

## Design Standards

### Facades:

- A. Building Design Elements. The selection of building design elements, for example, in the use of materials, fenestration, color, texture, etc., should ensure that such treatment is harmonious with that prevalent in the area, where such prevalence exists and where such harmony is desirable. The building façades should "reflect" the size, scale and setbacks of adjacent buildings and those across the street.
- B. Proportion of Façades. The relationship of the width to the height of the front elevation shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is related.
- C. Proportion of Openings. The relationship of the width to the height of window proportions on the front elevation shall be visually compatible with the buildings and places to which it is related. Original window and door sizes and shapes should not be altered in any renovation. If window replacement is required, original masonry or framed window openings shall be filled completely with new windows of the same design as original. Decorative panels or filler strips that reduce the size of the original openings to accommodate standard windows are prohibited. If earlier "improvements" to original window openings were not well done, and are in conflict with the guidelines, it is the intent of the standard to encourage the reversal of such alterations.
- D. Window and Door Types. Select window and door types that are compatible to original architectural style in existing buildings. In new buildings, use windows and doors that are harmonious to those prevalent in the area or as approved by the technical advisory committee. Glazing shall be transparent with low reflectance, although tinted and coated glass of slight coloration may be used above the first floor for energy conservation.
- E. Shutters. Use paneled or louvered shutters that when closed will fully cover the window opening.
- F. Rhythm of Solid (Wall) to Void (Window and Door). The use of vertically proportioned windows is generally encouraged as they reinforce established rhythms. The distinction between upper and lower floor windows should be maintained. The first floor is primarily transparent, whereas the upper floor façades are more traditionally solid with smaller window openings. New construction shall use windows of similar sizes and shapes or incorporate other façade elements that establish the same pattern of other buildings in its content.

- G. Rhythm. Rhythms which carry through a block such as window spacing, entrances, canopies or awnings, etc., should be incorporated into new or renovated façades.
- H. Fire Escapes. Fire escapes are prohibited on the principal façade of a building. They may be permitted on the side or rear if not in conflict with zoning, property ownership or code requirements.
- I. Architectural Style. Façade renovations should be in accordance with the original architectural style of the building. Original details should be retained. When it becomes necessary to introduce new features, they should harmonize with existing features. If windows and doors must be replaced, use new windows and doors that match the original in design.
- J. Historical Appropriateness. False historical styles that do not have a design relationship to the rest of the building are prohibited.
- K. Exterior Spaces. Exterior spaces should be related in scale to the building which defines them. Exterior spaces should be organized in sequence. Abrupt changes from very small to very large, without the use of transitional space, should be avoided. Exterior parking areas should be screened from view by walls, fences, buildings or vegetation with a minimum height of thirty-six (36) inches nor shall it exceed any height limits for fences. Screening shall not violate any sight triangles.
- L. Building Materials. On existing buildings, retain original material wherever possible. Do not cover original materials for cosmetic reasons. In a renovation, incorporate elements of the original façade and its materials by covering it with metal panels or plastic. Aluminum siding, metal panels, EFIS systems on the ground floor and mirrored glass surfaces are prohibited unless already used on the building or adjacent structures. Masonry cleaning should be accomplished by the most gentle cleaning method possible. Masonry intended to be painted should stay painted and unpainted masonry should remain unpainted.
- M. Lighting of Façades. Façade lighting shall be arranged to reflect the light and glare away from adjoining lots and streets. No façade lights shall be permitted with a beam, beacon or flashing illumination. Façades shall be lighted from the top or bottom with the light source angled no closer to the horizontal than two vertical to one horizontal; and the light source shall be shielded from adjoining lots, streets and interior drives. All façade lights shall be either shielded or shall have a translucent fixture to reduce off-site effects. New lighting shall be prohibited for use around storefront borders or storefront or window outlines.

