

Leicester Lakes Area Pattern Book



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The Leicester Lakes Pattern Book was produced for the Leicester Planning Commission, Leicester, Vermont, by the firm of Raycroft-Meyer Landscape Architects, Bristol Vermont, with help from the Addison County Regional Planning Commission. Special thanks to Leicester Town Clerk Donna Pidgeon, and to Cindy Hill and Ron Fisk for the photographs.

Introduction

This project was initiated by town officials and residents concerned over the changes in use and scale of the residential properties along the shores of Lake Dunmore and Fern Lake. The conversion of camps and cottages to year-round homes can have potential negative impacts on the overall character and environment. The goal of this study is to provide recommendations for future growth based on existing siting and architectural patterns identified in the lakes area.

To help understand the distinctive character of area the following patterns were studied:

Site development Patterns:

- Siting and Lot Size
- Shoreline Set Back
- Slopes
- Lot Clearing

Architectural Patterns:

- Form and Massing
- Window Arrangements
- Porches and Decks
- Combinations of Building Forms



Site Development Patterns

Siting and Lot Site

The Lake Shore district is comprised of a variety of property types and sizes. There are many small, seasonal camps and cottages, as well as larger camps and year round homes.



The buildings on smaller lots are typically proportional to the lot size and orientation. Buildings sited on narrow, deep lots tend to face the lake with a narrow gabled end while buildings on wide, shallow lots tend to face the lake with a longer side gable. Minimal side yard set-backs leave little room for buffers between buildings. Typically these camps are a single story in height.



The buildings on larger lots typically are larger in size. The siting of these buildings is less determined by the dimensions of the lot size. Side yard set backs are greater, allowing for greater natural buffers. These buildings tend to be 1½ - 2 stories in height.

Site Development Patterns

Building Set-backs

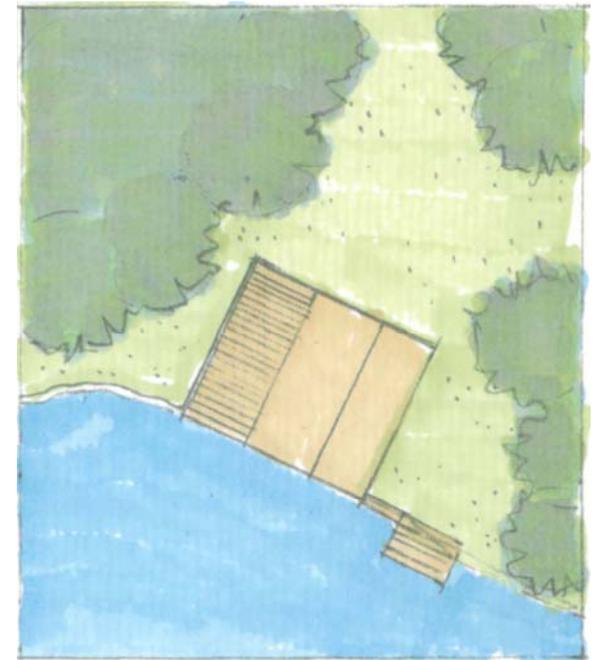
The history of development of lake shore properties and changes in zoning requirements has resulted in a range of shoreline set-backs. Presently there is a 75' minimum shoreline set-back for new construction.



Deep set-back, 75' or more.



Minimal set-back, less than 75'.



No lake shore set-back.



Site Development Patterns

Slopes

Much of the shore along Lake Dunmore and Fern Lake has very steep slopes.

Many camps and year round residences have been constructed on steep lake shore slopes.

Steep slopes accentuate the height of buildings constructed on them.

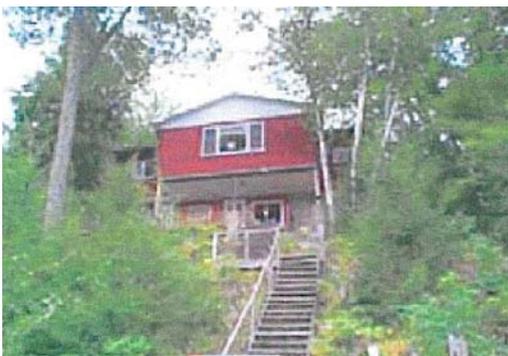
Decks, porches and additions are cantilevered out over the slope.



Camp with a set-back of 75' or greater on a moderate slope.



Camp with a set-back of 75' or greater on a steep slope.

