

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY  
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
DESIGN GUIDELINES**  
Updated February 2, 2011



## **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW**

### ***Background***

Section 15.2-2306 of the *Code of Virginia* authorizes localities to regulate the design of development along streets, roads, and highways providing significant routes of tourist access to the County and to designated historic landmarks, structures or districts and to contiguous cities and towns to insure that such development is compatible with the architecture of the historically significant landmarks, buildings, and structures to which these routes lead. These “entrance corridors” have been designated by the locality. The review of development proposals within such corridors is to be undertaken by the locally designated Architectural Review Board.

On October 3, 1990, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors adopted Section 30.6 of the *Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance*. The section is titled “Entrance Corridor Overlay District” and implements the authority described above. It specifically designates a number of “entrance corridors,” establishes standards for the review of development proposed within the corridors and creates a five member Architectural Review Board (ARB). The Board of Supervisors also appointed members to the ARB and charged them with the responsibility for proposing and administering a set of Guidelines for development within the designated corridors.

### **Procedures and Requirements**

State law and County ordinance both require that the ARB approve *only those proposals which reflect designs which are compatible with the historically significant architecture of the County of Albemarle and City of Charlottesville*. It is not intended that proposed designs mirror existing historic structures in the area. Replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired. However, developers proposing “trademark” designs can expect that significant modification will be required by the ARB before approval will be granted.

The guidelines which follow are intended to provide assistance to the applicant in designing projects which will satisfy these design guidelines. In addition, Appendix A contains a list of the pictures of historically significant structures in the area that are illustrated in this booklet; drawings which highlight some of the important features of these structures; and photographs of modern buildings, both in the area and elsewhere, which are considered compatible with these historic structures.

**See the ARB page on the Albemarle County website at [www.albemarle.org/ARB](http://www.albemarle.org/ARB) for additional details regarding:**

- Application requirements and the types of ARB applications
- Steps in the ARB review process
- The types of projects that require ARB review
- Areas of the County that are included in the Entrance Corridor Overlay District
- A map of the County’s Entrance Corridors
- Links to relevant forms and related information (including a link to Section 30.6 of the Zoning Ordinance: Entrance corridor overlay district – EC).



## **DESIGN GUIDELINES – GENERAL**



## ***Purpose***

1. The goal of the regulation of the design of development within the designated Entrance Corridors is to insure that new development within the corridors reflects the traditional architecture of the area. Therefore, it is the purpose of ARB review and of these Guidelines, that proposed development within the designated Entrance Corridors reflect elements of design characteristic of the significant historical landmarks, buildings, and structures of the Charlottesville and Albemarle area, and to promote orderly and attractive development within these corridors. Applicants should note that replication of historic structures is neither required nor desired.
2. Visitors to the significant historical sites in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area experience these sites as ensembles of buildings, land, and vegetation. In order to accomplish the integration of buildings, land, and vegetation characteristic of these sites, the Guidelines require attention to four primary factors: compatibility with significant historic sites in the area; the character of the Entrance Corridor; site development and layout; and landscaping.

### ***Compatibility with significant historic sites:***

3. New structures and substantial additions to existing structures should respect the traditions of the architecture of historically significant buildings in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area. Photographs of historic buildings in the area, as well as drawings of architectural features, which provide important examples of this tradition are contained in Appendix A.
4. The examples contained in Appendix A should be used as a guide for building design: the standard of compatibility with the area's historic structures is not intended to impose a rigid design solution for new development. Replication of the design of the important historic sites in the area is neither intended nor desired. The Guideline's standard of compatibility can be met through building scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The Guidelines allow individuality in design to accommodate varying tastes as well as special functional requirements.

### ***Compatibility with the character of the Entrance Corridor:***

5. It is also an important objective of the Guidelines to establish a pattern of compatible architectural characteristics throughout the Entrance Corridor in order to achieve unity and coherence. Building designs should demonstrate sensitivity to other nearby structures within the Entrance Corridor. Where a designated corridor is substantially developed, these Guidelines require striking a careful balance between harmonizing new development with the existing character of the corridor and achieving compatibility with the significant historic sites in the area.

