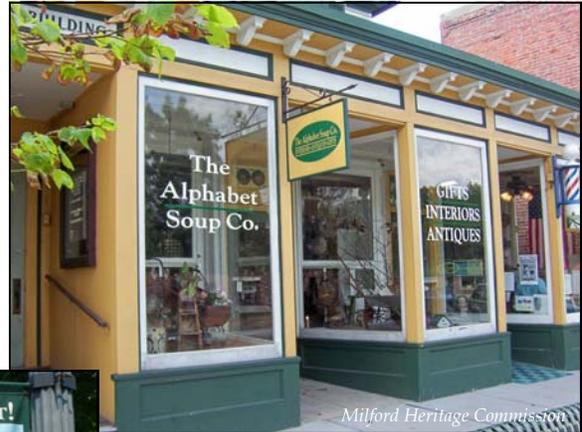


# Town of Milford Corridor Design Guidelines



Prepared by the Nashua Regional Planning Commission

iTRaC Program





# Introduction

The goal of these design guidelines is to preserve the small town character of Milford by encouraging coordinated traffic patterns and context-appropriate appearance of development along the Town’s main corridors. Promoting the traditional pattern of growth within the town creates pedestrian friendly and distinctive places for dining, shopping, working and living for which Milford is already known. To maintain and improve the high-quality atmosphere of Milford in accordance with the Town’s Master Plan, site design, architectural, and landscaping design standards have been established that include mechanisms to protect and enhance Milford’s historic heritage, established neighborhoods, major arterials, new neighborhoods, scenic roads, and entryways into the Town (*Town of Milford Master Plan Update 2007. Chapter 1: The Character of Milford and the Community’s Vision for the Future*). This document describes and provides local examples of the visual and functional details of the site design and architectural standards identified as critical for maintaining the character of Milford.

These standards are tools that create a flexible framework guiding the appearance of future development compatible to the historic nature of Milford, while allowing for innovation and architectural creativity in order to create a special place.

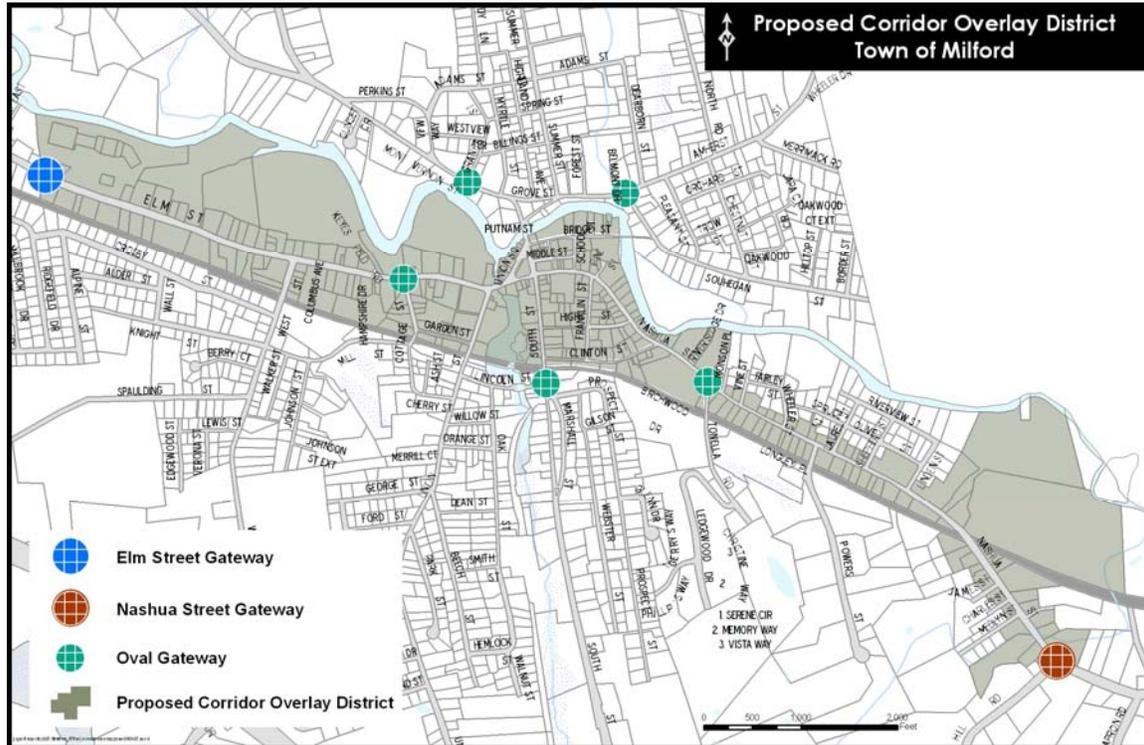
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## Study Area

