

# Avon Village Center Design Guidebook

Proposed July 9, 2018



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# Introduction

## **1. Purpose and Use of the Guidebook**

This Guidebook is intended to guide the implementation of the master plan for the Avon Village Center through the application of basic design principles. It is also aimed at facilitating the design review and approval process for new projects and improvements by compiling and illustrating basic design guidelines for the Village Center. The guidelines allow for a range of design responses, while providing verifiable standards of compliance.

This Guidebook incorporates and expands upon the more general Design Guidelines that were previously prepared and adopted as part of the overall Avon Village Center Master Plan. The guidelines herein contained specifically accompany the Phase I projects, but they are intended to be useful for subsequent phases.

The guidelines are intended to be the basis of administrative reviews and approvals of individual buildings, and design review and approvals after the overall framework has been established as part of the Site Plan Review and Approval stage. This recognizes that there will be variation in building and tenant improvement design that will occur as specific tenants are identified for commercial spaces.

In general, photographs are used to provide examples of improvements that would comply with the intent of an applicable guideline. The final designs in the Avon Village Center are not required to mimic or replicate any of the images that have been provided.

## **2. Compliance Alternative**

If a proposed design meets the purpose, use, and design principles described in this Section I. Introduction, but it does not meet all the specific guidelines contained elsewhere in this document, the Applicant and the Permit Granting Authority may agree to the submission and review of a Compliance Alternative that reasonably demonstrates that the purpose, use and design principles are met through an alternative design solution.

The Applicant will need to submit documentation indicating the proposed alternative method or standard that will be used, why the specific guidelines are not applicable, and reasonably demonstrating how the application is fully compatible with the Avon Village Center Design Principles.

If approved by the Permit Granting Authority because of its adherence to the Design Principles, then the project shall be deemed consistent with this design guidelines and may proceed.



# Design Principles

## Avon Village Center Design Principles

The Avon Village Center Design Principles provide the framework for the development of a unique and authentic mixed-use village center that respects and incorporates elements of Avon's history together with best practices of placemaking, connectivity and pedestrian walkability within a unique and compelling architectural environment.

These design principles are to serve as that consistent thread yet flexible guide for the development, encouraging creativity in form, mass and design capitalizing on dynamic new experiential retail and restaurant concepts in the creation of this live, work, shop, play environment.

### 1 Relationship to the Human Scale

In general, the scale of the entire Avon Village Center and its distribution within the site master plan is governed by the applicable zoning standards as implemented through the approved permit documents and other associated conditions. Large buildings, however, should not be monolithic in form; they should be articulated through variations in massing, roof forms, material treatments and other architectural features to create moderating, intermediate scales that relate to the human scale.

### 2 Creative Design Solutions

Each building or façade should be designed through a creative development solution that establishes compatibility with the entire Avon Village Center, rather than assembling a development with pre-designed buildings associated with commercial branding strategies. While the use of proprietary signage, colors or façade elements associated with a company, product or service is a customary practice in retail design, these should be reserved for small façades and detail accents.

### 3 Village Center Design Character

The architectural composition of the Avon Village Center may adopt features and characteristics that are compatible with the design character of New England village centers, and Avon in particular, such as design elements that relate in character and scale to the existing brownstone buildings and historic structures in Avon Center. This doesn't necessarily mean that the design of new buildings should mimic or replicate historic styles and expression, but rather design compatibility should be established by means of scale, proportions, and the compositional organization of elements.

# Design Principles

## 4 **Pedestrian Orientation and Connectivity**

The location and design of the buildings, streetscape, and outdoor spaces should support and reinforce the village center's pedestrian orientation and connectivity, providing for safe and pleasant sidewalks, and a variety of urban spaces of different size and character. Pedestrian-friendly gathering places with outdoor seating and activities will contribute to generate a more attractive and lively village center. A network of streets, sidewalks, and trails will facilitate movement throughout the site and connectivity to the nearby park, neighborhoods, and natural resources.

## 5 **Placemaking Opportunities**

Placemaking is a philosophy and a collaborative design process that allows communities to collectively create quality public spaces to share and enjoy as part of their health, well being, and community identity. Opportunities for placemaking should be sought and developed around locations where the proposed pedestrian and vehicular networks intersect, where active uses promote people's gathering, and where the natural conditions of the site allow for recreational activities or iconic vistas.

# Urban Design Guidelines

## 1. Building Siting and Orientation

Careful consideration should be given to building siting and orientation, to promote and enhance walkability and the connection to surrounding landmarks and amenities, such as Town Hall and the existing brownstone buildings and structures. The site plan layout and organization should promote respect for the area landscape/topography including wetland pockets, Nod Brook and view corridors to Avon Congregational church, Avon mountain and the Heublein Tower.

