

RESIDENTIAL CITYWIDE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Multi-Family Residential & Commercial Mixed-Use Projects



Los Angeles
Department
of City Planning

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The City of Los Angeles' General Plan Framework Element and each of the City's 35 Community Plans promote architectural and design excellence in buildings, landscape, open space, and public space. They also stipulate that preservation of the City's character and scale, including its traditional urban design form, shall be emphasized in consideration of future development. To this end, the Citywide Design Guidelines have been created to carry out the common design objectives that maintain neighborhood form and character while promoting design excellence and creative infill development solutions.

The Citywide Design Guidelines serve to implement the 10 Urban Design Principles, a part of the Framework Element. These principles are a statement of the City's vision for the future of Los Angeles, providing guidance for new development and encouraging projects to complement existing urban form in order to enhance the built environment in Los Angeles. While called "urban", the Urban Design Principles reflect citywide values to be expressed in the built environment of the City, establishing a design program for the City. They are intended to embrace the variety of urban forms that exist within Los Angeles, from the most urban, concentrated centers to our suburban neighborhoods.

THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF URBAN DESIGN

- 1 Develop inviting and accessible transit areas.
- 2 Reinforce walkability, bikeability and well-being.
- 3 Nurture neighborhood character.
- 4 Bridge the past and the future.
- 5 Produce great green streets.
- 6 Generate public open space.
- 7 Stimulate sustainability and innovation in our city.
- 8 Improve equity and opportunity.
- 9 Emphasize early integration, simple processes and maintainable solutions.
- 10 Ensure connections.

The Citywide Design Guidelines supplement the Citywide Urban Design Principles. By offering more direction for proceeding with the design of a project, the Design Guidelines illustrate options, solutions, and techniques to achieve the goal of excellence in new design. It is important to remember, though, that they are performance goals, not zoning regulations or development standards and therefore do not supersede regulations in the municipal code.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Communicate to the development community, in advance of application being filed, the design expectations in Residential, Commercial, and Industrial projects;
- Facilitate the fair and consistent application of design objectives;
- Protect investment throughout the city by encouraging consistently high-quality development;
- Encourage projects appropriate to the context of the City's climate and urban environment;
- Facilitate safe, functional, and attractive development; and
- Foster a sense of community and encourage pride of ownership.

HOW ARE THE GUIDELINES APPLIED

The Guidelines are intended for the Planning Department, as well as other City agencies and department staff, developers, architects, engineers, and community members to use in evaluating project applications along with relevant policies from the General Plan Framework and Community Plans. To achieve the stated purpose, the Guidelines will apply to all new developments and substantial building alterations that require approval by decision-making bodies and planning staff. However, all "by-right" (see *definition in glossary*) development projects are also encouraged to incorporate the Design Guidelines into their project design.

Each of the Citywide Design Guidelines should be considered in a proposed project, although not all will be appropriate in every case, as each project will require a unique approach. The Citywide Design Guidelines provide guidance or direction for applying policies contained within the General Plan Framework and the Community Plans. Incorporating these guidelines into a project's design will encourage more compatible architecture, attractive multi-family residential districts, pedestrian activity, context-sensitive design, and contribute to placemaking.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDELINES

Property owners, developers, designers, and contractors proposing new development in Los Angeles should first review the zoning of the property being developed. They should then proceed to the Citywide Design Guidelines appropriate to the project, dependent on whether it is residential, commercial, or industrial.

The provisions set forth in this document identify the desired level of design quality for all development. However, flexibility is necessary and encouraged to achieve excellent design. Therefore, the use of the words "shall " and "must" have been purposely avoided within the specific guidelines. Each application for development, however, should demonstrate to what extent it incorporates these guidelines.

Applications that do not meet specific guidelines applicable to that project should provide rationale for the design and explain how the project will meet the intent of the General Plan, the Municipal Code, and these Guideline objectives. Whether the design is justified will be determined through required "Findings" in the appropriate section of the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GENERAL PLAN, ZONING CODE, CITYWIDE GUIDELINES, AND COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The approval process for new development is guided by the General Plan, Chapter I of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, and the Citywide Design Guidelines.

City of Los Angeles General Plan: Comprised of 35 Community plans, the General Plan is the policy document that sets the development vision of the community. It provides policy direction for land use, vehicular and bicycle circulation, open space and recreation, and infrastructure.


Los Angeles Municipal Code: Adopted ordinances that implement the General Plan by establishing land use and development requirements. The Municipal Code includes provisions for the establishment of specific plans and supplemental use districts.

Citywide Design Guidelines: Establishes best practices for designing high-quality development that meets the objectives of the General Plan. Certain items apply to site planning and others to building design and aesthetics.

Many neighborhoods in Los Angeles have adopted guidelines as part of a Community Plan Urban Design chapter, or special zoning designations such as specific plans, community design overlay districts, redevelopment plans, designated historic properties and historic districts. This document applies to all areas, but is particularly applicable to those areas within the City that do not currently have adopted design guidelines. In cases where the Citywide Design Guidelines conflict with a provision in a Community Plan Urban Design chapter or a specific plan, the community-specific requirements shall prevail.

ORGANIZATION

The guidelines are divided into three sections: Residential, Commercial, and Industrial. Within each section are a number of design principles and measures that address the different elements of site and building design and environmental sensitivity based on land use. Each section of the Citywide Design Guidelines is organized by overarching objectives (e.g., Maintaining Neighborhood Context and Linkages). Each topic includes an objective statement followed by a list of specific implementation strategies. A glossary of key terms is included on page 47 of this document. * Terms that are defined in the glossary and appear throughout the text are highlighted on each page for the user's convenience.

