

5.15.5 General Standards

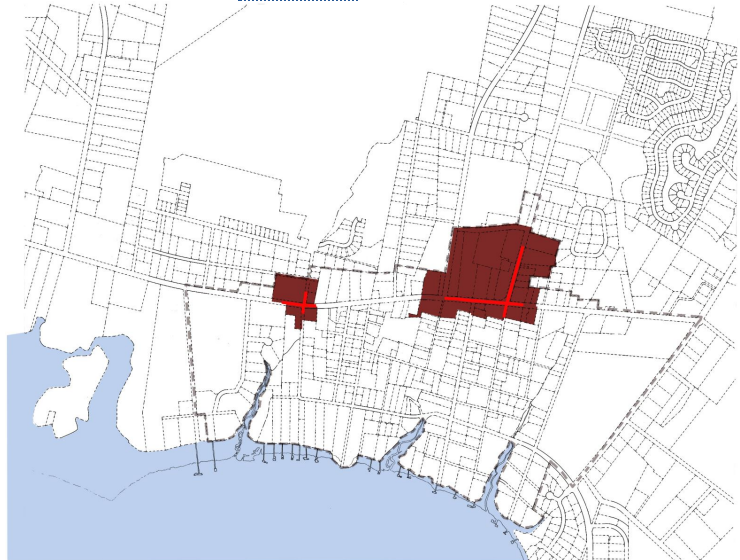
The existing or proposed building type shall determine the applicable lot standards. Except as otherwise provided by this Section, the maximum building footprint and building size for an Additional Building Type shall not exceed the largest building footprint and building size permitted for other building types permitted within the same zoning district. Within the Riverfront Edge-Historic District, the UDO Administrator may approve a building footprint up to 5,500 square feet, provided that the footprint is characteristic of a building type permitted in the district and its permitted building size range. Building types shall only be permitted as listed in the applicable District. The maximum allowed density is based on the dimensional characteristics established for each building type in combination with other site characteristics that may limit the amount of land able to accommodate density. These other site characteristics include, but are not limited to, lot configuration, right-of-way, easements, protected natural resources, open space, topography, and parking.

A. Neighborhood Core Historic District (NC-HD)



NC-HD Precedent Imagery

The red lines indicate the locations of required shopfront buildings (Main Street Building, Commercial Cottage, or Live-Work Sideyard). In addition to shopfront buildings, civic structures are allowed within these areas.



NC-HD Regulating Plan

Neighborhood Core Building Type Requirements:	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Main Street Building	10'-20'	50'-100'	70% - 90%	25'	5'	2-3	80%
Commercial Cottage	10'-15'	50'-75'	40% - 70%	25'	8'	1-1.5	80%
Live-Work Sideyard	10'-15'	50'-65'	50% - 75%	25'	5'	2-2.5	80%
Duplex	10'-15'	55'-70'	N/A	25'	5'	2-3	75%
Triplex	10'-15'	70'-100'		25'	5'	2-3	75%
Mansion Apartment House	10'-25'	60'-80'	N/A	25'	5'	2-2.5	70%
Civic Building	10'-25'	N/A	N/A	N/A	5'	2.5	80%

Neighborhood Core Building Type Requirements:	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Carriage House	See Sec. 5.15.8.F. for placement and other requirements			5'	5'	1-2	

Additional Building Types							
As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/ Commission with approval authority in accordance with Article 2 of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Core-HD zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements:							
	10'-25'	50'-100'	to be determined by UDO Admin.	25'	5'	2 - 3	80%

(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024; Ord. [2026-01](#), January 13, 2026)

