

# 18.606 Building Design

## Part 6 Development Standards

### Contents

- 18.606 Building Design .....1
- Part 6 Development Standards .....1
  - Chapter 18.606 Building Design .....1
  - Article I: Purpose .....1
    - 18.606.010 Purpose and Intent..... 1
    - 18.606.020 Applicability ..... 2
    - 18.606.030 Exceptions ..... 3
  - Article II: Building Design Standards Applicable to All Uses .....3
    - 18.606.040 Building Design ..... 3
    - 18.606.050 Building Massing and Articulation Design ..... 5
    - 18.606.060 Rooftops ..... 6
    - 18.606.070 Weather Protection..... 7
    - 18.606.080 Ground-Level Transparency ..... 8
  - Article III: Standards for Specific Uses .....10
    - 18.606.090 Multi-family Building Massing Design ..... 10
    - 18.606.100 Multi-family Building Setback Design..... 11
    - 18.606.110 Retail, Hotel, & Commercial Building Setback Design..... 11
  - Article IV: Administration .....12
    - 18.606.120 Allowed Deviations to this Chapter ..... 12

## Chapter 18.606 Building Design

### Article I: Purpose

#### 18.606.010 Purpose and Intent.

**i** The Purpose and Intent section was adapted from CIDDS 14.1, Building Design, Intent.

- A. The intent of this chapter is to establish building design standards that:
  - 1. Create a vibrant, livable, pedestrian friendly, and sustainable built environment through buildings designed to frame and engage the public realm, while maintaining and enhancing existing building uses and designs and views to nature;

2. Ensure internal and external views and solar access are considered when locating taller buildings. This includes ensuring sunlight at street level and in Community and Amenity Spaces by thoughtfully locating buildings;
3. Ensure that buildings engage with adjacent facilities and that they do not have a "back sides" through design and articulation;
4. Encourage and enforce a safe and healthy environment for benefit of the public welfare;
5. Encourage building designs that accommodates many uses so they may evolve over time;
6. Reduce heat island impacts by allowing for green space and tree canopy between buildings; and
7. Increase passive solar to reduce energy use.

**i** The following intent standard adapted from a purpose statement in Olde Town MF, Articulation and Overall Massing/Bulk Of Buildings. Additional language adds consistency with Climate Action Pla

B. The Multi-family building design standards intend to break up the mass of buildings in creative ways.

**i** The following intent statement adapted from Olde Town MF, Articulation and Overall Massing/Bulk Of Buildings Intent. Language was edited for brevity.

**i** The following intent statement was adapted from the Urban Design Manual, UD.2.3.2.1, Setbacks - Ground Floor, Multifamily.

1. Balance street-level activation with visual separation and privacy for ground-floor multi-family units that have minimal setbacks from streets, through-block passages, or other public rights-of-way while increasing physical interaction between ground floor multi-family units and the public realm.

**i** The following intent was adapted from 2.3.4.2 Ground Floor Transparency, Multifamily; commercial, service

C. The Retail and Commercial building design standards intend to:

**i** Following intent statement adapted from UD.2.3.2.2, Setbacks - GF Retail, Hotel, & Commercial

1. Activate transitions into storefronts, hotel lobbies, and other commercial spaces that have minimal setbacks from streets, through-block passages, or other public rights-of-way; and

**i** The following intent statements adapted from Ground Floor Transparency, Retail and 2.3.4.2 Ground Floor Transparency, and a "should" statement from CIDDS 14.4, Ground Floor Details.

2. Increase visual and physical interaction between ground-floor retail uses and the public realm through adequate window and door openings. Retail uses face circulation facilities and use large street level windows that allow pedestrians to see activity within shops.

## 18.606.020 Applicability

A. Unless exempt by 18.606.030, this chapter applies citywide to development, redevelopment, and subdivisions.

## 18.606.030 Exceptions

- A. The chapter does not apply to the following:
  - 1. Single family dwelling units, except those located in the Single Family-Duplex zone.
  - 2. Temporary uses and structures
  - 3. Buildings and sites designated as landmarks by the Historic Preservation Commission.

