

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL AND MULTI-FAMILY DEVELOPMENT IN WILTON

## Overview

**Successful development in Wilton's commercial and multi-family districts should be informed by the town's historical vernacular factors, the character and quality of the buildings, public spaces, and landscape in designated areas in Wilton in order to maintain and enhance its quality and character. New buildings of any style should reflect the existing and desired street pattern with regard to rhythm, harmony and scale, as well as pedestrian ease.**

The Town of Wilton's Design Guidelines have been developed to guide the appearance, form, and function of new development and redevelopment in nonresidential zoning districts within the Town. This document suggests guidelines for design elements, building materials and streetscape amenities to enhance Wilton's unique architectural and environmental qualities.

There is no one dominant architectural style in Wilton, rather Wilton's architectural essence is simplicity and clarity. Buildings should therefore seek to contribute positively to the public realm and relate to the context and fabric of existing places in Wilton. The size, mix, proportion, and form of buildings should emulate the heritage character of traditional Connecticut structures. These guidelines represent an aesthetic overview of the design elements to be considered in conjunction with established **Wilton Zoning Regulations** which can be found on the town website [www.wiltonct.org](http://www.wiltonct.org).

In utilizing these guidelines, the applicant, the Town staff, the authorized review commissions, or any other users should consider the characteristics of the site and its immediate context, applicable plans for an area, the nature of the use, and the intent of the guidelines and performance standards as they apply to the specific design district. In cases in which special conditions exist that are not specifically addressed by the guidelines, the Design Guidelines should serve as the basis for determining the appropriateness of the proposal.

These are guidelines and suggestions, not rules and regulations. After reading these Guidelines, the next step is to visit the Planning & Zoning Department in

Town Hall. An introductory conversation with a P&Z staff member will save time and expense in the planning and development stages of your project.

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## Goals and Objectives

The goal of these design standards is to aid in maintaining and enhancing the character and quality of the buildings and public spaces, in order to maintain and enhance the overall quality of Wilton's built environment, the economic and social vitality of areas which depends upon:

- the attractiveness of the street environment, the economic viability of businesses and a hospitable atmosphere for residential occupants and visitors,
- the sensitive balance of visual and spatial relationships that create the character and support the function of the designated areas,
- the distinctive character, landscape, and historic value, especially in areas designated as "Village Districts".
- a unique sense of place that promotes pride and social interaction among residents and visitors;
- a community that is open and accessible to all Town residents and promotes a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable lifestyle.

These design standards are intended to provide:

- design to the human scale;
- structures, spaces, and related site improvements visible from public roadways that shall be of compatible design with the features and elements of the area that have a functional or visual relationship to the proposed building or modification,
- that the color, size, height, location, proportion of openings, roof treatments, building materials, landscaping, signs, and lighting shall be evaluated for compatibility with the local architectural motif, historic context, and environment,
- 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,
- that the removal or disruption of historic traditional or significant structures or architectural elements shall be minimized,
- criteria from which a property owner and the Commission may make a reasonable determination of what is permitted.

The application of design standards and guidelines to commercially and multi-family zoned properties will assist the Town staff and review commissions to implement the Plan Of Conservation and Development (“POCD”), and specific requirements for Wilton’s commercial and multi-family areas in a more effective and cohesive manner. These Guidelines:

- assist in the planning and design of quality development projects to provide for increased opportunities and land use efficiency for new development and redevelopment, and promote design continuity and cohesiveness at the main portal corridors entering the Town of Wilton and it’s Village Center,
- avoid piecemeal and fragmented development that detracts from the establishment of a viable business environment and strong neighborhood appearance and character that reflect the Town’s planning goals for the subject area,
- encourage a viable and compatible mix of commercial, business, office, and residential uses in the Town,
- encourage the integration of mixed uses in designated areas through the development of consistent building forms placed parallel to the street, with appropriate setbacks from the right-of-way, and an attractive and viable pedestrian-friendly environment to the greatest extent possible,
- encourage creative planning and design in the arrangement and siting of buildings, circulation and access, and parking facilities,
- encourage efficient traffic flow and ingress/egress arrangements compatible with the goal of promoting an attractive and viable pedestrian-friendly environment through the establishment of a safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian and bicycle network of paths and public places,
- protect property and private investment,
- promote public health, safety and welfare.

Are the Guidelines mandatory?

The Guidelines are not intended to inhibit or restrict innovative and creative design solutions. Rather, the intent is to achieve a cohesive vision for development that appropriately applies techniques compatible with lasting styles and ideals that define Wilton’s character, historic charm, community values, and future growth. Throughout the document the word “should” is used to denote

that these are recommended guidelines and not mandatory standards. The Guidelines in this manual are intended to accompany adopted Town plans and guide the Town staff and commissions during the review process of applications from businesses or property owners for improvements, and modifications to existing buildings, and for parking and circulation improvements in the commercial districts.

