CHAPTER 5

SITE DESIGN

This chapter presents the design guidelines for a variety of categories that may apply to many projects, including historic properties and new construction. Also note that for many of the design topics presented in this chapter other City regulations may apply. Please consult the City of Anderson before planning a project to determine which requirements are applicable.

Historically, a variety of site features appeared in the historic districts. The occasional wood fence or stone retaining walls defined property boundaries. Concrete sidewalks were popular and lined many streets. A variety of plantings, including trees, lawns and shrubbery also occurred. Each of these elements contributes to the character of the neighborhood. They also added variety in scale, texture and materials to the street scene, providing interest to pedestrians.

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a street, site, and its environment should be preserved. The removal or alteration of historic or distinctive environmental features should be avoided. Development proposals should identify and retain plants, well established trees, fencing, walkways, street lights, archaeological features, signs, benches, outbuildings and other items that reflect the property's history and development. New site work should be based on actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property as found in photographs, drawings, newspapers, and tax records. If changes are made, they should be carefully evaluated in light of the past appearance of the site.
Sidewalks and Walkways

Policy: Sidewalks and walkways should be compatible with the surrounding area.

Some sidewalks are also historically significant elements that contribute to a neighborhood’s inviting atmosphere and provide spaces for walking and personal interaction. Streets throughout the historic district exhibit sidewalks that include detached sidewalks, those separated from the street by a space or planting bed and those attached directly to the street. There are also a number of areas where sidewalks do not exist.

Walkways, which lead from the sidewalk to each house entry, often contribute to a sense of visual continuity on a block and convey a “progression” of walking experiences along the street. This progression, comprised of spaces between the street and the house, begins with a walkway that leads from the sidewalk; this is often in turn punctuated by a series of steps. This progression of spaces greatly enhances the street scene.

5.1 Preserve original sidewalks.
- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Any replacement materials should match as closely as possible to the original in color, scoring lines and brush finishes.

5.2 New construction should include street-side sidewalks placed parallel to the street as well as from the front door to the street.
- Where an attached sidewalk must be replaced, do so with a detached sidewalk.
- Where no sidewalk exists, that condition should be continued, unless it conflicts with public safety needs.
- A new sidewalk should align with those that already exist along a block.
- Scoring lines or “brushing” patterns should be consistent with those in the existing sidewalk.
- Using paving materials that are similar to those employed historically is preferred.

Streets throughout the historic district exhibit sidewalks that include detached sidewalks, those separated from the street by a space or planting bed and those attached directly to the street. There are also a number of areas where sidewalks do not exist.
5.3 Maintain the established progression of public-to-private spaces.
- The typical neighborhood tradition of walkways from the sidewalk to the house should be maintained.
- This includes a sequence of experiences, beginning with the “public” sidewalk, proceeding along a “semi-public” walkway, to a “semi-private” porch or entry feature and ending in the “private” spaces beyond.

5.4 Maintain the tradition of trees planted in the planting strip.
- A planting strip, located between the street and a detached sidewalk should be planted with grass, flowering plants and trees.
- If a tree is cut down, replace it in-kind.
Fences and Site Walls

Policy: A fence or site wall should be in character with those used traditionally and relate to the principal structure on a lot.

In some instances, fences were a part of traditional construction in Anderson. When used historically, fences were typically wood picket or wrought iron. Most were relatively low in height and had a “transparent” character, allowing views into yards and providing interest to pedestrians. Site walls were also used in some cases where yards slope down to the street. Common materials were brick and stone.

5.5 Preserve original fences and site walls.
- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated. Any replacement materials should match the original in color, texture, size and finish.
- A historic wood fence should be protected against the weather with a painted or stained surface.
- If repointing a wall is necessary, use a mortar mix that is similar to that used historically and match the original joint design.
- Painting a historic masonry wall, or covering it with stucco or other cementious coatings, is not appropriate.

5.6 Where no fence exists keeping the yard open may be the best approach for a front yard.

5.7 Where a new fence is needed, it should be similar in character with those seen historically.
- A fence that defines a front yard or a side yard on a corner lot is usually low to the ground and “transparent” in nature.
- New fence design and materials that are similar to those used historically are appropriate.
- Solid walls or walls with decorative metal panels are not appropriate.
5.8 Appropriate materials for fences that can be seen from the public right-of-way are wrought iron or wood picket.

- Chain link, concrete block, un-faced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, rebar, iron, plywood and mesh “construction” fences are inappropriate.
- A wood fence should be painted.

5.9 A side yard fence should be set back from the primary facade of a house.

- Two types of side yard fences were seen traditionally: a fence that extends between two houses and a fence that runs between two houses.
- A side yard fence should be set back enough to provide the historic sense of open space between homes.
- A side yard fence may be taller than their front yard counterparts, but the taller portion should be located behind the front plane of the house.
- Consider staggering the fence boards on either side of the fence rail, or using lattice on the upper portions of the fence, to give a semi-transparent quality to the fence.
**Landscaping**

**Policy:** *Plant materials should be used to create continuity among properties.*

Anderson has a rich array of landscape materials, most are indigenous to the area, that grow readily in the Upcountry climate. Trees and flowering plants help provide interest to pedestrians, as well as shaded protection from the sun, as they walk along the street.

5.10 **Preserve historic landscape and streetscape features.**
- Existing historic landscape and streetscape features, such as parks, fences, sidewalks, trees and lights, should be preserved.
- Existing native plantings should be preserved in place. This particularly applies to historically significant trees, shrubs and garden designs.

