Seaside, Walton County, Florida

www.seasidefl.com

Designers: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (<u>www.dpz.com</u>)

Developer: Robert Davis

Design/Charrette date: 1978

Construction start date: 1981

Size: 80 acres

Units at build-out: 361 (335 single-family detached; 25 multifamily; 26 live-works)

Percentage complete as of 2010: 95%

Price range: At launch, lots at \$15,000-25,000; currently, lots at \$499,000-1.1

million; homes at \$825,000 - \$4,850,000

Unique physical challenges/advantages: An environmentally sensitive Gulf Coast landscape with a history of hurricanes. Seaside chose to preserve the natural protective barrier of the dunes, which has preserved the beach and protected the community from storms.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: Because Walton County had no zoning at the time, Seaside's design team had the freedom to experiment. Since its approach was out of the ordinary for a region used to high rise beach condos, the project required extensive design research and builder education.

The Project that Helped Launch a Movement

Seaside recovered a tradition of urbanism and pioneered a form-based approach to zoning. But it wasn't exactly painless. The image of a glorified American town, painted up in pastels, was not the intent of Seaside's designers. There are mistakes and kitsch, and with each mistake came a lesson fueling the rediscovery of the traditional neighborhood form.

A key decision was to leave the natural dune line untouched. The designers understood that the dune ecosystem is important to the survival of the beach and the buffering of the land beyond from water and wind. Though this retreat from the dune line is now mandatory, at the time, this was a departure from standard practice in beach resort development.

As a seminal project reviving the idea of traditional housing types, streets and blocks, Seaside reintroduced key design components of community. Its site plan reallocated private and public space, sometimes forcing design compensations. The

rear walks, for instance, invite more pedestrian activity than a service alley might allow, making rear yards less private. But that led to the rediscovery of the side yard house as a functional solution to issues of privacy.

Skyrocketing prices for Seaside real estate cemented the success story. But that level of exclusivity was never imagined by the developer or the design team. The original streets were crushed limestone or asphalt, and the initial houses small and affordable – at least by beach resort standards. The development started north of the highway instead of concentrating on maximizing Gulf-front real estate values. And every decision seemed to make every inch of Seaside even more appealing and more worthy of the premiums paid by vacationers and property owners.

Now in its fourth decade of development, Seaside has grown into an icon for the return to traditional planning ideals and smart growth.

WaterColor, Walton County, Florida

www.joe.com/watercolor-community

Designers: Town Planner/Architect -- Cooper, Robertson & Partners (www.cooperrobertson.com); Landscape Architect -- Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects (www.nbwla.com); Civil Engineer -- PBS&J (www.pbsi.com)

Developers: The Saint Joe Company (<u>www.joe.com/watercolor-communi</u>

Design date: 1997

Construction start: 1999

Size: 499 acres

Percent complete as of 2010: 85/90%

Unique physical challenges/advantages (topographical, environmental, etc):

- The site is bounded by the Gulf of Mexico, Western Lake, Grayton Beach State Park, and the communities of Seaside and Seagrove Beach. As such, it spans a particularly diverse and environmentally sensitive series of ecotones. Direct beach access is limited to a quarter-mile triangular piece of land south of Hwy 30-A. And visual access to the beach is limited due to the rise of the dunes along the shore.
- The T4 and T3 fabric of WaterColor's five neighborhoods are intended to complete the transect from Seaside's T5 to the T1 natural reserve of Grayton Beach State park.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages:

WaterColor is one of the flagship communities of the St. Joe Company, a
publicly-traded company that has transformed from a forest products
company into one of Florida's largest real estate developers. Partly due to
the need to meet shareholders' expectations, WaterColor was built with a
much faster trajectory compared to its neighbor, Seaside. In less than 10
years, the project is substantially complete.

Center and Edge

Despite its nearly 500 acres, more than six times the size of Seaside, WaterColor has only a quarter mile of direct access to the Gulf. And much of the site is home to wetlands, marshes, pine groves and a lake. In recognition of its sensitive resources, the development was subject to a Florida Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) review, which introduced an added level of regulatory oversight.

