ASHLAND CITY

DESIGN REVIEW MANUAL

AUGUST 08, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GOALS FOR COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER

1. Natural Character. Ashland City's natural character should be preserved and enhanced with new development. Especially important is retaining mature trees and vegetation, maintaining topography, preserving important views to the lakes and other natural features, and ensuring that new buildings sit within a generously landscaped setting.

2. Compatibility. New buildings should be compatible with their neighbors, assuming that neighboring structures are a credit to the community. This does not infer uniformity of architectural style but rather a sympathetic response to the height, scale, materials, color, site location and other aspects of nearby structures.

3. Orderly Public Realm. The city's character is largely formed by the appearance of its important streets. How public and private elements of the streetscape relate to each other provides a sense of order -- public roadways, shoulders and medians, utility lines, and traffic signage in relationship to private landscaping, parking areas, building facades and signage. Scrutiny of what may be seen from public ways should be most intense while less visible private areas of sites should be more at the landowner's discretion.

4. Restrained Communications. Private signage and advertising should be restrained and not detract from the sense of a continuous landscape. The principal purpose of on-site signage is to identify establishments and to direct those seeking to visit them safely and efficiently to their destination. Signage that is limited in size and set in a strongly landscaped surrounding can be more effective than a cacophony of uncontrolled messages.

5. Diversity of Opportunity. Ashland City wishes to continue to attract diverse housing types, services and other community attractions. In reviewing plans and proposals, it does not wish to rule out particular uses because of costs or burdens imposed. Rather, it wishes to work with developers and builders to find a formula for creating uses that are economically viable as well as harmonious with the community environment.

6. Residential Privacy. The sense of privacy of residential areas should be protected especially from nuisances created by adjacent uses, such as noise, traffic, high lighting levels, and uncontrolled access. Within residential areas, there should be privacy of individual units.

7. History. References to Ashland City's past -- both its natural and settlement history -- should be preserved wherever possible. These include artifacts such as rock fences, walls, areas of formal landscape, historic cemeteries and archaeological sites; structures

more than 50 years old; and traces of prior fields and land subdivision.

8. Utilitarian Elements. As a way of reducing disorder and emphasizing the human environment, utilitarian elements should be masked or located out of public view. These include mechanical equipment on buildings, transformers, meters, refuse stations, electric wiring and service areas.

2. DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

2.1 SITE LAYOUT

1. Site Coverage

Sites should not be covered completely with impermeable surfaces which prevent percolation of water back into the soil and can cause erosion, street flooding, or overloading of storm sewer systems. A minimum of 15% of the site shall be devoted to permeable surfaces (reference Section 3.140 - ACZO). This will also ensure that buildings are set in a strong landscape.

2. Building Setbacks

Building setbacks provide dimension to the public realm along streets. In areas where there is a consistent setback line, new structures should conform to it. In areas where setbacks vary, buildings should be set back the average distance of adjacent buildings within 100 feet of the proposed structure. In major commercial areas where patrons are to be encouraged to walk between establishments, buildings should generally be located as close to streets as possible while providing adequate area for landscaping in the setback area.

Large unbroken expanses of paving between the street and building are discouraged. Required side yard areas should also be landscaped.

3. Entries and Curb Cuts

Entries to sites from public streets should be clear, controlled and safe. Continuous curb cuts confuse circulation of automobiles as well as destroying the pedestrian environment and reduce opportunities for landscaping. Ashland City's Zoning Ordinance and subdivision standards establish specific standards for the location and design of curb cuts and site entries.

The number and width of curb cuts along a property should be the minimum necessary for effective on and off-site traffic circulation. As a guide, no more than one curb cut should occur in each 100 feet of frontage. Combined or shared entries between properties is encouraged. If two entries are needed, a one-way system should be considered to reduce curb cut area and maximize parking area.

In general, curb cuts should be no wider than needed to meet

standards. Generally, they should be limited to 30 feet for residential uses and commercial uses, 45 feet for industrial uses.

