INTRODUCTION
Introduction

These guidelines and the accompanying contents of this workbook have been prepared to assist the merchants, property owners and citizens of Great Barrington in protecting and enhancing the unique character and attractiveness of the principal commercial areas of the town.

The economic vitality of each business enterprise is important, and is linked in part to the vitality of the entire commercial community in Great Barrington. Additionally, the character of the commercial areas contributes greatly to the overall image of the community for its citizens and visitors. By establishing guidelines and a source book for ideas and information, it is hoped that several important public and private objectives can be met, including:

- Enhancement of the commercial success of Great Barrington’s commercial corridor by ensuring a pleasant experience for the patrons of businesses.
- Preservation and enhancement of Great Barrington’s historic buildings and features.
- Preservation and extension of landscaping and open space where it can reinforce the existing rural character and townscape qualities of Great Barrington.
- Recognition that Great Barrington is a community with unique qualities that should be reinforced by designs specific and appropriate to this place.

The guidelines address particular areas of town. Specifically, the guidelines concern the renovation or redevelopment of properties within the commercially zoned areas of Great Barrington along Route 7 from Monument Mountain to the north and to the Sheffield town line to the south. The map on Page 5 outlines this area.

There are several methods through which these guidelines may be applied to prospective projects:

- For properties in designated historic districts, the Historic District Commission may use these guidelines as it formulates recommendations and approvals for proposals.
- The Design Advisory Board will use these guidelines as a resource for its recommendations concerning projects that it reviews, including both renovations and new construction in the downtown “B” zoned districts. The responsibilities of the Design Review Committee and the procedures it follows are contained in a June 1, 1992 amendment of the Zoning Code.
- Special facade improvement design grants or other publicly-funded projects may be required to adhere to these guidelines.
- For other projects, these guidelines may serve as a helpful information base and as a source of ideas for owners, designers and builders.
This document is divided into sections.

The first section relates the history of the commercial areas of Great Barrington and describes current issues and future objectives that have been identified. A brief summary is included describing the organization of the guidelines. A glossary of commonly-used terms is included for reference.

The second section consists of the guidelines, organized by topic.

The final section contains appendices with further information and resource material for those undertaking projects in the commercial areas.

These guidelines have been prepared under the management of the Community Development Coordinator, with participation by the Town Manager, Town Engineer and Town Building Inspector. Participants also included representatives of the Design Advisory Committee, the Main Street Action Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Stockbridge Road Association, the Planning Board, the Historic District Commission, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Great Barrington Historical Society, and representatives from businesses in Great Barrington's commercial areas. Two public workshops were held to solicit additional ideas and recommendations.

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Great Barrington's Commercial Past and Present

The Town of Great Barrington was formed along its Main Street, and understanding the evolution of its commercial areas is important as its future is designed. One can recognize this history in the form of the community and the architecture of its commercial areas.

An Early American Town

Great Barrington was incorporated as a distinct community in 1761. The topography of its location was an immediate and important influence in shaping the colonial and early American community. Great Barrington flanks the Housatonic River as it passes through a series of narrow passages and broader valleys. An easy river crossing was available at one point, where steep hillsides approached the river edge and narrowed the stream's width. This location served as the nucleus of the original town, and exists today as the location where Route 7 still crosses the Housatonic over the “Great Bridge” where North Main Street turns into State Road. This convenient crossing was not an appropriate location for a town center, however; the steep hillsides were difficult for constructing streets and buildings, then as now. So the center of town was reestablished where it exists today, along a broader plateau just south of the river crossing.

Like other colonial and early American towns, Great Barrington was a center for a predominately rural culture. Farms were established along the main road leading in and out of the town, connecting Great Barrington to Stockbridge and Sheffield. The farm houses clustered along the roads where access was convenient and the fields trailed outwards, using favorable land. In 1792, the townspeople undertook a major planting program and lined the main road from Stockbridge to Sheffield with elm trees. These trees grew into a distinctive canopy for travellers, and served the practical purpose of protecting horses and their riders from the sun and winds.

The buildings that contained early commerce differed very little from the residential structures of the town. In fact, it was typical in early New England for goods and services to be offered within the same buildings that housed the merchants and their families. Although this close arrangement eventually began to change, early commercial and residential architecture were very similar in form; individual buildings stood on separate open lots along a broad street. Photographs of Great Barrington dating from 1865 capture this character. Commercial structures were clustered along an elm-arched street, and fences and small front yards distinguished properties from the dirt expanse of Main Street.
Great Barrington and the Industrial Revolution

The middle of the 19th century saw large changes in the economy of Great Barrington. The industrial revolution arrived, signaled in part by the establishment in 1842 of the Housatonic Railroad. Railroad Street was appropriately named — it formed an important corridor and support area for the town’s rail depot. Industrial buildings clustered in strategic locations along the Housatonic, including a large complex below the Main Street crossing of the river. Few signs of the industrial heritage can be seen along the Route 7 corridor today, although Weld E. Calgari & Sons along North Main Street is housed in the remnants of such a structure.

The evolving economy also engendered a new type of commercial building in the downtown — the “commercial block.” This building type was a specialized structure with an efficient, large floor plan filling an entire site, with large glazed storefronts to attract retail customers. In photographs from 1865, the first of these buildings can be seen — the City Store at the corner of Railroad and Main Streets. This building exists today as the oldest surviving example of this type. Over time, large “commercial blocks” began to fill Main Street and extend up Railroad Street, creating the architectural character of the center of town which remains today. Examples that have survived include the Mahalwe Block, the Durant Block, the Berkshire Block, and others.

A 19th century view of Railroad Street
(Courtesy of Gary Leveille)

Great Barrington’s original commercial block in 1865
(Historic Society Collection)
Practical needs influenced the traditional design of the storefronts. Tall storefronts with tall glazing allowed light to penetrate into the interior before electric lighting was available. Large windows also served to display the wares of the merchants. Awnings on the storefront served multiple functions, protecting the pedestrian from the weather and providing a location for advertising. Before modern heating and air conditioning, awnings were an important tool to control the interior temperature of stores as well.

Complementing the commercial blocks were other distinctive building types. The hotels, churches, and public building of the late 19th and early 20th century became landmarks for the town.
The Car and Commerce

The commercial community was well-served by a downtown constructed of clustered buildings during the times when horse-drawn transportation, the railroad, and street cars were dominant. This changed with the arrival of the automobile. Speed and individual mobility made distance less important, and convenience for the automobile user a priority — parking near stores and businesses became essential. Businesses began to spread out and use their sites in new ways. Open and available land along the rural approaches to town served as excellent sites for new or relocated businesses.

The orientation to the automobile led to significant changes in the character of commercial establishments. Because businesses were set back from roads and potential patrons were driving by at higher speeds, signs grew in size and importance. The need to rapidly identify a business led to the creation of highly identifiable buildings associated with a particular use and business, such as the generic architecture of fast food restaurants associated with particular chains.

The impact of autos on the town: A view of the short-lived trolley system, early view of parked cars on Main Street, and an early sign oriented to motorists. (Photo credits to be added)

Main Street streetcar (Courtesy of Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities)

Hotel Miller (Courtesy of Gary Leveille)

Cove Inn Restaurant (Courtesy of Gary Leveille)
Great Barrington as a Country Retreat

Great Barrington was “discovered” as a country retreat during the late 19th century. The role as country retreat has greatly influenced the character of the commercial areas of town. The expansion of the American economy created wealth and increased leisure time, allowing the well-to-do from urban areas to find more pleasant surroundings in the summer. The construction of great country homes included sites along Main Street, notably in the building of the Searles Castle in 1891, a spectacular building designed by the leading American architecture firm of McKim Meade and White.

This is only a brief summary of some of the influences which have shaped the commercial corridor of Great Barrington. More information and images of the past are plentiful, and the Great Barrington Historical Society serves as an excellent resource for more information and insight into its history. In addition, Remembering Main Street: An American Album by Pat Ross provides a colorful view of Great Barrington’s past.

A view of the original elms along South Main Street (Historic Society Collection)

An early view of Main Street (Courtesy of Bernard Drew)
Great Barrington’s Commercial Corridor Today

Travelling along the Route 7 Commercial corridor today, all of these influences can be seen. The corridor is the layered result of different architectural styles and periods, and shifting trends in the local and national economy. The corridor’s history has not been continuous. In addition to the gradual replacement of older structures, great fires have destroyed large portions of the downtown from time to time. What has emerged is a pattern in which the compact and traditional downtown has remained largely intact and actively used, even as the mix of traditional business have changed. An expansion of retail uses along the once-rural roads and residential approaches into town has occurred, but the origins of these areas is apparent in the farmhouses and homes which remain, even though many now contain shops and businesses. Although the lines of elm trees were destroyed by disease, the natural landscape is still a major element along the corridor, preserved because of topography, floodplains, wet and unusable land, and the retention of large areas of privately-held land as open space.

