
STAFF COMMENTS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: April 15, 2009

SUBJECT: **DRAFT OLDE TOWNE DESIGN
GUIDELINES**

TITLE: **Design Guidelines for Future
Development and Redevelopment in
Olde Towne in Accordance with The
Olde Towne Master Plan: MP-1-05**

REQUEST: **RECOMMENDATION TO M&CC**

ADDRESS: N/A

ZONE: CBD (CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT)

STAFF PERSON: Rob Robinson, Planner

Enclosures:

Staff Comments
Draft Guidelines Document
Draft Minutes from March 18, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting

STAFF COMMENTS

BACKGROUND:

The Gaithersburg Olde Towne District Master Plan, MP-1-05, was approved by Mayor and City Council resolution R-64-05 on July 18, 2005. The future Olde Towne envisioned in MP-1-05 would require new, expanded design guidelines, rather than the antiquated guidelines currently adopted and not developed for said plan.

Staff first presented the draft guidelines to the Planning Commission on January 21, 2009 as a discussion item, where the Commission provided comments. Following that meeting, staff also presented the draft guidelines to the Olde Towne Advisory Committee (OTAC) on February 3, 2009 and the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) on February 5, 2009. Both committees recommended additional modifications to the document. Comments were also received from the public.

Since these aforementioned meetings, staff revised the draft document, taking into consideration all comments received. On March 5, 2009 staff presented the revised document to both the OTAC and HPAC. Both Committees have prepared memos endorsing the document and recommending adoption by the Mayor and City Council.

Staff then brought forward to the Planning Commission, on March 18, 2009 the draft Olde Towne Design Guidelines for recommendation to the Mayor and City Council. During the course of discussion, the Commission offered additional comments for inclusion in the draft document. Staff has incorporated the Commission's comments and revised the document to be presented tonight. The italicized portions of the document reflect new text while the double strike-through portions reflect those sections to be deleted.

CONCLUSION:

Staff is seeking a formal recommendation of approval and adoption by the Planning Commission to be transmitted to the Mayor and City Council. It is to be noted that following any such adoption, staff would continue to work with the Commission and various committees in creating a user-friendly graphic version, such as was done with the Sign Ordinance. Any Mayor and City Council resolution would only involve written content.

SECTION 1:
OLDE TOWNE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Olde Towne District is the City of Gaithersburg’s focus of historical identity and distinctive in character. Olde Towne celebrates and reconnects with Gaithersburg’s heritage through buildings such as the train station and Belt building. The vision for the 21st Century Olde Towne is to be a place for living, working, shopping, and entertainment in a lively, safe, and diverse community environment.

The purpose of the Olde Towne Design Guidelines is to establish criteria for implementing the vision defined by the Olde Towne Master Plan for the overall re-development of the district. The Guidelines allow diverse, various future and existing projects to blend and succeed; resulting in a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban center while preserving Olde Towne’s historic character and charm. Olde Towne redevelopment projects will be evaluated on the degree to which the project demonstrates compliance with the intent of the design guidelines and the goals of the Olde Towne Master Plan. These guidelines are not intended to serve as a tool for Historic Preservation. Those projects whose review includes the issuance of a Historic Area Work Permit are to follow the City’s preservation requirements.

The Design Guidelines provide a framework of requirements providing direction on the qualitative aspects of a development project. The guidelines will be used during the City’s development review process to encourage the highest level of design quality, while at the same time providing flexibility in their application to specific projects. Not all guidelines may be applicable to an individual project with innovative and otherwise preferable design concepts, or based upon unique project site characteristics. Alternative measures (architecture and materials) may be considered if the measures meet or exceed the intent of the design guidelines and further the goals of the adopted Master Plan. The Planning Commission has the authority to waive specific guidelines if they so deem it will further the goals of the adopted Master Plan. Any design aspects not addressed in these guidelines are to conform to the established requirements laid forth in the City of Gaithersburg City Code and any applicable adopted City regulations.

SECTION 2:
DESIGN FEATURES

New buildings and additions should not imitate historic buildings, but should be compatible with them. Designs that are contemporary interpretations of traditional Olde Towne building features may be considered and incorporated, such as the use of flat roofs

with parapet walls and the incorporation of arcade structures. New developments should express uniqueness in form and should be designed specifically for the particular building site within the context of Olde Towne, such as the new City of Gaithersburg Youth Center and not as a generic building design type that may be found anywhere. New projects should strive to incorporate all aspects of sustainable design, from orientation of buildings; to the construction materials used; to energy efficient components and features.

SECTION 3:
SITE PLANNING

1) BUILDING SITING:

- i) Front setback lines shall be located 0 to 10 feet from the property lines, unless the setback is pedestrian-oriented and contributes to the quality and character of the streetscape, benefiting the public realm or in accordance with § 24-160F.4 of the City Code. (Ex. 2)
- ii) Orient the primary facade and locate the primary entrance toward the public street unless the function precludes it. Secondary entrances are encouraged to be included in all designs.
- iii) Design street corner buildings so they address the corner by placing the main building entrance at the intersection, wherever possible.

