

## 5.0 Guidelines for New Residential Buildings

### 5.1 Residential District Defined



*The rhythm of porches along the street is a pleasant and typical detail in traditional residential neighborhoods such as those surrounding downtown Goldsboro. See #2 at right.*

This section applies to all the residential areas within the Historic District (shown on page 2) and Master Plan area (shown on page 2). On page 3, residential areas within the Historic District are shown in blue. Existing residential structures within the Historic District must use the Historic District Guidelines for renovations. New Structures within the Historic District must also follow the Historic District Guidelines as they relate to materials. This section provides guidance for siting and building design for all new residential structures within both the Historic District and the master plan area. The intent of these guidelines is to create residential neighborhoods that draw upon and reinforce the best principles of traditional neighborhood design. It is understood that the residential areas may include residential buildings of all types, including single-family detached, attached housing, apartment buildings, and condos. These guidelines apply to the site design and form of buildings only, uses may vary as

specified in the Unified Development Ordinance. For example, home and professional offices are allowed in the residential districts, as long as the guidelines for site design and building form are followed.

### 5.2 Allowed Uses

Residential uses occur throughout the downtown and take a variety of forms from single family structures to townhomes, apartment or condo buildings, or apartments over commercial in the CBD. However, in areas of the plan that are primarily residential (shown in blue on the map on page 3), new infill commercial or service uses are not allowed, except existing uses which are grandfathered under the current ownership only. In transition areas between the CBD and residential neighborhoods mixed uses are allowed, but each site plan should be carefully considered to ensure compatibility with any adjacent residential use.



*This attractive street in Southport, NC illustrates common design elements such as porch details and setbacks, yet each building is unique. See items 2, 3 and 4 on previous page and at right. Also note that there are no driveways off the primary streets.*

*This attractive residential structure has been converted for use as lawyers' offices. Such conversions are not prohibited in the guidelines as long as the site and architectural guidelines are met (see #8). Note also the brick retaining wall in the front (see # 6)*



## 5.3 Residential District Site Guidelines

1. **Buildings oriented to the street.** The front façade of the architecture in residential areas should be oriented to the street. Where lot and block configurations allow, vehicular access from the rear is favored. Where driveways must be placed in the front, garages and/or parking areas should be set back from the front facade. If lot size permits, garages may be located next to the main structure (attached) but it is preferred that the garage entrance be oriented away from the street. Permanent parking areas are only permitted in front yards by exception and with review.
2. **The use of porches and traditional detailing.** Front porches are an almost universal feature of residential architecture in eastern North Carolina. This regional tradition should be incorporated into the design of all detached homes and townhouses.
3. **Front yards.** Homes in the downtown should include front yard setbacks as specified by the zoning ordinance. Generally, a minimum of 20' (measured to the front porch, not the main wall of the building) for detached structures, and 15' (to the porch) for townhouses is recommended. In areas with existing homes, the setbacks should be in harmony with adjacent structures. For larger structures such as apartments, a larger landscaped setback (approximately 25' front and 20' side) is recommended.
4. **Utilize a range of unit types and sizes rather than standardization.** Because the amount of land available in the downtown is limited, it is desirable to encourage a range of harmonious styles of residences rather than a grouping of very similar styles.
5. **Suburban design elements such as frequent curb cuts for driveways should be avoided.** On lots with single family detached homes and a minimum of 50' of frontage, direct access from the main road is acceptable, although orientation of the garage away from the street or set back from the main facade is recommended. In areas where smaller homes, townhouses or attached units will be constructed, however, frequent curb cuts are unfriendly to pedestrians and give visual and physical preference to vehicles. To address this problem in areas where townhouses or small lot detached units are planned; access from alleyways behind the buildings or on side streets is preferred, as shown in the plan.
6. **No privacy fences or chain link fences in front yards** will be permitted, but historic-style picket fences, low brick or stone walls, metal pick-





*Continuity of sidewalks in residential areas encourages walking and neighbor interaction. Although driveways are present along this sidewalk, note how they are de-emphasized by continuing the sidewalk through them. New Bern, NC.*

ets (“wrought-iron”) or combination masonry/metal picket fences will be permitted. Small, well-kept front yards are the hallmark of an attractive, stable residential community. The combination of front porches and front yards invites neighborly interaction and creates an attractive image of the community. PVC or prefabricated wooden fencing is not permitted.

**7. Parking for larger structures shall be located in the rear (preferred) or the side of the buildings.** Apartments and condominium complexes should have parking areas located to the rear if possible, or to the side. Parking lots must be screened from the street and from adjacent residential properties, well-lit for safety, and accessed from the street as specified in the guidelines for Downtown Commercial.