Guidelines that promote low-impact development and sustainable practices are designated by a leaf () symbol.



residential

multi-family residential | commercial mixed-use

Multi-family development in the City of Los Angeles varies across a wide spectrum of typologies, from low-density small lot **subdivisions** in suburban areas to high-density, mixed-use buildings in urban regional centers. Each typology presents unique challenges and opportunities. The following Design Guidelines are intended to address some of the most common, overarching challenges in designing multi-family developments encountered across the City. The prime areas of opportunity for attaining high quality design in multi-family and **mixed-use projects** include: maximizing sustainability in multi-family developments, establishing height and massing transitions from multi-family uses to commercial uses or less dense single-family residential; considering the pedestrian as the cornerstone of design over automobile-centric design; establishing landscaping and open space as essential design concepts from the outset of a project; and highlighting the role that quality building design can play in creating visually interesting and attractive multi-family buildings by contributing to existing neighborhood character and creating a "sense of place." More specific design regulations relating to individual communities can be found in each of the 35 Community Plans. The guidelines below are intended for developers and architects as well as for advisory and decision-making bodies when evaluating a project.

OBJECTIVE 1:

Consider Neighborhood Context and Linkages In Building and Site Design

Site Planning

- 1 Work with the natural topography of the site to avoid dramatic and unnecessary **grade** changes by utilizing landform **grading**.
- 2 On hillside lots, use smaller terraced retaining walls to avoid massive blank wall faces. Use the site's natural topography to terrace the structure along the hillside.
- 3 Create a strong street wall by locating **building frontages** at the front property line where no setback requirement exists, or at the required **setback**. Where additional setback is necessary or a prevailing setback exists, activate the area with a courtyard or "outdoor room" adjacent to the street by incorporating residential amenities such as seating or water features, for example.

RECOMMENDED



Preserve trees & vegetation



Terraced development accommodates hillside slope

NOT RECOMMENDED



Lack of articulation creates feeling of large blank facade



A massive blank wall on the edge of the hillside is created when development is not terraced to accommodate existing topography

Site Planning (cont.)

- 4 In small lot **subdivisions** where there is an existing average prevailing **setback**, apply the setback to provide continuity along the street edge.
- 5 Locate a majority of code-required open space at the ground level in a manner that is equally accessible to all residential units to promote safety and the use of outdoor areas. In mid- and high-rise buildings, podiums between buildings and rooftop areas can be used as common areas.
- 6 Use a 50 percent **lot coverage** ratio as a rule of thumb for low-rise housing developments and townhomes, especially in primarily residential, low- and low medium-density areas.
- 7 Provide direct paths of travel for pedestrian destinations within large developments. Especially near transit lines, create primary entrances for pedestrians that are safe, easily accessible, and a short distance from transit stops.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Buildings placed around a central courtyard and accessible by all residents




✓ Primary entrance to residential building is located near metro station and bus stop

NOT RECOMMENDED



Massive building with no central courtyard or outdoor common areas

Objective 1: Consider Neighborhood Context and Linkages in Building and Site Design

- 8 In dense neighborhoods, incorporate passageways or **paseos** into mid-block developments, particularly on through blocks, to facilitate pedestrian access to commercial amenities nearby, such that pedestrians will not need to walk the perimeter of a block in order to access the middle of the next parallel street or alley.
- 9 Activate mid-block passageways or paseos using water features, pedestrian-level lighting, artwork, benches, landscaping, or special paving so that they are safe and visually interesting spaces.
- 10  Install bicycle racks and lockers near building entrances, especially in residential or **mixed-use projects** located on Major or Secondary highways, or on Local and Collector streets near commercial services. Ensure bicycle racks are placed in a safe, well-lit location, convenient for residents and visitors.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Bicycle racks conveniently located near building entrance



✓ Pedestrian paths through the site provide connections from residential land uses to nearby commercial uses



✓ Mid-block paseo

Building Orientation

- 1 Design small lot **subdivisions**, low-rise townhomes, and apartment buildings to ensure that all street-fronting units have a primary entrance facing the street. Alternatively, for Medium and High-Medium density buildings without **ground floor** entrances for individual units, create a prominent ground or first floor entry, such as a highly visible lobby or atrium.
- 2 Locate gathering spaces such as gyms, recreation rooms, and community space at the ground level and accessible to the street.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Prominent stairway creates a visible ground floor entry



✓ Street-facing entrance to building

✓ Usable outdoor area for individual units

NOT RECOMMENDED



Street-facing units should have an entrance from the sidewalk



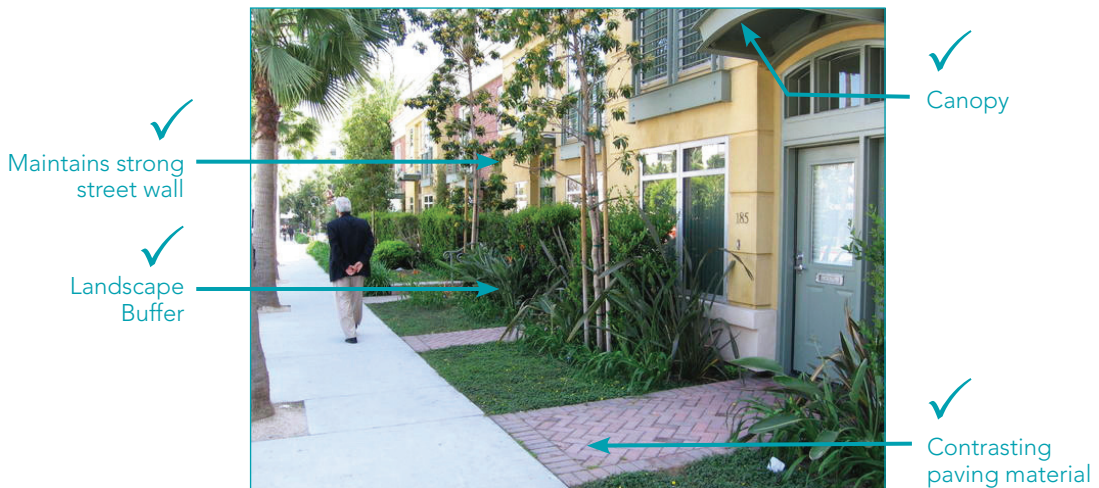
Missed opportunity for creating a livelier street frontage

Objective 1: Consider Neighborhood Context and Linkages in Building and Site Design

