

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES



CITY OF
SIMI VALLEY

CITY OF SIMI VALLEY RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1. USER'S GUIDE TO THE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. Purpose 1-1

B. Interpretation of Provisions 1-1

C. Applicability 1-2

SECTION 2. SINGLE-FAMILY SUBDIVISION DESIGN

A. General 2-1

B. Lot Design and Arrangement 2-1

C. Streets and Circulation 2-2

D. Common Areas and Amenities 2-4

E. Walls and Fences 2-5

F. Trash Receptacles, Utilities and Equipment Screening 2-7

SECTION 3. SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

A. General 3-1

B. Facades 3-1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

C. Roofs 3-4

D. Garages and Accessory Buildings 3-5

SECTION 4. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECT DESIGN

A. General 4-1

B. Multi-Family Project Site Design 4-1

C. Multi-Family Residential Architecture 4-3

APPENDIX A

Typical Lot Setbacks A-1

Separation Policy A-2

OTHER REFERENCES

- A. Landscape Guidelines - Provides information concerning the City’s policies for on-site and common area landscaping, as well as streetscape landscaping design and standards.
- B. Utility Equipment and Trash Enclosure Screening - Requirements are contained in Ordinance No. 986 which became effective on December 28, 2000. The Ordinance includes Guidelines for the Preparation of Conceptual Utility Screening Programs for new projects.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- C. Water Tank Screening - Guidelines are contained in a City of Simi Valley Public Works Department Memorandum dated January 10, 2000. The Guidelines include landscaping and painting standards for water tank sites.

- D. Zoning Ordinance - The Simi Valley Municipal Code (SVMC) Title 9, Chapter 1 - Contains the City's codified development standards. Portions that have particular application for residential developments include the following:
 - Article 2 Zoning Definitions
 - Articles 3 & 4 Purposes and Establishment of Zones
 - Article 5 Uses by Zone
 - Article 6 Lot Areas, Setbacks, and Heights
 - Article 7 Standards for Specific Uses
 - Article 8 Standards for Specific Zones
 - Article 11 Approval Process and procedures
 - Article 15 Mature Trees
 - Article 16 Hillside Performance Standards
 - Article 18 Residential Building Permit Allocation System

SECTION 1: USER'S GUIDE TO THE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

SECTION 1: USER'S GUIDE TO THE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

A. PURPOSE

The Residential Design Guidelines are intended to promote excellence in the design and development of new residential projects in the City of Simi Valley in a manner that will:

- Maintain a high quality of life without causing unnecessary costs for residential development or undue restriction of private enterprise and initiative;
- Implement the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan;
- Contribute to a positive residential built environment and community identity through superior residential design;
- Contribute to implementing the concepts and recommendations for aesthetics provided in the City's Vision 2020 report;
- Provide guidance for the orderly development of the residential portion of the City;
- Supplement the Zoning Ordinance on matters of residential design;

- Promote the common safety of homeowners, pedestrians, and drivers by adhering to all required safety guidelines; and,
- Maintain and enhance residential property values.

B. INTERPRETATION OF PROVISIONS

The Residential Design Guidelines do not seek to impose a particular architectural theme, color palette, or particular style. The Guidelines do seek to assist in promoting positive quality-based design that will have enduring appeal. The Guidelines complement mandatory development standards by providing good examples of design solutions, and by providing design interpretation of the various mandatory regulations. The Guidelines are, however, less quantitative than mandatory development standards, and may be interpreted with some flexibility for specific applications.

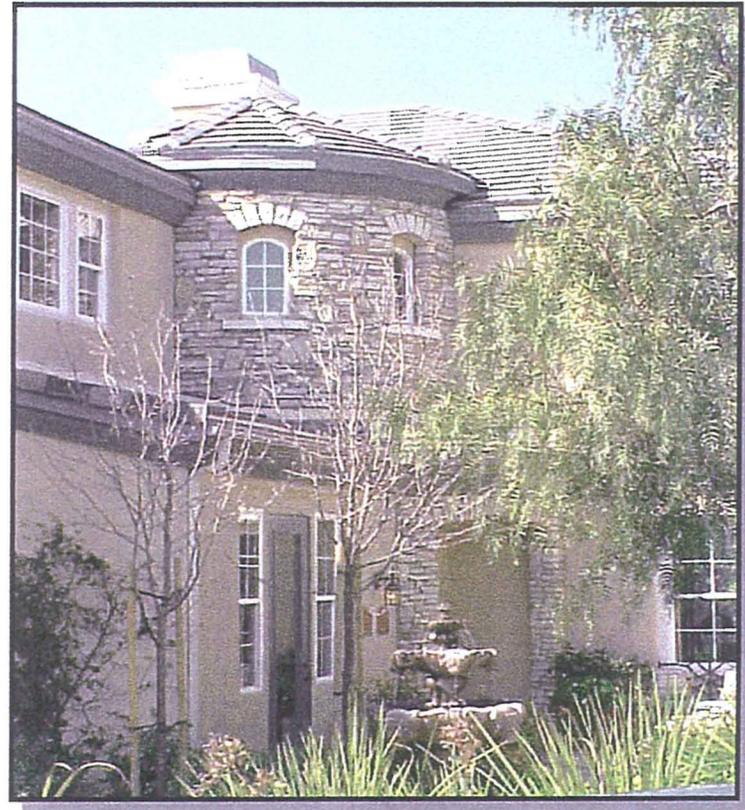
To aid in the interpretation of these guidelines, a development applicant should understand the meaning of "should," "encouraged," and "discouraged".

Guidelines which employ the word "should" are intended to express the City's desire and expectation. An alternative measure may be considered, however, if it meets or exceeds the intent of the guideline.

Guidelines using the words "encouraged" or "discouraged" are meant to express a more or less desirable design solution.

C. APPLICABILITY

The provisions contained in the Guidelines are applicable to residential development within the City of Simi Valley. However, existing residences that are not otherwise the subject of a discretionary permit application are encouraged, but not bound by, the Residential Design Guidelines. In all cases, residential development projects are subject to the applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance (Simi Valley Municipal Code Title 9).



