

## Design Code Stakeholder Comments as of February 16, 2024

1.

I'm writing to provide some feedback on the proposed change to the ULDC. I see the modification and I assume that the intent is to eliminate a cheap look and feel to buildings that would diminish our city's quality standard. This is a good goal.

The specific language of 407.105.a.3.b could lead to unintended consequences. For example, to the layperson who may be tasked with reviewing compliance, any material that would be defined as "smooth" could be denied approval. Here are a few examples of materials that might be deemed inappropriate, but in fact might be excellent choices that elevate the quality of our built environment:

Brick. <https://www.beldenbrick.com/brick/brick-colors/color/smooth>

Glass. <https://www.pinterest.com/bachacopensante/glass-details-architecture/>

Metal panels. [https://longboardproducts.com/exterior-products/cladding?](https://longboardproducts.com/exterior-products/cladding?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjAwbitBhDIARIsABfFYIjmsvXtcN1bY3x4QdvavAlz6iGqfLVYEoYxHXPTOGtN3pGNgy1cOcaAigzEALw_wcB)

[gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjAwbitBhDIARIsABfFYIjmsvXtcN1bY3x4QdvavAlz6iGqfLVYEoYxHXPTOGtN3pGNgy1cOcaAigzEALw\\_wcB](https://longboardproducts.com/exterior-products/cladding?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjAwbitBhDIARIsABfFYIjmsvXtcN1bY3x4QdvavAlz6iGqfLVYEoYxHXPTOGtN3pGNgy1cOcaAigzEALw_wcB)

Concrete block: <https://basalite.ca/product/ground-face-concrete-block/>

The goal of what "finished" will look like is clearly established in the preceding items. This line of requirements is an attempt to engineer a perfect outcome and will certainly introduce distracting discussions from all parties. My suggestion would be to eliminate line "b" in its entirety.

Thanks for your time!

**Joe Walker AIA**

**President, Managing Partner**

LEED AP BD+C

2.

I received an email through the AIA requesting feedback on Sec. 407.105. Required design elements. I would love to share some thoughts about item #3 (my thoughts are in blue):

(3) *Exterior treatment.*

a. The exterior facade treatment shall consist of a minimum of two (2) different building materials, textures, or finishes. *More distinction between what is meant by "materials" and "finishes" would be helpful. For example, is cementitious lap siding considered a material or a finish? Could you use all lap siding and just paint it two different colors, since paint is a finish? Or, is this left vague to allow for creativity and interpretation?*

b. The predominant building material along a primary facade shall not consist of smooth-faced concrete block or other smooth-faced finish stucco. *I think it would be more effective to dictate the level of fenestration and articulation they'd like to see rather than exclude the use of any reasonable building materials. There is nothing objectively wrong with concrete or stucco, and both are very durable longlasting products that can be used quite beautifully. They can also be used to make plain, ugly buildings. I get the sense that this clause is aiming to reduce the amount of smooth, blank wall area on a street-facing facade. It should be phrased in a way that limits monotony, not materiality.*

*An example might be, "the predominant building material shall not be used in increments of more than X feet in any direction without a joint/trim/material change/etc." This would allow architects to design the building using the most reasonable choice of material for the site conditions while limiting the ability to make something that doesn't add visual texture to the streetscape (if that is the county's goal).*

c. The use of high-intensity colors, metallic, black or neon colors are prohibited. Neon tubing shall be used only as a trim element or to accentuate architectural features. *"High Intensity" is a subjective description. I might rephrase it to say "highly saturated" and prescribe a level of color saturation allowed for exterior coatings.*

Thanks for your time and for reaching out to the AIA!

Regards,

Nancey Jones

3.

Our local AIA chapter forwarded the proposed changes to the ULDC, Article X, Sec. 407.105. I am an architect practicing in Alachua County for over 20 years. I would like to address some of the proposed requirements.

(2) Glazing

The 25% glazing is not clear, how many square feet (or percentage of first floor façade) would this be? Are the glazing requirements on upper floors? You may also want to specify the height/location of the glazing. The City of Gainesville clarifies a percentage of the façade (not length) to be located minimally between 3 feet and 8 feet above the finish floor. Additionally, requesting sills or framing around windows is limiting the architectural design. There are many gorgeous buildings with simple punch-out windows in facades without articulating frames or sills. See sample photos.

(3) Exterior treatment

I believe dictating or limiting materials is not going to be very effective to achieve the desired outcome the county is looking for. There are many great examples of stunning architecture that use “smooth-faced concrete block or other smooth-faced finishes”, and using only one material, texture or finish. I believe the wording is a bit ambiguous. Do Frank Ghery’s or Tadao Ando’s smooth facades fall into this category as some of their buildings only use one material. See sample photos.

(3)-c. Limiting colors may make everything look homogenous. Just head down to SE Florida around West Palm to Boca Raton. Everything is tan, brown or taupe. I hope that is not the goal for our county. High intensity colors can also be balanced by adjacent colors, and the term “high-intensity” is quite subjective. Having a bright accent color can accentuate the features of a building. Would Shands Childrens Hospital not be allowed in the county? See sample photos.

