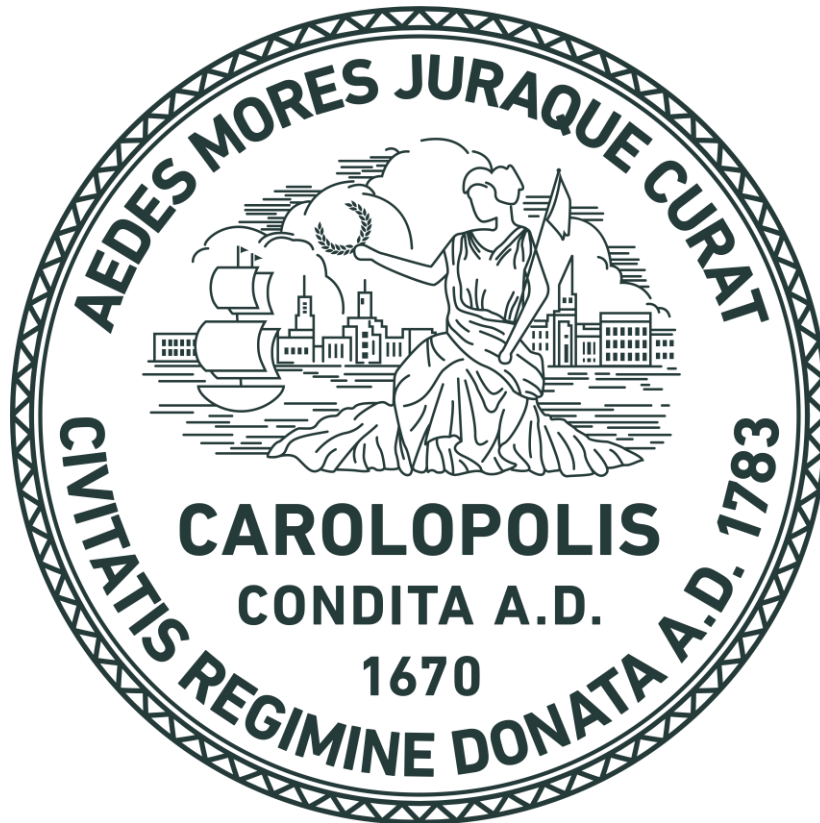


Addressing and Street Naming Guidelines

City of Charleston, South Carolina



Rev. 1.0

Revision History

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03/15/2026	1.0	Initial draft

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1. Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this document is to define the standards, responsibilities, and procedures for assigning, updating, and managing addresses within the City of Charleston.

Its objectives are to:

- Promote consistency, clarity, and transparency in address assignment
- Ensure accurate location information for efficient emergency response
- Ensure accurate location information for visitors and the delivery of services
- Facilitate reliable mapping, recordkeeping, and communication across all departments and partner agencies.

These guidelines are not meant to exhaustively anticipate every individual circumstance. The City of Charleston reserves the right to revise or rescind these guidelines or any portion thereof as it deems appropriate. The GIS Addressing Coordinator reserves the authority to deviate from these guidelines on a case-by-case basis.

2. Authority and Responsibility

All buildings erected or to be erected on the streets, alleys, lanes and courts in the city whether public or private, shall be numbered by the city's geographic information system ("GIS") Division. ([*City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-76*](#))

No building permit for construction or renovation shall be issued until such time as an official street number has been assigned to the proposed or existing structure. ([*City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-81*](#))

Addressing data will be maintained in the city's Geographic Information System (GIS). New and updated addressing will be communicated directly to the County, United States Post Office (USPS), and power and water utilities. The city's addressing GIS data will be made freely available through the city's online Open Data Portal.

The GIS division is **not** responsible for updating the addressing data used commercially by third parties.

2.1 Correction of Irregularities in Numbering System

It shall be the further duty of the city's GIS Division when an error or irregularity exists in the numbering system to have it corrected without unnecessary delay, as soon as the facts are brought to their notice. ([City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-80](#))

3. Street Naming

3.1 When Required

A street name is required whenever a planned or existing public or private street, driveway, or internal access drive provides access to three or more addressable structures, facilities, or parcels, and that access cannot be accurately addressed using an existing named roadway from which it branches. This applies whether the road is built as part of a subdivision, capital project, redevelopment effort, or private development with addressable locations.

A street name is also required when an existing unnamed drive evolves beyond a simple access path and becomes a shared route used by multiple occupants or reaches a length or complexity that could confuse responders or service providers if left unnamed.

The Address Coordinator may also determine whether an access drive should be named **before** there are three or more buildings or if there is the likelihood of additional residences, commercial buildings, or lots along the access drive in the future.

The ownership of the right-of-way or land on which the street is constructed (public or private) does not change the naming requirement.

3.2 County Approval and Reservation

The City of Charleston is in both Berkeley and Charleston Counties. All new street names must first be approved and reserved for use by the county that the road is in. Street names may not be duplicated within each county or within the city. Documentation or email correspondence verifying the name reservation must be provided to the city before plat, plan, or permit is approved by GIS.

See **Appendix B** for county street reservation instructions.