SECTION 2: SINGLE-FAMILY SUBDIVISION DESIGN

A. GENERAL

The primary goal of these subdivision design guidelines is to promote functional, attractive, safe, and enduring neighborhoods that integrate well with the existing built environment, as well as with the surrounding natural environment. Good subdivision design results in the creation of a sense of place for each individual family home, and for the project as a whole. This is accomplished by careful consideration of the dynamics and interaction among the three principal elements of a subdivision: Lot design, road network, and public and common area facilities associated with the subdivision.

B. LOT DESIGN AND ARRANGEMENT

The design of subdivisions should serve to unify their various components, including residential blocks, open space, streets and landscaping, and community focal points such as schools and parks.

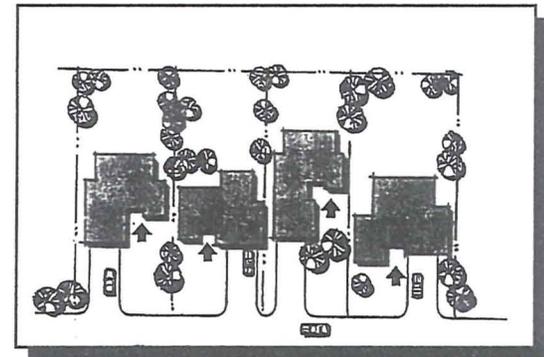
Lot arrangements should incorporate development standards that allow for varied setbacks, including those for reduced front yard setbacks for living areas and side-facing garages, zero lot-lines, detached garages and other creative residential design tools. Typical lot setbacks and separation between one and two-story houses are exemplified in Appendix A. By providing one-story homes and/or one-story elements on homes, projects are afforded a reduction in side setbacks. Front setbacks may be

reduced in some cases to allow living areas, porches and side-facing garages as further defined in SVMC Section 9-1.602.

Corner lots are best suited to be larger and wider lots, and are best suited for single-story models. This helps lessen the apparent bulk of the block's streetscape.

Lots should maximize useable private open space. For example, the largest yard area should be directly accessible to the most frequently used area of the house, such as the family room or kitchen/dining area.

The front and rear wall planes between adjacent houses should vary by at least two to five feet.



Staggered Setbacks

Mass grading and individual lot grading should take advantage of the natural terrain to the extent feasible. For example, lots for split-level homes are encouraged for areas in excess of 10% slope.

Individual lots should avoid vertical changes of grade in excess of three feet, or steep manufactured slopes. Significant grade changes should be gradually stepped or terraced. This is particularly important along side property lines where wall

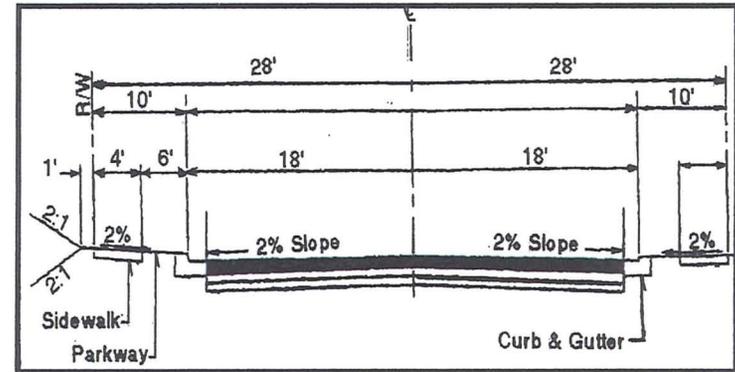
heights can be significantly affected by abrupt elevation changes. Rear property lines should be setback at least two feet from the top of slope. Avoid setting property lines at the bottom or along other intermediate lines along slopes.

Lots that back on to arterial roadways or adjoin land with a more intense zoning classification should incorporate expanded buffer areas such as enhanced parkway landscaping and deeper rear yards to mitigate potential aesthetic, noise, and land use compatibility conflicts.



C. STREETS AND CIRCULATION

The City's standard local residential street has a 36 foot pavement width.

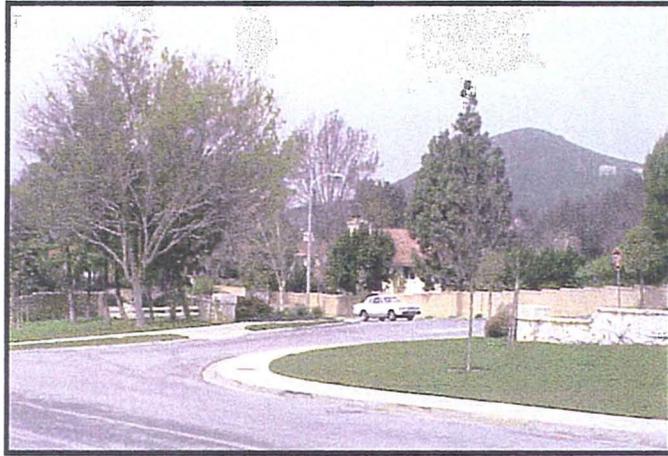


The sidewalks are separated from the curbs by a five and one-half foot wide landscaped parkway, as shown on the adopted City road standards.

The circulation system serving a subdivision should be logical and predictable. Streets should connect to adjacent subdivisions and should provide direct through-access to schools, parks, and community centers that serve the subdivision.

