



Single-Family Residential Design Principles

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Mayor Jimmie Yee



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Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Building Design:

General Architecture 5

Garages 6

Porches/Entries/Courts 8

Lighting/Security 14

Site Planning/Design:

Driveways/Entry Walks 9

Setbacks/Lot widths 10

Landscaping/Sidewalks 11

Street view walls/Monument Entries/Access 12

Orientation to parks/public open space 13

Introduction

Alternative design solutions that are consistent with the spirit of the design principles identified in this document will be considered and even encouraged.

The following residential design principles are provided to assist developers, homebuilders, and architects in the design of new single family residences and subdivisions. The text and illustrations give a general idea of basic principles expected by the Planning Commission.

While these principles promote the development of enduring and sustainable neighborhoods, they do not individually address problems or opportunities associated with each unique site or structure. The principles are not intended to list or illustrate all possible solutions to all situations. However, the principles do promote quality design and innovative solutions that in turn encourage viable neighborhoods of enduring value. This document is not intended to represent mandatory requirements, but instead, suggested principles for sustainable development.

Each section includes principles, rationales and guidelines / design approaches, defined here:

Principle: Represents the prescriptive or mandatory elements of project planning or design that will be used by the City to determine compliance with the Principles Document. Principles are broad in scope and allow for flexibility in approach and alternative design solutions.

Rationale: The underlying reason or explanation for the Principle.

Guidelines/Design Approaches: Each design principle includes advisory guidelines or a series of suggested approaches to accomplish the principle. Alternative design approaches that achieve the design principles will be also be considered. Drawings and photos are provided as examples and are not intended to list or illustrate all possible solutions to all situations.

Principle: Variation in residences, structures and buildings is achieved through the use of quality materials and detail in design, which lends visual interest, distinctive character and identity to a community.

Rationale: Quality in detail and design contributes not only to the long-term value of a home, but the neighborhood as well.

Encourage:

- Design diversity that breaks from repetitive tract house style by providing front elevation variation throughout neighborhood plan.
- Manipulation of building elements and massing to avoid visual monotony with particular emphasis on long streets.
- Consistent levels of detailing/finish on all sides of structure such as recessed, pop out, or trim features where visible from public streets or spaces.
- Exterior color and material palettes that reflect area context.
- Window shape and placement that breaks long expanses of wall.
- Roof form, mass, shape & material changes to create variations in plans.
- Residential heating/air conditioning units should be located to have the minimum visual and noise impacts on adjacent residential neighbors.

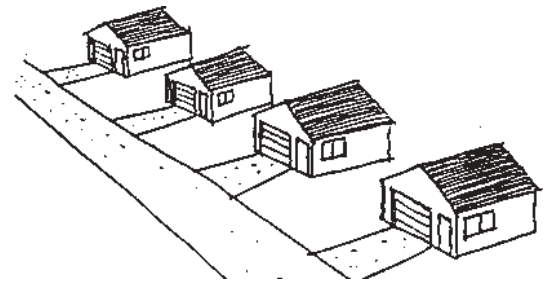
Discourage/Avoid:

- Excessive repetition of identical floor plans and elevations throughout a neighborhood or subdivision with little differentiation.
- The use of low quality/grade materials that do not wear well and contribute to a sense of permanence.
- Roof-mounted heating and air conditioning.

Building Design

Residential Design Element:

General Architecture



Uniform setbacks create unsightly repetition

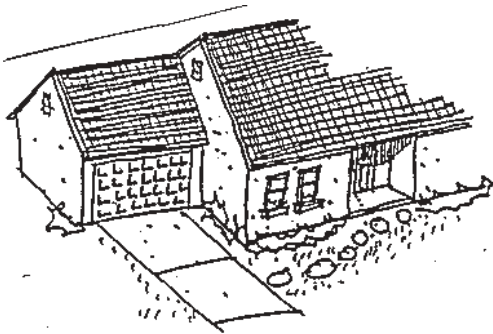


Roof equipment visually inappropriate

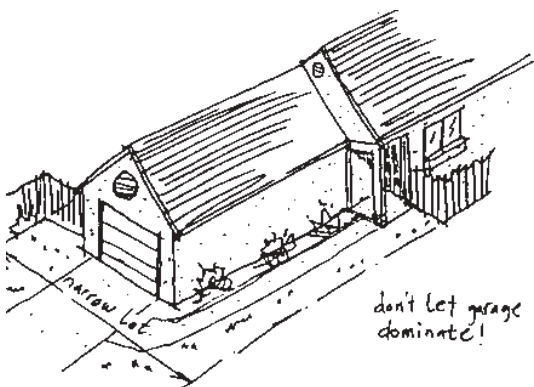
Building Design

Residential Design Element:

Garages



*Ideas to reduce impact of garage doors:-
recess back or detach- use paneled
doors- face side instead of front*



Don't let the garage dominate

Principle: Minimizing the impact of the garage as viewed by the public realm creates a visual relationship between the front entrance of each home and the street.

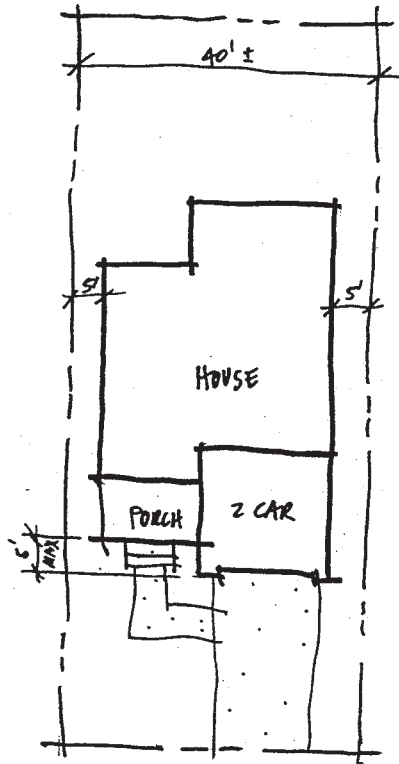
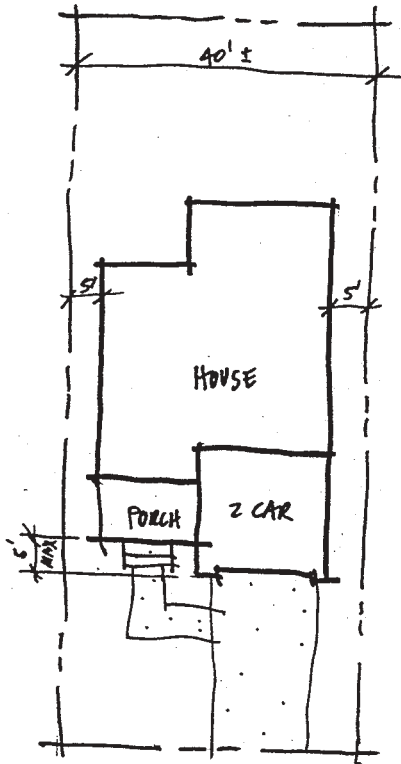
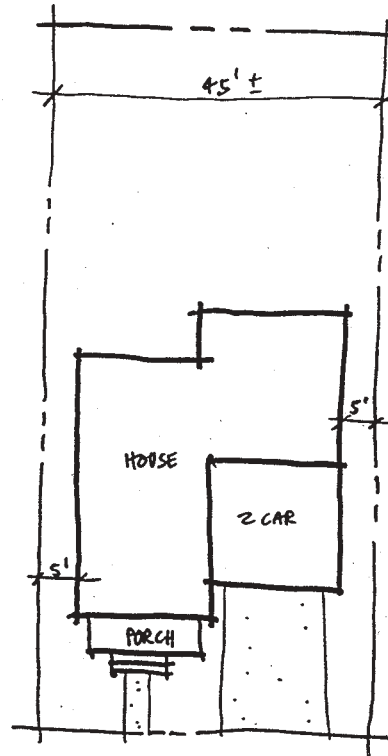
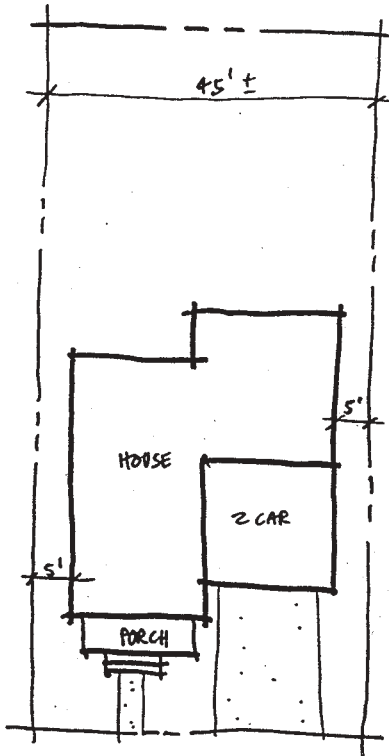
Rationale: Enhanced visual appeal, perception of eyes on the street, and neighborhood interaction is promoted by reducing the prominence of garages.

