

# City of Sacramento Industrial and Business Park Design Guidelines



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# Department of Community Development

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# Introduction

## Purpose of this Document

The City of Sacramento Industrial and Business Park Design Guidelines have been developed for citywide use. They provide consistent design principles for structures to contribute to the overall character of industrial and business park areas.

In summary, these Design Guidelines are intended to:

- Encourage high-quality development and creative design options;
- Provide clear and usable design direction to project applicants, developers, designers, and City planning staff;
- Protect and enhance property values and community economic viability; and
- Facilitate a clear and expeditious project review process.

Projects will be reviewed for compliance with the design principles identified in this document. Although it is understood that not all design principles will be applicable to all proposed projects, conformance with relevant principles is required.

Overall, the Design Guidelines are intended to encourage consistent design while allowing for variety and innovation. City staff do not advocate a particular architectural style or styles, and will review all applications on the basis of this document.

## How to Use this Document

Project proponents and their design team will use this document as an information tool, since it outlines what will be required for project planning approval. It will also be useful for City staff in determining if a project proposal meets the minimum design standards necessary as part of the site plan and design review process.

**Designers** should use the guidelines as a framework for decisions made during the design process. This will ensure timely processing of applications, and minimize revisions, delays and misunderstandings.

**Reviewers**, such as staff and Planning and Design Commission will use the design principles to provide consistent, objective, and fair review of proposed projects.

## Organization of this Document

This document is organized into two parts:

I. Site Design Guidelines

This section focuses on site design elements such as building orientation, circulation, parking, and landscaping.

II. Architectural Design Guidelines

Design options for building entryways, facades, roof form, materials, and other architectural elements are discussed in this section.

To provide the needed FLEXIBILITY and ADAPTABILITY of these guidelines to many different types and projects, they are organized into two levels: **Principle & Rationale**, and **Guidelines**.

**Principles** represent the overall concepts that are required. They are the underlying objectives of good project planning and design. They will be referenced by the City to determine compliance with this document. Principles are broad in scope and allow for flexibility in approach and alternative design solutions

**Rationales** are included with the principles to assist in clarifying why the principle was adopted, and why it is important to the overall purpose of this document.

**Guidelines** are suggested approaches to meeting a principle. The text and figures are presented as examples, but do not illustrate all possible solutions applicable to all situations. There are alternative approaches that, in a particular set of circumstances, could well be a more appropriate way to meet the principle.

## Alternative Design Approaches

Design Principles cannot be simplified as a “step by step” cookbook approach. Each design challenge is in some way unique, with its own issues of context, constraints, objectives, challenges and opportunities. Although it would be ideal if every project could rise to the standards that might be used for new ‘greenfield’ construction, that may not be possible due to **physical constraints** such as property size or the scale of a project.

The City recognizes that each project must be considered individually, and is committed to a collaborative review process that has the shared objective amongst project proponents, project reviewers, and other interested parties of ensuring enduring and sustainable commercial areas and promoting quality design. Flexibility in considering alternative approaches to good design allows the City to encourage design creativity, and avoid possible undue hardships in particular situations.

# Site Design Guidelines

## I. Site Design

This section provides direction for the site design of new industrial and business park development, and the renovation of existing structures. Effective site planning techniques should create a unified industrial and business park environment that enhances the character of the area.

The major principles of industrial and business park site design are intended to:

- Create a distinctive character and sense of place;
- Enhance the vitality of the district; and
- Create a comfortable and welcoming environment for customers and employees.

### Sections:

1. Building Orientation
2. Parking Lot Design & Vehicular Circulation
3. Landscape Elements
4. Screening & Fencing



Image 1.1 Safe building orientation with landscaping

# 1. Building Orientation

## Design Principle

Building orientation and positioning of other elements on a site (e.g., entrances, parking lots, and driveways) shall be planned to assure a viable, safe, and attractive site design. Site planning considers how the various components of a development (e.g., buildings, circulation, parking, open space, etc.) relate to adjacent streets and existing development, and how the various components relate to each other within the development site.

**Rationale:** Appropriate building location and site organization can help to create a safe and interesting streetscape that promotes interaction and visibility. Building orientation also plays an important role in neighborhood context particularly in proximity to residential development.

## Site Design Guidelines

**1-1** If adjacent to a residential zoning district, additional building setbacks should be provided adjacent to the residential use to reduce the visual impact of the large-scale buildings.

