

NORWALK BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 1987

**NORWALK BUSINESS DISTRICT
DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**ADOPTED BY
THE NORWALK PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1987**

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NORWALK BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Prepared by the Norwalk Planning and Zoning Commission as a reference document for the Central Business Design District regulations.

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"Norwalk Business District Management Plan" October 1986

Project For Public Spaces, Inc.

"The Norwalk Center Business Improvement Plan" July 1987

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INTRODUCTION: NORWALK BUSINESS DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

As part of the Central Business Design District regulations, these design guidelines are intended to further illustrate the urban design features considered to be an essential part of all new development within the district. The design guidelines serve as a vehicle to insure that Norwalk derives maximum benefit from downtown development and that such development adds character to the district through the provision of needed public amenities.

The basis for these guidelines has been set forth in the Norwalk Business District Management Plan adopted in October of 1986. The plan emphasizes the importance of creating a downtown with character and a sense of place; of preserving quality historic structures and designing compatible new in-fill development; of creating special areas within the district which possess a mix of uses integrated by complementary activities; and finally, of restoring vitality and economic strength to Norwalk's Central Business District.

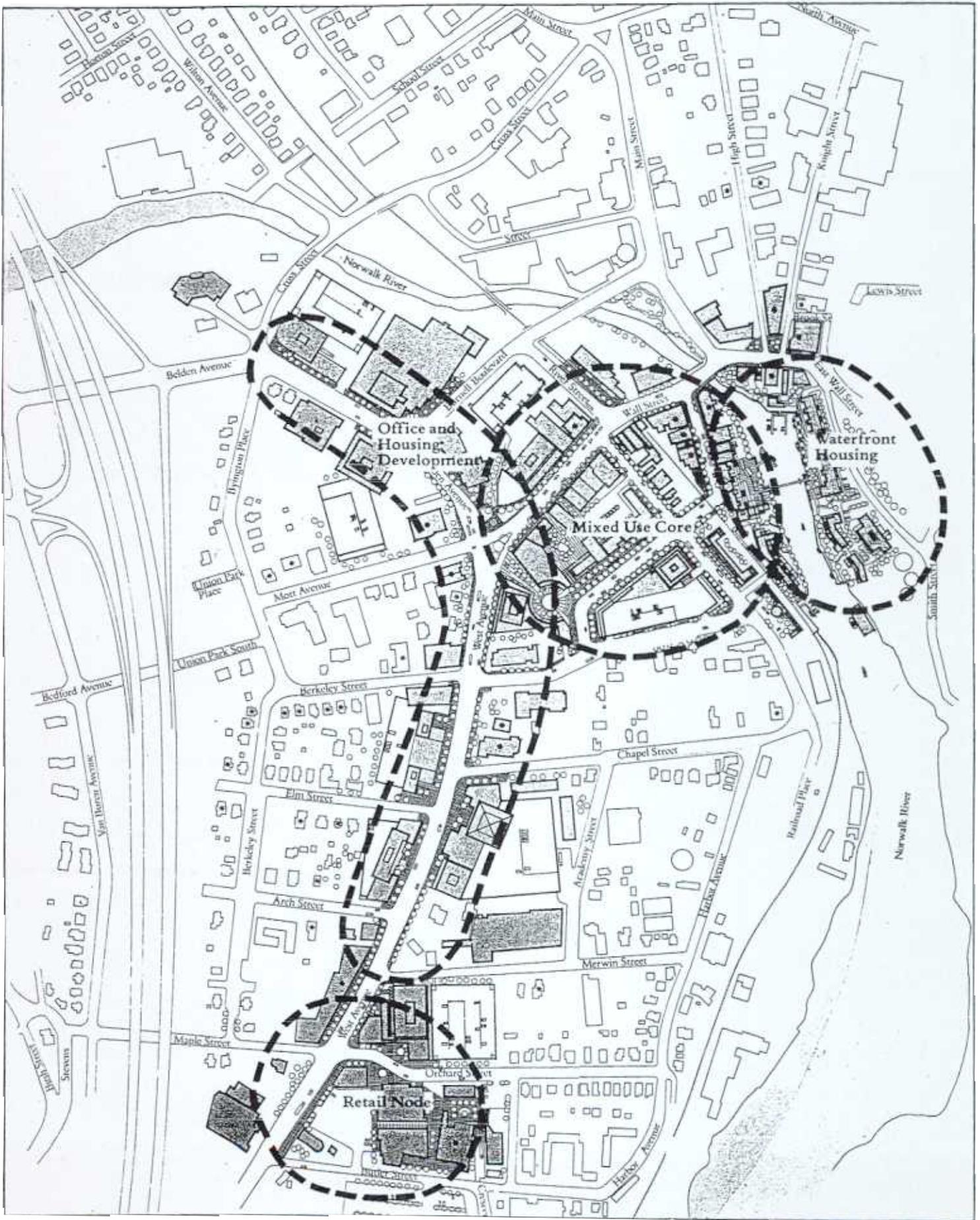
These guidelines provide direction to developers, architects and property owners working with the city to enact the goals outlined above. The contents of this manual are divided into three sections:

Urban design goals and guidelines by subarea
(Streetscape standards)

Site feature definitions

Historic building modification guidelines

The Norwalk Business District Management Plan is illustrated on a map on the following page which depicts focal areas for new development and for historic rehabilitation; locations for public and private parking facilities; designs for streetscape improvements, waterfront amenities, public parks and open spaces; and suggested alignments for streets and through block walkways.



URBAN DESIGN GOALS AND GUIDELINES

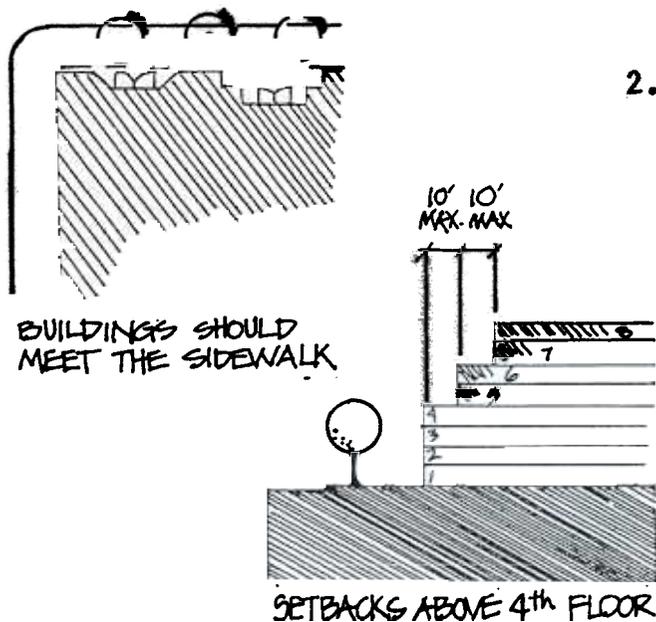
SUBAREA A: WALL/MAIN CORE AREA

The Wall Street area of Norwalk has traditionally served as the core of the downtown area and is delineated by Cross and Leonard Streets to the north and south, and Knight Street and West Avenue to the east and west. The Master Plan goals for this area seek mixed use, infill development which complements and reinforces the established character, street level continuity and retail shopping patterns of the area. In addition, developments which provide new housing opportunities and incorporate streetscape improvements and needed public facilities, such as public parking garages and daycare centers, are encouraged.

The following development guidelines are divided into three sections: Building Uses & Design, Traffic Circulation and Parking Provisions and Streetscape and Open Space Design; each viewed as critical to achieving the above-cited goals:

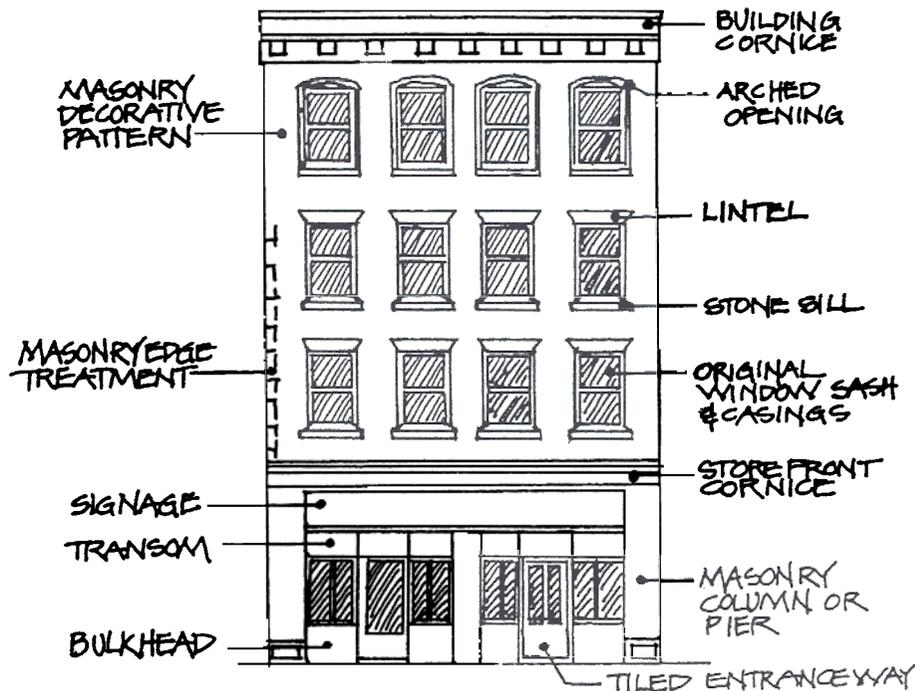
BUILDING USES AND DESIGN

1. Continuous ground floor retail, service and entertainment facilities should be incorporated into all new development and maintained in all existing structures. Housing is encouraged in the upper floors of new development to enliven downtown throughout the day and week.



2. Buildings should be situated directly on the front property line with no at grade setbacks except at building entrances and where through-block walkways and courtyards are provided as shown in the plan of development. All structures must be setback 10' above the fourth floor and an additional 10' above the sixth.

3. Building facades should be no longer than 200 feet in length and be designed with consideration for architectural detailing [awnings, cornices, eaves, signs, windows and fenestration] which create visual interest and break up the front plane of the building. Rehabilitated structures should uncover, restore or replicate such architectural features whenever possible, as illustrated below.

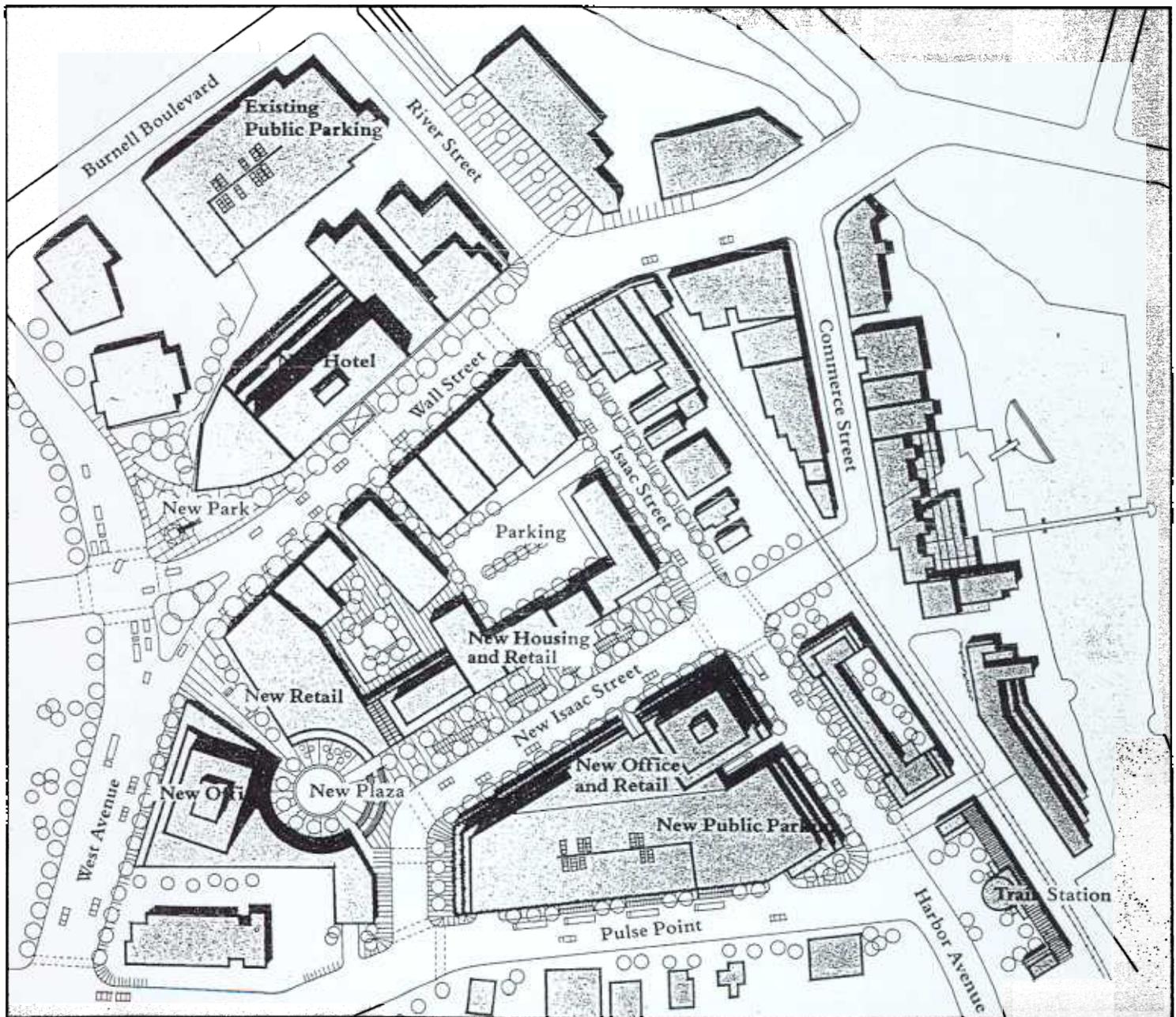


REHABILITATED STOREFRONT
ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

4. Buildings should be a minimum of 2 stories in height, and preferably 3-4 stories, in order to promote efficient land use, create a critical development mass and maintain a sense of urban density in the central business district. All buildings should be at least as tall as adjacent parking structures and the principal use of the lot should be located between the street and any parking facilities, in order to maintain an active street frontage.
5. New development should relate to the existing streetscape environment in scale, architectural style, shape and surface treatment in order to create a visual harmony between new and existing structures and to minimize the aesthetic clashing of styles. Natural materials such as brick, stone and wood should be emphasized. Reflective mirrors and glass are strongly discouraged.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND PARKING PROVISIONS

1. Traffic flow should be improved by restricting parking access to less active side streets. The number of curb cuts required for vehicle ingress and egress into parking areas should be minimized in order to maintain continuous pedestrian sidewalks.
2. Centralized subgrade parking structures are preferred and should be located as illustrated in the plan of development with clear signage directing traffic from main arteries and pedestrians to through-block accessways.



MASTER PLAN OF WALL/MAIN CORE



WALL STREET VIEW - EXISTING



WALL STREET VIEW - POSSIBLE FUTURE

3. Parking may be provided off site if the property is located on a map entitled "Designated Properties for Fees in-lieu of Parking" dated January 9, 1987 and otherwise complies with the requirements of the fee-in-lieu of parking regulations. Nevertheless it is recommended that some on site parking be provided, particularly where retail or restaurant uses are included.
4. Surface parking areas should be designed with sufficient screening to provide a sense of enclosure and should maximize the use of unpaved areas to provide shade trees and allow for ground water percolation.
5. Service and loading areas should be confined to the rear of buildings or within parking structures and wherever possible, hours of operation restricted to before 10:00 AM or after 5:00 PM to reduce conflict with business operations.

