

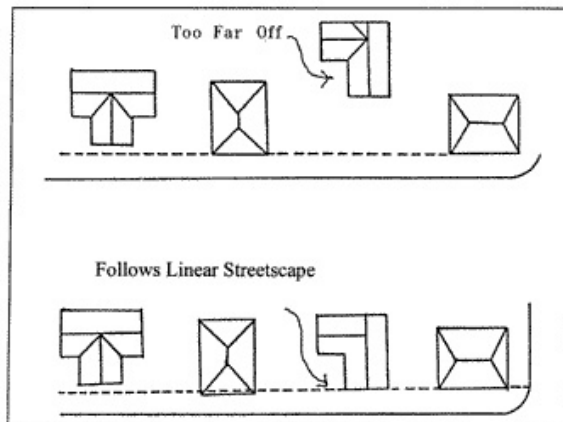
B. Design Guidelines Specifications for Commercial Areas

1) Building Placement and Site Considerations for New Construction

a) Physical Placement of New Buildings and their Relationship to the Street

How a building presents itself—its distance from the street and sidewalk and its relationship to surrounding buildings—plays a significant role in determining whether a building will fit into the existing streetscape and become part of its overall character, or whether it will stick out as an obvious later addition which overlooked the surrounding neighborhood. In West Concord Village, buildings in commercial areas (primarily Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue) are set directly on the sidewalk at a minimum distance from one another to promote pedestrian access and interest in its local businesses. New construction in these areas should maintain the existing pattern established by the spacing patterns of surrounding structures

A property's setbacks are the minimum distance from the front, side or rear property line which a building is required to be placed as defined under Dimensional Regulations in Concord's Zoning Bylaw. New construction or additions must, at a minimum, meet the zoning requirements of the property, but property owner are also strongly encouraged to also relate the placement of the building to its surroundings. The building's setbacks should also relate to those of existing, adjacent structures and new structures in commercial areas should be constructed at a distance of not more than 5 feet in front of or behind the existing setbacks of adjacent buildings. In cases where the developing lot(s) are adjacent to a building which has a significantly greater setback than other buildings on the street, the new buildings should be located in compatible relationships to the lesser setback structures.



To promote a pedestrian friendly environment, buildings should be oriented with their front or primary entrance along the street façade. Buildings which present blank, featureless, or solid walls to the street have a closed off, inhospitable appearance which discourages pedestrian use of the area. Buildings which are designed to be centered on vehicular rather than pedestrian traffic are also discouraged., were

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Further information on the orientation and development of specific building features can be found in Section 2, Architectural Elements.



Discouraged - Storefront Oriented away from streetscape



Encouraged Storefront oriented to sidewalk with transparent and inviting front facade

b) Exceptions to Zero Setbacks for New Structures

As stated in the previous section, the standard in the commercial areas of West Concord is that buildings are set directly on the sidewalk at a minimum distance from one another. However, additional interest in the streetscape can be provided through the use of rare instances of residential-style buildings with moderate setbacks which allow front and/or side yards to be built out with gardens and/or outdoor seating. These areas are accessible to the public and serve a public benefit. Such properties should not form more than 10% of total frontage in any block nor more than 50 contiguous feet of frontage. Their goal should be to form welcoming public spaces with gardens, play space, fountains, benches, café seating, or equivalent public amenities, and with no more than 10% of front yard space dedicated to non-motor vehicle parking such as bicycle racks. Refer to Section 3 for further information and guidelines on Street Furniture.

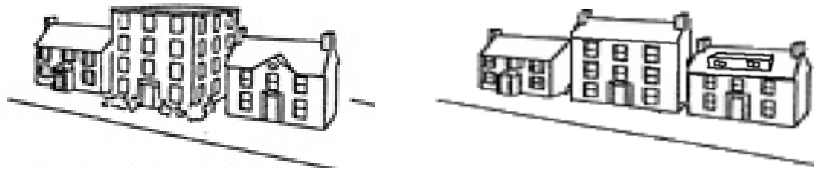
Such front-yard public spaces should be built at street level. Front-yard spaces consisting primarily of lawn and walkway are not considered to be in keeping with these design guidelines.

c) Scale and Massing

Buildings generally look out of character with their surroundings when their scale - the building's size relative to its surroundings and the components of the building - is dramatically out of line with that of adjacent structures. West Concord Village's commercial area is hardly homogenous in its construction, but its predominantly one to two story structures are all of a human scale which is open and inviting to pedestrians. Where larger structures exist, they typically employ design elements, such as varying roof forms, to better relate to their surroundings. These commercial structures are also most commonly aligned with adjacent buildings in relation to building height, cornice line, storefront dimensions and upper story windows, giving the impression of a unified horizontal streetscape, even if the buildings themselves are not. Floor levels of new buildings should also relate to, and be consistent with, the floor levels of existing

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adjacent structures. The overall height of a new building should be no higher than that of the nearest half-story of the adjacent building, or determined by the average height of the immediately surrounding structures on both sides.



