



*City of Hemet*

# **COMMERCIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Approved by  
City Council Resolution No. 3744  
(applicable to all projects submitted on or after August 13, 2003)



## Commercial Design Guidelines

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## I. Site Planning

### A. Existing Features

1. Significant natural amenities such as views, mature trees, riparian features, rock outcroppings, and other topographic features should, to the greatest extent possible, be preserved and incorporated into the project design.
2. Structures determined by the City to be of historical local importance should be preserved and incorporated into the project design. If structures are relocated off a site, a historical reference to the relocated structures should be maintained on-site. Historical local importance being defined as a building or site shown any local, regional, or state historical inventory as a locally important site. This is applicable to all historical references in this document.
3. Overall site layouts and new structures should be designed to complement preserved structures and natural amenities.

### B. Grading

1. Site grading and disturbance should be minimized.
2. The site plan should be designed to integrate the development into existing topography and natural vegetation.

3. Grading for developable pads should follow the contours of the existing landform. Mass grading, which can alter the integrity of the natural landform should be avoided.
4. Terraces should be used if the height of a graded slope exceeds six (6) feet in height in front or street side setback areas. The height of a slope is the difference in elevation between the toe of the slope and the top of the slope.
5. Transitions at top and toe of manufactured or cut and fill slopes should be rounded.
6. Individual parcels should be graded in such a way as to direct runoff away from buildings and into drainage facilities.
7. Grading and the use of berming within the streetscape should be coordinated with the development pad location and landscaping to screen parking or loading areas.
8. Detention/Retention and other drainage facilities should be no larger than required to fulfill their function.
9. Development on sloped properties should generally follow the natural contours of the land by use of at least one of the following design features:

- a. Use terraced parking lots.
  - b. Provide stepped building foundations and retaining walls.
  - c. Incorporate larger setbacks to preserve natural landforms.
10. When designed as an open landscaped feature, drainage facilities may be located within street setbacks.

C. Access and Circulation

1. The circulation system should address the needs of both motorists and pedestrians and avoid vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.
2. Pedestrian walkways should be clearly delineated with special pavement, landscaping, and lighting.
3. Pedestrian walkways should include architectural and hardscape treatments that are at human-scale and which create a pleasant environment which invites people to linger in commercial areas.
4. Dead-end parking aisles should be avoided.
5. Proper vehicle stacking distance should be provided at all ingress and egress points so that queued vehicles will not block access to parking

stalls.

6. On large or high volume projects, a minimum of two means of ingress and egress should be provided to the project site, not including an emergency only access but may include shared access points.
7. On-site project entrances should provide a strong entry statement through the use of textured pavement, enhanced landscaping and project identification treatments.
8. Ingress and egress points should be aligned with existing driveways, intersection, or median openings.
9. The number of curb cuts should be kept to a minimum and driveways providing shared access to multiple parcels is encouraged.
10. Pedestrian walkways should connect adjoining properties through open space areas.
11. Adjacent parking lots should be connected by vehicular and pedestrian access points to minimize ingress and egress upon public rights-of-way.
12. Physical barriers (e.g., fences, walls, curbs) between adjacent parcels with similar uses should be avoided unless frequent vehicular and pedestrian access points are provided.

13. Coordinated site design (including parking, driveways and circulation, sign facilities, landscaped areas and garbage collection areas) is encouraged on adjacent parcels with similar uses. Such coordination will typically involve (mutual access) rights-of-way over both properties or reciprocal easements and mutual access agreements.
14. Frontage roads or drives should be provided adjacent to open space areas unless the commercial project is designed to provide direct pedestrian access to the open space and the road or drive is not otherwise necessary.
15. One-way drive-aisles should be limited to drive-in facilities or to where a two-way aisle is not possible.
16. On-site directional signs should be used selectively so as to be effective yet avoid cluttering the site with unnecessary or confusing signage.
17. Bricks, pavers or decorative textured concrete should be used on-site to accent and highlight street entries, corners, pedestrian walkways, and plazas or other focal points.
18. The site plan should incorporate provisions for adequate local transit facilities such as turnouts and bus shelters necessary to meet the needs and demand generated by the proposed project.

