



# SAN FERNANDO

## Design Guidelines

### Volume 1: Single-Family Residential

*Adopted By Ordinance # 1585  
November 17, 2008*



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November, 2008

To Homeowners and Designers:

Welcome to the City of San Fernando! We want to help you with your building improvement plans so that the design of your home fits well into your chosen neighborhood. In the interest of maintaining and improving the neighborhood that brought you to San Fernando, we are pleased to present these design guidelines for your use as part of the city's site plan review application process.

San Fernando has a long and rich heritage of architectural and garden design. We value that heritage as seen in our historic homes and neighborhoods. It is important that new buildings and improvements to existing buildings and sites be compatible with the character of the community.

These guidelines were written to enhance the creative process. We believe that the use of a few concise principles and many photographs make the guidelines interesting and instructive. We hope you agree.

The City Council has made a commitment to good design, with the realization that each project can be expected to influence our environment for a very long time. We appreciate your efforts to improve your property in a manner that will contribute positively to you neighborhood and your community.

Sincerely,

Steven Veres  
Mayor





# Design Guidelines

## Single-Family Residential

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### 1. Residential Neighborhoods of San Fernando

Like other desirable communities, San Fernando has experienced significant changes in long-established neighborhoods. Houses are being remodeled, expanded, and in some cases completely replaced by larger houses. The City of San Fernando appreciates the positive statement this makes about living in San Fernando. At the same time, the city has a goal to maintain the attractive aspects of the community's neighborhoods that draw people into the city and keep them here.

The neighborhoods of San Fernando offer a variety of house styles. Also, within most neighborhoods there is a mix of house styles. Increasingly, large new houses or additions result in striking contrasts between house sizes as well. This is a nationwide trend, sometimes known as "mansionization". The term implies houses that are overdesigned for their surroundings -- too big for the lot, too heavily stylized for the neighborhood, or perhaps both.

San Fernando was developed on a compact street grid, with a limited range of lot sizes. Many house designs throughout the city feature traditional features such as porches, rear garages, and individualized detailing. This has helped make the houses relate well to each other and to the view from the street. This in turn has made the community's neighborhoods feel like home to residents. In that pattern, large formal houses tend to disrupt the amenity of the neighborhood and the character of the community. To introduce overdesigned houses into these neighborhoods is like wearing furs to a neighborhood picnic. They look out of place, and disturb the level of comfort that has been enjoyed by so many for so long.



*Many of San Fernando's attractive houses feature straightforward, yet varied design, along with craftsmanlike detailing.*



*One of San Fernando's strengths is its great diversity of traditional house styles.*



## 2. Purpose of These Guidelines

The city's zoning code provides minimum setbacks, limits on house sizes, and other regulations to prevent neighborhood disruption by construction of overly large houses. As a companion to those regulations, these guidelines seek to improve the level of design quality by focusing on important design principles. This is not an academic exercise, but a direct application of principles to problems that are common to this time and place. The following sections present these design principles along with photographs illustrating good use of each principle, and treatments to avoid.

At the project level, these design standards and guidelines are meant to encourage projects – additions, remodels, and new houses – that accommodate their users' needs while contributing to an attractive environment. Respect for context is central to this historic city's purpose, but that should never discourage striving for design excellence within that context. Even the smallest improvement of an existing property is welcome, and it is not the city's intent to require an increase in a project's scope through the use of these guidelines as part of the site plan review process.



*Of all the traditional styles found in San Fernando, Craftsman is one of the most common. It shares many characteristics with Spanish style – broad gable roofs, large overhangs, simple massing relying on interesting details. Both styles also lend themselves well to all houses – large and small, simple and complex.*



**Guideline:** All projects should be designed according to basic design principles, to maximize design opportunities and to fit harmoniously into their neighborhoods.

*One reason new architecture and landscape design can prove to be discordant is that fundamental principles of design are no longer generally observed. Mutual awareness of a few principles, laid out in the following pages, will assist in the design and review of all projects.*

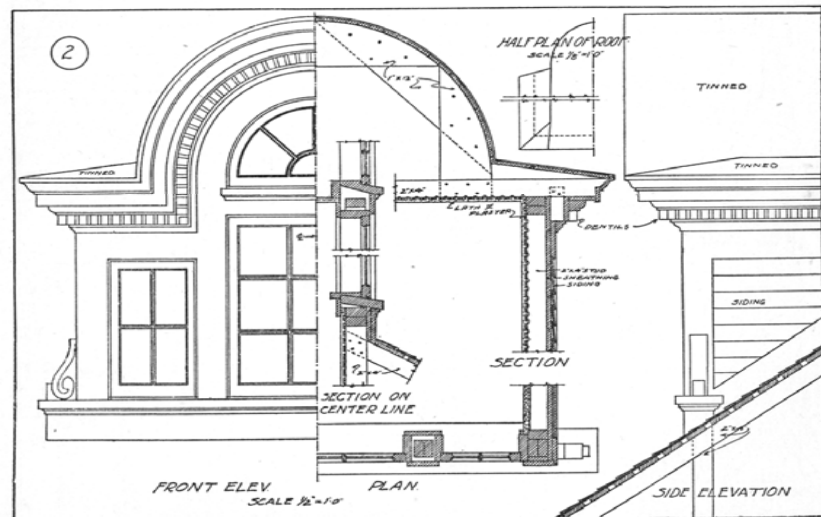
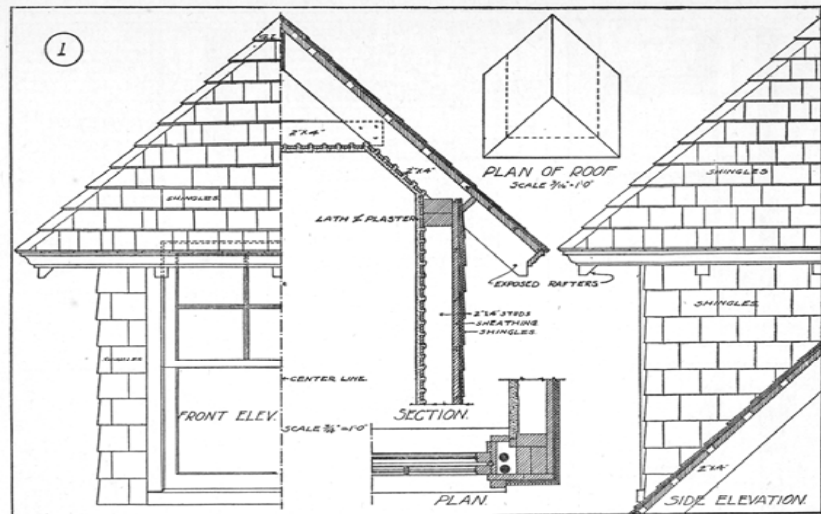
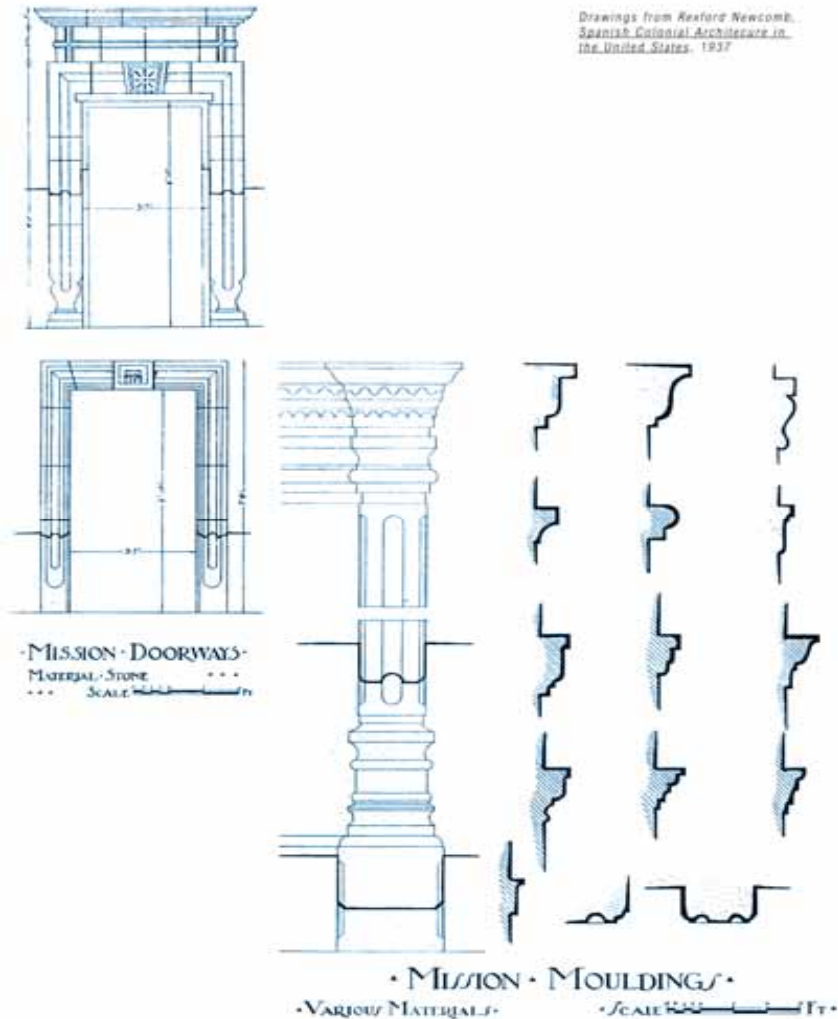


