Town of Arlington
Design Guidelines Manual

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PREFACE

The Town of Arlington is a community rich in history and heritage in the midst of vibrant growth. Established in 1900, Arlington has always held its small town charm in high regard, and therefore, it seeks to maintain that charm and character by ensuring attractive and quality residential and commercial development. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen, town administration, and citizens of Arlington desire to protect the established character of the community by developing, enacting, and maintaining an architectural and aesthetic vision for all development. This vision consists of 1) the Design Review Committee, a body of citizens appointed to review and approve all proposed commercial architecture, landscaping, signs, and residential entrances, and 2) a Design Guidelines Manual, a collection of the principles and design standards that the Design Review Committee applies to the applications it reviews.

The primary goals of this architectural and aesthetic vision are to protect the community’s identity, enhance and protect property values, and promote economic development. These factors, as they relate to commercial and residential development, are critical elements in developing and maintaining an attractive and thriving municipality. So, through the successful implementation of the Design Review process and guidelines, the Town of Arlington intends to secure its character, heritage, and small town charm for many generations to come.
TOWN OF ARLINGTON DESIGN REVIEW
COMMITTEE
Design Guidelines Manual

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. WHAT IS DESIGN REVIEW

The purpose of Design Review is to protect the established character of the Town, and to ensure that new development, or changes to existing development, are consistent with the Town’s aesthetic vision for its built environment. Design Review will work to keep Arlington from looking and feeling like “Anywhere, USA.”

The Design Review process considers a wide range of design issues. These include such things as open space and natural features, building scale and massing, architectural details, signs, landscaping, site lighting, utility connections and stormwater detention/retention areas. Each issue considered may appear individually small. However, in combination, they can make the difference between a poor project and a successful project.

Design Review is a very important tool for protecting community character and enhancing community appearance and property valuations. It allows the Town to look beyond the specifics of a proposed development and consider its context and how a project will fit and benefit its surroundings. Design Review benefits the community and individual property owners in many important ways:

a. Protect Community Identity

Arlington has a small-town charm, as well as a unique history that should be preserved and enhanced. Additionally, Town leaders desire to improve the community’s existing high quality of life and make the Town more attractive for investment. Design Review will help to protect these assets for future generations.

b. Enhance and Protect Property Values

Design Review helps assure property owners that their investment will be protected. Just like traditional zoning prevents landfills from locating in a residential neighborhood, Design Review tries to ensure that the character of the neighborhood is maintained. Improvements in the quality of design stabilize, and in some cases enhance, the value of private property.

c. Promote Economic Development

Design Review is an especially important tool for commercial districts where increased private investment and maintaining an image of vitality is a community goal. Areas such as the U.S. Highway 70 and future Milton Wilson Road corridors will increasingly rely on Design Review to protect and enhance public and private investments, and to support and encourage new development.
B. BASIS FOR DESIGN GUIDELINE STANDARDS

The Town of Arlington Mayor and Board of Aldermen created the Arlington Community Design Review Committee (DRC) by ordinance (Ordinance 2003-13) in January 2004. The DRC is governed by the following provisions:

Section 1. Composition

The Design Committee shall consist of seven (7) members.

Section 2. Qualifications of members

Members shall be recognized practitioners in any of the following fields: Architecture, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, Art, or Building. It is desired that at least one architect and one engineer serve on the board at all times, however, an individual with building experience may be substituted for the architect and an individual with construction experience may be substituted for the engineer, should there be no one to serve in those positions.

Section 3. Appointment of members

Each member of the Design Committee shall be appointed or reappointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Board of Aldermen. Vacancies occurring for reasons other than expiration of terms shall be filled as they occur for the period of the unexpired term.

Section 4. Term of members

Each member shall be appointed for a term of two years, except that to obtain the benefits of carry-over membership, the initial appointments will consist of one year for three of the members and two years for four of the members.

Section 5. Removal of members

Members of the Design Committee may be removed without cause at the will of the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen.

