



City of Franklin



Guidebook to Hamlets, Conservation Subdivisions,  
and Traditional Neighborhood Development



Franklin Planning and Sustainability Department

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July 2013

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# Introduction

*The City of Franklin encourages unique, innovative, and contextually-sensitive development. The Guidebook to Hamlets, Conservation Subdivisions, and Traditional Neighborhood Development is intended to provide practical guidance to those interested in pursuing these particular development types. Prospective applicants are encouraged to employ the standards set forth in this Guidebook where appropriate.*

*Additional information on hamlets, conservation subdivisions, and traditional neighborhood development is available from the City of Franklin Department of Planning and Sustainability.*

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# Hamlets

*Hamlets are intended to 1) accommodate new growth and development in rural or agricultural areas without adversely affecting the rural context and established development pattern, and 2) provide necessary civic services and the opportunity for low-intensity nonresidential uses intended to serve nearby residents and existing agricultural uses.*

## Procedure

Hamlets are subject to the procedures and standards in Subsection 2.4.2 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Planned Unit Development.

street pattern of interconnected streets, sidewalks, and trails except where environmental conditions make other patterns more appropriate and reduce impacts on natural resources.

## Basic Standards

Development proposed as a Hamlet should have the following characteristics:

- Block lengths should be an average of 400 linear feet but should not exceed linear 600 feet.
- Blocks longer than 400 linear feet should include a mid-block pedestrian walkway to join opposing sides of the block.

## Location

- Hamlets should be located on major street intersections composed of one or more arterial or collector streets.
- Hamlets should occupy areas that are relatively flat or with gentle slopes.

## Maximum Size

Development within a Hamlet should be limited to a maximum size of 100 dwelling units and 40,000 square feet of nonresidential buildings.

## Street Pattern

- Development within a Hamlet should use a grid



**Figure 1.** Hamlets are traditionally located at major intersections and include residential and limited commercial development organized within a grid-street pattern supplemented with generous amounts of open space.

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## **Standards for Residential Development**

Residential development on lots within a Hamlet are subject to the traditional area standards in Section 5.3.5 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*.

## **Standards for Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Development**

### *Uses Allowed*

- Lands within a Hamlet should be limited to the MN and CI zoning district classifications.
- Commercial and office development should be limited to uses intended to serve local residents and surrounding agricultural uses.
- No single structure housing a nonresidential or mixed-use should exceed 10,000 square feet (excluding belfries, spires, steeples, crawlspaces, or similar areas not intended for habitation).

### *Location*

Nonresidential and mixed-use development should be located in the geographic center of the Hamlet and focused on the corners of an intersection composed of one or more arterial or collector streets.

### *Subject to Standards for Traditional Areas*

Nonresidential and mixed-use development on lots within a Hamlet should be subject to the traditional area standards in this chapter.

## **Minimum Open Space Set Aside**

A minimum of 50 percent of the area proposed for development as a Hamlet should be set aside as informal open space in accordance with the standards in Section 5.5 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Open Space Standards.



# Conservation Subdivisions

*Conservation subdivisions are intended to provide additional development flexibility to build on smaller lots in a way that protects the natural and historic features on the site. This is done in order to 1) conserve open land, including those areas containing agricultural lands and unique and sensitive natural features such as floodplains, wetlands, unbuildable soils, stream corridors, and steep slopes; 2) retain and protect existing environmental, natural, and cultural resources, including mature stands of trees, tree lines, fencerows, hedgerows, and historic resources; 3) create a linked network of open spaces; 4) promote existing rural character within agricultural and rural areas; and 5) provide reasonable economic use of the property.*

## Procedure

Development of a Conservation Subdivision is subject to the procedures and standards in Subsection 2.4.2 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Planned Unit Developments. If not a Planned Unit Development, a Conservation Subdivision is subject to the procedures of a Preliminary Subdivision Plat.

## Conservation Subdivision Standards

- A conservation subdivision should set aside a minimum of 50 percent of the total acreage of the site as conservation area to be permanently maintained and protected as:
  - \* Open space lots;
  - \* Land dedicated to the city; or
  - \* A conservation easement.
- Development within a Conservation Subdivision is subject to either the traditional or conventional area standards in this chapter, but may not use both standards.
- Lands within a Conservation Subdivision should be limited to the AG, ER, R-1, R-2, RX, and CI zoning district classifications.

## Conservation Areas

The conservation areas within the conservation subdivision should have the following characteristics:

### *Features to be Preserved*

Conservation areas should be located so as to preserve community resources including, but not limited to, the following (in no order of priority):

- Steep slopes over 20 percent;
- Floodplain, wetlands, stream corridors;
- Tree Protection Zones;
- Areas within an HHO;
- Habitat used by endangered or threatened species;
- Structures or sites designated as a National Historic Landmark;

- Historic, archeological, and cultural resources, such as stone walls, farmhouses, or barns (other than National Historic Landmarks);
- Prime agricultural lands, including existing pastures (whether in use or otherwise);
- Established tree lines, hedgerows, and fencerows;
- Scenic corridors, gateways, and views; and
- Areas that could serve to extend existing greenways, trails, parks, or recreation areas.

