TOWN OF IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

STEPS FOR THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

OPTIONAL STEP A - REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION WITH THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

What it is: A request for preliminary consultation with the Design Review Board is a request to the Planning Office submitted by a project owner or developer asking that the Design Review Board schedule a meeting to have an informal discussion with the applicant to review a project's preliminary design.

What the applicant must do: The applicant must submit a request to the Planning Office for a preliminary consultation. The request should include eight copies of one or two preliminary design alternatives in rough sketch form illustrating the project's design. A brief written description of the proposed project's design intent is also helpful.

What the Planning Office will do: The Planning Office will transmit the applicant's request to the Design Review Board to establish a date for the preliminary consultation and will confirm the date with the applicant. The Design Review Board will review the applicant's submitted material and prepare preliminary responses for the consultation.

How long it will take: The Design Review Board will meet with the applicant for the preliminary review within three weeks of the applicant filing their request.

OPTIONAL STEP B - PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION WITH THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

What it is: Preliminary consultation with the Design Review Board is an informal discussion with the applicant to review a project's preliminary design.

What the applicant must do: The applicant attends the meeting and should be prepared to discuss the preliminary thinking behind the project's design. If the design thinking has changed since the applicant's initial request was filed, the applicant should bring updated sketches to the meeting.

What the Design Review Board will do: Representatives of the Design Review Board will meet with the applicant to discuss the applicant's preliminary design ideas and to advise the applicant on aspects of the design that are especially

appealing to the Design Review Board as well as those that may be considered problematic by the Design Review Board.

How long it will take: The duration of a preliminary consultation by the Design Review Board will vary depending on the project's size, prominence, and complexity, but will typically last between 20 and 45 minutes.

STEP ONE - APPLY FOR DESIGN BOARD REVIEW

What it is: An application for Design Board review is a written submittal made by a project owner or developer requesting that the Planning Board schedule and convene a meeting of the Design Review Board so that the project's design can be formally reviewed.

What the applicant must do: The applicant must submit to the Planning Office an application package consisting of a completed application form (see sample in Appendix X) and descriptive documents including, but not limited to, the following relevant documents:

-Brief written description of the design intent
-Plan drawings
-Elevation drawings with major materials identified
-Photographs
-Preliminary description of materials and products to be used
-Sketches or renderings showing the project in three dimensions

(Note: Applicants are encouraged to strive for clarity, simplicity and brevity in their submittals. All plan, elevation, section or detail drawings submitted must be drawn to scale and the scale must be identified on the drawing. Applicant must provide eight copies of all application materials.)

What the Planning Office does: The Planning Office and /or the Design Review Board will review the application for completeness. If the application and attachments are considered incomplete, the Planning Office will advise the applicant to provide additional information. Upon receipt of a complete submittal package, the Planning Office will notify the Design Review Board that it must convene a meeting to review the project. The Design Review Board will confirm a date for the review and the Planning Office will notify the applicant.

How long it will take: The Design Review Board will meet with the applicant to review the project no later than 21 days after the date the Planning Office receives a complete application package. If the applicant is unable to attend on the date offered by the Design Review Board, the review will be scheduled at the next earliest date that is mutually acceptable to the applicant and a quorum of the Design Review Board.

STEP TWO - DESIGN BOARD REVIEW

What it is: Design Board Review is an official meeting between the applicant and the Design Review Board to review the design intent of the project.

What the applicant must do: The applicant is expected to attend the meeting at the agreed date and time. If the design of the project has changed since the submittal of the application, revised drawings shall be submitted to the Planning Office no later than three days before the scheduled meeting. The applicant must provide eight copies of any revised drawings. For the meeting, the applicant should be prepared to discuss the project's design and make a brief presentation describing the project's key features and design intent.

What the Design Review Board will do: A quorum of the Design Review Board will meet with the applicant to discuss the project's design and to advise the applicant on positive aspects of the project as well as potential concerns the Planning Board may have with the design.

How long it will take: Typically, a Design Board Review will take one to two hours depending on the size and complexity of the project.

