



# Multi-Family Residential Design Principles

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Approved by Planning Commission  
March 16, 2000

Approved by City Council  
August 5, 2000  
Resolution No. CC2000-487





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Special thanks to Lucinda Willcox for her editing assistance, and Darryl Chinn, DCA Architects, Randy Ward and Donna Decker for their much appreciated assistance with graphics.

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# Introduction

This document articulates design principles for multi-family residences to assist the Planning Commission, City Council, City staff and project planners and designers by identifying the City's design criteria for multi-family development. The intent is to achieve well-designed projects to enhance the community's overall value and appearance.

This document establishes design principles for new multifamily projects (containing three or more units). These principles are intended to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the community by carrying out the following goals:

- Promotion of a positive environment for the residents of multi-family developments with sustained quality and adequate amenities.
- Compatibility of multi-family development with surrounding properties.
- Contribution to and enhancement of the character, value and livability of Sacramento's neighborhoods.
- Direct and safe pedestrian access to adjacent transit and activity center locations.
- Clear, consistent and specific objective guidelines to provide developers with a more timely, cost effective, and more certain review process.

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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.

### Summary

The Planning Commission and its staff will use the design principles to provide consistent, objective, and fair review of proposed projects. The intent is not to subject projects to undue hardships. The Commission and staff are committed to engaging in a collaborative review process.

The Commission and staff welcome alternative designs, that, while not meeting every design principle, contribute positively to the City. The Commission and staff will review projects for overall compliance with the design guidelines, realizing that not every guideline will be met on any given project.

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 possible solutions to all situations. The principles do, however, promote quality design and innovative solutions.

The design principles shall be in addition to any other regulations/ requirements, as well as any applicable design review district requirements. ***Where design guidelines have been adopted for a specific area (see Appendix), those specific guidelines shall take precedence over the Multi-Family Residential Design Principles.*** In approving these Principles, the Planning Commission strongly encourages applicants for multifamily projects to meet or exceed minimum standards identified in City Codes and Ordinances.

Changes in planning and design practices may arise in the future and result in the need to modify the design principles. The Planning Commission will re-evaluate the principles annually, with input from members of the community, and make revisions as necessary.

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

# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

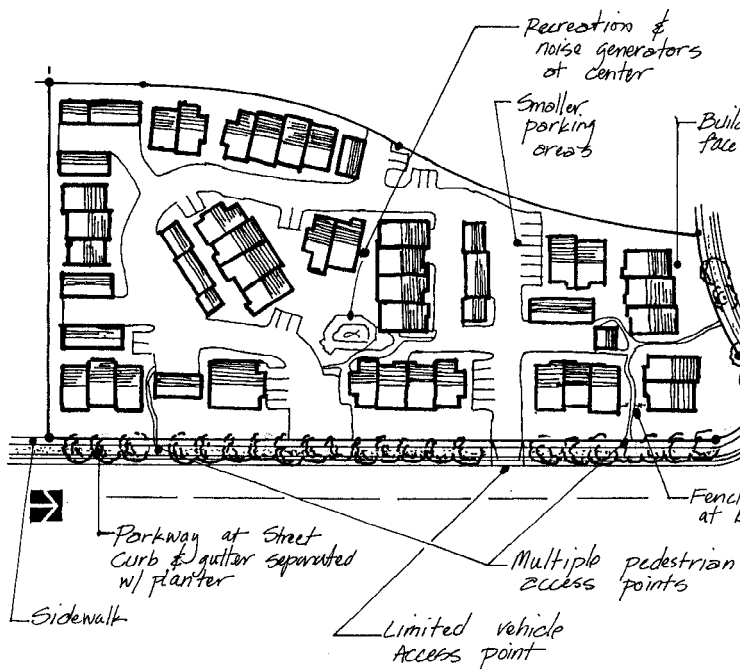
## Site Planning/ Orientation/Setbacks

**Principle:** Site planning and project design shall address the potential impacts on existing and planned adjacent uses. Project designs will address traffic, transit access, parking, circulation and safety issues, light and glare, noise, odors, dust control and security.

**Rationale:** Appropriate building orientation and design can help to create interesting and safe common open space areas that promote neighborly interaction. Windows, doors and balconies can provide “eyes on the street”, a sense of security for pedestrians, and increased security for residents.

## Site Planning

- Residential buildings should be arranged to provide functional public and private outdoor spaces.
- Locate structures to create continuity of desirable characteristics (i.e., porches, balconies, etc.) along the street face.
- Pedestrian-orientation is encouraged in the allocation of space, building size and placement, and open space design. Provide adequate walkways without obstructions (i.e., curbs and steps).



- Encourage appropriate amenities to serve anticipated residents (e.g., on-site child care and play lots for projects for families with children, less parking and more walking paths for senior housing, etc.)
- Active common open spaces should encourage gatherings and avoid noise, light and other potential conflicts with adjacent neighbors.
- Provide signage and building numbering programs to facilitate interior circulation for emergency services and visitor access.



## Building Orientation

- Multi-family buildings are encouraged to be oriented to the adjacent public street by providing large windows, porches, balconies and entryways or other entry features along the street. Active spaces provide visual access to street side activities. Balconies are allowed internally.
- Building ends should contain windows and active spaces to provide for additional security, and visual interest. Avoid the creation of blank street-facing walls.
- Residential buildings should have pedestrian access and visual orientation to the adjacent roadways and/or open space features. Avoid the creation of monotonous streetscapes
- Locate buildings to minimize the potential for disruption to privacy and outdoor activities of adjacent neighbors/buildings.
- Develop projects that face on alleys to enhance the general livability, visual quality and safety of the alley.



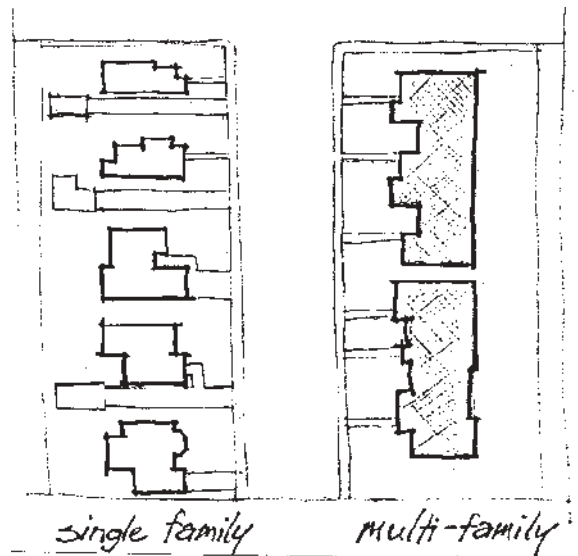
Encourage



Avoid

## Setbacks

- Building setbacks should be developed based on the context in which the building exists (i.e., reduced setbacks in urban areas, and increased setbacks in proximity to roadways with high noise and traffic).
- Modulated or varied building setbacks typically help to avoid the creation of a monotonous streetscapes.
- Site plans should be designed with variation in both the street patterns and the siting of structures so the appearance of the streetscape does not become overly repetitive. Avoid continuous lines of buildings with the same setback.



