

# **DOWNTOWN VILLAGE DISTRICT DESIGN & LANDSCAPE STANDARDS *(effective 9/15/03)***

## **1. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY**

1.1 The purpose of the standards that follow is to establish preferred patterns and a design framework for development in the Downtown District of the Town of Madison, in order to protect and enhance the overall quality of the built environment. Some of the design standards contained in this Appendix apply to activities that occur in public areas such as streets and sidewalks. They are intended to guide Town officials as well as private citizens in making land use and land management decisions.

As used in these standards:

- a. The word “shall” means that the relevant standard, criterion or action must be followed unless the applicant demonstrates that it would clearly be unreasonable or undesirable to do so under all of the circumstances;
- b. The word “should” means that the relevant standard, criterion or action will generally be required, but the applicant may offer, and the Commission may approve, an alternative standard, criterion or action if the Commission finds that the alternative would better fulfill the overall goals set forth in these standards.

1.2 The high quality of life enjoyed by Town residents results in large measure from the physical form and design of the town center. This traditional “Main Street” pattern of development is characterized by an inviting and attractive street environment that encourages pedestrian activity and informal interaction among residents, merchants, and visitors. This interaction is enlivened by the closely interwoven combination of residential, retail, service, office, and other non-residential uses built at a human scale. New buildings and renovations of existing buildings should respect that scale in all cases, avoiding uses and architectural treatments that would appear to dominate or overwhelm their neighbors.

1.3 In addition to the buildings of the town center, landscaping, walkways, as well as the relationships between buildings and vistas are important to the character of Madison. Landscaping should enhance, but not obscure, buildings and vistas, while walkways should take advantage of, and give access to, views, open space, and environmental features that are an important part of the Downtown District. Wherever possible walkways on private property should connect to public walkways and extend the pedestrian network of the District. In particular, access should be provided to Tuxis Pond, Scranton Park, the Green, the railroad depot and parking, and other reservoirs of parking by way of accessible, attractive walkways. In addition, existing vistas, especially those to the Green, Tuxis Pond, Scranton Park, Samson Rock, and significant public buildings should not only be preserved, but also enhanced wherever possible, including access to, and extension of, the Tuxis Pond walkway. Walkways on private property should connect to and extend the network of public pedestrian movement that is crucial to the proper functioning of the Downtown District.

1.4 The lively downtown street environment is a valuable public space that attracts tourists who support the local merchants and provide an important economic stimulus to the community. The economic and social vitality of the Town of Madison depends upon maintaining the attractiveness of this street environment, the economic viability of downtown businesses, and a hospitable atmosphere for residential occupants and visitors.

1.5 The Madison Planning and Zoning Commission has determined that the existing variety of building types and architectural styles and mixed-use development patterns found along the Boston Post Road Core, between Route 79 and Wall Street should be preserved in order to maintain the character and quality of the buildings and public spaces in the downtown.

1.6 The Planning and Zoning Commission has further determined that the Town’s downtown area should be encouraged to expand north of Boston Post Road in the area bordered by Bradley Road, Route 79, and Wall

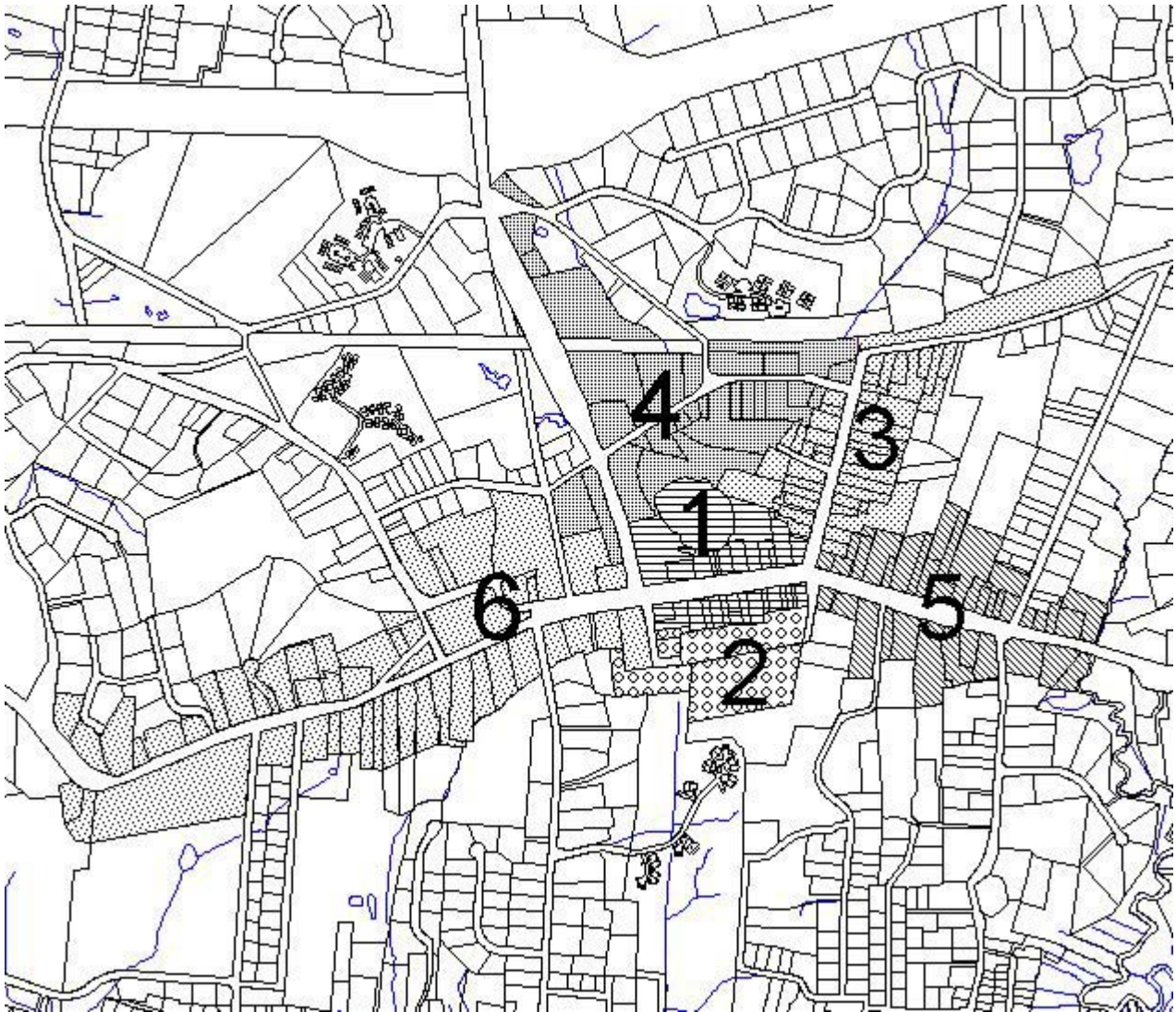
Street. These standards are to be used as guidelines to help shape new growth in this area in a pattern similar to that of the existing downtown core area.