Milford's site design and architectural performance standards are set forth in the *Nashua and Elm Streets Corridor Overlay District Ordinance*. This district consists of a significant portion of Route 101A, from Ponemah Hill Road west to Elm Street, including Union Square.



This roughly three mile section is an important mixed-use route through the town, where attractive, historic houses serve as residences and businesses.

The desirable attributes of the traditional architecture of Milford are at risk from contemporary development practices along these roads.



## Site Design Standards

The site design standards prescribe an interrelationship between the new project and its site. The project's size, location, relationship to the street and other buildings, the use of natural features on its site, and the amount of visitors it will attract should be considered and adjusted to reflect the town's traditional patterns of development for the most harmonious effect.

### Natural Features

Buildings, parking lots and other impervious surfaces must be located on the parts of the site best suited for development, protecting sensitive habitat areas and preventing potential property damage. Floodplains, steep slopes, wetlands, unique natural areas, and sand and gravel aquifers are among the geographic conditions deemed unsuitable for development. Natural drainage on the site must also be preserved to the maximum extent, requiring protective measures including alteration of proposed site plans or reducing the amount of excavation.



*The adjacent pond provides a scenic seating area for this parking lot.*



*This un-mowed field can provide habitat for birds and other animals.*

### Parking Areas

Large parking lots are unsightly, take up valuable real estate, and make travel less pleasant for pedestrians. Large parking lots also isolate stores from the street and one another. To limit the negative effects of vast amounts of visible parking lots, parking in the Overlay District shall be located to the back or side of a building. At the side, parking shall be buffered from the street. Shared parking between buildings is ideal and encouraged to eliminate potential access management problems.



*Rear or side parking is a key element of maintaining the character of the street.*



*Rear or side parking is used at many commercial buildings in Milford.*

## Build-to Zone

The distance a building is set back from the street contributes to the feel of the site. Large setbacks in residential neighborhoods create lawns and a suburban feel, while buildings located right along a sidewalk invoke a traditional downtown experience. The setback requirements of new construction will be determined by the setback of adjacent buildings and the context of the street to maintain a traditional streetscape edge.



*The set back of this Elm Street home provides for an ample yard while maintaining the streetscape.*



*Attractive fencing separates the street from the building without requiring a large set back.*

## Landscaping

Native trees and plants can provide habitat and food for native animals, help accentuate a sense of place, and are best adapted for survival in this climate. Preserving existing mature trees and vegetation is optimal and should be included in the overall landscaping plan. Stone walls and wood fences can be appropriate additions, defining pedestrian spaces and tying structures to the landscape. Street trees establish a pleasant barrier between the pedestrian and automotive travel ways.



*This flower-filled front yard could not exist without parking in the rear.*



*This path provides pleasant access from the rear parking lot to the front door of this salon.*

## Architectural Design Standards

The architectural guidelines are intended to protect Milford from the threat of development that is indifferent to the town's architectural heritage. Standards on rooflines, material, scale and massing can all contribute to an aesthetically pleasing, functional and profitable project that is concurrent with the town's architectural climate. Proposed plans must include all of the building's elevations and its surroundings to display the relationship of the proposed design to its site. If the proposed development is in an historic area, the Planning Board may require that the building be designed by an architect and landscape architect, and reviewed by an historic preservation consultant.

### Building Orientation

Buildings shall locate their main entrance or storefront toward the street with appropriate architectural details clearly indicating the doorway. The entrances shall be directly accessible from the sidewalk. This maintains the traditional emphasis towards the pedestrian-oriented streetscape. Buildings shall maintain a street edge consistent with the adjacent buildings as described above in the Build-to-Zone section.