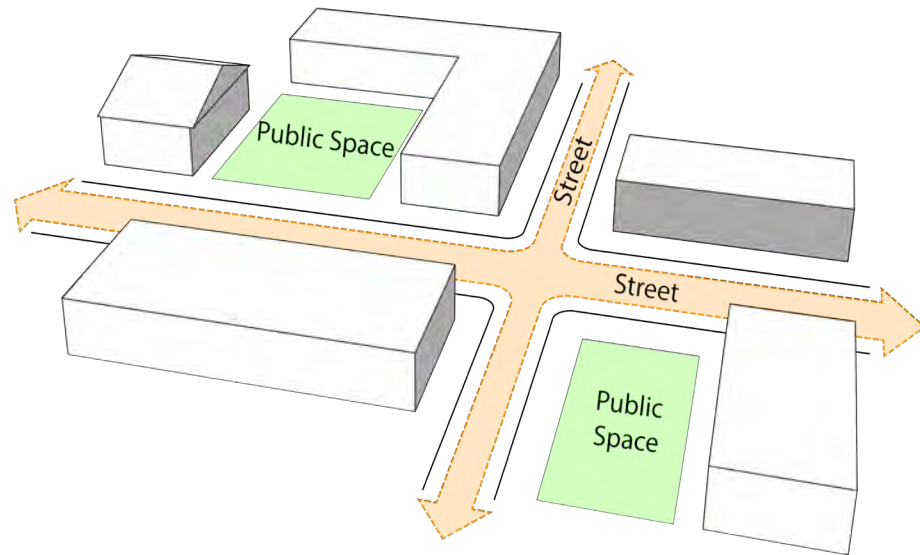


# Urban Design Guidelines

## 1. Building Siting and Orientation

### a. Relationship to the Street

Avon Village Center should be developed with the siting and orientation of buildings to frame the public realms created by the streets and public open spaces that will be. Buildings on the street, especially along Main and North Main Streets create a stronger sense of presence and reinforce the village center's visual and pedestrian connectivity. Buildings should be designed to frame streets and public spaces, to provide a sense of spatial enclosure, and to define the street edges.

