
TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY



COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

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**TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
A. Purpose	The design guidelines addressed in this section are intended as a reference framework to assist developers and project designers in understanding the Town’s goals and objective for high quality development within the commercial land use districts.	2
B. Applicability	This section describes the manner in which the design guidelines should be applied to new and existing development.	3
C. Elements of Project Design	This section addresses desirable elements of the commercial project design, as well as undesirable elements that should be avoided.	3
D. Architectural Styles	This section provides a framework of common architectural design elements that best reflect the Town’s “desert southwestern” character. Architectural guidelines outlined in this section are intended to be used as guidelines and allow flexibility and to promote creativity.	4
E. Designs Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Colors § Building Entries § Building Height § Building Mass/Scale § Building Finishes and Detailing § Roofs § Awnings § Materials § Architectural Details § Walls and Fences § Focal Points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 9 10 11 12 13 14 14 14 15 16
Glossary		18

A. PURPOSE

The design guidelines are intended to assist developers and project designers in understanding the Town's goals and objectives for achieving, enhancing, and or maintaining high quality development within commercial land use districts. Specifically, this is aimed at achieving the following:

- to promote the desired character and a shared vision of future development within the Town's commercial districts;
- to provide clear design guidance for citizens, developers, engineers, architects, landscape architects and other professionals in preparing development and construction plans;
- to provide guidance to Town staff, the Planning Commission and the Town Council in reviewing and evaluating future development projects within commercial land use districts;
- to provide minimum standards for development while allowing the greatest degree of flexibility and creativity;
- to implement the Community Design and Scenic Highway Elements of the General Plan and to reflect the issues raised in the "Visions and Planning Recommendations for the Gateway Area of Yucca Valley";
- to enhance/create a positive image along State Routes 62 and 247;
- to promote complimentary and harmonious development adjacent to existing commercial development.

The guidelines addressed in this document apply to proposed commercial projects, including new projects, additions, renovations, remodels and other related projects requiring building permits.

The text and photo illustrations contained herein are not intended to dictate solutions and or limit creativity. They are general and may be applied by Town staff with some flexibility in their application to specific projects. Beyond the guidelines, creative adaptation and innovation are encouraged, provided the proposed development plan also adheres to general design principles to the greatest extent possible. Pre-submittal review of development plans and design concepts prior to formal submittal is encouraged to assist developers and other project proponents in realizing the goals established within these design guidelines.

B. APPLICABILITY

New or Replacement

The provisions of this document should apply to all new commercial development within the Town's commercial land use districts and where any Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan Review, or Land Use Compliance Review is required, except projects that are under the regulation of an approved Specific Plan.

Existing

Any alteration to the exterior of a building, material or storefront that involves a Building Permit shall adhere to the provisions of this document.

Change in color to an existing building shall be consistent with the colors section under Design Element of these Guidelines.

Prior to the painting of an existing commercial building, the color scheme shall be approved by the Planning Division. Colors that are tan, light brown, off-white, any muted or soft earth tones can be approved at the staff level. The Director may forward a proposed color scheme to the Planning Commission for review and approval.

C. ELEMENTS OF PROJECT DESIGN

Desirable Elements of Project Design

Community development proposals are evaluated based upon the thoughtful consideration of community design principles and the various project elements that implement them and adjacent development.

The most desirable qualities and design elements for commercial projects include:

- cohesiveness of scale and overall character with adjacent structures and sites
- multi-planed, pitched roofs
- significant wall articulation (canopies, insets, wing walls, trellises)
- richness of surface and texture
- roof overhangs, arcades
- regular or traditional window placement and rhythm
- color which compliments the natural desert setting

Undesirable Elements

Elements that should be minimized or avoided include:

- square, "boxlike" structures
- large blank, unarticulated wall surfaces
- highly reflective surfaces
- metal siding on the main facade
- gray concrete precision block walls

- plastic siding
- primary, bright, or fluorescent colors

D. ARCHITECTURE STYLES

Yucca Valley’s unique desert environment and historic influences can be maintained through an adherence to southwestern and other similar architectural styles. Those that best reflect the character of the community can be defined as Desert Western, Ranch, Mission, Mediterranean, Santa Fe and Southwest architecture. Contemporary designs, including a 50’s era look or that are responsive to local climatic conditions and are consistent with these architectural design principles are not precluded; however, such designs must provide sufficient quality of design and materials to assure they meet the aesthetic goals of the community and compliment development within the immediate area surrounding the project site.

