The Town of Ashland City

Design Review Manual

Fire, Building & Life Safety Department

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Basis for the Standards 1
1.2 Actions Subject to Design Review 2
1.3 Purpose of this Manual 2
1.4 Goals for Community Appearance and Character 3

2. DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS 4
2.1 Site Layout 4
2.2 Grading, Drainage, and Topsoil Preservation 5
2.3 Preservation of Existing Trees and Site Features 6
2.4 Architectural Character 7
2.5 Parking Configurations 9
2.6 Landscape 11
2.7 Screening 14
2.8 Pedestrian Circulation 17
2.9 Lighting 17
2.10 Signage 18

3. PROCEDURES 18
3.1 Submission Requirements 18
3.2 Review Process 19

4. DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST 21

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS 23
5.1 Intent and Purpose 23
5.2 Role of the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission.....23
5.3 Design Review Manual 23

6. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS 24
6.1 Development Subject to Design Review 24
6.2 Development Exempt from Design Review 25
6.3 Design Review Applications and Processing 25
6.4 Design Review Standards 26
6.5 Design Districts 26
6.6 Public Works 27
6.7 Application; Vested Rights 27
6.8 Continuing Maintenance 27
6.9 Prohibitions 28

7. EFFECTIVE DATE 29

Design Review District Map.....Exhibit "A"

1. INTRODUCTION

Ashland City's environment is its most important asset, in seeking to attract residents, businesses and employment opportunities. Its natural environment sets a demanding standard; the lakes and rolling hillsides provide an unparalleled setting for places to live, shop and work. However, as Ashland City has grown rapidly to a community of more than 3,600 residents, some of the buildings and areas developed have not received sufficient attention in their quality. The purpose of this manual is to promulgate a set of design standards for new development in the city, aimed at ensuring that Ashland City lives up to its residents' aspirations.

1.1 BASIS FOR THE STANDARDS

Article I of Ashland City's Zoning Ordinance outlines several basic purposes of design review:

1. enhancing the character and stability of residential, business, commercial, and industrial areas, and promoting the orderly and beneficial development of such areas;
2. preventing the overcrowding of land;
3. conserving the value of land and buildings;
4. minimizing traffic hazards and congestion;
5. preventing undue concentration of population;
6. providing for adequate light, air, privacy, and sanitation;
7. reducing hazards from fire, flood, and other dangers;
8. assisting in the economic provision, utilization, and expansion of all services provided by the public, including but not limited to roads, water and sewer services, recreation, schools, and emergency services;
9. encouraging the most appropriate uses of land; and
10. enhancing the natural, man-made and historical amenities of Ashland City, Tennessee.

The standards, which follow, translate these purposes into guidelines for design. This manual also outlines the process which applicants must follow to seek approval of their projects by the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission.

1.2 ACTIONS SUBJECT TO DESIGN REVIEW

Development, which includes any commercial or industrial buildings, structures or physical improvements or changes to land, is subject to design review if:

1. Approval of the development is conditioned upon either:

   - Site plan or plot plan approval under Article III of the Zoning Ordinance involving either a new structure or external modification to an existing structure totaling an increase of more than 50% of the assessed value of the structure as per Cheatham County Tax Records.
   - Final planned unit development master development plan approval, unless the plan envisions the construction of only one- and two-family dwellings.
   - Approval of special exceptions or conditional uses under Article IV of the Zoning Ordinance involving either a new structure or an external modification to an existing structure totaling an increase of more than 50% or ground floor space or 50% of the total assessed value of the structure as per Cheatham County Tax Records.

2. The development being a public building or improvement to a public building which the City has authority to regulate. Any other governmental entity should comply with the exception of State and Federal projects.

All developments meeting these criteria as shown on the Design District Map, Exhibit "A" are subject to design review.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This Manual explains the goals and standards which the Planning Commission will apply in reviewing proposals. It does not reproduce all of the specific requirements stated in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, or other applicable development standards and regulations. Applicants are advised to consult all such documents prior to preparing plans. The Manual is intended to complement these ordinances and regulations and explain graphically what is intended. In the event that there appear to be differences between the manual and the Code or other standards adopted by the Planning Commission, the more stringent standard shall apply.

While this Manual requires that all submittals adhere to the stated letter of the law, variances to the design requirements cited herein may be filed according to the procedures indicated in Section 6.3 of this manual. Under no circumstances shall variances be granted in contradistinction to the basic intent of this Manual and/or to the Municipal Zoning Ordinance, its enabling

mechanism. Variances are to be granted only in those cases where unique and peculiar circumstances lead to unnecessary hardships. The burden of demonstrating that the plan is appropriate falls upon the applicant.

Design review will occur in parallel with other reviews of a project mandated by present requirements, with consistent materials used for all reviews. The Design Review Process is described step by step in Section 3 of this Manual. Where site plan review is required, Design Review will occur at the same time. Where the applicant is requesting final master plan approval under PUD regulations, plans will also be simultaneously subject to the standards of Design Review.

1.4 GOALS FOR COMMUNITY APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER

Certain standards about Ashland City's appearance and character are widely shared by its residents. These provide the basis for the specific standards included in this manual:

1. Natural Character. Ashland City's natural character should be preserved and enhanced with new development. Especially important are retaining mature trees and vegetation, maintaining topography, preserving important views to the lakes and other natural features, and ensuring that new buildings sit within a generously landscaped setting.

2. Compatibility. New buildings should be compatible with their neighbors, assuming that neighboring structures are a credit to the community. That does not imply uniformity of architectural style; rather, a sympathetic response to the height, scale, materials, color, site location and other aspects of nearby structures.