**8. Uses not specified.** It is important to understand that the residential design guidelines refer to the design of the buildings, not necessarily their use. For instance, many of the structures on William Street between Walnut and Pine Streets are residential in form, but commercial in use. As long as the guidelines are met, uses other than residential are not prohibited by these guidelines.

## 5.4 Residential Architectural Guidelines

The ultimate goal of these guidelines is to create a true sense of “neighborhood”. This can be achieved through the use of traditionally inspired forms and details that most people are familiar and comfortable with. Reproduction of traditional house designs is not required for new structures, and contemporary interpretations of traditional elements are allowed with review and approval.

It is important to understand the factors that allow a residential area to be comfortable and pleasant. A key factor to remember is that the pedestrian should be more important than the automobile. This is not meant to suggest that modern conveniences are discouraged: Quite the contrary, cars and other creature comforts are ingrained parts of our everyday lives. The guidelines are meant to reduce the emphasis many new houses place on garages and driveways and return the emphasis to the people that inhabit a given home. An added benefit of this philosophy is that removing the vehicle-related elements from front yards removes



*Although these three adjacent houses in New Bern are different styles, they have many common elements that make them harmonize, such as materials, proportion, front porches and setbacks.*

barriers that discourage interaction between neighbors.

**1. Placement of Structures.** In the case of infill between existing residential structures, new structures should harmonize with adjacent residences. In areas with more than two new structures, the front walls of houses should fall within a specified setback range along a street (i.e. the building setbacks can vary somewhat for interest). For accessory buildings such as garages or sheds, detached, smaller scale buildings are encouraged. Attached garages should be set back from the front façade of the house. Whenever possible, garage doors should not face the street, but should open to the side or rear. The development of alleys to the rear of residences for such access is strongly recommended. Where garage doors

must face the street, consideration should be given to painting the garage doors to match the main house instead of using a contrasting trim color. Another effective technique for reducing the emphasis on front-facing garage doors is to provide an overhanging roof over the garage doors so that they appear to be recessed.

**2. Materials.** Recommended materials include:

***Siding Materials:***

- Wood siding or approved high-quality modern equivalent, such as fiber-cement siding or Hardy Plank.
- Wood or vinyl shingles
- Vinyl siding, with appropriately scaled trim
- Brick in approved range of colors
- Smooth textured stucco (either traditional cement-based or modern synthetic systems) for foundations only.

***Trim or accent materials:***

- Wood
- Wood composite trim
- Vinyl (proper proportions are critical)
- Fabricated millwork (Fiberglass or structural foam)
- Cast or wrought iron

***Glazing Materials:***

- Clear glass, glass block
- Textured, stained or faceted glass accent windows, portions of windows, or sidelights.



### **Roofing Materials:**

- Standing-seam metal
- Composition shingles (including basic 3-tab types).
- Membrane roofing (built-up roofing, single-ply roofing, etc.; only for low-sloped roof areas).
- Slate or synthetic slate
- Wood shingles (must comply with fire-resistant requirements of building code).

### **Prohibited materials include:**

- “Mirrored” or opaque glass
- Colored glass (except as specified above).
- Wood shakes (wood shingles are allowed, shakes are prohibited because of poor fire-resistance)
- Clay tile roofing
- Metal shingles that imitate clay tiles or wood shingles
- Heavily textured stucco
- Panel siding such as “T1-11” siding
- Imitation stone texturing (formstone)
- Sheet metal awnings or canopies
- Backlit canopies or awnings
- Plastic awnings

- 3. Building Scale and Proportion.** Windows should generally be taller than they are wide, and organized into regularly spaced patterns within the wall surface. Large glazed areas should be composed of several window units, not plate glass “picture windows”. The use of porches or porticoes on the front of residential structures can help to provide a transition from a large building to the pedestrian scale. New residential structures should be designed to generally relate in size and height with surrounding residences. Consistency in the scale of the structures on a particular street is extremely important to reinforce a sense of community. See picture on previous page.

