

III. VILLAGE CORE

A. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Within the commercial district along Mentor Avenue there exists Old Mentor Village. This four block area represents the original historic core of the City of Mentor. Stretching from Center Street east to Jackson Street, Mentor Avenue contains older homes and commercial buildings; some dating back to the 1860s and earlier. The majority of the buildings were constructed in close proximity to the street; therefore, the Old Village Area has the potential to have a more “pedestrian-friendly” feel to it than the balance of the commercial zones and has great potential to be enhanced. Recent development in this zone does not conform to the scale and character of the older buildings. Building additions have been constructed that were not sympathetic to the original building. For example, there is a large car dealership and linear retail centers within this historic core. The majority of the businesses have parking in front of their building and deep setbacks. Modern cobra head streetlights contribute to safety, but lack aesthetic appeal.

B. EXISTING ZONING

All properties in the Village Core are zoned B-2, General Business. The primary purpose of this district is to provide adequate areas for commercial activities along the City’s highways. The district permits a wide variety of uses. There are no requirements for lot area and dimensions. Side and rear setbacks are established as part of site development review conducted by the Planning Commission. Side or rear setbacks to residentially zoned property are twenty feet. The front yard setback is thirty feet. The current parking setback is ten feet. This minimum depth encourages on-site parking in front of commercial establishments in the Village Core which detracts from the traditional character of the area.



TYPICAL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS IN VILLAGE CORE.

C. DESIGN GUIDELINES

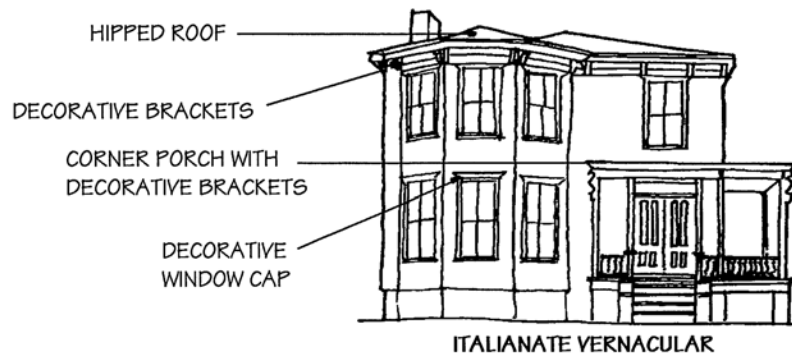
1. Architecture

Since the community wishes to retain, respect and reinforce the remaining historic character of the Mentor Village Core, these following guidelines have been developed to ensure that new construction relates to existing historic buildings in the district. Any new proposed development should include elevations (i.e. photographs, drawings, etc.) of adjacent buildings to assist in determining the relationship of the new building to its context.

a. Styles

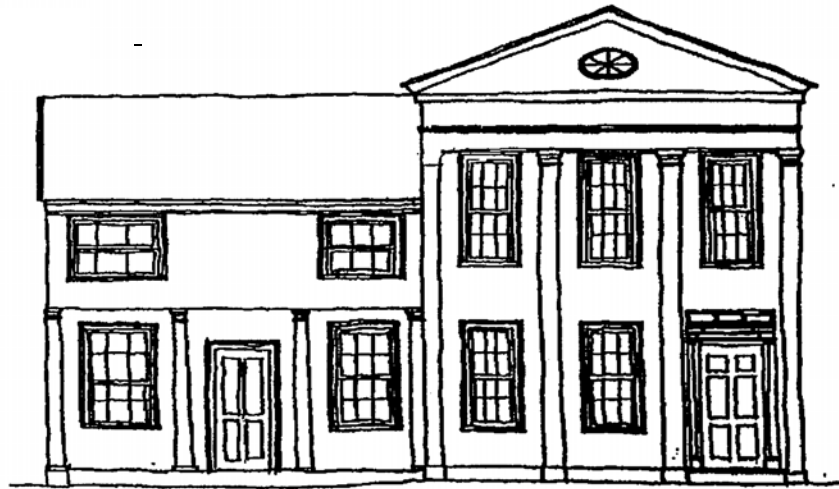
Particular historical architectural styles are not recommended for new construction. It is desirable to relate the new design to its historic neighbors. In the Village Core there are two basic historical building types.

The typical commercial building is two to three stories in height, has a flat or shed roof that is not visible and has a façade that is composed of three parts: a storefront, an upper floor with windows and a decorative cornice at the top. These buildings are generally constructed of masonry. Most of these are located near the intersection of Mentor Avenue and Center Street. (Refer to the figure at the bottom of page 6).



The second type of historic building in the Village Core is the historic residence, most of which date from the second half of the nineteenth century. The styles of these buildings may be Greek Revival or Italianate. Their common features include a setback from Mentor Avenue and a front yard, some type of entry porch, combinations of gable or hipped roofs, two stories and frame construction with some brick examples. Windows are small scaled and contain sash with six-over-six, two-over-two or one-over-one panes. Decorative features vary and may include brackets, cornices, window caps,

entry transoms and sidelights as well as sawn millwork in gables or on porches.



