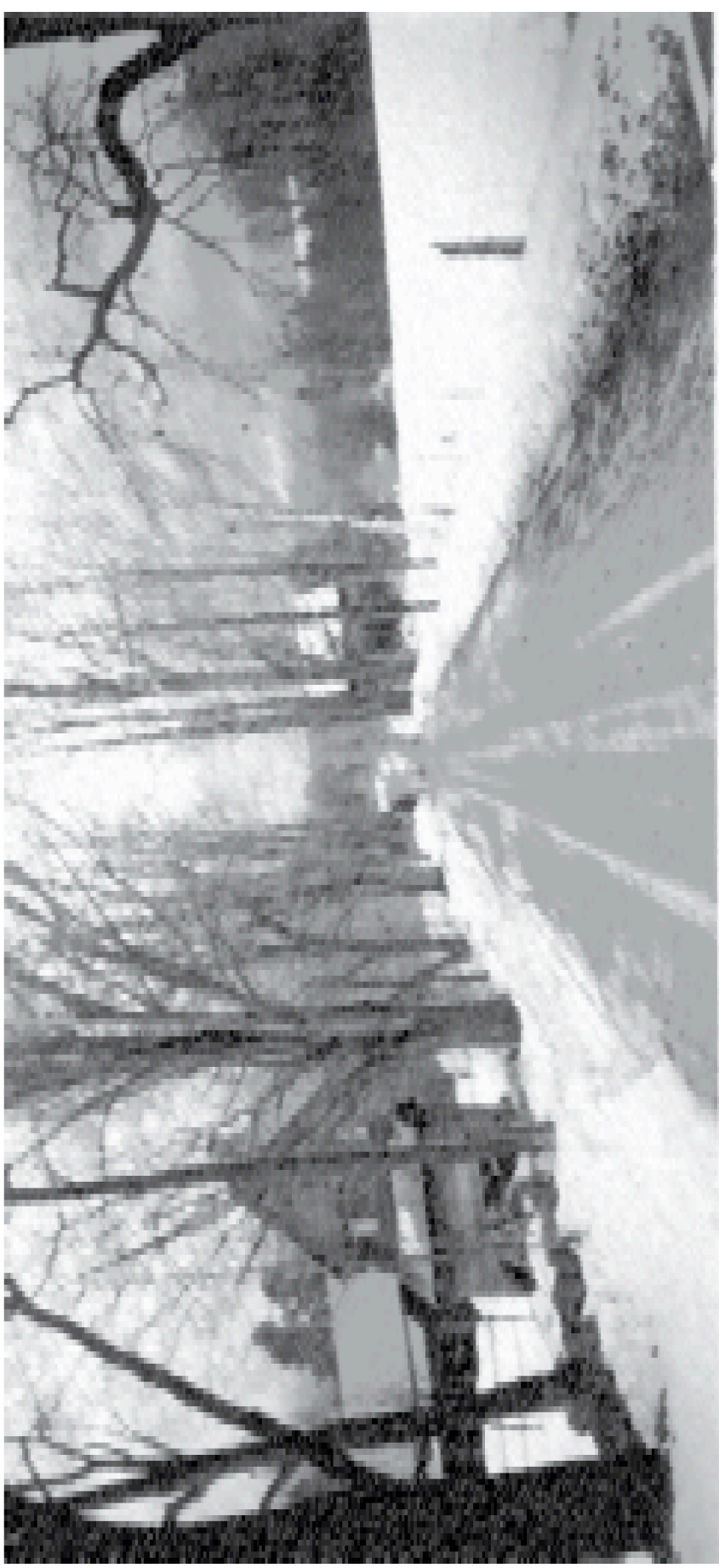


TOWN OF PLAINFIELD

PLAINFIELD - RURAL BY DESIGN



TOWN OF PLAINFIELD

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FORWARD

Plainfield is a special place. Both Meriden and Plainfield villages possess a distinct New England village character and visual appeal that attracts residents, visitors, and businesses. We are extremely fortunate to have a collection of preserved 18th, 19th century and early 20th century homes, churches, granges and school buildings in our village centers. We also feel we have been fortunate that recent small businesses that have chosen to build in our community or renovate existing buildings for business uses have built attractive facilities that blend well into the village landscape.

The core objective of Plainfield's Master Plan is to retain and nurture the rural character of the Town. These voluntary, **Design Guidelines** are the result of the Planning Board's desire to provide architectural and aesthetic guidance to business and residential developers which is consistent with the objectives of our Master Plan.

The Planning Board believes that it would be helpful to developers to provide design guidelines early in the planning process. The Planning Board began discussion of these **Design Guidelines** in October of 1997 by reviewing guidelines developed by other New Hampshire towns. In February 1999 a workshop discussion was held and a draft proposal was considered. After further review and discussion these guidelines were put together. These guidelines, in conjunction with Plainfield's current building and sub-division ordinances will facilitate discussions with respect to site development, building proportionality, and architectural detail.

Jane Stephenson
Chair,
Plainfield Planning Board

June 1999 Edition

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OBJECTIVES

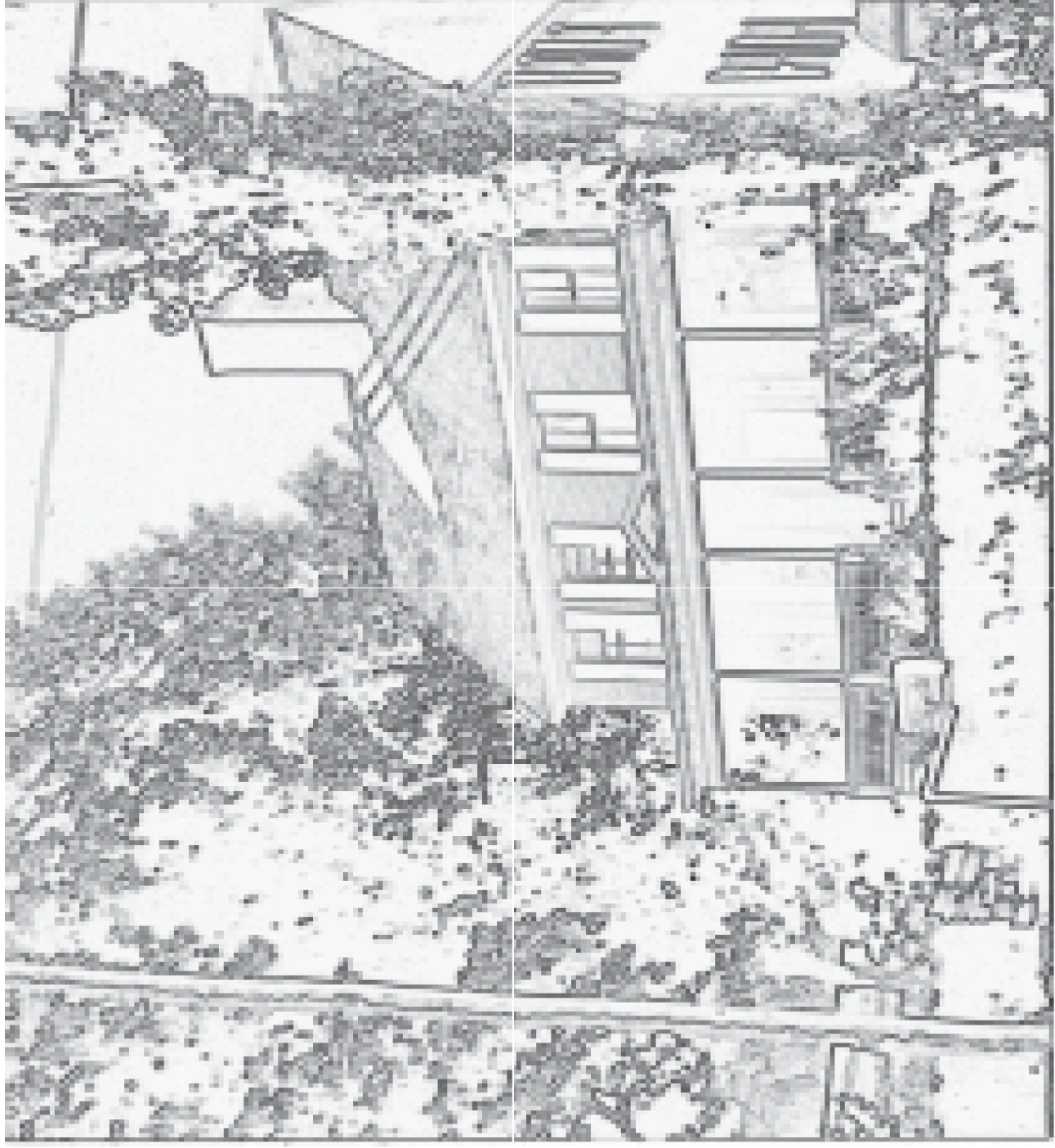
You set the tone!

The Town of Plainfield wishes to preserve and promote its rural New England character by encouraging compatible site and building development throughout the town. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide site and architectural guidance that will help achieve high quality development and which will serve to:

1. maintain the traditional scale and character of Plainfield,
2. preserve vistas as the backdrop for most of the Town and its buildings,
3. stimulate and encourage architectural innovation while maintaining appropriate scale and the dignity of the environment,
4. develop and enhance a pedestrian oriented environment,
5. protect the value of investments,

We believe that preserving Plainfield's village character and visual appeal is important to its citizens and critical to its continued vitality. These guidelines are offered as a tool to promote, preserve and enhance these qualities. These design guidelines will help those contemplating new building in the community become more aware of the current village environment and highlight the importance of good design of the site, buildings, plantings, signs and lighting. These standards are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation or variety, but rather to assist in focusing on design principles which can produce creative solutions that will maintain an attractive community.