D. Parking

1. Parking should be distributed evenly throughout the project.
2. Parking areas should be screened from public view with mounding, landscaping, low walls, grade differentials, and building orientation. Screening techniques should be varied and long expanses of a single technique should be avoided.
3. Off-street parking areas should be adequate to meet all of the parking and loading demands generated by the use as required by Chapter 90, Article XL of the Hemet Municipal Code.
4. Parking areas should be designed so that pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars. The need for pedestrians to cross parking aisles should be minimized.
5. All parking areas should be clearly outlined on the surface of the parking facility with painted white or contrasting lines or stone, brick, textured or smooth concrete.
6. Parking aisles should be separated from vehicle circulation routes.
7. Parking within structures, including basement and roof parking, should be considered in order to minimize impervious surfaces and maximize open areas.

E. Building Location and Orientation

1. Buildings should be clustered to optimize open space and create opportunities for; gathering places such as common plazas and outdoor seating areas; highlighting natural and landscaped amenities; and effective pedestrian connections.
2. Building footprints should be varied throughout the project. Repetitive rectangular buildings should be avoided in favor of buildings with varied and articulated footprints.
3. Buildings should be designed and located so that main entrances are generally oriented toward common plazas, primary circulation aisles, or public rights-of-way.
4. Structures, landscaping, and hardscape should be designed and located in a manner that creates views into the project and establishes a sense of place and arrival.
5. Freestanding buildings should be located close to the street to create a more attractive streetscape, insure privacy of adjacent uses, and minimize the visual impact of large areas of pavement or parking from public streets.
6. Buildings located along a street should be designed and located in a

manner that creates an attractive pedestrian friendly streetscape with varied footprints and avoids monotonous unbroken building facades.

7. Buildings should be designed and located so that loading and service areas, trash facilities, ground mounted equipment and utilities are screened from public view with buildings, landscaping, and/or walls and other hardscape features.
8. Commercial uses should be clustered with shared facilities, rather than developed in strips with separate facilities for each site.
9. Buildings should be designed and located so as not to block solar access to adjacent properties.
10. Noise, traffic, or odor-generating activities should be located adjacent to similar activities on adjacent properties.
11. When adjoining residential and commercial uses can mutually benefit from connection rather than separation, appropriate connective elements (e.g., walkways, common landscape areas, building orientation, and unfenced property lines) should be provided between the uses.
12. Buildings should be designed and located so that window orientation does not create a direct line of sight into adjacent residential units and private open spaces within 100 feet of the property line.

13. When commercial buildings back up to open space areas of multi-family residential projects, the rear setback area should be landscaped and combined with the residential open space.
14. Where a project adjoins residential development, the project should lessen its impact on adjacent residences through enhanced setbacks, building height limitations, building footprint and facade articulation, and increased landscaping.

F. Landscaping

1. Landscaping, earth berms, decorative walls and other buffers should be used to define project boundaries and to reduce impacts on adjacent properties. However, such features should not prevent connecting access points between compatible uses.
2. Landscaping should be provided around the entire base of structures to soften the edge between the parking lot and the structure, except at entrances, exits, and loading and service areas.
3. Special landscaping treatment, such as intensifying the density and size of trees, accent trees, and special paving, should be provided at all project entries and building entrances.
4. Developments should integrate on-site landscaping with adjacent streetscape landscaping, where appropriate.

5. The plant palette should include a range of materials consistent with the City's adopted Landscaping Guidelines with an emphasis on plants native to the region or low water use plants/materials.
6. Canopy shade trees should be provided in parking areas.
7. On southern and western exposures, deciduous trees should be used to provide summer shade and winter sun.
8. Evergreen trees or shrubs should be used to block winds, screen unsightly features, and decrease heat gain.
9. Plants should be selected based on appropriate size and shape at maturity.
10. Landscaping should define outdoor spaces such as street edge, outdoor plazas, or movement paths between parking and building entrances.
11. Landscaping should screen unattractive views and features, such as parking lots, loading and storage areas, trash enclosures, utility equipment, and heating and air-conditioning equipment.
12. Landscaping should be used to break up uninterrupted building mass, expanses of paved surfaces, frame views, and connect development on adjacent pads.

13. Landscaping should achieve a continuity of form through the implementation of the following concepts:
  - a) Trees of the same shape and form should be used along access routes of the same type to reinforce the hierarchy of streets and access ways.
  - b) Trees should be planted in similar patterns along access ways of the same type.
  - c) The same species or combination of species should be used for the entire length of an access way.
  
14. Landscaping should be provided in sufficient size and quantity to adequately screen and soften the visual impact of new building planes within the first year (typically a mix of 24" box and 15 gal. trees and 5 gal. shrubs). A minimum of 20% of the trees used for screening purposes should consist of 24" box trees at the time of installation.
  
15. At a minimum, one tree should be provided for every thirty (30) linear feet of on-site street and access drive frontage with trees informally clustered. Areas between planting groups should not exceed fifty (50) feet.
  