### ***Site development and layout:***

6. Site development should be sensitive to the existing natural landscape and should contribute to the creation of an organized development plan. This may be accomplished, to the extent

practical, by preserving the trees and rolling terrain typical of the area; planting new trees along streets and pedestrian ways and choosing species that reflect native forest elements; insuring that any grading will blend into the surrounding topography thereby creating a continuous landscape; preserving, to the extent practical, existing significant river and stream valleys which may be located on the site and integrating these features into the design of surrounding development; and limiting the building mass and height to a scale that does not overpower the natural settings of the site, or the Entrance Corridor.

***Landscaping:***

7. The requirements of the Guidelines regarding landscaping are intended to reflect the landscaping characteristic of many of the area's significant historic sites which is characterized by large shade trees and lawns. Landscaping should promote visual order within the Entrance Corridor and help to integrate buildings into the existing environment of the corridor.
8. Continuity within the Entrance Corridor should be obtained by planting different types of plant materials that share similar characteristics. Such common elements allow for more flexibility in the design of structures because common landscape features will help to harmonize the appearance of development as seen from the street upon which the Corridor is centered.

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES – SPECIFICS**



This section provides specific recommendations intended to achieve the goals described in the general design statement.

***Compatibility with significant historic sites:***

**Structure design**

9. Building forms and features, including roofs, windows, doors, materials, colors and textures should be compatible with the forms and features of the significant historic buildings in the area, exemplified by (but not limited to) the buildings described in Appendix A. The standard of compatibility can be met through scale, materials, and forms which may be embodied in architecture which is contemporary as well as traditional. The replication of important historic sites in Albemarle County is not the objective of these guidelines.
10. Buildings should relate to their site and the surrounding context of buildings.
11. The overall design of buildings should have human scale. Scale should be integral to the building and site design.
12. Architecture proposed within the Entrance Corridor should use forms, shapes, scale, and materials to create a cohesive whole.
13. Any appearance of “blankness” resulting from building design should be relieved using design details or vegetation, or both.
14. Arcades, colonnades, or other architectural connecting devices should be used to unify groups of buildings within a development.
15. Trademark buildings and related features should be modified to meet the requirements of the Guidelines.
16. Window glass in the Entrance Corridors should not be highly tinted or highly reflective. Reflectance off the outside pane of glass should be kept below 7%. Specifications on the proposed window glass and samples of tinted window glass should be submitted with the application for final review.

**Accessory structures and equipment**

17. Accessory structures and equipment should be integrated into the overall plan of development and shall, to the extent possible, be compatible with the building designs used on the site.
18. The following should be located to eliminate visibility from the Entrance Corridor street. If, after appropriate siting, these features will still have a negative visual impact on the Entrance Corridor street, screening should be provided to eliminate visibility.

- a) Loading areas,
  - b) Service areas,
  - c) Refuse areas,
  - d) Storage areas,
  - e) Mechanical equipment,
  - f) Above-ground utilities, and
  - g) Chain link fence, barbed wire, razor wire, and similar security fencing devices.
19. Screening devices should be compatible with the design of the buildings and surrounding natural vegetation and may consist of:
- a) Walls,
  - b) Plantings, and
  - c) Fencing.
20. Surface runoff structures and detention ponds should be designed to fit into the natural topography to avoid the need for screening. When visible from the Entrance Corridor street, these features must be fully integrated into the landscape. They should not have the appearance of engineered features.
21. The following note should be added to the site plan and the architectural plan: “Visibility of all mechanical equipment from the Entrance Corridor shall be eliminated.”