## Residential Design Element:

### Parking/Garages/Circulation/Entryways

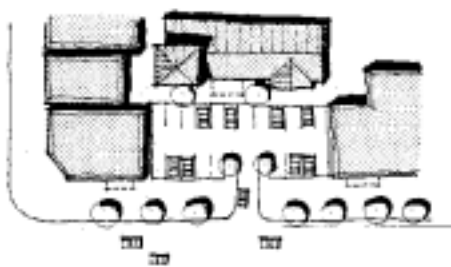
**Principle:** The visual prominence of vehicles shall be minimized by generally siting parking areas to the rear or side of the property rather than along street frontages, providing underground parking, and screening parking areas from views exterior to the site. Parking shall be designed to minimize potential pedestrian conflicts.

**Rationale:** Planning for safer and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians can result in an aesthetically appealing site with less impervious surface and increased open space. In addition, pedestrian ingress and egress provides opportunities for increased transit use and interaction with the community.

## Parking

- Surface parking lots should be located away from the adjacent public roadways, to the rear of (or beneath) buildings where possible. Parking areas should not be located adjacent to public roadways.
- Parking and vehicle access should be located away from street corners.
- Landscaping and walkways should be provided between buildings and paved parking areas. Parking directly against buildings is strongly discouraged.
- Parking areas visible from the street right-of-way should be screened from view with landscaping or other types of visual barriers.
- Parking areas should be buffered from adjacent residential properties. Landscaping should be provided adjacent to and within parking areas to screen vehicles from view.

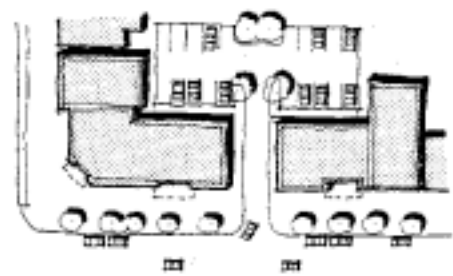
*Parking Locations: (Courtesy City of Seattle)*



*Discouraged*



*Acceptable*



*Preferred*



## Multi-Family Residential Design Principles

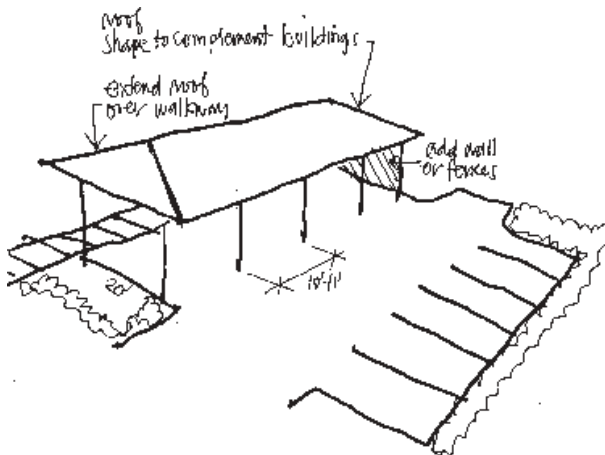
- Multiple smaller parking lots are preferred over single, large lots to minimize the expansive appearance of parking fields.
- Perimeter parking aisles which surround a complex and isolate residences from the parking areas shall be discouraged. Parallel parking along drive aisles may be added to minimize the number of stalls in lots.
- If large parking areas are needed, a clearly defined pedestrian path inside the parking area that provides safe and easy access to and from buildings and sidewalks should be included in the design.



*Because they are impersonal and unwelcoming, expansive parking areas are undesirable for residential developments.*

## Garages/Carports

- Carport roofs should reflect the design of the buildings, and materials and colors should be compatible with the adjacent buildings. If carport roofs are flat or need to vary from the design of adjacent buildings they should be located interior to the site, away from street views.
- Break up setbacks of garages to avoid “corridors” of garage walls.
- Lighting in carport areas should be provided.
- Storage for boats, recreational vehicles, and trailers, as well as storage sheds, should be fully enclosed when visible from the street or active adjacent uses.



# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Parking/Garages/ Circulation/Entryways (cont'd)



*Pedestrian circulation is safely and attractively separated from vehicles in these examples.*

## Pedestrian Circulation

- Pedestrian planning should be on par with that of vehicular access and provide easy pedestrian access to public bicycle/pedestrian ways, neighborhood centers and transit stops.
- Pedestrian routes should be as obvious, direct and simple as possible.
- Pedestrian access should not be limited to vehicle access locations. Provide separated pedestrian access points wherever possible. Sidewalks should not be combined with or be part of driveways.
- Pedestrian pathways should be separated from auto circulation routes. Where pedestrian circulation crosses vehicular routes, a change in grade, materials, textures or colors should be provided to emphasize the conflict point and improve its visibility and safety.
- Actual walking distances to transit services should be considered in project designs. Pedestrian accessibility should be measured by the actual path available, rather than a straight line. The general rule for time and distance for people willing to walk to get to transit is five minutes, or approximately 1,000 feet.
- All likely pedestrian routes should be considered in the design phase to eliminate “short cuts” which damage landscape areas.
- Pedestrian pathways should include amenities such as trellises, trees, or other landscaping. Lighting should be provided for safety and visual access.
- Bicycle parking should be located close to, and with direct access to, residential buildings.

## Vehicle Circulation

**Principle:** The location and design of driveways and entryways shall minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and pedestrian safety.

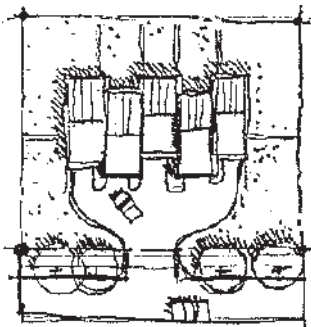
**Rationale:** Smaller driveways, curb cuts and parking areas can reduce barriers to pedestrian movement, improve aesthetics of a site, and reduce development costs.

- Redundant circulation unnecessarily reduces the amount of site available for landscaped areas and should be minimized.
- Dead end roadways greater than 150 feet require City approved turn around area to facilitate emergency vehicle access.

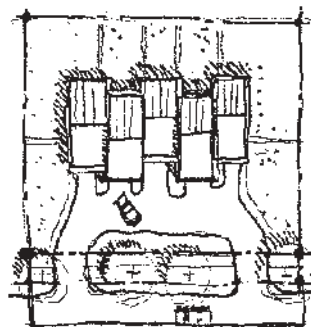
**Note:** All walkways, entry gates and common facilities shall meet Title 24, California Code of Regulations pertaining to disabled access design requirements. Parking lot design shall be subject to Section 3, Chapter 2 of the Zoning Ordinance, and Title 24, California Code of Regulations.

## Vehicle Entryways

- Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts. Shared driveways are encouraged where possible.
- Textures, patterns, and colors are encouraged in the design of paved parking areas or entries. Large monolithic areas of single-color untextured paving are discouraged.
- Colored and textured paving of project entry drives and parking court entries are encouraged to soften the streetscape.



PREFERRED



ACCEPTABLE

# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Open Space/ Landscaping

**Principle:** Residential projects should be designed to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, and integrated open space.

**Rationale:** Landscaping can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and the area. Planted areas shall be used to enhance the appearance of structures, define site functions, and screen undesirable views.

**Principle:** Open space areas should be linked among adjacent developments to allow shared open space opportunities, with a goal of providing contiguous regional open spaces and greenbelts.

**Rationale:** Usable, attractive and functional open space and landscaping provide for a pleasant and sustainable living environment, which ultimately contributes to property values. Landscaping also provides cooling shade and helps to improve air quality.

