

# SITE & BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

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## 4.1 PURPOSE & INTENTION

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The purpose of this chapter is to provide physical standards and guidelines for site and building design. Design regulations are not intended to replicate existing built form or achieve a specific stylistic result, but to allow imaginative design that respects the neighborhood context. It is the specific intention of this chapter to ensure that development:

- Is compatible with surrounding areas;
- Supports the unique visual character and streetscapes in Davidson;
- Utilizes architectural styles which respect the existing historic character of the town;
- Spatially defines streets, squares, and parks through careful building placement and site design;
- Encourages walking by orienting buildings to public streets, providing easy pedestrian connections, and bringing activities and visually interesting features closer to the street;

## SECTIONS

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4.1 PURPOSE & INTENTION	PAGE 4-1
4.2 APPLICABILITY & ADMINISTRATION	PAGE 4-2
4.3 GENERAL SITE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS	PAGE 4-2
4.4 GENERAL BUILDING DESIGN REQUIREMENTS	PAGE 4-6
4.5 SPECIFIC BUILDING TYPE REQUIREMENTS	PAGE 4-11
4.6 EXISTING INDUSTRIAL CAMPUSES	PAGE 4-19
4.7 RENOVATION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES	PAGE 4-19

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## 4.2 APPLICABILITY & ADMINISTRATION

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The standards in this section shall:

- Serve as criteria for the review of the application and decision to approve, deny, or approve with conditions.
- Serve as criteria to evaluate the application and prepare an analysis of the application for the appropriate decision-making board.
- Serve as the basis for the decision-making bodies' deliberations. See section 14 for design review procedures.
- "Shall" and "Must", when used, denote a design requirement. "Should" and "May" denote a design guideline.
- Shall not be applied in any manner prohibited by NC G.S. 160A-381.

### 4.2.1 HISTORIC DISTRICT REGULATIONS

All changes or improvements made to structures within the Local Historic District must comply with the Historic District Regulations as described in Section 22.

## 4.3 GENERAL SITE DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

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### 4.3.1 STANDARDS

#### A. Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

1. The primary pedestrian entry to all storefront and workplace buildings and access to first floor retail shall face a fronting, primary street. There shall be a connecting walkway from the primary entry to the street.
2. Detached, attached, townhouse, mixed village, and multi-family buildings shall have the primary pedestrian entry facing a fronting, primary street, a central courtyard, or pedestrian way. Secondary access for all building types may be provided from parking areas located to the rear of a building.
3. Large buildings fronting more than one street shall provide multiple building entrances on each fronting street.
4. Large buildings fronting a single street should have multiple entrances on the fronting street.
5. Porte cocheres are prohibited on the front of buildings.
6. Vehicle access from the fronting street is prohibited on lots for which access from an improved alley is available. See Section 8.5.
7. Developments that include or front on an existing street must integrate that street into the development. Vehicular access may be from existing or new streets.
8. Berms that separate development from the street are prohibited.
9. See Section 8 for Parking and Driveway requirements and Section 6 for Street Design requirements.

**B. Building Location and Orientation**

1. Buildings must front on a public street, pedestrian way, or a dedicated public plaza that is open to a public street.
2. A building located at a street intersection shall not have parking, loading, or service areas at the corner.
3. Significant street vistas should terminate in a focal point, such as a distinct building, architectural or natural feature.

**EXAMPLE 4-1: LOTS FRONTING PEDESTRIAN WAYS**



*Buildings fronting a pedestrian alley. Davidson, NC*



*Residential lots fronting a cottage court. Saint Charles, MO*

**C. Building Height**

For building heights, see Section 4.4.1 and the specific district standards detailed in Section 2.

**D. Fences, Hedges, and Garden Walls**

1. All Planning Areas: Fences, hedges, and/or garden walls located in front of the building line shall be no greater than three feet in height and fences shall be no more than two-thirds solid. Fences, hedges, and/or garden walls located behind the front building line shall be no greater than six feet in height. Chain link fencing is allowed in rear yards only. Hedges, garden walls, or fences may be built on property lines or as the continuation of building walls. For buildings on corner lots, both facades fronting a street shall be considered a front building line for purposes of fencing, hedges, and garden walls.
2. Scenic Byway Overlay District: For parcels subject to the split-rail fence standards within the Scenic Byway Overlay District, fences shall be constructed with a top of rail height not to exceed 48 - 52 inches. Supporting posts may extend an additional six to eight inches above the top of rail, but may not exceed 58 inches total. Agricultural or equestrian-related exceptions may be permitted by the Planning Director.
3. Retaining Walls: The maximum height of retaining walls behind the front building line is six feet. In front of the building line the maximum height of retaining walls is three feet. Taller retaining walls may be tiered, with a minimum two foot separation between walls.

