THE CAPITOL AREA
Design Standards

Capitol Zoning District Commission
Little Rock, Arkansas

March 25, 1999

Change is a sign of economic health and confidence in Little Rock's future. It is an essential process in a vital community, representing the current phase of an evolution that has been continuing since the beginning of the city. How we construct, where we build, and how we treat what is already established will determine the quality of life we provide for current and future generations.

However, the character of change must be managed to assure that the heritage of Arkansas as represented in these special areas is protected and that the basic urban framework will support and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

Historic buildings should be treated with respect, and additions and other new buildings should strengthen the design context. If the imprint of new construction is to be positive, thoughtful consideration must be given to each change in the built fabric of the community.

Uncontrolled demolition, alteration, and insensitive new construction can irreparably alter the character of the area. Once lost, the ambience of the Capitol Area cannot be recaptured with any sense of authenticity.

These design standards therefore are intended to guide the character of change such that the citizens of Arkansas will derive the maximum benefit of their Capitol and its environs.

THE CAPITOL AREA
Design Standards

prepared for the
Capitol Zoning District Commission
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The Capitol Zoning District Commission operates with a series of documents that establish its powers and responsibilities, define its operating procedures and provide land use policies and development standards.

ORDINANCE/REGULATORY

These documents provide the basic regulations for CZDC operations.

CZDC Ordinance

- Enabling powers
- Commission organization

CZDC Administrative Procedures

Provides administrative procedures, including:

- Hearing requirements
- Conducting meetings
- Application requirements
- Height review

OVERALL STANDARDS

These documents provide design standards and zoning regulations that apply to both the Mansion and Capitol Areas.

City of Little Rock Site Development Guide

Provides prescriptive standards for:

- Access & parking layout
- Landscaping
- Excavation & drainage

General Standards

Provides prescriptive standards for:

- Zoning chart
- Use groups
- Parking
- Signs

Rehabilitation Standards

Addresses treatment of historic properties

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

These documents provide development policies for individual areas in the Capitol Zoning District Commission's jurisdiction.

Capitol Area Framework Plan

Includes:

- Land use policies
- Urban design goals

Mansion Area Framework Plan

Includes:

- Land use policies
- Urban design goals

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN STANDARDS

These documents provide performance based design standards for individual areas in the Capitol Zoning District Commission's jurisdiction.

Capitol Area Design Standards

Includes standards for:

- New construction
- Site plans

Mansion Area Design Standards

Includes standards for:

- New construction
- Site plans

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CAPITOL AREA DESIGN STANDARDS **1**

CAPITOL AREA NEIGHBORHOODS **2**

CAPITOL AREA STREET CORRIDORS **3**

SITE DESIGN STANDARDS **4**
- Alignment of Building Fronts 4
- View Corridors 5
- Plazas and Courtyards 6
- Drop-Off Areas 7
- Pedestrian Connections Through Parking Lots 7
- Service Entrances and Loading Areas 8
- Pedestrian Interest at the Street Level 8

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS **9**
- Building Scale 9
- Exterior Expression of Floors 9
- Horizontal Alignment of Facade Components 10
- Distinction Between Upper and Lower Floors 10
- Building Height 10
- Building Materials 12
- Scale of Building Materials 13
- Use of Traditional Facade Components 13
- Building Form 13
- Relation of Building Exterior to Pedestrians 14
- Building Entrances 14
- Multiple Entrances 14

PARKING LOT DESIGN STANDARDS **15**
- Surface Lots 15
- Special Parking Spaces 16
- Parking Structures and Parking Under Buildings 17

LANDSCAPE DESIGN STANDARDS **18**
- Visual Buffers 18
- Retaining Walls 19
- Public Art 19
- Designing with the Topography 19
- Plant Materials 20
- Landscape Quantity Requirements 20
- Parking Lot Landscaping 21

INTRODUCTION

The following section applies to work under the jurisdiction of the Capitol Zoning District Commission for the Capitol Area.

In addition, design standards for treatment of historic properties may also apply to a specific project. Furthermore, underlying policies for these design standards are presented in the Master Plan for the Capitol area. Refer to the chart at the beginning of this section that indicates which other documents may apply to a particular project.

An asterisk adjacent to a statement in the text indicates that it is a standard directly enforced by the Capitol Zoning District Commission. Other text is provided as advisory information and may also, in some circumstances, be considered in the Commission's reviews.

A check mark with an illustration indicates that it is an example of an appropriate treatment.

An "x" mark with an illustration indicates that it is an example of an inappropriate treatment.

The page numbers in this document are preceded by an "C," which signifies that the sheets are part of the Standards for the Capitol Area.

A note to reviewers of this draft:

This draft of design standards for the Capitol Area is one of a set of companion documents currently in production. A separate document provides standards for new construction in the Mansion Area and a separate document provides standards for treatment of historic properties.

In addition, more information will be provided in the introduction at a later date. This, in part, will be influenced by the manner in which these materials are ultimately published.

THE CAPITOL AREA DESIGN STANDARDS

The area around the Capitol is in a state of transition. It originally developed as a neighborhood primarily of residential uses. Single family structures were typical in most blocks. These buildings faced the street, where front porches established a human scale and added interest for passersby. Front lawns were defined by fences and shrubbery that also made walking a comfortable experience.

Although this residential character was the primary feature of the neighborhood, certain "subareas" also existed. Around the train station, a mix of uses emerged, including boarding houses and hotels. The area around the state penitentiary also had its own distinct character.

A new focal point was created with the construction of the State Capitol at the penitentiary site. The building itself is a dramatic monumental structure that is set in a park and gives identity to the neighborhood. Over the years, additional state office buildings have been added to the west of the Capitol itself, creating a campus of an institutional nature.

In the mid-twentieth century, the character of the Capitol Area changed substantially. Houses were demolished in many blocks to make room for a variety of commercial buildings. Some of these were relatively small in scale, while a few were substantial in size. A variety of building materials were used as well. This trend has continued, although at a relatively slow pace in recent years.

In a few locations, reminders of the earlier residential neighborhood survive. Sometimes, a row of houses stands intact, providing a sense of the earlier character. In other cases, individual houses stand isolated or they are framed with newer commercial buildings.

Perhaps the most striking feature from this transitional period of development is the creation of extensive areas for parking automobiles, particularly surface lots. This has led to a series of freestanding, independent buildings in an open landscape with no strong sense of visual continuity or distinct identity as a neighborhood. Overall, a relatively low density of development exists.