STEP THREE - DESIGN BOARD PREPARES RECOMMENDATIONS

What it is: The recommendations of the Design Review Board are a series of written comments and observations about a project's design that are provided on an advisory basis to the Planning Board as part of the official review of the project.

What the applicant must do: There are no specific actions required of the applicant at this step in the process. However, the applicant should remain available via phone or email to respond to questions that the Design Review Board might have regarding the project's design.

What the Design Review Board does: Based on the materials submitted by the applicant and the discussion from the Design Board review, the Board will prepare written recommendations regarding the project's design and submit them to the Planning Board.

How long it will take: The Design Review Board will issue its recommendations to the Planning Board no later than 14 days after the date of the Design Board's review with the applicant.

STEP FOUR - DESIGN BOARD TRANSMITS RECOMMENDATIONS TO PERMIT GRANTING AUTHORITY

What it is: By transmitting its recommendations to the Planning Board, the Design Review Board is stating that that its review of the project is complete and its recommendations have been concluded.

What the applicant must do: The Design Review Board requires no specific actions of the applicant at this step in the process. However, other actions may be required of the applicant by the Planning Board.

What the Design Review Board does: The Design Review Board transmits its written recommendations to the Planning Board for their consideration. The Design Review Board will advise the Planning Board on one of three actions:

1. Accept the project as presented,
2. Provisionally accept the project if the applicant responds to attached conditions, or
3. Reject the project and advise the applicant to revise and resubmit.

How long it will take: If the Design Review Board has taken no action on the project within 35 days of the receipt of a complete application package by the Planning Office, the Design Review Board forfeits its mandate to advise the Planning Board and the project will be considered to have been recommended by the Design Review Board for approval as submitted. (Please note: This does not imply that the Planning Board accepts the project. Approval of the Planning Board must still be obtained before commencing any work on the project.)

TOWN OF IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Purpose:

The purpose of the Design Review Board (DRB) is to preserve and enhance the Town's cultural, economic and historical resources by providing for a detailed review of certain changes in land use, the appearance of structures and the appearance of sites which may affect these resources.

The review procedures are intended to:

a. Enhance the social and economic viability of the Town by preserving property values and promoting the attractiveness of the town as a place to live, visit and shop;
b. Encourage the conservation of buildings and groups of buildings that have aesthetic or historic significance;
c. Discourage construction that is incompatible with the existing environment;
d. Encourage quality, creativity, and variety in proposed development; and
e. Provide advice for applicants, building owners, developers, and design consultants on the design review process, as well as provide guidance to the DRB when reviewing applications.

Applicability and Authority:

Design Review shall be required for:

a. Any community facility, commercial, industrial or business buildings which require site plan review or special permit approval;
b. New construction, exterior alteration, or expansion of buildings associated with a special permit application for a Great Estates Preservation Development; and
c. Any special permit application for a multi-family dwelling or mulit-family development.

No zoning or other district boundaries shall apply.

Background:

The Design Review Bylaw was approved at a Special Town Meeting in the Fall of 2005. As an out growth of the Ipswich Community Development Plan (CDP) and the Ipswich Town Character Statement (TCS), the Design Review Bylaw was drafted by a study committee under the direction of the Ipswich Planning Office in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Composition:

The Design Review Board consists of five members and two alternates, with the following qualifications, if possible: two registered architects, landscape architects or persons with equivalent professional training; one resident who is either a business or commercial property owner/operator, or is a member of an organization representing Ipswich business owners; and one residential property owner. Appointments to the Design Review Board are made as follows:

1. Two members are appointed by the planning board;
2. One member are appointed by the Historical Commission;
3. Four members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen, two of whom shall be alternates.

The terms of all members and alternate members of the Design Review Board are three years, except that when the Board is originally established, members shall be appointed as follows: the Planning Board appoints one member to a one-year term and one member to a two-year term; the Selectmen appoints one member for a two-year term and one member for a three-year term, and the Historical Commission appoints one member for a three-year term. The terms of the Alternates appointed by the Board of Selectmen are one and two years when the Board is originally established.

TOWN OF IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

How to Use These Guidelines:

These Guidelines are intended as a guide and not as a prescriptive approach to what features of a project the Design Review Board will approve or disapprove. Applicants are expected to be creative with architectural styles and materials, while complementing and responding to the surrounding architecture and landscape. A building is not an independent object in a landscape. It must work to weave itself into the surrounding built environment.

