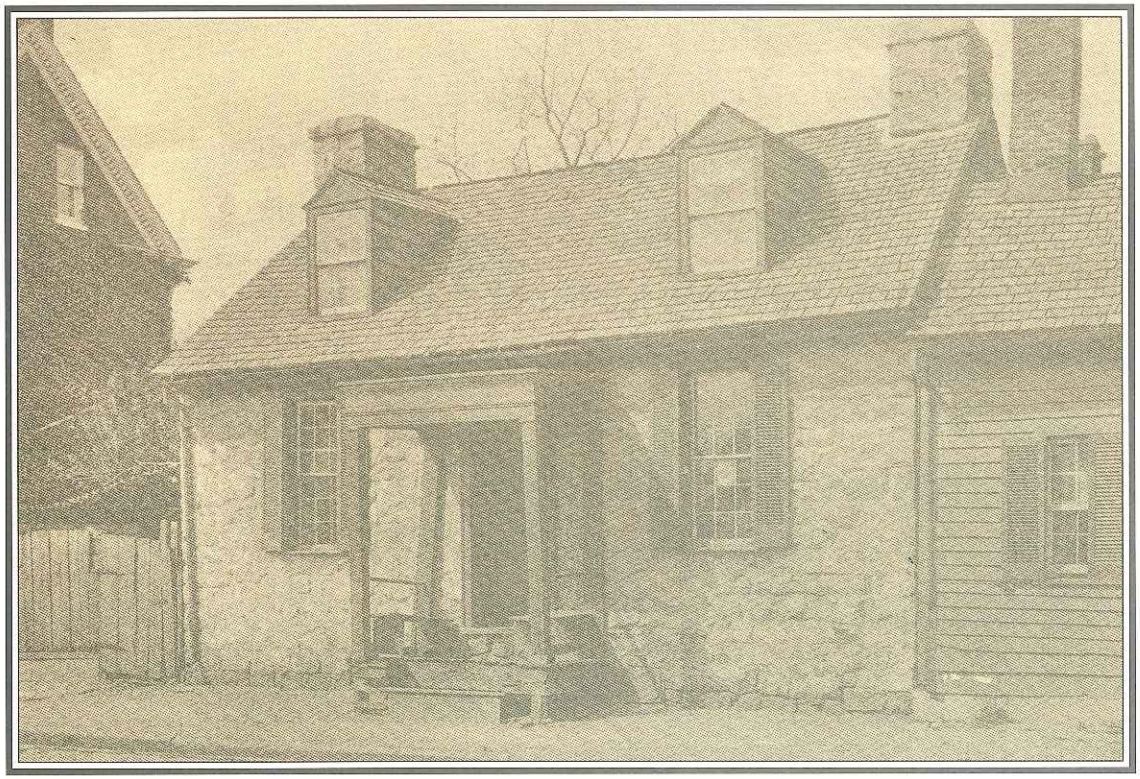
# BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES



*Washington's Headquarters*
*Loudoun Street, c. 1910-20*

## BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

*"First we shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us."* –Winston Churchill

Buildings are generally the most conspicuous elements of a development project. The visual character of buildings and their relationships with adjacent roadways and the other features of the site are important concerns, not only for the overall appearance of the development, but also for the development's contribution to the character of the corridor as a whole. Because the H-2 corridors serve as major routes of approach to the historic town center, their architecture should reflect the character of Leesburg, making the entrance experience both more understandable to visitors and more pleasant to local residents.

When development plans include rehabilitation of or additions to buildings that predate 1940—even those that may not appear significant—the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* should be followed. A summary of the *Secretary's Standards* can be found in Appendix C. In addition, the guidelines on the following pages should be used for both the construction of new buildings and the rehabilitation of older structures. These guidelines begin with a discussion of the importance of compatibility and variety in building design, and then address the major characteristics that determine a building's appearance.

## Compatibility and Variety †

*All new construction in design review districts need not be virtually indistinguishable from historic architecture or have a uniform appearance. What is important, instead, is that new or rehabilitated construction be compatible† with older, existing buildings. Compatibility between buildings is fostered by similarities among the basic characteristics that make up a building: its siting, size, scale†, massing†, roof † form, construction materials and use of color. The* Inventory of Existing Conditions, *the companion document to these guidelines, indicates areas of compatibility and those of incompatibility.*

*While it may be easy to recognize situations where compatibility between land uses or buildings is lacking, defining just what constitutes compatibility may be more difficult. The table on the following pages may help clarify some of these distinctions. For a more complete discussion of the items listed, reference should be made to the specific sections which follow in this chapter.*

*Equally important is variety† among buildings—both within the Old and Historic District and throughout the rest of town. Variety results from differences in the treatment of basic characteristics from one building to another. The degree to which this*


***Incompatibility** of use, height, setback, material, building style, roof form, and landscaping can disrupt both the visual character and quality of the streetscape.*

*A building can have an **intimate scale** by the use of a single-story front porch (top), or a more **imposing scale** by the use of a two-story, high-ceilinged porch (bottom).*

| **Compatibility of:** | is promoted by: |
|---|---|
| **Use** | ► building or site uses that are either the same as other nearby uses or by uses that support one another. For example, a neighborhood of single-family residences may be able to support additional residences, a park or a neighborhood store, but not necessarily a shopping center or office complex. The *Town Zoning Ordinance* provides further information on what constitutes compatible or appropriate land use. |
| **Siting** | ► the same or similar† attitude in the way buildings are placed on the site, such as their orientation to roadways and pedestrian circulation systems, the natural topography, existing landscape elements, or other buildings. |
| **Height / Size** | ► buildings that do not vary in height by more than one story from that of the predominant height, or in size by more than 50% of the average volume, of nearby buildings. |
| **Building scale** | ► the use of similar types of scale-defining features as that of other nearby buildings. More specifically, the building should demonstrate a similar attitude with its neighbors as to how it relates to the pedestrian. |
| **Massing** | ► buildings that demonstrate a composition of geometric forms similar to other nearby buildings. For example, the massing of a building may be that of a simple rectangular solid or "shoe box," or of a more complex nature with projecting bays, towers and other articulated elements. |
| **Roof pitch** | ► the use of roofs that are within 2 in 12 pitch of adjacent building roofs. |

**Roof form**

► the use of roof forms that are similar in appearance to those of other nearby buildings. For example, roofs with a single slope on each side, such as gabled and hipped roofs, are more similar to each other than are roofs with two or more slopes, such as a gambrel roof, or roofs that do not have a visual presence, such as flat roofs or sloping roofs behind parapet walls†.

**Construction materials**

► the use of materials that are the same or visually similar to those of nearby buildings. Because the visual qualities of construction materials are determined by their size, shape, texture and color, the similarity of materials should include a comparison of these features.

**Detailing**

► similarities in the form that construction materials take, or the way in which they are used. For example, a brick wall may reflect 18th century detailing by the use of brick jack arches, or contemporary detailing by the provision of large openings supported by steel lintels. Similarly, the form of a piece of wood trim may have an elaborate molding profile, or a simpler flat appearance.