Functionally, the goal for the area is to promote a mix of uses that will support a lively neighborhood that is in use twenty-four hours a day. While the predominant use will continue to be offices, other commercial uses including dining and retail should be encouraged. In addition, an important goal is to promote new residential uses that will combine with the other activities to animate the neighborhood.

Design goals

Today, the goal is to establish a distinct identity for the neighborhood that will continue to serve as a foreground for the Capitol and also enhance it. This means that key view corridors to the building should be defined and preserved. At the same time, other buildings in the area should establish a sense of relating to the Capitol without imitating it architecturally. Certain common way of building should be followed to create a building typology that will contribute to a visual cohesiveness in the neighborhood while also accommodating variety in designs and a mix of uses.

Streets should once again be places that are active with pedestrians, where walking is a pleasant experience. The automobile should appear subordinate to other uses and therefore parking and circulation requirements should be accommodated in a manner that supports the desired uses for the neighborhood.

Landscaping should help establish a sense of visual continuity in the area. It should include places for outdoor activities, including plazas and courtyards, as well as visual accents that give identity to individual blocks. This should include public art and other unique urban design features.

Signs also should be subordinate to the overall neighborhood character. While it clearly is important to identify businesses and signs will continue to be a part of the scene, they should complement building designs, not detract from them and their placement and design should help to convey a sense of order for the area.

Within the overall neighborhood, the tradition of establishing subareas with distinct identities should be continued. For example, where historic residential buildings survive in sets, that character should be preserved. Similarly, the distinct character of the neighborhood around the depot should continue to be reinforced. Most important, Capitol Avenue should develop as the ceremonial approach to the Capitol.

CAPITOL AREA NEIGHBORHOODS

The Capitol Area Master Plan recognizes a series of neighborhoods, which should each develop with their own individual identities. These distinct characteristics of individual neighborhoods should be reinforced:

Capitol Avenue Neighborhood (Zone "A1")
This spine links downtown Little Rock with the State Capitol. It should have the highest density of development in the area, with the focus at the western end near the base of the Capitol building itself. Along Capitol Avenue, buildings should frame views to the Capitol and define the edge of the street to provide an attractive pedestrian zone. Medium-scale office buildings with ground floor storefront activities should define the street edge. Parking should be located in the rear. A goal is to have a mix of governmental offices and private professional offices as the dominant uses. These should be supplemented with service businesses, dining and retail.

South-of-Capitol Neighborhood (Zone "A2")
This neighborhood should continue to develop as a concentration of governmental offices,and commercial uses, including professional offices and support businesses. Medium scale office structures should be the predominant building types. It is similar in character to Capitol Avenue itself, although initially it may develop at a somewhat lower density. Defining views from major roadways, including Interstate 630, to the Capitol should be special considerations here and pedestrian connections to Capitol Avenue and to the State Capitol should be enhanced. Landscaping of parking lots will be particularly important for this reason.

Capitol Avenue Neighborhood

Roughly bounded by Victory Street on the west, Garland Street on the north, Cross Street on the east and West 4th Street on the south, this area retains the greatest number of historic residential buildings, several still in rows that convey the early character of the neighborhood. These should be retained and new construction in this area should be designed to be compatible with this established context. Mixed use developments that include residential uses should be encouraged in this neighborhood and building forms that relate to traditional residential types should be used. Variety in building setbacks is appropriate in this area. Where buildings are set back, the foreground should be landscaped to reflect the tradition of front yards. Parking should be located to the side or in the rear of a lot and screened from view.

Union Station Neighborhood (Zone "C")
The land around the Union Station depot should develop with a mix of uses that supports the adaptive reuse of the station itself. A mix of residential, offices, dining and retail should be encouraged. This also should help to serve as a western anchor to specialty retail activities that are emerging along Markham Street. A variety of building types and setbacks is appropriate. Medium density housing should be encouraged to develop in conjunction with commercial uses.

It is vitally important that a pleasant pedestrian experience develop here, one that invites "exploration" of the neighborhood. Historic buildings in the area should be preserved and new buildings near them should be compatible in character. New development also should make creative use of the sloping topography here. Stepped terracing of sites, for example, should be considered.

The Industrial Neighborhood (Zone "D")
This small neighborhood is located at the southwest corner of the Capitol Area and contains a mixture of small single family residences and state maintenance shops. It lies below the Interstate at the lower end of the Capitol campus. Motorists approaching downtown from the west look across these lands to the Capitol dome. It is zoned for industrial uses, in part because it is relatively remote and access is limited. While it is not a key area in terms of planning for the character of the foreground of the Capitol, it is important that its development within this area be managed such that it does not impede views to the Capitol.

CAPITOL AREA STREET CORRIDORS

Commercial Corridors

Streets designated in the "A1" and "A2" Zones are those in which commercial buildings are to be the dominant use and establishing a building line at the sidewalk edge is a goal. Building fronts therefore should be located at the inside edge of the sidewalk. These are located along Capitol Avenue and streets to the south of it.

Victory Street Corridor

Victory Street is designated in the Master Plan as a corridor that should link Capitol Avenue with the Union Station area. It should be inviting to pedestrians and convey an "urban" character. Primary uses along the street should be commercial, including professional offices and service businesses as well as retail and dining. Buildings should be located at the sidewalk edge to establish an inviting pedestrian experience. Parking should be located in the rear.

Medium Density Mixed Use Corridors

Streets in the Medium Density Mixed Use Corridors are those in which a mix of commercial and residential uses are anticipated at a moderately high density. Defining the street edge with buildings is also a goal in these areas, although some variety in setbacks may occur where residential uses are at street level. The majority of buildings within a block therefore should be built with their fronts at the inside sidewalk edge. These are generally located to the north of Capitol and around Union Station.

Low Density Mixed Use Corridors

Streets in the Low Density Mixed Use Corridors are ones where development should blend with established residential scale structures. A mix of uses is anticipated in a setting in which the character of traditional front yards is promoted. Buildings may be set back from the street with landscaping in the foreground. These are generally located in the Northeast Neighborhood.

