



Introduction

Purpose

In order to preserve and enhance the rural, cultural, economic and historic character of the Town of Lexington, by providing detailed review of the design, layout, visual appearance, aesthetic character and economic value of commercial and industrial developments that have a substantial impact upon the character of the Town and upon traffic, utilities and services therein. And because excessive uniformity, dissimilarity, inappropriateness, or poor quality of design in the exterior appearance of structures and signs, and the lack of proper attention to site design in the major commercial corridors of the Town hinders the harmonious development of the Town, impairs the desirability of residence, investment or occupation in the Town, limits the opportunity to attain the optimum use and value of land and improvements, adversely affects the stability and value of property, produces degeneration of property in such areas with attendant deterioration of conditions affecting the peace, health and welfare of the town, and destroys a proper relationship between the taxable value of property and the cost of municipal services.

Please note that the purpose of this Architectural and Appearance Design Manual is *not* to encourage commercial development in residential areas of the Town of Lexington but to encourage *aesthetically pleasing* commercial development anywhere it might be within the

Town. The Town of Lexington's Zoning Ordinance governs the use of land and the location of commercial development.

Objectives

- Encourage originality, flexibility and innovation in site planning and development, including the architecture, landscaping and graphic design of said development;
- Discourage monotonous, drab, unsightly, dreary and inharmonious developments;
- Protect and enhance the appearance of development;
- Protect and enhance the Town's natural beauty, visual character and charm by insuring that structures, signs and other improvements are properly related to their sites; and to surrounding sites and structures; and that proper attention is given to the exterior appearance of structures, signs and other improvements;
- Protect and enhance the Town's appeal to residents and visitors and thus support and stimulate business and industry and promote the desirability of investment and occupancy in residential, commercial and industrial properties;

- Stabilize and improve property values and prevent blighted areas thus, increasing tax revenues;
- Implement design guidelines that have been included in plans adopted by Town Council;
- Sustain the comfort, health, tranquility and contentment of residents thus, promoting and protecting the peace, health and welfare of the Town.
- Promote conservation of buildings and groups of buildings that have aesthetic or historic significance; and
- Enhance the historical, social and economic viability of the town by preserving property values and promoting visual attractiveness.

The Architectural and Appearance Design Manual

This Architectural and Appearance Design Manual contains the guidelines that govern the aesthetics of structures, parking lots and facilities, landscaping and site design, and signs in the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District and the Downtown Special Overlay District of the Town of Lexington. It is derived from the Architectural and Appearance Standards Ordinance, which contains provisions that are not contained within this manual. If you would like to have a copy of this ordinance, please contact the Department of Planning, Building, and Technology at 356-5938.

The Zoning Administrator will use this manual when making decisions about whether to grant Preliminary Certificates of Appropriateness and Certificates of Appropriateness. The Board of Appearance will use this manual when hearing appeals of the Zoning Administrator's decisions regarding whether to grant Preliminary Certificates of Appropriateness and Certificates of Appropriateness. Property owners will use this manual to understand the aesthetic environment of the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District and to help make decisions about demolitions, removals, relocations, renovations and new construction.

Please note that the positive photos in this Architectural and Appearance Design Manual (marked by ★) depict projects that meet a particular guideline but they do not depict the *only* acceptable way for projects to meet a particular guideline. Conversely, the negative photos (marked by ⓧ) depict projects that do not meet a particular guideline but they do not depict the *only* way that projects might fall short of meeting a particular guideline. Furthermore, simply because a project is depicted as a positive example of one guideline does not necessarily mean that it is a positive example of another guideline.

The Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District

The Town of Lexington has established a Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District. As with all overlay

districts the Town Council has made the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District part of the official zoning map of the Town of Lexington after the Planning Commission's recommendation.

This district is comprised of property that fronts or primarily accesses the roads in the Town that are considered to mainly be commercial in nature or are expected to become mainly commercial in nature. A map of this district is located in Appendix A.