**E Loading/Service Areas, Mechanical Equipment and Utilities:**

1. Loading facilities, loading docks, service doors, and other service areas shall not be located along a primary street-facing façade, nor visible from a park or public open space.
2. Mechanical equipment (except small items such as fans and vents), utility meters, storage areas, solid waste containers (including dumpsters, compactors, recycling containers, and solid waste and recycling handling areas), transformers, generators, HVAC units and similar features, or other utility hardware on the building, roof, or ground shall be screened from public view with materials similar to the structure; OR they shall be so located as not to be visible from a primary fronting public street. In certain cases, screening using natural materials may be preferable. See Section 9 for landscape screening requirements. Note: Natural screening alternatives must be approved by the Planning Director in consultation with the Arborist.
3. Screening is not required for electronic vehicle charging stations.
4. Off-street parking shall not be located forward of the front façade of the building unless on a corner lot. On a corner lot, parking may not be located in front of the facade on the primary street. See Section 8 for more information on parking.
5. Underground Utilities: All utilities must be underground from the point of connection. See Davidson Municipal Code for right-of-way restrictions.

**F. Encroachments:** Certain structures shall be permitted to encroach within the minimum required setbacks established in the respective planning areas in Section 2 as specified below:

1. Hedges, garden walls, or fences may encroach within minimum required setbacks up to the property lines.
2. Cornices may encroach up to two feet within any required minimum setback.
3. Detached house, attached house, and townhouse building types may have:
  - a. Rear decks that encroach up to eight feet into the rear setback.
  - b. Balconies, stairs, stoops, open porches, bay windows, and awnings that encroach up to five feet into the minimum front setback area of the lot.
  - c. Outdoor swimming pools that encroach to within five feet of any side or rear property line.
4. Ramps for handicap accessibility and fire escapes required by the North Carolina State Building Code may encroach within any required minimum setback, but may not be closer than three feet to any property line.
5. Required street lighting and any landscape lighting may encroach into a minimum required setback.

**G. Development Plans with Multiple Buildings**

1. In order to encourage pedestrian activity, buildings should be grouped together or attached along the primary fronting street or along an internal network of interconnecting streets.
2. Building sites should be clustered in order to minimize their impact on the landscape and preserve views and historical features.

**H. Public Spaces**

Public spaces are required or encouraged in mixed-use, commercial, or employment nodes based upon the requirements of the specific planning area. The design and location of urban open space on a site is an important factor in a successful pedestrian environment. To ensure that the open space is well-used, it is essential to locate and design it carefully in accordance with the following general standards:

- Urban open spaces shall be fronted by streets and buildings to encourage its use and its safety.
- The space shall be located where it is visible and easily accessible from homes and public areas (building entrances, streets, sidewalks).
- The space should be located to take views and sun exposure into account.
- The space shall be well-buffered from moving cars so that users can enjoy and relax in the space.
- The space shall be visible from streets or internal drives, but should not be wholly exposed to them.
- The space shall be partially enclosed with building walls, freestanding walls, landscaping, raised planters, or on-street parking to help buffer it and create a comfortable “outdoor room.”
- See Section 7, Parks and Open Space, for additional information.

#### I. Exceptions

Exceptions from the site and building design standards established in this section may be approved by the Planning Director to preserve mature trees and natural features.

### 4.3.2 GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING BUILDINGS

This section is intended to ensure the compatibility of infill development and redevelopment to surrounding neighborhoods and shall apply to new construction and the expansion of existing buildings. As a means to provide guidance for the design of buildings that integrate well into the context of Davidson, this section identifies the following key features necessary to ensure compatibility. When developing in the Village Infill Planning Area, in addition to the standards below, see Section 2 for development in the Village Infill Overlay District.

