

24V.207

STANDARD DESIGN GUIDELINES

24V.207.010 PURPOSE

These Standard Design Guidelines intend to ensure new development embody architectural characteristics that maintain desired human scale, rhythm, and urban characteristic. This is done without prescribing architectural styles. The Standard Design Guidelines are advisory. The Standard Design Guidelines are organized as follows:

- A. Context and Architectural Character
- B. Building Massing and Articulation
- C. Building Walls
- D. Wall Openings
- E. Roofs
- F. Miscellaneous Building Elements
- G. Site Improvements
- H. Green Design

A. CONTEXT AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

Proposed buildings should relate to the architectural characteristics of surrounding buildings to be more compatible with their neighbors. The intent is not necessarily to replicate or emulate existing buildings, but to allow for a range of architectural expressions that complement the existing urban fabric. Therefore, proposed building designs should be based on and reflect thorough analysis of their surrounding patterns with regard to the following:

1. Building orientation;
2. Horizontal and vertical building articulation;
3. Architectural style;
4. Building scale and proportion;
5. Roof line and form;
6. Fenestration pattern and detailing;

7. Architectural detailing;
8. Exterior finish materials and colors; and
9. Lighting and landscape patterns.

Even where there is no consistent architectural character or pattern found in the surrounding area, building design and massing can be used to complement architectural characteristics of neighboring buildings. In some cases, where the existing context is not so well-defined, or may be undesirable, a proposed project can establish an architectural character and pattern from which future development can take its cues.

B. BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION

1. Each building should have at minimum a distinctive: horizontal base; occupied middle; and eave, cornice and/or parapet line that complement and balance one another. Horizontal articulations can be produced by material changes or applied facade elements.
2. Each building should have a clear and harmonious pattern of vertically-oriented facade openings including entries, windows, and bays and columns or other exposed vertical supports. Vertical articulations can be produced by variations in rooflines; window groupings; applied facade elements such as piers or pilasters, bay windows and balconies; entrance stoops and porches; and subtle changes in materials and vertical planes that create shadow lines and textural differences. Vertical elements break up long, monolithic building facades along the street. Major vertical elements should be a maximum of 50 ft apart measured center-to-center.
3. In T4.5 zone buildings should generally be designed to the scale and form of single-family houses.
4. Building Base - This may be as simple as a small projection of the wall surface and/or a different material or color. It may be created by a heavier or thicker design treatment of the entire ground floor for a building of two or more floors, or by a setback of the upper floors.
5. Pattern of Features - Windows, wall panels, pilasters, building bays, and storefronts should be based on a module derived from the building's structural bay spacing. Features based on this module should be carried across windowless walls to relieve blank, uninteresting surfaces.
6. Building Entrances to Upper Floors - should be directly visible from the street and easy to identify.
 - a. For buildings in T4.8, T4.9, and T5.3 zones:
 - ii. Main building entrances - should be easily identifiable and distinguishable from first floor storefronts. At least one of the following treatments is recommended:

- a) Marked by a taller mass above, such as a tower, or within a volume that protrudes from the rest of the building surface;
 - b) Located in the center of the facade, as part of a symmetrical overall composition;
 - c) accented by architectural elements, such as columns, overhanging roofs, awnings, and ornamental light fixtures;
 - d) marked or accented by a change in the roofline or change in the roof type.
- iii. Along Victoria Avenue - entries to shops or lobbies should be spaced a maximum of fifty (50) feet apart.
- iv. Corner buildings - should provide prominent corner entrances for shops and other activity-generating uses.
- b. For buildings in T4.5 zone:
- i. A clear entry sequence should lead from the sidewalk to the front door. The following elements are recommended:
 - a) Low Hedges, Fences and/or Entry Gates - to define the edge between the public street and private property.
 - b) Stairs, Stoops, and Open Porches - are recommended to create attractive semi-public spaces.
 - (1) Stairs - All stairs should be boxed and framed by attractive stepped bulkheads walls or balustrade railings. Bullnose treads are recommended. Open or "floating" exterior stairs should not be used.
 - (2) Open porches - should have attractive bulkheads or balustrade railings and a roof that complements the pitch and materials of the main roof.
 - c) Ornamental Lighting - for porches and walks to add attractiveness, safety, and security.
 - d) Freestanding Landscape Elements - such as trellises, arbors, and special landscape materials that add character to yard spaces and / or accent the entry sequence.
 - e) Pedestrian Access to Subsurface Parking Garages - should be provided along the building frontages to increase streetside pedestrian activity. Accessways could link directly to the main entrance stoop/porch, or be provided in a separate location. In either case, they should be designed as a prominent, visible element in the overall facade composition.