Design Objectives:

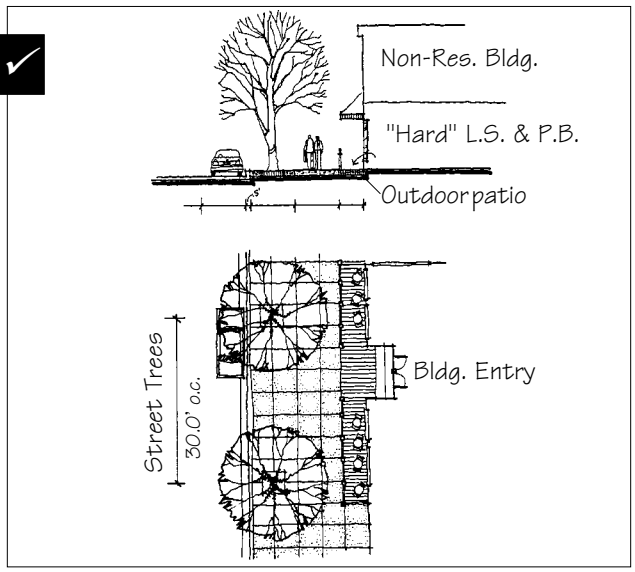
Given the basic goal of promoting an active, mixed use neighborhood that serves as a foreground to the Capitol, new buildings should help to define the edges of streets, to frame views and to establish a sense of scale. They also should provide visual interest at the street level, to encourage pedestrian activity.

- Define and enhance views to the Capitol.
- Establish a sense of visual continuity within individual neighborhoods.
- Enhance the pedestrian experience throughout the area.
- Minimize the visual impacts of automobiles and signs.

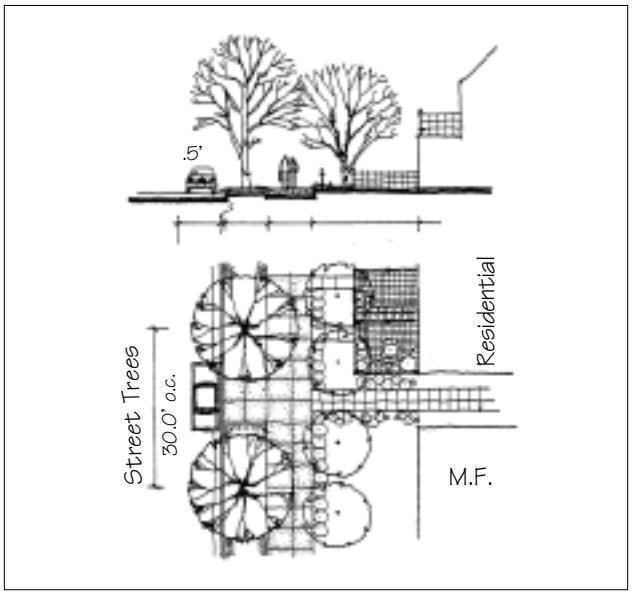
The design standards that follow seek to achieve these objectives.

Low Density Mixed Use Corridors

Union Station



Builidngs should be located at the sidewalk edge.



A few exceptions may be granted where a building may be setback from the sidewalk edge.

SITE DESIGN STANDARDS

Each site should be developed to help define active spaces for people, to provide pedestrian connections between sites, and to define street edges. The placement of a building on a site should therefore be considered within the context of the block and how the structure will reinforce the broader design goals for the neighborhood.

Alignment of Building Fronts

C1. A building should be oriented to reflect the street grid.

- In general, the front of a building should be parallel with the street.
- An exception exists at the intersection of Capitol and Woodlane Avenues, where two different street grids intersect. This variation may be reflected in building alignments.

Commercial Corridors:

C2. Locate a building front at the sidewalk edge.

- A building in Zones A1 and A2 shall have a zero setback for a minimum of 75% of its facade along the sidewalk edge. Exceptions may be granted only by the CZDC for those conditions where the predominant character of adjacent properties reflects a setback from the sidewalk. In those conditions, the setback from the sidewalk can not exceed 25'.
- If a portion of the building wall is to be set back from the sidewalk such as to create a courtyard or arcade, continue to define the sidewalk line with planters, columns, railings or similar features.

Medium Density Mixed Use Corridors:

C3. Locating a building front at the sidewalk edge is encouraged.

- A building with a commercial use at the street level should have a minimum of 50% of its facade at the sidewalk edge. If a portion of the building wall is to be set back from the sidewalk such as to create a courtyard or arcade, continue to define the sidewalk line with planters, columns, railings or similar features.
- A building with a residential use at the street level may be set back a maximum of 25 feet from the sidewalk edge. The front setback area should be landscaped.
- Access to parking facilities should be provided from an alley when feasible. (See the standards for parking.)

Low Density Mixed Use Corridors:

C4. Maintain the character of residential yards along the street.

- Variety in building setbacks is appropriate.
- A building may be set back a maximum of 25 feet from the sidewalk edge. The front setback area should be landscaped.
- Access to parking facilities should be provided from an alley when feasible. (See the standards for parking.)

View Corridors

A key consideration in the Capitol Area is planning to maintain special views. The primary view objective is to provide dramatic views to the Capitol Building from key points in all directions. In most cases, this can be achieved by keeping an open view shed throughout the area. Keeping the height of buildings below that of the main level of the Capitol Building is the established policy for doing so. In some cases, however, it is more desirable to frame the view by enclosing a view corridor with buildings, and then providing points at which the view may open out to reveal the Capitol. This is the concept for framing views along Capitol Avenue.

In addition to view consideration *to* the Capitol, it is also desirable to establish selected view corridors *from* the Capitol to other features. For example, providing a view corridor from the northern Capitol circle to the bottom lands to the north should be an objective.

Views to other landmarks also should be considered. Creating a view corridor to Union Station, for example, is desirable.

C5. Plan view corridors as a series of vista experiences.

- In many cases, building fronts should align along street edges to frame views, and then provide outdoor areas, such as plazas, to "open up" the view. This will create variety in the view experience.
- In other situations, buildings should be set back from the front property line to provide uninterrupted views.
- Also consider the height of buildings. Building heights should generally remain low. See the Capitol Area Framework Master Plan.

C6. Maintain views to the Capitol from major streets and public spaces.

- Major Streets include Capitol Avenue, Interstate 630, Cantrell Road and Markham Street.
- View corridors from Union Station to the Capitol are also important.

Maintain views to the Capitol from major streets and public spaces.

C7. Provide views from outdoor plazas and courtyards to the Capitol when feasible.

- This is particularly important along Capitol Avenue.

C8. Provide views from outdoor plazas and courtyards to area landmarks when feasible.

- Provide views to Union Station, for example.

Plazas and courtyards

The development of plazas and courtyards should be encouraged in order to enhance the street scene as a place for pedestrians. These should be easily accessible and comfortable to use for substantial parts of the year.

C9. Orient open space to views of activities, architectural landmarks or natural land forms that are visually interesting.

