

SECTION 20
ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS

20.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Statement of Purpose

The Town of Waxhaw, NC has adopted this manual as a guide for the design of buildings within the Town of Waxhaw. These standards are not intended to promote the replication of the existing built form of Waxhaw, but to allow imaginative design. The standards are meant to help achieve good design, not a certain stylistic result. Buildings should be designed to be complimentary of the existing built environment, not explicit reproductions of existing architectural styles. Spatial elements like massing, proportion, scale, setbacks, spaces between buildings and their relative positions should be used to integrate new development into existing surroundings.

These design standards will enable developers, architects, landowners and the general public to anticipate and plan for building acceptability as a key element of the overall project approval process. They are also provided to inform readers regarding many of the most common design and aesthetic intentions of the Town and to shorten the design and approval process by heading off designs that might otherwise be rejected.

These design standards will promote:

- High quality architectural and site design.
- Protection of sensitive land areas, stands of mature trees, open space, existing natural features and view corridors.
- Creation of commercial, office and industrial developments which result in a positive community influence.

2. Overview of Design Principles

- A. Buildings shall avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted walls or roof planes on their visible facades. Building wall offsets, including projections, recesses, and changes in floor level, shall be used in order to add architectural interest and variety; relieve the visual effect of a single, long wall; and subdivide the wall into human scale proportions. Similarly, roofline offsets shall be provided to lend architectural interest and variety to the massing of a building and to relieve the effect of a single, long roof.
- B. All sides of the building shall use materials consistent with those on the prominent side visible from public streets or neighboring properties, and should

be carefully designed with similar detailing, comparable quality, and compatible materials.

- C. The Town of Waxhaw encourages designs that are based on ‘green building principles.
- D. The rich architectural vocabulary of Waxhaw presents a wide variety of development opportunities using traditional forms while avoiding any perception of monotony. Buildings that are stylized in an attempt to use the building itself as advertising shall be discouraged, particularly where the proposed architecture is the result of a “corporate” or franchise style. The guidelines in this section are intended to attach the same or greater level of importance to the overall building design as is placed on the use contained within. Buildings are expected to be added to the Town as long-term additions to the architectural vibrancy of the community.
- E. All development projects shall provide a high level of quality in design and construction practices. This document requires compliance with the intent of Waxhaw’s Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and other provisions of the UDO related to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community but also offers the advantages of large scale planning for development and the efficient use of land.

20.2 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: NON-RESIDENTIAL

1. Building Walls

Building walls should complement the traditional materials and techniques of Waxhaw. They should express the construction techniques and structural constraints of traditional, long-lasting, building materials. Simple configurations and solid craftsmanship are favored over complexity and ostentation in building form and the articulation of details. All building materials to be used shall express their specific properties. For example, heavier more permanent materials (masonry) support lighter materials (wood). The Zoning Administrator may modify these requirements for government facilities subject to the supplemental regulations in Section 11.3.88.

- A. Materials: The following materials are permitted:
 - 1. Brick and tile masonry
 - 2. EFIS/Stucco only in accent or decorative uses (smooth or sand finish only)
 - 3. Native stone (or synthetic equivalent)
 - 4. Gypsum Reinforced Fiber Concrete (GFRC - for trim elements only)
 - 5. Metal (for beams, lintels, trim elements and ornamentation only)

- 6. Cast concrete masonry for limited applications
- 7. Siding

- a. Wood siding
- b. Cementitious wall board
- c. Lap siding (horizontal) configuration
- d. Smooth or rough-sawn finish (no faux wood grain)
- e. Premium grade vinyl – maximum 4.5” clapboard smooth finish with a minimum of .044 inch thickness – to be used only in residential scale buildings

B. Building materials and colors shall be similar to the materials already being used in the surrounding area. If dissimilar materials are being proposed, other characteristics such as scale, proportion, form, architectural detailing, color, and texture shall be used to ensure that enough similarity exists for the building to relate to the rest of the surroundings. All accessory buildings shall utilize the same materials as the principal structure.

