

F--LAKE ANNE VILLAGE CENTER HISTORIC OVERLAY DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Lake Anne Village Center Historic Overlay District was established in 1983 to recognize and preserve the special quality of this section of Reston, a renowned example of mid-20th-Century new town planning.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- o Lake Anne Village Center is a concentration of residential, commercial, and public uses around a plaza and a narrow, man-made lake.
- o The design separates pedestrian and vehicular uses, relegating the automobiles to a recessed and landscaped parking lot north of the plaza.
- o The plaza and buildings around it have an urban character of density and scale.
- o The buildings have a unity of design and materials with a non-derivative architecture of intersecting right-angled planes executed in brown brick, concrete, and glass.
- o Planned landscape elements and sculpture are incorporated into the entire site design.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Reston occupies the former 7000-acre Bowman Farm, which by the mid-20th century was the largest single tract of land in the area. The Bowmans first tried to develop a town themselves, but eventually sold the land. Robert E. Simon purchased it in 1961 and began immediately to plan and build the new town of Reston (Simon's initials combined with the English suffix for town are the source of the name). Ironically, this had been the site of another planned town, Wiehle, conceived of by Dr. C.A. Wiehle in the 1890s, but which never grew to more than a handful of buildings.

Unlike Wiehle, Reston, home now to 60,000 people, was phenomenally successful. From the beginning, critics hailed Reston, with its concept of village centers surrounded by greenbelts, as a significant planning and architectural achievement. Lake Anne Village Center, designed by the New York firm of Whittlesey and Conklin, was the first of the village centers built. The centers were to be designed at a pedestrian scale with a mix of residences, offices, and retail stores gathered around lakes and plazas, creating urban spaces in the suburbs. Lake Anne Village Center, opened in 1965, best embodies the vision for the town of Reston. As a 1981 Washington Post article observed, "No piece of Northern Virginia real estate was more praised and honored in the 1960s than Reston's Lake Anne Plaza." In recognition of its historic significance as a recognized symbol of Reston, pioneer of the 1960's "new town" movement, and its architectural quality, the County designated the village center an historic district. Once it passes the requirement that properties are at least fifty years old, much of Reston will be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE DISTRICT

- o ARCHITECTURE: Lake Anne Village Center was designed and built as a whole with each individual element fitting into the entire scheme. Buildings line the lake and paved plaza and range in height from two to four stories, with one eighteen-story high-rise apartment building as a focal point at the end of the plaza. A horseshoe-shaped row of shops topped by apartments encloses the wide plaza and crowns the northern tip of the lake. The buildings share a common vocabulary of design and materials--the modern, straight-edged, architecture is executed in medium brown brick, dark brown wood trim, gray concrete, and glass. The buildings are complex compositions of solid and void, with many balconies, sheer brick walls, and expanses of glass. Concrete sculptures are located throughout the plaza.

HISTORIC AND CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES: In the report substantiating the zoning amendment that established the Lake Anne Village Center Historic Overlay District, all structures facing onto the lake are listed as historic properties. All other structures located within the district are considered as contributing.

- o LANDSCAPE AND SITE FEATURES: Like the architecture, the site design and landscape elements of the Lake Anne Village Center are crucial to the character of the whole. Every part of the plaza complex contributes to encouraging people to gather and enjoy the planned spaces. Landscaping screens the recessed parking areas from the roads leading to Lake Anne; within the parking lots are planted islands. The red brick plaza, with a concrete design echoing the layout of the buildings, opens between the first two buildings as a visitor enters from the parking lot. The north edge of Lake Anne, a man-made lake, laps at the bottom of steps leading from the plaza and walkways extend from the central plaza along the east and west edges of the lake. Throughout the plaza area trees and shrubs soften building edges and, together with the lake, bring an element of nature into the brick, concrete, and glass complex.

- o ARCHAEOLOGY: No known archaeological resources exist within the district.

DISTRICT GOAL

The goal of the historic district is to protect the architectural and environmental character of the area and to ensure that future development is compatible with the existing design.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The following section presents standards which should be maintained and promoted in order to achieve the goals of the district. Specific guidelines then suggest ways in which those standards may be maintained.

This historic district is unique among Fairfax County districts. Instead of being a composition of landmarks which have evolved over time, Lake Anne Village Center was designed and built at one time; instead of having large sections of open space with great potential for new development, Lake Anne Village Center is "built-out." Thus, the standards and guidelines are concerned with preserving the as-built character of the existing structures, urban design relationships, and landscape design rather than compatible new construction.

STANDARD 1--Preserve the spatial quality of the district.

GUIDELINES

- 1.1 Retain the separation of pedestrians and automobiles.
- 1.2 Maintain alignment of building heights on all structures as seen from the plaza. The continuous edge of the roof lines is an important element in defining the space around the plaza.
- 1.3 Maintain orientation of buildings toward the plaza and the lake.
- 1.4 No structure or plantings should obscure the view of or access to Lake Anne from the plaza.
- 1.4 Do not block or fill the pedestrian walkways between the structures which connect the plaza to the paths and areas beyond it.
- 1.6 Maintain parking areas as recessed lots arranged around the periphery of the district.
- 1.7 Maintain alignment of building facades on plaza edges.

STANDARD 2--Protect the integrity of the historic structures by respecting their original design.

GUIDELINES

- 2.1 Follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for all preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation.
- 2.2 Repair deteriorated material; if repair is not possible, replace with the same material.
- 2.3 Do not obscure original material or forms by covering or infilling any of the storefronts, balconies, or other designed spaces.
- 2.4 Maintain original finishes; do not paint unpainted surfaces.
- 2.5 Maintain the pattern created by windows and wall.
- 2.6 Do not alter the original shape of openings.
- 2.7 Building components should be similar in size, shape, and material to those already in use.

2.8 Maintain original condition and location of sculptures.

STANDARD 3--Maintain existing landscaping.

GUIDELINES

3.1 Maintain screening along edges of parking lots.

3.2 Do not remove existing healthy trees or shrubs, except in an effort to recreate a documented aspect of the original site plan.

STANDARD 4--Necessary service and mechanical structures should be compatible with the existing design.

GUIDELINES

4.1 Use materials and colors similar to existing materials and colors.

4.2 Install mechanical systems with as little disruption of the original structures and design as possible.

4.3 Locate new mechanical features in inconspicuous places.

STANDARD 5--Signs should contribute to the overall character of the design.

GUIDELINES

5.1 Maintain the original large white emblems of services located within the storefronts (knife and fork for a restaurant, pharmaceutical symbols for the drugstore).

5.2 Promote a variety of signs, not a monotonous sameness, as a reflection of the busy commercial area this is intended to be.

5.3 Signs should never overwhelm the building.

5.4 Limit the number of signs for each business to the minimum necessary.

5.5 Do not allow commercial signs to intrude into the space of the residential units above them.

STANDARE 6--All light fixtures and outdoor furniture should be compatible with the architectural character of Lake Anne Plaza.

GUIDELINES

6.1 Maintain the simple, brown metal street lights along the lake.

6.2 Install simple benches of compatible materials, such as wood with a natural finish.