**1-2** Site elements such as buildings, parking, driveways, and out-door activities should be arranged to emphasize the more aesthetically pleasing components of the site (e.g., landscaping and superior architectural features) and disguise less attractive elements (e.g., service facilities, outdoor storage, equipment areas, and refuse enclosures) through proper placement and design of buildings, screen walls, and landscaping.

**1-3** In multiple building developments requiring multiple service / loading facilities, the design of such facilities should be located adjacent to each other to reduce visual and noise impacts.

**1-4** Loading areas should be located and designed to minimize direct exposure to public view. These areas should be buffered with landscaping to reduce the visual impact whenever possible.

**1-5** When adjacent to residential uses, uses or activities above the first floor should consider the privacy of residents when placing windows, balconies or other accessible spaces.



**Image 1.2:** Well positioned building with visible, safe, and attractive site design



## 2. Parking Lot Design & Vehicular Circulation

### Design Principle

Parking areas shall provide vehicular access without compromising pedestrian accessibility and the character of the public realm.

**Rationale:** Planning for safer and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians can result in an aesthetically appealing site with less impervious surface and increased business visibility. In addition, pedestrian ingress and egress provides opportunities for increased transit use and pedestrian activity.

### Site Design Guidelines

**2-1** Parking lots should not be the dominant visual element at the front of the site. Large expansive paved areas located between the street and the building should be avoided.

**2-2** Parking lots should be placed at the side or rear of the building, when feasible, to ensure direct connections between the street and the building entrance and to avoid obstructing views of the building's front facade from the street.

**2-3** Primary access points for automobiles, especially visitors, should be enhanced with elements such as ornamental landscaping, low-level decorative walls, monument-type signs, and decorative paving to emphasize site access locations.

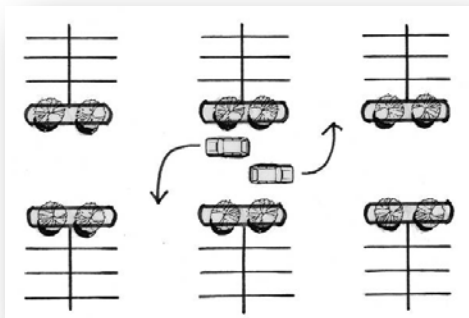
**2-4** Convenient public access and short-term visitor parking should be at the front of the building to produce the shortest route of travel from a building entrance.

**2-5** Employee parking and service areas should be located at the sides and/or rear of buildings.

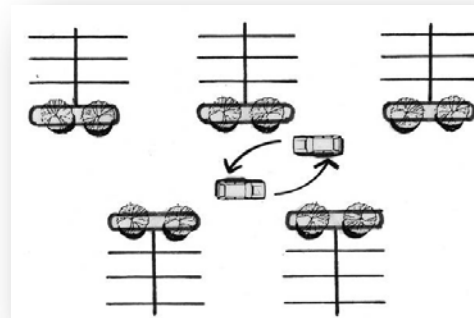
**2-6** Site access and internal circulation should promote safety, efficiency, convenience, and minimize conflict between vehicles and large trucks. Appropriate maneuvering and stacking areas for trucks should be a primary consideration in the overall design of the circulation system.

**2-7** Unobstructed sight lines at corners and mid-block are important to improve visibility for vehicles exiting and entering the site and to reduce potential conflicts with other vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

**2-8** Dead-end aisles are not acceptable and should be avoided because they restrict the flow of on-site traffic and may cause traffic congestion on the street. Travel aisles should be designed so that they align with one another. Travel aisles that are offset are inappropriate. (See graphic below.)



**Image 1.3:** Travel aisles that are aligned



**Image 1.4:** Offset travel aisles (inappropriate)

### 3. Landscape Elements

#### Design Principle

Landscaping shall be used in a variety of functions, including softening the edges of development, screening unattractive views, buffering incompatible uses, providing shade, and increasing the overall aesthetic appeal of a project.

**Rationale:** There is no one other single element that makes a greater contribution to the visual appeal of a site than landscaping. An attractive landscape can contribute to the pride, maintenance, and care of adjacent or nearby properties. Landscaping also helps reduce heat gain during the summer, and provides naturally cleaner air.

#### Site Design Guidelines

**3-1** When industrial and warehouse uses are located adjacent to less intense uses (e.g., residential, office, or retail commercial), additional landscaping in conjunction with appropriate decorative walls and setbacks should be provided to mitigate potential adverse impacts.

**3-2** The front, public portions of buildings, should be separated from parking areas by landscaping and pedestrian walkways.

**3-3** Landscaped areas should be planned and designed as an integral part of the project. The type, quantity and placement of plant material should be selected for its structure, texture, color and compatibility with the building design and materials.

