PORTSMOUTH DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

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CREDITS

Thanks go to the citizens of Portsmouth who volunteered their time, expertise and energies to serve on the Design Review Board to generate these Design Review Guidelines. They are: John Borden (Chair), Dorothy Guiffre, Allen Shers, Mary Frances Bauchspies, Weber Wilson, Mary Philcox, and Gary Graham. A special thanks to Bob Gilstein, Town Planner, who helped pull everything together. Also of great help have been Bill Clark, Business Development Director, George Medeiros, Building Inspector and Zoning Officer, Andre D'Andrea, Town Solicitor, Dr. Robert Quigley, Chair, and Kelly Woodward, Executive Director, of the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, the Portsmouth Planning Board, and the firm of Taylor and Partners.

Lastly, thanks must go to the Town Council for authorizing this document to be prepared and for their willingness to stand up for the future of our communities against the forces of unbridled and uncontrolled development that have led to disastrous consequences so many other places.

THE CHARACTER OF PORTSMOUTH

As one of the three communities on Aquidneck Island, Portsmouth wishes to conserve and protect its historical character. Clusters of buildings of small-scale dot pastoral landscapes, which are the island's treasure. Simple, well-crafted structures of wood frame, whose sites are bounded by artfully laid dry stone walls, are found in neighborhood after neighborhood, facing roads long on history.

Downhill views frame the blue waters of the Sakonnet, Mount Hope Bay and Narragansett Bay. The glacially deposited rich soils of the island have blessed agricultural uses for its land. Portsmouth does not wish to lose the visual wholeness of such a place to random development. It cannot be recreated if it is lost.

Residents of Portsmouth treasure their community for the richness it adds to their lives…Its land inspires them with its unspoiled beauty… they watch glorious sunrises across broad pastures…they see a sky full of clouds above a vast sweep of landscape from their sail boats, they glimpse the harbor full of small boats below as they arrive home passing over the Sakonnet and Mount Hope Bridges. They walk the rocky beaches at sunset completing their day, at one with its beauty. New residents move here for its" quality of life".

Portsmouth is a community of families, many with roots here for generations.
It is the wish of the Design Review Board to guide the process of development within its boundaries so that its residents, both now and in the future, will feel the special power of this place. Architectural additions and compatible land use practices can be positive and welcome in communities when they respect the tradition and character of the place. Portsmouth is committed to protecting its "quality of life".

WHY ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES NEEDED?

> *Land available for development on Aquidneck Island is a scarce resource. The quality and character of the community is dependent upon the quality and character of the architecture and development that is allowed to occur. Poorly planned and executed projects detract from the character and value of adjacent properties, while well-planned development enhances the character, quality of life, and value of the surrounding properties.*

Once built, communities must live with the results for generations, whether they are successful or not. Design standards are a tool in development and redevelopment assuring that honoring community priorities as an integral part of the design process is respected. **The small degree of extra investment in time and design that is necessary to conform to Design Standard Guidelines will be repaid many times over the life of each individual project**. Likewise a business owner or developer can rest assured that, because Design Guidelines are in place, the project that follows their recommendations will be done in a way that is sensitive to the character of the community and will enhance the value and viability of their property and business.

> *The Design Review process considers a wide range of design issues. These include such things as open space and natural features, pedestrian and traffic circulation, building scale, architectural details, signs, landscaping, and site lighting. Each issue may appear individually small. However, in combination, they can make the difference between a bad project and a good project. Hopefully, these guidelines will prevent Portsmouth from looking like "Anywhere USA".*

Without Design Guidelines the development process becomes a "race to the bottom" where each project tries to eke out some value from the site before all the character and value of the overall community is lost. Under these conditions there is no motivation to produce well-designed, carefully built projects as their usable lifespan is assumed to be short. In a community like Portsmouth, with a long history dating back to the settlement of our nation, newly designed architecture should be given forms that will reflect community history as well as its values and hopes for years to come. Portsmouth welcomes small scale well crafted architecture that respects the uniqueness of its site and its place in a community.

This "Design Guidelines" document is a set of common sense design principles that offer a positive direction for design as seen by the members of the Design Review Board, who are residents of Portsmouth. The guidelines and interpretations are based upon maintaining and enhancing the character of the community – one of the major legal justifications of all land use laws. They are not intended to specify any particular design or style. **All projects will be evaluated within the context of the surrounding area and the planned uses of the proposed development.** This manual is meant to serve as a way for developers and their architects and designers to get a head start on the design process and to facilitate a faster, better design experience.

WHO IS THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD?

The Design Review Board is a group of knowledgeable individuals from the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, community planning, building and construction, and business owners who understand the impact and complexity of building new projects. **By utilizing their specific knowledge, Design Review becomes an interactive process helping to develop creative solutions which might not fall within a strict set of rules, yet will benefit the business and the community in developing a workable and well crafted project.**

DESIGN REVIEW IN THE REGULATORY PROCESS

Design Review is part of the zoning approval process, as stipulated in the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance. Recommendations on specific types of projects are given by the Design Review Board, members of which are appointed by the Town Council, to the Planning Board, which, in turn, advises the Zoning Board of Review. The Zoning Board of Review may approve, approve with conditions, or reject development proposals in its jurisdiction. Conditions set by the Zoning Board of Review will usually be based upon recommendations of the Design Review Board and the Portsmouth Planning Board, and will be recorded in the land evidence records.

1. Conflict with Other Town Laws

Developments must adhere to the Zoning Ordinance. The Portsmouth Planning Board reviews developments using its Subdivision Regulations for things like road construction, drainage, and other site-related issues. The Building Inspector reviews developments using the R.I. Building Code and the Portsmouth Soil Erosion Ordinance. In the case of conflict between these guidelines and said ordinances, regulations and laws, said ordinances, regulations and laws shall prevail. Nonetheless, any such conflict does not relieve the responsibility of the applicant to comply with conditions recommended by the Design Review Board that are adopted by the Zoning Board of Review that are not specifically in conflict with said laws.

WHICH PROJECTS MUST COMPLETE THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS?

All development designated as such in Article VII. of the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance, are subject to design review. These are all non-residential and multi-family developments in commercial and light industrial zones.

While all projects must comply with municipal zoning requirements and building codes, these standards are being written to guide development and renovation of commercial projects within Portsmouth's town borders. While the Design Review Guidelines may differ in small ways in their applications from one zoning category to another, the guidelines for all commercial designs are uniformly focused on:

- Environmentally friendly site planning including traffic calming devices
- Modifying excesses in such things as visual clutter and color.
- Creating architectural compatibility with the significant existing neighborhood.
- Structures and site planning.
- Integrating signage and exterior lighting into the design.

- Increasing pedestrian linkages between the many small retail and residential areas which comprise Portsmouth.
- Placing greater focus on walkability for the centers of retail districts.
- Attention given to providing amenities, carefully crafted details, landscaping strategies and the "feel" of the project from a town resident's point of view.

THE PRE-APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet informally with the Design Review Board at the earliest stage of the development process, before time, money and energies are spent on planning, designs and professional services. Early in the consideration of a potential project, the applicant should carefully review and obtain copies of the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and the Design Guidelines.

The applicant is also encouraged to research the site history, utilizing aerial photographs to consider the context of the site within the community. Information regarding past applications on any property that may provide valuable information may be available through the Planning Board and Building Inspector.

Technical information regarding drainage, grading requirements and frontage improvements can be obtained from the Planning Board Administrative Officer

Early in the process applicants should make direct contact with local utilities and any special agencies that must give approvals to make sure that the design process addresses their specific requirements.

HELPFUL HINTS

While there is no way to absolutely guarantee a positive recommendation in the design review process, there are general approaches that are more likely to lead to a successful conclusion:

Know Your Site

Know your project site and its physical features well. Pay particular attention to subsurface conditions and previous uses or covenants that may have applied to the site.

Review Environmental and Traffic Issues

Special planning consideration will be given to sites containing wetlands, drainage ways, significant trees or sites affected by nearby traffic and circulation problems. Larger trees on a site should be carefully surveyed and given special consideration in the initial stages of the project.

Use Qualified Professionals and Consultants

If possible, choose professionals who are knowledgeable in the best design practices and who are familiar with the Design Review Guidelines. They will be an important resource in guiding you through the approval and implementation process.

Comply with Building Codes and Zoning Ordinance
While variances may be granted, projects will take longer to gain approval and will be subjected to more intense public scrutiny if variances are requested. If your project can be completed within the framework of the existing public building codes, you are more likely to have a faster, easier approval process.

Consistent with the Character of the Area and the Design Guidelines
The guidelines express the community's desire to create a place that is in harmony both economically and aesthetically. Working with the guidelines shows that your business wants to be a good neighbor to the businesses and residences that your project will be joining. *There is significant flexibility and variation built into the guidelines and they should not adversely limit the design of your project.*

Maintain Good Communication
Establishing good lines of communication with abutters to the property from the onset of the process will increase the level of trust that you establish with the Design Review Board and the community as a whole. When you have successfully communicated your vision for the project, especially its compatibility for the neighborhood, and have the support of the property abutters, approval by the Town Boards is far more likely.

