

Town of White Springs Design Standards

Community Design

Community design is an important consideration in determining future land use and development. The form that development takes influences property values, investment potential, infrastructure, and the overall quality of life in a community. Good community design is based on some commonly accepted “rules” of physical form. Each community must establish its own baseline “rules” that address a wide range of design issues, from building and site design to streets and neighborhoods. In the Town and Villages, the following issues must be adequately addressed directly in the zoning code, either as part of district regulations or in the form of standalone design standards.

Context

Proposed development and redevelopment should be appropriately related to existing designs, styles, building forms and land uses. It is important that new development or redevelopment adequately retain, reflect and enhance the dominant visual qualities of the neighborhood or surrounding area.

By encouraging and promoting a sense of design continuity of design elements, details, styles and architectural features as well as other amenities, materials or treatments, the community will create buildings, signs, sites and public spaces that are context sensitive.

Purpose of the Design Standards

The Town’s vision for the area is to create a community that gives identity to White Springs and the people who live here. We envision a traditional downtown – a walkable downtown with an attractive compatible architecture – a downtown that accommodates citizens and visitors with a place for family oriented activities.

The standards have the following objectives:

- Raise public awareness of the importance of local architectural character.
- Increase the appeal of a building’s façade and neighborhood presence.
- Create design that is pedestrian friendly in the downtown area.
- Stress the importance of how buildings can work together to create an attractive theme or identity.
- Create a well designed environment that can increase property values and improve safety.

Creativity

In order not to stifle creativity, the guidelines are not meant to be overly specific, dictate certain designs, or encourage the copying or mimicking of particular historic style(s). Rather, they are intended to allow for the recognition of individual taste and promote design creativity. This is accomplished through a framework which allows architectural freedom and interpretation while ensuring the compatibility of the new structure with its historic surroundings.

The Design Review Process

To ensure compliance and ease the process, all applicants are required to present a conceptual plan before the Planning and Zoning Board prior to the submission of a Site Development Plan. Because of the significance of new construction and its impact on the character of the town, a Certificate of Review will be awarded by the Planning and Zoning Board for all new construction projects.

With these thoughts in mind, regardless of whether the new building is residential or mercantile, there are certain design elements which must be taken into account to ensure consistency and compatibility within the entrance corridors of the town. Broadly, these elements are:

- Building types
- Setbacks
- Spacing
- Facade orientation
- Height, width, and scale
- Directional expression
- Complexity of form
- Roof form and materials
- Foundations
- Doors and windows
- Porches and balconies
- Storefronts
- Cornices
- Materials, texture, and color
- Architectural detail, and decoration
- Residential driveways and walkways
- Parking areas
- Landscaping
- Fences and walls

Site Planning

How buildings, parking, landscaping, lighting, infrastructure and other site features are configured on a lot will have a tremendous impact on the development's appearance and performance. The scale and location of new buildings should be consistent in scale with nearby buildings and the context of the surrounding area. Building orientation should be aligned with the primary roadway it faces and entrances should be easily visible from the roadway.

Parking should be placed at the side or rear of the lot and screened from view whenever possible.

Limit the amount of paved surfaces to what is needed on site and look for opportunities for shared parking, shared access and cross access between lots. Corner lot development should be located as close to the intersection as possible to anchor the lot and maximize visibility. Corner buildings face two streets and should be oriented accordingly.

Provide pedestrian linkages from building entrances to nearby roadways, parking areas and adjacent pedestrian systems, to the greatest extent possible.

Form, Scale and Massing

Place a majority of the building mass as close to the road as possible to help define the street edge. In the Town, along commercial corridors, where appropriate and/or achievable, a zero setback should be required to maintain traditional development pattern.

High-access, public functions (e.g. entryways, public art, displays) should be located prominently at the front of buildings, with less public uses (e.g., storage, loading, drive-throughs) located to the side or rear of buildings.

Facades walls should maintain ample transparency (windows and doors) to allow views into and out from the building. Blank façade walls should be prohibited. For larger commercial structures, building entries should be treated with different massing to enhance humanscaled appearance and improve visibility from many directions. Blank end walls should incorporate building components or design features. Blank rear walls should be screened with landscaping.