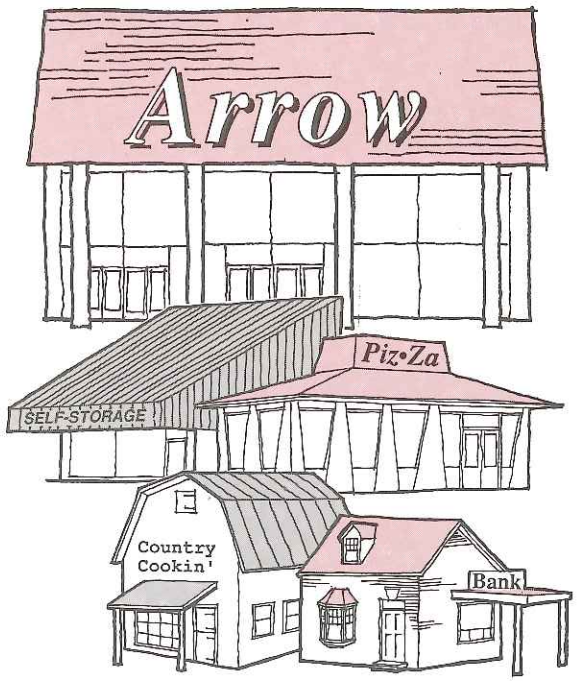
**Color**

► the choice of colors that harmonize with other existing building colors, according to traditional principles for selecting color schemes, such as complementary colors†. Because the characteristics of color includes hue, intensity† and value, the harmony of colors should include a comparison of these features.

**Design expression**

► the way in which building elements, construction materials, detailing and color combine in different buildings to give an overall similarity in appearance. For example, two buildings may be built of brick and have the same size and massing, but because of differences in their choice of building elements, detailing or color, one may have a distinctly more contemporary design expression than the other.

*The **incompatibility of roof styles** detracts from the overall appearance of a development.*



### *COMPATIBILITY IN THE OLD AND HISTORIC DISTRICT*

*Buildings in the Old and Historic District exhibit a variety of building materials, styles and uses, yet similarities in roof form and pitch, massing, scale, and height lend them compatibility.*


### *COMPATIBILITY IN AREAS OF NEW DEVELOPMENT*

*The individual buildings in this shopping center are compatible with one another in terms of their height, materials, colors, roof form and detailing, producing a cohesive appearance.*

*treatment is compatible but not identical is a measure of variety. It is this element of variety that helps create a building's unique identity. Compatibility and variety are complementary qualities: both are necessary in the development of Leesburg if it is to maintain a sense of its past, live in the present and look toward the future. The following guidelines address some of the ways that compatibility and variety can be balanced:*

► It is desirable that, in most cases, new or rehabilitated construction have some measure of variety in relation to other nearby, appropriately-designed properties. This variety should derive primarily from the compatible but not necessarily identical treatment of building characteristics described in the previous table.

► All new or rehabilitated construction should demonstrate compatibility with other nearby existing buildings which meet the intent of the H-2 District on at least 75% of the items described in the previous table. The context for this evaluation should include parcels both within three properties on either side of the proposed development site and along a comparable road frontage directly across the roadway from the site.

► For new commercial centers or residential developments incorporating multiple buildings, each individual building or structure should be compatible with other buildings within the overall design plan. Even if developed incrementally over time, there should be a master design plan that relates buildings to each other and to the total development.

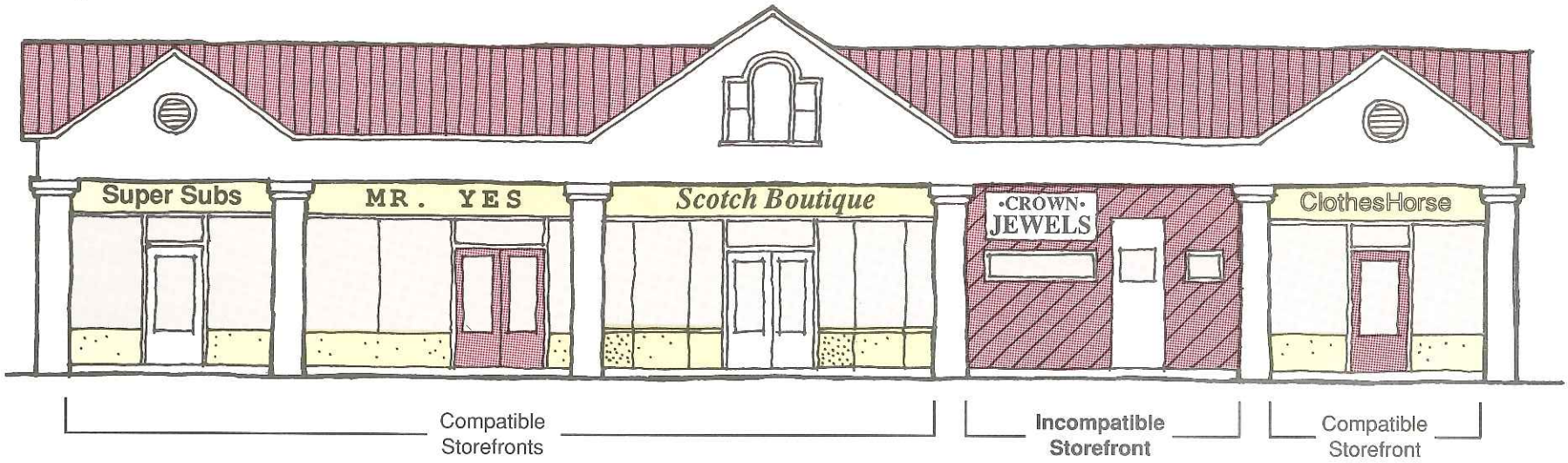
► Additions or alterations to existing structures should be compatible with and enhance the existing design plan whenever possible. If a different design expression from that of the existing structures is adopted for additions and alterations, then the new design should be applied to the older construction as well.

► Building form for townhomes, row houses and apartments, should be expressed through variations in the basic architectural design. Such expression helps to reduce the scale of the building and increase the individual identity of each unit.

► In major commercial developments composed of buildings with multiple tenants, the design and/or selection of exterior building elements or features common to all tenant spaces—such as doors, windows, building materials, textures, colors, and other storefront features—should be compatible. Variety between individual storefronts may be introduced—such as in the choice of lettering for signs or accent paint colors—to reflect the character of particular businesses, but in general the design features of storefronts should be subordinate to the overall design expression of the development as a whole.

***Variety** in the use of building elements and landscape treatment provides a sense of identity and character to individual dwellings in a multi-unit residential grouping.*

*The **incompatible treatment** of an individual storefront in a building with multiple tenants detracts from the design expression of the building as a whole.*



## Siting / Relationship to Roadway

*The siting of a building is influenced by many concerns such as site access, topography, the building's function, desired image and need for parking to name a few. Yet, unless the building or development is totally screened† from the roadway, it should also be sited and oriented in such a way as to have a positive visual presence on the corridor. The following guidelines provide suggestions for creating a strong building identity through siting, orientation and ground-floor-level pedestrian features:*

► Buildings should be sited not only in compliance with applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance such as setback requirements, but also to retain as many of the natural features of the site as possible.

► Building entrances should be clearly defined, providing a strong visual cue to motorists and pedestrians alike. Sidewalks, crosswalks and other pedestrian circulation elements should be directly associated with building entries.

