Cary Towne Center
Design Guidebook

A NEW WALKABLE URBAN
MIXED USE DISTRICT

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Purpose

This Community Design Guidebook ("Design Guidebook" or "Guidebook") was developed by Turnbridge Equities, the owner of Cary Towne Center. This document is hereby included as a zoning condition for the project to help facilitate Cary Towne Center’s re-development as a high quality, high density urban mixed use district. The purpose of this Design Guidebook is to ensure that the project is developed with a higher level of quality and an overall higher caliber of design than would otherwise be required by the Town of Cary’s existing architectural standards, which are contained in the Town’s Land Development Ordinance ("LDO") and Community Appearance Manual ("CAM").

The Guidebook pursues these purposes by identifying specific types of design elements and then illustrating the level of quality required for Cary Towne Center. This Design Guidebook utilizes pictures to convey the caliber of design, overall quality of materials, and the type, character, and relationship of design elements that may be used and combined to create a unique and special sense of place for Cary Towne Center. The actual design of Cary Towne Center will vary from the Town’s architectural standards with the overall design including materials and design elements substantially similar to those pictured and described in this Design Guidebook to achieve a high quality development.

This Guidebook is also designed to provide the developer with opportunities for flexibility and creativity in achieving the committed level of design and quality. The pictures and descriptions in this Guidebook are conceptual examples of the high quality of materials and caliber of design envisioned for the District. The materials, architectural features, signage, fixtures, hardscape, and landscape components depicted ("design elements") are (i) not intended to be exclusive, (ii) not exhaustive examples of design elements that will meet the level of quality required, and (iii) not required to be duplicated in the design or construction of The Project. Instead, these design elements are intended to be used as examples of acceptable building massing and articulation, street level architecture, fenestration and materials, lighting, parking deck design and screening, the construction and display of specialty and temporary uses, landscaping, hardscapes, site furnishings, screening and enclosures (together “Guideline elements”). Guideline elements are intended to be applied in a manner that promotes variability and variation, in order to achieve the overall goal of establishing Cary Towne Center as a unique, high quality mixed use district.
Application

This Design Guidebook is intended to be used in lieu of the Town’s LDO and CAM when determining the architectural standards to which development in Cary Towne Center must adhere, except as provided below. For all development in Cary Towne Center, the review of design and materials will occur at the time of development plan review or building permit review. Development plans that demonstrate compliance with the high quality and caliber of design reflected in this Guidebook, and show substantial similarity to the Guidebook elements, will be approved. In such cases, proposed designs and materials shall be informed by Guidebook elements, and shall be significantly more like, than not like, the Guidebook elements in terms of quality of materials and the level and application of design.

Being substantially similar does not require, or intend, that Guidebook elements have to be copied. As part of fostering creative, unique, and innovative outcomes, substantially similar outcomes may sometimes differ from the examples illustrated in the Guidebook. In such cases, as long as these creative and innovative designs and their associated elements are equally good or better in terms of quality and caliber of design, such that the end result still achieves the overall high quality of development reflected in the Design Guidebook, such development plans will be approved.

Unless otherwise specifically addressed in the Preliminary Development Plan for Cary Towne Center, materials and design-related aspects that are not addressed in this Design Guidebook shall be subject to all requirements of the LDO, CAM, and other applicable laws, standards, policies, and guidelines. Assuming compliance with these requirements is demonstrated, such development plans will be approved.

For purposes of review, it is important to note that the captions underneath the pictured Guidebook elements are intended to highlight the primary design element(s) illustrated in each picture. Captions are not intended to be an exclusive listing of the design elements in the picture. Accordingly, pictures may be used to identify more than one Guidebook element(s) and all of those Guidebook elements may not necessarily be identified in the captions.

As indicated above, compliance shall be determined at the time of development plan or building permit review by the Planning Director or his or her designee (“Director”). Plans that are determined to be compliant will be approved by the Director. Decisions of the Director may be appealed as provided in the Town’s LDO.
Vision

The Cary Towne Center master plan envisions the transformation of the existing underutilized mall into a walkable neighborhood that includes residences, offices, shops, restaurants, hotels, civic spaces, and parks. Cary Towne Center will be an engaging, organic neighborhood—a destination to dwell, collaborate, learn, stay, eat and drink, shop, and recreate. Embracing urban place making and connecting homes, workplaces, daily necessities, and leisure activities as part of a complete neighborhood will support Cary's evolving demographics and become a source of civic pride.