Where do the Guidelines apply?

The provisions of the Guidelines apply to all commercial and multi-family residential zoned areas in the Town. They apply to new construction as well as expansions or redevelopment of existing buildings and sites. They apply to isolated commercial developments located outside of Village Design Districts, as well as those within.

How should the Guidelines be used?

The Guidelines will be applied to all development that requires approval from the Town planning commissions. There are two main functions of the Guidelines:

- They provide guidance to landowners and developers in the early stages of planning and design, to address this question: “What is the Town looking for?”
- They will be used as a benchmark by the staff, consultants, commissions, committees, boards, and peer reviewers to evaluate development proposals as part of the review processes to address the questions of “Does it meet the Town’s criteria?” and “What will it look like and how will it function?”

Implementation of the Guidelines may rely on the services of architects, civil engineers, and landscape architects working as consultants or developers. The Guidelines will be administered by Town staff through the review process.

Finally, the Guidelines are not designed to produce immediate results. Like the POCD, they provide a framework for the future. The process is intended to ensure that site and building plans are reviewed efficiently by commissions and staff, and result in high-quality development that improves Wilton’s overall aesthetic cohesiveness and the immediate environment of the subject site.

## **Site Planning**

**Streetscape and relationships of buildings to one another are key components to successful site planning for an aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly environment. Distinctive, attractive properties welcome people to the Town.**

Each property is unique. Plans for development and redevelopment should be based upon a careful understanding of the site and its surroundings in order to meet the requirements of the ultimate user, while meeting the Town's goals for functionality, visual character, and environmental impact, and ensure consistency with the POCD. Developments should be integrated into the commercial areas and the immediate context through street connections, sidewalks, connecting outdoor spaces, land use transition and compatibility, and building scale and character, which respects the uniqueness of each property and reinforces the Town's sense of place and character. Seek a balance between serving both automobile and pedestrian movement.

A project's site plan is considered part of the permit application to be reviewed by the Architectural Review Board, with final approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

## **Building Placement**

- Site buildings to frame the street with pleasing, interesting enclosures.
- Structures designed to a human scale will enhance pedestrian interest, aesthetics and comfort. Avoid long, unarticulated facades and ensure neighborhood compatibility and historical continuity.
- Keep front building setbacks in relation to the adjacent buildings, with careful consideration of size, bulk and sunlight. These relationships are much more important than conforming to the allowable zero-front set back in some zoning districts.
- Minimize blank walls and allow for parking in the rear of or beneath the building.

## **Access & Driveways**

- Design the main entrance, exits and rear entrances to be welcoming, safe, accessible and clearly marked with appropriate signage.

- Minimize conflicts between pedestrian and vehicle movement utilizing design elements, minimized curb cuts, and safe handicap accessibility.
- Segregate general traffic movement from service traffic/loading areas.
- Allow for possible bike paths, pedestrian accessways, and coordination with public transit, such as the train station or bus stops.

## **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.

- Design street corners as pedestrian places featuring public or civic buildings and/or small public spaces.
- Use buildings, trees, hedges, fences, low walls, and sidewalks to define the street corner.
- Curb cuts should be minimized and kept away from the corner.
- Clearly designated, safe, and continuous pedestrian sidewalks should be maintained around corners.
- Parking lots should be located away from street corners.

## **Walkways**

- Invite pedestrian movement and integrate entry destinations with easily distinguished walkways constructed of attractive, safe and walkable pavement material. Include landscaping and appropriate lighting.
- Provide pathways with attractive pavement in visually engaging locations, with adjacent planting areas.
- Include benches and bike racks in strategic locations.

## **Plazas & Pocket Parks**

- Create small parks to provide for pedestrian enjoyment and to create a streetscape of aesthetics and rhythm.
- Design plazas and pocket parks to include benches or low seat walls for social interaction and rest.

- Provide lighting for security and nighttime landscaping visual interest (See Exterior Lighting)

## **Outdoor Dining**

- Provide areas for outdoor dining amenities in appropriate approved locations.
- Ensure that outdoor dining locations do not impede pedestrian flow or emergency access or egress.
- Design outdoor dining areas to include screening, well-maintained landscaping, lighting and pavement appropriate to the adjacent buildings as well as appropriate visual, light and sound screening if immediately adjacent to a residential use.
- Provide attractive and properly sized trash receptacles near dining areas.
- The design of outdoor dining furniture and umbrellas requires approval by the Architectural Review Board and the Planning and Zoning Commission. Signage on umbrellas requires a variance.
- Consult Connecticut Liquor Control Commission for state requirements on outdoor dining that will include serving alcoholic beverages.