## Landscaping

- Exterior site design and landscaping should provide functional recreational spaces and/or community site amenities.
- Exterior spaces should be designed to enhance the overall appearance and compatibility of such development by providing privacy, buffering and daylight, and to provide a pleasant transition to the street.
- Street-facing elevations should have landscaping adjacent to their foundation. Landscaped area may be along the edge of a porch instead of the foundation.
- Dense landscaping and/or architectural treatments should be provided to screen unattractive views and features such as storage areas, stand alone unfinished or untreated trash enclosures, freeway structures, mechanical equipment (i.e., transformers, HVAC etc.) and other similar elements.
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping that includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Unpaved areas should be planted with irrigated plant materials. Unpaved areas where landscaping would be challenging should be mulched to minimize weed growth and improve appearance.
- Provisions for on-going maintenance should be identified to ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- Landscaping compatible with building design is encouraged. Trellises, arbors, cascading landscaping, vines and perimeter garden walls are encouraged.

- Landscaping should be in scale and compatible with the project and adjacent land uses.
- Security issues should be considered in the landscape design of the site, including creation of barriers and screening.
- Landscape plans should avoid potential conflicts between landscaping and lighting.
- Provide deciduous shade trees around the east, west and south sides of residences to help reduce cooling loads during the summer and allowing solar gain during the winter months.
- Streetscapes should incorporate a planter strip separating the sidewalk from the street (except where prohibited by the existing street cross section). Planting of trees within the planter strip is strongly encouraged for screening, security, shading and cooling benefits.
- Retain existing mature trees in landscape and building location plans where possible.
- Landscaping shall not impede fire access to hydrants connections.

## Open Space

Multi-family projects should be organized around usable common space. The site plan for each multi-family project should address both active and passive open space uses. Open spaces consisting of playgrounds, pools, picnic areas, tot lots, community rooms, etc. should be provided as appropriate for the ages and number of residents. Unless otherwise identified as an “adults only” or “senior” project, recreation areas for children should be provided.

Common areas should be accessible from all buildings and connected by a comprehensive, on-site pedestrian circulation system. Recreation areas, plazas and courtyards should be located and landscaped to take advantage of solar orientation, provide protection from wind and afford shade.

Each dwelling unit should have a usable outdoor space designed for the exclusive use of that dwelling unit at grade or in the form of a balcony for upper story dwellings. Private usable open space should be directly accessible from buildings and be of such size as to offer a reasonable outdoor living opportunity. The placement of air conditioning and other mechanical equipment should not render private open space unusable.

**Note:** Street design (cross sections) shall be compatible with the City Street Design Manual. All new landscaping shall comply with the City of Sacramento Water Conservation Ordinance.



*Landscaped planter strips add comfortable separation between the street and the pedestrian environment*



# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Lighting/Security

**Principle:** Project lighting shall respect the scale and character of the adjacent residential neighborhood. Lighting shall not intrude or create a nuisance towards adjacent properties. At the same time, lighting should provide for adequate visibility and security for residents.

**Rationale:** Lighting not only provides for increased security and visibility, but can also contribute to the design of a project.

## Lighting

- Exterior lighting should be architecturally integrated with the building style, material and colors.
- Raised light pole bases should be attractively designed and well-detailed to be compatible with the overall project. The use of cylindrical type concrete pole bases is discouraged.
- Parking areas and entry drives should be lighted to facilitate pedestrian movement and safety, especially where parking is located away from street views. Pole mounted lighting should be spaced for maximum energy efficiency and be no taller than 16 feet.
- Pedestrian walk lighting should be of an appropriate scale and style such as bollard type lighting, step lighting and/or pole mounted lighting. Site lighting should not be pervasive or impact surrounding neighboring properties.
- Coordinate planting of Landscaping and installation of lighting. Choose appropriate light pole size and location to avoid conflicts between mature trees and lighting. This will help to prevent mature trees from being severely pruned.

## Security

- For security, landscaping or other suitable barriers should be provided between sidewalk and entrances or windows. Avoid plant massings that may provide “hiding spaces”.
- Projects should encourage use of neighborhood watch and good neighbor policies.
- Consider the use of low walls on downstairs patios to allow residents to watch children and other activities (eyes on streets/ common areas).



*Light fixtures can add to the aesthetic character of a building when designed to complement the architecture*



*Low, downcast lighting adds safety to pedestrian walkways without contributing to “light pollution” and nuisance illumination.*

# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Accessory Structures/ Infrastructure



*Dedicated storage units provide secure storage and minimize clutter in other spaces.*



*Integrate accessory structures in terms of massing, roof pitch and finishing.*

**Principle:** Amenities and accessory structures (such as community rooms, mail rooms/kiosks, recreation rooms, garages, carports etc.) should be centrally located and easily accessible by residents. Service elements and infrastructure such as trash enclosures, loading docks and mechanical equipment shall be located away from street views.

**Rationale:** Unsightly and poorly located service elements can detract from compatibility with main building designs and create hazards for pedestrians and autos.

## Accessory Structures

- The roof pitch of accessory structures should be consistent with the predominant roof slope of primary structures. Materials and colors should also be consistent with primary structures.

## Storage

- Resident storage areas should be integrated into the building design. Storage facilities integrated with carports should have architectural treatment consistent with the buildings, using similar design elements. On site storage facilities will help to prevent the use of porches and balconies as storage areas.

## Trash/Recycling Enclosures

- Trash enclosures should contain enough space to facilitate both waste disposal and recycling. Containers should not block each other and be convenient to use.
- Trash enclosure design should address solid waste personnel safety. All enclosures should have access routes that do not require solid waste personnel to lift dumpsters for collection. Vertical curbs should be avoided, and materials for sidewalk or driveway access should be flat to prevent wheels from becoming stuck.
- Views of trash storage areas should be minimized from public streets and be located to avoid impacting adjacent properties.

- Trash enclosures are required to be constructed of concrete block or other durable material. Split face block, brick, stucco or similar quality materials are preferable. Avoid the use of unsurfaced cinder block.
- Landscaping should be incorporated around trash enclosures to provide for more effective screening.
- Trash enclosures and surrounding areas should be kept clear of loose trash.

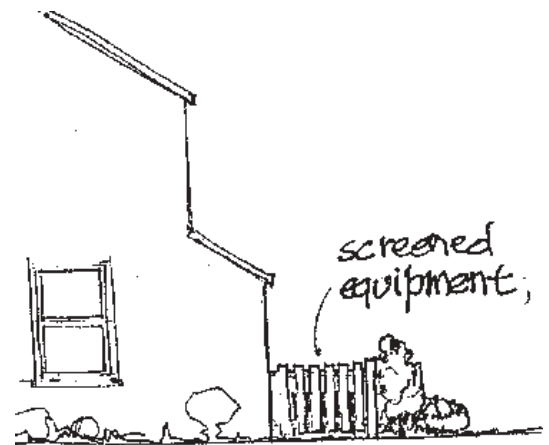
**Note:** Trash enclosures shall meet City standards for design and compliance with the City’s recycling ordinance [Chapter 3, Section 4, City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance]. Maintenance of trash enclosures (i.e., pick up of loose trash) is regulated by Chapter 19.01.121 of the City Code.

## Mechanical/HVAC/Utility Equipment

- Mechanical equipment (e.g., heating, cooling, antennas, satellite dishes, air conditioners or similar mechanical devices) should be integrated into the design of projects as much as possible.
- When integration is not possible, mechanical equipment should be screened from view whenever possible. Mechanical equipment should not be placed on building roofs.
- Minimize the visibility of roof-top mechanical equipment by grouping plumbing vents, ducts away from the public view.
- Utility equipment such as transformers, electric and gas meters, electrical panels and junction boxes should be screened by walls and/or landscaping. Combine the location of utilities and services where feasible.
- All electric, gas, television, radio, and cable television lines should be placed underground. Mechanical equipment should be installed consistent with the Comprehensive Floodplain Management Plan.
- Where possible, provide shade trees adjacent to mechanical equipment to reduce temperature at air intakes.



