

# Chapter 5

## **IMPLEMENTING THE VISION: MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL AND MIXED-USE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION – COMPREHENSIVE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines are intended to convey overall best practices. These are additional to guidelines tailored to a specific place or neighborhood. However, conditions vary from site to site, and there may be a more appropriate solution that is in conflict with or is not included in the guidelines. ***Innovative design solutions that are consistent with the spirit of the design principles identified in this document will be considered and encouraged.***

### MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL/ MIXED USE DESIGN GUIDELINES

The design guidelines are intended to convey overall best practices. These are additional to specific guidelines tailored to a specific place or neighborhood. However, conditions vary from site to site, and there may be a more appropriate solution that is in conflict with or is not included in the guidelines. ***Innovative design solutions that are consistent with the spirit of the design principles identified in this document will be considered and encouraged.***

**Site Planning - Site planning involves a careful analysis of the opportunities and constraints of the site, including existing site features such as mature trees, topography, and drainage patterns. The components of site development extend beyond building placement and configuration, including topography, surrounding uses, retaining walls, landscape design, hardscape considerations, and parking.**



**Landscaping and canopy tree with building set back from sidewalk enhances the street and the building**

#### A. Building Location

1. Consider relationship to adjacent buildings, topography, and sunlight.
2. Coordinate setbacks with the building design and streetscape. Consider prevailing setback of buildings on the street as well as code requirements.

#### B. Solar Design

1. Design to maximize options for passive and active solar heating and cooling. Provide access to sunlight while employing common-sense techniques to increase energy conservation and interior comfort.

2. Any design features for advantageous passive or active solar design must be fully integrated into the overall design of the structure.
3. Provide for passive solar design by:
  - carefully orienting building walls, window openings;
  - windows and roof details on a site in response to sun patterns
  - generous roof overhangs or other shading devices especially at south and west facing elevations

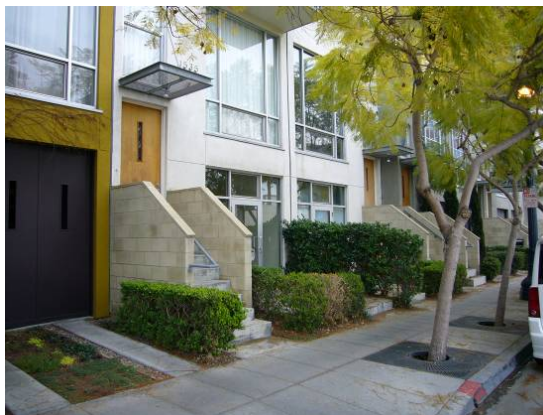
### C. Yards and Usable Open Space



**Landscaping for common open space complements the building while enhancing the outdoor area**

1. Integrate outdoor areas into the site design of new developments, surrounding buildings and existing open spaces.
2. Allow flexibility for open space for new development.
3. Common open space should be easily accessible to all units. In larger projects, consider providing more than one distinct outdoor space.
4. Common open space should transition to private open space in a layered fashion for best usability.

### D. Garage Location and Driveways



**Garage location designed to fit with design and rhythm of entries and other elements**

1. Vehicular access and parking should be secondary or subordinate to the homes they serve.
2. Vehicular access should be from an alley wherever possible.

3. Driveways and curb cuts should be the minimum width and number allowed by zoning to minimize pedestrian conflicts.
4. Fully integrate the garage within overall structure.
5. Driveways should be located away from street intersections to minimize conflict with traffic on public streets.
6. For structures with four units or more, parking should be separated from the street by an active use (residential or commercial) and should not be visible from common open space.
7. For structures with four units or more, parking should be located behind, under or on the side of buildings, not visible from any street. Garages on the back half of the lot or screened from view by housing units or landscaping are strongly encouraged.
8. Pedestrian access to subterranean parking should be from the common open space. Elevators and stairs to subterranean parking should be incorporated into the building design rather than be freestanding elements.