## **Parking**

**Successfully integrated buildings provide for adequate parking to accommodate employees, customers, residents and visitors.**

Parking lots should be designed to complement adjacent buildings, the site, and the design district without becoming a dominant visual element. Parking lots should be inviting, pedestrian-friendly places by careful attention to landscaping, lighting, and walkways. Parking areas must also comply with applicable code requirements, comply with the Town's stormwater standard, and consider using porous surfaces.

Every effort should be made to reduce the scale of parking lots by minimizing the total amount of paved surface visible from the road. Providing more parking than the required adds substantial costs to development and redevelopment, and increases the negative environmental impact of development.

- Provide sufficient parking for property use per Zoning Regulations.

- Locate the majority of parking at the rear of buildings and remainder at the side yard.
- Create a shared parking arrangement to integrate adjacent parking areas and facilitate pedestrian circulation.
- 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.
- 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 way by a change in grade or material or both.
- Minimize conflicts between pedestrians (sidewalks) and vehicles (curb cuts).
- Pave and grade parking so that storm water will not cross public sidewalks.
- Select parking lot light standards and fixtures that are compatible with the area in terms of design, height, color and intensity of illumination.
- Screen parking areas from street view (with landscaping, berms, fencing, etc.) to create buffers that visually screen parking areas, but not isolate the property or compromise security.
- Provide, at minimum, a 3-foot-wide buffer strip between a parking lot and a street, Civic Space, sidewalk or pedestrian way. A buffer strip may be comprised of a landscape buffer and/or a low wall or ornamental fence.
- See Treescape section for recommended landscaping layout when planning the parking lot design. Locate all delivery areas toward the rear of the site concealed from view from the public way.
- Parking areas used for infrequent parking or overflow parking should be constructed with sustainable materials in accordance with LEED or similar design specifications.
- The design of parking structures should focus on screening views of cars at the street level, especially parking structures facing Mixed-Use Neighborhood Street Frontages, Pedestrian Pathway Street Frontages and Riverwalk Street Frontages.

## **Alleys and Passageways**

Alleys and passageways between buildings can make an important contribution to the character of an area. Alleys can extend the public space and commercial frontage of the sidewalk.

- Utilize alleys to provide access to parking areas located to the rear of buildings.
- Pave, landscape and light alleys used to access parking and other areas.
- Screen off service alleys not generally used by the public.

## **Transit Connections**

Redevelopment and/or site improvements should plan for access and connectivity to existing and future transit facilities, including, but not limited to the railroad station, Norwalk River Valley Trail, pullouts, stops and shelters. Transit stops should be incorporated into the layout of the site, and should be protected from automobiles, include shelters where feasible, to become safe pedestrian spaces.

## **Architecture**

**Aesthetic design choices can make connections among individual structures in the built environment, the natural landscape, the historical context and the people who experience them.**

Successful architecture emerges from many factors, including local climate, topography, history, and building practices. Individual projects should link seamlessly with their surroundings, transcending style. The purpose of these Guidelines is to encourage design that provides lasting value and cohesive architectural vocabulary characteristic of the Town and specific location.

Building design should be developed to a human scale, through careful consideration of architectural forms, massing, detailing, number and use of materials, and color. New buildings should be designed to fit the specific characteristics of their particular site and surrounding area. Renovations or additions offer an opportunity to add visual interest to existing buildings, update aesthetics to current guidelines and to strengthen their relationship with the site and nearby structures.

The architecture should be influenced by use of lasting materials, the specific needs of the intended users, the nature of the intended use, and other site-specific factors. Many architectural elements can add human scale to a building – recessed openings, divided pane windows, building-mounted light fixtures, projecting rooflines, covered walkways, and similar features – provided they are designed as integral parts of the overall structure.

### **Massing**

- Create compatibility in size and scale with surrounding buildings rather than conformity.
- Design to create interesting and proportional outdoor spatial relationships between buildings, open space and any setbacks on adjacent sites.
- Where appropriate, establish building rhythms with adjacent structures for visual continuity.
- Contribute to the human-scaled streetscape, and avoid the over-massing of buildings as related spatially to public rights-of-way, areas of open space and pedestrian walkways.

- Make clear design statements, and the individual design elements, materials, and details consistent with the contextual setting.
- Balance the visual relationships of building bulk and size with its site.
- Articulate larger building volumes into smaller forms to lessen the total building mass.
- Maintain proportions between building height, length, and width consistent with prevailing architectural standards.