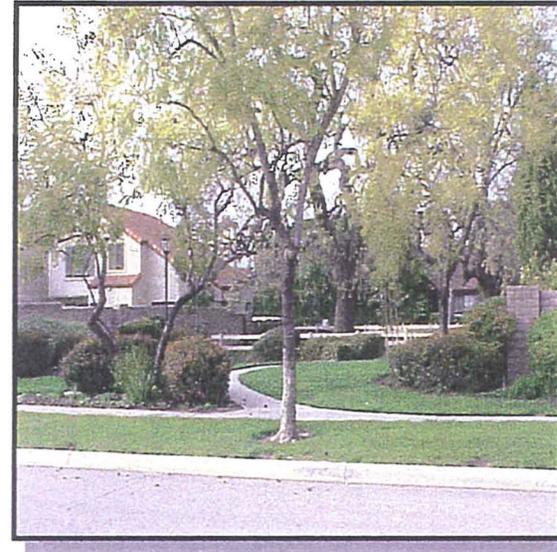
Every street should connect to a through street. However, it is not necessary for every local street to connect to a collector street. Rather, consideration should be made for providing multiple points of access for a neighborhood to diffuse traffic patterns.

When “T” intersections occur at project entries, they should incorporate open space areas, enhanced parkways and medians, and other measures to create an attractive open-view to the development.



Street patterns that would create long uninterrupted property line walls at the right-of-way line should be avoided.

Streets should incorporate passive traffic calming devices such as landscape islands (on arterial streets), slight variations in road curves and widths, and on-street parking. The use of speed humps or other active traffic barrier devices are not to be incorporated.



Cul-de-sacs that side onto through streets or greenbelts should have pedestrian access and open-view fencing to connect to the adjacent through street.

Private streets and sidewalks are encouraged to be designed, constructed and maintained at the same or greater level as that of similar public rights-of-way.

Alleys may be incorporated into the road network of residential subdivisions as a method for relocating garage access, utilities and service functions away from the fronting street. Where alleys are proposed, they should be designed to ensure adequate access, lighting, and passive surveillance from adjacent residences. Vehicle parking in the alley should normally be restricted. Alleys should be included in the common area maintenance schedule of the homeowner’s association.

D. COMMON AREAS AND AMENITIES

Entry statements are encouraged. Entry monuments walls, fences, and landscaping must comply with the City's Traffic Safety Sight Area provisions and with the required sight lines for the minimum stopping distances of vehicles. Project walls or sign walls should not be located so that they abut the sidewalk without an intervening planter area. Entry features should be constructed with materials that are also found within the subdivision. The ongoing maintenance of entry features and landscaping are to be incorporated into the common area landscaping program for the project.



On-site detention facilities should be located away from main project entries, to the extent feasible. Detention basins that appear to fit within the natural topography of the land are encouraged. Basins should remain unfenced where possible. If needed, fencing should be decorative in nature. Detention basins should be improved with landscaping, and may also incorporate active recreation components where possible.



The furniture and play equipment associated with pocket parks and mature tree preservation sites should be finished in neutral colors to preserve a more timeless theme for the site.

SECTION 2: SINGLE-FAMILY SUBDIVISION DESIGN



Individual mail boxes are encouraged. Where community mail boxes are required, they should be placed at a location that provides convenient pedestrian access from the houses that they serve, and should be directly visible from the front windows of at least two houses. Community mail boxes should also be located in decorative enclosures using

materials, landscaping, and architectural styles found in the neighborhood.



Gated subdivisions should have a controlled pedestrian gate in addition to the vehicle entry gates. The vehicle entry gate and structure should be located a sufficient distance from the cross street to accommodate

vehicle stacking, and be wide enough to provide for vehicles to turn around. The on-site portion of the entry should be surfaced with a contrasting decorative material.

E. WALLS AND FENCES



Permitted materials for side and rear property line walls are limited to brick, natural stone, decorative masonry block, tubular steel, and precast concrete panels.

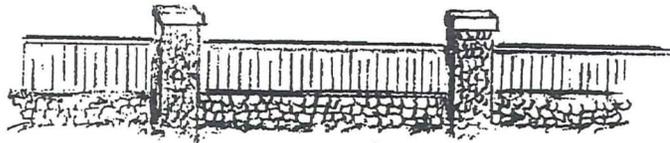




Elevation of Solid Wall with Pilasters



Elevation of Planters/Wall



Elevation of Wall/Wrought Iron Combination



Elevation of Wrought Iron with Pilasters

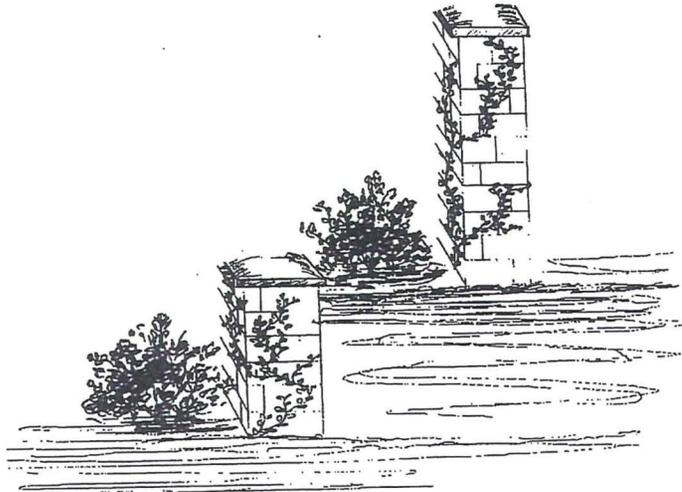
Side-yard gates should also be made of an opaque material which may also include decorative wood or other equally aesthetic materials that also provide a screening effect.

The portion of side-yard fencing that extends along the front portion between the residence and the side property line should be a solid decorative material to provide a solid screening for trash receptacles and equipment, provided that it complements the architectural style and materials of the residence. (See photographs, page 2-8)

Both sides of a solid wall should have decorative finishes.



Perimeter walls and fences should have regularly spaced pilasters, planter alcoves, or similar techniques that provide for variation in the wall's horizontal lines.



Walls taller than six feet should be terraced at a mid-point of the total fence height.

Fencing along residential property lines may be decorative tubular steel or clear panels to maintain views, where appropriate.

Open-view fencing may be used along road and trail sections that offer a scenic view.

Walls and fences must not interfere with the minimum required driver's sight safety line at all intersections and driveways.

F. TRASH RECEPTACLES, UTILITIES AND EQUIPMENT SCREENING

Above ground utility equipment should be placed out of the public right-of-way.