Timetables & Scheduling
While the basic timetable for review by the Design Review Board is prescribed in the Zoning Ordinance, the amount of time process time is dependent upon several factors:

Complexity
The degree of complexity that a project presents may extend the process. A project that conforms to existing use, zoning, building codes and the Design Guidelines will be faster and easier for the board to review and approve. A project that is seeking zoning, code or use variances, or if it is contrary to Design Guidelines, may take considerably more time to review and rule upon.

Quality of Application
A carefully assembled application that has completely considered and explained the various aspects of the design and has illustrated the effect on the surrounding environment will go through the process at the fastest possible rate. Poorly conceived applications where questions are left unanswered may need to be resubmitted multiple times to meet the needs of the review process. Many of these types of delays can be avoided through proper use of a pre-application meeting.

The Design Review process should be part of your overall development plan.

WHAT ARE THE SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS?

A list of the submittal requirements is attached as Appendix I and is explained below. Many of the same items are required by the Planning Board for its review.

THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

1. **Conceptual Design Review Meeting**
2. **Formal Application**
3. **Final Design Review**
4. **Design Review Board Recommendations**

Project Scheduling

The Design Review Board meets the first Tuesday of each month. It may also hold special meetings as needed. A space will be reserved on the Design Review Board agenda when submitted plans have been determined acceptable for Board review. Future meetings depend on several factors:

- Resolution of outstanding design issues.
- Resubmission of recommended plan revisions.
- The Design Review Board's schedule.

1. Conceptual Review Meeting (strongly recommended)

It is strongly recommended that the applicant meet with the Design Review Board to obtain input on the project prior to investing significant time and money in the design process. **A conceptual review is intended to allow discussion of a project before the plans are fully developed. Conceptual review is intended to provide initial feedback on site planning, architectural, signage and landscape issues. At this stage, Board members may give valuable advice on how to make the project work for everyone**.

A submittal for concept review should be reasonably well developed and presented so that the Board is clearly informed as to:

- Design intent and concept
- Site planning and circulation relationships
- Indication of landscape elements
- Architectural plans

The applicant should bring to such a meeting:

A written description of the project (one page)
Preliminary site plan drawn to scale
Preliminary/rough building elevations
Listing of proposed exterior building materials
Photographs of the site showing:
    Abutting or existing structures
    Existing trees and landscape
    Road frontage conditions

A brief written design concept statement should be submitted as part of the design review application that identifies the significant site features, supports the reasoning behind the architecture and site plan proposed, and explains how and why the site features are incorporated into the project design. This will help the Board to understand the project,

and help Board members provide advice on how to meet these guidelines and improve the development.

Following a review of the materials, the applicant will be contacted to set up a workshop session with the Board.

2. Formal Application for Design Review

Once the applicant has compiled a completed application, it may be submitted through the Building Inspector's Office for review. Applicant should be prepared to follow the application checklist. It is the responsibility of the applicant to insure that all necessary submittal requirements are provided. Incomplete, inaccurate and unorganized submittals cannot be processed and may result in significant delays. A submitted application must include:

A completed checklist
A completed application form signed by the applicant and property owner (s)
The requisite number of plans, as listed in Appendix I.
A one page written description of the project
A one page written description of the design concept

Once recorded, the application will be reviewed for completeness. Following the review, the applicant will be contacted regarding the items discussed. If there are outstanding design issues that cannot be resolved, the applicant may wish to schedule a Workshop Session with the Board.

Application should conform to the application checklist requirements (see appendix), which should be suitable for a complete review and address all of the following:

Site Plan

- Concept
- Compatibility with surroundings
- Pedestrian circulation and accessibility
- Vehicular circulation and accessibility
- Landscaping and grading
- Public Spaces
- Noise orientation
- Solar orientation

Buildings

- Concept
- Compatibility with surroundings
- Compatibility with Design Guidelines
- Height and Massing
- Style and Materials

Site photos should be available at the meeting.

It is possible that complex projects may need more than one preliminary review session prior to final design review. Efforts are made to resolve outstanding design issues at the informal preliminary review session(s) rather than at a formal public hearing at the Zoning Board of Review level.

3. Final Design Review

Final design review before the Design Review Board is required. The Zoning Ordinance requires a recommendation by the Design Review Board to the Planning Board, which, in turn, reviews and approves part or all of the Design Review Board's recommendations, then incorporates them in its own recommendations to the Zoning Board of Review.

Review by the Planning Board may be happening in the same time frame as the Design Review Board. The two boards will communicate their findings to each other, to ensure that their recommendations do not conflict. If the Zoning Board of Review finds that the recommendations conflict, it may remand the application back for further review. Therefore, **it is in the interests of the applicant to ensure that the Planning Board and the Design Review Board are kept up to date on recommendations of the other.**

4. Board Actions / Recommendations to Planning Board

A request for final action by the Design Review Board may result in various actions:

a) Recommendation – The project meets or exceeds all Design Review criteria.

b) Conditional Recommendation - The Board may recommend conditions of approval not shown on the submitted exhibits. Conditions that are adopted by the Zoning Board of Review must be incorporated into the plans submitted for a building or site development permit. In some instances, the Board may recommend a project but recommend specific components to return for its review at a future meeting. (e.g., colors, signage, and other components that are typically decided upon in that latter stages of development).

c) Continuance - If there are outstanding issues at the conclusion of a meeting, the Board may continue the items to a future meeting, with the consent of the applicant. If the item is continued, plan revisions may be required. If the applicant does not agree to a continuance to resolve significant design issues, the Board is obligated to recommend denial of the project.

d) Recommendation of Denial - The Board determines that the project deviates substantially from the Design Review Guidelines and is not in the best interest of the community as presented.

The final resolution as adopted by the Board, together with the plans and exhibits submitted are the official design review documents. The Board will generate a written opinion letter summarizing their recommendations to the Zoning Board of Review.

Appeals

As the recommendations of the Design Review Board are advisory only, appeals as such are not relevant. The applicant with the Zoning Board of Review may file a written disagreement with such recommendations, with copy to the Design Review Board. An abutter who objects to a project recommendation may also file a written disagreement.

5. Approval by the Zoning Board of Review

The recommendations of the Design Review Board are transmitted to the Planning Board and, as in 3. above, to the Zoning Board of Review in written form and on plans as appropriate, per the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The Design Review Board will include in its recommendations specific conditions to be attached to any approval by the Zoning Board of Review.

ENFORCEMENT

The Zoning Enforcement Officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of all Zoning Board of Review requirements. The Zoning Enforcement Officer may seek interpretations of its conditions from the Design Review Board.

FEES

The Town Council in a separate fee schedule ordinance sets application fees.

THE DESIGN GUIDELINES

I. GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

It should be the goal and responsibility of each project developer to present for review a complete and well-conceived set of documents that highlight and make visible the compatible character and architectural craftsmanship that will make their project worthy of praise and a good neighbor when built.

1. The words “acceptable”, “appropriate”, attractive”, “compatible”, complementary” and other such words where judgment is inferred, refer to the majority opinion of the Design Review Board exclusively.

2. Where the word ‘Board’ used, it shall mean the Design Review Board unless otherwise indicated.

3. To provide guidance to building and property owners in the renovation and development of their parcels, the term “historic” refers to buildings or plantings that pre-date 1940. A list of buildings considered historical by the R.I. Historical Preservation Commission is available at the Town Planner’s office. Prospective builders and developers should consider their value in maintaining the character and context of the community.

II. SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

By responding to the larger contexts of neighborhood, topography, natural features, circulation, existing structures, view corridors, water elements, skylines, and open spaces, the possibilities inherent in the site become visible. The act of creating “place” begins with affirming what is already good and special about a site and introducing nothing onto the site that destroys that quality.

A. General Site

1. The site plan, building design and landscaping of new development should achieve high quality and appearance that will enhance, and be compatible with, the character of the surrounding area.

2. Significant site features such as natural ground forms, large rock outcroppings, vegetation, water and significant view corridors should be identified and incorporated into new development.

3. The design of outdoor spaces should recognize and incorporate views, climate, solar angles, and the nature of outdoor activities that could occur in conjunction with the project.

4. Where identified as appropriate, new and existing development should include public plazas, courtyards, landscaping and similar amenities or public assembly areas that are accessible and visible from the street. Such amenities should be provided in scale appropriate to the size and location of the project.

5. Phased projects should be designed to the greatest degree possible so that each phase, in and of itself, is complete in functional, visual, traffic, parking, drainage and landscape aspects.

B. Transitional Areas

1. Site planning and design of projects proposed adjacent to dissimilar land uses should carefully address any potential undesirable impacts on existing uses.

2. Project sites that are impacted by excess noise from the surrounding area or that would create an excessive noise impact on adjacent properties should use both site planning and architectural solutions to minimize impacts.

3. Where adjacent uses are determined to be incompatible, it is strongly recommended that a significant buffer zone be established which includes well-designed, large-scale, densely planted landscape elements, which diminish the impact on the neighborhood. Commercial developments should be screened from residential zones. (*See also Article IX in the Zoning Ordinance.)*

C. Grading

1. Abrupt or unnatural appearing grading (changes of grade of over 50% from top to bottom) is strongly discouraged. Grading on new project sites should blend, as possible, with the contours of adjacent properties.