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PROCESS

Compliance with these Design Guide lines is a voluntary component of the Site Plan Review process and is encouraged as part of construction projects which may not require site review. These Guidelines do not replace or modify current zoning, subdivision, or site plan review regulations which exist primarily to protect public health and safety. They are intended to enhance existing regulations and should be used as a tool to address important visual and design aspects of residential and commercial building and renovation projects. These guidelines are about aesthetics and do place some strictures on what is acceptable in the community. Consult with your architect or builder as well as our Town Administrator about the influence of these guidelines on your vision. For perspective, it will undoubtedly be helpful to first take a few panoramic pictures to see how your concepts fit with adjacent properties. Look around town to see where guidelines have made a difference. We do not ask that you follow any particular architectural

style, as Plainfield has many. We ask only that you take the time to observe the traditional and best character of the town and design your project to fit in with, and hopefully enhance that image.

The natural landscape of the Town's hills, fields and forests, combined with the historic and eclectic mix of Plainfield's architecture creates this special character that contributes to the quality of life, adds to the value of property and enhances the desirability and livability of the town. Given the diversity and richness of the built environment in Plainfield, the recommended first step in this process is to carefully observe any area where development is proposed. This will establish the environment into which new development should fit.

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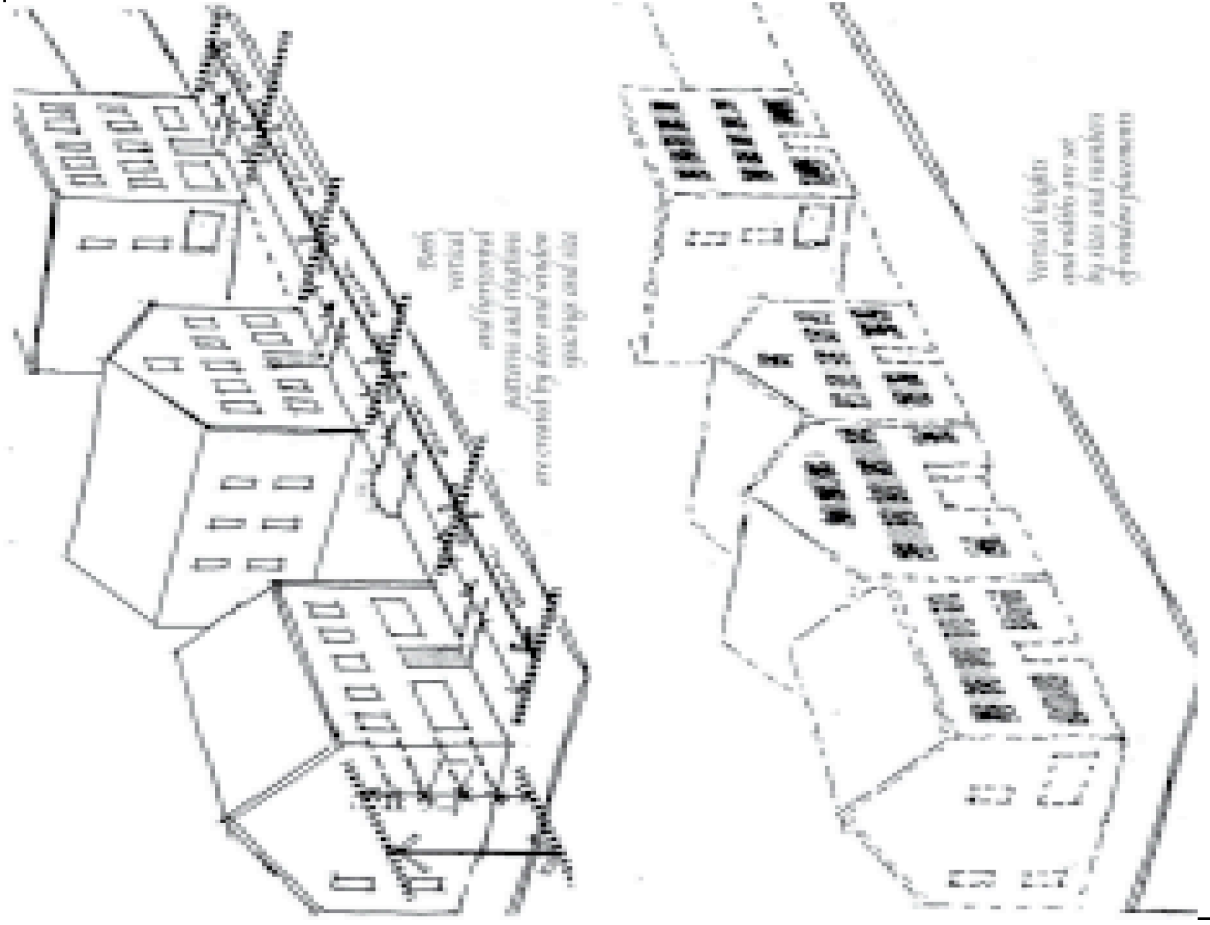


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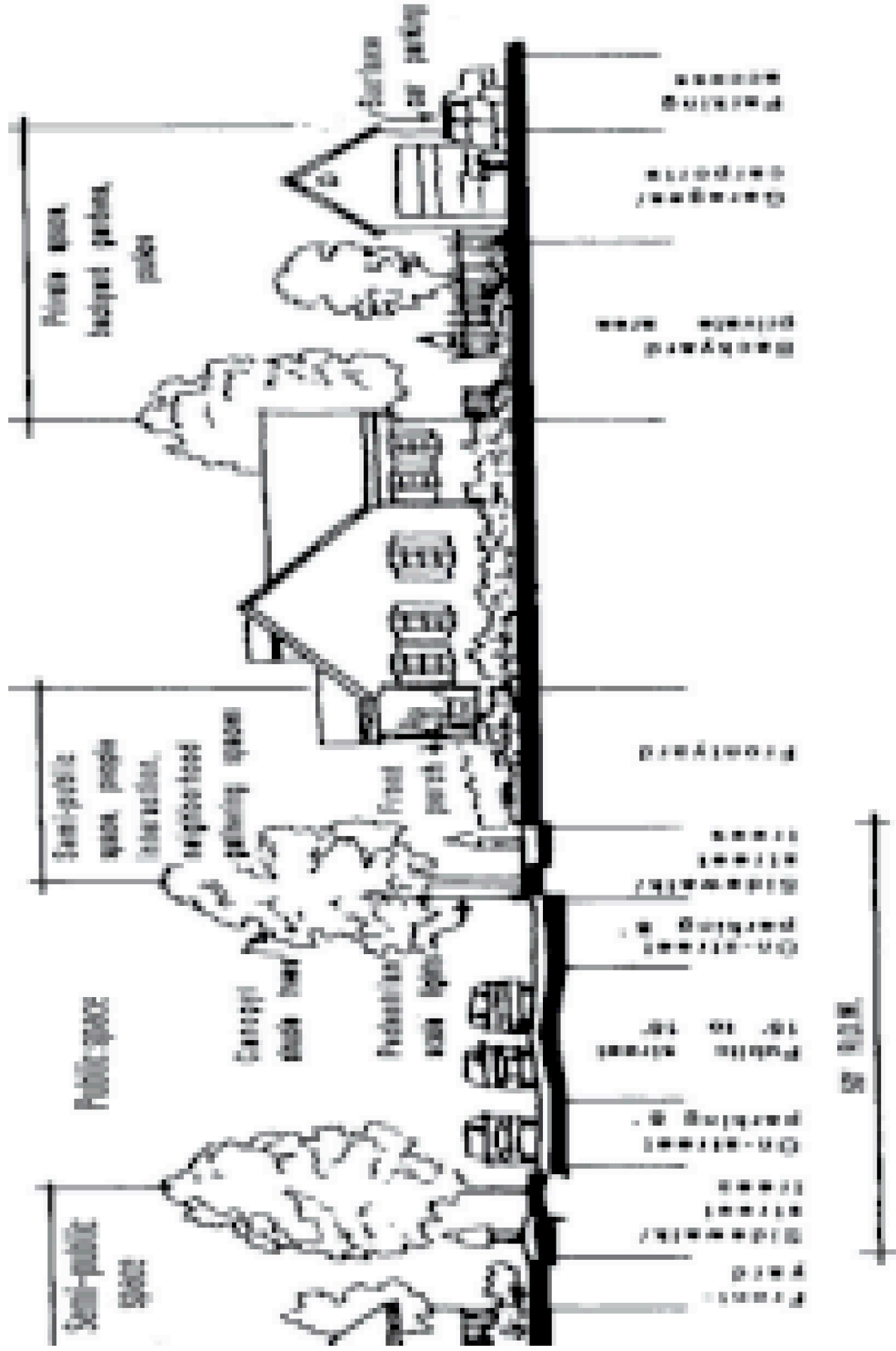
PROPORTION & RHYTHM

The relation between the height and the width of the facade, the rhythm of solids and voids (doors and windows), the pattern of the height and width of windows, the shape of the roof, the amount of open space and planting around, together with a more general reference to compatibility of materials, texture, and color set the tone of any streetscape. Proposed development should relate harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale, and architecture of existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visual relationship to any planned buildings. Site and proportion of new buildings should reflect the scale, massing, rhythm, materials and siting of adjacent structures. For areas without a distinctive architectural character, new buildings should be designed to complement Plainfield's traditional New England styles.

The removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant uses, structures or architectural elements should be minimized insofar as practicable.