A portion of the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District is also located in the Downtown Special Overlay District. This overlapping section has additional guidelines outlined within this manual that not only give direction about the appearance of this district but also strive to preserve the historic fabric of Downtown Lexington.

The Board of Appearance

Town Council appoints the members of the Board of Appearance. The Board of Appearance functions to hear appeals regarding the Zoning Administrator's determination of whether to grant Preliminary Certificates of Appropriateness and Certificates of Appropriateness.

Chapter 1 – The Process

Applicable projects

The standards contained within this manual apply to the following types of development within the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District located in the Town of Lexington:

- A. All demolition/removal/relocation of existing buildings or structures;
- B. All construction of commercial or institutional buildings or structures and all construction of residential structures where one building or structure contains three or more living units;
- C. Most renovations/expansions of commercial or institutional buildings or structures and most renovations/expansions of residential structures where one building or structure contains three or more living units;
- D. Most modifications of existing signs and most installations of new signs.

For particulars, see Town of Lexington Code of Ordinances Section 160.03.02.

Certificate of Appropriateness Required

A. To modify or install an applicable sign

Before modifying an existing sign (including repair) or installing a new sign in the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District, the applicant must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness if the sign is of a type that makes the standards contained within this manual applicable (see above). In order for the Zoning Administrator to review the modification or installation of such a sign for a Certificate of Appropriateness, the applicant needs only to submit a standard sign application. The Zoning Administrator will review this sign application to ensure that it meets the standards of this manual as well as the requirements of the Sign Ordinance.

B. To demolish/remove/relocate, renovate/expand, or construct an applicable building

Before receiving a permit to take any of the above listed actions on an applicable project in the Commercial Corridors Special Overlay District, the applicant must obtain a Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness for the action. Therefore, the applicant should apply for a Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness at the same time he/she applies to demolish/remove/relocate, renovate/expand or construct a building.

To apply for this certificate, the applicant should submit the following:

- Completed application form and fee (\$50);
- One stamped survey plat prepared within six months of the application filing date;
- Five copies of a site plan that includes the following:
 - Proposed footprint of the building(s);
 - Existing building(s) adjacent to the property lines;
 - Location of all parking areas, parking lot islands, driveways, sidewalks, loading areas, walls/fences, utilities, site lighting, drainage, site signage, at-grade mechanical units, dumpsters and all other site improvements;
 - Building setbacks as required by the Zoning Ordinance; and
 - Parcel boundaries (all property lines shown).
- Five copies of a landscaping plan that includes planting details, a plant schedule, street trees, foundation plantings, all landscaping buffers, parking lot trees, existing trees to remain and trees to be removed;
- Five copies of dimensioned building elevations for all sides of the building(s) showing design of all elevations, existing grade, proposed grade, finish

floor elevations, roof slopes, mechanical vents and equipment, location and type of outdoor light fixtures, design and location of all wall sign(s) and notations regarding exterior colors and materials;

- Five copies of typical wall section(s) with information as described in item directly above;
- Materials specification outline with samples, brochures and/or photographs of all exterior building and site materials, finishes and fixtures;
- Contextual model showing new building(s) in existing environment if required by the Approving Authority; and
- Five copies of all final construction details for building(s), walls/fences, signs and any other improvements.

It may help the applicant to schedule a pre-meeting with the Zoning Administrator before applying for a Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness. This meeting, while optional, may save a significant amount of the owner's time. The owner should be prepared to describe the project in a much detail as possible during this meeting.

After the Zoning Administrator is satisfied that the proposed plan meets the standards contained within this manual, he/she will issue a Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. The Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness will allow the applicant to

move forward with obtaining the required permit to demolish/remove/relocate, renovate/expand or construct the building.

Once the project is complete but prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy, the Zoning Administrator shall inspect the project to assure that the applicant followed the plan he/she approved through the Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness. If the project is in compliance with that approved plan, the Zoning Administrator will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the project. This Certificate of Appropriateness will allow the applicant to move forward with obtaining the Certificate of Occupancy for the project.

