

Community Design Guidelines



City of San Luis Obispo
Community Design Guidelines

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Community-wide design issues in San Luis Obispo were initially the responsibility of the Design Review Board, which was established in the late 1960s. In 1973, the City of San Luis Obispo established an Architectural Review Commission (Ordinance No. 600), which superseded the Design Review Board. Since that time, the Commission, commonly referred to as the ARC, has had the charge of reviewing most new development projects in the community.

The ARC has a set of guidelines that it utilizes in the review of new projects. The current “*Community Design Guidelines*” were adopted by the City Council on November 19, 2002 through Resolution No. 9391 (2002 Series). Prior to that, the City’s architectural guidelines consisted of a small booklet entitled “*An Applicant’s Guide to the Design Review Process*”, which had been last comprehensively updated in 1982.

Various amendments, as outlined below, have occurred to reflect changes in other regulations that affect design review and to update and augment the guidelines. This material is current as of the date of the latest amendments listed below. Additional amendments may have been adopted since this date which are not yet included. City planning staff can advise you of the most recent amendments, if any, as well as corrections made to the text.

AMENDMENTS

May 5, 2003 - the ARC adopted the Hillside Development section (Section 7.2) as an addition to Chapter 7.

October 5, 2004 – the City Council amended Section 1.2 of the guidelines to clarify architectural review requirements for small residential development projects, implementing a Housing Element program.

March 19, 2007 – the ARC adopted changes to Section 6.1E. regarding trash and recycling enclosures and Section 6.1G. regarding the screening of backflow prevention devices. The Commission also adopted new Solid Waste Standards that are included as Appendix B to the guidelines and minor updates to Section 6.3F. related to bicycle parking.

November 6, 2007 – the City Council adopted a change to Section 1.3B noting that “should” language is intended to be followed unless there are specific extenuating circumstances. They also adopted changes to Chapter 4, Downtown Design, related to updates to the zoning regulations allowing taller buildings in the downtown.

June 21, 2010- the ARC adopted changes to Section 6.1C regarding lighting and Section 6.2 regarding landscaping.

Chapter 1 - Introduction and Applicability

San Luis Obispo is a vital community located in a beautiful and unique physical setting. It is also a place where citizens care about the quality of architecture and urban design, and participate in the design review process.

1.1 - Purpose of the Design Guidelines

The design guidelines provided here are intended to describe, and inform project designers and applicants of the City's expectations and preferences for the quality and character of new development. All development projects should be designed in a manner that responds to the unique characteristics of their individual sites, but also to fit into the wider context of San Luis Obispo.

These guidelines have been prepared because San Luis Obispo has become a city with a physical character and identity that are distinct, attractive, and widely appreciated by residents and visitors. At the same time, changes in the nature of business, marketing, and the California economy have created pressures for types and styles of development that have made many other communities lose their distinctiveness and look and feel like everywhere else, and nowhere in particular. San Luis Obispo instead intends to maintain and enhance its character as a compact community with distinctive, attractive, pedestrian-oriented commercial areas and neighborhoods.

In addition to assisting project designers and developers, these guidelines are considered by the Architectural Review Commission (ARC) in the Design Review process. The ARC uses the guidelines as a basis for evaluating the suitability and appropriateness of individual project design, to help achieve attractive and environmentally sensitive development. A project that is consistent with the guidelines is likely to be well-received and move more quickly through the design review process. These guidelines cannot provide information on every potential situation or detail that may arise on a project. They do identify general concepts considered in the review of projects and provide more specific information on aspects of project design such as site planning, building design, parking, landscaping and signs.

This document is intended to be modified and refined over time through the inclusion of guidelines covering additional topics and specific areas of the City, and through revisions to the guidelines provided here, as experience is gained with their implementation.

1.2 - Applicability of the Design Review Process

Design review is one of several procedures used by the City to guide development in the interests of public health, safety and general welfare. Design review was established by City ordinance to be separate from, and in addition to, other approvals that might be required for a project (such as obtaining a use permit or building permit, or a property rezoning).

Design review considers building design, site planning, landscaping, parking layout, signs, and other features that affect project appearance and function. In examining these project features, the design review process looks at the way a project relates to the site, the surrounding neighborhood, and the community as a whole. Design review is intended to help achieve a project that strikes a balance between the sometimes competing interests of the applicant and the City.

A Note on Innovation

These guidelines frequently speak of the need to consider the architectural context of the site (the style, character, and form of existing buildings around the site) when designing a new building or remodeling an existing building. This emphasis is intended to acknowledge the importance of maintaining the character of particularly attractive areas within the community that are widely appreciated and visually successful. However, the City has no intention of discouraging architectural innovation and creativity, or requiring that all new development look the same. The City encourages excellence, creativity, and innovation in architectural design. Variety in architectural style is particularly appropriate for civic, quasi-public, and institutional buildings on larger sites outside of the downtown, but the City will consider buildings that present high quality alternatives to these guidelines in other locations as well.

When is Design Review Required?

Design review is required for all new and remodeled multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial development projects. Single family homes are required to have design review in the specific instances listed below.

Some changes to existing buildings and site development are considered “aesthetically insignificant” and can be reviewed by a planner at the counter. Other minor projects can be handled by a streamlined application process known as minor or incidental review.

- A. Single family homes.** Plans for a single family home need design review when:
1. Required for a parcel as a condition of approval of a subdivision, use permit, or other discretionary entitlement;
 2. A single applicant proposes to build three or more home in the same area;
 3. The location is a "sensitive site" (see subsection D. below);
 4. The scale or character of the proposed dwelling contrasts significantly with adjacent or neighboring structures; and
 5. A required covered parking space is converted to another use and replacement parking is proposed.
- B. Small Residential Development Projects.** The construction, rehabilitation, or remodeling of less than five dwellings is exempt from design review, provided that the gross floor area of individual dwellings does not exceed 1,200 square feet. The Community Development director may require minor or incidental architectural review where necessary to achieve the intent of these guidelines.
- C. Aesthetically insignificant projects.** The Community Development Director may determine that a new small structure, or a change or addition to an existing building or other site feature, will not conflict with the objectives of design review due to its size, location, form, materials, or colors. In these cases, a separate design review application and fee are not required. This determination will be noted in the building permit file, if one exists, or in the site address file.
- D. Minor or incidental projects.** The Community Development Director may determine that a project, such as a sign, building addition or remodel, is minor or incidental to a larger, previously approved

project. Plans for projects which an applicant believes are minor or incidental are submitted for staff review, along with a design review application and fee. The Director will decide within about 10 days if the project is required to be reviewed by the Architectural Review Commission (ARC). The Director's action may be appealed to the ARC.

- E. Sensitive sites.** The Community Development Director, Planning Commission or City Council may require design review on certain "sensitive sites". A project site is considered sensitive when:
1. It has been designated through an "S", Special Consideration, overlay zone, use permit, or a condition of a tentative parcel or subdivision map as a site with special development concerns;
 2. It is located adjacent to Laguna Lake, a creek, or a designated sensitive hillside;
 3. It is a property included on the City's Inventory of Historic Resources, or is near a historic resource where the development might adversely impact the historic resource; or

The Director may ask the developer of a sensitive site to use a multi-disciplinary design team, including architects, engineers and landscape architects, to ensure appropriate site development.

- F. Demolitions and moved buildings.** A request to demolish a structure that is listed on the Inventory of Historical Resources may require review by the ARC. The ARC also reviews permits to move structures from one site to another within the City. See Appendix A to these guidelines.

- G. Other projects subject to ARC review.** Sometimes a development project (for example, a subdivision) may need several different approvals by both the ARC and Planning Commission. The Director may refer certain projects to the ARC prior to Planning Commission review, to address basic site planning issues early in the process, and minimize conflicts in project purview between review authorities.

The City's zoning regulations enable the ARC to approve use permits for minor site development exceptions. This streamlines the planning process by reducing application fees and the number of hearings required for a project. The ARC also reviews City projects, including municipal parks and public spaces, streetscape enhancements, and street furniture.

Roles and Responsibilities

The parties that play a role, and have responsibilities in the design review process include property and business owners, design professionals and the Architectural Review Commission. Property and business owners initiate the design review process when they propose development as applicants for design review approval; they work with design professionals to design their projects and with the ARC to refine their projects.

The City expects project applicants and their design professionals (architects, landscape architects, engineers, planners, and others) to design quality projects consistent with these design guidelines and City regulations. Such projects will respond appropriately to the characteristics of the site, its surroundings, and the City as a whole, and be a positive addition to the community.

The Architectural Review Commission is a panel of citizens appointed by the City Council to review, approve and, where appropriate, work with applicants to refine the site planning and building design of proposed development projects. The ARC has four responsibilities:

- Review proposed development for compliance with these design guidelines, applicable City regulations, the General Plan and, where appropriate, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA);
- Update the design guidelines, when necessary;
- During regular meetings, advise developers, designers and the City on how to apply the guidelines; and
- Develop design guidelines for specific areas within the city, and specific design issues.

An Applicant's Guide to the Design Review Process

The following is the procedure for architectural review by the Architectural Review Commission (ARC). Architectural review approval is required before the City will accept an application for construction permits.

- 1. Conference with a planner.** Before the preparation of detailed plans, a project applicant should discuss their ideas for the project with a planner in the City's Community Development Department, so that potential problems and issues can be identified as early as possible, and addressed in project design. An appointment for a pre-application conference can be scheduled at any time during business hours.
- 2. Application/plans.** Architectural review begins when the City's application form is completed and submitted to the Community Development Department together with project plans and the required application fee, and any other information required by the City's *Architectural Review Application Checklist*. Twelve copies of the project plans must be submitted, and each copy must be folded to a size of nine by 15 inches or smaller, to fit into a legal size folder.

Staff will review the application materials for completeness, and contact the applicant if additional information is needed. An incomplete application package will delay its processing.

- 3. Architectural review options.** While an architectural review application will not be considered complete until all items listed by the City's *Architectural Review Application Checklist* are provided, an applicant may request a preliminary review by the ARC by paying the required application fee and submitting the information identified by staff in an optional pre-application conference as appropriate for preliminary review.

During preliminary review, the ARC can offer comments on site planning and overall building form, allowing the applicant to respond to basic concerns before investing in detailed plans. Preliminary review may occur before an environmental determination is made, but approval can be given only after final project plans are submitted and an environmental determination is made.

- 4. Time required for architectural review.** The ARC will consider submitted plans at the first possible regular meeting after the application package is determined to be complete. The ARC usually reviews new project about four to six weeks after application filing, but the actual schedule may vary, because staff needs time to review the plans, contact other affected agencies, complete an environmental review when required, and prepare a staff report before the ARC meeting.
- 5. At the ARC meeting.** All ARC meetings are open to the public. The City's schedule for ARC meetings can be obtained from the Community Development Department or found on the City's website. All project designers and applicants should attend the ARC meeting when their project

will be reviewed, to discuss the project with the Commissioners. A staff report from the Community Development Department with recommendations to the ARC about the project will be sent to the applicant before the meeting; copies are also available

at the Community Development Department public counter the Friday afternoon before the meeting

After discussing the project with the designer at the meeting, the ARC will either:

- a. Approve the project as submitted or with conditions;
- b. Deny the project, based on inconsistency with the General Plan, other City goals and policies, environmental standards, and/or these guidelines; or
- c. Continue consideration of the project to a future ARC meeting.

If the ARC approves or denies the project, the decision and any other requirements are recorded in the minutes of the meeting, and a letter is mailed to the applicant explaining the decision and any conditions of approval.

If the ARC continues a project it is usually done with the applicant's consent, when the designer wants to revise or restudy the plans in light of ARC comments, or because the designer is unavailable to discuss the plans with the ARC at the scheduled meeting. If an applicant doesn't want a continuance, they may ask the ARC to approve or deny the project. If the applicant asks for, or agrees to, a continuance to avoid a denial, revised plans should be submitted as soon as possible.

ARC denial of a project is rare, and typically happens only when a project does not comply with City requirements and guidelines, and the ARC and applicant cannot agree on project changes. An applicant may pursue a project in a form that was denied by the ARC through an appeal to the City Council. An applicant or any other person may appeal an ARC decision on a project by filing a written appeal with the City Clerk within 10 calendar days of the ARC action. Appeals should be based on inconsistencies between the ARC action and the procedures and criteria in these design guidelines. The Council will hold a public hearing, and take action on an appeal within 45 days after it is filed.

- 6. After ARC approval.** Before completing working drawings and obtaining construction permits, it is necessary to have any other required planning approvals. These may include a tentative map, use permit, or variance. ARC approval alone does not usually entitle an applicant to build anything or do any preliminary work. A planner will review the working drawings prepared as part of an application for a construction permit to ensure that ARC requirements are followed.

It is not necessary for a project to go back to the ARC unless the Community Development Director finds during "plan check" that the working drawings do not comply with the ARC-approved plans or conditions. Any plan revisions made after a construction permit is issued may also require staff or ARC approval.

- 7. Approval is for one year.** ARC approval automatically expires after one year if construction has not started, unless the ARC designates a different time period. An applicant may file a written request for a one-year extension from the Community Development Director, but in no case may the approval be extended beyond two years from the original approval date. If an

applicant wants another extension after two years, a new application package and fee must be submitted.

1.3 - Use of the Design Guidelines by the Architectural Review Commission

These design guidelines will be used by the Architectural Review Commission in the review of projects (additions, remodeling, relocation, or new construction) that require design review in compliance with Section 1.2 above.

- A. The design elements of each project (including site design, architecture, landscaping, signs, and parking design) will be reviewed on a comprehensive basis. The City's other design standards dealing with signs, landscaping, and parking shall also be addressed whenever applicable.
- B. The ARC may interpret these design guidelines with some flexibility in their application to specific projects, as not all design criteria may be workable or appropriate for each project. Guidelines that contain "should" language will be followed unless not doing so will result in better implementation of other guidelines or General Plan policies. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of the design guidelines are followed.
- C. The graphics included in these guidelines are intended to be illustrative, but not prescriptive.

1.4 - Goals for Design Quality and Character

San Luis Obispo has repeatedly received national recognition as a desirable place to live. With a beautiful landscape, relatively uncrowded streets and highways, clean air, a growing business economy, and a unique, and well-maintained built environment, the quality of life in San Luis Obispo is high. How the built environment appears in relation to the surrounding landscape, and the quality of the architecture and site design within the city, are key to continuing and advancing the high quality of life. This section describes several means to achieve the long-term economic and environmental health of the community.

The primary goals of the City’s design review process are to:

- Maintain the community’s quality of life for residents;
- Maintain property values;
- Attract growth in the local economy; and
- Preserve the City’s natural beauty and visual character.

The following general objectives expand on the above goals, to assist designers and developers in understanding the City's expectations for design quality. All development should be designed to accomplish the following.

A. Keep San Luis Obispo architecturally distinctive, don’t let it become “anywhere USA.”

1. Maintain high quality craftsmanship in development through use of authentic building styles, design elements, and materials.
2. Integrate local cultural and historical themes into building and site design where appropriate.
3. The quality of development at city gateways and along key corridors is critical to the city's overall image for residents and visitors.
4. Design with consideration of the site context in terms of the best nearby examples of massing, scale, and land uses when the site is located in a notable area of the city (for example, the Downtown, Old Town).
5. Protect the scale and character of historic neighborhoods.
6. Require design excellence for infill and redevelopment sites, especially in the downtown area.
7. Minimize the use of “stock” plans and designs in corporate and franchise architecture.

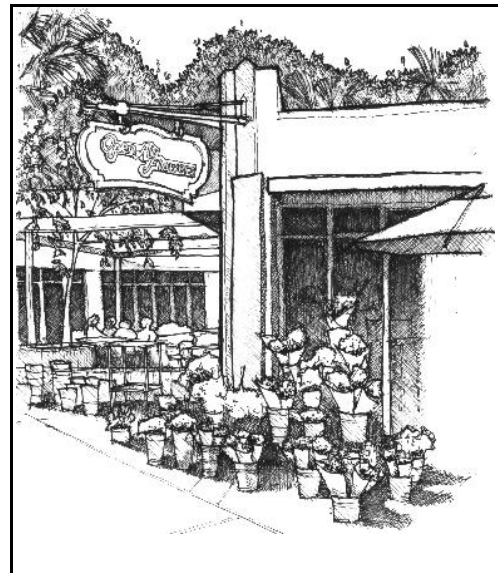


Figure 1-1 – Downtown – Higuera Street

8. Encourage traditional neighborhood form and street patterns (for example, interconnected streets more than cul-de-sacs, streets with tree planting strips between curb and sidewalk) to provide pedestrian scale and safety.
9. Integrate public squares and art into proposed development, designed to reflect local cultural and historical themes.

B. Design to create and maintain pedestrian scale wherever appropriate.

1. Emphasize pedestrian oriented buildings and site planning (for example, commercial storefronts at the back of the sidewalk, pedestrian plazas, and front porches on dwellings).
2. Incorporate design elements that respond to environmental conditions such as wind, sun, shade, etc. to protect and shelter pedestrians, and that will provide an enjoyable pedestrian experience.
3. Building height should be appropriate to street width in commercial areas. Minimize parking between buildings and the street.
4. Plan building sites to accommodate alternate modes of transportation (bicycles, transit where available).

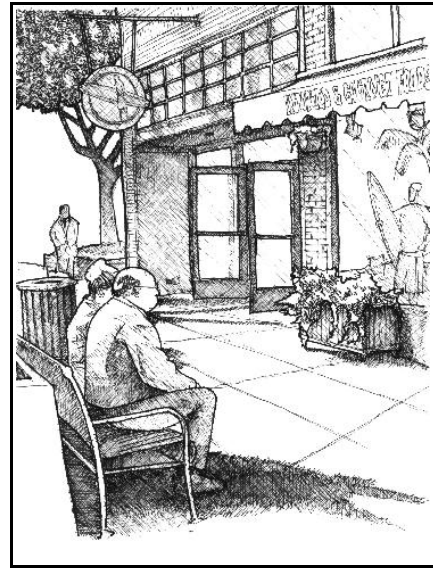


Figure 1-2 – Downtown – Monterey Street

C. Protect natural resources and integrate the natural environment into building and site planning, where appropriate.

1. Site planning and building design should assist in reducing the need for vehicle trips by implementing "park once" principles (for example, pedestrian connections between parking areas on adjacent parcels), thereby reducing air quality impacts.
2. Maintain views of hillsides surrounding the city.
3. Maintain the health of the city's creeks through sensitive structure design and site planning near them.
4. Site planning should protect creek resources while providing visual access, and provide pedestrian access along bank tops where consistent with resource protection.
5. Continue urban forest and streetscape landscaping; protect significant existing trees.
6. Control outdoor lighting to provide necessary security, but not spill onto adjacent properties or impair the view of the night sky.

1.5 - The Community Design Context

The City's preferences and expectations for design quality and character are shaped by the nature of this place. Consideration of site "context" in the design and development process is vital in achieving and maintaining the physical environment the community wants.

The San Luis Obispo Landscape

Located on the Central Coast midway between the Bay Area and Southern California, San Luis Obispo is part of a beautiful, dramatic landscape. Hillsides, coastal mountains, and valleys with long views of fertile fields surround the city. The city is at least 10 miles away from any other town, which adds to the identity of San Luis Obispo as separate and distinct from other places.

San Luis Obispo is nestled in a valley between the coastal ridge of the Santa Lucia Mountains to the east, the Irish Hills to the west, Edna Valley to the south, and a volcanic chain of peaks or morros, and Los Osos and Chorro Valleys to the north. Highway 101 extends southwest to northeast through town, adjacent to Cerro San Luis. The surrounding valleys and hillsides (outside of the City) are generally used for agriculture and cattle grazing. Many of these areas are also protected as public or private open space. Development on hillsides within the city is generally restricted to elevations below 300 feet and to slopes of 20 percent or less. The continuous open space and agricultural land around San Luis Obispo enhances residents' sense of connection with the surrounding landscape.

Several tributary streams meander through town, and eventually connect to San Luis Creek, which ultimately flows to San Luis Bay. The streams and creek offer opportunities for residents to observe nature close up, including aquatic life and riparian habitats. The city's inland location and the surrounding ridges help create a nearly ideal climate by protecting the city from significant coastal fog or wind, or excessive heat.

Community History

San Luis Obispo began with the Spanish settlement and establishment of Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, by Father Junipero Serra in 1772. The mission attracted population growth and land development. The City was incorporated in 1856. The north-south railroad connection by the Southern Pacific through the Cuesta Ridge was completed in 1874, with significant labor provided by the Chinese population under the direction of Ah Louis. This was an era of extensive economic development and community growth, with the railroad being the largest employer in the City at this time. California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) was founded in 1901, which also attracted new residents to the community. Camp San Luis Obispo was a significant factor in community growth during and following the World Wars. Continuous population growth has since occurred, filling in most of the easily developable land within the City at the base of the surrounding hillsides.

City Form

The overall form of San Luis Obispo has been largely determined by its location at the junction of the Chorro, Los Osos, and Edna Valleys, and the surrounding steep hillsides. The city branches out from its downtown core, with development extending along the major transportation corridors and wrapping around the bases and lower slopes of the hills. Although San Luis Obispo has areas with gridiron street layouts, the branch-like form of the town has prevented a single, uniform grid from being extended throughout the community. Local neighborhood street patterns are generally determined by the major road corridors that border them. The major northwest-to-southeast corridors include Santa Rosa Street, Broad Street, Los Osos Valley Road, and Johnson Avenue. Major northeast-to-southwest corridors include Madonna Road, Higuera and South Higuera

Streets. Predominately east-west corridors include Foothill Boulevard, Orcutt Road, Tank Farm Road, and South Street.

The San Luis Obispo Downtown has a cohesive identity and supports a variety of specialty retail, office, tourist-serving and residential land uses. Clusters of commercial development also occur in other districts or nodes in the city, and along major road corridors. Residential neighborhoods surround many of the commercial districts or corridors.

Commercial and Industrial Areas

- Foothill area
- Santa Rosa corridor
- Downtown
- Monterey Street corridor
- Mid Higuera corridor
- Broad Street corridor
- Tank Farm/Airport area
- Madonna/Promenade area
- South Higuera corridor
- Auto Mall
- Laguna Lake area
- Orcutt Road/Laurel Lane area
- Industrial Way/Capitolio Way area

Significant Residential Neighborhoods

- Ferrini/Bishop's Peak area
- Chorro Street area
- Cal Poly area
- Historic/Railroad area
- Old Town area
- Johnson Avenue area
- Edna-Islay area
- Laguna Lake area
- South Higuera area
- Sinsheimer area

San Luis Obispo Architecture

The architectural styles found in San Luis Obispo reflect the variety of influences from particular periods of growth over the last 200 years. Thus, no single style characterizes local residential or commercial architecture. Although it is not the intent of the design guidelines to require any particular architectural style in new construction, it is important that the design of proposed development consider the site surroundings, so that, where appropriate, the project will be compatible with and "fit" into an area with a clearly defined character that is valued by the community. Therefore, an understanding of the architectural styles found locally can be helpful in considering design alternatives.

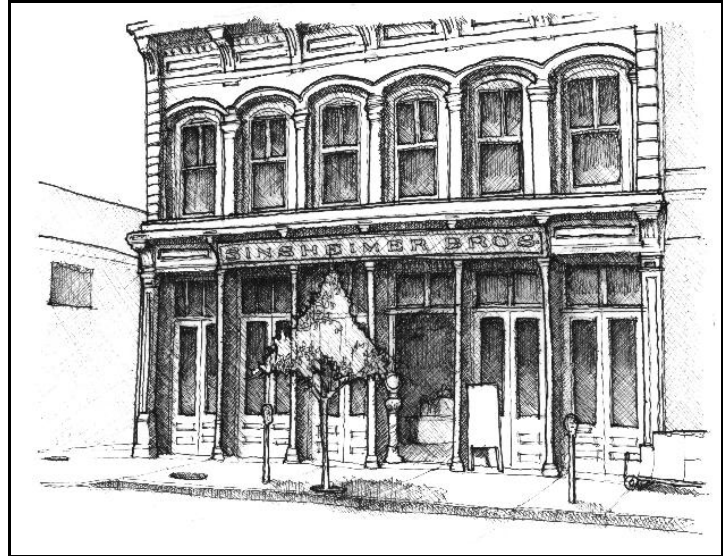


Figure 1-3 – Downtown – Sinsheimer Building

Older residential neighborhoods include railroad vernacular; Spanish colonial revival and Spanish eclectic; Victorian; craftsman; mission revival; Mediterranean; Tudor revival and others. During the 1950s and 60s and into the present time, many areas were developed with contemporary and/or ranch-style homes. Residential development during the last 20 to 30 years has been of styles common in California communities, incorporating neo-Mediterranean, neo-Spanish, and other eclectic modern and contemporary styles.

Commercial buildings in the Downtown include traditional and historic architectural design themes, as well as contemporary styles. Outside of the Downtown, most commercial buildings are of contemporary design, with Spanish or other Mediterranean influences. A few commercial and manufacturing land uses incorporate railroad vernacular architectural themes.

Regarding urban form, the density and linkages between districts and neighborhoods is, in general, fairly compact. In the Downtown, the presence of several structures that are two or three stories, organized on a grid street pattern, and the arrangement of public open spaces and landscaping elements supports the Downtown area's cohesiveness in urban design. The City has also been conscientious in preserving views and access to distinctive open space features including creekways and hillsides, by incorporating access to creeks into individual site designs and area plans, and by maintaining view corridors to open views and hillsides. Thus, the scale of structures and overall size of the community helps maintain the character of a "small town," with many visual and physical connections to the surrounding natural landscape.

Chapter 2 - General Design Principles

The following general principles should be considered in the design of all development. Certain guidelines may only apply to non-residential projects, and/or apply depending on whether a proposed project includes specific features.

2.1 - Site Design

- A. **Fit the site.** Each project should be designed with careful consideration of site character and constraints, and minimize changes to natural features, rather than altering a site to accommodate a stock building plan. Existing topography should be preserved where possible and excessive cuts or fills should be avoided.
- B. **Consider the context.** Review existing development near the site and consider how the project can be designed to fit in with the best examples of appropriate site design and architecture in the vicinity of the site.
- C. **Site function.** The various activities and elements proposed on a site should be logically located so the project will operate efficiently, and effectively address the needs of all users.
- D. **Provide pleasing transitions.** Attention should be given to the transition between the street and the project through definition of the building entry, walkways and landscaping.
- E. **Coordinate site elements with buildings.** The design and placement of fences, retaining walls, gates, arbors, footbridges and other site features should relate to building architecture and site topography. The Architectural Review Commission is especially concerned that these elements be of the same quality, in design and materials, as the buildings.

2.2 - Building Design

- A. **Keep building elements in proportion.** Proportion, continuity, harmony, simplicity, rhythm and balance should prevail in building design. Building elements should be balanced and in proportion to one another. See Figure 2-1.
- B. **Strive for interest, not clutter.** The City encourages well-articulated, but not cluttered building elevations. Large roof and wall planes unrelieved by shadow or texture interest are generally not acceptable. However, too many elevation details can overwhelm, and appear awkward, gaudy, and/or chaotic.

