



SINGLE FAMILY DESIGN BOARD GUIDELINES



Prepared By
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

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Introduction

A. Purpose of the SFDB Guidelines

1. What the Guidelines Do

The Single Family Design Board Guidelines support high-quality design for single-unit residential development in the City of Santa Barbara. They outline the SFDB's goals and policies and serve as a reference for applicants, design professionals, City staff, and the public, throughout the design review process.

2. Advisory Nature of the Guidelines

These Guidelines are advisory rather than legally binding. A project may be denied if it does not meet them; however, noncompliance does not invalidate SFDB decisions or create legal claims against the City or its representatives.

3. Minor Edits Authorized by Resolution

Under City Council Resolution No. 07-032, the Community Development Director may make minor or clarifying edits—such as correcting formatting, updating references, or clarifying language—in consultation with the City Attorney. These edits do not require City Council approval.

4. Relationship to State Law and the Municipal Code

These Guidelines must follow State law and the Santa Barbara Municipal Code. If there is a conflict, State law or the Municipal Code will take priority.

B. SFDB Purpose

Single-family homes are an important part of Santa Barbara's neighborhood character. The Single Family Design Board (SFDB) is responsible for ensuring that new and remodeled homes reflect high-quality design, fit the surrounding neighborhood, protect the City's visual resources, support long-term sustainability, and contribute to a desirable living environment.

C. SFDB Background

1. Establishment of the Board

The SFDB was established by ordinance on June 8, 2007, following the update to the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO) and Single Family Residence Design Guidelines, which began in 2004. The Board reviews single-unit residential projects to ensure they are compatible with neighborhood character and meet the City's design standards.

2. Membership

The SFDB consists of five members:

- At least one licensed architect.
- Up to three members of the public at large who do not possess professional qualifications in fields related to architecture.

- The remaining members must have professional qualifications in architecture or landscape architecture or related fields, such as building design, structural engineering, industrial design, urban planning, or landscape contracting.

D. SFDB Goals

The SFDB follows a set of general goals that guide its review process:

- Ensure development is compatible with the site and the surrounding neighborhood
- Enhance neighborhood character through quality and diversity in architectural styles
- Promote high standards in architectural and landscape design
- Ensure new development does not significantly impact adjacent historic resources
- Protect Santa Barbara's natural and built visual resources
- Preserve public scenic views of the ocean and mountains

1. Approach to Design Review

The SFDB reviews projects to ensure they are compatible in size and design with surrounding neighborhoods. In Santa Barbara—where topography, architectural variety, and zoning regulations vary widely—compatibility doesn't mean uniformity. A home may differ in size or style and still be appropriate if it respects neighborhood patterns and character.

2. Design Evaluation Factors

The Board evaluates each project holistically, considering massing, scale, materials, site planning, and architectural consistency. While no specific architectural style is required, proposed designs must be high-quality and well-executed examples of their chosen styles. Common styles include Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, Victorian, Cottage, and Contemporary.

3. Related Design Goals

For more information on the SFDB's goals related to infill development, hillside neighborhoods, neighborhood compatibility, and sustainability, see the "Introduction" section of the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines.

E. Relationship to Other Documents

1. General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan

- The Santa Barbara General Plan provides policies related to visual quality, neighborhood compatibility, and protection of historic resources. It describes the character of individual neighborhoods and supports sustainable community design.
- The Coastal Land Use Plan governs land use within the Coastal Zone including policies on coastal access, coastal resource protection, scenic resources, and public scenic views. The Zoning Ordinance and SFDB Guidelines help implement the goals of both plans.

2. Municipal Code

The Santa Barbara Municipal Code (SBMC) establishes mandatory development standards. These Guidelines are intended to supplement the Municipal Code by offering additional detail and design direction.

For the SFDB ordinance, refer to SBMC Chapter 30.220 (Design Review) which includes:

- Projects requiring SFDB review
- Required findings for approval
- Projects requiring a mailed notice

Procedures for processing planning applications, including noticing requirements, can be found in SBMC Chapter 30.205 (Common Procedures).

3. Relationship to the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines

While the SFDB Guidelines address Board operations and procedures, the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines (SFRDG) provide and the primary design criteria for single-unit residential development citywide. They are advisory rather than mandatory but should inform the SFDB's findings when approving or denying projects. These guidelines include illustrative examples and cover topics such as architectural style, massing, and site planning. They also provide guidance on projects located in the Hillside Design District.

Some design topics—such as historic building information and landscape design—are addressed in the SFDB Guidelines but not in the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines.

Applicants are encouraged to consult the Neighborhood Compatibility Guidelines (starting on page 15-C of the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines) and consider the Neighborhood Compatibility Findings in SBMC §30.220.040.E.

F. Relationship to Other Guidelines

Several other City-adopted guidelines provide additional direction on architectural appearance, site design, and landscape. The SFDB Guidelines are generally consistent with those documents but may offer more detail on certain topics. If a conflict arises, the guidelines specific to the area or subject matter take precedence.

