

A row of diverse residential houses in a suburban neighborhood. The houses vary in color and style, including a white house with a porch, a light blue house with a porch, and a brown house with a porch. There are trees and a stop sign in the foreground.

Village of Newburgh Heights

June 2001

A brick commercial building with a storefront and signs. The building is made of red brick and has a green awning over the entrance. There are signs on the building, including one for "LIFE" and another for "LIFE". A white van is parked in front of the building.

Residential and Commercial Design Guidelines

Village of Newburgh Heights Residential and Commercial Design Guidelines

June, 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Design guidelines are architectural standards for residential and commercial building alterations and new construction. The guidelines serve a two-fold purpose: 1) they ensure that the architectural integrity of existing structures is maintained, 2) they ensure that the design elements of proposed alteration or construction projects are compatible with the existing building styles in the surrounding neighborhood.

Newburgh Heights' design guidelines will be used as a set of standards by the Village's Architectural Review Board (ARB) in their consideration of applications submitted from the public to alter or construct a residential or commercial building. Use of the guidelines by the ARB will ensure that decisions are based on a clear set of standards, and not influenced by the preferences of Board members. The guidelines also serve as a resource for residential and commercial property owners in helping them to preserve and maintain their property. As one of the oldest communities in Cuyahoga County, Newburgh Heights' homes possess architectural features that are of historic and aesthetic significance. It has been demonstrated in communities across the country that preservation of historic features and better coordination of neighborhood architecture through tools such as design guidelines helps to maintain property values, and can enhance community identity and pride.

The Newburgh Heights design guidelines have been divided into two sections: residential and commercial. The first section on residential guidelines will cover architectural styles in Newburgh Heights, and will then present information on the maintenance of different architectural elements of existing residential properties. The guidelines will then cover the topic of new residential construction. The second section, which covers commercial guidelines, will focus on recommendations for Harvard Avenue commercial and industrial properties.

RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

Predominant Architectural Styles Of Newburgh Heights Homes

Table 1 summarizes some of the important structural and architectural characteristics of Newburgh Heights' residential buildings. The Village is largely comprised of single-family (64%) and two-family (35%) homes. The most common exterior material found in Newburgh Heights homes is aluminum or vinyl siding (61%), followed by wood (23%) and brick (12%).

Just over 80% of Newburgh Heights' existing housing stock was constructed prior to 1940—largely between the years 1910 and 1929. This is significant because the post-WWII era signifies the beginning of a new period in American architectural history. While the first half of the twentieth century is characterized, in large part, by revivals of traditional European and Colonial American architectural styles, the 1950's and 1960's witnessed the emergence of new styles such as the ranch and the split-level. In the 1970's and 1980's, another contemporary style emerged, where individual houses were characterized by the adaptation of a combination of historical details to more current construction methods and materials. Following are descriptions of the most common residential architectural styles found in Newburgh Heights.

Table 1
Newburgh Heights Residential Building Characteristics

Year Built	Number of Buildings	%
1909 or Earlier	38	4.9%
1910-1919	294	37.7%
1920-1929	320	41.1%
1930-1939	20	2.6%
1940-1959	70	9.0%
1960-1979	32	4.1%
1980-1989	0	0.0%
1990-1997	1	0.1%
Unknown	4	0.5%
Total	779	100.0%
NUMBER OF STORIES		
1	68	8.7%
1.5	187	24.0%
2	519	66.6%
Unknown	5	0.6%
Total	779	100.0%
EXTERIOR WALL MATERIAL		
Wood	179	23.0%
Wood/Brick	9	1.2%
Brick	90	11.6%
Aluminum/Vinyl	473	60.7%
Asbestos Shingle	17	2.2%
Composition Siding	2	0.3%
Stucco	1	0.1%
Other	1	0.1%
Unknown	7	0.9%
Total	779	100.0%
TYPE OF STRUCTURE		
Single-Family	502	64.4%
Two-Family	261	33.5%
Three-Family	15	1.9%
Other	1	0.1%
Total	779	100.0%
ROOF MATERIAL		
Asphalt	754	96.8%
Slate	17	2.2%
Wood Shake	1	0.1%
Composition	1	0.1%
Not Known	6	0.8%
Total	779	100.0%

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office



Vernacular Double ("duplex")

Vernacular Double ("duplex")

The style of double home found in Newburgh Heights is similar to that found throughout Cleveland and its older, inner-ring suburbs. Ninety-seven percent of Newburgh Heights' doubles were built prior to 1940. The original characteristics of the vernacular double in Newburgh Heights include:

- ✓ Vertical orientation of the housing units, with one above the other, as opposed to a side-by-side orientation.
- ✓ Identical floor plan in each unit.
- ✓ Identical window placement on first and second story.
- ✓ Front-facing gabled main roof.
- ✓ Front porches that span the full width of the front of the house on both the first and second floor
- ✓ Closed, clapboard railings on porches or baluster railings

- ✓ Second floor porch covered by a low-pitched, front-facing gabled roof

The most common exterior alteration to duplex homes in Newburgh Heights is made to the front porch. Examples of typical alterations include: enclosure of front porch, removal of front porch, alteration of pillars or railings, or alteration of second-floor porch roof.

Bungalow

Bungalows were popularized in the U.S. during the first three decades of the twentieth century—although certain prominent elements of the bungalow style are also evident in many post-WWII homes. The most common characteristics of bungalows include:

- ✓ one and one-half story height
- ✓ sweeping, low-pitched gabled roof with overhanging eaves; gable can be front-facing or side-facing
- ✓ full- or half-width front porch, commonly sheltered by extension of main roof structure if gable is side-facing
- ✓ square-shaped wooden or brick support columns on front porch
- ✓ second-floor dormer windows



Bungalow



American Foursquare

American Foursquare

Foursquare style houses were built primarily between 1900 and 1925. They are easily recognized by the following characteristics:

- ✓ two full stories with almost square dimensions
- ✓ symmetrical placement of windows on front facade
- ✓ front entrance typically located in center of house, although sometimes can be off-center
- ✓ low-pitched, pyramidal roof
- ✓ front porch which can span either full- or partial-width of house (full-width is more common)
- ✓ dormers with hipped roofs

Romantic Revival

Although sometimes more difficult to distinguish, romantic revival homes, built predominantly during the first half of the twentieth century, are a common fixture in the architectural landscape of Newburgh Heights and other communities in the region. Distinguishing characteristics of romantic revival homes include:

*Romantic Revival*

- ✓ cross-gabled roof
- ✓ exterior material usually consisting of brick, stone, or masonry veneer on a wood frame
- ✓ diversity in window type—for example the front facade of a house may have a casement window, a double-hung window, and a rounded-arch window
- ✓ stone or brick pattern detailing around windows and doors

*Homestead*

Homestead

Most homestead houses were built in the early 1900's. The typical style of the homestead house, built in the early twentieth century or later, is the result of an architectural evolution which traces its roots back to colonial homes of the 1700's. Characteristics of the twentieth century homestead house include:

- ✓ two-and-a-half story height
- ✓ rectangular floor plan
- ✓ front-gabled roof
- ✓ minimal amount of exterior detailing
- ✓ front porch which is typically full-width

Post-WWII

In Newburgh Heights, the most common post-WWII homes are the ranch, the “contemporary” style referred to earlier, which consists of a mixture of historical architectural elements, and a style modeled after traditional New England Cape Cod houses.