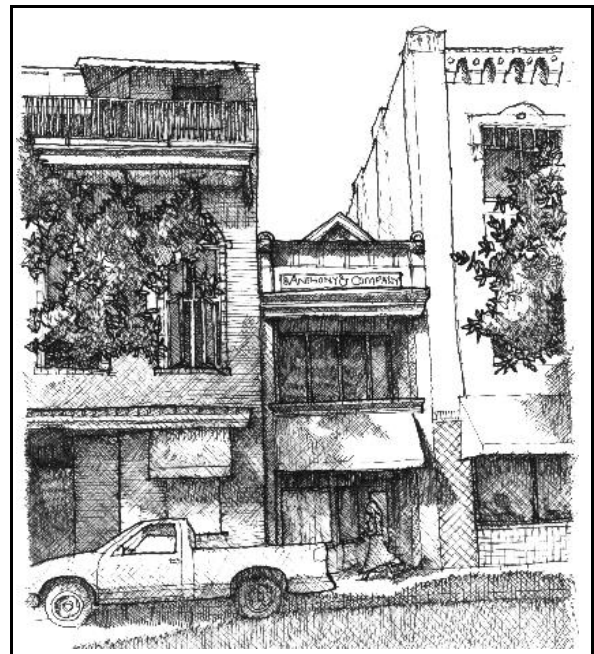


Figure 2-1 – Building elements in proportion

- C. **Pay attention to details.** Attention to detailing, and emphasis on vertical and horizontal articulation, are encouraged as tools to visually reduce the apparent mass of a building.
- D. **Select materials carefully.** Exterior treatment should be restrained, not harsh or garish, and should be selected for durability, weathering characteristics, and authenticity, as well as for beauty.
- E. **Think about maintenance.** Ease of maintenance should be considered in selecting forms, fixtures, materials and finishes.
- F. **Coordinate the new with the old.** When new construction is proposed on a site with existing structures that are to be retained, the new work should be designed to coordinate with old structures that have architectural and/or historic value.

Chapter 3 - Commercial and Industrial Project Design

The commercial areas outside of the Downtown, and the City’s manufacturing/industrial areas present special urban design challenges. The present character of these areas reflects both the architectural styles of non-residential, automobile-oriented development that were predominant when most of the structures in each area were built, and various modernization and renovation efforts thereafter. This Chapter provides guidelines for new and renovated commercial and industrial structures outside of the Downtown.

3.1 - Commercial Project Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines apply to all commercial projects. See also the General Design Principles in Chapter 2, Section 3.2 for guidelines that apply to large-scale retail projects, Chapter 6 for guidelines on site planning and other design details (for example, vehicle and bicycle parking, signs), and the Airport Area Specific Plan for design guidelines addressing that particular part of the community.

A. Overall design objectives for commercial projects. The design of each project should work toward achieving the following objectives.

1. Consider San Luis Obispo’s small town scale and demonstrate sensitivity to the design context of the surrounding area.
2. Avoid “boxy” structures with large, flat wall planes by articulating building forms and elevations to create interesting rooflines, building shapes, and patterns of shade and shadow. See Figure 3-1.
3. Preserve the design integrity of architecturally or historically significant structures and neighborhoods adjacent to the commercial area.
4. Provide landscaping as a project amenity, and to help screen parking, equipment and storage areas.
5. Provide logical and safe access to the site, and design parking and internal circulation areas to avoid awkward or cramped turning movements. In general, on-site access driveways should be located away from street intersections to minimize conflicts with turning movements from traffic on adjacent streets.
6. Consider the need for signs and their appropriate scale and locations early in the design process, so that they are not an afterthought.
7. Locate outdoor equipment, trash receptacles, storage, and loading areas in the least conspicuous part of the site.

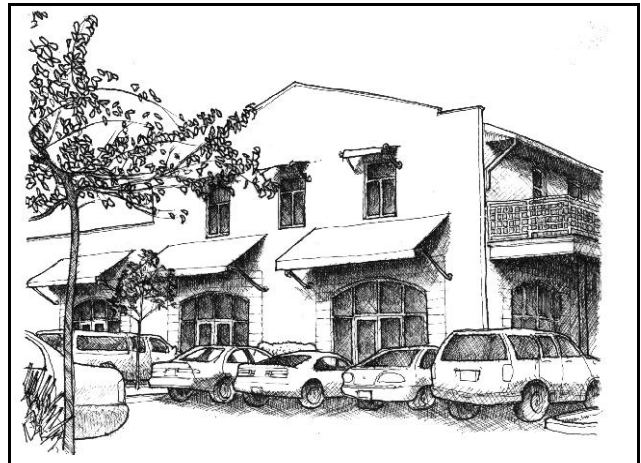


Figure 3-1 – Articulate building forms

B. General architectural design guidelines.

1. **Architectural style.** No particular architectural style or design theme is required in the City nor can San Luis Obispo be defined by any particular architectural style. A wide range of architectural characteristics adds to the City’s overall image. While variety in design is generally encouraged, the compatibility of new projects with the existing built environment should be a priority. The goal is to preserve not only the historic flavor of the community but, equally important, its scale and ambience. “Canned” or “trademark” building designs used by franchised businesses in other cities may not be acceptable in San Luis Obispo, as they can collectively have the effect of making the commercial areas of the City look like anywhere in California.

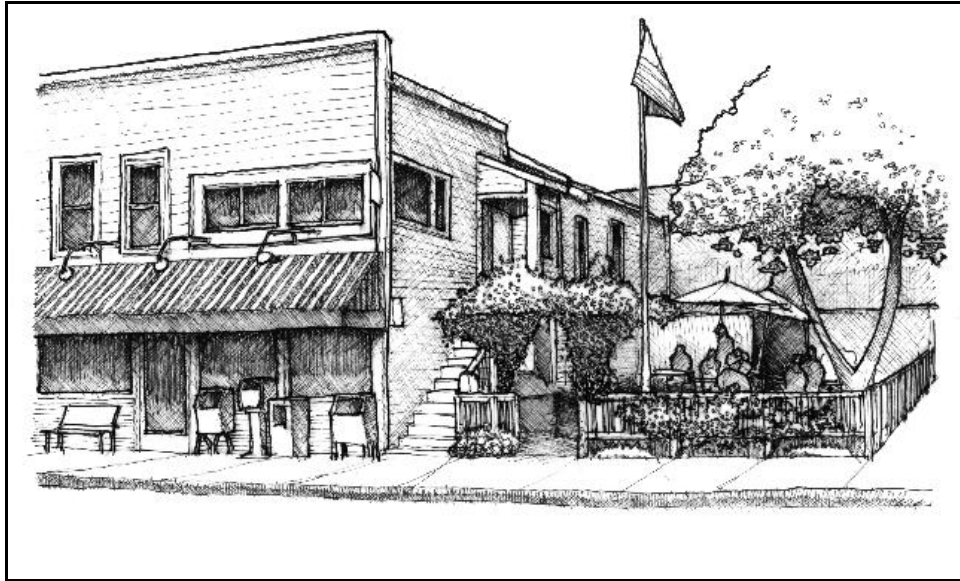


Figure 3-2 – Compatible building massing and articulation is more important than architectural style

2. **Neighborhood compatibility.** In designing a building, it is important to analyze the areas surrounding the building site to find elements of compatibility that can be used in a new design. Simply duplicating the character of surrounding buildings, however, should not be a design goal. It is important for each site to both maintain its own identity and be complementary to its surroundings. Thus, a new building can be unique and interesting and still show respect for and compatibility with the architectural styles and scale of other buildings in its vicinity.

Design factors that contribute to neighborhood compatibility include:

- a. Appropriate design theme;
 - b. Proportional building scale/size;
 - c. Appropriate building setbacks and massing; and
 - d. Appropriate colors, textures, and building materials.
3. **Design consistency.** Designs should demonstrate a consistent use of colors, materials, and detailing throughout all elevations of the building. Elevations which do not directly face a street should not be ignored or receive only minimal architectural treatment. Each building should look like the same building from all sides.



4. **Form and mass.** A building's design should provide a sense of human scale and proportion. Horizontal and vertical wall articulation should be expressed through the use of wall offsets, recessed windows and entries, awnings, full roofs with overhangs, second floor setbacks, or covered arcades. See Figure 3-3.
5. **Rooflines.** Roof design contributes strongly to the image of a structure as having quality and permanence.
 - a. A structure with a pitched roof, or pitched roofs over key building elements can sometimes project a more small town image and reinforce the pedestrian orientation that is prominent in many parts of San Luis Obispo. Structures with flat roofs and parapets can be appropriate with special attention to the wall-to-parapet juncture, and to cornice details.
 - b. Pitched roofs may be gable, hip, or shed-style, but should either be full pitched or should appear so from the street. Any flat portions (i.e., equipment wells) should be relatively small and not visible from streets or other public areas. On larger structures, pitched roofs should be multi-planed to avoid large, monotonous expanses.
 - c. Flat roofs are appropriate for larger commercial structures when it is determined that a project's overall design is amenable to flat roofs and is otherwise consistent with the objectives of these guidelines. When flat roofs are used, there should be a continuous screening parapet topped with coping, or a cornice. Mansards should be used only to the extent that they maintain the same roof pitch as surrounding structures and are both high and deep enough to create the illusion of being a true roof. Steeply-pitched mansard roofs are discouraged.
6. **Equipment screening.** See Section 6.1.D (Mechanical equipment), page 65.

7. **Parapets.** Parapet walls should be treated as an integral part of the building design, with architectural detailing consistent with the rest of the facade, and should not appear as unrelated elements intended only to screen the roof behind them. See Figure 3-4.
8. **Entries.** Building entries should be important and obvious elements in the design of a facade.
- a. Each entry should be protected from the elements and should create an architectural focal point for the building.

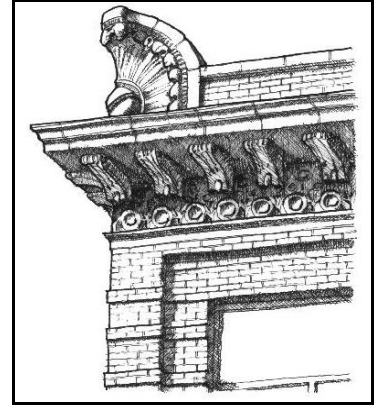


Figure 3-4 – Parapet detail

- b. Wall recesses, roof overhangs, canopies, arches, columns, signs, and similar architectural features should be integral elements of the building's entry design, and used to call attention to its importance.
9. **Additions to existing structures.** The design of a proposed addition should follow the same general scale, proportion, massing, and detailing of the original structure, and not be in stark contrast to the original structure. Incorporating the main characteristics of the existing structure may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing structure to the addition; repetition of bay, window, and entrance spacing and cornice details; roof design and ground-level details; use of the same or complementary colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar architectural details (such as window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration).
10. **Building materials.** Building materials shall be carefully chosen to enhance the consistency of the architectural theme and design.

- a. Materials should be used honestly. Artificial or decorative facade treatments, where one or more unrelated materials appear "stuck-on" to a building (such as artificial columns or posts), should be avoided. While authentic materials such as brick, stone, and wood are preferred, artificial products that effectively imitate real materials may be appropriate in limited situations. If artificial stone-like materials are used, they should look like local natural materials (for example, river rock, serpentine stone, etc.). See Figure 3-5.

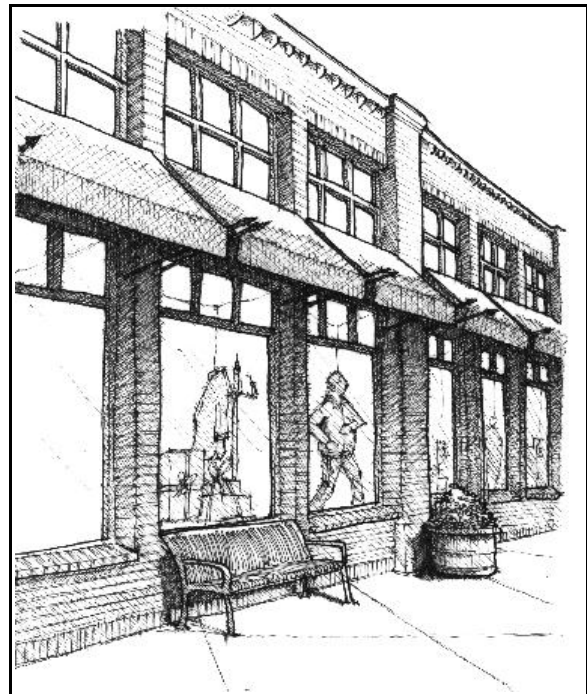


Figure 3-5 – Quality materials, awnings

- b. Exterior finish materials should be chosen and applied so that they do not appear "unnatural" and otherwise artificial, as in the case of "brick" veneer applied to a single building face

so that it is obviously only 3-inch thick when viewed from the side. Veneers should turn corners, avoiding exposed edges.

- c. The use of fabric awnings is encouraged and should follow the guidelines for the Downtown in Section 4.2.D.5, beginning on page 50. See Figure 3-5.
 - d. Downspouts and drain pipes should preferably be placed within building walls. If they must be placed on a building exterior, they shall be integrated with the architectural design, colors, and finish materials of the building.
- 11. Windows.** Existing windows should be maintained, and not "walled-in" or darkened to provide more interior wall or storage space.
- 12. Colors.** The exterior colors of a building are as important as the materials in determining how people think about the building and its surroundings. Colors should be compatible with the existing colors of the surrounding area but need not duplicate existing colors.
- a. The use of muted tones for the structure's base color is recommended. Color should not be used as an attention getting device.
 - b. Accent colors should be used thoughtfully and complement the base color or a variation of its hue, either weaker or stronger.
 - c. The transition between base and accent colors should relate to changes in building materials or the change of building surface planes. Colors should generally not meet or change without some physical change or definition to the surface plane.
- 13. Signs.** Every structure should be designed with specific consideration for adequate signing, including provisions for sign placement, sign scale in relation to building scale, and readability. The colors, placement, and materials of all signs should be integrated with the architecture and facade details of the structure.
- C. Site planning.** Project site planning should comply with the following guidelines.
- 1. Consider neighboring development.** Each development proposal should demonstrate consideration for the existing conditions on and off the site including the following:
 - a. The uses on, and site layout of neighboring properties;
 - b. The architectural style, and the shape and massing of neighboring structures.
 - c. Existing natural features (i.e., mature trees, landforms, etc);
 - d. Opportunities to preserve or enhance views of the hills;
 - e. Privacy and solar access of the site and neighboring properties;
 - f. Opportunities for new projects to provide physical links to adjacent development using sidewalks, and shared access drives and parking, whenever possible; and

- g. Opportunities for new projects to provide visual links to adjacent development in the form of similar landscaping, trees, etc., in addition to contextual architectural design as noted in b. above.
- 2. Building and parking location.** Buildings should generally be oriented parallel to streets and should be placed as close to the street as required setbacks and consistent building placement permit. See Figure 3-6.

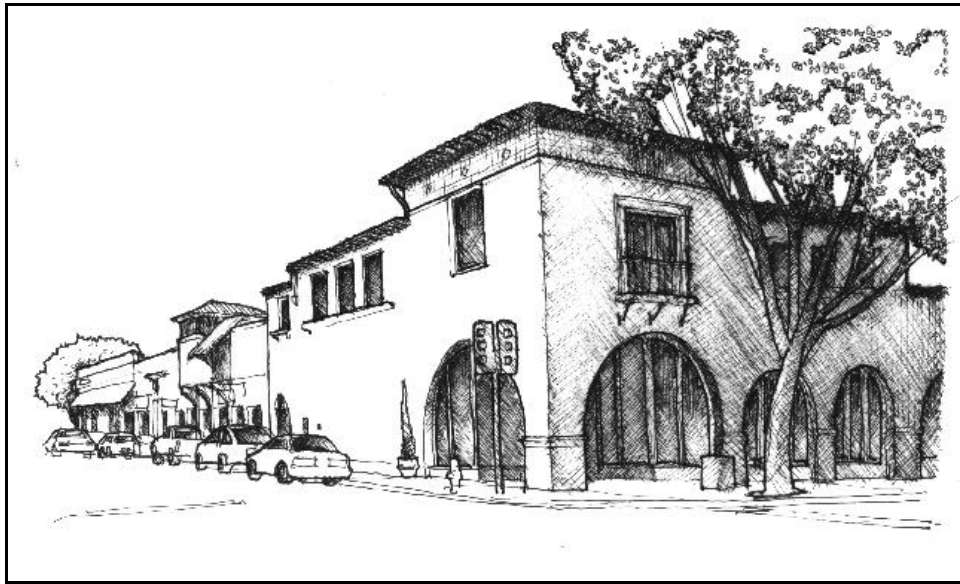


Figure 3-6 – Buildings located at back of sidewalk

- a. Buildings may be angled to create interesting juxtapositions if there is a clear and desirable design goal to be achieved. However, the definition of the street edge is an important role for buildings and should be considered in project design. Variations from this guideline may occur for wider setbacks from the street if a pedestrian oriented use or activity area is proposed (for example, outdoor dining or a rest area) or to maintain continuity with landscaped areas on adjacent properties.
- b. The orientation of buildings should respond to the pedestrian or vehicular nature of the street. Buildings with high pedestrian use should face and be directly accessible from the sidewalk.

Buildings in parts of the City that are more suburban and auto-oriented in character should not face large parking lots located between the building and the street, but should instead face major on-site open space and streetscape elements provided for pedestrian use. In the case of new commercial structures located on major arterials, it may also be appropriate to provide landscaped setbacks between buildings and streets.

- c. The City strongly encourages shared parking arrangements. Parking areas on adjoining parcels should be connected to allow continuous vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access. Pedestrian linkages between parcels should be located separately from vehicle connections where possible and, in all cases, clearly differentiated from vehicle ways.

- d. Scenic views and natural features around the site, and a site's location on a scenic route (see the Circulation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan) should be considered early in project design. For instance, the placement of buildings against the backdrop of the hills should not obscure views by being oversized, extremely tall, or use materials or colors to draw attention away from the natural environment.
- e. Larger commercial projects and shopping centers should be designed to locate a minimum of 30 percent of the total building frontage (including pad buildings) at the front setback line, with direct pedestrian access to the buildings from the sidewalk. Locating buildings near the front of the property, together with substantial landscaping, strengthens the overall streetscape, and helps screen off-street parking areas.
- f. Corner buildings should have a strong tie to the setback lines of each street. The primary mass of the building should not be placed at an angle to the corner. This does not preclude angled building corners, or an open plaza at a corner. See Figure 3-7.

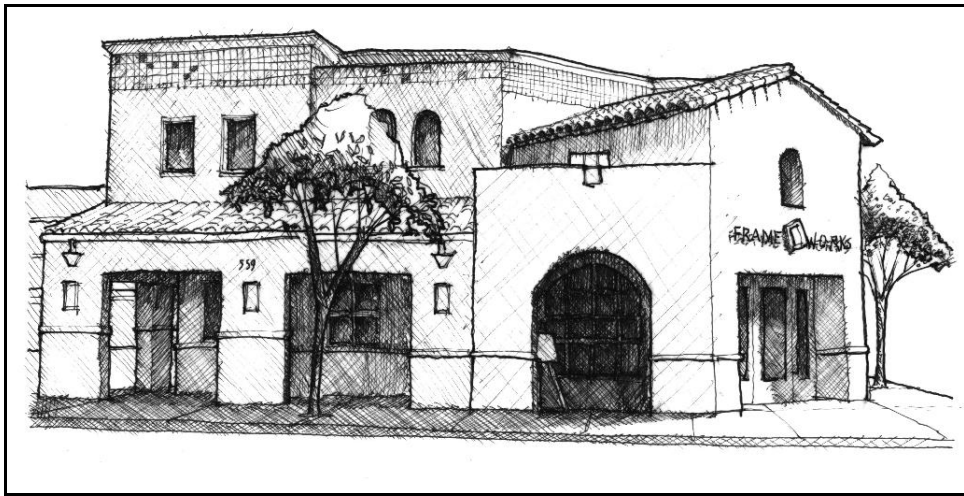


Figure 3-7 – Corner buildings – Placement of primary mass

- g. Multiple buildings in a single project should be designed to create a visual and functional relationship with one another. Whenever possible, multiple buildings should be clustered to achieve a "village" scale. (See Figure 3-8.) This creates opportunities for plazas and pedestrian areas while preventing long rows of buildings. When clustering is impractical, a visual link should be established between buildings. This link can be accomplished through the use of an arcade system, trellis, colonnade, landscaping and trees, or enhanced paving.

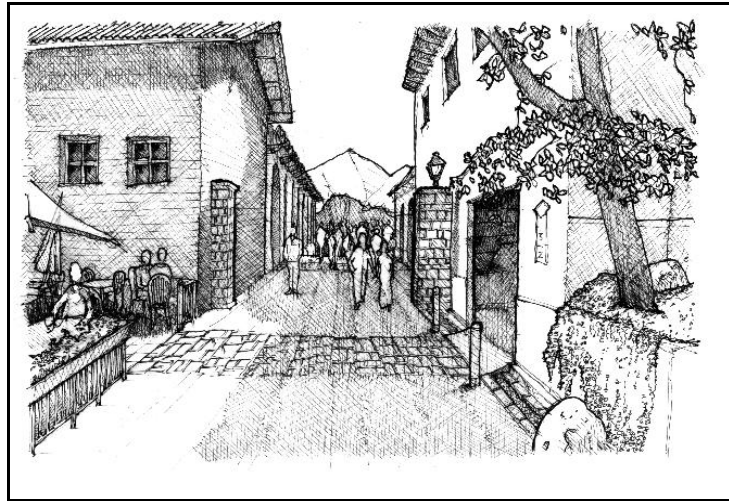


Figure 3-8 – Cluster buildings to achieve a “village scale”

- h. The location of open space areas should be accessible from the majority of structures, and should be oriented to take advantage of sun or shade, and offer wind protection, as appropriate.
- i. The visual impact of parking lots should be minimized by locating these facilities to a portion of the site least visible from the street and by providing adequate screening and parking lot landscaping.
- j. Projects should connect the on-site pedestrian circulation system to the off-site public sidewalk at least once in each 200 linear feet of sidewalk adjacent to project.
- k. Parking areas should be connected to building entrances by means of enhanced (patterned or stamped) paving.
- l. Handicapped access should be provided into the property from the nearest point of public transit.
- m. Loading facilities should not be located at the front of buildings where they will interfere with customer and employee traffic and be difficult to adequately screen. These facilities are usually more appropriate at the rear of buildings; however, loading areas should not look like an afterthought. They should be screened from street and off-site views to the maximum extent feasible, and shall be architecturally integrated with the design of the building.

Special attention must be given when designing loading facilities in a rear location adjacent to residential uses. Techniques such as block walls, enhanced building setbacks with landscaping, and careful attention to the location and shielding of lighting can help minimize adverse impacts to residents. It is sometimes preferable to require that tenant spaces within a commercial project receive and ship products through the “front door,” rather than subject adjacent residential uses to the noise and night time glare associated with actual loading facilities.

3. **Landscaping.** Landscaped areas should be planned as an integral part of the overall project and not simply located in "left over" areas of the site.
 - a. Landscaping should be used to help define outdoor spaces, soften a structure's appearance, and to screen parking, loading, storage, and equipment areas.
 - b. The use of on-site pedestrian amenities (such as benches, shelters, drinking fountains, lighting, and trash receptacles) is encouraged. These elements should be provided in conjunction with on-site open spaces and be integrated into the site plan as primary features.
 - c. Trees shall be used in parking lots to help visually break up large expanses of paving and to provide some shading. Some trees within parking areas should be deciduous, to provide pavement surface shading during the warmer months, and to allow for solar gain during the winter. Tree species should be selected with rooting and canopy patterns to fit the spaces provided them. In general, species with messy fruits, pods, and seeds that will drop on the surfaces below are not good choices.
4. **On-site lighting.** See Section 6.1.C (Site Planning and Other Design Criteria - Lighting), page 64.
5. **Screening.** Screening can protect and separate uses and site functions to decrease adverse noise, wind, or visual impacts and to provide privacy. The need for screening should be considered early in the design process so that screening elements (such as fences and walls, berms, and landscaping) can be effectively integrated into the overall project design and not added later as an afterthought.
 - a. The method of screening should be compatible with the adjacent structure in terms of overall design, materials, and color.
 - b. Where screening is required at the ground level, a combination of elements should be considered including solid masonry walls, berms, and landscaping.
 - c. Walls and fences used for screening should comply with the design guidelines in Chapter 6 for walls and fences (page 63).
6. **Refuse, storage, and equipment areas.** See Sections 6.1.D (Mechanical Equipment), 6.1.F (Trash/recycling enclosures and service areas), and 6.1.F (Utilities), beginning on page 63.

3.2 - Large-Scale Retail Projects

The City welcomes retail commercial development projects that are pedestrian-oriented, of “human scale,” and reflect the architectural styles and features common in the city’s most attractive commercial areas. Large-scale, monolithic “big-box” structures surrounded by extensive parking lots are not considered acceptable. These guidelines describe the City’s expectations for quality and excellence in the design of large-scale retail projects. Project designers must also comply with the standards for large scale retail projects in the City’s Zoning Regulations, which limit the maximum floor area of these businesses, provide special parking requirements, and impose other requirements. For the purposes of these guidelines, a “large-scale retail project” is one with an individual building in excess of 40,000 square feet.

Guidelines in other sections of this document may also apply to large-scale retail projects. See also the General Design Principles in Chapter 2, Chapter 6 for guidelines on site planning and other design details (for example, vehicle and bicycle parking, signs), and the Airport Area Specific Plan for design guidelines addressing that particular part of the community.

A. Site planning. Project site planning should emphasize pedestrian-oriented features, even though most customer trips to these facilities may be by auto.

1. The layout of buildings and parking on the site should emphasize a strong relationship to adjoining streets, and encourage pedestrian circulation and access between the buildings and the street. Buildings should be near the street frontage on streets with slower traffic speeds and a pedestrian orientation, but may be located farther from a wide street with higher traffic speeds. The placement of buildings should also consider solar orientation, and the protection of outdoor pedestrian areas from the wind. See Figure 3-9.
2. Site planning should include an outdoor use area or focal point adjacent to major building entrance. The area should provide public amenities such as a water feature, benches, landscaped areas, public square, etc. Projects with two or more structures should group the buildings to define this space. See Figure 3-10.

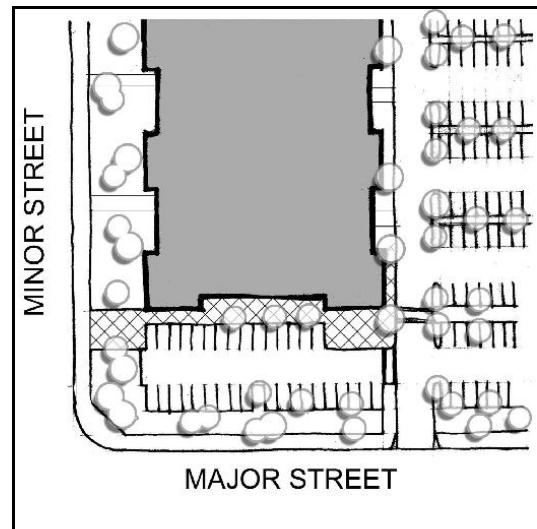


Figure 3-9 – Emphasize Relationship with Street, Locate Most Car Parking to Building Side or Rear

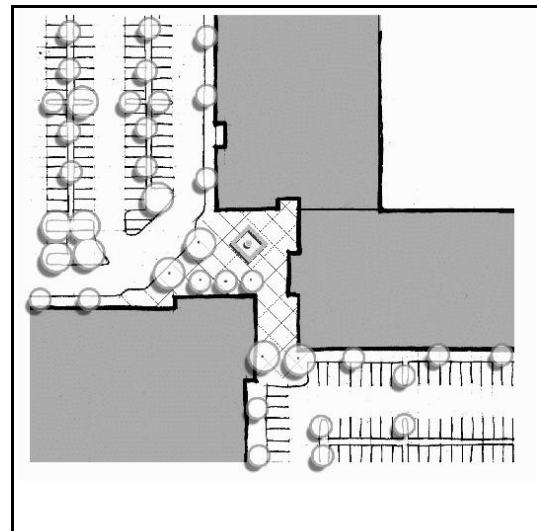


Figure 3-10 – Create a Focal Point

3. When the site is located on a street or road identified as scenic in the Circulation or Open Space Element, the building layout should also provide views through the property to the background hills and/or other natural features highlighted by the Circulation or Open Space Element.
4. Building walls visible from Highway 101 should be stepped instead of appearing as a single continuous plane, and allow for clusters of evergreen trees and other extensive plantings in the foreground. See Figure 3-14 (page 31).

