

**KELLEY'S CORNER, ACTON**

# Design Guidelines



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Prepared for **The Town of Acton**  
by **The Cecil Group**



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

These design guidelines are intended to be implemented through the Kelley’s Corner Business District. They are intended to be used during review, decisions and determinations on projects under local review. These guidelines were created to assist both the reviewing agencies and the project proponents with direction to maintain a high quality of design as the overall goal. The following guidelines are presented to allow the proponents of projects and the review authorities to have a better sense of the design details that are expected to be part of building and site improvements.

## A Context

Kelley’s Corner architecture is a mix of periods and design styles. This variation contributes to the particular character of the district. While the present properties include several historic buildings, the district is notably developed with contemporary style buildings of more recent periods of architecture, and must be considered as to what contributions they may provide to the overall character of Kelley’s Corner.

## B. Principles of Design

These design guidelines are meant to apply to the “public realm;” those building forms and spaces that are subject to public view from public areas and in public use. Interior spaces and building code compliance are not the subject of these guidelines but may be considerations under the design standards.

Overall principles of design include:

- Support Kelley’s Corner vitality with uses and spaces that contribute to the commercial and entertainment experience of the district and promote attractiveness for visitors and patrons of the area.
- Reinforce Kelley’s Corner as a civic place with spaces for small public gatherings and discourse.
- Use examples of existing architecture and design in the Town of Acton as models for renovation and new design.

## C. Design Assistance

Because good design is project specific, for each project it is recommended that these guidelines be used with professional assistance participating from the conceptual design stage.

**FIGURE 1.** One of the most prominent buildings in Kelley's Corner is a cleanly detailed contemporary design



**FIGURE 2.** Building styles in Kelley's Corner are eclectic and include traditional building forms



**FIGURE 3.** Recent building improvements have contributed to the contemporary mix of building styles in Kelley's Corner



# 2 ARCHITECTURE

## A Architectural Style

The architectural styles within Kelley's Corner are varied rather than limited to a narrow range of established architectural styles. However, each building should be composed with its own stylistic integrity rather than a composite of different styles; the chosen style must be suited to the building type and scale to which it is applied. In the case of an existing historic structure, the integrity of its architectural style must be preserved and enhanced. In the case of large, multi-building developments, variations or expressions within a style should occur among the constituent buildings.

### 1 New Buildings

- a) **Sources** – The architectural style of new buildings may be drawn from either traditional models or from contemporary design practices applied consistently in the design. A single building design must apply one style well and avoid becoming a pastiche of several styles.
- b) **Multiple Storefronts** – In the case of buildings that have multiple tenancies and storefronts, design an overall architectural framework that is visually apparent and that helps link the component parts, but different architectural styles may be expressed for the different tenancies and storefronts.

### 2 Additions and Alterations to Existing Buildings

- a) **Compatibility** – Design additions and alternations to existing buildings to be compatible with the architectural style of the original building. New building additions may be designed as an extension of the existing architectural style or be a reflection of their own time, but must reflect a balance with existing patterns of materials, forms, architectural elements, or common details.
- b) **Integration** – Integrate additions and alterations to existing buildings into the existing building composition and façade organization. New architectural components must fit within existing building and structural frames and relate to existing architectural components so as to avoid compromising existing features of architectural detailing or style.

### 3 Historic Buildings

- a) **Preservation** – Historic buildings within Kelley’s Corner should be preserved and rehabilitated consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- b) **Expansion** – Massing and form for expansion of historic buildings must enhance the historic and architectural assets of the existing building and reinforce the preservation of the historic portion of the building through context-sensitive design.



**FIGURE 4.** Historic buildings and classic New England building forms are part of the diversity of styles in Kelley’s Corner

## B Building Massing

The building massing within Kelley's Corner should be varied to create a range of building sizes, configurations and roof forms. Highly-repetitive and overly-simplified building forms must be avoided. Building massing should respect the scale, configuration and form of adjacent properties and harmonize with their context. Buildings must be oriented to address the primary street frontage of the site and respond to distinguishing site features, such as primary intersections or views.

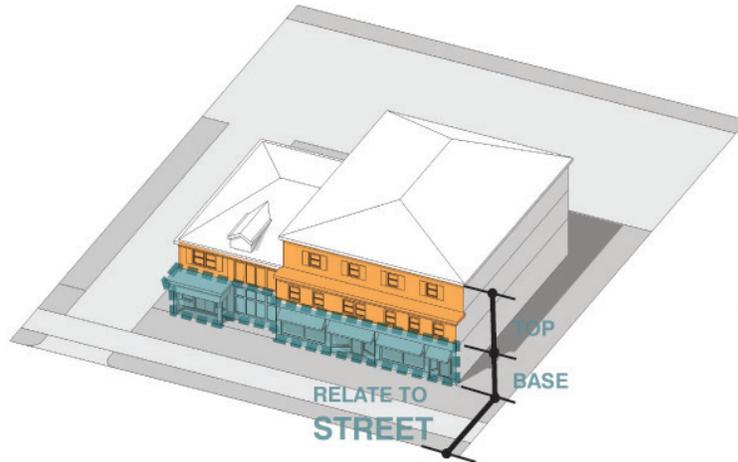
### 1 Forms

- a) **Legibility** – Design building massing to provide a consistent and legible organization of forms that reflects the use of the building, articulates multiple building stories, responds to the context and site conditions, and treats the organization of the building consistently.
- b) **Emphasis** – Design building form to place emphasis on important contextual features, such as a prominent street corner or intersection. When such a contextual feature exists, the building form must directly address that feature. For example, at a prominent street corner or intersection, the building form should address both street frontages of the intersection and place a vertical emphasis in the building form at the corner. Even within a one-story building, a two-story entry space at the corner may provide the effect of emphasis at an important site feature.
- c) **First Floor Height** – The height of any building, measured from finish floor to underside of eave, is to be a minimum of 14 feet. For a one-story building the additional height on the first floor should be integrated into the facade design and layout of building components and signage.