16. The visual impact of parking areas should be reduced by landscaping, hedges, berming, and planted islands and fingers.

17. Low walls, berms or landscaping, 36" to 42" in height should be used to screen automobile headlights in parking areas along major roads and across from residential areas.
18. Trees should be located throughout parking areas in islands and fingers between parking spaces to shade parking areas and reduce heat radiated from paved areas.
19. Accent trees and landscaping should be used as identity plantings at major entry points and should highlight key features such as entry monument signs and other hardscape features.
20. Streetscape grading, berms and other landscape treatments consistent with these guidelines used by adjacent development to screen parking should be continued by new development with similar site conditions.
21. On-site entry statements should include hardscape elements consistent with the overall architectural style of the development. Such features may include
  - a) Enhanced landscaping treatment;
  - b) Enhanced monument signage;
  - c) Decorative entryway;

- d) Exposed aggregate or stamped concrete; and
  - e) Berming and/or low decorative walls.
22. Developments larger than five (5) acres in size should include a hardscape element which creates a focus for the development and creates a usable public open space. Appropriate hardscape elements include plaza areas, arbor or patio facilities, courtyards, atriums and outdoor gathering and eating areas.
23. Hardscape elements should be used in coordination with the landscaping to accent site architecture and provide a connection between access ways and individual developments.
24. Materials used in the construction of street furniture should compliment architectural materials used on adjacent buildings and should be of a common design. Trash receptacles and other minor structures or features should also relate to the architectural style of the development.
25. Enhanced landscaping or water features should be used at plazas and courtyards to create focal points along pedestrian areas and to enhance views from building windows.
26. Where screening is necessary, a combination of elements should be used, including walls, berms, and landscaping. Screening of outdoor

storage areas should be a minimum of six (6) feet in height and a maximum of ten (10) feet in height. Vinyl-covered chain link fencing with neutral colored slats, and/or landscaped screening may be used for areas not visible from any pedestrian gathering area, public right-of-way, or residential use or property.

27. All outdoor mechanical and electrical equipment should be screened from view by architectural elements designed to an integral part of the building. Plans should include the locations and elevations of all outdoor equipment.

#### G. Exterior Lighting

1. All glares should be directed onto the site and away from adjacent properties.
2. Light standards should blend architecturally with buildings, pedestrian areas, and other hardscape elements and should be scaled to match its function.
3. All lighting used in parking lots for security or safety purposes should be designed so that light rays are projected below the fixture.
4. Flashing lights should be prohibited.
5. Low energy lights should be used whenever possible (solar powered lights

is one example).

#### H. Signage

1. Signs should be integrated into the architectural style of the building. Individual signs should reinforce the building's character and not obscure or detract from it.
2. Signs should be used as a means of business identification rather than a form of advertising.
3. A simple layout and color scheme should be used to make signs easier to read.
4. Colors and materials should be complementary to the building.
5. Signs should be sized so as to be proportional to the scale of the building and the surface area they are affixed to and in compliance with the City of Hemet Municipal Code.
6. Wall signs should be placed to direct customers to the building location entrance.
7. Signs should be designed to visually balance with the mass and height of the building and surface area rather than to the maximum size allowable.

8. Projects with multiple buildings should submit a uniform sign program. The sign program should create a coordinated project theme of uniform design elements, such as size, color, lettering style, and placement.
  
9. Sign programs should include the following elements:
  - A. Consistent size parameters, such as an 18" maximum letter height for shopping centers and a 12" maximum letter height for buildings located adjacent to a street.
  
  - B. Proportional limitations, such as a sign-area's length should be no greater than 65 to 70 percent of the leased space width.
  
  - C. A single letter style and color should be used for smaller projects.
  
  - D. For programs with a single letter style, up to three (3) colors may be used. Where lettering styles vary, a single color should be used to maintain a consistent theme.
  
  - E. Colors should be selected for day and night visibility.
  
  - F. Logos may be used to retain corporate or trademark identity but are counted as a sign with regard to design limitations.
  
  - G. Major anchor tenants, which are typically two or more times the floor area of the other (minor) tenants in a center, may vary from

the sign design parameters.

- H. All signs, including those for major anchor tenants, should be consistent with the regulations contained in the Hemet Municipal Code.
- I. The size and style of individual building address signs shall comply with the City's regulations for such signs.

