

## SECTION 11. ADDITIONAL STANDARDS OF APPROVAL

The basic **site plan review** system set out in Section 9 incorporates basic standards that address issues related to public health, public safety, and environmental protection. **Site plan review** offers the community the opportunity to go beyond these basic considerations to address how a project can be designed so that it is a “good neighbor” and so that it is compatible with the character of the community or neighborhood in which it is located.

This section includes additional standards that communities may want to include in their **site plan review** provisions to address these “good neighbor” and design considerations.

*A special note of caution is in order with respect to the design standards. Any design standards that you include must be tailored to the character of your community and the particular situations that exist. The standards included here are provided as examples of how these issues can be addressed. Any requirement will need to be customized to your community. In addition, some of these design standards may be more appropriately included in your zoning ordinance so that they apply only in particular circumstances or locations in your community.*

*Discussion*

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● **Good Neighbor Standards**

*This group of standards deals with how the proposed development relates to neighboring properties and how negative impacts on those neighbors are minimized or prevented. Use these standards if your community is concerned about these issues.*

*This standard deals with exterior lighting on the site.*

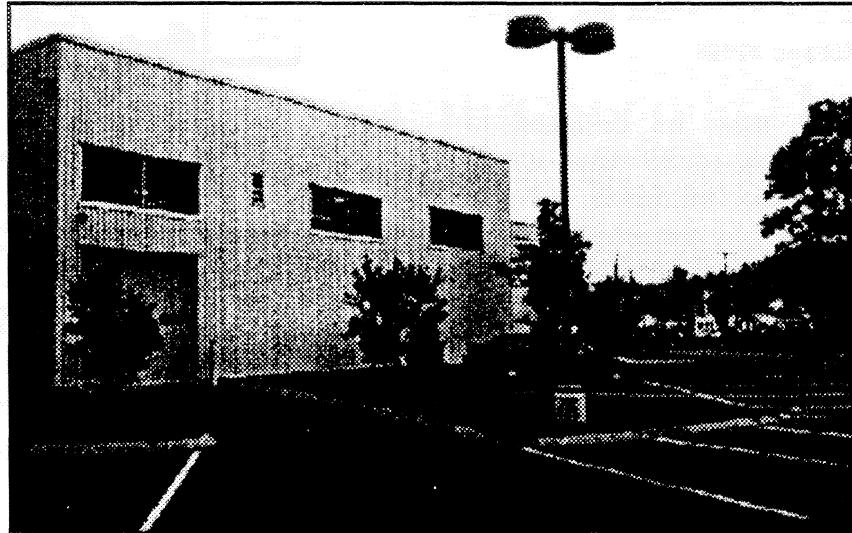
**1. Exterior Lighting**

- “Exterior Lighting** - The proposed development must have adequate exterior lighting to provide for its safe use during nighttime hours, if such use is contemplated. All exterior lighting must be designed and shielded to avoid undue glare, adverse impact on neighboring properties and rights-of-way, and the unnecessary lighting of the night sky.”

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*Discussion*

*This alternative standard provides specific criteria that site lighting must meet. You should review the illumination standards to assure that it is reasonable in your community.*



An Exterior Light Designed to Shine Down and not Light the Night Sky

*This standard deals with creating buffers between different types of uses.*

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- “Exterior Lighting** - The proposed development must have adequate exterior lighting to provide for its safe use during nighttime hours, if such use is contemplated.

Lighting may be used which serves security, safety and operational needs but which does not directly or indirectly produce deleterious effects on abutting properties or which would impair the vision of a vehicle operator on adjacent roadways. Lighting fixtures must be shielded or hooded so that the lighting elements are not exposed to normal view by motorists, pedestrians, or from adjacent dwellings and so that they do not unnecessarily light the night sky. Direct or indirect illumination must not exceed 0.5 footcandles at the lot line or upon abutting residential properties.

All exterior lighting, except security lighting, must be turned off between 11 P.M. and 6 A.M. unless located on the site of a commercial or industrial use which is open for business during that period.

Wiring to light poles and standards must be underground.”

