

VII. DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

A Land-Sensitive Approach

The landscape of Yates County is a rich tapestry of patterns, forms, colors and textures. Its hills, valleys and lakes are monumental inscriptions of the last Ice Age, a physical record of natural forces which have been at work for thousands of years.

More recently but with equal drama has been the impact of humans on these ancient hills. Virtually every corner of Yates County exhibits the marks of human activity, the most pervasive being agricultural. Together with the natural forces, human efforts have shaped this memorable landscape. Unfortunately, we also possess the capability to destroy it. The record of interaction between Western man and the natural world has often been tarnished by attitudes of pre-ordained dominion over the role of nature. Throughout the history of North America our ancestors have left

their imprint of domination as pioneers who tamed the wild.

However, in recent years, we have come to understand more fully the vast implications that our activities have on the natural world. Where once exploitation was considered appropriate and necessary for survival, today it is inexcusable. The lessons of history demonstrate clearly that

What is essential is to do correct development which is productive and land-sensitive.

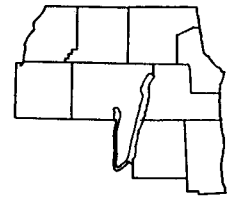
we must adopt practices which enhance rather than impede our relationship with the landscape and its infinite network of ecosystems.

In rural America, land speculation has frequently consumed vast tracts of farm and woodland. Ironically, in many cases it is the farmer who has worked the land for

so many years that gets caught up in the process of land speculation. The tradition of land ownership and freedom to do as one sees fit with his or her property is a basic right not to be questioned. But there is an even greater issue at stake involving the larger landscape within which each individual must function. To destroy this is to ruin the very basis for our existence. And it is this realm which is often most vulnerable. When a strip of prime agricultural land is sacrificed for a noisome collection of fastfood restaurants, when a hillside vineyard overlooking a lake is carved up senselessly for a dozen condominiums, ruining the view for all but a handful of owners, everyone becomes a little poorer.

The identity of the American people has historically rested upon a magnificent natural heritage. Two centuries ago the great canyons, forests, and mountain ranges represented the very essence of

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the New World; to Old World eyes an unspoiled Arcadia on the other side of the Atlantic. What Europe possessed in the accumulated cultural achievement of centuries, America equalled in natural wonders.

We are the inheritors of this treasure, one which includes the hills and vineyards of Milo, Italy and Jerusalem as surely as it does the Rocky Mountains, Yosemite and the Everglades. With every piece of this heritage that is stripped or paved over, it is our legacy and that of our children's children that is forever lost.

The critical task then is to establish an ethic which enhances our relationship with the natural world, striking a balance between the worlds of humanity and economics. In areas of predicted future growth such as Yates County, an attitude of coexistence is crucially important. It is impossible and *undesirable* to STOP growth and development in its tracks. What is essential, is to do correct development in a way which is both productive and

land-sensitive. The biggest change that Yates County will experience over the next decade will be from a low-density community of land-intensive agricultural and forest activity to more of a year-round and seasonal residential environment. The site development principles to follow have accepted this assumption focusing primarily on how this transformation can be successfully accommodated. Toward this end, they serve to inform the process of future development in the County so that its outstanding beauty may be preserved for posterity.

The site design principles have been generated through field analysis, examination of regional history, precedent research, site-design investigations and common sense. They have been developed for uniform, county-wide application. Illustrative case-studies showing how the development principles are put into practice on various sites in the County are also offered in this section of the workbook.

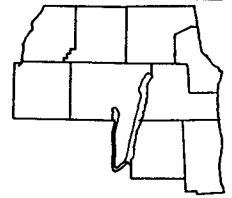
Site Design Principles

I. Accommodation of new development

within existing landscape features and patterns.

- New development should take advantage of natural terrain so that the least amount of landscape modification is necessary. Be aware of the existing natural systems which have evolved over many years. When siting new buildings be responsive to features of drainage patterns, vegetation, views, wind and sun exposure.
- Cluster new development to prevent the visual monotony of houses spaced equally on uniformly sized lots. This traditional approach to subdivision development tends to destroy the original open character of the land. By clustering development instead, open space is preserved for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors. Further, such new development will recall the image of accumulated structures which typifies the region's farmsteads, hamlets and linear places.