## **Lighting**

### **General Guidelines**

22. Light should be contained on the site and not spill over onto adjacent properties or streets;
23. Light should be shielded, recessed or flush-mounted to eliminate glare. All fixtures with lamps emitting 3000 lumens or more must be full cutoff fixtures.
24. Light levels exceeding 30 footcandles are not appropriate for display lots in the Entrance Corridors. Lower light levels will apply to most other uses in the Entrance Corridors.
25. Light should have the appearance of white light with a warm soft glow; however, a consistent appearance throughout a site or development is required. Consequently, if existing lamps that emit non-white light are to remain, new lamps may be required to match them.

26. Dark brown, dark bronze, or black are appropriate colors for free-standing pole mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors.
27. The height and scale of freestanding, pole-mounted light fixtures should be compatible with the height and scale of the buildings and the sites they are illuminating, and with the use of the site. Typically, the height of freestanding pole-mounted light fixtures in the Entrance Corridors should not exceed 20 feet , including the base. Fixtures that exceed 20 feet in height will typically require additional screening to achieve an appropriate appearance from the Entrance Corridor.
28. In determining the appropriateness of lighting fixtures for the Entrance Corridors, the individual context of the site will be taken into consideration on a case by case basis.
29. The following note should be included on the lighting plan: “Each outdoor luminaire equipped with a lamp that emits 3,000 or more initial lumens shall be a full cutoff luminaire. The spillover of lighting from luminaires onto public roads and property in residential or rural areas zoning districts shall not exceed one half footcandle.”

#### Guidelines for the Use of Decorative Landscape Lighting

If other site lighting is visible from the Entrance Corridor, lighting used for decorative purposes will generally not be approved. However, the ARB will review each proposal to determine impact and appropriateness for the Entrance Corridor.

30. Exterior light used for decorative effect shall:
  - a) be compatible with the character of the Entrance Corridor. Compatibility of exterior lighting and lighting fixtures is assessed in terms of design, use, size, scale, color, and brightness.
  - b) impact only the immediate site. The effect of the illumination should not be discernible from distances along the Entrance Corridor.
31. Where used for decorative effect, outdoor light fixtures shall:
  - a) be equipped with automatic timing devices and shall be extinguished between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and dawn.
  - b) be shielded and focused to eliminate glare. Glare control shall be achieved primarily through the use of such means as cutoff fixtures, shields and baffles, and appropriate application of mounting height, wattage, aiming angle, fixture placement, etc.
  - c) be cutoff luminaires, aimed so as not to project their output beyond the objects intended to be illuminated; or non-cutoff luminaires, equipped with glare shields, visors, barn doors, and/or other similar shielding accessories as required to meet the following criteria: Light distribution from all lighting installations shall be cut-off at all angles

beyond those required to restrict direct illumination to within the perimeter of the landscape feature being illuminated.

- d) never exceed 3,000 lumens. Further restrictions on lumens may be imposed by the ARB.
- e) not be modified to reflect seasonal colors.
- f) be of a number that is compatible with the scale of the object and the development to be illuminated, such that the light emitted will not over-illuminate or overpower the site, as determined by the ARB.

### **Signs**

See the ARB's revised sign guidelines, adopted October 13, 2004.

### **Landscaping**

32. Landscaping along the frontage of Entrance Corridor streets should include the following:

- a) Large shade trees should be planted parallel to the Entrance Corridor Street. Such trees should be at least 3½ inches caliper (measured 6 inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 35 feet on center.
- b) Flowering ornamental trees of a species common to the area should be interspersed among the trees required by the preceding paragraph. The ornamental trees need not alternate one for one with the large shade trees. They may be planted among the large shade trees in a less regular spacing pattern.
- c) In situations where appropriate, a three or four board fence or low stone wall, typical of the area, should align the frontage of the Entrance Corridor street.
- d) An area of sufficient width to accommodate the foregoing plantings and fencing should be reserved parallel to the Entrance Corridor street, and exclusive of road right-of-way and utility easements.

33. Landscaping along interior roads:

- a) Large trees should be planted parallel to all interior roads. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a plant species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 40 feet on center.

