

Section Eleven

August 2000

Non-Residential Development: Community Character Guidelines

Site Lighting Guidelines

GUIDELINES BY TOPIC

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The Impacts of Site Lighting

Site lighting extends the use of places beyond daylight, which is desirable for most commercial developments. Unfortunately, lighting is often installed with little consideration for off-site impacts, including light pollution. The height of light poles and fixtures are typically out of scale with the pedestrian environment and with the sole purpose of illuminating the greatest area possible. More often than not, there is too much light overall, or not enough illumination of critical points of conflict, such as driveway curb cuts and pedestrian entrances. Harsh or poor illumination detracts from the desirability of a place. Light poles and fixtures should be considered a design element and relate to the character of the project.

Lighting as a Design Element



- ◆ Exterior lighting should be designed to coordinate with the building architecture and landscaping, and should contribute to the character of the property and neighborhood or street.
- ◆ The type of light source used should be consistent throughout the site.
- ◆ Site lighting should be designed or reviewed by a qualified lighting designer.



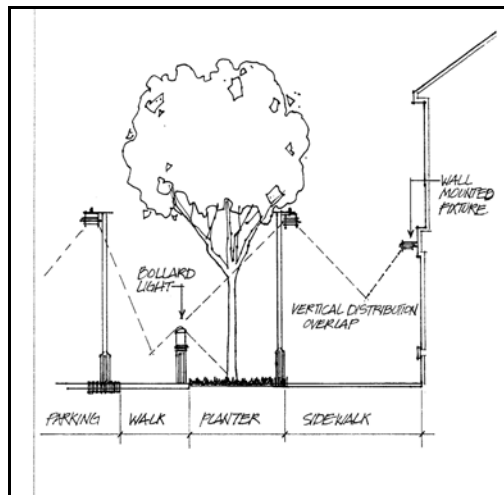
Prepared by:

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Coordinated Lighting Enhances the Streetscape

Controlling the Impacts of Lighting

"Lighting is very often installed with little consideration for off-site impacts, including light pollution."



Lighting Diagram

- ◆ Light fixtures should be positioned to prevent undesirable incidental illumination of abutting properties, the street and the nighttime sky. Glare, directions and light level should be considered.
- ◆ Security, parking lot and sign lighting should be shielded or otherwise designed to ensure that the light is directed downward.
- ◆ Overall lighting levels should be consistent with the character and intensity of existing lighting in the area surrounding the project site.
- ◆ Fixtures should be low mounted to provide surface illumination.
- ◆ Parking lot and security lighting should not exceed a maximum of fifteen (15) feet in height, including lamp, pole and base for sites within 200 feet of residential uses, and a maximum of twenty-five (25) feet in height otherwise.

Parking Lot and Public Space Illumination



Coordinated Parking Lot Lighting

- ◆ Parking lot lighting should provide a minimum of two foot-candles of light at ground level.
- ◆ Parking lot entrances and intersections should provide a minimum of five foot-candles of light at ground level.
- ◆ Public spaces and sidewalks should provide a minimum average of one foot-candle of light at ground level.

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Sign Guidelines

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Guidelines to Control Visual Clutter

Although most communities have sign ordinances to control the size and location of commercial signs, current regulations may not provide enough guidance to avoid visual clutter. Additional guidelines should incorporate compatibility considerations in addition to size and placement, such as the materials and color, amount and size of information permitted and restrictions on franchise signs.

Lowering the height of signs to be seen from under tree canopies and requiring individual shop or office signs to be fixed on structures will further reduce visual clutter. Signs should be required to have external illumination, which allows for signs to be constructed with natural materials and to minimize light pollution.

Signs for Identification & Direction



Business Identity Sign: Lexington, MA

- ◆ The purpose of a sign is to identify the location of a place, provide directions through a site, but not to provide advertising.
- ◆ Reader boards are not recommended.
- ◆ Franchise signs should be subject to all the standards of signage guidelines.
- ◆ Billboards should be prohibited in all locations to avoid visual clutter and interruption of views.



Prepared by:

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

Signs to Integrate with Architecture



Signs That Integrate with Architecture

"Signs should be required to have external illumination, which allows for signs to be constructed with natural materials and to minimize light pollution."