#### **E. Landscape Design (Including Hardscape)**



**Landscaping for common open space complements the building while enhancing the outdoor area**

1. Provide landscape design complementary to building design in all required setback areas.
2. Provide appropriate landscaping on hillsides to minimize the visual impact of new construction and grading, and to complement the overall site design.
3. Particular consideration should be paid to existing Oak, Bay Laurel and Sycamore trees. Appropriate landscaping should be used below the canopies of these trees.
4. All landscaping should be drought tolerant. Minimize use of turf.
5. Space for landscaping should be provided adjacent to alley garage entries where feasible. Typically, pockets of landscaping can be provided between garages.
6. Permeable paving systems are strongly encouraged. In addition, “Hollywood” style driveways, where the tracks for the car are separated by strips of green lawn or gravel, also reduce stormwater runoff.
7. Include decorative driveway paving materials.
8. For common areas above grade:

- Landscaping should be designed at a depth to allow planting to grow to full maturity.
- A minimum of 20% of planting must be within 9 inches of the finish floor in order to provide a more natural sensibility and to prevent crowding in the outdoor space.

#### **F. Minimize stormwater runoff**



**Landscape design provides ample area to contain stormwater runoff**

- Site design should maximize water permeability by reducing paved areas (hardscape), use of permeable paving materials, and preserving open space drainage ways when feasible.
- Avoid large continuous paved areas.
- Consider use of permeable paving materials such as ungrouted brick pavers or interlocking paving systems in which grass can be grown.
- Consider conveying stormwater from building roofs to an on-site drainage system, such as French drains, detention basins, bioswales, or into planted areas.

#### **G. Walls and Fences**

1. Front yard fences and walls are discouraged. Use decorative material. Materials such as wood, wrought iron, and stone should be used for walls and fences. Use of chain-link, vinyl or other plastic material is strongly discouraged.
2. Security gates and fences are not encouraged and should be located behind the street face of adjacent buildings.
3. Design of all gates and fences should be integrated with building and site design, and have a high level of transparency.
4. Walls and fences should be designed in a style, material, and color that complement the overall building and/or site design.
5. Natural colors and/or colors consistent with the architectural design are encouraged.
6. Both sides of all perimeter walls or fences should be architecturally treated.

#### **H. Retaining Walls**

1. Minimize the use of retaining walls to modify landform.

2. Use decorative material such as natural stone, poured in place concrete, or other quality materials.

**I. Mechanical and Plumbing Equipment**

1. Locate mechanical equipment and supplemental functions (i.e., trash storage) away from the street and screened from view in ways that are integrated into the building and site design.
2. If mechanical equipment is located on the roof, required screening should be fully integrated into the building design and not appear as an afterthought.

**J. Trash Location and Enclosure**

1. Trash receptacles should be screened from view. In development with four or more units, enclosed common trash areas must be provided in sufficient quantity to accommodate all refuse generated. In developments with less than four units per lot, trash receptacles should be stored out of public view. Adequate space for separate recycling bins should be provided.

**K. Lighting**

1. Minimize impacts on neighbors and maintain design quality.
2. Lighting should be incorporated into the building and landscape design to provide ambience, safety and security.
3. Exterior lighting should be designed for specific tasks, including illumination of paths, entryways, parking, streets and common areas.
4. Height of light poles should be appropriate in scale for the building or complex and the surrounding area. Lights that are mounted on poles or posts should be only as tall as needed to accomplish their particular task and are encouraged to be a maximum of 12'.
5. Fixtures and poles/posts should be consistent throughout the project. Light fixtures should be designed or selected to be architecturally consistent with the main structure and overall design or historic building, if applicable.
6. Lighting should be designed to provide appropriate light levels for each area without unnecessary spillover or glare onto adjacent properties, or into the night sky.
7. Uplighting of building elements and trees is among effective and attractive lighting techniques that are strongly encouraged.



