

Fenwick Island Commercial District Design Guidelines



Fenwick Island Commercial District Design Guidelines

Draft #3

September 8, 2020



The Town of Fenwick Island

Design Guideline Committee:

Teresa Tieman, Town Manager
Richard Mais, Chair / Councilman / Planning Commission
Reid Tingle, Vice Chair / Building Committee
Bill Weistling, Building Committee
Pat Schuchman, Building Inspector
Winnie Lewis, Planning Commission
Faye Horner, Planning Commission



JSD / The Design Group
Architectural and Planning Consultants
Phone: (802) 496-2166
Jeff Schoellkopf, AIA, Principal

Contents

1. Introduction	1
Use of the Guidelines	3
Applicability	3
Town Review Process	4
2. Historic Contexts	5
3. Design Objectives	7
4. Building Character	8
Building Compatibility	9
5. Streetscape	10
Sidewalks	10
6. Building Form	12
Setback	13
Height	14
Width	14
General Climatic Considerations	15
Climate Based Building Guidelines	16
Light and Ventilation	16
Outdoor Spaces	17
7. Roofs	18
Roof Design	18
Flat Roofs	20
Dormers	20
Cupolas	20
Roofing Materials	20
8. Facades	21
General Building Facades	21
Side and Rear Facades	22
Siding Materials and Trim	24
Openings and Entries	27
Porches	28
Covered Walkways	29
Decks and Exterior Stairs	30
Buildings on Corners	31
Awnings	32
Colors	32
9. Landscaping	33
10. Flood Elevation	34
11. Accessibility	35
12. Parking	35
13. Lighting	36
14. Fencing and Screening	37
15. Service and Utility	38
16. Signage	38
17. Public Art	39



Existing 2020

East Side



Typical Rear Yard to Residential



Positive Village Character



Long Unbroken Facades Lack Character

1. Introduction



The town of Fenwick Island is an incorporated town that is, in fact, a barrier island, extending approximately 1 mile along the Delaware Bay barrier island complex which extends from Cape Henlopen, Delaware to Chincoteague, Virginia. It is located just north of the Maryland state line (Mason Dixon) and ten miles south of the Indian River inlet. The town is bisected by Delaware Route 1 and the south end of town connects to Route 54. Its eastern boundary lies along the Atlantic Ocean. It encompasses an area of approximately 0.5 square miles.

Goals:

- Safe and friendly environment for pedestrians, families, and kids
- Attractive buildings that respect traditions and are of good quality, well- designed and maintained
- Maintain commercial uses and basic services in the commercial districts
- Improve quality and image of rear yard and services areas

The town of Fenwick Island is an outstanding beach community in southern Sussex County that caters to our year-round residents, property owners and business community, as well as to our summer vacationers. A highlight of the community is our clean and safe beach, protected by our professional lifeguards. Fenwick Island is characterized by a lovely beach, friendly residents, and a quieter, slower pace than its neighbors.

Fenwick Island is known as a quiet resort town because of our emphasis on being a family-oriented vacation destination. It is a well-known gathering spot where immediate, as well as extended families can reconnect, relax and play while enjoying the benefits of ocean breezes, beautiful beaches and a refreshing surf.

At the core of Fenwick Island is its commercial district, a narrow spine along Coastal Highway. This area provides neighborhood commercial uses, including shops, stores, restaurants, basic services and municipal functions. In addition to these functions, they provide much-needed gathering places for residents and visitors, and are key elements to the identity and character of the town as a whole.



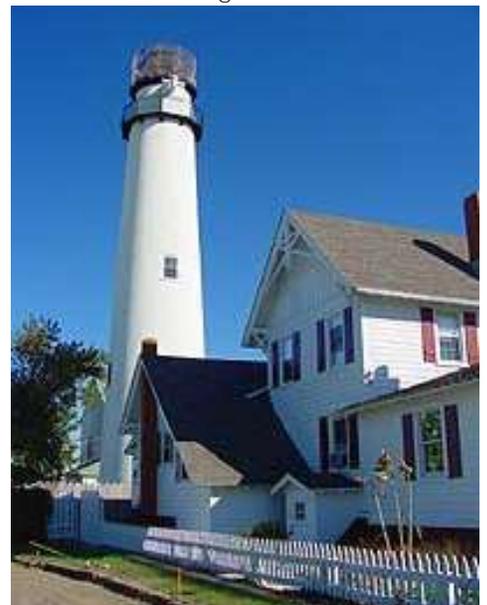
Through the development of these guidelines, Fenwick Island hopes to encourage property owners and developers to continue to develop an improved character in this district. Other nearby commercial areas include Ocean City, Bethany Beach, South Bethany, and Dewey Beach. Slightly further away are Lewes, Rehoboth Beach, and the inland towns of Berlin, Millsboro, Ocean View, and Selbyville. While they also provide services and activities to visitors and residents, Fenwick Island is unique because of its scale, charm, location, character, and special beaches.

A critical ingredient in any development and redevelopment process is the presence of strong design characteristics. Successful revitalization projects in towns that have created vibrant downtown areas have included four key elements:

- Community consensus and commitment
- Streetscape amenities
- Design guidelines
- Effective zoning and review process

We envision a town that is a welcoming and attractive community that more than satisfies the needs of the various stakeholders in Fenwick Island. That vision encompasses our clean and safe beaches, a warm and inviting business district, our charming neighborhoods, and well-maintained facilities, as well as our outstanding municipal services.

Fenwick Isl and Lighthouse





Mid-1900's AERIAL

Use of the Guidelines

The design guidelines are intended to be flexible and allow for creative design solutions that are consistent with the overall goal to improve the commercial district of Fenwick Island. This has been developed by the Town in order to provide property owners and developers with voluntary guidelines that will support an improved common vision for the Town. All references are advisory and use the terms “encourage,” “discourage,” “should” and “should not.”

Reference photos and illustrations shown in this document exemplify the concepts described by the guidelines. The examples shown throughout this guideline manual are not the only acceptable solutions.

The design guidelines were developed for the Fenwick Island Ad Hoc Commercial District Planning Committee, with final approval by the of Fenwick Island Town Council.

Applicability

This design guideline manual applies to all buildings within the downtown commercial Fenwick Island areas. The guidelines address site design and use, architectural design, use, size, bulk, scale and signage, as well as landscape design. The guidelines apply to all construction, unless specifically excluded, including new and rehabilitated buildings.

The design guidelines are intended to guide property owners, builders, planners, engineers and architects in designing projects that will be compatible with, and will improve the quality of, the existing community in which they are sited. However, if a particular project is unable to meet the recommendations of these guidelines due to unique project issues, the project could still attempt to meet the intent of the guidelines in those areas that are not affected by the unique project issues.

It is noted the Fenwick Island town limits do not include several blocks of commercial development on the south end to the border of Ocean City, MD. It is hoped that developers and businesses in this area of Sussex County might also consider and apply these guidelines, to the extent they are coordinated with Sussex County Zoning Regulations.

The Fenwick Island Board of Adjustment (BOA) may grant special exceptions to setback provisions and other zoning requirements based on unique circumstances, as described below and according to the process provided in the Fenwick Island Zoning Code.



It is hoped that all exterior renovation of existing structures and all new construction will be inspired by these guidelines. Interior improvements, as well as necessary maintenance to existing buildings that does not change the form, size, color or character, is clearly exempt from these guidelines.

Town Review Process

1. The Building Inspector initially reviews the applicant's concept(s).
2. If the submission is a tear-down and a rebuild, involves significant exterior renovation, or new construction, the applicant's plan(s) are subject to sketch plan review by the Building Committee. (BC)
3. Following comments and suggestions made by the BC at sketch plan review, the applicant shall contact others for their review, requirements, and advice, including possibly:
 - State Fire marshal
 - DNREC / Sussex County Soil Conservation District - SWM
 - Sussex County Health Dept (if applicable)
 - Solid Waste
 - Water - By Private Utility Artesian
 - Sewer - Sussex County
 - DELDOT for access & impact on the storm sewer system along Route 1
 - Utilities: Gas - Private by tank
Electric - Delmarva Power & Light
Data and Communications - Private
Utilities, Verizon and Comcast
4. Plans shall be updated in compliance with all these considered and a final review by the BC conducted.
5. When and if the applicant's plan(s) are approved by the BC and Fire Marshal, the Building Inspector may accept final building construction documents for building permit review. A building permit will be issued when all building plans and review conditions (PC and otherwise) are met. Please note, a Sussex County Building Permit may also be required.
6. The Building Inspector monitors the progress of the construction to insure compliance with the building and zoning code requirements. Inspections by others may include Electrical, Plumbing, Fire, Health and Environmental.
7. A Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is issued after all requirements are successfully met.
8. Please note that a separate building permit is also required by Sussex County.

2. Historic Contexts



Fenwick Isl and Lighthouse

Fenwick Island was named after Thomas Fenwick, a planter who hailed from England. The town of Fenwick Island was incorporated in 1953.

The development of Fenwick Island was typical of the trend followed by most coastal Delaware communities founded during the earlier years. People started to settle on Fenwick Island in the 1800s. It's popularity slowly increased, until after WWII when it really became a vacation destination. Later years of development fostered a trend that emphasized additions to community facilities and improvement to quality of life, which have culminated in today's developmental characteristics.



Several observable historical trends have had a major impact on the community and continue to influence its development. The community characteristics spawned in midcentury continues to dominate the area. The town is a family-oriented resort community.

Since its founding, the community has been influenced by several nearby urban metropolitan areas. The very first visitors to the area had a two-day journey from Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. by rail, water and wagon. Transportation improvements over the years have made the town much more accessible, and the summer population increases annually. The opening of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge in the 1950's created a high-speed route from the District of Columbia and Baltimore areas. Consequently, most of Fenwick Island's seasonal residents, visitors and immigrating retirees come from urban backgrounds. The Fenwick Island area has continuous involvement with government installations. A U.S. Coast Guard station was manned in the community in the early part of the 20th century. A naval radio-compass station operated for years from neighboring Bethany Beach. Coastal Defense troops were also quartered in nearby Bethany Beach during World War II, and the existing Delaware National Guard training installation was used as a POW camp. It continues to be an active National Guard training camp.