## II. Architecture

### A. General

1. Projects should be designed with an overall architectural style or theme.
2. No specific architectural style or theme is required. A variety of architectural characteristics should be considered to add to the City's overall image. However, while variety in design is encouraged, compatibility of new projects with surrounding development is important and should be a priority.
3. Focal points in the architectural theme should be provided to create strong entry statements and provide a sense of place. Towers, spirals, domes, massing, color, trellises, fountains, public art, and plazas are encouraged.
4. Designs should provide a consistent use of colors consistent with the

City's approved color palette, materials, and detailing to all buildings throughout the site.

5. Architectural treatments should be provided to all elevations of a building.
6. A variety of building designs and a mixture of one (1) and two (2) story heights and profiles should be used.
7. Special attention should be given to creating pedestrian scale and an inviting place for shoppers to visit.
8. The visual impact of drive-thru lanes should be lessened by a combination of building orientation, landscaping, berming, and low screen walls.
9. Drive-thru access and queuing lanes should not intersect pedestrian pathways.
10. Vending machines and newspaper racks should be recessed and integrated into building facades.
11. Long-term shopping cart storage should be completely screened from public view.

B. Height

1. The height of structures should relate to adjacent open space and should be sensitive to views of natural features from public roads and adjacent structures.
2. New development should provide a transition, which may include various buffering techniques, from the height of existing adjacent development to the maximum height of the new development.
3. Buildings with greater heights than typical single-story construction should lessen the visual impact of the structure through articulated building facades, varied exterior colors and materials, and landscaping treatments compatible with the overall architectural design.

C. Scale

1. The scale of buildings should relate to each other and be generally consistent throughout a development, except where anchor tenants require larger building areas.
2. To avoid "boxlike" architecture and reduce the impact of building mass, different parts of building should be articulated through the use of columns, dimensioned decorative cornice bands, compatible tricolor schemes, varying building materials and textures, and recessed entries and windows.

3. Building features that provide shade and create an interplay of light and shadow, such as recesses, building pop-outs, covered walkways, colonnades, arcades, appropriately scaled awnings and other human scale elements should be provided to reduce the impact of building mass and create visual interest.
4. Roof lines should be varied to add interest to, and reduce the massive scale of large buildings. Alternating various sized portions of a building with roof overhangs and areas with parapets where overhangs are not used is one method of achieving the desired variety.
5. Parapets that do not exceed 15% of the supporting wall should be used to conceal flat roofs and rooftop equipment. Parapets should be designed as an integral part of the structure and should compliment the building's architecture.
6. Sloping roofs should not exceed the average height of the supporting walls and have an average slope greater than or equal to one (1) foot of vertical rise for every three (3) feet of horizontal run and less than or equal to one (1) foot of vertical rise for every one (1) feet of horizontal run.

#### D. Windows and Doors

1. Storefront designs should compliment the overall development's architectural style and provide interest and variation.

2. Design elements should include strong base materials, offsets and bays, multi pane windows, and accent colors and treatments. Large areas of single-pane glass should be avoided.
3. Building entrances should create a formal entry point that is friendly and inviting.
4. Service doors should be designed to blend in with the structure and be painted to match and/or enhance the building's facade.

E. Building Materials

1. Colors should be consistent with the City's Municipal Code establishing a commercial development color palette.
2. Except for movie theaters, neon, laser, fiber optic, and other similar light technologies should not be used for building trim or accent areas unless incorporated and approved as part of the development's overall architectural design or as otherwise permitted by the City's Municipal Code.
3. Products that attempt to imitate natural materials, such as wood and stone, or other construction materials, such as brick and ceramic tiles or pavers, should be avoided. If used, such products must be durable, avoid the impression of being artificial, and receive specific approval through the

City's design review process.

4. The transition between base and accent colors should relate to a change in building materials or building surface planes. Colors should not meet or change without some physical change or definition to the surface plane.
5. The transition of building materials should be done in a manner that avoids exposing the edge of any material and promotes an image of quality construction.
6. Pedestrian facilities should be designed and constructed so as to discourage inappropriate use by non-pedestrian uses such as skateboards and bicycles.

#### F. Walls and Fences

1. Unless required for a specific screening or security purpose, walls should not be used within commercial areas. When used, walls should be kept as low as possible while still performing their screening or security function.
2. Walls should be compatible with the architectural character of the primary structures and the surrounding area. Both sides of all walls should be finished.
3. Long expanses of wall or fence surface should be architecturally designed to avoid monotony. Pilasters should be provided at intervals consistent

with the length and scale of the wall but at a minimum of every fifty (50) feet. Landscaping should also be used to break long expanses of wall or fence surface.

