



# Atlantic Beach, Florida Design Guidelines for Traditional Residential Neighborhoods

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# Introduction

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Atlantic Beach is noted for a pattern and scale of development within its older traditional residential neighborhoods that is reflective of its beachside location where features of both the natural and built environment largely define the “feel” of the City. Most would agree that key components of the City’s personality are a beautiful beach, lush vegetation and a dense tree canopy, and streets and sidewalks that invite pedestrian activity and neighbor-to-neighbor interaction. Most residents of the City place deep value in these qualities and recognize that what is built and re-built in the City is an integral part of retaining what is so special about Atlantic Beach.

This workbook provides guidelines for design in residential neighborhoods, with a focus on Old Atlantic Beach. It is advisory, not a set of rules and regulations. It attempts to provide a description of the qualities and basic design characteristics the community seeks to achieve and maintain. (Where a particular requirement exists related to a land development item addressed in this workbook, the regulation is included and identified as such. For convenience, the Residential Development Standards, which are Section 24-172 of the City Code, are included in Appendix I.) Atlantic Beach has a collection of neighborhoods that are highly desirable places to live. Each neighborhood has distinct features, but along most blocks within Old Atlantic Beach, houses have traditionally been similar in scale and size, and are similarly located on their lots. A certain eclectic quality and a diversity of textures and architectural styles also contribute significantly to the unique character of Old Atlantic Beach, and while there is a broad range of housing types, Old Atlantic Beach conveys a sense of individual properties belonging together as part of a welcoming and warm neighborhood.

The trend over recent years of teardown-rebuilds should not be viewed as a negative influence on the City. Reinvestment in older neighborhoods is essential to the long-term sustainability of any community as a desirable place to live, regardless of how unique the location may be or how affluent it may be. New residents and young families are not drawn to tired worn-out communities. The balance here is to guide this pattern of redevelopment rather than just to observe the evolution of the City as the proverbial victim of its own success. While there have been some glaring misfits, these remain exceptions, and hopefully over time, these too will blend into the fabric of the City. Should these become the rule rather than the exception, however, Atlantic Beach would risk losing a part of its special identity.

This workbook provides photos and graphic illustrations intended to serve as a guide for property owners, architects, designers and builders when planning the design of new residential construction. The guidelines are arranged thematically related to various components of a residence and a lot. While the focus of this ongoing effort has been Old Atlantic Beach, the guidelines are certainly appropriate for all residential areas of the City.



The predominantly residential character of the City of Atlantic Beach is reflected in a view that is rare to most of coastal Florida.