Generally, Cary Towne Center will accomplish this vision by:

• Incorporating a variety of architectural styles to create a vibrant, sophisticated, high-quality and authentic neighborhood that is inviting and enjoyable to visitors, residents and employees.

• Includes a high level of style, character and design quality in a manner that accentuates individual uses while composing an overall neighborhood fabric that is a setting for high-quality place-making.

• Designing each building in a distinctive manner consistent with the overall design vision for Cary Towne Center.

• Incorporating a high-quality pedestrian oriented streetscape that includes a variety of public and civic spaces.

• Utilizing high-quality materials to construct the buildings, streetscape, architectural elements, signage, lighting, and public places.
Architectural Character

*Massing and Articulation*

The architectural term “massing” refers to the perception of the general shape, form and size of a building. Massing refers to the organization of the building’s overall volume, and determines whether a building’s scale feel appropriate to the public. Massing influences the sense of space which the building encloses, and helps to define both the interior spaces and the exterior shape of the building.

In architectural terms “articulation” is a method of styling the breaks or transitions in the formal elements of architectural design. Through degrees of articulation, each part is united with the whole work by means of a break or transition in such a way that the joined parts of the building are put together in styles ranging from exceptionally distinct to the opposite of high articulation – fluidity and continuity of joining.

**Key Elements**

- Emphasize important building corners and terminating vistas by treating them as architecturally important and special. This will make the spaces around them interesting and create attractive and memorable approach and walking views.

- Architecture at the second level and above should be varied, differentiated, and articulated in the facades and cornices.

- Create architectural relief and variation by including bay projections, balconies, roof overhangs and other forms of façade articulation that creates building differentiation and visual interest.

- Buildings provide a backdrop and setting for their adjacent public spaces and should be intentionally designed to enhance the public realm.

- Where adjacent building have significant height variation use unifying architectural elements to appropriately integrate and connect them with visual interest.

- Entrances to buildings should be architecturally interesting to enhance recognition and create a sense of arrival.
Architectural Character

*Massing and Articulation*

**Key Elements**

- Define public realm and Main Street through enhanced attention to building architectural massing, scale articulation and detail.
- Organize residential buildings around courtyards and screen parking as much as possible.
- Align large floorplate office buildings to streets with minimal setbacks and screen parking as much as possible.
- Mix Modern and Traditional styles derived from the architectural character of the region, including the industrial heritage of brick, glass and steel buildings.
- Vary the massing of buildings at selected locations such as corners and vary roof lines where possible.
Architectural Character

Massing and Articulation

Key Elements

- Vary façade treatments on streets where possible in response to create interest and variety along streets.

- Create green spaces and courtyards related to residential buildings and where possible create views into courtyards from sidewalks.

- Break up large featureless building walls, spaces, masses, or volumes through an articulated facade to create visual interest.

- Create mid-block pedestrian connections where possible particularly on larger blocks.

- Vary lower floors of buildings particularly where there is a change of use at street level.

- Encourage window bays to project over sidewalks to create visual interest and building articulation.
Architectural Character

*Massing and Articulation*

**Key Elements**

- Vary façade treatments on residential buildings with setbacks and balconies where possible.
- Retail buildings that are one to two stories with varying heights and designed to reflect different tenants.
- Vary the upper floor or penthouse level architecturally at selected locations by setbacks and/or varying materials and colors.
- Articulation of residential buildings with slight setbacks and by varying materials and colors.
- Greater transparency at street level and at key locations.
Architectural Character

*Massing and Articulation*

**Key Elements**

- Express individual residential units along streets with slight setbacks and/or change of materials and colors.
- Residential buildings may vary in height up to four to six levels.
- Organize and compose residential buildings along streets to create some variety and interest by including setbacks, varying materials, colors and transparency.
- Allow for a range of residential buildings types such as townhouses, stacked townhouses, and flats. Allow for at–grade and above grade (stoop style) entrances from the street, in addition to single entrance multi-family buildings.
- Residential block size should be pedestrian scale rather than auto oriented.
Active street level uses are important to making Cary Towne Center a walkable neighborhood and destination, particularly at its core and along streets connecting to Main Street.

