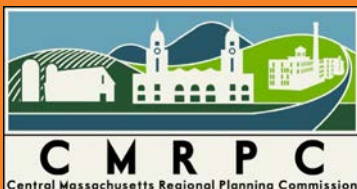




TOWN OF MENDON

DESIGN GUIDELINES HANDBOOK

Prepared by the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission with support from the Town of Mendon Affordable Housing Coordinator. This guide is intended to inform the development proposals in the Town of Mendon.



For more information or clarifications please contact The Planning Board
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Overarching Principles

PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF MENDON

Building more housing or commercial development does not mean changing the fundamental character of the community. Development can be pursued in a manner that is consistent with, and complementary to what came before. Existing housing should serve as a reference point such that the character or architectural aesthetic can form the basis for new housing development.

DESIGN AESTHETIC

These Design Guidelines cannot depict every possible building configuration that can be built on a particular site. Rather, an attempt is made here to consider what is possible. These design guidelines have been informed both by our understanding of the aesthetic character of the town, in consultation with local experts, and through our analysis of the community wide survey conducted over the summer of 2017. From this we have learned the design should be modest and well-integrated into both the neighboring structures and the surrounding countryside.

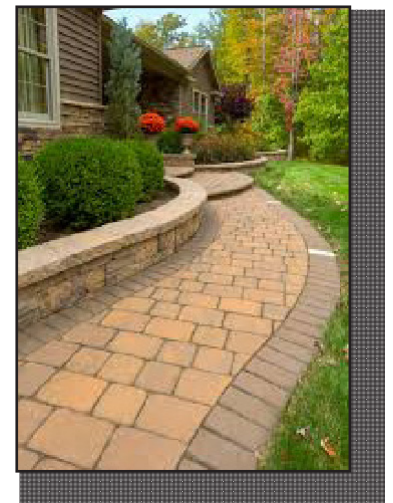
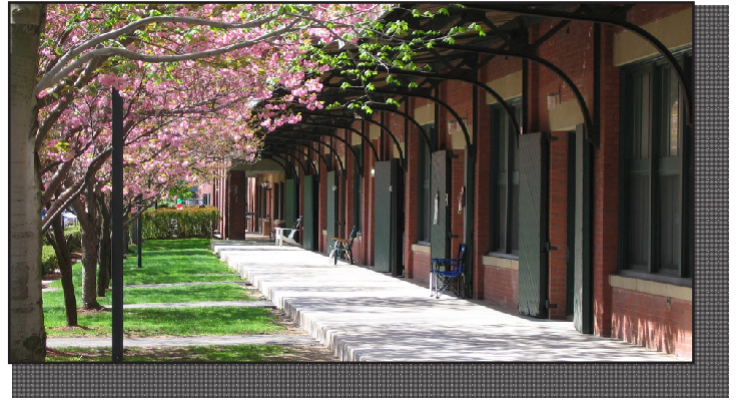
ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

Every effort should be taken to ensure that any development has a minimal impact on the town's natural resources. Any development proposal should strive for the highest sustainable and ecological principles, employing green technologies, materials, and low impact design standards whenever possible.



ENCOURAGE

- Connectivity between parking lots, connecting streets and buildings
- Amenities that increase the comfort of pedestrian movement along sidewalks such as lighting and street trees
- Usable open spaces adjoining sidewalks that create activated pedestrian areas for dining, playing, gardening, and other passive recreation uses
- Improvements to adjacent crosswalks, curbing, and sidewalks to accommodate increased pedestrian activity associated with new developments.
- Outdoor space for seating that creates a pedestrian friendly atmosphere