B. Parking areas. Parking lots should be designed to be equally pedestrian and vehicular oriented, as follows. See Figures 3-11 and 3-12, and the specific guidelines for vehicle and bicycle parking facilities in Chapter 6.

1. **Location and design of parking.** Parking should not be the dominant visual element of a site. Large, expansive paved areas between the building and the street are to be avoided in favor of smaller multiple lots separated by landscaping or buildings, or located to the sides and rear of buildings. No more than 50 percent of the parking required for a building may be located between the building and the street.
2. **Landscaping.** Parking areas should include substantial landscaping, including trees planted in an "orchard" layout. See Figure 3-11. Extensive landscaping throughout parking areas and the project site is highly desirable because landscaping can soften the appearance of large structures, assist in energy conservation by reducing heat gain by buildings adjacent to large asphalt areas, and make walking around the site a more pleasant experience for pedestrians.
3. **Pedestrian routes.** Safe and direct pedestrian routes should be provided through parking areas to primary entrances, and designed as noted under "Pedestrian Circulation."
4. **Overflow and employee parking.** Where appropriate because of site characteristics, surrounding land uses, and project site planning, parking areas intended for employees and peak-season overflow may be allowed to have screening perimeter landscaping only, with no internal plantings, provided that these parking areas are located behind the main structures and not readily visible from streets or residential areas.
5. **Shopping carts.** Parking areas shall include shopping cart corrals where carts can be dropped-off without obstructing vehicle, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic movement, or being left in landscape planter areas.

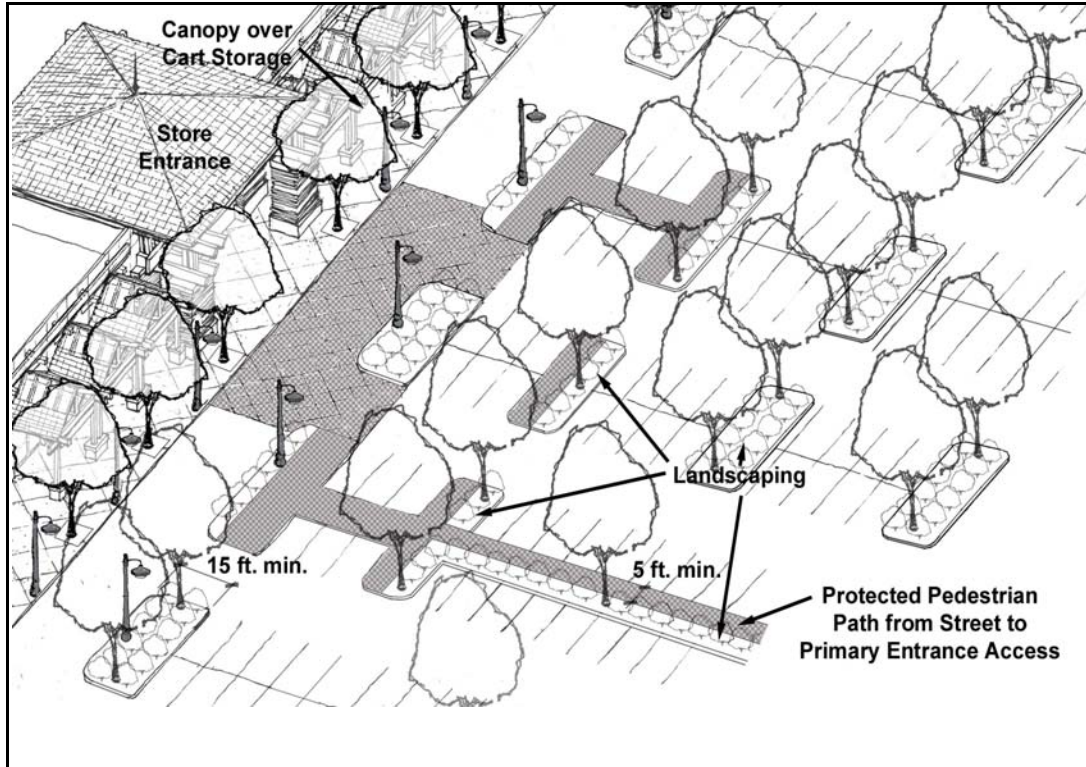


Figure 3-11 – Examples of parking lot and pedestrian circulation features

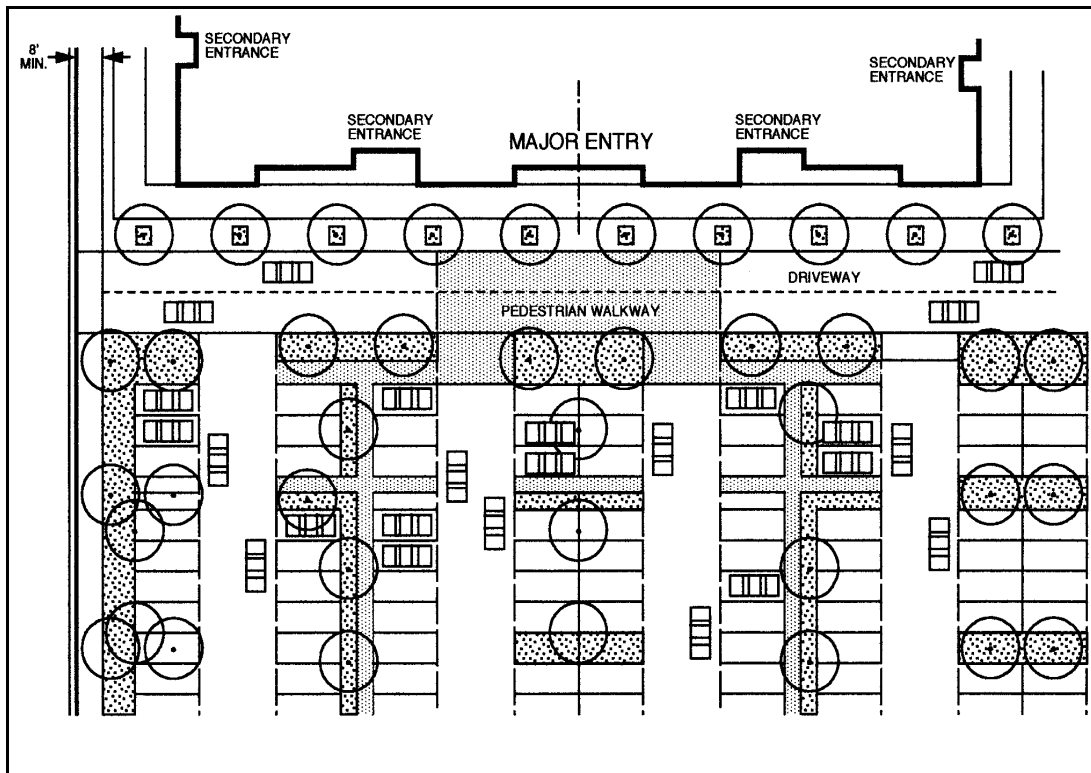


Figure 3-12 – Examples of parking lot and pedestrian circulation features

- C. Pedestrian circulation and amenities.** It is the nature of large retail uses that most customers arrive by car and make purchases that could not be carried home by foot or bike. Nevertheless, the large parking lots in these projects cause much of the customer's experience to be as a pedestrian, often walking long distances from car, to entrance and back. Safe accommodation for pedestrians is essential and must be an integral part of site design.
1. Sidewalks at least eight feet in width shall be provided along all sides of the lot that abut a public street.
 2. Sidewalks must be provided along the full length of the building along any facade with a customer entrance, and along any facade abutting a parking area. The sidewalks must be located at least six feet from the facade to provide area for landscaping, except where the facade incorporates pedestrian-oriented features such as pedestrian entrances or ground floor windows. Sidewalks should be eight feet wide, exclusive of any area planned for outdoor display or storage. The sidewalks should have wells for canopy trees at 30-foot intervals along the sidewalk edge adjacent to parking areas or vehicle access ways, so that the combination of building wall, sidewalk, and trees provide an enhanced pedestrian experience. See Figures 3-12 and 3-13.
 3. Pedestrian walkways within the site should be provided a weather protection feature such as an awning within 15 feet of all customer entrances, which should also cover nearby short-term bicycle parking. See Figure 3-13.
 4. Pedestrian walkways within the site must be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of special pavers, bricks, or colored/textured concrete to enhance pedestrian safety and the attractiveness of the walkways. Pedestrian circulation in parking areas should be parallel to traffic flow toward building entrances, and separated from drive aisles within 50 feet of entrances. Sidewalk landings should be provided and extended between parking spaces where needed to connect pedestrians to walkways. See Figures 3-11 and 3-12.
 5. Clearly demarcated and direct pedestrian routes should extend from peripheral public sidewalks and transit stops to the sidewalks that front commercial outlets. These routes should be distinguished from driving surfaces by using contrasting pavement materials.

- D. Building design.** Building design shall be site-specific, and incorporate design themes and features reflecting San Luis Obispo’s character and history. Building details should relate to the scale of pedestrians as well as passing motorists. The tendency of many “big-box” retail chains is to replicate a corporate or generic aesthetic, often treating the building elevations much like large, scale-less billboards. The lack of human scale and absence of architectural character or local connection serve to emphasize a disconnection between the chain store and the community. These conventional approaches to large-scale retail design are unacceptable in San Luis Obispo.

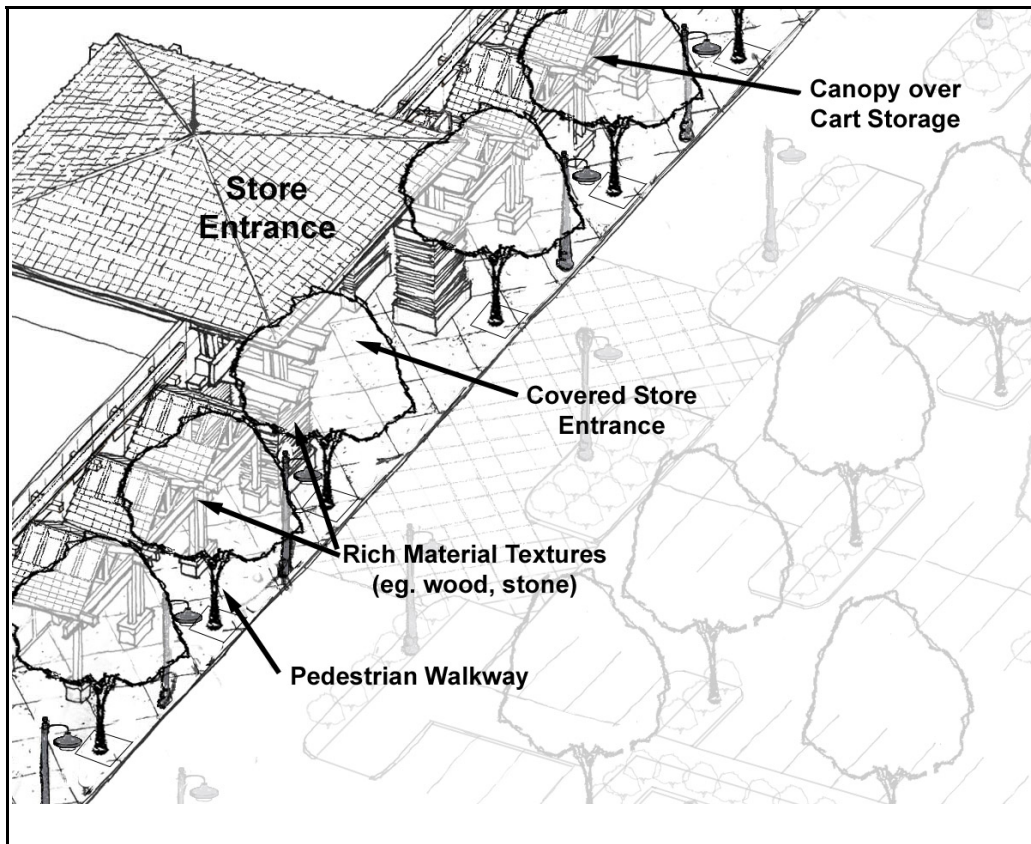


Figure 3-13 – Examples of building design features

- Entrances.** Each side of a principal building facing a public street should feature at least one customer entrance. Where a principal building directly faces more than two abutting streets, this requirement should apply only to two sides of the building. The use of a corner entrance will satisfy the entrance requirement for only one side of the building.

Customer entrances must be clearly defined and highly visible, with features such as canopies or porticos, arcades, arches, wing walls, and integral planters. See Figure 3-13.

2. **Exterior wall materials.** Predominant exterior building materials must be of high quality. Examples of these materials include brick, wood, stone, tinted/textured stucco, and tile accents. Smooth or split-faced concrete masonry units, tilt-up concrete panels, or prefabricated steel panels should generally be avoided for expansive wall surfaces, but may be appropriate in limited areas as building accents. See Figure 3-13.
 - a. Building walls should incorporate the same quality and level of detail of ornamentation on each elevation visible from a public right-of-way.
 - b. Building facade details and materials should be authentic, and integrated into building design, and should not be or appear as artificial “glued/tacked-on” features, such as trellises that do not support plant materials, encouraging the perception of low quality.

See also guidelines D.3.c below regarding wall design details.

3. **Wall design.** All building walls, especially those visible from public roadways or residential areas should be designed to break up the appearance of a box-like structure. See Figure 3-14.

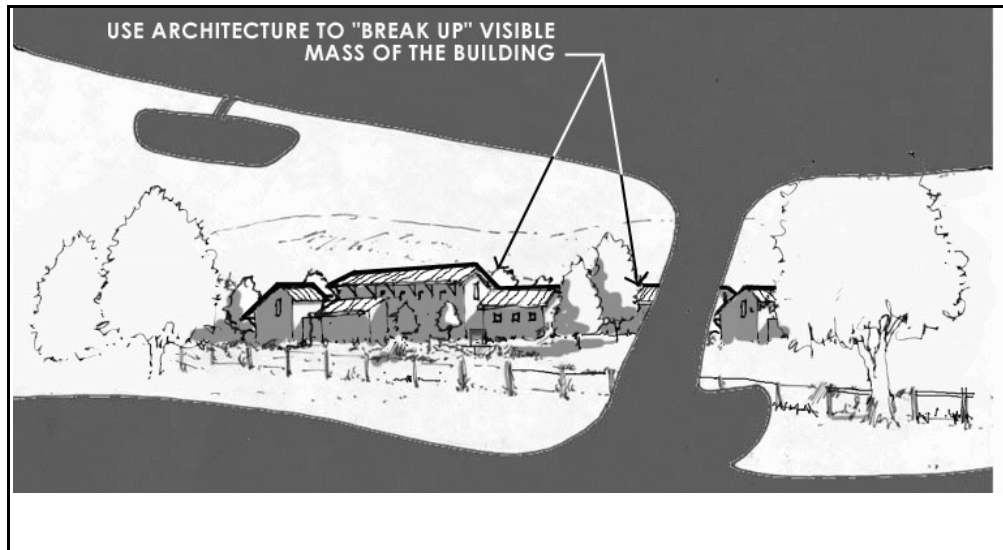


Figure 3-14 – Break-up the appearance of a box-like structure

- a. **Facade articulation.** Include extensive facade articulation in the form of horizontal and vertical design elements to provide variations in wall plane and surface relief, including providing a variety of surface textures, recesses and projections along wall planes. Facades greater than 100 feet in length should incorporate recesses or projections at least 20 feet deep along at least 30 percent of the length of the facade. Ideally, these recesses or projections should accommodate secondary uses/liner shops, and/or reflect the different internal functions of the store. See Guideline D.6 (page 34), and Figures 3-14 and 3-15.



Figure 3-15 – Examples of wall features

- b. **Ground floor windows.** Ground floor windows are highly encouraged. These should ideally provide pedestrians with views into the building, but even display windows can improve the pedestrian experience of the building at the street or sidewalk level. See Figures 3-15 and 3-16.
- c. **Design details.** A variety of building and wall features should be used, in ways that avoid a cluttered appearance. These may include varying colors, reveals, an external wainscot or bulkhead at the building base to reduce apparent bulk, cornices and parapet details, and moldings. The features should employ a variety of materials as appropriate for the architectural style. See also guideline D.2 above regarding exterior materials.

Bulkheads should be constructed of a durable material other than stucco, such as tile, brick, rock, or pre-cast concrete. Windows, awnings, and arcades must total at least 60 percent of the facade length abutting a street. See Figure 3-16.

- d. **Corporate identification.** Colors or logos identified with an individual company should be employed as building accent features, and not used as the main or dominant architectural feature of any wall.
- e. **Colors.** Large areas of bright, intense colors should generally be avoided. While more subdued colors usually work best for large facade areas, brighter accent colors may be appropriate for trim, windows, doors, and other key architectural elements. Bold stripes of color are not an adequate substitute for architectural detailing.

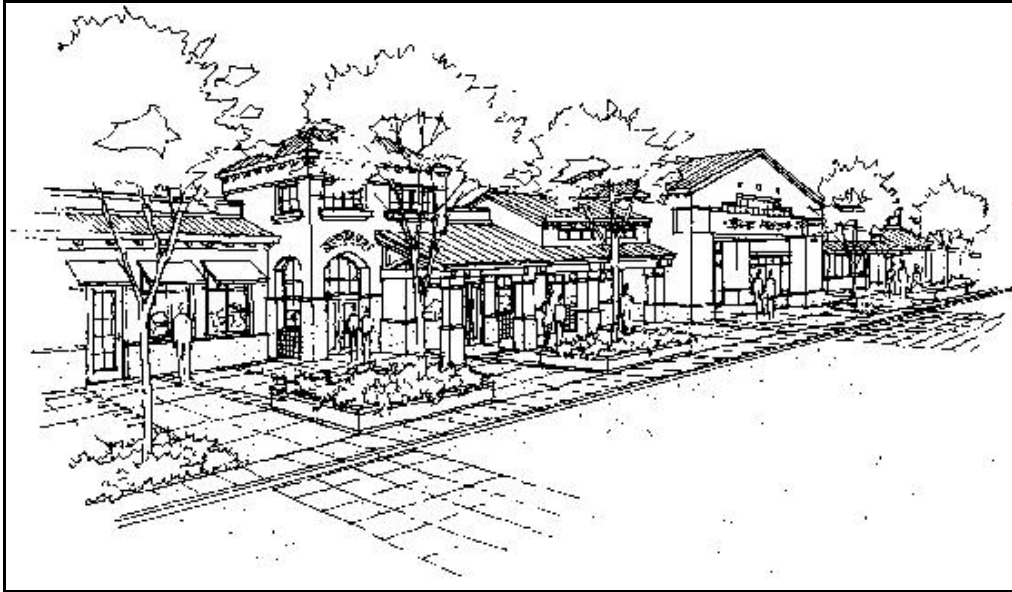


Figure 3-16 – Façade articulation, building and wall features, windows, vertical wall articulation

4. **Vertical wall articulation.** The height of building walls facing streets or on-site pedestrian areas should be varied so that the vertical mass is divided into distinct, human-scaled elements. See Figure 3-16.
 - a. Except on a pedestrian-oriented public street where buildings are at the back of the sidewalk, structures over 20 feet in height (typical for structures of two stories or more) should step-back the building mass at least five feet for the portions of the structure above 14 feet (or the height where an actual second story begins) to provide visual variation.
 - b. The facade of the areas stepped-back above the actual or apparent first floor should include detailed building articulation with windows, eaves, and decorative details such as tiles, wood trim, etc. as appropriate. It is also important that the facade below the step-back have a substantial structural appearance, and not simply appear as an awning “tacked-on” to the building.
 - c. Building facades that are tall for no functional reason, have little surface articulation or relief, and are simply intended to provide high, visible surfaces for tenant signage are not appropriate.

5. **Roof lines.** The roof lines should also be varied to break up the mass of the building. Pitched roofs with roof overhangs proportional to the scale of the adjoining building wall are encouraged. Major roof-mounted equipment should not be visible from off the site. Cornices and decorative parapets should be utilized to conceal flat roofs and to screen any roof-mounted mechanical equipment. The height of mechanical equipment shall not exceed that of the parapets or other roof features intended to screen the equipment. Enclosures, blinds, or other architectural treatment may be necessary to screen roof equipment visible from residences or public areas. See Figures 3-16 and 3-17.

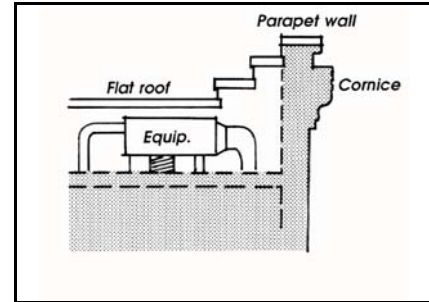


Figure 3-17 – Equipment screening

6. **Location of secondary uses.** Secondary uses or departments including pharmacies, photo finishing/development, snack bars, dry cleaning, offices, storage, etc., should be oriented to the outside of the building by projecting them outward or recessing them inward. This includes providing the individual uses with separate entrances and windows facing the outside of the building. The intent is to break up the appearance of the large, primary building with more human-scale elements. Food courts/bars should provide indoor and sheltered outdoor eating areas with tables, chairs, umbrellas, etc. See Figure 3-18.

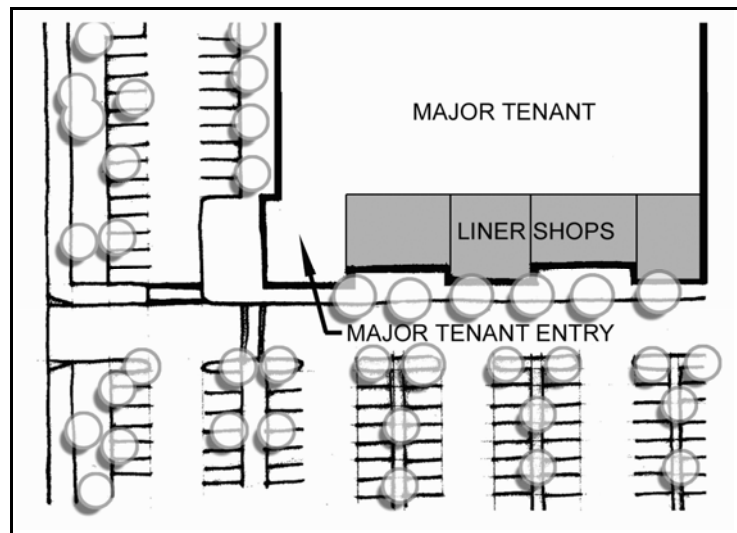


Figure 3-18 – Break-up façade with secondary uses

7. **Design continuity.** Large-scale retail projects shall incorporate elements to visually unify the buildings and signage without creating monotony. Buildings on separate pads should maintain the overall architectural character of the site; at the same time architectural variety is encouraged.
- E. **Loading areas.** Loading docks, trash collection areas, outdoor storage, and similar facilities should be incorporated into the overall design of the building and landscaped, so that the visual and acoustic impacts of these functions are fully contained, and out of view from adjacent properties and streets. Any screening materials must be of the same quality and appearance as those used on the building itself.

- F. Landscaping.** Landscaping that complements and is in scale with the building should be provided adjacent to structures. Landscaping should include evergreen trees, shrubs and ornamental landscaping (and berms where appropriate) with all landscape areas having a minimum width of six feet. Landscaping should be used to create a focal point near front building entrances. Sidewalks and other walkways should also be integrated with landscape areas around building base and in parking lot areas. Trees should be planted in notable clusters within larger planting areas, and not exclusively in lines along building facades. See also the landscaping design guidelines in Chapter 6.
- G. Outdoor lighting.** The design, size, and placement of outdoor lighting fixtures on buildings and in parking lots should be in keeping with the architectural style of the buildings. More, smaller-scale parking lot lights instead of fewer, overly tall and large parking lot lights should be installed. Outdoor light fixtures mounted on building walls should relate to the height of pedestrians and not exceed eight to 10 feet. All light fixtures should be directed downward and shielded so that the light source itself is not visible.
- H. Signs.** The signs provided in conjunction with a large-scale retail project should comply with the following guidelines, and the sign guidelines in Chapter 6.
1. Proposed large-scale retail projects shall include a comprehensive program that effectively integrates signage into the project design.
 2. Signs for these projects, and the buildings themselves, should not be designed to be freeway-oriented.
 3. Along with typical auto-oriented wall and freestanding signage, permanent, pedestrian-oriented window, awning, projecting, and suspended signs should also be provided.

3.3 - Industrial Project Design Guidelines

The guidelines in this section apply to industrial projects; however, guidelines in other sections of this document may also apply. See the General Design Principles in Chapter 2, Chapter 6 for guidelines on site planning and other design details (for example, vehicle and bicycle parking, signs), Chapter 7 for specific design considerations (for example, creekside development), and the Airport Area Specific Plan for design guidelines addressing that particular part of the community.

A. General design objectives. The following guidelines address the overall approach to industrial project design favored by the City.

1. A variety of building and parking setbacks should be provided to avoid long monotonous building facades and to create diversity within the project.
2. Buildings should be located on "open space islands", which may be formally landscaped or set in a natural open space environment. The main entrance of the building should not directly abut the paved parking area. A minimum five- to seven-foot landscape strip should be provided between parking areas and the portions of the buildings where parking is provided.
3. Building setbacks should be provided proportionate to the scale of the structure and in consideration of existing adjacent development. Larger structures require more setback area for a balance of scale and so as not to impose visually on neighboring uses.
4. The placement of structures to create plazas, courts, or gardens is encouraged. Setback areas can often be used to provide space for patio and outdoor eating areas.
5. The main elements of preferred business park/industrial site design include the following:
 - a. Easily identifiable site access;
 - b. Service areas located at the sides and rear of buildings;
 - c. Convenient access, visitor parking and on-site circulation;
 - d. Screening of outdoor storage, work areas, and equipment;
 - e. Emphasis on the main building entry and landscaping;
 - f. Placement of buildings to provide plazas and courtyards;
 - g. Landscaped open space; and
 - h. Multiple buildings on the same site clustered to create a campus-like setting that takes advantage of shared open space and pedestrian amenities.

