

Case Study One

Model Subdivision Plan, Franklinville, NY

One of the work elements of the Visioning Project involved visiting a parcel of village-owned land in Franklinville and preparing a model site plan showing the location of residential lots in a “conservation design” following the four-step approach described and illustrated in *Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks*, by Randall Arendt (Island Press, 1996).

The project site was visited by Franklinville officials, Randall Arendt, Prof. Gary Day of SUNY Buffalo (and several of his students), and David Swartz, chairman of the Zoning Board, who walked the property with site analysis base maps (showing topography, vegetation, and soils) prepared by the students.

Following that site walk and discussion of the property’s inherent constraints and opportunities, Arendt sketched out a tentative layout of conservation areas, house locations, streets/trails, and lot lines (in that order) for review by Day and the local officials. A second layout was then prepared, incorporating the ideas and suggestions put forward by all the team members.

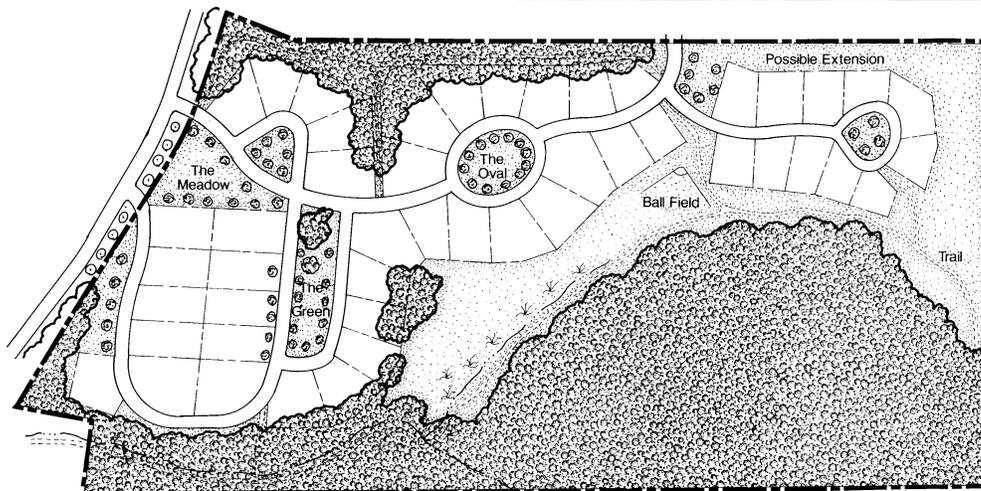
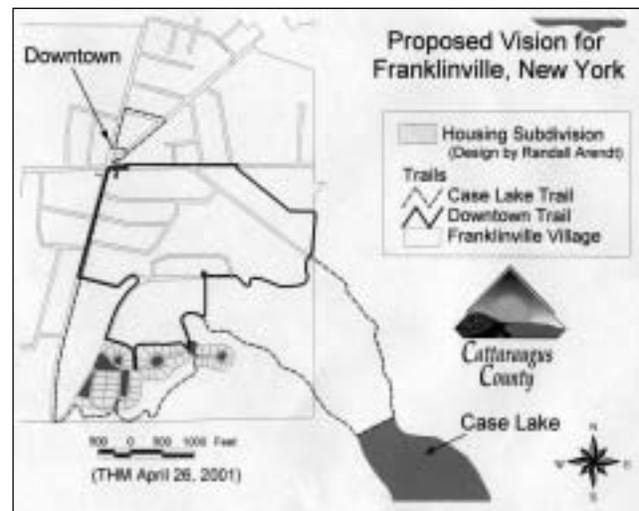
The resulting neighborhood design, called Mt. Pleasant Commons, is shown here and is intended to serve as model for the region, as well as being a specific design for this particular property.

Noteworthy aspects of the design process was the idea, early on, to protect the rural view from the road as much as possible by creating a “foreground meadow” and ensuring that the first tier of homes would all face toward the front of the property so the view into the parcel from Mt. Pleasant Road would not be dominated by relatively

unattractive rear elevations (sliding glass doors, pressure-treated decks, etc.).

The next design decision was to designate the first small plateau, with its large trees, as a neighborhood green, and to access this by a road that traversed the property along the contour lines to minimize the cost of cutting and filling. Another small common is proposed to be created in the next phase as well, and this one is to have an oval shape modelled on the historic oval green in the center of Franklinville.

