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## **Appendix A: Main Street Guidelines and Drugstore Guidelines from National Trust for Historic Preservation**

These guidelines are being included in the Gateway Neighborhood Design Plan because they illustrate several of the concepts that need to be followed for implementation of the Design Plan goals. Any work for Gateway Design Guidelines should incorporate these with minimal modification to the graphics as presented by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# KEEPING UP APPEARANCES



What makes a Main Street business successful? There is no single formula. Product, price, display, service, location and market all play a part. So does the outward appearance of the business.

Many store owners regard appearance as secondary to the more immediate concerns of price, product and service. Too often, the building itself is neglected or mishandled.

Yet experience shows, time and again, that appearance is important to a healthy commercial district. With merchants working together to create an attractive image, the downtown as a whole can benefit.

Through the National Main Street Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation has demonstrated the value of keeping up appearances. Without gimmicks or themes, it has shown how to build on resources and strengths that already exist

in traditional commercial centers across the country. The time-tested methods for keeping up appearances are presented in this publication.

## Recognizing the Problem

Most downtowns had their beginnings more than 150 years ago as the hearts of their communities. They grew in times very different than today, when merchants directed their attention to the walking trade and the fastest moving vehicle was the horse-drawn carriage.

The 20th century brought changes to Main Street. With the automobile grew competition from commercial strips and shopping centers. Downtown retailers turned their attention to passing cars, erecting shiny storefronts and eye-catching signs. Main Street stores tried to imitate their competitors.

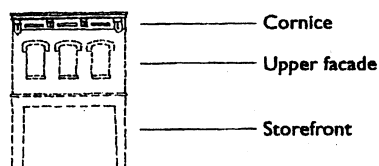
In many ways, the result has been a sorry one. In too many communities, downtown now appears as a curious cross between neglected old buildings and a commercial strip. It presents a confused image to the shopping public, satisfying neither the pedestrian nor the driving customer.

The key to improving appearances lies in recognizing a simple fact: The traditional business district is neither a shopping mall nor a commercial strip and should not pretend to be either.

With its buildings, history, setting and place within the community, downtown is unique and special. It makes sense to acknowledge these resources and take full advantage of them, to develop the qualities that are already present downtown—qualities a mall or strip will never have.

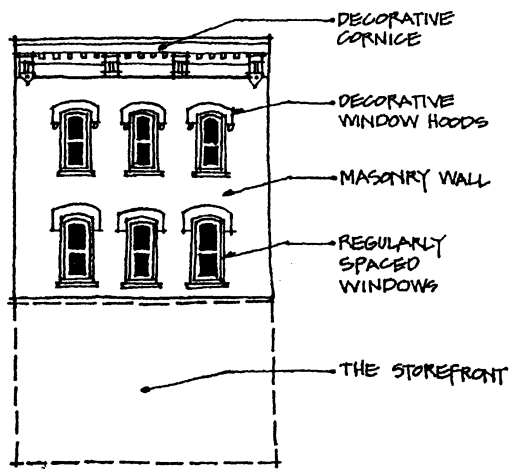
# THE TRADITIONAL FACADE

We have looked at the facade as the building block of Main Street. Now let us consider the individual building facade itself. Aside from consistency, what were the typical characteristics of the traditional facade? Essentially, it had three parts.



1. **Building cornice.** The traditional building cornice, made of brick, wood, metal or other materials, served to visually cap the building, completing its appearance.

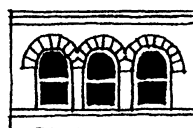
2. **Upper facade.** The upper facade, constructed of brick, stone, wood, stucco or pressed metal, almost always contained regularly spaced window openings surrounded by decorative details.



## Typical Building Cornices and Upper Facades



Typical building cornices and upper facades in the mid to late 1800s were characterized by boldly decorated cornice and window hoods and narrow window openings.

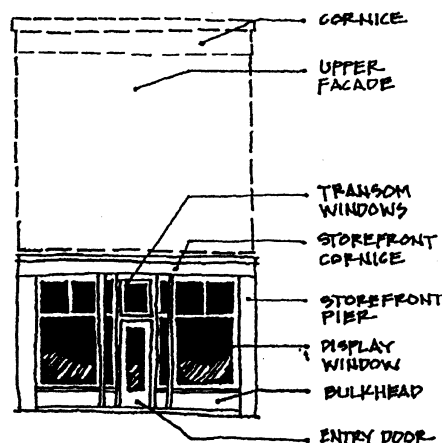


In the late 1800s to early 1900s, these areas of the facade were mostly highlighted by corbeled brick cornices and large, arched window openings.