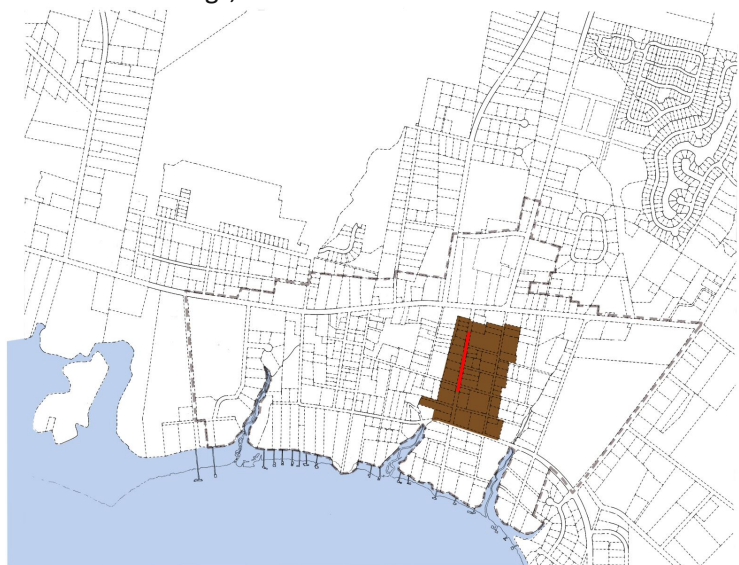
Effective on: 1/13/2026

B. Neighborhood Center Historic District (NCE-HD)



NCE-HD Precedent Imagery

The red lines indicate the locations of required shopfront buildings (Main Street Building, Commercial Cottage, or Live-Work Sideyard). In addition to store-front buildings, civic structures are allowed within these areas.



NCE-HD Regulating Plan

	Front Build- to Zone	Lot Width Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Neighborhood Center-HD							
Building Type Requirements:							
<i>Main Street Building</i>	10'-25'	50'-80'	75% - 90%	25'	8'	2-2.5	80%
<i>Commercial Cottage</i>	10'-20'	50'-60'	50% - 70%	25'	8'	1-1.5	80%
<i>Live-Work Sideyard</i>	5'-10'	50'-60'	40% - 75%	25'	8'	1.5-2.5	80%
<i>Duplex</i>	10'-15'	55'-70'	N/A	25'	8'	1.5-2.5	75%
<i>Triplex</i>	10'-15'	70'-100'					
<i>Mansion Apartment House</i>	10'-25'	60'-80'	N/A	25'	10'	2-2.5	70%
<i>Carriage House</i>	See Sec. 5.15.8.F for placement and other requirements.			5'	5'	1-2	65%
<i>Cottage</i>	10'-15'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	8'	1-1.5	65%
<i>Medium House</i>	5'-15'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	8'	1-2	65%
<i>Village House</i>	10'-15'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	8'	2-2.5	65%
<i>Sideyard House</i>	10'-15'	50'-65'	N/A	25'	8'	2-2.5	65%
<i>Vernacular House</i>	10'-20'	60'-80'	N/A	25'	10'	1.5	65%
<i>Civic Building</i>	10'-25'	N/A	N/A	N/A	8'	2	80%
Additional Building Types							
As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/ Commission with approval authority in accordance with Article 2 of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Center-HD zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements:							
	10'-25'	50'-100'	to be determined by UDO Admin.	25'	8'	1-2.5	80%

(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024; Ord. [2026-01](#), January 13, 2026)

Effective on: 1/13/2026

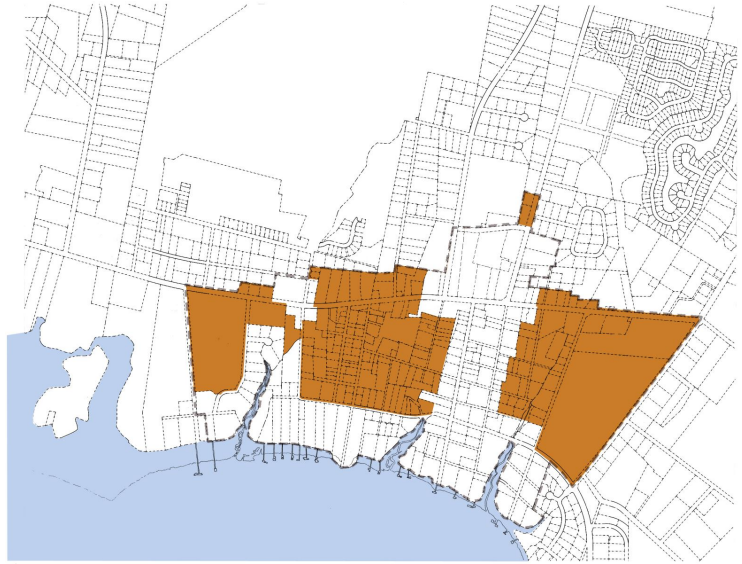
C. Neighborhood General Historic District (NG-HD)

