

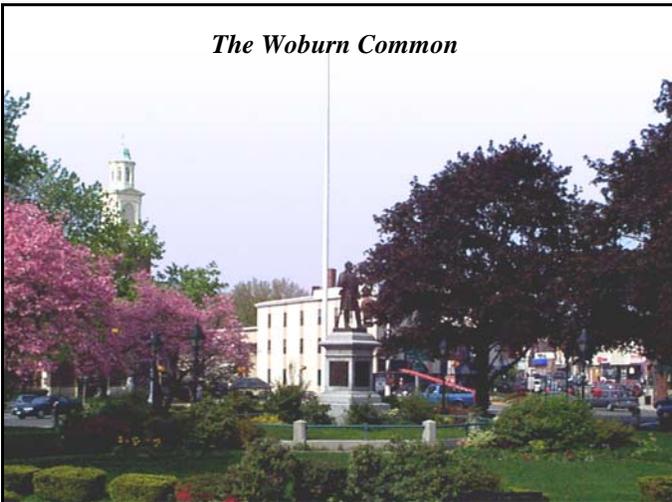
# Woburn Square Revitalization Plan

## Streetscape Guidelines

**I. Introduction:** Woburn Square has long been the civic and commercial center of Woburn. The City's traditional downtown lies at the intersection of most of Woburn's major arteries, including Main Street, Montvale Avenue, Winn Street, Pleasant Street and Salem Street. At the center of the Square, forming the literal hub itself, is Woburn Common. This 18,000 square foot, triangular shaped park has been set aside as public open space since the founding of the Town of Woburn in 1642. At the center of the Common is a monument with a bronze infantry figure, commemorating the citizens of Woburn who served in the Civil War. The monument, dedicated in 1869, has long been the central focal point of the park. Surrounding the Civil War Memorial are additional memorials to the veterans who served in the American Revolution, the Spanish American War, both World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In 1999, a new memorial was added to the Common, honoring the women of Woburn who served the country in each of its conflicts.

Well landscaped and maintained by the City's Recreation Commission, the Common is the center of what is essentially a busy traffic rotary, and is the visual focal point of Woburn Square. Throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall, there are always plantings in bloom, providing color and enchantment for commuters and shoppers alike. City Hall, the Woburn District Court, and several churches and lending institutions all face the Common. The Common continues its long tradition as a place for community celebrations.

Geographers often talk about a concept called the "identity of place." A great many important elements contribute to this identity, which define the history and culture of a community, creating a sense of shared background and experience, and thus connectivity, among its members. Among those critical elements are the important, unique landmarks of a community. Woburn



*The Woburn Common*

Common is undoubtedly one of the central such landmarks of Woburn, along with the nearby Woburn Public Library, the first library designed by the famed 19<sup>th</sup> Century architect, H.H. Richardson, now designated a historic landmark. The identity of place, in which these public landmarks play such a major part, is important to everyone in the community, because the sense of place, the idea of "home," is also a critical defining component of every individual's sense of personal identity.

