

See Section 3 below for Infill Design Guidelines

SECTION 3 Infill Design Guidelines

1.3.1 Purpose of the Infill Design Guidelines.

The Infill Design Guidelines supplement the Guidelines in Section 1, Site and Surrounding Area Considerations; and Section 2, Architectural Imagery. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that infill development complements existing buildings, preserves neighborhood character, and is well integrated into the neighborhood with a cohesive and well-thought out design. Compatible designs respect the existing neighborhood context,

character and adjacent structures through compatible building massing (height, scale and location), and incorporate building design principles and streetscape elements that are attractive. In addition, appropriate open space designs incorporate features that increase livability of projects and safety of occupants.

- 1.3.2 **Compatibility.** For the purposes of design review, “compatibility” is defined as a project’s ability to integrate harmoniously with the desirable architectural qualities and characteristics which are distinctive of Santa Barbara and the immediate neighborhood. A study of the ten (10) closest properties, and additional properties as needed, can be a tool used in evaluating neighborhood compatibility.

The following should be considered in achieving compatibility:

- A. Contextual setting (streetscape, surrounding structures, street trees, parks)
- B. Patterns of development in the particular area
- C. Architectural style
- D. Size, mass, bulk, height, and scale
- E. Proximity to, and interface with, historic resources, historic districts, historic sites, or natural features
- F. Design intent and overall concept of the project and land use designation of the site

1.3.3 **Design Techniques and Approaches**

The Infill Design Guidelines are organized in sections: Building Design, Height and Massing; Open Space and Landscaping; Livability and Privacy; and Historic Resources. Each section lists some possible design techniques and approaches that can be employed in order to achieve the objectives in the Project Compatibility Criteria. Other creative and innovative design techniques and approaches may be considered in order to achieve the intended objectives of the listed guidelines.

- A. **Building Design, Height and Massing:** Appropriate building design, height and massing contributes to Santa Barbara’s quality, sense of place and compatibility. These guidelines seek to ensure a project is compatible with the neighborhood through appropriate mass, bulk and scale. In addition, the design should be well integrated into the neighborhood with a cohesive and well-thought out design. Massing refers to the building’s physical form including size, mass, bulk, scale and height. Massing is influenced by specific design features and architectural treatments that may be used to express or break up the massing of a building including: variations in building height, setbacks, stepping back recessed volumes, and other strategies to provide a response appropriate for the surrounding context.

It is recognized that not all techniques or approaches are appropriate or practical for every development project. Where appropriate, consider applying as many of the design techniques and approaches listed below as needed to result in an appropriate size, mass, bulk, height, and scale of the building and achieve compatible building design and massing:

1. Design new buildings to enhance and fit into the streetscape. Consider all design elements for compatibility with adjacent buildings and with the immediate neighborhood.
2. Setting back a building more than the Zoning Ordinance requirement may be necessary to be compatible with the general alignment of the setbacks of neighboring properties and to reduce apparent building mass along the street.
3. Avoid massing that overwhelms adjacent buildings and streetscapes. Stepping back upper floors can mitigate overall mass of the building.
4. Reduce the overall floor area of the building by decreasing the average unit size, number of units, bedrooms or bathrooms per unit. The floor-to-lot-area ratio (FAR) can be used to evaluate if the project may be too large for the size of the lot.
5. It may be necessary to reduce the plate heights to lower overall building height and massing. Plate heights should relate to the size and use of the occupancy type.
6. Use variation in height and roofline to reduce the perceived height of the building.
7. Step down larger buildings in height adjacent to smaller buildings, especially if adjacent buildings are historically significant.
8. Open stairs leading to upper floors or the roof top can help reduce building mass. (When allowed by building code.)
9. Design parking to minimize building mass and height and to maximize functional open space and landscaping. Stacked parking and at-grade podium designs can increase building height, while underground parking can lower building height and reduce mass.
10. Provide articulation to reduce the apparent mass and scale of the building, and to be sensitive to the neighborhood.
11. Organize the street facades of a large development or building into several visually distinct parts to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.
12. Divide a larger building mass into smaller components similar in size to adjacent structures to reduce the overall mass of the building. Consider all elevations of the project.
13. Buildings should be within the range of heights seen in the neighborhood. Careful consideration should be given when proposing a building with more stories than surrounding buildings. Three or four story buildings may not be appropriate in all neighborhoods.
14. Encourage the use of traditional building materials compatible with neighborhood styles.