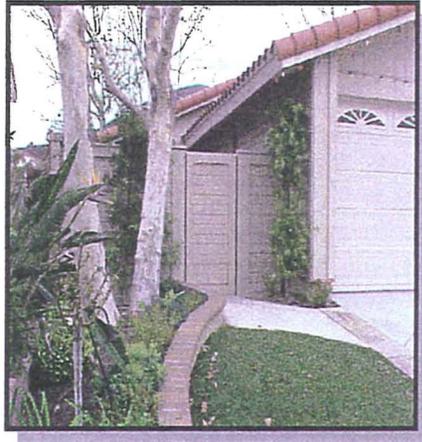
Above ground utility equipment should be screened from view by the use of low walls or berms, and should be further screened by the use of hedge material and vines.

Ongoing maintenance of the screening devices and landscaping for above ground utility equipment should be incorporated into the common area landscape maintenance plan for the project.



Utility connections and service locations such as trash storage areas and air conditioning units should be architecturally screened, placed within an enclosed area, or otherwise situated to avoid direct view from the street and from adjacent houses, as detailed for side yard fencing and gates in this Section.

Side yards should incorporate decorative screening walls and gates that also help to enhance the overall design and architecture of the residence, as shown.



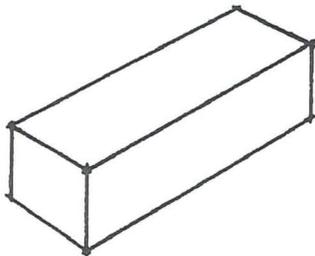
See through fencing that fails to adequately screen trash receptacles and equipment, as shown, is discouraged.

SECTION 3: SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

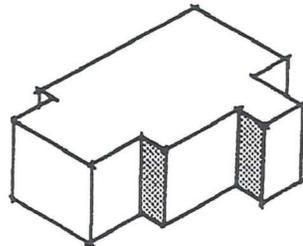
A. GENERAL

There is no particular architectural style required for residential structures. The focus should be on the development of a high quality residential environment. In general, the architecture should consider compatibility with the adjacent and nearby houses that make up the block, as well as with the character of existing neighborhoods in the area. In addition to harmonious building styles, architectural design should include careful consideration of form, size, color, material, rooflines, and accessory structures. Individual dwelling units should be distinguishable from one another, yet “fit” well in relationship to each other.

B. FACADES



Undesirable Architectural Treatment



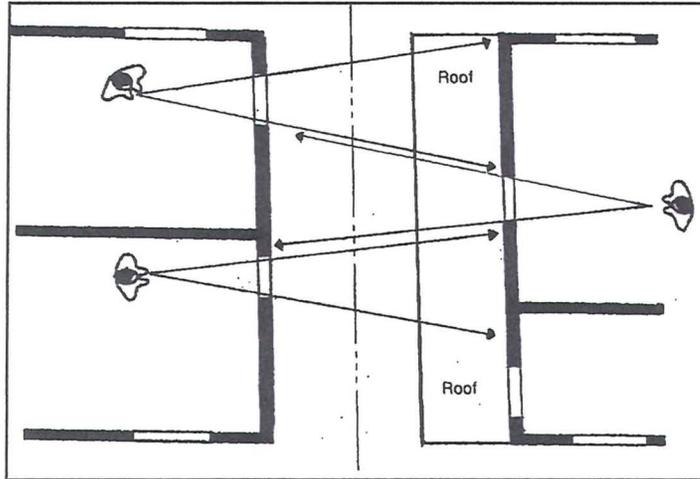
Vertical Articulation Added

1. BUILDING ARTICULATION AND MASS

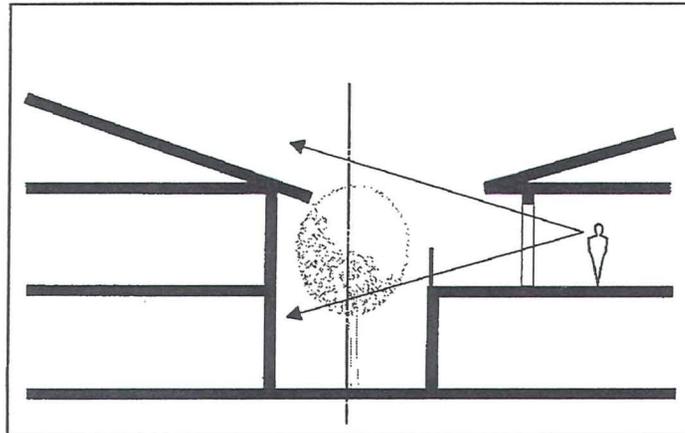
House designs should emphasize substantial changes in wall planes and vertical articulation to avoid “boxy” building appearances. House designs should not be repeated more frequently than every fourth house or between houses that face each other. The living area of the house should dominate the garage area when viewed from the street. Similarly, the entry should be the most identifiable and accessible element of the front elevation of the house.



All building sides should feature articulation and detail similar to that applied to the front side of the house. This is particularly critical for houses that back on arterial roadways and other prominent site views. In these cases, particular care should be taken to incorporate wall articulation, window treatments, and roof designs that will provide for effective variation and relief, as viewed from the off-site perspective.

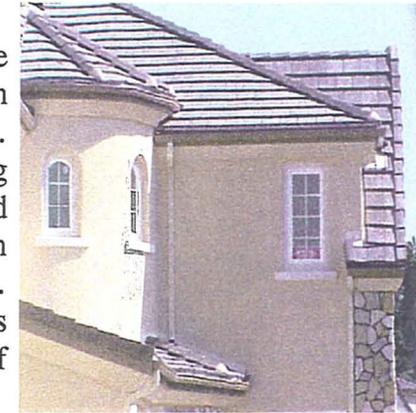


Off-setting window locations will help prevent views into adjacent houses.



Setting second stories back further than the first story requirement will help screen views between adjacent houses.