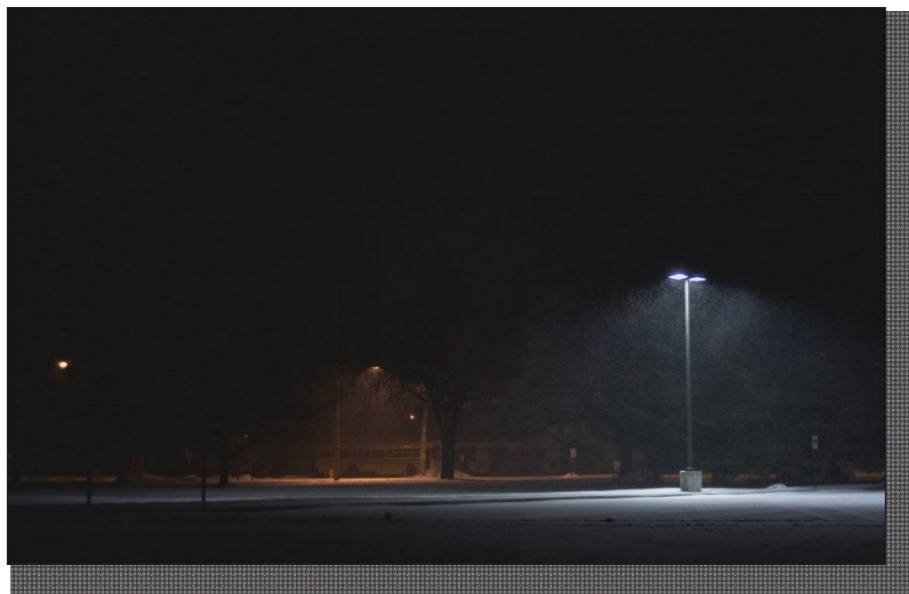


Developments should blend seamlessly into the fabric of the community, being as unobtrusive as possible. Mobility should prioritize pedestrian connections and needs first and cars second. Every effort should be made to create walking connections from the site to adjacent open spaces and community amenities



DISCOURAGE

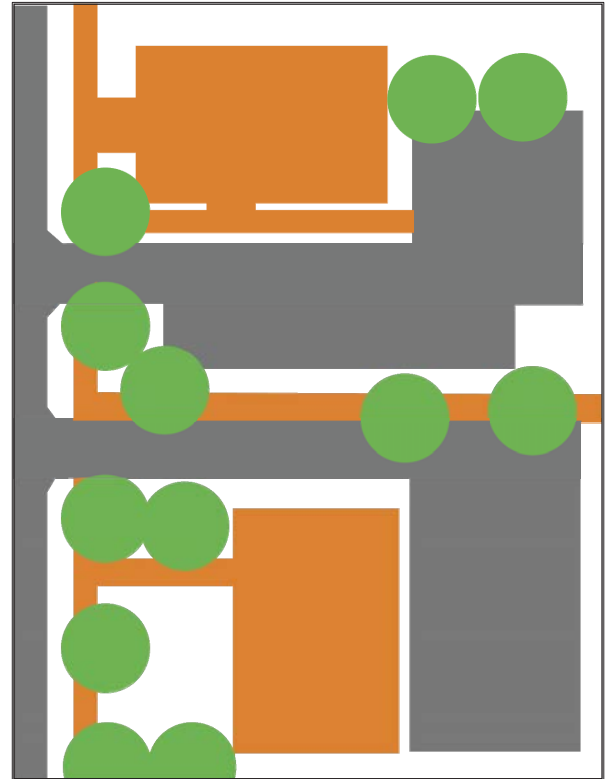
- Partial or disconnected sidewalks; pathways that fail to integrate into the existing street network
- Developments should seek to minimize the number of curb cuts they employ so as to increase pedestrian and cyclist safety as well as create a less confusing environment for drivers
- Overly narrow sidewalks and pathways in order to encourage walking, cycling and other car-free activities
- Poorly lighted sidewalks





ENCOURAGE

- Parking areas located to the rear and/or to the side of the building
- Parking lots placed behind buildings to encourage the orientation of entrance ways, porches and windows toward common areas
- Parking aisles designed to minimize conflict with pedestrian traffic at sidewalks
- Pedestrian walkways to connect open spaces, residents' units, parking areas, and other on-site amenities such as playgrounds, laundry facilities, mail boxes, etc.
- Clearly identifiable pedestrian entryways that are separate from vehicular driveways



Parking is a necessity in any development, but it should not be the dominant feature of the development. Parking should be at most seen as a secondary consideration with the emphasis on pedestrian mobility and common space.



DISCOURAGE

- Parking that is a dominant feature of the proposed site plan



- Curbs, motor vehicle stops, or similar devices should prevent vehicles from overhanging on or into public rights-of-way or adjacent property



- Lighting designed and arranged such that light is directed away from public roadways and toward other adjacent properties or otherwise improperly shielded from direct glare or hazardous interference





ENCOURAGE

- Communal open spaces that maximize sunlight
- Playgrounds located along accessible routes
- Signage in multiple languages (per local needs) indicating age-appropriate uses
- Play structures designed for Children that are at least 25 percent shaded by tree canopies or structures
- Shared spaces that are accessible to all residents, provide seating areas and some shade, be appropriately lighted, and be designed to encourage social activity
- Shared spaces that are relatively flat and usable

OPEN SPACE



The Town of Mendon prides itself on its rural, small town character. Any new development should incorporate as many of the above elements into the design as possible. Open, shared space should be a focal point of the design. Similarly, connections to any adjacent open spaces should be emphasized.