Access Control can be found in Section 3.090 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance.

2.2 GRADING. DRAINAGE, AND TOPSOIL PRESERVATION

1. Topography

Buildings, parking and service areas should be sited in a manner which minimizes disruption to the existing topography. Where there is mature existing vegetation on a site, changes in topography and runoff patterns should be minimized.

The volume of cuts and fills on a site should be balanced, so that transportation of soil off or onto the site is minimized.

The maximum allowable landscaped slope created by cut or fill is 1:3 vertical to horizontal. To provide a stable slope for soil and plant materials, less steep slopes or terracing is encouraged.

2. Overland Drainage and Detention

Overland drainage and detention are encouraged, to recharge groundwater and minimize loads on storm sewerage facilities.

The rate of peak runoff at site boundaries should not increase significantly from that prior to development.

Landscaped retention/detention areas should be created where possible to collect runoff from paved areas. Such areas should be treated as visual amenities for the site and not as utilitarian or unkempt areas.

3. Topsoil Stabilization

Topsoil should not be removed from sites or used in spoil. Topsoil should be saved during construction and then placed over landscaped areas at a depth of at least 6". In general, efforts should be made to retain as much topsoil as practical.

2.3 PRESERVATION OF EXISTING TREES AND SITE FEATURES

1. Trees are protected within the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance, Article 3.140.

2. Retention of Site Features

A natural setting is one of Ashland City's attractive qualities. Streams, wetlands, large rock outcrops, stands of native vegetation, fence rows,

rock walls, cemeteries and other notable natural features must be located on the site plan and preserved wherever possible.

Bands of trees, such as fencerows, that would not otherwise be wind-firm when left as individuals should be maintained as an effective screen and wind buffer.

3. Preservation of Notable Old Structures. Structures which are over 50 years old and valued for their local significance should be located on the site plan and retained if possible. Incorporation of such structures into the site's development as a special feature is encouraged. If the structures are not to be retained or adapted reasons should be given.

2.4 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

1. Compatibility with Surroundings and Facades. Massings and Roofs for Building

Buildings should avoid long, uninterrupted facade planes.

Buildings should have a defined base and cap.

Window and door openings should have a vertical orientation and be vertically aligned between floors.

Rear and side facades, if visible from public streets, should be similar to the primary facade in their architectural treatment.

Blank walls facing streets should be avoided.

Where a clearly established development character and scale exits, new infill development should include: a) window and door openings with area ratios and proportions similar to those on adjoining buildings, b) key design elements of surrounding buildings with respect to windows, door, rhythm of bays, detailing, roof forms, materials and colors.

Roof forms should be appropriate to a building's design and scale. Flat roofs or low-pitched roofs with parapet walls are encouraged for larger commercial buildings. Alternative roof forms may be used if appropriate for a particular acceptable architectural style.

A particular roof form should be applied to the entire roof, rather than terminating at less visible points, such as the building's rear.

Roofs that are visible from the street should be finished with colors and features consistent with the architecture of the facade.

Building forms should be tailored to fit within the existing topography and site features as much as possible.

In most cases, buildings are not viewed in isolation, but rather in the context of other buildings. While architectural style may vary, buildings of a proposed development should be compatible with surrounding buildings with regard to massing, scale, proportion of openings, roof types, types of glazed openings, and degree of detail.

The use of materials and colors compatible with buildings adjacent to a site is encouraged.

Along Main Street, Frey Street and Cumberland Street certain façade materials are encouraged to create a unified appearance particularly with brick and stone.

The use of certain façade materials and colors for buildings along arterial streets are discouraged. These materials are exposed or painted metal siding or roofing, painted concrete block and artificial stone. Full chroma colors are also discouraged.

The following are encouraged as exterior materials: brick, limestone, tile, plaster, stucco, glass and glazing, EIFS, architectural pre-cast and split face block. Ground face masonry should only be used as an accent.