*At street level, the Town Hall has human-scale windows and defined entryways.*



*A wide walkway, lampposts and an arched doorway accentuate the central entrance of the Post Office.*

### Building Massing, Form, and Height

New buildings must maintain the scale and context of the corridor through similar mass, form and height as the existing structures. Small-scaled architectural features on large structures, including variations in roof form and height, and creating an irregular footprint makes the large volume buildings seem smaller. Terraces, material changes, and horizontal trim bands articulate each floor within. Buildings must be compatible with adjacent structures and overall height must conform to the zoning ordinance.



*The traditional form of this medical services building makes its large size compatible with its surroundings.*



*This building demonstrates attractive design and scale.*

## Pedestrian Scale

The ground level is the pedestrian level. Avoid blank walls by using windows, trellises, material changes, arcades, or other features that increase the visual interest for people on the street. Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be utilized wherever possible and be consistent with the existing building and location. The use of floodlights, wall packs, and tall light posts are not permitted.



*The overhang at the entrance of this building creates a shaded patio for dining.*



*Pedestrian scale lighting by this park bench creates a safe and welcoming environment for walkers.*

## Architectural Features & Materials

Architectural details associated with Milford's architectural heritage include columns, pilasters, porticos, awnings and arches, and must be considered in every building design. Large areas of repetitive architectural elements or flat wall surfaces should be avoided. Traditional materials such as wood, brick, tile and stone, or materials that have the same visual effect are desired.



*The Centennial School displays traditional architectural features, particularly around the entryway and upper windows. Photo: Milford Heritage Commission*



*Different materials articulate the stories and reduce the apparent mass of this medical services building.*

## Roof Forms & Materials

Rooflines must employ the local vernacular of peaked roofs with dormers, chimneys, or gables. Large roofs must be broken into appropriately scaled masses to avoid large continuous planes. Where appropriate, roofs must provide overhang for pedestrian activity below. Flat roofs are generally prohibited. Roofing materials must be high quality durable and architecturally consistent, such as asphalt shingles, standing seam metal, or concrete tile.



*Classic roof lines on the new police station help it to maintain the character of older public buildings.*

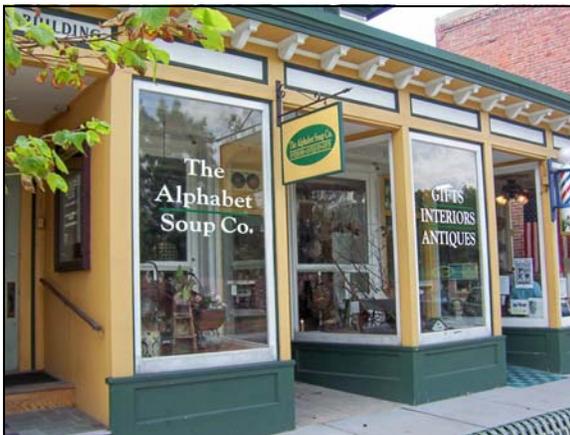
*Photo: Milford Heritage Commission*



*The roofline of this redevelopment project also helps it to blend in with existing structures.*

## Windows

Modestly scaled, vertically oriented windows are most common in the local building vernacular and should be adopted. These windows are abundant, non-reflective, and align vertically with any windows above or below, if possible. Ground floor, street-facing walls must have display windows, recessed windows, detailed entry areas, awnings or prominent sills.



*These bright storefront display windows help to create a vibrant downtown.*

*Photo: Milford Heritage Commission*



*Large windows on the front of this commercial building provide an attractive design element.*

## Building Entrances

All building entrances must be clearly defined and highly visible from the street. Many methods exist, including canopies, porticos, raised cornice parapets over the door, outdoor patios, display windows, and planters.



*Display windows flank the recessed entrance of this shop on Nashua Street.*



*The portico over the front door of this business clearly defines the entryway.*

## Signage

Signs must complement the building site and surroundings while being readable by both pedestrians and motorists approaching the site. Consideration should be given to form, color, lighting, and materials that are compatible to the building and its surroundings. Wall mounted signs must be appropriately scaled to the building and not obscure important architectural features of the building.