## Article II: Building Design Standards Applicable to All Uses

### 18.606.040 Building Design

- A. The following standards provide a baseline for building design in the City of Issaquah. However, Issaquah's neighborhoods are not all the same. Additional building design standards may apply in Issaquah's overlays areas, which are addressed in Part 7, Neighborhood Overlays.

**i** These general standards were adapted from CIDDS 14.2, Building Design Standards, General Standards.

- B. Primary building entrances must face and be accessible from Transportation Facilities in order to engage the public realm, to bring visual interest, variation, and intimacy to the streetscape, while maintaining the pedestrian through-route. Other, nonprimary, building entrances may also be accessed from secondary or non-pedestrian oriented Transportation Facilities or Parking Lots. Activity areas in the right-of-way must comply with IMC 18.602 Circulation Facilities.
- C. Each primary building entrance must have weather protection and highlight the presence of the entrance to pedestrians through the use of architectural treatments such as modulation and articulation changes in the street wall or building façade, and lighting. Primary pedestrian entrances must be visually more prominent than secondary entrances.
- D. For buildings that have more than one frontage along a Transportation Facility, each frontage must receive individual and detailed ground level treatment to complement the designated pedestrian character.
- E. Blank walls longer than 30 linear feet are not allowed except facing alleys.
  - 1. General design should appear to have continuity on all sides and no "back side".
  - 2. If windows and doors are not present, blank wall treatment is required. Treatment methods include the following, but are not limited to at least two of the following:
    - a. Transparent windows, doors or other features that allow visibility to the interior of the building;
    - b. Vertical trellis with climbing vines or plant materials to obscure or screen a minimum of 60% of the wall's surface;
    - c. Decorative tile, cornices, or masonry;
    - d. Artwork (mosaic, mural, sculpture, etc.) on at least 25% of the blank wall surface;
    - e. Discernable change in building materials, patterns, or color variation every 15 horizontal feet and extending 60% of the vertical height of the adjacent building story; or
    - f. Special building details that add visual interest at a pedestrian scale. Please see 18.606.060 and 18.606.110 for more details.

**i** The following standard is from CIDDS 10.9, Landscaping

3. If landscape is present, it must enhance the blank wall and pedestrian experience as well as reduce the perceived scale.
  - a. Landscape shall be provided in a manner that in combination with other design features.
  - b. Landscaping must be species that will not cause damage to hard surfaces over time;
  - c. Landscape beds/boxes, raised planters, and/or green ways shall count towards landscaping.
- F. Outdoor informal gathering areas and opportunities for social interaction must be located adjacent to the façade. The required area will be based on requirements for outdoor spaces for new and redevelopment. Please see IMC 18.612 Community and Amenity Spaces for additional requirements.

**i** Following adapted from UD 1.3.2, Contrast

- G. Numerous and separated, rather than consolidated, entrances must be used such as regular use of individual entrances to businesses and residences. Entrances must be reinforced with the use of traditional “main street” design and repeated architectural elements such as windows, weather protection, pedestrian oriented signage, archways, doors, accent lights and piers, columns, or pilasters.
- H. Landscaping including evergreen plantings to maintain year-round interest, must be located between the property line and the building to soften hardscape spaces and contribute to the Green Necklace. Plantings may be in at-grade or raised planters, containers, window box planters, upon trellises, etc. Where the building is located at the property line, plantings may be located in building bays such as required in 18.606.060.D. Plantings may also extend onto the adjacent right-of-way. Please see the Sidewalk Use Design Standards and Guidelines under IMC 12.05 Sidewalk Use District for requirements.
- I. In commercial or mixed-use zones that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), at least two of the following design elements must be incorporated into building design to best enhance the ground level details.
  1. Clerestories over storefront windows,
  2. Projecting window sills,
  3. Medallions,
  4. Benches and seat walls along 25% of the length of the façade,
  5. Decorative brick, tile or stone work on the ground floor façade
- J. Design of buildings must reinforce a pedestrian-friendly environment using the following techniques.
  1. In commercial and mixed use zones, the ground floor must be designed to incorporate active, visible uses (e.g. retail) or other visible uses that engage the pedestrian (e.g. residences, meeting rooms, lobbies, live/work). Where office and other uses require ground floor privacy, then a combination of landscaping, low walls, fencing and other built elements should create layers, and differing textures to define these semi-private areas while maintaining a pedestrian friendly environment.
  2. Where gates or fences are desired or required, an open design must be used to allow social interaction. Delineate semi-public and semi-private space from public areas with railings or fences no more than three feet tall (unless fall protection is required), planters, or overhead elements.

