

# DESIGN REVIEW STANDARDS

## CITY OF LANGLEY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Langley is fortunate to have a strong sense of place and unique quality. This comes in part from its special setting along Saratoga Passage, from the overall layout of the town, and from the distinctive character of many of its buildings. It is the desire of its people to preserve and enhance this unique quality. In the years ahead, new development is welcome, and indeed inevitable. To assist this development in making a positive contribution to Langley, the City Council created the Design Review Board.

The function of the Board is to provide preliminary design review during the planning and formative stages, and final review of all proposed designs of new commercial and conditional use development within the City of Langley pursuant to the requirements of Section 18.34.030 LMC (please see attached copy of Chapter 18.34 LMC). The Board has established design review guidelines, contained herein, by which each of these proposals must abide. In cases where the guidelines conflict with other applicable City codes and ordinances, the more restrictive requirements shall apply.

The intention of these Design Standards is to assist any owner or builder in designing quality buildings and outdoor spaces that are consistent with Langley's character, and that connect and contribute to the shared public space and surrounding built environment.

### II. APPLICATION GUIDELINES:

- A. Pre-Application Meeting: Prior to making a formal design review application to the City, the prospective applicant is encouraged to arrange with the Planning Official for a pre-application meeting with the Design Review Board. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the general design features, scope and location of the proposed development, and to identify specific areas of concern which should be considered when designing the proposal. No fee or detailed applications are required, although preliminary sketches would be helpful for discussion. Some small-scale projects may be handled at the pre-application meeting (in which case, a fee will be charged).
- B. Formal Application Procedure:
  - 1. Fill out the necessary forms provided by the City Planning Official.
  - 2. Submit forms and seven sets of design documents, along with the required application fees to the City Planning Official.
  - 3. The city Planning Official shall schedule the application for review.

4. The Design Review Board shall review all proposed development at public meetings and approve, conditionally approve, deny without prejudice or deny design-related aspects of the proposal.

C. Design Documents for Review by the Design Review Board shall include, where applicable:

1. Site Plan: drawn to a scale of 1" = 20' and shall clearly show existing conditions and proposed changes. A larger scale may be used as necessary to show detail.

2. Vicinity Information: show adjacent buildings, streets, pedestrian walkways, etc.

3. Topography: show existing and proposed contours, surface drainage patterns, streams, etc.

4. Landscaping: Outdoor furniture, paving, trees and plantings. (Show existing, to be removed and proposed. Designate types of vegetation proposed, locations, common name and taxonomic designation, and the installed and mature height of all vegetation.

5. Lighting fixtures. Show location and light spread of proposed fixtures.

6. Driveways, off-street parking areas, on-site traffic movement.

7. Structures, fences, walls.

8. Utility services.

9. An analysis of the project's seasonal solar exposure and shadowing effect on adjacent properties.

10. Architectural drawings:

- a. Drawn to appropriate and readable scales.
- b. Floor plans, sections, elevations (designate surface treatment, materials, color, trim, door and window type; provide samples or photographs when possible.)
- c. Details of outdoor structures, street furniture, unique features, etc.
- d. Exterior lighting (designate location, type, heights, area of illumination.)
- e. Signs. (For each sign, show design, size, materials, color scheme, location.)

III. Design Review Guidelines

A. Site:

1. Buildings shall respond to the natural topography, impinging as little as possible on the land through site-appropriate application of cuts, fills and impervious surfaces.

2. Preservation of significant vegetation is strongly recommended (mature hedges, large clusters of ground cover, large trees, etc.).
3. Buildings and outdoor spaces with southern exposure should be designed for optimum solar benefit.
4. The outdoor spaces surrounding a building should be designed along with the interior spaces, in such a way as to interrelate with each other.
5. New development should make a gesture toward the community (a sitting bench, a special garden, window planters, etc.).
6. Unsightly functions such as trash bins, storage areas, etc., shall be screened appropriately or located out of public view.
7. Parking areas shall be placed at the side or rear of a building, screened appropriately or otherwise located out of public view when lot conditions permit. Parking areas shall be designed for safety, efficiency and appearance.
8. Pedestrian circulation shall be designed in such a way as to provide convenient and safe movement patterns and where possible, connect to existing sidewalks, walkways, public trails and roadways.

B. Landscape Considerations:

1. Landscaping should be designed for the unique qualities of each site and should compliment the successful landscaping and building design of the surrounding area. Landscaping should be used to help create outdoor spaces.
2. Landscaped areas and gardens shall be protected from vehicular traffic with curbing or other means.
3. Maintenance considerations shall be included in the design of landscaped areas. The provision for long-term maintenance is required.
4. Landscape and street furniture (tables, benches, seats, etc.) shall be designed for their location and for longevity and safety of use
5. Plant screening shall function in both winter and summer and shall be effective within two years of planting.
6. Exterior lighting, street furniture and other site amenities shall compliment the design and character of the building and surrounding area. All lighting shall be directed downward and be shielded so as to avoid light spill onto adjacent properties..

7. To the maximum extent practicable, drought-tolerant native plant species shall be used in all landscaped areas.
8. Landscaping shall not impede vehicular or pedestrian safety.

C. Building considerations:

1. Buildings shall respond to the natural characteristics of the site and locality, incorporating contours, significant trees and vegetation, streams, view, etc.
2. Buildings shall respond to the design successes of their immediate neighbors and to those of Langley.
3. Buildings shall be appropriate to the scale of Langley. Large, monolithic buildings shall be avoided.
4. All buildings should be as energy-efficient as possible, using natural ventilation, solar gain (passive or active), sufficient insulation, etc.
5. Buildings shall be located or modified in height so as to preserve, as much as reasonable, the main vistas of its immediate neighbors.
6. Pitched roofs are recommended, although other roof types are acceptable if shown to be a better design solution.
7. Façade and exterior surfaces:
  - a. Surface color, finishes and articulation should be appropriate to the building and the townscape. Long, monotonous, unlandscaped walls shall be avoided.
  - b. When appropriate, historical references are encouraged (i.e., classic mouldings, door and window pediments, roof finials, scrolls to connect changes of roof height, etc).
8. The transition space between the street and the main entrance of the building shall be given special design consideration.
  - a. Where there is a setback, bring the walkway through this space and mark it with a change of some kind (i.e., change of direction, of surface texture, of level, etc.). Give attention to special landscaping.
  - b. Where the front of the building is set on the property line, consider recessing the main entry. Provide additional enclosure as needed or desired (i.e., with a canopy, awning, etc.).

9. Doorways should be expressive of the building and the business, and should be easy to operate.

10. Windows

- a. Windows should serve the function of the building and be complimentary to the exterior façade. They should be designed with both the inside and outside in mind.
- b. Display windows should be creatively lit, but never in ways which intrude on pedestrian or vehicular traffic (i.e., glare, reflection).
- c. Window awnings and other protective features should be appropriate for the building.

11. All mechanical equipment and utility hardware shall be screened from public view and hearing in a way that compliments the building and the public space. In special cases where the mechanical function of a building is to be expressed in order to educate the public, such as with solar collectors, or with the equipment of a building such as a fire station, its design shall integrate with the building.