



**VILLAGE
OF
ELM GROVE**



**DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

“DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES”

Adopted November 25, 2003

Executive Summary

The Village of Elm Grove's character, accentuated by its tree-filled landscape, architectural richness, compact size, and residential character, is truly unique. Elm Grove's families, institutions, and businesses have long contributed to a rich history that provides an excellent foundation for the future. The Village recognizes the importance of a vital central business district, not only in terms of economic value, but also as an essential expectation of our residents. The Village would like to maintain a traditional "Village Center" theme within downtown, incorporating elements of neighborhood compatibility, land use diversity, pedestrian-friendly design, empathetic building placement, high quality materials, and the support of public safety.

Elm Grove's downtown is generally bordered by Juneau Boulevard on the north, Elm Grove Road on the west, the School Sisters of Notre Dame property on the east, and the northern property line of parcels along Bluemound Road to the south.

Renovation and redevelopment of properties within downtown must respect the historical significance of the Village as a crossroad of commercial development and personal travel. Planning efforts should focus on architecturally sensitive facades and massing that create inviting areas for pedestrian movement. Buildings must be constructed of high quality materials, and used in ways that reflect the village's history and vision for the future.

It is the Village's intent to work with each property owner in the renovation or redevelopment of their parcel within downtown. The Village seeks to cooperatively achieve viable and vibrant economic development by respecting the rights of property owners, while at the same time representing the interests of Village residents. The Code of Ordinance and these Downtown District Site Design Guidelines (also known as "Downtown Design Guidelines") are documents that reflect those characteristics of renovation and redevelopment of the downtown desired by the residents, including:

- **Neighborhood Compatibility:** Buildings should be designed to enhance the surrounding neighborhood. Improved architectural character is desired; however, radical deviations from, or monotonous copying of, surrounding building forms and style is discouraged. The predominate commercial environment of downtown should be well integrated with surrounding residential neighborhoods. Care must be given to ensure proper transition between residential and non-residential uses. Buildings should maintain the quality of their character from any viewing angle.
- **Land Use Diversity:** Developments are encouraged to incorporate multiple uses within a building or parcel. A mixture of residential with retail or office space is encouraged to maintain a downtown with vital living space.
- **Pedestrian Friendly Design:** Downtown Elm Grove is compact enough that an individual could park their car once and comfortably walk between several retail establishments. Buildings and outdoor spaces must be designed in a manner that encourages an individual to walk throughout downtown.
- **Building Placement:** Buildings should front upon, and have an entrance off of streets and public walkways.
- **High Quality Materials:** The Village desires the highest quality of building materials feasible to be used on the exterior facades of buildings downtown.
- **Public Safety:** The safety of residents within downtown will always be significant evaluation criteria for development proposals.

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Introduction

These Downtown District Site Design Guidelines (also known as “Downtown Design Guidelines”) are not intended to restrict imagination, innovation, or variety, but rather to assist each property owner in focusing on the planning and design principles that will develop the desired “Village Center” appearance and environment within downtown Elm Grove, preserve property values, and promote the public health, safety, and welfare. The Building Board and/or Plan Commission may grant exceptions to these guidelines on the basis of compelling architectural merit. All proposed and existing buildings and properties are subject to the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance, especially *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88). These Design Guidelines are intended to enhance, but not replace the Code of Ordinance.

Development proposals and building alterations are subject to review by the Plan Commission and Building Board as outlined in the Code of Ordinance. Although the Village desires to work with each property owner in the renovation or redevelopment of their parcel within downtown, adherence to provisions found within the Code of Ordinance and the Downtown Design Guidelines are the responsibility of the property owner. These Design Guidelines apply to all parcels located within the “Downtown Design Overlay District” as referenced in Code of Ordinance Section 335-12.

The process of review and approval of renovation and redevelopment within downtown involves many aspects of village government. Conceptual planning is to be coordinated with the Village’s Planning and Zoning Administrator. Formal review and approval of renovation and redevelopment projects is subject to the interpretation of the Code of Ordinances and these Design Guidelines, as administered by the Village Plan Commission and the Village Building Board. Coordination may also be required of the Village Manager, the Public Works Director, the Building Inspector, the Village Attorney, and the Police and Fire Departments.