*Trash enclosures should be architecturally integrated with the building design.*



# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Fencing/Walls



*Encourage*



*Avoid*

**Principle:** The establishment of new walled developments or developments which are isolated or barricaded from the surrounding community is discouraged.

**Rationale:** Although the City recognizes the need for security measures, it is not recommended that multi-family projects become walled-in enclaves with few connections to the surrounding neighborhood or streets. Where fencing and gating are part of a project, they shall be integrated into the overall design which contributes to the long-term value of a project, and the neighborhood as well.

## Fencing/Walls

- Soundwalls, masonry walls or fences should be designed to minimize visual monotony through changes in plane, height, material or material texture or significant landscape massing where appropriate.
- Fencing and gating should be designed as an integrated part of the site, rather than as a separate fence, (i.e. planter wall, continuation of architectural wall, etc.).
- Alternative fencing designs and materials, (e.g., wrought iron/brick mix, hedges, shortened walls/fencing) are encouraged. Plain black wrought iron and chain link fencing without breaks or pillars are discouraged.
- Support placemaking goals with fences and walls that reflect the style, materials, colors and architectural character of the buildings and the site.
- Fencing should be screened to the greatest extent possible with landscaping.
- Fencing on street sides should be set back as much as possible and softened with landscaping to minimize a “fortress” image.
- Solid fencing, walls, large hedges, or other similar barriers exceeding four (4') feet in height are discouraged within streetside setback areas



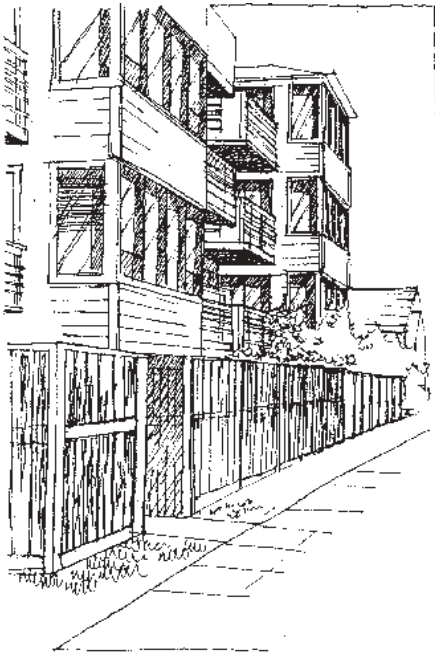
## Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines

- Fencing should allow pedestrian (resident) ingress and egress to the project site. Fencing should not create a barrier to pedestrian movement.
- Fencing shall not exclude use of hydrants or fire department connections or hydrants. All gates should have “knox” access for emergency use subject to review and approval by the City of Sacramento Fire Department.

**Note:** Security gating will be considered on a case-by-case basis per the City of Sacramento Gated Development Policy and Zoning Ordinance regulations.

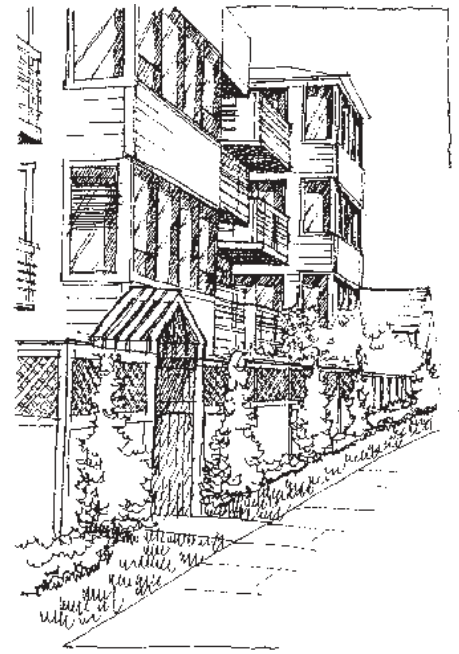


*Landscaping can add visual interest to a wall while screening objectionable views*



*Before*

*Details such as landscaping, trellises and variation in fencing design can add to the character, desirability and value to multifamily projects, as shown in this before/after*



*After*

# Site Planning/Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Drainage/ Water Quality

**Principle:** New multi-family development shall incorporate design features which provide for on-site source and treatment of urban runoff.

**Rationale:** Controlling urban runoff pollution from new developments during and after construction is critical to the success of Sacramento's Comprehensive Stormwater Management Program (CSWMP). The goal is to minimize the increase in runoff pollution typically caused by land development and protect the beneficial uses of receiving waters by employing a sensible combination of pollutant source control and site specific treatment measures.

In accordance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the City of Sacramento is implementing a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Program to reduce urban runoff pollutants to the maximum extent practical.

## Parking Lots

- With early planning and design it is possible for areas required for tree planting to also be used to satisfy the City's requirement to provide on-site treatment of stormwater.
- Parking lots which are part of new developments with 1 acre or more impervious area are generally required to provide treatment control measures that capture and treat stormwater runoff through settling, filtration, and /or biodegradation. The treated runoff is then released to the storm drain system or percolated into the ground.
- Integrating treatment measures with areas used for tree shading may significantly reduce land requirements and costs. The following figures ( Exhibit A and Exhibit B) describe typical criteria for Vegetated Swales and filter strips which can effectively be integrated with tree shading. The Department of Utilities, Stormwater Management Program should be contacted for specific design and plan approval.