- 1.7 The Portion of the Downtown District south of the Post Road Core, and including the rear elevations of the buildings and businesses facing the south side of the Post Road, as well as the area south of Meigs Avenue and Scranton Park, forms a distinct sub-district (known as the Backs), with somewhat different patterns of development, permitting larger scale buildings on the south side and uses oriented to parking areas.
- 1.8 Transition, or gateway, areas along Boston Post Road west of Route 79 and east of Wall Street contribute to the character of the Downtown area and are appropriately subject to specific design standards that will protect and enhance their unique character.

## 2. DESIGN RELATIONSHIPS AND TYPOLOGY: BUILDING AND SITE LAYOUT

### 2.1 Design Sub-Districts

For the purposes of these design standards six distinct design sub-districts within the overall Downtown District will be distinguished according to their individual architectural character and patterns of use (see accompanying map):



1 Post Road Core

2 The Backs

3 Wall Street

4 Bradley Road

5 Post Road East

6 Post Road West

## **2.2 Design Sub-Districts: Post Road Core**

The Post Road Core (between Route 79 and Wall Street) has the character of a traditional New England 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century downtown, with small closely-spaced detached or party-wall buildings that front directly on the sidewalk. This area includes a pleasing variety of architectural styles and types, although two to three story commercial structures with parapets predominate, and their scale, character and rhythm should be respected, maintained and enhanced. Traditional materials and significant architectural detail are also characteristic of buildings in this area and should be maintained. The primary design concern in this area is strip encroachment and the proliferation of curb cuts, which should be avoided in the future and ameliorated whenever possible. (See next page.)

Post Road Core (North Elevation):



Post Road Core (South Elevation):



### 2.3 Design Sub-Districts: the Backs

The area to the south of the Post Road Core, known as The Backs, includes the rear elevations of buildings fronting the Post Road and the larger scale commercial buildings to the south of Meigs Avenue and Scranton Park. While auto and parking oriented uses and service uses are appropriate in this area, the carefully cultivated public character of this sub-district should be protected and enhanced. Rear facades may have a more informal character than the fronts, but should still be architecturally significant in treatment and materials, signage and sidewalks should be attended to as in the rest of the Downtown District and service uses screened from public view. Larger structures should be designed in a manner compatible with the character of the Downtown District and according to the standards outlined below.

The Backs (North Elevation):



The Backs (South Elevation):



## **2.4 Design Sub-Districts: Wall Street**

Wall Street provides a distinctive and valuable extension of the Downtown commercial area, but is mainly composed of residential structures that have been adapted to commercial use. These structures are generally traditional wood frame and clapboard construction with frontal gables and porches facing the street. Commercial additions and adaptations, including signage and new windows, should respect and enhance the main structures and their historic character, and accessory buildings in the rear yards of Wall Street buildings, which have proliferated, should be held to the same design standards as the main structures. In general, the character of Wall Street as a tree-lined residential street should be maintained and enhanced preserving the scale, materials, detailing and patterns of use that currently characterize the street. (See next page.)

Wall Street (West Elevation):



Wall Street (East Elevation):

