3.0 COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. INTRODUCTION

The commercial design guidelines presented in this section focus on efforts to foster good design in order to create a quality built environment for the City, encourage reinvestment, and maintain the City's economic vitality in general. The design principles provided herein are applicable to commercial projects including retail, service and office uses throughout the city.

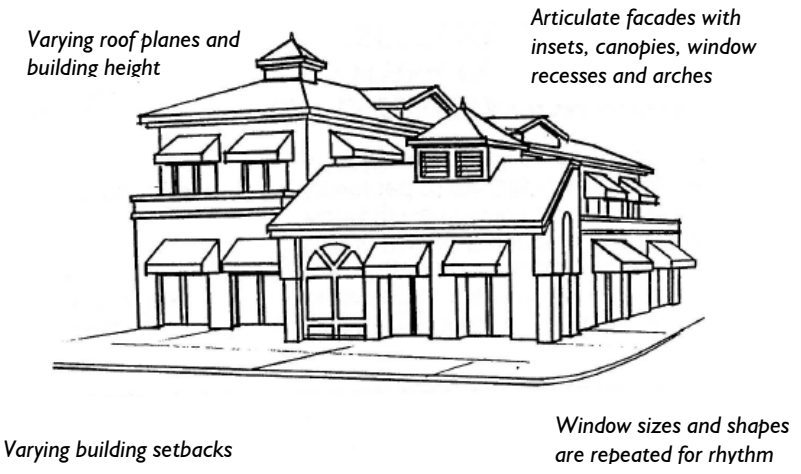
B. ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The concepts of "compatible" and "contextual" design are two of the most important elements in understanding these design guidelines. Throughout the commercial guidelines, emphasis is placed on making new buildings and building additions compatible with their surroundings instead of being in competition with them. Compatible designs do not seek to imitate neighboring buildings, but do reflect their surroundings in terms of the design concepts: height, bulk, scale, orientation, and to a lesser extent, architectural style and materials. In short, compatible designs are in harmony with the best "design features" of surrounding buildings.

1. DESIRABLE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

The qualities and design elements for commercial buildings considered desirable include, but are not limited to:

- Significant wall articulation (insets, pop-outs, columns, canopies, wing walls);
- Multi-story building profile;
- Multi-planed pitched roof;
- Full roof treatment;
- Roof overhangs, arcades;
- Regular window rhythm;
- Articulated mass and bulk;
- Significant landscape elements;
- Prominent access driveways; and
- Landscaped and screened parking.



2. UNDESIRABLE ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

The following qualities and design elements for commercial buildings that are considered undesirable and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Large, blank, flat wall surfaces;
- Square, 'box-like' buildings;
- Unpainted concrete or block walls;
- Highly reflective surfaces (mirror windows);
- Metal or plastic siding;
- Mix of unrelated materials (i.e., rustic wood shingles and polished chrome);
- Visible outdoor storage, loading and equipment areas;
- Disjointed parking areas and awkward circulation patterns;
- Overabundance of access driveways, or unsafe locations;
- Flat roofs, or 'stuck on' mansard roof treatments; and
- Exposed pipe columns.

3. BUILDING HEIGHT

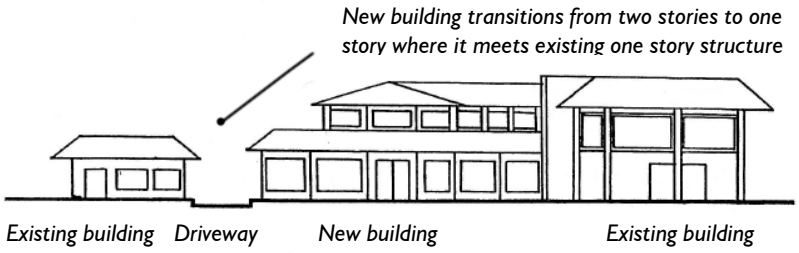
Building height should relate to adjacent structures and open spaces to allow maximum sun and ventilation, protection from prevailing winds, minimize obstruction of view from adjoining structures, and maintain a consistent scale of development along the street.

a. Height and scale of new development should be compatible with that of the surrounding development.

b. New development height should 'transition' from the height of adjacent development to the maximum height of the proposed building whenever possible.

c. When larger, taller buildings are proposed, design techniques should be used to diminish the mass of the building visually. Stepping back the building with increasing height and articulation of the facade with insets and pop-outs lessen the visual impact of height.

d. Variations in parapet and roof height should add variety and interest to the building's form.

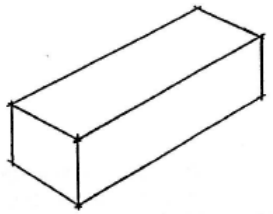


4. SCALE AND BULK

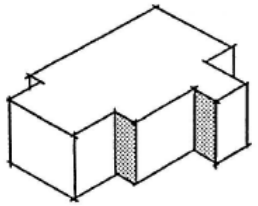
Scale is the relationship between a proposed building's size and the size of adjoining buildings. The scale of new buildings should be consistent with existing buildings in the area.

