



**TOWN OF CAREFREE**  
**PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT**  
**2021**

**COMMERCIAL**

GARDEN OFFICE RETAIL RESTAURANTS OFFICE MULTIPLE FAMILY

**COMMUNITY DESIGN**  
**STANDARDS &**  
**GUIDELINES**

# TOWN OF CAREFREE



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Carefree prides itself as a predominantly residential community with a semi-rural character. Complementing the residences is a cohesive Town Center composed of a diversity of neighborhood retail services and offices. Surrounding the Town Center is a number of multiple-family properties transitioning to low density residential properties throughout the majority of the Community.

As the Town Center matures, it is important to maintain its small town feel and pedestrian friendly character. In order to ensure that these qualities are preserved as well as strengthened over time, it is critical that the following guiding principles are incorporated into the vision for each multiple-family, garden office, and commercial use.

- Provide for comfortable and publicly accessible pedestrian spaces which connect to adjacent uses.
- Provide for a humanistic scale to the building architecture by de-emphasizing the building's mass and emphasizing the building's entries.
- Ensure the building's architecture responds to the constraints and opportunities of the Sonoran Desert climate by incorporating energy efficient and sustainable building practices.
- Strengthen the quality, identity, and character of multiple-family, garden office, and commercial uses.

## **PURPOSE**

The Design Standards and Guidelines outline the Town's expectations with regard to future development or redevelopment of multiple-family, garden office, and commercial properties. These Guidelines are designed to promote a balance between the Community's concerns over aesthetics with the functionality of the respective use. Furthermore, they promote continuity in architecture, establish pedestrian and vehicular linkages, and mitigate negative impacts. These Design Standards and Guidelines should be applied to all non-single-family residential uses within the Town.



## **SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN**

**Similar to the Single-Family and Mountainside Design Standards and Guidelines, commercial site design should respond to the natural and physical characteristics of the site and surrounding environment, including, but not limited to topography, vegetation, drainage patterns, and the surrounding built environment.**

1. Site design should coordinate with adjacent sites to include:
  - a) Shared driveways to perimeter streets.
  - b) Continuation of landscaped areas or open space.
  - c) Planned access to service or refuse areas.
  - d) Drainage and retention facilities.
  - e) Pedestrian circulation systems and pedestrian spaces.
  - f) Internal vehicular circulation systems within a shared parking area.
2. Building entries should be easily identifiable and should be visible from public streets.
3. Surfaced parking areas and other expansive areas with paved surfaces should be interspersed with landscaped areas.
4. A median should be provided within a parking lot between every ten (10) vehicle spaces. The median should be a minimum of five (5) feet in width from back of curb to back of curb and extend the length of a parking stall. The median should be planted with a minimum of one (1) twenty-four (24) inch box tree and two (2) five (5) gallon shrubs.
5. Any parking lot with a capacity of twenty-five (25) or more vehicle spaces should contain a minimum of twenty-five (25) percent hardscape accent material. This hardscape should be used to delineate pedestrian crossings and/or building entrances and to break down the massing of asphalt. The hardscape may consist of patterned colored concrete, exposed aggregate, brick or stone.
6. A parking lot with a capacity of fifty (50) or more vehicles should contain curvatures to the parking aisles to break down the rigid geometry of the parking areas.
7. Covered parking should be architecturally integrated with the adjacent buildings by using appropriate colors, materials and detailing consisting of muted desert tones with a light reflective value below thirty- five (35) percent. Lighting for covered parking spaces should be shielded to avoid glare and/or light spillage onto adjacent properties.



*In order to provide shade, buffer impacts from head lights, and soften the amount of asphalt, parking areas should include landscaped*

8. Pedestrian pathways and spaces between buildings and outlying parking areas should be

well defined and provide for safe lighting, appropriate landscape design, and hardscaping.