Architectural Theme

Today, many buildings within downtown Elm Grove follow two distinct, and somewhat contradictory, architectural themes. The first is a traditional “Main Street,” characterized by a variety of architectural styles popular between 1890 – 1920, including Colonial Revival, Vernacular (Mill Place Shops), Greek Revival, Neo-Classical, and Tudor. The facades of these buildings have a traditional main street storefront appearance, are relatively small in scale, have little or no street or side-yard setback, have regularly-spaced window and door openings, include significant detailing, and are constructed of more traditional building materials.

The second architectural theme present in downtown Elm Grove today is an auto-dominated “Suburban” style popular between 1950 – present. These buildings are generally larger in scale, have significant street and side-yard setbacks, have somewhat irregularly spaced window and door openings, lack significant detailing, and are constructed of less traditional building materials.

The architectural theme that the Village desires is that of a quaint, traditional Village Center. Although downtown will certainly retain some “Main Street” and “Suburban” architectural elements, a traditional Village Center has three key components that will be required of all future development. The first is neighborhood compatibility. Buildings located in a traditional Village Center often differ in style, scale, and form; however, there are typically enough similar architectural elements present in each individual building to create a cohesive whole. Likewise, commercial uses within traditional Village Centers gradually blend into surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The second component of a traditional Village Center is land and building use diversity. Commercial buildings may have first floor retail, with offices or residences above. A single parcel may have a commercial building along the street, with residential structures behind. A mixture of living, working, and relaxing environments enlivens the traditional Village Center.

The final key component of a traditional Village Center is pedestrian friendly design. Buildings and public spaces are designed in a way that welcomes an individual to walk through the community. Buildings directly front upon streets, and have direct pedestrian access via a system of public and private sidewalks. Multi-story buildings are brought down to the pedestrian scale through the use of architectural elements such as awnings. The first floor of commercial buildings is dominated by inviting storefront windows. Sidewalk cafes and other public seating areas are also encouraged for a place of rest for pedestrians and to provide relief from the constant façade/sidewalk/street organization.

By incorporating the principles of neighborhood compatibility, land and building use diversity, and pedestrian friendly design into future development projects, the appearance of downtown Elm Grove will continue to approach that of a quaint, traditional Village Center.

Building Form

Buildings should be designed to enhance the surrounding neighborhood. Improved architectural character is desired; however, radical deviations from, or monotonous copying of, surrounding building forms and style is discouraged. The predominate commercial environment of downtown should be well integrated with surrounding residential neighborhoods. Care must be given to insure proper transition between residential and non-residential uses. Buildings must maintain the quality of their character from any viewing angle.

Tripartite Composition

All commercial building facades should utilize Tripartite Composition: a defined building base, middle and top.

- **BASE**: The base visually and structurally connects the building with the ground. It may appear as a built extension of the foundation integrated with the main body of the building, or it may extend upwards further into the middle element.
- **MIDDLE**: The middle is the main body of building. This section contains the window and door openings as well as most of the building's architectural features.
- **TOP**: The top is comprised of the roof elements that terminate the building. Not only does this consist of the main roof form but also any projections in the form of dormers, towers and chimneys.

Scale

The scale of proposed structures in relationship to surrounding buildings must be taken into consideration. Significant deviations in height or mass between neighboring buildings will not contribute to a quaint, traditional Village Center theme. Likewise, large, monotonous building facades do not form the human scale desired within a traditional Village Center. Features such as awnings, windows, and doors should be used to divide large facades into smaller sections. This will provide a more pedestrian friendly environment, while adding distinction to downtown buildings.

Building Additions and Renovations

Building additions must compliment the existing structure in form, material use, architectural detail, and color. Building proportions, scale, and rhythmic elements must be maintained while allowing for the use of more modern materials, ornamentation, and detail.

Building Facades

Please see Appendix A.

Building Alterations

Although these guidelines are applicable to all proposals considered by the Building Board, there are several key issues that are more likely to impact building alterations, rather than new construction. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Roof alterations will not compromise or conceal evident historic roofing forms or details.
- Roof additions will compliment the existing roof.
- Covering or filling-in window openings, or any portion of one, on a primary facade is not permitted, unless it has historic merit.
- Replacement windows that enhance the architectural character of a building are strongly encouraged.
- Divided light (grills and muttons) windows will not be replaced with windows without divided lights, unless the applicant provides satisfactory justification.
- Aluminum and vinyl storm doors are not acceptable alternatives to wood, glass, or other high quality metal doors.
- Closing off an existing door opening on a primary facade is discouraged.
- Historic porch features and details will be retained where feasible.
- Resurfacing an existing building façade with new materials is not permitted unless it significantly enhances the architectural character or appearance of the structure, or has historic merit.