Window placement should be carefully considered in relation to adjacent residences. Direct views between living and kitchen area windows and neighboring private open space should be avoided. Similarly, avoid direct views between bedroom windows of adjacent houses.



Window sizes and styles, and frame details should be matched within a room, even if the windows are on different walls. Similarly, windows along a wall section should also be compatible with each other in terms of size and style. Exterior trim and sills should accurately reflect the homes architectural context and style.

Specially accented windows such as green house, bay, stained glass, or multi-paned windows should be prominently featured when viewed from offsite perspectives. Designer or feature windows, including arched and round windows, are encouraged within the appropriate architectural context.

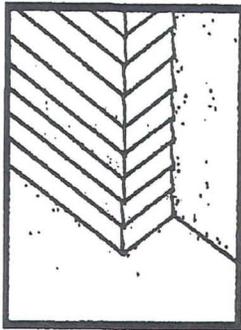


Recessed windows are encouraged.

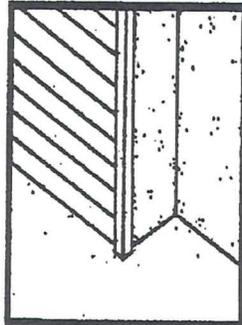
2. MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Materials and finishes should serve to achieve a common theme for the house. Avoid borrowing from multiple styles to apply to a single house in a manner that would conflict with the intended architectural style. For example, a French country-style design could incorporate slate rock and window shutters, but should avoid adobe tile or ornamental wrought iron which would be more characteristic of Spanish architecture.

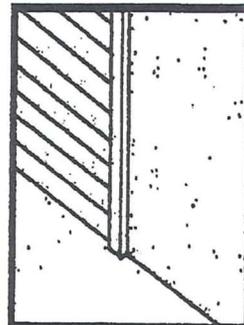
Finish materials should terminate only at distinct changes in wall planes, as opposed to terminating the finish at the wall edges.



Change in plane with change in material Recommended



Material or color change at outside corner Not recommended



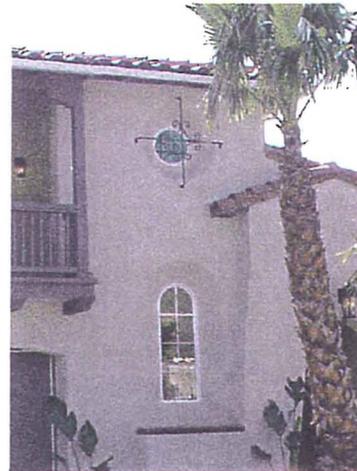
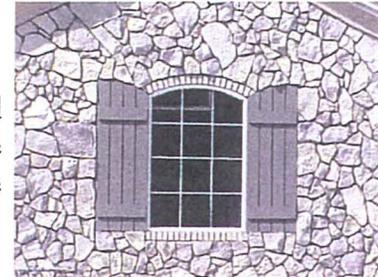
Change of materials on same plane Not Recommended

Raised stucco bands should be angle-cut at their termination points. Styrofoam appliques placed below the second floor level should have a hard finish to reduce their tendency to become dented and cracked.

Finish treatments should be made of materials that are maintainable for the full life of the main structure.

Finish treatments should appear to be structurally integral with the building. For example, heavy eave beams should be part of the roof trusses or should protrude at an architecturally appropriate point.

Stylistically and historically appropriate finishes and detailing are encouraged.



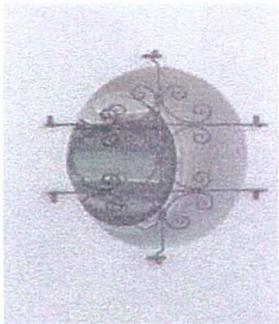
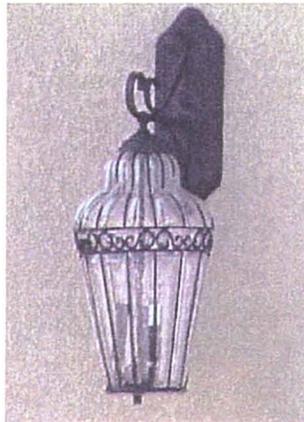


Main wall colors should be compatible with the City's semi-arid climate, where the use of muted and pastel colors provides a cooling and calming effect. Variety in finish colors is acceptable if the colors selected are not highly light reflective or

garish, and further provided the variety is carried throughout the development and not limited to a few isolated examples.

Trim colors that contrast main colors are encouraged.

Non-standard stucco finishes such as fan trowel or dapple styles should be employed in a manner that will serve to add accent to the wall finishes.



Avoid regimentation or over use of these accent finishes where the use would tend to lessen the unique quality of its application.



C. ROOFS

Roof styles and materials should complement the building style. For example, a Craftsman style house should avoid the use of clay mission tiles, or hip roof elements.

Roofs should have a rake of no less than 12 inches, and should have eaves that are a minimum of 18 inches wide to maximize the natural shading and cooling values.

Roofs should feature frequent changes in ridge line direction and style. Variations that are found on the front roof sections should also be incorporated into the back and side roof sections. Skylights and clear-story windows are encouraged to maximize the use of natural light.



Roof mounted heating and cooling equipment is not allowed.

Attic vents should be low profile, placed away from front elevations, and should be painted to match the roof color.

The same roof material should be used for all accessory structures.

D. GARAGES AND ACCESSORY BUILDINGS

Garages should be placed and oriented to be visually subordinate to the living area of the house.

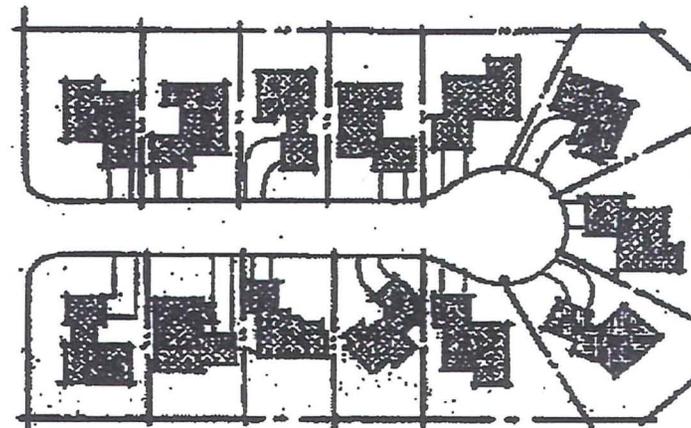
Side-facing garages, garages set back behind the leading edge of the living area, as well as detached garages placed to the rear of the lot are encouraged.

