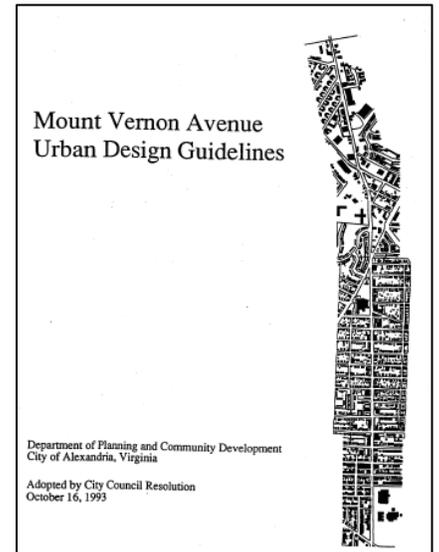
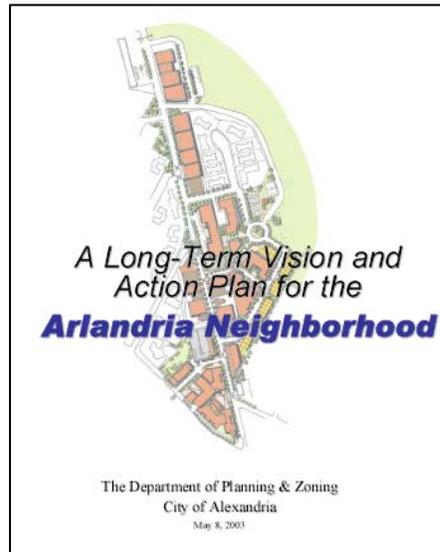
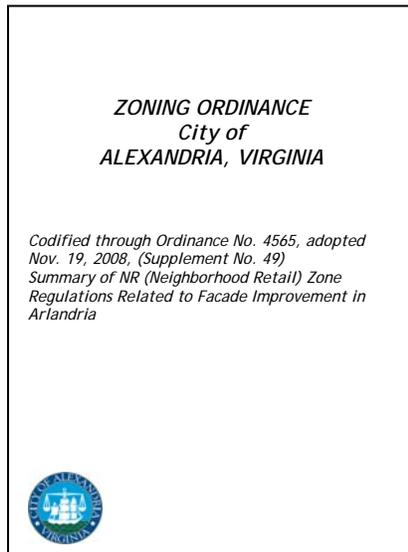




FACADE IMPROVEMENT & STREETSCAPE GUIDANCE FOR ARLANDRIA*

A Summary of City Regulations and Guidelines for properties located along the Mount Vernon Avenue Corridor between Four Mile Run to the north and the intersection of West Glebe Road and Mount Vernon Avenue to the south.



Compiled June 2009

* This document is a compilation and summary of existing documents strictly related to facade and streetscape treatment for properties in Arlandria located along Mount Vernon Avenue from Four Mile Run to W. Glebe Rd. The information was compiled from the *Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Design Guidelines (1993)*, *A Long-Term Vision & Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood (2003)* and the *Alexandria Zoning Ordinance*. For more comprehensive information, please contact the Department of Planning and Zoning at 703-746-4333 or refer to the full versions of each document, found on the City of Alexandria's website at www.alexandriava.gov/planning.

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A. Summary of How Zoning, Action Plan and Design Guidelines Work Together

Facade/streetscape improvement in Arlandria along the Mount Vernon Avenue corridor between Four Mile Run to the north and the intersection of West Glebe Road and Mount Vernon Avenue to the south are governed by several documents that work together as follows:

1. *The City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance*. The zoning regulations are the legal requirements with which all parcels must comply. The majority of Arlandria is governed by *NR/Neighborhood Retail Zone*. Other zones that exist in this area are Coordinated Development District (CDD) #6 and CDD #12. The underlying zoning for both CDD #6 and CDD #12 is Neighborhood Retail (NR). With regard to facade and streetscape guidelines, all property within the CDD must be consistent with the NR Zone. The RA/Multifamily Zone also abuts some of the northern section of Mount Vernon Avenue, however there are no aspects of this zone that regulate facade or streetscape improvement. (Please see zoning map on page 12). As relates to signs, Section 9 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates signs citywide, and any new sign in Arlandria must comply with these regulations in addition to the regulations specified in the NR zone.
2. *A Long-Term Vision and Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood (2003)*. This planning document provides supplementary and illustrative guidance to the regulations established in the NR Zone. (See page 85-95 of the Arlandria Plan for additional illustrations).
3. *The Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Design Guidelines (1993)*. These guidelines provide illustrative guidance in support of the NR Zone regulations. Originally written in 1993, the guidelines were incorporated into the new Arlandria NR Zone in 2003, and therefore the two are generally complimentary with one another.

