

CHARLOTTESVILLE

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN CONTROL DISTRICTS

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Approved by City Council, September 17, 2012



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VI PUBLIC DESIGN & IMPROVEMENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

Public spaces define the spatial organization of the City, forming the basis for social, cultural, and economic interaction. The Downtown Pedestrian Mall is the centerpiece of the community. Charlottesville's historic parks, trails, boulevards, cemeteries, playgrounds, and other open spaces help balance the desired urban density and promote healthy living and quality of life. Public spaces accommodate multiple functions and provide social venues. The historic uses and organization of public spaces represent a timeline of cultural practices and values of the community. Significant features should be identified and respected when changes are proposed. New public spaces and improvements should reflect contemporary design principles and values.

Charlottesville has a rich history of public improvements, which include public buildings, bridges, streetscape

landscaping and lighting, street furniture, monuments, public art, fountains, and signage. Many of these improvements have been made within the historic districts, and there will be the opportunity to create additional such amenities in future years. All changes or improvements require BAR review and approval, and should be compatible with the general architectural features and character of an area or district. Repairs and maintenance should match original materials and design, and should be accomplished in a historically appropriate manner.

All public improvements should reflect the quality and attention to detail and craftsmanship of the overall historic district's character.



Jackson Park provides a major focal point of civic space at Court Square.

B. PLAZAS, PARKS & OPEN SPACES

1. Maintain existing spaces and important site features for continued public use consistent with the original design intent.
2. Maintain significant elements in a historic landscape: grave markers, structures, landforms, landscaping, circulation patterns, boundaries, and site walls.
3. Design new spaces to reinforce streetscape and pedestrian goals for the district. These areas offer the opportunity to provide visual focal points and public gathering spaces for the districts.
4. New landscaping should be historically and regionally appropriate, indigenous when possible, and scaled for the proposed location and intended use.
5. Exterior furniture and site accessories should be compatible with the overall character of the park or open space.
6. Repairs and maintenance work should match original materials and design, and should be accomplished in a historically appropriate manner.
7. Avoid demolishing historic buildings to create open spaces and parks.



The open lawn, colorful plantings, and diagonal pathways that lead to the equestrian statue focal points in Lee Park (above) and Jackson Park (below), provide welcome respites in an urban environment.



This wide pedestrian path leads to the downtown mall, the major public space of the entire city.

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C. PUBLIC BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES

1. Public buildings should follow design guidelines for new construction.
2. New structures, including bridges, should reflect contemporary design principles.



The Transit Center and the Free Speech Monument feature contemporary design while adhering to the guidelines of new construction.



The JPA bridge uses design to foster a cohesive, multi-modal transportation network.



D. STREETS, WALKS, & CURBS

1. Retain historic paving or curbing.
2. If any historic paving or curbing is uncovered in future public projects, consider reusing it or parts of it in the new project.
3. Make street paving consistent throughout districts.
4. When widening existing streets provide sidewalks, street trees, and other elements that maintain the street wall and emphasize the human scale.
5. Limit paved areas to streets, driveways, and pedestrian areas.
6. Consider using some type of distinctive crosswalks at key intersections or crossings.
7. Avoid faux techniques or appearances in materials, such as stamped asphalt or concrete.
8. When sidewalks must be repaired, match adjacent materials in design, color, texture, and tooling.
9. Avoid variation in sidewalk and curb materials.
10. When sidewalks need replacement, use a paving unit, such as brick or concrete with a tooled or saw cut joint that relates to the scale of the districts.
11. Avoid excessive curb cuts for vehicular access across pedestrian ways.
12. Where curb cuts are necessary, they should be consistent with other curb cuts in the area.
13. Do not block sidewalks with street furniture elements.
14. Remove obsolete signs and poles.



Brick crosswalks with granite details highlight pedestrian crossings in the area surrounding the Albemarle County Courthouse.



In recent years, an expanded pedestrian area was created along the storefronts of the Corner.



Cobblestones are used for crosswalks in the Corner historic district.

VI PUBLIC DESIGN & IMPROVEMENTS

E. STREET TREES & PLANTINGS



These two examples of street trees, above and below, show how they create a visual edge and provide shade for pedestrian routes.