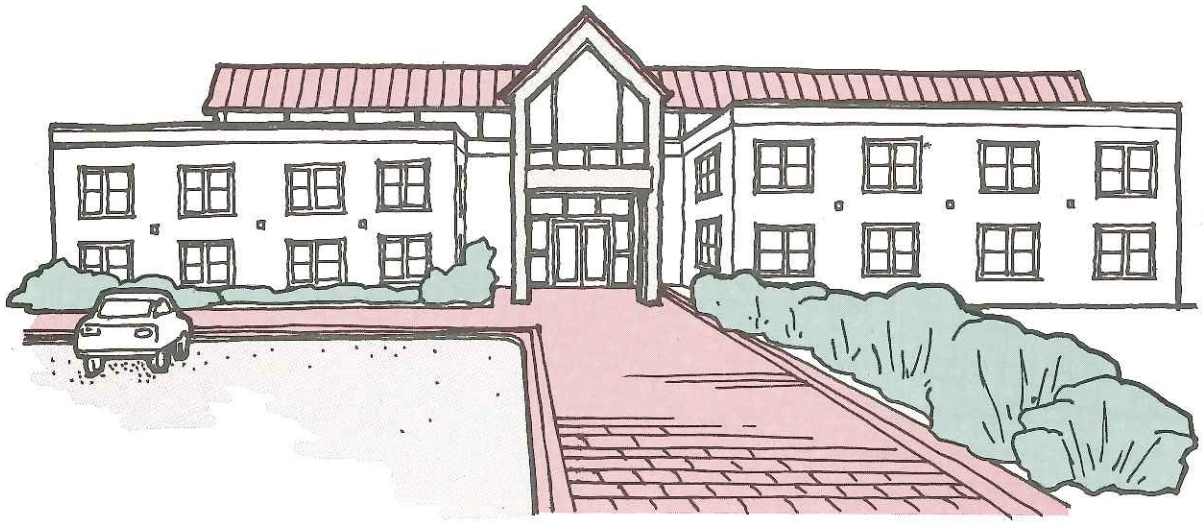
► A publicly-oriented building, such as an office or commercial facility, should have as its primary orientation the major adjacent roadway from which it is accessible. This orientation should be expressed not only in the building's predominant architectural expression but also through the presence of a clearly recognizable entrance. When the approach to such a building is from a different direction than that of the roadway, the building should have an entrance which is oriented to the direction of approach, while maintaining a consistent architectural identity that is also recognizable from the adjacent roadway.

► Buildings that are residential in character or which do not relate primarily to the general public should generally respond to site conditions or features such as direction of approach, open space or views for their orientation rather than to the major adjacent roadway.

► The side or rear facade† of a building located adjacent to and visible from a roadway should be designed with as much attention as the primary facade, even if the roadway is not the building's primary orientation or point of entry. Windows, doors, balconies and varied rooflines all help to add visual interest. When buildings must present blank side or rear walls to the roadway, these must be screened from view with appropriate plant materials, berms or other screening.

► When several buildings are to be located on a given site, they should be arranged as

*Clearly defined **walkways and building entrances** provide a safer, more convenient pedestrian environment. The use of specialty paving materials or pavement markings helps to delineate pedestrian areas for motorists and pedestrians alike.*



much as possible to form outdoor spaces that provide a setting for pedestrian activity and/or promote smaller-scale parking areas.

► Additions to existing buildings should be sited and oriented so that they are clearly subordinate to the existing structure. However, additions may be sited in a more conspicuous manner if the intent is to provide a new entry or to re-orient the building in a new direction.

► The ground floor level of buildings where pedestrian activity is considerable should include elements of pedestrian interest. Display windows, retail shops, and courtyard entrances are suggested. Uses which visually disrupt the continuity of pedestrian movement should be avoided or screened. This includes open parking lots, parking structures, blank walls, service or delivery areas of buildings, etc.

## Size and Scale

*The size of a development is sometimes determined by the site area available or the perceived market demand for a particular use. Even when a building may be of a size appropriate to its needs, people who live, work or shop in it may nevertheless feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed by it. Thus, it is not only the size of a building but also its sense of scale†—the way in which a building can be visually broken down into components of a size to which people can relate—that determines a building's comfort and appeal. The following guidelines help promote better awareness of appropriate building size and scale:*

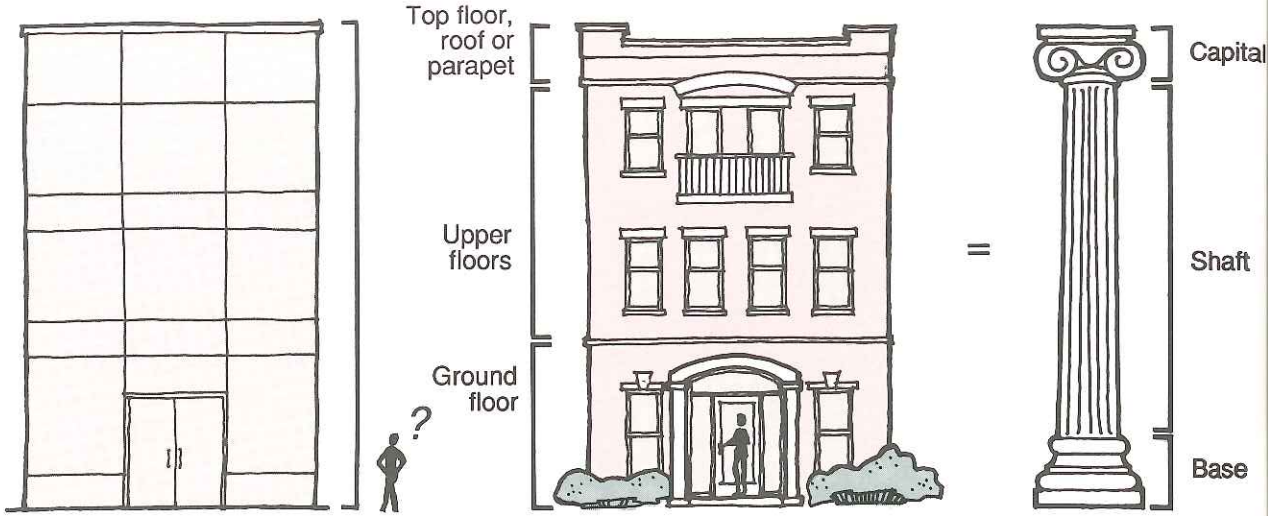
*Balconies, windows, varied roof lines, building detail and landscaping provide visual interest to the **rear of buildings** visible from the roadway.*

► All buildings should promote a better sense of scale by observing and clearly expressing a basic three-part organization, similar to the base, shaft and capital of a column. This may take the form of 1) ground floor, 2) upper floors, 3) roof, parapet† or cornice,† *or* 1) foundation†, 2) wall, 3) roof for smaller buildings.

► The size of a building or collection of buildings should be appropriate to the function and the range of activities accommodated. Residential developments, for example, should not be built with large numbers of dwellings at a uniform density throughout the site, but with dwellings clustered in recognizable subgroups that can successfully function as neighborhoods†. Commercial developments may also cluster shops that relate more closely to smaller, decentralized parking areas.

► Buildings should attempt to relate to the pedestrian by including human-scale† elements in the building design. Features that give a distorted sense of human scale or no visual frame of reference as to building size should be avoided. The table on the following page lists scale-related features to be encouraged and avoided in building design.

*Buildings should be considered as being composed of **three parts**, similar to the parts of a column. Each building has a ground floor, upper floor(s), and a roof or parapet. Expressing these elements provides a building with a better sense of scale.*




| Features that **Promote** Human Scale in Buildings: | Features that **Obscure or Destroy** Human Scale: |
|---|---|
| • Recessed or projecting entries | • Flat or unarticulated entries |
| • Individual, human-sized windows; multiple window panes; total shutter size equal to window size | • Oversized windows with large,single panes of glass; undersized shutters |
| • Balconies, columns, covered walkways and other facade projections or recesses | • Flat or continuous curtain wall† facades |
| • Walls with doors and windows, differentiated wall surfaces, and other building detail | • Blank walls |
| • Textured and/or modular building materials (bricks, clapboards†) | • Smooth or panelized building materials (stucco†; metal or prefabricated concrete panels) |
| • Visible roofs or roof elements | • Flat (not visible) roofs |
| • Sidewalks, lighting, landscaping | • Lack of pedestrian amenities |