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- Successful grading will imitate the existing slopes and blend smoothly with the surrounding natural topography. Take measures to minimize cut and fill.
- "Carve out" woodlots to accommodate structures, rather than replanting a clearcut site. The edges of such openings inside the woodlot should be naturally "scalloped" to avoid appearing artificial. Construction should be cognizant of the need to save as many of the existing trees on a building site as possible.
- Refer to old land patterns to inspire the new. For example, a rectilinear scheme is more appropriate among the geometric fields of an agricultural and woodlot zone, whereas in an upland forest area or gorge/gully situation a more organic system could be accommodated.
- Architecture which is introduced should follow a common theme and attempt to reflect a scale, profile and massing that is not alien to the vernacular construction of the region. New signage should be subdued and of a uniform size, color and design.
- New plantings should contain a mixture of plant species and sizes reflecting the diversity of native, naturally vegetated areas. Avoid the use of showy, non-native ornamental species. Often the plant material for new plantings and revegetation of disturbed areas can be selected from parts of the site which will be cleared for construction.

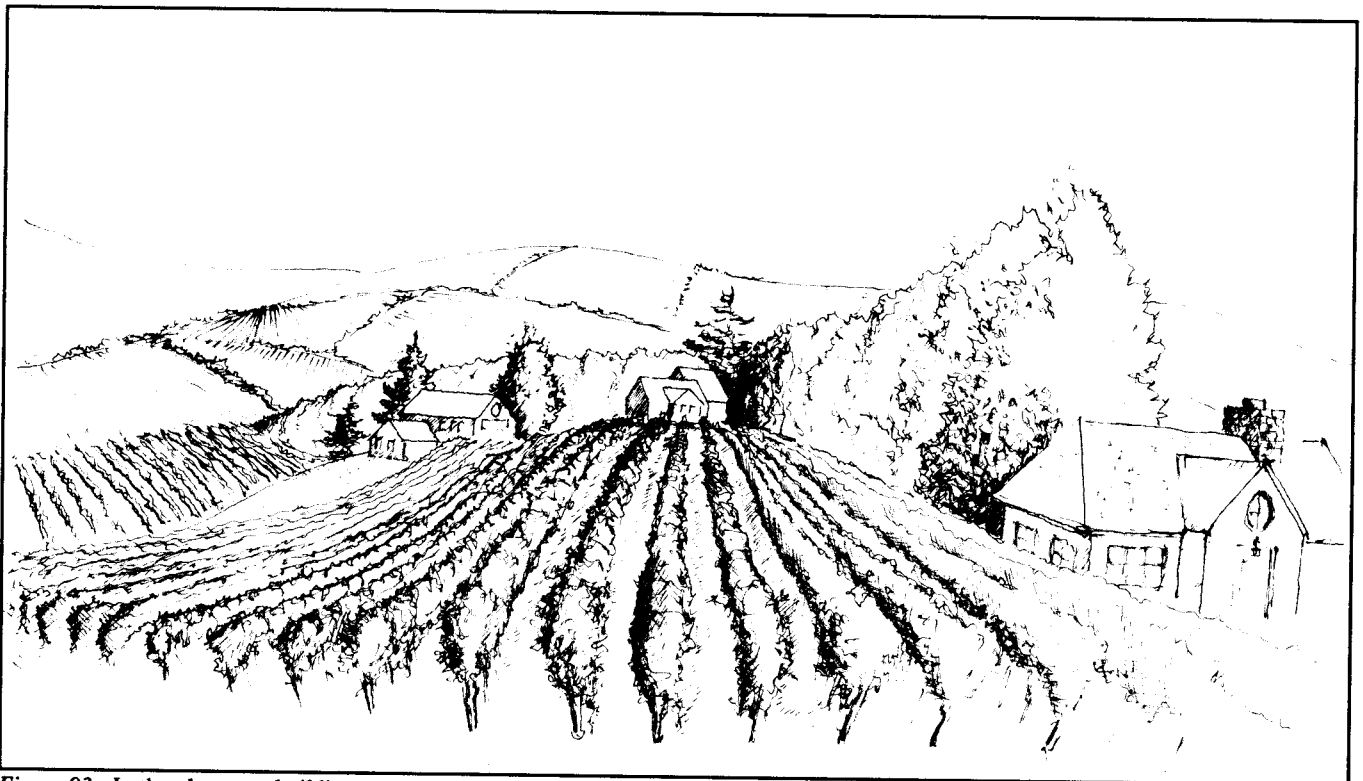
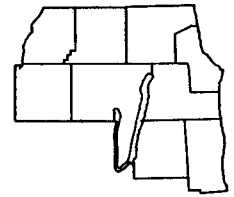


