

Borough of Riverdale, New Jersey

COMMUNITY DESIGN HANDBOOK



CHA
CLOUGH HARBOUR & ASSOCIATES LLP

Borough of Riverdale
91 Newark-Pompton Turnpike
Riverdale, NJ 07457
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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

The intended purpose for this handbook is to link the Borough of Riverdale's land use and development planning objectives, policies and regulations expressed through its Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance and other community planning initiatives with evolving community design goals and objectives. This handbook provides additional project design and development guidelines and standards that must be consulted in order to create desirable visual characteristics for different types of projects and places within Riverdale.

In order to convey some guidance towards creating a vision for the future of Riverdale, this handbook utilizes a mixture of text, photographs, diagrams, sketches and illustrations.

Two primary goals for this handbook are to:

- 1.) Provide guidance on how to visually enhance what already exists in the community that is considered desirable and,
- 2.) Recommend design guidelines and standards for new forms of development and redevelopment of existing areas in Riverdale.

SUBJECTS

This handbook considers and addresses the following planning and design elements relative to existing and future land use in Riverdale:

- New Development Projects
- Infill Possibilities
- Redevelopment Possibilities
- Site Layout
- Building Orientation
- Building Design
- Architectural Styles and Materials
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Parking and Vehicular Circulation
- Landscape Design
- Streetscape Design
- Signage

- Project Design Review
- Implementation
- Bibliography of Resources

TRENDS

Community design handbooks, sometimes also referred to as “pattern” books, are becoming more commonplace and complex as a local decision-making tool. Handbooks are being used more often, not only as guidance materials for local decision-makers, but as a regulatory instrument to encourage, perhaps through incentives, or require through standards of development, the design of projects in communities of all sizes.

There are a number of trends being observed which show the direction that handbooks and pattern books are taking.¹

- There is a trend in making the material contained in pattern books more explicit. The design guidelines they contain are becoming more specific and detailed.
- Guidelines are becoming more tailored. Neighborhoods and municipalities are realizing that the guidelines, not the review procedures, should be individualized.

- More often than not, the guidelines are voluntary and not mandatory. However, some communities are replacing this idea with requirements for review, thus, making the guidelines mandatory as development standards.
- Design guidelines are being used as a tool for “meeting and melding” the objectives of private interests and public interests rather than the two being adversaries.
- Guidelines are ever more being used in combination with other public strategies to drastically enhance the aesthetic and design character of communities.

¹ APA 2006 pp.657-658

IMPLICATIONS

The following design and development guidelines and standards of development shall be considered in all new development and significant redevelopment projects in the Borough of Riverdale. These guidelines and standards, where noted, address various forms of land use including residential and non-residential development. This handbook, in combination with existing land use policies, strategies and other community planning initiatives will significantly enhance the quality of life for Borough residents and visitor experiences.

USE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The Borough of Riverdale shall encourage the implementation of the design and development guidelines and standards presented in this handbook within the boundaries of the community. Design features that are encouraged as guidelines that are not considered regulatory are identified separately from those design features that are considered to be standards and therefore, regulatory.

The design and development guidelines presented in this handbook shall be considered in all new development and redevelopment projects subject to review under the Borough's zoning,

subdivision, conditional use and site plan review and approval processes. Design and development considerations in this handbook may also be incorporated into the Borough's Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Review process as determined to be necessary by local officials.

The content of this handbook is intended to be an evolutionary process and not remain stagnant. It is the Borough's intention to periodically review the contents of this document as land use and real estate market trends change and as specific design-related needs of the community are identified.

This handbook is designed to guide local officials, developers, planners, property owners and citizens with regards to project design and development. These guidelines and standards are based on a vision for the community established in Riverdale's Master Plan. Therefore, this handbook depicts this future vision of Riverdale in various formats including photos, sketches and other graphic illustrations.

This handbook is not intended to stifle creativity in community design. Design and development guidelines allow for flexibility in design, while at the same time not sacrificing creativity or function, but still enabling the Borough

to achieve desirable design objectives through its site plan review process and other permitting and approval procedures.

This handbook addresses design and aesthetic issues within both the private and public realm. Both private property and properties considered to be within the public realm must be fully integrated from a design perspective to create a memorable community, which is the ultimate goal for Riverdale.

THE PRIVATE REALM

What is the Private Realm?

The private realm refers to properties that are under the ownership of a

private owner or entity. The private realm includes privately owned parcels that exist beyond the established boundaries of the public right-of-way. Activities and opportunities that may include new development, infill development and redevelopment projects that occur within the private realm must consult and consider the guidelines and standards in this handbook.

New Development

New development refers to developing a use on an undeveloped, vacant or substantially underutilized property that did not exist previously on a specific site. It is not only a significant change in

the use, for example from agricultural uses to a residential subdivision, but it is also a significant change in intensity or the density of development that occupies a site.

Infill Development

Infill development refers to lots that are vacant or not fully developed in areas that are already built-up. Vacant lots are usually due to developers passing these lots over for greater opportunities for development elsewhere. Examples of infill projects are additions to residential lots, single-lot development,

brownfield redevelopment, or multi-parcel projects in city centers.²

There are many issues that need to be addressed when considering infill development. It is extremely important to consider existing zoning regulations, the condition and capacities of existing infrastructure such as sewer and water, site acquisition and development financing, parking necessities, and community concerns.³ It is also important to take into account the existing conditions of the area, which includes neighborhood character, block patterns, connections (existing land use patterns – street networks, open space

² APA 2006 pp.456

³ Ibid

systems, etc.), shadow effects and existing amenities, such as views.⁴

Redevelopment

Redevelopment refers to developing underutilized, blighted or depressed areas with new uses or uses that previously existed in an area. Redevelopment may be needed to retain residents, create new employment opportunities, establish a sense of place and community, attract youth, and provide for growth. Recommendations for redevelopment include, but are not limited to:

⁴ Ibid

- Creating a new, unique and realistic vision for redevelopment that will raise the expectations for the area and surrounding areas.
- Avoiding competition with other suburban commercial developments by offering a unique and distinct environment.⁵
- Making the area an attractive place to live, work and socialize.
- Generating incremental tax revenues to pay for the public investment and to “seed” further investment and development.
- Providing an attractive return to the private developer commensurate with the risk and effort.⁶
- Increasing local employment opportunities by providing new sites for commercial and business development.
- Constructing new residential opportunities via apartments, condos, and other types of residential units.
- Building parks and recreational facilities on vacant or open space lands.
- Improving the traffic patterns in the area to decrease traffic hazards and congestion.
- Removing obsolete, substandard, and deteriorated buildings and clearing debris-strewn empty lots in the area.⁷
- Allowing business property owners to convert vacant commercial space to housing units.⁸
- Allowing developers and property owners to convert small vacant lots into single-family housing units.⁹

THE PUBLIC REALM

What is the Public Realm?

The public realm refers to the network of public spaces, buildings and properties not typically owned by private individuals or entities. These are areas

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

and spaces normally considered to include streets, sidewalks, parks, squares and plazas that make up the common areas shared by citizens in a community as part of their daily activities. The public realm is important from a community design perspective because it is under the more direct control and management of a municipality as compared to private properties.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This handbook is intended to facilitate a more seamless integration between the public and private realms in order to create a unique identity for Riverdale, foster a greater sense of community and

community pride, and establish a higher quality of life through community design.

Additional goals include supporting economic development and redevelopment of underutilized areas, facilitating creation of a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development pattern and supporting implementation of local and regional Smart Growth planning policies and strategies.

These goals can be achieved through partnerships between the public and private sectors. Several key community design objectives are identified throughout this handbook. These include:

1. Creating a unique character for the community that is based on Riverdale's history and heritage, natural and human resources, and geographic setting.
2. Establishing a comfortable, safe, visually interesting pedestrian-friendly environment for residents and visitors that will sustain Riverdale's "walkability" by non-vehicular users including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit patrons.
3. Providing areas of continuous visual interest that integrates open space, recreation, cultural

activities and places for social interaction.

4. Creating visually appealing neighborhoods with high quality specialty retail shops, businesses and restaurants.
5. Stimulating greater economic development, investment and revitalization along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike and in the Riverdale Quarry area.
6. Highlighting public use and civic areas that provide a greater sense of community and permanence in the Borough.

The following chapters of this handbook provide a variety of design techniques and information that need to be considered and implemented in meeting these design-related goals of the community towards fulfillment of a new vision for the Borough of Riverdale, New Jersey.