- **Fence, Screen, Wall, and Hedge Guidelines:** Explains Coastal Zone standards for exceptions to height standards for fences, screens, walls and hedges.
- **Historic Resource Design Guidelines:** Provides guidance on new construction, specifically location and site design and massing adjacent to historic resources to avoid negative impacts.
- **Lower Riviera Special Design District Guidelines:** Ensures compatibility with the existing pattern of pedestrian-friendly bungalow character of the district.
- **Outdoor Lighting & Streetlight Design Guidelines:** Includes outdoor lighting standards to minimize glare and light trespass.
- **Upper State Street Area Design Guidelines:** Describes the different Upper State Street area neighborhoods and assists the public in designing projects to be compatible with those neighborhoods.
- **Urban Design Guidelines:** Promotes traditional design principles and pedestrian-friendly development in the urban grid.



1

General Information



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General Information

1.1 SFDB Jurisdiction

Projects on a lot with one single-family residential unit or related accessory structures in any zone are subject to SFDB review under SBMC §30.220.040.

Projects involving designated and potentially historic homes and homes in Historic District Overlay Zones that would otherwise be subject to review by the SFDB are instead referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission under SBMC §30.220.020.

The SFDB's purview includes building and site design:

- Building design includes building size, bulk, height, massing, scale, architectural style, and exterior finish materials.
- Site design includes the placement of buildings on a lot, public views, vehicle access and circulation, pedestrian circulation, parking placement and design, landscaping, and other similar issues, including any topic in these guidelines and other applicable design guidelines.

1.2 Levels of SFDB Review

The SFDB uses different levels of review based on the scale, complexity, and potential neighborhood impact of a project. This tiered approach allows more detailed consideration of larger projects, while smaller or low-impact projects may be reviewed through streamlined procedures.

1.2.1 Full Board Review

Full Board is the standard level of SFDB review and is conducted by a quorum of at least three, and up to five, Board members.

a. Projects subject to Full Board review

- Subdivision grading plans subject to Planning Commission or Public Works review.
- New single-unit residences.
- Upper-story additions over 500 square feet or additions that create a new second or higher story.
- Projects exceeding the maximum allowable floor area ratio (FAR) in the Municipal Code.
- Significant site work, including more than 100 cubic yards of grading or grading on slopes over 20%.

b. Referrals

The Full Board may refer projects to Consent Review or Administrative Design Review when the project is minor, when the Board has provided clear direction and only follow-up adjustments remain, or when the project is unlikely to result in significant visual or neighborhood impacts.

1.2.2 Consent Review

Consent Review is used for minor projects that do not qualify for Administrative Approval but are unlikely to result in significant visual or neighborhood impacts. One SFDB member, assisted by Staff, conducts the review. All decisions are subject to ratification by the Full Board.

a. Projects eligible for Consent Review

- First story-additions up to 1,200 sq ft.
- Additions to existing second stories up to 500 square feet. New second story is Full Board.
- Additions to existing first or second stories larger than 250 square feet that result in over

85% required FAR.

- Site work involving up to 100 cubic yards of grading and not on slopes over 20%;
- Requests for minor design or development standard waivers, Minor Zoning Exceptions, or similar allowance, when a Design Review body is the Review Authority.

b. Referrals to Full Board

Items may be referred to the Full Board when the project involves design questions beyond the scope of Consent Review, where neighbor concerns warrant broader consideration, or when Board direction is needed to resolve outstanding issues.

c. Referrals to the Director

Items may be referred to the Director for Administrative Design Review when the outstanding issues are limited in scope and can be addressed through a ministerial approval.

1.2.3 Administrative Design Review

Some minor projects may be approved ministerially by the Community Development Director without an SFDB hearing.

a. Projects eligible for Administrative Review

Projects eligible for Administrative Staff review are listed in Section 6 of these Guidelines.

b. Referrals to the Board

The Director may refer any project to the Consent Calendar or the Full Board if:

- It may adversely affect the architectural integrity of the building or nearby properties, or
- It does not appear consistent with the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines.

1.3 Stages of Design Review

Santa Barbara's design review process is organized into stages that follow the natural progression of a project allowing early feedback, coordination with land-use decisions, and verification of design consistency from initial concepts through final details.