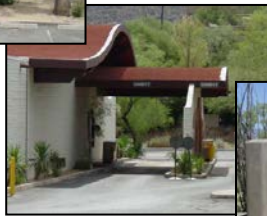


**Provide for shaded  
Pedestrian amenities.**

9. Bicycle parking should be provided at locations that are easily identifiable, visible, and convenient to customers/ users.
10. Shaded seating areas should be provided at staging (pick up) areas and break/lunch areas. A combination of landscaping and architectural features should be used to create and define pedestrian seating areas. These areas should typically be placed at internal locations or near corners of buildings which are easily accessible to the pedestrian.
11. Outdoor dining areas should be placed away from off-site uses that are sensitive to noise and night-time activity. Where space allows, outdoor dining areas should be used to help synergize plazas, courtyards, and street frontages in the Town Center.
12. The placement of patios and plazas should address solar orientation and incorporate both landscaping and architectural elements to provide shade for the pedestrian.
13. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IX, Section 9.06 \(2\)](#), service, storage, and refuse areas shall be oriented away from public areas and screened from public view. These areas shall be clustered wherever possible.
14. Properties within the Town Center (the area bounded by Tom Darlington Drive on the west, Cave Creek Road on the north and east, and Bloody Basin Road on the south) must be developed in conformance with the Town Center Specific Plan. If any conflict is found between these Design Standards and Guidelines and the Town Center Specific Plan, the more stringent standard or guideline should prevail.
15. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IX, Section 9.10 \(4\)](#), washes that have a flow of

fifty(50) cubic feet per second during a 100 year storm event shall be maintained in their natural location. Additionally, the hydraulic properties of this wash may not be modified at the historical entry and exit point.

16. Shopping carts, vending machines, and newspaper racks should be stored within a building or screened by a wall that is integral with the architecture of the respective building. Walk-up ATM's should be integrated into the design of the existing or planned building.
17. Utility cabinets and pedestals should be located where they can be screened from view. They should not be located within a landscaping island in a parking lot where they are subject to damage by vehicles or may impact oncoming vehicles sight lines. Consideration should also be given to accessibility for required service and maintenance of such facilities.
18. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article V, Section 5.02 \(27\)](#), Wireless Communication Facilities shall be fully screened from view and integrated into the building's architecture.
19. Drive-through facilities should be adequately screened from public view. Adequate vehicle queuing length should be provided to ensure that stacking traffic does not obstruct on-site or off-site pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Drive-through covers/enclosures should be designed to add variation to the building's mass and appear integrated with its architecture.



**Integrate drive-throughs in building architecture and screen from public view.**

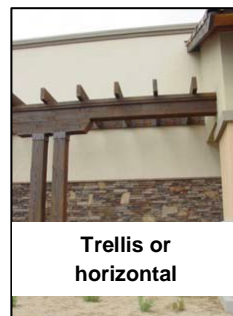
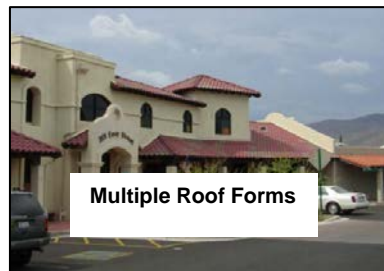


**Screen all refuse containers and utility pedestals from public view and integrate enclosures into architectural theme of respective area.**

## **BUILDING ARCHITECTURE**

**New and renovated buildings should create threads of relationships with existing structures but not necessarily sameness. Each building should convey a sense of being part of the whole downtown area.**

1. Buildings that derive their image primarily from applied treatments that express corporate identity are highly discouraged.
2. Buildings within the same development complex or setting should replicate a theme by using colors, materials, textures, patterns, and rhythms found with other buildings in the complex.
3. The proposed building's scale should be consistent with the surrounding development in the area. This can be accomplished by designing elements of a similar scale towards the periphery of the development/building while providing a gradual transition to any larger mass toward the interior of the site.
4. The perceived height of a building may be reduced by defining and detailing a base, middle, and top to the building. The base may be defined by landscaping adjacent to the building in concert with a wainscot of different material, texture or color. The middle and top may be defined by the application of different colors and/or textures and architectural detailing. A minimum of one-third of any building's elevation should incorporate stone, split face block or other media in addition to its primary building material. The accent material should be used as a wainscot or to highlight a building mass such as an entry features.





5. The perceived mass of a building should be broken down by using variations in roof forms, mass and void techniques, modification of textures and colors, deep set windows, wide building arcades, the accenting of building entries, and the use of building focal points or vertical accents.
6. The distinction of each building mass should relate to the internal function of the structure and further define a logical hierarchy for breaking down the mass of the building.



