

# *Wick Avenue*



## Institutional Design Guidelines

**Wick Neighbors, Inc.**

*Building a neighborhood for creative living, working  
and learning in the Heart of the City*

June 2006

## **Wick Neighbors, Inc.**

*Mission Empowered by the stakeholders, Wick Neighbors will promote and guide their interests through collaboration, planning and design, development and the promotion of the Wick District's cultural, religious, educational and business community.*

*Purpose The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure the overall quality of design, construction and material as the Wick District/Smoky Hollow Development Plan unfolds over the years. This commitment to quality has been a core value of Wick Neighbors, Inc. since it began in September of 2003. Visual quality and aesthetics are fundamental to the Wick District's market image as a new neighborhood for creative living, working and learning and will attract new residents, employers, employees, customers and audiences. And this success will depend on the cooperation of all stakeholders.*

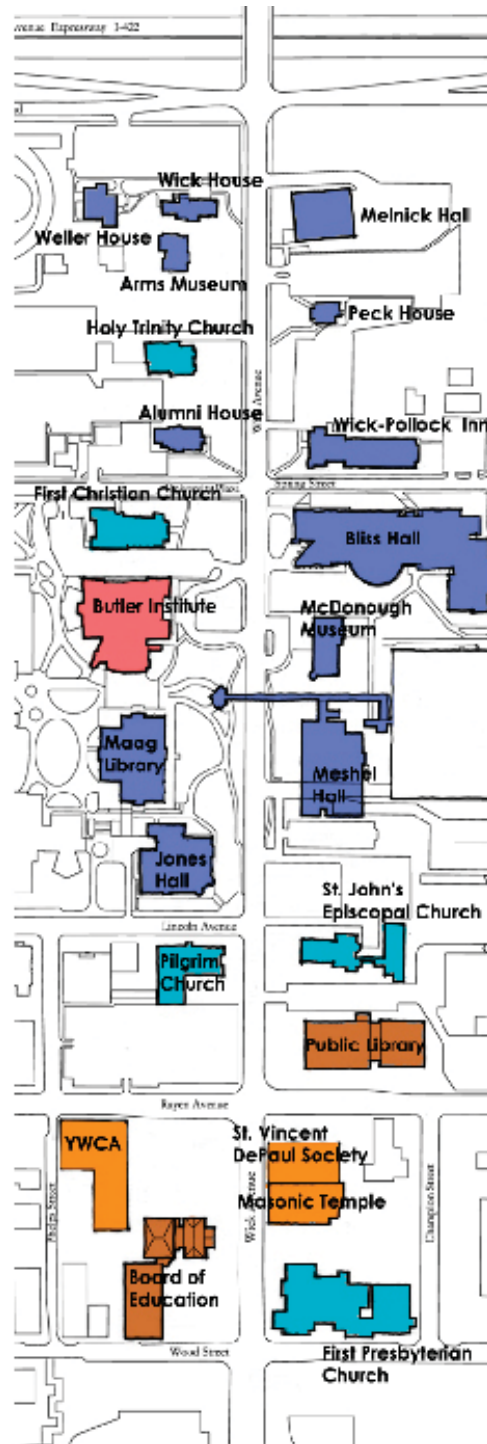
# Contents

1 Wick Avenue Overview .....	1
2 Purpose of the Guidelines .....	2
3 Modifications to Existing Buildings .....	3
4 New Construction.....	5
5 Signage.....	7
6 Parking.....	8
7 Landscape/Victorian Lawns .....	10
8 Streetscape.....	12
9 Gateways.....	13



### Current Uses

- University
- Museum
- Church
- Social Service
- Government



## 1. Wick Avenue Overview

*A Community Coming Together to Build a Neighborhood for Creative Living, Working and Learning in the Heart of the City.*

Wick Neighbors, Inc. is a nonprofit community development corporation serving the Wick District of Youngstown, Ohio. The Wick District boundaries are Madison Avenue to the north, Wood Street to the south, Andrews Avenue and Crab Creek to the east, and the west side of Wick Avenue.

