

**SEA PINES**  
**Commercial**  
**Architectural Review**  
**Board**

**COMMERCIAL**  
**SIGN GUIDELINES**

*Approved 12-31-2025*

## **COMMERCIAL SIGN GUIDELINES**

***December 31, 2025***

The following guidelines will be used by the Sea Pines Commercial Architectural Review Board (CARB) in its consideration of applications for sign permits to be erected on Commercial Properties.

These guidelines are derived from legally recorded covenants of Sea Pines and are binding upon the CARB; and from the Land Management Ordinance (LMO) of the Town of Hilton Head Island (Town) which will have great weight in the deliberations of the CARB.

The LMO requirements will usually be regarded as establishing the minimum standards for signs under the jurisdiction of the CARB. The CARB may impose more restrictive requirements, consistent with its covenants.

Applicants are expected to review and understand all applicable CARB Guidelines and Standards prior to submitting an application. The review process is intended to evaluate compliance, not to substitute for applicant preparation or due diligence. Submittals that demonstrate a lack of familiarity with the guidelines may be deemed incomplete and returned without review.

The terms "Commercial Property", "Property" or "Project", as used herein, are considered interchangeable and applicable to any specific application, irrespective of type of project.

### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

What we know today as Sea Pines is a very large part – but not the entirety - of the land area that Charles Fraser started with; as he shaped a new vision for creating communities. For the land areas outside the gates of Sea Pines, Charles recognized the need for commercial and service establishments, civic and religious institutions, and homes for workers. And while he understood that greater flexibility was needed to accommodate many of these uses; he also sought to ensure that these areas reflect good design principles and respect for the environment.

Thus, a set of use and building covenants for these areas were introduced. As noted in the language of these covenants, there is a recognition that Hilton Head Island is an environmentally sensitive area, and that any development is a matter of concern to both the developing party and the community at large. The standards are intended to ensure: quality of design, workmanship and materials; harmony of external design; development of an attractive and convenient commercial area of integrated design and function; to preserve and enhance economic value; to prevent congestion and crowding; and prevent development that would tend to decrease the beauty of Hilton Head Island as a whole.

Over the years, there has been inconsistency in the administration of these covenants, but Community Services Associates (CSA), the Administrator of the covenants, has a renewed commitment to ensure a quality environment and that Sea Pines remains a unique community. Particular attention will be paid to properties visible from the vehicular approaches to Sea Pines, and as one gets closer to the entrance gates.

Those areas subject to these covenants are indicated in Exhibit A.

## **A. PURPOSE**

The Purpose Statement as contained in the Town of Hilton Head Island Sign Standards (Sec. 16-5-114 A.) is adopted in full. In addition to the purposes set forth by the Town, it is the intent of the Sea Pines Commercial Architectural Review Board (CARB) to protect property values by preserving the aesthetics of the natural environment, to promote safety, and to complement the special character of Sea Pines in those areas adjoining the community and within the purview of the CARB.

## **B. APPLICABILITY**

### **1. NEW SIGNS**

There must be an application to CARB for any new sign to be erected. In cases where there is an existing shopping center, commercial management areas, or merchants' association, the applicant must first obtain their permission, before making application to the CARB.

### **2. ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SIGNS**

There must be an application to CARB for any type of alteration to existing signs. In cases where there is an existing shopping center, commercial management areas, or merchants association, the applicant must first obtain their permission, before making application to the CARB.

### **3. SUBSTITUTION OF NONCOMMERCIAL MESSAGE**

Consistent with the Town's sign standards, a noncommercial sign may be substituted for a commercial sign. Such noncommercial signs must comply with all Town and CARB design standards.

## **C. SIGN DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE**

### **1. DESIGN GUIDANCE**

The Town of Hilton Head Island Design Guide serves as the basis for sign guidance. The CARB shall also take into account the intent of the governing covenants and the recognition of the unique character of the approaches to, and the areas adjoining, Sea Pines in its deliberations.

### **2. SITE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES**

The Town guidance in these matters shall govern. The visual impact of signs shall be softened with landscaping appropriate to the site. Signs shall be constructed of high-quality materials.

## **D. SIGN ILLUMINATION**

The Town's requirements for sign illumination, as reflected in Sec. 16-5-114.D., shall generally control. The CARB reserves the right to impose more stringent requirements based on specific site considerations and aesthetics.

## **E. SIGN PERMITS**

### **1. APPLICABILITY**

#### **a. General**

A CARB Sign permit shall be required for all signs identified by the Town as requiring a permit (Sec. 16-5-114 E.a.)

#### **b. Exemptions**

- i. The Town regulations pertaining to "Sign Alterations Exempt from a Sign Permit" shall govern.
- ii. The Town regulations pertaining to "Signs Allowed Without a Sign Permit" shall govern.

### **2. SIGN REVIEW**

#### **a. Application Form**

Applications must be submitted using the most recently adopted CARB Sign Application form.

**b. CARB Notification**

The applicant will be notified in writing of CARB's approval or disapproval of the proposed sign. Until receipt of such notification, a sign may not be erected.

**F. FREESTANDING SIGNS**

The Town's standards for the number of signs, number of faces per sign, sign face maximum, total size of all sign faces, and other matters as reflected in Sec. 16-5-114.F., shall be considered maximum guidelines. The CARB reserves the right to impose more stringent requirements based on specific site considerations, property size, and aesthetics.

**G. FAÇADE AND HANGING SIGNS**

The Town's standards for façade and hanging signs, as reflected in Sec. 16-5-114.G., shall be considered maximum guidelines. The CARB reserves the right to adjust these downward based on specific site considerations, property size, and aesthetics.

**H. STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC TYPES OF SIGNS**

The CARB shall defer to the Town for those Specific Signs identified in Sec. 16-5-114.H., with the following exceptions:

**1. SPECIFIC TYPES OF SIGNS REQUIRING CARB REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

A CARB Sign Permit shall be required for the following types of Specific Signs:

- a. Nonresidential Real Estate Sales Signs greater than four-square feet in size
- b. Sign Systems for all planned unit developments, commercial developments, office complexes, and shopping centers.

**I. PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The Town's list of the types of prohibited signs, as reflected in Sec. 16-5-114.I., shall govern.

**J. INSPECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT**

The CARB shall generally defer to the Town of Hilton Head Island LMO for the inspection and enforcement of signage regulations, but reserves all rights under the covenants to inspect and enforce compliance at all times and specifically where the CARB has imposed stricter standards than those adopted by the Town.

# Exhibit A