There are several ways to reduce the appearance of excessive bulk in large buildings:

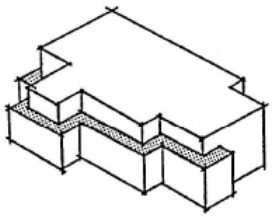
- Vary the planes of the exterior walls in depth and/or direction;
- Step back upper floors;
- Vary the height of the buildings so that it appears to be divided into distinct elements;
- Use varied roof planes and shapes;
- Reduce building volume by lowering roof pitch and extending roof lines;
- Articulate the different parts of a building's facade by use of color, arrangement of facade elements, and change in materials; and
- Use landscaping and architectural detailing at the ground level to lessen the impact of large buildings.
- Large scale buildings which give the appearance of 'square box' structures are undesirable. Such buildings appear out of place, especially if situated adjacent to smaller scale buildings which are typical of Westminster.
- Utilize windows, wall insets, change in color, materials, or utilize canopies to create interest. Blank walls at the ground floor level are undesirable.



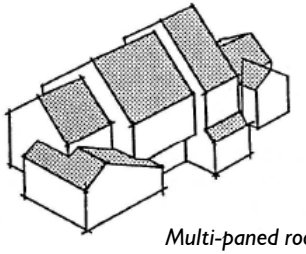
Undesirable architectural treatment



Vertical articulation added



Horizontal articulation added



Multi-paned roots and awnings add desirable articulation

5. EXTERIOR WALLS

a. Building elevations should be designed to avoid a 'box-like', massive appearance. Horizontal and vertical articulation should be expressed through the use of full roofs, wall offsets, recessed windows and entries, awnings, roof overhangs, second floor setbacks, or covered arcades.

b. Doors and windows should be set back in their wall openings to reveal the thickness of the wall.

c. Additions to existing buildings should be designed to be integrated with the existing building. The new addition should match the original in terms of scale, window and door styles and openings, roof line, materials, color and other aspects of design.

d. The following materials should not be used as primary exterior wall materials:

- Unfinished concrete and concrete block;
- Corrugated metal a plastic;
- Reflective mirror-type glass;
- Standing seam metal walls;
- Plywood (painted or otherwise);
- Imitation “rock work” veneers;
- Corrugated fiberglass;
- Asphalt shingles;
- Illuminated sidings and awnings;
- Plastic laminates;
- Unmilled, bare aluminum; and
- Applied 'rustic' veneers.

e. Doors and windows mounted flush with the wall surface should not be used unless in conjunction with an arcade or covered walkway.

Without architectural variations buildings appear flat, monotonous and “box-like”

Example of a building that applies the use of wall offsets, windows, awnings, and entries to provide appropriate building articulation.

6. ROOFS

a. A variety of roof planes and ridge heights should be used.

b. Large roof overhangs should be used, whenever feasible.

c. Mansard roofs, if used on commercial structures, should wrap around the entire building perimeter where feasible. For buildings located on a property line, a full roof may not be feasible.

d. Rooftop equipment should be screened from public view.

e. When mechanical equipment is placed on a rooftop, it should be located below the highest vertical element of the building wherever possible to avoid the use of penthouse structures or other special screening devices.

f. When mechanical equipment is added to an existing building, it should be screened in such a way as to match the architectural style and materials of the existing building without giving the appearance of being added on.

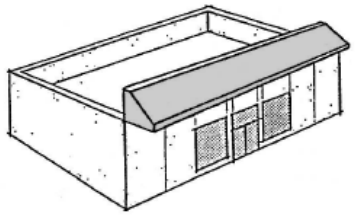
g. Roof drains should be designed as an integral part of the structure and should not be exposed on building exteriors facing public streets or parking lots. Drainage should be under sidewalks and curbs.

h. The following roof materials should not be used

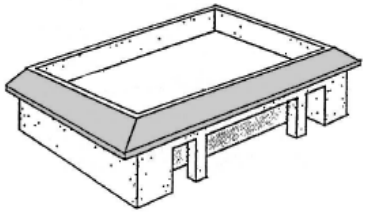
- Corrugated metal;
- High contrast or brightly colored glazed tile, except in small amounts where desirable for accent purposes;
- Highly reflective surfaces; and
- Illuminated roofing.

i. Nearly vertical roofs (A-frames) and piece-meal mansard roofs (used on a portion of the building perimeter only) should not be used.

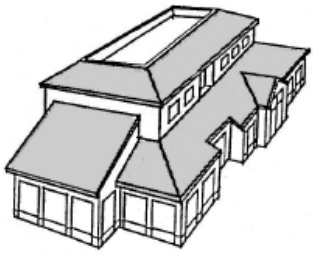
Not Acceptable:
Partial mansard roof appears added-on



Acceptable:
Mansard roof wraps around entire building



Preferred:
Full roof with overhand



7. COLOR

Color can dramatically affect the appearance of buildings and should be carefully considered in relation to the overall design of the building and other structures in the immediate area. Color can also affect the apparent scale and proportion of buildings by highlighting architectural elements such as doors, windows, fascias, cornices, lintels and sills.

a. The dominant color of new buildings should relate to the inherent color of the primary building's finish materials.

b. Subdued colors should be used for the overall color scheme. A bright trim color may be appropriate if it can be shown to enhance the general appearance of the building.

c. The color palette chosen for a building should be compatible with the colors of adjacent buildings. An exception is where the colors of adjacent buildings strongly diverge from these design guidelines.

d. The number of colors appearing on the building exterior should be minimized. Small commercial buildings should use no more than three colors.

e. Flashing, sheet metal, vent stocks, pipes and other mechanical equipment should be painted to match adjacent surfaces.

f. Subtle accent colors should be used to identify special areas such as entries, courtyards, alcoves, etc.

g. Color accented window and door frames should be used.

h. Neon lighting may be used as an architectural accent.

i. Large areas of intense white color should be avoided.

j. Bright neon paint colors should be avoided.

