



## **CITYWIDE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES (EXCLUDING THE DOWNTOWN LORAIN PRESERVATION DISTRICT)**

The design review guidelines cover all aspects of the exterior features of a project and include an examination of the surrounding context to ensure that new development and modifications to existing development achieve the objectives of Chapter 1185. The following guidelines are in addition to the specific regulations and requirements set forth for each of the particular zoning districts:

### **I General criteria applicable to all proposals requiring review.**

(1) The proposal shall enhance and improve the character of the community and be appropriate and compatible with its surroundings in accordance with the intent, objectives and development criteria of these guidelines. In assessing the characteristics of the surrounding area, noncontributing features will not be considered factors in determining compatibility.

(2) The proposal should minimize changes to the natural grade, and the removal and destruction of trees, landscaping and other natural features.

(3) Buildings shall be oriented in relation to proposed grading, natural features and to existing structures on and adjacent to the site to maintain:

- A. Satisfactory proportions and scale;
- B. Reasonable light and air; and
- C. Privacy, as appropriate.

(4) Buildings, structures and landscaping should be designed and located on the

site and be of a scale to complement adjacent buildings and enhance the character of the surrounding area by having features that are appropriate and compatible with existing buildings and structures. In making this determination, the Design Review Board shall consider:

- A. Building height, width and general proportions;
- B. Architectural features, including patterns of windows and doors, roof pitch, cornice lines, balconies, porches, shutters, dormers, eaves and other decorative detail;
- C. General site characteristics which encourage well landscaped and conveniently located parking areas, safe and comfortable pedestrian ways, and convenient pedestrian movement among adjacent and nearby buildings and parking areas; and
- D. Color used which is not bright or brilliant.

(5) Each individual building should express its function, and have an individual character and identity created through functional variety in the overall design.

(6) When existing buildings are to be renovated, the distinguishing qualities or character of a property that contribute to the overall character should not be destroyed. Removal or alteration of distinctive architectural features should be avoided, except for features that are determined to be noncontributing features.

(7) Unique and contemporary designs may be appropriate to the extent such design does not clearly detract from any architectural unity of an ensemble or group of architecturally significant buildings.

(8) Landscaping shall be designed to:

A. Maintain an adequate and appropriate proportion of deciduous and non-deciduous trees.

B. Be in such locations, scale and amounts to be integrated with the building design.

C. Clearly designate entrances/exits.

D. Reasonably screen paved areas from the street through the use of mounding, the land's natural topography, and/or adequate vegetation.

(9) Mechanical equipment, waste receptacles and other similar appurtenant or accessory structures shall be located to minimize the impact on the building and the community.

A. Window air-conditioning units, condenser elements, antennas, other mechanical equipment, and waste receptacles should not be located on the front of the building.

B. Mechanical equipment on the ground and waste receptacles must be screened with a fence or plant material as approved by the Planning Commission, or housed in a structure that is in harmony with the surroundings.

C. Mechanical equipment attached to the side or roof of a building, including heating vents, should be kept as low as possible and screened and be compatible with the background.

## **II Supplemental criteria applicable to uses in all districts,**

(1) General site design:

A. Parking areas, drives and approaches shall be of appropriate size and scale in relation to the appearance of the proposed development from public rights-of-way, adjacent property and the internal portion of the site itself. Such appropriate scale shall be achieved by the width of approaches and drives, by having adequate but not excessive parking, and by using landscaping within large parking areas.

B. Accessory loading areas should be located in unobtrusive areas and be screened or blocked from public view.

C. Signs should be designed to reflect the scale of the building, site and surrounding characteristics. Buildings shall be designed for the appropriate placement of signage in a manner which compliments the building.

D. Exterior security and ornamental lighting, when used, shall enhance the building design and the adjoining landscape. Lighting standards and fixtures shall be of a design and size compatible with the building and adjacent areas. Lighting shall be designed so as not to shine directly onto adjoining properties and not be excessive.

E. Entryways should be designed to enhance the ability of the general public to find their way into and around buildings and open spaces.

(2) Scale:

A. Variations in the height of structures are encouraged in order to impact some variety to the skyline of the area and to add some distinction to the streetscape.

