

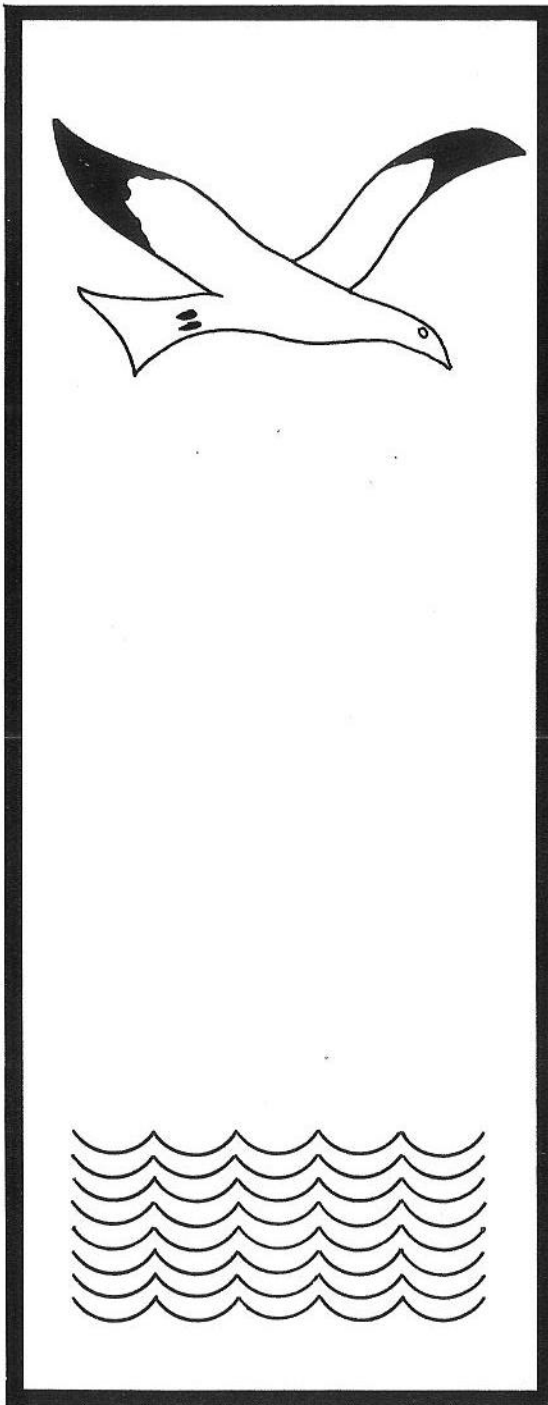


TOWNSCAPE REVITALIZATION GUIDE

Oyster Bay Hamlet
Town of Oyster Bay
New York



Polly DeGroot



TOWNSCAPE REVITALIZATION GUIDE

Oyster Bay Hamlet Town of Oyster Bay New York

PREPARED by
VISION Inc.

for

SOCIETY FOR PRESERVATION OF LONG ISLAND ANTIQUITIES
and

OYSTER BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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PREFACE

Townscape is the term which describes the overall quality of the town environment. In a time when many towns are faced with the deterioration of their character, townscape is a concept which tests residents' abilities to conserve and to enhance those elements of the man-made environment which enrich daily life.

PURPOSE. This study raises the question of appropriateness: What elements (signs, colors, materials) are suited to the character of Oyster Bay? To be indiscriminate in the selection of these elements is to encourage the kind of anonymity that plagues most of our towns today--towns filled with a plastic sameness that causes the tourist to flee and gives the resident shoppers no visual alternative to the roadside strip or the shopping mall.

The goals of this townscape study are to define the rich potentials harbored in the heritage of Oyster Bay and to outline the options available to the people who live and work there. The study directs attention toward the town as a sum which is more than just the collection of its individual parts (its buildings, streets, and open spaces). First, there is an economic benefit; evidence is now accumulating from other towns across the country that have undertaken town center improvement of the schemes, which indicates direct increases in retail sales and property values. Second, the improvement of the town environment creates a base for an enriched daily life, an area of concern for millions of Americans today.

SCOPE. This study is not considered to be a master plan which requires great administrative efforts to implement, and decades to come to fruition. Nor is it an urban renewal project which would necessitate large clearance programs to be successful.

The Townscape Plan is a loosely-woven net of actions in which everyone can become involved, that involvement ranging from individual efforts, to club projects, to town-wide activities. Each can be executed with the confidence that such actions will contribute to the well-being of all, that each effort is an incremental addition--a piece of the plan that adds to a more harmonious environment. It is an opportunity for citizen expression for the benefit of the community.

The actions proposed here range from building facade changes to sidewalk paving, to the coordination of color schemes of the village center. These suggestions are presented in four sections. The first part of the report describes the architectural heritage of the hamlet and evaluates the tone of the village as it is today.

The second section introduces the basic elements of townscape design. These elements range from facade improvements, to sidewalk planting, to the landscaping of parking lots. The third section of the townscape study illustrates specific examples for the application of townscape elements within the hamlet of Oyster Bay. The fourth section presents strategies for implementing the plan.

DESIGN CLINICS. At the core of the project is the process of "design clinics." These clinics are individual consultations between merchants and the townscape design team. Participation in these clinics is voluntary, and the service is free. In these sessions, the specific quality and condition of a merchant's building are discussed with the special concerns of the merchant considered. The team produces a sketch of recommended design improvements and a written analysis which outlines the steps for executing the design. These materials are given to the merchant as his record and source of reference. Clinic suggestions often include the removal of inappropriate signs, the addition of awnings, and new color schemes which accentuate the architectural details of the building.

Other issues are broader in scope than the individual design clinic such as the installation of street trees or the creation of a mini-park. These additions require promotion by local groups, which may be existing service clubs or organizations formed specifically to execute a selected project. Design proposals in the brochure are presented in a format which reflects this type of implementation strategy.

Not all elements of the streetscape are within direct control of merchants and local groups, since corporations with chain stores or franchises comprise part of the town. The townscape team is also engaged at this level in corporate advocacy work. With the demonstration of interest by local residents, corporations are encouraged to participate by removing large lighted signs, adding landscaping to their facilities, and working to integrate their operations into the community.

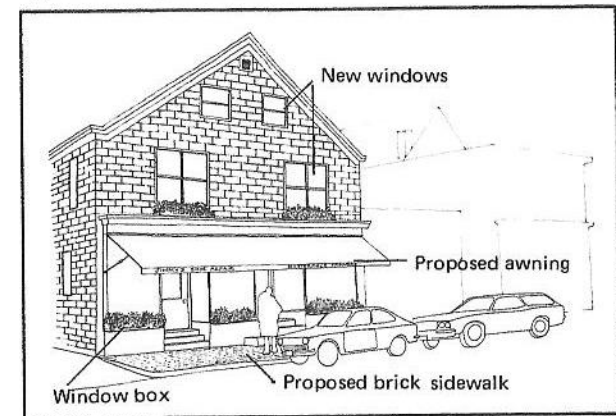
Opportunities for action in all of these categories are illustrated in the report. The improvements recommended here do not constitute the end of the planning process. Rather, the report is presented as an initial stimulus to guide residents, shopkeepers, and property owners in their own program of conservation and enhancement.



Vision design clinic.

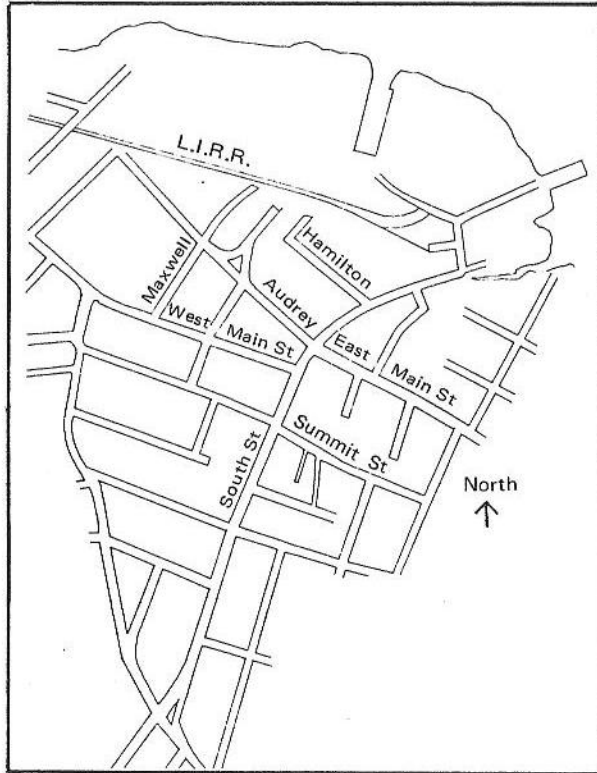


Typical existing facade on South Street.



Proposed facade improvements

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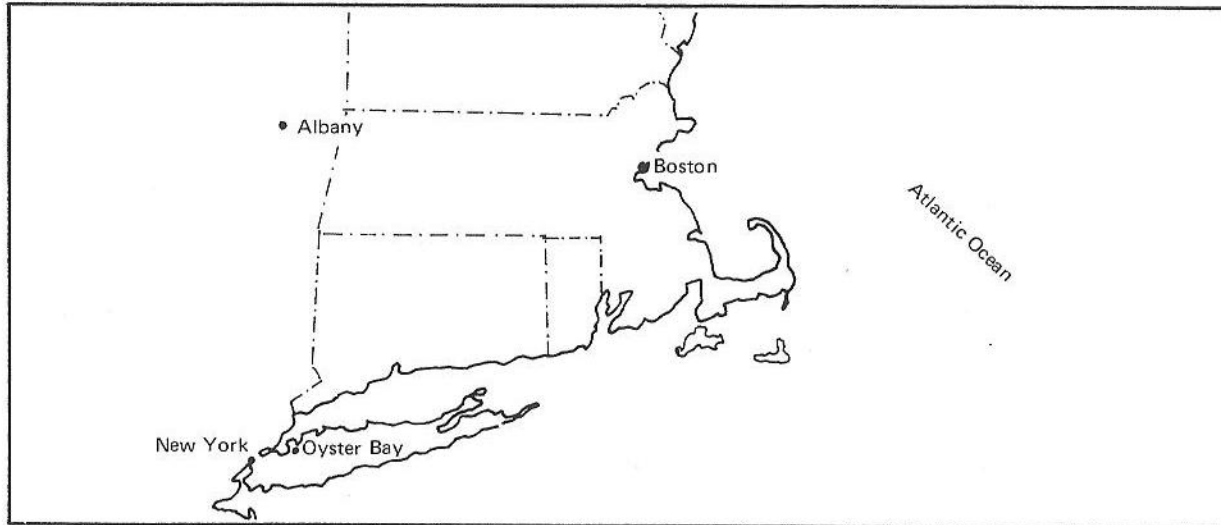
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Location of Oyster Bay hamlet.

OYSTER BAY: THE PAST

The history of Oyster Bay dates back to the middle of the seventeenth century. Job Wright, one of the original settlers, built a house near what is now the intersection of South Street and Audrey Avenue, in 1653. Today, the area has grown into the second largest township in New York State, covering 118 square miles and containing over 360,000 people in 18 villages and unincorporated areas.

Originally a small fishing and farming community, the Oyster Bay hamlet retained this character up until the twentieth century. By that time, it had grown into a commercial center for servicing surrounding estates. Despite the dramatic growth in recent years, the hamlet still contains representative examples of each successive architectural style that marked these changing times.

ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES. The majority of buildings represent the exuberance of turn of the century architecture, the era of Theodore Roosevelt. It was Roosevelt's family who helped to make "summering" in Oyster Bay a fashionable pastime. However, there are notable examples of earlier periods, ranging from the clapboard Wilson House on East Main Street (circa 1750), to the rambling shingled country house of Theodore Roosevelt, Sagamore Hill. Other notable examples of fine architecture in the hamlet include: The Octagon Hotel (now in the guise of a Datsun dealership), circa 1858 and believed to be the only octagonally-shaped hotel ever built in the United States; the Carpenter Gothic cottage at 22 Tooker Avenue, circa mid-1800's, the last domicile in the hamlet with board-and-batten sheathing. The Little (circa 1835) residence at 78 Harbor Road is the best example of articulated Greek Revival in the Hamlet.

The Griffen Hall house, 148 Anstice Street, is the finest existing Queen Anne style home in the vicinity. The Wightman House (before 1825), is thought to be the oldest building now standing in Oyster Bay. The exterior has been restored to its 19th-century appearance with authentic forged shutter hardware and wooden box rain gutters and down spouts; it has an original-style shed porch and is surrounded by a picket fence.

The hamlet is dotted with other fine examples of Oyster Bay's architectural heritage. Some have been successfully restored and others are recycled in adaptive uses. This array of architectural wealth, mainly residential in nature, is complimented by many splendid 19th-century commercial structures, including Charlie's

Inferno (Roosevelt's summer White House) and the Nassau Trust building. Despite the encroachment of certain incongruous elements on their facades, these buildings set good standards for other merchant facilities.

The creeping architectural malaise, "imitation colonial," has afflicted Victorian Oyster Bay with its parody of broken pediments, doorways, and multi-paned windows. These architectural details slapped indiscriminately on newer buildings, attempt to recreate an environment that has largely disappeared. It is far more effective to let the surviving styles, particularly the concentration of Victorian and Edwardian architecture that distinguishes the hamlet, speak for themselves.

