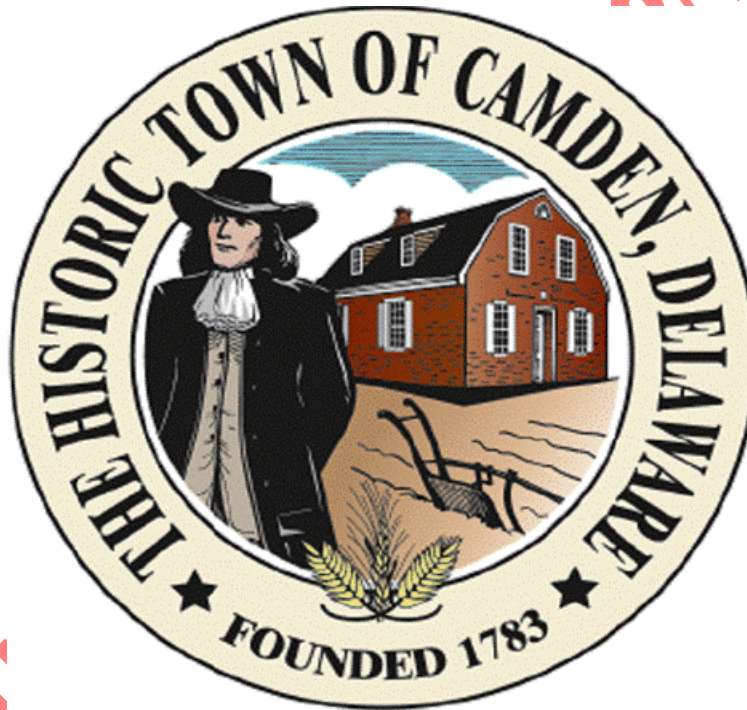


Town of Camden

Community Design Concepts & Standards

2/15/2010



DRAFT

By: James O. Plumley III
Town Manager / CFO

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND IMAGE

Heritage Zone

Developments within proximity to Route 13 and Alt. Route 13 have been classified as being in the Heritage Zone area of the town. Developments within 500 feet of the highways, and 1000 feet of highway interchanges are required to have a particular design theme. Designs that would be appropriate within the Heritage Zone could include the following: Colonial, Victorian, Federal, and Elizabethan or modern interpretations of these styles. The most important aspects of the Heritage Zone are the type of materials, their colors, and textures, and the scale of the architectural elements within the building design. The types of building materials would include the use of wood, glass, brick, textured blocks, and other similar materials. The building materials should be appropriate in the design of the building. The configuration of the building should provide for a variety of features and a well-balanced combination of parts of the building rather than a simple block of a building mass. The building should be broken up whenever possible. Building clustering or differences in massing will allow parking to be segmented into numerous smaller lots. The buildings themselves can be used to screen one lot from another and provide for a variety of open space areas. The Heritage Zone provides the traveler with an initial view of the town and sets forth the character of the community. It also provides design continuity along the most heavily traveled corridor in the town, Route 13.

Approachways

The approachways leading into the town should be provided with a designation of the entrance to the town. This can be done with a simple sign recognizing the town of Camden. The approachways into the town should be kept clean of weeds and debris and kept free of cluttered development and signs. The coordination of design approachways is extremely important and distinguishes the quality of the entire community.

Architectural Design

Architectural design not only addresses the functions of buildings, it also addresses the building style through its materials, detailing, colors, textures, and configuration of the building. While no single building style is dictated, certain areas will be influenced by the Heritage Zone. Buildings should be complementary to the surrounding buildings and environment. In addition, buildings should function well in that the parking areas support the building and that the building serves the needs of the tenants. Buildings should address the site planning through the use of proper setbacks, access to streets, and support features such as parking, landscaping, and loading areas. The buildings should be accented with surrounding landscaping, plazas, walkways, and identifiable entry. The massing of buildings should provide for a balance between wall areas and roof areas, window areas and landscaping. While a variety in the massing is important to achieve this balance, too much variety in the massing results in colliding architectural elements. The clustering of buildings is preferable to a large single building. The variety in the design of the building can also be achieved through the use of a variety of roofing planes, wall areas, overhangs, pedestrian spaces, and trellises.

Architectural Design

Certain styles in the buildings should be avoided. The use of Mediterranean style buildings for instance, is not appropriate in Camden which has more of a Colonial character. Buildings designed to stand out in the streetscape should be avoided in favor of buildings that are complementary to the area and that balance other existing open space lands and buildings nearby. The materials in a building should be appropriate as to the construction of the structure. Building materials should be a pleasant texture, color, and style. Accent colors can be utilized: however, they should be complementary to the main building colors and not overbearing.

Historical Buildings and Features

There are several buildings which reflect the early character of Camden and provide texture to the present image of the community. The following buildings provide an identifiable asset to the community design of Camden.

Developments nearby should be a complement to the area and should use similar materials, color, textures, proportions and massing. Present styles and construction techniques, labor and costs would not allow for buildings to duplicate the historical sites of the area, however, buildings having a complementary character can be achieved. Additions to buildings having a historical benefit should reflect the architectural elements of the main structure. Freestanding buildings on the same site may be simpler in detail so as not to compete with the main building.

Environmental Consideration

In the design of development plans, a greater concern could be directed toward including environmental factors in the design of buildings. Buildings could be sited as to orient more towards the solar patterns and other environmental factors such as wind patterns and topography. The string of buildings on an east/west axis would allow for greater application of passive and active solar designs. The use of overhangs on southern exposures and the incorporation of deciduous trees on the southern exposure could allow for a lesser amount of heat gain during the summer months and greater amounts of heat gain during winter months. The energy code requirements instituted by the state require the review of the type of building construction so as to encourage energy conservation and to match the performance of efficient mechanical systems with better designed buildings. Other applications of environmental design considerations include the retention of natural topographical patterns so as to minimize grading and the impact upon the existing landforms. As a part of this, it should also be encouraged to minimize the amount of paving so as to reduce water runoff. This has a positive effect of providing greater amounts of open space areas and reduced construction costs.

