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Chain Drugstore Development: An Exploration of Design and Regulation in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts

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Abstract

This research project explores the development practices of chain drugstores and the effects that these developments have on traditional downtowns in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The study first explores the evolution of the pharmaceutical industry and identifies the existing competitive nature of the drug market. The study evaluates chain drugstores' aggressive growth strategies and standard prototypes for building and site design.

Windshield survey of Walgreens drugstores in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts provided insight as to the chain's common development practices. This method identified the standard prototype building designs and signage that the drugstores use to minimize costs and maximize efficiency. It was determined that this practice of locating "cookie-cutter" stores in older downtown settings commonly disrupts the existing scale and architectural character of older commercial districts.

Innovative planning concepts that promote better design such as downtown vision plans supported by zoning codes, design review and historic districts are explored to show the regulatory measures and negotiating strategies that are available to communities interested in preventing homogeneous chain drugstore development. In addition, case studies of three communities that integrated better models for chain drugstores into their traditional downtown settings are evaluated as precedents.

The final chapter of the study focuses on community elements that are key to assure successful integration of chain drugstore design. These include strong design regulations, adamant citizen support and monitoring, and consistent enforcement, which ensures that the chain drugstores carry out the community's established design standards.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter One

The Chain Drugstore Phenomenon

Introduction

Chain drugstore corporations such as Walgreens, CVS and RiteAid are building new stores at an increasing rate to meet the country's growing demands for pharmaceutical services. Rite Aid's 1997 annual report cites three factors that drive the fast-paced growth of the drugstore industry: 1) an aging U.S. population; 2) pharmaceuticals extending life expectancy; and 3) the rise of managed health care. Due to this trend, independent drugstores are finding that they cannot compete with the unusually low prices that chains offer. Anne Stillman addresses this issue in *Better Models for Chain Drugstores* by stating that, " as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) reduce prescription drug reimbursement rates to record lows, only the biggest chains with the largest market share can compete effectively with the HMOs' business" (Stillman 1999).

The three top chain drugstore retailers in the United States are currently Walgreens, CVS and Rite Aid, with Eckerd trailing closely behind. There are several ways to measure the success of these stores and each one is a national leader in the drugstore industry for specific reasons. If compared by the rate of sales, Walgreens is the leader with $25 billion in sales in fiscal 2001. CVS came to a close second with $22 billion. Rite Aid closed at $15 billion and Eckerd at $13 billion. By another measurement, prescriptions, CVS is the largest, filling 12 percent of the nation's prescriptions in 2001, which estimates to 1 out of 9 prescription refills. If compared based on the number of stores, CVS is the leader with approximately 4,100 stores

nationwide; Walgreens and Rite Aid are tied at approximately 3,600 stores and Eckerd is a distinct fourth at 2,600 stores. However, store numbers change rapidly based on the aggressive development strategies the chain corporations are continually implementing. For instance, more than 1,000 Walgreens were built in less than three years, averaging almost one store a day (National Trust for Historic Preservation 2001). Similarly, a comparison of Walgreens reported store numbers in December 31, 2001 (3,618 stores) and February 28, 2001 (3,678 stores), indicates that 60 new stores were built in this window of time. Two new Walgreens stores were built in Massachusetts alone during this two-month period (Walgreens 2002).

Context

The chain drugstore formula for development commonly uproots blocks of urban core buildings for new buildings and larger parking lots. If unregulated, this can result in the loss of assets that give a town or city unique historical character and eventually leaves a community with little or no self-identity. Stillman describes that "corporate chains have largely supplanted independently owned drugstores and are imposing large, single-story, characterless architecture and oversized parking lots on America's beloved Main Streets, bulldozing historic buildings that get in the way" (Stillman 1999).

This condition is alarmingly evident in New England cities and towns that have distinctive town centers characterized by buildings and spaces that reflect the way of life of an earlier period. Characteristics include architectural and historical integrity of buildings and the intimate scale of streetscapes, green spaces and building walls that lend themselves to pedestrian activity. The formula for chain drugstores disrupts this pattern

and threatens the self-identity of these places that are so important to our country's early history.

Many traditional New England cities and towns are or will be faced with the dilemma of chain store development in their communities. These places have a physical composition that conflicts with the standard formula of chain drugstore retailers. Although many cities and towns want these developments for the tax base and convenience, many people disagree with the low standards of development these retailers incorporate when unregulated. This condition fosters lengthy development processes characterized by disagreement and undesired outcomes.

There is a lack of understanding in many cities and towns as to what retailers need as opposed to what they initially ask for in their proposals. Similarly there is typically a lack of consensus among people as to how and where retailers should develop in their communities. Many municipalities are unprepared for these battles and lack the appropriate plans and regulations to sympathetically integrate these developments into their environments. This commonly results in developments that exacerbate sprawl conditions and are geared toward automobile users. They are characterized by large parking lots, oversized building footprints and disregard for green space, which contributes to an "Anywhere USA" atmosphere with little character that gives a New England town or city a sense of place.

This issue is of such importance that the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) listed the "corner of Main and Main" on their 1999 list of Most Endangered Places in the United States. They state on their website that "shoppers are coming back to Main Street – and national drugstore chains are following them. Identifying the heart

of downtown....as the prime target for massive expansion efforts, major chains have launched what some communities are calling 'the drugstore invasion.'" (NTHP 2002) Similarly, the NTHP northeast regional office has led an initiative to address this trend and offers assistance and advocacy literature on the issue.

Many examples of these phenomena can be found throughout Rhode Island and Eastern Massachusetts. These locations have been selected as case studies for their importance in containing many characteristically traditional New England town centers. Walgreens has been selected as the target for case studies for its relevance as a leader in the drugstore industry.

Walgreens

Walgreens is the leader in sales in the drugstore industry, with more than $22.2 billion in sales in fiscal 2000, generated by 3,165 stores in 43 states and Puerto Rico (Walgreens 2000). A major component of their corporate philosophy is customer convenience. They build their stores to accommodate the prominent category of customer traffic in the location they want to build in. Usually, this type is the automobile user. As a result, the chain drugstore formula for development is characterized by stores designed to accommodate the automobile user with easy access points to large parking lots that compromise pedestrian movement and in proximity to other amenities which usually dictates locations in or near town or city centers. Walgreens favors freestanding units as opposed to strip shopping center locations. They pioneered the use of the drive-through-service prescription window (drive-thru), an innovation quickly emulated by the rest of the industry. Strategies highlighted on the company's website include locating

stores at "major intersections," while "ample parking and easy in-and-out access" are termed "mandatory." In a December 1998 *New York Times* article Walgreen's CEO dubbed these preferred locations the "corner of Main and Main." Walgreen's store prototype in 1998 was 14,000 square feet, and of the 304 stores that opened nation wide, almost one third were relocations of existing stores to larger spaces (Stillman 1999). Walgreen's chain competitors such as CVS and Rite-Aid have responded by increasing their store sizes through similar strategies of relocating and building new larger stores in town centers.

Objectives and Research Method

Objectives: A key objective of this study is to reach a better understanding of the nationwide phenomenon mentioned in the above paragraphs. To meet this objective, the study looks at the needs of the drugstore corporation and its developer; identifies their reasons for incorporating certain elements in their standard prototypes that are considered detrimental to traditional New England downtowns; evaluates the results of chain drugstore development in communities with unsuitable regulations or without regulations; identifies key regulatory tools and negotiating measures that communities can use to have more control over commercial chain development; and explores the practices of several communities that have incorporated proactive measures to achieve more well-integrated chain drugstore development. This collection of knowledge allows attainment of the main objective: an exploration of the flexibility of chain drugstore corporations in terms of site and building design. This knowledge can be transferred to

communities that are looking to incorporate requirements for better designs of chain drugstore development.

Method: The selection of one chain drugstore allowed for the study of the corporation's strategies for development, typical design formula and identification of stores that deviate from that standard. Walgreens was selected due to their role as national leader in sales and because they typically prefer to build stores with larger building and site footprints than the other competitors. As indicated, all of the chains have rapid physical development strategies, and the leader today could become a close second tomorrow. Additionally, regional competitors such as Brooks Pharmacy outweigh national competitors such as Rite Aid and Eckerds in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. Walgreens stores in the specified geographic area lead over the regional competitors.

Data for this study was collected primarily using three methods. First, intensive research on current events related to this issue was conducted using recent publications from professional organizations such as the American Planning Association and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, periodical resources such as the Providence Journal and the Boston Globe and literature on chain franchise design.

Second, windshield survey was conducted as a means of identifying typical design characteristics of Walgreens stores in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. For the purpose of this study, Southeastern Massachusetts is limited to those cities and towns south of Interstate Highway 90 to the north; touching Interstate Highway 95 including Needham and Norwood on the west; bounded by the Atlantic Ocean to the east; and bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the state of Rhode Island to the

south (Figure 1.1). As of February 28, 2002, Walgreens had 15 stores in Rhode Island and 88 stores in Massachusetts. Approximately 20 percent of the 88 Walgreens stores in Massachusetts are located in the southeastern region. For that reason, 20 percent of the total number of stores were surveyed with the requirement that they be located in the southeastern portion of the state. The specific stores were selected through stratified sampling. In other words, a random sample was selected from the subpopulation of Walgreens stores located in Southeastern Massachusetts (Neuman 2000). Thirteen of the fifteen Rhode Island Walgreens were surveyed, with stores in Woonsocket and Middletown excluded due to their lack of geographic proximity to the other stores (Figure 1.2). In total 31 stores were surveyed in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts (Table 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Southeastern Massachusetts Study Area.

Figure 1.2 Rhode Island Walgreens Stores.

A store rating system was developed to compare stores' physical exterior characteristics to one another. This system was developed with the notion that New Urbanist Theory, which promotes walkable communities with residential neighborhoods

Table 1.1 Store Listing - Selected Walgreens Stores in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts

Store #*	Rhode Island Stores	Store #*	Massachusetts Stores	Store #*	Massachusetts Stores
1	700 Central Ave. Pawtucket	14	369 Plymouth Ave. Fall River	27	969 Main St. Weymouth
2	100 Broad St. Pawtucket	15	838 Pleasant St. New Bedford	28	620 Middle St. Weymouth
3	1074 Mineral Spring Ave. Providence	16	1737 Acushnet New Bedford	29	757 Gallivan Road Dorchester
4	25 Putnam Pike Johnston	17	40 Broadway Taunton	30	416 Warren St. Roxbury
5	295 Academy Ave. Providence	18	196 Pleasant St. Attleboro	31	Corner of Harvard and Aspinwall streets Brookline
6	354 Admiral St. Providence	19	1478 Highland Ave. Needham		
7	533 Elmwood Ave. Providence	20	951 Providence Hwy. Norwood		
8	1010 Park Avenue. Cranston	21	595 Washington St. Canton		
9	1387 Plainfield St. Johnston	22	413 Washington St. Stoughton		
10	1763 Broad St. Cranston	23	Corner of Pleasant and West streets Brockton		
11	2399 Warwick Ave. Warwick	24	North Main St. Randolph		
12	1000 Division St. E. Greenwich	25	418 Quincy Ave. Quincy		
13	3336 Post Rd. Warwick	26	550 Adams St. Quincy		

* Store Numbers Correspond to those in Table 1.2 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

connected to and mixed in with commercial uses, is preferable. "As planners and designers, we face the challenge of creating and maintaining communities which are affordable, efficient, scaled to human proportions, and environmentally sound...we should realize that our past is usable, that it can provide concrete examples of the kinds of communities that provide the services and pleasures of civilization. When we examine what has happened to our urban pattern in the last fifty years, we see a trend towards decentralization [sprawl]. Although we as people and as a society have changed with time, it is evident that we are still drawn toward urban places. We still have a need for community, for the amenities such places provide, and for places where many people meet, congregate, do business and play" (Nelessen 1994). Chain drugstore corporations have identified with this need and are migrating back from the outskirts of town back into urban centers. However, their focus remains on automobile users, rather than the people living and working nearby. Their prototype signs, colors and building form are strategically used to be recognizable to out of town visitors. The chain drugstores prefer to draw automobile user business more so than to respect the existing urban form of their preferred downtown locations. Their standard design overlooks the consistent street edge and first-floor commercial activity that encourages pedestrians to visit more than one store. The chain drugstores are designed for easy, quick access for cars. The stores will typically obstruct the path of a person walking to the store from a neighboring office building, with many curb cuts, large surface parking lots and few or no sidewalks.

As a result of this phenomena, the rating system (Table 1.2) was designed to grant lower scores to those stores with pedestrian considerations such as connected, unobstructed sidewalks and elements that respect existing urban fabric such as interesting

Table 1.2 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

Categories	Rating Classification	Rhode Island Store Numbers*													Massachusetts Store Numbers*																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Store Orientation																																
	Facing 1 street wall	0																0		0	0						0			0		
	Corner facing 2 busy streets		0			0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0						0	0		0	0			0
	Corner facing 1 major street/1minor street			0	0			0									0					0	0	0						0	
	In between 2 parallel streets								0																							
Setbacks	Minimal or no setback from street=0	0				0	0		0	0		0		0	0			0		0									0		0	0
	Large setback from street=10		10	10	10			10			10		10			10	10		10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10		
Intersections	Major intersection		0		0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0			0			0			0	0		0	0			0
	Minor intersection			0				0									0						0	0						0	
	No intersection	0							0									0		0	0						0			0		
Relationship to neighboring buildings	Attached=0	0											0					0		0		0	0				0			0	0	0
	Freestanding=10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10		10		10			10	10	10		10	10			
Street Type	Main Street	0		0				0	0								0	0		0	0	0		0			0			0	
	Corner of Main and Main		0		0	0	0			0	0			0	0	0			0						0		0	0			0
	Stip Mall/Area with strip malls											0	0									0	0			0				0		
Store Design																																
Building Prototype	Old prototype= 15		15	15	15	15	15	15		15	15	15			15	15	15		15			15		15		15						
	New prototype= 10																				10				10				10			
	Variation=0	0							0				0	0				0		0										0	0	0
	Building reuse=-5								-5											-5			-5				-5	-5				
Roof Design	Pitched=5		5	5	5	5	5	5		5	5	5			5	5	5		5			5		5		5						
	Flat=5	5							5				5								5		5		5			5	5	5	5	
	Alternative=0													0				0		0						0						0
Store Walls	Designed walls= 0 for each																	0												0	0	
	Blank walls= 10 for each	20	10	20	20	10	20	20	30	20	10	10	20	10	20	30	20		20	10	20	20	20	20	10	20	10	20	10	20		
	If designed walls,																															
	Variation in elevation=0													0					0	0									5		0	0
	No variation in elevation=5 for each	10	15	10	10	5	10	5		5	5	10	5		10	15	10	5			10	10	10	10	5	10	5	10		10		
Building Materials	Natural building materials=0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Synthetic building materials=10																						10									
Building Colors	Neutral colors=0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
	Bright colors=10																														10	