STREET AND WATERFRONT RESOURCES. In the streets themselves, amenities which contributed to a pleasant pedestrian environment have come and gone; large trees, like those surviving on Hamilton Avenue, once graced many of the principal streets. Remnants of brick sidewalks, like the pavement along West Main Street at Raynham Hall, give testimony to the testural variety strollers experienced at the turn of the century.

The waterfront began intensive development after the Civil War. By 1900, it held moorings for small craft, pier facilities for coal, lumber, oyster and ferry interests. A casino, a pottery, carriage shop and two hotels were also located there. These activities were once integral parts of the community. Little evidence of this interaction with the waterfront exists at present.

In America, four hundred years is a long time to accumulate a past. The hamlet of Oyster Bay is the richer for this accretion. The built environment--that collection of buildings, spaces, shapes, and textures we call townscape--is the evidence of that past. It is also a resource for the future. It provides a reference point, a feeling of context, in which to measure today's actions. The clustering of associations about a place over time, the density of meanings that emanates from old buildings strengthen our own sense of identity by reinforcing our connection with places. The familiar image of old buildings helps newer residents to put down roots next to those of life long residents. Seen in this vein, the conservation and enhancement of this built environment is not a frill to be addressed only when the economy is booming but a necessity to be pursued tenaciously even during the leanest of times. For ultimately, this work is a means of conserving not only buildings, but a sense of identity, and thus it becomes an act of cultural self preservation.



View of South Street c.1905.



Grocery store at site of present Bank of North America.

OYSTER BAY: TODAY



Corner of South and East Main Streets today.



Uncoordinated facades on South street today.

Looking at Oyster Bay, it is important to consider the individual buildings as part of the streetscape. In any successful renovation effort, each building should compliment the adjoining ones.

IMPACT OF THE STREET. Many of the signs on the storefronts of the hamlet now are uncoordinated from facade to facade. The signs combat one another, competing for visual attention. The result is a "jumble of information." It is difficult to visually isolate individual signs from the mass of advertising; everyone loses and money is wasted. Similarly, street furniture, such as waste receptacles, traffic signs, and lights poles are not coordinated with their surroundings. Each element has been installed as a single, disconnected effort. There is no coordination in placement, design, or materials. Other street amenities are totally lacking. In the central business area, there is little to distinguish the sidewalk from the roadway itself; there are no benches, little plantings, and no variety in paving materials. No incentives exist to encourage the pedestrian to linger, to browse, or even to conduct commerce out of doors.

The buildings themselves hide the beauty they possess. Details are obscured by signs and paint. Single buildings which contain multiple shops appear fragmented by individual paint and sign schemes. Upper stories do not relate to those below.

LINKAGES. Pedestrian connections to nearby amenities are weak. The resources of the waterfront are virtually ignored. The public beach draws large seasonal crowds, but these people do not find their way into the village. Similarly, the walking connections to the bay

from the hamlet are deficient. The waterfront holds potential for the revival of commercial services, such as restaurants, hotels, and other concessions, which would thrive with strong pedestrian links. If made visually attractive, the bay could become once again a recreational and commercial asset to the hamlet.

Similarly, Roosevelt Park lacks a strong pedestrian connection across the railroad tracks into the commercial center of the hamlet. Several of the parking lots also lack strong connections to the commercial area. Although large investments have been made to create the lots, the result is a negative impact upon the environment. They remain vast plains of asphalt with no visual relief (and few cars). The large lot on Hamilton Avenue is a barren testament to the singular unattractiveness of an asphalt desert devoid of amenities.

HIGHLIGHTS. Special features located in the town hold the potential for enhancing daily experience and for increasing an understanding of the surroundings. The natural springs of the hamlet, and the site of Fort Hill are examples of unique aspects of the townscape which should be emphasized, even dramatized, so that they can fulfill their potential as key environmental enrichments. In the following sections of the townscape report, the Vision design team makes specific recommendations which respond to the positive elements of the townscape. In considering the actions recommended in the study, it is important to bear in mind the architectural heritage of Oyster Bay, and the potentials of its natural resources. It is also critical to consider the liabilities that are involved if we allow the present deterioration of visual quality to continue.

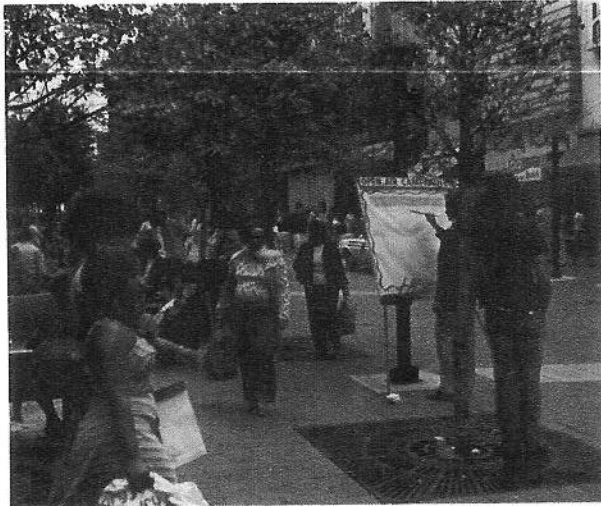
TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS: INTRODUCTION

The central issue of townscape is the interrelation of buildings, streets and open spaces. It is the sum of these parts that makes the town environment. In a healthy situation, these elements work in harmony to convey the image of a town environment which excites and encourages human activity. The test of a healthily built environment is its ability to communicate this vitality.

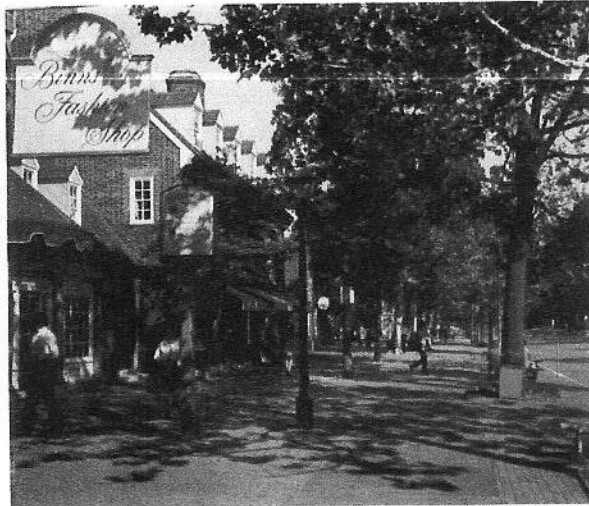
The message the townscape conveys should be one of the town as a unified place. This image is reinforced by layers of meaning which the streetscape conveys. It is a sense of place, that connotes both history and change, and is an image that should be strengthened with each walk through the streets. Ultimately, the result is an intangible one; although the tools of townscape conservation are physical, the final product is a state of mind. That state is a sense of living in a "special" place with unique character, composed of multiple associations and a density of meanings with a resonance that kindles the imagination long after the physical images are forgotten.

PURPOSE. The general goal of the proposed changes is two-fold: to improve the visual impact of the hamlet, and to increase pedestrian use of the town environment. These goals rely upon improving the legibility of the streetscape. The street is made readable by removing pieces of visual information which confuse or distract, and by replacing these elements with others that fit the tone of the entire street. These elements range from building signs, to sidewalk paving, to the landscaping of parking lots.

This chapter presents the elements of townscape in an ascending order of scale and complexity. At the smallest scale, individual building facades are examined, and the pieces that make up a facade are discussed. The second section combines single facades into blocks, and illustrates elements of continuity that relate to these blocks. The next level of scale, an examination of the furnishings of the street and sidewalk, is found in the third section. Finally, the fourth section presents townscape elements that comprise the most comprehensive scale, (such as pedestrian linkage systems), which relate to the entire village.



Pedestrian Mall in Baltimore.



Commercial street, Williamsburg Virginia.

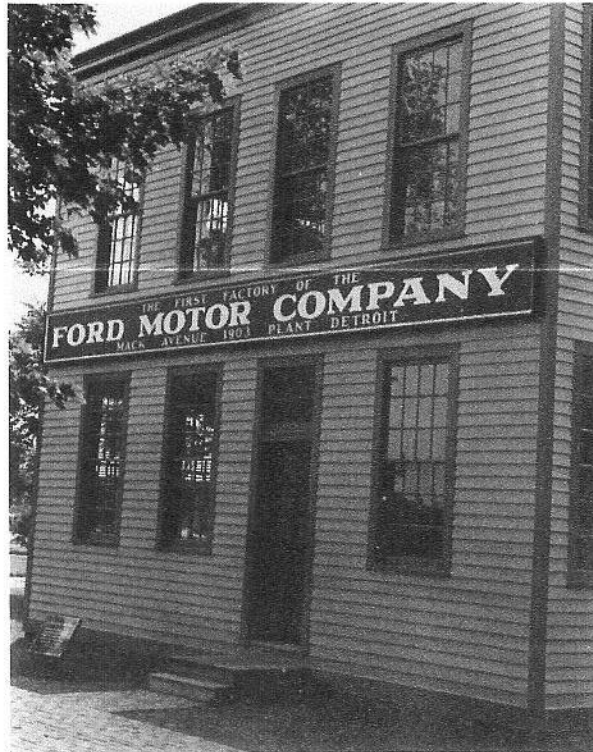
TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS: INDIVIDUAL FACADES

The success of a townscape effort relies upon the incremental improvements that over time create a coordinated image for the town. It is important that all of the townscape projects start off properly at the smallest scale of detail. If the little elements are neglected, the larger issues will lack substance to sustain them. An appropriate beginning for an examination of townscape elements is with the components of a single building. Individual facade components are discussed briefly in this section. For further information, see the Townscape Handbook which is an adjunct to this brochure and is on file at the public library. Begin with these elements:

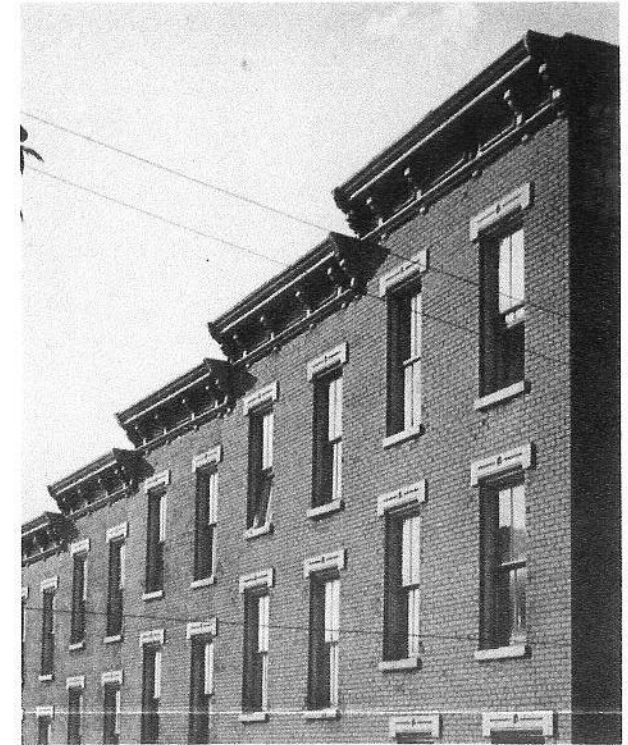
DOORS. Many of the entrance ways to shops in Oyster Bay are standard aluminum and glass doors which have replaced wooden doors in the course of remodeling efforts. In cases where these doors are retained, the bare aluminum should be painted to match the remaining wood trim of the building. In any remodelings, it is best to harmonise the door design with the facade. This means respecting certain relationships: the proportion of the door to any surrounding windows, the height of the door to the display windows, and the position of the door to second-story openings. Avoid conflicts of style. For example, a "colonial" door, often with an exaggerated pediment, should not be added to a twentieth century masonry building.

WINDOWS. The most important factor to remember when renovating windows is to relate the proposed design to the facade. Avoid mixing styles within the same facade. For example, a casement and a top hung window when mounted next to each other will disrupt the continuity of a facade, which is created by the repetition of similar elements. In the same way, colonial windows with small panes can disrupt the continuity of a block facade which is entirely composed of large plate glass windows. The relationship of first floor and second floor windows should also be carefully considered. Be certain that their respective sizes do, in fact, relate.

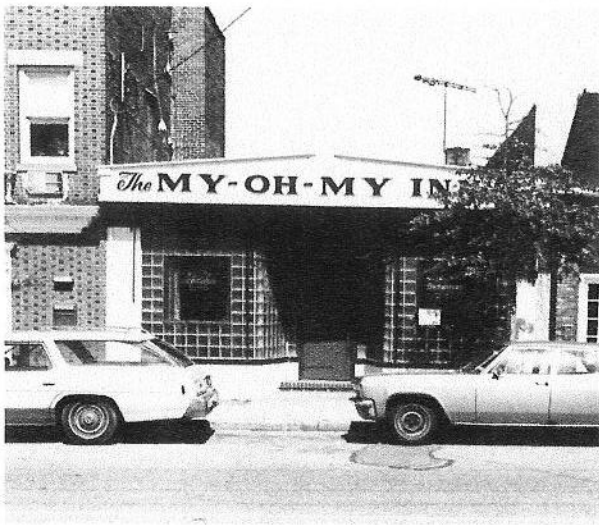
SURFACE MATERIALS. When renovating the surface materials of a building, use materials which are identical or similar to those used in the original construction. Avoid using imitation materials such as vinyl siding, asphalt shingle, perma-stone, and scored brickwork, which do not reproduce the texture and scale of the original materials. Wooden clapboards are preferred to aluminum ones. However, if aluminum siding is used, care should be taken to select a width that matches the scale of the original wooden boards. When exterior surfaces are in need of cleaning, as is the case with many brick facades in Oyster Bay, the original finish should be restored. Methods are available other than sandblasting, which destroys the masonry glaze and allows the brick to crumble. These usually include washing with water and detergents or chemical agents.