B. Zoning Ordinance for the City Of Alexandria (NR Arlandria Neighborhood Retail Zone, Coordinated Development Districts and RA/Multifamily zone) as related to facade improvements

The Arlandria neighborhood retail zone (NR) shall apply to land that abuts the Mount Vernon Avenue corridor between Four Mile Run to the north and the intersection of West Glebe Road and Mount Vernon Avenue to the south. The NR Zone is also the underlying zoning for properties in CDD #6 and CDD#12.

Sec. 4-1400 NR/Neighborhood retail zone (Arlandria).

4-1401 Purpose. The neighborhood retail zone is intended to revitalize Mount Vernon Avenue and the properties that abut Mount Vernon Avenue in Arlandria with a mix of uses, including pedestrian scale retail along the street, by imposing additional regulations designed to achieve a desirable, active urban environment. The neighborhood retail zone is intended to:

- A) Enhance the pedestrian-oriented commerce with greater opportunities for shopping, recreation and cultural activities, with a variety of uses, including retail shops and services, restaurants and cafes for residents, commuters and tourists;

4-1402 Development principles. Any redevelopment, new development, or infill development that requires review by the city for a special use permit, site plan, or administrative permit pursuant to section 4-1404 or section 4-1407 shall be consistent with the currently adopted *Mount Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines*, the infill development principles, and the building and retail guidelines articulated in the long-term vision for the Arlandria Neighborhood plan as adopted as part of the master plan. (Please contact City staff for more information (703) 746-3833).

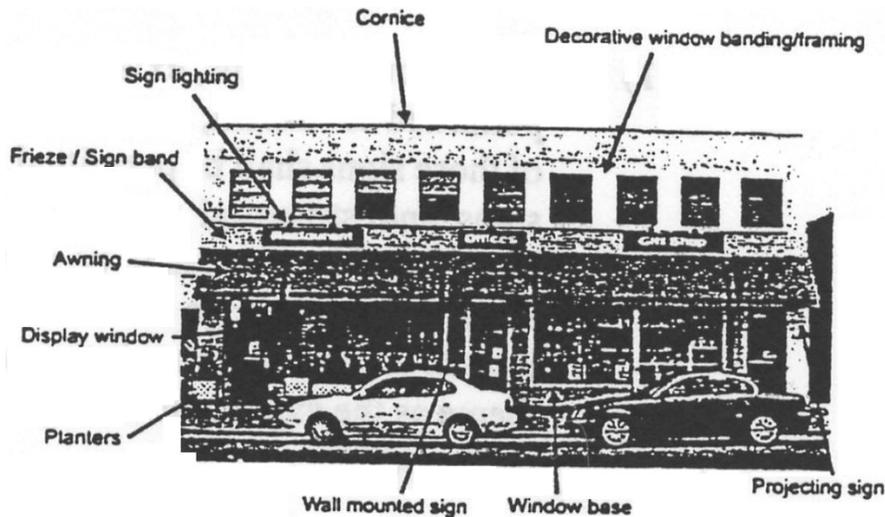
4-1410 Signs. Storefront signs should contribute to the overall look and theme of the neighborhood and be compatible with the architecture style and details of the building. Signs should be attractive, clearly identifying the business, uncluttered, and not overpowering to the building facade. The sign provisions of article IX (the relevant sections of which are summarized later in this document) shall generally apply; however, notwithstanding any conflicting provisions in article IX, the following are applicable in the NR zone:

- (A) The design of signs shall be incorporated into the overall design of the structure and the site and:
 - (1) Simple, readable signs that incorporate the name "Arlandria," or its Spanish equivalent, and theme of "family" are strongly encouraged. Signs consisting of individual letters mounted to the building facade are encouraged;
 - (2) Signs should be centered on the building facade, or over the entrance door to the business;
 - (3) Unique, creative signs are strongly encouraged;
 - (4) Sign materials shall include durable wood, painted plastics, metals, or pre-fabricated pin mounted letters;
 - (5) Signs projecting from the building wall at a 90 degree angle are encouraged to identify a business to pedestrians on the sidewalk, or to those traveling parallel to the storefront;

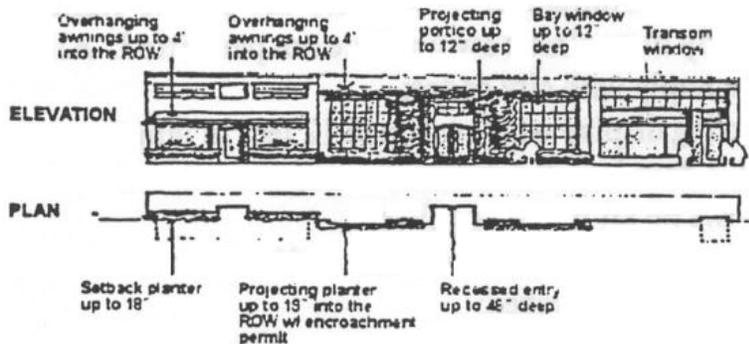
- (6) Internally lit plastic box signs or flashing signs are prohibited;
 - (7) Where a building includes multiple commercial units, the sign for each unit should be of uniform character and location;
 - (8) Awnings are strongly encouraged and should be designed to coordinate with the design of the building and any other awnings along the same block face. Any sign located on an awning shall be fixed flat to the surface, shall be non-illuminated and shall indicate only the name and/or address of the establishment. (Note: Awnings that project over a public way require an encroachment ordinance approved by City Council).
- (B) In order to retain the existing noncomplying roof signs that provide uniqueness and a sense of history in Arlandria, the following provision applies as specified:
- (1) Roof-mounted signs, existing as of January 1, 2003, shall be permitted to remain; however, no enlargement or relocation of those signs shall be permitted. Routine maintenance of the signs and structural repairs as necessary to maintain the integrity of the signs shall be permitted. Limited alteration to allow a name change for the business shall be permitted so long as the new lettering is the same type style, size, scale and theme as the existing lettering. No alteration of the structure is permitted.
- (C) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 9-104(F) of the zoning ordinance, vertical banners may be installed on the light poles located in the public right-of-way as a coordinated banner program subject to review and approval by the director of planning and zoning. Banners shall be coordinated to promote a unified identity for Arlandria, an upcoming event or season, but shall not identify or promote individual businesses or products. Such banners shall be securely affixed at the top and bottom so as to preclude any fluttering or rotation by the movement of the atmosphere;
- (D) Umbrellas displayed in conjunction with outdoor dining areas may display only the name of the restaurant on the fabric of the umbrella. No other businesses or product names shall be displayed on the umbrella;
- (E) Free standing signs are hereby prohibited; however, one ground mounted, monument style center identification sign may be permitted on sites developed with shopping centers that have more than 20,000 square feet of lot area. The total area of shopping center identification signs shall not exceed 50 square feet with a maximum height of 8 feet. The center identification sign shall display only the name and address of the center. No other ground-mounted signs shall be permitted.

4-1411 Building and retail guidelines for any redevelopment or new development requiring a special use permit or administrative permit pursuant to section 4-1404 or 4-1407. Please contact staff at (703) 746-3833 for more information regarding redevelopment or new development.

(A) *Building facades.* New and remodeled facades should conform to the general historical Art Deco architectural style of the historic buildings in Arlandria. Decorative elements such as cornices and belt courses should be used to give scale and interest to the facades, to help define the building elements (base, middle, and top), and to create three dimensional richness to the facades.



(B) Storefront design. The storefront should work with the architecture of the overall building facade, should clearly and simply present the name of the business and the type of services and products offered. It should give customers easy visibility into the store. The storefront design should contribute to a distinctive pedestrian and customer experience, and uniquely enhance the overall business district's identity and beauty.