8. AWNINGS

a. Use awnings and canopies on buildings to add architectural interest. They provide an excellent means of breaking up large walls that otherwise may be left blank. The addition of fabric awnings over doors and windows is a simple way to update the appearance of a building as part of a renovation or façade remodel.

b. The design of awnings should relate to the overall facade on which they are to be placed in terms of size, shape, scale and color.

c. Awnings on contiguous buildings should be the same color, form, and general location.

d. Signs may be printed on the awnings but should be restricted to the owning flap (valance) or to the end panels of shed, curved or box awnings. Awning signs should be included in the calculation of total sign area.

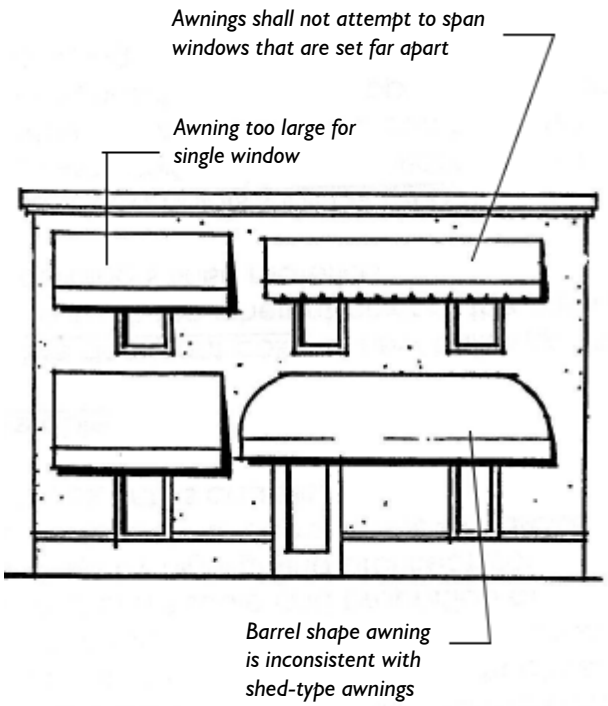
e. Canvas, matte finish vinyl and fabric awnings should be used.

f. Fabric awning colors which are least susceptible to fading are blue, green and neutral.

g. Internally illuminated awnings are discouraged.

h. Plexiglas and metal awnings are generally discouraged.

i. Fabric awning colors that are most susceptible to fading are brown, yellow, orange and red and should not be used.



9. ARCHITECTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR MULTI-TENANT CENTERS

a. Vertical architectural elements such as towers and cupolas should be used as focal points to help identify major tenants. However, when tower elements are used as focal points, they should also be utilized in other portions of the development to create a sense of balance and to avoid over-emphasizing any particular portion (tenant) of the development.

b. The placement of larger, taller anchor stores should be thoughtfully located to ensure that the entire development has a balanced appearance.

c. Storefronts within a multi-tenant development should utilize a consistent palette of materials and textures. While generally this will mean a continuous treatment of the entire frontage, it is acceptable to vary individual storefronts within a given palette of materials. For example, brick bases under shop windows could alternate with stucco treatments where there is a variation in the placement of the facade that correlates to changes in materials.

d. Freestanding 'pad' buildings within centers should exhibit a ratio of approximately 50 percent window area to 50 percent wall area on at least two building facades. Larger percentages of window area are encouraged.

Anchor store is identified through the use of architectural elements and is in scale with other smaller shops

C. SITE PLANNING GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL

Placement of buildings should consider the existing built context of the surrounding area, the location of any incompatible land uses, the location of major traffic generators as well as an analysis of a site's characteristics and particular influences.

a. *Consider adjacent structures.* New buildings should be sited in a manner that will complement and relate to the existing adjacent buildings and landscape.

b. *Cluster buildings around open spaces.* Whenever possible, new buildings should be clustered. This creates opportunities for plazas and pedestrian areas and prevents long "barracks-like" rows of buildings or overly simplistic "L"-shape shopping centers. When clustering is impractical, a visual link should be established between buildings. This link can be accomplished through the use of an arcade system, trellis, or other open structure.

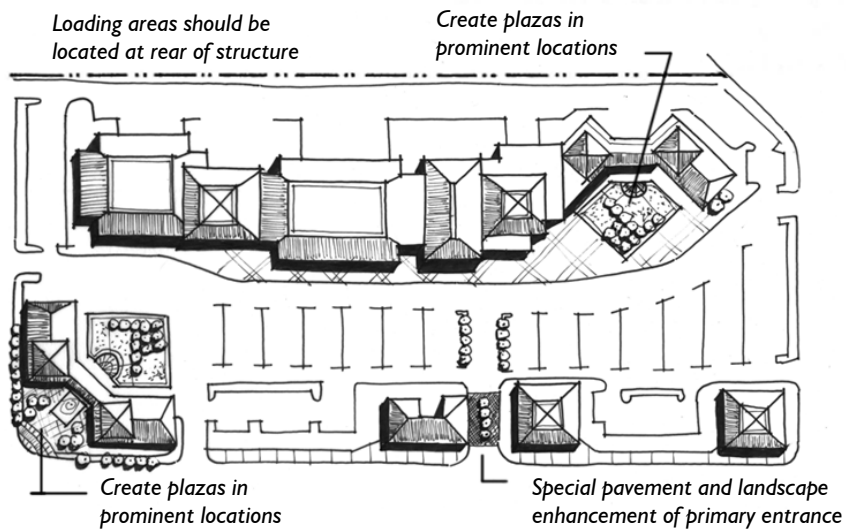
c. *Provide street-adjacent buildings.* When shopping centers are set back from the street with parking in front, street-adjacent buildings with minimum front setbacks should be provided along 10 percent to 20 percent of the street frontage. These freestanding "pad" buildings should be oriented to the street and provide connections to it to encourage pedestrian access and to visually link the center to the street. Landscaping should be provided on all four sides (except where loading space is required) with emphasis on the street-adjacent side.

