

# BUILDING PLACEMENT

### New Buildings in their neighborhood context

Where appropriate, buildings should be sited to maintain prevalent street setbacks. If existing buildings are close to the street, then new buildings should follow this pattern. For example, a medical building constructed in a local downtown maintains its closeness to the sidewalk similar to the other downtown buildings in the area constructed decades earlier.

As new projects are proposed, they should follow front setbacks in the area, building heights, proportion of windows to wall space, and have an obvious entrance visible from the sidewalk and street. Consistency regarding these elements can help to maintain community character within an area.



### WITHIN APPROPRIATE AREAS, BUILDINGS PLACED CLOSE TO THE STREET...

- Follow historic patterns of building placement to maintain community character
- Create an outdoor room effect along the street
- Keep the visual focus on architectural features & building entrances
- Minimize the need for free standing signs, as building signs are close and more visible
- Are more pedestrian friendly along the streetscape as businesses are often closer together
- Make it easier to separate vehicle circulation and pedestrians
- Protect pedestrians from having to cross large parking areas
- Eliminate the need for lengthy sewer and water hook-ups
- Minimize dominant views of parking areas

### Deeper front setback examples

Conversely, this aerial view has a gas station on one corner and a drug store opposite that are not close to the sidewalk. The church located down from the corner results in parking areas fronting three of the four corners at this intersection. As a result, pedestrian access is secondary to vehicular access to the locations, making it difficult for pedestrian circulation in the area.



*"Growth and development should be compatible and build upon the area's unique historic and cultural assets."*

*Growth and Development Guidelines, Jefferson County Planning Board - 2005*

### Build-to lines or maximum setbacks in certain areas

Typical setbacks often push new buildings away from roads, fostering a contrasting character and anti-pedestrian pattern to historical patterns of development. Build-to lines require buildings to be placed closer to the street, allow parking to the side and rear, and create a pedestrian friendly streetscape by keeping businesses in close proximity to the street and to each other.

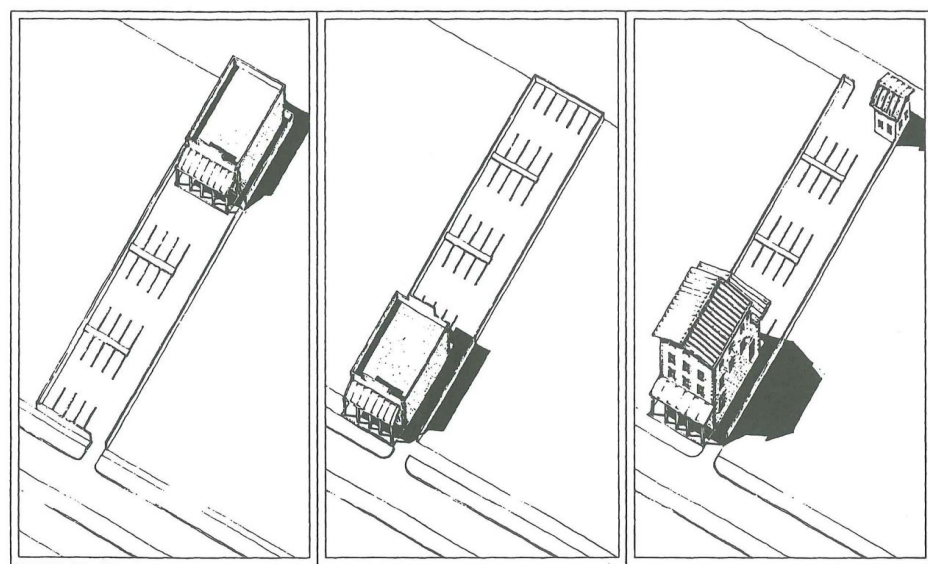


Figure 9-10. Alternative locations for buildings, parking, and access, Davie Settlement, Broward County, Florida. Source: Dover et al., 1990.

In the example to the far left, the building has a large set-back with front yard parking. The middle example is close to the road enhancing pedestrian access from the sidewalk, and has ample rear parking. In the third example, the building has multiple stories, rear parking and adjacent lot access.

Towns and Villages should require new projects to either follow the prevalent pattern in the neighborhood or develop and shape projects consistent with community goals.

### BUILDING SETBACKS

- Influence where buildings can be placed on a parcel (required minimum or maximum setbacks)
- In appropriate areas, setbacks should be decreased and perhaps a maximum setback should be set
- Can result in parking areas to be located to the side or rear of buildings
- Affect the visibility of prominent architectural features and building signage

### Local or Community Priority Views

Buildings should also be sited (when feasible) so that obstruction of important or priority views are minimized (from scenic roads, walkways, parks, or businesses that depend on such views). This can be achieved by taking advantage of topographic changes or existing vegetation.

In the example to the right, the building is located slightly to one side of a scenic view of the countryside or landscape, while taking advantage of a small hill and existing trees to screen the building. This business placement would be opposed to blocking the view and placing the parking area in front which would also contrast with the natural surroundings.

