



DEDHAM

BUILDING BETTER

A Design Manual for
Building Improvements



Dedham Community Theatre

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Design Manual: PURPOSE



The Design Manual offers guidance to property owners and business owners planning building improvements. Recognizing that most of the resources applied to improving commercial buildings are in the hands of individual owners, the aim is to make it more likely that each incremental investment "adds up" to a coherent retailing environment – creating, over time, attractive, fun and vibrant places that people look forward visiting and returning to.

The Design Manual provides advice and information. It is not a "rule book", although some sections refer to ordinances and the legal obligations of property owners, builders, fabricators and architects. When legal provisions are cited, the reader should refer to those sources for specific requirements.

The Design Review process seeks to accommodate contemporary retail without compromising the liveliness of the street. A lively street is an invitation to stroll a bit, making it more likely you will remember something about the offerings of the district. Buildings can be sited in a manner that either enhances or diminishes the vitality of streets. The Design Review process helps owners and developers plan their project in the context of the surrounding commercial environment.

The Design Manual promotes preservation and re-use of historic structures. Much of the town's turn-of-the-century character was established at a time when the predominant building material was brick and the architecture was ornate.

The Design Manual takes the long view. Over time, the design decisions that affect the appearance of the town most profoundly are going to be made by individual tenants and property owners. Available technical and financial resources are too rarely utilized or understood by property owners and merchants, or by local suppliers, sign vendors, and contractors that participate in those design decisions. Challenges to the traditional Dedham squares and crossroad centers include:

- Retail businesses often require substantial dedicated off-street parking with the additional expectation that the parking lot, rather than the sidewalk will be the entrance to the building.
- Lenders typically avoid opportunities that include a mix of uses within a single building envelope. This makes it difficult to develop mixed-use, multi-story buildings.
- Dedham's traditional centers are framed by mixed use, multi-story buildings; a building type that can be more difficult to design and finance than the suburban prototypes that retail developers are familiar with.
- The materials and construction techniques readily available to property owners and their tenants from local suppliers, signmakers, and contractors deliver a quick-fix approach to repair, business identity signs, and shopfront "makeovers".

The Design Manual defines a considered approach to the most common types of building and property improvements – signs, facade restoration, and parking lots – as well as new construction, and offers illustrative design advice that addresses some of these challenges.

B.1. REGULATORY CONTROLS

For legal and procedural requirements related to projects in the Town of Dedham applicants should refer to the Zoning Bylaws and other resources. The **Design Review Advisory Board** offers design advice and technical assistance to property owners, developers, and business operators. Board members are volunteer design professionals with backgrounds in architecture, landscape, graphic design and development.

B.1.a THE TOWN ZONING BYLAWS

Zoning protects public health, safety and welfare by providing appropriate bulk, height and use controls for land and buildings. The Zoning Bylaws for the Town of Dedham are located within the Town Bylaws as Chapter 18, and can be found online at www.dedham-ma.gov

Chapter 27 of the Town Bylaws provides direction for size, and location of wall signs, awnings, projecting signs, window signs, and freestanding signs. These ordinances include performance provisions for obsolete signs, workmanship, and deterioration.

B.1.b 2009 MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The town has completed a comprehensive plan that addresses community concerns and focuses on future opportunities. In 2010, the Planning Board established an "Implementation Committee," which is now working on helping various boards, committees and departments address planning-related topics such as parking requirements, development densities, and pedestrian amenities.

B.1.c REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Historic designation establishes a record of the historically significant buildings, streetscapes, and landmarks. Some are listed on the National Register of Historic places or they may be designated by the local municipality – or both. National designation and local designation each carry different obligations and privileges. Dedham Village, an Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has 342 properties. There are also a handful of individual properties on the Register, including the Ames Schoolhouse, Endicott Estate, Fairbanks House, and the Norfolk County Courthouse. The latter two are also designated National Historic Landmarks. In addition to the properties that are under National protection, Dedham has two local Historic Districts and over a dozen locally protected properties. The Dedham Historic District Commission is the Town board that oversees the preservation, protection, and development of the historic and archeological assets of the Town. Contact Nancy Baker, the Commission Administrator, at 781-751-9100.

B.2. RESOURCES

B.2.a PRESERVATION EASEMENT

Donating a historic preservation or conservation easement establishes a deed restriction or covenant that will prevent future demolition, neglect or insensitive alterations. Donations of historic easements usually qualify as charitable contributions deductible from federal income tax.

B.2.b SIGN AND FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Dedham Square Circle (DSC) provides grants to retail businesses to restore commercial facades in the Dedham Square shopping area. Awards given to merchants and property owners fund physical improvements to signs, awnings and building facades. Projects selected to receive grants are subject to the same *review for compliance* as other similar projects in the Town. Contact DSC at 617-968-3040 for more information, or go to www.dedhamsquarecircle.org

B.2.c TOWN OF DEDHAM

The Town of Dedham may be able to offer financial assistance in the future to assist with qualifying projects by building owners who wish to improve the appearance of their properties. This may be similar to the program offered through Dedham Square Circle, but with a Town-wide scope.

B.2.d DEDHAM CIVIC PRIDE COMMITTEE

Dedham Civic Pride Committee is a non-profit that is dedicated to improving the overall physical and aesthetic appearance of Dedham through improvement programs for open space. Although the organization does not typically provide financial resources to business owners, the committee does raise funds for improvements that meet their goals. Contact Amy Black at 781-727-9054

B.3. DESIGN

The following resources can be valuable to property owners, builders, fabricators and architects, especially early in the design phase of the project. When legal provisions are cited, the reader should refer to those sources for specific requirements.

B.3.a SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Secretary of the Interior's "Guidelines For Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings" provides technical guidance for the preservation and restoration of historic facades. It is available at <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/>.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines address the Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction of historic buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. The Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties establish professional practices for the preservation and protection of historic resources listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The purpose is to protect the integrity and historic character of a property, discouraging the removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a place or significant structure. The Guidelines provide detailed technical and illustrative guidance on preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction, including recommendations to:

- Identify character-defining features of historic resources
- Repair and maintain historic materials and features
- Stabilize deteriorated portions of historic buildings
- Identify, document and curate archaeological resources
- Design new building additions and alterations
- Identify and protect the context of historic resources

This authoritative source is often referenced as a benchmark by property owners, designers and regulating agencies making decisions that affect material integrity and historic character of specific structures, sites, and districts. The Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines should be supplemented with local guidelines that reflect the unique cultural and historic context of the community, neighborhood or district.