**Mass and Scale-New projects should fit well with surrounding building fabric. While new proposals need not copy existing development, mass and scale should respect adjacent building context.**



**Building is broken up into different elements surrounding outdoor space, breaking down the size and appearance of the massing**

#### **A. Relate Buildings to Existing Context**

1. Identify open space, building solid and void, overall configuration in relation to overall concept, relationship to adjacent structures and best functional project design.
2. Relate new buildings (especially if larger than existing context) to existing adjacent buildings through use of proportion, transition, or other design features.
3. Typical development patterns along the street vary from 50 to 100 feet. Building massing and articulation should reflect the development pattern of the neighborhood. To provide appropriate massing with surrounding buildings and a human scale, long, continuous segments of building walls facing the public street should be avoided.
4. As new development is often larger in size and mass than existing neighboring structures, a building may need to be expressed as a series of separate volumes. A variety of architectural strategies can be used to express or break up the massing of a building including: variations in building height, setbacks and stepbacks, recessed volumes, and other strategies to provide a response appropriate for the surrounding context.

5. New projects can be larger than existing development, provided the mass and scale of the new proposal is appropriate and transitions well to the existing context.
  - Provide an appropriate massing concept for proper fit into the neighborhood.
  - Design of larger buildings should diminish apparent size and scale.



**Units are designed as separate buildings facing the street rather than a single building frontage**

## **B. Architectural Concept**



**Contemporary design provides separate units defined by strong architectural elements**

1. Each building or project should have an architectural idea that governs massing and design decisions. Architectural concept should be appropriate to site and concept and executed with rigor and consistency.
2. Massing of the project should reinforce the overall architectural concept.



### C. Outdoor space



**Building designed as separate elements surrounding outdoor space**

1. Create a comfortable, usable outdoor space easily accessed from all units.
2. Common open space should be incorporated into the overall site and building design while enhancing the overall site, streetscape and view of project from public ROW.
3. The common open space should be a size, scale and proportion to maximize benefits of light and air by insuring the ground plane is at least partially lit with direct sunlight for part of the day, providing usable open space for building occupants.
4. Where feasible, common open space should be oriented to receive maximum exposure to the southern sky, and buildings should be massed to maximize the exposure of neighboring buildings to light and air.
5. For buildings with long frontages, open space and/or courtyards should be visible from the street to break up the massing. The entranceway to the courtyard from the street is encouraged to provide visibility. All fences and gates to courtyard spaces should provide openness in design.
6. Courtyards are encouraged as they provide protected common open space large enough to be usable by occupants. However, each building design should maximize opportunities of the specific and unique site configuration.
7. Public, communal and private open spaces should be clearly distinguishable from one another, but may be arranged adjacent to one another for maximum effect. Private patios may be located in a courtyard or in front yards facing the street if they are defined by a low wall (36" max.) or hedge.
8. Partial courtyards or open space adjacent to parking lots should be screened by a minimum 5' wide landscape zone.

#### **D. Relate Buildings to Existing Topography**



**Building steps up as the site slopes up**

1. Building form and profile should follow existing topography.
2. Minimize the use of retaining walls to alter grades. Where retaining walls are necessary, they should terrace with the existing topography as much as possible.
3. Transition to Single-Family Neighborhoods - Portions of multi-family and/or mixed-use buildings that face or are directly adjacent to single-family homes should provide a meaningful transition to neighboring context

#### **E. Privacy**

1. The privacy requirements in the Zoning Code are critical to quality of life in multi-family housing.

#### **F. Scale and Proportion/Monumentality**

1. A project can be designed to make it appear more monumental or to help diminish the apparent size and scale of its mass.
  - Placement of building forms in relation to one another, emphasis of horizontal and vertical elements, size scale and placement of entries, doors, windows and other architectural elements all contribute to the perceived mass and scale of the project.
  - Proper use of design elements makes it possible for projects varying in size to be designed to visually fit into the surrounding context.
2. Proper location and configuration of entries, prominent building elements and features should relate to overall building concept as well as neighborhood pattern, site configuration and slope, relationship to streets and corners, and to and from the site.
3. Differentiating the building with a hierarchy of architectural elements can also assist in achieving a balanced proportional relationship within the project itself, and to the surrounding context.
4. Over-scaled or 2-story monumental entries are discouraged.
5. Side yard setbacks should be varied where possible to help create different sized yards and private patio areas. This variation maximizes the use of land and enhances dwelling privacy.
6. Surface detailing should not serve as a substitute for well-integrated and distinctive massing.

