

II. TOWN-WIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following series of design guidelines apply to all properties within the town where development is to be constructed or where significant redevelopment is to take place, except for the uses indicated in the intent section on Page 2.

A. LANDSCAPING

- 1) All required street trees should be placed between the edge of the road and the parking area or front building line whichever is closest, in accordance with Section 17.36.200 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*.



(Above) On this site, the presence of vegetation provides a buffer between the street and the business behind it.



(Above) A lack of landscaping and little differentiation between automobile and pedestrian circulation systems translates into unappealing and unsafe environments, for all users.

- 2) Parking areas located between structures and the road should be softened with a low growing hedge and/or an attractive fence or wall.



(Above) In this photo, the presence of a hedgerow behind the wooden fence softens the impact of the shopping center.

- 3) Large expanses of parking (rows of larger than 12 spaces) should be broken up with tree and shrub plantings. Parking shall additionally meet all other requirements of the Town's parking regulations (Section 17.48 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*).



(Above) In this shopping center, tree and shrub plantings help to break up large rows of parking.

- 4) A transition zone consisting of pedestrian amenities and landscaping should be constructed between buildings and parking areas. Some specific items that can be utilized for this would be the use of different types of building and landscaping materials, placing curbs or bollards between the parking and building areas, or landscaping these areas. Retail sales and display space should be minimized in this area; however, outdoor dining areas should be encouraged, where applicable.

(Right) The business in the top image does not provide a transition area between the store and parking areas, creating the potential for safety issues to take place. Conversely the presence of a transition zone between the parking and building areas shown in the bottom picture allows safe access for pedestrians in an aesthetically pleasing manner.



- 5) Minimum plant size shall be specified as follows (for the purpose of determining tree trunk size, the diameter shall be measured six inches above ground level)

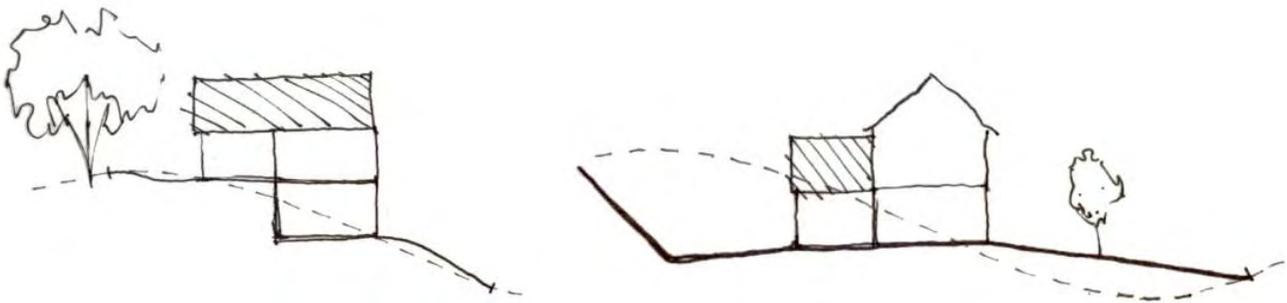
<u>Plant Type</u>	<u>Minimum Size</u>
<i>Evergreen tree</i>	<i>six feet in height</i>
<i>Deciduous canopy tree</i>	<i>twenty-two (22) inches caliper at dbh*</i>
<i>Small deciduous tree</i>	<i>twelve (12) inches caliper at dbh*</i>
<i>Evergreen or deciduous shrubs</i>	<i>eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) inches in height</i>