- ◆ Sign programs should be designed to complement the style, color and materials of the building. The best sign programs are integrated so that they become a natural part of the building facade.
- ◆ Sign programs, which provide attractive and coordinated combinations of type styles and colors are encouraged.
- ◆ Within the sign program, the background color, type style and print color of the sign should be consistent.
- ◆ The use of a logo that provides identification for the business can bring distinction to the business within the framework established by the sign program.

Sign Materials



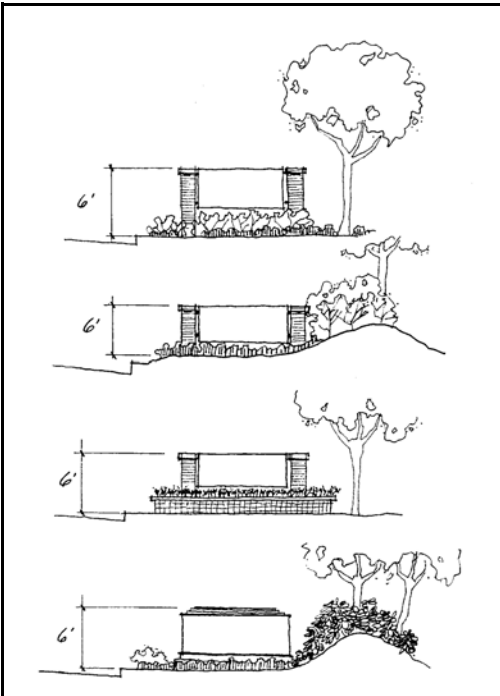
Business Sign with External Light Source

- ◆ Signs should not be internally illuminated, and all light sources should be controlled or shielded to prevent glare or off-site intrusion.
- ◆ Sign materials and colors should be related to the materials and colors of the site architecture.
- ◆ Natural materials are preferred for signs, although the Planning Board may consider creative use of other materials, if the sign is in character with the community.



Signs Constructed with Natural Materials and Related to Pedestrian

Ground Mounted Signs

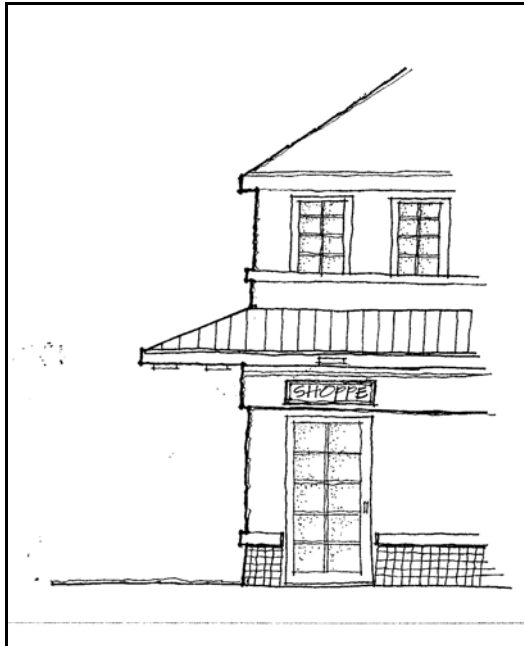


- ◆ Only one ground mounted sign is permitted for each frontage to identify a business center or, in the case of a single business, the individual business.
- ◆ Pole signs should not be permitted.
- ◆ Signs should be limited to thirty-two (32) square feet of sign face per side.
- ◆ The maximum permitted height of the entire sign should be six (6) feet above finished grade.
- ◆ Ground mounted signs should be landscaped.

Ground Mounted Signs

Individual Business Signs

- ◆ Signs identifying individual businesses or offices should be mounted on the facade of the building with one per side, and should be limited to a six (6) square foot maximum.
- ◆ Wall mounted signs should not be internally illuminated, and all light sources should be controlled or shielded to prevent glare or off-site intrusion.
- ◆ Business signs should not be placed above the cornice line of buildings.



Individual Business Signs

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Loading & Service Facilities

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Minimizing Impacts of Site Service Areas

One of the more challenging tasks in site design is controlling the visual impact and pedestrian conflicts with loading and service areas. Guidelines encourage design of these facilities to minimize interference with pedestrian and automobile circulation on the site and to provide adequate space and facilities for the needs of the proposed use. Guidelines also provide for screening of facilities from public rights-of-way, abutting properties, access drives, public spaces and pedestrian walkways.

