



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Economic and Industrial Development Commission

Architectural Guidelines

The Economic and Industrial Development Commission is a body that makes recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission and they have final authority over building design.

1. Purpose:

- a. It is the Economic and Industrial Development Commission's goal to foster long term economic development by encouraging excellence in building design. Fostering architectural harmony within the town's seven commercial districts by embracing our traditional New England character (as it has evolved over the last 200 years) and thereby creating a pleasing business environment that encourages visitation and increased patronage.
- b. It is also the goal of the Commission to minimize the impact of stark transitions between business and industrial districts to adjoining residential areas. The Commission believes that such transitions between different zones can be best accomplished through an increased utilization of the New England style of architecture.
- c. All applications for new construction, substantial additions and renovations of commercial and business structures are strongly encouraged to comply with these guidelines. Businesses in high visibility areas such as Middlebury Center, Middlebury Green, Judd's Corner, and the Gateway District are encouraged to be particularly mindful of the economic benefit of visual harmony.

2. General Guidelines:

- a. It is the purpose of this section to provide general guidelines concerning the architectural design of commercial buildings and treatment of facades. It is not the intent to specify one particular type of architecture, but rather to provide a guideline for exterior designs while simultaneously fostering the spirit of our historic and traditional architecture in all zoning districts.
- b. Designs should follow traditional New England style concepts, and modern, monolithic structures should be avoided whenever possible as they are not compatible with the desire for more historic architectural themes. This consensus is consistent with the stated goal of protecting and conserving the character of the town.
- c. The Commission understands that certain enterprises may wish to have a special theme such as Art Deco or Retro. These exceptions should be kept to a minimum. When proposed, such exceptions to these guidelines should transition from one style to another as smoothly and seamlessly as possible.

3. Design Standards:

- a. Facades should attempt to recreate traditional New England architecture themes and concepts. Such facades need not be exact replicas of historical Colonial, Georgian, Federal, Classical Revival, Victorian, etc., architectural styles. However, they should exhibit the "spirit" of such designs. Facades need not be identical to abutting or neighboring structures, but should be complementary to other neighboring buildings.
- b. Establish horizontal continuity by referencing adjacent prominent facade detail elevations and rhythms as much as possible
- c. Facades should be designed to suggest other than flat roof designs.
- d. Rooflines of adjacent properties should be taken into consideration to avoid clashes in style and materials.
- e. Where roof themes cannot be gabled or pyramid, such as in the case of exceptionally large retail buildings, a facade giving the appearance of a gable roof will be encouraged.
- f. Exteriors employing large, continuous, solid planes of exterior material such as glass, metal, vinyl or wood facing and masonry, should be minimized and alternative designs to break-up such unarticulated or mundane planes should be considered. Pediments, columns, arches, gables, dormers, plinths, architraves, protruding bays and similar architectural features should be used in order to "break up" vast, singular exterior planes as much as possible.
- g. The types of materials and colors used should be compatible with and compliment the design intent. The building materials should be durable and functional and the use of color and texture should be reflective of neighboring style and character.
- h. Developers are encouraged to limit the number of different materials on the exterior building elevation to avoid visual overload. A coordinated color scheme and similar materials to neighboring buildings, and the town as a whole is desired to reinforce harmony.

4. Scale, Massing and Proportion:

- a. Attempt to break larger building volumes into smaller forms to lessen the total buildings' apparent mass and to provide continuity with nearby patterns. Smaller forms could include projections (e.g. overhangs, awnings, etc.) or recesses (e.g. windows) on smaller buildings, or stepping back upper levels on larger buildings.
- b. Maintain proportions between building height, length and width consistent with prevailing architectural standards. Avoid distortion or exaggeration.
- c. Build elements (e.g. protective canopies, stairs, columns, wall or roof projections and recesses, etc.) to human scale at sidewalk level to encourage pedestrian use.
- d. Avoid false detailing (e.g. mansard roofs, partial HVAC screens, truncated roof structures, etc.) which detracts from a building's integrity.