WaterColor was envisioned as evolving over time from a vacation resort community into a place for year-round residents. It's designed to provide supporting T4 and T3 neighborhood fabric to Seaside's T5 and T4 "historic core." The retail program was purposefully reduced so as not to compete with Seaside town center. Provisions were included for direct street connectivity between WaterColor and Seaside; however, due primarily to resistance from Seaside property owners, the connection has not been made.

The master plan provides for retail, office, recreational and community services, and upgrades to the regional transportation network. While many services have been included to support a year-round community, the design was unable to accommodate a place of worship.

Incorporating lessons from the first neighborhood developed, the subsequent four hamlets feature smaller housing types in order to introduce entry-level product. This has led to a slight imbalance in the location of density.

St. Joe was able to bring one sort of community amenity that has eluded many TNDS – a large-scale supermarket at WaterColor Crossing. Prior to its development, locals had to drive 45 minutes to the nearest alternative. The grocery store serves a regional market beyond residents and vacationers in WaterColor, Seaside, and Seagrove. But its location and suburban format provoke debate.

Rosemary Beach, Walton County, Florida

www.rosemarybeach.com

Designers: Architect/Urban Designer -- Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (www.dpz.com); Landscape Architect -- Keith LeBlanc Landscape Architecture (www.kl-la.com)

Developers: The Rosemary Beach Land Company and Leucadia Financial

Corporation

Design/Charrette date: 1995

Construction start date: 1996

Size: 107 acres

Units at build-out: 800

Percentage complete as of 2010: 90% (400 main houses; 210 carriage houses; 121 apartments.condos; 70 hotel rooms – all built or under construction. Unbuilt: 8 town center/mixed use lots; one multi-family lot; 20 home lots)

Price range: Single lot in 1998 -- \$75,000; in 2004 -- \$500,000+; currently -- \$275,000+. Current home: \$800,000- 3 million+ (max. sale \$8 million+)

Unique physical challenges/advantages: Gulf-front location, with high elevation for coastal property (25+ feet). Project respects an established "coastal construction control line" and is governed by a 50' height limit.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: Came online in wake of Seaside's growing success and during prime speculative boom. Leucadia is a cash land buyer. Relatively loose regulatory environment during planning and entitlement stages.

Right Idea, Right Time, Right Execution

Rosemary Beach is a product of lessons learned and exceptional timing, a story inextricably linked to Seaside, 8 miles east.

Rosemary Beach's developer, Leucadia Financial, bought the land on a cash basis and had no special interest in the New Urbanism. Seaside's national press helped Atlantans rediscover the Florida Panhandle, which is closer than Georgia's beaches, and it's financial success prompted Leucadia to collaborate with Seaside alumni.

Rosemary Beach hit the market as a luxury resort during an economic boom which, along with the threat of penalties for delayed starts, resulted in a speedy build-out. Wealthy buyers hired local talent to design mostly custom houses overseen by a

town architect vested with broad authority. The capital-rich developer invested early in architecturally rich amenities including pools and the influential town hall. The town center is dense, urban and almost built-out. It was platted and sold early, which may have compromised the center's retail tenant mix and architectural vision.

A unified architectural language, drawing on St. Augustine, New Orleans and the Caribbean, satisfied the marketing need to differentiate from Seaside. Masonry and stained wood spared Rosemary owners the maintenance hassles of Seaside's cottages, which require frequent repainting. Rosemary Beach's environmental ethic is visible in native landscaping paired with a site plan sensitive to natural topography. The stormwater system uses pervious surface infiltration rather than piping and storage. Some drainage problems have been reported and deeper paving at corners was needed.

The layered circulation plan includes streets, alleys, boardwalks, and sand paths with many alley-loaded houses facing on boardwalks rather than streets. The final plan for Rosemary Beach owes several important points to an earlier site plan by McWhorter Architects developed for a prior landowner. That plan included a beachfront park, footpaths, pocket parks, and was conceptualized with St. Augustine architecture.