Storefront design should include as many of the following items as possible:

- Primary pedestrian entrances should be located directly fronting the sidewalk; entrances should be recessed up to 48 inches deep from the facade;
- Detailed window frames with decorative moldings are encouraged;
- A window base or bulkhead below storefront windows should be not less than 18 inches high, and not taller than 30 inches;
- A pattern of transom windows, horizontal elements and mullions provides a unique rhythm of glass and trim elements in the storefront;
- 65--75 percent of the ground floor facade should be windows with clear glass;
- Porticos around the entry door may project up to 12 inches into the public right-of-way;
- Marquee structures or canopies may project from the building at entries (maximum ten feet in length, minimum height eight feet above the sidewalk and maximum projection of four feet into the public right-of-way). These shall comply with city codes and be reviewed on an individual basis as to design compatibility;

- Awnings may overhang the sidewalks (awnings shall be below 14 feet in height, not less than eight feet above the sidewalk and project a maximum of four feet into the public right-of-way). Internally lit or plastic awnings are not permitted. All awnings shall comply with city codes;
- Projecting display windows up to 12 feet in length may project up to 2 feet into the sidewalk, and are encouraged to have windows on all projecting faces;
- Creative display of merchandise and/or services in storefront windows is encouraged;
- Blank walls longer than six feet are prohibited;
- Solid roll-down or sliding security grates are prohibited.

(C) *Lighting.* Lighting dramatically enhances the appeal of storefronts at night, and makes the streets feel safe. Creative lighting should illuminate signs, window displays, and architectural details of the building while adding to the overall image of the street. The following guidelines apply:

- Lighting should be carefully coordinated with nearby street lighting and other storefronts, and should not be too bright or glaring;
- Light sources should be carefully concealed and blend in with the architecture. Sconces, downlights or other exterior mounted light fixtures should be used selectively to light signs and/or architectural features;
- Lighting shall be provided along commercial store fronts from sundown until 11:00 p.m. on week days, and until midnight on weekends;
- Neon banding is strongly discouraged;
- All lighting must conform to city codes and regulations.

(D) *Greenery.* Plants, flowers, planters, urns, and hanging baskets should be used to enhance and humanize the storefront and sidewalk in front of the stores. All greenery installations should conform to the currently adopted *Mount Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines*, the Landscape Guidelines (available on the City's website <http://alexandriava.gov/planning/info/default.aspx?id=14676> or by calling 703-746-3833), and the City Code (available on the City's website at <http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=10349&sid=46> or by calling 703-746-3833).

5-602 Coordinated development districts (CDDs)

Arlandria has two CDDs: CDD #6 (Arlandria Shopping Center/Birchmere shopping center) and CDD #12 (Safeway/Datatel site). The underlying zoning for both CDD #6 and CDD #12 is Neighborhood Retail (NR). With regard to facade and streetscape guidelines, all property within the CDD must be consistent with the *NR Zone*, the *Arlandria Long-Term Vision and Action Plan*, and the *Mount Vernon Avenue Design Guidelines*, as summarized above in this document.

3-600 RA/Multifamily zone.

3-601 Purpose. The RA zone is established to provide and maintain land areas for medium density residential neighborhoods in which apartments predominate and in which single-family, two-family and townhouse development is permitted. Nonresidential uses of a noncommercial nature which are related to, supportive of and customarily found in such residential neighborhoods are also permitted.

ARTICLE IX. SIGNS, MARQUEES AND AWNINGS

Elements applicable to Arlandria retail businesses located in the NR zone. For the complete sign ordinance, go to www.alexandriava.gov/planning or call 703-746-3833.

Sec. 9-200 Signs, marquees and awnings permitted in various zones.

9-202 Commercial zones.

(A) *Permitted signs.* In any commercial zone, the following signs, marquees and awnings only may be erected and displayed so long as they comply with all other applicable requirements of this Article IX.

(2) Business signs which meet the requirements of section 9-202(B).

(4) Marquees and awnings which are permitted in the RC, RCX and RD residence zones and marquees and awnings which meet the requirements of section 9-202(D).