GREEK REVIVAL

Mentor Avenue in the Village Core is intersected by residential side streets wherein homes of historic character of the nature discussed above are sited. In order to preserve the character of these residential neighborhoods, new commercial buildings at these intersections shall be small in scale and orientation shall closely adhere to the historic styles and architectural elements detailed above.

Elsewhere in the Village Core commercial buildings exist which were constructed prior to the adoption of the Design Guidelines which adhere to no particular architectural style. Most often they are simple square or rectangular buildings with little to no architectural detail. These structures are deemed intrusive in nature and it is the express goal and intent of the Design Guidelines that any reimagining of these structures shall incorporate architectural details that will further the historic character of the Village Core and be in harmony with the same.

It is recognized that reinvestment in the Village Core may in specific cases be dependent upon allowing for an alternative architectural style and that, when not in conflict with the purposes, intents, and standards set forth herein, may be permitted when (i) it serves to remove a structure(s) deemed intrusive, as detailed above, and (ii) where the new structure may harmoniously be integrated with historic architectural styles and the neighborhood as a whole. Such architecture shall have a high level of design, be unique, and further be of a timeless quality as opposed to reflecting a particular limited period. Architecture in the “international” style is an example of what is not permitted

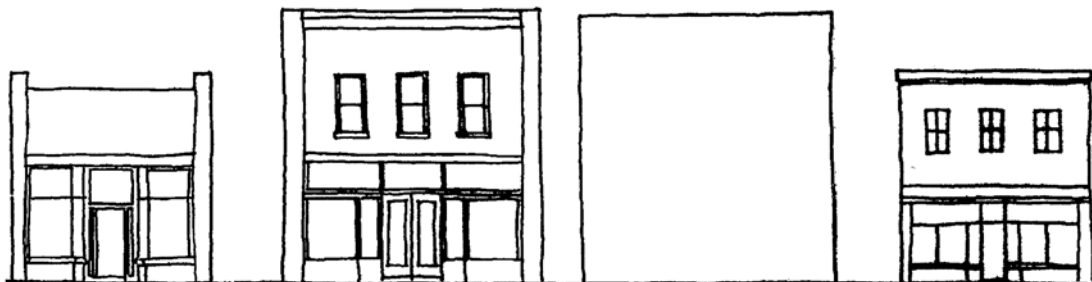
when evaluating whether a high level of design is proposed, whether it is unique, and whether it is of a timeless quality.

Facades shall not have prominent sign bands (which is typically a horizontal area above a building’s entrance(s), architecturally designed to accommodate signage in a sign-centric manner). Likewise, the use of parapets as an architectural element for the purpose of locating signage is not permitted. If the parapet is clearly an integral component of the overall architectural composition, then such an element would be permitted. Typically, if the parapet wall has a full return, cornice or other capping, and is architecturally harmonious with the structure as a whole, then it would be deemed an integral component of the overall architectural composition.

No structures in the Village Core shall adopt an architectural style or theme which is out of character for the Village Core based on the standards set forth herein. Examples of such unacceptable styles or themes would include “western” or “southwestern” styles and any “incompatible” and/or “standardized” design that is a standardized model for a business’s national or regional architectural branding or trade dress.

b. Height

The height limit in this area is thirty-five feet which is appropriate for new construction since that relates to approximately three stories. The heights of new construction in the Village Core should be at least two stories to relate to the historic character of the area. Multi-story construction should provide retail stores at the ground level in order to preserve retail continuity and promote pedestrian activity; upper-stories can be used for offices and other non-pedestrian oriented businesses. One story buildings are not encouraged within the Village Core.



THE HEIGHT AND WIDTH OF NEW CONSTRUCTION IN THE VILLAGE CORE SHOULD RELATE TO THE NEIGHBORING HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

c. Width

There is much variety of building widths within the Core. New buildings, or their modules, should generally relate to the existing width of neighboring historic buildings. Commercial historic buildings generally have a façade module of approximately twenty-five to thirty feet. Most historic residences have widths of twenty-five to forty feet and may also have additions which lengthen that width.

d. Scale

The scale of most of the structures in the Village Core is small and human instead of large and monumental. The scale of new construction should relate to the village scale in order to strengthen this important design character of the area.

e. Orientation

The orientation of many of the historic structures in the Village Core is vertical (the proportion of the façade is taller than wide). Certain residences, with their additions, may have more of a horizontal orientation. New construction orientation should relate to the proportion of the neighboring historic structure.

f. Materials

Brick and wood are the two most common materials used in historic structures in the Village Core and should be used to reinforce the historic character of the area. The use of artificial siding is not recommended in this district.