- D. **Street Frontage:** Street trees should be preserved.
- E. **Rhythm of Development along the Street:** Established building rhythms along street frontages should be continued. Larger buildings can be integrated into smaller-scale neighborhoods by creating repetitive bays with facade articulation.
- F. **Building Orientation:** Main entrances, and other primary building facade elements should be oriented toward the street. Courtyard buildings should orient main entrances toward courtyards that open to the street and serve as a semi-public extension of the public realm.
- G. **Front Setback Patterns:** Established building setback patterns should be continued as practical. Deep front setbacks can compromise the pedestrian realm.
- H. **Building Form:** Massing, proportion, scale, setbacks, spaces between buildings, and their relative positions should be used to integrate new development into existing streetscapes.
- I. **Density:** Density should increase closer to mixed use and commercial nodes.

- J. **Building Design:** Buildings should be designed to respect the existing built environment, but not be explicit reproduction of past historical styles.

## 4.4 GENERAL BUILDING DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

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This section shall apply to all buildings, excluding the detached house, and accessory structure building types. For requirements for these building types see Specific Building Type Requirements, Section 4.5.

### 4.4.1 STANDARDS

The design of buildings should be complementary with prevalent architectural features of the surrounding neighborhood, especially in areas where patterns established by recurring architectural features are well-documented and valued.

#### A. Building Height

1. Building height, as established in each respective planning area in Section 2, is measured as the number of stories in a building. A story is a habitable level in a building.
2. The following elements shall not be calculated as stories:
  - a. Under-roof areas less than seven feet clear height with dormers.
  - b. Unoccupied residential attics less than seven feet above the eaves.
  - c. Raised basements less than four feet exposed at the lowest grade at the front façade.
  - d. Mezzanines
3. Building height is measured from the finished floor elevation of the façade facing the street to the ridgeline or the highest point of the roof (where there is no ridgeline), excluding chimneys and basements, excepting raised basements described above. Unless specifically stated elsewhere in this ordinance, the height requirements established in this ordinance shall not apply to:
  - a. Building elements (such as church spires, belfries, cupolas, domes, parapets, etc.) which are not intended for human occupancy;
  - b. Mechanical penthouses which are set back at least 20 feet from the front elevation of the building.
4. This ordinance requires buildings, excluding detached and attached house building types, to be at least two stories. The following exceptions are permitted:
  - a. A one-story grocery store in Neighborhood Center II Planning Area, not exceeding 50,000 square feet is permitted provided it adjoins, or is separated only by a pedestrian/vehicular plaza from, a storefront building of at least two fully functioning stories for a minimum of 60 feet each side of the grocery.
  - b. Conference centers over 10,000 square feet, civic buildings, workplace



buildings used in light manufacturing, sanctuaries, auditoriums, neighborhood clubhouses, and gymnasiums may be one-story without liner buildings with Planning Director approval.

## B. Form and Massing

1. Franchise architecture, where buildings are stylized in an attempt to use the building itself as advertising, is not permitted.
2. For large scale buildings, the front façade shall create repetitive bays, or the façade shall be divided into an asymmetrical, yet balanced, composition.
3. Buildings on a corner or axial termini should be designed with additional height or architectural embellishments to emphasize their location.
4. Building design shall take the natural topography of the site into consideration. Construction techniques shall be used to have the least amount of impact on sites with a slope greater than 15 percent. Examples of such techniques include avoiding excessive cut and fill on site during construction, building into the slope (if topography permits), terracing the building and site improvements to match topography as closely as possible, and controlling water runoff.
5. Structured parking shall be screened in such a way that cars are not visible from the sidewalk in front of the building. Locating structured parking at the interior of the block surrounded by buildings is the preferred method.
6. Large scale single-use buildings, such as parking garages, athletic arenas, and big box retail stores, shall be located behind two story liner buildings or above a one story storefront. See section 4.4.1.A.4 for exceptions.

## C. Facade Articulation\*

All building facades visible from a public street or park/open space shall have:

1. A recognizable base, distinguished from the body of the building by features such as, but not limited to:
  - a. Thicker walls, ledges or sills;
  - b. Visually heavier materials (such as brick, stone, tile or other masonry) than those used on the body of the building; and/or
  - c. Lighter or darker colored materials, mullions, panels or planters.
2. A recognizable top, occupying the highest portion of the building and distinguished from the body of the building by features such as, but not limited to:
  - a. A dimensional cornice capping the top of a building wall;
  - b. Different materials or differently colored materials;

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*\*Not applicable to Detached House, Townhouse, or Live/Work building types: 1. Located outside of a local historic district or outside an area designated as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; and, 2. Reviewed under the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings.*

- c. A roof overhang with brackets; and/or
  - d. Stepped parapets. Parapets shall be proportional to the height of the building.
3. Large building facades shall be modulated through the use of repetitive bays separated by piers or columns, the use of reveals or recesses in the surface of the wall itself, the placement of window and door openings, or the placement of balconies, awnings, canopies, and sunshades.