## Rooflines

- 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. Pitched rooflines are preferred in pedestrian environments.
- Roofs are a design element that should relate to the building facade articulations.
- Strive for visual simplicity rather than unnecessary complexity.
- Roofing materials should complement the color and texture of the building's facade.
- Roof colors should be muted earth tones or a color that is darker than the facade. Stripes and patterns on the roof are strongly discouraged.
- Prominent roofs should have a minimum pitch of 5/12 (ratio of rise to run), unless demonstrated to the Town's satisfaction that this is not practicable from an engineering or technical standpoint.
- Where appropriate, eaves and roof overhangs should be incorporated into the design of the roof to provide a distinct shadow line.
- The use of cupolas, dormers, chimneys, and other roof projections is encouraged, provided they are designed as integral parts of the structure and do not appear to be floating or pasted on.
- Flat roofs shall be concealed with parapet walls that have 3-dimensional cornice treatments or similar screening methods.
- Screening for roof-mounted equipment should be designed as an integral part of the architecture to complement the building's mass and appearance.

**Note:** Each zone classification in Wilton has its own setback regulations and possible overlays which define required lot frontage and depth; front, side, and

rear areas; possible density; number of stories and height; as well as parking requirements. Refer to the Wilton Zoning Regulations for specific requirements.

## **Façade and Entrance Elements**

### **Front Elevation:**

The front façade (the façade facing streets) should be clearly designed as the front of the building. The front elevation(s) should contain a front door and/ or windows, and should incorporate human scale detailing through the use of cornices or other projections and details, structural or architectural bays, recessed windows or doors, material changes, color, and/or texture differentiation so as to be easily recognized as the main access point. On corner lots, the main entrance should face the major street, or be located on the corner of the building. Building entrances should be visible from the street and provide unobstructed areas for pedestrians.

- Arrange window and door types and patterns with a balanced spacing and conscious rhythm.
- Include architectural detailing and apply it consistently throughout the design.
- Trim details, such as rake boards, corner boards and fascia trim, should be of a material and dimension appropriate to the overall scale and treatment of the facade. These details help to outline and give definition to a facade and should be of dimensions to serve that purpose effectively.
- Observe Wilton's historical precedents wherever possible, and ensure architectural details are compatible with the historical context.

### **Side & Rear Elevations:**

Similar materials and detailing, to a lesser extent, should be used on all façades to ensure continuity and design completeness and to give the building scale and visual interest.

### **Entrances:**

Each building should have a clearly defined user entrance, which is visually obvious and emphasized through the use of distinctive architectural treatments.

- Building entrances shall be located where a sidewalk exists to a roadway, and in the case of multi-tenant buildings, each separate space should have its own public entrance.
- The design and character of the entryway to the development should establish its identity and theme, and set forth its image and quality.
- Accentuate entrances with strong definition and legibility for individual tenants.
- Integrate signage needs during the design phase so it becomes part of the overall building design.
- Locate garage entries and loading areas to minimize their appearance from surrounding streets.

#### Ground Floors:

The horizontal length of the façade of the ground floor of commercial buildings facing public streets should include awnings, transparent display windows, entry awnings, or other similar pedestrian-friendly features, and weather protection elements complementary to the building's design.

- Establish horizontal continuity by referencing adjacent prominent façade detail elevations and rhythms, such as with brick coursing, moldings or fenestration.
- Build elements with protective canopies, wall or roof projections and recesses to human scale at sidewalk level to create an attractive pedestrian environment that includes weather protection, convenience and safety features.
- Arrange window and door types and patterns with a balanced spacing and conscious rhythm.
- Reference adjacent building roof details such as dormers, fascias and roof pitches when applicable.
- The design and character of the entryway to the development should establish its identity and theme, and set forth its image and quality.

- Conceal garage entries and loading areas from view from surrounding streets.
- Screen views of all roof-mounted equipment (e.g. HVAC, plumbing, exhaust fans, etc.) from the public right-of-way.

### **Material, Color, and Surface Texture Elements**

Coordinate all exterior elevations of the building using color, materials, architectural form and detailing to achieve continuity.