2. The height and length of retaining walls should be minimized and should be screened with appropriate landscaping. Retaining walls should incorporated design elements of other architectural or natural features of the project.

3. Wood retaining walls and smooth faced concrete retaining walls are generally discouraged regardless of height.

4. Terracing should be considered as an alternative to the use of tall or prominent retaining walls, particularly in highly visible areas on hillsides.

5. Grading under a drip line of protected trees is strongly discouraged, in order to prevent soil compaction and significant root damage.

D. Drainage/ Stormwater Management

Drainage issues are primarily reviewed by the Planning Board according to principals laid out in the Subdivision Regulations, which primarily regulate this subject. The following are additional guidelines:

1. Drainage from rooftops or other impermeable surfaces should not be conveyed into planter areas that are surrounded by hard surfaces without a drain inlet.

2. Drainage should not be conveyed within the drip line of any tree on the site that will be retained.

3. Drainage from landscape areas should be properly conveyed and contained and should not drain freely across sidewalks, landscape and building faces.

E. Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation

Reference is made to the Zoning Ordinance, Articles III, VII, and IX, which primarily regulate this subject. The following are additional guidelines:

1. Circulation patterns should be as obvious and simple as possible. All likely pedestrian routes should be considered in the design phase to eliminate "short cuts" which may damage the landscape areas.

2. Every effort should be made to provide pedestrian routes and bike paths to adjacent neighborhoods.

3. Circulation systems should be designed to avoid conflicts between vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian circulation should take precedence over vehicular circulation, especially near buildings.

4. Redundant circulation that unnecessarily reduces the amount of site available for landscaped areas should be minimized.

5. New driveways and parking facilities should be sited either immediately opposite street intersections or well away from them. The number of driveways should be minimized, but should always meet the requirements of emergency service vehicles.

6. The number and width of curb cuts must be minimized, consistent with the Traffic Sensitive District regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. A wider curb cut may be appropriate on a higher speed street.

7. Where pedestrian circulation crosses vehicular routes, a change in grade, materials, textures or colors is encouraged to emphasize the conflict point and improve its visibility and safety.

8. Circulation routes should focus upon main entries and exits and also identify secondary access points.

9. All elements of the site design must accommodate access requirements of emergency vehicles and delivery vehicles. The Fire Department stipulates space requirements between buildings and other immovable objects.

10. Service functions should be integrated into the circulation pattern in a manner that minimizes conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians.

III. LANDSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Landscaping and plantings serve to screen, define, and highlight – framing views and giving form to space. Landscaping is an integral part of any development.

A. General

1. Well-designed landscaped areas should be maximized and balanced throughout the site.

2. Native trees and shrub plantings should be grouped together to create strong accent points within the site. Trees having greater than 18" caliper are considered important. It is strongly recommended that they be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

3. Dense Landscaping and/or architectural treatments should be provided to screen unattractive views and features such as storage areas, trash enclosures, transformers, generators and other similar elements.

4. Electrical transformers, which are installed as part of a new project, should be located to the rear of the site, or underground. Existing transformers, located at the front of the site, should be screened by substantial dense landscaping and /or architectural barrier.

5. The incorporation of defined outdoor spaces into the buildings and site designs of all new developments is encouraged. Outdoor spaces that are encouraged include terraces, courtyards, patios, covered walkways, passages, gardens, and trellised areas.

B. Landscape Design Standards

1. All plant materials should be sized so that landscaping has a full and finished appearance at the time of planting and a mature appearance within two years of planting.

2. Unless unusual circumstances prevail, all parking lot trees should be a minimum of 2" caliper. Street trees or perimeter trees should be minimum 2-3" caliper. In other areas proposed trees should meet the following standards.

3. Evergreen Trees 6' minimum height.

4. In cases where existing highly protected trees over 18" caliper are removed for new development, substantial replacement trees and additional landscaping material in new locations is strongly encouraged.

5. No irrigated landscape area should be placed under protected trees.

6. All proposed shrubs, except seasonal annuals, or ground covers planting should be a minimum of 18" mature height. Shrubs and ground covers plants should be spaced close enough together to ensure an attractive and mature planting effect.

7. For screening in car parking areas, a minimum of 36" mature height is recommended. For other screening purposes a minimum of 72" height is recommended and should include various evergreen material.

8. Landscaping connections linking open spaces/ woodlands and meadows should be made wherever possible.

9. Bike paths and pedestrian pathways linking neighborhoods and business areas are encouraged and should be subtly landscaped with native plant materials that require minimal care.

10. Native plant species should be chosen for all landscaping projects in Portsmouth, because they grow well in the climate and soil conditions of the area without requiring excessive irrigation.

C. Perimeter Trees

Perimeter Trees are planted along roadways or between parcels. (The recommended Perimeter Tree List is included as Appendix II.)

1. Trees may be recommended in the public right-of-way for all development within non-residential districts. The Recommended Tree List (Appendix II) designates recommended tree species for each street. New trees should be planted consistent with the plan and the perimeter tree standards and guidelines.

2. In commercial areas, perimeter trees are recommended in addition to any proposed on-site landscaping to provide the shading, visual enhancement and continuity for the streetscape.

3. Perimeter trees should normally be planted at 40' intervals.

4. Any existing perimeter tree that constitutes a specimen, historic or protected, may be substituted for a recommended perimeter tree.

5. Perimeter tree placement should include consideration for vehicle line of sight, entrance and exit curb cuts, street light and traffic control devices, and other site specific conditions as part of design review process.

6. Plant materials and perimeter trees should be installed consistent with planting standards which specify soil depth, irrigation requirements, tree grates, staking and other planting details.

7. Where significant vistas or view corridors are present or desired, the number and placement of the perimeter trees and landscaping recommendations may be amended.

D. Landscape Construction Recommendations

1. Landscaping plans should show all obstructions such as street lights, meters, backflow devices, utility covers, transformers, and similar objects which may affect plant placement and installation limitations.

2. When constructing new landscape planting areas on surfaces which were previously covered by pavement or structures, all existing asphalt, base rock or other deleterious material should be removed to the depth of the native soil and clean soil should be used to backfill the planting area.

3. All exposed dirt areas should be covered with bark mulch or other weed control measures included as part of final landscape installation.

IV. OFF-STREET PARKING DESIGN

Reference is made to Articles III and IX of the Zoning Ordinance, which primarily regulate this subject. The following are additional guidelines:.

A. Parking Lot Access

1. Curb cuts must be minimized, per the requirements of Article III of the Zoning Ordinance, Traffic Sensitive Districts.

2. Wherever possible, adjacent parking lots must be connected or, in the case of a vacant commercial lot, a connection provided so that traffic may move between them, reducing traffic on the arterial roadways.

B. Parking Lot Site Design

1. The visual impact and presence of vehicles should be minimized by generally siting parking areas to the rear or side of the property rather than along street frontages, providing underground parking or parking garages, and/or screening parking areas from views exterior to the site. Parking areas may be appropriate in the front of the site in certain retail areas, such as strip centers and shallow lots, provided appropriate landscaping and setbacks are incorporated into the parking design.

2. Driveway entrances should provide 10’ clear behind sidewalk or curb prior to starting the first parking space.

3. Where possible, the last parking stall in an aisle should contain an end island area to provide adequate turning and maneuvering room.

4. When parking must be adjacent to a street or public thoroughfare, the use of berms and landscaping should be implemented to minimize the visibility of cars and headlights from off the site.

C. Parking Lot Landscaping

1. **Parking lots should be designed with adequate landscape areas to avoid the appearance of a "sea of asphalt".** A minimum landscape area of 72" to the back of the perimeter curb stop should be provided where landscape separation is needed. Landscaping areas in which trees will be planted may need a 96" minimum clearance.

2. Placement of landscape materials and signs should permit adequate sight distance for motorists and pedestrians entering and exiting a site. (See Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance under "Vision Clearance".)

3. Landscape materials should not interfere with circulation patterns. Minimum distance of visibility should be 3 feet times the numeric posted speed limit in miles/hour on the affected road.

4. Landscaping should be provided adjacent to and within parking areas to screen vehicles from view and to minimize the expansive appearance of parking areas.

5. Shrubs and trees should be selected and installed at optimal locations to avoid damage from vehicles.

V. FENCING AND SCREENING DESIGN

A. Design Standards

1. Existing stone walls should be preserved wherever possible. Where existing stone walls must be moved, they should be replicated as nearby as possible within the site.

2. New stone walls should be built to be compatible in material, method and style with historic walls adjacent to or nearby the site.

3. All fencing should be designed as an integrated part of the site, rather than as a separate fence. For instance, planter walls, and continuation of architectural walls are preferable to freestanding fences.

4. Chain link fencing is highly discouraged. Where used, chain link should be green vinyl clad and have vegetative creeping cover within 12 months of installation. Chain link along major thoroughfares is very strongly discouraged.

5. Use of special fencing design or materials should be discussed in the design narrative submitted as part of the Design Review Application.

6. All new sound walls, masonry walls or fences 50’ in length or longer, and 4’ in height or taller should be designed to minimize visual monotony through changes in plane, height, material or material texture or significant landscape massing where appropriate.

7. Utility lines should be under-grounded within the Town Center area, along identified scenic corridors, at gateways and at other prominent locations.