The commercial uses also reflect a multifaceted local economy, supported by three distinct markets. The first is the local market, consisting of normal goods and services supplied to the town and the surrounding region, as Great Barrington remains a regional center. The second is the second-home market. The owners and tenants of country retreats are an important source of business. The third market has been created by tourists, whose seasonal travels in the Berkshires provide distinct retail opportunities.

Remnants of the tree lined character of South Main are still in evidence today.

Downtown Great Barrington retains a compact and traditional pattern of commercial development that is still an attractive pedestrian environment.
Planning for the Future

These guidelines are intended to be a tool for the community to plan its future, so that the future commercial areas of Great Barrington remain economically vital and continue to be "in character" with the image and tradition of this special town. In many communities, commercial development has become unsightly and monotonous, with highway strips that are convenient but nearly indistinguishable from each other. In other communities, historic themes have been reinforced to the extent that the commercial areas appear artificial and museum-like. In still other towns, commercial areas have become specialized to meet the needs of particular clienteles, so that the life of the community becomes specialized.

The guidelines presented here seek to avoid any of these scenarios. They reinforce the existing character of the commercial areas by underlining its genuine history. They consider the landscape as a unique and desirable element in Great Barrington. They recognize the benefits of a mixed economy and retail areas that simultaneously support the local, second home and tourist markets. The guidelines suggest that the consistent use of simple principles of traditional design can be reasonably used to create an attractive environment for all without resulting in homogeneity.

The Design Guideline Districts — This course for the future recognizes that Great Barrington's Route 7 commercial corridor is not and should not be uniform. There are a series of subareas, or districts, with distinct characters that should be respected and reinforced. The guidelines have been developed accordingly in order to develop guidelines that respond specifically to issues and opportunities that make each district unique. The following map defines the districts, as illustrated below:

- **Stockbridge Road Area** — This area extends along the portion of Route 7 known as Stockbridge Road from the Monument Mountain area southwards to Belcher Square. It is an area that retains some of its original rural image in the form of reused farm houses, widely spaced buildings, and a series of views to open landscapes. However, highway-oriented businesses now dominate portions of this area.

- **State Road Area** — This is a transition area with a mix of uses that are constrained by the topography created by the Housatonic to the north and a steeply rising hillside to the south. This area retains a great deal of housing and a collection of small commercial structures. In the district there are many older residential structures now converted to commercial use.
Great Barrington Commercial Design Guidelines Districts
• **North Main Street Area** — This is a transition area with a wide mixture of building types and uses that attracts both pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Lots in the district are constrained by the proximity of the Housatonic on the east and the hillside to the west. Residential structures are mixed with the older commercial structures which dominate the district. The street loses definition at its developed river edge, but is enhanced by a significant river bank open space.

• **Downtown Area** — The center of Great Barrington remains a compact and traditional downtown, providing an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment. The district contains a significant number of historic structures, many of which have retained their original character. The street is strongly defined by the dense concentration of buildings built to the sidewalk, forming a streetwall.

• **South Main Street** — Moving south from the Searles Castle and Town Hall, the character of the commercial corridor shifts again. Beginning with a transitional zone of historic homes, South Main Street retains a rural image in the midst of automobile-oriented development, in part because of the large open space of the old fairgrounds.

In considering the future of these areas, the design guidelines acknowledge that the Stockbridge Road Area and the South Main Street Area have a great deal in common. The State Road and North Main Street areas also have numerous similar qualities. The Downtown Area, however, is unlike any other part of town. Special guidelines have been created to acknowledge and reinforce the character of the subarea, and are grouped appropriately.
Using the Guidelines

The guidelines have been organized into three basic areas for your use and consideration. In order to use the guidelines to your best advantage, it is important to review all areas that pertain to your project.

- **Overall Principles and Guidelines** — These are general considerations which should apply to any project.

- **Specific Principles and Guidelines** — These concern the elements of a building and its site which might be affected by a proposed project, such as storefronts, lighting, roofs, materials, and signage.

- **District Principles and Guidelines** — The commercial corridor consists of several districts. Special guidelines which apply to your project because of its location can be found here.

The information within the guidelines are organized as follows:

- **Principle** — These are the goals or reasons for the guidelines.

- **Guidelines** — These are specific intentions or directions for new designs or renovations.

### Site Design: Building and Parking

#### Principles

*Locate buildings, off-street vehicular access, and parking to reinforce the desirable characteristics of the surrounding district.*

*Parking areas and driveways should not dominate the building image or create gaps in an attractive visual experience for pedestrians and drivers.*

#### Guidelines

- Buildings should be located to relate to existing adjacent buildings in order to reinforce the existing street pattern.

- Buildings should have their primary facade and circulation focus toward the street.

- Parking areas should receive fencing, planting, or other landscape treatment in order to provide for a visually attractive pedestrian experience along a public sidewalk.

- Parking lots should be kept to the minimum size and capacity necessary. Off-street parking provided on a site should only serve the specific uses on the site, or specific uses on lots immediately adjacent to the site.

- **Graphics and comments** — Graphics and brief commentaries have been included to illustrate the guidelines and show examples that represent both desirable and undesirable approaches to design.
A Glossary of Terms

There are many traditional terms that are used to describe portions of buildings and storefronts. Because some of these terms are used in the guidelines, this glossary has been prepared.

**Ashlar** — Stone cut and laid in a rectangular shape and pattern.

**Awning** — An element projecting from and supported by the exterior wall of the building, constructed of fabric on a supporting framework, for the purpose of providing shelter or shading windows.

**Balustrades** — Railing of vertical and horizontal elements. Railing can be part of a stair or platform, or a decorative motif at the roof edge.

**Canopy** — A permanent roof-like shelter extending from and supported by the exterior wall of the building, constructed of some durable material such as metal or glass.

**Canopy Sign** — A sign painted on, printed on or attached flat against a canopy or marquee.

**Clerestory Windows** — Windows located well above street level which allow light to enter near the ceiling of the interior.

**Composition** — See the appendix on architectural styles.

**Cornice** — An element at the top edge of a wall where it meets the roof, which usually is profiled to overhang the wall.

**Dormer** — A small, roof covered projection from a sloped roof.

**Facade** — Any side of a building which faces a street or open space.

**Fascia** — A facing board used as trim, this term is also sometimes used to refer to the signboard (see below).

**Fenestration** — The door and window openings in a building facade.

**Gable** — The vertical surface which connects two or more sloped roofs.

**Historic Merit** — The quality which marks a building or other element as a significant part of the architectural, cultural, or social history of a place.

**Landscaped Area** — The part or parts of a lot developed and permanently maintained in grass and other plant materials, in which the space is open to the sky and is free of all vehicular traffic, parking, loading and outdoor storage.

**Lintel** — A spanning element above a window, typically seen in masonry construction.
Mansard — A roof with steeply sloping sides, rising to a relatively flat roof at the top.

Marquee — Similar to a canopy, but also serves as a location for signage.

Massing — The overall form of a building.

Pedestrian-oriented — Describes an attitude or accommodation in which the pedestrian is the primary consideration.

Pilaster — A decorative column or pier which is inset into the face of a wall.

Signboard — An area of the storefront above the glazing which was often ornamented and became the traditional location for signage. The term "fascia" is sometimes used for the same element.

Setback — The minimum horizontal distance between the street or way line and the line of the building.

Style — See the appendix on architectural styles.

Symmetrical — Having a regular or balanced arrangement of elements on opposite sides of a center or axis.

Transom — The glazed or solid panel immediately above a door.

Yard, Front — A yard extending across the full width of the lot and lying between the front line of the lot and the nearest line of the principal building or structure.

Vehicle-oriented — Describes an attitude or accommodation in which the vehicle is the primary consideration.
OVERALL PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES
Overall Principles and Guidelines

**Principles**

Great Barrington is an attractive small town with a genuine history that attaches great value to its natural setting, traditional appearance, and scale. In order to protect and enhance these characteristics along the commercial corridors near Route 7, this set of design guidelines has been established. The guidelines provide information and guidance in the development of new buildings and the renovation of existing buildings.

In general, Great Barrington’s commercial corridors should be treated as a series of distinct districts, each with its appropriate character. These guidelines are intended to retain a well-defined downtown district which respects the character and architecture of the traditional downtown development pattern. Commercial areas north and south of the downtown should retain significant open space and landscaping characteristics of the rural landscape of Great Barrington; design and site planning in these areas should avoid the dominant imagery of the automobile and standardized building and signage design characteristic of commercial “strip” development. The single unifying element throughout should be a comprehensive landscaping program of tree plantings.

