



373 Highway 23, Suwanee, Georgia 30024
(770) 945-8996, Fax (770) 945-2792
www.suwanee.com, Email: info@suwanee.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: Persons Interested in City of Suwanee Architectural Standards

FROM: Marvin Allen, Planning & Community Development Director

DATE: November 15, 2005

RE: City of Suwanee Architectural Standards

Attached you will find the City of Suwanee's Architectural and Design Standards. These are minimum design standards that must be maintained for all multi-family, office, commercial, industrial and other non-residential development within the City of Suwanee. They cover most aspects of exterior building design including color, roof pitch, building materials and other similar elements

As you will see these are flexible standards that still allow creativity while maintaining high quality design. Provided a proposed building design meets all of the criteria contained within the standards, architecture can be reviewed and approved by staff during the normal permitting process. Should a design not meet all of the standards contained within the regulations, then the proposed architectural design must be submitted to the City of Suwanee Planning Commission for review and approval as an Alternate Architectural Review. The Planning Commission will consider the integrity of the design and how it compares to the City's policies when reviewing alternate designs.

The most recent amendment to the Standards (11-15-15) addresses the color of new and existing buildings and more clearly defines what is meant by subdued colors. The Standards now explicitly require exterior paint colors to be limited to black and colors within the Martin Senour Williamsburg Collection, Martin Senour Exterior Collection, Sherwin-Williams Victorian Exterior Color Preservation Palette, Sherwin-Williams Arts & Crafts Exterior Color Preservation Palette, or approved equals.

Adopted: June 22, 1999
Amended: September 17, 2002
Amended: November 15, 2005

City of Suwanee **Architectural and Design Standards**

I. Objectives and Findings:

In an effort to maintain high quality, long-lasting and sustainable development within the City of Suwanee, the City hereby adopts the following design guidelines and standards for all non-residential and multi-family buildings within PMUD, RM-6, RM-8, C-1, C-2, C-3, O-I and M-1 zoning districts. These guidelines are intended to enhance the visual aspect and livability of the entire city. They are intended to encourage an “old-town” look and feel of historical Georgia villages. These guidelines will foster architectural diversity and interest, yet achieve and maintain a consistent, durable and pleasing aesthetic/visual quality.

The use of a common palate of building materials should be maintained for all building facades to create a consistent and traditional architectural identity. Traditional architecture includes the use of red brick, pitched roofs, low-profile signage and subdued colors. For large commercial/retail buildings, variations in façade, roofline and depth should be provided to lend the appearance of multi-tenant occupancy.

II. Grandfathering and Adoption:

The following design guidelines and standards for all non-residential and multi-family buildings within PMUD, RM-6, RM-8, C-1, C-2, C-3, O-I and M-1 zoning districts. Any project within the City that has received or applied for a Development Permit by the date of adoption of these requirements, shall be allowed to proceed under the previous requirements. In addition to applicable provisions outlined in Article XIII of the 1998 Zoning Ordinance relating to non-conforming uses, any building addition or enlargement to a lawfully constructed building shall not be subject to these requirements, except that all existing buildings, including additions and alterations thereto, shall comply with Section V.D. pertaining to exterior paint colors.

III. Building Plans:

All building plans submitted as an application for a building permit should clearly indicate all of the proposed building materials and colors for each façade as described herein. The plans should clearly show the location and calculate the amount/percentages of all building materials per façade.

Groups of buildings on the same parcel of land may be reviewed and permitted as a single project rather than individual buildings. Grouping of similar buildings is encouraged to minimize the number of reviews required and to allow for originality and design flexibility.

The following design standards are primarily based upon the City's zoning categories. However if a use is clearly permitted in a less intensive zoning district, building material allocations shall be used for the less intensive classification (e.g. a professional office in a C-2 zoning district shall use the building material allocations in Table I for O-I categories.)

IV. Definitions:

- Arcade: As used herein, an arcade is a covered walkway/structural canopy extending along the entire length of the front façade of a commercial building.
- Building: Any structure having a roof supported by walls and intended for the shelter, housing or enclosure of any individual, process, equipment, goods or materials of any kind.
- Facade: A vertical exterior face or elevation of a building.
- Front facade: Any façade with a public entry which faces a public right-of-way.
- Rear facade: Any facade without a public entry that does not face a public right-of-way.
- Side facade: Any façade without a public entry but facing a public right-of-way or any façade with a public entry but not facing a public right-of-way. A side façade typically connects a front façade with a rear façade.