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SITE & SETBACKS

The front, side and rear setbacks should be considered in relation to the prevailing setbacks existing in the immediate area. The landscape should be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal. Any grade changes should be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas. The orientation of individual building sites shall be such as to maintain maximum natural topography and cover. Setback impacts the way a group of buildings look together. New and in-fill buildings should align with existing buildings to preserve the streetscape edge. In certain circumstances, expansion of pre 1974 conforming structures into front, side or rearlot setbacks may be permitted as an “Approved Setback Encroachment”, see Section 3.10 of the Building Ordinance and consult the Town Administrator.

STREETS, SIDEWALKS & VIEWLINES

Streets should be designed and located in such a manner as to maintain and preserve natural topography, cover, significant landmarks, and trees, to minimize cut and fill, and to preserve and enhance views and vistas on or off a subject parcel. The design of roadways should enhance the rural character of the town and promote the retention and creation of neighborhoods.

Design for the largest vehicle may result in over-design for the majority of users. It is recommended that all developments be designed to promote pedestrian access trails and greenbelts, not only within the subdivision, but with adjacent properties. Sidewalks incorporating a buffer planted with street trees are strongly encouraged. Future connections to existing adjacent developments via pathways and trails are also encouraged.

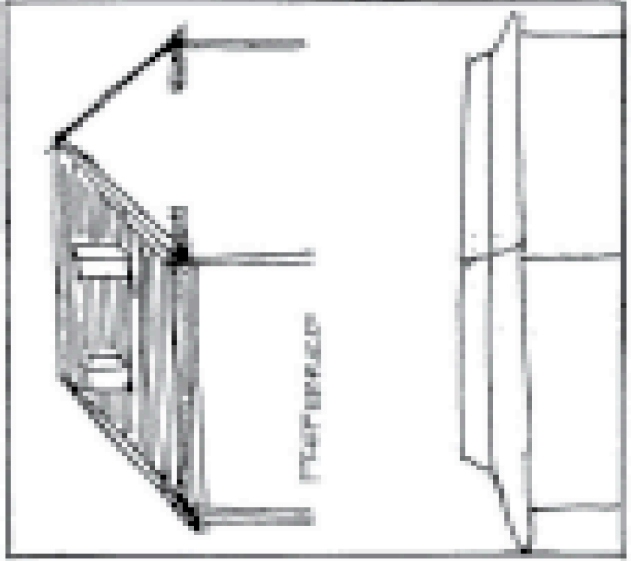
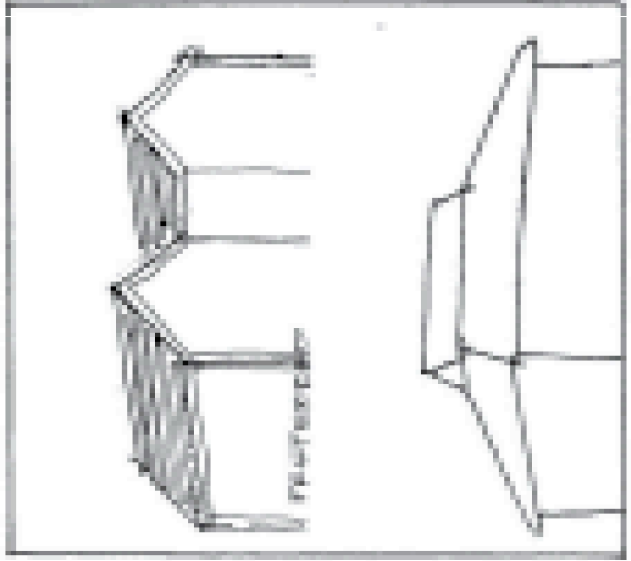
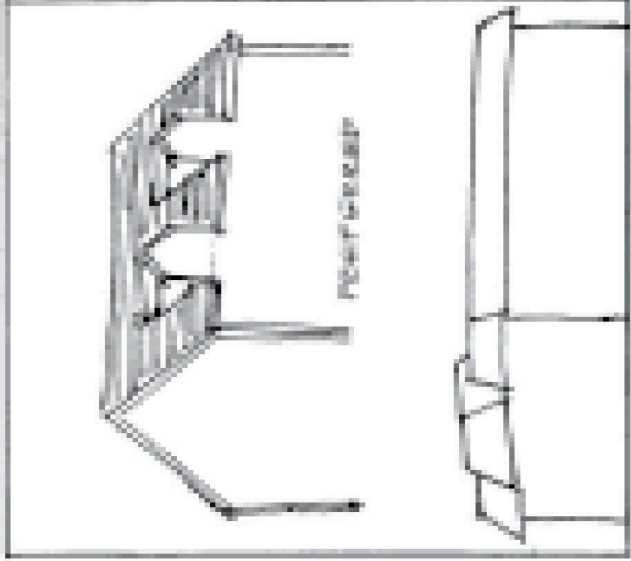
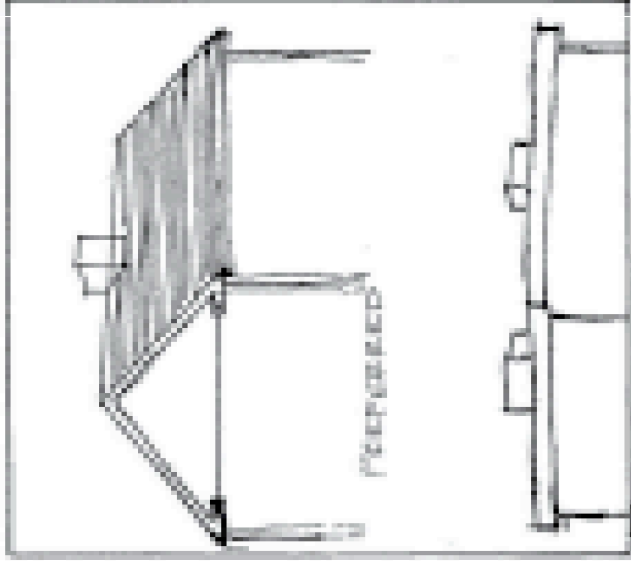
Road improvements do not necessarily

mean widening, straightening, and cutting back natural vegetation. Retaining the scenic rural appearance, hiding electric wires, and making pedestrian improvements should be considered.

Building on hilly sites that can be observed from considerable distance requires thoughtful design in order to protect the viewscape.

Care should be taken in protecting both the view from a site and to a site. Building just below peaks maintains the ridge line. Leaving some mature trees and selective cutting for views is preferable to clear cutting. Use of natural colors and buffering of development along ridge lines is encouraged.

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ROOFS

Roofs are a dominant visual element and play a major role in the definition of the character of a building. Roofs should be of various pitched varieties commonly found within Plainfield. Gable or hipped shed and gambrel style roofs are preferred. False mansard or other flat roofs are much less desirable. All roofs should have appropriate overhangs. Flat roofs should be considered only where the size of the building does not permit a pitched roof. When flat roofs are built, any roof top mechanicals should be screened from the main viewpoints on ground level. Roofs should be constructed of materials commonly found in New England. Roll roofing, sheet and corrugated plastic and fiberglass are discouraged.

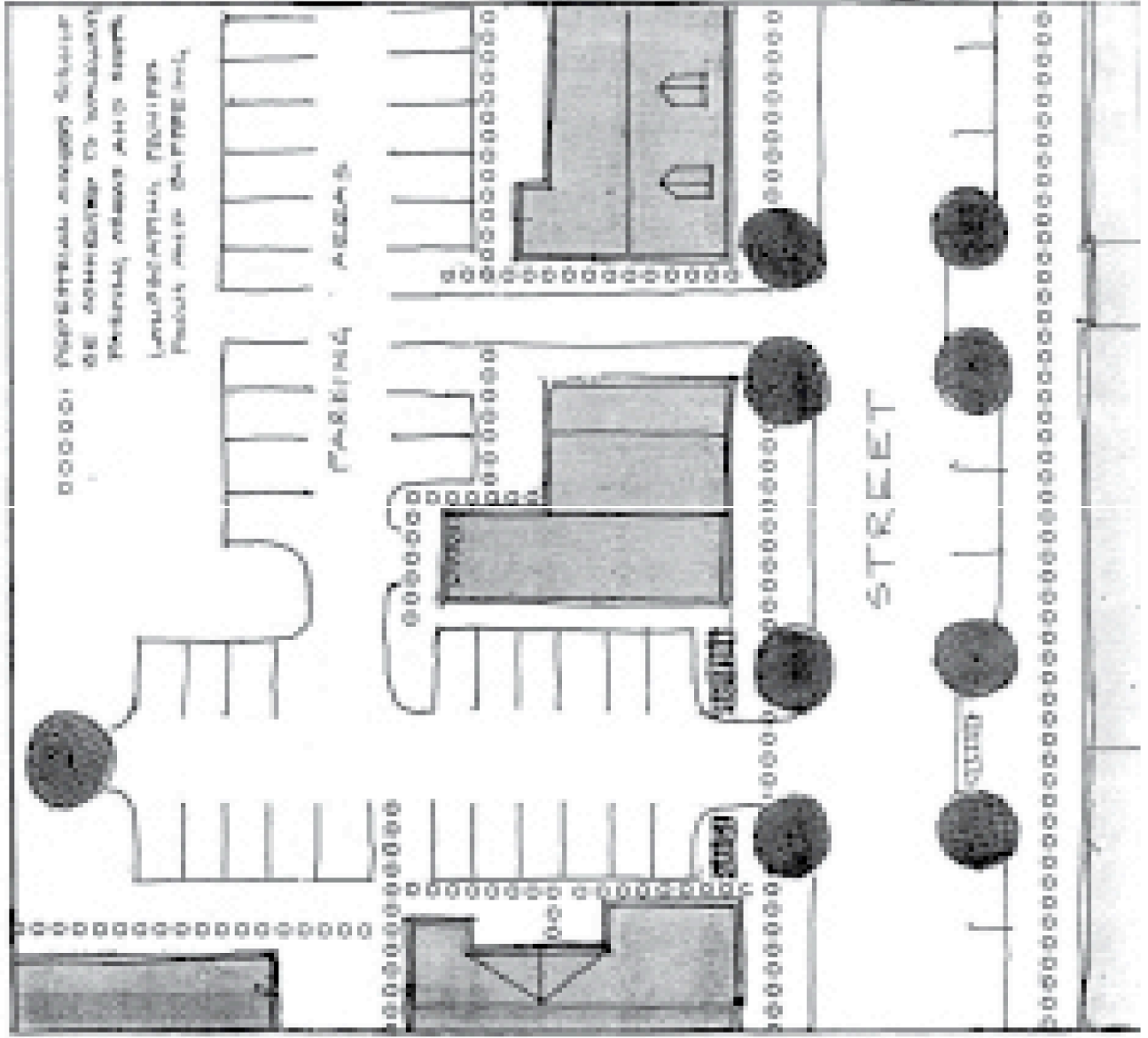
MATERIALS & COLOR

The materials and color should be compatible with the architecture of surrounding properties.