- View corridors to the Capitol and the depot are particularly appropriate locations.

C10. Provide outdoor seating that is usable year-round.

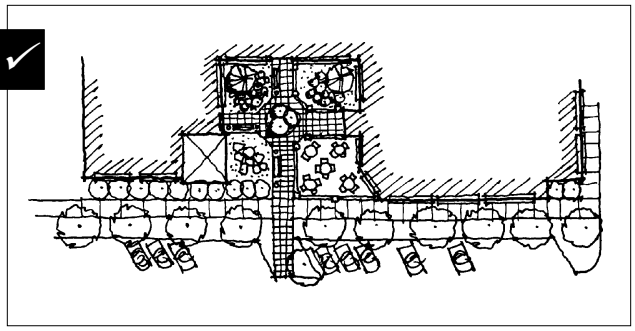
- Use designs that will drain water and that will not collect debris.
- Position seating so it can be buffered from extreme winds.
- Provide for shade in hot months and for sun in winter months. Shading devices may be integrated elements of the architecture, or they may be moveable features such as awnings or umbrellas.

C11. Connect open spaces to major building activities.

- Consider connections to restaurants or outdoor dining areas and to shop or office entrances, especially where the space can be used for product display.

C12. Where feasible, create a sense of enclosure for outdoor seating areas.

- Use buildings, planters, low walls or railings to define and enclose seating areas.



Use buildings, planters, low walls or railings to define and enclose seating areas.

Drop-Off Areas

Passenger drop-off areas should be considered and should be designed to provide safe, convenient use. This applies particularly to higher density developments along Capitol Avenue, where parking lots and structures are to be located to the rear of buildings.

C13. Clearly distinguish drop-off areas from service lanes.

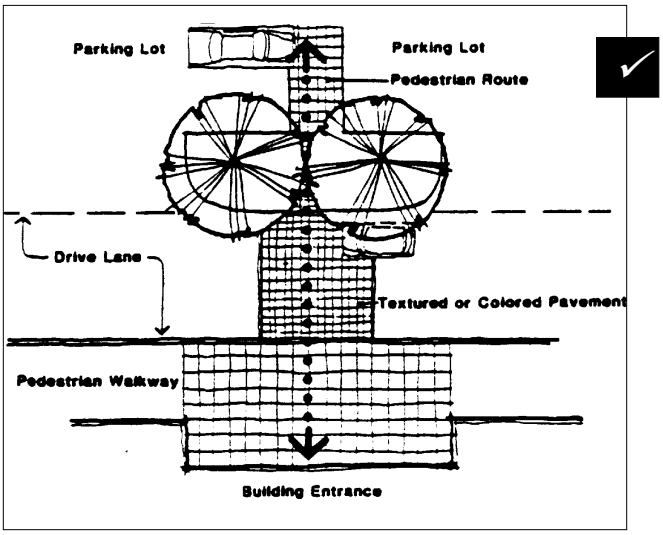
- Provide a separation between a driveway curb cut and a drop-off area to minimize circulation conflicts.
- Provide a clear separation of vehicular traffic between drop-off zones and access to either a parking lot or parking structure.
- Use a textured paving material that is distinguishable from the travel lane at the drop-off.
- Consider using signs to indicate “drop-off zone” or “passenger loading only”.

Pedestrian Connections Through Parking Lots

Walkways that lead pedestrians from parking to building entrances should be planned such that they minimize crossing conflicts with cars and facilitate easy movement. The pedestrian should feel comfortable and in a clearly defined “territory." This should include a variety of grade separations or other vertical features, such as bollards, lights and trees, which distinguish the pedestrian way from the drive lanes and parking stalls. Also, clearly defined entry ways should be included.

C14. Provide clear, convenient pedestrian routes through parking lots to building entrances.

- Pedestrians should not be required to cross service drives or areas to gain access to major entrances from principal parking lots.
- Where major pedestrian routes within the parking lot will cross roadways and drives, use textures or colored paving that is distinguishable from the road surface to define these pedestrian routes.



Provide clear, convenient pedestrian routes through parking lots to building entrances.

Service Entrances and Loading Areas

Service areas should be visually unobtrusive and should be integrated with the design for the site and the building.

C15. Orient service entrances, waste disposal areas and other similar uses toward service lanes and away from major streets.

- Coordinate the location of service areas with adjacent developments, so that shared service drives may be feasible.
- Avoid placing service areas where they will be visible from adjacent buildings or where they will impact designated view corridors.

C16. Screen service entrances with walls or landscaping.

Pedestrian Interest at the Street Level

The development of the first floor street level as an area that is interesting to the pedestrian is a primary objective throughout the Capitol Area.

C17. Develop the street level of a building to provide visual interest to pedestrians.

- For buildings located on Capitol Avenue, a minimum of 65% of the linear dimension of the first floor street wall should contain display windows.
- For buildings located on other streets a minimum of 55% of the first floor street wall should contain the following: display windows or outdoor dining places, wall murals or sculpture. Other alternatives include display cases or decorative architectural screens and plant materials.

C18. Provide direct access from a public sidewalk to retail shops.

- Avoid designs that require patrons to enter the internal lobby of a building in order to enter a shop.

C19. Shelter the sidewalk along the street level.

- Use awnings or consider arcades with storefront glass recessed.

Use awnings to shelter the pedestrain.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS

Building Scale

Buildings should appear to have a "pedestrian scale." In general, this is the result of the use of familiar forms and elements that can be interpreted in human dimensions.

C20. Express facade components in ways that will help to establish building scale.

- Compositions that emphasize floor lines or that express rhythms and patterns of windows, columns, and other architectural features are encouraged.

C21. When feasible, align facade elements with others in the block.

- Where feasible, reinforce the general alignment of building heights.
- Express the position of each floor with horizontal elements.
- When feasible, align first floor window heights with others in the block.

Exterior Expression of Floors

The exterior wall design should help pedestrians establish a sense of scale with relation to each building. In the interest of the CZDC's goal of creating a campus-like environment, efforts should be made to prevent the larger buildings from dwarfing the pedestrian. Articulating the number of floors in a building can help to establish a building's scale, for example.

C22. Express the position of each floor in the external skin design of a building.

- Use belt courses or other horizontal trim bands, of contrasting color and materials to define floor lines.
- Also consider articulating structural elements, or changing materials as methods of defining floors.

Use belt courses or other horizontal trim bands, of contrasting color and materials to define floor lines.

Horizontal alignment of facade components

Horizontal alignment of architectural features can occur among building fronts in the form of cornices, window sills, and moldings. These lines can enhance the visual continuity of the street, which is to be encouraged.