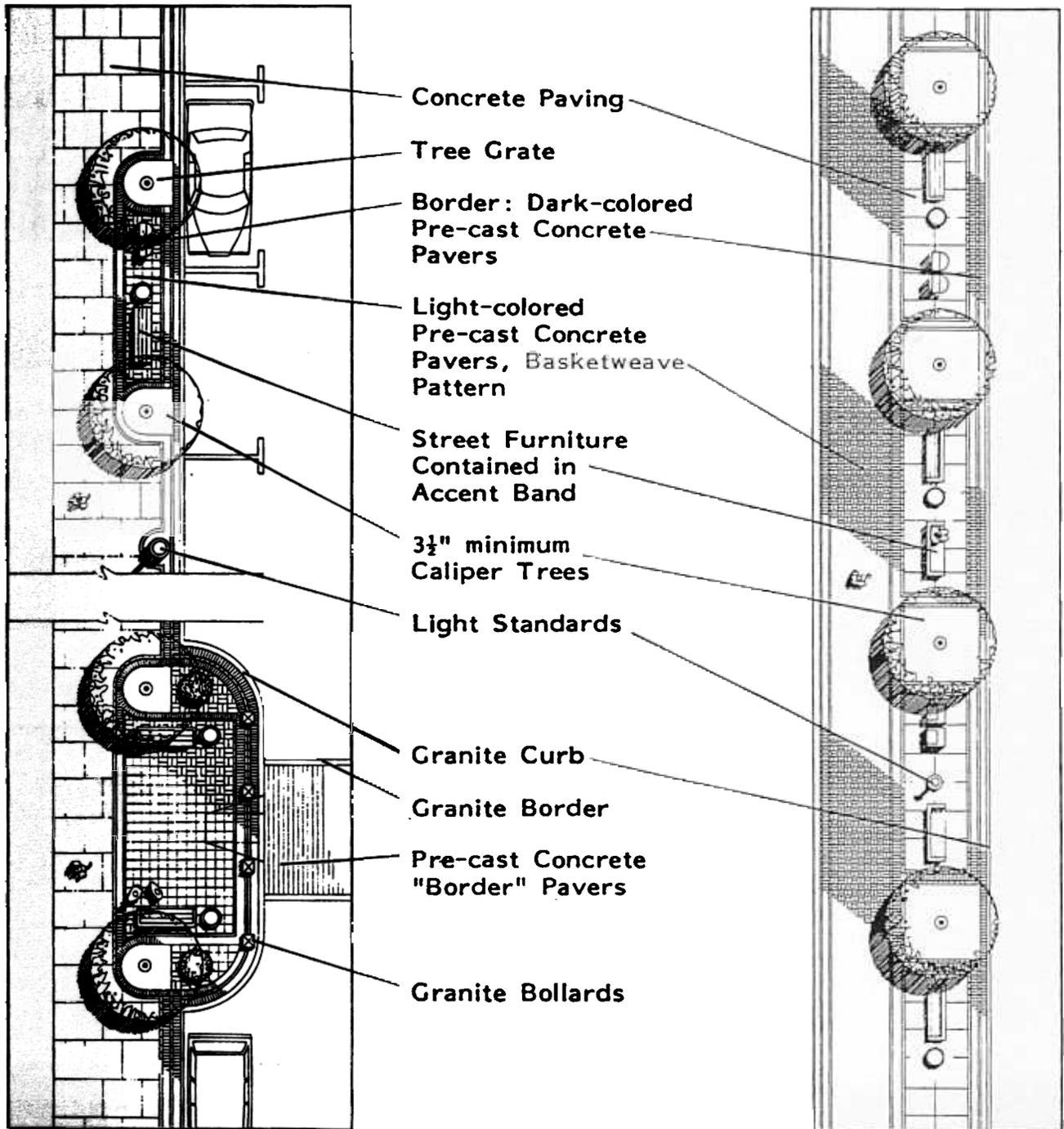
STREETScape AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN

1. Open spaces should be focused in areas of peak pedestrian activity as illustrated in the plan of development (p.5); including:
 - Plaza with walkway to public parking garage adjacent to Post Office at corner of Wall Street/West Avenue intersection
 - Large park/plaza at southeast corner of Wall Street/West Avenue intersection connected by walkways to Isaac Street.
 - Park/plaza at Landmark Square between Knight and High Streets.

Adjoining property owners should coordinate their open space plans to encourage the creation of the above-cited improvements.
2. Temporary vending stands/carts are encouraged in public open spaces and plaza areas to add a market place ambiance to downtown streets as well as provide opportunities for new retail enterprises to be initiated.
3. Awnings, marquees, arcades or other architectural features which provide pedestrian protection during inclement weather are encouraged. These elements should be designed so as not to interfere with pedestrian movement through the area (ie. minimal use of columns and other obstructions) and, when enclosed, should allow maximum penetration of natural light.
4. New developments should be designed to preserve and incorporate natural site amenities, such as water views, trees, areas adjacent to public spaces and other similar features, into their site plans.

5. Streetscape improvements should be incorporated into the site design of all new structures and be compatible with the materials/designs used in municipal improvements; including the following site elements illustrated below:

- Pedestrian area lighting
- Widened sidewalks/mini parks
- Seating (benches/low walls/wide planter edges)
- Signing
- Trash receptacles/bollards/bus shelters
- Granite curbing with brick/concrete paving patterns



WALL STREET STREETScape

ISAAC STREET STREETScape

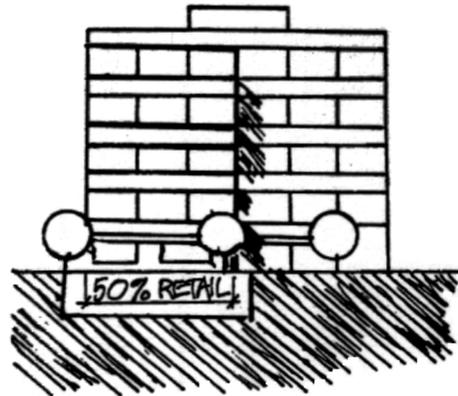
SUBAREA B: WEST/BELDEN CORRIDOR

The West/Belden corridor serves as the gateway to the Norwalk Business District with its wide boulevard streetscape and its proximity to Interstate 95 and Routes 1 and 7. This corridor extends along both sides of West Avenue from Butler Street and continues north along Belden Avenue to the Route 7 exit ramp. The Master Plan goals for this area seek a dense, mixed-use district with an even distribution of retail, housing and office uses. The width of the street allows for greater traffic volumes than the Wall Street core area and, consequently, can accommodate larger scale and higher density development projects. In an effort to provide street level activity and continuity with the Wall Street area, ground floor retail remains a primary requirement. Enhancement of the boulevard nature of the street through the planting of street trees and shrubs and the inclusion of public open spaces and plazas at specific locations is key to the West/Belden corridor's revitalization.

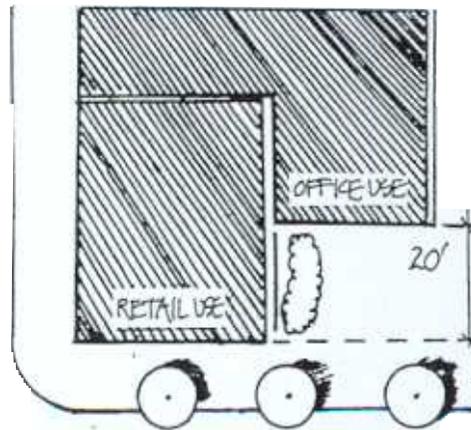
The following development guidelines are emphasized as the basis for achieving the goals outlined above:

BUILDING USES AND DESIGN

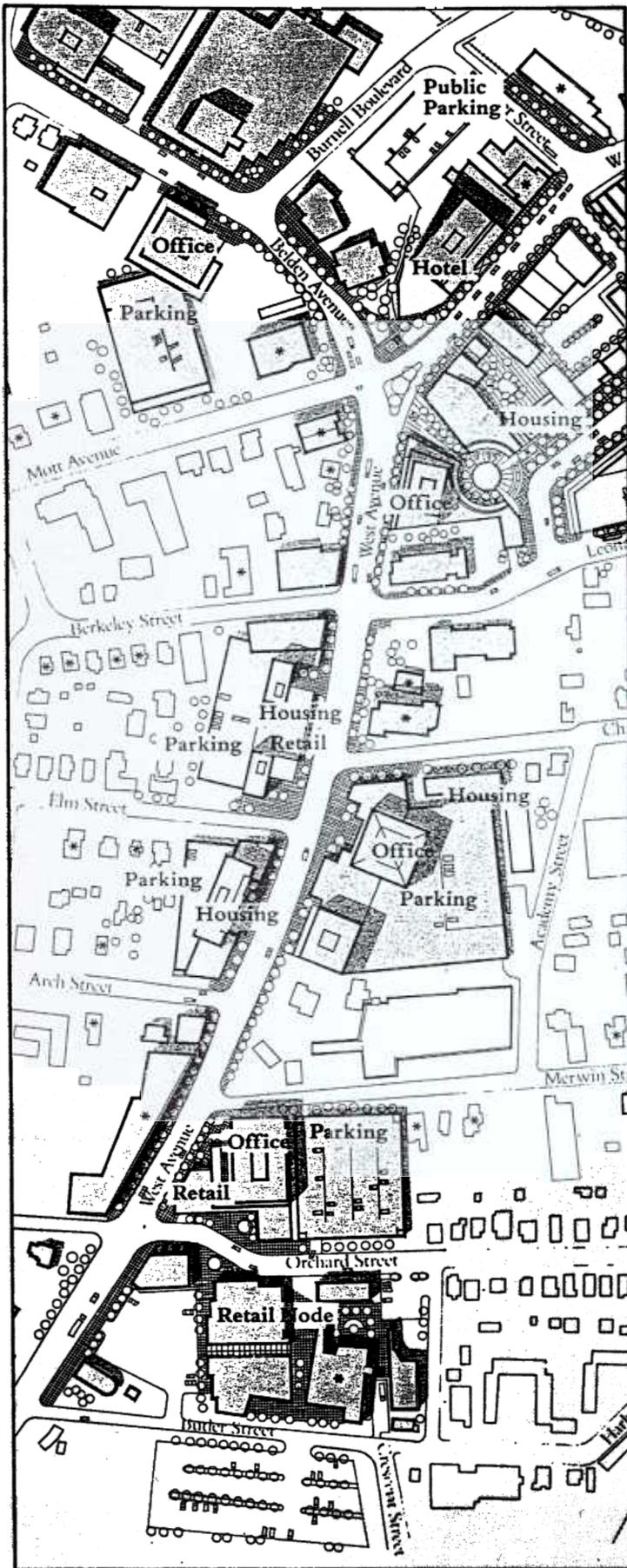
1. Ground floor frontage should be devoted entirely to retail, service and entertainment facilities designed to serve pedestrian traffic. If office uses are incorporated into the ground floor, as allowed in the zoning regulations, then a twenty foot setback of that frontage should be provided and the resulting open space developed as a public plaza with seating, landscaping and lighting, according to the standards set forth in the plaza definition.



AT LEAST 50% OF THE STREET FRONTAGE SHOULD BE RETAIL

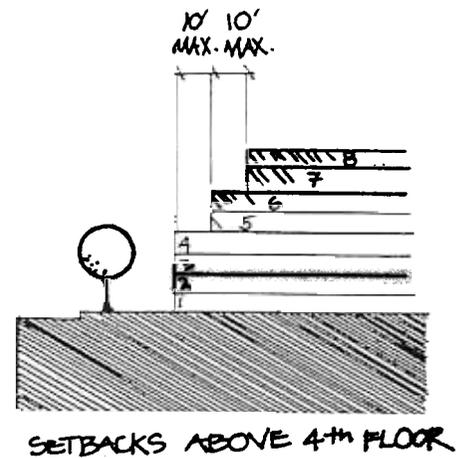


SETBACKS FOR OFFICE USE



MASTER PLAN OF WEST BELDEN CORRIDOR

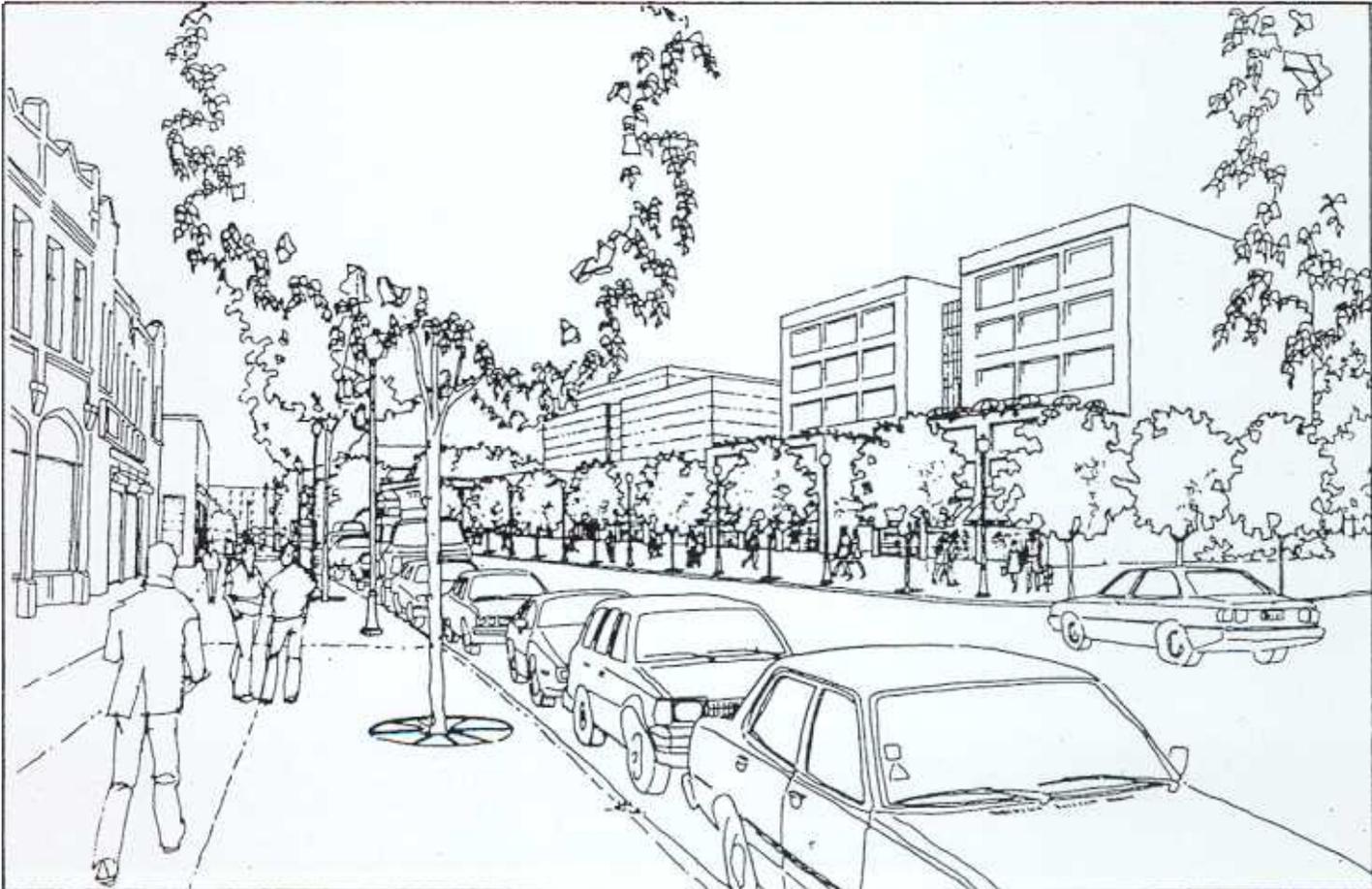
2. Large scale housing and office developments should be located along the West/Belden corridor at locations cited in the plan of development. Small lot assembly and the redevelopment of the resulting larger parcels is encouraged as it will result in a more efficient use of available land.