EXAMPLE 4-4: BUILDING BASE, BODY & CAP



**D. Facade Transparency\***

1. See Section 4.5 for facade transparency requirements for specific building types.
2. Minimum requirements
  - a. On the ground floor facade the required percentage of transparency applies to the area of the first floor façade of each principal building façade.
  - b. On the upper floor facades the required percentage of transparency applies to the area of the façade.
3. All windows and glazing used to meet the minimum first floor requirements must allow views from habitable areas within the building to the street or property line and must allow passers-by a view into the habitable area of the building. Shelves and/or fixtures may not obstruct the view to the interior. Neither permanent nor temporary signage may reduce the window transparency requirement.
4. Windows or fixed glass areas in doorways may be used to satisfy the minimum requirements except in doorways designed for egress only.
5. Glass block, reflective or highly tinted glass, faux windows, or display windows that



are not open to the habitable space beyond cannot be used to satisfy the minimum requirements.

**E. Materials\***

1. Materials shall be selected for suitability to the type of building and design for which they are used.
2. Piecemeal embellishment and frequent changes in material should be avoided.
3. All sides of the building should use materials consistent with those on the front if visible from public streets or neighboring properties, and should be carefully designed with similar detailing, comparable quality, and compatible materials.
4. Building materials and colors shall be:
  - a. Complementary to the materials already being used in the neighborhood, or
  - b. If dissimilar materials are being proposed, other characteristics such as scale, proportion, form, architectural detailing, color, and texture shall be used to ensure that the building relates to the rest of the neighborhood.
5. All facades visible from a public street or park/open space shall utilize high-quality finish materials including, but not limited to:
  - a. Brick, masonry, or stone
  - b. Integrally tinted, textured masonry block
  - c. Stucco
  - d. Wood or cementitious siding
  - e. Glass

Stucco or EIFS system finishes may be used as secondary materials but should not be greater than 25 percent of a facade.
6. Where any sloped roofs and structural canopies are used, they shall be covered with:
  - a. Asphalt shingles
  - b. Clay tile
  - c. Slate
  - d. Concrete tile
  - e. Ribbed metal

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- f. Wood shakes or shingles
- 7. The color of roof stacks, flashing, vents, power exhaust fans, and metal chimney caps shall blend with the roof colors. They shall extend above the roof only the minimum required by the building code and located on the rear of the roof whenever possible.
- 8. Materials used only on one face of a structure, which give the impression of “thinness” and artificiality, are prohibited. Brick/stone needs to turn corners a minimum of 12”.
- 9. Contrasting quoins are prohibited.
- 10. Vinyl siding is prohibited on all building types except on Live/Work units reviewed under the residential building code, Detached House and Townhouse building types; however, it strongly is discouraged on these building types.

#### **F. Architectural Details\***

- 1. Windows and door openings shall be arranged and proportioned so that vertical dimensions dominate horizontal dimensions. To the extent possible, upper story windows shall be vertically aligned with the location of windows and doors on the ground level, including storefront or display windows.
- 2. Architectural treatments which create the appearance of false entrances facing the street are prohibited. Faux windows and doors are prohibited. Visible false fronts are prohibited.
- 3. Architectural elements like openings, sills, bulkheads, columns, and other architectural features shall be used to establish human scale at the street level.
- 4. Fenestration shall be architecturally related to the style, materials, colors, and details of the building.
- 5. When a mansard roof has dormers, they shall project out from the roof.
- 6. The main entry to a building should be emphasized at the street level. Appropriate methods include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Recessing the door within a larger cased opening.
  - b. Flanking the door with columns, decorative fixtures or other details.
  - c. An awning or canopy, providing a sheltered transition to the interior.
- 7. Interior walls should butt to mullions rather than to exterior windows, and dropped ceilings should not obscure any portion of a window.

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**EXAMPLE 4-5: PROHIBITED ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS**

The images below illustrate some of the building elements that are prohibited.