C23. Align facade elements with others in the block.

- This is particularly relevant along "A" type streets.
- Facades should be articulated to repeat the standard heights of building components, such as floor levels and cornices.

Distinction Between Upper and Lower Floors

Typically, the first floor of commercial buildings is predominantly transparent with a large proportion of void to solid. This distinction helps to define the first floor as more open to the public in general. The line established by uniform storefront heights also helps to establish a sense of scale for pedestrians.

C24. Express the distinction between upper and lower floors in commercial buildings.

- Develop the first floor as primarily transparent.
- On upper floors, consider using windows or other architectural features that will reinforce the typical rhythm of upper story windows found on traditional commercial buildings.

Building Height

A primary concern is that a new building or major additions to an existing building be designed to maintain views of the Capitol building and dome. This particularly includes considerations of placement and also height of any new construction. Allowable building height is limited to 45 feet with a maximum of three stories in the Capitol Zoning District. Upon a Height Review and subsequent approval by the CZDC, additional height of up to 30 feet, but under no circumstances exceeding 75 feet total with a maximum of five stories, can be allowed. The definitions for allowable height and allowances for additional height are included in the General Standards. The criteria by which the CZDC will review a proposal for conformance with these standards follow.

C25. In general, buildings may be no more than 45 feet or three stories in height.

A building in Zone A1 or Zone C may exceed this limit if the following conditions are met:

- In Zone C, if the property slopes greater than 10% and the additional floors are located downhill, such that no more than four stories are above grade at the higher end of the site.
- The building will appear compatible height with other buildings in the block.
- Residential uses will be incorporated into any additional height which exceed the allowable limits within Union Station Neighborhood, Zone C.
- Standards for views listed below are met.

C26. A building should appear compatible in height with established buildings in the block.

- If a structure would be markedly taller than adjacent buildings, step down the height to establish a transition in scale with the adjacent structure.

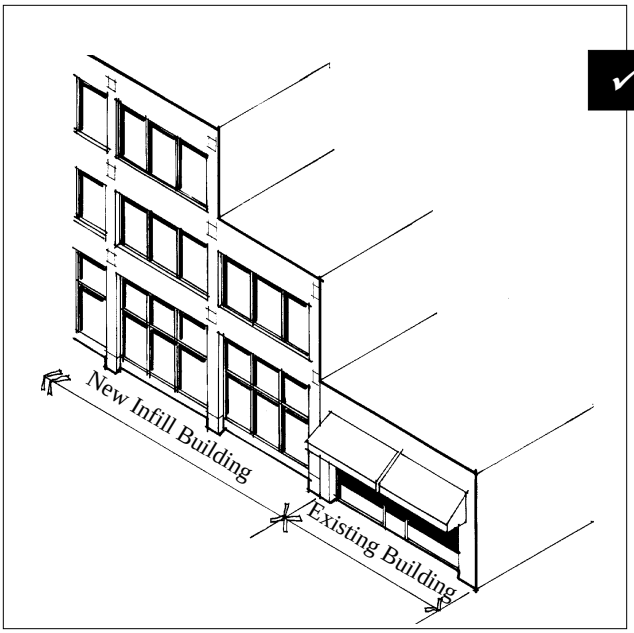
C27. Although a general similarity in building heights at the sidewalk is encouraged, variety in building form is desirable in large building projects.

- For large projects that occupy several lots, variation of building height within the project is encouraged.
- For smaller projects, consider variation of the overall height in relation to its neighbor.

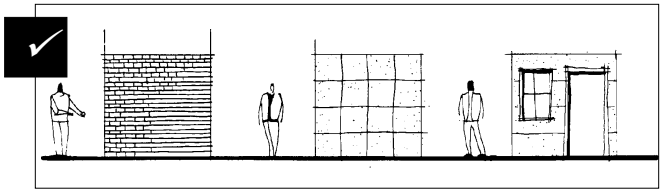
C28. The placement of any new building or significant addition to an existing building should be evaluated for any potential impacts upon existing views.

Careful consideration regarding the placement of new buildings and major additions to existing buildings should be given particularly upon their impacts to existing views. Three types of views should be considered, including:

- View Corridors; view corridors, such as those along Capitol Avenue, should be maintained and frame views as possible.
- Panoramic Views; views from areas such as the I-630 corridor and the western approach from W. 3rd St. should be maintained.
- Vistas; Vista points, from areas such as the Capitol steps, should be maintained.



If a structure would be markedly taller than adjacent buildings, step down the height to establish a transition in scale with the adjacent structure.



Use building materials that are similar in their dimensions and that can be repeated in traditional modules.

Building Materials

Although variety in building styles is anticipated, visual continuity among major building materials is desired throughout the Capitol Area. Materials should be similar in appearance to those that are prevalent on the Capitol campus and with those that were seen historically in the neighborhood. Materials that convey a regional identity are particularly encouraged. Alternative materials that achieve a similar appearance may be considered.

C29. The primary building material should be masonry.

- Brick, stone and concrete are appropriate.
- Stucco should only be used as a secondary material.

C30. Reserve strongly contrasting materials and colors for accents, such as building entrances.

- Avoid the excessive use of many different facade materials.

C31. Avoid using highly reflective surfaces that will generate glare, especially at the pedestrian level.

- Limit reflective glass to an outside daylight reflective factor of 30% or less. Mirror glass is not allowed except in very limited applications.
- When allowed, limit reflective glass to no more than 15 % of the total surface area of the building.

Scale of Building Materials

Perceiving the scale of the building is important in terms of the pedestrian's ability to relate comfortably to buildings, and to relate to walking distances between buildings, amenties, and parking lots. Building materials that are manufactured in units measurable in human proportions should be used because they help people to interpret the size of a building. Brick, tile, and stone are examples.

C32. Use building materials that are similar in their dimensions and that can be repeated in traditional modules.

- This helps to establish a sense of scale.
- Brick and stone are preferred.
- Cast or scored concrete that conveys a sense of proportion similar in scale to traditional materials also may be appropriate.

- Expanses of large featureless surfaces are inappropriate.
- In general, large metal, glass or plastic panels or other non-modular materials used in curtain wall construction are inappropriate unless other architectural features can adequately provide a sense of scale.

Use of Traditional Facade Components

The repetition of traditional facade components creates patterns and alignments that visually link buildings within a block, while allowing individual identity of each building. These elements are familiar to the pedestrian and help establish a sense of scale. The use of traditional facade components is therefore encouraged, with the understanding that these elements may be reinterpreted in a variety of creative ways.