The town of Fenwick Island wages a continuous struggle with the natural forces of wind and water, which have threatened the town throughout its history. The town has been rebuilt many times as hotels and other buildings have fallen victim to a storm's fury. The famous coastal storm of 1962 ravaged the town. Waves estimated to be 20 feet high hammered the town and a tidal storm surge, destroyed homes and infrastructure. Despite intermittent storms, the town of Fenwick Island continues to maintain a reputation as one of Delaware's finest coastal communities.



Regional References



Chesapeake Light House and Pavilion



Original Bethany Beach Life Saving Station



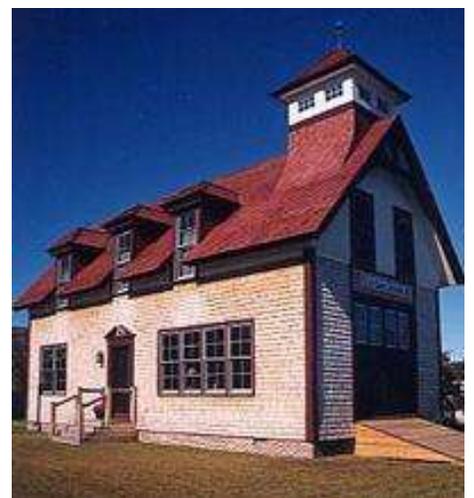
Ocean City Maryl and Life Saving Station



Indian River Life Saving Station



Ocean City Victorian Porch with Glass



Dewey Beach Life Saving Station

3. Design Objectives

AS DESIGN CONSULTANTS, ARCHITECTS, AND PLANNERS OUR INTENT IS TO IMPLEMENT GUIDELINES WHICH, WHILE GUIDING QUALITY AND ENCOURAGING COMPATIBILITY AND IMPROVED TOWN IDENTITY, ALLOW FOR CREATIVITY AND INDIVIDUAL COMMERCIAL PRESENCE. OUR GOALS ARE VITALITY AND A NOTABLE CHARACTER. WE DO NOT ENCOURAGE A VERY TIGHTLY CONTROLLED OR EXCESSIVELY THEMED DOWNTOWN. WE BELIEVE THE APPROACH THAT BEST SUITS THE EXPRESSED INTERESTS OF RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, AND OTHER PROPERTY OWNERS IS TO THINK OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT AS ROOTED IN LOCAL TRADITIONS BUT EXPRESSING A NEW GENERATION. THE GOAL IS TO MAINTAIN THE BEST OF LOCAL CHARACTER WHILE ENCOURAGING A FRESHNESS TO EVOLVE.

THIS REGIONAL/LOCAL GENERATIVE APPROACH ENCOURAGES THE EMPLOYMENT OF TRADITIONAL FORMS AND MATERIALS IN NEW AND CREATIVE WAYS. MANY OF THE NOTABLE BUILDINGS IN THE AREA WERE BUILT WITH GABLE ROOFS, SHINGLE SIDING, AND DOUBLE HUNG WINDOWS- BUT THE MOST NOTABLE HAVE THE UNIQUE BAY, THE ODD SHAPED PORCH, THE UNUSUAL TOWER, THE SPECIAL TRELLIS, FENCE, GARDEN, OR COURTYARD. THESE ARE THE KINDS OF THINGS AND PLACES WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE.

While the number of remaining older and/or historic buildings in the town is very limited, the character of the area remains unique. Private property within the downtown provides the “physical backdrop” for public life. The buildings of the commercial zone can contribute to the overall perception of spirit and quality of life. They work together to provide an integral part of the community’s experience as a place where people want to stroll, shop, play, conduct business and interact with their friends, family and neighbors.

The intent of these guidelines is to encourage the following:

1. Encourage a commercially vibrant core in the district, providing key neighborhood services. Generally maintaining human scale and existing height limits.
2. Develop and enhance the character of downtown. Provide greater architectural continuity and cohesiveness.
3. Improve buffering to the adjacent residential zones, in terms of reduced noise intrusions and improved visual qualities. Provide for improved appearance of rear yards and service areas, and provide control or uses, physical barriers, and physical separations to mediate noise adjacent to residential areas.
4. Enrich the quality of the pedestrian experience at street level, including improved signage, storefront design, wider walkways and the use of appropriate materials and landscaping.
5. Encourage a high level of quality for design and materials in all proposed projects
6. Encourage that adjacent buildings work together to reinforce the character of the commercial district as a vital and lively place abundant with a diversity of businesses and services.
7. Provide for improved bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation systems as possible. Coordinate with DELDOT improvements.
8. Provide all this within the context of increased flood protection, improved fire safety and improved public accessibility.



4. Building Character

The core architectural character of the area can best be described as “Seaside Cottage.” Although some of the original buildings in older nearby towns incorporated elements of Victorian design into their facades, they remain unique to this area and elegant in their simplicity. From the early days through the 1960’s, significant architectural styles identified by historians of the area include Folk Victorian, Bungalow/Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Art Deco and Ranch, though the majority of structures have been described as vernacular beach cottages with fairly simple detail. To retain this uniqueness and to create a sense of place, these buildings should serve as a model for future development of the downtown.

The common characteristics of the seaside cottage style are still apparent today in the many buildings which remain from that era. These buildings are simple geometric forms of two to three stories topped with hip or gable roofs. The wide variety of dormers, towers and gable ends that grace these rooflines add to their unique charm.

While building massing is often asymmetrical, windows and doors are most often arranged in a somewhat ordered symmetrical pattern, creating balanced façades. The windows are often tall, rising to the ceiling line, and transoms are occasionally used to maximize air circulation.

The porches surrounding these buildings are wide and spacious and often wrap around the side. They are usually supported with large, white or natural wood columns, either round or square. The columns are connected with rounded railings and square pickets. Locally produced lumber and cypress shingles were materials most often used for framing and exterior shingles. The dominance of shingles and clapboard siding reflects both the tastes of the era and the carpentry of the builders who built the homes.

Since the 1950’s, the commercial districts have been influenced by buildings that represent these more residential traditions (**examples**). Others are more of a flat-roofed, zero lot line, urban street front. These range from modern, plain, and flat-faced to the more decorative and Victorian influenced (**examples**). Several recent buildings have combined the efficiency and construction of the flat roof with traditional roof character on the street front (**examples**).

Buildings of various forms, types and characteristics are allowable under the more specific guidelines which follow.

Commercial Buildings with Desirable Characteristics



Modern



Historic

Common and encouraged design elements and architectural characteristics associated with the traditional styles include the following:

- Simple building masses with gable or hip roofs of varying shapes and pitches, gable, shed or hip dormers
- Generous porches with large-scale columns on first and occasionally second floors
- Second-floor porches overlooking the street
- Clapboard and shingle siding and brick chimneys and foundation walls
- Board and batten on upper floor gable ends
- Large plate-glass storefront windows
- Decorative railings, trellises, gates and mostly white painted fences with railings
- Shed-style window awnings
- Columns with bases and capitols
- Articulated relief detailing that emphasizes space, shadow and depth
- Frieze boards, gable brackets and exposed rafter tails
- Transoms above doors and windows
- Glass enclosed porches as commercial space or display windows
- Corner articulation with towers, turrets, corner bays or wrap-around porches



Bethany Municipal Building



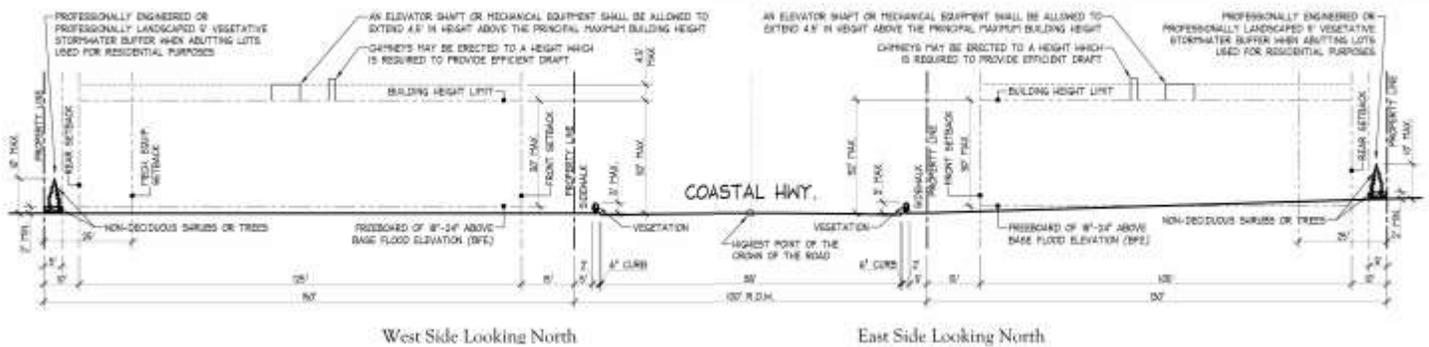
Seacrest Building in Bethany

Building Compatibility

The size, bulk and scale of new buildings should be generally compatible and in scale with adjacent structures in the surrounding neighborhood. However, some variety is encouraged.

Where the proposed structure is significantly taller or larger than existing adjacent structures, one or more of the following methods should be used to make the structure compatible:

- Roof types that minimize building mass at the perimeter
- Architectural treatments such as varying building materials, window size and color
- Large building facades broken into smaller units



To provide a comfortable and interesting pedestrian experience, the ratio of building height to the distance between buildings must relate to the human scale. The commercial District is characterized by a broad and open highway and 2-story building height limitation.