Figure 93. In the plan, new buildings are tucked into existing landforms, hedgerows and wooded areas along the edges of vineyards and open fields -- thus preserving the foreground and distant views.

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- Avoid introducing too many connector roads across large agricultural parcels and utilize existing roads as much as possible.
- When planning the extension of existing hamlet areas, establish development terminus zones which enframe growth, concentrating it in the hamlet and preventing sprawl. Protecting the character of a harmonious transition from hamlet to surrounding landscape is important, as are issues of visitor perception of "gateway" and "introduction" to the hamlet area on major road corridors.

Refer to old land patterns to inspire the new.

II. Preservation of significant historic and natural features

on a site. Such an ethic continues the historic legacy of an area by adding new value to elements which have helped form the character of a region. It is important to remember that such cultural and natural treasures are often what sparked interest in an area in the first place, hence even more worthy of protection.

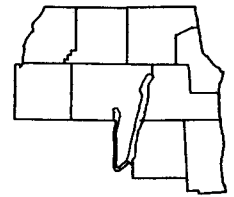
- Judiciously protect sites which fall in Scenic Overlay districts such as the Pinnacle and the Bluff Point promontory area.
- Promote the adaptive reuse of a site's extant structures such as the Esperanza Mansion on the Pinnacle.
- New development should respect the existing character and density of areas adjacent and peripheral to historic sites as integral parts of the historic feature itself. Such sites should not be overcrowded.

III. Application of critical existing landscape components

which comprise the unique vocabulary of the region's landscape.

- Establish "hedgerows" along entrance roads and driveways when crossing open fields. In addition to the visual benefits, such plantations provide important wildlife habitat.
- Employ existing edge conditions to define new development areas.
- Retain vineyards as foreground features in the landscape.
- Establish tree plantations and orchards to interrupt continuous development areas.

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IV. Visually screening new development to preserve the rural image

of the countryside, while accommodating development in a sensitive manner. In the reverse, buffer residences from offensive noises and smells associated with roads and some agricultural activities.

- Place structures on the flanks rather than the crest of hills where they are silhouetted against the sky.
- Incorporate existing vegetation as buffers or use new plantings.
- Employ site topography to "tuck away" structures.
- Avoid the use of forms, colors and materials which are alien to the surrounding landscape. Encourage the application of colors which blend in with those of the surrounding landscape, considering the variation in palette throughout the seasons.