1.3.1 Pre-Application Design Consultation (One-Time, Optional)

a. Purpose

The One-Time Pre-Application Design Consultation provides early, informal, and non-binding feedback prior to submitting a full Planning Application. It is intended for very preliminary concepts, in contrast to the more developed plans typically submitted for Concept Review.

b. When it Occurs

This consultation may be scheduled on the next available agenda and occurs before a full Planning Application is filed. Only one hearing will be scheduled per pre-application submittal.

c. Who Reviews

The SFDB conducts the consultation at a public meeting.

d. Scope of Review

The SFDB provides general comments on site planning, building placement, massing, scale, and architectural character. The Board may identify potential neighborhood compatibility issues such as privacy, views, or streetscape presence.

e. Submittal Requirements and Procedures

Applicants must submit a separate pre-application prior to filing a full Planning Application. Sketches or conceptual plans are encouraged. Applications are processed under SBMC §30.205.030 (Pre-Application Review). Plans submitted for a Pre-Application Design Consultation are not reviewed for completeness or compliance with the Municipal Code.

f. Noticing and Appeals

Projects subject to a mailed notice will require a mailed notice for the Pre-Application Design Consultation. Pre-Application Design Review is not a discretionary action. No formal action is taken, and the review is not appealable.

1.3.2 Concept Design Review (Optional)

a. Purpose

Concept Design Review provides applicants and the community an early opportunity to assess a project's overall design approach before significant resources are invested in detailed plans. The goal is to identify potential issues, provide early guidance, and reduce the likelihood of costly redesigns later in the process.

b. When it Occurs

Concept Review is an optional review stage available after a full Planning Application is submitted but before the application is reviewed for completeness or consistency with the Municipal Code.

c. Who Reviews

The SFDB conducts Concept Design Review at a public meeting.

d. Recommended Project Types

Concept Review is encouraged for:

- New single-unit residences.
- Additions over 800 sq. ft. or over 50% of the existing structure.
- Projects involving height or massing changes, such as second-story additions.
- Projects with potential impacts on privacy, views, or neighborhood character including projects in the Hillside Design District and along Shoreline Drive.
- Projects requiring discretionary land use approvals by the Staff Hearing Officer, Planning Commission, or City Council.

e. Scope of Review

The SFDB considers site layout, building orientation, architectural style, compatibility with surrounding development, and consistency with the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines. Concept Review may occur more than once, but applicants are encouraged to incorporate feedback to avoid more than two hearings.

f. Submittal Requirements and Procedures

Applicants request Concept Review by submitting a Planning Application and indicating that Concept Review is desired. Applications are processed under SBMC §30.205.040 (Concept Review). Projects with major unresolved zoning or policy issues will not be scheduled until those issues are addressed.

g. Noticing and Appeals

Projects subject to a mailed notice will require a mailed notice at Concept Review. No formal action is taken, and the review is not appealable.

h. Forwarding of Comments

If a project requires discretionary land use approval, SFDB's Concept Review comments are included in the minutes forwarded to the appropriate decision-making body.

1.3.3 Project Design Review (Discretionary Action)**a. Purpose**

Project Design Review is the formal stage of the Design Review process. The SFDB evaluates design compatibility, massing, proportion, siting, and consistency with applicable design guidelines. Approval at this stage is referred to as Project Design Approval (PDA) and constitutes the City's discretionary Design Review decision under the State Permit Streamlining Act (Government Code §65950 et seq.).

b. When it Occurs

Project Design Review occurs after the application is deemed complete, development-standard compliance is verified, and environmental review is finished. Projects requiring discretionary land use approvals may only be scheduled after the land use decision has been made, and plans must reflect all conditions of approval.

c. Who Reviews

The SFDB conducts Project Design Review and issues the discretionary design approval. City staff provide technical and statutory review, verify environmental compliance, and confirm conformance with the Municipal Code.

d. Level of Plan Detail Required

Plans submitted for Project Design Review must include enough detail for the SFDB to evaluate design quality and guideline consistency. Required components include:

- Site plan and building orientation
- Architectural elevations and materials
- Landscape plans
- Exterior lighting

- Window and door specifications
- Roofing and finish materials
- Exterior details, materials, and finishes
- Exterior mechanical equipment
- Screening elements

Construction-level drawings are not required unless SFDB specifically requests them for design or aesthetic clarity in the design review process.

e. Submittal Requirements and Procedures

Applicants request Project Design Review through their Planning Application. If Concept Review occurred, the same application may be used to request Project Design Review after receiving SFDB Concept Review comments. Applications are processed under SBMC §30.205.050 (Review of Discretionary Applications).

e. Noticing and Appeals

Mailed noticing is required as specified in the Municipal Code. A Project Design Review decision is a discretionary action and is appealable to the Planning Commission.

f. Next Steps After Approval

Following Project Design Approval, applicants may submit for a building permit.