PLATE 22—ROOF DORMER WINDOWS



The design principles cover all aspects of design. In particular, they address the most common characteristics of recent designs that do not fit well into San Fernando neighborhoods. Some common examples of poor design in single-family homes that are addressed by the design principles in this volume include the following:

- a. **Porch either missing or too tall.** If missing, there is no expression of shelter. If too tall, the porch expresses a monument rather than a welcoming entry.  
(*Principle 1, Shelter*)
- b. **Uninteresting or awkward roof design**  
(*Principle 1, Shelter*)
- c. **House too big for setback and screening**  
(*Principle 3, Balance*)
- d. **Proportion between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors** (flattened first floor)  
(*Principle 3, Balance*)
- e. **Front facade has too much ornamentation relative to other facades**  
(*Principle 5, Integrity*)
- f. **Badly organized windows and doors**  
(*Principle 5, Integrity*)
- g. **Lack of detail**  
(*Principle 7, Detail*)
- h. **Flat facade; no recessing of windows; inadequate column dimensions**  
(*Principle 6, Substance*)
- i. **Inadequate planting; overbearing front yard fences**  
(*Principle 2, Transition*)
- j. **Inappropriate style for neighborhood**, without mitigating setbacks and planting (*Principle 8, Character*)

Application of the eight design principles covered in the rest of this volume will help to avoid such problems.



a, b, c, d, e, g, h, i, j



a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j



a, b, c, d, g, h

**Guideline:** Sloped roofs and small-scaled porches or entry alcoves should generally be used to express the sheltering character of houses.

*At the most basic level, a sloped roof is the most powerful visual clue to a house. Few flat-roofed houses exist in San Fernando; these are more typical of commercial buildings. Those commercial buildings that have sloped roofs usually also have parapets, and the roofs tend to have simple form. On residences, the roofs typically have more intricate form, as well as small-scaled materials such as shingles or barrel tiles.*



*Variety of roof forms in Spanish style on South Brand...*



*Variety of roof forms in a Craftsman design on South Brand...*



*Variety of roof forms in a recently remodeled ranch house...*



*Colonial design is established as an exception, with simple roof forms. Design quality relies on fine details.*

**Treatments to avoid:**



*Awkward roof forms combining shed, nested gables, and parapets...*



*A wall without visible support conceals a sloped roof and prevents harmonious house character...*

*Another awkward use of a shed roof...*





*Porches and entry alcoves are also shelter elements, and are encouraged for their role in expressing the character of a house. However, this role as a sheltering feature is lost when the porch or alcove is too high. For security purposes, it is important to keep the entry visible from the street and neighboring properties.*



*This strong entry uses a porte-cochere roof over the driveway to lead into the porch. This works well unless cars are parking in front of the entry. Separate paths, as in the example, are better.*



*A generous and prominent porch is found on an Asian variant of the Craftsman style. This is part of San Fernando's great architectural variety.*



*This design uses varied but related roof forms along with varied arch sizes for strong entries at driveway and porch.*



*This porch entry introduces the visitor at a welcoming, intimate scale that builds up to the taller space inside the living room.*

#### *Treatments to avoid:*



*This entry alcove is too tall and shallow to create a welcoming effect.*



*Many steps lead to a disappointing entry; barely sheltered.*

*Another inadequate shelter, with an uncomfortable low entry soffit...*



## 2. Transition

1. Shelter 2. Transition 3. Balance 4. Rhythm 5. Integrity 6. Substance 7. Detail 8. Character

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**Guideline:** House and landscaping, site and surroundings, should be designed to provide a visual transition from one to the other by placing garden structures and shrubs next to the house, and by using streetscape planting to form a transition to neighboring properties.

*The transition between the house and its surroundings is central to creating an attractive property and neighborhood. Generous landscaped setbacks create this transition from the street and neighboring properties. Architectural and landscaping elements can help achieve strong entries to buildings and smooth transitions between indoor and outdoor areas. Elements include entry courts, garden structures, foundation shrubs, screen planting, focal planting, and procession planting.*



*Graceful entry gates could work well even on a smaller lot.*



*Porte cochere leads to a trellis beyond. This is an inviting entry and extension of the building's architecture.*



*An open porch terminates a house.*



*An arched porch is topped by a festive balcony.*



*Colorful and vibrant plantings screen a two-story wall along a driveway entry.*

### *Treatments to avoid:*



*This entry offers no transition. At least an inviting entry arbor could have offset some of the awkward massing.*



*Too often, no individual path for pedestrians is offered. They must approach these houses from up their driveways. This is uninviting and could devalue the houses.*





*Curved or straight, walks independent of driveways are inviting.*



*Attractive paving on a split driveway*



*With no walls or plantings between properties, front yards form an expansive shared open space.*



*A low, screened picket fence with decorative plantings provide a good transition to the yard and house.*



*An open arch in the front yard wall allows a peak into the house window beyond.*

*With a large frontyard, a low picket fence allows an expansive view. For smaller properties, it is even more important to keep the fence low.*



### *Treatments to avoid:*



*This gray plaster wall is not complementary to the house*

*Concrete block pillars and high gates are not appropriate to this small house.*



*This fence is too ornate, and is entirely made of fiberglass!*

**Guideline:** House massing and site design should maintain pleasing proportions, and should balance mass with setback and screening, avoiding monumental symmetry.