Garage doors should have a finish color that matches the main building color or the dominant trim color.

Accessory buildings are to remain subordinate to the main residential structure.



For garages that face directly to the street, the doors should be recessed to reduce the dominance of the garage door openings and to create greater shadow and depth effects for the garage wall.





Front yard patios, porches and enhanced entry statements are encouraged to be placed closer to the street as a symbol of entry, and to encourage residents to participate in neighborhood activities and develop neighborhood ties.

Push through devices such as window unit air conditioners are not encouraged.



SECTION 4: MULTI-FAMILY PROJECT DESIGN

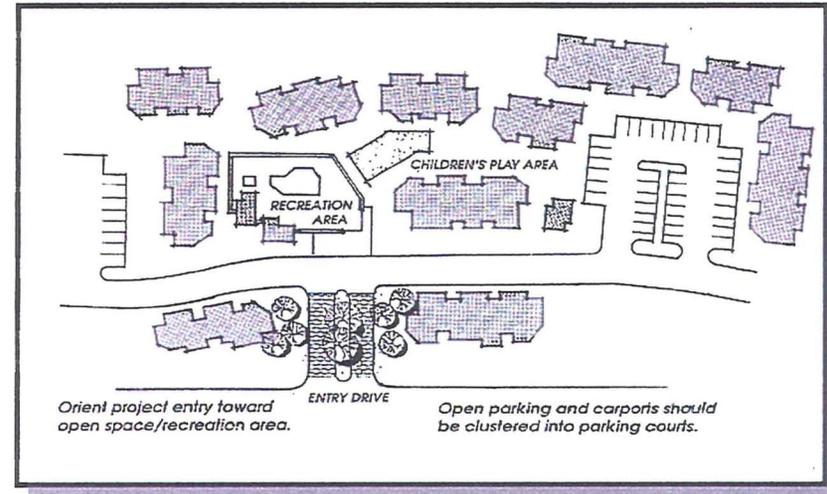
A. GENERAL

Site and building design for multi-family projects should take into account higher densities, increased parking areas, and larger individual buildings than single-family projects. These guidelines are intended to assist developers, staff and the approving body in ensuring that multi-family housing projects integrate with surrounding neighborhoods so as to enhance the sense of community and contribute to the overall quality of the City's built environment, and that all of the City's residents enjoy the opportunity for a superior quality of life in a pleasant residential environment.

B. MULTI-FAMILY PROJECT SITE DESIGN

Site designs should relate to surrounding properties with respect to building locations, orientation, massing and setbacks, and arrangement of parking and open space.

Multi-family buildings should be set forward to the street in relation to other site features such as parking and recreation areas, and the buildings should have similar setbacks to other residences along the fronting street. However, multi-family buildings in excess of two stories may require increased setbacks as a means to buffer the building's height and mass. Walled private yard areas should not dominate a building's front facade.



The overall circulation system must be logical and understandable to the first time visitor by avoiding circuitous or confusing travel paths and dead ends.

For gated projects, adequate stacking room and parking stalls should be provided outside of the gates. Entries should accommodate separate vehicle and pedestrian access and turnaround area.

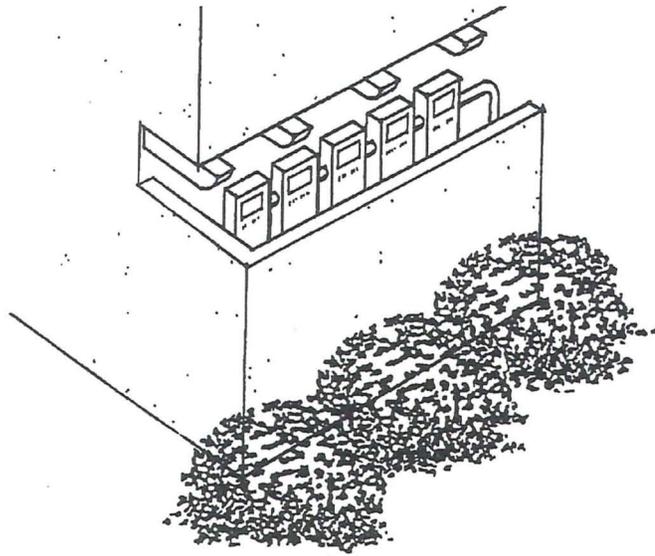
Parking areas should be set away from the street. Parking areas should be directly visible from both individual residences and from other common areas such as recreation rooms. Passive surveillance of parking and common areas is encouraged.

Where parking areas are placed adjacent to a perimeter street, vehicles should be screened to a height of at least three feet by means of lowering the finished grade of the parking area, low profile walls or berms, and landscaping.

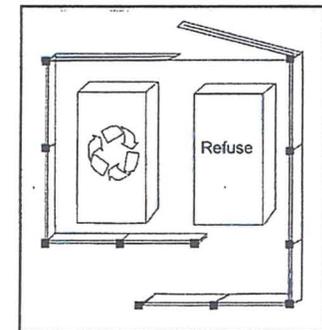
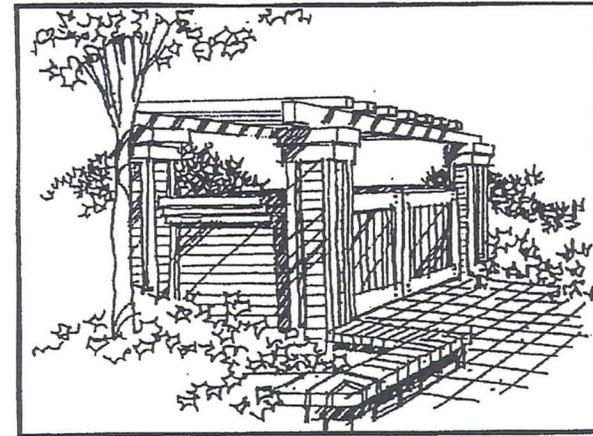
Parking structures, carports, and common area buildings such as laundry rooms should have the same level of architecture and finish as the main residential buildings.