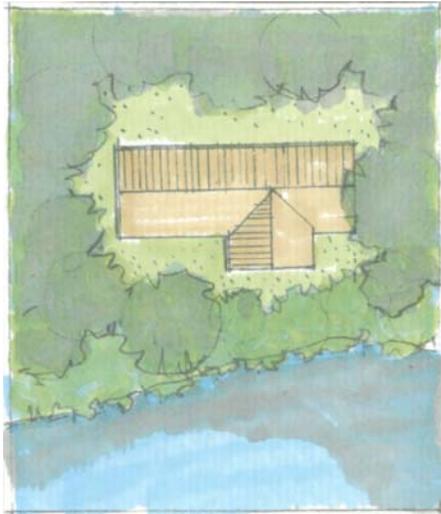


Camp with a minimal set-back on a steep slope.

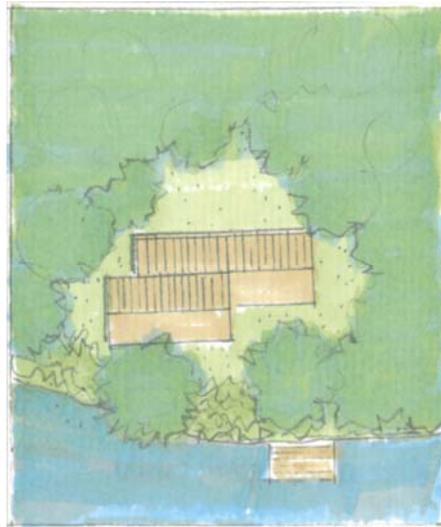
Site Development Patterns

Lot Clearing

Along the lake shores, much of the natural vegetation of trees, shrubs and grasses has been cleared for construction of homes and camps. The percentage of this clearing varies significantly.



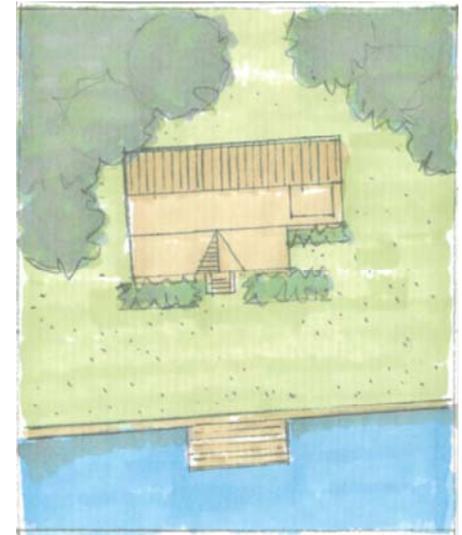
Natural vegetation of trees and shrubs intact along the shoreline. Lot is heavily wooded.



Thinning of trees along the shoreline. Low shrubs and native ground cover left as a buffer.



Some trees along shoreline. Large area cleared for lawn.



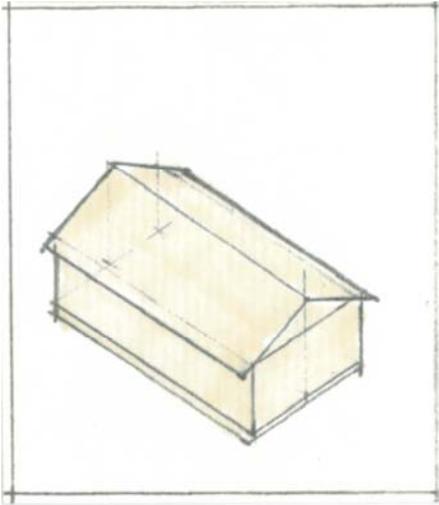
No natural vegetation between lake shore and house. Area cleared for lawn.



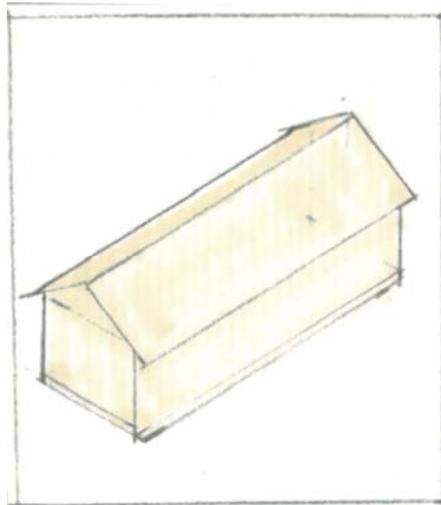
Architectural Patterns

Form and Massing

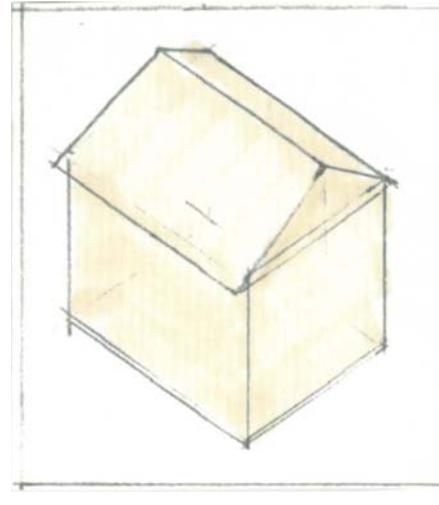
The style of architecture found in the Lake Shore district is a variation of traditional New England, wood framed, front or side gable design. Most buildings are modest, with shallow pitched roofs, many windows and porches. Four basic forms can be seen.