- Create visual variety, establish character and aid in climate control by using architectural elements such as overhangs, trellises, projections, reveals and awnings.
- Limit the number of different materials on the exterior of the building elevation to avoid visual overload.
- Avoid large, unarticulated or monolithic facades. Use detailing to add relief and shadow patterns to otherwise flat facades.
- Building exteriors should be constructed from high quality, durable materials. Use natural materials such as wood, stone, brick, glass, and metal in their traditional applications.
- Preferred roof materials are slate, wood shingles, and shakes. Asphalt shingles and matte-finish standing seam metal roofing are acceptable. Roof colors should be neutral to dark.
- Avoid use of vinyl, aluminum, or other synthetic siding materials (such as EIFS or cast stone), or reflective-coated glass.
- Building materials should not change at the corners closest to the street, but instead should change at internal corners furthest from the street or at least 4 feet from the outside corners.
- Window detailing shall be appropriate to the architectural period of the overall façade. Divided-light windows shall have muntins on the exterior surface, of scale appropriate to the size of the opening; between-glass muntin divisions shall be prohibited.
- Shutters, where used, should be sized to fit the openings and provided for all windows on a given wall. Shutters should be made of solid, durable finished materials, and be hung with functional shutter hardware.
- Coordinate color scheme and materials with neighboring buildings, and the Town as a whole, to reinforce harmony.

## Historical References

Wilton is committed to maintaining its intrinsic character that is derived from its historical origins as a small New England town. Since its settlement, development in Wilton has been determined by the natural elements of the Norwalk River valley, adapting the built environment to its natural assets. It is in the public interest of the Town to attempt to preserve as much of its early history as possible. Preservation and adaptive use of structures have an important place in Wilton, particularly in the **Local Historic Districts**.

The **Historic Districts and Properties Commission (HDPC)** exists to preserve and protect the character and integrity of the Wilton Historic Districts and individually designated Historic Properties. In so doing, the Commission helps preserve the distinct character and landscape of the town, and protects the architectural and historic significance of the Districts. The Commission administers a design review process, which grants “**Certificates of Appropriateness**” for plans of renovation in order to protect the historic character and style of structures in local historic districts.

- New building styles should reflect integration, but not necessarily imitation, of existing architectural forms and patterns.
- The distinctive characteristics of historic structures in the vicinity of the site shall inform the siting, massing, and architectural detailing of the proposed site development.
- When working with a historic structure, compliance with the regulations concerning the exterior of structures shall be consistent with the "Connecticut Historical Commission - The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings", revised through 1990, as amended.
- The design of improvements shall be patterned on the physical, cultural and historic context in the vicinity of the site. Reinforce historic scale, massing, proportion, spacing, setbacks, and orientation.
- Incorporate historic / cultural landmarks into new development, where applicable.
- Protect and create views of distinctive landscapes and historic sites and structures.

- In the event of significant departure from standard “New England village” - type architecture, the burden of proof of the overall appropriateness of the design rests with the applicant.

## **Building Demolitions**

**In the case of projects including demolition of existing structures, the HDPC reviews requests for demolition of *any* structures or part thereof larger than 500 square feet and over 50 years of age, *whether or not they are located in an Historic District*. If the structure is deemed of historic, architectural, or cultural interest, the Commission may request a demolition delay of 90 days. Verify your structure’s age with the Building Department prior to commencing design or permit application process.**

## **Landscape**

**Safe and level sidewalks and crosswalks, effective lighting, with comfortable places to sit, all contribute to an enjoyable pedestrian experience. Trees and shrubs enhance design features of the buildings, walkways, and parking areas, and provide shade, visual interest and spatial organization. Appropriate plant choices, as well as existing mature vegetation, will aesthetically link adjacent areas and provide year-round interest.**

- Landscape elements should be proportionate to the scale of the built environment and enhance the human scale of the project.
- Landscaping in parking lots can be used to improve their appearance, reduce the scale and amount of paved areas, define edges, provide shade, reduce headlight glare, and add seasonal interest.
- Integrate plantings as design features rather than solely for screening purposes.
- Amalgamate existing mature plantings into new design projects.
- Select the appropriate plant materials for the specific site environment.
- Use of native species is strongly encouraged to support natural habitat and pollinator pathways.
- Include plants with varying year-round interest, texture, form and habit in landscape projects.
- Low maintenance, water consumption, and self-sustaining projects are encouraged. Invasive plants and plants not naturally occurring should not be utilized.
- Use of native fieldstone walls is encouraged over concrete masonry unit walls. Earthen berms or brick may also be acceptable.

## **Sidewalks**

- Wilton Center District sidewalks are concrete edged with a brick band and cast concrete curbing along the street. All new construction in the District shall include installation of this typical sidewalk.
- Sidewalks along Route 7, 33, and 106 shall be of concrete.
- Plans and specifications for sidewalks in the public right of way can be obtained from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

## **Site Amenities**

- Incorporate benches into the building and site design where appropriate.
- For benches on town property or in rights of way, the site must be approved by the DPW. Benches on private property must be approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&ZC).
- Use the Town-standard wood and metal bench design.
- Provide trash bins where appropriate along the building perimeter.
- Trash bins locations on private property shall be included in the Site Plan approved by P&ZC. Property owners are responsible to empty trash bins on private property.
- Trash bins sited on town property or in a right of way shall be approved by DPW.