B.3.b HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Town of Dedham's Historic Districts Commission (HDC) requires regulatory design review for exterior alterations of private homes within designated historic districts, and no work can commence without their approval. An appointed board of volunteers with expertise in historic architecture, preservation, real estate and law, the HDC are appointed by the Board of Selectmen to ensure compliance with standards and guidelines. Residents modifying houses within historic districts are required to comply with HDC published the Standards and Instructions For Homeowners. Although this resource is primarily directed at residential homeowners, some of the guidelines may be applicable to commercial properties as well.

B.3.c THE DESIGN REVIEW AND ADVISORY BOARD

The Town Charter; Chapter 18 Section 9.6 of the Zoning By-Laws, defines what items/projects need to apply for review by the **Design Review and Advisory Board (DRAB)**. Commercial property owners will find this **DESIGN MANUAL** is a useful place to start. The **Design Review and Advisory Board** includes design professionals with backgrounds in architecture, landscape, graphic design and development that volunteer to work with project owners during the planning and approval process.

B.3.d. DESIGN GUIDE: Principles, Character Districts, and Design Topics

The guide covers specific features of storefronts, the character of upper floors (cornices, windows, etc.), entrance doors and access ramps, store windows, shop displays, facade and shop lighting, some details regarding shop signs, awnings, security grills, and building colors.

It is organized around **SIX DESIGN PRINCIPLES**, which are intended to ensure that renovations, additions, or other changes contribute to the overall character and appeal of the street, square or center. Future renovations are encouraged to fit within and contribute to the established or planned architectural character of the surrounding area, so that each increment of change improves the public realm and makes for a better retailing district.



B.3.d1 SIX DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Principle #1 "FACE FORWARD"

Though contemporary retail businesses often require substantial dedicated off-street parking, the building should be sited so that its front doors open onto the sidewalk.

Principle #2 "LINE UP RIGHT"

New buildings should be sited so that they align along the same setback line as their neighbors. This point may be close to the street at the property line, or it may be partially on the surface parking lot, depending on the Character District. Building setbacks can accommodate outdoor dining, plazas, landscaping and other amenities.

Principle #3 "RESPECT THE ORIGINAL"

Necessary modifications to adapt older buildings to new uses should reveal, stabilize, and repair period detail, rather than obscure, remove, or damage it.

Principle #4 "DETAILS MATTER"

Incidental repairs, business identity signs, and shopfront "makeovers" should be of a high quality.

Principle #5 "STREETS ARE NOT HIGHWAYS"

Sign graphics and streetscape elements should be designed principally to create an inviting environment for pedestrians. Sign types and infrastructure elements associated with highways or suburban strips should be rare occurrences.

Principle #6 "SHOW YOUR STUFF"

The shopfront should invite passers-by to become customers. Large, clear glass areas display the nature of the business within and produce an interesting streetscape that is welcoming in the evenings as well as during business hours.



B.3.d2 CHARACTER DISTRICTS

Zoning based planning is driven almost entirely by land use, and has delivered a lower quality built environment for Dedham than residents desire. In Dedham Square, it has been possible to initiate and follow design guidance for signs and landscape because the character of the neighborhood (historic, with mixed uses and pedestrian-oriented design) is well established. However, this character-based approach has not been expanded to other parts of town. Elsewhere, entire commercial areas have been built from scratch in the last 20 or 30 years from the “shopping center” design template. Design had been left to individual property owners working under the limited guidance of the Zoning Bylaws and the limiting guidance of corporate branding. If design guidance of these areas is to be improved, an organizing system that is based on the character of each place should be the dominant organizing system, not zoning.

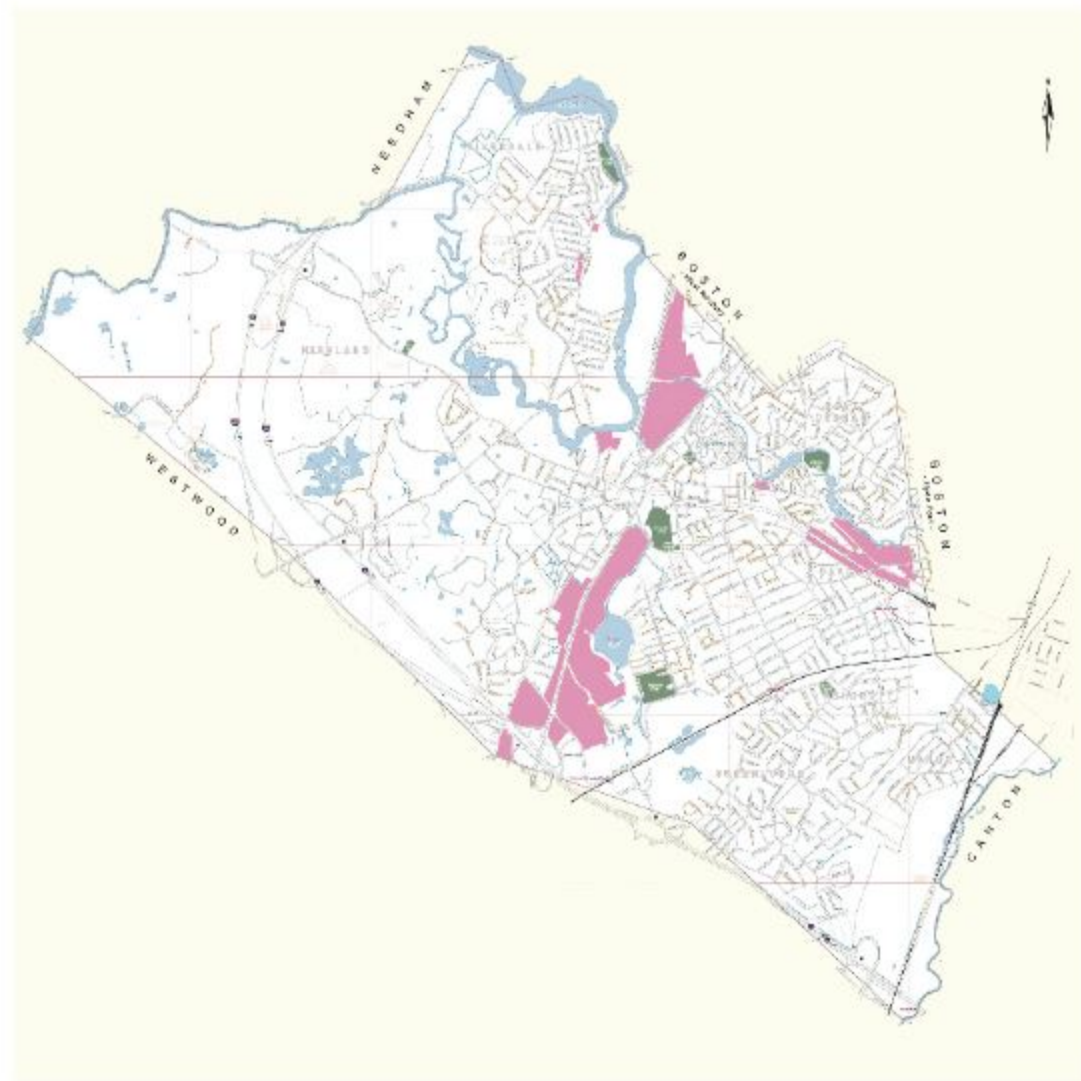
“Character Districts” work “over top” of the zoning-based planning.