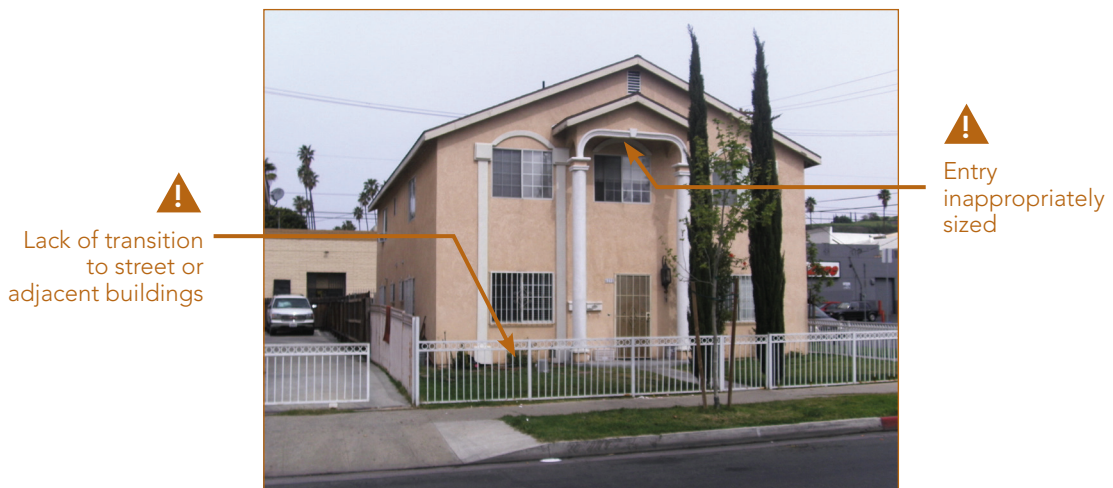
Entrances

- 1 Incorporate transitions such as landscaping, paving, porches, stoops, and canopies at individual entrances to residences, and from the sidewalk to the front door. These methods should not protrude into required yards or negatively impact the overall street wall.
- 2 Entries should be designed according to simple and harmonious proportions in relationship to the overall size and scale of the building. Design entries in proportion to the number of units being accessed. Ensure that pedestrian entries provide shelter year-round.
- 3 Ensure that the main entrance and entry approach can accommodate persons of all mobility levels.

RECOMMENDED



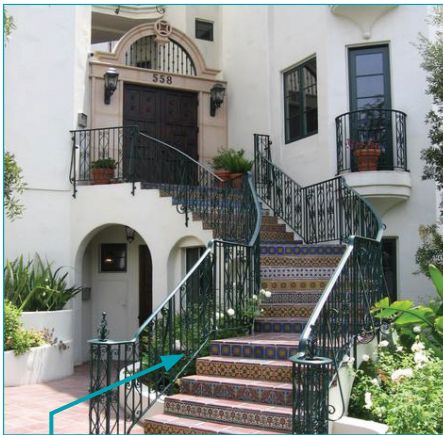
NOT RECOMMENDED



Entrances (cont.)

- 4 Promote pedestrian activity by placing entrances at **grade** level or slightly above, and unobstructed from view from the public right-of-way. Entryways below street level should be avoided.
- 5 If stairs are used in common areas, such as an atrium or lobby, they should be highly visible and integrated with the predominant architectural design elements of the main building.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Stairs integrated with architectural style of the building



✓ Highly visible street-level pedestrian entrance, accessible to all mobility levels

NOT RECOMMENDED

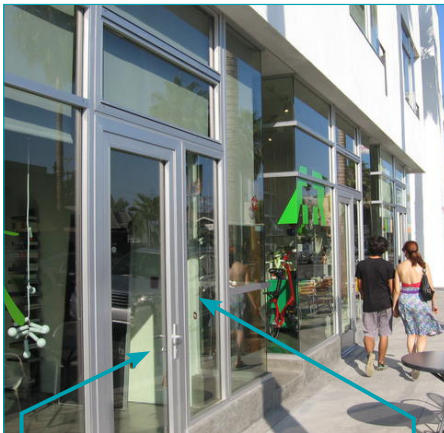


⚠ Sunken entries are generally less visible and therefore less secure

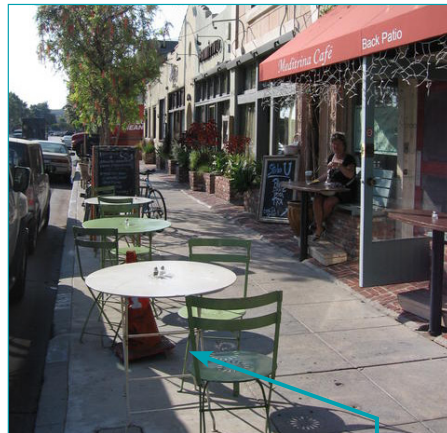
Objective 1: Consider Neighborhood Context and Linkages in Building and Site Design

- 6 Maintain an active street presence for **ground floor** retail establishments in **mixed-use projects** by incorporating at least one usable street-facing entrance with doors unlocked during regular business hours.
- 7 In mixed-use projects, ensure that ground floor uses maintain a high degree of transparency and maximize a visual connection to the street by providing clear and unobstructed windows, free of reflective glass coatings, exterior mounted gates, or security grills.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Clear glass maintains visual connection between interior and exterior



✓ Street-facing entrance maintains an active street presence

✓ Outdoor seating activates streetscape

NOT RECOMMENDED



⚠ Windows obstructed by security grills

Relationship to Adjacent Buildings

- 1 Ensure that new buildings are compatible in scale, massing, style, and/or architectural materials with existing structures in the surrounding neighborhood. In older neighborhoods, new developments should likewise respect the character of existing buildings with regards to height, scale, style, and architectural materials.
- 2 For RD1.5, RD2, R3, R4, RAS3, and RAS4 developments, apply additional setbacks in side and rear yards abutting single-family and/or R2 zoned lots.
- 3 Where multi-family projects are adjacent to single-family zones, provide a sensitive transition by maintaining a height compatible with adjacent buildings. Mitigate negative shade/shadow and privacy impacts by stepping back upper floors and avoiding direct views into neighboring single-family yards.