AREAS OF APPLICABILITY

The contents of this handbook are intended to be applied to all areas throughout the Borough of Riverdale. When specific areas are most appropriate for implementing certain guidelines and standards those areas are identified.

RULES OF INTERPRETATION

In applying the guidelines and standards contained in this handbook, the contents are to be considered the minimum expectations of the Borough in achieving its community design goals and objectives. The following rules of interpreting the contents of this handbook apply.

- Terms, words and phrases such as “shall”, “will”, “must”, “is required”, etc. indicate standards which must be specifically adhered to and/or implemented.
- Terms, words and phrases such as “should”, “is encouraged”, “is

desired”, “is recommended”, etc. indicate guidelines that are strongly encouraged to be implemented, but are not considered mandatory.

- Terms, words and phrases such as “may”, “allowed”, etc. indicate permissible, but not required actions.
- Terms, words and phrases such as “acceptable”, “satisfactory”, “adequate”, etc. indicate an acceptable approach to meet the intent of a standard or guideline, if an Applicant/Owner can demonstrate an inability to fully meet a recommended action due to site configuration, existing building elements, physical constraints, legal

or regulatory constraints, or other constraints that may exist.

The guidelines and standards contained in this handbook are in addition to any requirements by local codes and procedural requirements of the Borough of Riverdale. The photos and illustrations used in this handbook are not intended to specifically illustrate how to meet local requirements, but are presented as examples.

The contents of this handbook shall not be interpreted to override or supersede the requirements of other regulations and local laws in the event of a conflict in requirements or interpretation.

SITE PLANNING & SITE DESIGN

STRATEGY

Encouraging "mixed-use" types of development and the creation of specialty retail uses along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike in Riverdale and in the Riverdale Quarry, if development occurs there in the future, are key to revitalizing these areas. Mixed-use encourages pedestrian activity and helps create and support neighborhoods that are vibrant and attractive. These uses enhance a community's quality of life and identity.

Although the following guidelines and standards apply to the entire Borough they are particularly appropriate to infill development and redevelopment along the Turnpike and within the Quarry area as discussed in the Borough's Master Plan.

OBJECTIVES

The physical definition of streets lined by buildings and streetside design features, also commonly referred to as "the streetscape" promotes visual interest, particularly for pedestrians and provides for a safer, more comfortable walking environment in contrast to streetscapes consisting of parking lots and vacant properties.

Buildings located near and along streets and close to street corners create pedestrian interest and mitigate the negative visual effects associated with underutilized properties and large parking areas.

Site layout, including building orientation and parking lot location **must** consider the visual relationship of new/redeveloped buildings to the surrounding neighborhood. Building orientation, building use and location, the exterior building appearance, parking lot location and design, site landscaping, signage, lighting, accessibility of public spaces, and vehicular and pedestrian circulation **shall** be considered in the overall site

planning, site design, and project review and approval process.

Building location and orientation on a site are significant design considerations that have a direct relationship to how the building looks and functions relative to its surroundings. The location and orientation of buildings **shall** consider their overall visual impact on surrounding buildings and properties, public use areas, streets and public roadways (the public realm).

New development or redevelopment **shall not** be visually intrusive on neighboring properties, obstruct views or sharply contrast with the existing and/or desirable visual characteristics of

various uses and areas in proximity to development activity.

Mixed-Use

Mixed-use developments **are encouraged** and necessary to create a more “walkable” community, particularly along key roadways and in key areas of Riverdale such as along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike and along the Newark-Pompton Turnpike. Mixed-use developments are typically designed as pedestrian-oriented environments, at higher-densities than surrounding uses, and have an array of uses that allow citizens to live, work, socialize and shop in a single area.

There are typically three different types of mixed-use developments. These are vertical mixed-use buildings, horizontal mixed-use buildings, or mixed-use walkable buildings.¹

Vertical mixed-use developments contain many different uses within the same building. The lower floors usually contain public uses, such as street-level retail or commercial uses, while the upper floors usually contain private uses, such as residential units. However, these developments may also contain street-level retail with office/professional located above. These developments can include any

¹ APA 2006 pp.447-448

number of different, but equally supportive uses within the same building.² This form of development is encouraged in the Borough.

Horizontal mixed-use developments include single-use buildings (for example, individual buildings for commercial and residential uses) spread out within the development.³ This type of development may also be considered as multiple use areas.

Mixed-use "walkable" developments are a blend of the vertical and horizontal uses that are ideally within 0.25 miles,

or easy walking distance of other uses, destinations and activities.⁴

Specialty Retail Districts

Specialty Retail Districts are typically referred to as retail-oriented developments that include a wide variety of shops and services. Citizens are able to complete their daily shopping needs while also combining personal and leisure activities. Specialty retail districts are not specifically designed to only meet people's shopping needs, but are also designed to meet social and entertainment needs as well.

Successful specialty retail districts include the following:⁵

- Activity-based facilities such as a movie theater(s), cinemas or sports/athletic stadiums.
- A mixture of retail and dining that are unique to the local market.
- A pedestrian-oriented environment which includes public spaces for walking, social activity, sports and athletics and public events.

Specialty retail districts have unique characteristics. The land use, circulation patterns and spatial characteristics include:⁶

² Ibid

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ APA 2006 pp.430

⁶ Ibid



- Higher than normal density in the area
- Minimal or no building setbacks
- Mixed-uses including residences
- Limitations on curb-cuts for access
- On-street parking
- Hidden parking areas (parking lots to the rear or sides of the building or utilization of parking decks/garages)
- Shared parking areas in order to promote walking to nearby venues.

These districts **should** be designed to contain and/or be contiguous to housing and places of work in order for citizens to make the district part of their daily

routine for a variety of needs consisting of both short and long visits.⁷

There are six types of specialty retail districts:⁸

- *Festival Marketplaces*, which are leisure/tourist oriented and include a “tourism anchor” such as a museum, aquarium, conference center or performing arts center.
- *“Lifestyle”* retail centers, where merchants are focused towards a small group of people, such as outdoor sports enthusiasts (i.e. fishing, rock climbing, hiking, etc.).

- *Activity-dominant* districts, which are focused towards a cinema or sports/concert venue.
- *Food-market* related districts, which contain flea-markets and dining areas.
- *Strip center* tenant mix, which is designed like a “main street.”
- *Education-supported* districts adjoining an educational campus, where the campus is adjacent to the district.

However, it is also possible to have combination districts, which combine any of the above district uses. They have mixed-uses that promote walking, which includes being within walking distance of office and professional

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

buildings as well as residences.⁹ An example of this would include a cinema or sports venue, public park areas, residences and retail uses.

In Riverdale the traditional downtown area along the Hamburg Turnpike is most conducive to establishing mixed use forms of development as a revitalization strategy. Mixed use development will also promote greater pedestrian activity which is crucial to a vibrant downtown. Riverdale **encourages** this form of development in the downtown area along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike east of

Interstate 287 to the Borough's easternmost boundary.

If development occurs in the Riverdale Quarry and immediate surrounding properties along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike west of I-287, the Borough **encourages** that development include a Specialty Retail District and multiple uses focused on meeting community and regional needs. These needs include open space and recreation, entertainment, dining, a hotel and conference center as a regional venue, and sports and athletic facilities.

As development and redevelopment occurs within the Borough there are tremendous opportunities for creating

high quality uses and venues within the community. The following guidelines and standards are intended to establish a higher quality of design and development that will make Riverdale unique among surrounding communities in the region.

⁹ Ibid



STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Building Placement

- The orientation of new buildings and their rooflines **must** be compatible and consistent with existing or desirable development patterns in the neighborhood. In downtown areas along the Hamburg Turnpike east of I-287 flat roofs are more appropriate than elsewhere within the community where peaked roofs are more appropriate.
- The height, scale, massing and proportion of new buildings **must** be consistent with surrounding buildings on adjacent properties.

- Buildings **must** be oriented to maximize views of the fronts, not the sides or rear of the buildings from public roadways.
- Care **must** be taken to reduce or adequately screen undesirable views of large parking lots, service areas, outdoor storage facilities, utility areas, and delivery locations from surrounding streets and properties, particularly in residential areas.
- New buildings and parking areas **must** be oriented so as to provide for safe, distinctively separate and efficient circulation patterns among pedestrians, non-motorized and motorized vehicles.

- Buildings **should** be within 25 feet of the street curb or in-line with existing or established building setbacks. In downtown areas along the Hamburg Turnpike zero setback along the public right-of-way boundary are appropriate.
- Buildings or the main portions of buildings **should** be located at the corner of a street intersection. Off-street parking, loading and service areas **should** be located behind or to the side of the building, preferably the side farthest from an adjoining street.