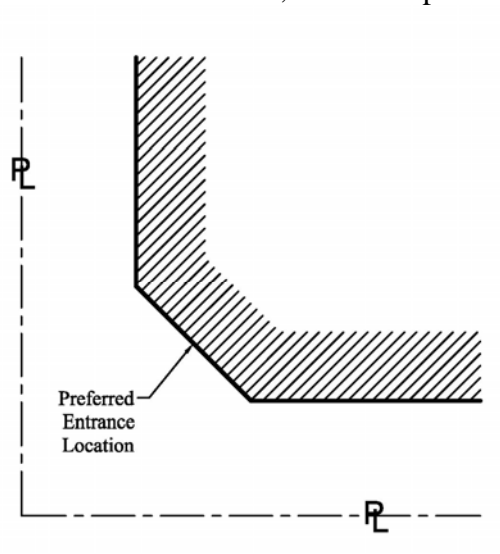


Exhibit 1¹

2) FENCES AND WALLS:

¹ All exhibits and photographs in this document are draft versions for illustrative purposes only and are not in and of themselves guidelines

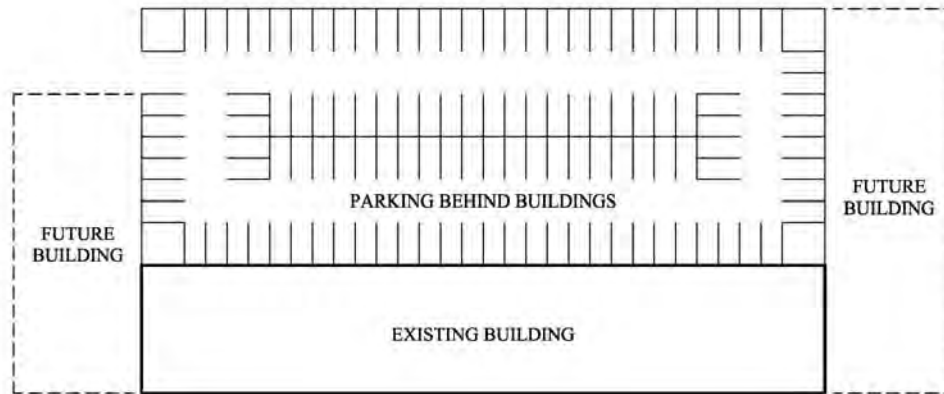
- i) The colors and materials of screening fences and walls should be consistent with and complement the architectural style of the adjoining building
- ii) Terraces adjoining a street or pedestrian walkway may have a hedge or low wall not to exceed three feet in height, constructed of pre-cast stamped / decorative concrete or brick.
- iii) Dumpsters must be screened on all sides with complementary materials to the building(s) served.
- iv) Chain-link or vinyl fencing is not permitted when visible from the public right-of-way associated with public roads.
- v) Posts within fencing or wall sections should be capped.
- vi) Smooth face concrete masonry units (CMU) are not allowed as decorative, screening, or retaining walls unless faced with either stone or brick or of an architectural nature.
- vii) Planters may be incorporated into and used as decorative screening walls.
- viii) If parking is adjacent to a public right-of-way, screen the lot vehicles with a low wall, fence, or hedge.
- ix) Retaining walls are to be decorative in appearance, faced with either stone or brick. Wooden railroad and landscaping ties are not allowed.
- x) Ceremonial or decorative gates and accent fencing is allowed and should be in keeping with the scale and style of the project.

3) LIGHTING:

- i) *The City is committed to preserving the natural environment from the adverse effects of night-lighting from electrical sources.*
- ii) Lighting in Olde Towne should illuminate façades, entrances and signage. The intent is to provide well lit areas fostering a lively pedestrian environment, while providing public safety *and minimizing spill onto neighboring properties.*
- iii) Lighting should be designed to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the buildings.
- iv) Any colored lighting schemes should provide continuity and complement adjacent building lighting.
- ~~v) Building, parking, and signage lighting must be indirect.~~
- vi) Shaded gooseneck lamps are encouraged for exterior building and sign illumination.
- vii) Wall-mounted light fixtures are not allowed to extend above the height of the wall to which the fixtures are mounted.
- viii) The use of wall sconces, lanterns, or other lighting to delineate building entrances is encouraged.
- ix) Street lighting proposed within any public ROW, will be of a type approved by the Department of Public Works

4) PARKING:

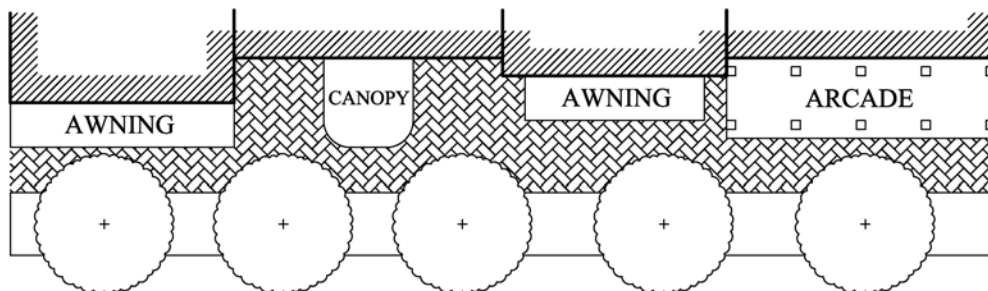
- i) Locate parking behind buildings or in the interior of lots.



