



DESIGN GUIDE FOR PORT WASHINGTON BUSINESS OVERLAY DISTRICT

October, 2012

**PLANNING & DESIGN GUIDELINES
FOR MAIN STREET PORT WASHINGTON**
(ARTICLE XXC: Port Washington Business Overlay District)

Prepared for:
Town of North Hempstead

In Partnership with:
Residents for a More Beautiful
Port Washington



Prepared by:
BFJ Planning
115 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003

BFJ Planning

Acknowledgements

Town Board:
Supervisor Jon Kaiman
Councilwoman Viviana L. Russell (District 1)
Councilman Thomas K. Dwyer (District 2)
Councilman Angelo P. Ferrara (District 3)
Councilwoman Anna M. Kaplan District 4)
Councilwoman Lee R. Seeman (District 5)
Councilwoman Dina M. DeGiorgio (District 6)

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Table of Contents

Introduction2
Use of the Design Guidelines4
Overlay District Map5

Design Guidelines
(a) Storefronts6
(b) Building Facades8
(c) Roofs & Rooflines12
(d) Signage14
(e) Awnings16
(f) Outdoor Lighting16
(g) Loading & Service Areas18
(h) Landscaping & Pedestrian Walkways18

Parking Requirements20

Design Guidelines Evaluation Matrix22

Introduction

This design guide is intended to be a user-friendly resource for property owners looking to develop in the Port Washington Business Overlay District (Zoning Code: Article XXC). The guide was created out of an effort sponsored by Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington to revitalize and improve Port Washington's downtown area.

Many constituencies have been involved in the preparation of this document including local and state elected officials, building owners, merchants, developers, the real estate community as well as local community groups and residents. The community effort began with two visioning workshops undertaken in 2005 with the Shared Vision Plan for the Port Washington Peninsula. In 2009, as part of Nassau County's "Cool Downtowns" initiative, fifty leaders in the community participated in the Visioning II workshop to measure progress.

In 2011, Residents for a More Beautiful Port Washington and the Town of North Hempstead worked with BFJ Planning to prepare preliminary planning and design guidelines for the model block area. The design guidelines were developed by studying the historic architectural elements of the entire length of Main Street as well as other Main Streets in comparable towns, especially those with a close connection to the waterfront. Responses from the public since have refined plans and informed the final Design Guidelines for the Port Washington Business Overlay District.

The overlay district is a Town effort to promote buildings whose siting, massing, scale, materials, and street rhythm are compatible with the neighborhood context. The design guidelines intend to promote harmonious development that:

- Is high quality and visually appealing from adjacent streets and surrounding neighborhoods with an emphasis on building placement and orientation as well as site landscape.
- Has an appropriate mix of uses defined in the zoning district.
- Has open spaces, parking areas, pedestrian walks, signs, lighting, landscaping, and utilities that are well related to the site and arranged to achieve a safe, efficient and contextually sensitive development.
- Shows high interconnectivity between proposed uses and adjacent areas

The guidelines recognize the importance of maintaining the diversity of buildings which currently exist along Main Street. The guidelines do not select a single monolithic architectural style; new buildings may be contemporary or traditional in approach. However it is important to have standards that preserve and enhance the strengths of downtown Port Washington while complementing its overall character and complying with zoning codes.



Main Street with a mix of 1-3 story mixed-use buildings, attractive landscaping and brick sidewalk treatments

Introduction: Use of the Design Guidelines

In the following section, photographs and rendered images are intended to provide a palette of options with regard to site design, facade treatments, lighting, landscaping, site circulation, parking, etc. from which property owners can choose, or be guided in developing or enhancing their properties. Although the design guidelines are encouraged for all building improvements and new developments, they are not mandatory. For those parcels in the Port Washington Overlay District (that conform to the minimum lot area and width standards in the underlying district), the following bonuses are allowed if development adheres to the design guidelines:

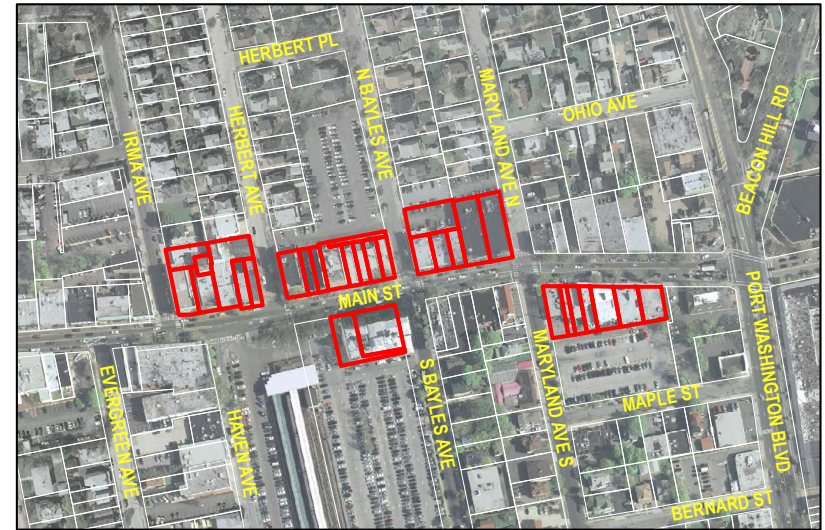
- Residential uses above ground floor commercial uses.
- Residential density allowed:
 - 18 units per acre for properties adhering to base design guide standards*.
 - 24 units per acre for properties which exceed base guideline standards*.
- The maximum height may be increased to 45 feet with a pitched roof. This is currently allowed for senior citizen housing.
- The maximum height remains at 3 stories.

The Determination that a property owner may qualify for such incentives shall be made by the Town Board after a public hearing and in accordance with the evaluation check list found in the zoning code (§70-195.25). Points are awarded for each design component according to the Town Board's evaluation of the appropriateness of design in meeting the guidelines. A further explanation of the point system is explained on page 21.

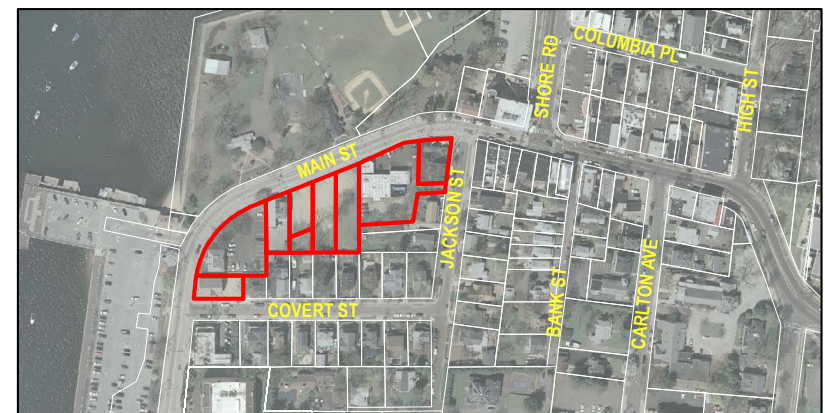
* For an explanation of "meets base standard" and "exceeds base standard" see §70-195.25 in the zoning code.

Introduction: Port Washington Overlay District Map


Port Washington Overlay District Section 1 (Upper Main Street)



Port Washington Overlay District Section 2 (Lower Main Street)



Legend

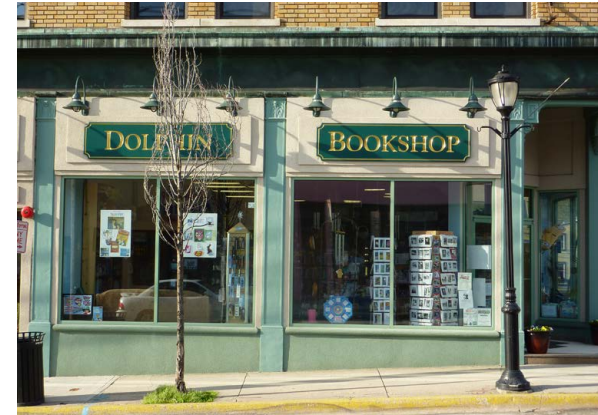
 Properties in PW Overlay District

300 150 0 Feet



Design Guidelines: (A) Storefronts

1. Designs should emphasize the role of the storefront as the focus of the building facade. Storefront should act as the unifying element within the block by creating strong horizontal elements such as continuous display windows, a consistent design frieze and use of colorful awnings.
2. Main entrances should be recessed and inviting, allowing for views into indoor commercial spaces.
3. Storefront designs should maximize window exposure and include at least one display window. At least 60% of the ground floor facade should be transparent.
4. Architectural features and details such as projecting storefront cornices, decorative below-window panels, prominent display windows, etc. are encouraged.
5. Landscape treatment should establish an attractive link between rear building entrances and parking areas.



