



SHAKER HEIGHTS

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR MULTI-FAMILY AND ATTACHED SINGLE-FAMILY INFILL HOUSING

Multi-family housing is an increasingly popular form of infill development in Shaker Heights because of the city's built-out nature, existing infrastructure and public transportation. Multi-family infill housing, depending on the zoning district, can include a wide range of building types, from two to three story, attached single-family residential units constructed in rows or blocks to multi-story apartment buildings. As with any type of infill development, it is very important that new multi-family and attached single-family infill housing coordinate with the existing context and minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

Purpose

These guidelines supplement the Shaker Heights Zoning Code, Architectural Board of Review Design Guidelines and Standards, Shaker Heights Fences Guide, and Shaker Village Colors Guide. New housing construction designs are also subject to review by the Shaker Heights Architectural Board of Review and the City Planning Commission.

The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that the design of new multi-family infill housing construction is suited to the site and the neighborhood and maintains the high quality of design that is characteristic of Shaker Heights.

Urban Design Goals

Working in tandem with the City's zoning and other requirements, the guidelines are meant to articulate and clarify the public interest in site design and built form in order to achieve good urban design.

- Protect and enhance the visual character of Shaker Heights.
- Enhance the relationship between new housing development and public streets and open spaces.
- Provide adequate and well-connected pedestrian access that links the development internally and with its surroundings.
- Maintain an appropriate overall scale and pattern of development within its context.
- Protect significant natural features such as mature vegetation and street trees.
- Maintain and enhance the attractiveness and desirability of neighborhoods through the use of high quality design and materials, including quality modern design elements.
- Ensure compatibility between new and existing development through the use of well-designed landscaping and screening.

Design Standards and Guidelines

1. **Street Accessibility and Layout.**
 - a. New multi-family and attached single-family infill developments should be accessible from existing public streets.
 - b. If new streets are required, they should be extended and integrated into the existing public street system.
 - i. New streets should be laid out to reduce the impact of additional traffic on surrounding neighborhoods and promote convenient and easy pedestrian access both to/from and through the site.
 - ii. Private streets should function like a public street providing address, landscaping, sidewalks, curbs and parking, where appropriate.
 - iii. Street designs are encouraged to incorporate traffic calming devices and techniques.
 - iv. Streets shall be laid out to allow emergency vehicle access.
 - v. Streets shall be laid out to connect to, and accommodate extension of, existing bicycle infrastructure and signage where appropriate.
2. **Building Location and Site Design.**
 - a. Buildings shall be located and oriented to respect the street context, to form street walls where appropriate, and to respect or create view corridors. These design principles are important to achieve a connection between new infill development and the surrounding neighborhoods.
 - i. Building entrances shall front onto existing or newly created streets.
 - ii. The main facade shall be parallel to the street and set in line with adjacent buildings.
 - iii. Corner buildings shall respect the neighborhood context along both streets.
 - b. Buildings shall be designed and arranged to define public and private spaces with open views and surveillance for public areas and privacy for private areas.
 - c. Buildings and sites shall be designed to emphasize pedestrian scale, human scale architecture, and landscaping.
 - d. Multi-family development sites shall be designed to accommodate bicycles and provide bicycle parking for residents and visitors (and should be covered where appropriate).
3. **Building Envelope.**
 - a. The placement and massing of structures shall form a unified comprehensive development of the premises.
 - b. The existing architecture of the surrounding structures and neighborhood must be carefully considered when designing new infill residential structures.
 - c. All structures shall be designed in a high quality manner. Designs should not be monotonous, and should show variation in character.