Construction should represent any chosen style through appropriate detailing and proper application of materials. A consistent architectural style should be used for a building and elements that relate to it, such as trellises, planters, etc. Multi-building projects should also use a consistent architectural style throughout the project. While specific architectural styles are not dictated by the Development Code, the desert western, ranch, and modern composite styles predominate throughout Yucca Valley and should be emulated to keep Yucca Valley’s unique “sense of place”. “High tech” or styles using simple shaped structures with unarticulated or plain surfaces and insubstantial materials to create stark visual effects should be avoided.

The following photo illustrations are just a few architectural styles:

Western Architecture

Background

The migration westward brought us a form of Architecture we call “western”. The structures were usually built with wood, were simple and were quickly constructed, and normally had front parapets which were stepped or sculptured to provide interest and signboards. This form of architecture is present throughout the west where quickly constructed “boomtowns” sprung up to accommodate the miners, ranchers, and farmers demands.

The western movie set at Pioneertown which was constructed in the 1950’s and the historical presence of many miners and ranchers in the area make this an architectural style with a strong background within the Morongo Basin.

The following photo illustrations provide just a few examples:



Illustration #1

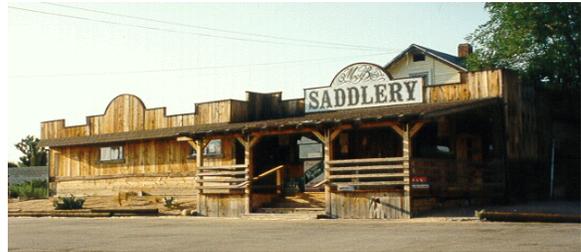


Illustration #2



Illustration #3



Illustration #4



Illustration #5



Illustration #6

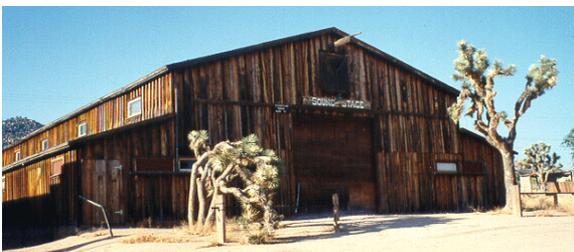


Illustration #7



Illustration #8

Southwest/Santa-Fe Architecture

The first and most primitive structures of the Southwest desert region are represented by the adobe and mud structures of the Pueblo cultures. These structures are simple, and essentially pure in form and function. The Morongo Basin has many early structures which represent this style and construction technique. The following pictures show modern efforts to duplicate this form.



Illustration #9



Illustration #10



Illustration #11



Illustration #12



Illustration #13



Illustration #14



Illustration #15

Composite Architecture

The historical multi-cultural influences on the Southwest desert region have resulted in a composite form in building design which is not pure in form but offers sound solutions for desert structures. The following group of pictures represent this composite architecture, its western influence, and strong awareness of the desert environment.



Illustration #16



Illustration #17



Illustration #18



Illustration #19



Illustration #20



Illustration #21



Illustration #22



Illustration #23



Illustration #24



Illustration #25



Illustration #26

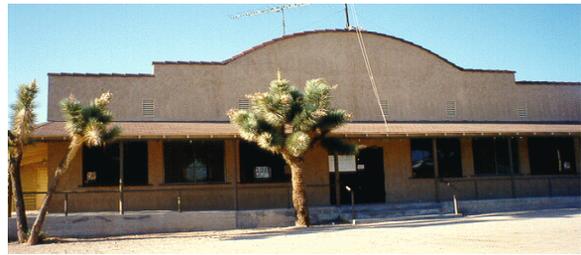


Illustration #27

Ranch Architecture

The Ranch style of structure in commercial building is basically a variation of the traditional residential design of housing in rural areas. The commercial version usually has pitched roofs which extend to provide protected walkways and porches held up with posts, use a variety of materials, and offers good protection from the desert elements. The following pictures provide examples of commercial ranch architecture.