RECOMMENDED



✓
New development maintains existing theme in neighborhood

NOT RECOMMENDED

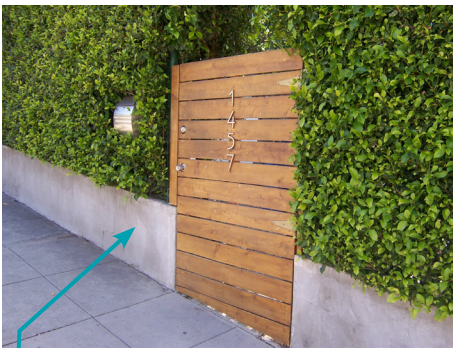


⚠
Scale, height, and architectural style incompatible with adjacent development

Objective 1: Consider Neighborhood Context and Linkages in Building and Site Design

- 4 When designing small lot **subdivisions** or projects built over two or more lots, provide sufficient space between buildings, articulation along the **street frontage**, and visual breaks to diminish the scale and massing.
- 5 Plant trees, shrubs, and vines to screen walls between property lines. Use decorative walls that include a change in color, material, and texture.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Incorporate various textures and materials to create visual interest while screening the property



✓ Providing space between buildings helps diminish scale and massing of development

NOT RECOMMENDED



⚠ Lack of articulation makes the building appear boxlike and out-of-scale



⚠ Repetitive, boilerplate facades lack differentiation and individual character

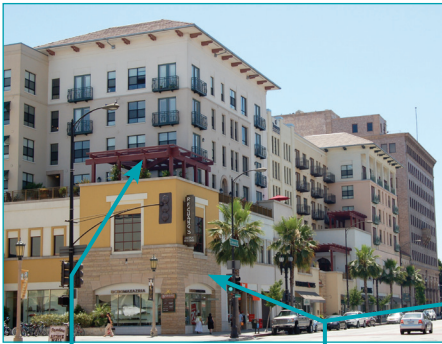
OBJECTIVE 2:

Employ Distinguishable and Attractive Building Design

Building Façade

- 1 Add architectural details to enhance scale and interest on the building facade by breaking it up into distinct planes that are offset from the main building façade. Porches and stoops can be used to orient housing towards the street and promote active and interesting neighborhood streetscapes.
- 2 Design multi-family buildings to convey individual residential uses, even when applying a modern aesthetic. Modulated façades can prevent residential buildings from appearing commercial.
- 3 Layer building architectural features to emphasize certain features of the building such as entries, corners, and organization of units.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Upper stories are offset

✓ Building base establishes pedestrian scale



✓ Modulated façade and variation in wall planes provide additional articulation

NOT RECOMMENDED



Monolithic buildings lack architectural details that contribute to scale and visual interest

Objective 2: Employ Distinguishable and Attractive Building Design

- 4 Alternate different textures, colors, materials, and distinctive architectural treatments to add visual interest while avoiding dull and repetitive façades.
- 5 Utilize windows and doors as character-defining features to reflect an architectural style or theme consistent with other façade elements. Windows should project or be inset from the exterior building wall and incorporate well designed trims and details.
- 6 Treat all façades of the building with an equal level of detail, articulation, and architectural rigor.

RECOMMENDED



✓
Interesting and varied architectural treatments using different colors and materials accentuate the building form

✓
Plenty of windows and doors enliven the ground floor and create foot traffic

NOT RECOMMENDED



! Missed opportunity to provide transparent elements on the ground floor to activate pedestrian-friendly uses

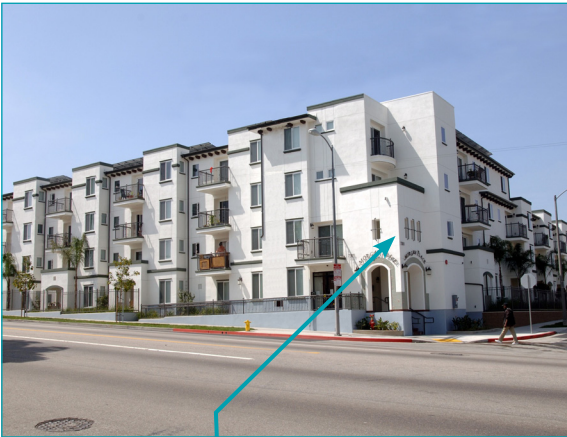


! Lack of 3-dimensional architectural treatments creates a dull and repetitive façade

Building Façade (cont.)

- 7 Integrate varied roof lines through the use of sloping roofs, modulated building heights, **gables**, **dormers**, or innovative architectural solutions.
- 8 Reinforce existing facade rhythm along the street where it exists by using architectural elements such as trim, material changes, paved walkways, and other design treatments consistent with surrounding buildings.
- 9 Include overhead architectural features such as eaves, awnings, canopies, **trellises**, or **cornice treatments** at entrances and windows that provide shade, provide passive cooling, and reduce daytime heat gain.

RECOMMENDED



✓ A modulated roof and variety of architectural features creates a sense of dimension



✓ Trellis used as an entryway treatment



✓ Strong façade rhythm along street frontage is accomplished through the use of architectural elements

Objective 2: Employ Distinguishable and Attractive Building Design

- 10 Orient windows on street facing units toward public streets, rather than inward, to contribute to neighborhood safety and provide design interest.
- 11 Orient interior unit spaces so that larger windows for more public rooms, such as living and dining areas, face onto the street.
- 12 Design balconies such that their size and location maximize their intended use for open space. Avoid "tacked on" balconies with limited purpose or function.