Site Circulation and Service Area Location



Truck Delivery Route: Nashua, NH

- ♦ All loading and service areas should be designed and located to minimize interference with pedestrian, bicycle and automobile circulation on the site and to provide adequate space and facilities for the needs of the proposed use.
- ♦ Service road/alley or underground access to loading and service facilities should be provided.
- ♦ Truck delivery and circulation routes should be separated from customer circulation through the site.

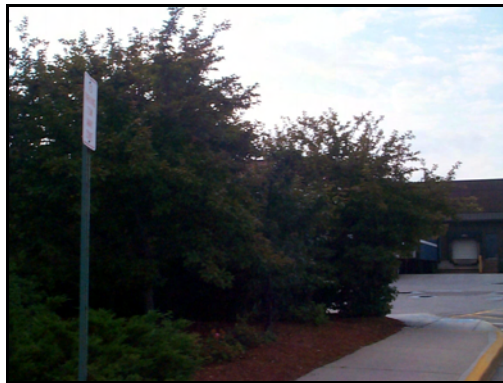


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Screening Facilities



Waste/Recycling Screening: Fishkill, NY



*Service & Delivery Screening:
Nashua, NH*

- ◆ Outside storage, machinery, dumpsters, service areas, truck loading, and utility structures should be screened from public rights-of-way, abutting properties, access drives, public spaces and pedestrian walkways.
- ◆ Roof-top and ground-level mechanical equipment should be screened from public view.
- ◆ All screening should be architecturally compatible with the primary structure. The screening should be part of the building articulation without having the appearance of being an afterthought.

Loading & Service Details



*Alternative Shopping Cart Storage:
Amherst MA*

- ◆ Loading facilities and solid waste refuse and recycling containers should be surfaced and maintained with reinforced portland cement concrete to provide a stable surface for maneuvering trucks and to minimize leaching into the groundwater.
- ◆ Shopping cart storage areas should be incorporated into the overall site design to provide safe, effective, accessible storage that is attractively designed to minimize visual impact.
- ◆ Auto dealership service area/ service bays should be located to the rear of the building and adequately screened from visibility off-site.

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Special Consideration Uses

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Uses with Special Design Considerations

The most challenging site design considerations include accommodating the specific needs of service stations, drive through establishments and outdoor sales. Service stations have evolved into combination convenience markets/gas stations/car wash centers, and the vehicle service use has been relegated to franchise service centers. Other drive-through businesses with similar traffic patterns include banks, fast food restaurants, and the newly emerging drive-through pharmacy.

Gas Station/Convenience Markets

Siting gas pumps for smooth traffic flow, both on and off site, and for the safety and convenience of pedestrians presents a major challenge. Compatibility becomes more elusive when factoring conventional cinder block and plastic gas station architecture. Corporate colors or patterns should not be permitted for any structure or site element, other than in the sign. Separate structures (canopies, car wash, cashiers booth, etc.) should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site.



*Cohesive Gas/Convenience Mart:
Fishkill, NY*



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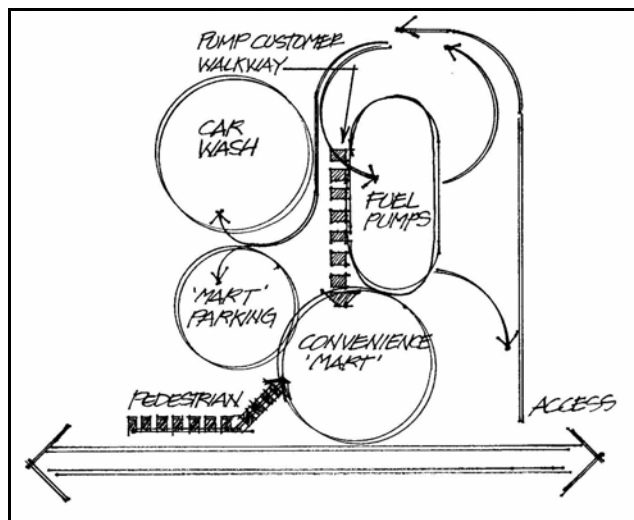
Gas Station/Convenience Market: Best Fit



Gas Station/Convenience Mart: Fishkill, NY

- ◆ Gas station/convenience markets should not be permitted on corner lots.
- ◆ Gas station/convenience markets should conform to all other requirements of the community character guidelines.