**Overall Guidelines**

1. Building improvements should respect a building's original style or type if the building is of historic merit.

2. New development should be sympathetic with its environment, and recognize the materials, scale and architectural character of existing buildings in the vicinity that are similar in function or have a visual relationship with the new development.

3. Building additions and renovations should be harmonious in form, character, and materials to the original structure.

4. The tradition of commercial buildings in Great Barrington has been dominated by simple and pragmatic designs drawn from models appropriate to the time in which they were created; this approach should continue.

5. Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties or new construction are encouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant architectural or cultural material, and when the design is compatible with the surrounding environment.

6. Distinguishing original qualities and features of a building, structure, or site and its environment should be preserved.
7. Building designs that relate to the context of Great Barrington are encouraged. Prototype or generic designs are strongly discouraged. Businesses should rely on signage, not on signature or symbolic building architecture, to advertise themselves and to attract patrons.

8. Site design should emphasize simple and attractive landscaping in character with the existing landscape of its surroundings, and de-emphasize the visual impact of the automobile.

9. No new or existing building should be made to appear older than the era in which it was originally constructed, nor should it mimic or duplicate historic structures.

10. Creative, inventive or innovative design that creates a vital, unique and interesting streetscape and environment is encouraged.
SPECIFIC
PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES
Site Design: Building and Parking

**Principles**

*Locate buildings, off-street vehicular access, and parking in a way that reinforces the desirable characteristics of the surrounding district.*

*Parking areas and driveways should not dominate the building image or create gaps in an attractive visual experience for pedestrians and drivers.*

**Guidelines**

1. Buildings should be located to relate to existing adjacent buildings in order to reinforce the existing street pattern.

2. Buildings should have their primary facades and circulation focus toward the street.

3. Parking areas should receive fencing, planting, or other landscape treatment in order to provide for a visually attractive pedestrian experience along a public sidewalk.

4. Parking lots should be kept to the minimum size and capacity necessary. Off-street parking provided on a site should only serve the specific uses on the site or specific uses on lots immediately adjacent to the site.

5. Curb cuts should be kept to the minimum number and size appropriate to the use served, and accommodate pedestrians at all public sidewalk crossings.

6. Avoid locating parking between the primary building and the street. Avoid parking as the first image seen from the street.
Buildings form and define the edges of the street, and the activity they generate enlivens it. The intention of these guidelines is to encourage building fronts that address the street and the passerby, creating a pleasant and vital environment.

New development should consider the street and sidewalk as positive features and build its focus to the street edge.

In these diagrams, several site plan development responses are shown to highlight ways of addressing the street. The top diagram puts building development far back on the site. Although this approach may be appropriate in limited cases where large building developments would be too bulky in relation to surrounding buildings, it generally provides poor definition of the street and gives the perception of a gap in the townscape. The middle diagram shows how set-back buildings, with street trees and landscape forming a street edge, can enhance the street image. Parking is kept to the rear of the site in order to prevent large voids which add little to the attractiveness of the roadway and pedestrian environment. The bottom diagram shows how a building on the setback line not only provides a strong street edge, but also provides for good visibility and interest. As with the middle diagram, the impact of parking has been kept to a minimum.
Site Design: Landscape and Screening

**Principles**

Recapture the essential element of landscaping that historically tied the various images and characters of Great Barrington’s commercial districts together.

Screen unattractive uses with materials that blend with, rather than stand out from, the general building architecture and that are appropriate to their purpose.

**Guidelines**

1. Provide a planting strip between the public sidewalk and the front facade of any building with a front yard setback of more than 15 feet. The planting strip should be a minimum of 4 feet wide, with a 6 foot minimum width in areas designated for street tree planting. The planting strip should extend continuously across the front yard setback, exclusive of drives and sidewalks which run perpendicular to the street. See Special Guidelines for each district for areas designated for street trees and other planting provisions.

2. Planting of street trees of appropriate species, caliper size and spacing is strongly encouraged in all districts. The intent of street tree planting is to minimize the adverse impact of development along the roadside, while preserving significant natural views and open space. Tree spacing and location should be adjusted where buildings, paving or utilities will interfere with the normal development of the tree canopy and root system. See Special Guidelines for each district for areas designated for street trees and other planting provisions.

3. Landscape front yard setbacks, except for access roads and sidewalks.

4. Refuse storage, dumpsters, fuel storage facilities and all other outdoor storage should be screened from all streets abutting the property and from all adjacent properties.

5. Loading docks should be screened from all streets abutting the property and from all adjacent properties.

6. Screening should consist of any solid fence or wall built of solid, natural materials that are compatible with the buildings surrounding it. Brick, wood, natural and cast stone are acceptable. Concrete masonry units (concrete blocks) are not acceptable.
Site Design: Site Lighting

**Principles**

Site lighting should be of a modest scale and be indirect or low-glare to emphasize the site and its buildings rather than the fixtures themselves.

**Guidelines**

1. Appropriately scaled pole-mounted fixtures are encouraged in all districts. See Special Guidelines for each district for sizes and locations.

2. Exterior site lighting should be in the white light spectrum. Avoid sodium vapor or other types of lighting that do not render colors correctly.

3. Site lighting fixtures should shield glare from streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties.

4. Avoid lighting parking lots, driveways and other site areas from any part of a building. Lighting the loading and outdoor storage area with building-mounted lighting fixtures is appropriate if they shield glare from streets, public ways, and adjacent properties.
Building Walls/Roofs

Principles

The facades of new buildings and improvements to older structures must relate to their surroundings to provide a sense of cohesiveness, yet without mimicry or strict uniformity.

Facades should strive to be visually interesting and attractive along areas that will be seen by the public.

Guidelines

1. Building doors and windows should be harmonious in proportion, size and configuration with adjacent buildings.

2. Facade colors should be complementary to the natural materials used on the building and to the buildings adjacent to it.

3. Facades should complement the major horizontal courses and signage bands on adjacent buildings.

4. Building elements such as awnings, storefronts, doors, sills, lintels, lighting, etc. should complement the adjacent buildings.
One of the pleasing aspects of historic streets was the similarity of materials, although individual buildings each had their own distinct characters. The survival of this street character is one of the reasons that the downtown is so attractive today.

(Historical Society Collection)

Here is a case in another town where clapboard and brick are used together in a way which is inconsistent, both within its own facade and with the surrounding buildings.
Exterior Building Materials

Principles

*Materials should help the building or improvement to relate harmoniously to its surroundings.*

*Use materials that are traditional and historically typical to Great Barrington, or convey integrity and substance.*

Guidelines

1. Building materials should complement the adjacent buildings.

2. Avoid using precast concrete, concrete block (CMU), applied thin brick veneers (less than 4" nominal thickness), or materials made to look like masonry as exterior building finish materials.

3. Avoid brick that is heavily molded or made to appear old on new or existing structures unless it is to match brick original to the building.

4. Avoid using masonry as a finish material under storefront windows, except in cases where it was original to a historic building.

5. Avoid materials, especially of fiberglass or plastic, made to look like other materials (vinyl siding, plastic roof tiles made to look like slate or clay tile).

6. All frames of screens and storm/screen doors should be of the same wood or metal material, and of the same finish, as the primary door or window. Vinyl should be avoided.

7. Avoid using metal as the major cladding material. Metal should be limited to trim, cornices, bands, storefronts, windows and entrance elements.

8. Metal/metal finish should be either painted galvanized steel, painted aluminum, non-clear anodized finish aluminum, muntz metal (bronze), or other metals with a natural finish or patina. Avoid natural aluminum or glossy stainless steel.

9. Plywood or other wood panel sheathing materials should be avoided unless they are incorporated as a panel within a frame and are durable for exterior use.

10. Minor decorative elements, such as facade ornaments, decorative fasteners, or small accents can be of any rigid, durable material that will be in harmony with the facade.
These buildings take full advantage of the traditional materials with which they are constructed to convey a sense of character and appropriateness.
Windows

**Principles**

*Windows should respect the fenestration pattern and character that is appropriate to the building architecture, and be harmonious with surrounding buildings of similar function.*

**Guidelines**

1. Where ceilings need to be lowered below the window head, provide a ceiling soffit that allows the vision glass to be full height.

2. Avoid blocking, reducing, or changing the pattern of windows in renovating older buildings.

3. Avoid continuous horizontal or vertical strip windows.

4. Avoid reflective or dark tinted glass

5. Avoid using opaque panels, such as painted metal or spandrel glass, to replace vision glazing in windows.

6. Avoid windows with multiple small panes and muntins (or with that appearance) which emulate historic windows, unless it is appropriate to the primary style of the building.
This is an example of a building in another community where the windows have been obscured and altered to such an extent that it is difficult to see the form and character of the original historic structure.

