

IV. DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose of the guidelines that follow is to allow the Appearance Review Commission to encourage owners, developers, and builders to propose development and modifications that are compatible with existing historic structures and areas in Bath Township, and to protect the open spaces that characterize the township, while allowing for design flexibility and individual preference.

The Appearance Review Commission is directed by the amended Zoning Resolution to review proposed projects and make recommendations, first to the applicants for permits and then to the Zoning Inspector and/or Board of Zoning Appeals. Working cooperatively with applicants is key to the effectiveness of this review process, and the Commission recognizes its responsibility to make helpful, creative recommendations. The guidelines are intended to help both the Commission and applicants make informed decisions.

It should be noted that these design guidelines provide a description of preferred design considerations for new construction and renovation. In certain instances, subjects discussed in these design guidelines may also be addressed in specific requirements in certain zoning districts in the Bath Township Zoning Resolution. In no way should these design guidelines be viewed as abrogating zoning requirements. Rather, these guidelines should be viewed as a supplement to zoning requirements that helps residents and the Appearance Review Commission more fully define desired urban and rural design elements.

The guidelines discuss design considerations in detail, but they do not require specific construction techniques, and they do not mandate architectural styles or historic themes.

Recognizing that Bath Township and the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor are composed of a diverse architecture in a diverse natural environment, the guidelines cannot be done as a "book of rules." Rather, the intent is to encourage design that is compatible with the character of the corridor and enhances the rural character that is the essence of Bath.



*... to protect
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This small outbuilding has been tucked into the natural environment. In any kind of development or new construction it is desirable to avoid, as much as possible, disruption of the natural setting.



Landscaping elements can create or enhance a sense of quiet and privacy.

A. Guiding Principles for the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor Design Guidelines

The following principles reflect the issues and concerns expressed by Bath Township citizens during interviews and meetings that were part of the planning for preparation of the design

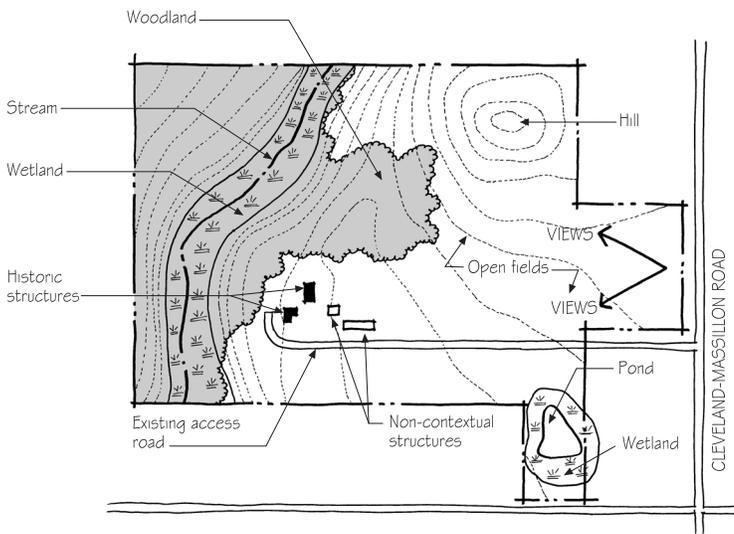
guidelines. The principles establish a framework and set the tone and scope for the guidelines themselves.

Although these principles relate specifically to the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor guidelines that follow, they are sound rural planning concepts that could be applied on a voluntary basis anywhere in the township.

1. Preserve existing historic properties which contribute to the visual quality and rural character of the corridor and the villages. Historic properties usually are buildings and structures that are at least 50 years old and still retain their architectural character; but often there may be properties of lesser age that also are important. The many excellent historic houses, barns and public buildings throughout the corridor are important elements of the township's environment.
2. Analyze every site to determine its significant physical attributes before planning and designing any development of the site. Develop a design that respects the unique attributes of each site, especially tree cover, existing structures, streams and ponds, hillsides, and vistas. Avoid destroying trees, reconfiguring the topography, or placing new structures in the center of otherwise open sites.
3. Design new buildings so they are compatible with surrounding buildings, so they enhance rather than diminish the area's sense of rural character. Buildings should be sited to avoid protruding above the surrounding treetops and should not be sited at the crests of hills if they will be visible from a public right-of-way. Encourage the use of traditional forms and materials for new buildings in highly visible locations such as the three villages, and encourage visual screening for buildings utilizing non-traditional forms and materials.
4. Utilize existing roads and driveways where possible. Avoid cutting of trees and alteration of the landscape to accommodate new roads and driveways.
5. Encourage the planting of new trees to ensure that when mature trees are lost to storms or old age, their replacements are already well established.



The guidelines that follow incorporate these principles and discuss the specific steps to take when planning new construction in the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor.



