

CHAIN REACTION

Chain stores and national franchises are often seen to be the cause of an epidemic of urban ugliness. However, fast food restaurants and big box stores can and do correspond to design dictates from communities through a process of design review. This is described as “a means of ensuring the compatibility of franchise design with local community character.” More than 3,000 cities, towns, and counties have a design review process for new commercial construction.

Some communities place limits on the floor plan for big box retailers and others outlaw outdoor parking altogether. For example, a Wal-Mart in Long Beach, California has no parking lot and parking is provided in nearby garages.

The photos on this page illustrate the results that can be achieved through negotiation.

