MULTI-FAMILY AND SINGLE-FAMILY ATTACHED DESIGN GUIDELINES
CITY OF ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA
**Applicability**

This section applies to all new multi-family (including single-family attached) development within every zoning district in the City of Rock Hill. While these guidelines intend to encompass all multi-family housing types, there are instances where a standard may be noted as only applicable to a particular housing type.

**Intent**

These Design Guidelines for Multi-Family and Single-Family Attached Residential are intended to help facilitate and promote the development of attractive, visually interesting, high-quality, durable and safe multi-family housing within the City of Rock Hill.

These Guidelines are meant to be suggestive, in that they portray ideal characteristics of a quality multi-family building that promotes the livability, quality, safety and overall sense of community.

Example photos are included for reference to achieve the desired level of quality as portrayed within these guidelines and the City of Rock Hill Zoning Ordinance.

Example images that include a symbol are generally discouraged and do not meet the intent of these guidelines. The images within these guidelines are examples of a particular element and it should be recognized that they alone do not encompass all of the suggested guidelines in this manual and zoning ordinance.
Site Design

*Purpose and objectives:*
To promote multi-family communities that create a visually appealing and distinctive streetscape in addition to a well-connected and defined pedestrian network.

Building Form

*Purpose and objectives:*
To create multi-family buildings that are compatible with the existing context while containing unique or distinct characteristics thereby contributing to the neighborhood’s sense of place and environment.

Building Facade

*Purpose and objectives:*
To enhance the overall appearance of the building such that it portrays a high level of quality and visual interest within the community.

Exterior Materials

*Purpose and objectives:*
To ensure new construction of multi-family housing is of durable and quality materials that will allow for a lasting appearance throughout the future life of the building.
A.1 Buildings should be oriented such that the primary façades face public/private streets or open space. This method of building orientation helps create discernable street edge.

A.2 Off-street parking should be internal to the overall development, generally located to the rear and sides of buildings so as to not be visible from any public street. Off-street parking needs to be adequately screened with landscaping and/or fencing that is compatible with the zoning ordinance.

A.3 On-street parking is encouraged within multi-family developments. The on-street parking should be accompanied by a landscaping strip with street trees and a sidewalk.
A.4  In single-family attached units or any multi-family units with garages, the garages should face internal to the overall development and not face any public street.

A.5  Garages should be recessed within the primary façade and include detailing elements to create visual interest and add to the overall architectural character of the building.

A.6  Any parking below the building, or podium parking, should be adequately screened and integrated into the overall design of the building. Screens, louvers, grilles, and green screens can be incorporated into the design to add to the visual richness of the building design.
A.7 Units at the ground floor should be accessed at the street level to which they front and be provided with a transition element from the public (street/sidewalk) to private realm (building). These transitions can include stairs, low masonry walls, ornamental fencing, landscaping, and/or a raised porch/patio/stoop to ensure privacy for the residents occupying the first floor of the building. See Building Façade: Street Level Unit Entry for more information.

A.8 Pedestrian walkways should be provided between buildings, streets, driveways, community spaces, and off-street parking to help create a walkable, pedestrian oriented community.
A.9 Shared or common building entries should provide a transition from the street to the entry itself to create a unique sense of entry for pedestrians.

These transitions should be thoughtfully designed and incorporated into the overall character of the building and should include any of the following: changes in grade, stairs, low masonry walls, ornamental railing, changes in paving material and/or landscaping.

See Building Façade: Prominent Entry for more information.
A.10 All residential units should be accessed through enclosed, common access points that are monitored by a security system and/or on site security/management staff. See Building Façade: Prominent Entry for more information.

A.11 The use of breezeways or exterior balconies for access to residential units is discouraged. If after exploring all possible options and the use of the breezeways cannot be avoided, they should be designed such that they are secured in a manner similar to the requirements for an indoor lobby or corridor.
A.12 All accessory buildings and structures within a multi-family residential development should be designed such that they are consistent with the overall architectural style and character. These include but are not limited to service and delivery areas, outdoor storage, trash storage, mail buildings, and other site amenities.

A.13 Any ground or building mounted equipment should be thoughtfully placed and concealed in such a way that it is integrated into the overall site and building design. Equipment should be of similar color to the adjacent building façade and screened with landscaping or fencing compatible with the zoning ordinance.
Buildings should include changes in wall planes (recessed and/or projecting), layering of materials or planes and variations of material and color to create a harmonious building design that is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

All façades of a building should include a base, middle and top to help reduce perceived scale of the building and provide visual interest for the overall building.

Buildings should be modulated on all façades to prevent large, monotonous walls that lack any variation in massing or detail.
B.4 The building façade should express the module of the actual residential unit in order to create a façade that has depth, visual interest and rhythm.