*This is a good example of an attractive wall sign.*



*Signs can be easy to read without being obtrusive, as demonstrated by this Elm Street sign.*

## Screening

All rooftop air conditioning, heating and large mechanical equipment, building accessories, and refuse must be screened from public view.



*Even items as large as dumpsters can be well screened, attractively enough to be located near an entry way.*



*Shrubbery conceals this electrical equipment while allowing easy access for repairs.*

## Existing Structures

Existing buildings of historic value should be preserved. If renovated or expanded, the work must be done in a manner that is respectful of the character, features and details of the existing structure.



*This Elm Street building is an excellent example of an historic renovation and retrofit.*



*This business on Nashua Street has also successfully renovated a historic structure.*

## Traffic Standards

As Milford continues to grow, a set of transportation standards will assure that the needs of all forms of transportation are addressed and met, including the potential for public transit in the future. These standards serve to limit the future effects of auto-focused development that have changed the traditional patterns of land use in Milford, in addition to strengthening the capacity of other modes of transportation through infrastructure improvements. Encouraging foot traffic and allowing for safe and efficient bicycle travel will help create a lively street-scape along the commercial corridor that extends beyond downtown Milford.

### Access Management

Access management policy moderates the number of access points along Elm and Nashua Streets for safety and convenience. Currently, the number, placement, and frequency of curb cuts along the roadway create the potential for conflicts and delays. Any new access points will be allowed only if it is not feasible to share existing access points.

The following methods are established to limit the necessity for new access points. Where feasible, all projects are required to provide interconnecting driveways for existing adjacent properties or easements to allow interconnecting driveways for future construction. This minimizes the number of access points along the main travel corridor, and reduces the possibility of conflicts. Interior parking lots must be shared between adjacent buildings to further reduce potential access points along the main road, and allow pedestrian and vehicular access between adjacent lots without entering the roadway.



*The daycare center on Elm Street locates its driveway on a side street, allowing a landscaped buffer along the busier road.*



*Curb cuts are well defined with granite blocks.*

## Throat Length

Throat length describes a long driveway entrance into a parking lot. Blocked by the use of landscaped barriers or other devices, no turns are possible along this entry way. These structures funnel traffic into and out of the parking lot safely by preventing turns from unexpected vehicles or pedestrians entering the throat.



*This landscaped median is part of the parking lot's throat, and it makes access to the main road less chaotic.*



*Many stores share this parking lot that has only one access point to the road.*

## Transit Facilities

In order to facilitate future transit use, all major developments that could generate high volumes of transit users must incorporate the future development of transit into the design, in such a way that makes transit an attractive transportation choice. Potential transit routes as well as locations for bus turn outs and shelters will be designated along major roads and within large developments, and easements reserved for such facilities, for implementation at a later date.



*The indented turnout lane allows buses to stop for passengers without disrupting traffic.*



*Bus shelters indicate bus stops and protect riders from the weather.*

### Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle facilities must be provided where recommended by the studies listed in the Overlay District Ordinance or as otherwise required by the Planning Board. Facilities include on-street bike lanes or separate bike paths. Bike racks may be required for all developments.



*Designated on-street bike lanes allow bicyclists to ride safely among motorized traffic.*



*The provision of bike racks encourages citizens to use this alternative form of transportation.*

### Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks must be constructed where recommended by the studies listed in the Overlay District Ordinance or as otherwise required by the Planning Board. Sidewalks will be universally accessible and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards which can be found online at [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada).

When a sufficient right of way exists, sidewalks will have landscaped buffers between the roadway and the sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience and create a barrier between traffic and walkers. Walking routes must connect destinations and not require pedestrians to travel out of their way unnecessarily. Buildings should be sited to create plazas and pedestrian gathering spaces.



*This pedestrian plaza provides an ideal gathering space for walkers.*



*Tree-lined buffers separating sidewalks from the street enhance pedestrian safety and aesthetics.*

Photos (pg 14): courtesy of Dan Burden, Glattig Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc., and Walkable Communities

## Gateways

Gateways announce entry points into residential neighborhoods, downtowns, commercial centers, or historic districts. Gateway designs can include signage on a landscaped plot, an arch or other feature over the roadway, sculpture and fountains.