C. BUILDING WALLS

1. Configuration
 - a. Two or more wall materials may be combined on one façade only with one above the other - lighter materials above those more substantial (e.g. wood above stucco or masonry, or stucco above masonry); dependent, however, upon the chosen style.
 - b. All building elements that project from the building wall by more than 16 inches, including but not limited to decks, balconies, porch roofs and bays, shall be visibly supported by pilasters, piers, brackets, posts, columns, or beams that are sized proportionally to the structure above. This requirement does not apply to cantilevered elements that are typical for a specific style.
2. Wall Surface Materials - If the building mass and pattern of windows and doors is complex, simple wall surfaces are preferable (e.g. stucco); if the building volume and the pattern of wall openings are simple, additional wall texture and articulation should be employed (e.g. bricks or blocks, rusticated stucco, ornamental reliefs). In both cases, pilasters, columns, and cornices should be used to add visual interest and pedestrian scale.
3. The palette of wall materials should be kept to a minimum, preferably two (e.g. stucco and tile, brick and stone) or less. Using the same wall materials as adjacent or nearby buildings helps strengthen the district character.
 - a. Brick - Brick veneers should be mortared to give the appearance of structural brick. If used, brick tile applications should use wraparound corner and bullnose pieces to minimize a veneer appearance.
 - b. Stone and Stone Veneers - are appropriate as a basic building material or as special material for wall panels or sills in combination with other materials, such as brick or concrete.
 - c. Poured-in-Place Concrete - options in terms of formwork, pigments, and aggregates should be explored to create rich surfaces. When used, include accents such as ceramic tile or stone for decorative effect.
 - d. Ceramic Tile - is recommended as an accent material.
 - e. Stucco - and/or painted stucco may be used in order to reduce maintenance and increase wear. All stucco surfaces should be smooth to prevent the collection of dirt and surface pollutants, and the deterioration of painted surfaces.
 - f. Wood Siding – Wood is the predominant material of most existing residential structures in Ventura and should be widely used in the architectural design of new residential

structures. Horizontal sidings such as clapboard and tongue-in-groove; vertical siding such as board and batten; and other horizontal sidings such as smaller wood shingles and shakes may be suitable.

- g. Fiber-Cement or Cementitious Siding: These are exterior siding products composed of Portland cement, ground sand, cellulose fiber and sometimes clay, mixed with water and cured in an autoclave. They are available in planks, panels and shingles and are an acceptable substitute for wood siding when used in the formats described above under wood siding.
 - h. Curtain Wall Systems - Should only be used for limited areas, such as connections between buildings, entrance lobbies, etc.
 - i. Note on Parapet and Cornice Cap Flashings - Sheet metal parapet cap flashings should be painted to match wall or trim color.
 - j. Not Appropriate:
 - i. Simulated finishes - such as artificial stone.
 - ii. Wood shingles and shakes - Vertical board and batten, shingles, or shakes are not recommended in the T4.8, T4.9, and T-5.3 zones; they have a rural/residential character.
 - iii. Plywood siding.
4. Side and Rear Building Facades - should have a level of trim and finish compatible with the front facade, particularly if they are visible from streets, adjacent parking areas or residential buildings.
5. Blank Wall Areas - without windows or doors are only permitted on internal-block side-property line walls. Such blank walls should reflect the Ground Level Building Increment, Building Massing & Organization, and Facade Compositions guidelines. Surface relief, decorative vines, and/or architectural murals and other surface enhancements should also be considered. Any blank exterior wall should also be treated with a graffiti-resistant coating.
6. Color - In general, drab earth tones should not be used. Building walls should contrast trim colors; for example, neutral or light walls with dark colors and saturated hues for accent and ornamental colors; white or light window and door trim on a medium or dark building wall. Colors of adjacent buildings should be taken into consideration.
- a. Secondary Color - can be used to give additional emphasis to architectural features such as building bases (like a wainscot), plasters, cornices, capitals, and bands.
 - b. Bright Colors - should be used sparingly. Typical applications are fabric awnings and banners. A restrained use of bright colors allows display windows and merchandise to catch the eye and stand out in the visual field.