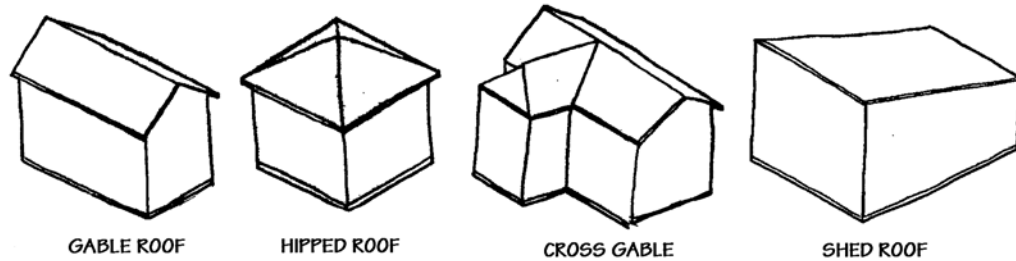


MOST BUILDINGS HAVE EITHER A VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL EXPRESSION. NEW CONSTRUCTION SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THAT OF ITS NEIGHBORS.

g. Roof Forms and Materials

The roof forms of the historic buildings vary in the Village Core. They include gable, hipped and combinations of both on residential structures. Traditional commercial buildings in the area have shed roofs behind parapet walls and cornice lines. New construction in the area should use these roof forms depending on the location of the building and the roof forms of neighboring buildings. Note that the roof pitches of historic buildings are often steeper than modern construction. Shallow pitched roofs are not recommended in the Village Core. The roofs of the remaining historic structures in the Village Core have long since lost their original materials and most have been replaced by asphalt shingles. Metal and wood shingle roofs

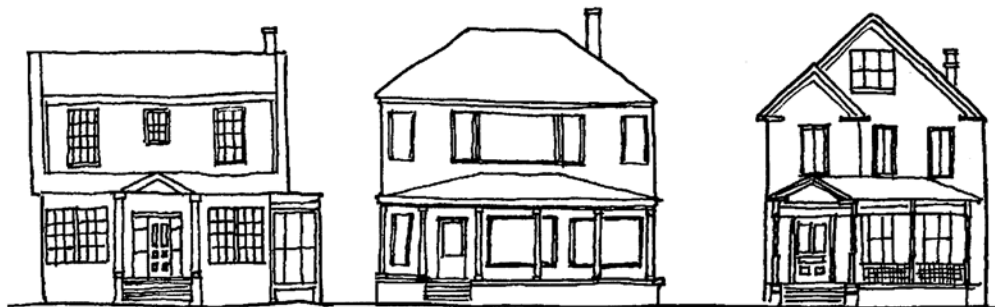
were also used in many of the older structures and both are appropriate to use in this area. Some textured asphalt shingles resemble wood or slate and may be appropriate.



FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION IN THE VILLAGE CORE, RESPECT THE ROOF TYPE AND MATERIALS OF NEARBY BUILDINGS.

h. Entrances and Windows

If the building is a typical commercial design, the entry should be part of the storefront that would contain display windows. Upper floors would contain a row of traditionally scaled windows. If the new construction is near historic residences, the entry would typically be from some sort of porch and the entrance could be articulated with a transom and sidelights. Overall, the total amount and size of openings in relation to the solid wall area, within these historic residences, is minimal in comparison with more recent structures. Windows in these buildings may have six-over-six, two-over-two or one-over-one double hung sash. The size, type and configuration of windows of new construction should relate to these historic examples in the Village Core.



THIS NEW BUILDING IN THE MIDDLE DOES NOT RESPECT THE EXISTING RATIO OF OPENINGS TO SOLID WALLS AMONG ITS NEIGHBORS.



BY MINIMIZING THE AREA OF OPENINGS TO SOLID WALLS, THIS STRUCTURE FIT IN PROPERLY AMONG ITS NEIGHBORS. THE ROOF STYLE ALSO ENHANCES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

i. Access for Disabled Persons

Commercial building entrances shall be designed to accommodate access for disabled persons. See the building code for more specific requirements.

j. Architectural Details

Architectural details vary considerably throughout the district depending on the period and style of the building. Details of historic houses may include columns, decorative railings, brackets on porches and cornices, bay windows, decorative caps or contrasting lintels over windows and doors, window shutters and corbelled brick chimneys. Details of commercial structures may include decorative brick patterns or brick rows above the storefront and at the roof cornice line. New construction within the Village Core should relate in terms of details to older structures within the district.