(5) Signs, marquees and awnings encroaching upon a public right-of-way for which an encroachment ordinance has been enacted or which city council has expressly authorized for up to ten days.

(6) Banners for which special permission has been obtained pursuant to section 9-104(F).

(B) *Size and location limitations.* Signs permitted within a commercial zone under section 9-202(A) may be displayed on any building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area or may be freestanding signs, and shall comply with the following provisions as to size and location.

(1) *One-story buildings.* The total area of all signs displayed on a building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing the street, alley or parking area.

(2) *Multi-story buildings.*

(a) The total area of all signs displayed between the sidewalk and a height of 20 feet on any building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing such street, alley or parking area.

(b) The total area of all signs displayed above the 20-foot height specified in section 9-202(B)(2)(a) above on any building wall which faces a street, alley or parking area shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building width facing such street, alley or parking area.

(3) *Window signs.* The total area of window signs, including those advertising sales, in any one window shall not exceed 20 percent of the area of the window. The total area of window signs shall be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed.

(4) *Projection and height of signs.* A sign may be erected or displayed flat against a building wall or at an angle thereto, so long as the sign does not project more than four feet from the building wall or within one foot of an established curb line and the bottom of the sign is at least eight feet above a sidewalk or parking area and at least 14.5 feet above an alley.

C. A Long-Term Vision & Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood (2003)

Prior to the 1930s, much of Mt. Vernon Avenue in Arlandria was small residential homes except for some retail buildings clustered at the corner of W. Glebe. Extensive development began in the late 1930s and early 1940s adding an Art Deco style theater, the Colonial Revival style Presidential Greens apartment complex, and Potomac Village (Chirilagua).

Presidential Greens was built in two phases, the first phase composed of seven buildings along Russell Road, and the second included the remaining fourteen buildings. The complex today remains much the same architecturally as when it was built, and is the most significantly unique building grouping in the Arlandria area.

Presidential Greens

Chirilagua was originally built in 1939 and consisted of an eight-building complex with some Art Deco detailing which remains intact today. The buildings have been somewhat altered over the years, and two new buildings were added over the past thirty years. Both Presidential Greens and Chirilagua have well planned landscape areas with pedestrian parkway style paths, making them unique garden-style apartments.

Several more Art Deco structures were built along Mt. Vernon Avenue in front of Chirilagua. Two of these remain today as the Lilian's building and the Arlandria Shopping Center. The significance of the Lilian's building has been greatly diminished by the demolition of the Beverly Plaza next door which is now used as a parking lot for Lilian's. Together these structures made up a substantial Art Deco presence and history concentrated around the intersection of Bruce Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue.



Arlandria Shopping Center



Although these buildings together do not constitute a historic district eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, it is felt that what remains should be preserved and enhanced with any new development along this portion of Mt. Vernon Avenue.

The recommendations for redevelopment are as follows:

- Existing structures should be preserved whenever possible
- New development should respect the style and scale of the preserved buildings
- Authentic Art Deco styling and design elements should be incorporated into new buildings in this area
- New buildings should not over-power the preserved buildings, and should step down to them



D. *Mount Vernon Avenue Urban Design Guidelines (1993)*

HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

The guidelines are intended to be used by business and property owners, builders and architects of projects along Mount Vernon Avenue, and by citizens, appointed and elected officials and city staff in evaluating these projects.

For projects requiring Site Plan approval or Special Use Permit approval, the guidelines will be incorporated into the review process. The Zoning Ordinance requires the Planning Commission to consider urban design issues such as massing, location and orientation of buildings, parking, pedestrian and site amenities, compatibility with surrounding property and character of the neighborhood. The guidelines are intended to provide assistance to applicants in addressing these issues, and will serve as part of the criteria for public review of these projects.

After the Planning Department staff reviews the application for a project, its recommendation, along with any citizen comments, is forwarded to the Planning Commission for its consideration. For any project requiring a Special Use Permit, the recommendation of the Planning Commission will then be forwarded to City Council for their consideration.

The guidelines are not intended to replace but to support and supplement other applicable codes and ordinances of the City of Alexandria.

FACADE TREATMENT

This section outlines the guidelines for basic building components, such as doors, windows, awnings, and so forth. These guidelines are intended to be used for all sides of a building, but particularly those portions visible from Mount Vernon Avenue.