d. *Make open-space areas usable.* Open space areas should be grouped into larger, prominent landscape areas rather than equally distributing them into areas of low impact at building peripheries, minimal side yard setbacks, behind a structure, or to areas of little impact to the public view.

e. *Consider areas for loading.* Avoid placing loading facilities at the front of buildings where it is difficult to adequately screen them from public view.

f. *Orient storefronts to the street.* Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage. They must not turn their backs to the street. This tends to create uninteresting blank facades and decreases pedestrian activity along the street. Architectural treatments should be provided on all building sides, not just those facing the street.

g. *Avoid "L"-shaped centers.* Shopping centers should incorporate either a clustered village oriented site plan or utilize external pads at the street edge for visual interest. A clustered approach can provide more opportunities for pedestrian open space, linkages between individual shops and parking, and more visually interesting architectural arrangements.

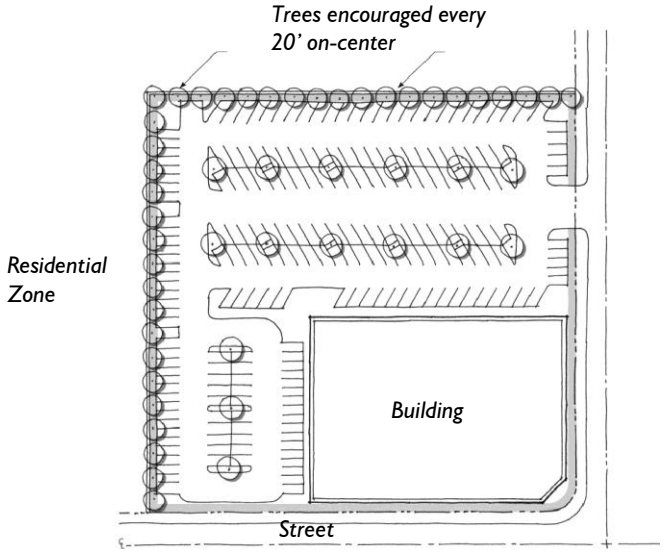


2. LAND USE BUFFERING

Commercial developments directly adjoining residential zones should consider the impacts of such development on residential uses and should take all necessary measures to eliminate negative impacts.

a. *Increase building setbacks*. Additional setback areas should be provided when a commercial project adjoins a residential zone. These, setback areas can be used for vehicle circulation and drive aisles and/or landscaping.

b. *Use landscaping as a buffer*. Evergreen trees should be planted no further apart than 20 feet on center, depending on species, to screen parking lots and large building walls, decrease perceived noise impacts, and provide a visual buffer between commercial and residential uses. Sufficient landscaping should be provided to screen parking lots from residential uses.



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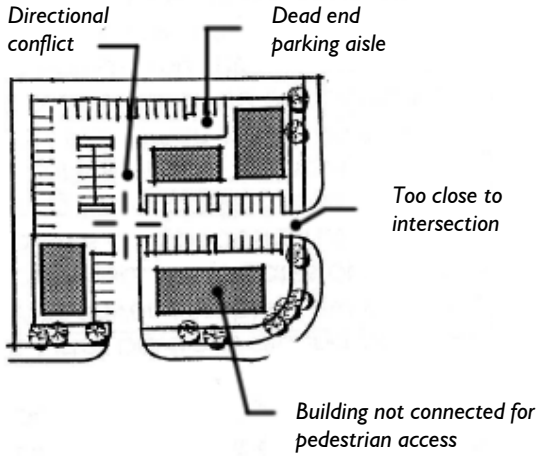

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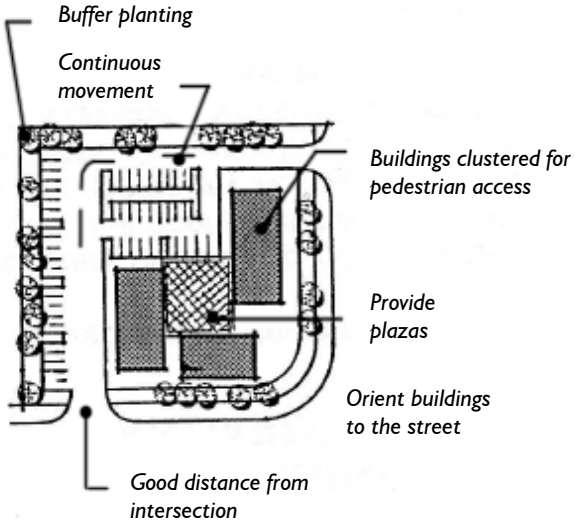


3. PARKING AND CIRCULATION

Parking lot design can be a critical factor in the success or failure of a commercial use. In considering the possibilities for developing a new parking area, a developer should analyze the following factors:

- Ingress and egress with consideration to possible conflicts with street traffic;
- Pedestrian and vehicular conflicts;
- On-site circulation and service vehicle zones; and
- The overall configuration and appearance of the parking area.

a. *Consider pedestrian movement*. Separate vehicular and pedestrian circulation systems should be provided. Pedestrian linkages between buildings in commercial developments should be emphasized, including distinct pedestrian access from parking areas in shopping centers.