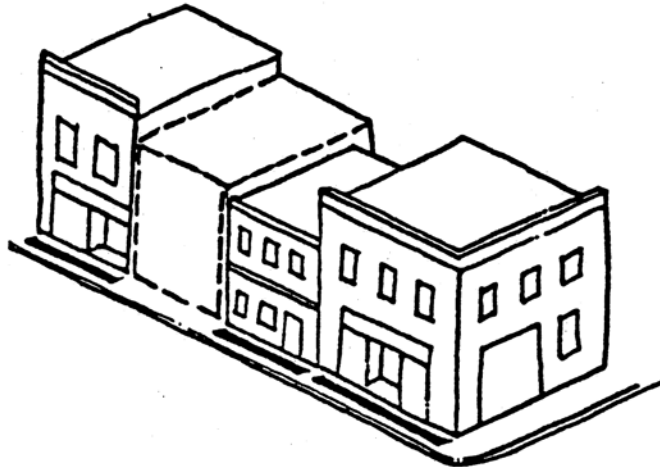
k. Utilities/Mechanical

Roof mounted mechanical units should be screened from the street and painted to match the color of the building.

2. Site Planning

a. Setbacks

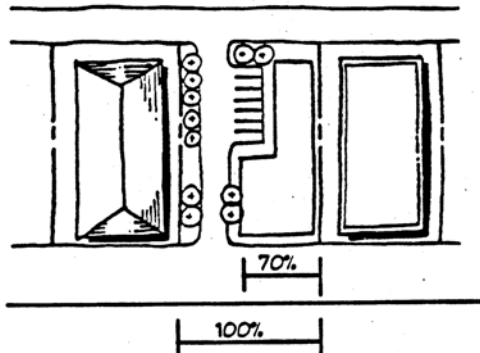
Locate new construction between 80 and 120 percent of the average setback from the street established by the existing adjacent historic buildings. If all the buildings in the vicinity have the same setback, respect that line.



NEW STRUCTURES SHOULD ALWAYS RESPECT THE SETBACK LINE OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS IN THE VICINITY.

b. Street Frontage

The portion of the street frontage occupied by the structure should be at least 70% of the parcel frontage. This is also intended to provide a more urban “street front” and encourage linearity.

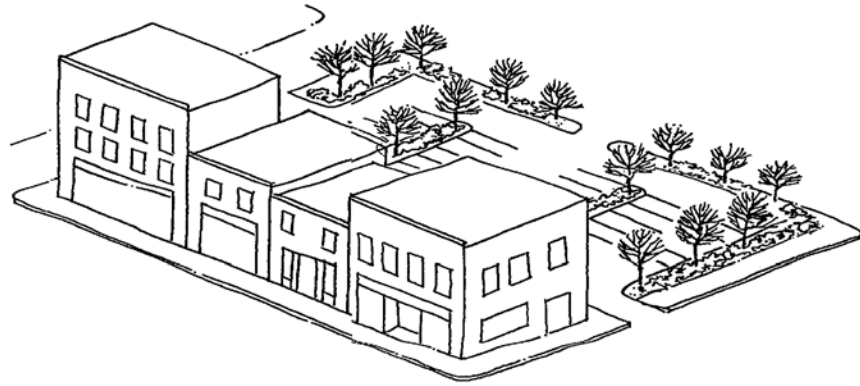


BY REQUIRING NEW CONSTRUCTION TO OCCUPY 70% OF THE PARCEL FRONTAGE, A MORE URBAN "STREETFRONT" IS CREATED.

c. Site Access

Access is to be from the front or side streets. More than one vehicular access point is discouraged. This is intended to encourage pedestrian use and visibility from Mentor Avenue.

d. Site Parking



THE URBAN "STREETSCAPE" IS PRESERVED BY PLACING PARKING IN THE REAR. THE ADDED LANDSCAPING CREATES A BUFFER TO THE STREET WHILE ALSO PROVIDING VISUAL RELIEF FROM LARGE EXPANSES OF PAVEMENT.

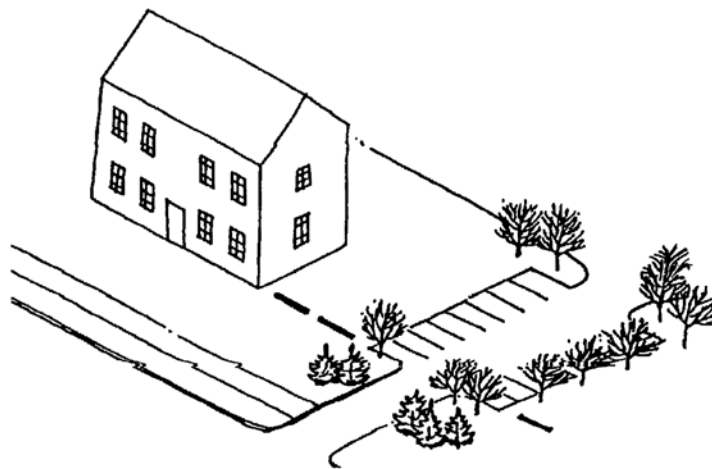
- i. Parking should be located in the rear or sides. Parking is not recommended on any portion of the site parallel to and adjoining Mentor Avenue between the principal building and perpendicular to the street. Parking must be accommodated on-site, but can be combined to create common (public or private) lots.
- ii. Only one curb cut is recommended per site.
- iii. Avoid demolishing buildings for parking lots.
- iv. Screen parking lots from streets and sidewalks with trees, walls and landscaping.
- v. Provide landscape islands in parking lots of fifteen or more parking spaces.
- vi. Protect planting areas in parking lots of fifteen or more parking spaces.
- vii. Provide water in parking lots for plant maintenance.