“Street level architecture” refers to the portion of a building that interacts with pedestrians from a ground-level perspective. This viewpoint can involve both the massing of upper stories with a relationship to the street, as well as finer elements such as the selection of materials and fenestration.

Street level architecture should have variation and sensitive detailing that relates to the public realm and which is important to creating a high-quality pedestrian experience. Clear visual division between street level and upper floors is important as the typical condition. In limited locations full height architectural elements can frame overall building architecture. Architectural elements such as entries, windows, balconies, awnings and bays all serve to enhance visual interest.

Street-level retail should extend outdoors in plazas and widened sidewalk zones. Slight setbacks in the building façades along streets should create pockets of outdoor dining, contributing to the experience of a pedestrian scaled neighborhood.

Encourage active street-level uses with visual transparency to improve the quality of the street and pedestrian experience such as retail and food & beverage spaces with opening/retracting walls to extend outdoor space and views to the inside of buildings; residential amenity spaces such as lounges and fitness centers; and hotel lobbies with active uses.
Architectural Character

Active Street Level Architecture

Key Elements

• Street-level uses are typically functionally different than the uses on higher building levels, with the exception of residential buildings such as townhouses.

• Street-level retail and food & beverage venues should be unique in character and utilize a variety of building materials and colors to create visual interest.

• Slight variation of building height along active streets will enhance the pedestrian experience.

• Periodically allow street-level uses to move vertically into upper levels.
Architectural Character

Active Street Level Architecture

Key Elements

- Whenever possible line streets with active street level uses where possible such as retail, food & beverage, lobbies and amenity spaces.
- Extend food and beverage to outdoor spaces along the sidewalk and if possible to roof terraces at selected locations.
- Consider environmental enhancements to the pedestrian zone with canopies, awnings and shade structures.
- If possible make some retail streets pedestrian only with outdoor seating, dining and special lighting.
- Incorporate a variety of materials and other design elements to create a distinctive and engaging public realm.
Architectural Character

Active Street Level Architecture

Key Elements

• Make widened sidewalk spaces or setback buildings with small courtyards for outdoor dining in some locations on retail streets.
• Employ strategies to externalize the ground floor program with transparency to engage the street.
• Make some street level retail spaces with walls, doors or glass that open to connect interior to exterior seasonally.
• Design storefronts and sidewalks so retailers can extend into the pedestrian space.
Architectural Character
*Active Street Level Architecture*

**Key Elements**

- Commercial building entries should have principal entries along sidewalks and be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Townhouses should have front doors along sidewalks.
- Multi-family residential buildings should have major entries along streets and sidewalks.
- Retail spaces should express individual storefronts.
Architectural Character

Fenestration and Materials

The architectural term “fenestration” refers to the openings in a building’s façade, most notably the doors and windows, such as any building element that allows for the passage of light, people and views from outside to inside.

Materials are essential architectural elements of buildings and places. A building’s materials will often influence not only the building’s general appearance, but also the size and configuration of the fenestration elements impacting the architectural style and function.

Materials often contribute to the perception of a building’s overall scale and texture. For example, the use of individual building elements of a human scale allows a pedestrian to understand and relate to the total size and scale of the building. The texture and color of the materials also affect the perceived massing and scale of a building.

Diversity of materials to create visual interest including steel, brick, glass, panel systems such as precast concrete and others, as well as wood.
Architectural Character

Fenestration and Materials

Key Elements

- Visibility into retail spaces is important. Retail glazing should be clear glass and glazing areas should be offset from the face of the building at least 6”.
- Use large recessed punched openings to create shadows and visual relief.
- Encourage a variety of building materials to provide visual interest and richness.
- Highly detailed window treatments are encouraged.

