ARTICLE VII: EXTERIOR BUILDING DESIGN STANDARDS

Section 550.07.01: Purpose and Applicability

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to regulate the design and materials used for the exterior of buildings and structures within the City so as to maintain and enhance the attractiveness and values of property in the community. This Article is further intended to support the creation of a pedestrian-oriented urban environment that emphasizes architectural and urban design principles of human scale and visual interest. Additionally, this Article is intended to ensure the development of structures that maintain a long-lasting appearance; withstand the effects of time and exposure to the elements; resist damage in areas with high vehicular and pedestrian traffic and in areas where larger equipment that could cause damage is commonly used; that maintain a consistent character of development based on land use and zoning district particular to each development; and that contribute to the long-term economic and social vitality of the City of Watertown.

(2) Applicability. Telecommunication, Extraction and Disposal, Energy Production, and Agricultural land uses are exempt from the exterior design standards in Sections 550.07.10 to 550.07.50 below.

(a) New Construction. The requirements of this Section shall apply to all structures and buildings within the City constructed after the effective date of this Chapter.

(b) Additions. Additions to buildings constructed after the effective date of this Chapter shall comply with the standards of this Section and, as determined by the Plan Commission, shall match or be substantially similar to the design and materials of the existing building.

(c) Alterations. For buildings constructed prior to the effective date of this Chapter, alterations that do not impact the floor area of the building shall comply with the standards of this Section, or shall match or be substantially similar to the existing building design and materials. Ordinary repairs and maintenance are not considered alterations.

(d) Exceptions and Appeals.

1. Exceptions. Exceptions to the building design standards set forth in this Section may be granted by the Zoning Administrator, to permit substitute building materials or construction of comparable quality or design when it can be demonstrated that the provisions of this Section are infeasible and that the granting of such exception is in keeping with the purpose of this Section. Decisions rendered by the Zoning Administrator may be appealed to the Plan Commission.

2. Appeals. Any person affected by a decision of the Zoning Administrator may petition for a hearing before the Plan Commission.

3. Waivers. The Plan Commission is authorized to grant one or more waivers for specific design requirements in this Section when the Plan Commission finds the design to constitute an exemption as described above in subsection (1) or finds an alternative design standard also achieves the Purpose of this Section.

   a. Granting of waivers by the Plan Commission shall be identified within the conditions of approval as part of the design review component of any Site Plan review (Section 550.10.43).

(e) Beyond the rules in this Section, additional building design standards may apply to:

1. Conditional Use Permits (see Section 550.10.32)

2. Planned Development Districts (see Section 550.0.2.11)

Commented [SK1]: Allows some flexibility in PC design review, while still being closely prescribed by the Code. This avoids the need for drawn out processes with things like CUPs.

(3) Review and Approval. Through the site plan review and building permit processes, the Zoning Administrator shall be responsible and have authority to hear, review, and act upon all proposed exterior architectural plans for all proposed development.

(4) Exterior Building Materials. The 4 classes of building materials referenced in this Chapter have the following meanings:

(a) Class I materials include brick, brick veneer, stone, stone veneer, and glass (curtain/storefront).

(b) Class II materials include split face or decorative block, and stucco.

(c) Class III materials include architectural/decorative metal panels, EIFS, residential aluminum siding, and siding made of wood, wood composite, vinyl, or fiber cement.

(d) Class IV materials include smooth face or non-decorative block; concrete panels (tilt-up or precast); asphaltic, fiberglass, metal, or poly-roofing siding; non-decorative metal panels; corrugated metal; and plywood, chipboard, or other non-decorative wood. Also includes any material not listed in (a) through (c) above.

(e) Architectural Metal Panels. For purposes of this section, architectural metal panels are factory-manufactured exterior metal wall panels with concealed fasteners, a factory-applied or inherently finished surface, and a smooth or intentionally designed profile. Corrugated, standard ribbed, and exposed-fastener metal panels shall be classified as Class IV materials. The Zoning Administrator may require manufacturer specifications to verify compliance.