## Massing and Roof Form

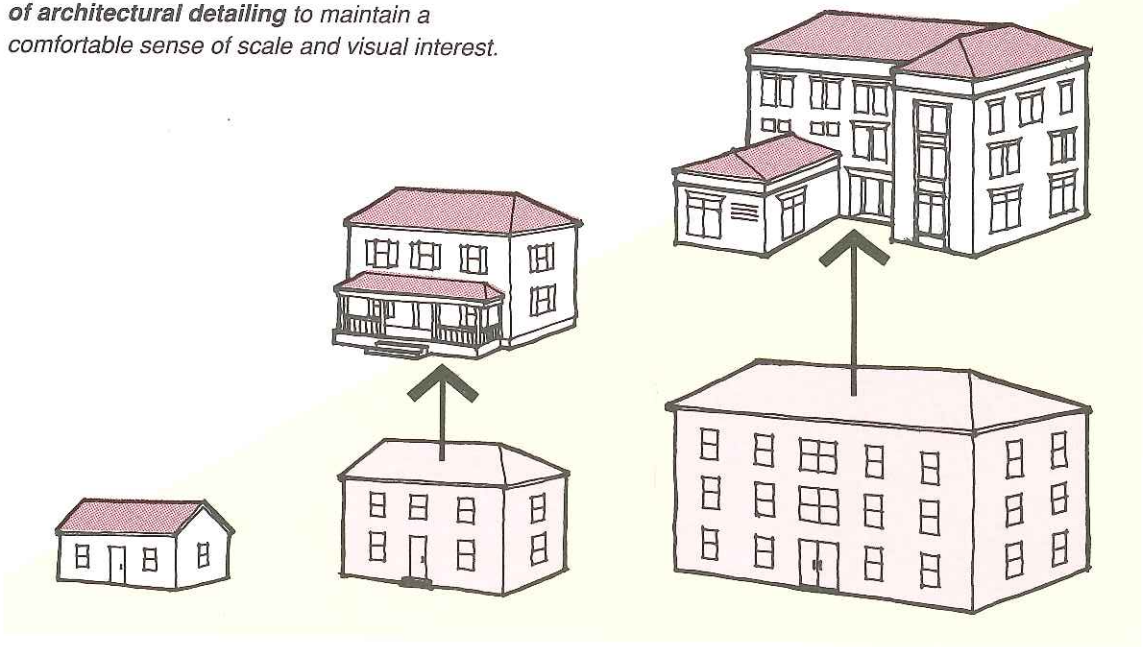
*The massing of a building—its overall shape or composition of geometric forms—and the shape of its roof are primary sources of its visual interest. These characteristics may often provide strong clues to a building's function, promote the more rapid recognition of a particular building and its occupants, and even occasionally give a building the role of a landmark or guidepost in the physical organization of town. The following guidelines suggest the importance of building massing and roof form in making buildings or development projects more interesting and identifiable:*

► The massing of an individual building should be compatible with that of other nearby, appropriately-designed buildings of similar† size and function. For example, a simple building mass should not be introduced into an area where the massing of existing buildings is more complex.

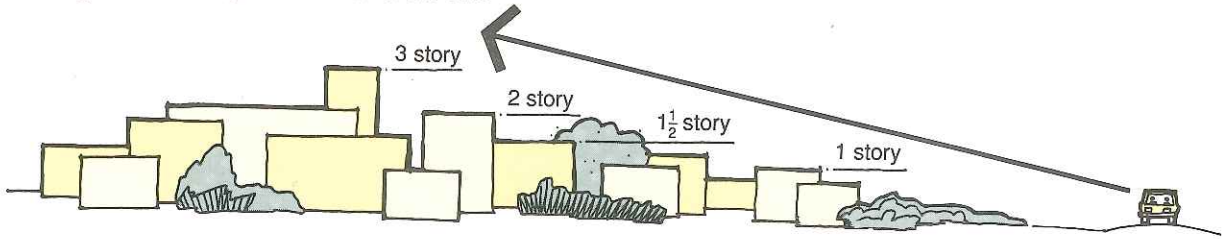
► As the size of a building increases, the complexity of its massing should also increase in order to provide suitable visual interest and maintain a comfortable human scale.

► Projects containing many buildings or accommodating a variety of different functions generally should provide variety in building size and massing. A transition from small or low buildings on street frontages to larger and

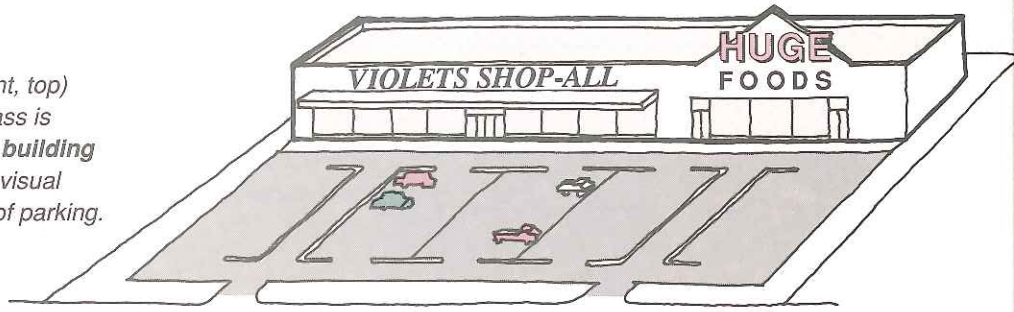
*Larger buildings should be characterized by **greater complexity of massing** and **inclusion of architectural detailing** to maintain a comfortable sense of scale and visual interest.*



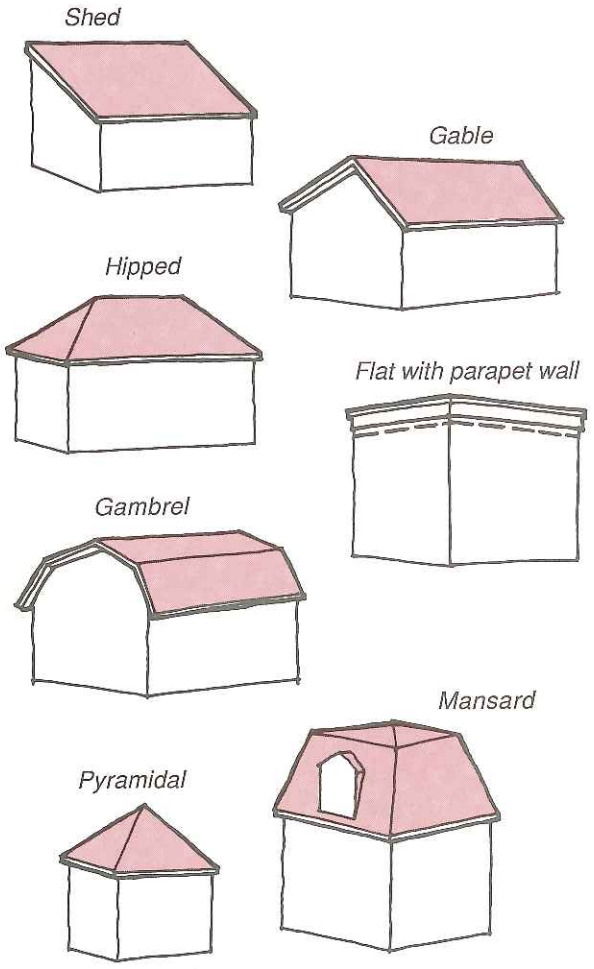

*A **hierarchy of massing** and building heights creates visual interest. Lower buildings should be placed closer to the roadway, with taller buildings near the middle and rear of the site.*

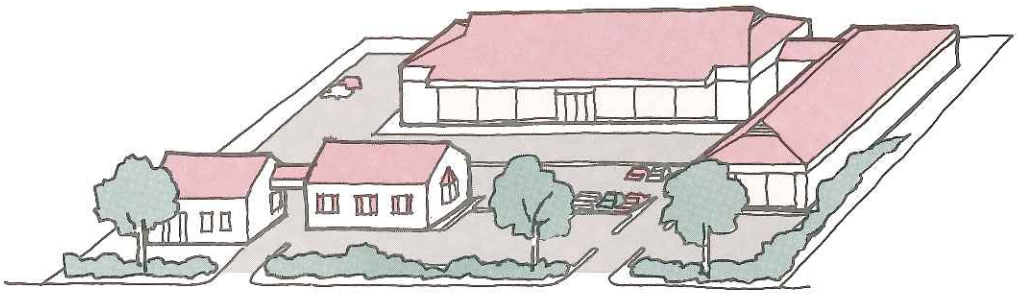


*An **obtrusive expanse of parking** (right, top) occurs when a single, large building mass is located at the rear of a site. **Variety in building massing** and siting (bottom) promotes visual interest and reduces the visual impact of parking.*




***COMMON ROOF TYPES***



taller structures on the interior of the properties is generally encouraged.