In Dedham’s earliest days, one built in certain ways in the countryside, other ways along roads, others at crossroads, and others still in the center of town. That simple hierarchy of settlement patterns was largely replaced in the planning framework by use-based zoning, resulting in many of the challenges the Design Review is attempting to address today. That is not to say that zoning should not be considered, only that character can often transcend land-use zone, and that some Character Districts may be made up of blocks that are zoned separately while a single zone may be made up of multiple Character Districts.

A Character District organizational system is a tool that recognizes that Dedham’s structure is important, and that it can better inform issues of signage, parking lots, setbacks and storefronts. Its ideas can be expressed through Design Guidelines that describe how some neighborhoods have a different form, scale and character than others, even if they share a common zoning category.

The four proposed Character Districts below outline how this can work in Dedham:

- Roadside Commerce**
- Crossroads Village**
- Village Square**
- Town Center**



Examples of Roadside Commerce conditions around Dedham.

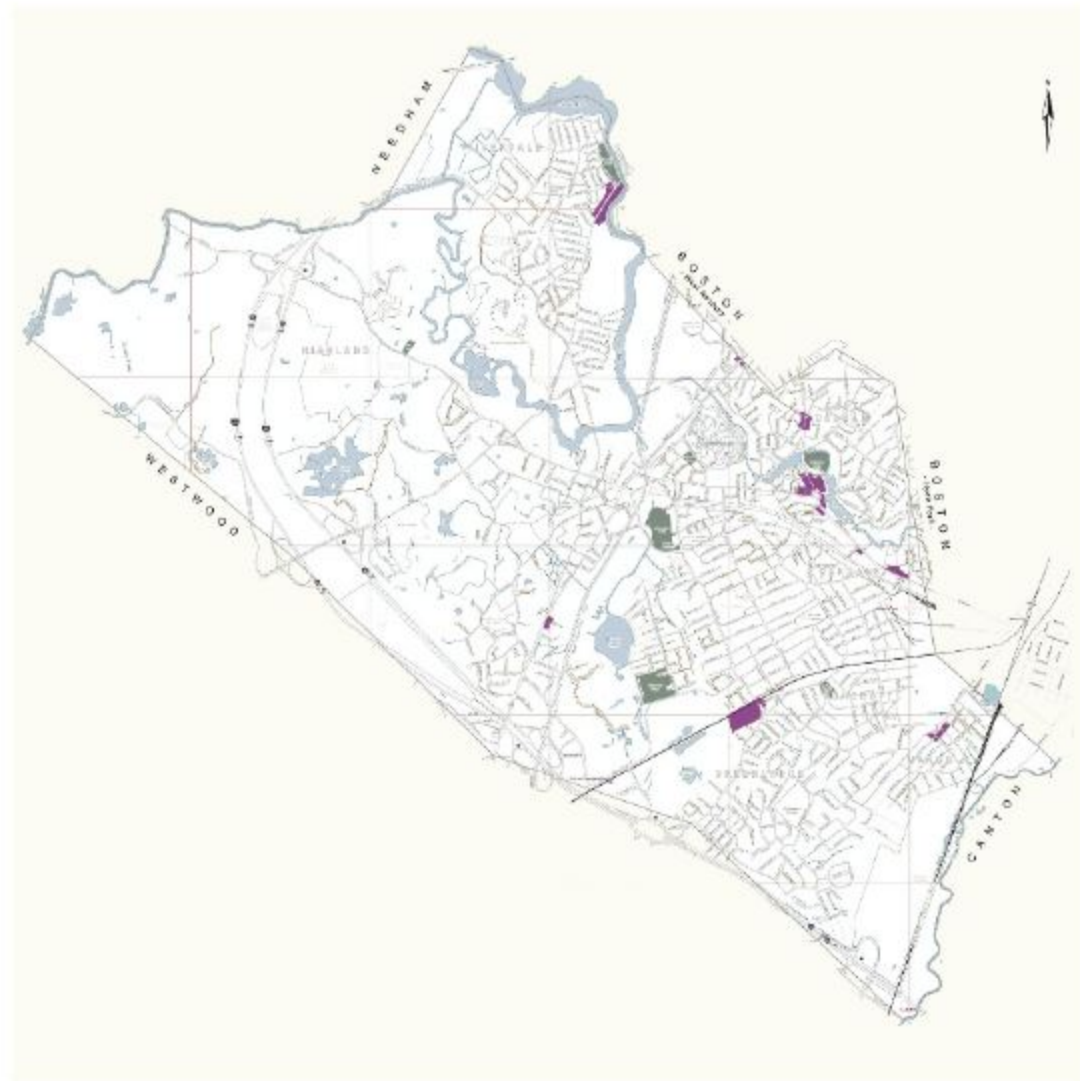
ROADSIDE COMMERCE

Comprised of single-use parcels along main roadway corridors, this character district is primarily for mid-sized commerce. However, some areas may change over time to allow for new development that is more mixed in use and building type. Currently, retail, light industry, and/or offices dominate this district, although neighboring blocks can be exclusively residential. The location along main roads, and the fact that parking areas separate buildings from each other and from the street, means that businesses here require larger and simpler signage that can be easily seen from moving vehicles.