Wick Avenue, one of the main north-south arteries in Youngstown was originally the City's "Millionaire's Row" and cultural center. The street was named for one of the most important early Youngstown families and housed many of the City's elite by the mid-nineteenth century. At the same time, several important cultural institutions also located on Wick Avenue, including the Mahoning County Court House, Rayen School (the city's first public high school), First Presbyterian Church and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church. The trend toward a mixed residential and cultural district on Wick Avenue continued into the early twentieth century. Between 1860 and 1920, a number of leading families built new mansions on both sides of Wick Avenue. Other important cultural structures also appeared at this time including the main branch of the Rueben McMillan Free Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County, St. John's Episcopal Church, the Butler Institute of American Art, the Masonic Temple, First Christian Church and First Reformed Church. Concurrent with the residential and cultural development of Wick Avenue was also the appearance of some commercial activity, including several new car dealerships, architects' offices, music teachers' studios and doctors' offices. As Youngstown State University grew, it began to expand into the Wick Avenue neighborhood. For many years, ysu purchased and renovated existing buildings. When the school became a state institution, it built many new structures along Wick Avenue, including Maag Library, Meshel Hall and Bliss Hall. Today, the street is a mixture of university buildings, private institutions and public agencies.



*Jones Hall*

## 2. Purpose of the Guidelines

The *Wick Avenue Institutional Design Guidelines* address all of the institutional buildings along Wick Avenue, in an effort to preserve and reinforce the historical and architectural character of the street. Guidelines for the Wick Avenue streetscape and landscape are also included. The *Guidelines* promote a consistently high level of design quality by providing a general framework for making design decisions along the street, as well as specific standards related to building details, landscaping, infrastructure and signage. The guidelines embrace the values of historic preservation and sustainability through an emphasis on enhancing the quality and character of Wick Avenue. The *Guidelines* and the design review process provide the following benefits:

- Preservation and enhancement of the unique character of Wick Avenue.
- Enhancement of property values through a collective community commitment to neighborhood placemaking and identity.
- Increased interest and investment by property owners and tenants in improving the image of their properties.
- Protection of property owners' and tenants' investments by promoting compatible development on neighboring properties.

The guidelines are divided into sections which address renovations and new construction, landscape, streetscape, parking, signage, infrastructure and neighborhood gateways.



*Rayen Board of Education Building*

### 3. Modifications to Existing Buildings

#### A. General Guidelines

1. Preserve the distinguishing original character and distinctive architectural features which characterize a building or a site.
2. Repair, rather than replace, deteriorated architectural features whenever possible.

#### B. Design Elements

1. Do not block or cover existing doors or windows.
2. A building's entrance can be enhanced with the installation of accent lighting, planters, or other features that highlight existing architectural details.
3. Secondary entrances, convenient to rear or side parking areas, should be well-lit and inviting.
4. Locate mechanical equipment so that it is not visible from the street. Existing parapet walls can provide screening for rooftop equipment; screen ground level equipment with evergreen landscaping.

#### C. Building Additions

1. Design additions and auxiliary structures to complement, but not copy, the original building.
2. Respect the style, height, form, roof shapes and massing of the original building when designing an addition.
3. A building set back line of approximately 50 feet from the property boundary has been established by many of the existing building. This set back shall be respected by any new construction. The space between the building and Wick Avenue shall continue the "Victorian Lawn" theme
4. Use compatible exterior building materials for building additions.

#### D. Materials

1. Maintain stone on boundary walls and markers.
2. Do not sandblast masonry or wood surfaces. Sandblasting permanently erodes surfaces and accelerates deterioration.
3. For historic buildings, use historically appropriate colors when re-painting.

#### E. Lighting

1. Distinctive, well-designed exterior lighting will accent a building's architectural features, heighten security, and enhance the night-time view of the building.
2. Avoid excessive lighting levels that create daytime light levels. Where possible use low level light poles or wall mounted fitting rather than high, high-intensity lighting.
3. Hide or shield exterior light fixtures so that the light produced does not infiltrate neighboring properties.
3. Select the type, height and location of fixtures, and the color of the light to avoid subjecting pedestrians or motorists to glare.