RECOMMENDED



✓
Functional balconies

✓
Windows oriented toward the main street increase the sense of "eyes on the street" and neighborhood safety

NOT RECOMMENDED



⚠
Windows oriented inwards with blank walls on the street

⚠
Lack of balconies or open space

Building Materials

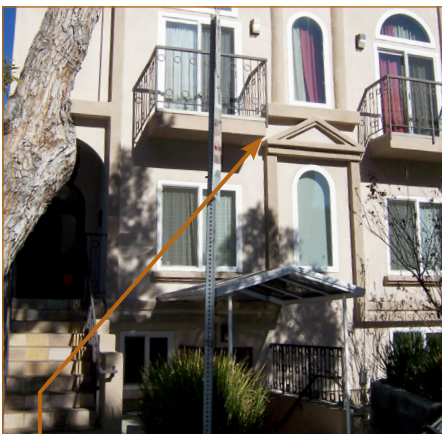
- 1 Approach character-defining details in a manner that is true to a style of architecture or common theme.
- 2 Apply trim, metal- and woodwork, lighting, and other details in a harmonious manner, consistent with the proportions and scale of the building(s).
- 3 Select building materials, such as architectural details and finishes that convey a sense of permanence. Quality materials should be used to withstand weather and wear regardless of architectural style.
- 4 Apply changes in material purposefully and in a manner corresponding to variations in building mass.

RECOMMENDED



✓
Varied building materials correspond to the architectural style

NOT RECOMMENDED



⚠️ "Faux" architectural treatment is inconsistent with the architectural style it attempts to emulate



⚠️ Hastily applied stucco window trim does not correspond to the window sill. Façade materials show signs of weather and wear

Objective 2: Employ Distinguishable and Attractive Building Design

- 5 Long expanses of fences should incorporate openings, changes in materials, texture, and/or landscaping. Avoid materials such as chain link, wrought iron spears, and barbed wire.
- 6 Exterior bars on windows convey an environment of hostility and are therefore strongly discouraged.

RECOMMENDED



- ✓ Variations in fence height, materials and texture



- ✓ Landscaped planters act as a buffer for ground floor units and eliminate the need for security doors

NOT RECOMMENDED



- ⚠ Wrought iron spears and bars on windows create a sense of danger more than safety



Special Design Considerations for Historic Properties

Ensure that any additions, alterations, or improvements to buildings designated as Historic Resources or otherwise identified as eligible Historic Resources as part of Survey LA, comply with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, and restoring historic buildings can be found online at: http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm

Preserve original building materials and architectural features

Preserve, repair, and replace, as appropriate, building elements and features that are important in defining historic character. Retain the original building continuity, rhythm, and form created by these features. Consult historic documentation and photographs of the building before commencing work.

- Original building materials and details should not be covered with stucco, vinyl siding, stone, veneers, or other materials.
- Materials, which were originally unpainted, such as masonry, should remain unpainted.
- Avoid hiding character defining features behind displays, signage, and/or building alterations and additions. Remove non-historic additions to expose and restore the original design elements.
- The materials and design of historic windows and doors should be preserved.



Repair deteriorated materials or features in place, if feasible.

When it is infeasible to retain materials or features, replacement should be made with in-kind materials or with substitute materials that convey the same form, design, and overall visual appearance as the original.

Design building additions on historic buildings to be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of an historic structure or site, while clearly reflecting the modern origin of the addition.

- Additions should be subordinate in massing to the main structure and located toward the rear, away from the primary façade.
- Within historic districts or eligible historic districts, new infill structures should harmonize in style, scale, and massing with the surrounding historic structures.
- New window and door openings should be located on a secondary façade. The arrangement, size, and proportions of historic openings should be maintained; avoid filling in historic openings, especially on primary facades.



OBJECTIVE 3:

Provide Pedestrian Connections Within and Around the Project

Sidewalks

- 1 For new multi-family residential projects where a sidewalk does not currently exist, establish a new sidewalk along the length of the public **street frontage**.
- 2 On Major and Secondary Highways, provide a comfortable sidewalk and parkway; at least 10 feet in width to accommodate pedestrian flow and activity, but wider if possible. Sidewalks and parkway widths on Local and Collector streets may be narrower, but generally not less than nine feet wide.
- 3 Create continuous and predominantly straight sidewalks and open space. Reconstruct abandoned driveways as sidewalks.

RECOMMENDED



New, straight sidewalks create an easy path of travel for pedestrians

NOT RECOMMENDED

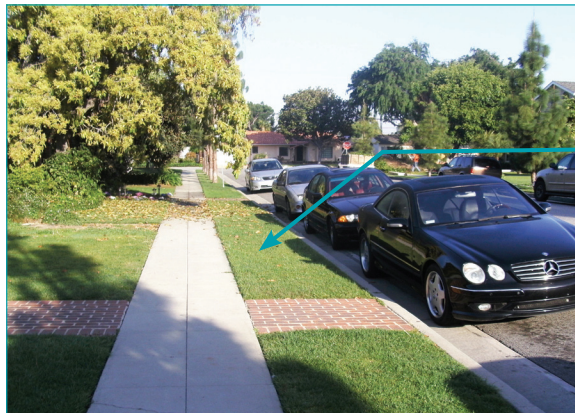


Sidewalk in disrepair due to overgrown tree roots creates a walking hazard for pedestrians

Objective 3: Provide Pedestrian Connections Within and Around the Project

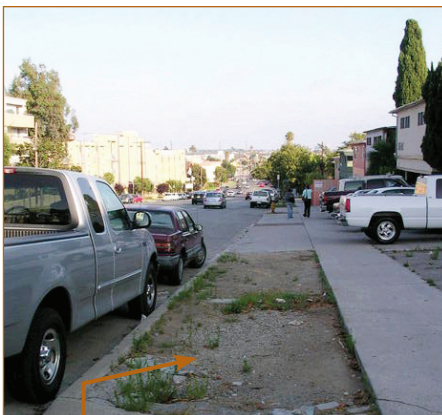
- 4 Plant parkways separating the curb from the sidewalk with ground cover, low-growing vegetation or permeable materials that accommodate both pedestrian movement and the use of car doors. Brick work, pavers, gravel, and wood chips are examples of suitable permeable materials.
- 5 Create a buffer zone between pedestrians, moving vehicles, and other transit modes by the use of landscape and street furniture. Examples include street trees, benches, newspaper racks, pedestrian information kiosks, bicycle racks, bus shelters, and **pedestrian lighting**.

RECOMMENDED



A nice landscape buffer with special paving provides a soft transition between pedestrians and parked vehicles

NOT RECOMMENDED



No active buffer zone is provided between pedestrians and the street



Cropped or poorly maintained street trees make the walking experience unpleasant

Sidewalks (cont.)