- ii) Structured parking is encouraged.
- iii) Structured parking should be context sensitive in design and appearance with comparable building materials used. The access points should be well marked and defined with the openings proportional to the building design.
- iv) Parking sites should provide areas dedicated for public bicycle and motorcycle parking.
- v) Surface parking areas are to be buffered from public sidewalks or streets through the use of screen walls and/or landscaping.
- vi) Parking, both structured and surface, should foster interconnectedness among properties within Olde Towne.
- vii) Vias that give pedestrians access to the streets from parking areas located behind buildings and have non-residential uses facing them are encouraged.

5) STREETSCAPE & LANDSCAPING:

- i) A continuous overhead cover, offering adequate pedestrian protection from the elements, should be provided along right-of-ways. This may be accomplished by combining projections from buildings (awnings and canopies); an open, to the street, arcade; or the planting of street trees.



- ii) Appropriately wide sidewalks should be provided from corner to corner along all property lines fronting roads and alleys.

- iii) New utility upgrades and services to properties should be installed below ground.
- iv) Tree wells for street trees are to have a minimum dimension of five by five feet.
- v) Appropriate landscaping for tree wells is encouraged.
- vi) Decorative metal fencing, with a minimum of eight inches in height, bordering tree wells is encouraged. Tree grates are ~~not allowed~~ *strongly discouraged*.
- vii) The inclusion of “Green Streets” design elements is encouraged.
- viii) The ability to provide for outdoor seating, subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, is encouraged.
- ix) Landscape elements, such as the use of decorative planters, should be included in all project designs.
- x) Landscaping should be context sensitive, in design and the plant material diversity, to the site and situation of the project, with an emphasis on native, non-invasive species.

6) HARDSCAPE ELEMENTS:

- i) Developments should incorporate enhanced transit stops and shelters into their design.
- ii) Developments are encouraged to provide, and ~~site~~ *locate* appropriately, hardscape amenities which may include benches, trash receptacles, wayfinding signs, and bicycle racks.
- iii) ~~The inclusion of public art is encouraged, subject to approval of the Art in Public Places Committee.~~
- iv) Decorative and permeable pavings are encouraged, subject to DPW approval.

SECTION 4: **ARCHITECTURE**

1) ELEVATIONS:

- i) The principal building façade or one that faces a public street is to have a base, middle, and a top. This should be accomplished through the use of color, the arrangement of façade elements, or a change in materials. (Ex. 2)
- ii) Doors at entryways should be designed to not interfere with pedestrian movement on adjacent sidewalks.
- iii) 360-degree architecture, where all sides of a building have been detailed to complement the primary façade in architecture, massing, and materials is encouraged.
- iv) Buildings should include articulation of the façade using architectural techniques. A building with more than 50 feet of street frontage must provide articulation.

- v) Break-up front façade massing with vertical and horizontal articulation through variation in the wall plane (defined by recesses and reveals), placement of window and door openings, or divisions/ breaks in building materials.
- vi) Recessed or projecting entries, for articulation, in ground level frontage are encouraged.
- vii) Floor-to-floor heights above the first story should appear to be similar with first floor non-residential uses providing pedestrian scaled architecture. (Ex. 2)
- viii) The use of corporate “chain/prototype” architecture is not allowed. Corporate tenants should design their buildings to address the scale and character of Olde Towne.
- ix) Changes in vertical plane are encouraged at places in exterior walls where floor-to-roof control joints are required.
- x) Mechanical louvers for exhaust are to be sited/positioned so as not to impact the pedestrian environment, when facing walks.
- xi) Architectural features, such as lintels, are to be integral to the façade wall and *integrated into the design of the building* ~~not “added on”~~.
- xii) *The inclusion of public art is encouraged, subject to approval of the Art in Public Places Committee*
- xiii) *Exterior entryways are to be integrated into the architectural design of the building.*