Clear glass and glazing areas offset 6” from building face

Large recessed punched openings to create shadow

Use a variety of building materials to provide visual interest

Highly detailed window treatments are encouraged
Architectural Character

Fenestration and Materials

**Key Elements**

- Painted brick to create rich and authentic visual texture.
- Retail and food & beverage storefronts should be visually differentiated and individualistic.
- Utilize contemporary building technologies and traditional building practices common to the region, including the industrial heritage of brick, steel and glass buildings.
- Employ a diversity of regionally authentic materials to create visual interest, express different building uses and to give identity to individual buildings.
Architectural Character

Building Lighting and Art

Key Elements

• Integrate art into the streetscape in multiple ways such as murals, sculpture, lighting and signs to provide visual interest. Murals and scrims can be used on large walls to enhance and improve the visual experience of large blank walls.

• Use architectural lighting such as sconce lighting, down-lighting, up-lighting, flood lighting, hanging lighting and string lighting to create a sense of identity and visual interest and delight.

• The adaptive reuse “look and feel” with faded signage on walls can be utilized selectively.

• Use functional art such as garage doors, benches, bicycle racks, fences and screens to complement the streetscape and provide visual interest.
Parking Structure Screening

Key Elements

- Minimize parking structure presence through integration into buildings and/or careful screening with active uses such as retail, transparent stairways/elevators, or with architectural and artistic treatments.
- Provide special architectural treatment to any exposed portion of a parking structure, including but not limited to program space on ground floor, variety of materials, colors and textures, visually-intriguing façade screens, vertical gardens, public art, rain capture systems, photovoltaics, etc.
- Design parking structures with sufficient floor-to-floor heights that allow for future transformation from automobile storage to different complementary uses.
- Views to parking structures and internal parking ramps should be screened from pedestrian views.
- Public art should be incorporated into parking structure facades.
Architectural Character

Screening and Enclosures

Key Elements

- Decorative screen walls
- Use of different textures, colors and materials
- Green screens
- Planting used as a screen
- Screening integrated into architecture
Architectural Character

Temporary Uses

Large scale mixed use projects such as Cary Towne Center will be developed over time in phases. Accordingly, there will be future phase parcels that will be temporarily undeveloped until a specific used is identified. To activate these vacant spaces in the interim it is possible to incorporate a variety of temporary retail/commercial and community uses such as pop-up food & beverage uses and pavilions and community event gathering spaces.

A wide variety of eclectic temporary and seasonal uses and events such as food truck venues, outdoor music and entertainment venues, creative retail pavilions, food & beverage, and arts & culture displays will enrich the experience of Cary Towne Center.
Architectural Character

Specialty and Seasonal Uses

Key Elements

- Food trucks
- Seasonal and specialty retail kiosks
- Mobile dining options
- Ice rinks
- Markets

Food trucks
Seasonal kiosks
Kiosks with a traditional design
Seasonal gathering areas
**Landscape Character**

*Hardscape*

**Key Elements**

- Plaza to have unit pavers in the intensively used areas of the Core
- Sidewalks typically exposed aggregate, or scored concrete
- Some park areas will have crushed stone paving
- Selected streets in core with special paving
- Streets are typically asphalt or concrete
- Trails will be paved including options for porous paving
Landscape Character

Site Furnishings

Bike Racks
Security Bollards
Movable Wood Furniture
Metal Bollards
Linear Benches
Wood Raised Decking
Raised Planters
Landscape Character

Site Furnishings

Sitting Walls with Lawn Terrace
Trash Receptacles
Water features
Sitting Walls
Movable Chairs and Tables
Movable Chairs and Tables
Movable Chairs and Tables
Landscape Character

*Lighting*

- Festival lighting
- Festival lighting as catenary lighting
- Linear lighting integrated within seating
- Pedestrian scale street lights as contemporary
- Pedestrian scale street lights as historical modernism
- Tree Up-Lighting
- Sculptural Lighting
Community Gathering Spaces

Key Elements

- Plaza / Flexible Lawn for Events
- Music, Performance, Movie Night
- Active Edges with Food and Beverage Pavilions
- Seasonal Displays
- Variety of Seating Options
- Recreational Activities