- B. Architectural design.** The inherently utilitarian nature of industrial buildings need not prevent the design of attractive industrial areas within the city.
- 1. Architectural style.** The architectural style of buildings in the business park/industrial category should incorporate clean simple lines. Buildings should project an image of high quality through the use of appropriate durable materials and well-landscaped settings.
 - 2. Mass and scale of structures.** As a category of structure type, typically bland industrial buildings often present unattractive, unadorned, "box-like" forms. A variety of design techniques should be used to help overcome this situation and to produce a cohesive design statement.
 - a. Provide articulated facades with offsets and recessed entries.
 - b. Entries to structures should portray a quality appearance while being architecturally tied into the overall building composition and scale.
 - c. Alteration of colors, textures, and materials should be used to produce diversity and enhance architectural forms.
 - d. A compatible variety of siding materials (i.e., metal, masonry, concrete texturing, cement or plaster) should be used to produce effects of texture and relief that provide architectural interest.
 - 3. Undesirable elements.** Design elements which are undesirable and should be avoided include:
 - a. Large blank, unarticulated wall surfaces;
 - b. Exposed, untreated precision block walls;
 - c. Chain link fence and barbed wire;
 - d. False fronts;
 - e. Steeply pitched Mansard roofs;
 - f. Materials with high maintenance (such as stained wood, shingles or light gauge metal siding);
 - g. Mirror window glazing;
 - h. Loading bays or doors facing a street; and
 - i. Exposed roof drains and downspouts, except where integrated with the colors, materials, and other details of the building architecture.

- C. Parking and circulation.** Parking lots should not be the dominant visual elements of the site. Large expansive paved areas located between the street and the building are to be avoided in favor of smaller multiple lots separated by landscaping and buildings and located to the sides and rear of buildings whenever possible. See also the parking design guidelines in Chapter 6.
1. Site access and internal circulation should be designed in a straightforward manner, which emphasizes safety and efficiency. The circulation system should be designed to reduce conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
 2. Entrances and exits to and from parking and loading facilities should be clearly marked with appropriate directional signage where multiple access points are provided.
 3. Parking lots adjacent to and visible from public streets must be adequately screened from view through the use of rolling earth berms, low screen walls, changes in elevation, landscaping or combinations thereof.
- D. Loading facilities.** Loading bays are key elements of the function of many industrial buildings, but can be problematic in creating an overall building design that is attractive from the public view.
1. To alleviate the unsightly appearance of loading facilities for industrial uses, these areas should not be located at the front of buildings where it is difficult to adequately screen them from view. Loading facilities are generally more appropriate at the rear of the building where they are more functional and can be more effectively screened.
 2. When site features prevent the placement of loading facilities at the rear of the building, loading docks and doors may be at the side of the building but must be screened from view by a combination of screen walls, ornamental landscaping and/or portions of the building. Gates should be located so as not to allow views from the public right-of-way into loading areas.
 3. Rolling shutter doors located on the inside of the building are the preferred method for providing large loading doors while keeping a clean, uncluttered appearance from the exterior.
 4. Loading areas must be designed so that trucks will not need to back-in from the public street onto the site. These maneuvers are unsafe, and shall not be utilized except under extenuating circumstances and with the specific approval of the ARC.
- E. Landscaping.** Landscaping should be used on industrial sites to define areas such as entrances to buildings and parking lots, define the edges of various land uses, provide transition between neighboring properties (buffering), and provide screening for outdoor storage, loading and equipment areas. See also Section 6.2 (Landscaping), page 66.
1. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and be of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended purpose.
 2. Landscaping around the entire base of buildings is recommended to soften the edge between the parking lot and the structure and the view of the structure from the public right-of-way. Landscaping should be accented at building entrances to provide a focal point.
 3. Use berming at the edge of the building in conjunction with landscaping to reduce the apparent height of the structure and its mass, especially along street frontages.

4. Development in areas with native vegetation or located within foothill, riparian, viewshed or other unique natural environments are encouraged to use landscape designs and material which are sensitive to and compatible with existing vegetation.

F. Walls and fences. The fact that industrial uses often require large outdoor areas for production activities, parking, or storage necessitates the thoughtful design of surrounding walls and fences because they can become significant visual elements on the site.

1. If walls are not required for a specific screening or security purpose they should not be used. The intent is to keep walls as low as possible while still performing their screening and security functions.
2. Where walls are used at property frontages, or screen walls are used to conceal storage and equipment areas, they should be designed to blend with the site's architecture. Landscaping should be used in combination with such walls whenever possible. See Figure 3-20
3. Long expanses of fence or wall surfaces should be offset and architecturally designed to prevent monotony. Landscape pockets should be provided along the wall.
4. With taller walls over five feet in height, it may be more appropriate to have a stepped design which allows for the creation of a planter area between wall components. The use of trailing vines or groundcovers in these planters is encouraged.
5. When security fencing is required, it should be a combination of solid columns, or short solid wall segments, and wrought iron grill work, rather than the entire fence being a single material.

G. Screening. The nature of some industrial uses and their sites may inevitably result in unsightly features. In these cases, screening features must be carefully designed so that their appearance is not equally unattractive.

1. Exterior storage and loading areas should be confined to portions of the site least visible to public view where screening needs are minimized.
2. Where screening is required, a combination of elements should be used including solid masonry walls, berms, and landscaping. Chain link fencing with wood or metal slating is an acceptable screening material only for areas not visible from a public street or parking lot.
3. Where permanent screening is required between a manufacturing zone and a residential zone, a decorative, solid masonry screening wall is required. Evergreen landscaping should be placed adjacent to the wall.

H. Roofs. Roof design contributes strongly to the image of a structure as having quality and permanence.

1. Unless roofing materials are a part of the design element (for example, tiles, concrete or metal roofing elements), the ridgeline elevation should not exceed the parapet elevation.
2. Piecemeal mansard roofs (used on a portion of the building perimeter only) should be avoided. Mansard roofs should wrap around the entire perimeter of the structure.

3. Rooftop equipment must be screened as described in Section 6.1.D (Mechanical equipment).

I. Metal buildings. All metal buildings should be designed to have architectural interest and articulation as is encouraged with conventionally built structures.

1. In addition to architectural metal panels, exterior surfaces should include either stucco, plaster, glass, stone, brick, or decorative masonry. Stock, “off-the-shelf” metal buildings are highly discouraged as main structures.
2. Metal buildings should employ a variety of building forms, shapes, colors, materials and other architectural treatments to add visual interest and variety to the building. Architectural treatments should emphasize the primary entrance to the building.
3. All exterior surfaces of metal buildings that have a risk of being struck and damaged by vehicles or machinery should be protected with landscaped areas, raised concrete curbs, and/or traffic barriers.

J. Signs. Every structure should be designed with a precise concept for adequate signing. Provisions for sign placement, sign scale in relation to building scale, and the readability of the sign should be considered in developing the overall project’s signing concept. See also the sign design guidelines in Chapter 6.

1. All signs should be highly compatible with the structure and site design relative to color, material, and placement.
2. Monument-type signs are preferred for business identification; pole signs should be avoided. Where several tenants occupy the same site, individual wall mounted signs are appropriate in combination with a monument sign identifying the business park complex and address.
3. The use of carved wood, or backlit individually cut letter signs is encouraged.
4. The industrial site should be appropriately signed to give directions to loading and receiving areas, visitor parking and other special areas.

3.4 - Guidelines for Specific Commercial and Industrial Uses

The following design guidelines apply to the specific commercial and industrial uses listed, in addition to the other guidelines in this chapter, those in Chapters 2, 6, and 7, and those in the Airport Area Specific Plan.

- A. Auto dealerships.** Auto and other vehicle dealerships are typically characterized by large outdoor areas for the storage and display of vehicles, with comparatively minor portions of the site being used for structures and customer parking.
- 1. Site planning.** Auto dealership site plans should incorporate the following features.
 - a. On-site areas for the unloading of vehicles from carriers.
 - b. Outdoor vehicle displays oriented toward streets are limited to permanent at-grade display areas with all structures architecturally consistent with the buildings on the site.
 - c. Storage and outdoor activity areas not for vehicle display (e.g., car washing, stacking areas for vehicles waiting for service, etc.) that are screened from view from public streets and any nearby residential area.
 - 2. Building design.** Buildings on the site of an auto dealership should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.
 - a. Buildings should be consistent on all sides in terms of architectural style and exterior finish materials, and well articulated.
 - b. The showroom should be oriented toward the major public street bordering the site.
 - c. Walls and fences should be architecturally consistent with the buildings.
 - d. Service uses and areas should be entirely contained within the buildings. Internal vehicle access should be provided to each individual service bay. The access points to the service bays should not be visible to the public.
 - e. All storage areas should be screened from public view from streets and adjoining properties by appropriately designed walls, fencing and landscaping.
 - f. Provisions should be made for a vehicle washing area. The wash rack should not be located so as to be visible or audible from any public street or residential area.
 - g. Landscaping should be provided along all display perimeters, but should be maintained at a low level (less than 32 inches), except for street trees along site street frontages.

- B. Fast food restaurants.** Restaurants that specialize in the rapid delivery of food orders, high volumes of "to-go" orders, and clientele comprised primarily of motorists, present special design challenges. Without strong local design guidance, they tend to look identical from city-to-city, and can play a significant role in the loss of individual community identity.
- 1. Site planning.** A structure accommodating a fast food restaurant should be placed at the back of the sidewalk, with parking and auto circulation areas located to the rear or side of the building, but not on the street side of a corner lot.
 - 2. Building design.** Fast food restaurants should avoid the use of "stock" franchise architecture, and instead be designed in compliance with the other guidelines in this document for commercial structures that emphasize the importance of considering the design context of San Luis Obispo.
 - 3. Signs.** Signs for fast food restaurants should be pedestrian oriented and of small scale.
- C. Offices.** Office structures differ from other commercial buildings in that their intensity of use is lower while building scale is typically larger, primary activities are not limited to the first floor, and there are fewer entries along building perimeters. Without careful attention in design to building form and mass, and street level features, these structures can impair the pedestrian orientation of a streetscape.
- 1. Site planning.** Office site plans should incorporate the following features.
 - a. Office buildings should be "built to" the minimum required front setback.
 - b. Surface parking should be located towards the rear of the site or at the side of the building, with bicycle parking convenient to building entrances.
 - c. Multi-story buildings should not be placed adjacent to residential private open space areas (e.g., rear yards).
 - d. The primary building entrance should face the street.
 - 2. Building design.** Office buildings should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.
 - a. Depending upon adjacent land uses and building scale and mass, it may be appropriate to place the first floor at the minimum setbacks, with upper floors set back further.
 - b. Building surfaces over two stories high or 40 feet in length should provide vertical and horizontal wall plane offsets.
 - c. Office structure facades should have extensive window areas.
 - d. The primary building entrance should be designed as a highly visible and significant architectural feature.

- e. Decorative elements should be focused at the pedestrian level; more architectural simplicity may be appropriate on upper floors.

D. Service stations. A service station (with or without a car wash) is an intensive auto-oriented use that is characterized by large areas of pavement.

1. Site planning. Service station site plans should incorporate the following features.

- a. The site should be designed to accommodate anticipated car and truck (including fuel delivery truck) circulation patterns and minimize paving.
- b. Driveway cuts should be limited to two per site, unless otherwise allowed by the City Engineer for valid circulation reasons.
- c. Service and wash bays should not face streets or residential properties. The visibility of service and wash bays should be otherwise minimized.
- d. Gas pump canopies should be screened by the main building structure. The retail market/office building segment of the facility should be oriented along the street frontage, to encourage pedestrian use. Bicycle parking should be provided where the facility includes a convenience store.

2. Building design. Service station buildings should be designed to comply with the following guidelines.

- a. Site specific architectural design is strongly encouraged. Corporate or franchise "stock" design solutions are strongly discouraged.
- b. All structures on the site should be architecturally consistent and related to an overall architectural theme.
- c. High quality building materials are encouraged. Reflective, glossy, and florescent surfaces are discouraged.
- d. The roof design of all structures, including pump canopies, should incorporate roof treatments with a low to moderate pitch. Flat roofs or mansard roof applications are strongly discouraged unless they are consistent with an established and attractive architectural theme in the site vicinity.
- e. Gas pump canopies should not be internally illuminated. Light fixtures shall be completely recessed into the canopy so that the light source is concealed.
- f. Each pump island should include stacking for at least two vehicles (40 feet) on-site, or at least at one end of the pump island.

Chapter 4 - Downtown Design Guidelines

The San Luis Obispo downtown is the heart of the community in several essential ways. The downtown is the city's center for shopping, cultural, entertainment, social, and governmental activities. It is also the area that most strongly defines San Luis Obispo in its national reputation as a livable city, and in how residents and visitors describe San Luis Obispo to those who have not seen it.

Many downtown buildings date from the late 19th and early 20th century. The plaza around historic Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, including open portions of San Luis Obispo Creek, is the venue for a variety of special events. Nowhere in the city is design more important.

4.1 - Goals for Downtown Design

The primary goal of the following downtown design guidelines is to preserve and enhance its attractiveness to residents and visitors as a place where: people prefer to walk rather than drive; and where the pleasant sidewalks, shading trees, and variety of shops, restaurants, and other activities encourage people to spend time, slow their pace, and engage one another. The design of buildings and their setting, circulation, and public spaces in the downtown have, and will continue to play a crucial role in maintaining this character and vitality.

Another principal goal of these guidelines is to implement the vision of the downtown Conceptual Physical Plan wherever feasible.

4.2 - Design and Development Guidelines

- A. Street orientation.** Buildings in the downtown should be located at the back of the sidewalk unless space between the building and sidewalk is to be used for pedestrian features such as plazas, courtyards, or outdoor eating areas.
- B. Height, scale.** Multi-story buildings are desirable because they can provide opportunities for upper-floor offices and residential units¹, and can increase the numbers of potential customers for ground floor retail uses, which assists in maintaining their viability. Multi-story buildings should be set back above the second or third level to maintain a street façade that is consistent with the historic pattern of development, maintaining the general similarity of building heights at the sidewalk edge. Different building heights may be appropriate as follows:
 - 1. The height and scale of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings shall fit within the context and vertical scale of existing development and provide human scale and proportion. Some tools to achieve this include:
 - a. In no case may the height of a building at the back of sidewalk exceed the width of the adjoining right-of-way (see Figure 4-2).
 - b. New buildings that are significantly taller or shorter than adjacent buildings shall provide appropriate visual transitions.

¹ – One goal of the Housing Element of the General Plan is to encourage mixed use projects in the downtown that provide housing on upper floors above the commercial street frontage.

- c. For new projects adjacent to buildings included on the City's Inventory of Historic Resources there shall be a heightened sensitivity to the mass and scale of the significant buildings.

- d. The project provides upper story setbacks from the front building façade along the street consistent with LUE Policy 4.16.4. Portions of the building above 50 feet should be set back sufficiently so that these upper building walls are not visible to pedestrians on the sidewalk along the building’s frontage (see Figure 4-3).

The City’s General Plan Land Use Element includes policies that explicitly call for upper floor setbacks for downtown buildings. Specifically:

- Policy 4.16.4 is intended to insure that new buildings fit within the context and scale of existing development. The policy says new buildings “should be set back above the second or third level to maintain a street façade that is consistent with the historic pattern of development.”
- Policy 4.5 says that “new buildings should not obstruct sunlight from reaching sidewalks on the northwest side of Marsh street, Higuera Street and Monterey Street at noon on the winter solstice.”
- Policy 4.13 says that new buildings “nearby publicly-owned gathering spaces such as Mission Plaza ... shall respect views of the hills, framing rather than obscuring them.

The objectives embodied in these policies are able to be realized through appropriate building setbacks. The policies are implemented by Design Guidelines Section 4.2.B and are further illustrated by Figures 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3. These policies and guidelines work together to insure that setbacks are provided for upper stories, consistent with the General Plan.

2. New buildings shall not obstruct views from, or sunlight to, publicly-owned gathering places including, but not limited to, Mission Plaza, the Jack House gardens, and YCLC Cheng Park. In these locations, new buildings shall respect views of the hills, framing rather than obscuring them.

3. New buildings should not shade the northerly sidewalk of Marsh, Higuera or Monterey Streets at noon on December 21st. Information demonstrating this objective shall accompany all applications for architectural review as detailed on application checklists.

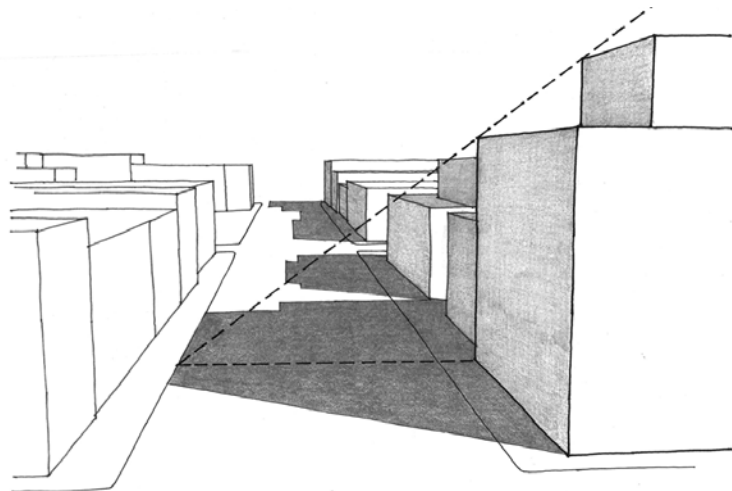


Figure 4-1 – Solar access at the sidewalk level. Along Marsh, Higuera and Monterey Street, upper floor setbacks may be required to insure solar access consistent with guideline 4.2.B.3.

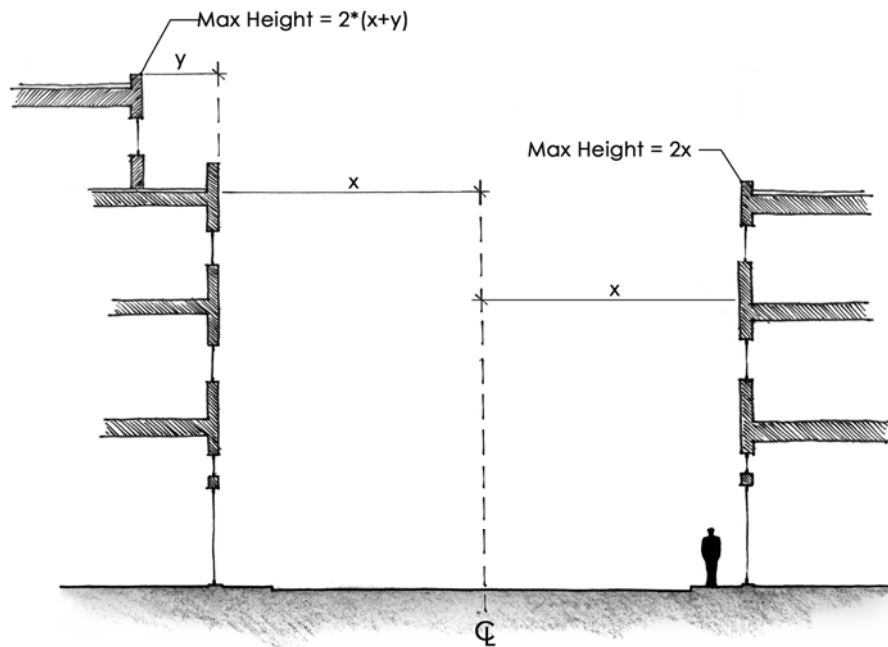


Figure 4-2 - Building Height to Street Width Ratio. This figure illustrates guideline 4.2.B.1.a. In this figure, ‘x’ is equal to the distance between the centerline of the street and the building face at the back of sidewalk (usually the property line). ‘Y’ is equal to the upper-floor setback (measured from the building face at the back of sidewalk to upper-level building faces as shown above). This guideline uses the width of the adjoining street to determine maximum height at the back of sidewalk and the minimum amount of setback required for upper-level building walls.

Figure 4.3 - Visibility of Upper Stories from the Sidewalk.

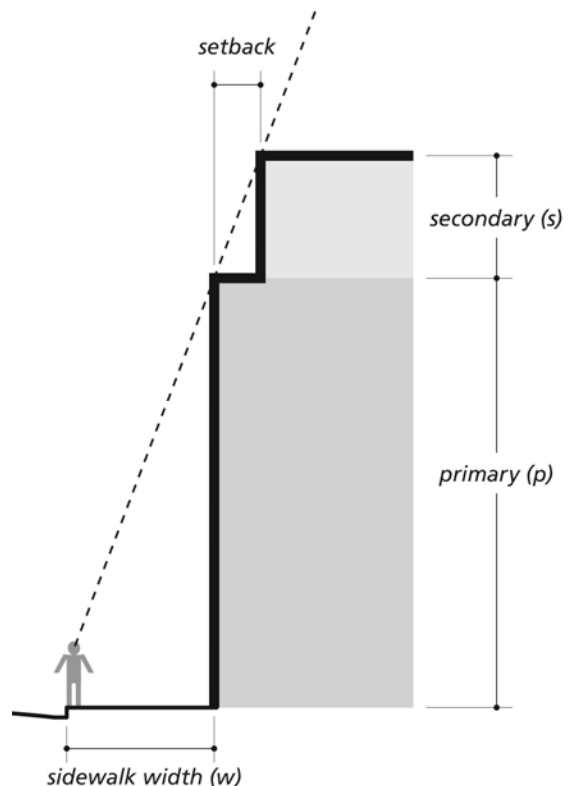
This figure illustrates guidelines 4.2.B.1.d. and provides guidance on the amount of setback suggested for upper floors, per the following examples:

$$setback = \frac{w \times s}{p - 5.0}$$

sidewalk width (w) = 12.0'

		primary height (p)	
		35	50
secondary height (s)	10		2.7'
	25	10.0'	6.7'
	40	16.0'	

In all cases, consistency with this guideline will be evaluated based on a sidewalk width of 12'. The table above provides examples of suggested setbacks for common primary building heights. The suggested setback will be based on the actual primary and secondary heights of the proposed building, which must fit within the context and scale of existing development. Primary building heights should maintain the general similarity of building heights at the sidewalk edge.



4. Tall buildings (between 50 and 75 feet) shall be designed to achieve multiple policy objectives, including design amenities, housing and retail land uses. Appropriate techniques to assure that tall buildings respect the context of their setting and provide an appropriate visual transition to adjacent structures include, but are not limited to:

- a. For large projects that occupy several lots, variable roof heights and architectural features that penetrate the roof plane are encouraged to diminish the mass and scale of the taller structure;

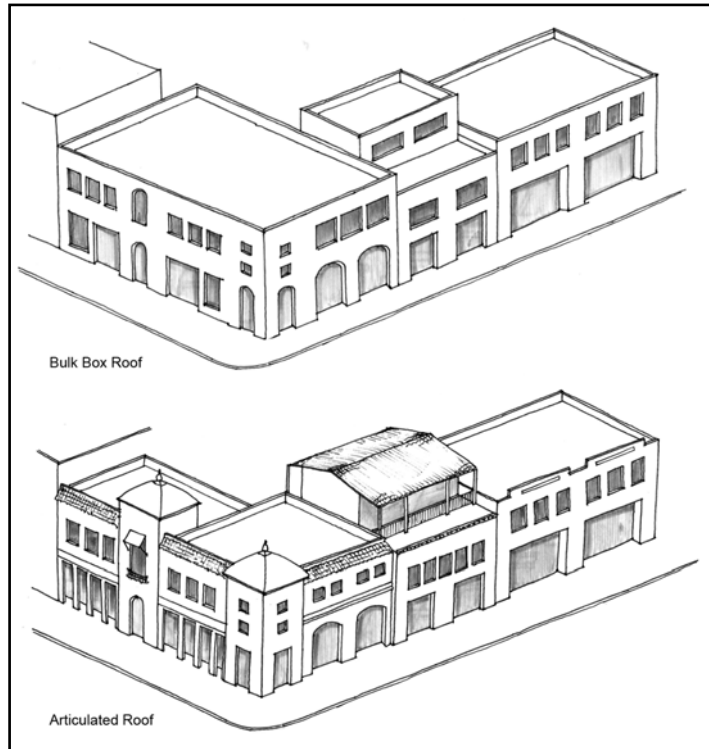


Figure 4.4 – Articulated roofs. Articulated roofs should be used to provide interest and to diminish the mass and scale of taller buildings.

- b. Reinforce the established horizontal lines of facades in adjacent buildings;



Figure 4.5 -- Horizontal lines. Reinforcing established horizontal lines is one way to provide a logical transition between adjacent buildings with different heights.

- c. Maintain the distinction between the first and upper floors by having a more transparent ground floor. On upper floors, consider using windows or other architectural features that will reinforce the typical rhythm of upper story windows found on traditional commercial buildings and provide architectural interest on all four sides of the building;

- d. Larger buildings (where frontages exceed 50 feet) should be clearly expressed at the street frontage by changing material or setback to respect the historic lot pattern and rhythm of downtown development;
 - e. Abrupt changes in building heights and/or roof orientation should be diminished by offsets of building form and mass;
 - f. Use roof overhangs, cornices, dentals, moldings, awnings, and other decorative features to decrease the vertical appearance of the walls;
 - g. Use recesses and projections to visually divide building surfaces into smaller scale elements;
 - h. Use color to visually reduce the size, bulk and scale of the building;
 - i. Use planter walls and other pedestrian-oriented features on the ground floor such as windows, wall detailing, and public art.
 - j. Consider the quality of natural and reflected light in public spaces within and around the project site and choose materials and colors to enhance lighting effects with respect to available solar exposure.
5. The following guidelines are established in recognition of the particular service demands of buildings downtown. Planning for the following considerations must be done early so that proposed building designs correctly depict final construction.
- a. Utility boxes for phone, cable, electricity, natural gas, information systems and/or other services should be located along service alleys, within the building, or in a sub-grade vault.
 - b. Location of backflow prevention devices and the fire sprinkler riser must be identified on project plans submitted for Architectural Review and shall be located inside the building, consistent with County Health Department requirements.
 - c. Minimum sidewalk width should be 8-feet clear of obstructions for pedestrians (furniture, news racks, street trees etc.) across 100% of the project frontage. Minor deviations may occur where necessary to preserve street trees, or where right-of-way limitations reduce available sidewalk width. While wider sidewalks are desirable, they may not be feasible in all locations where on-street parking, loading zones or travel lanes are determined to be a higher priority, and where building setbacks are considered architecturally incompatible.
 - d. Service access to the building for loading and maintenance functions should not exceed 20% of the project frontage on any facing street.

- C. Façade design.** New structures and remodels should provide storefront windows, doors, entries, transoms, awnings, cornice treatments and other architectural features that complement existing structures, without copying their architectural style.
1. **Overall character.** In general, buildings should have either flat or stepped rooflines with parapets, and essentially flat facades. Walls with round or curvilinear lines, or large pointed or slanted rooflines should generally be avoided.
 2. **Proportions in relation to context.** Buildings should be designed with consideration of the characteristic proportions (relationship of height to width) of existing adjacent facades, as well as the rhythm, proportion, and spacing of their existing door and window openings.
 3. **Storefront rhythm.** A new building facade that is proposed to be much "wider" than the existing characteristic facades on the street should be divided into a series of bays or components, defined by columns or masonry piers that frame windows, doors and bulkheads. Creating and reinforcing a facade rhythm helps tie the street together visually and provides pedestrians with features to mark their progress down the street.