- Agricultural uses;
- Individual or community water supply and septic systems;
- Stormwater management systems or other best practices, where no feasible alternative exists;
- Required drainage or other utility easements; and
- Mitigation of development activities, including restoration of disturbed or degraded areas to enhance habitat and scenic value.

#### Allowable Use of Conservation Area

- Greenways or blueways;
- Pedestrian or bicycle trails and walkways;
- Above and below ground public utilities and associated easements, provided no feasible alternative exists;
- Street or driveway crossings provided such crossings do not violate this ordinance, or other state or federal laws;
- Historic, archeological, and cultural resources, including properties within an HPO District, National Register properties, properties eligible for designation as a National Register property, interpretive activities associated with National Historic Landmarks, or natural areas;

#### Ownership

The conservation area should be considered as an open space set-aside. Such set-asides are subject to the ownership requirements in Section 5.5 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Open Space Standards*.

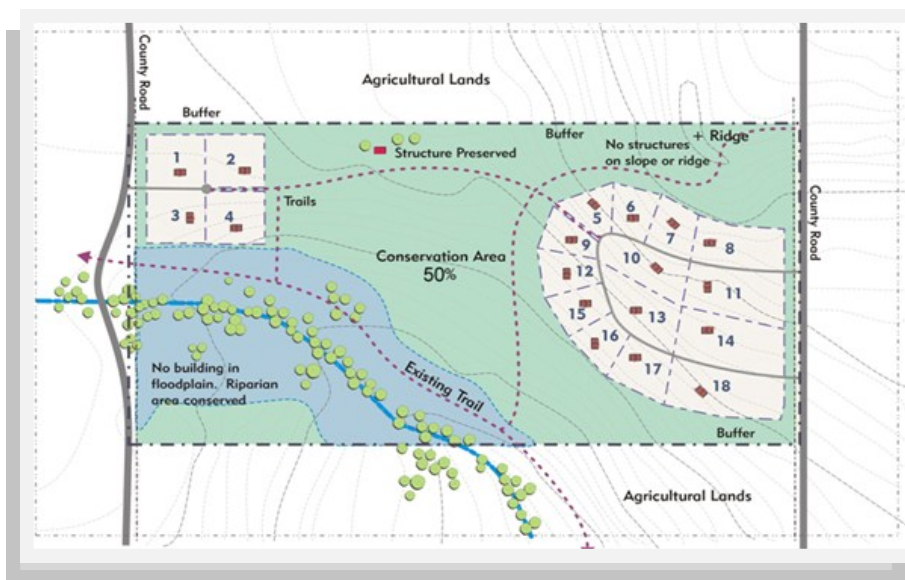
#### Development Areas

After identifying the conservation areas, the development area should be identified. It is the area within which development may occur and should include the area within the site where:

- Any clearing or grading activities will take place;
- Ingress and egress will be located;
- Roads, utilities, and similar structures will be located;
- Attached or detached residential development will be located; and
- Allowable nonresidential uses will be located.

#### Nonresidential Development

Nonresidential development should be limited to those uses permitted within the CI zoning district classification.



**Figure 2.** Conservation subdivisions set aside substantial portions of a development site for open space.

# Traditional Neighborhood Development

**Traditional Neighborhood Development** uses design in the tradition of small American villages and neighborhoods that flourished during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These standards are intended to create developments including the following elements: 1) a mix of residential and neighborhood-serving nonresidential uses; 2) a focus on street character through use of front porches and gardens; 3) a sensitive approach to the design and location of off-street parking and service areas; 4) the incorporation of public parks, greens, or village squares; and 5) good access to integrated transportation networks, with the pedestrian and mass transit having equal consideration to the automobile.

## Procedure

Traditional neighborhood developments (TND) are subject to the procedures and standards in Subsection 2.4.2 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Planned Unit Developments. If not a Planned Unit Development, TNDs are subject to the procedures of a Preliminary Subdivision Plat and/or Site Plan.

encourages a variety of uses and land use characters within a district. Each TND should provide an interconnected street network that promotes interaction among uses and connectivity for automobiles as well as pedestrians.

## Compliance with Development Standards

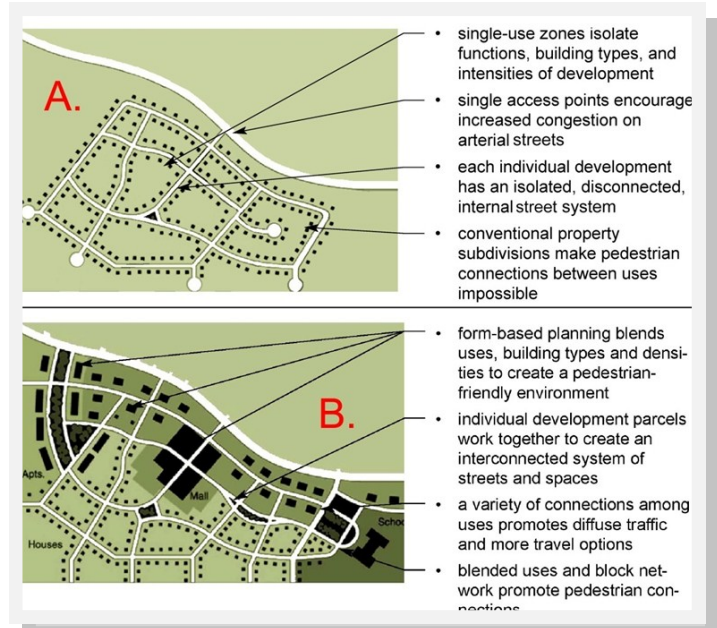
TNDs should comply with the standards in this guidebook and Table 3-8 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Site Development Requirements for Traditional Areas.