A special note about removal/relocation/demolition:
Before anyone removes, relocates, or demolishes any structure or part of a structure within the Commercial

Corridors Special Overlay District, he/she must submit an application for a Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness. The Zoning Administrator will assess the application based on standards contained in Town of Lexington Code of Ordinances Section 160.03.03 to determine the historical and/or cultural significance of the structure. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the historical and/or cultural value of the building is greater than the proposed development, he/she may deny the Preliminary Certificate of Appropriateness, which will preclude the applicant from obtaining a demolition permit. However, any structure that the Building Official requires to be demolished due to concerns about public safety is exempt from this process.

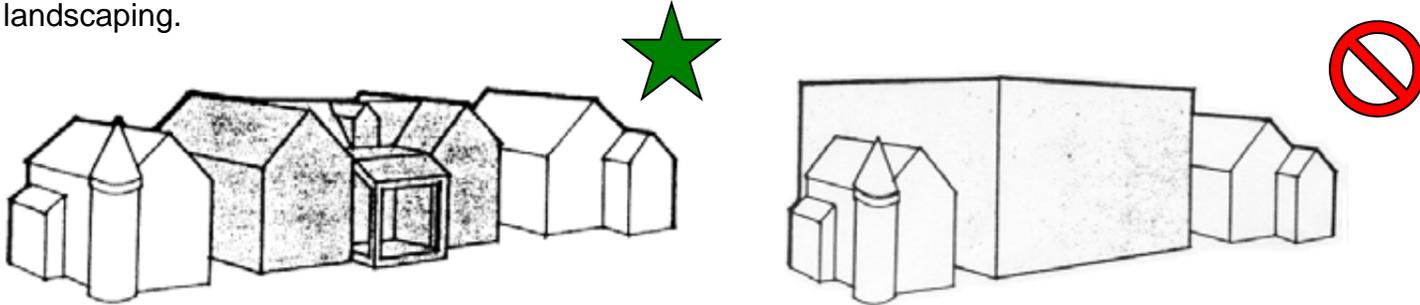
Chapter 2 –Structure Guidelines

COMPATIBILITY WITH COMMUNITY

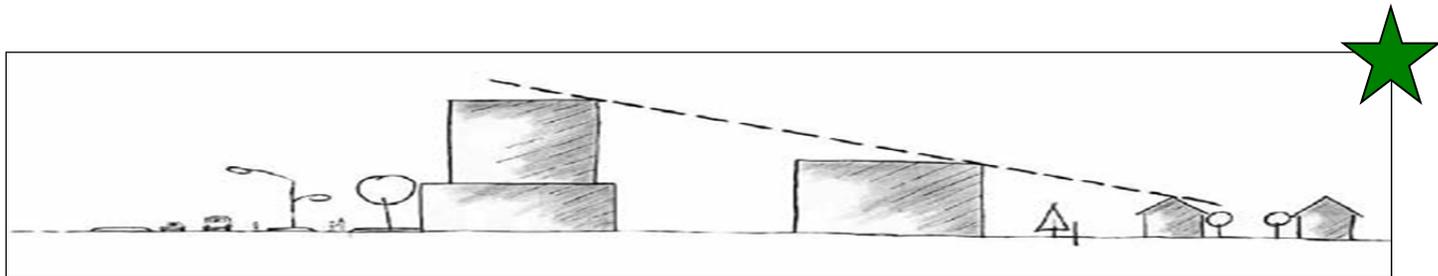
SG-1 Design new development to be compatible with the general physical character of adjacent neighborhoods. Protect and respond to the positive elements of the existing community fabric by including significant buildings, pedestrian routes and amenities and public facilities in the design by maintaining existing trees on the site keeping the existing building height, setbacks, building orientation and architectural styles of the community. Individual corporate image, trademark or marketing architectural design elements and colors shall be incorporated only as secondary design elements to the development and not as dominant elements. These design elements shall be compatible with surrounding development and shall not define the character or style of the building or development.