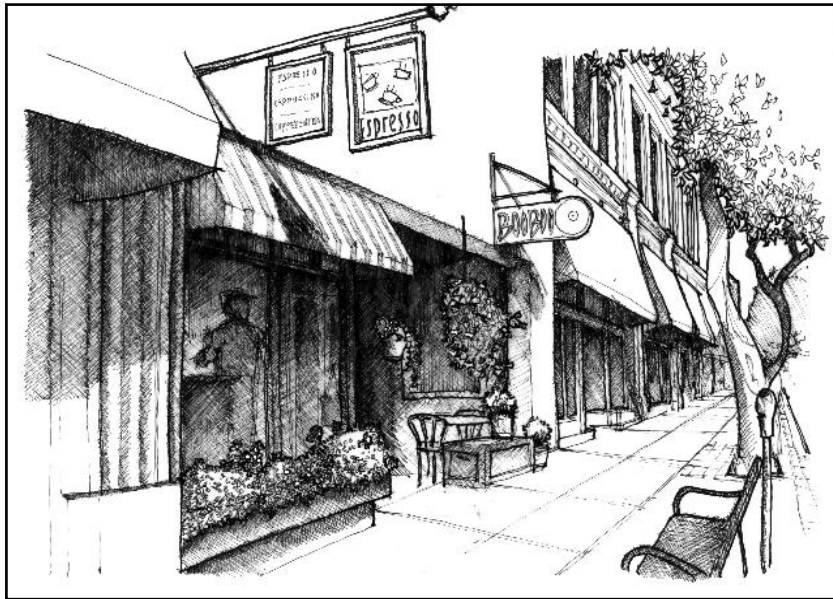


Figure 4-6 – Maintain storefront rhythm.

4. **Individual storefront proportions.** Storefronts should not overpower the building façade, and should be confined to the area framed by the support piers and the lintel above, consistent with classic “Main Street” architecture.
5. **Wall surfaces.** Wall surfaces, particularly at the street level, should be varied and interesting, rather than unbroken and monolithic, because blank walls discourage pedestrian traffic. This can be achieved in a number of ways including:
 - a. Dividing the facade into a series of display windows with smaller panes of glass;
 - b. Constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads;

- c. Providing traditional recessed entries; and
- d. Careful sizing, placement and overall design of signage.

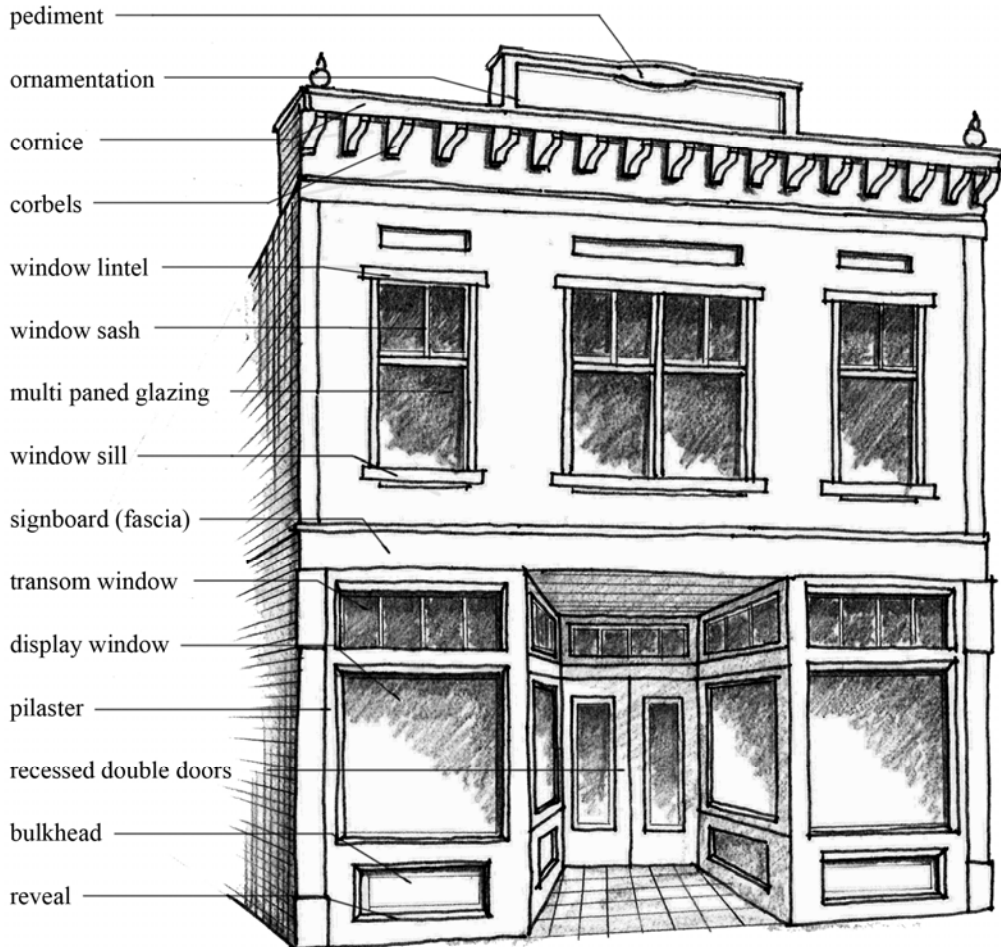


Figure 4-7 – Downtown building design elements.

6. **Doorways.** Doorways should be recessed, as described in Section D.3, below, and shown in Figure 4-9.
7. **Bulkheads.** Storefront windows should not begin at the level of the sidewalk, but should sit above a base, commonly called a “bulkhead,” of 18 to 36 inches in height. Bulkheads should be designed as prominent and visible elements of building facades, and should be treated sensitively to ensure compatibility with the overall appearance of the building. Desirable materials for bulkhead facing include those already common in the downtown: ornamental glazed tile in deep rich hues, either plain or with Mediterranean or Mexican patterns; dark or light marble panels; and pre-cast concrete.

D. Materials and architectural details. While downtown buildings have a variety of materials and architectural details, several consistent themes in these aspects of design in the downtown have helped to define its distinctive character.

- 1. Finish materials.** The exterior materials of downtown buildings involve several aspects including color, texture, and materials. Materials with integral color such as smooth troweled plaster, tile, stone, and brick are encouraged. If the building's exterior design is complicated, with many design features, the wall texture should be simple and subdued. However, if the building design is simple (perhaps more monolithic), a finely textured material, such as patterned masonry, can greatly enrich the building's overall character.

Materials should complement those on significant adjacent buildings. The following materials are considered appropriate for buildings within the downtown.

- Exterior plaster (smooth troweled preferred)
- Cut stone, rusticated block (cast stone), and precast concrete
- New or used face-brick
- Ceramic tiles (bulkhead or cornice)
- Clapboard (where appropriate)
- Glass block (transom)
- Clear glass windows

The following exterior finish materials are considered inappropriate in the downtown and are discouraged:

- Mirrored glass and heavily tinted glass
- Windows with false divisions (i.e., a window where the glass continues uninterrupted behind a surface mounted mullion)
- Vinyl and aluminum siding
- Painted or baked enamel metal awnings
- Rough “Spanish lace” stucco finish
- Plywood siding
- Corrugated sheet metal
- Corrugated fiberglass
- Split face concrete block
- Exposed concrete block without integral color

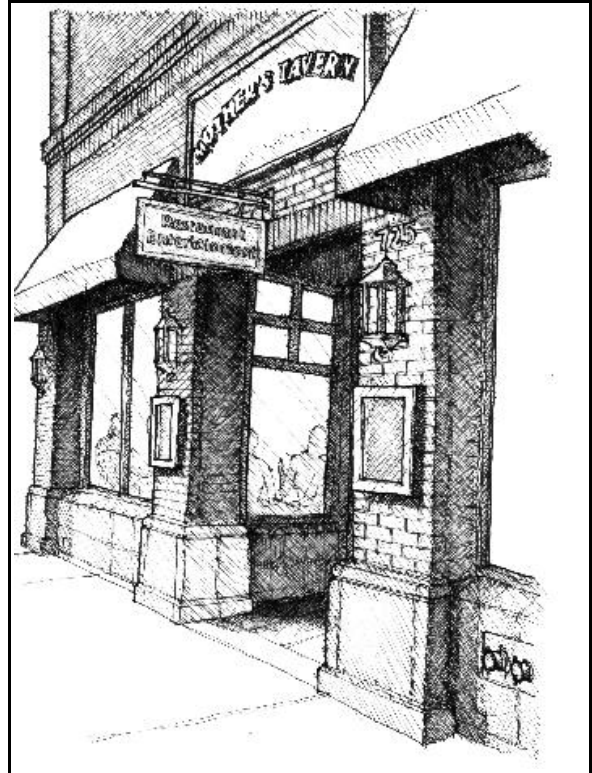


Figure 4-8 – Quality of finish materials.

2. **Remodeling.** Storefront remodeling often covers original decorative details, or retains them only as visual “leftovers.” Existing details should not be wasted in remodeling efforts. If enough remain, they can be restored as part of the original design. If only a few remain, they can be incorporated as design features in a new storefront. In either case, the design of changes to a façade should grow out of the remaining traditional details and create a harmonious background that emphasizes those details.

3. **Doorways.** Doors and storefront systems should be of materials and have details and ornament appropriate to the building wall materials (for example, an older brick building would more appropriately have wood and glass doors with brass fittings than aluminum-framed doors). See Figure 4-9.

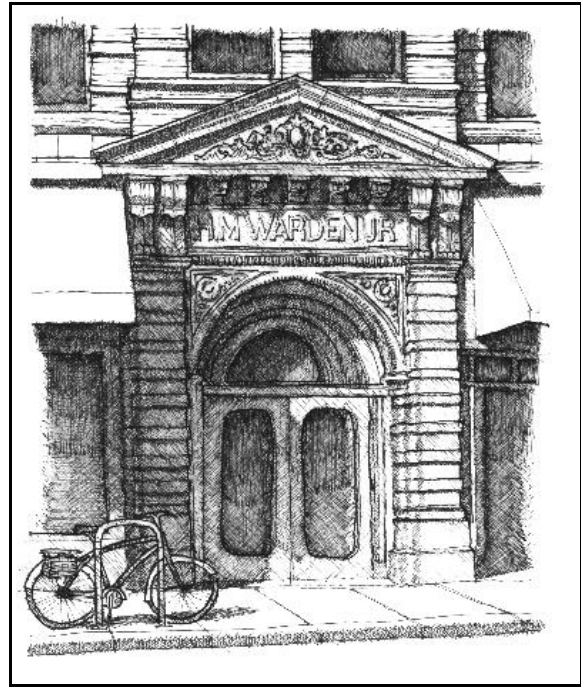


Figure 4-9 – A quality doorway for upper floor uses

- a. Storefront entrance doors should be recessed within the building façade to provide an area for pedestrians to transition from the interior space to the public sidewalk. The appropriate depth of the recess will depend upon the storefront design and available space, but should be at least the width of the entrance door.
 - b. Doors themselves should be primarily of glass, to avoid conflicts between entering and exiting patrons.
 - c. Door and entry designs and materials should be compatible with the other storefront materials. Terrazzo and tile pavers are attractive and appropriate paving materials common in the downtown, while indoor/outdoor carpeting and wood planking are inappropriate materials.
4. **Windows.** Windows that allow pedestrians to see the activities within the ground floors of downtown buildings are important in maintaining the pedestrian orientation of the downtown. Ground floor windows adjacent to sidewalks encourage pedestrians to linger, while extensive blank walls do not.
 - a. When windows are added or changed, it is important that the design be compatible with the themes common on the same block.
 - b. Use of clear glass (at least 88 percent light transmission) on the first floor is recommended. Introducing or changing the location or size of windows or other openings that alter the architectural rhythm or character of the original building is discouraged.
 - c. Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are not permitted. Any necessary security grilles should be placed inside, behind the window display area.

- d. Traditional storefront transom windows should be retained whenever feasible. If the ceiling inside the structure has been lowered, the ceiling should be stepped up to meet the transom so that light will penetrate the interior of the building.
 - e. Existing windows should be maintained, and not "walled-in" or darkened to provide more interior wall or storage space.
5. **Awnings.** Awnings should be retained and/or incorporated where feasible and compatible with the storefront.

- a. Where the facade of a commercial building is divided into distinct bays (sections defined by vertical architectural elements, such as masonry piers), awnings should be placed within the vertical elements rather than overlapping them. The awning design should respond to the scale, proportion and rhythm created by the bay elements and fit into the space created by the bay.
- b. Awning shape should relate to the window or door opening. Barrel-shaped awnings should be used to complement arched windows while square awnings should be used on rectangular windows. See Figure 4-10.
- c. Awnings may not be internally illuminated.
- d. Awnings can be either fixed or retractable.
- e. The materials and color of awnings need to be carefully chosen. The use of second floor awnings shall be coordinated with lower storefront awnings. Canvas is the most appropriate material for awnings. Metal, plastic (vinyl), or other glossy materials are not appropriate.
- f. Awnings should be functional and at least four feet wide.
- g. A single building face with multiple tenants should use consistent awning design and color on each building floor, unless the building architecture differentiates the separate tenancies. See Figure 4-11.

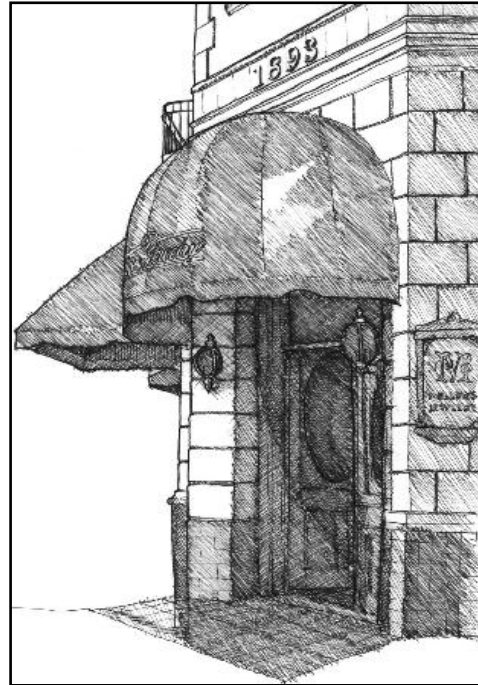


Figure 4-10 – Awning shape relates to opening



Figure 4.11 – Same awning style on upper and lower floors

- 6. Other details.** A number of other details should be incorporated into exterior building design to add a degree of visual richness and interest while meeting functional needs. These details include such items as:
- a. Light fixtures, wall mounted or hung with decorative metal brackets
 - b. Metal grillwork, at vent openings or as decorative features at windows, doorways or gates
 - c. Decorative scuppers, catches and down-spouts, preferably of copper
 - d. Balconies, rails, finials, corbels, plaques, etc.
 - e. Flag or banner pole brackets.
 - f. Crafted artworks.
- E. Public spaces, plazas and courtyards.** Public spaces on downtown sites should be designed as extensions of the public sidewalk by providing pedestrian amenities such as benches and fountains, and by continuing the pavement treatment of the sidewalk.
- a. Plazas and courtyards are encouraged within the downtown.
 - b. Primary access to public plazas and courtyards should be from the street; secondary access may be from retail shops, restaurants, offices, and other uses.
 - c. Shade trees or architectural elements that provide shelter and relief from direct sunlight should be provided.
 - d. Courtyards should be buffered from parking areas or drive aisles by low walls, landscaping, or other features to clearly define the edges of the pedestrian space.
 - e. Ample seating should be provided.
 - f. Bicycle parking should be provided.

Chapter 5 - Residential Project Design

The design character of San Luis Obispo's residential neighborhoods is as diverse as the different time periods during which they were developed. The guidelines provided here are intended to assist project designers and property owners in understanding and implementing the City's goals for attaining high quality residential development. They are also intended to help preserve the traditional character of the City's older neighborhoods.

These guidelines apply to the design of new residential subdivisions and to multi-family and clustered residential projects. Guidelines are also provided for single-family homes on sensitive sites, vacant infill parcels, and that are proposed as replacement structures within established neighborhoods.

5.1 - Goals for Residential Project Design

These guidelines are intended to encourage well designed residential neighborhoods that people enjoy living in, which: reduce the visual dominance of the automobile; promote pedestrian activity; create variety and interest in the appearance of residential streets; provide community open space; and protect significant features of the natural environment.

5.2 - Subdivision Design and General Residential Project Principles

The following guidelines apply to new residential subdivisions, and address how new residential subdivisions should relate to their surroundings.

- A. **Develop "neighborhoods."** Each new residential project should be designed to integrate with the surrounding neighborhood to ensure that it maintains the established character. Subdivisions in City expansion areas should be designed so that individual, separately developed projects work together to create distinct neighborhoods, instead of disjointed or isolated enclaves.
- B. **Integrate open space.** New subdivisions adjacent to planned or existing parks or other public open spaces (e.g., creeks, riparian areas), or the landscaped grounds of schools or other public facilities should maximize visibility and pedestrian access to these areas. Where these facilities are not already planned, the subdivision should be designed to provide usable public open spaces in the form of parks, linear bicycle and pedestrian trails, squares, and greens, as appropriate.
- C. **Edges.** "Gated communities," and other residential developments designed to appear as continuous walled-off areas, disconnected and isolated from the rest of the community, are strongly discouraged. While walls and fences may be useful for security, sound attenuation and privacy, these objectives can often be met by creative design that controls the height and length of walls, develops breaks and variations in relief, and uses landscaping, along with natural topographical changes, for screening.
- D. **Scale.** New residential subdivisions, and groups of subdivisions that, in effect, collectively create a new neighborhood, should be designed to provide a "walkable" scale, that places all homes within 1/4 mile of neighborhood shopping opportunities, a neighborhood park, or a public facility that can serve as a "center" for the neighborhood. Ideally, each neighborhood should have a center that includes all three facilities.

E. Site planning. Residential subdivision and multi-family project site planning should emphasize the needs of pedestrians and cyclists rather than cars

1. Street layout. New public streets and sidewalks should be aligned with, and be connected to those of adjacent developments to interconnect the community.

a. Pedestrian orientation. Subdivision design should emphasize pedestrian connectivity within each project, to adjacent neighborhoods, nearby schools and parks, and to transit stops within 1/4-mile of planned residential areas. All streets and walkways should be designed to provide safe and pleasant conditions for pedestrians, including the disabled, and cyclists.

b. Block length. The length of block faces between intersecting streets should be as short as possible, ideally no more than 400 feet, to provide pedestrian connectivity.

c. Street width and design speed. Streets within neighborhoods should be no wider than needed to accommodate parking and two low-speed travel lanes. Streets in new subdivisions should be designed to accommodate traffic speeds of 25 miles per hour or less, with most streets in a subdivision designed for lower speeds.

d. Parkway/planting strips. Sidewalks should be separated from curbs by parkway strips of at least five feet in width. The parkways should be planted with canopy trees at an interval appropriate to the species of the selected street tree that will produce a continuously shaded sidewalk. The parkways should also be planted with ground covers and other plant materials that will withstand pedestrian traffic.

e. Access to open areas. Single-loaded streets (those with residential development on one side and open space on the other) should be used to provide public access to, and visibility of natural open spaces, public parks, and neighborhood schools, as well as a means for buffering homes from parks and schools.

Where single-loaded streets are not feasible or desirable, other methods that provide similar access and visibility may be used, including private streets, bike and pedestrian paths, or the placement of private common open space or recreation facilities adjacent to the public open space.

f. Cul-de-sac streets. The use of cul-de-sac streets should be avoided wherever possible. If cul-de-sacs are necessary, the end of each cul-de-sac should provide a pedestrian walkway and bikeway between private parcels to link with an adjacent cul-de-sac, street, and/or park, school, or open space area.

g. Alleys. Alleys may be provided for garage access, otherwise individual lots should be wide enough to accommodate a side yard driveway to a detached garage at the rear of the lot, so that appearance of the street frontage is not dominated by garages and pavement.

2. **Open space and natural features.** Providing open space and integrating natural features into a residential project can significantly increase the appreciation of residents in their neighborhoods, provide safe places for children and families to play, and maintain a strong sense of connection with the surrounding natural environment in the city as a whole.
 - a. Natural amenities (such as views, mature trees, creeks, riparian corridors, rock outcrops, and similar features) should be preserved and incorporated into proposed development to the greatest extent feasible. Reduced density and the clustering of units in hillside areas is encouraged as a means of achieving this goal.
 - b. Development adjacent to parks or other public open spaces should be designed to provide maximum visibility of these areas.
 - c. Development on hillsides should generally follow the natural terrain contour. Stepped building pads, larger lot sizes, and setbacks should be used to preserve the general shape of natural land forms and to minimize grade differentials with adjacent streets and with adjoining properties.
 - d. Public access and visibility to creeks, and the separation of residences and other uses from creeks should be provided through the use of single-loaded frontage roads in combination with multi-use trails. Pedestrian access to and along creeks and riparian corridors may need to be restricted to flatter areas (e.g. beyond top of bank, natural benches) where grading needs and erosion potential are minimal, and where sensitive environmental resources require protection.
- F. **Exterior finish materials.** Exterior finish materials should be durable and require low maintenance. The use of combined materials (such as stucco and wood siding) can provide visual interest and texture; however, all sides of each single-family dwelling or multi-family structure should employ the same materials, design details, and window treatment. No residential structure should have a carefully designed and detailed facade facing the street, and use bland, featureless stucco or other simple materials on the other exterior building walls. Each residential structure should look like the same building from all sides.
- G. **Windows.** Where one or more windows are proposed 10 feet or less from a side lot line, or within 10 feet of another dwelling, the windows should be located and/or screened to provide privacy for the residents of both structures. In some cases, glass block or translucent glass may be appropriate to provide light, but also provide privacy between buildings.
- H. **Garages and carports.** Accommodating vehicle storage in both single-family dwellings and multi-family projects should avoid the common problem of creating streets that appear garage- and driveway-dominated.
 1. In the limited instances where an exception is granted for a setback to a garage of less than 20 feet from a property line or internal driveway, the garage shall be equipped with a roll-up door. This requirement is intended to discourage vehicles from parking in front of garages and blocking the adjacent driveway or sidewalk.
 2. Where carports are provided, they may be bordered by patio walls, or used to define public and private open space, but should not be located adjacent to perimeter streets. Each carport end should be screened by a low wall, berm, and/or landscaping.

3. Where multiple garages are located together, landscaped tree wells should be placed between every two garage doors. Each tree well should be a minimum of 10 square feet.
4. Carports and detached garages should be designed as an integral part of a project. Their materials, color, and details should be the same as the principal structures. Carports may have flat roofs but should not project above the exterior walls of any buildings adjacent to streets. Prefabricated metal or canvas tent-like carports should not be used. Where garages are utilized, doors should appear set into walls rather than flush with the exterior wall.
5. The use of quality materials, windows, and features with horizontal and vertical relief are encouraged to add interest and character to the design of garage doors and to coordinate their design with the architecture of the primary residence.

5.3 - Infill Development

The following guidelines apply to “infill development.” That is, multi-family structures or individual houses that entirely replace existing units or are constructed on vacant parcels between existing units. The guidelines are intended to provide for infill projects of high architectural quality that are compatible with existing development. They are also intended to promote the conservation and reuse of existing older houses, and to preserve the historical character of the City’s older neighborhoods. Preservation and rehabilitation efforts in the older neighborhoods should protect the architectural features of a home that identify its individual style and contribute to the character of the area.

A. General principles. Infill residential development should:

1. Be compatible in scale, siting, detailing, and overall character with adjacent buildings and those in the immediate neighborhood. This is crucial when a new or remodeled house is proposed to be larger than others in the neighborhood. When new homes are developed adjacent to older ones, the height and bulk of the new construction can have a negative impact on adjacent, smaller scale buildings.
2. Continue existing neighborhood patterns. For example, patterns such as front porches and entries facing the street, finished floor height, and garages located at the rear of lots.

B. Building design. An infill residential structure should incorporate the traditional architectural characteristics of existing houses in the neighborhood, including window and door spacing, exterior materials, roof style and pitch, ornamentation and other details.

C. Visual impacts from building height. The height of infill projects should be consistent with of surrounding residential structures. Where greater height is desired, an infill structure should set back upper floors from the edge of the first story to reduce impacts on adjacent smaller homes, and to protect solar access.

D. Outdoor living areas. The use of balconies, verandas, porches, and courtyards within the building form of infill structures is strongly encouraged.

E. Exterior finish materials. The thoughtful selection of building materials can enhance desired neighborhood qualities such as compatibility, continuity, and harmony. The design of infill residential structures should incorporate an appropriate mixture of the predominant materials found in the

neighborhood. Common materials in San Luis Obispo are smooth, troweled, or sand-finished stucco, wood, horizontal clapboard siding, shingles, brick, and stone.

- F. Exterior colors.** Color schemes for infill residential structures should consider the colors of existing houses in the neighborhood, to maintain compatibility.

5.4 - Multi-Family and Clustered Housing Design

Multi-family and clustered housing projects are generally more dense than single-family developments, and tend to generate larger parking areas and provide less private open space. If not properly designed, parking can dominate a multi-family site, and open space may only be provided as “left over” areas, unrelated to other project features, that are not usable for outdoor activities, and expose residents to uncomfortable noise levels.

Multi-family projects that are surrounded by high walls, parking lots and/or rows of carports along streets are inappropriate in San Luis Obispo and should be avoided. These guidelines address the problems associated with higher density developments through appropriate site planning, parking layout, circulation patterns, building design, and landscaping.

- A. Site planning.** Site planning for a multi-family or clustered housing project should create a pleasant, comfortable, safe, and distinct place for residents, without the project "turning its back" on the surrounding neighborhood
1. The placement of new units should consider the existing character of the surrounding residential area. New development should respect the privacy of adjacent residential uses through appropriate building orientation and structure height, so that windows do not overlook and impair the privacy of the indoor or outdoor living space of adjacent units.

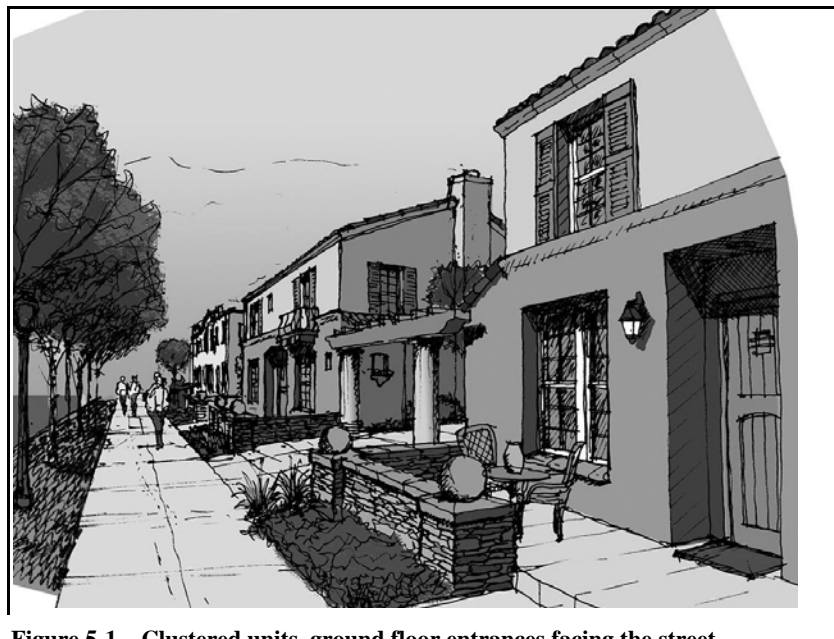


Figure 5-1 – Clustered units, ground floor entrances facing the street

2. Multi-family units should be clustered. A project of more than 10 units outside the Downtown should separate the units into structures of six or fewer units. See Figure 5-1.