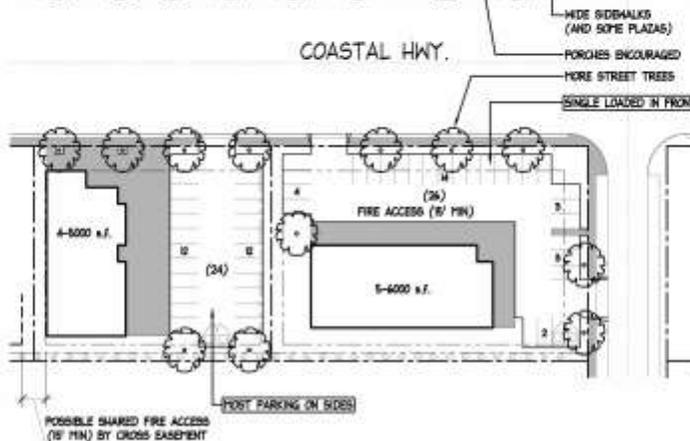
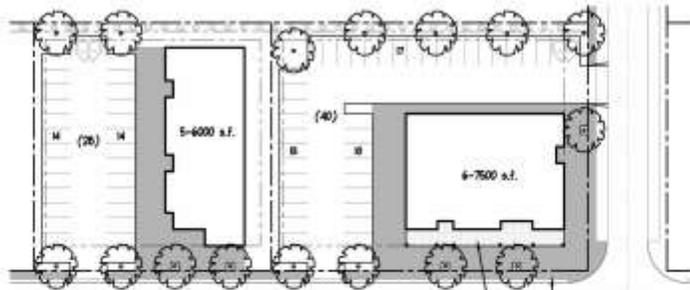
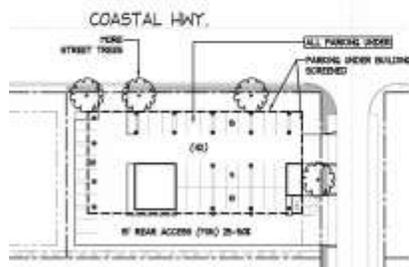
5. Streetscape

We believe over time improvements can be made to the character and quality of the commercial district at a larger scale than individual properties, by envisioning an improved streetscape throughout the district. Not all properties can change or contribute, but improvements may be made in terms of building positioning on lots, parking layout, sidewalk design, landscaping, coordination of street furnishings and details, lighting, and improved quality of signage. These are all in addition to the character and quality of buildings addressed in other sections of these guidelines. The goals for this include making the downtown more pedestrian friendly, more attractive, and more lively along the street edge, while keeping it more quiet and better buffered on the neighborhood sides.

This all needs to be also coordinated with access for fire safety, utility easements, State highway conditions and regulations, stormwater management, flood resilience, and other more technical aspects of development.

The single largest factor in defining the streetscape is the position of buildings in relation to the street, sidewalks, and parking areas. We encourage the provision of wide sidewalks and streetside plazas, the inclusion of porches, and most parking on the side or rear of buildings. In the case of buildings with parking beneath we encourage the screening of that parking and provision of landscaped pedestrian walks at ground level along the street.

Examples of these can be found in the illustrations in appendix B and in the drawings in this section.





Encouraged

- Buildings located on corners close to the setback, especially at intersections.
- Streetside small plazas and courtyards, including streetside cafes and outdoor dining and display on porches.
- In long continuous buildings such as a commercial strip, use building massing, bays, porches, recesses, and dormers to break up the straight lines.
- Use of raised boardwalks to connect access to buildings and address flood elevation requirements.
- Clearly defined and safe pedestrian ways through parking lots, that connect to sidewalks.
- Landscaped parking lots, and planting of street trees.
- If parking must be in front along the highway- make it single loaded with the parking along the street and a walkway or boardwalk along the building connecting to neighboring properties where possible
- If parking is under a raised building provide screening and landscaping on the highway side and any side streets.
- Locate dumpsters on the sides and rear of properties, in well screened areas- but as far away from the neighboring homes as possible. Share facilities for neighboring small lots.
- Coordination of neighboring properties for sidewalks, walkways, boardwalks, and building locations.
- Mixed use properties that can request parking reductions from stand alone requirements.
- Inclusion of bike racks and bus stops.

Allowed

- Head in parking in setback on the minor side streets, especially if just on one side.
- Buildings set to the rear of the lot with parking in front, if the parking lot is well maintained and landscaped, adequate pedestrian access is provided, and the building character is compliant with other recommendations of this guidelines.

Discouraged

- Double loaded parking lots along the highway, with long uninterrupted buildings.

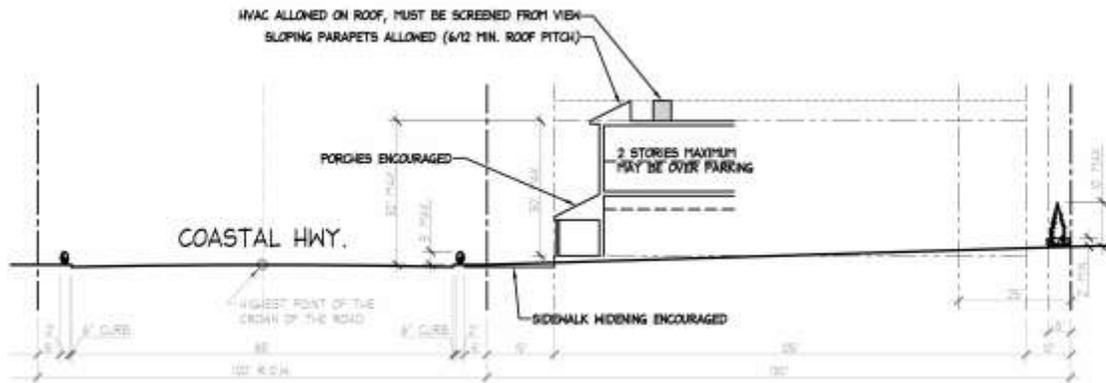


Setback

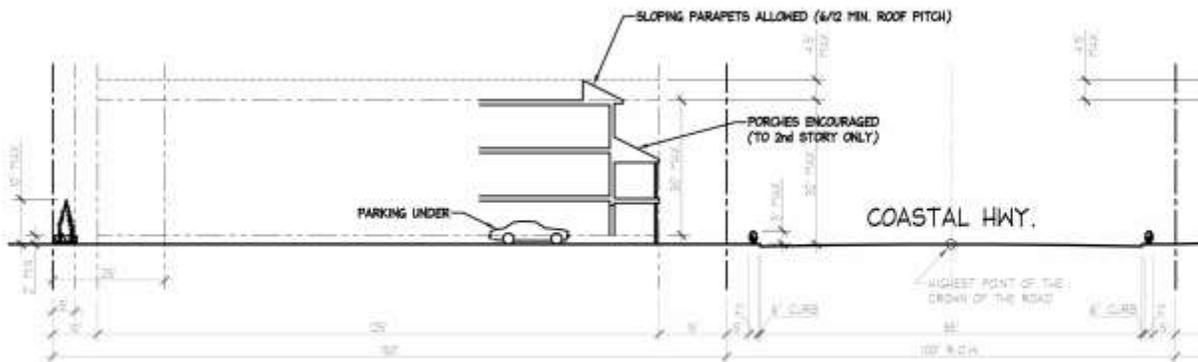
All new buildings and additions must adhere to the setback requirements as defined in the town zoning ordinance. Tower elements and roof dormers are permitted in this zone, adding up to no more than 25% of the building frontage. Allow bay windows, etc. to protrude into front and side setbacks up to 3 feet.

Prohibited:

- Porches may not protrude into the setback.



East Side Looking North



West Side Looking North



Height

The relationship of the building height and width to the street creates the “outdoor room” which defines the downtown. Appropriate building massing contributes to the livability and quality of the downtown experience.

- Buildings are allowed to be constructed to the height permitted in the district. Allowable maximum height of top plate/eave is 32 feet, with a max. of two stories. The height of non-habitable sloping roof elements may extend to 36-1/2 feet.
- Height shall be measured from the required 2' freeboard above FEMA base flood elevation or average grade, whichever is higher.
- Sloping parapets with a roof pitch above 6/12 are allowed to have a 4-1/2' extension above the height limit on all sides.
- Cupolas and widow's walks not larger than 8 feet by 8 feet may extend up to 4-1/2' above the height limit.
- HVAC equipment (which shall be attractively well screened) shall be allowed up to 36-1/2 feet.
- Elevator shafts and chimneys may be to height permitted by zoning and building codes, 4-1/2' above the height limit.

Width

The original downtown building lots were typically 50 feet wide. Although many buildings today occupy more than one lot, the dominant building lot pattern remains. New development should respect this characteristic rhythm.

Building articulation is the key to creating appropriate scale, an interesting pedestrian environment and architectural vitality. Large, monolithic buildings degrade the character and atmosphere of downtown.

Encouraged:

- New construction on two or more lots or lots longer than 100' are encouraged to repeat traditional building widths by maintaining a similar division of the façade to maintain this progression.
- To ensure that new buildings are compatible with the existing character and scale of the district, such buildings should be organized into visible building increments of no more than 50' in width.
- Where the street frontage is defined by a continuous building façade, infill construction should maintain the façade by building from side lot line to side lot line.
- Buildings that occupy more than 50' of frontage should be designed to appear as several smaller but related parts of a larger structure.

Discouraged:

- Flat front façades longer than 40 feet without interruptions by a setback, porch or bay window.

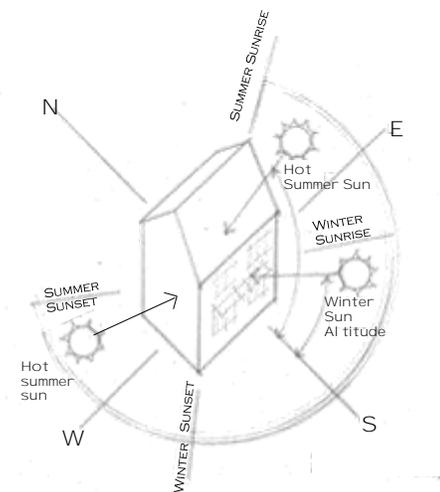
General Climatic Consideration

The challenge of this climate is that it ranges from very hot and humid in the summer to cold and windy in the winter. These conditions create conflicting desirable building configurations for natural comfort and energy efficiency.

In general, 20 to 30 days are uncomfortable in the summer, and three months of winter are challenging when dealing with simple passive methods. Building massing is affected by a desire for good natural ventilation (extension and openness) and a desire for minimum surface area (compactness) for heating and cooling efficiency.

Cold winter winds usually come from the north and west and are mostly accompanied by clear, sunny skies. Snow is infrequent, but typically wet and very heavy.

In the summer, cool sea breezes blow often from the south, and occasionally the northeast, providing relief from the heat. The diurnal effect of land and sea masses causes fairly regular offshore or westerly breezes in the late evening and early morning in summer.