Below is an example of several existing buildings in Great Barrington where the windows are similar in character and have proportions which seem appropriate to the facades in which they are located.
Doors and Entrances

**Principles**

Primary entrances should concentrate visible activity and interest toward the street.

**Guidelines**

1. Primary entrances should face the street.

2. Loading and service entrances should be screened or visually minimized from streets, public ways, and adjacent properties.

3. Primary entrances should be largely transparent.

4. Multiple-paned glazing is appropriate only if it is historically accurate for the building.

5. Entrances should be accessible to the physically disabled.

*A traditional storefront on Railroad Street which is largely unchanged today. (Photo credits to be added)*
Awnings, Canopies and Marquees

**Principles**

Awnings, canopies and marquees with a traditional design and appearance are encouraged as facade elements when they serve to protect pedestrians from the sun and rain, provide a secondary location for signage, add color and interest to building storefronts and facades, and add emphasis to display windows and doorways.

**Guidelines**

1. Only traditional, retractable awnings or fixed awnings that have the same traditional profile should be used on buildings with framed storefronts.

2. Awnings on a multiple storefront building should be consistent in character.

3. Traditional profile awnings should be located within the building elements framing storefront openings.

4. Fixed awnings and extended retractable awnings: the rigid framework should be no lower than 8 feet above the sidewalk below.

5. Suspended fabric panels of awnings should be no lower than 7 feet above the sidewalk.

6. Awnings or awning hardware projecting more than 4" from the building wall next to a walkway should be no lower than 80" above that sidewalk.

7. Canopies or marquees should be no lower than 8 feet from the sidewalk, measured to the underside of any canopy or marquee element.

8. If signage is provided under any canopy or marquee, clearance between the sidewalk and the bottom of the sign should be no less than 8 feet.

9. Avoid concealing important architectural details of the building with awnings, canopies or marquees.

10. Avoid using fixed awnings of a round or bullnose shape unless used for a single door or window opening that is not part of a framed storefront.

11. Avoid signage under awnings.

12. Avoid backlit awnings.
Design Diagram

The traditional single sloped awning, either retractable or fixed, is the appropriate design solution to use in most storefront applications. This traditional design is essential for facades that have framed storefronts like the one pictured. The awning in this case should fit just inside the vertical elements of the storefront frame.

Local Example

This storefront employs awnings that are respectful of the building architecture, functional, and attractive additions to the streetscape.

Fit awning between major vertical and horizontal elements
Exterior Building Lighting

Principles

Building lighting should highlight the building without attracting attention to itself, and be appropriate to the building architectural style, in order to maintain a positive nighttime image.

Guidelines

1. Exterior building lighting should be incorporated at all entrances.

2. Building lighting should provide an even illumination level while operating. Avoid flashing, pulsating or similar dynamic lighting.

3. Avoid lighting that does not render building colors correctly, such as sodium vapor lights. The preferred lighting should be in the white spectrum.

4. Avoid lighting fixtures that mimic historically inappropriate designs.

5. Avoid fluorescent lighting unless it is a PL lamp type.

6. Avoid lights that glare onto streets, public ways, or adjacent properties.

Here is an excellent example of effective indirect lighting.
Storefront Design and Display

**Principles**

*Storefronts should have strong vertical and horizontal elements in keeping with the building architecture, provide clarity and interest to the facade, provide for a high level of transparency, and be harmonious with the surrounding storefronts.*

*Displays in both retail and non-retail storefront windows that add color, texture, information or visual activity to the pedestrian experience are encouraged.*

**Guidelines**

1. Storefronts should be as transparent as possible.

2. Storefront designs should relate harmoniously to adjacent storefronts.

3. Building elements which frame the storefront openings should be harmonious with the rest of the building.

4. Vertical elements, such as piers, columns or heavy mullions, should be incorporated to define storefront bays and the limits of awnings. A simple decorative treatment detailing a base, middle and top of the vertical elements will be encouraged.

5. A horizontal band or frieze that serves as a signage band should be incorporated at the top of storefronts.

6. At the storefront base, there should be a base panel and sill course. The base panels and sill course should continue across the entire width of the storefront bay and terminate at doors or the vertical elements framing the bay. The base panel and sill course should be 30° or lower, measured from the sidewalk.

7. Incorporating a glazed transom (with the building address) above the door is encouraged when storefront heights allow.

8. Storefront window transoms should be consistent with door transoms.

9. Avoid storefront windows with multiple small panes and muntins (or with that appearance) which emulate historic windows, unless it is appropriate to the primary style of the building.

10. Where ceilings need to be lowered below the head of the storefront glass, provide a ceiling soffit that allows the vision glass to be full height.
11. Avoid reflective or dark tinted glass or reflective films.

12. Avoid opaque panels, such as painted metal or spandrel glass, to replace vision glazing in storefronts.

13. Avoid overhead roll-down security grates and doors, bars, or other security items whose components cannot be completely concealed during business hours.

14. Storefront display windows that display products or services available on the premises, signs with the name of the organization, business logos, hours of operation, public service messages or displays, or views to an activity in which people are involved frequently during hours of operation are encouraged.

15. For non-retail businesses and organizations, allow some view from the sidewalk to internal activities.

16. Avoid placing items that block views to internal activity, such as the backs of display cases, that are not part of a display to the outside sidewalk or street.

17. Storefront lighting should be confined to highlighting signage and the window display. Avoid lighting that attracts attention to itself.
An attractive combination of display, signage, lighting, and architectural elements is shown in this photo of the Gorham & Norton store.
**Full Display**
- Best for retail product display
- Utilizes the maximum benefit of the storefront window
- Generates a high level of pedestrian interest

**Signboard Display**
- Used for retail and non-retail display
- Information display can be simple and direct or more detailed
- Generates a fair level of pedestrian interest

**Activity Display**
- Good option for restaurants and non-retail uses
- Window treatment can provide levels of privacy necessary for service businesses
Signage

**Principles**

*Signage should provide information that is simple and legible, be of a size and location that avoids competing with or obscuring the architecture of the building, and be harmonious with the character of the building and the signage of surrounding buildings.*

*Signage should focus on advertising local businesses, not national product brand names or logos.*

**Guidelines**

1. Signage should advertise the name and type of business or organization at its location.

2. Signage should employ colors and type faces that complement the primary architectural style of the building.

3. All signs should be of durable materials compatible with the materials of the building served.

4. In a multiple storefront building, the signage should be of a size, location, material and color that relates harmoniously between bays.

5. In new commercial buildings, a strong signage band above the level of the storefront should be considered if flat wall signs are employed.

6. Projecting (shingle) signs, when employed, should be centered on a vertical column, pier or pilaster. Avoid centering these signs on a wall opening such as a door, window, or storefront.

7. Projecting (shingle) signs that convey information in a unique way, utilizing images that visually represent goods or services provided are encouraged.

8. Signs on canopy fabrics advertising the name of the business or organization are encouraged.

9. Signage above the sills of second story windows should be confined to painted letters on window glass, provided these signs advertise the organizations therein.

10. Freestanding signs should generally be limited to buildings not visible from the street or sidewalk, or where other signage is not appropriate to the architecture.
11. Avoid signage that advertises brand names as its major message, unless the brand name is inherent in the name of the business.

12. Avoid signage that covers or obscures architectural details of the building.

13. Avoid signage that covers or obscures the bays of both single and multiple storefronts.

14. Avoid listing anything on freestanding signs other than the name and type of business/organization, address, phone numbers, and site access information.

15. Avoid internally backlit signs

16. Avoid flat wall signs or projecting shingle signs higher than 15 feet.

This is an example of signage which obscures the key architectural feature of the entry — a major archway.
The district guidelines for Stockbridge Road and South Main Street include a recommendation to limit the height of free-standing signs to 1/2 the setback distance from the street, with a maximum height of 20 feet. This 2:1 ratio will provide for visibility of signs without overwhelming the landscape with signage.

This is an example of simple, freestanding signage which is appropriate to its setting.
Building Systems

**Principles**

*Minimize the impact of building systems and equipment on building facades.*

**Guidelines**

1. Exposed elements of building systems which cannot be hidden, recessed or screened should be blended sympathetically with the building facade.

2. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be completely screened from view from the street and sidewalk by the building parapet wall.

3. Avoid placing air conditioning units into windows or any other openings visible from the street. Units located in non-window openings are acceptable if they lie completely within the building wall and are screened with a grille appropriate to the storefront or facade.