## 18.606.050 Building Massing and Articulation Design

**i** This section was adapted from CIDDS 14.3, Building Mass and Design. CIDDS 14.3.A standards, 1,2, and 4, which discuss setbacks of building heights over 3 stories, breaking buildings into smaller buildings, and buildings with footprints greater than 45,000 sq ft were removed based on staff feedback and conflict with UD standards.

- A. This section provides design standards for the massing and articulation standards provided in 18.404, Form and Intensity. These standards apply to all buildings, except where architectural styles of a specific neighborhood subarea or overlay provide different guidance.
- B. Step back upper portions of buildings through changes in building materials with articulation and modulation that differs from the first three floors, per base and building height requirements in IMC 18.404.090 through 18.404.120, Form and Intensity Standards Tables.

**i** The following adapts code from UD.2.3.1, Building Edge. An "inappropriate" standard was removed due to lack of ability to enforce: "Inactive open spaces along the street."

- 1. Upper floors must step back between five and 20 feet must be in accordance with IMC 18.604.040.G.1.b Building Orientation to Natural Areas, under the following circumstances:
  - a. For buildings taller than five floors, step back shall begin by the sixth floor but may begin as low as the third floor above fifth floor (step back minimum five feet, maximum 20 feet).
  - b. For buildings with fewer than six floors, a minimum of the first two floors shall be built at the street edge.

**i** The following standard was added based on Lucy's Staff Observation on 11/19/2021. Update: deleted due to 1.a above which was worked out with the AMS and Gene Paul for the TOD project to address the same concern. Not adopted yet. Based on Kirkland or Redmond.

- 2. Step backs must incorporate terraces and usable outdoor space.
- 3. Buildings with four or fewer floors may not incorporate more than one upper floor step back
- C. Buildings must provide surface relief, depth, and shadows to the façade by:
  - 1. Recessing at least 18-inches deep or projecting elements of the façade, especially windows;
  - 2. Changing materials, color, or height; or
  - 3. Vary within the build-to line for horizontal facades longer than 30'.
- D. Commercial and retail structures must abut the sidewalk to create the presence of a streetwall. A setback from the sidewalk will only be considered if the use and/or adjacent uses will use the setback area as active space, specific design elements, or for security purposes (e.g. outdoor seating for a restaurant or café, retail display area, entry court, seating, fountain, kiosk, etc.). If a setback is allowed, use of design elements that create and/or maintain a strong connection to the street and support a pedestrian friendly environment shall be provided.
  - 1. If a setback is allowed, it should be the minimum necessary to provide the active space and/or design element needed for the specific use.
  - 2. An approved setback for commercial and retail proposals shall be no greater than 10-feet.

- E. To increase a building's architectural detail and level of interest, in areas that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), windows must be:
  1. Divided light windows;
  2. Operable;
  3. Trimmed around framed openings; and
  4. Recessed or projecting from the building façade and not flush.
- F. In areas that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), distinguish a building base, middle and top through techniques such as setting back buildings with heights over three stories or varying character, materials, color, or height.
- G. To preserve views of the forested hillsides of Tiger, Squak, and Cougar Mountains and Mt. Rainier, floors above the Mid-Rise level for High-Rise buildings must be horizontally separated from other High-Rise buildings by 110 feet. Low-Rise, Mid-Rise, and High-Rise building locations may be adjusted as determined by the Director to ensure preservation of these view corridors.
- H. In areas that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), building corners adjacent to the public realm must include added detail, design, and building form, or conversely cutting away the corner for a special entry, gathering spot, café seating, sidewalk vending, art, a signature fountain, or other special element.