Exterior colors should be earth tones and compatible with adjacent properties. Subdued, muted colors are encouraged. Bright colors should be limited to accent or contrast.

Translucent or back-lot canopies and awnings are discouraged.

Dumpsters should be screened on all sides; enclosures should be of materials and colors matching the primary structure and should be higher than the dumpster being screened. The access side should not be visible from public streets.

Chain-link fencing provided in a commercial and industrial areas shall be vinyl coated and of a black or dark green color. The use of razor wire is strongly discouraged.

Metal siding may be allowed in Industrial Zones that are not visible from the street.

2. Adapting Prototypical Designs to Particular Sites. National “standard” designs should be adapted to reflect the Ashland City context by careful siting, use of compatible materials and landscaping of the site so that it blends with its surroundings.

3. Relationship to Streets. Buildings should be oriented such that their main entrances are visible from streets.

Facades along streets should be treated in a manner which enhances

interest. Displays or windows with active interior uses are encouraged. Blank or undifferentiated facades are discouraged.

"Stage-set" facades on the street are not acceptable. The materials and colors of the street face should continue on the sides and rear of structures visible from public streets.

Building service areas or loading areas shall not be visible from public streets. They should be located away from streets and/or adequately screened.

Mechanical equipment on roofs or sides of buildings shall not be visible from streets. Adequate screening must be provided.

Landscaping with generous planting should define the street edge and entries of a development as well as building entries.

2.5 PARKING CONFIGURATIONS

1. Efficiency of Parking Areas

To allow space for landscaping and site improvements without significantly reducing the potential number of parking spaces on a site, efficient configuration of entries, circulation, and layout is encouraged.

Adjoining parking lots serving nonresidential buildings should be interconnected between sites.

Small lots or those with narrow front yards are encouraged to develop one-way angle parking configurations with curb cuts narrower than the maximums noted above for entry and exit lanes.

2. Reduce Apparent Size and Visibility of Parking Areas

Site arrangements which minimize the amount of parking between the street and buildings are encouraged. To the extent possible, parking areas should be split between the front and back of a lot or along the side of a building to reduce the paving at the street face.

Wherever possible, parking areas should be set 2-3 feet below streets or surrounding areas or be partially hidden by landscape berms to reduce the visibility of parked cars.

Retention of existing trees located in parking areas is strongly encouraged. Tree wells may be used if necessary to allow for changes in grade while protecting the tree.

3. Fit Parking Areas to Site Topography

On sloping sites, lines of parking spaces should run parallel to site contours, with planted medians taking up any excessive slope. Paved areas should not exceed a 5% slope.

Detention of runoff within parking areas or in adjacent landscaped areas is encouraged. Runoff from parking areas should not sheet flow onto public streets or sidewalks.

2.6 LANDSCAPE

1. Landscape Areas – Reference Section 3.140 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance

2. Streetscape

A consistent landscape treatment along public streets enhances the appearance of the public domain and provides an attractive unified setting for variations among individual developments. Landscaped areas should dominate the frontage of any site where entries are the only interruptions.

It is encouraged that street trees are planted in this zone. Street trees are to be planted behind the sidewalk unless the walk is set back at least 5 feet from the back of the curb and there are no imminent plans for street widening.

Trees planted in sidewalk zones must be surrounded by a protective grate or planted zone to allow water to reach the roots with minimum dimensions of 5 feet by 5 feet.

Trees should be planted along streets at least 40 feet on center with relatively even spacing. If frontages exceed a multiple of 40 feet, an additional tree should be planted along the street, e.g., a frontage of 50 feet should contain two trees, a frontage of 130 feet should have four trees, etc.

To provide a consistent effect along major streets, the preferred street tree species is Sugar Maple.

To provide a consistent effect along other streets, the preferred street tree species are Marshall's Seedless Ash, Willow Oak, London Plane, Red Maple and Sawtooth Oak.

The use of ground cover or low shrubs for the ground plane of streetscape planting is encouraged as a lower maintenance and higher impact treatment than turf.

