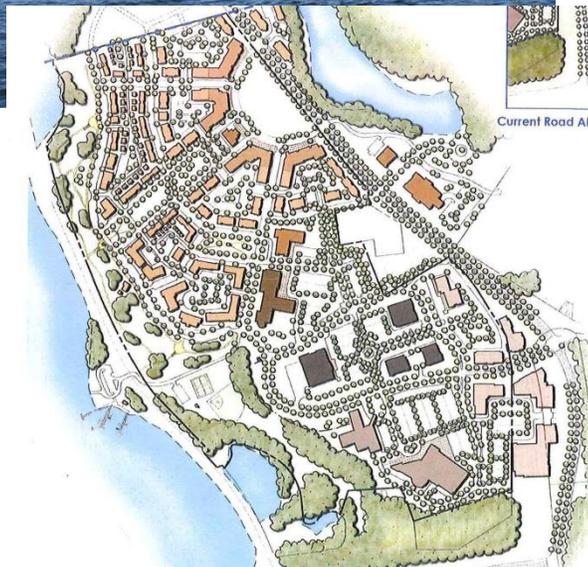


Thames River District Design Guidelines

Prepared by the Preston Planning and Zoning Commission



Adopted July 2013

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Purpose

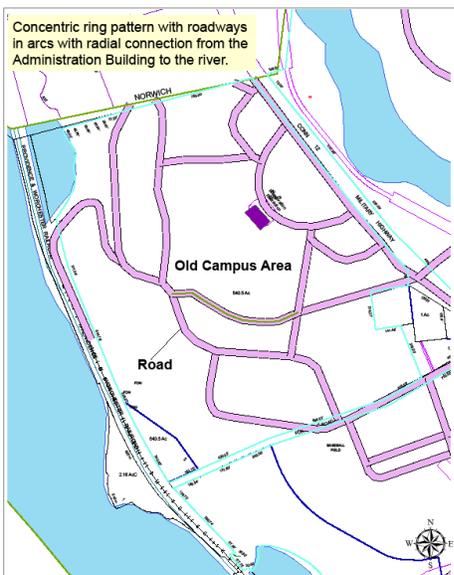
The purpose of these design guidelines is to promote a mixed use development that will have high-quality design that will complement the natural setting of Thames River District. This document is intended to address the complexity and diversity of Community design values in a format that can be easily understood, and consistently interpreted and administered.

Background

The Town of Preston acquired a portion of the Norwich Hospital Site in 2009 from the State of Connecticut in order to redevelop the property that is now defined as Preston Riverwalk. The site, which was a National Historic Register District, is 393 acres and at one time contained nearly sixty buildings. The “Old Campus”, located north of Fort Point Road and east of Route 12 had the most historic buildings dating back to the early 1900s. The buildings were brick with slate gable roofs primarily of the Late Gothic Revival or the Colonial Revival. The former Administration Building is the centerpiece or natural focal point of the Old Campus. It is three and one-half stories, elaborately detailed.



With the Administration Building as the center, the site was previously developed in a concentric ring pattern with roadways in arcs with a radial connection from the Administration Building to the river. The



“Plan of Conservation and Development for Preston Riverwalk” prepared by Fuss & O’Neill, recommends that this concentric pattern of roads be maintained because it would allow the mature trees to remain and the roadways match the viewpoints from the site which resulted from a response to the natural fabric of the property. It is the town’s intent to try to maintain the character of the site, its natural beauty and to reconstruct buildings to complement the concentric road pattern. Lastly, it is the town’s intent that new buildings reflect the level of architectural integrity and/or quality of the former buildings on the “old campus”, whether the building be historic replications or contemporary design.

The Thames River District includes the Preston Riverwalk property which extends beyond the Old Campus area to the more contemporary campus area. The zone also includes

parcels that are not part of the Preston Riverwalk project area. These parcels vary from being wooded to residential use. Consistency of design concepts for all parcels within the area is critical if we are to create a cohesive, sustainable and livable community.

The need to understand how to develop the District, considering its natural and beneficial manmade features, is difficult given the diversity of interests. These *Design Guidelines*, which coordinate with the Thames River District zoning regulations, provide guidance to a developer and the critical assistance to the PZC in their deliberations regarding development projects. The PZC has attempted to develop flexible and creative regulations, that when used with these Guidelines, will encourage harmonious and cohesive design complementing the natural and/or historic layout of the property.

