



User's Guide

WACCAMAW NECK COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY ZONE

August 10, 1999

This booklet contains supplemental information to Article XVII of the Georgetown County Zoning Ordinance, which establishes the Waccamaw Neck Commercial Corridor Overlay Zone. While this document should provide valuable assistance to potential commercial property developers within this Zone, information contained within shall not be construed to be a requirement of the Ordinance.

WACCAMAW NECK COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR OVERLAY ZONE

Waccamaw Neck Profile.

The Waccamaw Neck extends approximately 20 miles from its southern boundary at Winyah Bay, to its northern boundary at the Horry County line; the Waccamaw River and Atlantic Ocean constitutes its western and eastern boundaries, respectively. Great rice plantations once lined its local rivers. At their peak, they produced two thirds of all the rice grown in the United States. After the Civil War, the plantations and elegant lifestyles they supported disappeared, although many of the large properties remained mostly intact. Following World War II, people began to recognize the beauty and desirability of the area and significant new development began. The attractive and orderly development that occurred along Ocean Highway (U.S. Highway 17) complemented its established architectural features and its extraordinary natural environment.

Intent of this Guide.

The Waccamaw Neck has evolved into five distinctive geographic areas. The intent of this guide is to provide written definition and illustrative interpretation of the architectural styles and peculiar characteristics of each of these areas, as a mean of ensuring the design of compatible architecture in this unique Overlay Zone.

Geographic Boundaries of the Waccamaw Neck Commercial Corridor Overlay Zone.

The Waccamaw Neck Commercial Corridor Overlay Zone shall consist of all commercially zone lands which have frontage on Ocean Highway (U.S. Highway 17), or are located within five hundred (500) linear feet from U.S. Highway 17, extending from its southern terminus at the point where U.S. Highway 17 crosses the Waccamaw River/ Intracoastal Waterway, north to its terminus at the Georgetown/Horry County line. Developments located partially within this area, when visible from U.S. Highway 17, shall comply with the regulations. U.S. Highway 17 Bypass in Murrells Inlet is included in this boundary.

Design Review Process.

Design proposals for the Zone shall be reviewed under the specific requirements of the Overlay Zone section of Georgetown County Zoning Ordinance. However, to achieve efficient, cost-effective, and successful design solutions, applicants are encouraged to review the contents of this document prior to development of initial design concepts. In this manner, applicants will have a clear understanding of the stylistic qualities deemed desirable by Georgetown County for all new construction and major alterations in this Zone. Furthermore, the spirit of the design review is to offer constructive criticism and guidance toward achieving a mutually acceptable proposal, rather than to reject a submittal strictly on a non-compliance basis.

Additionally, it is important to note that the Design Review Process is an integral part of the process required for issuance of a Building Permit. Section 1700.8 of the Zoning Ordinance outlines the submittals that are necessary for approval by both the Design Review and Building Departments. The documents that are necessary for the Building Permit application will be forwarded to the appropriate departments for their approvals. Building permit cannot be issued until the Design Review Process is approved.

Preliminary and Final Review Timetable.

Upon submission of complete Preliminary Design documents, Planning and Development staff shall have no more than fifteen (15) business days to review and provide written comments to the applicant. Additionally, and upon submission by the applicant of Final Design documents, the Director of Planning and Development shall have no more than fifteen (15) business days in which to render a final decision on this building design application. It shall be understood that the fifteen (15) day timetable, in each instance, shall not begin until staff determines that the submission package is complete and in full compliance with the requirements of this ordinance. If either deadline is missed, the proposal is automatically approved.

Recognition of Excellence in Design.

At a time specified in each calendar year, awards for building design excellence in the Waccamaw Neck Commercial Corridor Overlay Zone will be awarded by County Council. Planning and Development staff will make recommendations to the Board of Architectural Review annually. Upon concurrence of that board and approval by County Council, medallions pronouncing “Excellence in Building Design,” will be fabricated and awarded for display on either exterior or interiors walls of the subject property, to recipients in each three (3) categories:

1. New construction.
2. Adaptive Reuse.
3. Major Alteration.

The “User Guide” contains the following elements:

1. An overview description of the unique features of each of the five (5) distinctive areas in this Zone.
2. A list of desirable exterior building design features.
3. Exterior building materials defined as unacceptable in this Zone.
4. A map of the Zone.