**2. Buffering of Adjacent Uses**

- “Buffering** - The development must provide for the buffering of adjacent uses where there is a transition from one type of use to another use and for the screening of mechanical equipment and service and storage areas. The buffer may be provided by distance, landscaping, fencing, changes in grade, and/or a combination of these or other techniques.”

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OR  
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*Discussion*

*This alternative provides some additional specificity for the buffering standard.*



Exterior Air Conditioning Equipment  
Shielded by Landscaping

*You should review the requirement for buffer width and adjust it if necessary to fit your situation.*

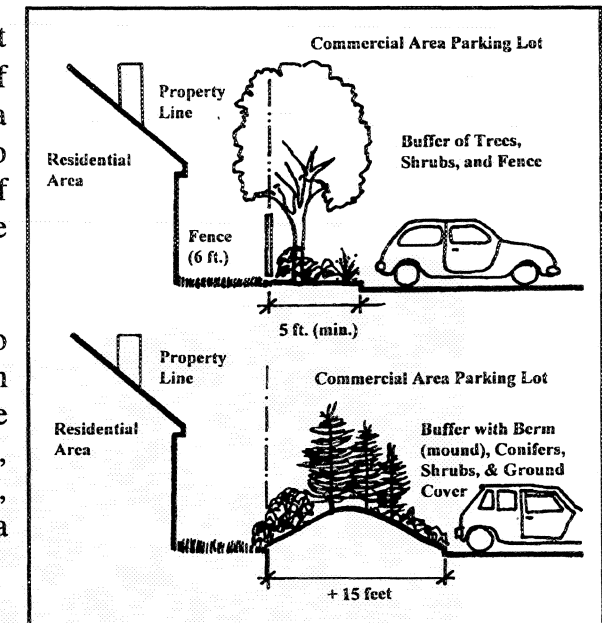


A Buffer of Trees and Shrubs

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- “Buffering** - The development must provide for the buffering of adjacent uses where there is a transition from one type of use to another use and for screening of mechanical equipment and service and storage areas.

Buffering must be designed to provide a year-round visual screen in order to minimize adverse impacts. It may consist of fencing, evergreens, berms, rocks, boulders, mounds, or a combination thereof.



A development must provide sufficient buffering when topographical or other barriers do not provide reasonable screening and where there is a need to:

- a. shield neighboring properties from any adverse external effects of the development, or
- b. shield the development from the negative impacts of adjacent uses.

The width of the buffer may vary depending on the treatment of the area. Within densely built-up areas, a buffer with dense plantings, fencing, or changes in grade may be as little as five (5) feet in width. A buffer with moderate levels of planting should be ten (10) feet to fifteen (15) feet in width. In suburban and rural settings, the width of the vegetated buffer should be increased to a minimum of twenty-five (25) feet. Areas adjacent to service, loading, or storage areas should be screened by dense planting, berms, fencing, or a combination thereof with a width of a minimum of five (5) feet.”

*Discussion*

*This standard addresses sound level issues.*

*This alternative standard establishes specific criteria for noise levels associated with various activities.*

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3. Noise

“Noise - The development must control noise levels such that it will not create a nuisance for neighboring properties.”

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OR
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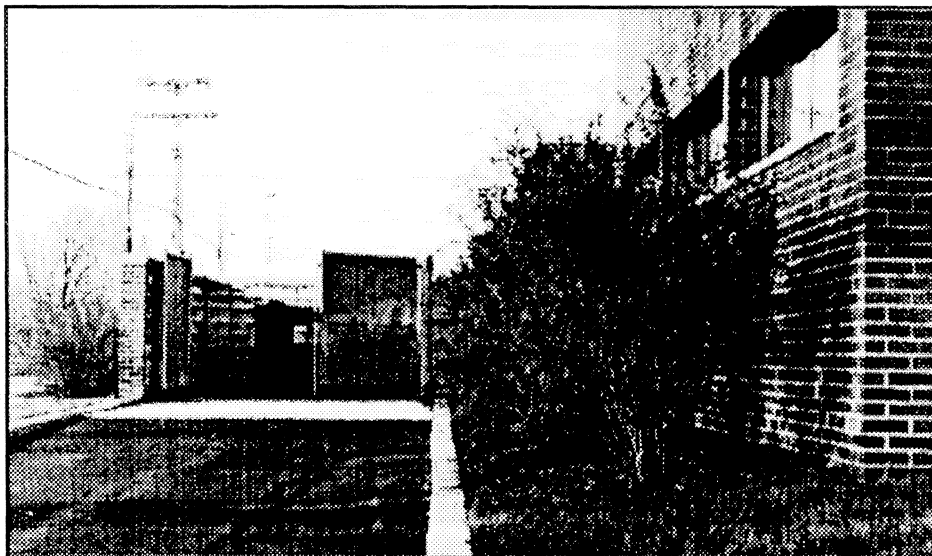
“Noise - The maximum permissible sound pressure level of any continuous, regular or frequent or intermittent source of sound produced by any activity on the site shall be limited by the time period and by the abutting land use as listed below. Sound levels shall be measured at least four (4) feet above ground at the property boundary of the source.

