

Chapter 6

Special Consideration Commercial Guidelines

The guidelines contained within this chapter address site organization and building design issues associated with the following development types:

- Offices
- Vehicle Dealerships
- Service Stations and Car Washes
- Auto Repair Service
- Hotel and Motels
- Drive-Through Businesses
- Big Box Retail
- Mixed Use Projects

These guidelines are intended to supplement the development concepts and recommendations which were outlined in Chapter 4 of this document for general commercial development and in Chapter 5, Downtown/ Main Street commercial guidelines.



Office Building

A. Offices

1. Description

Office uses are primarily located along commercial corridors and share the following functional characteristics which contribute in the design of significantly different building forms from other commercial development:

- intensity of use is lower while building scale is greater
- buildings are typically ‘live’ on all four sides
- office activities are not limited to the first floor
- fewer entries along building perimeters
- no display windows
- occupancy of office buildings is more predictable

2. Site Planning

- a. Office buildings should be “built to” the minimum required front setback.
- b. Surface parking should be located towards the rear of the site or at the side of the building.
- c. Multi-story buildings should not be placed adjacent to residential private open space areas. The first floor may be constructed at the minimum setback. Second and third floors should provide

an additional foot of setback for each additional floor.



- d. Office buildings should site the primary entry towards the street.

3. Building Design

- a. Building surfaces over two stories high or 40-feet in length should provide vertical and horizontal wall plane offsets.
- b. The primary building access should be designed to convey a sense of entry.



Horizontal and vertical offsets are encouraged

B. Vehicle Dealerships

1. Description

Vehicle Dealerships typically specialize in the sale and servicing of one or more lines of new or used automobiles. Dealerships are regional in nature and can have a market radius well in excess of 20 or 30 miles.

The major portion of a Vehicle Dealership site is typically used for outdoor storage and display of vehicles and a relatively minor portion is used for structures and customer parking.



Sufficient customer parking should be provided

2. Site Planning

- a. Provisions will need to be made onsite for the unloading of vehicles from carriers.
- b. Outdoor vehicle displays oriented toward streets should be limited to permanent at-grade display areas that are architecturally compatible with the project.
- c. All storage areas should be screened from view from the public street and any adjacent residential

area. No storage except new car storage should occur adjacent to residential areas.

- d. No potentially noisy activity, such as vehicle repair, cleaning or testing, should be located near or oriented toward residential properties.
- e. Sufficient space should be provided for service drop-offs to prevent vehicle stacking on public street(s). Customer parking should be provided for the sales, service, and parts areas.

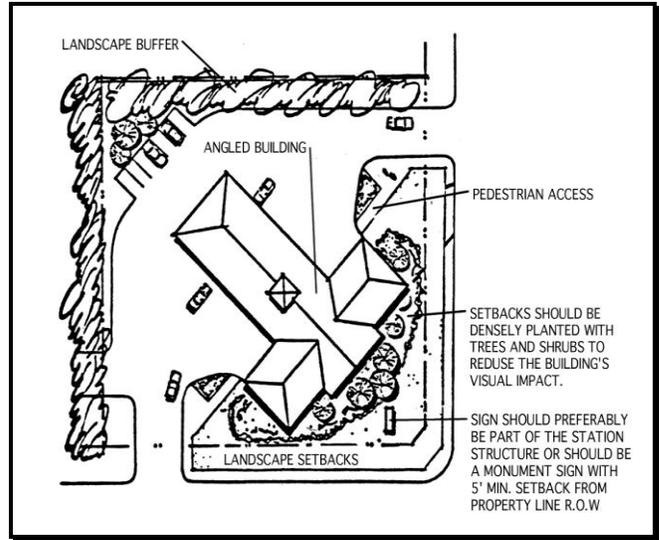
3. Building Design

- a. Buildings should be stylistically consistent on all sides and well articulated.
- b. The showroom should be oriented toward the major public streets.
- c. Walls and fences should be architecturally compatible with the buildings.
- d. Service uses should be entirely contained within the building(s). Internal vehicle access to the individual service bays should be provided in all cases. The access points to the service bays should not be visible to the public.
- e. All storage areas should be screened from public view from any adjoining properties and from the public right-of-way by appropriately designed walls, fencing and landscaping.
- f. Provisions should be made for a vehicle washing area. The wash rack should not be located visible or audible from any public street or residential area.
- g. Landscaping should be provided along all display perimeters but should be maintained at a low level (less than 32 inches in height).