In addition to these guidelines, it is imperative that the applicant looks also to the Ipswich Town Character Statement (TCS), the Ipswich Community Development Plan (CDP) and the Ipswich Façade Improvement Program (FIP) for guidance. All three of these documents are available on the town website: www.town.ipswich.ma.us, or in the Planning office at Town Hall. Ipswich is a diverse town, with many areas of varied character. These Character Areas are described at length in the Ipswich Town Character Statement. It is expected that the applicant knows what area their project falls within, and responds to the specific character of that area.

The following 10 standards (in bold) are taken directly from the Protective Zoning Bylaw for the Town of Ipswich, Massachusetts - Special Regulations - Section K-5. The associated guidelines, developed by the DRB, are intended to provide further detail and description of these standards.

(1) Height – The height of any proposed alteration should be compatible with the style and character of the building, structure or site being altered and that of the surroundings.

Guideline:

In general, because building height has implications for density and public safety, the allowable heights of buildings are governed by zoning and building code requirements. However, the issue of building height is also a design consideration of the Planning Board and the Design Review Board as it relates to the visual quality of the Town.

At the time of this writing, there are no existing buildings in Ipswich exceeding four occupiable stories in height and most buildings are three stories or lower. Only structures such as church steeples, water towers, cell phone towers and radio towers exceed this height.

The historic prevalence of this low-rise approach to building in Ipswich contributes to the character of the Town and to its perception as a small, accessible community. Lower building heights typically foster a closer connection between building occupants and ground level activities, which is generally regarded as a positive benefit and contributes to the close-knit, social character of smaller towns.

In addition, because lower buildings cast shorter shadows, they typically allow greater penetration of sunlight to surrounding ground level areas and thus provide a pleasant and healthful amenity.

In Ipswich's downtown area, building heights which optimize site utilization are generally favored because the greater height and density contribute to the visual unity of the downtown.

Although building height is measured in stories or in feet, the visual impact of a built structure's height is also related closely to issues of *proportion* and *scale* (see Standards Two and Six on the following pages).

(2) Proportions – The proportions and relationships of height to width between windows, doors, signs and other architectural elements should be compatible with the architectural style and character of the building or structure and that of the surroundings.

Guideline:

The proportioning of a building's architectural elements is a complex and subtle interplay of parts which, when done well, contributes to the perception of a balanced and complete composition.

Observing, understanding and utilizing proportional cues from existing adjacent structures is one strategy that can increase the visual compatibility of new elements with their existing architectural context. However, both the Planning Board and the Design Review Board further encourage building owners and designers to seek proportional relationships of new architectural elements that enhance and complement the existing context and do not merely attempt to replicate it.

Successful proportions are partially a product of context, but also of suitability to purpose. As such, existing models may not provide all that is necessary for attractive and useful proportional strategies serving non-historic, new uses. Owners and designers are encouraged to recognize the unique characteristics of their projects and to thoughtfully incorporate those aspects into the way elements on the building are proportioned.

(3) Relation of Structures and Spaces – The relation of a structure to the open space between it and the adjoining structures should be compatible with such relations in the surroundings.

Intent
These guidelines are provided to assist the applicant in creating a project that preserves and enhances the quality of a harmonious relationship among the elements of the built environment and the natural environment. This sense of harmony through scale is one of the key elements in a design proposal.

1. Proportion and Scale

A. When considering scale check to assure that the size of one part of the proposal related to another part makes the whole pleasing and harmonious.

B. A sense of scale directly related to the scale of the surrounding neighborhood needs to be considered.

- Use land use maps of the neighborhood to get a feel for the relationship of buildings to open space already established including set back patterns, and natural open space to functional open space.
- Define the rhythm and pattern and how your site can create or improve a sense of balance.

C. The scale of the building needs be in relative scale and harmony with the size of the plot plan

D. The use of large and small canopy trees helps to reduce the scale from buildings to circulation spaces in transition areas such as entryways, junction points and paths

(4) Shape – The shape of roofs, windows, doors and other design elements should be compatible with the architectural style and character of a building or site and that of its surroundings.

