

Division 6. Design Review Standards

Section 5-601. Purpose and applicability.

A. The purpose of these design review standards is to:

1. Provide standards and criteria for review of applications for development approval within the City;
2. Promote innovative design with regard to the aesthetics, architectural design, appearances, safety, and function of the built environment in relation to the site, adjacent structure and surrounding community;
3. Promote orderly and harmonious development of the City;
4. Enhance the desirability of residences or investment in the City;
5. Encourage the attainment of the most desirable use of land and improvements;
6. Enhance the desirability of living conditions upon the immediate site or in adjacent areas;
7. Promote visual environments which are of high aesthetic quality and variety and which, at the same time, are considerate of each other;
8. Establish identity, diversity and focus to promote a pedestrian friendly environment; and
9. Encourage the utilization of a variety of architectural attributes and street level amenities to create a sense of place, including the spatial relationship of buildings and the characteristics created to ensure attractive and functional areas.

B. The standards in this Division shall be applicable to applications for development approval within all zoning districts, except as otherwise provided herein.

Section 5-602. Design review standards.

A. The Board of Architects shall determine if an application satisfies the following design review standards:

1. Whether the color, design, finishes, fenestration, texture, selection of architectural elements of exterior surfaces of the structure are compatible and the relationships of these items in comparison to building base, middle and top with the hierarchy of importance being the base, top and middle.
2. Whether the planning and siting of the various function and structures on-site provides the following:
 - a. Creates an intrinsic sense of order between buildings, streets and pedestrian movements and activities.
 - b. Provides a desirable environment for occupants, visitors and the general community.
3. Whether adjacent existing historic features, natural features and street level pedestrian view corridors are appropriately integrated or otherwise protected.
4. Whether the amount and arrangement of open/green space [including urban open space (i.e. plazas) or unimproved areas (i.e. open lawns, etc.)] are appropriate to the design,

function and location in relationship to the function of the structures and surrounding properties.

5. Whether sufficient buffering (including hard and softscape) is provided when non-compatible uses abut or adjoin one another.
 6. Whether the proposed lighting provides for the safe movement of persons and vehicles, provides security, and minimizes glare and reflection on adjacent properties.
 7. Whether access to the property and circulation is safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, and is designed to interfere as little as possible with traffic flow on these roads and to permit vehicles a prompt and safe ingress/egress to the site.
 8. Whether waste disposal facilities adversely affect adjacent properties.
 9. Whether the application provides improvements, public open space, pedestrian amenities which benefit the public.
 10. Whether the proposed application is in conformity with provisions of this Division.
- B. In applying the standards set forth in Section 5-602(A) above, the Board of Architects shall review each of the following items of an application:

1. Aesthetics.

2. Architectural compatibility with neighboring properties and uses.

3. Architecture.

4. Building and building components including, but not limited to:
 - a. Accessory structures including garages, sheds, utility facilities and waste receptacles;
 - b. Arcades, loggias, porte coheres, passages and similar covered areas;
 - c. Building appendages including but not limited to the following: balconies, penthouses, loading docks, awnings, louvers, or any visible devices for deflecting, filtering or shielding the structure or interior from the elements, flues, chimneys, exhaust fans, air-conditioning equipment, elevator equipment, fans, cooling towers, antennae or similar structures placed upon the roof or the exterior of the building;
 - d. Building entrances/exits for pedestrians and vehicles;
 - e. Building height;
 - f. Building materials, texture, fenestration and surfaces;
 - g. Building openings;
 - h. Building scale and mass;
 - i. Building façade step-backs;
 - j. Building rooflines;
 - k. Design;

- I. Lighting;
- m. Parking and paved surfaces;
- n. Signage;
- o. Stairs, ramps, escalators, moving sidewalks, elevators or downspouts on the exterior buildings; and
- p. Window coverage, casings/depth and proportion.

5. Colors.

- C. If the Board finds that an application is not consistent with the above standards, the Board of Architects may require changes of an application and its specifications to promote and maintain the purpose of these standards.

Section 5-603. Architectural style.

- A. Except as provided for in Section 5-603(I) all buildings hereinafter constructed or reconstructed, shall be designed in a specific architectural style such as but not limited to Colonial, Venetian, Mediterranean, Italian, French, Bahamian or other identifiable architectural style. All buildings hereinafter altered or added to shall conform to the architectural design of the existing building provided, however, that if the architectural style of the building is being altered then the building shall be designed in a specific architectural style such as but not limited to Colonial, Venetian, Mediterranean, Italian, French, Bahamian or other identifiable architectural style. The Architect shall include a page or pages in the plan which defines the architectural style with text and photographs and provide a statement on how the proposed building complies with the style. It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Board of Architects to determine in each and every case whether or not the submitted plans comply with the type and scale of architecture set forth hereinabove and require from the designing architect such changes as would bring the design into conformity. The Board of Architects shall require such changes in the design of the structure so as to preserve traditional aesthetic treatments and promote design excellence in the community. In considering the design of the building, the Board of Architects shall consider and render a decision as to the adequacy of the following elements in the design concept.

1. Awnings and canopies.

2. Colors.

3. Decorative lighting (height, location and style).

4. Doors.

5. Height of building.

6. Impact on adjacent properties of continuous two (2) story walls that are in excess of forty (40%) percent of the site depth.

7. Location of exposed piping, conduits and rainwater leaders.

8. Location of structure on site.

9. Planters.

10. Roofs including materials, color, slope and overhang.

11. Shutters.

12. Site circulation in regard to pedestrian travel, parking, services, grades and landscaping.

13. Texture of surface.

14. Trim.

15. Walls, height, location, materials, and design.

16. Window boxes.

17. Windows (Fenestration).

- B. The architectural style for a given location, unless specified to the contrary, shall be in harmony with the architecture of its particular neighborhood. The Board of Architects shall review a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure that is to be constructed in context within an area that includes both sides of the street, on the block where it is located and surrounding properties. The Board of Architects shall require that photographs of both sides of the street, on the block where a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure is to be constructed and surrounding properties, is submitted for their review.
- C. The architectural context of an area includes the height, scale, massing, separation between buildings, and style, in regard to how buildings and structures relate to each other within a specified area. Architectural context allows for differences in height, scale, massing, and separation between building and style, when such differences contribute to the overall harmony and character of the area. The Board of Architects shall not take into consideration existing buildings and structures that are out of context with the area when considering whether a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure is in context with both sides of the street on the block where it is located and surrounding properties. The Board of Architects shall review the building or structure in the context of that area in which the site is located when a new building or structure or a substantial addition to an existing building or structure is located on a building site that is on the border of two areas that have different character or context.
- D. Additions and alterations to buildings, which have been designated by the provisions within the Zoning Ordinance as an Historic Landmark, shall conform to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards.
- E. Duplication of elevations and/or exterior architectural design. No duplication of elevations and/or exterior architectural design or any similar designs as to massing, scale, and architectural features shall be permitted in any residential area. It is the intent of this section that the design of single-family residences be a unique and original design and that the design or similarly designed single-family residences not be repeated within the residential neighborhoods of the City. This section does not prohibit repetitive styles of architecture in the residential neighborhoods of the City, just a repetitiveness of design. Architects submitting plans for consideration by the Board of Architects shall, as part of said plan, and as a prerequisite to approval thereof, sign a certificate reading as follows:

"To the best of my knowledge and belief, the within plans and specifications do not duplicate the elevations and/or exterior architectural design or are similar in design as to the massing, scale, and architectural features of any buildings in the residential area of the City of Coral Gables,

previously submitted by me or by my office. Furthermore, that to the best of my knowledge and belief these plans and specifications are a unique and original design and not a duplication of elevations and/or exterior architectural design or similar design as to the massing, scale, and architectural features of any building constructed, or for which a permit has been issued, in the City of Coral Gables; I further certify that I am fully familiar with the ordinance and regulations under which this certificate is required. (Seal)”

F. Architects who have been found by the Code Enforcement Board to have violated the provisions of this section shall be reported to the State of Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation for disciplinary action, in addition to the other penalties provided by this Code.

G. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply, however, in the following cases:

1. In the units of a single-housing project, which shall be deemed and which hereby is defined as not more than three (3) multiple family units constructed on a lot or on contiguous lots so as to be an architectural entity; and
2. To the interior design or floor plan of any structure.

H. Specific standards. The owner shall require that his plans be designed in such a manner as to enhance the overall architectural character of the city, neighborhood and street. All new buildings, alterations, additions or changes to the facade in any nature shall conform to the following regulations:

1. Marked stucco to simulate shutters, flanking window openings and indiscriminate use of stucco scoring or cut lines, unless they perform a function in the design, shall not be permitted.
2. Where particular treatment such as scoring, slump brick or other architectural motifs is employed, these shall return on the abutting elevation.
3. Excessive use of slump or other brick shall not be permitted.
4. Where wood or metal columns are used, the same shall be well proportioned.
5. Shutters shall be architecturally designed to enhance the structure and all tracts and housings shall be concealed from view to the maximum extent practicable when not in use.
 - a. Plans for all new construction shall incorporate or make provisions for hurricane shutters.
 - b. Storm panels with removable horizontal tracks shall be permitted on all structures without Board of Architects review and approval.
 - c. The Board of Architects may approve a hurricane shutter type or system for multi-unit buildings (residential and commercial) as a whole, thereby allowing individual owners or tenants to install pre-approved hurricane shutters without additional Board of Architects review and approval.
 - d. No shutter shall be placed on a structure so that it will alter or conceal architectural features or details of a structure.
 - e. Shutters shall not be installed in such a way as to prevent the intended or normal operation of any window or door.

- f. In every area of a structure required by the Florida Building Code to have egress, there shall be at least one (1) manually operable (non-electric) method of egress when completely enclosed by hurricane shutters.
 6. Rooftop equipment such as that used in air conditioning and any other type of mechanical or service equipment shall be screened from view, as required by Article 5, Division 17.
 7. Air-cooled condensing and/or compressors equipment, water-cooling towers and any other type of mechanical equipment or apparatus installed on or attached to a premises shall be screened from view from the street, waterway, bay or golf course by a wall and landscaping.
 8. Exposed concrete or masonry block shall not be permitted. With the exception of slump, red or other brick, crab orchard or other stone and architecturally formed and detailed concrete, all masonry surfaces shall be stuccoed.
 9. If metal garage doors are used, they shall be painted in accordance with the palette of colors approved by the Board of Architects and on file with the Building and Zoning Department.
 10. No exposed air-conditioning ductwork or exposed solar tanks shall be permitted.
 11. The approval, materials, slope, construction, location and design of awnings and canopies shall be as set forth under Article 5, Division 3.
- I. Architectural type, specific locations. The type of architecture for specific locations in the City shall be as follows:
1. In the Industrial Section, MacFarlane Homestead, and Golden Gate Subdivision, any architectural style shall be permitted as shall be approved by the Board of Architects as being harmonious with the immediate neighborhood.
 2. Where otherwise required by the terms of existing restrictions in deeds conveying lots or lands, or as specifically provided for therein.
 3. In Commercial and Industrial Districts, such types of architecture shall be permitted as shall be approved by the Board of Architects as being harmonious with the immediate neighborhood.