Currently zoned "LB," "LM" & "GB"

Character elements:

- > Address Numerals: Auto-oriented (large)
- > Outdoor Signs: Auto-oriented, free-standing
- > Wall Signs: Auto-oriented (large, back-lit)
- > Projecting Signs: Few
- > Shopfront Windows: Varied purpose, size, and number
- > Shopfront Elements: Limited in detail; some corporate branding
- > Facades: Limited glazing percentage
- > Landscape: Some edge and foundation plantings, some trees



Examples of Crossroads Village-type places in Dedham today.

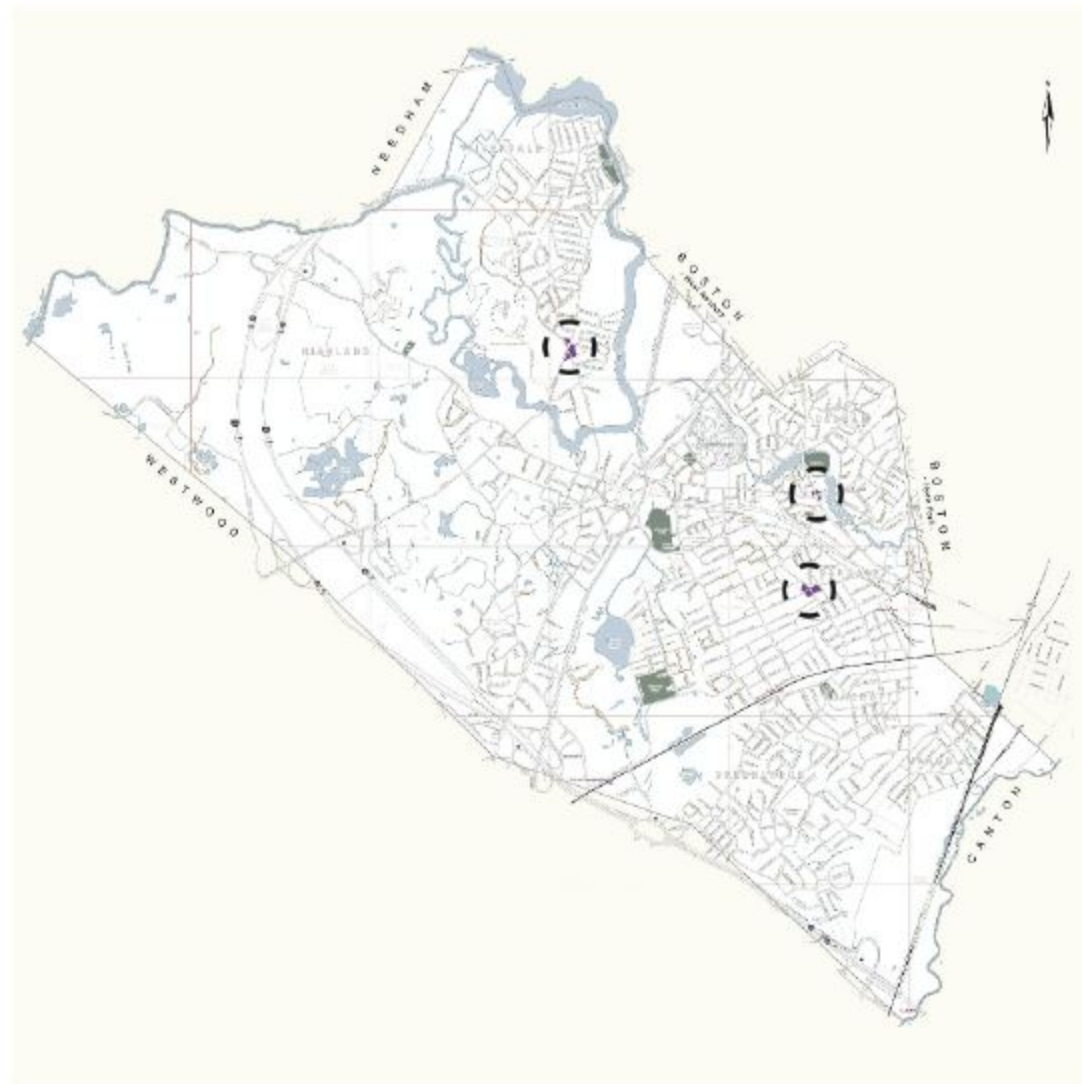
CROSSROADS VILLAGE

Made up of the parcels currently zoned LB or GB where commerce is clustered near major intersections, this district now includes a mix of residential, light industrial, and other commercial uses. Crossroads Villages are locations for commerce that is not appropriate for Dedham Square, but needs to be located near major roads. Despite this distinction, building design and signage is often similar in character to Dedham Square, although buildings are larger, farther apart from each other (and the sidewalk) and parking lots are more prominent. However, auto-oriented signage is prevalent.