3. Buildings should be situated directly on the front property line with no at grade setbacks except at building entrances and where through-block walkways and courtyards are provided as shown in the plan of development. All structures must be setback 10' above the fourth floor and an additional 10' above the sixth.



WEST AVENUE VIEW - EXISTING



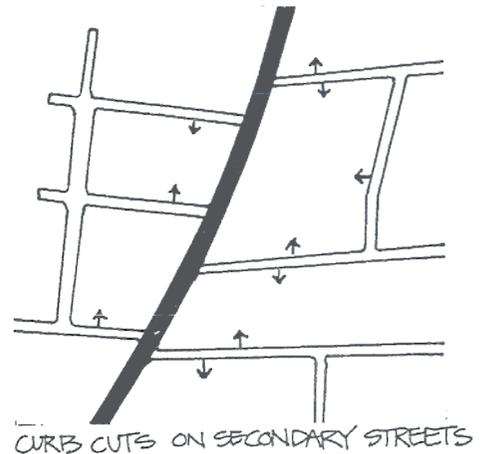
4. New structures should have a minimum height of two stories, preferably 3-4 stories, to promote efficient use of land, create a critical development mass and take advantage of the wider street dimensions along the West/Belden corridor and should be at least as tall as adjacent parking structures.
5. Building facades, particularly those with residential use, should be designed with projections (balconies, bay windows, etc.) or recesses (terraces, inset windows, etc.) along at least 20% of their front and side elevations in order to create architectural interest and provide additional living/working space for building tenants.
6. Front building facades of all structures should be designed with consideration for the pedestrian and incorporate sheltered areas, such as awnings, marquees or arcades which provide protection during inclement weather, as illustrated at right.
7. Buildings should be designed with natural materials such as brick, stone and wood. Reflective finishes are strongly discouraged.



IMPROVED BUILDING FACADES

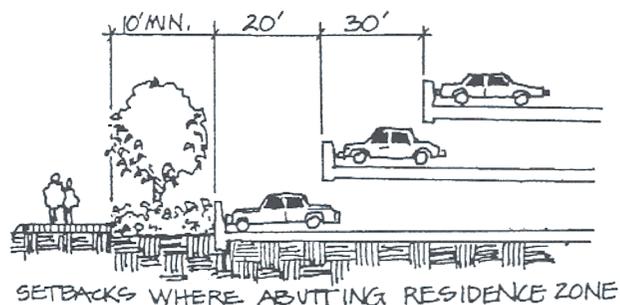
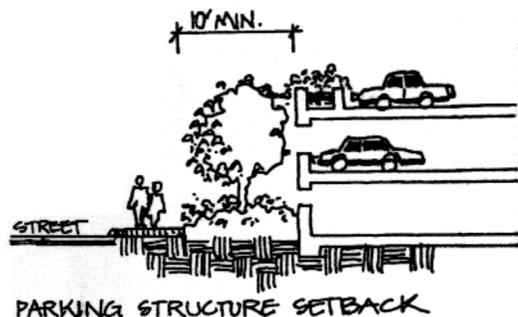
TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND PARKING PROVISIONS

1. Curb cuts for access to parking and service areas should be limited to side streets so as to maintain optimal traffic flows and encourage pedestrian activity along the West Avenue corridor.



CURB CUTS ON SECONDARY STREETS

2. Parking structures should be designed to minimize their impact on surrounding land uses, particularly where abutting residential zones. This can be accomplished by reducing their presence and bulk through the use of recesses, stairs, railings, landscaping, surface treatment, ground floor retail/service uses and by locating as much parking as possible below grade.



3. Surface parking areas should be designed with landscaped areas which provide a sense of enclosure, shade trees and allow for ground water percolation.
4. Service and loading areas should be confined to the rear of buildings or within parking structures and, wherever possible, hours of operation restricted to before 10:00 AM or after 5:00 PM to reduce conflict with business operations and traffic flow.

STREETScape AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN

1. Open spaces should be oriented toward the West/Belden Street frontage and coordinated with the open space plans of adjoining properties as indicated in the plan of development (p.10); including:

Park/plaza at southeast corner of West Avenue/Chapel Street intersection and across the street at the northwest corner of West Avenue and Elm Street.

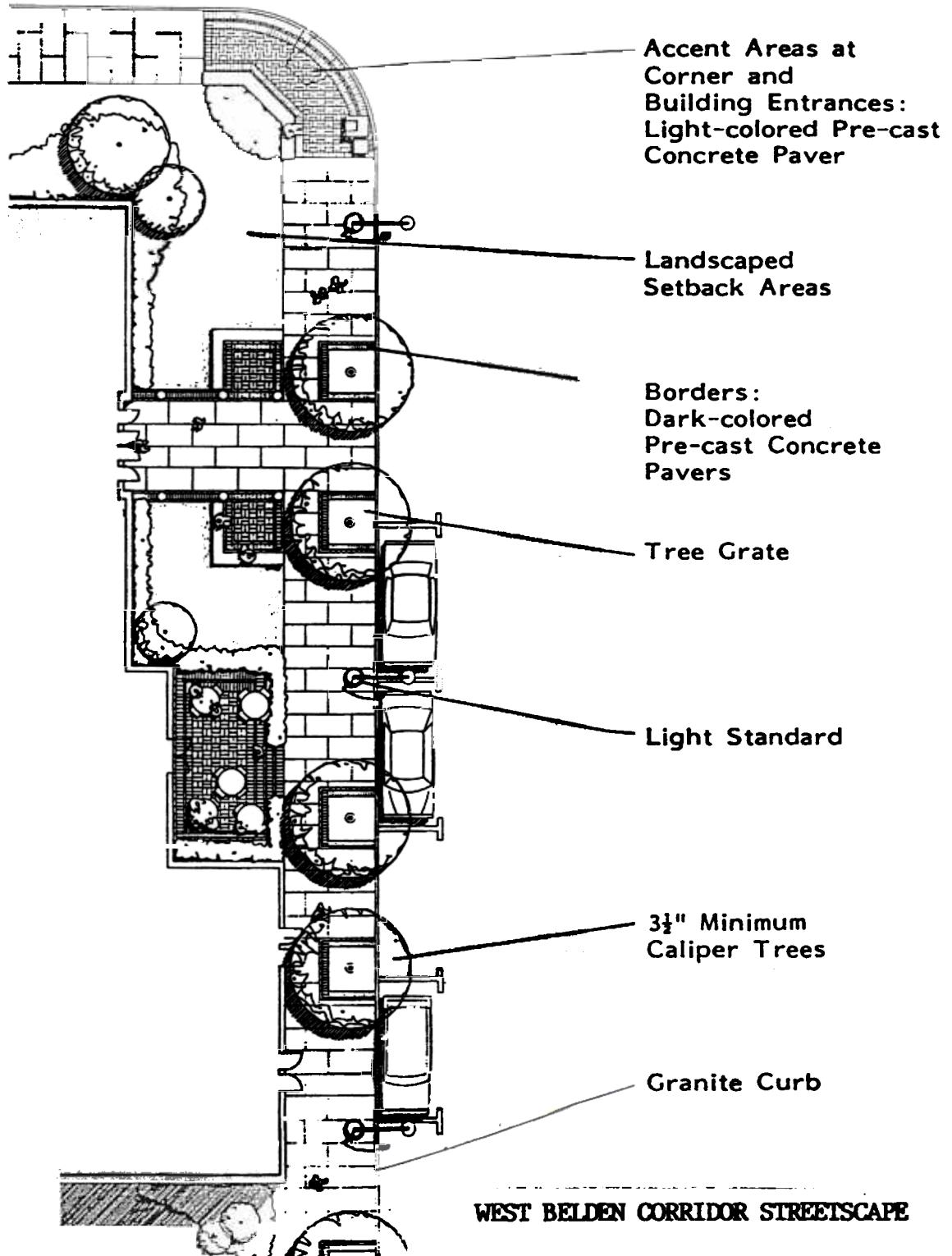
Park/plaza on both sides of realigned Orchard Street at West Avenue

Widened sidewalk in front of new development between Elm and Arch Streets on the west side of West Avenue.

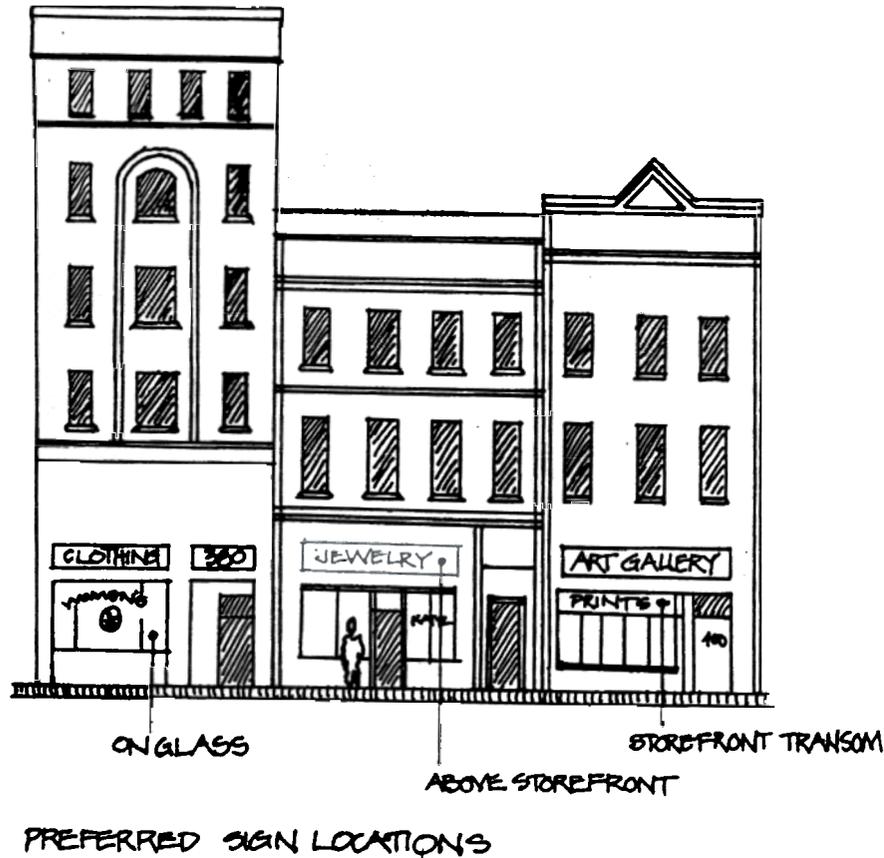
Park/plaza and walkway to public parking garage adjacent to Post Office on east side of West Avenue.

2. Streetscape improvements should be compatible in design and composition to those used in municipal improvements and provide well-planned transition areas from public right-of-ways to building entrances; including the following site elements:

- Pedestrian area lighting
- Seating (benches/low walls/wide planter edges)
- Street trees/landscaped islands
- Bollards/trash receptacles/bus shelters
- Widened sidewalks and mini parks
- Granite curbing with brick and concrete paving patterns



3. Temporary vending stands and carts are encouraged in public open spaces and plaza areas to add street level activity and a marketplace ambiance to the West Avenue corridor.
4. New development should be designed to preserve and incorporate natural site amenities, such as significant trees and areas adjacent to public spaces, into their site plan.



5. Signs should be located on building facades below the sills of second floor windows as shown in the diagram above. Wall murals and flags or banners which contain no advertising are permitted provided they comply with applicable sign regulations.
6. Structures fronting on West and Belden Avenues should have at least sixty percent (60%) glazing on the street level facade as measured from floor to ceiling to provide a sense of activity and openness to the street.

SUBAREA C: DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT

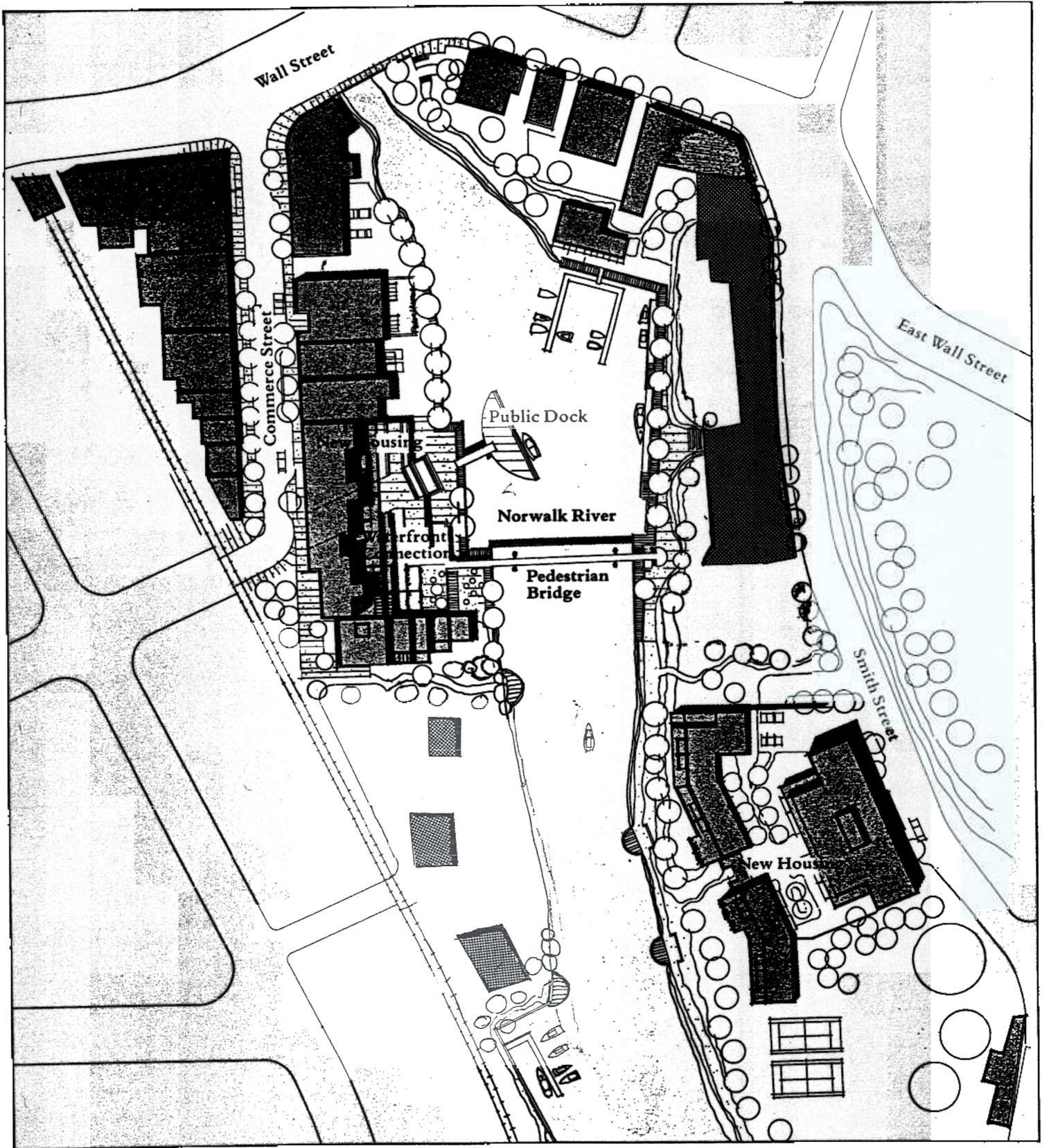
The waterfront area of downtown Norwalk is an important asset for the central business district, extending south along both sides of the Norwalk River from the Wall Street Bridge to Chapel Street on the west bank and to Daskam's Lane on the east. Although the area is currently characterized as a working waterfront, with uses ranging from oil storage tanks to sand and gravel yards and boat repair facilities, the master plan goals seek mixed use development with a focus on residential and water dependent uses. A primary requirement of all new development is that it provides visual and physical access to the waterfront through careful siting of structures and architectural designs which maximize views and follow the natural topography of the river's edge. In addition, development which contributes to the public's use of the waterfront by including walkways, transient slip space, boardwalk cafes, food vendors and the like, is encouraged as is development which establishes links to the main streets of the downtown to insure that the waterfront is not isolated.