- viii. Provide adequate lighting for security in evening hours that does not reflect on adjoining properties, if possible, and is appropriate to the scale of the building.
 - ix. Modify parking requirements in cases where a hardship is imposed on the property owner and where mitigation is included in the application.
- e. Site Landscaping
- i. Open Space

A ten foot strip of open space is recommended along the frontage of the property. However, based on the surroundings, if adjacent buildings to the property are located substantially closer than ten feet from the right-of-way, this open space requirement should be waived. Buildings should then be encouraged to align with adjacent structures when they do not obstruct views for entering traffic.

- ii. Perimeter of Parking Lot

Parking should be located behind the front setback line of the building and screened with a period decorative fence and/or landscape material.



WHEN PARKING LOTS ARE PLACED ON THE SIDES, THEY SHOULD BE SCREENED & PLACED BEHIND THE FRONT LINE OF THE BUILDING.

iii. Interior Landscaping

The interior of parking lots with fifteen or more parking spaces should be landscaped. Interior landscaping for parking lots with fewer than twenty parking spaces is optional.

All trees planted in landscaped areas should be at least three inches caliper. Shrubs used for buffering or screening should be a minimum 18” high. Trees and other landscape material should be controlled by pruning, trimming or other suitable methods so that plant materials do not interfere with public utilities, restrict pedestrian or vehicular access or otherwise constitute a traffic hazard.

All planted areas should be maintained in a relatively weed-free condition and clear of undergrowth.

All plantings should be fertilized and irrigated at such intervals as are necessary to promote optimum growth.

All trees, shrubs, ground covers and other plant materials should be replaced if they die or become unhealthy because of accidents, drainage problems, diseases or other causes.

The owner, tenant and their agent, if any, should be jointly and severally responsible for the maintenance of all landscaping in good condition so as to present a healthy, neat and orderly appearance and should be kept free from refuse and debris.

- iv. To minimize the impact of the mechanical equipment on the appearance of the building and the community, window air conditioning units or condenser elements should not be located on the front facades. Antennas should be located where they are not visible on the front façade. Mechanical equipment on the ground should be screened with a fence or plant materials or housed in a structure that is in harmony with the surroundings. Mechanical equipment attached to the side or roof of a building, including heating vents, should be kept as low as possible, concealed by a parapet wall and/or painted to blend with the background. Electrical service should be underground or provided from the rear where possible.

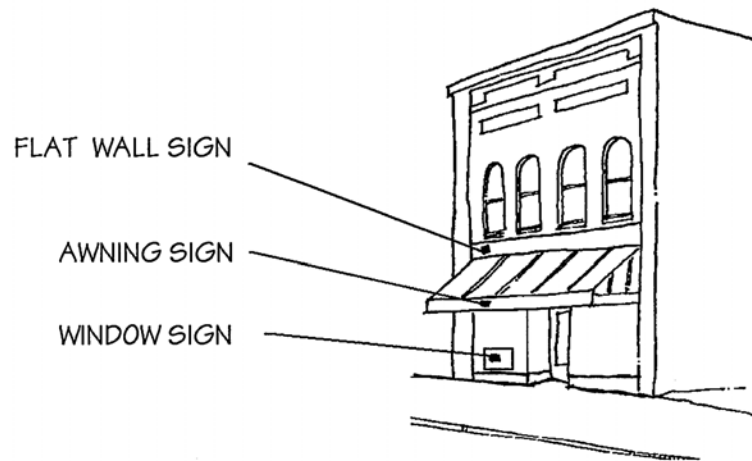
- v. All trash dumpsters should be screened and located to the rear of the lots.

3. Signs

Many of the present signs in the Village Core do not contribute to the historic character of the area. Several of the signs are large; roof mounted and made of plastic. The following guidelines for signs are particularly important in creating the feeling of an intimate village atmosphere in this area of Mentor Avenue.

a. Location

- i. On traditional commercial buildings, flat wall signs should be placed above the storefront, within the frieze of the cornice, on covered transoms, on the pier that frames display windows, on flat surfaces of the façade below the second floor windows, or in areas clearly designed as sign locations. Awning signs should be placed only on the valance of the awning.



SIGN LOCATIONS FOR TRADITIONAL COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS.

- ii. On a free-standing building that is setback from the street, such as a historic residence, the location of the sign may be mounted on the wall of the building below the second floor windows. Freestanding signs may be set on posts and placed in front of the setback building. They should not be higher than eight feet.



SIGN LOCATIONS FOR A FREE-STANDING BUILDING.