Building Materials and Color

The Village of Elm Grove desires the highest quality of materials feasible on the exterior facades of buildings downtown. All materials require review and approval by the Building Board. For the purpose of these guidelines, primary customer parking area is defined as the section of parking lot used by the majority of customers or patrons visiting a commercial establishment.

Building Materials

Aluminum and Vinyl Siding

- Aluminum and vinyl siding is prohibited, except for use on non-primary facades not highly visible from public right-of-ways, walkways, primary customer parking areas, and neighboring residential or public uses.

Brick

- Modular brick is an acceptable material for all building types.
- Oversize or large size bricks may only be used as an accent.
- Adding detail through the use of decorative banding and color or texture transitions is encouraged.

Cement Board Siding

- Cement board siding is acceptable if it maintains the characteristics of traditional clapboard siding.

Clapboard Siding

- The general use of clapboard siding is encouraged.
- The exposed laps heights should be limited to a range from 3" to 6".

Concrete Masonry Units (CMU)

- Will be used as a secondary material only, comprising no more than 49% of a single façade.
- Plain CMU is not permitted, and CMU coloring will be integral to the product (no painted finishes will be permitted).

Plaster – stucco – and other similar materials (such as EIFS)

- Will be used as a secondary material only, comprising no more than 49% of a single façade.
- Finishes will be smooth; no "cake icing."

Half-Timbering

- Half timbering is restricted for use only on architecturally appropriate structures.

Metals

- The use of ornamental metals as accent material is encouraged.
- Metals may be used for gutters, downspouts, railings, trim, grills, panels, flashing, etc. when appropriate to the architectural style of the building.
- Metals will have an anodized, painted or powder coated finish.
- The use of unfinished, exposed metals is discouraged, unless it is compatible with the overall design of the building.

Precast Concrete and Cast Stone

- Precast concrete and cast stone are acceptable if they embody the characteristics of natural stone.

Pressure Treated Wood

- Pressure treated wood is restricted for use as porch supports, decking, columns, balustrades, and railings.
- Any use of this material on a primary facade must have a painted or stained finish.

Stone

- Natural stone is encouraged.

Wood or Cement Shingle Siding

- The use of wood shingle siding as an accent in dormers and gable as well as a wall finish is encouraged if compatible with the overall design of the building.
- Cement board shingles are acceptable if they embody the characteristics of natural wood shingles.

Material Transitions

- When transitions in material are made, different materials should meet only at a change in plane, for instance an inside corner.
- Materials will not transition directly at an outside corner edge. One material will turn the corner and carry over to the side elevation to a point at which the corner looks solidly finished.

- Corner trim pieces, such as corner boards on clapboard siding, may be used where appropriate.

Color

- Colors must be appropriate to the style and period of the building's construction.
- Franchise or corporate structure, logo, or sign colors will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis for their appropriateness within downtown.
- Neon colors are prohibited for use on all buildings and features.
- Bold colors that attract undue attention to a property are prohibited.

Roofs and Roofing Materials

- The termination of flat roofs must be concealed with a parapet.
- Detail and ornamentation applied to roof parapets must reflect the style or time period of the building.
- Dormers will be located and grouped as appropriate to the precedents of the architectural style of the building.
- Skylights will be permitted if they are architecturally appropriate.
- Roof protrusions, other than the chimney, will be concealed behind the primary roof parapet or a screen that matches the architectural character and materials of the structure.

Roofing Materials

Built-Up Roofing

- Built-up roofing surfaces are acceptable with very low pitched or flat roofs concealed with a parapet.

Rubber Membrane Roofing

- Synthetic rubber roofing is appropriate for very low pitched or flat roofs concealed with a parapet. Fiberglass membranes are also available in this category of roofing.

Asphalt and Fiberglass Shingles

- Asphalt shingles are acceptable for use on all pitched roofing types.
- Thicker shingle types with shadowed edges are preferred.
- Asphalt and fiberglass shingles will not be used on vertical surfaces.

Glazed or Unglazed Clay Tile

- The use of clay tile is encouraged if appropriate to the architectural characteristics of the building.

Cement Tile

- Cement tiles are acceptable if they maintain the characteristics of traditional clay tile, or another more traditional roofing material.