## Principle Elements of Traditional Neighborhood Development

Traditional neighborhood developments should include the following eight principle elements.

### *A Variety of Street Types within an Interconnected Network*

By providing a variety of street types, TND



**Figure 3.** Conventional Development (Diagram A) compared to Traditional Neighborhood Development (Diagram B).



**Figure 4.** An example of a varied and interconnected TND street grid.

### *A Variety of Housing Types*

TNDs should include a variety of detached and attached housing types within a district. This encourages greater diversity in the population with a mix of prices, ownership types, and plan options.

### *A Mix of Uses*

Each TND neighborhood should have a mix of uses that serve the neighborhood including schools, churches, services, shopping, entertainment, and offices, in an amount proportionate to the size and population of the community.

### *Institutions or Neighborhood-Serving Commercial as Focal Points*

TNDs should provide a variety of neighborhood-serving sites and community focal points such as retail stores, schools, services, libraries, post offices, civic uses and parks within a ten minute walk (approximately one-half mile) of the majority of dwelling units within a neighborhood. Small mixed-use districts at a key intersection, a public plaza surrounded by live/work units, or a school with community and recreation facilities are examples of design elements that serve as community gathering spaces and focal points for TND.

### *Minimum Density*

TNDs should include an appropriate residential density to establish the critical mass or market shed necessary to support retail, transit, and civic uses. While this figure will vary based upon the size of the TND and the mix of uses, all TNDs should attain a net density not less than four units per acre, excluding public right-of-way and open space set-asides.

### *Pedestrian-and Transit*

#### *Orientation*

TNDs are configured to improve the pedestrian experience by providing narrow streets, generous sidewalks, on-street parking, and alley-loaded lots. By lessening the amount of pavement at pedestrian crossings and removing driveways from front yards, car/pedestrian conflicts are minimized.

#### *An Interconnected Network of Open Space*

An interconnected network of public open space is an integral component to be provided in a TND. A network of open spaces encourages interaction among neighbors and reinforces strong pedestrian and bikeway connections.

#### *Sites for Civic Uses*

Prominent or significant sites that terminate vistas, front open space, or anchor primary intersections



**Figure 5.** A street elevation showing a hypothetical mix of residential building types.



should be reserved for civic and institutional uses or buildings in a TND.

### Principle Elements of Lots in a TND

A traditional neighborhood development should have a mix of lots covering a variety of sizes and uses in accordance with the following standards.



**Figure 6.** A typical section through a residential streetscape and photos of pedestrian-friendly center (top) and neighborhood (bottom).

### Lot Types

Each TND should include at least four of the following five basic lot types:

- Alley-loaded detached residential;
  - Street-loaded detached residential;
  - Attached residential;
  - Mixed-use; and
  - Nonresidential.
- Side Yard Setback  
The side yard setback is the minimum setback requirement for the building to the side property lines or side street right-of-way.
  - Rear Yard Setback  
The rear yard setback is the minimum setback requirement for any building to the rear property line or alley right-of-way.

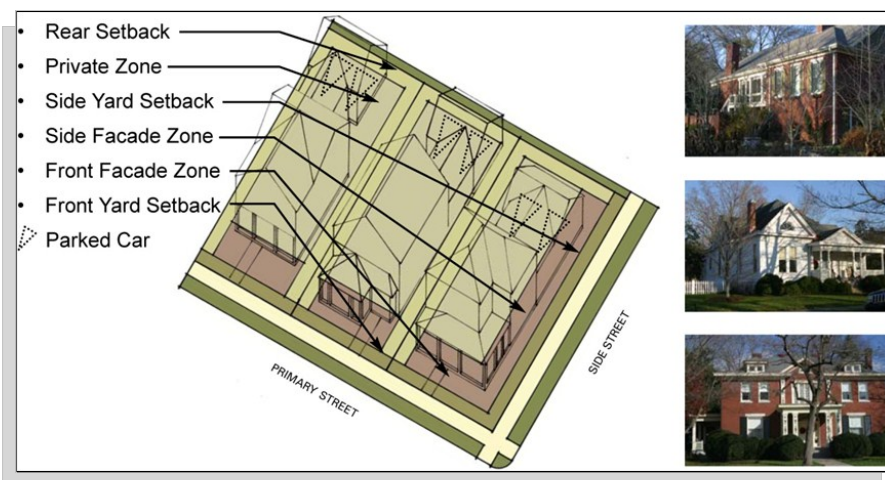
### Lot Elements

- Front Yard Setback  
The front yard setback is the minimum setback requirement for the building from the main frontage street right-of-way.