Illustration #28



Illustration #29



Illustration #30



Illustration #31



Illustration #32

E. DESIGN ELEMENTS

An architectural framework that is based on common design elements creates an integrated community, while also allowing each project to express its own distinct character. The text and illustrations provided below are intended to serve as departure points for creative architectural innovation and adaptations.

Colors

1. Colors should be muted and lighter in value. (Muted colors contain a mix of complementary colors that result in off-whites, tans, and other “softer colors”). Primary, bright and fluorescent colors or any variation shall be avoided. Sharp contrast in colors shall also be avoided.
2. Dominant colors should be derived from earth tones and natural building materials. Subtle hues, including shades of brown and beige, sandy pink, peach, and terra cotta red should be encouraged.
3. Choose colors with consideration to surrounding buildings. The building should be a “good neighbor” and not clash visually with adjacent buildings.
4. Colors should be used to “tie together” all the building’s parts, including the storefront, windows, doors, and cornices.
5. Choose colors which compliments the natural desert setting.
6. Large areas of one color, without the use of color accents, should be avoided.

Building Entries

1. Building entryways should provide for well defined, safe, and unobstructed pedestrian access.

2. Entries should be integral parts of building facades and should incorporate arches, overhangs, columns, wall articulation, and/or other architectural features which distinguish it from the rest of the building.
3. Entryways should be easily identifiable to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Exterior enhancements, including entry porticos, landscaping, pedestrian walkways, textured paving materials, benches, and/or other similar treatments should be used to direct pedestrians to the entry and enhance the appearance of the structure. The following illustrations are examples of textured paving:



Illustration #33



Illustration #34



Illustration #35



Illustration #36

Building Height

1. Heights of structures should be compatible with that of surrounding development. New development shall “transition” from the height of adjacent development to the maximum height of the proposed structure. Illustration #37 illustrates similar or complimentary roof line whereas Illustration #38 shows an example of building design and roof line that does not transition or compliment one another.



Illustration #37



Illustration #38

2. Heights of structures should not overwhelm the streetscape, and should be compatible with adjacent open space and adjacent structures. Structures that are adjacent to the street should be single-story buildings where the topography of the lot is 5 foot or higher in grade than the adjacent street. Additional street setbacks and/or enhanced facade and roofline articulation may be required for two-story structures, depending on height and scale of building.
3. Building heights shall not exceed standards established for each district set forth in the Town's Development Code.

Building Mass/Scale

Scale refers to the relationship between the size and mass of a new structure and that of adjoining structures, as well as the size of the new building in relation to the human scale.

1. The scale of buildings shall be carefully related to adjacent structures and pedestrian areas, such as plazas and courtyards. Clusters of buildings should be of similar scale and mass.
2. The scale of buildings shall be generally consistent throughout a development, except where anchor or major tenants require larger building areas.
3. Blank, unarticulated walls at the ground floor level emphasize the mass of a building and should be avoided, to the greatest extent practical. Illustration #39 and #40 illustrates an unarticulated structure that is often referred to as "box like".



Illustration #39



Illustration #40

4. Design must be sensitive to all elevations of a building. Special attention should be given to those elevations most visible to commercial patrons, the traveling public, and adjacent residential neighborhoods. The following treatments can be applied to diminish the mass and scale of large, dominating structures:
 - emphasize the horizontal through the use of trim and bands of windows
 - add awnings, eaves, windows, or other ornamentation to articulate building surfaces
 - use a combination of complementary textures and colors to provide visual

interest and warmth

- use landscape materials to soften and give relief to an otherwise bulky building (Illustration #41 and #44)
- vary the height of the building so that it appears to be divided into distinct massing elements and provides additional visual interest
- use architectural detailing, especially at the ground level, but also elsewhere on the building
- utilize windows, trellises, roof overhangs, arcades, and wall articulation to visually “break up” massive buildings (Illustration #42 and #43)
- Illustration #9 demonstrates how the use of landscaping and varying building heights can be used effectively to provide visual interest

5. Commercial development adjacent to residential areas shall incorporate residential scale to minimize land use conflicts.