Sound Pressure Level Limits Using the Sound Equivalent Level of One Minute (leq 1) (Measured in dB(a) Scale)		
<u>Abutting Use</u>	<u>7 a.m.- 10 p.m.- 10 p.m.</u>	<u>10 p.m.- 7 a.m.</u>
Residential	55	45
Residential located in a commercial-industrial district	65	55
Public, semipublic and institutional	60	55
Vacant or rural	60	55
Commercial	65	55
Industrial	70	60

*Discussion*

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*This standard provides for the location and screening of storage areas.*



A Dumpster Hidden Behind a Brick Wall Enclosure with Gated Entrance

Noise shall be measured by a meter set on the A-weighted response scale, fast response. The meter shall meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI S1 4-1961) 'American Standards Specification for General Purpose Sound Level Meters.'

No person shall engage in construction activities, on a site abutting any residential use between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m."

**4. Storage of Materials**

- "Storage of Materials - Exposed nonresidential storage areas, exposed machinery, and areas used for the storage or collection of discarded automobiles, auto parts, metals or other articles of salvage or refuse must have sufficient setbacks and screening (such as a stockade fence or a dense evergreen hedge) to provide a visual buffer sufficient to minimize their impact on abutting residential uses and users of public streets.

All dumpsters or similar large collection receptacles for trash or other wastes must be located on level surfaces which are paved or graveled. Where the dumpster or receptacle is located in a yard which abuts a residential or institutional use or a public street, it must be screened by fencing or landscaping.

Where a potential safety hazard to children is likely to arise, physical screening sufficient to deter small children from entering the premises must be provided and maintained in good condition."

*Discussion*

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● **Design Standards**

*These standards address the physical appearance of the project and its relationship to the neighborhood. It is very important that any visual and design standards included in your ordinance be compatible with the visual environment of your community. While the standards provided here are reasonable for many Maine communities, you may need to customize them to reflect local conditions. Some of these standards are suitable for urban or built-up environments, while others are appropriate for rural environments.*



A Buffer of Lawn, Shrubs, and Trees in Front of Stores Along Route

*This standard addresses the basic placement of the building on the site and the overall layout of the site.*

**1. Landscaping**

- “Landscaping** -Landscaping must be provided as part of site design. The landscape plan for the entire site must use landscape materials to integrate the various elements on site, preserve and enhance the particular identity of the site, and create a pleasing site character. The landscaping should define street edges, break up parking areas, soften the appearance of the development, and protect abutting properties.

Landscaping may include plant materials such as trees, shrubs, groundcovers, perennials, and annuals, and other materials such as rocks, water, sculpture, art, walls, fences, paving materials, and street furniture.”

**2. Building Placement**

- “Building Placement** - The site design should avoid creating a building surrounded by a parking lot. In urban, built-up areas and in villages, buildings should be placed close to the street, in conformance with existing, adjacent setbacks. Parking should be to the side or preferably in the back.