- 6 Plant street trees at the minimum spacing permitted by the Division of Urban Forestry, typically one tree for every 20 feet of **street frontage**, to create a consistent rhythm. Broad-leaf evergreen and deciduous trees should be used to maintain a continuous tree canopy. Shade producing street trees may be interspersed with an occasional non-shade tree. In high pedestrian use areas, install tree guards to protect tree trunks from damage.
- 7 Provide lights on sidewalks to encourage and extend safe pedestrian activities into the evening.
- 8 Utilize **pedestrian lighting**, seating areas, special paving, or landscaping. Ensure that new developments adjacent to transit stops invest in pedestrian amenities such as trash receptacles and sheltered benches or seating areas for pedestrian that do not intrude into the accessible route.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Sidewalk accommodates pedestrians and car doors

✓ Drought-tolerant landscaping with permeable paving materials

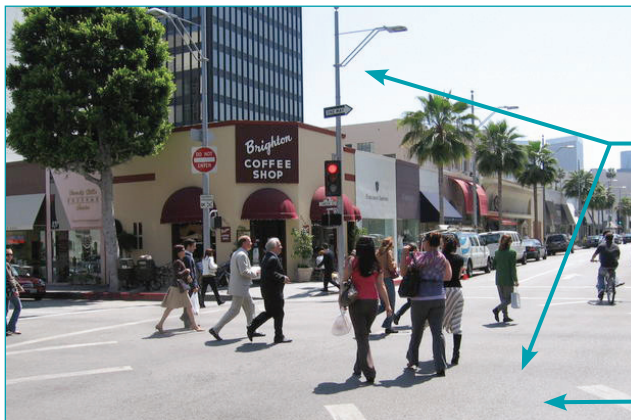
✓ Low-growing vegetation

Objective 3: Provide Pedestrian Connections Within and Around the Project

Crosswalks/Street Crossings for Large-Scale Developments

- 1 Incorporate features such as white markings, signage, and lighting so that pedestrian crossings are visible to moving vehicles during the day and at night.
- 2 Improve visibility for pedestrians in crosswalks by installing **curb extensions/bump outs** and advance stop bars, and eliminating on-street parking spaces adjacent to the crossing.
- 3 Emphasize pedestrian safety and comfort at crosswalks with devices such as pedestrian crossing signals, visible and accessible push buttons for pedestrian activated signals, and dual sidewalk ramps that are directed to each crosswalk.
- 4 Create the shortest possible crossing distance at pedestrian crossings on wide streets. Devices that decrease the crossing distance may include a **mid-street crossing island**, an area of refuge between a right-turn lane and through lane, a curb extension/bump out, or a minimal **curb radius**.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Visible white markings and street lights to provide pedestrian safety

✓ Diagonal crosswalk provides shortest possible crossing distance

NOT RECOMMENDED



⚠ A very wide street intersection with no street lighting or pedestrian crossing provided

On-Street Parking

- 1 Locate **curb cuts** in a manner that does not reduce on-street parking and replace any unused curb cuts and driveways with sidewalks to maintain continuity for pedestrians.
- 2 Provide angled or parallel on-street parking to maximize the safety of bicyclists and other vehicular traffic.

RECOMMENDED



- ✓ Diagonal or angled parking creates a protective buffer for pedestrians and increases on-street parking opportunities

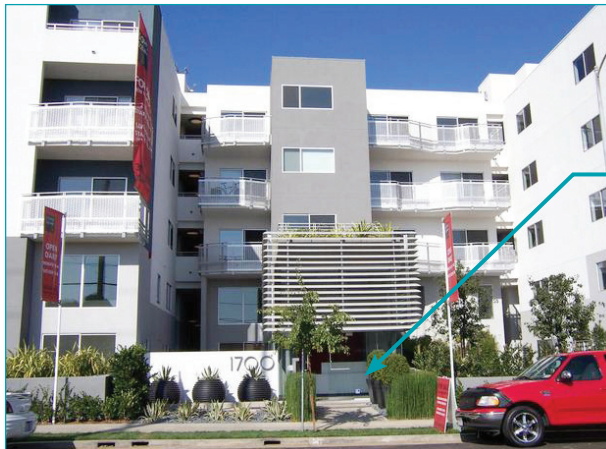
OBJECTIVE 4:

Minimize the Appearance of Driveways and Parking Areas

Off-Street Parking and Driveways

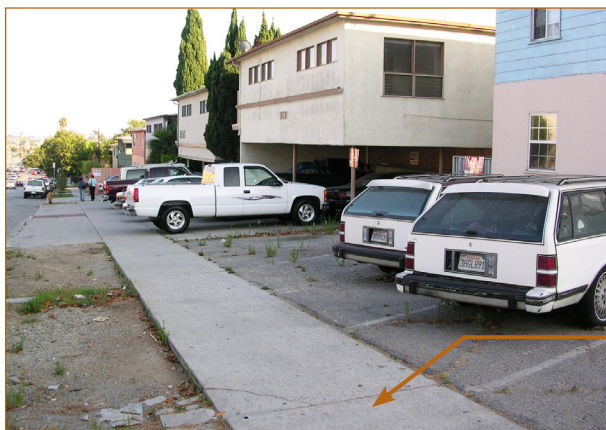
- 1 Prioritize pedestrian access first and automobile access second. Orient parking and driveways toward the rear or side of buildings and away from the public right-of-way. On **corner lots**, parking should be oriented as far from the corner as possible.
- 2 Maintain continuity of the sidewalk by minimizing the number of **curb cuts** for driveways and utilizing alleys for **access** and **egress**.
- 3 Provide drop-off areas for large-scale residential projects to the side or rear of the building.
- 4 When a driveway in a front yard cannot be avoided, locate the driveway at the edge of the parcel rather than the center. Ensure that the street-facing driveway width is minimized to 20 feet or less.