B.5 The ends of the building (or secondary façades) should receive similar treatment to the façades that are oriented towards the street. That is, they should have variation in its massing and include a similar pattern of windows and doors as the primary façade.

B.6 Large blank walls should be avoided unless required by the applicable building codes. If absolutely necessary, they should include architectural elements such as recesses in material, green screens, trellises, public art, landscaping or other visually interesting features that relate to the remainder of the building and are in keeping with the overall architectural character of the building.
Building Form

Roof

B.7 The roof line should be varied and relate to the elements and features on the façade. Roof material, form, texture and color should relate and be compatible with the overall architectural style of the building.

B.8 The top should act as a prominent visual termination for the building and can add further interest through the use of projecting elements, cornices, eaves and other features that visually define the top. Roof pitch, its materials, size, and orientation are all distinct features that contribute to the character of a roof.

B.9 Simple roof massing should be avoided, and consideration should be given to creating roof forms that vary in slope and pitch to create a dynamic and compelling building.
B.10 If a flat roof is used, a parapet should extend above the roof plane and include an element that provides a visual termination of the façade. The parapet should extend far enough above the roof plane that any mechanical equipment is concealed.

B.11 Consider the use of brackets, overhangs, sunscreens, louvers, brise soleil, cornices and other architectural features to enhance the character of the roof line.
C.1 Building entries should have a strong visual presence from the street on which it fronts and be distinguished as an architectural feature on the building façade, thus making it an obvious point of entry. Entries should either project or be recessed from the primary façade.

C.2 At the street level, pedestrian scaled elements should be used such as canopies, overhangs or balconies to reduce the overall scale of the building, add to the sense of entry and to protect pedestrians from the elements.

C.3 Building entries should be significant and integrated into the overall design of the building.
C.4 Windows should be recessed enough to create a shadow line and express the thickness of the wall in which they are placed.

C.5 Windows should include detailed elements such as, but not limited to:

- Headers
- Sills
- Trim/Surround/Molding
- Muntins/Grilles/Grids
- Louvers
- Sunshades
- Operable shutters
- Awnings (at street level)
- Canopies (at street level)

C.6 Non-dimensional, flat window trim that is otherwise relatively flush with the exterior wall material should be avoided. If window is in plane with the façade, dimensional window trim should be applied in lieu of recessing the window itself.
C.7 Porches, patios and balconies should project or be recessed enough to substantially differentiate it as a feature apart from the primary plane of the façade on which they are located and to function for their intended purpose.

C.8 Porches, patios and balconies should be integrated into the overall building design and be looked at as part of the whole building rather than faux architectural elements.

C.9 Porches, patios and balconies that are unable to be occupied for their intended use are discouraged. If a false balcony or Juliet balcony is used, it should have enough depth to it that it is not flush with the wall on which it is affixed.
C.10 Residential entrances that front a street, pedestrian path or open space should be recessed within the façade and incorporate a covered porch, stoop, veranda or similar architectural feature that highlights the point of entry, provides protection from the elements and encourages social interaction.

C.11 Stairs, low walls, change in grade and landscaping can be integrated into the design of the entry units in order to help set it apart from the remainder of the façade as well as to create a semi-public zone between the private space of the unit and the public space of the street or parking.
C.12 Unit entry doors should be constructed of high quality, durable, long lasting material that signifies a strong sense of entry. Doors should include panels, windows, sidelites, transoms, etc., to enhance the perceived quality of the door.

C.13 Avoid using doors that are flush with the façade in which they are located, lack any trim or molding, and that lack any detail or definition to the door itself.
The building should incorporate several materials of durable, high quality characteristics that enhance the overall image of the project such as stone, brick, cast stone, architectural concrete masonry units, stucco, wood veneer, cementitious siding and architectural-grade metal siding (in limited applications).

High quality materials such as stone and brick are encouraged to be used for at least the first ground level of the building on all façades.

The use of vinyl siding is prohibited on any façade or portion of the building.
**D.4** Building materials should be used to reinforce the modules of the building, establish rhythm and emphasize architectural features and elements.

**D.5** Changes in material and color should generally not take place on the same plane to avoid a faux material quality. Rather, changes in material and color should correspond to the massing and other architectural features of the building.

**D.6** Long expanses of the same material are discouraged. And while variety creates visual interest, the variety should not be created with just color alone but should also place importance on the variation of materials.

**D.7** At a recess, projection or change in material, the material should turn the corner and return to the façade rather than terminating at the corner, which creates a condition where the edge of the material is visible.

**D.8** Colors should be within context of the building style itself and the buildings in the surrounding area. Brighter colors should typically be avoided unless used as an accent feature to further accentuate an architectural element.