Common area facilities such as pools, laundry rooms, recreation buildings and outdoor play and picnic areas should have direct access and visibility from the majority of the units for which the facility is providing service.

Utility equipment and service meters are to be located away from high visibility and usage areas and effectively screened from view. The use of enclosed structures or interior access to utility equipment and meters is encouraged. The use of utility closets on exterior walls is not encouraged.



Trash enclosures are required to be conveniently located throughout the development, and to be constructed with a walk-in entrance, solid metal gates, and a decorative cover. Enclosures should have sufficient size to house both the recycling and refuse bins.



C. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

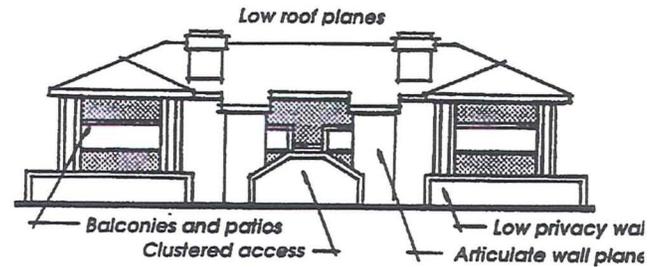
Multi-family residential buildings should incorporate the same architectural principles that apply for single-family structures, including adherence to general design themes, building articulation and mass, materials and finishes, roofs, garages and equipment screening.

In addition, multi-family buildings should incorporate significant and functional vertical and horizontal articulation features on the front building elevation. Secondary elevations should carry through the features found on the front elevation and should not be left as essentially blank or flat surfaces.



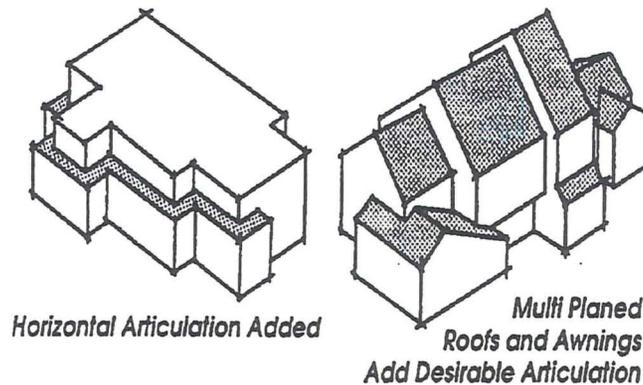
Each external residential entry should have an individual access with distinctive architectural treatments to distinguish it from other units, and to give the entire building more of a single-family feel.

The incorporation of balconies, porches, and patios within multi-family structures is encouraged for aesthetic value and for useable private open space. However, such features should avoid strictly regimented duplication along an elevation since this tends to reduce the feature's aesthetic value.

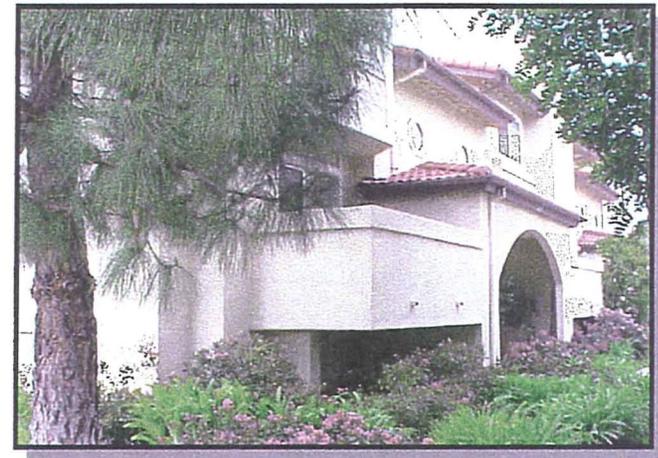
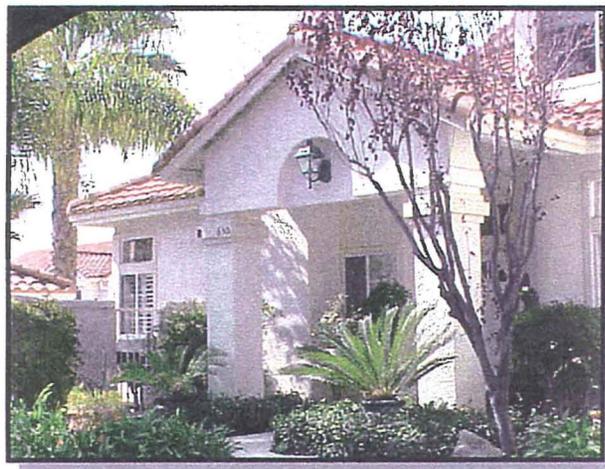
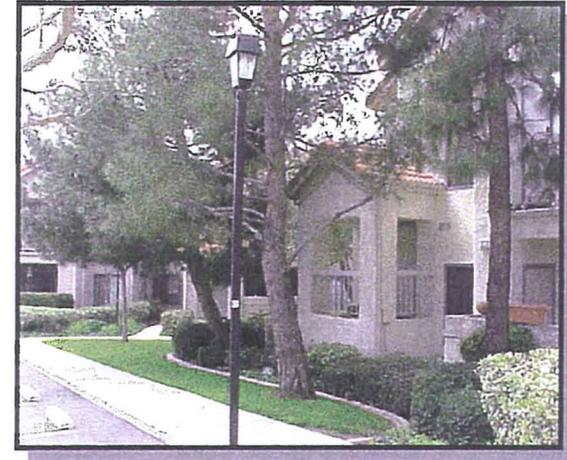


Roofs for multi-family buildings should incorporate pitches, ridges, rakes, ridge lines and materials that are typical of single-family residences in the area.

