

Chapter 17.99

DESIGN MANUAL

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17.99.010 Acknowledgements.

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17.99.020 Overview.

The design standards of this chapter shall be reviewed, applied and processed under the provisions of Chapter 17.98 GHMC. The definitions applicable to this chapter are in the glossary at the end of this chapter, GHMC 17.99.590, and additional definitions appear in Chapter 17.04 GHMC.

The design standards of this chapter are intended to:

- A. Encourage building design and site planning to:**
 - Compliment the existing character of specific neighborhoods or geographic areas of the city in which the proposed building or site improvements are located.
 - Relate visually and physically to surrounding development.
 - Promote pedestrian usage.
- B. Provide options that allow for diversity and creativity in project design.**
- C. Facilitate a dialogue between project proponents and the city's design review board in a public meeting setting.**
- D. Increase public awareness of design issues and design options.**
- E. Provide an objective basis for decisions which affect both individual projects and the city of Gig Harbor as a whole.**
- F. Ensure that the intent of the goals and objectives contained within the city of Gig Harbor's comprehensive plan are met.**

The comprehensive plan dictates that design consideration go beyond the appearance of individual buildings and address the civic fabric of the city.

The standards contained in this manual are intended to identify and respect important visual patterns in Gig Harbor's built environment and relate those to the natural backdrop of trees, hills and water.

This design manual chapter will consider design within three broad articles:

Article II. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT.

This article addresses how projects relate to and connect with surrounding development. It requires that development design take consideration of, and be integrated with, both the existing streetscape and nearby parcels. It defines prominent parcels and transitions between zones, and places more rigorous requirements on projects located in these visually sensitive areas. Similarly, it identifies certain streets within the city as being visually distinct and places more rigorous standards on development along those streets.

Article III. SITE DESIGN.

This article addresses how projects relate to their own site. It requires that design consideration be given to topography, building location, walkways, parking, landscaping, open space and common areas. It encourages pedestrian access, outdoor activities, and preservation of significant trees and existing views.

Article IV. ARCHITECTURE.

This article addresses the more traditional aspects of design review such as selection of colors and materials, roofs, windows, lighting, and other architectural details. It also discusses the perceived mass and scale of a building, and footprint modulation. Separate standards are set for residential and nonresidential projects, and for development within the city's historic district.

(Ord. 1347 § 65, 2016).

Design review can:

- *Be a mechanism to facilitate flexibility in the application of design regulations.*
- *Allow for early discussion of a project's design.*
- *Provide examples that demonstrate how projects can better fit the environment of Gig Harbor.*

The result of this increased flexibility and dialogue is the opportunity for projects to enhance the character of Gig Harbor more effectively than would be possible if standard zoning regulations alone were strictly applied.

17.99.030 Design review options.

The design standards of this chapter shall be observed for building and site design within the city of Gig Harbor. Design standards include both GENERAL REQUIREMENTS and SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS. "General requirements" include all **BOLD UNDERLINED** text in this chapter. "Specific requirements" include the more detailed text which immediately follows general requirements. This differentiation allows proponents to select from the design review options described in Chapter 17.98 GHMC, including:

A. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

Design review for projects or portions of projects which conform to the SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS may be approved administratively by the city of Gig Harbor community development department planning staff as described in GHMC 17.98.050. This method provides for a reasonable degree of flexibility while minimizing review time.

B. DESIGN REVIEW BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The design review board (DRB) option as described in GHMC 17.98.055 encourages a creative approach to design by providing a more flexible review standard than that which is allowed in the administrative approach. The DRB can recommend alternative design solutions to SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS if it finds that:

1. An alternative design represents an equivalent or superior design solution to what would otherwise be achieved by rigidly applying specific requirements, and
2. The alternative design meets the intent of each general requirement.

To determine the general requirement's intent, the DRB shall consider the specific requirements as appropriate examples of compliance. The staff or the DRB may request that the proposed structures be demarcated with rods, netting and/or balloons to better review mass, scale and/or location.

The DRB shall not consider or recommend approval of any deviation from dimensional or numeric standards stated within the text of any general requirements, or from minimum setback standards, maximum height standards or zone transition building size standards stated in specific requirements. Approval to deviate from these standards must be obtained through the variance process defined in Chapter 17.66 GHMC and not through the design review board process.

The design review board (DRB) may recommend approval of proposed alternatives to SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS if the DRB finds that alternative design solutions meet the intent of the GENERAL REQUIREMENTS in any section of this chapter.

C. MINOR ADJUSTMENTS TO HEARING EXAMINER DECISIONS

The planning director may review minor adjustments to a final, approved hearing examiner decision prior to building permit issuance as described in GHMC 17.98.056. The minor adjustment process can be used only after the design review board has made a recommendation and the hearing examiner has ruled on the recommendation. The director can approve a minor adjustment if all of the criteria set forth in GHMC 17.98.056(B) are met.

D. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE DESIGNS

The planning director will review alternative design solutions to SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS, as described in GHMC 17.98.058, for single-family (detached only) and duplex dwelling building permit applications for remodel and construction as well as tenant-specific alterations. The director can approve alternative designs for such application if all of the criteria set forth in GHMC 17.98.058(B) are met.