- Architectural elements, patterns of window openings or articulation of bays should all be used to maintain a sense of scale and add interest to a building. Large, blank facades should be avoided (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Provide facades of interest

- In general, the placement and orientation of architectural elements, particularly windows, should maintain the typical horizontal or vertical emphasis of other structures along the block face (Fig.2), with these exceptions

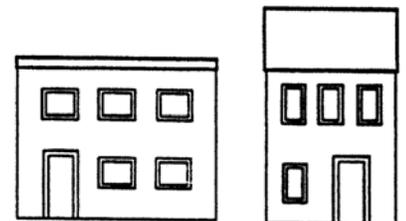


Fig. 2 Horizontal & vertical emphasis

- In general, individual "punched" or framed windows are recommended rather than strip or "ribbon" windows.

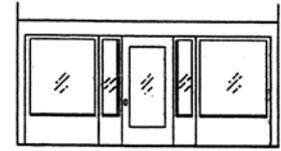


Fig. 3 Storefront windows are recommended

- Storefront openings, typically including large display windows, are highly recommended for retail uses at street level (Fig. 3).

- Awnings are encouraged for first floor retail uses to provide architectural interest and to encourage pedestrian activity. Awnings over a public way require an encroachment ordinance approved by City Council. Translucent and/or internally lit awnings are not recommended (Fig. 4).

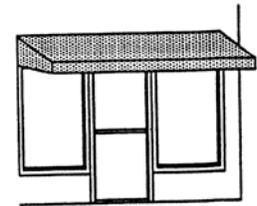


Fig. 4 First floor awnings are encouraged

- Where awnings are used, they should be designed to coordinate with the design of the building and any other awnings along the same block face (Fig. 5).

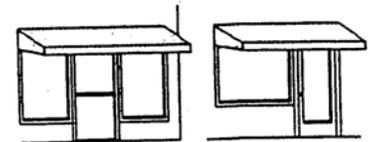


Fig. 5 Coordinate awning design

- The entry to commercial and institutional buildings should be directly from street level.

- The entry to the building should be clearly visible from the street. Prominent entries are encouraged for architectural interest and as an element of scale and orientation (Fig. 6).

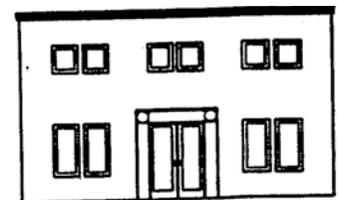


Fig. 6 Prominent entries are encouraged

- Architectural components and details, such as a change in materials, ornamentation, and the use of smaller, more human scaled elements are particularly encouraged at the pedestrian level (Fig. 7). Such elements include: recessed windows, projecting windows, bay windows, textures, patterns, colors, trim elements, balconies, belt courses, cornices, shutters, and landscape elements.

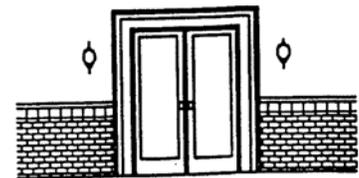


Fig. 7 Include pedestrian-scaled elements

- Attention should also be given to the top of a building. Providing architectural elements such as dormers or details at the cornice level can help to break down the apparent mass of the building, compensate for changes in height and scale between existing and proposed structures, and create interests at the skyline (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8 Provide roof level interests

- Buildings should be of those colors and materials which will allow the structure to blend in with the overall fabric of the neighborhood.

- Storefronts should be narrow and vary. The preferred width of storefronts is approximately 20-25 feet and should be no more than 50 feet (Fig.9).

- Entrances should be recessed up to 48 inches from the facade (Fig. 9).

- Detailed window frames with decorative moldings are encouraged (Fig.9).

- A pattern of transom windows, horizontal elements, and mullions that provide unique rhythm of glass and trim elements is encouraged (Fig.9).

- 65-75% of the ground floor facade should be windows with clear glass (Fig. 9).

- New and remodeled facades should conform to the general Art Deco architectural style in Arlandria.