Table 1.2 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

Categories	Rating Classification	Rhode Island Store Numbers*													Massachusetts Store Numbers*																	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Store Design (cont'd.)																																
Fenestration	Fenestration with displays =0																															0
	Fenestration with no displays =5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
	Infilled fenestration=10													10																		
Scale	To scale with surroundings=0	0			0				0	0		0		0	0			0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0			0	0		0
	Not to scale with surroundings=10		10	10		10	10	10			10					10	10					10				10	10			10	
Parking Orientation																																
	Rear=0																															0
	Two rows in front of Store=10																															
	3+ rows in front of store=20					20	20			20		20	20	20	20		20					20	20			20	20			20	20	
	Rows beside store=5	5																5		5									5			5
	2+ rows wrapping store=15		15	15	15			15	15		15					15			15		15			15	15			15				
No. of Parking Spaces																																
	0-20 spaces=0																															
	20-40 spaces=10				10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10		10		10		10					10			10		10	10
	40+ spaces=20		20	20																					20						
	Shared parking=5	5											5			5		5		5		5	5	5			5		5	5		
	On-street parking=-5	-5				-5																										
Automobile Access																																
	2 drive ways with entrance/exit=10			10	10		10				10					10			10							10						10
	1 drive way with entrance/exit=5	5																5						5			5	5		5		
	2 drive ways, 1 entrance/ 1 exit=5																			5		5							5		5	
	More than 2 driveways=20		20			20		20	20	20		20	20	20	20		20				20		20			20						
Drive Thru	No=0	0							0				0					0		0			0				0	0			0	0
	Yes=10		10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	10		10	10	10	10		10		10	10		10	10	10			10	10		
Pedestrian Access																																
	Sidewalks with continuous access=0	0				0	0			0				0				0		0									0		0	0
	Sidewalks with fragmented access=5								5			5														5						
	Sidewalks only/no access to store=10		10	10	10			10			10				10	10	10		10			15	10	10	10		10	10		10		
	No sidewalks=20												20								20											
	Public transportation on site=0			0				0						0	0																	0
	Public transportation nearby=5		2			5	5				5	5	5					5	5	5	5					5	5		5	5	5	5	
	No public tranportation=15	15			15				15	15						15					15	15	15	15			15					
Landscaping																																
	Shrubs and trees=0		0	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0		0		0	0
	No shrubs or trees=10	10						10	10														10				10		10			

Table 1.2 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

Categories	Rating Classification	Rhode Island Store Numbers*													Massachusetts Store Numbers*																		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Landscaping (cont'd.)																																
Fencing	Natural materials (wood, iron)=0	0									0	0	0	0											0							0
	Standard (chainlink)=10																					10	10								10	
	No fencing=20		20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20					20	20	20	20	20	20	20			20		20	20	20	20	20		
Green Space	Extensive=0					0				0	0																					0
	Moderate=10	10	10	10	10		10	10				10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10			10	10	10	10				10	
	None=20								20													20	20					20	20	20		
Lighting	Designed=0			0										0			0	0														0
	Standard=10		10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10			10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
	None=15	15																														
Signage																																
Materials	Natural material=0													0																		
	Plastic=10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Lighting	Indirect lighting=0													0		10																0
	Neon=10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10		10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	
Design	Alternative design=0													0						0			0				0					
	Moderately altered standard design=10						10				10		10					10				10			10			10				10
	Standard design=20	20	20	20	20	20		20	20	20		20			20	20	20		20		20			20		20			20	20	20	
Freestanding Signs	To scale of surroundings=0								0	0		0		0	0		0		0		0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0		
	Larger scale than surroundings=10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10								10		10											10		10	
	Smaller scale than surroundings=-5										-5																					
	No Freestanding Sign=-10																			-10												-10
	Combined with other signs in shopping plaza=5												5									5					5					
Building Signs	To scale of surroundings=0	0			0	0			0	0	0	0	0	0	0				0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0		0
	Larger scale than surroundings=10		10	10			10	10								10	10	10		10							10				10	
Colors	Neutral colors=0						10																				0					
	Standard colors=10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10	10	5	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10		10	10	10	10	10
	Total	162	271	256	253	220	242	279	236	233	195	217	204	136	253	305	282	154	251	138	290	272	249	271	223	295	217	264	241	273	230	107

* Store Numbers Correspond to those in Table 1.1 Store Listing - Selected Walgrens in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts

façade treatments and similar materials, design and scale to other downtown buildings. Stores that incorporated more auto-oriented provisions such as drive-thru windows, no fenestration or unique façade treatment, large parking lots and few sidewalks accumulated higher scores. Some of the categories in the system such as store orientation and street type were given no rating and remained neutral. These categories were incorporated into the system to provide context for the rated classes. For example, if one was looking to see why a drugstore had a drive-thru, no sidewalks and three or more rows of parking in front of the store, yet it was considered to scale with its surroundings, one may look to the street type category to determine how this is possible and find that was in a strip mall.

This method for rating stores allowed for the identification of deviations from Walgreens standard formula for design. The evaluation forms were designed to show stores with the most divergence from the standard formula as having the lowest scores.

Case study comprised the third research method of this study. The rating system of the second method identified the two stores in Southeastern Massachusetts and one in Rhode Island. Case studies of those three best examples, determined by their lower scores in the rating system, were conducted to determine the reasons for the deviation in standard formula. This in-depth look included identifying the regulatory structure of the subject community and the extent to which the community negotiated with the Walgreens developer to obtain modifications to the standard drugstore design. These case studies provide interesting alternative designs. Their evaluation also provides a clue for other communities as to the regulatory tools and negotiating strategies that are the most successful in influencing and controlling the Walgreens developer.

Chapter Two

History of Pharmacy and Drugstores

Introduction

It order to assess the current development goals and strategies of chain drugstores, it is useful to understand the history and evolution of the drug industry. This provides insight into communities issues related to the current drug industry. These issues include the struggle of independent pharmacists to compete with the low prices of chain drugstores, the influence of managed healthcare, the increase of the United States elderly population and the return of chain drugstores' to downtown.

History

Vince Staten provides a detailed history of the evolution of the modern drugstore in his book, *Do Pharmacies Sell Farms?: A Trip Inside The Corner Drugstore*. He begins with the first image of a pharmacist that was painted approximately 14,000 years ago by a cave dweller in southwestern France. He follows with the first known prescription, which dates to 2100 B.C. in ancient Mesopotamia to the era of Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, who rejected the ancient school of ritualistic healing for the rational, empirical approach. Staten tributes the Greeks with assembling the first pharmaceutical guide and credits the English words pharmacy and apothecary to the Greek words *pharmakon*, meaning remedy and *apotheca*, meaning storeroom. He

continues with the Romans who created the first classification system for drugs. (Staten 1998.).

The Middle Eastern countries were the first to introduce a professional literature on pharmaceuticals. In the 9th century and again in the 11th century A.D. they compiled lists of formulas for preparing drugs. This resulted in a five-volume *Canon medicinae*, which united all known medical knowledge. The *Canon* was translated into Latin in the 13th century and was sold throughout Europe well into the 18th century. Cairo valued pharmacists to such an extent that they adopted a pharmaceutical code of ethics in the 13th century. This handbook provided that pharmacies should be clean and well stocked, with an inventory monitoring system to ensure that decaying products were replaced. The pharmacist was instructed to keep his profits moderate and "to have deep religious convictions, consideration for the poor and needy, a sense of responsibility and be careful and God-fearing." Arabs were also the first to license pharmacists and to have a permanent building for dispensing medicine. The first pharmacy shop opened in Baghdad around A.D. 775 and was called *dakakin al-sayadilah* (Staten 1998).

Through the 14th and 15th centuries, apothecaries in central Europe were part of the grocers' guild. This continued until Hippocrates theories were challenged in the 16th century by a Swiss physician who developed a medical basis for the mixing of chemical formulas. In 1614, James I of England gave apothecaries their own guild (Staten 1998).

The first pharmacy shops in America, which were commonly referred to as apothecaries, opened in the 17th century. Records have survived of a pharmacy shop operating in Boston in 1646 and another in New York in 1653. Most drugs of the 17th and 18th centuries were liquids or powders. In 1834, Frenchmen, F.A.B. Mothes and

J.G.A. Dublanc invented the soft gelatin capsule. Three years later a hard version of the capsule was patented in England. The Burroughs Welcome Company in England popularized the tablet form, beginning in the 1880s. These inventions made precise doses possible, which eventually led to the pharmacists change of role from drug maker to pill merchant. To illustrate, a broad knowledge of the compounding of medicines was still an essential skill for 80 percent of all prescriptions dispensed in the 1920s. By the 1940s that had declined to 26 percent and by 1971, it had fallen to 1 percent (Staten 1998).

The pharmaceutical industry took over the pill manufacturing process because of the boom in patent medicines. At this time, the patent medicine companies trademarked their brand names in order to ensure the receipt of benefits of their product. In 1894, the U.S. Pharmacopeia, the reference book for drugs, had no patent medicines. Yet ten years later it had hundreds. Following the lead of Rhode Island, which passed the first modern pharmacy law in 1870, by 1900, most states also had laws establishing requirements for licensing pharmacists (Staten 1998).

Chain drugstores arrived on the scene before the turn of the century with names such as Hegeman and Company, Charles Jaynes, Hall and Lyon and Cora Dow having franchises in New York City, Boston, Providence and Cincinnati. The arrival of the chain concept to the drugstore industry can be credited to two men: Louis K. Ligget and Charles R. Walgreen. Ligget founded the United Drug Company in 1907, and by 1930, he had 672 United Drugs stores (Staten 1998). Charles R. Walgreen paid $6000 in 1901 to purchase the Chicago drugstore at Cottage Grove and Bowen Avenues where he

previously worked as a pharmacist. By 1928 Walgreen's company had 185 stores with 75 percent in the Chicago area (Walgreens 2002).

Up until the 1950s and early 1960s, the corner drugstore, along with providing drugs and other healthcare products, was a community center for teenagers and adults. The focus of these stores was on reliable service, where the pharmacist might have provided gossip along with good medicinal advice. Staten describes the Corner Drug as the "cracker barrel" of the city where people lingered to catch up with neighbors on community affairs. They were built on Main Streets and busy intersections and were easily accessible to pedestrians who lived nearby (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Figure 2.1 The front of an American Drugstore, 1890, as displayed in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

Figure 2.2 Hook's Historical Drugstore and Pharmacy Museum has brought America's most important health and social center, The American Drugstore, into sharp focus with its millions of visitors. The furnishings in this ornate 19th century drugstore were used from 1849 to 1962 in the small Indiana town of Cambridge City. Today they display rare historical antiquities and tell a colorful story about the important role the community pharmacist and drug store have always played in peoples' lives. Courtesy of Hook's Discovery and Learning Center.

Chain drugstores were still the minor players prior to the 1950s. A 1947 survey by The National Association of Chain Drugstores found that only 4,655 of the total 52,809 drugstores in the United States were chains. However, while chains made up only 9 percent of drugstores in number, they accounted for almost 24 percent of sales. Chain drugstores grew more rapidly after World War II with Ligget's idea of the Rexall brand. Rexall drugstores started out as "independent financial units who agreed to purchase at least minimum amounts of Rexall products in exchange for special discounts, local and national advertising advantages and a distinctive window sign." At its peak in 1950, there were 559 Rexall-owned drugstores (Staten 1998).

By the 1950s, with drugstores new ability to offer lower prices and larger selections, service was no longer a priority. In 1950 Walgreens pioneered the transition from total clerk-service to self-service stores with a large pharmacy (Walgreens 2002). This concept revolutionized drugstores, where customers were encouraged to find their way through the store, find products themselves and bring them to a central cash register location. Drugstores became more than just pharmacies and began competing with other specialty stores. As Staten describes, the drugstore became "part department store, part hospital, part book nook and candy kitchen, part post office and short-order restaurant." The store managers were no longer the druggists, but corporate managers trying to increase sales and provide higher returns to their out-of-state corporations. Drugstores were no longer community centers, but shopping centers.

As a natural progression in the 1960s and 1970s, with the onslaught of urban renewal and the flight of many city dwellers to the suburbs, shopping plazas and mini strip malls began to appear in the suburbs to provide newly needed services. This

phenomenon persisted well into the 1980s. To contend, drugstores left their Main Street and downtown locations for suburban-style strip malls to catch the business of auto-dependent families visiting the anchor grocery or department store. However, the grocery stores began to incorporate new development strategies in the 1990s to compete with large department superstores such as Kmart and Wal-Mart who provided grocery products along with products you might find in hardware, clothing, auto-related, drug, and florist stores. Part of the grocery's development strategy evolved to include an in-store pharmacy. Most drugstore chains reacted by seeking to return to their former downtown locations such as busy intersections with high auto and pedestrian traffic volume. Suzanne Mead, Rite Aid vice president for corporate affairs, stated that "dominant corners in downtown areas and sites and major thoroughfares in so-called transitional areas - part residential, part commercial – are becoming particularly attractive. Our expansion strategy has moved more and more away from strip malls...we want to bring neighborhood drugstore services closer to the communities that benefit from them. And often that means building a store at Main and Main" (Goff 1997).

However, the stores now have very different demands such as more square footage to accommodate increasing product supply and larger parking lots to accommodate automobile users, which conflict with the scale and use of traditional downtowns. "The typical Rite Aid store is somewhat a-typical for Main and Main: a roughly 10,600 square foot box on a corner, set back 50 feet from the street, with a red, white and blue sign that would suffice in freeway settings. A drive-thru pharmacy allows patrons to fill prescriptions without leaving their cars" (Goff 1997). This conflict of will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Another effect of the chain drugstores' return to downtown is the survival or demise of independent neighborhood drugstores. Lisa Wormser noted in her 2002 article on the effects of chain drugstores that it is a combination of the drugstores and the HMOs that are hurting the independents. "Chains are not the only factor in affecting the independent drugstore's future. According to many pharmacists, the biggest threat to small pharmacies nationwide is not the chain drugstores so much as the advent of managed care, under which insurance companies pay substantially less for each prescription filled, and often refuse to deal with independent pharmacies" (Wormser 2001). With rising costs in healthcare and prescription medication, independent drugstores are finding it too difficult to compete with the low chain drugstore prices. On the other side, chains are also working very hard to individually gain control of the HMO market. CVS made such an attempt in 1997, which was summarized by Lisa Goff in a 1997 issue of Preservation News. "Now the chains, like CVS, which is based in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, are striking deals with HMOs to act as the sole approved provider of prescriptions" (Goff 1997).

