

## **APPENDIX VI**

# **DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL SITE PLANNING**

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**AMENDED:**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
B.	DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES.....	1
C.	DESIGN GUIDELINES.....	1
1.	Landscape Plans.....	1
a)	Coordination with Site Features.....	2
b)	Safety.....	2
c)	Rock.....	2
d)	Variety.....	2
e)	Minimum Plant sizes.....	2
f)	Roadside Plantings.....	2
g)	Planting Design.....	3
2.	Planting Strips.....	3
a)	Ground Covers.....	3
b)	Mulch.....	3
c)	Plant Masses.....	3
d)	Street Side Trees.....	3
e)	Roadside Plantings.....	3
f)	Parking Lots.....	4
3.	Parking Lot Landscaping.....	4
a)	Trees & Shrubs.....	4
b)	Parking Stall Separation.....	4
c)	Snow Storage.....	4
4.	Recommended Species.....	4

# **Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District, Business District North and Business District South**

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

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, safety, and visual character.

These *Guidelines* are intended to supplement, illustrate, and amplify various sections of the Zoning Ordinance and Site Plan Review Regulations. Check the applicable sections of the regulations for specific requirements.

## **B. DESIGN OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES**

Good site planning should result in an attractive, safe, and economically viable relationship between buildings, parking, signage, lighting, landscaping, and the surrounding environment. Site plans should minimize the visual effects of parking, feature high-quality landscaping, accommodate pedestrian movement, and encourage connections to nearby properties.

- An attractive, functional, and safe environment that is conducive to commerce and other permitted activities.
- Distinctive, attractive properties that welcome people to Hampton Falls.
- Quality development that respects the uniqueness of each property and reinforces Hampton Falls' sense of place and character.
- Public open space throughout Hampton Falls to enhance its appearance and support pedestrian use.
- Quality redevelopment of transitional or substandard properties.
- Protection for abutting residential properties through sensitive site planning, buffering, and architectural design.
- Upgrading visual character and sense of human scale in spaces through particular attention to architecture, site planning, signage, landscaping, and lighting.
- Encourage increased walking and bicycling by providing safe, attractive, interconnected facilities. Universal accessibility that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Sensible access management to maintain efficient traffic flow and high levels of safety.

## **C. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

### **1. General Guidelines**

#### **a) Site Analysis**

The site plan should be based upon a careful analysis of existing site conditions that considers topography, wetlands, soil conditions, existing vegetation, drainage, abutting land uses, and other factors that will influence the placement of buildings, roads, and parking areas. The Planning Board

Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District,  
Business District North and Business District South

may require a graphic presentation to demonstrate how knowledge of site conditions has influenced the site plan.

b) Preservation of Existing Features

Site development should minimize disruption to natural and cultural features (e.g., mature trees, wetlands, vernal pools, drainage ways, rock outcrops, barns, historic buildings, stone walls) in a manner that would change their existing character.

c) Open Space

Open Space should be preserved and integrated throughout the development. Where possible, open space should be continuous and used to preserve significant natural and cultural features. Open space should be coordinated with abutting properties to create continuous open space networks for wildlife corridors, riparian buffers, visual screening, etc.

d) Parking Lots

Parking should be located primarily at the side or rear of the bulidng, with minimal parking in front. Parking lots should be screened to minimize their appearance in most districts.

e) Relationships to Surrounding Properties

Service areas, parking lots, outdoor storage and sales areas, HVAC equipment, trash containers, and other similar features should not face residential neighborhoods.

f) Coordinated Future Development

Where site plans are presented for a portion of a property, the applicant should show how the plan has been designed to accommodate future buildings, access roads, sidewalks, esplanades, drainage, utilities, signage, and preserved open space in a coordinated fashion.

2. Circulation Planning

Development activities throughout Hampton Falls should be characterized by safe, user-friendly, and efficient traffic flow. Access management principles should be followed to reduce the number of curb cuts, provide a safe vehicular and pedestrian environment, encourage intra-parcel travel, and minimize the number of trips on roadways.

a) Curb cuts on Major Roads

Site plan involving curb cuts onto major roadways should demonstrate an adherence to sound access management principles to promote efficient traffic flow and maintain a high level of safety for pedestrians and motorists. The number of curb cuts on major roadways should be minimized to increase vehicular and pedestrian safety.

Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District,  
Business District North and Business District South

b) Shared Access

Entrances to abutting commercial properties should be combined wherever feasible to minimize curb cuts and provide for more efficient traffic flow.

c) Internal Traffic Flow

To ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians, the development plan should clearly delineate internal traffic patterns for both vehicles and pedestrians. Development plans should be designed by a professional engineer familiar with the Hampton Falls Site Plan Regulations. Parking space, directional arrows, crosswalks, and other markings on the ground should be delineated with pavement paint.

d) Connections with Adjacent Properties

Pedestrian and vehicular connections between parking lots and driveways on adjacent parcels should be provided wherever feasible to facilitate deliveries, minimize turning movements onto major roadways, and encourage foot traffic. Internal connections should provide safe, direct access while discouraging vehicular shortcuts. Cross easements should be provided as required to facilitate circulation. Site planning should anticipate future connections to any abutting undeveloped property.