3.3 Street Name Rules

The following street name rules are an attempt to cover the rules of the city and both counties combined.

1. New street names must not be duplicated or be similar to an existing street name within the city or each county. ([SC Code § 23-47-60 \(2024\)](#))
2. Existing duplicate street names must be changed as necessary to ensure efficiency of the emergency response system. ([SC Code § 23-47-60 \(2024\)](#))
3. Named roads should be continuous, without gaps. If there is an impassible section of the roadway, the two (2) separate sections should be assigned different road names, not directionals.
4. Road names shall not be phonetically similar even if spelled differently.
5. Street names should not have more than 18 characters including spaces and street type. (e.g. Rd, Ave, etc.)
6. A person's full name (first and last name together) shall not be used.
7. Street names using proper names must receive unanimous support from all property owners.
8. All street names must have an allowed street type. (e.g. Rd, Ave, etc.) Street types are limited to the list in Appendix A.
9. Suffixes on dead end streets, driveways, or cul-de-sacs with only one end connected to another street shall be Court or Lane.
10. Short roads that connect at both ends with a segment of the same street shall use Circle or Loop.
11. Parkway or Boulevard shall only be used on a road with a divided median.
12. Street names shall not change within a street except at 90 degree turns or substantial offsets. Extensions of an existing street shall use the existing street name.
13. Cul-de-sacs with a depth of 50 feet or more may require a separate street name.
14. Existing patterns of street names within an area should be considered when choosing names.
15. Words or phrases which the GIS Division determines are inappropriate shall not be used.
16. Continuously named streets may not cross themselves, or loop back to create an intersection where both intersecting streets have the same name.

17. Spelling of words in street names shall conform to the spelling found in standard dictionaries of the English language, US usage. Words that are taken from a non-English language, or that are difficult to spell or pronounce, are not permitted.
18. No special characters shall be used. (e.g. periods, apostrophes, dashes, etc...)
19. Roads crossing multiple parcels must have a recorded plat or deed detailing a permanent public right-of-way or ingress easement.
20. Street names that contain street type words (e.g. Johnson Court Drive or Lake Cove Trail) are discouraged.
21. The use of pre-directionals shall be avoided. (e.g. N Smith St)
22. New road names shall not contain suffix directionals. (e.g. N, S, E, W, EXT, ANX)
23. Road names containing numbers will have the number spelled out.
24. Words within a road name shall not be abbreviated.
25. The use of corporate or institutional names for streets is discouraged.
26. A small round-about traffic circle shall have no addressable features located on it, and no name shall be assigned. It shall be considered a portion of the highest-classification street passing through it.

3.4 Private Street Signs

Requirements and guidelines for the installation of private street signs can be obtained from the City of Charleston [Traffic Operations Division](#).

4. Primary Address Numbering

4.1 Introduction

Proper address numbering is essential to ensure that every home, business, and parcel within the city can be uniquely and logically identified. Consistent numbering supports essential public services, including emergency response, public safety, utilities, and postal delivery by making locations easy to find, reference, and navigate.

This section establishes how street numbers are assigned, displayed, and maintained within the city. The goal of these guidelines is to ensure addresses are accurate, sequential, and adaptable to future changes in the built environment.

4.2 Definitions

Primary Address – A unique address assigned to every addressable structure.

Sub Address – An address to identify a separately occupied area within a structure or multi building campus that has a primary address.

Primary Access - This is the most easily identifiable and accessible primary entrance (“front door”) that would be used by visitors, emergency personnel, and deliveries. The primary access cannot be behind a garage door or locked gate.

Utility Address – A utility (UT) address is assigned for additional utility connections, temporary construction trailers, or permitting requirements for small structures during new construction. Examples include an irrigation system’s power meter, a powered sign at a separate location from its associated entity, a dumpster enclosure, a pool area or a maintenance shed. UT addresses are not used for mail or deliveries and typically do not need to be posted. However, temporary construction trailers are an exception and are required to have a posted address.

4.3 When Required

An address is required for any property, structure, or individually occupied space that may need to be identified by emergency responders, delivery and service providers, or visitors. Numbers shall be assigned whether the lot or parcel is built upon or not.

Address numbers must be assigned to the following:

- **Primary Structures** – All buildings, including residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and mixed-use structures.
- **Accessory structures** – Other structures where regular human activity occurs (e.g., separate offices, workshops, maintenance buildings, pool houses).
- **Unoccupied structures** – Structures not regularly occupied may still require an address for permitting. Examples include communication towers, docks, critical infrastructure assets, gates, and dumpster enclosures.
- **Structures requiring power** – All structures requiring a separate power meter shall receive an address (e.g., pump stations, irrigation equipment, signs)
- **Individual Units Within Buildings** – All separately operated spaces within a building shall receive an address.

4.4 Address Number Posting

The owner of each building is required to post the assigned address number in a conspicuous location. ([City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-80](#))

Costs and installation of the numbers shall be paid for by the property owner or occupant or person in charge of the house or building.

