

# Preservation Guidelines: New Buildings

## New Buildings

Well-designed new buildings are not only allowed in Bennington - they are encouraged. The town's character comes from good architecture of many periods, and this tradition deserves to be continued with new buildings from the present and the future. While well designed new buildings can do much to enrich Bennington's character, badly-designed buildings can do just as much to destroy it. The quality of a new building depends on its relationship to the street and to neighboring buildings, as well as on its design as an independent piece of architecture.

## Basic Guideline

High quality contemporary buildings are encouraged on vacant sites in Bennington. New construction should be compatible with existing buildings and streetscape patterns in such aspects as scale, massing, materials, ornamental details, size and rhythm of openings, and set-back distance from the street. Significant historic buildings should never be demolished solely to make way for new construction.



Fig. 5-93: 400 Main St. Although this building would be better as two or three stories, exterior renovations have helped to improve the facades dramatically.

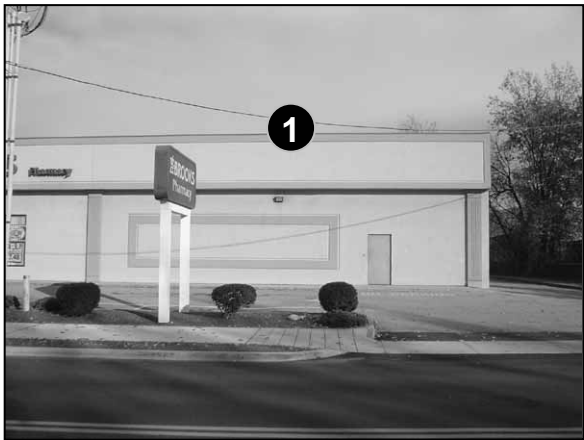


Fig. 5-95: 194 North St. The large blank wall facing the street is not in keeping with the historic neighborhood.



Fig. 5-92: 324 Main St. Adaptive re-use of this older building has maintained the exterior facades while modernizing the interior.



Fig. 5-94: 338 Main St. Simple details like the concrete cornerstones at this entry help to evoke earlier design styles.

### **Appropriate**

**A** Designing new buildings to be compatible with existing structures and streetscape patterns. A good designer can make a new building compatible with historic surroundings in many ways, ranging from a simple modern approach to a more highly detailed reference to historic designs. Regardless of the degree of detail, some basic possibilities for making a new building compatible with its context include:

- Maintaining a similar overall size and massing.
- Maintaining a similar set-back distance from the street.
- For commercial buildings, placing parking spaces behind the building rather than between the building and the street.
- Following existing roof shapes, slopes and materials.
- Using similar wall materials and paint colors.
- Making the size and spacing of window openings similar.
- Using windows of similar type, materials and pane pattern.
- Maintaining a similar rhythm and glass-to-wall ratio in commercial storefronts.
- Using moldings and other decorative details which are generally similar, but somewhat simplified or otherwise distinguishable from the originals.

*IMPORTANT NOTE: A new building should relate to the design, materials and ornamental detail of its historic surroundings; but it is important that a new building not resemble an old one so closely that it becomes a counterfeit, in which new construction is confused with old. A person looking at a new building should always be able to tell that it is a product of its own time rather than a piece of earlier historical construction.*

### **Not Appropriate**

**1** Constructing new buildings which are incompatible with their historic surroundings in scale, massing, materials, rhythm of openings, street setback or other significant design features.