3. Plant Materials

Ashland City displays a robust ecosystem with a variety of native plant

materials. The use of these hardy and attractive native species in developments is encouraged.

Plant materials should be installed at a reasonable size to provide a sense of presence and to mitigate microclimate impacts caused by development.

Street trees need to be large enough when installed to have some presence while allowing views to sites and branching above pedestrians walking along the sidewalk. Trees along arterial streets are to be no smaller than 3 - 3 1/2" caliper. Trees along collector and minor streets shall be no smaller than 2 - 2 1/2" caliper.

4. Maintenance

All landscape zones and plantings installed by the developer shall be privately maintained.

Any diseased, dying or dead plants shall be removed by the property owner and replaced with healthy plants meeting minimum size standards.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this section after a notice of noncompliance has been issued by the Zoning Administrator, accompanied or followed by a stated time frame for compliance shall be deemed a violation of the Zoning ordinance and shall be subject to the sanctions set forth in Article VII, Section 7.100 as well as to the revocation of any permit, license, certificate or other approval initially issued by the City as a basis for construction and/or occupancy of the development on which the violation has occurred.

2.7 SCREENING

1. Conditions for Screening

Screening requirements vary by their purpose. Three types of screening conditions are distinguished:

- Transitions between land uses.
- Privacy separations between streets and individual sites, such as on double-fronted lots and multifamily yards; and
- Nuisance screening for service and loading areas, dumpsters, materials storage areas, utility boxes, etc.

2. Performance Criteria

Screens are intended to provide visual and physical separation of conflicting uses and should be designed to fit within their surroundings, not dominate the view.

Screens should not compromise safety by blocking vision at

intersections. They should not be placed within 75 feet of any street corner as referenced in Section 3.080 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance.

Screens should not block access to any above ground pad mounted transformer and should provide 15 feet of clear access to the transformer doors.

Screens should not impede or divert the flow of water in any drainage way.

Fence screening of service areas should be at least 6 feet in height.

3. Design Standards

Design standards vary according to the function of the screen as follows:

Transitional Screening. Transitional screening is required where commercial or industrial uses adjoin residential areas, where multi-family residential or mobile home sites adjoin one- or two-family housing zones, and within Planned Unit Developments with similar adjacencies.

Where areas adjoining residential zones are likely to be used for truck loading, storage or driveways, the transitional zone must provide protection through use of earth berms or solid masonry materials.

Where lighted parking areas are located adjacent to residential zones, lighting should be designed to minimize illumination across the boundary, and the transitional buffer must screen headlights.

Privacy Screening. Double fronted residential lots should have privacy screening along the rear lot line. Privacy screening may also be required in multi-family housing areas to separate individual yards or yards adjacent to streets or pedestrian pathways.

Fences designed to create privacy or separations should be made of masonry, ornamental metal, durable wood or some combination of the three. The use of untreated wood, chain link, plastic or wire fencing is not permitted for fences fronting streets or on double-fronted lots.

Solid fences should not create a stockade appearance. This can be avoided in several ways such as adding an evergreen planting on both sides of the fence or undulating the plane of the fence. Fences over 80 feet long on double-fronted lots facing streets should have no more than 50% of their length in a straight line unless the entire fence is set back 15 feet or more from the property line with evergreen planting in the setback area. Nuisance Screening. To reinforce the sense of natural surroundings and a consistent streetscape, auto service functions such as areas to store cars while they are being repaired, auto or truck outdoor work areas and truck loading docks in commercial or retail areas shall be screened from public view.

Garbage collection areas shall be enclosed by opaque materials on all four sides with doors to remove containers. Where dumpsters are enclosed, the screening shall be at least 2 feet taller than the dumpster. Where topography may expose interiors of garbage collection areas to view screening shall be correspondingly taller.

Water meters, gas meters, electric meters and ground-mounted air conditioning or mechanical units should be hidden from public view by screening.