The adopted Fire & Building Codes require the posting of address numbers/letters to be:

- Minimum of 4 inches tall for all properties. 6-8" tall is recommended for commercial properties.
- Made of durable material and placed on a contrasting background.
- Placed immediately above or to the side of the entry door so the numbers are clearly visible from the street.
- If the address is posted on a different street, such as a corner building fronting two streets, the street name must be included on the posting.

When suite numbers or letters are assigned, they are considered part of your address:

- Numerical suite designations should never be higher than address numbers.
- Suite numbers or letters should be clearly distinguishable from the address. As an example, if a street address is 1010 and a suite identification is 10, the posted address should be displayed in two lines: Line 1 "1010" and Line 2 "Suite 10".
- Buildings with multiple suites can utilize a single address posting on the building that is readily visible from the street (recommend 8" tall minimum) and then clearly label the suite identifier for each space. As an example, the building address of "1010" is prominently posted and each individual suite or space is labeled such as "Suite 10". This will provide a clear distinction between the physical address and the suite identifier.

Other considerations:

- Be sure address numbers can be seen at night - properly lighting your address increases visibility.
- Reflective numbers are best.
- Numbers on the mailbox should not replace numbers on your home or business.
- Keep address numbers clearly visible throughout the year. Remember that emergency vehicles may sit up higher than automobiles, and low hanging limbs can obstruct their view.
- Replace numbers that are faded, painted, or damaged.
- Bigger is better, the size criteria are the minimum acceptable size. Larger numbers greatly improve visibility.
- Make sure your address number is correct before posting. You can contact the GIS Division with any questions regarding your address assignment.

4.5 Buildings Set Back from Street

Should a building be set back more than fifty (50) feet from the right-of-way, the number assigned to such building or the premises upon which the same is situated shall be displayed on an approved sign, a post, fence, mailbox, or the like at the property line to be easily discernible from the street. (City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-79)

4.6 Damaging or Altering Posted Address Numbers

No person shall take down, alter, deface, destroy, or conceal any number assigned to, or placed upon any building, or shall place or substitute or permit to be placed or substituted, an erroneous or improper number to be retained upon any building.

(City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-76)

4.7 Address Number Format

Address numbers shall be assigned as Arabic numerals. No decimals or alpha characters are permitted. Existing historical fractional addresses on the Charleston peninsula can remain. New fractional addresses should be avoided.

4.8 Address Spacing

In most cases an address number is assigned every 10 feet. This is the **address interval**. High density areas should have an address interval of every 4 feet. The following formula can be used to determine an address along a roadway using the address interval of choice.

Always assume the densest possible development for the area may occur across the street.

Address Assignment Formula

1. Choose the appropriate **Addressing Interval (I)**.
2. Measure the **Distance (D)** of the road centerline from the beginning of the block to where it passes the front door or access drive of specific existing or proposed building(s).
3. Using the equation below, find the **Address (A)**
 - a. Distance / Address Interval = Address
 - b. $D / I = A$
4. Take resulting Address and add it to the starting address on the road or block.

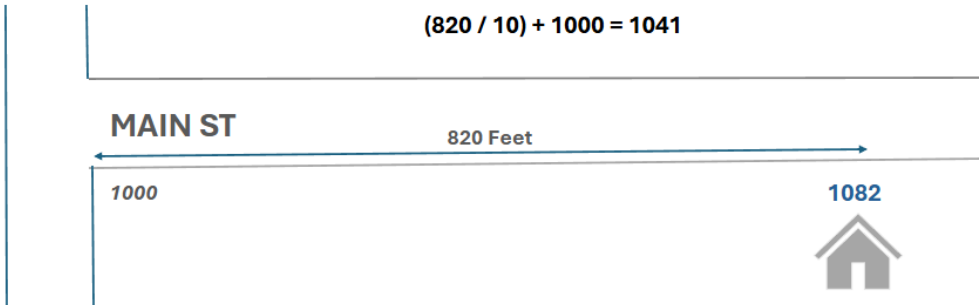


Figure x – Address Assignment Formula example.

4.9 Address Sequential Order

All addresses must be in sequential numeric order increasing from point of origin and have numeric consistency/balance on both sides of the street. Addresses shall generally increase when traveling east and north.

4.10 Odd / Even Number Placement

Odd numbers are on one side of the road, even numbers on the other.

- **Odd numbers** shall be placed on the **west** and **south** sides of a road.
- **Even numbers** shall be placed on the **north** and **east** sides.

(City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-77)

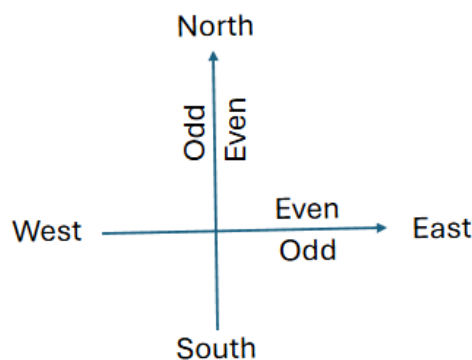


Figure x – Odd / Even Number Placement.

Additional Rules:

- Odd and even addresses cannot be on the same side of the road.
- Odd and even number placement shall follow the format nearest the street's point of origin, regardless of curvature or changes in direction.
- The odd/even pattern should not reverse or switch sides.