► On large commercial sites, development of a single large building mass is less desirable than an arrangement of several smaller buildings which would add visual interest, spatial variety and more human scale to the site. Such massing also can help subdivide a large parking lot into several smaller areas.

► The roof type selected for a building should relate to the building's function and character. Simple pitched or gabled roofs are generally appropriate for one and two story construction, while taller, more highly visible buildings may be better suited to hipped roofs or flat roofs behind parapet walls.

► High-profile roofs such as mansards are generally only appropriate for larger-scale residential buildings. Because they provide an additional level of floor space, they should generally incorporate dormer† windows that are characteristic of that roof type.

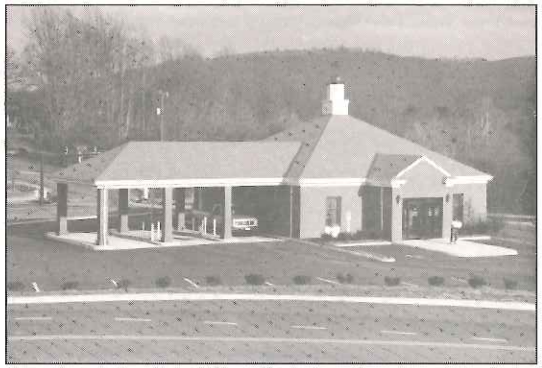
► Buildings should have a roof type that is compatible with those found on other nearby appropriately-designed buildings having the same or similar function. For example, barn-like gambrel roofs are not appropriate for most commercial buildings.

► When a building with a drive-thru window requires a roof covering, the drive-thru should be structured as a clearly defined building mass with a roof that is compatible with that of the main building mass. Drive-thrus with flat roofs—especially those built of insubstantial-looking corrugated metal roof decking—attached to buildings with more prominent roof forms should be avoided.

► For projects with more than one building, all roofs generally should be of the same type but may vary from each other in height. If several roof types are used for projects with many buildings, they should have a common pitch or slope but still provide variety in height.

► Roofs should not be used as non-functioning decorative elements. If visible, a roof should function as part of the building enclosure rather than as a false facade or add-on element.

***Drive-thru structures** should have roofs that relate to the roof style of the main building.*



## Facade Elements

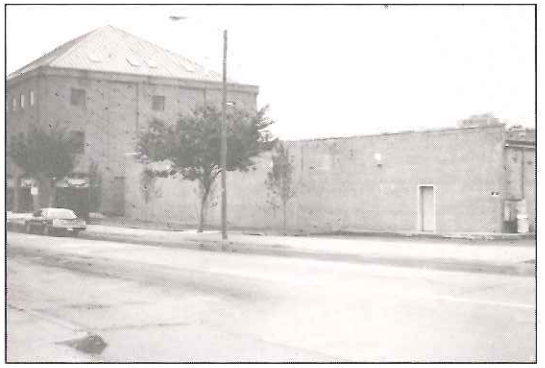
*Apart from the general size and massing of a building, various exterior architectural elements are most responsible for a building's character and appearance. Generally, these exterior elements are an expression of the internal functions or needs of the building's occupants. All too often, however, such elements are added simply for their visual effect, with little relationship either to each other or to the interior functions of the building and its users. The following guidelines provide assistance in choosing and coordinating the use of facade elements:*

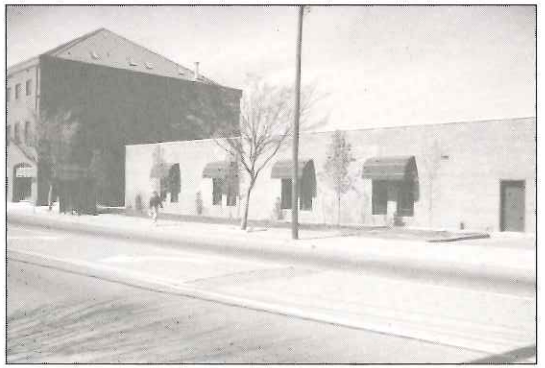
► Buildings should be planned and perceived as a single architectural entity rather than a collection of unrelated facades or elevations†. The architectural character and detailing of a building's primary facade should also be evident in the compatible treatment of side and rear elevations when these are visible from public rights-of-way.

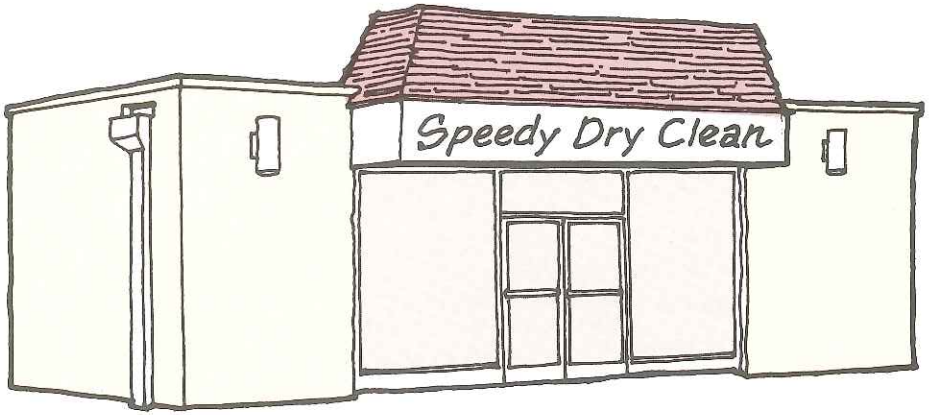
► Blank walls—even at the side of a building—produce a deadening appearance and should be avoided. Instead, doors, windows or other architectural elements that reflect the character of the front facade of the building should be used on the remaining elevations if possible.

► Three-dimensional structural building elements such as porches, display or bay windows†, parapet walls, dormers, towers and

***Blank side walls** visible from the public right-of-way (top) have a deadening effect on the streetscape. The **inclusion of windows,** awnings and other details (bottom) from the front facade enhances the building's character and improves the appearance of the streetscape.*

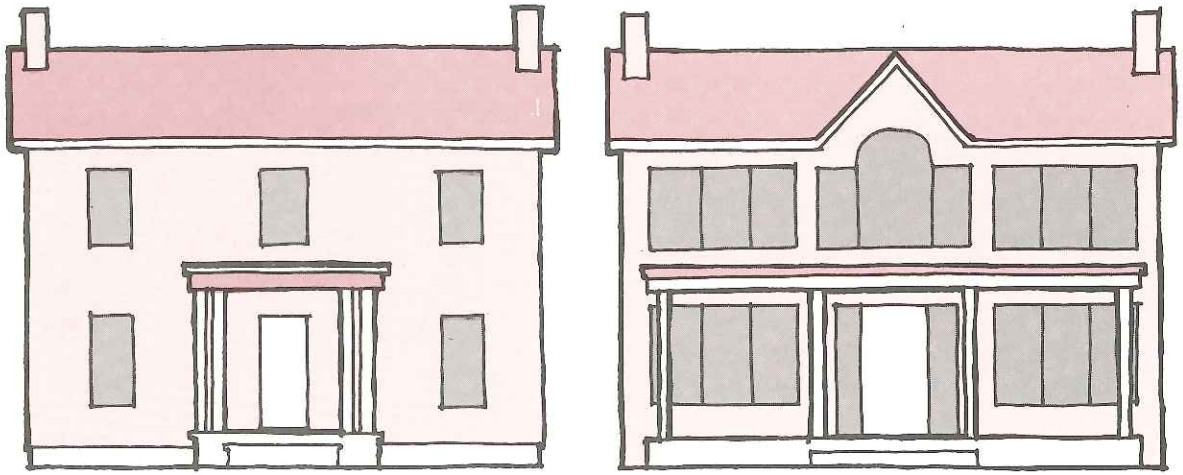







*Elements such as roofs or canopies should not appear to be pasted-on but should be designed and built as **integral parts** of the overall building design.*