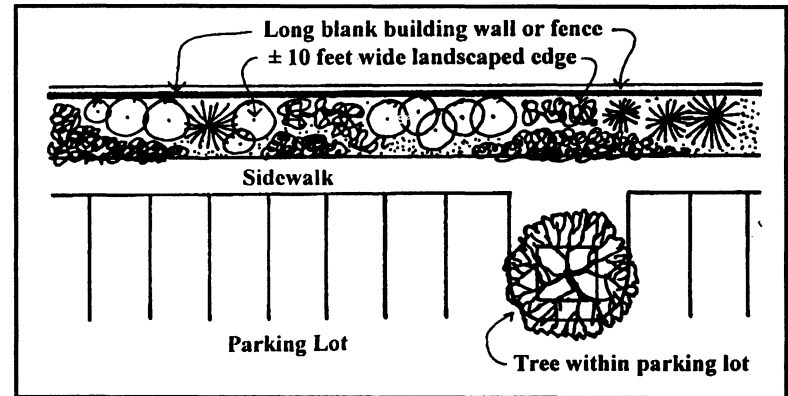
In rural, uncongested areas buildings should be set well back from the road so as

*Discussion*

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to conform with the rural character of the area. If the parking is in front, a generous, landscaped buffer between road and parking lot is to be provided. Unused areas should be kept natural, as field, forest, wetland, etc.

Where two or more buildings are proposed, the buildings should be grouped and linked with sidewalks; tree planting should be used to provide shade and break up the scale of the site. Parking areas should be separated from the building by a minimum of five (5) to ten (10) feet. Plantings should be provided along the building edge, particularly where building facades consist of long or unbroken walls.”



**3. Building Illumination**

- “Building Illumination** - Building facades may be illuminated with soft lighting of low intensity that does not draw inordinate attention to the building. The light source for the building facade illumination must be concealed.

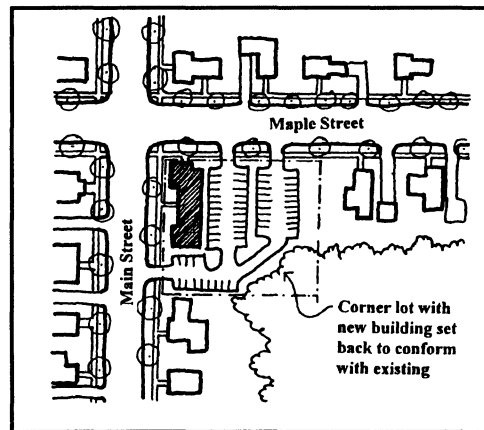
Building entrances may be illuminated using recessed lighting in overhangs and soffits, or by use of spotlighting focused on the building entrances with the light source concealed (e.g., in landscaped areas). Direct lighting of limited exterior building areas is permitted when necessary for security purposes.”

*This standard addresses the illumination of buildings.*

*Discussion*

*This standard requires that the main entrance be oriented toward the street. This is appropriate in village or urban settings and other situations where there is a consistent character.*

*This standard requires the placement of new buildings to conform to established setback lines.*

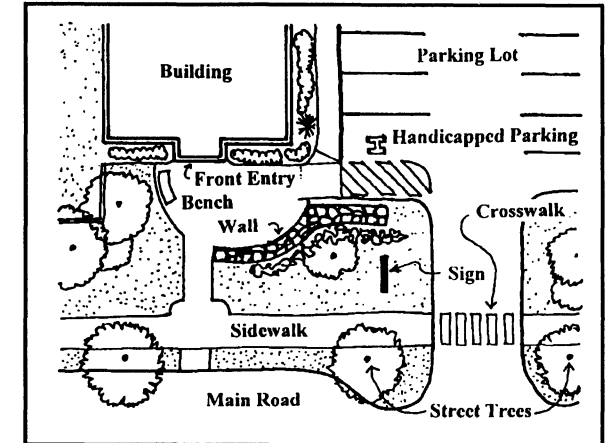


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**4. Building Entrances**

- “Building Entrances** - The main entrance to the building should be oriented to the street unless the parking layout or the grouping of the buildings justifies another approach, and should be clearly identified as such through building and site design, landscaping, and/or signage.”

At building entrance areas and drop-off areas, site furnishings such as benches and sitting walls and, if appropriate, bicycle racks shall be encouraged. Additional plantings may be desirable at these points to identify the building entrance and to complement the pedestrian activity at this point.”