Encourage:

- Alternatives to garages as predominate architectural features by creative use of following design elements:
 - Recess garage back 5' from front house elevation entry.
 - Detach garage to rear of property - tie to residence with trellis, breezeway, etc.
 - Side turn-in garage at front elevation.
 - Grouped garage locations in higher densities.
 - Courtyard garage design.
 - Provide a second story above garage with features such as balconies for direct visual access.
- The use of architectural detailing, textures, windows, and garage placement or other design solutions to reduce the dominance of garage doors.
- Place active living areas at the front of the house with windows onto the street limiting the garage projection.

Discourage/Avoid:

- Prominent placement of garage door with respect to front door, entryway or front porch. This reduces the perception of eyes on the street and allows for less interaction with neighbors.
- Avoid the long uninterrupted wall created by the extension of the garage out from the house.



Encourage: example site plans

Building Design

Residential Design Element:

Porches/Entries/Courts



Front Porches Provide: weather protection and shade, sense of entry, and design interest

Principle: A clear sense of entry and design interest to a home is provided through the inclusion of porches, verandas, porte cocheres and other architectural elements that contribute to a sense of place and activity.

Rationale: The quality design and orientation of porches and entries provides for “eyes on the street” and contributes to pedestrian safety and activity.

Encourage:

- Fronts of houses and entries that face the street. Each house should have a clearly identified entry and have active use windows (i.e., living room, kitchen) facing the street.
- The main entry feature (which shall not be the garage door) should be prominently displayed on the elevation facing the street.
- Front porches large enough to accommodate chairs provide an opportunity for increased interaction among neighbors.
- “Standard” entryways can be extended to provide a modest front porch with minor modifications and cost.
- At a minimum, the front door should have the same prominence as the garage door.
- Porches that provide weather protection and shade are desired.

Discourage/Avoid:

- Providing a garage door that protrudes forward from the front face of the house. This tends to reduce visibility from the street to the front door.
- Locating the porch or entryway in a location obstructed by the garage or side of the house.
- Locating entryways and windows that are small and oriented to the interior or side of the site.

Principle: Creative driveway entry walk design, with the use of quality materials, are scaled to the pedestrian, enhancing overall neighborhood appeal.

Rationale: Pedestrian scale paving design allows for greater landscape areas that contribute to neighborhood livability.

Encourage:

- Separate pedestrian access to the front door from the driveway
- Single-width driveways whenever possible, especially on lots less than 50 feet wide.
- “Hollywood” driveways are encouraged.
- When a large portion of the front elevation is devoted to driveways and walkways, the driveways should be constructed with visually contrasting paving surfaces such as salt finish bomanite, stamped/colored concrete or paver stones.
- Driveway access to “third” garages and/or R.V. access should be provided with alternative paving materials (i.e. Hollywood driveways, pavers, decorative concrete etc.)

