



Grand Traverse Commons Comprehensive Plan

Treatment of the Land
(Grand Traverse Commons District Plan 1994)

Design Guidelines



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(Grand Traverse Commons District Plan 1994, p.138)

Design Guidelines

Treatment of the Land

A. General Goals

1. Rehabilitation of the landscape shall be consistent with the spirit and intent of the original landscape
2. New development shall respect and preserve existing elements of the original development, and continue historic patterns and connections, particularly as they relate to views and building/site relationships
3. Redevelopment shall address inappropriate site modifications which either interrupt the natural patterns and systems on the site or are consistent with the principles of the original plan



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B. Design Guidelines - Landscape

1. Preserve and protect existing original historic elements of the landscape
2. Reinststate grandness of scale and nobility of landscape expression by expanding and defining important visual corridors and clarifying the connections between open spaces
3. Induce movement through the landscape by the ordering of connecting open spaces
4. Enrich the visual quality of the site through the ordered disposition of architectural and landscape elements on the site
5. Achieve a dynamic landscape character by the interplay of important distant views and view corridors on the property with the layout of actual circulation on the site
6. Develop outdoor spaces between buildings and the large open space of the front lawn which are transitional in scale and character between the architecture and the central organizing space.



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C. Design Guidelines - Topography

1. Site buildings shall fit the grade to minimize excavation. Where excavation is necessary, cut and fill quantities shall balance
2. Curbs into the natural grade are permissible for unsightly secondary structures such as parking decks, where the combination of insertion into the slope and landscape treatments can visually buffer the building
3. Restoration of areas to the original grade shall be accomplished through distribution of materials excavated for new construction, or materials removed from earlier fill locations
4. It is desirable, where practical, to remove linear fill zones which cross the wetland and impede the natural patterns of surface drainage to the site. Expansion of openings through the fill zones may be an option



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D. Design Guidelines - Vegetation

1. Existing elements of the historic designed landscape shall be the basis of all further planting on the site, and shall be the guide for selection, scale of layout, and design character of all new planted landscape.
2. The historic significance of the Redevelopment District property and landscape requires that all plantings within the Commons, including plantings along publicly dedicated rights-of-way or on publicly owned land, must conform to the National Park Service's view of the landscape. Consequently, the conservation and preservation of significant plantings along publicly dedicated rights-of-way or on publicly owned land shall take precedence overall normal tree and/or street maintenance requirements .
3. Preservation and relocation or original landscape plantings shall be the goal in the Commons area, including the cottages, where photographic information of the historic landscape is available.



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D. Design Guidelines - Vegetation (continued)

4. The grand alleé of sugar maples which lines the main entrance drive along 11th street shall be the model for treatment of the main drives within the CCRC and Residential/Activity subareas and the Medical Campus Subarea on the north end of the site, but shall not be applied to service roads or the site entrance drives from the west and south.
5. The planted landscape in the Recreation/Activity Subarea shall be accomplished through the use of orchards, hedgerows, windbreaks and farm lane plantings to express the scale and simplicity of an agricultural setting
6. Native species, selected for suitability for the specific natural situation, shall be used for all new and restoration planting in the Woodland and Wetland Subareas.
7. Management programs shall include strategies and practices to eradicate exotic species and return the natural flora to the wetland and forested areas of the site



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D. Design Guidelines - Vegetation (continued)

8. Use native species in natural combinations to accomplish visual screening, where necessary, along the interface between the wetland and the developed landscape
9. Protect natural vegetation zones along drainage corridors on the site



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E. Design Guidelines - Site Development

1. Specific elements of the landscape such as lighting, furniture, garden structures, fences, fountains and bridges shall be sympathetic in design and materials to the period and style of the historic architecture
2. Historic elements shall be rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interiors Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
3. The design of new site structures and development introduced in the adaptive reuse of historic buildings shall be consistent with the original character of site development



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1. Building Landscape Zone: The landscape treatments of the building within this zone include the most detailed application of plantings and other elements of site design (Figure 59). The cottages are very large buildings, by residential standards, so the actual treatment of the front landscapes, building entrances, foundation plantings, courtyards, gardens and other outdoor use areas are larger and somewhat simpler than would be the case in a conventional residential landscape. The building landscapes are the one zone within the overall Redevelopment District where the full range of landscape plants, from flowers and groundcovers, to shrubs, ornamental trees, evergreens and shade trees are appropriately used. The building landscape zone is further broken down into specific design areas with prescribed types of landscape materials





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F. Design Details (Continued)

