



ADOPTED 9-19-02

AMENDED 11-13-24/11-25-24

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN POLICY

Purpose

The City of Auburn Hills seeks to promote architectural design that is harmonious with adjacent structures and sensitive to the natural environment. No single architectural style will be mandated within the City. However, the reliance on or use of a standardized “corporate or franchise” style is strongly discouraged unless it can be shown to the Planning Commission and City Council’s satisfaction that such style meets the objectives noted below. Strongly thematic architectural styles associated with some chain restaurants, gas stations, big box retailers, and service stores are discouraged and, if utilized, will be requested to be modified to be compatible with the City’s design objectives.

The primary purpose of this policy statement is to achieve the following goals:

1. Enhance and protect Auburn Hills’ quality of life and community image through agreed-upon architectural design objectives.
2. Protect and promote Auburn Hills’ long-term economic vitality through architectural design objectives that encourage high-quality development while discouraging less attractive and less enduring alternatives.
3. Facilitate innovative and creative building design and development.

Design Objectives

The following architectural design objectives are intended to apply to all non-residential, mixed-use, and multi-family residential developments within the City. New building construction shall employ design strategies and building materials that evoke a sense of quality and permanence: High-quality construction and materials should be used to ensure that buildings will not look dated or worn down over time nor require excessive maintenance:

1. Exterior Building Materials. Exterior building materials should be aesthetically pleasing and compatible with the materials and colors of nearby structures. Predominant exterior building façade materials shall consist of high-quality, durable products. Durable building materials such as brick, sandstone, decorative metal panels, decorative concrete masonry units, wood, and glass are recommended. External Insulation Finished Systems (E.I.F.S) material should not be used as a primary exterior wall cladding system material. Where it is to be used, E.I.F.S. should be appropriate based on the design intent of the building and limited to accent applications above the pedestrian level (approximately 10 feet above ground). Fiber cement materials are an acceptable replacement for E.I.F.S. and should be limited to accent applications.
2. Exterior Material Colors. Building colors should accent, blend with, or complement surroundings. Façade colors are recommended to be earth tone colors, which are low reflectance, subtle, and neutral (e.g., grays, greens, burgundies, browns, and tans). The coloring of all materials should be integral to the product and not painted on the product's surface, as deemed feasible by City staff. The City may allow the staining of brick, concrete

masonry units, and precast panels to add or change the color of the materials upon review and acceptance of the application and methods by City staff. The use of high-intensity colors, metallic colors, black, or fluorescent colors is discouraged. Primary colors are requested to be reserved for trim and accent.

3. Roof Forms. Consideration should be given to the architecture of surrounding buildings, and complementary building elements, trim, or architectural style should be incorporated. Rooflines should incorporate changes and variations to create and enhance interest and avoid the monotony of design. Rooflines should be articulated in detail in a way appropriate to the chosen style. The appearance of flat roofs should be avoided. Flat roofs shall be allowed, provided the building design includes changes in facade height along the building length. Using hipped, gable, gambrel, or other roof forms is encouraged.
4. Four-Sided Architecture and Building Massing. Exterior building walls on all sides of the building should include materials and design characteristics consistent with those on the front. The effect of a single, long, or massive wall with no relation to human scale is not acceptable. Building articulation and modulation are recommended to provide visual relief for large wall areas. Building massing elements should be utilized, such as varied rooflines, varied facade materials, varied facade planes, upper story setback, windows, etc., to reduce the apparent size of the building. Glass at the ground level should be clear and unobstructed to allow visual access to the building's active interior uses such as retail display, product production or office space. Mirrored glass and dark-tinted glass are highly discouraged. The building design should also consider and be in context with its surroundings.
5. Mechanical Unit Screening. In accordance with Zoning Ordinance requirements, rooftop mechanical installations shall be appropriately screened to block the view from adjacent public and private streets and properties. Such screening shall match or complement the overall theme of the building.

Design Review and Implementation

This policy was created to outline the City's general expectations for architectural design and is not intended to be comprehensive or serve as a detailed guide. The Planning Commission and City Council have authorized City staff to communicate the community's design expectations as part of the administrative development review process to facilitate the creation of site plans that are deemed potentially acceptable for the Planning Commission's recommendation for approval and final City Council approval.

Materials and colors must be labeled and keyed on the building elevation drawings in the site plan package. In addition to providing building elevation drawings, petitioners are expected to provide realistic perspective illustrative drawings showing the proposed building in context with the site and a material sample board displaying all proposed exterior materials. Product brochures, specification sheets, and/or photos may be submitted in lieu of a material sample board if authorized by staff.