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All major commercial projects are reviewed by the Commission and the Planning Board. The Planning Board is responsible for all zoning-related issues resulting from the intended use of the site, while the Commission reviews exterior architectural features, including materials and landscaping. Early review at the schematic design phase of a commercial project by both the Commission and the Planning Board is essential to save the developer both time and expense. It is recommended that the developer present drawings representing the scale and relationship of the project's components as early on in the project's conceptual life as possible.

Guidelines for Building Commercial Structures

The Commission and Planning Board's objective is to reconcile new commercial architecture with the historic village character which determines Nantucket's existing commercial identity. Orderly streetscape patterns, small and clustered scale, traditional building forms, materials and details, understated signage and appropriate landscaping contribute to the village context.

Traditional village life derives from urban precedents which focused on pedestrian needs. Nantucket's Main Street serves as the model—a place

**Village
Context**

where goods are bought and sold and business is conducted. It is a compact social setting where people continue to enjoy a unique, small town quality of life.

Suburbanization and its accommodation of the automobile has destroyed the traditional pattern of life in many places. Typical mainland commercial strip development includes large, low-profile buildings surrounded by asphalt parking areas and visually competitive signage. On Nantucket, strip development is neither necessary nor in keeping with the island's spirit. Consideration of, and provision for, pedestrians continue to be priorities for new commercial development. Addressing the requirements of the automobile can be accomplished with excellent alternatives which offer opportunities to protect Nantucket's environment and maintain traditional village characteristics.

Pedestrian Focus

New Commercial Design: Shops, Offices, Lodgings, Restaurants

In-Town or Settled Areas

In town, or in settlements such as 'Sconset, Madaket, Quidnet or Wauwinet, the existing historic building context is the source for new design. Scale, massing, proportion, roof pitch and style should relate to surrounding building characteristics. Near the Civil War Monument at the intersection of Main and Gardner Streets is a building that was long used as a dry cleaning establishment. Its large front windows and angled siting set the small-scale building quietly apart from its residential neighbors. A more recent example of appropriate commercial design is the Harbor House Hotel complex located between South Beach