SG-2 Ensure that the structure is not of such mass that it dominates its surroundings or adjacent development. Use architectural form and detailing to reduce the appearance of the mass of the structure. While height limits are established in the Zoning Ordinance, design upper areas of taller structures to minimize their visual appearance. Larger structures will require a greater degree of sensitivity to site location and inclusion of larger forms of landscaping.



SG-3 Create a transition in the scale and density of the built form on the site when located next to lower density neighborhoods to mitigate any potential impact.



ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

SG-4 Provide significant architectural features to emphasize the public streets and enhance the streetscape.





SG-5 Coordinate architectural detail and character within an overall design concept for all building sides and components.



SG-6 Create visual interest and shadow play through techniques including but not limited to the use of offsetting planes with a variety of depths. Use projections, recesses, plazas, awnings, color and texture to reduce the visual size of any blank walls facing public areas or streets. Avoid monotonous unbroken planes or unrelieved repetition of shape in the form and shape of structures.



SG-7 Design secondary doors, such as emergency exit doors, to blend in with the building façade.



COLOR AND MATERIALS

SG-8 Color schemes shall tie building elements together, relate separate buildings within the same development and enhance the architectural form of a building. Façade colors must be low reflecting and subtle to ensure that a building's color does not compete for attention with neighboring buildings. Use warm, muted colors that have low reflectivity. Avoid the use of high intensity colors and or metallic or fluorescent colors.



SG-9 Use richer or deeper hues only to accent door or window trim and other small architectural details. Avoid the use of bright colors, such as primary or neon colors, that have intense or bright hues.



SG-10 Where building facades face a public street(s) or other public areas, compose them of appropriate materials as determined by the general environment of the Commercial Corridor Special Overlay District. Examples include brick, stone, stucco, wood, cementitious siding, wood shingles, or other materials that give the appearance of the above.



LIGHTING

SG-11 Provide lighting that is appropriate to the ground-floor use and that focuses on pedestrian areas.



SG-12 Use efficient white light sources on site to reduce energy costs and to create a natural color balance for safety and security.

SG-13 Design lighting so that light does not spill over onto or cast a glare onto adjacent uses.

SG-14 Use outdoor lighting that is in accordance with the design style of the project and is compatible with surrounding property lighting.



SCREENING OF CERTAIN ITEMS

SG-15 Enclose all utility equipment within buildings or screen it from both the public street(s) and other public areas, and ensure that noise is attenuated. This equipment includes utility boxes, garbage and recycling container storage, loading docks and ramps, both ground and rooftop air conditioner compressors and heating units, as well as vehicle service areas. Additionally, all power lines shall be placed underground and vending machines or other such equipment should be concealed from the street or other public areas.



SG-17 Design garbage enclosures that are external to the building with the same materials as the building and ensure that the wall height is sufficient to completely conceal garbage dumpsters.