3. Orderly Public Realm. The city's character is largely formed by the appearance of its important streets. How public and private elements of the streetscape relate to each other provides a sense of order -- public roadways, shoulders and medians, utility lines, and traffic signage in relationship to private landscaping, parking areas, building facades and signage. Scrutiny of what may be seen from public ways should be most intense, while less visible private areas of sites should be more at the landowners discretion.

4. Restrained Communications. Private signage and advertising should be restrained and not detract from the sense of a continuous landscape. The principal purpose of on-site signage is to identify establishments, and to direct those seeking to visit them safely and efficiently to their destination. Signage that is limited in size and set in a strongly landscaped surrounding can be more effective than a cacophony of uncontrolled messages.

5. Diversity of Opportunity. Ashland City wishes to continue to attract diverse housing types, services and other community attractions. In reviewing plans and proposals, it does not wish to rule out particular uses because of costs or burdens imposed. Rather, it wishes to work with developers and builders to find a formula for creating uses that are economically viable as well as harmonious with the community environment.

6. Residential Privacy. The sense of privacy of residential areas should be protected, especially from nuisances created by adjacent uses, such as noise, traffic, high lighting levels, and uncontrolled access. Within residential areas, there should be maximum privacy of individual units.

7. History. References to Ashland City's past -- both its natural and settlement history -- should be preserved wherever possible. These include: artifacts such as rock fences, walls, historic cemeteries and archaeological sites; structures more than 50 years old; and traces of prior fields and land subdivision.

8. Utilitarian Elements. As a way of reducing disorder and emphasizing the human environment, utilitarian elements should be masked or located out of public view. These include mechanical equipment on buildings, transformers, meters, refuse stations, electric wiring and service areas.

2. DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

2.1 SITE LAYOUT

1. Site Coverage

Sites should not be covered completely with impermeable surfaces which prevent percolation of water back into the soil and can cause erosion, street flooding, or overloading of storm sewer systems. A minimum of 15% of the site shall be devoted to permeable surfaces, with 10% of the sites vehicular use area or parking area being devoted to landscaping. This will also ensure that buildings are set in a strong landscape.

2. Building Setbacks

Building setbacks provide dimension to the public realm along streets. In areas where there is a consistent setback line, new structures should conform to it. In areas where setbacks vary, buildings should be set back the average distance of adjacent buildings within 100 feet of the proposed structure.

Large unbroken expanses of paving between the street and building are discouraged. Required side yard areas should also be landscaped.

3. Streets, Entries and Curb Cuts

Where any building within a subdivision or site plan borders on or contains an existing or proposed arterial street, a marginal access or frontage road (separated from the arterial street by a planting or grass strip and having access thereto at suitable points) may be required. Moreover, all streets shall be properly integrated with the existing and proposed system of roads and dedicated rights of way as established by the Major Thoroughfare Plan.

Entries to sites from public streets should be clear, controlled and safe. Continuous curb cuts confuse circulation of automobiles as well as destroying the Pedestrian environment, and reduce opportunities for landscaping. Ashland City's Zoning Ordinance establishes specific standards for the location and design of curb cuts and site entries.

The number and width of curb cuts along a property should be the minimum necessary for effective on and off-site traffic circulation. As a guide, no more than one curb cut should occur in each 100 feet of frontage. Combined or shared entries between properties are encouraged on all collector streets, and required on all arterial streets. If two entries are needed, a one-way system should be considered to reduce curb cut area and maximize parking area.

Curb cuts should be no wider than needed to meet standards. They should be limited to 30 feet for residential uses and commercial uses, 45 feet for industrial uses.

Greater detail pertaining to the design of ingress/egress points is contained in Section 3.090 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance.

2.2 GRADING, DRAINAGE, AND TOPSOIL PRESERVATION

1. Topography

Building, parking and service areas should be sighted in a manner which minimizes disruption of the existing topography. Where there is mature existing vegetation on a site, changes in topography and runoff patterns should be minimized.

The volume of cuts and fills on a site should be balanced, so that transportation of soil off or onto the site will be minimized.

The maximum allowable landscaped slope created by cut or fill is 1:3 vertical to horizontal. To provide a stable slope for soil and plant materials, less steep slopes or terracing is necessary.

2. Overland Drainage and Detention

Overland drainage and detention are encouraged, to recharge groundwater and minimize loads on storm sewerage facilities.

The rate of peak runoff at site boundaries shall not increase from that prior to development.

Landscaped retention/detention areas shall be created where possible to collect runoff from paved areas. Such areas must be treated as visual amenities for the site, and not as utilitarian or unkept areas. If retention is chosen, then the area shall be considered as an amenity and must be landscaped. If detention is chosen, then the area shall be considered a service area and be screened from view. All landscape beds shall have a minimum of 6" of topsoil. If 6" is not present, topsoil shall be brought on site and placed on landscape beds.

3. Topsoil Stabilization

Topsoil shall not be removed from sites or used in spoil, unless the amount of excess topsoil is not needed for landscaping. Topsoil shall be saved during construction and then placed over landscaped areas at a depth of at least 6".

2.3 PRESERVATION OF EXISTING TREES AND SITE FEATURES

1. Trees are protected within the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance, Article 3.150.

2. Retention of Site Features

A natural setting is one of Ashland City's attractive qualities. Streams, wetlands, large rock outcrops, stands of native vegetation, fence rows, rock walls, cemeteries and other notable natural features must be located on the site plan and preserved wherever possible.

Bands of trees, such as fencerows, that would not otherwise be wind-firm when left as individuals should be maintained as an effective screen and wind buffer.

2.4 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

1. Compatibility with Surroundings and Facades, Massings and Roofs for Building

Buildings shall avoid long, uninterrupted façade planes. The maximum permitted width of an uninterrupted façade plane shall be 50 ft.

Buildings shall have a defined base and cap.