Exteriors should utilize materials appropriate for the character of the building, compatible with significant nearby structures, and durable for our climate. Use of natural materials commonly found in New England such as clapboard, vertical board, brick, stone, and wood shingles is encouraged.

The color should also relate to adjacent buildings to create a harmonious effect. Research into the history of architecture in New England often reveals a wide range of authentic colors, many of which can be found today in the inventory of the local paint vendors.

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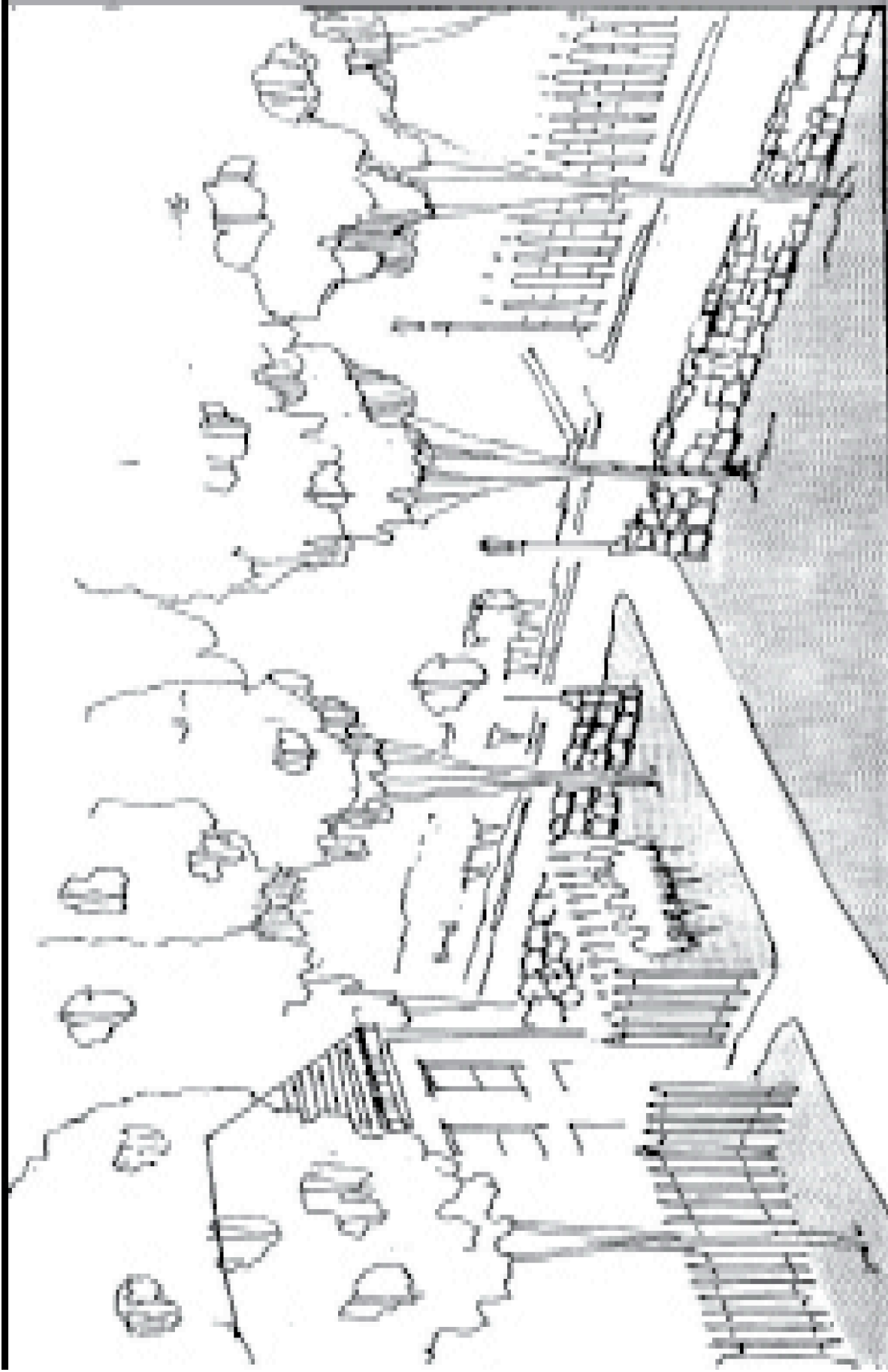
PARKING

Plan parking areas to promote pedestrian orientation and in such a manner as to not lead to motor vehicle clutter in setback areas. Parking in the rear or screened on the side of a building is preferred and can in many cases provide safer access to commercial or business sites. New or extended parking areas should be sited behind buildings; pedestrian emphasis should prevail in front. Where large parking lots fronting the street are unavoidable, special care in landscaping and fencing should be taken to ensure no encroachment into setback and sidewalk areas by parked vehicles. Adjacent parking lots should be connected whenever possible and safe pedestrian access through parking lots to buildings should be provided. Parking lots should always be designed to enhance the overall visual impact of a project.

REAR ENTRANCES

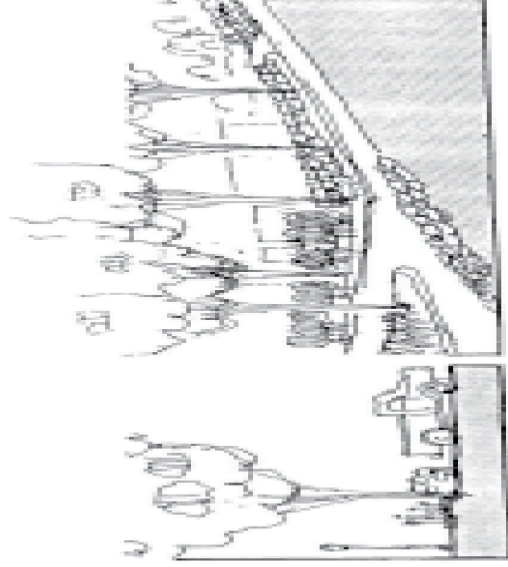
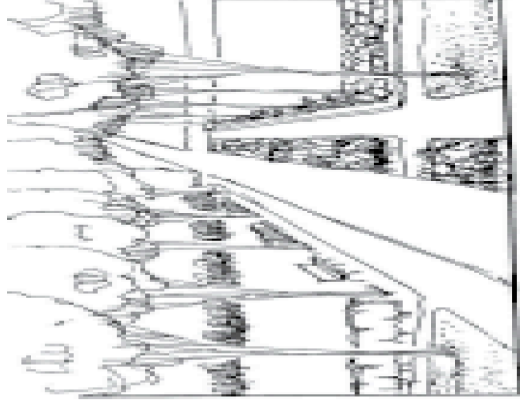
Where appropriate, rear entrances should be provided for commercial buildings. Rear entrances should be designed with the same sensitivity as front entrances. The rear facade/entrance should be clean, well maintained and present a welcoming appearance. A small directional sign, display windows and planter boxes can improve the appearance. Screen exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers, utility meters, air conditioning units and roof equipment from view in a manner that is compatible with the building and site design.