Landscaping

Provide onsite landscaping at the building edge, parcel edge and throughout the site to provide physical and visual relief. Landscaping should be utilized, to the greatest extent possible, to reinforce street edge lines and establish buffers between adjacent development, especially where uses vary.

Landscaped islands and other green space should be consolidated into useful areas. Avoid narrow grass or planting strips, which can fail over time. Landscaped islands should be utilized in larger surface parking lots to counterbalance environmental impacts of pavement, improve appearance and help define vehicular and pedestrian circulation.

Street trees, planted in the right-of-way or along parcel edges, should be encouraged everywhere in the town and villages. They are a relatively inexpensive streetscaping element that increases the appearance and value of commercial, residential and industrial development.

Streets

Across all development types, a pedestrian-oriented and human-scaled streetscape should be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

In areas where sidewalks currently exist or may be desired, pedestrian connections should be maintained and/or expanded. Promote safe pedestrian movement, access and circulation. Public walking areas, including streets, sidewalks and public rights-of-way should be highly visible and clearly defined.

Street lighting should be scaled for comfort of pedestrians but provide adequate illumination for safety. Street lighting design should reflect the architectural vernacular of the surrounding area whenever possible. In the Town, historic decorative street lights would be appropriate. Traffic calming techniques should be used where appropriate throughout the street system, such as curb bulb-outs, street trees, and raised crosswalks. These types of physical design measures reduce the negative impacts of vehicular use, modify driver behavior and improve conditions for non-motorized street users.

Materials and Details

Attractive, durable materials affect the quality of the physical environment and the public's perception of the area and community. They instill pride and convey that people care about the area. Inexpensive building envelope materials deteriorate quickly and convey an unfavorable image. The use of smaller scale, natural materials such as stone or brick is encouraged whenever possible, especially on the front façade and near pedestrian areas. The table below is intended as a general guide to the materials most and least appropriate for use within the Town's commercial areas.

The Town should actively promote preservation of historic buildings to enhance and promote the history, culture and architecture. For historically significant structures, replacement windows in elevations visible from any public right-of-way should match the original windows in size, materials, and configuration to the greatest extent possible.

Protect, respect, and expand the design of green space, landscaping and open space within the Town and encourage public and private development that enhances this character with landscape design details such as trees, lawns, plantings, fountains and public gathering areas.

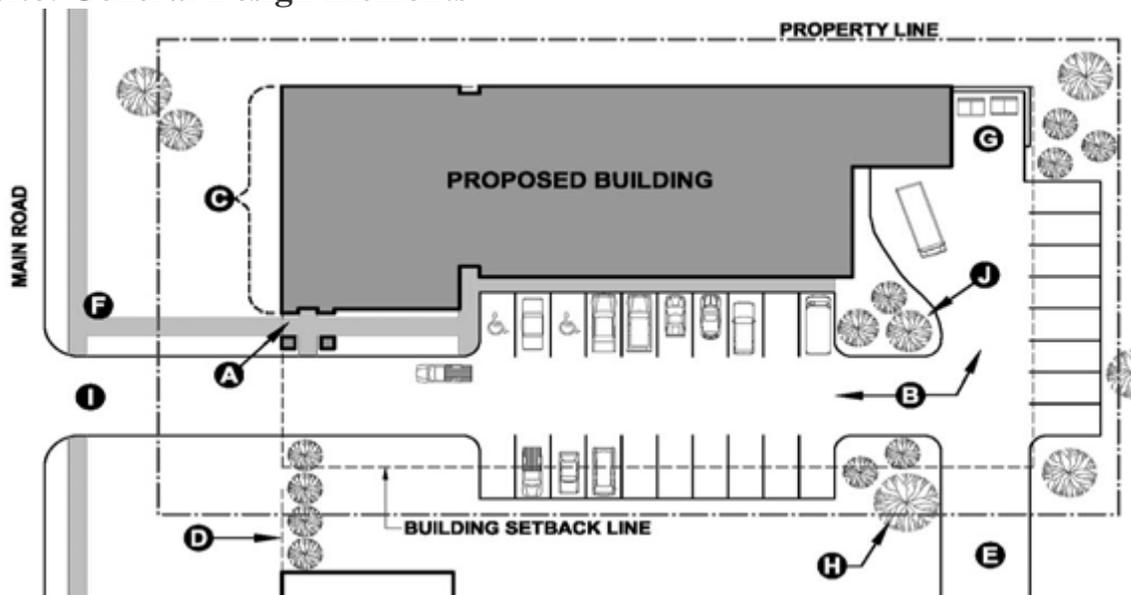
DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS GUIDE