Ranch

Newburgh Heights ranch homes are easily identified by the following characteristics:

- ✓ one-story height
- ✓ almost square dimensions
- ✓ low-pitched, pyramidal roof

Contemporary

Contemporary, post-WWII homes are more difficult to classify because they might display a mixture of architectural features. Some common possible attributes of the contemporary post-WWII style include:

- ✓ two-story height
- ✓ no front porch
- ✓ aluminum or vinyl siding exterior, which can span the entire house, or is commonly combined with brick covering the first story of the home.

Cape Cod, built after WWII

Based upon the traditional New England Cape Cod style, the contemporary “suburban” Cape Cod found throughout Newburgh Heights and other communities in the area is identified by the following characteristics:

- ✓ one-and-a-half story height
- ✓ cross-gabled roof, with gable flush to left or right side of house
- ✓ first floor window configuration of picture window and double-hung window flanking front entrance

Preservation and Alterations

Exterior Material

Siding

If possible, retain and preserve the home’s original siding. Deteriorated siding materials should be repaired or replaced with materials similar to those used in the original construction of the home. Covering traditional siding materials such as wood and brick with synthetic siding materials such as aluminum or vinyl siding, asbestos or asphalt shingles, or artificial stone and brick veneer is strongly discouraged. Aesthetically, installation of artificial siding on older homes (pre-World War II) almost always results in a loss of architectural detail—a process which alters the style and historic character of the house. Additionally, artificial siding can promote the deterioration of the original material it covers, as the impermeability of synthetic materials traps moisture and does not allow for circulation of air beneath.



Post-World War II Ranch



Post-World War II Contemporary



Post-World War II Cape Cod



Exposed window frames

Artificial siding can be removed, and original wood siding restored. In the case of homes installed with vinyl or aluminum siding, the most common types of artificial siding found in Newburgh Heights, the condition of the original wood siding underneath is dependent upon many factors, including the quality of the new siding materials used and utilization of proper installation procedures.

Should it be determined that installation of artificial siding is necessary, siding which most closely imitates the appearance of the original siding

should be chosen. Vinyl siding with wood-grained pattern is not appropriate, as real wood siding has a smooth finish. Siding should not cover the wood frame bordering windows or doors, nor should it cover any other original architectural detailing of the exterior of the home as these are important architectural features.

Existing homes which have already been sided with artificial materials should be properly maintained. Siding should be washed, and any deteriorated or damaged portions should be replaced immediately. Artificial siding, particularly aluminum, will eventually need to be painted and this process will increase the maintenance responsibilities associated with the material.

Masonry

Stone and brick are among the most durable of building materials, but they are also susceptible to certain wearing effects with age. The natural color of the stone or brick can fade slightly, and soot and dirt can accumulate on their surfaces. The fading process is viewed by many to be a beautification process which results in improved harmonization between the colors of the buildings and the surrounding natural environment.

If soot and dirt have accumulated on the surface of the stone or brick, wash with low-pressure water, mild detergents, and soft-bristled brushes. Never clean by blasting, as this process can seriously erode the protective, hard outer surface of the masonry material and accelerate its deterioration. Additionally, the blasting process leaves behind a roughened surface which accumulates dirt and pollutants much faster than the original surface.

Stone and brick should not be painted, as the resulting surface is neither as attractive nor as durable as the original, unpainted version. Once masonry has been painted, it is very difficult to restore it to its original appearance. Painting masonry transforms a durable, attractive, low-maintenance surface into a less durable, less attractive, high-maintenance surface.

At some point, the mortar between bricks and other masonry material may require repair. Areas where the mortar has cracked or is missing should be repointed. In choosing the proper mortar to use for repointing, select mortar which matches the color of the original. Prepare samples of the mortar and allow them to dry to ensure that they match the original color. Additionally, choosing a mortar with the correct ingredient composition is crucial. Replacement mortar should be softer than

the bricks, and no harder than the original mortar. Mortar is not an adhesive for bricks. It serves to absorb the expansion and contraction of masonry during freezing and thawing periods. The appropriate mortar for masonry in most Newburgh Heights homes, given the average age of the housing stock, is probably a mortar with low or no portland cement content. Mortars of high portland cement content are harder than brick, and in this situation the masonry will crack as it, rather than the mortar, yields to seasonal adjustments. The mortar in older Newburgh Heights homes is primarily composed of lime and sand.

Doors and Windows

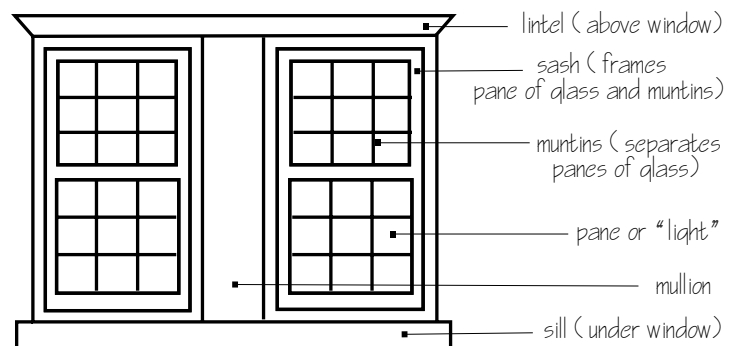
The front door serves as a focal point of the facade of a home. Certain styles of homes have distinct types of doors which are appropriate to the original architecture of the house. Doors on older homes were intended to stylistically complement the surrounding exterior detailing. Therefore, one should always try to retain the original door, frame, trim, surrounding fixtures and windows, and porch structure.

If a replacement door is necessary, the new door should match the original as closely as possible in material, size and style. This includes any panels or windows that were present in the original door. Most contemporary door designs are not appropriate to homes built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. If a storm door is desired, it should be of simple design with a large glass pane that reveals as much of the door behind it as possible.

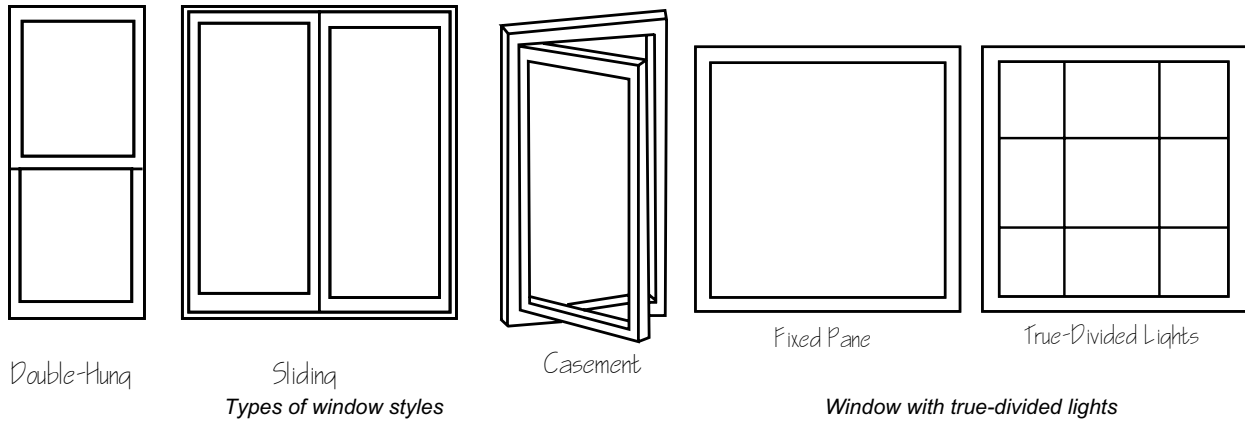
Windows are one of the most important architectural elements of the facade of a house. They allow light and glimpses of activity from the interior of a home to spill forth onto the street, enhancing the sense of community and safety for passers-by. The decorative elements of windows, such as the sash, muntins, and sill, as well as the wood or masonry materials that surround them, are designed to complement the exterior detailing of the home.