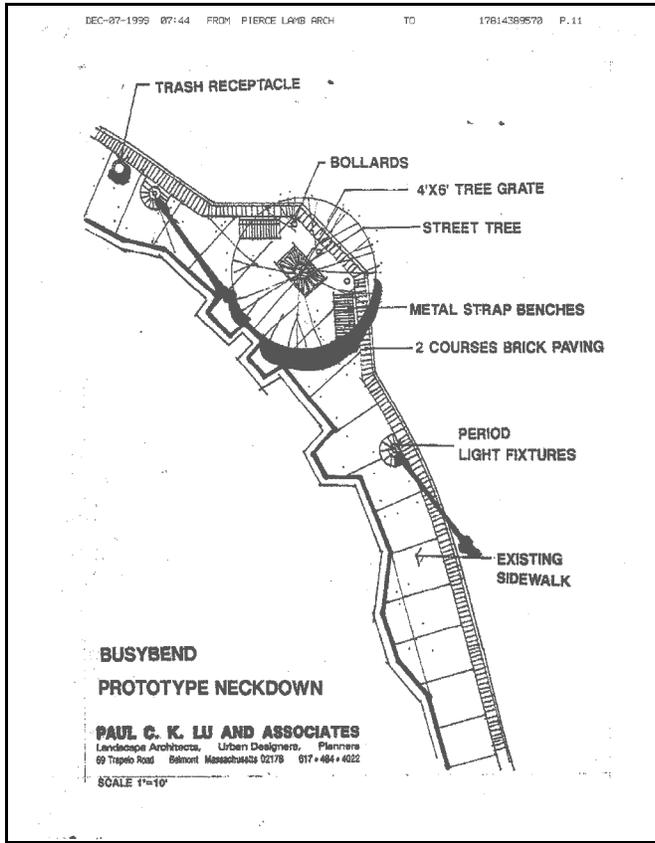
While the Woburn Common remains an attractive centerpiece, in recent decades, the commercial side of Woburn Square has clearly stumbled, as the City's residents have chosen to patronize newer, more modern shopping centers for the purchase of their desired goods, services, and entertainment. As with most of the nation's older centers, Woburn Square has gradually experienced rising vacancy, and increasing deterioration in its buildings and infrastructure. Today, however, there is clear consensus among Woburn's citizens that Woburn Square should remain the essential civic and commercial hub of the City of Woburn. To this end, the Woburn Redevelopment Authority (WRA) and the Committee to Revitalize Downtown Woburn (DRC) have formed the Woburn Square Partnership, to bring together local government, lenders, merchants, civic groups, and concerned citizens to plan a strategy for downtown revitalization. The Partnership is working together to improve the downtown, and to change the image of Woburn Square from that of an obsolete anachronism, to that of a creative, vibrant, and unique commercial center. To guide this redevelopment effort, the WRA/DRC Partnership has prepared and adopted the Woburn Square Revitalization Plan, which proposes an ambitious two year program of physical improvements, business development, and promotional activities.

A central activity of the Woburn Square Revitalization Plan is the eventual installation of new streetlighting and other streetscape improvements throughout the downtown area. These improvements will help extend the positive identity of place now enjoyed by the Woburn Common throughout the commercial downtown, and link those commercial blocks with the Common's central focal point. This is a critical step, as the overall appearance of the downtown has proven to be a major deterrent to the recruitment of new businesses. In addition, a new pedestrian plaza/accessway, planned for a location immediately across from the Common, will serve to link the Common, both visually and directly, with the Walnut Street Municipal Parking Lot, the largest and most central parking facility in Woburn Square.

The streetscape improvements will be costly, and as a result will be implemented in stages, as funds can be raised through the private fundraising efforts of the Downtown Committee, from state and local highway funds available to the City of Woburn, and through grants obtained from other public sources. Since the improvements will be installed incrementally, it is critical that a design program be adopted from the beginning of the effort, to provide a uniform template for the purchase and installation of equipment, furnishings, and improvements over time. In order to create that template, the WRA and the DRC undertook the Busy Bend Design Project, through which comprehensive storefront façade, streetscape, and parking design guidelines could be developed which could later be applied throughout the downtown. The WRA retained the team of Pierce Lamb Architects and Paul C.K. Lu and Associates to assist the Partnership in completing the design program. These guidelines are the result of that effort.

A statement from the streetscape guidelines of the Town of Lexington summarizes a point which is also very relevant to Woburn Square. "Street furniture need not be overly 'historic' – the objective is not to reproduce 1775, 1875, or 1975- but should have a visual character which fits in with both the historic and contemporary aspects of the Town's character and pedestrian scale."