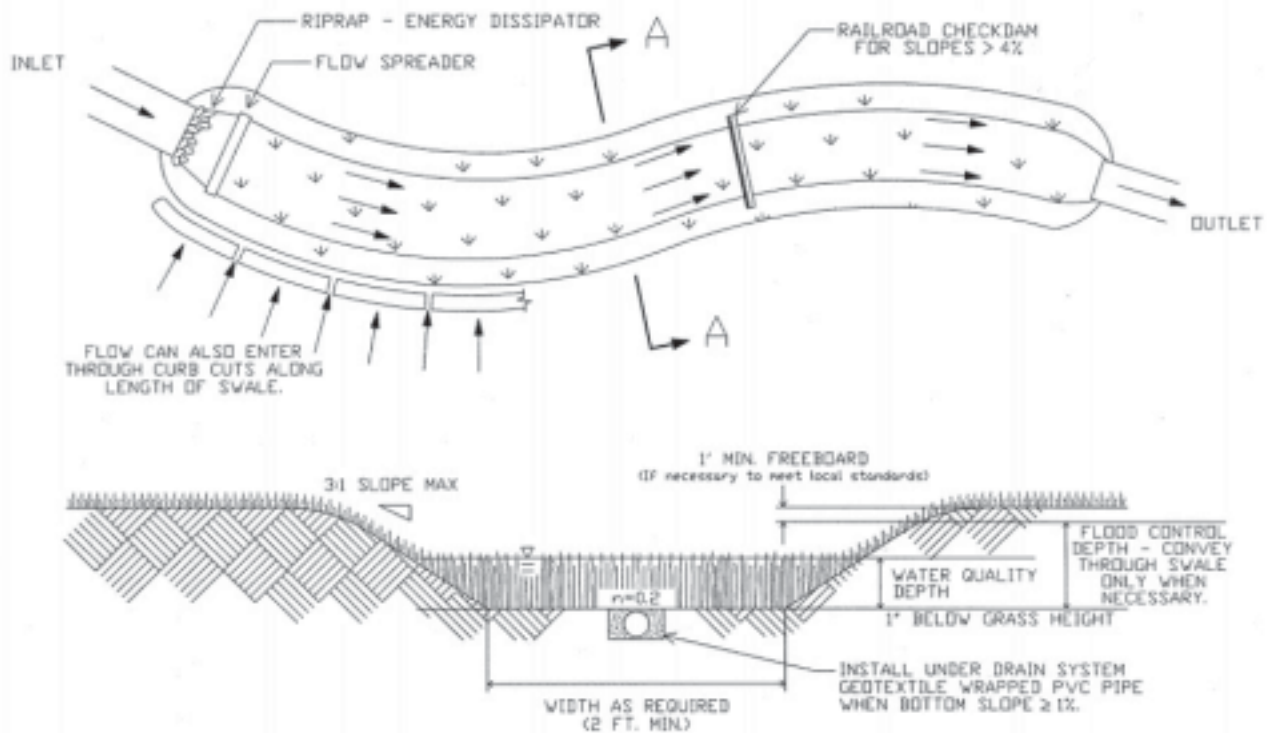
## Waste Handling Areas

- Provide covered trash and recycling containers in common areas such as recreation, laundry and vehicle wash areas.
- Provide grades or slopes of paved areas which direct runoff towards a dead-end sump or a drain connected to the sanitary sewer.
- Do not locate a storm drain in the immediate vicinity of a waste handling area.

## Vehicle Wash Areas


- Provide common vehicle wash areas where feasible.
- Pave, berm and grade designated vehicle wash areas to drain into the sanitary sewer.

**Note:** New multi-family sites shall be designed to incorporate urban runoff mitigation measures as identified in the City of Sacramento Guidance Manual for On-Site Stormwater Quality Control Measures.



## NOTES:

1. An energy dissipator and flow spreader should be installed at the entrance to the entrance to the swale to reduce velocity and evenly distribute flows across the swale.
2. Maximum allowable side-slope 3:1.
3. Grass height maintained in accordance with design specifications. Design grass height between 4 to 6 inches.
4. Flow height to be one-inch below design grass height for water quality design storm flow. (2-year - 6 hour storm) Use a Mannings roughness coefficient of 0.2 to design for flow through the swale vegetation.
5. If the swale bottom slope exceeds 4% or soils very permeable, install check dams every 50 feet to slow the velocity to prohibit scouring and promote infiltration.
6. If the swale bottom slope is less than 1% install under drain system to prevent standing water.
7. Flows in excess of water quality volume should be diverted around the swale. If necessary for swale to convey flood waters, provisions shall be made to ensure conveyance in accordance with City Standards. Provide 1 ft. freeboard if necessary for flood control.
8. n value above water quality height determined based on type of vegetation used. Typical value: 0.035

 <b>CITY OF SACRAMENTO</b> <b>DEPARTMENT</b> <b>OF UTILITIES</b>	<b>VEGETATED SWALE</b>
	<small>SCALE: NONE</small> <small>DATE DRAWN: 27 MAY 1999</small> <small>DRAWN BY: RLW</small> <small>FILE NAME: jim_mcd\001-02.dwg</small>

ADAPTED FROM PUGET SOUND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT MANUAL

