

Industrial Property Architectural and Urban Design Guidelines

An industrial property should be designed to be functional for the operation, allow expansion of the business, allow adaptation by future users, and be cost effective. Further, it should provide attractive and appropriate edges along streets and adjacent properties, incorporate green building and sustainable practices into the design and should offer workers and visitors transportation choices and pleasant work amenities. Industrial design requirements should serve to raise the value of the entire surrounding industrial area and establish a long-term pleasant working environment.

GENERAL CONCEPTS

The siting of the various required components is critical to a good overall design. An industrial property is generally composed of a large, bulkier building where production, shipping and receiving, post-production, finishing, storage and mechanicals. A smaller area is typically devoted to offices for executives and administration, sales, engineering and support services for all employees such as break rooms, locker rooms, toilet facilities, administrative control, and security. In businesses producing certain products, visitor areas for conference rooms, showrooms and limited retail outlets may be provided.

- A. The office area, visitor area, and employee services area for an industrial building should be placed along street frontages so as to break down the scale of the building and be placed to both activate the street and provide optimal location for these human activities.



- B. Parking areas should be no larger than needed by current work force of the facility. A number of smaller, well placed parking lots is generally better than one large expansive area. The zoning code has no minimum parking requirements for industrial uses.



- C. Parking should generally not occur between the front office area of the building and the street, however if it does, a strong connection to the street must be retained through wide, concrete pedestrian walkways and other outdoor plaza features. Any parking between the office area of the building and the street

should be limited to a double-sided row and be landscaped with a significant urban edge treatment. These up-front parking areas should be concrete paved and preferably be porous paving, as it will not endure truck traffic.

- D. Truck loading docks, required outdoor mechanical aspects of the operation, and expansion area temporary walls of the larger box building should be to the rear or to the sides as long as they are screened from public streets and offices areas of neighboring buildings.
- E. Outdoor storage area should be located at the rear of the property or be behind buildings or appropriate screen wall and landscaping. The zoning code requires substantial landscape screening of these areas.
- F. Where an industrial property is adjacent to a residential district, the zoning code requires a buffer setback that is required to be planted with substantial landscaping and have opaque fencing.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE PROPERTY

- A. The office area should generally receive the larger amount of design attention in regards to more a striking/signature design, that includes large windows, more articulate detailing, higher quality materials, etc.



- B. While more design and detail should likely occur on the office portion of the facility rather than on the large “box” of the factory or storage areas, the design of the larger components should correlate and be compatible with the more articulated office area. This could be achieved by design elements such as limited, high windows that are proportioned to windows on the main building, base banding articulation is carried onto the large box element, cornice details continue, etc.



- C. The large box element(s) of the industrial property should have both vertical and horizontal articulation. A distinct base middle and top should occur, and long stretches of expected blank walls should be broken down into smaller distinct area. If pre-cast tip-up panels are used, these articulations could be cast into the panels as scoring lines, with different relief at top and bottoms. Colorization of the pre-cast or painting bases differing tones could also help achieve these goals. Different materials, such as masonry bases with metal systems above could also help achieve this articulation.





- D. The large box element should typically have either a series of high, smaller punched openings, a continuous clerestory or a combination of elements to both better articulate the building and also provide natural day lighting to interior areas as an appropriate green building practice.



- E. Corners of industrial building should be articulated with some special design elements so buildings do not appear as large boxes. This could be achieved in a number of ways, from larger windows, extruded elements, and possibly more articulated pre-cast score lines.





DETAILED ISSUES

- A. A variety of materials and construction methods may be used. All materials should have finished quality appearance. Street facing sides should utilize higher quality materials. Pre-cast panels should be articulated with scoring and other techniques to provide a higher quality finish. Brick veneer, ground face block and other finished quality materials may be used. Utility concrete block should only be used on rear portions, and split face block should generally only be used for base elements, unless detailed with in specific patterns. Metal wall may be used if they are limited in area, generally are above a masonry base, have banding, cornice line and other articulation and are finished quality materials. EFIS may be used but should be avoided near office entrance areas and areas where durability is important.
- B. Pre-engineered metal building portions typically need to be site modified in order to meet the above design requirements. This is not to say "stock" buildings cannot be used, however care must be executed in their overall coordination into the property.
- C. The building technology and construction typology should be detailed appropriately. The larger building box area should have parapet walls and/or appropriately detailed tops/cornices in order to properly drain and divert storm water.

- D. Accessory buildings should follow the design requirements of the main building or be located at non-conspicuous rear areas of the property and/or be screened with landscaping.
- E. Bike racks should be provided for employees in safe areas.

F. Pedestrian connections need to be made to public transportation location.

G. Loading docks on sidewalls of buildings should have wing walls that continue off the main building mass to screen the predominant amount of the truck and loading activity.



H. Utility locations and connection, gas meters, condensers and similar mechanical equipment should be either located at rear or side areas, and should be screened and/or painted to coordinate with the building.



I. Fences/walls used along street property lines and in front yards of buildings should be decorative metal fencing, finished product masonry walls, or other better materials. Vinyl coated chain link fences are limited to the rear portion of side property lines and to rear property lines.

J. Freestanding signs should be monument style, Type A (as defined by the Milwaukee Zoning Code). Size limitations are outlined in the zoning code. Larger, individual letter wall signs are encouraged on the larger building area to help better articulate the wall and to emphasize the commerce that is occurring.



K. Outdoor break areas, gathering areas for presentation and meeting, and outdoor cafes area encouraged to both enliven the exterior areas and to provide an optimal working environment.

- L. Future expansion areas should be sodded or planted in order to provide a finished appearance in the interim period. These areas should not be used for storage or other purposes unless appropriately screened.



Photo by Eddee Daniel



- M. Native plantings should be utilized in site areas where either landscaping screening is required or where portions of the site are to remain un-used.