**5. Setback and Alignment of Buildings**

- “Setback and Alignment of Buildings** - Where there is a reasonably uniform relationship between the front walls of buildings and the street, new buildings must be placed on a lot in conformance with the established relationship. For buildings on corner lots, the setback relationship of both streets should be maintained. The creation of ‘empty corners’ should be avoided through the placement of the building and other site features.”



*Discussion*

*This standard addresses the placement type and size of business signs that are appropriate in various situations. A 4' x 4' or 4' x 8' sized sign is usually adequate. If your zoning ordinance addresses signs, the provisions of your site plan review process must be consistent with those requirements.*



An effective sign that uses a symbol to catch the eyes. It is about 8 feet high and 4 feet wide.

*This standard addresses the treatment of sidewalks. This provision may need to be customized to match existing practices in your community.*

*Model Ordinance Provisions***6. Business Signs**

- “Business Signs** - Freestanding commercial business signs should be placed at right angles to the street so as to be viewed from both directions. Simple, geometrically shaped signs set low the ground must be used. Minimize the number of words and use symbols to catch the eye. Signs shall be no larger than 4' x 4' or 4' x 8'.

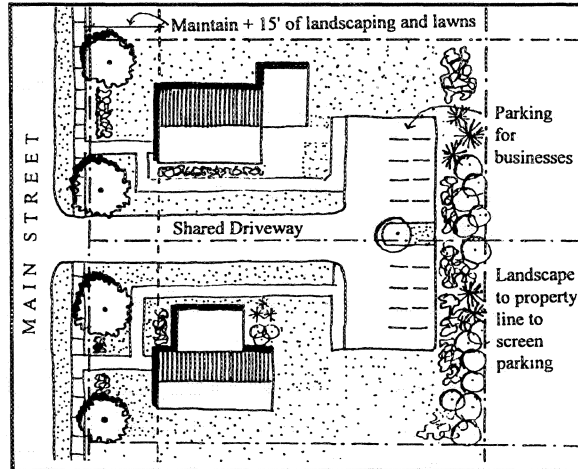
In urban, built-up areas commercial business signs must be placed on the building, unless visibility is impaired and a freestanding sign is the best option.”

**7. Sidewalks**

- “Sidewalks** - Where an existing or planned public sidewalk is interrupted by a proposed project driveway, the sidewalk material must continue to be maintained across the driveway, or the driveway must be painted to distinguish it as a sidewalk. Further, if street trees exist on an adjacent property, street trees must be planted, in a like manner, on the new site. In urban situations a widening of the sidewalk onto private property to encourage window shopping and an improved streetscape should be encouraged. Benches, sculpture, planters and other street furniture should be encouraged.”

*Discussion*

*This standard requires parking to be put at the side or rear of buildings in built-up areas.*



*This standard requires the creation of a landscaped buffer along the road when parking is located in front of a building.*



An Example of Attractive Lights and Trees along a Buffer Strip

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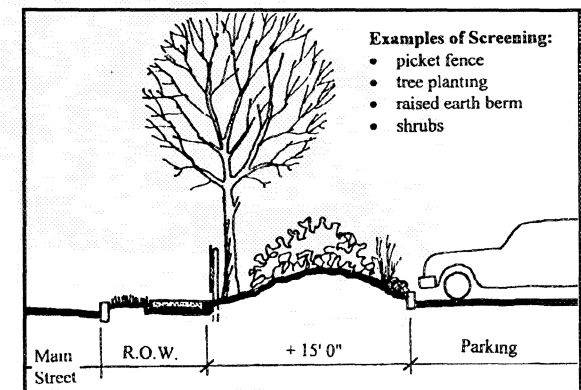
**8. Location of Off-Street Parking**

- “Location of Off-Street Parking** - Within built-up areas, parking lots should be located to the side or rear of the building. Parking should not be located between the building and the street. The use of shared parking, shared driveways and the cross-connection of parking lots is encouraged.

In suburban and rural areas, smaller uses that may need public visibility from the street should be sited as close to the street as possible. In this case, not more than one row of parking shall be allowed between the building and the street, with the balance of the parking located at the side and/or rear of the building. Larger scale uses and uses which do not require visibility from the road may be located further from the road with a landscaped buffer between the building and the street.”

