

Multi-Family Material Requirement

Wheat Ridge

The City of Wheat Ridge is a mostly built-out western suburb to Denver of over 30,000 people. In 2010, motivated in part by the anticipation of light rail and the potential of new development, the City adopted by ordinance design standards for mixed use development into their Zoning and Development Code. The City, previously without any design standards, wanted to enhance the character of Wheat Ridge through high quality design. The new code standards, developed by the City's planning staff and shaped by public input, has a strong urban design focus that emphasizes desired building form.

Building off of the success of the mixed use standards, the City decided to expand their design policy by adopting an Architectural and Site Design Manual (ASDM). Wanting to ensure that all new development and redevelopment is high quality, the new guidelines, adopted in 2012, apply to new buildings and major additions for commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential land uses. The goal of the regulations is to create a built environment that, "provide[s] a positive image, vibrant, and increased revenue to the City."

In terms of regulating building materials, the ASDM prioritizes different materials based on quality. For multi-family residential projects, the most durable materials such as brick and stone are classified as primary materials and must be used as the predominate cladding material. A list of secondary materials are provided of less durable or desirable materials to be allowed as trim features and to add design flexibility. Also included is a list of prohibited materials that the City feels should not be allowed in order to maintain high quality buildings.

Since the standards are objective, it simplifies the development review process. Developers have clear expectations and planners can easily identify if the application meets the design regulations.

Primary materials: buildings shall be constructed of durable materials. Approved materials include, but are not limited to:

- * Brick and Stone
- * Hard coat stucco
- * Terra-cotta
- * Synthetic brick and masonry materials
- * Integral colored textured concrete block

Secondary materials: the following materials are allowed as accent materials. Cumulatively, one or more of the following materials may not exceed 30% of any facade:

- * Cement board siding
- * Architectural metal panels
- * Smooth-faced concrete masonry units

Prohibited materials: The following materials are not allowed:

- * Exterior Insulation and Finishing System (EIFS)
- * Un-articulated large format concrete panels
- * Vinyl and aluminum siding
- * Plywood paneling
- * Exposed raw concrete



Wheat Ridge planners were motivated to expand design standards to multi-family areas after seeing the positive impact on mixed-use areas that included commercial structures like this one.

