



Heart of the Falls Neighborhood Revitalization



Design Guidelines



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

Introduction

Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Design Guidelines are an important tool for revitalizing and improving neighborhoods. In addition to the City's use of NEZ Design Guidelines to determine whether NEZ incentives will be awarded to projects, the guidelines are intended to be a resource for NEZ applicants, designers, architects, and City design reviewers.

These Guidelines are not intended to be a design instruction manual. Each new development project seeking NEZ benefits should have competent designers who are well-versed in such matters. This document is intended to address specific neighborhood concerns, provide clear guidance on desired design features of new development, and lay the groundwork for positive communication regarding applications.

Properly applied, the Central Wichita Falls Neighborhood Revitalization NEZ Design Guidelines will guide and inspire each applicant to embrace neighborhood compatibility as a positive contribution to community revitalization. Adherence to the principles embodied in the NEZ Design Guidelines will improve outcomes while also enhancing each individual development project.

Why NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines?

NEZ Design Guidelines are created to help conserve the original neighborhood's most valuable design characteristics while facilitating new development that supports and improves the existing neighborhood.

The Central Wichita Falls Neighborhood Revitalization NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are based on the following neighborhood design principles:

- The neighborhood is a unique area with its own personality and borders. It can be likened to an open-air space where the community thrives. It encompasses the streets, trees, setbacks, and overall street layout, as well as the distinctive architectural features of the original buildings that give it its identity. This includes the arrangement of driveways, sidewalks, garages, porches, building styles, architectural details, and green spaces.
- Buildings are the primary elements in the neighborhood, playing a crucial role in shaping its identity. When original structures set the neighborhood's character, new constructions and extensions should complement and reinforce that character.
- The neighborhood's architectural identity is shaped by the diversity of its buildings. Despite the varied architectural styles, a common identity emerges through shared patterns among the most exemplary structures. These patterns manifest in similarities in mass, scale, complexity of form, and how buildings relate to the street and each other. The essence of the neighborhood is encapsulated by the original buildings that established these patterns, highlighting the importance of consistent elements in defining the character of an area.
- Like community elders, the neighborhood's older buildings and formative elements hold great value for the community. They provide insight into our past, define our roots, and connect us to our culture, deserving respect and emulation.



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Applying NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines

The chart below identifies key steps in submitting and reviewing an application for NEZ incentives. To obtain NEZ incentives, each applicant must review the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines prior to starting project design and refer to design guidelines during the design process. Submitted projects are evaluated against the design guidelines to determine if the projects can receive NEZ incentives. The design guidelines are intended to shape the project design. Early design guidelines review can reduce the processing time for the NEZ application.

Because NEZ applications require construction-level drawings, it is recommended that applicants submit schematic designs for preliminary evaluation before submitting a final application. Design adjustments may arise from the NEZ Design Review, and it is usually more efficient and cost-effective to incorporate those adjustments during schematic design rather than after construction drawings are complete.

NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines Flow Chart

STEP 1 – Research & Design

Review the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines before starting project design and refer to the Design Guidelines during the design process.

STEP 2 – Application

Submit a complete NEZ application with required attachments, including a site plan, floor plan, and elevations of eligible rehab items to Development Services.

STEP 3 – NEZ Design Review

Application packets are sent to Planning Department staff to review the project design based on the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines. If necessary, changes are recommended to ensure the consistency of the project with the guidelines.

STEP 4 – Staff Recommendations

Planning staff sends public notices to the City Council members and registered neighborhood

STEP 5 – Decision

A Designated City staff member decides whether to approve or deny NEZ incentives based on program requirements, including a design review of eligible rehab items.



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

1. ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Construction of any new structures or rehabilitation of existing structures shall be done in such a way as to maximize energy efficiency while maintaining the neighborhood's character.

2. SETBACKS

New construction and additions should include front setbacks that are consistent with the neighborhood pattern. For setback requirements, refer to the City of Wichita Falls Zoning Ordinance.

3. ADDITIONS TO EXISTING STRUCTURES

A. Preservation of the Original Building

- a. All character-defining features on exterior façades that are visible from the public right-of-way (see City Zoning Ordinance Definitions) shall make the best effort to remain intact.
- b. Retain as much of the historic building fabric as possible in the construction of the addition.
- c. Do not partially demolish exterior walls that are visible from the public right-of-way to accommodate an addition

B. Location & Height

Locate additions as inconspicuously as possible. Consider the effect that the addition will have on the existing and neighboring buildings. Large additions may be constructed as separate buildings and connected to the existing building with a linking element such as a breezeway.