Vehicular Circulation

A primary objective with regards to vehicular access and circulation is to maintain an acceptable level-of-service on roadways for efficient traffic flow by limiting unnecessary turning movements, curb cuts (driveways), sightline problems, pedestrian conflicts and other potentially unsafe roadway conditions. Access management is strongly **encouraged** to provide for safe, separated pedestrian circulation patterns in relation to vehicular movement.

New site entrances, curb cuts and driveways along major roadways **shall** be avoided as much as possible to

eliminate additional turning movements that may cause further restrictions in traffic flow and decreased levels-of-service. The following standards and guidelines have a direct bearing on defining the vehicular and pedestrian characteristics of an area.

Street Patterns

- A connected street system that provides residential access through neighborhood streets to the greatest extent possible **shall be encouraged**.
- New streets **shall be** interconnected in clearly discernable patterns consistent with the traditional grid or other pattern of the Borough

wherever possible unless constrained by topography or other features.

- Street patterns **shall be** simple and direct to provide the shortest and most direct routes to destinations.
- Curvilinear street patterns and cul-de-sacs generally increase construction and maintenance costs, gas consumption, and the amount of impervious areas of pavement and **shall be** avoided wherever possible. These uses **shall be** considered only where natural or man-made conditions require their use.
- Street design, including reduced road widths, **shall be encouraged** to

slow traffic in neighborhoods and areas of pedestrian activity.

Driveways

- Site entrances and exits **shall be** clearly delineated and designed to provide for smooth traffic flow into and out of a site and within parking areas and **should** utilize curbing and landscaping to delineate traffic movement patterns.
- Internal access to out parcels **should** be provided over new ingress and egress points.
- Connecting parking lots and consolidating driveways for cross

access of parcels is **encouraged** in site design and layout.

- Restricting the number of driveways per lot to reduce potential traffic and pedestrian conflicts is **encouraged**. Driveways **shall** intersect adjoining roads at a right angle for maximum driver and pedestrian visibility and safety.
- Locating access driveways away from intersections at the maximum distances possible is **encouraged**.
- Entrances and exits **should** be attractively designed, signed, landscaped, and well-maintained to

better delineate driveways as access locations.

- Delineation of driveways in interior portions of sites **should** be accomplished using trees and other plant materials rather than bollards or other less attractive, man-made materials.
- Entrances to large residential and non-residential developments **should** have well-landscaped medians and tree-lined access roads for better delineation and appearance.

Parking Areas

- All surface parking **shall** be paved.

- Off-street parking areas that consolidate rear parking lots are **encouraged** as well as the use of shared driveways to limit the number of access points to a site or new curb cuts that may otherwise be needed along major corridors.
- Internal circulation of shared parking areas and driveways **should be** clearly delineated by curbing, green areas and landscaping.
- Off-street parking areas **should be** screened from street frontages and adjoining residential properties by brick or stone masonry walls, black ornamental metal fencing, earthen berms, dense landscape plantings or combinations of these elements no less than four (4) feet or more than six (6) in height.
- Fencing **shall be discouraged** in favor of more permanent, natural and durable screens unless fencing is of high quality and consistent with overall site design goals.
- Parking to the rear or sides of buildings **shall be encouraged** over parking areas between the building's front façade and major public roads.
- The design of large parking lots of more than twenty (20) spaces **should** include perimeter landscaping and landscaped islands at a ratio of approximately one island to each twenty spaces.
- Green space and landscaping **should be** provided between highway rights-of-way and parking areas where possible.
- Landscaped buffers and islands **should** consider the use of a variety of plant materials for visual appeal and year-round effect. Plant materials **should** include deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs and/or perennial flowers.

Transit Stops

Transit stops should be integrated into mixed-use developments along major corridors for both function and design. These transit stops should be conveniently located near major pedestrian areas and major building entrances and safely separated from vehicular traffic.

- Transit stops **must** be ADA compliant.
- Where practical bus stops **should be** located at or near building entrances and have identifiable architectural and site features.

- Transit stops **should** include basic pedestrian amenities including pedestrian scaled lighting, seating, trash receptacles, and durable vandal-proof shelter from the weather.
- Materials and colors used in the construction of transit stops **should be** compatible with nearby adjacent development.
- Transit stops **should** provide a curb-side concrete pad for wheelchair loading and to serve as a clear zone for passengers to avoid being splashed by passing vehicles.

Pedestrian Circulation

The benefits realized by creating a more “walkable” community include less reliance on the automobile, decreased traffic congestion, a healthier citizenry, greater social interaction among neighbors and businesses, and a strengthened sense of community. The result will be residential neighborhoods and business areas that are not isolated from each other by major roadways or other physical constraints.

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

Land use along major corridors **must** support pedestrian and non-motorized activities. Therefore, it becomes very important that the design of new

development and significant redevelopment projects that occurs along corridors create physical linkages between different adjoining land uses via a continuous network of sidewalks and/or trails. In Riverdale this is particularly important in areas between the downtown and areas west of I-287, including the Quarry area if redevelopment there takes place.

The design of new developments and redevelopment projects **must** provide for a safe and attractive pedestrian and non-motorized environment, including connections to existing or future sidewalks, trails and bike lanes. Street networks **shall be** designed to be pedestrian-friendly by providing

adequate and safe separation of pedestrians and non-motorized means of transportation.

➤ Sidewalks and curbs **shall be** provided along both sides of the public right-of-way of municipal streets wherever possible. This is particularly important in high traffic commercial areas.

➤ Sidewalks **shall be** constructed of concrete with a minimum width of five (5) feet. Widths of up to twelve feet or more may be appropriate in some high pedestrian traffic business areas, for example along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike.

➤ Sidewalks **should** provide landscaped areas between the street curb or paved shoulder of the road and the street side edge of the sidewalk, particularly in residential areas.

➤ Planting strips (green space or snow storage areas) of at least five feet in width where practical between the edge of pavement and the inside (roadside) edge of sidewalks **shall be** provided rather than paved asphalt or concrete surfaces, particularly in residential areas. This planting strip **may be** substituted for compatible pavement materials (bricks, cobblestone, etc.) in commercial and business areas.

- Sidewalks **shall be** provided at all new development or redevelopment projects along major corridors, including business and residential areas, to connect to adjacent land uses.
- All sidewalks, pedestrian and non-motorized pathways **shall be** designed to be barrier-free and accessible to the public and meet federal, State and local accessibility standards.
- Sidewalks outside the public right-of-way **shall be** provided at all new development or redevelopment projects as connections between the

public sidewalk and primary entrances to non-residential buildings.

- Well-defined crosswalks to connect sidewalks along major roadways are of paramount importance for public safety. In most cases, crosswalks **shall be** defined by signage, painting and striping, but in some instances pavement materials, such as brick pavers, **may be** used upon approval from the permitting agency to identify high pedestrian use areas.

Public Spaces

The provision of public spaces and open space areas becomes an important social issue as land use density in

developed areas increases. The need for public space and open spaces are especially significant to the elderly and children because they often do not have either complete mobility or the ability to travel any length of time or distance to get to a destination.

Public spaces typically include parks, sidewalks, trails, plazas, atriums, courtyards, terraces, parking areas, and public gardens. Site design **shall consider** public areas that are not only available to the public, but that are safe, comfortable and accessible to all citizens. Above all, public spaces **must be** useable since they contribute positively to an area by encouraging

social interaction and promoting a sense of community.

- Small parks, pocket parks, and plazas **shall be** an important consideration in overall building and site design as places for public gatherings and socializing, particularly at institutional sites such as municipal buildings, schools, libraries, meeting halls, etc.
- The design of public use areas **shall** consider views, climate, protection from weather extremes, solar angles, shade and shadow effects, public safety and security.

Maintenance

Continual maintenance and upkeep of buildings and grounds is necessary to realize the full potential and benefits of good site and building design. The selection of materials during site and building design **must** consider their maintenance requirements as perhaps one of the most important phases in the design process.

- Materials **shall** be selected for their longevity, durability and ease of maintenance as well as their appearance.

- Detailed site and building design **shall consider** and avoid design configurations and features that accumulate debris, leaves, trash, dirt and rubbish or otherwise create long-term maintenance problems.
- Building facades and landscaped grounds **shall be** maintained, repaired and replaced, if necessary, on a regular, seasonal basis.
- Maintenance requirements **shall** include removal and replacement of dead or diseased plant materials on an annual basis.



Photo 2-1 Buildings placed near street corners are effective in creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown.