C33. Consider incorporating traditional facade components in new designs.

- Consider the following elements:
  -Parapet cap or cornice
  -Awning or canopy
  -Transom above display window
  -First floor display window to expose the activity within
  -Recessed entry

The two new infill buildings above have successfully incorproated traditional facade components with a contemporary interpretation.

Building Form

C34. Simple rectangular forms preferred.

- In the Northeast Neighborhood, buildings with sloping roofs that reflect the residential traditional are also appropriate.

Relation of Building Exterior to Pedestrians

Facades with a high level of visual interest both at auto and pedestrian viewpoints, are encouraged. The exterior character of each building should enhance pedestrian activity in the immediate vicinity.

C35. Design walkways that encourage pedestrian use.

- Avoid locating walkways where users will be subjected to harsh glare from building materials, or where they will be subjected to harsh environmental conditions.

C36. Design the ground floor exterior of a building to be "pedestrian-friendly."

- Decorative wall surfaces and landscape materials are encouraged at this level.

- Windows that can reveal indoor amenities and activities are encouraged.
- Avoid large expanses of blank walls or mirror glass at this level.

Building Entrances

Primary entrances should be easily identifiable and should relate to human scale.

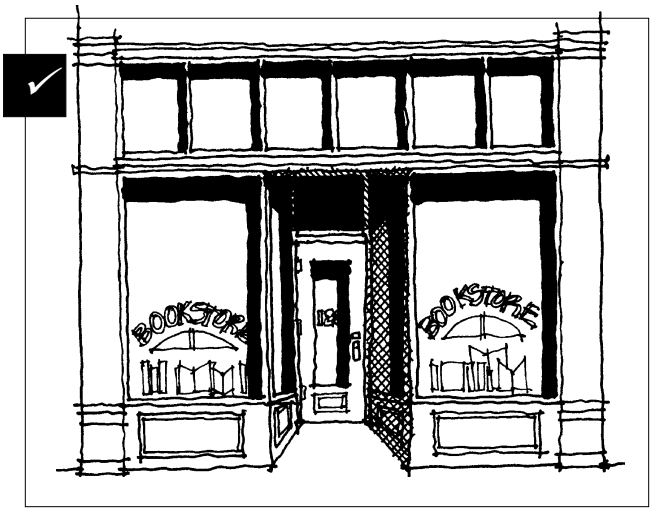
C37. Develop main entrances to be clearly identifiable.

- Design building entrances to contrast with the surrounding wall plane.
- Create a frame around doorways, by changing materials from the primary facade material.
- Entrances should be well-lit.

Multiple Entrances

Many buildings will in fact be "double-fronted," in that two facades will look out onto highly visible settings. Buildings that face edges along major streets while also facing into parking lots and landscaped spaces in the interior of the block are examples. Although one entrance is dominant, the second entrance is also significant.

C38. When two entrances are required for "double-fronted" buildings use the same standards for primary entrances.



Recessed entrances are encouraged.

PARKING LOT DESIGN STANDARDS

Surface Lots

Parking lots should be located and designed so they will provide efficient vehicular circulation and safe pedestrian circulation within the site, while minimizing the visual impact of cars. In general, parking areas should be a visual asset to the area, and large expanses of pavement should be avoided. On-street parking should be considered to accommodate some parking needs as well.

C39. Provide parking within convenient walking distance of building entrances.

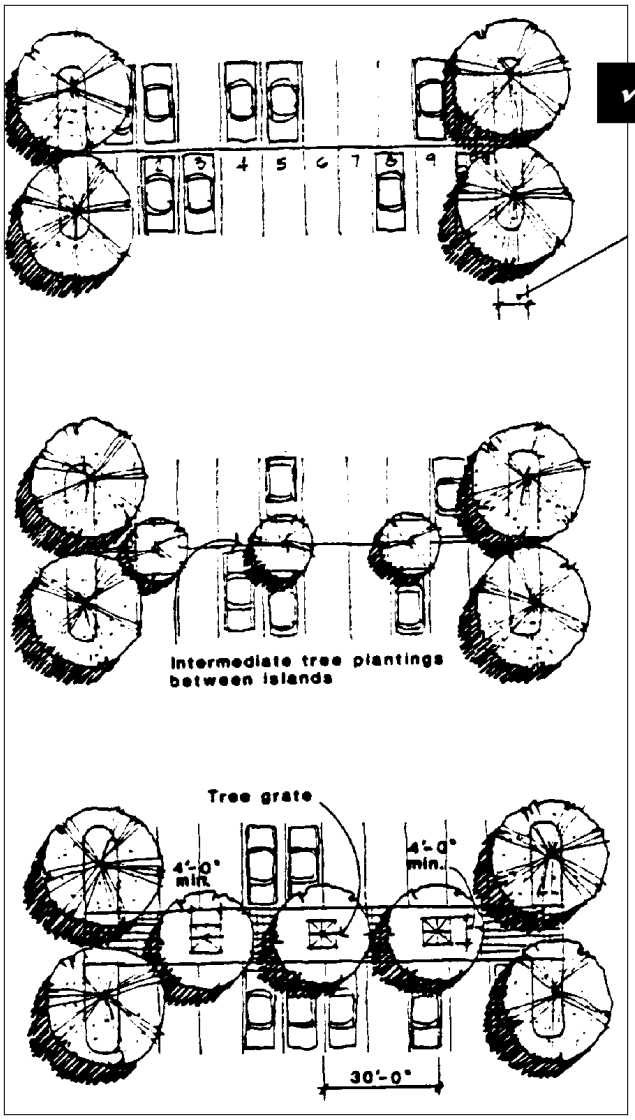
- The maximum recommended walking distance from the farthest parking space to a building is 200 feet for guest parking, and 500 feet for employee parking.
- Greater walking distances may be considered where the pedestrian way is well-designed and encourages walking.

C40. Minimize the negative visual impact of cars parked on site.