34. Landscaping along interior pedestrian ways:

- a) Medium trees should be planted parallel to all interior pedestrian ways. Such trees should be at least 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground) and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be located at least every 25 feet on center.

35. Landscaping of parking areas:

- a) Large trees should align the perimeter of parking areas, located 40 feet on center. Trees should be planted in the interior of parking areas at the rate of one tree for every 10 parking spaces provided and should be evenly distributed throughout the interior of the parking area.
- b) Trees required by the preceding paragraph should measure 2½ inches caliper (measured six inches above the ground); should be evenly spaced; and should be of a species common to the area. Such trees should be planted in planters or medians sufficiently large to maintain the health of the tree and shall be protected by curbing.
- c) Shrubs should be provided as necessary to minimize the parking area's impact on Entrance Corridor streets. Shrubs should measure 24 inches in height.

36. Landscaping of buildings and other structures:

- a) Trees or other vegetation should be planted along the front of long buildings as necessary to soften the appearance of exterior walls. The spacing, size, and type of such trees or vegetation should be determined by the length, height, and blankness of such walls.
- b) Shrubs should be used to integrate the site, buildings, and other structures; dumpsters, accessory buildings and structures; "drive thru" windows; service areas; and signs. Shrubs should measure at least 24 inches in height.

37. Plant species:

- a) Plant species required should be as approved by the Staff based upon but not limited to the *Generic Landscape Plan Recommended Species List* and *Native Plants for Virginia Landscapes* .

38. Plant health:

- a) The following note should be added to the landscape plan: "All site plantings of trees and shrubs shall be allowed to reach, and be maintained at, mature height; the topping of trees is prohibited. Shrubs and trees shall be pruned minimally and only to support the overall health of the plant."

***Site development and layout:***

**Development pattern**

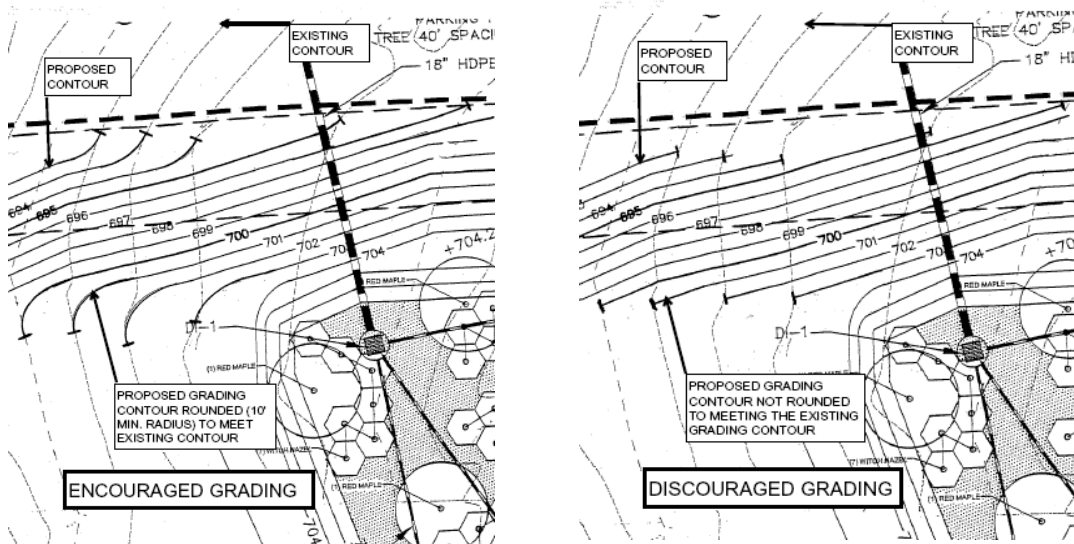
39. The relationship of buildings and other structures to the Entrance Corridor street and to other development within the corridor should be as follows:

- a) An organized pattern of roads, service lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian walks should guide the layout of the site.