*Balance is important on many levels. On the neighborhood level, a house should not create an imbalance when viewed with other houses in the block. Where one-story houses are common, two-story houses need to pay special attention to massing and setbacks that introduce the taller massing gently. This can maintain a balance of scale within the neighborhood.*



*This house is of rustic design, with its 2-story massing largely hidden by roofs. It expresses the Shelter principle well. Its generous setbacks, even to its front yard fence, allow it to maintain balance, even within a 1-story neighborhood. The highest wall facing a neighbor is the gable seen here, with the driveway providing a large setback.*



*Here is another house using a steep roof to conceal a second story. It also uses hipped roofs to reduce the visible mass on all sides.*

**Treatments to avoid:**



*Two-story houses inserted into smaller-scale blocks need increased second-floor setbacks, screening, and roof pitches to help fit in.*





*Similar masses or features can balance each other on both sides of a house. Subtle balance, involving dissimilar but well-proportioned masses or features, is encouraged. For example, balance can be achieved between a horizontal mass and a vertical accent. On two-story houses, a relatively higher ground floor achieves attractive proportions, balancing the upper floors' tendency to overpower.*

*Asymmetrical overall massing and open space design support an informal neighborhood setting and help a house fit within the context of a block. Symmetrical houses tend to become self-contained islands or monuments rather than joining the parade of houses on the block.*



*Another large house uses symmetry for the main mass, but also asymmetry in the massing on the right side. This allows the house to have the dignified appearance offered by symmetry, but to also have a degree of informality that makes a house seem like home.*



*This large house uses asymmetrical massing of varied roof forms to lead up to the second-floor wall. That part of the house is made attractive through the wide eave overhang and the balcony*

#### **Treatments to avoid:**



*Even the tree does not conceal the excessive size of the upstairs dormer in proportion to the gable below.*



*Dull symmetry is broken up by only an entry cut crudely out of the corner.*

*The steep roof minimizes mass at the front of the house, but the taller rear mass ruins the side view. A roof of the same slope as the front roof should have been used for a few feet at the end, before starting the higher wall.*



## 4. Rhythm

1. Shelter 2. Transition 3. Balance 4. Rhythm 5. Integrity 6. Substance 7. Detail 8. Character

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**Guideline:** Repetition of major elements should establish a rhythm, and should generally not exceed seven in number so as to avoid monotony.

*The repetition of building bays, row trees, or other major building and landscape elements is valuable for the achievement of rhythm and sense of place. However, the perception of repeated elements changes from pleasant order to monotony if the sequence is too long. Few houses reach a scale to raise that as a problem.*



*It takes only a few important elements to establish rhythm. The two gables with their exposed beams work well on the house to the left. Below left, the upstairs windows of a plain house create a strong but understated focus.*



*The living room windows at the top right and the entry arcade at the bottom right create identity through strong, simple rhythm.*



### Treatments to avoid:



*The garage doors have the only rhythm of this design, creating an undesirable focus.*



*The only rhythm is created by the regular windows... This is not enough to balance against the chaotic effect of the other shapes.*



*While the arches help tie the design together through their repetition, there is no rhythm in this design.*



**Guideline:** Integrity of house and site design should allow durable design features to resonate, to establish rhythm, and to be carried forward to all views as appropriate.

*"As is the small, so is the great." Integrity is the reflection of the small elements in the overall design, and vice versa. A house design is tied together through integrity, including appropriate completeness of detail on all elevations.*



*In this simple house, the fence form creates a gentle reflection of the arches within the porch spans.*

*This house treats the garages as true design features, and in fact creates a focus with the balcony atop them.*



*This is the side view of a traditional home, showing a presentable level of detail. The deeper openings on the front express entry.*

*This house uses a high level of detail of massing and facade elements on its side.*



**Treatments to avoid:**

*Two failures of integrity:*



*This house is top heavy in appearance with roofs of varying pitches.*

*This entry is out of place on the house.*



**Guideline:** Dimensions shall be given to design elements -- to give the house the appearance of structural substance; to select a tree or bench light enough to avoid overpowering a garden -- as appropriate to the setting.

*Often, a house's structural elements can be large enough to meet building code requirements, but still be too small to provide the aesthetically pleasing appearance of being substantial.*



*These small windows reveal thick walls that give the house a pleasing appearance of substance.*



*A narrow fascia, small posts with detailed caps, and simple rail treatment are used, along with small-scale roof shingles. These allow the house to have a domestic scale of detail and substance.*

#### *Treatments to avoid:*



*The house illustrated as an example of good window depth juxtaposed to a porch with posts that are too narrow to give the impression of structural substance.*



*This house has porch columns that are too wide for their height.*

*This house has a cantilevered mass that does not appear to be supported because of its arbitrary placement above the garage door.*







*The houses above and to the right benefit from deeply recessed windows.*



*The deep recessing of the garage doors and porch give substance to the base of this house, which otherwise suffers from a flat and uninspired appearance. This also helps the garage doors to be integrated into the street view.*



*The recessed window pictured to the right becomes a focal point that establishes a look of substance and high quality.*

### *Treatments to avoid:*



*Massive tapered stone pillars are a distinctive feature of Craftsman design. However, the exposed thin posts above them ruin the effect.*

*Tacked-on trim around windows is not a convincing way of providing the appearance of depth.*



**Guideline:** Details shall be carefully designed to contribute essential small-scale elements of house character.

*Detailed façade elements are essential to express the personal feeling that makes a house a home rather than just a building. It is also important to keep the scale of the detail small, and to avoid generic details.*



*Gable, window, eave, and door trim . . .*



*Delicate, detailed treatment at entry door . . .*



*Narrow moldings, wall reveals, and well-proportioned window dividers combine for a high-quality appearance.*



*Individualistic expression at gate. . .*



*Shutters and railing are standard items, while custom trellises convey an appearance of high interest and high quality. The degree of detail in the cornice and the molding above the window is also important.*

## Treatments to avoid:



*Wide, plain fascia and trim boards combine with false window dividers to give the impression of a dull house of low quality.*



*The arch and pilaster above are crowded and awkward.*

*Pipe rails and chain link infill are not appropriate.*







*It is the small details that make a house special.*

*Detail that is carefully designed and delicately proportioned speaks quietly and intimately to us.*

*Narrow fascia boards and small columns should be used, with more than simple flat wood shapes.*

*Recessed windows should be used, with more than planted-on moldings to make them look recessed.*

*Encouraged detail elements include:*

- Canopies of simple shape
- Exposed rafter tails
- Finely detailed plants near eye level
- Narrow, detailed moldings
- Benches, fountains, planters



**Treatments to avoid:**



*Awkward stone entry columns unrelated to the house . . .*



*Unstable appearance of stone columns...*

*Roof tiles too big for building scale...*



**Guideline:** Through composition using the other principles as appropriate, and observing the best aspects of San Fernando's heritage, the house's character shall improve its context.