*Building top*

*Middle*

*Base*



## 4. New Construction

New institutional buildings should be designed to respect the height, massing and architectural character of Wick Avenue.

### A. Building Orientation and Setback

1. Orient buildings to Wick Avenue. The principal entrance should be on Wick Avenue.
2. The Wick Avenue façade should be parallel to the street and align with the established setback of adjacent buildings.
3. Buildings and public facilities must be accessible to both the handicapped and the disabled.

### B. Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation

1. Design new buildings to a high standard of operating efficiency.
2. Design buildings to incorporate natural light and ventilation, where possible.
3. Use photovoltaic (PV) roof panels, where possible, to supplement a building's energy needs.
4. Reduce water usage through low-flow plumbing fixtures or by incorporating grey water recycling within buildings.
5. Use "energy-scaping" techniques to reduce cooling needs through the strategic use of new and existing vegetation.

### C. Construction Materials

1. Use recycled and green building materials for new construction.
2. Consider locally- and regionally- produced materials, where available.

### D. Adaptability

1. Design buildings for full adaptability over their lifespan.
2. Design flexible spaces that can be adapted to changes in the needs of building occupants.

#### **E. Building Walls**

1. Design street-facing façades to enhance the pedestrian experience with multiple views into the building.
2. Walls facing a street or public parking area should be designed in small sections to break up a long, horizontal expanses of wall through the use of canopies, bays or projections.
3. Provide a change in color, material, fenestration or a change in the depth of material for walls facing a street or parking area.
4. Design buildings with a base, middle and top.
5. Clad buildings in durable materials such as brick, stone, terra cotta or tile..
6. Stucco or synthetic stucco (EIFS) is not permitted as the primary cladding material.
7. Use accent materials such as tile, metal or other traditional, regional materials.
8. Brick or stone should be laid in a true bonding pattern. Stack bond is not permitted.

#### **F. Windows and Doors**

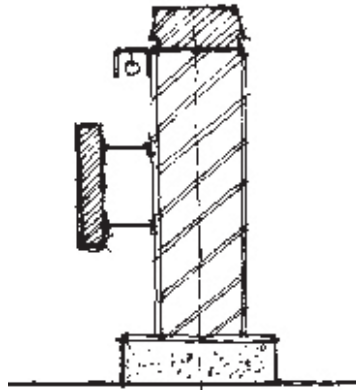
1. Windows should be of square or vertical proportion.
2. Primary glass should be clear.

#### **G. Building Height**

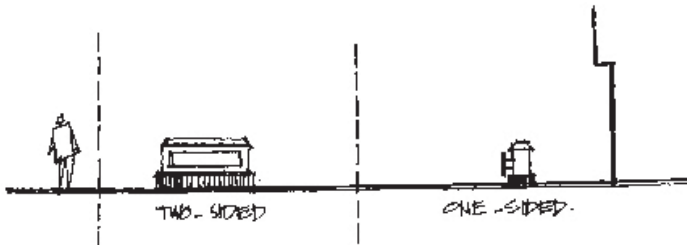
1. The maximum building height is 50 feet above ground level finish floor. This includes entrance parapets, architectural elements and other accent features.

#### **H. Building Roofs, Parapets and Cornices**

1. Roofs may be pitched, flat, or a combination thereof.
2. Design parapets to conceal rooftop mechanical units.
3. If a change in parapet height exceeds two feet, the parapet should return 90 degrees on both sides by a minimum of one foot, four inches.
4. Elevations or portions of elevations that are visible from a street or parking area should incorporate a cornice or other architectural element to top the building. Cornices may be projected brick, stone or precast courses, terra cotta, or molded fiberglass. They should be scaled appropriately to the building mass and be at least eight inches high.