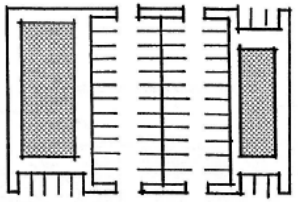
b. *Connect to adjacent uses*. Parking lot design should provide connections to adjacent parcels and shared parking where uses are compatible and such connections are practical.

c. *Minimize intersections/dead ends*. Intersections within parking areas should be kept to a minimum and dead-end aisles should be avoided.

d. *Provide access from side streets*. Whenever possible, access drives should be located on side streets or alleys.

e. *Locate driveways away from intersections*. Access drives, whether located on front or side streets, should be located as far as possible from street intersections so that adequate automobile stacking space is provided.

f. *Provide adequate space between drives*. Access drives for commercial centers should be at least 200 feet apart and at least 100 feet from any intersection. Additionally, access drives should be a minimum of 10 feet from property lines unless a shared drive is provided.



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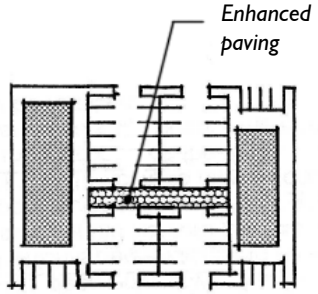

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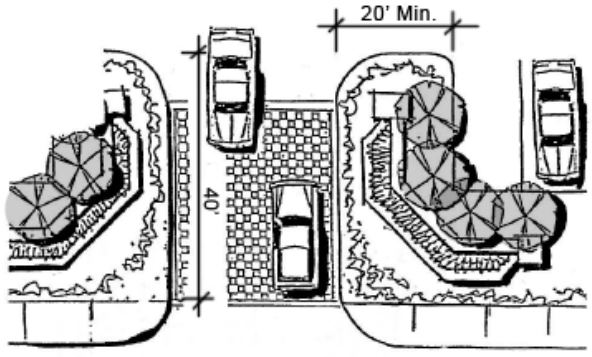
g. *Provide deep entry drive*. The first parking stall which is perpendicular to an entry driveway or the first aisle juncture that is perpendicular, should be at least 40 feet back from the curb to provide adequate queuing distance off the street. With larger centers, a larger setback is encouraged.

h. *Separate cars and pedestrians*. Parking areas should be designed so that pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars. The need for pedestrians to cross parking aisles and landscape areas should be minimized.

i. *Separate car and truck access*. Customer access and circulation should be separated from service truck areas wherever feasible.

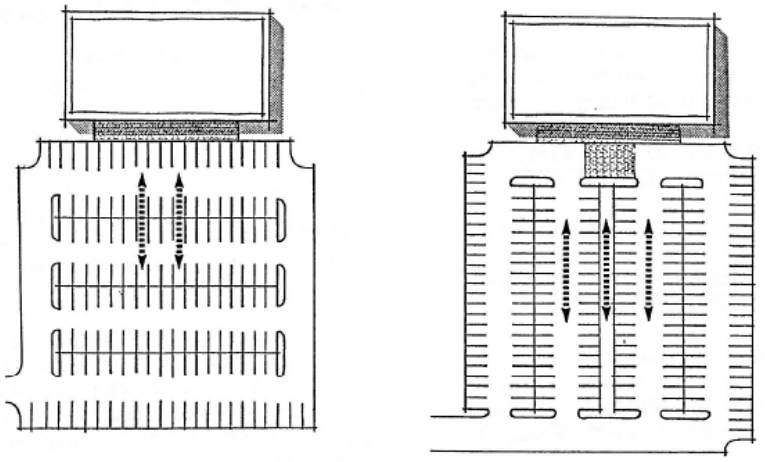
j. *Provide on-site circulation*. A vehicle entering a parking facility should not be required to enter a street or alley to move from one location to any other location within the same parking facility or premises.

k. *Use special accents at entries*. Monumentation, special textured paving, flowering accents, walls, shrubs, lighting and the use of specimen trees should be used to generate visual interest at entry pants to commercial centers.



Depth of entry drive (throat)

Parking aisle arrangement



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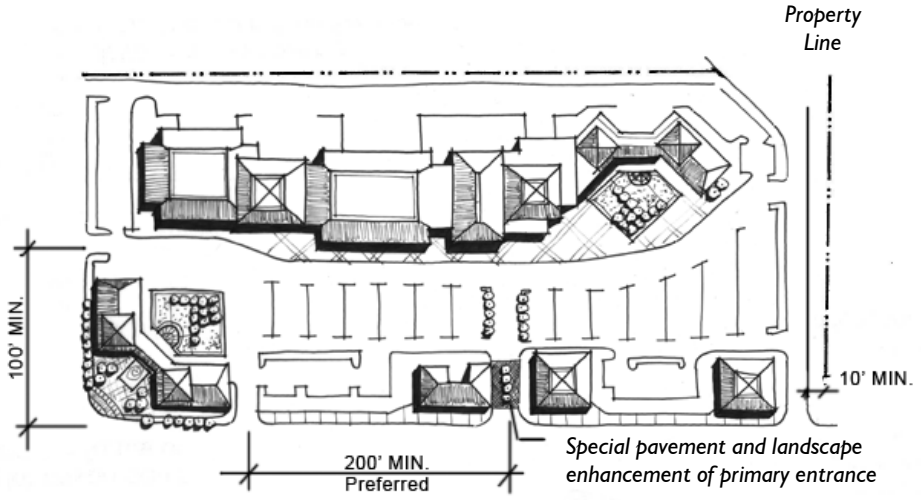