A window's style (double-hung, casement, etc.), orientation, placement, and size in proportion to other windows and the entire frontage of the house are of equal architectural significance.

Retain and repair, whenever possible, the original windows and their components. If replacement is necessary, replace with windows which duplicate the original window's material, style, orientation, placement, size, and decorative elements. Windows made of synthetic materials, such as vinyl or metal, or which have simulated features such as snap-in muntins, are strongly discouraged on homes built prior to World War II. Most homes of this era possess double-hung windows framed in wood with glass that is either a single pane, or "true-divided lights." Windows with true-divided lights are made up of smaller individual panes of glass, separated by muntins.



Components of windows



Sliding window installed on the first floor appears architecturally inconsistent with the other windows on the front facade, which are double-hung.

The standardized designs and synthetic materials found in most contemporary, manufactured windows lack the detailing and general aesthetic qualities imparted by traditional wood or metal materials which are stylistically appropriate to windows of homes built during the first part of the twentieth century.

Shutters should not be added to windows unless they were an original feature of the house. Original shutters should be retained and repaired. If replacement shutters are necessary, they should be made of wood and the same style as the original. Shutters should be large enough so that if they were closed, they would cover the entire window area.

Enlarging or reducing the size of window openings, or changing their orientation, is strongly discouraged. The original size and orientation of window openings are specifically appropriate to the original architecture of the house. When the orientation and/or size of window openings is altered, the house's appearance is compromised in that new openings now look out of proportion to both the remaining original windows and to the amount of wall space on the exterior of the home.

Alteration of second floor window configuration has disturbed the balance between wall space and window space on the front of the home.



Alteration of second floor window configuration has disturbed the balance between wall space and window space on the front of the home.

Porches

Front porches are an important feature of Newburgh Heights homes. As a transitional space between the private interior of a home and the public sidewalk and street, the porch has served as the traditional space from which people can interact with neighbors and people passing by, or as a comfortable vantage point from which to observe the

activity of the neighborhood. The front porch is an architectural symbol of the word “community.”

The original features of the porch, including the foundation, steps, roof (shape and pitch), railing, lattice, trellises and columns should be retained and repaired. Permanently removing the front porch is strongly discouraged. For homes which were designed and built with porches, the porch is essential to the house’s architectural integrity, and its removal renders it visually incomplete.

Porch columns and railings are the elements which are most commonly repaired, altered or replaced. When replacing these items, it is important to choose columns which are of the same style, material and dimensions as the original. When replacing the railing, choose balusters and caprails of the same style, size and material as the original. If it is not possible to obtain replacement balusters that have the same detailing as the original, the most important characteristics to be observed in achieving consistency with original are diameter, height, and material. For example, replacing a wood railing with one made of material such as wrought iron is strongly discouraged. When installing a new railing, maintain the same spacing between balusters that was present in the porch’s original railing.

An original feature on many porches in Newburgh Heights, especially on duplex homes, is the presence of a wood-sided, completely closed railing area. These types of porch features should also be maintained as close to the original as possible in terms of repair and replacement. Replacement of this feature with a “rail and baluster” system is strongly discouraged, as this represents an alteration of one of the original architectural features of the home.

Enclosing the front porch is strongly discouraged. A front porch is designed as an open structure that serves as a link from the outdoors to the interior of the home. Permanently enclosing it with siding and windows transforms it into a room of the house, and such an addition is not compatible with home’s original architectural scheme.



Porch balustrade



Porches of Newburgh Heights



Non-original balustrade looks architecturally inconsistent with the house.



Enclosure of second floor porch has disturbed the structural and visual balance of the home. The second story dominates and looks out of proportion to the first story.



Roof shape: front-facing gable

Roofs

Although widely recognized for its structural function, a roof is a definitive architectural feature of a house. The composition, color, texture and shape of the roofing material, as well as the shape and pitch of the roof, play a dominant role in establishing the house’s character. Most homes in Newburgh Heights most likely had roofs originally made of wood shingles or slate, given the time period in which the majority of them were built. However, currently, just over 96% of Newburgh Heights homes have asphalt roofs.

If the home does possess its original roof, it is strongly recommended that it be retained and repaired as needed, rather than replaced. Although more contemporary materials such as asphalt might be cheaper to install, they are typically less durable than many of the traditional roofing materials used on homes. For example, a slate roof of top quality material and flashing is estimated to last forty to sixty years with minimal maintenance, while the average

lifetime of an asphalt roof is typically ten to twenty years. The original roof may still exist under subsequent layers of new roofing.



Roof shape: side-facing gable

When repairing isolated sections of a roof, whether it be the original roof or a replacement roof, make certain that the replacement tiles match the existing, surrounding tiles in material composition, style, size and color.

If installing a new roof, it is important to choose materials that resemble traditional materials which were probably used on the home, such as substitutes for slate. Roof material color should be harmonious with siding and trim colors. The Cuyahoga County Archives have old appraisal cards for all houses in the County dating from the mid-1950’s. Most of these appraisal cards have photos of the homes which could provide evidence of many of the home’s original features.



$$\text{Roof pitch} = \frac{\text{RISE}}{\text{RUN}}$$



The roof’s original shape and pitch should also be maintained. Construction of new dormers should be carefully considered so as to not compromise the original design of the house. If a dormer is added, its size should be in scale with the overall size of the roof, its siding and roofing materials should match those on the rest of the house, and its window should be consistent with the existing windows on the house in style, orientation and material. Other alterations, such as roof decks, vents, skylights and mechanical and electrical equipment should be installed so that they

are not visible from the street. Skylights should protrude no more than six inches above the surface of the roof.

When repairing or replacing a roof, make certain to preserve or replace any original roof-mounted architectural features such as dormers, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, and cresting.

Other Exterior Features: Chimneys, Gutters and Downspouts

Existing brick chimneys should not be removed or covered with a cementitious coating. If portions of the original chimney exist, it is recommended that it be rebuilt in a manner consistent with the original design. Repairing or rebuilding portions of the chimney should follow the same recommendations outlined in the earlier section on repair of masonry.

Gutters and downspouts should be regularly cleaned and kept in good condition. Downspouts should be inconspicuously located on the exterior of the house and be compatible in color with that of the exterior of the home. Downspouts should also always run vertically; orienting downspouts diagonally across roof planes and walls is strongly discouraged. For a more traditional appearance, half-round gutters are available in a variety of materials, such as galvanized metal that can be repainted to match the house, or copper.

Residential Design Guidelines: Additions And New Construction

The structural and architectural features of individual homes collectively create an architectural pattern on a street. New homes built within well-established neighborhoods, a process known as “infill construction,” should be designed to harmonize with the existing homes in the neighborhood in order to maintain this pattern.