Building out of scale

Building in scale

Where scale explains the relationship of buildings to one another, massing refers to the overall size and orientation of the building itself. As with scale, when the massing of a building is significantly different from that of surrounding structures, the overall effect can be jarring. West Concord's commercial buildings are not only of similar scale, but of similar overall massing, and property owners are encouraged to continue this practice by designing new structures and additions which maintain similar proportions, roof forms, roof pitches and styles to that of their neighbors. New designs should be consistent with the form and massing of neighboring buildings and the directional emphasis of the established streetscape, which, as noted above, is oriented directly to the street and sidewalk.

How the massing of a building is perceived can have a lot to do with its architectural details, how it relates to its surroundings and the size of the overall building. West Concord has a well established façade pattern which helps to unify the streetscape. Property owners are strongly encouraged to maintain these patterns and proportions as seen in the relationship of solid wall to openings (doors and windows) in the main façades. Paying attention to the size and configuration of doors and windows, and making sure that they are in proportion to the overall building can assist in keeping the massing consistent with surrounding buildings. Attention should also be paid to window heights, the type of glass used, and doors.



Massing comparison between two adjacent buildings

A flat, unbroken or undecorated façade can appear more massive than one which incorporates architectural features as the variety of forms helps to break up the solid mass of the wall. For this reason, property owners are encouraged to vary the façade of new buildings by adding architectural features that are consistent with the character of

Comment [S1]: SF - What does "nearest half-story" mean? LK - Rather than put a fixed number of 2 or 3 stories, this was intended to match up the height of any new building to its adjacent structures. A new building could be built up to a half story higher than its adjacent building, which would prevent a new building from overwhelming the streetscape.

Comment [S2]: SF - This would be clearer if the center building was taller than its adjacent buildings, *but* taller within scale, to show the maximum scale increase. Sorta like this only taking into account whatever you meant about half stories (does the shed dormer I put on the right-hand building count as a half story?):



Also, there are very few porches in West Concord. I suggest not including a porch in an example unless the example relates directly to porches.

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West Concord's commercial areas. For example, adding bays or porches; installing architectural trim details which are consistent with the style of the building (see examples under Anatomy of a Building Façade); or stepping the building or addition down or in to avoid a solid, flat façade. By avoiding flat façades that draw attention for their lack of character rather than their contribution to the overall streetscape, a property owner can create a new structure which is visually pleasing and adds to the variety of the streetscape.



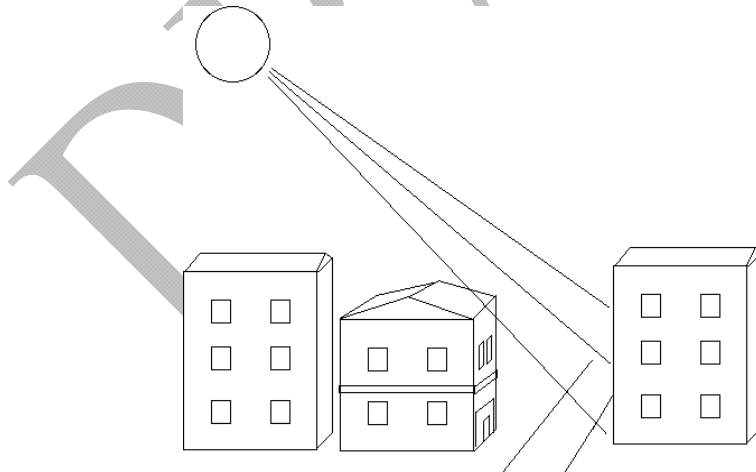
Architectural elements used to break up mass of front façade



Flat, featureless façade gives a more massive appearance to the building

Lastly, whenever possible buildings should be of a size and orientation to minimize the occlusion of sunlight on public spaces such as sidewalks. Gable roofs and shorter buildings may be more appropriate on the south sides of a street while gable end roofs and taller buildings may be more suited for the north side.