Currently zoned "LB" & "GB"

Character elements:

- > Address Numerals: Auto-oriented; some pedestrian-oriented
- > Outdoor Signs: Auto-oriented; some pedestrian-oriented
- > Wall Signs: Auto-oriented; some pedestrian-oriented
- > Projecting Signs: Few
- > Shopfront Windows: Varied purpose, size, and number
- > Shopfront Elements: Some historic and pedestrian-oriented detail
- > Facades: Higher glazing percentage than masonry/other
- > Landscape: Ornamental plantings, some trees



Images of Bridge Street, Oakdale, and Bussey Street

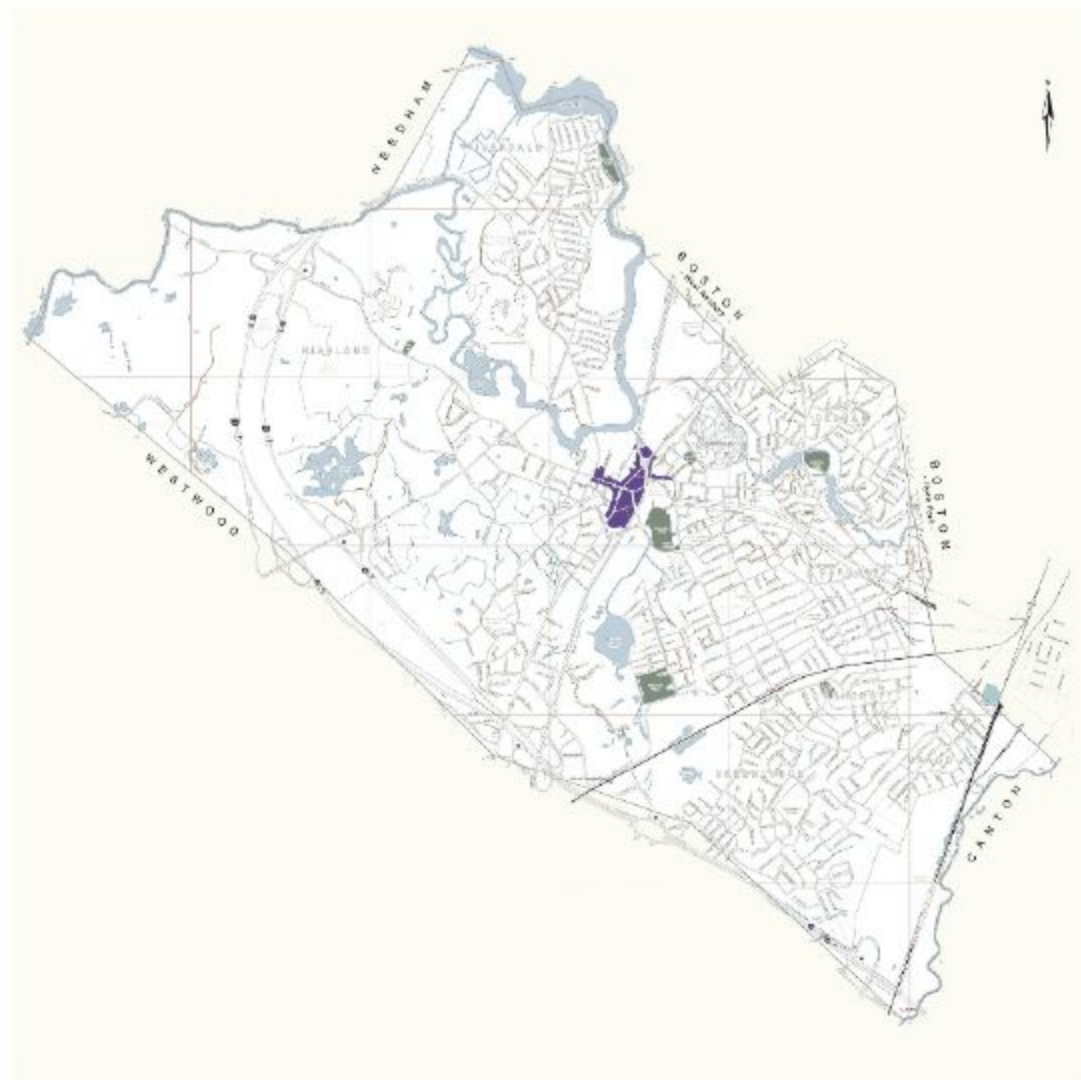
VILLAGE SQUARE

Made up of the semi-walkable nodes of activity not located in Dedham Square, this district hosts a mix of residential and commercial uses. This district is primarily made up of retail properties, with some mixed-use buildings and even fewer residential properties. Buildings are closer together (if they are not connected) and most are close to the sidewalk, with entrances on or near the sidewalk. Signs are a mix of pedestrian-oriented (see Dedham Square Character District) and auto-oriented (see Roadside Village Character District.)

Currently zoned "LB"

Character elements:

- > Address Numerals: Pedestrian-oriented; some auto-oriented
- > Outdoor Signs: Pedestrian-oriented; some auto-oriented
- > Wall Signs: Pedestrian-oriented; some auto-oriented
- > Projecting Signs: For some offices
- > Shopfront Windows: Front display space, some lighting
- > Shopfront Elements: Pedestrian-orientation, awnings, temp signage
- > Facades: Product display or promotional messages
- > Landscape: Ornamental plantings, some trees



Views of Dedham's traditional Town Center: Dedham Square

TOWN CENTER

The historic and cultural heart of Dedham, this district consists almost entirely of the mixed-use and commercial properties of Dedham Square. It has a "Main Street" character, with most buildings connected to their neighbors and featuring ground-floor shops and restaurants along the sidewalk. Most buildings are more than one story tall, with upper floors dedicated to offices or apartments. Signage is primarily oriented towards pedestrians, as they are typically smaller, lower, and more finely detailed than signage elsewhere in Dedham.

Currently zoned "CB"

Character elements:

- > Address Numerals: Pedestrian-oriented (scale); very few auto-oriented
- > Outdoor Signs: Few freestanding; mostly wall, window, or projecting
- > Wall Signs: Pedestrian-oriented; some auto-oriented
- > Projecting Signs: In some locations
- > Shopfront Windows: Front display space, night lighting
- > Shopfront Elements: Pedestrian-scale, awnings, temp signage, high detail
- > Facades: Solid entrances; Product display or promotional messages
- > Landscape: Street trees, screened parking lots



Signs around Dedham

B.3.d3 SIGNS (SEE ALSO: "DESIGN BULLETINS" #1-4)**DESIGN SIGNS**

Signs, together with a building's remarkable architecture, are the "voice" of the street. Signs tell the story of each district's offerings and they communicate to the potential customer something about the quality and level of service they might expect. This section offers suggestions for the prevalent sign types for retail and commercial buildings in order to:

- > Illustrate an agreed-to set of specific design principles aimed at incrementally elevating the standard of graphic communication for institutions and commercial businesses
- > Assist property and business owners to communicate expectations to fabricators and designers.
- > Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business or institution in an attractive way that contributes to the overall quality of the district and compliments the character of the building.