4.11 Circular or Loop Streets

Numbering begins at the lowest numbered intersection on the road the loop intersects. The outside of the circle is assigned first. The inside of the circle is addressed with numbers to generally correspond with the numbers on the other side of the street.



Figure x – Loop example.

4.12 Cul-de sacs

Numbering begins from the intersection and proceeds into the cul-de-sac with even numbers on the left and odd numbers on the right. The parity of the address for the house at the end is decided using best judgement.

Shallow “Thumbnail” cul-de-sacs with a depth of more than 50 ft. and four or more lots fronting on the cul-de-sac may require a separate street name if it’s determined that they configuration of the lots and street would prevent the thumbnail cul-de-sac lots from being easily visible from the through street. (*City of Charleston Zoning Ordinances Article I 3b*)

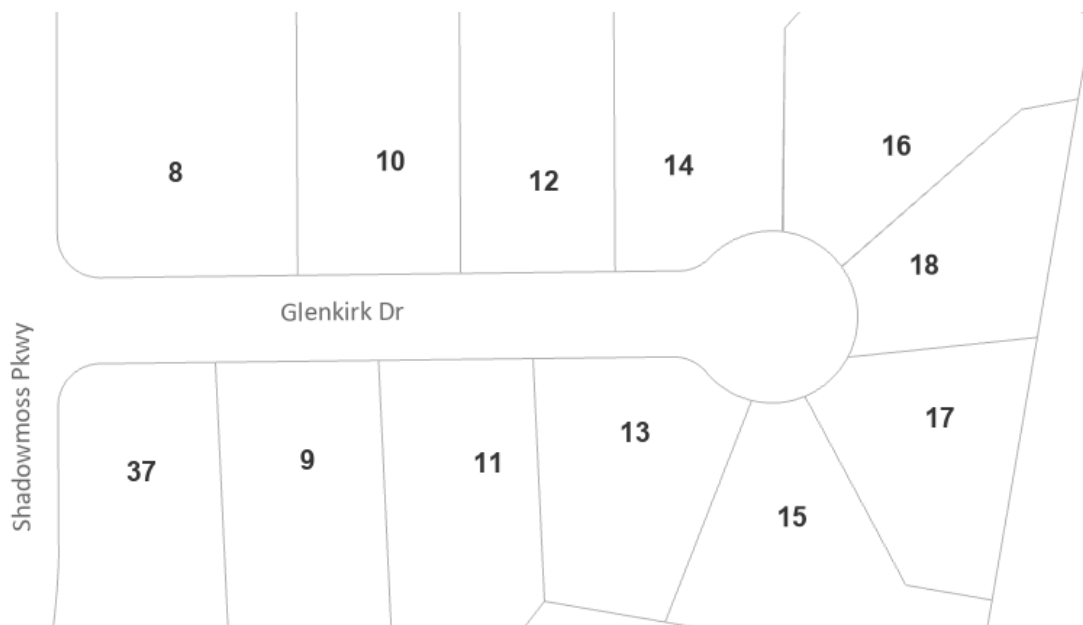


Figure x – Cul-de-sac example.

5 Sub Address Numbering

5.1 Introduction

Sub addresses are addresses within a building’s existing primary address. Each sub address has a **Sub Address Type** and a three (3) or four (4) digit **Sub Address Number**. The use of letter identifiers shall not be used for new addresses. Sub addresses are generally assigned from left to right.

5.2 When a Sub Address is Required

Sub addresses are required for all individually occupied / operated areas with a building, both commercial and residential. These are typically individually owned or rented spaces. For example, a coffee bar within a hotel lobby would not normally receive an individual address, but a separately owned coffee shop or store located within the hotel normally would.

5.3 Sub Address Types

The following sub address types are used in the address database. A mix of sub address types can be used within a building.

Postal	Full Name	Use
Apt	Apartment	Residential only
Unit	Unit	Residential only
Ste	Suite	Non-Residential only
Bldg	Building	Multi building complex. <i>No longer used for new addresses.</i>
Fl	Floor	Internal use only. Used for permitting system only.
Ut	Utility	Used to denote utility addresses.

5.4 Sub Address Numbers

For new addresses the sub address should be three (3) or four (4) digits.

Three (3) Digit Numbers

The first digit represents the floor level, and the next two digits represent the unit location.

Example:

155 Coastal Drive, 4th floor, apartment 18 = 155 Coastal Dr. Unit 418

Rule:

The sub address number shall not be duplicated within a building or multi-building complex for new addresses. For example, Suite 101 should not be used twice within a complex even if the primary address is different.

Four (4) Digit Numbers

This method will only be used for large complexes with multiple buildings. This ensures that each unit number within the complex is unique across all buildings. This avoids potential delivery issues and facilitates a shared mail kiosk for all buildings.

Example:

155 Coastal Drive, Unit 4408, is the eighth unit of the fourth floor of the fourth building in the complex.



Figure x – multi-building four (4) digit sub addressing example.