1.3.4 Final Design Review**a. Purpose**

Final Design Review confirms that construction drawings are in substantial conformance with the plans granted Project Design Approval. Approval at this stage is referred to as Final Approval. This review ensures all conditions of approval and detailed design elements are fully incorporated before issuance of a building permit.

b. When it Occurs

Final Design Review typically occurs during building permit plan check, after Project Design Approval has been granted.

c. Who Reviews

The Director reviews the building permit drawings for substantial conformance. The Director may refer an application to the SFDB for a decision when Board input is needed to verify conformance or resolve design-related questions. If changes are not clearly identified on the plans, they are not considered approved.

d. Scope of Review

During the building permit application review, the Director (or SFDB upon referral) verifies:

- Substantial conformance with Project Design Approval.
- Inclusion of all conditions of approval (if applicable).
- Completeness of final details such as colors, materials, door hardware, and exterior lighting fixtures.

e. Submittal Requirements and Procedures

For Final Approval, applicants must include the following information on their building permit construction drawings, in addition to what was submitted for Project Design Approval:

- All architectural and site details
- Color and material samples
- Exterior door hardware
- Fenestration (final window and door specifications)
- Exterior light fixtures (final cut sheet/locations)
- Final site grading
- Final landscape and irrigation plans
- All Conditions of Approval listed directly on the plans

f. Noticing and Appeals

No mailed noticing is required. Decisions made by the Director are final and not appealable. Items referred by the Director to the SFDB for a decision may be appealed by the applicant to the Planning Commission.

1.3.5 Review After Final**a. Purpose**

Review After Final (RAF) evaluates proposed changes to a project after Final Approval to ensure that any changes remain consistent with the approved design intent and are clearly documented.

b. Who Reviews

The Director reviews Review After Final applications when the revisions maintain substantial conformance with the approved project and fall within the originally approved scope of work. Minor changes may be approved administratively. Revisions that expand the project scope, introduce new design elements, or raise design concerns may be referred to the SFDB for a decision or may require the applicant to submit a new application.

c. Scope of Review

Review is limited to the proposed changes. The Director (or SFDB on referral) determines whether the revisions are in substantial conformance with the approved project. Any change not shown clearly and explicitly on the submitted drawings is not considered approved.

d. Submittal Requirements

Applicants must submit revised plans clearly identifying all proposed changes and showing sufficient detail to explain how the changes affect the approved design. A Review After Final Approval submittal is subject to additional fees.

e. Procedures

Minor changes that meet the criteria for substantial conformance are processed and approved administratively by the Director are processed under Chapter 30.205.155 (Review of Administrative Applications). Applicants must submit revised drawings clearly identifying all proposed changes, along with any supporting documentation needed to evaluate the revisions. Additional fees may apply.

f. Noticing and Appeals

No mailed noticing is required. Decisions made by the Director are final and not appealable. Items referred by the Director to the SFDB for a decision may be appealed by the applicant to the Planning Commission.

1.3.6 Changes to Approved Plans**a. Purpose**

This section explains how the Community Development Director evaluates proposed changes to an approved project and determines whether those changes remain in substantial conformance with the approved plans. It also describes when changes may be approved administratively and when referral to the SFDB or a new application is required.

b. Broad Considerations

When determining whether a change to an approved project is in substantial conformance with the approved plans, the Community Development Director considers broad issues such as:

- Whether the original project was controversial.
- Whether the proposed changes are outside the scope of the original approval and effectively constitute a new project.
- Whether the changes would noticeably alter the public's perception of the project.

These considerations guide whether the proposed revisions are appropriate for administrative approval or require review by the SFDB.

c. Minor Changes

Minor changes are revisions that meet all substantial conformance criteria and remain within the originally approved scope of work.

- Minor changes may be approved administratively by the Director.
- The Director may refer any change to the SFDB when Board input is needed to clarify design intent or resolve potential design issues.

d. Major Changes

Major changes are revisions that do not meet the substantial conformance criteria.

- Major changes must be reviewed by the SFDB for a revised Project Design Approval, consistent with SBMC §30.205.130 (Changes to Approved Plans).
- Major changes require filing a new application when the revision introduces new project elements or expands the project beyond the original approval.

1.3.7 Determining Substantial Conformance

In addition to these broad considerations, all of the following criteria must be met to determine substantial conformance.

a. Conditions of Approval

The change must not conflict with findings or conditions of approval made by the SFDB or, if applicable, by the Planning Commission on appeal.

b. Height

- For residences under 25 feet in height, the change must not increase the overall height by more than one foot (12 inches) above the approved height, and the total height must remain below 25 feet.
- For residences over 25 feet in height, the change must not increase the height by more than 4 inches above the approved height.
- Projects may not qualify for substantial conformance if they increase the approved height in cases where height was a concern raised during the original SFDB or Planning Commission decision.
- In all cases, building height must comply with the maximum height allowed by the zoning ordinance.

c. Floor Area

The change must not increase the approved net floor area by more than 50 square feet.

d. Grading

Outside the building footprint, the change must not increase grading quantities by more than 25 cubic yards.

e. Environmental Studies

Changes must not occur within a biologically sensitive area, unless a qualified technical study demonstrates that no adverse environmental impact will occur. Changes must not create environmental effects not previously analyzed or require new mitigation measures.

f. Trees

Any proposed tree removal must comply with the Administrative Approval Standards for tree removals in Section 6.3.20 (Tree Removals) of these Guidelines.

g. Privacy

Changes must not add new or enlarged window or door openings within interior setbacks. Any new or expanded decks or patios must be located outside the interior setbacks.