4. Visible retaining walls should be constructed of finished decorative material which is compatible with the primary material used on the main building.
  
5. When barriers are necessary for security, open view fencing, such as wrought iron or metal tubing, should be used. Chain link fencing should be avoided. Open view fencing should have columns of a material which complements the building architecture.



CITY OF HEMET  
Hemet, California  
RESOLUTION NO. 3744

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
HEMET, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR  
COMMERCIAL PROJECTS IN THE CITY OF HEMET

**WHEREAS**, the City of Hemet is desirous of enhancing the design quality of commercial development in the City of Hemet; and,

**WHEREAS**, over the past several months the City's Community Development Committee (CDC) has worked on preparing the proposed set of guidelines for recommendation to the Planning Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC began the process by reviewing the City's current regulations and the Planning Commission's comments from its September 3, 2002, workshop on commercial design and following discussion and comments from the CDC, staff drafted a set of guidelines which the CDC then reviewed, amended, and unanimously recommended for approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed commercial design guidelines are intended to assist staff, the Site Review Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council in determining whether a project meets the findings required for approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public meeting on May 20, 2003 to review the proposed commercial design guidelines and has recommended approval of said guidelines to the City Council; and,

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of Hemet, at their regular meeting of June 10, 2003 opened a public meeting on the proposed commercial design guidelines and subsequently continued the item to June 24, 2003, July 8, 2003, and August 12, 2003; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the evidence contained in the Staff Report dated August 12, 2003, and in consideration of the evidence received at the meeting, and for the reasons discussed by the Council at the meeting of August 12, 2003, the City Council now finds, determines and adopts as follows:

**SECTION 1: Environmental Findings.**

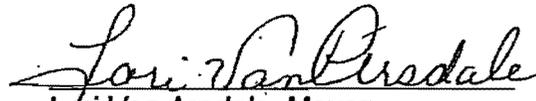
This project has been found to be consistent with the 1992 Environmental Impact Report prepared for the 1992 General Plan Update. Specifically, Section 15183(a) provides that if a project is consistent with a General Plan and no new density or changes of land use are proposed, then a

1 previous environmental determination can be used. The proposed guidelines do not increase density  
2 or change any land use and are furthermore, implementation measures of existing General Plan  
3 policies.  
4

5 **SECTION 2: Adoption of Guidelines**  
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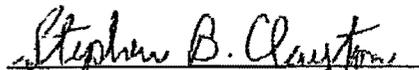
7 The City Council of the City of Hemet does hereby adopt the attached Commercial Design  
8 Guidelines to review, approve, conditionally approve, and deny, permits and approvals required  
9 under the Hemet Municipal Code for commercial projects and as shown in Exhibit A, attached  
10 hereto and incorporated herein by this reference, and directs the Site Review Committee, Planning  
11 Commission, and staff to utilize said guidelines in the review of commercial projects located in the  
12 City of Hemet and submitted in accordance with the Hemet Municipal Code after the approval date  
13 of this resolution.  
14

15 **PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED** this 12<sup>TH</sup> day of August, 2003.  
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17  
18  
19

20   
21 Lori Van Arsdale  
22 Lori Van Arsdale, Mayor  
23  
24  
25

26 ATTEST:

ATTEST AS TO FORM:

27  
28  
29   
30 Stephen B. Clayton  
31 Stephen Clayton, City Clerk  
32  
33  
34

  
Julie Hayward Biggs, City Attorney

THE FOREGOING INSTRUMENT IS A CORRECT  
COPY OF THE ORIGINAL ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE  
ATTEST Sandra McComas  
CITY CLERK, CITY OF HEMET, CALIFORNIA  
August 13, 2003

1 State of California )  
2 County of Riverside )  
3 City of Hemet )  
4

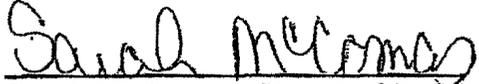
5 I, Sarah McComas, Deputy City Clerk of the City of Hemet, do hereby certify that the  
6 foregoing Resolution is the actual Resolution adopted by the City Council of the City of  
7 Hemet and was passed at a regular meeting of the City Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of  
8 August, 2003 by the following vote:  
9

10 **AYES:** Council Members Lowe and Meadows, Vice Mayor Alberg and  
11 Mayor Van Arsdale  
12

13 **NOES:**  
14

15 **ABSTAIN:**  
16

17 **ABSENT:** Council Member Tandy  
18

19   
20 Sarah McComas  
21 Sarah McComas; Deputy City Clerk

