



**FAÇADE
& SITE IMPROVEMENTS GRANT PROGRAM**

**GMP DESIGN and BEAUTIFICATION
COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

JUNE 2025



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PREFACE

The Greater Meredith Program is a community development organization seeking to enhance economic vitality, historical and cultural heritage, and town-wide beautification.

These guidelines were prepared by the Greater Meredith Program's Design and Beautification Committee to provide recommendations for the protection, enhancement, promotion, and preservation of Meredith. They are a working document striving to ensure future changes to Meredith are in keeping with the area's significant architectural and historical character.

The Town of Meredith helps to define the quality of the Lakes Region.

These Façade & Site Improvement Guidelines discuss specifics of Meredith's built environment; they should be read in conjunction with the town's *Architectural Design Review Ordinance & Architectural Design Review Design Guidelines*. In addition, coordination with the Meredith Community Development Office is important to understand which if any approvals and permits are required.

In order to qualify for design or funding assistance through the Greater Meredith Program, these guidelines must be closely followed.

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Meredith, New Hampshire is a special place. It possesses a distinct character, a sense of place and visual appeal that attracts residents, businesses, and visitors. Preserving Meredith's community character and visual appeal is important to its citizens and critical to its continued vitality and success.

These guidelines do not prescribe any particular style, but rather suggest time be taken to observe the best traditional characteristics of the Town and design a project that maintains and enhances that image. The setting and positive architectural features should be considered carefully prior to the initiation of improvements.

When a downtown is physically attractive, it fosters business and other activity that make people want to be there.

OBJECTIVES

These design guidelines are intended to:

- ▣ Protect, enhance, and promote historic and cultural features and architectural landmarks.
- ▣ Maintain traditional scale and character while simultaneously stimulating architectural compatibility within the community.
- ▣ Develop and enhance a pedestrian-oriented environment.
- ▣ Provide positive economic benefits to property owner's investments by enhancing and stabilizing property values through improved visual appearance.

INTERPRETATION

In addition to answering general questions and clarifying interpretation of these guidelines, the Greater Meredith Program may be able to offer limited expertise in the following disciplines:

- ▣ Physical appearance, streetscape, interior functionality.
- ▣ Landscaping - Street trees, pocket gardens, flower boxes, ornamental landscape features.
- ▣ Historic Preservation - Historic dating, materials selection and replication, maintenance of historic elements.

Assistance with these guidelines is available through the Greater Meredith Program and the efforts of community members who volunteer their time, energy, and talent to address design issues in the community.



PROJECT PLANNING GUIDELINES

Every successful construction project requires thorough evaluation, planning, and preparation. There is a sequence of research, prioritization, decision making, and organization that is critical to follow in order to attain an attractive, useful, and productive building that will continue to thrive for generations ahead and also to preserve the historic integrity of the building.

A professional design consultant should be sought prior to the undertaking of any major construction or remodeling project.

STEP 1: INFORMATION GATHERING

The first step involves learning about the building. Start asking questions such as:

- ☐ When was the building constructed?
- ☐ What purpose did the building originally serve?
- ☐ What changes have occurred over time, and in what sequence?

Meredith is fortunate to have resources such as the Meredith Public Library, the Meredith Historical Society as well as a town wide Architectural History Review, that can help property owners find answers to these questions. Additional informational resources are noted under Appendix A.

STEP 2: PHYSICAL HISTORY & EXISTING CONDITIONS

The second step is to compile a thorough physical history of the building and document existing conditions:

- ☐ What did the building originally look like?
- ☐ What significant alterations or additions have been made to the building?
- ☐ What are the significant and defining architectural features of the building?
- ☐ How stable and weather-tight is the structure?
- ☐ In what condition are the structural, mechanical, and electrical systems of the building?



STEP 3: PLANNING, DESIGN & COST PROJECTION

The third step is planning, design and cost projection. Now is the time to decide how the building will develop physically. The structural layout of the building, its relationship to the site, zoning, and economic factors will determine the best uses for the property. Make a list of the architectural attributes of the structure that are significant. Once that list is complete, make another list of necessary stabilizing measures, repairs, and changes necessary for the proposed uses.

Prioritize the items on the two lists, weighing preservation of the special features with the necessary repairs and upgrades. The items on the two lists may conflict with each other. When this occurs, try to find a compromise that retains the historic feature while creating a workable solution for the repair or upgrade.

There are four levels of redevelopment for historic buildings to keep in mind at this stage. “Stabilization” re-establishes a weather-tight enclosure and structural integrity. “Preservation” goes further to sustain the significant existing architectural conditions. “Rehabilitation” returns the building to a state of utility. “Restoration” accurately recovers the form and details of a building to a significant historic condition. Most projects are a combination of any of the four levels.

