

## **ARTICLE XII – ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS**

### **Section 12.1 Purpose.**

The purpose of these standards is to promote compatibility, imagination, innovation and variety in new construction or renovation of buildings subject to non-residential site plan review; and to encourage continued economic development, energy conservation, improved transportation efficiency, conserve property values, and further enhance the visual appearance of the community and its gateways within the context of overall community character. Consideration must be given to human scale and pedestrian orientation for the design of or renovation of a structure.

These architectural design standards are not necessarily intended to apply to industrial buildings, however general compliance is encourage and additional screening may be required for industrial buildings.

### **Section 12.2 General Criteria.**

- A. Plans shall show all building elevations and portray the design of all buildings and the relationship of the development to surrounding properties, buildings, natural features and built features.
- B. The Planning Board may require that development proposals be reviewed by a historic consultant or architect where applicable, and be designed by a NH licensed architect.
- C. Alternative architectural solutions may be considered by the Planning Board. Emphasis should be placed on compatibility, aesthetics and creativity.

### **Section 12.3 Standards.**

- A. Monotony of design or warehouse style structures shall be avoided. Variation in detail, form, and siting shall be used to provide visual interest. All sides of a structure shall receive design consideration. A façade unrelated to the rest of the building is not an acceptable design.
- B. Buildings shall be sited so that entrances are clearly identifiable and street/unit numbers shall be visible from the point of entry.
- C. The size, mass and form of new structures must relate to the appropriate scale of neighboring buildings as well as the context of the district in which it is located. The following architectural features and treatments should be used to enhance the character of new development:
  - 1. Avoid blank walls at ground-floor levels through the use of windows, trellises, wall articulation, arcades, material changes, awnings or other features.
  - 2. Reduce the apparent scale of the building by introducing small-scaled architectural features, creating an irregular footprint and variations in roof forms and height of roof elements.

3. Enhance definition of each floor of the building through terracing, articulated structural elements, changes in materials, belt courses and horizontal trim bands. Detail features should be crafted to provide visual interest and pedestrian scale.

D. Roof Forms and Materials

1. Rooflines shall be characteristically sloped and articulated with architectural features such as dormers, chimneys, gables, cupolas, etc.
2. Long, unbroken expanses of roofs should be avoided through the use of dormers, chimneys, cupolas and changes in ridgeline.
3. Flat roofs are strongly discouraged unless the Planning Board finds that a proposal can provide appropriate visual appeal.
4. In cases where pitched roofs are not practical, the use of false building fronts shall be used to imitate pitched roofs to vary the horizontal lines along portions of the façade to create the appearance of multiple attached buildings.
5. Where appropriate, roofs shall provide adequate overhands for pedestrian activity.
6. Roof materials shall be comprised of high quality, durable and architecturally consistent materials, including but not limited to, concrete tile, asphalt shingles and standing seam metal.
7. In all cases, all roof top mechanical units shall be screened so as not to be visible from road level or from public areas from ground level. Screening may be accomplished through architectural treatments including walls, parapets, false chimneys or cupolas.

E. Architectural features and details shall be considered in every building design.

1. Traditional features and details such as columns, pilasters, canopies, porticos, awnings or arches associated with Amherst's architectural heritage are strongly encouraged.
2. Long expanses of repetitive architectural elements and flat unarticulated wall surfaces shall be avoided.
3. Brick, clapboard, stone or tinted/textured architectural block are preferred for wall surfaces. EFIS, stucco, Texture 111, smooth-faced concrete block and pre-fabricated steel panels are discouraged.
4. Large plate glass windows are discouraged unless broken with mullions or muntins. Mirrored glass or colored metal panels are discouraged.

F. Existing buildings and structures of historic value should be preserved and, if renovated or expanded, shall be done in a manner that is respectful of the character, features and details of the existing structure.

G. Public amenities are encouraged, such as: benches, bike racks, sidewalks along building façades with a customer entrance, public bathrooms and walkways connecting transit stops, parking lot crossings or street crossings.

#### H. Signs

1. Signs shall comply with the Town of Amherst sign ordinance and should be designed to meet the needs of the individual uses while complementing the building, site and surrounds.
2. Wall signs should be appropriately scaled to the building or surface on which it is placed and should not obscure important architectural features.
3. Consideration should be given to form, color, lighting and materials that are compatible with the building and its surroundings.