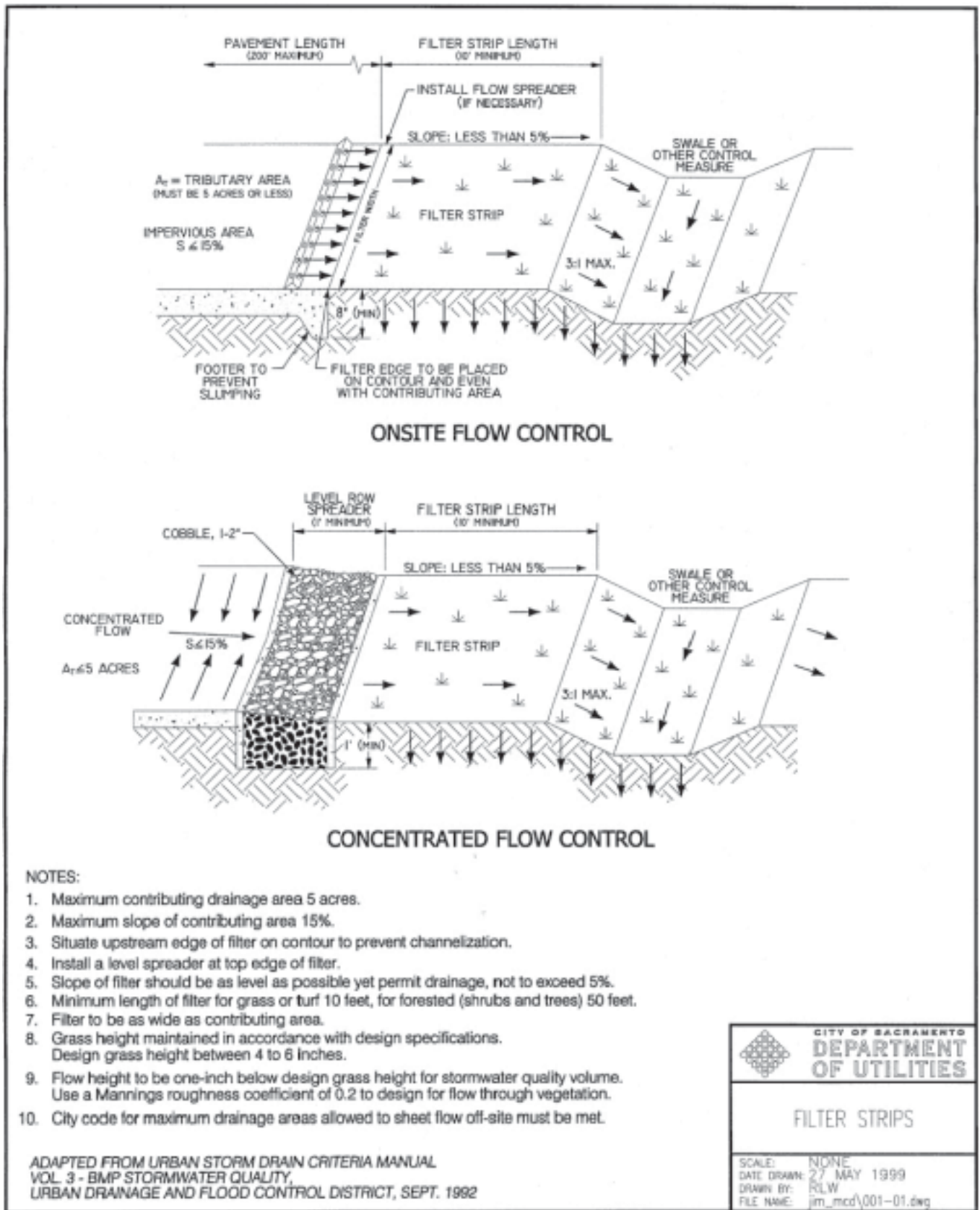


Exhibit B

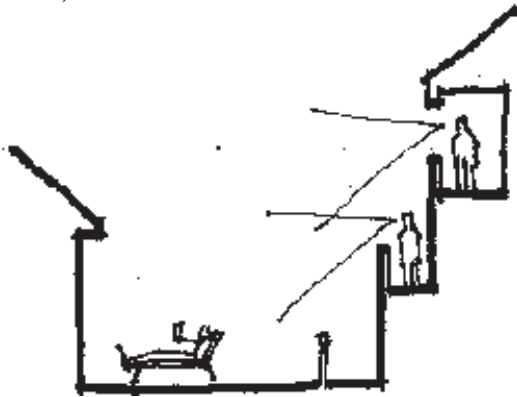


# Building Design

## Residential Design Element:

### General Architecture

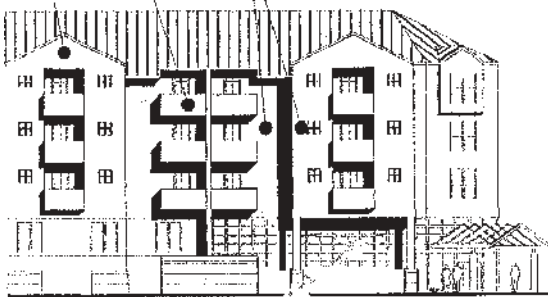
*Inappropriate siting of large buildings and design of building features may reduce the privacy of adjacent residents. (Courtesy City of Seattle)*



*Roof form mass broken up*

*Balconies are encouraged*

*Planar changes in building masses*



**Principle:** New multiple family residential development shall respect the scale and character of the adjacent residential neighborhood through attention to views, building scale and orientation and proximity to adjacent uses.

**Rationale:** Quality in detail and design contributes not only to the long-term value of a project, but the neighborhood as well. The use of different “styles” and materials is intended to add variety to the buildings just as is most often found in cities that have evolved over time.

## General Architecture

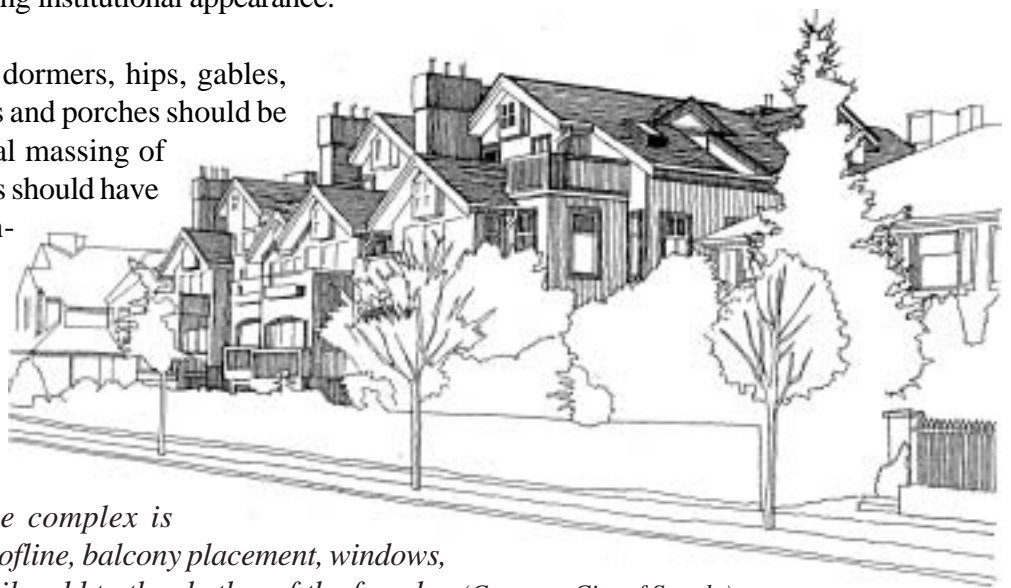
- Variety in the architecture, which adds interest and character, is strongly encouraged.
- Vary roof form, mass, shape and material changes to create variations in plans.
- Larger projects (greater than 200 units) should contain a variety of building elevations. Avoid excessive repetition of elevations throughout a neighborhood or project with little differentiation.
- Use high quality (permanent and long lasting) building materials to contribute to sustained quality and sense of permanence.
- Multi-family projects should be designed to respect the privacy of surrounding uses. Upper story views into adjacent yards are discouraged.

**Principle:** Multifamily projects shall be compatible with their surroundings with respect to building scale, mass, setbacks, and articulation.

**Rationale:** Stair stepping building height, breaking up the mass of the building and shifting building placement can help mitigate the impact of differing building scales and intensities.

### Scale/Massing/Articulation

- Buildings should be stepped down at upper levels in areas with a relatively smaller-scale character. There should be a scale transition between intensified land uses and adjoining lower intensity land uses.
- Extremely long facades should be designed with sufficient building articulation and landscaping. Include visual variety and provide a sense of human scale at the ground level. Long expanses of uninterrupted wall area, unbroken roof forms, and box-like structures should be avoided.
- Street elevations should contain appropriate features to provide visual interest, including posts or columns, wainscoting, decorative tiles, shutters, window boxes and other pedestrian level details.
- Units clustered into one structure should have varying front setbacks, staggered roof planes, and variety in orientation. Avoid a monotonous or overpowering institutional appearance.
- Articulation such as roof dormers, hips, gables, balconies, wall projections and porches should be used to break up the visual massing of building facades. End units should have articulation such as windows and doors facing onto the sidewalks. Unarticulated and windowless walls are discouraged.



*The massing of this large complex is improved by variation in roofline, balcony placement, windows, and chimneys. These details add to the rhythm of the facade. (Courtesy City of Seattle)*

# Building Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Architectural Scale/Massing/Articulation



*Avoid*



*Encourage*

# Building Design

## Residential Design Element:

## Architectural Elements/Details

**Principle:** Designs within a specific project area need to be consistent in scale and character, but not to the point of being identical or repetitious. The design shall respect the predominant characteristics of the existing developments in the project area. Variety and distinctiveness in design is desirable.