Alys Beach, Walton County, Florida

www.alvsbeach.com

Designers: Master plan -- Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (<u>www.dpz.com</u>); Town architect -- Khoury & Vogt Architects; Landscape design -- Kendall Horne

Developers: Ebsco Gulf Coast Development Company (Jason Comer, Town Founder)

Design/Charrette date: Planning charrette, June 2003; Architecture charrette,

January 2004

Construction start date: July 2004

Size: 158 Acres (20 acres deeded to preserve)

Units at build-out: Approximately 900

Percentage complete as of 2010: 8%

Price Range: Lots begin at \$400,000, houses at \$1,000,000

Unique physical challenges/advantages: Beachfront location; Hot humid climate in hurricane zone; favorable topography; traversed by county highway; variety of eco-systems.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: Area comfortable with the New Urbanism; nearby precedent; able to capitalize on feedback from residents of neighboring projects; perceived high-end market and corresponding budget; just underway when speculative housing bubble burst; limited by the high standards it has set for itself; costly construction methods.

High Design Meets Storm Zone Sustainability

Located between Seaside and Rosemary Beach, Alys Beach is the third and perhaps the most meticulously thought-out of the DPZ-designed resort communities along Hwy 30-A. Its site plan reflects a rural-to-urban transect, with naturally preserved wetlands in the north transitioning to the urban village just off the beach to the south. Beyond its model urbanism, the community is a showcase of sustainability – and, not incidentally, of breathtaking architecture.

The design language of Alys Beach is inspired by Bermuda architecture and by the courtyard houses of Antigua and Guatemala. The Bermuda style is characterized by

uncomplicated whitewashed volumes of masonry and stucco. Buildings are grouped into small compounds and unified by perimeter walls. The predominant residential type is the courtyard house, built to lot lines and centered around a sanctuary of private outdoor space.

Because the site slopes gently downward towards the Gulf, streets are directed to the water, preserving seaward views and allowing cooling Gulf breezes to circulate northward. The site plan calls for a main street leading to a waterfront plaza, which serves as the primary community space. Surrounding the plaza is a mixed-use urban center with apartments above gallerias lined with retail shops. Traveling north, density fades from row houses to detached homes. Farther north, a sequence of outdoor spaces transitions to the formal structure of the Caliza Pool and gardens, then to the Central Park and ultimately to the preserved wetlands.

Built to high standards of storm-zone fortification, Alys Beach is set apart by its commitment to sustainability. Buildings are constructed using cinder block with steel rods inserted into the cavities for strength, then back -filled with concrete. Whitewashed walls and roofs, tight-fitting windows, and the community's site plan minimize energy costs. This attention to performance and resilience without sacrificing eye-catching design has helped Alys Beach maintain its distinctive appeal even in a down market.

City of Montgomery, Alabama

www.montgomerval.com

Planning and Design Team: Dover Kohl & Partners (www.doverkohl.com); Urban Advisors (www.urbanadvisors.com); Zimmeran/Volk Associates (www.uvbanadvan.ze); Hall Planning & Engineering (www.hpe-inc.com); UrbanAdvantage (www.urbanadvan.ze) advantage.com)

Design/Charrette Date: September 2006

Plan Adoption: February 2007 (<u>www.montgomeryal.gov/depts/planning/downtown-plan.aspx</u>)

SmartCode adoption: May 2007 (http://www.montgomeryal.gov/index.aspx?

page=717)

Study Area Size: 730 acres

Unique physical challenges/advantages: "Excellent Bones." Even with the usual planning missteps of the mid-20th century, Montgomery could turn to an early history of good planning enough intact urban fabric to provide a foundation to build upon.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: Strong city leadership; a dedicated planning staff; a network of local investor support. The City of Montgomery planning department has made extensive efforts to retain local investors and has helped show developers how they can comply with the SmartCode. Retirement Systems of Alabama, the state government, does not have to comply with local zoning regulations, yet remains as the largest investor in downtown Montgomery.