Window and door openings shall have a vertical orientation and shall be vertically aligned between floors.

Rear and side facades, if visible from public streets, shall be similar to the primary façade in their architectural treatment.

Blank walls facing streets shall be avoided.

Where a clearly established development character and scale exits, new infill development should include: a) window and door openings with area ratios and proportions similar to those on adjoining buildings, b) key design elements of surrounding buildings with respect to windows, door, rhythm of bays, detailing, roof forms, materials and colors.

Roof forms shall be appropriate to a building's design and scale. Flat roofs or low-pitched roofs with parapet walls are encouraged for larger commercial buildings. Alternative roof forms may be used if appropriate for a particular acceptable architectural style.

A particular roof form shall be applied to the entire roof, rather than terminating at less visible points, such as the building's rear.

Roofs that are visible from the road shall be finished with colors and features consistent with the architecture of the façade.

Building forms should be tailored to fit within the existing topography and site features as much as possible.

In most cases, buildings are not viewed in isolation, but rather in the context of other buildings. While architectural style may vary, buildings of a proposed development shall be compatible with surrounding buildings with regard to massing, scale, proportion of openings, roof types, types of glazed openings, and degree of detail.

The use of materials and colors compatible with buildings adjacent to a site is required.

The use of materials and colors on buildings and structures, which are along arterial streets, are to create a unified appearance. The elevation of the buildings and structures visible from the arterial street shall not include standard block, metal siding and vinyl.

The following are acceptable as exterior materials: brick (maybe required as an accent only), limestone, tile, plaster, stucco, glass and glazing, EIFS architectural pre-cast and split face block. Ground face masonry may be used as an accent only.

Rooftop units shall be screened from all views and shall be compatible in color and material with the overall building material palette.

Primary façade materials shall not change at outside corners. Material changes shall happen along a horizontal line or where two forms meet. It is acceptable, however, for a change of materials as accents around windows, doors, cornice lines, at building corners, or in a repetitive pattern.

Synthetic stucco (EIFS) may be used at any point 2 feet above the exterior grade level. This standard will limit the exposure of this material to ground-level wear and tear.

Exterior colors will be earth tones and compatible with adjacent properties. Subdued, muted colors are permitted; bright colors are acceptable on a limited basis as accent or contrast.

Translucent or back-lot canopies and awnings are prohibited.

Dumpsters shall be screened on 3 sides, enclosures shall be of materials and color matching the primary structure they serve and shall be a minimum of 2 ft. higher than the dumpster being screened. The access side shall not be visible from public roads or parking areas.

Prototype or franchise designs shall be designed to reflect these design standards.

Chain-link fencing provided in a commercial area shall be vinyl coated and of a black or dark green color.

Metal siding may be allowed in Industrial Zones that are not visible from an arterial street.

2. Adapting Prototypical Designs to Particular Sites

National "standard" designs should be adapted to reflect the Ashland City context, by careful sitting, use of compatible materials, and landscaping of the site so that it blends with is surroundings.

3. Relationship to Streets

Buildings shall be oriented such that their main entrances are visible from streets, unless the characteristics of the site and/or surrounding structures cause this to be an unnecessary hardship.

"Stage-set" facades on the street are not allowed. The materials and colors of the street face shall continue on the sides and rear of structures.

Building service areas or loading areas shall be located away from streets and/or be adequately screened. Screening shall meet criteria identified in Section 2.7.3 of this Manual.

Mechanical equipment on roofs or sides of buildings shall be adequately screened.

Landscaping with generous planting shall define the street edge and entries of a development, as well as building entries.

2.5 PARKING CONFIGURATIONS

1. Efficiency of Parking Areas

To allow space for landscaping and site improvements without significantly reducing the potential number of parking spaces on a site, efficient configuration of entries, circulation, and layout is required.

In 90 and 60 degree parking configurations, the dimension of two bays of parking and a moving lane shall be 62 feet minimum. Angled parking dimensions of 30 and 45 degrees shall have 12 foot driving lanes for one way movement, and 18 foot driving lanes for two-way movement. However, if driving lanes also serve as designated fire lanes, they must be a minimum of 22 feet in width.

For commercial uses of greater than 20,000 square feet, driveways to parking areas shall be no more than 34 feet wide, unless a traffic report verifies the need for additional lanes.

Adjoining parking lots serving nonresidential buildings shall be interconnected between sites.

Perimeter and internal landscaping shall be aligned to create "green edges" necessary to define parking lots.

Trees shall be retained in parking areas. Tree wells may be used to permit changes in grade while protecting trees and their root systems.

Small lots or those with narrow front yards shall be required to develop one-way angle parking configurations, with curb cuts narrower than the maximums noted above for entry and exit lanes as long as such cuts are not less than 25 feet in width.

2. Reduce Apparent Size and Visibility of Parking Areas

Parking areas shall be split between the front and back of a lot, or along the side of a building to reduce the paving at the street face if possible.

To mitigate the negative microclimate and visual impacts of parking areas, a minimum of 10% of a sites parking area or vehicular use area within this area and immediately adjacent to this area must be landscaped.

Lines of parking spaces shall have a limited run: there shall be no more than 15 contiguous parking spaces between landscaped islands within all commercial zones.

Retention of existing trees located in parking areas is strongly encouraged. Tree wells may be used if necessary, to allow for changes in grade while protecting the tree.

The minimum width of a landscaped zone is 5 feet, excluding curb dimensions. The pooling of such landscaped areas to create more significant landscape zones shall be required.

The minimum area of a landscaped zone is 64 square feet. For every 250 square feet of landscape area, one tree must be planted. These 250 square foot landscaped areas or zones shall be saturated with profuse groundcover and/or brushes and shrubs. Grass in and of itself shall not be considered as meeting these landscaping requirements.