*Most buildings should have a **smaller proportion of window area** than solid wall (left). When wall openings account for more than 40% of the total wall area (right), a building may look vacuous or unsubstantial.*



roofs should be integral parts of the building design and built of materials similar to or compatible with the rest of the structure. Such features should not appear merely pasted onto the facade or unrelated to the overall appearance of the building.

► A building should generally have windows that are individual, recognizable units related to the building's overall size to help promote a sense of its scale. Curtain walls† and other continuous, floor-to-ceiling windows, and overly-large or small individual windows that lack or distort this sense of scale should be avoided.

► Doors should be substantial in construction, relate to the materials and detailing of windows and other related building elements, and provide the building with visual interest and enhance its sense of scale. As with windows, doors that employ a large, single piece of glass should be avoided unless they are part of an overall storefront facade.

► New buildings, like most existing structures, should have a significantly higher proportion of solid wall surface than windows. Buildings with more than 40% of the total wall surface given to windows or other openings lack an appearance of solidity and should be avoided.

► Where it is appropriate to provide a covered entry to a building or protection from the sun or rain, awnings† may be used to give

*A **striped awning** adds interest to a simple building facade (far left). A **solid color awning** complements rather than competes with a more highly detailed facade (left).*

additional visual interest to the primary facade of a building at the ground floor, particularly for buildings in commercial use.

► The design of awnings and the selection of fabric should complement the character of a building. Elaborately detailed buildings should have awnings that are fairly restrained in appearance, while a striped or patterned awning fabric may add interest and detail to plainer building facades.

► When awnings are used on the exterior of a building, they should be roughly the same width as the window or door openings that they are shading, rather than extending across the entire front of the building.

► If several storefronts within the facade of a larger building have awnings, the awnings should be compatible—though not necessarily identical—in design. Such awnings should be of the same style and proportion, and may employ different but harmonious colors and patterns.

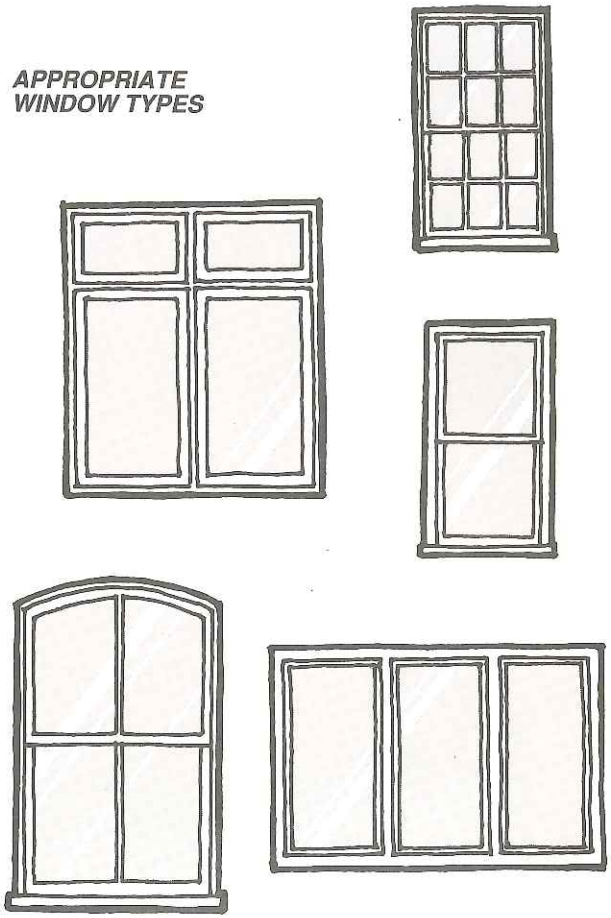
## Materials and Detailing

*The materials used in the construction of a building design can have significant implications for its appearance. Since the solid, exterior wall surface, for example, often accounts for up to 80% of a building's facade area, the selection of an appropriate wall material may be the single most important material choice. Yet, too often materials are selected that have no relationship either to those found in the Leesburg area or with other materials chosen for the building itself. The following guidelines provide assistance in the selection, application and detailing of appropriate building materials:*

► Extensive use of reflective or tinted glass, enameled or decorative metal wall panels, or other similar anonymous or non-traditional wall materials should be avoided.

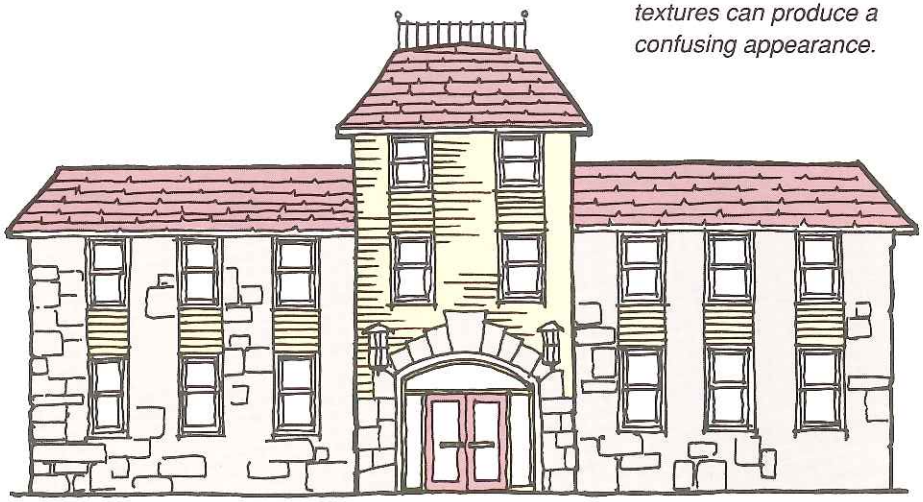
► Artificial veneer materials such as styrofoam-based simulated stucco, cast or fiberglass stone or brick, and plastic appear

***APPROPRIATE WINDOW TYPES***



***Traditional siding and roofing materials*** *found in Leesburg include (from top to bottom): red brick and slate shingles; stone and standing seam metal roofing; wood siding and wood shingles.*

***Too many materials*** *and textures can produce a confusing appearance.*



insubstantial and unauthentic, and should be avoided on new buildings.

► Exposed foundation† walls should be of stone, exposed aggregate concrete or brick and should be as inconspicuous as possible. When smooth concrete foundations are used, the maximum exposure should not exceed 10 inches.

► Traditional roofing materials that are also appropriate for new construction include slate, wood shakes, and standing seam metal such as copper, tin or aluminum.

► The history and nature of Leesburg indicate that wood, red brick and native stone are prevalent building materials; these materials likewise are appropriate for newer construction throughout town. Stucco† and concrete masonry occur less frequently, but may be acceptable building materials in some instances, depending on a building's style and function.