*Character is the sum of the parts. The first seven principles determine much of a house's character, and whether a house will continue the tradition of its neighborhood, improve it, or degrade it.*

*Respect for the house's setting is the most fundamental aspect of sensitive house and landscape design. This need not result in direct copying or referencing of design components, and contrast can be as valid an approach if compatibility is achieved. Character-defining features should be protected and complemented by any addition. Many of San Fernando's older houses are eligible for tax benefits such as provided by the Mills Act. The Planning Department is eager to assist homeowners in protecting their historic houses.*

*Aside from the seven preceding principles, style is a major factor in a project's character. At this point in the early 21st century, remnants of many architectural trends of past decades are found in new designs. Strict adherence to style according to academically correct criteria is rare. Outside of historically designated neighborhoods, the eclectic approach - within a neighborhood and within a single building - is acceptable if executed in a sensitive manner. Careful consideration of the design principles can help in that effort.*

*It is hoped that the principles and examples will reinforce the designer's creative desires and skills.*



**Treatments to avoid:**



*Boxy houses: awkward symmetry except for a cut-out entry.*



*Not much more than applied window moldings. This under-designed house lacks good character.*



*Poor proportions, no effort at recessing or attractive design elements, and tacked-on porches.*





*Regardless of style, good houses and landscaping typically use several of the preceding seven principles, adding up to attractive character. This is an art, not a science, as is the city's role in evaluating houses and outdoor spaces to ensure that San Fernando's residential neighborhoods environments are protected and improved over the years.*



## *Treatments to avoid:*



*High entry and overdone stone work.*



*Complete misfit in its neighborhood and planet.*



*Estate grandeur squeezed onto a lot where its side faces the street.*

**Guidelines:** All projects should be designed according to basic design principles, to maximize design opportunities and to fit harmoniously into their neighborhoods.

### 1. Shelter

Sloped roofs, and small-scaled porches or entry alcoves, should generally be used to express the sheltering character of houses.

### 2. Transition

Building and landscaping, site and surroundings, should be designed to provide a visual transition from one to the other, and to achieve mutual security, desirable social contact, privacy and quiet.

### 3. Balance

Building massing and site design should maintain pleasing proportions, and should balance mass with setback and screening, avoiding monumental symmetry.

### 4. Rhythm

Repetition of major elements should establish a rhythm, and should generally not exceed seven in number so as to avoid monotony.

### 5. Integrity

Integrity of building and site design should allow durable design features to resonate, to establish rhythm, and to be carried forward to all views as appropriate.

### 6. Substance

Dimensions shall be given to design elements -- to give the building the appearance of structural substance; to select a tree or bench light enough to avoid overpowering a garden -- as appropriate to the setting.

### 7. Detail

Details shall be carefully design to contribute essential small-scale elements of residential character.

### 8. Character

Through composition using the other principles as appropriate, and observing the best aspects of San Fernando's heritage, the project's character shall improve its context.







*Original design*



*Windows, porch roof,  
& moldings revised  
(total of revisions shown  
individually below)*

This house provides an example of some of the design guidelines at work. The original porch is too tall, and the squat windows compress the first floor appearance. The windows lack detail. Also, the moldings are too plain and wide. Below are the revisions viewed individually. Above right all three design revisions are shown together. Further work would help the house, particularly by redesigning the garage door.



*Porch roof lowered*



*Windows revised*



*Moldings revised*

## 1. PLANT SELECTION

Residential landscape design should complement the architecture. The design should also fit in with the neighborhood and the surrounding environment. Conserving existing, established plant materials is almost always the best approach. Borrowing from the existing plant themes and the environment makes the new design fit in. The new design should also group plants with similar water, nutrient, and sun needs so as to avoid any growth problem.

### SAMPLE PLANTING PALETTE

Recommended plants include the following, but additional selections are encouraged for variety:

#### Canopy trees:

*Cinnamomum camphora* (Camphor Tree)  
*Pistachia chinensis* (Chinese Pistache)  
*Platanus acerifolia* (London Plane Tree)  
*Platanus racemosa* (California Sycamore)  
*Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak)  
*Quercus engelmanni* (Engelmann Oak)  
*Tipuana tipu* (Tipu Tree)  
*Ulmus parvifolia* (Chinese Evergreen Elm)

#### Specimen trees:

*Agonis fluxuosa* (Peppermint Tree)  
*Eucalyptus* ssp.  
*Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair Tree)  
*Olea europaea* (Olive Tree)  
*Pinus eldarica* (Afghan Pine)  
*Pinus pinea* (Italian stone pine)  
*Platanus racemosa* (California Sycamore)  
*Schinus molle* (California Pepper)

#### Flowering trees:

*Albizia julibrissin* 'Rosa' (Silk Tree)  
*Cassia leptophylla* (Gold Medallion Tree)  
*Cercis occidentalis* (Western Redbud)  
*Jacaranda mimosifolia* (Jacaranda)  
*Koelreuteria bipinnata* (Chinese Flame Tree)  
*Koelreuteria paniculata* (Goldenrain Tree)  
*Lagerstroemia indica* (Crape Myrtle-multi)  
*Malus 'Prairiefire'* (Prairiefire Crabapple)  
*Pyrus kawakamii* (Evergreen Pear)  
*Prunus* ssp.  
*Tabebuia impetiginosa* (Pink Trumpet Tree)

#### Palm trees:

*Archontophoenix cumminghamiana* (King Palm)  
*Phoenix* spp. (Date Palm)  
*Washingtonia filifera* (California Fan Palm)  
*Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Fan Palm)



Coast Live Oak



Olive



California Sycamore



California Pepper



Mexican Fan Palm



Western Redbud



California Fan Palm



Silk Tree

### Plant materials to avoid:

The following plants should be avoided due to either widespread overuse (*rhapsiolepis*), inappropriate maintenance and planting (*nandina*), safety issue (*syagrus*), or lack of any historical or environmental significance (*cupaniopsis*). Whenever possible, these species should be replaced with more appropriate plant material.

#### Trees:

*Chorisia* spp. (Floss Silk Tree)  
*Cupaniopsis anacardioides* (Carrotwood)

*Lagerstroemia* spp. (as street trees)  
*Magnolia* spp.  
*Mahonia* spp.