3. Design of Parking Configuration Within I-1, I-2 and I-3 Districts

Within Industrial Districts there is no requirement for interior landscape islands or a limit on rows of continuous parking spaces unless frontage is on an arterial street. The ratio of landscaped area per square foot of paved area is 8% unless frontage is on an arterial street. Basic plantings around the foundation of the building and at all entrances into the site are required. For every 250 square feet of landscaped area one tree must be planted.

4. Fit Parking Areas to Site Topography

On sloping sites, lines of parking spaces should run parallel to site contours, with planted medians taking up any excessive slope. Paved parking areas or vehicular space areas shall not exceed a 5% slope.

The detention of runoff within parking areas or in adjacent landscaped areas is encouraged. Runoff from parking areas shall not sheet onto public streets or sidewalks.

2.6 LANDSCAPE

1. Landscape Areas

Landscape beds or areas which meet the 10% requirement as referenced in Section 2.5.2 should be located along the public boundaries of the site, within parking areas, and around buildings, and at building entries to create a sense of the buildings set in natural surroundings. All sides of a building visible from public streets shall have some foundation plantings. Planting beds shall be consolidated into areas large enough to give a natural character to a site, rather than distributed in thin ribbons. The minimum area of a landscape bed or zone shall be 64 square feet. These beds or zones shall be clearly delineated on site plan with square footage provided.

Areas with natural vegetation should be preserved along property boundaries, whenever possible.

When absolutely necessary to remove a tree having a caliper of 4 inches or more, the tree shall be replaced on a site as near as practical to where the tree was removed. Replacement shall match the tree's caliper by reaching an equivalent multiple, not to exceed 50 percent of the supplemental caliper requirements for the property, e.g., a 24-inch caliper tree could be replaced by six 4 inch caliper trees. This replacement would be in addition to normal landscape requirements.

2. Streetscape

A consistent landscape treatment along public streets enhances the appearance of the public domain, and provides an attractive unified setting for variations among individual developments. Landscaped areas shall dominate the frontage of any site, where entries are the only interruptions.

All site boundaries fronting onto streets must have a landscape zone, with a minimum width of 5 feet. It is required that a mixture of shrubs and trees be planted in this zone. Trees shall be planted behind the sidewalk unless the walk is set back at least 5 feet from the back of the curb and there are no imminent plans for street widening.

Trees planted in sidewalk zones must be surrounded by a protective grate or, a planted zone must be provided to allow water to reach the roots, with minimum dimensions of 5 feet by 5 feet.

3. Plant Materials

Ashland City displays a robust ecosystem, with a variety of native plant materials. The use of these hardy and attractive native species in developments is encouraged.

Plant materials shall be installed at a reasonable size, to provide a sense of presence and to mitigate microclimate impacts caused by development.

Street trees shall be large enough when installed to have some presence while allowing views to sites and branching above pedestrians walking along the sidewalk. Trees along arterial streets are to be no smaller that 3 - 3 1/2" caliper. Trees along collector and minor streets shall be no smaller than 2 - 2 1/2" caliper. All caliper measurements are taken at least one foot above the ground level.

Within a site, deciduous shade trees shall be 2 - 2 1/2" caliper; evergreen trees shall be 5' - 6' in height and heavily sheared; deciduous ornamental trees shall have a caliper of at least 1 1/4". No more than 25% of site trees may be comprised of ornamental trees.

Special consideration will be given on a site-by-site basis for various species to be used for street trees in areas where there are inherent, pre-existing height limitations, such as power lines, electric poles, etc., which act as deterrent to growth.

Upright shrubs shall be at least 24-inches high; spreading shrubs shall have a minimum spread of 18".

Grass areas shall be of sod or established lawn at the time of issuance of a permanent use and occupancy permit. A temporary use and occupancy permit may be issued if lawn is not established. Sod is required on 2:1 slopes, or greater which are clearly visible from the street or public parking areas.

All landscape zones and plantings installed by the developer shall be in compliance with all planting notes. Size and species identified in the required planting list shall be as specified, unless otherwise approved by Planning Commission prior to installation.

All species and size of species shall be in conformance with the American Standard for Nursery Stock developed by the American Association of Nurserymen, Inc.

Trees shall be planted along streets at least 40-feet on center with relatively even spacing. If frontages exceed a multiple of 40-feet, an additional tree should be planted along the street, eg: a frontage of 50-feet shall contain two trees. Frontage of 130-feet shall have four trees.

All trees located in Heavy Industrial (I-3) Districts shall be on 60-foot centers.

To provide a consistent effect along Ashland City's arterial street the preferred street tree species is Sugar Maple and Ash.

To provide a consistent effect along all other collector and local (minor) streets, the preferred street tree species are Marshalls Seedless Ash, Willow Oak, London Plan, Red Maple, and Sawtooth Oak.

In an effort to minimize the visual impact of parking areas in commercial zones, shrub rows shall be planted at a minimum height of 24" along the boundaries of any parking area visible from public streets, 5' on centers. Species used shall be evergreen.

The streetscape area (landscape area or zone adjacent to any public street) shall be to a depth of 5' adjacent to the full boundary of all lot line adjacent to a public street. Street trees shall be located within the streetscape area.

4. Maintenance

Following the construction or modification of any development the design of which is approved pursuant to this Manual, the development shall be maintained in accordance with the following standards:

(A) Buildings and appurtenances, including signs, shall be cleaned and painted or repaired as required to maintain an attractive appearance;

(B) Illuminated elements of buildings and signs shall be replaced as required to maintain the effect for which designed;

(C) Landscape materials, other than plantings, which are dead or have deteriorated shall be reconstituted or replaced to the same specifications as are shown on the approved site plan.