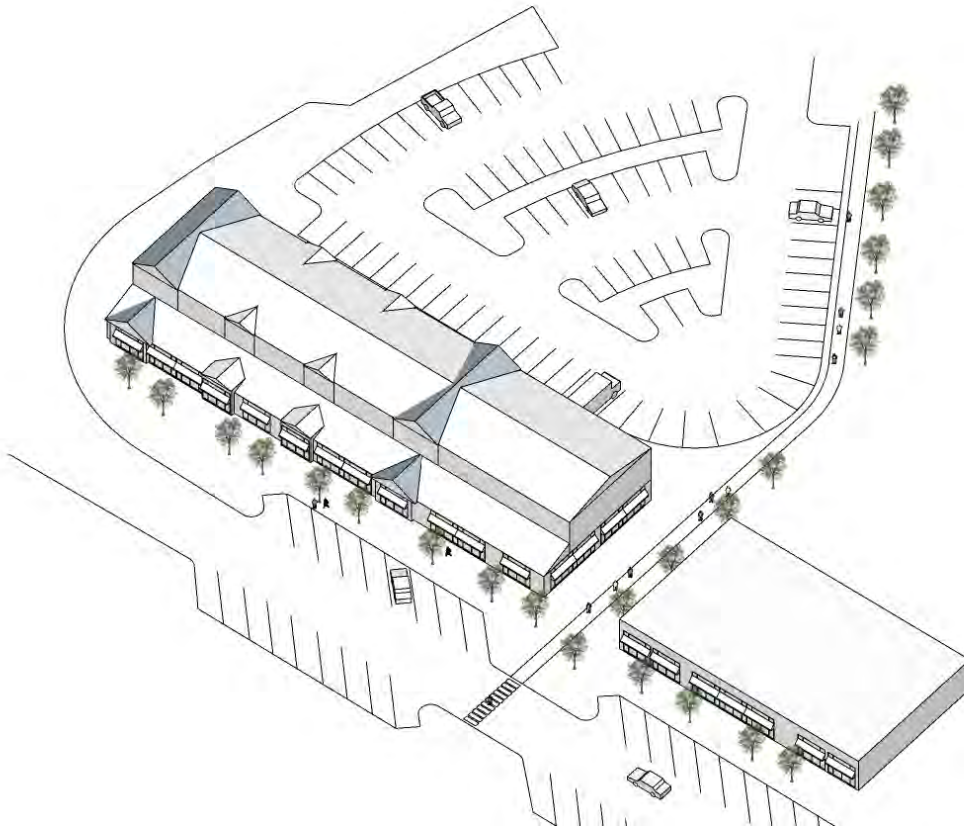


# Urban Design Guidelines

## 1. Building Siting and Orientation

### **b. Relationship to Parking**

With the exception of certain anchor retail and along Main Streets, parking should be provided behind the buildings with abundant pedestrian connectors and walkways between parking areas and storefronts. Loading areas and service entrances should be located at the rear of the buildings.



# Urban Design Guidelines

## 1. Building Siting and Orientation

### c. Street Corners and Intersections

The design of a building facing a street corner or intersection should be enhanced with distinctive massing or with architectural elements, such as towers, pitch roofs, canopies, awnings, bay windows, and projecting or recessing entrances. Front façade materials and details should be carried over to side elevations visible from the street.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography

# Urban Design Guidelines

## 2. Placemaking Opportunities



Cultural, historic, and natural landscape amenities, such as the historic buildings, Nod Brook, and the existing wetlands, represent opportunities for the creation of vistas, gathering places, and public open space. Buildings adjacent to these areas should recognize their proximity and take advantage of opportunities to create outdoor patios and outdoor dining seating areas.

Placemaking in the Village Center also entails creating visual and pedestrian connectivity, so that the features of the site and the architecture are linked. This will create sequences for moving from one place to the next. The design of these sequences should take advantage of the variation and character of the original topography.

# Urban Design Guidelines

## 2. Placemaking Opportunities

### a. Outdoor Seating Areas

Seasonal outdoor café terraces and outdoor dining seating areas should be provided near the Nod Brook, preserved wetlands, and other natural landscape amenities to enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment and strengthen the village design character.



# Urban Design Guidelines

## 2. Placemaking Opportunities



### **b. Connected Pedestrian Network**

Avon Village Center should incorporate a pedestrian network such that all phases of development include fully improved, continuous, convenient, and safe pedestrian connections along either sidewalks or paths to and from all public, resident and employee entrances to every completed building. This network should consist of well-lit pedestrian paths and improved crosswalks at every designated street crossing, incorporating streetscape design elements and signage at useful intervals indicating the route or directions to all amenities.



# Urban Design Guidelines

## 2. Placemaking Opportunities

### c. Transparency along Walkways

Providing transparency on the ground level of buildings by using storefronts, doors and windows, will enhance the pedestrian environment by generating visual interest, variety and illumination at night. As a general rule, building façades on sidewalks along Main Street and North Main Street should provide a minimum of 40% ground floor transparency; building façades along Bickford Boulevard and Bickford Extension should provide a minimum of 20% transparency.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 1. Massing and Articulation



Building massing and façades should be designed to frame streets and public spaces, to provide a sense of spatial enclosure and to define street edges. Building massing, façades, footprints, and rooflines should be articulated to vary the streetscape and provide visual interest as people move through the Avon Village Center. Blank walls 10 feet or longer without windows, doors, or significant architectural features should be avoided along all Main Streets with building frontage. Blank walls should similarly be limited to no more than 50% of the façade along building sides that face pedestrian circulation, with no blank façades longer than 50 feet in length.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 1. Massing and Articulation

### a. Building Massing

In order to create interest and reduce the perceived scale of a building mass, buildings shall incorporate articulation in their volume through the use of setbacks and projecting or receding elements. For large buildings, massing should incorporate the presence of secondary forms in addition to the main mass of the building, so that the building form appears as a composition of smaller elements.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 1. Massing and Articulation

### b. Articulation

Variations in building height, depth and direction of exterior wall planes, contrasts between solid and void, and rhythmical patterns of architectural design elements may be employed to achieve articulation. The use of dormers, cupolas, bay windows, curved window treatments, and other articulated forms is encouraged. The length of any continuous wall along a building's façade facing a street should not exceed 20% of the façade's total length without incorporating at least two of the following: color change, material change, texture change, plane projections of recesses, storefronts, trellises, balconies, roof pitch, doors, or windows.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography



# Building Design Guidelines

## 1. Massing and Articulation

### c. Design Compatibility

The design of building façades with frontage along the street should be compatible with the existing context of building façades along that street. This will be accomplished in designing within similarities with existing nearby buildings, such as design treatment at the ground level, relative location and size of doors and windows, window style and proportions, location of signs, dominant façade material, dominant color, cornice lines, or dominant roof form.