8. Electrical transformers and similar utility structures should be underground or placed in the rear of the site. If not feasible due to preexisting site conditions, such as a high water table, the facility should be enclosed within the building or adequately screened from the view of any public right-of-way. Screening with solid materials, such as berming or enclosures, is preferable to reliance solely on planting.

9. The design of fencing, sound walls, carports, trash enclosures, and similar site elements should be compatible with the architecture of the main buildings and should use similar materials.

10. Rooftop mechanical and electrical equipment, microwave antennae, or building elements to screen such equipment should be designed as an integral part of the building architecture. It is strongly preferred that screens conceal equipment from view for a 300 foot radius from the building at ground level.

11. All exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading docks and ramps, wood service poles, electric and gas meters, fire sprinkler valves, irrigation backflow prevention devices, transformers, etc., should be screened from view in a manner that is compatible with the building and site design. Screening should be well designed and materials should be substantial and durable. Generally, all such elements should be located to the rear of the site and/or away from a major street, and screened to a height necessary to conceal the equipment from view for a radius of 50 feet.

B. Trash Enclosures

1. Trash enclosures should be constructed of sturdy, durable, opaque materials (with receptacles screened from view) that are designed to be compatible with the project architecture.

2. Trash enclosures should include adequate, accessible and convenient areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials. Dimensions of the recycling area should accommodate receptacles to meet the recycling needs of the project. To determine the appropriate dimensions needed for dumpsters and waste wheelers, contact the solid waste and recycling management representatives.

3. Areas for collecting and loading recyclable materials should be adjacent to the solid waste collection areas.

V. EXTERIOR LIGHTING DESIGN

1. Historically appropriate lighting should be used for the renovation of all historic projects. For new construction, exterior lighting should be architecturally integrated with the building style, material and colors.

2. In the absence of appropriate historic lighting models, concealed, vandal resistant up-lighting should be employed for lighting monuments or noteworthy buildings.

3. Excessive illumination of the signage, building or site should be avoided. Roof lighting, down-lighting washing the building walls, and illuminated awnings are all strongly discouraged.

4. Exterior lighting of the building and site should be designed so that light is not directed off the site and the light source is shielded from direct offsite viewing.

5. Fixture mounting height should be appropriate for the project and the setting. Use of low, bollard-type fixtures are encouraged as pedestrian area lighting. The mounting height of fixtures in smaller parking lots or service areas should not exceed 16 feet, with lower mounting heights encouraged, particularly where adjacent to residential areas or other sensitive land uses.

6. Raised light pole bases should be attractively designed and well detailed to be compatible with the overall project. The use of “sonotube” type concrete pole bases is discouraged.

7. Exterior lighting sources that provide full-spectrum white light (metal halide lamps or approved equal) are strongly encouraged.

8. Full cutoff lighting is strongly encouraged.

ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

Architectural guidelines help ensure that commercial development is in keeping with the high quality, traditional New England rural characteristics of Portsmouth, as well as in keeping with the characteristics of the area in which a proposed development is located. For example, architecture typical of the southwestern states is not appropriate in Portsmouth. Industrial style buildings are incompatible with commercial developments, especially where they are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. (Please see also the introductory statement: "Why Design Guidelines Are Needed".)

A. GENERAL ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

1. New architectural design should be compatible with the character of the neighboring area. Design compatibility includes complementary building style, form, size, color and materials.

2. Building architecture should be designed to provide an attractive appearance. Prefabricated buildings are highly discouraged. Franchise or corporate style architecture and/or highly contrasting color schemes are strongly discouraged. If used, such buildings should be substantially modified and embellished to create a project that meets the community standards. All architectural details should be related to an overall architectural design approach.

3. Historic structures of merit should be preserved and maintained. If the development requires relocation of an historic building, every effort should be made to preserve the building.

4. Diversity of architectural design is encouraged. Highly stylized buildings that are characteristic of a particular historic period other than their own are discouraged, unless a building or site is historically important to the district or necessary for architectural harmony.

5. Loud or gaudy colors, sharply contracting colors and highly reflective materials are not compatible with the character of Portsmouth and should be avoided.

6. Efforts to coordinate the actual and apparent height of adjacent structures that are architecturally compatible with Portsmouth are encouraged, particularly where buildings are located close to one another. Aligning the height of a wall, cornice or parapet line to that of an adjacent building is encouraged. Similar design linkages can be achieved to adjust apparent height by placing window lines, belt courses, and other horizontal elements in a pattern that reflects the same elements on such adjacent structures.

7. Multiple buildings on the same site should be designed to create a cohesive visual relationship. Out buildings should be designed to complement the primary building on the site in style and material expression.

8. Building siting should take best advantage of solar orientation, climatic and other environmental conditions, should encourage safety and privacy of adjacent outdoor spaces, and should reduce the impact of noise upon (or from) the project.

9. Buildings that are stylized in an attempt to use the building itself as advertising are very strongly discouraged. This is particularly true where the proposed architecture is the result of a "corporate" or franchise style.

10. The visibility of roof-top equipment should be minimized by grouping all plumbing vents, ducts and roof-top mechanical equipment away, and screening from public view for a 300 foot radius from the building from ground level.

B. Storefronts, Façade & Fenestration

1. Building facades should be compatible in scale, mass, and form with adjacent structures and the pattern of the surrounding area (assuming the adjacent structures are generally in compliance with these design guidelines).

2. Exterior building design and detail on all elevations should be coordinated with regard to color, types of materials, number of materials, architectural form, and detailing to achieve harmony and continuity of design. No more than three paint colors should be employed, excluding signage and awnings.

3. Rear and side facades, if visible from public streets or neighboring properties, should be carefully designed with similar detailing and materials and should be compatible with the principal facades of the building. All elevations of the building will be evaluated in Design Review process.

4. Long unbroken or unadorned wall planes are discouraged. Massing of a building should not extend beyond 50 – 75 feet without the facade being relieved with changes of wall plane that provide strong shadow or visual interest.

5. Exterior materials should be durable and of high quality. Highly reflective materials are discouraged. Non-durable materials such as thin layer synthetic stucco or EIFS products should not be used within 96" of ground level unless specially reinforced or located away from pedestrian accessible areas.

6. Metal storefronts are very strongly discouraged, unless completely screened from view from the street, using landscaping, fencing or other materials that effectively hide the building from the street. Metal sides visible from the street should be similarly screened.

7. Pedestrian level storefronts should employ non-reflective glass or light gray tinted glass to enhance the visibility of the displayed merchandise from the outside.

8. Good design suggests that window and door openings on the front façade occupy a total of no less than 10% and no more than 60% of the gross square footage of that façade. The size and placement of windows should be commensurate with adjacent historical models where they exist.

9. Shutters are encouraged.

10. True divided light windows are encouraged.

11. No new building or remodeling of any existing building should have mill-finish (non-colored) aluminum metal windows or door frames visible from the street unless specifically requested by the applicant and recommended by the Design Review Board. Aluminum windows should typically have a Kynar or similar finish to match the proposed trim color of the building.

12. For renovation projects, it is desirable that the historic storefront be repaired. Where the historic storefront is beyond repair, the new storefront should emulate in design, scale and material the old storefront as much as possible or practical.

13. Code required elements, such as parapet walls and screen walls should be treated as an integral part of the architecture and these elements should not visually weaken the design.

14. All vents, gutters, downspouts, flashing, electrical conduits, etc., should be painted to match the color of the adjacent surface, unless being used expressly as a trim or accent element.

15. Soffits and other architectural elements visible to the public but not detailed on the plans should be finished in a material compatible with other exterior materials.

16. Material or color changes generally should occur at a change of plane. Material or color changes at the outside corners of structures that give the impression of "thinness" and artificiality of the material are discouraged. Piecemeal embellishment and frequent changes in material should be avoided.

17. Approved address numbers (by the Fire Department) should be provided so that they are legible to the public from the street fronting the property. Commercial address signs in the downtown areas should be illuminated in a manner commensurate with lighting conditions.

C. Building Materials

The following building materials may be used and combined to create a consistent, attractive, interesting and long-lasting building design:

1. Brick – Painted brick is not recommended, as it tends to chip easily.

2. Stone – Natural stone such as, but not limited to, fieldstone, granite, limestone and marble are recommended materials. Terra Cotta and/or cast stone, which simulate natural stone, are also acceptable. Painted stone is strongly discouraged.

3. Split-face Block / Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU) on side and rear elevations.

4. Natural wood and/or cement-based artificial wood siding.

5. Glass.

6. Painted concrete block.

7. Non-decorative cinder block should be limited to walls not visible from a public street.

D. Roof Lines and Materials

1. **Sloped roofs are highly preferred**. Gabled and hipped roofs should have a slope of greater than 4/12 (18º) but less than 14/12 (49º).

2. Gambrel roofs are also appropriate.

3. Mansard roofs are acceptable provided that the vertical rise is appropriate for the building size. A widow's walk or parapet element enhances such roofs.

4. Standing seam, cooper roofing, cedar and asphalt shingles are preferred. Roofing materials that imitate another material are generally discouraged. Metal roofs that face the street are discouraged, unless architecturally blended with the facade.