### 2 Orientation

- a) **Primary Frontage** – Building massing and orientation must address and define the edges of adjacent streets and public spaces. Building orientation and placement must reflect the context of adjacent sites by respecting established primary streets. Buildings should be set relatively close to the sidewalk. No parking can occur between the sidewalk and the front facade. Building entrances, storefronts and windows must be oriented to the primary street frontage or frontages.

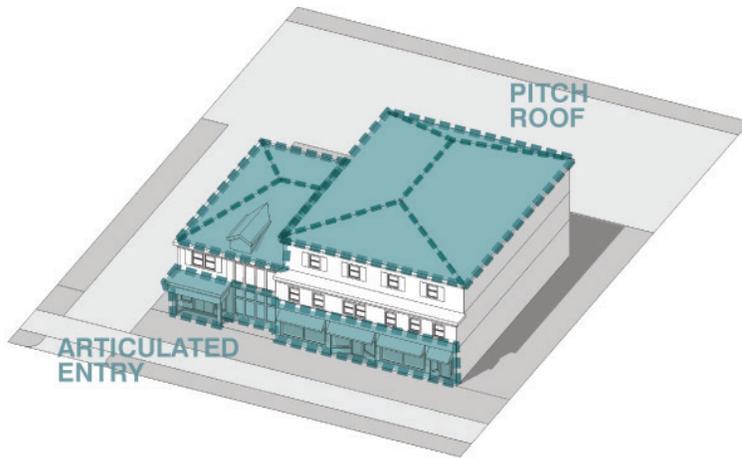
**FIGURE 5.** Building massing should be broken down to reduce perceived scale and relate to the street.



- b) **Pedestrian Activity** – Design building massing and orientation to define and activate adjacent street edges, open spaces and public spaces through the placement of the building on the site, location and configuration of building entries, and active ground floor uses. Use building massing to frame pedestrian spaces and provide a sense of definition and enclosure to public street frontages and public open spaces.

### 3 Roofs

- a) **Roof Form** – Variation of roof forms is one of the most visible methods to provide the appearance of a range of building forms in Kelley’s Corner. If a building is less than 25 feet in height, a pitched roof of any form is preferred (such as gable, hip, mansard, gambrel) as part of the primary frontage. Unless, a pitched roof would not be consistent with the architectural style of the design. If a building is more than 25 feet in height it may have a pitched roof or a flat roof. Although variation of roof forms in the district is desirable, excessive variation in roof forms in a single building is not desirable. A consistent approach to the roof form should be applied to each building.
- b) **Roof Features** – Large expanses of roof must be interrupted by a variation in the roof form, roofline or other roof or building features. Roof features that may be used to reduce the scale of large expanses of open roof areas include dormers, cupolas, parapets, cornice lines, skylights, atriums, chimneys or mechanical penthouses. Traditionally steeply-pitched roof forms are encouraged as part of the New England vernacular and to assist in managing snow loads. This type of roof pitch generally falls within the range of 8:12 to 10:12 (vertical: horizontal).



**FIGURE 6.** Roof forms should vary in order to create visual variety and break up large masses.

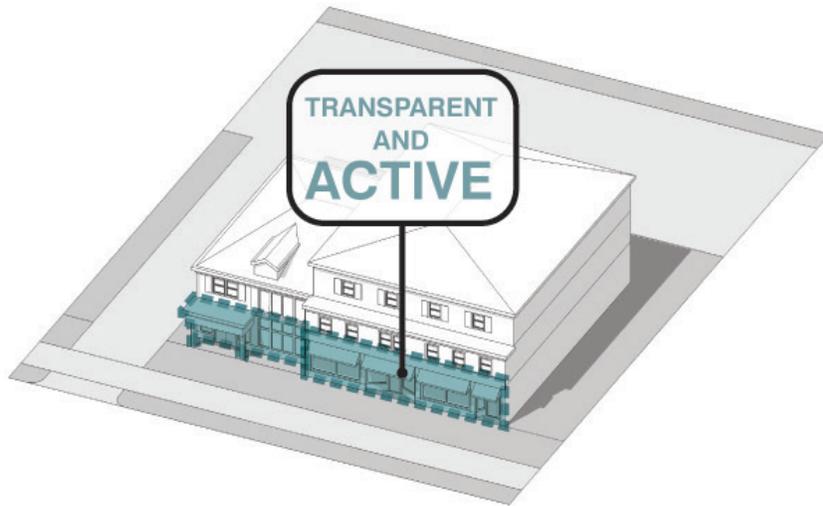
## C Facades

The composition and components of building facades within Kelley’s Corner do not need to reinforce a consistent architectural style within the district, but must be consistently applied based upon several important underlying design concepts. Facades should be varied from building to building and should respond to site orientation and context. However, each facade must be composed with its own stylistic integrity and design logic. The chosen style should be suited to the building type and scale. In the case of an existing historic structure, the integrity of its architectural style should be preserved and enhanced. In the case of large, multi-building developments, expressions within a style should vary among the constituent buildings.