Slate

- The use of slate is encouraged if appropriate to the architectural characteristics of the building.

Sheet Metal Shingles

- Sheet metal shingles will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Standing Seam Metal

- Standing seam metal roofing will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Windows, Doors, and Glazing (Glass)

Windows

- Windows will be aligned, configured, sized, spaced, and placed based on the precedents of the architectural style of the building.
- Windows must be a significant component of the primary façade(s) of commercial buildings, especially on the base or first level.
- When appropriate to the architectural style of the building, bay windows are encouraged to articulate building elevations.

Doors

- Doors will be placed and sized based on the precedents of the architectural style of the building.
- Main entries will be visible from and/or face the street.
- Main entry doors and frames will be prominently articulated features on the facade.
- Glass inserts or transoms are acceptable.

Glazing

- Spandrel glass is discouraged, and its minimal use must be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Other highly reflective glazing types are discouraged, and must be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Art, frosted, glass block, patterned, textured, tinted, and leaded glass must be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Awnings and Canopies

Awnings

- The use of awnings is encouraged.
- Both retractable and stationary awnings are permitted.
- Text may be printed on the front edge of an awning as signage, and reviewed for approval by the Elm Grove Building Board.
- Awning color must compliment the building's exterior color and material texture.
- Awnings must be made of cloth or soft vinyl.

Canopies

- Canopies should include construction, materials, detail, and color that are consistent with the architectural style of the building.

Signs

- All signs must follow requirements outlined in *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88) and *Signs* (Section 335-40) of the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance.
- Signs will not be internally lit unless it can be proven historically accurate to the style of the building.
- Plastic or aluminum box signs are not permitted.

- Neon signs will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Brackets, anchors, chains and other sign attachment methods will be considered part of the design, and will be connected to structural components of the building.
- External illumination will be shielded from direct view.
- Business signs will only include the name of the business, nature of the business, and the address.
- The use of monument signs with a brick or stone base is encouraged.
- Franchise and corporate logo signs will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis for their appropriateness within downtown.
- Advertising of product brand names is not permitted.
- Professional office buildings may list the tenants of the building on a separate directional sign.
- Hanging signs will protrude from the face of the building a distance appropriate to the scale and style of the structure.

Lighting

- All lighting must follow requirements outlined in *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88) and *Outdoor Lighting* (Section 335-65) of the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance.
- Accent lighting is encouraged to highlight architectural features, building forms, signage, and landscaping. These fixtures will be reasonably lamped to prevent glare and light spread that may interfere with residential uses, street lighting, and lighting on adjacent properties.
- Lighting intensity is limited to the minimum wattage necessary to satisfy the purpose of the lighting.

Mechanical Equipment

Mechanical equipment includes, but is not limited to, air compressors, HVAC equipment, solar panels, utility boxes or meters, satellite dishes, and vents/stacks:

- Mechanical equipment must be concealed from public right-of-ways, walkways, primary customer parking areas, and neighboring residential or public uses to the highest degree possible.
- Screening of mechanical equipment will be required to reduce visibility if equipment is not otherwise hidden from view.
- Newly installed utility services, and service revisions necessitated by exterior alterations, will be underground.
- Mechanical equipment located on the roof of a structure will be concealed behind the primary roof parapet or a screen that matches the architectural character and materials of the structure.

Parking Areas

- All parking areas must follow requirements outlined in *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88) and *Parking Requirements* (Section 335-32) of the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance.
- Pedestrian walkways and landscaping must be incorporated within parking areas to minimize the appearance of large expanses of impervious surface, and to facilitate the movement of pedestrians.

- The consolidation of parking between adjoining parcels is encouraged to enhance the functionality and appearance of parking areas.
- The screening of parking areas is encouraged.

Loading Docks

- Loading docks must be concealed from public right-of-ways, walkways, primary customer parking areas, and neighboring residential or public uses to the highest degree possible.
- If loading docks cannot be concealed, then loading docks and loading dock doors will be treated as an architectural feature of the building and constructed out of materials consistent with those used on the façade.

Refuse Containers

- Refuse containers must not be visible from public right-of-ways, walkways, primary customer parking areas, and neighboring residential or public uses to the highest degree possible.
- The color, architectural style, and materials of refuse container screening must be consistent with the principal structure.
- The use of landscaping material around refuse container screening is encouraged.
- Publicly accessible refuse containers, such as may be found adjacent to an outdoor eating area, will be consistent with the prominent architectural style of the building.