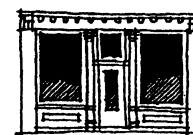


By the early to mid 1900s, typical upper facades were marked by corbeled brick cornices and large window openings with multiple window units.

3. **Storefront.** The traditional characteristics of the storefront contrast markedly with the more substantial upper facade and building cornice. The storefront was rather delicate in appearance and was composed primarily of large display windows surrounded by enframing piers and a storefront cornice.



## Typical Storefronts



In the mid 1880s to early 1900s typical storefronts were characterized by boldly decorated cornices, cast-iron columns and large display windows.

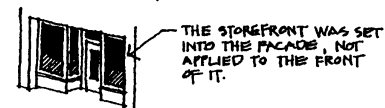


From the early to mid 1900s typical storefronts had simplified cornices, transom windows over display windows and metal window frames.

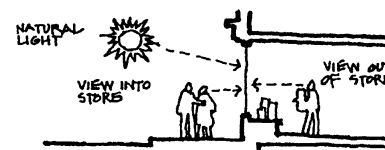
## Another Note of Emphasis

Sensitive storefront change is essential to improving the appearance of Main Street. The following qualities should be remembered as important to the traditional storefront:

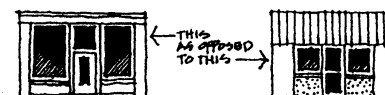
- The storefront was usually slightly recessed behind the enframing storefront cornice and piers.



- The storefront was almost all glass.



- The storefront emphasized the display windows.



# NEW INFILL CONSTRUCTION



The construction of new buildings on vacant lots downtown should be encouraged. Because this type of building fills a "hole" in the built environment, it is called *infill construction*.

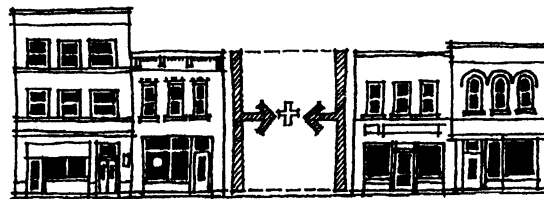
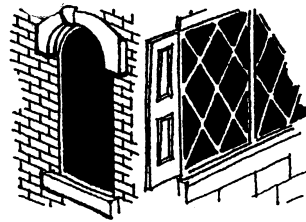
The design of a new infill building, particularly its front facade is a special challenge. It should be designed to look appropriate and compatible with surrounding buildings. Otherwise, the new building will look awkward and out of place.

What is good infill design? There is no pat answer; a good design will vary according to its setting. Professionals generally agree that because an infill building is new, it should look new. However, its appearance must be sensitive to the character of its neighbors.

The infill facade should not pretend to be historic by too closely mimicking older facades. Often, pseudo-Colonial or Victorian details are added to a new building in an attempt to make it blend in with older surroundings. This approach seldom succeeds;

instead, it detracts from an area's character by compromising what is authentic and historic.

The central idea behind good infill construction is a simple one. To a large degree, the design of an infill facade should be an outgrowth of those around it. If the design of the new facade is based on those of its neighbors, it is sure to be compatible.



This approach strikes a proper balance between the existing architecture and good contemporary design. The modern designer is allowed the freedom of individual talent—within limits.

Since a good infill design responds to its surroundings, it is not possible to develop specific guidelines

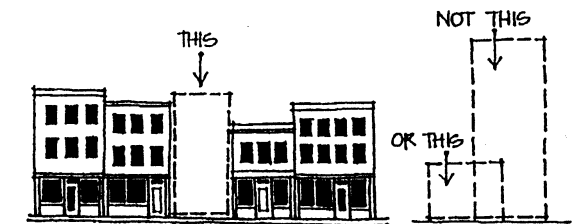


that will apply to all cases. Every situation has its own design problems and opportunities.

There are, however, several general concepts that should govern the visual relationship between an infill building and its neighbors.

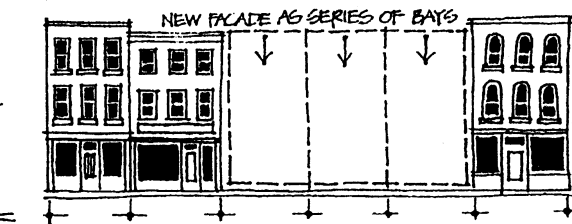
## 1. Height

Buildings in traditional commercial districts share a similar height. Infill construction should respect this. A new facade that is too high or low can interrupt this consistent quality.