C. Service Stations and Car Washes



Service Station



1. Description

Service Stations and Car Washes are intensive auto-oriented uses that are characterized by large areas of paving.

2. Site Planning

- a. The site design for corner and mid-block sites should convey a strong link to the street or corner.
- b. The site should be designed to accommodate, anticipated circulation patterns and minimize paving.
- c. Driveway cuts should be limited to two per site, unless otherwise allowed by the City Engineer for valid circulation reason.
- d. Service and car wash bays should not face residential properties or the public street. The visibility of service bays and car wash openings should be minimized.
- e. Gas pump canopies should be screened by the main building structure. The retail market/ office building segment of the facility should be oriented along the street frontage.



Gas pump areas should be screened from view

3. Building Design

- a. Site specific architectural design is strongly encouraged. Corporate or franchise design solutions are strongly discouraged.
- b. All structures on the site (including kiosks, car wash buildings, gas pump columns, etc.) should be architecturally consistent and related to an overall architectural theme.
- c. All building elevations should be architecturally enhanced.
- d. High quality building materials are encouraged. Reflective, glossy, and fluorescent surfaces are discouraged.
- e. The roof design of all structures, including pump canopies, should incorporate roof treatments with a low to moderate pitch. Flat roofs or mansard roof applications are strongly discouraged unless they are consistent with an established architectural theme.



- f. Gas pump canopies should not be internally illuminated. Light fixtures should be recessed into the canopy.
- g. Each gas pump island should include stacking for at least two vehicles (40-feet) onsite, on at least one end of the pump island.

D. Auto Repair Service



Auto Repair Service Center

1. Description

Auto repair service facilities are generally freestanding buildings but can also be found in mixed use projects or commercial planned developments. Auto repair uses are typically associated with noise, large numbers of parked vehicles, traffic, and the presence of hazardous materials.

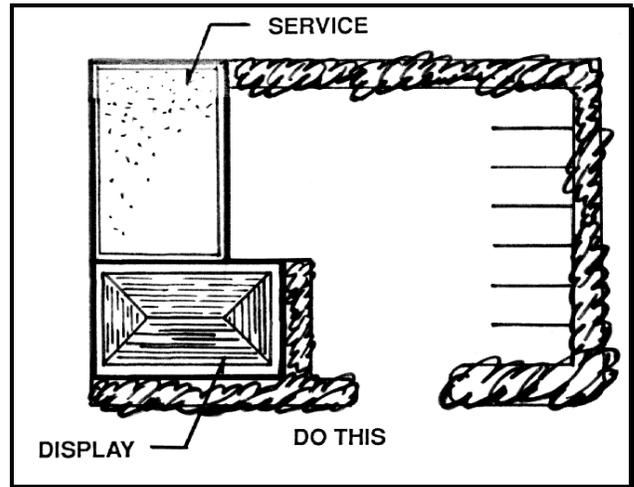
While these facilities rarely make good residential neighbors, they are necessary to urban life and can be accommodated into many other settings if care is taken to mitigate negative characteristics.

2. Site Planning

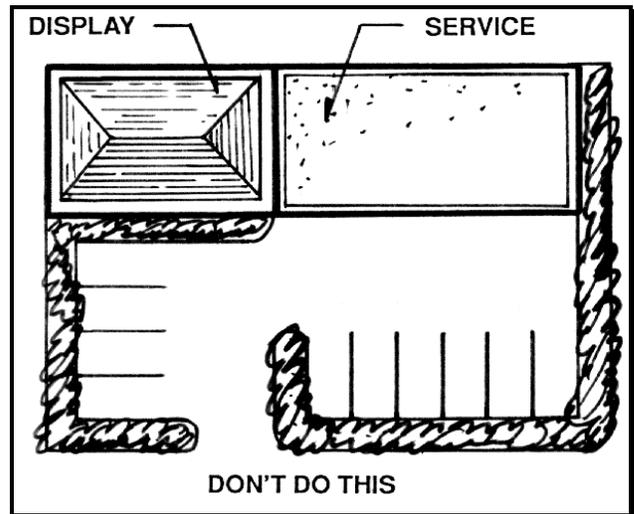
- a. Driveway access should be limited to the minimum number necessary.
- b. Vehicle drop-off areas should be provided to prevent vehicle overflow to adjacent streets.
- c. The interior of work bays should not be visible from a public street or any adjacent residential buildings or designated open space.