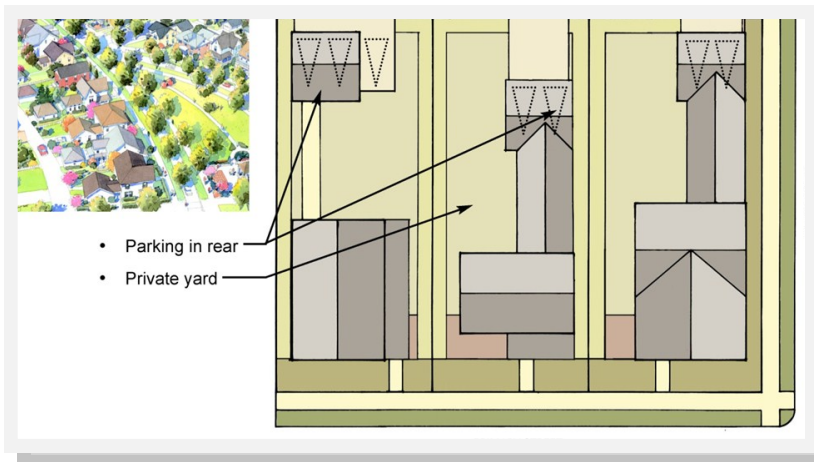
### Mix of Uses

Each TND should include a mix of uses in accordance with the following:

- Residential Uses  
Residential lots cover a broad range of sizes and house types, from attached residential, to semi-detached units, to single-family detached houses. Residential uses within a TND should be subject to the following standards:
  - \* Vertically-oriented attached residential units, such as townhouses, should comprise at least 15 percent of the total number of attached residential units.



**Figure 7.** An example of traditional residential lot elements.



**Figure 8.** Alley-loaded lot plan and aerial views.

### Alley-Loaded Detached Residential Lots

Alley-loaded detached residential lots are lots where garages are accessed from an alley rather than a front driveway, and are especially common where narrower lot widths, such as 50 feet or less, are desired. Alley-loaded detached residential lots have the following characteristics, and are designed in accordance with Subsection 5.10.8(2) of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Alleys*.

- \* Lots containing detached residential units should have at least three distinctly different lot sizes covering a range of lot widths from 35 feet wide and wider.
- \* Horizontally-oriented attached residential development, such as stacked flats or apartments, should comprise no more than 50 percent of the total dwelling units in a TND, including residential uses located within mixed-use buildings.
- Nonresidential Uses
  - A minimum of two of the following nonresidential use types should be accommodated in every TND:
  - \* Park, recreation, or open space;
  - \* Commercial (including offices or retail);
  - \* Institutional; and
  - \* Public buildings or uses.

- Side Wing Encroachments

One to one-and-one-half story side wings are encouraged. These side wings should be set back from the front facade of the dwelling's main body by a distance equal to or greater than the width of the side wing.

- Porch Encroachments

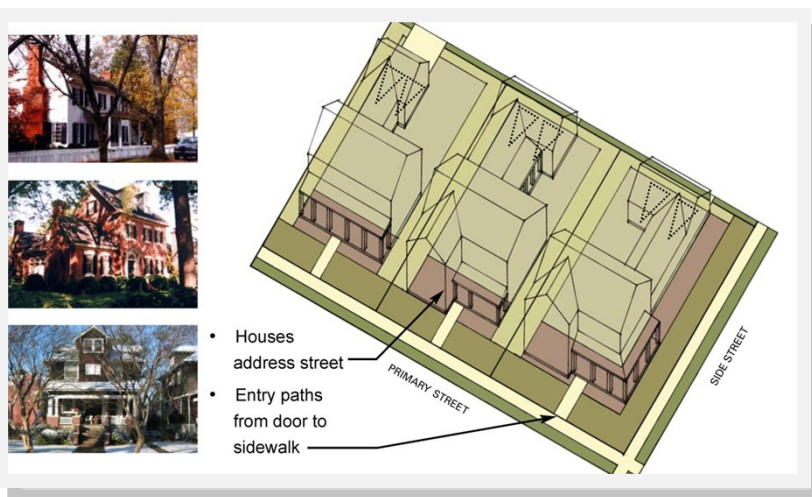
Porches may extend up to eight feet into the front yard setback. Bay windows may extend up to two feet into the front yard setback.

- Garage Requirements

Garages are to be designed in accordance with Subsection 5.3.5(2)(d) of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Garage Standards*, and should maintain a consistent level of architectural styling

### Individual Lot Types

The application prepared for a TND should depict the location and configuration of proposed lot types in accordance with the following standards:

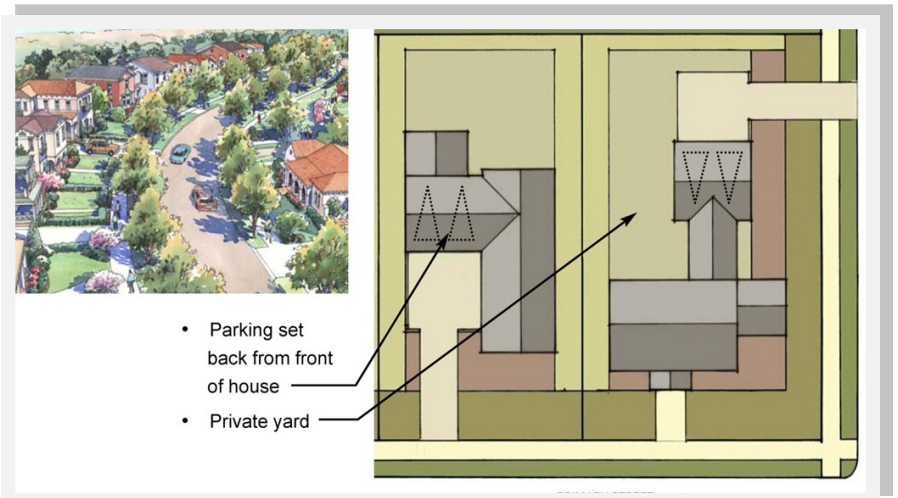


**Figure 9.** Alley-loaded lot photos and renderings.

and detail as used on the principal dwelling. Garages may be either detached or attached. Garage doors opening directly onto public streets are discouraged. Garage door openings should be at least nine feet wide, but not more than 12 feet wide per door.

- Fencing Recommendations

Fences provide delineation between public and private space and are strongly recommended on corner lots and between houses. For more specific fencing standards, see Subsection 5.3.9 (9) of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Landscape Character.



**Figure 10.** Street-loaded lot plan and aerial views..

be set back from the front facade of the dwelling’s main body by a distance equal to or greater than the width of the side wing.

### Street-Loaded Detached Residential Lots

Street-loaded detached residential lots are lots where garages are accessed from a driveway extending from the street. These are often used for large lots, such as those greater than 50 feet in width, or when topography or other site constraints prohibit alleys. Street-loaded detached residential lots have the following characteristics:

- Side Wing Encroachments

One to one-and-one-half story side wings are encouraged. These side wings should

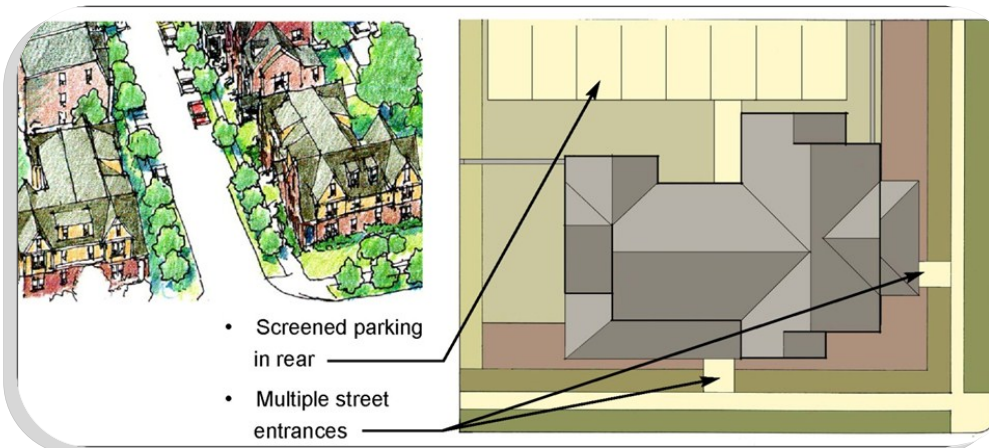
- Porch Encroachments

Porches may extend up to eight feet into the front yard setback. Bay windows may extend up to two feet into the front yard.

- Garage Requirements

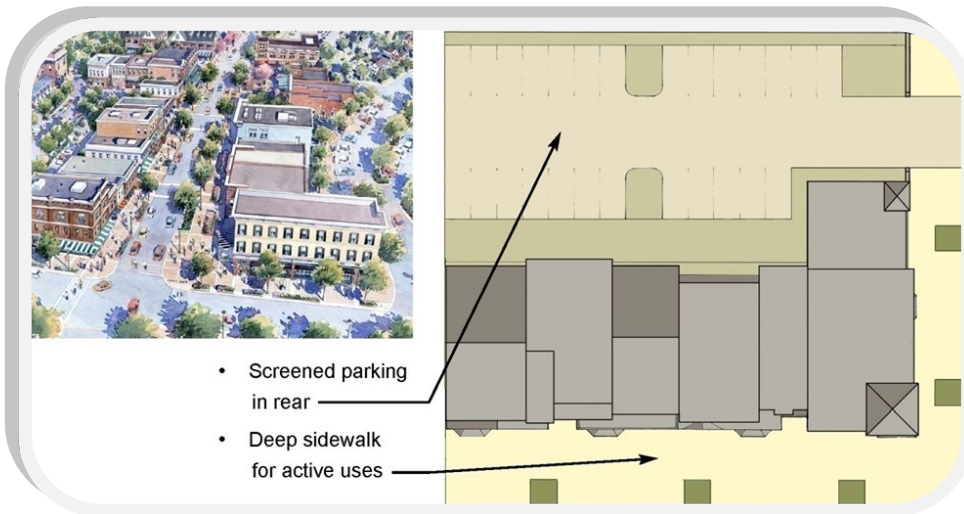
Garages are subject to Subsection 5.3.5 (2)(d), of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Garage Standards, and should maintain a consistent level of architectural styling and detail as used on the principal dwelling. Garages may be either detached or attached. Garage doors

opening directly onto public streets are discouraged. Garages should be set back behind the main body of the house at least 20 feet. Street-facing or side-loaded garages should maintain garage door openings that are at least nine feet wide, but not more than 12 feet wide per door.