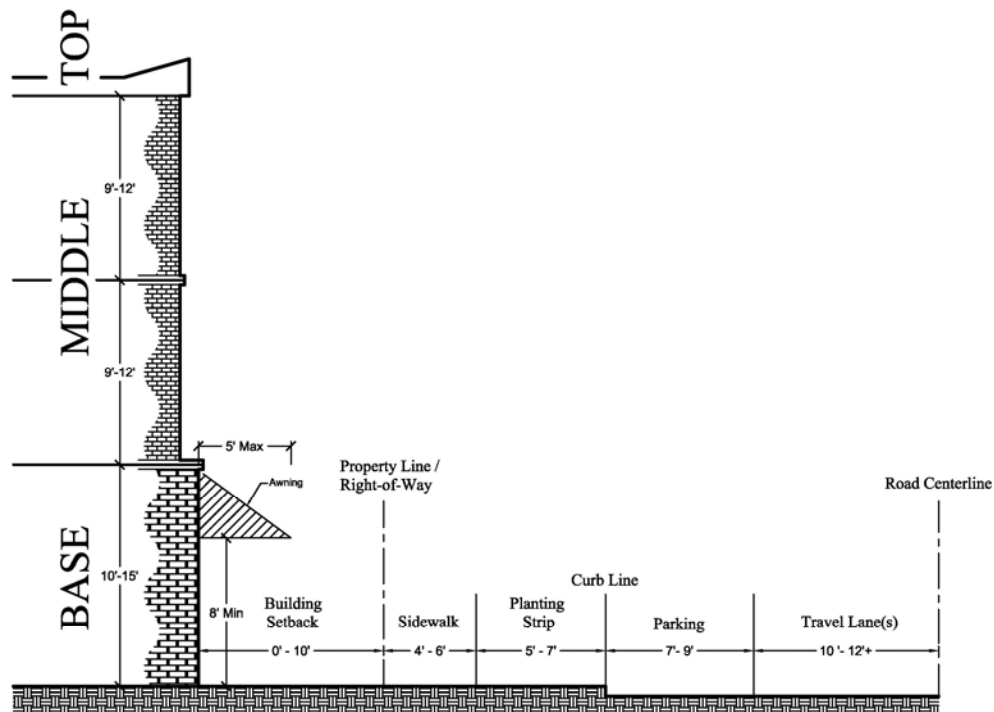


Exhibit 2

2) MATERIALS:

- i) Utilize building materials that have a human scale. Traditional materials including wood, brick, stone (including cast stone), fiber cement siding, synthetic wood, and stucco should be used as the primary building materials.
- ii) Tile, stone, glass block, copper flashing, metal and wood should be considered for accent materials.
- iii) Concrete block/ masonry units are not allowed to be the predominate material on façades or sides of buildings fronting public right of ways.
- iv) Aluminum, vinyl or fiberglass siding is not allowed.
- v) Larger blank panels, such as precast concrete, cementitious fiberboard, or smooth stucco, are to avoid blank walls by incorporating additional architectural details or textures.
- vi) Decorative metal panels are permitted.
- vii) Material changes are to occur at intersecting planes to appear substantial and integral to the façade.
- viii) Do not change materials or colors at the outside corners of structures.
- ix) In general, lighter weight materials should be located above heavier materials rather than below them.
- x) Cornices should be used on multi-story buildings to help define an elevation.

3) ROOFS:

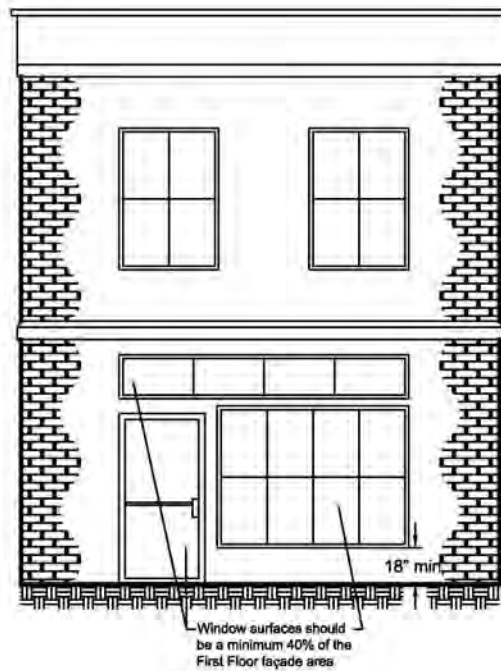
- i) Roof lines should be varied in height, and long horizontal roof lines should be broken up.
- ii) Solar panels are encouraged, but should be non-visible or screened from the pedestrian scale.
- iii) The roof of a new building should be visually compatible with the surrounding buildings.
- iv) Pitched roofs, such as hip, mansard, gable or shed roofs are allowed.
- v) Roofing materials should be non-reflective, and muted colors should be used.
- vi) Allowable roof materials include real or artificial slate (black or dark gray), architectural grade shingles, non-reflective standing seam metal, concrete tile, clay tile, and metal shingles.
- vii) Flat roofs are preferred with parapets that articulate the rhythm of the buildings.
- viii) Parapets should have sufficient detail, such as precast treatments, continuous banding, or projecting cornices, lintels, caps, or corner details.
- ix) Parapets should appear integral to the roof and to turn the corner.
- x) Any interior side of a parapet visible from the street should be finished with the same materials and a similar level of detail as the front façade.
- xi) All exterior mechanical equipment must be screened. Placement of mechanical equipment on rooftops or within a structure is encouraged.
- xii) Green roofs are encouraged.

4) WINDOWS:

- i) All exterior elevations are required to have windows, unless prohibited by code.
- ii) *Incorporation of stylistic elements in all window designs such as color, framing, use of mullions and muntins, et al is strongly encouraged.*

b) Commercial:

- i) Windows may not be any closer than eighteen inches (18") to the ground, with the associated spandrel relating to the architectural style of the building in materials.
- ii) A minimum of forty percent (40%) of the first floor façade for non-residential buildings, facing a public right of way, should be a window surface.