Coordinated alignment of facade elements, Dearborn, Michigan.



Rhythmic progression of facade elements, Cincinnati, Ohio.



Sign obscuring roof line.



Coordinated awnings, Middlebury, Vermont.



A good corporate sign in Philadelphia.

ROOFS. On many single and two-story stores in Oyster Bay, roofs are usually flat and not visible from the sidewalk. Some remodelings, however, have introduced pitched and Mansard roofs which interrupt an otherwise unified facade scheme. The addition of imitation colonial pediments to existing roof lines should be avoided. By revealing the original roof line, rather than concealing it, one can restore the unity of the facade and relate it to its immediate environment.

AWNINGS AND CANOPIES. Projecting canvas structures are traditionally used to give protection from inclement weather and to shield window merchandise from the sun. In addition to this protection, awnings and canopies can provide a color contrast and three-dimensional variety to a facade. If properly maintained and positioned, in relation to the sidewalk width and pedestrian heights, they can add character to a facade. Awnings also provide surface for signs when there is not enough space to mount a sign on the building facade without obstructing architectural details.

SIGNS. Commercial signs have become one of the most essential elements of facade renovation. Improperly mounted, they diminish an outstanding facade renovation, and the quality of the surrounding environment. Sign location, materials, color, illumination, and lettering styles are all important factors which should respect building proportions and architectural quality.

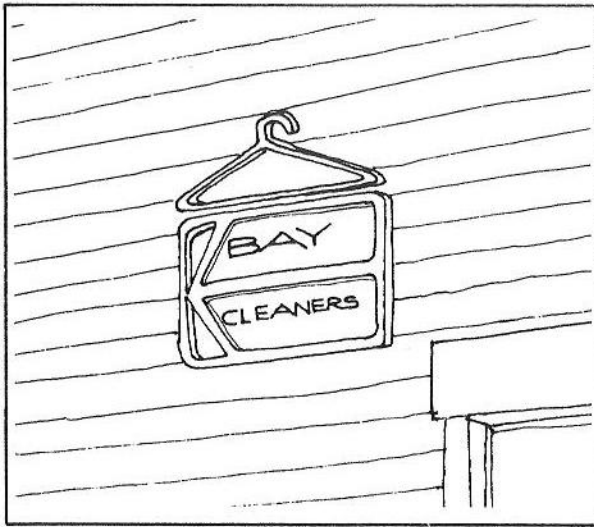
Location. Two general guidelines should be followed when locating a sign on a building: (1) Place the sign where it conceals the least amount of architectural detail. (2) Place the sign where it conforms to the existing line of signs established by others on the block.

Materials. Signs should be in sympathy with the materials of the facade. They should be maintained easily and capable of withstanding climatic variations. Treated wood and painted metal or plywood are preferred backgrounds. Letters may be painted or individually mounted.

Colors. Tones should be limited in number and be compatible with adjacent facades and signs. Think of the sign as being complimentary to its surrounding environment. Matte or flat backgrounds are preferable to glossy ones, as they reduce reflective glare and enhance legibility. Dark backgrounds with light letters applied are generally more readable than white or illuminated backgrounds with dark letters.



Awnings with symbol sign, for shoe shop on South street.



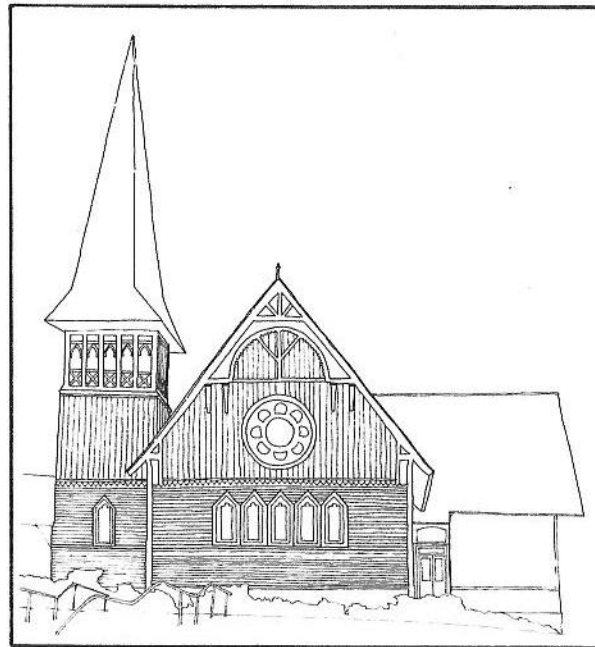
Symbol sign for Bay Cleaners at Bernstein's department store.

Illumination. The most appropriate illumination for signs within the hamlet is an indirect type, in which the lighting accents signs and window displays, rather than lighting the entire facade. Signs with interior illumination are discouraged as they divorce themselves from the building rather than becoming a part of the facade. Incandescent sources are best for natural color tones.

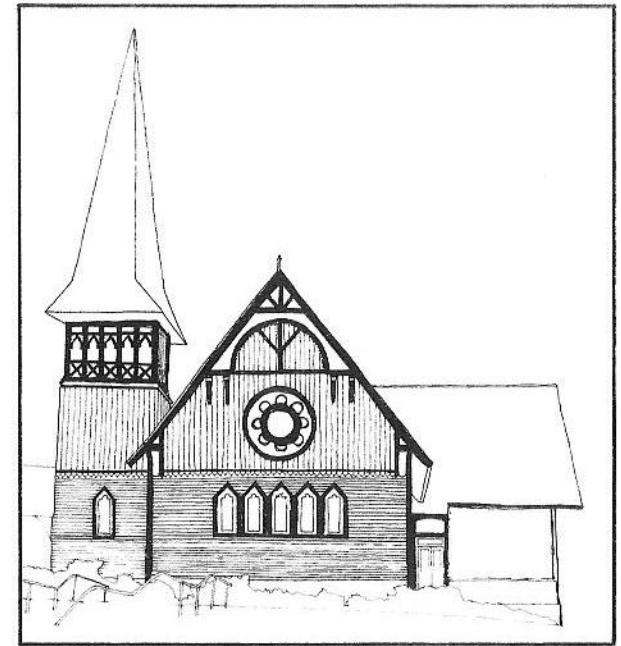
Lettering. The selection and positioning of lettering on the facade is an important factor in its appearance. The height, spacing, and style of the letters should respect the facade design. Generally, where lettering is concerned, "less says more" and invariably costs less. Too much information on the facade is confusing and difficult to read. Words should be limited to those naming the business and defining the services offered. Brand names of goods should be avoided. Message forms may be in upper or lower case lettering, and fixed directly to a wall surface or placed on a panel as a background.

COLOR SCHEMES. Select color schemes to convey the building as a unified facade. Care should be exercised to coordinate the colors of upper stories with the street level store front. Accent architectural trim with a color that compliments colors of the roof and walls. Avoid colors which contrast strongly with the prevailing tone of the street. In choosing base and trim colors, select the base color of the walls first; then select the trim shades. It is the base color which will have the greatest impact on the street.

MAINTAINENCE. It is important to maintain a facade once it has been renovated; therefore, bear in mind what maintenance procedures will be required while designing the renovation. Easy access to windows and signs for cleaning should be considered. Remember that continuous maintenance of facade and signs can avoid major expenses later. Repainting of woodwork, replacing light bulbs, and patching roof tiles are some of the tasks that should be considered an on-going process. When a change of business occupancy results in an unpainted area where the old business sign was affixed, it should be repainted to match the surroundings.



Presbyterian church today.



Presbyterian church with restored contrasting trim tones.

TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS: BLOCK FACADES



Buildings on the North side of East Main Street.

Just as single buildings have distinct facades, a block of continuous structures should be considered a unified system of colors, textures, signs and heights. One of the most important activities of townscape improvements is the effort merchants can make to coordinate their blocks. The "vocabulary" of elements in this section is the same as the previous one on individual facades. The significance here is the application of that vocabulary to the street as a whole.

The issue of block facades is the position of each building on the block: which elements bear emphasis. The auto-oriented culture of the nation has encouraged the use of large signs to attract attention. These signs are scaled for recognition at high speeds in an open landscape. On the highway, large signs are effective; they quickly communicate the presence of a service or business. In the highway setting, the details of buildings themselves are ignored.

Visual discontinuity results when highway-scaled elements are applied in the center of town; when one large sign is applied in the town setting, it can indeed attract attention. But when each business mounts a large panel of light and plastic within the compact spacing of the village, the result is an illegible blur. Individual identity is lost in the overwhelming (and expensive) juxtaposition of signs.

A more effective method of achieving identity is to use the existing facade of the building as the advertisement. When the details of the building are easily visible, they can attract attention through variety. The merchant sign, appropriately applied, then becomes the label of the coordinated package. Similarly, a coordinated block becomes a symbol for the business district. The unity of the block is accomplished by the alignment of building heights, awnings and signs, and the coordination of materials and colors.

HEIGHT. The scale of the buildings is the basic unifying element of a block. Structures of similar height combine to form a continuous edge against the skyline. When this edge remains approximately the same height on adjoining buildings, cornice moldings should be revealed and accentuated. Any new construction should conform to the scale of the existing buildings surrounding the construction site.

SIGNS. Careful placement of signs can dramatically transform a block while requiring little cost and effort. Flat signs should be mounted at approximately the same height on each building. Often buildings have cornice bands above the first floor of their facades, which are the best place for signs, since they can fit within the overall design of the building. Materials should be related (usually wood or metal with flat-painted finishes), and colors should be compatible throughout the block. Signs are particularly strong if the background of each sign is a variation of the same color. For example, all of the signs of adjoining shops could have backgrounds of different tones of brown, or perhaps green. The signs should be illuminated with indirect lighting, so that the sign will reflect light in the same manner of the rest of the facade, rather than standing out from the facade as a source of light. The level of intensity of lights on the signs should be uniform throughout the block. When several shops are located in a single structure and share portions of a unified facade, it is particularly important that they adopt a sign method that is the same for each shop. Signs should be mounted in a continuous line, and be of the same materials. Individuality may be expressed through variations of type styles and in trim colors. Sometimes it is best to speak softly so that others will be more attentive to what you say.



Buildings on the West side of South Street.

MATERIALS. When considering facade changes and restoration, it is essential to determine the prevailing materials and textures of the block. In new construction, finishes should match the existing ones. In existing situations where matching materials have been painted or covered, the original finish should be restored. For example, if a brick building which has been painted is sited in a block of buildings with exposed brick facades, the paint should be removed from the non-conforming facade.

COLOR. The same principle applies to colors. The prevailing color of the block facade should be established by agreement. In many cases, the natural colors of the building materials establish the base color (such as brick or stone). In situations in which the facade is painted by necessity (such as with wooden clapboarding), the historic style of the building and the prevailing colors of the block may be used as a reference.

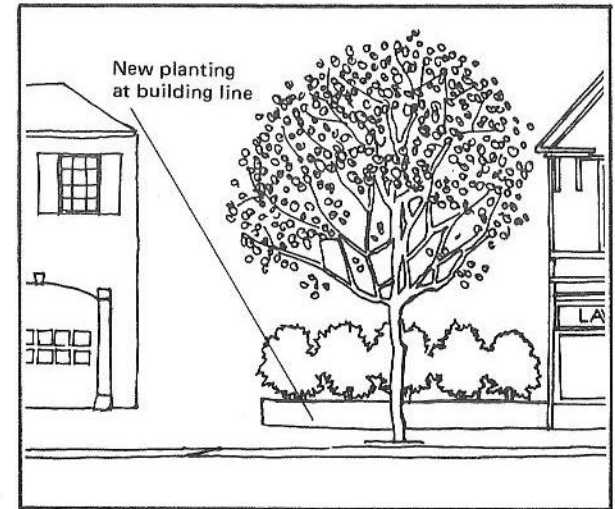
Architectural trim elements should also be coordinate by color. Related colors can be applied to window frames and doors along the block to strengthen the sense of unity. These colors may be variations of one hue or they may be complimentary colors. As with signs and awnings, it is especially important that shops located within a single structure present a unified scheme for trim and base colors.

AWNINGS. Canvas canopies and awnings can be strong unifying forces for a block. The awnings along the street should hang with their bottom edges at the same height. Where possible, the top edges of the awnings that are attached to the building should align as well. Color is especially important. Awnings of matching colors form a bright band for the entire street. This is especially important among shops which are in the same building.

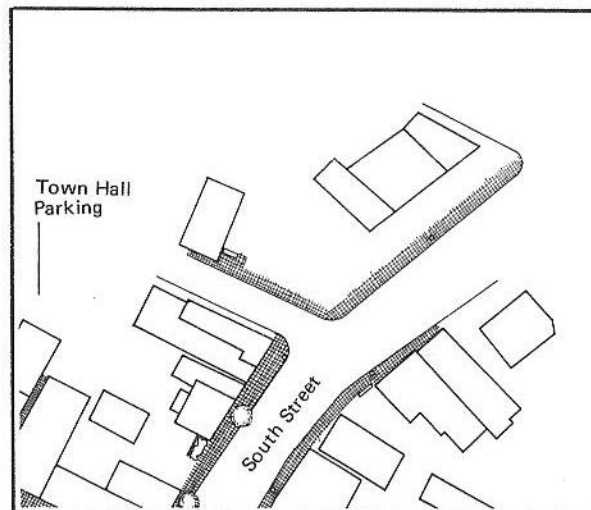
INFILL. There are cases in which a gap occurs in the block facade. This break is particularly felt as the pedestrian moves along the sidewalk. This opening usually results from the removal of a building that once matched the line of shops on the street. A new structure may have been built which is set back further from the sidewalk edge, or the site may have been converted into a parking lot. Where this "hole" does occur in the block facade, planting or fences should become an infill to bridge the gap between the flanking buildings. The action is simple but the result is dramatic. The block is strengthened and the scale of the sidewalk is restored.