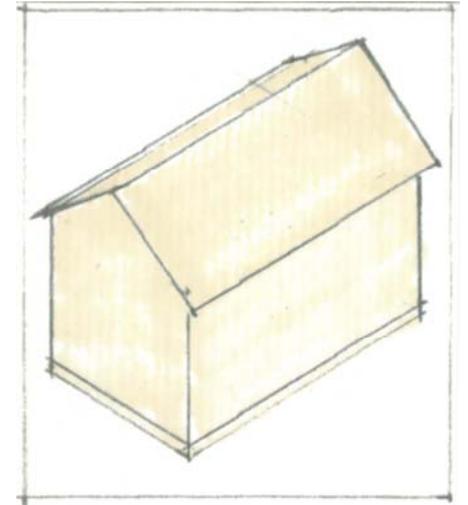
Narrow front gable,
1 story structure.



Side gable,
1 story structure.



Narrow front gable,
2 story structure.



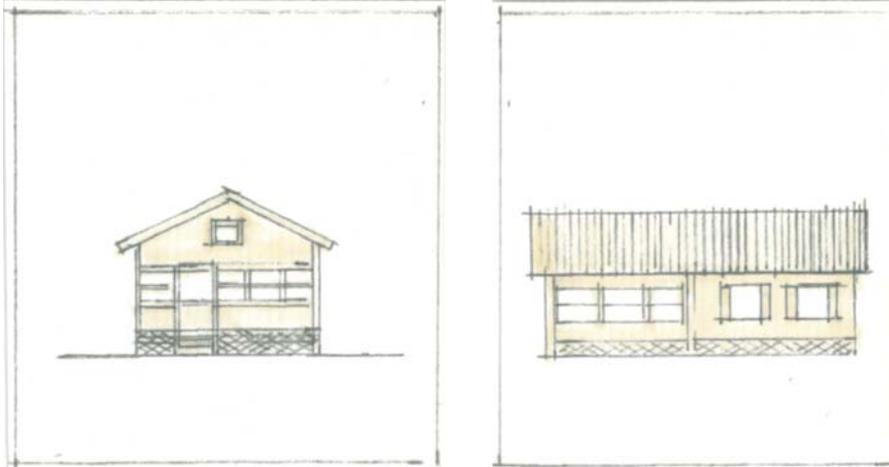
Side gable,
1½ -2 story structure.



Architectural Patterns

Window Arrangements

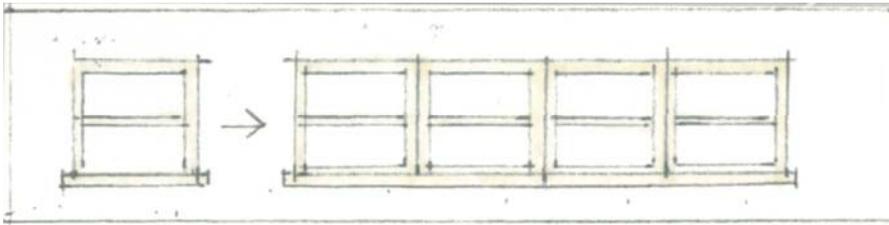
Most of the lake shore buildings are wrapped with windows and glass doors to capture the light and the views of the lake. The scale and type of the windows correlate with the scale and proportions of the architecture.



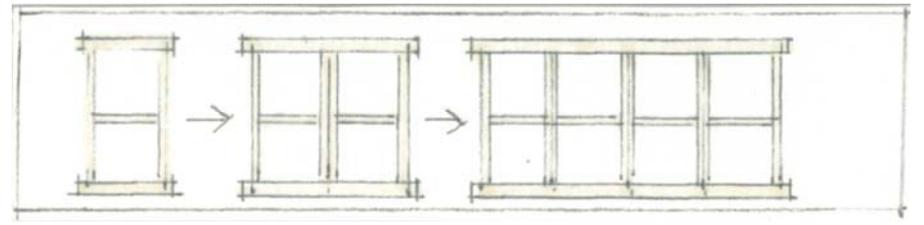
1 story front and side gable buildings have single or horizontal bands of square windows with horizontal mullions.



1 1/2 - 2 story front and side gable buildings have vertical windows, single or in groups, with horizontal and vertical windows.