*This close-up of a house in New Bern demonstrates attention to details. Note the repetition of small glass panes in the door and window, wide trim boards on the windows, and the authentic openwork brick on the foundation.*



The proportion of trim and details has a very large impact on the character of a house or townhouse. For instance, on most traditional homes with sidings other than brick, the trim around the sides and tops of windows and doors (casing) is usually a flat board four to five inches in width, sometimes embellished with additional trim at the outer edge. Most new windows and doors come with an attached “brick moulding,” a trim that is approximately two inches wide. The wider trim shall be used for all new structures unless they are constructed with masonry or stucco (for basements) as the exterior material. Most window manufacturers will supply the wider casings or will provide elongated sills that allow for their installation on-site. Consideration of other trim elements should



*The Goldsboro historic porches and doorways shown above illustrate the importance of the main entry in traditional homes. Even if there is no porch, as in the bottom photo, the front door is still given importance through the use of trim elements.*

include study of how similar installations were made on older buildings of similar type in the region. Many manufacturers now make a wide variety of residential millwork from synthetic materials. Many of these are excellent substitutes, but care must be taken in selecting items whose proportions are compatible with the design of a given residence. Corner boards and window casings should be a minimum of 3 1/2" wide, unless brick is used.

- 4. Building Elements.** The various components used in the composition of a building design greatly affect the success of a design and its compatibility with its context. The following descriptions provide guidance for various components used in traditional residential structures:

### ***Building foundations:***

Building foundations shall be constructed with brick or stucco as the exposed finish material. Exposed concrete block is not permitted. Consider the use of pier-type foundations for porches in lieu of wall-type foundations. All residences should be constructed on either a crawl space or elevated slab so that foundation walls are visible (approximately 2' minimum). Slab-on-grade construction is permitted for accessory structures only.

### ***Exterior Entrances and Porches:***

Most traditional residences in Eastern North Carolina have emphasis placed on the main entrance. There are a variety of ways in which this is accomplished. More simple facades may have the main entrance placed within a millwork "surround" that draws one's eye to this feature. Transoms, sidelights, panels and other features were often incorporated to embellish the entrance. Other residences may feature a portico, a sheltering roof over the entrance, usually supported by columns, while others featured porches that run the full width of the front façade.

For a porch to be functional, it should have a minimum depth of six feet. Porches shallower than six feet shall not be allowed. At a minimum, primary entrances to residences should be emphasized through the use of trim. If trim alone is the method used, careful detailing of flashings and weather resistant features is necessary to prevent rapid deterioration of the entrance elements.

Wooden porch railings should be designed and constructed to shed water, allowing long service life for these features. Many modern homes have suffered significant deterioration of railings and similar features due to poor detailing and construction practices. A little care and attention to these details pays substantial savings through the extended life achieved.



*This medium-size brick house is given added impact through the use of gracefully proportioned porch, roof and entry portico details. Also note the attractive porch railing. This house shows the narrow trim boards typical on the windows of brick houses.*



### **Windows:**

The most typical type of window found in traditional residential buildings in this region is double-hung sash. These windows are taller than they are wide, and have a horizontal rail that divides the upper half from the lower. Other window types, such as awning, casement or even fixed sash, can be used in a traditionally-inspired residence.

For new construction within the Master Plan area but outside the Historic District, if windows with muntins (divided lights) are desired, the divisions shall be either “true divided light” construction or permanent exterior grilles. Interior grilles alone or grilles set between the panes of double glazing are not acceptable. Windows may be constructed of wood or wood clad in vinyl or prefinished metal. All-vinyl windows may be allowed, but will require specific approval from the reviewing authority. Window casings should follow the information presented in the Building Scale and Proportion section.

### **Doors:**

Residential doors are now available in a multitude of configurations and materials. Careful selection of door types avoids such mistakes as installing an elaborate “Victorian” door on a simple cottage structure. Modern alternatives such as steel or fiberglass doors are acceptable alternatives to wooden doors. See examples on previous page. Flat panel doors are not allowed.

Garage doors should be simple panel designs, with glazing limited to the top row of panels. Features such as “fanlight” glazing are discouraged, as it is not desirable to call attention to garage doors. Again, garage doors should not face the primary street if at all possible.

### ***Shutters:***

Shutters can provide emphasis to window openings and can introduce elements of color to a building facade. However, there are some basic requirements for shutters to be appropriately installed. The size and shape of shutters should correspond to the size and shape of the window opening (see Figure 32). Shutters can be mounted to operate, or if mounted in a fixed position, should be placed immediately adjacent to the window jamb. Wood and synthetic millwork are acceptable materials for shutters.

### ***Equipment and Technology:***

Mechanical equipment should be located to the side or rear of buildings if ground-mounted equipment is used. Ground mounted equipment shall be screened.

Television antennae, satellite dishes and similar equipment should be as small as feasible and located so as not to be visible from the street.

5. **Accessory Structures.** Structures such as detached garages, storage sheds and workshops shall comply with applicable zoning ordinances in terms of building location. They should be designed to complement the primary residence. Prefabricated structures are not prohibited, but the design and materials of such structures must be compatible with the primary structure. “Barn” shaped and prefabricated metal accessory buildings are not permitted.