

Attachment 9

Revisions to the Architectural Design Control (ADC) Districts Design Guidelines: Chapter 5,
Section E. Outdoor Cafés

National Register of Historic Places

Charlottesville Downtown Mall Historic District:

Excerpts from the NRHP nomination, 2023.

Link: [The Downtown Mall NRHP District](#)

The Mall reached its current expanse in four additional building campaigns that did not precisely follow the details of the original design but reflect its key concepts. Built and planted features include brick and granite paving, bosques of deciduous trees, fountains, streetlights, planters, seating, bollards, bike racks, signage, and public artworks. These built elements were designed and arranged to present specific opportunities for visitors.

- The fountains were designed to tempt visitors to pause in their movement along the Mall, giving the opportunity for social interaction. The gathering space around the three Main Street fountains is currently restricted, however, by dining area enclosures serving restaurants facing the Mall. The tree bosques are shifted north or south of the center line of the Mall, creating open space that draws visitors from one side to the other to create a meandering pathway. Central Place, a large open square with a fountain at East 2nd Street, as well as three additional smaller fountains and groups of benches within the tree bosques, were designed to allow visitors to withdraw from the flow of traffic to socialize or rest.
- Commercial establishments along the Mall have added impermanent elements such as sandwich board-type signs, small planters, and newspaper boxes, as well as tables, chairs, and post-and-chain or pipe-rail enclosures for permitted outdoor dining areas and vendor tables within the public space. These elements affect both the open character of the original design and the space available for the activities that the design encouraged, while also fostering the primary goal of pedestrianizing this portion of Main Street – bringing people back to downtown Charlottesville. While some details of its design have changed, the primary elements remain.
- In addition to the two-dimensional patterned ground, LHA employed three-dimensional features to add a vertical element to the Mall, to organize space, and to influence pedestrian movement.
- The trees provide shade in the summertime and create distinct outdoor “rooms,” bordered by gray granite, within the Mall’s length. Like other features of the LHA design, the bosques are located along the Mall’s center line, but weighted to one side or the other to encourage lateral movement.
- **Statement of Integrity:** The Downtown Mall Historic District was evaluated under the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register of Historic Places (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, association). The landscape continues to fulfill much of its original purpose – offering an attractive public space to bring residents

and visitors to the downtown area, providing housing for twenty-four-hour use, and spurring the local economy – and does so in its original location and setting along Main Street two blocks south of the Albemarle County Courthouse. [...] The spatial organization that the LHA design devised to influence movement along the Mall also remains, although the current use of public space for private dining areas hinders its original effect. The dining areas and the permanent locations of the chairs also detract from one of the Mall's intended functions – as a public gathering space for rest and social interaction. These alterations negatively affect materials and workmanship, as well as the design of the Downtown Mall, without obscuring the design intent. (It should be noted that the alterations that affect movement and public use are impermanent and reversible.) The feeling and association of the Mall as a pedestrian-centered location for public gathering, entertainment, and recreation, as intended by the LHA design, therefore remains strong, and the Charlottesville Downtown Mall retains integrity to its period of significance (1975 - 1981).

- **Statement of Significance:** The Mall manifests Halprin's utilization of a simple palette of materials and features based in part on local precedents to create a series of interconnected spaces that act as a stage for public life. [The Mall is] one of the few successful pedestrianized downtown streets still performing its original function. It is the only extant pedestrianized Main Street in Virginia that remains faithful to its original design. The Mall is also an outstanding example of Lawrence Halprin & Associates' urban landscapes and the only extant work by the firm in Virginia.