**Figure 11.** Attached residential lot plan and aerial views.





**Figure 12.** Mixed-use lot plan and aerial views.

These include, but are not limited to, live-work units, office over retail, and residential over retail. Mixed-use lots have the following characteristics:

- **Front Yard Setback**  
Mixed-use buildings are subject to the standards in Table 3-8 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Site Development Requirements for Traditional Areas*, and should be built to the

back edge of the sidewalk. Façade projections such as balconies, awnings, signage, and overhangs may extend into the setback so long as they are a minimum of eight feet above the sidewalk. Entry doors should not swing into the public right of way.

- **Driveways**

Driveways should be no wider than ten feet when in the front yard. Hollywood drives are encouraged. Houses on corner lots should have access from a parking courtyard and should screen parking areas from the street with hedges, fences, or low walls.

- **Fencing Recommendations**

Fences provide delineation between public and private space and are strongly recommended on corner lots and between houses. For more specific fencing guidelines, see Subsection 5.3.9 (9), of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Landscape Character*.

- **Parking Requirements**

Parking should be accessed from the side street or a rear alley. Driveways should be a maximum of 20 feet in width, but a one-way drive at 12 feet in width is preferred. Screening for parking areas is subject to Subsection 5.4.6 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance, Vehicular Use*

### Attached Residential Lots

Attached residential lots are lots with multiple dwelling units such as townhouses, stacked flats, apartments, lofts, and condominiums. Attached residential lots may vary in size depending upon the scale of the residential structure.

### Mixed-Use Lots

Mixed-use lots should have a combination of retail, office, and residential uses.



**Figure 13.** This illustration shows a sample master plan drawing, surface parking options, and a photographic example of a typical nonresidential lot.

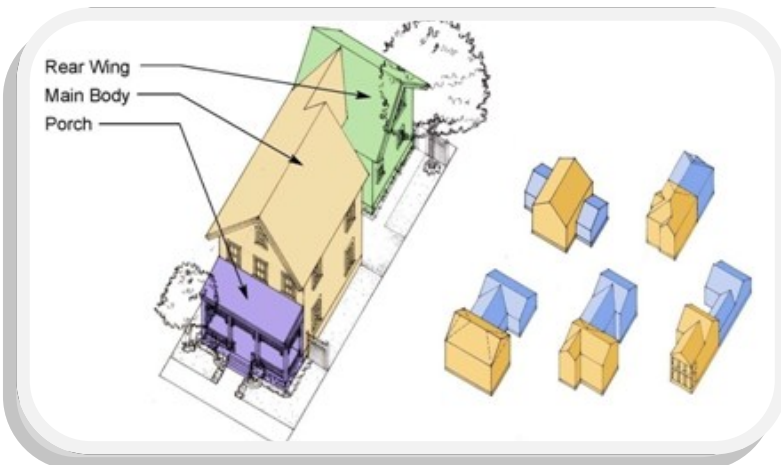


Area Landscape. Where buildings on outparcels front a mixed-use building, any off-street surface parking should be screened from view by continuous active uses.

### Nonresidential Lots

Nonresidential lots are lots that accommodate institutional or commercial uses in a freestanding building. These buildings may be occupied by a single user or by multiple nonresidential uses, including, but not limited to private offices, post offices, and similar services. Civic uses may occupy prominent locations within the development such as terminated vistas. Private uses may be organized around a courtyard or in a campus. Nonresidential lots have the following characteristics:

- **Front Yard Setback**  
Nonresidential buildings are subject to the standards in Table 3-8 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Site Development Requirements for Traditional Areas, and may be built with a setback to accommodate an entry court or front yard as appropriate to the use. The dimension of this setback should not exceed 20 feet and there should be no parking within the setback.
- **Parking Requirements**  
Parking should be accessed from the side street or a rear alley. Driveways should



**Figure 14.** Several configurations of main body and side and rear wings on detached dwellings.

be a maximum of 20 feet in width, but a one-way drive at 12 feet in width is preferred. Screening of parking is subject to Subsection 5.4.6 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Vehicular Use Area Landscape.

### Principal Elements of a Detached Residential Use

Detached residential uses within a TND should have the following components:

#### Main Body

The main body of the house is the principal mass and includes the front door, but excludes side or rear wings. The maximum width of the main body of the house is typically 40 feet or the maximum buildable width of the lot, whichever is narrower.

#### Side or Rear Wings

Side or rear wings are optional elements that are one to two stories high and are connected to the main body. They are smaller than the main body and are set back from the front façade. One story side wings should not exceed half the width of the house, and two story wings should not exceed one-third of the width of the house. Wings should not be built flush with the front façade. Side wings should be set back from the front façade no less than the width of the wing.