5. A copy of the application, listing all the required information.
6. Examples of structures, landscapes, and architectural features that illustrate successful design solutions.
7. A copy of all applicable zoning ordinances.

Unique Features of the five Distinctive Geographic Areas

Murrells Inlet Area.

This area includes historic Brookgreen, Richmond Hill, and Wachesaw Plantation. This area, like the river frontage that stretches the entire length of the Waccamaw Neck, included many productive rice plantations. This area incorporates Sunnyside and the Inlet, which had provided fresh seafood for the entire region. The Inlet continues to represent a South Carolina fishing village with marine themes and magnificent vistas of salt marsh.

Development of mixed quality has occurred in this area of the Waccamaw Neck, which does not reflect the traditional character of the Murrells Inlet fishing village theme. These structures of mixed quality are often non-vernacular or typical roadside architecture with diminished design quality that contributes to discontinuity and a lack of design coherence.

The distinctive characteristics of the Murrells Inlet are can be described as vernacular, usually represented by traditional building forms of wood siding and contrasting trim. Porches, dormers, and sloped roofs typify this architecture. Roof material may be shingles or metal. The occasional uses of brick or stucco as an exterior material are used. The position of the architecture on site is often informal to preserve significant natural features, sometimes rambling, and usually clustered around outdoor spaces, mature live oak trees or other significant natural features.

Commercially zoned property located within 500 linear feet of the Business U.S. Highway 17 right-of-way shall also be included in the boundary district.

Brookgreen-Huntington Area.

This area represents a pleasant green interlude along the busy U.S Highway 17 between Murrells Inlet and Litchfield. This area includes Huntington Beach State Park on the ocean side and Brookgreen Gardens, would famous outdoor sculpture garden, on the riverside of U.S. 17. This well maintained wooded area has limited improvements. The corridor edge is heavily wooded with the exception of the entry feature, which are well executed and maintained. Signage is tasteful and lighting is acceptable. This area is expected to remain largely vegetated with support facilities out of sight of the corridor.

Litchfield Area.

The Litchfield area is comprised of several mixed-use sections that are characterized by their relationship to the ocean or river. The area is readily distinguished by the landscaped and maintained U. S. Highway 17 median. Ocean-related resorts or seasonal residences influence architecture and land plans. The river side of U. S. 17 consists of primarily of master planned communities, typically with a golf course and clubhouse. Most of these communities are restricted with well-maintained common properties owned by a community or homeowners association. Usually highway commercial and institutional uses are complementary. Control and integration of structures, signage, lighting, and landscaping characterize the corridor image. The overall image is one of high quality.

The district is typified by stucco as the predominant building material. Roofs tend to be steeply pitched with a minimum slope of 8:12 or greater. The architecture is frequently more monumental than that found in Pawleys Island or Murrells Inlet. Commercial development along the U. S. 17 corridor has adopted a park-like atmosphere with expansive lawns, hardwood clusters and more manicured landscaping. Special feature such as monumental oaks or man-made water features often become focal points for the architecture. Buildings are typically setback a considerable distance from the highway with bike-paths and pedestrian trails lining properties and structures.

Pawleys Island Area

Pawleys Island was the historic ocean resort for plantation owners who moved to the island to avoid summer heat and diseases. While the island maintains the reputation of being one of the oldest ocean-side resort areas in America, the mainland has development with increasing rapidity in recent years. The island itself is a pleasing combination of single and multiple dwellings, some of which are historic buildings.

Mainland Pawleys Island is typified by mostly residentially scaled structure such as the Hammock Shops, Oak Lea, and Pawleys Business Center. Building forms usually included pitched roofs of 6:12 slopes, frequently with dormers and divided light windows. Principle exterior building materials are wood siding with contrasting trim. Some examples of brick and stucco particularly related to institutional and some commercial buildings are seen along the U. S. 17 commercial corridor. Roof material generally includes shingles or seamed metal. The architecture is generally vernacular, often alluding to older, more traditional forms of South Carolina coastal architecture.