Gas Station Circulation



Gas Station/Convenience Market Circulation

- ◆ As with all other sites, safe and continuous pedestrian walks and bike lanes should be designated from off-site access points to the building entries.
- ◆ Special consideration should be taken to avoid vehicular queuing lanes for gas pumps and car washes.
- ◆ On site circulation should provide adequate maneuvering space for vehicles not involved in fuel purchase at the pumps.

Neighborhood Compatible Building Materials



Materials Compatible with Setting: Orleans MA, Amherst, NH

- ◆ Building materials and colors should be compatible with the site, the neighborhood, and the community environment. Materials and colors should be used to unify the site through a clearly defined palette.

Building Details for Gas Station/Convenience Mart

- ◆ Corporate colors or patterns should not be permitted for any structure or site element, other than the sign.
- ◆ Separate structures (canopies, car wash, cashiers booth, etc.) should have consistent architectural detail and design elements to provide a cohesive project site.
- ◆ Tank vents should be completely screened or incorporated into the building architecture.
- ◆ Prefabricated buildings should be discouraged.



Neighborhood Compatible: Amherst, NH

"The architecture, building materials and colors should be compatible with the site, the neighborhood, and the New England environment."

Gas Pump Canopies

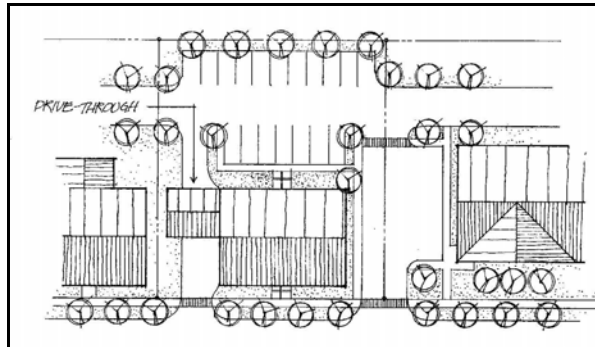
- ◆ Pump canopies should have peaked roofs and relate architecturally in scale, proportion, materials, detail and color with the building.
- ◆ Metal or plastic details should not be permitted.
- ◆ Signs should not be permitted on the canopy, which should be of a single color.
- ◆ Peaked roof forms should be required with a minimum 4:12 roof pitch and gable ends oriented to the street when possible.



Pump Canopies with Peaked Roofs, Coordinated Materials and Fascia Detail: Chatham, MA, Fishkill, NY, Orleans, MA & Hudson, NH

Drive Through Businesses

Drive-through businesses, such as gas station/convenience markets, fast food restaurants, banks, and pharmacies are high volume traffic generators and should not be permitted on corner lots.



Drive-Through Circulation

- ◆ As with all other sites, safe and continuous pedestrian walks and bike lanes should be designated from off site access points to the building entries
- ◆ Special consideration should be taken to avoid conflicts between vehicular queuing lanes for drive-through windows by providing clearly delineated sidewalks and parking lots, and by locating drive-through lanes on the perimeter of the parking lot.

Building Design & Materials

- ◆ Building materials and colors should be used to unify the site through a clearly defined palette.
- ◆ Corporate colors or patterns are not permitted for any structure or site element, other than on the sign.
- ◆ Peaked roof forms are required with a minimum 4:12 roof pitch and gable ends oriented to the street when possible.
- ◆ Drive through canopies should have peaked roofs and relate architecturally in scale, proportion, materials, detail and color with the building.
- ◆ Metal or plastic fascia details should not be permitted.
- ◆ Signs are not permitted on the canopy, which should be of a single color.