- iii) The use of decorative opaque or reflective glass on first floor non-residential buildings windows is allowed, including the use of spandrel glass.
- iv) Casement or sliding windows are encouraged for retail/ restaurant uses.
- v) Large glass panel units with transoms are encouraged.

c) Residential:

- i) Windows should be recessed and with mullions (when appropriate to window style) to develop shadow lines.
- ii) Windows must be single-, double-, or triple-hung, picture, or casement windows.

- iii) On upper floors, the windows should be vertically oriented. Arched tops, columns framing the windows and decorative lintels are encouraged.
- iv) Circular, half-round, irregular, or elliptical accent windows are allowed. Paired quarter-round windows may be used in pairs flanking another architectural feature.
- v) Shutters, if used, are to be wood, synthetic wood, or vinyl and of a sufficient size to appear operable to cover the opening if both sides are closed.

5) GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS:

- i) Gutters will be constructed of aluminum, galvanized metal, steel, or copper.
- ii) Copper gutters are permitted to retain their copper color or take on a weathered patina.
- iii) Gutters and downspouts shall be integrated into the design in terms of color, shape, and location.
- iv) Downspouts are encouraged to be located at the rear of the building unless required by specific conditions to be located elsewhere.
- v) Drainage design is ~~not to create~~ *to prevent* ice on walkways.

6) AWNINGS, BALCONIES, CANOPIES:

- i) Awnings and balconies may project no more than five feet (5') from the building façade. (Ex. 2)
- ii) Awnings, balconies, covered arcades, and canopies may project into the public ROW, provided an easement has been granted.
- iii) An architectural cornice or similar roof treatment must accompany any flat roof over an entry portico or porch.
- iv) A parapet will be used to edge any flat roof when used as an exterior deck and accessed from the interior of the building.
- v) Balconies projecting from any story above ground level are permitted on any façade.
- vi) Undersides of balconies shall be finished.
- vii) Balconies may be constructed of metal, synthetic materials, or pressure treated wood, but must be complementary to the building material of the façade to which they are attached.
- viii) Railings in design and construction are to be complementary to the building materials of the structure attached.
- ix) Covered arcades should be complementary in material and color to the main structure on which they are attached.
- x) Canopy materials should be complementary in material and color to the main structure on which they are attached.
- xi) Awnings should be of a durable, water repellent and fire-fade resistant commercial grade fabric, canvas or similar material having a matte finish. Plastic or fiberglass awnings are not allowed.
- xii) Awnings may not be backlit.

- xiii) Awnings may be retractable.
- xiv) For pedestrian scaled visual variety, the use of the same unbroken awning across multiple storefronts or buildings is not allowed. Long expanses of awning should be broken into segments and relate to a window or door opening beneath them.
- xv) The structural supports of the awning should be finished to match or complement the awning fabric.
- xvi) Awnings should be mounted above display windows or entrances and below the cornice or second story window sills.
- xvii) Awnings (including the supporting structure), balconies, covered arcades, and canopies must be at least eight feet (8') above the sidewalk at the lowest point.

SECTION 5:
SIGNAGE

SIGNS:

The following guidelines will be applicable to the CBD zone only and are binding pursuant to Chapter 24, Article IX of the City Code. If a conflict exists between these guidelines and the provisions of Chapter 24, Article IX, the guidelines shall control. Sign elements not specifically addressed by these guidelines will adhere to the provisions of Chapter 24, Article IX.

1) General Provisions:

- i) A sign must be subordinate to the overall building composition.
- ii) Multi-commercial tenant and/or multi-use developments are to submit a comprehensive sign package for Planning Commission approval at the time of Final Site Plan.
- iii) Multi-story, multi-family buildings shall submit a comprehensive sign package for Planning Commission approval.
- iv) All signs, with the exception as noted, are to be externally illuminated. Gooseneck style down-lighting is the preferred method.
- v) No sign may be located on that portion of a commercial or industrial building or structure facing abutting residentially improved property which are not separated by an improved public road from the property upon which said signs are located, except where the Planning Commission finds that an unlighted sign is compatible with the design principles of the building and residential area.
- vi) Signs featuring icons - including, but not limited to, icons in the form of any product, person, or logo - are allowed without Planning Commission review.
- vii) Sign materials and color schemes shall be compatible with that of the building facade. Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials. Unfinished materials, including unpainted wood, are not allowed.

- viii) In general sign materials should complement the style and materials of the building
- ix) No sign shall have a vertical height projecting above the roofline or parapet wall.
- x) Signs shall be professionally constructed of durable materials.