**3-4** Industrial and business park buildings should provide a high level of landscaping at the street frontage. When designing landscaping, consideration should be given to the compatibility with the adjacent street frontage and adjacent properties.

**3-5** Parking areas located within or abutting residential areas should be developed with landscaped buffers and attractive walls along property lines. This helps to screen the visible presence of cars.



**Image 1.5:** Landscaping at the street frontage adjacent to neighboring properties



**Image 1.6:** Landscaping separating parking area from pedestrian walkway

## 4. Screening & Fencing

### Design Principle

Screening and fencing play an important role in securing a site, as well as defining property boundaries. It shall be designed to project a high quality image for the area.

### Rationale:

Higher quality materials are provided to help improve the aesthetics of a district, and improve a sense of safety.

### Site Design Guidelines

**4-1** The colors, materials, and appearance of walls and fences should be compatible with the overall design, character, and style of the development. They should also be compatible with high-quality examples on adjacent sites.

**4-2** When security fencing is required adjacent to streets, it should consist of wrought iron, tubular steel, vinyl coated chain-link or similar material. The use of galvanized chain-link or wood fence material is strongly discouraged, especially adjacent to streets.

**4-3** Where fences or walls are visible from public streets, a combination of landscaping (trees, hedges, shrubs and vines) should be planted along the street-facing side to visually soften blank surfaces and to deter graffiti.



**Image 1.7:** Wrought iron fencing, combined with landscaping and materials compatible with the development



**Image 1.8:** Vinyl coated chain-link fencing is encouraged over galvanized chain-link or wood fence material

# Architectural Design Guidelines

## II. Architectural Elements

Architectural design guidelines address the exterior of buildings, as well as the relationship of these buildings to the surrounding built context. It is paramount to ensure that the design of the building complements the community setting and character, and contributes to the public realm. Architectural design should promote buildings that are:

- visually welcoming from the street;
- constructed of high-quality materials that will contribute to the longevity of the building.

### Sections:

1. Building Height, Massing, and Scale
2. Building Facades
3. Entry Features
4. Windows & Doors
5. Color & Materials
6. Lighting
7. Roof Forms
8. Service Areas & Utilities
9. Canopies & Awnings
10. Signage & Graphics



Image 2.1 Variation in color, material, and height

# 1. Building Height, Massing, and Scale

## Design Principle

The architectural design of a structure shall consider many variables, from the functional use of the building, to its aesthetic design, to its “fit” within the context of existing development. Buildings shall achieve the appropriate level of design detail on all facades, and avoid blank or unarticulated facades.

**Rationale:** Variations in the form of a building can add visual interest and break up what would otherwise be a large box-like form, into more pleasing and visually harmonious elements. A variety of techniques can be used to ‘break up’ the mass of a building.

## Architectural Design Guidelines

**1-1** The mass and scale of large buildings should be reduced by varying building heights, and/or setbacks, along the front and street side building façades.

**1-2** Building heights, massing and setbacks should be varied, to define different functions such as offices and warehousing.

**1-3** Industrial and business park development should be similar in scale and massing to adjacent development, and establish a smooth transition between uses. If a different scale for new development is required for functional reasons, the new development should provide a transition between adjacent buildings.

**1-4** Vertical and horizontal offsets should be integrated within building facades to minimize building bulk.

**1-5** Techniques that should be used to ‘break up’ the massing of a building include stepping the building height, furring out walls to create offsets in plane, adding battens or reveals to walls surfaces, and insets or other variations in plan.



**Image 2.2:** Use of varying building heights, massing, and setbacks are utilized to break up the building's massing and minimize bulk



## 2. Building Facades

### Design Principle

Building facades shall be designed to create visually interesting buildings that offer variety in industrial and business park areas.

**Rationale:** Varied facades enhance the aesthetic appeal of the district, and help to retain the overall quality and value of new development.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**2-1** Long, blank facades should be avoided. More articulation, detailing, and fenestration should be provided on facades visible from major thoroughfares and freeways.

**2-2** Facades of large buildings visible from a public street should include architectural features such as reveals, windows and openings, changes in parapet heights, color, texture, and material to add interest to the building elevation and reduce its visual mass.



**Image 2.3 (above) & 2.4 (below):** Use of architectural features such as windows as well as changes in height, color and texture add interest and reduce blank facades and mass



### 3. Entry Features

#### Design Principle

Entry features of industrial and business park buildings shall be clearly visible, accessible, and designed as a significant aspect of the building's overall composition.