3. Building Design

- a. Building design should be stylistically consistent, and compatible with surrounding buildings through use of similar scale, materials, colors, and/or detailing.
- b. Building materials should have the appearance of substance and permanency; lightweight metal or other temporary appearing structures are discouraged.



Appropriate site design



Inappropriate site design



An example of a well designed hotel facade

E. Hotels and Motels

1. Description

Hotels and Motels are located along commercial corridors and recreation areas and provide temporary accommodations for business and vacation travelers.

2. Site Planning

- a. The building(s), not the parking lot(s), should establish the image and character for the development along street frontages.
- b. Short term parking should be provided in close proximity to office/ check-in areas.
- c. Delivery and loading areas should be screened to minimize adverse visual and noised impacts to adjacent uses.
- d. Recreational facilities should be designed to offer privacy to facility users.

3. Building Design

- a. The scale of buildings should be compatible with the surrounding development patterns.
- b. Walkway, stairway and balcony railings and other similar details should be stylistically consistent with the building design.

- c. Mechanical equipment of all types, including swimming pool equipment, should be located to minimize impacts on adjacent uses. Air conditioning units should not be visible from public streets.
- d. Exterior corridors on multi-level buildings are strongly discouraged and should not be located adjacent to residential uses.
- e. Structures over two stories should incorporate interior access to guestrooms. Room entrances directly adjacent to parking lots or exterior walkways are discouraged.

F. Drive-Through Businesses

1. Description

Various uses with drive through services such as restaurants, banks and drug stores are common along Huntington Beach corridors. These types of establishments present unique design challenges due to building siting, traffic, vehicular access and on-site circulation.



The primary view along the major street frontage should be the building, not the drive through lane

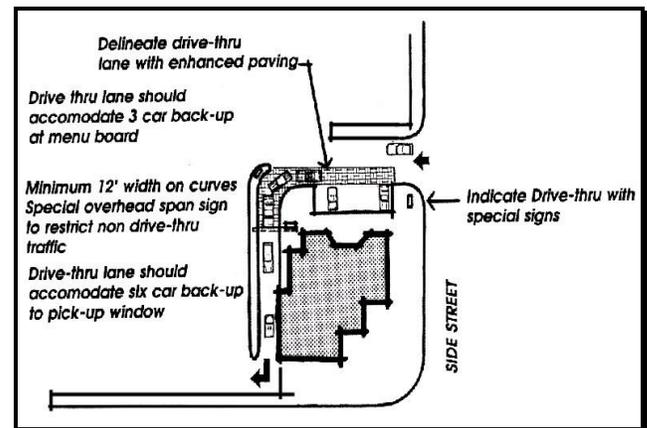
2. Site Planning

- a. The building should be the predominant visual element along street frontages, not parking lots or drive through lanes.
- b. Drive-through aisles should be located towards the rear of the building, away from the street frontage, and screened from adjacent parking areas.
- c. Buildings with drive-through services should be “built-to” the minimum front setback lines.
- d. Drive-through aisles should provide adequate on-site queuing distance to accommodate 5 cars (150-feet) before the first stopping point (e.g. menu board, teller window, automatic teller machine). No portion of the queuing aisle should serve as a parking aisle.
- e. Drive through lanes should not exit directly to the site’s main entrance. Drive-through aisles should provide at a minimum 25-foot interior radius for any curve.

- f. Whenever possible, the main structure should be sited so as to maximize the distance for vehicle queuing while screening the drive-through operations.

3. Building Design

- a. All building elevations should be architecturally enhanced.
- b. Buildings should incorporate a full roof with built-in roof top wells for mechanical equipment screening.
- c. A canopy should be provided at the drive-through pick-up window area.