- d. Special accommodations may be made for high quality contemporary/modern design when it reflects and relates to the context in which the new development is located.
 - e. All sides of a building open to view by the public shall display a similar level of architectural quality, and shall be subdivided and proportioned using features such as windows, entrances, awnings, or other such features.
 - f. Wherever feasible, buildings shall be designed to provide massing configurations with a variety of different wall planes. Blank walls are prohibited, even along parking garages. Expanses of walls over 20 feet in length shall be broken up by columns, bays, piers, undulation and windows, and other architectural features that establish a pedestrian scale.
 - g. Buildings shall be designed with other interesting design features such as changes in wall projections, roof height, brick coursing, changes in material and projections of windows or other architectural features.
 - h. There should be a clear, well-defined sense of entry from the street to each building.
 - i. For attached single-family units, a front entry stoop is preferred. Landscaping between the public sidewalk and private home is required. Appropriate alternative designs will be considered to accommodate accessibility/visitability.
 - ii. For multi-family buildings, the building shall include a distinctive entry featuring an awning, portico, or similar entry feature.
 - i. For attached single-family structures, windows that replicate single-family residential windows are required along the first floor on all elevations. When windows that are designed with grids are used on front or street-facing facades, simulated or true divided lights are preferred.
 - j. If shutters are used, shutter sizes must be proportionately correct. They should each be half the width of the window opening such that the entire window is covered when they are closed.
 - k. Buildings shall have well defined rooflines with attention to architectural detail. Consideration should be given to the prevailing pattern of roofs in the area surrounding and within the district.
 - l. Sloping roofs shall have one or more of the following architectural features: gables, hips, horizontal or vertical breaks, or other similar techniques that are integrated into the building architecture.
 - m. Skylights should be located where they will not be visible from the street. If the area can be seen from the street, dormers should be used instead.
4. Building Materials.
- a. Buildings shall be constructed of quality exterior surface materials.
 - b. Attached single-family structures shall comply with the following requirements:
 - i. Each elevation that faces a street shall consist of a minimum of 60 percent masonry, excluding windows. Masonry includes standard size brick, cultured stone, and architectural pre-cast concrete. The balance of the elevations may

- be constructed of wood siding, fiber cement siding, stucco, wood shingle or other natural materials approved by the Architectural Board of Review.
 - ii. Side elevations shall have a 2-foot 0-inch return of masonry where they abut a masonry wall. The remainder shall be faced with brick, stucco, fiber cement board, wood shingles or wood siding.
 - iii. Rear elevations shall have a 2-foot 0-inch return of masonry where they abut a masonry wall. The remainder shall be faced with brick, stucco, fiber cement board, wood shingles or wood siding. The Architectural Board of Review may approve vinyl siding where appropriate.
 - iv. Roofs shall be made of architectural grade fiberglass shingles or natural materials such as slate or shake. Metal roofs may be used, if determined to be appropriate by the Architectural Board of Review.
 - c. Apartment buildings shall comply with the following requirements:
 - i. Each elevation that faces a street shall consist of a minimum of 50 percent masonry, excluding windows. Masonry includes standard size brick, cultured stone, and architectural pre-cast concrete. The balance of the elevations may be constructed of wood siding, fiber cement siding, stucco, wood shingle, glass, metal or other natural materials approved by the Architectural Board of Review. A standard-size concrete product which simulates common size brick in terms of color, texture, size, and grout may be used if it is approved by staff and the Architectural Board of Review.
 - ii. Rear and side elevations shall have a 2-foot 0-inch return of masonry where they abut a masonry wall. The remainder shall be faced with brick, stucco, fiber cement board, wood shingles or wood siding.
 - iii. Roofs shall be made of architectural grade fiberglass shingles or natural materials such as slate or shake. Metal roofs may be used, if determined appropriate by the Architectural Board of Review. Flat roofs may be asphalt or rubber.
 - d. For contemporary architecture, the Architectural Board of Review may approve glass, metal or other similar materials.
 - e. Prohibited materials include: vinyl lap siding on front or street-facing facades, aluminum lap siding, dryvit-type products on the lowest 8 feet of any facade, concrete block, oversized brick, utility brick, split faced block, all brick units larger than common brick units.
- 5. Garages.
 - a. Attached garages are preferred.
 - b. Garage doors are prohibited on front or street-facing facades.
- 6. Pedestrian Circulation.
 - a. The development shall be designed with a coordinated pedestrian system (sidewalks and/or pedestrian paths) that provides access to the primary entrances to buildings, guest parking and development amenities.