Within the NG-HD district, building form and scale shall be primarily residential to maintain the predominantly residential character component of this district. The UDO Administrator may waive the mandatory residential component for properties with frontage on SC Highway 46 and Bruin Road; buildings on these properties may be constructed with retail shopfronts, awnings, marquees, colonnades, or arcades in accordance with this UDO but must be residential in form and scale.

C. Neighborhood General Historic District (NG-HD)



NG-HD Precedent Imagery



NG-HD Regulating Plan

	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Neighborhood General Building Type Requirements:							
<i>Carriage House</i>	See Sec. 5.15.8.F. for placement and other requirements.			5'	5'	1-2	
<i>Live-Work Sideyard</i>	10'-20'	50'-100'	N/A	25'	10'	1-2.5	60%
<i>Commercial Cottage</i>	10'-20'	50'-100'	N/A	25'	10'	1-1.5	60%
<i>Bungalow Court</i>	10'-20' (for foremost bungalow)	60'-100'	N/A	25'	15'	1-1.5	65%
<i>Cottage</i>	10'-20'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	10'	1-1.5	60%
<i>Medium House</i>	10'-20'	50'-60'	N/A	25'	10'	1-2	60%
<i>Village House</i>	10'-20'	50'-65'	N/A	30'	15'	2-2.5	60%
<i>Sideyard House</i>	10'-15'	50'-65'	N/A	30'	5'	2	60%
<i>Vernacular House</i>	10'-20'	60'-100'	N/A	30'	15'	1.5	60%
<i>Center Hall House</i>	15'-25'	70'-100'	N/A	30'	15'	2-2.5	60%

Neighborhood General Building Type Requirements:	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Civic Building	10'-35'	N/A	N/A	N/A	10'	2	80%

Additional Building Types

As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/Commission with approval authority in accordance with [Article 2](#) of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood General-HD zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements:

10'-20'	50'-100'	N/A	25'	10'	1 - 2.5	70%
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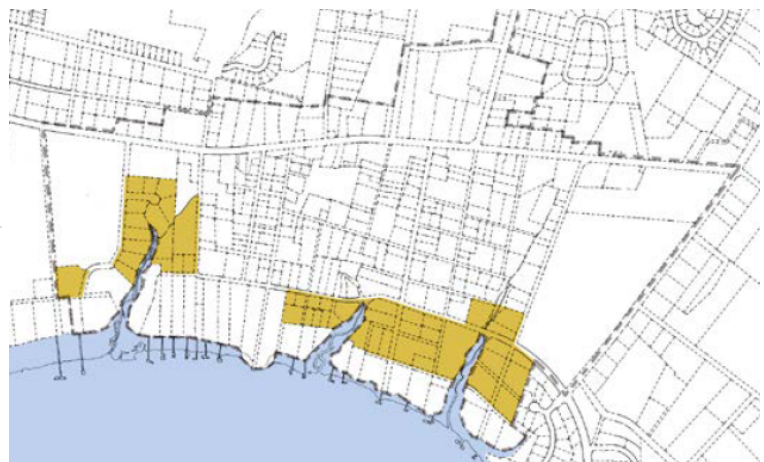
(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024; Ord. [2026-01](#), January 13, 2026)