### 1 Facade Composition

- a) **Articulation and Scale** – Moderate the building scale through articulation of the façade. Larger scale development or building facades should be reduced in overall impact by variation in building massing and façade articulation. Facades should be articulated to differentiate between the base, middle and top. The configuration of architectural components should be composed to relate to the pedestrian environment and reinforce the human scale of the building. Façade treatments and articulation should wrap the corners of the primary façade to be part of the design of secondary facades. Buildings located at a corner site should be designed with two primary facades.

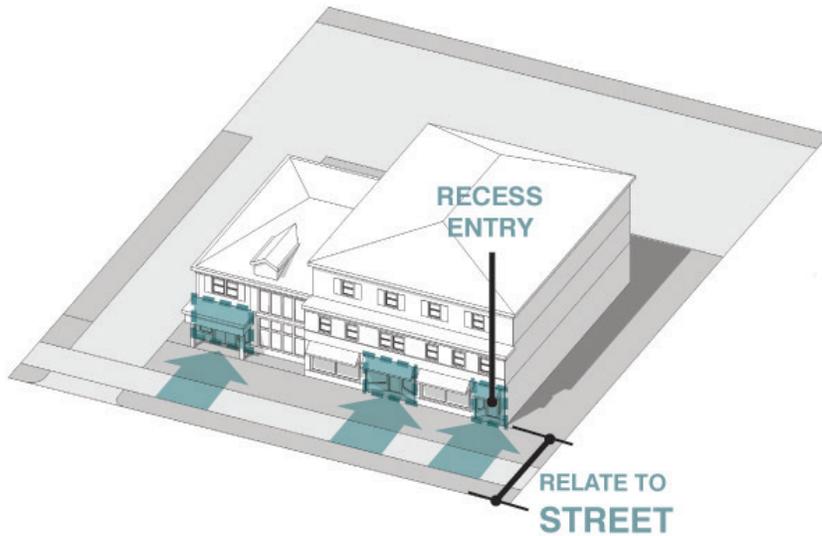
- b) **Pattern of Doors and Windows** – Windows and openings must be organized in a pattern and rhythm that is balanced and appropriate to the context and scale of the building. The proportion, scale, rhythm and number of openings should relate to the interior uses, but create an exterior pattern that relates to the overall building form and massing. Doors and entries should be framed by other openings and be the focal point of a balanced façade composition.
- c) **Transparency** – Building facades facing the primary frontage should have at least 25 percent of the overall façade area devoted to transparent windows and at least 40 percent of the ground floor façade area devoted to transparent windows. In a multiple story, mixed-use building, ground level articulation must clearly differentiate the ground floor from other upper floor uses with a difference in the scale and type of window openings and a more transparent treatment of the ground floor.



**FIGURE 7.** Building facades should have high transparency at the street-facing ground floor, in order to create a connection to sidewalks.

## 2 Facade Components

- a) **Entries and Doors** – Primary pedestrian entry doors should be the focal point of the primary façade. Secondary service and loading entries should be located on secondary facades and be integrated into the design of such façades.
- b) **Materials** – Building materials should be selected to be compatible with or complementary to the surrounding context. Materials should be of a high quality; materials with known maintenance or deterioration issues should be avoided. Traditional and natural building materials that typically are composed of a human-scaled module reinforce a pedestrian scale in the building. Materials such as masonry, wood and stone consistently perform well if properly installed. Contemporary glass and glazing products are



**FIGURE 8.** Frequent entries in building facades help to strengthen the connection to the sidewalk.

also reliable and attractive. Exposed concrete or exterior composite materials should be employed with caution to avoid unarticulated and overly simplified buildings.

- c) **Windows** – Window openings should create a regular pattern of either punched openings or storefront window systems. In general, punched window openings should be used on upper floors, while storefront window systems should be used on the ground floor. Other window patterns may be used, but should match the overall building form and massing. Window patterns may be used to balance the overall building massing and form. For example, windows with a vertical orientation can offset a horizontal building massing and balance the visual impact.
- d) **Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees** – Awnings, canopies and sign marquees may be used to provide visible and functional features on a building façade. Awnings and canopies should be placed on the façade to relate directly to doors and windows. The placement of these features should not obscure façade details. Multiple awnings on the same building should be consistent in size, profile, location, material, color and design.
- e) **Ornamentation** – Ornamentation may be used as part of the architectural composition and articulation of the façade, but must be authentic to the style and period of architecture for which it is employed. If used, ornamentation should be integrated into the design and composition of facades rather than tacked onto the design as an appendage or afterthought.