2) Wall and Window Mounted Signs:

- i) The amount of all sign square footage together on one façade cannot exceed 10% of the total non-residential related facade square footage.
- ii) A sign shall be in scale with the façade to which it is associated.
- iii) Sign location on a building should emphasize design elements of the façade itself and shall not obscure architectural details or features.
- iv) Wall Mounted Signage within 20 feet (but not less than 12 feet) of a public street curb-edge is permitted to use internally illuminated channel letters not greater than twelve inches in height, subject to approval by the Planning Commission.
- v) Projecting (blade) signs are allowed.
- vi) There is a limit of one projecting sign per façade, per tenant, facing a public road.
- vii) Projecting signs shall not extend vertically above the wall mounted sign height line of the façade upon which it is mounted.
- viii) Projecting signs shall maintain a minimum vertical distance of eight feet (8') above any sidewalk.
- ix) Projecting signs shall not be greater than twenty-four square feet in total area measured by sign height by horizontal distance from building face to outermost sign edge.
- x) The maximum horizontal projection from the building face is four feet. The maximum distance between the projecting sign and building face is one foot.

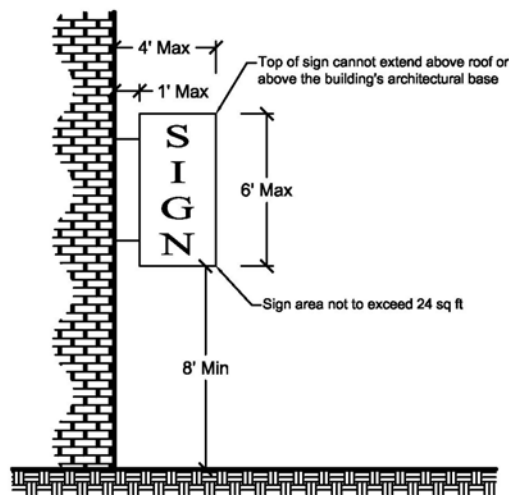


Exhibit 3

- xi) Projecting signs cannot block or obscure sign details, windows or cornices of the building upon which they are placed.
- xii) Projecting signs shall not be internally illuminated and must be constructed of painted wood or metal or a synthetic substitute. Unfinished materials, including unpainted wood, are not allowed.
- xiii) Projecting signs can project into the public ROW.
- xiv) Signs on awnings or canopies shall not exceed 24 inches in letter height.
- xv) An integrated window sign is permitted and may be either painted or etched.
- xvi) An integrated window sign may not cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.
- xvii) Glass etching is the preferred Window Sign treatment.
- xviii) Neon signs placed inside windows may not cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.

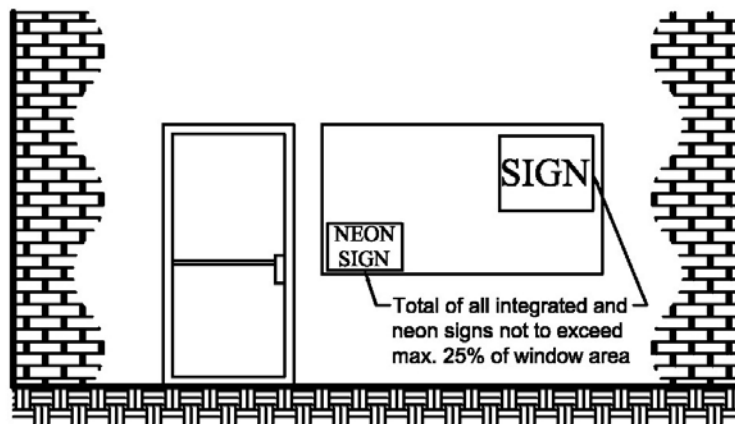


Exhibit 4

- xix) Exterior neon signage is permitted, subject to Planning Commission review and approval.
- xx) Individual building addresses should be visible from the street.
- xxi) Painted signs on blank walls were common historically and are allowed on masonry façades only and must comply with the provisions of §24-212 (c)(1).

3) Freestanding Signs:

- i) Monument style signs shall be designed with a solid base at least as wide as the sign itself.
- ii) Monument style sign applications shall be accompanied by a landscape plan incorporating a variety of native and non-invasive plant species which provide sufficient landscaping to screen the base of the sign. When site conditions preclude the provision of landscaping, the base of the sign must be constructed of masonry materials.
- iii) Monument signs shall not be greater in size than thirty-six (36) square feet, calculated by multiplying total width by total height from grade to top, with a maximum height of six feet.

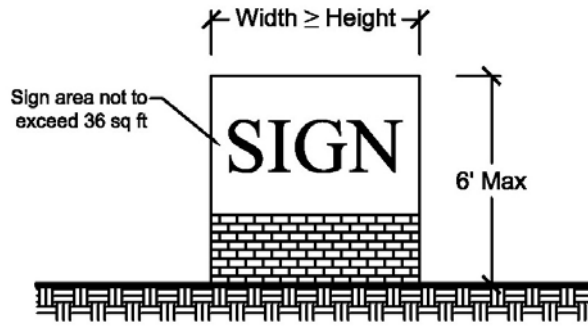


Exhibit 5

- iv) Monument signs are to include the property's street address.
- v) The use of "A" frame signage on streets is encouraged and must comply with the 10% allowable signage.

SECTION 6:
GLOSSARY

Arcade

A covered passageway, especially one with shops along the sides



Articulation

Architectural composition in which elements and parts of the building are expressed logically, distinctly, and consistently, with clear joints.

Awning

A shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall or window frame of a building.