5. Flat roofs are strongly discouraged. Where used, they should have a parapet wall at the façade and (with cornice elements larger than 3%, but less than 10% of the total building height looks best).

E. Building Equipment and Services

1. Access for service vehicles, trash collection and storage areas should be located on interior service drives or alleys where they exist or are planned. When no such access exists, the access should be provided on the street with the least traffic volume, with sensitivity to adjacent residential areas.

2. When feasible in larger commercial developments, service and loading areas should be separated from main circulation and parking areas and away from public streets. Loading and unloading activities may not interfere with circulation on public streets.

3. Building equipment should be located, designed, and/or screened to minimize visual impact on public streets, large surface parking fields, and neighboring properties.

4. Trash containers and outdoor storage areas should be screened from public streets, pedestrian areas, and neighboring properties. The screen for the trash containers should be designed to be compatible with the architectural character of the development. It should be constructed of durable materials similar to those of the building and should have solid (opaque) walls and doors.

5. Utility meters should be located in screened areas, or away from public view.

(SECTIONS F, G, H, AND I BELOW ARE GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF USES. THEY ARE IN ADDITION TO, NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR, THE OTHER SECTIONS OF THESE GUIDELINES.)

F. Guidelines for Auto Dealerships, Auto Repair, Construction and Other Establishments Having Significant Outdoor Equipment or Inventory

1. Special attention should be directed toward the site landscaping which is visible from the street. Trees to provide both shade and visual relief should be located within the site as well as on the site perimeter. The vehicle display or storage parking areas may remain relatively open, if balanced by substantial landscaping and tree planting on other visually prominent areas of the site.

2. Landscaping, special paving treatments, setbacks, and building orientation should be used to provide an attractive appearance from the front property line.

3. The service area and service bays should be screened or sited so they are not visible from the street.

4. Vehicles under repair should be kept either inside a structure or in an area that is screened from the street.

5. Service areas should provide adequate queuing space that does not impede vehicle circulation through the site or result in vehicles stacking into the street.

6. Perimeter fencing, security fencing, or gateways should be constructed of attractive materials that are compatible with the design and materials used throughout the project. Razor wire or electric fencing is not allowed and chain link fencing is strongly discouraged.

7. Night lighting and security lighting should be sensitively designed to ensure that no off-site glare is directed to neighboring parcels and that the overall intensity of the site lighting is not excessive. The use of excessive nighttime security lighting is discouraged. Other security measures should be considered instead.

G. Restaurant Guidelines

1. A new free-standing restaurant building should be sited and designed to be compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. If the restaurant will occupy a pad within a shopping center, the building should be designed to be consistent with the overall "theme." (See G. Shopping Center Guidelines.)

2. Drive-through elements are generally discouraged. **Where drive-through elements are required, they should be architecturally integrated into the building**, rather than appearing to be "stuck-on" to the building. Drive through elements should not be located on the street side and should be heavily screened from view. (*See also Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance*.)

3. The site design should accommodate logical and safe vehicle and pedestrian circulation patterns through the site. Circulation should allow for adequate length of queuing lines for drive through elements which do not interfere with the on-site parking for patrons entering the restaurant, nor result in traffic queuing into the street.

4. Free-standing restaurant buildings should be designed and detailed consistently on all sides, including the rear and side elevations.

5. Outdoor seating areas, play equipment, and perimeter fencing should be integrated with the main building architecture so it is compatible and attractive.

6. Trash enclosures and other service spaces should be constructed of materials and finishes which are consistent with the main restaurant building.

7. Remodeling of existing structures for restaurant uses require a review of the entire site and circulation plan to ensure that the project is updated to current design review standards of Portsmouth. This may include recommendations to improve and/or expand the existing landscaping, fencing, parking area or other site design issues.

H. Service Station Guidelines

1. Site Development Standards include: Maximizing landscaping along the street frontage; width of curb cuts limited to that necessary for safe access (including service vehicles); minimize size of canopy cover; canopy cover should contain no signage; at least two vehicle stacking spaces behind the pumps closest to the entrance driveway. (*See also Zoning Ordinance Article IX*.)

2. The site design for projects located at street corners should provide some structural or strong design element to anchor the corner. This can be accomplished using a built element or with strong landscaping features.

3. The on-site circulation pattern should include adequate driving space to maneuver vehicles around cars parked at the pumps, with special attention to the circulation of vehicles not involved in the purchase of fuel.

4. The amount of unrelieved pavement or asphalt area on the site should be limited through the use of landscaping, contrasting colors and banding or pathways of alternate paver material.

5. Separate structures (canopy, carwash, cashiers booth, etc.) on the site should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site.

6. Tall (over 13 ft.) tank vents should be completely screened or incorporated into the building architecture.

7. A car wash that is incorporated into the project should be well integrated into the design. The car wash opening should be sited so that it is not directly visible as the primary view from the street into the project site.

8. All signs should have consistent character and design details (such as trellis, brick, river stone, etc.) that reflect the design of the project. The “amount of price” sign square footage required as the state regulated minimum size does not count towards the signage calculation. For signs larger than this minimum, the incremental square footage difference is counted as part of the total allowable signage for the station.

9. Signs on the sides or top of pump-area canopies are strongly discouraged.

10. Illumination should be concentrated on specific signage. Canopies should not be illuminated. Light fixtures should be recessed into the canopy and no glare should be visible from the fixture. Yard lights should be oriented downward.

11. Dumpsters and service areas should have wall materials and building styles that match those used for the station buildings.

12. The rooftop mechanical equipment screen should cover all rooftop equipment, including any satellite or other telecommunication equipment.

I. Shopping Center Guidelines

1. A unified architectural design should be incorporated into each commercial center. The architectural design of freestanding pad buildings should be consistent with the design of the remainder of the shopping center. Where centers are to be updated, pad buildings should be remodeled in conjunction with an upgrade of the entire shopping center.

2. It is preferable that a significant portion of the total building area should be located at or near the street perimeter in the Town Center area, preferably on a corner location. Such siting, together with substantial landscape treatment reinforces and strengthens the streetscape and helps to screen off-street parking areas.

3. The appearance of a "sea of asphalt" parking lot in front of the center should be avoided. Both perimeter and interior parking lot trees should be provided for shade and visual relief in the parking area while maintaining view corridors to the storefront areas. Liner buildings along the street are strongly encouraged

4. Shopping center sign programs should be established and enforced for remodeling of the centers. Monument signs listing all tenant names (tenant identification signs) should be avoided.

5. Remodeling or comprehensive upgrades for centers should address all existing structures and not the only the new tenant space alone.

6. Truck delivery and circulation routes should be separated from customer circulation. Delivery and service activities should access the site from the least traveled street adjacent to the property.

7. All rooftop mechanical equipment, antennas, etc., should be screened from view. Rooftop lighting is strongly discouraged.

8. Textured or colored paving materials are encouraged to identify pedestrian circulation areas, especially within the parking lot.

9. Outdoor gathering areas and public eating areas are encouraged.

SIGNAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Reference is made to Zoning Ordinance Article IX , which primarily regulate this subject, particularly for size, number and placement. The following are additional guidelines. See also guidelines for specific types of uses and developments.

A. Sign Overview

1. ***Quantity***. *See Zoning Ordinance, Article IX*.

2. ***Size***. *See Zoning Ordinance, Article IX*.

3. ***Height***. *See Zoning Ordinance, Article IX*.

4. ***Design***: All signs should be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the building and are not in visual competition with other signs in the area.

5. ***Compatibility***: All signs should complement their surroundings without competing with each other, should convey their message clearly and legibly, should be vandal-proof and weather-resistant, and, if illuminated, should not be overly bright for their surroundings. New signs proposed for existing buildings should provide a compatible appearance with the building signage of other tenants. With multiple signs on a single building, an attempt should be made to bring in a unifying element (such as size), even where no sign program exists.

6. ***Mounting***: Signs that are replaced on masonry or stucco exteriors can result in unattractive "patched" areas. These potential maintenance problems should be addressed during the design phase of the project. Signs on masonry surfaces should typically be anchored into the mortar joints.

7. Businesses should not be "over-signed". Sign ordinance limitations will be strictly enforced.

B. Sign Types

1. ***Individual type***: Signs composed of individual letters are encouraged. Back-lit (halo-lit, or reverse pan channel) letters are generally desirable for logos and wider individual letters. Individual metal letters are often the best choice for office identification signs.

2. ***Cabinet signs***: Internally illuminated or non-illuminated cabinet signs are generally not appropriate and are strongly discouraged. Signs that incorporate a mixture of media, such as a cabinet sign with a rim of neon, are highly discouraged.

Freestanding signs on poles which have a top-heavy appearance are discouraged; twin posts help reduce the top-heavy appearance.

3. ***Roof signs***: The use of roof signs should be avoided, both for appearance and structural integrity of the roof. Alternate locations where the sign can be hung parallel to the storefront or façade should be considered.

4. ***Monument signs***: Freestanding monument signs are generally discouraged, as they are oversized and emblematic of strip malls nationwide. The freestanding sign should be a low height wherever site conditions allow for visibility. Monument sign materials should reflect the character of the use and the building the sign identifies.