3. Multi-family structures should be set back from adjacent public streets consistent with the prevailing setback pattern of the immediate neighborhood.
4. Lower density multi-family projects should be comprised of "walk-up" rather than "stacked" units, with each unit adjacent to a street having its primary pedestrian entrance from the street sidewalk. Higher density projects should be designed either with ground floor units having individual sidewalk entrances, or as courtyard projects with at least one significant pedestrian entrance from the street sidewalk. Where individual units have access to the street sidewalk, private "front yard" outdoor space may be differentiated from the public right-of-way by a porch, or small yard enclosed by a low fence. See Figures 5-1 and 5-2.



Figure 5-2 – Most ground floor units should have entrances facing the street

5. Residential units and activity areas not adjacent to a street should be accessible via pedestrian



walkways and activity areas. See Figure 5-3.

B. Parking and driveways. Individual closeable garages are the preferred method for providing parking for residents in multi-family projects. If garages within the residential structures are not provided, dispersed parking courts are acceptable.

1. Long, monotonous parking drives and large, undivided parking lots are discouraged.
2. The main vehicle access into a multi-family site should be through an attractive entry drive. Colored and textured paving treatment is encouraged outside of the public street right-of-way, and within the project.
3. Parking areas should be visible from the residential units to the extent possible.
4. Safe and protected bicycle parking should be located convenient to each dwelling unit.
5. Parking courts, with or without carports, should not consist of more than two double-loaded parking aisles (bays) adjacent to each other. The length of a parking court should not exceed the width of eight adjoining stalls.
6. Parking courts should be separated from each other by buildings within the project or by landscape or natural open space areas at least 30 feet wide.
7. Large scale multi-family projects (i.e., more than 20 units) with internal streets should have the streets designed as if they were pleasant public streets, with comprehensive streetscapes including sidewalks, and planting strips between curb and sidewalk with canopy trees.

C. Multi-family project architecture. The exterior design of multi-family projects should be derived from architectural styles in the surrounding neighborhood. Often, these types of projects are adjacent to single family neighborhoods, and care in design should ensure that the height and bulk of the higher density projects do not impact adjacent lower density residential areas.

1. **Facade and roof articulation.** A structure with three or more attached units should incorporate significant wall and roof articulation to reduce apparent scale. Changes in wall planes and roof heights, and the inclusion of elements such as balconies, porches, arcades, dormers, and cross gables can avoid the barracks-like quality of long flat walls and roofs. Secondary hipped or gabled roofs covering the entire mass of a building are preferable to mansard roofs or segments of pitched roof applied at the structure's edge. Structures (including garages and carports) exceeding 150 feet in length are discouraged. See Figures 5-2 and 5-4.
2. **Scale.** Because multi-family projects are usually taller than one story, their bulk can impose on surrounding uses. The larger scale of these projects should be considered within the context of their surroundings. Structures with greater height may require additional setbacks at the ground floor level and/or upper levels (stepped-down) along the street frontage so they do not shade adjacent properties or visually dominate the neighborhood. Large projects should be broken up into groups of structures, and large single structures should be avoided. See Figure 5-4.

3. **Balconies, porches, and patios.** The use of balconies, porches, and patios as part of multi-family structures is encouraged for both practical and aesthetic value. These elements should be used to break up large wall masses, offset floor setbacks, and add human scale to structures. Multi-family units with individual access to the street sidewalk should have individual covered porches. See Figure 5-4.

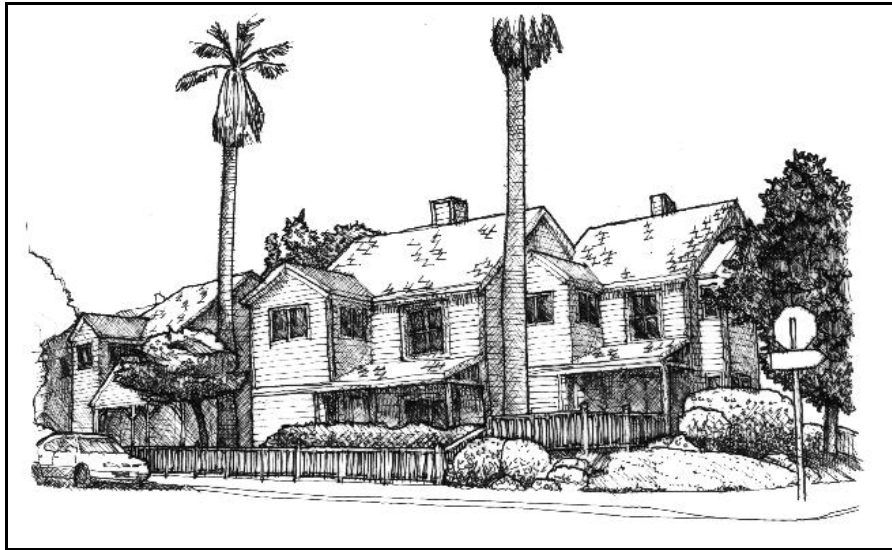


Figure 5-4 – Articulation, scale, covered porches for units at street level

4. **Dwelling unit access.** The use of balconies and corridors to provide access to five or more units should be avoided. Access points to units should instead be clustered in groups of four or less. To the extent possible, main entrances to individual units should be from adjoining streets. Distinctive architectural elements and materials should be used to highlight primary entrances.
5. **Exterior stairways.** Stairways providing access to the upper levels of multi-family structures should be located mostly within the buildings themselves. Where exterior stairways are necessary, they should provide residents and visitors protection from weather, and should be of stucco, plaster or wood, with accent trim to match the main structure. Thin-looking, open metal, prefabricated stairs that are not integrated with the design of the structure are discouraged.
6. **Accessory structures.** Accessory structures should be designed as an integral part of a project. Their materials, color, and details should be the same as the principal structures on the site.

5.5 - Single-Family Housing Design

- A. **Houses in new subdivisions.** The site planning of lots and the design of houses constructed in new subdivisions should help create neighborhoods that are oriented more toward pedestrians than automobiles. Subdivisions of new homes should comply with the following guidelines.
 1. Subdivisions should provide variety in the architectural detailing, size, and massing of houses on each block.

2. Houses should be located no further from the street than the minimum setback allowed by the Zoning Ordinance, except to provide variations in the alignment of houses along a block. Developers are encouraged to have variable setbacks approved along with their tentative subdivision maps in compliance with Zoning Ordinance Section 17.16.020 E.2.b.
 3. All houses should have their primary entrance facing and clearly visible from the street, with a front porch or verandah encouraged to provide a transition between the public space of the streetscape and the indoor private space of the house.
 4. When viewed from the street, a garage should be visually subordinate to the living space within the house that addresses the street. Ideally, a garage should be detached from the house, located at the rear of the lot, and accessed by an alley, or a shared driveway from the street fronting the lot. Where this arrangement is not appropriate, the front of an attached garage should be set back from the front of the house (at least 15 feet is recommended where the lot area permits).
- B. Infill development.** New single-family homes proposed on infill lots should comply with the guidelines for infill residential development in Section 5.3 (page 56)
- C. Additions and alterations in older neighborhoods.** The following guidelines apply to additions and the rehabilitation, remodeling, or alteration of existing single-family houses in San Luis Obispo's older neighborhoods. While these guidelines apply to all houses, those that are designated as cultural resources may be subject to more strict standards.
1. **Additions.** Additions to residential structures built before 1950 should respect the architectural style, detailing, scale, and composition of the original building so that they look integrated with the original structure, rather than a tacked-on afterthought. Modifications (e.g., additions, seismic strengthening, replacement of windows or siding material, and new entrances) should not compromise the integrity of historically authentic features, materials, or finishes. Additions should also be designed with consideration for the design and massing of adjacent residences, to promote neighborhood compatibility.
 - a. **Roof changes.** The roof features of a residential structure, especially its style, materials and pitch, are important architectural elements that must be considered when planning an addition. The roof style, pitch and materials on the addition should match the original.
 - b. **Additional floors.** Adding a story to an existing house will change the building proportions and should be carefully designed to follow similar multi-story examples of the particular architectural style found in the neighborhood. In some cases, integrating the new story addition may require that it be set back or "stepped" back from the front facade so that it is less noticeable from the street.
 2. **Alterations - Restoration and remodeling.** The rehabilitation of older buildings should aim to retain and restore their original elements. If damage or deterioration is too severe, the element should be recreated using original materials to match the design, color, texture and any other important design features.

When replacement is necessary and materials similar to or consistent with original materials cannot be obtained, substitute materials should incorporate design, colors and textures that convey the traditional appearance of the original material.

3. **Exterior materials.** Original exterior building materials should be retained whenever possible. Mismatched materials of different sizes, shapes, textures, or finishes should be avoided.
 - a. **Wood siding.** Residential buildings with original wood clapboard siding should not be stuccoed in an attempt to "modernize" their appearance.
 - b. **Brick surfaces.** Brick surfaces should not be sandblasted to remove old paint, nor should they be covered with stucco or other siding materials. Sandblasting will damage the natural fired surface of the brick and cause it to lose its water repellent qualities. Paint should be removed by chemical stripping. Brick that was not intended to be painted as part of a building's original design should not be painted over.
4. **Windows.** Most older residential structures have wood-framed windows that are either fixed, double hung, or casement. Window replacements or additions should also use the original type of window. It is strongly recommended that aluminum frame windows not be used as replacements in any residential structure unless they were part of the original design.
5. **Doors.** Many of San Luis Obispo's older homes have solid wood doors consistent with the particular architectural style of the building. The front door is typically the most ornate, with secondary doors usually more utilitarian in appearance. The size, shape and style of doors is an important feature of all historical architectural styles, and the original type and design should continue to be used.

If the original door is missing, an appropriate design should be selected through the study of the doors of similar residential structures in the neighborhood, or by consulting books on architectural styles. Some older-style panel doors can be obtained from material suppliers, and may closely match original doors.
6. **Porches and stairs.** During rehabilitation efforts, the design integrity of the front porch should be maintained. The installation of wrought iron or aluminum railings should be avoided, as a change in the structural or decorative elements of the front porch will usually compromise the architectural integrity of the entire building. Restoring an older building's architectural integrity may require "undoing" previous porch alterations.
7. **Ornamentation and trim.** The authentic decoration and trim of a residential structure lends character and identifies the building with a particular architectural style. Care should be taken in handling these materials during renovation because they are critical components.

Chapter 6 - Site Planning and Other Design Details

This Chapter provides guidelines for specific details of site and building design that apply to all development requiring architectural review. These guidelines apply in addition to all other applicable provisions of this design guidelines document.

6.1 - Miscellaneous Design Details

- A. Energy and resource conservation.** Site planning and building design should take advantage of all reasonable opportunities to reduce energy and other resource consumption, in compliance with the Energy Conservation Element of the General Plan. The City also encourages all proposed development to comply with the standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) developed by the Green Building Council (www.usgbc.org).
1. The placement of a building on a site and the building itself should be designed to maximize opportunities for the optimal operation of passive systems for heating, cooling and lighting. Sunlight should be used for direct heating and illumination whenever possible. Natural ventilation and shading should be used to cool a building.
 2. The use of exterior shading devices, skylights, daylighting controls, high performance glazing that allows the transmission of light with minimal heat gain, and high thermal mass building components is encouraged.
 3. An application for proposed building construction shall include a solid waste recycling plan for recycling discarded building materials, such as concrete, sheetrock, wood, and metals from the construction site. The plan must be submitted for approval by the Community Development Director, prior to building permit issuance.
- B. Fences and walls.** Fences and walls can effectively provide safety, security, screening, and privacy, but can also be unsightly site elements because of their length and visibility, unless thoughtfully designed.
1. The design and placement of fences, retaining walls, gates, arbors, footbridges and other site features should relate well to building architecture and site topography. These elements should be of the same quality in design and materials as the buildings.
 2. The color of fence and wall materials should complement the other structures on the site. The use of chain-link fencing and “crib” retaining wall designs are discouraged. Tall retaining walls (five feet and higher) should be divided up into two or more shorter walls (depending on height), with the upper portion of the wall set back from the lower wall at least two feet, with the slope between the walls not exceeding 4:1. Landscaping (with an irrigation system) should be installed in the space between walls.
 3. Long, monotonous fences or walls should be avoided. Fences and walls should be offset at least every 10 feet. Landscaping should be installed in offset areas where appropriate. Landscaping along fences and walls should be coordinated with the street tree planting scheme.

C. **Lighting.** Exterior lighting should be designed to be compatible with the architectural and landscape design of the project while preserving the night sky, and not create a nuisance for adjacent and nearby properties. See also the Night Sky Preservation standards in Chapter 17.23 of the Zoning Regulations.

1. Outdoor lighting fixtures, including lighting for outdoor recreational facilities, shall be cutoff fixtures designed and installed so that no emitted light will break a horizontal plane passing through the lowest point of the fixture (See Figure 6-1).

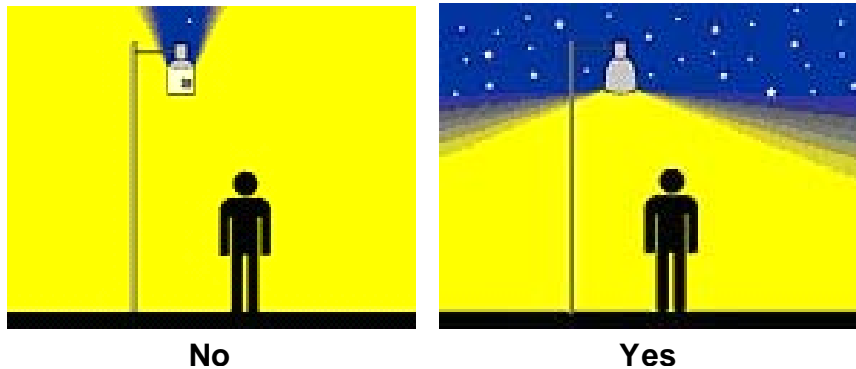


Figure 6-1
Examples of outdoor light fixtures

2. Outdoor lighting shall be fully shielded, recessed, directed downward and not spill onto adjacent properties and public rights-of-way (See Figure 6-1).

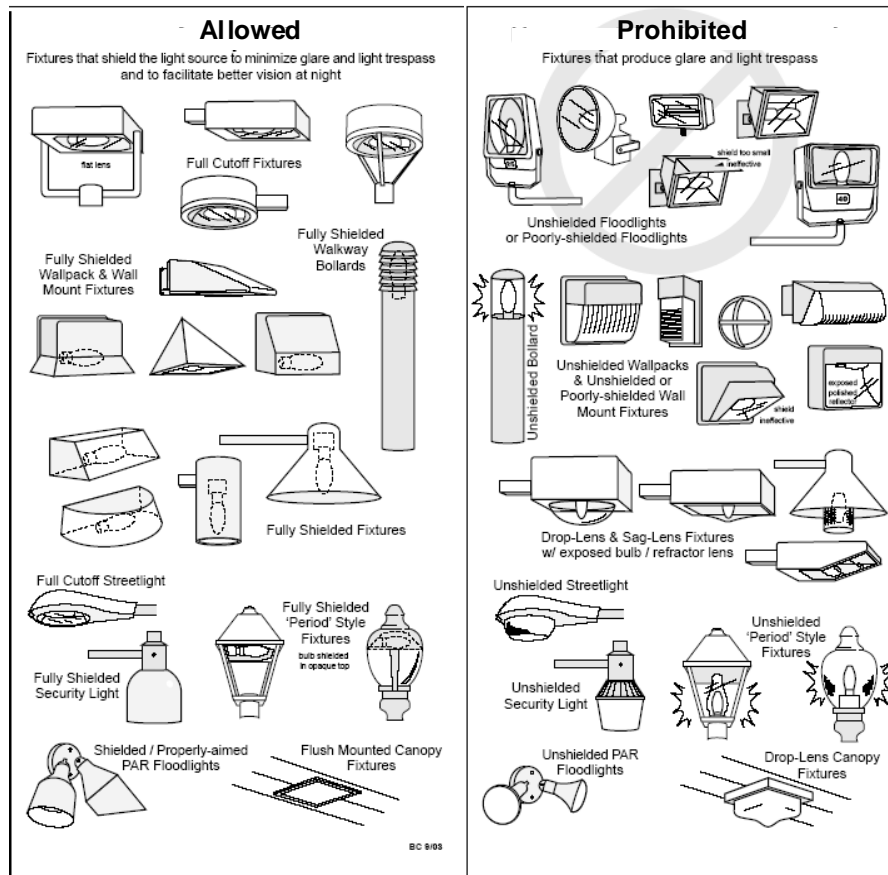


Figure 6-2
Examples of outdoor light fixtures¹

¹ Figures shown are examples for the public and staff to use in meeting the intent of this Section. The City of San Luis Obispo does not endorse or discriminate against any manufacturer that may be shown or mentioned as examples.

3. An appropriate hierarchy of lighting fixtures/structures and intensity should be considered when designing the lighting for the various elements of a project (i.e., building and site entrances, walkways, parking areas, or other areas of the site).
4. To achieve the desired lighting level for parking and pedestrian areas, it is preferred to have more, smaller scale lights instead of fewer, overly tall and large lights. Parking lot lights shall be as low in height as possible, and shall not exceed a height of 21 feet from the approved finished grade to the bottom of the fixture.
5. The design of outdoor light fixtures should be in keeping with the architectural style of adjacent structures. Outdoor wall-mounted fixtures should not exceed a height of 15 feet from grade or the height of the building, whichever is less.
6. The maximum light intensity on residential and nonresidential sites shall not exceed a maintained value of 10 footcandles at grade. Exceptions are allowed for sports lighting.
7. No lighting on private property shall produce an illumination level greater than two maintained horizontal footcandles at grade on any property within a residential zoning district except on the site of the light source.
8. The use of exterior lighting to accent building architecture is encouraged. When neon tubing is used to illuminate portions of a building it should be concealed from view by parapets, cornices or ledges. Small portions of exposed neon tubing may be used to add special emphasis to an architectural feature, but this must be well thought out and integrated into the overall design.
9. No permanently installed lighting shall blink, flash, rotate or be of unusually high intensity or brightness.
10. Exterior lighting should enhance building design and landscaping, as well as provide for safety and security, but should not create glare for residents or neighbors. Cut sheets or details of lighting fixtures shall be submitted with plans to confirm that lighting will be cast downward, rather than spreading glare onto adjacent properties.
11. Lighting fixtures should be durable, and of a design that complements building design and landscaping.
12. The Architectural Review Commission can approve an exception to these standards based on specific extenuating circumstances.

D. Mechanical equipment. The attractive appearance of an otherwise appropriate building design can be ruined by the placement of mechanical equipment (for example, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) in visible locations on the roof, or on the ground adjacent to the structure. Equipment that is not effectively integrated into the building design should be screened as follows.

1. All mechanical equipment (e.g., compressors, air conditioners, pumps, heating and ventilating equipment, generators, solar collectors, satellite dishes, communications equipment, etc.) and any other type of mechanical equipment should be concealed from view of public streets, and neighboring properties, and should be insulated as necessary to prevent noise generated by the equipment from being audible off the property.

2. Roof-mounted mechanical equipment should be screened by a building parapet or other effective roof design. If equipment will be visible above the parapet, some other type of screen shall be proposed. Plans must clearly call out the height of equipment and demonstrate how equipment will be adequately screened. A line of site diagram may be needed to confirm that proposed screening will be adequate. Ground or interior-mounted mechanical equipment (with appropriate screening) is encouraged as an alternative to roof-mounting.

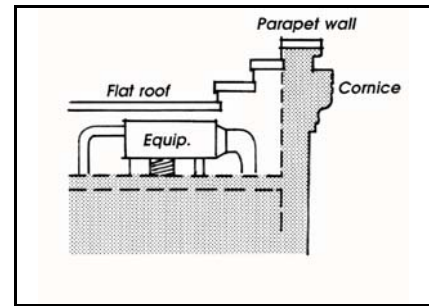


Figure 6-3 – Equipment screening

3. Roof penetrations (such as plumbing and exhaust vents, air conditioner units, and transformer boxes) should be grouped together where feasible to minimize their visual impact. The roof design should help to screen or camouflage rooftop protrusions.
 4. Solar heating equipment should be as unobtrusive as possible and complement the building design.
 5. Standpipes for fire sprinkler systems should be shown on plans early in the review process so that their visual impact will be understood. They should preferably be placed within the building.
- E. Outdoor storage.** Outdoor storage areas shall be screened with a solid fence, wall or mature hedge or other screen planting at least six feet high (per Zoning Regulations Section 17.6.090).
- F. Trash/recycling enclosures & service areas.** Refuse containers, service areas, loading docks, and similar facilities should be located out of view from the general public, and so that their use does not interfere with on-site parking or circulation areas, and adjacent uses, especially residential uses.
1. Trash/recycling enclosures and service and loading docks should be conveniently located and large enough to accommodate the uses on the site, but must not interfere with other circulation or parking on the site.
 2. Trash containers should be located away from public streets and primary building entrances, and should be completely screened with materials that are consistent with those on adjacent building exteriors.
 3. If space constraints or excessive site slope mandate that a trash/recycling enclosure be installed in a street yard, then it should be: located so it gates do not face the street; finished with high quality materials to match the architecture of the project buildings; and utilize surrounding landscaping to further screen and enhance its appearance. Screening techniques such as trailing vines on walls, berming along side and rear walls, and overhead trellises are all encouraged.

4. Trash storage areas that are visible from the upper stories of adjacent structures should be screened with a trellis or other horizontal cover to mitigate unsightly views. The covering structure should be consistent with the architectural style of adjacent buildings.
5. Enclosures should be designed for long-term use and made of durable materials built on a concrete pad, in compliance with the standards for trash enclosure design in Appendix B, “City of San Luis Obispo Development Standards for Solid Waste Services.”
6. Pedestrian access through a separate gate to trash/recycling enclosures is required for developments with multiple businesses, and multi-family residential projects, such as condominiums and planned developments, consistent with Section D of Exhibit 4. of the Bin Enclosure Standards available at www.slocity.org/utilities/recycling.asp.

G. Utilities. The location of meters and electrical transformers, control boxes, utility poles and lines, fire safety apparatus and any other utility equipment needs to be conceptually shown on plans submitted for architectural review pending final utility company approval. Equipment and fixtures must be accessible for their intended purposes, but also located and otherwise designed to be as unobtrusive as possible.

1. Utility service equipment (for example, electric and gas meters, electrical panels, and junction boxes) should be located in a utility room within the structure, or enclosed utility cabinets at the rear of the structure that are consistent with building architecture and, where feasible, integral to the building. Locations of meter boxes and other similar equipment should be clearly shown on elevations.
2. Transformers must be placed so that they are not visible from streets adjacent to the site. When transformers are unavoidable in a front setback, they should be placed below grade. If below grade placement is not possible, they should be completely screened by walls and/or thick landscaping, and should be located to not obstruct views of tenant spaces, monument signs, windows, and/or driveways. Underground placement and screening is also necessary when transformers must be located in side setbacks that are visible from the street.
3. The location of any required backflow prevention devices shall be shown on all site plans, including the landscaping plan, as part of an application for architectural review. When buildings are located within 20 feet of the front right-of-way line, the backflow preventer may be installed just inside this front part of the building in direct alignment with the fire service lateral from the water main in the street. Exterior backflow prevention devices shall be painted to blend in with the landscaping or other background material. In addition, the backflow prevention device shall be screened using a combination of slopes, landscaping, or other site improvements such as garden walls. Specific screening proposals shall allow access to the device for required annual testing, and shall be subject to review and approval by the Community Development Director, or for projects requiring their approval, the Architectural Review Commission.

6.2 - Landscaping

A. Goals for landscaping. The landscape design goals for the City include landscape that:

1. Enhances building architecture

2. Reflects local climate and is water conserving
3. Emphasizes native species while providing botanical and visual diversity
4. Helps to preserve and create views
5. Is low maintenance, while in keeping with the City’s high standards for the best of design
6. Provides aesthetic links and transitions between centers of activity
7. Uses plantings as examples of design, creative combinations of shapes, textures, and colors
8. Provides shade, either seasonal or year round
9. Provides seasonal variety
10. Preserves and utilizes historic plantings
11. Preserves and establishes landmark trees
12. Provides imaginative combinations of plantings and hardscape

B. Landscape design guidelines. The following guidelines are intended to assist in achieving the above goals.

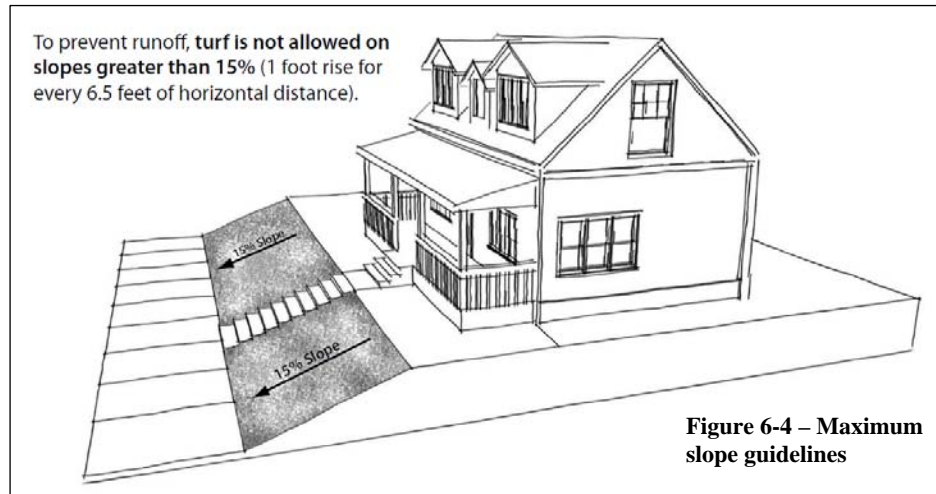
1. **Overall landscaping guidelines.** Planting areas should be integrated with the building design, enhance the appearance and enjoyment of the project and soften the visual impact of buildings and paving. Landscaping should use a combination of trees, shrubs, and ground cover. Project plantings should blend with vegetation on nearby property if the neighboring greenery is healthy and appropriate. The City encourages innovation in planting design and choice of landscape materials.
2. **Vegetation and natural features.** Healthy existing vegetation and natural rock formations should be kept and incorporated into site and planting plans if they improve site appearance or enhance its proposed use.
3. **Extent of landscaping.** A site should be adequately planted on all sides, and within its interior. Trees must be planted along streets in compliance with the City’s Tree Regulations, and should be selected from the City’s “street tree” list. Trees not on the list may be used if approved by the City’s Arborist. Trees may also be required at other locations on a site for screening.
4. **Plant selection.** The purpose of planting for shade, screening, erosion control or appearance should inform the selection of plant types. Thickness, height, color, seasonal characteristics and ultimate growth should be considered. Where planting is intended to perform a function such as screening or shading, its initial size and spacing should be selected to achieve its purpose within two years, or it should be supplemented by temporary architectural features such as screen fencing or an arbor.