Visible False Front



False Entrance



Faux Windows



Mansard Roof without Projecting Dormers



Franchise Architecture

**4.5 SPECIFIC BUILDING TYPE REQUIREMENTS**

**4.5.1 INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS TYPE**

Institutional buildings are typically used for public or semi-public purposes. These buildings must be designed appropriately to fit within neighborhoods as integral parts of the community. Institutional buildings serve as places of assembly. They have a sense of prominence within their respective neighborhoods. Their uses may include churches, libraries, post offices, and schools. All institutional buildings are subject to the Individual Building process and Design Review Board approval.

- A. The scale and architectural sophistication of these buildings should support their civic importance and complement Davidson’s existing civic buildings.
- B. Complexes with multiple institutional buildings should arrange the buildings to front the streets or to frame common open space and amenities.

See Section 4.4.1.A.4 for exceptions to the building story standards for institutional buildings.

**4.5.2 DETACHED AND ATTACHED HOUSES BUILDING TYPE**

Detached houses are dwelling units with open yards, including modular homes but not including manufactured homes, mobile homes, or recreational or motor vehicles.

Examples of detached homes are single-family residences or duplexes. Single family homes require permit approval.

Attached houses have the outward appearance of detached houses, but accommodate three or four completely separate dwelling units within one building. Triplexes and quadplexes are examples of attached houses. Duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes may be located on a single lot of record, or subdivided for individual sale.

Duplexes and all attached houses are subject to the Individual Building Process and Design Review Board approval.\*

- A. Detached and attached houses shall face a street or pedestrian way and have a walkway connecting the front of the house to a pedestrian way or the street.
- B. Where home designs are repeated in new development, materials, color, and detailing should be varied to distinguish between houses.
- C. Attached housing types should be integrated with detached housing in terms of scale, proportion, form, architectural detailing and material use.
- D. Complexes with multiple attached houses shall arrange the buildings to front the streets or to frame common open space and amenities.
- E. Roofs shall be simple forms such as hip, flat, shed, or gable and shall avoid excessive articulation.\*
- F. The following requirements apply to detached and attached house building types with attached garages. For requirements for detached garages see Section 4.5.8, Accessory Structures.
  - 1. In all planning areas, attached garages with street-facing doors shall have a maximum width of 25 feet.
  - 2. The street-facing doors shall be no wider than 10 feet each.\*
  - 3. In all planning areas, except as stated below, the front setback of a street-facing, attached garage or carport shall be recessed a minimum of 10 feet behind the front façade of the house and shall be a minimum of 20 feet behind the front property line; except if the house has a porch with a depth of at least six feet extending along a minimum of 60 percent of the front façade (excluding garage width), the attached garage shall be a minimum of 10 feet behind the front of the porch, but not in front of the front facade.
  - 4. In all planning areas, if the street-side elevation of the garage is side-loaded, i.e. oriented at least 90 degrees to the street, the attached garage may be flush with, but shall not project in front of, the front façade of the house. If the front property line is at least 75 feet wide and the front façade has a covered porch that covers at least 60 percent of the front façade, then a side loaded garage,

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i.e. oriented at least 90 degrees to the front façade, may be flush with the front plane of the covered porch but shall not project in front of this plane.

5. In the Rural Reserve and Rural Planning Areas, attached garages may be placed flush with, or project in front of, the street-facing façade if the following criteria are met:
    - The lot is a minimum of two acres in size; and
    - The lot is not part of an approved master plan; and
    - The garage is at least 150 feet from the street; and
    - The garage is not visible from the street because of topography or screened in accordance with Section 9.
- G. For Detached House types in the Neighborhood Services Overlay District:
1. The entire building must be built to commercial code, which requires Individual Building submittal and Design Review Board approval.
  2. The ground floor of the building must be used as commercial or retail use.
  3. Roofs: Roof forms shall not be flat.
  4. Transparency: A minimum of 45% of the first floor facade between 2'-0" and 10'-0" above grade facing the primary streets must be transparent. At least 30% of the upper floors facades between 3'-0" and 50'-0" above finished floor must be transparent.
  5. Porches: Wrap-around porches shall be installed on at least two building sides, including all facades with primary street frontage. A minimum porch depth of ten feet is required.
  6. Materials: Building design shall use materials consistent with rural vernacular architecture, as illustrated in the Rural Area Plan precedent images.