RECOMMENDED



Parking is screened behind the building or underground, maintaining a true streetwall and sidewalk continuity while affording opportunities for on-street parking

NOT RECOMMENDED



Driveways along building frontages create a hazard for pedestrians

Off-Street Parking and Driveways *(cont.)*

- 5 Wrap structured parking with active uses such as housing units or retail spaces on the ground floor.
- 6 Blend parking structure facades with nearby buildings by incorporating architectural treatments such as arches or other architectural openings and varied building materials, decorative screening, climbing vines, or green walls to provide visual interest.
- 7 Mitigate the impact of parking visible to the street with the use of planting and landscape walls tall enough to screen headlights.

RECOMMENDED



Mixed-use underground parking structure screened to reduce visibility from street

NOT RECOMMENDED



Inefficient mitigation of visibility of parking structure on the ground floor

Objective 4: Minimize the Appearance of Driveways and Parking Areas

- 8 Illuminate all parking areas and **pedestrian walkways** to improve safety. Avoid unintended spillover impacts onto adjacent properties.
- 9 Where openings occur due to driveways or other breaks in the sidewalk or building wall, use architectural features such as decorative gates and **pergolas** in combination with landscaping to provide a continuous visual presence at the street level.
- 10 When multiple units share a common driveway lined with individual garages, provide distinguishable pedestrian paths to connect parking areas to individual or common entries.

RECOMMENDED



Mixed-use building uses architectural features to provide structural continuity at the pedestrian level

NOT RECOMMENDED



Abandoned driveway and unused curb cut creates missed opportunities for additional street parking

OBJECTIVE 5:

Utilize Open Areas and Landscaping Opportunities to their Full Potential

On-Site Landscaping

- 1 Retain mature and healthy vegetation and trees when developing the site.
- 2 Design landscaping to be architecturally integrated with the building and suitable to the functions of the space while selecting plant materials that complement the architectural style and form of the building.
- 3 Design open areas to maintain a balance of landscaping and paved area.
- 4 Select drought tolerant, native landscaping to limit irrigation needs and conserve water. Mediterranean and other local climate-friendly plants may be used alongside native species.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Landscaping is functionally and architecturally integrated with building space

NOT RECOMMENDED



Minimal landscaping appears to be added as an afterthought

Objective 5: Utilize Open Areas and Landscaping Opportunities to their Full Potential

- 5 Facilitate sustainable water use by using automated watering systems and drip irrigation to water landscaped areas.
- 6 Facilitate **stormwater** capture, retention, and infiltration, and prevent **runoff** by using permeable or porous paving materials in lieu of concrete or asphalt. Collect, store, and reuse stormwater for landscape irrigation.
- 7 In addition to street trees, provide canopy trees in planting areas for shade and energy efficiency, especially on south and southwest facing façades.
- 8 Use landscape features to screen any portion of a parking level or podium that is above **grade**. Trees, shrubbery, planter boxes, climbing plants, vines, green walls, or **berms** can be used to soften views from the public right-of-way.

RECOMMENDED



✓ Native landscaping



✓ At-grade parking screened with landscaping

✓ Perimeter of the building is planted with a combination of shrubs and shade trees

Open Space and Recreation Activities

- 1 Activate all open areas not used for buildings, driveways, parking, recreational facilities, or **pedestrian amenities** with landscaping. Landscaping may include any practicable combination of shrubs, trees, ground cover, minimal lawns, planter boxes, flowers, or fountains that reduce dust and other pollutants and promote outdoor activities, especially for children and seniors.
- 2 For buildings with six units or more, cluster code-required common open space areas in a central location, rather than dispersing smaller less usable areas throughout the site.
- 3 Provide balconies to augment, rather than substitute for, actively used common open spaces and recreational areas.
- 4 Provide common amenities such as community gardens and tot lots.

RECOMMENDED



- ✓ Tot Lot ✓ Landscaping ✓ Balconies ✓ Open space reserved for a community garden

NOT RECOMMENDED



Balconies substitute for active open space areas

OBJECTIVE 6:

Improve the Streetscape Experience by Reducing Visual Clutter

Building Signage

- 1 Place signs so they do not dominate or obscure the architectural elements of the building design.
- 2 Include signage at a height and of a size that is visible to pedestrians and facilitates access to the building entrance. In residential-only buildings, permanent signs affixed to the building solely for the purpose of communicating the name of a business or entity, or for advertising rentals are inappropriate in residential areas.
- 3 For **mixed-use projects**, incorporate an overall sign program for the building, including business identification signs, directional and informational signs, and residential signage to maintain a common graphic character and theme.

RECOMMENDED



Well-designed, proportioned, and located permanent building signage

NOT RECOMMENDED



Sign does not clearly indicate entrance of building



Avoid permanent rental advertising signage

Lighting and Security

- 1 Use ornamental low-level lighting to highlight and provide security for pedestrian paths and entrances. Ensure that all parking areas and **pedestrian walkways** are illuminated.
- 2 Install **lighting fixtures** to accent and complement architectural details at night to establish a façade pattern and animate a building's architectural features.
- 3 Utilize adequate, uniform, and glare-free lighting, such as **dark-sky compliant fixtures**, to avoid uneven light distribution, harsh shadows, and light spillage.

RECOMMENDED



✓
Light fixtures double as an architectural detail while providing safety along a pedestrian path

Objective 6: Improve the Streetscape Experience by Reducing Visual Clutter

Utilities

- 1 Place **utilities** such as gas, electric, and water meters in side yard **setbacks** or in landscaped areas and out of the line-of-sight from crosswalks or sidewalks. Utilities such as power lines, transformers, and wireless facilities should be placed underground or on rooftops when appropriately screened by a parapet. Otherwise, any mechanical or electrical equipment should be buffered by planting materials in a manner that contributes to the quality of the existing landscaping on the property and the public streetscape.
- 2 Screen rooftop equipment such as air conditioning units, antennas and communication equipment, mechanical equipment, and vents from the public right-of-way.
- 3 Hide trash enclosures within parking garages so that they are not visible to passersby. Screen outdoor stand alone trash enclosures using walls consistent with the architectural character of the main building and locate them so that they are out of the line-of-sight from crosswalks or sidewalks.
- 4 Locate noise and odor-generating functions in enclosed structures so as not to create a nuisance for building residents or adjacent neighbors.