## 18.606.060 Rooftops

**i** This section was adapted from CIDDS 14.6 Roofs and Parapets.

- A. This section outlines the requirements and regulates the development of rooftops that may be used as active amenities, such as for community gardens, recreation, and useable courtyards, through the following standards.
- B. Where active uses cannot be placed on rooftops, use them for passive activities, such as green roofs to partially address stormwater, solar panels, art and/or design to make them visually interesting, as well as a means to allow access to light and air for adjacent occupied space.
- C. In areas that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), nonresidential buildings must have parapets and projecting cornices to create a prominent edge when viewed against the sky. Residential uses may use parapets and projecting cornices or sloping roofs consistent with the building design
- D. Parapets may not be excessively tall and dominate the façade; they may be used to highlight focal points of the building. Parapets may not appear as flat and obviously false extensions of building wall sections, but rather appear as distinct building masses and extend into the depth of the building.
- E. Parapets may not exceed 25% of the height of the supporting wall, as measured from grade to the exterior roof surface and may not exceed eight feet in height.
- F. Where roof shape and penthouse functions are integrated into the overall building design, one of the following design elements must be used:

1. Active rooftop uses. See 18.612.100, Rooftop Amenities.
  2. Green roofs that reduce storm water runoff, or
  3. Parapet walls.
- G. In areas that do not have detailed architectural styles (such as Central Issaquah or Olde Town's Single-Family/Duplex) or an active Architectural Review Committee (Issaquah Highlands and Talus), sloped roofs must have pitched roofs with a minimum slope of 4:12. Large roofs that extend longer than 60 feet must have a change in form such as a change in height, pitch, orientation, or other changes in form at a spacing to break up the massiveness of a continuous, uninterrupted sloping roof.
- H. Mechanical, electrical, and communication equipment, satellite dishes, Utilities, infrastructure housing, HVAC, except renewable energy appurtenances, must be screened from views above and at ground level, surrounding streets and surrounding buildings. The devices must be screened in a method that is integrated with the architectural character of the building. Where the equipment is contained in a plain box, or self-screened, the roof mounted equipment will match the color of the roof to minimize visual impacts when equipment is visible from higher elevations nearby.
- I. Cell phone towers and related equipment may be located on rooftops but must be located toward the center of the roof to minimize ground level and surrounding street views as much as possible. The Director may require structure design or screening methods to integrate the equipment with the development design.
- J. Equipment that is incorporated into a rooftop terrace or garden must ensure screening of large equipment with architectural elements and/or landscaping to include the top and all sides. At maturity, the plant screening must be at least the height of the equipment being screened.

## 18.606.070 Weather Protection

**i** This section combines the standards from CIDDS 14.5 Weather Protection and UD.2.3.5, Weather Protection. Standard A was adapted from UD 2.3.5

- A. Awnings and canopies are required along the ground floor of non-residential and multi-family buildings to protect pedestrians and outdoor seating areas from rain and snow. The design of awnings and canopies must be an integral component of the building facade and architecturally complement the architecture. Awnings must be proportionate to the building and sidewalks, and not so large as to impact street trees, light fixtures, or other street furniture.

**i** The following standards are adapted from CIDDS 14.5, Weather Protection.

- B. Weather protection is required over all entrances and shall be provided on no less than 75% of the building façade length, where the building is located at the property line, or where the sidewalk is directly adjacent to the building.

**i** The following standards are adapted from CIDDS 14.5, Weather Protection.

- C. Appropriate weather protection coverage is required:
1. Weather protection associated with non-residential buildings must be at least six feet in depth and have at least eight feet clearance beginning at the average finished grade, and up to protection 12 feet above the sidewalk which extends at least eight feet over the sidewalk.