Additions

An addition should be constructed so that it maintains the architectural integrity of the home. The roof of the addition should have the same general shape and pitch as that of the main structure. The color and composition of the materials on the roof of the addition should also match those of the roof on the main structure.

The “massing” of a structure describes its three-dimensional shape. It takes into account a house’s width, height, depth, and roof shape. An addition should be smaller than the main structure in its massing. The material of the addition should match that of the existing structure. However, if the main structure is made of brick, siding the addition with wood or vinyl is acceptable.

The windows of the addition should be similar in style (i.e. orientation, type) and materials to those of the existing structure. For example: installing sliding windows on an addition where the existing structure has only double-hung windows is discouraged; similarly, installing double-hung windows with snap-in muntins on an addition where the main structure has windows with true-divided lights is also discouraged.

Elements of the addition, such as the window and foundation, should align in their height with those of the main structure. The material composition and color of the foundation should also match that

of the main structure. Other architectural features of an addition, such as dormers, should be compatible in style and materials with those of the main structure.

New Construction

Dimensions and Site Placement

The height and width, along with the setback and amount of space between homes establishes the architectural “rhythm” of a street. Newburgh Heights’ zoning regulations have established minimum setbacks for every street in the Village. The minimum setback is defined as the minimum required distance between the street right-of-way and the front edge of a building structure. In Newburgh Heights, this distance is measured from the edge of the sidewalk to the front of the house. New construction should be placed in line with the setback established by existing homes on the street. Additionally, although it is not currently regulated by the Village, new construction should also observe an imaginary “maximum” setback, established by the average maximum distance that the front edges of existing homes on the street have been placed from the sidewalk.



Setback: The home at center has been set back much further than the rest of the homes on the street. On approach, the lot appears vacant and has left a disruptive void in the uniform setback line established by other houses.

The space between homes in Newburgh Heights, called the “side yard,” is also regulated by zoning code. The minimum width of one side yard is three feet, while the minimum width of both side yards together, located on either side of the house, must equal at least ten feet. For example, if a side yard on one side of a house is three feet, the side yard on the other side of the house must be at least seven feet wide. Therefore, as long as the two measurements together meet the minimum requirements, home builders have some flexibility in the planned widths of side yards. New construction should observe any pattern in side yard width that is present for existing homes on a street. If, for example, most homes on a street have five-foot side yards, the new home should also plan for side yards of five feet each.

The massing of new construction should be compatible with the massing of existing homes on the street. If the massing of a new home is much greater than that of other homes on the street, the scale of the structure can be reduced using sensitive design treatments such as overhangs, facade ornaments, dormers, slight changes in roof slope, and setback.

The height of the new home should be similar to that of existing homes on the street. For example, constructing a one-story, ranch-style house on a street consisting of two-story homestead style homes disrupts the established pattern of height on the street. *Map 1*, which shows the



Height: The one-story house at center looks out of place on the street comprised predominately of two-story homes.

number of stories of residential, commercial and public buildings in the Village, illustrates some of the current height patterns within Newburgh Heights' residential neighborhoods. Note that there appears to be greater consistency in height within the neighborhoods of the central and eastern portions of the Village, as compared to the neighborhoods of the western section.

The foundation of a new home should be comparable in height to those of existing homes on the street, as well.

Building Elements

If the existing houses on a street have been built with a particular type of exterior material, new construction should use the same type of material, or one that looks identical to it. *Map 2*, which shows the exterior wall material of Newburgh Heights' residential, commercial and public buildings, highlights some of the apparent patterns in exterior building material that currently exist within the Village's residential neighborhoods. The majority of homes throughout Newburgh Heights have either vinyl or wood siding, with most of the brick homes concentrated in the neighborhoods located north of Beta Avenue and east of E. 42nd Street.

The shape and pitch of a new home's roof should harmonize with the roofline pattern created by other homes on the street. The roof of the new home should be compatible in both shape and pitch with the roofs of the existing homes in the neighborhood.

Prominent roof features such as dormers and chimneys should be similar in style to others on the street.

The orientation of windows on the new house should be similar to that of the windows of surrounding houses. For example, if most homes have vertically oriented windows, then the new house should also have vertically oriented windows. Window openings should also be placed so that they are indicative of the position of the floor levels on a home.



Roofline Pattern

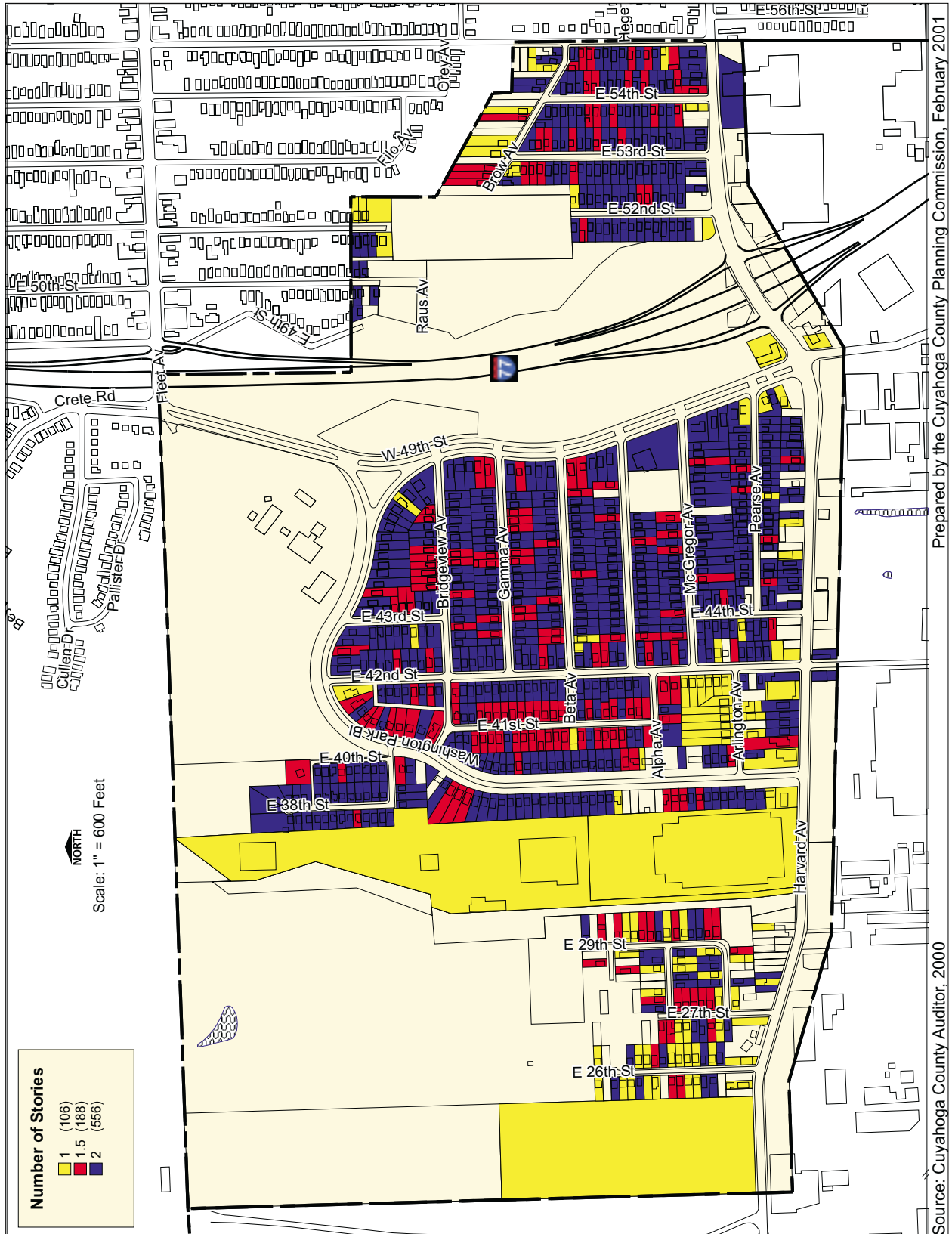
The ratio of window to solid wall space on the facade of the home should be similar to that of other houses.