- B. **Site Planning for Open Space and Landscaping:** Open space and landscaped areas contribute to the City's natural beauty and enhance the overall quality of life,

aesthetic appearance, and sense of place that is distinctive to the Santa Barbara community. Open space and landscaping break up the monotony of paved and built surfaces and contribute to a cleaner environment and healthier, livable neighborhoods. A generous amount of open space and landscaping is considered a positive enhancement to a project. Functional common and private open space enhances the quality of life for the occupants. Setbacks also serve to provide a sense of openness and continuity and enhance the environment. Interior setbacks can provide a buffer between adjoining properties and structures and allow for useable common and private outdoor gathering areas.

It is recognized that not all techniques or approaches are appropriate or practical for every development project. Where appropriate, consider applying as many of the following design techniques and approaches listed below as needed to achieve appropriate open space and landscaping:

1. Provide significant landscaping and trees at the ground level, particularly in areas that can screen and soften the larger masses of the building.
2. Include landscape buffers between surface parking, hardscape, and buildings.
3. For larger residential developments, combine and/or increase the amount of functional common open space and landscaped areas to accommodate amenities, such as play areas for children, recreational facilities, and outdoor gathering areas.
4. Landscaping on upper level decks may be appropriate as a method to increase livability and soften the mass of the building.
5. Preserve and incorporate existing natural landscape features and mature trees into new development. If not preserved, provide sufficient new landscaping.
6. Designs with parking garages under buildings or with stacked parking could help provide additional area on the site for open space and landscaping.

Part II of this document is the ABR Landscape Design Guidelines which has additional guidelines related to Site Planning for Open Space and Landscaping in sections on: Site Layout and Massing (Section 2.2.1), Parking Lots (Section 2.2.5), Additional Guidelines for Commercial/Industrial, Multi-Family and Residential Projects (Section 3), and Tree and Vegetation Preservation (Section 4).

- C. **Livability and Privacy:** The concept of livability is broad and can take on different meanings; however, for the purpose of these infill design guidelines, the concept of “livability” considers a person’s quality of life as it pertains to their place of residence or employment. Desirable livability design features including useable, functional, common and private open space, access to light and air, safety, and privacy from neighboring properties are considered important amenities to enhance quality of life for occupants. Meeting with adjacent neighbors to discuss livability and privacy considerations prior to beginning the City application process

is strongly encouraged.

It is recognized that not all techniques or approaches are appropriate or practical for every development project. Where appropriate, consider applying as many of the design techniques and approaches listed below as needed to enhance the livability of the project:

1. Provide appropriate useable open space to accommodate gathering, playing, and seating areas for residents. In some cases above-grade open space such as roof decks may be an acceptable substitute for on-grade open space if it provides adequate functional space, preserves privacy, and does not pose massing, height, and other aesthetic concerns.
2. Certain projects in certain zone districts do not have required setbacks from interior property lines. In specific cases, it may be appropriate to set back the proposed development in order to provide greater livability, light and air, and privacy for users of the proposed development and adjacent development.
3. Design parking to avoid conflict with living areas, but still be easily accessible to residential units.
4. Provide pedestrian pathways to create safe and efficient connections to on-site buildings, the public right-of-way, adjacent properties, and the neighborhood.
5. Design projects with visible entrances, lobbies, and gates from public sidewalks and streets.
6. Provide clearly demarcated, accessible, and lighted pathways between sidewalks and building access points to establish a sense of presence and safety.
7. Use courtyards, paseos, gardens and other outdoor areas to enhance open spaces.
8. Design projects to comply with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and Guidelines.
9. Place windows to avoid direct views into neighboring windows by offsetting or staggering with neighbors' window locations.
10. Avoid placing larger upper-story windows overlooking the rear yards of adjacent properties.
11. Locate upper-story balconies and decks to minimize loss of privacy for neighboring properties.
12. Set back upper floors or increase side and rear yard setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residents.
13. Orient upper story decks to face the street or away from neighboring windows, openings, and yards.