### **Fencing and Hedges**

Open fences 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. Use open fences, low walls, and hedges to define walkways, help give pedestrian scale to the street, provide privacy, and create a transition between public and private spaces.

- Fences, walls, and hedges should generally be architecturally compatible with the main structure, and residential in scale, character and materials.
- Discourage the use of fences, walls, or hedges that separate a building from the street.
- Provide fences to buffer or screen mechanical elements such as HVAC units, transformers and dumpsters.
- Fence and gate materials may include wood, wood composites, iron and metal, including decorative perforated sheet metal. Sharp-pointed or spear-headed pickets of less than one-half inch in diameter are discouraged. Chain link, woven wire, barbed wire and vinyl fences are prohibited.
- Maximum height of fences and walls shall be four feet along street frontages and public sidewalks, except up to 6 1/2 feet in height for privacy or when screening dumpsters or utility elements.
- If a wall or ornamental fence is proposed, low-growing shrubs and/or perennial plantings should also be provided on the street frontage side.

### **Treescape**

**Street trees** help create an inviting streetscape and provide shade and respite from inclement weather. They also act as a natural buffer from busy roads and soften the streetscape in the pedestrian environment. **Parking lot trees** provide shade relief and a more welcoming atmosphere. **Landscape trees** create attractive outdoor spaces for pedestrians to enjoy and improve the appearance of our town. Proper planting, pruning and maintenance of trees extends their lifespan and maximizes their attributes.

- Planting of new and replacement trees is strongly encouraged where appropriate.
- Diversify plantings to avoid an overpopulation and clustering of one species.
- Select an appropriate size of tree when planting a new tree and the built environment surrounding the tree pit remains the same.
- Tree species shall be selected to accommodate underground sewer lines, overhead utilities and narrow sidewalk conditions.
- Shade trees should be provided at an average rate of one tree per 40 feet of street frontage. The trees should be positioned to correspond with parallel parking striping to allow for vehicle door swings.
- Consider required setbacks from building facade to curb in selection of tree species and provide adequately sized tree pits.
- Street trees , a minimum of 2" in caliper, should be as tall as possible when first planted to avoid blockage of storefronts and signage of first floor tenants.

**Parking Lot Trees** promote cohesiveness throughout the Town's parking facilities, using a variety of coniferous and deciduous species. By greening these typically aesthetically harsh environments, the town's landscape will become more inviting and pleasing.

- Plant trees in all parking environments to enhance the site. For every 10 parking spaces, one tree shall be planted and maintained.
- When selecting and siting parking lot trees, avoid vegetation that could block sight lines of motorists or pedestrians.
- Plant smaller tree species where overhead obstacles are present.

**Landscape Trees** are any proposed tree not considered a Street Tree or Parking Lot Tree in the commercial realm, and will should be included in the landscape plan.

- Protect and maintain all heritage trees found in the public and private realm.
- Planting of new and replacement trees is encouraged where appropriate.
- Reference sewer safe trees where such obstacles exist below grade.

### **Planting, Pruning & Maintenance**

A developed environment presents many obstacles for trees: overhead utilities, below grade sewer lines, pavement and sidewalks all impact tree health and lifespan. Care and upkeep of existing and new trees in commercial areas are essential to keep the town's landscape healthy and flourishing.

Landscape plans should anticipate 3-8 years for shrubs to achieve maturity, and 15-20+years for trees. Proper maintenance should be provided to assure that the landscaping achieves its proper form and full height. Maintenance of all landscape elements should be considered in the development of the Site Plan.

- Plant and prune street trees to maintain unobstructed sight lines for the driver to the building facade.
- Use proper planting details when planting each tree species.
- Size tree pits large enough to support the tree at maturity.
- Maintain trees with water and fertilizer to extend the life and health of the tree.
- Execute appropriate pruning, especially around power lines in order to train the tree around overhead obstacles.
- During construction, protect existing trees with a sheeted barrier constructed around the trunk and tagged appropriately.
- The Town's Tree Warden shall oversee all planting, pruning and maintenance practices of town trees in the public right-of-way.

## Exterior Lighting

**Well-conceived lighting systems enhance the building design, site amenities and site elements while providing a level of illumination sufficient for the safety and security of pedestrians using the commercial areas after sunset.**

Lighting is a major determinant of night time activity in commercial developments, and should emphasize key features of the site. At the same time, it needs to balance the lighting needs of the different uses on the site and reinforce a unified image and identity for the project. Lighting plans should consider illumination levels and fixtures that accommodate safety and visibility needs, but are also respectful of neighbors and are compatible with nearby development.