Sun Exposure orientation



Climate Based Building Guidelines

Several building characteristics work well in this climate. Up to a point, maximizing southern exposure (wall or window area), and reducing eastern and western exposure, reduces summer solar overheating and increases winter heat gains. Porches and trellises can be effective for shading eastern and western facades, and glazed porches may be valuable as buffers on north sides as well. Skylights cause significant summer heat gain and rarely contribute to heating in the winter.

A well-designed, well-constructed building can provide a comfortable thermal environment almost all year round with minimum use of energy. For these days when they cannot,



Window shade Trellis

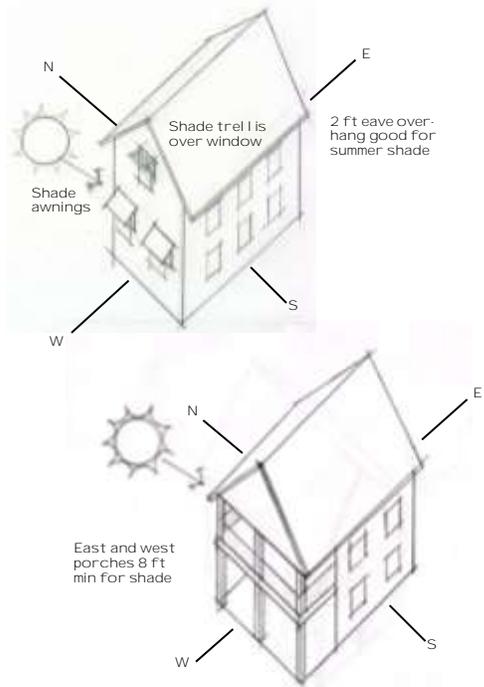
however, backup mechanical systems are needed to condition indoor space. The goal is to minimize this need and provide efficient, effective equipment. New mechanical, window, insulation and thermal storage technology are promising ways to deal with a cooler climate in a low-energy consuming manner, but the designer's control of building configuration and siting are the most cost-effective first steps.

- Shade south windows with small overhangs
- Shade east and west with porches, trellises, and awnings
- North light provides good daylight - No shading necessary

Light and Ventilation

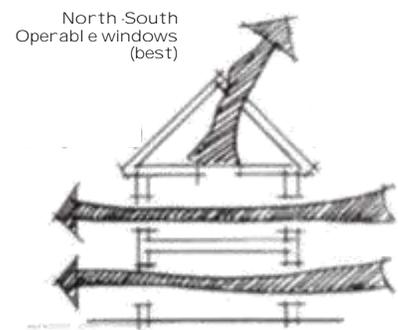
Buildings should be designed to take advantage of sunlight and prevailing summer ocean breezes. We encourage building designs that minimize shading of the street and neighboring properties, and that allow passage of cooling summer breezes. Well-shaded windows are also encouraged in order to minimize summertime solar heating. This will reduce the energy demand for air conditioning, and provide more naturally comfortable buildings. Natural daylight and cross-ventilation should be considered when placing windows as a means of reducing direct solar heat in the summer. Windows can be well shaded by short (2-3 foot) overhangs on south facades, but need larger (6-12 foot) porches, trellises and overhangs on east and west facades. Highly reflective coatings with high visibility that decrease heat gain are also available for windows on east and west facades.

Encouraged shading patterns



- Shade south windows with small overhangs
- Shade east and west with porches, trellises, and awnings
- North light provides good daylight - No shading necessary

Encouraged ventilation patterns



Cross-ventilation

- Narrow sections
- Operable windows
- Transoms
- Minimize interior partitions



Village of Fenwick shops and courtyards



Open outdoor spaces are good for natural breezes in summer



West Facing Courtyard Garden & Porch

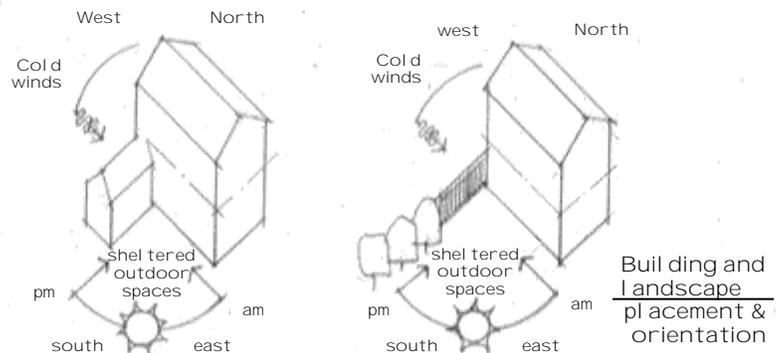
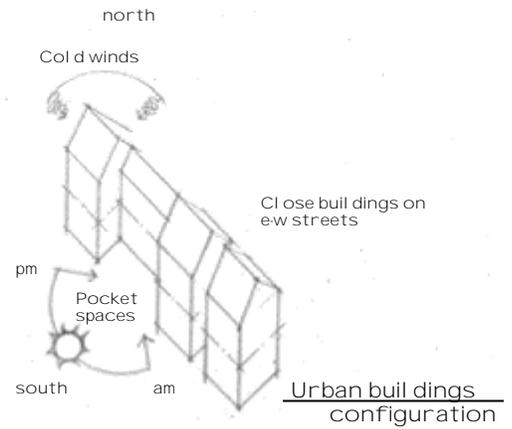
Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor spaces such as courtyards and patios are encouraged. Vegetation should be incorporated as a natural element of outdoor space.

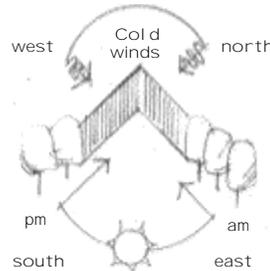
In an entire block of development, it is encouraged to make 2 or more separate buildings with courtyards and common spaced in between, such as with the Village of Fenwick.

Interior lot pedestrian walks are encouraged. These provide charm and human scale, and allow for multiple smaller-scale businesses.

Courtyards serve as a public amenity and work well in cafés and restaurants, as well as common entries for multiple businesses. Outdoor spaces that are sheltered on the north and west while open to the south often provide natural comfort in the shoulder seasons.



L-shaped buildings properly oriented



Landscape features
Placement of fences & vegetation



7. Roofs

Roof Design

Roofs are a defining element of a community's history and character. The most common types of roofs in downtown Fenwick Island are gable, hip and flat.

Encouraged:

- Roofs throughout downtown should be simple and basic in mass and form.
- Roofs may be gabled, hipped, flat/low pitched (up to 1/12) or a combination of these.
- Building with frontage that exceeds 40 feet should incorporate changes in roof form or type, which serves to reinforce the expression of the traditional building increment.
- Roof-mounted mechanical equipment shall be screened from view by attractive lattice, railings or roof forms that are designed as an integral part of the building architecture.
- New design should respect the alignment of neighboring building cornices or roof lines and other horizontal elements.
- Main roofs of buildings if pitched should be 7/12 min and 12/12 max. Porch and shed roofs should be 2/12 Min. and 8/12 max; Provide cornices and detail at flat roof parapets.
- Architectural enhancements including dormers and decorative trim.
- Exposed rafter ends and brackets (or tabs) at overhangs, soffits and eaves.
- Gable end and eave brackets.



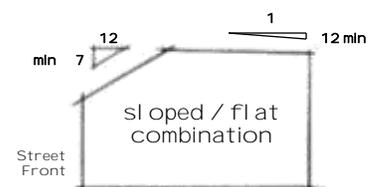
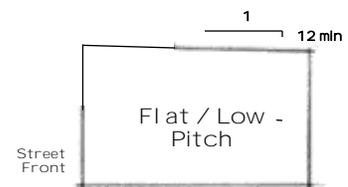
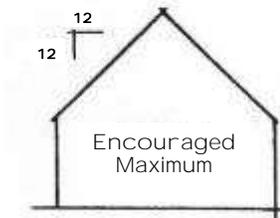
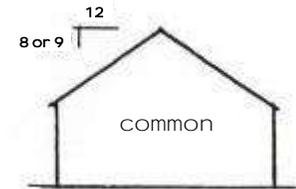
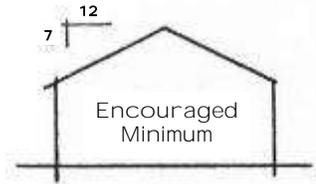
Possible:

- Other unique roofs

Discouraged:

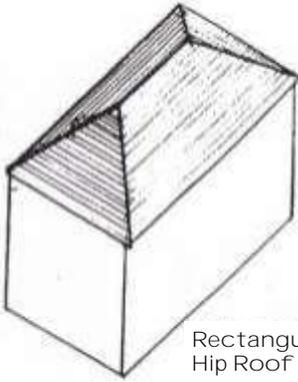
- Flat faced parapets
- Long, unbroken mansard roofs
- Plainly detailed flat roofs

Roof Pitch general diagrams

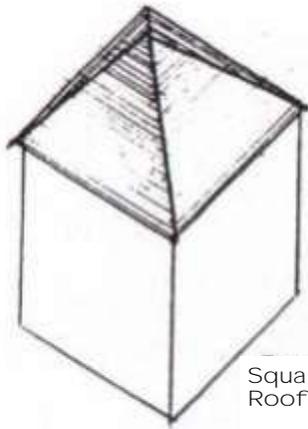


Basic Roof Forms

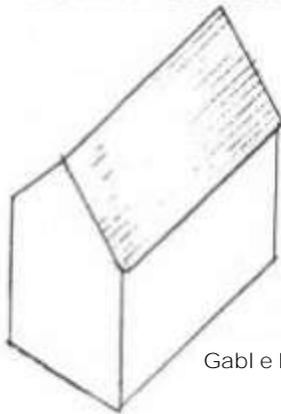
Pitched Roofs



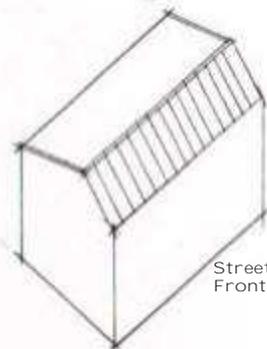
Rectangular Hip Roof



Square Hip Roof



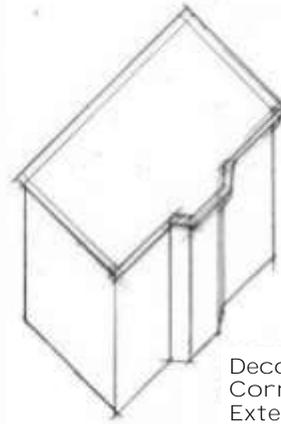
Gable Roof



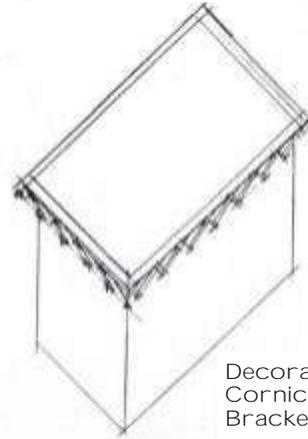
Street Front

Combination Roof

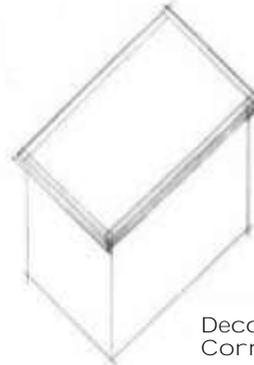
Flat Roofs



Decorative Cornice W/ Bay Extension (s)