- b) In general, buildings fronting the Entrance Corridor street should be parallel to the street. Building groupings should be arranged to parallel the Entrance Corridor street.
- c) Provisions should be made for connections to adjacent pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems.
- d) Open spaces should be tied into surrounding areas to provide continuity within the Entrance Corridor.
- e) If significant natural features exist on the site (including creek valleys, steep slopes, significant trees or rock outcroppings), to the extent practical, then such natural features should be reflected in the site layout. If the provisions of Section 32.5.6.n of the *Albemarle County Zoning Ordinance* apply, then improvements required by that section should be located so as to maximize the use of existing features in screening such improvements from Entrance Corridor streets.
- f) The placement of structures on the site should respect existing views and vistas on and around the site.

**Site Grading**

40. Site grading should maintain the basic relationship of the site to surrounding conditions by limiting the use of retaining walls and by shaping the terrain through the use of smooth, rounded land forms that blend with the existing terrain. Steep cut or fill sections are generally unacceptable. Proposed contours on the grading plan shall be rounded with a ten foot minimum radius where they meet the adjacent condition. Final grading should achieve a natural, rather than engineered, appearance. Retaining walls 6 feet in height and taller, when necessary, shall be terraced and planted to blend with the landscape.



41. No grading, trenching, or tunneling should occur within the drip line of any trees or other existing features designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness. Adequate tree protection fencing should be shown on, and coordinated throughout, the grading, landscaping and erosion and sediment control plans.
42. Areas designated for preservation in the final Certificate of Appropriateness should be clearly delineated and protected on the site prior to any grading activity on the site. This protection should remain in place until completion of the development of the site.
43. Preservation areas should be protected from storage or movement of heavy equipment within this area.
44. Natural drainage patterns (or to the extent required, new drainage patterns) should be incorporated into the finished site to the extent possible.

45. Fuel Pump Canopies

*(Adopted by the ARB on August 25, 1998, revised October 13, 2004)*

- a) Fuel pump canopies may be required to provide customers with protection from the elements and to provide lighting levels required for dispensing fuel. Such fuel pump canopies are functional elements of present-day gas/convenience stores and their character and appearance shall reflect a minimalist design consistent with that function.
- b) Fuel pump canopies shall be the smallest size possible to offer protection from the elements. Canopies shall not exceed the sizes identified in Standards for Fuel Pump Canopies as outlined in Appendix B.
- c) The size of the canopy fascia and canopy support columns shall be in proportion to the overall size of the canopy structure. The fascia shall not exceed 36" in total height, including any accent bands.
- d) Canopy fascias shall not be illuminated.
- e) Lighting of fuel pump canopies shall be of the lowest level that will provide safe dispensing of fuel. All canopy lighting shall be flush-mounted and shielded, downward directed, and shall not emit light above the horizontal plane. All canopy lighting shall meet the .5 foot-candle spillover requirement in compliance with zoning ordinance regulations.
- f) Canopy related elements, including fuel dispensers, support columns, spandrels, planters, etc. shall be compatible with the character of the building and site and shall not be used for advertising.
- g) The architectural elements of a building should not be altered to reflect trademark canopy design.

- h) Canopy fascias shall be limited to the use of one principal color, with ARB review.
- i) Colors, materials, forms, and detailing may be used to coordinate canopies with a site, its building(s), and structures.
- j) Fuel pump canopy applicants should refer to ARB Standards for Fuel Pump Canopies. (Appendix B)