The following development guidelines are provided to further define the above-cited goals for this critical waterfront area of the central business district.

BUILDING USES AND DESIGN

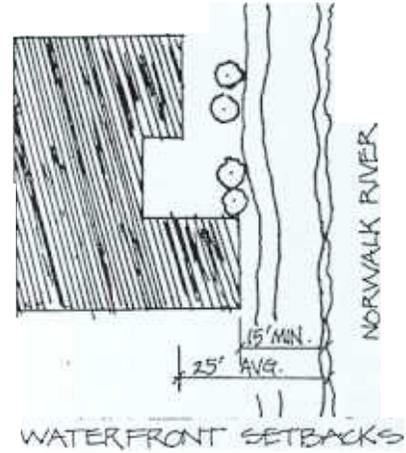
- 1) Water-dependent marine, industrial and wholesale operations should remain along the waterfront, and infill development should not inhibit the ability of these water-dependent uses to operate.

- 2) Mixed use developments with multifamily residential, retail and restaurant uses should be the priority of infill development proposals. Retail and restaurant uses should be located on the waterfront or the street level floor of a structure so as to encourage pedestrian activity in both these areas.

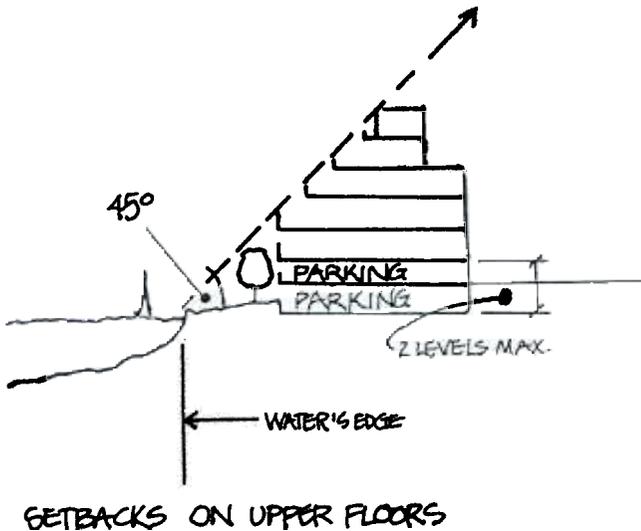
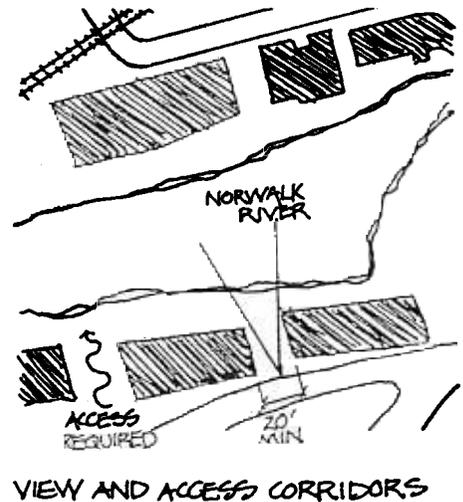


MASTER PLAN OF DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT AREA

3. All new development should be setback from the water an average of 25 feet from the mean high water mark in order to provide for public access and to maintain the river's natural topography and views along the water's edge. Setbacks can vary from 15 feet to 25 feet as long as a 15 foot minimum and the 25 foot average is maintained.

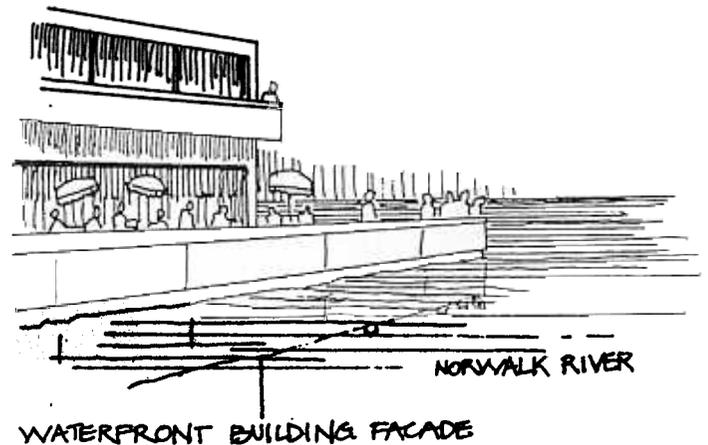


4. View corridors from the street to the water should be provided in all new development to enhance awareness and enjoyment of the waterfront. Corridors should allow for a maximum field of vision on at least one side of all new development.



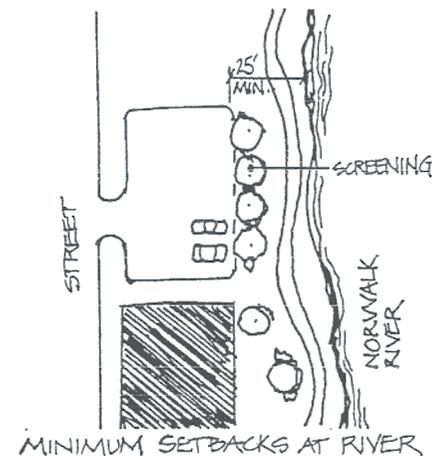
5. Structures designed with building setbacks on the upper floors which conform to a 45 degree angle as measured from the river's edge to the top of the structure are encouraged. This configuration can be achieved by stepping back each floor of the building above the fourth floor approximately 10-15% of the depth of the floor below.

- 6) Waterfront building facades should be designed with projections such as balconies, terraces, bay windows or greenhouse along at least 20% of the structure's rear and side elevations in order to maximize water views.



TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AND PARKING PROVISIONS

1. New development should provide all parking in subgrade parking structures to the maximum extent practicable, limited to two floors or 25' above the mean high water mark. Such parking structures should be screened with appropriate plantings and designed with architectural treatments such as stairs, recesses and railings so as to minimize the impact of the structure on the waterfront.

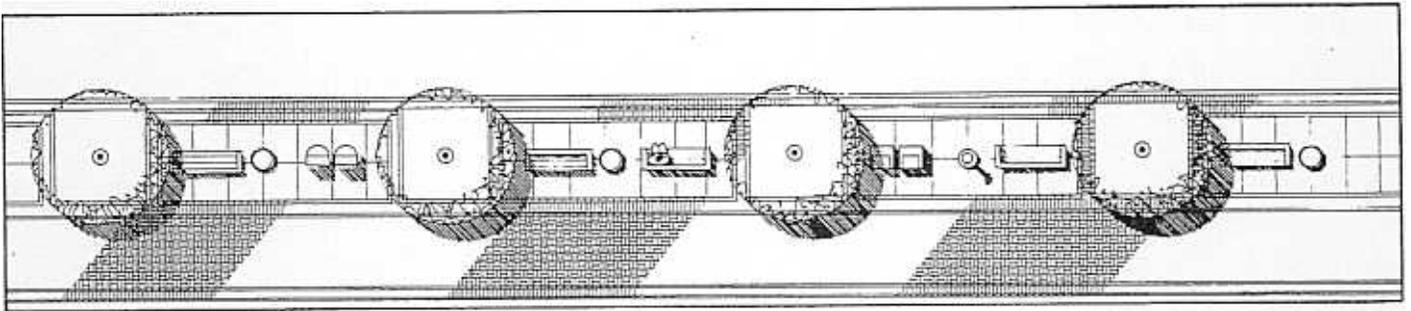


2. Surface parking areas are discouraged, and are therefore restricted to a 25' setback from the water's edge and screened from public view with dense plantings.
3. Parking may be provided off site if the property is located on a map entitled "Designated Properties for Fees in-lieu of Parking" dated January 9, 1987 and otherwise complies with the requirements of the fee-in-lieu of parking regulations. Nevertheless, it is recommended that some on-site parking be provided, particularly where retail or restaurant uses are included.

STREETSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE DESIGN

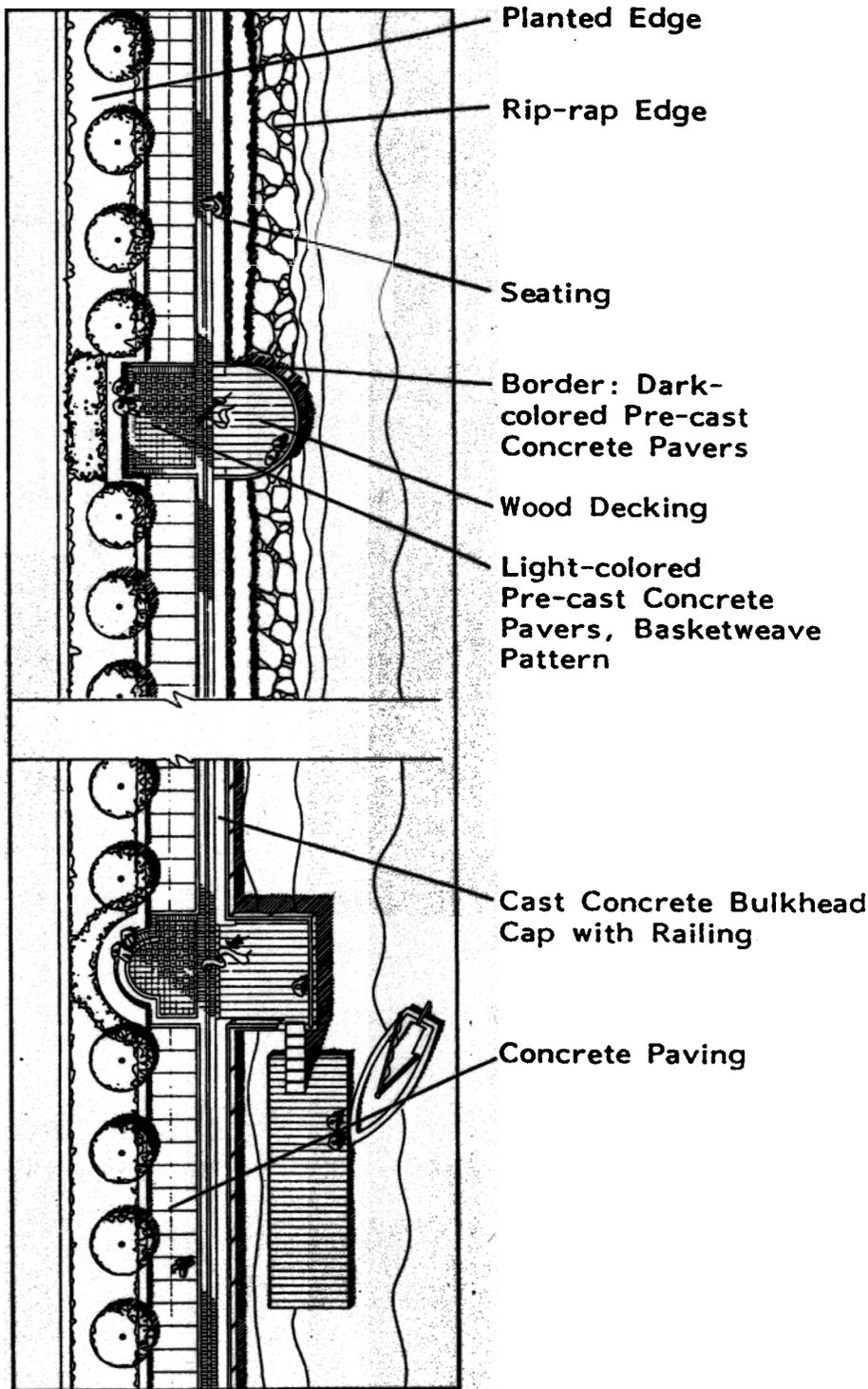
1. Open spaces should be oriented towards the waterfront edge of a development parcel and coordinated with the open space plans of adjoining properties to establish a linear park as indicated in the plan of development; including:
 - Small park on the southeast side of the Wall Street Bridge with steps leading down from Wall Street.
 - Public waterfront park and accessway from Commerce Street along the west bank of the river with public docking facilities and transient slip space.
 - Network of public access walkways and boardwalks along both sides of the river.
 - Bikeway, along the east side of the Norwalk River parallel to Smith Street as described in the Riveredge Park and Bikeway Study (Norwalk Waterfront Improvement Project, December 1984, pp. 24-48).

2. Streetscape improvements to Commerce and Smith Streets should conform to the guidelines described in the Wall/Main core area in order to provide continuity within the district.



COMMERCE STREET STREETSCAPE

3. Boardwalks, accessways and parks along the river should be compatible in design and composition with the guidelines provided on the following page including well defined areas for public use and activity which are a minimum of 8' wide and which incorporate the site elements enumerated.



Public seating on continuous low bulkhead walls with cast concrete caps.

Boardwalk of concrete paving accented with precast concrete pavers at key observation areas and used as edge trim.

Planted edges to provide shade trees and buffers from parking areas.

Pressure treated wood observation decks and docks to provide observation points along boardwalk.

Boardwalk lighting, trash receptacles and signing for the convenience of visitors.

SITE FEATURES & AMENITIES: GRAPHIC DEFINITIONS

Throughout the text of the zoning regulations and design guidelines for the Central Business Design District, references are made to various public amenity and architectural features which should be incorporated into the design of buildings, parks and streetscapes within the district. It is the purpose of this section to provide a more detailed, graphic definition of each of these features so as to provide architects and site designers with a complete understanding of the intentions of these regulations.

OPEN SPACES & PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AREAS

- Courtyards and gardens
- Planters and landscaped islands
- Street trees and shrubs
- Pedestrian seating
- Pedestrian walkways and lighting

FACADE DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

- Awnings
- Flags and banners

PEDESTRIAN SERVICES

- Sidewalk cafes
- Street vendors

WATERFRONT FEATURES

- Public waterfront areas
- Piers and observation decks

PUBLIC AMENITIES

- Pedestrian Plaza
- Sidewalk Arcade
- Fountain/Water Feature
- Atrium
- Through Block Arcade
- Day Care Center
- Public Parking Facilities

OPEN SPACES AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AREAS

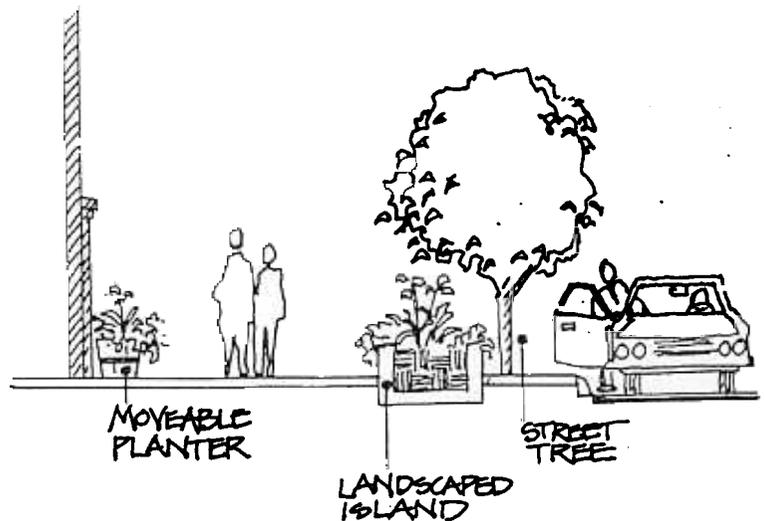
The Norwalk Business District Master Plan calls for a system of open spaces and pedestrian circulation patterns to be established which will encourage the public to experience the revitalized downtown area on foot rather than in a vehicle. The following site features, thoughtfully located and designed, will provide an attractive environment for downtown residents, workers and shoppers alike.

Courtyards & gardens

The greening of downtown can occur in small spaces between structures as much as through an established public park system, therefore property owners are encouraged to take advantage of small underutilized spaces to create pocket gardens and courtyards. These spaces should be open to the public, consisting of as little as a tree and surrounding grass or a full fledged garden complete with flowers, shrubs and trees and maintained year round.

