

Chapter 1119: Architectural and Historic Preservation Standards

1119.01 Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to encourage development that contributes to the City of Wooster's unique sense of place, reflecting the community's physical and historic character, and adding to it in appropriate ways. The standards of this chapter are intended to be established to ensure that development and redevelopment contribute to the character and attractiveness of core districts, major uses, gateways, and corridors in the City.

1119.02 Applicability

All buildings and structures shall be subject to the standards of this chapter unless otherwise stated.

1119.03 Design Criteria for Residential Dwellings in the R-T District

All single-family detached dwellings in the R-T District shall comply with the following regulations. The Zoning Administrator may exempt applicants from these standards when the exterior building modifications are minor in nature, meaning the design modifications will have no discernable impact on neighboring properties, the public, the public right-of-way, or those intended to occupy or use the proposed development.

- (a) The main entrance of the dwelling shall be oriented toward a public street.
- (b) The front wall of the dwelling shall be parallel to the street or its tangent, if the street is curved.
- (c) For corner lots, a dwelling unit may be oriented toward the intersection of the two streets.
- (d) Dwelling unit entrances shall include architectural elements that emphasize the entrance, including, but not limited to, front porches, transom and sidelight windows, decorative trim and moldings, and arches.
- (e) At least fifteen percent of the area of a street-facing façade shall be windows that meet the following standards. Windows in rooms with a finished floor height of four feet or more below average finished grade are exempt from this standard:
 - (1) Each window shall be square or vertical in orientation; or,
 - (2) A horizontal window opening may be created when:
 - A. Two or more vertical windows are grouped together to provide a horizontal opening; or
 - B. There is a band of individual lites across the top of the horizontal window. These small lites shall be vertical and cover at least 20 percent of the total height of the window.
- (f) No principal building shall be constructed where the front facade is more than 25 percent wider or narrower than the average width of principal buildings along the block face.
- (g) If over 75 percent of the existing dwellings along the same block face contain two or more stories, the new dwelling unit shall also include two or more stories.
- (h) The roof type shall generally reflect the predominant roof types of the buildings along the same block face (e.g., the building should not have a flat roof where the predominant roof type is a gable).

- (i) Where the majority of buildings along the same block face have front porches, the dwelling unit subject to this subsection shall also include a front porch that has a width and depth generally similar to the average width and depth of porches along the same block face.



Figure 1119-A: The detached dwelling in the foreground exhibits compatibility with the surrounding dwellings in regard to design, scale, setbacks, and materials.

- (j) For any new dwelling, an attached garage that has overhead garage doors that face the street shall be setback at least four feet from the front façade of the main building mass. The following exceptions shall apply:
- (1) An overhead garage door may be flush with the front façade of the building if the building has a porch, floor to ceiling bay window, balcony, structurally integral planter, or other significant design feature or combination of features that extend at least four feet forward from the wall plane on which the garage door is placed. A garage door that is recessed within the thickness of the garage wall as a result of typical construction practices shall be considered flush; or
 - (2) An overhead garage door may be flush with the front façade of the residence if at least 40 percent of the façade on which the door is located is comprised of windows; or
 - (3) An overhead garage door may be flush with the front façade of the residence if the garage is not more than 35 percent of the length of the street-facing façade.

1119.04 Architectural Standards for Single-Family Attached Dwellings and Multi-Family Dwellings

The standards of this subsection shall apply to all single-family attached dwellings and multi-family dwellings.

- (a) All siding shall be either horizontal or vertical in placement.
- (b) A minimum of 50 percent of all facades shall be constructed of brick, stone, wood, or other natural materials. The use of cultured stone, brick veneer, cementitious materials, or other fabricated materials that resemble natural materials is also permitted, excluding vinyl siding. The remaining 50 percent of facades may be constructed with any sturdy building material, including vinyl.
- (c) Front facades shall incorporate variation in mass through one or more of the following methods every 50 feet of façade frontage:

- (1) Wall offsets in the form of projections and/or recesses in the façade plane; Wall offsets shall have a minimum depth of two feet;
 - (2) Bay windows;
 - (3) Façade color changes;
 - (4) Use of pilasters, columns, or other detailing to articulate the facades; or
 - (5) Roofline changes when coupled with correspondingly aligned façade material changes.
- (d) In addition to wall offsets, front facades and side facades on buildings on corner lots shall provide a minimum of three of the following design features for each residential unit fronting onto the street:
- (1) One or more dormer windows or cupolas;
 - (2) A recessed entrance;
 - (3) A covered porch;
 - (4) Pillars, posts, or pilasters;
 - (5) One or more bay windows with a minimum of 12-inch projection from the façade plane;
 - (6) Eaves with a minimum of six-inch projection from the façade plane;
 - (7) A parapet wall with an articulated design, which entails design variation rather than a simple rectilinear form; or
 - (8) Multiple windows with a minimum of four inch wide trim.



Figure 1119-B: Illustrative example of acceptable architectural design for multi-family dwellings



Figure 1119-C: Illustrative example of unacceptable architectural design for multi-family dwellings

- (e) To the maximum extent practicable, all roof vents, pipes, antennas, satellite dishes, and other roof penetrations and equipment (except chimneys) shall be located on the rear elevations or configured to have a minimal visual impact as seen from the street. See Section [1119.05\(f\)](#) and Section [1123.07](#).

1119.05 Architectural Standards for Nonresidential Buildings

Any nonresidential building in the C-1, C-2, C-3, or C-4 Districts shall be subject to the following standards. Where a building or structure is considered a Landmark or is located within a Landmark Building, such buildings or structures shall be subject to the standards of this section and Section [1119.06](#).

(a) Building Orientation

- (1) Buildings shall generally be parallel to the street they front unless an alternate orientation is consistent with adjacent development.
- (2) The primary entrances of buildings shall be oriented towards a public street.
- (3) If the primary entrance is located on the side or rear of the building due to the location of parking, the façade located along the street frontage shall be identified and designed as the primary façade.

(b) Building Materials

- (1) The structural frame of a building shall not be exposed to the exterior of a building.
- (2) A combination of materials, textures, colors, and finishes shall be utilized to create visual interest.
- (3) Materials within three feet of the finished grade or sidewalk shall be of a durable material to withstand pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
- (4) No stucco (commonly known as “dry vit” or E.I.F.S.) or similar materials shall be permitted within three feet of the finished grade.
- (5) All rooftop equipment shall match the color of the structure or be visually compatible with the structure.

(c) Building Facades

- (1) Blank building walls, whether the primary or secondary façade, that are visible from public or private streets (including alleys adjacent to residential or mixed use buildings) are prohibited. These requirements shall not apply to those walls that are not visible from a street or are completely hidden due to topography or natural features preserved as open space.
- (2) Although the front façade of a building is expected to be the focal point in terms of the level of architectural character and features, all sides of buildings that are visible from a public street or an adjacent building shall incorporate architectural detailing on all facades that is consistent with the front façade and the requirements of the applicable zoning district. Any façade of a building that will be screened from view due to the buffering requirements of [Chapter 1123: Landscaping and Buffering](#) shall be exempt from this requirement.



Figure 1119-D: This figure shows two methods of using architectural features to create wall surface relief on wall elevations that are not the primary elevation.

- (3) The maximum linear length of an uninterrupted façade plane in the C-4 District shall be 35 feet. This shall mean that the building design shall incorporate pilasters, material variations, height variations, awnings, storefronts, or other elements to divide a long façade plane into distinct sections with no individual section exceeding 35 feet in width. See [Figure 1119-E](#).



Figure 1119-E: This image illustrates how existing and new structures divide the entire façade plane into smaller components through the use of pilasters, storefronts, height variation, and material variations.

- (4) The principal building shall have a front façade that occupies a minimum percentage along the frontage abutting the public street as established below and as seen in [Figure 1119-F](#).
- A. 50 percent in the C-2 District;
 - B. No requirement in the C-3 District; and
 - C. 75 percent in the C-4 District.

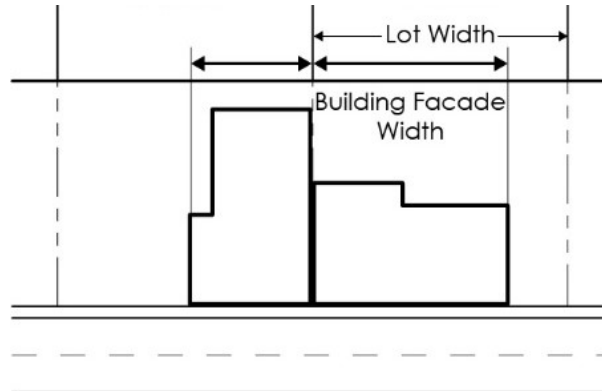


Figure 1119-F: A figure illustrating the minimum width of the principal building façade occupying the street frontage.

(d) Roof Styles

- (1) The height of any pitched roof shall not exceed one-half of the overall building height.
- (2) **Roof Line Changes**
- A. Roofline changes shall include changes in roof planes or changes in the top of a parapet wall, such as extending the top of pilasters above the top of the parapet wall.
 - B. When roofline changes are included on a façade that incorporates wall offsets or material or color changes, roof line changes shall be vertically aligned with the corresponding wall offset or material or color changes.



Figure 1119-G: Roofline changes shall be aligned with corresponding wall offsets and/or material or color changes.

(3) Flat Roofs

- A. When flat roofs are used, parapet walls with three-dimensional cornice treatments shall conceal them. The cornice shall include a perpendicular projection a minimum of eight inches from the parapet façade plane.
- B. Thin parapets that extend more than two feet above the roof and have a depth of less than two feet from the façade surface, are prohibited.

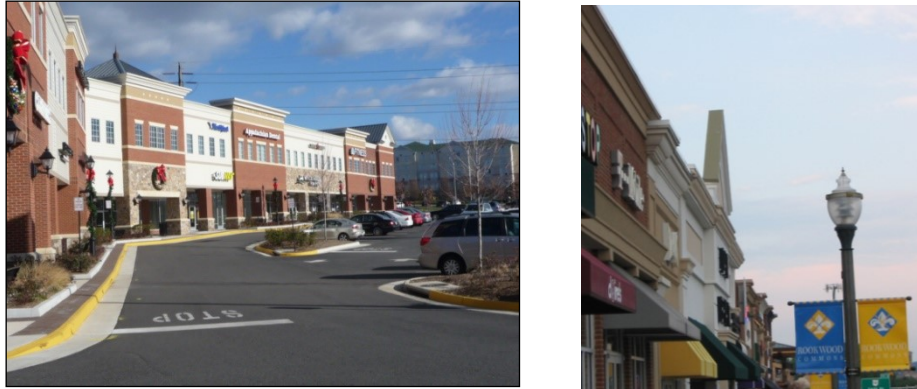


Figure 1119-H: Parapet walls with cornice treatments are used to disguise flat roofs. The image on the right illustrates a tall, thin parapet wall that is prohibited.

(4) Asymmetric or Dynamic Roofs

- A. Asymmetric or dynamic roof forms allude to motion, provide variety and flexibility in nonresidential building design, and allow for unique buildings.
- B. Asymmetric or dynamic roof forms shall be permitted on nonresidential buildings provided the criteria for flat roofs in Paragraph [1119.05\(d\)\(3\)](#), above, are met.
- C. Asymmetric or dynamic roof forms are prohibited in the C-4 district.



Figure 1119-I: Examples of dynamic or asymmetric roof lines

(e) Transparency

- (1) In the C-4 District, the primary façade (with customer entrances) or the front façade of all buildings shall include transparent doors or windows in an amount equal to 65 percent of the façade area on the first floor and 30 percent of the façade area of upper floors, with each floor of the façade being calculated separately.

- (2) In all other districts, the primary façade (with customer entrances) or the front facade of all buildings shall include transparent doors or windows in an amount equal to 25 percent of the facade area, which each floor of the façade being calculated separately.
- (3) A window or door shall be considered transparent when there is a completely unobstructed view of a building interior to a depth of no less than three feet. This shall not include any merchandise displayed within three feet of the window or any window sign, permitted in accordance with [Chapter 1127: Signage](#), provided that the window or door would be considered transparent prior to the erection of the display or sign.
- (4) Any part of the building, which is not the front façade, that is visible from a private right-of-way, parking area, or public circulation area shall have no more than 25 percent of the wall length, not to exceed 75 feet, of contiguous wall length devoid of windows, on any ground floor, unless the wall includes architectural features such as piers, columns, defined bays, or an undulation of the building so that a pedestrian scale, rhythm, and visual interest is created.

(f) Mechanical Equipment

- (1) Wall mounted mechanical, electrical, communication equipment, downspouts, gutters, service doors, and other building-mounted utility fixtures, shall be painted and maintained to match the building or be screened from view.
- (2) Mechanical equipment such as transformers and HVAC units shall not be located in front yards.
- (3) All mechanical equipment, including both ground-mounted and roof-mounted equipment, shall be screened from view from adjacent public and private rights-of-way, as well as from all property zoned or used for residential purposes.

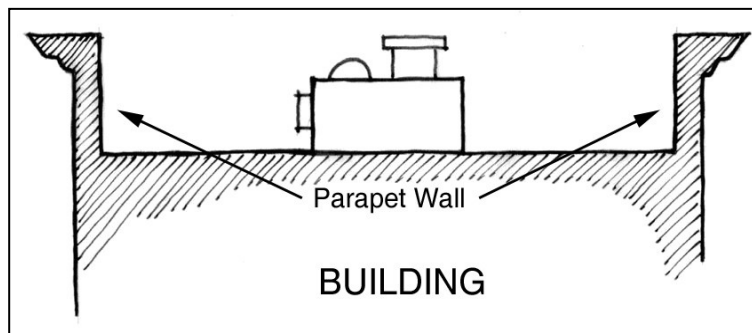


Figure 1119-J: Example of how parapet walls are utilized to screen roof mounted mechanical equipment.

- (4) Screening elements shall include walls (same material and color as principal structure), landscaping, mounds, parapets or enclosures constructed of the same materials used on the majority of the principal structure or any combination or as otherwise approved or required during development plan review (See Section [1105.07](#)).
- (5) The screening of mechanical equipment will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis based upon the following determinations:
 - i) Site location relative to adjacent properties and public rights-of-way;

- ii) Topography of the subject site relative to adjacent properties and public rights-of-way;
- iii) Whether the subject screening creates visual inconsistencies with surrounding areas; and
- iv) Whether the screening substantially meets the overall intent of these district architectural guidelines.

(6) Mechanical equipment is also subject to Section [1123.07](#).

(g) Planning Commission Waiver

The Planning Commission may waive portions of the above architectural standards for new construction in the C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4 Districts for any building that is not a designated Landmark or within a Landmark District, provided that the Planning Commission finds that:

- (1) The subject standard or requirement would not be compatible with nearby buildings in the same zoning district; or
- (2) The applicant proposes an alternative that complies with Section [1105.10](#).

1119.06 Preservation Standards for Landmarks and Landmark Districts

(a) Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a means for the designation and protection of Landmarks and Landmark Districts in the City of Wooster pursuant to the procedures and standards of this code in order to preserve, protect, and perpetuate places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects having a special historical, community, or aesthetic interest or value, all for the reasons described below:

- (1) To safeguard the heritage of the City by preserving sites and structures that reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, archeological, or architectural history;
- (2) To stabilize and improve property values;
- (3) To enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity and interest of the City;
- (4) To foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past;
- (5) To promote the use and preservation of historic and archeological sites and structures for the education and general welfare of the people of the City; and
- (6) To take necessary measures to safeguard the property rights of the owners whose property is declared to be a Landmark or is located in an area designated as a Landmark District.

(b) Designation of a Landmark or Landmark District

The City may, from time to time, consider the designation of structures, buildings, or places within the City as Landmarks or Landmark Districts through the procedure established in Section [1105.09](#).

(c) Certificate of Appropriateness Required

A certificate of appropriateness may be required for any construction, reconstruction, demolition, relocation, or other exterior alteration of a structure, building, or use as defined in Section [1105.08](#).

(d) Determining the Significance of a Structure

- (1)** When making decisions or recommendations about changes to Landmarks or structures in a Landmark District, the Design Review Board shall have the authority to make a determination of the historical significance of the structure based on this section.
- (2)** For structures that the Design Review Board finds are not historically significant, the board may relax or waive the standards or guidelines found in the City of Wooster Design Guidelines for Landmarks and Landmark Districts.
- (3)** If the Design Review Board finds that the structure is historically significant, the standards and guidelines of the design guidelines or this chapter may be fully applied at the discretion of the Design Review Board and as further described in the design guidelines or in this chapter.
- (4)** The Design Review Board shall determine whether a structure or site is significant based on the structure's:
 - A.** Value as a reminder of the cultural or archaeological heritage of the City, State, or nation;
 - B.** Location as a site of a significant local, state, or national event;
 - C.** Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the City, State, or nation;
 - D.** Identification as the work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual work has influenced the City, State, or nation;
 - E.** Value as a building that is recognized for the quality of its architecture and that it retains sufficient elements showing such architectural significance;
 - F.** Example of an architectural style or period;
 - G.** Contribution to the historical nature of the overall site; and/or
 - H.** Character as a contributing element in a Landmark District.

(e) Review Standards and Guidelines

- (1)** In addition to any applicable standards of the applicable zoning district or standards found in this chapter, any construction, modification, expansion, or other changes subject to a certificate of appropriateness review shall be subject to the applicable design standards and guidelines that are established in the City of Wooster Design Guidelines for Landmarks and Landmark Districts, as adopted by City Council. The manual shall hereafter be referred to as the design guidelines.
- (2)** The following design criteria shall apply to all buildings, site elements, structures and property designated as Landmarks or within a Landmark District:
 - A.** All construction, reconstruction, exterior alteration, demolition, or other exterior structure or site element change shall preserve the character, historical significance, and architectural style of the existing buildings, site elements, structures and property. Such changes shall be visually compatible with the subject structure, property and area, and a false sense of history shall not be created.
 - B.** Traditional building materials such as wood, brick, metal, or stone shall be used for construction, reconstruction, exterior alteration, or other exterior structure or site element change. Modern man-made materials may be utilized at the discretion of the Design Review Board if the proposed project keeps in character with the existing building, site, area structures, and design guidelines.

- C.** For new construction and additions, the structure's width, height, surrounding setbacks and style shall be considered in relationship to adjacent structures. This relationship between structures shall allow for consistency of style, size and density in each given neighborhood area.
- D.** Where possible, elements which can contribute to the quality of the pedestrian environment and other public amenities should be promoted. Included among these may be benches, water features, seating areas, arcades, awnings or canopies.
- E.** Signage shall be proportionally scaled and appropriately designed to coalesce with the subject building, site and area.

(f) Changes Not Prohibited

Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior architectural feature of any property which has been designated a Landmark or which is situated in a designated Landmark District, and which does not involve a change in design, material, or outer appearance thereof; nor to prevent any environmental or changes to the building that the Building Standards or Fire Divisions shall certify in writing is required by the public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.