The Overlay District has several opportunities for corridor improvements or landscaped gateways welcoming visitors and residents alike. The location of a gateway announcing entrance to the Elm Street neighborhood occurs at the Granite Town Plaza on Elm Street. The Nashua Street neighborhood can be defined by a gateway at the intersection of Ponemah Hill Road and Nashua Street at the eastern end of the district. Potential gateways announcing the Oval area of Union Square are located at Amherst Street and Souhegan Street (outside of St. Patrick's Church), Mont Vernon Street and Granite Street, Elm Street and Cottage Street, Nashua Street and Tonella Road, and South Street and Lincoln/Prospect Street.



*Granite Town Plaza is a great location to signify the entrance to the Elm Street neighborhood.*



*There is a potential neighborhood gateway location for Nashua Street at Ponemah Hill Road.*

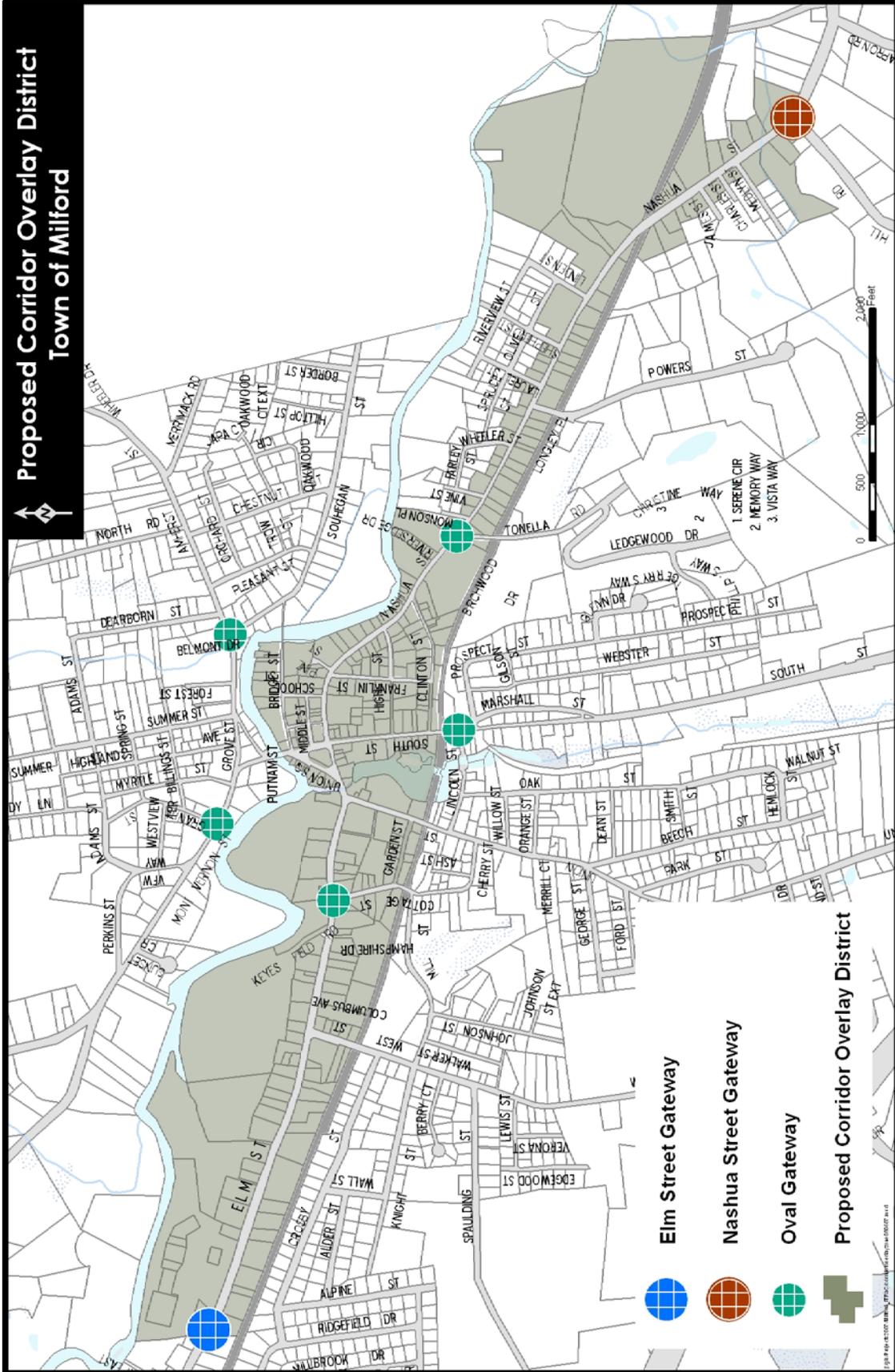


*South Street and Lincoln/Prospect Street could define the entrance to the Oval District from the south.*



*The intersection at Amherst Street and Souhegan Street could serve as the northern gateway to the Oval District.*

**Proposed Corridor Overlay District  
Town of Milford**



# Glossary

## Arcade

A covered walkway consisting of a series of arches supported by columns or piers; a building or part of a building with a series of arches open to the street level; a roofed passageway, especially one with shops on either side (definition: NRPC Staff; photo Wikipedia).



## Articulation

Places emphasis on the visible expression of distinct parts of a building, such as stories or windows, rather than on the building as a whole (definition: The Architecture Project, University of Arizona; photo: NRPC Staff).



## Awning/Canopy

A roof-like structure, often made of canvas or plastic, that forms a shelter over a storefront, window, door, or deck (definition & photo: NRPC Staff).



## Build-to-Zone

The area measured from the front setback line within which the front edge of a structure must be constructed on a lot. It indicates the maximum distance the front of a building can be constructed from the front lot line in order to maintain consistency with the surrounding area. (definition: NRPC Staff; photo: Milford Heritage Commission).



## Cornice Parapet

A projecting ornamental molding along the top of a low, solid, protective wall or railing situated along the edge of a roof or balcony (definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: Wikipedia).



## Cupola

A small structure that sits on a building roof, often featuring architectural elements such as domes or other ornamentation. (definition: NRPC Staff; photo: Milford Heritage Commission).