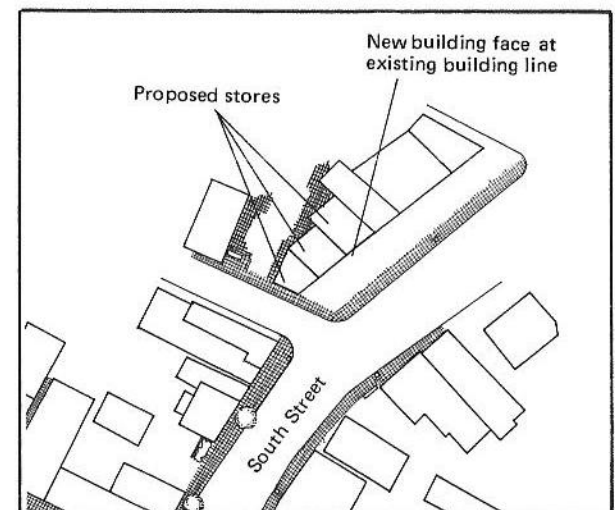
Infill planting, Williamsburg Virginia.



Infill planting used at Fire Station parking area.



Gap in street facade on South Street.



New construction sited to fill facade gap.

TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS: STREET FURNISHINGS

Most of the streets in Oyster Bay have been modified over the years to accommodate the automobile. Curbs, paving, lights, traffic signs and meters are all designed of materials and to scales which suit driving needs. Even the trees that once graced the main streets have been lost to parking spaces. But if the town is to be a healthy environment, the automobile must share the street with the pedestrian. Both car and pedestrian can co-exist happily through careful design and control. Street furnishings should be installed to add variety in color and texture, to provide comfort, to please pedestrians, and to seduce motorists out of their cars!

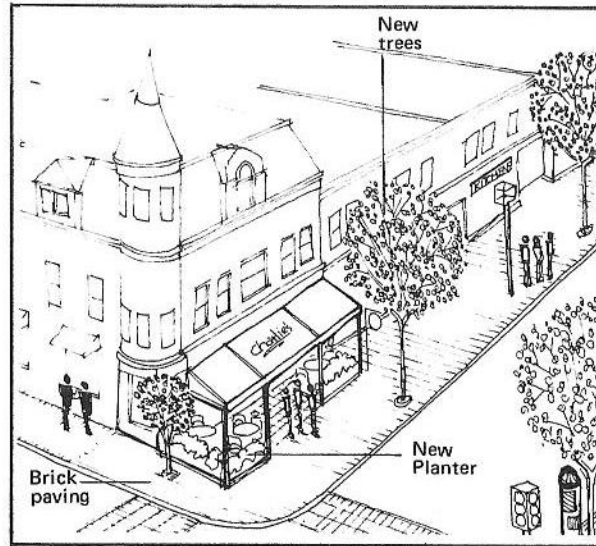
PLANTING. Trees and shrubs are the most basic addition to the street. Trees planted at regular intervals establish a rhythm which aids in unifying the street. They provide shade for shoppers in warm weather and act as a cooling factor for shops themselves. Even without leaves the branches add interesting texture and scale to the visual environment.

Special opportunities for other plantings also exist. Where the sidewalk is wide, or a building is set back, plant beds or boxes can be installed. Add window boxes as well.

When selecting plantings, consider the specific site. Compact shrubs should be chosen for small sites. Plants which maintain a low silhouette should be used where visibility of windows and signs is necessary. Use evergreens where planting is needed year-round as a buffer. Choose a combination of flowering plants which bloom at different times in order to stagger the period of color display.



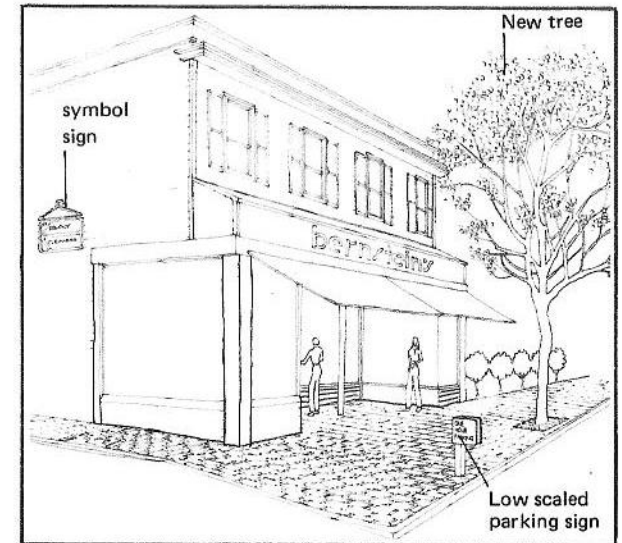
Street amenities in Westlake Village, California.



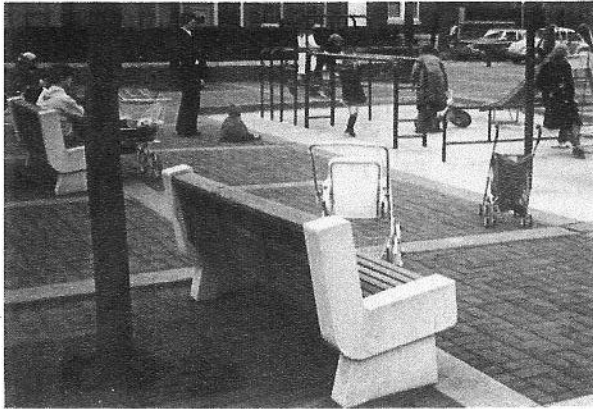
New planting at South and East Main streets.

PAVING. The sidewalk is the pedestrian's domain. Its paving materials should distinguish it from the auto zone and encourage walking. The pedestrian paving material should extend through crosswalks, to graphically separate the pedestrian from street traffic. The color and texture of brick make it a desirable material. It is also easy to lay and to maintain. It will conform to soil shifts without cracking; concrete, by contrast, will break under such conditions. Composed of ready-made components, brick walks are easy to repair. They facilitate alterations, as individual bricks can be removed for the location of a tree or plant bed. Materials similar in nature, such as stone block and tile are also suitable.

Pedestrian paving can be extended into unused spaces for the creation of rest areas. Where there is no interference with traffic or parking, small portions along the curb can be reclaimed from the street. Areas where parking is already prohibited (such as space adjacent to fire hydrants) are ideal locations.



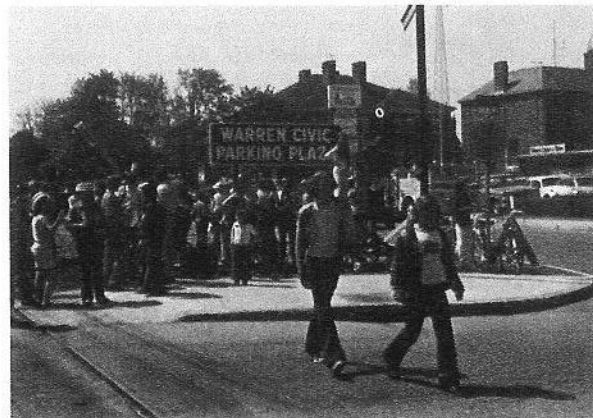
Proposed brick paving on South Street.



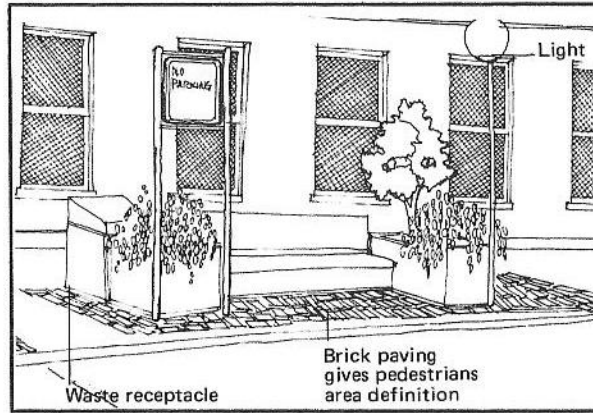
Public bench in Philadelphia.



Fountain with waste receptacle, Palm Springs, California.



Good public sign in Warren, R.I.



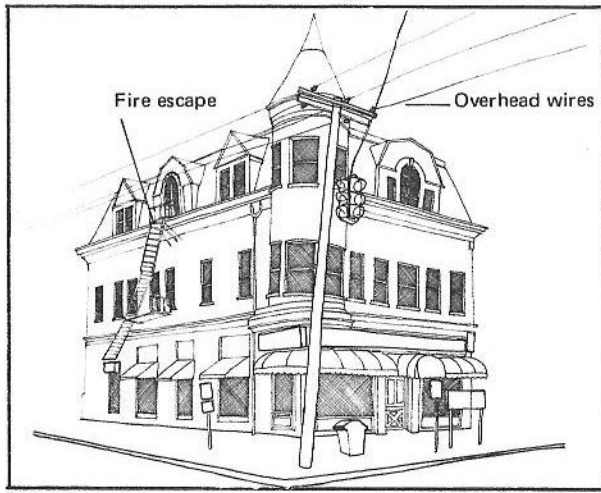
Bench with waste receptacle, corner of Audrey Ave. at South St.

BENCHES. Pedestrians are encouraged to use the street where they have places to rest and wait for others. Benches can be located along the sidewalk where space is available, as well as in areas which have been specially widened. Many of these spaces can be developed as mini-parks. Wooden benches are preferred. These benches should be selected for comfort and durability. It is also important to use bench designs which are compatible with other street furnishings. Materials should match when possible. Coordinated structures which incorporate benches with planters, waste receptacles, and sign frames are particularly useful. They are visually cohesive, and help to concentrate elements into small areas rather than stringing individual pieces of furniture throughout an entire block.

WASTE RECEPTACLES. Trash containers should have an exterior casing which conforms to bench and planter box materials. Wooden containers can be fabricated to allow the insertion of a concealed metal container, which can be removed for easy servicing. They should be spaced frequently along the street. As suggested in the previous categories, link waste receptacles with other street furniture.

SIGNS. Street signs refer to public notices mounted at the curb which give instructions to drivers and pedestrians about traffic control. These signs include parking restrictions and traffic lights. There are also "trailblazing" signs, which indicate direction to a remote location. An example of a 'trailblazer' is a sign indicating direction to an offstreet parking lot.

For slow, in-town traffic, parking regulation signs must be mounted at a level easily seen by motorists. The height for easy visibility is generally much lower than the level of most signs in towns today. The poles are usually an uninteresting, steel channel-shape which is easily bent and is often mounted carelessly at odd angles. Flat sign panels should be mounted on solid wooden posts or square metal tubing which will remain firmly in a perpendicular position. Treat trailblazer signs similarly. Wherever possible, integrate these signs with benches, plant boxes, and other street furnishings. Traffic signals should be pole-mounted at intersections, to eliminate overhead wires.

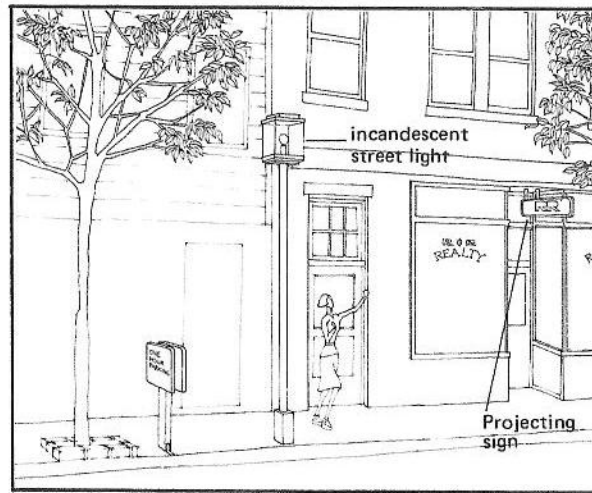


Charlie's Restaurant with existing utility wires.



Charlie's Restaurant with underground utilities.

UTILITIES. One of the greatest obstructions to the visual unity of block facades is the jumble of leaning utility poles and overhead wires. These telephone and power lines are best placed underground. A concerted effort to stage an undergrounding program for the core of the commercial area can yield dramatic results. The conversion of overhead wires to underground lines is a major cost in revitalization programs, but the yield in long-term benefits is more than compensatory. Utility companies are particularly encouraged to facilitate undergrounding schemes in communities that have already demonstrated a concern for their visual environment through other townscape actions.



Low scale lighting on Audrey Avenue.