2. Landscape Treatment Zone: A zone of variable dimension, depending upon the design and orientation of the buildings, will allow for the graceful transition in scale and landscape treatment from the detail of the individual building landscapes to the general park-like character of the Commons historic landscape (Figure 6o). The type and scale of plantings is intermediate between the two landscapes zones





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F. Design Details (Continued)

(3) Wetland & Woodland Treatment

- a) Development Zone Edge Treatment at Wood Bluffs: A minimum 20' setback from building or parking face to drip line of undisturbed forest edge is required (Figure 61)
- b) Perimeter Revegetation: Wetland edges will be managed/replanted to reinstate native woody species as significant components of the wetland flora, in zones and patterns consistent with their occurrence in nature (Figure 62)
- c) View Enhancement: Existing stands of mature trees may be thinned in some instances to enhance views from central locations within the historic zone (Figure 63)
- d) Retention Zone: Excavate in specific locations at edges of the wetland to create areas for stormwater retention, and provide enhanced wildlife habitat and opportunities for views to open water (Figure 64). Install wetland trees and shrubs especially along upland edges of retention area.
- e) Excavation of Fill Zones: Excavate out segments of the Elmwood Ave. Roadbed across the wetland at least partially reinstate natural patterns of surface flow (Figures 65-66). Pedestrian systems may follow the road alignment surface paths in sections where the roadbed remains, or as boardwalks on either pilings or floats over the old alignment. Additional excavation to create open water zones adjacent to the boardwalks will enhance both the aesthetics and the wildlife value by increasing the physical diversity of the area.



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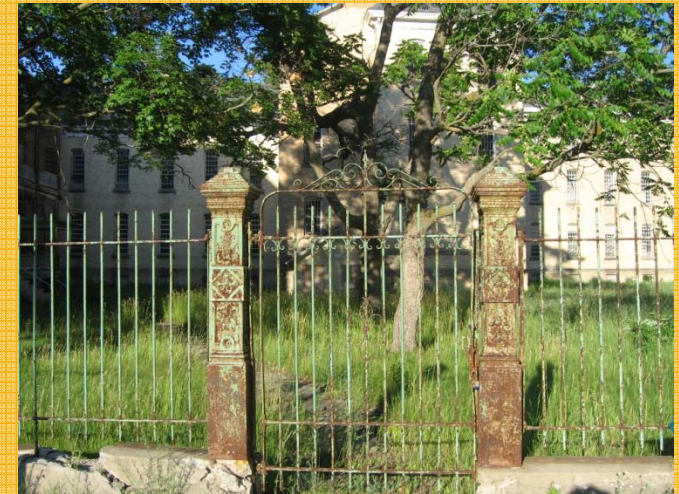
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F. Design Details (Continued)

(5). Site Furnishings

- a) Benches, waste receptacles, fences, trellises, kiosks and other site furnishings in the developed portions of the Grand Traverse Commons Planned Redevelopment District shall reflect the exact historic character of the site (see figure 70 as our example) if historical information exists to verify its accuracy. Otherwise site furnishings will be modern and quiet in character so as not to distract from the historic character of the site





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F. Design Details (Continued)
(6). Site Graphics

A comprehensive site graphics system will be implemented to accomplish the following:

- a) Provide clear directional signage for roadways, parking lots, buildings and pathways; and
- b) Provide informational signage for site history, natural systems education and site activity information

The Grand Traverse Commons Planned Redevelopment District will include traffic directional signage, project signage, identification signage and interpretive signage.

Traffic Signage is an important element of convenience, guiding users through the site. A unified system applied to all posts and signs throughout the site will help provide a cohesive identity to the Commons Planned Redevelopment District. Simplicity of design will minimize the visual clutter of these elements. **(Wayfinding)**



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F. Design Details (Continued)

(6). Site Graphics (Continued)

Design Guidelines

Project Signage that identifies specific users, buildings, parking locations or other destinations also needs to be part of a unified system. Form, scale, graphic design and selection of material and color should blend with rehabilitated architecture. It should be easy to read, with contrast between copy and background and easy to understand.

Identification Signage for specific user groups should be part of the project signage system so that there are no signs that visually clash with the overall project character. Interpretive signage is another potential information system within the site.





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F. Design Details (Continued)
(6). Site Graphics (Continued)

Interpretive Signage within the central Commons area, relating to the historic buildings or arboretum should blend with the rehabilitated architecture and project signage in terms of form, scale, graphic design and selection of material and color. In the Conservation subareas it is important that the interpretive signage blend with the natural setting within which it will be located. A color or size that is appropriate in the Medical Campus subarea may not be appropriate in the Conservation subareas. All signage will be part of a unified signage program which will be reviewed by the Development Plan Committee and the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation.





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