Examples of storefronts on Main Street that include recessed entrances, maximize window displays and avoid excessive signage



An example showing possible improvements to the rear entrance areas of two commercial establishments between Herbert Ave and N. Bayles Ave

Design Guidelines: (B) Building Facades

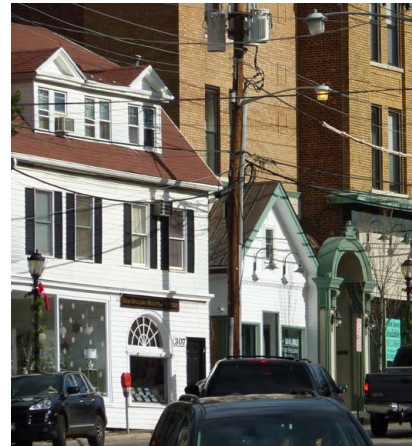
1. Upper floor windows should be vertically oriented to reflect the prominent facade treatment found in many buildings on Main Street.
2. Varied roof forms involving use of gables, dormers and decorative cornices are encouraged.
3. Building materials are to be compatible with nearby structures. Use of brick, stucco, stone and clapboard is appropriate in this regard.
4. Facade articulation using bay windows, setbacks, pilasters and other features are encouraged to create architectural interest and to maintain a human scale along the street.
5. Improved rear building entrances should consider recessed doorways and installation of protective canopies and awnings.
6. Materials, colors and quality of rear facades should be complementary and of similar design to materials, color and quality of front facades.



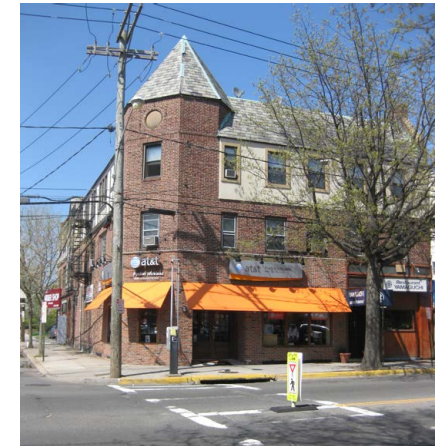
Differing building scales and heights



Vertical design emphasis



Varied roof forms



Emphasis on block corner

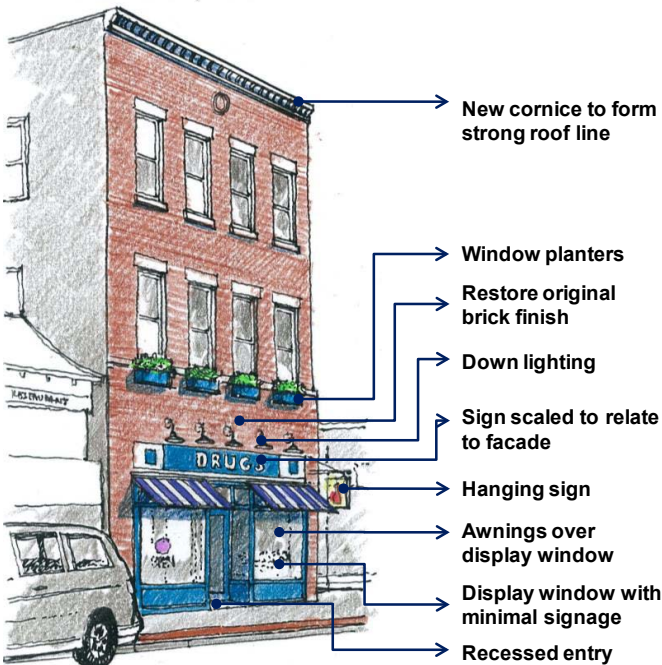


Differing facade finishes and colors

Design Guidelines: Storefront & Facade Design Examples



An example of possible building and storefront upgrading that includes facade restoration, new signage, awnings and improved display window appearance.