LIGHTING. Street lighting of commercial areas is brighter than necessary. The frequent custom is to mount mercury vapor or other high-intensity lamps on high poles and to space them at wide intervals. A lower intensity incandescent lamp is more suitable for in-town pedestrian areas. The incandescent bulb provides a more natural color range and can save energy if lowered wattages are used. The lamps should be mounted on closely-spaced, short poles. This method can establish a perfectly adequate light level. In addition to the uniform lighting pattern of pole-mounted fixtures, other areas of special lighting should be considered. Light fixtures can be mounted on buildings in entry ways and alleys. Shielded lamps which are integrated into benches and planters can provide emphasis in areas of pedestrian concentration. All light sources on the street, including those of commercial signs and shop windows should be included in determining the overall light level of the street. This diminishes the level of light from street poles significantly without hampering visibility.



A well-designed light fixture, San Leandro California.

TOWNSCAPE ELEMENTS: BROAD SCALE ISSUES

The elements of townscape discussed in the earlier sections apply to all buildings, blocks, and streets. In addition, there are certain elements which occur at special points within the hamlet. These relate to the town as a whole, help to tie it together and provide special amenities.

PARKING LOTS. The auto is a strong determinant of street character; therefore, conscious control of all auto-oriented uses is essential. As vast areas of land are dedicated as lots for parking, the lots should be landscaped thoroughly as positive contributions to the environment. Whenever an edge of a parking lot touches the street, it should be planted with a row of vegetation to buffer the mass of cars from the pedestrians on the sidewalk. Fences, walls, and earth berms may be used as well. Within the parking field, pedestrian ways should be created which include planting and paving materials that distinguish the walkways from the parking areas.

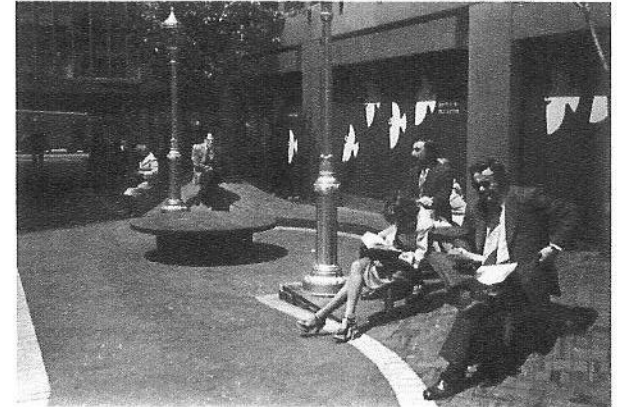
PEDESTRIAN LINKS. It is important to develop every opportunity to encourage pedestrian use of the village. A pleasant walking environment can increase activity along the commercial streets. Improved connections to outlying facilities also strengthen the relationship of the merchant area to the entire town.

Pedestrian links to parking lots are particularly important. If passages to remote lots are pleasant, they can increase the use of these parking areas. Alleys between buildings, and open sidewalks are examples of pedestrian links.

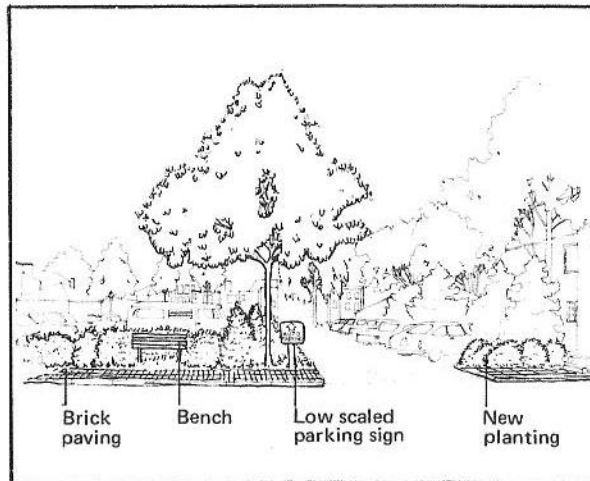
Crossing connections to public resources (such as parks and waterfronts), are other opportunities for development. These linkages with the town are especially critical where railroads or highly-traveled streets break the walkway connection. Special paving, planting and signs can be used in these cases.



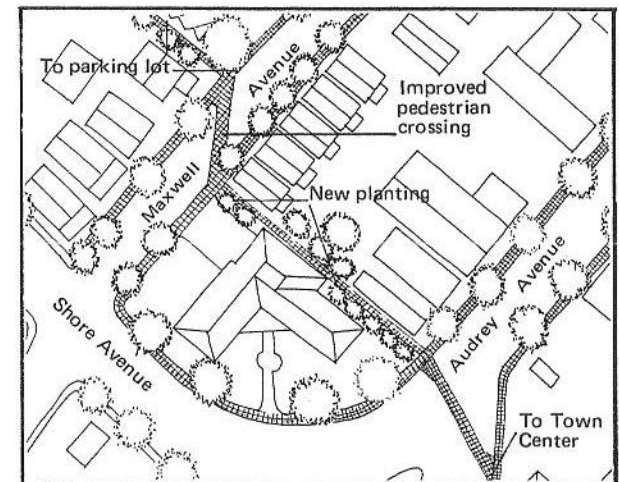
Landscaped parking lot in Westlake Village, California.



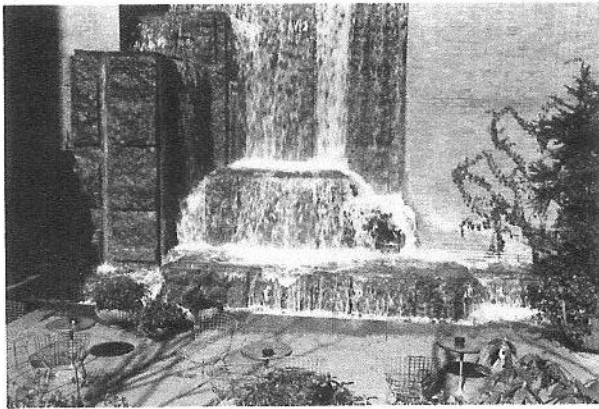
Pedestrian link defined with special paving, New York City.



Proposed landscaping at West Main street parking lot.



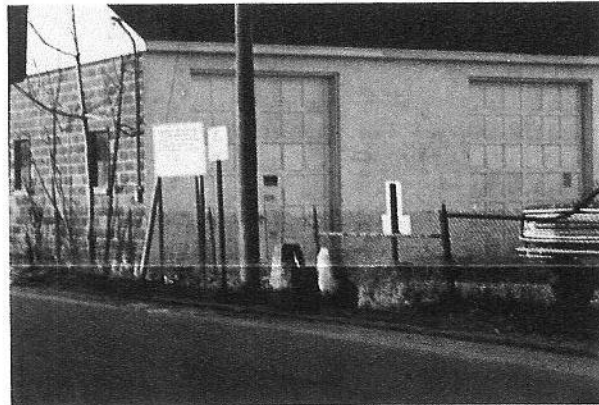
Proposed pedestrian link from Maxwell Ave. parking to town center.



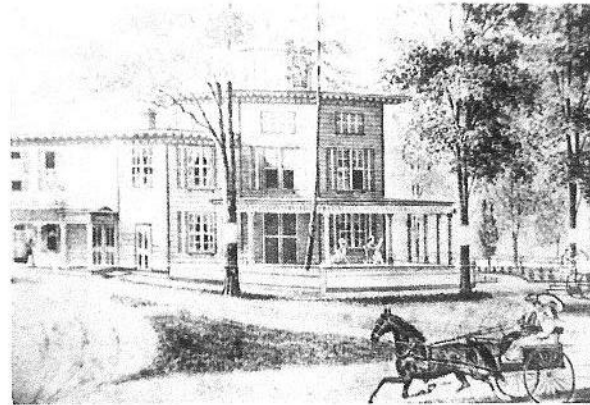
Fountain in a mini-park in New York City.



Historic marker, Boston



Existing spring on South Street, Oyster Bay.



Original Octagon Hotel, Oyster Bay.



Octagon Hotel today.

OPEN SPACE. Undeveloped land is a significant recreational resource. Existing parks need to be well maintained and new park spaces created. Land of historic significance, or land that is near centers of activity should be developed as community park space. Small lots in the core of town can be converted into valuable mini-parks. These parks can focus on special features, such as fountains, rear-court building entries, and public information centers.

MARKERS. Signs which explain historic significance are essential elements in creating an understanding of our urban environment. They create a link with the past. Markers can also illustrate the process of change; signs which reproduce illustrations of particular sites as they once looked often give insight into today's condition. A coordinated set of markers placed throughout the town can sustain a sense of connection to the past and add the excitement of discovery to the walking experience today.

PROPOSALS: COMMERCIAL



The previous section of the report discussed the elements of townscape in general terms, with illustrations of specific applications of those elements to situations in Oyster Bay. This section focuses specifically upon Oyster Bay hamlet and presents examples that combine groups of townscape elements to demonstrate the full impact of townscape revitalization. Time and space do not allow the illustration of every design opportunity in the town, therefore the illustrations shown are intended as prototypes which can be applied to other buildings, streets, and open spaces. While reading this section, remember that the recommended actions are intended to be executed incrementally by various groups in the community.

FOUR CORNERS AREA. The main commercial core of Oyster Bay radiates from the intersection of South Street, Audrey Avenue and East Main Street; this may be termed the "four corners area." The design team recommends special emphasis for this intersection since it visually represents the heart of the village. The Nobman hardware store, the Bank of North America, the Sagamore Drugs building, and Charlie's Inferno restaurant define this intersection. Basically, these four buildings are sound structures, and with special attention, can become a focal point. The accompanying sketch outlines renovations and civic improvements that can make the four corners a "special place." These improvements include an outdoor cafe and the redesign

of signs for Charlie's Inferno; the realignment of signs and the addition of coordinated awnings for the Sagamore Drugs building; a change in wall surfacing for the Nobman block; and a painting scheme for the Bank of North America that highlights existing architectural details.

In addition, to the facade renovations, special amenities have been added to improve the street appearance. Brick sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as a widening of the sidewalk at three of the corners, offer improved pedestrian spaces. Groupings of street furniture include benches, waste receptacles, sign structures and information kiosks. Street trees add to the cohesiveness of the area.



North side of East Main Street, with proposed changes.



North side of East Main Street today.

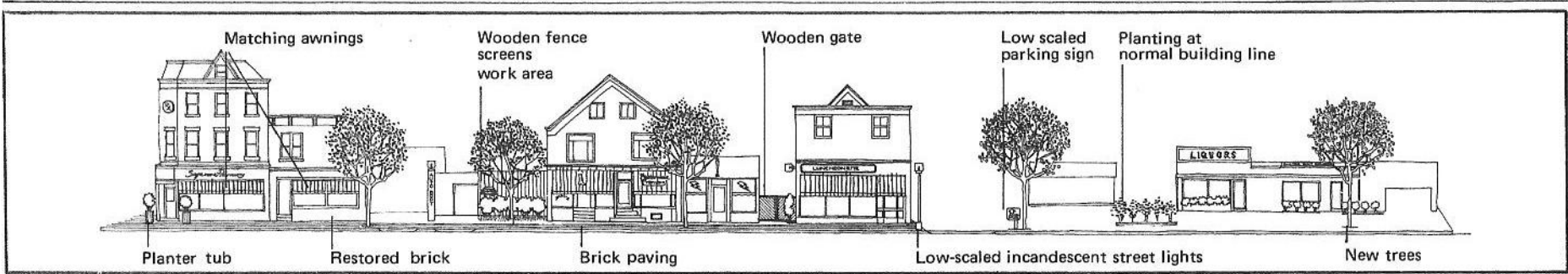
CHARLIE'S INFERNO BLOCK. This block extends from Charlie's Inferno restaurant to the Boulderwood Shop on East Main Street. It contains good examples of early twentieth century commercial architecture. The Inferno building is illustrated with an outdoor cafe and a color scheme that accentuates the architectural details. The adjoining buildings, an expansion of the restaurant, bears a similar color scheme. The next

buildings have had their imitation brick siding removed and the original siding restored. The successive buildings containing multiple shops have been reorganized with uniform canopies and sign placements to express the unity of the structures. Street furnishings bind these renovations together into a block with its own strong image.

NOBMAN BLOCK. This set of building facades on West Main Street begins with Nobman's Hardware Store at the corner of South Street. The complex of three buildings is shown with a color system that reveals the identity of the separate structures, while tying them together with matching colors. Infill planting is used at alleys on either side of the fire station, where parking occurs, to shield the cars from the street and to retain the "edge" of the sidewalk.



South side of East Main Street.



West side of South Street above Audrey Avenue, with proposed changes.



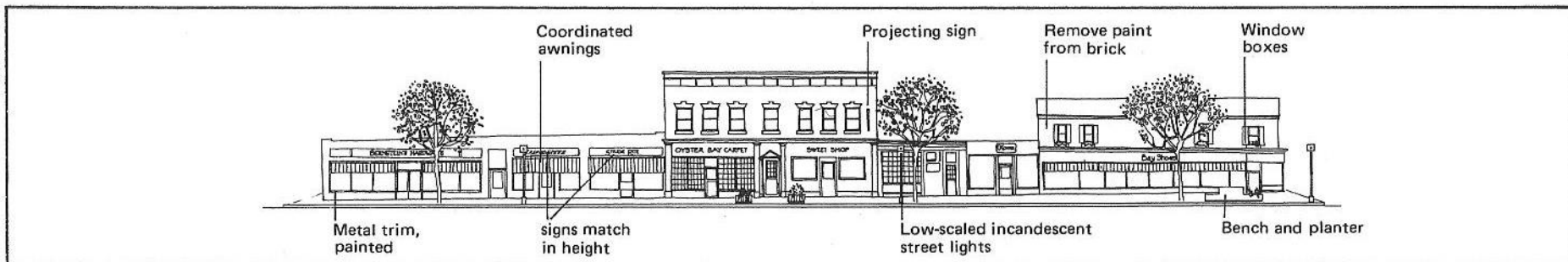
West side of South Street above Audrey Avenue, today.