(D) Plantings shall be kept watered, fed, cultivated, and pruned to give a healthy appearance during all seasons. Plant materials which have deteriorated shall be replaced with healthy plantings. Excessive pruning of site and street trees is strictly prohibited (no topping).

(E) Parking areas shall be kept in an orderly state, properly marked, and clear of litter and debris; and

(F) Vacant property shall be kept free of refuse and debris, and shall have the vegetation cut periodically during the growing season.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this section after a notice of noncompliance has been issued by the Zoning Administrator, accompanied or followed by a stated time frame for compliance shall be deemed a violation of the Zoning ordinance and shall be subject to the sanctions set forth in Article VII, Section 7.100 as well as to the revocation of any permit, license, certificate or other approval initially issued by the City as a basis for construction and/or occupancy of the development on which the violation has occurred.

2.7 SCREENING

1. Conditions for Screening

Screening requirements vary by their purpose. Three types of screening conditions are distinguished:

- Transitions between land uses;

- Privacy separations between streets and individual sites, such as on double-fronted lots and multifamily yards; and
- Nuisance screening for service and loading areas, dumpsters, materials storage areas, utility boxes, etc.

2. Performance Criteria

Screens are intended to provide visual and physical separation of conflicting uses, and should be designed to fit within their surroundings, not dominate the view.

Buffers shall be required when any incompatible use is being developed abutting an existing developed lot or vacant area. The arrangement of trees and shrubs in the buffer area shall be done in a manner that provides year-round visual separation between abutting land uses. Shrubs shall be massed in rows or groups to achieve the maximum screening effect. At least 40% of required trees within the buffer shall be classified as canopy trees. At least 25% of all trees within the buffer shall be evergreen. Understory trees may be used where conflict with overhead lines may occur. All trees shall have a minimum caliper of two inches.

Screens should not compromise safety by blocking vision at intersections. They shall not be placed within 75 feet of any street intersection as referenced in Section 3.080 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance and shall not be placed so as to obstruct visibility of vehicles entering or leaving driveways.

Screens shall not block access to any above ground pad mounted transformer, and should provide 15 feet of clear access to the transformer doors.

Screens shall not impede or divert the flow of water in any drainage way.

Fence screening of service areas shall be at least 6 feet in height.

3. Design Standards

Design standards vary according to the function of the screen, as follows:

Transitional Screening. Transitional screening is required where commercial or industrial uses adjoin residential areas, where multi-family residential or mobile home sites adjoin one or two family housing zones, and within Planned Unit Developments with similar adjacencies.

Transitional screening shall consist as a densely planted buffer strip at least 10 feet in width, designed to form an effective buffer in all seasons. Wherever possible, mature natural vegetation shall be retained in such areas and, if necessary, supplemented by new vegetation to screen sight lines. Consideration shall be given on a site by site basis for the removal of existing vegetation.

At the discretion of the Planning Commission, opaque barrier 6 feet in height may be required to be located within the buffer strip. This shall consist of a fence or wall of opaque or translucent materials resistant to deterioration by natural causes, or it shall be of continuous evergreen plant materials. Within the buffer strip, trees shall be planted on 20' centers with 3' offset. See definitional "Buffer Strip" in the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance.

Where areas adjoining residential zones are likely to be used for truck loading, storage or driveways, the transitional zone must provide protection through use of earth berms or solid masonry materials.

Where lighted parking areas are located adjacent to residential zones, lighting shall be designed to minimize illumination across the boundary, and the transitional buffer must screen headlights.

Nuisance Screening. To reinforce the sense of natural surroundings and a consistent streetscape, auto service functions such as areas to store cars while they are being repaired, auto or truck work areas, truck loading docks, and garage door areas in commercial or retail areas shall be screened from public view.

Garbage collection areas shall be enclosed by opaque materials on all four sides, with doors to remove containers. Where dumpsters are enclosed, the screening shall be at least 2 feet taller than the dumpster. Where topography may expose interiors of garbage collection areas to view, screening shall be correspondingly taller. Landscape plantings are required around three sides of all dumpster screens to soften the effect of fencing.

Propane tanks, gas meters, electric meters, utilities meters, backflow devices, and ground-mounted air conditioning or mechanical units shall be hidden from public view by screening.

At the discretion of the Planning Commission screening requirements may however be relaxed where areas are located so they are not visible from public streets or adjacent properties.

4. Required Plant Materials for Screening

Evergreen plants are recommended for effective year-round screening. Required evergreen trees and shrubs include: Arborvitae, Hetzi Juniper, White Pine, Red Pine, and Yew. Required broadleaf evergreen shrubs include: Red-Tipped Photinia, Euonymous, and Holly (Notably Foster Holly).

A limited number of ornamental shrubs and trees may also be used for screening, preferably in combination with evergreen plantings or fencing. Suggested ornamental shrubs include: Red-Tipped Photinia, Willowood Viburnum, upright Hollies, and large flowering shrubs. Suggested ornamental tree species include: Flowering Crab, Dogwood, Magnolia, and Purple Leaf Plum.

2.8 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

1. Sidewalks, a minimum of 4 feet wide, shall be provided on all streets if any portion of the commercial subdivision is located within one-thousand (1,000) feet of any public facility, i.e. library, school, recreational area, or adjacent to residential areas.

2.9 LIGHTING

1. Design Criteria

To reduce adverse impacts on adjacent sites and minimize energy consumption, lighting shall be carefully located and its intensity shall be the minimum necessary for safety.

Lighting levels shall be as even as possible.

Light fixtures, which cast light primarily downward, shall be used.

Warm lighting colors are required; blue-white color is prohibited.

2. Site and Parking Area Lighting

Site or parking area lighting shall not cast light beyond property boundaries. Cut-off devices shall be used to avoid throw onto adjacent sites, and the performance standards cited in the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance as apply to off-site glare shall be followed.