*The air conditioners located along this storefront facade do little to enhance the streetscape in this image from another community.*
Stockbridge Road and South Main Street District Principles

**Principles**

- Enhance the historic elements in the district, especially historic residences.
- Enhance existing landscape elements with new street trees and landscape to create a coherent landscape image.
- Enhance the existing rural image by encouraging buildings along the road edge to maintain the existing character of smaller, more rural and residential structures.
- Encourage the largest structures to have the largest setback from the road.
- Provide greater opportunities for increasing pedestrian traffic along Stockbridge Road and South Main Street.
- Reduce the overwhelming image of road signs by developing signage that is smaller at the road edge, with larger and taller signs allowed with greater setback from the street.
- Discourage off-street parking located within the minimum setback.

**Special Guidelines**

**Site Design: Buildings and Parking**

1. Buildings should be located to relate to existing adjacent buildings in order to reinforce the existing street pattern, but have no less than a 25 foot front yard setback.

2. Off-street parking should not be located within the required front yard setback, nor be closer to the street than the principal building structure.

**Site Design: Landscape and Screening**

1. Provide for the planting of street trees on the east side of Stockbridge Road that are 6-8 feet back from the sidewalk edge where possible.

2. Provide for the planting of street trees on the west side of Stockbridge Road that are 14 to 16 feet back from the centerline of the utility lines where possible.

3. Where possible, provide for the planting of street trees on South Main Street that are 14 to 16 feet back from the centerline of the utility lines or 16 to 18 feet back from the roadway edge where no utility lines exist.
4. Provide street trees of the following species:
   Disease-resistant American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*)
   London Plane Tree (*Platanus acerifolia*)
   Red Oak (*Quercus Borealis*)
   Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*)
   Elm Zelkova (*Zelkova carpinifolia*)
   Katsura Tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)

Site Design: Site Lighting

1. Site lighting should be from pole-mounted fixtures. The bottom of the light source should be 17 feet or less from the finish grade within 50 feet of any street, with an increase to 34 feet or less from the finish grade for other areas.

Storefronts

1. For commercial facades facing streets, parking or sidewalks, storefronts and other glazed openings should make up 1/2 of the facade area unless the facade is part of a converted residential building form.

Signage

1. Maximum height of freestanding signs should be 1/2 of the setback distance from the street line or 20 feet, whichever is less. Minimum setback for freestanding signs is 20 feet from the street line.
State Road and North Main Street
District Principles

**Principles**

- Enhance historic character of buildings in the district.
- Enhance existing landscape elements with new street trees and landscape to create a coherent landscape image.
- Enhance the transition from a rural character to a more residential and small business mix towards downtown.
- Maintain the existing character of smaller commercial developments.
- Provide greater opportunities for increasing pedestrian traffic
- Provide greater opportunities for better parking options, especially along the east side of Main Street.
- Protect the open space on the banks of the Housatonic River.
- Encourage signage oriented to pedestrian and slower moving vehicular traffic.
- Encourage screening and landscaping of off-street parking to reduce its visual impact from the sidewalk and the roadway.
- Provide more definition between the edge of the street and the adjacent parking areas.

**Special Guidelines**

**Site Design: Building and Parking**

1. On the south side of State Road and the west side of Main Street, off-street parking areas should receive a minimum 6 foot wide tree planting strip between the parking area and any public sidewalk.

2. On the north side of Main Street, off-street parking areas should receive a minimum 4 foot landscape strip between the parking lot and the public sidewalk.

3. On the east side of Main Street, off-street parking areas should receive some treatment that physically separates it from the roadway and the public sidewalk.
Site Design: Landscape and Screening

1. Provide for the planting of street trees on the south side of State Road that are 16-18 feet back from the roadway edge or curb wherever possible.

2. Where possible, provide for the planting of street trees on the north side of State Road that are 14-16 feet back from the centerline of the utility lines or 16-18 feet back from the roadway edge or curb where no utility lines exist.

3. Where possible, provide for the planting of street trees on the west side of North Main Street that are 14-16 feet back from the centerline of the utility lines or 16-18 feet back from the roadway edge or curb where no utility lines exist.

4. Provide street trees of the following species:
   - Disease-resistant American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*)
   - London Plane Tree (*Platanus acerifolia*)
   - Red Oak (*Quercus Borealis*)
   - Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*)
   - Elm Zelkova (*Zelkova carpinifolia*)
   - Katsura Tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)

Site Design: Site Lighting

1. Site lighting should be from pole-mounted fixtures. The bottom of the light source should be 17 feet or less from the finish grade.

Storefronts

1. For commercial facades facing the street, storefronts or other glazed openings should make up 2/3 of the facade area on the ground floor unless the facade is part of a converted residential building form.

Signage

1. Maximum height of freestanding signs should be 3/4 of the setback distance from the street line or 20 feet, whichever is less. On Main Street, minimum setback for freestanding signs is 20 feet from the street line on State Road and 10 feet from the street line or 20 feet from the traveled way, whichever is greater.
Downtown Main Street
District Principles

Principles

- Enhance historic character of the commercial district.
- Encourage new buildings to respect the existing setback patterns of adjacent buildings.
- Encourage primary facades and entrances to be oriented to the sidewalk in order to put as much pedestrian traffic on Main, Railroad, Castle, Bridge Streets.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience and an urban character with active storefront and sidewalk uses.
- Discourage any negative visual impacts of off-street parking and drive-through activities.

Special Guidelines

Site Design: Building and Parking

1. Buildings should have no front yard setback from the street.
2. Buildings on corner lots should have no setback from either street frontage, except that required to accommodate a corner entry.
3. The relationship of a structure to the open space between it and adjoining structures should be compatible. The effects of shadows on abutting property or public open space should be minimized.
4. The scale of a structure should be compatible with its architectural style and the character of the surrounding buildings.
5. Off-street parking should not be located within the required front yard setback.
6. Off-street parking should be located at the rear of the principal building facing the street.

Site Design: Landscape and Screening

1. Provide for the planting of street shade trees on Main Street where buildings have a setback greater than 20 feet. Provide trees in these areas that are 14-16 feet back from the centerline of the utility lines or 16-18 feet back from the roadway edge or curb where no utility lines exist.

2. Provide for the planting of street trees in the sidewalk in front of buildings with 0 to 20 foot setback. In lieu of the guidelines above, tree planting should continue the existing street tree pattern and species character in sidewalk planting locations.
3. Provide street trees of the following species:
   Disease-resistant American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*)
   London Plane Tree (*Platanus acerifolia*)
   Red Oak (*Quercus Borealis*)
   Red Maple (*Acer Rubrum*)
   Elm Zelkova (*Zelkova carpinifolia*)
   Katsura Tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*)

**Site Design: Site Lighting**

1. Site lighting should be from pole-mounted fixtures. The bottom of the light source should be 17 feet or less from the finish grade.

**Building Walls/Roofs**

1. Provide for continuous pedestrian interest along street facades.
2. Proportions and relationships between doors and windows should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the surrounding area.
3. The design of the roof shape should be compatible with the architectural style of the surrounding buildings.

**Building Materials**

1. Where masonry is used, provide for appropriate masonry materials. Appropriate masonry is face brick with a uniform flat surface and a narrow range or color variation when seen as a field, terra cotta, ashlar-cut natural stone or cast stone, and natural stone veneer systems.
2. Avoid acrylic and concrete stucco systems as a cladding material.
3. Avoid exposed concrete above 10" above grade or the sidewalk level.
4. Avoid wood siding unless it is used on an existing building in which wood siding was an original cladding material.

**Doors and Entrances**

1. For corner buildings that front two streets, the primary entrance should face the street or be located at the corner.

**Windows**

1. Proportions and relationships between doors and windows should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the surrounding area.
2. Windows sills on floors above the first floor should be between 18" and 36" above the finish floor.
Exterior Building Lighting

1. Exterior building lighting is encouraged, especially if it illuminates the street face. Fixtures should be largely concealed or minimized visually.
2. For commercial facades facing the street, storefronts should relate harmoniously to the proportion, size and composition of adjacent storefronts.

Signage

1. Maximum height of freestanding signs should be the same as the setback distance from the street line or 20 feet, whichever is less. Minimum setback for freestanding signs is 10 feet from the street line or 20 feet from the traveled way, whichever is greater.
Appendix: Design Guidelines in the Design Review and Permitting Process

New construction and improvement projects in the commercial areas of Great Barrington are subject to review by the Town in order to obtain the proper permits. While not a detailed discussion of all of the steps necessary to get a permit granted, this summary has been prepared in order to give a general picture of how the design guidelines can be used in the review process for sign permits, design review, and special permits. For more detailed information, please review the sign ordinance and/or the zoning provisions for Great Barrington, or speak to the Town Building Inspector.

Sign Permits

Most signs in the Town of Great Barrington require a permit unless exempt or a pre-existing non-conforming sign as defined in the town’s bylaw. The process of obtaining a sign permit, whether for a by-right sign or a sign requiring a Special Permit or a Special Exemption, starts with review of the Town’s provisions regarding signage. Since these provisions affect design of signage, this review should happen early in the process.