SITE CONSIDERATIONS - EXISTING CONDITIONS

B. Site Considerations

The Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor has, in its fairly short length, a surprising variety of landforms, vegetation, landscape features, and visual qualities. Again and again during the preparation of

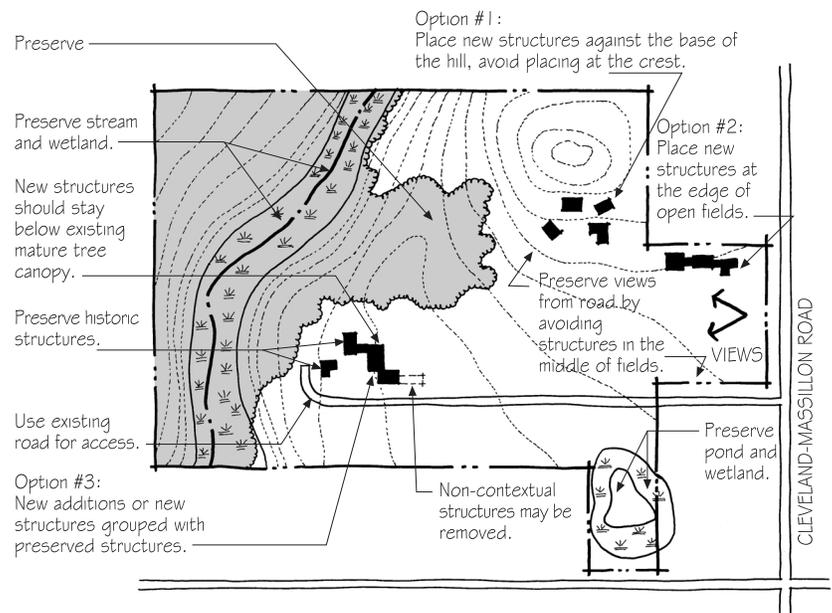
these guidelines, Bath Township citizens stated their concern that the rural character of the corridor be preserved. They felt that this was important in the villages as well as in the more sparsely-developed areas between. One important design component that affects this sense of rural character is the site.

The treatment of a building's site is as important as the design of the building itself. In many cases, and particularly so in the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor, building sites may have distinctive or unique features and elements -- watercourses, landforms, vegetative cover -- that define the site. Some of these may be natural, while others may be man-made, such as fences, stone walls, historic gardens, or particular kinds of trees planted long ago.

Anyone planning new construction of a commercial or residential structure, or an addition to an existing building, should first undertake an inventory and evaluation of the site's features

so these can be taken into account during project planning. Consider the following:

- 1. Topography and Landforms.** Does the site have hills or a hillside; is there a stream or pond; is there a bluff or rock outcrop? Is the site flat or sloping? Has the natural topography been altered in the past to create a particular shape or effect?



SITE CONSIDERATIONS - DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS



2. **Vegetative Cover.** What trees, shrubs, plants, and grasses cover the site? If there are large, mature trees,

where are they located? What is the mix of deciduous and evergreen species, and where are they located? Is the current vegetative cover natural, or was it planted after previous alteration of the natural cover? Are there any endangered, exotic or otherwise unusual plants?

3. **Existing Buildings.** Are there any existing buildings? What are their ages? Do they represent a related cluster such as a farm complex or other grouping of associated structures? What is their condition? Are they significant for their architecture or history, and are any of



them listed in the National Register of Historic Places? Do they have essential architectural elements and details still intact?

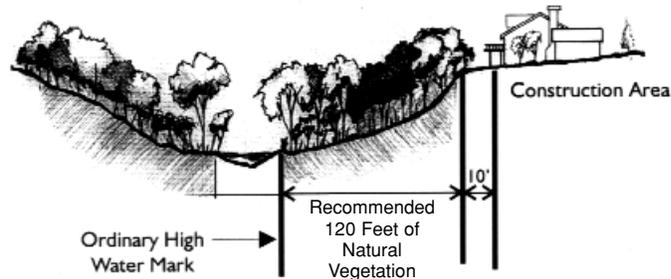


4. **Landscaping.** Are there any landscaping elements on the site -- planting beds, formal or informal garden elements, planting patterns of trees or shrubs, vistas or views? These may be historic elements (generally, more than 50 years old), or they could be from more recent efforts.

5. **Existing Roads, Paths and Driveways.** Do any roads, paths, or driveways exist? Are they older, or of more recent date? Are they paved? Are there any paved or unpaved parking areas? Is there safe access from public roads onto the property by means of existing roads or driveways?

6. **Riparian Buffers.** As part of the Riparian Corridor Overlay Zoning District, The Bath Township Zoning Resolution contains development standards that preclude structures or impervious surfaces from being constructed within specific distances from named and unnamed watercourses. These regulatory measures were adopted as minimum standards to protect riparian systems from the negative impacts associated with urban development.

