

ORDINANCE NO. 1156

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND AMENDING §§ 6.4.1 AND 6.4.2 OF THE CITY'S UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE ("UDC") TO ENHANCE THE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR GENERAL COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE BUILDINGS; PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY AND GENERALLY RELATING TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-204 and § 2.2.3 of the Unified Development Code (the "UDC"), the Commissioners of Cambridge are authorized and empowered to amend, supplement, change, modify, and repeal the City of Cambridge's (the "City") zoning regulations and boundaries and change the City's zoning classifications; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Local Gov't § 5-202 and § 3-27(1) of the Charter of the City of Cambridge, the Commissioners of Cambridge are authorized and empowered to pass all such ordinances not contrary to the Constitution and laws of the State of Maryland or the Charter as they may deem necessary for the good government of the City; for the protection and preservation of the City's property, rights, and privileges; for the preservation of peace and good order; to secure persons and property from danger and destruction; and for the protection and promotion of the health, safety, comfort, convenience, welfare, and happiness of the residents of the City and visitors thereto and sojourners therein; and

WHEREAS, following a public hearing held on September 3, 2019, the City of Cambridge Planning Commission (the "Planning Commission") unanimously recommended that the Commissioners of Cambridge approve a text amendment amending §§ 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 of the UDC to enhance the design standards for general commercial/mixed use buildings in the City; and

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2019, the Commissioners of Cambridge held a public hearing regarding the foregoing text amendment recommended by the Planning Commission, notice of which was published on September 29, 2019 and October 6, 2019 in the Star Democrat, a newspaper of general circulation in the City, in accordance with Md. Code Ann., Land Use § 4-203(b) and § 2.2.3.C of the UDC; and

WHEREAS, having considered the recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Department of Planning and Zoning Staff, as well as the comments made during the October 28, 2019 public hearing, the Commissioners of Cambridge find that it is in the best interest of the City to amend §§ 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 of the UDC to enhance the design standards for general commercial/mixed use buildings in the City; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of Cambridge find that the text amendment set forth herein is necessary to promote and protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Commissioners of Cambridge, that the City's Unified Development Code is hereby amended as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 6.4 (General Building Design Standards) is amended as follows:

§ 6.4 General Commercial/Mixed Use Building Design Standards

§ 6.4.1 Purpose and Applicability

A. Purpose

This section is intended to establish the general requirements for the appearance of **commercial** buildings which are subject to site plan review and approval and through the application of these standards promote and protect a cohesive architectural character within the City. **Additionally, these standards shall strive to have new development evoke the essence of Cambridge’s unique character through building design.**

B. Applicability

These provisions shall apply to all **commercial/mixed use** developments where site plan review is required in accordance with the provisions of Article 2 and shall be enforced through the site plan approval process, except that this section shall not apply to new ~~single-family or duplex~~ residential construction ~~in the NC districts~~.

C. Required Submittals

1. All Category 1 site plans and all site plans in the Historic District shall include proposed street front elevations prepared by a licensed architect for all buildings.
2. The Zoning Official may require that Category 2 site plan submittals contain street front building elevations prepared by a licensed architect.

§ 6.4.2 Key Terms: Proportion/Rhythm/Scale

A. Terms

1. Proportion refers to the relationship between width and height of building facade.
2. Rhythm refers to the repetition and space of opening (windows and doors) on individual buildings as compared with adjacent structures. Rhythm also refers to the spacing of repetitive building masses along a street.
3. Scale refers to the size (height/width) relationship between adjacent structures. Human scale refers to the comfortable size relationship between buildings and people.

B. General Standards

Illustration 4 shows the appropriate and inappropriate application of the basic design standards set forth below.

1. Buildings

~~The proportional relationship of individual facades shall emphasize the vertical rather than the horizontal.~~

2. a. Large disparities between the height, width, and length of a building shall be avoided.