### 4.5.3 TOWNHOUSE AND LIVE WORK BUILDING TYPES

A townhouse building type consists of a structure that contains two or more dwelling units placed side by side sharing a party wall. Each unit has its own exterior entrances. Units are typically aligned close to the public sidewalk, although sometimes there are variations in setback to provide landscaping or variety in the streetscape. A small rear yard or courtyard is provided for each unit as private open space.

Live/work units combine commercial and residential uses within a single dwelling unit of two or more stories. All units must be constructed to meet the commercial building code standards. At least 50 percent of the heated floor area must contain the residential dwelling unit(s).

- A. Each unit shall have a separate exterior entrance that includes a porch, stoop, courtyard or similar element which provides a transition from the public sidewalk to the private space within the building or unit.
- B. Complexes with multiple townhomes or live/work units shall arrange the buildings to front the streets or to frame common open space and amenities.

- C. The first floor shall be taller than upper floors.
- D. Townhouses and live/work units shall not have front-loaded garages.
- E. For Live/Work buildings located in the Neighborhood Services Overlay District:
  - 1. Roofs: Roof forms shall not be flat.
  - 2. Materials: Building design shall use materials consistent with rural vernacular architecture, as illustrated in the Rural Area Plan precedent images.

All townhouse and live/work buildings are subject to the Individual Building process and Design Review Board approval.\*

#### 4.5.4 MIXED VILLAGE BUILDING TYPE

Mixed Village housing includes well-scaled buildings designed to fit within the context of surrounding residential or mixed-use neighborhoods. These buildings are a minimum of two stories, include individual or shared entrances, and provide walkable access to nearby destinations. Examples of Mixed Village buildings include walkup and courtyard dwellings, as described below. All Mixed Village buildings are subject to the Master Plan or Individual Building processes as well as and Design Review Board approval.

- A. Village Walkup: Small-scale buildings comprised of 4-12 units that typically feature a shared entrance or corridor.
- B. Village Courtyard: Small-scale buildings comprised of 10-18 units arranged around a courtyard and including individual or shared entrances.
- C. Features:
  - 1. Sites with multiple buildings shall arrange the buildings to front the street and to frame common open space and amenities. Village Courtyard buildings must include a courtyard, and courtyard proportions shall feature a maximum of 2:1 or minimum 1:2 height to width ratio. Courtyard depth shall be at least one times the width but not exceed two times the width of the courtyard opening.
  - 2. Entrances should be differentiated architecturally to create a sense of human scale.
  - 3. Building and outdoor unit entrances on the first floor shall face the street or courtyard and may include a porch, stoop, or similar element which provides a transition from the courtyard area/public sidewalk to the private space within the building or unit. The primary pedestrian entrance to end unit(s) of courtyard buildings shall face the primary fronting street. Units above the first floor shall be accessed from an interior stairwell. Entrances to common stairwells shall also have access from the courtyard or the fronting street. Exterior corridors fronting the street are not allowed.

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4. Generally, parking shall be located behind the building where required.

#### 4.5.5 MULTI-FAMILY BUILDING TYPE

Multi-family buildings incorporate more than four dwelling units within one building. Common entrances and interior corridors serve multiple units. These buildings are a minimum of two stories with parking typically located behind the buildings or underground. Examples of multi-family buildings include apartment complexes and condominiums. All multi-family buildings are subject to the Individual Building process and Design Review Board approval.

- A. The first floor shall be taller than the upper floors.
- B. Building and outdoor unit entrances on the first floor shall face the street and include a porch, stoop, courtyard or similar element which provides a transition from the public sidewalk to the private space within the building or unit. Units above the first floor may be accessed from a common stairwell. Common stairwells shall also have access from the fronting street. Exterior corridors fronting the street are not allowed.
- C. Complexes with multiple buildings should arrange the buildings to front the street or to frame common open space and amenities.
- D. Entrances should be differentiated architecturally to create a sense of human scale.
- E. Multi-family buildings with storefront facades on the first floor fronting primary public streets may be considered storefront buildings.

#### 4.5.6 STOREFRONT BUILDINGS TYPE

Storefront buildings may accommodate either single or multiple uses or tenants in a single building. A group of storefront buildings may be combined to form a mixed-use neighborhood center. Individual storefront buildings shall be designed to accommodate commercial/retail uses on the first floor, though office or residential uses are permitted. Upper Floors are appropriate for office or residential use. They are a minimum of two stories, typically are aligned adjacent to the public sidewalk and include a high percentage of transparency in the ground level façade to encourage pedestrian activity. All storefront buildings are subject to the Individual Building process and Design Review Board approval.