A How-To Model for Activating a Master Plan through Coding

Once a vibrant and thriving southern downtown rich with historical significance, the urban heart of Alabama's capital city fell victim to the urban renewal trends and central city disinvestment that gutted so many other cities in the United States. This process began in the 1800's when the city became the first in the country to install a city-wide electric street car line, facilitating the development of suburbs along the line and contributing to depopulation of the city center. By the end of the 20th century, Montgomery found itself characterized as a "9-to-5 Suburban Commuter Office Park" and turned to New Urbanist tools for revitalizing the city.

The city has a rich history of superior town planning, including the efforts of Charles McKim and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. Tapping this tradition seemed essential to revitalizing the historic city, along with taming suburban style development influences in the Downtown.

Montgomery features one of the most historic streets in the South, Dexter Avenue, a grand main street leading from downtown to the State Capitol. It's recognized as the most important street of the civil rights movement, having played host to marches

by Martin Luther King Jr. and speeches at the base of the Alabama State Capital Building.

The Downtown Plan by Dover Kohl and Partners includes near and long-term project recommendations and a detailed implementation strategy to help achieve the community's vision. Among key principles: Preserving, restoring, and reusing historic structures; encouraging a mix of land uses, building types and housing options; expanding Downtown's green and civic spaces; and promoting a better balance of transportation options. Dover-Kohl calibrated the SmartCode for Downtown as a way to provide increased certainty for implementation of the Master Plan. This form-based code, now mandatory for Downtown, ensures that future development promotes a diversity of building, thoroughfare, and civic space types with characteristics appropriate to location.

The Waters, Pike Road, Alabama

http://www.thewatersal.com/

Designers: PlaceMakers LLC (<u>www.placemakers.com</u>)

Developers: Dale Walker, Ed Welch

Design/Charrette date: October, 2003 Charrette

Construction start: 2005

Size: 1,250 acres (to be refined with new partners)

Units at build-out: 2,500 (provided the 1,250 acres remain intact)

Percent complete as of 2010: 5%

Price range: Single-family (\$158,000-\$1.5 million); live-Works (\$150,000-490,000); townhouses (\$219,900-289,000); courtyards (\$525,000-600,000); side-yards (\$248,000-415,000); carriage homes (\$199,000-325,000); brownstones (\$825,000-1.2 million)

Unique physical challenges/advantages (topographical, environmental, etc):

- Lake Cameron. The Waters' eight hamlets are organized around the 200-acre, man-made lake.
- Two key topographical elements. Chapel Hill, where the Chapel Hill Meeting House stands, was originally slated to be flattened. Instead, the view from Chapel Hill Street towards the Meeting House has become the iconic image of the community. The Playborhood Hill is a series of constructed playground hills that has become a center for social interaction for both children and adults.
- Soil challenges. Soil on the site required extra planning and engineering for the construction of attached housing and for storm water management.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages:

- Developers had the advantage of unincorporated land with no zoning, allowing a site plan that proscribed a more intense urbanism than previous greenfield projects in the county. The Waters launched in a boom market, then suffered along with everyone else when the downturn hit. A cash infusion from new partners came in the spring of 2010.

Pioneering New Urbanism in the Montgomery Market

The Waters' site and adjacent parcels attracted at least two previous schemes. The first, Grangemoor, featured a 1997 DPZ designed plan for over 1800 acres. The proposal stalled in part due to the difficulty of extending sewer lines. A portion of the Grangemoor site was purchased and recast as a conventional cul-de-sac suburb. PlaceMakers design consultants convinced some members on the development team that a New Urbanist approach might yield a better result for the community, and the charrette was conducted in October 2003.

The break from regional convention required innovative marketing strategies and intensive builder education. The Waters team hosted weekly, on-site information sessions with local builders for the year prior to construction. And rather than big-budget advertising, a successful "whisper campaign" calculated to penetrate Montgomery networks of influence introduced The Waters with an insiders' buzz.