Photo 2-3 Vacant lots can be temporarily landscaped areas to create the impression of use.



Photo 2-5 Roundabouts are effective in managing vehicular and pedestrian circulation. (Dan Burden)



Photo 2-2 Buildings near the street with attractive streetscapes provide visual interest to pedestrians.



Photo 2-4 Buildings that use traditional materials present a sense of permanence in a community.



Photo 2-6 Vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists should be separated when necessary for safety. (Dan Burden)



Photo 2-7 Changes in the pavement color and texture help delineate pedestrian areas.



Photo 2-9 The area between the sidewalk and curb (the verge) should be paved in high traffic areas.



Photo 2-11 Community pavilions are a focal point and could be located along the Pequannock River.



Photo 2-8 Sidewalks should be a minimum width of 5 feet with granite or cobblestone curbing.



Photo 2-10 Public spaces should be incorporated into site design as gathering spots.



Photo 2-12 Transit stops should be integrated into new developments. (Dan Burden)



Photo 2-13 Accent lighting can be used to highlight buildings and streetscapes. (Cooper Carry & Associates)



Photo 2-15 Landscaping along major streets with on-street parking promotes pedestrian activity.



Photo 2-17 Pedestrian scale lighting should be provided in all pedestrian areas.



Photo 2-14 Signage, building design and landscaping must all be consistent to work effectively.



Photo 2-16 A boardwalk & multiple-use trails along the Pequannock River are envisioned. (Dan Burden)



Photo 2-18 Screens and buffers should be both attractive and functional.



Photo 2-19 Public spaces with pedestrian amenities should be an integral part of site planning and design.



Photo 2-21 Attractive public spaces with interesting pedestrian features help attract people to an area.



Photo 2-23 Lighting and seating areas along pathways are important site design features.



Photo 2-20 ADA compliance is vital in streetscape design for easy accessibility by all pedestrians.



Photo 2-22 Pathways lined with trees and pedestrian amenities encourages walking.



Photo 2-24 Outdoor seating areas with protection from the sun affords opportunities for socializing.



Photo 2-25 Public spaces and mixed uses are essential when designing for walkability.



Photo 2-27 Public art is an important aspect of site design in creating a pedestrian-friendly environment.



Photo 2-29 Two to three story mixed use redevelopment can revitalize downtown Riverdale.



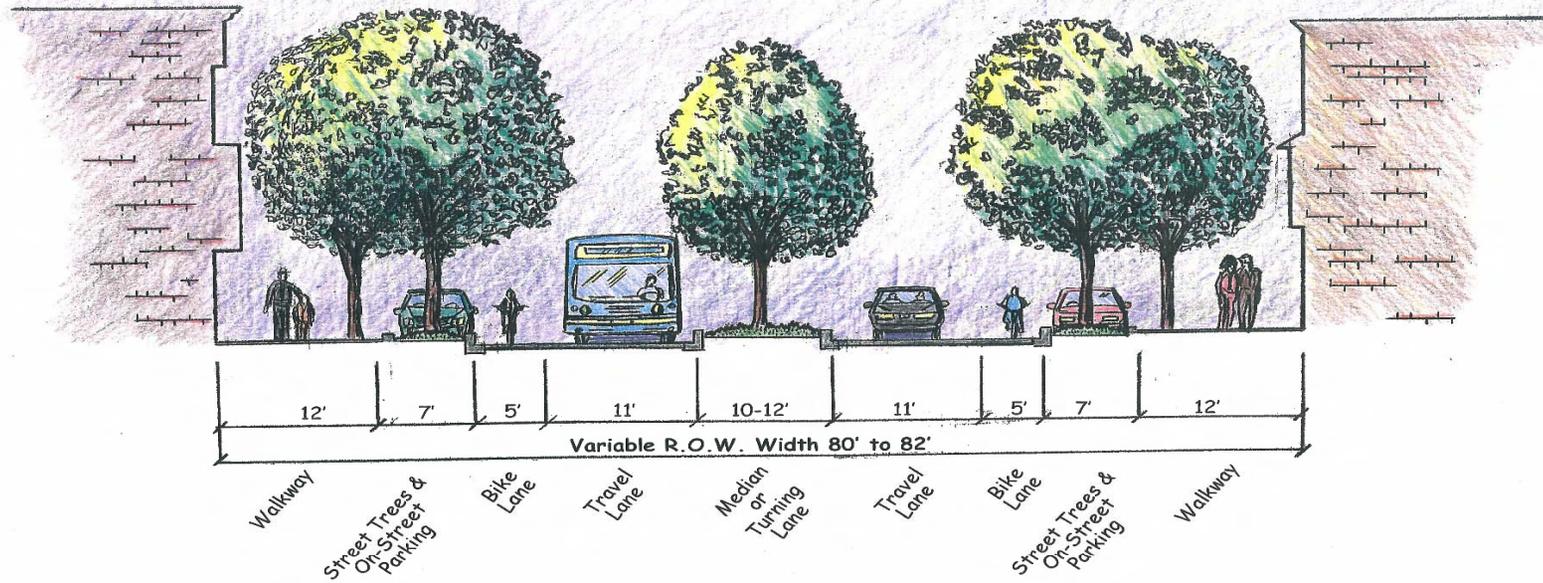
Photo 2-26 Mixed use building design and streetscaping promotes walkability.



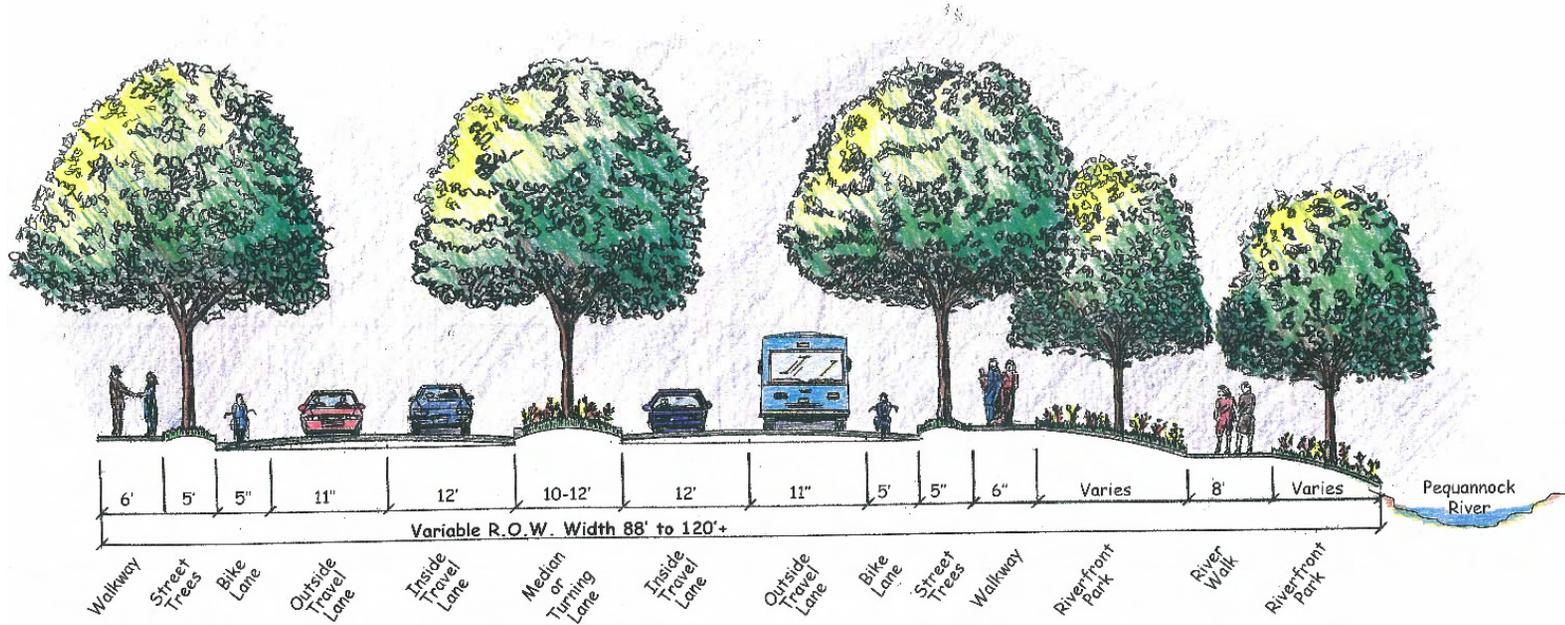
Photo 2-28 This form of mixed use design is very appropriate for the Hamburg Turnpike downtown.