C. Configurations

- 1. Wall materials shall not change at a building corner.
- 2. Material changes shall be made within a constructional logic—as where an addition (of a different material) is built onto the original building.
- 3. Two wall materials may be combined horizontally on one facade. The heavier material should be below.
- 4. The suggested configuration of all visibly exposed facades should have:
 - a. A recognizable base course consisting of, but not limited to thicker walls, ledges or sills; integrally textured materials such as stone or other masonry; integrally colored and patterned materials such as smooth finished stone or tile; lighter or darker colored materials, mullions, or panels; and/or planters;
 - b. A recognizable top consisting of, but not limited to cornice treatments, other than just colored stripes or bands, with integrally textured materials such as stone or other masonry or differently colored materials; sloping roof with overhangs and brackets; stepped parapets; and/or a cornice capping the top of a building wall.

D. Metal Siding

The use of metal siding exclusively on any building is prohibited. Metal siding used for accents on any development shall be of the decorative, architectural

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metal type. The use of corrugated metal siding is prohibited unless used as a decorative element to accent a particular architectural style.

2. Roofs

A. Sloped roofs

1. Shall be of dimensional composition shingles, tile, slate, shakes, standing seam roofing or combinations thereof
 - a. Minimum pitch of sloped roof should be 8:12
 - b. Mono-pitch (shed) roofs are allowed only if they are attached to the wall of the main building. No mono-pitch roof shall be less than 6:12.
 - c. Sloped roof overhangs must project a minimum of 12 inches
2. Mansard roof used for a story façade is not permitted, see *Figure 1*.
 - a. Mansard roof should have functional dormers, see *Figure 2*.



Figure 1 – mansard as part of story façade (Unacceptable)



Figure 2 – functional dormers in mansard (acceptable)

B. Other Roof Requirements

1. Flat Roofs shall be screened with parapets on all sides
2. Roof drainage shall not be directed across any walkways or streets
3. Sky-lights shall be flat (non-bubble). Solar tubes are not considered sky-lights.

4. Use of alternative energy sources is encouraged, including but not limited to solar panels and photovoltaic solar collectors, but the appearance of such items must be approved through the Administrator prior to any construction.
5. All rooftop equipment shall be screened from public view.

C. Windows and Entryways

1. Requirements:

- a. Fenestration shall be architecturally related to the style, materials, colors and details of the building.
- b. Publicly accessible sides of a building shall have fenestration.

1. Corner entry buildings shall have fenestration on both sides of the building comprising the entry.

- c. Windows, doors and other building components shall be proportional to the overall scale of the building.
- d. Windows and door openings should be proportioned so that verticals dominate horizontals.
- e. Glass shall be transparent with a minimum of tint to preclude opacity.

1. Mirrored glass is not permitted in any location.
2. Specialty windows may utilize stained, opalescent, or glass block (one per façade maximum).



Figure 3 – Continuous ribbon windows



Figure 4 - mullions

- f. Continuous ribbon windows shall not be permitted, see *Figure 3*

- g. Windows shall have muntins and/or mullions with the exception of street level store front windows, see *Figure 4*.
- h. Windows may be ganged horizontally (maximum 3 per group) if each grouping is separated by a muntin, mullion, column, pier or wall section that is a minimum 7 inches wide but is also proportional to the wall and windows, see *Figure 5*.



Figure 5 – Acceptable window grouping with separation (2nd floor)

- i. Exterior shutters, if applied, shall be sized and mounted appropriately for the window (one-half the width), even if inoperable.
 - j. The maximum pane size for office uses is 48 inches vertical by 40 inches horizontal.
 - k. Doors shall not be recessed behind the building facade a distance that would create a sight or safety issue.
- D. Street Walls
- 1. Street walls establish a clear edge to the street where the buildings do not. All street wall facades shall be as carefully designed as the building façade, with the finished side out, i.e. the “better” side facing the street.
 - a. Free standing street walls shall be constructed with materials complimentary with the architectural building style and should

not exceed 72 inches in height, excluding decorative pillars, columns, etc.

- b. Street walls should avoid long, monotonous uninterrupted expanses.
- c. Street walls located within 10 feet of a sidewalk along a public street right of way shall not exceed 48 inches in height nor encroach into the public right of way unless deemed appropriate by the Administrator.