The first hamlet of eight to be developed, Lucas Point, features a number of civic amenities such as parks, beaches and the Chapel Hill meeting house, all of which served to establish a community identity early on. The plan integrates eleven housing types, ranging in size from 762 to 8,000 square feet, into the neighborhood, broadening the potential market.

One miscalculation: Lot sizes and prices were fixed early in the first-phase financing period. This limited flexibility to adapt quickly to market realities. Additionally, there is some debate as to whether commercial space in the Town Center would have been more successful more quickly had it been located along the waterfront rather than embedded in the neighborhood.

As a testament to The Waters' influence in the region, the surrounding community of Pike Road and the City of Montgomery subsequently adopted the SmartCode to guide future development.

Hampstead, East Montgomery, Alabama

www.townofhampstead.com

Designers: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (<u>www.dpz.com</u>)

Developers: The Colonial Company (<u>www.colonial-company.com</u>); City Loft

Corporation, Development Consultants (cityloftcorporation.com)

Design/Charrette date: Planning charrette, August 2005; architectural charrettes,

July 2006 and August 2007

Construction start date: October 2007

Size: 416 Acres

Units at build-out: 1513 residential units, in addition to civic, commercial and

mixed used.

Percentage complete as of 2010: Approximately 4% (town center buildings and

52 homes)

Price Range: \$162,000-\$1,500,000

Unique physical challenges/advantages: 416 acres of greenfield in fast growing area; proximity to developed/active uses allow for regional integration; natural stream that will allow for manmade lake.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: Jurisdiction with SmartCode; local planning agency well versed in the new urbanism; support from large-scale developer; barely underway when the housing bubble burst.

SmartCode-Enabled New Urbanism by a Conventional Developer

Hampstead is the first traditional neighborhood development to be built under Montgomery's newly adopted SmartCode. The developer, City Loft Corporation, is part of the Colonial Company, one of the largest home builders in the region.

Located on 416 acres of former farmland adjacent to Alabama's Interstate 85, Hampstead is in Montgomery's fastest-growing area. Its plan is comprised of three neighborhoods, each with its own civic buildings and public gathering spaces. Each neighborhood center is designed to respect the natural features of the land and to provide the optimal pedestrian shed -- a five-minute walk from center to edge.

The town center features restaurants, shops, offices, a YMCA, the Sales Gallery, the Racquet Club, and apartment and live-work units. To the north, Hampstead Farms

will provide residents and local restaurants with fresh produce, as well as a farmer's market. The neighborhood adjacent to the urban farm focuses on agricultural use. The other neighborhoods will feature a mix of apartments, townhouses and single-family homes.

Hampstead's architecture—not to mention its name—is reminiscent of the famed Hampstead Garden Suburb north of London, England by Unwin and Parker. To develop a varied yet unified style, the developers commissioned designs from several local architects; most notably Gary Justiss, who designed the Town Center buildings and several others. Building types under development include live/work units, row houses, cottages, and detached houses.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Hampstead at this point in its history is how quickly it made its way through the approval process. Because Montgomery had recently adopted a SmartCode, making good design legal again, the project was approved by the county, as a matter of right, after a short staff review.

Mt. Laurel, Shelby County, AL

www.mtlaurel.com

Designers: Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company (<u>www.dpz.com</u>)

Developers: Ebsco Industries

Design/Charrette date: 1996

Construction start date: 1998

Size: 535 Acres

Units at build-out: 600

Percentage complete as of 2010: 30% (176 single-family detached; 4 multifamily)

Price range: \$350,000 - \$550,000 at launch; \$299,000-1.1 million currently

Unique physical challenges/advantages: Mt Laurel is built within a forest. The commitment to preserving as many existing trees as possible required a sensitive approach to grading, civil design, and landscaping.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: The county required a number of concessions on street design and street width. Yet due to strong leadership at the county's planning department, the project was more or less supported through the course of permitting.