Square, double hung windows, single or in horizontal bands.



Standard, double hung windows. Single or ganged.

Accent windows are small windows added to gables and small dormers.



Shed or gabled dormers are added to introduce light to half story spaces.



Architectural Patterns

Porches and Decks

Nearly every camp along both lake shores has some type of porch or deck.

In many cases, the square footage of porches and decks exceed that of the interior building space.

Porches and decks can function as an entry space, attached to the facade or run the full length of the building.

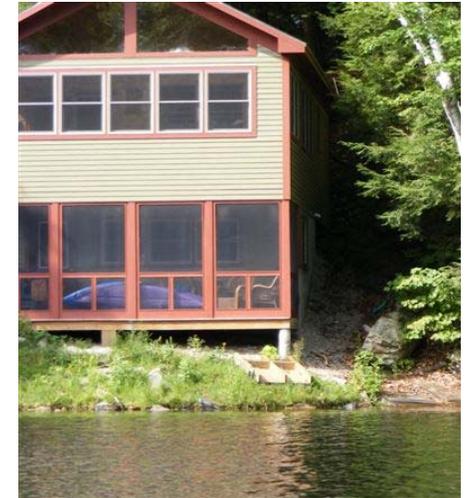
Porches are screened or open.



1 1/2 story camp with shed roof screened porch.



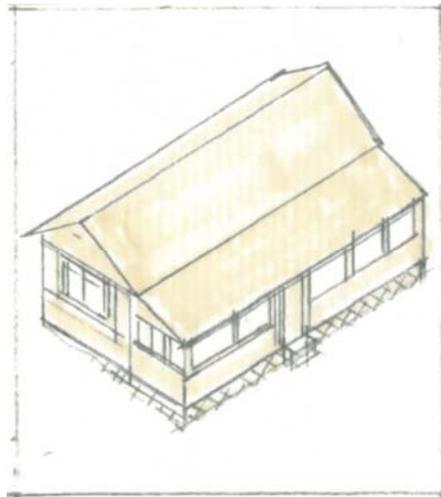
2nd story balcony on a cross gable addition.



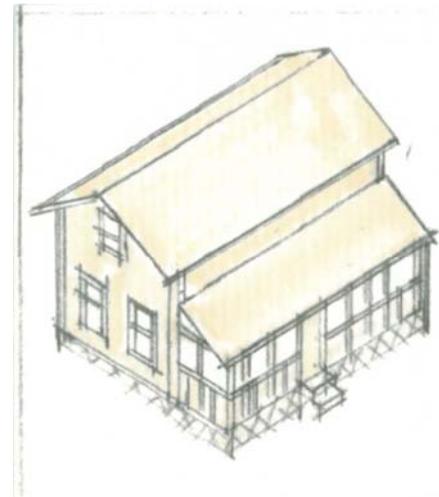
1st story screened porch of a 2 story front gable.



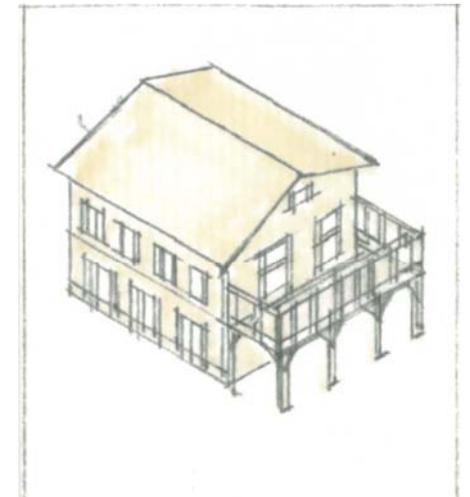
Many porches read as part of the main structure.



Full length porch on a single story, side gable camp.



Full length porch on a 1 1/2 story side gable camp.



2nd story deck on a 2 story, front gable camp.

Architectural Patterns

Combinations of Building Forms

Much of the lake shore architecture is a combination of front and side gable forms.

Cross gable wings on the side or rear of the main structure create additional living space.

Dormers added for light, also increase living space.

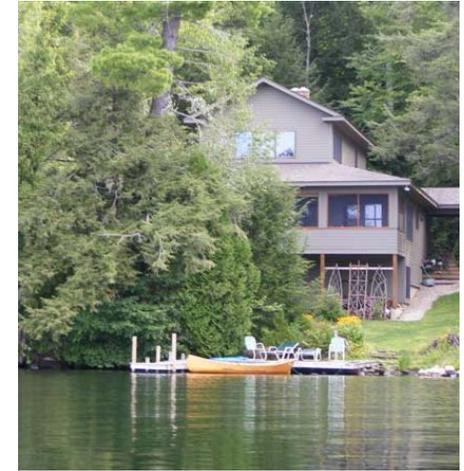
Stepped 2nd stories add space without overtly increasing the mass of the building.