5. **Water conservation.** The conservation and efficient use of water are important City goals. To that end, the City Council adopted Ordinance 1547 (2010 series) that promotes the use of native and drought tolerant materials and sets water efficient landscape standards consistent with State law. The purpose of the standards are to provide landscape designers and project applicants with the tools they will need to design a landscape that is consistent with the Community Design Guidelines goals and meet the more stringent requirements for water conservation. The landscape standards apply to the following types of development:
- New construction and rehabilitated landscapes for institutional, commercial and multi-family development projects with a landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet which are otherwise subject to a building permit or development review.
 - Developer-installed single-family residential landscapes and common areas of a project with a landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet which are otherwise subject to a building permit or development review. Where model homes are included, the developer shall install at least two model homes with landscapes that comply with the City Engineering Standards requirements and include signs and printed materials explaining design strategies and plant materials for water conservation.
 - New construction landscapes which are homeowner-provided and/or homeowner-hired in single-family projects with a total project landscape area equal to or greater than 5,000 square feet requiring a building permit or development review.

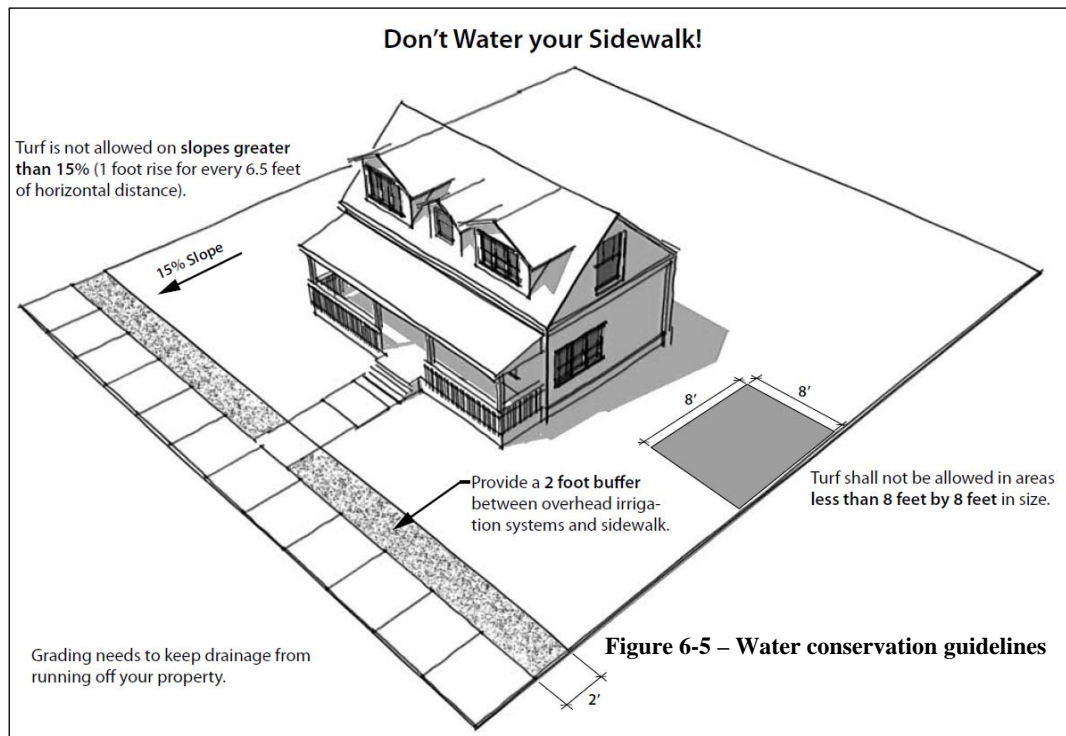
The landscape design criteria are located in the City’s Engineering Standards in Section H. Landscaping and Irrigation. The following are the standards that apply to all projects which fall under the ordinance:

- Any combination of plant materials that do not exceed the Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA). MAWA or a water budget approach establishes the upper limit of the amount of water applied annually to the landscape. Using the formula based on plant water use factors, the MAWA allows for approximately 1/3 high, 1/3 medium and 1/3 low water use plants in a landscape design.
- The method to calculate the Maximum Applied Water Allowance and Estimated Total Water Use shall be in accordance with Appendix E.
- Plant factors used to calculate the MAWA shall be derived from the most recent edition of the Department of Water Resources “Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS)”.
- Each hydrozone shall have plant materials with similar water requirements.
- Plants shall be selected and planted appropriately based upon their adaptability to the climatic, soil, and topographical conditions of the project site, and water attributes.
- Turf is not allowed on slopes greater than 15% (1 foot rise for every 6.5 feet of horizontal distance) where the toe of the slope is adjacent to an impermeable hardscape.

- Turf shall not be used in areas less than 8 feet by 8 feet in size, irregularly shaped areas, street medians, traffic islands, planter strips, bulbouts of any size or raised beds for maximum water efficiency and ease of maintenance.



- Low and moderate water-use plants can be mixed, but the entire hydrozone will be classified as moderate water use for MAWA calculations.
- High water-use plants shall not be mixed in the same hydrozone with low or moderate water-use plants.
- Invasive plants as listed by the Cal-IPC are prohibited.
- Recirculating water systems shall be used for water features.
- The surface area of water features, including swimming pools, will be included in a high water-use hydrozone.
- A landscape design plan for projects in fire-prone areas shall address fire safety and prevention. A defensible space or zone around a building or structure is required per Public Resources Code Section 4219 (a) and (b). Avoid fire-prone plant materials and highly flammable mulches.



6. **Placement.** Plants should be placed with respect for their life cycles, including factors such as their ability to maintain and reproduce themselves, their size at maturity and their life span. Placement also should respect the different environmental requirements of different plants; factors such as temperature, moisture, soil, sunlight, and wind should be considered. Placement should not crowd plants so that they will require frequent pruning.
7. **Irrigation.** Most plants need irrigation for survival, to serve their intended purposes, and look their best. An appropriate irrigation system might include sprinklers, bubblers, a drip system and hose bibs, for example, placed as appropriate to the particular hydrozone. The system must be designed for efficient, conservative use of water and in accordance with Section H of the City's Engineering Standards. The ARC encourages the use of automatic watering systems, set to water at night. Planter areas need to be large enough to properly accommodate the proposed irrigation systems.
8. **Protection for planters.** Planting areas must be protected by wood, masonry or concrete curbing where necessary.
9. **Tree/landscaping removals.** Proposals to remove trees over three inches in trunk diameter must be shown on plans. The type, trunk and canopy diameter, and status (e.g. to be removed, saved, relocated) needs to be noted. Landscaping should not be considered for removal as part of a demolition plan without an accompanying development plan that demonstrates why the plantings cannot be saved and provides for an adequate replacement.
10. **Maintenance.** Landscaping plans should be designed with function and ease of maintenance in mind. Diseased vegetation must be treated and dead vegetation replaced. Configurations that tend to catch trash and debris should be avoided.

11. Other considerations. Proposed landscaping should also be designed to address the following considerations:

- Maintenance and replacement
- Water shortages
- Effects of drought, plant loss, increased water costs
- Health concerns such as allergies (heavy pollen producing trees)
- Poor soils and poor drainage
- Intrusion of temporary structures into landscape space
- Safety issues (tree fall, root damage, visibility)
- Disease concerns (pitch canker, borer beetle)
- Drainage, to keep all irrigation and normal rainfall within property lines

6.3 - Parking Facilities

The following are general design guidelines for parking facilities, including bicycle parking. See also the City's Parking and Driveway Standards, and the design guidelines for parking areas in the earlier sections on commercial and residential project design.

A. General design principles. Parking areas should be designed to serve pedestrian needs as effectively as vehicle parking needs.

1. The City strongly encourages shared parking arrangements. Parking areas on adjoining parcels should be connected to allow continuous vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian access. Pedestrian linkages between parcels should be located separately from vehicle connections where possible and, in all cases, clearly differentiated from vehicle ways.
2. Pedestrian ways should connect parking areas to streets.
3. Pedestrian ways should be incorporated in parking lots, where practical, using such elements as accented paving, trellises, and lighting.

B. Siting and screening. Parking lots should not dominate street views of projects. Wherever possible, parking lots should be placed behind buildings.

1. Motorcycle and bicycle parking spaces and accessible parking spaces should be located for convenience and safety.
2. When parking lots are proposed along street frontages, they shall be screened by a three-foot (minimum) high wall, fence, hedge consisting of five gallon or larger plants, or landscaped berm. The area between such screen and the street shall be landscaped. (per Parking and Driveway Standards).
3. A parking lot on a non-residential site adjacent to a residential use shall be screened by a solid six-foot high wall, fence or an existing mature hedge.
4. Structured parking is encouraged to minimize “vast seas of parking” in large commercial projects.

5. The number of driveway entries to a site should be minimized, and located as far away as feasible from adjacent street intersections. Opportunities for common driveways and shared parking areas through reciprocal easements should be pursued.
6. Where there is adequate space to do so, planters should be created along the edge of driveways leading to parking lots, rather than up to the property line.

C. Landscaping in parking areas. The City encourages landscaping in parking lots to provide visual interest, buffers between land uses and shading for cars and people.

1. A minimum of five percent of the total area of a parking lot shall be devoted to landscaping, in compliance with the City's Parking and Driveway Standards.
2. To provide for trees in parking lots, planters shall be placed after each six parking spaces in any row, and at the ends of each row of parking spaces, in compliance with Parking and Driveway Standards Section I.1.
3. Trees in parking lots should be selected to provide adequate visual interest and shading when they mature. Trees with messy fruit and excessive litter should be avoided.
4. Landscape areas shall have a minimum dimension of four feet exclusive of any car overhang area, and eight feet where intended to accommodate trees. Landscape areas shall be defined by concrete curbing at least six inches wide, designed to minimize damage to pavement caused by irrigation of landscaping.
5. Landscaping in parking lots should be located and maintained so as to not block a driver's view.
6. Planter areas should be provided between buildings and adjacent parking lots to visually break up the hard surfaces.

D. Pedestrian access. Parking lots should be designed to help direct pedestrians comfortably and safely to building entrances.

1. Walkways should be clearly delineated by changes in the color or texture of paving materials.
2. Parking lot aisles should generally be oriented to run perpendicular to the building's entry to allow pedestrians to walk parallel to moving cars. This strategy also minimizes the need for the pedestrian to cross parking aisles and landscaped areas.
3. The design of pedestrian access within a site should also consider pedestrian access to adjacent sites and uses.

E. Alternative paving materials. The City supports the use of innovative paving materials such as colored and/or stamped concrete, brick or grasscrete to help define an entry or walkway, to minimize the visual expansiveness of large paved areas, or to help save a specimen tree. However, care should be taken that walkways connecting disabled-accessible parking stalls or public sidewalks and transit stops to proposed uses are constructed with smooth surface materials that can be comfortably negotiated by people with disabilities.

- F. Bicycle parking.** Adequate on-site facilities for bicycle parking throughout the City will encourage more widespread bicycle use.
1. Each new multi-family, office, commercial, or industrial project that requires 10 or more automobile parking spaces must provide both short-term (racks) and long-term (lockers or interior space) bicycle parking. The number of spaces required is based on the percentages included in Section 17.16.060, Table 6.5 of the Zoning Regulations. Section 17.16.060 E. of the City’s Zoning Regulations allows a project that provides more bicycle and/or motorcycle spaces than required, to reduce its vehicle parking requirement at the rate of one vehicle space for each additional five motorcycle or bicycle spaces, up to a 10 percent reduction.
 2. Each bicycle rack should:
 - a. Stand a minimum of 30 inches from ground level and support each bike in a stable position by providing at least two vertical contact points for a bicycle frame. The rack should be coated with, or constructed of a durable material that prevents rust and corrosion. Inverted “U” racks or “Peak Racks” bike racks have been identified as complying with the City’s standards, illustrated in Figure 6-4. Other similar designs may be allowed upon approval by the Public Works Director.
 - b. Allow the frame and both wheels (one wheel removed from the frame) to be locked to the rack using a common locking device such as a standard-sized "U"-lock.
 - c. Be installed with mounting brackets on a concrete surface with access provided in accordance with the manufacturer’s specifications for placement and clearance from obstructions as shown in Figure 6-5.

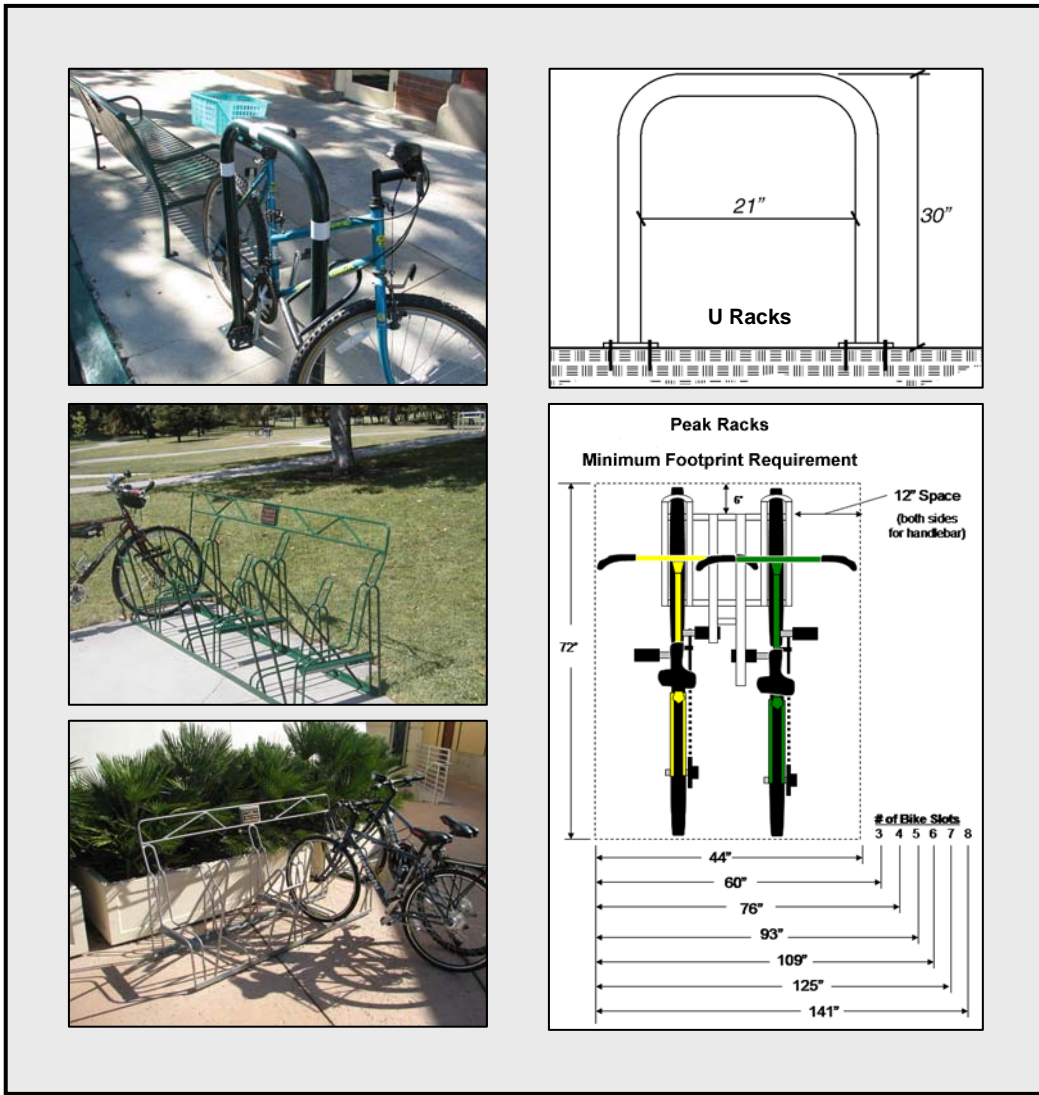


Figure 6-4 – Bicycle rack design

- d. Be installed at highly visible locations that are as close to the main entrance of the destination as possible and be located at least as conveniently as the most convenient automobile parking space available to the general public.
- e. Be distributed to serve all tenants/visitors on sites that contain more than one structure or building entry.
- f. Be visible from the interior of the destination.
- g. Be placed where they will not be damaged by vehicles or vandals.
- h. Be located where clear and safe pedestrian circulation is ensured.
- i. Be illuminated at night to the extent that the destination supports nighttime activity.
- j. Be sheltered, when shelter can be attractively integrated with project architecture.

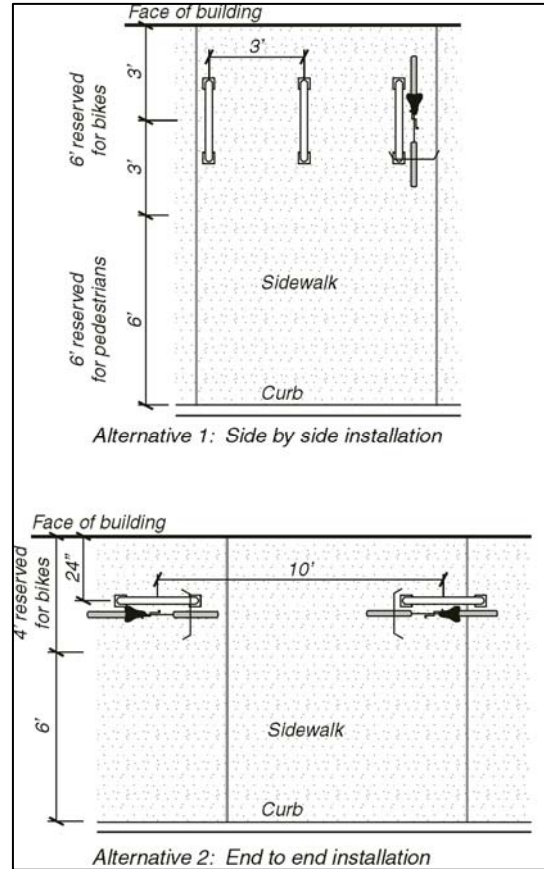


Figure 6-5 – Bicycle rack placement typical of U racks

G. Motorcycle parking. Section 17.16.060 E. of the City’s Zoning Regulations requires that one motorcycle space be provided for each 20 vehicle spaces for each use that requires 10 or more vehicle spaces. Motorcycle spaces shall be four feet wide by eight feet long and installed on a 3-2 inch concrete base.

6.4 - Public Art

The City wishes to enhance the cultural and aesthetic environment and to encourage creativity and an appreciation of the arts and our cultural heritage. Through the public art program, funded by private development, the City will balance the community’s physical growth and revitalization with its cultural and artistic resources.

Public art includes sculpture, monuments, murals, frescoes, bas-relief, mobiles, drawings, paintings, graphic arts, mosaics, photographs, fountains, decorative arts, ceramics, carving and stained glass located in or on a public place. It does not include landscaping, paving, architectural ornamentation or signs.

A. Requirements. The City’s public art ordinance (Ordinance No. 1372, adopted in 2000) applies to new non-residential development having a total construction cost of \$100,000 or more. It also applies to all expansion of, remodeling of or tenant improvements to existing eligible buildings, when any such work has a total construction cost of \$100,000 or more.

1. The project applicant must acquire and install public art, approved by a public art jury and the Architectural Review Commission, in a public place on the development project site.
2. The cost of the public art must be equal to one-half of one percent (0.5%) of that portion of the total construction costs in excess of \$100,000 for each building permit. Should a project consist of multiple buildings with separate building permits, the City has the option to make arrangements to combine the public art requirements in an appropriate manner.
3. As part of the development review process the project applicant must submit the following to the City for review and approval:
 - a. Preliminary sketches, photographs, or other documentation of sufficient descriptive clarity to illustrate the proposed public artwork. An appraisal or other evidence of the value of the proposed public artwork, including acquisition and installation costs.
 - c. Preliminary plans with detailed information to evaluate the artwork's location in the proposed development.
 - d. A narrative statement demonstrating that the public art will be displayed in an area open and freely available to the general public.
4. The Community Development Director forwards completed applications to the Public Art Coordinator who assembles a jury to review the proposed public art using adopted public art evaluation criteria. Upon recommendation of the jury, the Architectural Review Commission reviews the public art application. All approvals for placement of public art on private property must be obtained prior to issuance of a building permit.

B. Exceptions, alternatives. The following exceptions, and alternatives apply to the City's public art requirements.

1. An exception to the public art ordinance is made for construction, repair or alteration of buildings to rehabilitate private property that is primarily financed with public funds. Another exception is construction, repair or alteration of buildings to meet City mandated seismic rehabilitation or fire lateral replacement.
2. An option offered by the public art ordinance is that the project applicant may acquire and install public art in a City-owned public place not located at the development site. Such public art will be considered a donation to the City of San Luis Obispo. As a voluntary alternative, an applicant may pay an amount equal to the program allocation to the City's Public Art In-Lieu Account.

C. Ownership, maintenance and removal. Required public art is subject to the following requirements for ownership, maintenance and removal.

1. Public art placed on applicant's project site remains the property of the applicant. The property owner is responsible for providing all maintenance necessary to preserve the public art in good condition, and to protect it against physical defacement, mutilation, or alteration. Maintenance shall also include securing and maintaining fire and extended coverage insurance and vandalism coverage, as appropriate. Prior to placing approved public art, the applicant and owner of the

site must execute and record a covenant requiring public art maintenance. Failure to maintain the public art will be considered a public nuisance.

2. Public art installed on or integrated into a construction project may not be removed or altered without the approval of the City Council. If public art on a development project is removed by the property owner without prior approval, the property owner must contribute funds equal to the development project's original public art requirement into the City's Public Art In-Lieu account, or replace the removed artwork with one of comparable value approved by the City Council.

More information on the City's public art program, including both local and international examples of public art, can be found in a publication entitled "*Guidelines for Public Art in Private Projects.*"

6.5 - Site Drainage and Storm Water Retention

Pollution carried by storm water runoff is rapidly growing in importance as a national environmental issue. In California, pollution of storm water is a major source of the state's water pollution.

Storm water runoff is part of a natural hydrologic process. However, land development and construction activities can alter natural drainage patterns and pollute storm water runoff. Runoff picks up pollutants as it flows over the ground or paved areas and carries these pollutants into the storm drain system. Common sources of pollutants from construction sites include: sediment from soil erosion; construction materials and waste (e.g. paint, solvents, concrete, drywall); landscaping runoff containing fertilizers and pesticides; and spilled oil, fuel and other fluids from construction vehicles carrying vehicles and heavy equipment.

To address the problem, federal and state governments have developed a program for monitoring and permitting discharges from municipal storm drain systems. As a result development and construction projects are subject to new requirements designed to improve storm water quality.

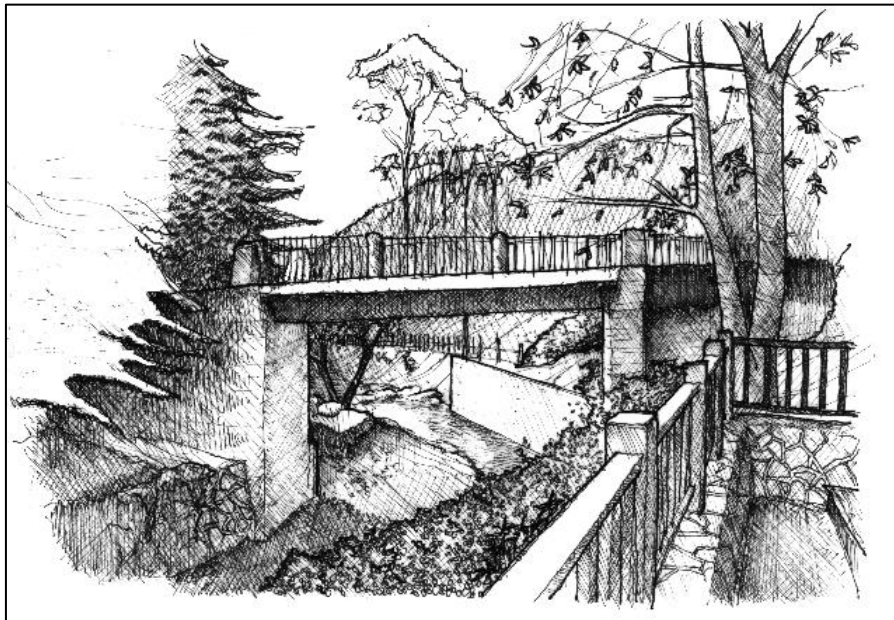


Figure 6-6 – San Luis Creek

A. Plans to minimize runoff. In the selection of a drainage plan for a development, the applicant shall evaluate and implement site design features that minimize the increase in runoff volumes and rates from the site. The applicant's drainage plan submittal shall include evaluations of site design features that are consistent with the following hierarchy:

1. Minimize impervious surfaces on the property, consistent with the needs of the project.
2. Attenuate flows by use of open vegetated swales and natural depressions and preserve existing natural stream channels.
3. Infiltrate runoff on-site.
4. Provide storm water retention structures.
5. Provide storm water detention structures.
6. Construct storm sewers.

The drainage system should incorporate multiple uses where practicable. Uses considered compatible with storm water management include open space, aesthetics, aquatic habitat, recreation (such as trails and playing fields), wetlands and water quality mitigation. The applicant should avoid using portions of the property exclusively for storm water management.

- B. Infiltration practices.** To effectively reduce runoff volumes, infiltration practices including basins, trenches, and porous pavement should be utilized.
- C. Vegetated filter strips and swales.** To effectively filter storm water pollutants and promote infiltration of runoff, sites should be designed to maximize the use of vegetated filter strips and swales. Runoff from impervious surfaces should be directed onto filter strips and swales before being routed to a storm sewer or detention basin.
- D. Safety considerations.** The drainage system components, especially detention basins, shall be designed to protect the safety of any children or adults coming in contact with the system during runoff events.
- E. Maintenance considerations.** The storm water drainage system shall be designed to minimize and facilitate maintenance. Maintenance of storm water drainage facilities located on private property shall be the responsibility of the owner of that property.

6.6 - Signs

The City encourages signs that effectively identify individual business establishments and support public safety and convenience by providing good directions. The design and content of signs are important in shaping the image of the city in the minds of visitors and residents, and how they feel about the city, and themselves. While in most cases the City cannot regulate the content of signs, and the ARC will not consider sign content in its deliberations, businesses are encouraged to think about how the images and words on signs will affect not only their business interests, but also how they will affect and relate to the attitudes and values of families and children within the community.

- A. Sign standards.** The City's current Sign Regulations limit the type, size and location of signs in each zoning district. The regulations allow the ARC to approve signs not normally allowed, under

exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances might include impaired or difficult visibility, or unique or innovative sign design.