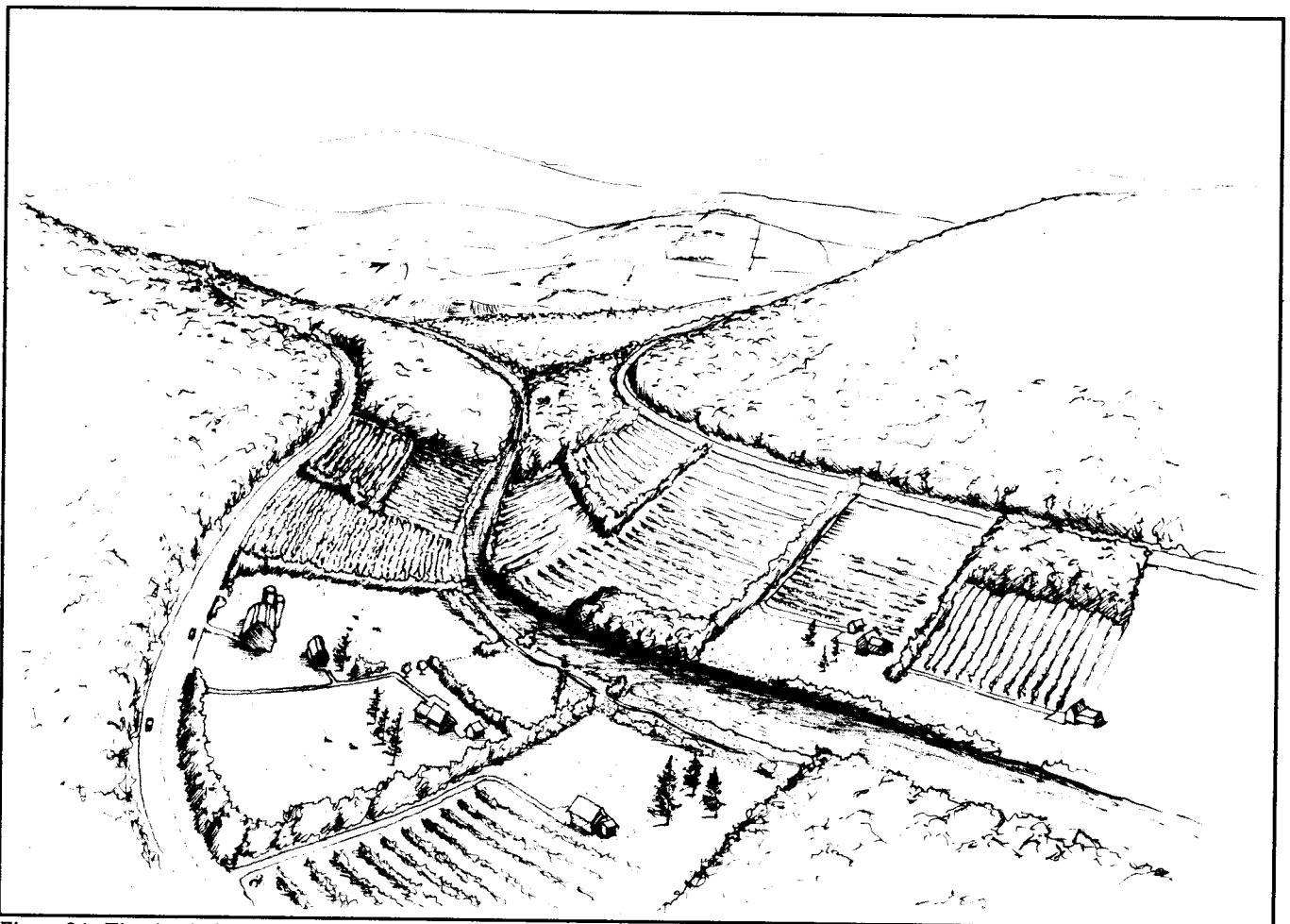
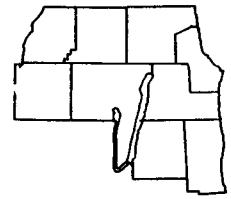


Figure 94. The site design principles applied to a typical valley condition positions the new development away from the roads and water course, respecting existing landscape patterns.

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- Place new utilities underground to avoid hazards and improve visual appearance. They should be located so that they can be easily accessed for repair.

V. Contouring new roads

to harmonize with the form of the land.

- Work in roads parallel to slope contours rather than perpendicular.
- Where a road must negotiate a severe grade change, traverse contour lines of the slope gradually.
- Where a road must cross perpendicularly to contours, stay near an existing feature which already defines such an edge. This may be a woodlot or agricultural field boundary.
- Avoid long stretches of road which clash with the scale and texture of the larger landscape. If a long section of new road is unavoidable, the introduction of periodic "kinks" will limit its extent perceived at any one point. Such intentional irregularities

can occur along the edges of agricultural fields, in which case they will conform to the patterns of the landscape.

VI .Adaptation of existing roads

and other infrastructural improvements to service new development

- Guide site development to take advantage of existing points of access. This reduces development costs, avoids the negative environmental impact of road construction and respects the accumulated

infrastructure patterns of the historic landscape.