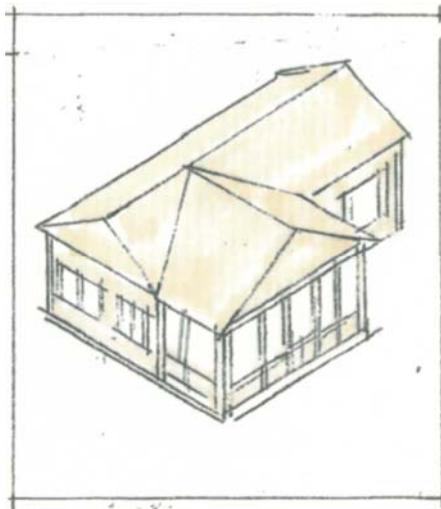
Shed double dormer on 2nd story.



Cross gable two story structure with screened corner porch.



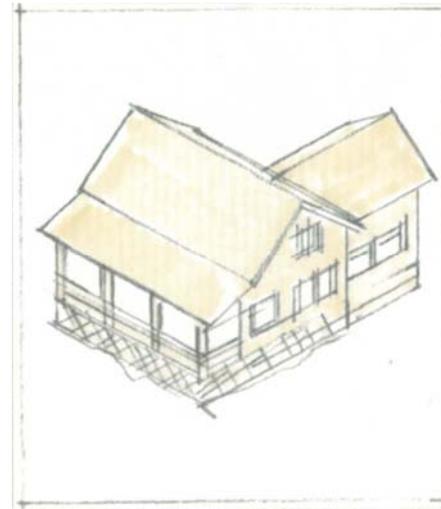
Stepped 2nd story front gable.



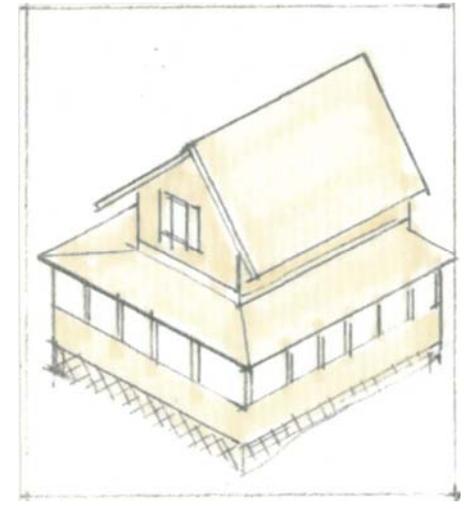
Single story cross gable camp.



Large dormer on a 1½ story camp.



Rear cross gable wing on a 1½ story camp.



2nd story, stepped back.



Wooded lot with trees thinned along shoreline.

Recommendations for New Building and Construction

The following recommendations do not propose an exact duplication of existing siting and architectural patterns, but a contemporary and appropriate interpretation of these patterns for further growth.

- Protect and/or preserve a significant percentage of existing woody and herbaceous vegetation on lake shore properties. Avoid clear cutting lake shore lots. Avoid creating large expanses of lawns.
- Maintain a native vegetated buffer along the shoreline. Stabilize shorelines with a natural buffer instead of retaining walls and bulkheads.
- Proposed siting for new construction should be comparable with the scale, orientation and setback of the existing structures. Consideration should be given to the pattern of development in that area.
- Avoid new construction and additions of porches and decks on steep lake shore slopes. The steeper the slope the greater the lake shore setback should be.
- New construction should be compatible in form, massing, height, roof shape, and proportion with surrounding architecture.
- The lake shore facade of new buildings should match the form of adjacent, existing buildings.
- Window openings should be proportional to the scale of the building façade.
- Building details and materials should be compatible with surrounding architecture.
- Use a variety of compatible building forms; cross gable wings, stepped upper story additions, dormers and porches, to increase living space.
- Architectural style of additions should match the character of the main building.

Site Development

- Protect and/or preserve a significant percentage of existing woody and herbaceous vegetation on lake shore properties. Avoid clear cutting lake shore lots. Avoid creating large expanses of lawns.

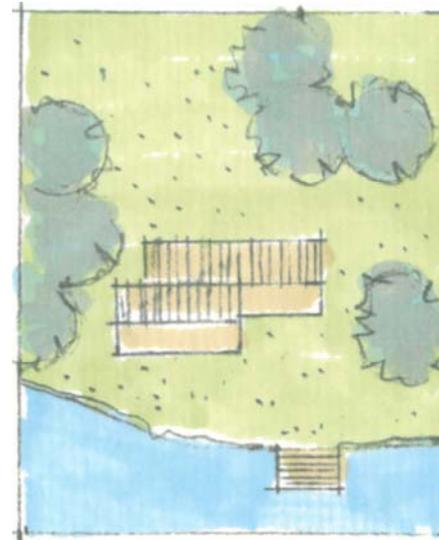
Why? Existing vegetation provides a buffer between lake shore parcels.