B. All observable sides of new construction should achieve architectural interest and excellence.

(3) Materials:

A. New construction shall be guided by the existing work to which it is attached or is associated, and should not be in stark contrast to the materials used on adjacent structures.

B. The texture, color, and placement pattern of materials shall be appropriate for the size and scale of the proposed structures and be compatible with the character of the area.

C. In Industrial Districts, full size masonry units of split face and scored block are permitted with integral earth tone, white or gray colors. Metal panels and standing seam roofs are permitted. HVAC units shall be screened from the street with architectural screens or parapet walls. Mansard roofs and asphalt or fiberglass shingled roofs are not appropriate in Industrial Districts and are not permitted.

### **III Supplemental criteria applicable to uses in all districts except Industrial Districts,**

(1) Site features:

A. Park benches, ornamental planters, pedestrian plazas, fountains, sculpture, bicycle racks and brick pavers shall be encouraged when appropriate to create inviting, people-oriented spaces.

B. Other devices may be considered appropriate in the interest of adding attractive features to the District, such as a clock tower, a raised roof on an otherwise flat-roofed structure, or a cupola or other design feature.

C. Sidewalks connecting building entrances with parking areas and to the public sidewalks shall be provided to permit and encourage pedestrian access to buildings.

(2) Building style and scale:

A. Buildings shall be designed with the following styles either a flat roof or pitched gable or hip roof. A false gable or pitched roof may be used over a canopy, dormers or bay windows or as a rooftop mechanical screen on a flat roof. Three story or higher buildings shall generally be built with flat roofs. Flat roofed buildings shall have a parapet wall or a false gable or partial pitched roofs to screen mechanical rooftop equipment. Gable roofs shall generally not be higher from the eave to the peak than the height of the building to the eaves. Mansard roofs are generally not permitted where roofing material is used to cover a building wall.

B. Architectural details and ornamentation shall be meaningful to the overall design and appropriate for the size and scale of proposed structures; and harmonious with other architectural detail and ornamentation.

C. In areas which have a predominate architectural style, including historic

styles, such character should be a significant consideration in determining compatibility. In such cases, compatibility is partially achieved by some repetition of basic elements such as color, materials and common scale.

D. Building facades should have windows in order to insure a comfortable visual dialogue between occupant and pedestrian. Large unwindowed spaces shall be discouraged.

E. The proportion of wall surface to openings should be consistent with adjacent structures.

F. The use of awnings, mainly confined to the street level, in shopping areas is encouraged. Awnings are to be designed and mounted so as not to cover significant architectural detail.

(3) Materials and colors:

A. Materials shall be used which contribute to the City's architectural character and building quality. Examples of such contributing materials include:

1. Brick in colors of: red/rose, tan, brown, beige and white;
2. Masonry units in a split-face, flashed or smooth finish in reduced size of 4" x 12" or less with integral earth tone colors: red/rose, tan, brown, beige or white, in Office Districts full size split-faced block may be permitted in the same colors as above;
3. In Residential Districts horizontal lap siding and trim in wood, vinyl or metal;
4. Stone.

B. Conversely, the following materials are not consistent with the City's architectural characteristics or of lesser quality and would tend to hasten the creation of nuisances and/or blight; therefore, they are considered inappropriate for use:

1. Mirrored/reflective glass unless used as a small component of the building, designed and located within the context of the architectural style and primarily limited to office buildings;
2. Concrete block;
3. Stucco, EIFS (e.g., "dryvit") or large expanse of similar material except as a minor architectural feature, belt course or minor design element;
4. Unfinished and industrial type materials such as full size concrete block, EIFS, Metal siding or panels or painted block;
5. Bright or primary colors, multiple colors (more than three) on the exterior finish and/or awnings which are in stark contrast to other structures in the surrounding area and/or the design of the proposed structure.

C. Authentic materials are preferred; however, modern products that simulate such as stone effectively may be considered.

D. Roofing material on sloped and visible roofs shall be as follows:

1. Asphalt, fiberglass or slate shingles in colors of: gray, black and brown;
2. Standing seam metal roofs limited to natural copper or copper patina, dark green or dark brown;
3. Clay tile, exposed roll roofing, or light colored or bright colored roofs are not permitted.