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FENCING & WALLS

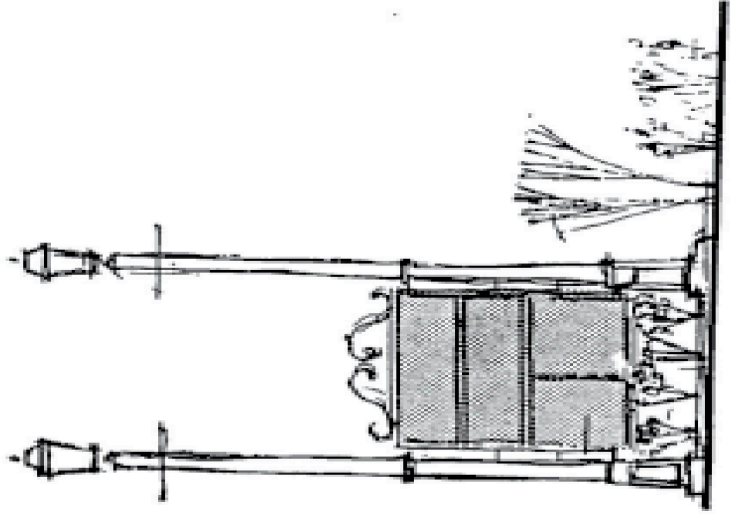
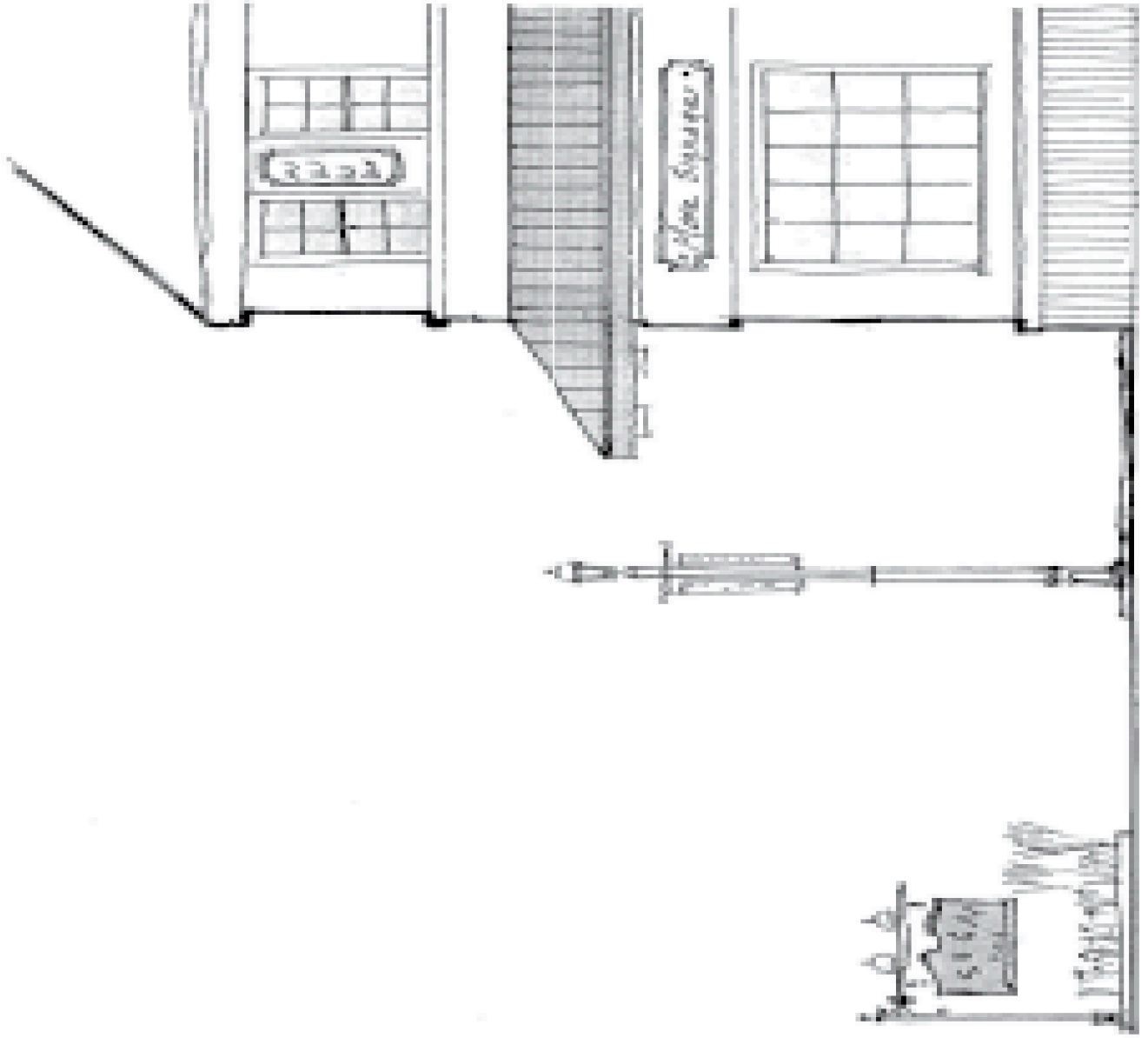
Fencing and walls should complement the style and the setting of the building. Existing stone walls should be preserved and added to. Fencing should be constructed of traditional New England materials such as wood, brick, stone and iron. Some synthetic materials are available which replicate the characteristics of wood fences and are good substitutes. The least desirable fences include chain link, stockade, stucco, and concrete. Natural vegetation should be considered as an alternative buffer or to visually soften fencing.



LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is an integral component of Plainfield's visual appeal. The maintenance of views and vistas of natural landscapes, recognized historic landmarks, parks, and landscaping is essential. Effective landscaping can enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas, provide necessary buffers, screen utility and service areas, and improve the streetscape. The role landscaping plays in determining the character of a new development warrants its early consideration in the site planning process. Mature trees and existing natural vegetation should be maintained whenever possible. New developments should incorporate plants characteristic of the region and in natural masses.

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SIGNS

Because they are publicly viewed, signs can either add or detract from the community image.

Scale signage to complement and unify the building. The design of the sign should complement the building on which it is placed. Use the smallest and least number of signs. The size of a sign should be in proportion to the building or in proportion to its setting. There is an obvious difference between the optimum size of a sign generally viewed up close by pedestrians, and a sign on a building set back 100' and viewed from a moving automobile. Free standing signs should be placed at eye level for pedestrians and vehicles.



Reduce large signs for individual businesses by grouping signs at the site and building entries. Portable and adjustable message signs should rarely be used. Banners and pennants are not allowed.

Carved or painted signs of natural materials such as wood or metal are encouraged. Use of plastics is generally discouraged. Materials, color, lettering and shape should be compatible with surrounding building materials, colors and texture. Use existing vegetation under and behind signs. A simple mass of natural plantings can be used as a backdrop.

Sign lighting should complement sign design and be placed to be effective both at night and during the day. External illumination generally produces the most compatible lighting for streetscape environments and is preferred as long as its origin is screened from view and the direction or level of illumination does not affect adjacent properties, motorists or pedestrians. Plastic, internally lit signs, are not compatible with Plainfield's character and are discouraged.

Signs incorporating brand names, symbols

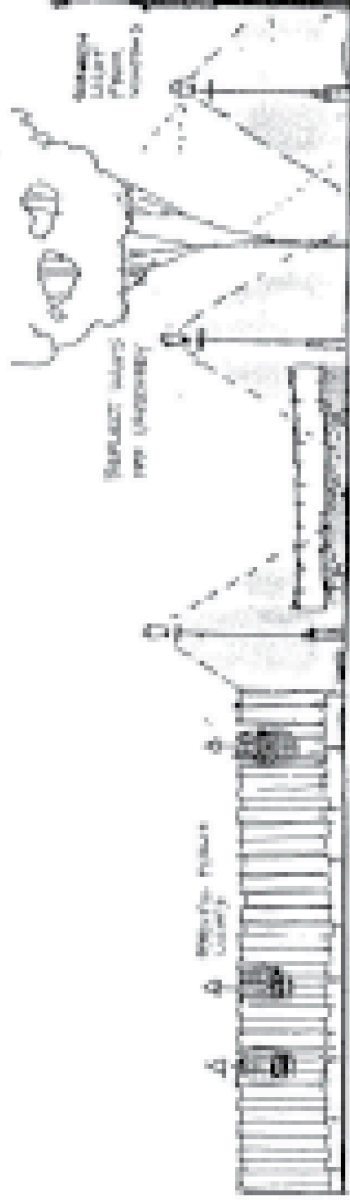
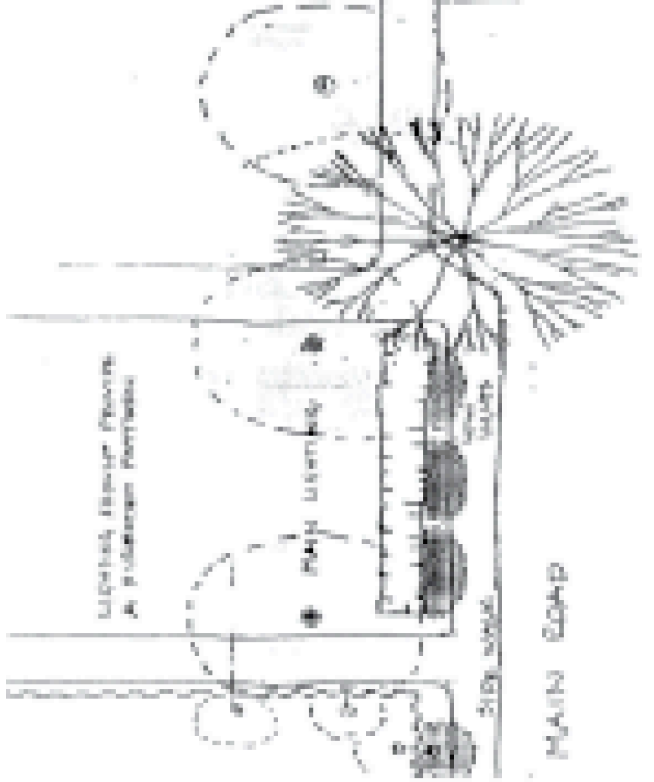


or slogans should adhere to the same standards as signs for local business. Unless a business has a single product or a sole distributorship, signs that carry a manufacturer's logo, (especially those signs sold by the manufacturer), should be avoided. These logos are detrimental to Plainfield's special character. Signs like Toro, True Value, etc., which may be necessary, are best treated as a component of a custom designed sign.