Good service provided by the independents is continually falling a short second place to drugstores who can guarantee convenience, affordability, choice and accessibility. A study published by Ortho Biotech in 1999, surveyed almost 22,000 pharmacy customers nationwide. Sixty-four percent of participants said they had a prescription filled at a chain location in the most recent 12 months. Although consumers using independent pharmacies reported the highest level of satisfaction and those using chain drugstores reported the lowest level of satisfaction, the majority of participants reported that location is the number one reason customers cited for choosing a specific

pharmacy, followed by insurance acceptance. In other words, convenience was highly prioritized over good service and that in general, the participants would probably choose the neighboring Walgreens over the independent drugstore. As defined by the study, location meant more than where a store is situated; factors such as appearance and how easy it is to get in and out of the store were also important (Fleming, Jr. 1999). To support this evidence, "by 1998, corner drugstores were going out of business at the rate of four a day according to *The Economist"* (Staten 1998). Also, data from IMS Health shows the decline of independent drugstores, with 32,079 independents in 1990 and 20,736 in 1998 (Fleming, Jr. 2000).

Conclusion

In summation, by 1897, there were 39,885 drugstores serving a population of 70 million (about one store per 1,750 people). In the rush to accommodate the growing population of aging baby boomers, drugstores became more aggressive with their growth strategies with a total 54,515 drugstores serving a population of 260 million (one store per 4,770 people) in 1998 (Staten 1998). If you compare Fleming, Jr.'s 1998 statistic of 20,736 independents and Staten's 1998 statistic of 54,515 total drugstores, it is evident that independent drugstores no longer outnumbered chains (roughly 33,779 chain drugstores) by 1998. Chain drugstores, in their move back to downtown in proximity to existing independent drugstores and other chain drugstores, and their attempts to dominate the business of HMOs, are currently saturating the drug

Figure 2.3 Independent corner drugstore on Highland Avenue in Needham, Massachusetts. This store is located with a ¼-mile radius of both CVS and Walgreens drugstores.

market (Figure 2.3). Their current development practices of large, free-standing stores with front parking lots similarly disregards the existing contextual fabric of communities.

Chapter Three

Understanding Key Players: Walgreens Corporation and the Developer

Introduction

To have a more complete understanding of the chain drugstore development process, it is important to know the priorities and goals of both the chain drugstore corporation and the developer working with them. Certain strategies such as cookie cutter signage make projects more timely, and therefore cost effective for both entities. Developers will push communities to accept certain elements of proposals for these reasons. This process of understanding will make the developers reasons for adamantly requiring that certain design components be maintained less obscure to a community. This process also helps communities to develop alternative aesthetic means to reach similar monetary ends for the developer and the corporation alike. This provides for a more effective negotiating and regulatory process at the community level.

Walgreens Corporation

From 1990 to 2000, Walgreens Corporation focused their development strategy on building more stores in more locations with new products and services (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Walgreens Store Growth, 1990-2000.

	1990	2000
Total Stores	1,564	3,165
Freestanding Stores	155	2,118
24-hour Stores	55	690
1-hour Photo Stores	2	3,007
Drive-thru Pharmacies	1	1,990

Source: Walgreens 2000.

Walgreens primary strategy focuses on customer convenience. They seek to help customers save time through quick access to services and products. In designing stores, particular attention is paid to how fast people get into and out of the store or are served in the drive-thru pharmacy, how easily they find what they came to buy, and how well Walgreens reminds them of what they are forgetting to buy. Facilitating quick "in-and-out" shopping is key to store layout. Walgreens insists on store-to-store consistency, "where customers familiar with the layout of one Walgreens can easily find their way around another" (Walgreens 2000). Twenty-four hour stores, touch-tone prescription refills, flu shots and childhood immunizations, osteoporosis screening, cash machines, phone cards, clerk-served cosmetics and photo departments, rebate booklets and week-long ad prices are designed to provide customers convenience and to save time. This philosophy also guides their site layout and building design. Stores with easy access for motorists in central locations and with drive-thru pharmacies are preferable to increase this convenience factor.

Walgreens goal of being the national drugstore leader in providing convenience in service and product guides its aggressive growth strategy. This strategy includes:

- **Entering new markets.** Because prescription use rises with age, Walgreens has found it necessary to follow the "baby boomers" and to plan new stores in their future retirement locations, which include Florida, Texas, California, Arizona, Georgia and the Carolinas.
- **"Densing up" existing markets.** According to Walgreens President and Chief Operating Officer, Daniel W. Bernauer, "in the short-term, diluting sales by locating stores very close to one another usually causes a drop in sales. Long-

term however, as stores are added, overall sales in the market increase, while expenses are spread over a larger base and profitability increases."

- **Relocating and Remodeling.** Relocating and remodeling stores keeps the chain "fresh" according to Walgreens Chief Executive Officer, L. Daniel Jorndt. Their average store age is five-and-a-half years. They will either relocate their store to a more strategic location or remodel existing stores to increase square footage.
- **Investing highly in hi-tech store and distribution systems**. This drives service up and costs down.
- **Offering an online drugstore website** which is totally integrated with retail stores (Walgreens 2000).

Walgreens notes a particular development approach that differs most notably from its competitors. "Walgreens does not typically participate in the 'acquisition feeding frenzy'" or the practice of acquiring older stores and reusing them (Walgreens 2000). They pride themselves in having the ability to open new, freestanding locations with drive-thru pharmacies without incurring debt. They claim this method of expansion is "organic" and that these "carefully honed operations and well-financed growth" ensure long-term profitability (Walgreens 2000).

Walgreens plans to open 500 new stores a year over 10 years, with the goal of operating 6,000 by 2010. Walgreens President and Chief Operating Officer, David W. Bernauer claims that market research shows "there is room for more than 10,000 Walgreens across America." Walgreens holds the philosophy that an aggressive growth policy is the most accurate way to guarantee shareholders the increased dividends and stock splits that has occurred in every quarter since 1933 (Walgreens 2000). Walgreens

Chief Executive Officer, L. Daniel Jorndt explained how new stores impact earnings in Walgreens 2000 Annual Report. "New stores take two to three years to reach profitability. Currently there are more than 1,000 Walgreens stores less than three years old. Long-term, the Corporation is in an excellent position as the stores become profitable."

CVS, Walgreens chief national competitor, holds similar growth strategies to achieve control of the drug market. These growth strategies include:

- **Entering new markets**. CVS hopes to follow the "baby boomer" cohort as it reaches retirement age to places such as Florida, where they anticipate that their strong name recognition will attract this groups' business.
- **Adding stores with existing markets**. CVS seeks to grow in high-quality markets with substantial potential such as Chicago, the second largest drugstore market in the United States.
- **Relocating stores to more convenient, freestanding sites**. Relocating stores from inline shopping centers to higher-profile, freestanding, convenient, corner locations typically generates 25 to 35 percent higher front-end sales, improved margins and a better return on invested capital than the stores they replace. Nearly 40 percent of CVS stores are currently in freestanding locations, although they aim to reach 80 percent over the next five to seven years (CVS Procare 2000).

The similarities in the development approaches of the top chain drugstores in the United States confirms each chain's urgency to build as many stores as possible in as many locations as possible as they strive for market dominance and economic wealth.

The Developer

Brooks Pharmacy, a regional New England competitor, holds market criteria and location requirements for developers. This criteria is a very good illustration of the guidelines that building developers use to create stores that are the physical embodiment of the convenience concept.

Market Criteria:

- Urban locations with a population of 15,000 within a 1-mile radius.
- Suburban locations with a population of 15,000 within a 2-mile radius.
- Rural locations with a trading area of 10,000.

Location Requirements:

- Strong retail flow.
- Excellent ingress and egress from signalized intersection.
- Excellent visibility.
- Prefer corner locations.
- Pylon signage.
- 35-60 parking spaces.
- Maneuverability for 50 cars with parking lots.
- Delivery vehicles.
- New or existing building.
- Freestanding.
- Pad site or endcap in convenient shopping centers (Brooks Pharmacy 2002).

Walgreens 2000 annual report describes drugstore needs in terms of site location. "From the beginning, we knew a good corner meant good business. Location, location, location

still rules our site selection strategy. We are the corner grocery, convenience store and drugstore. We operate stores in the neighborhoods of nearly 95 million Americans." Developers will go to great lengths to find sites in prime locations to attract the interest of the chain drugstores.

Elisa Cavalier, General Council to the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation has worked with several communities in opposition of chain drugstores. She reported on the role of local developers in the process of siting and building new chain drugstores at the 2001 National Preservation Conference session, "Corporate Drugstore Proliferation: A Prescription for Dialogue." She described that in the campaign to better regulate chain drugstores, it is key to understand the major players in a project. In the construction of new drugstores, local developers drive the deal. The developer will choose a site based on guidelines set by the drugstore corporation, such as those of Brooks Pharmacy mentioned above, or the developer will be asked by the drugstore to select a feasible site in a specific target market area. The developer then brings the proposed site to the corporation for approval, negotiates with the community for improvements to the prototype design and finally oversees construction of the building. This is a "turnkey" development because developers will literally turn the keys over to the drugstore corporation by long-term lease or by selling the store to the chain.

Much happens in planning of the store before the developer approaches a city or town with a proposal. The developer will typically purchase options on a property prior to the city or town approval process. The public does not have input or awareness of the project until plans are filed with the city or town.

It is in the best monetary interest of the developer to build the store as quickly as possible. Developers receive approximately $150,000 to $200,000 per drugstore and they usually receive payment after they "turnkey." However, if they receive a final approval on a land development plan or a building permit from the city or town within a short timeframe, the drugstore corporation will reward them with an upfront payment as a certain percentage of the final fee. For this reason, developers will try for the most basic design in order to save time and cut costs. The following list describes characteristics of site and building design that are favorable to the chain drugstore developer.

- *Topographically flat sites.* Large, flat sites for large building footprints and parking are necessary to the developer. They avoid sloped parking lots and will build retaining walls to create a flat site.
- *Easy access.* This concept contributes to the convenience factor of drugstores. A corner site or a site with easy access from main arterials is preferred. They also prefer to be at a traffic light with no turning restrictions. They prefer sites with accessible driveways on the "coming home" side of the road, to attract evening shoppers on their way home from work. Chain developers will frequently make an inflated offer for purchase of their preferred locations.
- *Drive-thru windows.* Drive-thru windows are inexpensive for the developer to build at approximately $13,000. They are a large part of drugstores marketing program for customer convenience. Currently, drive-thru windows are allowed by special permit in many communities in Rhode Island. To help lessen the time constraints associated with permitting and to increase the ease of building convenient stores, Brooks Pharmacy worked with State Representative Kilmartin

to petition the Rhode Island General Assembly in January of 2001 to amend the state's zoning enabling legislation that would permit drive-thru windows by right in some zones of Rhode Island communities. The act, fortunately for communities, was rejected (Rhode Island General Assembly 2001). Such a bill would give municipalities even less power over drugstores.

- *Sites that adequately support large, freestanding building footprints and 40-60 parking spaces.* New store prototypes occupy approximately 14,000 square feet (Stillman 1999). These store sizes are needed to stock the diversity of products currently offered by the drugstores. Zoning ordinances typically require a given number of parking spots per square foot of commercial retail space. Developers seek this amenity even when it is not required to add to customer convenience. This commonly results in 35-60 parking spaces on site.
- *A standard prototype for building design and signage.* This cuts down on architect and engineering fees and is less time consuming. Similarly, familiar buildings and signage will attract customers who are visiting from other communities. They usually want a minimum of glass to maximize the merchandise displayed on the interior walls.

This developers "wish list" contains attributes of a site and building that promote cost-effective, time saving strategies that monetarily benefit the developer and the drugstore corporation.

Conclusion

Walgreens corporation strategies and developers' wishlists tend to disregard the community and the character of the area they are entering. If towns and cities with valuable downtown resources such as historic buildings, a distinguished comprehensive and walkable commercial district, and/or open spaces do not properly equip themselves with regulations and leverage to negotiate for better drugstore models, they face the threat of losing those resources. If communities do not first identify resources they want to protect and have an active "watchdog" group (whether it be a community organization, active planning board, or specially appointed commission) to ensure that the resources are protected, these resources face the threat of being lost. The developer will not take measures to respect community resources that the community itself is not trying to protect. Their unregulated prototype designs result in characterless architecture that can be found "anywhere U.S.A." The following chapter explores more in-depth the results when towns and cities fail to be proactive about this issue.

Chapter Four

Walgreens Standard Designs for Drugstores

Introduction

This study incorporates two strategies to assist in the understanding of the method Walgreens uses to establish a dominant presence within a community. The first, which is discussed in **Walgreens Site Planning and Store Design**, identifies design and site plan elements that commonly reoccur in stores from town to town in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The second part, **Randolph, Massachusetts: A Case Study in the Effects of Walgreens Presence**, utilizes a case study approach to trace Walgreens' development activity in one community. This strategy supports a conclusion of this study that Walgreens standard designs and locations for their drugstores can be detrimental to New England community character.

Walgreens Site Planning and Store Design

As discussed in Chapter 3, Walgreens has specific standards and criteria for drugstore locations, building design and signage. For instance, most Walgreens are built of either concrete block and stucco or yellow brick. Building design and footprints rarely vary from store to store. Their signs are almost always the same color, material and size and landscaping is typically the minimum required by the locale. Walgreens Corporation benefits from these prototype stores because they facilitate cost effective and time efficient construction projects while providing a familiar commercial setting, which draws consumers from the market area. To gauge the standard physical outcome of this

strategy, 31 stores were analyzed through windshield survey based on the following elements: store orientation; store design; parking orientation; number of parking spaces; automobile access; pedestrian access; landscaping; and signage. Through this analysis, recurring site design elements were identified (Table 4.1). When combined, these recurring elements produce the standard prototype for Walgreens drugstore design. The following describes design elements that recurred frequently during the survey process.

Store orientation: Most Walgreens stores were found at the "Corner of Main and Main" or along a high traffic, linear commercial corridor. The windshield survey indicated 26 stores in this classification, although it found five stores in the traditional strip mall atmosphere that was a common location for drugstores in the 1970s and 1980s. Eighteen of the 31 stores were found at major intersections, while 13 were found at minor intersections or corridors with no intersections at all. Twenty-one of the stores were freestanding, standard stores (this design will be discussed later in this chapter), although 10 were found attached to other buildings. Of those buildings that were attached, several were found in suburban shopping plazas, while others were found in more urban downtown locations (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).

Figure 4.1 Walgreens in a shopping plaza.
550 Adams Street, Quincy, MA

Figure 4.2 Walgreens in a downtown location.
700 Central Avenue, Pawtucket, RI.