- f) **Color** – Color should be used to highlight or emphasize architectural or façade features. Color should be used to focus attention in targeted locations, such as signs, awnings, architectural details, features, entries or windows. Frequent application of high contrast and competing colors should be minimized.
- g) **Lighting** – Building lighting should use shielded fixtures that avoid spilling light and glare onto neighboring properties, structures, or streets, or upwards into the night sky. Building lighting should prioritize illuminating building entries, display windows, signs or other building accents.

## D Mechanical Equipment

Mechanical equipment must not be visible from public frontages. Screening should be used to disguise visibility of mechanical equipment. Rooftop placement of mechanical equipment is the preferred location, and should be screened along public frontages from ground level view. Screening may be accomplished by appropriate placement on the roof to eliminate view angles to the equipment, increasing the height of a roof parapet, concealing equipment in the building attic, or building a screen wall around the equipment on the roof. Mechanical equipment that must be placed at grade must be screened for ground level views from public frontages. Screening may be accomplished either by appropriate placement behind the building to eliminate view angles to the equipment or by building a screen wall around the equipment on site, integrated with the site landscape.

# 3 SIGNAGE

## A Relationship to Town’s Zoning Bylaw

The Town of Acton’s *Zoning Bylaw*, Section 7, Signs and Advertising Devices, provides detailed standards for allowable and prohibited signage types, signage illumination, and the number and type of signs permitted in each zoning district, including the Kelley’s Corner Business District (zone KC). It also explains which signs require a Special Permit from the Planning Board, and which do not.

### 1 Signage Types in Zoning Bylaw

- a) **Exterior Signs** – These are divided into Wall Signs, Projecting Signs, and Awning Signs
- b) **Freestanding Signs**
- c) **Temporary Signs**
- d) **Off-Premises Directional Signs**
- e) **Temporary and Special Event Signs**
- f) **Signs Types That Do Not Require a Sign Permit** – These include Agricultural Signs, Construction Signs, Directional Signs, Directory Signs, Fuel Pump Signs, Government Signs, Identification Signs, Landmark Signs, Menu Signs, Multifamily Dwelling Signs, Residential Development Signs, Political Signs, Religious Signs, Sale/Rent/Lease Signs, Traffic Signs, Window Signs that cover less than 25 percent of the window, Neon / LED Window Signs not exceeding 10 square feet or 25 percent of the window area, Yard / Garage sale Signs, and “Open” Signs.

### 2 Intent of Design Guidelines for Signage

- a) **Supplemental Role** – The intent of the following signage guidelines is to provide additional assistance in shaping the appearance and character of signs in order to foster a high-quality, pedestrian-friendly environment at Kelley’s Corner. These guidelines supplement the zoning requirements, and are not intended to conflict with any aspect of the zoning.
- b) **Note on Capitalization** – Words that are capitalized below, such as “Projecting Sign”, refer to a word that is specifically defined in the Zoning Bylaw, Section 7.



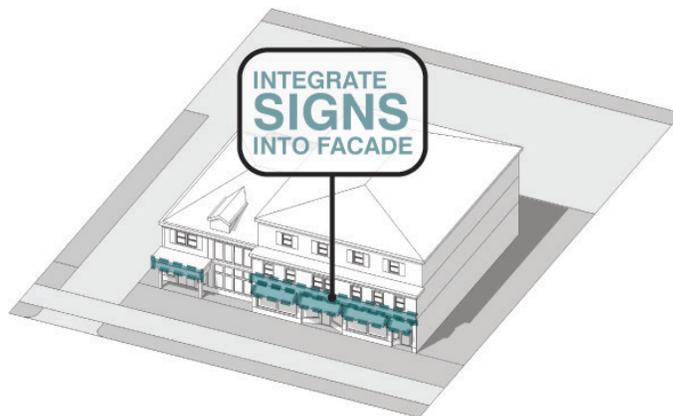
**FIGURE 9.** Hanging signs and temporary chalkboard signs are appropriate for pedestrian-scaled signage.

## B General Guidelines for all Signage Types

In general, well-designed signs increase the visual quality and character of the business being served as well as the image of Kelley's Corner as a whole. Because they are viewed publicly, signs can either add or detract from the community image. Additionally, well-designed signage helps to unify the street-front or building facade by creating an organized pattern of information. Signage design can activate a building's facade by introducing color and texture.

### 1 Role of Signs

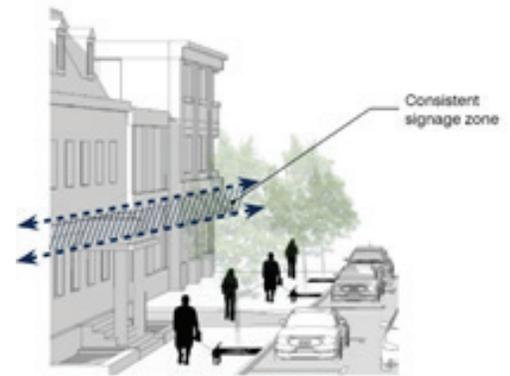
- a) **Identification** – The primary function of a sign is to identify a property or business and direct customers clearly and easily to the desired location.
- b) **Harmony** – Signage design should reflect the architectural qualities of the buildings and the Kelley's Corner area. Within a Business Center or block, signs should be compatible with the buildings they serve in terms of type, size, color, and material. In a multiple-storefront building, the signage should be of a size, location, material, and color that harmoniously relates storefront bays.
- c) **Restraint** – While the Town's Special Permits may allow a business to erect more than one sign, the overall number of signs should be limited to that necessary to clearly and visibly convey the name of the establishment, institution, or use and the character of the goods or services being offered from street approaches. Too many signs not only compete with each other and create repetitive advertising, but also detract from the appearance of buildings and the overall Kelley's Corner area.



