



*Live/work units in the Market Square area*

An essential part of the neo-traditional town concept is the town center, which provides shops, services, dining, recreation, entertainment, and employment within walking distance of all residents. The first element of this town center was Kentlands Square, a conventional outdoor shopping center anchored by Kmart and Giant Foods, which opened in 1993. The adjacent Boulevard Shops, a more pedestrian-oriented center, followed in 1997 and then Market Square, with mostly small-scale shops and restaurants of traditional design, began to be occupied in 1998. More recently, three blocks of “live/work” units, which combine shops, offices and residences in a single unit, have added a traditional Main Street to the commercial center. Mixed-use office/retail has also been added, with more in the planning, and a residential/retail complex with structured parking has been approved. This latter is the first Kentlands redevelopment, as a replacement for the closed Upton’s department store.

In general, the design code calls for the use, whenever practical, of natural materials, building facades 8-12 feet from the sidewalks with stoops and porches in that space, steeply pitched gable or hip roofs, amply trimmed vertical divided glass windows, and fences or hedges along the sidewalks. The layout of the street plan followed the topography of the site but was affected by three external constraints: the width and layout of the two major through

streets, Kentlands Boulevard and Tschiffely Square Road; the location of a major commercial center along Great Seneca Highway; and the federal government’s change of its wetlands regulations after completion of the initial plan.

Unlike some previous DPZ projects such as Seaside in Florida, Kentlands is not, and was never intended to be, a community of expensively designed custom houses. Twelve builders, some national and some local, offered stock designs for attached and detached houses. Most of these designs were created especially for the Kentlands, as the narrow lot sizes and rear-alley garage access called for traditional housing types not found in other new suburban developments in the area. Buyers could purchase lots directly from the developer and have architects and builders create a home custom-designed for that site, but most were satisfied with the variety of homes offered by the large number of builders. As a result, custom houses are not necessarily larger and more opulent than their neighbors, but may be smaller homes designed for their own personal use.

Housing built in the Kentlands consists of rental apartments, condominium apartments,



*Community green area where residents of all ages gather to enjoy outdoor activities and community events (Photo courtesy of Stephanie Vierra)*



stacked-unit townhouses, row houses, live/work buildings, detached “urban cottages,” “carriage homes,” and single-family houses.

All neighborhoods contain a mix of housing types, often on the same block or along the same street.

Many of the individual private houses and gardens in the Kentlands are beautifully designed and attractively maintained. It is important, though, that first-time visitors to the Kentlands realize that the pleasure and attraction that many visitors experience is more the result of the streetscapes and public spaces created by the town plan and design code than it is of the excellence or uniqueness of any individual building. For many of the residents, who also may have been first attracted by the streetscapes, the real value is in the social interactions of a close-knit and diverse community with the convenience of accessible shopping, dining, recreations, and services.

#### Kentlands Community Foundation

The Kentlands Community Foundation is a community-based, not-for-profit organization rooted in Kentlands. The Foundation’s mission has three branches: to serve as an educational resource on the landmark new urbanist community that is Kentlands, to build community by supporting local arts and cultural programs, and to provide opportunities for volunteerism and community outreach.

The Foundation believes that the neighborhood is the heart of community life. Our goal is to help connect individuals and families in ways that enhance everyday life and encourage civic involvement. All programs are open to the public, and volunteers are always welcome. For docent tours, information, or to learn about volunteering, please contact the Foundation.

<b>Street Address</b>	<b>Mailing Address</b>
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# Kentlands Walking Tour Guide



**KENTLANDS**  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

G a i t h e r s b u r g , M a r y l a n d

## Tour Route

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The proposed tour route is intended to introduce you to many of the concepts of new urbanism and to a variety of natural and built features of the community. You may feel free to expand your tour by venturing off into additional neighborhoods not covered in this tour.