RECOMMENDED



- ✓ Trash enclosure uses similar building materials as the building which it serves



- ✓ Rooftop mechanical equipment is screened by a parapet

NOT RECOMMENDED



- ⚠ Poorly screened trash enclosure fronting public right-of-way in plain view of passers by



- ⚠ Odor-generating functions not appropriately screened

GLOSSARY

After-hours Lighting - Pedestrian lighting, intended to create safe, well-lit pedestrian areas in the evening and at night.

Bay - A window or series of windows, forming a bay in a room and projecting outward from the wall.

By-right - Projects which meet all LAMC zoning regulations and require review only by the Department of Building and Safety.

Clerestory Window - An outside wall of a room or building that rises above an adjoining roof and contains windows.

Berm - A bank of earth placed against one or more exterior walls of a building as protection against extremes in temperature.

Building Frontage - The maximum length of a line or lines formed by connecting the points representing projections of the exterior building walls onto a public street or onto a courtyard that is directly accessible by pedestrians from a public street, whichever distance is greater.

Corner Lot - A lot located at the intersection of at least two streets designated on the transportation element of the General Plan as a major, secondary, or other highway classification or collector street; At least one of the streets at the intersection must be a designated highway.

Cornice - A continuous, molded projection that crowns a wall or other construction, or divides it horizontally for compositional purposes.

Cornice Treatment - The design or style used to create a cornice, such as bracketed eaves, boxed eaves, exposed eaves, decorative bands, or a classical cornice.

Curb Cuts - A ramp leading smoothly down from a sidewalk to a street, rather than abruptly ending with a curb and dropping roughly 4–6 inches; Curb cuts placed at street intersections allow someone in a wheelchair to move onto or off a sidewalk without difficulty; Pedestrians using a walker, pushing a stroller or walking next to a bicycle also benefit from a curb cut; In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that curb cuts be present on all sidewalks; A wider curb cut is also useful for motor vehicles to enter a driveway or parking lot, on the other side of a sidewalk; Smaller curb cuts, approximately a foot in width, can be utilized in parking areas or sidewalks to allow for a drainage path of water runoff to flow into an area where it may infiltrate such as grass or a garden.

Curb Extension (also called Bump-out) - A traffic calming measure, intended to slow the speed of traffic and increase driver awareness, particularly in built-up and residential neighborhoods; They also allow pedestrians and vehicle drivers to see each other when vehicles parked in a parking lane would otherwise block visibility; A curb extension comprises an angled narrowing of the roadway and a widening of the sidewalk; This is often accompanied by an area of enhanced restrictions (such as a “no stopping” or “no parking zone”) and the appropriate visual enforcement.

Curb Radius - A term used by highway engineers, used to describe the sharpness of a corner. A large curb radius enables vehicles to go around corners faster; A small curb radius slows down turning vehicles; A large curb radius also increases the distance a pedestrian must walk to cross the street.

Dark-sky Compliant Fixtures - Shielded lighting fixtures which protect adjoining properties from lighting spillover and glare.

Dormer - A projecting structure built out from a sloping roof, usually housing a vertical window or ventilating louver.

Findings - The reasoning or justification for a discretionary planning decision, as prescribed by the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Gable - The triangular portion of wall, enclosing the end of a pitched roof from cornice or eaves, to ridge.

Grade/Grading - The ground elevation at any specific point on a construction site, usually where the ground meets the foundation of a building.

Ground Floor - The lowest story within a building which is accessible from the street, the floor level of which is within three feet above or below curb level.

Ingress/Egress - A place or means of going in/out, respectively.

Lighting Fixture - The assembly for an electrical light that holds the lamp and may include an assembly housing, a mounting bracket or polo socket, lamp holder, ballast, a reflector or mirror and a refractor or lens.

Lot Coverage - That portion of a lot which, when viewed from above, is covered by a building.

Mid-street Crossing Island - A painted crosswalk, sometimes used in conjunction with a protected pedestrian island or bump-out, which provides opportunities to cross the street in the center of the block, as an alternative to doing so only street intersections.

Mixed-use Project - A project which combines one or more commercial uses and multiple dwelling units in a single building or development.

Ornamental Lighting - Architectural lighting fixtures, which primarily serve a decorative purpose, instead of a functional purpose, such as highlighting landscaping features and/or architectural elements at night.

Portico - A porch having a roof supported by columns, often leading to the entrance of a building.

Paseo or Pedestrian Walkway - A walkway that is typically open to the sky and that provides pedestrian passage between structures, or through landscaping, or parking lots, which is distinguished by ground surface treatments that provide for pedestrian safety and ease of movement.

Pedestrian Amenities - Outdoor sidewalk faces, public plazas, retail courtyards, water features, kiosks, paseos, arcades, patios, covered walkways, or spaces for outdoor dining or seating that are located on the Ground Floor, and that are accessible to and available for use by the public.

Pedestrian Lighting - Freestanding lighting fixtures not exceeding a height of thirty-six (36 inches from ground grade level.

Pergola - A structure of parallel colonnades supporting an open roof of beams and crossing rafters or trelliswork, over which climbing plants are trained to grow.

Runoff - The portion of precipitation on land that ultimately reaches streams often with dissolved or suspended material.

Setback - A placing of a face of a building on a line some horizontal distance from the building line or of the wall below; The distance of a structure or other feature from the property line or other feature.

Stepback - A variation in roof height, such that the height of the building decreases as it approaches adjacent lower scale buildings.

Stormwater - Describes water that originates during precipitation events.

Street Frontage - See Building Frontage.

Subdivision - The same as defined in Section 66424 of the Government Code; Subdivision includes a stock cooperative project as defined in Section 12.03 of the Municipal Code; An area of real estate, composed of subdivided lots.

Sunken Entryways - An entrenched path or building entrance, which creates a restricted view of one's surroundings; It is sometimes used to prevent excessive amounts of snow and/ or wind from coming into a building, and to trap heat indoors, while still allowing ventilation.

Trellis - A frame supporting open latticework, used as a screen or a support for growing vines or plants.

Utilities - Uses that provide the transfer or delivery of power, water, sewage, storm water runoff, information, and telephone services.

NOTES

NOTES



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