Design Signs to tell YOUR story - Each of the signs on a building has a different job. Most businesses will have a combination that might include several of the basic types described previously. It is important to think about the "audience" and to design the message accordingly. Some sign types connect with people strolling by on the sidewalk and others may leave an impression on someone passing in a car. Others tell a customer searching for a particular shop or that "You are here".

SIGN TYPES

Each type of sign has a different job, most businesses should have a combination of SIGN TYPES:

Projecting Signs - Projecting Signs present the business name and identity graphic to strollers, cyclists and motorists, so they should be designed to be legible from about 60' away.

Projecting signs can be either flat panels or three-dimensional symbols depicting product or services offered, such as a shoe for a shoe store or eyeglasses for an optometrist. 3-D or cutout figures symbolizing the nature of the business are most effective, since the view from the car gives the passenger only seconds to "get it."

Cornice Signbands - Are mounted either flush to the building wall or on to the architectural signband area often incorporated into the cornice over the ground floor shopfront. Pedestrians across the street have the best view of the business name on the Cornice Signband, so the message size has to be calibrated to the width of the street.

Wall Signs - Wall signs are signs on a building façade that are placed where the architectural features suggest a location for signage. The message they convey should be associated with a business located within the building. Imagery associated with the type of products or services is encouraged.

Window Sign - A well-composed window displays business name, important affiliations, contact info, hours of operation and services. Applied "cutout" letters are superior to panel or paper signs because they do not obscure the view in.

Awning Sign - Awning Signs are printed or painted on an awning mounted above a continuous shopfront. Messages should be simple - confined to business identity and logo. Back-lit graphics are discouraged.

Pole Sign - Free-standing pole-mounted signs typically identify businesses that are set back from the street and/or have a substantial frontage devoted to surface parking. Height, size, message length and method of illumination should be in keeping with the character of the surrounding district.

Pylon Sign - Pylon Signs usually identify establishments that are set back from the street behind areas of associated parking, and/or have a drive-through operation. Messages should be no more than a word or two designed to be visible from 500' or more.

Upper floor signage - Upper floor businesses should identify themselves with a simple, well-designed logo and contact information.

Temporary Promotional Signage - Temporary Promotion Signs amplify your promotional efforts in other media, an invitation to the spontaneous browser and comparison shopper. Paper window signs, or exterior banners should have a limited lifespan; and should not function as the primary identity or advertising method for the business. Temporary signs are an invitation to passers-by and should present "act now" promotional messages rather than business identity information.

Address signs (numerals) confirm to the customer, responding to a newspaper promotion that she has found you and is a navigation aid that assists the visitor or delivery service to find nearby destinations.

Signs do the job you assign - Signs can be a creative demonstration of your business personality and attitude. Businesses that have a lot of signs or signs that are big do not necessarily attract customers. The more signs a business has, the more cluttered and confusing the building facade appears. Since, on average, someone going by in a car can only read four words, the best signs rely on strong graphic character rather than a lot of prose. The best graphic character is achieved when there is definite contrast between background and text colors. The best location is typically centered over the storefront or door into the business.

Strongly Discouraged

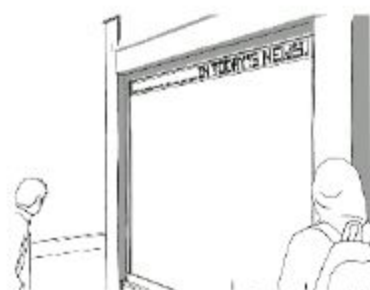
- > Applying too many signs on the building
- > Covering windows, cornices or ornamental details with signs
- > Blocking visibility of the store interior with signs.
- > Installing internally lit plastic box signs or vinyl, mylar or plastic film awing signs
- > Obsolete advertisements or other temporary signs

Encouraged

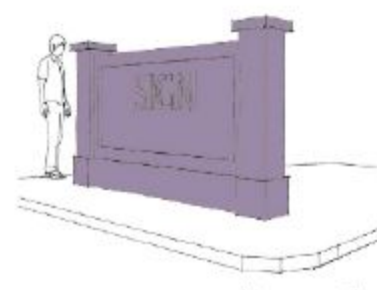
- > Replacing, repairing or installing signs that are scaled for the building and the street
- > Creative graphics and materials that maintain high standards in legibility and design
- > Design for flexibility to allow for change and upgrades
- > Signs in the frieze, signband, windows, doors, awnings and any other architecturally appropriate location
- > Creating a sign band for buildings that may not have a clearly demarcated area for signs
- > Installing projecting signs mounted perpendicular to the building face
- > Using plastic, metal, or wood pin-mounted letterforms
- > Exploring bold and vibrant colors, to distinguish a business, while still relating to the storefront design and the type of retail offerings.
- > Painted or adhered letterform window signs - providing a secondary level of information about business hours and types of services
- > 3-D fixed or projecting signs of an icon or logo that represents the business
- > Rear-lit letterforms or images on signbands
- > Internally-lit formed-letter signage which indicates business identity, but does not to advertise product brands.
- > Following the sign regulations in the Town's General Bylaws



Sign Band



Programmable Message



Monument Sign



Marquee



Window Sign -with Applied Letters



Pole Mounted



Projecting Sign



Awning with Letters



Sandwich Board
Examples of Sign Types

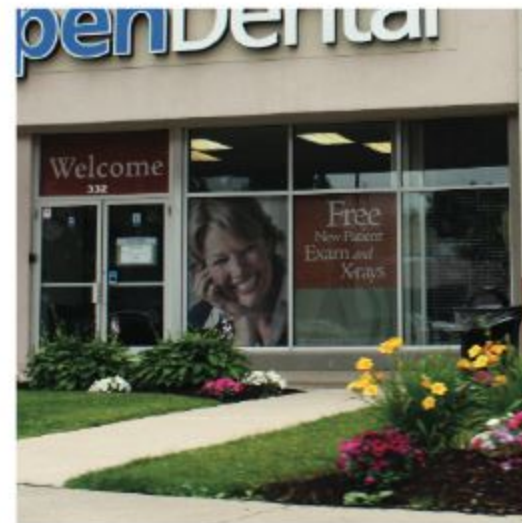
Improving signs

Signs can be a creative demonstration of your business personality and attitude. Encourage owners and merchants to replace:

- > Internally illuminated plastic box signs
- > Signs with too much information
- > Wall signs placed over architectural features

Improve the quality of commercial signage:

- > Sandwich boards should include a timely promotional message, something more than just the name.
- > Banners and other temporary signs, where permitted, should be refreshed or replaced every 30 days. Remove obsolete messages.
- > Plan outdoor merchandising displays and signs to work with the shopfront design.
- > Design placement of window graphic displays so as to leave clear at least 75% of the viewing area.
- > On buildings where signbands exist, that is where the sign should go.



Dedham shopfronts

B.3.d4 SHOPFRONTS (SEE ALSO: "DESIGN BULLETINS" #5-7)

Effective Design Review of commercial buildings within each of Dedham's Character Districts will focus on the following design elements:

- > Building facade
- > Display windows
- > Front doors / entryways
- > Awnings / canopies
- > Signs

Building facades

The building's façade should be a continuous frame around commercial signage and display windows.

Display windows

Windows that display goods or services should provide the maximum amount of display area necessary (unique to each business) for merchandise and well-lit displays.

Front doors / entryways

Along with signage, a store's best opportunity to draw a customer in is the entry area around the front door. When the character and level of detail around the entry is inviting, casual passers-by are more likely to stop and enter.

Awnings / canopies

The function of awnings and canopies is twofold. First, and more importantly, it is to shield display windows from the sun, rain and snow. Awnings and canopies can also display logos and the name of the business.

Signs

Commercial Signage should convey what your business does in a clear manner. Sometimes more signs do not amplify their effectiveness. Quality is often more important than quantity. For more on Commercial Signage, please see the next section and Design Bulletins 8 & 9. Be sure to consult the town's Bylaws, Chapter 27 - Sign Code, where you will find a clear description of allowable sign types, the permitting and review process, provisions regulating design and illumination, requirements for sign size and mounting heights; as well as special controls that apply only to the Dedham Square Historic District.



Dedham parking and landscaping

B.3.d5. SITE DESIGN (SEE ALSO: "DESIGN BULLETINS" #8-9)

According to The Town of Dedham Zoning Bylaws Section 9.6.3, applications can be made for site design review for all projects subject to parking plan approval, site plan review, or Major Nonresidential Projects. In these cases, site design topics that require review may include:

- > Landscape
- > Parking

Site design standards acknowledge both the requirements of modern retail and recognize the special obligation of operating in a vibrant, active, and urban realm.

Landscape

Trees and Plants: A quick survey of the use trees and plants in landscaping around Dedham reveals a variety of purposes they serve. Some act as buffers, keeping pedestrians at a safe distance from traffic. Others provide much desired shade on hot summer days. Still others frame points of interest along the streetscape or call attention to a particular building entrance. Some provide a pleasant place to sit while enjoying a lunch.

In general, plants and trees enhance the Town's spaces, improve pedestrian-friendliness, and soften spaces to encourage social interaction.

Planters: Planters are encouraged because they make it possible to have vegetation in spatially constricted areas. Planters should fit within the urban context, and must complement the architectural form, detailing, color, scale and materials. They should be sized appropriate to the plants they will contain, and proper maintenance should be planned for.

Planter design should seek to achieve the following objectives:

- > Bring an aesthetically pleasing element to the public realm.
- > Create an environment that encourages walking, and enhances the pedestrian experience.
- > Combines vegetation with architectural detailing.
- > Adds character, unifies the streetscape the character of the public realm.

Parking Lots: It is generally desirable to maintain a planted edge at least 3 feet wide between the sidewalk and parked vehicles. Alternatively, a low fence can provide a similar sense of security and continuity at the sidewalk's edge. Where neither is possible, the paving edge between the lot and the sidewalk should be constructed in a workman-like manner, with a curb or other "roll-stop" preventing cars from infringing on the sidewalk.

Because parking lots are often the largest impervious and dark surfaces, the addition of planting in islands or planting strips next to the parking lot can significantly diminish environmental issues such as stormwater runoff and heat island effects. Trees are particularly important for providing shade, as well as improving the aesthetic quality of the entire parking lot. Parking islands can have the same effect, but the fragmenting of planting areas should be avoided. Curb cuts to capture stormwater from the parking lot's asphalt surface rather than allowing it to sheet into storm drains.

Parking

This section provides suggestions for parking lot improvements and design standards for establishments that provide off-street parking for clientele and customers.

Several parking related conditions compromise the integrity of the urban realm, and should be avoided. Continuous curb cuts interrupt sidewalks and discourage walk-in business. A lack of landscaped or otherwise defined edge between the sidewalk and parking area creates the impression that accommodating cars is a higher priority than creating an inviting environment for pedestrians. Parking spaces that are not clearly delineated can lead to a pattern of parking that encroaches on the pedestrian realm and encumbers access to adjacent businesses.

When new off-street parking lots are planned, in order to protect the character of the town, the site should be configured in a way that limits the amount of building frontage devoted to parking. Several strategies are suggested:

- > Site the building entrance at, or close to, sidewalks at the property line.
- > Limit continuous frontage devoted to parking to two parking lanes and one travel lane, or about 60'.
- > Create shared parking arrangements that take advantage of the different peak demand hours of users.
- > Parking structures associated with new construction should be designed with capacity for a mix of adjacent uses.
- > Limit curb cuts to the minimum requirements for access in order to continue the street line and sidewalks.

In the case of existing parking lots, the following improvements are recommended:

- > Define the parking edge by change of pavement, landscape, ornamental fencing, elevated curb, and/or tire stops. Planting in particular can act as a visual barrier between pedestrians and cars.
- > Elevated curb or "tire stops" in every parking space protects pedestrians and landscaping from damage, and clearly delineates parking spaces.
- > Installation of landscaping, such as trees and or planting areas within islands or along the edge of the parking lot.