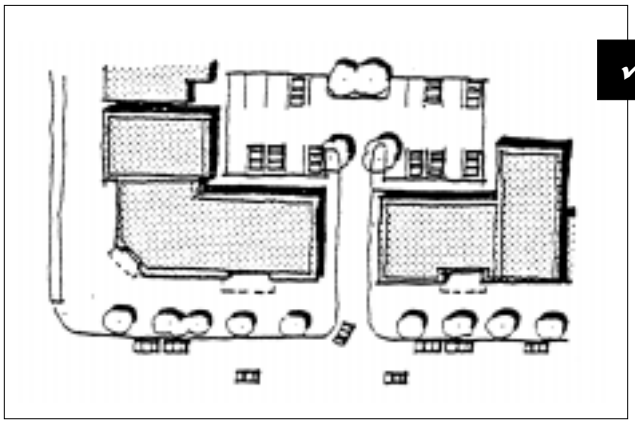
- Screen parking areas from view of public ways and designated view corridors with landscaping.
- Divide parking lots into smaller areas with planted buffers between them to minimize the perceived scale of the total field of stalls.
- Locate parking lots behind buildings.

C41. Use those quantitative standards provided in the City of Little Rock's Site Development Guide for the dimensions of standard and handicapped accessible parking spaces.

- Parking space dimensions for standard size cars are provided in Figure 4.8, "Minimum Dimensions for Parking Layouts."
- Design standards for handicap accessible parking spaces are provided in Section 7.7, "Handicapped Parking," and Figure 7.12, "Handicapped Parking Layout."



Minimize the negative visual impact of cars parked on site. Divide parking lots into smaller areas with planted buffers between them to minimize the perceived scale of the total field of stalls.



Siting parking lots behind buildings is preferred.

Where feasible, provide continuous access to adjacent parking aisles, lots or roads.

Screen parking areas from view of public ways and designated view corridors with landscaping.

C42. Connect parking lots with convenient service ways between lots.

- Consider opportunities for cross-property easements to share driveways and reduce the need for additional curb cuts.

C43. Design parking lots to discourage high speed driving, especially near building entrances.

- Avoid aligning all travel lanes in parking lots in straight configurations that facilitate speeding.

C44. Design parking lots to avoid dead-end aisles.

- Where feasible, provide continuous access to adjacent parking aisles, lots or roads.
- Where dead-end situations are unavoidable, adequate space for unimpeded turnaround must be provided.

C45. Where parking lots are included in sites with steep slopes, minimize the slope of the paved areas.

- Consider terraced parking lot design solutions incorporating retaining walls with landscaping as the transition between levels.
- Paved parking areas should not exceed 7% in slope.

C46. Design parking lots to minimize surface runoff.

- Parking lots constitute a major portion of impervious surface area. Runoff from storms should be controlled to reduce impacts on storm drainage systems.
- The use of innovative state of the art porous paving systems which maximize infiltration of storm water into soils is encouraged. The use of gravel in parking lots shall be limited to lots accommodating 20 or less parking spaces.
- In contrast to large continuous paved lots, development of sets of smaller lots is encouraged, to accommodate infiltration systems.
- Drainage from parking areas should be dispersed in a manner that promotes infiltration and reduces erosion.
- Design drainage to sheet flow from paved areas across grass areas into grass swales.

Special Parking Spaces

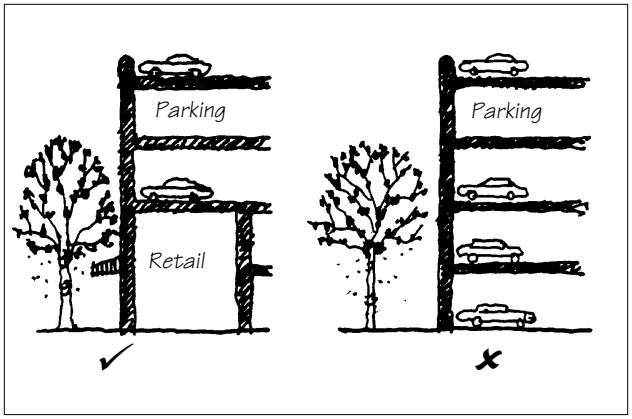
C47. Locate special parking spaces for van pool and car pool parking close-in to building entrances to encourage their use.

Parking Structures and Parking Under Buildings

The appearance of parking structures, either freestanding, or attached, should relate to the "parent" buildings and should positively contribute to the character of the site. Structures that are integrated into the main building are preferred.

C48. The general architectural standards shall apply to all parking structures; specifically with regard to mass, scale, and materials.

C49. The ground level of a parking structure should be wrapped by retail, office or some other active use along at least the primary street facade.



The ground level of a parking structure should be wrapped by retail, office or some other active use along at least the primary street facade.

C50. Screen cars from view from the ground level.

C51. Provide convenient, weather-protected pedestrian connections between parking structures and main buildings, and pickup points.

C52. Where parking levels are integrated into primary buildings, conceal the view of cars, especially at the first floor along the street and alley facades.

- Consider using decorative screens, murals, or plant materials that can provide interest to pedestrians.

C53. Soften the view of the top floor of the parking deck from view of upper floors of adjacent offices with architectural screens or landscaping.

- This is especially critical where deck tops will be visible from upper floors of buildings oriented toward designated view corridors.

LANDSCAPE STANDARDS

Landscaping provides many benefits in an urban setting such as the Capitol Area. Landscaping: 1) enhances the aesthetics of residential and commercial developments, 2) creates a pedestrian friendly environment, 3) breaks up the massing of buildings and expanses of parking areas, 4) softens architectural materials, 5) provides screening of service structures, 6) enhances the streetscape environment, 7) defines building and parking lot entrances, 8) provides shade and climate control, 9) controls airborne particulates, and 10) provides buffers between incompatible land uses.

Refer to Chapter 15, "Landscaping and Tree Protection," in the *City of Little Rock Code of Ordinances* and Chapters 3.0, "Excavation and Drainage;" 5.0, "Landscaping;" and 6.0, "Screening," in the *City of Little Rock Site Development Guide* in addition to the following standards. If conflicts exist, these standards shall govern.

Visual Buffers

Visual buffers are to be used where parking and service areas negatively affect views. Buffers may be architectural, such as walls or fences, or may be composed of plantings.

C54. Use visual buffers to screen parking lots.

- Where a separation in grade is not possible, or when screening a service area, incorporate a hedge, fence, or wall.
- Trees and shrubs may be used separately or together to form an intensive plant screen.
- Use evergreen or deciduous shrubs to create hedges or screens. Deciduous shrubs should have a dense branching structure that begins close to the ground.

Retaining Walls

Retaining walls should be aesthetically pleasing structures in the landscape. Retaining walls offer many possibilities for uses aside from their main function. Stepped, tiered, or terraced retaining walls for instance, can also serve as seating, planting beds or bases for signs.

C55. Construct retaining walls of materials that harmonize with the surroundings in the area where they are built.