- B. Design.** Plans submitted to the ARC need to show all proposed signs, including materials, size, color, lettering, location and arrangement. The design of each sign should consider the architecture of the building it is applied to and should be appropriate for the type of activity the business conducts.
- C. Details.** The colors and materials of signs should complement the architectural style of the building.
- D. Scale.** The size of a wall sign should be in proportion to the scale of the wall to which it will be attached. Similarly, the size of a freestanding or monument sign should be scaled to its proposed location and compatible with surrounding signage.
- E. Location.** Building signage should be located near the business entry.
- F. Coordination, consistency.** Signs should be in consistent locations throughout a project. The preparation of an overall signage program is highly recommended for projects with more than one business, including shopping centers, so that each sign appears thoughtfully designed in relation to the overall project and each other sign. This is not intended to suggest that all signs in a project must have the same design, or colors or materials, but that they should be placed in consistent locations within the project, and not vary substantially in size.
- G. Consistency.** When more than one type of sign is used in a project, the styles of the signs should be consistent with one another so that the effect of the overall program is harmonious.
- H. Message content.** Text should be kept to a minimum and designed for business identification, not advertising purposes. Location, size, materials and other features of a sign should be selected to achieve legibility.
- I. Types.** Wall signs, monument and other types of low-profile freestanding signs are encouraged. Distinctive architectural features, planting, window displays and merchandise can often communicate some of the message and identity usually conveyed by traditional signage.
- J. Monument and freestanding signs.** The base of a monument sign or the pole of a freestanding sign should be architecturally compatible with the architecture of site buildings. Sign faces of these types of signs should be sufficiently high to allow the placement of landscaping around the bases without obstructing sign visibility.
- K. Pedestrians.** Signage for pedestrians should be provided where necessary for orientation. Suspended and small projecting signs are good choices for business identification in the downtown. Signs near building entries should be of human scale.
- L. Illumination.** Where permitted, lighting for signs shall not create a hazardous glare for pedestrians or vehicles either in a public street or on any private premises. The light source shall be shielded from view. (Section 15.40.170 I. of the Sign Regulations)
 - 1. External illumination.** Lighting for externally illuminated signs shall be indirect and utilize focused light fixtures that do not allow light or glare to shine above the horizontal plane of the top of the sign or onto any public right-of-way or adjoining property. (Section 15.40.170 I. of the Sign Regulations). See Figure 6-7.

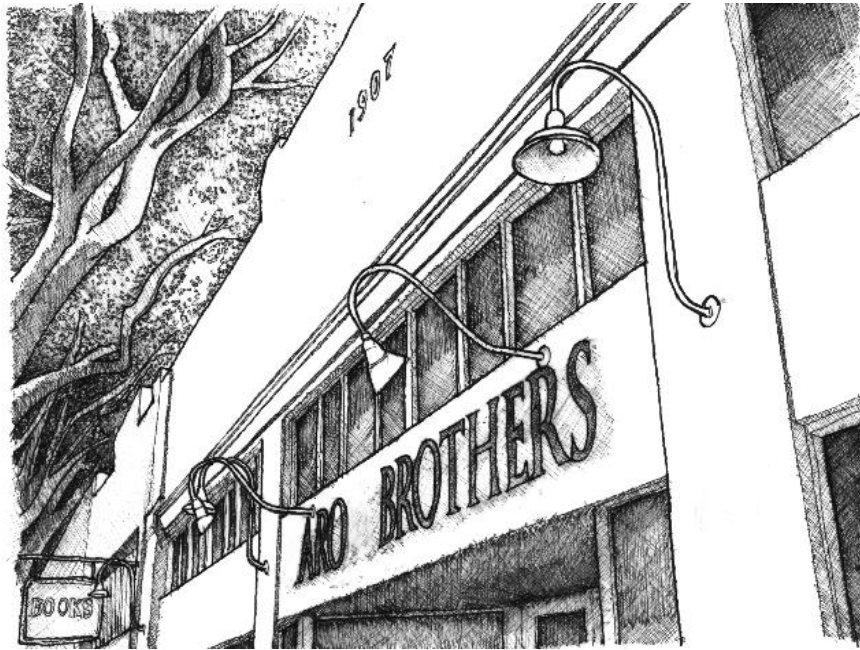


Figure 6-7 – Sign lighting that does not spill off the site

2. **Internal illumination.** For internally illuminated signs, a dark background with lighter letters and graphics is generally preferable to the reverse. Raised lettering and graphics with halos or back lighting are also preferable to flat-faced signs with a light background and dark copy.
- M. Materials.** Internally illuminated cabinet signs (can signs) are strongly discouraged. The City instead encourages signs comprised of individual letters of quality materials (metal, ceramic, etc.), signs of carved wood, and three-dimensional signs in appropriate circumstances.

6.7- Solar Energy Facilities

New structures should be oriented to maximize solar access opportunities to the extent feasible.

- A. Lot sizes and configurations should be planned to maximize the number of structures oriented so that the south wall and roof area face within 45 degrees of due south, while permitting the structures to receive cooling benefits from prevailing breezes and any existing or proposed shading;
- B. Roof-mounted solar collectors should be placed in the most inconspicuous location without reducing the operating efficiency of the collectors. Wall-mounted and ground-mounted collectors should be screened from public view with material that is compatible with building architecture;
- C. Roof-mounted collectors should be installed at the same angle or as close as possible to the pitch of the roof;
- D. Appurtenant equipment, particularly plumbing and related fixtures, should be installed in the attic or screened from public view; and

- E. Exterior surfaces of the collectors and related equipment should have a matte finish and should be color-coordinated to harmonize with roof materials and other dominate colors of the structure.

Chapter 7 - Special Design Considerations

Various sites within the city have particular environmental, cultural, and other characteristics that require special attention in project design. This Chapter provides guidelines to address these issues. These guidelines apply in addition to all other applicable provisions of this design guidelines document.

7.1 - Creekside Development

Creek corridor habitats support plants and animals; recharge aquifers; and filter some pollutants. Creek corridors are a valuable open space resource and provide recreational and scenic opportunities. For these reasons, the City intends to provide adequate buffer areas between creek corridors and adjacent development to protect this valuable community resource as a natural, scenic and recreational amenity.

The provisions of this section apply to proposed development on any site adjacent to or crossed by a creek or stream.

- A. Streambed analysis.** The project permit application shall include a site-specific streambed analysis prepared by a hydrologist, civil engineer, or other qualified professional to determine the precise boundary/top of bank of the waterway. The Director may waive this requirement if it is determined that the project, because of its size, location, or design will not have an impact on the waterway, or that sufficient information already exists and further analysis is not necessary. A required streambed analysis shall include all information and materials required by the Department.
- B. Creek setback development guidelines.** Each proposed structure shall comply with the following guidelines.
 1. A building setback line along the waterway shall be measured from the existing top of bank or from the edge of the predominant pattern of riparian vegetation, whichever is farther from the creek flow line. Applicants should review the City Creek Setback Standards (Municipal Code Section 17.16.025), for additional information and exceptions for creek setback measurements and requirements.
 2. A path or trail may be located within a creekside setback where biological and habitat value will not be compromised; however, no other structure, road, parking access, parking space, paved area, or swimming pool should be constructed within a creek or creekside setback area. The surfacing of a path or trail may most appropriately be permeable; the type of surface will be based on the need to protect riparian resources and minimize runoff to the creek channel.
 3. No grading or filling, planting of exotic/non-native or non-riparian plant species, or removal of native vegetation shall occur within a creek or creekside setback area.
 4. Where drainage improvements are required within a creek or creek setback area, they shall be placed in the least visible locations and naturalized through the use of river rock, earthtone concrete, and landscaping with native plant materials.

5. Proposed development should incorporate permeable surfaces in hardscape areas (for example, wood decks, sand-joined bricks, and stone walkways) where feasible, to minimize off-site flows and facilitate the absorption of water into the ground.
6. Development or land use changes that increase impervious surfaces or sedimentation may result in channel erosion. This may require measures to stabilize creek banks.
 - a. Creek rehabilitation is the preferred method of stabilization, with the objective of maintaining the natural character and quality of the creek and riparian area. Rehabilitation may include enlarging the channel at points of obstruction, clearing obstructions at points of constriction, limiting uses in areas of excessive erosion, and restoring riparian vegetation.
 - b. Concrete channels and other mechanical stabilization measures are not appropriate, and should be considered for use on a case-by-case basis and only unless no other alternative exists.
 - c. If bank stabilization requires other rehabilitation or vegetative methods, hand-placed stone or rock rip-rap are the preferred methods.
7. Public access and visibility to creeks should be provided through the use of single-loaded frontage roads adjacent to creeks, but outside of the creek setback. Structures, or lots that back-on to creeks are discouraged. However, certain areas along the creek may not be appropriate for public access due to on-going conservation plans and programs. These areas are determined by the City's Natural Resource Manager.

7.2 - Hillside Development

The Open Space and Land Use Elements of the General Plan both note the importance of preserving the natural character of the hillsides surrounding the community. The guidelines in this section are intended to assist in implementing General Plan hillside policies by minimizing the visibility and other impacts of allowable hillside development.

A. Site planning and development. The following hillside development policies in Land Use Element section 6.2.2 address the placement of buildings on hillsides, roads and grading:

- D. Minimize grading of roads;*
- E. Minimize grading on individual lots; generally locate houses close to the street; minimize the grading of visible driveways;*

The following design guidelines implement the General Plan policies.

- 1. Subdivision design.** A proposed subdivision of two or more parcels shall be designed to comply with the following guidelines:
 - a. Parcel and building site slope.** No parcel shall be created:
 - (1) With an overall average slope of 30 percent or more; and

- (2) Without at least one building site of at least 5,000 square feet that has no natural slope of 10 percent or more.
- b. Roads.** Each new road shall follow natural terrain contours to the maximum extent feasible to minimize grading and the visibility of the road from off the subdivision site.
- 2. Site access.** Each driveway shall follow natural terrain contours to the maximum extent feasible to minimize both the extent of grading and the visibility of the driveway. Driveways also shall comply with the following standards.
 - a. Common driveways that serve more than one parcel are encouraged, and may be required, to reduce the total amount of grading and pavement.
 - b. Drainage from a driveway shall be directed in a controlled manner to the drainage facilities of the nearest road wherever feasible, subject to the approval of the Public Works Director.
 - c. A driveway shall not have a grade steeper than five percent within 10 feet of a garage or carport entry. Driveway finished grade shall not exceed an average of 15 percent.
- 3. Placement of structures.** Each structure shall be located in the most accessible, least visually prominent, most geologically stable, portion of the site, and at the lowest feasible elevation. Siting structures in the least prominent locations is especially important on open hillsides where the visibility of structures should be minimized by placement that will provide screening by existing vegetation, depressions in topography, or other natural features. Each proposed structure shall be located so that:
 - a. It is as close as possible to the street, to avoid the need for a long driveway;
 - b. The silhouetting of a structure against the sky above the nearest ridge or knoll when viewed from a public street is minimized;
 - c. Existing hillside vegetation is retained to the maximum extent feasible, so as to not destroy the natural character of the site; and
 - d. The structure and its construction do not disturb major rock formations, existing trees and native vegetation, waterways, ridgelines, and known archaeological sites.
- 4. Grading.** Hillside grading to provide a building site and driveway access should be minimized. Large, single-elevation graded pads should be avoided in favor of more careful site preparation that provides for stepped foundations and/or smaller-scale graded areas.
- 5. Retaining walls.** Large retaining walls in a uniform plane must be avoided. No visible portion of a retaining wall should be higher than six feet, and a maximum height of three feet is preferred. Where a retaining wall would otherwise exceed six feet in height, the wall shall be divided into terraces with variations in plane and include landscaping to break up the length of walls and to screen them from view. All retaining walls should also comply with the guidelines for exterior structure colors in B.4, below.
- 6. Drainage channels.** Proposed development shall maintain existing natural drainage systems, with all new drainage from the development directed away from adjoining properties.

B. Building design. The following hillside development policies in Land Use Element section 6.2.2 address the design of buildings on hillsides:

- B. Keep a low profile and conform to the natural slopes;*
- C. Avoid large, continuous walls or roof surfaces, or prominent foundation walls, poles, or columns;*
- G. Use materials, colors, and textures which blend with the natural landscape and avoid high contrasts;*

The following design guidelines implement the General Plan policies.

- 1. Overall design.** Design and locate each structure so that it keeps a low profile and conforms to the natural slopes, emphasizes horizontal rather than vertical features and, overall, maintains as low a profile as feasible.
- 2. Exterior wall surfaces.**
 - a. The apparent size of exterior wall surfaces visible from off the site should be minimized through the use of single-story and small-scale elements, setbacks, overhangs, roof pitches, and/or other means of horizontal and vertical articulation to create shade and shadow, and break up otherwise massive forms.
 - b. Large flat building planes should be avoided; the spatial arrangement of the building, including roof overhangs, should be used to achieve alternating light and dark building surfaces that will blend with similar contrasts found in the surrounding natural vegetation.
- 3. Roofs.** Roof design is as important to the visual impact of a hillside structure as other aspects of design, and will be considered by the ARC as carefully as all other design features.
 - a. Roof pitches should generally be oriented to follow the angle of the hillside slope; but with variations to minimize a monotonous un-natural appearance.
 - b. Flat roofs should be developed as open space or as gardens serving nearby living space.
- 4. Colors and materials.** A mixture of materials and color shall be used to blend structures with the natural appearance of the hillside.
 - a. The exterior colors of each structure shall emphasize dark earth tones on north-facing slopes, and medium earth tones on south-facing slopes.
 - b. Preference shall be given to earth tone colors such as brown, beige, ocher, sienna, grey, and grey-green.
 - c. Warm colors may be used in small areas for either accessory treatment, or as a design counterpoint.
 - d. Reflective materials should be avoided.

- e. Natural and natural-appearing materials such as stone, brick and other masonry, and wood should be emphasized, with fire retardant materials used where appropriate. Exterior finishes should be primarily of materials with uneven textures (wood, stone, etc.).
5. **Height of lowest floor level.** The vertical distance between the lowest point where the foundation meets grade and the lowest floor line of the structure should not exceed six feet.
 6. **Downhill building walls.** No single building wall on the downhill side of a house should exceed 15 feet in height above grade. Additional building height on a downhill side may be allowed in 15-foot increments, where each increment is stepped-back from the lower wall a minimum of 10 feet.
 7. **Support structures.** Support structures (for example, columns, pilings, etc.) below the lowest floor on the downhill side of a house, shall be enclosed unless visible structural members are an integral feature of the architectural design. Support structure wall surfaces shall not exceed six feet in height.
 8. **Decks.** No portion of the walking surface of a deck with visible underpinnings should exceed a height of six feet above grade. Decks shall be integrated into the architecture of the house to the maximum extent feasible, not appearing as an “add-on” to the primary building mass.
 9. **View protection.** Each proposed structure should be designed and located to avoid unnecessarily blocking views from other properties.
 - a. Where feasible, a new structure should not be placed directly in the view of the primary living areas on a neighboring parcel.
 - b. Mechanical equipment may be placed on rooftops or below a deck only if the equipment is not visible from off the site, except for unobtrusive solar collectors that are compatible with the roof line and architecturally integrated with the structure.
- C. **Landscaping.** Land Use Element hillside development policy 6.2.2.F states that development on hillside parcels shall *"Include planting which is compatible with native hillside vegetation and which provides a visual transition from developed to open areas."* The following guidelines implement this policy.
1. **Plantings.**
 1. The overall objective for landscaping on hillside sites should be to create harmony with nature and the adjacent neighborhood.
 2. Selected plant materials should be:
 - a. Primarily of native, drought tolerant, and low combustion species; and

- b. Compatible with the existing natural vegetation on the site in terms of height and color.
 3. The following are prohibited:
 - a. Contrived, non-native landscaping located on visible downhill slopes; and
 - b. The planting of long tree rows or formal hedges visible from a public right-of-way.
 4. Landscape shall be used to blend built elements such as structures and grading cuts and fills into the natural neighborhood setting; and when provided on downslopes should be placed as near to all structures as possible.
 5. Landscaping shall be installed prior to occupancy to ensure slope retention within disturbed areas, and where required to provide screening.
2. **Hardscape.** The planning and design of hardscape on a hillside site should:
 1. Enhance the building design;
 2. Follow all the same principles of these guidelines applicable to other aspects of project design, including minimizing grading;
 3. Provide for adequate, but controlled drainage;
 4. Keep a low profile and conform to the natural slope;
 5. Use materials and colors that blend with the building;
 6. Provide for outdoor living spaces that are designed to be sensitive to the privacy of neighbors; and
 7. Be integrated with the architecture of the building.
- D. **Fencing.** Hillside area perimeter fencing that is visible from off-site vantages should be of a semi-transparent, rather than solid design.
 1. Fencing should be limited to the developable portions of hillside lots, which are typically defined by the allowed building footprints through the subdivision map review process.
 2. Examples of appropriate materials for semi-transparent fencing include black or green vinyl-coated chain link, wrought iron, split rail, and 4-inch square welded wire.
 3. The use of solid, opaque fencing shall be limited to the side yards between living areas on adjacent lots. The preference is for a more naturalistic approach to screening in the side yards, with semi-transparent fencing combined with landscaping, or landscaping alone.
- E. **Exterior lighting.** Land Use Element hillside development policy 6.2.2.H states that development on hillside parcels shall "*Minimize exterior lighting.*" The following guidelines implement this policy.

1. The number and intensity of exterior lighting fixtures shall be minimized.
2. Each exterior light fixture shall be directed downward, and shall incorporate shielding to prevent light spilling onto adjacent properties, and otherwise prevent any glare visible to neighbors, so that no exterior light interferes with views of the night sky and the hillside.

7.3 - Historic Resource Preservation

The City's requirements for the preservation of historic and cultural resources are administered by the Cultural Heritage Committee (CHC). The guidelines adopted by the CHC and in the San Luis Obispo Municipal Code (Section 2.48) should be reviewed for projects that may be subject to those guidelines and regulations.

7.4 - Public Facilities

- A. **Bus shelters.** Bus shelters and transit turnouts on public and private property should be designed in compliance with the following guidelines.
 1. **When required.** The City's Master Bus Stop Plan designates where bus shelters and related facilities will be required.
 2. **Site planning.** When a project is required to incorporate a bus stop, convenient access to the bus stop for resident pedestrians and bicyclists should be carefully considered in project design.
 3. **Bus shelter design.** A property owner that installs a bus shelter must either:
 - a. Select a *standard* shelter design that has already been approved by the ARC. Design specifications can be obtained from the Public Works Department; or
 - b. Develop a *custom* design that integrates more effectively with the project architecture and landscape design. An owner choosing this option will be responsible for maintaining the structure.

Appendix

A. Demolitions and moved buildings.

1. **Demolitions.** New development projects often include requests for demolitions of existing buildings. Depending on the age, and known or potential historic significance, of the structure proposed for demolition, the demolition request may require further review by either the Cultural Heritage Committee (CHC) or the ARC.
 - a. **Demolition or relocation of historical resource.** An application for architectural Review is required for the demolition or relocation of any structure located on a property listed in the Inventory of Historical Resources (master or contributing list, or “potentially significant historic resource” as described in Section 2. below). Since these structures have been determined to be the City’s most important historical resources, the demolition of one of these buildings would likely not be supported. Given the current requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will likely be required if significant resources are proposed for demolition. Also, depending on the particular historical significance of the structure, it may ultimately be determined that it must remain in its present location, and could not be relocated elsewhere on the same site or moved to another site.
 - b. **Demolitions of a “potentially significant historic resource”** will also require architectural review. This phrase is meant to describe a structure that is not listed in the current Inventory of Historic Resources, but that meets one or more of the criteria listed in CEQA or in the Historical Resource Preservation Guidelines for delineation of historic resources.
 - c. **Demolition or relocation of structure not designated historical.** For a structure that is not located on a property listed in the City’s Inventory of Historical Resources and is over 50 years old, the Building Official may issue the permit if:
 - (1) The applicant provides evidence that, for a period of not less than 90 days from date of permit application, the building was advertised in a local newspaper on at least three separate occasions not less than 15 days apart, as available to any interested person to be moved; and
 - (2) The applicant submits historic documentation for the structure in accordance with the criteria established by the Community Development Director and the CHC; and
 - (3) The Community Development Director determines that the structure or structures proposed for demolition are not potential historic resources.

Exceptions:

- (1) A building or structure determined by the building official to be a dangerous building as defined in the Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings which poses an imminent, serious threat to the health, safety or welfare of community residents or people living or working on or near the site, and for which photographic documentation acceptable to the Community Development Director has been submitted.
 - (2) Accessory buildings, sheds, garages, and similar structures unless determined to be potential historic resources by the Community Development Director.
2. **Moved buildings.** Moving a structure from one location to another within the City requires architectural review. Since relocated structures are often placed on infill lots in established neighborhoods, the architectural review process allows the City to evaluate whether the placement of the building at the new location will fit in with the context of the setting. Typically such requests can be handled through the minor or incidental architectural review process. However, requests may require review by the ARC if significant compatibility issues arise, or if the project is determined to have potentially significant impacts on a historic resource.

B. City of San Luis Obispo Development Standards for Solid Waste Services.

Proposed trash enclosures must be designed and constructed in compliance with the San Luis Garbage Company's trash enclosure drawings and specifications, in terms of size and structural materials, but may be required by the ARC to have an exterior appearance compatible with the other structures on the site. It is important for the applicant to understand the requirements of the solid waste service standards prior to submitting a planning application. It is also important to coordinate a project's solid waste service needs with San Luis Garbage Company as well. If you need assistance and/or have questions, contact the Utilities Department at 805-781-7215.

These standards are provided to assist in the proper design and installation of solid waste facilities consistent with the City's Solid Waste Code, Urban Runoff Control Practices, City Zoning Regulations, Community Design Guidelines, and with Franchisee collection requirements. Compliance with these standards will result in more attractive developments overall which because of their superior design and functionality will prevent overflow problems and associated nuisance and maintenance concerns. To view the complete standards and bin enclosure guidelines, go to the City's website at www.slocity.org/utilities/recycling.asp. To better assist applicants in determining the appropriate solid waste facility requirements prior to the issuance of a building permit the following "User's Guide" is provided.

The intent of this guide is to assist applicants in determining which service type and capacity requirements shall be required for a given project. Note that the use of this guide does not negate the need for submittal and approval of detailed plans for any project concerning solid waste issues by Community Development, Public Works and the Utilities Department.

1. **Single Family Residential Projects:** If the proposed project is a single family residential structure which for purposes of these standards shall be viewed as one living unit on one lot, then the following shall apply.
 - a. **For Interior Storage:** The garage unit shall be designed and constructed to include adequate storage space for three 96-gallon waste wheelers. The minimum space required shall be 92” wide by 36” deep by 6’ tall, or
 - b. **For Exterior Storage:** Adequate storage space shall be constructed to house three 96 – gallon waste wheelers at a location that is not visible from a public thoroughfare and behind the front line of the building.
 - c. **For All Single Family Residential Projects:** Adequate curb frontage shall exist, such that three 96 - gallon waste wheelers shall be placed at curbside for collection purposes without any obstructions or hindrances to collection vehicles. Placement of the containers within the public right-of-way shall require the approval of the Public Works Department. For three 96 gallon waste wheelers (i.e. trash, green waste and recycling) an unobstructed area totaling 15 - ½’ wide shall be required at the curb for each proposed dwelling unit. This space may not be located in the driveway or sidewalk.
 - d. For additional requirements refer to the “General Requirements” herein.
2. **Multi-Family Residential Projects:** If the proposed project is for a multi-family residential development then the project applicant shall refer to the “General Requirements” herein and Exhibits 2, 3, 4 and/or 5 in the Development Standards for Solid Waste Services as a guide in proper design.
3. **Commercial Projects:** If the project is for a commercial development then the project applicant shall refer to the “General Requirements” herein and Exhibits 1, 3, and 4 as a guide in proper design.
4. **General Requirements**
 - a. **Solid Waste Service General Requirements For All New Developments, Additions, Tenant Improvements and Remodels**
 - (1) **Solid Waste Services Required.** The City of San Luis Obispo requires all developed properties to have solid waste collection services. Solid waste services are to be provided by the City’s franchise hauler.
 - (2) **Collection Required at Least Once a Week.** All solid waste of any kind shall be removed by the City’s franchised hauler at least once every seven days. Note that solid waste storage issues and potential overflow problems that lead to nuisance or inappropriate housekeeping conditions are not permitted.
 - (3) **Commercial, Multi-family, Condominium and Planned Development Solid Waste Facilities.** Tenant mix and/or size of the development can affect the type of service and the number of bin enclosures required to service a development. Specific requirements per project type or size are detailed in *Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 4* and

5 which are available upon request. Service levels and number of bin enclosures generally require City review, and discussions between applicant and the City's franchisee {i.e. solid waste service provider, San Luis Garbage Company (805) 543-0875}. This process will assure that sufficient service levels and minimum capacity requirements¹ are planned for **prior to plans being submitted to the City**. Guidance on the design, placement, and other requirements associated with solid waste facilities may be directed to City staff at (805)-781-7258 and are addressed.

- (4) **Single Family Automated Collection Truck Service.** Typically automated collection vehicles are used to service single-family residential areas once a week where 19, 32, 64 or 96 gallon wheeled carts are utilized.
 - (a) **Single-Family Services:** For design and planning purposes all single family structures should include adequate storage capacity to accommodate three (3) standard 96-gallon waste wheelers. The standard 96-gallon waste wheeler (i.e. gray for refuse, blue for commingled recyclables and green for green waste) is 34 ½" long x 29 ¼" wide x 46 ¾" high. For example, please refer to *Diagram 8.04 – F – 8* in the Development Standards for Solid Waste Services.
- (5) **For safe and efficient curbside servicing, solid waste vehicles** require: (1) a minimum of 46.5 feet of turning radius (66 feet of curb to curb diameter for a 180 degree turn); (2) an unobstructed vertical clearance of 18 feet; (3) unobstructed horizontal clearance of at least 18'; and (4) at least 2' of clearance between each container and any other object (i.e. this includes parked cars, etceteras) placed at curbside for servicing purposes.
- (6) **Solid Waste Container Storage / Bin Enclosure Areas:** Wherever feasible solid waste storage areas shall not be located in the front yard area, defined for the purposes of this section as the area measured from the front property line to a line parallel with the face of the front wall of the main building located the greatest distance from the front property line and extending the full width of the lot.
- (7) **Submittal of Plans.** All development projects subject to the requirements of these "Development Standards for Solid Waste Services" shall submit at the time of application, plans to a typical architect's or engineer's scale that is clearly identified (i.e. marked on the plans) showing the proposed (1) design, (2) size, (3) elevation, (4) location of solid waste bin enclosure(s) and/or storage area(s), (5) type of collection containers to be used, (6) if applicable, location where containers shall be placed for collection purposes, (7) location of any storm drains² within twenty feet of a proposed enclosure, (8) and, if applicable any proposed

¹ Minimum solid waste capacity requirements are defined as a capacity in volume to meet the solid waste generation levels of a given property serviced at least one time per week.

² Oil and sand separators or other filtering media shall be installed at each drain inlet intercepting runoff as a means of filtering toxic substances from run off before it enters the creek directly or through the storm water system. The separator must be regularly maintained to ensure efficient pollution prevention. Additional, requirements to bin enclosure cleanliness can be found in the City Of San Luis Obispo's Municipal Code, Section 8.04.

turnarounds³ (i.e. 3-point turn locations) within the project for collection vehicles. These requirements shall be in addition to the standard required plans and information for the project.

- (8) **Conditional Exceptions.** Conditional exceptions to accommodate special circumstances may be requested by completing the required application form (I.e. Exhibit 7 herein), however, all deviations from the standard designs and policies provided in these standards must be reviewed by the Community Development Department, Public Works Department and the Utilities Department prior to development plan approval. For development projects requiring review and approval, the Architectural Review Commission (“ARC”) would have the authority to grant exceptions and the necessary findings would be made as part of their action on the project. Please note that any deviations may create additional long-term special service cost to the property owner(s) and/or occupant(s). *See Diagram # 8.04 – D – 4 for specific details.* Prior to the consideration of a conditional exception the conditions outlined in Exhibit 6 in the Development Standards for Solid Waste Services must be met.

³ An example of a minimum turning radius template for collection vehicles is included herein as *Diagram 8.04 – G – 9 - 12.*

Acknowledgements (original November 19, 2002 version of the Community Design Guidelines)

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