► Roll roofing, built-up tar and gravel, and plastic or fiberglass roofing materials are not appropriate unless they are used on flat roofs not visible from public areas. Asphalt shingles are generally only appropriate for residential buildings.

► The specific materials used on a building or set of related buildings should be compatible with each other in terms of size, shape and texture. While variety in the size or shape of different building components may add interest to a building's exterior appearance, more than one highly textured material such as stone, ashlar-faced concrete

block or wood shingled roofs should not be used on a single building. Instead, such materials should be combined with those that are simpler and less textured to avoid a confusing or overly elaborate appearance.

► While the selection of materials for new construction should be influenced by those materials that are familiar in the built environment of Leesburg, the architectural detailing of such materials—the way in which they are used in relation to other materials in the building—may be less traditional as long as it relates to the overall design of the building.

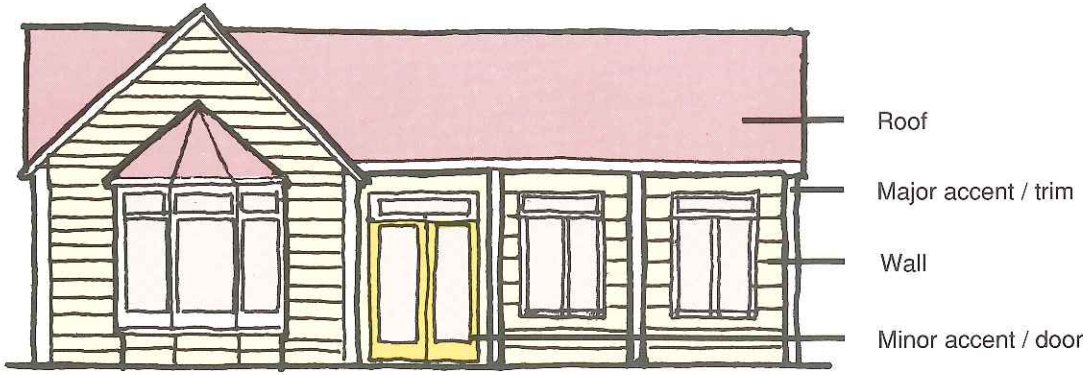
## Color

*Color can add interest and vitality to a building, but its use may often call undue attention to a particular building or make it appear out of character with its neighbors. Since most building colors are a function of materials themselves, material selection requires careful consideration. For elements that must be painted, however, the choice of color must be even more carefully considered. The following guidelines offer suggestions for the successful application of color in building design:*

► All colors selected for a building should be compatible with the traditional building colors found in Leesburg as well as to those of the surrounding natural environment.

► Building color schemes should be kept simple. Most buildings can be planned with no more than four colors: one for the walls or body of the building, a major accent color for most trim areas, a minor accent color for doors and/or decorative details, and when it is visible, a roof color.

*Most buildings can be planned with **four colors**.*




► Brick or stone should be used in their natural or traditional colors—red brick; brown, gray or bluish stone—when selected as the predominant wall material of a building. Brick or stone generally should not be painted.

► The use of integral coloring—where pigment becomes part of the material and is uniform throughout—is encouraged for concrete, stucco and similar materials, whether one of these materials is used as the predominant body material or in conjunction with other primary wall materials.

► Colors for materials that must receive protective coatings such as wood trim or metal roofing should be selected to be compatible with the building's predominant natural or integrally-colored materials. When wood siding, for example, forms the predominant building surface, its paint color should dictate the selection of compatible colors for the building's other, less predominant materials.

► A building's paint colors—both those selected for the body and for accents—should not be overly intense, or used as a "sign" to draw unnecessary attention to the building. Instead, they should subtly reinforce the overall character of the building. Colors that are of a medium to low intensity†, that is, those formed by the addition of grey or white to the basic hue, are generally more appropriate for both the body and trim areas of a building than pure hues themselves.

*The standard design of many **trademark buildings** is inappropriate for Leesburg due to the use of inappropriate colors, materials, and lack of compatibility with adjacent buildings.*



***Artificial themes** such as Bavarian or Tudor cottages bear no relationship to the history or architecture of communities like Leesburg.*



## Design Expression

*Form, massing, roof shape, facade elements, materials, detailing and color together create a building's overall appearance or design expression. This expression may be somewhat generalized, such as a building that has either a contemporary or a traditional appearance. Occasionally, a more specific or historic style is evident through the careful design of various features, as with many of the buildings in the Old and Historic District. At other times, however, buildings may have a design expression that is unrelated to the context of Leesburg, such as those that reflect trademark building† designs of franchise establishments or that adopt ethnic or regional design themes. The following guidelines offer advice on how to achieve an appropriate building design expression for the Leesburg environment:*

► To prevent giving any building a confusing appearance, elements that derive from different styles or building traditions should not be mixed on a single building. For example, traditional building elements such as elaborate window moldings or pedimented doorways should not be combined with more contemporary materials such as textured concrete block or large panes of glass.

► Trademark buildings†—those which have a distinctive exterior appearance and are readily identifiable with a franchise or chain business—do not necessarily reflect the

historic building character of Leesburg and should be discouraged. If such buildings are used, they should be modified to relate both to the specific site and local building traditions, particularly regarding the building's siting, scale, construction materials, and color.

► Artificial themes that are unrelated to the traditions of the Leesburg area or that represent other objects are not an appropriate basis for a building's design expression. For example, buildings that try to look like wharfs, Spanish missions, or Polynesian villages—to name a few—have no place in Leesburg and should be avoided.

► A building whose design expression reflects traditional building styles is acceptable, provided that the design of the building and/or its site makes it clear that it is not from an earlier period and is a product of its own time.

***Oversized signs** compete for drivers' attention and contribute to visual clutter.*


## Signage

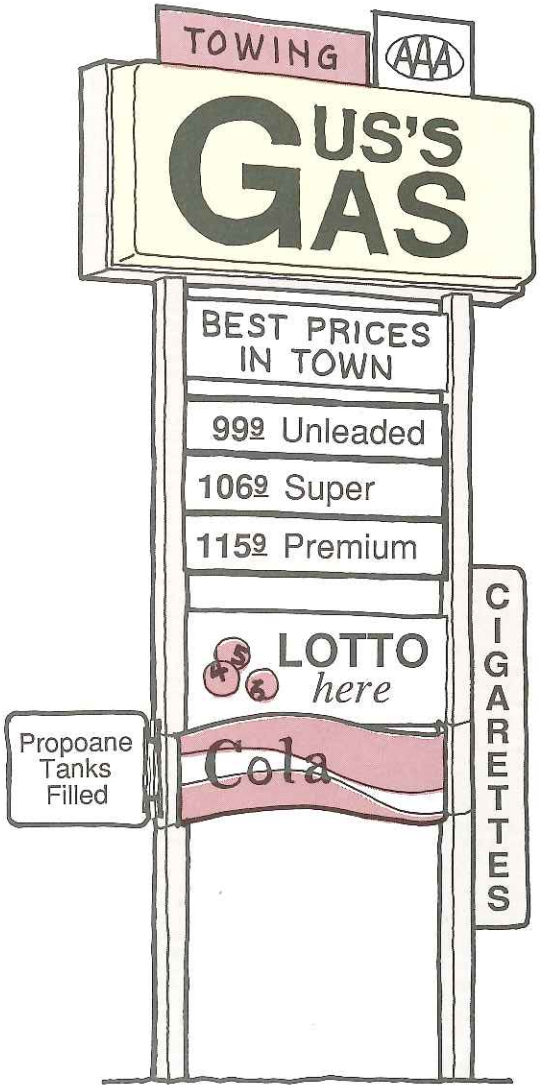
*The Leesburg* Town Zoning Ordinance *currently regulates the size, location, height and construction of all signs placed on buildings for public observance. The planning department staff administers these sign regulations. The Board of Architectural Review will review sign requests to determine appropriate color, design and location within the H-2 Corridor. The following guidelines provide preliminary assistance in the appropriate design and placement of signs. For additional information refer to Article 10: Sign Regulations of the* Town Zoning Ordinance.