- a. Locate all additions toward the rear of the building.
 - i. Never locate an addition flush with the original front façade or projecting beyond the original front façade.
 - ii. Whenever possible, additions shall be located behind the original rear façade of the original building.
 - iii. The minimum setback between the original façade and the addition shall complement the proportion and scale of the original building.
- b. Minimize the height of the addition.
 - i. Design one-story additions to one-story buildings whenever possible.
 - ii. Roof heights of new additions shall respect adjacent properties and conform to all City of Wichita Falls Zoning and Building codes.
 - iii. Within a NEZ district, the roof height of the addition shall not be taller than the tallest contributing building on a similarly sized lot within the district.
 - iv. Whenever possible, the roof form of the new addition shall not be visible above the ridgeline of the original roof when the front of the original building is viewed from the street.



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

Definitions

This section defines certain terminology used in the design guidelines.

Building Mass & Composition

The manner in which the basic elements and forms of a building are arranged.

Construction Drawings

Construction drawings provide a graphic representation of what is to be built. Construction drawings should be concise and coordinated to avoid, wherever possible, ambiguity and confusion.

Façade

The faces or elevations of a building are visible from a public way or space; usually, they are limited to the front face of a building in an urban environment.

Facia Profiles

The vertical frieze or band under a roof edge, which forms the outer surface of a cornice, is visible to an observer.

Porte-Cochere

A roofed structure extending from the entrance of a building over an adjacent driveway and sheltering those getting in or out of vehicles.

Schematic Designs

A rough drawing of a site plan, floor plans, elevations, and often illustrative sketches or computer renderings.

Setbacks

The required minimum front, side, or rear yard distance between a building or structure and the property line or private street easement line.

Site Plan

A plan showing the location of all the protected trees by size and species that are six inches or greater on the site, the location of all easements, the location of all proposed buildings, a grading plan, if applicable, the protected trees desired to be removed, the protected trees that shall remain on the site, and an accompanying document indicating the reason for the proposed removal of any protected tree, and if applicable, a description on how the existing healthy protected trees proposed to be retained will be protected from damage from construction.



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

UNDERSTANDING NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

Neighborhood Pattern

These NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are concerned with conserving and improving upon the beneficial characteristics of the existing neighborhood buildings. We refer to those characteristics as patterns. Although each building will have its own unique features, proposed buildings in the NEZ area must be responsive to the overall neighborhood context. A sudden change in the building and neighborhood patterns can be visually disruptive and detract from the overall character of the neighborhood. New development should build on the common rhythms and elements of architectural expression found in the neighborhood.

Things to look for in identifying and understanding neighborhood patterns:

- The placement and styles of buildings that were part of the formative, original fabric of the neighborhood.
- The extent to which newer buildings are or are not compatible with the neighborhood character.
- Additions and new construction that is consistent with the neighborhood character and that of the best example buildings in the neighborhood.
- The extent to which the neighborhood looks like it is a cohesive and unified whole while exhibiting architectural diversity and visual interest.
- The general location of houses on the street and the ways that those houses address the street, including porches, sidewalks, and landscaping.
- The general height and mass of the houses in the neighborhood.
- The extent of consistent neighborhood fabric, based on the original period of the houses and example residences which define the neighborhood character.
- Parking and garage patterns.





Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

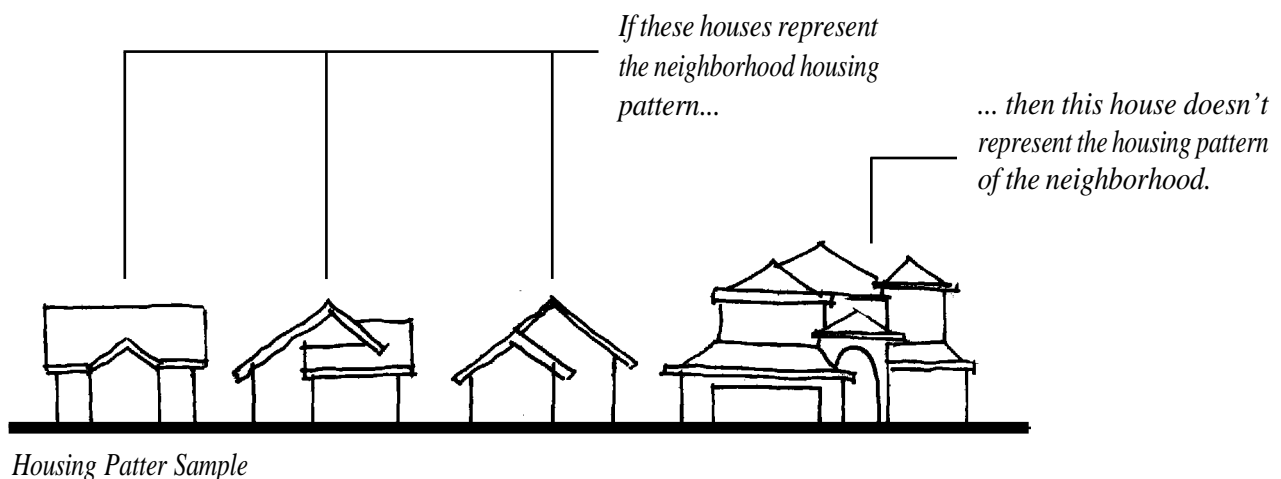
House Patterns

The term “House Patterns” refers to the key architectural elements and design features of the houses that represent the most positive neighborhood patterns upon which the NEZ Strategic Plan Design Guidelines are based. It will be important for the design professional as well as the design reviewer to identify the best example houses in the neighborhood in order to generate a successful design and perform a meaningful review. Certain houses will stand out from the neighborhood fabric as clearly inconsistent. They will stand out not just because they are different but because they are more massive, less respectful of impacts on neighbors, or a markedly inconsistent architectural style. It is important not to consider “mistakes” from the past as important elements of a neighborhood.

When considering additions to existing buildings – whether houses or commercial structures – consistency with the existing architecture will be a critical component of compatibility. New additions should harmonize with their existing buildings and the completed buildings should look like a cohesive design. Ideally, there should only be subtle evidence that an addition was completed.

Things to look for in identifying and understanding patterns in an existing house:

- The general architectural style.
- The level of complexity of the footprint: are there lots of bays, porches, extensions, and appurtenances, or is the house plan simple and plain.
- The type, slope, and configuration of the existing roof system.
- The size, proportion, and style of openings such as doors, windows, and vents.
- The details of the roof, including overhang dimensions, fascia profiles, trims, and supporting construction.
- The details of appurtenances such as porches, including post sizes and configuration, railing details, roof intersections, and decorative components.
- The details and construction of windows and doors, with particular attention to the window casing.





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A - Single-Family Buildings

Single-family buildings can be either “single-family detached” or “single-family attached” buildings (i.e. townhomes).



Single-Family Detached

A single, detached residential dwelling, which addresses the street with stoop or porch entry.



Single-Family Attached

A two- or three-story building with three or more attached dwelling units is consolidated into a single structure with individual unit entrances (i.e., townhomes). An elevated ground floor for residential uses is recommended to increase privacy when the building is close to the street.

B – Multifamily Buildings

Multifamily buildings include apartments, condominiums, and urban manor houses.



Manor House

A building with two to five attached dwelling units consolidated in a single structure. Dwelling units within a building may be situated either wholly or partially over or under other dwelling units. Manor houses are designed to look like a large single-family house.



Apartment/Condominium

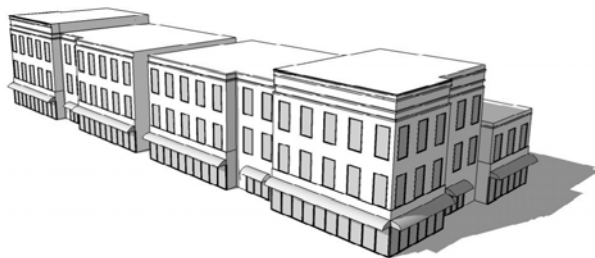
A multifamily residential development type containing more than five units that often shares a common entrance for some or all of the units.



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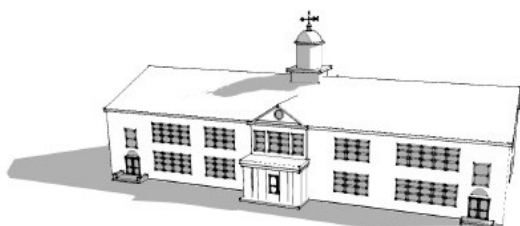
C - Commercial, Institutional, and Mixed-Use Buildings

A commercial, institutional, or mixed-use building is at least one story in height with direct street entry. Types can include restaurants, office buildings, or retail. Mixed-use buildings typically include residential uses, often on upper floors.



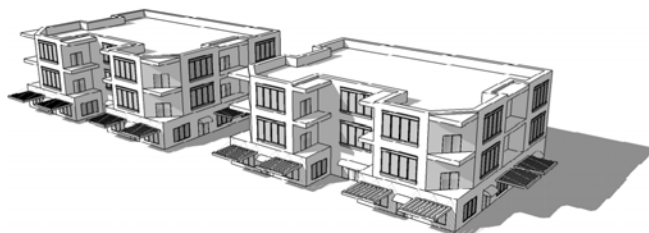
Commercial Buildings

A development type designed for commercial uses. Ground floor spaces are flexible enough to accommodate a variety of non-residential uses. Upper stories are used for offices and/or other types of compatible non-residential uses.



Institutional Buildings

A development intended to provide public or privately-owned facilities that serve the public, including places for assembly/meeting facilities (e.g., religious assembly), congregate care homes, cultural institutions, health care facilities, museums, schools, community centers, and comparable facilities.

