APPENDIX C

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR WILTON CENTER AND CANNON CROSSING DISTRICTS

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As used in these standards:

The word "shall" means that the relevant standard, criterion or action must be followed unless the applicant demonstrates that it would clearly be unreasonable or undesirable to do so under all of the circumstances;

The word "should" means that the relevant standard, criterion or action will generally be required, but the applicant may offer, and the Commission / Committee may approve, an alternative standard, criterion or action if the Commission / Committee finds that the alternative would better fulfill the overall goals set forth in these standards.

1. PURPOSE

These design standards are intended to aid in maintaining and enhancing the character and quality of the buildings and public spaces in designated areas in Wilton in order to maintain and enhance:

a. the distinctive character, landscape and historic value, especially in areas designated as "village districts",
b. the sensitive balance of visual and spatial relationships that create the character and support the function of the designated areas,
c. the overall quality of the built environment, and
d. the economic and social vitality of areas which depends upon maintaining the attractiveness of the street environment, the economic viability of businesses, and a hospitable atmosphere for residential occupants and visitors.

2. APPLICATION

These design standards are intended to provide:

a. that proposed buildings or modifications to existing buildings shall be harmoniously related to their surroundings, and the terrain and to the use, scale and architecture of existing buildings that have a functional or visual relationship to a proposed building or modification,
b. that all spaces, structures and related site improvements visible from public roadways shall be designed to be compatible with the elements of the area in and around the proposed building or modification,
c. that the color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials and landscaping of commercial or residential property and any proposed signs and lighting shall be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motif and the maintenance of views, historic buildings, monuments and landscaping,

d. that proposed improvements complement and are in concert with existing and planned public improvements including but not limited to sidewalk construction, street curbing, street lighting and landscaping,

e. that the removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized, and

f. criteria from which a property owner and the Commission may make a reasonable determination of what is permitted.

3. OVERALL DESIGN

3.1. Compatibility Objectives

All development shall be designed to be compatible with the existing and planned character of the area where it is proposed. Guidelines include:

a. The building and layout of buildings and site improvements should reinforce existing buildings and streetscape patterns and the placement of buildings and included site improvements shall assure there is no adverse impact;

b. Proposed streets should be connected to the existing road network, wherever possible;

c. Open spaces within the proposed development should reinforce open space patterns, in form and siting;

d. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or sight lines or vistas should be integrated into the site design;

e. The landscape design should complement the landscape patterns in the vicinity of the site;

f. The exterior signs, site lighting and accessory structures should support a uniform architectural theme and be compatible with their surroundings; and

g. The scale, proportions, massing and detailing of any proposed building should be in proportion to the scale, proportion, massing and detailing in the vicinity of the site.

3.2. Local Context

The design of improvements shall be patterned on the physical, cultural and historic context in the vicinity of the site. Guidelines include:

a. Reinforce historic scale, massing, proportion, spacing, setbacks, and orientation.

b. Protect and create views of distinctive landscapes and historic sites and structures.

c. Incorporate historic / cultural landmarks into new development, where applicable.

3.3. Other Context

The regulations concerning the exterior of structures or sites shall be consistent with:

a. The "Connecticut Historical Commission - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", revised through 1990, as amended; or
b. the distinctive characteristics in the vicinity of the site.

3.4. Organization

Improvements should be organized as an integrated system of structures, outdoor spaces, landscapes, and details both within the site and in relation to other improvements in the vicinity of the site. Guidelines include:

a. Organize the site in a unifying and discernible manner.
b. Maintain visual privacy between public and private spaces.
c. Preserve or create scenic views.

4. SITE LAYOUT

4.1. General

The overall design of the site should provide for places that promote pedestrian comfort, provide visual pleasure, and support outdoor social activity that reinforce community life. Guidelines include:

a. Provide for public gathering at convenient, safe and visually engaging locations.
b. Use sidewalks / walkways as organizing elements.
c. Illuminate assembly areas and street for visibility and safety.