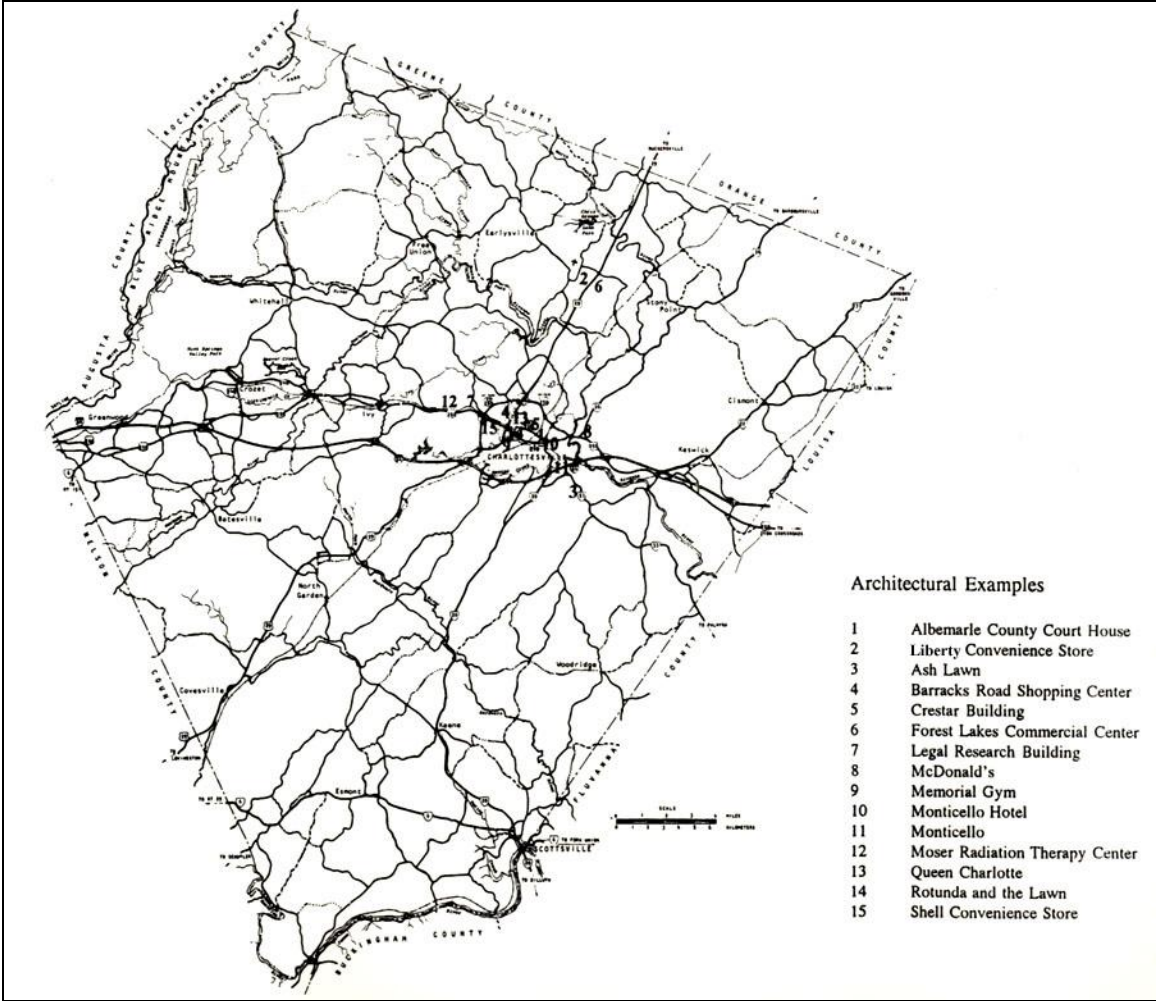
## APPENDIX A

The following list contains properties that serve as examples for architecture and site design proposed within the Entrance Corridor Overlay District. The list contains historic buildings as well as more recently constructed buildings. The buildings are located within Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville.