Table 4.1 Total Number of Walgreens Stores in Each Category

Categories	Rating Classification	Number of Stores In Class
Store Orientation		
	Facing 1 street wall	6
	Corner facing 2 busy streets	16
	Corner facing 1 major street/1minor street	8
	In between 2 parallel streets	1
Setbacks	Minimal or no setback from street	13
	Large setback from street	18
Intersections	Major intersection	18
	Minor intersection	6
	No intersection	7
Relationship to neighboring buildings	Attached	10
	Freestanding	21
Street Type	Main Street	12
	Corner of Main and Main	14
	Stip Mall/Area with strip malls	6
Store Design		
Building Prototype	Old prototype	16
	New prototype	3
	Variation	9
	Building reuse	5
Roof Design	Pitched	16
	Flat	10
	Alternative	5
Store Walls	Designed walls	3
	Blank walls	28
	If designed walls,	
	Variation in elevation	6
	No variation in elevation	25
Building Materials	Natural building materials	30
	Synthetic building materials	1
Building Colors	Neutral colors	30
	Bright colors	1
Fenestration	Fenestration with displays	1
	Fenestration with no displays	30
	Infilled fenestration	1
Scale	To scale with surroundings	18
	Not to scale with surroundings	12
Parking Orientation		
	Rear	1
	Two rows in front of Store	0
	3+ rows in front of store	14
	Rows beside store	5
	2+ rows wrapping store	12

Table 4.1 Total Number of Walgreens Stores in Each Category

No. of Parking Spaces		
	0-20 spaces	0
	20-40 spaces	17
	40+ spaces	3
	Shared parking	11
	On-street parking	2
Automobile Access		
	2 drive ways with entrance/exit	8
	1 drive way with entrance/exit	6
	2 drive ways, 1 entrance/ 1 exit	4
	More than 2 driveways	13
Drive Thru	No	10
	Yes	21
Pedestrian Access		
	Sidewalks with continuous access	10
	Sidewalks with fragmented access	3
	Sidewalks only/no access to store	16
	No sidewalks	2
	Public transportation on site	5
	Public transportation nearby	16
	No public tranportation	10
Landscaping		
	Shrubs and trees	25
	No shrubs or trees	6
Fencing	Natural materials (wood, iron)	7
	Standard (chainlink)	3
	No fencing	21
Green Space	Extensive	4
	Moderate	21
	None	6
Lighting	Designed	5
	Standard	25
	None	1
Signage		
Materials	Natural material	1
	Plastic	30
Lighting	Indirect lighting	3
	Neon	28
Design	Alternative design	4
	Moderately altered standard design	8
	Standard design	19
Freestanding Signs	To scale of surroundings	15
	Larger scale than surroundings	11
	Smaller scale than surroundings	1
	No Freestanding Sign	2
	Combined with other signs in shopping plaza	3

Table 4.1 Total Number of Walgreens Stores in Each Category

Signage (cont'd.)		
Building Signs	To scale of surroundings	21
	Larger scale than surroundings	10
Colors	Neutral colors	2
	Standard colors	29

Universe: Table 1.1 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

Store orientation and issues of accessibility: Drugstore corporations prefer sites in high profile locations characterized by large volumes of automobiles but not necessarily pedestrians. The most attractive locations abut more than one street. They will be either at the corner of an intersection or located on a lot in between two parallel streets. This type of orientation, which usually allows more than one point of ingress/egress, captures automobile traffic from various directions. Of the 31 Walgreens drugstores surveyed, 81 percent (or 25 buildings) were found to be located at the corner of two streets or in between two parallel streets, while 19 percent (or six buildings) were found to face just one street. Of the 25 buildings located at the corner of two streets or in between two parallel streets, only two stores had just one point of ingress/egress on the site. Eleven of those 25 stores had two driveways and 12 had more than two driveways. Two of the six stores facing just one street wall had two or more points of ingress/egress on the site. Drive-Thru windows are provided to increase the convenience of automobile users and because they are inexpensive to build. Twenty-one of the 31 stores had drive-thru windows (Table 4.2).

For Walgreens, site assessments indicate that the ease of pedestrians in accessing drugstores is secondary to that of the automobile user. The windshield survey results indicate that 21 of 31 stores had little or no access for pedestrian traffic. Two of the stores lacked sidewalks on both the street edge and within the site. Sixteen of the stores had sidewalks on the street edge but none that connected from the street across the parking lot to the drugstore. Three stores had fragmented access to the store, meaning that a sidewalk was evident on-site, although

Figure 4. 3 Walgreens with fragmented pedestrian access. 354 Admiral Street, Providence, RI.

Table 4.2 Store Orientation and its relationship to automobile and pedestrian access.

Categories	Store Orientation				Total
	Facing 1 street wall	Corner facing 2 busy streets	Corner facing 1 major street/1minor street	In between 2 parallel streets	
Total Number of Stores	6	16	8	1	31
Percent of Total	19	52	26	3	100
2 drive ways with entrance/exit	0	6	2	0	8
1 drive way with entrance/exit	4	1	1	0	6
2 drive ways, 1 entrance/ 1 exit	1	1	2	0	4
More than 2 driveways	1	8	3	1	13
Drive-Thru	2	13	6	0	21
No Drive-Thru	4	3	2	1	10
Sidewalks with continuous access	3	6	1	0	10
Sidewalks with fragmented access	0	2	0	1	3
Sidewalks only/no access to store	2	7	7	0	16
No sidewalks	1	1	0	0	2
Public transportation on site	0	3	2	0	5
Public transportation nearby	3	11	2	0	16
No public tranportation	3	2	4	1	10

Universe: Table 1.1 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

Table 4.3 Building Prototype Comparison, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts

	Rhode Island		Southeastern Massachusetts	
Total Number of Stores	13		18	
Building Prototype	**Total in Class**	**Percent of Total**	**Total in Class**	**Percent of Total**
Old prototype	9	69	7	39
New prototype	0	0	3	17
Variation	4	31	5	28
Building reuse	1	8	4	22

Universe: Table 1.2 Walgreens Drugstores, Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts - Store Rating System

it was interrupted by driveways, curb cuts or drive-thru ways (Figure 4.3). The remaining 10 stores had sidewalks with continuous access into the drugstore. This classification means that those 10 stores had sidewalks that were uninterrupted by curb cuts, driveways or drive-thru ways. Of those 10 stores with continuous sidewalk access, six were stores located on corners facing two busy streets. This indicates that Walgreens will take measures to accommodate pedestrians in areas of already existing high volume pedestrian traffic.

Store Design: Two standard prototypes for building design were used for stores in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The older building designs from the early 1990s (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) usually range from 10,000 to 12,000 square feet. They are characterized by a one-story, rectangular mass capped by a flat roof. The façade roof is typically elevated and flanked by cross-gables on both ends. These cross-gables are usually detailed with a false half-timbering effect. Building materials usually consist of yellow or red brick or concrete block at the ground level, which is separated from the off-white stucco attic story by a simple belt course. The cross-gables of the façade will have an extended overhang supported by simple columns usually of the same material as the ground level. This overhang provides a sheltered, outdoor space for customers. Fenestration includes small fixed casement windows in a ribbon series set just below the roofline of the facade. They are purposefully small and set very high to allow for more display space on the interior of the building. The other elevations are rarely elaborated upon and usually have flush walls with little to no fenestration or architectural detailing. Some stores demonstrate variations from the standard prototype and will be discussed in more detail in later chapters. Figure 4.5 shows a slight variation that is incorporated into

the standard use of cross-gables in the façade. Several stores displayed an open fanlight effect in place of the false half-timbering. This application allows more air and light into the entrance areas of the stores.

Figure 4.4 Old Prototype. 533 Elmwood Avenue, Providence, RI.

Figure 4.5 Variation of Old Prototype. 1763 Broad Street, Cranston, RI.

The newer prototypes, which began to appear in the mid-1990s, are larger with 14,000 square feet. These stores hold more variety in product as Walgreens continues to compete with other drugstores and big box superstores such as Kmart and Wal-Mart. The building mass remains a rectangular, flat-roof shape, although the façade has evolved into a more open, full-height entrance portico with columns that frame the doors rather than impede them. The new porticos have an elevated flat roof with a display window. These windows either house a plastic neon sign in the form of a mortar and pestle, the tools of the first pharmacists (Figure 4.6) or are infill with opaque glass (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6 New Prototype. 951 Providence Highway, Norwood, MA.

Figure 4.7 Variation of New Prototype. 620 Middle Street, Weymouth, MA.

Belt courses seem to be less emphasized with the new prototypes, although a more detailed entablature is usually incorporated on the cornice-line. Building materials remain the same as the old prototype with yellow or red brick or concrete block at the ground level. The attic stories were found with either stucco or synthetic siding. Paint color varied from the traditional off-white to a lighter eggshell white. Small fixed casement windows in a ribbon series set just below the roofline of the façade continue as the standard. The other elevations continue to have little to no architectural detail. With both prototypes, the standard entrance is oriented at a corner of the building.

Of the 31 buildings surveyed, 52 percent reflected the old prototype. Ten percent were the new prototype. The remaining 38 percent were variations of the prototypes. These variations had unique architectural features, were attached to other stores in a strip mall or downtown setting, or were the result of a building reuse. Of the 13 Rhode Island stores, nine were of the old prototype and none were of the newer. The remaining five stores were variations of the old prototype, excluding one, which incorporated extensive architectural detail. The innovation of this store, located in Warwick, Rhode Island will be discussed in later chapters. Seven of the 18 Southeastern Massachusetts stores were of the old prototype while three were new prototypes and nine were variations or reuses (Table 4.3).

Parking: Walgreens provides parking based on square footage of the store, as is required by most conventional zoning bylaws. Most of the stores surveyed had between 20 to 40 parking spaces. A small number of stores had more than 40 parking spaces although these stores shared parking with other stores in a strip mall or downtown parking lot. Regardless of the type of location, all Walgreens had an abutting parking lot.

Roughly half of the stores had parking lots with two or more rows that wrapped around the store, oriented toward the corner entrance of the prototypes (Figure 4.8). The other majority of stores had three or more rows of parking in front of the store. Five of the 31 stores had parking lots beside the stores and these were all in dense downtown settings. Only one store, in Brookline, Massachusetts had parking to the rear of the building.

Figure 4.8 Parking wraps store with the store entrance as the corner point. 1074 Mineral Spring Avenue, Providence, RI.

Landscaping: The windshield survey found some stores with extensive landscaping while other stores had little to no landscaping. Many of the stores had minimal landscaping, with a few small trees or shrubs at the base of the Walgreens pylon sign. Others had more elaborate landscape plans with landscape buffers between parking and sidewalks and between parking corridors. Walgreens will typically incorporate only the minimum requirements of the locality. Should the locality be lenient with its landscaping requirements, as with many other site plan requirements, the developer will take advantage of this by excluding this element from the plan to cut costs (Figures 4.9 and 4.10).

Figure 4.9 Walgreens with no landscaping along the site perimeter. 1737 Acushnet, New Bedford, MA.

Figure 4.10 Walgreens with moderate landscaping along site perimeter. 1387 Plainfield Street, Johnston, RI.

Survey of five Walgreens that were located in reused buildings showed that not one of these buildings had landscaping on the site. This indicates that localities do not tend to have power to regulate site plans of existing vacant or used commercial buildings that are sold to Walgreens for reuse (Figures 4.11 through 4.13).

Figure 4.11 Walgreens in a former grocery store. 413 Washington Street, Stoughton, MA.

Figure 4.12 Walgreens in a former clothing store. 969 Main Street, Weymouth, MA.

Figure 4.13 Walgreens in a former hardware store. 1010 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI.

Lighting: Thirty of the 31 Walgreens had lighting in their parking lots. The only Walgreens without lighting was located in a downtown location that had extensive street lighting. Twenty-five of the 31 stores surveyed incorporated standard lighting throughout their parking lots. This type of lighting features tall, metal lamp poles that support fluorescent lights covered by rectangular hoods. Many of the lamp poles held banners with Walgreens advertising slogans (Figure 4.14). The remaining five stores had decorative lighting that will be discussed in later chapters.

Figure 4.14 Walgreens standard lighting.

Public Transportation: Cities and towns will sometimes work in partnership with the developer of a chain drugstore and the local public transit authority to incorporate bus stops abutting or near the site. Twenty-one of the 31 stores had public transportation along sidewalks abutting the site or nearby. A handful of these stores, all in Rhode Island, had waiting shelters with benches (Figure 4.15). None of the stores surveyed in Southeastern Massachusetts had shelters. The remaining 10 stores showed no evidence of public transportation nearby.

Figure 4.15 Bus Shelter abutting Walgreens site. 100 Broad Street, Pawtucket, RI.

Figure 4.16 Walgreens neon freestanding sign. 2399 Warwick Ave., Warwick, RI.

Signage: Walgreens rarely deviates from the standard height, design and colors of both their freestanding and building signs. Freestanding signs are almost always very tall pylon signs with a red plastic base and white letters. They are almost always neon lit. A billboard with

advertisements and store notices is usually provided below the primary sign (Figure 4.16). Building signs are always red plastic neon signs that state the company name and various services they provide (Figure 4.17). In eight cases of the 31, freestanding signs were of the same design, but at a slightly smaller scale. In only 4 cases was the design completely alternative. In these instances, there was no freestanding sign or there was a sign of different height, color and materials. These variations will be discussed in later chapters.

Figure 4.17 Walgreens neon building signs. 2399 Warwick Ave., Warwick, RI.

Randolph, Massachusetts: A Case Study in the Effects of Walgreens Presence

The South Shore town of Randolph, Massachusetts is primarily a bedroom community to the Boston Metropolitan area, located fifteen miles south of Boston, at the intersection of Interstate Highway 93 and Route 24. With a land area of 10.07 square miles, it has a population of 30,093 and a density of 2,988 people per square mile. Representation consists of a Board of Selectmen, Executive Secretary and a Representative Town Meeting. Randolph has a traditional Planning Board without professional staff support. The town has recently appointed a historical commission, although they have yet to establish historic districts within the town. They are currently working to establish a downtown local historic district. Applicable ordinances consist of a zoning ordinance, a sign ordinance and a subdivision control bylaw.

Problems in Randolph are characteristic of those in many New England towns and cities. Randolph is currently experiencing a continued loss of open space and historic resources to new residential construction with large lots. A sprawling commercial corridor is appearing on Route 139 west into the neighboring town of Canton, which is consuming open space, straining infrastructure and having a detrimental affect on downtown businesses. The downtown has experienced an economic downturn. Small businesses come and go. Store closings are common. Many historic buildings in the downtown have been lost to new development. As a reaction to these conditions, Randolph has just recently contracted a professional consultant to redraft their Master Plan. However, this idea came a few years short to influence the Walgreens developments in the downtown.

Walgreens has a ten-year history with the town that follows the sequence of the chain's typical development processes. This history is tainted by instances of strip mall construction near the downtown, store abandonment, demolition of unprotected historic resources at the "corner of Main and Main," and the construction of a freestanding store adjacent to a top chain drugstore competitor in the town center.