The first steps to take before designing a sign:
- Review specific design guidelines for the type of sign that is proposed and the special guidelines for the district in which the sign will be located.
- Review the Sign Bylaw for Great Barrington.
- Consult the building code and the Town Building Inspector on code-related issues for signage.

Once the design is complete, application for a permit is made to the sign officer of the Town. Signs that require special permits or special exemptions are submitted by the sign officer to the planning board or the Board of Selectmen for review. Other town departments and entities may also review the application. The design guidelines may be consulted during these reviews as an advisory guide for signage design and placement.
Design Review and the granting of permits

In the downtown business district 'B', projects are subject to design review by the Design Advisory Board in order to guide improvements. For this reason, design guidelines may be consulted regularly to ensure that the character of the district is preserved and enhanced.

Special Permits

Special permits are required for particular uses or purposes outlined in zoning or other town bylaws. A Special Permit Granting Authority is charged with granting such permits and may refer to the design guidelines during the decision process.

Other town departments may make recommendations to the SPGA for additional requirements and restrictions in order to protect the public and the environment. They may utilize the design guidelines as a guide for these recommendations.
Appendix: Architectural Styles in Great Barrington and a Guide to Restoration

The commercial areas of Great Barrington include a wide array of architectural styles. Because a great emphasis has been placed on recognizing and preserving the genuine qualities of Great Barrington's past in the design guidelines, this summary has been prepared. It discusses how commercial design and architectural styles have evolved, and shows examples of typical styles. It briefly discusses the concept of building form, which is distinct from style. Finally, some standard guides to restoration of historic buildings are included.

Traditional Design and Commercial Architecture

The concept of architectural "style" is linked to changing traditions in the process of building.

In the earliest history of Great Barrington, building design was a pragmatic process that used building forms and materials established through the common tradition of craftsmen. Designs used a narrow range of accepted decorative features. The original colonial buildings were simple wood-frame structures with minimal ornamentation. However, as early America prospered, this tradition began to absorb design influences reaching back to Europe. Classical decorative elements began to appear, and by the middle of the 18th century, the classical inspiration dominated the entire shapes of buildings. The owners, builders and craftsmen modeled their designs on other buildings they had seen, and occasionally mimicked images from publications showing new buildings and styles emerging in other parts of the country. Nevertheless, most buildings had much in common.

In the late 19th century, the design and building process was altered substantially. Architecture emerged as a distinct profession, and architects brought diverse inspiration for building design to New England from Europe where they were trained. Emerging wealth combined with an explosion of information and travel. Out of this grew a period of experimentation, in which a dizzying flurry of styles for residential and public buildings became quickly popular and receded in rapid succession. This new process began in the so-called Victorian period, when such buildings as the large churches, the Searles Castle, and Town Hall were designed, each in a dramatically different style. A pattern of continuous change in taste was now in place, not unlike fashions in clothing. This continued through the 1930s.

Even while this was occurring, a quieter evolution occurred in industrial and commercial building design. These buildings followed the practical needs of the businesses they contained, and the simple massive boxes of wood and brick were adorned with ornament where it could be simply applied. Comices, window frames, and entries contained flourishes of style which mildly echoed other building forms.

Styles favored by architects have continued to evolve throughout the twentieth century, and occasionally examples of a "pure" example of a popular design approach emerges in Great Barrington. But in great part, decisions about the design or alteration of many buildings has been determined by the taste and ideas of the owners, merchants and
builders who have referred to images from nearby buildings and designs from similar buildings they have seen.

The result of all of these different approaches to design is an often confusing and complicated visual environment.

**Architectural Styles in Great Barrington**

There are a number of buildings which exemplify a clear style that was popular at the time it was designed. These styles and characteristic elements include:

**Federal Style**

- Dates from period 1790 to 1820
- Balanced and symmetrical in design
- Simple rectangular floor plan
- Central entrance in a freestanding building
- Most urban examples are brick construction.
- Refined ornament and proportion
- Symmetrical chimneys located at end walls
- Multiple-paned windows

![Ives-Taylor Store and Boarding House (left)](image)

**Greek Revival**

- Dates from period 1820 to 1860
- Looked to Greek temples for inspiration
- Two-story temple-like front
- Triangular pediment
- Wood columns standing free or part of the wall
- Cornice detail at eaves
- Portico or pilasters at the door
- Heavily-molded window surrounds/trim
- Wood columns and other wood detailing
- Multiple-paned windows

![Greek Revival House (1846) with commercial front](image)
Gothic and Carpenter Gothic

- Dates from the 1840s and continued through the 1920s
- Recalls the stone arch forms and stone details of medieval Gothic architecture
- Occasionally constructed in wood, called "Carpenter Gothic"

Victorian (Queen Anne)

- Dates from around 1870 to 1895
- Rich use of materials and detailing
- Picturesque roof line broken by a gable or pediment
- Variety of materials used: wood, brick, brownstone and dark granites with rough-hewn and smooth surfaces
- Emphasis on vertical and horizontal structural members, with large grouped windows and bays
- Flattened arches
- Windows with simple vertical divisions, not multiple panes

Second Empire

- Dates from the period 1870 to 1900
- Characteristic mansard roof (a roof with steeply sloping sides that rise to a flat or shallow-pitched roof)
- Pinnacles and decorative roof cresting at the top
- Arch-headed door and window openings
- Dormer windows are common at the roof
- Wood details made to resemble masonry
- Details emphasize more massive appearance at the base
- Simple vertical window divisions, not multiple panes.
Beaux Arts Classicism

- Dates from the period 1895-1920
- Looked to classical Rome for inspiration
- Incorporated classical elements such as paired columns or pilasters, balustrades at the roof line, semicircular arched openings.
- Smooth materials like brick and dressed stone were favored
- Monumental when used in bank or civic architecture to express weight and authority
- Multiple-paned windows, but not storefronts

Colonial Revival

- Dates generally from the period 1900 to 1940, although this style is still often used today.
- Incorporated colonial architecture forms such as cupolas and gabled chimney walls.
- Bowed display windows were common
- Red brick and white wood trim
- Windows had multiple panes

Moderne

- Dates from the period 1930-1940
- Simple cubic forms and flat surfaces
- Related to Art Deco style, but with much more stripped down ornamentation
- Streamlined facade
- Smooth, shiny surfaces as building materials, with minimal joints
- Windows are large glazed openings
- Neon lighting was common at storefronts
Stripped Neo-Classical

- Dates from the 1920 to 1960
- Uses simple, classical forms with a minimum of decorations
- Favored the use of stone and metal-framed windows
- Used simple window details

International Style

- Dates from the 1920 to present
- Functional, spare design
- Emphasis on structural elements and their expression
- Minimal use of ornament
- Machine-made appearance
- Large expanses of glass
- Lightness of outside wall does not appear to carry roof or building weight

Highway Commercial Style

- 1930 to the present
- Designed particularly to succeed in the automobile and highway environment
- Buildings serve simultaneously as signs by declaring their identity and demanding attention
- Use distinctive forms, often conforming to standard patterns
- Materials are distinctive as well, with unusually colored roofs and walls being typical elements
- Signage for these uses is often integral to the site and building design.
Appendix: Maintenance, Repair and Restoration Techniques for Building Improvements

A great deal has been learned over the last thirty years about practical techniques for undertaking building improvements, restoration and maintenance for storefronts and commercial properties. There are many sources of information available to assist you in planning, designing and building a successful project. This section reviews some of the common areas of concern, describes key issues which must be addressed, and lists sources for detailed information to assist you as you move ahead.

For More Information...

A notebook containing many of these sources is available for your review through the Design Advisory Committee, who may be contacted through the Town Clerk.

We recommend three sources for an overview of the issues and strategies you may wish to consider as you plan and design your project:


Planning and Design

Suggestions

• Establish the scope of the improvements you require. This is the first step that must be accomplished. The business goal of the project, the list of elements which you know must be accomplished, and the list of alternative elements you are still considering should all be established at the beginning of the process.

• Review code and other regulatory requirements. Not only must your improvements meet building code standards, but they may trigger other requirements ranging from compliance with emergency egress or handicapped access requirements (see the appendix on The Building Code and Accessibility). Also, establish the design review steps to which your project may be subject, if any. Depending upon the location and nature of your project, you may be required to prepare submittals or meet with such groups as the Design Advisory Committee, Planning Board, Historic District Commission, or Zoning Board of Appeals.

• Establish your budget. Like any budget, it is important to be realistic and include contingencies for the unexpected. Some simple guidelines for establishing a budget are included as a separate appendix. Builders, tradesmen, suppliers, design professionals,
and information from other recent projects are also sources for cost estimates. Communicate your budget goals consistently to those involved in the project.