1.4 Scope of Project Review

The SFDB has the authority to approve, conditionally approve, or deny projects within its jurisdiction. The following subsections describe how the SFDB determines the scope of its review:

1.4.1 Standard Review – Full Project Scope

When a single-unit residential project requires Design Review under the Municipal Code, the SFDB must review the entire scope of exterior work shown on the plans—not only the component that triggered the review. For example, if a second-story addition triggers Design Review and the plans also include site work, both the addition and the site work fall under SFDB’s purview.

1.4.2 Focused Review – Fences, Walls, and Gates

If the only element that requires Design Review is a fence, wall, or gate, the SFDB’s review is limited to that element only. Other exterior work on the site that would not otherwise require Design Review is not included in SFDB’s purview in a focused review.

1.4.3 Review of Unpermitted (“As-Built”) Construction

The SFDB must review unpermitted (“as-built”) work with the same degree of scrutiny applied to proposed new work. The following criteria apply:

- As-built work must comply with all adopted design guidelines or be modified to comply.
- As-built work may be denied if the SFDB finds the work unacceptable.
- The SFDB must evaluate the materials, craftsmanship, and architectural quality of as-built work when determining whether it is acceptable as constructed.

1.4.4 Manufactured Homes – Limited Review Authority

Under Government Code §65852.3, the SFDB’s Design Review authority for manufactured homes certified under the National Manufactured Housing Construction and Safety Standards Act of 1974 is limited. When SFDB review is required, the Board may evaluate only:

- Roof overhang
- Roofing material
- Siding material

Manufactured homes must meet the same zoning standards that apply to a conventional single-family residence on the same lot.

1.4.5 Reviewing Zoning Modifications

Requests for Zoning Modifications are decided by the Staff Hearing Officer or the Planning Commission, as specified in the Municipal Code. When a project requires both a Zoning Modification and SFDB review, the Board typically provides comments during Concept Review before the Modification request is heard.

The SFDB’s role is limited to commenting on the aesthetic and neighborhood compatibility aspects of the requested Modification. This includes whether the request is consistent with existing neighborhood development patterns, whether it maintains adequate light, air, and usable open space for each residence, or whether it aligns with the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines.

The SFDB does not take a position for or against the Modification itself, as that is a land use decision outside the SFDB’s purview.

Example of an appropriate comment:

“The proposed Modification is/is not aesthetically appropriate. The proposed Modification does/does not raise consistency issues with Single Family Residence Design Guidelines” (Include guideline reference when applicable).

1.4.6 Subdivision Grading Plan Considerations

Subdivision grading plans involving cut or fill on lots in single-family zones must be reviewed by the SFDB, as required by the Municipal Code. After any applicable Pre-Application Review Team (PRT) review, the SFDB evaluates:

a. Site Design

Consistency with Guidelines 1, 2, 3, of the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines (SFRDG), including: lot layout and suitability for future development, building pads and envelopes, hillside protection, road and sidewalk design, pedestrian access, driveways, visitor access, connectivity, and the preservation of public scenic views. The SFDB may require supplemental materials—such as view studies, grading sections, massing diagrams, tree surveys, or additional site photographs—when needed to complete its review of the subdivision design.

b. Grading

Consistency with grading findings and SFRDG Guidelines 30 and 31, focusing on grading quantities and the placement of cut and fill to avoid visible scarring.

c. Retaining Walls, Fencing, and Gates

Consistency with SFRDG Guideline 35 regarding height, length, materials, and placement. Lot layout should follow natural terrain to avoid excessive retaining walls or unusual fence alignments. Gates must be modest in scale and compatible with neighborhood character.

d. Site Landscaping

Conceptual landscape design must align with SFRDG Guideline 1. Review includes preservation of existing trees, required mitigation of any tree removals, and appropriate site screening.

e. Site Drainage

Consistency with SFRDG Guideline 4, focusing on maximizing permeability, effectiveness of drainage, related fencing, and compliance with the Storm Water Management Program.

f. Site Utilities

Placement of electrical equipment, transformers, gas meters, fire backflow prevention devices, and central mailbox locations (if applicable) are also evaluated for appropriate placement.

g. Parking Design

Consistency with SFRDG Guideline 5 on parking aesthetics.

h. Privacy

Adequacy of setbacks, distance between structures, and lot layout to protect privacy and align with the Good Neighbor Guidelines.

i. Solar Access

Consistency with SFRDG Guideline 3, ensuring homes are oriented to support passive and active solar energy use. The impact of existing trees on solar potential is also considered.

j. Items outside SFDB review authority

These matters fall under the Staff Hearing Officer or Planning Commission, not the SFDB:

- State Subdivision Map Act
- City’s General Plan and Municipal Code Title 27
- Allowable residential density and lot sizes
- Street design and traffic impacts
- Public Improvements
- View corridors