1. Begin tour at Old Farm by the Arts Barn. (Review of Mansion, Carriage House, Firehouse, Green, and Arts Barn.) From the side of the Arts Barn, proceed down Firehouse Lane to first left on Golden Ash Mews.
2. Follow Golden Ash Mews, staying on it when it turns right, through the alley to Inspiration Lane.
3. Turn left on Inspiration Lane and follow it to Main Street. Turn right on Main Street to Market Square area. (Review of Market Square area.)
4. Retrace steps on Main Street and follow to where it becomes Midtown Road.
5. Take Midtown to Thurgood Street. Turn right on Thurgood Street.
6. At Tschiffely Square Road take a left. (Review of Clubhouse, Community Green and Crescent.) Follow Tschiffely to Leekes Lot Way.
7. Turn left at Leekes Lot Way and follow to the trail entrance on the left.
8. Enter trail and follow through to Treehaven Street.
9. Take a right on Treehaven Street and follow to the next trail entrance on the right which leads to the lakes.
10. Follow the path to the right around Lake Helene ending back up on Firehouse Lane.
11. Take Firehouse Lane to the left past Inspiration Park. At Inspiration Park, take the diagonal walking path back to the Mansion to end the tour.

## The Kentlands Site and Its History

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A former farm estate, Kentlands is edged on the west by a stone-outcrop hill, once the site of a quarry. It is dotted throughout with lakes, wooded streams and wetlands. The original estate, called Wheatlands, was put together at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by Frederick A. Tschiffely, owner of Washington's best-known pharmacy which was also the largest pharmaceutical wholesale distributor in the region. In 1900, Mr. Tschiffely built "The Bricks," the mansion that became home to his family of eight children.



*Kentlands Mansion (Photos courtesy of Nylec Photography 301-607-4188)*

In 1942, a prominent Washington lawyer, Otis Beall Kent, purchased the estate and renamed it Kentlands. He greatly expanded the farm through the purchase of adjoining land, enlarged the mansion, and built magnificent brick outbuildings to house his farm manager and staff, the farm equipment, his many vehicles, and his collection of vintage fire engines. In 1944, Mr. Kent created the chain of lakes that bordered his mansion on three sides. These lakes were intended for irrigation, for flood control, and most importantly as habitat for the birds, fish, and wildlife that Mr. Kent, a pioneer conservationist, was determined to shelter and preserve. Towards the end of his life in the 1960's, Mr. Kent deeded parts of his estate to the Izaak Walton League and the

National Geographic Society with the condition that the unbuilt portions of these properties remain as wildlife sanctuaries. He also laid plans for the future development of his estate as a uniquely beautiful, natural neighborhood, which he planned to name "Lakelands."

In 1988, Joseph Alfandre purchased Kentlands from Mr. Kent's heir, Helene Danger Kent, and began planning for the creation of Kentlands, a complete town based on neo-traditional planning principles. After the initial plans were laid down, and construction had begun, ownership and management of the Kentlands development passed to the Great Seneca Development Corporation, an affiliate of the Chevy Chase Bank. Six years later, Natelli and Classic Communities developed the National Geographic site and began the development of Lakelands, doubling the size of the neo-traditional community and greatly enlarging the combined commercial downtown area.



## The Kentlands Planning Process: Goals and Context

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In the mid-1980s, just as Mr. Alfandre was beginning to plan his new development, two crusading urban planners, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, attracted attention to their ideas about neo-traditional town planning. In contrast to the prevailing suburban planning of the time, they advocated a "new urbanism" of mixed residential and commercial uses built densely on small lots served by a grid of narrow streets and alleys. (See the attached summary, "Principles of New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development.")

Alfandre engaged the firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) to design the Kentlands, the

largest new urbanist project in the country at that time. Alfandre, DPZ, and the City of Gaithersburg conducted a design charrette – basically a five-day planning marathon attended by all the stakeholders – in June 1988. The result of the charrette was the basic design for the Kentlands and a new zoning concept for the City of Gaithersburg, an MXD zone allowing for mixed commercial and residential uses, governed by the design code developed in the charrette.