Photo 2-30 Redevelopment of the private and public realm must complement the desired uses of each area.



Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike - East of I-287
Community Boulevard - Typical Cross Section
Borough of Riverdale, NJ



Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike - West of I-287
Community Boulevard - Typical Cross Section
Borough of Riverdale, NJ

BUILDING DESIGN

STRATEGY

The design of new buildings in Riverdale shall emphasize longevity and a sense of permanence in the community. This is most easily accomplished by the use of traditional building materials that are long-lasting, attractive and easily maintained such as brick and stone particularly for commercial uses and community-oriented buildings.

Also, the placement and style of a building has a direct effect on the visual quality of a neighborhood. A building's setback and any encroachment into the public right-of-way along with its design

has a significant effect on the spatial qualities of a street.

Building design shall be based on traditional architectural styles and avoid ultra modern or contemporary styles that overly exhibit current design trends that may be short-lived and out of character with desirable styles already developed or developing in Riverdale. Non-traditional and overly ornate building styles, colors, etc. may look outdated in just a few short years after their construction. In building design compatibly mixing new materials with traditional styles is desirable and encouraged.

DEFINITIONS

Setback – A setback is the distance a building façade is located from the property line, usually expressed as a minimum or maximum distance in feet. Setback requirements are identified in zoning ordinances.

Encroachment – Encroachment is the distance that a portion of a building, such as a staircase, bay window, or porch can extend out from the property line or facade of a building into the setback or public right-of-way.

Zero Setback – A zero setback is where a building is placed on the property line, thus creating a sense of

comfort and enclosure for pedestrians. This type of setback is most appropriate for mixed-use buildings with commercial, retail or office uses on the ground floor and residential or office uses above. This type of setback is most appropriate for buildings that front the Hamburg Turnpike that are within the traditional downtown area of the Borough.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Building Placement

➤ Buildings **shall be** built to the property line (zero setback) along the Hamburg Turnpike in the downtown area when possible,

except at street corners or where otherwise restricted or constrained.

➤ No portion of the ground floor front façade of buildings along the Hamburg Turnpike within the downtown area **shall be** farther than three (3) feet from the property line. This allows for pilasters and other building façade features without encroachment into the public right-of-way.

➤ Upper floor projections of buildings, such as balconies and other architectural features **shall require** a permit for encroachment into the

public right-of-way whether within the downtown area or elsewhere.

Building Design and Features

The following criteria are not intended to restrict creativity or variety in building design, but rather assist in focusing on traditional design elements and architectural principles already established in Riverdale. These principles are intended to encourage creative design solutions that will result in projects with an attractive and almost timeless visual appearance.

Non-residential Buildings

Large-scale, multiple use and mixed use, non-residential projects including

professional office, commercial, light industrial and institutional uses **must be** compatible in scale and character with nearby developments, particularly residential uses.

- Corporate franchise-style and “cookie cutter” architecture **shall not be** used in favor of building styles and materials that complement neighborhood character and design objectives particularly where residential uses are nearby.
- The floor to floor height of the first story of new buildings along the Hamburg Turnpike within the downtown area **shall be** of sufficient height to accommodate retail uses,

whether or not that is their immediate intended purpose.

- All building facades visible from public streets, public areas and residential neighborhoods **shall** have features of suitable scale and utilize construction materials that integrate consistently and compatibly with the visual characteristics of surrounding areas.
- The rear facades of buildings that are visible from public streets and public viewpoints **shall have** a finished quality utilizing materials and colors that are consistent with the remainder of the building.

- Public spaces **shall be** integrated into the design of large-scale non-residential developments where public use is expected or encouraged. These spaces may include seating areas, gardens and plazas. This is especially true for institutional uses and large-scale businesses that are open to the public.
- Loading and delivery areas, outdoor storage facilities/areas, trash collection areas and employee parking areas **shall** incorporate suitable site and landscaping features. These areas **shall not be** located in full public view of major roadways and residential areas.

- Landscaping features **shall** include appropriately sized deciduous and evergreen plant materials to mitigate the effects from year-round public exposure of fencing, lighting and noise.
- A top cornice line, parapet wall, belt course or intermediate cornice, pilasters and/or columns and prominent and/or recessed entrances **are strongly encouraged** building design elements for new structures.
- Traditional architectural styles exhibited in the Borough and surrounding communities **are encouraged** over highly ornate and/or ultra modern styles.
- The use of drive-thru design **is discouraged**, particularly along the Hamburg Turnpike within the downtown area.
- Peaked roofs with varied rooflines **are appropriate** for some non-residential buildings to mimic nearby residential areas and characteristics.
- The minimum height of buildings along the Hamburg Turnpike within the downtown area **is encouraged** to be two stories.
- Contemporary design interpretations of historic features and patterns **are acceptable**.

Building Materials

- Materials **shall have** desirable architectural character and quality.
- Materials **shall be** selected for harmony and compatibility in color and texture with adjoining buildings. Brick, native stone, stone, concrete, plaster and high quality wood trim products and treatments **are encouraged** over the use of metal or similar non-traditional materials as the principal non-residential building material.

- Buildings **shall** make use of the same materials, or those that are architecturally harmonious and visually compatible, for all building walls and exterior building components that are either wholly or partly visible from major roadways.
- Materials **shall be** considered for their durable quality, longevity and ease of maintenance. Inappropriate use of materials, for which they are not intended, and non-typical construction practices in their installation **shall be** avoided.
- Front and side building façade materials **shall be** of subtle colors and low reflectance to prevent glare.

- Colors that are classic and traditional in appearance, neutral, timeless, and of an earthen tone **shall be encouraged** over non-traditional, bright or neon colors.
- Combinations of the following materials **are encouraged** and/or **acceptable** in the design of new buildings fronting major streets:
 - New or used face brick
 - Masonry
 - Terra cotta
 - Cut stone and/or cast stone
 - Textured and/or decorative concrete
 - Stucco/exterior plaster (only acceptable if smooth troweled and used for upper stories)

- Wood and metal cornices, door and window frames
- Stone, brick and formed concrete for cornices and pilasters
- Clear untinted glass for windows

Windows and Doors

- Building components such as windows and doors **shall be** compatible in scale and proportion to one another and to desirable patterns already established within the Borough.
- A well-designed building entrance **shall be** visible from the street and be the focal point of the building's

front façade. Recessed entrances **are encouraged** particularly when such entrances add to the overall appearance of the façade.

- Building entries **shall be** accessible at grade and located along the primary street front.
- Street addresses at building entries **shall be** clearly displayed with numbers that are a minimum of three (3) inches high. Numbers greater than ten (10) inches **may be** considered under the Borough's sign regulations.
- Colors for framing doors, windows and other features **shall be**

harmonious with other building elements.

- There **shall be** no long, blank, featureless building facades. Building wall appearance **shall be** enhanced with windows or other architectural design and/or landscape features such as recessed areas, projecting walls or well-landscaped with trees and shrubs in order to avoid monotony in design and appearance.
- Earth tone colors such as browns, tans, brick red, grays, terra cotta with suitable accent colors including white **should be** used in building design.

- The following materials **are prohibited** in the design of new buildings along major streets:
 - Rough stucco
 - Reflective, mirrored, tinted or opaque glass
 - Imitation stone or brick made of plastic, fiberglass and/or concrete
 - Rough sawn or natural unfinished wood
 - Used brick with no fired face (previously used as interior bricks)
 - Plastic and fiberglass panels
- Garish building and accent colors **are prohibited**. The use of

compatible accent colors is **encouraged**.

Utilities and Storage

Utility facilities and areas may include electrical and gas distribution facilities, transformers, meters and air-conditioning units. Utilities **may be** located at ground level or rooftops, but their visibility to the public **must be** considered.

Storage areas include uses such as trash collection locations (dumpsters), loading and unloading docks and bays, service bays and outdoor storage areas or storage facilities/buildings. All utilities and storage areas **shall be** located at the rear of buildings and visually hidden

from major roadways, residential uses, public streets and public view.

- Rooftop utilities **shall be** effectively hidden from the view of motorists, residents and pedestrians at street level.
- Rooftop screens **shall be** constructed from materials that are consistent in color and texture with the building's exterior design materials.
- All gas and electric meters and other facilities **shall** either be incorporated internally into the structure or be of similar color and materials to the

principal structure so as not to be visually distinct.

- Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on the roof, ground level, or buildings themselves **shall be** screened from public view with materials that are harmonious and compatible with the building, or located in such a manner as to not be visible from residential uses, public areas, walkways and streets.
- Landscaping of potentially visible utility boxes located along major public rights-of-way **shall be** screened to the greatest extent possible using plant materials and

landscaping while still allowing for access and maintenance.