All lots are to be served by public water and sewer, and they all back up to or face permanent open space, through which winds proposed, continuous trail systems, connecting this neighborhood with the Village center and also with Case Lake. The trails also link residents with a neighborhood ballfield.



Case Study Two

Storefront Rehabilitation

One of the work elements of the Visioning Project involved creating a practical design for rehabilitating a storefront on a historic building in Little Valley. The object was to show how this could be accomplished in a low-cost manner that would help reinforce the building's original architectural character.

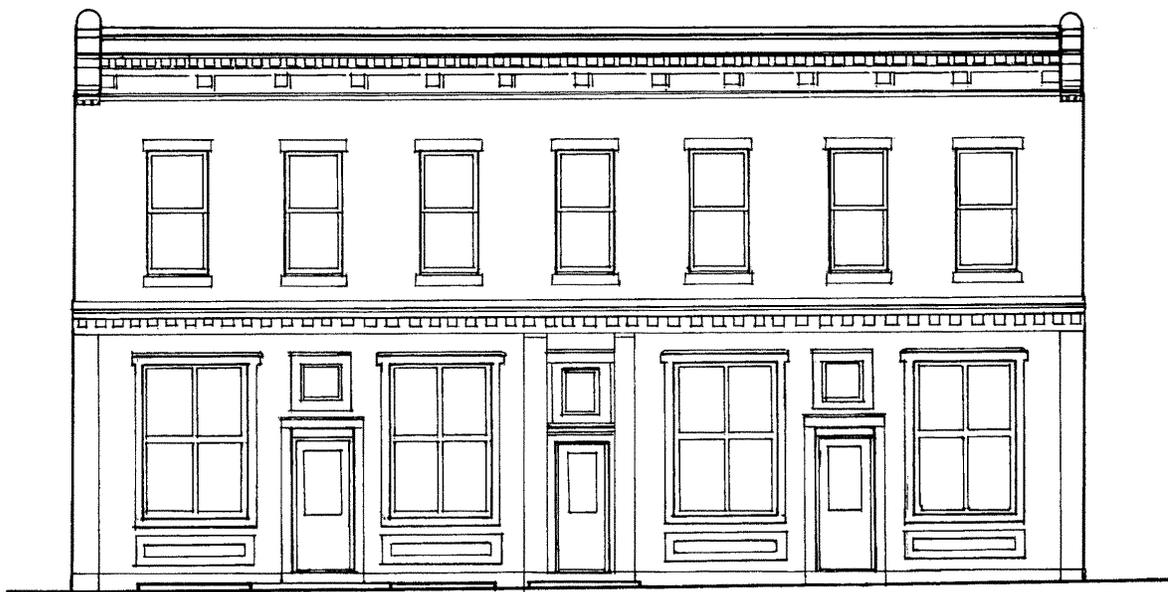
The building which was selected, along Main Street, had retained all of its original upper-story exterior features, but the storefront had been completely modernized several decades ago, with smaller, shorter display windows, and grooved plywood (T-111) siding.

The design recommendations included the following suggestions (which were all implemented by the owner, within a few months of his meeting with the design consultant, Randall Arendt):

- The existing short windows should be visually "divided" into taller rectangular panes by the simple technique of applying a thin strip of wooden moulding on top of the glass. The existing narrow moulding around the windows themselves should also be replaced with plain 1" x 4" pine boards so they more closely resemble the original casing boards around the second-story windows. This is an important and inex-

pensive substitution of materials. If for any reason it is difficult to remove the existing narrow mouldings, perhaps they could be supplemented with boards bringing them out to a four-inch width around the sides and top.

- Above the existing short windows additional glass-like features should be created, resembling window panes from a distance. The purpose is to re-establish an appearance in keeping with the original tall window treatment which the building originally possessed. Because glass windows typically look black from across the street, black plexiglas (or clear plexiglas spray-painted black on the inside surface) is a fairly convincing material. The plexiglas should be attached to the building's surface and trimmed around the edges with 1" x 4" clear pine boards. To look more realistic, it will be important to make sure that the horizontal bar between the real glass windows below and the plexiglas "windows" above are as thin and narrow as possible. Inasmuch as the plexi can be laid on top of the building surface itself, it can be located so that it practically touches the glass in the real panes below.