**dbh = diameter at breast height*

B. NATURAL SITE DESIGN

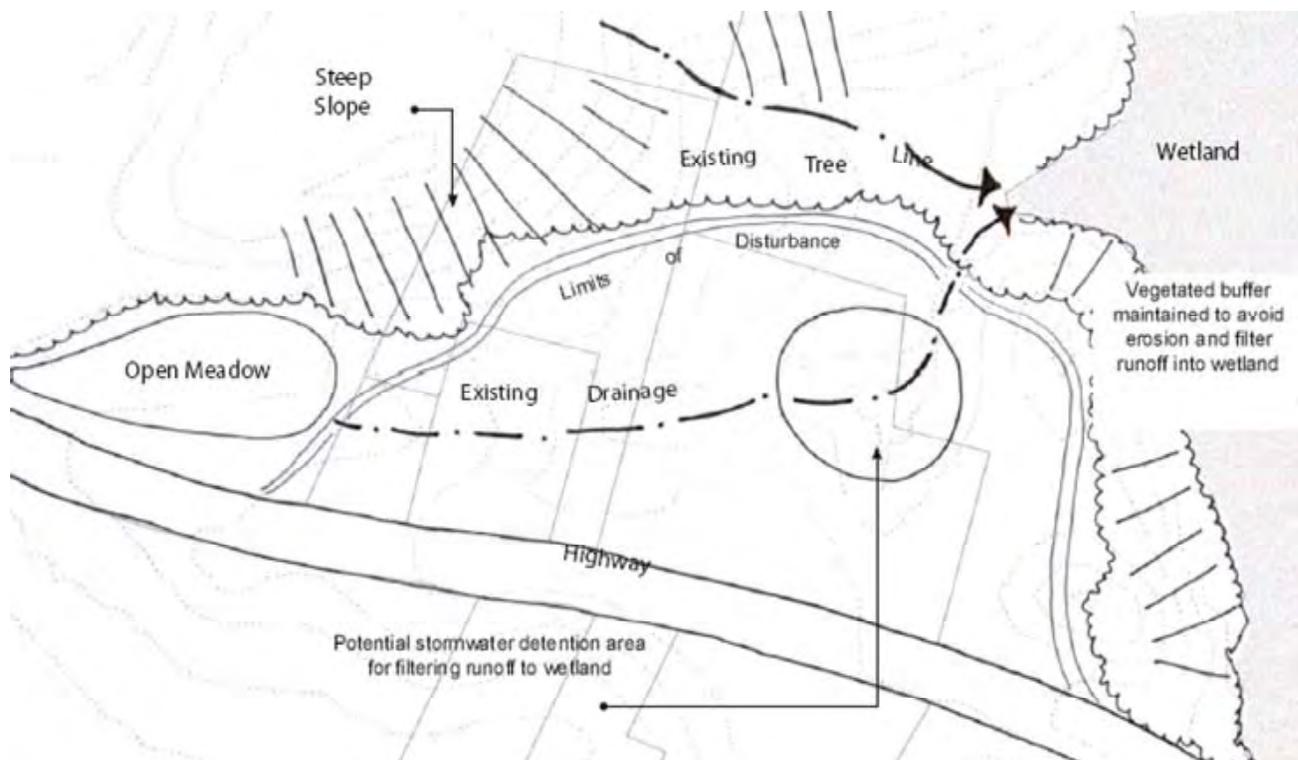
Site design shall recognize and respect the site’s natural features, creating a balance between the program of the new development and the environmental impact. By recognizing and building with the existing topography, it becomes possible to integrate stormwater management into the design, lessen the amount of grading and erosion, and thereby lessen the environmental impact to surrounding areas. In addition, by incorporating the site’s natural features into the site design, it becomes possible to create a more aesthetically relevant place that fits into its surroundings.

- 1) Existing mature trees should be maintained and species selected for planting should be appropriate for this region and the microclimate of the specific setting.
- 2) Utilize native vegetation and avoid invasive species, in accordance with Section 17.36.200 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*.
- 3) Development should minimize cut and fill, utilize gentle grading, and avoid abrupt grade transitions. Any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.



(Above) The example on the left shows how an alternative development plan can preserve existing topography rather than regrading an entire site, which requires clearing existing mature trees.

- 4) Utilize sensitive construction practices and erosion control to limit soil erosion and disturbance, in accordance with Chapter 17.37 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*.
- 5) Natural drainageways, contours, and landforms should be respected, and disturbance to these areas should be minimized.
- 6) Utilization of "green techniques" for handling stormwater and runoff are encouraged where feasible, such as bio-retention swales, pervious paving materials, and pervious alternatives to asphalt and concrete, such as modular paving systems or reinforced grass block (or other "dust-free" materials). For more detailed regulations and best management practices for minimizing and treating stormwater and runoff, applicants should consult the town's Stormwater Management, Erosion and Sediment Control Law (Chapter 17.37 of the *Big Flats Zoning Law*) and the *New York State Stormwater Design Manual* which can be found at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's website (www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/29072.html). Applicants should also refer to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's "*Better Site Design Manual*" which can be found at www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43321.html.