Lighting levels within commercial sites should vary according to the land use, fixture height and spacing. A range 0.5 - 1.0 foot candles is required for commercial developments.

The total height of fixtures should be in proportion to the building mass, preferably no more than 22 feet.

Ground-oriented, pedestrian scale lighting should be considered as an alternate to pole-mounted fixtures along sidewalks.

Lighting fixtures should be compatible in style with associated buildings.

2.10 SIGNAGE

The overall objective of the sign standards herein is to ensure that signage does not detract from the sense that Ashland City's environment is a continuous landscape. The emphasis is on using signage for identification purposes, not predominantly for advertising.

The Ashland City Sign Ordinance establishes in detail the signs that are permitted in each zone and those that are not permitted. it covers both temporary and permanent signs, and should be consulted for specific requirements. This information pertains to permanent on-site signs that are accessory to uses located on a site, and which therefore will be reviewed as part of the Design Review Process.

3. PROCEDURES

3.1 SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Design review occurs in the context of review of the required Site Development Plan or plot plan (see Section 3.120 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission is required to review a project prior to issuance of a building permit. A site plan or plot plan drawn to scale of sufficient size to show clearly:

- The dimensions, orientation and acreage of each lot to be built upon
- The layout of the entire project and its relationship to adjacent properties
- The location and dimensions of present and proposed streets and highways
- The location of points of entry and exit for vehicles and internal circulation patterns
- The location and layout of all paved areas including off-street parking and loading facilities.
- All existing and proposed topography, with contours at intervals of no more than 2-feet in areas that are disturbed
- The size, shape and location of existing and proposed construction with uses noted.
- Please see Section 3.120 of the Zoning Ordinance for additional information.

- The seal of a civil engineer or surveyor licensed in the State of Tennessee.

A site landscaping plan, either as a separate drawing or integrated with the site plan above, showing:

- The location of existing vegetation including all trees of over 18-inch diameter to be retained or removed.
- Proposed site landscaping with size, species, and numbers noted.
- The location of all walls, fences, and railings with indication of their height and construction materials
- The location of exterior lighting and types of illumination sources, adequate to determine its character and enable review of possible hazards and disturbances to the public and adjacent properties.
- The location of exterior freestanding signs.

Schematic building plans drawn to scale, including:

- Exterior building elevations indicating materials to illustrate their appearance.

The Planning Commission may waive any of the above submissions that it believes are unnecessary. It may also require such other information or exhibits, including samples of proposed building materials, as may be considered necessary to reach an informed decision on the acceptability of the project.

3.2 REVIEW PROCESS

1. Prospective applicants are encouraged to schedule an informal presubmission meeting with the City staff early in the design phase, in order to be aware of conditions and constraints of their site, and to familiarize themselves with the standards that will be applied.

2. The Planning Commission meets at 5:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of every month. Applications received at least 30 days prior to a meeting and subsequently judged to be complete by the City Planning Director and Planning Staff will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Ten (10) copies of all materials must be submitted with applications. The director will notify the applicant within 8 days of receipt of an application whether it is complete. Applicants' may appeal judgments that their materials are incomplete directly to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will generally not take action on an incomplete application.

3. City staff review and recommendations will be available to applicants at least 7 days before the meeting in which their project will be heard. The applicant may request that action be deferred to the following meeting in order to revise plans to take account of staff reviews.

4. The Planning Commission will review proposals based on the standards and guidelines in this manual. The Planning Commission may approve plans as submitted, or approve plans with specific conditions including items which must be changed, or may disapprove of plans but invite resubmission based on modified designs, or may disapprove of plans.

5. Copies of the relevant minutes along with any conditions of approval by the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission will be made available to the applicant. If the proposal has been disapproved, the Commission will indicate the changes which, if made, might result in approval of the project.

6. The Planning Commission will complete its review and make its decision and recommendations within 60 days after a formal application with all required information is received, unless an extension is mutually agreed upon by the Commission and the applicant. In the case of voluntary withdrawal of a proposal by an applicant, in order to make changes, the review period shall begin upon submission of the revised application.

7. Failure of the Planning Commission to complete its review and make its decision and recommendation within 60 days after a formal application with all the required materials is received shall be deemed approval of the application, unless the applicant voluntarily agrees to an extension of the time period.

8. Applicants may appeal the decisions of the Planning Commission to the Board of Zoning Appeals, by filing a notice of appeal which sets forth the reasons for such appeal within 30 days of action by the Planning Commission. Should they decide to hear the appeal, the Board of Zoning Appeals will generally not accept or consider any evidence outside of the record and materials available to the Planning Commission, except on procedural issues if irregularities are alleged. The Board of Zoning Appeals may affirm the Commission decision, or may remand it to the Planning Commission for further proceedings, or may reverse the decision if it finds that the decision was erroneous. In reviewing the appeal, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall not invalidate the Planning Commission's action unless approved by a majority of the entire membership, and unless they forth in writing the reasons supporting this determination.

9. The City Planner in conjunction with the City Building Official will be responsible for ensuring that any conditions imposed at the time of design approval are met in final plans submitted for building permits, and that final plans submitted are in substantial accord with plans submitted for approval. During construction, the landscaping plan may be amended by the planning staff with the provision that no more than 25% of the planting list be relocated on site or no more than 25% of the planting list can be substituted with other species. In the event that plans depart in significant ways, they may require the resubmission of plans to the Planning Commission for further review.

10. Prior to obtaining a final permit for use and occupancy, the applicant must submit a certificate of compliance as provided in Article VII, Sections 7.030 and 7.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. A DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST

The checklist indicates items which must be addressed in the application for design approval. The items may be dealt with in drawings and exhibits, or in a written narrative which accompanies the application and notes how the design standards have been met.