Illustration #41



Illustration #42



Illustration #43



Illustration #44

Building Finishes and Detailing

Building facades should not be monotonous or have a flat, shadowless appearance on any side where feasible. No wall should have a blank, uninterrupted length exceeding 20 feet without including one of the following: change in texture, change in plane (2 foot minimum), window, lattice, tree or equivalent element, except where building is being built adjacent to an existing building and the building elevation will not be visible.

All facades should have a recognizable “base” and “top”. The base should visually carry the weight of the building. A recommended rule of thumb is approximately one-eighth of the building’s height, unless associated with window stem walls where it may be as little as 18 inches tall. Techniques for establishing a base include (but are not limited to): thicker walls,

textured materials (e.g. tile or masonry treatments), darker colored materials, and landscaping.

“Tops” take advantage of the visual prominence of a building’s silhouette and should be approximately one-twentieth of a buildings height or 12 inches (which ever is more).

Techniques for clearly expressing a top include (but are not limited to): cornice treatment, roof overhangs, stepped parapets, textured materials and differently colored materials. Color “stripes” are not acceptable as the only treatment.

Roofs

1. Sloped or pitched roofs are preferred over flat roofs, except in the case of an adobe or Santa Fe style where a flat roof is acceptable. Roofs of varied pitches can be used, but should be proportionate to the building size and scale. Roof pitch for southwestern and mission style architecture is typically low. A 2:12 roof pitch (vertical rise to horizontal run) is common for main roof surfaces, except colonnades and arcades. Roof pitch may vary in keeping with the prevailing architectural style being applied. Examples of various pitched roofs can be seen in Illustrations #21, #22, #29, and #30.
2. Where flat roof construction is used, parapets and enhanced elevations shall be used to screen rooftop mechanical equipment, provide visual interest, and break up the monotony of linear rooflines. Screening materials should be consistent with and an integral part of the main structure’s materials. Mechanical equipment shall be located behind the highest vertical element of the building. Examples of the use of parapets can be seen in Illustrations #1 thru #19.
3. The roofline at the top of the structure should avoid running in a continuous plane for more than 50 feet without offsetting or jogging the roof plane. The rooflines of larger buildings, especially those with greater setbacks, may exceed this amount but should be offset to break up the roofline to the greatest extent practical.
4. The following roof materials should not be used:
 - highly reflective surfaces (copper roofs may be considered)
 - illuminated roofing
5. Overhanging or exposed wooden beams contribute to the rustic, natural character of desert western architecture and should be used where appropriate. Illustrations #1, #2, #3, #5, #28 provide just a few examples.
6. Gutters, where used, shall be considered an integral part of the building design and treated with appropriate architectural details.
7. Openings which are protected by overhangs, such as arcades, colonnades and covered patios, are encouraged.
8. Roof tiles with a clay-like appearance are encouraged and may be constructed of clay,

concrete, fiberglass, or other approved materials. Tiles should be uniform in color mix and ranges and shall be non-reflective for a soft, natural appearance.

Awnings

1. The use of awnings along a row of contiguous structures should be limited to awnings of the same form and location, and awning colors should be complementary and consistent. A minimum 8 foot clearance between the ground or walkway and the awning overhang shall be maintained.
2. Non-reflective awning materials, including canvas, treated canvas, matte finish vinyl and fabrics are encouraged. Plexiglas, metal, glossy vinyl, illuminated, and backlit awnings are discouraged.
3. Signs on awnings should be limited to the awning's flap (valance) or end panels of angled, curved or box awnings. Sign lettering and designs should be printed directly on the awning. All signage shall conform with the Town Development Code.