Guideline Goals

These Guidelines will:

- Assist with providing consistency and harmonious design within the Thames River District.
- Facilitate innovative and creative building designs that promote energy efficient buildings.
- Provide direction for a developer/investor as to the style and integrity of building designs and thereby resulting in a more complete submission and improved design review process.
- Ensure that various applications are judged according to consistent criteria, thereby protecting not only the town's interest, but the developer's investment as well.

These Guidelines have been prepared in conjunction with the Thames River District. However, they are only recommendations that illustrate the concept of what the PZC and community desires for the district.



Building Design Guidelines

Building Mass and Design

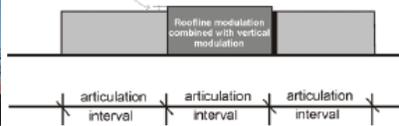
Building mass is defined as the physical volume bulk of a structure and can be measured by height and foot print of the building. It is an important factor that affects functional and visual compatibility between adjacent neighborhoods and/or commercial development. Building design is how the structure complements the natural environment and the transitions to adjacent buildings, streets and open space, pedestrian or public corridors.

1. Buildings should be comparable in height and mass with the surrounding buildings. The mass of a larger building should step down near smaller buildings and may use varied roof forms and façade planes to reduce the size difference. The large building may appear to be smaller using varied façade planes.



Varied façade planes not only add interest to large buildings, they reduce the large appearance of a building.

A mass of larger buildings should step down near smaller buildings



2. Design of structures and individual property areas should consider and complement the natural resources on the site, such as the Thames River, the cove areas and other significant resources that define the landscape. Protecting viewing and greenway corridors and creating complementary transitional areas between developments and natural resources will be a critical component for the overall property development. See the overall conceptual plan for example.

3. Buildings should be arranged in a manner to create a sense of defined space as shown in the illustrations, whereas, buildings, spaces, pedestrian amenities all create a New England style setting.



Buildings creating a sense of defined space and with compatible architectural styles.

4. Buildings should be setback from the street to create a prominent line of building massing along the street or internal driveway system. See the overall conceptual plan for example.

5. Buildings should have similar compatible architectural styles, materials, and detailing that reflect historic styles of the former Administration building (i.e. Colonial Revival, Late Gothic Revival, and other New England styles or may be contemporary) and should be at a scale that complements the site and surrounding area.