- b. Sidewalks and walkways shall be designed to provide clear sight lines and direct links to the public sidewalk.
- c. Public sidewalks must be constructed along perimeter streets if not present.
- d. Pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures shall be provided along all sidewalks and walkways to provide ample lighting during nighttime hours.

7. Landscaping and Screening.

- a. A landscaping plan shall be submitted for the entire site. The standards contained in the Zoning Code are considered to be minimum standards for new infill development, with additional landscaping provided where needed to mitigate off-site visual impacts or to improve the internal landscaping on the site.
- b. All areas of the development not devoted to impervious surfaces shall be landscaped with appropriate trees, shrubs, ground cover and grass.
- c. All reasonable efforts shall be made to preserve significant healthy trees and existing green space, including sensible and preventive construction practices, and wherever possible should integrate existing natural attributes and topography in the design of the new development through minor changes to the placement and design of buildings and paving.
- d. In areas where vegetation is removed or harmed, trees, shrubs, ground cover and grass shall be amply planted to restore natural buffers.
- e. New development shall provide open space required by the zoning district in which the development is located.
- f. Landscaping shall be well maintained; an irrigation system shall be installed in common areas where necessary. An irrigation system is not required for private yards and patios.
- g. Appropriate buffer or transition to existing buildings may be required based on the distance between the new and existing buildings and the differences in scale and density.
- h. A year round visual screen shall be provided between the site and any adjacent single family uses.
- i. Entryways shall be planted with ornamental plant materials such as ornamental trees, flowering shrubs, and perennials, and ground covers.
- j. Landscaping should be designed and constructed to promote on-site water management and infiltration through the use of native plants and porous landscape detention, swales, and filter strips.

8. Signs. Project signs shall be limited to major entry points.

9. Sustainability Guidelines.

- a. Minimize environmental and city infrastructure impacts through careful selection of materials, building siting, use of alternative energy sources and storm water management techniques.
- b. Semi-pervious paving materials, such as permeable pavers, porous asphalt or porous concrete, are encouraged for new streets, sidewalks, driveways and off-street parking

so as to permit natural percolation of water. Such materials shall be installed and maintained in accordance with industry and manufacturer standards and the following:

- i. The manufacturer's specifications are applicable to the subject property's particular soil type and slope (gradient) so that vehicles are supported without rutting and water percolation is achieved.
 - ii. Semi-pervious streets and parking areas must allow storm water to percolate into the ground at a rate sufficient to accommodate the five-year, 24-hour storm event.
 - c. To the maximum extent practicable, new buildings are encouraged to incorporate one or more of the following features:
 - i. Low-Impact Development (LID) stormwater management features; designed for on-site stormwater mitigation through low impact development techniques as approved by the City Planning Commission.
 - ii. Energy-efficient materials, including recycled materials that meet the requirements of this Code.
 - d. Alternative energy systems such as solar and geothermal are encouraged, and should be placed in a manner that limits negative visual impacts when viewed from adjacent property or the public right-of-way.
 - i. Alternative energy systems installed on a structure should be located in the least visible location when viewed from the public right-of-way or appropriately incorporated into the design of the structure. For example, solar panels installed on the front roof should be considered as part of the overall building design and the shape and proportions of the solar array should match the shape and proportions of the roof.
 - ii. Ground-mounted systems shall be located in a side or rear yard or appropriately incorporated into the design and landscaping of the site.
 - e. Consideration should be given to the provision of electric vehicle charging station(s).
10. Accessibility/Visitability.
 - a. A portion of dwelling units in an attached single-family infill or multi-family development should be designed with accessibility/visitability features, such as at least one zero-step entrance (which can be any door that provides access to the primary entry level), wide interior and exterior door openings (minimum clear opening of 32-inches) and a half-bathroom on the primary entry level.
 - b. Dwelling units are encouraged to incorporate universal design features, especially units with a first floor master bedroom, in order to increase the ability of occupants to age in place.