- 7) Retention basins shall be attractively landscaped and, where feasible, double as environmentally beneficial habitats. In cases where a retention basin must be fenced for safety purposes, chain link fencing is discouraged.



(Above) The retention pond shown here provides a habitat area for a variety of wildlife and a scenic backdrop for park visitors and a senior housing complex.

- 8) Organic mulching materials are preferred over stones or other non-organic materials. The exception to this is in areas where smoking is explicitly permitted. In such areas, non-flammable mulching materials shall be utilized.
- 9) Decorative annuals shall be used for pops of color and visual interest in locations with high visual impact, such as site entrances, building foundations, and at the bases of signs.

- 10) The use of so-called “green roofs” shall be encouraged in order to assist in the mitigation of stormwater, the heating and cooling of a building, and heat island impacts to a development site. One means of successfully implementing green roofs in a climate similar to the Elmira area is to utilize vegetation that is indigenous to the region. According to a recent study, the utilization of evergreens and a thicker soil base allow for a building to better retain its heat in winter months¹.



(Above) The green roof shown here assists in heating and cooling while reducing stormwater runoff created by the presence of the building underneath it. (328 Euclid, Toronto ON. Courtesy *greenroofs.com*. Source *Terry McGlade*)

¹ University Of Toronto (2005, November 27). Green Roofs In Winter: Hot Design For A Cold Climate. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved April 6, 2009, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2005/11/051126141309.htm>

- 11) Sufficient buffering and landscaping along the boundaries of a property should be encouraged to mitigate the impacts of development.



(Above) Substantial landscaping along the commercial corridor continues in the interior parking and shopping area, making an otherwise ordinary shopping plaza an inviting and attractive environment.

C. BUILDING MATERIALS AND DESIGN

- 1) The use of metal-sided building façades for primary structures should be minimized whenever possible, especially in highly visible areas and along state or county maintained highways. In areas where metal-sided buildings are utilized, sufficient landscaping should be in place to screen the building from the adjacent roadway. Additionally, if a metal sided building is constructed the primary frontage should be enhanced with wood, stucco, or other materials that would soften the façade.
- 2) Construction or redevelopment of a property should utilize, whenever possible, materials and design that is either evocative or respectful of the surrounding community. This should include wood, brick, and stone materials or materials that present the appearance of wood, brick, or stone, for primary façades.

(Right) The two images provide contrasting options for the potential development on a site. In the top photo, the metal framed building negatively influences its surroundings. In the bottom photo, the building design and landscaping add to the image of the area where the shops are located.



- 3) Avoid long monotonous walls along the sides of buildings especially along sides that face a road or parking lot. Vary the height, elements, and alignment of the wall; include gates or other penetrations; repeat modular patterns along the length of the wall.