Special pavement and landscape enhancement of primary entrance

4. WALLS AND FENCES

Walls and fences are generally used for security purposes and to screen areas from public view. If they are not required for a specific purpose they should not be used.

a. *Keep walls low*. Walls and fences should be kept as low as possible while performing their screening and security functions.

b. *Materials and colors*. Walls viewed from the street or parking lots should be compatible with the site's architecture through the use of similar materials and colors.

c. *Landscape walls*. Landscaping should be used in combination with walls whenever possible to soften the otherwise blank surfaces.

d. *Offset long walls*. Walls should be offset every 50 feet and architecturally designed to reduce monotony. Landscape pockets along the wall should be provided at regular intervals.

5. SCREENING OF STORAGE AND EQUIPMENT AREAS

Any equipment, whether on the roof, side of building, or ground, should be screened.

a. *Screening required*. The method of screening should be architecturally integrated with the building in terms of materials, color, shape and size.

b. *Outdoor storage*. Any exterior storage or equipment area should be confined to portions of the site least visible to public view.

c. *Screening materials*. Screening should consist of a combination of elements including solid masonry walls, berms, and landscaping.

d. *Use a continuous screen*. Where individual equipment areas are located reasonably close together, a continuous screen should be installed instead of a number of individual screens.

D. LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are intended to augment, and are in addition to, the landscape and irrigation design standards codified in Chapter 17.31 of the WMC. In the event of any inconsistency or conflict, the more stringent requirement should prevail.

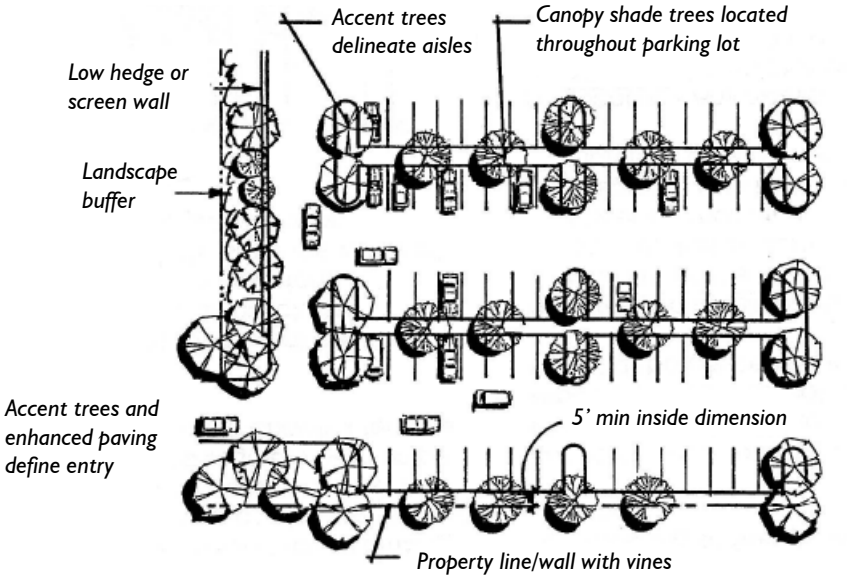
Landscaping for commercial uses defines specific areas by helping to focus on building entrances and parking lots, defines the edges of various land uses, provides transitions between neighboring properties (buffering), and provides screening for loading and storage areas. Landscaping should also be used as a unifying element within a project to obtain a cohesive appearance and to help achieve compatibility of a new project with its surroundings.

1. GENERAL

a. *Three tier system.* Landscaped areas should generally incorporate plantings utilizing a three-tier, or "layered" system including a mix of: l) grasses and ground cover, 2) shrubs, and 3) trees.

b. *Planting concepts.* The following are common planting design concepts that are strongly encouraged:

- Specimen trees used in informal groupings and rows at major focal points;
- Use of flowering vines both on walls and arbors or trellises;
- Use of planting to create shadow and patterns against walls;
- Use of plants to creatively soften building lines and emphasize the positive features of the site;
- Trees to create canopy and shade, especially in parking areas; and
- Berms, plantings, and walls to screen parking lots, trash enclosures, storage areas, loading docks, utility boxes, etc.



c. *Size and scale of plants*. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and be of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended goals.

d. *Landscape base of building*. Landscaping around the entire base of buildings should be provided whenever possible to soften the edge between the parking lot and the structure.

e. *Protect landscape areas*. Landscaping should be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment by raised planting surfaces and the use of curbs. Concrete mow-strips separating turf and shrub areas should be provided.

f. *Use vines on walls*. Vines and climbing plants integrated upon buildings, trellises, and perimeter walls not only look good but also help discourage graffiti. A few plants to consider for this purpose are: bougainvillea, grape ivy and wisteria vines.

g. *Discouraged landscape materials*. Non-living landscaping, such as gravel, bark or AstroTurf should not be used as a substitute for plant materials.

h. *Use plants in containers*. Plants in containers are especially appropriate for areas adjacent to storefronts along walkways.

i. *Separate walls from sidewalks*. Walls installed immediately in back of a sidewalk or other hardscape element without a landscape separation are strongly discouraged.