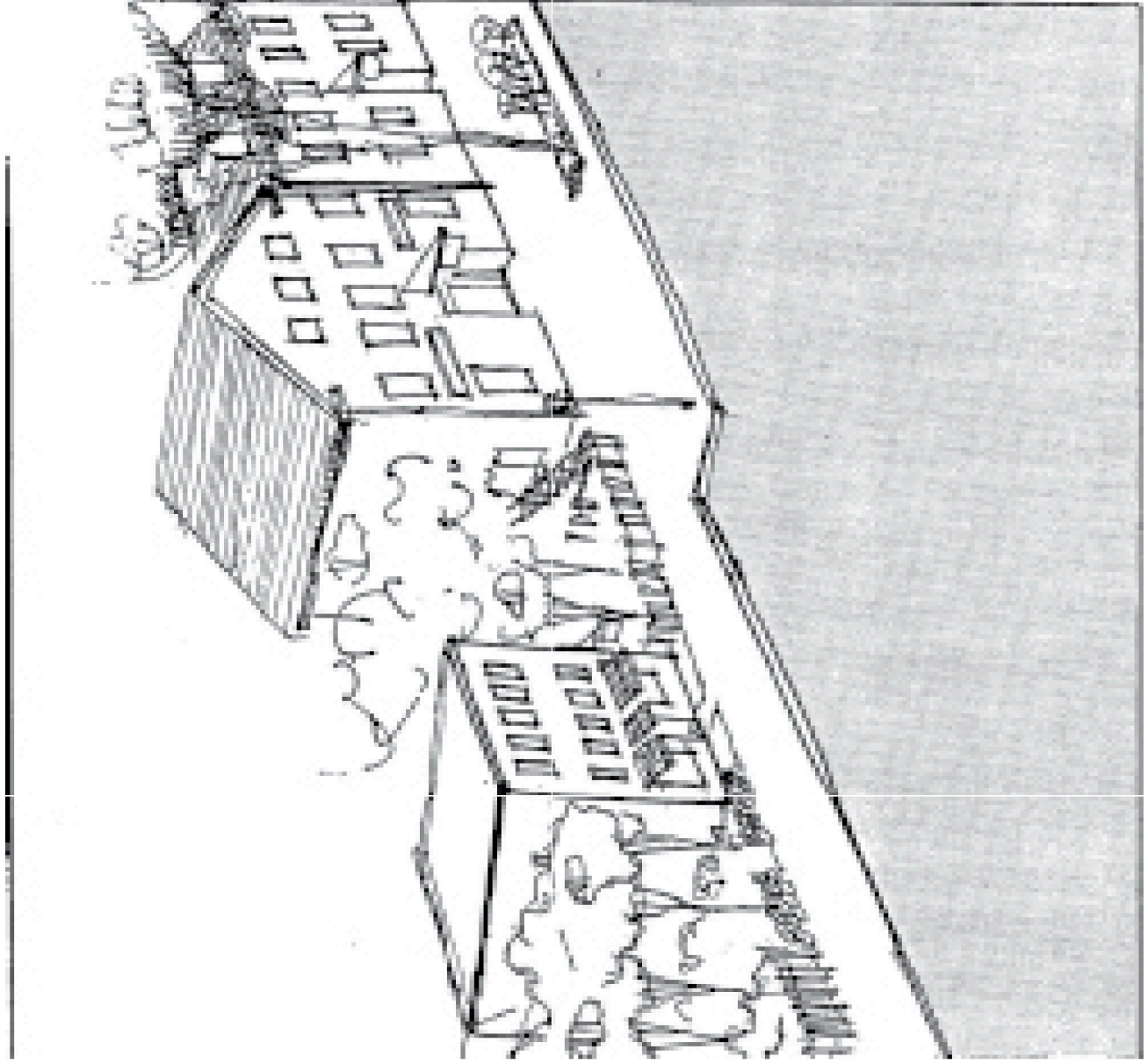
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OUTDOOR LIGHTING

Outdoor lighting has a significant impact on the safety, security and visual quality of a development and the community. By day, lighting fixtures are part of the visual character of the site design. At night, if not carefully designed, lighting can be a major intrusion upon abutting properties. Select lighting and posts that are complementary to the general architectural style of the development and surrounding area. Lighting elements should be covered by a globe or shielded. Lighting should be designed so as not to spill over onto adjacent properties or create street glare. Generally lower wattage, consistent with safety and security is preferable.



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MIXED USE BUILDINGS

The Town encourages the development of mixed commercial/residential buildings for home businesses and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings as multi-family dwellings in the village areas. Refer to Section 4.3 B of the Building Ordinance(Approved Combination of Related Uses) and the Town Administrator for more details. This type of use can add vitality and security to the village neighborhoods and at the same time fill an important housing need. In some cases it means adding a store front to an existing house, in others it means adding an apartment above a storefront. Care should be given when renovating existing buildings to maintain the integrity of the existing architecture and neighborhood The same principles of good building design for commercial and residential properties should apply to any mixed use development.

RESTORATION & REUSE

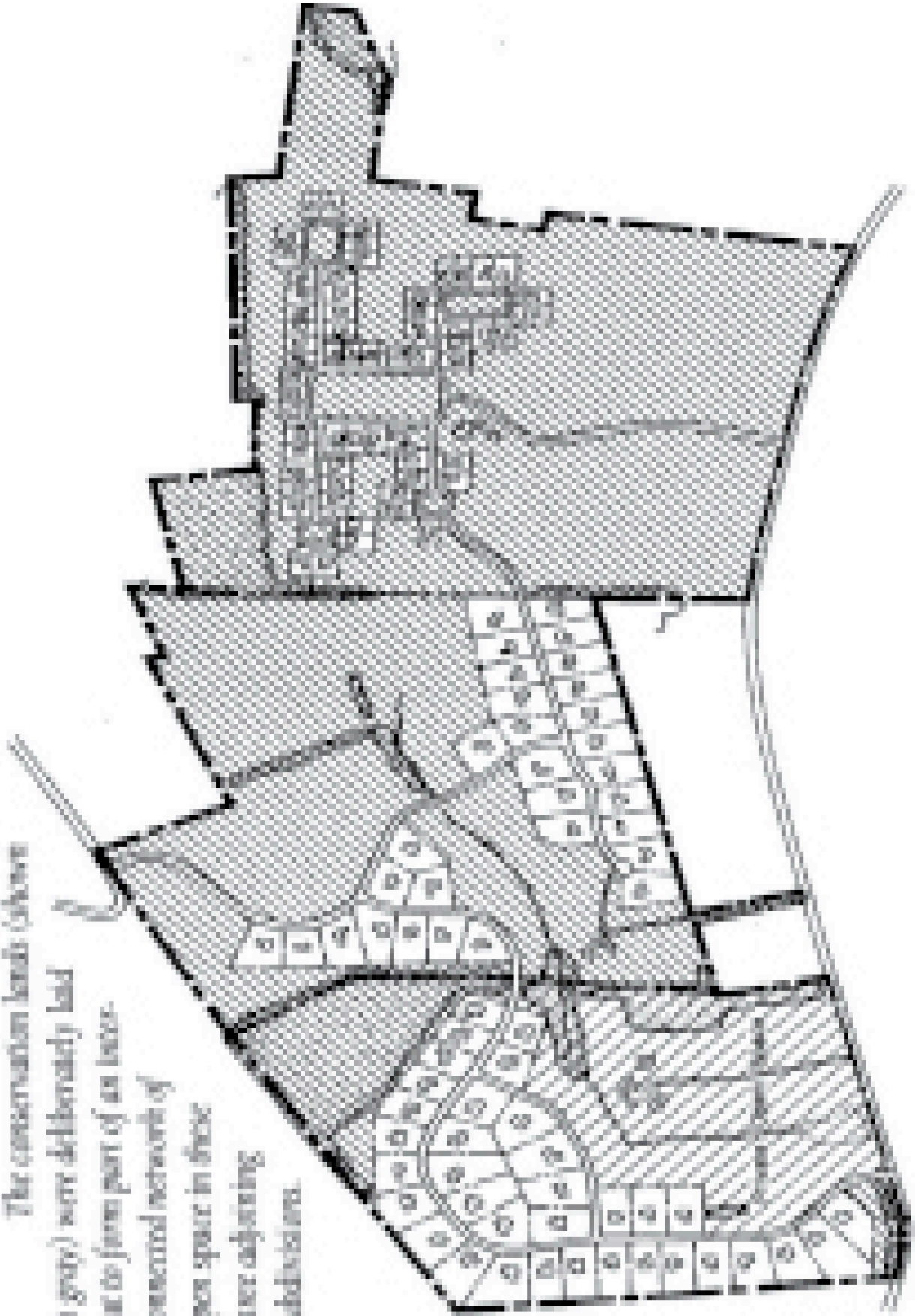
Many of Plainfield's existing older buildings are important from both a historical and visual perspective. Older buildings provide a link to the past and create a pleasing context for new development. The preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of architecturally and historically significant structures is critical to preserving community character and is consistent with the objectives of the Planning Board. When adapting to a new use, every attempt should be made to preserve the character defining elements of a historic building and its setting. The first choice for rehabilitation is to restore historic buildings. New buildings should reflect some of the detailing of surrounding buildings in window shape, cornice lines and materials.

Balconies, decks, covered porches, awnings, bracketed eaves, columns, arches, gates and railings are among the details to be considered and preserved. Otherwise incompatible buildings can be improved by adding cornices, lintels, chimneys, and other details that match nearby buildings. One should not however match one building style with details from another architectural era.

Windows and doors should be of style consistent with Plainfield's New England character. Windows should be in proportion to the building. Windows and doors should be encased with trim, and decorative trim is preferred. Glass blocks and heavily tinted or mirrored glass are not appropriate.