## G. Roof Forms

1. Use roofline configurations (i.e., shed, gable, hip, flat) to reinforce the overall architectural idea. In some cases, variation of the roof form, heights etc, can provide visual interest and provide appropriate scale and proportion for the structure.
2. Roofs on a building and its garage should be consistent, employing the same roof type (hipped, gabled or flat), slopes and materials.
3. Superficial roof forms, such as mansards, affixed to the buildings typically are not found on well-designed buildings, and are strongly discouraged.
4. Roof forms should be consistent with the building's overall building design.
5. Continue any decorative roof treatments around the building or terminate in a logical manner.

**Design and Detailing-The design and detailing of the building are paramount to a quality environment. Detailing and choice of materials should reinforce the overall project design. Architectural design elements, details and materials should be consistent throughout a project, recognizing that a building is 3-dimensional and must be well designed on all sides.**

## A. Overall Design and Detailing

1. To maintain a high level of design, the architecture of any multi-family housing project or complex should reflect a common vocabulary of building massing, forms, and elements and materials, while at the same time express architectural variation.
  2. Design and detailing should enhance the overall architectural idea and be consistent around the building.
  3. A variety of architectural designs and styles is encouraged. While there is no preferred design style, new designs should consider the existing context.
- B.** On corner lots, the sides of buildings should be planned so both façades enhance the street and are oriented to the pedestrian. A street facade should never look like a building “side” or “back.”
- C.** Buildings should be designed in three dimensions so all facades, including any courtyard elevations, are thoughtfully designed from the “outside-in” as well as the “inside out”.
- D.** Where buildings are adjacent to an alley, building elevation should be well designed, recognizing that this side of the building will be in public view. Alley elevations should not be treated as a building rear or blank façade.
- E.** Detailed façade elements enable a building to provide a human scale. However, exaggeration of detail or use of generic, applied or foam details can create a cartoon-like appearance that is not consistent with quality design. Foam details should not be used.
- F.** Entrances and windows, not garages, should be the dominant elements of the front façades. Window and door placement, size, material and style should help define a building's architectural style. Careful attention should be given to the exterior as well as interior pattern of windows.

- G.** Balconies are most attractive and useful when integrated into the architecture of the building. Balcony railings should be well designed and crafted, and consideration should be given to screen items stored on the balcony from view.
- H.** Stairways, fences, and other accessory elements should be well integrated with the architecture of the building. These elements can also serve to enliven the building design and should be of quality materials.
- I.** Fences in particular should respond to the fabric of the neighborhood and have a high level of transparency when visible from the street.
- J. Entryways**



**Landscaping highlighting ground floor entries**

1. All pedestrian and vehicular entries should be incorporated into the overall building design, well defined, and designed for maximum pedestrian orientation and street presence. Ground floor units should have direct access from defined entries facing streets or courtyards.
2. Entries should be well defined. For example, stoops, and porches can be used to provide a transition from public/outdoor space at the unit entry. All architectural strategies and elements should reinforce the overall architectural design.



**Well-defined entries give residents a sense of home**

3. When the living room of a unit faces the street, the unit's primary entry should be from the street, to provide eyes on the street and activate the street frontage.
4. For units that face the street, entries and living spaces, such as living rooms and dining rooms, should be oriented toward the street. Where units are configured around a common open space, entries and living space should be oriented toward common open space.
5. Face building entrances and openings toward the front property line.
6. Recess or otherwise articulate building entries for visual interest and to provide a sense of arrival to the structure.
7. Entries should not be over scaled. Two-story entries are discouraged. Entries should be properly scaled and integrated into the overall architecture of the structure.

**K. Windows and Doors**

1. Design windows and doors to coordinate with the architectural design of the building. Window and door type, material, shape, and proportion should complement the architectural design.
2. Details of windows and doors should reflect the overall design idea of the building, be well crafted, and constructed of high-quality materials.



**Window and door type, material, shape and proportion should complement architectural design**

3. If a window contains divided lights (multiple panes), three dimensional grids, as viewed from the exterior, are required. Maximize daylighting and views through window placement and design.
4. Use of "security bars" is discouraged, especially along the street front.
5. Window articulation, such as sills, trim, kickers, shutters, or awnings, should be employed where appropriate to the architectural style to improve the facade of the building.