1.4.7 Historic Significance Evaluation

a. Overview

Evaluation and protection of archaeological or historic resources are governed by the City Charter and Municipal Code, and applicable state and federal laws. Before submitting a development application, applicants should check City records, historic surveys, and available archives to determine whether existing structures may be historically significant. Plans must identify any potentially historic features and show how the project preserves or incorporates them.

b. Procedures

The following procedures apply:

- Applicants should consult with the City’s Architectural Historian by submitting photos, basic site information, and a brief description of the proposed work so the historian can determine whether a structure over 50 years old is historically significant. If the historian determines that the structure is eligible for the Historic Resources Inventory, the project will be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) instead of the SFDB.
- If the structure itself is not historic but the project is adjacent to a historic structure or within a historic neighborhood, the SFDB must evaluate the proposal for consistency with Chapter 3.2 of the Historic Resource Design Guidelines, which apply to new construction near historic resources.



2 |

Meeting Procedures



2

Meeting Procedures

2.1 General Information and Procedures

2.1.1 Meeting Dates and Location

Full Board SFDB meetings are held every other Monday at 3:00 P.M. in the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room, 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara. Meetings are broadcast live on the local Government Access channel and on YouTube. Agenda items are scheduled as time-certain, and the final item is generally scheduled for no later than 6:00 P.M. Meeting times may shift due to postponement of items as described in Section 2.10.

- The SFDB Consent Calendar is reviewed at 11:00 A.M. every other Monday in the same location. Consent meetings are not televised.
- If a holiday falls on a Monday, meetings are typically held on the following Tuesday. Regular meetings may occasionally be canceled or special meetings scheduled.
- To request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, contact the Planning Division at (805) 564-5470 at least 48 hours before the meeting.

2.1.2 Notice and Posting

Agendas for the Full Board and Consent Calendar are posted for public review at 630 Garden Street and are available online.

2.2 Agenda Organization

Full Board agendas follow a general time-certain schedule. Items may not be heard more than 15 minutes before their scheduled time. The agenda typically includes:

1. Preliminary Matters:

- A. Announcements, requests for continuances or withdrawals, future or ex-agenda items, and appeals.
- B. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda. Due to time constraints, each person is limited to two minutes.
- C. Review of the minutes and Resolutions of the previous meeting
- D. Ratification of Consent Calendar Actions

2. Subject Items:

- A. Appeals Referred Back to SFDB from Planning Commission
- B. One-Time Pre-Application Consultation
- C. Concept Review (continued items first, followed by new items)
- D. Project Design Approval (continued items first, followed by new items)
- E. Revised Project Design Approval
- F. Items Referred from the Community Development Director
- G. Items Referred from Consent

3. Administrative Agenda:

- A. Standing and Ad Hoc Subcommittee Reports. (These reports are brief announcements and do not involve general SFDB discussion or actions. If members wish to discuss the substance of a subcommittee report, members must request that staff properly agendize the topic under "Discussion Items" at a future meeting of the SFDB.)

2.2.1 Timing and Attendance Expectations

Actual timing may vary based on the length of earlier items. Attendees are encouraged to arrive at least 15 minutes before the approximate time of their item. Applicants and applicant teams are required to be present in person. Applicants who arrive late—or who are not present at all—may have their item postponed unless the Board agrees to hear it and time permits. It is the applicant’s responsibility to request rescheduling if needed.

2.3 Public Notice

2.3.1 Consent and Full Board Items

Some projects require a mailed notice before SFDB review. The purpose is to give nearby owners and occupants an opportunity to comment on proposals that may affect them. When required, notice is mailed to the applicant, owners, and occupants within 300 feet of the site, and interested parties in the City database. A “Notice of Development” sign may also be required on the site.

If a project also requires a land use decision by the City Council, Planning Commission, or Staff Hearing Officer, the first SFDB hearing must follow the notice requirements for that decision-making body. See Municipal Code for noticing requirements.

2.3.2 When Revised Plans Require Re Notice

If revised plans differ from what was previously noticed in ways that may affect neighbors or decision-makers, the Community Development Director may require a new mailed notice. If the Director determines that changes to height, floor area, building footprint, grading quantities, or exterior massing exceed the limits allowed under the substantial-conformance criteria, the project must be re-noticed for a new hearing. Additional noticing fees may be required.

2.4 Project Presentation and Plan Substitution

2.4.1 Project Presentation by the Applicant

Applicants must present their project at both Consent and Full Board hearings. If no one is available to present on behalf of the applicant, the item must be continued to a future meeting date. This ensures that the Board can ask questions, receive clarifications, and evaluate the proposal accurately.

2.4.2 Plan Substitution and Supplemental Hearing Items

Plans submitted for a scheduled meeting must not be replaced at the hearing. Minor supplemental materials that do not require zoning review, such as changes in materials, new

renderings, additional photos, color boards, or similar presentation items, may be submitted up to one week before the hearing if accepted by the Community Development Director. This requirement ensures adequate staff review and provides the public with a fair opportunity to review the revised plans before the meeting.