*Fraxinus* spp. (Ash)  
*Syagrus romanzoffianum* (Queen Palm)



## Shrubs: (\* denotes value as screening plant)

*Azalea* spp. (Azalea)  
*Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree)  
*Alyogyne heugelii* & cvs (Blue Hibiscus)  
 \* *Bamboo* spp.  
*Buddleia davidii* (Butterfly Bush)  
 \* *Camellia* spp. (Camellia)  
*Cassia splendida* (Golden Wonder Senna)  
*Ceanothus* var. (Wild Lilac)  
*Cistus purpureus* (Orchid Rockrose)  
 \* *Cocculus laurifolius*  
 \* *Cotoneaster* spp.  
*Echium fastuosum* (Pride of Madeira)  
 \* *Escallonia* spp.  
*Euphorbia characias* 'Wulfenii'  
*Euphorbia rigida*  
*Gardenia* spp.  
 \* *Grevillia* spp.  
 \* *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*  
 (Chinese Hibiscus)  
 \* *Myrtus communis*  
 (True Myrtle)  
 \* *Osmanthus* spp.  
*Penstemon spectabilis*  
 (Showy Penstemon)  
 \* *Podocarpus* spp.  
 \* *Prunus caroliniana*  
 (Carolina Laurel Cherry)  
 \* *Pyracantha* spp. (Firethorn)  
 \* *Rosa* spp. (Rose)

## Groundcovers:

*Arctostaphylos hookeri* (Monterey Manzanita)  
*Ceanothus griseus horizontalis* (Carmel Creeper)  
*Cistus* spp. (Rockrose)  
*Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Lowfast'  
*Lantana* spp.  
*Lavandula* spp. (Lavender)  
*Liriope muscari* (Big Blue Lily Turf)  
*Mahonia repens* (Creeping Mahonia)  
*Pelargonium* spp. (Pelatum)  
*Rosmarinus officinalis* (Rosemary)  
*Salvia* spp. (Sage)  
*Santolina chamaecyparissus* (Lavender Cotton)  
*Trachelospermum jasminoides* (Star Jasmine)  
*Verbena* spp.

## Vines:

*Bougainvillea* spp.  
*Distictis buccinatoria* (Blood-Red Trumpet Vine)  
*Distictis laxiflora* (Vanilla Trumpet Vine)  
*Distictis* 'Rivers' (Royal Trumpet Vine)  
*Jasminum polyanthum* (Jasmine)  
*Pyrostegia venusta* (Flame Vine)  
*Rosa* cultivars (Rose)  
*Thunbergia alata* (Black-eyed Susan Vine)

## Low accent plants:

*Aloe* spp.  
*Hemerocallis* hybrids (Daylily)  
*Iris* spp.  
*Kniphofia uvaria* (Red-hot Poker)



Rockrose



Royal Trumpet



Aloe



Lavender



Cotoneaster dammeri



Bougainvillea



Rose



Latana



Orchid Rockrose



Salvia



Wild Lilac

## Plant materials to avoid:

### Shrubs:

*Agapanthus* spp. (Lily-of-the-Nile)  
*Diets* spp. (Fortnight Lily)  
*Dodonaea viscosa* (Hopseed Bush)  
*Euonymus* spp.  
*Tulbaghia* spp.

### Hebe spp.

*Juniperus* spp. (Juniper)  
*Nandina domestica* (Heavenly Bamboo)  
*Phormium tenax* (New Zealand Flex)  
*Photinia* spp.

### Groundcovers:

*Aptenia cordifolia* 'Red Apple'  
*Festuca* spp. (Fescue)  
*Gazania* spp.  
*Hedera canariensis* (Algerian Ivy)  
*Juniperus* spp. (Juniper)



## 2. HARDSCAPE DESIGN



*The hardscape components will reflect the lifestyle of the homeowner, however, design should also focus on safety and overall unity with the architecture and planting. The materials should look more natural such as brick, stone, decomposed granite, or colored concrete.*

## 3. SITE AMENITIES



*Residential site amenities include the following: flower pots, benches, trellis, BBQ, shade structure, fence, fire pit, lighting, steps, seats, and water features.*





In addition to the Design Principles, the following guidelines apply to single-family residences. These guidelines the City's actions. Additionally, the City's R-1 (Single-Family Residential Zone) Development Standards regulate the more numerical aspects of houses, such as height, setbacks, and floor area.

The following design features are identified as "encouraged", "acceptable", and "discouraged". Those items listed as "encouraged" will usually be allowed, and those that are listed as "discouraged" will generally be required to be revised. Items listed as "acceptable" will be allowed as long as it is demonstrated that there is justification for the design choice, and that the choice does not prevent the design from fitting into its surroundings.

Site Quality . . .	ENCOURAGED	ACCEPTABLE	DISCOURAGED
<b>Access / Parking:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reciprocal access</li> <li>- Rear garage</li> <li>- Pedestrian walkway separate from driveway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Side-loaded front garage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semicircular driveway</li> <li>- Front-loading front garage</li> </ul>
<b>Building Siting:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pedestrian entry facing street</li> <li>- Increased setback at highest building mass</li> <li>- Natural grade maintained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Side-loaded pedestrian entry visible from street</li> <li>- Minimal fill to finish grade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pedestrian entry hidden from street view</li> <li>- Substantial (more than 1 foot) fill to finish grade</li> </ul>
<b>Open Space &amp; Fencing:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Courtyards, especially visible from street</li> <li>- Open view across front yard to adjacent yards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Courtyards behind tall wall (behind setback line)</li> <li>- Low hedges within 20' front setback (3' max.)</li> <li>- Front yard fence, simple design of wood or dark metal, set back behind landscape strip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ground floor raised more than 3 feet above street</li> <li>- Tall front yard hedges</li> <li>- Front yard fence on property line, of ornate design, and/or white painted metal</li> </ul>
<b>Landscaping:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Native plants</li> <li>- Drought tolerant / low water usage plants</li> <li>- Appropriate groupings of plant materials</li> <li>- Consistency in style/design of paving &amp; site amenities</li> <li>- Screening of utility structures, trash enclosures, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water features, depending on maintenance</li> <li>- Plants with moderate water use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overused, generic plants &amp; high water-use plants (see list on pp. 22-23)</li> <li>- Inconsistent design style of paving &amp; site amenities</li> <li>- Inconsistent style and/or compatibility of plants</li> </ul>