Guideline:

Shape is important both in terms of the overall form or outline of a building as well as the shape of collective elements, such as window and door openings within the composition of the building. Equally important are the shapes created between these elements and the patterns of repeated forms. Similar to considerations of proportions, the overall shape of a building and its elements should generally relate to the surrounding context, its purpose or use, and it's individual architectural style. In short, the building composition must be true to itself and respectful of its neighbors.

As a general rule in an urban context or densely developed area, the shape of roofs (gabled, hipped. flat, etc.) should be consistent on each public façade and relate well to adjacent buildings. Buildings in more open settings are less restricted by immediate context. As with most things though, a straightforward consistent approach to building shapes is often best. Avoid combining too many different styles and shapes within a building. Many differing shapes and sizes of windows on a building façade for example can result in visual confusion. A unified architectural style should be created and used consistently for the entire building form and its elements.

Building additions and renovations should be harmonious with the original structure, in form, style and materials. The addition should not be an imitation or replica of the original. Especially with historic structures, the shape and style of the addition should be distinct yet in balance with the whole.

(5) Landscape – Any proposed landscape development or alteration should be compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Landscape and street elements, including topography, plantings and paving patterns, should provide continuity and definition to the street, pedestrian areas and surrounding landscape.

The Guidelines listed below are provided to assist the applicant in the goal of creating a cohesive and integrated site and building design plan taking into account the topics of:

A. Image and Character (of the site and area of Ipswich the site is located in)
B. Landscape and Site Treatments
    1. Preservation
    2. Ecological aspects
    3. Design aspects
    4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
    5. Parking, Service Areas and Screening
    6. Hardscape

The preservation and enhancement of landscape and site treatments can often make the difference between a successful and unsuccessful overall design approach. A well designed site can draw people, clients and customers and lend consistency, unity or compatible contrast to a street, neighborhood or area of town.

Landscaping needs to enhance the design and either strengthen or buffer the visual relationship with buildings and the surrounding area. The overall intent is not to discourage new and innovative landforms or architecture but to identify certain characteristics or elements which when used well on site contribute to the character of the area and the town.

Determine your purpose with a landscape architect or designer, and study the surrounding area. Refer to the requirements within the Ipswich zoning bylaw and apply the following Landscape Review Guidelines. They are meant to be used as a tool - a checklist of topics to consider. There is much room for creativity and individuality within these guidelines since each applicant will interpret the guidelines uniquely depending on the scale and character of each project.

A. Image and Character

1. Provide consistency between the proposed character of the site and the established character of the part of Ipswich which it is located in.

A Review the Ipswich Character Statement
B. Observe existing land patterns on & off site
C. Identify significant views both positive and negative on and off the site.

2. Illustrate an effort to create continuity or compatible contrast in light of neighboring land use patterns, both natural and built.

A Preserve site elements that already provide continuity with the neighborhood such as topography, large trees, stone walls, paving materials, other historic elements that contribute to the character and unity of the project.
B. Ensure that special features are protected from construction.
C. Propose new landscape elements such as plant species, hardscape materials and screens that aesthetically fit the nearby image.

3. Use appropriate landscape transitions to adjoining properties for continuity, attractiveness and conformance to the Town Buffering and Screening Ordinance

A. Consider softening a vegetated border screen by not creating a straight line if there is space and the area is naturalized.
B. Consider softening a fence if the image fits the area with some appropriate plantings.

4. Create, preserve and or enhance all interesting views from the outside in and the inside out.

A. If your project is located near a particular natural area, or the river consider the impact of your property in terms of view enhancement.

B. Landscape and Site Treatment

1. Preservation

A. Preserve existing site patterns, exceptional views, and topography. A new building should fit the topography not fight it.
B. Preserve existing trees when at all possible
C. Use and enhance existing drainage patterns whenever possible
D. Minimize clearing, regrading, in favor of natural and enhanced vegetation.