e) Refuge Zones

Pedestrian islands (5 ft. minimum width) should be installed in driveways and streets where the crossing distance is greater than 32 ft.

f) Pedestrian and Bicycle Movement

The development plan should provide for safe pedestrian and bicycle movement within the site and between abutting properties.

g) Services Drives

Service drives should be separated from internal walkways, parking areas, or pedestrian use areas by landscaped islands, grade changes, or other method to minimize pedestrian contact.

h) Maintenance

All painted crosswalks and parking area lines should be repainted on an annual or biannual basis to maintain their effectiveness.

i) Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures should be included where appropriate to discourage speeding within the site and between abutting properties. Measures may include speed tables, on-street parking (where

Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District,  
Business District North and Business District South

appropriate), raised crosswalks, vertical curbing, curvilinear road alignment, roadside plantings, neck-downs, curbed islands, and signage.

j) Drive-Throughs

Where such uses are allowable, access routes leading to or from takeout windows or other drive-throughs should minimize conflicts with pedestrian circulation routes. Motorists should be made aware of pedestrians through signage, lighting, raised crosswalks, changes in paving, or other devices. The site plan should be designed to prevent queuing in parking lots or other areas which would cause congestion or unsafe conditions.

3. Parking Lots

Parking lots should be designed to complement adjacent buildings, the site, and the commercial district without becoming a dominant visual element. Every effort should be made to reduce the scale of parking lots by minimizing the total amount of paved surface visible from the road.

Parking lots should be designed as inviting, pedestrian-friendly places by careful attention to landscaping, lighting, and walkways. With proper planning, parking lots can balance the needs of both the vehicle and the pedestrian.

a) Orientation

Parking lots should be designed as part of the overall plan for the site, and coordinated with the circulation plan, building entrances, lighting, landscaping, snow storage, and service areas. Parking lots should be located, to the maximum extent possible, to the rear and or side of all commercial or mixed use buildings.

b) Scale

Parking areas with more than 10 spaces should be broken up with trees, landscapes islands, grade changes, low walls, or other appropriate features.

c) Relationship to Buildings

Paved surfaces or parking lots should be separated from buildings by a minimum of five feet of landscaping and/or a paved walkway. The width of the landscaping should be proportional to the height of the building.

4. Pedestrian Spaces

Commercial buildings should provide outdoor spaces for a variety of uses – seating/resting, dining, displays, and aesthetic enhancement – to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District,  
Business District North and Business District South

a) Outdoor Spaces

Development plans should include outdoor use areas such as greens, plazas, and courtyards. Buildings should be oriented toward open spaces rather than roadways. In these situations, buildings should have a major access on the space as well as a secondary access point(s) oriented to parking areas. Outdoor spaces should be coordinated with the pedestrian circulation plan to encourage pedestrian use, with provisions for seating and outdoor activities. Outdoor spaces should be designed to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic with landscaping, grade changes, and other site features.

b) Planning

Where outdoor use areas are provided, they should be located in sunny, highly visible locations and sized to fit the anticipated uses. The design should be a collaborative effort between architect, landscape architect, engineers, artist, and other design professionals.

c) Materials

Outdoor use areas should be constructed of high quality, easily maintained materials. All elements within the space should be coordinated with the architecture and site elements to achieve a unified look. The use of decorative paving is encouraged for sitting areas, pedestrian plazas, building entrances, or other designed open spaces.

d) Entrances

Major entrances to new or renovated buildings should be emphasized through the use of canopies, recessed entries, seating areas, decorative plantings and lighting.

5. Public Sidewalks

Public sidewalks and planted esplanades can be a highly desirable part of the streetscape, adding scale in a commercial landscape and creating a safe place for pedestrian movement.

There are many areas in Hampton Falls' commercial districts which are currently not pedestrian or bicycle friendly. The long term objective is to provide an interconnected network of sidewalks that provide an alternative to the automobile and encourage safety, connectivity and an alternative form of transport for the general population.

Where sidewalks and planted esplanades are required by the town, they should be constructed within or near the right-of-way on and in some cases on both sides of all streets to encourage safe pedestrian movement. Facilities should be coordinated with abutting land uses to create interconnections throughout the commercial areas and linkages to surrounding residential neighborhoods and in the case within the Business District South, the Town of Seabrook. Lighting and other amenities abutting walkways should be at a human scale.

Design Guidelines for General Site Planning in the Town Common District,  
Business District North and Business District South

a) Coordination with Site Plan

All new sidewalks should be coordinated with the Site Plan to avoid conflicts with landscaping, utilities, grading, drainage structures, signs, and other elements. Walks should be designed to facilitate snow removal for year-round use. Sheet flow of storm water across sidewalks shall be avoided.

b) Material Selection

Material selected for curbing and sidewalks should be durable, long-lasting, and resistant to New Hampshire winters and local maintenance policies. Developers should coordinate their choice of materials with the Town and or Towns reviewing representative for suitability.

c) Crosswalks

Where sidewalks intersect with commercial drives or roads, crosswalks should be installed to alert the motorist and improve visibility. Crosswalks should offer a noticeable change in texture and color. Materials for crosswalks should be highly durable and slip resistant.