Screening requirements may be relaxed where areas are located so they are not visible from public streets or adjacent properties.

4. Suggested Plant Materials for Screening

Evergreen plants are recommended for effective year-round screening. Suggested evergreen trees and shrubs include: Arborvitae, Hetzi Juniper, White Pine, Red Pine, and Yew. Suggested broadleaf evergreen shrubs include: Red-Tipped Photinia, Euonymous, and Holly (Notably Foster Holly).

Ornamental shrubs and trees may also be used for screening, preferably in combination with evergreen plantings or fencing. Suggested ornamental shrubs include: Red-Tipped Photinia, Willowood Viburnum, upright Hollies, and large flowering shrubs. Suggested ornamental tree species include: Flowering Crab, Dogwood, Magnolia, and Purple Leaf Plum.

2.8 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

1. Continuous Sidewalks. Sidewalks shall be continuous between properties. A proposed development shall locate sidewalks to meet abutting walkways.

The width of a sidewalk shall blend with that of abutting walkways. The minimum walkway width is 5 feet.

Sidewalks may run along the street curb; however, it is preferred that they be separated by a landscape zone along arterial streets.

2. Connections Within and Between Developments. Sidewalks should connect building entries within and between developments where possible.

3. Sidewalk Materials. Sidewalks along public or private easements and public rights-of-way must meet the minimum requirements of the zoning ordinance.

2.9 LIGHTING

1. Design Criteria

To reduce adverse impacts on adjacent sites and minimize energy consumption, lighting should be carefully located, and intensity should be the minimum necessary for safety.

Lighting levels should be as even as possible.

Light fixtures which cast light primarily downward should be used.

Warm lighting colors are preferred; blue-white color is discouraged.

2. Street Lighting. Lighting levels along streets should vary according to land use with higher lighting levels in industrial and commercial areas than in residential areas. Lighting levels should be varied by fixture height and spacing.

A standard pole and fixtures recommended for major thoroughfares and for other streets. Applicants shall consult with city staff on the choice of such fixtures.

3. Site and Parking Area Lighting

Site or parking area lighting may not cast light beyond property boundaries. Cut-off devices should be used to avoid throw onto adjacent sites when necessary, and the performance standards cited generally in the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance and specifically in Section 3.190.8 should be followed.

The total height of fixtures should be in proportion to the building mass, preferably no more than 22 feet.

Ground-oriented, pedestrian scale lighting should be considered as an alternative to pole-mounted fixtures along sidewalks.

Lighting fixtures should be compatible in style with associated buildings.

Lighting directed on buildings is discouraged unless it illuminates identification signage on the building facade.

2.10 SIGNAGE

The overall objective of the standards herein is to ensure that signage does not detract from the sense that Ashland City's environment is a continuous landscape. The emphasis is on using signage for identification purposes not predominantly for advertising.

The Ashland City Sign Ordinance establishes in detail the signs that are permitted in each zone and those that are not permitted. It covers both temporary and permanent signs and should be consulted for specific requirements.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Design review occurs in the context of the required Plot Plan (see Section 3.120 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission is required to approve the design of a project prior to issuance of a building permit. A site plan or plot plan drawn to scale of sufficient size to show clearly:

- The dimensions, orientation and acreage of each lot to be built upon
- The layout of the entire project and its relationship to adjacent properties
- The location and dimensions of present and proposed streets and highways
- The location of points of entry and exit for vehicles and internal circulation patterns
- The location and layout of all paved areas including off-street parking and loading facilities.
- All existing and proposed topography, with contours at intervals of no more than 2-feet in areas that are disturbed.
- The size, shape and location of existing and proposed construction with uses noted.
- See Section 3.120 of the Zoning Ordinance for additional information.
- The seal of a civil engineer or surveyor licensed in the State of Tennessee.

