

# BLYTHEWOOD SERVICE STATION

Blythewood, South Carolina



above: Rendering of gas station building showing approach to signage  
right: Perspective site plan showing new station building (bottom right) and adjacent building (upper left)  
far right: View from gas pump area to adjacent building



Working with the City of Blythewood and a regional South Carolina gas service station operator, TSW Architecture developed prototypical site and architectural designs examining a more urban approach to new stations on rural, greenfield sites. The proposed station incorporates all the prerequisite components of a gas station/food store (large canopy-covered pump area, adequate turning radii, drive-by beverage window) and a nearby small retail building. Yet by reconfiguring the buildings tight to street intersections, and with new interpretations of the architecture, the design breaks away from the pattern of suburban gas centers.

TSW has been helping Blythewood understand its regional architectural heritage since 2008. As a component of the Town's Master Plan, the area's architectural fabric was catalogued, and precedents for new development defined. The resulting guidelines focus on appropriate regional materials, use of those materials, and building forms as opposed to a strict adherence to historic styles. They seek to promote designs of complementary scale and texture, but allow interpretations reflective of Blythewood goals of being a progressive community.

The TSW gas station design reflects this approach. The facades use regional brick, detailed in a sparse, minimalist way. Most of the fenestration has traditional proportions, yet some openings are intentionally expansive (and contemporary). A key feature of the design is the incorporation of the digital gas price signs(s) on the building itself and not on a freestanding monument sign (there will be no freestanding sign). Such a "the building is the sign" approach has many precedents in 20th century roadside architecture. As used here, with the station sited tight to its corner, and with a complementary sister building helping to define the court, a reasonable design balance between the car and pedestrian is achieved.