A Neighborhood in a Forest

Situated on 525 acres 30 minutes from Birmingham, Mt. Laurel maintains a forested feel through the preservation of the site's natural systems and site-sensitive design of the streets and buildings. The DPZ master plan has been respected and meticulously built out over the 14-year history of the project. Streets were cut in to alter the land as little as possible, and the architecture respects the rolling topography. The resulting character suggests Mt. Laurel could have been built a century ago.

Elton B. Stephens Jr. founded the town to emulate the neighborhoods of his childhood and hired a multidisciplinary team to ensure the preservation of the existing site's ecology and to respond to the setting with the design of homes and public spaces. Although this was EBSCO's first traditional neighborhood development, the project accomplishes the goal of creating an authentic place, positioning it well enough to survive the recession better than other projects in the region.

Hilly conditions forced the right-angle intersections in the town center to become more irregular. That prevented massive grading of the site and the loss of mature trees. Additionally, the steep terrain required the rethinking of standard house/ street/garage relationships and inspired new home designs. The civil engineer and site crews were taught techniques developed in the 1920s to ensure sensitivity to the site. Only native planting materials are allowed in the front yards to reinforce the character the forested streets.

A blend of craftsman and English Tudor style homes take full advantage of the site's landscape and topography. This architectural language is used throughout the project's homes, mixed-use buildings, two schools, the Olmsted Park Swimming Pool and the town's fire station. This commitment to quality design extends to the award winning landscape architecture of the towns many parks, squares, walking paths and man-made lake.

Serenbe, Chattahoochee Hills, GA

www.serenbe.com

Designers: Phillip Tabb, master plan architect; William Lewis Oliver, III, architectural director; Sean J. Murphy, project landscape architect

Developers: Town founders Marie and Steve Nygren, Nan and Rawson Haverty, Jr., Ryan Gainey

Design/Charrette date: 2002 (Chattahoochee Hill Country Community Plan)

Size: 1000 acres (70% preserved)

Units at build-out: 850-1200 units

Percentage complete as of 2010: ~20% (1st Hamlet 80%; 2nd Hamlet 20%)

Unique physical challenges/advantages: Pastoral setting within Atlanta Metro. Hilly Terrain.

Unique political and/or economic challenges/advantages: In many ways, Serenbe is an implementation of the 2002 Chattahoochee Hill Country Plan, which provided political and design context for the project. (http://www.chatthillcountry.org/masterplan)

A Model for Rural Clustering within a Metro Area

Serenbe's founders participated in the formulation of the 2002 Chattahoochee Hill Country Plan, which requires clustering of developments and the preservation of 60-70% of land in its natural state or in agricultural use. The City of Chattahoochee Hills, in which Serenbe is located, was incorporated in 2007.

Located a half-hour from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Serenbe («serene» + «be») existed before the town founding as a successful bed and breakfast and country retreat of the Nygren family. At build-out, Serenbe will consist of four hamlets. The focus on food and agriculture, tied to the Nygrens' success in the restaurant industry, already has gained Serenbe attention in the popular press and among find dining experts.

The first, mostly complete Hamlet, Selborne, is based around the arts and cuisine. The 2nd Hamlet, The Grange, incorporates a 30-acre farm, an existing equestrian facility, and space for additional farmsteads and gardens. The third Hamlet will focus on Health and Wellness, and the fourth is planned as the most populous.

The plan is based on «omega curves» and crossroads. The omega curves creates a linear «road side» town with a transect that is most intense at the peak of the curve and more rural moving away in either direction. The single corridor design means

that houses back up to large continuous natural spaces that are preserved in perpetuity.

The site plan responds to natural topography and accommodates stormwater and wastewater recycling through a bio-mimetic «Living Machine» design. The architecture is intentionally eclectic. Serenbe's design is contemporary with regional new urbanist projects such as Glenwood Park and Vickery. Its plan shares the common dialogue of compactness and walkability but was intended, at the same time, to differentiate Serenbe from those developments.