Planters & landscaped islands

Greenery can soften the impact of hard surfaced areas when located in planters or raised landscaped islands situated along sidewalks, alleyways, at building entrances and in parking areas. The advantage of this type of planting is the ease of maintenance and the ability to modify or remove the planters to suit the season. Half whiskey barrel planters housing Christmas trees in winter and flowers in summer can be attractive yet inexpensive additions to downtown streets.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Street Trees & Shrubs

In addition to the plantings which are incorporated into the downtown streetscape plans, trees should be a component of the various public and private open spaces throughout the downtown. To survive the stresses of urban streets, trees should be a minimum of 4-6 inches in diameter at time of planting and be located a sufficient distance from vehicular traffic to restrict damage from maneuvering vehicles. In addition, the following list of trees are recommended for their tolerance and suitability to urban conditions.

SUGGESTED URBAN PLANTS

OVERHEAD CANOPY TREES	SUGGESTED URBAN PLANTS													REMARKS
	EVERGREEN	DECIDUOUS	TOLERANT POOR DRAINAGE	LITTER PROBLEM	GROWTH RATE	NOISE FILTER	DISEASE PROBLEMS	SHADE TOLERANT	SCREENING	ATTRACTIVE FLOWERS	GOOD FALL COLOR	DISTINCTIVE BARK		
NORWAY MAPLE <i>Acer platanoides</i>		●			M	●								Dense shade - Very tolerant of urban conditions. Good street trees
2. RED MAPLE <i>Acer rubrum</i>		●			R								●	Red profuse flowers early spring - Brilliant fall colors
3. GINKO (male plant) <i>Ginko biloba</i>		●	●		S								●	Wide spreading open habit tolerates pollution & city conditions
4. HONEY LOCUST <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>		●			R	●							●	Withstands city conditions - mimosa webworm problem
5. SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA <i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	●			●	M	●		●		●				Drops large leaves in summer - Forms large dense screen
6. LONDON PLANE TREE <i>Platanus acerifolia</i>		●	●	●	R	●								Withstands worst city conditions - Good street tree, long lived
7. WILLOW OAK <i>Quercus phellos</i>		●			R	●								Fine foliage texture; Excellent street tree
8. E. RED OAK <i>Quercus rubra</i>		●			R								●	Valued for rapid growth; Withstands most city conditions
9. PIN OAK <i>Quercus palustris</i>		●			S								●	Excellent street tree; Red leaves in fall
10. BALD CYPRESS <i>Taxodium distichum</i>		●	●		S								●	Tolerates poor soil conditions - Fine texture
11. LITTLE-LEAF LINDEN <i>Tilia cordata</i>		●	●		M	●								Pyramidal habit - tolerates poor drainage
12. CHINESE ELM <i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>		●			M									Beautiful growth habit as street tree; Disease free
13. JAPANESE ZELKOVA <i>Zelkova serrata</i>		●			R	●								Tolerates city conditions; Excellent shade street tree
14. CHINESE SCHOLAR TREE <i>Sophora japonica</i>		●			M				●					Tolerates city conditions; Excellent shade tree

S: SLOW M: MODERATE R: RAPID

SUGGESTED URBAN PLANTS

INTERMEDIATE FOCUS TREES												REMARKS	
	EVERGREEN	DECIDUOUS	TOLERANT POOR DRAINAGE	LITTER PROBLEM	GROWTH RATE	NOISE FILTER	DISEASE PROBLEMS	SHADE TOLERANT	SCREENING	ATTRACTIVE FLOWERS	GOOD FALL COLOR		DISTINCTIVE BARK
1. AMERICAN HORNBEAM <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	•	•		S							•	•	Pest free tolerant of city conditions - Good street or small shade tree
2. CORNELIAN CHERRY <i>Cornus Mas</i>	•			M		•			•				Yellow flowers in April
3. WASHINGTON HAWTHORNE <i>Crataegus cordata</i>	•	•		R		•			•		•		Excellent all-season interest - Attractive fruit; Choose varieties carefully
4. AMERICAN HOLLY <i>Ilex opaca</i>	•	•		M	•			•	•				Pyramidal shape - Best suited for borders and as a screen
5. CRAPE MYRTLE <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i>	•	•		M		•			•		•	•	Best suited as under-story street tree or as specimen - Excellent year round
6. SAUCER MAGNOLIA <i>Magnolia soulangiana</i>	•			S		•					•		Best suited to protected city gardens/plazas. Beautiful spring flowers
7. YOSHINO CHERRY <i>Prunus yedoensis</i>	•			R		•					•		Excellent floral display. Needs well-drained site. Life span 15-20 years
8. BRADFORD PEAR <i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	•	•		R							•	•	Very tolerant of urban conditions - Long lived. All season interest

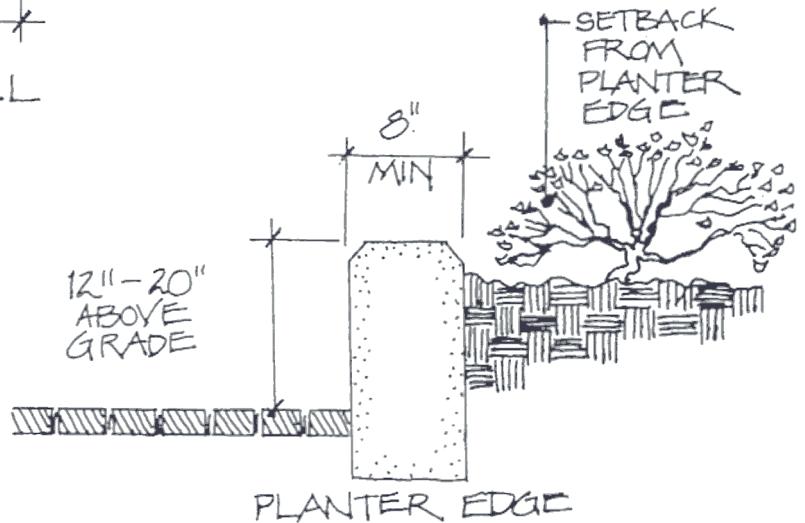
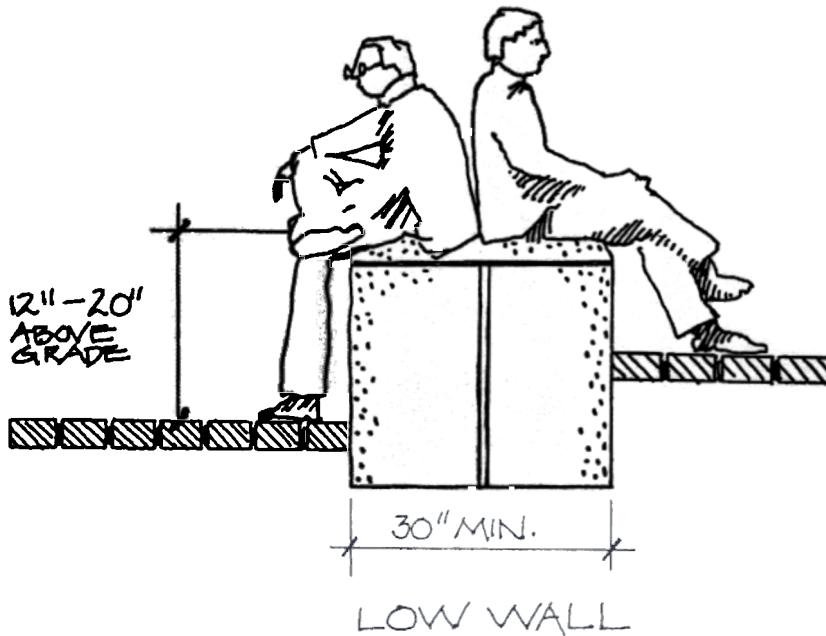
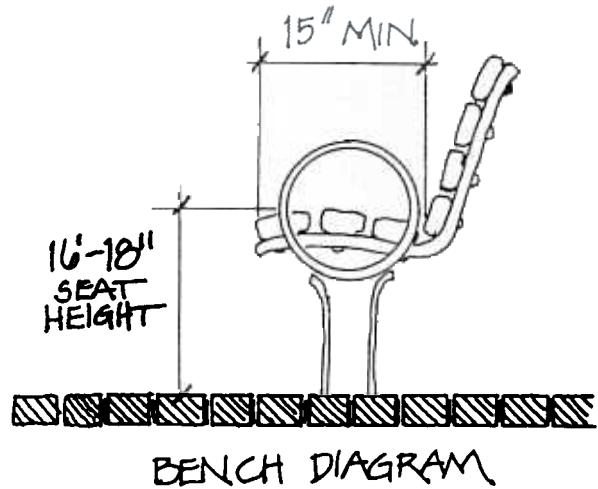
S: SLOW

M: MODERATE

R: RAPID

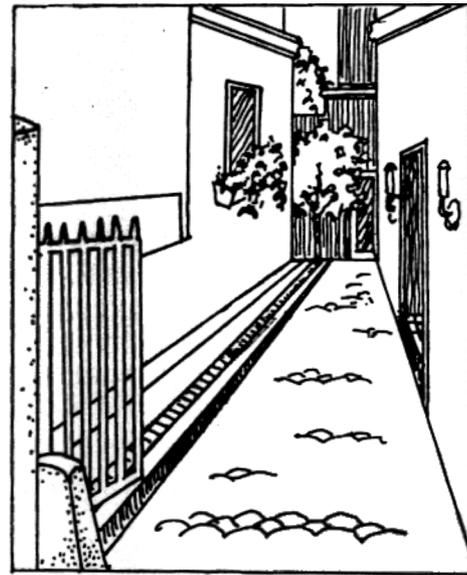
Pedestrian Seating

Seating is an essential element of a pedestrian oriented downtown and can be provided for in a variety of ways; either with traditional wood-slatted park benches or as integral parts of other site features, such as walls, ledges, steps and edges of fountains or planters. These seating alternatives should provide a minimum length of 24" per person and comply with the minimum design criteria illustrated:



Pedestrian Walkways & Lighting

Pedestrian circulation patterns which are convenient, well lit and provide access to long term parking areas will encourage shoppers to extend their visits to downtown beyond brief single-purpose errands. Walkways which connect rear parking areas to the street are of particular importance in improving the downtown retail climate. Priority attention should be given to improving the lighting, landscaping and paving surface of such walkways so as to encourage shoppers to use off-street parking areas rather than the limited supply of on-street spaces. Lighting can either be individual pole fixtures or wall sconces with a minimum height of 10' to reduce potential for vandalism.

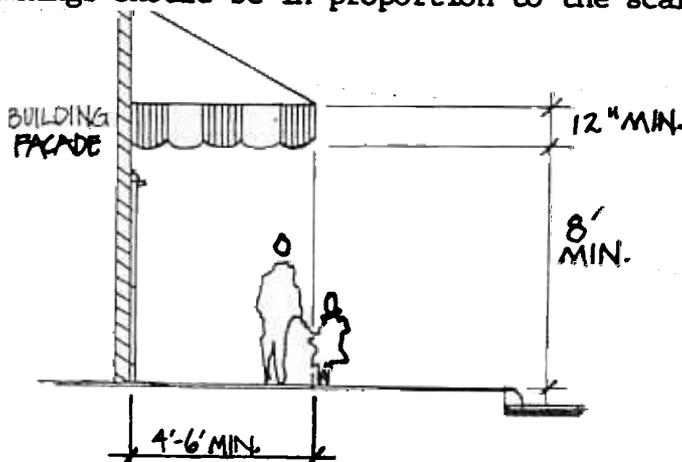


IMPROVED WALKWAYS

FACADE DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

Awnings

Canvas awnings are encouraged in the downtown to provide both protection from the elements as well as color and character to the streetscape. Awnings should be in proportion to the scale of the structure and provide a



minimum clearance of 8' from the street grade. Property owners should maintain awnings in clean and operating condition at all times and must comply with sign regulations when applicable.

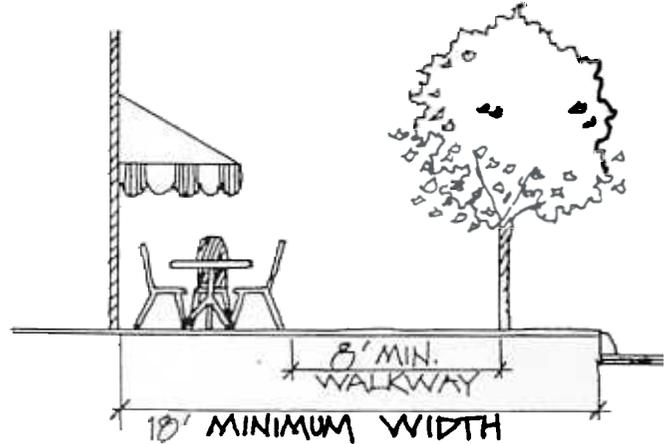
Flags and Banners

As with awnings, flags and banners can provide character to the downtown when used selectively and maintained in good condition, and are permitted as long as they comply with the applicable sign regulations.

PEDESTRIAN SERVICES

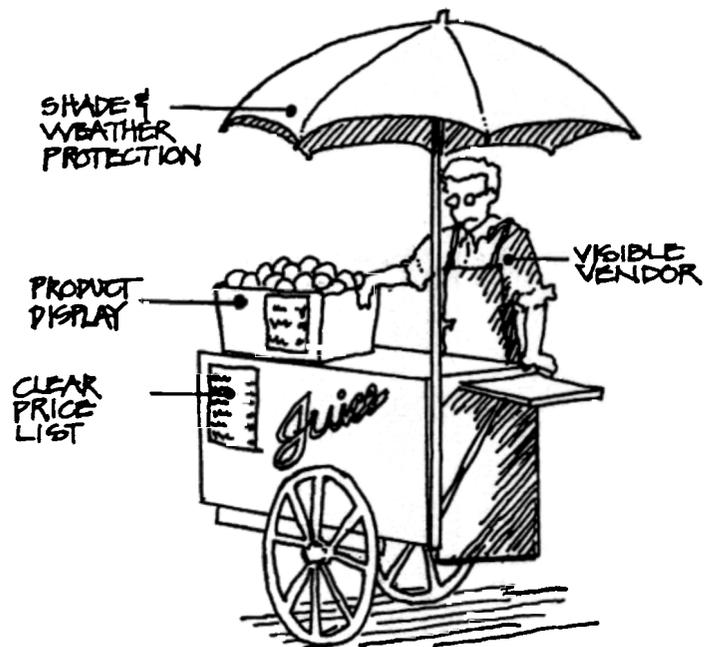
Sidewalk Cafes

Pedestrian use of downtown sidewalks would also be enhanced with the inclusion of sidewalk cafes as a streetscape feature. Seasonal outdoor cafes should be located within plazas or along enlarged sections of the sidewalk so as to provide a minimum of 8' for pedestrian passage. The use of awnings or table umbrellas can add character and color to downtown streets as well as provide shade protection during hot sunny days.



Street Vendors

Another service which stimulates pedestrian activity is the presence of pushcart vendors. When properly licensed and controlled, vendors can provide a variety of seasonal foods and novelty merchandise not normally available downtown. In addition, vendors can adapt their operations to locations where the street activity is greatest and vending stands can serve as an entrepreneurial proving ground to test the market for new products with minimal capital outlay. Vendors should be located adjacent to public parks and plazas or along enlarged sections of the sidewalk which provide adequate seating and trash receptacles for patrons use.