Decorative Cornice W/ Brackets



Decorative Cornice

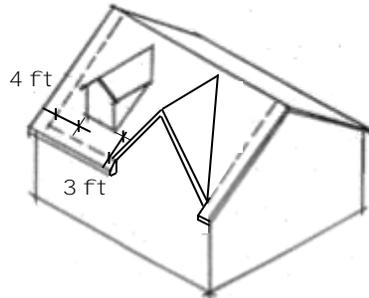


Flat Roofs

Flat roofs are acceptable if built within the traditional character. This might include a cornice, projecting parapet elements (3-D, not flat), a three-dimensional façade (bay windows) and limited length of façade without break (40 feet max on street front).

Dormers

Traditional dormers such as shed, gable and hip are encouraged. They should be modest in proportion to the overall roof shape.

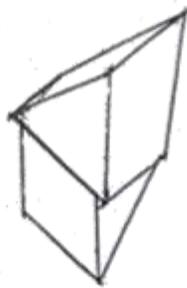


Small dormers should be set back at least 4 feet from either end of the building and 3 feet from the front eave. Large dormers may be flush with the building façade.

Basic Dormer Forms



Gable Dormer



Hipped Dormer



Shed Dormer

Cupolas & Widow's Walks

Cupolas and widow's walks not larger than 8 feet by 8 feet may extend 4-1/2' above the height limit and are encouraged. One allowed per 50' of frontage.

Roofing Materials

Encouraged:

- Exposed roofing materials shall be asphalt and/or fiberglass, metal standing seam, slate, composite shingles or fire retardant treated wood shingles.
- Flat and low-pitched roofs should be light colored to be generally heat reflective, and may be bituminous, built up or single ply roofing.



Hip roof with a hip dormer



Large & small gable dormers with exposed rafter tails



gable roof with shed dormers



8. Facades



Example of porch as entry element to multiple stores, detail with exposed structure, unique bracketing and open CIRCULAR "WINDOW".



Example of porch as entry element, two-story columns and glazed-in porches as display windows.



Fl at roof with cornice detail and bay extension

The façade is literally the “face” of the building on the street. Proper detailing of walls, windows, doors and porches contributes to architectural quality, both in the rhythm of these openings and in the detailing of each opening itself. Windows act as eyes onto the street, contributing to street activity and improved safety.

Existing commercial buildings in Fenwick Island are diverse in period, style and materials.

General Building Facades

Encouraged:

- Although architectural styles may vary from building to building, similar patterns of entries and storefronts are encouraged.
- Quality materials should be employed, especially on the ground floor. Special attention should be paid to window and entry trim detailing.
- One building entrance should be provided every 25 to 50 feet to encourage a high level of pedestrian activity to the street.
- Glass on storefronts should be transparent,
- Individual shop or tenant spaces should be expressed on a building’s exterior through the rhythm of openings, walls and columns, as well as the careful use of color and materials.
- Professional buildings should provide window openings and detailed entrances that maintain pedestrian and visual interest along the sidewalk.
- Regularly spaced windows in the upper façade, with attention to rhythm and form.

Allowed:

- Porches either utilized as shared entries or glass enclosed as usable commercial space.
- Sidewalk areas or courtyards large enough for café seating and other lively uses.
- Appropriately designed and detailed shed awnings and canopies above the first floor that provide shade and architectural interest.
- Recessed entry areas.

Discouraged:

- False windows and doors on first floor facades.
- Windows should not exceed 9 feet in height from the sidewalk without a transom, or 5 feet in width without a sidelight or dividing structural element.
- Front or side street walls without window or door openings.



Side and Rear Facades

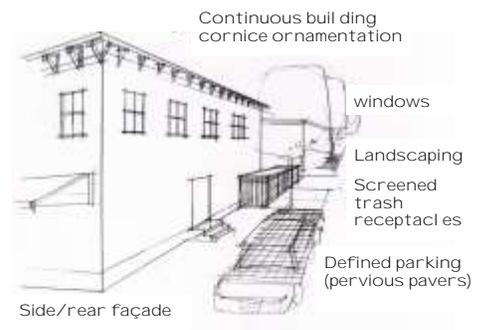
A building's character should be consistent throughout, especially where the building will be visible from publicly accessible areas such as streets, alleys or parking areas. Although details may be simplified, elements like finish materials and architectural details should be related on each building façade.

When a building abuts a side property line in the interior of the block, or when that building's side wall is likely to remain visible for an extended period of time, the building's exposed façade should reflect a design treatment consistent with the building's established street-front design. It is recognized that in case this is a fire wall, openings are not allowed and materials must be non-combustible. All exposed façades must be treated with materials allowed per section.

Foundations

Exposed areas of foundations shall consist of one of the following materials:

- Red brick
- Concrete – cast with brick or block texture and can be painted
- Old style rustic block
- Lattice or screening shall be encouraged between pilings and at exposed crawl spaces
- Parged cinder block or concrete (with attractive landscaping)



Red brick foundation on seacrest building



Historic rustic block foundation and piers on Addy Sea with lattice under porch

Facades

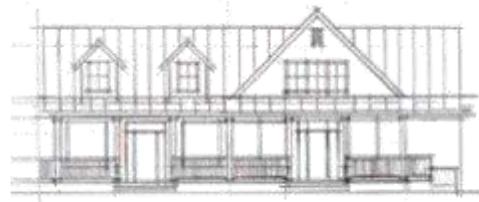
Examples of compliant street front/store front facades



2-story building with street level and upper level covered porches and gable dormers



2-story flat roof building with bracketed parapet and bay window



2-story building with 1-story street level porch and 2nd floor spaces under roof

Siding Materials & Trim

Facade standards are intended to preserve the traditional character of the downtown area. The choice of materials for building facades is critical to achieving this goal. The wood-shingled and clapboard exteriors of the early buildings add character to the often simple structures they adorn. The use of these patterns and textures will ensure that new construction is compatible with its older neighbors. Contemporary materials that provide a traditional appearance and are compatible with the objectives of these guidelines are allowed.

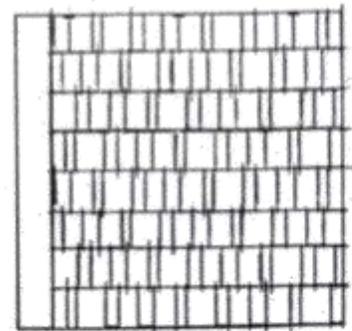
Encouraged

Horizontal clapboard.

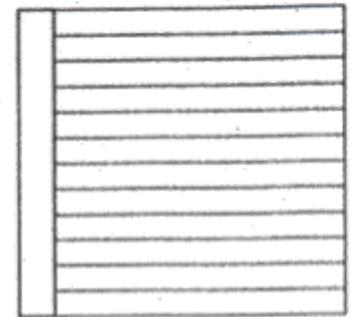
- Wood shingles.
- Board and batten in upper story and gable ends.
- Clapboard, shingles and board and batten may be painted, stained, natural wood, fiber cement or other composite materials as approved.
- Heavy gauge composite shingles.
- Red brick.
- Parged block or painted concrete (on side and rear facades only).
- Exterior Insulation Finished System (EIFS) for ornamental detailing and limited application that is above the second floor.
- Aluminum and vinyl siding greater than 0.40" thick.

Discouraged

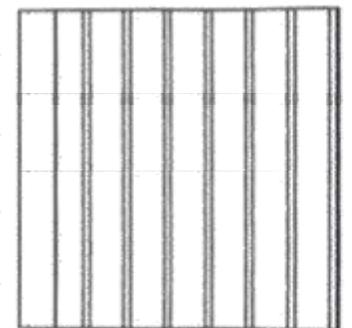
- Aluminum and vinyl siding less than 0.40 inches thick.
- Texture 111 siding.
- Diagonal siding.
- Split face block.
- Parged block or plain concrete surfaces on street front facades.