**FIGURE 10.** Wall signs and other sign types should be integrated into building facades to create a harmonious appearance.

## 2 Location and Placement

- a) **Integration with Site** – At the site scale, signage should be integrated into the overall site design and be complementary in colors and materials with the buildings and landscape.
- b) **Freestanding Signs** – Freestanding Signs should generally be limited to buildings that have a significant setback or are otherwise not visible from the street or sidewalk, or where other signage is not appropriate to the architecture.
- c) **Integration with Buildings** – At the building scale, signs should not obscure architectural features of the buildings such as columns, windows, or recessed entries, but rather should be placed in a logical portion of the façade. Wall Signs typically should be placed in the sign band or entablature that extends in a consistent zone across the façade above the windows and doors. Wall Signs for buildings with multiple tenants should use a consistent height and line for the sign band of any wall signs.
- d) **Signage above the Second Story** – For buildings over one story in height, signage above the sills of second story windows should be confined to painted letters on window glass, and should only advertise the organizations therein.



**FIGURE 11.** Adjacent wall signs should be placed in a consistent sign band on the facade.

## 3 Legibility

- a) **Hierarchy** – Where a building or business includes more than one sign, the sizes, placement, and design of signs should create a logical hierarchy of information from large, easy to read content for drivers to finer-grain, more detailed designs for pedestrians on adjacent walkways.
- b) **Appropriate Size** –The size of lettering on signs should be appropriate to the intended audience, whether drivers or pedestrians. For example, lettering on Directional Signs, such as those indicating the locations of parking lots, should be very clear and simple so as to be legible to drivers on the far side of the adjacent street, easy to read amidst other distractions while driving. Lettering on Wall Signs on a building façade near a street should be legible to pedestrians on the opposite sidewalk. Lettering on Hanging Signs and Window Signs, on the other hand, should be smaller because it is only needs to be legible from an adjacent sidewalk or plaza
- c) **Reflectivity** – Matte, flat materials should be used for opaque sign backgrounds to reduce reflective glare and enhance legibility.



**FIGURE 12.** Wall Signs with individually-cut and mounted letters create dimensionality in the signage. Exterior gooseneck lighting provides appropriate downlighting of the signage.



**FIGURE 13.** Channel-cut signs mounted vertically above a marquee-style awning or canopy can create a strong identity for retail buildings.

## 4 Materials and Design

- a) **Durability** – All permanent signs should be of durable materials compatible with the materials of the building served. Their weight and form should convey a sense of substance and permanence.
- b) **Dimensionality** – To encourage visual interest in Wall Signs, dimensional signs that create shadow lines (such as carved relief signs or Individual Letter Signs) are encouraged.
- c) **Openness** – For the best quality appearance, Window Signs and signs in glazed entry doors should be screened or painted directly onto the glass. Such signs should be “airy,” with letters and graphics generously spaced so as to preserve the view into the ground-floor space.
- d) **Compatibility** – Typefaces used in signage should be compatible with the building architectural style, and with any other signs used in the same building or Business Center.
- e) **Colors** – No more than two or three colors should be used on a sign. High color contrast between the lettering and the background should be employed to maximize legibility. For Awning Signs and Wall Signs, lettering and logos should be provided in one color only, selected to enhance contrast and readability against the background. For example, white or light lettering should be used against dark background colors; while black or other dark, muted colors should be used against lighter-color backgrounds.

# 4 SITE IMPROVEMENTS

## A Site Composition

The composition of the site should provide for efficient and organized layout of buildings, parking areas and vehicular circulation, with a particular emphasis on pedestrian connectivity.

### 1 Building Location

- a) **Reference** – See Building Massing (Section 2B)

### 2 Site Circulation

- a) **Relationship to Entries** –Building’s primary entries should be directly connected to sidewalks or public pedestrian areas by walkways. Walkways should also connect parking areas with secondary building entrances.
- b) **Minimized Vehicular Conflicts** –Walkways, parking areas, and drives should be planned so that there is minimal vehicular crossings of pedestrian areas.

### 3 Parking Areas & Access Drives

- a) **Parking Location** – Parking areas should be located in the rear or along the sides of buildings. Parking area located along the sides of buildings should be setback at least ten (10) feet from the front face of the building.
- b) **Loading Location** – Loading areas should be located at either the side or rear of each building and should be designed to avoid traffic conflicts with vehicles using the site or vehicles using adjacent sites.
- c) **Shared Access Drive** – Parking areas should be accessed by shared drives whenever possible. A well-organized system of access drives will reduce pedestrian crossing areas, limit gaps between development frontages and ensure a more efficient flow of traffic.

## B Pedestrian Areas

Developments within Kelly’s Corner should focus on creating an attractive pedestrian friendly environment. Pedestrian connections, plazas and seating areas are encouraged whenever feasible.

