

TOWN OF BLYTHEWOOD DESIGN GUIDELINES

Blythewood, South Carolina



Blythewood is a historic village located 20 miles north of Columbia, South Carolina, that lies in the path of development along I-77. The town is known for its rural character and rich equestrian history, both of which could be lost in the absence of a vision for the future. In 2008, TSW worked with the town and local stakeholders to develop a Master Plan and a set of supporting Design Guidelines to guide growth and ensure proactive tools to respond to development pressure, rather than just react to it. Many of the principles of the Design Guidelines are being incorporated into a zoning overlay district that will require appropriate design in Blythewood's downtown.

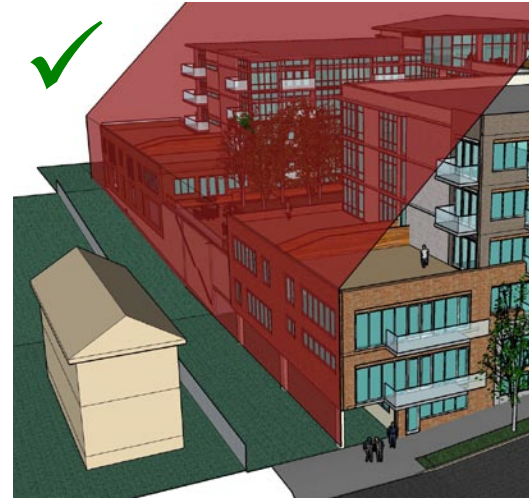
The Design Guidelines form a concise handbook that allows decision makers to understand the principles behind good design in order to prevent private and public investment that contradicts Blythewood's vision for its future. The Guidelines are divided into four primary sections: neighborhood planning, site planning, building design, and landscape design.

Neighborhood planning guidelines focus on open space and farmland preservation through clustered growth. A planning process is outlined that allows for new development to focus on preserving natural areas, increasing connectivity, and creating usable public spaces.

Site planning guidelines focus on public space and street design, building siting, parking, signage, fencing, and other elements. The goal is to promote human-scale, walkable development patterns that respect historic precedents in the region.

Building design guidelines, inspired by local traditions, do not attempt to dictate a particular architectural style, but help decision makers identify building elements that are not appropriate for the town. Specific guidelines are provided on desirable façades, materials, windows, porches, and entrances.

Landscape design guidelines focus on sustainability. They encourage appropriate public space design and native tree plantings.



Types of Civic Space

Park: An open space, available for unstructured recreation. A park's edges may be defined by landscaping rather than buildings. Its landscape should consist of paths and trails, meadows, woodlands, and trees, naturalistically disposed. The minimum size should be 15 acres.

Green: An open space, available for unstructured recreation. A green may be spatially defined by landscaping rather than buildings. Its landscape should consist of lawn and trees, naturalistically disposed. The minimum size should be one acre and the maximum should be 15 acres.

Square: An open space available for unstructured recreation and civic purposes. A square is spatially defined by buildings. Its landscape should consist of paths, lawns and trees, formally disposed. Squares should be located at the intersection of important streets. The minimum size should be one half acre and the maximum should be five acres.

Plaza: An open space, available for civic purposes and commercial activities. A plaza should be spatially defined by buildings. Its landscape should consist primarily of pavement. Trees are optional. Plazas should be located at the intersection of important streets. The minimum size should be one half acre and the maximum should be two acres.

Playground: An open space designed and equipped for the recreation of children. A playground may include an open shelter. Playgrounds should be interspersed within residential areas and may be placed within a block. Playgrounds may be included in parks and greens. There should be no minimum size and the maximum size should be one acre, unless located within a green of a larger size.

(Courtesy Duany Plater-Zyberk and Co.)

top right: Guidelines and drawings show how new development can respect existing homes

center right: Civic space guidelines promote usable public spaces

bottom right: Planning guidelines encourage clustered development to preserve farmland

below: Street sections show sample designs and native tree plantings