*Signs should be externally lit.*



*Monument signs near the street should be double-sided and perpendicular to Wick Avenue; signs near the building should be single-sided and parallel to the street.*

## 5. Signage

### A. General Guidelines

1. Signs should include only the formal name of the institution or business and the street number. There shall be no advertising or brand names, although church signs traditionally indicate the time of services.
2. Backlit, flashing or moving signs are not permitted.
3. Signs must be externally lit. External light sources shall be shielded from viewers on the street to prevent glare.

### B. Monument Signs

1. Monument signs are the preferred signage type for buildings along Wick Avenue
2. One monument sign is permitted per building.
3. Signs shall be setback at least 5 feet from the right-of-way.
4. If a monument sign is located within the first 15 feet of the building setback, it shall be double-sided and placed perpendicular to Wick Avenue. If a monument sign is located more than 15 feet from the right-of-way, it should be one-sided and placed parallel to Wick Avenue.
5. Design signs to be architecturally compatible, in size, materials and detail, with the buildings to which they are related.
6. Monument signs shall be designed to a pedestrian scale, although they must also be legible to passing motorists.
7. Monument signs shall not exceed five feet in height and fifty (50) square feet in area.
8. Do not site a monument sign in a way that blocks site lines; clear site lines must be maintained along the public right-of-way for vehicular and pedestrian safety and the entire building should be visible from the street and sidewalk.
10. Low-level signage parallel to the street is permitted along the building line on walls used to screen parking or to maintain privacy.

SERIFED SIGN

SAN SERIF SIGN

*Serifed letter styles are more appropriate than  
san serif letters*

#### C. Wall Signs

1. Wall signs will be considered for buildings properties where monument signs are not feasible or appropriate.
2. Only one sign is permitted per street front, so a combination of a wall and monument sign is only possible for corner properties.
3. Integrate wall signs into the architecture of the buildings to which they are attached.
4. Do not cover ornamental features of a building with signage.

#### D. Style and Size of Letters

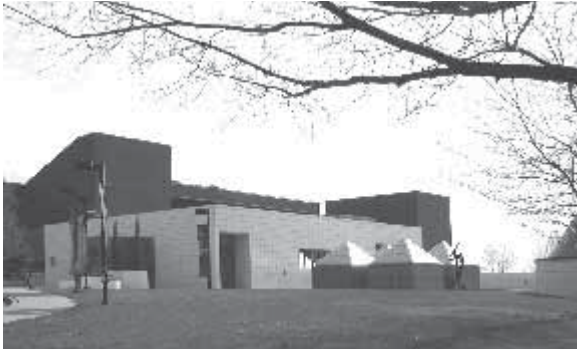
1. There are many letter styles available. The primary lettering styles used in the 19th Century were serifed and these styles are strongly recommended.
2. The maximum height of letters shall not exceed 75% of the height of the background on which they appear.

#### E. Temporary Signs

1. Temporary signs advising of exhibits, shows, concerts, special church services, etc. are permitted.
2. Where temporary signs are anticipated on a regular basis, space should be incorporated into the monuments sign designed to accept temporary information. Other temporary signs are permitted only if mounted on the face of the building.

#### F. Traffic-related signage

1. Directional parking and other ancillary signs for Institutions along Wick Avenue shall conform to the standard pattern established by Wick Neighbors, Inc.



*McDonough Museum*



*Parking lot fences should be appropriate to an urban setting*



*Fence screening parking*

## 6. Parking

### A. General Guidelines

1. When designing parking lots, it is important to establish vehicular or pedestrian links to adjacent properties to facilitate pedestrian movement and shared parking during peak use.
2. Standard parking spaces should be at least nine feet wide. Ten-foot-wide spaces are permitted, but nine-foot-wide spaces are preferred to minimize the pavement needed for parking areas.
3. Handicapped spaces must meet ADA regulations.
4. Shared parking is encouraged throughout the district.
5. Use curbs with perforations to allow for drainage instead of concrete stop blocks. Curbs better resist damage from snowplows and protect planted areas from being damaged by vehicles.
6. Stripe lot spaces and travel lanes to clarify traffic circulation.