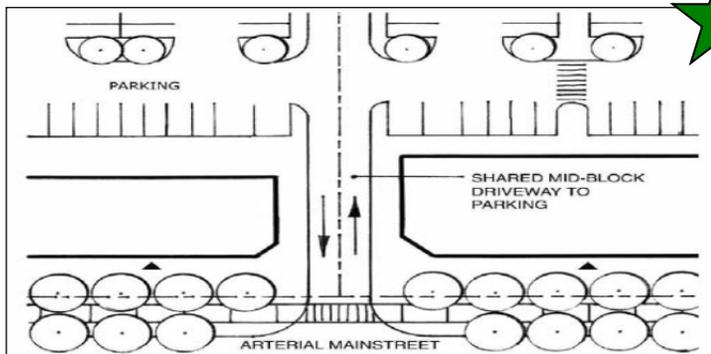


Chapter 3 – Parking

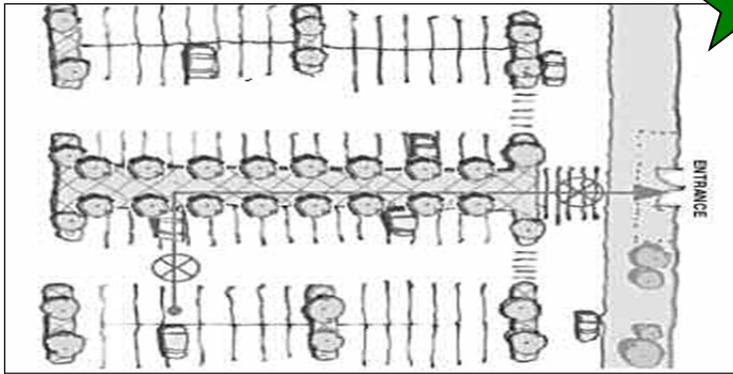
- P-1** Minimize the visual impacts of a parking structure by making it an attractive, compatible addition to a commercial area and by respecting the regular window pattern and other architectural elements of adjacent buildings. Discourage parking areas in front of the buildings. Place parking to the side or rear yards of a building that is effectively screened with landscape.



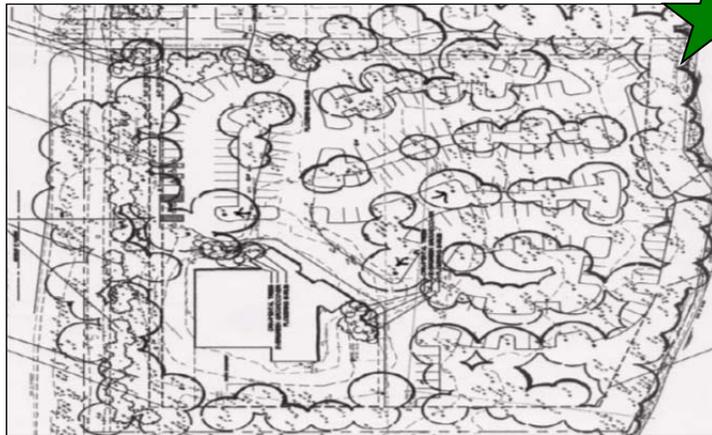
- P-2** Link access drives and parking lots of adjacent properties in order to allow for the circulation of vehicles between sites.



- P-3** Design the site circulation to minimize the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. This can be achieved by orienting car parking spaces to minimize the number of traffic aisles that pedestrians must cross.



- P-4** Divide large parking areas into smaller and well-defined sections, separated by landscaped open space, other site features or structures. Where appropriate, avoid large areas with rigid layouts but use staggered or meandering designs. This will help save trees, slow down vehicles and create site interest.



P-5 Use soft and hard landscaping in order to minimize the amount of paved areas.



P-6 Minimize the visual impacts of a parking lot. Where a parking lot abuts a public sidewalk or street, provide a visual buffer.



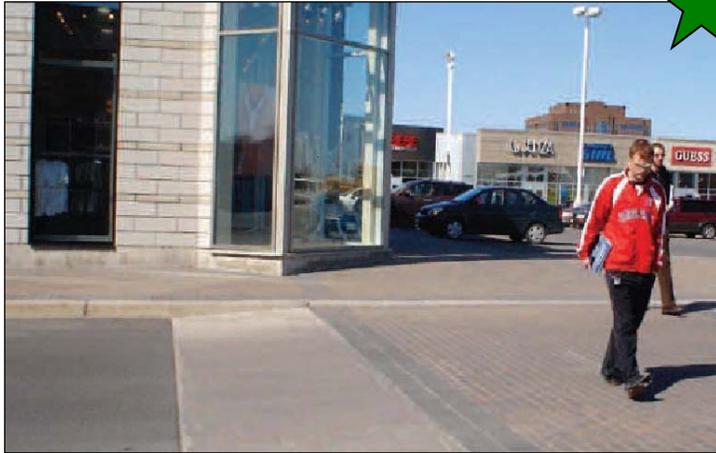
P-7 Provide direct, safe, continuous and clearly defined pedestrian access from public sidewalks and parking areas to building entrances.