- All accessory buildings (garages, sheds, storage buildings, etc.) and structures **shall be** compatible and/or consistent with the materials and colors of the principal building(s).
- High quality, decorative fencing, plant materials and/or masonry materials **shall be** used to screen trash disposal and collection areas (dumpsters) and other outdoor storage areas from adjoining residential properties.

- The use of natural plant materials, including trees, shrubs and perennials **is encouraged** to screen ground level utilities and outdoor storage buildings and areas as part of an overall site landscaping plan.
- Private and public utilities **should be** buried underground wherever possible.

Residential Development

New single family residential development projects **shall be** compatible in scale, form and mass with surrounding residential areas and adjacent uses. New infill residential development **shall be** sensitive to adjacent properties and not introduce

housing styles that are inconsistent in patterns of development, scale, mass, form, or style with surrounding residential units or neighborhoods, unless such changes are desired by the community.

- If a single house design is used repeatedly, the use of varying materials, colors, window treatments and other design details **shall be** used to distinguish one unit from another.
- The orientation of new houses **shall** follow established patterns where either the fronts or sides of homes are seen from public areas.

- New housing developments **shall** avoid consistent use of styles that emphasize garages as a visual focal point of a house's design.
- New development **shall** avoid to the greatest extent possible, visual monotony caused by long, straight lines of similar looking houses along a street.
- Houses that are identical in appearance, building elevation, floor plans, etc. **shall be discouraged** from locating on adjacent lots, or directly across the street from each other.
- Variation in roofline, roof features (peaks, dormers), porches, doors, windows and paint details **are encouraged**.
- New development **is encouraged** to extensively use landscaping elements to help distinguish housing units, subdivisions and neighborhoods.
- Landscaped entranceways into neighborhoods **are encouraged**.

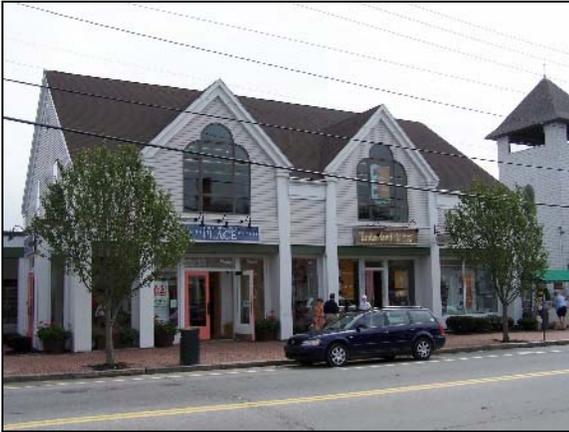


Photo 3-1 Mixed-use building design can be contemporary and mix materials and styles.



Photo 3-3 Building styles like this may be appropriate for specialty retail uses at the Quarry.

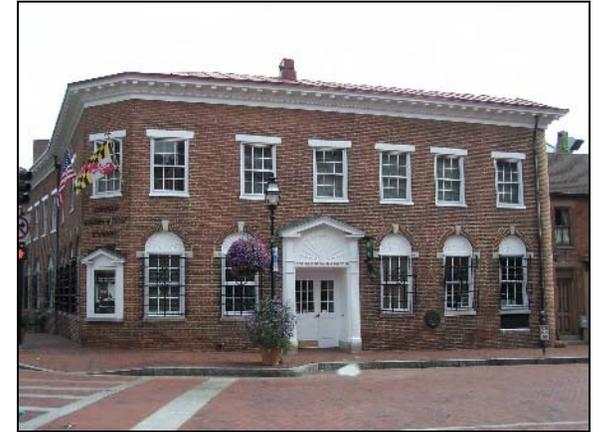


Photo 3-5 The use of brick with wood trim is a traditional style suited for the Hamburg Turnpike.

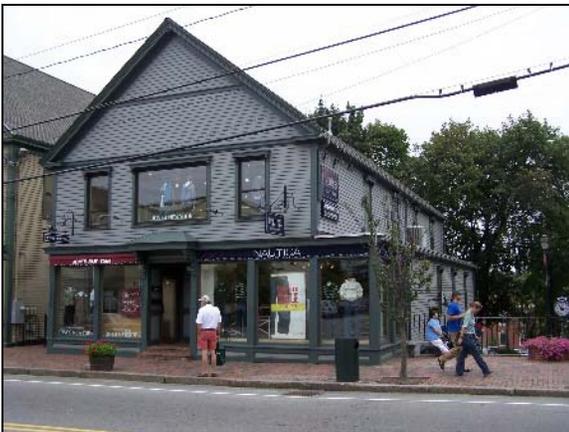


Photo 3-2 Two story buildings should accommodate retail uses at ground level.



Photo 3-4 Buildings at higher densities that mix uses create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.



Photo 3-6 A traditional downtown should integrate buildings of similar style and scale close to the street.

STREET DESIGN

STRATEGY

The Borough, through its Master Plan and other planning initiatives encourages creating a more walkable, pedestrian-friendly community than presently exists in Riverdale. This is most achievable in areas where new development is occurring or is likely to occur based on present zoning and where redevelopment is envisioned as desirable based on Riverdale's Future Land Use Plan that is part of its Master Plan. These areas primarily include, but are not limited to the traditional downtown area east of I-287, the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike corridor that includes the Pequannock River and

adjacent park area, and the Riverdale Quarry area.

Becoming a more pedestrian-oriented community can be achieved through changes in both the public and private realms. Streets throughout the Borough should be designed as the principal public spaces of the community and appropriately scaled to the pedestrian.

The following guidelines encourage the development of a continuous network of interconnected streets, sidewalks, bike lanes and pedestrian (non-motorized) pathways that link neighborhoods and key destinations in the community. These guidelines and standards encourage the development of safe and

attractive environments for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized means of travel in Riverdale.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Street Trees, Furnishings and Pedestrian Amenities

Street trees, streetscape furnishings and pedestrian amenities **must be** considered as part of an integrated, well-conceived street design and streetscaping plan along major road corridors. A streetscape plan **shall** at a minimum include street trees, for shade and comfort, and street lighting for safety and security.

The placement of any materials within the public right-of-way **requires** the permission and approval of any jurisdictional agency with authority over the right-of-way which may include the State and/or County Transportation Departments or others.

In the event that plant or other streetscaping materials cannot be placed within the public right-of-way, the placement of trees, plant materials and furnishings (for example, benches, planters, lighting) may be possible alongside the public right-of-way with the support and permission of the private property owner. The placement of materials and amenities outside of the public right-of-way could be part of

an overall development or redevelopment project undertaken by either the public or private sector or in partnership with other.

- The provision of streetside amenities **shall be** encouraged along all pedestrian sidewalks where possible. This includes the placement of suitable species of street trees, pedestrian lighting, landscape plant materials, benches, etc.
- Trees, shrubs, flowers or other materials **shall not** restrict views of or from pedestrian areas or cause the creation of any potentially unsafe situations.

- In addition to sidewalks, new development and redevelopment projects **shall**, if necessary, consider the use of trees and/or other vertical design elements just outside the public right-of-way (lampposts, plant materials, etc.). The use of these materials are intended to create effective physical and visual buffers between sidewalks, vehicular traffic and parking areas as well as a means to better define the edges of the public right-of-way.
- The planting of street trees **shall be** a long-term objective with a consistent appearance in the use of tree species and spacing inside or outside the public right-of-way.

- Tree species **shall be** selected that have root growth habits that do not cause damage to pavements, sewer or water lines.
- Trees **should be** planted no closer than approximately 2 feet from sidewalks, approximately 3 feet from streets, and approximately 8 feet from driveways or as otherwise established by local jurisdictions.

Street Furniture and Accessories

- Street furniture and accessories **shall not** result in damage or have the potential to damage the public streetscape or block pedestrian access or visibility.

- Private streetside features **shall be** located within the first three (3) feet of the façade and generally range in height between 18 to 30 inches.
- Street furniture and accessories **shall be** made of durable materials. Plastics and treated wood **are discouraged**.
- Planters, public art and other accessories can enhance a building's front façade, soften the streetscape and **may be** located in front of a building.

Lighting

Lighting objectives are different for motorists and pedestrians. High intensity lighting mounted on poles of considerable height is meant to illuminate roadways for safe vehicular travel. However, lighting intended for motorists may create an uncomfortable or undesirable pedestrian atmosphere.