1. Site Layout

- Site plan includes all the necessary information (see Submission Requirements).
- Percentage of site devoted to permeable surfaces calculated distances between curb cuts and their width noted.
- Conformance of all road widths with the Major Thoroughfare Plan noted.
- Frontage road shown as required.

2. Grading, Drainage and Topsoil Preservation

- Existing and proposed topography shown at 2-foot intervals.
- Estimates of the amounts of material to be exported or imported to and from the site.
- Runoff calculated and detention planned.

3. Preservation of Existing Trees and Site Features

- Existing trees and vegetation areas noted, with all trees over 18", diameter located precisely with tree type.
- Replacement trees for large trees to be removed shown Special site features noted, with plan for their protection.
- Important views across the site to lakes or landmarks shown.

4. Architectural Character

- Building elevations shown with materials noted, and colored to accurately represent built appearance.
- For prototype designs, indicate how they have been adapted to Ashland City setting.
- Location of building service areas noted, with screening provided.
- Location of exterior mechanical equipment noted, with plans for screening.

5. Parking Configurations

- Capacity of parking areas, lane and bay widths noted on plans.
- Directions of movement shown.
- Runoff locations and detention areas shown.
- Computation of landscaped area within parking areas made and noted.

6. Landscape

- Location, size and species of all planting noted on plans.
- Note conformance of plans to minimum landscape standards.

7. Screening

- Locations of all screening shown on plans, along with designs for screening and materials.
- Note how screening plans conform to design standards.

8. Pedestrian Circulation

- Indicate location of sidewalks along street and pedestrian connections to sidewalk.
- Locate pedestrian areas on adjacent sites and indicate how connections have been made to them.

9. Lighting

- Locate lighting sources and illustrate design of standards.
- Calculate lighting levels and evenness ratio indicates any special provisions to shield light from adjacent properties.

10. Signage

- Locate any project identification signs, major accessory business signs, directional signs or project directory signs on plans.

5. GENERAL PROVISIONS

5.1 INTENT AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this article is to conserve property values within the Town of Ashland City by establishing procedures for the design review of development henceforth erected, reconstructed or altered, and thereby

(A) To promote qualities in the environment that sustains the community's economic well-being.

(B) To foster the community's attractiveness and functional utility as a place to live and to work.

(C) To preserve the community's heritage by maintaining the integrity of any area(s) enjoying a discernible character contributing to this heritage.

(D) To safeguard public investment within the community.

(E) To raise the level of citizen expectations favoring the quality of the community's visual environment.

5.2 ROLE OF THE ASHLAND CITY MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION

The Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission shall administer the provisions of this article including, without limitation:

(A) Certification that proposed development comports with the design standards set forth herein.

(B) Recommendation of amendments, as necessary, to the Design Review Manual for approval by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

(C) Consultation with municipal and other appropriate agencies on matters addressed in this article.

(D) Adoption of such rules of procedure as the Planning Commission may deem necessary.

5.3 DESIGN REVIEW MANUAL

To further the purposes of this article as set forth herein, there is hereby adopted a Design Review Manual. Amendments to the Design Review Manual, shall be made by ordinance approved by a majority of the entire membership of the Ashland City Commission, with appropriate input from the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

6.1 DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO DESIGN REVIEW

Development, including any buildings, structures or physical improvements pertaining thereto, shall be subject to the provisions of this article if:

(A) Approval of this development is conditioned upon one or more of the following:

1. Plot Plan or Site Plan approval under ARTICLE III, of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance including a new structure or any addition to an existing structure totaling fifty (50) percent of the ground floor area or any external modification where the estimated cost of the improvement exceeds fifty (50) percent of the total assessed value of the structure as per Cheatham County tax records.

2. Final planned unit development master development plan approval under ARTICLE IV, of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance unless the plan envisages the construction exclusively of one- and two-family dwellings.

3. Special exceptions granted under ARTICLE VII, of Ashland City Zoning Ordinance involving either a new structure or any addition to an existing structure totaling fifty (50) percent of the ground floor area or any external modification where the estimated cost of the improvement exceeds fifty (50) percent of the total assessed value of the structure as per Cheatham County tax records.

(B) The development is a public building costing in excess of twenty-five thousand dollars ($25,000) which may be regulated by the Town of Ashland City under applicable law. Any other governmental entity will be strongly encouraged to comply.

(C) Any development which requires approval by the Planning Commission which the planning staff determines to possess design characteristics that merit review under this article. Reasons for the planning staff's determination must be clearly stated in writing. Appeals from the staff's determinations shall be filed with the Planning Commission within sixteen (16) days thereof, and resolved by the commission within sixty (60) days of said filing.

Development within the city limits shall be subject to the provisions of this article.

6.2 DEVELOPMENT EXEMPT FROM DESIGN REVIEW

Reconstruction or repairs required for immediate public health or safety reasons, as determined by the Mayor or his designee, are expressly exempted from the requirements of this article. Also exempt are all residential developments.

6.3 DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSING

Preapplication Conference

Any prospective applicant for a development approval permit that may require design certification under this article may request a preliminary conference with the planning staff by filing a written request no later than sixteen (16) days prior to the planning staff meeting at which the PREAPPLICATION conference is sought. Accompanying the request shall be ten (10) copies of such preliminary exterior drawings, site plans, and related materials as the applicant wishes to bring to the planning staff's attention. Viewpoints expressed by the planning staff shall be advisory only; no legally enforceable rights or expectations of any kind shall vest until the applicant's formal application for design review has been processed in accordance with all the provisions of this article.