The town approved a strip mall to be constructed on open space just south of the Town Hall on the east side of Route 28 in 1992. Walgreens served as the anchor store and supplementary businesses included a chain hair salon, a postal service business and an eye doctor's offices. The store was successful at this site although it did not meet certain convenience criteria (as the criteria was developed and refined) for Walgreens drugstores. For example, commuter traffic from the south side of town typically gets off of Route 24 South at route 139 east and then travels onto Route 28 south (Figure 4.18).

Route 28 southbound eventually passed the former Walgreens site. However, Walgreens was located across from the "going home" side of the road. Another factor in the inadequacy of the site was that much commuter traffic would take Highland Avenue, a residential road running parallel to Route 28, home to avoid the downtown traffic. Other problems included the store's orientation only toward one road and the absence of a drive-thru window. Also, the store was setback from the road and obscured from southbound traffic by the abutting former Town Hall, which has a very small setback. This Walgreens was of the old prototype and had more than three rows of parking in front of the store. Two points of ingress/egress were provided on the site. After Walgreens relocated to the town center in 1998, the old store remained vacant for three years until a medical office moved in and renovated the store façade (Figure 4.19).

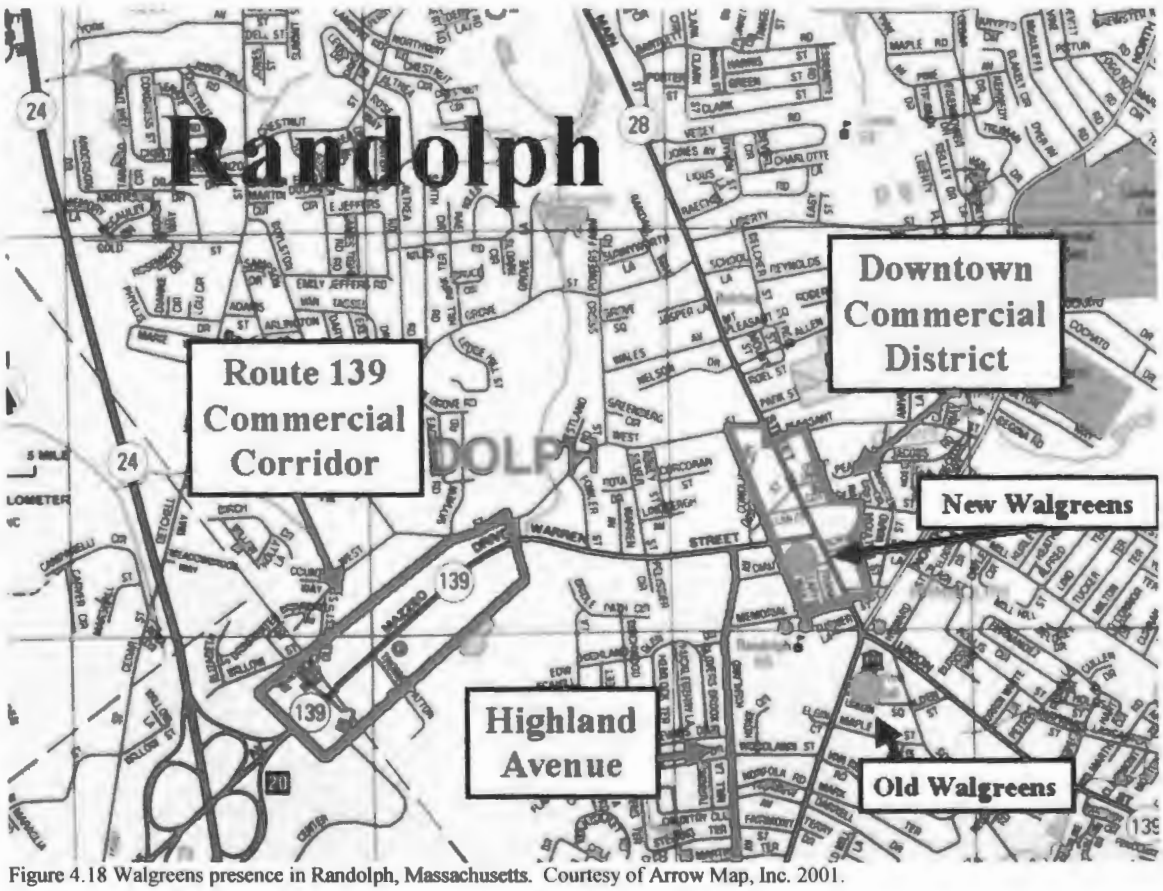

Figure 4.18 Walgreens presence in Randolph, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Arrow Map, Inc. 2001.

Figure 4.19 Old Walgreens Site. Route 28, Randolph, Massachusetts.

In 1998, Walgreens approached the town with a proposal to relocate their drugstore to a more accessible location within the town center. This site is at the intersection of two primary roadways in Randolph: Route 139, a collector road for Route 24; and Route 28, a collector Road for Interstate Highway 93. This intersection has historically been a center for both commercial and institutional uses, including a Catholic Church, a Masonic temple, and a traditional New England commercial block with a local bank and other small businesses. Several Victorian-era houses were situated near the activity on this corner. Over the years the original church was lost to fire and a new, postmodern-style church was constructed. The old commercial blocks were replaced by a newer strip mall, which has included chains such as Dunkin Donuts, Blockbuster Video, TCBY Yogurt, Little Caesars Pizza and Boston Chicken. A freestanding NHD hardware store was also built at this intersection. Both of these developments had large setbacks. Many of the houses in the area were demolished or relocated to residential lots in the southern part of town to make room for the new strip mall. By the mid-1990s, only the Masonic temple and two Victorian-era houses remained. In 1998 Walgreens proposed to relocate their store to the southwest corner of the intersection, the site of the former Masonic Temple and houses. Because the town had no regulatory measures such as design review for buildings in commercial districts, historic preservation designations

for the site, or an organized citizen group to battle the development, the buildings were lost to the wrecking ball.

Figure 4.20 New Walgreens. Corner of Route 28 and Route 139, Randolph, Massachusetts.

Walgreens new store generates more revenue at this site due to its prime "going home" location on two major roads in town. The store is oriented toward the corner, with parking that wraps the store and access points on both intersecting roads. A drive-thru window is also provided. The store is of the new prototype, and has some variations to the general standards that were requested by Town Meeting members. Although they did not have the power to stop the development, they negotiated with Walgreens for better site planning and store design in exchange for the prime location. As a result, landscaping is more extensive on the site with grass, trees and shrubs and an iron fence along the sidewalk perimeter. The sign, although still a standard design, is slightly shorter. Two rows of parking separate the store from the street edge. The store's red brick building materials blend into the surroundings (Figure 4.20).

Problems with the site that persist include the lack of pedestrian access, increased traffic congestion and the store's contribution to the generic character of the intersection. In 1998, Walgreens chief New England competitor, CVS, coincidingly located directly across the street in the old NHD building. Although the chains have been successful in bringing people back to downtown in Randolph, their method has resulted in the loss of unique architectural quality and other cultural resources. In Randolph, as is occurring in many towns across Rhode Island and Massachusetts, any trace of the former traditional

New England town corner has been lost to new architecturally homogeneous development.

Chapter Five

Negotiating Tools

Introduction

Many cities and towns are beginning to equip themselves with regulations that can restrict the location and design of chain drugstores. Such standards are created to encourage development that is better integrated with the character of the community. **Proactive Measures**, discusses the various regulatory measures available to communities and how they positively influence the results of chain development. A model ordinance from Burlington, Vermont will be discussed. Additionally, many cities and towns that have yet to establish regulatory measures have some options for negotiating with the chains to obtain better designs. These options include community involvement, public relations, political lobbying and legal strategy. However, there is a fine, and sometimes obscure line as to how far communities can go without impeding the rights of the developers. These issues will be discussed in **Reactive Measures**. **The Role of the National Trust for Historic Preservation** will discuss this national organization's role in helping communities bargain with chain drugstores.

Proactive Measures

In the wave of chain drugstore expansion, numerous cities and towns have faced the choice between economic development and their historic architecture, between jobs and downtown character (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). If prepared ahead of time, a community should not have to forfeit either (Stillman 1999).

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 At 100 Broad Street in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, the 1915 Fanning Building (left) and all attached storefronts on the block were leveled to make way for a Walgreens drugstore and parking lot (right). Figure 5.1 courtesy of Fred Stachura.

Large chains find that building stores from standard prototypes is efficient and increases corporate recognition. It is a "tough sell" to convince a corporation to deviate from its standard model because it slows the development process. Community Relations spokesperson for Walgreens, Michael Polzin stated that "We do try to blend into each community and be sensitive to its needs…but we take a unique design approach in a very small percentage of our stores – probably fewer than 10 percent." However, if communities have strong zoning, historic preservation and design regulations that dictate certain standards, the chains are obligated to conform. Tommy Smith of Smith Gerber Associates and architect for a Rite-Aid project in Charleston, South Carolina stated that, "When local design ordinances require design approval…the chains will comply and the result is something specific to the area and to the local taste." Therefore the burden is placed on the communities to ensure that projects have unique, high quality designs that respect community character.

There are several proactive planning measures that communities can take to manage local development and prevent destruction of historic resources. Local land use regulations and design review ordinances are the most consistently successful way to

address inappropriate chain drugstore design proposals. These regulations have resulted in compatible new construction or reuse of existing buildings without undue alteration of the exterior. Specific effective regulations include local historic district or landmark designation; special use permits and design review of certain commercial structures, as determined by square footage or use; design districts with architectural review; and planning and zoning regulations requiring pedestrian-friendly placement of commercial buildings on the site. Any such ordinances need to be coupled with effective implementation. Citizens should work to elect commissioners and officials who understand the long-term value of protecting community character.

Planning and Zoning: An effective strategy that a community can utilize to protect itself from inappropriate drugstore development is to engage the community and develop a vision for how it wants the downtown to look and work in the future. Through this comprehensive planning process, towns and cities may incorporate language in their plans that promote pedestrian-friendly site plans and innovative building design. They can strengthen this plan with zoning regulations. This long-term solution reshapes not only the building practices of the drugstore chains, but also those of other chain retailers interested in the downtown. Zoning regulations that are consistent with a long-term municipal plan can govern the design and placement of buildings, signs and lighting, and the position of parking lots. These regulations are key in avoiding the standard homogeneous designs that the chains will initially propose.

Special Overlay Districts: As an alternative to standard zoning regulations, some communities have used overlay districts such as local historic districts, which can be implemented in various forms. For example, if a developer selects a protected historic

building, the local authority or review board must approve any proposed alterations to the exterior of the building. The board will also consider impact on the setting and surrounding neighborhood. Although this scenario provides the greatest protection, citizens must still turn out in force for any public hearings to make their wishes known (Stillman 1998). Similarly, these districts are able to require Compatible new construction. The best chance for compatible new construction occurs within a locally regulated area, such as a historic district, or a zone that requires special-use permits. In regulated areas, a municipality may have the authority to make substantial modifications to "cookie-cutter" designs and site plans. It is possible to negotiate for buildings that maintain the existing streetscape, better windows and signage (Stillman 1998).

Design Review: In the PAS Report, "Saving Face: How Corporate Franchise Design Can Respect Community Identity," author Ronald Lee Fleming defines Design Review as the systematic assessment of the three-dimensional configuration, design, and materials to be incorporated on a site. It is based on a community's established standards, adopted review principles, and commonly accepted design practice. Design review establishes a context for development and follows established guidelines. Fleming describes the design review process as a means of ensuring the compatibility of franchise design with local visual character or aspirations. Design review at the broadest level seeks to enhance and protect property values as it seeks to create a harmonious composition. To be most effective, design review needs clear guidelines. Often, these can be supported by illustrations that show examples of compatible design as well as issues of scale, height, composition, use of materials, siting, landscaping, or rhythm of

solids and voids. Finally, it requires effective enforcement by a building inspector or community design coordinator. It is also most helpful to begin the process of review at the earliest stage of the project development so that the applicants do not make investments that will ultimately be wasted if a proposal is not approved. Fleming holds that communities need to employ some form of design regulation to achieve certain levels of visual compatibility or appropriateness. This process is conducted through a range of mechanisms that can be used to respect or enhance identity which include:

- Site plan review
- Design guidance as part of redevelopment programs
- Historic district review
- Overlay zoning districts sometimes used for entry corridors or business centers
- Conditional or special use permits
- Performance standards for design quality
- Sign control

Design review authority is executed primarily through ordinances that empower planning commissions, boards of appeal, design review boards, community development departments, and/or art and preservation commissions to critique new construction or renovations. Often, a city will use a design review board as an advisory body working in concert with a planning or zoning commission, which makes its decisions while taking into account the recommendation of the reviewing body (Fleming 1994).

Organized Community Involvement: Once community ordinances for better design are established, an organized community watchdog group that monitors new development proposals is key to ensuring that municipalities get the most out of their

developments. Ann Stillman offers Eleven Tips for Successful citizen participation in her Main Street News Article, "When Chain Drugstores Come to Town." These include:

1. Monitoring demolition permits, building permits and site plan applications in the planning, zoning, and building departments.
2. Trying to cast the group's message in a positive light – For example, the group is not against growth: the group is for development that is compatible with community character and enhances the town or city's quality of life.
3. Studying the local regulations. Boards and commissions need legal reasons to turn down an application or require modifications.
4. Finding out if threatened buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.
5. Writing a petition and conducting a signature drive for registered voters and property owners. Submitting the petition to elected officials and enter it into the record of any public hearing.
6. Getting a lawyer; pro bono if necessary.
7. Identifying any state policies or laws that may be relevant.
8. Forming coalitions with the business community, local elected officials, state legislators, and even congressional representatives or the governor's office. Obtaining support from local, regional, statewide, and national preservation, environmental, and civic organizations.
9. Making the group's case in the press. Write press releases and letters to the editor regularly. Make the group's points short and to the point. Always

strive to be reasonable and sensible; the group does not want to be labeled strident.

10. Turn out group members and supporters for any relevant meetings and public hearings.

11. Coordinate speakers for public hearings ahead of time. Make points clearly and succinctly; cite specific regulations if you can. Submit statements in writing, and always be courteous, even if you are angry (Stillman 1998).

Model Ordinances: Burlington, Vermont: The Burlington Municipal Plan of Development is straightforward in its urban design goals. It follows the standards for design review guidelines suggested by Fleming, incorporating "clear guidelines" supported by examples and illustrations of compatible design. The following selected guidelines from the Burlington Municipal Plan of Development encourage pedestrian-friendly new construction that is compatible with the surrounding area:

- New buildings or additions on any given street should be consistent with the predominant setback pattern for that street.
- Especially in downtown and commercial areas, setback requirements should reinforce an urban and pedestrian streetscape by being close to the sidewalk.
- Street-level storefronts and building entrances should be open and inviting to pedestrians.
- The scale and massing of buildings on any given street should be harmonious.