P-8 Connect pedestrian walkways between adjacent properties in order to facilitate circulation between sites.

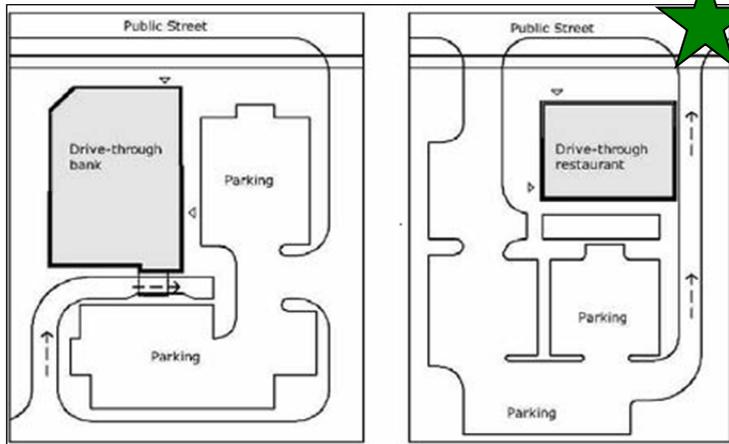


P-9 Distinguish walkways from driving surfaces by using varied paving treatments and by raising walkways to curb level.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DRIVE-THROUGHS

P-10 In buildings with drive-through lanes, locate drive-through and stacking lanes at the side or rear of buildings.



- P-11** In buildings with drive-through lanes, locate drive-through and stacking lanes away from adjacent sensitive uses, such as residential and outdoor amenity areas, to reduce the impacts of noise and pollution that could be caused by stacking cars on such uses. Use landscaping and fencing to help buffer potential impacts.
- P-12** Where the drive-through is at a bank, provide views and clear sightlines between the site and surrounding uses to ensure sufficient safety and comfort levels.
- P-13** Drive through windows should be coordinated with the architectural character of the principal building to create a unified building design



Chapter 4 – Landscaping and Site Design

LANDSCAPING

LD-1 Provide significant landscape features to emphasize the public streets and enhance the streetscape.



LD-2 Demonstrate the fundamental principles of good landscape architectural design.



LD-3 Provide landscaping of a scope and size that is in proportion to the scale of the development.



LD-4 Landscape the area in front of blank walls that face public streets or other public areas.



LD-5 To the extent practical, when abutting protected property, leave a twenty-foot portion of the buffer in the natural state.



LD-6 While function is important in the design and location of storm water retention areas, aesthetic considerations must also be addressed. Whether dry or wet, the shape and appearance should look natural and not detract from the overall site design.



SITE DESIGN

LD-7 Coordinate and harmonize the design of structures, parking and site amenities. Encourage social interaction by furnishing open areas and pedestrian routes within commercial establishments with benches and trash receptacles.



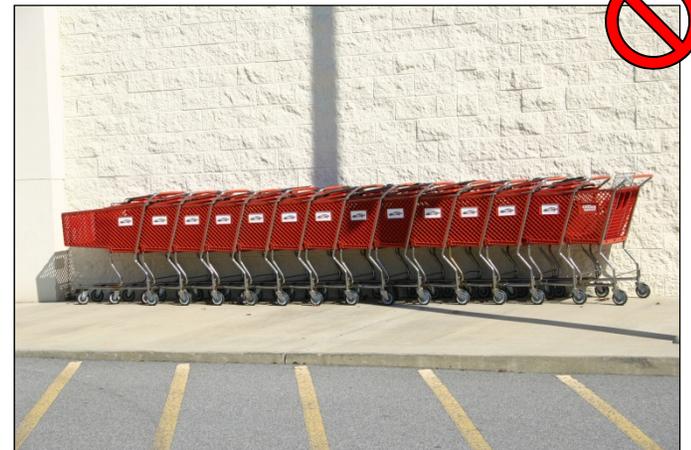
LD-8 Design open space within a site to maximize the potential for active use. Incorporate courtyards and open seating areas in site designs for commercial and neighborhood shopping centers