- e. Accentuate entrances with strong definition and individual legibility for individual tenants.
- f. Create an agreeable pedestrian environment, including weather protection, convenience and safety features.

5. Equipment and Service Areas:

- a. Install new utility service systems underground, and bury all existing above ground service when renovating where feasible.
- b. Conceal views of all roof-mounted equipment (e.g. HVAC, plumbing, exhaust fans, etc.) from the public right of-way using detailing incorporated into the architectural design as opposed to an applied barrier.
- c. Screen all ground or concrete pad-mounted equipment (e.g. HVAC electrical, gas, metering devices, etc.) using evergreen plants of different species and size, or architectural detailing complimentary to the building.
- d. Locate and screen accessory buildings and functions (e.g. trash containers, storage sheds, and emergency generators) away from parking areas, walks, and adjacent land use. Use either a variety of evergreen plant materials, or and architectural enclosure in character with the primary building.
- e. Conceal garage doors and loading areas from view from surrounding streets. Protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from noise, traffic, risk of hazards, etc.

6. Historic Resources:

- a. Special design consideration should be given to the impact on historical resources. Treat resources in a manner consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- b. Preserve and/or enhance natural views and features of historical importance. Incorporate historic cultural landmarks (e.g. houses, commercial buildings, old stone walls, barns or sheds, fences, tree stands on open space edges, etc.,) into new development whenever possible.
- c. Preserve and reinforce historic scale, massing and proportion where possible.
- d. Honor local historic detailing with typical New England roof forms and shapes. Observe historic precedents wherever possible
- e. Include architectural detailing and apply it consistently throughout the design. Ensure such detailing is compatible with the historical context.

Appendix A. Middlebury's Seven Commercial Districts

Straits Turnpike North

This area consists primarily of automobile dealerships adjacent to the Watertown town line and office buildings, with some small retail uses closer to Route 64. Middlebury Edge is the most prominent anchor within this area. Several multiple tenant buildings contain health care offices, restaurants and retail stores.

Straits Turnpike South

This area from Route 64 to the Naugatuck line contains small retail uses and a large concentration of multi-story office structures. It is adjacent to Post University and helps serve student and faculty retail needs.

Judd's Corner

This is an area along Route 64, centered upon the intersection of Route 188. It includes a portion of West Street, adjacent to the Middlebury Green area, and Middlebury Hamlet. The area has four restaurants and includes a small plaza along Route 64 and small commercial uses along West Street, and most prominently, the widely known Shoppes at Whittemore Crossing.

Middlebury Green

This is the historic center of town, an iconic New England townscape with churches, historic residences and the Westover School are all clustered around an unspoiled Green. The historic Town Hall is at the edge of the Green and other town facilities, such as the Shepardson Community Center and Public Library are a short distance away. There currently are no commercial businesses on the Green. Commercial development should not detract from the historic character of this important area of Middlebury which was listed as a Historic District on the National Register in 1985.

Gateway District

Much of this area along Southford Road is undeveloped and ready for commercial use under specific zoning regulations enacted in 2010. Current uses include the former Trucking Museum, which has become a furniture outlet, plus two office buildings, fitness, swimming and racquet clubs, medical offices and day care. Interstate 84 and the Crown Plaza Hotel are just to the southwest. A grocery store is an approved use for this area which has not yet been built.

Industrial Area

This area encompasses the southwest corner of the town and is generally bound by the Southbury and Oxford town lines, Interstate 84 and Benson Road. Some campus office and light industrial development has occurred, but large acreage remains vacant. The area provides easy access to Oxford Airport and Interstate 84.

Middlebury Center

This well-traveled area centered on the intersection of Middlebury Road, Glenwood Avenue and Regan Road currently includes six restaurants, three gas stations, a grocery store, hair salons, and many other retail and small commercial businesses built up over the years. The town intends to gradually adopt Village District regulations to improve the appearance and pedestrian-friendliness of the area with improvements such as sidewalks, lampposts and landscaping.