

Residential Design Guidelines

Excerpts for Appeal Hearing to the
Redondo Beach City Council



**City of Redondo Beach
Adopted October 7, 2003**

Planning Department
415 Diamond Street
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
310.318.0637
www.redondo.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|------|--|------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | | III. NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIFIC GUIDELINES | |
| A. Purpose | 1 | A. Introduction | 28 |
| B. Background | 2 | B. "The Avenues" | 29 |
| 1. Single-Family Zones | 2 | 1. Major Identifying Features/ Characteristics | 29 |
| 2. Multiple-Family Zones | 3 | 2. Neighborhood Specific Design Guidelines | 31 |
| C. Community Participation Process | 4 | C. "Beryl Heights" Neighborhood | 32 |
| D. Implementation of the Design Guidelines | 6 | 1. Major Identifying Features/ Characteristics | 32 |
| E. Organization of Guidelines | 7 | 2. Neighborhood Specific Design Guidelines | 34 |
| II. SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL | | IV. MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL | |
| A. Applicability | 8 | A. Applicability and Purpose | 35 |
| B. Administrative Design Review | 8 | B. Design Review Procedures | 35 |
| C. Zoning Amendments | 8 | C. Zoning Amendments | 36 |
| 1. Floor Area Ratio | 8 | D. Design Guidelines | 37 |
| 2. Floor Area Ratio Bonuses | 10 | 1. General Project Considerations | 37 |
| 3. Second Floor Area Setbacks | 11 | 2. Site Planning | 37 |
| 4. Rear Setbacks | 11 | 3. Open Space | 38 |
| 5. Definition of Semi-Subterranean | 12 | 4. Pedestrian Circulation | 38 |
| D. Design Guidelines | 13 | 5. Architectural Guidelines | 39 |
| 1. Front Yard Lot Coverage and Entries | 13 | 6. Building Height, Mezzanines, Roof Decks | 40 |
| 2. Building Height, Mezzanines, Roof Decks | 15 | 7. Roof Articulation | 40 |
| 3. Scale and Mass | 16 | 8. Building Materials | 41 |
| 4. Architectural Imagery | 18 | 9. Landscape Guidelines | 42 |
| 5. Roof Articulation | 21 | 10. Miscellaneous Subjects | 44 |
| 6. Garage Placement | 22 | | |
| 7. Driveway Guidelines | 24 | APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS | |
| 8. Sidewalks/Parkways | 25 | | |
| 9. Walls and Fences | 26 | | |
| 10. Materials | 27 | | |

A. Purpose

An important objective of the City of Redondo Beach Strategic Plan is to improve the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. These design guidelines are intended to help accomplish this objective by ensuring that new homes or additions to existing homes are of high architectural quality; are compatible in mass, scale, and other design features with surrounding development; and preserve and contribute to the unique character of established neighborhoods.

The design guidelines are intended to provide a clearer understanding of acceptable design solutions that will be used in Administrative Design Review or Planning Commission Design Review procedures applicable to development under the Zoning Ordinance. These guidelines are in addition to all applicable development standards in the Zoning Ordinance.

It is the goal of these design guidelines to encourage creative solutions and eclectic architectural styles consistent with the overall intent of compatibility with the neighborhood. There will be instances when following the design guidelines may yield an unsatisfactory result or the applicant may propose a design that does not meet the letter of the design guidelines, but that may meet the spirit of the guidelines. In light of this, the City will work closely with the project applicant to come to a mutually beneficial solution. If agreement cannot be reached between staff and the applicant, the applicant can appeal the staff decision to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission would make a decision on the application at a public hearing.



Residential Design Guidelines are needed to soften the impact of new development on the established character of the neighborhood.

In addition to city-wide design guidelines for single family zones, neighborhood-specific guidelines have been developed for three areas that have a unique neighborhood character in terms of time of construction, lot characteristics (such as lot size, slope, alley access, parkways, etc.), and architectural styles (see map below). In the future, neighborhood-specific guidelines may be developed for additional neighborhoods.



Typical scale and high-quality character of single-family homes in Redondo Beach.

2. Multiple-Family Zones

In multiple-family zones, new development is typically 2 or 3 unit condominiums (depending on the zone) that replace the scattered remaining single-family homes in these zones. Lots with existing single-family homes that could be potentially replaced by multi-family development comprise only 18% of all lots in multi-family zones.