6 Vacant Parcels

6.1 Introduction

Vacant parcels are parcels that do not have a physical structure requiring a primary address. Address numbers will be assigned to lots whether the lot is built upon or not ([City of Charleston Code of Ordinances Sec. 28-77](#)). An assigned address number on a vacant lot does **not** constitute the right or ability to use the address for permitting or development. Vacant parcel addressing should not be included on plats. Addressing is always reviewed and updated as needed during the permitting process.

6.2 Vacant Parcel Addressing

Vacant parcels are given a single address based on the center of the parcel's primary road frontage.

6.3 Vacant Residential Corner Lots

Corner lots in new residential developments will be assigned an address on each street the parcel fronts. Once the location of the driveway is known during permitting, the lot will be addressed to the road where the driveway is located, and the other address will be retired.

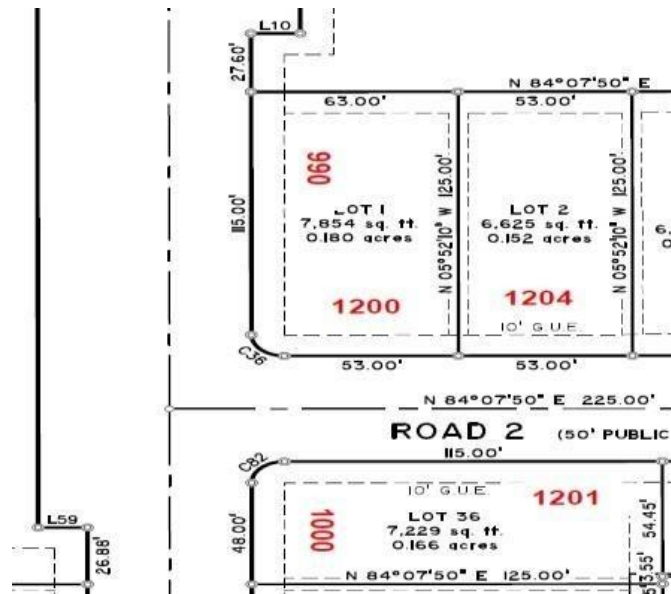


Figure x – Vacant Residential corner lot addressing.

7 Residential Addressing

7.1 Single Lot – One Residence

A single-family house on a single lot will receive one address. For corner lots the official address will be where the front of the home will face. In the event that the driveway is on a different road than where the front door faces, the address shall be assigned based upon the location of the driveway unless a sidewalk connects the front door to the road it faces.

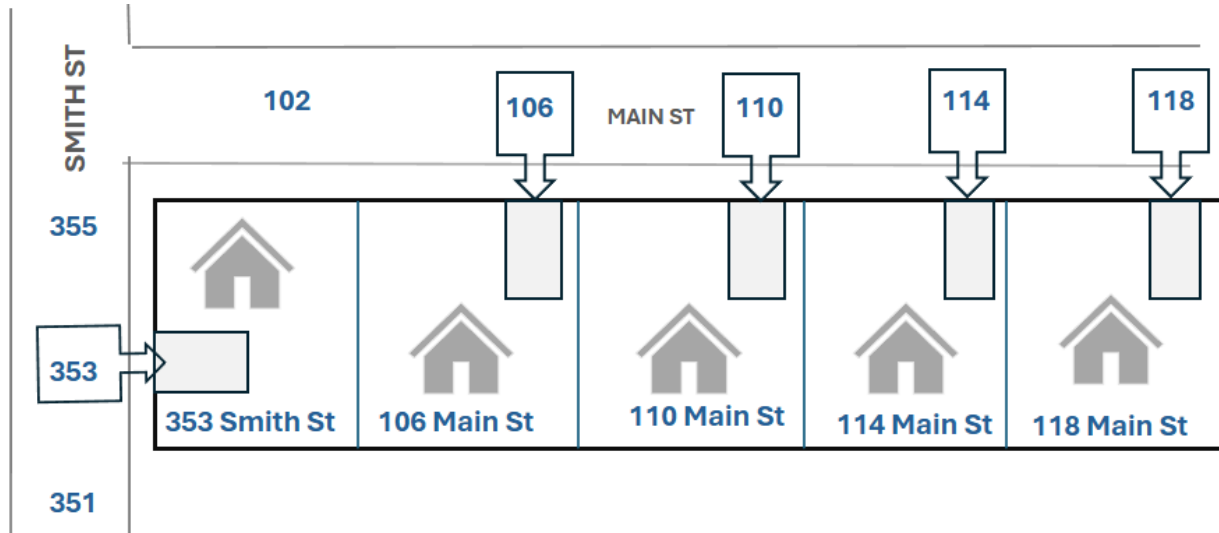


Figure x – Residential corner lot addressing.

During plat review, if it cannot be determined which road a house will face, addresses will be assigned to both roads. One address will be retired during permitting once the home's configuration is known.

7.2 Duplexes

A duplex with separate entrances should be assigned separate numbers for each unit. If there is lack of addressing space, unit letters can be assigned with a shared primary address number.

If each unit of a duplex is entered from one entrance via a foyer, a single address is assigned with sub addresses for the units.