Discourage/Avoid:

- Excessively wide paved driveways that result in smaller yard area, increase heat in the summer and increased storm water runoff.
- Encroachment of the driveway into the front yard area (i.e., between the street and the front window and/or entryway).

Site Planning/Design

Residential Design Element:

Driveways/Entry Walks



Single width driveway to recessed garage



“Hollywood” driveway to recessed garage



Double width driveways dominate the property

Site Planning/Design

Residential Design Element:

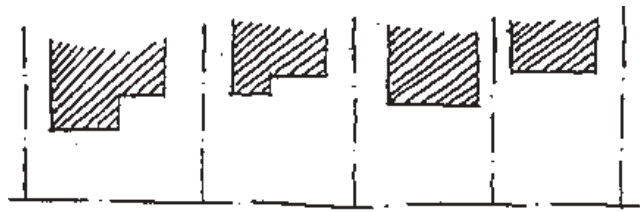
Setbacks/Lot widths

Principle: Neighborhood environments are established by the variety of architecture and landscape defined by varied lot widths and setbacks.

Rationale: Varied lot widths and setbacks provide a mix of architecture, massing and densities.

Encourage:

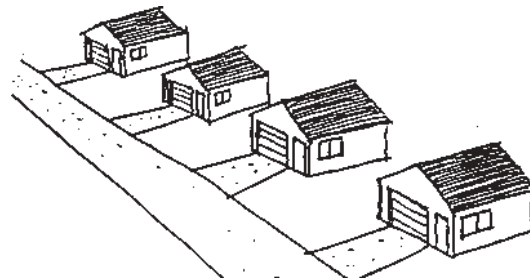
- The incorporation of reduced or varied front setbacks. These provide for a more interesting street environment, provide for a sense of security for pedestrians and allow front yard landscaping to contribute to a softened and densities.



- Curvilinear or angled streets to allows varied setback.

Discourage/Avoid:

- Deep homogeneous front setbacks. This provides for a “sameness” that exists throughout most new developments.



Principle: Consistent quality and design of landscape elements and sidewalks softens the aesthetics of structures and ties neighborhoods together while contributing to energy efficiency.

Rationale: Landscape and treescape design elements add value, and increased sustainability to neighborhoods.

Encourage:

- Planting at least one 15 gal. Shade tree within the front yard setback to provide for shading on the house and sidewalk. Spacing between front yard trees should be no greater than 50 feet.
- Residential subdivisions should incorporate thematic street tree programs in their designs.
- Utilize drought tolerant landscaping whenever possible. (A list of drought tolerant vegetation is available from the Planning Department).
- Sidewalks should be developed consistent with the City of Sacramento Streets Standards Manual. Landscape strips between sidewalks and curbs are desirable.

Discourage/Avoid:

- Building new homes with few or no front yard shade trees.
- The planting of water-dependent turf only.



Homes with trees provide better Quality of Life



Uniform Street Trees tie neighborhoods together, and provide shade. When planting, vary species and follow the tree planting list provided by the city.

Site Planning/Design

Residential Design Element:

Landscaping/ Sidewalks

Site Planning/Design

Residential Design Element:

Street view walls/ Monument Entries/ Access

Principle: Through creative design and use of quality materials, perimeter wall and entry elements provide a sense of arrival and identity for neighborhoods.

Rationale: Integrated together with defined landscape elements, perimeter wall and entry elements welcome neighbors and define community identity.