### B. Siting

1. Parking shall be located behind the front line of existing buildings.

### C. Screening and Landscaping

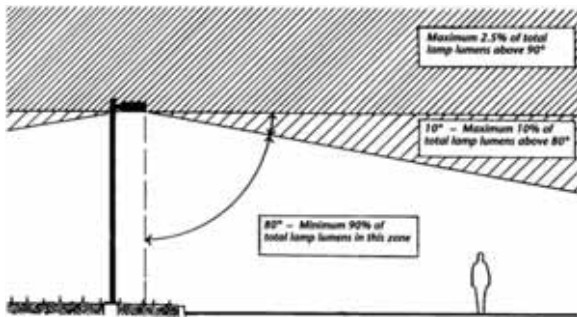
1. Parking must be screened from front, side and rear views with a wall or fence along the building line.
2. Fencing may be used, behind the building line, in combination with plant materials to screen parking areas.
3. Minimize turnaround areas to allow for green space and plantings around and within surface parking lots.
4. Landscaping for parking lots that hold more than ten cars shall cover at least five percent of the total lot area.
5. Trees are encouraged to soften the appearance of surface parking areas and to absorb heat. Shade trees should be provided at a rate of one for every ten cars.
6. The landscaping of parking lots can serve an environmental function as natural collec-



*Granite pavers provide durable and beautiful parking surfaces*



*Permeable parking surface*



*Cut-off fixture for pedestrian and parking lot lighting*

tion areas for stormwater runoff. Use ground covers or grasses to collect and filter surface runoff.

8. Choose hardy, salt tolerant trees, shrubs and groundcover for parking areas.
9. Develop a plan for removing and storing snow. Piling snow on planting beds should be avoided.

#### D. Materials

1. Pave parking lots with brick or granite pavers to reinforce the urban, institutional image of the district.
2. Permeable surfaces should be considered for parking lots to control stormwater runoff.

#### E. Lighting

1. Parking lots must be well-lit for pedestrian safety and protection from vandalism.
2. Light internal parking areas with omni-directional floodlights, located along principle parking aisles.
3. Employ "lightshielding" techniques for parking lots to minimize unnecessary light runoff while maintaining a high level of safety.
4. Entrances to parking areas should be well-lit and clearly marked.
5. Accent lighting is encouraged in the landscape strip around the perimeter of parking lots; this lighting should be located so as not to create an obstacle for pedestrians.



*Existing lawn setbacks*

## 7. Landscape/Victorian Lawns

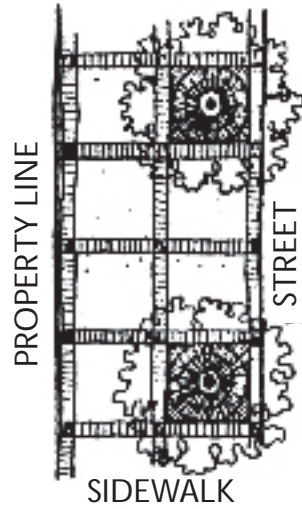
A large front lawn is a defining characteristic of the landscape of Wick Avenue. Plant materials and design features for front lawn landscapes are encouraged to reinforce the historic character of the Street.

1. Front lawns should be composed primarily of grass with shade trees and shrubs; other plant materials should be limited to foundation screening.
  - Plant grass in front lawns.
  - Retain existing stone retaining walls or reconstruct historic stone walls.
  - No buildings, fences or walls, other than those mentioned above, and only monument sign walls should be located in the space between street and front line of buildings.
  - Locate dumpsters behind the front building line. Dumpsters must be screened on all sides with an opaque enclosure.
  - Restore, preserve, and landscape the historic bridge in the Maag library forecourt lawn.
2. Use trees within the lawn to shade parts of buildings where direct sun is unwelcome and to frame the approach to the building.
  - Weeping trees and trees with interesting colored phase or notable shaped leaves were popular during the Victorian era and would be appropriate in the neighborhood.
  - Exotic trees may also be displayed as specimen plantings in the lawn.
3. Shrubs and Flowers
  - Deciduous shrubs and vines are appropriate; mixing species of shrubs was common during the Victorian era.
  - Use shrubs to screen unsightly elements of the landscape, such as ground level mechanical equipment or parking areas.
  - Carpet bedding, using flowers of a single height, was popular in the Victorian era.
  - Roses were also very popular; climbing varieties were often trained over a trellis, bower or pergola.





