



NEW ALBANY, OHIO

COMMERCIAL OUTSIDE  
VILLAGE CENTER

DESIGN GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 6





A good site plan considers placement of the building, parking areas, pedestrian access and landscaped open space.



Open space and landscape features can create a setting that adds to the visual quality of large-scale commercial development.

## I. Overview

This section applies to all commercial development in New Albany that is outside of the Village Center. Commercial development outside the Village Center varies widely in terms of scale and form, including small-scale individual office or retail buildings, commercial strip centers, fast food restaurants, and large office parks. The larger the scale of the development, the greater its visual impact. New Albany has developed these guidelines to encourage high-quality design and to distinguish the commercial development in New Albany from that in other areas through attention to details of design and site planning.

### A. Site Characteristics

A site plan is of critical importance when planning a new commercial building or complex, whether for office, retail, or mixed use. Achieving the appropriate mix of site elements around the building or within the complex should be a major goal, since it can have a significant impact upon the visual quality of New Albany.

A good site plan takes account of existing natural site features; natural drainage patterns; landscaping details; opportunities to minimize the visual impact of parking lots; and the size, location, and type of major trees. Retaining existing topographic features, trees, and drainage can enhance the character of the setting. Finding ways to break parking areas up into smaller lots that can be screened with plantings and trees will help reduce “car clutter.” Careful landscaping can create a visual “frame” or setting that adds to the visual quality of the building design. Retention of trees and natural plantings can form attractive settings for employees to take breaks or eat lunch.

1. Buildings should face public open space and greenbelts. Buildings that back onto a public right-of-way must be approved by the Architectural Review Board and must be based on substantial justification for doing so.
2. Lot sizes may vary in size to encourage creation of appropriate green spaces for common use, and interconnected trail or path systems are encouraged.
3. In campus office developments, buildings should be placed in a configuration that maximizes open green space and visually minimizes parking areas.

## I. Building Characteristics

Commercial buildings outside the Village Center are different from those in older traditional downtown areas, primarily in their size, architectural design and placement in relation to large parking facilities. These commercial buildings are more directly related to automobile use than traditional “downtown” commercial structures and are designed to fit well visually on their generally larger sites.

At the same time, some time-tested design considerations typical of older commercial areas can help make new commercial developments functional and attractive. Concepts such as pedestrian friendliness, avoiding “blank walls,” and employing traditionally-proportioned windows all can lend a human scale and visual interest to new suburban development.

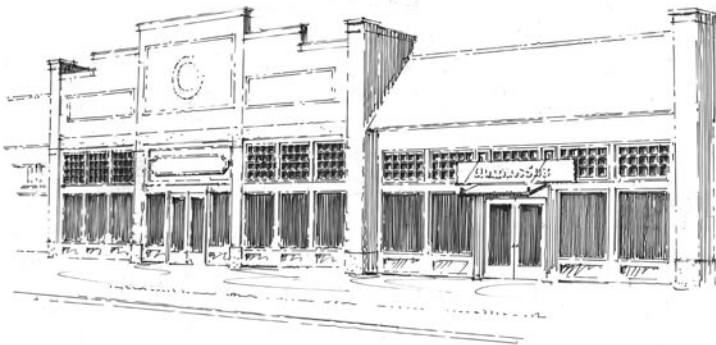
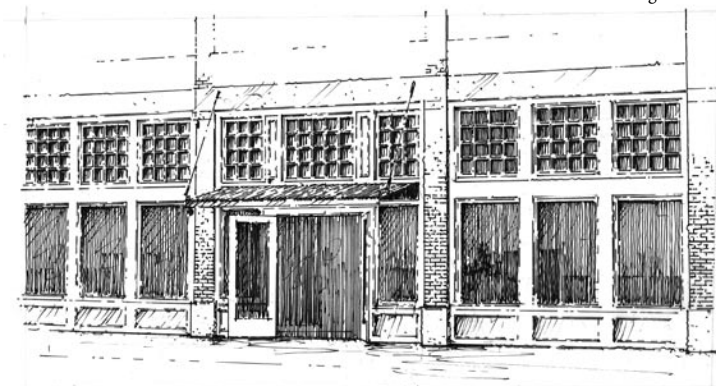
Commercial buildings used for retailing commonly are one or two stories in height; those used for offices generally are greater than two stories in height. The standards below can be applied equally well to shopping centers, individual commercial office or retail buildings, and to office complexes.



Commercial retail buildings outside the Village Center should avoid blank walls and create some pedestrian-friendly amenities.



