existing street wall.



2. Proposed buildings shall complement and reflect the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the District as determined by the Planning & Zoning Commission

3. Buildings to the greatest extent possible shall be placed and oriented to the front of a lot and close to a street and should maintain a pleasing spatial relationship with the roadway and other nearby buildings in relation to their height and mass and that of others. New buildings shall not be setback from the street by more than ten (10) feet from the property line and shall occupy 70% of the lot frontage, unless otherwise approved by the Commission



4. Front facing walls of retail establishments shall contain display windows appropriate in size and number as determined in the design review process.

5. 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.

6. The street level and/or ground level façade shall be transparent between the height of three feet and eight feet above the walkway grade for no less than 70% of the horizontal length of the building. Windows shall be recessed and should include visually prominent sills, shutters, or other such forms of framing.

## B. Façade and Entrances

1. Buildings shall have their principal access directly off a public street and sidewalk unless otherwise approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

2. Windows and doors should be balanced in their placement on building facades. Though literal symmetry is not necessary, a general balance among façade elements is desirable.

3. Exterior facades, including eaves, columns, pilasters, cornices, windows and window surrounds, canopies, fascia and roofs, shall be proportionate with the proposed building and compatible with existing architectural precedents in the District.



4. Principal buildings should include elements such as canopies, columns, and arches that establish a human scale.

5. 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).

## C. Scale, Massing and Proportion



1. The construction of accessory buildings shall be prohibited unless otherwise approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.

2. Large building masses should be divided into heights and sizes that relate to human scale by incorporating changes in building mass or direction, projections, recesses, sheltering

roofs, windows, trees, small scale lighting or other distinctive elements that remain compatible with the building architecture.

3. Projections or recesses should be utilized along with color, texture and/or material changes in order to achieve visual relief of walls or extended facades.

4. Banding of exterior materials and/or architectural details should be incorporated at eye-level to break up large facades and create human scale elements.



## D. Materials and Colors

1. Predominant building materials to be used shall include brick, wood, stone or other natural materials. Glass shall not constitute the majority of a building exterior. Manmade materials may be used where recommended by Architectural Design Review and approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission.



2. Dryvit or exterior insulation finish systems, smooth-face concrete blocks, tilt-up concrete panels and pre-fabricated steel panels shall not be used.

3. Predominant exterior building materials should be non-glossy and have subtle, neutral or earth tone or historic colors.

## E. Rooflines

1. Building design shall reflect the rooflines of surrounding properties to avoid incompatible styles and materials, and the roof mass should create a consistent composition but extensive roof faces fronting public streets should be avoided.

2. Roofing materials exposed to view shall be slate, wood, asphalt or standing seam metal shingles.

4. All roof-mounted equipment shall be concealed from public streets and rights-of-way right-of-way by using detailing incorporated into the architectural design of the building as opposed to an applied barrier.



## **F. Equipment and Service Areas**

1. Install new utility systems underground and bury existing above ground services. Utility feeds and metering devices should be screened and may not be located on the building's front facade.
2. All utilities and mechanical equipment mounted on the ground shall be screened using a combination of high quality architectural treatments and evergreen vegetation.
3. Wherever possible, loading docks, solid waste facilities, recycling facilities and other service elements should be placed to the rear or side yard of the building in visually unobtrusive locations with minimum impacts on view.
4. Refuse containers and associated facilities should be hidden by an opaque wall or fence of sufficient height to screen the bin and any building appurtenances, but not less than 6 feet in height.