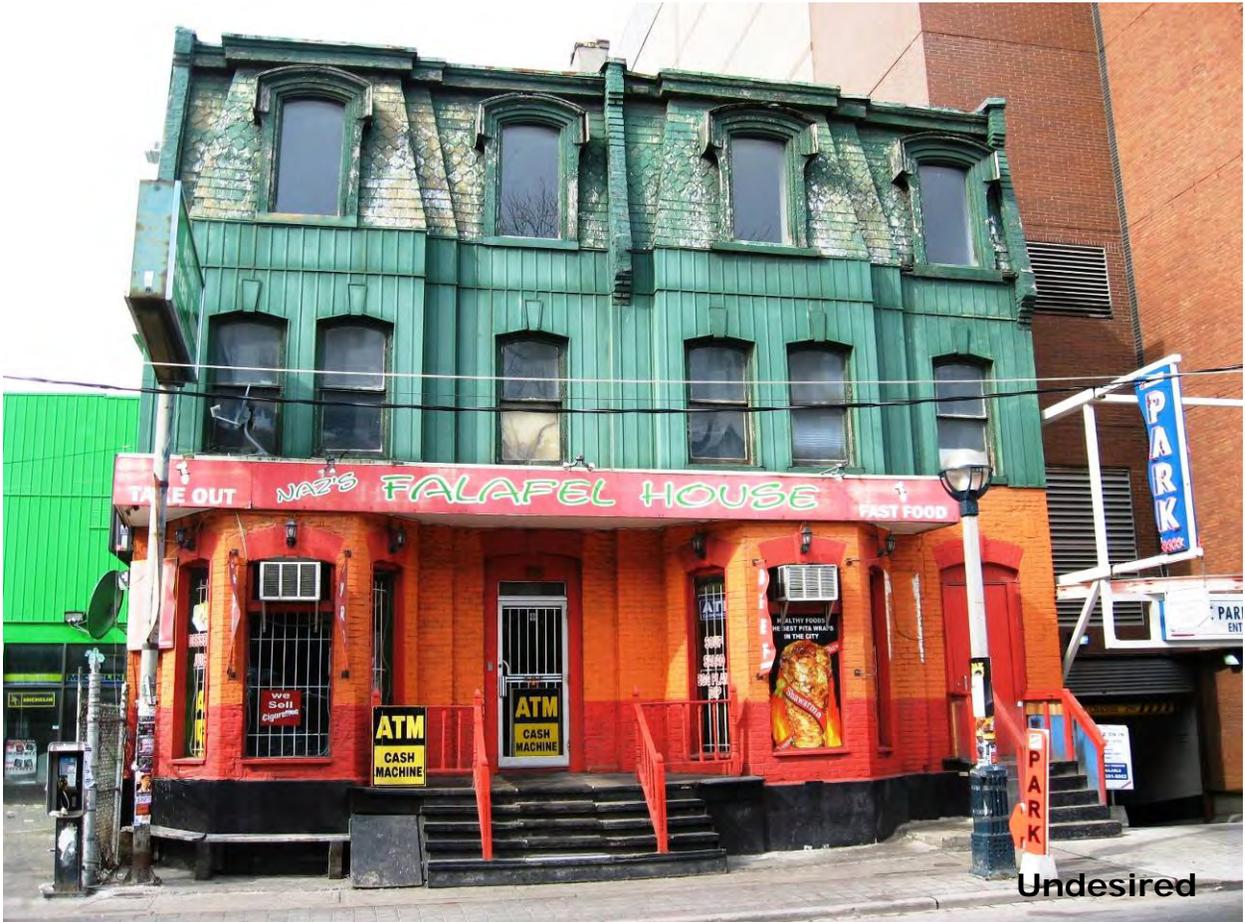
(Above) A monotonous wall, such as the one shown here provides little visual appeal to visitors to this store.

- 4) Peaked roofs are generally preferred to flat roofs, particularly with respect to larger structures. Creative use of parapets, mansard roofs, gable roofs, hip roofs, or dormers and other roofline elements shall be used to highlight entrances, add visual interest, hide rooftop mechanics from view, and break up the mass of large buildings.



(Above) In this example, multiple building planes, varied building materials, and ample windows create visual interest and de-emphasize building mass, while actively engaging the public realm.

- 5) Muted or earth tones should be used for the color of buildings, including roofs. No bright or primary (red, blue, or yellow) colors should be used for buildings façades or roofs.



(Above) In this image, the contrast between the building shown and the adjacent buildings limit the desirability of the surrounding area.



(This page) In these examples, higher-quality, varied building materials provide visual interest and relief to larger retail buildings.

D. CORPORATE AND FRANCHISE DEVELOPMENT

The town wishes to foster high-quality development that complements and build upon the town's unique character. The architecture and site design of corporate and franchise businesses are no exception to this rule. Adherence to the guidelines set forth in this document will ensure that all commercial development, including franchises, will contribute positively to the town's character. However, the provisions below provide additional guidance for franchises, or any other business that seek to draw attention through the excessive use of colors, logos or other "branding" techniques:

GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 1) Corporate/business logos and colors shall not envelope the entire structure, but rather, shall be limited to building mounted and freestanding signs. Restrained and subtle use of corporate colors may be used on commercial structures or other elements of the site, provided that they are not excessively bright or overly applied.
- 2) Alternatives to the standard prototypes for building design and site layout shall be considered in the design and approval process.