E. EXCEPTIONS

An exception is used in those situations when a project does not meet the SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS and the applicant does not provide an alternative design solution. A request for an exception is reviewed by the design review board and the board issues a recommendation to the planning director. The DRB can recommend approval of an exception if the board finds that all of the criteria set forth in GHMC 17.98.060(D) are met.

Specific Requirements

Strict conformance to this section allows for **administrative approval**.

General Requirements

Bold underlined text represents the general requirements of each section and is used by the **design review board** to determine the intent of specific requirements.

Descriptions and Graphics

Examples, explanations and/or images that may be presented with this shaded box provide guidance to interpret general or specific requirements.

17.99.240 Natural site conditions.

Site development should be designed to reflect the natural conditions of the site, including topography and existing vegetation. The following standards will help to achieve this, and are applicable to all development.

A. Limit clearing of vacant parcels to no more than 50 percent of significant vegetation and retain vegetation in all required buffers and setbacks.

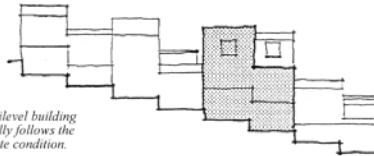
Clearing limitations apply to all vacant parcels with no approved site plan or building permit for development.

B. Retain natural vegetation on underdeveloped portions of sites with approved site plan.

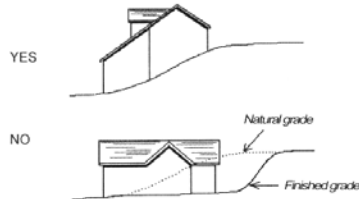
Clearing of underdeveloped portions of approved site plans is not permitted until building permits for development of those areas have been issued.

C. Maintain natural topography.

Buildings and parking lots shall be designed to fit natural slopes rather than regrading the slope to fit a particular building or parking lot design. Cuts and fills on a site shall be balanced and finished grades shall not include any retaining walls that exceed six feet. Instead, designs shall complement and take advantage of natural topography. Sloped lots may require multileveled buildings, terraced parking lots and/or lower level parking garages.



This multilevel building successfully follows the natural site condition.



Natural vegetation, together with existing views of the water and territorial views is an integral part of the harbor setting and should be preserved on both developed and vacant parcels.

Views through or framed by natural vegetation may be achieved while retaining the existing vegetation which characterizes the harbor setting.

(Ord. 1307 § 63, 2014; Ord. 1194 § 46, 2010; Ord. 1093 § 12, 2007).

17.99.040 Industrial building exemption (IBE).

A. There are numerous standards throughout this chapter that are not practical for industrial development within defined areas of the city. Accordingly, any building, structure or site that is principally used for the uses set forth in subsection B of this section is eligible for the industrial building exemptions described in subsection C of this section if the following are true:

1. The building, structure or site is not located in the city's historic district; and
2. If the building, structure or site is in the employment district (ED), one of the following must be true:
 - a. The building, structure or site is more than 800 feet from a parkway or the defined right-of-way within an enhancement corridor as described in GHMC 17.99.110 and 17.99.150, respectively; or
 - b. The building, structure or site is within 800 feet from a parkway or the defined right-of-way within an enhancement corridor and is not visible from such right-of-way; or
3. If the building, structure or site is not within the employment district (ED), one of the following must be true:
 - a. The building, structure or site is more than 800 feet from a public right-of-way; or
 - b. The building, structure or site is within 800 feet from a public right-of-way and is not visible from such right-of-way.

B. The industrial building exemption described in subsection A of this section applies only to buildings principally used for any of the following uses:

Research and development facilities;
Light assembly and warehousing;
Light manufacturing;
Distribution facilities;
Contractor's yards and related on-site offices;
Mini-storage facilities;
Service and retail uses which support on site and are ancillary to any of the above stated uses;
Auto body/detail shops.

C. Industrial building exemptions are identified by the acronym IBE. The IBE acronym will be shown at the end of any general requirement that qualifies for an industrial building exemption.

Industrial buildings and structures are exempt from the following standards of this chapter:

- Primary walkway requirements (GHMC 17.99.260);
- Secondary walkway requirements (GHMC 17.99.270);
- Location of structure near the front setback line (GHMC 17.99.300(B));
- Minimize parking in front of buildings (GHMC 17.99.330(H));
- Fencing material and height limitations (GHMC 17.99.340(A) and (C));
- Wall and roof modulations requirements (GHMC 17.99.380(A) and (B));
- Sawtooth roof form restrictions (GHMC 17.99.380(F));
- All primary structure requirements (GHMC 17.99.390);
- Application of standards to all prominent facades (GHMC 17.99.400(B));
- Solid/void ratio requirements (GHMC 17.99.410(B));
- Service and delivery orientation restrictions (GHMC 17.99.440(D));
- Bright lighting limitations on buildings (GHMC 17.99.460(C));
- Light fixture utilitarian design restrictions (GHMC 17.99.460(E));
- Siding and trim standards (GHMC 17.99.420). (Ord. 1307 § 64, 2014).

17.99.050 Application requirements.

Application requirements for design review are defined in GHMC 17.98.040. (Ord. 1093 § 13, 2007).

17.99.060 Design review applicability.

See GHMC 17.98.030.