Building Quality . . .	ENCOURAGED	ACCEPTABLE	DISCOURAGED
<b>Massing:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Big setback or driveway at highest mass</li> <li>- Tall first floor proportions</li> <li>- Large porch and/or alcove</li> <li>- Balanced symmetry, open to neighbors</li> <li>- Layering / detail / depth</li> <li>- Vertical/horizontal balance</li> <li>- Vertical accent at entries / street corners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Simple mass if well-detailed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tall entry</li> <li>- No entry porch or alcove</li> <li>- Symmetry (overall)</li> <li>- Applied ornament as substitute for integrity or interest of massing</li> <li>- Large unbroken massing</li> <li>- “Floating” elements (no visible support)</li> </ul>
<b>Roofs &amp; Parapets:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sloped roofs</li> <li>- Hide 2<sup>nd</sup> floor behind roof / use dormers</li> <li>- Large eave overhangs</li> <li>- Flat roof behind detailed parapet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mansard roofs</li> <li>- Clipped eaves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flat roofs</li> <li>- Varying roof pitches</li> <li>- Tall wall on one side of gable</li> <li>- Visibly thin parapets</li> <li>- Prominent generic arch or gable parapets</li> </ul>
<b>Facade Elements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Base &amp; cornice expression</li> <li>- Detailed balconies</li> <li>- Simple canopy shapes</li> <li>- Recessed windows with dimensional muntins</li> <li>- Custom ornamentation</li> <li>- Narrow, detailed moldings</li> <li>- Delicate, detailed posts</li> <li>- Simple garage doors</li> <li>- Detail at side and rear, not only front</li> <li>- Recessed windows &amp; doors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Irregular canopy shape</li> <li>- Layered screening panels</li> <li>- Tinted glass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flush windows / false muntins</li> <li>- Oversized, novelty, or generic ornament</li> <li>- Flat fascia boards</li> <li>- Flat plant-on window surrounds</li> <li>- Plastic garage door window inserts</li> <li>- Permanent or exterior security grate/bars</li> </ul>
<b>Materials &amp; Colors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wood, stone, etc. if fitting context &amp; style</li> <li>- Brick</li> <li>- Smooth stucco</li> <li>- Mission or barrel tile</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other subtle stucco textures</li> <li>- Ledge stone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Color Saturation + Brightness over limit (see Community Development Dept.)</li> <li>- Modular units (tiles, blocks, etc.) too large for building scale</li> <li>- Metal</li> <li>- S-tile</li> </ul>
<b>Style:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authentic period styles as compatible with context</li> <li>- Modern with depth of planes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eclectic</li> <li>- Generic classicism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mimicry of mission bells, etc.</li> <li>- Novelty/ deconstructivist</li> </ul>

## D E F I N I T I O N S :

**Alcove:** a small area cut out of a larger mass, such as an entry porch

**Asymmetry:** different on one side than on the other

**Brightness:** a numerical index of the amount of white in a color

**Cantilever:** a portion of a building extending out beyond its supporting wall or column

**Clipped eaves:** eaves that have a minimal projection over the wall below

**Context:** the character-defining surroundings of a site

**Craftsman:** an early 1900s style popular in California, using broad eaves, shingles, rustic brick foundations, generous porches, and fine wood detailing

**Dimensional:** having enough depth and width to appear substantial

**Dormer:** a structure with walls extending up from a roof, housing one or more windows

**Eave:** the extension of a roof beyond an exterior wall, with no enclosed area underneath it

**Eclectic:** of mixed styles

**Elevation:** a two-dimensional view of the front, side, or rear of a building or wall

**Fascia:** the board enclosing the edge of an eave

**Gable:** a wall beneath the exposed end of one or more sloping roofs

**Guidelines:** regulations that can be required flexibly as appropriate to each project or situation

**Hardscape:** pavement and other ground treatments other than plant materials

**Integrity:** having enough consistency to be perceived as an “integral” unit

**Layering:** having different elements in different planes, forming layers, rather than a simple wall.

**Linkage:** a path of travel or visual path that links two or more different areas

**Mansonization:** building a house too big for its lot, or too ornate or formal in its appearance

**Mission or barrel tile:** a half-circular roof tile that is used alternately face-up and face-down

**Monumentality:** the appearance of trying to appear too important or imposing for its context

**Muntins:** narrow strips that form a division between window panes

**Nested Gables:** one gable placed beneath another, usually off-center

**Overdesigned:** too ornate for its size or surroundings

**Pilaster:** a column (structural or decorative) placed against a wall

**Pitch:** the slope of a roof, expressed in inches of rise against 12 inches run (as in 4:12)

**Porte-Cochere:** a roofed structure, open on the sides, extending over a driveway and attached to the house

**Project:** any physical work upon a property requiring City approval

**S-tile:** a roof tile attempting to simulate the effect of mission or barrel tile with multiple curves

**Saturation:** a numerical index of the intensity of a color

**Scale:** size relative to other portions of a building, landscape, or surroundings, or to viewers

**Shed Roof:** a simple roof of a single slope

**Site amenities:** benches, fountains, garden structures, and other items added to an open space to enhance its use and enjoyment

**Substantial:** having enough visual depth to appear visually and structurally sound

**Symmetry:** the same on both sides

**Underdesigned:** too simple to offer any interest to the viewer

**Vine pocket:** a small area allowing the planting of a vine; often attached to a wall

## R E F E R E N C E S :

*(available from the Community Development Department)*

- Development Regulations
- Development Review Application Checklist
- Historic Residence Guidelines





# Appendix

## Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines

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1. Accessory Dwelling Unit Guidelines	A-3
2. Historic Resources & Guidelines	A-4
3. Architectural Styles	A-6
4. Development Review Process	A-8
5. Acknowledgments	A-11





*The City's Zoning Code allows accessory dwelling units – both attached and detached – on many residential lots. These developments are encouraged, within the limits of the Zoning Code, and according to the principles and guidelines for single-family residences.*

*Accessory dwelling units raise design issues in addition to those already laid out in the single-family residential guidelines.*

**Accessory dwelling units should be designed to be similar or compatible in character in order to harmonize with, and be subordinate to, the primary residence on the site.**

In order to harmonize with the primary house, the accessory dwelling unit should follow these design strategies:

- Use the style and materials of the primary house, creating balance and harmony.
- Designate sufficient area for landscape and open space.
- Keep the roof design similar to the primary house, including roof pitch and eaves.
- Allow for eave overhangs and porches, helping the accessory dwelling unit seem like a home despite its size.
- Select exterior colors that are similar or compatible to the primary house.
- Provide maximum separation between the accessory dwelling unit and the main house and neighbors to allow for privacy.
- On second floor units, provide some upper floor setback from the ground floor, and a band or base, to make the height seem gentler.
- Allocate the necessary amount of parking by creating an even flow of design, maintaining setbacks for vehicular mobility.



*The preservation of historical resources maintains the rich aesthetic elements of the City of San Fernando. The recognition, preservation, protection, and use of historical resources in the city in a manner consistent with the objectives of the Historical Preservation Element of the General Plan are necessary to:*

- Protect and enhance the historic resources that represent distinctive and important elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, archeological and architectural history...
- Foster civic pride in the beauty and notable accomplishments of the past by promoting private stewardship of historic resources that represent these accomplishments...
- Encourage and promote preservation and rehabilitation of historic resources for the culture, education, enjoyment and economic welfare of the city's inhabitants...
- Insure that historic preservation planning is inclusive and reflective of the unique background and diversity of the city...
- Integrate historic preservation into community economic development strategies for the sustainable development and to promote adaptive reuse of historical structures...
- Preserve neighborhood character...



### *Criteria for designation of historic resources*

**Historic Resource-** A property or location may be considered for designation as an historic resource if it meets at least one of the following criteria...

- It is associated with events or lives of persons that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the city, region, state or nation...
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a historic property type, period, architectural style or method of construction, or represents the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is significant to the city, region, state or nation...
- It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in the history of the city, region, state, or nation...