Compatible Drive-Throughs: Orleans, MA, Nashua & Hudson, NH

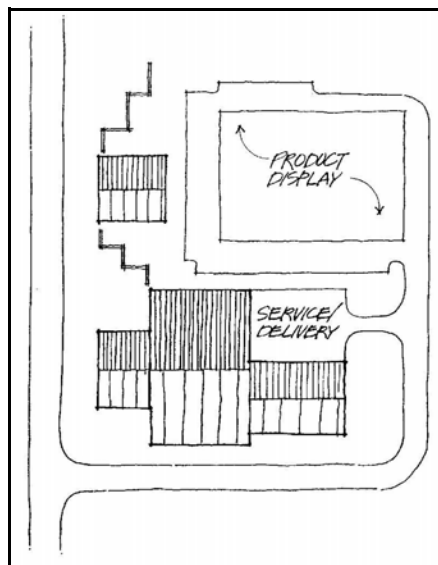
Outdoor Sales

Businesses with outdoor sales are a difficult siting challenge, because they typically display entire product inventories on the edge of the road, and the structure plays a subordinate role. Outdoor display should not negatively detract from the character of the streetscape. Certain products may even be desirable along the frontage, including farm products and nursery stock. Limiting the permitted location and area of display for other kinds of products and the allowed distances between similar uses, are all tools used by communities to combat visual clutter.

- ◆ Outdoor sales establishments should conform to all other requirements of the community character guidelines.
- ◆ Automobile or product display for sale, and raw or processed material storage should not be permitted in designated parking spaces, and may not obstruct any drive aisle, access way or emergency access.
- ◆ Streamers or flashing lights should be prohibited.
- ◆ Advertising on parked vehicles should be prohibited.

Outdoor Display Areas

- ◆ Outdoor displays should not be permitted in the front of any building for any use, except plant materials for retail sale or agricultural produce.
- ◆ All other outdoor displays should be located to the side or rear of the building, in the areas designated on the approved site plan.
- ◆ Special permits may be issued by the community for 1 to 7 day events or farmers markets and festivals.
- ◆ The sign ordinance should establish flexible but restrictive sign requirements for outdoor display.



Outdoor Display Area

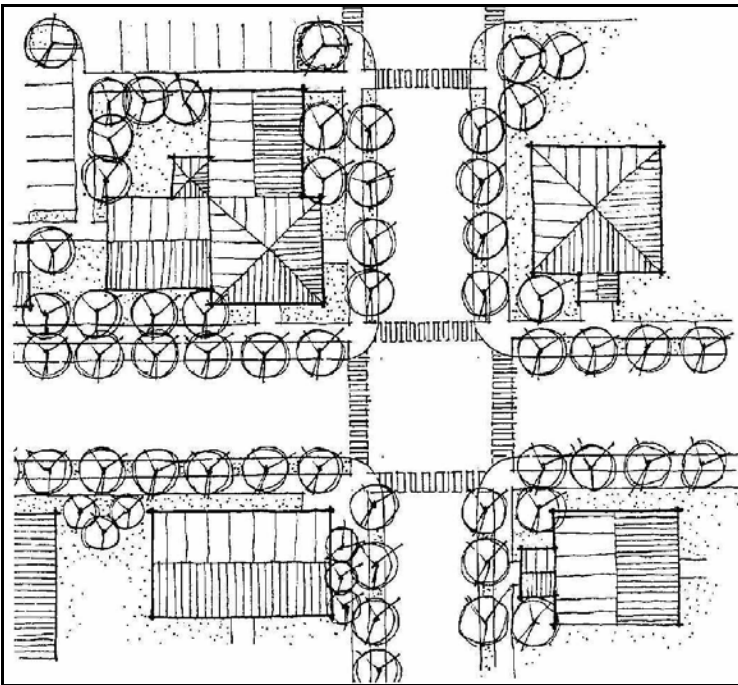
Corner Lots



Corner Lots: Lexington, MA

The corner lot remains the most desirable business location, because it has the greatest visibility & access potential. Corner lots should also be revered by the community as gateways setting the stage for community character. Development of the corner lot can pose access management challenges that should be addressed in the access management plan. Corner lot development should be restricted to the types of businesses, site layout and inter-site connections permitted. Corner lots anchored by the strength of quality architecture and the pattern of street trees makes a strong statement about the character of a community. By contrast, corner lots anchored by service stations and parking lots detract from the quality of that crossroad and diminish the overall character of the community.

Corner Lot Development Guidelines



Corner Lots Defined by Architecture & Trees

- ◆ Architecture, trees, landscaping, low walls, and sidewalks should define street corners.
- ◆ Corner lot development should be restricted as to the types of businesses, site layout and inter-site connections permitted.
- ◆ Gas station/convenience markets, drive through establishments, vehicle service, and outdoor sales should not be permitted on corner lots, or should conform to rigorous design standards, including placing the building at the street corner.
- ◆ Parking lots and access ways should not be permitted in the front of buildings or parallel to streets.