Encourage:

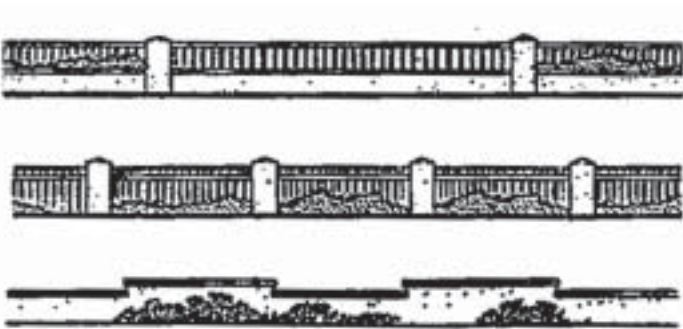
- Front or side on lots adjacent to local and collector streets where traffic and noise impacts allow. This orientation contributes to a more aesthetic and pedestrian friendly streetscape.
- Multiple ingress and egress points into subdivisions. This allows for a more even dispersal of traffic through a neighborhood. It also allows for improved emergency vehicle access.

Discourage/Avoid:

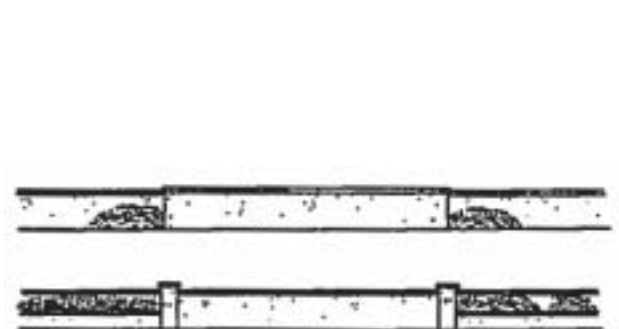
- Long walls separating subdivisions front street access and other subdivisions. This type of development restricts movement between neighborhoods and creates “dead” spaces along pedestrian corridors.
- Gates as entryways into subdivisions. Gates tend to create a “fortress” feeling and discourage interaction among neighborhoods.



Walls restrict access and inhibit community



Encourage: wall/wrought iron combinations, walls with breaks



Discourage/Avoid: staggered walls, planted walls

Principle: Visual and physical accessibility to public open spaces and parks allows for cohesive neighborhood viability and sustainability.

Rationale: Open space design orientation provides “eyes” on active and passive spaces that increase sense of place, neighborhood and safety.

Encourage:

- Residential units should front or side onto parks and public open space (including creeks and wetlands) providing “eyes” on active and passive open space.
- Where side or front on lots may not be possible or desirable, visual breaks should be provided (e.g., wrought iron, low fencing etc.) in rear yard walls to provide visual access to open space.

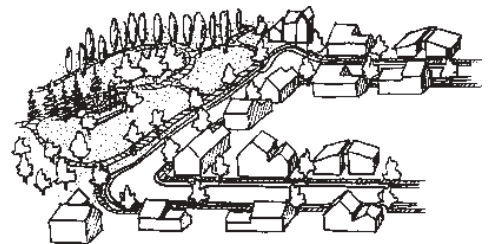
Discourage/Avoid:

- Back-on lots. This orientation turns a “blind eye” to active areas and reduces the opportunity for passive surveillance. It also misses the opportunity for increased housing values.
- Walls adjacent to visual corridors. (see next element)

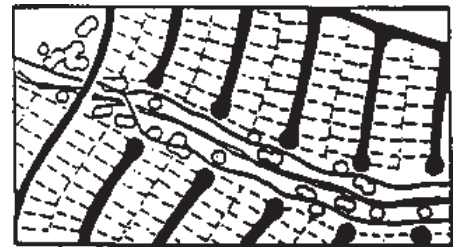
Site Planning/Design

Residential Design Element:

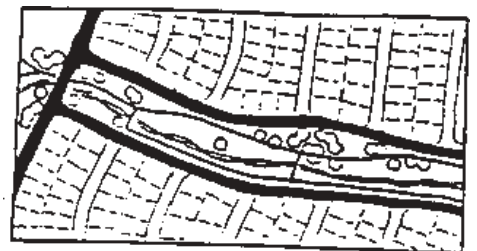
Orientation to parks/ public open space



Loop Streets



Cul-de-sac Streets



Parallel Streets