The multi-family neighborhoods have in most cases already transitioned to the character of the new developments built to the limits of existing zoning standards relating to setbacks, outdoor space, parking requirements and other development requirements. Establishing a floor area ratio is not appropriate in these areas. Instead, the design guidelines focus on reducing the appearance of mass and bulk. This includes addressing impacts on mass and bulk resulting from roof decks, mezzanines, and subterranean levels. Other issues in the multi-family zones include creating design variety and high quality architecture, and providing a transition from private spaces to public spaces along the street frontage.

on October 7, 2003, and associated amendments to the Zoning Ordinance were adopted by the City Council on October 21, 2003.

D. Implementation of the Design Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines should be used as a starting point for the creative design process. Property owners and developers are encouraged to involve Planning Department staff and adjacent property owners in the design process prior to making a significant investment.

This document is comprised of design standards (mandatory) and design guidelines (discretionary). Standards that employ the word “shall” are intended to be mandatory and reflect requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. Guidelines which employ the word “should” or “encourage” are not mandatory, but reflect recommended or desirable design solutions (while not precluding other design solutions) that meet or exceed the intent of the guideline.

During the review of development proposals by Planning Department staff, each submittal will be checked to ascertain if the mandatory zoning standards have been followed and to see if the intent of the discretionary design guidelines have been reasonably complied with. Developments in compliance with the standards and guidelines will receive favorable comment and approval. Developments are not expected to meet the letter of every discretionary guideline in order to be considered in reasonable compliance with the overall intent of the guidelines.

Decisions on new single family homes, additions to existing single family homes, and minor additions to multiple-family developments are made by Planning Department staff, pursuant to Administrative Design Review procedures (Section 10-2.2500 of the Zoning Ordinance). A decision denying the application may be appealed and set for public hearing before the Planning Commission.

Decisions on multi-family developments and additions of 1,000 square feet or more to multiple-family developments are made by the Planning Commission at a public hearing, pursuant to Planning Commission Design Review procedures (Section 10-2.2502 of the Zoning Ordinance). The decision of the Planning Commission is appealable to the City Council.

A. Applicability and Purpose

These design guidelines apply to all new buildings and structures in the R-2, R-3, R-3A, RMD, RH-1, RH-2, and RH-3 multiple-family residential zones. The design guidelines are intended to provide more detailed design criteria to supplement the general design criteria applicable under the Zoning Ordinance. The design guidelines are intended to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood, high quality design, consistency of architectural style, softening of the appearance of mass and bulk, variety and creativity in design solutions, and integration with the natural features of the landscape.

B. Design Review Procedures

The following developments in multiple-family residential zones are subject to Planning Commission Design Review (refer to Section 10-2.2502 of the Zoning Ordinance):

- All new residential developments of two or more units (whether attached or detached)
- Additions of 1,000 square feet or more of floor area to a development containing two or more units (whether attached or detached).

Through the Planning Commission Design Review process, developments will be considered at a public hearing before the Planning Commission to ensure that the development conforms to the broad criteria in the Zoning Ordinance and these more detailed design guidelines. The Planning Commission may approve, deny, or approve with conditions an application for Planning Commission Design Review. The decision of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council.

The following developments in multiple-family residential zones are subject to Administrative Design Review (refer to Section 10-2.2500 of the Zoning Ordinance):

- Single family homes and most additions to single family homes
- Additions of less than 1,000 square feet of floor area to a development containing two or more units (whether attached or detached).

Through the Administrative Design Review process, staff works with the applicant to achieve an acceptable design compatible with the neighborhood. If an agreement cannot be reached between staff and the applicant, the applicant can appeal the staff decision to the Planning Commission. Applicants are encouraged to involve staff and adjacent property owners in the design process prior to the Administrative Design Review and prior to making significant investment.

C. Zoning Amendments

Definition of semi-subterranean (APPLIES TO ALL ZONES)

To reduce the appearance of a third story and reduce mass and bulk, it is recommended that semi-subterranean areas be counted as a story if there is more than 4' from existing grade to the floor above for 50% or more of the perimeter of the building. The current code standard is no more than 6' to the floor above for 50% or more of the perimeter of the building. This change would lower buildings with subterranean levels by 2 feet. The amendment would be made to the definition of "story" in Section 10-2.402 of the Zoning Ordinance.