B.3.d6 DESIGN ASSISTANCE (SEE ALSO: "DESIGN BULLETINS" #10)

In order for Dedham to have a constructive level of involvement in future alterations, demolitions and new construction in town, the Board plans to:

1. Make the Design Manual widely available to property owners and public officials.

Property owners, developers and Town officials are aware that present procedures for guiding private property improvements are inadequate. The town will participate in the ongoing Town-wide efforts to create new tools and more effective procedures. The Design Manual is a graphic tool, meant to inform individual design decisions and to be a principle-based strategy that should prove useful to committees that evaluate variance applications and other matters that involve design judgment.

2. Develop an updatable set of technical recommendations for shopfronts, facades, signs, and off-street parking.

To be responsive to needs of individual owners seeking guidance for specific types of improvements, the town will augment the general advice provided by the Design Guide with topic-specific Design Bulletins. These simple, one-page documents illustrate how the principles and guidelines can be applied to specific design issues such as windows, outdoor displays, signage and lighting.

3. Recommend policy changes to improve the review process, based on input of stakeholders, applicants, board members, and town officials.

- a. Make the process easier to understand and navigate.

- > As part of "Guide to Doing Business in Dedham" project, the Board plans to develop a brochure that explains the role of each agency and board that has review authority, and that describes the obligations of property owners, developers and contractors at each stage of the project. This will be both a paper handout and an interactive web-based product.
- > Be involved earlier in the project so that applicants can take advantage of the talent, training, and experience of the board's members.
- > Hold Design Review sessions that "sync" with Planning Board Review. This enables the applicant to see that the Planning Board is reviewing for public safety and conformance with Master Plan policies and zoning provisions for things like building bulk, height, and access; whereas the Design Review Advisory Board will provide guidance on design-related topics or aesthetic issues such as color, proportion, materials or sign graphics. The recommendations of each body will be reported to the other in a timely way and in a clear, compact format.

- b. Create some "new tools" to fulfill its mission.

- > Comprehensive Design Guide that defines basic design principles for the kinds of projects typically brought before the board and then illustrates the application of those principles with annotated examples of buildings and design elements in a user-friendly format.

- > A "typical format" for the Recommendations Letter that includes a section to describe the basis for the recommendations and that distinguishes those aspects of the review that are "friendly advice" from those recommendations that need approvals and the actions of permitting agencies

- c. Clearly (re)define the role of design review and the powers of the **Design Review Advisory Board**.

- > Change the Bylaws that make the engagement of the **Design Review Advisory Board** part of the municipal agency level protocol for noticing and review – like Police and Fire; so that Planning Board and Zoning is able to consider their reports.
- > Change the bylaws that clarify purpose and intent for **Design Review Advisory Board** review – distinguishing that exercise from Planning Board hearings and reviews. Refine the two "tiers" of review, presently referred to as a Parking Plan Review and a Site Plan Review.
- > Change the name to Design Advisory and Review Board (DAARB).
- > Change to the Bylaws to clarify specific instances where the findings of the Board compel the applicant to either revise their plans or to seek relief through the ZBA.

- d. Consider amending zoning district boundaries in the Zoning Bylaws to be more responsive to the character of Dedham's neighborhood as described in section B.3.d.2 (pages 8 - 17).

- e. The intersection of Bussey and Milton is one example of a place where market forces and trends may enable a transformation from what is now a strip commercial area to a more attractive and viable neighborhood-serving retail center – changing, over time, from a Roadside Commerce character district to a Crossroads Village district. Though not anticipated by present Master Plan or by the Zoning Bylaws, this evolution - here and elsewhere - could be supported by the neighbors, and the **Design Review Advisory Board** and by the work of the Master Plan Implementation Committee as the Master Plan and Bylaws are amended to accommodate this desirable trend.

The following terms appear in this document or the accompanying Design Bulletins, and are further defined here:

APEX - The highest point of a sign as measured from the point on the ground where its structure is located, or, if no sign structure is present, the point on the ground directly below the sign itself.

BLOCK - A unit of land bounded by streets or by a combination of streets and public land, railroad rights-of-way, waterways, or any other barrier to the continuity of development.

BUILDING TYPE - A structure that is determined by a building's height, scale, use, and location of the building on its lot.

CORNICE LINE - A prominent, continuous, horizontally projecting feature surmounting a building's front facade, dividing it horizontally for compositional purposes.

CORRIDOR - An area along a highly-traveled public roadway, usually lined on one or both sides with commercial businesses that feature easy access by car and designated off-street parking areas.

DISPLAY WINDOWS - Windows on the ground story of a building that allow visibility into and out of a retail space and are used for retail display.

EAVE LINE - For a pitched roof, the lowest point of the primary roof structure.

FRONTAGE - The bounding edge of a lot that lies along a public street or road.

FRONT FAÇADE - The side of a building that faces a street; corner buildings have two front facades.

FRONT SETBACK - Location along a line drawn parallel with the street line or the front lot line and drawn through the point of a building or structure nearest to the street line or front lot line to establish the closest distance the front of the Building can be placed in relation to the front lot line.

GROUND FLOOR - The first floor of a building that is level with or elevated above the sidewalk, excluding basements.

NODE - Mixed Use area that is compact and walkable, yet smaller than a downtown and not necessarily along major roadways. Often serves as a neighborhood center for convenience retail.

PLANTING STRIP - The area between the curb and the sidewalk, intended to provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles, where grass and street trees are often located

SCALE - The proportion of a structure's mass and bulk in relationship to other structures in the structure's neighborhood; or the relative size of a building, street fixture, sign, or other architectural element.

SETBACK - The distance between the street line or property line and the building line.

SHOPFRONT - A ground floor façade, which is characterized by Display Windows and a building's main entrance. This facade is typically found on buildings that contain commercial uses on the Ground Floor, but have residential features such as a

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pitched rather than a flat roof.

STREETSCAPE - Combined design elements within and along the public right-of-way, including streetlights, sidewalks, landscaping, street furniture, and signage.

UPPER FLOOR - Any floor of a building that is above the Ground Floor and can be occupied.