- **Determine the historic origins of your building, if appropriate, and the buildings adjacent to them.** There are many sources of information in Great Barrington, not the least of which is the Great Barrington Historical Society. Numerous photographs exist which may show your building or your site as well as the adjacent properties.

- **Consider the need for professional design assistance.** Some projects will be best accomplished working directly with builders or suppliers. However, a range of design professionals are available and may prove very useful to your project. Typical professionals involved in the exterior portions of projects of new construction and renovation include architects, landscape architects, civil and structural engineers, and graphic and signage designers.

- **Review the applicable design guidelines.** The commercial area design guidelines are intended to assist the design process for everyone, and speed the review and approval process of projects when they are required.

- **Establish a design approach.** With your strategy clear and information well in hand, a design approach can be established which takes all of your research and consideration into account.

**Wood Exteriors: Cleaning and Painting**

**Suggestions**

- For historic buildings, determine if possible the original colors or appropriate color schemes appropriate to their time. New technologies are available to match color samples, and a great deal of interesting research has been done which may allow you to recreate original color qualities for your building, if appropriate.

- Consider the colors of the buildings adjacent to yours. Of course, painted buildings may have their colors altered overtime, but this is not true of masonry buildings.

- In general, avoid “Painted Lady” Victorian treatments which create complex, multicolored schemes. Painting schemes for such treatments were relatively rare historically and were generally confined to the Queen Anne style of Victorian buildings. On other styles, a simpler approach to color schemes is not only historically more correct, but more in character with Great Barrington.

- Review environmental standards for lead paint. These standards may effect the painting process in terms of time and cost.

- If you are planning to use an oil-based paint for your project, you should be aware that new environmental regulations are planned regarding the use of oil-based paints. Con-
sult suppliers and manufacturers concerning this issue, because it may affect price, availability, and choice of materials.

• Heed the advice of manufacturers concerning the application of paints. The compatibility of paints with existing surfaces, the need for priming, temperature, humidity, drying time between coats — these and many other factors can dramatically effect the success and longevity of any painting project.

• Removing paint from masonry (brick or stone) can be very difficult, and may destroy the integrity of the stone, brick, or mortar. In general, sandblasting or other techniques have often proved to be very destructive. In many cases, cleaning and repainting are the most practical and useful approaches. However, be sure that any repointing of joints is accomplished prior to painting, including scraping off any old paint before repointing.

For More Information ...


**Masonry Construction and Restoration**

**Suggestions**

• If you are restoring a masonry building, identify the existing material. There are many different types of stone, brick, and other masonry units, and the approach to restoration can vary enormously because of their different properties.

• A typical problem in masonry structures is the deterioration of mortar between the masonry units. While often caused by normal weathering, other sources of water such as leaking roofs or downspouts can cause enormous damage and must be repaired if repointing of joints is to be effective.

• There are many choices which must be made about mortar and the joints in masonry, including chemical composition and its relationship to the unit masonry, color of the mortar, and the type of joint finish. You should evaluate all of these and ensure that your decisions are compatible with the construction, the history, and the design intent of your project.

• Some methods of cleaning masonry or raking out joints can damage masonry. Be certain that the methods proposed are compatible with the existing masonry.

• Similarly, there are many choices for methods to clean existing masonry, ranging from
water cleaning, chemical methods, and abrasive methods. Each method has very
different results for particular masonry materials. It is essential that you understand the
methods and any potential drawbacks which may occur prior to commencing a project.

- Waterproofing and water repellent coatings are occasionally used with masonry. Such
products are not substitutes for solving fundamental problems of building integrity, roof
drainage, and the like. They can also cause unintended problems with both exterior and
interior surfaces, depending upon the materials used and the specific application. Re-
search proposed coatings thoroughly before using them.

For More Information ...

Gilder, Cornelia Brooke, Technical Series No. 5: Property Owners Guide to the Main-
York State, Inc., 1982.

Grimmer, Anne E., Preservation Briefs 6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic

Mack, Robert C., AIA, Preservation Briefs 1: The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of

Mack, Robert C., AIA, de Teel Patterson Tiller and James S. Askins, Preservation Briefs

Other Exterior Materials

Suggestions

- A great number of alternative building materials have been developed which mimic or
imitate historic materials. Often, these materials are practical and attractive, and do not
detract from the historic qualities of the building being restored. In other cases, the
material can appear entirely artificial or inappropriate.

- A decision about substitute or modern materials should be based on the appearance
both in relation to existing materials on a building, and the materials on adjacent build-
ings. Use large area samples to help determine what the final visual effect will be.

- Make sure that the physical properties of substitute materials match the characteristics
you need in general, and specifically as they relate to materials to which they are at-
tached.
For More Information ...


**Glazing, Windows and Storefronts**

**Suggestions**

- Research the character of the original glazing, windows and storefronts of older buildings before proceeding, and understand the characteristics associated with the style of your building.

- Be alert to the color and character of the window framing elements. Metal frames were an early 20th century development, for example, which are often very appropriate to modern storefronts, while a heavier wooden appearance is associated with older building styles.

- Early storefronts often used large expanses of glazing; the use of small, multiple panes is, in fact, not "historic", and is often used mistakenly as a sign of a "colonial" style.

- The conversion of residential structures to business uses raises important challenges. Attempt to retain the residential scale and proportions in new elements.

- The use of glazed transoms and clerestory windows was common in the past, and can be a very handsome and practical element in new designs as well as restorations.

For More Information ...


Appendix: Building Improvement Cost Guidelines

The budget for any project is a fundamental consideration. Realistic planning is aided if the anticipated budget is researched early and is realistically aligned with the eventual project costs.

Contractors, architects, and engineers often employ a simple system of categories to help track costs. This format may be useful to you during the design and building process.

The cost of each project will, of course, vary immensely according to the complexity and type of improvements which are anticipated. To assist you in the process, however, are the following considerations, and an outline of typical costs which have been experienced on other projects for different building estimates.

Cost Considerations

• Be sure to account for "soft costs" as well as "hard costs". The cost of construction including materials and labor, contractor overhead, and contractor profit are usually referred to as the "hard" costs of a project. "Soft costs" can include financing costs, permits and fees, legal assistance and surveys, fees for design professionals, and the like.

• Retain a contingency for the unexpected. Depending on the level of detail you have achieved in the planning and design of a project, you may vary the amount of contingency you assign to a project. A small contingency would be from 5 to 10% of the estimated cost. But regardless of the degree of preparation, unexpected conditions arise during construction, from surprising building conditions when old siding is removed to destructive snow storms during construction, from changing regulations to shifting prices. Building is a complex enterprise, and adjustments during construction are very normal.

• Make sure that any applicable taxes have been included in estimates of "hard costs".

• Cost estimators use the term "unit cost" to describe costs which vary by the amount of a material. So, for example, the cost of painting is usually based on a cost per square foot of materials and labor. "Lump sum" costs are used to describe costs for large, individual items. Signage costs are often estimated as a single "lump sum", for example.

• In general, the smaller the project, the higher the unit costs you will experience. This stands to reason. A contractor who has to buy materials, organize a work force, prepare the site, conduct the work, and clean up needs to charge a larger average amount for a tiny project requiring one day of effort than for a project which would allow his team to work steadily for one month, because of the efficiencies involved in managing and working on a larger project.

• As a result of the effect of project size on project costs, smaller projects are more difficult to accurately estimate than larger projects.
Organizing a Cost Estimate

The costs associated with construction work, whether new construction or renovation, have been broken into the following categories. These categories are basic components that may be found within a project.

- **General Conditions**: A price for general conditions has not been included within the costs for the items listed below. General conditions may or may not be a part of the estimate from a contractor. General condition costs may be added on some projects due to job conditions such as scaffolding, site protection barriers, security monitoring, paperwork or unusual conditions. You should be aware of these costs prior to the start of construction.

- **Site Work**: Site work covers all site design associated with parking, sidewalks, landscaping, and site furnishings such as benches or planters.

- **Concrete**: Concrete work covers all concrete materials needed for foundations of new exterior building walls and concrete for handicapped ramps. Included within concrete is form work and reinforcing.

- **Exterior Wall Systems**: Includes all materials within a complete wall system type that may be used as building facades, new or renovated. It includes masonry with various back-ups, wood stud with various finishes and store front. This section also includes masonry restoration and cleaning products.

- **Metals Fabrications**: Metals fabrications covers railing types and security window guards.

- **Decorative Elements**: Covers some elements which may be used on the exterior of a building, not included within a wall system type such as decorative columns and shutters.

- **Roofing**: Roofing includes all materials within different possible roofing systems and associated gutters and downspouts.