Structures are often clustered around an outdoor space, which is pedestrian friendly. This space may include informal gardens, seating areas, small ponds, or pathways linking elements or properties. Parking areas are usually more informal than the usual urban commercial standards and frequently are constructed of sand, clay, gravel, and shells. Many of the small commercial developments that characterize Pawleys Island contain

major tree forms and features thoughtful landscaping and signage. Landscape materials that conceal or soften the view of parked automobiles is valued. The more common structures at Pawleys Island include examples of adaptive uses, particularly the conversions of residential structures into commercial uses. The architectural can be eclectic, jocular, and rambling. By contrast, the new U. S. Post Office captures the traditional Pawleys Island roof form and combines this with siding, trim, and window detailing to create a please large institutional structure in the commercial corridor.

Prince George – DeBordieu Area

This area features large expanses of pinewoods bordering U. S. 17 with grassy median dividing the highway. The Prince George section is currently undergoing development with tastefully scaled entry wall visible from the corridor. The DeBordieu section is distinguished by a thoughtfully landscaped median signaling the access of a low-key Oceanside community entry feature. A whimsical nursery and the Hobcaw Barony, a university sponsored coastal research facility, also touch the corridor, and are part of the visual landscape.

Desirable Exterior Building Design Features

The following exterior building design features, though not required under Article XVIII of the Georgetown County zoning Ordinance, are considered desirable contributing elements to compatible design in the Waccamaw Neck Overlay Zone.

Building Form

1. When appropriate (particularly in the Litchfield area where buildings are often monumental in scale), transitional classical architectural forms characterized by arches, columns, large porticos, porte-cocheres, covered walkways, and porches are desirable.
2. Building should have a minimum 12-inch overhang. Fascia should not be wider than 12 inches.
3. Chimneys should be faced with either brick or stucco.
4. There should be a 20 percent maximum window to wall ratio for all structures, utilizing only vertically proportioned windows.

Windows and Doors

1. Windows and doors openings sizes define the scale of a building, and since commercial structures in the Waccamaw Neck are typically residential in scale, window size and articulation should be the same.
2. Where windows are trimmed in wood or wood-simulated siding, structures should have a minimum of 3.5-inch wide trim of contrasting color to the siding. Window head caps are encouraged.
3. Windows in a stucco or masonry structure should have brick-mold with a minimum width of 2.5-inch in a color that contrasts with the cladding. Jack arches or window heads and sill should be included with the brick or stucco.
4. Wooden doors that are panelized are desirable, wood or metal French or atrium doors are preferred.
5. Glass windows in the building elevations should have consistency in size, proportion and rhythm, should relate to structural bays, and should be predominately vertical in proposition.
6. Operable windows are recommended (double or triple hung); awnings and casement windows are also acceptable.

Architectural Trim / Building Details

1. Canopies or awnings should be composed of straight lines in traditional building form; awnings should be assembled from canvas or metal (galvanized v-crimp metal is acceptable), and should be finished in colors selected from Section 1800.6.4 of Article XVIII of the Georgetown County Zoning Ordinance. Curved forms should not be used.
2. All projecting canopies or porches should express vertical supports in columns and/or post.
3. Corner boards in a minimum size of 3.5 inches are preferred for wood-sided structures.
4. A frieze board with a minimum width of 9.5 inches should be included beneath the soffit or fascia on a brick or stucco building.
5. Decorative cupolas for institutional and public buildings (churches, banks, and government) are encouraged.
6. Dormer and decorative roof vents are encouraged where appropriate.
7. Lattice or louver underpinning or infill is preferred for buildings with crawl spaces. Crawl spaces vents should be wooden.

**Materials Considered to be Incompatible and Unacceptable for Use in the
Waccamaw Neck Commercial Overlay Zone.**

Siding

1. Plywood or Texture-111.
2. Masonite or other composition siding products, which have a flat exposed face.
3. Vinyl or other plastic product used as field materials.
4. Standard un-faced and unpainted concrete block and concrete masonry units.
5. Metal, when visible from U.S. 17.

Roofing

1. Barrel tile (half round shapes) or synthetic products resembling barrel tile.
2. Onduline, cellulose-bitumen roofing and cladding.
3. Corrugated fiberglass.
4. Unpainted corrugated metal.
5. Hypalon, (chlorosulfonated polyethylene synthetic rubber) or other fabric roof material, when visible from U. S. 17.

Windows

1. Unpainted mill finished aluminum.
2. Reflective or deeply shaded glass.
3. Bronze, black, and clear steel finishes.