- Avoid cul-de-sacs and other dead end roads. Rather, encourage the connection of new development to the infrastructural patterns of the existing landscape. In this way it does not become isolated, but rather is integrated into the pre-development environment to preserve a sense of continuity and "wholeness".

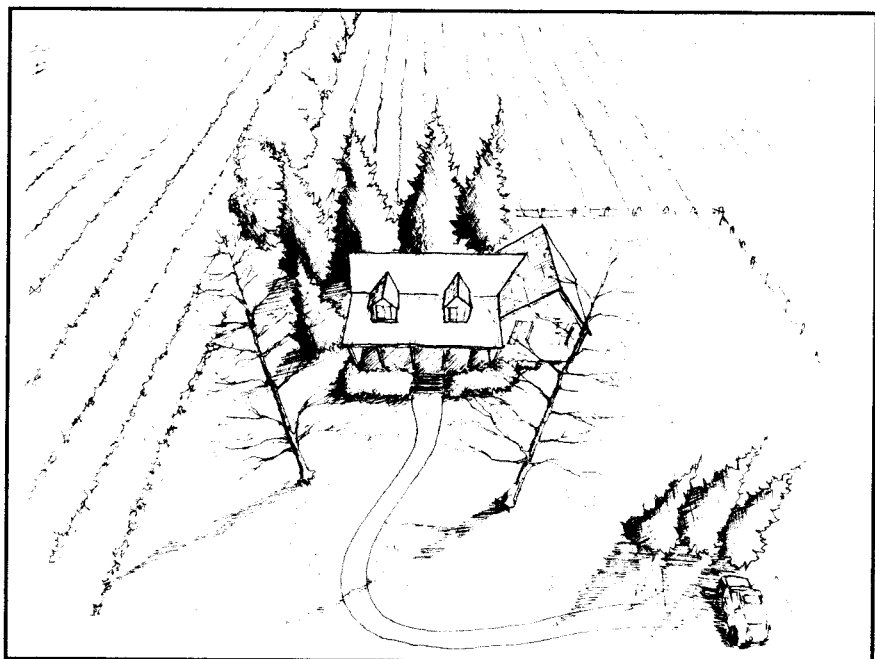
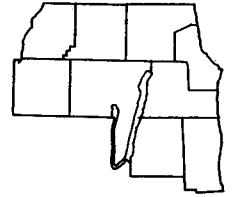


Figure 95. Sun, wind and adequate privacy for individual structures are factors to be considered in site plan review.

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VII. Provision of amenities

for the pleasure and safety of the occupants and to assure the financial success of the project, while not detracting from the experience of neighbors and visitors

- Provide a central "village green" in hamlet extension areas or in new residen-

tial developments of higher density/smaller lot size, to provide a focus of common open space in the community.

- Provide for a memorable entry sequence to the community.
- Site buildings (orientation and placement) to address the needs of the

residents in all seasons. Consider prevailing wind direction, solar exposure and orientation toward significant views. For example, evergreen trees planted on the north side of a structure foil winter winds and divert snow accumulation, while deciduous trees planted on south-facing slopes provide cool shade in summer while permitting sunlight to pass through when