- A uniform front and side yard setback along a street creates a consistent building edge and a well defined public space...in industrial and commercial areas, off-street parking should not be allowed in front of buildings."

The Burlington Zoning Ordinance reinforces the plan by stating "it is the intention of the legislative body that this ordinance implement the planning policies adopted...in the Municipal Development Plan."

This city obtained an alternative design and site plan for a Rite Aid drugstore through traditional means of the above-mentioned city plan reinforced by zoning. This Rite-Aid proposal was not without controversy, despite the developer's cooperation with an advisory Design Review Committee. The site plan presented to the Planning Commission, although enhanced with trees, landscaping, a bus shelter, and a bicycle rack, still had parking in front of the store along the principal street. This proved to be a sticking point for the Commission, which turned down the application by a narrow margin in a four-to-three vote. At the public hearing some citizens in the fields of landscape architecture, planning, and preservation urged the board to vote against the proposal. Others felt that in light of the typical chain drugstore style, the developer had improved the plan enough. Four months later, the Burlington Planning Commission approved a revised proposal for a building that was brought up to the street edge. The parking lot and drive-thru window were located in the rear. Building materials consisted of clapboard with two gables on the façade and large windows across the front (Stillman 1999).

Reactive Measures

"The chain drugstore expansion has been swift and effective, catching many communities unaware and unprepared" (Stillman 1999). Negotiating with the chains or the developers is always an option and should be started as early in the process as possible, although it carries no guarantees. Todd Zeiger, Director of the Northern Regional Office for the Statewide Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana has identified a "Four Point Approach" of negotiating with developers through his work as an outside expert with local groups. This strategy is used by communities without the proper regulatory measures mentioned above. It relies heavily on rapid community organizing and development of strategy. A very strong local contingency is required. These "Four Points" include:

1.) Public Relations (signs, newspaper and television; exposing the developer and the chain by showing their true intentions);

2.) Political Lobbying (Educate the public officials; politicians will listen to the majority to retain votes);

3.) Legal strategy (Obtain an ad hoc attorney); and

4.) Technical Assistance (Seek the assistance of your state preservation organizations or regional National Trust office; hire your own architect to develop alternative plans.)

Elisa Cavalier, General Counsel to the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation suggests additional reactive measures that a community should take which include the following:

- Focus on permits needed and timing (e.g. how long may the municipality study

plans before acting; how long is a permit valid, etc.)

- Study the drugstore's plan in excruciating detail. Compare the site plan to the applicable laws. Ascertain whether the drugstore has submitted everything required by law.
- Attend and speak convincingly at applicable public meetings.
- Beware of getting "SLAPPED." A Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation can be filed by a large corporation against nonprofit organizations or individuals because they have spoken out on some substantive issue of public concern. Free speech is a natural born right in America, although a corporation may file a legitimate lawsuit under four areas including: 1) defamation (libel, slander, business libel, etc.); 2) Business torts (interference with contract, business or economic expectation); 3) Process violations (malicious prosecution, judicial or administrative abuse of process); and 4) Conspiracy to violate civil rights.

Ms. Cavalier makes recommendations for community organizations in avoiding these lawsuits, which include buying general liability insurance and making sure everything that you write and say is factually correct. Real estate developers suing their community opponents has existed since the 1980s. Nine states including Rhode Island and Massachusetts adopted modern anti-SLAPP statutes in the 1990s.

Unique Alternatives: Moving historic buildings is an option for communities seeking to prevent demolition of structures without preservation ordinances. The Planning Commission in Keene, New Hampshire approved a strip mall development with a CVS as the major tenant. The proposed site included two mid-19th century brick buildings that served as worker housing to a nearby historic mill. A local ad hoc group,

Save the Mill Buildings Now!, banded together to save the buildings from demolition. Moving the building was their only option since the city had already approved the site plan and Keene had no preservation ordinance. They worked closely with the National Trust and secured moving funds from the Keene Housing Authority to move the building. The Keene Housing Authority reused the buildings as part of a nearby assisted living complex and the Rite-Aid was constructed in the buildings' old location (Stillman 1999).

Reuse of non-historic buildings: Many towns have large vacant commercial buildings formerly occupied by supermarkets of similar businesses. These can work well for chain drugstores, since they usually have both the required square footage and adequate parking. Such reuses do not result in enhanced design, but they occupy otherwise empty buildings and avoid further disruption of traditional downtown settings. By using existing buildings in or near the center of town they also avoid contributing to suburban sprawl.

Reuse of unprotected historic buildings: This scenario is realistic only if the ground floor is comparable to a typical chain drugstore format – 10,000 to 14,000 square feet. Room for 50 or so parking spaces will increase prospects for reuse. Negotiating with the developer and the chain by pointing out the benefits of historic rehabilitation tax credits is possible (Stillman 1998).

Reuse of a building listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: These buildings are only reviewed if the project uses federal funds, perhaps funneled into county or local grants. If so, the State Historic Preservation Office will have to comment on applications for demolition or exterior alterations. Impact on the setting and neighborhood may also be subject to review. Chain drugstore developers

rarely use public money, so National Register designation does not provide as much protection as local landmark or local historic district status (Stillman 1998).

Construction at another site or none at all: Although chain developers frequently offer inflated prices for their preferred location, sometimes property owners can be persuaded not to sell. In some cases, a concerned citizen or group is able to buy a threatened parcel or building. If the developer already owns the site or has an option to buy, a town land-use board would have to deny a site plan application to stop construction. Traffic and environmental impact studies have been used to show how detrimental such developments could be (Stillman 1998).

The Role of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation began receiving numerous calls from statewide preservation organizations and community groups in the late 1990s asking for help in fighting proposals for new drugstores that called for demolishing historic buildings and replacing them with standard prototype stores. In response, the National Trust commissioned industry research that concentrated on how communities might persuade chain drugstores to abandon their "cookie-cutter" designs in favor of buildings that better suit Main Street. National Trust Vice President of Programs, Peter Brink led meetings with the four major chains' real estate vice presidents. As a follow up, the National Trust listed "The Corner of Main and Main" on its 1999 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. These efforts produced results. The National Trust has since been successful in securing written agreements that Walgreen, CVS, Rite Aid and Eckerd will avoid demolishing buildings listed individually on the National Register

of Historic Places. A downfall to this agreement is that buildings considered eligible for listing or within a National Register Historic District are still unprotected. The National Trust remains vigilant regarding drugstore cases that involve the demolition of historic resources, particularly those listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They have six regional offices with a staff member who serves as a key contact on drugstore–related issues. The offices are prepared to provide both technical assistance and contact with the drugstore company to help save historic resources, when involved early in a case.

Conclusion

Having planning, zoning and a form of design regulations in place offers hope for communities fighting the chains, as does the presence of citizen watchdog groups. The importance of watchdog groups is immeasurable because they can monitor all potential impacts, from the effect of a project on historic architecture to its impact on traffic. Judith Eden, a leader of the Center City Residents neighborhood organization which monitors all proposals to ensure that new uses are compatible with Philadelphia's downtown retail environment states that, "If developers know you're there, they begin to self-restrict. It's not just the law that creates the effect, it's also the monitoring" (Stillman 1998). Todd Zeiger, Director of the Northern Regional Office for the Statewide Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana supports this notion by claiming that it is very difficult to fight the drugstores without a unified local opposition.

Chapter Six

Results of Negotiation: Design Elements That Drugstores Will Compromise On.

Introduction

The most effective way to achieve a well-designed building is through regulated design approval as discussed in Chapter Five. If pushed, the chains and/or developer will usually negotiate on specific design elements. Note that these changes usually come about due to community diligence and support and thorough regulations. The following elements are items that can sometimes be negotiated, added or improved upon:

Negotiating Points

Landscape: Walgreens will make compromises and add or upgrade landscaping areas upon site plan review and citizen requests for additional buffering. Shade trees are an innovative way to soften the generic architecture (Figures 6.1 through 6.3).

Figure 6.1 Landscape buffer between the store and d the sidewalk. 620 Middle Street, Weymouth, Massachusetts.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 Extensive landscaping includes tree screening along the site perimeter, a centralized tree and shrub planting in the parking lot and grass and shrubs surrounding the pylon signage. 1763 Broad Street, Cranston, Rhode Island.

Screening: Walgreens will usually make provisions for screening trash and parking areas (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4 Screened trash area at rear of Walgreens.
1074 Mineral Spring Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island.

Public transportation: If pushed, Walgreens will partner with the local public transit authority to incorporate bus stop seating areas (Figures 6.5 and 6.6).

Figure 6.5 Bus seating area provided along perimeter of site.
1074 Mineral Spring Avenue, Providence, Rhode Island.

Figure 6.6 Bus seating incorporated into design of Walgreens building. Corner of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Exterior Treatments: Walgreens will occasionally change the standard exterior treatments of their buildings to include more windows, as recessed panels or spandrel glass panels to mimic windows. The chains will prefer windows of darkened glass so that their product display racks can line the walls inside. They may agree to boxed-in windows. Some organizations have offered to be responsible for the displays and to

provide archival photographs or other attractive elements such as community artwork or signage. The community of Roxbury, Massachusetts incorporated panels of community artwork on the street elevation (Figures 6.7 and 6.8).

Figure 6.7 Community artwork on building elevation. 416 Warren Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Figure 6.8 Detail of community artwork on building elevation. 416 Warren Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Re-use: In some instances (especially if a local historic district ordinance exists), Walgreens will re-use an existing building (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9 Walgreens reuse of a downtown commercial building. 1478 Highland Avenue, Needham, Massachusetts.

Parking: On rare occasions, Walgreens will agree to move parking to the rear or side of the building if appropriate to the site. It can be useful attempt negotiating for removal of parking rows in front of the building to bring the store closer to the street. It does not cost the developer any more money to orient the building closer to the street edge. (The chains are more likely to make concessions on parking lots and drive-thru windows in urban areas with heavy foot traffic than in small towns or the suburbs.) (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10 Parking is located on-street and to the side of this downtown Walgreens. 700 Central Avenue, Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Retaining Walls: Sometimes Walgreens will change details, size or landscaping of retaining walls (Figure 6.11).

Figure 6.11 Retaining walls at corner of intersection. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Design Deviations: Sometimes Walgreens will go so far as to provide "perks" for adjacent landowners such as financial compensation, landscaping on their property, construction of parking pads, etc. They may change building size or style if required by

local zoning or historic preservation code, or strong neighborhood influence. Occasionally the chains agree to the addition of some architectural detail. In the cases of Warwick, Rhode Island and Taunton and Brookline, Massachusetts, the towns required extensive variations from the standard prototypes. These examples will be further explored as case studies in the next chapter (Figures 6.12 through 6.14).

Figure 6.12 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Figure 6.13 40 Broadway, Taunton, Massachusetts.

Figure 6.14 Corner of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Utilities and Drive-Thru's: Walgreens will sometimes modify its conditions for hours of operation, lighting, loading, hours of loading and deliveries (Figure 6.15). Sometimes municipalities will allow drive-thru windows as leverage to obtain other design and site plan modifications (Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.15 Variations to standard lighting found at Walgreens.

Figure 6.16 Standard drive-thru.

Signage: Walgreens has demonstrated little flexibility on the issue of signage unless regulated by a local sign ordinance. In that case, they usually ask for a variance. They will sometimes negotiate on height. The following displays some of the few examples of sign variations found through windshield survey (Figures. 6.17 and 6.18).

Figure 6.17 413 Washington Street, Stoughton, Massachusetts.

Figure 6.18 550 Adams Street, Quincy, Massachusetts.

Chapter Seven

Case Studies

Introduction

It is useful to relate the concepts of negotiating tools and strategies discussed in the previous chapters to the collective experiences of some cities and towns that have employed these tools and strategies consistently over a period of years. Many of these communities have achieved substantial improvements to the visual effect of automobile-oriented businesses. It seems that the communities with the best track records have made a greater commitment to the process of maintaining large enough professional staffs to accomplish these projects. That effort is assisted by the leadership of individual citizens that demand higher standards for new development. Fleming makes the determination that the task of comprehensive visual improvement can best be accomplished by combining a variety of tools with design and zoning regulations (Fleming 1994). These tools can include strong tree protection regulations, a one or two percent for public art ordinance, or a commitment to involve artisans and craftsmen in the construction of civic architecture. Fleming holds the importance of civic design vision. He notes the importance of fashioning a civic vision in a plan by actually picturing how a community wishes to look as well as grow over time. He criticizes that most current growth management plans are merely projections of the impact of population growth on a city's physical characteristics and services without consideration of design and its visual effect (Fleming 1994). The following case studies of Brookline and Taunton, Massachusetts and Warwick, Rhode Island indicate what can be done when citizens, government and

business work together to use the tool of design review to make community vision a reality.

Brookline, Massachusetts – A Case Study in Design Review

The town of Brookline, Massachusetts abuts Boston on its east side and is accessible from Massachusetts Turnpike 90 and State Highway 9. It was developed primarily as a bedroom community of middle-class citizens commuting to Boston. The town includes numerous summer country estates built in the late nineteenth century by wealthy Boston merchants fleeing the disease and overcrowding of the growing city. The town has been governed since the early 1900s by a representative town meeting and five Selectmen. With a diverse population of 57,107 people, the town of Brookline spans 6.8 square miles of varying densities with an average of 8,398 people per square mile.

Brookline is a community with possibly the most stringent and thorough design regulations throughout Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The town is fortunate to have had various notable design professionals as residents over the course of its history, which is reflected in the community's very high aesthetic values. These architectural giants include H.H. Richardson and Fredrick Law Olmsted. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. chaired Brookline's first Planning Board, which was created in 1914.

Brookline has had a strong foundation of planning services since the mid-1950s and has demonstrated an enduring commitment to design quality dating back to 1971, when it adopted the first design review ordinance in the state. Since that time, construction and renovation in the town have been aided by an environmental impact and design review process. Design review included illustrated guidelines, which were

upgraded from sketches in 1971 to a more sophisticated booklet similar to that of Burlington Vermont, in 1978. Brookline's strict and thorough Planning Board reviews "all new construction and building renovation on major commercial streets and of significant size and impact." The board also reviews alterations to commercial facades, signs and awnings (Fleming 1994). Table 7.1 illustrates the structure of Brookline's design review authority.

Table 7.1. Structure of Brookline Design Review Authority

Authoritative Body	Brookline Planning Board
Number, Composition and Term of Members	5 Members, 5-year terms: 1 Engineer, 1 architect, 1 realtor/planner, 1 lawyer, 1 businessperson
Meetings	Every two to three weeks.
Conflicts	If a Board member is involved in a project being reviewed, the Board member asks to be excused in the case.

Source: Fleming 1994.