**Rationale:** Highly visible building entries provide a visual cue for pedestrians seeking to access a building, and help ensure safety and security of employees and visitors.

#### Design Guidelines

**3-1** Building entries should be clearly identifiable, and integrated within the overall building design. Projections, columns, overhangs, enhanced landscaping, vertical architectural features, distinctive materials, and colors should be used to articulate entrances.

**3-2** Primary building entries should be readily identifiable and well defined through the use of projections, recesses, columns, roof structures, or other design elements.



**Image 2.5:** Clearly visible and identifiable entrance, utilizing distinctive colors, materials, and architectural features to articulate it

## 4. Windows & Doors

### Design Principle

The proper placement and design of windows and doors shall be used to create visual interest in buildings, and contribute to the stylistic coherence of development along the street.

**Rationale:** Windows and doors, when properly designed and located, can help to enhance publicly-visible facades, and encourage “eyes on the street” for safety and security. They also minimize views of unsightly loading, storage and service areas.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**4-1** Recessed windows, awnings, landscaping, and shading devices to reduce solar heat gain should be used where appropriate.

**4-2** Window type, material, shape, and proportion should complement the architectural style of the building entry.

**4-3** Glare-producing reflective glass is discouraged, but tinted glass may be used. The tinted glass should be as clear as possible while still being energy efficient.

**4-4** Building openings, such as windows and doors, should maintain the proportions and spacing of other openings on the block.

**4-5** Roll-up doors should be oriented away from public street views and adjacent residential areas to avoid unsightly views and noise emissions beyond the property line.



**Image 2.6:** Tinted glass which reduces glare



**Image 2.7:** Roll-up doors oriented away from public street view



## 5. Colors & Materials

### Design Principle

Color shall be used in a way that complements the surrounding structures and adds to the liveliness and character of industrial and business park areas. Buildings shall be constructed of high-quality materials that will promote the longevity of the structure, and provide a pleasing appearance as the materials age.

### Rationale

The major design principle in the selection of building colors is to be compatible with, but not identical to, surrounding development. High-quality finish materials promote the longevity of a building and add to its character, particularly on the ground floor, where people are most likely to come in contact with the building and can easily see and touch the materials.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**5-1** A comprehensive material and color scheme should be developed for each site. Material and color variations in multi-building complexes should be complementary and compatible among buildings.

**5-2** Large expanses of smooth material (e.g., concrete) should be broken up with expansion joints, reveals, or changes in texture, color, and material.

**5-3** Large expanses of highly reflective surface and mirror glass exterior walls should be avoided to reduce heat, and prevent glare impacts on adjacent public streets and properties.

**5-4** Materials and colors of wall and monument signs should be compatible with the main buildings on the site.

**5-5** Building walls that may be prone to graffiti should be treated with a graffiti resistant coating, materials that are not conducive to graffiti such as split face block, or extensive landscaping to cover blank walls.

**5-6** All exterior materials, textures and colors should be appropriate for the architectural style or theme of the building, and should contribute towards the quality of the streetscape.

**5-7** Compatible colors on a single façade, or composition, should add interest and variety while reducing building scale and breaking up plain walls. Light, neutral colors should be used on industrial buildings to help reduce their perceived size. Contrasting trim and color bands can help break up blank surfaces.

**Image 2.8:** Light, neutral colored building using high quality materials



## 6. Lighting

### Design Principle

Lighting fixtures shall be designed to complement and enhance the architectural style of the building and should be compatible with the character of the area.

**Rationale:** Every site must have provisions for lighting that is functional while also respecting the scale and character of adjacent development. Lighting must not intrude upon or create a nuisance for nearby occupants, especially abutting residential areas. At the same time, lighting should provide for adequate visibility and security for customers, and those passing by.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**6-1** The design of the light fixtures and their structural support should be architecturally compatible with the theme of the development.

**6-2** Lighting fixtures should not have exposed bulbs.

**6-3** Decorative accent lighting and fixtures above the minimum 1-foot candle illumination levels of surrounding parking lots should be provided at vehicle driveways, entry throats, pedestrian paths, plaza areas, and other activity areas.

**6-4** Exterior doorways and entries should be fully illuminated to a minimum of one foot-candle over the entire face and frame of the opening.

**6-5** Wall mounted lights should not extend above the height of the wall or parapet to which they are mounted.

**6-6** Parking lot lighting standards should be placed so that the illumination spread will not conflict with the growth of trees in required parking lot planters.