4.2. Building Alignment

The width, height and spacing of buildings should respect the existing rhythms of the street on which they front. Guidelines include:

a. Provide a well-defined front facade with the main entrance clearly visible and identifiable from the primary public vantage points or public right-of-way.
b. Align buildings so that the dominant lines of their facades parallel the line of the street and create a sense of enclosure.
c. The relationships between buildings and the street (such as front facades and major roof ridges) should either be parallel or perpendicular, not oblique or diagonal.

4.3. Pedestrian Circulation

The overall design of the site should provide a safe, logical approach and entry to all buildings and site use areas for pedestrians. Walkways on private property should connect to and extend the network of public pedestrian movement that is crucial to the proper functioning in the vicinity of the site. Guidelines include:

a. Minimum sidewalk /walkway width is five feet.
b. Grass strips, at a minimum of 2' wide, shall be provided in between roads and sidewalks. Exceptions may be made where there is on-street parking or the area is anticipated to have heavy foot traffic.

c. Materials for sidewalks and walkways shall be Portland cement concrete, brick, or precast concrete pavers.
d. Materials for sidewalks and walkways may be stone where possible and deemed appropriate.
e. Curb materials shall be Portland cement concrete, granite or Belgian blocks, where possible.
f. In parking lots with more than two aisles or two full parking bays, walkways shall be provided where needed so that pedestrians can move from their cars to buildings along a well-marked walkway and shall be clearly marked by a change in grade or material or both.
g. Walkways should take advantage of, and give access to, views, open space, and environmental features.

4.4. Vehicular Circulation

The overall design of the site should provide a safe, logical approach and entry to all buildings and site use areas for vehicles. Guidelines include:

a. Minimize curb cuts (both number and width) and encourage the use of shared walkways, shared driveways, rear driveway connections, and alley access to off-street parking areas.
b. Minimize conflicts between pedestrians (sidewalks) and vehicles (curb cuts).
c. Locate all delivery areas toward the rear of the site concealed from the public right-of-way.
d. Where interrupted by curb cuts, the continuity of the sidewalk surface material should be maintained, while the material of the driveway should be interrupted.

4.5. Site Parking

The overall design of the site should integrate parking into the site design providing a positive visual element rather than the dominating one. Guidelines include:

a. Locate the majority of parking at the rear of buildings and remainder at the side yard.
b. Pave and grade parking so that storm water will not cross public sidewalks.
c. Encourage parking lot light standards and fixtures that are compatible with the area in terms of design, height, color and intensity of illumination.
d. Screen parking areas from street view (with landscaping, berms, fencing, etc.) to create a buffer that would visually screen parking areas, but not isolate the property or compromise security.
    i. Screen hedges or walls shall be 2'-3' min. height (for plant material) when installed and maintained at a minimum of three feet in height. Types of plants that are encouraged include hedges of yew, privet, junipers, holly, euonymus, boxwood or other vegetation.
    ii. Stonewalls are encouraged. Earthen berms or brick may also be acceptable.

4.6. Service / Utility Areas

The overall design of the site should minimize the safety hazards and visual impacts of service equipment and supporting structures. Guidelines include:

a. Install new utility service systems underground.
b. Conceal or screen all HVAC equipment from view from the public rights-of-way and areas of public assembly.
c. Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from noise, traffic, risk of hazards, etc.

4.7. Special Conditions - Street Corners

Special attention should be devoted to street corners. Street corners are important focal points since attractive intersections encourage continuous pedestrian travel while vacant corners discourage pedestrians from continuing to the next street. Guidelines include:

a. Design street corners as pedestrian places featuring public or civic buildings and/or small public spaces.
b. Avoid locating parking lots at street corners.
c. Use buildings, trees, hedges, fences, low walls, and sidewalks to define the street corner.
d. Curb cuts should be minimized and kept away from the corner.
e. Clearly designated, safe, and continuous pedestrian sidewalks should be maintained around corners.