**9. Landscaped Roadside Buffers**

- “Landscaped Roadside Buffers** - Whenever the area between the street and the front of the building is used for parking or vehicle movement, a vegetated buffer strip must be established along the edge of the road right-of-way. This buffer strip must soften the appearance of the site from the road and must create defined points of access to and egress from the site. The width of the buffer strip must increase with the setback of the building as follows:



*Discussion*

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Building Setback	Buffer Width
< 50 feet	10 feet
50-74 feet	15 feet
75-99 feet	20 feet
100 feet or more	25 feet

Where the buffer cannot be achieved, a low wall, fence, or hedge may be used to create the buffer.”

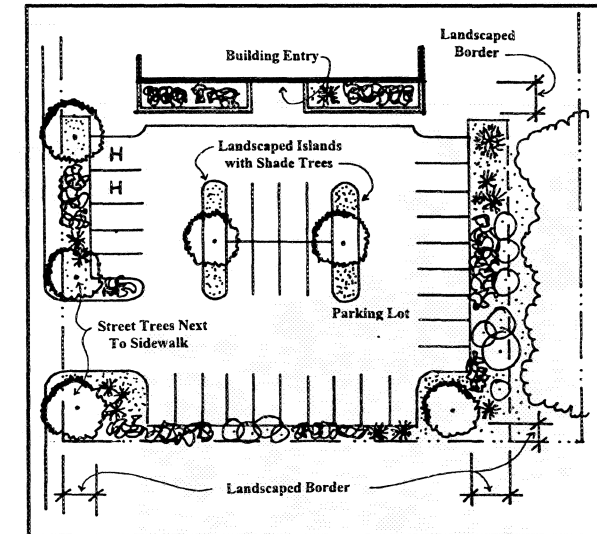
*This requires landscaping within parking lots.*



Generous tree and shrub plantings within the parking lot break up what could be a sea of asphalt.

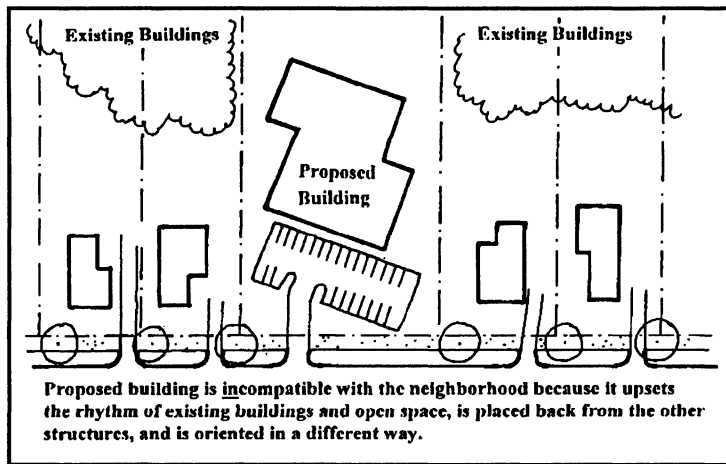
**10. Landscaping of Parking Lots**

- “**Landscaping of Parking Lots** - Landscaping around and within parking lots shades hot surfaces and visually “softens” the hard surface look of parking areas. Parking areas must be designed and landscaped to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. A landscaped border must be created around parking lots. Any parking lot containing ten (10) or more parking spaces must include one (1) or more landscaped islands within the interior of the lot. There must be at least one (1) island for every twenty (20) spaces. Landscaping must screen the parking area from adjacent residential uses and from the street.”

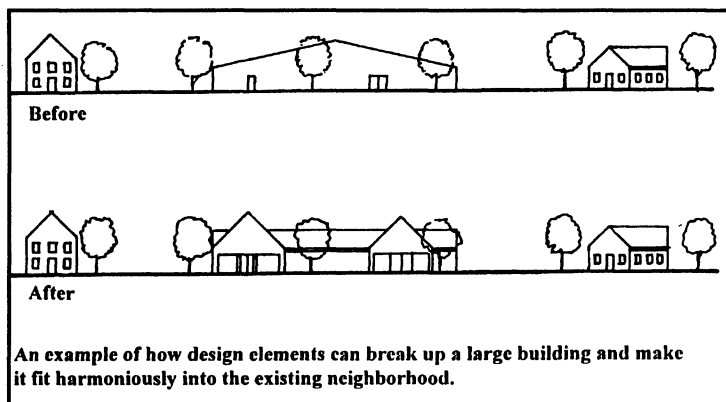


*Discussion*

*This standard deals with how the building is sited on the lot when the project is within a built-up area.*