Simple, contemporary forms and designs are encouraged for commercial development outside the Village Center.



For commercial uses, traditional storefront design with a bulkhead, display windows and transom is most appropriate, as these drawings illustrate.

## A. Design

1. Buildings need not follow the stylistic practice of traditional American commercial architecture. Simple, contemporary forms and designs are encouraged.
2. A building designed in a traditional American architectural style must employ all the character-defining architectural elements of that style.
3. Building designs shall not mix architectural elements or ornamentation from different styles.
4. The number, location, spacing, and shapes of window and door openings shall be carefully considered, particularly for buildings in retail use. Such openings shall impart a sense of human scale, and primary entrances to buildings shall be made sufficiently prominent that they can be easily identified from a distance.
5. When a building is designed for retail use, commercial storefront designs that follow traditional practice are required, including the use of a bulkhead, display window, and transom.
6. All visible elevations of a building shall receive similar treatment in style, materials, and design so that no visible side is of a lesser visual character than any other.
7. Use of elements such as shutters, cupolas, dormers, and roof balustrades shall be avoided in building designs that are not based on traditional American architectural styles. Such elements may be employed only when they are common elements of a specific style, and this style shall be replicated in its entirety. When shutters are employed, even if they are non-operable, they must be sized and mounted in a way that gives the appearance of operability.
8. Signage shall be as simple and unobtrusive as possible. Sign sizes shall be as small as possible and shall avoid overly bright or jarring colors. Signs shall be in conformance with all sign regulations promulgated by New Albany.
9. Projecting cornices may be employed as terminations of upper walls of buildings. Such cornices should be simple in design and not evocative of a specific architectural style unless the entire building is designed in that style.
10. Elements such as meter boxes, utility conduits, roof and wall projections such as vent and exhaust pipes, basement window enclosures, and trash containers shall be designed and located so as to minimize their visibility and visual impact.

11. Refer to the section on Isolated Sites for guidance on designs of buildings that will not be visible from public rights-of-way.

12. Buildings shall have operable and active front doors along all public and private roads.

**B. Form**

1. Buildings need not necessarily employ traditional rectangular forms. Creativity and variety are encouraged, provided that building designs shall not become excessively ornate or complex.

2. To the greatest extent possible, particularly along public sidewalks and leisure trails, building designs shall avoid windowless blank walls. A high window-to-wall ratio is preferred.

3. All building elevations shall be designed to be compatible with each other and to reflect a consistent design approach.

4. The barn form, when designed with appropriate barn windows, doors, siding, and roof, can be acceptable, but it must be used with restraint. Site planning for such structures is critical and must be in an appropriate rural setting that is primarily residential in character. Since relatively few buildings in the form of a barn would be appropriate in New Albany, each such proposal shall be considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Architectural Review Board.



The barn form can be appropriate for certain commercial buildings in New Albany, as these examples illustrate.



This large commercial building achieves a pedestrian-friendly scale through the landscaped courtyard leading to the building's main entrance.

### C. Scale

1. For commercial buildings in retail uses, a pedestrian or human scale is encouraged through careful attention to the size and placement of such elements as window and door openings, commercial storefronts, building entrances, and entrance canopies.

2. For office buildings and complexes, achieving a human or pedestrian scale is of less concern. When achieving such a scale is desired, it may be achieved by careful attention to width of facades, size and spacing of window and door openings, and floor-to-floor heights on exterior walls.

#### D. Height

1. Gable or hip roofs shall be avoided unless a building design replicates a traditional American architectural style that employs such roof forms.
2. In non-stylistic contemporary designs, low or flat roofs shall be employed. Roof visibility shall be minimized.

#### E. Materials

1. The materials of which new buildings are constructed shall be appropriate for contemporary suburban designs and shall avoid overly reflective surfaces. In general, traditional materials such as wood, stone, brick, and concrete are preferred, particularly for buildings designed in traditional American architectural styles. Designs not employing traditional styles may employ more contemporary materials including aluminum or stucco.
2. Commercial storefronts may employ wood or metal framing systems to support glazing in display window and transom areas. Bulkheads below display windows may be of paneled wood, metal, or ceramic tile. Brick should generally be avoided in bulkhead areas.



Contemporary design with flat roof forms and the use of large window openings can be appropriate for commercial development outside the Village Center.



Storefronts can employ wood or metal framing systems to create the bulkhead, display window and transom typical of traditional storefront design.



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PHOTO CREDITS & DRAWINGS

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