Figure 550.07.01a: Exterior Building Material Requirements by Use*

Type of Construction	Land Use (see Article III)	Exterior Building Materials Permitted
New Construction of Any Kind	Single Family, Two-Family, Manufactured Homes, and Cottage Courts	See Section 550.07.10
New Construction of Any Kind	Townhouse, Multiplex, Apartment	See Section 550.07.20
New Construction of Any Kind	Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Uses	See Section 550.07.30
New Construction of Any Kind	Industrial, Storage, Transportation	See Section 550.07.40
Any Exterior Change	Within the Downtown Mixed Use Zoning District	See Section 550.07.50

*Telecommunication, Extraction and Disposal, Energy Production, and Agricultural land uses are exempt from the exterior design requirements of this Article.

Sections 550.07.02 to 550.07.09: Reserved

Section 550.07.10: Single- and Two-Family Uses

These standards apply to all single-family, duplex, twin house, two-flat, manufactured home, and cottage court land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter.

(1) Except for (1)(a) below, all single-family, duplex, twin house, two-flat, manufactured home and cottage court land uses are exempt from the exterior design standards of this Article. See applicable land use requirements in Section 550.03.06 and the base zoning district's bulk dimensional standards in Article IV.

(a) Exterior building colors. High gloss paints and exterior finishes and primary colors, including red, blue, green, yellow, black, and fluorescent colors, shall not be permitted. Where an integral part of site design or used as accents, muted versions of these colors may be used as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

Sections 550.07.11 to 550.07.19: Reserved

Section 550.07.20: Multi-Family Uses

These standards apply to all townhouse, multiplex, and apartment land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. See an example exterior design diagram in Figure 550.07.20a.

(1) Exterior Materials. Multi-family buildings shall be clad in Class I, II or III materials. Class IV materials are prohibited.

(a) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

(b) Exterior building materials in conjunction with façade articulations listed below in Section 550.07.20(3) shall be used to create the building's distinct horizontal base, middle, and top.

(2) Building Entrance.

(a) The primary entrance shall be on the front façade facing the street and decorative doors shall be used on this facade.

(b) The primary entrance shall be covered a minimum of 3 feet from the door. Recessed 3-foot entries shall be deemed to meet this requirement.

(c) Exterior entry doors for individual units shall be residential in style and shall include frame and panel (real or decorative).

(d) Exterior entry doors for multiple units may be residential (as described in Subsection (c) above) or commercial in style (glass).

(3) Façade Articulation.

(a) Façade lengths shall not be greater than 40 feet without articulation such as:

1. Recesses or projections that step back or project a portion of the main façade plane.
2. Recesses or projections of upper floors from the ground floor façade plane.
3. Vertical division using different textures or materials.
4. Division of the façade into individual units through the use of windows, entrances, arcades, porches, decks, balconies, lighting, etc.
5. Roof form variation such as the inclusion of dormers, change in roof lines, or change in roof type.
6. Public art installations located directly on a facade, such as murals (See Chapter 12.075 of the City of Watertown Municipal Code for public art standards).

(b) On façades facing the street, windows or doors shall be required in order to promote a visual connection to the street.

1. The total area of windows and doors, including trim, shall comprise a minimum of 20 percent of the total façade area, excluding gables.

Commented [SK2]: Plan Commission could customize this if they were concerned with any particular material. For example, if you wanted to limit Architectural Metal panels, you could add sub (b): Decorative metal wall panels (Class III materials) may be used up to 30% of any façade. Draft as written does not include a limit.

2. Structured in-building vehicle parking or access is permitted on the ground floor of a structure in accordance with the standards below:

   a. Vehicle access is permitted from any façade of the structure to the right-of-way.

   b. Structured in-building parking shall be fully enclosed on all sides within the structure. Vehicle parking is permitted within the ground floor of the structure as long as the nonresidential land use requirements for ground floors of Mixed Use Buildings are met (see Section 550.03.08. and 550.03.28(19)).

(c) On any façade facing a public street or parking area, hard and durable materials such as decorative block, brick, stone, or a comparable material shall be required within 40 inches of the adjacent grade.

(4) Roofs.

(a) As determined by the Plan Commission, decorative and articulated metal roofs and exterior metal wall panels shall be permitted if all fasteners are fully shielded from view.

(b) Roof forms and materials shall be compatible and harmonious with those of existing buildings in the immediate area which conform to this Section.