2.5 Public Meeting and Public Comment

2.5.1 Procedure

Each regular meeting of the SFDB must include an opportunity for general public comment on items not on the agenda, as well as item-specific public comment before the Board begins questions or discussion. The Chair will announce the start of item-specific public comment prior to SFDB questions or discussion. The SFDB Secretary will call on speakers who have submitted a request to speak or who have indicated they wish to speak on the virtual meeting platform, if applicable. Speakers are limited to no more than two minutes. The Chair may reduce the time limit based on the number of speakers and the length of the agenda.

2.5.2 Public Comment Topics

a. Appropriate Public Comment

The City encourages neighbors to coordinate their comments or select a representative to speak on their behalf. Appropriate public comment topics include:

- Aesthetic issues
- Project design and size
- Neighborhood compatibility
- Compliance with the “Good Neighbor Guidelines”
- Public views

The SFDB will consider public comments related to these topics, as well as comments relevant to the Neighborhood Compatibility Findings, including grading, tree removal, and the project’s mass, bulk, and scale.

b. Comments outside the Board’s Purview

Comments outside the SFDB’s purview should not be discussed, including:

- Land use or zone designation
- Project affordability
- Private views
- Parking, traffic, or congestion impacts
- Residential density or number of bedrooms
- Construction-related impacts

2.6 Continuances, Postponements, and Referrals

2.6.1 Continuances

A continuance carries an item forward to a future meeting. To request a continuance, the applicant must attend the meeting and make a presentation. An item may be continued at the applicant's request or by action of the SFDB. Unless more information is needed to make a required finding, the Chair should offer the applicant the option of a continuance or a decision at the current meeting.

2.6.2 Postponements

A postponement defers an agenda item to a future meeting. A postponement must be indefinite and cannot be to a date certain. No discussion or presentation occurs on the date a postponement occurs.

Applicants requesting a postponement must contact SFDB staff as early as possible before the scheduled hearing and state the reason for the request. For timely agenda processing, requests must be made before 4:30 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the meeting.

Postponed items remain postponed indefinitely. It is the applicant's responsibility to contact staff to reschedule the item. Re-noticing and postponement fees apply. If an application has been postponed more than twice, the SFDB may deny the application without prejudice, meaning the Board will not carry forward any concerns or opinions if the project is resubmitted.

2.6.3 Referrals

All Consent Calendar actions are subject to ratification by the Full Board. Any SFDB member may request that an item on the Consent Calendar item be referred to the Full Board and must state the reason for the referral.

Referred items must be agendized and heard by the Full Board at a later date (not same day).

2.7 Decisions

2.7.1 Project Approvals

To grant Project Design Approval, the SFDB must make the applicable findings in the Municipal Code. If a project is approved administratively by staff in accordance with these SFDB Guidelines, findings are not required.

2.7.2 Project Denials

The SFDB may deny a project that is inconsistent with any applicable finding. The motion for denial must state the specific findings that cannot be made and the reasons those findings

are not met.

When state housing law (e.g., SB 330) limits the City's design review authority, the SFDB may deny a project only if it makes the written, evidence-based findings required under state law.

2.8 Appeals, Extensions, and Expirations

2.8.1 Time Limits and Extensions

Consistent with Chapter 30.205 (Common Procedures) the following time limits apply:

a. Concept Review

Concept Review comments are valid for one year from the hearing date, or at the Community Development Director's discretion.

b. Project Design Approval

A Project Design Approval is valid for three years from the approval date and will automatically expire unless the applicant pulls a building permit or receives a time extension before it expires.

c. Multiple Approvals

When a project requires multiple discretionary approvals, the overall expiration date is tied to the longest approval, except that design review approvals run from the date of Project Design Approval and do not extend any other permit. Any extension of a discretionary land use approval automatically extends the related design review approval.

d. Time Extensions

The Community Development Director may extend an SFDB Project Design Approval with either two one year extensions or one two year extension.

2.8.2 Appeal of SFDB Decision

Any SFDB action on a Project Design Review application may be appealed to the Planning Commission under SBMC §30.220.005 and Chapter 1.30 of the Municipal Code.

To file an appeal, the applicant must submit a letter stating the reasons for the appeal, along with the required fee, within ten (10) calendar days of the contested action.

2.8.3 Re-Filing a Denied Project Design

If a denied project design is re-filed within one year, the revised submittal must address and mitigate the reason for the prior denial. A new application and new application fees are required.



3 |

Meeting Conduct



3

Meeting Conduct

3.1 Officer Election

3.1.1 Chair

The SFDB must elect a Chair from its members each year. Elections must occur as soon as practical after January 1, or whenever the Chair position becomes vacant.

3.1.2 Vice-Chair

After electing the Chair, the SFDB must elect a Vice-Chair. The Vice-Chair conducts meetings when the Chair is absent.

3.2 Subcommittees/Advisory Committees

The SFDB must not establish a subcommittee without the approval of the Community Development Director and City Attorney.