Part II of this document is the ABR Landscape Design Guidelines. Part II, Section 2, General Guidelines contains additional guidelines related to utilizing landscaping to enhance privacy.

SECTION 4 Historic Resources

1.4.1 Historic Resources Element. The Historic Resources Element of the General Plan contains a goal to “Protect the significant contribution made by Santa Barbara’s neighborhood historic resources to the City’s charm and sense of historical context.” Historic Resources Element Policy HR1 – Protect Historic and Archaeological Resources, seeks to protect the heritage of the City by preserving, protecting and enhancing historic resources, and Policy HR2 – Ensure Respectful and Compatible Development, directs that all development respect historic resources and the overall historic character of the City. Implementation Actions HR2.1 thru HR2.5 specifically address construction in proximity to historic resources, and that development shall be designed, sited and scaled to be compatible with their historic neighbors and with public enjoyment of the historic site. The following guidelines are intended to implement Policy HR2.

1.4.2 Demolition Review Study Area. Project sites within the City’s Demolition Review Study Area containing older structures, site features, or landscape features must be researched to determine if they are potentially historically significant, or eligible to be designated as historic resources. Evaluation and protection of archaeological resources, historic resources, or trees are governed by policies, laws and regulations of the Municipal Code and at the state and federal levels. Consultation with the City’s Urban Historian is required for demolition or substantial alterations proposed for structures and for the proposed removal of any potentially historic site feature such as walls or landscaping. Existing historic structures and historic site features such as walls, gates, stairways, and specimen trees should be preserved and included as a part of the overall plan where feasible.

1.4.3 Infill Projects. Infill development projects involving historic resources shall preserve, protect, and enhance those resources. Projects on sites adjacent to historic resources shall respect and be compatible with the adjacent resources.

A. Project Sites Containing Historic Resources: If a project parcel contains potentially historic or designated historic resources the project shall be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). The Urban Historian can assist the HLC by identifying particular issue areas where the proposed development must show consideration and sensitivity to historic resources on the site.

B. Projects Adjacent to Historic Resources: The ABR is the review body for projects in proximity to historic resources. (However, the HLC is the review body for all projects within El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District or another landmark district.)

This section of guidelines helps to ensure that infill development is appropriately sensitive to adjacent historic resources, is compatible, and maintains a balance between historic resources and new construction.

It is recognized that not all techniques or approaches are appropriate or practical for every development project. Consultation with the City Urban Historian is required to determine which of the design techniques and approaches listed below should be followed to demonstrate sensitivity to historic resources:

1. Architectural styles of new or remodeled buildings should be compatible and fit with the character of adjacent structures.
2. Special consideration shall be given to setbacks for projects adjacent to historic resources and/or historic patterns of development to be compatible with other historic resources on the street.
3. Design interior setbacks to maintain an appropriate distance to provide views to the resource, appropriate light and air, and avoid impacts such as crowding or looming over adjacent historic resources.
4. Location of parking and garages should be sensitive to adjacent historic resources.
5. Orient the front entrance of the building to the street and clearly identify the front entrance unless this is not the predominant pattern on the street.
6. Larger buildings should be stepped down in height as they approach smaller adjacent historic resources.
7. Design the front façade to appear similar in scale with adjacent historic resources.
8. Align foundation and floor-to-ceiling heights to be sensitive to adjacent historic structures.
9. Align eaves, cornices, and ridge lines to be compatible with those of the neighboring historic structures.
10. Design the front of buildings to have a similar rhythm and pattern of window and door openings as those of the existing streetscape.
11. Incorporate materials and colors similar to those traditionally used in neighboring historic structures.