2. Materials: Only the following materials are permitted:

- a. Native/regional stone and equivalent imitation stone
- b. Metal (wrought iron, welded steel and/or aluminum) with masonry or stucco columns
- c. Brick
- d. Cementitious stucco on concrete block or poured concrete only, with coping
- e. A combination of materials (e.g. stone piers with brick infill panels)

E. Awnings and Canopies

1. When a building canopy, awning, or similar weather protection is incorporated in a building design, the following requirements must be met:

- a. Minimum 10 feet of clearance height above the sidewalk.
- b. Maximum projection shall be permitted to encroach over a sidewalk to within two feet of a public street curb.
- c. Maximum projection shall not exceed the side of the planting strip closest to the façade.
- d. Fabric, metal or glass: non-reflective, non-shiny.
- e. No internal illumination for transparent applications.
- f. Shall not be placed over blank walls; a true window or door must be present below the awning/canopy.
- g. Shall be incorporated into the building expression where the massing and scale should be appropriate to appear as an extension of the structure.
- h. Supporting columns for gas pump island canopies shall be built with the same materials as the primary building on the site and shall be architecturally consistent with the primary building.

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- F. Signage
All signage shall comply with Section 13 of the Unified Development Ordinance.

- G. Lighting
All lighting shall comply with Section 12 of the Unified Development Ordinance.

- H. Screening
 - 1. Utility and Mechanical Screening:
 - a. Equipment including but not limited to: utility meters, mechanical equipment, trash enclosures, transformers, generators and similar features or other utility hardware on the building, roof, or ground shall be screened from public view with materials similar to the structure they serve or they shall be so located as not to be visible from any public view or from potential buildings nearby.
 - b. Ground mounted equipment may also be screened with evergreen plantings as long as they provide 100% coverage of the equipment at time of issuance of certificate of occupancy. 100% coverage shall be maintained at all times.
 - c. Unused equipment should be removed.

 - 2. Service Entries
 - a. All service entries, including loading/unloading areas, shall be screened from public view.

- I. Colors
 - 1. Use color to promote an overall harmonious composition with the surrounding environment such that color is not used to shock the senses or scream for attention.
 - 2. A color board shall be submitted as part of the project application prior to approval.
 - 3. Any color changes from the original color board shall be approved by the Administrator.

20.3 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

This section refers to any building with more than two residential units.



Apartment/Condominium Building



Townhouse Building

1. General Building Requirements

- A. Maximum height is 3 stories based on the definitions found in the North Carolina State Residential Building Code, Chapter 2 Definitions.
- B. Useable porches and stoops as a predominate motif of the building design are encouraged and should be located on the front and/or side of end units clearly visible from public streets.

2. Façade Configurations

- A. The front elevation of the structure shall provide a sufficient number of doors, porches, balconies and/or windows to avoid long, monotonous, uninterrupted expanses. The side elevation of end units which are clearly visible from public streets shall be designed so they do not provide long, monotonous, uninterrupted expanses, through the use of doors, porches, balconies, windows or a combination of these and the design elements listed in the bullet below. The Zoning Administrator shall determine if the design meets the intent of this section.
- B. All multi-family buildings shall provide detailed design along all elevations. Detailed design shall be provided by using at least three (3) of the following architectural features on all elevations as appropriate for the proposed building type and style (may vary features on rear/side/front elevations):
 - 1. Dormers
 - 2. Gables

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3. Recessed entries
 4. Covered porch entries
 5. Cupolas or towers
 6. Pillars or posts
 7. Off-sets in building face or roof (minimum 16 inches)
 8. Window trim (minimum 3 inches wide, nominal)
 9. Decorative Windows (i.e. bay, stained glass, glass block, transom, palladium)
 10. Decorative patterns on exterior finish (i.e. scales/shingles, wainscoting, ornamentation and decorative moldings)
 11. Decorative cornices and roof lines.
 12. Shutters with crossheads
 13. Full gable returns
- C. The crawl space of buildings and porches shall be enclosed with masonry material.

3. Garages and Parking

- A. Single bay front loading garages must be recessed at least 2 feet behind the primary plane of the front facade of the dwelling.
- B. Double bay front loading garages must be recessed at least 10 feet behind the primary plane of the front facade of the dwelling.



