

RESOLUTION NO. R-28-09

RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
ADOPTING THE GAITHERSBURG OLDE TOWNE DISTRICT
DESIGN GUIDELINES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GAITHERSBURG OLDE TOWNE
DISTRICT MASTER PLAN: MP-1-05

WHEREAS, Olde Towne Design Guidelines were originally adopted by the Mayor and City Council in 1981 and revised in 1996; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, in resolution R-64-05 it was stated "Following the adoption of the Gaithersburg Olde Towne District Master Plan the City should begin formulating a collection of design guidelines for the five Planning Sectors. Concept plan proposals should go before the Planning Commission for courtesy review and comment. The Planning Commission will utilize the established design guidelines in their review of these concept plans."; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gaithersburg planning staff developed a collection of design guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the design guidelines were presented to the Planning Commission for review and comment on January 21, 2009; March 18, 2009; and April 15, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the design guidelines were presented to the Olde Towne Advisory Committee for review and comment on February 3, 2009 and March 5, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the design guidelines were presented to the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee for review and comment on February 5, 2009 and March 5, 2009; and

WHEREAS, upon further revisions, the Planning Commission, Olde Towne Advisory Committee, and Historic Preservation Advisory Committee have recommended approval and adoption of the Olde Towne District Design Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the Olde Towne District Design Guidelines are as follows:

SECTION 1:
OLDE TOWNE DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Olde Towne District is the City of Gaithersburg's focus of historical identity and is 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.
- 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.

2) FENCES AND WALLS:

- 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) Shaded gooseneck lamps are encouraged for exterior building and sign illumination.
- vi) Wall-mounted light fixtures are not allowed to extend above the height of the wall to which the fixtures are mounted.
- vii) The use of wall sconces, lanterns, or other lighting to delineate building entrances is encouraged.
- viii) Street lighting proposed within any public ROW, will be of a type approved by the Department of Public Works (DPW).

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 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 locate appropriately, hardscape amenities which may include benches, trash receptacles, wayfinding signs, and bicycle racks.
- iii) 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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, etc., 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

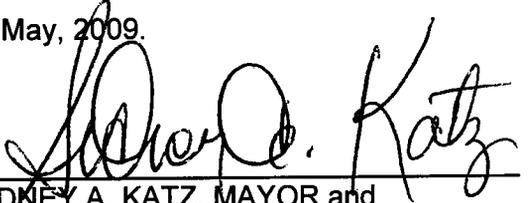
- xvii) Glass etching is the preferred Window Sign treatment.
- xviii) Neon signs placed inside windows may not cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.
- xix) Exterior neon signage is permitted, subject to Planning Commission review and approval.
- xx) Individual building 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.
- 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.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council that the Gaithersburg Olde Towne District Design Guidelines are hereby adopted by the Mayor and City Council in accordance with resolution R-64-05 for the purpose of furthering the intent and vision set forth in the Gaithersburg Olde Towne District Master Plan, MP-1-05.

ADOPTED by the City Council this 18th day of May, 2009.



SIDNEY A. KATZ, MAYOR and
President of the Council

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the City Council on the 18th day of May, 2009.



Angel L. Jones, City Manager