- N. Security Gates. Exterior security gates are prohibited. Interior security gates are only permitted provided the storefront or area to be secured remains visible. Solid security gates and exterior doors (roll-ups) are prohibited. "Panelized" gates of an open design that will correspond to individual window or door openings, or will break up a large storefront window into small increments, are permitted. Existing security gates and doors, to be retained in a project renovation, shall be painted in accordance with the color standards specified within this title. Existing solid security gates and exterior doors (roll-ups) are not permitted during any repair or renovation.
- O. Awnings, Canopies and Marquees.
1. Marquees are prohibited.
  2. Awnings shall consist of only fabric. All fixed or retractable awnings shall be constructed and installed so that the frame and fabric are of an integral part of the design of the structure.
  3. No awning shall extend more than four feet from the building surface; no awning shall be less than eight feet above grade.
  4. Awnings shall not be placed so as to conceal or disfigure an architectural feature or detail.
  5. Awnings shall be coordinated, in terms of design, color and height, with awnings on adjacent buildings.
- P. Color. The painting of buildings with bold patterns, checks, or using buildings as signs, and the use of fluorescent coloring, is prohibited.

#### Signs.

- A. All signs shall conform to the requirements as set forth within [Chapter 17.06](#) of this title and the following additional requirements:
- B. All signs shall be installed so that the method of installation is concealed or made an integral part of the design of the sign.
- C. Freestanding signs are prohibited.
- D. Plastic, internally illuminated signs are prohibited.
- E. Signs shall fit within the existing features of the façade.
- F. Where possible, signs shall be aligned with other signs on adjacent buildings.
- G. Sign colors, materials, size, shapes, and methods of illumination shall reinforce the overall composition of the façade.

- H. Second floor businesses may be permitted to display signs which are placed either directly beside or immediately above a related window, but such signs may not extend beyond the building line.
- I. Except as permitted in this section, signs are prohibited on balconies, roofs, or placed in a way that they disfigure or conceal any architectural feature or detail of the building.
- J. Banners and similar flag-like devices, regardless of banner materials or absence of an advertising message, shall be considered as signs for the purpose of this section.
- K. Window Signs. One business sign may be painted on the window and/or door of each business bearing the name, street number and/or type of business of the principal occupant, and the total area of all such signs shall not exceed ten (10) square feet, or twenty (20) square feet for a corner property, with ten (10) square feet per exposure to street front. Window signs designed to promote the sale of an article or business activity shall not exceed in total sign area fifteen (15) percent of the total window area of the first floor or street level of the building involved. Each individual window sign shall not exceed six square feet in area.
- L. Prohibited Signs.
  - 1. Billboards, pylon signs (including feather signs) and roof signs.
  - 2. Internally illuminated, animated, flashing or illusionary signs using mechanical and/or electrical devices to revolve, flash or display movement or the illusion of movement, except time and temperature or barber shop poles.
  - 3. Any sign that uses the word "danger" or "stop" or otherwise presents or implies the need or requirement to stopping or caution or the existence of danger or which is likely to be confused with any sign displayed by public authority.
  - 4. Pennants, banners, and mobiles.
  - 5. Exterior neon or LED signs and decorative neon lighting is prohibited.
- M. Exemptions from Strict Application of Standards:
  - 1. It is the intention of these standards to encourage property owners to maintain their properties in a coordinated and aesthetically attractive composition of building

façades. These standards are not intended to discourage property owners from improving or modifying their properties. A property owner may seek an exemption to one or more of the design standards by proposing a reasonable design rationale as to why the design standards should not be strictly interpreted in this particular case. Arguments seeking an exemption should address design compatibility with surrounding buildings, unique factors of the building or business that necessitate a deviation from the standards, how an exception is part of an overall plan or proposal for the design or redesign of the structure, how a relaxation or modification of the standard would not detract from the overall aesthetic design and composition of the building or other factors that would justify an exemption from the standards that would benefit the public good of the neighborhood.

2. Exemption requests will be reviewed by the program administrator, who will make a determination whether an exemption is justified.
3. An exemption from the program's design standards does not relieve the property from the need to obtain a variance for the proposed work if the proposed work violates any standards of the City of New Brunswick Zoning Ordinance.