Prohibiting metallic facades is also not recommended. Metal is a great exterior material for our climate. It sheds water better, reflects heat better, and lasts longer than most standard materials. I actually wrapped my entire house in corrugated metal for these reasons. There are many different textures and patterns of metal siding. See sample photos.

Regarding Neon tubing, you may want to broaden this as there is now LED strip lighting and other types of lighting that mimic neon.

(b) Roof lines:

(2) I believe stunning buildings can be designed without “two or more plane breaks or slopes per elevation”. If a building has a continual parapet and simply steps part of the building 2 feet would it meet the intent of this (2)?

(c) Entryways:

I believe having the options 1 through 5 is helpful.

I have attached some photos of existing buildings that may not be permitted if these codes are approved as is.

I was on the development review board for the City of Gainesville for 8 years. Design standards were always a challenge. Maybe instead of these limiting rules, a design committee can be formed (including architects and planners) to review the projects. If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me.

Joshua Shatkin



Metal Façade



CMU Facade



Metal, No Window Trim



Vitra Design Museum-Frank Gehry



No Window Trim





Hirshhorn Museum DC – No Roof Breaks



Miami Red Stair

4.

Thanks for sending this on. I am not sure that your suggested change of language really addresses my concerns or allows for traditional stucco to be specified. I am not completely sure what the goal is. But, if you are trying to prevent just having monolithic walls, perhaps the way to address it is based on a percentage fenestration rather than trying to limit the material. Your suggested language, for instance, would allow for a full wall of textured acrocrete or Drivlt but prevent a wall of hand troweled smooth stucco.

I do a fair amount of work in historic areas in St Pete. The City there has a spreadsheet calculator for sowing the percentage of fenestration and percentage of transparency. City of Gainesville already has a glazing percentage requirement. I would think that just adding general total fenestration would make sense.

I am happy to discuss it further; sorry that we have had trouble connecting via phone.

Thank you,  
Jennifer

5.

Hope all is well! I wanted to weigh in here with some input, mainly to make sure architects are still able to spec other "smooth" finish materials that would be an alternate to stucco.

ACM (aluminum composite metal) are a very nice finish, that are very smooth in nature so by the general use of the word smooth it might be excluded? A more defined word other than smooth may be very important here.

Could it be updated to read "field mixed and applied cementitious finish" ? This would then still allow hardie panels to be used, as they are not field mixed but are factory made and have a more durable finish.

I will point out that doing away with 51% of the facade not being able to be EIFS or smooth stucco may have other consequences. Well installed EIFS/stucco that is maintained, will be a nicer look when compared to hardie lap siding which would be a default material in a similar price range. So it's very important to not have buildings switch from EIFS to lap siding everywhere, as this isn't a good look for much more than a single story building.

I would also propose that the code allow for a smooth faced EIFS/stucco finish, but only if it meets a certain product spec/install spec/and come with a mandatory maintenance/paint plan as part of the approval.

Thanks!

**James Blythe**  
**Principal, AIA, LEED AP**

6.

AIA Gainesville passed the input request along to our chapter members, and upon review the revised verbiage looks to eliminate many materials (including but not limited to smooth hardi, phenolic, metal panel, smooth stucco/EIFS, smooth wood, untextured CIP/Precast/Tilt-up concrete, and glass) as predominant facade materials. Is this interpretation correct?

I understand the desire to preserve a contextual aesthetic and promote greater use of durable materials, but as written this seems very prohibitive. Perhaps some elaboration on materials than *can* be used or a more detailed explanation of intent/why certain materials cannot be used as a predominant material would be helpful.

Thank you!

**Adam Gayle**  
**Director of Architecture, AIA, LEED BD+C WELL AP**

7.

Thank you for the update to the process for the building design code changes. I have reviewed them and have a few suggestions below, and attached one sample photo.

(a)Building Design Standards (1)a. By requiring to "articulate the first story" you are limiting the expression of the verticality of a building and I am concerned that all buildings will have to incorporate a line or break between the first two floors. (See attached photo labeled "Exterior -no 1st story break. I suggest just omitting "the first story" and keeping the rest, or possibly changing it to the first two stories.

(a)Building Design Standards (1)b. I suggest changing "shall be used" to "may be used" as the "shall be used" implies that the design has to incorporate ALL the features listed.

(a)Building Design Standards (2)b.: I would suggest changing the “25% of the exterior siding material must be different” to be “25% of the exterior siding TEXTURE OR PATTERN must be different...” as the same material could be used but have a completely different appearance.

(3)Glazing. B.2. At very tight infill lots requiring 30% and 10% glazing at side walls can be very costly if it has to be in a fire rated wall and possibly conflicting with NFPA (fire code). To alleviate this I would suggest that the 30% and the 10% be required if there is a building separation of at least 10 feet from the adjacent building, (which drops the fire rating requirement).

(3)Glazing. C. I suggest if the entrance doors contain glazing (eg: storefront doors) this glazing should count as part of the required glazing.

(4)Utilities.a. Sometimes there are very tight lots and some utilities may need to be located at the front of the building (eg: fire sprinkler supply backflow preventers). These can be masked or covered. These may also be required by the utility company.

Thank you for your consideration, and feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Joshua Shatkin

