Form and Character Development Permit Areas

4. Form and Character Development Permit Areas

The Town of Gibsons Official Community Plan has four Form and Character Development Permit Areas:

1. Upper Gibsons Commercial (UGC) Development Permit Area;
2. Multi-Unit Residential (MUR) Development Permit Area;
3. Gibsons Landing (GL) Development Permit Area; and
4. Industrial Commercial (IC) Development Permit Area.

The four Form and Character Development Permit Areas provide a standard of quality and design for development and public realm improvements in the Town of Gibsons. DPA boundaries for the Form and Character Development Permit Areas are shown on *Map C-4*.

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines apply to all areas designated in the Form and Character Development Permit Area.

1. Professional Requirements

1. All development permit applications are encouraged to provide architectural plans prepared by a BC registered Architect, a detailed Site Plan, and a Landscape Plan prepared by a BC registered Landscape Architect.
    a. Notwithstanding the above, for minor development permit applications, the Town may, at their discretion, accept plans not prepared by a BC registered Architect or Landscape Architect.

2. Public Realm and Landscaping

1. Minimize site grading in favour of retaining natural vegetation, to the greatest extent possible.
2. Provide a quality public realm through the development of an accessible sidewalk and cycle network, and using pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, walkways, and public gathering spaces.
3. Buildings are encouraged to incorporate the following architecture, landscape design, and environmental attributes that reflect elements of the surrounding context, such as:
    a. Use of local and natural building materials, such as timber and stone, in combination with limited amounts of glass, concrete, or metal;
    b. Use both architectural and landscape features to provide a “gateway” or a distinct entrance to the site for both vehicle and active transport;
    c. Incorporate public art in plazas and other publicly accessible spaces on the property to enhance the overall open space network;

d. Incorporate Sḵwx̱uwú7mesh art, language, and culture in public realm designs;

e. Select streetscape elements, such as street furniture (benches, garbage receptacles, etc.), paving, lighting, and plant materials that reinforce local character and sense of place;

f. Provide significant landscaping adjacent to roadways and integrated within the site; and

g. Provide a clear distinction between private and public realms through subtle cues in materials, pathway edges, grade, and/or landscape design elements.

4. Landscape plantings should incorporate a variety of climate resilient trees, shrubs, and ground-cover plants, with a preference for plant materials reflective of the local environment. Locally invasive plants will not be permitted.

5. Low Impact Development techniques for stormwater management are encouraged, including:

   a. Swales; or

   b. Other landscape features that alleviate impacts of storm runoff from impervious surfaces, including:

   c. Roof and surface parking areas;

   d. Green roofs; and

   e. Permeable parking areas.

3. Building Form and Design

1. Individual architectural expression should be secondary to a building's contribution to the whole of the context or streetscape in which it is located.

2. Building walls facing a street must provide an articulated facade using two or more design techniques or features to minimize the perception of massing, eliminate large blank walls, provide visual interest, and enhance the appearance of the building. Design techniques or features may include:

   a. Variations in rooflines;

   b. Vertical or horizontal building wall projections or recessions;

   c. Visual breaks of Building facades into smaller sections;

   d. Use of a combination of finishing materials; and

   e. Other similar techniques or features.

3. Applicants are encouraged to design and construct new buildings with architectural styles, landscape design, and natural building materials that are well-suited to the pacific

northwestern climate, which complement the surrounding natural environment. Some options for building materials include, but are not limited to:

a. Natural and standard local wall materials;

b. Materials with a wood-like appearance;

c. Metal;

d. Steel;

e. Concrete and cement; and

f. Local Stone.

4. Site design, including Site Plans, Elevation Plans, and Landscape Plans, must identify proposed transitions from façade to public realm, and address the needs of walkers, transit patrons, cyclists, and people with various mobility needs, including:

    a. Appropriate screening and / or buffering of buildings and parking areas from neighbouring uses;

    b. Active travel circulation features; and

    c. Direct, convenient, and accessible connections between the building entrance and neighbouring pedestrian pathways, such as sidewalks and / or crosswalks.

5. Buildings are encouraged to use fire-resistant building materials, including fire-resistant roofing materials and composite wood or non-wood products with the appearance of traditional wood shakes, such as:

    a. Concrete/cementitious tiles;

    b. Clay tiles;

    c. Metal roofing;

    d. Asphalt shingles;

    e. Synthetic slates; and

    f. Green roofs with green or garden space are permitted on flat roofs.

6. Buildings are encouraged to consider opportunities for the use of sustainable finishing materials and design to the extent possible, including:

    a. Recycled materials or materials with a high-recycled content;

    b. Concrete with at least 25% fly ash or slag;

    c. Wood products certified CSA Sustainable Forest Management Standard or equivalent;

    d. Integrate passive solar design into architecture and landscape design;

e. Energy efficient design and internal infrastructure including structural supports for future solar panels;

f. An emphasis on natural light through the significant glazing and orientation of buildings to views and/or other significant natural features;

g. To the extent possible, identify any incorporated standards such as Solar Ready and LEED;

h. Use of healthy, durable building materials to optimize the life-span of buildings; and

i. Architecture and landscape design that integrates water conservation and rainwater management, including permeable surfaces in outdoor spaces.

7. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate environmentally sustainable elements in the exterior features of the building and the landscape design. This may be achieved by:

    a. Buildings and roadways sited to retain existing trees, vegetation, and other important natural features;

    b. Incorporation of visible "green" landscaping features such as rain gardens, infiltration trenches, green walls roofs, and drought-tolerant native plants; and

    c. Incorporation of visible "green" building features and materials such as skylights, rain barrels, local wood and stone, solar panels, recycled exterior materials, and exterior elements for window shading.

8. Development should be designed and lit in a manner that addresses Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, such as:

    a. Clearly defined boundaries including private, semi-private, and public space;

    b. The ability to provide natural surveillance through "eyes on the street" from indoor and outdoor spaces;

    c. Providing secure access points including gates, lighting, and locks to areas such as parkades that are not afforded sufficient security through lighting and eyes on the street;

    d. Landscape design that provides clear sight lines and lighting, and avoids opportunities for concealment; and

    e. Pedestrian pathways and parking lots should be sufficiently lit to ensure pedestrian comfort and security.

9. Support service facilities and structures such as loading bays, refuse containers and storage areas, should be located and screened with walls, fencing, hedging, planting, other screening materials or a combination of these materials to minimize visibility from public areas.

10. General modification of standardized corporate or franchise building designs or features may be required in the event of conflict with these design guidelines.

4. Lighting

1. Gentle, indirect illumination of building facades, walkways, and signage is encouraged. Exterior and interior night lighting should be subtle and use neutral-toned bulbs, contributing to a visually harmonious and inviting atmosphere across the neighbourhood.
2. Design lighting to minimize light spill, glare, and sky glow by using non-glare full cutoff fixtures aligning with Dark Sky principles.
3. Lighting should be provided at the main entries to commercial and multi-unit residential buildings.
4. Buildings are encouraged to be oriented to maximize solar exposure while minimizing shadow impacts on adjacent buildings and common areas.
5. External lighting for fascia and wall signs should be directed downward and use lighting fixtures such as 'goose neck' style. All wiring and conduits are to be concealed.

5. Signage

1. Design of signage is encouraged to comply with the following guidelines:
    a. All signs should be creative and architecturally coordinated with the overall design of buildings and landscaping;
    b. Signs should be made from durable materials and sustainable materials to the extent possible. Accommodation will be made for signs made by local artists;
    c. Changeable illuminated copy signs are discouraged, except where such signage is a functional requirement of the business activity (i.e., movie theatres, gas stations);
    d. Internally lit signage (backlit box), and fluorescent, neon, and coloured lighting are discouraged, with the exception of internally illuminated channel lettering;
    e. Freestanding signs should be restricted to a maximum height of 4.5 m above grade.
2. Ornamental pediments, which may contain signage, are encouraged on commercial buildings and at the main building entrances of multi-unit residential buildings.
3. Multi-unit commercial buildings are encouraged to have an attractive, simple, single-entry sign rather than multi-tenant signs which create a cluttered appearance.

6. Parking

1. Where on-site parking is provided, it should not visually dominate a development. Parking areas should incorporate significant landscaped areas within the lot. A landscape bed should be placed between every 10 parking stalls in a row.

Upper Gibsons Commercial Development Permit Area

2. UPPER GIBSONS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA (UGC)

1. Purpose

The Upper Gibsons Commercial Development Permit Area is applied to lands designated as Mixed-Use Commercial in the OCP. The intent of this DPA is to ensure a high-quality appearance of commercial development in Upper Gibsons for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses. The Upper Gibsons Commercial DPA is designated under Section 488(1)(f) of the LGA for form and character of commercial development.

2. Area

This area is applied to lands designated as Mixed-Use Commercial in the Upper Gibsons, primarily located along the Sunshine Coast Highway and Gibsons Way, and in the Gospel Rock commercial node, as shown on *Map C-4*.

3. Justification

A significant amount of commercial development in Gibsons is located along the highway and is highly visible to the traveling public. The general appearance of this commercial development is important for the economic well-being of Gibsons. Council has designated this Development Permit Area to ensure a high quality of development in Upper Gibsons.

4. Guidelines

The transition between the highway and a building or parking lot should attempt to reduce the apparent width of the street, encourage a pedestrian-friendly environment, and incorporate greenspace and public realm improvements to reduce the impact of traffic. This can be achieved by the application of the following guidelines.