D. WALL OPENINGS

1. Windows - are an important element of building composition and an indicator of overall building quality:
 - a. All windows within a building, large or small, should be related in operating type, proportions, and trim. Other unifying elements should be used, such as common sill or header lines.
 - b. For storefront buildings: Window-to-Wall Proportion - In general, upper stories should have a window to wall area proportion (typically 30 — 50%) that is smaller than that of ground floor storefronts.
 - c. Window Inset - Glass should be inset a minimum of three (3) inches from the exterior wall surface to add relief to the wall surface; this is especially important for stucco buildings.
 - d. Shaped Frames and Sills -should be used to enhance openings and add additional relief. They should be proportional to the glass area framed; e.g. a larger window should have thicker framing members.
 - e. Mullions -“true divided light” windows or sectional windows are recommended where a divided window design is desired; “snap-in” grilles or mullions should not be used.
 - f. Glazing - Clear glazing is strongly recommended. Reflective glazing should not be used. If tinted glazing is used, the tint should be kept as light as possible; green, gray, and blue are recommended.
 - g. Replacement/Renovation - Wood windows should be replaced with wood windows of the same operating type (e.g. double-hung, casement, etc.; vinyl-covered wood windows are available for lower maintenance). If aluminum replacement windows or doors are used, they should be same operating type - and orientation as the original windows (e.g. do not replace a double hung window with a horizontal sliding window):
 - i. Factory painted - or fluorocoated to match the original; color anodized is also acceptable.
 - ii. Similar in size - and thickness to the original frame and mullions.
2. Storefronts - are like small buildings with their own base, “roofline,” and pattern of window and door openings; with the exception of styles, for example, as Art Moderne and Art Deco.
 - a. Base - a panel of tile or other special material is recommended below display windows. Materials recommended for walls (next section) are generally suitable. Base materials should

be the same or “heavier” materials visually than walls.

- i. Brick and wood - should only be used if the rest of the wall surface is the same material; neither material should be used exclusively.
 - ii. Ceramic tile - is frequently used as a storefront base. Dark tile with light stucco is an effective combination. Different colors and sizes of tile may be used for decorative effect.
- b. Display Windows - Large pane windows encompassing a minimum of 60% of the storefront surface area are recommended. Where privacy is desired for restaurants, professional services, etc., windows should be divided into smaller panes.
- c. Clerestory Windows - are horizontal panels of glass between the storefront and the second floor. They are recommended for new or renovated storefronts. Clerestory windows can be good locations for neon, painted-window~ and other relatively non-obtrusive types of signs.
- d. Recessed Entries - are recommended as another traditional element of the main street storefront. Recommended treatments include:
- i. Special paving materials - such as ceramic tile;
 - ii. Ornamental ceilings – such as coffering;
 - iii. Decorative light fixtures.
- e. Doors - should be substantial and well detailed. They are the one part of the storefront that patrons will invariably touch and feel. They should match the materials, design and character of the display window framing. “Narrowline” aluminum frame doors are not recommended.
- f. Cornices - should be provided at the second floor (or roofline for a one-story building) to differentiate the storefront from upper levels of the building and to add visual interest; this also allows the storefront to function as the base for the rest of the building.

