

MASONRY ORDINANCE CASE STUDY

CARMEL, INDIANA

In 2004 Money magazine listed suburban Carmel, Indiana as one of the "Top 10 Places To Live" in the Midwest and its 57,000 residents would agree. Carmel, Indiana is one of Indianapolis's fast growing suburbs having experienced a 75% increase in population in just 8 years. This rapid growth rate, however, has been well planned, mixing a boom of single and multifamily homes with commercial and office space.

Executive Summary

The City of Carmel, Indiana is one of the fastest growing communities in the nation. Carmel's Mayor and City Council have taken a proactive approach to this growth by implementing Architectural Standards which call for brick and masonry products for new housing subdivisions and commercial sites. While Carmel is still expanding, the community practices principles of sustainable development, using brick construction to promote quality design and a sense of place.

Just The Facts

- City: Carmel, Indiana
- Population: 57,000
- Area: 39.14 Square Miles
- Type of Government: Mayor/City Council
- Masonry Requirement: Site-specific
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Since the onset of its growth, quality development has been commonplace in Carmel, and the City has successfully utilized Architectural Standards that incorporate brick materials for new construction. "Brick has been used in some way in all new construction, making it the driving force of community

development," says Mike Hollibaugh, Carmel's Director of Community Services. "Developers are eager to take advantage of our robust economy, so we've enforced planning policies that require brick in virtually every design in order to achieve a consistent, high standard of architectural quality."

As new construction materials are developed, the City of Carmel responds to ensure future construction is of similar quality and design. In 2004, the Carmel City Council requested a review of the City's Architectural Standards from an Architectural Review Committee comprised of local architects, builders, and city planners. According to committee member and Carmel Building Commissioner Jeff Kendall, the recommendations were clear: the city needed to update its building code in order to continue to regulate the type and quality of materials allowed in new construction.

"The committee actually recommended prohibiting vinyl (siding) in all new development," said Kendall. "Even though the amendments we proposed weren't written into the code, we have continued to follow a policy of specifying the materials to be allowed in every new project, and it always includes brick."

Carmel has enjoyed remarkably consistent growth in recent years, reporting an average of 1,500 new building permits each year, of which approximately 800 are single-family homes. Typically, the city requires that a minimum percentage of brick or masonry be used in all new residential construction.

Commercial and office developments, such as the development occurring on Meridian Street are held to even stricter requirements. Meridian Street is home to the second highest concentration of workers in the state, many of whom are employed by healthcare and financial services that occupy the busy corridor. Within this designated overlay district, the City of Carmel requires that 100% of all new development be constructed with masonry products, and 80% of these masonry products are required to be brick.

Along Range Line Road, also within a designated overlay district, all new buildings must be constructed of brick or other masonry products. A similar requirement specified that Clay Terrace, a 450,000 square foot lifestyle shopping center, be constructed of brick on all four elevations. Major retailers are no exception to masonry requirements in Carmel. Lowe's and Target were also required to construct with brick according to Architectural Standards specific to these developments.

According to Hollibaugh, Architectural Standards that include brick will allow Carmel to "age gracefully," preserving its appeal and securing its economic viability in the future.

"As planners, we are pro-brick because of the standard it sets for the community overall," said Hollibaugh. "By force of our marketplace, we have seen a large amount of brick used as the product of choice, so our design policies and materials requirements are usually self-enforcing, since developers know what we are looking for in Carmel."