Acceptable recessed double bay front loading garages

- C. The total width of the outside garage measurements shall be no more than 50% of the width of the front facade of the dwelling.

- D. The arrangement of permanent structural elements of the unit (i.e. stoops, porches, etc.) must provide side view screening of single or double bay front loading garages.
- E. Garages on adjacent dwellings may not abut one another.
- F. Double bay front loading garages must utilize two single bay width doors.



Acceptable two single bay front loading garages

- E. In no case shall on-site residential parking extend into the public right of way or across the sidewalk. At least 20 feet shall be provided from the garage door (when closed) to the public right-of-way, sidewalk or edge of private alley.

4. Standards for Building Walls

- A. Materials: The following materials are permitted.
 - 1. Brick and tile masonry
 - 2. EFIS/Stucco only in accent or decorative uses (smooth or sand finish only)
 - 3. Native stone (or synthetic equivalent)
 - 4. Gypsum Reinforced Fiber Concrete (for trim elements only)
 - 5. Metal (for beams, lintels, trim elements and ornamentation only)
 - 6. Cast concrete masonry for limited applications
 - 7. Siding
 - a. Wood siding
 - b. Cementitious wall board
 - c. Lap siding (horizontal) configuration

- d. Premium grade vinyl – maximum 4.5” clapboard smooth finish with a minimum of .044 inch thickness or approved equivalent
- e. Wood Shingle
- f. Board and Batten

- 8. Wall materials shall not change within 18 inches of a building corner.
- 9. When two wall materials are combined horizontally on one façade the heavier material should be below.

5. Roofs

- A. Residential roofs shall be clad in wood shingles, standing seam metal, terne, slate, asphalt shingles or similar material.
- B. Main roofs on residential buildings shall be gables or hips with a minimum pitch of 8:12. Mono-pitch (shed) roofs are allowed only if they are attached to the wall of the main building. No mono-pitch roof shall be less than 6:12.
- C. The eave on the front and rear of the structure shall overhang a minimum of 12 inches, not including the gutter.
- D. The eave on the side of the structure shall overhang a minimum of 8 inches, not including the gutter.
- E. Overhanging eaves may expose rafters.
- F. All rooftop equipment shall be screened from view.

6. Colors

- A. Use color to promote an overall harmonious composition with the surrounding environment such that color is not used to shock the senses or scream for attention.
- B. A color board shall be submitted as part of the project application prior to approval.
- C. Any color changes from the original color board shall be approved by the Administrator.

20.4 ARCHITECTURAL STANDARDS: ONE AND TWO FAMILY RESIDENCES

This section refers to any building with one or two residential units.

1. Site and Building Elements

- A. All one and two family residential housing types shall comply with the following standards. The Administrator may waive individual requirements in this section on a case-by-case basis, provided the intent of this Section is met.
 - 1. Architectural plans shall be furnished to the Administrator and shall conform to the architectural details outlined below.

2. Homes built on a slab in which a concrete foundation wall is used shall have a brick, stone, stucco or other masonry veneer skirt on the face of the foundation wall.
3. Main roofs on residential buildings shall be gables or hips with a minimum pitch of 8:12. Mono-pitch (shed) roofs are allowed only if they are attached to the wall of the main building. No mono-pitch roof shall have a pitch less than 6:12. These standards do not apply to porch roofs.
4. Roof Overhang (not applicable to storage sheds)
 - a. The eave on the front and rear of the structure shall overhang a minimum of 12 inches, not including the gutter.
 - b. The eave on the side of the structure shall overhang a minimum of 8 inches, not including the gutter.
 - c. Eaves on dormers shall overhang at least eight (8) inches.
5. Corner lots shall adhere to the following standards:
 - a. Side elevations which are clearly visible from public streets shall be designed so they do not provide long, monotonous, uninterrupted expanses, through the use of doors, porches, balconies, windows or a combination of these and the design elements listed below.
 - i. Dormers
 - ii. Gables
 - iii. Recessed entries
 - iv. Covered porch entries
 - v. Cupolas or towers
 - vi. Pillars or posts
 - vii. Off-sets in building face or roof (minimum 16 inches)
 - viii. Window trim (minimum 3 inches wide, nominal)
 - ix. Decorative Windows (i.e. bay, stained glass, glass block, transom, palladium)
 - x. Decorative patterns on exterior finish (i.e. scales/shingles, wainscoting, ornamentation and decorative moldings)
 - xi. Decorative cornices and roof lines.
 - xii. Shutters with crossheads
 - xiii. Full gable returns
 - b. The Administrator shall determine if the design meets the intent of this section