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The conservation lands (shown in gray) were deliberately laid out to form part of an interconnected network of open space in these three adjoining subdivisions.



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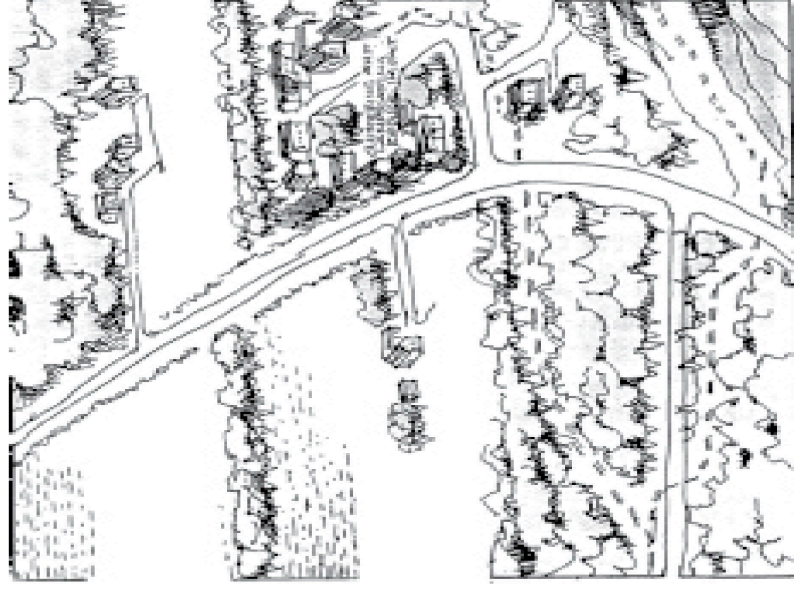
OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to Plainfield's built environment which consists of rural New England style architecture, it is the open spaces, woodland tracts, undeveloped shoreline, and scenic vistas that shape the landscape that is beloved by residents and visitors to this town. As a means of preserving this natural landscape for future generations, the town encourages developers to consider the use of the cluster development or conservation development when creating new subdivisions. Simply stated, the cluster/conservation development options allow the creation of house sites in a compact area on smaller than conventional lots, with a significant amount of undeveloped open space remaining permanently undeveloped for wildlife habitat, low-impact recreational use, scenic value, and similar uses. Plainfield Building Ordinances provides for ordinary cluster development and conservation design approaches to cluster development. The Planning Board, through the subdivision review process, assures that residential development is designed in a way which promotes community objectives, including the preservation of open space and natural areas. By preserving open space we protect streams and water quality, provide habitat for plants and animals, preserve rural "atmosphere,"

provide recreational areas, protect home values, and reduce costs of municipal services. In short, land conservation makes our communities better places to live. All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be designed to add to the visual amenities of the area.

The conservation subdivision approach involves small, but significant, changes to the subdivision design and review process. Conservation subdivision design differs in several significant ways from the more familiar "cluster development" approach. Under conservation design principles full density is achievable only when at least 50 percent of potentially buildable land is set aside as permanent open space, not to be further subdivided, and protected through a conservation easement.

Many land owners today are interested in stewardship of the forest resources on their property. Their are multiple land owner benefits to land management including aesthetics, accelerated growth and timber. A number of advisory services on land and wildlife management are available to residents through the Cooperative Extension Service of the University of New Hampshire.



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SHORELAND PROTECTION

ACT

Developers of shorefront property have a responsibility to a much wider population than those who develop in other areas of town. A major factor in successful New Hampshire tourism is our ability to retain current water quality and current shoreline appearance. For this reason, the state has instituted RSA 483-B, the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act governing development within the first 250' of land as measured from the shoreline. All developers and landowners should investigate these regulations as a first step in development planning. The board also recommends an excellent publication entitled A Guide to Developing and Redeveloping Shoreland Property in New Hampshire, developed by a broad coalition of agencies, which is available from the Plainfield Town Of-

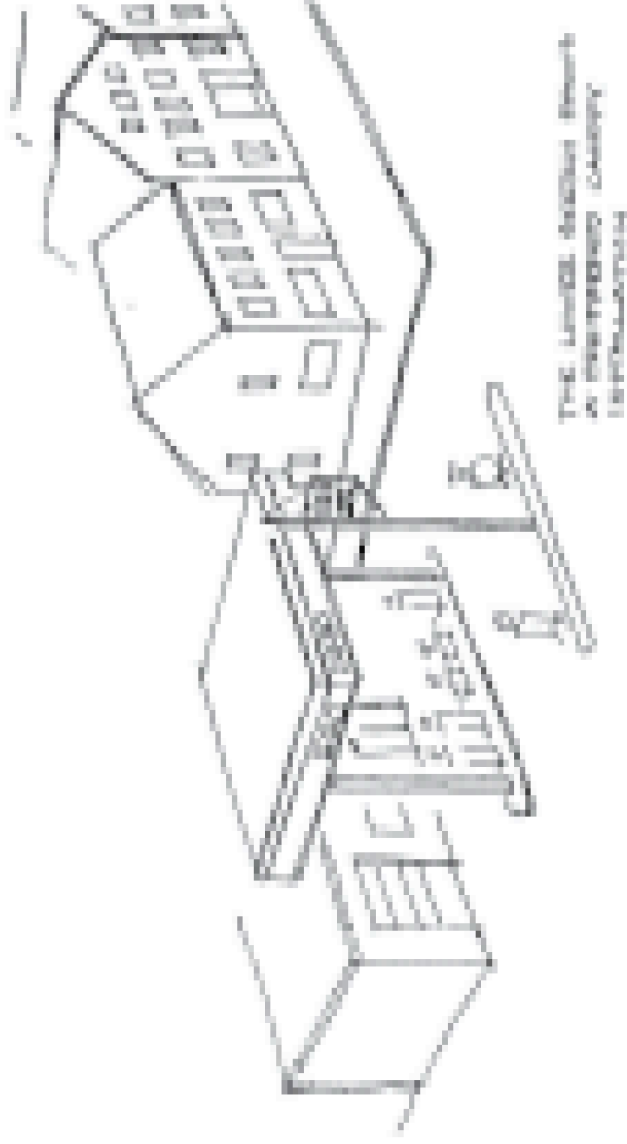
MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The Town of Plainfield is committed to establishing a positive civic presence. Plainfield also plans to take a leadership role in promoting quality site and building design by establishing a comprehensive program of planned public improvements designed to complement Plainfield's rural character. New municipal building construction, building renovation, landscaping, signage, and amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and lighting should all meet the standards promoted in these guidelines.

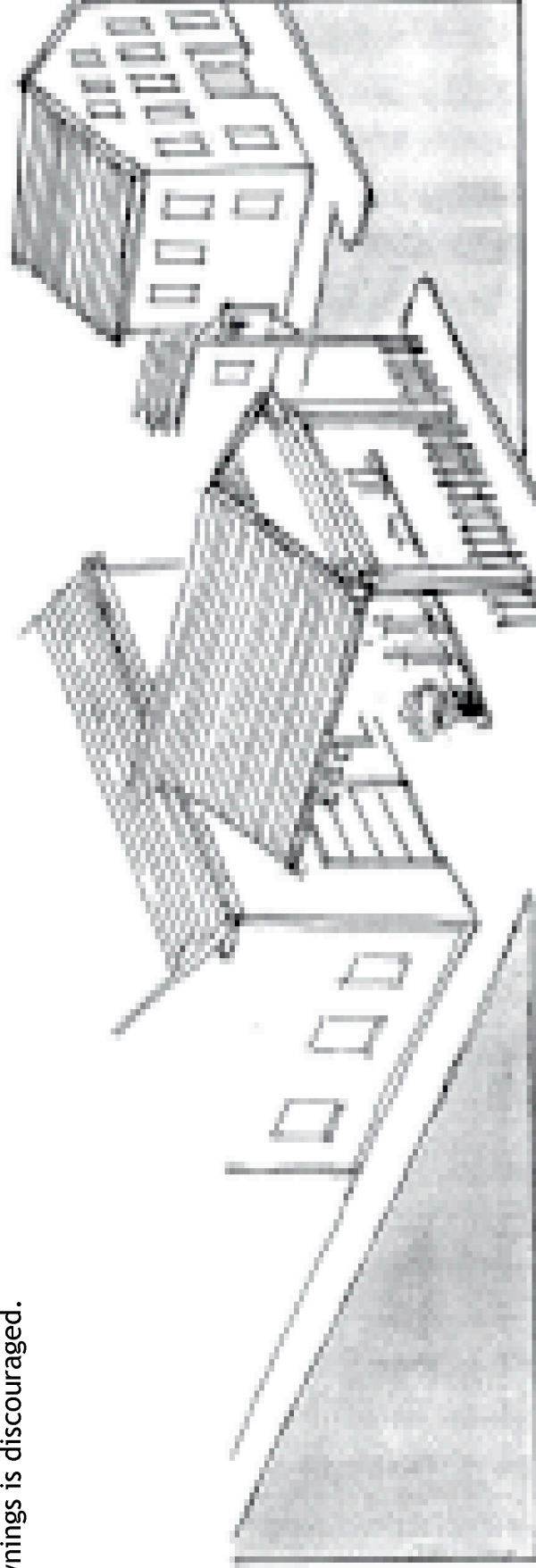


CANOPIES & AWNINGS

Canopies, when necessary, should be in scale and proportion to existing buildings. Canopies should be of the same style as the main building's roof. For example: a gable canopy should be used to intersect a gable main roof in scale and in proportion with existing buildings. It has become popular to cover a set of gasoline pumps with a large canopy. Some companies have taken the time and borne the expense of adapting a canopy to the building, while others employ a pre-designed type that often overpowers or is completely out of character with the size and style of building. Use of metal, plastic or fiberglass awnings is discouraged.