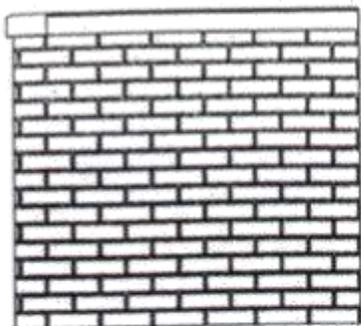
Shingle



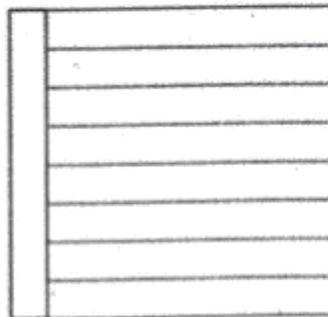
Clapboard - 4"



Board & Batten

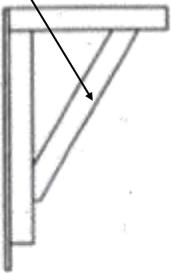
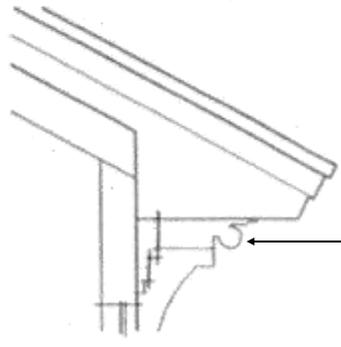
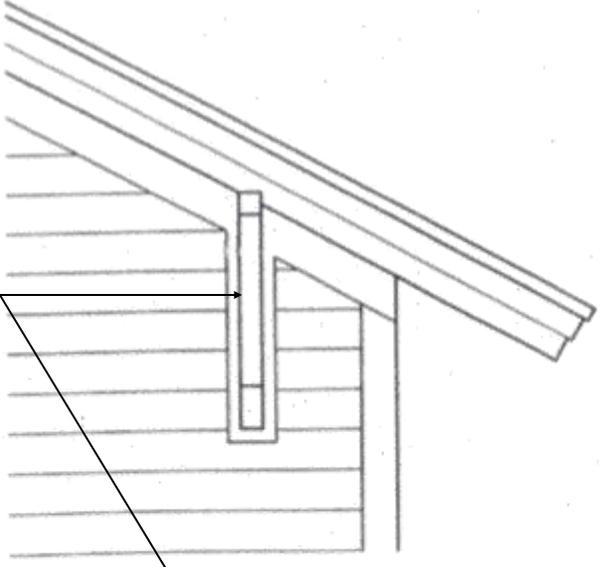
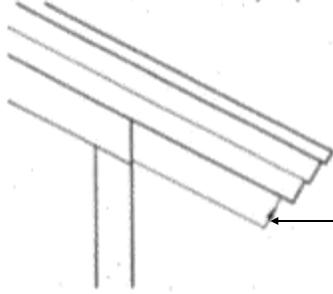
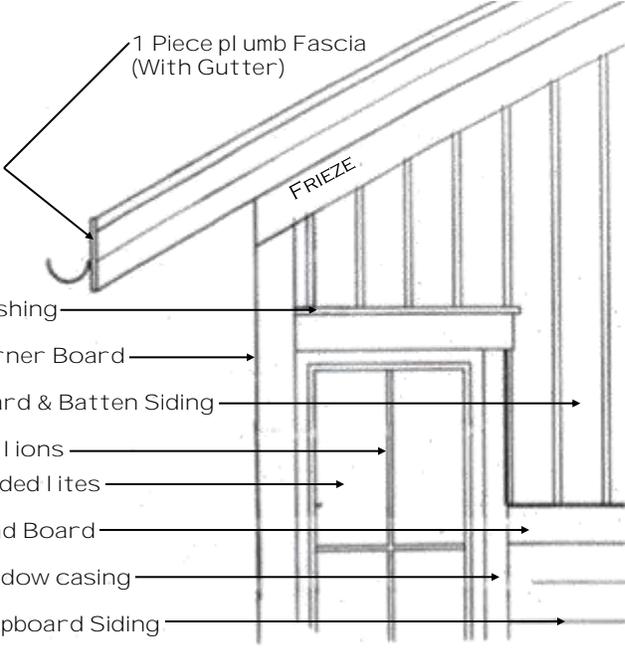
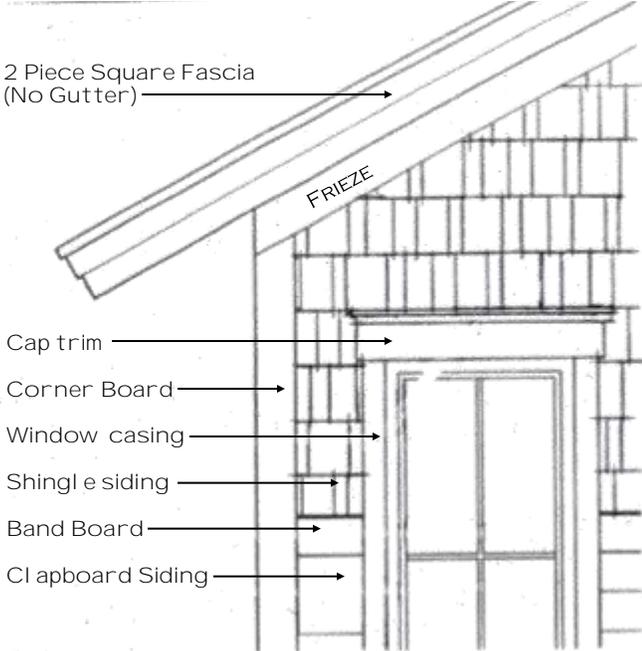


Brick Base w/ Cap



Clapboard - 6"

Exterior Wall Siding and Trim Examples



Exterior Wall Siding and Trim Examples



Small painted gable bracket



Wood bracketed shade awnings



Shingle Style Details in light colors - Trim casing, composite shingles, trellis and rafter tails



Gable truss and brackets in natural weathered wood



Exposed beams and rafters, combination board & batten and shingle siding



Flat roof with parapet and color accents. Arched canopy and recessed doorway provides desired relief.



Window variation: Large storefront windows below with smaller decorative windows above
Entry doors: recessed corner doors provide relief



Portico entry

Openings and Entries

Windows:

Windows are encouraged to be of a generally traditional type (mostly rectangular or square). Unique bays and storefronts are encouraged. All windows shall be recessed a minimum of 2 inches from the face of the building to enhance shadow line around the opening.

Bay windows are desirable. Traditional elements range from simple sheds to round corner turrets. Divided lites are encouraged on all upper story windows.

Encouraged

- First floor windows should be wood, fiberglass, or aluminum framed with rich trim surround. Max size of individual pane 7 feet high by 5 feet wide.
- Upper floor windows should be in a vertical or square pattern, with multiple divided lites.
- Transoms above windows are encouraged.

Doors:

Primary Entries

Primary entries should be consistent with the chosen architectural style. Door materials shall be wood, glass, metal or fiberglass.

Encouraged:

- Doors that are flanked by columns, decorative fixtures or other details.
- Doors that are recessed within a larger arched or cased decorative opening.
- Doors that are covered by means of a portico projecting from or set into the building face.

Secondary Entries

Secondary entries should be enhanced with simple detailing so as to blend into the surrounding building façade. Where trash or storage areas are located in conjunction with service entries, such areas should be enclosed and screened by the use of design elements that are consistent with the particular style of building.



Porches

Porches are a defining element of the downtown’s seaside architecture. They provide relaxed and shady places where residents and pedestrians can comfortably relate to one another. This interaction creates a vital sense of community.

In the commercial districts, porches most often serve as common entry elements to public or multiple commercial uses, or they have been glassed in to take full advantage of commercial available space. In either case the employment of porches is encouraged but not required.

Encouraged:

- Ground level porches should be a minimum of 7 feet deep.
- Porches should be supported by large square or round column posts, minimum of 6 inches by 6 inches, or 6 inches in diameter.
- railings should be traditional and must meet all zoning code requirements.
- Railings and columns should be wood, metal, vinyl or other DRC approved composite materials.
- Open porches should be located on east and west facing façades, which provide shade from hot summer morning and evening sun.

Discouraged

- Visual cantilevered decks or porches.

Front porches may be enclosed by screen, glass or other approved material, but shall maintain the character and form of a porch. Ground level porches shall not be filled with opaque walls higher than 2 feet above the floor. All other porch designs subject to approval by the DRC.

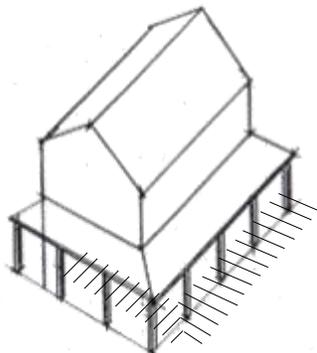
Porches above the second floor should be integrated into the building mass, with porch posts provided at the outer edges for support.

Additive Porches

PORCHES WHICH ARE “ADDED TO” the primary building mass



Front Hip



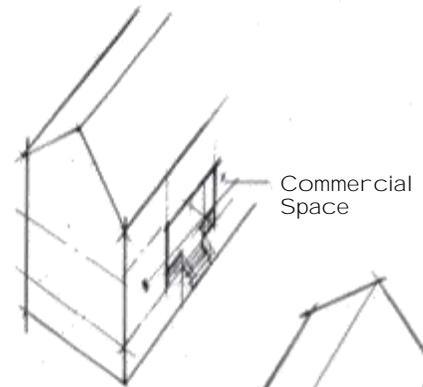
Wrap Around (two-sided) Hip / Shed Ends



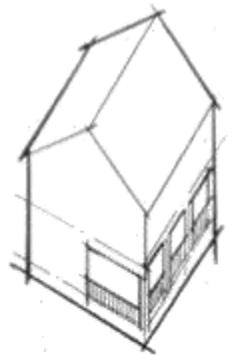
Two-Story Shed

Recessed Porches

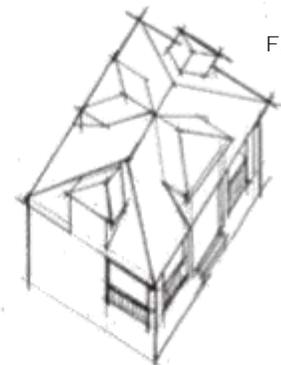
PORCHES WHICH ARE “CARVED OUT” OF THE PRIMARY BUILDING mass