ELEMENT	RECOMENDED	AVOID
Walkways	Concrete Stamped concrete Pavers Gravel	Asphalt
Facade	Common brick Stone veneer Stucco Ground face concrete block Split face concrete block Cement fiber siding Cedar clapboard or shingles	Standard gray concrete block (unless façade is similar to area buildings) Vinyl siding EIFS (exterior insulation finish systems) Metal siding Imitation (Cultured) stone
Trim	Painted or stained finish grade wood Cement fiber panels Rough lumber	Bare wood
Accessories	Aluminum Traditional style opaque awnings	Preservative treated lumber Internally illuminated vinyl awnings

Commercial Design Considerations

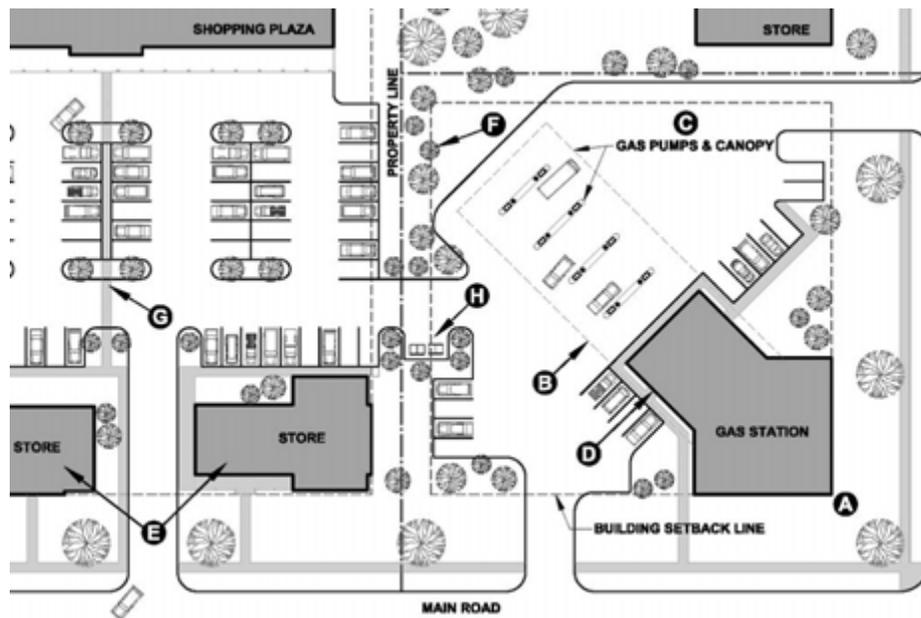
As one of the community's most visible areas, commercial development requires considerable focus on design in order to ensure it adds value and contributes positively to a community's sense of place. The following diagrams have been incorporated into the plan to demonstrate several different community design elements presented in this section:

Site: General Design Elements



- A. Prominent building entrance is visible from the street and is easily accessed from parking and public sidewalk. A better design would include an entrance facing the street. In the villages, building entrances should always face the street.
- B. Parking is located at rear and side of building and is screened from abutting homes.
- C. Prominent façade with large windows faces street.
- D. Street edge is defined by building and landscaping.
- E. Parking connects to adjacent property.
- F. Sidewalk across street frontage with connection to building entry.
- G. Loading docks, service areas and trash facilities are not visible from the street. Fences and or landscaping screen these areas from abutting properties.
- H. Mature existing trees are saved and incorporated into site design.
- I. A single driveway serves property.
- J. The parking lot has a simple efficient design that minimizes the amount of pavement required. Landscaped areas are large enough to allow plantings to thrive and have a visual impact.

Site: Defining Street Edges and Incorporating Landscaping Features:



A. Corner lots are especially important in defining the street. Corner buildings should be designed to locate building mass as close to the intersection as possible to help anchor the lot. Two facades, each incorporating large areas of glass, give corner businesses excellent exposure.

B. Gasoline filling canopies incorporated into the architectural design of the adjacent retail store.

C. The preferred way to lay out a gas station is to place the pumps toward the rear of the lot while having the convenience store out in front near the street. This gives the store greater visibility, reduces the prominence of the pumps and parked cars and pulls the curb-cuts away from the intersection permitting safer, easier access.

D. Store entrance is conveniently accessible and visible from the pump, parking and street.

E. In many cases shopping plaza parking areas are oversized. Existing shopping plazas set back far from the street can be improved by developing the land at the front of their lot.

This helps to improve the character and visual quality of the street and allows for “onestop” shopping using shared parking.

F. Screen large parking areas from abutting residential properties and streets.

G. Large parking areas incorporate landscape islands and sidewalks to reduce the apparent expanse of asphalt and to create a safer more comfortable pedestrian environment.

H. To use space efficiently, adjoining properties share a common dumpster and have interconnected parking areas.

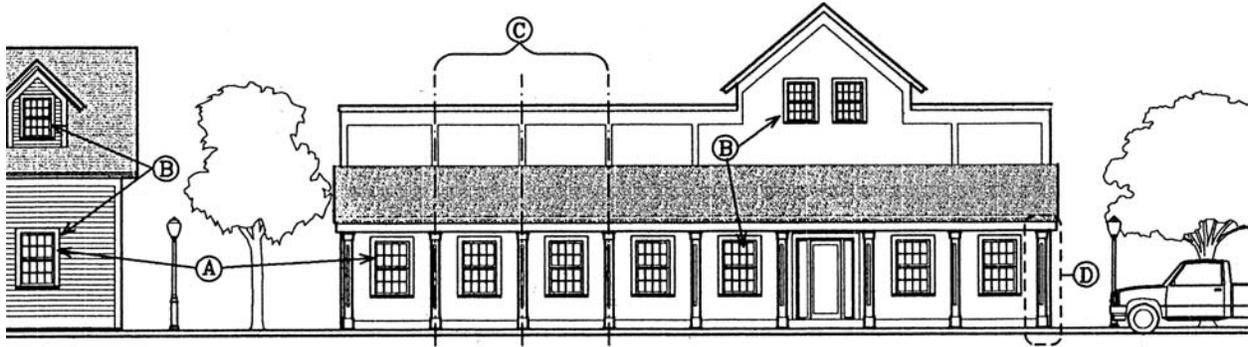
Building Design: Facades, Scale, and Massing:



- A. Place the largest mass of the building near the street. The building's most public functions such as retail space, showrooms, and dining areas should be located toward the street.
- B. Loading, warehouse spaces and utilitarian functions are hidden from view in the rear.
- C. The front façade is articulated into smaller divisions to give it a human scale.
- D. Many large windows create transparency at the main façade facing the street. They also make the building appear interesting and inviting.
- E. Garage Doors and Utility entrance are located at the rear and sides of building.
- F. The primary entrance is treated as a prominent architectural feature and provides visitors with protection from the weather.
- G. Large "big-box" mass in rear is screened by human scale wing at street.
- H. Large blank walls may be broken up with pilasters or other features.

Building Proportions

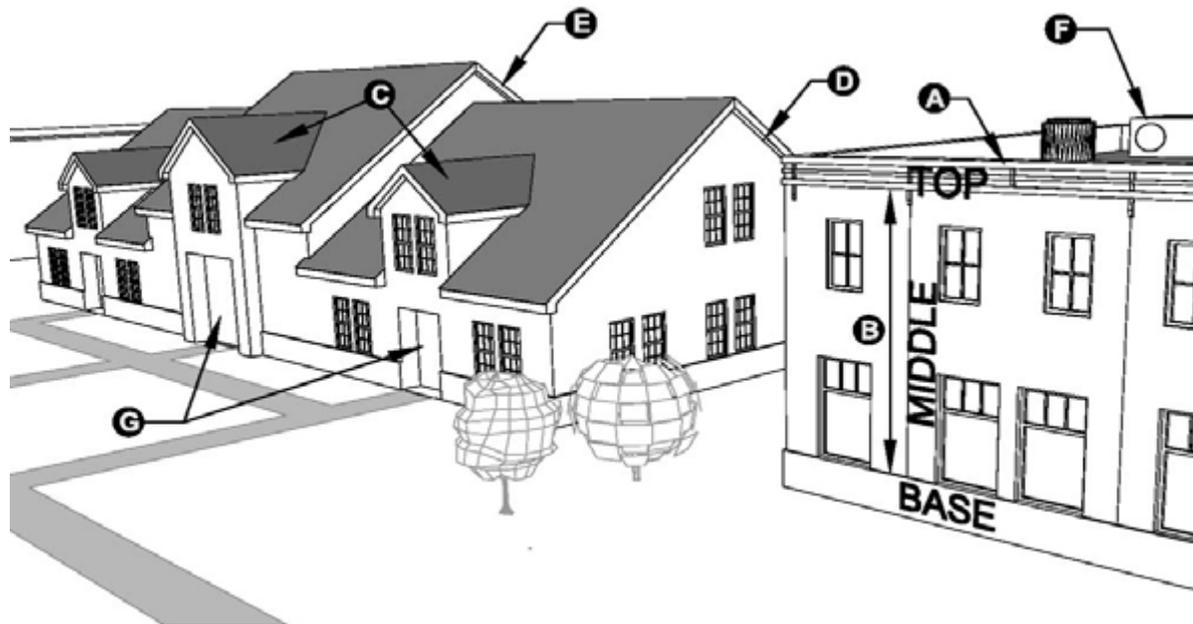
Building Proportion deals with the relative shape of a building and its parts with regard to width and height, usually understood as a ratio such as “1:2”. For example, a window which is four times as tall as it is wide would have a ratio of “1:4”, which is generally vertical in proportion.



Taking cues from your neighbor. Although these buildings look very different from each other, they can share similarly proportioned elements to help tie them together visually.

1. The proportion of design elements, such as windows and bays, should be in keeping with the proportions of adjacent structures. The buildings shown in Figure 6 have windows which are the same relative proportion to each other. (A)
2. The relative proportions of design elements in a structure are most successful when kept consistent throughout the design, creating a coherent overall picture. The buildings shown in Figure 6 have both large and small windows which are generally the same proportion to each other. (B)
3. Vertical proportioning systems used throughout a design can help a building appear taller than it really is and are recommended because they have a nice relationship to human proportions. The vertically proportioned “bays” are represented by the porch columns and the design elements above them. (C)
4. The proportion of structural elements such as posts or columns must express their strength and not appear too spindly for the weight they carry. (D)

Building Design: Roof Forms and Massing



A. The highest section of the building should be oriented toward the street. The cornice is the transition between the wall and the roof. The cornice should reflect the scale of the building and should not be overly large, bold, or “inflated” to accommodate a giant logo or sign lettering. Flat-roof structures should be simply articulated to express their form rather than concealed by a mansard roof, large cantilevered soffit or other applied form.

B. Traditional articulation of the base, middle and top of facades is encouraged.

C. Sloped roofs, projecting gables, dormers and other variations in roof forms break down the scale of larger structures.

D. Roof overhangs from 6 inches to 18 inches are typical of our region’s vernacular architecture and lend shadows and visual interest to facades.

E. Variations in roof height may be used to highlight the main entrance or the most important part of a building.

F. Air handling units, condensers, satellite dishes and other equipment placed on the roof should not be visible from the street.

G. The roof should be designed to divert rain and snow away from pedestrian areas such as walkways and building entrances. The use of porches, loggias, canopies, awnings or similar protective designs are encouraged.

Guidelines for Signs

Historically, signs used in White Springs were relatively simple. They varied in size and location, but most were basic painted panels with simple lettering styles. Others were painted directly on the building wall. If it was illuminated, an indirect light source was typical. These features of sign design should be continued. To do so, the Town seeks to limit the size and number of signs so that no single sign dominates the setting, but, rather, the district reads as a distinct neighborhood.

Sign Context

A sign typically serves two functions: first, to attract attention, and second to convey information. If it is well designed, the building front alone can serve the attention-getting function, allowing the sign to be focused on conveying information in a well conceived manner. All new signs should be developed with the overall context of the building and of the district in mind.

Consider the building front as part of an overall sign program.

- Coordinate the overall facade composition, including ornamental details and signs.
- Signs should be in proportion to the building, such that they do not dominate the appearance.
- Develop a master sign plan for the entire building front, which should be used to guide individual sign design decisions.

A sign must be subordinate to the overall building composition.

A sign shall appear to be in scale with the facade. Locate a sign on a building such that it will emphasize design elements of the facade itself. In no case should a sign obscure architectural details or features. Mount signs to fit within existing architectural features. Use signs to help reinforce the horizontal lines of moldings and transoms seen along the street.

Permitted Sign Types

Flush-mounted wall signs may be considered.

A flush-mounted wall sign is one that is mounted flat to the wall. When feasible, place a wall sign such that it aligns with others on the block. When planning a wall sign, determine if decorative moldings exist that could define a “sign panel.” If so, locate flush-mounted signs such that they fit within panels formed by moldings or transom panels on the facade. In no case should a sign obscure significant facade features.

A pole mounted or monument sign may be considered

No pole mounted or monument sign should have an effective area greater than thirty-two square feet. No pole mounted sign should exceed fifteen feet in height.

Projecting signs may be considered.

- A projecting sign should be located near the business entrance at, or slightly above, eye level, just above the door or to the side of it.
- Note that other approvals may be required to allow a sign to overhang the public right-of-way.

A window sign may be considered.

- A window sign may be painted on a window.
- A window sign may cover approximately twenty-five percent (25%) of the total window area.

A directory sign may be considered.

- Where several businesses share a building, coordinate the signs. Align several smaller signs, or group them into a single panel as a directory to make them easier to locate.
Use similar forms or backgrounds for the signs to tie them together visually and make them easier to read.

Signs that are inappropriate:

Any sign that visually overpowers the building or obscures significant architectural features is inappropriate.

No sign or part of a sign may move, rotate, flash or change its brightness.

Sign Materials**Sign materials shall be compatible with that of the building facade.**

Painted wood and metal are appropriate materials for signs. Their use is encouraged. Highly reflective materials that will be difficult to read are inappropriate. Painted signs on blank walls were common historically and may be considered.

Sign Content**Symbol signs are encouraged.**

Symbol signs add interest to the street, are quickly read and are remembered better than written words.

Use colors for the sign that are compatible with those of the building front.**Simple sign designs are preferred.**

Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the area historically are encouraged. Avoid sign types that appear too contemporary. Also limit the number of colors used on a sign. In general, no more than three colors should be used.

Select letter styles and sizes that will be compatible with the front of the building.

Letters should not exceed ten inches in height.

Avoid hard-to-read or overly intricate typeface styles.

Preserve historic painted signs where they exist.

Sign Lighting

One should be able to perceive the character of individual buildings and of the district as a whole during both day and night. Sign lighting should be within character of the building.

The light for a sign shall originate from an indirect source.

- Light shall be directed at the sign from an external, shielded lamp. Internal illumination of a sign is discouraged.
- No sign should be illuminated by fluorescent or backlighting.
- A warm light, similar to daylight, is appropriate.

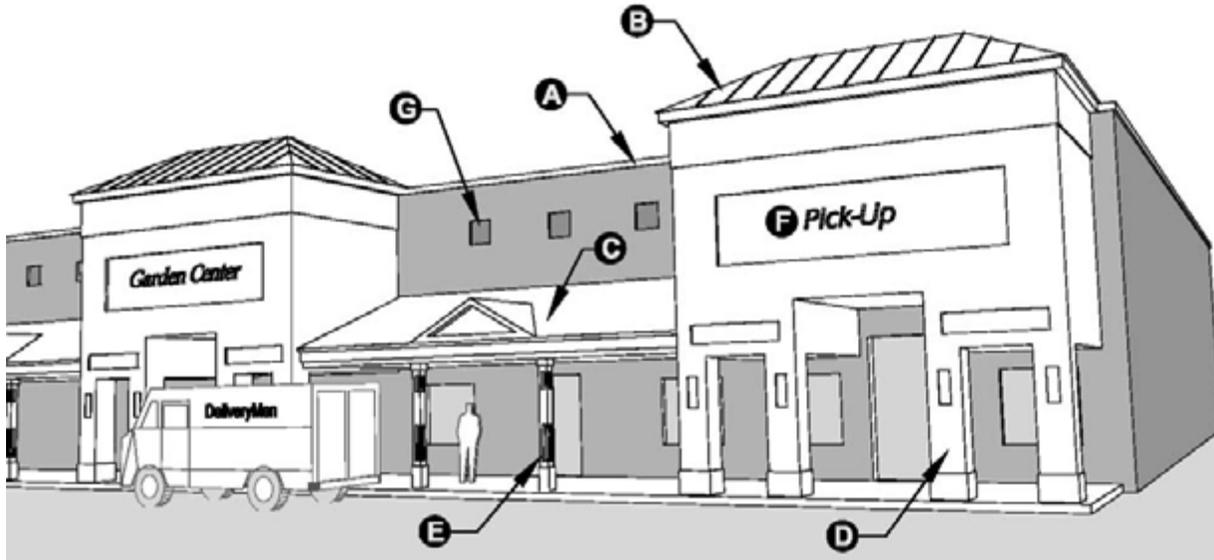
The use of neon and/or incandescent bulbs may be considered.

- Use neon in limited amounts so it does not become visually obtrusive.

Lighting

1. Exterior lighting must be between 100 – 150 watts
2. Lighting used for landscaping and signs must be kept to comfortable levels (0.5 to 1.0 foot-candles) Higher levels of lighting (2-5 foot-candles) are only needed in areas of high security.
3. Lighting of signage must be indirect.
4. Lighting of signage must be concealed and directed in such a way as to not allow light to be visible directly from the street, sidewalk, or other public way. Neon signs are allowed for window signage only when mounted on the interior side of the glass.
5. Lighting used for landscaping and signs must include full shielding that eliminates glare with no light projected above the horizontal level into the sky. The light from such fixtures must not spill over onto adjoining properties. The surface of any bare, exposed bulbs must not be readily visible.
6. Lighting for signs must be top mounted fixtures which project downward only onto the sign surface itself. Internally lit signs are not allowed.
7. Freestanding lamp posts must only be as tall as necessary. Parking lot lights must be between 15 – 20 feet tall maximum. Street sidewalk lights should be between 10 - 15 feet high maximum.
8. Walkway lights must not be taller than 3 feet. Lighting fixtures must complement those of adjacent properties.
9. Exterior gas station canopy lights must be recessed within their housing so as to focus their illumination directly downward. Lamp styles which allow the canopy lights to illuminate the surroundings beyond the pumping area are not allowed.

Building Design: Improving the “Big Box”



A. The typical big box is usually a featureless mass articulated only by the point of entry and would not have most of the architectural features depicted in the other sections of the concept.

B. Roofline variations and massing projections can be used to reduce the apparent scale of the building and make the façade more interesting. These features may highlight specialty areas, exits, or customer pick-up zones. The size, scale, motif and use of materials for the front façade design should be kept consistent across the façade in order to tie the entire composition together. The use of a variety of design styles across the façade is not recommended.

C. A single-story porch provides a human-scale entrance and visually breaks down the building mass.

D. Piers and posts should be visually proportional to the mass they support.

E. Small scale materials, variations in color and greater detail make entrance areas inviting and easy to find.

F. Appropriately scaled signs are incorporated into the design of the façade.

G. Use repeating windows or recessed panels of contrasting color or texture rather than horizontal stripes to add façade interest.