## Kentlands Architecture and Design Code

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The actual plan and design code for the Kentlands is based on the best traditional architecture in the region such as that of Annapolis, Georgetown, and Old Town Alexandria. Four neighborhoods were laid out around three central nodes: the clubhouse, the original farm buildings now put to civic and cultural use, and the church/school/store center. Later, neighborhoods were developed around the most conspicuous physical features of the landscape – the hill and the lakes – and much denser neighborhoods were provided for the midtown area, between the shopping center and the civic buildings of the old farm, and on "the Bluffs" at the east end of the property. These



*Gable end of a single-family residence*

neighborhoods include a number of multi-family rental and condominium communities, including Copperfield Crossing I and II, Beacon Place, and the Gardens, a senior living community adjacent to Main Street shopping and services. When fully built out, Kentlands will have about equal numbers of multi-family housing units and single-family houses, with a total population estimated at 4582.

# Principles of New Urbanism and Traditional Neighborhood Development

## Walkability

Most daily needs—shopping, services, schools, and recreation—can be satisfied within a 5- to 10-minute walk of home and work. Pedestrian-friendly design includes buildings close to the street, front porches, continuous tree cover, on-street parking, hidden parking lots, and garages relegated to rear lanes. Narrow streets, traditional roadway features (e.g. forks, triangles, staggered intersections, traffic circles, and curb bump-outs), and on-street parking are provided to calm traffic. Elementary schools, day-care centers and recreation facilities are located and sized to be easily accessible on foot or bicycle. A range of parks, from tot-lots and green spaces to ball-fields and community gardens, are distributed within neighborhoods, with small playgrounds distributed evenly throughout each neighborhood.

## Connectivity

An interconnected street grid network disperses and slows traffic and increases walkability by allowing most streets to be narrow. Cul-de-sacs are avoided unless demanded by natural conditions. Interconnected networks of streets and paths are designed to encourage walking, reduce the number and length of automobile trips, save energy, and allow all trips to be comfortable, pleasant, and interesting.

## Mixed-Use

Mixed-use is encouraged within the neighborhood and the block and within buildings through a mix of shops, offices, apartments, houses, recreation, and institutional uses.

## Diverse Housing

A range of housing types, tenures, sizes and prices are located close together, often in the same block. Houses are permitted to contain an ancillary dwelling unit in the rear yard, typically above the garage. Affordable housing is designed to look like market-rate housing, not segregated, and never clustered in large numbers. The housing mix brings people of diverse ages, ethnicity, and incomes into daily interaction.

## High-Quality Architecture and Urban Design

Design emphasizes aesthetics, human comfort, and a sense of place. Civic buildings and public sites are placed in prominent locations, as landmarks, within the community. Streets are faced by building fronts or public tracts and most vistas are terminated by a public tract, natural feature, deflection in the street, or carefully-sited building. Retail buildings front the sidewalk directly, with no setback. Residences are placed relatively close to the street with allowable encroachment by bay windows, balconies, stoops, open porches, awnings, arcades, etc. Most residential lots have parking access via rear lanes, and garages that must be served from the street are separated or set back from the front of the house.

## Increased Density

Residences, shops, services, and employment are close together to preserve open space, encourage walking, reduce public costs, and provide sufficient scale to support local amenities, businesses, and public transportation. Close neighbors naturally develop social interactions, beautify their surroundings by adding landscaping and gardens, and watch over each other for collective security.

## Traditional Neighborhood Structure

The neighborhood has a discernable center and edge. Commercial activity and housing density increase toward the neighborhood center, with office space often accommodated in mixed-use buildings. Each neighborhood center includes a civic space (e.g. a square, plaza or green) and reserves at least one prominent site for a civic building.

## Sustainability and Environmental Quality

Development, construction, and operations are designed to minimize environmental impact. Significant natural features (e.g. wetlands, lakes, and streams) are retained and celebrated by designing public spaces and thoroughfares to front them, rather than by privatizing them behind backyards. The plan is accommodated to the topography to minimize the amount of necessary grading. The site is developed to maximize the preservation of specimen trees by locating greens and parks at tree save areas. Open spaces are connected into continuous natural corridors as green belts passing through neighborhoods or greenways within neighborhoods. Preservation and renewal of historic buildings, districts, and landscapes

affirm the continuity and evolution of urban society.

## Smart Transportation

A high-quality rail network connects cities and towns. Neighborhood centers provide dignified places to wait for transit. All elements of site design encourage a variety of modes for daily transportation.