5.11 **In new landscape designs, use materials that are compatible with the historic property and neighborhood.**
- Minimize the amount of hard surface paving for patios, terraces or drives in front yards.
- The tradition of landscaping located along foundations, walkways and fences should be continued.
- Avoid planting too close to a structure that will damage architectural features or building foundations. This also can cause moisture retention against the structure.
- Garden ornaments and sculpture which are incompatible with the style, scale and materials of the building are not recommended.

5.12 **Maintain mature and historic trees.**
- Mature trees should not be removed unless the tree is dying, dead, diseased or poses a safety hazard to the residents or the public.
- If a tree is cut down, at least one replacement tree of a similar kind should be replanted in its place, unless it would damage the house.
- Replacement plant materials should be similar in kind, size or equivalent massing to the plants removed (e.g., a cluster of smaller new trees may be used to establish a massing similar to one large tree).
Lighting

**Policy: Exterior lighting should be a subordinate element on a site.**

Traditionally, lighting within a site was minimal. An occasional garden light was seen, but porch lights were usually the only exterior illumination. Most used incandescent lamps. These were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices.

5.13 **Original lighting fixtures should be preserved, when feasible.**
- Light fixtures that are original to a house or integral to an architectural style are examples of fixtures that should be preserved.
- Replace broken glass.
- Re-secure loose fixtures.
- Check electrical connections for exposed or damaged wiring. Replace as necessary.
- If a historic light fixture is damaged beyond repair, then replacing it with a replica fixture is preferred.

5.14 **New exterior lights should be simple in character and low in intensity.**
- Lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building in terms of style and size.
- Lights that cast a color similar to that of daylight and that have a low level of luminescence are preferred.

5.15 **Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.**
- Unshielded, high intensity light sources and those that direct light upward are inappropriate.
- Where safety or security are a concern, the use of motion sensors that automatically turn lights on and off are appropriate.
- Do not wash an entire building facade in light.
- Avoid using more than one fixture to light the same area.

5.16 **Prevent glare onto adjacent properties by using shielded and focused light sources that direct light onto the ground.**
Driveways and Parking

Policy: Parking areas should have a positive visual impact.

When parking was originally introduced it was an ancillary use and was located to the rear of a site. This tradition should be continued, and in all cases, the visual impacts of parking—which includes driveways, garages and garage doors—should be minimized.

5.17 Avoid paved parking in the front yard.
• Paving for parking in the front yard is inappropriate.

5.18 Use paving materials that will minimize the impact a driveway will have on a streetscape.
• Decomposed granite, pea gravel, exposed aggregate concrete, gravel or chip and seal are appropriate paving materials.
• Large areas of paving are not appropriate. Consider providing two paved driving strips with turf between the strips instead of large driveways.
• Plain asphalt or black top is discouraged.
• Using materials that are not impervious to water and will not create runoff into the street or onto adjacent properties is recommended.

5.19 Preserve a historic garage where it exists.
• Respect the character-defining features of a historic garage such as primary materials, its roof materials, roof form, location, window and door openings and any architectural details.
• Avoid moving a historic garage from its original location.
5.20 A garage should not appear to dominate from the street.
  • A garage should be subordinate to the primary structure on the site.
  • A garage should be compatible in design with the primary structure.

5.21 A detached garage located to the rear of the property, and that is set back substantially from the house, is recommended.
  • The material and detailing of a garage should be utilitarian.

5.22 When parking is not located in a garage, screen it from view from the public right-of-way.
  • Consider using a fence, hedge or other landscape device.
  • Also consider visual impacts on adjoining properties.
Accessory Structures

Policy: An accessory structure should be similar to those seen historically.

5.23 Locate an accessory structure to the rear of a lot.
- Locating an accessory structure to the side of a primary structure, but set back substantially may also be considered.

5.24 Construct an accessory structure that is subordinate to the primary structure.
- In general, an accessory structure should be unobtrusive and not compete visually with the house.
- An accessory structure should remain subordinate, in terms of mass, size and height to the primary structure.

5.25 An accessory structure should be similar in character to those seen traditionally.
- Basic rectangular forms, with hip, gable or shed roofs, are appropriate.
- Maintain the simple detailing found on accessory structures.

5.26 Maintain the traditional range of building materials on accessory structures.
Mechanical Equipment and Service Areas

Policy: Utilities should be placed such that their visual impacts are minimized.

Utilities and mechanical equipment that serve properties may include telephone and electrical lines, gas meters, air conditioners, telecommunication systems and security systems. For new construction, adequate space should be planned in a project from the outset and should be designed such that visual impacts are minimized.

5.27 Minimize the visual impacts of utilities and mechanical equipment.

- Provide adequate space for utilities. They should not simply be put into “left over” space that abuts the public right-of-way.
- Locate mechanical equipment at the rear or sides of a property and screen them with landscaping if visible from the public right-of-way.
- Vents for direct-vent fireplaces should not be installed on the building front.
- Window air conditioning units or condenser elements should be located where they are not visible on a front facade.
- Any utility device or mechanical equipment should have a matte or non-reflective finish.
- Horns for security alarms should be hidden from view. Consider placing them under an eave or at ground level screened by landscaping.

Window air conditioning units or condenser elements should be located where they are not visible on a front facade.
5.28 **Screen a satellite dish from view.**
- Use landscaping to screen a satellite dish that is mounted on the ground.
- A satellite dish should be located away from the front of a structure.

5.29 **Service areas should not be visible from major pedestrian ways.**
- Trash areas should be screened from view, using a fence, hedge or enclosure. For a larger storage area, consider using a shed to enclose it.