**Historic Resource (interior) – Public or semi-public spaces and features for an interior to a building may be designated as a historic resource if it meets all of the following criteria:**

- Historically, the space has been open to the public
- The materials, finishes or detailing are intact or later alterations are reversible
- The plan, layout and features of the space are illustrative of its historic function
- Its form and features articulate a particular concept of design
- There is evidence of distinctive craftsmanship



**Historic District- An area of the city including more than one property may be considered for designation as a historic district if it meets the following criteria:**

- Any of the criteria identified in the Historic Resource and Historic Resource (interior)
- A grouping of related properties possessing a concentration of historic, scenic or thematic sites that aesthetically contribute to each other and possess distinct architectural quality.
- Reflects patterns associated with different eras of settlement, particular transportation modes, or distinctive example of community planning.
- Is an established and familiar visual feature of the city, possessing a unique location and distinctive physical characteristics.



*The design guidelines below do not prescribe specific styles for new buildings. Rather, these guidelines are set up to allow for a range of architectural styles and types, so as to encourage creativity in design. The Guidelines set up a framework for quality design by establishing a framework for good urban design relationships between buildings and an assured level of quality in construction.*

#### **Elements of Mission architecture:**

- Plain, smooth stucco siding
- Large square pillars and twisted columns
- Timberwork, wood framing and balustrades
- Bell or corner towers
- Sloping, low-pitched or hipped roofs or flat roofs with parapets.
- Red roof tiles, wood shingles or clay tiles.



#### **Elements of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture:**

- Stucco, brick, wood, or combinations of these materials.
- Little or no overhanging eaves
- Deeply inset windows within thick stucco walls
- Arches, especially above doors, porch entries and main windows
- Decorative ironwork, particularly at balconies, porches and on roof forms.
- Courtyards, porches, pergolas and other shaded or sheltered outdoor areas
- Red tile roofs



#### **Elements of the Victorian (Queen Anne and Eastlake) styles:**

- Asymmetrical facades
- Elaborate spindlework ornamentation
- Corner or curved towers
- Extensive, wrap around porches on the first floor
- Surfaces with a variety of patterning, i.e. clapboard or patterned shingles
- Protruding bay windows
- Steeply pitched roofs



#### **Elements of the Craftsman style:**

- Full- or partial-width porches
- Pedestal-like, tapered columns
- Overhanging eaves and exposed roof rafters
- Low-pitched gabled roof
- River rock exterior elements
- Horizontal wooden clapboard siding
- Smooth stucco or concrete



#### **Elements of the California Bungalow house:**

- An offset entryway
- A projecting bay on the façade
- Large front porch with square columns
- One or one and a half stories
- Low-pitched roof
- River rock exterior elements
- Horizontal wooden clapboard siding
- Smooth stucco or concrete building exterior



*Residential influences in San Fernando are eclectic, ranging from Spanish-inspired styles to east coast influences. New residential buildings should build upon these roots, and draw from the broad menu of residential styles the city has to offer. These include Mission, Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Monterey Mediterranean styles; as well as Southern California variations on the Craftsman, bungalow and various Victorian styles.*

#### **Elements of Mediterranean architecture:**

- Asymmetrical shape with cross-gables and side wings
- Carved doors
- Ornate detailing including molded decoration, carved wood and stonework, or cast ornament
- Spiral columns and pilasters
- Carved stonework or cast ornaments
- Patterned tile floors and wall surfaces
- Flat roof and parapets, or a hipped roof



#### **Elements of the Streamline Moderne style:**

- Horizontal building orientation
- Technological and nautical themes / references
- Smooth, rounded building corners
- White or light in color
- Long bands of windows
- Rounded edges, corner windows, and glass block walls



#### **Elements of the Monterey style:**

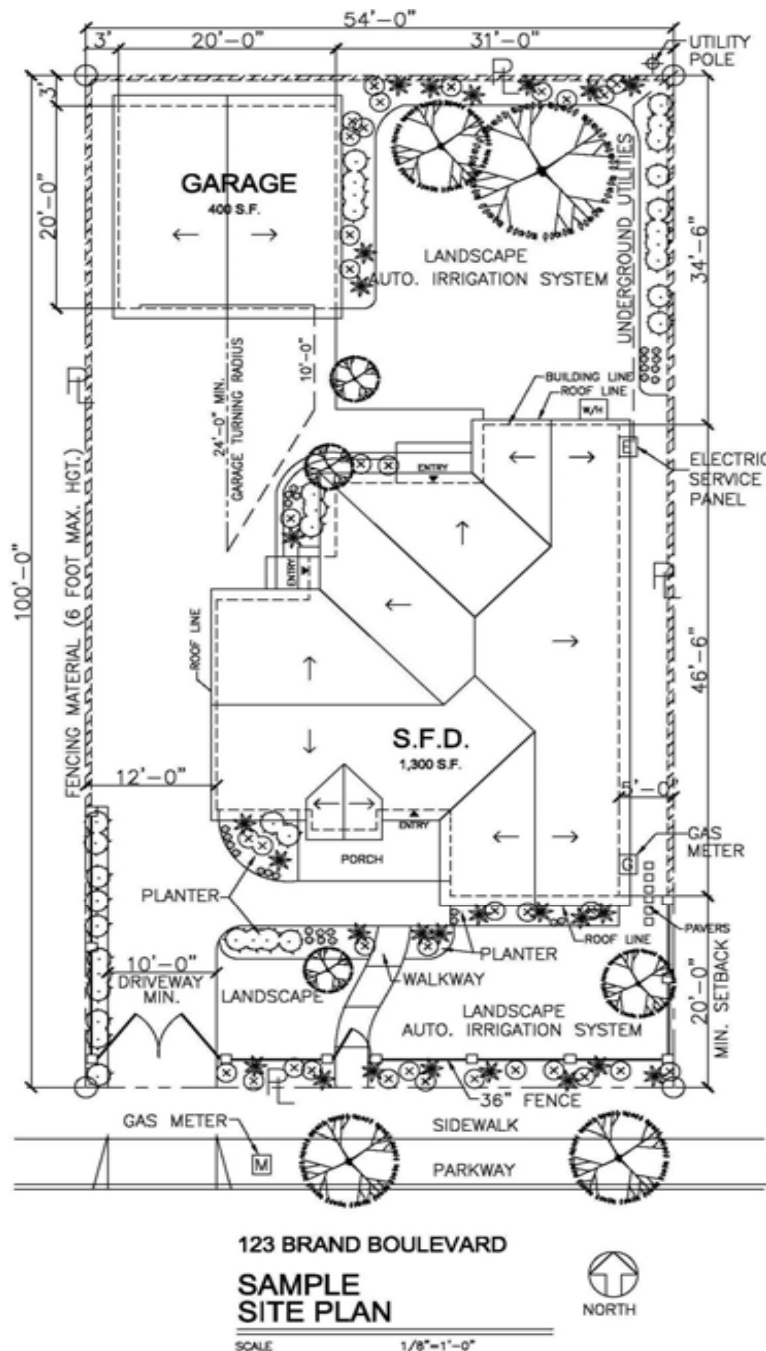
- Paneled doors with sidelights
- Double-hung windows with mullions
- Ornate wood spindlework
- Projecting continuous balconies or porches on upper-stories
- Wooden verandas
- Low pitched, hipped or gabled roofs, often covered with shingles



#### **Elements of the Art Deco style**

- Angular form, often with stepped back façade
- Symmetrical or asymmetrical massing
- Strong vertical accents
- Use of glass or tile on wall surfaces
- Bands of design and carving
- Ornament in cubic forms and zigzag designs, often in colorful terra cotta





The development procedure enables the various city departments and divisions to check development proposals for conformity in the manner in which they are applied. The review process is intended to ensure that each development proposal is designed to be compatible with any existing structures and neighboring properties. The application of this method preserves the quality and economic health of the city's residential, commercial, and industrial districts.