Be sure to plan the intended direction before beginning the construction portion of the project. Budget the project to enable a quality result even if several phases will need to take place. It is important to sustain the building's significant architectural features whenever possible. In order to do this, all tasks may not be able to be done at the same time. For example, the first phasing of a project may involve stabilization by repairing a leaking roof or re-glazing broken windowpanes. The second phase could be storefront rehabilitation and facade improvements to obtain a tenant at ground level, allowing for a third phase for the rehabilitation of upper floors for a new use.

Throughout the planning, design and cost projection phase, consult with any jurisdiction that may require approvals and permitting to be obtained.



STEP 4: CONSTRUCTION

Flexibility must be kept in mind during the construction phases of the project. Every re-development uncovers unknowns and challenges during construction. Always return to the original assessment of priorities when studying solutions for construction surprises. Quality should not be compromised for an inappropriate "quick-fix" solution.

STEP 5: MAINTENANCE

It is important to follow maintenance schedules and conduct periodic inspections of the entire building after construction. This may prevent costly repairs from damage that could have been easily avoided. As periodic maintenance tasks are performed, all activities should be recorded in a maintenance log. This log would include a record of general housekeeping and maintenance activities, details of work performed, dates, costs, and names of personnel involved (whether contracted or in-house). The log should be periodically reviewed for repeated repairs, which may be indicative of more serious problems.

Every building will benefit from its owner keeping a maintenance log.



Phu Jee's Restaurant, Main Street, Meredith, before (above) & after (below)





ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ELEMENTS

FORM AND PROPORTION

Façade rehabilitation and new construction should have massing and configuration that compliments buildings on the same block.

Factors that affect a building's mass are height, width, and roof forms. Site and proportion should reflect the scale, massing, rhythm, detailing, and materials of adjacent structures if the area has a distinct character. For areas without distinctive architectural character, new buildings should complement Meredith's traditional New England styles.

Historically, Meredith's 'downtown' was small, but it had a consistency in its character. There were few storefront buildings exceeding three stories.

The construction of new buildings or façades is encouraged, where appropriate to fill a void in the built environment. The intent is that new construction will follow the general guidelines for renovation and restoration projects to the degree possible.

The design of an infill façade should be an outgrowth of those around it, striking a proper balance between existing architecture and good contemporary design.

HEIGHT

Height should be consistent with the building style and surroundings. The Meredith Zoning Ordinance regulates maximum building height.

WIDTH

Width is also an important consideration in proportion. Various architectural elements can be used to balance width, including using variation of roof heights, vertical divisions, materials, façade offsets in plan. Consultation with Meredith's Community Development Office is key to understanding setback regulations that may affect width.

ROOF FORMS

Rooflines of new construction should be sympathetic to those of adjacent buildings. When original rooflines have been altered inappropriately, it is preferable to restore the original shape, if feasible.

Vernacular roof forms evidenced in Meredith's architectural heritage are strongly encouraged.

The roofline of rear additions should be lower than the roofline of the original building.



FENESTRATION

The arrangement and design of doors & windows within a building's façade are important factors of rhythm and solid to void ratios.

Original fenestration should be preserved and maintained with as little alteration as possible if practical. Doors and windows for new buildings will ideally reflect the materials and character of original village architecture.

DOORS

Historically, a door's design and appearance reflected the importance of the façade's character and function.

The main front entrance of a storefront should be significant, but compatible with the rest of the facade. Over decoration of the storefront entry door should be avoided.

Wood is strongly encouraged as replacement doorframe material. Metal doors finished in baked enamel are acceptable.

WINDOWS

Window openings serve the primary function of admitting light and usually air into a building. New or replacement windows should complement the façade's architectural period and quality.

Window openings that have been in-filled should be re-opened to re-establish the original rhythm of the façade. When it is no longer practical to have all windows open into the interior, a black panel should be placed behind the glass on the interior rather than covering the window from the exterior.

It is a good idea to use storm windows to protect original window elements on upper floors. Storm windows should be sized to fit the entire window opening. Wood storms are encouraged, however, when using metal storms, paint in accordance with the building's color scheme.

Storefront façades are typically composed almost entirely of windows, allowing a maximum of natural light into the store



space while giving potential customers a good view into the store.

Wood is strongly encouraged as replacement window frame material. Metal windows finished in baked enamel are acceptable. Sensitivity to the color of the window and the framing material is imperative.