- A. The first floor facing the primary streets shall be designed to accommodate retail uses.
- B. At least 65% of the first floor facade between 2'-0" and 10'-0" above grade facing the primary streets must be transparent. At least 30% of the upper floors facades between 3'-0" and 120'-0" above finished floor must be transparent.
- C. The first floor shall be taller than upper floors and lower floors should be differentiated architecturally to create a sense of human scale.
- D. Buildings elements shall have a dominant vertical proportion.
- E. All buildings shall provide street level, pedestrian-oriented, active uses on principal

street fronts.

- F. Large buildings fronting multiple streets should provide entrances from each street.
- G. Major building entrances that provide access to the primary use of the building or a central lobby shall be distinguished from the entrances used for secondary uses.
- H. The principal entrance to a building, and any ground-floor tenant space entrance, both functionally and architecturally, shall front the primary public street or a public open space such as a square, plaza, courtyard, or sidewalk.
- I. Secondary uses and entrances may be located off a rear parking area.
- J. For Storefront buildings located in the Neighborhood Services Overlay District:
  - 1. The ground floor of the building must be used as commercial or retail use within 100 feet of the Shearer Rd. – East Rocky River Rd. intersection.
  - 2. Roofs: Roof forms shall not be flat.
  - 3. Transparency: At least 50% of the first floor facade between 2'-0" and 10'-0" above grade facing the primary streets must be transparent. At least 30% of the upper floors facades between 3'-0" and 37'-0" above finished floor must be transparent
  - 4. Materials: Building design shall use materials consistent with rural vernacular architecture, as illustrated in the Rural Area Plan precedent images.

#### 4.5.7 WORKPLACE BUILDINGS TYPE

The workplace building type may have either single or multiple uses or tenants. Office, industrial, and commercial tenants are typical. Southern mill villages provide examples of how these buildings can reasonably coexist with other businesses and homes. Workplace buildings are crucial to the town as employment centers and commercial service locations. They provide space for industry and offices. All workplace buildings are subject to the Individual Building process and Design Review Board approval.

- A. Multiple-story buildings with office, industrial, or commercial uses on all floors are typical workplace buildings. Residential tenants on upper floors are permitted.
- B. At least 65% of the first floor facade between 2'-0" and 10'-0" above grade facing the primary streets must be transparent. At least 30% of the upper floors facades between 3'-0" and 120'-0" above finished floor must be transparent.
- C. Off-street parking areas are located behind the building or underground.
- D. The first floor shall be taller than upper floors and lower floors should be differentiated architecturally to create a sense of human scale.

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*\*Not applicable to Detached House, Townhouse, or Live/Work building types: 1. Located outside of a local historic district or outside an area designated as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places; and, 2. Reviewed under the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings.*

- E. Main entrances shall be distinguished architecturally from the remainder of the building.
- F. Major building entrances that provide access to the primary use of the building shall be distinguished from the entrances used for secondary uses.
- G. The principal entrance to a building, and any groundfloor tenant space entrance shall front the primary public street or a public open space such as a square, plaza, courtyard, or pedestrian way.
- H. Secondary uses and entrances may be located off a rear parking area.
- I. Large buildings fronting multiple streets shall provide entrances from each street.

#### **4.5.8 ACCESSORY STRUCTURES**

An accessory structure is an above-ground structure that is clearly and customarily subordinate to a principal use or principal structure located on the same lot. An accessory structure is smaller in area, extent, or purpose than the principal use or principal structure. Accessory structures are permitted as established in the respective planning areas in Section 2 provided they meet the specific standards set forth in this section. Lots within the Rural Planning Area that are part of an approved master plan are subject to all applicable ordinance requirements and are not eligible for the exceptions granted to individually-developed lots located within the Rural Planning Area.

For the purposes of this ordinance, the establishment or construction of an accessory structure on an existing lot shall be considered an expansion of an existing use and/or structure and shall be subject to the approval procedures found in Section 14.