Residential Scale

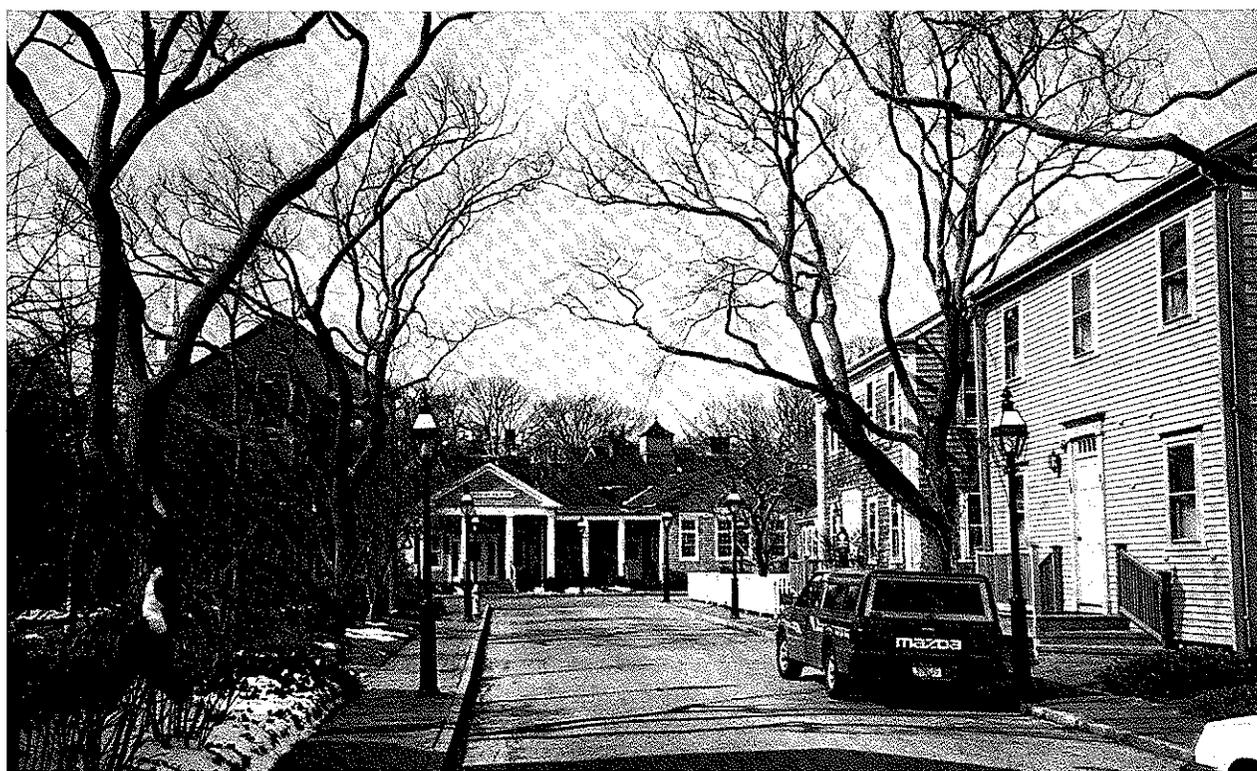


Fig. 155. Siting and respect for architectural tradition make the Harbor House Hotel complex a model for commercial design.

and North Water Streets (fig. 155). The clustered layout with main block set back, interior curbside parking, generous landscaping and understated and respectful architectural design maintains a visually close relationship with the surrounding neighborhood.

Street-facing elevations should try to reflect Main Street design elements. Traditional proportion and detail, with fenestration which provides attractive display of goods and welcoming entry areas enhanced by flower boxes, benches and attractive signage, are elements that are encouraged.

Traditional Detail

Outlying Areas: Corridor and Fringe Areas

On roadway corridors—main thoroughfares leading in and out of town, including Old South Road and Sparks Avenue—the following guidelines apply:

Corridors

Buildings should be sited toward the front of the lot to maintain a traditional relationship with the road. Major commercial structures (over 4,000 square feet) should be designed so that the narrow elevation is placed perpendicular to the road, to lessen the impact of a large mass.

Locate parking areas at the side or rear of the lot. They should be visual assets, screened by hedges or low fencing, and should include generous interior landscaping of indigenous shade trees, shrubs and plants. Traditional pavement patterns, materials and textures are important for sidewalks and paved areas. Boston pavers, bluestone, brick and granite are characteristic.

Parking

Several advantages result from locating buildings close to the road, with parking placed at the side or rear of the building. Businesses have the opportunity to display goods and place signs both facing the road and the parking

area. The community's visual character is enhanced by attractive facades along the corridors, and parking lots are more easily screened.

In relatively undeveloped environments, or fringe areas, commercial development plans should maintain the character-defining natural resources. Vegetation, topographical features, and wildlife habitats should be identified and maintained as a buffer between the road and any proposed structures. Levelling land, brush-cutting wide swathes and creating unnatural hollows are inappropriate. The visual impact of new commercial buildings is reduced by keeping existing natural buffers.

Fringe Areas

Structures should be clustered well away from the road. Good examples of fringe area commercial development may be seen off Nobadeer Farm Road, on Sun Island Road and Teasdale Circle.

Siting

In areas of significant natural vegetation, massing should not extend above the existing tree line. Natural, earth tones and materials will complement the environment, and are recommended. Two-rail split timber fencing is also recommended to define or separate parking and pedestrian areas.

New Commercial Design: Storage, Industrial and Agricultural Structures

Scale and mass distinguish commercial structures built for storage, industrial and agricultural purposes. Large-scale buildings played an important role in Nantucket's history, on the wharfs and as farm out-buildings. The Thomas Macy Warehouse, on Straight Wharf, now functions as a museum.

Historic Models

Its simple classic proportions, 19th century brickwork and utilitarian openings and trim provide an excellent overall historic example of this building type. A more simple 19th century building is the American Legion Hall on Washington Street (fig. 156), which continues to function for meetings, auctions and special events. The Barn in Wauwinet, now adapted for use as a school, is an important model for agricultural and other large-scale structures. In the mid-19th century, more than 100 working farms could be counted on Nantucket—many lined the Polpis, Quidnet and Wauwinet Roads.