Use of the following is discouraged:

- ☒ Mirrored, reflective, or moderate to high grade tinted glass.
- ☒ Unfinished metal or raw aluminum windows.
- ☒ Flush applied muntins.
- ☒ Use of window openings for mechanical equipment.

SECONDARY ENTRANCES

Secondary entrances should be less prominent and more modest than the main front entrances. The "second front door" should fit into the overall facade without drawing attention to itself.

Where appropriate, rear entrances should be provided for commercial buildings to present a good view and pedestrian access from all directions. The rear façade entrance should be clean and well maintained and present a welcoming appearance. This is especially important for storefront properties. Rear entrances should be designed with the same sensitivity as front entrances, particularly if they are publicly visible.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility should be provided in all design for both new construction and rehabilitation consistent with the American with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). These requirements apply to interior building layout and exterior building access.

DETAILING

The charm and beauty of architecture is found in the detailing of each individual building, which contributes to the overall character of a block and the community. For both new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings, it is important to recognize and respect Downtown Meredith's architectural heritage.



MATERIALS

Appropriate rehabilitation and new construction materials for exposed surfaces may include the following

- ☐ Brick siding.
- ☐ Stone siding
- ☐ Wood and cementitious siding or shingles.
- ☐ Asphalt or metal roofing.

For details areas, the following materials are encouraged:

- ☐ Cast and molded metals.
- ☐ Wood (exterior grade, properly finished).
- ☐ Fiberglass replications.
- ☐ Gypsum detailing.
- ☐ Structural glass.
- ☐ Architecturally Detailed Exterior Insulation Finish System.

The following materials are discouraged for visible surfaces:

- ☐ Vinyl or aluminum siding.
- ☐ Asphalt or fiberglass shingles on walls or vertical surfaces.
- ☐ Structural ribbed metal panels.
- ☐ Plywood sheathing.
- ☐ Plastic sheathing.
- ☐ Reflective or moderate to high grade tinted glass.

Appropriate colors for exterior materials are found in natural materials such as browns, greys, deep reds, and deep greens. The color should relate to adjacent buildings and create a harmonious effect. Colors that are strident and incompatible with other colors found on adjacent structures are discouraged. Many paint manufacturers have color charts of historic paint colors that are quite helpful. Scraping existing paint on buildings can also reveal original historic color schemes.

Masonry materials require particular detailing and maintenance. If re-pointing existing masonry match width of joints, color and texture. Any new masonry should be appropriate to the buildings existing façade.

Building exteriors should utilize materials appropriate for the character of the building as well as our New England climate and should be compatible with nearby structures.



AWNINGS AND CANOPIES

Awnings and canopies lend both character and color to a building. An awning or canopy can serve as both a decorative feature and as a functional addition to a storefront. They can also serve as an energy saver by regulating the amount of sunlight entering a building.

However, these items must be in keeping with the style of the building and its overall purpose. Fabric awnings are encouraged, whereas awnings and canopies consisting of backlit plastic or vinyl fabric are discouraged since they detract from the architecture of the building and can overwhelm window displays.

Canopies, when necessary, should be in scale and proportion with the existing buildings. Canopies should be of the same style and material as the main building's roof. For example, a gable canopy should be used to intersect a gable main roof in scale and proportion with existing buildings.

SIGNAGE

On commercial properties, signage is an important factor. It can be used to identify the names and locations of businesses but can also convey an image as well as a direct message.

Consideration should be given to a sign's integration with existing architectural elements. Restrained and tasteful signs suggest a high-quality business. However, a jumble of oversized and competing signs, even on a single downtown facade, can confuse the customer. Remember, bigger is not always better.

The Meredith sign ordinance controls signage throughout the Town. In addition, the following signage guidelines are suggested:

- ☐ Signs complementing the existing design features and architecture of the building.
- ☐ Signs using external or surface applied lighting.
- ☐ Signs using textured surfaces.

- ❑ Signs with matte finishes.
- ❑ Lettered canvas awnings, unlit or directly lit (not backlit).
- ❑ Wood, high-density urethane, metal, or canvas hanging signs perpendicular to the storefront.

Examples of inappropriate signs would include:

- ❑ Backlit plastic signs and awnings.
- ❑ Signs that are disproportionate in size to the building or background.
- ❑ Glossy finishes.
- ❑ Unframed porcelain enamel signs.
- ❑ Backlit plastic channel letters.
- ❑ Signs on raceways.
- ❑ Neon and internally lit signs.