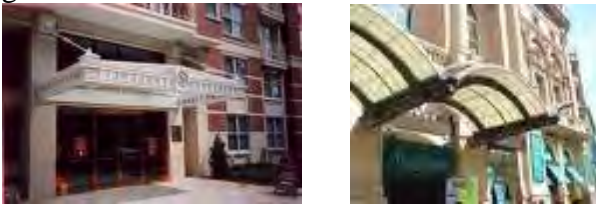
Blade/ Projecting Sign

A non-electric sign hanging beneath a canopy and/or attached to the face of a building or post.



Canopy

A roof structure extending from the front of a building over a sidewalk or walkway which may be wholly or partially supported by columns, poles, or braces extending from the ground.



Canopy Sign

Any sign that is part of or attached to an awning, canopy, or other fabric, plastic, or structural protective cover over a door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area.



Casement Window

A window that is attached to its frame by one or more hinges.



Chain/Prototype Architecture

Standardized architecture associated with specific corporate entities. Design is not unique to the site and situation of the project.

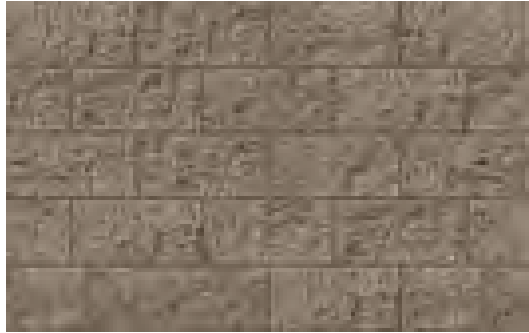


Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU)

A large rectangular brick used in construction. Concrete blocks are made from cast concrete.



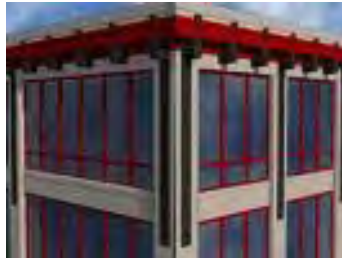
Discouraged:



Encouraged:

Cornice

The cornice is the uppermost section of moldings along the top of a wall or just below a roof.



Double Hung Window

Consists of two window sashes (i.e., panes of glass), one on top, one on the bottom.



Façade

The face of a building from the ground to the roofline



Gable

A very triangular roof, the gable allows rain and snow to run off easily.

Green Roof

Roofing with alternative surfaces that replace conventional construction materials and include a protective covering of planting media and vegetation to reduce impervious cover and more closely mimic natural hydrology.



Green Streets

Streets designed with landscaped areas that capture, filter and allow for infiltration of stormwater runoff.



Gooseneck Lights

Lights used to light a sign, canopy, or awning. Typically these lights extend from the building wall above a sign and are used to illuminate the sign.

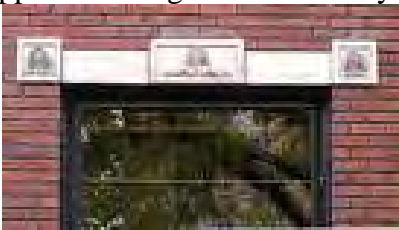


Hip Roof

A type of roof containing sloping planes of the same pitch on each of four sides. A hip roof contains no gables.

Lintel

A heavy horizontal beam of wood or stone over an opening of a door or window to support the weight above it. ~~May be aesthetic in nature only.~~



Mansard Roof

A four-sided roof having a double slope on all sides, with the lower slope much steeper than the upper.

Mullion

An element that divides adjacent larger window units.



Muntin

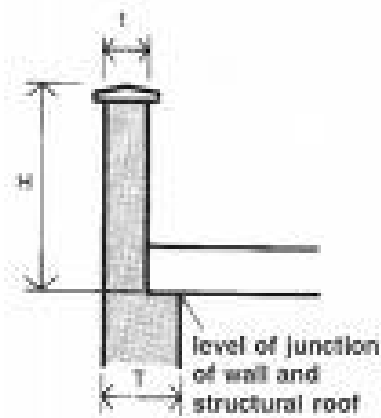
Decorative lines applied within larger window panels.



The picture above illustrates the difference, with the thinner black lines being the Muntins and the thicker black raised wood pieces the Mullions

Parapet

A false front or wall extension above the roofline of a principal building.



Permeable Paving

A term used to describe paving methods for roads, parking lots and walkways that allow the movement of water and air around the paving material. They allow precipitation to percolate through areas that would traditionally be impervious and instead infiltrate the stormwater through to the soil below.

Shed Roof

A roof containing only one sloping plane. Has no hips, ridges, valleys or gables.

Single Hung Window

Consists of a single pane of glass that covers the entire window space and does not move.

Spandrel

Typically the low panels made of wood, metal or masonry that create a wall below shop windows. In a building with more than one floor, indicates the space between the top of the window in one story and the sill of the window in the story above.

Spandrel Glass

An opaque glass used in windows and curtain walls to conceal spandrel beams, columns, or other internal construction.



Transom Window

A transom window is the window over the crosspiece separating a door or the like from a window or fanlight above it.