Section Fifteen

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Technology, Research & Development

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Technology Uses



Industrial Building: Hudson, NH

Technology development typically occurs on large parcels, or within business parks, which are separated from all other uses. Light industry has evolved into more compatible uses in recent years, particularly computer and technology based operations, which do not generate noise or pollution. For many light technology uses, the most objectionable activity is heavy truck traffic. Given the nature of modern industry, opportunities often exist to encourage mixed uses providing housing and commercial activities near employment centers.

Best Models for Development



Traditional Model: Nashua, NH

The best models for new development exist in the traditional patterns of pre-1950's industrial structures. Sidewalks, public spaces, seating areas, trails, recreational facilities, and other amenities should be incorporated into business parks, so that work places provide pedestrian friendly environments to enhance the overall work experience.



Prepared by:

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

"Given the nature of modern industry, opportunities exist to encourage mixed uses providing housing and commercial activities near employment centers."



New Industrial Site

Industrial Building Details

For new industrial development, the level of detail applied to the quality of site layout, architecture, landscaping and pedestrian amenities, should be similar to commercial development. The facade of any structure visible from a public street should reflect the character of the community. For any building side not visible from a public street, a more utilitarian structure may be appropriate to the particular use.

Building Orientation & Siting Guidelines

- ◆ Building elevation plans depicting all four sides, and/or visual simulation techniques showing the impact of the development from all sides should be required for submittal with each application.
- ◆ The proposed building should respect the orientation of surrounding buildings, existing pedestrian paths and sidewalks, and surrounding streets.
- ◆ Buildings and additions should be sited to maintain existing vistas when possible.
- ◆ Buildings should be oriented so that entrances are clearly identifiable and directly accessible from a sidewalk. Buildings should be accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users.
- ◆ Façades, entries and fenestration should provide visual interest.
- ◆ Outside storage areas and mechanical equipment should be screened.



Industrial Buildings with Good Materials and Clearly Defined Entries

Industrial Site Design Guidelines

- ◆ Site plans for new industrial development should include preservation of the most significant features, scenic vistas and vegetation.
- ◆ Buildings, parking and site access should be designed to maximize preservation and provide opportunities for common areas.
- ◆ Preservation areas should be permanently protected in a conservation easement or land dedication to the community.
- ◆ Functional open space should be designed to be accessible and usable by occupants of the proposed development. Functional open space may include preservation areas and common areas.
- ◆ Common areas should be accessible from all buildings and connected by a comprehensive pedestrian circulation system. Common areas include plazas, courtyards, gardens, play-grounds, and recreation spaces.
- ◆ Streets and roads should follow natural patterns and minimize the number of wetland crossings. Road design should seek to minimize cut and fill, encourage narrower roads, and use low profile street lights.
- ◆ Flexible parking options, with limited paved areas and natural cover, and the potential to expand on site if necessary should be provided.



*Technology Site Development:
Hudson, NH*



*Provide Site Amenities &
Preserve Natural Areas to
Enhance the Site*

Industrial Building Design Guidelines



Industrial Facades with Visual Interest

- ◆ New technology buildings should respect the scale of adjacent residential buildings and provide an orderly transition to different scale of development.
- ◆ Business structures should not be less than 1½ stories high, and no more than three stories high, except in dense urban environments.
- ◆ Avoid long unbroken expanses of roofs through the use of changes in ridge lines.
- ◆ External details on building facades, entries, stairways, retaining walls and other features in view from the public street should provide visual interest, enrichment and texture.
- ◆ New development should incorporate the use of strong vertical and/or horizontal reveals, off-sets, and three dimensional details between surface planes to create shadow lines and to break up flat surfaces.
- ◆ All features and details should be in proportion to the building. Doors and window openings should be proportional to facade length and height.