3. ~~Large blank walls shall be avoided. Buildings shall be designed to support a human-scale environment. One of the windows on each floor may be substituted with another architectural element such as a chimney, door, garage, deck, or other element that creates visual interest and eliminates blank walls.~~

4. b. Buildings and accessory structures shall be compatible with neighboring buildings and structures in terms of height, proportion, rhythm, and scale, where appropriate.

5. c. All of the design elements of a building shall maintain the same architectural style in terms of proportion, rhythm, and scale as the overall style of the building.

6. d. Large buildings shall be designed to promote a pattern of closely spaced buildings with multiple entrances.

7. ~~Rooftop and exposed mechanical electrical equipment shall be screened from view. Screening shall be architecturally integrated with buildings.~~

8. e. ~~Buildings orientation:~~ buildings and their main entrances shall face the front yard.

9. ~~Roofs of buildings should conform to the predominant orientation of roofs on the street.~~

10. f. Neighborhood context should dictate the choice of materials for the exterior of buildings, when high quality materials are present, such as but not limited to, brick, stone, metal, masonry, and fiber cement.

Illustration 4

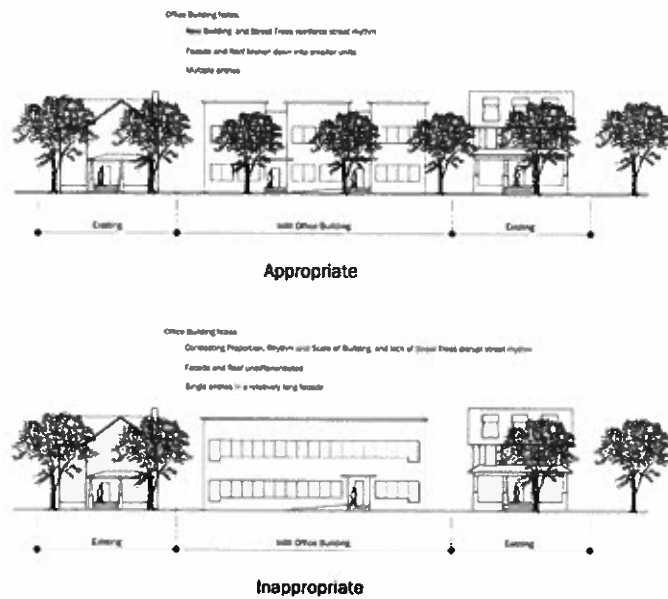


Illustration 4

2. Facades

- a. The proportional relationship of individual facades shall emphasize the vertical rather than the horizontal, where appropriate.
- b. Building facades with wainscoting or water tables at the base of the building shall have a horizontal projection of at least two (2) inches.
- c. Building facade colors shall be low reflectance, subtle, neutral or earth tones, while the building trim may be brighter colors for accent.
- d. Primary entries of buildings shall be clearly defined and shall have features such as canopies or porticos, overhangs, recess/projections, raised cornices over the doors, peaked roof forms, and/or arches.
- e. Large blank walls shall be avoided. Buildings shall be designed to support a human-scale environment.
- f. Building facades greater than one hundred (100) feet in length, measured horizontally, shall have a recess or projection of a minimum of two inches every thirty (30) to fifty (50) feet or change in building material.

- g. Long blank walls shall incorporate design elements that break up the mass every thirty (30) to fifty (50) feet or create some kind of visual interest.**



**Illustration 5 – Premiere Cinemas
Creative treatment of large expanse of blank wall**

- h. Side facades adjacent to the front facade shall continue some of the primary facade’s design elements/materials for a minimum of twenty (20) feet after turning the corner.**
- i. Buildings that are visible from rights-of-way on multiple sides shall have higher-quality building designs on those visual facades. “Back of House” facilities shall be screened and architecturally integrated into the building design.**
- j. Mixed-use buildings with ground floor commercial uses shall have a minimum ceiling height of twelve (12) feet on the ground floor. Using this height will allow the space to be converted into a restaurant.**