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- Below the two large storefront windows two panels should be added. These panels should be made of exterior grade “MDO” plywood, which is covered with a special smooth surface making it highly resistant to cracking or peeling. The panel would be framed with 1" x 3" pine boards, with cove mouldings along the inside edges with the plywood surface. This MDO plywood is also a good material for covering the “T-111” siding which now covers most of the storefront area.
- Choosing colors is always a matter of preference, but one recommendation would be for the trim to be

painted a very dark green (sometimes called “Essex Green”). The flat building surface could be painted to match the sandstone block below the brick building pier on the left corner of the structure. Those two colors would go together extremely well. That sandstone paint could also be applied to the several sandstone blocks that were used as masonry trim pieces, since painted red. If a third color is within the budget, the upstairs window sashes (and the window trim downstairs) could be painted the same sandstone color. The third color would really make the building look extremely special.

Before



After



Case Study Three

Village Center Streetscape Improvements, Little Valley, NY

As part of the County Visioning Project, Village officials in Little Valley requested that the central area of their community be studied with respect to practical streetscape improvements which could be implemented relatively quickly and easily, and which would produce long-range benefits to be enjoyed by future generations of residents, visitors, and businesspeople.

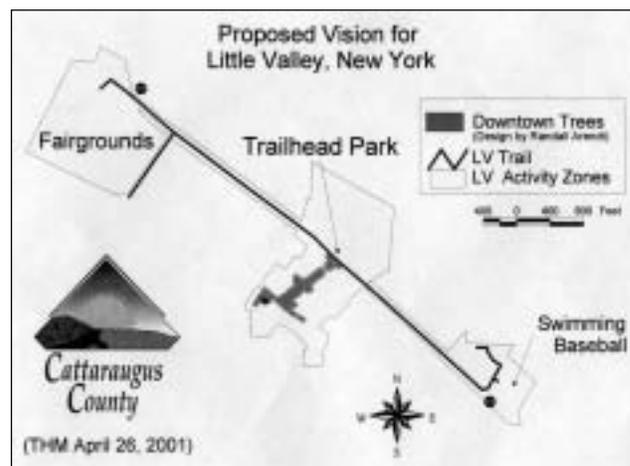
Coincidental with this study was the decision to remove the flowering ornamental trees that had been planted along Main Street about twenty years ago, due to damage caused by a virulent blight that had impaired the health of those trees, killing many in a very short time. During that same period Village officials also decided to enhance the visual appearance of their downtown by purchasing and installing a number of new lightposts with a historic design.

A careful analysis of the Main Street situation generated the idea of not only replacing the diseased trees with hardier varieties that would grow taller and cast more shade during the hot summer months, but also supplementing those replacement trees with additional ones planted in the middle of the large open paved area covered by this very wide thoroughfare, which measures fully 60 feet from curb to curb.

This idea was discussed with Village officials, whose thoughts and observations were incorporated into the final recommendation, illustrated here. Extremely useful information was provided by Bob Milks, Public Works Director, who helped to shape the final layout with his

local insights and detailed knowledge of underground utility locations. The recommended planting design includes a central median island with parallel parking spaces along both sides, complementing other parallel parking spaces along the curbs in front of the stores.

The principal idea underlying this design recommendation was that a third line of trees, planted down the center of this extremely wide street, would be necessary to fill the large “celestial space” existing between the opposing storefronts, which are situated about 100 feet



apart. And filling more of that big space was considered necessary to recreating a traditional village streetscape, of the type that historically featured tall stately shade trees arching over narrower streets, often forming canopy effects. This street ends at a major new entrance to a \$1.5 million, 12-mile trail system which is being constructed by a non-profit community group.

Additional elements of the shade tree planting program include reinforcing the traditional storefront “building line” in locations where the original buildings no

longer exist. These empty lots should also be bordered, along the sidewalk’s edge, with a visual screen about 42 inches tall, such as a dense hedge or a picket fence. The tree planting and screening ideas are recommended not only along Main Street but also along Park Street and that segment of Rock City Street between Park and Main.

Several tree species will be selected by Village officials from a list of varieties determined to be hardy in this climatic zone, and capable of withstanding the typical stresses accompanying urban street situations. The list of species recommended for their consideration include the following, of which a mixture is suggested, to avoid a situation in which another blight could infect the entire planting, as happened previously, before the downside of relying on a single species was fully appreciated.

- Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)
- Green Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)
- Green Vase Japanese Zelkova
(*Zelkova serrata* “Green Vase”)
- Greenspire Littleleaf Linden
(*Tilia cordata* “Greenspire”)
- Chinese Elm, Lacebark Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*)
- Shademaster Honeylocust
(*Gleditsia triacanthos* “Shademaster”)
- Bloodgood London Planetree
(*Platanus x acerifolia* “Bloodgood”)
- Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*)