DISCOURAGE

- Placement of play facilities oriented away from common space and toward parking lots
- Common spaces which are likewise oriented towards parking spaces
- Open space that is oriented so as to discourage shared uses and not well integrated into the overall development





ENCOURAGE

- Landscaping that complements architectural features and, when necessary, screen unattractive aspects (e.g., hvac systems)
- Maximizing visual impact by using mature trees and other plant types
- Use of architectural landscape lighting to heighten the effect of street trees and other special landscape features
- Providing planting, trees and shrubs to soften hard surfaces of pavement and building facades
- Providing some measure of landscaping in parking areas to help ease the transition between paved surface, common space and private living space



LANDSCAPING

Landscaping should be consistent with the rural character of Mendon. Large landscaping features that do not add to common space, such as large ponds should be avoided. Landscaping should always reflect and enhance the rural, pastoral nature of the town. Use of native plants is encouraged.



DISCOURAGE

- It is not recommended to use the front lawn or common area for parking purposes
- Landscaping that creates unusable public open space
- Landscaping should not impede the flow of pedestrians nor impact the use of designated common space
- Landscaping should not negatively impact the functioning of stormwater abatement design elements





ENCOURAGE

LIGHTING

- Wall mounted decorative lighting fixtures such as wall sconces to illuminate building piers or highlight building cornice above
- Decorative or historic light fixture poles to illuminate parking lots and pedestrian ways
- Lighting design that is coordinated to illuminate architectural features, entries, sidewalks, parking area, and signage
- Façade lighting and architectural lighting that articulates building uses and entries and reinforces the public nature of the sidewalk and building frontage
- Lighting along street fronts that reinforces rather than competes with the Continuity of the town's street lighting



One of the benefits of living in a small, rural community is the ability to enjoy a night sky free of light pollution. Any new development should take pains to minimize lighting that could contribute to such pollution.



DISCOURAGE

- Neon or other edge-glowing sources, mercury vapor, low pressure sodium, high pressure sodium, searchlights, and flashing or changing light sources
- Lighting fixtures of a scale inappropriate to pedestrian activity
- Lighting along pedestrian and roadways that competes with the continuity of the town's existing street lighting
- Lighting that is not oriented downward or otherwise conforming to "dark skies" standards
- Up lighting should only be used to light a primary entrance when the light fixture is mounted under an architectural element (e.g., roof, cornice, walkway, entryway or overhanging non-translucent eaves) so that the up light is captured.





ENCOURAGE

UTILITY AREAS

- Utility areas designed to minimize their impact on the aesthetic of the development
- Landscaping and other treatments that hide or otherwise disguise utility areas
- Utility areas oriented away from common areas, pedestrian paths, and connections from the main town road to minimize visual impacts
- Placement of incoming utility lines and connections that have a minimal impact on the aesthetic of the development



Utility areas, while necessary, can often detract from the coherence of common space. Every effort should be made to minimize their impact.

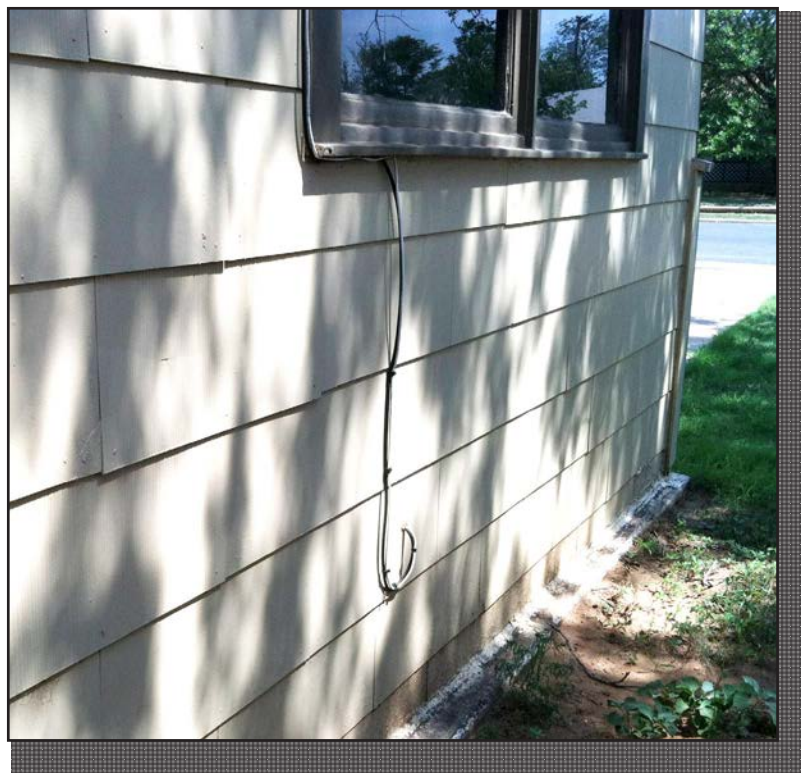


DISCOURAGE

- Placement of equipment such as satellite dishes, hvac, utility meters, clotheslines, play equipment, and hot tubs in areas visible from the public way



- Wiring that is stapled to the siding and/ or along gutters or downspouts is also a safety concern.