Beyond minimum regulatory standards, desired optimum development practices are defined. These desired and optimum development practices were derived from the *Natural Resource Protection Study, Bath Township, Summit County, Ohio, Davey Resource Group, 1999.*



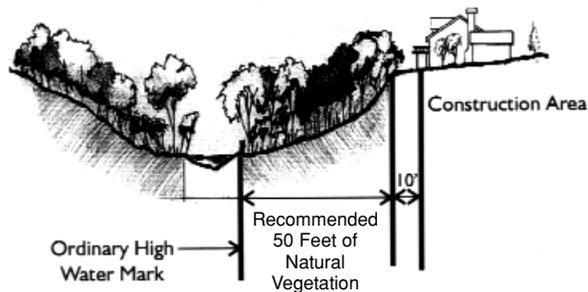
NAMED WATERCOURSES

Along named watercourses, it is recommended that there be a natural vegetated strip of land at least 120 feet in width measured from the ordinary high water mark of the watercourse. Existing natural vegetation should be preserved and allowed to mature. Where possible, lawns or other maintained vegetation should be allowed to revert to natural vegetation and mature. No buildings or impervious surfaces should be located closer than ten feet to this naturally vegetated buffer.

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UNNAMED WATERCOURSES

Along unnamed watercourses, it is recommended that there be a natural vegetated strip of land at least 50 feet in width measured from the ordinary high water mark of the watercourse. Existing natural vegetation should be preserved and allowed to mature. Where possible, lawns or other maintained vegetation should be allowed to revert to natural vegetation and mature. No buildings or impervious surfaces should be located closer than ten feet to this naturally vegetated buffer.



Once the inventory of site elements is complete, the elements can be mapped, evaluated and ranked in their order of significance to the site's character. It is important to note that not every element will be of the same importance from site to site. On one site, for example, large trees may be the most prominent and important features, while on another a cluster of farm buildings may be the principal contributor to the site's character.





It is important that site elements not be evaluated against already-planned new construction. For example, the need to cut down mature trees in order to build a large commercial building does not mean that the trees are not major site elements. The site elements should be evaluated solely for their contribution to the site's character, regardless of what may be planned for the site. Once the evaluation is done, decisions can then be made about whether and which site elements should be changed to accommodate building needs.



As noted, the relative significance of various site elements will vary from site to site, but it is possible to list a general hierarchy. Consistent with concerns expressed by Bath Township citizens during research for these guidelines, large trees should be considered very important site elements, as should historic buildings or groupings of buildings. (Historic buildings are generally defined as being both over 50 years of age and possessing either architectural character or association with important historical events or people, but there often may be younger buildings that also are significant.) Natural topography and landforms would be next in order of importance, followed by man-made landforms and landscaping. Last would be roads, paths, and driveways.

Remember, however, that this is simply a suggestion of a general hierarchy of significance that does not necessarily apply to every site in the corridor. The real task -- and the challenge -- is to define the site elements that contribute the most to the site's character and desirability, so that development plans can be made in a way that

preserves those elements to the greatest extent possible. Important features should be set aside in Conservation Areas in which the site will remain undisturbed during and after construction. Conservation Areas are increasingly being used as a development tool, not only as a means of preserving significant site features, but also as a means of making newly-developed areas more attractive and livable. Deed restrictions, easements, or actual transfer of land to a non-profit or public entity are some of the ways in which Conservation Areas' future can be ensured.

Conservation Areas are intended to preserve existing natural site features and



vegetative cover. Bath Township's Zoning Resolution is intended to enhance this goal by calling for appropriate kinds of plantings when development occurs. For example, the resolution suggests a mixture of deciduous and evergreen shrubs at the base of signs. In other instances, only evergreens may be called for if there must be year-round screening of a property.

Completion of the inventory and evaluation of site elements then permits moving on to the process of designing what will go on the site.

C. Building Placement

Placement of a new building, or an addition to an existing one, is important because it can affect both significant site elements and the overall appearance of the property.

The evaluation of site elements, which was discussed in the previous section, will provide a starting point for deciding placement of any new construction. The challenge is to meet construction needs while avoiding removal of or damage to significant site elements. Another consideration is to try following traditional examples of building placement, as reflected in nearby structures similar to the one(s) being planned.

A trip along the Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor will reveal that building placement varies depending upon both location in the corridor and local site conditions. Consider the following factors when thinking about building placement:

1. **Setback.** Setback is the distance between the edge of a public right-of-way, or another demarcation line, and the facade of a building. It varies considerably in the corridor, depending on location. In the three villages, buildings generally have a shallow setback and are placed close to the edge of the road, while in the less densely-developed parts of the corridor, between the villages, the setback is often quite large or deep. Planning for new construction should take account of the setback of similar or nearby structures. In village areas, the setback should be similar to that of existing properties. In contrast, a greater setback is appropriate in the rural areas of the corridor, and the actual amount of setback can vary considerably.
2. **Orientation.** This refers to the direction in which a building's primary facade points.



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