2. Weather protection over building entrances for residential uses must be at least four feet deep and four feet wide.
- D. The heights of weather protection must be compatible with directly adjacent buildings. The location of street trees and the edge of the driving surface may require adjustments to these dimensions. In all cases, the height and depth of the weather protection must prioritize providing protection to the pedestrian over architectural enhancement.

**i** Acceptable weather protection material standards are combined from both CIDDS and UD standards on Weather Protection.

- E. Acceptable weather protection materials include:
1. Fabric awnings, including canvas or retractable awnings, made out of fire-retardant material;
  2. Horizontal metal canopies with transom or clerestory windows above,
  3. Simple, planar forms resembling flat or shed roofs, or
  4. Glazed canopies.

**i** The following standards adapted from "Inappropriate" standards under UD.2.3.5, Weather Protection

- F. Weather protection may not be:
1. Made of vinyl fabrics in Central Issaquah or Issaquah Highlands subareas;
  2. Backlit through internal lighting.
  3. Arched, circular, or in rounded dome forms in Central Issaquah.

**i** The following standard was reworded to add specificity to the vague, existing standard of "other unintended uses"

4. Used primarily for non-pedestrian uses. For example, weather protection for pots, and retail displays and does not protect pedestrian facilities or outdoor seating.

## **18.606.080 Ground-Level Transparency**

**i** This section combines UD 2.3.4.1, Ground Floor Transparency, Retail and 2.3.4.2 Ground Floor Transparency, Multi-family; commercial, service

- A. Transparency standards intend to ensure active ground floor street uses for non-residential and multi-family developments. The transparency percentage is measured for each facade facing a public space and must include the linear five feet above the building's first finished-floor height. Transparent surfaces include windows and transparent or glass doors.



Figure 18.606.100.A.1 Ground Floor Transparency Along a Building Frontage [Image: Crandall Arambula]



- B. Window glazing must be clear and transmit visible daylight.
- C. Reflective glass, coatings or glazes may not be used. Transparent surfaces may not use glazing that is blue/green, dark tinted, or other opaque materials or treatments. This includes window films and walls placed behind windows.

**i** The following standard was migrated from CIDDS 14.4, Ground Level Details

- D. Multi-Family and Commercial Use must have:
  - 1. 40% ground floor façade transparency in buildings that front streets, through-block passages, natural areas, or publicly accessible open space.
- E. Retail Use Standards
  - 1. 70% ground floor façade transparency is required for retail uses that front streets, through-block passages, a natural area, or publicly accessible open space;
  - 2. Applied window signs must be less than 10% of any single opening; and
  - 3. Transparent surfaces may not use glazing that is blue/green, dark tinted, or other opaque materials or treatments. This includes window films and walls placed behind windows.

**i** Following standard, subsection F., was adapted from CBD Olde Town Design Standards on Ground Floor Transparency

## Article III: Standards for Specific Uses

### 18.606.090 Multi-family Building Massing Design

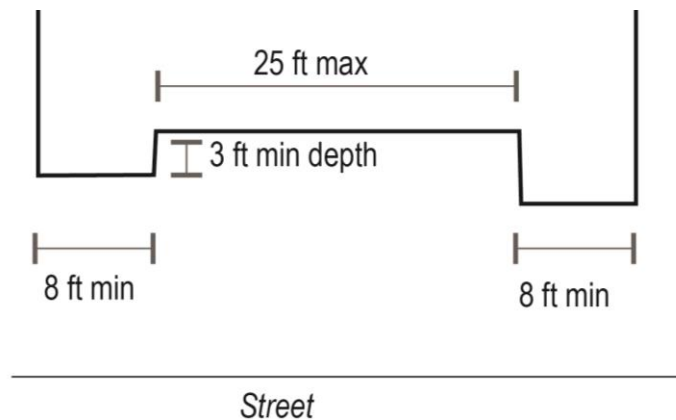
**i** This section was adapted from text from Olde Town MF Standards, Articulation and Overall Massing/Bulk Of Buildings. Step back requirement removed based on city staff input.