3. Roofs

- a. Rooftop and exposed mechanical electrical equipment shall be screened from view. Screening shall be architecturally integrated with buildings.**
- b. Buildings with flat roofs shall include elements such as parapets and/or cornices that completely screen all mechanical equipment.**
- c. Roofs of buildings should conform to the predominant orientation of roofs on the street.**

d. Buildings with a pitched roof shall have a minimum of 6/12 pitch ratio, unless otherwise associated with a specific architectural style. Mansard roofs are not permitted except in the Historic District and as approved by the HPC.

4. Materials

a. Building materials shall be high-quality and durable. Examples of such materials include, but are not limited to, brick, stone, masonry, metal, and fiber cement. Examples of unacceptable building materials include, but are not limited to, vinyl siding, aluminum siding, smooth-faced block, tilt-up concrete panels, and prefabricated steel panels.

b. EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finishing System) or similar materials shall only be used ten (10) feet above the building facade. EIFS is a soft material and can be easily damaged.

5. Examples of buildings with notable architectural elements



Illustration 6 – Former High Spot Restaurant
Example of historic cornice and storefront



Illustration 7 – Examples of modern cornices



Illustration 8 – Dorchester County Circuit Court

Example of Italianate architecture – low-pitched roof, square tower/cupola, projecting eaves with brackets, additional elements of arches at entrance and Palladian windows



Illustration 8 – Harris Teeter
Example of new construction with Italianate elements



Illustration 9 – Old City Hall
Example of clock tower with Widow's Watch and arches



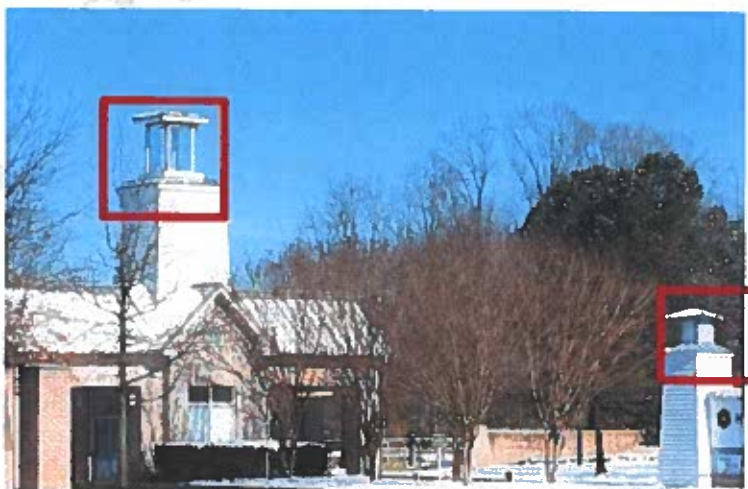
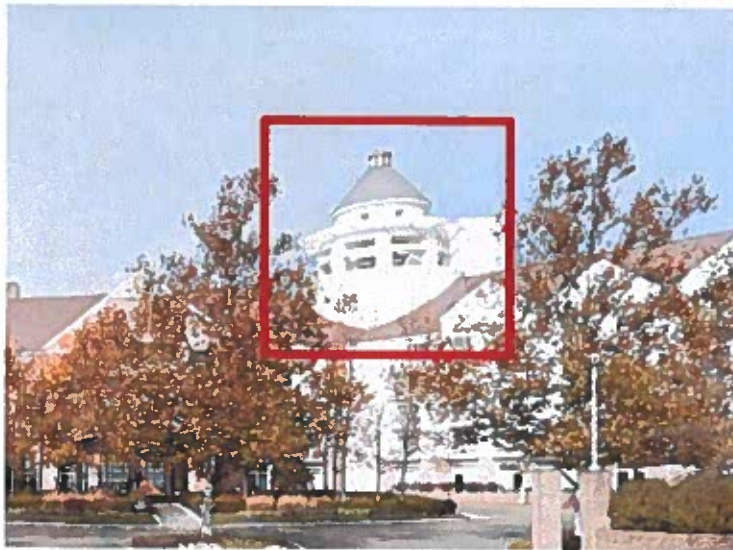
Illustration 10 – Public Safety Building
Example of Palladian window, arches, and Widow’s Watch