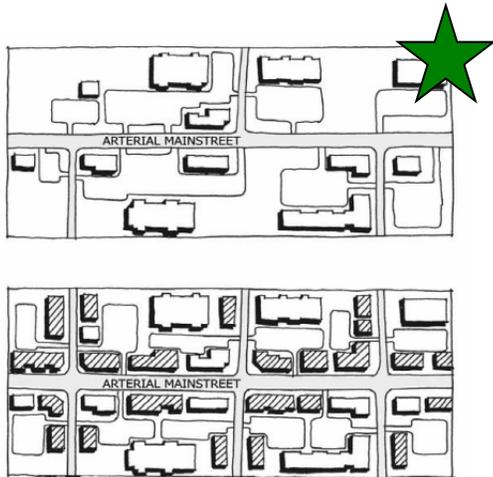
LD-9 Provide site furnishings, such as benches, bike racks and shelters, at building entrances and amenity areas.



LD-10 Minimize the visual impact of shopping cart areas.



LD-11 Base new development on an internal circulation pattern that allows logical movement throughout the site and that will accommodate, and not preclude, intensification over time.



LD-12 Provide spaces for public art.

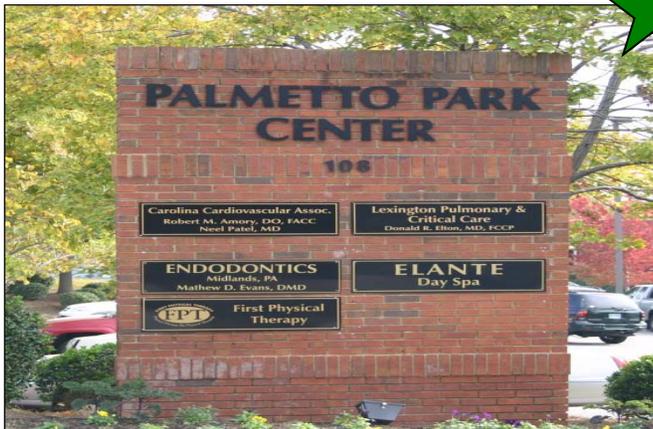


Chapter 6 – Signs

- S-1** Design buildings to include defined spaces that accommodate signs in such a way that respects building scale, architectural features, signage uniformity and established streetscape design objectives.



- S-2** Eliminate visual clutter.



S-3 Allow for retailer brand identification where there are multiple buildings and uses on a site, but avoid individual corporate image, color, and back-lit signs from dominating the site.



S-4 Design sign illumination to be task-oriented and avoid glare/light spillover toward adjacent land uses.

S-5 Locate and design ground-mounted and wall-mounted signs to complement the character and scale of the area.



S-6 Integrate landscape features with ground mounted signs.



S-7 Sign color must be low reflecting and subtle. Avoid the use of high intensity colors and or metallic or fluorescent colors. Use warm, muted colors that have low reflectivity.

S-8 The use of white as a background color intended to enhance the intensity or illumination of a backlit sign is prohibited. Changeable copy signs are exempted from this provision although the size of this portion of a sign should be proportional to the overall sign.



Chapter 5 – Downtown District

DT-1 Provide significant architectural features to emphasize the public streets and enhance the streetscape while maintaining the existing aesthetic environment and historic feel of the downtown.



DT-2 Respond to the positive elements of the existing historic design elements and context through such means as building height, setbacks, building orientation and architectural styles.



DT-3 Design elements should be mindful of human scale and encourage pedestrian access and activity.



DT-4 Generally, sidewalks should extend to building facades and provide planting areas.



DT-5 Disguise and blend parking structures into the historic area.



DT-6 Generally, place parking in rear and encourage pedestrian access from the streets.



DT-7 Design site furnishings to be compatible with public furnishings and appropriate for the district.



APPENDIX – A