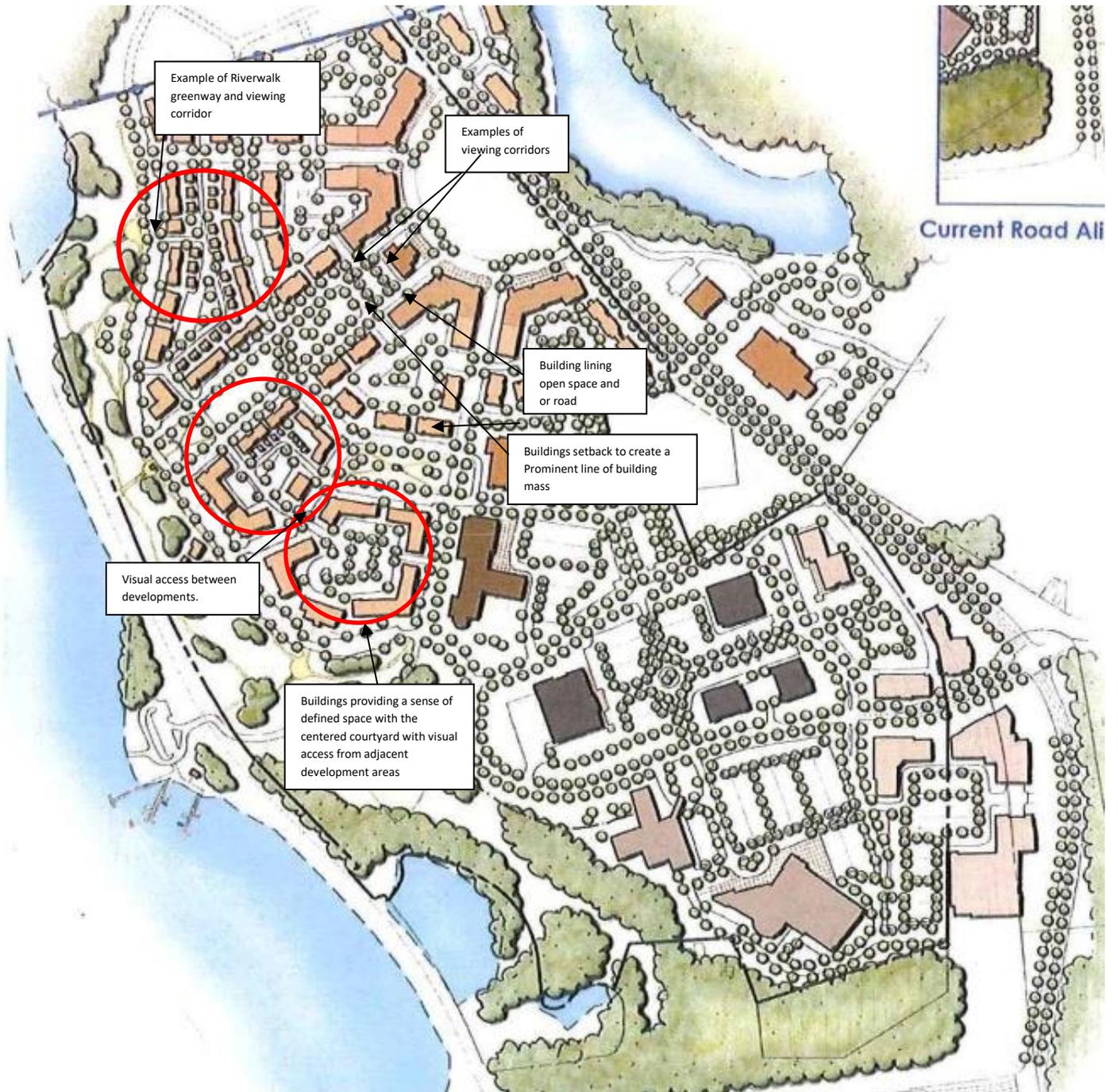


6. Buildings should be designed to create a sensible human scale through articulation, modulation, and detail. The appearance of large buildings can be designed to reduce the appearance of its scale by adding visual interest and contribute to pedestrian environment.



This building has visual interest with windows, awnings, roofline, etc.

Conceptual Plan



Preston Riverwalk concept plan taken from the *Preston Riverwalk Plan of Conservation and Development*

Pedestrian-Friendliness

Pedestrian-friendliness is the quality of a built environment that attracts foot traffic and fosters a sense of place, safety, and well-being for its user.

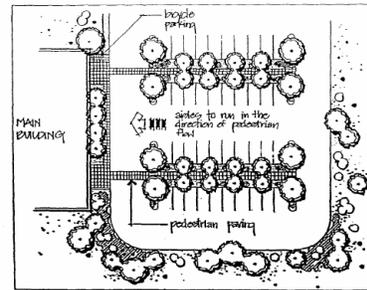


1. Buildings can frame public spaces, such as parks, open spaces, pedestrian plazas, courtyards, and streetscapes providing a sense of place.



2. Buildings should engage and define the street or interior road network with landscaping, pedestrian walkways, and street furnishings to allow safe and comfortable movement of pedestrians.

3. Building setback to the street or interior road network should be minimized. Parking should not be located to the front of the buildings. Parking should be segmented and landscaped and direct pedestrians in a safe manner. Pedestrian connections should be made to adjacent developments, open space, parks, plazas, etc.



Parking is landscaped and directs pedestrians in a safe manner (above). Buildings relate to the street line with an active and unified street environment (below).

4. All buildings should relate to street or private roadway frontage through landscaping, pedestrian access and other public spaces. Commercial buildings are encouraged to create an active street environment and unified streetscape that encourages pedestrian activities; including pedestrian seating, moveable tables, planters, pedestrian-scaled light fixtures (not more than 16' tall), artwork, decorative paving, waste receptacles, bicycle racks, and other street furnishings.



The ground level of this building is detailed to enhance its appearance at street level.

5. Pedestrian-scaled architectural detailing will enhance the appearance of a building at the street level and are generally positioned on the first two floors. They can include knee walls, cornices, detailed windows, door treatments, and/or wall mounted lighting fixtures.



Visual Attractiveness

Many architectural design aspects combine to create visual attractiveness. A building's attractiveness may be judged from several perspectives, from the vehicular realm at a distance to the pedestrian realm. Buildings should have:

1. Architectural Composition is the organization of the design components. The visual flow of the surface material should tie together the building as a whole. Buildings should avoid radical breaks in the elevations and massing that reduces connectivity of building components. Symmetry and balance is important to project design. Symmetry is when the building sides are matched in size and fenestration layout is about at center point creating visual harmony. Balance is when buildings that are not symmetrical but massed to create visual balance.