Pedestrian circulation is encouraged and therefore pedestrian-oriented lighting should emphasize the location of walkways and be in character with the architectural and landscape design of the development. Provide appropriate levels of lighting to ensure visibility and safety in both pedestrian and vehicular areas while avoiding over-illumination.

- Help to unify the quality of the visual environment through the selection of attractive, appropriately scaled fixtures.
- Enhance noteworthy features such as monuments, sculpture, or architectural elements.
- Avoid light fixtures or mountings that can cause distractions or hazards to motorists or pedestrians.
- Position lighting with shielding to reduce or limit glare, distraction or spill-over onto adjacent properties. Utilize 'Night Sky' fixtures to control excess lighting pollution.
- Eliminate light intrusions onto abutting properties, especially residential uses.
- Eliminate reflected light from parking lots and large commercial users that contribute to skyglow.
- Use lighting systems providing illumination between 2,700 Kelvin to 3,500 Kelvin at light levels appropriate to the application.
- Design lighting systems that include LEDs, timers, motion or light sensors and other energy saving systems to reduce overall energy use.
- Regulations prohibit the use of neon, HPS, flashing or moving lights.

- Details of all proposed exterior lighting is subject to prior approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Architectural Review Board.

### **Building Lighting**

- Coordinate lighting fixture design and output with architecture it serves.
- Use selective night lighting, where deemed appropriate, to highlight architecturally significant and/or distinctive features of a building or structure.
- Consider matching design of existing fixtures in adjacent lots when selecting light fixture designs. If none exist, use town-specified light fixtures for municipal sidewalks and roadways.

### **Site Lighting**

- Mounting heights for pedestrian lighting should be appropriate for the project and the setting.
- Utilize Step lights at stairways, bollard fixtures, 3-4 feet in height, and ornamental fixtures, up to 12 feet in height, as pedestrian area lighting.
- Screen any external spot or flood lighting from view by passers-by.
- Screen low-level lighting from view with plant materials.
- Light walkways to ensure safety.

### **Streetlamps**

- Wilton Light pole heights shall be kept as low as practical. Lighting for walkways shall be at a maximum pole height of 15'. Bollard-type lights are encouraged.
- Center District municipal streetlamps are traditional-style cast metal fixtures and poles. Plans and specifications can be obtained from the Department of Public Works.

## Signage

**Signs designed with consideration to size, scale, color and style will complement building design and add to the physical appeal of the site and area.**

Motorists and pedestrians rely on clearly visible street address numbers and good signage to identify businesses in an attractive commercial area. Sign regulations ensure that business identification and street address information for pedestrians and motorists are presented in a clear and aesthetically pleasing manner throughout town. Signage should reflect the character of the architecture, site, and neighborhood without occurring at the expense of individual expression and creativity.

Design guidelines:

- Minimize the number of building and directional signs to avoid repetitious signage information on the same building frontage.
- Signage should be proportionate to its location and the setback from the primary vantage points.
- Signage should conform to the character of the site elements in terms of historic era, style, location, and size.
- Integrate building signage to become a natural part of the façade. Coordinate sign background, trim, text, and detail with the architecture.
- Design information to fit into the sign location without visual clutter. Avoid use of slogans and advertising.
- Construct signs durable, weather-resistant and vandal-proof materials.
- Trim edges of flat sheet signs to provide substantial finished appearance.
- Use flat or semi-gloss finish on the surface in lieu of a glossy finish.
- Avoid bright background colors (e.g. bright red, orange, or yellow).
- Replacements for oversized existing signs should be resized to current zoning requirements for the location rather than matching the pre-existing conditions.

## Sign Lighting

**Sign lighting should be used judiciously and specifically to illuminate useful information.**

- Use only external sources when lighting signs. Neon, LED, and internally illuminated signage is prohibited ('Halo' illumination allowed).
- Illuminate only the sign and avoid light spill onto adjacent property.
- Balance signage illumination with surrounding lighting level intensities.

### **Freestanding Sign Landscaping**

- Signage should be integrated with the ground plane by using complimentary plant materials as part of the overall planting plan.
- Use durable and low maintenance plant materials with year-round appeal. Artificial plant materials are prohibited.
- Utilize low walls to define plant beds when appropriate to the architecture, grade, and surroundings. Irrigate planting beds when possible.