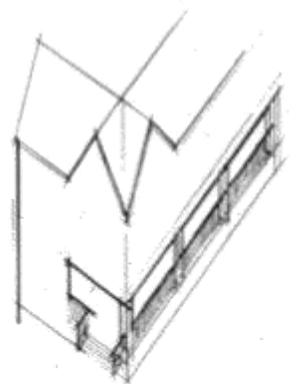
Entry Porch



Full Length Porch



Full Length Porch



Arcade Porch

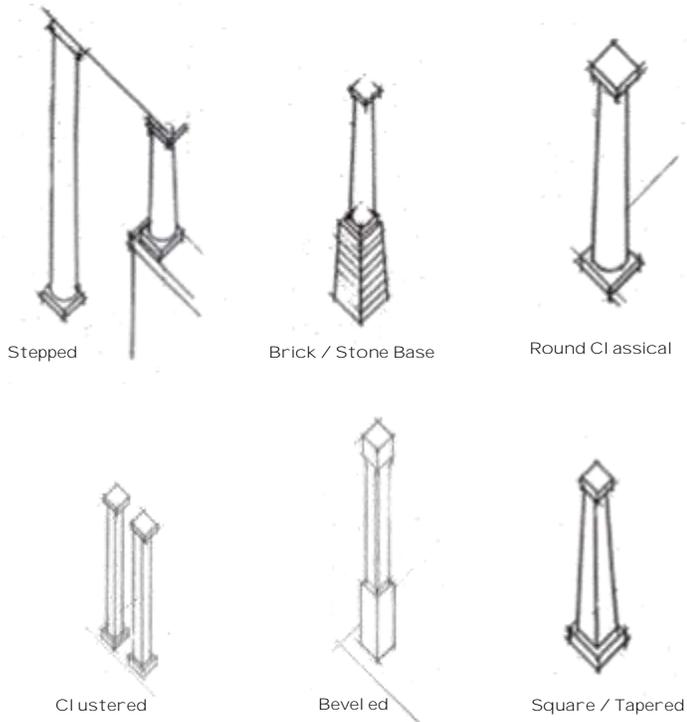


Porch and column detailing with brick walk

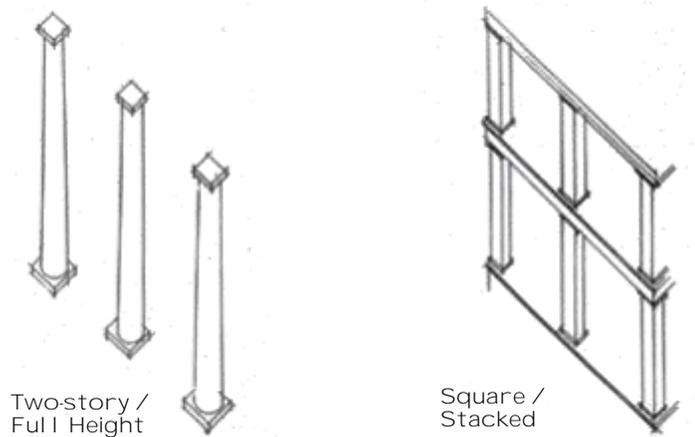
Covered Walkways

Covered walkways on the front of a commercial property allow for a wider walking area as well as a means to provide rain protection and shade on hot summer days. Covered walkways are allowed as porch structures within the property lines. Awnings are also allowed and may extend over the sidewalk as noted on page 32.

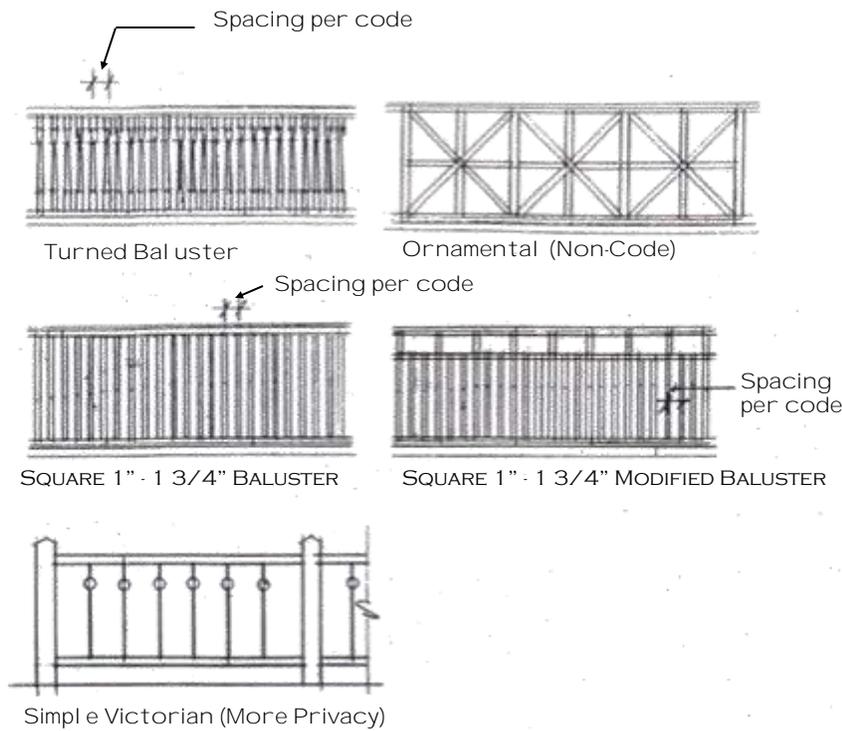
Column Type Examples



Two-Story Column Examples



Railing Type Examples

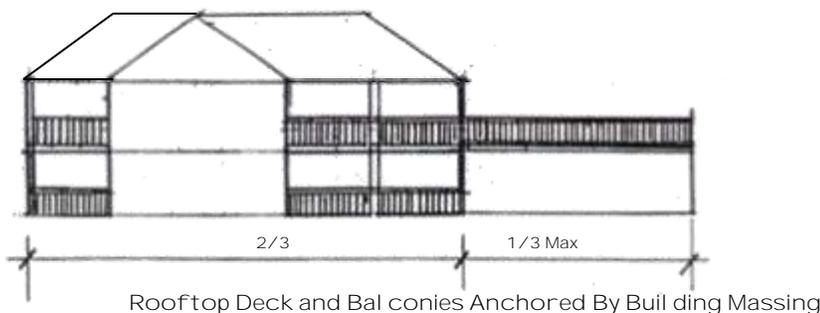


Decks and Exterior Stairs

Decks and stairs should relate to the mass, scale, placement and detailing of a building and should be consistent with traditional architecture.

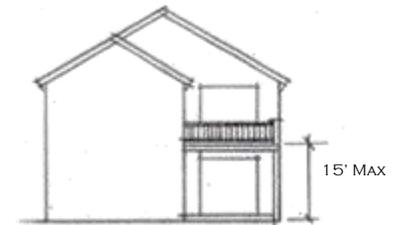
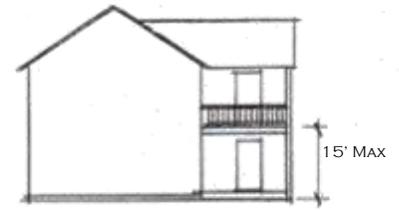
Encouraged:

- Railings should be open in design.
- Materials such as flooring, edge bands, columns, trim, and railings may be painted, stained or naturally weathered, composite or wood.
- Stairs above the first floor in a rear yard or other permitted area should be integrated within the footprint of the main building as much as possible. Stairs should be sturdy in appearance and should be painted or stained.

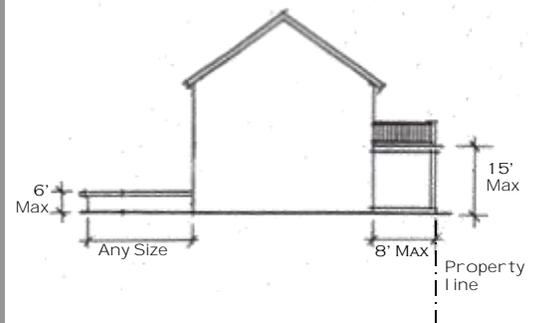


Rooftop Deck and Balconies Anchored By Building Massing

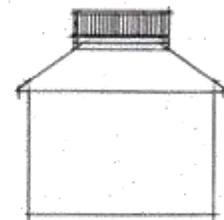
Decks and Balconies



Open Decks Anchored by Building Massing

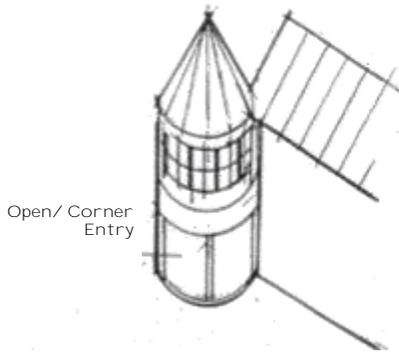


Open Deck as Building Extension

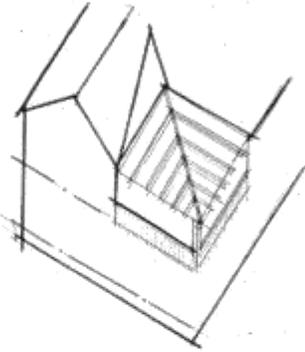


Widow's Walk

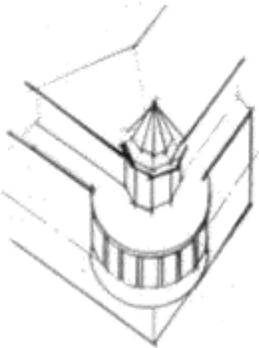
Unique Corners



Tower Element



2nd Floor Trellised / Semi Open



Decorative Corner Element

Buildings on Corners

Corner buildings should be distinctive, with rounded or angled corners to facilitate pedestrian flow. Façades should relate to the scale and massing of buildings on their respective streets.



Example from Old Town Ocean City of unique but traditional corner elements with glazed porch.



Awnings

Awnings serve a functional purpose by protecting windows from intense direct sunlight and heat, and providing rain shelter at the sidewalk.

Encouraged:

- Awnings shall be of a durable, commercial grade fabric, aluminum or composite. Awning frames and supports should be of painted or coated metal or other non-corroding material.
- Awnings shall be shed style.
- Decorative brackets and supports.

Discouraged:

- Bright multi-colored awnings.
- Storefront awnings more than 5 feet above the street front windows.
- Back-lit awnings.
- Signage on awnings.

Colors

Exterior colors play an important role in the way a building and its details are perceived. Color can be used to enhance or draw attention to specific parts of a building such as entries.

Encouraged:

- Primary exterior colors should be muted or white.
- Trim and accent detail colors should provide contrasting accent.
- Materials with natural colors such as wood, brick or copper may be left unfinished.
- Bright or intense colors or very dark colors should be used sparingly and should typically be reserved for more delicate or intricate design elements such as grille work trim or doors, as well as more transient features such as awnings, signs and flags.

Discouraged:

- Dark colors on the siding.



Bethany Blues - Attractive west facing awnings have been employed to shade hot afternoon sun. Decorative cornice, colors and siding were added to make a nice façade on a previously plain block building.



Exterior color schemes

9. Landscaping



Planting in buffer zones...