**FIGURE 14.** An example of how parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings, and the portion of the frontage disrupted by driveways should be minimized.

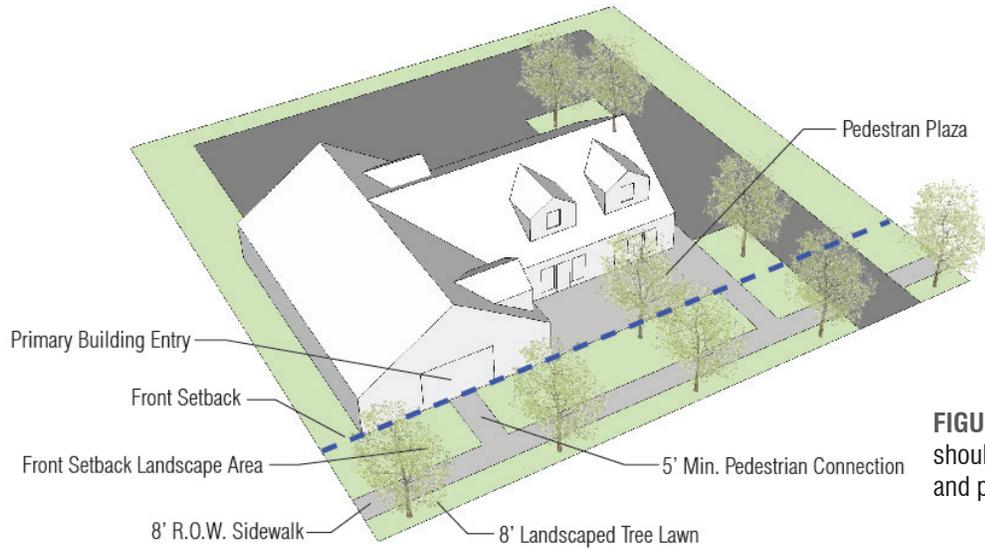


## 1 Sidewalks

- a) **Sidewalks** – A sidewalk should be provided along the lot’s frontage on a street or streets. The sidewalk should be at least 8 feet wide.
- b) **Pedestrian Connections** – Pedestrian walkways of five feet minimum should be required to establish connections between the sidewalk and primary building entrances and between parking areas and secondary entrances. Accessible walkways should be encouraged between adjacent facilities and parcels wherever practical.
- c) **Crosswalks** – In areas where walkways cross vehicular areas, safe crossings should be provided that include designated painted or decorative crosswalks at a minimum.
- d) **Hierarchy** – The site design should create identifiable and practical hierarchies among site elements. The traveled ways and walkway designs should distinguish among those intended for principal public access and use, and those that provide for internal circulation or service requirements.
- e) **Materials** – Pedestrian surfaces should be comprised of brick, concrete, or a combination of both.

## 2 Plazas

- a) **Size** – The minimum size for pedestrian plazas is as follows:
  - \* 500 square foot minimum plaza for lots where the net floor area is less than 30,000 square feet.



**FIGURE 15.** Pedestrian connections should link sidewalks to building entries and pedestrian plazas.

- \* 1000 square foot minimum plaza for lots where the net floor area is between than 30,000 and 100,000 square feet.
- \* 2,000 square foot minimum plaza for lots where the net floor area is greater than 100,000 square feet.

**b) Location** – Pedestrian plazas should be located in the front or sides of a building and should be accessible, well lit and provide opportunities for seating. The pedestrian plaza should not be separated from the building by a drive or parking area.

## C Site Amenities

Amenities provide convenience for pedestrians and create a settings for resting, sitting, eating and social encounters with others. Site amenities such as public seating, bike racks and other site furniture should be properly integrated into the site design. The amenities should be of traditional style and be located in spaces that relate to the desired patterns of uses, such as near entry walkways.

### 1 Furnishings

- a) **Bicycle Facilities** – Bicycle facilities are encouraged to be placed in appropriate locations in close proximity to building entrances and parking areas. Black powder coated round loop and post type bike racks are recommended.
- b) **Benches** – Benches should have a back and be six or eight feet in length. Benches should be of a traditional style, metal, and painted black.
- c) **Trash and Recycling Receptacles** – Trash receptacles should be approximately 36 gallons and constructed from black powder coated steel.

### 2 Bollards

- a) **Placement** – Bollards should be placed sparingly and used when it is necessary to protect pedestrian areas or site elements from vehicles.
- b) **Style** – Bollards be constructed from 3.5 diameter black powder coated tubular steel and not exceed four feet in height from the ground surface.



FIGURE 16. Bench style

## D Site Landscaping

Site landscaping is critical for making a site comfortable and at human-scale. Additionally, it can help frame building entries and demarcate important site circulation relationships.