10

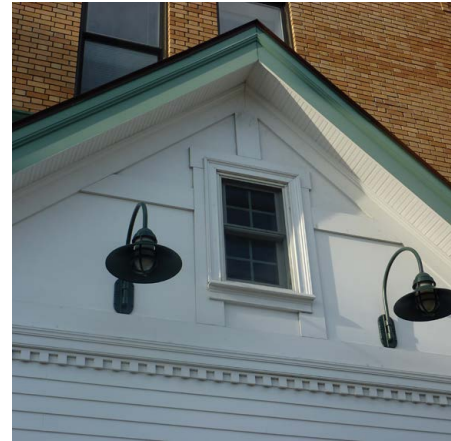


An example of possible building and storefront upgrading that includes facade restoration, additional floor with 15' setback, new signage, awnings and improved display window appearance.

11

Design Guidelines: (C) Roofs & Rooflines

1. Peaked roofs are encouraged as a means to promote architectural variety and streetscape quality.
2. The use of green roofs and rooftop gardens is encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff, reduce heat sinks, and to promote energy efficiency.
3. All mechanical equipment, television antennas, satellite dishes, etc. shall be screened from view from the street or adjoining properties.



Vertical design emphasis

Design Guidelines: (D) Signage

1. The design of wall signs should be consistent in terms of materials and colors with the architectural character of the associated building.
2. The use of natural materials such as wood is encouraged.
3. Signs should have a minimum of information in order to avoid clutter and confusion. The use of bold, easily recognized symbols, logos and simple illustrations that identify a business or activity is encouraged.
4. Signs should have dark background colors with light colored letters since this minimizes the apparent size of signs within the streetscape. The number of colors used in a sign should be limited to three unless used in an illustration.
5. Wall signs should not obscure or cover architectural features of the building facade.
6. Lettering styles should complement the style and period of the building on which they appear. No more than two different type styles or fonts should be used on the same sign to avoid a cluttered appearance.
7. The use of pedestrian-scale hanging signs is encouraged and should be designed to illustrate the use of the building or products/services offered. Hanging signs should be limited to a maximum of six square feet in area and should be located at least 7'6" above the sidewalk level.
8. Window signs, painted or attached to the inside surface of a window, should be limited to 25 percent of the total glass area. Temporary window advertising signs is discouraged.



Attractive wall signage that is related to the scale and character of the storefront/ scale.



An attractive window display that incorporates unobtrusive signage and a simple graphic symbol



Hanging signs (Hudson, NY) add visual interest to the streetscape

Design Guidelines: (E) Awnings

1. Awnings and canopies should complement the scale and proportion of buildings with colors or patterns that enhance the materials used on facades
2. Awnings should be of traditional form; curvilinear (“waterfall”) forms are not permitted.
3. Awnings should be made of non-glossy, weather resistant fabric (such as canvas).
4. Lettering should be focused on awning aprons. Any signage on awning fronts should be limited to the store name or to a logo/symbol that identifies the business or activity.



Awnings that complement the scale of display windows and provide color accent for the streetscape

Design Guidelines: (F) Outdoor Lighting

1. Lighting should be of a height and intensity to ensure a pleasant and safe sidewalk for pedestrians.
2. The use of Light Emitting Diodes or other alternative to High Pressure Sodium or Metal Halide is preferred.
3. Lighting should be shielded to ensure a minimum amount of light is directed towards the sky or creates off-site glare.



Ornamental lighting

Design Guidelines: (G) Loading & Service Areas

1. Any loading and maneuvering of service vehicles and all other related service activities necessary for the construction or operation of the development shall be accommodated entirely within lot lines and shall not impede traffic on adjacent streets.
2. All service areas shall be adequately screened from view from adjacent streets and from neighboring residential units.
3. There shall be no outdoor storage of materials, refuse, garbage, or unlicensed vehicles. Garbage dumpsters, where approved, shall be screened from public view at all times and, where possible shall be situated in the rear of the premises.



