Resolution 103-2018: Town of Caroline Site Plan Review Law of 2018 Design Guidelines

Resolved, the Caroline Town Board adopts the following Design Guidelines to be provided as a document to applicants and used in review of Site Plan Review Applications by the Town's Review Board:

Town of Caroline Site Plan Review Local Law Design Guidelines

General Principles

It is the expectation of the Town of Caroline that the design of any Development should be appropriate to the Site's physical, natural, agricultural, historic, energy, and cultural features and resources. It is the intent of this section to provide guidelines for the design of Sites.

Guidelines

In reviewing a proposed Site Plan, the Review Board shall consider the answers to the questions listed below. With permission of the property owner, the Board may make a site visit to the proposed Development, with notification made to the applicant, to consider alternative designs that may better address the following guidelines. The guidelines are presented in the form of questions to reflect the fact that they are intended to guide a discussion by the Review Board on the design of a proposed Development, not to provide a boilerplate standard for development design.

1. Does the Site Plan design comply with all existing local laws?
2. Is the proposed Development consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan?
3. Will the proposed Development protect all Floodplains, Wetlands, and Steep Slopes from clearing, grading, filling, or construction (except as may be approved by the Town for essential infrastructure or active or passive recreation amenities)?
4. Will the proposed Development preserve and maintain mature woodlands, existing fields, pastures, and meadows and create sufficient buffer areas to minimize conflicts between the Development Site and other uses, such as Residential and agricultural uses?
5. If Development is located on open fields or pastures because of greater constraints in all other parts of the Site, will dwellings be sited on the least prime agricultural soils, or in locations on the far edge of a field, as seen from existing public roads?
6. Will a vegetative buffer be maintained adjacent to Wetlands and surface waters, including creeks, streams, springs, lakes and ponds? If not, will such a vegetative buffer of native species be created?
7. Does the design of the Development incorporate existing hedgerows and tree lines between fields or meadows, and minimize impacts on large woodlands (greater than five acres), especially those containing many mature trees or significant wildlife habitat?
8. Does the design leave scenic views and vistas unblocked or uninterrupted, particularly as seen from public roads? Does the design avoid siting new construction on prominent hilltops or ridges, by taking advantage of lower topographic features?
9. Does the design incorporate and preserve sites of historic, archeological, or cultural value, and their environs, insofar as needed to safeguard the character of the feature? Such features may include stone walls, spring houses, barn foundations, earthworks, and burial grounds.
10. Does the proposed Development affect a Unique Natural Area as identified by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council or a Critical Environmental Area? If so, has guidance been sought from the appropriate County official and documentation provided to the Town to further evaluate how this impact may be avoided or mitigated?
11. Will the proposed Development protect rural roadside character and improve public safety and vehicular carrying capacity by avoiding development fronting directly onto existing public roads?
12. Will the Development's design support sustainable transportation features such as bike racks and/or storage, a dedicated car share parking space(s), a car or van pooling service, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, or Tompkins Area Consolidated Transit (TCAT) bus service, or public transit options for disabled persons?

13. Will Site Development incorporate the use of "green infrastructure"—rain gardens, bioretention areas, vegetated swales/dry swales, green roofs, porous pavement (xeriscaping), stream buffer restoration—into the design of the proposed Development to assist in the management, conservation, and re-use of water resources?
14. Is the architectural design and details of proposed buildings or structures compatible with the character of the surrounding area?
15. Will the Applicant consider dark sky-friendly lighting strategies and equipment, as suggested by the International Dark Sky Association (IDA), for the Development?
16. Has the Applicant considered the environmental and health impacts of building materials to be used for the proposed Development (including their transportation, embedded energy, and hazardous material content during manufacture and curing)?
17. Is the Applicant aware that prior to the Review Board approving a proposed Development's Site Plan, it may or be required to refer the Site Plan to the County Planning Department (pursuant to Tompkins County's §§ 239-l, -m, and/or -n of the General Municipal Law) for review? Further, as part of this review, the County has formalized Energy Recommendations for New Construction (2016) of proposed Developments, and the Applicant should be prepared to demonstrate how energy and water use will be managed per these recommendations prior to pursuing Final Site Plan approval.
18. Will the design of the proposed Development, should it be a residential project greater than 20 units, a commercial use with a Gross Floor Area of 10,000 square feet or more, or a industrial use with Gross Floor Area of 25,000 square feet or more, complete a building energy model to demonstrate optimized building energy performance to potentially reduce initial construction costs, and significantly reduce energy costs and GHG emissions?
19. Has the proposed Development utilized best practices in its design of building envelopes—foundations, walls, windows—that will minimize heating and cooling costs, including, but not limited to, using 20% more insulation (cellulose and spray foam preferred) than required by current energy code, implementing window-to-wall ratios of less than 25%, and minimizing window placements in low-occupancy areas, avoiding unusually complex building shapes, minimizing infiltration and stack effect results to maximize the overall thermal energy performance of buildings in this region of New York State?
20. Does the Site Plan for the proposed Development consider the Site's "location efficiency"—housing and related development located in a walkable area near transportation alternatives, employment opportunities, schools, and other retail and service amenities that allow residents to drive less—thereby reducing transportation costs and associated GHG emissions, as well as possibly reducing the need for new utility infrastructure?
21. Will the proposed Development utilize EnergyStar–certified products, such as those that conserve energy use in permanent appliances (apartment refrigerators, restaurant cooking equipment, air-source heat pump water heaters, smart meters, thermostat systems) and water use (low-flow fixtures that meet U.S. EPA Water Sense requirements) in its built structures?
22. Are building footprints minimized for energy savings in the proposed Development and structures oriented and designed to be "solar receptive", meaning roof areas are maximized for the installation of PV and/or solar hot water systems?
23. Can the proposed Development forego the use of fossil fuels and instead consider an electric energy program of an air-source or ground-source geothermal heat pump system (that is not boiler-assisted), or a combination of one heat pump system powered by renewable solar PV?

24. Will the proposed Development address climate change and work to mitigate energy use and GHG emissions per the NY DEC *Guide for Assessing Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions in an Environmental Impact Statement*?
25. Will the owner of the Development, once complete, conduct 3rd party building commissioning to ensure ongoing energy efficiency performance of buildings and share these results with the Town?