1. Maintain existing plantings in public rights of way.
2. Replace damaged or missing street trees with appropriate species. New street trees should be planted in appropriate locations. Consult the City-approved plant list.
3. Install plantings in areas like medians, divider strips, and traffic islands.
4. Locate planters so that they do not block sidewalks.



These large circular planters provide distinctive elements within the downtown mall.

1. In pedestrian areas, use smaller-scaled light fixtures that do not create a glare.
2. Light fixtures can vary according to district or sub-area and can be in traditional or contemporary styles.
3. Provide adequate lighting at critical areas of pedestrian/vehicular conflict, such as parking lots, alleys, and crosswalks.
4. Limit the number of styles of light fixtures and light sources used in each district except in cases of varying sub-areas or distinctive areas, such as bridges.
5. Light color and intensity should be consistent throughout a general area or subarea of a historic district. Use similar lamping (bulb type) and/or wattage to maintain a consistent quality of light.
6. Provide street lighting fixtures with flat lenses that are shielded and directed down to the site in order to reduce glare and prevent uplighting.



Traditionally styled street lights help define the edge of the lit pedestrian zone and provide a location to attach banners.



This contemporary light fixture is scaled appropriately for the downtown mall and provides a location for a grouping of street furniture elements.

G. STREET FURNITURE, KIOSKS, & NEWSPAPER BOXES

1. Trash containers should be metal and should match other street furniture.
2. Place benches at key pedestrian locations. Use designs constructed of wood and/or metal.
3. Attempt to make street furniture, such as newspaper boxes, telephone booths, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, planters, and bollards, compatible in design, color, and materials with existing elements.
4. The design and materials of bus stop shelters should be compatible with street furniture in the districts.
5. Kiosks
 - a. Kiosks should be in scale with other mall elements.
 - b. Kiosks should not obscure significant features of the space.
 - c. Kiosks should be constructed of wrought iron, painted metal, painted wood, or some combination of the above.
 - d. The use of natural wood is discouraged.
 - e. The roof should be painted metal or copper.
 - f. Signs should be incorporated into the design of the kiosk.
 - g. No signs should be located on the roof of the structure.
6. Newspaper boxes should be grouped in designated locations and placed within uniform enclosures of black metal.



The design of this metal bench relates to the historic character of the district.



The mall area has a coordinated design of black metal street furniture.



Placement of newspaper boxes should not obscure other street furniture.

H. TRAFFIC SIGNALS & UTILITIES

1. Consider installing signals on poles that are placed beside the street and are compatible with the pedestrian-scaled light fixtures.
2. Place utilities underground or behind buildings, if possible.
3. Screen surface equipment.
4. Place necessary utilities, such as transformers and overhead wires, so that they are as visually unobtrusive as possible.



Traditional mast-arm traffic signals fit the scale of this intersection.



Overhead utilities dominate the streetscape throughout the historic districts.



Situated next to a pedestrian-scaled traffic signal, control boxes are difficult to screen.

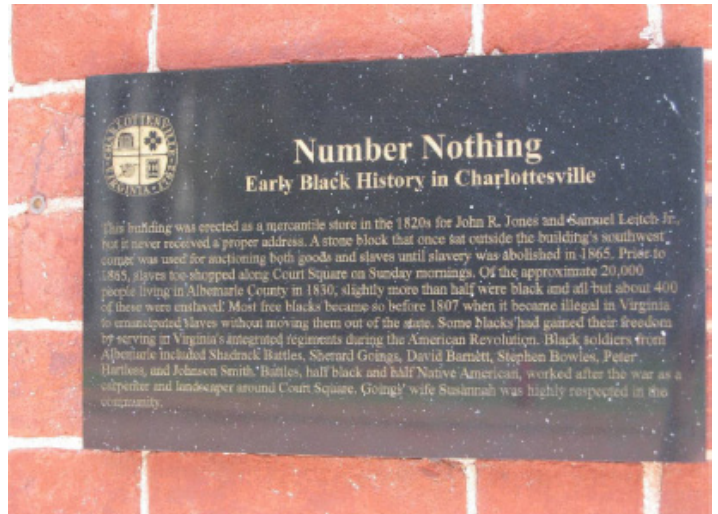


Service connections for the park are well screened from the adjacent street and surrounded by plantings while allowing access as needed.