### 1 Landscape Character and Disposition

- a) **Use of Native Vegetation** – The plantings should be composed of native species that thrive naturally without irrigation and are not invasive species listed by the federal and state environmental agencies. The choices of landscape materials should also consider their value in improving habitat. Native plantings should be chosen to withstand weathering and public use, with particular attention to durability and ability to withstand salted runoff from winter roads.
- b) **Placement** – Tree pits, raised planters and potted plants are acceptable to accommodate tight spaces in pedestrian ways. Plantings and landscape treatments adjacent to private buildings at the edge of any open space should be designed to soften but not hide the buildings and encourage public access up to the edge of the public space. Landscaping that has year round interest and complements the architecture is encouraged in areas where the development faces the roadway.
- c) **Hierarchy** – The site landscaping should utilize tree species and landscaping patterns to strengthen hierarchies among site circulation and elements. Primary pedestrian and vehicular access ways should be demarcated with landscaping that differentiates them from the rest of the site. A mix of species is encouraged throughout the site. However, trees of a similar form, character and consistent spacing is encouraged along primary access ways.



FIGURE 17. Landscape patterns

### 2 Screening and Buffers

- a) **Sidewalk Landscape Buffer** – All development subject to required zoning setbacks should include a landscape buffer between the sidewalk and building that is a minimum of 8 feet wide. The landscape buffer should consist of layered massing of shrubs and ornamental grasses where visual buffering is needed. Low height Shrubs, perennials and ground covers should be used where it is critical not to block views businesses features.

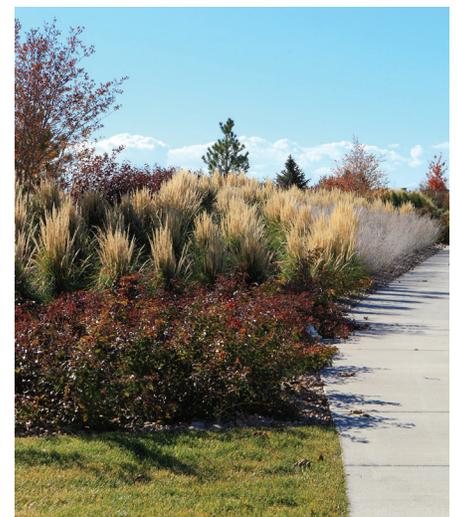
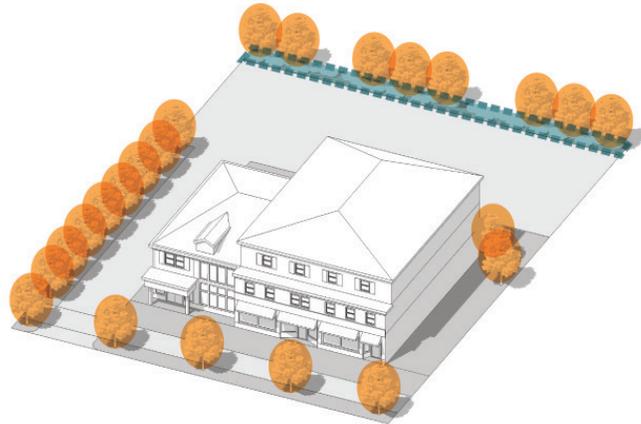


FIGURE 18. Sidewalk landscape buffer

**FIGURE 19.** Landscaping within a site should form an integrated, cohesive palette.



- b) **Property Perimeter Buffer** – Where nonresidential properties abut a residential property, a minimum strip of land at least five (5) feet wide should be planted with a mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and/or trees suitable to visually screen the development.
- c) **Additional Screening** – Dumpsters, storage areas and utility structures, except for renewable energy systems, shall be screened from view from public sidewalks, streets and adjacent properties by dense evergreen landscaping, fencing, walls or a combination thereof.

### 3 Landscape Preservation

- a) **Maintain Existing Vegetation** – Site development should be designed to incorporate, and limit disturbance and removal of existing trees.
- b) **Existing Tree Replacement** – Where preservation of existing vegetation is not possible and would compromise the development of the site, substitution of replacement landscaping is acceptable. For each healthy tree that is greater than 16” in caliper DBH is removed on the site, two native replacement trees should be planted. For each healthy tree that is between 10” and 16” in caliper DBH is removed on the site, one native replacement tree should be planted.

## E Parking and Loading

Adequate and convenient parking is a necessity for developments in Kelly's Corner. While an appropriate amount of parking must be provided, parking areas should be located to the side or rear of developments and integrated into the overall layout of the site. Expansive parking areas void of landscaping should be avoided.

### 1 Layout and Organization

- a) **Location** – Vehicular driveways and parking lots may be located to the side and rear of buildings or to the rear of a pedestrian plaza.
- b) **Layout** – No more than one entry drive per 100 linear feet of frontage should be permitted. A maximum of one parking bay (60 feet) is permitted to the side of a building on any one lot. The layout and organization of the parking areas should follow the requirements set forth in section 6 of the Zoning Bylaw.
- c) **Shared Access Drives and Parking** – Shared access drives and parking is encouraged wherever appropriate.

### 2 Interior Landscape

- a) **Minimum** – Where off-street parking for twenty (20) or more cars is required, a minimum portion of the parking area should be landscaped so that there are landscaped areas within the parking lot and/or immediately adjacent to and within five (5) feet of the perimeter of said parking area(s) in the minimum amount of twenty-four (24) square feet for each parking space.
- b) **Dimensions** – The minimum width of each said area should be six (6) feet, and the minimum area should be fifty-four (54) square feet. The required landscaped area need not be contiguous, but it is



FIGURE 20. Parking lots should be landscaped at the perimeter and within the lots.

recommended that no parking space be located more than ninety (90) feet from a landscaped area.