Examples of "desired" and "undesired" franchise architecture and site design are provided below and on the following page.



(Left) This commercial structure, home to several national chains, complements the rural landscape through building design, setbacks and the incorporation of rural elements such as a stone wall and mature trees.



(Left) This example demonstrates a national chain's successful interpretation of the local vernacular architecture and character.

Desired



Undesired



(Above) The example on the left illustrates the desired combination of corporate signage and high quality building materials and design, as opposed to the example to the right, which utilizes the entire building a corporate “sign”, with little attention to building character or design.



Undesired

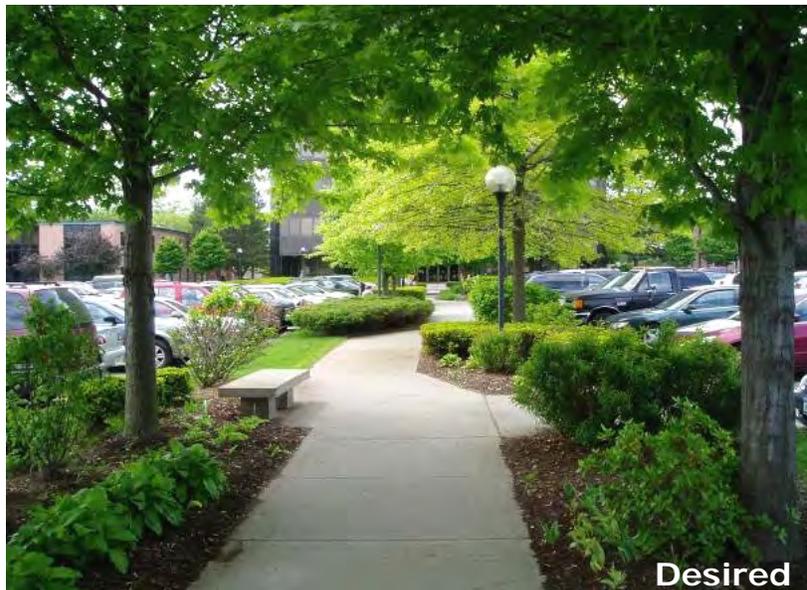


Desired

(Left) These examples illustrate two very different approaches to site advertising and corporate branding. The gas station in the top example calls attention to itself by liberally applying its corporate colors to virtually every surface of the site. The same effect is achieved in the lower gas station, albeit more tastefully, through the use of higher quality building elements that are repeated in both the main structure and the station canopy, and a consistent, yet restrained, use of the corporation’s colors throughout.

E. ACCESS MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

In order to create safe and comfortable circulation for both pedestrians and drivers, it is necessary to minimize the interaction between cars and people, and provide safe crossing areas where cars and people must come together. According to the NYSDOT, at any given intersection, there are potentially nine points of conflict. By minimizing the number of entry points to a development, there are fewer possibilities for conflict between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. This provides for greater vehicular and pedestrian safety, increases overall roadway capacity because of increased traffic flow, increases the amount of uninterrupted sidewalk along the front of a development, thereby decreasing pedestrian crossings, creating a relationship between adjacent buildings. This improved relationship makes providing pedestrian connections between adjacent commercial developments easier and more natural.



(Above) Pleasant, walkable internal pedestrian connections enhance a community, and provide transportation options for its residents.