SAGAMORE DRUGS BLOCK. Running along South Street above Audrey Avenue, this block is composed of a variety of uncoordinated building facades and open gaps which are not visually linked. To promote this linkage, a variety of townscape devices are employed. Fencing with buffer planting is used to fill in gaps in the facades. Wire link fences have been replaced with solid wooden ones. New awnings of matching color

unify the string of structures, and sign lines are simplified. A new public sign serves as a "trailblazer" to the public lot. Street trees, lighting and paving bind the street together.

BAY SHOES BLOCK. This block of South Street below West Main Street is headed by the Bay Shoes building. The predominant material of the block is unpainted brick; therefore, the white paint has been removed

from the Bay Shoes building to visually tie the building facades together. Other areas of painting on the remaining buildings have also been removed. The addition of benches, planters, and street lamps adds to the visual cohesion of the block, while providing a variety of colors, and textures. The sidewalk has been paved in brick.



West side of South Street, below West Main Street.

EXXON STATION. Gas stations are often the single most blighting influence on the visual appearance of any town. With a few well-chosen townscape techniques, gas stations can become pleasant visual assets to any area! The stations are used frequently by many residents and maintain a position of high visibility in the community. Good design in gas stations can serve as an incentive for other improvements in the town.

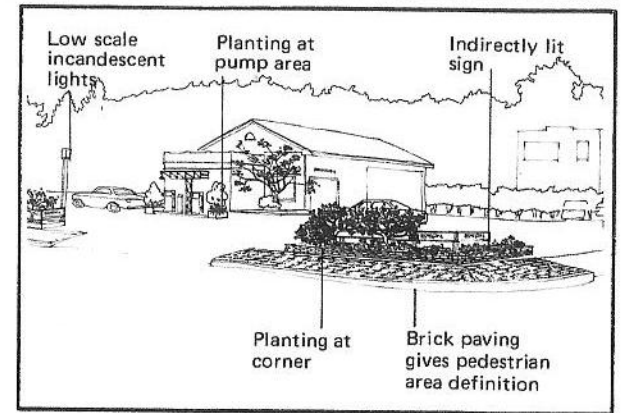
In the drawing of the Exxon station of South Street at Adams Avenue, planting techniques have been suggested that improve the appearance of the service court area. The planting around the perimeter of the station cuts down the impact of the expanse of paving seen from the road. It further reinforces the sidewalk edge. Planting at the pump islands and foundation planting at the station itself add color and soften the impact of the service area. Low lights and wooden station signs help integrate the station into this visual environment and expresses a goal that both the oil companies and the individual proprietors publicly state they wish to achieve--integration into the community.



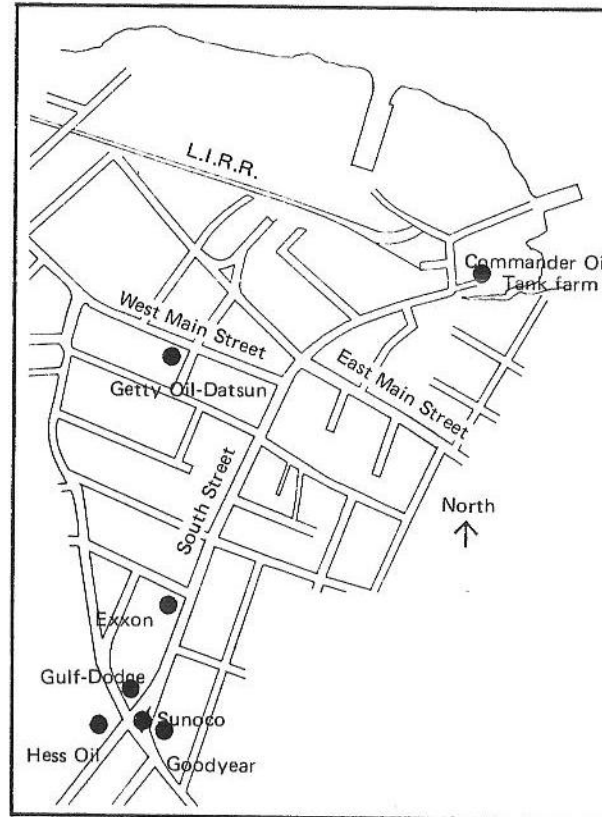
Exxon Station in Columbia Maryland.



Exxon Station on South Street, today.

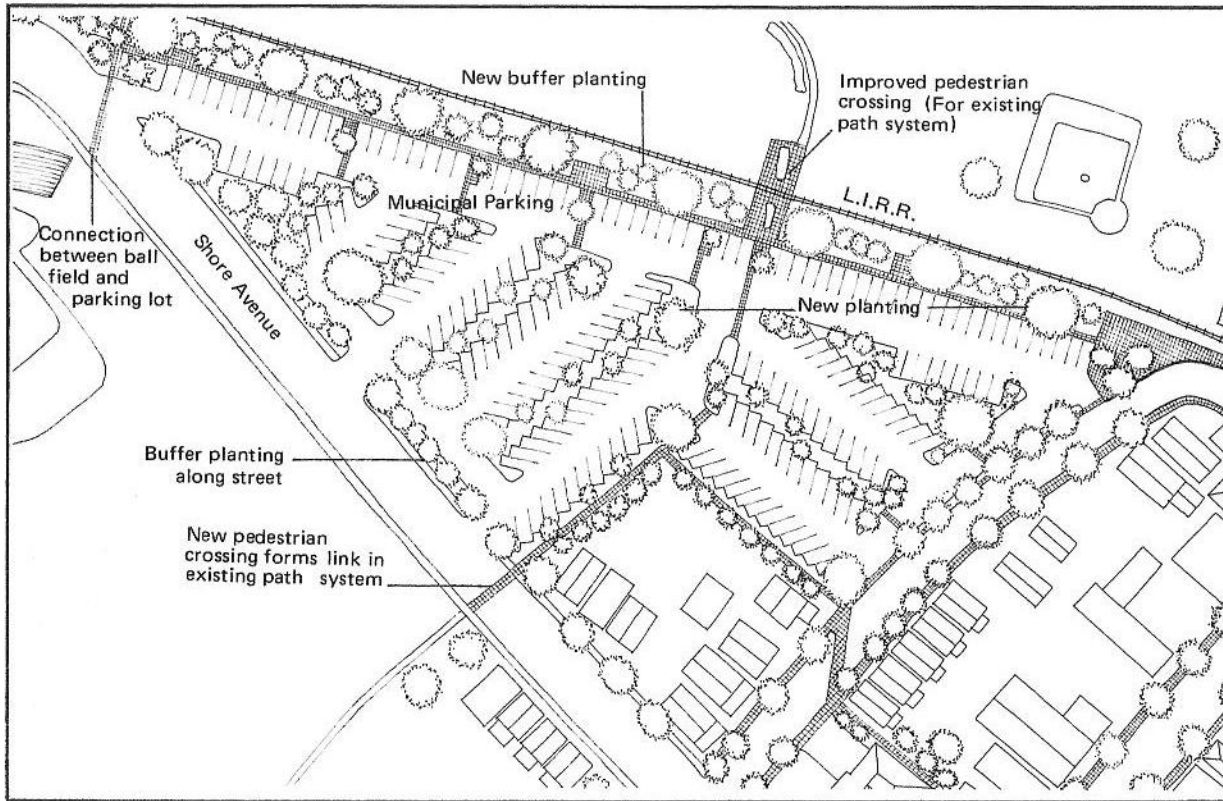


Proposed landscaping of Exxon station on South Street.

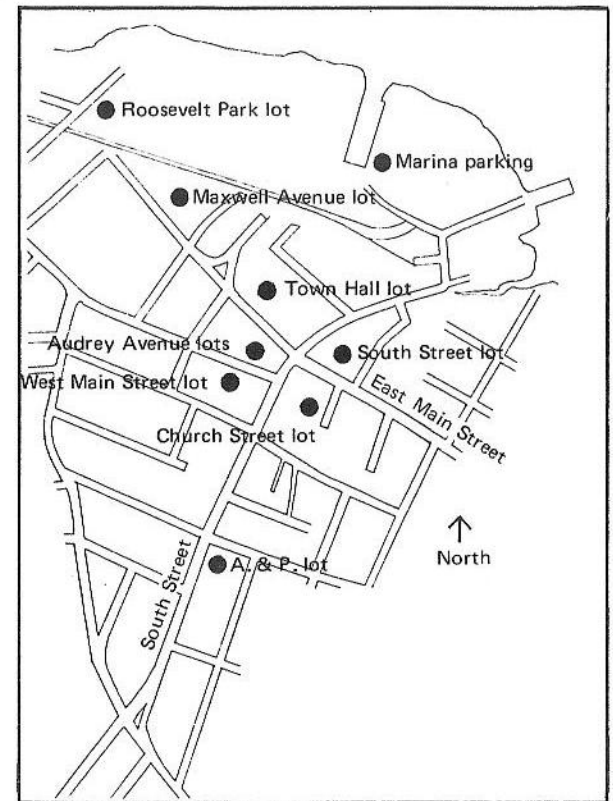


Location of auto-orientated sites for landscaping action.

PROPOSALS: PARKING LOTS



Landscaping improvements of Maxwell Avenue lot.



Location of parking lots needing landscaping.

MAXWELL AVENUE LOT. The parking field to the west of the railroad station is now one huge expanse of barren paving, lacking definition of parking lanes and landscaping. The illustration demonstrates the opportunities for this lot. Extensive landscaping within the lot itself literally converts it into a park for cars, with lanes specially marked for pedestrians. Heavy buffering of the edges of the site strengthen the quality of the surrounding street environments. Particularly important are the pedestrian ways that link the lot with nearby facilities, such as the park, playing fields, the station area, and the town center. This parking lot plot plan is an example of the potential for development of each of the lots within the hamlet.

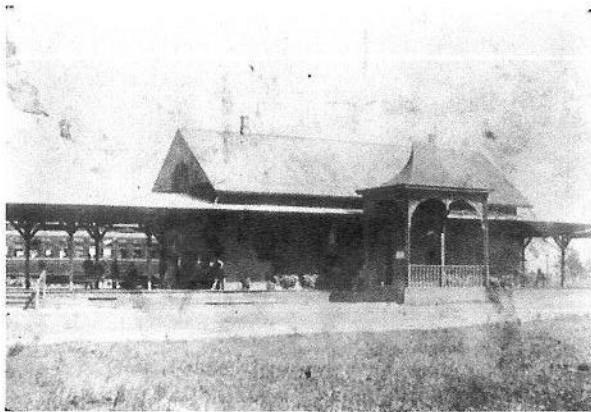
The most direct benefit of parking lot landscaping is the increased use of outlying, underutilized lots. By making these lots pleasant, and the walking connections enjoyable, parking pressures in the core of the hamlet can be relieved, while increasing the shopping population. Oyster Bay has already invested heavily in this parking project. A landscaping program can enhance that investment.

PROPOSALS: OPEN SPACE

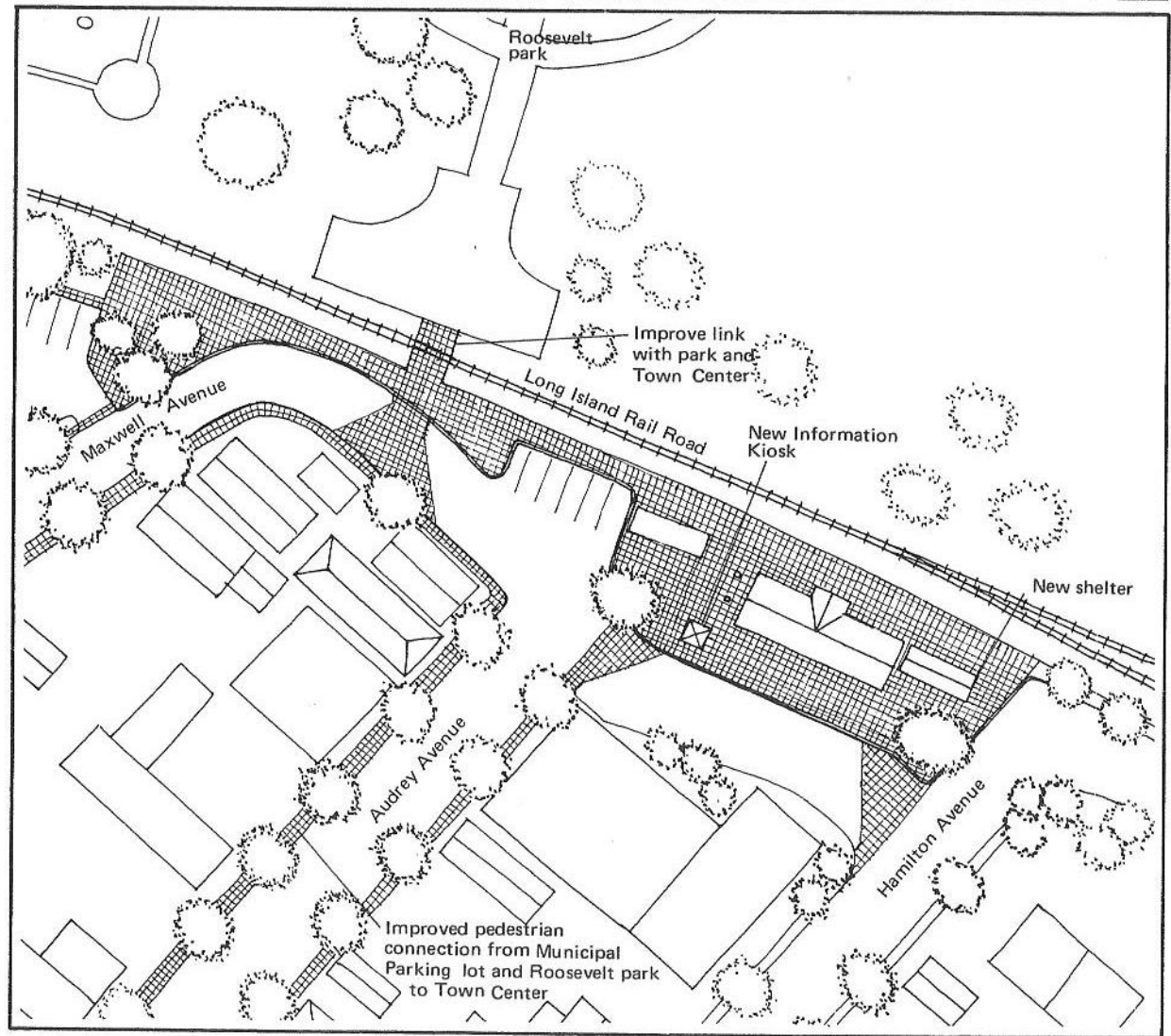
ROOSEVELT PARK. One of the greatest resources of the hamlet, Roosevelt Park is not fulfilling its potential. It lacks concessions and services directed toward recreation, such as food kiosks and scenic view-points along the waterfront. The expansion of the public marina is a special opportunity to include small commercial services relating to boating activities.