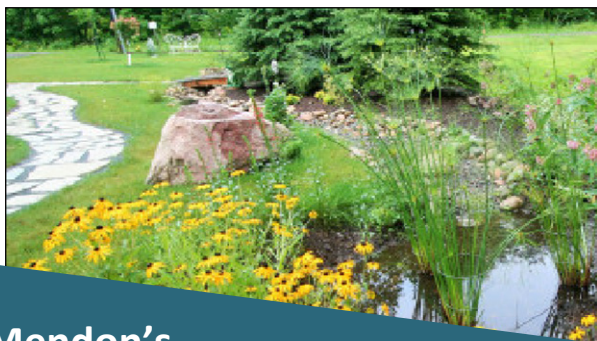
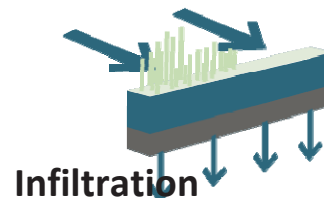
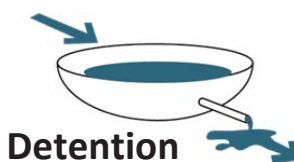
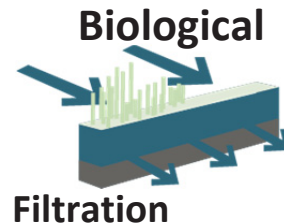
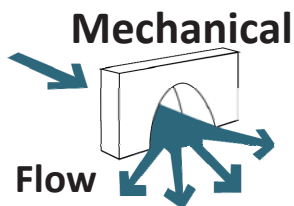
- Avoid exposed wiring across building faces or hanging across property lines to ensure occupant and neighborhood safety.





ENCOURAGE

- Low-impact-development landscaping to help manage stormwater runoff and treat rain as a resource rather than a waste product.
- Rain gardens should be planted to allow stormwater from impervious surfaces (i.e. roofs, driveways, walkways, etc.) to drain off the edges and soak into the ground.
- Permeable pavers, such as cobblestones, should be placed around trees to ensure optimal water penetration.



Mendon's waterways are a key natural resource and are to be protected. Stormwater management solutions need to be adopted that will minimize the impacts of runoff from new roads, parking and other infrastructure.



DISCOURAGE

- Wherever possible, use of pavement should be minimized to encourage the flow of rainwater into the ground. directing runoff into the sewer system may lead to sewage spills and street flooding.



- Front yard pavement may also create pools of water, which can promote mosquito growth and pose health hazards to the entire neighborhood.





ENCOURAGE

- All buildings should have a principal facade and entry facing an open space or common area. Buildings may have more than one principal facade and/or entry.
- Encourage design styles that are relevant to the town's architectural history, culture, and regional significance without compromising innovative and contemporary interpretations of these styles.
- Building finish materials should be appropriate to traditional New England architecture and may include, but shall not be limited to, brick or high-quality brick face, wood, stone or high-quality stone face.
- Provide architectural details, surfaces, textures, and materials that relate to human scale.



All new housing should be stylistically compatible with the surrounding buildings. Mendon has many fine examples of rural New England architecture. These elements should be evoked in order to help the new housing blend seamlessly with the old.



DISCOURAGE

- Garish and extravagant stylized elements as well as excessive use of decorative features
- Vinyl, unfinished metal or fiberglass as a primary finished surface
- Extremely bright Colors that are not Consistent with the town's historic architecture
- Combining distinctly different elements in the building design, i.e. contrasting materials and colors





ENCOURAGE

BULK MASSING AND SCALE



- Developments that are limited to no more than two (2) to three (3) stories in order to maintain a sense of proportion and scale in relation to the rural character of Mendon's existing housing
- Designs that employ a variety of techniques throughout the development that avoid monotonous building facades and produce a distinct "sense of place"

Mendon is characterized by small scale single-family housing. Visual preference surveying indicates residents prefer this style of housing over larger, denser structures. Effort should be taken to minimize the profile of the structure as seen from the main road and to lessen the impacts on the tree line.



DISCOURAGE

- Large-scale complexes which do not match well to the massing, scale and form of existing Mendon buildings
- Box-like designs which lack building offsets, projections, balconies and setbacks
- Designs that exceed the height of the forest canopy or otherwise dominate the skyline