A site landscaping plan, either as a separate drawing or integrated with the site plan above, showing:

- The location of existing vegetation including all trees of over 18-inch diameter to be retained or removed.
- Proposed site landscaping with size, species, and numbers noted.
- The location of all walls, fences, and railings with indication of their height and construction materials
- The location of exterior lighting and types of illumination sources, adequate to determine its character and enable review of possible hazards and disturbances to the public and adjacent properties.
- The location of exterior freestanding signs.

Schematic building plans drawn to scale, including:

- Exterior building elevations indicating materials to illustrate their appearance.

The Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission may waive any of the

above submittals considered unnecessary. It may also require such other information or exhibits, including samples of proposed building materials, considered necessary to reach an informed decision on compliance with these design standards.

3.2 REVIEW PROCESS

1. Prospective applicants are encouraged to schedule an informal submission meeting with City staff early in the design phase, in order to be aware of conditions and constraints of the site and to familiarize themselves with the standards that will be applied.

2. The Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission will review proposals based on the standards and guidelines in this manual. The Planning Commission may approve plans as submitted, approve plans with specific conditions including items which must be changed, or disapprove plans but invite resubmission based on modified designs, or disapprove plans.

3. Copies of the minutes along with any conditions of approval by the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission will be made available to the applicant. If the proposal has been disapproved, the Commission will indicate the changes which, if made, might result in approval of the project.

4. The City Building Official will be responsible for ensuring that any conditions imposed at the time of design approval are met in final plans submitted for building permits, and that final plans submitted are in substantial accord with plans submitted for approval.

5. Prior to obtaining a final permit for use and occupancy, the applicant must submit a certificate of compliance as provided in Article VII, Sections 7.030 (Building Permits) and 7.050 (Certificates of Occupancy) of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. A DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST

The checklist indicates items which must be addressed in the application for design approval. The items may be dealt with in drawings and exhibits, or in a written narrative which accompanies the application and notes how the design standards have been met.

1. Site Layout

- Site plan includes all the necessary information (see Submission Requirements).
- Percentage of site devoted to permeable surfaces.
- Distances between curb cuts and their widths noted.

2. Grading, Drainage and Topsoil Preservation

- Existing and proposed topography shown at 2-foot intervals.
- Estimates of the amounts of material to be exported or imported to and from the site.
- Runoff calculated and detention planned.

3. Preservation of Existing Trees and Site Features

- Existing trees and vegetation areas noted, with all trees over 18", diameter located precisely with tree type.
- Replacement trees for large trees to be removed shown.
- Special site features noted, with plan for their protection.
- Important views across the site to lakes or landmarks shown.
- Age of existing structures on site noted with plans for conservations of structures over 50 years old.

4. Architectural Character

- Building elevations shown with materials noted and colored to accurately represent built appearance.
- For prototype designs, indicate how they have been adapted to Ashland City setting.
- Location of building service areas noted, with screening provided.
- Location of exterior mechanical equipment noted, with plans for screening.

5. Parking Configurations

- Capacity of parking areas, lane and bay widths noted on plans.
- Directions of movement shown.
- Runoff locations and detention areas shown.
- Computation of landscaped area within parking areas made and noted.
- Plan for protecting existing trees in parking areas noted.

6. Landscape

- Location, size and species of all planting noted on plans.
- Note conformance of plans to minimum landscape standards.

7. Screening

- Locations of all screening shown on plans, along with designs for screening and materials.
- Note how screening plans conform to design standards.

8. Pedestrian Circulation

- Indicate location of sidewalks along street and pedestrian connections to sidewalk.
- Locate pedestrian areas on adjacent sites and indicate how connections

have been made to them.

9. Lighting

- Locate lighting sources and illustrate design of standards.
- Calculate lighting levels and evenness ratio.
- Indicate any special provisions to shield light from adjacent properties.

10. Signage

- Locate any project identification signs, major accessory business signs, directional signs or project directory signs on plans.
- Submit designs for each sign including details on illumination.
- Indicate on rendered elevations the size, location and character of all establishment signs mounted on the face of buildings.
- Make calculations of allowable sign area and compare to actual sign area proposed