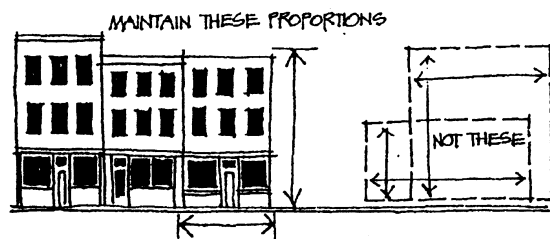
## 2. Width

The infill building should reflect the characteristic rhythm of the facades along the street. If the site is large, the mass of the facade can be divided into a number of small bays.



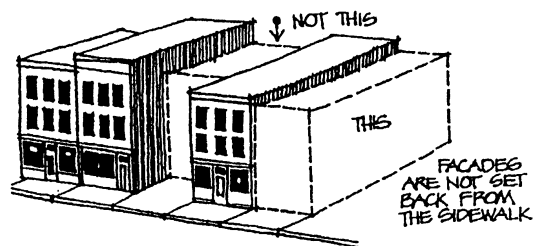
### 3. Proportion

The characteristic proportion (the relationship between height and width) of existing facades should be respected.



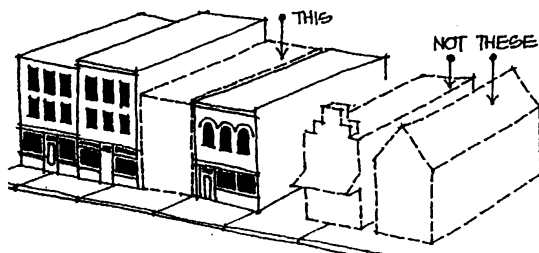
### 4. Relationship to Street

The new facade's relationship to the street (called the "setback") should be consistent with that of its neighboring buildings.



### 5. Roof and Cornice Forms

The form of the roof and building cornice should be similar to those on adjacent structures. On Main Street, this usually means a flat roof hidden behind a cornice.



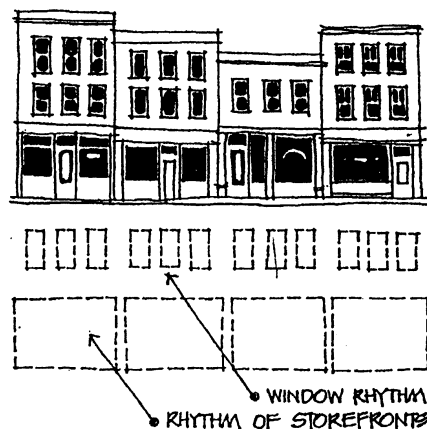
### 6. Composition

The composition of the infill facade (that is, the organization of its parts) should be similar to that of surrounding facades.



### 7. Rhythm

Rhythms that carry throughout the block (such as window spacing) should be incorporated into the new facade.



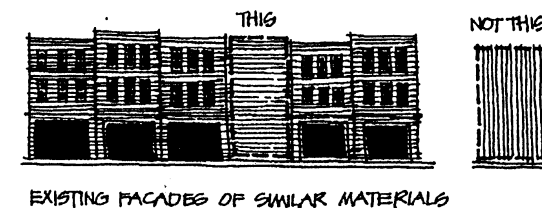
### 8. Proportions of Openings

The size and proportion of window and door openings should be similar to those on surrounding facades. The same applies to the ratio of window area to solid wall for the facade as a whole.



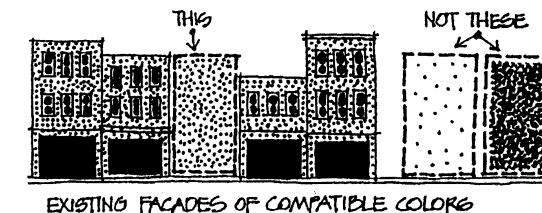
### 9. Materials

An infill facade should be composed of materials that complement adjacent facades. The new building should not stand out against others.



### 10. Color

The colors chosen for an infill facade should tie it to its neighbors.