- iii. Signs mounted on the roof of a building are not permitted.
 - iv. Maintain clear site distance when locating signs.
- b. Type
- i. On a traditional commercial building, signs can be flat wall-mounted, painted on glass display windows, or project from over the storefront.
 - ii. On a free-standing building that is setback from the street, such as a historic residence, signs can be flat wall-mounted or freestanding in front of the building.
- c. Size
- i. On a traditional commercial building the total area of the sign shall not exceed 1.5 square feet per 1.0 linear foot of building frontage. Window signs should not obscure any more than twenty-five percent of the window glass. Projecting signs should not exceed ten square feet in area and should be placed at least feet above the sidewalk, and should project no more than four feet from the building. (Note: the sign code does not permit projecting signs to exceed eighteen inches.)
 - ii. On a freestanding building that is setback from the street, such as a historic residentially styled building, the total area of all signs should not exceed thirty square feet and no single freestanding sign should exceed twenty square feet. Its height should not exceed eight feet.



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- d. Material
 - i. Use traditional materials such as carved wood, glass, gold leaf raised individual metal or painted wood letters, and painted letters on wood, metal or glass.
 - ii. Wall signs should not be painted directly on the wall of the building.
 - iii. Window signs should be painted or have flat decal letters.
- e. Lighting
 - i. Incandescent lighting should be used to illuminate signs in the Village Core.
 - ii. Self-illuminated backlit plastic molded signs are not recommended.

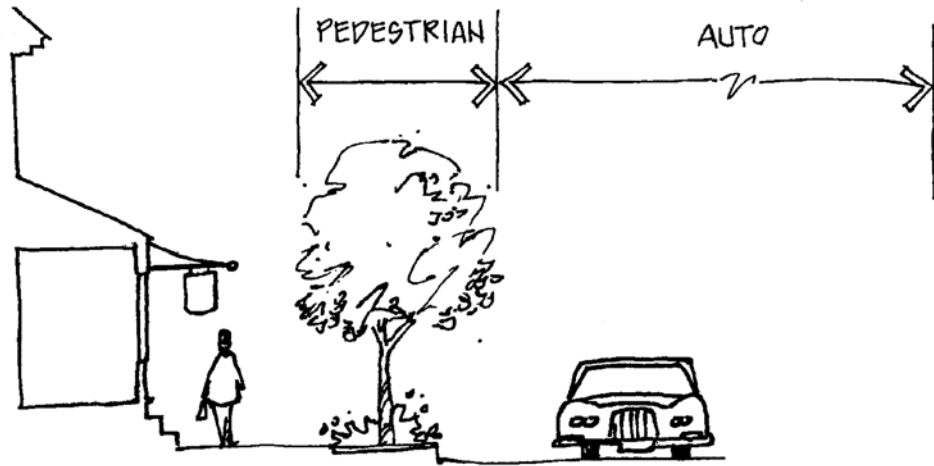
4. Streetscape

a. Streets

Potential conflicts between pedestrians and automobiles can be reduced by eliminating or avoiding large curb cuts through major sidewalks. Intersections can also be redesigned to accommodate pedestrians by widening sidewalks.

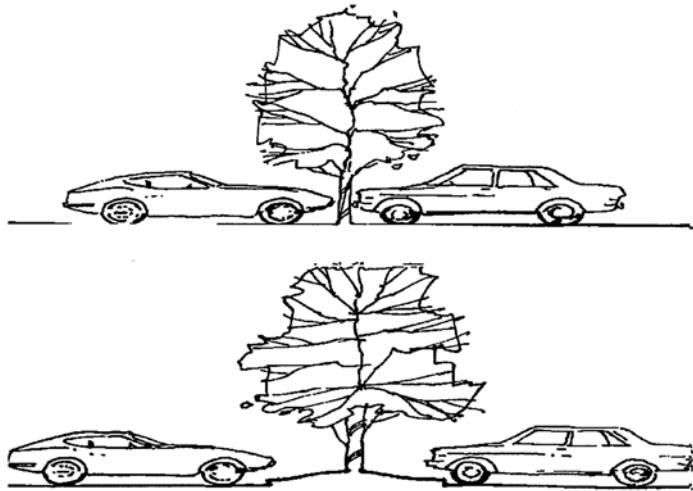
b. Pedestrian Sidewalks and Curbs

Among the most important functional concerns is the need to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian circulation. The widening of sidewalks and the removal of impediments, such as utility poles, can provide better pedestrian flow. Public improvements can also be used to define major paths between parking areas and downtown stores, to create pedestrian walkways through or along the edges of large paved parking lots and, in general, to separate shoppers from vehicular traffic.