Improved sidewalk adjacent to off-street parking (on N. Bayles Ave) with landscape screening



Hedges screen off-street parking (Northport, NY)

Design Guidelines: (H) Landscaping & Pedestrian Walkways

1. All land not covered by structures or parking areas shall be landscaped with lawn, vegetative ground cover, shrubs, trees, or appropriate pedestrian walkways or amenities.
2. To minimize water consumption, xeriscaping and/or the use of indigenous or drought-resistant species is preferred.



Parking Requirements

- For all off-street parking lots, landscape screening, such as shrubs should be used to screen parking lots from roads, pedestrian paths and other facilities.
- Planting areas at the end of rows (for non-covered parking) should be used to soften the visual expanse and provide shade
- One tree should be planted per 10 spaces and there should be a landscape separation of every other parking bay

The parking requirements section of the overlay district (§ 70-195.24) describes the off-site parking bonuses allowed for properties that adhere to the design guidelines. For mixed use buildings, up to 50% of the parking area may contain surface or on-grade parking spaces that are covered by a building. Off-street parking credits are available only for the nonresidential component of a building. These credits may be allowed for:

1. On-street parking

One space for every twenty feet of frontage along a public street (exclusive of driveways, fire hydrants, bus stops or other curb segments for which parking is prohibited).

2. Municipal parking

One space for every three spaces located within a municipally-operated parking field within 500 feet of subject property and available to the general public.

3. Shared parking

Where a permanent or long-term lease or agreement has been executed between two or more adjoining property owners to share, aggregate or pool their parking spaces, the required off-street parking requirement for each participating lot may be reduced by 30%.

4. Access Easement

Owners with rear parking street access are encouraged to grant easements to mid-block owners so that the mid-block owner can gain access to the street for their required parking.



Example of rear entrance with parking, screened dumpster, and facade elements that are complimentary in style and quality to front facade

Design Guide Evaluation Matrix

Each proposed project will be reviewed by the Town Board for adherence to the Port Washington Overlay District Design Guide criteria. Points are awarded for each design component listed below according to the appropriateness of design in meeting the guidelines. A matrix of the various components is provided in the zoning code and a sample is shown below. Some design elements may be considered more critical than others and weighted accordingly.

	YES/NO
STOREFRONT	
- contains strong horizontal elements	
- contains continuous display windows	
- main entrance is recessed	
- main entrance allows for views into the interior	
- contains at least one display window	
- at least 60% of the ground floor façade is transparent	
- projecting cornices at the storefront	
- decorative below-window panels	
- display window(s) are prominent	
- other architectural features that enhance window design	

Design Guide Evaluation Matrix

	YES/NO
BUILDING FACADES:	
- upper floor window vertically oriented	
- varied roof forms	
- materials are compatible with nearby structures	
- use of bay windows	
- use of building setbacks	
- use of pilasters	
- other features of architectural interest	
- quality/materials/style of rear facade is complimentary to front facade	
ROOF AND ROOFLINE:	
- use of peaked roofs	
- use of green roofs or roof top gardens	
- equipment and utilities are screened	
SIGNS:	
Wall Signs:	
- materials and colors consistent with architectural character	
- use of natural materials	
- use of easily recognized symbols, logos or illustrations	
- use of dark background colors with light lettering	
- no more than three colors	
Hanging Signs:	
- indicates products/services offered	
- maximum area of six square feet	
- at least 7'-6" above sidewalk	

Design Guide Evaluation Matrix

	YES/NO
AWNINGS:	
- use of traditional form	
- constructed of non-glossy, weather-resistant fabric	
- lettering only located on awning apron and limited to store name or logo	
OUTDOOR LIGHTING:	
- appropriate height and intensity	
- use of alternative lighting methods and materials	
- adequately shielded	
LOADING AND SERVICE AREAS:	
- does not impede traffic on adjacent streets	
- screened from streets and adjacent properties	
- material storage is enclosed	
- rear dumpsters where appropriate	
LANDSCAPING AND PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS:	
- landscaping and/or pedestrian walkways are provided	
- use of xeriscaping, indigenous or drought resistant species	
- materials are compatible with nearby structures	
- use of bay windows	
- use of building setbacks	
- use of pilasters	
- other features of architectural interest	