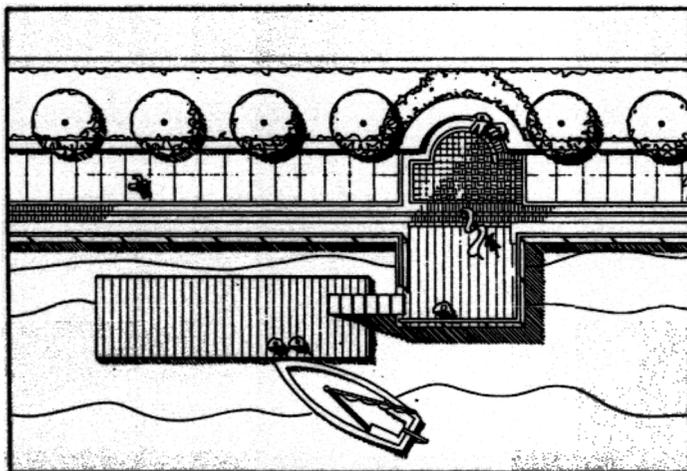
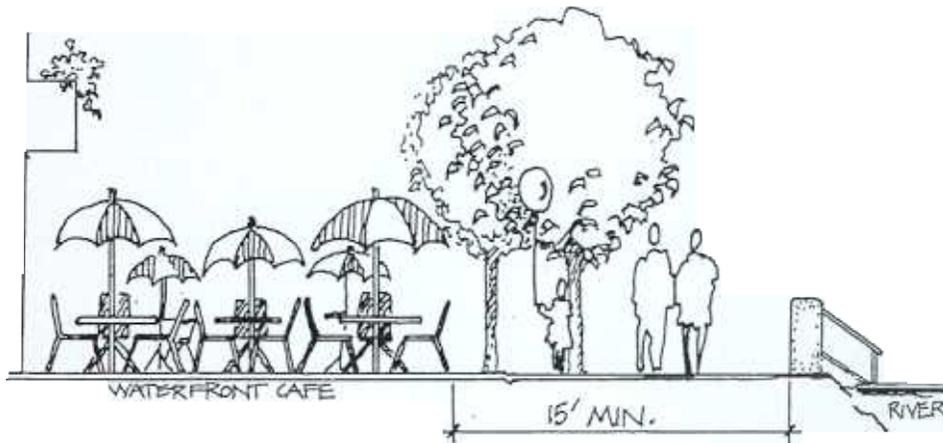
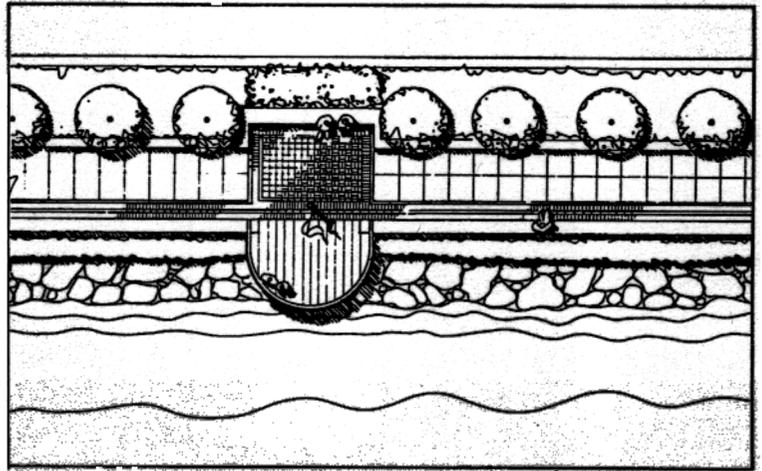


VENDING CART DESIGN

WATERFRONT FEATURES

Public Access Walkways

Public access to the waterfront should be provided by way of paved walkways with precast concrete border details running adjacent to the line of the established bulkhead or rip-rap waterfront edge. The walkway should incorporate seating, lighting, trash receptacles and landscaping, including shade trees, and should be coordinated with existing or planned walkways on adjacent properties. When restaurant and retail uses are provided, they can be incorporated into the walkway system by way of a hard-surfaced plaza area connecting the structure frontage with the walkway. Such plazas can be utilized for waterfront cafes in conjunction with a restaurant use if desired.



Piers & Observation Decks

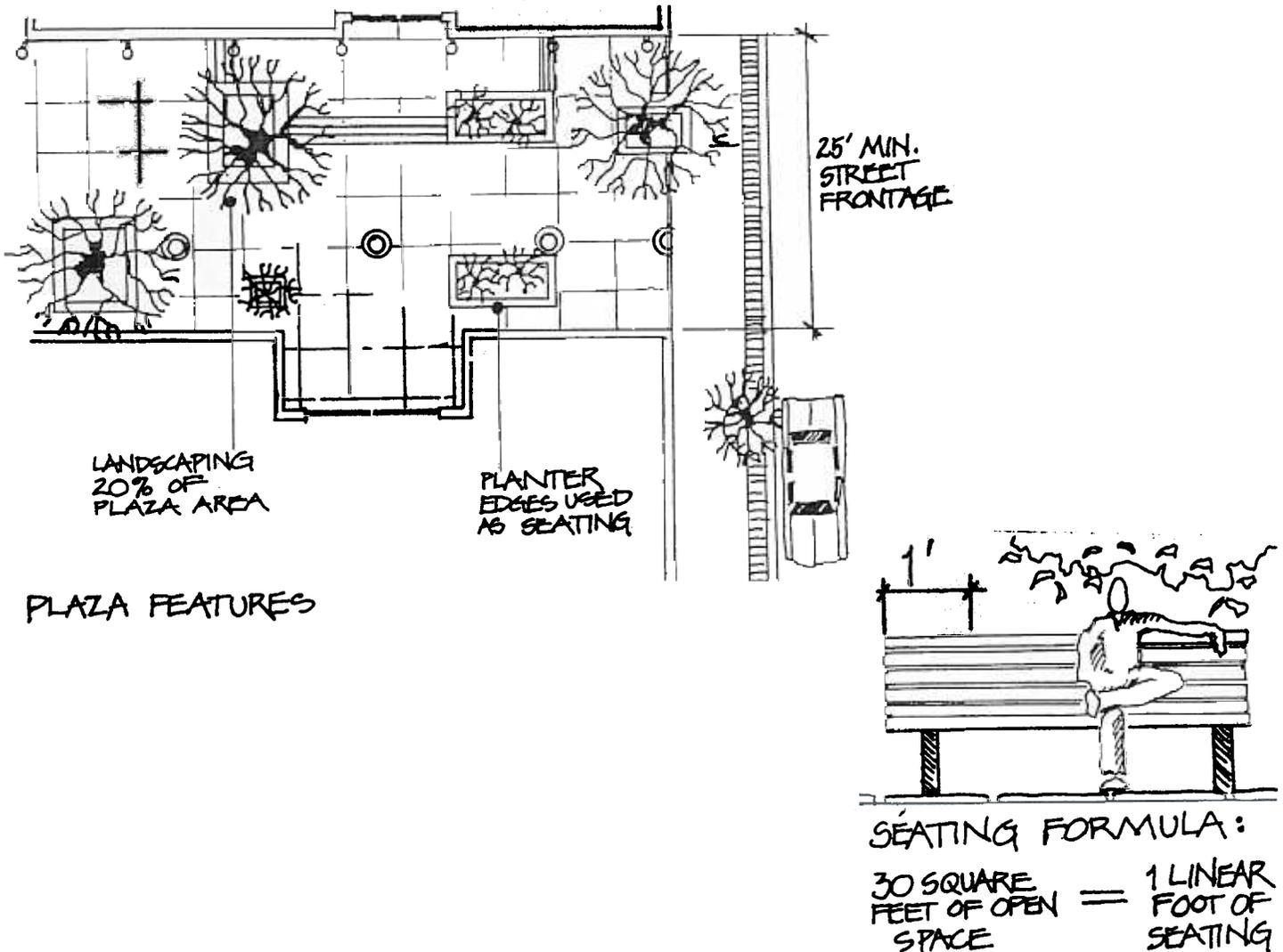
Piers, docks and observation decks should be included along all waterfront walkways which extend 100 feet or more. Pressure treated wood platforms are considered to be most desirable, although other materials may be considered.

PUBLIC AMENITIES

The following public amenities are defined in the Central Business Design District regulations under the amenity incentive section and are listed here to provide graphic examples of each amenity feature.

Pedestrian Plaza

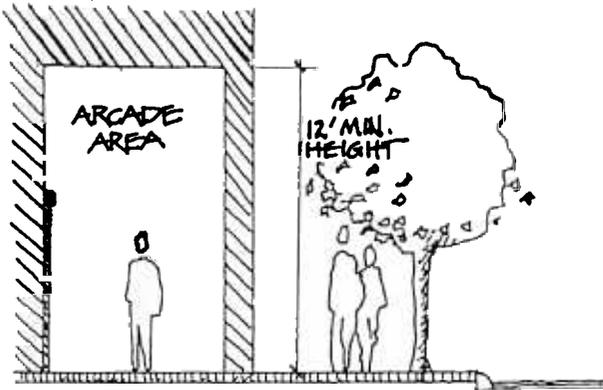
Plazas should function as a centralized gathering place for pedestrians in the downtown as well as an outdoor amphitheatre for concerts and other public events. In a recent study of the dynamics of public plazas, it was determined that the following elements are essential to making a plaza successful: adequate sun exposure, shelter from strong winds, presence of shade trees and water features, proximity to an active public street and availability of comfortable seating and food. Most of these elements are required in the specifications for plazas eligible for a bonus, nevertheless, it is strongly recommended that either a water feature or a cafe/vendor be a part of all downtown plazas. Adjacent land uses are also critical to a successful plaza, therefore plazas should be located near active ground floor uses, such as retail stores and restaurants, or in areas with a large office worker population.



PLAZA FEATURES

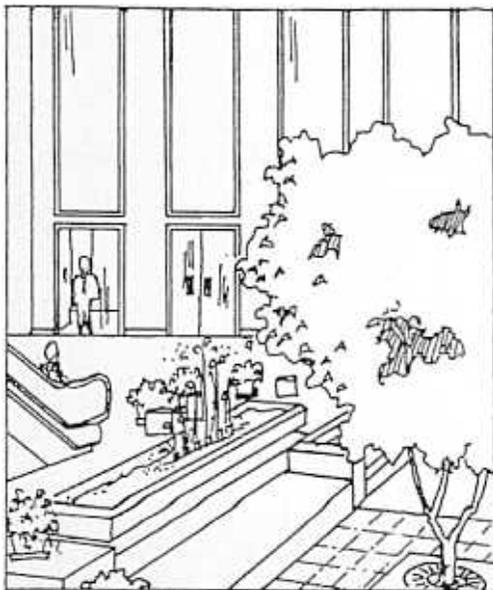
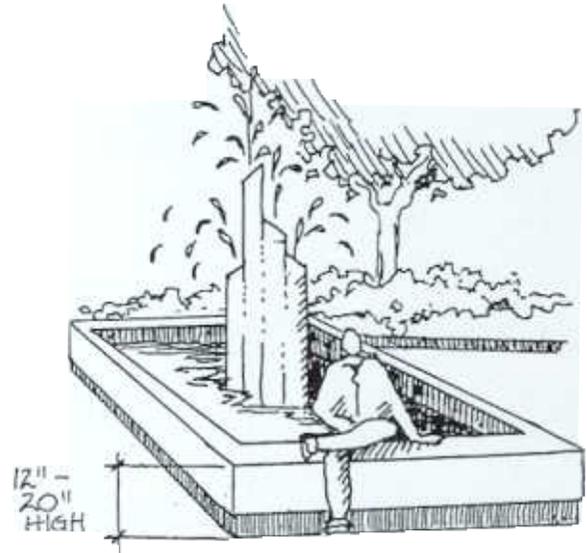
Sidewalk Arcade

Arcades are intended to provide sheltered areas for pedestrian passage, particularly during inclement weather and should be located so as to provide maximum protection from northerly winds and other climatic elements. The arcade should be contiguous with retail frontage along its entire length and, if enclosed, provide easy access from the adjoining street/plaza with conveniently located entryways. Arcades should be designed with vaulted ceilings, light colored interiors and good lighting to promote light and visibility inside.



Fountain/water feature

As was mentioned previously, fountains and water features contribute significantly to the environment of a street or plaza and serve as a focal point for pedestrian activity. Water features should be located in public spaces with optimum sun exposure and which are proximate to other uses that stimulate pedestrian activity, such as a restaurant or major retail operation. Raised fountains with sitting ledges around 18" high also enhance public use of this amenity.



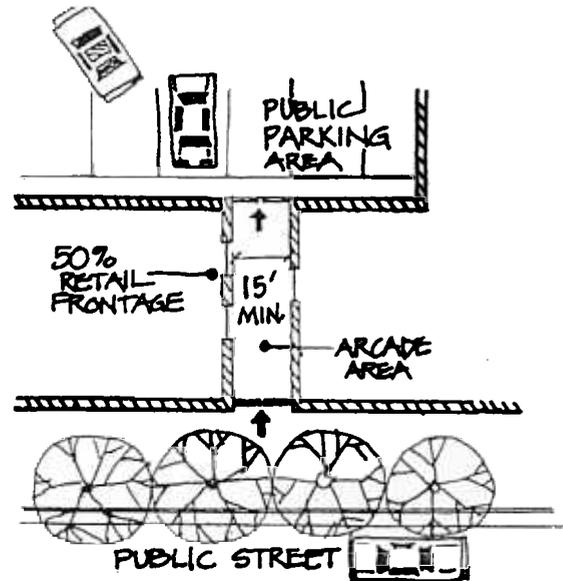
ATRIUM FEATURES

Atrium

Although an atrium is primarily an interior structural feature, it should function as a part of the downtown streetscape and retail environment. Its proximity to the street should be enhanced with as much transparent glazing as possible and with clear well defined entrances from the street. The atrium should serve as a public gathering or resting place, particularly during cold and inclement weather. The integration of the atrium with adjacent restaurant and retail uses is strongly encouraged.

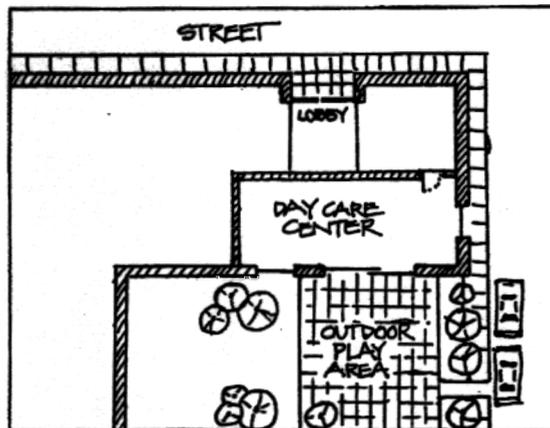
Through Block Arcade

Arcades which connect public streets to off-street public parking facilities are considered to be one of the most important pedestrian amenities needed in the downtown in order to realize the goals of the master plan. Direct connections to parking facilities will enhance the shopper's perception that adequate parking is available throughout the district. Arcades should be located as shown in the plan of development and designed so as to allow the arcade to remain open even when the rest of the building is closed. The arcade should have adequate lighting and clearly identified entrances to encourage public use, particularly during evening hours.