The pedestrian links to the park are particularly weak. The plan illustrates paved walkways that clearly define the connections from the station area and remote parking lots to the park. It simplifies the railroad crossing which is now an obstacle for direct pedestrian access.

RAILROAD STATION PLAZA. The area around the Long Island Rail Road depot is singularly devoid of amenities and definition as a civic space. There is no guidance for visitors when they arrive by train. As a system, the station environment does not encourage rail use. The drawing illustrates a plaza which re-establishes a sheltered waiting area, and creates a setting for an information kiosk announcing town events, locating special services and providing town maps. Pedestrian crossings are provided which clearly orient visitors toward the town center.



Oyster Bay depot c. 1910



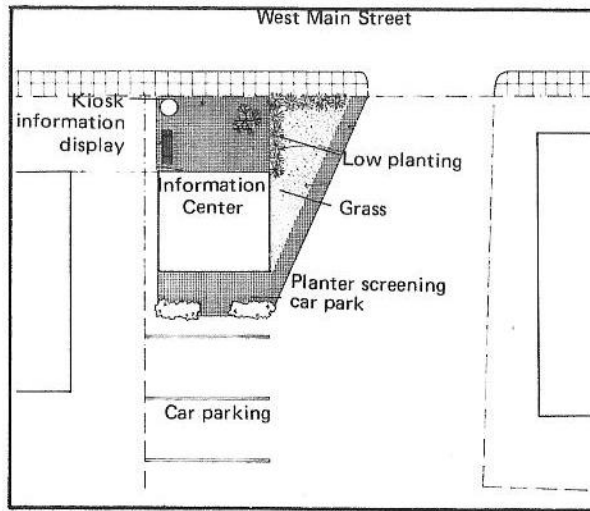
Plan of station plaza with pedestrian connections to Roosevelt Park

INFORMATION CENTER. A central location for distribution of town information is needed in the hamlet. Its function is to provide information on the resources of the area, and to direct tourists to them. It further acts as a bulletin board for residents. A renovated summer cottage, now available to the town, is shown located in a parking lot on West Main Street. It can serve this function. The building is aligned with the adjacent residential properties, and is surrounded by planting, and a forecourt which can become a rendezvous point for visitors and shoppers.

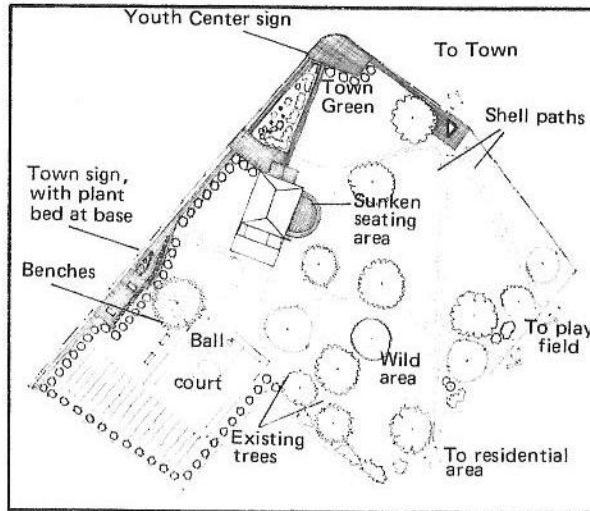
TOWN GREEN AND YOUTH CENTER OFFICES. The intersection of Oyster Bay and Berry Hill Roads is a key entry point to the hamlet. It can easily be transformed into a welcoming green space. This site is also an ideal location for the administrative center of the Oyster Bay - East Norwich Youth organization. The sketch shows the area with trees, shrubs and grass. The site boundaries are clearly defined by paving, and telephone poles are laid around the edge of the site to form a curb. The poles can be well anchored in this position to control auto access at a fraction of the cost of concrete curbs.

FORT HILL SITE. The location of a British strong point from 1778 to the end of the Revolutionary War, Fort Hill is of both historic and archeologic interest. The area should be developed as a park. The town has already accepted the site for historical preservation in recognition of its significance. The next task is to improve the site as a park, with areas set aside for wildlife and for excavation activities.

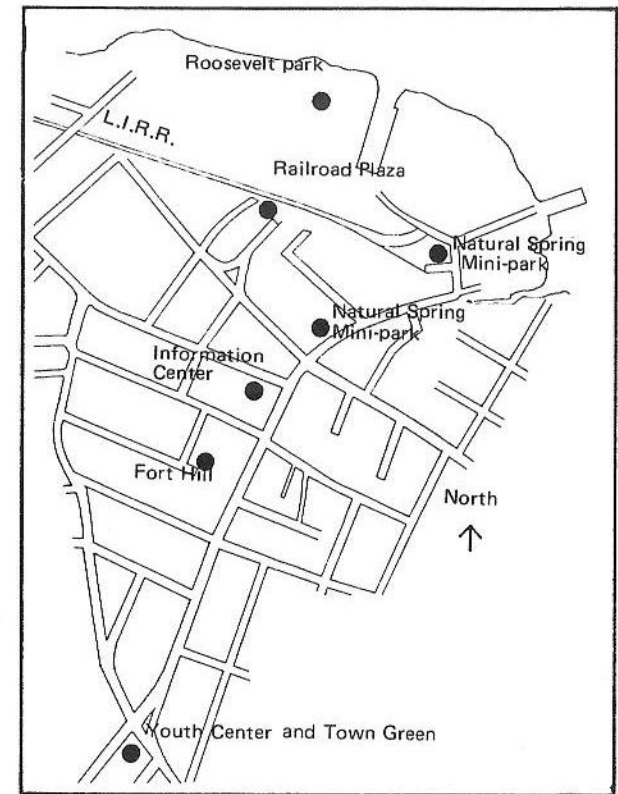
FOUNTAIN PARKS. A town resource bearing special emphasis is the set of natural springs which are dotted about the hamlet. The sites could be developed easily as mini-parks for community use. Planting, benches, and explanatory markers are needed at these sites. The little fountain at the South Street entrance to the Town Hall parking lot is the best place to start.



Plan of proposed information center on West Main Street.



Plan of proposed youth center.

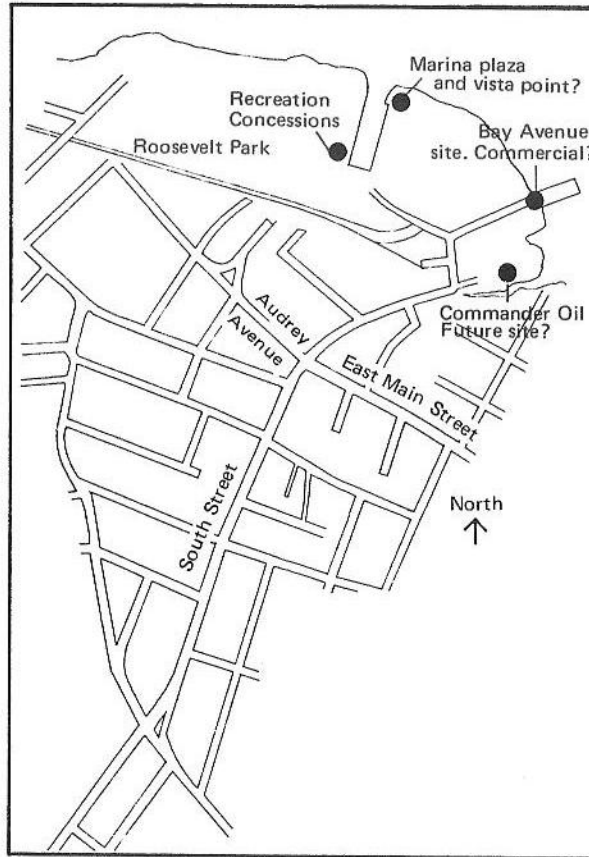


Location of open space improvements.

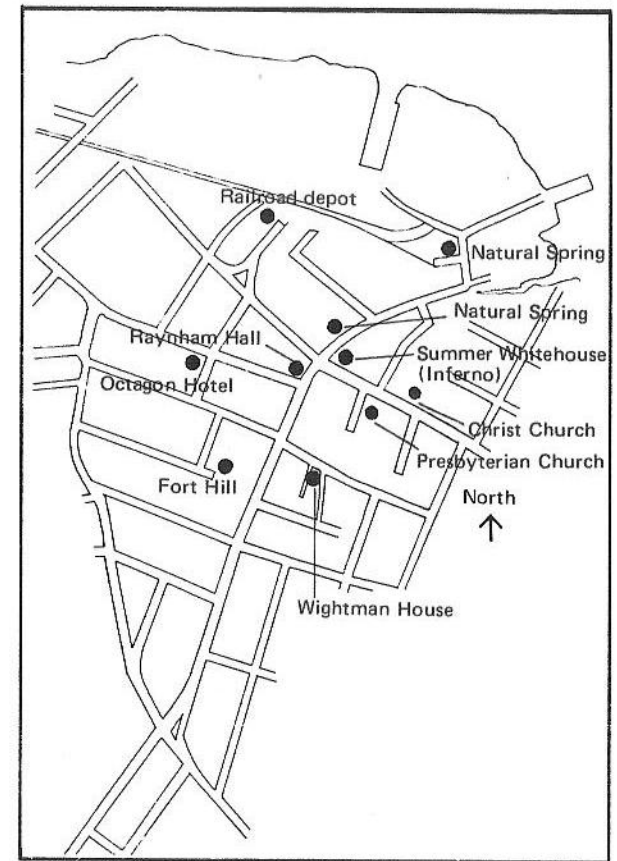
PROPOSALS: SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE WATERFRONT. One of the greatest assets of Oyster Bay, and one that appears to be least developed, is the waterfront. The area offers great potential for land and water activities. If the waterfront strip had restaurants and shops, landscaping, and good pedestrian connections with the commercial areas, the bay area could become an integral element of activity for the hamlet once again.

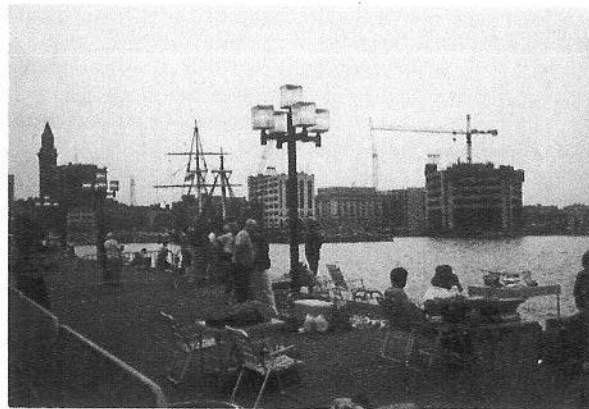
MARKERS AND TOWN SIGNS. Markers indicating the significance of points of interest within the hamlet, and town signs announcing entry into the hamlet, are simple actions, but yield great benefits. Both disseminate information, and create an awareness of presence in a special place. Oyster Bay possesses a wealth of historic buildings and sites which should be identified with markers. Examples are Fort Hill, the Octagon Hotel, and the natural springs. Town signs located at points of entry can provide directions to key points and form the basis for creating an image of pride in the community.



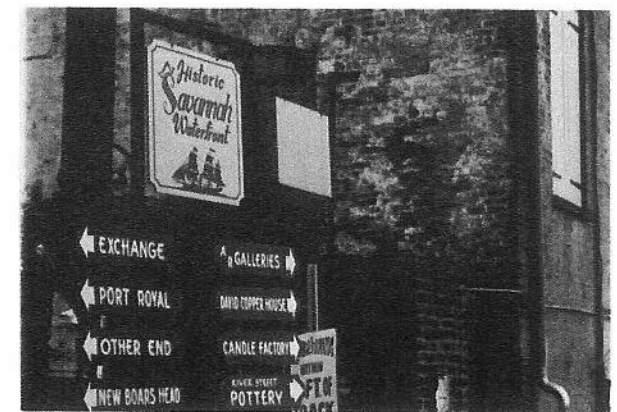
Waterfront development sites in Oyster Bay.