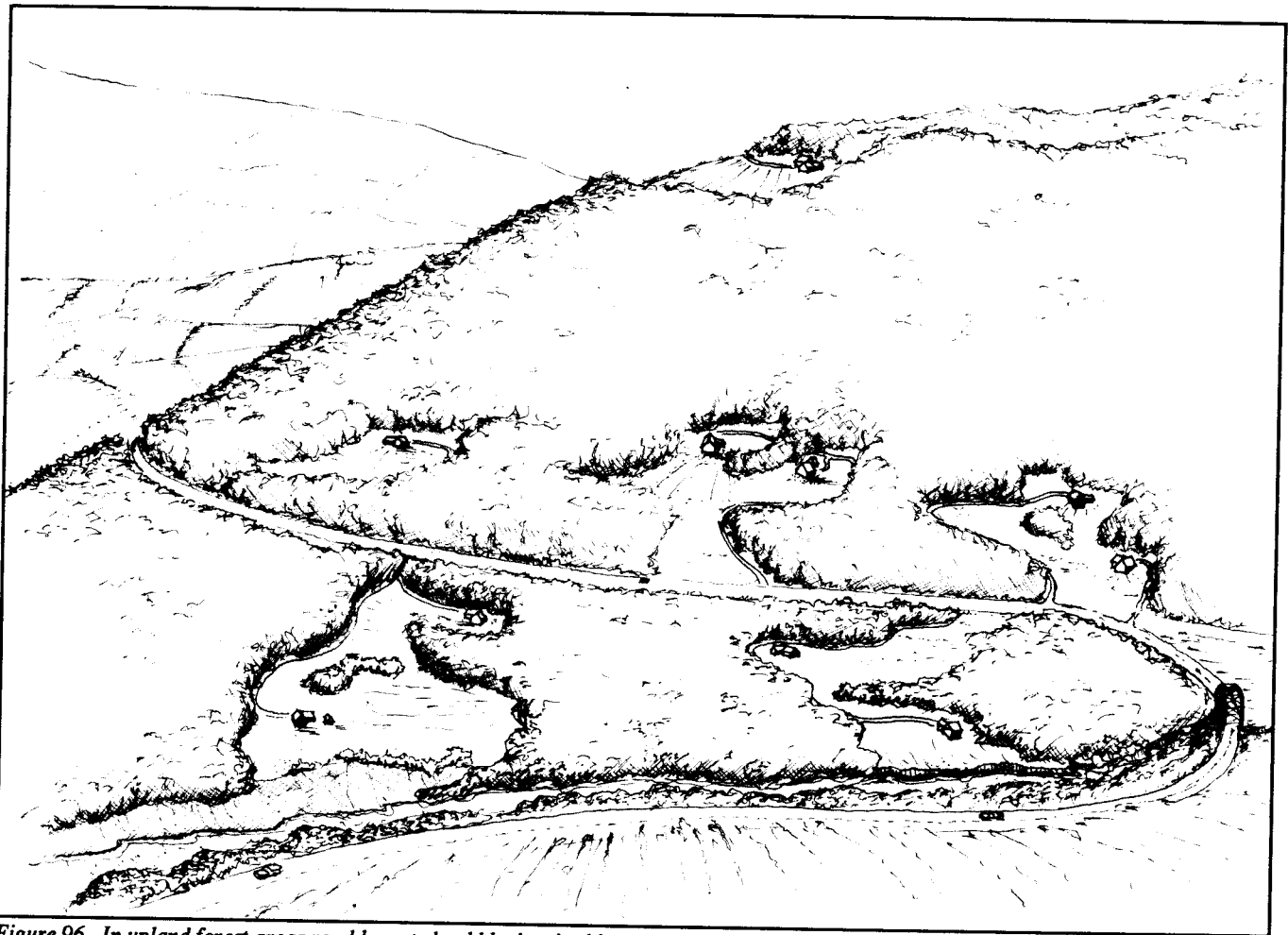
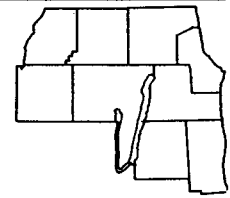


Figure 96. In upland forest areas road layout should be inspired by topography. Avoid placing structures directly on the hilltops and carve out forest mass in a way which conceals development, yet opens views.

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the leaves are dropped in autumn.

- Pay attention to the psychological significance of certain visual amenities which contain the essence of the Finger Lakes Region. Often this is what has attracted potential residents to the area in the first place. For example, vistas composed of vineyard rows in the foreground, a lake in the far middleground and rolling hills fading into the horizon represent a priceless amenity which may be emphasized in a sensitive manner.
- When siting a number of structures on a sloping site, stagger their placement to prevent obstructing the views of the

upslope neighbors.

- Configure individual lots so as to insure the privacy of the future residents, conforming to the layout of an efficient system. Avoid highly irregular geometries or excessively narrow "bowling alley" lots.
- Design driveways to approach the residence indirectly, shielding it from public view and assuring privacy.
- Avoid the potentially hazardous situation of a long dead-end road which will impede access of firefighting and public safety equipment.

A centrally placed "village green" provides a focus of common open space for the community.