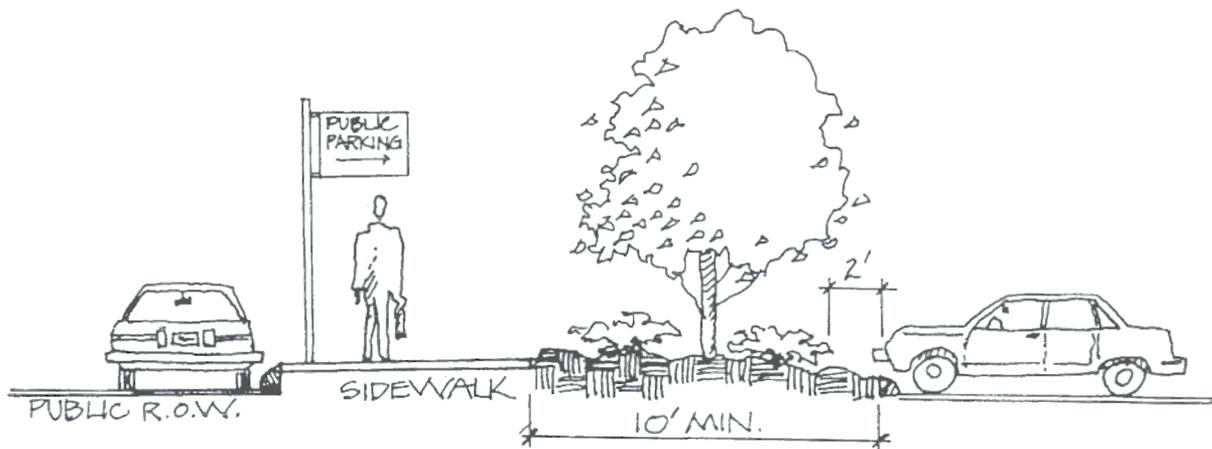
Child Day Care Center

Day care centers for children should be associated with all large commercial developments in order to provide convenient facilities for working parents employed in the district. The center should be located on the ground floor with access to landscaped outdoor play areas, as required by state statute, and designed with maximum openness to the outdoors. Convenient drop-off areas and parking facilities should be provided. If the center is located off site, it should be within easy walking distance of the proposed development and no more than 500 feet away.



PUBLIC PARKING FACILITIES

Public parking facilities which are convenient to stores, well marked and which provide easy access to the street are always at a premium in a downtown environment. A bonus is provided for this amenity in order to encourage property owners to supply transient public parking spaces in addition to those spaces required by the zoning regulations for the proposed development.



Surface or on grade parking facilities should provide transient spaces adjacent to the street or primary entrance to the project with clear signage designating restrictions as to their use (not for building tenants, time limits, etc.) Structured parking facilities should locate transient spaces on the level of the garage closest to the street access and should clearly identify on the exterior wall of the structure that public parking is available.

BUILDING REHABILITATION GUIDELINES

A characteristic of all commercial districts is that their physical character is continually changing and Norwalk's central business district is no exception. Buildings are demolished and rebuilt; facades are altered, rehabilitated or restored; and new business signs are constantly appearing. Although these changes are natural and healthy, many cities in their zeal to make improvements lose much of their original character and appeal. Instead of preserving their uniqueness, there is often a tendency to alter buildings to reflect the personality of other places. In response to this approach, it is often necessary to create special guidelines to insure that building alterations are compatible with the district's streetscape and to provide an outline of what changes are recommended and the reasons why.

It is therefore the purpose of these building rehabilitation guidelines to act as a resource, by illustrating rehabilitation techniques and explaining design concepts as they apply to older, historic buildings as well as to commercial storefronts.

These guidelines are organized in the following categories:

Design Guidelines For Historic Structures

Design Guidelines For Retail Storefronts

Facade Maintenance Procedures

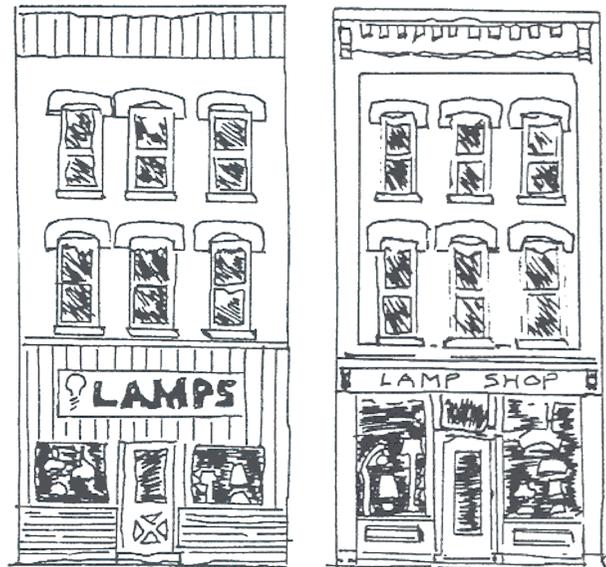
Case Studies: Norwalk Rehabilitation Examples

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES:

The following six points are important elements for the rehabilitation of historic structures.

REVEAL BUILDING PIERS AT STOREFRONT LEVEL.

Buildings are supported by vertical elements called piers or columns which are usually built of the same building material found on the upper facade, i.e., masonry, stone, etc. It is best to keep these piers uncovered. This action not only exposes sections of the original facade, but visually links the upper and lower parts of the building together, while providing a "frame" for the storefront.



COVERED PIERS

EXPOSED PIERS

2. AVOID LARGE AREAS ON THE LOWER LEVEL THAT ARE VOID OF DETAIL.

In the effort to "cover-up" an older building or create a simple facade for a new building, large plain areas often result. These visually important areas are rendered uninteresting and do little to enhance the building, storefront or street experience. Facade renovations should try to provide interest to these areas with architectural detail, signage, lighting, paint colors, change of materials, etc.

3. **AVOID ATTEMPTS AT HIDING AN OLDER BUILDING FACADE.** Although this practice has diminished somewhat, it occasionally still happens. Astonishingly, some merchants and building owners will cover up a perfectly beautiful building facade for the sake of 'modernization'. This practice is strongly discouraged.

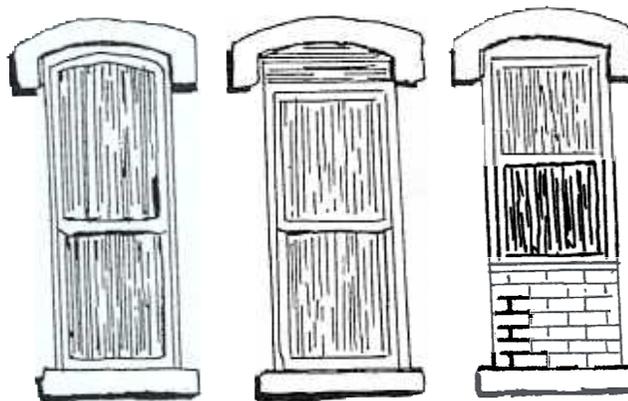


INFILLED STOREFRONT WINDOWS



ORIGINAL STOREFRONT WINDOWS

4. **PRESERVE THE SIZE OF ORIGINAL WINDOW OPENINGS.** In an attempt to minimize the size of window openings, (usually to save energy) building owners often remove the building's original windows. The size of the windows, whether it be an older or newer building is important to the building design and should not be altered. Energy conservation can be achieved thru the use of storm windows, interior window treatments, etc.

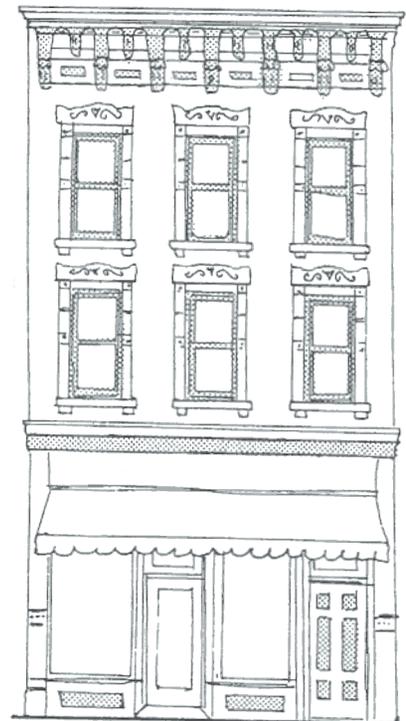
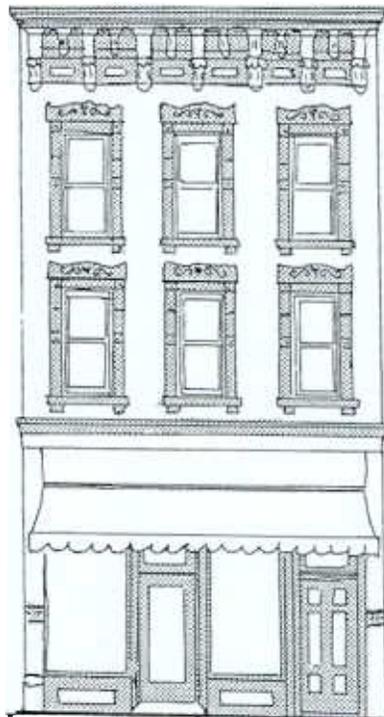
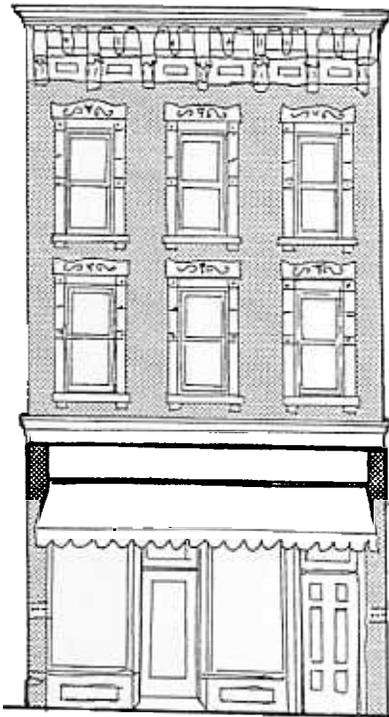


ORIGINAL WINDOW

INAPPROPRIATE REPLACEMENTS

5. **PRESERVE THE BUILDING CORNICE.** A building's cornice is designed as an integral part of the overall design. The cornice adds dimension and acts as the building's top. It should be properly maintained and preserved.

6. **BUILDING PAINTING.** One of the easiest and least costly procedures to enhance the facade of any commercial building is to simply paint the facade. Proper painting methods are outlined in the Standards for Rehabilitation produced by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and available through the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, however certain recommendations that deal with color and color separation are listed here. The choice of color for any building, old or new, can cover a large spectrum. The only stipulation is that the color compliment the building upon which it is applied. Because of a building's visual impact, the color should not be overly bright. Neutral, darker, and muted colors are suggested for the large base areas (masonry, stone, etc.). Contrasting colors, which could be of a brighter hue should be reserved for trim and details. Try not to paint the same building material different colors, but rather limit different colors to different materials, as illustrated below.



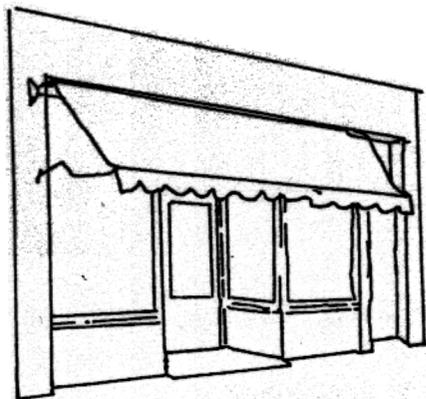
BASE COLORS
NATURAL MATERIAL TONES
 • WALL SURFACES
 • WINDOW LINTEL & SILLS
 • STOREFRONT PERS

MAJOR TRIM
CONTRASTING TONES
 • CORNICE
 • WINDOW FRAMES
 • STOREFRONT CORNICE
 & BULKHEAD
 • DOORS

MINOR TRIM
ACCENT TONES
 • CORNICE DETAILS
 • BULKHEAD TRIM
 • DOOR TRIM

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RETAIL STOREFRONTS

1. KEEP STOREFRONT WINDOWS ON A CONTINUOUS PLANE WITH THE FACADE. In order to maintain an intimacy between the shopper and the window display it is important to keep the display window as close as possible to the path of the pedestrian. Recessing the window more than 1 foot from the facade will hamper this desired relationship.
2. AVOID USING TINTED GLASS. Tinted glass, although purposeful in shielding the interior from direct sunlight, can greatly cut down on the shopper's visibility of what is within the store window. Good retail practice makes it essential that shoppers get a clear, unobstructed view of the merchandise displayed within the window.
3. KEEP THE BULKHEAD OR LOWER WINDOW PANEL TO A FIXED HEIGHT. Keeping the size of the display window as large as possible makes for good retailing. Merchandise is also best displayed above the floor on a platform. Recommended heights of between 6" to 2'-0" allow for a suitable sized display window and an appropriate interior platform or exterior bulkhead.
4. ENCOURAGE THE USE OF AWNINGS. Awnings add dimension and a touch of color and excitement to a building facade. They are also practical in providing shade to merchandise and protection for the shopper. They are relatively inexpensive and easy to install. The use of fabric is strongly suggested as being most suitable because of its texture and soft quality. The manner and dimension in hanging can also make a critical difference. Recommended styles are illustrated below.

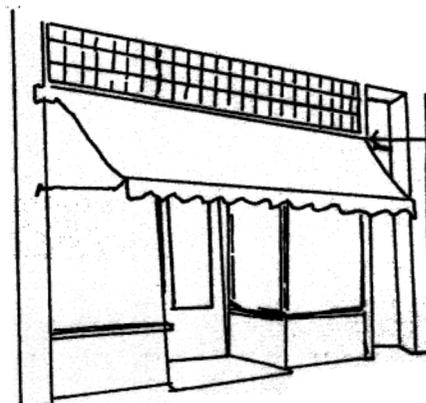


RETRACTABLE AWNING



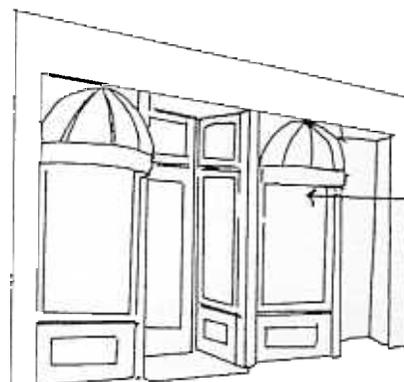
INSTALLED WITHIN STOREFRONT AREA

FIXED/QUARTER ROUND CANOPY



INSTALLED AT LINE OF TRANSOM

RETRACTABLE AWNING



INSTALLED WITHIN WINDOW AREA

FIXED/QUARTER ROUND CANOPIES

5. **MAINTAIN GOOD QUALITY SIGNAGE.** The use of signs is not only a practical business measure but one that can significantly enhance a building facade or storefront. Suggestions for good signage are numerous but the most significant recommendations are as follows:

Placement. Most buildings (old and new) have a logical place to fit a sign. On older buildings the natural location is beneath (not covering) the lower window sill and above the transom or storefront cornice. Signs should compliment a building and not cover any of its architectural details. Although newer buildings may not have these architectural features the best location is from within 9 feet - 14 feet above the level of the sidewalk. It is also best to keep the heights of signs uniform so that they can be read easier as a group. Shoppers expect signs to be placed in familiar locations.



Size. The appropriate size of a sign is determined most by the area available on the building as well as the street upon which it is found. Heights of letters will vary from a smaller scale for streets with a slower rate of traffic to a larger scale for wider thoroughfares. Norwalk Center is unique in having both situations - one for Wall and Main Streets and one for West Avenue. In either case the size of the signs should be in correct proportion to the building and surroundings and should comply with applicable zoning regulations.

Legibility. The most important recommendation regarding the legibility of commercial signs is to keep the background dark and the lettering light. This is especially true for back lit plastic cabinet signs. Although these signs have become popular because of their availability and durability they lack the personal and creative touch that is so important for the image of any business. Cabinet signs look especially mundane when the background material is made of white plastic and the letters are applied using a darker color; as such, the sign appears as an ordinary box. This result can change dramatically by simply reversing the contrast, keeping the background dark and the lettering light; in this way the background recedes while the letters or message stands out. Specifying a matte finish for the plastic can also make a significant difference.

Preserve original and historic signs. Many older buildings display the names of their original owners, who were proud of their contributions to the community, on the upper part of the building. When painted, they are referred to as 'ghost' or 'phantom' signs. Some building signs are formed in the sheet metal of fascias or cornices and many are incised in stone panels or molded in terra cotta relief. Other historic signs worth saving include those painted on windows with gold leaf; decals on window interiors; symbol signs; stained glass in transoms; terrazo in entranceways; porcelain enamel signs; and signs using neon. These early signs should be protected as they are important in preserving a neighborhood's history and character.