Some of the economic benefits of environmental design applications provide for initial cost savings. Other applications, such as the installation of solar systems, may add slightly to the initial cost; however, over the longer term savings will be realized. This is particularly in energy, construction, and water.

Graphics and Signage

The basic function of all street graphics should be to communicate a message to the observer. In most instances, the oversigning and competition between signs and lights conveys only a sense of visual clutter. When the environment becomes overloaded with graphics displays, the cumulative effect is negative; the viewer actually sees less, not more.

Regardless of the particular activity to which a street graphic pertains, it should not violate the character of the area in which it is located. Well –designed and appropriately located directional and informational signs are an important part of a community’s communication system. A smaller number of well-designed street signs properly related to the activities to which they pertain do a better job of indexing or selling than a multitude of gaudy graphics competing with one another for the viewer’s attention. A careful use of color, lighting and materials in sign fabrication can contribute to quick and easy communication.

The two types of signs include informational signs and advertising signs. Informational signs, such as traffic signs, historical markers, directional signs, warning signs and such, serve a useful purpose and generally do not lead to clutter except when in large numbers of haphazardly placed signs. Some attention is required to ensure that informational signs are not randomly sized or placed and that they serve an appropriate purpose.

Advertising signs come in a variety of types including business name signs, price signs, sale signs, billboard signs, et cetera. Most signs are “on-site” (they are located where the business they advertise is situated). “Off-site” signs such as billboards do not directly relate to the site and are not permitted except for directional signs for temporary sales of subdivisions. In the review of signs, the town should continue to strive for the following:

1. The town should continue to review signs to regulate and control the location, type, size, number of signs, sign colors, materials and the design of signs.
2. The town should continue its abatement program for signs which exist past the amortization program and signs which are placed without permits.
3. The use of master programs should be implemented in shopping centers, business parks and office developments to provide for a uniform display of materials, graphics and colors.
4. Off-site signs should be prohibited with the exception of subdivision directional signs.
5. All signs should be well designed and include appropriate treatment, such as masonry base, boxed-out columns, painted cabinets, non-glare lights, or similar features depending on the type of sign.
6. A program for street name signs at major intersections and along major roadways should be developed to aid motorist in indentifying streets.
7. Public information signs should be installed to help indentify public facilities and help direct access to such facilities. A designed sign program should be utilized to provide for informational signs.

Graphics and Signage

8. Signs which fall within the Heritage Zone must be carefully designed to complaint the Colonial theme.

Trash Enclosures

Trash enclosures are required in order to confine trash and debris and to screen barrels and dumpsters. Trash enclosures are especially important at commercial developments, office complexes, industrial facilities, higher density residential areas and public facilities where dumpsters are kept outside of a building. The design of trash enclosures should consider the following:

1. The walls should be of a block or masonry material to match the building where it is located.
2. Vines or shrubs should be planted near the enclosure to soften the walls and blend it into the development.
3. The enclosure should be located to be accessible for the residents or businesses and for the trash trucks.
4. The enclosures should be located away from main entries and so as not to create traffic hazards by creating sight clearance problems.
5. Trash enclosures within developments of two-story or more buildings should incorporate a trellis cover so as to screen views from above.
6. Access gates of a solid wood or metal shall be required. Baffled entries may be utilized as shown in the following drawings.
7. The size and number of trash enclosures should be such that the type use of the project would adequately be served. If the use changes, additional pickups or additional enclosures may be necessary.
8. In residential projects, common dumpsters may be required instead of barrels where carports or non-attached garages are used.

Trash Receptacles

Trash receptacles shall be provided within developments and shall be part of the street furniture. The receptacles should be placed near uses such as restaurants, parks and schools and placed frequently along pedestrian ways within commercial areas. The design of the trash receptacles shall complement the design of the surroundings and shall be manufactured of materials utilized within the development. Where possible, the receptacles should be integrated into walls.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS AND CONTROLS

The design concepts and principals detailed in the Community Design Element are general in nature to avoid a monotonous uniformity of design throughout the town. The concepts instead are to guide development so as to be consistent with the nature of the elements is to set a pattern for development of Camden. The tone set by the element addresses existing areas, future developments, open space lands, public lands and streets to ensure a quality environment for the residents of the town.

Camden is a place for living, working, shopping or relaxing and is rich in recreational opportunities. It also has a vast potential for cultural and civic events as witnessed by its civic activities, parades, educational programs and exhibits.

It is in this context that one realizes that no single method of implementation for the Community Design Element can be unitized. Instead, the town must continue to make use of a variety of development controls and standards in its efforts to create a community which enriches one's life and evokes a sense of excitement. This section will address the various methods of development standards and controls which are being utilized to implement design concepts or are available to be considered. These methods range from specific plans, which address advance planning for areas, to Zoning Ordinance requirements which set precise development requirements.

The type of development standards and controls include the following: Zoning Ordinance, Parking Ordinance, Sign Ordinance, Grading Ordinance, planned development permits, architectural review, Subdivision Ordinance, public lands and easements, maintenance controls, specific plans, public improvements, historical preservation, environmental review, and Comprehensive Plan.

The implementation of the various development standards and controls is to promote the application of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan including its various elements. They form a coordinated and cohesive method to ensure that developments within the Town of Camden will be of the highest quality standards and that the character of the community will be enhanced. The development of a good program to promote quality design in the community will help to develop an image of the community of which the citizens would be proud.