Lighting in pedestrian areas **shall** include low-angle pedestrian-scale lampposts that illuminate full color spectrum light for more realistic nighttime colors and prevention of glare.

Lighting features **shall** complement building design and be consistent in appearance throughout a development

site. However, as with the use of other design elements, creativity in design **shall be encouraged** to avoid too much uniformity that results in visual monotony.

- Illumination **shall be** consistent with neighborhood ambient light levels and accepted industry standards such as those of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA).
- Lighting fixtures **shall be** shielded and direct light downward in most applications to limit the amount of light escaping off-site except in situations where low level lighting is used specifically to highlight

landscape features, buildings and pedestrian walkways.

- Exterior lighting **shall be** considered as part of the design concept for a building and site. Light fixtures, standards, and all exposed accessories **shall be** harmonious to a building's design and not result in undesirable lighting off-site.
- Adequate lighting **shall be** provided for safety and security reasons and incorporated into the site and building design process.
- Floodlights, the use of other high intensity lighting as well as moving,

blinking and strobe lighting **shall be discouraged**.

- Vandal resistant light fixtures **shall be** used to the greatest extent practical.
- Lighting elements in pedestrian areas as part of site design **shall be** pedestrian-scale, typically 12 to 15 feet in height, made of durable metal and vandal-proof materials and ornamental, but not overly ornate in appearance.
- Any ornamental lighting used in site design and in view of the public right-of-way **shall be** consistent in style and street lighting patterns

acceptable to the Borough's design objectives.

- Lighting **should be** used to enhance landscaping, building features and textures, pedestrian areas, public spaces, building entrances and site entry points.

Signage

The location, size, design, materials and lighting of signs **shall be** considered as an important part of a site's overall design. Signage **shall** enhance a building's architecture and complement a site in terms of its consistency with building scale and architectural styles. Signs **shall not** appear as an afterthought to a building or site's

design or be visually dominant and **shall be** consistent with other local codes and ordinances.

- Sign size **must be** consistent with the Borough's Zoning Ordinance requirements.
- Signs **shall** complement their surroundings and convey its message clearly and simply. Signs **shall be** weather and vandal proof to the greatest extent practical.
- Ground-based signs **shall be** well-landscaped and maintained using plant materials of suitable scale, numbers and form.

- Roof-mounted signs **shall be** avoided.
- Freestanding signs **shall** incorporate the architectural style and character of the building(s) it identifies. Large-scale freestanding signs **shall be discouraged**.
- Signs **shall have** appropriate scale and proportion to a site and its use and be in compliance with local regulations.
- Signs **shall be** designed as an integral part of the architectural features of the building.

- Sign height **shall be** proportional to local zoning districts and permitted uses.
- Wall signs incorporated into a building's façade **shall be** framed and limited to one sign for each side of the structure to prevent visual clutter.
- Colors and materials used for signs **shall be** consistent with building colors and materials.
- Lighting **shall be** adequate to enhance the sign's overall appearance.
- Intense lighting that produces glare or off-site impacts **shall be avoided**.
- Exposed supports to stabilize signs, including wires and cables **shall be avoided**.
- Only the business name, street address, building name and logo **shall be** allowed on an awning or canopy. No other advertising **shall be allowed**.
- Lettering **shall not** exceed 40% of the awning area.
- Wall signs or low-profile signs **are preferred** over pole-mounted or projecting signs.
- Neon tubing and other high intensity accent treatments **is not encouraged** in sign, façade or building design.

Landscape Design

Landscape design not only improves the appearance of a site, but also enhances both pedestrian and vehicular access and management. Plant materials and landscaping features, such as masonry walls, can serve to highlight points of entry to a site or a neighborhood as well

as identify pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes.

Landscape designs often do not realize their full potential and effectiveness for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons may include using an insufficient amount of landscaping materials, primarily plants; poorly designed landscape plans using incompatible or inappropriately sized materials; and a lack of adequate maintenance that may include irrigation or regular removal and replacement of dead or diseased plant materials.

- All new development and redevelopment **shall include** landscaping as part of the overall



site design process. Landscaping **shall not** be an afterthought to site development or the building design process, but integrated as a primary design consideration.

- Perimeter landscaping **shall be** provided along property lines where there is a change in land use, primarily between non-residential uses and adjoining residential properties.
- Landscaping **should be** used to accentuate building entrances, pedestrian corridors and building features. Foundation plantings **should be** used around all buildings.

- Plant materials and man-made elements (brick pavers, concrete, etc.) **should be** used creatively to delineate and highlight building and site entry points and serve to act as gateways into development areas, business and office parks, and residential neighborhoods.
- Landscaping **should be** used to define parking areas, vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes.
- The ground plane that abuts the public right-of-way **should be** paved with terrazzo, concrete pavers, concrete, stone, brick, tile or other high quality hardscape material acceptable to the Borough. The use



of asphalt and loose gravel materials **shall be** prohibited.

- The use of native plant materials **shall** take precedence over exotic or non-native plant species. Invasive plant species **shall not** be used.
- Year-round effectiveness of plantings **must be** considered and **shall** include a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs.
- Landscape designs **shall** incorporate existing, desirable trees and shrubs found on site as much as practicable. In particular, healthy mature trees and woodland areas **shall be**

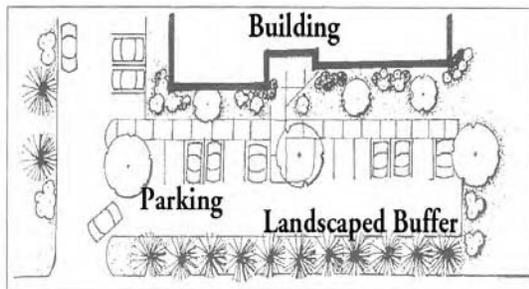
preserved and maintained to the greatest extent possible.

- Grading of a site **shall** blend in with existing contours of adjacent parcels and not result in abrupt changes in grade. Earthen berms, if used, **should not** appear overly engineered or linear, but have a more natural, non-linear, undulating appearance.
- Undisturbed natural areas that function as screens and buffers **are preferable** to new plantings.
- All plant materials **should be** sized to create an attractive appearance and effective visual screen within

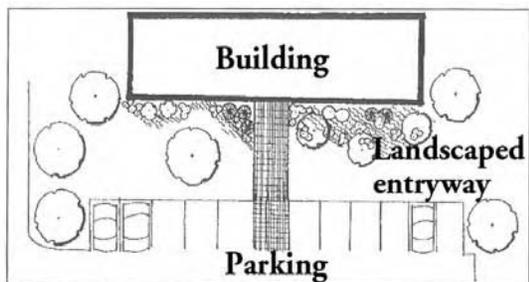
three years of installation. Trees and shrubs **should be** creatively grouped together to form visual focal points of interest.

- Irrigation **is encouraged** to maintain plants in healthy condition.
- Excessive varieties of plant materials **should be** avoided in favor of creating an attractive, cohesive landscape design.
- Grading under the drip line of mature trees to be protected **is discouraged** to avoid soil compaction and root damage.

- Developers **are encouraged** to use the services of professional landscape architects and landscape designers.



Landscaping should define parking and pedestrian areas.



Landscaping should accentuate building entrances.

Buffers and Screens

Physical buffers and visual screens between different, adjoining land uses are critical design elements that **shall be** utilized to reduce undesirable visual impacts. In developed areas, visual screens **may be** a combination of structural elements (walls) and non-structural natural elements (earthen berms and plant materials). The use of some types of wooden fencing (for example, stockade) and particularly those requiring regular maintenance, and chain link fencing along or in the immediate view of major roadways and public rights-of-way **shall be** avoided.

- Structural screening walls **shall** appear as extensions of a building's design and repeat architectural features including building materials, textures and colors. For example, red brick buildings could use matching red brick materials if structural screening walls are used.
- Screening walls **shall not** be painted since painting requires considerable maintenance to keep its appearance. Rather screening walls constructed of high quality, long lasting, but not necessarily high cost materials **are preferred**.
- Fences and railings **shall be** a minimum of thirty-six (36) inches

and a maximum of forty-two (42) inches in height and/or meet other local regulations.

- All screening walls 50 feet or greater in length that are visible from major roadways **shall be** designed to minimize visual monotony through changes in height, material, texture and the use of plant materials.
- A combination of structural screens, such as low walls, and/or natural landscape plant materials **should be** provided where possible between parking lots and sidewalks or other pedestrian use areas.