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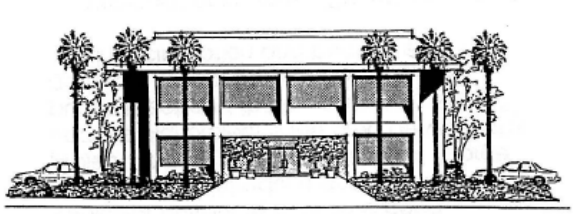

Mature landscaping is in scale with building

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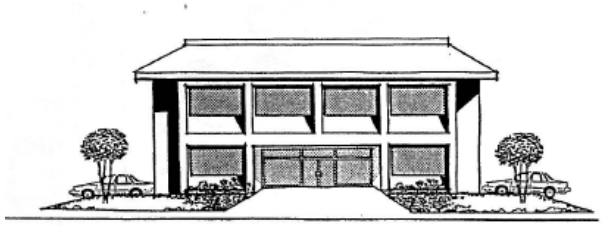
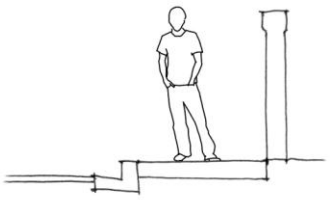


Landscaping is small at maturity and out of scale with building



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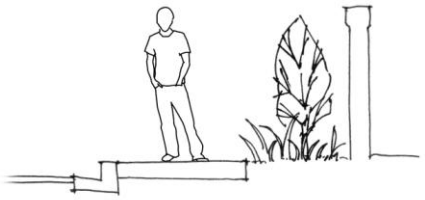

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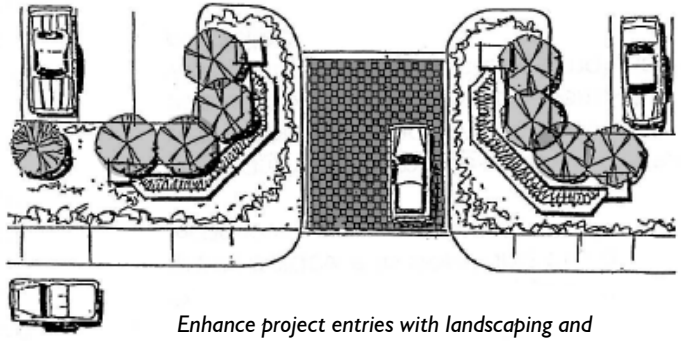
2. LANDSCAPING AT NON-RESIDENTIAL SITE ENTRANCES

Vehicular entrances provide a prime opportunity to introduce and identify a project. The vehicular entry zone in a large commercial project is the area between the public street and the main entry to the building. This zone generally includes the on-site entry aisle, parking, circulation and building entry area.

a. *Vehicular entry zone*. The vehicular entry zone should be treated with special landscape elements and hardscape elements that will give individual identity to the project (i.e., special paving, specimen trees, flowering plants, etc.).

b. *Textured paving*. Interlocking pavers or rough-textured concrete should be used to delineate site entries in commercial developments.



Enhance project entries with landscaping and special paving for visual impact

3. LANDSCAPE AREA SPACING

Plant materials should be placed so that they do not interfere with the lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes. Trees or large shrubs should not be planted under overhead lines or over underground utilities if their growth might interfere with such public utilities.

4. BASIC PLANT LIST

Following is a list of generally accepted plant species that should be used to landscape private properties. It should also be noted that the City also implements a Master Plan of Street Trees program for landscaping in the public right of way. The Master Plan of Street Trees should be referenced to ensure that a visually cohesive and compatible landscape palette is used on both public and private property.

a. Groundcover/bedding

- Hedera H. hahnil
- Gozania species
- Potentilla verna
- Ophiopogon spp.
- Rosmarinus officialis
- Vinca minor
- Trachelospermum Jasminoides

b. Shrubs

- Agapanthus africanus
- Asparagus sprengeri
- Azalea southern indica
- Alsophila australis
- Carissa species
- Escallonia fradesi
- Hemerocallis speciosa
- Hibiscus species
- Ilex species
- Juniperus species
- Liriope species
- Moraea iridioides
- Nadina domestica
- Nerium oleander
- Photina
- Pittosporum tobira variety
- Raphiolepsis indica
- Ternstroemia japonica
- Veronica species
- Xylosma congestum

c. Trees

- Cuapniopsis anacardioides
- Erythrina caffra
- Eucalyptus species
- Ficus species
- Jacaranda acutifolia
- Kaelreuteria paniculata
- Lagerstroemia indica
- Liquidamber styraciflua
- Magnolia grandiflora
- Meleleucca leucadendra
- Pistacia chinenois
- Pinus species
- Platanus species
- Podocarpus gracilior
- Prunus pissardi
- Pyrus kawakamil
- Schinus terebinthifolius

d. Climbing Vines

- Bougainvillea spp.
- Ficus pumila
- Parthenocissus tricuspidata
- Thumbergia spp.