Materials

1. Materials should complement the surrounding natural environment and may include wood, smooth or textured stucco and terra cotta tile. Building materials which have a hand-crafted, natural look and feel are encouraged.
2. Metal, glass and concrete block should be limited in their use as predominant wall materials. Their more extensive use may be appropriate in some situations, depending on the overall architectural design concept.
3. A mix of complementary finish textures is encouraged to provide visual interest and variety. Examples include the use of rusticated wainscot with smoother finishes above, or a mix of split face with architectural quality precision block or smooth stucco.
4. Architectural detailing should be constructed of materials and/or painted to complement the facade.
5. The number of colors appearing on the structure's exterior shall be limited to only three or four colors, unless otherwise approved by Town staff during project review.
6. The use of decorative tiles, tile inserts, medallions and other trim materials is encouraged to add interest and definition to window sills, doors and building facades. Moldings or painted borders may also be used, where appropriate.

Architectural Details

1. Courtyards, patios, covered porches, and gardens are encouraged as they provide a sense of

enclosure, enhance the commercial environment, and foster pedestrian activity. Such areas should offer pedestrian amenities such as fountains, benches and walkways.

2. Windows that are deeply recessed into thick exterior wall surfaces provide protection from intense sunlight and offer insulation against wind, cold, and extremes in weather. Recessed windows are an important element of all architectural styles and are encouraged.
3. Roof overhangs, deeply-recessed windows and doors, decorative iron grills on windows, and other architectural features which create shade and shadow and permit the interplay of natural light are recommended. The use of arches or galleries to create colonnades and covered patios or porches is encouraged. Heavy timber beams or trellises can also be used to provide shade.

Walls and Fences

Walls and fences are important components of urban design which perform numerous functions. Not only do they help delineate the boundaries of outdoor spaces, but they also provide effective noise buffering and visual screening effects, as well as enhanced security. Walls and fences can serve as wind barriers to protect landscaping treatments, and can create and enhance a sense of privacy.

The following is just a few examples that can be used to compliment a commercial project:



Illustration #45



Illustration #46



Illustration #47



Illustration #48



Illustration #49



Illustration #50



Illustration #51



Illustration #52



Illustration #53

1. Wall and fence materials shall consist of wood, stone or masonry construction. Ceramic tile and wrought iron should also be encouraged.
2. Wall and fence colors shall consist of desert tones, such as brown, tan, beige and sand. Other colors may be used if they are part of an approved architectural theme and color scheme. Colors shall complement the nearest buildings and structures.
3. Walls and fences should serve as unifying design elements along public streets and pedestrian corridors. They should be consistent in material, design and height in such locations.

Focal Points

1. Architectural focal points provide visual interest and can help define a sense of place within a development or along a streetscape. The use of building or design elements, such as towers, articulated rooflines, artwork, fountains, pedestrian seating areas, or

landscape plantings as special focal points is encouraged. The following example is an example of simple pedestrian seating area accented with landscaping.



Illustration #54



Illustration #55



Illustration #56

2. Focal point features should be located near main activity areas, building entryways or pedestrian plazas to capture existing and generate new pedestrian activity. Such elements should be integrated with the architectural style and scale of the subject and surrounding buildings.
3. Signage on towers or other highly visible architectural features should be discouraged. Refer to the Town Sign Ordinance for direction on appropriate signage placement.

GLOSSARY

Articulated. Changes in building surfaces through the use and manipulation of alternating planes, windows, arches, moldings, cornices, rooflines and other architectural elements having joints or segments which add additional depth or height to a structure.

Eaves. The projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Facade. The main face or front of a building.

Molding. An ornamental strip used to decorate a surface, especially an upper wall.

Parapet. A low, protective wall or railing along the edge of a roof, balcony, or similar structure.

Trellis. An open framework or lattice used for training vines and climbing plants.

Wainscot. A facing or paneling applied to the walls of a room or building; the lower part of a wall when finished in a material different from the upper part.

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