#### Porches

Porches create exterior living space, and at least 51 percent of the detached residential uses along a single block face should have some form of front porch, including but not limited to, full-façade front porches, wraparound porches, porticos, and side porches. Some architectural styles also have inset porches. Architectural detail should be included to accent the primary entrance.

#### Outbuildings

Outbuildings are optional structures that include carports, detached garages, storage buildings, and carriage houses. Outbuildings



**Figure 15.** A plan of a typical lot distribution, where lot types repeat within a block and facades must be varied. (Different colors indicate different house models.)

should maintain a similar level of style and architectural detail as the principal structure they serve.

#### Architectural Style

One of the hallmarks of traditional neighborhood design is the derivation of local, vernacular style both in the planning forms and the architectural style. Some of the styles found in the city’s historic neighborhoods include Victorian, Italianate, Colonial Revival, Classical, Arts & Crafts, and European Romantic.

#### Architectural Variety

In order to ensure variety within a TND, a maximum of four detached dwellings of the same model should be located next to each other along the same block face. In addition, identical models (defined as having the same front façade and floor plan) should not be repeated within a grouping of six houses (three in a row and the three across the street). Within each grouping, a house plan may be repeated if three of the following five key façade elements are varied:

- Window type;
- Porch type;

- Building material;
- Color, or
- Trim details.

### Streetscape Character in a Traditional Neighborhood Development

#### Streets

Streets within a TND are to be designed according to the *Franklin Transportation and Street Technical Standards*.

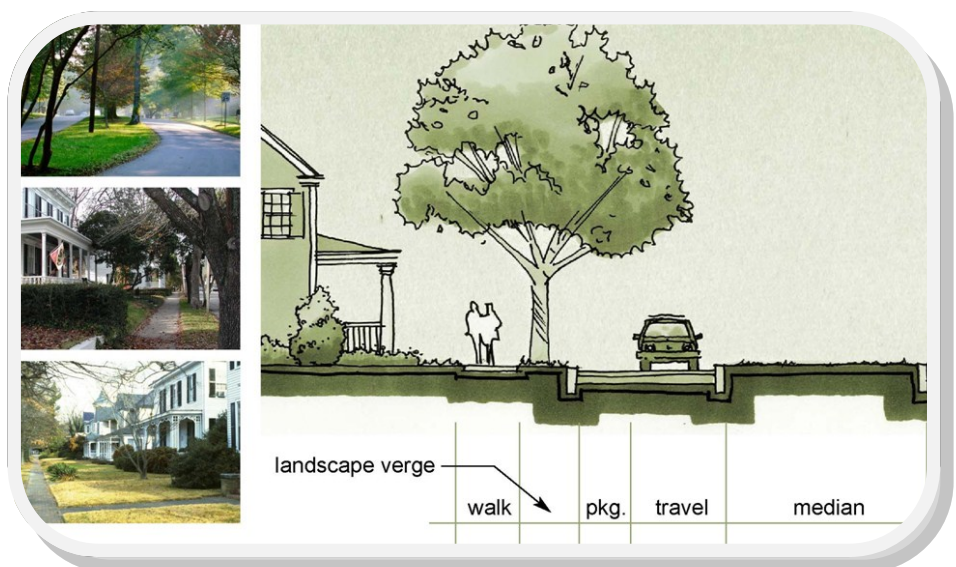
Traditional streets have a narrow cross section and include elements such as parallel parking, landscape strips or verges, and sidewalks.

#### Street Trees

Street trees are to subject to the standards set forth in Subsection 5.4.9 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Street Trees.

#### Sidewalks

Traditional neighborhoods should have sidewalks made of poured concrete, or brick. Sidewalks are subject to the standards listed in Subsection 5.10.9 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Sidewalks.



**Figure 16.** Typical components of a traditional street.



## Landscape Character

### Lighting

Exterior lighting is subject to the standards in Subsection 5.11 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Exterior Lighting.

### Fencing and Garden Walls

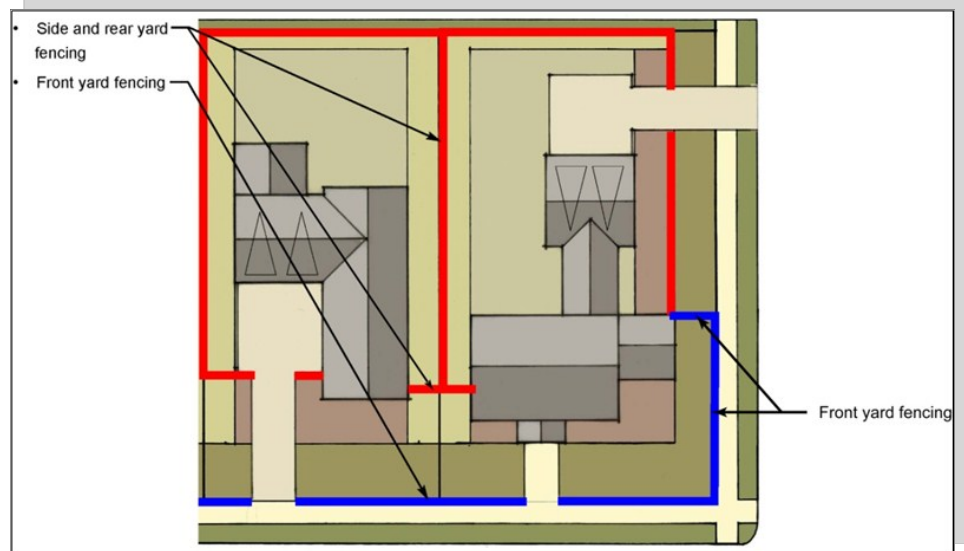
Fences and walls are subject to the standards in Subsection 5.6 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Fences and Walls, and should incorporate the following characteristics:

- Location

Fences and walls provide delineation between public and private space and are strongly recommended on corner lots and between houses.

- Design

Fence and wall designs should relate to the design and period of the house, and a diversity of fence styles should be used throughout the development and along individual streets.



**Figure 17.** Typical front yard fence locations (blue) and typical side and rear yard fence locations (red).

- Front Yard Fences

The front yards of houses in traditional neighborhoods can be a defining landscape element. Walls, fences, and hedges mark the transition from the street to the yard. Walls should be of stone or brick. Fences should be of a natural material such as wood or iron and should respond to the architectural character of the house. Low front yard retaining walls can also be used, especially where grading issues require them. At least one gate for emergency access should be provided for fences restricting access to the side of a dwelling.

- Side and Rear Yard Fences

Where rear yards face alleys, screen fencing is encouraged along the rear yard setback line. Materials may include wood or



**Figure 18.** Typical front yard fences, walls, and hedges.

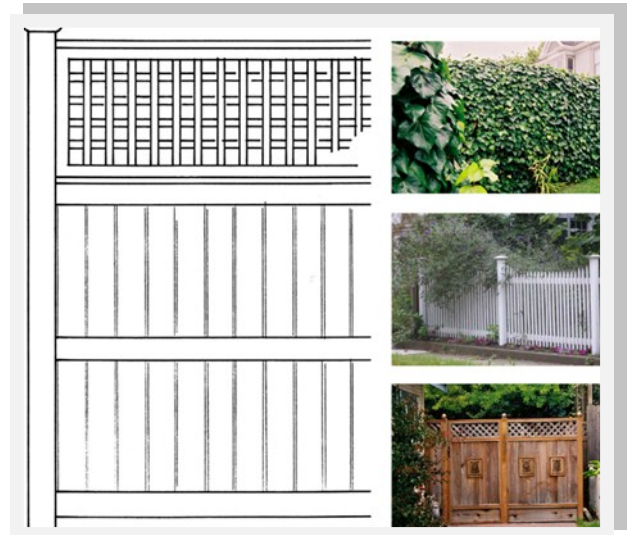
wire fencing, stone or brick walls, hedges, or other material approved with the Development Plan. Walls and fences can be softened with vines and plantings. Gates are allowed as well as arbors.

#### *Landscape Walls and Grade Transition*

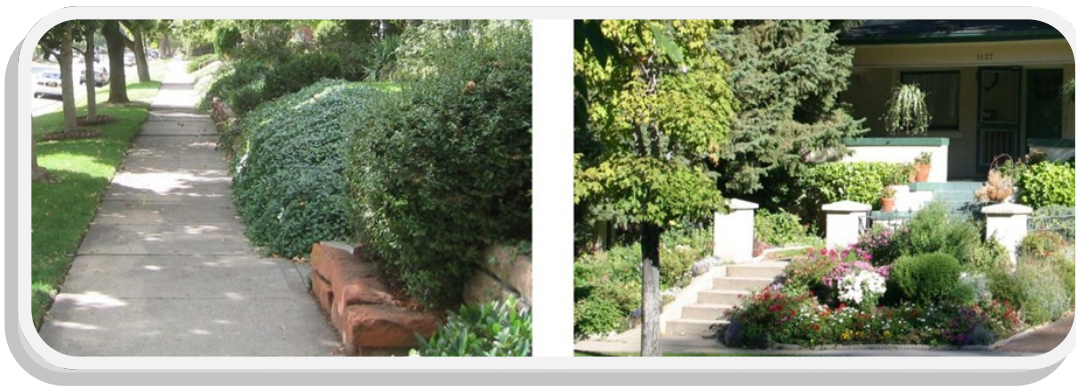
Steps set in low landscape walls, known as grade transition walls, may be used to delineate public and semi-private realms. Grade transition walls range from one to two feet tall, and are generally built of stone or brick capped with stone. Fences or walls are subject to the standards in Subsection 5.6 of the *Franklin Zoning Ordinance*, Fences and Walls.

#### *Planting*

- Hedges may be used along property lines to create an ‘outside room.’
- Grade transition walls may be replaced by a heavily landscaped slope or a low hedgerow.



**Figure 19.** These are examples of fences and hedges typically found in side and rear yards of TNDs that serve to create a sense of privacy when dwellings are in close proximity.



**Figure 20.** A typical retaining wall (left) and sloped front yard (right).