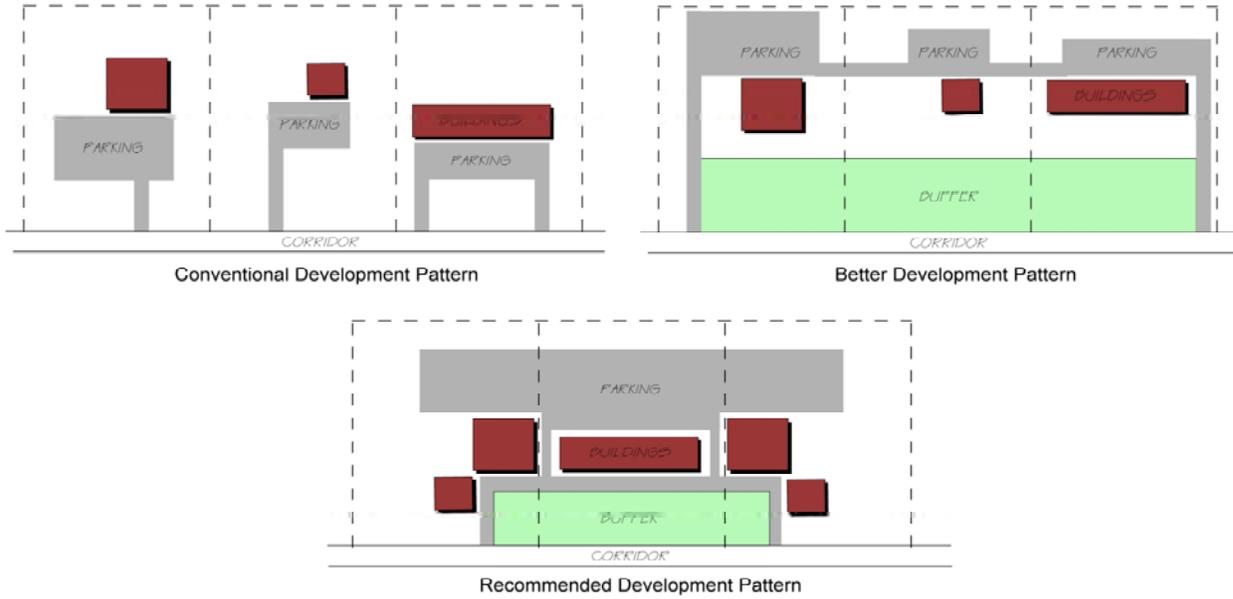
- 1) Provide automobile connections to adjacent lots and developments through shared access roads, linked parking, etc.
- 2) Provide pedestrian connections within and between adjacent commercial developments through sidewalks, multi-use paths, etc.



(This page) Multi-use trails, such as the one shown above, can provide alternative access between commercial and residential areas of Big Flats. Conversely, a lack of sidewalks and trails can make pedestrian travel difficult, as seen below.

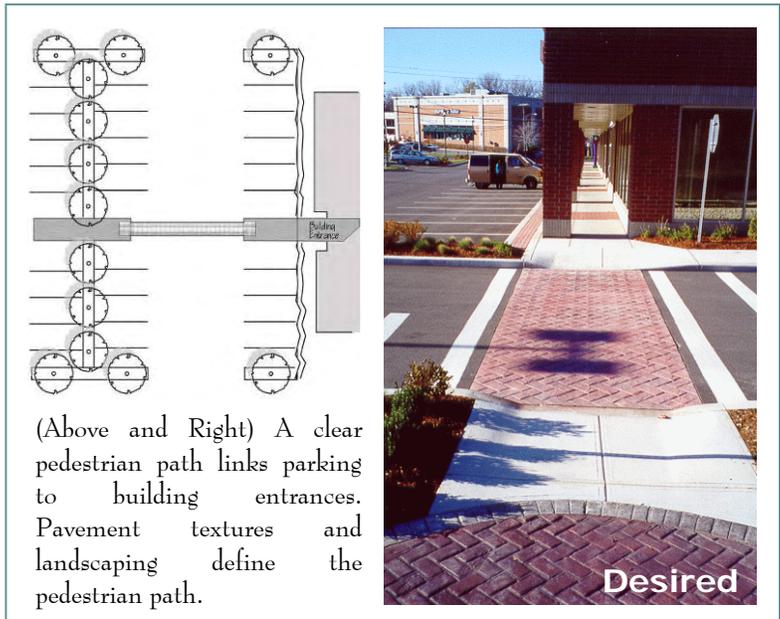


- 3) Minimize entry points and curb cuts. Temporary curbcuts may be provided for individual sites along the town’s major corridors, as they are developed. However, as additional sites are developed, such curbcuts may be abandoned in favor of safely and conveniently located curbcuts that serves multiple adjoining businesses.