Comment [S3]: SF - I suggest adding something about sunlight reaching streets. My sketch is dreadful and doesn't even show light reaching the street, just the far sidewalk.



d) Eclecticism

West Concord's eclectic nature is a significant part of its character. So it is important to note at this time that the goal of these Design Guidelines is not to encourage "cookie cutter" copies of existing West Concord building. Whenever possible, the form and

Comment [S4]: SF - What do you think of having a section like this? People often say about West Concord that they don't want it to be all cookie cutter or "zoned quaint" like Nantucket or Cape May. If you like this section, it could appear here, or it could appear much later after more design elements have been introduced.

Comment [Ik5]:

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features of new buildings should be varied to avoid excessive uniformity. Buildings can be varied in many ways: by type of siding, roof style, paint color, window and trim style, use of dormers, etc. Rather than having blocks of buildings with identical features, it may be preferable to meld less common elements (which are still within the general architectural style of West Concord's commercial area) with some of West Concord's core architectural elements (see list of architectural elements below) to add diversity and interest to a new structure.

Architectural elements found in West Concord's commercial area can be divided into three categories: Core Elements that reinforce West Concord's dominant, coherent architectural style (clapboard siding, gable and gable end roofs, dormers, zero setbacks, traditional awnings, etc.); Eclectic Elements that, when used in moderation and judiciously, reinforce West Concord's unusual style (shingle siding, porches, moderate setbacks with "front yards" designed as public space, etc.); and Discouraged Elements that detract from West Concord's style (vinyl and aluminum siding, exposed cinderblock walls, etc.) Property owners are strongly encouraged to consider new and even modern designs when considering new construction, and to draw from the core and eclectic architectural elements as part of its design.

e) Additions

Additions provide an opportunity to create additional space or to accommodate modern conveniences while maintaining the original character and design of the existing building. Ideally, the size, placement, and design of an addition will maintain the character of the existing building so that it is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, destroyed, or rendered subordinate to the addition. In short, additions should be designed to work with, but not be identical to, the original building. The existing streetscape and the scale and massing of the existing building should also be considered in the design of a new addition. Additional stories should be set back from the main façades in order to be as inconspicuous as possible and consistent with West Concord's commercial area design.



Dormers can be useful and easy way to provide additional space or a partial extra story by using a typical West Concord architectural element. Setting any additional stories back from the front facade preserves the form of the original building and ensures that the additional story will not block sunlight from reaching the street.

Comment [S6]: SF - Insert photo of 5&10 as an example of a particularly harmonious 3-story building? LK - I would suggest using a photo of a building where the extra story is an obvious addition - perhaps this one or one from outside of the village center?

In summary, additions should:

- be subservient to the original structure;

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- be differentiated from the existing building (i.e., set back from the existing wall plane);
- be in harmony with the original structure in size, scale, style and materials; and,
- not obstruct the visual integrity of the original structure.

f) **Green and Sustainable Design**

Property owners are strongly encouraged to incorporate “green” design into both new construction and renovation projects whenever possible. Opportunities abound for integrating green elements into new structures including not only the more obvious choices such as good insulation, low-flow water fixtures, and fluorescent rather than incandescent lighting, but also the use of LED lighting for exterior sign and capturing rainwater for gardens or underground recharge systems. Bicycle racks and benches can be provided to encourage non-motor-vehicle transportation while managed parking agreements can reduce the number of parking spaces needed. Other options include solar panels, small roof-mounted turbines, purple-pipe wastewater systems, closed-loop geothermal heating systems, passive solar heating, natural lighting, and much more. Below are some suggested resources on green design:

- Concord’s Green Team: (www.greenteamconcord.org)
- U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System (www.usgbc.org)
- International Dark-Sky Association (www.darksky.org): A non-profit member organization that teaches others how to preserve the night sky through factsheets, law references, pictures, and web resources.

Comment [S7]: SF - What do you think of adding a section like this, to spoon-feed some information to property owners so that they can incorporate early in the process instead of waiting until the last minute and then realizing it’s too late, and instead of thinking that we can save the planet if we just change a couple of light bulbs and drive a hybrid. If you like this section, it ought to have a longer list of ways to be green, to get people thinking. The Green Team ought to be able to provide a better list of resources. Maybe there should just be a single pointer to a list of resources on line, to stay more up to date. If the Green Team or anyone could volunteer to be point people with whom property owners could work, that would be great, but they’re probably much too busy for that. Of course the state or the feds should provide resources, but we’re all behind the curve on this, and Concord probably has to take the lead itself to get something significant done. This section could also contain examples of “green” projects around town that property owners could copy, e.g., the DPW says part of the parking lot by the Village Cleaners is soon to be resurfaced with a permeable(?) substance that will reduce flooding and help with ground water recharge. And of course there’s the Willard School. But maybe there aren’t enough projects around town that would be suitable for private property owners to copy and about which useful information could be provided.