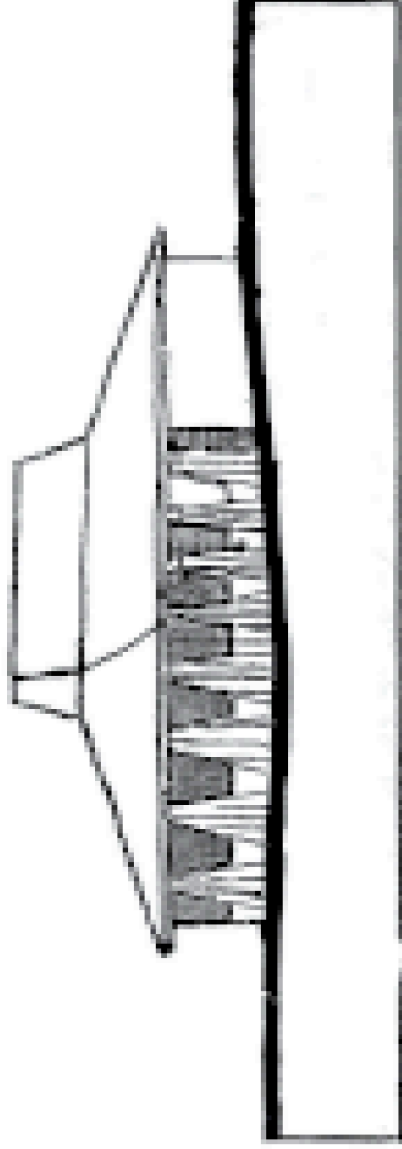
THE LINDEN RESIDENT STREET
AT PLAINFIELD CANOPY
IS PROHIBITED



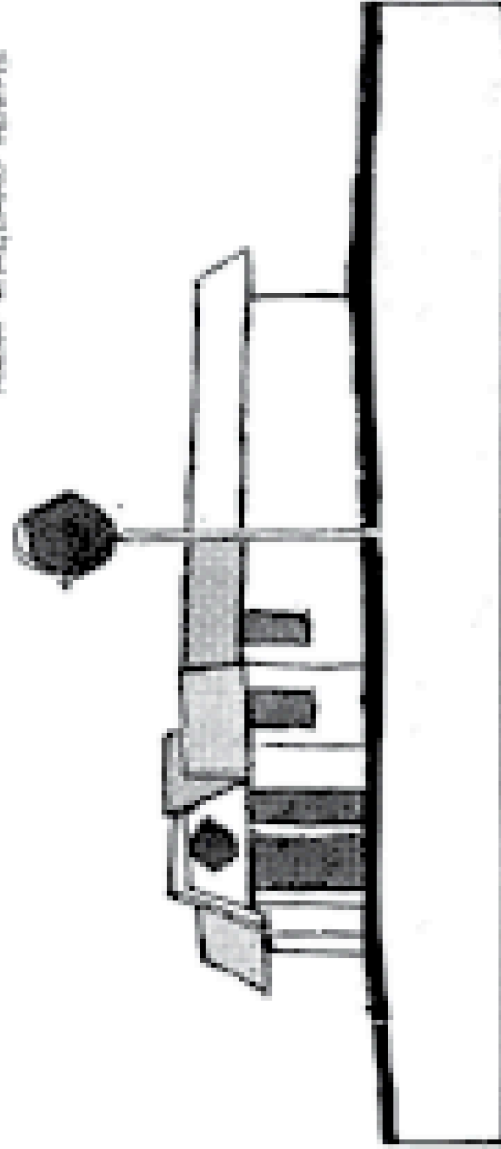
TOWN OF PLAINFIELD

FRANCHISE DESIGN

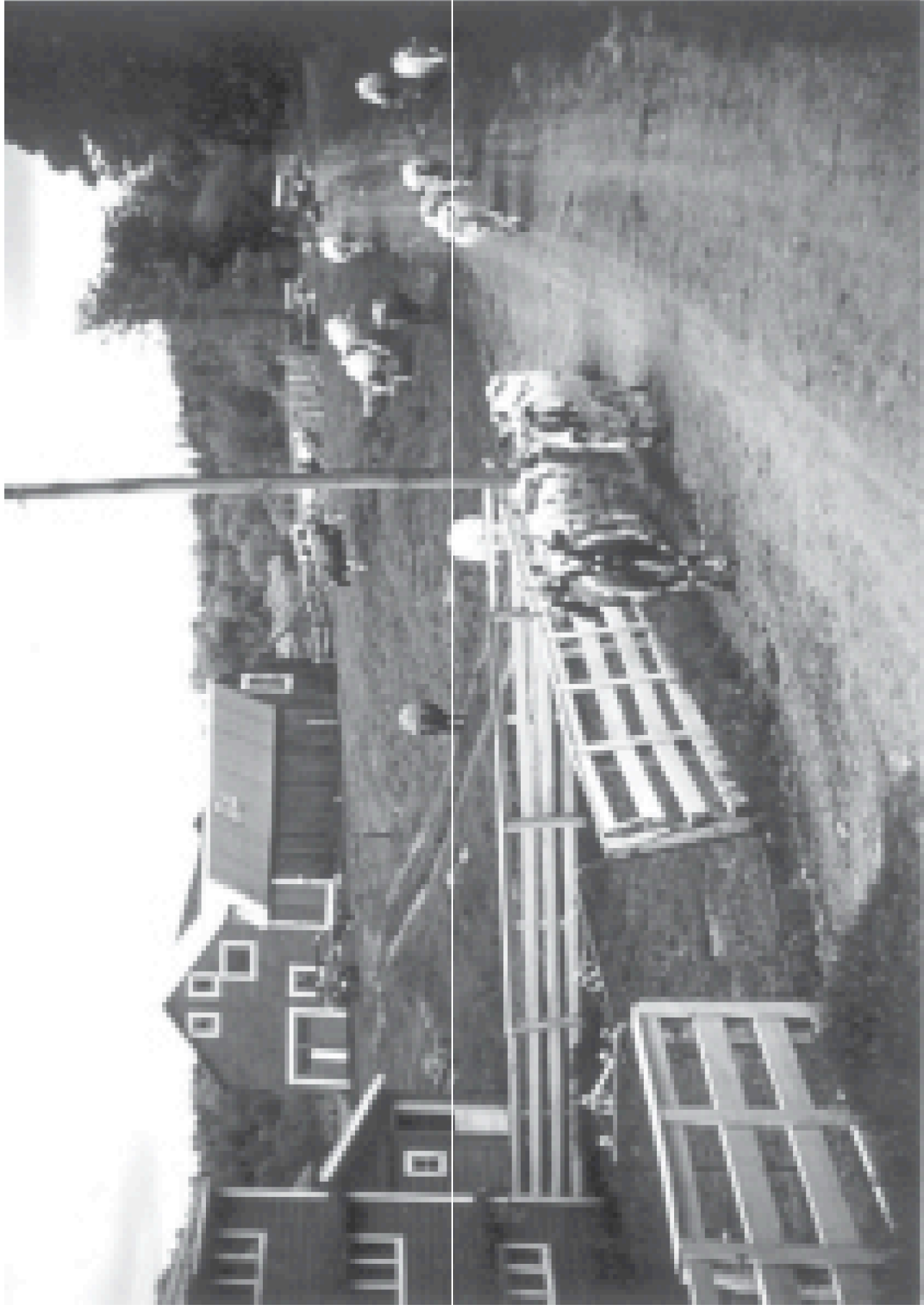
Franchise architecture does not fit in Plainfield. This growing national trend provides a serious threat to Plainfield's look and feel. This type of architecture is usually not designed to fit in but to stick out. It is strongly discouraged in our community. There are many examples of national franchise companies that have thoughtfully considered the community environment and have constructed buildings of traditional architecture that complement the community in which they wish to prosper.



Traditional style building
fitting Plainfield's
look and feel. Manufactured
franchise architecture does not.



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READINGS & RESOURCES

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD BUILDING AND SUB-DIVISION ORDINANCES.

RURAL BY DESIGN: Maintaining Small Town Character, Randall Arendt, Elizabeth A. Brabec, Harry L. Dodson, Christine Reid, and Robert D. Yaro, 1994 , By the American Planning Associations, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

CONSERVATION DESIGN, Randall Arendt, 1998.

VERMONT TOWNSCAPE, By Norman Williams, Jr./Edmund H. Kellog/Peter M. Lavigne, 1987.

APPEARANCE CODES FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES, By the American Planning Associations, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

DESIGN REVIEW, Mark L. Hinshaw, American Planning Association, February, 1995, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

SIGN REGULATION, For Small and Midsize Communities,

Eric Damian Kelly and Gary J. Raso, 1989, By the American Planning Associations, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

A GUIDE TO DEVELOPING AND RE-DEVELOPING SHORELAND PROPERTY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE, A Blueprint to Help You Live By The Water, Ray Lobdell, 1994, By North Country Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.,

THE SUBDIVISION AND SITE PLAN HANDBOOK, David Listokin and Carole Walker, 1989, By Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Published by the Center for Urban Policy Research, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

HAVE IT YOUR WAY- Fast-food Restaurant Design, E. T. McMahon, Planning Commissioners Journal, Fall 1995.

FAST-FOOD CHAINS: Review of their Evolution and Visual Impact on Communities, R. Kent Millard, Historic Preservation Forum, January/ February, 199 1.

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