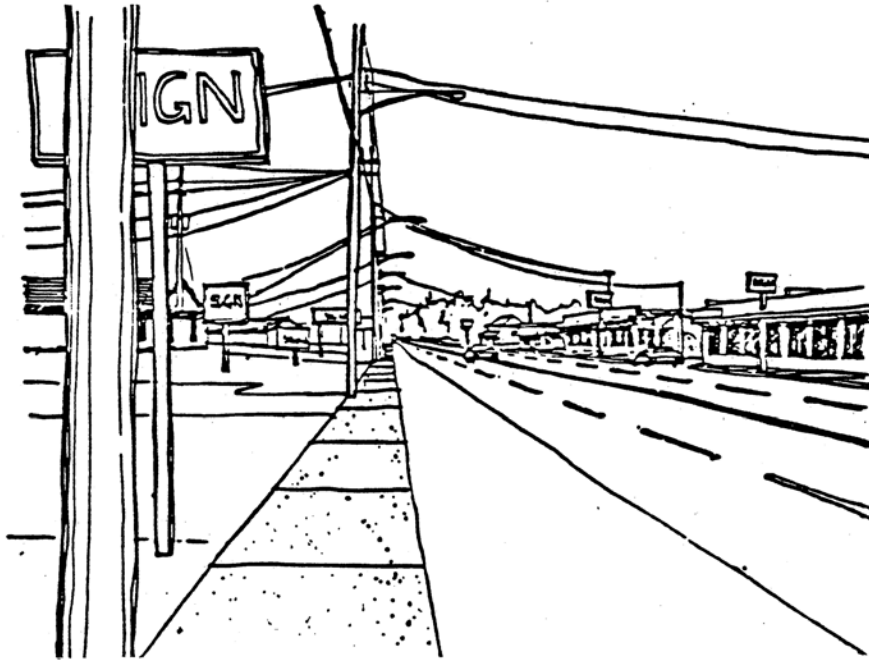
A RAISED CROSSWALK AND LANDSCAPE EDGE DISTINGUISH THE PEDESTRIAN ROUTE FROM THE VEHICULAR.

- i. Along Mentor Avenue, there should be clearly designated routes for pedestrians between the street, the parking area, and the main entrance along both sides of the street. A raised walkway is preferred, with crosswalks designated by pavers or scored concrete across vehicular lanes. Trees and other plantings should be provided along the walkway. Sidewalks should be provided along both sides of the street.
- c. Street Trees and Planting
- i. Create an edge on both sides of the street.
 - ii. Protect plantings from pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
 - iii. Select hardy plant species that require minimal maintenance.
 - iv. Do not demolish buildings to provide open areas for plantings.

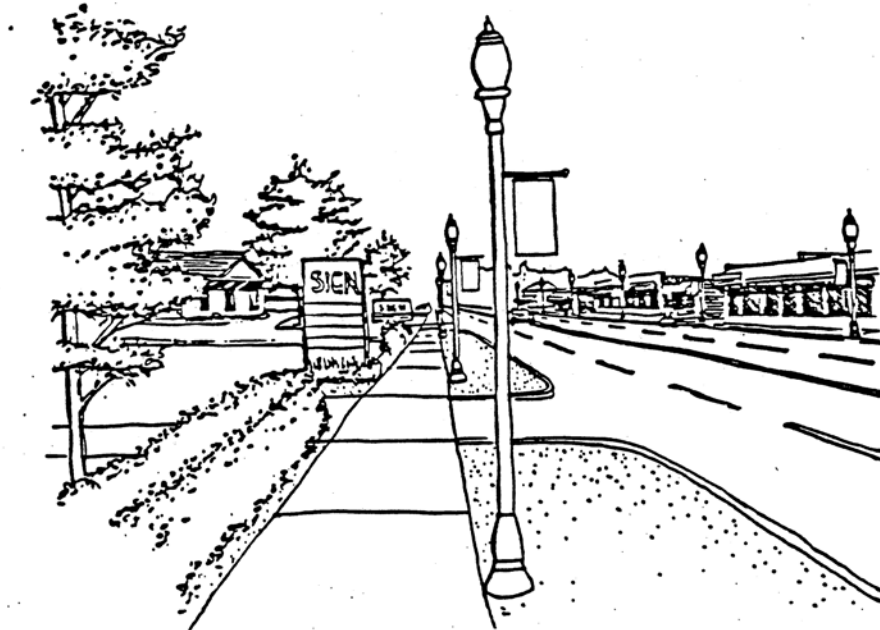


PROTECT PLANTING AREAS IN PARKING LOTS FROM DAMAGE BY VEHICLES.

- v. All plant growth in landscaped areas should be controlled by pruning, trimming or other suitable methods so that plant materials do not interfere with public utilities, restrict pedestrian or vehicular access or otherwise constitute a traffic hazard.
 - vi. All planted areas should be maintained in a relatively weed-free condition and clear of undergrowth.
 - vii. All plantings should be fertilized and irrigated at such intervals as are necessary to promote optimum growth.
 - viii. All trees, shrubs, grounds covers and other plant materials must be replaced if they die or become unhealthy because of accidents, drainage problems, disease or other causes.
- d. Lighting
- i. Use pedestrian-scaled light fixtures throughout the Village Core. Base the design on any historically styled fixtures that may have formerly been used in the district.