D. Design Guidelines

1. General Project Considerations

- A. All new multi-family developments should be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.
- B. Existing site amenities should be preserved and incorporated within new multi-family projects whenever feasible.
- C. Mature trees and similar natural amenities unique to the site should be preserved and incorporated into development proposals whenever possible.
- D. New multi-family residential development should respect the development in the immediate area through the use of similar setbacks, complimentary building arrangements, buffer yards and avoidance of overwhelming building scale and visual obstructions.
- E. New landscaping should compliment existing landscape materials, location, and massing on adjacent established developments where appropriate.

2. Site Planning

- A. Appropriate building siting should be used to reduce the perception of bulk, maximize open space, increase pervious areas and provide community-gathering spaces.
- B. Buildings should be generally oriented parallel to streets with varying setbacks to provide visual interest, vary shadow patterns, and reduce the appearance of bulk.
- C. Clustering of multi-family units should be a consistent site-planning element. Large projects should be broken up into groups of structures. Continuous elements of various heights in building clusters are encouraged.
- D. Buildings should be oriented to take advantage of prevailing breezes and direction of the sun in order to provide natural lighting and ventilation for open spaces.
- E. On interior lots, front loaded garages are prohibited in the front half of the lot. On interior lots with attached multi-family units, side-loaded garages are discouraged along the street frontage.

5. Architectural Guidelines

- A. There is no particular architectural “style” proposed for multi-family residential structures in Redondo Beach. The primary focus should be on constructing a high quality residential environment.
- B. Where the neighborhood has a recognizable architectural theme, style, or character, it should be considered for incorporation into the design of the development.
- C. A visual balance or rhythm should be created by the dimensional ratio of multi-family buildings, their parts and spaces around them.
- D. Boxy and monotonous facades that lack a sense of human scale and large expanses of flat wall planes are strongly discouraged.
- E. Portions of upper floors should be set back in order to scale down facades that face the street, common open space, and adjacent residential structures. Upper story setbacks are recommended either as full length “stepbacks” or partial indentations for upper story balconies, decks, and/or aesthetic setbacks.
- F. Where a semi-subterranean level is visible along the street frontage, the second story above that level should be set back to soften the appearance of a three-story building mass.
- G. Architectural elements such as bays, bay windows, recessed or projecting balconies, verandahs, balconies, porches and other elements that add visual interest, scale and character to the neighborhood are encouraged.
- H. All support buildings within multi-family residential projects (i.e., laundry facilities, recreation buildings and sales/lease offices) should be compatible in architectural design with the rest of the complex.
- I. Along the front portion of the lot, entrances to buildings should be located on the front façade, be clearly articulated, and be directly visible from the street.
- J. While special ornamental treatments may be focused on front and entry facades, quality articulation and finishes should be provided on all visible sides of buildings.

6. Building Height, Mezzanines, and Roof Decks

A. Varied building heights are encouraged. Varied building heights provide visual interest and give the appearance of smaller structures.

B. Combination of one, one and a half, and two story units create variation and visual interest, and are encouraged (applicable to larger developments comprising multiple lots).

C. The building heights should create a transition from the heights of adjacent existing residential structures.

D. Mezzanines:

- should not compromise the integrity of the architectural style;
- should be stepped back from the building edge above the second floor;
- rooflines of mezzanines should be compatible with the roofline of the primary structure.

E. Roof decks:

- should not compromise the integrity of the architectural style;
- should be stepped back from the building edge above the second floor;
- should be oriented away from neighbors' yards as much as possible;
- should use appropriate screening measures to reduce privacy invasion (i.e. solid railing walls, latticework, and landscaping).

F. Spas, hot tubs, and similar equipment located above the first floor on balconies and roof decks:

- should be stepped back from the building edge above the first floor;
- should be oriented away from neighbors' yards as much as possible;
- should use appropriate screening measures to reduce privacy invasion (i.e. solid railing walls, latticework, and landscaping).

7. Roof Articulation

A. Roof-lines should be segmented and varied within an overall horizontal context. Varying heights are encouraged.

B. Use of vertical elements such as towers may be used to break up horizontal massing and provide visual interest.

C. Hipped or gabled roofs covering the entire buildings are preferable to mansard roofs and segments of pitched roofs applied at the building's edge.