Natural vegetation provides habitat and food for wildlife.

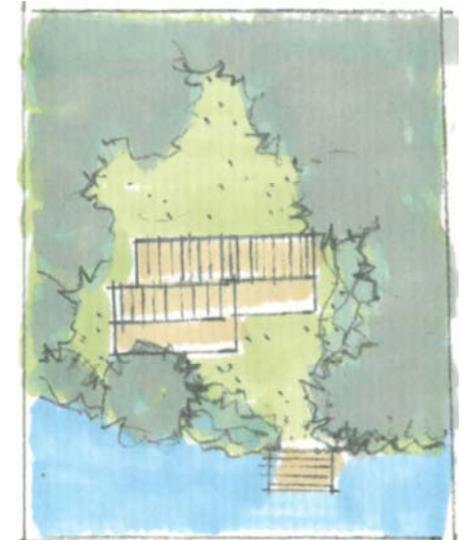
Mature trees provide shade.

Run off of fertilizers and pesticides, used for the maintenance of lawns contribute to lake pollution.

Wooded shorelines are aesthetically pleasing viewed from the lake.



No



Yes

- Maintain a native vegetated buffer along the shoreline. Stabilize shorelines with a natural buffer instead of retaining walls and bulkheads.

Why? A natural buffer along the shoreline stabilizes lake shore banks and protects against erosion.

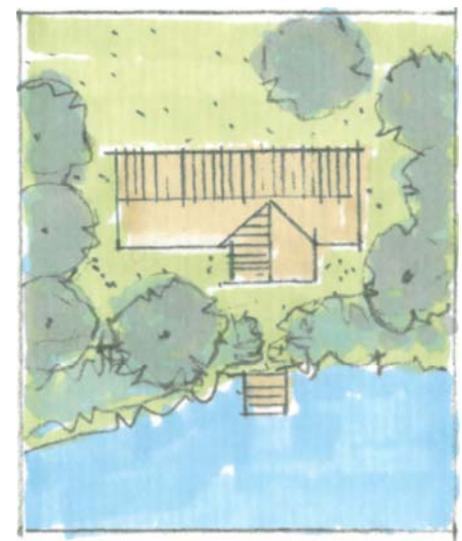
A natural buffer will preserve and protect the natural habitat and shoreline ecosystem.

Views can be enhanced when framed by natural vegetation.

Properly designed buffers do not block views.



No



Yes

*For a list of native plants for shoreline buffers see appendix.

Site Development

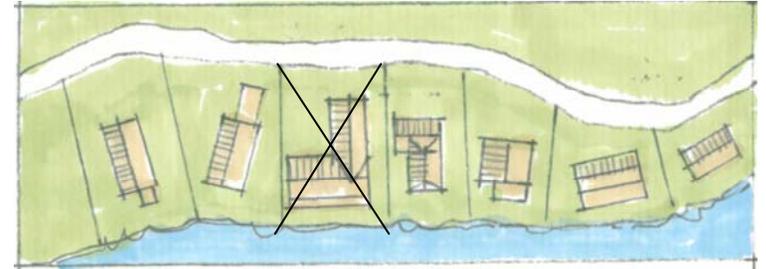
- Proposed siting for new construction should be comparable with the scale, orientation and setback of the existing structures. Consideration should be given to the pattern of development in that area.

Why? Large structures built on small lots significantly reduce side yard buffers of natural vegetation.

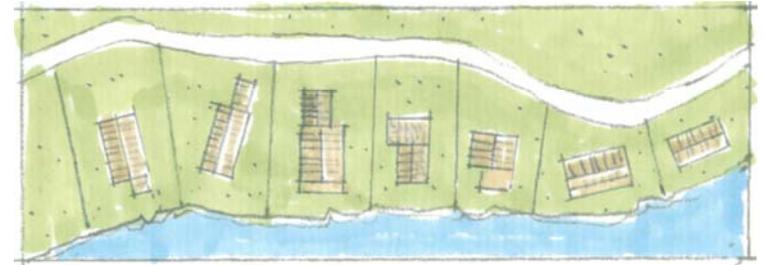
Large structures built close to the shore will block lake views from camps with deeper setbacks. Consistent lake shore setbacks preserve lake views of adjacent properties.

Inconsistent siting can significantly alter the character of the lake shore.