## NATIONAL TRUST for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

*The National Trust develops approaches and resources to help communities respond to chain drugstores. This tip sheet identifies design issues to create a drugstore that is most compatible with a community's character.*

Walgreens, Boston, MA



*Jessica Zullinger*

Rite Aid, Camden, ME



*Jeffrey Harris*

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## COMPATIBLE NEW DRUGSTORE CONSTRUCTION

The successful revitalization of older Main Streets utilizes the historic character of the downtown or commercial district to its comparative advantage. Preserving what is special and unique about a downtown sets it apart from the multitude of look-alike new developments. Additionally important is the preservation of the pedestrian quality of a street. In a walkable Main Street shoppers visit a number of stores. This synergy is destroyed as car-oriented drive-throughs and massive parking lots make walking infeasible.

The good design of new buildings starts with placing them on the site so that the pedestrian nature of the downtown is maintained. In an historic area one then looks at the context, history, and building rhythm of the streetscape. By respecting the streetscape it is possible to construct new buildings that add to rather than diminish the downtown's character. Ultimately, the goal is to create a building that appears to be part of the larger streetscape -- a new building that exhibits unifying elements of the surrounding buildings. Good design for new drugstores can make a new store appear to be an integral part of the community it serves, rather than a suburban or highway prototype plopped in the middle of an historic area.

By respecting such things as height, scale, and building materials, it is possible to construct new buildings in a way that meets the needs of modern companies while at the same time respecting the historic character of a community. This does not mean new drugstores must be constructed to look old, but rather they should be constructed to be compatible with surrounding buildings. Infill architecture should not be designed to copy historic buildings, but it should remain consistent in size, scale, and character to adjacent buildings. By keeping the predominant design features of the downtown in mind, a new building can be a welcome addition and an overall enhancement to the streetscape as well as to the community.

Some cities such as Chicago have secured design agreements with major national drugstore chains regarding new construction in the city's older neighborhoods. While a formal agreement may not be feasible in every community, there are basic design principles that should be followed to promote good new drugstore construction. These principles can help your community welcome the services of a new drugstore, while retaining the character of the community that makes it so special.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

### SIZE, SHAPE, AND SCALE

- ▣ **Site Plan.** The primary façade of the newly constructed building should front at least one principal street whenever possible. Additionally, drive-throughs should not be placed on main streets, but rather someplace less obtrusive.
- ▣ **Lot Size.** The predominant lot size of surrounding buildings should be respected; building anything significantly larger is inappropriate.
- ▣ **Setback.** The setback of a new building, meaning how far back from the street it is constructed, should be consistent with adjacent buildings. Commercial buildings are traditionally built to the sidewalk.

- ❑ **Height.** Height should be similar to that of adjacent buildings. New construction should respect the floor to floor heights of surrounding buildings as well as the height-to-width ratio seen on the block, thereby creating a uniform streetscape without visually jarring gaps.
- ❑ **Roofline.** Rooflines should follow the predominant styles of area buildings. Similarly, the surrounding cornice line should be reflected in a compatible manner.

### MATERIALS

- ❑ Materials should be compatible in color and texture to those used in the surrounding area.
- ❑ It is best to use the same materials used on adjacent buildings whenever possible.
- ❑ Avoid using materials that were unavailable when surrounding buildings were originally constructed. For example, it is inappropriate to use synthetic stucco when all surrounding buildings are composed of brick or wood.

### WINDOWS AND DOORS

- ❑ New drugstores on Main Street should have storefront windows. Often times drugstore companies are resistant to windows because they utilize prime display space. At the very least, shadow-box windows should be considered when a corporate design does not call for actual windows.
- ❑ Windows and doors should be similar in height, size, and orientation to those in adjacent buildings.
- ❑ Any pattern created by window and door placement should likewise be respected.

### PARKING

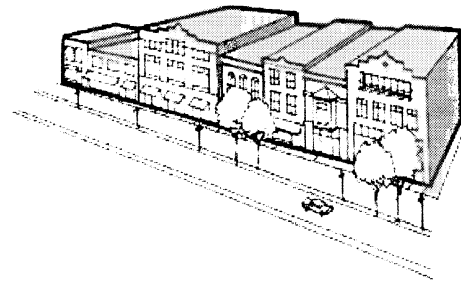
- ❑ Locating a sizable parking lot in front of a building is inappropriate.
- ❑ Encourage on-street parking when feasible.
- ❑ Whenever possible, parking lots should be located to the rear or side of the new drugstore, in a location that is unobtrusive to the main streetscape.