E. ROOFS

1. Forms - Roof forms should complement the building mass and match the principal building in terms of style, detailing and materials. Double-pitched roofs (such as gable, hip, pyramid), dormer windows, and chimneys are recommended to add variety and visual interest when viewed from downtown streets below and hillside areas above. Roofs of historic buildings in Ventura and neighboring cities should be used as an inspiration for new designs. Flat roofs are acceptable, if a strong, attractively detailed cornice and/or parapet wall is provided. Single-pitched - or “shed” roofs should not be used for the principal building.

2. Parapet walls - are recommended; they should have a distinct shape or profile, e.g. a gable, arc, or raised center.
3. "Commercial Mansards" - i.e. wraparound roofing panels that do not enclose a habitable floor, should not be used.
4. Mansards - should only be used when emulating a traditional building style that typically employs mansard roofs, e.g. Beaux Arts, Victorian, etc. The following guidelines should apply:
5. Buildings are three (3) stories or greater height,
 - a. They enclose no more and no less than one (1) floor of habitable space;
 - b. Dormer windows and other architectural features should occupy a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the roof length.
6. Accent elements - such as flags, cut-out openings, grilles and latticework, ornamental medallions or building numbers are recommended.
7. Mechanical equipment - on rooftops should be screened, preferably behind a parapet roof. Latticework, louvered panels, and other treatments that are compatible with the building's architecture may also be appropriate.
8. Materials – Encouraged roof surface materials are identified as follows:
 - a. Clay, Ceramic or Concrete Tile - Colorful glazed ceramic tiles are recommended for decorative roof shapes, such as parapets, domes, and turrets.
 - b. Tar and gravel, composition, or elastomeric roofs (at flat roof locations): Light, reflective colors are recommended to minimize heat gain within the buildings. Roof surfaces utilizing these materials should be screened from view from adjacent buildings and sites by parapet walls.
 - c. Metal Seam Roofing - should be anodized, fluorocoated or painted. Copper and lead roofs should be natural or oxidized.

F. MISCELLANEOUS BUILDING ELEMENTS

1. Trellises, Canopies, Awnings and Other Building-Mounted Accessories.
 - a. Awnings - are recommended. They should be a colorful fabric mounted over a metal structure that is framed and attractive in design. Fabric awnings are generally preferable to permanent canopies. Backlit awnings are strongly discouraged.
 - b. Trellises and Canopies - Materials, color, and form should be derived from the building architecture.

- c. Height and Projection - trellises, canopies and awnings should be a minimum of seven (7) feet above the sidewalk, and project no more than seven (7) feet out from the building wall.
 - d. Placement - of trellises, canopies and awnings should be above the display windows and below the storefront cornice or sign panel. They should not cover piers, pilasters, clerestory windows or other architectural features. An individual awning or canopy for each storefront or building bay complements the building more effectively than one continuous awning does.
 - e. Accessories - Colorful banners should be used to add variety to the street. Ornamental brackets and poles add further interest. Hanging flower or plant baskets suspended from ornamental brackets of metal or wood are recommended for storefronts.
2. Accessory Buildings
- a. General - Outbuildings of all types should have architectural treatments derived from the main building: surface materials, trim, fenestration, roof materials, and colors.
 - b. Freestanding Garages - should be unobtrusive, preferably located at the rear of properties to minimize visual impact.
 - c. Single-Car Garage Doors - are strongly recommended, with windows, surface panels, trim, and other forms of architectural detailing to reduce their impact and scale.
 - d. Built-in Garages - should blend with the form of the residence.

G. SITE IMPROVEMENTS

1. Public and Semi-Public Open Space – where provided as part of new development; e.g. pedestrian spaces, arcades, malls, courtyards, etc.
 - a. Spatial Definition – Spaces should be defined by buildings or landscape elements on a minimum of two sides.
 - b. Linkage - Spaces should be publicly accessible during daylight hours and linked to adjacent streets and sidewalks.
 - c. Sequence - Gateways, trellises, special lighting, planting, etc., should be used to create a sequence for pedestrians; for example, an ornamental gate at the sidewalk, a passage lined with columns, and arrival at a courtyard.
2. Walls, Fences and Piers - should be used to define public and private boundaries and spaces.
 - a. Design - Walls, fences, and piers should be designed to be compatible with the character of the principal building(s).
 - i. Walls and fences should be open and/or low along street frontages - to maintain both a public character and sight distance for driveways where they occur.