**Details of windows and doors should reflect the overall design idea of the building.**



6. To enhance privacy, windows on side elevations of adjacent homes should be staggered whenever possible. Windows should not be positioned directly opposite of windows in an adjacent structure.
7. To prevent wall surfaces from being monotonously flat and where appropriate to the architectural style, windows should be inset from building walls to create shade and shadow detail. Windows and doors typically should be recessed 1.5 to 2 inches from the face of the finished exterior wall. However, in some contemporary design, a window or storefront designed to be flush with the exterior finish is appropriate.
8. EPA “Energy Star” labeled windows with low-e coatings are encouraged.

#### **L. Finish Materials**

1. Reinforce overall building design with high quality design and detailing.



**Building design is reinforced with color, material and detail**

2. All façades of a building should employ a palette of materials that work well together and complement the overall building design.
3. All materials should be durable and of high quality. Materials that are short-lived or insubstantial should be avoided (for example, unfinished wood for exterior use.)
4. Stucco should have a smooth finish, such as a smooth trowel or fine sand float finish. Textured, lace or rough sand finishes are not acceptable.
5. Painted surfaces should use colors that reinforce the architecture of the building and are well-integrated with natural materials used in the overall project.
6. Use of indigenous material, such as native rock or stone is encouraged.
7. Include a variety of materials on building facades to enhance the overall design, creating visual interest.



**Building design is reinforced with color, material and detail**

8. Use high quality materials, especially facing the street.
9. “Wrap” finish materials around exterior corners (to be terminated at an inside corner) to alleviate the appearance of a “wall paper” application.
10. Design compatibility can be aided by selecting finish materials with similar textures, color and proportions as depicted on adjacent structures.
11. Materials should be utilized that reduce the transfer of heat into and/or out of the building.
12. Recycled content materials, such as wood substitutes, recycled concrete and asphalt, as well as non-toxic materials, should be used whenever possible.

**M. Wall Thickness**

1. Expression of wall thickness can be achieved by providing recessed windows and entries to exaggerate wall thickness.

**N. Color**



**Building design is reinforced with color, material and detail**

1. Use colors complementary with adjacent structures and natural environment (earth tones are encouraged).
2. Use of the following colors/materials is discouraged:
  - a) Highly reflective materials and colors, especially those that produce glare
  - b) Large expanses of dark colored surfaces
  - c) Bright or garish colors



Building design is reinforced with color, material and detail

**O. Paving Materials**

1. Use of decorative paving treatments is encouraged at building entrances, walkways and at automobile and pedestrian contact zones.
2. Provide permeable paving wherever possible.
3. Keep paving patterns simple and relate to the overall architectural design of the building.
4. Appropriate paving materials include masonry block pavers, brick, stone, granite, and concrete.
5. Textured concrete finishes and/or integrally colored surfaces may be enhanced by scoring or accented with contrasting paving materials.
6. Relate colors to the color scheme of the building.
7. Use of soft paving materials (i.e., Grass Crete) is encouraged when appropriate to the site.
8. Concrete bands may be used to define the edge as a transitional tool between differing materials.

**P. Equipment/ Trash Location and Enclosure**

1. Any equipment, whether on the side of a structure or on the ground, should be screened. Screening should be architecturally consistent in terms of materials, color, shape, and size.
2. Trash should be in an accessible location yet out of view.
3. Rain gutters, downspouts, vents, and other roof protrusions should be appropriately placed and to complement the adjacent materials and/or colors.
4. The design of ancillary structures (guesthouses, cabanas, barns, storage sheds, etc.) should be architecturally consistent with the main structure through the use of wall and roof forms, materials, architectural detailing, fence or wall connections, and landscaping.
5. New electrical, telephone, cable television, and other distribution lines and mechanical equipment should be placed underground.
6. Utility connections located above ground should not interfere with or adversely impact access, visibility, appearance, or the character of the structures near which the connections are located. Utility connections and mechanical equipment should be screened with landscaping.

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