THE CORRIDOR IS MARRED BY OVERHEAD WIRES, UNATTRACTIVE STREET LIGHTING, DISTRACTING SIGNS, AND UNSCREENED PARKING LOTS.



THE APPEARANCE OF THE STREET CAN BE IMPROVED BY LOCATING UTILITIES UNDERGROUND, INSTALLING COMPATIBLE PUBLIC LIGHTING, CONTROLLING SIGNS, AND SCREENING PARKING LOTS.

- ii. Provide adequate lighting at critical areas of pedestrian/vehicular conflict such as parking lots and crosswalks.
- iii. Coordinate lighting in private parking lots to insure their compatibility with the City's fixtures.
- iv. Consider lighting important facades and steeples to provide focal points for the district in evening hours.
- v. Provide outlets on light standards for seasonal lighting and brackets for hanging banners and decorations for special events on the commercial corridor streets.
- vi. Keep to a minimum the number of styles of light fixtures and light sources used in the district.

e. Fences On-Site

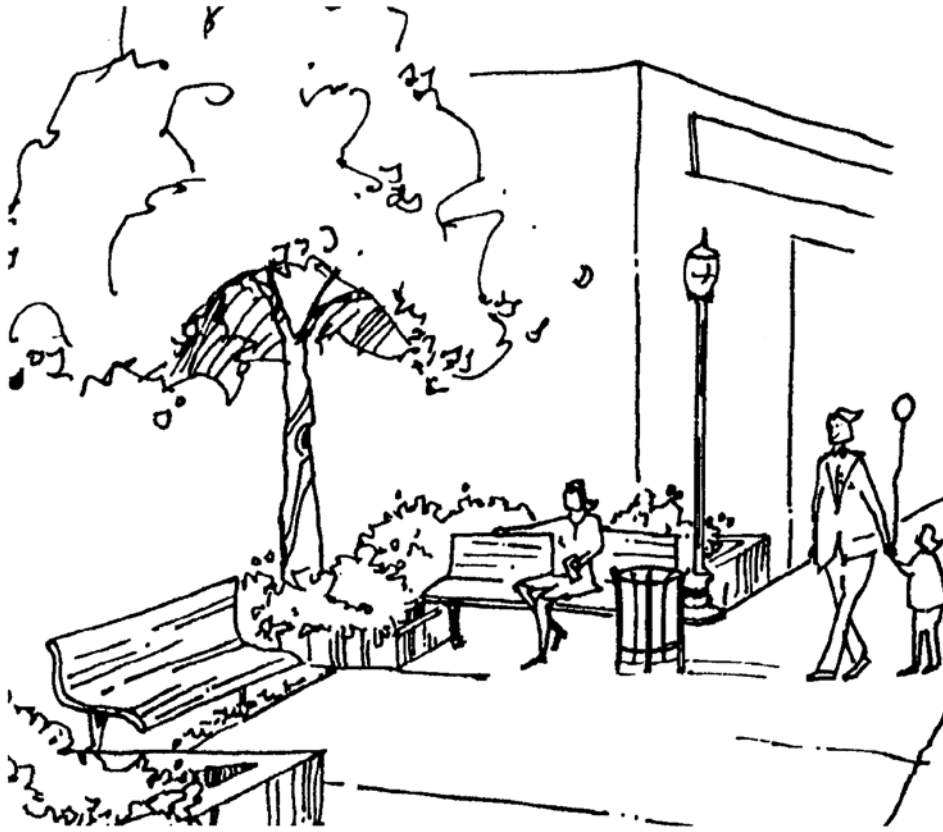
Where fences are used, they should be decorative and constructed of wood, iron, stone or plant materials. These should not exceed three feet in height in the front yard. Chain-link or metal fences, concrete block, plastic fiberglass or plywood fences are not permitted. Solid (privacy) wood fences recommended only for screening rear yard parking, storage or dumpsters.

f. Retaining Walls

Retaining walls should be of dry stone or masonry. Unfaced concrete or concrete block are not recommended.

g. Street Furniture

The City should attempt to integrate particular elements of the Mentor Avenue corridor. These elements include benches, trash receptacles, and planters. Many of these elements are currently being placed in the corridor. Painted metal and wood materials in traditional designs are recommended instead of contemporary designs and plastic materials.



STREET FURNITURE, SUCH AS BENCHES, TRASH RECEPTACLES, AND PLANTERS, ARE AMENITIES WHICH UNIFY THE STREET CORRIDOR.

- h. Pedestrian Signals
 - i. Install pedestrian signals as needed. These would particularly be useful on Mentor Avenue where the vehicular traffic is heavy.
 - ii. Transformers should be located so that they are visually unobtrusive and concealed with landscape materials.
 - iii. Develop long-range plans to place existing utilities underground or along rear yards.
 - iv. Screen surface equipment.