No



Yes



- Avoid new construction and additions of porches and decks on steep lake shore slopes. The steeper the slope the greater the lake shore setback should be.

Why? Loss of vegetation, due to construction disturbance, leads to soil erosion.

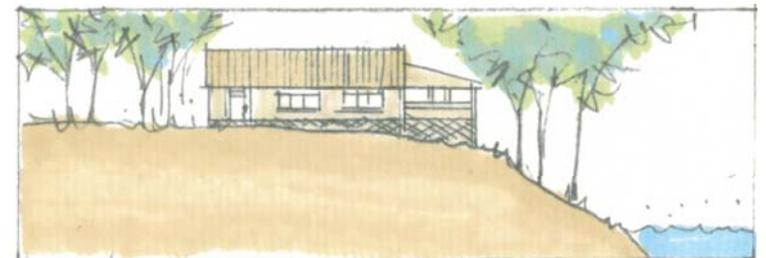
Foot traffic up and down slopes will further destabilize the soil, inhibit re-growth of natural vegetation, and lead to erosion.

Viewed from the lake, structures built on steep slopes appear taller and out of scale with typical lake architecture.

No



Yes



Architectural Patterns

- New construction should be compatible in form, massing, height, roof shape, and proportion with surrounding architecture.
- The lake shore facade of new buildings should match the form of adjacent, existing buildings.

Why? Buildings that are architecturally incompatible with surrounding structures, negatively impact the aesthetic of the lake shore.

Excessive height and/or width of new construction can obscure lake views and diminish value of adjoining properties.

- Window openings should be proportional to the scale of the building façade.
- Building details and materials should be compatible with surrounding architecture.

Why? A variety of window sizes, types and placement will highlight many lake views while maintaining privacy within the house.

Proportionally sized windows break down the mass of the building façade.

Large, unarticulated, plate glass windows provide one view while compromising the privacy of the homeowner and people out on the lake.