- Textured concrete or rock-faced walls are encouraged. Brick may be considered as well.
- Railroad ties and other wood materials are not allowed.

Public Art

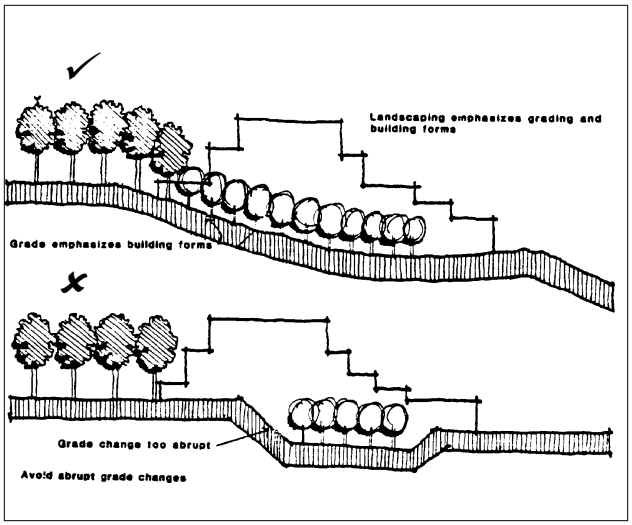
Public art should be encouraged throughout the area. Public art can help to establish a strong visual identity for the area in its entirety, and for individual neighborhoods.

C56. Where feasible, provide public art for buildings larger than 40,000 square feet as part of the development of the parcel.

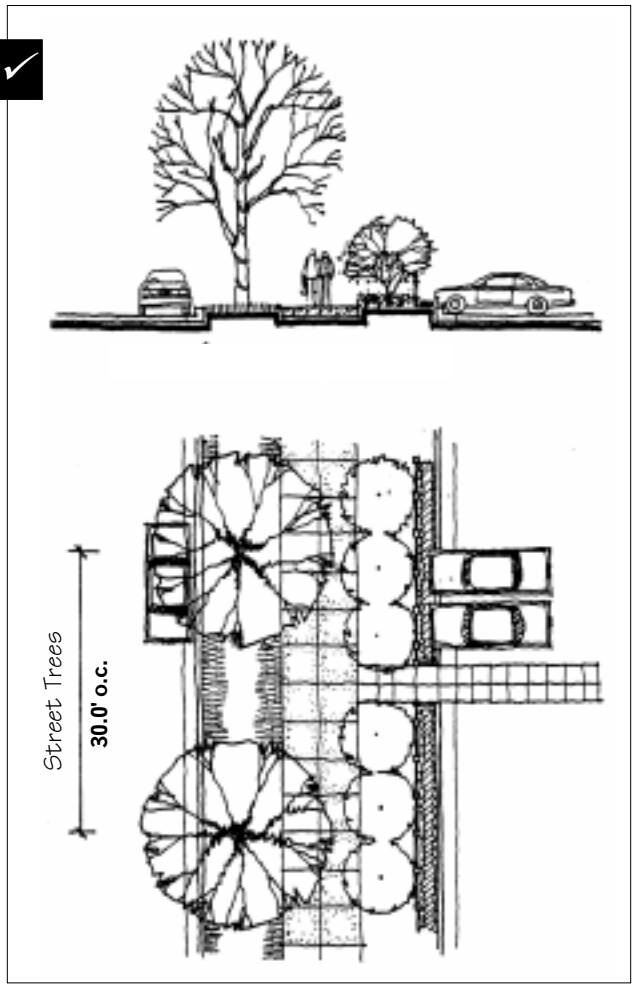
- Adjoining property owners are encouraged to develop shared artwork opportunities (i.e., in a shared plaza area).
- Locate the artwork so that it is reasonably visible or accessible to the public from a major street, or that is located at the building entrance.
- Gateways and special intersections are also excellent locations for public art.

Designing with the Topography

The natural contours of hillsides contribute to the distinct character of the Capitol Area and should be considered in site designs. Site plans should minimize the need for cut and fill. Where it does occur, it should be considered as an opportunity for positive enhancements through creative use of terracing and retaining walls.



Develop site designs to enhance existing contours.



The quantitative plant material requirements contained in Chapter 5.0, "Landscaping," of the City of Little Rock Site Development Code *should be followed.*

C57. Develop site designs to enhance existing contours.

- Where changes in grade occur, design them as positive enhancements.
- Terrace buildings and parking areas to follow the topographic contours.
- Incorporate landscaping and retaining walls to provide transitions between levels.
- Also, refer to Chapter 3. Excavation and Drainage, sections 3.5 Hillside Buffers, 3.6 Hillside Benches, & 3.7 Treatment of Excavation Areas from the *Site Development Guide*.

Plant Materials

C58. Drought tolerant plant species, native to the region and suitable to the climate in Little Rock, should be used.

- Use only recommended plant materials contained in Tables 5.1 and 5.3 in the *City of Little Rock Site Development Code*. The tables identify preferred species that are best suited in the Little Rock area and require the least maintenance.

Landscape Quantity Requirements

C59. The quantitative plant material requirements contained in Chapter 5.0, "Landscaping," of the *City of Little Rock Site Development Code* should be followed, with the following exceptions:

- Although parking lots located in front yards are discouraged, there are instances where this condition already exists. In this case, the parking lot should be screened from any adjacent streets with a minimum six foot wide landscaped zone containing one tree per every 30 linear feet of frontage and 3 shrubs per every 10 linear feet of frontage.
- Low walls or fences may also be included in this zone.

Parking Lot Landscaping

C60. Parking lots should be designed to blend with each building site's character using landscape plantings and grading.

- Parking lots are necessary features of building sites that can, if not designed properly, visually detract from the overall development character.
- Terrace parking lots on steep slopes.
- For parking lots in excess of 40 spaces, provide a minimum of one tree per 10 spaces within the parking lot.
- Landscape a minimum of ten percent (10%) of each total parking lot (excluding the perimeter landscaping).
- Utilize landscaped islands and medians to provide the definition of circulation patterns, provide shading for parked cars and break up continuous rows of parking.
- Section 5.10 of the site development guide addresses exceptions for landscaping within industrial sites, allowing parking in the front yard and reductions in the landscaped area required and in setbacks. These landscaping and parking exceptions for industrial sites will not be allowed in the Capitol Area.
- The use of innovative, state of the art porous paving systems which maximize infiltration of storm water into soils is encouraged, when appropriate maintenance is assured.
- The use of gravel in parking lots shall be limited to lots accommodating up to 20 parking spaces.