4.8. Special Conditions - Alleys and Passageways

Special attention should be devoted to alleys and passageways where they exist or are created. Alleys and passageways between buildings can make an important contribution to the character of an area. Guidelines include:

a. Use alleys to extend the public space and commercial frontage of the sidewalk.
b. Use alleys to provide access to parking areas located to the rear of buildings.
c. Pave, landscape and light alleys used to access parking and other areas.
d. Screen off service alleys not generally used by the public.

4.9. Special Conditions - Drive-in Windows

Drive-in windows shall be discouraged. Drive-in windows can disrupt the overall pedestrian character of an area. Guidelines include:

a. Drive-in windows shall be prohibited, except for banks and public and semi-public libraries in Wilton Center where permitted under Section 29-6.3.j. or section 29-6.C.3.l.

5. BUILDINGS

5.1. Architectural Style

"New England village" -type architecture should be encouraged. Guidelines include:

a. Promote basic design elements and relationships that will help maintain and enhance a harmonious "New England village"-type architectural character.
b. Other architectural forms and types (including architecturally unique or exceptional buildings) may also contribute, in the appropriate place and at an appropriate scale, to the character of the area.
c. In the event of significant departure from this standard for "New England village" -type architecture, the burden of proof of the overall appropriateness of the design rests with the applicant.

5.2. Form and Space

Building forms and surrounding spaces should reflect continuity of density, streetscape rhythm, yard setbacks, and community character. Guidelines include:

a. Create interesting and proportional outdoor spatial relationships between buildings, open space, and setbacks on adjacent sites.
b. Establish building references (e.g. eave or cornice heights, wall detailing, ground window heights, etc.) with adjacent building forms for visual continuity.
c. Create variety using building siting, surface recesses, and projections.
d. Avoid long and large unarticulated structures that are uninviting and do not contribute to the human-scaled streetscape.
e. Avoid the over massing of buildings as it spatially relates to public rights-of-way, areas of open space and pedestrian walkways.

5.3. Scale, Massing and Proportion

The design statement should be simple and the individual design elements, materials, and details should be consistent with the contextual setting. Guidelines include:

a. Balance the visual relationships of building bulk and size with its site.
b. Break larger building volumes into smaller forms to lessen the total building mass.
c. Maintain proportions between building height, length and width consistent with prevailing architectural standards.
d. Create variety through compatibility rather than conformity.
e. Strive for visual simplicity rather than unnecessary complexity.

5.4. Rooflines, Facades and Entrances

Rooflines should be simple, functional, and reflective of the broader community building stock and the public face of the building should present a clear, well-defined, and balanced façade. Guidelines include:

a. Form a consistent composition between the roof mass and building façade.
b. Reference adjacent building rooflines and roof details (e.g. dormers, fascias, roof pitches, etc.) and materials where applicable.
c. Apply consistent and historically correct architectural detailing throughout.

d. Build elements (e.g. protective canopies, columns, stairs, roof projections, etc.) to human scale at sidewalk level to encourage pedestrian use.
e. Avoid false detailing (e.g. mansard roofs, partial HVAC screens, truncated roof structures, etc.) which detracts from the building's integrity.
f. Create an agreeable pedestrian environment including weather protection, convenience, and safety features.
g. Arrange window patterns with a balanced spacing and conscious rhythm.
h. Observe historic precedents wherever possible.

5.5. Materials, Color and Surface Texture

Building materials should be durable and functional and the use of color and texture should be reflective of local style and character. Guidelines include:

a. Preferred exterior wall materials are brick, stone, and wood.
b. Tile, stucco, metal, concrete and concrete block wall surfaces are not typical building materials in Wilton, but may be acceptable in limited applications.
c. Vinyl, asphalt and other synthetic siding materials (such as EIFS) are strongly discouraged.
d. Preferred roof materials are slate, wood shingles, and shakes. Asphalt shingles are acceptable. Colors should be neutral to dark.
e. Standing seam metal roof materials may be acceptable for larger buildings in some areas. Colors should be neutral to dark.
f. Materials should be used with appropriate detailing and expression.
g. Limit the number of different materials on the exterior to avoid visual overload
h. Avoid large, unarticulated or monolithic areas on the street facades by using details to add relief and shadows.
i. Create visual variety and establish character using architectural elements (e.g. roof overhangs, trellises, projections, reveals, awnings, etc.) using proportional architectural elements.
j. Coordinate all exterior elevations of the building (color, materials, architectural form, and detailing) to achieve continuity.
k. Coordinate color scheme and textures with neighboring buildings, and the neighborhood as a whole, to reinforce harmony.
l. Any new or exterior alterations should have significant trim detail to be compatible with surrounding architecture.
m. Trim details, such as rake boards, corner boards and fascia trim, should be of a material and dimension appropriate to the overall treatment of the facade. These details help to outline and give definition to a facade and should be wide and thick enough to serve that purpose effectively.

5.6. Equipment and Services

Building equipment, storage, and service areas should be integrated into the site plan and architectural composition in ways that minimize adverse impacts. Guidelines include:

a. Install new utility service systems underground, and bury all existing above ground services when renovating.
b. Conceal views of all roof-mounted equipment (e.g. HVAC, plumbing, exhaust fans, etc.) from the public right-of-way.
c. Screen all ground or concrete pad-mounted equipment using evergreen plant materials of different species and size, or architectural detailing complementary to the building.
d. Locate and screen accessory buildings and functions (e.g. trash containers, storage sheds, and emergency generators) away from parking areas, walks, and adjacent land use.
e. Conceal garage doors and loading areas from view from surrounding streets.

5.7. Building Height

Building heights should be appropriate. Guidelines include:

a. Maximum two-story eave heights are encouraged.
b. The first floor level of a 2-story facade should not exceed a height of four feet (4') above the grade at the street face of a building.
c. Story heights should remain within the range of those in surrounding buildings.
d. Two-story mixed-use buildings are encouraged.
e. Roof eaves on main roofs should be at least ten feet (10') above the grade at the building front entry.

6. SITE ENHANCEMENTS

6.1. Landscaping

Planting material should be used in a logical, orderly manner that defines spatial organization and relates to buildings and structures. Guidelines include:

a. Consideration shall be given to any overall landscaping plan or theme endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission for the vicinity of the site.
b. Use plant material as design features and integrate mature vegetation into the design utilizing existing trees where possible.
c. Use indigenous plants and avoid unusual or exotic cultivars.
d. Create identifiable places utilizing open space and vegetation.
e. Balance the quantity of landscaping with the scale of the development.
f. Landscape around buildings, shield unsightly areas, and provide shade.
g. Create tree canopies for environmental and spatial impact at maturity.
h. Choose plant materials that have year-round interest.
i. Preserve street trees and protect their roots during and after construction and from snow removal operations.

j. Provide landscaped islands within parking areas.
k. Protect landscape materials and vehicles with concrete or stone curbs.
l. Landscape areas between the parking and the building.
m. Provide space for snow placement or removal.
n. Trees shall be planted in landscaped areas, unless planters, tree wells or tree pits are a preferable alternative.

6.2. Site Lighting

Site lighting should provide the functional and esthetic benefits of exterior lighting while mitigating the potential for nuisance. Guidelines include:

a. Consideration shall be given to any overall lighting plan or theme endorsed by the Planning and Zoning Commission for the vicinity of the site.
b. Coordinate lighting fixture and standard details with the architecture or neighborhood character.
c. To ensure that light sources are not visible off site, light sources shall be directed down toward the ground surface, lighting fixtures shall have opaque hoods over all light elements, and all fixtures shall have sharp cut off shields.
d. Light pole height shall be kept as low as practical.
e. Lighting for walkways shall be at a maximum pole height of 15'.
f. Bollard type lights are encouraged.
g. Locate lighting fixtures for the anticipated use (e.g. signage, site features).
h. Avoid relative brightness differences with adjacent dissimilar land uses and provide associated photometric data.
i. Use of selective night lighting, where deemed appropriate, to highlight architecturally-significant and/or distinctive features of a building or structure.
j. Lights should not blink, flash, or change in intensity.
k. Use lighting fixtures with shielding devices or sharp cut-off refractors.
l. Conceal the lighting source from the public right-of-way.
m. Use white light lamps (e.g. metal halide) for site development illumination, do not use low or high-pressure sodium sources, and avoid mixing light source colors.
n. Ensure that lighting support locations do not create a safety hazard.
o. Use shatterproof coverings for low-level lighting.
p. Select from a "family" of standards for specific character areas.
q. Coordinate lighting fixture assembly with architecture it serves.
r. Illuminate entrances, exits and internal barriers.