### **Permitting**

Determine the zone in the Wilton Zoning Regulations which your property is located. Review the Sign Regulations within your zone to determine the number, type, area, letter height and location of signs permitted on the property.

**All exterior signs over 2 sf in area, including temporary external signs and those displayed within a window for more than 30 days, require prior review and approval by the Architectural Review Board and a zoning permit.**

Roof-mounted, rotating, flashing, and freestanding 'feather' signs are prohibited. Use of flags and sandwich board directional signs are time-limited. Refer to Wilton Zoning Regulations for restrictions.

## **Equipment & Service Areas**

**Visual harmony in building and site design is achieved when utility features are screened from the streetscape view.**

Integrate building equipment, storage and service areas into the site plan and architectural composition in ways that minimize impact.

### **Building Utility Equipment**

- Roof-Mounted Equipment. Mechanical, HVAC, and other equipment mounted on rooftops should be screened from public view or grouped in a location where visibility is limited.
- Building-mounted equipment such as HVAC, plumbing, exhaust fans, electric and gas meters shall be screened from the public right-of-way using detailing incorporated into the architectural and landscape design.
- Screen all ground or concrete pad-mounted equipment such as HVAC, gas and electrical transformers and generators using evergreen plant materials of different species and size, or architectural detailing complementary to the building.

### **Trash handling, Storage, Outbuildings, and Delivery Bays**

Locate and screen accessory functions and outbuildings such as trash containers, storage sheds and emergency generators away from parking areas, walks and adjacent land use. Use either a variety of evergreen plant materials or an architectural enclosure in character with the primary building.

- Install new utility service systems underground.
- Bury all existing overhead services when renovating.
- All proposed outbuildings in excess of 100 sf shall require review and approval of the Architectural Review Board.
- Conceal garage doors and loading areas from view from surrounding streets.

## **Maintenance & Repair**

**As important as the design of a building is, maintenance is an essential element to preserving the physical appeal of a building, site, and district.**

A maintenance program enhances the appearance and durability of village buildings and contributes positively to the overall appearance of the streetscape. Building a maintenance plan into your design project will ensure buildings and village districts look attractive and well-kept for residents and visitors to enjoy.

### **Building Maintenance**

- Secure hanging material, repair holes and replace loose boards and shingles in walls, roofs, gutters and overhangs.
- Re-point brickwork, repair holes and replace loose or missing bricks.
- Regularly paint or replace woodwork on store fronts/facades to prevent rotting, chipping and fading.
- Keep windows clean.

### **Site Landscaping Maintenance**

- Plant plazas, pocket parks, islands, building sites with appropriate, hardy plant material. Select native plant species to encourage biodiversity and longevity.
- Keep areas weeded and litter and debris-free. Be mindful of where snow is piled during the winter and the salt content of that snow.
- Lawn areas should be mowed and trimmed regularly.
- Maintain container plantings, replacing plant material as needed.
- Prune trees to enhance physical appearance and guard against hazards.
- Work with garbage service providers to keep the dumpster and surrounding area litter-free.

### **Walkway & Sidewalk Maintenance**

- Sweep regularly to keep free of litter and cigarette butts. Remove leaves in a timely manner.
- Repair broken, loose, or uneven walkway material to keep hazard-free.
- Remove snow and ice within 24 hours of snowfall.

### **Private Parking Lot Maintenance**

- Repave lots as needed to eliminate potholes and maintain a safe, hazard free surface.
- Re-line parking spaces and traffic flow arrows as needed.
- Remove litter, leaves, snow and ice in a timely manner.

### **Lighting, Sign & Awning Maintenance**

- Replace non-functioning bulbs in a timely manner to maintain the attractiveness and perceived vitality of the business.
- Maintain seasonal lighting. Periodically remove and/or replace non-functioning lights on privately owned trees to allow proper tree growth.
- Wherever practical, lighting design shall include installation of timers, light and motion sensors to preserve night sky and reduce energy consumption.
- All signs, together with their supports, brackets, guys and anchors, shall be kept in good repair and in a safe condition.
- Repair holes and tears in awnings in a timely fashion.
- Clean awnings regularly.

### **Street Furniture Maintenance**

- Replace missing slats on benches and maintain in a safe condition.
- Painted parts of street furniture should be maintained regularly.
- Regularly empty and clean privately-owned cigarette and trash receptacles and clean and paint when needed.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Planning, Zoning, and Design Review Authorities

Appendix B: Business District Architecture and Site Examples

Appendix C: Village District Architecture and Site Examples

Appendix D: Multi-Family District Architecture and Site Examples

Appendix E: Comprehensive Plan Map of Relevant Area Map, Aerial Views of Districts

Appendix F: Terminology

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.