2. Ecological Aspects

A. Choose plants that will survive in Zone 6
B. Choose plants that will provide four season interest
C. Choose low maintenance drought resistant plants
D. When possible choose native species and habitat creating species
E. Assure that landscape beds, and mulched areas are designed for water infiltration. Use dark mulch whenever possible.
F. Select ground cover to provide erosion control, soil moisture retention, and maintenance reduction
G. If irrigation is proposed insure system is water efficient with automatic sensors.
H. Protect plants from potential damage wherever possible
I. Check the sun, wind, shade, water and soil needs of all proposed plants and place accordingly on site.

3. Design Aspects

A. Create unity and flow through repetition of landscape elements in appropriate areas
B. Design plant material to reinforce and compliment the building design by emphasizing the important lines and masses
C. Use plant material to soften and balance any awkward architectural angles or materials
D. Use new plant material to frame desirable views of the buildings or landscape
E. Utilize shrubs for:
lower level screening interest, foundation plants that complement the building architecture
F. Use canopy trees to:
filter the sun, soften architectural lines, set the landscape theme, create a focal point, or provide a space ceiling for an outdoor room.
G. Study size and spacing of plants both at planting time and projected maturity for appropriate placement.

4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

A. Provide efficient and affective circulation. Layout of parking lot spaces and circulation paths can have a significant effect on the overall impression the proposed development will have on its environment. Special attention should be given to the location and number of access points to streets, sidewalks.
B. Access from parking areas to buildings and from the site to the street needs to be carefully examined for conflicts.
C. Pathways, walkways, linkages and entryways should complement the site.

5. Parking

A. Treat parking as an accessory to the building by minimizing it's visability with landscaping and a secondary location such as the back of the building when possible.
B. Us e appropriate screening at least 3 feet high when parking cannot be located behind the building.
C. Provide landscaping to the interior of parking lots . Incorporate existing trees, berms, landforms whenever possible.
D. Use shade trees whenever possible to reduce the void open scale of parking areas and create scale transitions to the building.
E. Consider going beyond the zoning requirement to beatify parking and bring it to the pedestrian scale.
F. Use landscaped bays with shrubs and trees to define the space and create a more friendly pedestrian scale.
G. When choosing llight fixtures in parking areas consider the character of the area of Ipswich and direct light downward.

6. Service Areas and Screening

A. Plants combined with berming can hide service areas and parking. Fit service areas, trash dumpsters, loading docks into the overall project so that they disappear using screens, and setbacks.
B. Use coniferous plants when screening for year round effect.
C. When using building materials to complete screening needs choose carefully with strong consideration to historic materials where appropriate or materials that are in character with the building and area.

7. Hardscape

A. Landscape improvements increase amenities such as street furniture, art work, fences, stonewalls, fountains, courtyards, and driveways. The materials used need to provide site cohesiveness as well as some indication of New England character or compatability with the area of the site. Wood picket fences, iron fences, stone walls are encouraged. Stockade, concrete walls, chain link fences and excessive amounts of asphalt are not encouraged.

B. Keep it simple. It is generally more desirable to use fewer differing materials repeated in a cohesive manner.

(6) Scale – The scale of a structure or landscape alteration should be compatible with its architectural or landscapes design style and character and that of the surroundings. The scale of ground-level design elements such as building entryways, windows, porches, plaza, parks, pedestrian furniture, plantings and other street and site elements should be determined by and directed toward the use, comprehension and enjoyment of pedestrians.

Guideline:

Arguably the most important aspect of reviewing a new building or addition is to look at the overall scale, shape and placement fit in with the surrounding environment. Scale is important in two ways; first, in terms of the building context, or how well the building as a whole relates to its surroundings. Secondly, the scale of the individual elements of the building façade (window and door openings, bays, gables, cornices etc.) should fit that particular building. Both are closely related to issues of proportion, shape, and exterior finish and detail.

Urban commercial buildings should respect the height and scale of surrounding buildings, cornices, stories, window openings, etc. Facades can often be subdivided into smaller parts to identify the various functions of the building such as street level commercial uses, individual tenant uses, and upper level business or residential uses.

Buildings in rural or less dense commercial settings should also respect the scale of surrounding structures. The order and pattern of buildings through a similarity of scale, height, shape and rooflines helps them relate like members of a family.