The Board decides on average, sign, awning and façade cases and makes recommendations to the Zoning Board of Appeals on significant cases. The Board acts primarily as an informal advisory body to franchises that wish to locate in the area and routinely presents design proposals to the town's Board of Appeals. The advantage of this system is that applicants can obtain some informal feedback on how to relate their proposals to the town's regulations. However, when using this two-pronged system, coordination between the Planning Board and the Board of Appeals is essential to a successful process. It can be dangerous to have one board acting as an advisory body, only to have the approving body (in this case, the Board of Appeals) turn down a proposal that was "recommended" by the advisory body. On the administrative side, there is increased attention to consistency and a concern for avoiding the legal test of presumptive or arbitrary behavior. Planning Boards worry that the Board of Appeals may

ignore their recommendations and make inconsistent, arbitrary decisions. Brookline's illustrated guidelines are useful in helping the Board of Appeals and the applicants avoid such arbitrariness. The Planning Board has opted not to establish a separate design review board, feeling that the current organization is less complex and more flexible. The Chamber of Commerce has been supportive of their design review process because it recognizes the values that have been created by ensuring high-quality, consistent design (Fleming 1994).

The Brookline Planning Board has negotiated with a number of corporate franchises, including Mobil, Texaco, Exxon, Valvoline, McDonald's, Dunkin Donuts and many more. The Board has worked mostly with the signage for these establishments and has altered some of the facades. Rather than taking a strictly prohibitive approach, Brookline negotiates with franchises that seek to locate in town. Rarely is a design project ever accepted on the first try. The Board has strict standards and has been successful in conveying them to chains in the negotiating process. They recognize that chains have established design prototypes and they negotiate to seek change in color, design and scale. For example, Fleming states a case where "even though the town bowed to pressure from gasoline stations for pricing signs, it managed to negotiate a compromise that required that those signs relate visually to the main station identification sign. In return, the allowed sign area was increased from 20 square feet to 30 square feet and from an elevation of 12 feet to 19 feet." He adds "this practice of creative compromise is essential in a community that wants to attract business activity without accepting the visual degradation that often accompanies a standard corporate formula" (Fleming 1994).

The proposal of a Walgreens development in Brookline Village triggered an intensive view. In 1995, a developer proposed to build a new 11,000 square foot Walgreens on the corner of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets. Brookline zoning regulations require design review for all buildings fronting Harvard Street and a special use permit for stores larger than 5,000 square feet. In this case, the developer realized from the beginning that soliciting community input before submitting plans to the town land use boards was essential because many residents live within walking distance of the site and an elementary school is located diagonally across the street. After meeting with the neighborhood for the first time in June of 1994, the developer consulted the Design Advisory Team (DAT) (a subcommittee appointed by the Planning Board of architecture and design professionals). After several meetings with the DAT, the developer brought the revised proposal to the Planning Board. The Planning Board reviewed the application on two separate occasions before recommending final approval with design stipulations to the Board of Appeals. Although a lengthy procedure, the thoroughness of the process resulted in a new drugstore that is compatible with existing commercial architecture and the walkability of the street (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Walgreens, Corner of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets, Brookline, Massachusetts.

From the street, the brick veneer building abuts the sidewalk, maintaining the streetscape along Harvard Street (Figure 7.2). On the Aspinwall Street side, consistency

is achieved and the street edge is maintained with the neighboring building. Both buildings have small-scale shrubbery separating the sidewalk from the building and street trees (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.2 Harvard Street edge. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.3 Aspinwall Street. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

The architect added a contrasting belt course along the façade and other elevations for architectural interest with hybrid brick pilasters with flush concrete caps and bases. Period lighting is also placed on the building to complement parking lot and Harvard street lighting. These details run consistently along both street walls. The two elevations facing the parking lot have similar architectural elaborations without the windows (Figure 7.4). The first floor windows on the Harvard Street elevation resemble the large display windows common on busy downtown streets. Many criticize that the false window treatment on the Aspinwall Street side is inappropriate. The second floor also has a row of windows, although the upper story is only used for storage. Some criticize that the town should have negotiated for a mix of uses on the site with residential apartments or offices on the second floor.

Figure 7.4 Rear Elevations. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Signage is minimal. Although Walgreens incorporated the typical red neon lit signs with the standard store name and store services, they are at a slightly smaller scale and are set upon a backdrop of concrete flanked by decorative period lighting, which distinguishes the signage from the brick (Figure 7.5). There is no freestanding sign. A bus stop is integrated into the building façade at the busy intersection of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets with a bench, an awning, trash receptacles and lighting provided for bus riders (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.5 Signage. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

The parking lot is laid out on one side of the store and slopes downward from Harvard Street to the rear of the building and has a secondary ingress/egress on Aspinwall Street. A wrought-iron fence with brick piers, coupled with extensive shade trees and shrubbery separates the sidewalk from the parking area, further decreasing the visual impact of the lot (Figures 7.7, 7.8 and 7.9).

Figure 7.6 Bus Stop. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.7 Side parking lot design. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.8 Parking lot landscaping. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.9 Ingress/Egress from Aspinwall Street. Walgreens, Brookline, Massachusetts.

The Walgreens drugstore replaced a gas station and automobile repair shop. The Walgreens developer purchased the two lots for the new drugstore. The building footprints of the former buildings were set back from situated to the front. The Planning Board felt that the drugstore with parking to the side and rear was a more desirable use of the site (Figures 7.10 and 7.11).

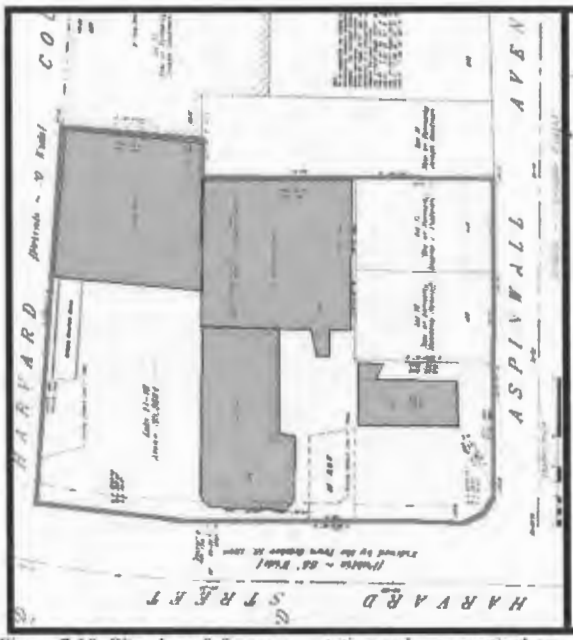

Figure 7.10 Site plan of former gas station and auto repair shop. Corner of Harvard and Aspinwall Streets, Brookline, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Ryan Engineering Corporation.

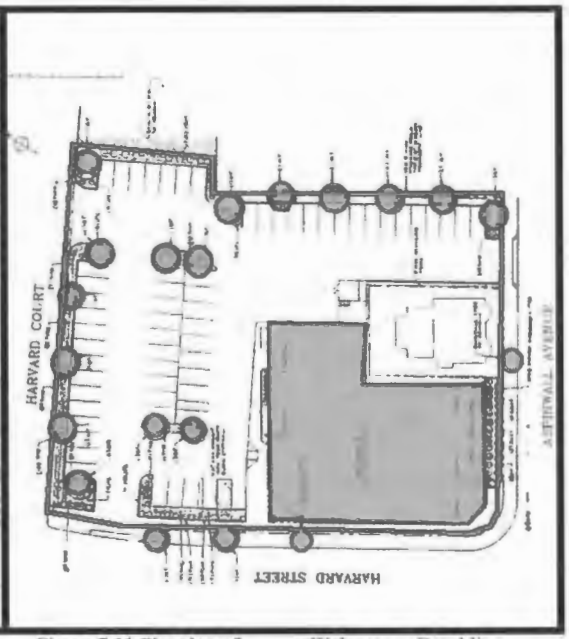

Figure 7.11 Site plan of current Walgreens. Brookline, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Asfour Associates, Inc.

A typical Walgreens single-story, freestanding building with very few windows and a large parking lot in front would not have fit on Harvard Street, nor would it have been granted town approval. Design review, restricting larger retail operations to special

use permits, neighborhood input, and the cooperation of the developer combined to create a development that blends into, rather than disrupts, this key commercial street.

Fleming sites one lesson particular to the Brookline experience is the importance of coordination in a design review system that involves more than one governing body. Using the Planning Board as a preliminary review entity can be helpful for applicants trying to develop a contextual design for a franchise. However, when the Board of Appeals makes the final decisions, the review process needs to ensure that the two Boards share certain design parameters about what is visually appropriate. Similarly, enforcement must be coordinated with the process. For instance, a standard process could be established in the Building Inspection Department that triggers design review and ensures that decisions of the design review authority are carried out and applied (Fleming 1994).

While Brookline has no mechanism for changing the design of existing buildings and facilities that were approved before the design review process was initiated because of grandfathering rights, it has effectively used design review when changes to grandfathered structures are proposed.

Because of its foresighted approach to town planning, Brookline has been able to work cooperatively with franchises and uses design review procedures with some success to regulate its visual environment. Brookline's approach, in concert with a Board of Appeals, has demonstrated that design review can be a vital part of enhancing a town's visual resources when done in coordination with other governing bodies and with the support of the local community members.

Taunton, Massachusetts – A Case Study in Special Overlay Districts

The city of Taunton, Massachusetts is situated toward the southeast edge of Massachusetts with direct access to Interstate Highway 495. The city spans 46.6 square miles with 1,201 people per square mile. The city's development pattern follows several pockets of dense urban areas with more rural undeveloped land near the western outskirts of the city. The city has a Mayor/City Council form of government. The population is approximately 55,976 people (U.S. Census 2000).

Taunton has a Planning Board with one staff person. The Planning Board makes decisions on subdivisions and site plan review. According to City Planner Kevin Scanlon, the standard procedure for Taunton's site plan review is to review impacts on traffic and parking, storm-water runoff, utilities, layout, minimum landscaping and other standard code requirements. It does not however, make provisions for design review, without recommendations for appropriate architectural design or signage, under these ordinances. Taunton recently granted an approval for a Brooks Pharmacy near the downtown. The design of this building reflects the standard prototypes for drugstores (Figure 7.12). Although the building has extensive landscaping in the front, it is free-standing and situated on a corner lot with a very large parking lot to the front and minimal architectural detailing and fenestration. Brooks Pharmacy is the result effect of traditional land use controls.

Figure 7.12 Brooks Pharmacy. Taunton, Massachusetts.

However, as one travels closer into Taunton Center, well-integrated buildings can be found. The Taunton Center is spotted with historic downtown buildings such as a courthouse, the City Hall, a Common Green and various pedestrian-oriented commercial buildings. Infill development is noticeably designed to compliment the existing architecture. This phenomenon is not occurring in Taunton Center due to the good will of developers. The City has a special overlay district in this small section of the City in which provisions are made to regulate architectural design, scale and signage. When Walgreens decided to develop in the Taunton Center, the proposed site came under review of the Taunton Redevelopment Authority (TRA) (Figure 7.13).

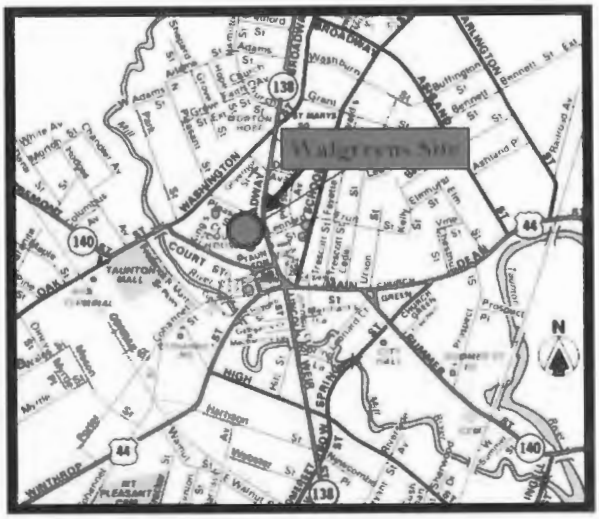

Figure 7.13 Walgreens site in the heart of Taunton Center. Taunton, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Arrow Atlas.

According to TRA Chairman, Robert Treano, the Walgreens site is within the geographic area of the Downtown Urban Renewal District, which was established, sometime in the late 1960s. The TRA holds deed restrictions on all properties within this district, which allows them subjective comment on design elements of new proposals or any alterations to buildings. In the early 1990s the City Council passed a Sign Ordinance allowing the TRA to comment on signage for the buildings within the district. Because of this overlay of regulatory jurisdiction, a separate series of review lasting about one year occurred before the Walgreens proposal was presented to the Planning Board.

The site was previously occupied by a Store 24 establishment. This freestanding building was an eyesore to the downtown with a standard prototype design and a large asphalt parking lot. Walgreens proposed to demolish the old store and build a larger building of approximately 14,000 square feet (Figure 7.14).

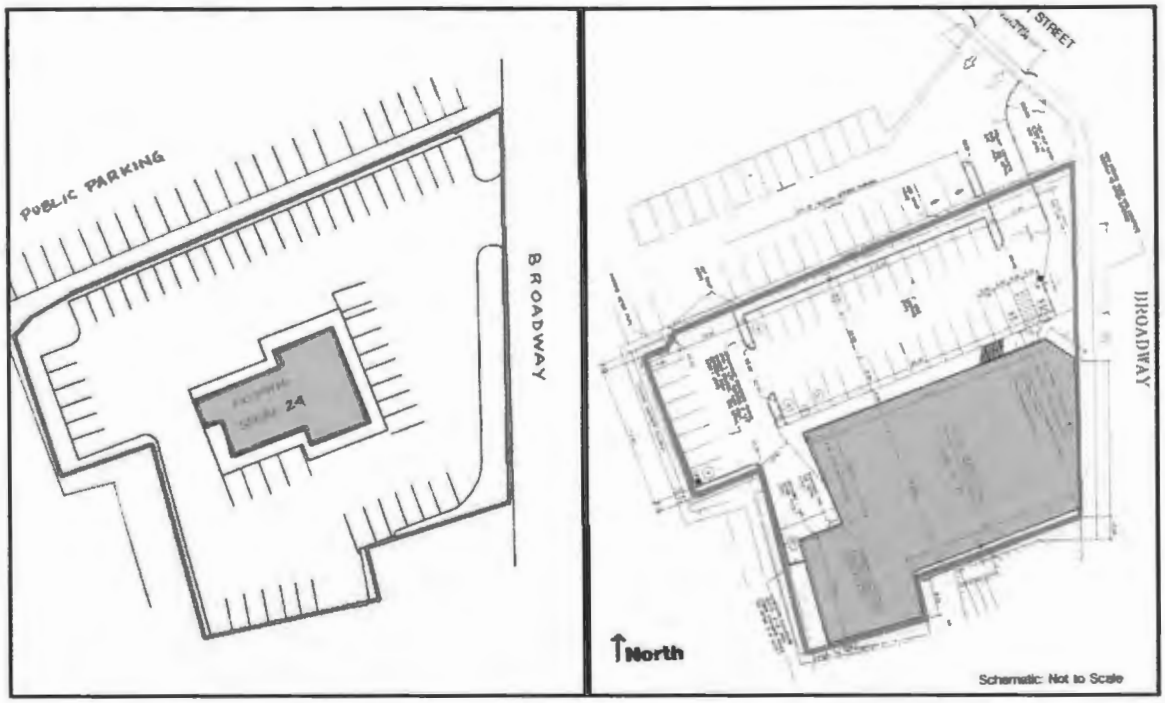

Figure 7.14 Former site layout of Store 24 and Walgreens reconfigured site plan for the same lot. 40 Broadway, Taunton, Massachusetts. Courtesy of Abend Associates.