E. SIGN GUIDELINES

The following design guidelines are should be considered in addition to the requirements of the WMC (Chapter 17.33):

1. GENERAL

a. *Use a brief message.* The fewer the words, the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief, succinct message is simpler and faster to read and looks more attractive. Sign text should be limited to the name of the business, or to the type of product or service being sold (i.e., "Shoes" or "Haircuts").

b. *Select colors and materials carefully.* Sign colors and materials should be selected to contribute to sign legibility and to complement the building's architecture. Bright "day-glo" colors should be avoided as they are distracting and do not usually blend well with building and other background colors.

c. *Use signs to establish façade rhythm.* On buildings that have plain façades, signs should be used in a manner that establishes rhythm, scale, and proportion.

d. *Consider the proportions of the building.* Signs should be placed on buildings in locations where they are appropriate to the scale of the building. For example, a small sign near an entrance is more appropriate than if the same sign were located high up on a wall.

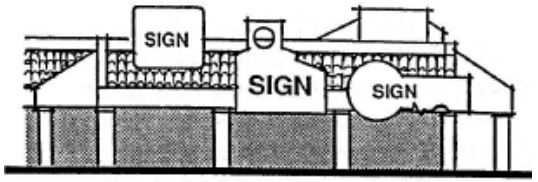
e. *Avoid intricate typefaces.* These typefaces are difficult to read and reduce the sign's ability to communicate its message. The use of complex typefaces on sign lettering is strongly discouraged.

f. *Avoid faddish typefaces.* Such typefaces may look good today, but soon go out of style. The image conveyed may soon become that of a dated and unfashionable business.

g. *Avoid too many colors.* Too many colors overwhelm the basic function of the signs communication and can compete with the sign's content for the viewer's attention. Limited use of the accent colors can increase legibility. No more than two colors should be used, with bright colors limited to accent features. Structural components, such as poles and supports, should be minimized by painting them a muted earth-tone color.

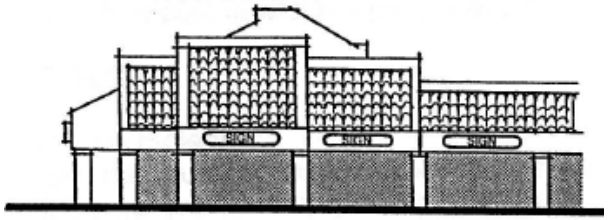
h. *Avoid signs with strange shapes.* Signs that are oddly shaped can restrict the legibility of the message.

DON'T DO THIS



Inconsistent sign patterns create confusion. Signs within or above the roof area constitute a roof sign as defined in Article 7 of the WMC and are prohibited.

DO THIS



Employ a consistent sign pattern

2. BUILDING, WALL OR FASCIA SIGNS

a. *Provide logical space for signs.* All commercial buildings should provide space for the logical and integrated placement of signs.

b. *Sign placement.* Building signs should be placed on the building parapet or fascia and should not exceed the height of the parapet or fascia itself. A wall sign should also be placed on the portions of exterior building walls that correspond with the interior location of the business to which the sign pertains, provided that where this provision would not result in a reasonably visible sign from the adjacent public right-of-way, the Director can consider alternate placement of the sign.

c. *Make signs complementary.* Within any development where there is more than one sign, all signs should be complementary to each other in the following ways:

- Type of construction materials (cabinet, sign face, supports, etc.);
- Color of copy and background;
- Method used for supporting sign; and
- Shape of sign and related components.

d. *Lighting methods.* Direct and indirect lighting methods are allowed provided that they are not harsh or unnecessarily bright.

e. *Backlit letter signs.* The use of backlit, individually cut letter signs is preferred and may be required in place of any other type of sign.

3. WINDOW SIGNS

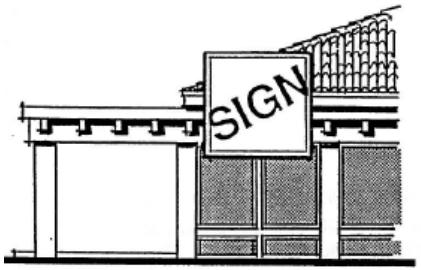
a. *Location.* Permanent window signs should be painted or otherwise permanently affixed to the interior of the window surface. Neon tube signs may be used.

4. ARCADE SIGNS

a. *Design/materials.* The design of arcade signs, the materials of construction, and the method of mounting should be the same for all such signs within a multitenant center.

b. *Illumination.* Arcade signs should not be illuminated except by permanent lighting fixtures recessed into the ceiling of the arcade.

DON'T DO THIS



Sign is out of scale and character with building

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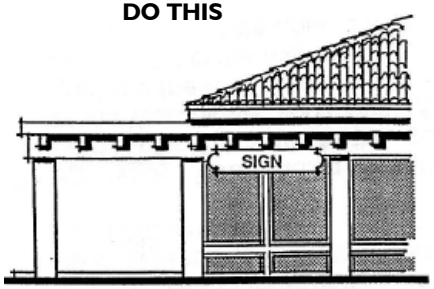
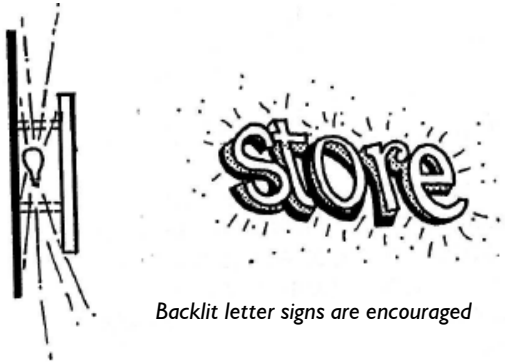


Sign is in scale and character with building



Backlit letter signs are encouraged

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