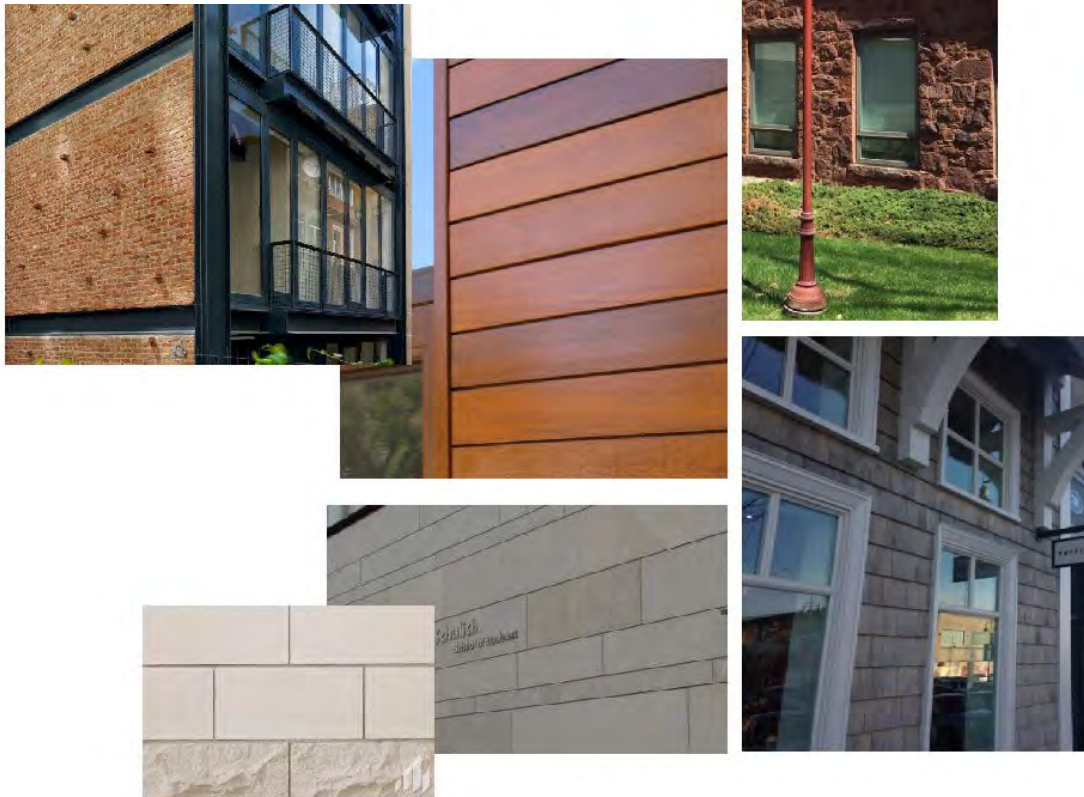
Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography



# Building Design Guidelines

## 2. Building Materials

Building exterior design and construction in Avon Village Center should employ high quality and durable materials, such as wood, stone, brick, glass, steel, and integrated or textured masonry. The use of brownstone, typical to the region and existing historic buildings nearby, is encouraged to establish consistency with the use of traditional local building materials. Front façade materials and detailing should be carried over to all sides of the buildings.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 2. Building Materials

### a. Façade Materials

Building façade materials, including architectural trim and cladding, should be of high quality and durable, including, but not limited to: wood or cementitious shingles or clapboard, wood trim, stone, brick, glass, steel, aluminum, and integrated or textured masonry. Synthetic siding materials, vinyl siding or panels, and materials on the façade that are subject to deterioration should not be used.

The overall quality and character of the materials should be consistently high along principal elevations which include all street-facing elevations and side or rear elevations that are along main sidewalks or paths. The extent and character of the facade materials may be of a lesser quality and architectural character along rear elevations that principally face parking or loading areas without public entrances. However, some of the materials used on the principal facades should be used on secondary facades to create a coherent composition.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 2. Building Materials

### **b. Roofing**

Roofing materials visible from public sidewalks or streets should be of high quality and durable, including, but not limited to: slate, simulated slate, copper, ceramic slate tile, or architectural asphalt shingle. Mechanical equipment located on top of the building should be set back, screened, enclosed within the roof shape, or concealed from public view through other methods.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 3. Storefront Design