Section 6. Meetings

Meetings of the Design Committee shall be held status quo and at such other times as the Committee may determine. Four (4) members shall constitute a quorum; and, in the absence of the Chairman, the member next in seniority shall be the acting chairman. The Committee shall keep minutes of its proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent, or failing to vote, indicating such fact. A majority of the Committee may adopt rules and regulations to govern the procedure before the Committee.

Section 7. Responsibilities

It shall be the duty of the Design Committee to develop specific review procedures for construction of development for all non-residential properties, multiple family residential, and any entrances to residential or nonresidential development and to apply such procedures in either approving or disapproving proposals for such improvements in the Town of Arlington.

Section 8. Building applications – Submittals to Committee

Prior to application for a building permit all non-residential properties, multiple family residential, and any entrances to residential or nonresidential development shall be submitted to the Design Committee, along with plans, elevations and landscape plans. A preliminary submittal prior to completion of detailed plans and specifications is recommended but not mandatory.
B. BASIS FOR DESIGN GUIDELINE STANDARDS – cont.

Section 9. Building Applications – Due consideration

Within 30 days after a complete application shall have been submitted to the Committee, the Town staff shall examine same and present it to the members of the Committee for examination and determination of whether the proposed structure will conform to proper urban design standards and be conducive to the proper architectural development of the Town. At said meeting, the Design Committee shall examine the plans, elevations, and specifications, and any other evidence that may be pertinent or requested. The Chairman of the Design Committee may request the applicant or his representative to appear at the Committee meeting. The Design Committee shall act as expeditiously as practicable and in no event shall any applicant be caused unreasonable delay.

Section 10. Building applications – approval or disapproval

At said meeting or at any meeting within fifteen (15) days subsequent thereto, the Design Committee shall approve the application if, in its opinion, the proposed development will conform to proper design standards and be conducive to the proper development of the Town. The Design committee shall disapprove and return the application if it determines that the proposed development will be unsightly or unsuitable in appearance or detrimental to the environment of the community. However, the Design Committee may make comments and recommendations if it sees fit, toward the end of informing the applicant, the building official, and the Board of Aldermen why the proposal is unsuitable and what might be done to help bring it into conformance.

Section 11. Building applications – issuance of permit

If the Design Committee approves the application, the Town staff may submit the plans to the building official for the permit. If the Design Committee returns the application with its disapproval and recommendations, the Town staff shall not submit the project for a building permit until such time as appropriate changes have been made and resubmitted in such form that meets the approval of the Design Committee. If, in the opinion of the Chairman of the Design Committee, the re-submittal clearly meets the design standards and recommendations of the Design Committee, he may approve the application for the Committee without further delay.

Section 12. Appeals

In the event any application is refused by the building official under the provisions of this Community Design Review Committee ordinance, the applicant may appeal to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to review the decision of the Design Committee at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, at said hearing, shall listen to all parties who desire to be heard and after said hearing shall approve or disapprove the application. If the Mayor and Board of Aldermen approve, project may be submitted to the building official for approval.
C. PURPOSE OF THE DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

This manual is intended to identify the principles and design standards that the DRC will apply to the applications before them. These standards do not reproduce all the specific requirements stated in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, or other applicable development standards and regulations. DRC approval does not relieve the applicant of compliance with the existing Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Property owners, developers, architects, builders, business owners and others should consult these standards when considering redevelopment or new construction prior to preparing their plans. These standards are intended to complement the Town’s ordinances and regulations by providing a graphic explanation of what is intended. In the event that there is a conflict between these standards and other Town ordinances/codes, or other standard(s) adopted by any Town board or commission, the more stringent shall apply.

The design standards do:

- Provide developers and design professionals with a clear and equitable set of parameters for site and building design.
- Identify important design elements that are to be maintained or enhanced.
- Encourage high quality development through recommended appropriate design approaches.
- Provide for reasonable, logical, and timely review and appeal procedures.
- Maintain as well as enhance the quality of life for Town of Arlington residents.
- Reinforce civic pride of its citizens through attractive development.
- Protect and enhance property values.
- Increase awareness of aesthetic, social, and economic values.
- Create a “sense of place.”

The design standards do not:

- Discourage growth within the Town of Arlington.
- Dictate stylistic design approaches or restrict creative design solutions.