**Image 2.9 & 2.10:** Lighting that is compatible with the theme of the development, providing for visibility and security

## 7. Roof Forms

### Design Principle

Roofs shall be given design considerations and treatment equal to that of the rest of the building's "exterior" and should be integrated within the architectural theme of industrial and business park buildings. Building rooflines shall include variations to avoid long, continuous planes, demonstrating special design treatments where there is a major change in an element of a building's facade.

**Rationale:** Industrial and business park buildings can often have very large roof expanses, that when coupled with long wall elevations, can cause a monotonous effect. Varying roof forms, or parapet walls, can enhance a building's appearance and help screen unattractive mechanical equipment.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**7-1** Rooflines should include variations to avoid long, horizontal rooflines. Long, horizontal rooflines should be minimized through articulating a building's facade, alternating roof or parapet heights, providing variations in materials and colors, or other appropriate methods.

**7-2** Depending upon the architectural style of a structure, industrial and business park buildings are encouraged to use decorative roof elements, such as cornices to enhance a building's roof edge.

**7-3** When sloped roofs are incorporated into a design, equipment wells should be used to continue the existing pitch and roofline.



**Image 2.11:** Variation in height, color, and slope of the building's roofline

## 8. Service Areas & Utilities

### Design Principle

Service and utility areas, including loading docks, storage areas, mechanical systems, and trash bins, shall be screened from view and integrated into the design of a project.

**Rationale:** Unappealing views of service areas can mar an otherwise successful site plan and building design. Carefully sited and screened services and utilities can be both functional and unobtrusive.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**8-1** Refuse, storage, and equipment areas should be screened from view from adjacent uses.

**8-2** All installed equipment, electrical rooms, and service rooms should be placed within the footprint of the structure. No equipment of any kind should be visible on the outside of the structure.

**8-3** All screening devices should be compatible with the architecture, materials and colors of the building.

**8-4** Trash enclosures that are visible from upper stories of adjacent structures should have an opaque or semi-opaque horizontal cover/screen to mitigate unsightly views. The covering structure should be compatible with the architectural theme of the site's buildings.

**8-5** Roof ladders should be located inside the building or be designed to be compatible with the architectural design of the building. Equipment used to retract and store roof ladders should not be mounted to the exterior of the structure.

**8-6** Refuse storage and loading areas should be located at the rear of the development and screened from public view.



**Image 2.12:** Loading area integrated into the design of project with no equipment being visible on the outside of the structure

## 9. Canopies & Awnings

### Design Principle

When incorporated into a building, canopies and awnings shall be made of high-quality components that complement the overall design, colors, and materials of the building.

**Rationale:** Canopies and awnings can help shield building occupants from excessive heat gain and glare, add visual interest to building facades, and provide shelter for employees and visitors who are entering or exiting the building during inclement weather.

### Architectural Design Guidelines

**9-1** Canopies, awnings, arcades, and overhangs are encouraged over windows and entries along public sidewalks on the ground floor.

**9-2** Canopies, awnings, and arcades should be designed with respect for the proportions of the building in terms of size, shape, and placement, unless a unique architectural style encourages something different.

**9-3** Canopies and awnings should fit within individual bays or structural divisions of the building facade rather than extending beyond a single bay, unless the building structure dictates an alternative placement.

**9-4** Use of a continuous awning for the windows on the upper floors is discouraged. Each window, or small grouping of windows, should be articulated with an individual canopy or awning, with awnings extending no more than halfway down the window. The color and style should complement ground-level awnings and canopies on the same building.

**9-5** Brightly colored awnings should be compatible with the colors used on the main building. Uncolored or light-colored canvas awnings may be appropriate for dark and north-facing facades.

**9-6** Canopies and awnings should only be internally illuminated where appropriate to the architectural style of the building.

**9-7:** Materials should be of the highest quality such as metal and glass. If canvas material is used, it should be heavy duty and non-reflective matte finish. Plastic or vinyl canopies should not be used.



**Image 2.13:** Canopy with compatible colors using high quality metal material



## 10. Signage & Graphics

### Design Principle

Building identification signs and graphics shall enhance the appearance of the building and contribute to the overall character of the street, while minimizing the appearance of clutter.

**Rationale:** Attractive, artistic, well-proportioned, and carefully located signs can enhance the character of industrial and business districts. Signage should enhance the character of existing older buildings, and can help new development to be compatible with existing development.

### Design Guidelines

**10-1** Signage can be wall-mounted, projecting, combined with awnings, or placed on windows. Hanging signs with projecting lettering are encouraged.

**10-2** Attached signage should consist of individual letters; cabinet signs are discouraged.



**Image 2.14:** Signage that is wall mounted, consisting of individual projecting letters