**i** Façade modulation standards rewritten for clarity. Supplemental graphic may be helpful.

**i** Following standard new in order to address differences across the architectural / neighborhood styles provided in the Central Architectural Manual, which may differ.

- A. These standards apply to all multi-family buildings, except where architectural styles of a specific neighborhood subarea or overlay provide different guidance except where architectural styles of a specific neighborhood subarea or overlay provide different guidance, such as Central Issaquah, Issaquah Highlands, and Talus subareas.
- B. Street-facing façades must project or be recessed from abutting façade planes by a minimum depth of three feet for a minimum width of eight feet and maximum width of 25 feet.

**Figure 18.606.110.A.1 Multi-Family Building Modulation**



- C. Modulation must extend to the roof, except where there are balconies.
- D. Buildings must include articulation along the façades facing and visible from public rights-of way.
- E. Horizontal façades longer than 30 feet must be articulated into smaller units using at least two of the following elements:
  - 1. Distinctive roof forms;
  - 2. Changes in materials;
  - 3. Window patterns; and/or
  - 4. Color differentiation.

## 18.606.100 Multi-family Building Setback Design

- i** The following standard was adapted from the Urban Design Manual, UD.2.3.2.1, Setbacks - Ground Floor Multifamily.
- i** Standards listed as inappropriate have been incorporated into the intent of this chapter for Multi-Family, or rewritten to be prescriptive

### A. Where buildings have a zero setback:

1. Establish finished floor elevations at a minimum 18 inches above street level with recessed entries (maximum four feet depth) oriented to stoops, patios, terraces, or porches for each individual entry if required;
2. Window openings must be at least six feet above sidewalk.

**Figure 18.606.120.A.3 Windows positioned Six Feet Above the Sidewalk [Image: Crandall Arambula]**



### B. Where buildings have a setback up to 10 feet:

1. Incorporate landscaping within the setback;
2. Provide entries at-grade or raised above the sidewalk;
3. Private porches or patios must be separated with hedges, steps, low walls, or low fences.

## 18.606.110 Retail, Hotel, & Commercial Building Setback Design

- i** UD.2.3.2.2, Setbacks - Ground Floor Retail, Hotel, & Commercial
- i** New intent statement combines existing Objective and Description language

### A. Where buildings have a zero setback:

1. Recess windows and facades a maximum of 1.5 feet from the build-to line to accommodate columns or other architectural elements that engage the pedestrian and create facade interest

2. Entry areas and doorways must be recessed a maximum of four feet to provide a transition into storefronts

**i** Following graphic migrated from UD Manual, UD.2.3.2.2 on Setbacks for Ground Floor Retail, Hotel, and Commercial Uses.

**Figure 18.606.110.A.3 Recessed Entries and Windows for Zero Setbacks [Image: Crandall Arambula]**



- B. Where buildings have a setback up to 10 feet:
  1. Accommodate outdoor seating, dining, and/or retail display with primarily paved areas (may include limited landscaping in the form of at grade or raised planters or landscape pots).
- C. Buildings must engage with the street by including design and amenity elements. These may include outdoor seating, plantings or landscape elements, or pavers.
- D. Ground level retail and entrance lobby uses located on a Pedestrian Oriented Transportation Facility must have a first-floor height of at least 15 feet. Office uses and other uses not located on a Pedestrian Oriented Transportation Facility may have lower first floor heights as determined by the Director in accordance with IMC 18.200 Permits and Procedures.

## Article IV: Administration

### 18.606.120 Allowed Deviations to this Chapter

- A. Exceptions from this chapter must be requested according to the appropriate permit process in IMC 18.200 Permits and Procedures. Any proposal to deviate that does not satisfy the following conditions must apply for a Variance, also according to IMC 18.200, Permits and Procedures. Allowed deviations from this chapter:

**i** The following deviation was added based on a CIDD standard in 14.4 on Ground Level Details, which intends to provide flexibility for privacy purposes

1. Window transparency percentage standards may be adjusted by 10 percentage points when the security and privacy requirements of the tenant or owner need to be balanced with the flows of the Circulation Facility.