If most houses on a street have porches, the newly constructed home should also have a porch.

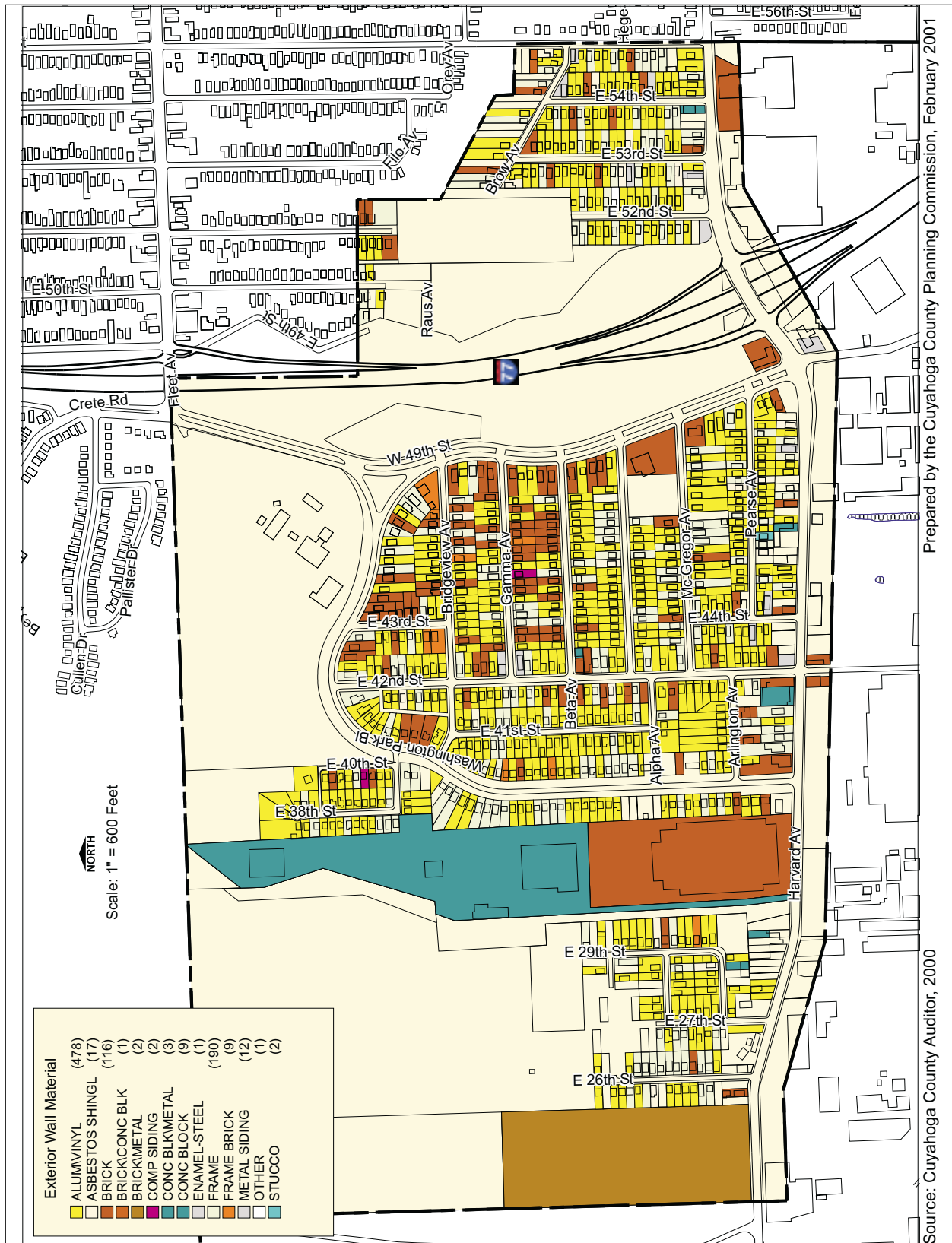
The new home's porch should have comparable setback, height, width and depth dimensions, as well as roof shape and pitch, as the porches of surrounding homes. On a wooden porch, all exterior architectural porch elements should be painted. The use of transparent stain is discouraged for aesthetic reasons.

New construction should observe the location of the main entryway on the existing homes of a street. If most homes have the main entrance parallel to the street on the front facade, new construction should place the entrance in the same location. The dimensions of the entryway should be simi-

Map 1: Newburgh Heights Building Heights



Map 2: Newburgh Heights Building Exterior Wall Material



lar to that of entryways on other homes on the street. More contemporary trends in housing design, such as taller entryways, are not compatible with the pre-WWII architectural styles that dominate Newburgh Heights' residential landscape.

Garages

Garages should be built in the same location as those of the existing homes on the street. For example, if existing homes on the street have been built with detached garages placed to the left side of the house in the rear, the construction of the garage for the new home should observe this layout as well. Attached, front-facing garages should always be slightly recessed from the front of the main structure.

The exterior wall and roof materials and roof pitch of the garage should be the same as that of the home.



Trees planted decades ago have grown to form an important part of the street's visual pattern.

Landscaping

All new construction should be landscaped with lawn and shrubs planted along the foundation of the home. Landscaping should equal or exceed the quality and density of landscaping of existing homes on the street. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of species and placement of shrubs. Plant materials should be selected and located in areas such that they will not encroach upon one another or the residential structure once they have matured.

Older neighborhoods, such as that of Washington Park Boulevard, often had trees planted on front lawns or tree lawns at the time the neighborhood was developed, or soon thereafter. Over the years, these trees have matured in size and have come to form an integral part of a street's rhythm. In neighborhoods where there exists a clear pattern of mature trees planted on front lawns or tree



In their maturity, trees originally planted too close to the front of the house now encroach upon and obscure the home's facade.

lawns, a 2.5- to 3-inch caliper tree of the same or compatible species should be planted in a similar location on the property or tree lawn of the newly constructed home.

HARVARD AVENUE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Background and Purpose

As an arterial road which runs through Newburgh Heights' commercial district and is served by an I-77 interchange, Harvard is a frequent route for people who are traveling within and passing through the community. According to a year 2000 traffic count conducted by the Cuyahoga County Engineer's office, in the course of a twenty-four hour period, over 14,000 cars traveled on the portion of Harvard Road immediately west of E. 49th Street¹. In short, Harvard Avenue is probably the most heavily traveled and highly visible corridor within the Village of Newburgh Heights.

The "commercial district" referred to throughout these guidelines is that portion of Harvard Avenue between E. 27th Street and E. 55th Street.