Visual Impact Visual impact is the most important consideration when planning a large-scale utilitarian structure. Impact may be minimized by siting off the public way and using plant materials for screening. Very long, unbroken ridge lines are not appropriate. Cupolas, used traditionally for light and air circulation, may mitigate the effect of a long ridge line on buildings in this category.

Adequately proportioned doors and windows should include appropriately characteristic historic types and shapes.

Barn lights, bands of square windows under the eaves, sliding barn doors in front of openings and second-story hayloft openings provide relief from broad, uninterrupted walls.

Loading Platforms Garage doors and loading platforms should not be placed in the street-facing elevation, or in the front. Screening and site plans should take into consideration placing these elements away from direct public view.

Materials Building materials may include board-and-batten siding, a traditional utilitarian fabric for rural structures, in addition to white cedar shingles and clapboard. Metal siding and simulated plywood board material are not in keeping with the architectural intent of the Commission.

Secondary additive masses, called warts, will provide transition from high eaves lines to grade, to better relate an overall large mass to its site. Additional transitional elements include generous landscaping, planters and fencing set away from the structure. These, and trellis work with climbing plants, can help to reduce the effect of a large mass.

Fencing Traditional wood fencing is recommended. Chain link fencing is considered on a case-by-case basis, for security, as is required at the airport by federal code, and at certain industrial sites. Tennis and paddleboard courts require chain link fencing for enclosure. The immediate environment should determine whether galvanized or plastic-coated fencing is appropriate. In wooded areas, or densely settled areas, dark colored plastic blends in well, while in open areas such as the elementary school playing field, galvanized chain link is less obtrusive.



Fig. 156. American Legion Hall. Washington Street — Originally a whaling-era warehouse, it is now used for a variety of public and commercial purposes.

New Commercial Design: Exterior Details

Unwelcome glare from tall, unshielded and unfocused light fixtures detracts from the rural environment out-of-town and compromises Nantucket's stunning night sky. Exterior lighting fixtures should be kept low, be shielded and directed as closely as possible. Generally, a greater number of shorter poles with lower intensity is preferable to a few tall, bright fixtures. (Lighting plans are required for any commercial project by the Planning Board, with subsequent review by the Commission.)

Traditional retractable canvas coverings which may provide protection from sun and rain are appropriate for commercial use. Shops on Main (fig. 157) and Centre Streets provide examples for reference. Bubble, ellipse and ribbed awnings will not be approved. Colors and materials should follow traditional examples.

Exterior Lighting

Awnings, Drop Curtains, Canopies, Tents

Clear plastic drop curtains are generally inappropriate in the Old Historic District. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. They will be approved only when visibility is determined minimal from the public way. The proportion of any plastic drop curtain should not exceed the guideline addressing window to wall proportion.

Walkway canopies are inappropriate on the front of a building because they detract from the architectural features of historic structures. Side and rear entry canopies only will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Tents are approved for special events only and are limited to seven days.

Exterior mechanical systems for air circulation should be carefully designed at the earliest planning stage. Their location on a building should be limited to side or rear elevations. Additional provisions for screening are recommended to reduce noise and visual clutter.

Vending machines must be placed in an enclosed area out of view.

Pumps, Vents

Vending Machines



Fig. 157. Congdon's Pharmacy, Main Street — Awnings and storefront windows create a place of commerce in keeping with Nantucket's traditional building scale.

Public and Municipal Buildings

The public and municipal buildings of Nantucket are direct descendants of the first meeting houses and places of worship built by the early settlers. A central feature contributing to the design of these early facilities was one of civic and religious pride, a recognition that these buildings were the shared focus of the community and, as such, helped establish an identity for the town and, indeed, the entire island. Historically, these buildings, so dependent on public patronage on the one hand and so singular in their use as gathering places, were almost always centrally located, reinforcing that community center.