Illustration 11 – Oakley Beach
Example of Widow’s Watch



Illustration 12 – Waterside Condos
Example of Widow’s Watch



Illustrations 13, 14, and 15 - Hyatt
Examples of lighthouse element and new signage replicating the existing lighthouse design



Illustration 16 – Example of a lighthouse



Illustration 17 – Oakley Beach
Example of a pavilion



Illustration 18 – Richardson Museum and Ruark Boat Works
Examples of clerestories



Illustrations 19 and 20 – PNC Bank, Virginia and Winery, Massachusetts
Examples of new construction with clerestory elements

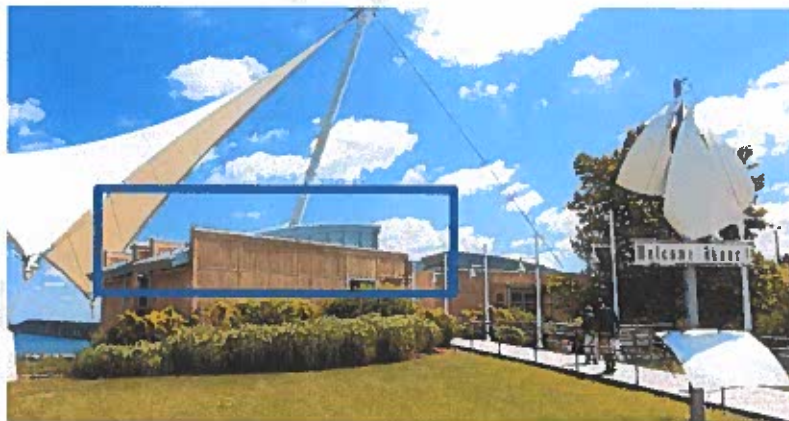


Illustration 21 – Dorchester County Visitor Center
Example of arched roof



Illustration 22 - Walmart
Example of arched roof elements



Illustrations 23 and 24
Adaptive reuse encouraged

6. Site design

- a. The Site Plan application shall include any significant features on site and/or on adjacent properties. Significant features shall include, but not be limited to, historic, scenic, or other environmental features. If**

there are significant features, the Planning Commission may request that these features be enhanced, restored, or preserved.

- b. The Planning Commission may modify yard setbacks if that modification promotes exemplary overall site design.**
- c. On-site parking shall be located in side or rear yards unless approved by the Planning Commission due to site constraints.**
- d. Street trees shall be large or medium-sized shade trees, including but not limited to, large shade trees such as oaks, elms, maples, and London Planes, and medium shade trees such as Zelkovas, Little Leaf Lindens, and Gingkos. The particular tree species shall be determined with each Site Plan, based upon the appropriate size.**
- e. Ornamental trees, such as Crepe Myrtles, Dogwoods, Serviceberry, and small Magnolia species, shall be used as accents.**
- f. The recommended sidewalk width shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet wide for primary access points and a minimum of six (6) feet wide for secondary access points.**
- g. Sidewalks shall be flush across all driveway crossings.**