(c) See (8) below for roof-top mechanical screening requirements.

(5) Wall Details, Trim, and Windows.

(a) Exterior windows shall match the architectural character of the building. Spandrel, mirrored, or tinted glass is prohibited.

(b) All façade openings shall be articulated or appropriately trimmed through the use of materials such as lintels, sills, surrounds, shutters, etc.

(c) Natural wood shall be painted or stained unless it is cedar, redwood or other naturally weather-resistant species intended to be exposed.

(d) Pressure-treated lumber shall be painted or stained after a curing period of no greater than 18 months.

(e) Exterior building apparatus such as brackets, wiring, antennas, gutters, downspouts, and other similar feature shall blend in with the color and design of the structure's exterior façade.

(6) Patios, Decks, and Balconies.

(a) Ground-level patios and decks facing the street shall be bordered with landscape treatments, in accordance with Article VIII as depicted and approved on the Site Plan (Section 550.10.43).

   1. Covered porches are exempt from this requirement.

(b) Exterior stairs leading to a deck or balcony are not permitted on the front or street side of a building.

   1. On corner lots, exterior stairs shall be permitted on the interior side façade.

(c) Exterior corridors shall be covered by the building roof, shall be located within the footprint of the building foundation, and shall not be visible from the street.

(d) Upper-story decks and balconies shall be cantilevered, supported by vertical columns, or supported from above.

(7) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems.

Commented [SK3]: Requires durable material on base of building

Commented [SK4]: Could add a section on color here if desired: Colors. Primary colors including red, blue, green, yellow, and fluorescent colors are prohibited on all exterior facades. Color patterns shall be used consistently throughout the property. Some communities prefer to be a little less regulatory on colors.

Commented [SK5]: Metal roof reference

Commented [SK6]: City may not wish to regulate roof forms.

(a) Drainage pipes and air intakes and exhaust vents for high-energy gas applications and meters on exterior walls shall match or be complementary to the color of the roof and wall onto which they are mounted.

(b) Facade-mounted Equipment.

1. Window-mounted air conditioning units shall not be permitted in any window that faces a public street and shall not encroach into exterior balconies, porches, decks, or patios.

    a. When no alternative is available, units shall be masked (painted, encased, etc.) in order to blend into the building's exterior finish and shall be flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade more than necessary.

2. Building-mounted equipment installed on the façade visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall not encroach into exterior balconies, porches, decks, or patios and shall be screened in a manner that is:

    a. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.

    b. Incorporated as part of the building wall or flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade.

    c. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.

(c) Roof-mounted Equipment. Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened, preferably by parapet walls. Other acceptable screen types shall be:

1. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.

2. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.

3. Designed to be an integral part of the building's architectural design and give the impression that it is something other than a mechanical screen.

(d) See Section 550.06.21 for screening requirements for ground-mounted mechanical systems and refuse enclosure requirements.

(8) Wall or Roof-Mounted Lighting. See Section 550.06.20.

Figure 550.07.20a: Multi-Family Exterior Design Standards Example



Sections 550.07.21 to 550.07.29: Reserved

Section 550.07.30: Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Uses

These standards apply to all mixed-use, commercial, and institutional land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. See Article VIII for landscaping standards. See an example exterior design diagram in Figure 550.07.30a.

(1) Building Entrance and Orientation.

(a) The main entrance shall be clearly defined and accentuated through the use of detailing, distinctive materials, or colors, projections or recesses, porticos, covered entrances, stoops, or other features as deemed appropriate by the Zoning Administrator.

(b) Buildings shall be oriented so that the front façade faces the road with the highest traffic volumes.

(a) All façades facing a public right-of-way shall be designed to have the appearance of a front façade and shall incorporate decorative doors, meaning each shall include windows, doors or other architectural components typically associated with front façades, as approved by the Zoning Administrator.

(c) Service or loading areas shall not be permitted between the building and the public street.

(d) Drive-through windows shall not be located between the building and the public street.

Commented [SK7]: Flagging for awareness.

(2) Exterior Materials. Commercial buildings shall be predominately clad in Class I materials. Class II and Class III materials may be used as accents and trim not to exceed 50 percent of the total building façade. Class IV materials are prohibited.

(a) Rear building elevations not facing a public street or public parking lot shall be exempt from this requirement.

(b) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

(c) Exterior building materials in conjunction with façade articulations listed below in Section 550.07.30(3) shall be used to create the building's distinct horizontal base, middle, and top.

(3) Façade Articulation. See Section 550.07.20(3).

(4) Colors. See Section 550.07.20(4).

(5) Roofs. See Section 550.07.20(5).

(6) Wall Details, Trim, and Windows. See Section 550.07.20(6).

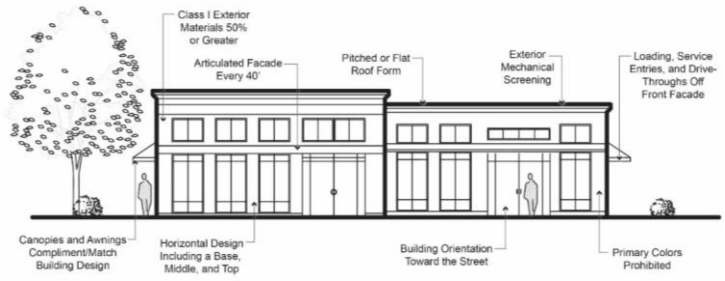
(7) Patios, Decks, and Balconies. See Section 550.07.20(7).

(8) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems. See Section 550.07.20(8).

(9) Wall or Roof-Mounted Lighting. See Section 550.07.20(9).

Commented [SK8]: Everything is just cross referenced to the MF section above to reduce redundance text. However, you could have all of that text here and further customize it to be more or less stringent than MF standards. If not regulating color in MF standards, delete the reference here.

Figure 550.07.30a: Commercial, Mixed-Use, and Institutional Exterior Design Standards Example



Sections 550.07.31 to 550.07.39: Reserved

Section 550.07.40: Industrial Uses

These standards apply to all industrial, storage, and transportation land uses, buildings, and structures constructed after the effective date of this Chapter. See Article VIII for landscaping standards. See an example exterior design diagram in Figure 550.07.40a.

(1) Architectural Design.

(a) Buildings shall be designed to include façade articulation; flat, unadorned walls shall be avoided.

(b) Buildings shall be oriented so as to face the road with the highest traffic volumes. This requirement shall not apply to buildings with frontage on state or federal highways, unless there is direct access from the development to the highway.

1. If a visitor, office, or customer entrance component is included in the building, such space(s) shall be clearly defined and accentuated through the use of detailing, windows, distinctive materials and/or colors, projections or recesses, or other architectural features as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.

(2) Exterior Materials. Industrial buildings shall be clad in Class I, II or III materials. Certain Class IV materials are also acceptable as noted.

(a) For all façades facing a public street, a minimum of 15 percent of the façade shall be composed of Class I building materials.

1. This requirement may be reduced to 10 percent of the façade provided that other elements are incorporated into the building and site design, such as façade articulation, increased landscaping, or other improvements approved by the Plan Commission.

Commented [SK9]: Our common approach for industrial. It basically says you need to make the front façade look a little nicer with glass, stone, or brick up to 15%, the rest of the building can be pretty much whatever you want.

(b) Smooth faced/non-decorative block or concrete panels (tilt-up/precast) (Class IV materials) may be used if they are part of a palette of permitted materials or if they incorporate horizontal and vertical articulation including, but not limited to, changes in color or texture, as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.

(c) Non-decorative metal panels (Class IV materials) may be used as deemed appropriate by the Plan Commission.

1. In the AG, LI, HI, and IOA zoning districts, visible exterior fasteners shall be the same color as the attached wall for any principal or accessory building visible from a public street.
2. In all other zoning districts, exterior wall fasteners shall be fully concealed from view.

(d) Materials of comparable quality may be substituted for any class of material or be used as a decorative element if the material can be removed or replaced with a permitted exterior material, as determined by the Plan Commission.

(3) Façade Articulation.

(a) Façade lengths shall not be greater than 100 feet without articulation such as:

1. Recesses or projections that step back or project a portion of the main façade plane.
2. Recesses or projections of upper floors from the ground floor façade plane.
3. Vertical division using different textures or materials.
4. Division of the façade into individual components (i.e., storefronts, distinct uses) through the use of architectural elements such as porches, balconies, windows, covered entrances, arcades, awnings, marquees, lighting, signage, etc.
5. Roof form variation such as the inclusion of dormers, change in roof lines, or change in roof type.
6. Public art installations located directly on a facade, such as murals (See Chapter 12.075 of the City of Watertown Municipal Code for public art standards).

(4) Mechanical and Exterior Building Systems.

(a) Applicability. See Section 550.06.21 to determine whether screening is required.

(b) Drainage pipes on exterior walls shall match or be complementary to the color of the roof and wall onto which they are mounted.

(c) Building-mounted Equipment.

1. Building-mounted equipment installed on the façade visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall be disguised or screened in one of the following ways:
   a. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.
   b. Incorporated as part of the building wall and/or flush-mounted so as not to project beyond the main plane of the façade.
   c. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.

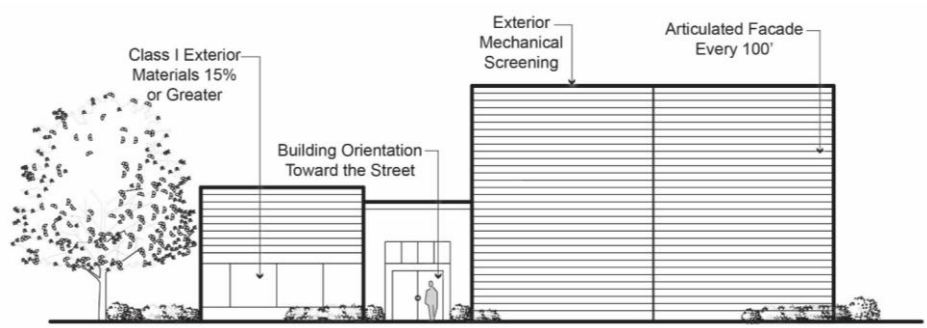
(d) Roof-mounted Equipment. Roof-mounted equipment visible from an adjacent public right-of-way or residential district shall be screened, preferably by parapet walls. Other acceptable screen types shall be:

a. Architecturally compatible with the primary structure to which the equipment is attached. Screening materials shall be identical to or substantially similar to the materials used on the building façade to which the equipment is attached.

b. Consistent with the color of the structure to which the equipment is attached.

c. Designed to be an integral part of the building's architectural design and give the impression that it is something other than a mechanical screen.

Figure 550.07.40a: Industrial Exterior Design Standards Example



Sections 550.07.41 to 550.07.49: Reserved

Section 550.07.50: Downtown Historic Preservation and Exterior Design Review

(1) Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to preserve and enhance the historic and architectural character of downtown Watertown, encourage compatible new development and reinvestment in existing buildings, and coordinate zoning review with the City's historic preservation review process.

(2) Applicability. Properties within the Downtown Mixed-Use (DMU) Zoning District shall be subject to the following exterior building design requirements.

(a) Historic Preservation Review. Properties subject to a Certificate of Appropriateness under Chapter 325, Historic Preservation, shall be reviewed in accordance with Chapter 325.

(b) Other DMU Properties. Properties within the DMU Zoning District that are not subject to historic preservation review under Chapter 325 shall comply with the applicable exterior building design standards of Sections 550.07.10 through 550.07.40.

(c) Other Applicable Requirements. All properties within the DMU Zoning District shall remain subject to applicable zoning requirements including dimensional standards, site design, landscaping, lighting, parking, signage, and other applicable provisions of this Chapter.

(3) Review and Approval.

(a) Historic Preservation Review. The Historic Preservation Commission shall review applications requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with Chapter 325. Such review shall address the historic and architectural appropriateness of proposed exterior improvements.

(b) Site Plan Review. For development requiring Site Plan Review under Section 550.10.43 and a Certificate of Appropriateness under Chapter 325, the Historic Preservation Commission shall review the proposed exterior building design and provide a recommendation to the Plan Commission prior to final Site Plan approval. The Historic Preservation Commission shall retain its authority to issue Certificates of Appropriateness as provided in Chapter 325.

Sections 550.07.51 to 550.07.99: Reserved