Glossary of Terms

- ◆ **Accent strip:** The use of an alternate paving material to call attention to a particular edge or section of pavement.
- ◆ **Access management:** The control and regulation of the spacing and design of driveways, medians, median openings, traffic signals, and highway intersections in order to maintain the function and purpose of arterial roads.
- ◆ **Applicant:** A developer submitting an application for development.
- ◆ **Arterial road:** A road whose primary function is mobility, moving people and goods over long distances quickly and efficiently.
- ◆ **Berm:** A mound of soil, either natural or manmade, used to obstruct views.
- ◆ **Bicycle lane:** A lane at the edge of the roadway reserved and marked for the exclusive use of bicycles.
- ◆ **Buffer:** An area within a property or site, generally adjacent to and parallel with the property line, either consisting of natural vegetation or treated by the use of trees, shrubs, fences, and/or berms, designed to limit continuously the view of and/or sound from the site to adjacent sites or properties.
- ◆ **Building elevation:** The view of a vertical plane of one side of the building.
- ◆ **Building facade:** The face of a building.
- ◆ **Collector road:** A road connecting arterial roads to local roads, whose function is divided between providing mobility and access.
- ◆ **Collector access drive:** The main driveway through a development connecting private driveways to collector roads.
- ◆ **Common open space:** Land within or related to a development, not individually owned or dedicated for public use, which is designed and intended for the common use and enjoyment of the residents of the development.
- ◆ **Curb cut:** A driveway entrance or exit to a development, requiring a permit from the governing body having jurisdiction over that particular road or access-way.
- ◆ **Deceleration lane:** Right turn lanes and tapers removing turning and slow moving vehicles from the travel way of the road.
- ◆ **Drainage system:** The method through which surface water is managed.
- ◆ **Driveway throat length:** Adequate depth at a driveway entrance to allow sufficient maneuvering space on-site for safe and efficient access and egress.
- ◆ **Easement:** A right-of-way granted, but not dedicated, for limited use of private land for a public or quasi-public purpose and within which the property owner shall not erect any permanent structures.
- ◆ **End aisle:** The traveled way at the end of parking aisles.

Non-Residential Development: Community Character Guidelines

- ◆ **Fascia:** A flat horizontal band or member between architectural moldings.
- ◆ **Fenestration:** A structural opening in a building, typically referring to the design and position of windows.
- ◆ **Foot-candles of light:** A quantitative unit of measurement referring to illumination incident at a single point. One foot-candle is equal to one lumen uniformly distributed over an area of one square foot.
- ◆ **Frontage:** That portion of the lot extending along the street line.
- ◆ **Integral walkway:** A complete walkway system accessible from all parking spaces on a site and connected to all points of entry in a building or buildings, transit locations, and public spaces.
- ◆ **Local road:** A road whose primary function is to provide access to adjacent development.
- ◆ **Median (parking lot):** A portion of impervious surface area separating parking aisles.
- ◆ **Mixed-use site:** Allowing for a compatible mix of commercial, office and residential uses, typically in town centers and at other nodal areas having jobs, services and goods available within a reasonable walking distance.
- ◆ **Mullion:** A vertical strip separating window panes.
- ◆ **Out-parcel:** A remainder parcel on large site that was set aside for future development.
- ◆ **Performance guarantee:** Any security that may be accepted by a municipality a guarantee that the improvements required as part of an application for development are satisfactorily completed.
- ◆ **Porous curbing:** Curbing designed to allow for the passage of stormwater through pores or small openings to an impervious area for infiltration.
- ◆ **Portico:** A walkway or porch with a roof supported by columns, often at the entrance of a building.
- ◆ **Principle building:** The primary structure in a development.
- ◆ **Reader board:** An addition to a sign, either attached or detached, providing space for changeable text, either fixed or electronic.
- ◆ **Setback:** The distance between the street right-of-way line and the permitted front line of any portion of a structure.
- ◆ **Speed table:** A section of the drive aisle or access road slightly elevated to provide pedestrian crosswalks in combination with speed control.
- ◆ **Stormwater infiltration:** A method of enabling stormwater to permeate the ground surface, at or near the point of rainfall contact.
- ◆ **Traffic calming:** Methods for slowing traffic to prevent conflicts with pedestrians, bicycles, and other slow moving vehicles.
- ◆ **Traffic analysis:** A traffic impact study to determine the effect of a proposed development, both on and off site, and propose appropriate mitigation measures.
- ◆ **Tree caliper:** The diameter of a tree trunk measured in inches, six inches above the ground for trees up to four inches in diameter and twelve inches above the ground for trees over four inches in diameter.
- ◆ **Vista:** A distant view seen through an opening, such as between buildings, trees or landforms.

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