*This standard addresses the scale of buildings and the way in which larger buildings can be designed to minimize their apparent size.*



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**11. Building Orientation**

- “Building Orientation** - New buildings within a built-up area should be compatible with the neighborhood such that they reflect the overall building bulk, square footage, dimensions, placement of the building on the lot, and rhythm of buildings and spaces along the street edge and minimize the visual impact on the neighborhood. The visual impact of a building shall be measured by its relationship to other buildings on the lot, design of the front of the building, and the rhythm of buildings and open spaces along the street.”

**12. Building Scale**

- “Building Scale** - When large new buildings or structures are proposed in built-up areas where their scale (size) and other features may be significantly different from that which already exists in the immediate neighborhood, care must be taken to design the new building or structure so that it is compatible with its neighbors. This may include making the building appear small, using traditional materials, styles and/or proportions.”

*Discussion*

*This standard addresses the location and layout of drive-throughs.*

*This standard deals with protecting views from public roads or land. It addresses views that have previously been "identified" as being important to the community. The list of views should be included in an official document such as the Comprehensive Plan or the site plan review provisions.*

*This standards addresses development near ridgelines to assure that the silhouette of the structures does not extend above the ridgeline.*

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**13. Design of Drive-Through Facilities**

- “Drive-Through Facilities** - Any use that provides drive-through service must be located and designed to minimize the impact on neighboring properties and traffic circulation. No drive-through facility shall be located in the area of the site adjacent to a residential use or residential zone. Communication systems must not be audible on adjacent properties in residential use. Vehicular access to the drive-through shall be through a separate lane that prevents vehicle queuing within normal parking areas. Adequate queuing space must be provided to prevent any vehicles from having to wait on a public street, within the entry from the street, or within designated parking areas. The drive-through must not interfere with any sidewalk or bicycle path.”

**14. View Protection**

- “View Protection** - When a proposed development is located within the viewshed of an identified view from a public street or facility, the development must be designed to minimize the encroachment of all buildings, structures, landscaping, and other site features on the identified view.”

**15. Ridgeline Protection**

- “Ridgeline Protection** - When a proposed development is located on a hillside that is visible from a public street, road, water body, or facility, the development must be designed so that buildings, structures, and other improvements do not extend above the existing ridgeline or alter the ridge profile significantly when viewed from the public streets, roads, water bodies, or facilities. This provision may be waived for communication towers, spotting towers, and similar facilities that must be located above the ridgeline for operational reasons.”

*Discussion*

*This standard addresses the visual impact of development on hillsides that can be seen from public areas and requires steps to minimize the impact.*

*This standard addresses the visual impact of waterfront development as seen from the water.*

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**16. Hillside Development**

- “Hillside Development** - When a proposed development is located on a hillside that is visible from a public street, road, water body, or facility, the development must be designed so that it fits harmoniously into the visual environment when viewed by the public from public areas. In predominantly natural environments, site clearing must be minimized and vegetation must be retained or provided to minimize the visual intrusion of the development. In developed environments, the appearance of the new development, when viewed by the public from public areas, must be compatible with the existing visual character in terms of scale, massing, and height to the maximum extent reasonable.”

**17. Shoreland Development**

- “Shoreland Development** - When a proposed development is immediately visible from a great pond, river, stream, or the Atlantic Ocean, the development must be designed so that it fits harmoniously into the visual environment when viewed from the water body. In predominantly natural environments, site clearing must be minimized, natural vegetation must be maintained adjacent to the shoreline to soften the appearance of the development, and vegetation must be retained or provided to minimize the visual intrusion of the development. In developed shoreland environments, the appearance of the new development when viewed from the water must be compatible with the existing visual character in terms of scale, massing, and height to the maximum extent possible. Storage and service areas must be screened or landscaped to minimize their visual impact.”