Effective on: 1/13/2026

D. Neighborhood Conservation Historic District (NCV-HD)



NCV-HD Precedent Imagery



NCV-HD Regulating Plan

Neighborhood Conservation
Building Type Requirements

	Front Build-to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
Carriage House	See Sec. 5.15.8.F for placement and other requirements.			5'	5'	1-2	
Cottage	10'-20'	50'-60'	N/A	30'	10'	1-1.5	60%
Medium House	10'-20'	50'-70'	N/A	30'	10'	1-2	60%
Village House	10'-20'	50'-70'	N/A	30'	10'	2-2.5	60%
Vernacular House	15'-25'	60'-100'	N/A	30'	10'	1.5	60%
Center Hall House	20'-35'	80'-100'	N/A	30'	15'	2-2.5	60%
Civic Building	15'-40'	N/A	N/A	N/A	10'	1.5	80%

Additional Building Types

As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/ Commission with approval authority in accordance with [Article 2](#) of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Neighborhood Conservation -HD zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements:

10'-35'	50'-100'	N/A	30'	10'	1 - 2.5	70%
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(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024; Ord. [2026-01](#), January 13, 2026)

Effective on: 1/13/2026

E. Riverfront Edge Historic District (RV-HD)

In the Riverfront Edge HD district Zone, the river shall be the focus of each lot abutting it and therefore acts as the “front” of the lot.



RV-HD Precedent Imagery



RV-HD Regulating Plan

Riverfront Edge Building Type Requirements:	Riverfront Build- to Zone	Lot Width	Frontage Requirement	Setback (from rear property line)	Side Setback (from side property lines)	Height (in stories)	Maximum Lot Coverage
<i>Carriage House</i>	See Sec. 5.15.8.F. for placement and other requirements.	5'	10'	1-2			
<i>Cottage</i>	≥150'	≥60'	N/A	20'	10'	1-1.5	50%
<i>Vernacular House</i>	Perpendicular to, and in a horizontal plane from, the	≥75'	N/A	20'	20'	1.5	50%
<i>Center Hall House</i>	OCRM line	≥75'	N/A	20'	20'	2-2.5	50%
<i>River House</i>		≥75'	N/A	20'	20'	1.5-2	50%
<i>Civic Building</i>	15'-50'	N/A	N/A	N/A	15'	1.5	80%

Additional Building Types

As approved by the UDO Administrator or Board/Commission with approval authority in accordance with [Article 2](#) of this Ordinance, additional building types may be allowed in the Riverfront Edge-HD zoning district. Building types not specifically listed shall be regulated by the following general requirements:

≥150'	Perpendicular to, and in a horizontal plane from, the OCRM line	≥60'	N/A	20'	20'	1 - 2.5	50%
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(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024; Ord. [2026-01](#), January 13, 2026)

Effective on: 1/13/2026

F. General Standards

1. Building Heights

- Building heights and widths shall be visually similar to those in the neighboring vicinity.
- Building heights are regulated by the number of stories, based on the designated Zoning Districts.
- Residential structures shall have a first finished floor height raised a minimum of three (3) feet above average adjacent sidewalk grade. The first finished floor height can be elevated as much as five (5) feet above average adjacent sidewalk grade without counting the undercroft as a story.
- Each story above the first story in commercial and residential buildings shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet and a maximum of twelve (12) feet high from floor to ceiling. Floors more than twelve (12) feet, as measured from floor to ceiling, will count as additional floors.
- A space under a sloping roof that has the line of intersection of the roof and the exterior wall supporting the roof not more than 3 feet above the floor level, and in which space the possible floor area with head room of 5 feet or more occupies between 30 and 70 percent of the total floor area of the story directly beneath. If the possible floor area with head room of 5 feet or more occupies more than 70 percent of the total floor area of the story directly beneath, then that space shall be considered a full story.
- Appurtenances may extend above the building height limits, but may not exceed 50' above the adjacent grade level.