7.3 Townhomes

Townhomes will be treated as individual residences. If there is not enough room for individual numbers due to existing addresses on adjacent parcels, a multi-family addressing plan can be utilized with a single house number for each building and sub addresses as defined in Section 5 for the individual units.

7.4 Condominiums

Single level condominiums are treated as townhomes should have their own address numbers. Multi-level condominiums are assigned as multi-family complexes.

7.5 Single-Family Fronting Two Parallel Roads

When a lot is between two parallel roads, the final address will be assigned where the primary pedestrian (front door) entrance is located. In some cases, the primary entrance will face an alley with only garage access on the main road. The garage access side cannot be used for addressing unless there is a separate, easily identifiable, and accessible outside door facing the same road.

If it cannot be determined where the primary entrance will be located during plat review, addresses will be assigned to both roads as is done for a corner lot. The second address will be retired during building plan review, when the location of the primary entrance is determined.

Posted address numbers must face the road they are addressed too. If posted facing another road, the address number's road name will be included.

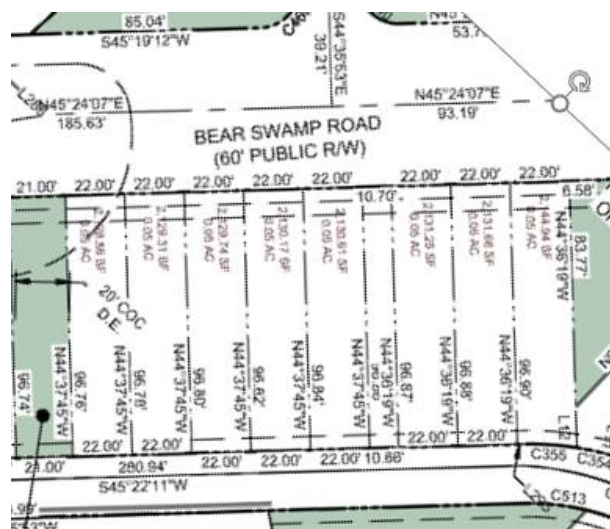


Figure x – Residential lot fronting two parallel roads.

7.6 Single-Family Fronting an Open Space

When a single-family structure's primary access does not front a road, the address will be assigned to the road with the best access to the primary entrance. A way-finding sign should be located at the access road directing people to the range of addresses. This is usually a sidewalk.

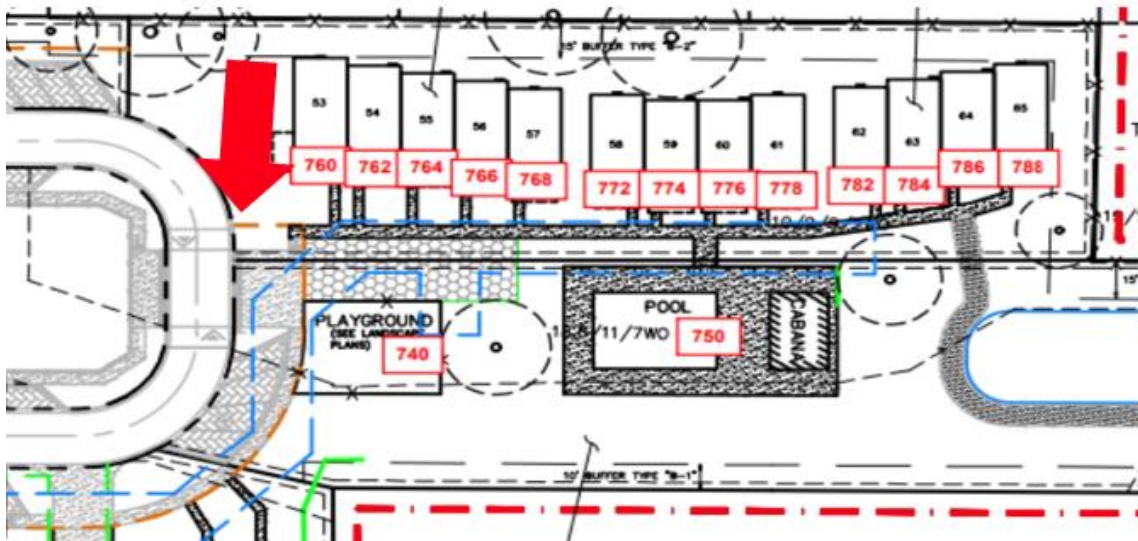


Figure x – Residential lots fronting open spaces with paths to roads.

7.8 Accessory Structures - Habitable

When garage apartments, cottages, or mobile homes are approved for residence a new address will be assigned.

If warranted, the access drive may be named and additional structures addressed to it using the guidelines in Section 3.1.

Single accessory units behind a main house or sharing the same driveway may retain the main house number and be assigned a sub-address as the unit identifier.

The sub-address will use **Unit** or **Apt** with a **three-digit** number. When multiple accessory dwelling structures are present, the sub address unit numbers will increase by 5 or 10 to leave room for future development or the access drive will be named and units addressed

to it. If there are existing sub addresses on the property using legacy formats like letters, the existing format can be used. Effort should be made to re-address legacy address formats when possible.