- Fences, railings and walls **are discouraged** along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike and Newark-Pompton Turnpike except to screen surface parking lots, vacant and unimproved lots, and to protect pedestrians against grade changes.
- Solid walls, including seating walls, **shall be** a minimum of eighteen (18) inches and a maximum of thirty-two (32) inches in height. Seating walls **shall be** at least sixteen (16) inches in width at their top face.
- Dense landscaping and structural materials **shall be** used to screen unattractive views of outdoor

storage areas, trash enclosures and ground level mechanical and electrical equipment.

- The appearance of security fencing **shall be** enhanced by landscaping along the fence line with evergreen and deciduous plant materials.
- Fences, railings and walls **shall be** constructed of metal, brick and stone. Plastic, chain link and wooden fences **are discouraged**.
- The use of chain link fencing as buffers and screens **is discouraged**.

- Berms, if used, shall be a minimum 36 inches high in combination with plantings and no greater than 1 foot vertical rise to a 3 foot horizontal run ratio and **should** appear as natural as possible.



Photo 4-1 Lighting, landscaping and street furniture (benches) should be well designed and integrated.



Photo 4-3 Signage should be landscaped and use similar materials to the buildings on site.



Photo 4-5 Plant materials and man-made materials like fencing soften the appearance of parking areas.



Photo 4-2 Enhanced streetscaping may be nothing more than some planters and flowers.



Photo 4-4 Signage does not need to be large to be effective.



Photo 4-6 Landscaping provides visual interest and must be part of overall site development.

5.0 ADMINISTRATION

5.1 INTENT

The intended purpose for this handbook is to link the Borough's land use and development policies and regulations expressed in its Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance and other local regulations with evolving community aesthetic and design goals and objectives. This handbook provides additional project design and development guidelines and standards that must be consulted during the Borough's Site Plan review and approval process as well as other permitting processes, including

Conditional Use approvals, as allowed by the Zoning Ordinance.

5.2 DESIGN REVIEW

Design Review is considered to be part of the Borough's site plan approval and conditional use processes. Design review is intended to protect and enhance the character of the Borough and ensure that new development and significant redevelopment is compatible with the visual character of surrounding neighborhoods without placing undue burden on an Applicant or property owner.

The Design Review process considers a range of design-related issues expressed throughout this handbook. Each issue may appear to be insignificant by itself, but when considered in combination with other issues and elements of design the cumulative difference between good design and poor design can have profound effects on the aesthetic character of the community.

Design Review provides a number of direct benefits to the Borough. These include:

- Enhancing community identity
- Protecting property values
- Promoting economic development

Under Community Design Review, projects will be evaluated in three basic stages. The process is intended to work simultaneously alongside with and complement the Borough's existing site plan review and approval procedures.

These stages include:

1. A preliminary review by the Zoning Officer who reviews the application for completeness and provides comments to the Planning Board possibly through the creation and recommendations of a Design Review Committee.

2. The Planning Board and/or Design Review Committee meets with the Applicant and in the case of the Committee forwards its comments with recommendations to the Planning Board.
3. The Planning Board considers the comments and recommendations of the Zoning Officer and the Design Review Committee, if applicable, as well as any testimony from the public, before rendering a final decision on whether the project meets local design guidelines and standards.

Details of each stage are as follow:

Stage 1. Schematic/Draft Plans

It is recommended that the Applicant informally meet with the Zoning Officer before completing any detailed plans for the project proposal. The Applicant should provide conceptual schematics of the proposal in an informal submission for preliminary review and comment by the Borough.

The Zoning Officer may offer suggestions about particular issues or concerns that may be expressed during the formal review. These suggestions

can be incorporated into draft plans early in the design process potentially saving the Applicant both time and money.

Once a complete application with draft plans is formally submitted and acceptable to the Zoning Officer the proposal will be placed on the next scheduled Planning Board (or Design Review Committee) meeting agenda.

During its review of submitted draft plans the Planning Board, or Design Review Committee, if applicable, will consider site layout, landscaping, parking, driveways, circulation, signage,

scale, materials, colors, styles and other design elements addressed in this handbook to determine how well the project fits in with surrounding uses and the community in general in meeting its design goals and objectives.

Stage 2. Draft Plans

The Design Review process is intended to fit efficiently into the Borough's existing development review procedures, including site plan and conditional use applications to avoid unnecessary delays to the Applicant.

The Planning Board will judge the quality of the proposed project's draft plans on behalf of those that may live, work and visit locations in the future. The process allows for professional support from outside design consultants to insure that decisions are not arbitrary. This handbook allows for and encourages flexibility in design and does not require a specific style of architecture or design features. Illustrations provided in this handbook are intended to facilitate ideas and discussion.

In its review of a proposed project the Planning Board and/or Design Review

Committee will be considering the following types of questions relative to the project's design.

- Will the project contribute to the overall quality of life in the Borough and a higher quality of development in the community?
- Will the project fit in with the desirable character for the area and surrounding neighborhoods?
- Does the project incorporate basic principles of good design illustrated in this Community Design Handbook and the Borough's Master Plan?
- Does the project meet the requirements, expectations and intent of the handbook in enhancing community design?
- Are special design features included in the project that will make it memorable and a source of community pride?
- Have features and materials been included that will be easily maintainable in years to come?
- Does the project reflect local heritage and contribute to community identity?
- Can the project be adequately served by the Borough and local service providers?

The expectation is that projects that meet or attempt to meet the guidelines and standards of the Borough expressed in this handbook and in the Master Plan will pass through the Design Review process quickly.

Stage 3. Revisions and Final Plans

If applicable, the Design Review Committee will recommend to approve a project, or require revisions, and it so notifies the Applicant and Planning Board. The Planning Board considers all previous comments on the proposal and renders its final decision. The action and any conditions of approval are recorded

in a Certificate of Design Appropriateness which will be sent to the Applicant and filed with the Borough.

If the approval is subject to conditions the Applicant must submit revised plans to the Planning Board that reflect these conditions as final plans. The Applicant is not required to go back to the Committee, unless specifically required to do so.

5.3 SUBMITTALS

The following information should be included in a submission for design

review and approval. Many of these items are typically required for site plan approval, conditional use permits and/or buildings permits.

- A site plan at appropriate scale indicating existing and proposed buildings, lots lines, parking spaces, driveways, curbing materials, vehicle and pedestrian circulations and connections, landscaping, plant and hardscape materials, lighting and lighting fixtures, fencing, walls, sidewalks, signs and other materials relevant to project design that may be requested by the

Planning Board and/or Design Review Committee. All information should be drawn to scale and show all relevant dimensions noting or illustrating exterior materials and other pertinent information used in building construction, site landscaping, paving, etc.

- Building elevation drawings for all sides of the structure indicating design materials, colors, type of illumination fixtures and signs.
- Color photographs of the subject property shown in the context of

adjoining properties within approximately 250 feet or as otherwise directed by the Zoning Officer.

- Architectural and other vendor sample materials including colors proposed and installation methods, as applicable.
- Conceptual building plans and drawings showing organization of building functions and spaces, building height, window treatment, detailing, trim and façade materials.

- A brief written description of the project, its location, ownership information, proposed activity and uses.

5.4 DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Design Review Committee, if established, may be comprised of three to five (3-5) members appointed by the Mayor and/or Council. At least one member should be a trained design professional.

The Committee has three primary functions:

- To review development proposals in accordance with the Community Design Handbook.
- Advise the Borough on evaluations and updates to the Community Design Handbook.
- To provide urban design expertise and advice on related aesthetic matters of importance to the community.

In reviewing a development proposal the Committee will recommend to the Planning Board to:

- Approve a project
- Approve a project with conditions
- Require redesign of a project

5.5 APPEAL

Decisions of the Committee and the Planning Board may be appealed to the Borough in accordance with local procedures of appeal.

The Committee does not make decisions and determinations that are otherwise the responsibility and requirement of other Borough staff and boards on such issues as re-zonings, building permits, conditional uses, plan amendments, site plan approval or subdivision approval.

5.6 PROJECTS SUBJECT TO REVIEW

Design review is required for:

- Major projects subject to permitting, site plan review, conditional uses and formal approval by the Borough
- Commercial and mixed-use buildings
- Professional offices
- Multi-family housing
- Planned Unit Developments
- Planned residential projects
- Public projects
- Exterior property alterations subject to issuance of a Building Permit

5.7 EXEMPT PROJECTS

One and two-family houses are exempt from Design Review. Also, normal exterior maintenance and repairs, as well as interior alterations, are exempt from design review for all types of buildings.

5.8 FEES

Design review is subject to a fee schedule charged to the Applicant as established by Borough.

**Community Design
Review Process
Flow Chart**