V. General Architectural Requirements:

- A. If provided, dumpsters shall be screened to a height of eight feet with an opaque screen on all sides made of brick, stucco, or split-face block and located behind the building they serve. For industrial/distribution/warehouse buildings exceeding 25,000 square feet, no screening is required. However, the dumpsters shall be located in the rear yard behind the building they serve.
- B. All ground mounted mechanical, HVAC and like systems shall be screened from public street view (within 300 feet) on all sides by an opaque wall or fence made of brick, stucco, split face block or landscaping.
- C. For all commercial/retail buildings, roof mounted mechanical, HVAC and like systems shall be screened from public street view (within 300 feet) on all sides.
- D. Exterior Paint Colors: contrasting accent colors on any single façade shall be limited to no more than 10% of the total wall area for any single façade. Exterior paint colors shall be limited to black and colors within the Martin Senour Williamsburg Collection, Martin Senour Exterior Collection, Sherwin-Williams Victorian Exterior Color Preservation Pallette, Sherwin-Williams Arts & Crafts Exterior Color Preservation Pallette, or approved equals.¹ (cross reference: this section applies to both new construction and existing buildings, see Section II. Grandfathering and Adoption).

Exterior colors for pre-colored materials such as brick, stone, etc. shall be muted, earth-tone colors generally consistent with the above paint schemes.

¹ This is not a recommended or preferred list of paint brands. Instead, it is intended to provide clear and concise standardized paint colors.

Nothing herein shall prohibit a lawful pre-existing building from routine painting and maintenance, including repainting and touch-up painting, provided such building is repainted to its existing color(s). No changes in a building's exterior paint colors shall be allowed except in accordance with this Section.

- E. Permanent mounted exterior neon lights shall not be allowed.
- F. In a non-residential development with out-parcels, buildings located on outparcels shall be constructed of the same primary building material as the principal building with which they are associated.
- G. Back-lit awnings, roof mounted lights, and/or roof mounted flag poles are not permitted. Satellite dishes shall be located and painted to blend with the background as much as practical.

VI. Building Materials:

The following building materials may be used and combined to create a consistent, attractive, interesting and long-lasting building design. The quantity and type of building materials is outlined below.

A. Allowed Building Materials:

1. Brick – Brick veneers which are intended to simulate brick exteriors are not acceptable;
2. Stone – Natural stone such as, but not limited to, Granite, Limestone, and Marble are allowed building materials. Terra Cotta and/or Cast Stone, which simulate natural stone, are also acceptable;
3. Split-Face Block/Concrete Masonry Unit (CMU);
4. Tilt/Architectural Pre-Cast Concrete;
5. High Grade Stucco ;
6. Natural Wood and/or Cement-based Artificial Wood Siding;
7. Glass;
8. Painted Concrete Block;

B. Ratios and Amounts of Allowed Building Materials:

The following tables outline the allowed building materials for uses within each zoning category within the City of Suwanee:

Table I – Allowed Building Materials – Multi-Family/Commercial/Office/Industrial

Zoning Category	Brick	Stone	Glass	Tilt/Pre-Cast	Stucco		Concrete Block		CMU/Split-Face Block		Siding		Metal	Tile
					Front	Side/Rear	Front/Side	Rear	Front/Side	Rear	Front	Side/Rear		
RM-6	Yes	Yes	No	No	Max. 50% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	No	No	No	Max. 50% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	No
RM-8	Yes	Yes	No	No	Max. 50% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	No	No	No	Max. 50% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	No
O-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	No	No	No	No#	No#	No	No
C-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	25%	No	No
C-2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	25%	No	No
C-3	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	25%	No	No
M-1@	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	Max. 25% per Façade	Yes*	No	No	No	No

Table II – Allowed Building Materials – Industrial/Warehouse/Distribution Uses over 30,000 square feet Gross Floor Area (GFA)

Zoning Category	Brick	Stone	Glass	Tilt/Pre-Cast	Stucco		Concrete Block		CMU/Split-Face Block*		Siding		Metal	Tile
					Front	Side/Rear	Front/Side	Rear	Front/Side	Rear	Front	Side/Rear		
C-2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	No	No	No
C-3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	No	No	No
M-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Max. 25% per Façade	Max. 50% per Façade	No	Yes*	Max. 25% per Façade	Yes*	No	No	No	No

Notes:

* Allowed only on Rear Facades of buildings larger than 10,000 square feet gross floor area.