Albemarle County Court House  
Albemarle First Bank (Route 29 North)  
Liberty Station & Convenience Store (previously Amoco, intersection of Route 29 North and Airport Road)  
Ash Lawn  
Barracks Road Shopping Center (Barracks Road and Emmet Street intersection)  
Crestar Building (High Street)  
Forest Lakes Commercial Area (intersection of Route 29 North and Airport Road)  
Ivy Commons (Ivy Road)  
Legal Research Building (Route 250 West)  
McDonald's (intersection of Route 250 East and Route 20 North)  
Memorial Gym (University of Virginia)  
Monticello  
Moser Radiation Therapy Center (Route 250 West)  
Peter Jefferson Place (Route 250 East)  
Queen Charlotte (High Street)  
Rotunda and the Lawn (University of Virginia)  
Shell Convenience Store Building (Route 250 East)  
Wachovia Bank (Route 29 North)

The buildings as noted above are either historically significant or serve as examples of architecture compatible with historically significant buildings in the Charlottesville and Albemarle area and serve as examples of shapes, structures, materials, colors, textures, site development, and the integration of site and structure which are encouraged by these guidelines.

It should be recognized, however, that replication of these examples will not necessarily result in the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Architectural Review Board because each building site and its context is unique.



## APPENDIX B

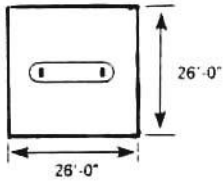
### Standards for Fuel Pump Canopies

(Adopted by the ARB on August 13, 1998)

#### LENGTH

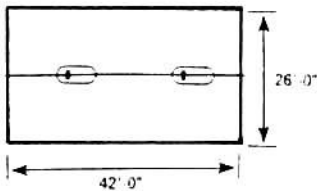
Maximum length for a single island canopy = 26'

(= 4' comfort zone front + 18' auto length + 4' comfort zone back)



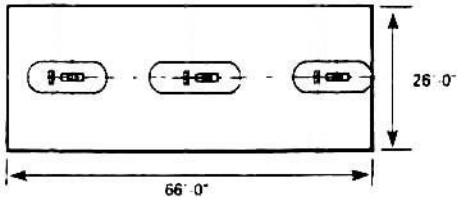
Maximum length for a double island canopy = 42'

(= 2' comfort zone front + 18' auto length + 2' comfort zone middle + 18' auto length + 2' comfort zone back)



Maximum length for a triple island canopy = 66'

(= 3' comfort zone front + 18' auto length + 3' comfort zone middle + 18' auto length + 3' comfort zone back + 18' auto length + 3' comfort zone back)

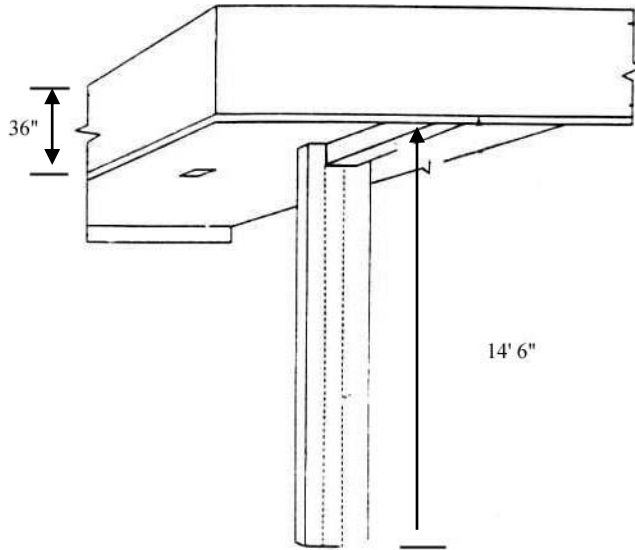


#### WIDTH

Maximum width for single island canopies = 26'. (= 3' (open door overhang) + 6' (car width) + 2' (curb clearance) + 4' (island width) + 2' (curb clearance) + 6' (car width) + 3' (open door overhang))

**HEIGHT (from ground to bottom of fascia)**  
Maximum acceptable height is 14' 6".

**FASCIA HEIGHT**  
Maximum fascia height is 36".



**FUEL DISPENSER SIZE**  
A typical size is 7' 9" high (approximately half the minimum canopy height), 4'6" wide, 32" deep.

**ISLAND SIZE**  
A typical size is 12-14' long, 4' wide, 9" tall.