Attractive landscaping at the entry of the Municipal Building



Shade trees provide relief from afternoon sun at Bethany Station



Town-maintained flower beds provide inspiring colorful plantings



10. Flood Elevation

With a long history of significant storms in the area, and a predicted sea level rise (which is likely to exacerbate their effects over the next 50 – 100 years), structures must be built to meet or exceed FEMA requirements.

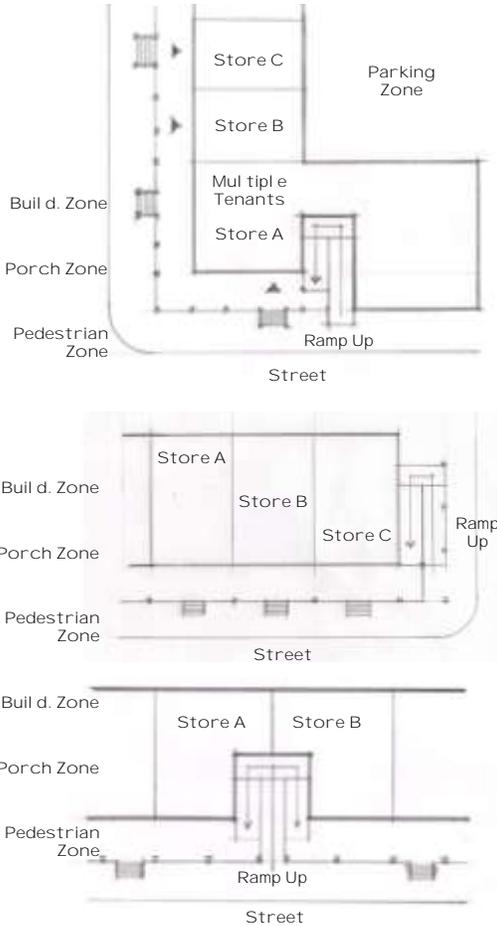
Adhering to FEMA requirements and creating an attractive and lively street environment may be challenging in certain areas of the downtown area where street elevation is significantly below required flood elevation. In many areas FEMA base flood elevation with required freeboard is 2 feet or greater above street and sidewalk levels.

Property owners and design professionals are advised to closely review flood elevation conditions and requirements with the building inspector prior to design improvements. Building renovations are also subject to FEMA requirements per code.

Due to this situation, flexible and innovative designs shall be considered.



11. Accessibility



People with accessibility needs, whether temporary or permanent, enjoy both public and private places. It is required that towns provide access that meets the requirements set forth in the American with Disabilities Act and the State of Delaware codes.

In providing accessibility, ramps should be built to minimize obstructions of the sidewalk to porches and entrances. This is best achieved by providing ramps perpendicular to the sidewalks. These ramps may serve multiple tenants with shared porches or arcades.

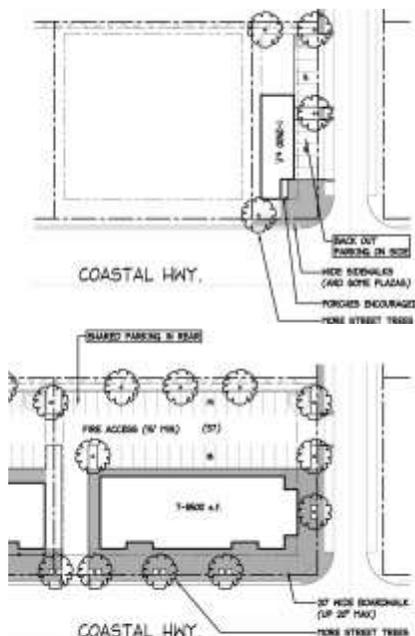
- Ramps are permitted to protrude to within 5' of the property line in the setback area.

Encouraged:

- The development of shared access, no more than 100 feet apart, including shared access even if on neighboring lots.
- It is preferable to place access ramps on the side of buildings rather than across the front.
- All ramps on the side of buildings should provide a clearly visible entry from street or public way and lead to the main entrance.



12. Parking



See Fenwick Island Zoning Code for on-site parking regulations.

- Parking space 9'x18' minimum size.
- 20% of required spaces allowed to be 8'x16' compact size.
- Min. 23' aisle width for parking lot circulation.
- Head in parking in setback on the minor side streets, especially if just on one side.

Encouraged:

- Parking to the extent possible on the side and rear of lots, with building facades as near as possible to Coastal Highway.
- Landscaped parking lots (heads of space 2.5' landscape strip with low shrubs and some trees between spaces).

Discouraged:

- Parking lots on street corners
- Double loaded parking lots along the highway



13. Lighting

The design of exterior lighting fixtures shall enhance and complement the character of a specific building or space, and must reflect the traditional element of downtown. Exterior lighting shall serve as a security measure and will also increase general visibility.

Required:

- The lighting of buildings, landscaping, driveways and signs, as well as other exterior objects, shall be designed to minimize the light and glare on adjacent neighbors per town zoning code.

Encouraged:

- Gooseneck lighting and externally illuminated signs are encouraged.
- Pole-mounted fixtures in vehicular use areas should not exceed a mounting height of 14 feet, and such poles should be located so as not to be a hazard in a pedestrian path.
- Pole-mounted fixtures in pedestrian use areas should not exceed a mounting height of 12 feet, and such poles should be located so as not to be a hazard in a pedestrian path.
- Wall-mounted lighting fixtures should not exceed the height of the main structure, and should be provided in a manner that will minimize glare to vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- All outdoor lighting should provide illumination at ground level not to exceed the range set below:

Commercial Areas:

- Average Illumination: 1.5 Foot Candles
- Maximum Illumination: 5.0 Foot Candles
- In addition, outdoor lighting should be designed so that any overspill of lighting onto adjacent properties should not exceed one-half foot candle vertical and one-half foot candle horizontal illumination to the adjacent properties or structures.
- Outdoor lighting poles and fixtures should conform in character and style to the district.

Discouraged:

- The use of up-lighting should be avoided to minimize light pollution of the night sky and to prevent light trespassing onto adjacent properties.



14. Fencing & Screening

Fencing

Fences can be an attractive ways of separating the public and private sector realms. They are a special detail to be included in the traditional style of development for the area. Fencing, garden walls, or hedges are strongly encouraged, and may be constructed along all unbuilt rights-of-way that abut streets and alleys.

Required:

- Per Zoning Code, provide 6'-7' high fence at the rear of commercial property adjacent to residential zone. Reduce to 4' high fence within 15' of street.

Encouraged:

- Made of wood, metal, concrete or synthetic material as approved by the town.
- Painted or stained materials should be white or light-colored.
- Generally, fences in the front of the property should not be higher than 36 inches. Fencing of the rear yard may be higher but not exceed the city regulations for height.
- Concrete posts and garden walls are allowed. Continuous concrete walls should be textured or patterned .

Prohibited:

- Chain link fencing
- Barbed and razor wire fencing

Screening

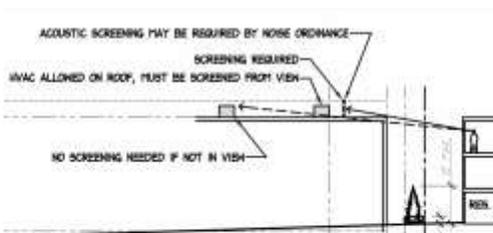
Screening is a valuable tool to hide items that generally are not attractive, including but not limited to HVAC equipment, trash collection areas, service, storage and parking areas.

Required:

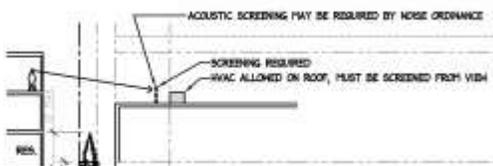
- HVAC units required to be roof top units (RTU), to be located 25' from rear property line and to be screened.
- RTU allowed to exceed height limit by 4-1/2 feet.
- RTU required to be low some level or have acoustic screening.

Encouraged:

- HVAC RTU located at center of roof where possible.
- Screening should be made of wood, synthetic material, or masonry (decorative block, brick, or stone).
- Landscaping in front of other screening material.



East Side Looking North



West Side Looking North

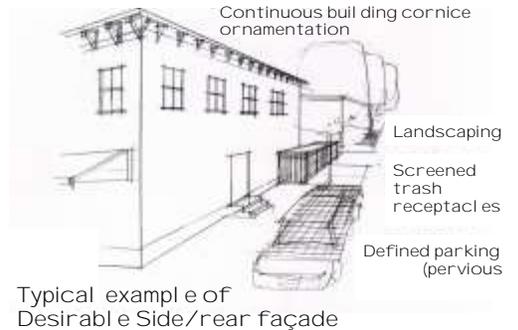
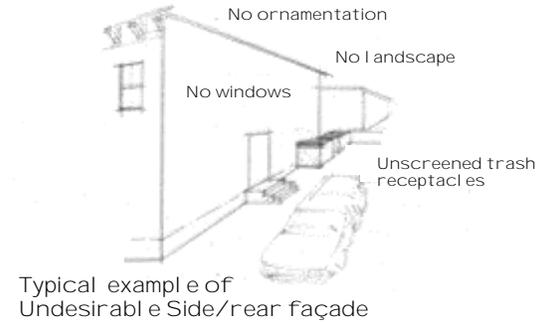


15. Service & Loading

Solid Waste

Encouraged:

- Dumpsters are encouraged to be on a concrete pad with fence screening



16. Signage

Signs are important and useful tools in a community. Signage shall be regulated and reviewed on a case by case basis according to size/height, location, shape, lettering, illumination, mounting attachment method, color and materials.

Required:

- Provide signage as per town zoning code.

Encouraged:

- High Quality signage
- Signs with borders
- Externally lit signs with carved or raised letters

Discouraged:

- Large plastic faced pylon signs
- Flashing lights
- Sign clutter in windows



17. Public Art



Art can help build a sense of community and enhance neighborhoods. It can add warmth and character, strengthen a community's unique identity and encourage human interaction. Most projects, including a building, park, playground, garden, fence and pathway, can be enriched by an art component.

- Art is encouraged to be diverse in medium and style.
- Public art, such as fountains, sculptures, mosaics, murals and inlaid designs is encouraged within streetscape design.
- Areas that can be enriched by public art may include, but are not limited to, street furnishings, landscape planters, walkway surfaces and public gathering spaces.