(Above) Buildings, parking lot(s), and open space should relate to one another in such a way as to create the feeling of one unified development and minimize entry points from the road.

- 4) Utilize a consistent theme of street trees, other landscaping elements, and pedestrian amenities to provide a unified streetscape.
- 5) Pedestrian safety shall be promoted using traffic calming devices such as bump-outs, crosswalks, speed bumps, and pavement changes, particularly to discourage high traffic speeds on internal access drives.
- 6) Businesses should consider low walls to suggest spatial separation or definition of territory such as seating walls or planting walls.



F. SIGNS



(Above) This low, monument style sign incorporates elements of the adjacent stone wall.



(Above) Monument signs should be adequately landscaped at their bases. The larger the sign, the more landscaping is needed.

- 1) Lower, monument style signs are preferred for areas where visibility from the right-of-way is not an issue, as determined by the Planning Board, in consultation with Town Staff. Preferred monument signs are low, horizontal with raised lettering. Additionally, flowers, shrubs, or lawn should be placed below the sign to provide contrast and to beautify the area surrounding the sign.

- 2) Ample landscaping should be provided at the bases of signs.

- 3) Sign materials should relate to the materials and style of the building(s) they serve. Plastic signs, banners, or flags that include loud colors, particularly colors not pertaining to the building materials or style, are discouraged.
- 4) Rear lighting of signs should be discouraged. If rear signs are to be used, they shall meet the lighting standards set forth in Section 17.36.240 (Outdoor Lighting Requirements - *Town of Big Flats Zoning Law*).



(This page) In both examples shown, the signage does not overwhelm the building façade. Additionally, the signage is lit via the lighting fixtures above the sign area, limiting the impact of the lighting on the night sky.

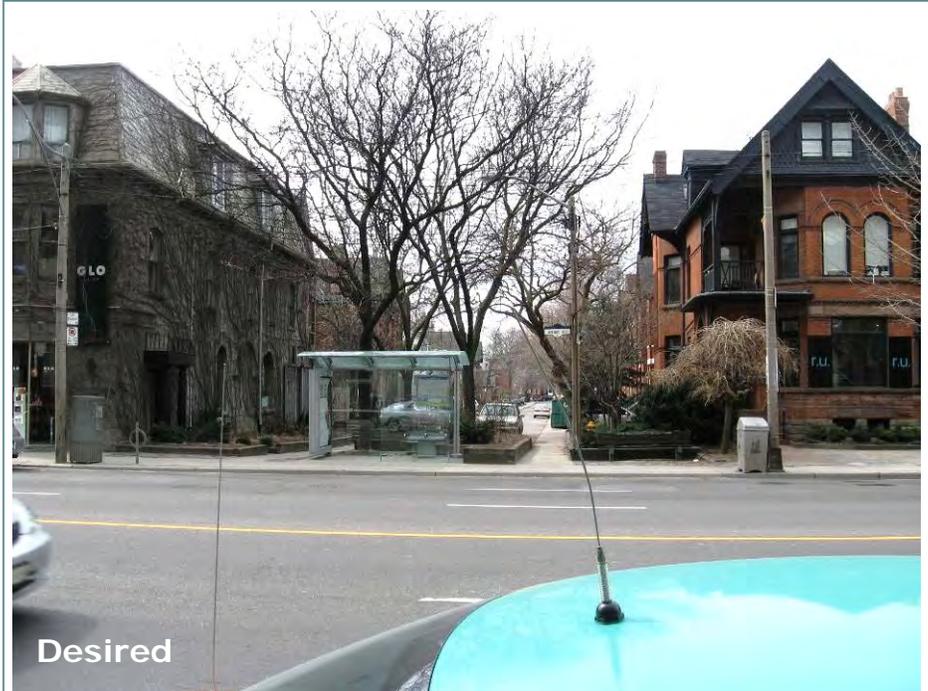
- 5) Keep signs simple. Too many combinations of colors, typefaces, and symbols can result in visual chaos.
- 6) The pole element of a pole-mounted sign should be architecturally pleasing and in proportion to the sign that it carries. Whenever possible, landscaping should surround the pole.