SITE DESIGN ELEMENTS

STREETSCAPE

Improvements within the public right-of-way fall under the jurisdiction of the Town’s Department of Public Works. However, since the sidewalk acts as a transition zone between the public street and the private business, improvements within the sidewalk area affect both the public and private realms. These guidelines include general information relative to private improvements within the public realm.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping is an integral part of Meredith Village's appeal. Landscaping should be used to screen parking areas exposed to the street, soften broad uninterrupted expanses of building facade, provide needed shade to pedestrians, lower the overall ambient temperature in the summer, and provide interest, texture, and detail throughout the village and the rest of the Town. Native plantings are recommended. Use of plantings requiring minimal watering is also encouraged.

Trees have important functional and spatial roles in downtowns. Street trees should be selected and planted judiciously to provide visual impact and shade without detracting from the architectural and commercial elements of the buildings

Survivability and affordability should be balanced. However, providing landscaping that is mature, healthy, and properly sized should be the most important consideration.

PEDESTRIAN PATHS

Paving has a primarily utilitarian function with accessibility an important factor. Review and implementation of any new pedestrian patterns should be carried out prior to any investment in material upgrades or changes.

All paving surfaces require maintenance and eventual replacement. In addition, pavements are frequently cut and patched for utility repairs. The expense and responsibility of

The Greater Meredith Program encourages cooperation between building owners & downtown merchants and the Meredith Planning Department for streetscape improvements, which are mutually beneficial to both the private and public realms of the Town.



maintaining paving materials should be a primary consideration in their selection.

Harmonious differences in paving types and detailing are encouraged to avoid a sterile “revitalization” look.

FENCING, WALLS, AND SCREENING

Fencing and walls should complement the style and the setting of the building. Fencing should be constructed of traditional New England materials such as wood, brick, and stone. Iron fences are also acceptable. Discouraged are chain link, stucco, and concrete, except in areas not visible to the public. Natural vegetation should be considered as an alternative buffer or to visually soften fencing.

Screen exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers, utility meters, and air handling equipment from public view in a manner that is compatible with the building and site design. Live screening should be considered where appropriate.

LIGHTING

The objective of municipal street lighting is to light travel lanes and pedestrian ways with the minimum illumination required. Pedestrian walks should be provided with pools of light at a higher level than the road surface. Lighting from storefront displays should be used as an adjunct to pedestrian scale pole lighting to provide additional pedestrian illumination. Streets should not be over-illuminated.

Owners are encouraged to provide decorative pole light fixtures reflecting historic character similar to fixtures the town has used in its parks.

PARKING AND LOADING

Parking quantity receives a great amount of attention, but parking organization and management are equally important. Meredith's Zoning Ordinance regulates parking requirements for commercial businesses in the Town.



The walking experience after leaving a car in a parking lot should be as convenient as the vehicular access to the parking from the roadway. Avoid creating paths through undesirable areas. Design parking and paths so that destinations are visible early in the walk. Parking behind commercial buildings should be coordinated with other improvements to create a positive pedestrian experience. Public entrances to commercial buildings should be considered where appropriate.

Landscape parking areas appropriately. Emphasize pedestrian areas with plantings, paving, or other elements



APPENDIX B — GLOSSARY

ADA	"Americans with Disabilities Act" and Interim Guidelines
Cornice	The projecting moldings forming the top band of a wall or other element
Divided Light	Alternate term for multipaned window sash
Engaged Column	A column attached to the wall behind it. Also known as an attached column
Facade	The front wall of a building, or the wall in which the principal entrance is located, especially when highly ornamented
Glazing	The clear translucent material through which light passes into a building; most often glass but includes other materials such as acrylic or polystyrene.
Hood	A projecting shelf like element over an exterior wall opening.
Lintel	A structural beam spanning over a door or window opening, or a facing, such as ornamental brick veneer, that appears to be a structural lintel.
Massing	The overall composition of the exterior of the major volumes of a building, especially when the structure has major and minor elements.
Molding	Linear decorative trim in various geometric profiles; term includes both the individual shapes and a composite of several shapes.
Mullion	A vertical element between two window or door frames; typically, not a structural support for the building
Muntin	The small molding or bar that separates the individual panes of a multipaned window sash
Proportional Bay	The relationship of the size, shape, and location of door and window openings in a façade.
Sash	The part of a window frame that holds the glazing, especially when moveable.
Setback	Distance behind a property line.
Sign Frieze	The long narrow horizontal band on a building containing a sign.
Sill	The projecting horizontal base of a window or door.
Storefront	A ground level façade of a shop with large panels of plate glass in display windows; typically, with a recessed entrance.
Transom	A fixed horizontal member between the top of a door and a window above
Transom Window	A glazed opening above a door or window