Currently, the property lining Harvard Avenue, particularly that on the north side of the street, is comprised of several different land use activities, including industrial, light industrial, commercial, and residential. Newburgh Heights' most recent master plan recommends the redevelopment of the north side of Harvard Avenue into a more consistent commercial/retail district. Future conversion of properties currently used for residential space into commercial space, along with revitalization and redevelopment of existing commercial buildings will increase the capacity of the Village's local economy to serve the local demand for retail and services by residents and improve the tax base². As part of the commercial redevelopment of Harvard Avenue, the Master Plan recommends establishing commercial design guidelines in order to improve the image and appearance of commercial buildings along the street. In a fashion similar to the guidelines for Newburgh Heights' residential areas, the commercial design guidelines establish a set of architectural standards toward achieving a more cohesive, visual identity for Harvard Avenue, and, alternatively, discouraging design which is architecturally incompatible with that of the surrounding district.

Just over half of the smaller (non-industrial) commercial properties along Harvard Avenue were built between 1910 and 1950, with construction of the remaining half occurring at various points in time throughout the last five decades. Additionally, many of the commercial buildings built prior to 1980 have experienced some type of exterior renovation. These renovations have been undertaken using a variety of construction methods, materials, and elements of architectural style. The construction and renovation of commercial buildings along Harvard Avenue throughout the course of almost an entire century, with very little attention to coordination of architectural design has resulted in a complete lack of visual cohesion within the district.

1 Cuyahoga County Engineer. *Cuyahoga County Report of Intersection Vehicle Counts*. May 31, 2000.

2 Village of Newburgh Heights. *Comprehensive Community Development Plan*. June, 1997.



East 42nd Street, Newburgh Heights



Coventry Road, Cleveland Heights



Mayfield Road, Little Italy in Cleveland

Examples of early twentieth-century commercial architecture in Cuyahoga County

As applied to an older, inner-ring suburb developed largely during the first half of the twentieth century, these guidelines recommend re-establishing the appearance of the Harvard Avenue commercial district according to design principles frequently used in commercial districts of older communities within Cuyahoga County during that time period. Some examples of such buildings still exist in Newburgh Heights along Harvard Avenue and E. 42nd Street, and in nearby communities such as Cleveland (the Little Italy neighborhood), Lakewood and Cleveland Heights. These were typically two-story buildings that originally had retail on the first floor and apartments on the second, with a brick exterior accented by stone, tile or patterned-brick detailing. The site placement of the structures within these older commercial districts made efficient use of shorter street blocks and shallow lots, such as those found along Harvard Avenue, by setting the buildings close to one another and to the right-of-way.

The first part of the commercial design guidelines for Harvard Avenue briefly discusses recommendations for rehabilitation and preservation of some of the existing buildings within the district which were built during the early part of the twentieth century, and are considered representative of the general design standards that should be incorporated into new construction. Such buildings can serve as local landmarks in establishing a visual identity for the district.

The second part of the guidelines will cover recommendations for existing and new commercial and industrial buildings along Harvard Avenue on the following topics: building elements, signage, site layout, landscaping, and storage areas and equipment.

Recommendations For Preservation Of Existing Commercial Buildings

Several buildings along Harvard Avenue are exemplary of the type of commercial building design recommended within these guidelines. The Brown's Food Market Building at 5301 Harvard Avenue and the Halfway Building at 4601 Harvard Avenue display some of the typical architectural characteristics which will be recommended for new construction. Built in 1920 and 1922, respectively, the Village should consider rehabilitation and restoration of such buildings to set the tone for commercial construction proposed in the future.

Restoration can be accomplished through careful removal of artificial veneers or other exterior materials installed after the buildings were constructed, thoroughly cleaning the brick exteriors through power washing, and cleaning and repairing any other original exterior architectural features. On some buildings the original storefront display windows have either been filled in, altered in size, or replaced with inappropriate styles. The display windows should either be reinstalled or expanded to their original dimensions and placement. If wood or synthetic siding has been installed as framing to windows, it should



The Halfway Building, 4601 Harvard Avenue



Brown's Food Market, 5301 Harvard Avenue

be removed and replaced with masonry materials. These buildings can then be linked in appearance to new construction along Harvard Avenue through the addition of signage, landscaping, awnings, and lighting which is similar in style to that of new commercial construction.

All commercial buildings in Newburgh Heights are eligible for low interest loans to finance exterior and interior renovations through the Cuyahoga County Department of Development's Storefront Renovation Program.

Design Guidelines for Existing and New Commercial and Industrial Buildings

Building Elements

Exterior Material

As shown in the illustrations above, small-scale commercial buildings constructed just after the turn of the twentieth century typically had exterior walls composed of brick or, quite often, brick accented by patterns of stone or tile. It is recommended that new commercial construction along Harvard also use traditional-sized brick as the façade's predominant exterior material. Use of tiles, stone, or pre-cast concrete to create decorative patterns throughout the building's facade is strongly encouraged. Decorative patterns can also be achieved through installing patterns of brick which is a different color from that of the rest of the building's exterior, by alternating the orientation of the bricks, or by creating texture through bricks which are set slightly raised above or recessed below the exterior wall surface.



Examples of tile and pre-cast stone (concrete) set in brick



Industrial Building

Industrial buildings should also preferably use brick for the building's exterior. Industrial buildings with brick exteriors also exist along Harvard Avenue, such as the Cleveland Railway Company Building at 5400 Harvard Avenue.

Use of "jumbo"-sized bricks, split-faced concrete, or excessive amounts of glass as exterior material is strongly discouraged.

Roof and Cornice

It is recommended that the rooflines of new commercial construction be predominantly horizontal. Incorporating raised parapets which are squared or rounded into the roofline can also add character to the building. The parapet is that portion of an exterior wall built above the roof's surface. Exterior walls should be capped by coping made of stone or pre-cast concrete. The use of a cornice installed below and parallel to the roofline can also add decorative emphasis to the building's roofline. No portion of the roof, or mechanical equipment installed on the roof, should be visible from the street.

Windows

Ample window space along small commercial storefronts is essential to the creation of a lively and interesting visual environment within any commercial district. It is recommended that street-side walls devote twenty to forty percent of the wall area per story to window space. At street-level, the maximum amount of glass is preferred in order to provide an interesting commercial vista for both pedestrians and motorists. Commercial proprietors—particularly of retail establishments—are strongly encouraged to provide as unobstructed a view into the interior of their store as possible. It

is recommended that street-level windows have a base height (the distance between the finished grade and the bottom member of the window frame) of no more than two feet, and a header height of at least eight feet above the finished grade. The head is the uppermost member of the window frame.



Rounded, raised parapets

Where two or more storefronts or commercial establishments occupy a single building, the base and the header heights, and style of the street-level windows should match. For buildings greater than one story in height, the style, orientation, materials, height, and placement pattern of upper-story windows should also match.



A pre-cast cornice installed just below the roofline adds architectural detail to the building's exterior.

Bordering the bases of windows with a stone or concrete sill is strongly encouraged as it adds architectural character to the building's facade. Correspondingly, the headers of windows should also be bordered by a stone, concrete, or patterned brick lintel to enhance the architectural detail of the commercial structure.

In cases where display windows are not feasible due to building function or safety, a simulated transparent window which imitates the appearance of a display window is an acceptable substitute. A simulated window can be created by constructing a wood frame within the window opening, which is covered on both the interior and exterior side with plywood or drywall. The frame can be filled with insulation. The exterior window face is painted a dark gray or black and fitted with plate glass or a similar transparent material.