### LANDSCAPING

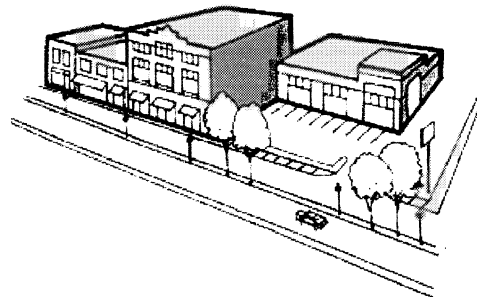
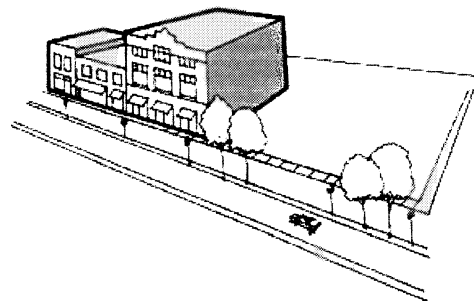
- ❑ Landscaping can be used to create a buffer between the parking lot and drugstore.
- ❑ Landscaping may also be used to soften the design of a new building by including benches and fences, built of materials compatible to the building, as well as vegetation.

### SIGNAGE

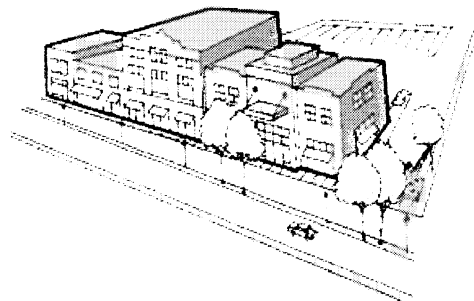
- ❑ Signage should compliment the scale, design and materials of the new drugstore.
- ❑ Communities may consider placing a height cap on signage under their local zoning requirements, or establish rules regarding maximum size dimensions and placement of signs.



*Historic downtown streetscape (ABOVE), and same streetscape, following loss of half the block (BELOW).*



*Conventional new drugstore approach to design and site planning (ABOVE), and new drugstore design that maintains "street wall," scale, with massing and parking in rear (BELOW).*





## URBAN DESIGN CENTER, INC.

c/o Architects Resource Center, Suite 105,  
109 Warren Street, Syracuse, New York 13202

# CHARRETTE\* - FRANKLIN STREET

## ALLEYS

### Guideline

Alleys should be used for access to parking lots behind buildings with a mix of uses and for access to garages behind narrow lots and attached residences.

### Discussion

Alleys facilitate access to garages behind houses and allow narrow lots and attached houses to have garage access. They also allow more on-street parking by eliminating driveway curb cuts.

October 1994

Adapted from guidelines prepared by  
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Joel S. Russell, Woodlee Associates  
Jennifer Shakespeare, Architect

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The Urban Design Center, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization created with participation from the American Institute of Architects/Central NY Chapter; the Syracuse University School of Architecture, the SUNY-ESF School of Landscape Architecture, the American Society of Landscape Architects/Upstate Chapter and the Downtown Committee of Syracuse, Inc.

## PARKING LOTS/DRIVE-THROUGHS

### Guideline

Small parking lots within a hamlet should be located to the rear of buildings or, if that is not possible, to the side with the lot screened from the street. Parking lots should contain no more than necessary to satisfy 35% of the anticipated peak demand. Wherever possible rear lots should be linked by alleys. Parking lots should have permeable surfaces wherever possible. Curb cuts and interruptions of the pedestrian space should be kept to a minimum.

### Discussion

Wide curb-cuts and large parking lots destroy the scale and pedestrian continuity of the hamlets. Permeable surfaces for lots reduce runoff and environmental damage.

### Guideline

Connect parking lots with alleys wherever possible.

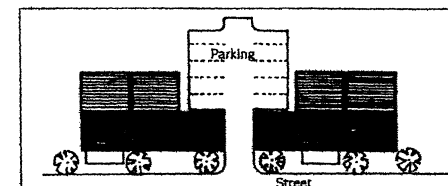
Gas stations and drive-throughs should conform to parking lot and curb cut requirements.

### Discussion

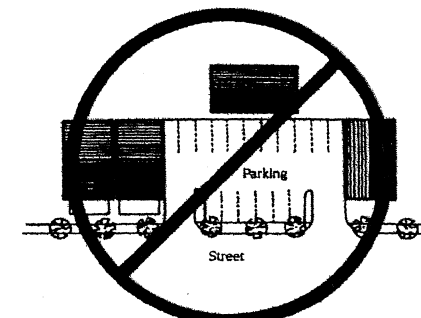
Connected lots are convenient and reduce congestion on mixed use streets.