Drive-through business standards



Big Box Retail

G. Big Box Retail

1. Description

Big box retail outlets are typically housed in large single story structures. Due to their positive economic impact on communities, they are becoming more prolific along local freeways, at major intersections and major commercial corridors.

Big box retail developments are characterized by large parking areas and minimal, “big box”, architectural design.



Distinguishing architecture is encouraged

2. Site Planning

- a. Parking area design should minimize adverse visual impacts of expansive parking lots by incorporating intensified landscaping and segmenting the parking area into smaller components.
- b. The major entry aisle should be aligned with the building entry of the most prominent building on site.
- c. Cart storage should be integrated within the initial building and site design. Large “cart corrals” are acceptable if they are designed to complement the project’s site plan and architecture.

3. Building Design

- a. The building design should incorporate a 2 ft. high building base.
- b. Building materials should be durable and resistant to damage, defacing, and general wear and tear. Stucco should not be utilized as a base material. Use of precast decorative concrete, stone masonry, brick and commercial grade ceramic tile is encouraged.
- c. Multiple plane roof lines are encouraged. Cornice details should be used at the top of parapet walls to provide distinctive caps to building facades.
- d. Big box building design should incorporate “liner shops” with entrances from interior and exterior of

the big-box building.

- e. Significant building wall articulation should be provided on all exterior building elevations visible to the public from the site or adjacent properties. Exterior wall treatments such as mass offsets, arcades, porticos, colonnades, and wing walls can be used to successfully mitigate the appearance of the typical big-box building appearance.
- f. The base of the big box building should be enhanced on all four sides by landscaping.
- g. Auxiliary outdoor storage and/or garden areas should be integrated within the primary building and their design should compliment the main building architecture.



Outdoor storage area

H. Mixed Use Projects

1. Description

Mixed-use projects combine both commercial/office and residential uses as components of a single development. The uses may be combined either vertically or horizontally within the same structure, or can be distributed in different areas/structure on the site.



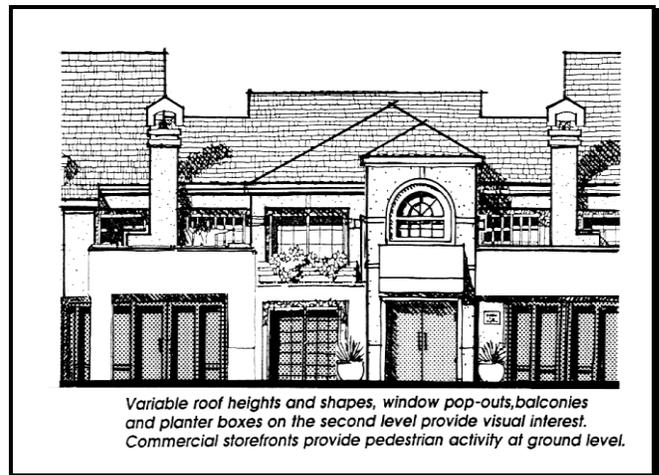
Vertical mixed use project in downtown Huntington Beach

2. Site Planning

- a. Separate site access drive and parking facilities should be provided for residential uses and commercial uses.
- b. Security gates should be considered for access to residential uses and residential parking areas.
- c. Private open space areas which are intended for use by residents only should not be accessible from the commercial/office portion of the site.
- d. Parking lot lighting and building security lighting for commercial uses should be appropriately shielded so as not to spill over into the residential area.

3. Building Design

- a. The architectural style and use of materials should be consistent throughout the entire mixed-use project. Differences in use of architectural details may occur where the intent is to differentiate between the residential and commercial/office scale and character of the structure(s).
- b. The design of storefronts should be consistent with the guidelines for commercial development. The residential portion of a mixed-use structure should be consistent with the design guidelines for multifamily residential development.
- c. Projects three stories or less in height should incorporate full roofs on at least 50% of the roof area.
- d. Commercial signage should be restrained.
- e. Structures with heights greater than three stories should set back the upper portions of the structure a minimum of 10 feet for each additional two stories.
- f. When residential and commercial uses are combined in the same structure, separate entrances should be provided for each use.



Variable roof heights and shapes, window pop-outs, balconies and planter boxes on the second level provide visual interest. Commercial storefronts provide pedestrian activity at ground level.

Design upper floors with residential look