(7) Directional Expression – Building facades and other architectural and landscape design elements should be compatible with those of others in the surrounding area with regard to the dominant vertical or horizontal expression or direction related to use and historical or cultural character as appropriate.

Guideline:

Although the exterior design of some buildings is directionally neutral or might rely on free-form, diagonal or curved geometries, most buildings tend to have a dominant directional expression which is either horizontal or vertical.

A building's relation to its site or nearby buildings, its massing, it's roof line, the arrangement of openings, the emphasis placed on certain architectural features, and even the way materials are used can all contribute to the sense that a building or a group of buildings tends to be mostly horizontal or mostly vertical in appearance.

Certain architectural styles carry with them a strong directional expression. The emphasis placed on elements such as porch posts, pilasters, corner boards, cornices, eaves, or trim elements create the directional expression. For example, Victorian and Queen Anne styles tend to be more vertical, whereas Prairie Style places a strong emphasis on horizontality.

Similarly, certain materials tend to carry an emphasis: brick and clapboards typically appear horizontal while tongue-and-groove cedar siding is usually installed vertically.

Thoughtfully used, a building's directional expression can be used to blend new buildings with existing context or to establish a contrast that emphasizes a special aspect of the building's use (for example, the extreme verticality of a steeple on a church sets it apart from other buildings and symbolizes a special use).

When designing renovations or new buildings, owners and designers should carefully analyze the existing context, the building's purpose and the principal components to help in the selection of a directional expression that contributes positively to the architectural intent of the project.

(8) Architectural and Site Details – Architectural and site details including signs, lighting, pedestrian furniture, planting and paving, along with materials, colors, textures and grade should be treated so as to be compatible with the original architectural and landscape design style of the structure or site and to preserve and enhance the character of the surrounding area. In the downtown business districts, these details should blend with their surroundings to create a diverse, functional and unified streetscape.

Guideline:

As important as it is to achieve compatibility of height, shape, scale and proportion, it is equally important that new development interacts with the surrounding environment at a more intimate level; In other words, in the design of the details.

Because the built environment in Ipswich spans so many centuries, the need for details, which enable the differing structures to tie together cohesively, is perhaps even more pronounced. One need only take a stroll down Market Street to understand how the signs, lighting, materials, plantings, etc. all play a critical role in weaving together this eclectic gathering of structures.

This is not to say that the buildings should all have the same signage, or be constructed of the same material. What the Design Review Board hopes to promote is a thoughtful balance between invention and compatibility, thus strengthening the town's existing historic yet diverse character.

Signs-
The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of signs should be in harmony with significant architectural features of existing and proposed buildings and structures and with surrounding properties. (Guideline 9 describes the design criteria of signs in further detail.)

Lighting-
Building lighting should highlight the building rather than attract attention to the light fixture itself, and be appropriate to the building's architectural style. Avoid lighting fixtures that are historically inappropriate for the building type and scale.

The primary purpose of lighting should be to provide security and safety at night, once these requirements are met, typically less is more. Avoid lights that glare onto streets, public ways, or onto adjacent properties.

Pedestrian furniture-
Pedestrian furniture, artwork, fences, stonewalls and fountains can be valuable assets to a building if thoughtfully integrated into the landscape. The addition of

these elements should be thought of as extensions of the building, harmoniously integrated in style and material with the building.

Planting and Paving-
Plantings should be used to enhance the design and to either strengthen or buffer the visual relationship with surrounding areas. Provide plantings, planters and flower boxes to visually break up paved areas and to enhance an ordinary façade. Do not, however, obstruct pedestrian sidewalk traffic.

Paved areas such as pedestrian walkways should be thoughtfully integrated into the landscape. Choose durable and attractive materials such as brick, slate, stone and textured concrete. Avoid asphalt. Try to connect walkways and continue pavement types to connect and complement adjoining sites.

Materials-
Materials should be suitable to the style of the building, in harmony with adjacent buildings, and of durable quality. Durable materials and high quality craftsmanship is the best investment an owner can make.

Common materials in downtown Ipswich are wood, brick and stone. The use of materials that are traditional and historically typical to Ipswich is encouraged.