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

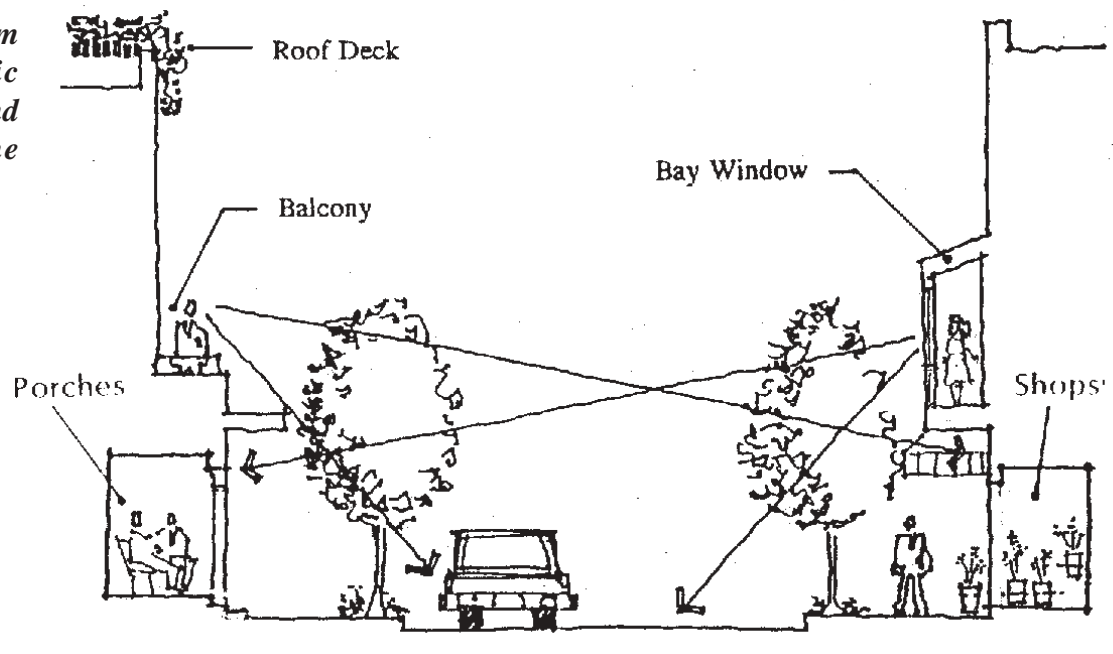
### Facades/Entries

- Provide entries that allow residents to “see and be seen”. These entries can be integrated with second floor elements to provide balconies and decks. Various types of roof supports are encouraged.
- Provide clearly defined site and building entries that are in scale with the proposed project, and that relate directly to the street frontage. The front door to each unit should be clearly visible.
- The main entrance of each primary structure should face the street-side lot line when structures are proximate to street rights-of-way.
- Provide addresses that are clearly readable from the street, and illuminated.

**Note:** All building entrances shall meet Title 24, California Code of Regulations pertaining to disabled access design requirements.

*Visibility of and from entries and public spaces adds security and visual interest to the streetscape.*

*(Courtesy City of Seattle)*



## Materials/Textures/Colors

- Materials selected for multi-family projects should be very durable and require low maintenance, including, but not limited to: stucco, wood siding, stone, and brick. Over-use of pre-fabricated, less durable materials (including T-111) is discouraged.
- The use of a variety and combination of building materials is encouraged. However, it is generally preferred that the number of materials used on the exterior be such that a clean, uncluttered design statement is the result.
- Integrate signs of quality consistent with the design of the project
- Use material textures and colors to help articulate the building design.
- Careful application of materials is important to final design and appearance. For example, poor installation results in low quality appearance.
- “Permanent” roof materials, such as concrete and clay tile, are encouraged because of their low maintenance and consistent appearance over time. Wood shake or shingle roofing is also acceptable. Composition shingles should be the heavy laminated dimensional type, and be of at least 25-year quality.
- The patterns created by the window and door placement can help add variety and interest to the design. Relentless grids of repeated windows should be avoided.



*Building design should include windows with visible massing and detail. Shutters, trim, awnings, and moldings on windows are encouraged. Aluminum window frames, without trim or other details, are discouraged.*



*Acceptable*



*Preferred*

# Building Design

## Residential Design Element:

### Energy Conservation

**Principle:** New multi-family development shall incorporate site planning and building design features that help to reduce energy consumption.

**Rationale:** Attention to energy conservation in design will lead to an energy efficient, sustainable multi-family development.

## Energy Conservation

- Make the living units energy efficient by lowering the requirement for heating and cooling, by including: proper building orientation (solar), efficient framing, weather-stripping, insulation, shading and high quality windows.
- Downsize the heating and cooling systems and make them more efficient and ensure that the ductwork is tight.
- Install energy efficient lighting, including living areas and porch lights.
- Use energy efficient appliances, including refrigerator, microwave and a water heater with an energy factor of .60 or more.
- Install measures such as Energy Star rated roofs, strategically placed shade trees, shaded pavement and other landscaping to reduce site/building temperatures.
- Where possible, include renewable energy measures such as photovoltaic roofs and ground source heat pumps. Improve recycling opportunities for construction materials, refuse and wastewater.
- Use recycled and sustainable building materials wherever possible.
- Incorporate features that reduce water consumption (i.e., low flow fixtures, recycled grey water, etc.)



## Definitions

**Accessory Structures:** A structure detached from a principal building, located on the same lot and incidental to the principal use. These include recreation rooms, pools, laundry, storage buildings, home theaters, mail box kiosks, laundry facilities, leasing offices and recreation rooms

**Articulation:** The dividing or segmenting of building elements into smaller components to create a sense of minor detailing. Articulation may be described in terms of roughness of materials, number of openings, patterns in materials, differences in materials, massing etc.

**Design Context:** Describes the surrounding styles, scales, uses and other factors that identify distinctive qualities in relation to a design project.

**Design Continuity:** A unifying or connecting theme or physical feature for a particular setting or place, provided by one or more elements of the natural or created environment. The use of design continuity helps to avoid abrupt and/or severe differences with adjacent projects.

**Efficient Framing:** Efficient framing, also called “advanced framing”, eliminates structurally unnecessary or excess framing material (especially at headers, corners and ceiling) and increases the amount of insulated cavity - thereby increasing energy performance and minimizing thermal bridges.

**Elevation:** The external faces of a building

**Hardscape:** Typically involves street infrastructure, including: paving elements, such as roads, sidewalks, fountains, shelters and medians.

**Human Scale:** Generally refers to the use of human proportioned architectural features and site design elements clearly oriented to human activity.

**HVAC:** Heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment.

**Infill:** Building and land development that utilizes land within the urban environment that is unused or under-used.

# Glossary

**Massing:** The distribution of building volumes in regard to a) the building’s relative location on the site and b) the height, width, depth of the elements of a building relative to each other.

**Mixed Use:** A building or neighborhood that incorporates more than one type of use, such as Residential and Retail or Commercial.

**“Knox” Access:** Keyed or coded access available to City of Sacramento Fire Department personnel for use in the event of an emergency.

**Multi-Family:** Includes residential development projects with three (3) or more units.

**Orientation:** The direction that various sides of a building face.

**Pedestrian Scale:** A design relating to the scale of an average person.

**Scale:** Describes the relationship between the proportions of a project and adjacent uses.

**Softscape:** Includes landscape elements, such as trees, bushes and other plant materials.

## Relevant Codes/Ordinances:

**Floodplain Management:** Development in the floodplain is regulated by the Comprehensive Flood Management Plan (CFMP) and Chapter 5, Section 3 of the City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance. These regulations focus on the protection of public safety and property through development guidelines.

**Gating/Fencing:** Gating and fencing are regulated by City of Sacramento Gated Development Policy and Chapter 5, Section 3.2 of the City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance. These address the siting and design of fencing and gating of residential development larger than 2 units in size.

**Parking:** Parking lot design and shading requirements shall be subject to Chapter 3, Section 2 of the City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance addresses required parking and design standards. Projects located within Planned Unit Develop-

ments (PUD) may be governed by special development standards identified in individual PUD design guidelines.

**Shade Trees:** See parking

**Street Design:** Street design (cross sections) shall be compatible with the City Street Design Manual.

**Title 24, California Code of Regulations:** These regulations, generally referred to as ADA regulations, require minimum adaptations for newly constructed multi-family development to address safety and welfare needs of persons with disabilities.

**Trash Enclosures/Recycling:** City of Sacramento Recycling Ordinance [Chapter 3, Section 4, City of Sacramento Zoning Ordinance]. This ordinance addresses the design and siting of trash enclosures.

**Maintenance of Trash Enclosures** (i.e., pick up of loose trash) is regulated by Chapter 19.01.121 of the City Code.

**Water Conservation:** City of Sacramento Water Conservation Ordinance. This ordinance governs the quality, quantity, and variety of plant materials identified in the open space/landscaping section.