5. ***Landscaping***: Landscaping should be designed around the base of freestanding and monument signs to integrate the sign with the ground plane and screen out any low-level floodlights. Irrigation should be designed so it does not damage the sign.

6. ***Skyline signs***: Skyline signs placed on the upper portions of buildings should be constructed of individual halo-lit letters if illumination is desired.

7. ***Driveway directional signs***: These should *only* be used for projects where circulation is complex and traffic must proceed through the site along a specific path for service. Where the layout of the parking lot and driveways are obvious and clearly apparent to the driver entering from the street, directional signage is not needed and is strongly discouraged in order to prevent visual clutter.

8. ***Standards***: Where traffic control signage is used it should conform to the standards found in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and other such applicable codes.

C. Sign Design and Materials

1. ***Background***: Dark colored backgrounds on signs are generally encouraged. Stark white or extremely bright background colors such as bright red, orange or yellow are strongly discouraged. Where the design of the sign results in a large field of illuminated background, the use of white or off-white as a background color should be avoided.

2. ***Raceways***: Visible raceways and transformers for individual letters are strongly discouraged. Sign installation details should indicate where the transformer and other mechanical equipment will be located.

3. ***Supports***: Exposed supports or guy wires to stabilize signs are strongly discouraged.

4. ***Cabinet signs***: For cabinet signs, the use of opaque backgrounds that only allow illumination of the cutout letter or graphic area is encouraged. This can be accomplished with a metal routed sign face using Plexiglas behind (the preferred

method) or with a vinyl-coated Plexiglas. When designing a cabinet sign, an ample border around letters should be maintained. Standard proportions should be ¼ borders, letters and ¼ borders.

5. ***Channel letters***: When using reverse pan channel letters, avoid small printing, as it does not read well at night. The color of the trim caps should match the color of the letter face or the cabinet return.

6. ***Foam letters***: The use of plastic foam letters is recommended only if used 8'-0" or higher above ground level. Each letter should be properly capped with Plexiglas. In addition, each letter should be studded and glued to the wall to provide a more secure sign connection.

7. ***Flat sheet signs:*** Flat sheet signs (such as plywood) are generally discouraged. When employed, they should have a trimmed edge or frame to improve the finished appearance of the sign.

D. Sign Message/Copy

1. ***Fit***: Signage should be designed to fit properly into the sign location. In some cases, the corporate identification and/or logo should be split into two or more lines to fit attractively into the space.

2. *Font size*: Small letters on the sign face, or used as part of the sign, do not read well and are discouraged. Words on signs to be read from the street should be legible from at least 100 ft. away.

E. Sign Lighting

1. ***Illumination***. Shining light on individual letter signs is discouraged for both skyline signs and signs placed high on building walls. Business signs in residential zones may not be directly illuminated. Indirect lighting is encouraged.

2. ***Off-site glare***: Arrange any external spot or flood lighting so that the light source is screened from direct view by passers-by, and so that the light is directed against the sign and does not shine into adjacent property or blind motorists and pedestrians. Where individual letter signs face nearby residential areas, a low level of brightness can be maintained by using halo-lit letters.

3. ***Halo-lighting***: Halo-lit or back-lit letters are highly encouraged for both office and retail use. Such signs convey a subtle and attractive appearance and are very legible under moderate ambient lighting conditions. Face illumination letters may be appropriate for retail use.

F. Sign Programs

1. ***Sign Programs***: New construction design should anticipate signage and, where necessary, a sign program. New building design should provide logical sign areas and dimension, allowing flexibility for new users, as the building is re-tenanted over time. Designs that provide for convenient and attractive replacement of signs are encouraged.

2. ***Complementarity***: Sign programs should be designed to complement the style, color and materials of the building. The best sign programs are integrated so that they become a natural part of the building façade.

3. ***Design***: Sign programs that provide attractive combinations of type styles and colors are encouraged. Within the sign program, the background color, type style and print color of the sign should be consistent. However, the use of a logo that provides identification for the business can be used to bring distinction to the business within the framework established by the sign program.

APPENDIX I: APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR FORMAL REVIEW

Most of the following are required for Planning Board and Zoning Board of Review as well. (* Indicate required Documents)

A. * Application Form (signed by applicant and property owner)

B. * Application Checklist - one

C. * Vicinity Area Map (include scale and north arrow) - one

D. * Site photographs - one set

E. * Written Descriptions – one set

1. * Project Description and Profile Date Summary (one page maximum)
2. Design and Architectural Concept (one page maximum)

F. * Site Plans – 3 sets (drawn to scale and submitted on 11"x17" minimum to 30" x 42" medium sized sheets) showing:

1. Proposed Site Plan (drawn to the centerline of adjacent streets and to all adjacent structures).
2. Site Boundary and Topographical Survey including public and private easements.
3. *Existing Structures and Proposed Structures and Uses
4. * Existing Natural Features (e.g., creeks, drainage swales, rock outcroppings, etc.)
5. *Trees (accurately plotted showing the trunk location and the actual spread of the drip line). Plan must include type, size, and whether they will be removed or retained)
6. *Proposed Building Footprint dimensioned to property lines. Include proposed uses
7. Parking spaces including handicapped stalls showing aisle and space dimensions
8. Landscaped Areas
9. Circulation (vehicular and pedestrian) including surface and posted directional signs
10. Contiguous off-site features (sidewalks, driveways, buildings, street furniture, traffic signs, traffic signals, etc.)
11. Location of light fixtures, fences, trash areas, recycling areas, etc.
12. Loading and Unloading areas.
13. *Conceptual grading and drainage showing existing and proposed drainage patterns and retaining walls including height and material.
14. Existing and proposed Right-of-Way alignment
15. *Existing and proposed fence locations
16. Site Lighting Plan including light fixtures and stanchions and area of illumination

G. Architectural Drawings – scaled and dimensioned both vertically and horizontally (see example in appendix) – 3 sets.

1. *Exterior Elevations – 1/8" minimum scale with sample representations at ¼" for detail areas. Elevations must show:
   a) *Materials, details and features (include visible roof equipment, plumbing and electrical meter locations and method of concealment, downspouts, lighting fixtures, etc.)
   b) *Heights scaled and identified. Topography must be accurately represented with building heights measured at any and all points from existing or finished grade, whichever is lower.
   c) *All sides of the building with compass reference settings
   d) A minimum of one representative colored elevation. (Note: Elevations should not include superimposed landscaping or trees.)
2. *Roof plan (include proposed mechanical equipment and screen)

H. Preliminary Landscape Plans 3 sets - drawn to 1" = 20' scale or larger, indicated accurate growth in three-year period.

1. Plant legend showing plan list and indicating type, size, and spacing of plants, shrubs, trees, ground cover
2. Planting plan indicating location and specification of plants
3. Trees to remain or proposed for removal including species, trunk size and drip line.
4. Preservation information for trees in construction zone
5. Hardscape features including walkways, driveways, paving material, etc.
6. Schematic Irrigation Plans
7. Light stanchions, bollards, transformers, etc.
8. Trash area and landscape screening
9. Utility transformer locations

I. Signage Plans (including individual submittals and Sign Programs)
Site plan referencing all sign locations

1. Table indicating total site signage square footage, sign message and sign type
2. Signs shown as proposed on the architectural elevations
3. One colored elevation, if possible.
4. One actual sign copy (wording)
5. Sign details, scaled and dimensioned, one set showing:
   - color
   - material
   - cabinet details
   - sign returns
   - illumination method, type, level
   - method of attachment

6. Site directional signs keyed to site plan

J. Color and Material Palette (one set), including paint chips and individual samples.

K. Optional Requirements. The following optional items need not be submitted at the time of initial application. Applicant may wish to submit in order to clarify issues:

- Perspective Drawings
- Conceptual Model
- Color Renderings
- Sectional Drawings
- Shade Diagram

APPENDIX II: RECOMMENDED TREE LIST

The following species are recommended as Perimeter Trees throughout the Commercial Districts, due to their tolerance for tight conditions and auto emissions. Care should be taken in selecting which types do best in wet vs. dry areas, whether roots grow downwards or spread near the surface, etc.

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acer rubrum	Red Maple
Acer saccharum	'Green Mountain' Sugar Maple 'Green Mountain
Cladrastis lutea	"Yellowood"
Fraxinus	Americana 'Summit' 'Summit' White Ash
Fraxinus pensylvanica	'Patmore" Green Ash 'Patmore'
Liquidambar styraciflua 'Rotundifolia'	Seedless Sweet Gum
Liriodendron tulipfera	Tulip Tree
Nyssa sylvatica	Tupelo
Quercus alba	White Oak
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
Quercus palustris	Pin Oak
Quercus rubra	Red Oak
Tilia	Americana 'Redmond' Redmond American Linden
Ulmus American (disease resistant)	American Elm (disease resistant)

Additionally the following species are recommended where no sidewalk or trail is located within the right-of-way:

Botanical Name	Common Name
Quercus alba	White Oak
Quercus bicolor	Swamp White Oak
Quercus Palustris	Pin Oak
Quercus rubra	Red Oak

Because of their particular hardiness to more urban conditions, the following species are recommended as Perimeter Trees throughout the Town Center District:

Botanical Name	Common Name
Acer platenoides	Norway Maple
Ginko biloba-male	Maidenhair Tree
Gleditsia triacanthos	Honey Locust
Platanus acerifolia	"Blood good' London Plane 'Bloodgood'
Pyrus calleryana	'Bradford' Bradford or Aristocrat Pear
Tilia cordata	European Littleaf Linden*
Zelcova serrate	'Village Green' Village Green' Zelcova

Evergreens are appropriate for all areas, especially to provide screening from adjacent properties.