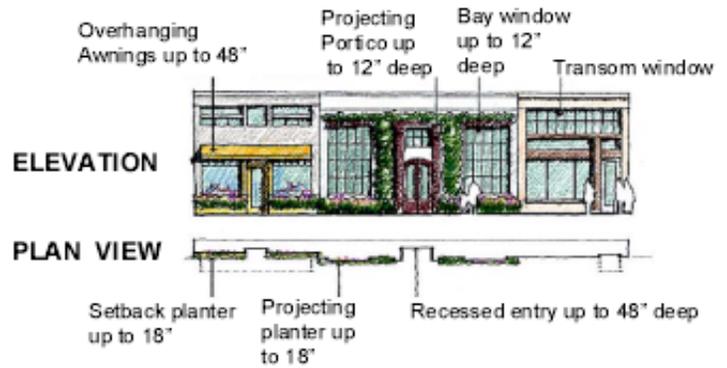


Fig. 9 Facades should be narrow, vary, provide interest, and have permit transparency.

STREETSCAPE

The concept of streetscape generally refers to the quality and character of the public streets and sidewalks and adjacent private property. This section includes guidelines for private property only. Mount Vernon Urban Design Guidelines, Appendix E contains guidelines for the public right-of-way (See also Mount Vernon Urban Design Guidelines Appendix D: Suggested Plant List).

Paving Materials and Borders

- Paved areas between the right-of-way and the building facade or entrance area should use the same materials as the right-of-way. (See Mount Vernon Urban Design Guidelines Appendix E for a list of appropriate materials by area.)

- Accent pavers can be used to emphasize the entrance or other significant areas in the streetscape (Fig. 10). Materials should be compatible with the type and color of the surrounding material.

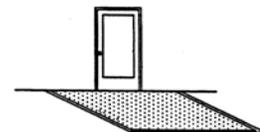


Fig. 10 Accent pavers in sidewalk

- An edge treatment is recommended where sidewalk meets grass or planting areas (Fig. 11); an edge treatment is not necessary at building facades. The edge treatment may be:

- Precast white concrete tree planter curb (same as existing ones)
- Unidecor brick edge for unidecor pavers (by Balcon manufacturing, or equal)
- Landscape timbers are strongly discouraged.

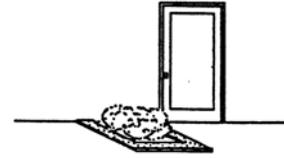


Fig. 11 Edge treatment recommended for planted areas

- Driveway aprons for parking and alley access should be poured-in-place concrete.

Planted Areas

- Planting strips on private property in front of buildings are recommended for the area between Four Mile Run and Commonwealth Avenue for multifamily and commercial uses (Fig. 12). The minimum width should be 2 feet beyond roof overhangs.



Fig. 12 Planting strips in front of building

- Ornamental deciduous shrubs, such as Meidiland Roses, are recommended at gateway corners.

- All planted areas must be maintained by the property owner.

SIGNS

Signs play an important part in maintaining the vitality of the commercial uses along Mount Vernon Avenue. They should be designed and sited to identify individual businesses, but must not detract from the image and identity of the entire area. All signs must meet the requirements of §9-100 to 9-403 of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance.

- The design of commercial signs should be incorporated into the overall design of the structure and site. The color and materials should complement the architecture and the streetscape, not compete with it. The size of the sign should be in proportion with the size of the building.

- Simple, readable designs are strongly encouraged. A maximum of three colors and two type faces is recommended.

- Where a development includes multiple commercial units, the sign for each unit should be of uniform character and location.



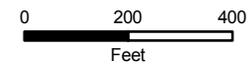
Fig. 15 Coordinate sign design

- The coordination of sign design along an entire block face is encouraged (Fig. 15).

Zoning for Parcels Along Mt. Vernon Ave from Four Mile Run to W. Glebe

Legend

-  City Boundary
-  Zoning
-  Parcels
-  Roads
-  Water Features



This map was produced by the GIS Division of the Department of Planning and Zoning, City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Mapping Standards:
Coordinate System - NAD83 State Plane Virginia North
Projection - Lambert Conformal Conic
Map Units - Feet



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Map Produced:
Date: 06-15-2009

Produced by: MAR