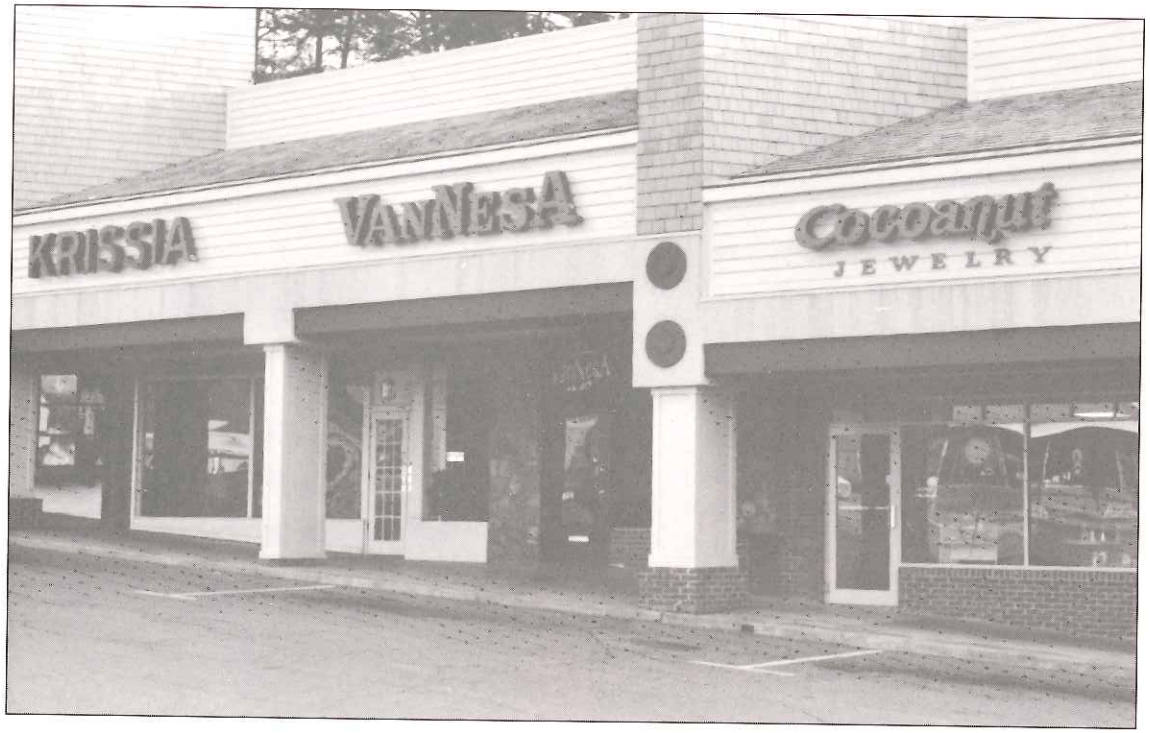
► Signs in commercial areas should be clearly legible to both motorists and pedestrians. Oversized or excessively elaborate signage that competes for attention with other signs or creates visual clutter or confusion is not recommended.

► Signs should primarily serve to identify the name and nature of a business. Attempting to convey too much information to the motorist causes distraction and contributes to visual clutter along the commercial streetscape.

► In major commercial centers with multiple stores and businesses, signs and graphics for tenant identification should be compatible but not necessarily identical to one another, uniform in color, and not compete with one another for attention.

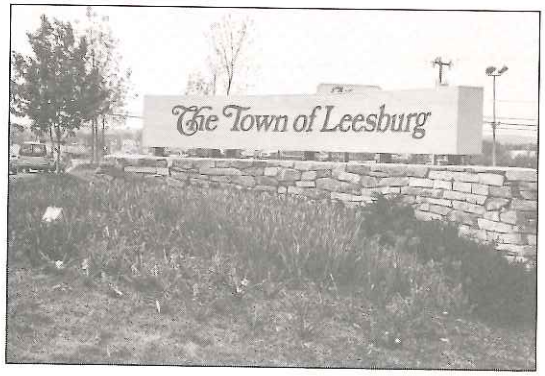
*Signs that contain **too much information** are confusing and add to the clutter of the streetscape.*






***Compatible signs** in a shopping center need not be identical, but should be low-key and uniform in color.*

***Leesburg's monument entry sign**, with its stone base, extensive plant materials, and external lighting, creates an attractive welcome to the community.*




► Signs should be compatible in design with other streetscape elements as well as the overall design character of the development. Sign material, style and color should complement both the building and landscape materials used on the site.

► Monument signs should not convey a monolithic appearance. Bases should not overwhelm the sign face. It is recommended that base materials should be of brick, stone or stucco material.

► The placement and size of signs should be compatible with other building elements. Signs should not obscure significant building elements such as windows, cornices or decorative details.

► Freestanding signs shall be incorporated into the landscape plan for the site. Trees and shrubs should be used with signs and/ or their supportive bases to integrate them into the landscape and soften their intrusive effect upon the streetscape.

► Generally, externally lit signs are preferable to those that are internally lit. External illumination should be limited to white light. If internally lit signs are used, dark backgrounds and light lettering, or individually illuminated letters, are preferred.

► Floodlights or spotlights used to externally illuminate signs must be positioned or screened by landscape elements in such a manner that none of the light spills onto an adjoining property. The source of such lighting and any resultant glare should not be visible to motorists or pedestrians.

## Building Services

*Delivery bays or trash dumpsters are a necessity for some buildings. All too often, however, such building services are provided with little regard to the building's appearance or practicality. The following guidelines offer suggestions for keeping them under control:*

Storage, service and delivery areas should never be located at the front or conspicuous side(s) of a building. Features such as material or inventory storage, delivery bays and trash dumpsters should be located at the rear of buildings away from view but served by convenient vehicular access.

Garbage storage for buildings not requiring a dumpster should be located away from public areas, screened by an opaque enclosure or contained in an outbuilding compatible in materials and design with that of the building served. Wherever possible, several adjacent buildings should consolidate their garbage storage needs in a single location.

If outside storage or display is required, it should be screened from view from the roadway.


***Permanent outside display** or storage of merchandise visible from the roadway gives the streetscape a cluttered appearance.*

## Screening

*Utilities† and mechanical equipment are necessary features of all buildings. Some building uses also require the provision of service areas or other less public functions. While such aspects are important, they rarely make a positive contribution to a building's appearance. When utilities and service areas cannot be located away from public view, screening† should be provided. The following guidelines address the screening of building-related activities and services:*

► Service and delivery areas should be located away from both public view and pedestrian/vehicular circulation as much as possible. When such activities must be located in areas visible from public rights-of-way, appropriate screening should be provided.

► Mechanical equipment, energy conservation or collection equipment, or communications transmitting or receiving apparatus should also be screened from public view. The location of such equipment should not adversely affect the streetscape† and/or pedestrian circulation. Location of mechanical equipment within the building or at the rear at ground level is preferable to rooftop mounting.

► Preferred methods of screening building utilities and equipment include berming† and/or vegetative planting, or walls and fences. Plant materials selected for screening should provide a hardy, dense screen throughout the year. Walls and fences should be located in close proximity to and made of materials compatible with those of the adjacent building(s), and should be both solid and opaque. The design of walls in particular should be integrated with that of the building structure. If they are not of the same material as the building, they should be the same color.

***Mechanical and communication equipment** located on a rooftop (left) should be screened from view, preferably by increasing the height of the building's parapet (middle). A better approach (right) is siting such equipment at the rear ground level and screening it from view with plant materials.*