

7.7 Architectural and Design Standards

For Duplicate Buildings and Buildings of 60,000 Gross Square Feet or Greater

7.7.1. General Purpose and Intent

- a. The purpose of this Section is to supplement development standards elsewhere in these zoning regulations with specific criteria that apply to the design of certain commercial buildings and projects, duplicate buildings.
- b. The applicable commercial development depends on high visibility from public streets. In turn, design of certain commercial buildings and sites determines much of the image and attractiveness of the streetscapes and character of the community. Massive, duplicative or generic projects that do not contribute to, or integrate with, the community in a positive manner can be detrimental to a community's image and sense of place.
- c. The County's goal is to create and maintain a positive ambiance and community image and identity by providing for architectural and site design treatments that will enhance the visual appearance of certain commercial development and the quality of life in Sarasota County.
- d. This Section incorporates a basic level of architectural design which, in conjunction with site design, landscaping, lighting and sign treatments located elsewhere in these zoning regulations, is intended to result in a comprehensive scheme for building design and site development consistent with the goals, policies and objectives of the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan. However, this Section is not intended to require any specific style of architecture.
- e. This Section is also intended to:
 1. Promote high standards in architectural design and the construction of creative, innovative, aesthetically pleasing structures;
 2. Encourage landowners, designers and developers to look closely at local conditions and the development site, and produce new development that enhances and complements both the built and natural environment;
 3. Continue the significant architectural heritage of Sarasota; and
 4. Ensure that development and building design is sensitive to the specific site, consistent with the existing and proposed character of the area, including residential and nonresidential uses in the surrounding area, and does not detract from the positive elements existing neighborhood characteristics.

7.7.2. Applicability

a. Table of Requirements

The requirements of this Section shall apply to the uses and use categories listed in the following table.

7.7.3 Duplicate Buildings

	Duplicate Building	Large-Scale Commercial
Development Under 60,000 SF †		
Indoor Recreation (5.2.5.a) Restaurants (5.2.5.e) Retail Sales and Service (5.2.5.f) Self-Service Storage (5.2.5.g) Transient Accommodations (5.2.5.h) Vehicles Sales and Service (5.2.5.i) Dry Storage of Boats	Yes	---
Development Of 60,000 SF or Greater* †		
Retail Sales and Service (5.2.5.f) Self-Service Storage (5.2.5.g) Dry Storage of Boats	Yes	Yes

* Includes expansion or redevelopment of over 20 percent of the area of the existing building, or over 50% of the length of a multi-tenant façade where the existing use, or the existing use plus any expansion, would exceed 60,000 square feet.

† 60,000 square feet shall be the gross floor area as measured from the outside walls.

b. Exception for Approved Critical Area Plans

A critical area plan may define a specific architectural style. Where the application of that style conflicts with the requirements of this Section. 7.7.4, the requirements of Section. 7.7.4 shall apply unless expressly in conflict with the architectural requirements implementing the adopted critical area plan.

c. Exception for Developments of Regional Impact

A development of regional impact development order may contain specific architectural standards and requirements for structures that would otherwise be regulated by Sec. 7.7.4, where approved by the Board of County Commissioners. All building permits, site and development or construction plan applications for affected buildings shall reference the adopted development order's architectural standards and requirements.

7.7.3. Duplicate Buildings

a. Purpose and Intent

These requirements are intended to eliminate development of duplicate non-residential buildings in Sarasota County. The intent is not to eliminate corporate trademarks or identity, but to require projects in Sarasota County to be of an identifiably higher quality architectural design than standard duplicate non-residential buildings.

b. Defined

For the purposes of this Section, a duplicate building shall be defined as any non-residential structure whose design meets any one of the following criteria:

1. A building design that is commonly associated with a specific tenant or user.
2. A building design that uses the building or architectural elements as advertising for the specific business located in that building.
3. A building that is stylized in an attempt to use the building or elements of the building as advertising. This may include items of trade dress such as exterior decorations or colors,
4. A building that is not appropriately designed for the specific site.