Materials should be chosen carefully, and it is generally more desirable to use as few differing materials as possible. Consistent use of a dominant building material for the “skin” of a building is encouraged.

Color-
Choose colors that are suitable to the style of the building and in harmony with adjacent buildings. Victorian styles used many colors, generally with a dark body and decorative trim. The colonial style used lighter colors with lighter trim. Generally, muted tones and colors are appropriate for most building facades except for trim and special storefront elements.

Texture and Grade-
Texture and grade can be key elements when integrating a building into it’s surrounding landscape. Subtle grade changes that soften the interaction between building and site, as well as textures that relate to the surrounding landscape, can help to nestle a building into it’s site.

See also:
Signs – page 37,38 (FIP); page 40-44 (Zoning Bylaw)
Lighting – page 34 (FIP); page 87 (Zoning Bylaw)
Materials – page 27,28 (FIP)

(9) Signs – The design of signs should reflect the scale and character of the structure or site. Signs should simply and clearly identify individual establishments, buildings, locations and uses, while remaining subordinate to the architecture and larger streetscape. The choice of materials, color, size, method of illumination and character of symbolic representation on signs should be compatible with the architectural or landscape design style of the structure or site.

1. Compatibility with surroundings.

Throughout Ipswich's commercial areas, signs play a major role in creating either a positive or negative visual image for the Town. Signs should make a positive contribution to the general appearance of the street and commercial area in which they are located. A well-designed sign can be a major asset to a building. The Town encourages high quality, imaginative and innovative sign design.

a. **Proportional size and scale.** The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and the area in which they are located. The size and shape of a sign should be proportional with the scale of the structure. Small storefronts should have smaller signs than larger storefronts.

b. **Integrate signs with the building.** Signs should be designed so that they are integrated with the design of the building. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design, and a coordinated color scheme. Signs in multiple tenant buildings should be designed to complement or enhance the other signs in the building.

c. **Sign placement.** Wall signs should be placed to establish facade rhythm, scale, and proportion. On buildings that have a monolithic or plain facade, signs can be placed to establish or continue appropriate design rhythm, scale, and proportion.

d. **Pedestrian-oriented signs are encouraged.** It is desirable and encouraged to include a pedestrian-oriented sign as one of the permitted signs for a business. Pedestrian-oriented signs are signs that are designed for and directed toward pedestrians so that they can easily and comfortably read the sign as they stand adjacent to the business.

2. Color and Materials

a. **Selecting colors.** Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication it can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings. Colors should be selected to contribute to legibility and design integrity. Even the most carefully thought out sign may be unattractive and a

poor communicator because of poor color selection. Too many colors used thoughtlessly can confuse the reader and negate the message of a sign.

b. **Use contrasting colors.** Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast should be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background or dark letters on a light background are most legible. Light letters on a dark background work best for both day and night time use.

c. **Avoid using too many colors.** Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs should be avoided. Small accents of several colors may make a sign unique and attractive, but the competition of large areas of many different colors often decreases readability.

d. **Use complementary colors.** Sign colors should complement the colors used on the adjacent buildings and the project as a whole.

e. **Compatibility of materials.** Sign materials should be compatible with the design of the facade on which they are placed. Consider the architectural design of the building's facade and select materials that complement the design. The selected materials should also contribute to the legibility of the sign.

3. Sign legibility.

a. **Use a brief message.** A brief message should be used whenever possible. A sign with a brief, succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive because it is less cluttered. Evaluate each word. If the word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it probably detracts from it and should be deleted.

b. **Space letters and words carefully.** Letters and words should not be spaced too closely. Crowding of letters, words, or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75 percent of sign panel area.

c. **Use symbols and logos.** Symbols and logos can be used in place of words whenever appropriate. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message. And, they can be an expression of the owner's creativity.

d. **Limit the number of letter styles.** The number of lettering styles that are used on a sign should be limited in order to increase legibility. As a

general rule, limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs. Intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate. In other words, keep it simple

4. Sign illumination.

a. **Use a projected light source.** If the sign can be illuminated by a projected light (e.g., spotlight), this is usually the best arrangement because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the sign cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the building's face as well. Projected lighting emphasizes the continuity of the structure's surface and signs become an integral part of the facade.

b. **Use small light fixtures.** The use of small, unobtrusive fixtures for external (projection) lighting is encouraged. Avoid the use of oversized fixtures that are out of scale with the sign and structure.

c. **Internal illumination.** Individually illuminated letters, either internally illuminated or back-lighted solid letters (reverse channel) are a preferred alternative to internally illuminated plastic cabinet signs. Signs comprised of individual letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's facade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.