- c) **Further Requirements** –The plantings should follow the requirements set forth in Section 6.7.8 of the Zoning Bylaw.

### 3 Parking and Loading Screening and Buffering

- a) **Parking Areas** – Parking areas should be screened from adjacent buildings with landscaping if they do not serve such adjacent development.
- b) **Loading Areas** – All commercial loading areas should be screened with combinations of architectural and landscape elements. The combination must appear to be an integrated part of the building architecture and not an adjunct or add-on to the building.
- c) **Landscaping** – Where screening is intended, a minimum strip of land at least five (5) feet wide should be planted with a mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and/or trees suitable to visually screen the development without creating a discernible ‘wall’. Screening plantings should follow the requirements set forth in Section 6.7.8 of the Zoning Bylaw.



FIGURE 21. Stone retaining wall

## F Walls and Fencing

Walls and fencing are critical vertical landscape elements that may be needed for retaining grade or serving as buffering unwanted views.

### 1 Walls

- a) **Materials** – Wall construction should be composed entirely of stone or a stem wall with stone veneer with an ashlar pattern and color composition that is of a character inherent to New England.
- b) **Height** – Walls greater than five (5) in height are not permitted. Where a large amount of grade must be retained, terraced walls are encouraged.

### 2 Fencing

- a) **Locations** – Fencing should not be permitted between the building frontage and the street. Fencing can be used to aid in the screening of loading and parking areas from adjacent properties.
- b) **Materials** – Fencing should be of a material and style that relates to the site architecture. Slatted chainlink fence should not be permitted.

- c) **Height** – Fencing height should not exceed six feet.

## G Site Lighting

Lighting should be provided to supply the minimum illumination needed for safety and security for vehicles and pedestrians. Parking areas, pedestrian connections and plazas should be lit to an acceptable level without excessive dim or bright zones.

### 1 Pedestrian Lights

- a) **Location** – Pedestrian lights should be placed along primary walkways and near parking areas. The location of the light poles should be integrated with other site furniture elements and trees. Lighting should be located or shielded to prevent light from intruding upon adjacent residential uses.
- b) **Style** – Pedestrian lights should be of a traditional style and be of appropriate scale with a pedestrian environment. Pedestrian lights should not exceed a maximum of (16) feet in height.
- c) **Fixtures** – Lighting fixtures should minimize light pollution and be Dark Sky Association compliant. Additionally, direct light emitted by an outdoor light fixture should not emit directly by a lamp, off a reflector or through a refractor above a horizontal plane through the fixture's lowest light-emitting part. The lighting color temperature for light fixtures should not be greater than 4000 kelvin.

### 2 Light Bollards

- a) **Location** – Light bollards should be placed along secondary walkways and in close proximity to building entries and plaza areas.



FIGURE 22. Site lighting

- b) **Style** – Light bollards should be of a traditional style and with a full or semi cutoff fixture.

## **H Stormwater Management**

Sites should be required to meet all stormwater management requirements of the Zoning Bylaw. Implementation of “Low Impact Development” methods is encouraged, in order to comply with the mitigation requirements. This may include, at a minimum, the use of small, dispersed surface detention areas (‘rain gardens’), dispersed under-grade detention structures, separation of roof runoff from pavement runoff, and use of paving materials that reduce the rate of runoff. The most current version of the Massachusetts Stormwater Handbook should be referenced for stormwater compliance techniques and best management practices.

# 5 RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

Department of Interior Regulations, 36 Code of Federal Regulations 67, *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Available at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>.

# 6 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Many traditional terms are used to describe portions of buildings and storefronts. This Glossary has been prepared to explain such terms that are used in these Guidelines. Where noted, certain terms are taken directly from the Acton *Zoning Bylaw*. For definitions of signage-related terms, refer to the *Zoning Bylaw*, Section 7.2.

- **AWNING** – An element projecting from and supported by the exterior wall of the building, constructed of fabric on a supporting framework, for the purpose of providing shelter or shading windows.
- **CANOPY** – A permanent roof-like shelter extending from and supported by the exterior wall of the building, constructed of some durable material such as metal or glass.
- **CORNICE** – An element at the top edge of a wall where it meets the roof, which usually is profiled to overhang the wall.
- **DORMER** – A roof-covered projection from a sloped roof.
- **FACADE** – Any side of a building which faces a street or open space.
- **FRONTAGE** – [from Zoning Bylaw] A continuous LOT line along the sideline of a STREET. The sideline of a STREET is defined by the front boundary lines of LOTS along a STREET and not necessarily the pavement edge of a STREET or sidewalk.
- **GABLE** – The vertical surface that connects two or more sloped roofs.
- **LANDSCAPED AREA** – The part or parts of a lot developed and permanently maintained in grass and other plant materials, in which the space is open to the sky and is free of all vehicular traffic, parking, loading and outdoor storage.
- **MANSARD** – A roof with steeply sloping sides, rising to a relatively flat roof at the top.
- **MARQUEE** – Similar to a canopy, but also serves as a location for signage.
- **MASSING** – The overall form of a building.
- **PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED** – Describes an attitude or accommodation in which the pedestrian is the primary consideration.
- **SETBACK** – The minimum horizontal distance between the street or way line and the line of the building.