- ii. Fence and wall panels - should be divided into regular modules that reflect the module of the principal building.
- iii. Thick and thin elements - should be used, with thicker pieces for supports and panel divisions. Fence posts and support columns should be emphasized and/or built-up.
- iv. Walls - should have a base and coping.
- d. Materials - should be compatible with the principal building. Post or pier materials may differ from fence materials, such as metal fences with masonry piers.
- e. Fences – should be wrought iron, cast iron, and welded steel ornamental fences, or wood picket fences of substantial design. Metal fences also may be mounted on a low masonry wall, and/or spanning masonry piers. Wooden fences in non-residential areas should be painted, preferably a light color.
- f. Walls – are recommended to be of brick, stone, concrete, precast concrete, stucco-faced concrete, or concrete block.
- g. Piers - for spatial separation, a line of piers is acceptable. A continuous chain suspended between piers can be an effective and attractive device for creating a separation.
 - i. Spacing: no more than eight (8) feet on center.
 - ii. Thickness: at least eighteen (18) inches per side or diameter.
 - iii. Height: at least three (3) feet, no more than six (6) feet.
 - iv. Materials: should be the same as or complementary to the principal building.
- h. Not Recommended:
 - i. Chain link fences - If used, chain link should be coated with nylon, preferably of a dark color. Chain link fences can be made more attractive by using masonry or heavy wood posts.
 - ii. Unfinished or unsurfaced concrete block walls - should not be used; block walls should be coated with stucco or a similar surface.
 - iii. Rustic wood fences - should not be used.
 - iv. Barbed wire/plaza wire - should not be used.
- 3. Paving Materials - recommended for pedestrian surfaces are listed below. In general, a maximum of two materials should be combined in a particular application:
 - a. Stone - such as slate or granite.
 - b. Brick Pavers.

- c. Concrete Unit Pavers.
 - d. Poured-in-Place Concrete - with any of the following treatments: integral pigment color, special aggregate, special scoring pattern, ornamental insets such as tile, or pattern-stamped. All concrete walks should be tinted to reduce glare.
 - e. Not Recommended - asphalt, with the exception of bike paths.
4. Furnishings, Art Work, and Special Features - are recommended for public and/or common outdoor spaces.
- a. Permanent Outdoor Seating — is recommended in all publicly-accessible ways and spaces. Seating should be either:
 - i. Incorporated — as part of the design of the building base, or;
 - ii. Custom designed — in a style related to the architecture of the building (permanent benches of stone, brick or precast concrete), or;
 - iii. Catalog items — of substantial materials; e.g. steel or cast iron, precast concrete, or substantial wood.
 - b. Portable Seating — movable chairs, tables for cafes and other furniture should be of substantial materials; preferably metal or wood rather than plastic. Tables used for outdoor dining within the public right-of-way (i.e. in sidewalk areas) shall be a maximum of three (3) feet in diameter if round and three (3) feet along the longest side if rectilinear.
 - c. Street Clocks, Directory Kiosks, and Permanent Freestanding Showcase Displays - are encouraged for commercial buildings, subject to City review for adequate clearances, safety, and design. Designs should reflect the architecture of the sponsoring building or storefront.
 - d. Fountains - are recommended in open courtyard and passage spaces. The design and materials should relate to the principal building.
 - e. Public Art - such as sculpture, wall murals and other paintings, lighting displays and special public open spaces are encouraged.
 - i. Location - of public art should be in highly visible places specifically designed or modified for the purpose of accommodating it; public art should not be located in semi-private areas such as the rear of buildings or in courtyards.
 - ii. Symbolic content - of public art should relate to and represent the rich history of Ventura where appropriate; abstract as well as literal representative elements are appropriate.
 - iii. Murals - should reflect the color and architectural composition of the buildings on which they are painted, and,

to the extent appropriate, that of neighboring buildings. Murals are strongly recommended for exposed firewalls and other windowless wall areas that extend two or more floors above neighboring buildings.