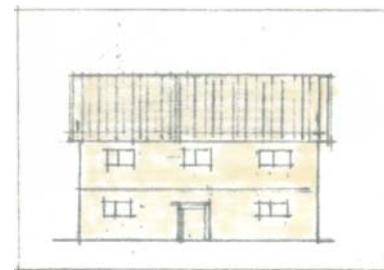
No



Yes



No



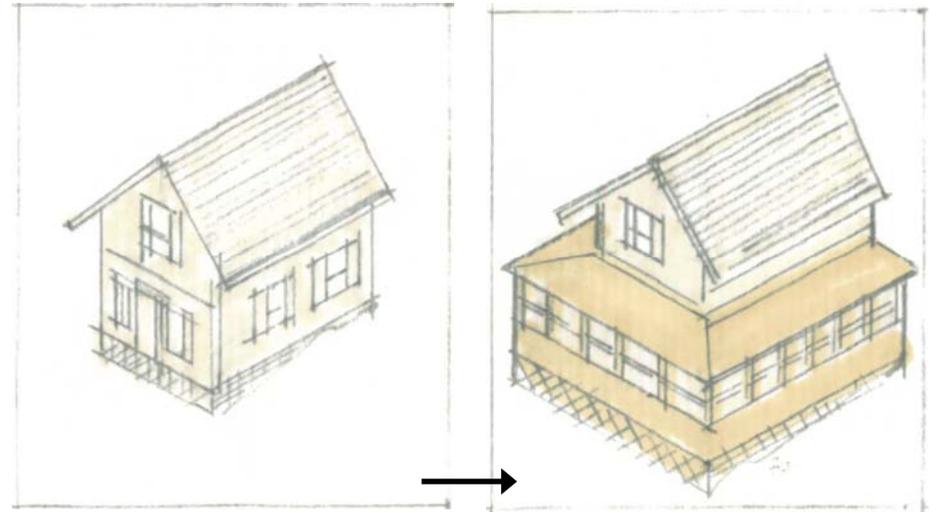
Yes



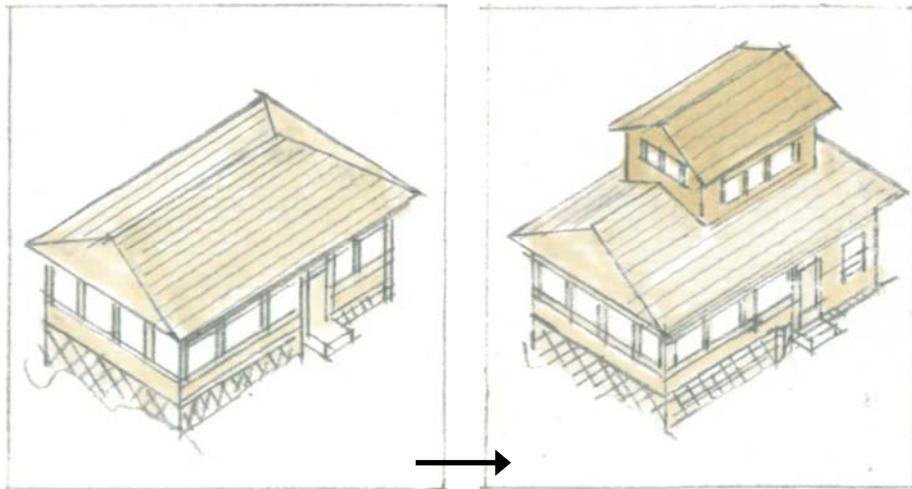
New Buildings and Additions

- Use a variety of compatible building forms; cross gable wings, stepped upper story additions, dormers and porches, to increase living space.
- Architectural style of additions should match the character of the main building.

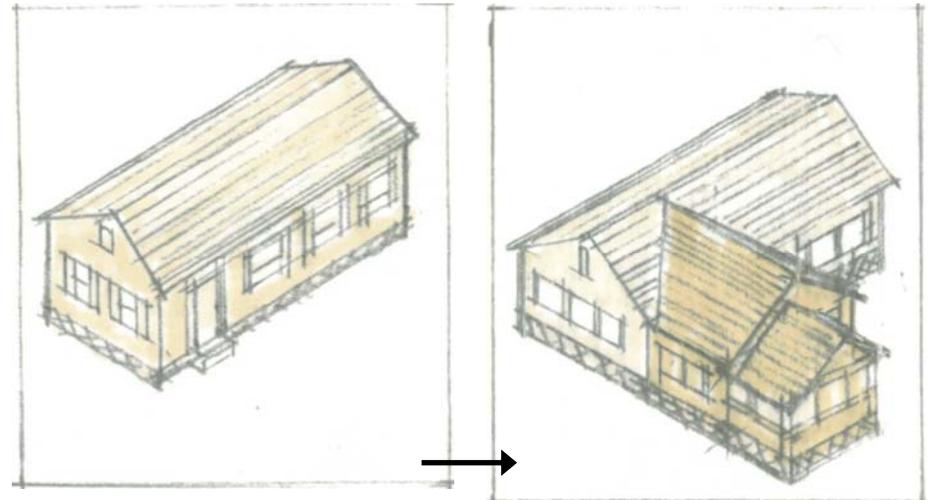
Why? Inappropriate and/or incompatible design will threaten the architectural character and historic patterns of the Lake shore district.



A wrap around, three season porch greatly increases living space.



A small second story addition.



A cross gable addition and screened porch.

Appendix

Native Plants Available for Shoreline Buffer

TREES

Balsam fir
Striped maple
Red maple
Silver maple
Sugar maple
Serviceberry
Yellow birch
White birch
Grey birch
American hornbeam
American beech
White ash
Larch
Hop hornbeam
White spruce
White pine
Balsam poplar
Quaking aspen
Pin cherry
Black cherry
White oak
Swamp white oak
Bur oak
Red oak
White cedar
Basswood
Eastern hemlock

SHRUBS

Speckled alder
Bog rosemary
Bearberry
Black chokeberry
Buttonbush
Sweet fern
Beaked hazelnut
Pagoda dogwood
Red-osier dogwood
Bush honeysuckle
Wintergreen
Witch-hazel
Winterberry
Sheep laurel
Bog laurel
Canada (wild) plum
Chokecherry
Rhodora
Roseshell azalea
Staghorn sumac
Willow
Elderberry
Red elderberry
Mountain ash
Meadowsweet
Steeplebush
American yew

Lowbush blueberry
Hobblebush
Witherod
Arrowwood
Nannyberry
Highbush cranberry

FERNS & VINES

Maidenhair
Ebony spleenwort
Maidenhair spleenwort
Lady fern
American bittersweet
Bulbet fern
Hayscented fern
Goldie's wood fern
Evergreen wood fern
Ostrich fern
Sensitive fern
Cinnamon fern
Royal fern
Virginia creeper
Christmas fern
Braun's holly fern
New York (tapering) fern
Rusty woodsia

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

Sweet flag
Spikenard
Baneberry
Common columbine
Wild ginger
Water arum
Marsh marigold
Harebell
Turtlehead
Bunchberry
Crowberry
Trailing arbutus
Joe-pyeweed
Blue flag iris
Creeping snowberry
Soft rush
Cardinal flower
Pickerelweed
Pitcher plant
False Solomon's seal
Foamflower
Red trillium
White trillium
Bellwort
Blue vervain
Canada violet

This book was created as a guide for the residents and town officials to create and maintain the landscape of the lake district region while enhancing existing features.