#### Pre-Submittal/ Informal Review

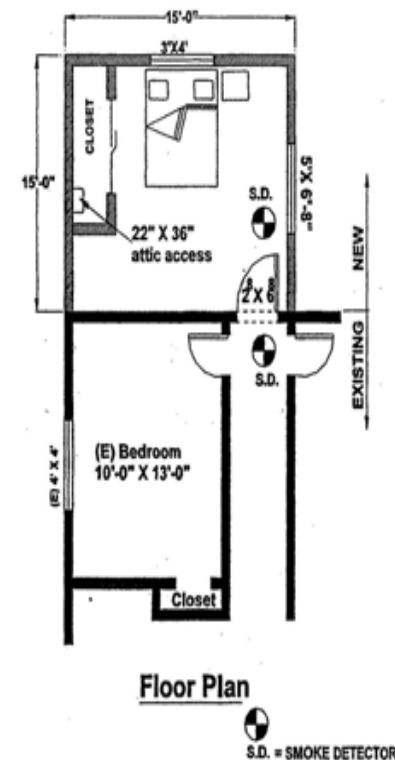
- Applicants are encouraged to actively discuss any project proposal with the Community Development Department to receive determinations on achieving project approval.

#### Site Plan Review Process

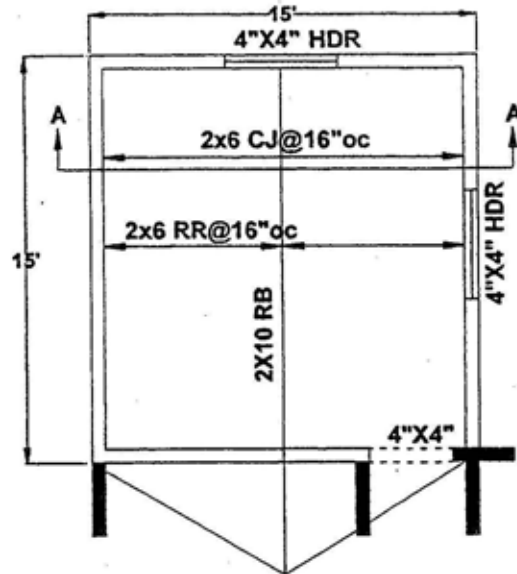
- Applicants are required to submit **eight (8)** sets of *site plans, floor plans, conceptual landscape plans, roof plans, and elevation drawings* to the Community Development Department, including a completed Site Plan Review Application and required filing fees.

#### Final Review Process

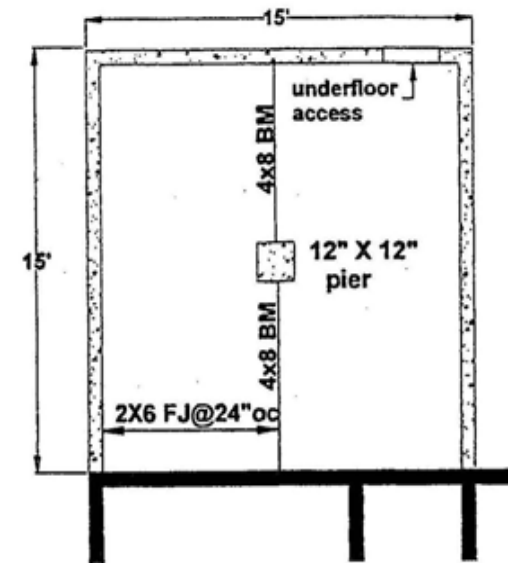
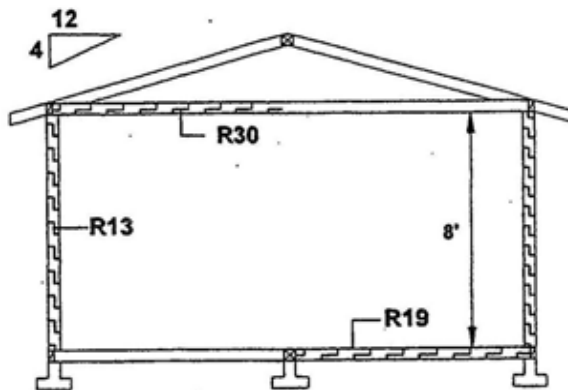
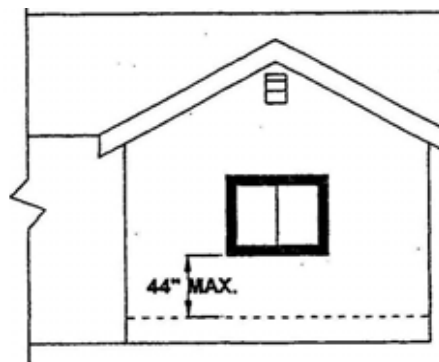
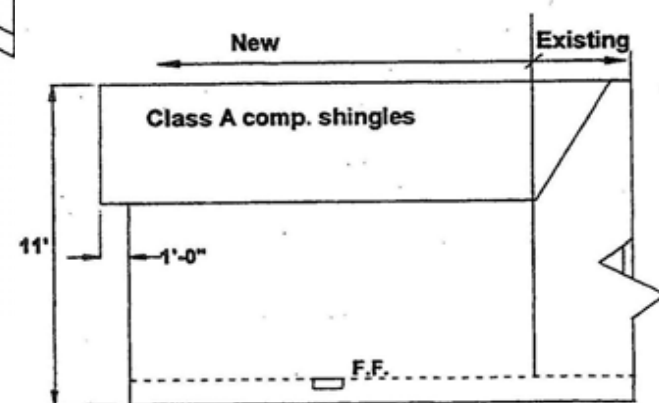
- If a project requires approval from the Planning Commission or Redevelopment Agency, then applicants are required to submit **fifteen (15)** sets of all necessary plans to the Community Development Department, along with Site Plan review application and filing fees.





**Roof Framing****Plan Checking and Permit Issuance**

- Applicants are required to submit **two (2)** sets of complete construction plans and documentation to the Building & Safety Division, including plan check fees.
- Permits are issued after all requirements are satisfied for all divisions and departments involved in the process.
- Permit fees are determined by the type of construction and cost per square foot. Additionally, any Public Works or Los Angeles Unified School District Building Fees must be paid for at this time.

**Foundation/Floor Framing Plan****Section A-A****NORTH Elev.****WEST Elev.**







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# Acknowledgments

November, 2008

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