Tree Well Fencing

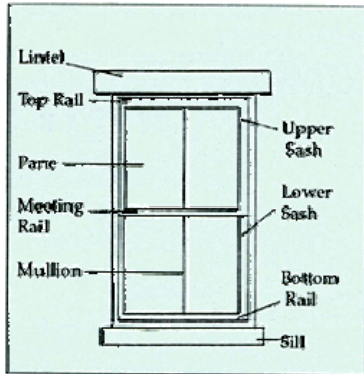


Triple Hung Window

Consists of three window sashes (i.e., panes of glass), one on top, one on the middle, one on the bottom.



Windows





31 South Summit Avenue
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877
Telephone: 301-258-6330

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MARCH 18, 2009

Chair John Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present at the meeting were Vice-Chair Danny Winborne, Commissioners Matthew Hopkins, Lloyd Kaufman, and Lenny Levy, Alternate Commissioner Geri Lanier, Planning Director Lauren Pruss, Community Planning Director Trudy Schwarz, Planner Rob Robinson, and Recording Secretary Myriam Gonzalez. Chair Bauer noted Alternate Commissioner Lanier would sit at the dais but would not actively participate this evening, since all Commissioners were present.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 4, 2009, Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Levy moved, seconded by Commissioner Kaufman, to APPROVE the Minutes of the March 4, 2009, Planning Commission Meeting as submitted.

Vote: 5-0

II. RECORD PLATS

R-1252 -- Fairfield at West Deer Park, Plat 3 (Plat of Correction)

R-1253 -- Fairfield at West Deer Park, Plat 4 (Plat of Correction)

Commissioner Levy moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Winborne, to APPROVE the Record Plat Agenda.

Vote: 5-0

III. RECOMMENDATION TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Olde Towne Guidelines – Design Guidelines for Future Development and Redevelopment in accordance with the Gaithersburg Olde Towne District Master Plan: MP-1-05

Planner Robinson noted the draft guidelines were introduced for the Commission's discussion in January 2009, and were revised following the receipt of comments from the Commission, the Olde Towne and Historic Preservation Advisory Committees during their February 2009 meetings, and from the public. He reported that staff has received endorsements from the above-referenced advisory committees encouraging the City Council to adopt the guidelines.

The Commission reviewed each section of the draft document and inquired further about language discouraging tree grates, as well as lighting levels, sustainability issues, fences and walks, parking, trash, drainage, architecture and encouragement of stylistic elements. Staff was given guidance with language modifications regarding those items and the glossary section. Commissioner Hopkins recommended the use of pictures and diagrams, particularly with respect to storefronts. Mr. Robinson voiced a concern, however, with standardizing, which would conflict with seeking creative diversity in Olde Towne. Commissioner Hopkins and

Chair Bauer elaborated on the advisability of using pictures of multiple storefront types in the glossary section.

Lastly, Mr. Robinson discussed how the subsequent reviews of the draft guidelines and adoption resolution would proceed. Chair Bauer suggested labeling diagrams/pictures as "draft" for the City Council's review so as to ensure the focus of the review is on the narrative content.

The Commission directed staff to revise the draft document in accordance with tonight's discussion and bring back the revised guidelines for recommendation to the City Council. Chair Bauer congratulated staff on the quality of their work.

IV. DISCUSSION

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Gaithersburg West Master Plan

Planning Director Pruss referenced her March 12, 2009, Memorandum to the Planning Commission with an accompanying draft letter from the Commission to the County's Department of Planning, previously included in the Commission's informational package for tonight's meeting. She indicated the draft letter discusses broader issues which staff identified as items the Planning Commission wishes to address, noting that staff is seeking comments and/or additional issues the Commission wants included in the letter.

Chair Bauer shared Gaithersburg City Manager Jones's request for the removal of the reference to "Gaithersburg" from the County's plan name, and additionally recommended revising the name of the landmark project (Life Sciences Center) so as to better reflect its mixed use residential portion. He suggested a name more evocative of the historical content of the area would be more appropriate.

In addition, Chair Bauer expressed a concern with the addition of a stop in the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) route, noting that it could delay the process from going forward due to the need for additional review. Director Pruss noted that although staff shares the concern, it chose not to include it in the draft letter as additional stops would call for adding density, which would help support the future funding of the CCT. Planner Robinson noted, however, two related issues (Nos. 10 and 15) in the letter that call for the inclusion of acceptable alternatives in the plan, while ensuring that the overall project is not delayed. In response to Commissioner Levy, Mr. Robinson provided information relating to State and County funding for the CCT project.

Commissioner Hopkins suggested language to encourage the retention of the DANAC Stop. Chair Bauer strongly recommended that public access to a station at the Johns Hopkins University's Belward Research Center campus be provided. Commissioner Hopkins agreed adding that street-front retail development contiguous to that station would be most appropriate.

Lastly, Chair Bauer provided language for inclusion in the letter ensuring that public review/comment forums continue through the time the plan's design process nears its completion, and added that this item be included in staff's verbal comments at the public hearing.

Planning Director Pruss announced the County's public hearing is scheduled for March 26, 2009, at which time the City staff would voice the City's key comments on major issues.