D. Roofs should reflect a residential appearance through pitch and use of materials.

E. Roof pitch for a porch may be slightly lower than that of the main building.

F. Carport roofs visible from buildings or streets should incorporate roof slope and materials to match adjacent buildings. Flat carport roofs are strongly discouraged.

G. Flat roofs are discouraged in favor of full roofs.

9. Landscape Guidelines

Landscaping for multi-family projects can be used to define and accent specific areas (e.g. building entrances, parking lots), define the edges of various land uses, provide a transition between neighboring properties (buffering), and screen storage areas. Landscaping should be used as a unifying element within a project to obtain a cohesive appearance and to help achieve compatibility of a new project with its surroundings. Landscaping shall conform with all requirements pursuant to Section 10-2.1900 of the Zoning Ordinance.

A. Landscaped areas should generally incorporate plantings utilizing a three-tier system; 1) grasses and ground covers, 2) shrubs and vines, and 3) trees.

B. Plant materials should be placed so that they do not interfere with lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes. Trees or large shrubs should not be planted under overhead lines or over underground utilities if their growth might interfere with such public utilities.

C. The following planting design concepts are encouraged within each project:

- A specimen tree (36-inch box or more) in the front yard of a single lot development, or trees in informal groupings or rows at major focal points for larger multiple-lot developments;
- Use of flowering vines both on walls and arbors or trellises;

- Use of planting to create shadow and patterns against walls;
- Use of planting to soften building lines and emphasize the positive features of the site;
- Trees to create canopy and shade, especially in parking areas and passive open space areas; and
- Berms, plantings, and walls to screen parking lots, trash enclosures, storage areas, utility boxes, etc.

D. Vehicular entries provide a good opportunity to introduce and identify multi-family developments. The vehicular entry zone in multi-family developments is the area between the public street and the project's internal circulation system. The vehicular entry zone should be treated with special landscape elements that will give individual identity to the project (i.e. special paving, graphic signage, specialty lighting, specimen trees, flowering plants).

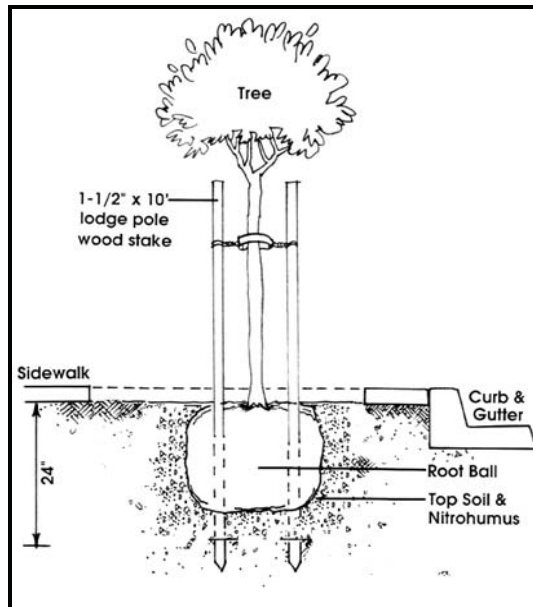
E. Textured paving or interlocking pavers may be used to delineate site entries.

F. Landscaping should be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment by raised planting surfaces and the use of curbs. Concrete step areas should be provided in landscape planters adjacent to parking spaces.

G. Vines and climbing plants integrated upon buildings, trellises, and perimeter walls are encouraged.

- H. Gravel, bark, Astroturf, concrete, or similar materials are not allowed as a substitute for plant materials.
- I. Impervious surfaces should be minimized in all open space and setback areas.
- J. Landscaping shall emphasize water-efficient plants.
- K. All young trees should be securely staked with double staking and/or guy-wires. Root barriers should be required for any tree placed in paved or other situations where roots could disrupt adjacent paving/curb surfaces.

- L. Automatic sprinkler controllers shall be installed to ensure that landscaped areas will be watered properly. Backflow preventors and anti-siphon valves shall be provided in accordance with current codes.
- M. Sprinkler heads and risers should be protected from car bumpers. “Pop-up” heads should be used near curbs and sidewalks.
- N. The landscape irrigation system should be designed to prevent run-off and overspray.
- O. All irrigation systems should be designed to reduce vandalism by placing controls in appropriate enclosures.



Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used within this guideline manual. For terms not defined in this glossary, please refer to the City of Redondo Beach Zoning Ordinance and/or General Plan.

Adjacent – Property that abuts the subject property on the same side as the street.

Aesthetics - The science and philosophy of beauty. If something is aesthetic, it is of beauty or artistic.

Alignment (Architectural) - The visual alignment and placement of architectural elements such as windows, cornice elements, soffits, awnings, etc. or structures in order to promote blockscape continuity.

Alley - A public or private way permanently reserved for vehicular access to the rear or side of properties.

Arch - A curved structure supporting its weight over an open space such as a door or window.

Arcade – An exterior covered passageway along a faced open to the street.

Articulation - The degree or manner in which a building wall or roofline is made up of distinct parts or elements. A highly articulated wall will appear to be composed of a number of different vertical and horizontal planes, usually made distinct by their change in direction (projections and recesses) and/or changes in materials, colors or textures.

Awning - A fixed cover, typically comprised of cloth over a metal frame, that is placed over windows or building openings as protection from the sun and rain.

Balcony - A platform that projects from the wall of a building, typically above the first level, and is surrounded by a rail balustrade or parapet.

Baluster - The upright portion of the row of supports for a porch railing.

Basement – Floor area partially or completely below grade and not qualifying as a story as defined in the Uniform Building Code. However, for the purposes of these design guidelines, basements shall not include garages.

Bay (Structural) - A regularly repeated spatial element in a building defined by beams or ribs and their supports.

Blockscape/ Blockface - The properties abutting on one side of a street and lying between the two nearest intersecting or intercepting streets, or nearest intersecting or intercepting street and railroad right-of-way, unsubdivided land, watercourse, or city boundary.

Buffer – A method or materials used to visually conceal one element of a development from other elements or from adjacent development.

Building - Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls for the housing or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels, or property of any kind.

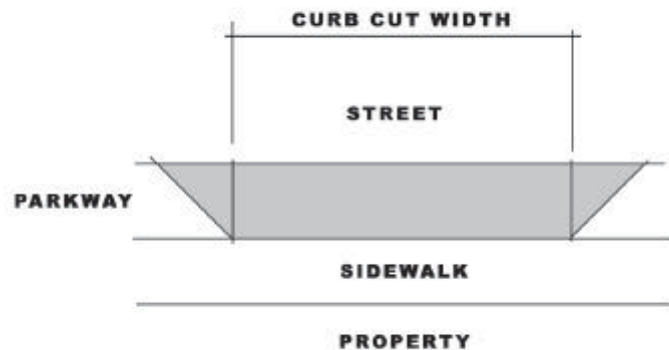
Carport - A permanent roofed accessory structure with not more than two enclosed sides intended for vehicle storage.

Column - A vertical support, usually cylindrical, consisting of a base, shaft and capital, either monolithic or built-up of drums the full diameter of the shaft.

Compatibility – Provision of site design, architectural design, and high quality materials that are compatible with the existing neighborhood.

Cornice – The horizontal member along the top of the building, which visually finishes it.

Curb Cuts - The elimination of a street curb to enable vehicles to cross sidewalks and enter driveways or parking lots.



Facade - The exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

Fenestration - The arrangement and design of windows in a building.

Floor Area Ratio - Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the relationship between a building's total floor area and the total area of the lot. FAR helps control the appearance of bulk while at the same time maintaining a reasonable opportunity to build a larger home on larger lots, without reducing the character of an existing neighborhood.

$$\text{FLOOR AREA RATIO} = \frac{\text{GROSS FLOOR AREA OF A BUILDING}}{\text{TOTAL AREA OF THE LOT}}$$

Focal Point - A building, object or natural element in a streetscene that stands out and serves as a point of focus, catching and holding the viewer's attention.

Gable Roof –the vertical triangular end of a building from cornice or eaves to ridge.

Grade - the degree of inclination of a slope

Height – the distance from the existing grade to the top of a structures roofline.

Hip Roof - A roof with four uniformly pitched sides.

Impervious Surface – A surface that does not offer an opportunity for water to infiltrate into the ground.