**II. Sidewalk Treatment:** In general, the roadway and sidewalk surfaces throughout Wo-



burn square are in good condition, having been replaced by the Department of Public Works over a period beginning in 1993, and completed by late 1996. However, throughout most of the downtown, the sidewalk widths are eight feet or less, which do not provide adequate space for the installation of tree wells, public benches, trash receptacles, or other public furnishings. The Busy Bend design consultant has proposed the construction of neckdowns or “bump-outs,” which would project 8 to 10 feet into the right of way, not directly obstructing existing travel lanes, and would be between 12 and 18 feet in width. This additional sidewalk area would eliminate one on-street parking space for each bump-out, but would effectively serve several purposes. As a traffic calming measure, particularly at crosswalk locations, the distance pedestrians needed to negotiate would be shortened, and the



sidewalk “safe haven” would be extended further into the right of way. Each bump-out would also accommodate a new street tree, two metal slatted benches, lighted bollards, and other streetscape improvements. Bump-out locations will be determined on a block by block basis, after consultations and negotiation with the City Engineer and the business proprietors and building owners who would be impacted by the improvement. The sketch plan above shows a typical section of sidewalk, with the bump-out or neckdown.

As new streetlighting is installed, it will be necessary to sawcut the sidewalk edge behind the curbing in order to install new “sweep” service connections from the pole base to the secondary power lines in the street. These saw cuts will be completed with sufficient width to allow for the installation of two courses of brick pavers as new sidewalk trim. The sidewalk would have to be carefully sawcut all along the perimeter, with the new brick trim installed after the new pole bases, etc. were first installed. Otherwise, the existing sidewalks will remain intact.

**III. Fixtures and Equipment:** The specific fixtures and equipment to be specified include:

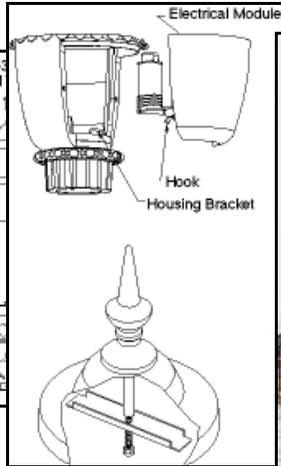
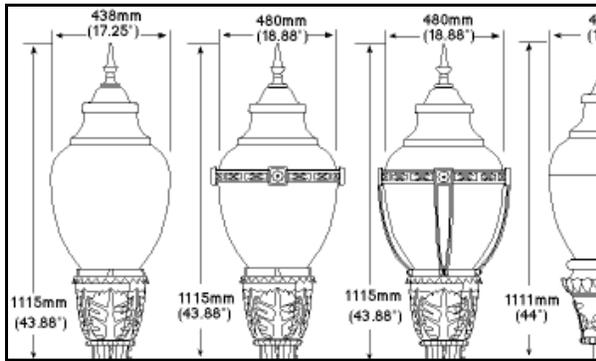
- Luminaire and posts for the sidewalk area,
- Benches,
- Trash receptacles,
- Bollards,
- Tree guards and grates, and
- Planters.
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**1. Streetlighting:** The current downtown streetlighting was installed around 1980, as part of a program of Urban Systems improvements. The concrete poles are now in very deteriorated condition, and must be replaced. Many of the poles are leaning, and some pole bases show stress cracks, indicating serious structural problems. The single largest streetscape improvement activity is the replacement of the existing, deteriorated highway style cobra-head fixtures with 65 new, traditional style streetlighting fixtures, more in keeping with the overall goal of producing a more historic, pedestrian scale and orientation for the downtown area. These fixtures will be placed within the sidewalk along eleven contiguous block faces shown on the map on the following page. Fixtures will be placed approximately 42 feet apart.



In addition to the physical condition of the lighting equipment, the nature and quality of the lighting generated by the existing 30 foot high, cobra-head style fixtures is also an issue. The light generated by these fixtures is more suited to a highway setting, than to a more pedestrian oriented commercial area. The height and spacing of the fixtures, approximately 30 feet in height and 100 feet apart, dictates that the light from the lamps is spread over a wide area. Upper floors, and the areas directly below the poles, are exposed to excessive light, while the light at street level in the mid-areas between poles is dissipated, and is actually underlit.

The relatively narrow width of Main Street through much of the Square, approximately 44 feet



*Washington Post luminaire without ribbing. Base is not Richmond style base.*

curb to curb, allows for greater flexibility in streetlighting design. Lighting fixtures could be spaced closer together, at a substantially lower height, with an effective radius for the general area of lighting of between 20 to 30 feet. This would be adequate for traffic safety, and allow for a fixture and lamp which is more pedestrian friendly, and provides for reduced glare and more evenly distributed illumination at the sidewalk level. The exact locations and separation of the streetlights will be determined through a lighting study, to be completed as part of the construction design.