1. Public Realm

1. Building design and configurations should provide a variety of textures and details to create visual interest and activate streets and pedestrian-oriented spaces (*Image 1*).
2. Buildings and structures should be pedestrian oriented at the ground level. This can be achieved by:
    a. An emphasis on the fenestration (the arrangement and positioning of windows);

Image 1. Visually interesting pedestrian-oriented public spaces.

b. Providing architectural emphasis, awnings, or step-backs at the first or second storey to impart a pedestrian-**scale** to building frontages; and

c. Inclusion of weather protection on buildings along pedestrian routes at maximum 3.5 m height above finished grade through the use of awnings, arcades, and canopies that are integral with the building form.

3. Onsite landscaping should be integrated with a frontage design that includes sidewalks on each side of the street. Pedestrian routes should be separated from the highway edge by a planting strip of no less than 1.5 metres, wherever possible.

4. Use both architectural and landscape features to provide a "gateway" or distinct entrance to the site for both vehicles and pedestrians.

5. Provide pedestrian amenities within the 3.0 metre transition zone between the sidewalk and the building or parking edge such as benches, bike parking, shelters, alcoves, seating, trellises, arbors, and walkways to the adjacent businesses (*Image 2*).

6. A minimum 3.0 metre planted edge between a development and the street should be established.

Image 2. Bike parking and shelter at the front entrance of buildings.

7. Effective transitions between commercial areas and adjacent residential properties can be achieved using:

a. Fencing, combined with a broad area of landscape plantings (e.g., trees, shrubs);

b. Dense shrub plantings or hedges capable of impeding travel and buffering views through to adjacent properties.

c. A transition zone to complement the scale of the development, no less than 2.0 metres in width; for buildings over 3 storeys, locate parking, open spaces, or lower stepped rooflines next to adjacent low density residential land uses wherever possible;

d. Careful positioning of lighting, parking, and access points to minimize impacts on adjacent properties.

2. Building Form and Design

To encourage varied building forms and to avoid the creation of a commercial strip image, the following guidelines respecting massing and scale shall apply:

1. Primary entries should be clearly visible and accessible from the street and sidewalk.
2. Varied building forms are encouraged. Long, single story buildings should incorporate elements that add vertical definition such as sloped roofs or façade treatments such as fascia or awnings.
3. Small commercial frontages should be provided within commercial retail bays creating a fine-grained pattern of shops, with a larger retailer being required to make use of external bay articulation to break up the massing of façade elements and contribute to the perception of a rhythm of smaller retail bays.
4. Discourage large areas of blank wall on a face with a pedestrian or residential area orientation.
5. Wall lines should be offset and modulated along the building elevation to create visual interest along the building section.
6. Stepping down of rooflines should be incorporated to vary height in the roofscapes of buildings and reduce shadows.
7. On sloped sites, building forms should gradually step down to follow the slope of the site.
8. Include clearly defined entrances for people and vehicles.
9. Where commercial development incorporates residential or multi-unit use on upper floors, the following design consideration should be used to ensure adjacent properties are not faced with a wall:
    a. Graded transition in the building height using step-backs; and
    b. When unavoidable, screen blank walls with landscaping or materials that enhance the public realm.

3. Siting of Building and Structures

1. Buildings shall be sited near the front of a parcel with the building's front face and main access facing the street.
2. To reduce the impact of the large parking areas associated with commercial uses, reduce the apparent width of the fronting street, and create visual interest and distinct and visible access points for pedestrians, the following guidelines respecting the placement of buildings shall apply:
    a. Buildings should be placed with the entrance to the buildings facing the street (Gibsons Way, North Road, or the access road);

b. The buildings or structures should be used to reinforce the definition of street corners;

c. Buildings on corner sites should have entrances, landscaping, and / or materials that enhance the public realm facing both streets;

d. Natural landscape features such as significant tree stands or rocks should be retained and incorporated into site development plans when feasible; and

e. Buildings shall be designed to frame rather than obstruct public views of the ocean, Mount Elphinstone, and the Coast Mountains.

4. Parking

1. Parking shall be located at the rear or side of buildings rather than the front.
2. Parking should not visually dominate development. Parking areas should be integrated into developments by incorporating significant landscaping, coordination of outdoor elements, and linking buildings with parking by distinctively paved walkways.
3. Parking lots should have defined pedestrian crossings, such as marked crosswalks and / or raised walkways connecting across the site and leading to principal entrances.
4. Bicycle parking for short term use is to be conveniently and visibly located adjacent to the main entrance to the building.
5. Parking lots shall be paved and shall include landscaped areas within the lot. No more than 10 parking stalls in a row should be allowed without a landscaped island or other landscape feature.
6. Low, dense screening of street fronting stalls is required. This can be achieved using landscape materials or a combination of landscape features which run the length of the parking area.
7. Support service facilities and structures such as loading bays, garbage, organics and recycling receptacles, storage areas, and utility services should be located where visibility from public areas is minimized and screened with walls, fencing, hedging, planting, or other screening materials.