

Design Guidelines and Review Criteria

for the

Sturgeon Bay Aesthetic Design & Site Plan Review Code

When acting upon an application, the Sturgeon Bay Aesthetic Design and Site Plan Review Board shall rely upon generally accepted site planning and design principles, the stated purposes and intent of the Sturgeon Bay Aesthetic Design and Site Plan Review code, and the provisions of the Sturgeon Bay Comprehensive Plan or other applicable plans and ordinances. The Aesthetic Design and Site Plan Review Board shall also give important consideration during the review process to the following criteria for approval:

(1) Site layout.

- (a) The existing natural topographic and landscape features of a site should be incorporated into a development plan. Such plan shall include all prudent and necessary steps required to protect the natural environment of the site and surrounding areas during and after construction.
- (b) The site shall be designed to accomplish a desirable transition from the public streetscape, and between commercial, industrial, and residential land use areas.
- (c) Where grading is necessary for the construction of structures and paved areas, the grading should blend into adjacent property. Abrupt changes in grade are discouraged.
- (d) Where possible, buildings should be situated on the site to promote and protect public views to and along shorelines from public roads and other public lands.
- (e) In areas where sidewalks exist or are planned, buildings containing retail and other commercial uses should have entrances that provide convenient pedestrian access from the street.
- (f) Where a pattern of small-scale commercial development exists or is planned, narrower buildings or multiple storefronts within larger buildings are encouraged.
- (g) Where a pattern of relatively consistent building setbacks exist on a street, new buildings should be situated to closely match such setback pattern.
- (g) On corner parcels where the proposed building is located close to both street lines, the corner of the building shall be recessed from the street lines in order to create pedestrian areas; prominent building entrances; and more architecturally interesting buildings.

(h) Stormwater drainage shall be designed so as not to alter the natural drainage systems or cause flooding or erosion on neighboring properties.

(2) Access, circulation and parking.

(a) Vehicular driveways into the site shall be located in a manner to minimize traffic congestion and difficult turning movements and shall be coordinated with existing and proposed access points on adjoining or nearby properties. Individual developments having more than one access points per street are discouraged and shared access driveways with adjoining properties is encouraged.

(b) The interior circulation of the site shall be designed to provide for the convenient and safe flow of pedestrians and non-pedestrian traffic through the site and to/from public streets or sidewalks.

(c) Off-street parking areas for motor vehicles and bicycles that are shared with neighboring businesses and parcels through the use of common driveways or internal access driveways shall be encouraged, if feasible, instead of stand-alone single use parking areas.

(d) Off-street parking located to the rear or side of buildings is preferred over parking between the building and the street, particularly if the amount of off-street parking supplied is greater than required under the zoning code. For stand-alone buildings under 15,000 square feet, it is preferable that not more than one tier (single row or double row) of parking be located between the building and the street it fronts.

(e) For large developments over 40,000 square feet, the site design shall allow for present or future alternative transportation modes, such as bike routes or transit stops.

(f) Permeable surfaces, bioswales, rain gardens, and other forms of stormwater runoff prevention for parking and on-site traffic areas are encouraged.

(3) Building design.

(a) Buildings shall not be limited to a preferred type of architecture or building materials. However, architectural styles, which are generally not common to Sturgeon Bay or Northeastern Wisconsin, are discouraged.

(b) Buildings should be sited and designed to be aesthetically pleasing as viewed from adjoining public streets. Excessively long, unbroken building facades shall be avoided. Building materials and design features shall be consistent with the general design theme and/or proposed use of the development.

(c) The architectural character of historic structures shall be maintained or enhanced whenever remodeling, expansions, or other changes are proposed.

- (d) Buildings on in-fill sites shall be compatible with surrounding buildings in terms of scale, massing, height, entrances, and windows.
 - (e) Rhythm/re-occurring patterns in windows and storefronts are encouraged.
 - (f) Building components, such as windows, doors, eaves, and parapet, should be in proportionate scale in relationship to one another.
 - (g) The use of door and window canopies and awnings is encouraged.
 - (h) The use of special architectural features, including projecting windows, towers, turrets, arches and cupolas are encouraged, particularly on corner buildings.
 - (i) Rooftop mechanical equipment shall be screened with parapets or the roof form.
 - (j) Designs seeking Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification are encouraged.
 - (k) Buildings containing retail commercial uses that are located within 15 feet of the street should have transparent windows on the ground floor along at least 50% of the length of the building facade facing the street.
 - (l) Garages should be designed to not dominate the site. Whenever possible, detached garages shall be located to the rear of the principal building or shall be screened or have overhead doors not facing the street. Attached garages that extend beyond the front façade of the building are discouraged. Garages with three or more parking stalls shall be designed to limit the visual impact of overhead doors through features such as offsets or side-loading.
 - (m) Blank walls viewable from the street are undesirable.
- (4) Materials and colors.
- (a) Opaque or reflective window tints and glazes are discouraged.
 - (b) The use of identical building materials on all sides of a building that are visible from public streets is encouraged.
 - (c) For developments with multiple buildings, a palette of options for exterior building colors for use throughout the site should be established. The range should be wide enough to allow for variety, yet narrow enough to unify all the buildings on a site.
 - (d) Metal siding is strongly discouraged except for industrial buildings or for facades not facing public areas such as streets or parking areas.

(5) Landscaping.

- (a) The appearance of paved areas should be enhanced through landscaping. Large parking areas shall comply with the interior landscaping requirements of the Sturgeon Bay Zoning Code. Required landscape islands shall be dispersed throughout the parking area to avoid large expanses of pavement.
- (b) Storage areas, dumpsters and other places that tend to be unsightly shall be screened by walls, fences, berms, vegetation, or combinations of these. The screening should be equally effective in winter and summer.
- (c) To reduce erosion and surface runoff, trees and other vegetative land cover shall be removed only where necessary for the construction of structures or paved areas.
- (d) Vegetative landscaping shall be used to soften the appearance of blank walls.
- (e) Fences and retaining walls shall be surfaced, painted, landscaped or otherwise treated to blend with their surroundings.
- (f) Utility lines should be placed underground where appropriate and economically feasible to reduce the visual impact on open and scenic areas. Utility pedestals should be screened.
- (g) The use of native and indigenous plant species is encouraged over exotic species. The use of invasive species, as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, is prohibited.

(6) Lighting.

- (a) Exterior light fixtures shall be shielded such that direct beams of light are not cast skyward or onto adjoining property.
- (b) Lighting of an intensity beyond which is reasonably required to conduct operations or maintain security is discouraged.
- (c) Lighting fixtures and devices promoting energy efficiency are encouraged.

(7) Signs.

- (a) The location, size, design, materials, and colors of signs should be compatible with the building style.
- (b) The location and design of freestanding signs shall be coordinated with the landscape treatment.

- (c) Neon signs, portable arrow signs, and light box signs are discouraged. Interior lit cabinet signs, when approved, should be designed with opaque materials such that only the message/logo is lit rather than the entire cabinet.
- (d) Signs that are raised on a pole or pylon should have landscaping such as shrubs or flower beds surrounding the base of the sign.