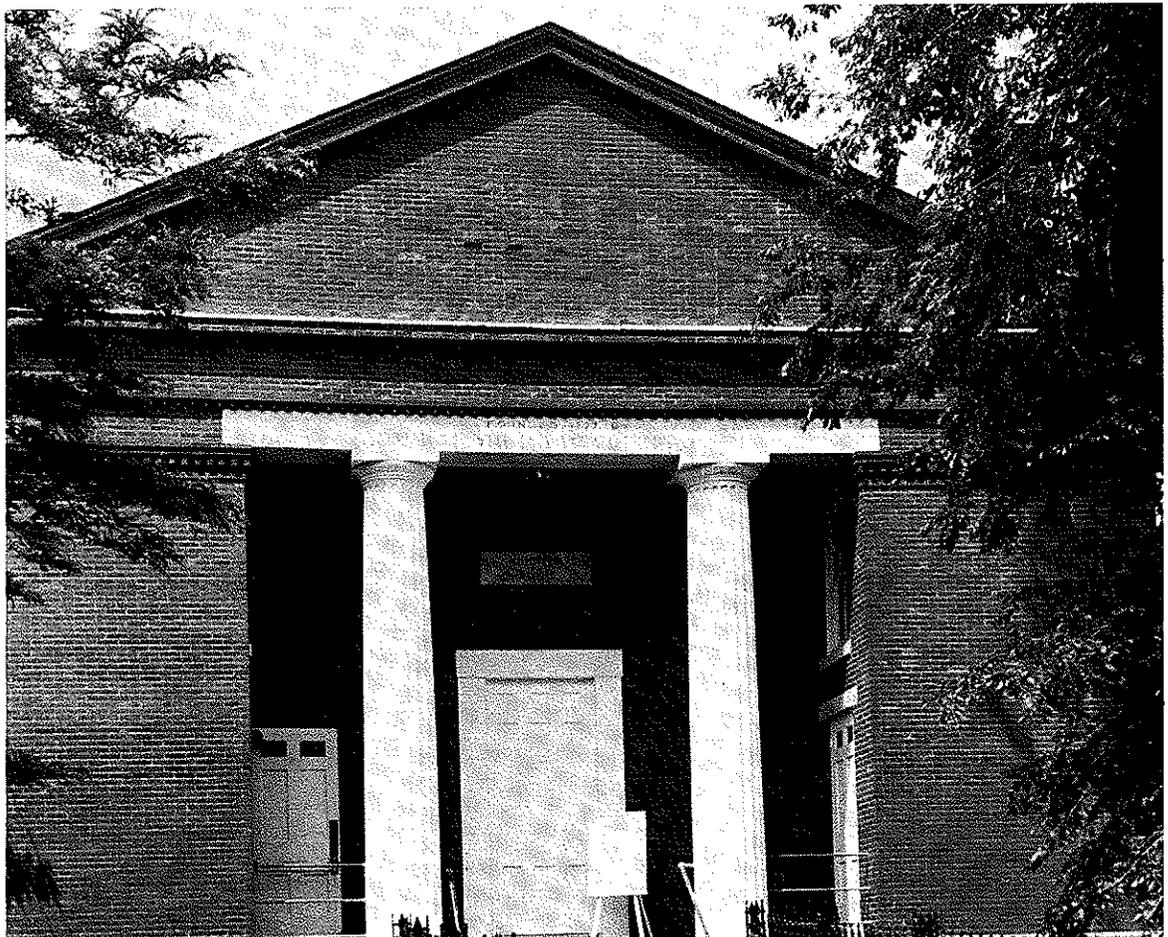
Traditional features

Traditionally, public and municipal buildings combined the utilitarian size required for large gathering places with

Adapt Scale

the design principles of their residential counterparts. Through similarities in massing, architectural detail and materials used, a harmony with the surrounding neighborhood was achieved, even though the scale of these facilities took on more monumental proportions. Usually, a dominant entry emphasized both invitation and welcome to the public.

Although the construction of new public and municipal buildings is not a frequent occurrence on Nantucket, such construction, nevertheless, needs to abide by basic tenets: to follow traditional patterns and design considerations (see Chapter IV) and, as development pushes these facilities further from the town core, to adapt scale to more rural surroundings, that is, not dominating the setting but rather blending with it as much as possible (see Chapter V).



Coffin School, Winter Street.