Drive-throughs and gas stations can be convenient for cars without ruining the pedestrian space.

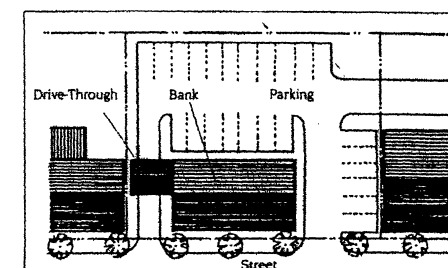
SATURDAY, 24 March 2001



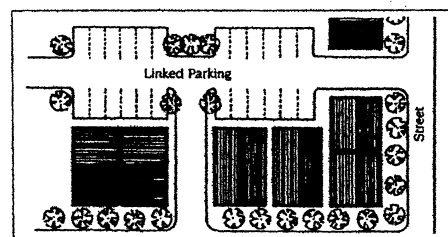
Small lot between buildings screened from street



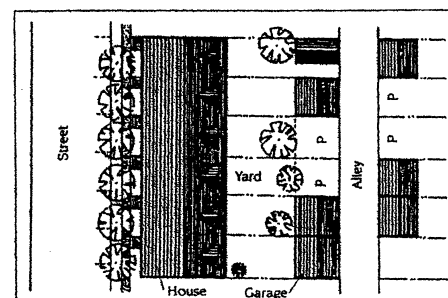
Parking lots in front should be prohibited



Example of drive-through bank layout with rear and side-lot parking



Parking lots linked by alley behind buildings



Alley with garages behind townhouses



SATURDAY, 24 March 2001



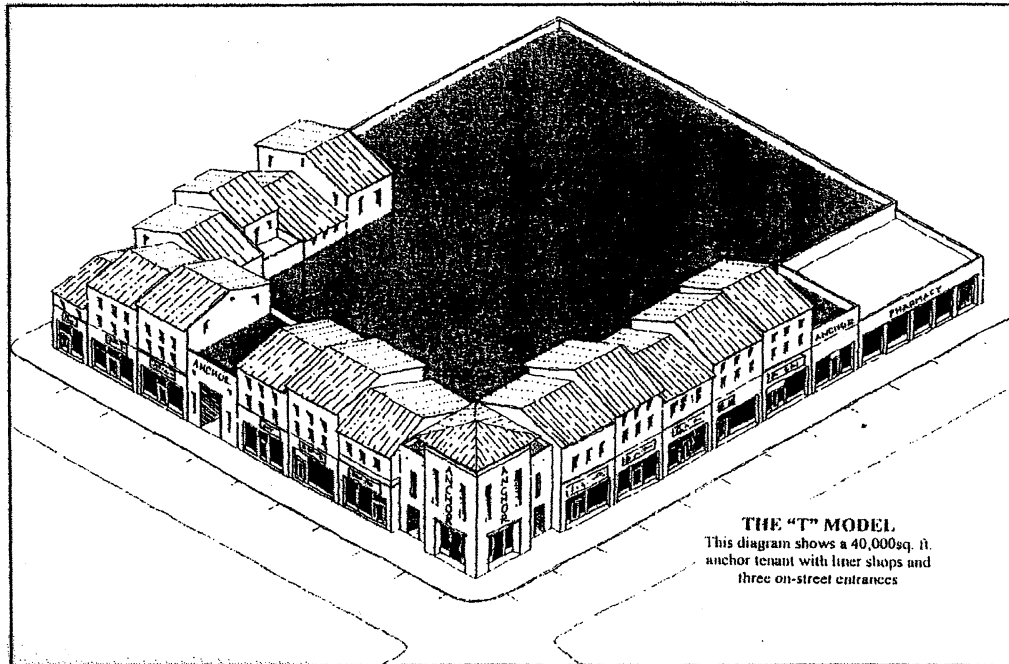
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The key to improving appearances lies in recognizing a simple fact: The traditional business district is neither a shopping mall nor a commercial strip and should not pretend to be either.

## CHARRETTE\* - FRANKLIN STREET CORRIDOR STUDY

How can a big box store fit on a traditional main street? This drawing shows one way to do it. For more details, see page 4.



**THE "T" MODEL.**  
This diagram shows a 40,000sq. ft.  
anchor tenant with liner shops and  
three on-street entrances

DRAWING BY GIBBS PLANNING GROUP

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