Note:
The sign design guidelines are designed to help ensure quality signs that communicate their message in a clear fashion; however, the "guidelines" are not as strict as sign "standards." The review authority may interpret the design guidelines with some flexibility in their application to specific signs/projects, as not all design criteria may be workable or appropriate for each sign or project. In some circumstances, one guideline may be relaxed to facilitate compliance with another guideline determined by the review authority to be more important in the particular case. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of the design guidelines are followed.

(10) Garages and Accessory Buildings – Garages and accessory buildings should be sensitively integrated into the overall development, and should not be the predominant design feature when viewed from the street.

Guideline:

Accessory buildings are defined as “any structure other than the principal building on a lot.” Some examples of accessory structures are garages, sheds, carports, barns, farmstands and greenhouses.

While accessory structures are usually a secondary use on the site, they have architectural impact like all other buildings, and thus, should conform to the other standards and guidelines described in this document. (Refer to Standards 1 through 8.) Because they too contribute to the architectural image of the town, they should adhere to good design principles.

Garages and accessory buildings should be integrated into the design in a way that does not overwhelm the primary use or building on the site. They should respect and be compatible with existing design, height and siting patterns, as well as be in a harmonious architectural style with the main building.

In terms of the streetscape, accessory structures should be integrated into the whole. Think of each building as more than a separate structure; it is part of the environment. Garage doors should not be visible from the street. New construction should ensure that garage doors are located either on the back or sides of the building. A garage door can overwhelm the façade and break up the streetscape.

In general, accessory structures should not be taller than or have more mass than the primary structure, although there may be exceptions.*

Parking areas should be treated as an accessory to the building. The placement of the parking area should reflect its secondary nature; parking should be behind or to the side of the building and its visibility minimized by appropriate landscaping. The use of setbacks, screens, plantings and fencing are typical ways to make features “disappear” into the overall sight. (See Standard #5 – Landscape.)

*In a more traditional or historic downtown, neighborhood or farm community, such as Ipswich, accessory structures may actually be larger or taller than the primary buildings. Examples of this can be seen along Summer Street - a mainly residential street with a commercial history, in which some of the accessory structures are larger and taller than the homes along the street.

TOWN OF IPSWICH

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APPENDIX A – DESIGN REVIEW BOARD APPLICATION

In accordance with Section IX of the Ipswich Zoning By-Laws, the Ipswich Design Review Board (IDRB) shall review applications for projects that are subject to the provisions of Section K - Design Review.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to distribute eight (8) copies of the plans that require design review to the members of the DRB. For convenience, the applicant may submit this application with plans to the Ipswich Planning Office.

1. Applicant Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone/Email: _____

2. Project Information:

Name of Project: _____

Project Location: _____

Architect/Designer/Engineer: _____

3. Description of Project:

Briefly describe the use of the building:

_____

_____

Briefly describe the nature of construction work:

_____

_____

_____

4. Required documentation checklist:

- ❑ Color photographs showing existing buildings and site conditions on and adjacent to the proposed project area;
- ❑ Building elevations showing the proposed configuration, building materials and colors, and adjacent site/building conditions;
- ❑ Plans showing the footprint and relationships of structures, including relationship to structures on contiguous lots, exterior circulation and points of entry;
- ❑ Full lot and building section, including relationship of building height and street width;
- ❑ Other plans, including landscaping, renderings, models and detailed drawings, which may be necessary to demonstrate what design attributes are being addressed.

Plans are to be to scale and no smaller than fifty (50) feet to the inch. The Design Review Board may waive any and all of the requirements for design submittal and review.

5. Received By: _____ **Date:**_____

DESIGN REVIEW COMMENTS: