

## **ARTICLE 27**

# **BUILDING FORM AND COMPOSITION**

### **SECTION 27.01. Preamble**

The Building Form and Composition standards are hereby established to provide regulation in the shape, placement, design, and quality of the built environment (building design, placement, and composition) as they are important elements in reinforcing a comfortable, human-scale environment, maintaining the Township’s attractiveness and economic vitality, and providing a unique sense of place in Commerce Township. This Article is not intended to supersede or supplant established building and fire code regulations, nor to regulate the quality, durability, maintenance, performance, load capacity, or fire resistance characteristics or workmanship of buildings and materials. Accordingly, it is the purpose of this Article to:

- A. Maintain the visual environment of the Township, protect the general welfare, and ensure that the Township’s property values, appearance, character, and economic well-being are preserved through design and appearance standards.
- B. Encourage creativity, imagination, innovation, and variety in architectural design and building composition.
- C. Preserve the unique heritage, history, and architectural character of existing buildings in all Districts as these buildings are proposed, renovated, re-used, and as changes and improvements are made.
- D. Reinforce and support a healthy, pedestrian-oriented development pattern in all Districts through facade transparency requirements, complementary and appropriate use of scale, massing, and architectural details.
- E. Standards for the use of exterior building facade materials are established in this Ordinance for the purposes of promoting harmony in the context of physical relationships and scale between buildings, yet encourage originality and uniqueness in design.

### **SECTION 27.02. Non-Residential Districts**

The provisions of this Section shall apply to all planned buildings and all alterations, renovations, expansions or other work that includes exterior changes to existing buildings subject to review per Article 35 (Site Plan Review) in the following zoning districts:

**B-1 – Local Business District**

**B-2 – Community Business District**

**B-3 – General Business District.**

**CV – Commerce Village District**

**TC – Town Center District**

**O – Office District**

**TLM – Technology and Light Manufacturing**

**HF – Hospital Facilities District**

**URL – Union Lake Road Overlay District**

## **A. General Requirements**

Building construction, alterations, renovations and expansions, and other work subject to the provisions of this Article shall comply with the following general requirements:

### **1. Architectural Standards**

Decorative and functional architectural features, details and ornamentation (such as arches, colonnades, columns, pilasters, detailed trim, brick bands, contrasting courses of material, cornices or porches) shall be incorporated into all building facades at a scale appropriate to the size and bulk of the building, as determined by the Planning Commission.

- a. **Side and rear façade.** All sides of a building shall be complementary in design, details, and materials. Where a side or rear facade is visible from a public road or backs up to a residential district, or if parking is located at the side or rear of a building, the facade shall include windows, building materials, and architectural features similar to those present on the front facade of the building (see illustration).
- b. **Façade variation.** Building façade walls exceeding 100 feet in length shall be subdivided into bays, through the location and arrangement of architectural features and design variations, to provide a changing and varying facade appearance. Such features and design elements may include, but are not limited to the following (see illustration):
  - i. Projections, bays or recesses, not exceeding ten (10) feet in depth.
  - ii. Enhanced ornamentation and architectural detailing.
  - iii. Variations in building height or window patterns.
  - iv. Distinctively shaped roof forms, detailed parapets, and cornice lines.

### **2. Public Entrances**

Public entrances shall be emphasized with framing devices, such as, peaked roof

forms, porches, overhangs, archways, larger door openings, display windows, accent colors, tile, moldings, pedestrian-scale lighting, and similar devices.

**3. Roof Design**

Roof-top mechanical equipment, HVAC systems, exhaust pipes or stacks, elevator housings, satellite dishes and other devices and equipment shall be screened from public rights-of-way and adjacent uses by a parapet wall or similar device extending around all sides of the building (see illustration).

Pitched and shingled roof forms with overhanging eaves shall be incorporated into a new building design where determined necessary by the Planning Commission in accordance with the purpose of this Article.

**4. Security and Safety Equipment**

Exterior security gates or roll-down security doors shall be prohibited. Link or grill type security devices shall be permitted only if installed on the interior of the building, within the window or door frames. Such security equipment shall be recessed and completely concealed during regular business hours, and shall be predominantly transparent to allow maximum visibility of the interior.

Fire escapes shall not be permitted on a building's front facade, except where the Fire Marshall determines that no other option is available to provide the required means of egress.

**B. Standards for Exterior Facade Materials**

All building construction, alteration, renovation, and other development activity subject to the provisions of this Section shall conform to the following standards for exterior building facade materials. Each building façade shall conform to these standards independently of other facades.

Building Materials		Maximum Permitted Facade Coverage (percentage)		
		B-1 CV	B-2 TC O TLM ULR <sup>5</sup>	B-3 HF
BRICK	Face, terra cotta, or ceramic	100%	100%	100%
	Jumbo or utility <sup>1</sup> brick	25%	25%	75%
STONE	Natural stone, stone veneer or simulated stone materials	100%	100%	100%
CONCRETE	Formed in place, pre-cast panels or blocks	10%	10%	25%
	Split-face CMU <sup>2</sup> or similar decorative block	25%	25%	50%
SIDING OR SHINGLES	Vinyl, metal, or other synthetic materials	10%	10%	10%
	Wood, cement board, or similar materials	75%	50%	50%
ENGINEERED FINISH PRODUCTS	EIFS <sup>3</sup> , plaster, stucco or similar materials	0% <sup>3.a.</sup>	0% <sup>3.a.</sup>	0% <sup>3.a.</sup>
	Hard-coated EPS <sup>4</sup> or similar polyurea hard-coated foam materials	20%	20%	25%
GLASS	Translucent, dark tint or mirrored	10%	10%	25%
	Transparent, pale tint or energy efficient	50%	50%	75%
	Glass block	10%	10%	50%
SHEETS, PANELING OR SIMILAR	Metal	10%	10%	10%
	Wood	25%	25%	25%

Notes to table:

1. Utility brick is larger than standard brick (typical utility brick = 3 5/8 inches x 11 5/8 inches).
2. CMU = Concrete Masonry Unit.
3. EIFS = Exterior Insulation and Finish System.

- a. Limited amounts of EIFS may be used for decorative features and building accents as determined by the Planning Commission.
4. EPS = Expanded Polystyrene.
5. May exceed 10% with approval of Planning Commission where material is scored or otherwise architecturally treated to give the appearance of texture rather than a flat, monotonous façade.

### **SECTION 27.03. Residential Districts**

The provisions of this Section shall apply to all new residential developments (one-family and two-family) subject to review per Article 35 (Site Plan Review) in all residential districts.

#### **A. Application of Standards**

1. New site condominium and subdivisions: The requirements and standards of this Section shall apply to site condominium and two-family condominium developments approved under Article 37 of this Ordinance and residential subdivisions approved under Chapter 22 of the Township's Code of Ordinances subsequent to the adoption of this amendment.
2. Covenants and restrictions and master deed: The requirements and standards set forth in this Section shall be included in the covenants and restrictions and/or master deed of any development subject to these standards. The covenants and restrictions or master deed shall be submitted for review by the Township Attorney to ensure compliance with the standards of this Section.

#### **B. General Requirements**

1. No building permit shall be issued for any new residential dwelling unit which has the same elevation or is similar in appearance to any adjacent dwelling unit. A dwelling unit shall not be considered to be adjacent to another dwelling unit if it does not front on the same side of the street or is separated from said unit by an open space area (i.e. stormwater basin, park, wetland, etc.) that is at least ninety feet in width measured along the street setback line.
2. No more than twenty percent of the total number of dwelling units in any residential development can be similar in appearance. For developments that are to be completed in phases, each phase shall comply with this standard independent of other phases.
3. Variation in garage door location (front entry, side entry, recessed behind front façade, etc.) shall be provided throughout any new residential development. In no instance shall the same garage door location and orientation (i.e. front entry, left side of dwelling) be used throughout an entire development or for the length of an entire street. For two-family residential and single-family residential developments that have lots ninety feet in width or greater, a minimum of thirty percent of all dwellings

located on said lots shall have the garage door oriented other than to the front of the lot (i.e. oriented to the side or rear of the lot.)

4. No building permit shall be issued for any new residential dwelling unit which is proposed to be sided with horizontal-lap vinyl siding on any side of the structure. Quality horizontal-lap siding materials including fiber cement board and wood are permitted. Vinyl siding is permitted for decorative elements including simulated shake within the gable portions of a pitched roof.

### C. Standards for Determining Similarity

1. **Distinguishing Characteristics.** For the purpose of this article, the term “similar in appearance” shall mean a dwelling which is identical, or nearly identical, to another dwelling in any three of the following characteristics:
  - a. Roof type. Roof type is determined by location and orientation of the principal ridge line and adjacent sloping sections. Different roof styles include but are not limited to gable, reverse gable, Cape Cod, gambrel, hip, mansard and flat, etc.
  - b. Roof pitch. Roof pitch is determined by measuring the ratio of vertical to horizontal units in the sloping segments of the principal section of the roof of a structure. Different roof pitches are three (3) or more vertical units in twelve (12) from each other including, for example 6:12 and 9:12 or 8:12 and 11:12, etc.
  - c. Location of major design features relative to main mass. Major design features include but are not limited to attached garages, porches, porticos, breeze-ways, gables, dormers and/or similar major features. Different locations of major design features relative to the main mass of a structure include but are not limited to in front of, beside, on top of, and/or in some other location relative to the main mass of the structure.
  - d. Shape of the front elevation silhouette.
  - e. Locations and sizes of windows in the front elevation.
  - f. Location of windows and doors relative to main mass. Different window and door locations relative to the main mass of a structure include but are not limited to center door, off-center door and no door, with windows on either or both sides of and/or above the door.
  - g. Type of exterior material (e.g., brick, lapped horizontal siding, half-timber, shakes, etc.) on the front and side elevations.
2. **Housing Styles.** If adjacent lots or buildings contain different housing styles, the similarity standards delineated in subsection (C)(1) of this Section do not apply. Housing style is in and of itself a significant enough characteristic to constitute

dissimilarity. Housing styles shall consist of the following: ranch, bi-level, tri-level, 1 ½ story, two-story, three-story, as well as widely accepted architectural styles such as Colonial, Queen Anne, Victorian, Tudor, Contemporary, etc.

**D. Exemptions**

1. Single and two-family residential dwellings that were constructed in compliance with these regulations shall not be subject to these standards for any future building addition, renovation, alteration, or other structural modification, provided the dwelling units fronting on the same street within three lots or within three buildings distance have been fully constructed and received certificates of occupancy at the time of the proposed addition, renovation, alteration, or other structural modification.
2. New construction in residential condominiums or subdivisions approved prior to the adoption of these standards shall not be subject to these standards.
3. Following the issuance of a building permit for the construction of at least ninety percent of the total number of residential dwellings (based on the total number of units in all phases) in a residential condominium or subdivision, the remaining ten percent of dwelling units are not subject to the provisions of this Section.
4. Residential condominiums or subdivisions of ten dwellings or less, including future phases shall not be subject to these standards.

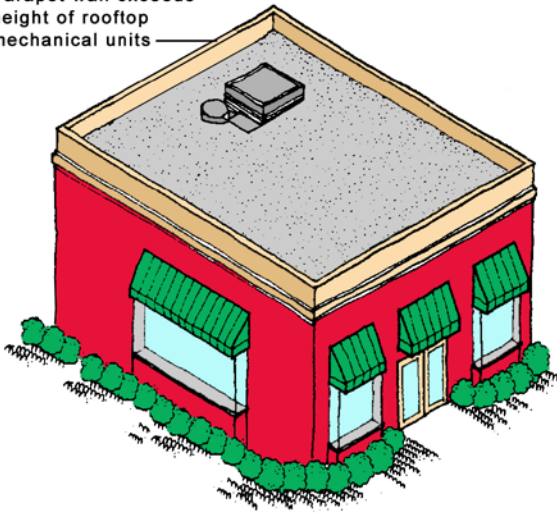
**SECTION 27.04. Alternative Designs or Materials**

To encourage creativity, imagination, innovation, and variety in architectural design, the Planning Commission may waive or modify the requirements of this Article upon determining that the proposed architectural design or exterior façade material meets all of the following conditions:

1. The proposed design or material is consistent with the purposes of this Article.
2. The proposed design or material would enhance the character of the building, development or neighborhood, and would be equal or superior to designs or materials permitted by this Article.
3. The proposed design or material would be in harmony with the character of adjacent buildings, neighborhoods, and the surrounding district.

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

Parapet wall exceeds height of rooftop mechanical units



**Roof Design**



**Rear Entrance**



**Facade Variation**