Multiple roof sections that also incorporate variations and changes in roof lines and incorporation of hip and dormer elements are encouraged.

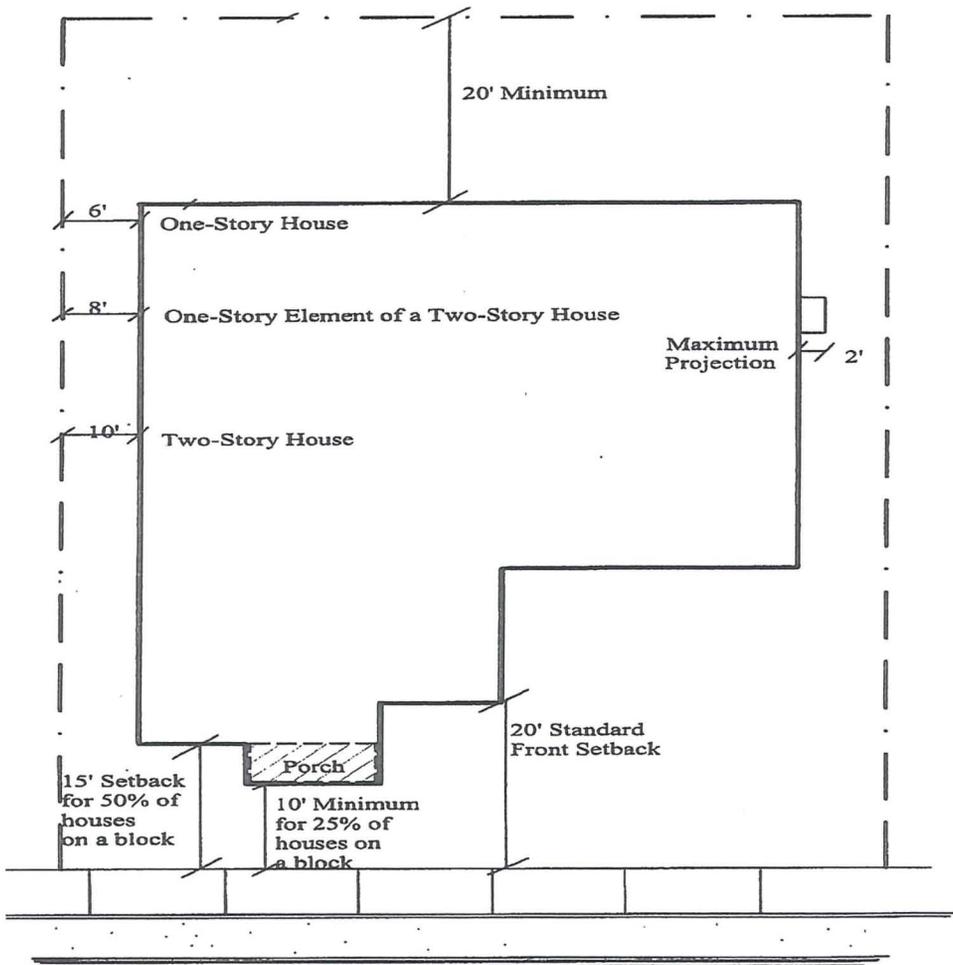


Exterior stairways should complement the architecture and sense of individuality of each residential unit. The use of open metal or prefabricated stairways is discouraged.



TYPICAL LOT SETBACKS

The example below represents typical setbacks for a single-family home in the Residential Low (RL) zone within a project of 31 units or more. This example is not meant to be all-inclusive. Further information regarding residential setbacks and building heights can be found in Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance.



The side yard setback for new projects with 31 units or more is 6 ft. for a single-story house, 8 ft. for a single-story element of a two-story house, and 10 ft. for a two-story house. Zero lot line houses shall retain the sum of the required side yard setbacks in one side yard.

With a Planned Development (PD) permit, up to 50% of the houses on a block may have the living area setback as close as 15 ft. to the front property line.

Porches, decks, and similar raised above grade structures may extend only 6 ft. into the required front and rear yard setbacks, except that with a PD permit up to 25% of the houses on a block may have covered porches extending up to 10 ft. into the front yard setback, provided the covered porch extends no closer than 10 ft. to the front property line.

Patio roofs, garages, guest houses and similar structures are not allowed within the front yard setback, and shall be at least 10 ft. from the rear property line, except that with a PD permit, up to 25% of the garages on a block may be as close as 15 ft. to the front property line, provided the garage is "side-facing".

Detached garages are not allowed in the front yard setback, and shall be located at least 5 ft. from the rear property line.

Reduced front yard setbacks shall only apply to projects with houses fronting on roads designed to City standards (i.e. sidewalk separated from the street with a parkway strip).

APPENDIX A

SEPARATION POLICY (REAR SETBACKS)

The City Council has addressed Policy III-1.6.3 of the General Plan Land Use Element relating to “extensive setbacks.” For every foot that a building pad for a new two-story house is raised from ten feet below the building pad of an existing single-story house, the rear setback should be increased beyond the standard 20 foot backyard by three feet. The following table illustrates this policy direction:

Elevation of New Two-story House Compared to One-story House	Standard Rear Yard Setback	Added Setback for Two-story House	Total Setback for New Two-story House	Minimum Separation of Existing One-story House and New Two-Story House
-10 ft.	20 ft.	0 ft.	20 ft.	40 ft.
-5 ft.	20 ft.	15 ft.	35 ft.	55 ft.
0 ft.	20 ft.	30 ft.	50 ft.	70 ft.
+5 ft.	20 ft.	45 ft.	65 ft.	85 ft.
+10 ft.	20 ft.	60 ft.	80 ft.	100 ft.

The graphic exhibits on the following page further illustrate this policy direction.