- **Doors**: Doors covers metal doors and frames, wood doors and frames, and all associated door hardware.

- **Painting**: Painting covers exterior painting of wall materials and fencing.
• **Signage**
  Exterior signage for buildings and sites.

• **Canopies**
  Canopies covers aluminum entrance canopies and awnings.

• **Lighting**
  Lighting covers exterior building lighting and parking lighting.

• **Overhead and Profit**
  Overhead and profit have not been included within the costs shown for the above items. This may be listed, within the contractor's pricing, as a separate item. Be sure that you get an explanation from the contractor regarding where and how overhead and profit are being accounted for. This may be as high as 20% to 25% of the overall costs.

**Typical Unit Costs for Construction Elements**

The following is a summary of typical construction costs (1995) which have been experienced for projects of a moderate size; these costs are listed to indicate general order of magnitude assumptions which might be used in the early phases of planning. However, all costs will vary according to the project size, scope, and existing conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>MATERIALS, LABOR &amp; EQUIPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Site work</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bituminous parking paving with 1 1/2&quot; binder base and 4&quot; wearing course, drainage, stripping and concrete curbs</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete sidewalk with 4&quot; gravel base, 4&quot; topping, broom finish, and concrete curbs</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6' High Chain Link Fence</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$7.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6' High Tubular Metal Picket Fence</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4&quot; High Wood Picket Fence</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$7.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood bench</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$272.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete planter, 48&quot; diameter, 24 &quot; high</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$430.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood planter 48&quot; diameter, 30&quot; high</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$706.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash receptacle, fiberglass</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees, various. Average 8' to 10' tall</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrubs evergreen, varies. Average 2' to 3'</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrubs broadleaf, varies. Average 2' to 3'</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groundcover</td>
<td>per hundred</td>
<td>$61.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawns and grasses</td>
<td>Square yard</td>
<td>$1.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Concrete**

Concrete poured-in-place foundation walls with form work and reinforcing, excavate and pour

Concrete ramp, 3" wide with rails both sides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete poured-in-place foundation walls</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and reinforcing, excavate and pour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete ramp, 3&quot; wide with rails both sides</td>
<td>Lineal Foot</td>
<td>$175.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exterior Wall systems**

**Masonry**

Brick wall with wood stud backup, plywood sheathing

batt insulation, painted drywall interior

Brick wall with 8" concrete block backup, plywood sheathing, batt insulation, painted drywall interior

Brick veneer over existing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brick wall with wood stud backup, plywood</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$24.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheathing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>batt insulation, painted drywall interior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick wall with 8&quot; concrete block backup,</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plywood sheathing, batt insulation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>painted drywall interior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick veneer over existing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble facing, polished, 3/4&quot; to 7/8&quot; thick</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$30.00 to $50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone veneer</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granite veneer, polished 3/4&quot; to 1 1/2&quot; thick</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$28.00 to $43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry Cleaning, clean &amp; point</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonry Cleaning, acid wash</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Wood Stud**

Vinyl siding over wood stud with sheathing, vapor barrier, batt insulation, interior drywall painted

Wood siding over wood stud with sheathing, vapor barrier, batt insulation, interior drywall painted

Stucco system over wood stud with sheathing, vapor barrier, batt insulation, interior drywall painted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vinyl siding over wood stud with sheathing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vapor barrier, batt insulation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interior drywall painted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood siding over wood stud with sheathing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vapor barrier, batt insulation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interior drywall painted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stucco system over wood stud with sheathing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vapor barrier, batt insulation,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interior drywall painted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Aluminum Storefront System**

Medium style, insulated glass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum Storefront System</td>
<td>Square Foot</td>
<td>$48.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Metal Fabrications**

Pipe railing, 2 rail primed 1 1/4" diameter

Pipe railing, 2 rail galvanized 1 1/4" diameter

Pipe railing, stainless steel 1 1/4" diameter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pipe railing, 2 rail primed 1 1/4&quot; diameter</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipe railing, 2 rail galvanized 1 1/4&quot;</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$16.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diameter</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$32.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamental railings, aluminum, bronze or</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$85.00 to $470.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stainless steel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamental railings, hand forged wrought</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$96.00 to $370.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Guards, steel bars</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>add for hinge mounted</td>
<td>per window</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Decorative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Shutters, alum., louvered 1'-4&quot; W x 6'-8&quot; L</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td></td>
<td>$68.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Shutters, vinyl, louvered 1'-6&quot; W x 4'-7&quot; L</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td></td>
<td>$93.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Shutters, pine, louvered 1'-6&quot; wwx 4'-7&quot; L</td>
<td>pair</td>
<td></td>
<td>$67.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns, aluminum, 10&quot; dia.</td>
<td>vertical if</td>
<td></td>
<td>$26.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns, fir, hollow, 10&quot; dia.</td>
<td>vertical if</td>
<td></td>
<td>$21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columns, fir, solid, 5 1/2&quot; dia.</td>
<td>vertical if</td>
<td></td>
<td>$14.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Roofing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt shingle, includes complete system with underlayment and flashing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate shingle, includes complete system with underlayment and flashing</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDPM (membrane) system, loose laid, ballasted, and flashed</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing seam metal, complete system</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal gutters</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal downspouts</td>
<td>Lineal foot</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Doors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal insulated with metal frame and hardware</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollow metal with metal frame and hardware</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid wood with frame and hardware</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Painting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous exterior of fences, walls and doors, three coats</td>
<td>square foot</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Signage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td>each</td>
<td></td>
<td>$165.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Building, simple metal painted store front sign</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td></td>
<td>$30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*sign prices will vary with materials. Could be wood, cut stone, porcelain enamel.....</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Canopies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aluminum entrance canopy</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvas awning and frame structure</td>
<td>Square foot</td>
<td>$25.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Lighting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building lights</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>$450.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking, 18&quot;, double head, high pressure sodium</td>
<td>each</td>
<td>$3,500.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

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Appendix: Building Codes and Accessibility Compliance

Building Codes

All improvements to existing buildings as well as new construction must conform to Building Code standards. Great Barrington is subject to the Massachusetts State Building Code, Fifth Edition. Certain ordinary repairs are allowed without requiring a building permit, but must nevertheless meet Building Code standards. You may wish to consult with the Town’s Building Inspector regarding questions or interpretations during the planning of your project. Please contact William Snyder, Sr., Inspector of Buildings, Town Hall, (413) 528-3032.

One of the principal questions which arises during renovation projects is the degree to which existing elements of a building must be “brought up to code” when improvements are undertaken on only a portion of a building. Many of the basic rules for compliance are contained in Article 32, “Repair, Alteration, Addition, and Change of Use of Existing Buildings” and in the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Code (521 CMR). A detailed review of the codes is recommended as one of the first steps in planning a new project. Although there are many special considerations which effect the requirements for a particular building, there are several principles which often define the extent of compliance which is required.

- The number of exits, their construction and capacity, and exit signage, lighting and alarms for a building must typically be brought to code, regardless of the amount of renovation.

- If the value of the renovation is greater than 25 percent of the 100 percent assessed value of the building, the entire facility is required to meet the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board code. A variance may be applied for in cases where full compliance is “impracticable.”

- If the cost of renovation work performed amounts to less than 25 percent of the 100 percent equalized assessed value of the building, and is more than $50,000, then that portion of the work being performed must comply with Access Board regulations, and an accessible entrance and toilet usable by a person in a wheelchair also shall be provided.

- If the cost of renovation work performed amounts to less than 25 percent of the 100 percent equalized assessed value of the building, and is less than $50,000, only that portion of the work being performed must comply with Access Board regulations.

It should be noted that the cost of renovation work on the building within any 24 month period must be added together in applying the preceding formulas.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

While similar in scope to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regulations, the ADA is a civil rights statute intended to prevent discrimination in employment. It states that elements of a building shall be made accessible to the “maximum extent feasible.”
This requires careful consideration of specific uses and architectural solutions, and is sometimes interpreted to require more extensive alterations than required through the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board Regulations. In general, the ADA has slightly more specific parking requirements than the Access Board. ADA is also more specific on elevator controls, emergency systems (such as fire alarm horns and strobes), stairs and equipment. ADA is somewhat less rigid than the Access Board on toilet room design and ramp widths.

Guides and further information on ADA compliance you may wish to consult include:


Appendix: Bibliography and Resources

Historical Information


Preservation Guides


Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036


Preservation Briefs

Preservation Briefs, put out by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interiors, address many topics relevant to restoration and renovation work. These documents are available from Massachusetts Historical Commission, Massachusetts Archive Facility, 220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston MA 02125


Auer, Michael J., Preservation Briefs 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs. Washington,


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