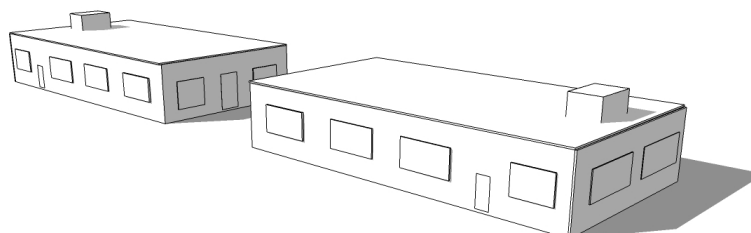


Mixed-Use Buildings

A development type with ground-floor retail or restaurant uses and upper-story residential and/or office uses.

D - Industrial Buildings

A one- or two-story building is used for industrial purposes, including warehouses and manufacturing or assembly facilities.





Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines



Setbacks and Yards

The character of a neighborhood is shaped by the location of buildings on the lots. A particular neighborhood may include large lots with buildings located near the center. Another neighborhood may include narrower lots with homes and front porches near the sidewalk. The general feel and walkability of the neighborhood are partly determined by how close homes are to the street and the other buildings.



Massing and Roof Form

The term mass refers to the overall appearance of a building and its apparent size and bulk. Mass includes actual and apparent components. The way the forms are sized directly relates to the way building elements are emphasized or deemphasized. Voids, or open spaces in the forms, can change the form's appearance and make the building more interesting and less imposing. Large houses look smaller when set against a large yard. The space between the houses in a neighborhood affects the perception of mass as much as the actual size of the building. Buildings that appear to be too large not only impact the neighborhood in a general way but also can have direct and significant effects on the immediate neighbors. Roof form refers to the shape of a roof, which can vary in many ways, including, angle and style. Some common roof types are; flat, gable, hip, gambrel, and monitor.



Garages and Driveways

The location of driveways and garages is a defining factor in site accessibility and vehicle vs. pedestrian focus. New garages and garage additions should be consistent with the best pattern seen in the neighborhood. This will result in positive relationships between houses and consistent resulting outdoor spaces. Garage location affects the neighborhood in three ways:

- It determines the location of drives and curb cuts.
- It defines the quality of open space between residences.
- It enhances or impedes residents' ability to see and participate in street and sidewalk activities.

Garage location has a substantial effect in defining not only the neighborhood but also the character of the individual residences. In general, rear garages offer more positive benefits to the neighborhood while being more consistent with historical patterns in the neighborhood. They tend to generate a greater separation between buildings, creating a greater sense of space in the neighborhood as well as a sense of greater distance between neighboring houses. Rear garages also improve neighborhood safety and walkability by bringing windows, porches, and doors closer to the street, making it easier for residents to interact with the neighborhood and view street activity. By increasing the number of "eyes on the street," neighborhood safety and security can be improved.



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines



Roofs and Windows

Roofs and windows can be some of the most notable and formative elements in defining neighborhood character. Numerous precedents exist in the neighborhood for variable roof slopes and forms. Prevalent architectural styles include combinations of sheds and gables, sheds and hips, and sloping and flat roofs.

Typical windows should be observed and noted to understand and appreciate the neighborhood. Of interest should be the type of window, the ways in which window units are combined to make larger openings and the frequency of exceptional windows. Window locations, sizes, and forms in new development and redevelopment projects should be compatible with the best examples in the neighborhood to enhance the project's positive impacts on the neighborhood.



Porches and Entries

Porches and entries help to define the personality of houses and often represent a substantial physical component of each house. Porches of usable size serve the functional needs of entry and exit, while also creating an outdoor room in which the realms of public and private can interact in a friendly and visually appealing way. When actively used, they foster a sense of security by serving as the eyes of the neighborhood. They also generate a sense that the houses and the neighborhood are actively engaged. In many cases, they are the places in which we see and communicate with our neighbors most often.



Central Wichita Falls NEZ Design Guidelines

Appropriate Examples of Massing and Roof Forms



These structures are in keeping with the character of the neighborhood, while maintaining the original roof form and scale of the building.



The addition is set back from the front façade and mirrors the roof form of the original building.



The addition is set flush with the original façade and does not destroy or detract from the character-defining features of the original building. The materials and windows used are in keeping with the original building.



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Inappropriate Examples of Massing and Roof Forms



The addition is set forward flush with the front façade, but the three-story scale overwhelms the original building, and the roof form and fenestration pattern do not reflect the character of the original building.



The addition's small scale doesn't match the original building's simple form, creating visual competition.



The addition is set forward flush with the front façade of the original building. The flat roof is not compatible with the character of the original building. Modern or Contemporary design may be appropriate for an addition, provided that it is not visible from the right-of-way.