VI PUBLIC DESIGN & IMPROVEMENTS

I. PUBLIC SIGNS

1. Maintain the coordinated design for a citywide gateway, directional, and informational public sign system.
2. Add a distinctive street sign system for historic districts.
3. Continue to install plaques or signs commemorating significant events, buildings, and individuals in the districts.
4. Avoid placing sign posts in locations where they can interfere with the opening of vehicle doors.
5. Preserve existing historic plaques located in the district.
6. New plaques should be discreetly located and should not obscure architectural elements.



Plaques containing historic information help interpret the heritage of the districts.



This interpretive sign located in a planting bed at the base of a statue gives important contextual information to the size of the human being.



Pole-mounted wayfinding markers direct tourists and local residents to historical and cultural destinations.

J. PUBLIC ART, STATUES, & FOUNTAINS

(AMENDED OCTOBER 21, 2013)

1. Maintain existing features related to public art, statues and fountains.
2. Public art is preferred that offers a place-making role in celebrating and communicating the history and culture of the districts.
3. Develop an appropriate relationship between materials, the scale of artwork and the surrounding environment.
4. Choose artwork that is appropriate for the current general character of the site.
5. Consider the appropriateness of the sculpture base.
6. Public art, statues, and fountains shall be maintained as accessible to the public.
7. A mural's appearance, materials, colors, size, and scale should be compatible with the building and historic district of which the building is a part.
8. The use of neon, luminescent, or reflective paint or materials is discouraged.
9. A mural should not obscure or distort the historic features of a building, and should not cover an entire wall.
10. Murals painted on primary facades are rarely permitted and strongly discouraged.
11. In general, previously unpainted masonry should be left unpainted.
12. Painting directly onto the walls of a non-contributing building, or adding a mural to a previously-painted, non-primary elevation of a contributing building will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
13. In general, murals should be created on removable material, no directly on a building wall; installed on framing that allows water to weep between the mural and the wall; and attachments should not irrevocably damage the building.
14. Mural art that constitutes a sign shall conform to the sign regulations.



More contemporary expressions such as this sculpture add an artistic dimension to the public realm.



The Central Place Fountain provides a major focal point and gathering place for visitors to the mall.

K. PARKING FACILITIES

1. Ensure that the design of any new parking structure follows the design guidelines in Chapter 3 for new multi-lot buildings and street-level design.
2. The street-level design of parking garage facilities should engage pedestrians through the use of storefronts, display windows or other visual features.
3. Avoid demolishing historic buildings to construct new parking facilities.
4. Locate vehicular exits and entrances to minimize their impact on the primary street on which they are located.
5. Parking at the ground level should not be visible from the street.
6. Reduce the scale of the openings by providing separate entrances and exits.
7. Consider the impact of interior and roof lighting.



Uniform bays, stair towers, recessed storefronts with awnings and street trees add interest to this large, municipal facility.

AVAILABLE GUIDELINES SECTIONS

These entrance corridor design guidelines have been divided into the following sections so that you need only read those pertinent to your project.

- I. Introduction
- II. Site Design & Elements
- III. New Construction & Additions
- IV. Rehabilitation
- V. Signs, Awnings, Vending & Cafes
- VI. Public Improvements
- VII. Demolition & Moving

Guideline sections are available from the Charlottesville Department of Neighborhood Services. Online they may be accessed through <http://www.charlottesville.org> at the Board of Architectural Review home page.

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City of Charlottesville Council Members

David E. Brown, Mayor
Kevin Lynch, Vice Mayor
Blake Caravati
Kendra Hamilton
Rob Schilling

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Joan Fenton, former member and Chair
Cheri Lewis, former member

City of Charlottesville Neighborhood Development Services Staff

Jim Tolbert, AICP, Director
Mary Joy Scala, Neighborhood Planner
Jim Herndon, Neighborhood Planner

Project Consultants

Frazier Associates, Architects & Planners
213 North Augusta Street
Staunton, Virginia 24401
(540) 886-6230
www.frazierassociates.com

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