ATTACHMENT 4

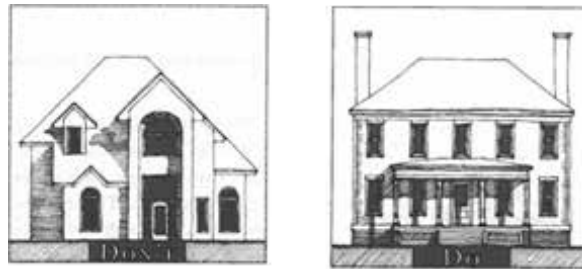
Do not clump everything equally under one enormous roof. Many [building forms] with a confusing assembly of gables show the guest at first glance neither the entry nor the principal rooms of the house. All buildings should pass the First Glance Test.



Source: *Traditional Construction Patterns*, p.62-63

Do mass a house so that it passes the First Glance Test. Massing of a house should clearly show two things at first glance: the location of the main body of the house and the location of the entry for people, which ought to be more important and more noble than the car entry.

Do not use complicated forms. Too many gables, dormers, and roof breaks are not appropriate and can unnecessarily increase costs.

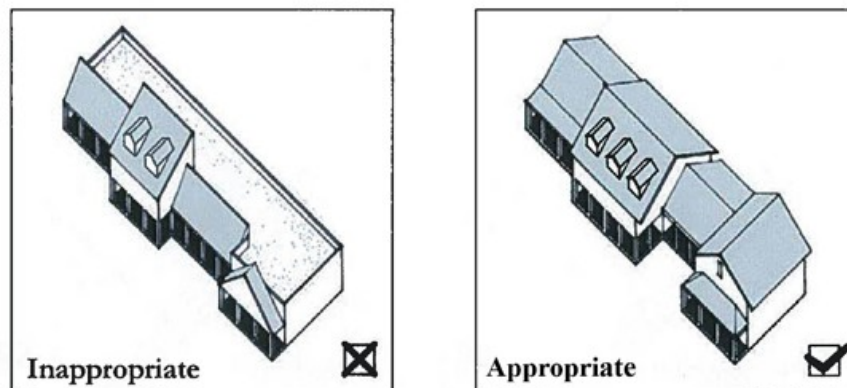


Source: *Traditional Construction Patterns*, p. 60-61

Do keep massing simple. Composing a house of one or a few simple boxes can save costs for more appropriate architectural elements like proper porch detailing, back porches, garden walls, frontage fences, pergolas, and a number of other items.

2. Building Form, Massing, and Scale

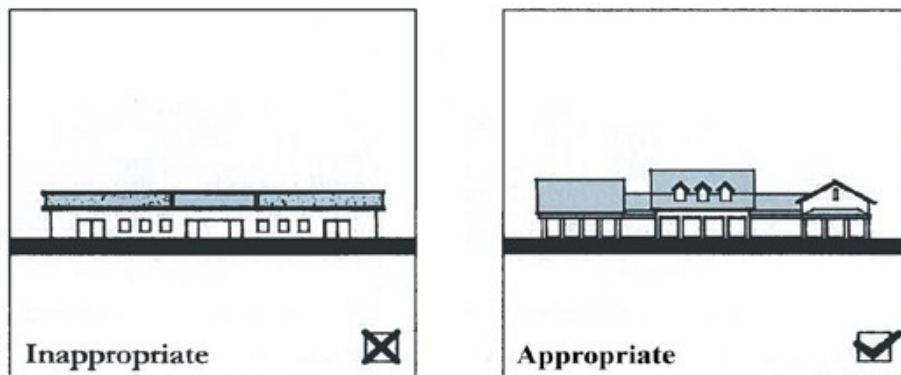
- a. Building mass shall consist of a simple composition of basic building forms that follow a clear hierarchy.



Roof forms should always respond to building forms.

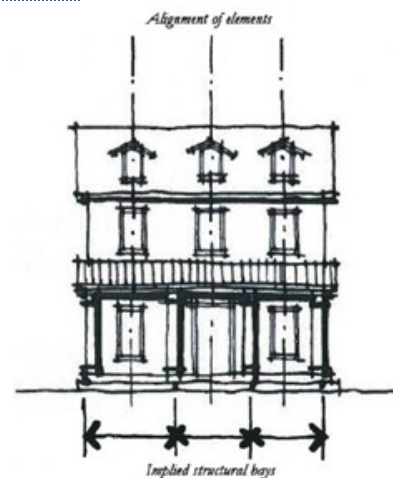
- b. Rooflines shall be simple, utilizing gables, hips, and sheds, or combinations of these basic forms. Roofs shall correspond to the major massing of the building; roof forms that overwhelm the mass of the primary building form and complicated rooflines are to be avoided.