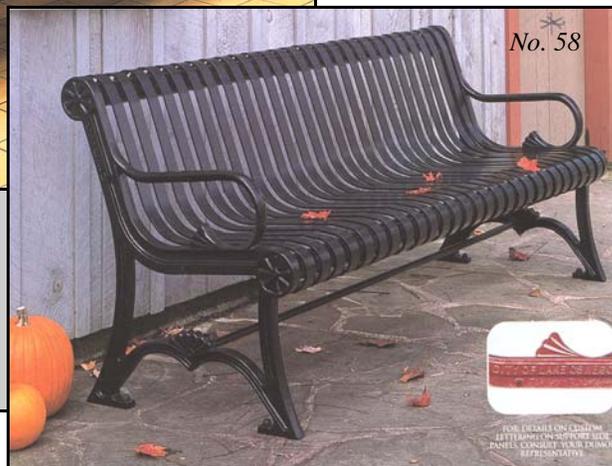
The fixture selected by the WRA and the Downtown Committee is the Washington Postlite Series, prismatic glass acorns from the Holophane Outdoor Architectural Lighting, Inc. This light will accept up to 400 watt high pressure sodium, metal halide, mercury vapor, or incandescent lamps,



and are recommended for a mounting height of between 12 and 22 feet. This will allow great flexibility in establishing the exact nature of the lighting color and intensity. The light comes in three levels of decoration. A relatively unique feature of this luminaire is the



brass finish of the finial, banding, medallions, and ribbing.



The selected light pole is a cast iron fluted colonial post and base from Sternberg Lanterns, Inc., Richmond Style No. 4900LP.

The estimated cost of the fixture (decorative style with band, medallions, and ribs) with

pole is \$2,800 each.

**2. Benches:** The bench selected by the WRA and the Downtown Committee has already been employed in several locations within the Woburn Common, and in other areas of the downtown. This is a traditional style metal strap bench, DuMor, Inc. No. 58, for the sidewalk neckdowns, and the comparable wooden slatted version, DuMor, Inc. No. 57 for the plaza area. The wooden version has been selected for the plaza because the wooden slats provide more comfort in extremes of temperature. The metal bench costs \$847 each unit, the wooden version \$572.

**3. Trash Receptacles:** Two DuMor trash receptacles have been selected- the steel strap No. 42, 32 gallon capacity, and the No. 24, also 32 gallon, which are steel with wood straps. The latter are proposed for the plaza area, to complement the wooden slatted benches. The No. 42 is priced at \$600 each, the No. 24 at \$740.

The receptacles have a flared design which is carried through in the design of the tree guard and metal planter, shown below.

**4. Bollards:** The selected bollard is a cast iron Sternberg Model No. 230LB, to match the lamp post. The bollard is 28" in height, and is manufactured with an acrylic lens to accommodate an interior lighting fixture. The bollard is priced at \$300 each.

**5. Tree Guards and Grates:** The DuMor Model No. 108 tree guard is slatted to match the other furnishings. Two cast iron grates are specified: a 6' x 6' Neenah R-8718, with a 1/4 inch slot, and a 4' x 6' Neenah R-8811, with a 3/8 inch slot. The larger grate is priced at \$1,115 each, the smaller at \$506.

**7. Planters:** The DuMor No. 114 is a flared, steel strap design which matched the trash receptacles, approximately 48" in diameter, with a polyethylene liner. The standard No. 114 is priced at \$495.



The above streetscape elements, taken together, provide a unified look which is traditional in style, and yet will still complement well the range of historic architectural styles found in Woburn Square, from the colonial style of the T.C. Jewelers building, the Victorian Woolworth Block, to the Art Deco Café Amante building. Once the streetscape improvements for the entire downtown are completed, these design elements will provide the common theme which will connect



the various commercial storefronts, public institutions, parking facilities, and the Woburn Common together into a unified whole.