7.9 Accessory Structures – Not Habitable

Existing small non-habitable structure, such as a garage, storage shed, gazebos, etc., shall not be provided with separate addresses unless it has a separate access drive from the main residence or requires separate utilities. A separate address may be assigned for safety as deemed necessary or for new construction permits.

7.10 Mobile Home Communities

All mobile homes will be assigned their own address number. If the mobile home community has interior roads, they will be named, and lots will be addressed to the road they front. The lots will not use sub addresses with a shared primary address.

7.11 Multi-Family Residential

Separate Exterior Doors for Each Unit

Multi-Family structures with individual exterior doors will be assigned separate address numbers. If there is not enough room for individual numbers due to existing addresses on adjacent parcels, a multi-family addressing plan can be utilized with a single primary address number for each building and sub addresses as defined in Section 4 for the individual units.

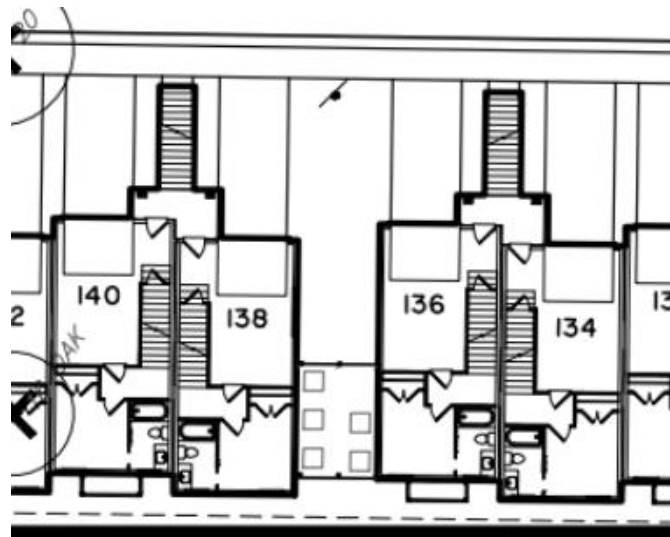


Figure x – Separate addresses for residential-attached buildings.

Common Exterior Entrance for Multiple Units

Multi-Family residences sharing a common entrance will share a single primary address number for the building and sub address as defined in Section 4 for each unit.

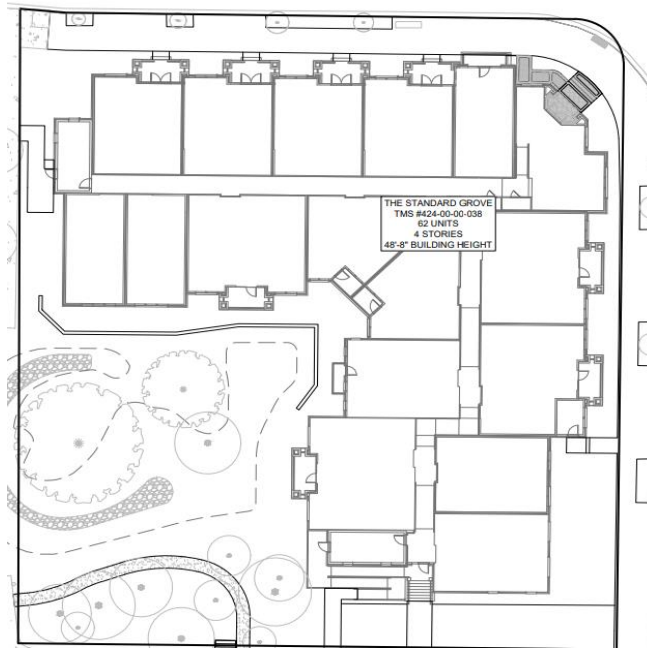


Figure x – Apartment building with common entrance at upper-right corner

Multiple Buildings

Each building will receive a separate primary address. The address will be assigned from the building's primary road access to the main or most used entrance. To accomplish this, interior access drives along parking areas should be named. Units will follow the guidelines in section 5 and use 4 digits. A unit number may not be repeated within the complex.