ATTACHMENT 4



Long expanses of unarticulated masses should be avoided. Combinations of massing can help reduce the perception of scale.

- c. Incorporate elements that give the building perceptible scale. Large buildings in particular shall be designed to reduce their perceived height and mass by dividing the building into smaller scale components.
- d. Long unarticulated masses shall be avoided. As an example, simple offsets of the primary façade can articulate the overall building massing and help reduce the perception of mass and scale.
3. Architectural Elements and Projections
 - a. Buildings shall incorporate interruptions and variety into the wall plane to create interest and variety in the streetscape while still maintaining a consistent architectural style and connection to its surroundings. Examples include but are not limited to offsets, recessed entrances, arcades, awnings and canopies, bay windows, roof overhangs, expression lines, shadow lines, porches and balconies.
4. Building Composition (Proportion, Alignment, Rhythm, and Spacing)
 - a. Overall building proportions and Individual building features shall have a proportional relationship with one another. For example, features such as porches, chimneys, cornices, windows and doors must be proportional to other features of the building as well as the overall building form.
 - b. Additions, connective wings, and outbuildings shall be secondary to the primary building form.
 - c. Building elements and the spaces between them shall be organized into a logical sequential manner.
 - d. Horizontal rhythm should be established by the organization of the building facade into horizontal bands which provides human scale and proportion to the facade.
 - e. Vertical rhythms should be established in the façade through alignment of windows, openings, pilasters, and columns.
5. Building Orientation
 - a. The front principal façade of all buildings must be built parallel to the street that it faces.
 - b. When a shopfront building abuts more than one street (i.e. occurs at a corner), it shall maintain at least 50% street frontage along its secondary street, in addition to the requirement for its primary street frontage.
6. Exceptions from Build-to Lines. Exceptions to Build-to Lines may be granted by the UDO Administrator where existing significant natural features are present, to preserve protected trees and to preserve the integrity of neighboring historic resources. Exceptions may also be granted to accommodate outdoor design features such as dining areas, open-air markets and public art features.
7. Drive-thrus. Drive-thrus shall not be permitted in the Old Town Bluffton Historic District.



8. Franchise Design. The quality of Bluffton's unique environment should not be eroded by inappropriate franchise designs and signage. It has been demonstrated in design conscious communities around the world that franchises can maintain their identity while working in a distinct context. The UDO Administrator and the HPC will evaluate franchise design proposals based on conformance with this Section.
9. Service Yards. If a service yard is provided, service items, such as waste receptacles, air-conditioning equipment, pool equipment, above ground propane tanks, irrigation equipment, utilities and other service-related items shall be located in rear or side yards not facing a street, away from all public vantages, and screened from view. The HPC may approve alternate locations and screening for utilities if they are unable to be located within the service yard. If a service yard is not provided, service items, at listed above, shall be located and screened as required by Sec. 5.15.6.F.
 - a. Materials used in building service yards shall be visibly compatible with the materials used in the primary structure and accessory structure(s).
 - b. The service yard may be enclosed by louvers, lattice, vertical board or board-on-board panels, or such other styles typical of earlier styling.
 - c. The height of the service yard enclosure shall be sufficient to screen equipment from public vantages; however, may not exceed six (6') feet in height.
 - d. Window air-conditioning units shall not be placed on the primary façade of the primary structure or of any accessory structure.
 - e. Roof mounted equipment, if required, shall be low-profile and located at the side or rear elevations to not be visible from the street.
 - f. Utility meters shall be screened from public view.
10. Sheds. Sheds shall not be taller than one story, exceed 121 square feet, and no more than three (3) are permitted per lot.

(Ord. [2024-02](#), April 9, 2024)

Effective on: 4/9/2024