Proposed marker locations in Oyster Bay.



Waterfront access in Baltimore, Maryland.



A good town entry sign in Savannah, Georgia.

IMPLEMENTATION

The task of defining the opportunities for townscape revitalization in Oyster Bay has been accomplished. But it is not enough to solely create a consciousness of the hamlet's potentials; the plan becomes meaningful only as it is implemented.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS. There are direct financial benefits of coordinated town design. Three brief examples are given here to demonstrate the range of small-town efforts.

David City, Nebraska. A rural community of 2400 residents, David City was experiencing a decline in population and business. Businessmen formed an association for rehabilitation. Each member restored his storefront to its original Victorian period, with the association resolving any conflicts about color and design schemes. The results: a 40% increase in sales in two years and a 17% increase in bank deposits. Others in the community committed themselves to similar rehabilitations and the town adopted a six-year improvement program.

Marshall, Michigan. A town of 15,000, Marshall caught preservation enthusiasm. Real estate assessments increased in 10 years from \$22 million to \$40 million with no appreciable new construction in that period. Chiefly due to restoration efforts, property values average \$1000 more than in adjoining communities. 10,000 people visit Marshall each year for the Historic Society's Home Tour. This tour grosses over \$31,000 annually which nets \$21,000 to support a non-profit preservation program.

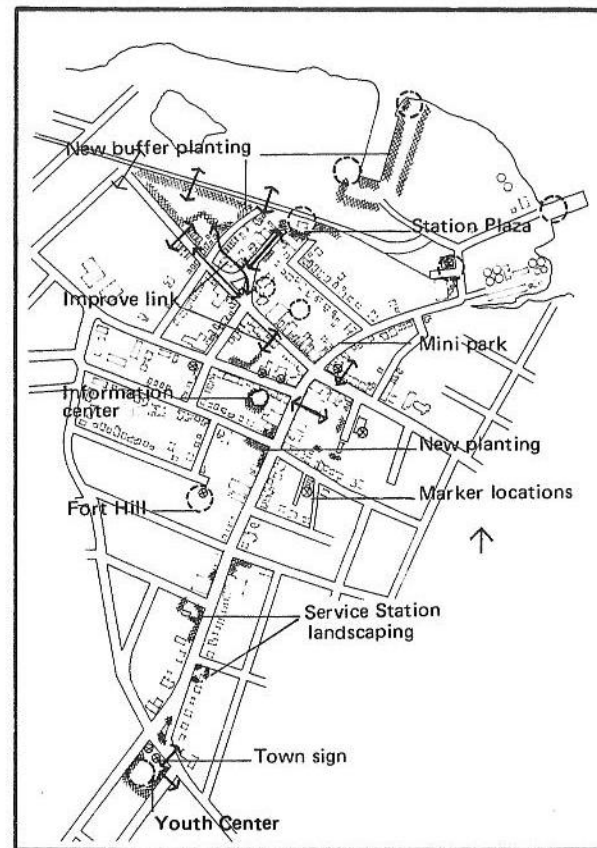
Denison, Texas. Without state or federal assistance, this town of 25,000 established a citizens' non-profit corporation. The town converted three blocks of downtown into a pedestrian shopping area and rehabilitated the shop fronts. The town replaced utility lines and repaved the streets while the corporation raised funds for the rehabilitations and acquired parking lots in the downtown area. Total cost: \$163,700. Results: In the first year, sales volumes in the Mall were up 25%, despite competition from new suburban shopping centers.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT. Start now. Begin work on your own facade and demonstrate a real interest. Push for your organization's participation in a project, and tell the town councilmen your interest in their actions. Pick up a phone and talk to your neighbor about what he can do.

Organize a Steering Committee. The first stage toward implementation is to organize a supervisory committee. It should be composed of representatives from a range of public organizations, service clubs and societies. The important idea is to create a broad base of representation. The steering committee can coordinate efforts to finance projects and encourage participation in specified activities such as a tree planting program for the main streets, or the development of a fountain park, or a drive for the undergrounding of utility lines.

Participating Groups. The range of organizations is broad in Oyster Bay. Each of them has special resources which can be contributed to the town effort. The groups listed below suggest some candidates. The list is short and not inclusive; other groups not listed here should, of course, be included: The Chamber of Commerce; churches, synagogues and religious organizations; Kiwanis, Lion's and Rotary clubs; youth organizations; Raynham Hall and the Historical Society; garden clubs and town service clubs; the American Legion; and representatives of the Town of Oyster Bay government.

STAGING. It is important to consider the sequence of actions that will develop throughout the revitalization program. The study area plan is intended to aid in coordinating projects. Individual renovations may proceed at any time. In projects of broader scope, efforts should be made to anticipate conflicts in projects so they may be resolved early in the planning stages. Costs can be held to a minimum by combining related projects. As an example, the undergrounding of utility lines could be executed at the same time that the sidewalks are being repaved, in order to save on excavation costs. Planting areas along the street should be designated before paving begins, to facilitate installation.



FUNDING METHODS. Financing may come from private sources, from the Town, State and Federal governments, and from foundations. The town government can be urged to enact laws which provide a tax incentive for building renovation and sign changes. A sign ordinance can be passed which provides guidelines for new signing and can include an amortization clause that provides a tax incentive for those who change their sign to meet the guidelines. There is already an innovational law that grants tax relief for the maintenance and conservation of designated historic sites.

The town government can allocate a portion of its capital improvements budget within the hamlet. Funds could include street improvements, landscaping and the undergrounding of utility lines. The guidance committee may also engage in a fund-raising campaign to finance undergrounding.

Local banks should be encouraged to participate in the revitalization effort by making loans available for individual improvements. In some cities, such as Portland, Oregon and Norfolk, Virginia, a non-profit corporation has been formed to take loans from local banks at a reduced interest rate. The banks do not pay taxes on the interest, which allows them to make the loans at a low rate. The corporation in turn makes loans to individuals for improvements, at the low rate. The corporation may add an additional percentage to the loan to create a general operating fund while still maintaining the loans at a rate below the market.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS. The Department of Housing and Urban Development has the bulk of its funds administered through the Community Development Block Grant Program. Most of the funds are applied to cities with populations of more than 50,000 and to urban centers with greater than 20,000 population. Other communities may qualify which are selected by the State for the receipt of State discretionary funds.

The Department of Commerce has programs oriented toward increasing economic development and employment. Within the department, the Economic Development Administration provides technical assistance grants to individuals, State and local governments and to non-profit organizations for financing economic development planning. The Public Works Impact Program can provide grants for public works in areas of high unemployment. These projects can include renovation of facilities.

The Small Business Administration funds Local Development Company Loan Programs which provide small businesses with assistance in covering the costs of construction, conversion and expansion of business facilities.

The Department of Transportation, through its Urban Mass Transportation Administration, has provided grants for the rehabilitation of railroad stations and connected services. Also within the department, the Federal Highway Administration has funds available for the construction of parking facilities, if parking is connected with a mass transportation facility. The Traffic Safety Act of 1973 can be utilized for funding pedestrian amenities.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a federally chartered organization, provides assistance in preservation efforts through field service grants.

LEGAL TOOLS. Special ordinances can facilitate townscape implementation and assure coordination of efforts. Briefly mentioned here, the legal tools of townscape are discussed in the supplementary handbook.

Design review board. The two strongest tools are design review ordinances and sign codes. A design review board reviews all renovations and new construction for compliance with an established set of guidelines. The board may preside over a specially designated area of the town, such as the hamlet.

Sign code. This ordinance establishes limits for size, materials, and placement of signs on buildings to insure compatibility. An amortization clause can set a deadline for the elimination of non-conforming signs.

Special permits. Approval can be required for the remodeling of historic structures, the removal of street trees, the addition of new utility lines, or for the creation of parking areas based on landscape requirements.

Zoning. Existing town zoning plans can be modified to influence future land use, such as the sites along the waterfront. All of the tools mentioned above could be appended to the existing zoning or building codes.

WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW? Individual efforts to revitalize the streetscape can begin immediately. The results of these early efforts are strategically important

in demonstrating a dedicated concern by the community. This commitment will be a strong argument for influencing Local, State and Federal governmental actions.

If you own a building, examine the facade for architectural details that have been ignored. If sign panels are covering portions of moldings or window sill, remove them and replace the sign with one that fits within the lines of the facade details. Develop a color scheme which will highlight the building details. These details may include items such as window arches and sills, cornice trim, and entry ways.

Brick surfaces may be cleaned chemically without sandblasting to restore a uniform color and texture. They may then be sealed with clear silicone solutions to protect the surface from deterioration.

There are useful sources in the libraries which outline some of the actions for individual restoration. In addition, suppliers of materials and services can be found listed in the Yellow Pages of the telephone directory. Check in the library under categories such as "Remodeling", "Houses--Remodeling", and "Landscape Gardening." Also check for journals which deal specifically with old houses and restoration. In the Yellow pages, look for categories such as: "Signs," "Building materials," "Siding contractors," "Mason contractors," "Nurseries-garden," and "Painters."

HANDBOOK. In conjunction with this townscape revitalization guide, an improvement handbook has been prepared which deals with the issues presented in this brochure in further detail. Copies of that handbook are available for reference in the Oyster Bay-East Norwich Public Library, 89 Main St., Oyster Bay.

CREDITS.

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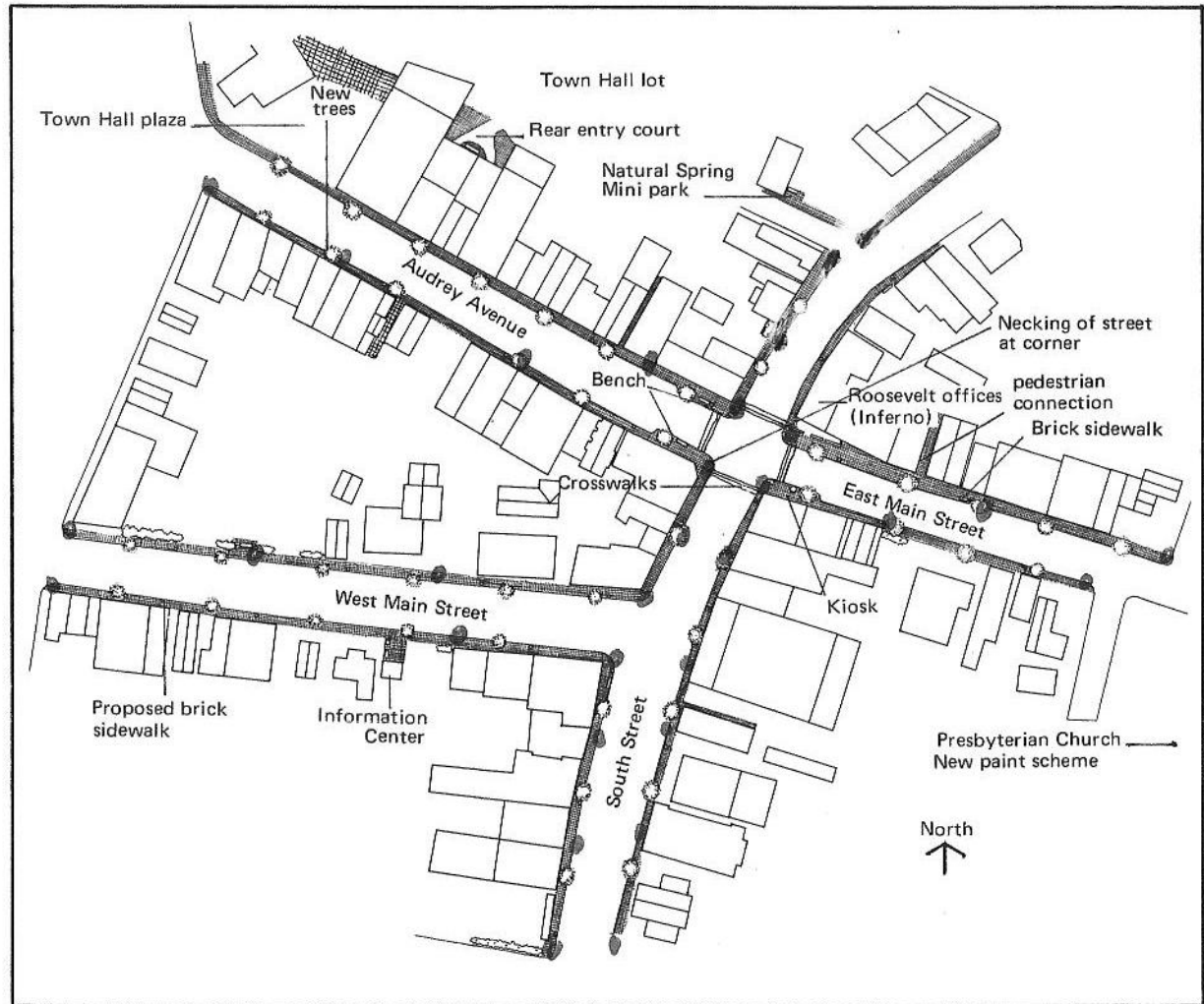
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Marshall, Michigan - Reid Williamson.

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Proposed improvements at Four Corners area.