When allowed it must be tinted or painted to blend with the balance of the building.

@ For industrial/warehouse buildings less than 30,000 square feet gross floor area.

Allowed for buildings intended to have a residential appearance. Building must have a minimum 4:12 roof pitch.

C. Accent/Trim Exterior Building Material

Small amounts of building materials such as wood, tile, etc., may be used to enhance the elevation of the building or for decorative elements but should not exceed 10% of total wall area per facade.

D. Façade Calculations

With the exception of accent/trim materials, there shall be no more than two primary building materials used. When a material is restricted as a percentage in Table I or Table II, such as stucco, siding, etc., the building material may not be combined with another restricted building material. The allowed façade materials shall not apply to windows, glass-front windows, entry doors and/or roll-up doors.

The amount of permitted material shall be calculated using the gross square footage of wall area per façade. A building material that is allowed (such as brick) may be used in any percentage throughout the structure. A material that is restricted (such as stucco) is allowed as a maximum percentage.

For example, a building has a front façade with a gross façade area of 1,200 square feet with 400 square feet consisting of windows and doors. Begin with 1,200 square feet for required building material calculations. In this case, the front façade of a building in C-2 zoning district with a wall area of 1,200 square feet shall have no more than 300 square feet of stucco on the front façade [ex. $(1,200 \times 25\% = 300)$]. The balance shall be brick or other allowed material.

VII. Roof Requirements:

A. Pitched Roofs

All one-story buildings less than 10,000 gross square feet must have a pitched roof (between 3:12 and 12:12) as much as possible. If a pitched roof is not possible, a combination of flat roof and pitched roof is required. Provide a pitched roof on front and side of the building to screen view of any flat roof. Create arcades, drive-under canopies, porches and other features with pitched roof.

Materials for pitched roofs shall be limited to architectural dimensional grade asphalt shingles, natural slate, natural terra cotta, natural wood shake, copper or factory finished sheet metal.

B. Mansard Roofs

Mansard roofs shall have a maximum pitch of 12:12 with a minimum 12 foot vertical surface length.

C. Flat Roofs

Flat roofs may be of any material that meets local codes. Exposed metal flashing shall be copper or factory finished sheet metal. If factory finished metal flashing

is used, such as standing seam, the color must be subdued to blend with other materials or of a color to simulate weathered copper or bronze.

All buildings with flat roofs should include parapet articulation on the front façade(s) of such building. There shall be roof articulations/offsets at a minimum of one per each 125 linear feet of length by a change in the top line of the parapet. Additional articulation may occur at any lesser distance. If the front facade is less than 125 linear feet, then a minimum of one roof articulation must occur.

D. Other

Drive under canopies for gasoline pumps may have flat roof with vertical or factory formed facing of finished sheet metal.

VIII. Arcade/Structural Canopy for Retail Use:

For any multi-tenant commercial shopping center or strip center, a covered arcade/structural canopy shall be provided along the front façade of the building. Arcades are covered walkways connected to or separate from the principal building. They should be designed in a manner which provides architectural depth to the building and includes covered areas for relief from the weather. The arcade should be a minimum of five feet in width.

IX. Alternate Review:

This Ordinance is intended to be followed as outlined above. In the event the intent of this Ordinance can be achieved with minor deviations which do not substantially impact the goals or intent of this Ordinance, the City of Suwanee Planning Department has the authority to modify the specific provisions.

If substantial modifications or changes are necessary, any person, firm, group or organization may apply for relief from these requirements to the City of Suwanee Planning and Zoning Commission. Any application for an alternate architectural arrangement shall be accompanied with proposed elevations, building materials, and/or renderings necessary for the Planning Commission to make a determination whether the alternate proposal meets the intent of these requirements. The Planning Commission, as part of an approval, may include conditions, modifications or requirements necessary to mitigate any part of their decision. The City may establish filing requirements, fees and deadlines as needed.

X. Separability:

Any requirement set forth herein deemed unconstitutional, vague, illegal and/or otherwise unenforceable in a court of law shall not invalidate the subject Ordinance and all other provisions and requirements thereto shall remain in full force and effect.