7. Building facades along pedestrian walkways should incorporate arcades to provide shade to both pedestrians and store front windows. These arcades should exhibit a human scale. Where awnings are used to provide maximum shade, they should consist of opaque material with no external lights. Fabric awnings do not weather well in the Arizona sun and degrade rapidly. Deterioration can be unsightly and costly to repair. Therefore, rather than fabric, an alternative awning material should be used. All awnings should be a single color and should not be used as a corporate identifier.
8. Building design should be responsive to the Sonoran Desert climate. Minimizing heat gain through building orientation, architectural shading devices such as pronounced eaves, fin walls and covered walkways are encouraged. Long continuous expanses of glass are highly discouraged.
9. Colors and finish materials should have a light reflective value of less than thirty-five (35) percent and blend into the muted colors and tones of the surrounding desert.
10. Primary building entrances should be identified with façade variations, porticos, roof variations, and architectural recesses or projections.
11. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IV, Section 9.07 \(2\)](#), roof mounted equipment



- shall be screened from view and painted the color of the roof.
12. Flat roofs shall be painted the color of the building's facade. Shiny metals are highly discouraged and must be approved by the Development Review Board. Weathered copper, zinc, etc. is acceptable.
  13. All elevations of the building should express consistent architectural detailing and character.
  14. Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IV, Section 9.06 \(2\)](#), walls to screen all storage, service, and refuse areas from view shall be integrated into the building architecture.

**Enhance pedestrian spaces by providing secluded, shaded landscaped courtyards.**



## **LANDSCAPING**

**Indigenous upper Sonoran Desert landscape should be used to define pedestrian spaces and soften the visual impact of site improvements. These landscaped gardens should act as a showcase to illustrate to residents and visitors the proper placement and maintenance of the native desert landscape.**

1. Landscaping should be provided along and against all buildings to blend the building into the surrounding environment. Raised planters are permitted when designed to accentuate the architecture and enhance pedestrian spaces.
2. Store fronts should incorporate canopy trees that coordinate with the placement of arcades, signage, and store front windows. Within the Town Center at least one landscape feature area with a minimum of two (2) forty-eight (48) inch box trees should be provided.
3. Landscape buffers should be provided to screen commercial and multiple-family uses from single-family residential uses. Mature trees should be used to further accentuate the buffer area. This buffer should be a minimum of twenty (20) feet in width.
4. Curbing should be installed at the edges of all planters/medians adjacent to vehicular circulation and parking areas.
5. Pedestrian walkways linking site features should be a minimum of six (6) feet in width and

- should incorporate landscaping and architectural shading.
- Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IX, Section 9.13 \(J\)](#), proper maintenance and timely replacement of dead plant material is required.
  - Please refer to the Town's Landscaping brochure for suggested plant species.



## **LIGHTING**

**In order to maintain the dominance and enjoyment of the community's dark skies, exterior lighting should be low-keyed, and only emphasized for safety and security purposes.**

- Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article IX, Section 9.12](#) all exterior lights in excess of twenty-five (25) watts shall be shielded.
- Light levels along pedestrian routes should be designed to maintain a balance both on-site and between adjacent commercial and multiple- family properties.
- Light glare and excessive brightness should be eliminated. Reflective materials in light fixtures are highly discouraged. Cut-off fixtures, mounting height, and the elevation of potential viewers should all be considered to control glare effectively.
- Illumination beyond the property line should not exceed ambient levels.
- Security and service lighting should comply with the guidelines stated in 1 through 4 above.
- Lighting of building facades or the use of architectural lighting that results in hot spots on a building wall is highly discouraged.
- The use of bollard lighting for pedestrian pathways and parking areas is encouraged and is preferable to lights mounted on walls, posts or standards.

## **SIGNAGE**

**Signage should be in scale with the respective use and in character with the immediate area. Muted desert colors and tones and soft halo style lighting are in character with development within the Town Center.**

- Signage shall meet all requirements of the [Zoning Ordinance, Article VII](#)
- The use of awnings, accent bands, parapet details, decorative roofing, or other construction materials to identify a business or corporate identity is discouraged.
- Wall signs should be integrated to appear part of the building façade.
- When there are multiple tenants for commercial uses, all signs should be consistent and architecturally integrated in the form of size, shape, color, materials, lighting, and placement.
- Pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance, [Article VIII, Section 8.03 \(4\) \(G\) and Section 8.03 \(5\) \(F\)](#) back lit/halo style signage is permissible for wall and ground mounted signs.
- Visible raceways and transformers for individual letters are discouraged.

**Signage should easily identify the respective use but not be intrusive to surrounding residential neighborhoods.**