Submission to Planning Staff; Review by Staff

Applicants for design review certification shall submit to the City Planning Staff, the photographs, site plans, site landscaping plans and schematic building plans referenced in Section 3.1, of the Design Review Manual, adopted by the Town of Ashland City, concurrent with the adoption of this article. The City Planning Staff will review all submittals. Written comments of all planning staff members will be made available to developers at least one (1) week prior to the Planning Commission meeting, in which their project will be heard after determining that the application comports with the requirements of Section 3.1, the City Planning Staff shall transmit the application with all written staff comments and recommendations to the Planning Commission members.

Review by Planning Commission

The Planning Commission shall approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove an application for design review certification within ninety (90) days of the application's initial review by the Ashland City Municipal Planning Commission, unless the Commission and the applicant agree to a greater time period. Absent such an agreement, all applications not acted upon by the Planning Commission within ninety (90) days shall be deemed approved. Minutes shall be kept of the Planning Commission's proceedings and reasons

for its decisions shall be clearly stated in this record. An approved application and its supporting exhibits shall be endorsed as approved by the Commission or its authorized representative.

Appeal of Planning Commission Actions

Any person aggrieved by a Planning Commission action under this article may appeal the action to the Board of Zoning Appeals within thirty (30) days after approval of the minutes, with the City Planner, a notice setting forth the respects with which the person filing the appeal takes exception to the written statement of reason as required by Subsection 8-203.3, of Design Review Article VIII in the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance. Appeals shall be decided within sixty (60) days of their filing unless the applicant and the Board of Zoning Appeals agree to extend this period. In reviewing the appeal, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall not invalidate the Planning Commission's action, unless approved by majority of the entire membership. The reason for the decision of the Board of Zoning Appeals determination shall be clearly reflected in the minutes. If the Board of Zoning Appeals invalidates the Planning Commission's action, it may, in its discretion, either exercise the powers of the Planning Commission or remand the matter, along with its statement of reasons, to the Planning Commission for further action not inconsistent with these reasons, which the Planning Commission shall take within thirty (30) days.

6.4 DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

In reviewing applications, the Planning Commission shall insure that the proposed development satisfies the criteria for the applicable category or type of development as these criteria are set forth, by category or type, in the Town of Ashland City Design Review Manual, and in any pertinent Town of Ashland City land use or building regulations and ordinances. In the case of a conflict between these ordinances, the more stringent shall govern.

6.5 DESIGN DISTRICT

Establishment

The Ashland City Commission hereby has designated the design district as shown on the Design Review District Map as shown in Exhibit "A" at the request of citizens and the Planning Commission as it has determined that the area contains buildings, structures, burial grounds or other features of archaeological, architectural, or design significance.

Administration

No building or other development permit shall be issued or the construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of any building, structure or physical improvement within the design district the Town absent certification by the Planning Commission pursuant to this article, of the conformance of the proposed development with the design standards referenced, herein. In particular, development must conform with the general land use regulations applicable to the design district's underlying area and the Design Review Manual as approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals in conjunction with the Board of Zoning Appeals establishment of the design district. In case of conflict among these requirements, the most stringent, as determined by the Planning Commission, shall govern.

6.6 PUBLIC WORKS

In reviewing the design of public buildings as specified in Section 8-201, (B), of Design Review Article VIII in the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance, undertaken by governmental agencies, other than the Town of Ashland City, the Planning Commission shall make recommendations to the agency proposing to construct the public project and seek to the extent permitted under applicable law or through communication with the agency to secure such modifications in the work's design as comport with the standards of this article. In the case of public projects undertaken by the Town of Ashland City, a Planning Commission determination to withhold a certificate of design approval shall be binding, unless this determination is reversed by a majority of the entire membership of the Board of Zoning Appeals.

6.7 APPLICATION; VESTED RIGHTS

The provisions of this article shall not be applicable to any property owner whose actions prior to the article's effective date have created a vested right to develop under applicable state or federal law. All other development or proposed development shall be subject to the article's provision.

6.8 CONTINUING MAINTENANCE

Following the construction or modification of any development, the design of which is approved pursuant to this article, the development shall be maintained in accordance with the following standards:

(A) Buildings and appurtenances, including signs, shall be cleaned and painted or repaired as required to maintain an attractive appearance.

(B) Illuminated elements of buildings and signs shall be replaced as required to maintain the effect for which designed.

(C) Landscape materials, other than plantings, which have deteriorated shall be reconstituted or replaced.

(D) Plantings shall be kept watered, fed, cultivated, and pruned to give a healthy appearance during all seasons. Plant materials which have deteriorated, shall be replaced with healthy plantings.

(E) Parking areas shall be kept in an orderly state, properly marked, and clear of litter and debris.

(F) Vacant property shall be kept free of refuse and debris, and shall have the vegetation cut periodically during the growing season as referenced in Ashland City Municipal Code.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this section, after a notice of noncompliance has been issued by the Zoning Administrator with a stated time frame for compliance, shall be deemed a violation of this zoning ordinance and shall be subject to the sanctions set forth in ARTICLE VII, SECTION 7.100 of the Ashland City Zoning Ordinance as well as to the revocation of any permit, license, certificate or other approval initially issue by the city as a basis for construction and/or occupancy of the development on which the violation has occurred.

6.9 PROHIBITIONS

No building permit, license, certificate, or other approval or entitlement shall be issued or given by the city with respect to any development subject to design review, until the development has been approved pursuant to this article. No certificate of use or occupancy, whether temporary or permanent in form, shall be given for any such development until the City Planning Staff has certified that the development has been completed in accordance with the design approved by the Planning Commission; provided, however, that the Planning Staff, in its discretion, may elect to grant a Temporary Use and Occupancy Permit subject to a reasonable bond guaranteeing that the applicant will complete the development in accordance with the approved design within a time certain. This procedure is detailed in ARTICLE VII, of the Zoning Ordinance.