Symmetry sides are matched with a center point. This also illustrates the concept of base, middle and cap with a prominent entrance.

2. Building Base, middle and cap – this provides a pedestrian element by separating a structure into the three sections. A building base is the foundation of the building and should have a heavier appearance and makes firm contact with the earth. The cap is the roofline – where it meets the sky. Varied rooflines add interest and detail. Building roof forms should appear integral to the building's design. Middle is the body of the building and connects the base to the cap and typically appears repetitive from floor to floor. Rooftop mechanicals should be completely screened.

3. Materials: the choice of material and textures has great visual significance and adds to the long term appearance and maintenance of the built environment. Materials should be high quality and long lasting that offer texture and avoid monotonous surfaces. Material use can be broken down into two separate classifications – primary material, dominant material and makes up about 75% to 90% of the exterior building face; accent material provides architectural interest and makes up about 10% to 25% of the building face.



Quality material is critical when designing a building, as shown on these brick building with wood/concrete and window accents. The awnings also add interest to building, as shown below.

4. Materials that may be used are as follows:

- a. Brick and stone are preferred materials.
- b. Glass may be used as a primary exterior building material on those lots not located on the former Preston Riverwalk campus.
- c. Cast-in-place concrete may be appropriate for secondary facades if sufficient detail is provided.
- d. Concrete masonry units may be acceptable as an accent.
- e. Wood
- f. Stucco
- g. EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems) or Dryvit (outsulation system) is not an acceptable material, as it is not consistent with New England design.



- h. Other as deemed appropriate by the Commission and provided the material accomplishes the overall design standards, such as AZEK (composite material used to replace wood trim).

5. Color scheme will unify the building image. It is important to coordinate a palette of colors. Primary and accent color use should be compatible with adjacent buildings.



Although these are separate buildings their color scheme complements each other.

6. Signage should be well placed and be appropriately sized. Signs can play a significant role within the district. Signs need to be properly scaled and compatible with the building design. Multi tenant buildings should have signs that complement or enhance each other. Customer entrances should be identified with pedestrian-oriented signs. Signage should be incorporated into the building architecture.



- a. Signage material and style: Signs should be weather retardant and high-quality durable materials. If wood is to be used, it should be properly sealed to prevent moisture from soaking into the wood.
- b. Awnings may be used for signage, provided the shape, color, and design of awnings are coordinated with other businesses and signs.
- c. Decorative overhanging signs are acceptable especially for pedestrian areas.



7. Secondary building faces – blank, massive faces are to be avoided and should include massing variation and façade details consistent with the primary faces of the building.



Secondary façade needs to include details and variation

8. Service areas should be screened from public view.

Sustainable Design



Sustainable design encourages strategies that minimize the impact on ecosystems and water resources, promotes smarter use of water, inside and out, to reduce potable water consumption, promotes better building energy performance through innovative strategies, encourages the use of sustainable building materials and reducing waste, promotes better indoor air quality and access to daylight and views, promotes walkable neighborhoods with efficient transportation options and open space, emphasizing compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods with good connections to nearby communities, reducing the environmental consequences of the construction and operation of buildings and infrastructure.

Please refer to information from the U.S. Green Building Council for information about sustainable building and site design - www.usgbc.org

Landscaping and Exterior Design

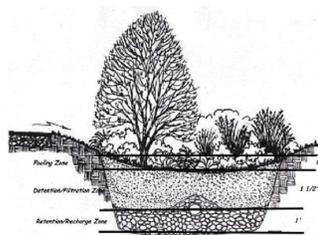
1. Landscape materials must be tolerant to our local climate, soils, natural water availability. Where appropriate, indigenous materials are preferred.



2. Encourage the utilization of natural drainage approaches, such as rain gardens, swales and vegetated filter strips.



Rain garden is a great alternative to structural drainage



Rain garden design



Drainage swales is another alternative to structural drainage

3. Landscaping should be scaled to complement the pedestrian components of the project.



Additional Examples



Development should complement the natural resources on the site, such as the Thames River, the cove areas and other significant resources that define the landscape. Protecting viewing and greenway corridors and creating public opens space areas transitional area between developments and natural resources will be a critical component for the overall property development.



This illustrates the interconnection of the structures within a development using pedestrian walkways. It also illustrates compatible building design.



New England character architecture with pedestrian elements



Lighting within pedestrian areas should be of pedestrian scale