

VII. ARCHITECTURAL REGULATIONS

DAVIDSON LAND PLAN CODE

Purpose

The purpose of these architectural regulations is to achieve a sense of harmony and repose in the public spaces and landscapes of the town and its surrounding areas. Within such an harmonious framework a degree of controlled tension and contrast between buildings and details can heighten the emotional impact and memorability of the place. Therefore, these guidelines and requirements create a point of departure for a good experienced designer while providing others with clear guidance for making buildings that are of an acceptable standard for the town of Davidson.

These regulations are divided into overall Principles and specific Details. They are intended to apply to all residential and commercial developments. Under appropriate circumstances, civic buildings, given their special role in creating the particular image of the town, are excluded from these provisions.

It is important to clarify and reinforce the intentions of this Code regarding the acceptable design and layout of apartment buildings, condominiums and town homes in Davidson. In recent years, these types of development have received a bad reputation for poor layouts and appearance--based on the predominant model of jumbles of building surrounded by large areas of asphalt and parked cars. This type of arrangement is not permitted under this Code.

Instead, the Code directs attention back to the traditional forms of apartment buildings, common in southern small towns and cities during the 1920's and 30's. This building type, usually two or three stories, faces directly onto the town streets across small front lawns, is built of brick with ample porches and balconies, and has the parking tucked to the rear of the building. The architectural conventions of these buildings are very similar to the single family homes of the same period, and are very compatible in traditional town settings.

Principles

Regional Character

The particular character of towns change as one moves from one part of the country to another. This is a function of local materials and construction techniques together with social, geographic and climatic influences. Easy nationwide transport of building materials eroded this local character, and if these desirable aesthetic qualities are to be retained the design of buildings will need to be influenced by the conscious choice of appropriate local materials over and above the easy availability of generic substitutes.

Policy: To perpetuate the unique building character of the historic town and its environs, and to re-establish its local identity, development shall generally employ building types, massing and external materials that are sympathetic to the historic architectural vocabulary.

Building Design

Individual buildings should be well designed in themselves and have specific regard for their setting.

Policies:

- a. Each building should be designed to form part of the larger composition of the area in which it is situated. Adjacent buildings should thus be of a similar scale, height and configuration.
- b. Each building shall use exterior materials suitable for its location with regard to adjacent buildings, construction techniques and local character.
- c. The separate volumes that combine to make up the overall form of each building shall be well proportioned and related to create a satisfactory composition.
- d. Building silhouettes should be generally consistent. The scale and pitch of roof lines should thus be similar across groups of buildings.
- e. The windows, bays and door openings shall be well proportioned, with vertical proportions dominating horizontals. These elements should be well related to each other on the facade and also sympathetic to adjacent buildings.
- f. Porches, where used, should extend over at least 50% of the front facade. While the overall porch design may be horizontal in its extent, it shall be made of discrete vertical elements combined to create the desired width.

Spaces Between Buildings

The human scale of small towns like Davidson is often created by the enclosed qualities of public spaces, whereby each building relates to its neighbor like walls of an urban room. While the spatial needs of the automobile must be acknowledged, new developments shall make every effort to create spaces for people and for cars, and to avoid unpleasantly large open areas of asphalt parking lots.

Policy: Site layout plans should emphasize enclosure of external spaces by building and by landscape, breaking the size of open areas down into smaller units of space.

The Treatment of the Ground Plane

The character of a space will be affected by the detail design of its horizontal surfaces, the "ground plane". The design and materials of the ground plane shall reinforce the character set by the adjacent buildings. For example, a formal space generally requires a formal geometric treatment: and informal space lends itself to an informal arrangement. Linear designs reinforce linear spaces and more static symmetrical forms are suited to squarer and more regular spaces. The ratio of planted areas to paving determine the "soft" or "hard" nature of a space.

Policy: All development shall include detail proposals for the treatment of ground surfaces.

Details

External Building Materials

Generally, materials should be used with regard to their constructional purpose and appropriateness to local character. They should not be "stuck on" to buildings for superficial visual effects. Materials must also be chosen to avoid any negative or disruptive impact on the landscape.

Policies:

Materials generally permitted include:

- Building Walls:** Wood clapboard, wood shingle and wood dropsiding
Stucco
North Carolina Brick and special faced concrete block
Composite wood siding
Vinyl siding
- Walls/Fences:** Freestanding masonry walls should match the material of the main building. Fences should generally be made of wood. Metal fencing should be limited to strictly industrial applications.
- Porches, Decks, Balconies, Bay Windows and Stoops:**
Wood - for posts, railings and general construction
Brick and Stucco - for piers and arches
Cast Concrete or Wood - for classical columns
Metal Railings - for balconies and external handrails to stoops
Brick, Cast Concrete or Wood - for external steps and flooring
- Roofs:** Wood Shingles, Sheet or Corrogated Metal or Asphalt Shingles
- Windows and Doors:** Wood, vinyl clad wood or metal framing. Glazing in clear glass

Materials generally not permitted include:

- Metal sheeting - With the exception of metal sheeting for roofs with its associated gutters and downspouts, no metal building shall be permitted with the exception of agricultural buildings.
Tinted or mirrored glass

Special Considerations

Here are set out specific policies regarding the assemblage of building elements and materials.

Policies:

- Roofs:** Main roofs shall be symmetrical gables or hips with a pitch of between 4:12 and 8:12. Monopitch (shed) roofs are allowed only if they are attached to the wall of the main building. No monopitch shall be less than 3:12. In non-residential buildings, flat roofs are allowed if they are accessible as a balcony and enclosed by a balustrade. No flat roof shall exceed 20% of the building footprint. In non-residential buildings, flat roofs and associated mechanical equipment should be concealed behind a parapet of adequate height. Dormers shall have shed or gable roofs and shall not exceed 75%, in aggregate, of the roof's width.
- Walls:** A maximum of two materials may be combined (horizontally) on one facade in addition to the foundation material. In such combinations the lighter material must be above the heavier material (e.g. wood siding above brick).
- Chimney Stacks:** These vertical elements should be finished in brick or stucco. Timber boarding is not permitted.
- Balconies:** Balconies should generally be simply supported by posts and beams. The support of cantilevered balconies should be assisted by visible brackets.
- Balustrades:** These shall be constructed with vertical spindles (not horizontal rails) with maximum 4" gaps.