*Pedestrian scale lighting*



*Decorative paving materials enhance the "sidewalk floor"*



*Landscape barriers should be eliminated*

## 8. Streetscape

### A. Sidewalks and Crosswalks

1. Sidewalk material along both sides of Wick Avenue should be consistent from Madison Freeway to Wood Street.
2. The "sidewalk floor" should not be a neutral ribbon of asphalt or concrete. It should be an equal partner with the buildings along Wick Avenue in terms of scale, proportion, texture and color. Points of dramatic paving materials are encouraged, provided that the design is compatible with the overall character of buildings along the street.

### B. Lighting

1. Streetlights should provide illumination for vehicles and pedestrians.
2. Pedestrian lighting should reinforce the historic, urban character of the street.

### C. Overhead Wires

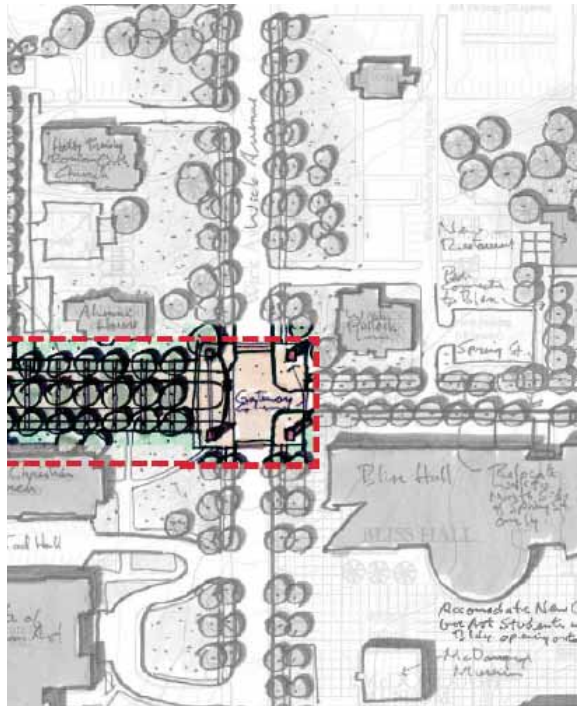
1. Bury utilities and power lines wherever possible.

### D. Barriers

1. Lawns should extend to the right-of-way; landscape barriers along the sidewalk edge should be eliminated.

### E. Crosswalks

1. Pedestrian crosswalks should be clearly identified. Brick pavers or colored concrete with a brick pattern should be used at all street intersections.
2. At key pedestrian intersections, the intersection panel (the area bounded by the crosswalks) should be differentiated from the roadway surface. These panels are appropriately sited for integral public art.



*Gateway at Wick Avenue and Spring Street*

## 9. Gateways

1. Establish a southbound gateway at the intersection of Wick Avenue and the Madison Freeway to mark the entrance to the Downtown and the Wick Avenue District.
2. Establish a northbound gateway at the intersection of Wick Avenue and Rayen Avenue.
3. Create a prominent gateway at the intersection of Wick Avenue and Spring Street, the "front door" of the vsu campus.
4. Gateway elements should be permanent and of an urban character that reflects the historic heritage of the neighborhood. Gateway elements should be illuminated to have an impact at night, but should not include flashing lights or chaser panels.
5. Establish primary links between the vsu campus, Wick Avenue and Smoky Hollow in the space between Bliss Hall and the McDonough Museum and through St. John's Church.



*Gateway at Wick Avenue and the Madison Freeway*