5. A building that makes little or no attempt to blend into the existing surrounding architectural context, or makes no significant architectural contribution to the surrounding area.
6. A building design that has been used twice in Sarasota County or its municipalities.

c. Duplicate Buildings Prohibited

The construction of a duplicate building, as defined above, for any applicable use set forth in the table in Section 7.7.2 above, is prohibited.

d. Demonstration of Compliance

1. Compliance with the duplicate building prohibition shall be demonstrated through submittal of architectural drawings at the time of site and development plan review in accordance with Section 3.9. Drawings shall include a roof plan, all exterior building elevations, and any other information deemed necessary to demonstrate compliance with this Section.
2. Other documentation to be submitted shall include photographs documenting all facilities with similar architectural features and tenant within Sarasota County or its municipalities, as well as the location and photographs of any known duplicate building in Sarasota County or its municipalities.
3. The re-use of another building's design where only minimal modifications have been made in an attempt to comply with this Section shall be prohibited.
4. A building design that would otherwise constitute a duplicate building may be modified to meet the intent of this Section through, at minimum, modification of all of the following
 - i. The building mass or articulation;
 - ii. The building façade; and
 - iii. The roof treatment.
5. The following modifications of an existing building design shall not be considered acceptable.
 - i. Moving a door;
 - ii. Changing an exterior material;
 - iii. Changing a color; or
 - iv. Adding or deleting window units.
6. The collective result of the modifications of an existing building design shall be to create a new building that can clearly be distinguished from the original design, and is unique to Sarasota County.

e. Review by Design Administrator

The Design Administrator shall review the required drawings and accompanying materials and make a determination as to whether or not the building is considered a duplicate building according to the definition above. The determination shall be provided in writing to the applicant, and once approved by the Design Administrator, a building permit application for the

7.7.4 Large-Scale Commercial

project may be filed. Applicants may revise the proposal and re-submit the application; however, such application shall be considered a new application.

f. Criteria for Approval

The Design Administrator shall apply the following criteria in making a determination of a duplicate building.

1. The petition is complete and the information contained within the petition is sufficient and correct enough to allow adequate review and final action.
2. The petition demonstrates compliance with the prohibition on duplicate buildings in this Section.
3. The petition demonstrates unique, site sensitive design qualities.
4. The petition exhibits compatibility of the design with surrounding properties.

g. Appeal of Design Administrator's Determination

The applicant may appeal the Design Administrator's determination as to whether or not a building is considered a duplicate building to the Board of Zoning Appeals in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.11, Administrative Appeal.

7.7.4. Large-Scale Commercial**a. Purpose and Intent**

The intent of this Section is to ensure that certain large, boxy, warehouse-like buildings are designed to eliminate the common monolithic appearance of such structures, and that instead it provides visual interest while enhancing the community's character and identity through the use of detail and scale.

b. Requirements for Building Massing and Articulation

1. The design shall help integrate the development with its surroundings by breaking down the apparent mass and scale of the building on all sides. This provision shall not be required in the immediate area surrounding loading docks, where specific heights may be required.
2. No more than 40,000 gross square feet of the structure shall be designed as a distinct mass. Preferably, two or more building masses shall be expressed.
3. All facades shall be given equal design significance. There shall be no blank, featureless walls, including rear walls. The design shall present a continuity of style on all facades, except where separated by a party wall located on a lot line.
4. Outparcels shall be designed and integrated with the main project.

c. Requirements for Building Entries

1. The design shall use architectural features which clearly define the public entry.
2. Multiple entryways shall be incorporated into the design wherever possible in order to break up the apparent mass and scale of the project.
3. At least one clearly articulated entrance shall be visible from a public street, and connected to that street with a pedestrian sidewalk. Such a

sidewalk may cross vehicular traffic within the parking area, provided that a change in materials clearly designates the pedestrian crosswalk.

d. Demonstration of Compliance

Compliance with the large-scale commercial requirements shall be demonstrated through submittal of architectural drawings at the time of site and development plan review in accordance with Section 3.9, or where no site and development plan is required, submittal directly to the Design Administrator. Drawings shall include, but not be limited to, a floor plan, roof plan and all exterior building elevations, and any other information deemed necessary to demonstrate compliance with this Section.

e. No Variance Permitted

No variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals from requirements of this Section shall be permitted.

f. Review by Design Administrator

The Design Administrator shall review the required drawings and accompanying materials and make a determination as to whether or not the proposed development meets the requirements set forth above. The determination shall be provided in writing to the applicant, and once approved by the Design Administrator, a building permit application for the project may be filed. Applicants may revise the proposal and re-submit the application; however, such application shall be considered a new application.

g. Criteria for Approval

The Design Administrator shall apply the following criteria in making a determination of compliance with these large-scale commercial requirements.

1. The petition is complete and the information contained within the petition is sufficient and correct enough to allow adequate review and final action.
2. The petition demonstrates compliance with the prohibition on duplicate buildings in this Section.
3. The petition illustrates compliance with the large-scale commercial requirements of this Section.
4. The design demonstrates unique, site-sensitive architecture.
5. The design is compatible with the design with surrounding properties.

h. Appeal of Design Administrator's Determination

The applicant may appeal the Design Administrator's decision to the Board of County Commissioners, who shall review the submitted application and accompanying Design Administrator's materials for compliance with this Section.