Awnings

Installation of awnings is strongly encouraged, as they are both functional and add architectural character to small commercial and industrial buildings. They provide protection from the sun, thus reducing cooling costs, and give temporary shelter to customers entering or leaving the building.

Throughout the district, awnings made of fabric are preferred. Aluminum awnings are strongly discouraged. Awnings should be installed to fit the existing framing of windows and entrances, and should be hung no higher than the top of the display window. At street-level, the awning should be no lower than seven feet above the finished grade. It should also be placed no higher than one foot below the building cap (on a one-story building) or the sill of the upper-story windows (on buildings of two or more stories). Backlit awnings are strongly discouraged.

Entrances

Entrances to commercial buildings should face the street, and preferably be located on the front facade of the building. They should be clearly identifiable to customers through the use of signage, awnings, and/or planters. A pleasant and accessible approach from public sidewalks and parking areas is an important design feature. In short, customers should be able to quickly and clearly see the path they should take to walk to the entry door.

Recessed entryways, a common design feature of small commercial buildings built in the early part of the twentieth century, are strongly encouraged. In commercial storefronts which incorporate recessed entryways, a recess of at least two feet is recommended. Doors made of solid material are strongly discouraged; entryways should be made of the maximum amount of glass possible. If a glass entryway is not possible, a glass substitute mounted on a dark security panel is an acceptable alternative.

Entryways and the area immediately surrounding should be designed to comply with the standards established in the Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines.

Lighting

In general, signs, entryways, addresses and parking lots should be lit and clearly visible at night. The scale of light fixtures should fit the scale and style of the building, and the function to which the particular fixtures are applied. For example, a small residential style fixture is not suitable for attachment to a commercial building. Likewise, a series of large fixtures suitable for parking lot lighting is also not appropriate for commercial buildings. The amount of light produced by the fixtures is critical. Inadequate lighting fails to identify the building at night while a blaze of glaring light is unattractive and makes signs hard to read at night.

Lighting for parking areas should be designed so that it does not glare into adjacent properties or into the right-of-way. It should be related to the parking lot's design and circulation, and should also be compatible with the scale of adjacent buildings.

Signs

Signs are one of the most noticeable features of the streetscape. Well-designed signs can add color and character to the street and identity to businesses. However, uncoordinated signage in commercial districts can cause visual confusion of the streetscape due to excessive or inadequate size and lack of compatibility with architecture and neighboring signs. Although complete uniformity can be uninteresting, coordination of certain elements of signage is necessary for a unified commercial district.

Specific information on sign definitions, requirements and regulations can be found in Chapter 1173 of the Planning and Zoning Codified Ordinances of Newburgh Heights.

On commercial and retail properties, Newburgh Heights Zoning Code prohibits the use of certain types of signs, including: animated signs, balloons used as advertising devices, banners (except as temporary signs with a permit), billboards, flashing signs, mansard signs, pennants/streamers/spinners, portable signs, roof signs, searchlights and spotlights, three dimensional objects, paper posters, and pole signs (except at freeway-oriented automotive services stations).

Wall, window, awning, canopy, and monument signs are permitted, while neon tubing signs and projecting signs may be permitted upon review by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Signs should be compatible with the architectural style and the proportions of the building to which they are attached. Sign color should complement the building and, if present, awning colors. By regulation, the total number of colors on a sign shall be limited to four (1173.07b).

All types of signs should respect the visibility requirements and design of signage of the neighboring storefronts. The competition that can occur between businesses located near one another for visibility is distracting. A signage design that allows for visibility of all signs is paramount. Signs for commercial tenants in multi-storefront building should be placed in similar locations and have similar dimensions. By ordinance, the style of a sign shall be generally consistent throughout the particular building or block involved, and, if seen in a series, the signs should have a continuity of design (1173.07a,b). Continuity of design can be achieved through coordination of characteristics such as style or type, dimension, size and type of lettering, and use of complementary colors.

Lettering and symbols on all signage must be large and clear enough to be visible to both pedestrian and automobile traffic. However, lettering should not exceed the size necessary for effective advertising. Excessive size can visually overpower the streetscape. Simple and easy to read lettering and symbols have the dual benefit of fitting in with other signage on the street and presenting a clear message to customers.

Toward the goal of building a more visually cohesive identity for the Harvard Avenue commercial district, these guidelines recommend the use of wall signs on commercial buildings, or signs comprised of individual lettering placed directly on the storefront's façade. The wall signs can be lit by an external source, or silhouetted by backlighting. "Light box" signs are discouraged.



Light Box Sign

Although the Village's sign ordinances limit the protrusion of wall or panel signs to a maximum of 12 inches, it is strongly encouraged that the sign protrude as little as possible from the storefront facade. By ordinance, the maximum size of all permanent signs is limited to the lesser of 120 square feet, or 1.5 times the width of the building. Although specific dimensions for wall signs are not regulated by ordinance, these design guidelines recommend a height of two feet. A sign of this height accommodates lettering which is 18 inches high. According to *The Sign User's Guide* published by the Institute of Signage Research, 18-inch lettering is readable at distances of up to 450 feet³.

3 Claus, Karen E. and James Clause. *The Sign User's Guide: A Marketing Aid*. Cincinnati: ST Publications, 1988.



Signage in the building's transom areas



Signage in building's lintel area



Awning signs

The recommended placement for a wall sign is within the transom area immediately above the entryway and display windows, or on the lintel area which, on a one-story building is below the building cap, or on a two-story building, separates the first from the second story. The sign should be centered relative to the display windows in multi-tenant buildings, or relative to the entryway in single storefront buildings. Businesses on the second or third floor can be identified by signs attached to or painted on the windows. Signs should also be placed no higher than one foot below the building cap (on a one-story building) or sill of second-story windows. They should also not extend beyond the width of the existing display windows.

If used, monument signs made of stone, concrete or brick are preferred. The text and graphic elements on the sign can be externally lit or internally illuminated. If internally illuminated, it is recommended that only the text and graphic elements should be lit, and the background should be opaque. The area around the base of the sign should be landscaped with plant material that is low enough in height so as not to obstruct the view of the sign.

For awning signs, letters are typically placed on the valance. Light colored lettering on a solid, dark-color background is most visible. The size and style of lettering should be in scale with the storefront, and similar to that of adjacent storefronts. Information printed on awnings should include the business name and address.

Although only permitted by review, if used, it is recommended that projecting signs protrude no more than four feet from the storefront façade. The projecting sign should not extend above the building cap or below the top of the display window.

As with commercial/retail buildings, wall and window, awning, and monument signs are permitted for use on industrial buildings. The regulations governing the characteristics of industrial property signs are similar to those of commercial buildings with the exception of the allowed maximum area of the sign. For industrial buildings, the maximum allowed area is the lesser of 2.5 times the width of the building, or 175 square feet.

Since industrial buildings are typically set back further from the road, visibility is of critical importance. Lettering should be in clear contrast to its background. The style and color of the sign and its lettering should complement that of all other businesses in the Harvard Avenue District.

Site Layout

Height

By ordinance, commercial buildings along Harvard Avenue are limited to three stories, which shall not exceed a total maximum building height of thirty-five feet from the finished grade line to the highest part of a wall or the main roof (1141.06).