* Except on streets with on-street parking

APPENDIX III – DEFINITIONS

Definitions herein are meant to apply to these design guidelines only. In case of conflict with the Portsmouth Zoning Ordinance or Subdivision Regulations, definitions in those documents shall prevail.

A

Access: Ingress and egress to and from premises, including ingress and egress to and from a public way and general road system.

Access Corridor: A vehicle circulation area in private ownership, including easements, tracts and driveways in a common ownership, over which access is afforded to two or more lots or residences. Where a driveway is shared and serves garages or accessory buildings and the lots and principal buildings front upon another street or an access corridor, the shared driveway should not be defined as an access corridor. In this case, the side street setbacks do not apply. An access corridor should not serve more than 10 single-family lots.

Access, Primary: The principal ways or means of approach to provide most frequent vehicular or pedestrian access to a property.

Accessory Structure: A detached, subordinate structure, the use of which is clearly incidental and related to that of the principal structure or use of the land, and which is located on the same lot as that of the principal structure.

Addition: Any new exterior construction attached to an existing building or structure.

Adjacent Elevation: The exterior walls of a new structure that will be located along the alignment of the primary historic building elevations, or generally parallel to any primary wall of the historic building within a distance of fifty (50) feet, and extend up to twice the height of the historic building.

Alignment: The linear or parallel placement of structures and/or primary facades within a row of adjacent properties, or along a streetscape.

Alley: A special public right-of-way affording only secondary access to abutting properties.

Arch: A curved form spanning an opening; it may take various rounded forms including a pointed shape.

Architectural Character: The basic detailing, architectural rhythm, architectural style, appearance and historic period of a building or group of buildings or structures, including the site and landscape development.

Architectural Detailing: The exterior placement and/or construction of the different architectural features including all horizontal or vertical surfaces.

Architectural Elements: See "Architectural Feature."

Architectural Feature: A prominent or significant part or element of a building, structure, or site. Architectural features may include special lines, massing, projections, recesses, and texture.

Architectural Style: The characteristic form and detail of buildings of a particular historic period.

Awning: A framework covered with a fabric or metal projection from the façade of a building located on storefront or individual window openings. The primary purpose is to shade the interior of the building and provide protection to pedestrians. Poles or brackets can support awnings and canopies.

Axis: A line established by two points in space and about which forms and spaces can be arranged.

Axonometric drawing: A drawing showing a building in three dimensions.

B

Balcony. That portion of the seating space of an assembly room, the lowest part of which is raised four feet or more above the level of the main floor.

Baluster: An upright, often vase-shaped, post or upright support for a rail.

Balustrade: A banister, railing, handrail or barrier.

Bay: Vertical division of a building facade as delineated by some regular recurring feature such as windows or columns.

Bay window: A window element projecting from a building facade.

Billboard: An advertising device, either freestanding or attached to a building, which is used to display information not related to the use or ownership of the establishment or the property upon which it is located.

Bond: The pattern formed by bricks in a wall using one or more sides or positions (oblong or upright) of the brick.

Borrow. Earth material acquired from an off-site location for use in grading on a site.

Bracket: A support element that supports eaves, shelves, or other roof overhangs.

Building Mass: The height (number of stories), width, and depth of a structure

Building Work Areas. Include all areas within 15 feet of a structure footprint; parking areas, access roads, and streets plus eight feet; and utility lines plus eight feet. All distances shall be measured horizontally. These areas are subject to setbacks, buffers and critical areas where no grade changes or other disturbance occur.

Buffer or Buffer Area. A naturally vegetated and undisturbed, enhanced or revegetated zone surrounding a sensitive area that protects the sensitive area from adverse impacts to its integrity and value, or is an integral part of the resource's ecosystem.

Bulkhead: The wood, masonry or metal panel located directly below the window plane of a typical storefront.

C

Caliper. American Nursery and Landscape Association standard for measurement of trunk size of nursery stock.

Canopy or Marquee. A roof-like structure, of a permanent nature, which projects from the wall of a building.

Capital: The top portion of a column or pilaster crowning the shaft.

Casement: A single sash window that opens outward from the side.

Cellar. A portion of a building located partly or wholly underground, and having two thirds (2/3) or more of its clear floor-to-ceiling height below the average grade of the adjoining ground. (See paragraph entitled "Basement.")

Chamfer: The surface formed by cutting off a corner of a board or post; a bevel.

Clapboard: Narrow, horizontal, overlapping wooded boards that form the outer skin of an exterior building wall.

Colonnade: A row of columns supporting a roof, arches, or an entablature.

Column: A vertical support generally consisting of a base, circular shaft and capital, this is either decorative or structural.

Compatible Use. A use that is complementary to another use and/or whose associated impacts to the environment are similar to another use such that the uses may exist together without undermining the intent of the zone in which the uses exist.

Construction. Any site preparation, assembly, erection, demolition, substantial repair, maintenance, alteration, or similar action for or of public or private rights-of-way, structures, utilities, or similar property.

Compatible: In architecture, a material, element, quality or feature that is congruent or harmonious with existing historic materials, elements, qualities or features.

Composition: The assemblage of architectural features and details of a specific architectural style, or the use of materials that are based upon specific examples found in an area or time period.

Construction Technique: The method used to assemble the parts of a building or structure.

Cornice: A horizontal molded projection that crowns or completes a wall or defines the roof and wall.

Course: A horizontal decorative band extending across a facade. Stringcourse refers to a narrow course while belt course refers to a wide course.

Craftsmanship: The combined effect of the quality of workmanship, skilled artistry or the conjunctive technique and appropriate installation and assembly of materials by which a building or structure is constructed or fabricated.

Curb Grade. The level of the established curb in the front of the building, measured at the center of such front. Where no curb has been established, the Board should recommend the establishment of such curb level or its equivalent for the purpose of this Ordinance.

Cupola: Small enclosed or partially enclosed structure built on top of a roof.

D

Dentils: Small, rectangular blocks arranged in a tooth-like series under an overhang.

Design Review Guidelines: A set of guiding principles that give direction on how the parts and details of a building's scheme or plan should be assembled.

Design Review Board: The authorized body given jurisdiction and control of Design Review Guidelines.

Dormer: A window rising vertically atop a roof or a roofed structure containing such a window.

Double hung window: A window with two vertical sliding sashes, each closing half of the window opening

Dripline. An area encircling the base of a tree, the minimum extent of which is delineated by a vertical line extending from the outer limit of a tree's branch tips down to the ground.

Driveway. An access which serves a lot, structure or parking area.

E

Elevation: A scale drawing of a front, side or rear of a building.

Eave: The horizontal or downward projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Elevation: A drawing of a building facade, without any allowance for perspective, in fixed proportion to the measurement on the actual building; also a single facade of a building.

Emergency Work. Any work performed for the purpose of preventing or alleviating the physical trauma or property damage threatened or caused by an emergency.

Entablature: A horizontal part in a classical post and beam system composed of the cornice, frieze and architrave.

Entrance. Ingress and egress to and from a structure.

F

Facade: An exterior face or elevation of a building. A principle facade is sometimes distinguished from the other faces by the elaboration of architectural details.

False front: A facade that extends well above the rest of the building, to give the impression that a building is larger than its actual size.

Fascia: A flat vertical board that forms the face along the edge of a flat roof or along the horizontal (or eave) side of a pitched roof

Fill / Fill Material. A deposit of earth material placed by human or mechanical (machine) means.

Fence: Any enclosure or barrier, solid or otherwise, made of wood, iron, stone or other material, as around or along a yard, walkway, field, or other area, and should include a "decorative fence."

Fenestration: Arrangement of windows on a façade including number, size, proportion, spacing, and composition.

Finial: A small vertical ornament at the top of a spire, gable or pinnacle.

Finishes: The characteristics of texture, gloss, sheen, coloration or patina that can articulate the character and appearance of an exposed material or surface.

Floor Area. For Residential Uses, the sum of the gross horizontal areas of the several floors of a dwelling unit, exclusive of porches, balconies, garages and basements, measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls or from the centerlines of walls or partitions separating dwelling units.

For Uses Other Than Residential, the area measured from the exterior faces of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of walls or partitions separating such uses, including all floors, lofts, balconies, mezzanines, cellars, basements, and similar areas devoted to such uses.

Freestanding Sign. A sign attached to the ground and supported by uprights placed on or in the ground. (Also called monument or pole sign.)

Frieze: A decorative, horizontal band set just below the cornice.

G

Gable: A simple pitched roof form with two opposite sloping sides; also the triangular part of a wall formed by a gable roof.

Gable, Cross: A gable form attached to and placed perpendicular to a larger gable roof.

Gambrel: A roof form with a double-sloped profile - a steep lower plane and a less steep upper plane (differs from a mansard in that a gambrel is two sided while a mansard is four sided; also angle of the two planes on a mansard is closer to 90 degrees).