6. Front loading garages shall not extend further than 4 feet past the front façade of the house unless a front porch is used and then the garage shall not extend further than 4 feet past the front porch.
7. If vinyl siding is used it must be premium grade vinyl – either a maximum 4.5” clapboard or distinct “V” groove and rounded bead - with a minimum of .044 inch thickness or approved equivalent. (smooth finish is preferred but not required)
8. Wall materials shall not change within 18 inches of a building corner.
9. When two wall materials are combined horizontally on one façade the heavier material should be below.
10. Special Standards for an Alley-Loaded House
 - a. For dwellings taking access from an alley, no parking shall be permitted in the required front yard, no driveways are permitted in the front yard and on-street guest parking is required.
 - b. At least 20 feet shall be provided from the garage door (when closed) to the public right-of-way, sidewalk or edge of private alley.
11. Builders should select building sites and home plans which will not result in the construction of repetitious designs within close proximity of each other. Similar or repeated front façade elevations in close proximity are discouraged and subject to disapproval by the Administrator.
12. The nearest lot upon which a particular front façade elevation can be repeated on the same side of the street is the fifth in a sequence starting from the original lot. The nearest lot upon which a particular elevation can be repeated on the opposing side of the street is the third in a sequence starting from the original lot. If there is any question regarding approval of a building elevation location or repetition the builder is required to obtain approval from the Administrator prior to construction.

20.5 STREETSAPES FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL AND MULTI-FAMILY BUILDINGS

1. The streetscapes of Waxhaw should be visually dominated by buildings rather than parking areas. The following standards shall be employed to achieve these objectives:
 - A. Buildings should be placed adjacent to public streets, with parking located to the side and / or rear of the building(s). New internal streets may be proposed within a site, in order to provide additional street frontage for buildings.
 - B. Building facades that front a street should generally extend parallel to that street.
 - C. When the rear or side of a building is placed adjacent to a street, the facade must have detailing consistent with the front of the building such that the side of the building facing the street gives the appearance that it is the primary entrance side of the building.
 - D. Parking, loading, or service areas shall not be located within 75 feet of a street corner (measured from 90 degree intersection of street right of way lines at the corner). This only applies to parking lots and not to on-street parking.
 - E. Variations from the above guidelines may be granted where unique circumstances of a site make them impractical or undesirable. Such circumstances may include: property size or shape, site topography, existing tree preservation, potential future road widening, building function or size, public safety, and location of existing buildings adjacent to the site. But any and all variations must be approved by the Administrator unless the Administrator deems the variation large enough to warrant going before the Planning Board and/or Town Board.
 - F. When landscape elements (trees, shrubs, light fixtures, street furniture, fences, walls, etc.) are placed adjacent to streets, they shall be located and designed in an organized manner to complement and blend harmoniously with buildings and overall site development.
 - G. Where parking is located adjacent to a street, it shall be visually screened in accordance with Section 12.4.2 of the UDO.

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- H. When a property Owner proposes to place parking in front of the building adjacent to a street, the site plan must be reviewed by the Planning Board, and the Owner shall present justification for why this approach is appropriate.

20.6 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCEDURE

1. All new construction shall conform to the architectural requirements of this Section regardless of the zoning applying to the parcel in question. The Administrator may approve minor variations to this section provided similar materials, configurations, and/or techniques are used to fulfill the intent of this Section.
2. An applicant may appeal the Administrator's decision of the Town of Waxhaw Board of Adjustments as outlined in the Unified Development Ordinance.
3. Major variation to build façade requirements may be approved by the Town Board, provided the general principles and intent of these architectural standards are maintained. All variations shall be noted on the final approved plan.