Storefront design guidelines are intended to guide the architectural design of commercial buildings, and to assist tenants in the design and installation of their own storefronts. Storefront design should support and enhance the pedestrian experience. Windows and glazing create an important connection and exterior/ interior visibility, allowing for effective window shopping and inviting customers in.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography

# Building Design Guidelines

## 3. Storefront Design

### a. Orientation and Visibility

Storefronts in commercial buildings should be oriented to the primary streets with access, visibility, and transparency from streets and public spaces. Transparent doors are encouraged to better integrate the sidewalk and the interior of the store. More than one door that can remain open during business hours are encouraged for active retail uses, such as cafes and restaurants. Exterior lighting and/ or accent colors are encouraged to attract attention to the store entrance.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 3. Storefront Design

### b. Storefront Materials

Storefront materials should meet or exceed the quality of the architectural base materials and the quality of other storefronts. Painted or stained wood may be used for window frames, decorative trim or molding, and larger architectural elements such as columns. Textured or brushed metal finishes, galvanized and etched metals may be employed. The use of vinyl or low quality plastics and Exterior Insulation Finish Systems (EIFS) is discouraged. Exposed faces of the materials should be finished, and sharp edges should be smoothed; edge details should conceal visible unfinished edges.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 4. Doors and Windows

A building's main entrance should be clearly visible and easily accessible from the street. Building and storefront entrances should provide a distinctive and welcoming composition that is integrated into the overall massing and design of the building.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography



# Building Design Guidelines

## 4. Doors and Windows

### a. Doors and Entrances

Building and shop doors should be recessed to a minimum depth equal to the width of the door to prevent them from swinging into the pedestrian way. Entrances may add distinctive design components to the building façade such as porches, canopies, glazed areas, or they may be marked with other architectural elements.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 4. Doors and Windows

### b. Window Transparency

Windows on the ground floor of the primary façade of retail and commercial buildings should not use mirrored or tinted glass, or be obstructed by curtains, shades, or blinds.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 4. Doors and Windows

### c. Vertical Correspondence

There should be a direct vertical correspondence between the design of the façade of the upper floors and the ground level retail façades in commercial and mixed-use buildings. Separate access to second story residential units should be easily distinguished by location and design from retail and commercial entrances.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 5. Awnings and Canopies

Awnings or canopies may be employed to highlight the main door of a building, storefront entrances, the corner of a building, or another significant design condition. A series of awnings placed along a storefront could provide shelter from the weather or contribute to define the space and location of an outdoor café terrace.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 5. Awnings and Canopies

### a. Awning Placement

Awnings and canopies should be at least 8'-6" above the sidewalk and below architectural lines that mark the top of the retail storefront. Awnings for individual tenants should be consistent in size, profile, location, material, color, and design; they may not obscure important architectural details by crossing over pilasters, or covering windows or trim elements.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 5. Awnings and Canopies

### b. Materials and Colors

Retractable fabric awnings are encouraged along cafe storefronts; lightweight metal and glass structures are encouraged above entrances. Vinyl or plastic, and translucent acrylic awnings are discouraged.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 6. Lighting

Building exterior lighting should be designed to ensure proper illumination of the pedestrian network, and it should not cast glare onto streets, public ways, or adjacent buildings. Illuminating devices, lighting practices, and systems which will minimize light pollution and conserve energy while maintaining reasonable nighttime safety and security should be employed. The fixture choice and light direction should limit glare and indirect lighting of residential units. Exterior lighting should be night sky friendly.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography

# Building Design Guidelines

## 6. Lighting



### a. Exterior Light Fixtures

Light fixtures attached to a building façade should be the 'cut-off' variety, projecting all light down towards the pavement (less than 90 degrees from the vertical line). Decorative fixtures do not need to be the cut-off variety but should be equipped with interior reflectors or shields to direct light at the desired target. Fixtures should not be aimed forward of glass storefronts.



# Building Design Guidelines

## 6. Lighting

### b. Storefront Lighting

Incandescent lighting, recessed downlights or track lighting is encouraged; low voltage lighting and the use of LED fixtures are recommended. Fluorescent strip fixtures visible from public areas are discouraged, warm range lighting is preferred. Storefront light levels are not recommended to exceed 100-foot candles (1000-lux) and should not be less than 60-foot candles (600-lux).



# Building Design Guidelines

## 6. Lighting

### c. Awning Illumination

Awnings and canopies may be lit from above but may not be internally lit. Exterior illumination should be provided by a continuous lighting source in the 'white light' spectrum, which should not cast light onto the sidewalk or pedestrians.



Photo Credit: Gene St. Pierre Photography