Decks, Patios, and Porches

Decks

- Decks will not be permitted to intrude upon sidewalks and other walkways.
- Where appropriate, decks are encouraged for properties along Underwood Creek to facilitate public interaction with the water.

Patios

- Materials for construction of a patio will be based on those present on the building.
Example: A brick building with stone accents may either have a stone or brick patio.
- Materials for construction of a low height wall around a patio will be consistent with the architectural style of the building.
- Poured concrete is only an acceptable patio material if colored, textured, or imprinted upon.

Porches

- Porches will only be permitted when appropriate for the architectural style of the building.
- Massing and details will be consistent with the architectural style of the building.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining areas associated with an adjacent eating or drinking establishment are encouraged. The Plan Commission must review all proposals for outdoor dining areas for approval. The use of outdoor dining space within a public right-of-way must receive specific permission from the Plan Commission, and will require a licensed agreement. Factors to be taken into consideration include:

- Room for pedestrians to pass when outdoor dining infringes upon or is directly adjacent to a public right-of-way or walkway.
- Configuration and specific components of the outdoor dining area.
- Zoning classification.

Sidewalks

- When a parcel is adjacent to a public sidewalk or walkway, every principal structure on the parcel must be served by a clearly identifiable private walkway leading from the public sidewalk or walkway to the primary entrance of the structure. The presence of a driveway does not fulfill this requirement.
- Whenever appropriate, the use of private sidewalks to connect adjacent parcels is encouraged.
- A minimum width of 48 inches for private sidewalks and walkways is required.
- Private sidewalks must be differentiated from driveways and parking areas through the use of different pavement material, grade, and/or landscape material.
- Paving materials that compliment and highlight the principal structure are encouraged.

Bike Racks

- The addition of bike racks is encouraged.
- Bike racks will be positioned adjacent to pedestrian right-of-ways; however, bike racks must not infringe upon pedestrian access to sidewalks and walkways.
- Bike racks will be styled and consist of materials consistent with other public amenities or building architecture.

Outdoor Public Seating Areas

- The addition of outdoor public seating areas is encouraged.
- Public seating areas must not infringe upon pedestrian access to sidewalks and pathways.
- Public seating areas adjacent to or located within public areas will be consistent with the style of other public amenities.
- On private property, this feature will be appropriate for the architectural character of the building.

Fences and Retaining Walls

Fences

- All fences must follow requirements outlined in *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88) of the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance.
- Seasonal fences around outdoor dining areas will be no higher than 36", and shall be constructed of materials appropriate for the architectural character of the building.

Retaining Walls

- Brick, stone, or decorative landscape block are appropriate for construction of a retaining wall.
- Landscaping is encouraged to enhance a retaining wall's visual impact.

Landscaping and Planters

Planting Materials

- All planting materials must follow requirements outlined in *Site Plan and Building Plan Approval* (Section 335-88) of the Elm Grove Code of Ordinance.
- Planting of indigenous shade trees, especially disease-resistant elms, is strongly encouraged.
- Plantings around the foundation of all buildings is encouraged where possible.
- Plantings of significant vegetation along blank walls or fenced areas is encouraged.
- Plantings, permanent or portable, are encouraged at front/main entrances of buildings.
- Cooperative agreements between the Village and property owners for shared public/private landscaping are encouraged, and may be considered if appropriate.

Landscaping Materials

Inappropriate Materials

- Concrete Block
- Galvanized Metal
- Plastic Statuary
- Railroad Ties
- Steel (exposed and unpainted)
- Tires (rubber or other materials)

Appropriate Materials

- Brick
- Cast or Wrought Iron
- Copper
- Concrete (with a pattern or texture)
- Keystone Block
- Cultured Stone (must be a good imitation of natural stone in color and texture)
- Ground Face Block
- Natural stone or rock
- Decorative Landscaping Block
- Steel (anodized, painted or powder-coated)
- Wood (such as trellises, arbors, fencing, etc.)
- Plastic or rubber edging

Planters

- Seasonal window planters are acceptable.
- Planters must not infringe upon pedestrian access to sidewalks and pathways.
- Planters will be constructed out of materials consistent with the architectural style of the building.
- Planters adjacent to public areas will be consistent with the style of other public amenities.

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Building facades in Appendix A courtesy of Mr. Vac Homolka.