- f. Surface Parking Lots Should Include Space-Defining Elements — such as arcades, trellises, columns, light standards, walls and railings, stairs and ramps, trees, climbing vines, arbors, and hedges to provide visual interest; use of these elements should be consistent with the principal building and other site features.
5. Plant Materials and Landscaping - should contribute to a comfortable, yet urban, downtown environment. The City of Ventura “City Tree Master Plan” should be referred to in addition to the guidelines listed below. Drought-tolerant plant materials should be used as appropriate.
 - a. Plant Materials Along Street Frontages - should contribute to a harmonious, civic character.
 - i. Street trees - shall be planted along all streets at a spacing of approximately twenty-five (25) feet on center to create a buffer between pedestrians and automobiles. Consistency in tree species, tree size, and spacing should be used to establish a strong street identity.
 - ii. Trees with open branching structures should be used. Deciduous trees are recommended to create shade in summer and allow sun in winter.
 - iii. Curbside planting strips shall be drought-tolerant grasses or low-growing groundcover; materials that might cause pedestrians to trip shall not be used.
 - iv. Streetside planting areas should have a simple palette of plant species. Drought-tolerant and/or native plants should be used. Common non-native species such as Juniper, Oleander, and Eucalyptus should not be used.
 - v. Plant materials that exhibit annual or seasonal color are recommended to highlight special locations; e.g. flanking main building entries and driveways.
 - b. Shade trees should be planted between every three (3) parking spaces.

Tree species employed shall not drop significant amounts of debris, sap or other materials. Trees shall be round-headed, easy to limb up, and able to thrive in urban conditions.
 - c. Plant Materials in Other Locations - should be selected and placed to reflect both ornamental and functional characteristics.
 - i. Deciduous trees should be the predominant large plant

material used. They should be located adjacent to buildings and within parking areas to provide shade in summer and allow sun in winter. Species should be selected to be drought-tolerant, provide fall color and minimize litter and other maintenance problems.

- ii. Evergreen shrubs and trees should be used as a screening device, for example, along rear property lines, around mechanical appurtenances and to obscure grillwork and fencing associated with subsurface parking garages.
 - iii. Flowering shrubs and trees should be used where they can be most appreciated: adjacent to walks and recreational areas, or framing building entries, stairs, and walks.
 - iv. Plants with annual or seasonal color are recommended to highlight special locations, such as courtyards, building entrances, or access drives.
 - v. Decorative vines should be considered for use along fences, property boundaries, perimeter walls, and on blank building elevations.
 - vi. Palm trees should be used sparingly.
 - vii. Drought-tolerant - and/or native plants should generally be used. Common non-native species such as Juniper, Oleander, and Eucalyptus should not be used.
- d. Mounding Earth — Freestanding earth berms and/or earth berms against buildings are a suburban landscape approach that are not appropriate in the Victoria Avenue Planning Area.

H. GREEN DESIGN

Green design seeks to increase the efficiency with which buildings use energy, water, and materials, while reducing building's impacts on the environment and human health through better siting, design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

1. Siting and Form
 - a. The early building location, orientation and massing decisions should consider solar-responsiveness, daylighting and natural ventilation and cooling design.
2. Passive Design Strategies
 - a. Roofs: Roof surface should be light colored and reflective roof surface to minimize heat gain.
 - b. Overhangs: Roof and window overhangs on the south side can be sized to provide shade in the summer, while allowing sunlight and warmth in the building during the winter.
 - c. Windows: All windows should be sealed, flashed, and properly installed to reduce air and moisture infiltration. The size and

number of windows on the heat intensive west side should be reduced in comparison to the recommended use of larger windows for greater ventilation and daylighting on the north and east sides.

3. Stormwater Management

- d. Development should limit the amount of impermeable surfaces on the site, since permeable surfaces both reduce peak stormwater runoff, and treat stormwater pollutants.

4. Landscaping

- a. Slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants that require less water and maintenance, significantly reducing water consumption should be planted. Native California plants and well-adapted non-native plants can be combined in wildlife-friendly and visually attractive landscapes suited to urban conditions.