### Display Window

A store window, typically facing the street, that it is used to display merchandise for sale in the store *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



### Dormer

A vertically set window on a sloping roof; the roofed structure housing such a window *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: NRPC Staff)*.



### Esplanade

An open level space, often serving as a public walkway *(definition: NRPC Staff; photo: Wikipedia)*.



### Gable

A ridged roof with at least two slopes on each side, which forms a triangular wall segment at the end of a double-pitched roof. *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



### Gateway

An entrance feature along a corridor that announces the entrance into a new district, area or neighborhood. Gateway features often include signs, decorative landscaping, monuments or natural features. *(definition: NRPC Staff; photo: .)*



### Integral Planter

A planter contained within the structure of a building *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



**Outdoor patio**

An open seating area for restaurants, often located on the sidewalk in front of or adjacent to the building *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



**Overhang**

A projecting upper portion of a building, such as a roof or balcony *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



**Pilaster**

A shallow pier attached to a wall; often decorated to resemble a classical column *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: Wikipedia)*.



**Portico**

A major porch, usually with a triangular, pediment roof supported by classical columns *(definition: National Trust for Historic Preservation; photo: This Old House)*.



**Prominent Sill**

A broad flat space located at the bottom of a deeply set window *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



### Vertically Proportioned

Describes the vertical orientation and equal spacing of openings on a building facade, typically used in reference to windows above the first floor *(definition & photo: NRPC Staff)*.



### Wall Plane

The wall plane is the exterior surface of a wall along the front and sides of a building. In order to minimize the mass and scale of larger structures and to encourage pedestrian-scale development along the public way, the impact of the wall plane should be reduced in height and width. Combined with architectural features and landscaping, the proportions of larger structures can appear to be more in scale with the context of the surrounding area. *(definition: NRPC Staff, photo: Milford Heritage Commission)*.



### Wing Wall

A subordinate wall, one end of which is built against an abutment; usually acts as support for the abutment and as a retaining wall *(definition: McGraw-Hill Dictionary; photo: Radial Block)*.