6.3. Fences, Walls, And Landscape Screens

Open fences, low walls, or landscape hedges may be appropriate where the continuity of buildings is interrupted by a vacant lot, a parking lot, or a building set back farther than the build-to line or setback zone. Guidelines include:

a. Where appropriate, use open fences, low walls, and hedges to define walkways, help give pedestrian scale to the street, and create a transition between public and private spaces.

b. Discourage the use of fences, walls, or hedges that separate a building from the street or try make up for other design issues.
c. Fences, walls, and hedges should generally be residential in scale, character and materials, and architecturally compatible with the main structure.
d. Chain link and stockade fences and tall walls and hedges create unfriendly barriers and may block important public visual and pedestrian access and are therefore discouraged.
e. Maximum height of fences and walls shall be four feet, except for screening of dumpsters, which shall be six feet in height.

6.4. Site Drainage

Site drainage should protect the health and safety of the public and promote ecologically sensitive approaches. Guidelines include:

a. Prepare for storm water recharge.
b. Design for zero increase in the peak rate of runoff.
c. Encourage renovation of storm water quality.
d. Use permeable pavement surfaces where optional.

7. SIGNAGE

7.1. General

Signage should identify the business and street number clearly and simply and avoid use of slogans and advertising. Guidelines include:

a. Integrate any existing and/or proposed signage into the overall design insuring that it complements its surroundings.
b. Avoid visual competition with other signs in the area and repetitious signage information on the same building frontage.
c. Minimize the number of building and directional signs to avoid repetition.
d. Avoid markings on the pavement.

7.2. Sign Context

Signage should reflect the character of the architecture, site, and neighborhood without occurring at the expense of individual expression and creativity. Guidelines include:

a. Integrate signage programs to become a natural part of the building façade.
b. Create a sign proportionate to its location and the setback from the primary vantage point.
c. Design information to fit properly into the sign location without visual clutter.
d. Prohibit roof-mounted signage, freestanding signs, and driveway directional signs unless needed in unusual situations.
e. Replacements for oversized existing signs should be resized for the location rather than matching the pre-existing conditions.

7.3. Sign Design

Signage should conform to the character of the site elements in terms of historic era, style, location, and size. Guidelines include:

a. Coordinate sign background, trim, text, and detail with the architecture.
b. Use durable, weather-resistant and vandal-proof materials for the sign.
c. Avoid bright background colors (e.g. bright red, orange, or yellow).
d. Avoid a white or off-white color in a large field of illuminated background.
e. Avoid visible raceways and transformers for individual letters.
f. Trim edges of flat sheet signs to improve the finished appearance.
g. Use a flat or semi-gloss finish on the surface in lieu of a glossy, plastic finish.

7.4. Sign Landscaping

Signage should be integrated with the ground plane by using complimentary plant materials as part of the overall planting plan. Guidelines include:

a. Use durable and low maintenance plant materials with year round appeal.
b. Utilize low walls to define plant beds when appropriate to the architecture.
c. Irrigate planting beds when possible.

7.5. Sign Lighting

Sign lighting should be used judiciously and specifically to illuminate useful information. Guidelines include:

a. Use only external sources when lighting.
b. Illuminate only the sign surface and avoid light spill onto adjacent property.
c. Screen any external spot or flood lighting from view by the passers-by.
d. Screen low-level lighting from view with plant materials.
e. Balance signage illumination with surrounding lighting level intensities.