After a review period of over one year with the TRA and other governing bodies, the final design was submitted to the Planning Board in 1995. The applicant's reasons for the petition to the Planning Board for Site Plan review read as such:

> This property is indeed unique because of its unusual shape and because it is abutted by parking lots and municipal streets on three of the four sides...The building has been designed in order to minimize the area occupied by the building while allowing for sufficient open parking space on the north and west sides of the property. By locating the building adjacent to existing buildings on the south side and along the sidewalk area on the east, the building will become an extension of the downtown business area and aesthetically conform to this particular area of the City of Taunton. It will also lend itself to a better overall utilization of the property while improving the quality of this main artery entrance in the

City from the north. The existing building (Store 24) set back from the street and from the abutting properties is basically out of character for the downtown development area and the proposal will enhance the development of downtown."

David T. Gay, Attorney for Greener Pastures, Inc.

Minutes of preceding TRA meetings indicated that the "storefront was to be extended to the sidewalk on Broadway. The building was not to connect to the Bentley Building [abutting commercial building], but instead of leaving a narrow alley-way, they proposed to construct a false façade. This would give the appearance of one continuous building."

Other negotiations the TRA worked out was to allow Walgreens standard pylon signage, which is usually prohibited by the local sign ordinance, in exchange for high-quality architecture. The TRA was, however, able to get a reduction in the height.

The resulting building varies tremendously from Walgreens standard prototype (Figure 7.15). The building appears attached to the neighboring commercial buildings and maintains the established downtown street edge (Figure 7.16).

Figure 7.15 Walgreens 40 Broadway. Taunton, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.16 Walgreens. Broadway street edge. Taunton, Massachusetts.

The first story is broken up from the clerestory level with a green decorative awning that extends the length of the store on the Broadway elevation. This awning is discontinued partially down the east side of the building. Materials include yellow brick

veneer on the first level and cream-colored stucco at the clerestory level. Other details include belt courses and cornice lines. Fenestration is typical of the standard designs. The roof structure is the common flat roof although the entrance portico is very unique with an inverted cone-shape cap set over a circular tower. The entrance is oriented, as with the Brookline Walgreens toward the both the sidewalk on Broadway and the side yard parking lot. The parking lot shares a common entrance with the neighboring courthouse, minimizing intrusions on the sidewalk. The lot is buffered by extensive trees and grass landscaping. Parking aisles are separated by landscape buffers. Lighting is decorative period lighting and there is available public transit next door. Signage remains standard although the freestanding sign is at a smaller scale (Figures 7.17 and 7.18).

Figure 7.17 Walgreens parking lot. 40 Broadway, Taunton, Massachusetts.

Figure 7.18 Walgreens signage, landscaping and lighting. 40 Broadway, Taunton, Massachusetts.

Although the City of Taunton does not have the all-encompassing, progressive planning that Brookline has, Taunton's special overlay district allows for more stringent review of developments within Taunton Center, which results in better design.

Apponaug Village, Warwick, Rhode Island – A Case Study in Historic Districts

The City of Warwick, Rhode Island is located south of Providence and Cranston and borders the west side of Narragansett Bay. The city is accessible by Interstate

Highway 95. It has a Mayor/City Council form of government and has a population of 85,472 (1990 Census). The City spans 35.5 square miles of varying densities with an average of 2,389 people per square mile.

Warwick's practice of respecting historic resources creates a unique environment where significant buildings and sites are preserved. Warwick has three local historic districts; Pawtuxet Village, Apponaug Village and Pontiac Village. This local designation allows the City to comment on any new development within the districts, demolitions and any alterations or additions to existing buildings. The City Ordinance designates the Warwick Historic District Commission (WHDC), a regulatory body which comments on features such as site design and layout, architectural design and new signage within the local historic districts. All applications for building permits in these districts must be filtered through the WHDC for comment and approval. Preliminary review of applications are commented upon by the WHDC's Design Review Subcommittee prior to consideration by the full Commission. The Commission is obligated to make the following considerations when reviewing applications:

- The historic or architectural value and significance of the structure and their relationship to the historic value of the surrounding area;
- The relationship of the exterior architectural features of such structures to the rest of the structure and to the surrounding area;
- The general compatibility of exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used;
- The historic, archaeological or aesthetic value of the sites without structures and their relationship to the surrounding area;

- To any other factor, including aesthetic, which it deems to be pertinent.

This overlay historic district proved very useful when Walgreens approached the City with a proposal to build a new drugstore at 3336 Post Road in the Apponaug Historic District of the City (Figure 7.19).

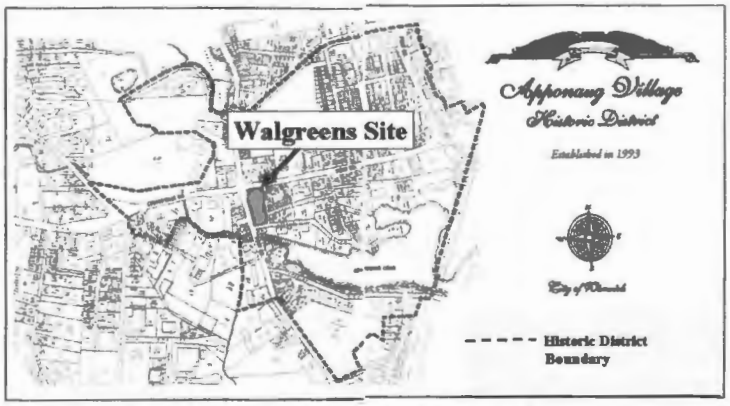

Figure 7.19 Apponaug Historic District in relation to Walgreens. Warwick, Rhode Island. Courtesy of Warwick Planning Department.

The buildings that occupied the site prior to Walgreens application were considered an intrusion to the district. The primary building was a two-story brick building with neither architectural integrity nor historic value. It housed a liquor store, food mart, and offices. The building to the rear of the site was a one-story, concrete block building housing a donut shop. Walgreens proposed to demolish the structures and build a new drugstore (Figure 7.20).

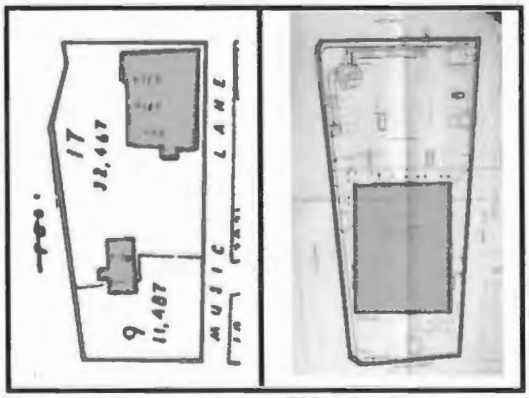

Figure 7.20 Former site layout of 3336 Post Road and New site plan. Warwick, RI. Courtesy of Warwick Planning Department.

The City of Warwick hired its own architects from Newport Collaborative in Newport, Rhode Island to assist the developer, Greener Pastures, Inc. (the same developer of the Walgreens in Taunton, Massachusetts) and its architect in coming up with a design that was compatible with the urban fabric of the Apponaug Historic District. After about a year of negotiation on the architectural design, signage and landscaping, a compromise was reached and a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted in June 1996. Most of the design components had been settled for the plan when it was later presented to the Zoning Board of Review for relief from dimensional requirements related to setbacks, signage and parking.

Figure 7.21. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road. Warwick, Rhode Island.

The resulting building is more compatible than the previous buildings had been (Figure 7.21). Although the common flat roof structure is used, an elaborated entrance portico with Doric columns supporting pediments and a rooftop cupola is incorporated. Other notable architectural features include variation in design of the west elevation, which directly fronts the south part of Post Road, and the rear elevation. Variation in projections of the wall of the west elevation are notable. Pediments with fanlights are used to embellish the rear entry and drive-thru window (Figure 7.22).

Figure 7.22 West and rear elevations. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Apponaug, Rhode Island.

Extensive landscaping and decorative period lighting is incorporated throughout the development (Figure 7.23). Similarly signage, although at a very large scale, is more appropriate and reflects the colors and design of the building. The City worked with an architecture student intern from Roger Williams University to develop a better design for signage and Walgreens accepted it (Figure 7.24).

Figure 7.23 Landscaping. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Figure 7.24 Signage. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Pedestrian access is also commendable with sidewalks directly accessible to the structure and a bus stop integrated within the site (Figures 7.25 and 7.26).

Figure 7.25 Access. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Figure 7.26 Bus Stop. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Although the store is considered more appropriate than the former development, some elements of the plan are criticized. For instance, the City was not able to negotiate a more appropriate parking configuration with the developer (Figure 7.20). Although the building maintains the street edge on the southern part of Post Road, some criticize that the building's site orientation with a large front parking lot is detrimental to the character of the buildings east of the site on Post Road. Those buildings have a distinguished street edge, which lend to a pedestrian-friendly environment. There is criticism that the building should have been oriented with unobstructed frontage on the east part of Post Road as the previous buildings had. Other poor elements of the resulting building include the failure of the builder to finish the window treatment on the west elevation. As part of the approved design, darkened glass was supposed to be installed in place of the painted gray window openings, although this has yet to occur. The retaining wall along the west side of the lot is also difficult to maintain. Also, the design of the east elevation, which fronts Music Lane, was left without architectural elaboration, which is unfortunate for the neighboring structures also facing Music Lane. Landscaping was also left out on this side of the lot, with pavement from the parking lot meeting the sidewalk (Figures 7.27 and 7.28).

Figure 7.27 East elevation. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Figure 7.28 East side of parking lot. Walgreens. 3336 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

Other general criticisms of this structure is that the design elements such as false pediments integrated into the west elevation and a functionless cupola atop the entrance portico are false representations of historic fabric and probably should have been left out.

Overall, the extensive landscaping and architectural quality of this Walgreens is commendable. Although not as complete as the first two case studies, due to several factors mentioned above, it is generally a successful example of the influence that historic districting has on integrating new chain store development into communities with an older urban fabric.

Conclusion

It is apparent that municipalities with a strong regulatory structure, supported by general community acceptance and respect for physical aesthetics, can achieve higher quality design in their new commercial construction. In each of the three case studies buildings that were considered intrusions to the downtown were demolished and replaced by well-integrated new construction. These communities can be used as precedents for others who wish to have more control over commercial chain development.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

The aging population of baby boomers and their predicted high life expectancy, the rise of managed health care, and the preference of today's consumers of convenience over good service, indicate a continued increase in demand for the pharmaceutical services provided by chain drugstores. As a result, the drugstore corporations are gearing up for this economic opportunity and are incorporating very aggressive growth strategies to dominate the national market of prescription drug users.

At the same time, the drugstore corporations have rediscovered that downtown locations are thoroughfares with people working and living nearby. Similarly, these locations are usually collector roads for state and interstate highways, and provide daily in-and-out of town access to many commuting residents and out-of-towners. Chain drugstores are leaving the strip malls, which tend to be located on the further outskirts of town for these prime downtown locations.

As part of their rapid growth strategies, chain drugstores will develop building and site plans that lend to the most timely and cost efficient projects. Windshield survey of Walgreens drugstores in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts provided insight as to the common development practices of one chain in traditional downtown settings. Walgreens, as is the case with other chain drugstores, has developed prototype building designs and signage to cut consultant fees and minimize costs. The chains argue that these prototype designs with standard colors, scale and form, are strategically incorporated to be recognizable to regional visitors. They hold that their provisions to

provide quick, easy in-and-out access will generate more visitors and more tax revenue for communities. To accommodate this concept of convenience, which is statistically proven the number one reason that customers choose specific pharmacies (Fleming, Jr. 1999), the chains will provide highly visible signage, large surface parking lots in front and drive-thru windows at prime downtown locations on the "going home" side of the road.

These drugstores are usually at a very large scale with 10,000 to 14,000 square foot, windowless structures that are oriented to provide access to the automobile user. This practice conflicts with the scale and use of traditional New England downtowns. New England downtowns are typically characterized by distinct, walkable commercial corridors with a consistent street edge, a diverse mixture of uses, and ground level activity such as large, interesting display windows. The class of structures that accommodates these uses usually does not have contiguous parking lots and are typically considered too small and deficient for the chain drugstore corporations. Most of the time, the chain drugstores will opt to demolish existing buildings to build new, freestanding prototypes. This results in homogeneous architecture that contributes to the notion of buildings that can be found "anywhere USA." New England communities face the threat of losing their buildings and spaces that contribute to unique downtown character to this type of architecture.

Chain drugstore developers will not make efforts to preserve community character if the community itself does not require maintenance of its cultural resources. In reaction to this phenomenon, many New England communities have realized that their downtown fabric is vulnerable, usually due to a loss of significant downtown buildings such as an

old playhouse or church. More and more communities are adopting innovative planning tools such as downtown vision plans supported by zoning codes, design review and historic districts. In addition, national agencies such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation have identified that the current development practices of chain drugstores can be detrimental to the integrity of Main Street. These agencies have developed programs that educate and provide technical assistance to communities who are fighting the chains. These regulatory measures provide hope for communities fighting the homogeneous chain drugstore designs. They allow for new development in a way that is more sympathetic to existing community character. These tools promote the preservation and reuse of existing buildings and new construction that is compatible to existing neighborhood scale and architecture.

These codes demand more from the chain drugstore than the standard "cookie-cutter" design the drugstore developer will initially offer. It is apparent however, that adamant citizen support and monitoring is required to keep the value of community preservation alive. Similarly, enforcement must be strong to ensure that the chain drugstores carry out the community's established design standards. Should one of those three elements weaken (strong regulations, community support and enforcement), the goal of protecting resources will become less attainable.

Despite the problems inherent in chain store development, the fact that drugstores are investing in Main Street and bringing business back to downtown is a hopeful sign. Drugstores have historically been a significant element of defined commercial districts along with municipal buildings, churches, post offices and grocers. Often, these chains are the first retailers to move back into depressed commercial districts. If they can be

prevailed upon, through effective regulations and "hard-nosed" negotiating, and they are required to invest in and maintain the historic character of communities, chain drugstore development may someday become a welcome partner.

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