Gross Floor Area (GFA). The area included within the surrounding exterior walls of a building or portion thereof, exclusive of vent shafts, elevator shafts, stairwells, courts, second story atriums and lobbies. Usable area under a horizontal projection of a roof or floor above, not provided with surrounding exterior walls are included within the total gross floor area.

H

Hedge: A row of bushes or small trees planted close together which may form a barrier, enclosure or boundary.

Hierarchy: The articulation of the importance of a form by its size, shape, or placement relative to the other related forms.

Historic Building: A building over fifty (50) years old that meets the standards for integrity and historical significance set by the state and local agencies given responsibility for such designation.

Historic Fabric: Any original materials used in the construction of a historic building.

Hipped Roof: A roof with four uniformly pitched sides, rising to a ridge or point.

I

Impervious Surface. Any material or ground treatment that prevents or substantially reduces absorption of storm water into the ground (i.e., concrete, asphalt, sidewalks, buildings, etc.).

In-Kind Replacement: Replacement of an architectural feature, damaged or deteriorated beyond repair, where the new feature will match the feature being replaced in materials, dimensions, design, configuration, texture and visual appearance.

K

Kiosk. A temporary or semi-permanent structure having one or more open air sides, operating on either private property or public rights-of-way and plazas, generally no larger than six feet wide by 10 feet long, which is operated for the purpose of vending food, drink, or retail goods.

L

Landmark Tree. Any healthy tree over thirty inches in diameter or any tree that is particularly impressive or unusual due to its size, shape, age, historical significance or any other trait that epitomizes the character of the species.

Landscape Architect. A person licensed by the State of Rhode Island to engage in the practice of landscape architecture.

Landscape Area. All portions of a site not devoted to a building, parking, storage or accessory uses are referred to as the landscape area. A landscape area may include patios, plazas, walkways, walls and fences, water features such as fountain or pool, and planting areas. Ponds for the detention of storm water runoff are not considered part of the landscape area of a site, unless they are integrated with landscaping as a water feature.

Lattice: A structure consisting of strips of metal or wood, crossed or interlaced to form regularly spaced openings.

Lines: Visual elements of the building, either within the façade or on the building edge, which are in a linear form either horizontally or vertically and may be composed of masonry, glass, or other related materials.

Lintel: A horizontal beam of any material used to bridge a door or window opening.

Loading Area. A complete off-street space or berth on the same lot for the loading or unloading of freight carriers, having adequate ingress and egress to a public street or alley.

Louver: A series of inclined slats in a vertical frame allowing ventilation without admitting rain.

Lunette: A semicircular or half-moon window or other element on a facade.

M

Mansard: A steep, story high roof with two planes on all four sides, the first plane almost vertical and the second plane above, nearly flat;

Masonry: Heavy materials including stone, brick, concrete, concrete block, and stucco.

Massing: The shapes, sizes, and arrangement of the three dimensional forms that compose a building.

Medallion: An ornamental plaque applied to a wall.

Minor Structures. Any small, movable accessory erection or construction such as birdhouses; tool houses; pet houses; play equipment; arbors; and walls and fences under four (4) feet in height.

Mixed Use. A land use where more than one classification of land use (residential, commercial, recreational) permitted within a zoning district is combined on a lot or within a structure.

Molding: A continuous decorative band that is either carved into or applied to the surface.

Mullion: Vertical element separating windows or doors set in a series.

Multiplex. A structure housing two, three or four multi-family dwelling units otherwise known as a duplex, triplex or fourplex. Multiplex units may be side-by-side or on top of another.

Municipality. The City or Town in which a project site is situated.

Native Vegetation, Native Plant(s). A tree, shrub or groundcover plant of a species that is native to Aquidneck Island.

Muntin: Dividers between panes of glass within an individual window.

N

Neoclassical: A formal style of design evoking ancient Greek or Roman architectural forms.

New Construction: The development of one or more structures on a vacant lot or lots, as distinguished from adding a new feature to an existing building.

O

Oriel window: A bay window projecting from a building's upper floor.

P

Panel: A decorative recessed rectangular portion of a wall.

Parapet (Walls): The portion of the wall of a façade that extends above the roofline.

Pediment: A wide, triangular low-pitched gable above a portico or door.

Pergola: The unenclosed structure with an open wood framed roof, often latticed.

Piazza: An open space oriented to pedestrians, usually rectangular in shape, defined by a building or buildings on two or more sides.

Pier: A freestanding upright support element, usually rectangular in cross section, and wider and more squat than a column.

Pilaster: A column or pier affixed to a wall surface (rectangular in cross section).

Plan: The layout of a building drawn in the horizontal plane.

Porch: A covered structure or recessed space at the entrance of a building.

Portico: A major porch, usually with a pedimented roof supported by columns.

Porthole window: A circular window (also called a bull's eye window).

Projections: Items such as sills, eaves, cornices, canopies, porches, and chimneys.

Proportion: The relation of one dimension to another, such as the height of a window compared to its width. Proportion affects visual order through coordination of such elements as height, width, depth, and spacing.

Q

Quoins: Corner stones, or other material made to resemble stones, at a corner or edge of a building.

R

Rafter: Part of a wooden roof frame sloping down from the ridge to the eaves and establishing the pitch.

Recesses: Portions of the building both in the horizontal and vertical planes that are setback from the building wall either for pedestrian articulation, to provide space for windows and/or doors or to create special architectural detailing.

Redevelopment: The expansion or modification that is of lesser value than the existing improvements. If a project is considered a redevelopment only the proposed improvements and an equal percentage of the existing improvements shall be brought into compliance with the current code.

Retaining Wall: A solid barrier of any material constructed to hold back a mass of earth. A retaining wall will be considered a fence for purposes of this Section.

Restoration: Re-creating an original architectural element so that it closely resembles the appearance it had at some previous point in time, based on historical, documentary, physical or pictorial evidence

Retention System. A storm water facility that is designed to accept runoff from a developed site and discharge it at a limited rate. Flows exceeding the limited rate are stored until they can be released at the limited rate (when the runoff rate into the system drops below the limited rate). A specified volume is stored indefinitely until it is displaced by runoff from another storm.

Rhythm: The use of recurring patterns to organize a series of like forms or spaces.

Ridge: The linear intersection of two sloping roof planes.

Riprap: A facing layer or protective mound of broken stones placed to prevent erosion or sloughing of a structure or embankment.

Roof Sign. A sign erected on or above a roof or parapet of a building or structure. Signs attached to a pseudo-mansard roof are not included.

S

Sash: A frame or window in which glass is set.

Scale: The proportional relationship of the size of parts to one another and in relation to the human figure.

Sense of enclosure: An outdoor area where the height and continuity of adjacent or surrounding buildings or other structures loosely establishes the feeling of a three dimensional space.

Service Area: Any area devoted to garbage or refuse containers, incinerators, the shipping or receiving of commodities, or the parking of trucks or other large vehicles used in the operation of an enterprise.

Shed roof: A roof composed simply of one sloping plane.

Shopping Center: A group of stores planned and designed for the site on which it is built, functioning as a unit, with off-street parking provided on the property as an integral part of the unit. (See "Planned Area Development.")

Sign: A communication device, structure, or fixture which incorporates graphics, symbols, or written copy that is intended to promote the sale of a product, commodity or service, or provide direction or identification for a premises or facility.

Sign Area. The total area of a single face of a sign including the framing structure surrounding the face, measured as follows:

Sill: The horizontal bottom element of a window or door frame.

Signs: Any words, letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, devices, designs, trade names, or trademarks by which anything is made known and which are used to advertise or promote an individual,

firm, association, corporation, profession, business, commodity or product and which is visible from any public street or highway.

Soffit: The underside of any building part, such as under an eave, arch, or lintel.

Sound Level. A-weighted sound pressure level measured by the use of a sound level meter using an A-weighted network and reported as decibels, dBA.

Stacking: The addition of automobiles in a line, generally associated with drive-through windows

Storefront: The first story of a façade of a commercial building, having display windows

Structure. An edifice, building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner.

Structure, Detached: A structure which has no common or party wall with another structure.

Stucco: A type of plasterwork, either coarse or fine, used for surfacing interior or exterior walls

Surround: An ornamental device used to enframe all or part of a window or door.

T

Third Party Sign. A sign identifying an enterprise and includes a sponsoring advertisement, such as Coca Cola

Traditional: Sensitive to, evocative of, or harmonious with any particular style of architecture established prior to 1950 or to the prevailing patterns, forms, or styles of architecture dating from the original settlement of the United States up to 1950.

Tree, Stand. A group of three or more trees of any size or species, whose driplines touch.

Texture: The quality of a surface, ranging from mirror finish, smooth, to coarse and unfinished.

Transom (Window): A small horizontal window located above a door or display window.

U

Utility. Public and private facilities such as natural gas, electric, telephone, cable communications, water, sewer, or storm drainage and their respective facilities, lines, pipes, mains, equipment, and appurtenances

V

Victorian: Term used to cover all of the various styles of architecture during the reign of Queen Victoria - 1837 to 1901, including Second Empire, Italianate, Gothic Revival, Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, and others. (Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles predate the Victorian era.)

W

Y

Z