Interactive Activities and Programming

Flexibility of Civic Space to accommodate seasonal activities

Gathering areas designed to allow for programming and events

Social Gather Spaces

Functional gather spaces and opportunities for intimate gather seating
Community Gathering Spaces

Key Elements

• Flexible Lawn for Events
• Active Edges with Food and Beverage Pavilions
• Planting to provide shaded seating
• Variety of Seating Options
Community Gathering Spaces

Key Elements

• Active Edges
• Paved Event Spaces
• High Quality Paving
• Seasonal Displays
• Annual Planting for Color
• Shaded Structures
• Variety of Seating Options
• Water feature

Active Edges

Use of natural materials through paving, furniture, planting and walls

Sculptural lighting

Outdoor fire tables within social spaces

High Quality Paving through concrete or concrete unit pavers

A variety of seating options

A variety of seating options

Water feature seasonal interest

Flexibility of the space to provide seasonal programming / displays

Use of natural materials though paving, furniture, planting and walls
**Community Gathering Spaces**

**Key Elements**

- Children’s Playgrounds
- Dog Parks
- Walking Paths
- Recreational Activities
- Game Tables
- Shaded Seating
- Color Gardens
- Flexible Lawn

Dog parks provided in close proximity to residential

Shade structures for comfortable seating

Color Gardens through native planting

Walking paths and connections to larger regional trail systems

Gaming tables and seating

Shade seating

Children’s playgrounds and nature play

Areas for intimate seating
LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.1.4 (C) - PROHIBITED SIGNS
THE USE OF BANNERS, ROOF SIGNS AND DIGITAL SIGNS SHALL BE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.3
RESTRICTIONS ON SIGN COLOR LIMITATIONS SHALL NOT BE APPLICABLE TO THE URBAN CORE AREA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.4
RESTRICTIONS ON ILLUMINATION OF SIGNS SHALL NOT BE APPLICABLE TO THE URBAN CORE AREA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.6 (B)
RESTRICTIONS ON NEON SIGNS SHALL NOT BE APPLICABLE TO THE URBAN CORE AREA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.8
A MASTER SIGNAGE PLAN SHALL NOT BE REQUIRED; ALL SIGNAGE REGULATIONS SHALL BE GOVERNED BY THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.5 (G)
ADDITIONAL MONUMENT SIGNS SHALL BE ALLOWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK. DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS MAY BE EXCEEDED BY UP TO 25 PERCENT. THE REQUIRED PERCENTAGE OF MASONRY SHALL NOT BE APPLICABLE.

LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE SECTION 9.2.5 (F)
ADDITIONAL PRINCIPAL GROUND SIGNS SHALL BE ALLOWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPROVED DESIGN GUIDEBOOK.
Signage

Streetlight Banners / Wayfinding / Digital Directories

Streetlight Banners  
Street Wayfinding  
Street Wayfinding  
Park Wayfinding  
Digital Directory

Street Poles and Wayfinding
Signage

Building Signage/ Parking Signage/ Outdoor Screens / Digital Advertising
Signage

Commercial Tenant Signs

- Natural Materials and Backlighting
- Blade Signage
- Wall Mount Signage
- Wall Mount Signage
- Neon on Painted Brick
- Signage Painted on Brick
- Signage Painted on Brick
Signage

Commercial Tenant Signs

- Painted Signage
- Painted Wood Signage
- Metal Signage
- Use of Neon
- Use of Neon on Brick
- Wall Mount Neon
- Backlighting
- Sandwich Board Signage
Signage

*Commercial Tenant Signs*

- Back lit letter signage
- Letter and logo signage
- Bold identity with large text and logo through signage
- Bold identity with large text
- Tenant signage on canopies
- Tenant visual identity and signage expressed along the entire tenant space
- Bold identity expressed through neon
Signage

Commercial Tenant Signs

Canopy mounted signage

Canopy mounted signage

Canopy mounted signage

Awning Signage
Signage

Monument Signs

- Vertical Upright Signage
- Horizontal Signage to incorporate natural materials
- Signage integrated with sculpture and art
- Signage integrated with lighting
- Signage integrated with landscape