(Above) In the “Undesired” example, too much information and competing colors result in an unattractive and confusing sign. In the “Desired” example, an attractive sign reinforces the character of the use it advertises and creates a cohesive and inviting environment.

G. ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND TRAILS

- 1) Access to public transportation via Chemung County Transit should be provided at visible, attractive, and safe locations within the town.



(Above and Below) A visible, safe, and attractive transit stop helps to make transit use a more valid option for residents of a community. Conversely, a lack of shelter or seating limits the desirability of transit in a community, as shown below.



- 2) Opportunities for making connections to the town’s trail system should be explored for properties that abut or are proximate to the trail system.
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(Above) Clear pedestrian pathways through parking areas and landscaping provide shade and break up a large expanse of parking.

- 3) Bicycle racks shall be provided in easily observable locations to serve large commercial, office and multifamily areas and sites, and near school and office entrances.



(Above) Along this street, there is provision for bicycle parking that is accessible and easily observable for employees and customers.

H. LIGHTING AND UTILITY PLACEMENT

1) Locate utilities underground to the furthest extent possible. All above ground utility boxes and similar facilities should be clustered and screened with landscaping.

2) Lighting should be appropriate to the setting of an area and adhere to the standards that the town already has in place (§17.36.240 of the *Town of Big Flats Zoning Law*.) For example, do not “over light” (too many lights or lights that are too bright), always include full shielding to eliminate glare, and outside of hamlet areas and large parking lots, minimize lighting to preserve dark skies, and limit light pollution.

3) In general, lighting fixtures should not be taller than the buildings they illuminate. More numerous, shorter, and lower powered lighting are preferred over fewer, tall, high-powered fixtures.

4) Strong contrasts between lit and unlit portions of a site should be avoided, in favor of lower-powered, more evenly distributed lighting.

5) Canopy lighting should be fully recessed.

6) Light fixtures shall include cutoff shields that prevent glare.



(Above) The jumble of utilities can be a detriment to a community, both from a visual standpoint and for the potential negative impact to these utilities during an ice storm or other catastrophic event.



(Above) Street lighting can add character to a community or neighborhood, as well as provide for pedestrian or driver safety.

- 7) Whenever possible, energy efficient bulbs should be used for outdoor lighting in the town. This can consist of fluorescent or light emitting diode (LED) lighting.
- 8) More numerous, shorter and lower powered lighting fixtures are preferred over fewer, tall, high-powered fixtures. However, in larger scaled parking lots, taller lighting fixtures may be necessary to comply with the town's minimum lighting levels as set forth in the town's zoning.
- 9) Harsh white lighting fixtures that cause glare are discouraged.



(Top) The lighting is in scale with the building it serves and the surrounding neighborhood.

(Bottom) The lighting pole and fixture towers over the parking lot and building of this shopping center.



I. SERVICE AND ROOF SCREENING

- 1) If a trash compactor unit is to be used, this unit should be attached to the building and be screened in with materials and colors that are consistent with the building that it serves. In addition, an effort to minimize the noise of the compactor unit from adjacent properties should occur.



(Above and Below) Adequate screening for loading areas, trash compactors, and dumpsters should be provided. This should include sufficient landscaping and/or a wall to serve as a buffer from the adjoining area, as shown in the above photo.



- 2) Loading docks, if attached to a building, should be screened in with materials and colors that are consistent with the building that it serves (i.e. loading dock attached to a brick building should be screened with brick wall). If this is not possible, sufficient landscaping should be in place to serve as a visual buffer.
- 3) While screens and recesses can effectively mitigate these impacts, the selection of inappropriate screening materials can draw more attention to the very item they attempt to screen. Therefore, materials, color, design of screening materials, and enclosures shall conform to those used as predominant materials and colors of the building. Landscaping can also be combined with screening materials to provide additional screening.
- 4) Communications and cellular towers should be as unobtrusive as possible.

- 5) Dumpsters should be screened in with materials and colors that are consistent with the building that it serves (i.e. a brick building should have a dumpster screened with brick walls).



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