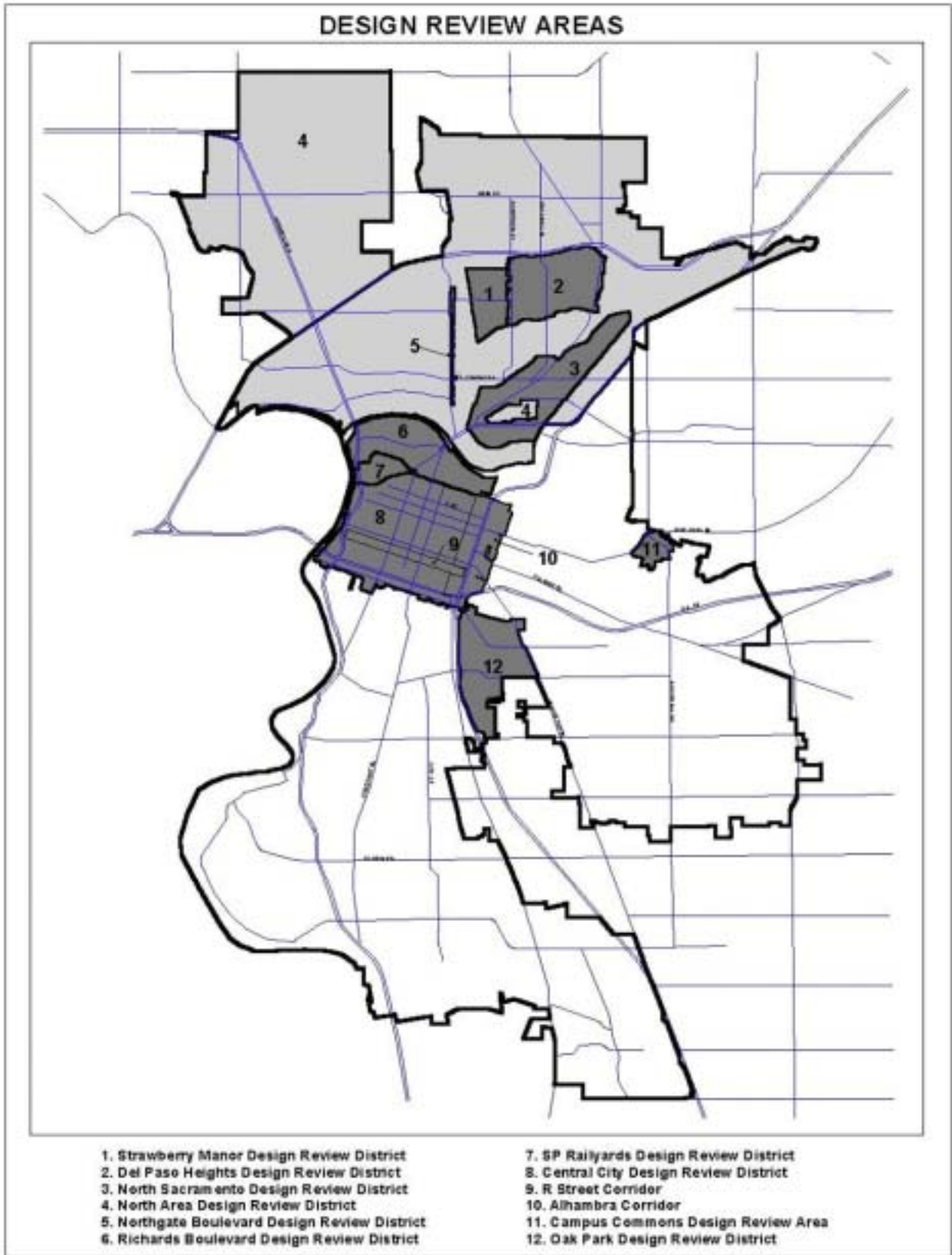
**Water Quality:** New multi-family sites shall be designed to incorporate urban runoff mitigation measures as identified in the Sacramento Stormwater Management Program, Guidance Manual for On-Site Stormwater Quality Control Measures.

# Glossary

# Appendix

## References:

- Arena Corporate Center PUD Guidelines (1998)
- City of Belmont (North Carolina) Design Guidelines
- City of Davis General Plan (1996)
- City of Folsom Design Guidelines (1998)
- City of Las Vegas Design Guidelines (1997)
- City of Portland Design Guidelines (1998)
- City of Sacramento, Central City Design Guidelines (1999)
- City of Sacramento Multifamily Design Criteria (1986)
- City of Sacramento Senior Housing Design Criteria (1985)
- City of Seattle Design Guidelines (1993)
- City of Walnut Creek Design Guidelines (1998)
- North Natomas Development Guidelines (1994)
- North Sacramento Design Guidelines (1994)



*Exhibit C: Design/Review Areas*



# Summary

## Multi-Family Design Principles Summary

This checklist is intended to be a summary of the issues addressed by the principles. It is not meant to be a regulatory device or a substitute for the language and examples found in the principles themselves. Rather, it is a tool for evaluating the success of a given project in meeting the intent of the design principles.

**YES**                      **NO**                      **N/A**

### **SITE PLANNING/DESIGN**

#### **GENERAL SITE PLANNING/DESIGN**

                                            Does site planning and design address the potential impacts in on existing and planned adjacent uses?

                                            Does the project design address traffic, parking, circulation and safety issues, light and glare, noise, odors, dust control and security?

#### **PARKING/CIRCULATION/ENTRYWAYS**

                                            Is the visual prominence of vehicles minimized through siting and screening views from adjacent roadways and uses?

                                            Are parking facilities designed to be compatible with building designs?

                                            Do the siting and design of driveways and entryways minimize the impact of automobile parking and driveways on the pedestrian environment, adjacent properties and bicycle safety?

                                            Is direct, simple, and safe pedestrian ingress and egress provided to and from the site?

#### **OPEN SPACE/LANDSCAPE**

                                            Does the project provide opportunities for usable, attractive, and integrated open space?

                                            Do proposed planted areas enhance the appearance of structures, define site functions, and screen undesirable views?

                                            Are open space areas linked among adjacent developments, where opportunities allow?

#### **SECURITY/LIGHTING**

                                            Is project lighting at an appropriate scale and compatible in design to the main structure?

*if NO or N/A was checked for any of the above, please explain*

## Multi-Family Residential Design Principles

Does the lighting of the project respect the adjacent residential development neighborhood through attention to scale, views, and excess lighting?

### **AMENITIES, INFRASTRUCTURES AND ACCESSORY STRUCTURES**

Are amenities and accessory structures centrally located and easily accessible by residents?

Are service elements and infrastructure such as trash dumpsters, loading docks and mechanical equipment appropriately screened and/or located away from street views?

### **GATING/FENCING**

If the project incorporates gating, is adequate pedestrian ingress and egress provided?

Is the design of proposed fencing and gating compatible with the overall design of the project?

Is fencing located behind setback areas to reduce the sense of isolation from the rest of the community?

## **BUILDING DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE**

### **GENERAL ARCHITECTURE**

Does the project respect the scale and character of the adjacent residential neighborhood?

### **SCALE/MASSING/ARTICULATION**

Is the project compatible with its surroundings with regards to: building scale, mass, setbacks, and articulation?

### **ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS/DETAILS**

Is the project design consistent in scale and character with adjacent properties?

Does the project respect the predominant characteristics of height, massing, setbacks, and materials of the existing developments in the project area?

Does the project incorporate variety and distinctiveness in design?

### **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

Does the project incorporate site planning and building design features that help reduce energy conservation?

*if NO or N/A was checked for any of the above, please explain*