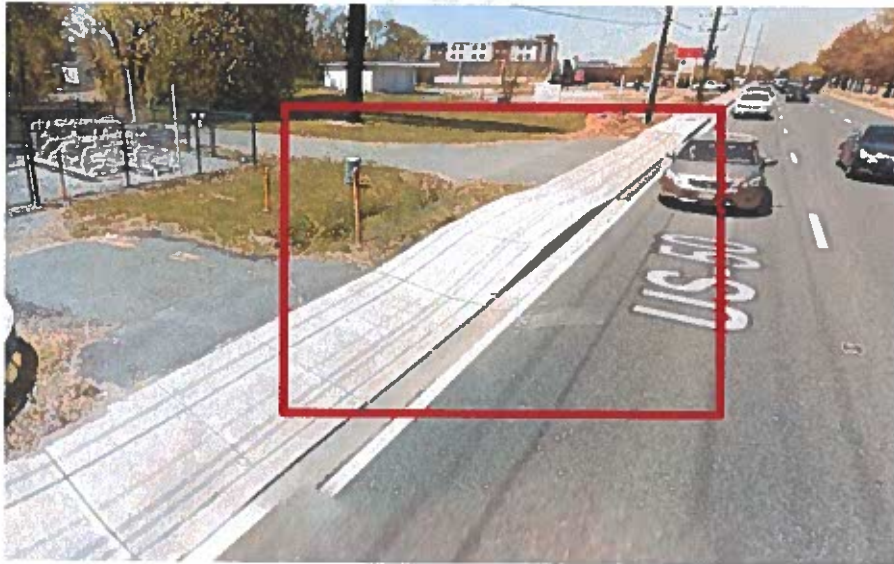


Illustration 25 – Existing sidewalk along Route 50 sloping down at driveway entrances



Illustrations 26 and 27 – Examples of sidewalks on a continuous plane

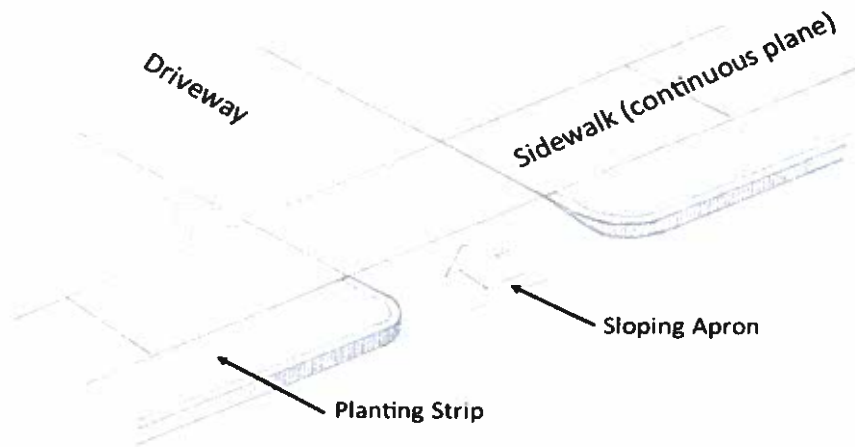


Illustration 28 – Sidewalk on a continuous plane - detail

SECTION 2. The recitals to this Ordinance are incorporated herein and deemed a substantive part of this Ordinance.

SECTION 3. In this Ordinance, unless a section of the UDC is expressly repealed in its entirety and reenacted, new or added language is underlined and in boldface type, and deleted text is crossed out with a single strikethrough. With respect to the substantive provisions of this Ordinance set forth in Section 1, language added after the date of introduction is in bold, italicized font and language deleted after the date of introduction is crossed out with a double strikethrough.

SECTION 4. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion of this Ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court or competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct, and independent provision and such holding shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance, it being the intent of the Commissioners of Cambridge that this Ordinance shall stand, notwithstanding the invalidity of any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or portion hereof.

SECTION 5. All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 6. They title of this Ordinance, or a condensed version thereof, shall be deemed to be, and is, a fair summary of this Ordinance for publication and all other purposes.

AND BE IT FURTHER enacted and ordained that this Ordinance shall become effective on the tenth (10th) day following the date of passage.

ATTEST: THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE

Patrick C. Comiskey, City Manager By: _____
Victoria Jackson-Stanley, Mayor

**Introduced the 23rd day of September, 2019
Passed the 28th day of October, 2019
Effective the 7th day of November, 2019**