Setback

The recommended minimum setback for commercial/retail buildings along Harvard Avenue is ten feet. It is also strongly encouraged that commercial/retail buildings observe a maximum setback of no more than twenty feet in order to maintain a more consistent setback line across all buildings along the street. For industrial properties, the recommended minimum setback is 20 feet, with a recommended maximum setback of forty feet. Frequent variation in building setback creates disruptive gaps in the line of building placement. Where setback differences do occur due to variations in building design, size, and parking requirements, a consistent setback line can be simulated along Harvard through the use of landscaping and/or fencing placed along the front edge of the property.

Fencing made of decorative metal, or low walls made of brick or brick accented by concrete or tile is recommended. Chain link fence placed along any public right-of-way is strongly discouraged. The recommended maximum height for fencing or walls along public right-of-ways is 3 feet for commercial establishments and six to eight feet for industrial buildings.



A low wall made of brick and decorative metal

The fundamental purpose of the setback area is to provide a safety buffer between the buildings and right-of-way, and to preserve the necessary lines of site for pedestrians and motorists entering and leaving parking lots. However, because of the lack of opportunity along Harvard for streetscape enhancement within the public right-of-way, the setback area of commercial buildings and parking lots also provides a valuable opportunity for landscaping, and therefore should be considered an element of beautification in the overall streetscape of the district.

Parking

The recommended location of off-street parking for Harvard Avenue commercial and industrial properties is at the side or the rear of the building. By ordinance, side lots must be set at least five

feet from an adjacent building. With parking placed to the side or in the rear, storefronts can be brought closer to the right-of-way, contributing to a more active and interesting streetscape.

Convenience-type businesses tend to prefer to locate off-street parking in the front of the building. Although not preferred, off-street parking located in front of the building is permitted. By ordinance, front parking lots of commercial buildings must be set back at least six feet from the right-of-way, to allow sufficient area for required landscaping. Additionally, front setback areas for side and front parking lots must be landscaped in order to partially screen parking areas from pedestrians and motorists (1141.09[1]). Landscaping of parking lots should follow the guidelines outlined in the next section.

Any parking lot containing more than 6,000 square feet of area or twenty or more vehicular parking spaces shall also provide interior landscaping. Section 1141.09[2] outlines the specific requirements of landscaping within parking lots that fall into this category. Along Harvard Avenue, this ordinance would apply mostly to industrial properties. Trees are particularly effective at breaking up large parking areas, helping to screen poles and wires, and in providing shade to keep buildings and cars cooler.

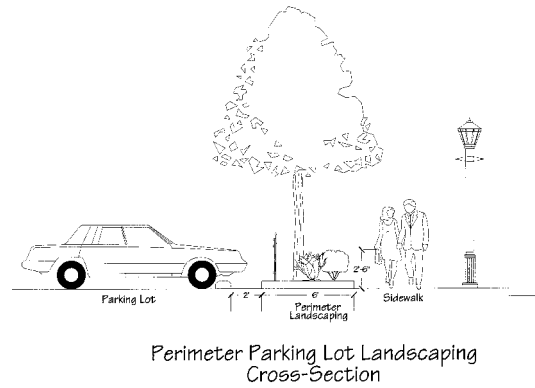
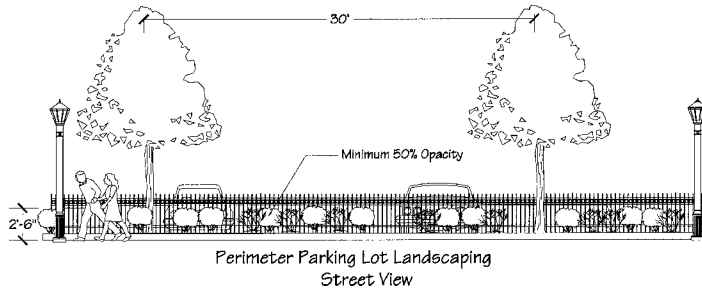
Landscaping

Simple landscaping of individual commercial and industrial properties is essential to creating a visually pleasant commercial district. Landscaping helps to soften and beautify the paved environment of urban commercial areas such as that of Harvard Avenue. Additionally, when employed effectively, strategically designed landscaping can also clearly define where to drive, park, and walk.

As previously mentioned, new commercial construction along Harvard Avenue should make efficient use of the required building and parking setback areas for landscaping. Given the limited size of most lots along Harvard Avenue, it is important to choose plant materials which are in scale to the amount of available area, and to the building to which they correspond. Shrubs, ground cover, and flowers are smaller-scale plants appropriate for planting in areas of limited size. The size of chosen plant materials when fully mature should also be considered, so that they do not eventually overcrowd their space.

By regulation, landscaping of commercial and industrial parking lots should provide a “visual screen” of at least fifty percent opacity, up to a height of two and a half feet throughout the year (1125.10a, 1145.10a). Opacity is defined as a degree of obscuration of light⁴. The higher the percentage, the greater the density of the landscaping. Except where it serves as a buffer between residential and commercial properties, landscaping should be designed and planted in such a way that it does not create a dense “wall” which obstructs the view of businesses and activity along Harvard. Landscaping should *partially* screen and beautify—not completely block out and visually isolate

4 Moskowitz, Harvey S. and Carl G. Lindbloom. *The New Illustrated Book of Development Definitions*. New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, 1993.



commercial properties. The recommended effect can be achieved by choosing a variety of plant materials which are different in texture and height. For example, using a combination of deciduous and evergreen trees or shrubs diversifies the look of the landscape and prevents the creation of a completely opaque and monotonous wall in front of a building or parking lot. Plants should be spaced apart and can be staggered, as opposed to placing them in horizontal rows, in order to give the landscaping a more natural and interesting look.



Building Landscaping

Many existing buildings along Harvard Avenue have been constructed at the building line, with no setback and limited or no off-street parking. In these situations, opportunity for landscaping is limited. Plant material placed in containers or window boxes is an option for landscaping storefronts with limited or no planting area. The containers should complement or match the commercial building's exterior material.



Parking Lot Landscaping

The selection of plant materials should also be coordinated across businesses within the district in order to achieve greater visual consistency along the streetscape.

Finally, maintenance of landscaping is of critical importance. Unkempt plants, trees and landscape areas can become a hazard to pedestrians, obstruct motorists' views, and become receptacles for trash.



At left, mechanical equipment is completely exposed to public view

Storage Areas and Equipment

Trash containers, storage areas, mechanical units, and other equipment located on the exterior of the building should not be exposed to public view. Such areas should always be located in the rear of the building, and should be screened by walls or dense fencing, preferably accompanied by landscaping. Dense landscaping, alone, may provide sufficient screening for smaller storage areas and pieces of equipment. If the design and size of the building permits, mechanical and other equipment can be situated on the building's roof, located far enough from any edge

so that it is completely hidden from public view. Alternatively, new construction can incorporate into the design a recessed area in the rear of the building for trash containers, storage areas, mechanical units, and other equipment.

Walls or fencing which screen dumpsters, storage areas, and equipment that are located in the rear of the building should be compatible with the exterior material of the main building. If walls are selected to provide the screening, three of the four walls should be of the same material as that of the main building. Fencing should preferably be made of wood. Use of chain link fence woven with material is strongly discouraged.



Although located in the front of the building, the exterior material of the walls of this trash storage area matches that of the main building. The enclosure is well constructed so that it completely hides the trash dumpster located inside.