6. **MAINTAIN THE STOREFRONT WINDOW.** A growing tendency in many downtowns is the changeover from retail businesses to those businesses that have no need for window displays. Many of these business look to reduce the size of the display windows by infilling the opening with solid materials, such as wood or brick. This is unfortunate, for one of the most valuable characteristics of any streetscape is the ability to maintain a continuous 'wall' of interest. Window shopping is an important activity for downtown and must be encouraged whenever possible. Closed-in storefront windows can hamper this experience, as illustrated on the following page.



'MODERNIZED' BUILDING FACADE

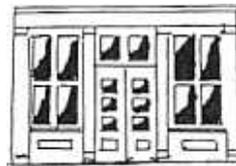


ORIGINAL BUILDING FACADE

Businesses that do not need displays can still take advantage of their windows through the use of community service announcements, displays, office extensions, reception areas, etc. Retaining natural light is a definite business asset. Maintaining the display window not only saves money but preserves the window for any eventual changeover which may revert the store back to retail use.

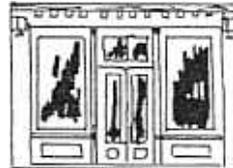
7. **PRESERVATION OF QUALITY DESIGNED STOREFRONTS.** The preservation of historic storefronts is obviously important, however there are numerous storefronts that, although lacking in historic significance are still worthy of preservation. Although representing more recent times (ca. 1940 - present) they represent a continuity of style and taste that adds to the sense of place and personality of Norwalk Center. These storefronts may have also been well maintained and display quality workmanship and materials. Above all, they may retain values, such as large display windows, that are perfectly suited for today's retailing.

TYPICAL STOREFRONTS



EARLY TO MID 1800'S

- POST & BEAM FRAME
- DIVIDED DISPLAY WINDOWS
- SIMPLE DECORATION



MID TO LATE 1800'S

- BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE
- CAST IRON COLUMNS
- LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS



LATE 1800'S TO EARLY 1900'S

- SIMPLE CORNICE
- TRANSCOM WINDOWS
- RECESSED ENTRANCE



EARLY 1900'S TO 1930

- METAL WINDOW FRAMES
- STRUCTURAL GLASS
- RECESSED ENTRANCE

FACADE MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

Preventive maintenance is a continual process that makes sense for any structure. It keeps up the appearance of the building and can prolong its life indefinitely while saving on costly repairs. The maintenance and rehabilitation techniques outlined by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation should serve as a standard for all rehabilitations of structures listed on the Norwalk Historical Resources Inventory. These standards are available through the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

CASE STUDIES: NORWALK REHABILITATION EXAMPLES

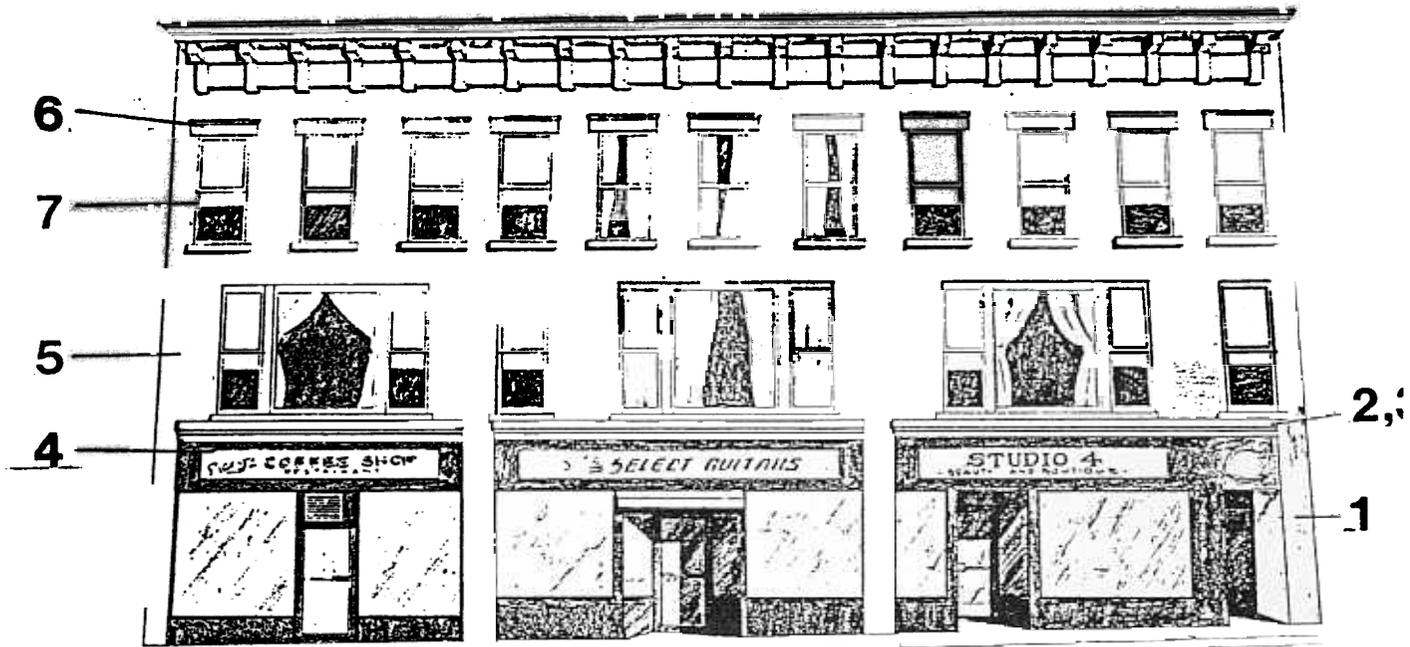
The following five drawings provide examples of how these guidelines have been applied to selected buildings within Norwalk's business district. Full size color renderings of these alterations are available for review at the offices of the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

EXAMPLE #1: 55 WALL STREET



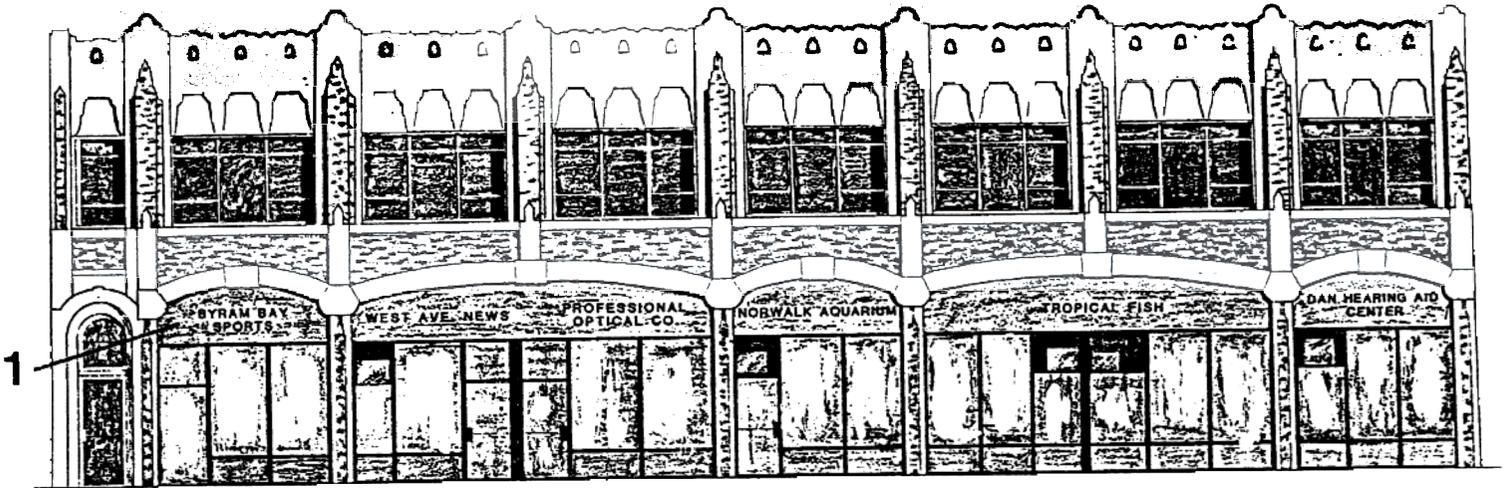
- 1) Remove the cover-up panels so as to reveal the original brick piers. This action will not only expose sections of the original facade but will visually pull the upper and lower part of the building together while providing a frame for the storefront.
- 2) Enlarge the storefront cornice. Mid cornices were a prominent feature in earlier storefronts and gave the front more importance. Increasing the width of the cornice will also produce a smaller and more proportionately correct area to place the business sign.
- 3) Install new signs
- 4) Install new canvas awnings. Awnings are not only practical in providing shade to merchandise within the windows, but give added depth to the storefront and protection to the shopper.
- 5) Apply recessed wood panels to bulkhead

EXAMPLE #2: 41-45 WALL STREET



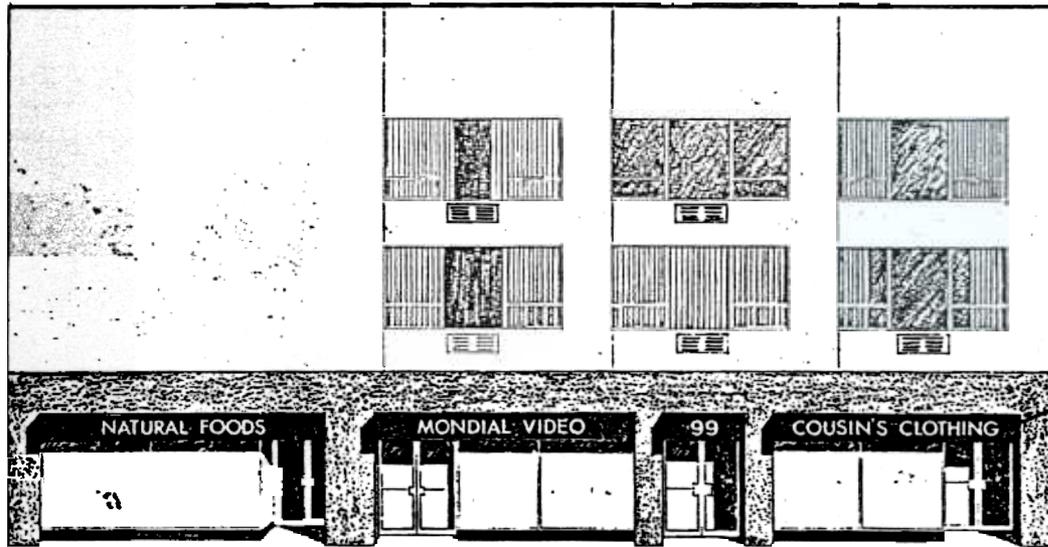
- 1) Remove cover-up panels to reveal brick piers.
- 2) Remove one foot of cover-up panel from beneath second floor window sill. When dealing with an older building, in just about every case there is an area just below the sill that is brick and part of the original building facade design. A good rule to follow when proceeding with any storefront rehabilitation of an older building is to reveal as much of the original building fabric as possible while trying to diminish any of the modern intrusions.
- 3) Install new storefront cornice.
- 4) Install new signs. These signs are in better proportion to the overall sign area. Although the signs are identical in height, in order to provide a more unified look, they allow for diversity in their graphics.
- 5) Repaint masonry facade. Thoroughly scrape and prepare facade and apply two coats of latex masonry paint.
- 6) Properly prepare and paint cornice and sills. These elements which are often made of wood, cast-iron or pressed metal should be painted a contrasting color to that of the masonry.
- 7) Paint window casings and sash. Older windows, being of wood require constant maintenance. Use oil base enamel.

EXAMPLE #3: 606-614 WEST AVENUE



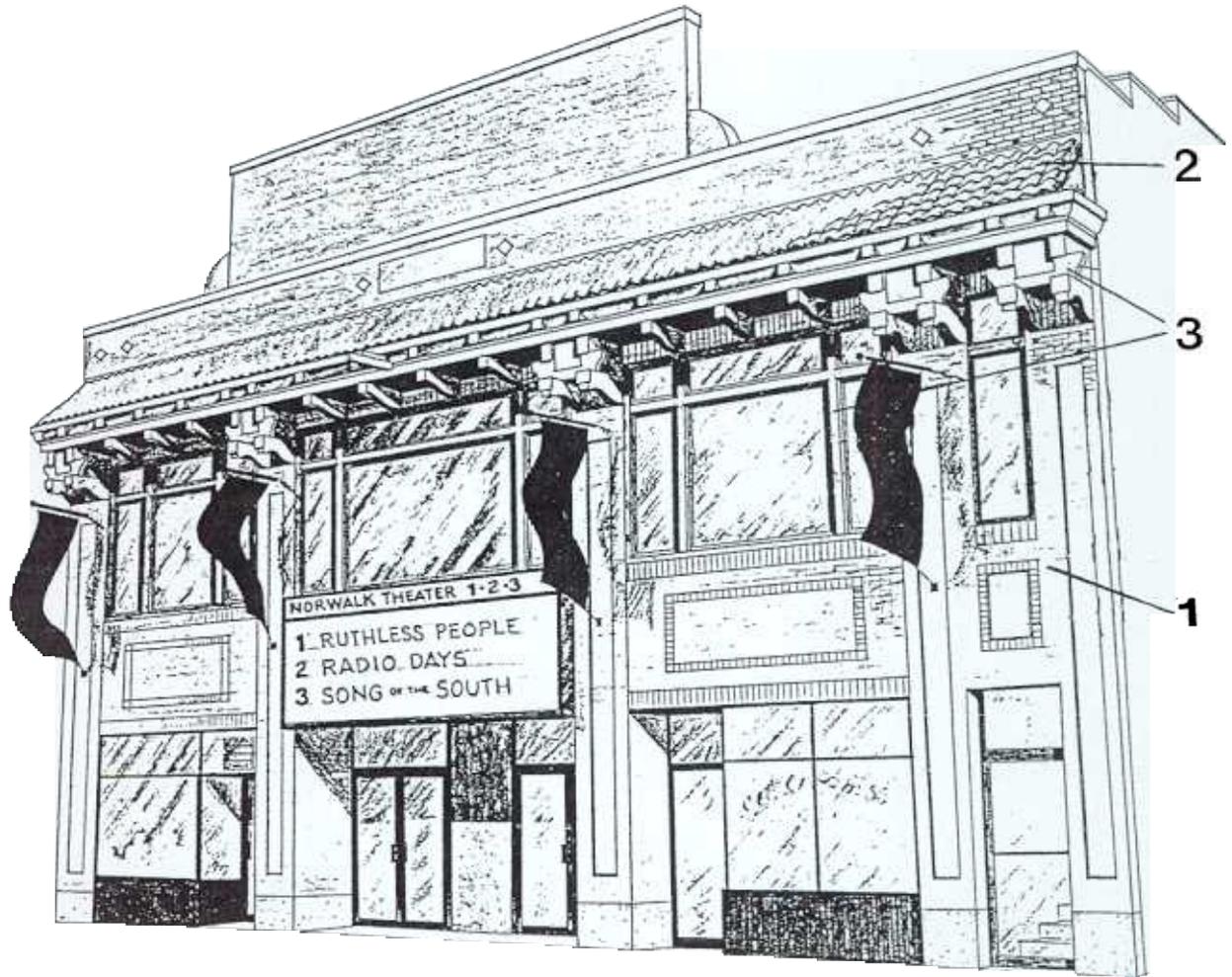
- 1) Paint the sign background (transom area) a dark color. This will provide contrast to the letters and emphasize the important architectural feature of the arch.

EXAMPLE #4: 32-36 MAIN AVENUE



- 1) Install new canvas awning - signs. This rather bland contemporary building needs the excitement of color to add to the appeal of the retail stores.

EXAMPLE WAT.T. STREET



-) Removal of the large up ma al reveal the
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- ii
-) Paint windo ing &