##### **A. Number of Accessory Structures**

1. In the Rural Reserve and Rural Planning Areas, on lots over two acres where the proposed accessory structure is located more than 150 feet from the right-of-way or is not otherwise visible from the right-of-way, accessory structures may include a detached garage and two other accessory structures.
2. In all other situations, the number of accessory structures on a lot may include a detached garage (if there is not an existing attached garage) and one other accessory structure. If the primary structure includes an attached garage, only one accessory structure is allowed.

##### **B. Size of Accessory Structure**

1. In the Rural Reserve and Rural Planning Areas, on lots over two acres where the proposed accessory structure is located more than 150 feet from the right-of-way or is not otherwise visible from the right-of-way, the footprint of an accessory structure shall not exceed 1,200 square feet. In all planning areas, except the Rural Reserve and Rural Planning Areas, the footprint of an accessory structure must not exceed 650 square feet or 30% of the footprint of the principal building (up to a maximum of 900 square feet), whichever is greater.

2. Any accessory structure over 650 square feet of first floor area and all accessory structure ancillary to non-residential building types shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board, in accordance with the procedures in Section 14.
3. The height (elevation above mean sea level) of an accessory structure shall not exceed the height (elevation above mean sea level) of the principal structure or may not exceed two stories, whichever is less.
4. Street-facing doors on any accessory structure shall not exceed ten feet in width.\*
5. Any accessory structure with street-facing doors shall have a maximum overall width of 25 feet.

### **C. Location of Accessory Structure**

1. A minimum of ten feet shall be maintained between the proposed accessory structure and the following: 1) The principal structure; and, 2), any other accessory structure(s).
2. Accessory structures shall be located in the rear yard only.
3. Accessory structures shall not be served by a driveway separate from that serving the principal structure. A driveway serving a principal use may be extended to the accessory structure.
4. In the Rural Reserve and Rural Planning Areas, any accessory structure over 900 square feet shall have a minimum 15 feet side yard setback and a minimum 30 feet rear yard setback. In all other circumstances, the minimum side yard setback shall be five feet and the minimum rear yard setback shall be five feet.
5. Exceptions or minor variations to the accessory structure location regulations may be permitted with the approval of the Planning Director. Such provision will only be for extraordinary site conditions.
6. Pools must be located in the rear yard only. Pools must also be at least 5 feet from the property line. All pools must meet Mecklenburg County's rules governing swimming pools.

### **D. Detached garages**

1. For the purpose of this ordinance, a detached garage is an accessory structure and shall meet all applicable standards of accessory structures, except as listed below.
2. If a garage has a minimum of 15 feet of wall in common with the main body of the house, it shall be considered an attached garage. See Section 4.5.2 for standards of attached garages .
3. An alley-loaded, detached garage may have a minimum zero side yard setback and may connect to and have a common wall with, another alley-loaded, detached garage if accessed from the same alley.
4. A detached garage whose doors are located on an alley may have a 16-18 foot wide garage door.\*

## 4.6 EXISTING INDUSTRIAL CAMPUSES

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With respect to property in the Employment Campus I Planning Area which was used primarily for office, industrial or warehouse on June 30, 2001 and at the time of application; a new building or addition to an existing building associated with pre-existing office, industrial or warehouse use may elect, in lieu of the foregoing design regulations, to continue the existing design aesthetic with respect to building height, materials, roof configuration, fenestration, orientation, and setbacks. The new building or additions to existing buildings are subject to the Individual Building process but is exempt from Design Review Board review. Buildings visible from NC 115 are not exempt from Design Review Board review.

## 4.7 RENOVATION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES

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All new construction, including changes to existing storefront, workplace, institutional, townhouse, live/work, or attached house building types must comply with these regulations.

Changing or rebuilding 50 percent or more of any façade of a building, requires the entire building to comply with the design regulations that are specific to facades, except the requirement for two-story buildings.

Changing or rebuilding less than 50 percent of any façade of a building requires only that façade to comply.

All new openings, including windows, entrances, storefronts, and doorways must be designed in accordance with these regulations.

Any addition of 50 percent or more of the first-floor area of a one-story building requires the entire building to come into compliance with the design regulations. Additions of less than 50 percent of the floor area of the buildings less than 5,000 square feet do not need to comply with the regulations for building height. In general, additions to two-story buildings shall be two stories. Exceptions will be made if there are topographic constraints. One-story additions to two-story buildings may only be built if the addition is on the rear of the building and does not front on a street or pedestrian way.

Routine maintenance and repair are exempt from these requirements.

See Section 12, for further details about nonconforming structures.