

## **Section IV**

# **Approval Criteria**

## Overview

The applicant should address how well the proposed plan promotes the unique character of Forest Grove. New development shall reinforce positive characteristics of town center, improve visual character of commercial corridor and complement the character of neighborhoods. Each building or addition shall fit within the context of its greater surroundings and environment in terms of overall street impact, scale and configuration.

Forest Grove has unique characteristics derived from its history; role as a regional center for the surrounding agricultural areas; and relationship to institutional uses, such as Pacific University. Property developed within the City has certain design characteristics, which should be emphasized by new development.

In the Town Center, new development should enhance the historic character of the town center. Buildings which disrupt the character would not meet the criteria. In all focus areas, projects should be functionally and aesthetically compatible with surrounding properties and the community as a whole. Multi-unit residential projects should be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods and create a safe and functional environment for residents.

All projects subject to design review shall demonstrate that they meet the five approval criteria listed below and described on the following pages. The applicant should include a written response to each criterion as part of the design review application.

1. Complements existing architecture
2. Compatible with adjacent neighborhood
3. Creates dramatic landscape statements
4. Sensitivity to the natural environment
5. Promotes well-designed streetscapes

*Top: View of historic buildings in the town center.*

*Bottom: City entrance (east)*



## DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

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### Criterion 1 – Complements Existing Architecture

New development shall be consistent with the quality and character of existing architecture in the community.

Forest Grove has a number of architecturally significant and well-designed institutional, commercial and residential buildings, some dating back to the early 1850s (e.g. Old College Hall, 1850). These structures enhance the community character of the community and establish a high-quality design standard.

Development should maintain and restore significant historic details on existing buildings. New buildings should be architecturally compatible with neighboring buildings. New buildings built in Forest Grove should enhance, rather than detract from the existing character of the community. The desired architectural character should vary depending on the location within the community. Large monolithic buildings lacking architectural details are discouraged.

*Top:* View of a renovated historic building in the town center located on Main Street.

*Bottom:* View of Goodwill store on Pacific Avenue.



## DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

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### Criterion 2 - Compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

Multi-unit residential developments shall be compatible with adjacent lower density residential development, as well as commercial development.

Some of the earliest buildings in the town center were hotels (as early as 1870) and dormitories for the college. Many of the early twentieth century downtown buildings featured apartments above the storefronts. The neighborhoods immediately surrounding the town center and along Forest Grove's commercial corridor have historically contained some higher density housing intermixed with single family homes. The community also has a number of elderly housing facilities. Many residents of these housing types have limited access to vehicles and need a safe walking environment. Three different types of built environments allow multi-unit development in Forest Grove: town center, commercial corridor and residential neighborhoods.

New development should provide safe pedestrian environments, be accessible to nearby commercial areas and provide a safe, well designed atmosphere to meet the needs of residents. Project which are disconnected from surrounding neighborhood (e.g. lacking pedestrian connections, excessive setbacks, large parking areas, no visibility from public streets) are discouraged.

*Top:* Well-designed modern apartment complex.

*Bottom:* Upper level residential units.



## DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

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### Criterion 3 – Creates Dramatic Landscape Statements.

Landscaping shall be used to create a design theme for a project, complement the building architecture, screen objectionable views and enhance privacy.

Landscape features are key determinant of community character in the city. Forest Grove was named for a grove of large trees present on the Tualatin Academy campus in the 1840s. The community has several examples of dramatic landscaping treatments (e.g. City’s eastern entrance; historic Grand Lodge) which helps define its character. Forest Grove is also a “Tree City USA” and has a recognition program for significant trees.

Landscaping should be used to create a design theme for a project. Landscaping should be integrated into the design of developments, to complement building architecture and create visual relief. Landscaping should also be used to screen objectionable views and enhance privacy. Landscaping should also be used for environmental benefits, such as reducing storm-water run-off and providing shade. Landscaping that blocks visibility creates safety concerns and interferes with utilities should be avoided. The use of invasive non-native species is discouraged.

*Top:* Sidewalk connection in parking lot.

*Middle:* Landscaping along public street.

*Bottom:* Entrance sign with landscaping at apartment complex.



## DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

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### Criterion 4 - Sensitivity to the Natural Environment.

Site plans shall be designed to avoid impacts to natural resources and integrate these resources into site plans for the enjoyment of residents.

The citizens of Forest Grove have a long tradition of respect for the natural environment. In fact, one of the early ordinances adopted by the City was a tree preservation ordinance. The early settlement of the city was sited between two major waterways and until recently has primarily developed away from the floodplains and wetlands associated with these waterways, avoiding impacts to natural riparian systems. The city has also avoided impact to natural resources by developing in a relatively compact fashion. When near natural resources, new developments are required to avoid potential impacts.

Site plans should avoid impacts to natural resources. Natural resources should be integrated into developments for the enjoyment of residents. Existing trees should be avoided when possible. Development that utilizes extensive paved areas and degrades wetlands or riparian areas should be avoided.

*Top:* Known as “The Tree,” this Giant Sequoia is located at the busy intersection of “B” Street and Pacific Avenue.

*Below:* Wetland near the intersection of Highway 47 and Sunset Drive.



## DESIGN REVIEW APPROVAL CRITERIA

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### Criterion 5 – Promotes Well-Designed Streetscapes.

Public Improvements made along street rights-of-way shall be consistent with City standards. Site improvements shall be functionally and visually connected to adjacent streets and sidewalks.

New development provided the opportunity to improve the appearance and construct a unified streetscape. Streetscapes should be constructed according to a common “design template” established for the project and consistent with the character of Forest Grove. Site improvements should be both functionally and visually connected to adjacent streets and sidewalks.

*Top:* Row of street trees along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

*Bottom:* Plaza adjacent to the entrance of the Goodwill store on Pacific Avenue.