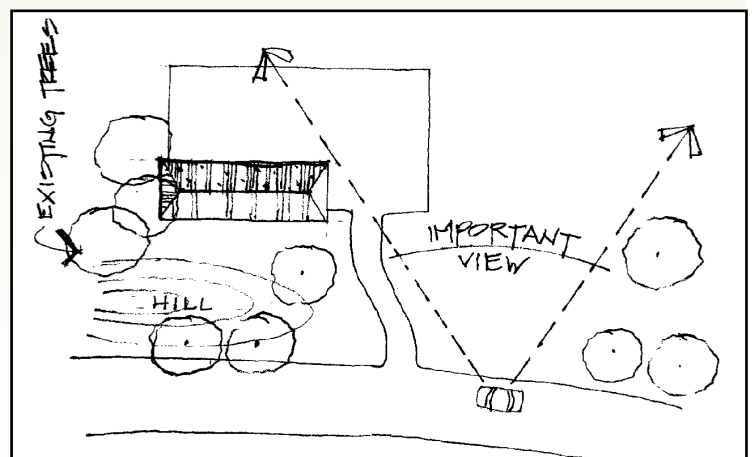


Image source: *Dealing with Change in the Connecticut River Valley: A Design Manual for Conservation and Development*, 1988



Prominent uses such as convenience store gas stations should consider featuring a well-designed store at the front of the parcel, with the gas pumps, canopy and more parking to the side or rear.



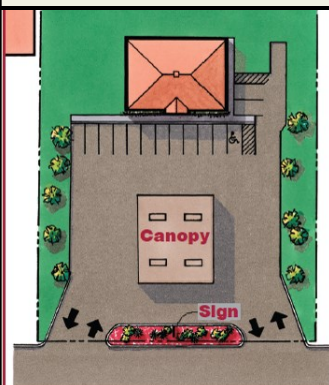
The typical gas station layout from the past (left photo) with pumps in the front and a repair bay or two no longer meets current demand for convenience stores. Now, the need for groceries, more pumps, larger canopies and more parking is the status quo for most new projects (right photo). Although each site may require a different design, alternative layouts should be considered rather than the less appealing gas pumps, canopy and expansive asphalt pad in the front.



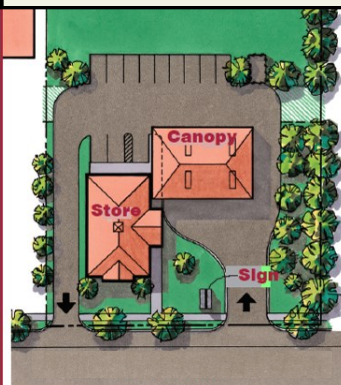
## Site Layout: store and canopy location

Canopy/pumps toward the side or rear allows direct pedestrian access to the store entrance, as well as a safer transition distance between vehicles turning in from the road, exiting pump areas, and those entering and exiting parking spaces. The three images below illustrate a typical layout and two creative alternatives that feature canopies to the side or rear with several site benefits while still being visible.

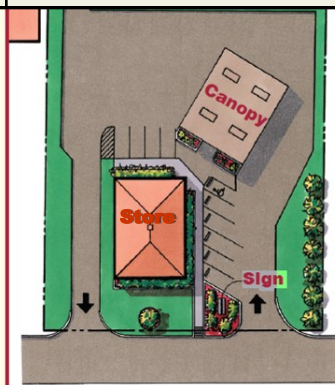
**Typical Layout below:**  
Canopy at the front of the parcel, two way traffic at each access.



**Creative Alternative 1:**  
Store up front with canopy to side, rear parking, one way entrance and exit



**Creative Alternative 2:**  
Angled canopy, some side parking, one way access and exit points



Images: Dutchess County Planning

## Guidelines for Convenience Store Design/Layout

- **Highlight the store up front** in a well-landscaped setting with the parking, pumps and canopy in a secondary position toward the side or rear (Creative Alternative 1 or 2 above).
- **Reflect traditional architecture** of the community and region in building and roof forms, window proportions, materials and details.
- **Provide a direct sidewalk connection** to the store entrance at the front or side of the building.
- **Design all four sides of the store** with windows and other architectural features to avoid visible blank walls.
- **Connect the canopy with the primary store structure** whenever possible, and coordinate the roof design and supports, even if not attached.
- **Use recessed, non-glare lighting under the canopy**, pedestrian scale lighting around the building, and medium height downlighting in the parking area.
- **Encourage a monument-style sign** integrated into a planter or landscaping and/or a wall or hanging sign, not standard pole or canopy signs.

## Canopy Design and Placement

Canopies serve several important functions as part of the gas pump operation. However, some canopies are large and brightly colored, and serve not just to cover the pumps, but to act as a billboard for the business, (as shown in the example to the right). This technique of using bright colors and brand advertisement on the canopy, would appear to circumvent sign standards in some local zoning laws.

As an accessory feature to the primary uses, canopies should never visually dominate the site. Canopies are roof structures and should be patterned after traditional roof types and structural supports in the area. Canopy and roof signs should be limited in size and visual prominence.

### Alternative Canopy Design

The new convenience store in the example to the right incorporates locally inspired architecture in the building and canopy design, as well as the façade, support and roofing materials. It features pumps to the front, however, the signage does not dominate the site because of the façade, roof and canopy details.



Typical canopy design and incorporated signage



### Store up front layout -

A newer convenience store in the Adirondacks incorporates locally inspired store and canopy design, as well as building materials. It also has separate parking from the canopy pump area, and features pumps located to the side with a proportionally sized sign incorporated into the roofline of the canopy.

## Canopy and Store Lighting Design

Night-time lighting plays an important role for many businesses, and convenience stores are no different. However, excessive lighting can negatively impact nearby uses, public streets, and even the neighborhood.



### Canopy Lighting glare

Glaringly bright canopy lighting can actually reduce overall visibility by making adjacent areas look dark by comparison. Balanced lighting directed downward is more effective than overly bright lighting and all canopy lighting should be recessed to limit glare.