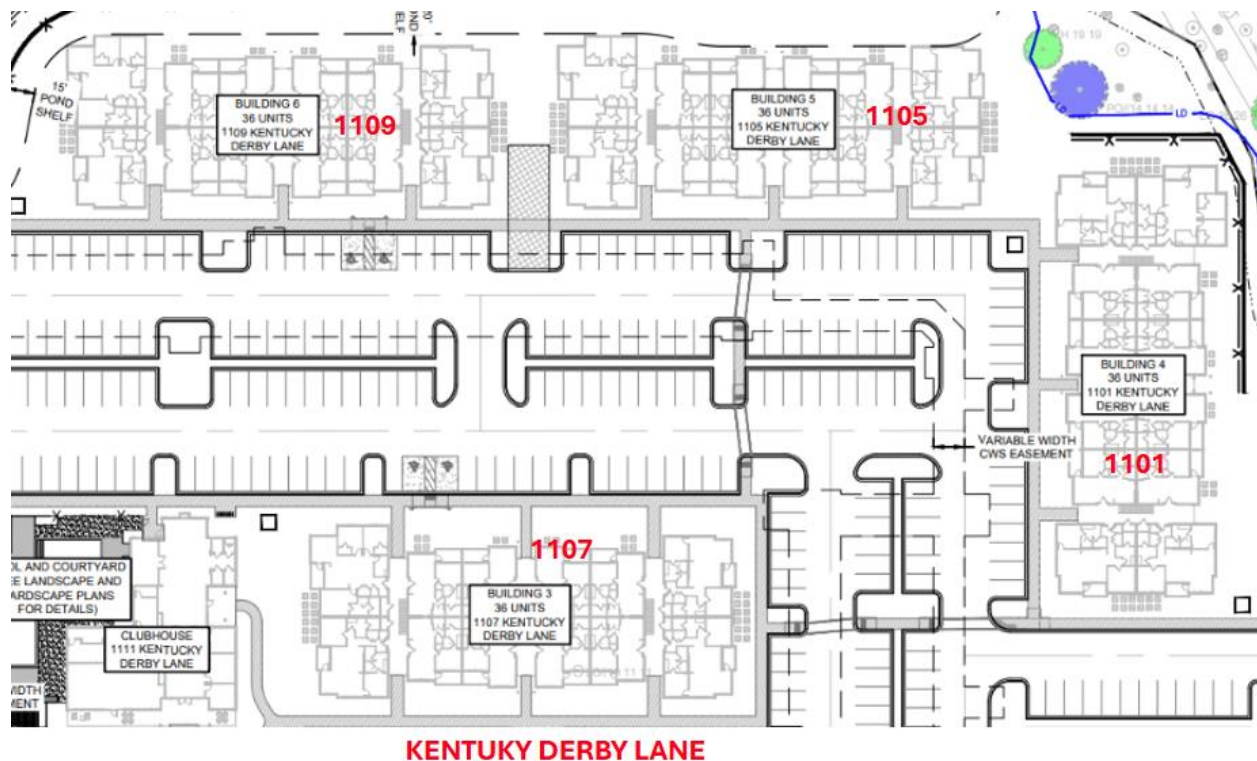


Figure x – Multiple buildings with separate addresses for one apartment complex.

7.12 Towers

Multi-tower complexes with multiple access points shall be treated and addressed as separate buildings if they are not accessed from a single common point of entrance at

If a building fronts multiple streets and has separately operated spaces, the primary access entrance to each space will be addressed to the street it faces. Spaces sharing an entrance will share a primary address number and be assigned sub addresses.

Multistory

Suites are assigned as three digits with the floor level as the first number and the unit location as the last two numbers. See *section 5*.

8.2 Commercial – Corner Building with Multiple Tenants

Commercial buildings located on corner lots with multiple tenants and separate public entrances on different streets shall be assigned individual primary addresses based on the street frontage of each entrance.

Example:

- Tenant A entrance on Main St → **100 Main St**
- Tenant B entrance on Oak Ave → **200 Oak Ave**

Criteria:

- Each tenant has a distinct, outside facing primary entrance
- Entrances are on different named streets
- Tenants operate independently (separate businesses).

If address numbers are limited, a shared primary address on each street can be used with suite number sub addresses.

8.3 Corner Entrance Buildings

If a mixed-use building is primarily accessed from a corner entrance facing a street intersection, the address will be assigned to the highest-ranked street. If both streets are equal in rank, the road with the most secondary entrances will be used for the address.

8.4 Mixed Use Buildings

Retail spaces are to use the sub type **suite** and residential spaces use the sub type **unit**.

If access to all residential and commercial spaces is off a single street one address will be assigned for the entire building. Units will be assigned to residential spaces and suites assigned to commercial spaces. See Section 4.

- If commercial or residential spaces are only accessed off a side or back street rather than the street of the main address, they will receive separate address numbers using the street the access faces.
- If entrances to commercial spaces are from the building's interior, connected to the building's main entrance, they will be assigned suite numbers.

Appendix A – Street Types

Approved street types and abbreviations.

Alley (Aly)	Avenue (Ave)	Bend
Bluff (Blf)	Boulevard (Blvd)	Circle (Cir)
Court (Ct)	Crescent (Cres)	Crossing (Xing)
Drive (Dr)	Expressway (Expy)	Highway (Hwy)
Landing (Lndg)	Lane (Ln)	Loop
Parkway (Pkwy)	Pass	Path
Pike	Place (Pl)	Point (Pt)
Road (Rd)	Row	Run
Spur	Street (St)	Terrace (Ter)
Trace (Trce)	Trail (Trl)	View (Vw)
Walk	Way	

City of Charleston Zoning Code, Appendix I

Appendix B – Road Name Reservation Tools

Proposed street names can be checked for availability and reserved by using the following links.

Berkeley County

Street Name Search:

<https://gis.berkeleycountysc.gov/address/street-search.php>

Street Name Reservation:

<https://gis.berkeleycountysc.gov/address/>

Charleston County

Street Name Search:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/803be6db729d4c19b5261b558634a39d/>

Street Name Reservation

<https://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/consolidated-911/reserve-street-name.php>