3.3 General Meeting Conduct

3.3.1 Rosenberg's Rules of Order

Rosenberg's Rules of Order govern how SFDB meetings are conducted unless these Guidelines state otherwise or the Chair determines that a different procedure is appropriate for a specific meeting.

3.3.2 Brown Act

SFDB meetings, including meetings of any standing subcommittees, must follow the Ralph M. Brown Act (Government Code Section 54950 et seq.). The Brown Act establishes requirements for public notice, agendas, and public participation.

3.3.3 Ex-Parte Communication

SFDB members must not initiate or encourage private discussions about specific projects with applicants or with groups of two or more SFDB members. Any ex-parte communication that does occur must be disclosed at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

3.3.4 Quorum Requirements

- A quorum consists of three SFDB members.
- A member who is present but abstains from voting counts toward the quorum.
- A member who steps down due to a conflict of interest must leave the room and does not count toward the quorum.
- Any member with a disqualifying conflict under the Political Reform Act must step down and must not be counted toward a quorum.

3.3.5 Abstention on Continued Items

A member who was absent at a previous review of a project should only comment or vote if they have:

- reviewed the previous plans,
- watched the video of the prior hearing, and
- read the minutes related to that project.

If the member has not reviewed this information, they should abstain.

For Consent Calendar and minor items reviewed only briefly, members must read the minutes and review the plans, since there is no video recording of Consent meetings.

3.3.6 Reconsideration

- A motion to reconsider an SFDB action may be made only at the same meeting or at the next regular meeting.
- Only a member who voted on the prevailing side of the original action may make the motion.
- To meet Brown Act requirements, if the motion is not made at the same meeting, the member must submit a written request to Staff before the end of the second business day following the original meeting so that the motion can be placed on the next regular agenda.

3.3.7 Conflict of Interest Compliance

Members must follow all applicable conflict-of-interest laws, including the Political Reform Act of 1974. Members must not participate in decisions when they have a disqualifying conflict of interest.

3.3.8 Staff Assistance

Staff assist both the SFDB and the public throughout the review process. Staff comments must be presented at the start of each item's review.

3.3.9 Member Attendance

If a member cannot attend a meeting or must step down from a specific item due to a conflict of interest, the member must notify Staff as early as possible. The purpose of early notice is to help ensure the SFDB maintains a quorum.

3.3.10 Member Compensation

SFDB members may receive meeting attendance compensation as authorized in the Community Development Department's approved budget.

3.3.11 Site Visits

The SFDB may conduct site visits when additional on-site information is needed before commenting on or acting on a project. Staff must notify SFDB members and the public of scheduled, organized, or drive-by site visits through a notation on the meeting agenda.

3.3.12 Story Pole and Site Visit Coordination

For projects requiring both design review and another land use approval, timing of story pole installation and site visits must be coordinated with the Planning Commission or the Staff Hearing Officer, as applicable.



4

Application Requirements and Visual Aids



4 Application Requirements and Visual Aids

4.1 Application Requirements

4.1.1 Overview

Applications for Design Review must follow the procedures outlined in SBMC Chapter 30.205 (Common Procedures) and SBMC Chapter 30.220 (Design Review). Applications must be submitted by the property owner or an authorized agent. If an agent applies, the application must include written proof of authorization to act for the owner.

4.1.2 Public Record

All application materials become part of the public record and, unless prohibited by law, are available for public review during normal business hours.

4.1.3 How to Submit

Application forms and checklists are available on the City's Forms & Applications webpage. Applications, including all supporting plans and documents, must be submitted electronically through the City's online system.

4.1.4 Required Content

A complete Design Review application must include all required plans, such as a site plan, floor plans, roof plan, building elevations, building sections, grading plans (if applicable), and any other drawings identified in the submittal checklist. Applicants must submit the current City application forms, project description, plan sheets in the required formatting, and all technical documentation identified for the project type. These materials must be accurate, internally consistent, drawn to required scales, and prepared according to the City's submittal standards.

Applications must also include any information or evidence needed to support the applicable findings. This may include:

- Visual aids (see Sections 4.2 and 4.4)
- Environmental documentation
- Written statements explaining how the project meets the findings.

4.2 When Supplemental Visual Aids Are Required

Supplemental visual aids provide additional information to help the SFDB, staff, and the public understand a project's height, massing, neighborhood context, and potential visual impacts. See the Visual Aids Supplemental Application for complete submittal requirements, standards, and formatting instructions.

A project must provide one or more supplemental visual aids listed in Section 4.4. (Types of Visual Aids) before Project Design Approval when any of the following conditions apply:

4.2.1 Second Stories

At least one supplemental visual aid is required when a project includes a new two-or-more story building, or an expanded second or higher story, or alterations to a building over 17 feet in height, and meets at least one of the following conditions:

- Upper Story Size. The new or expanded upper story floor area is 250 square feet or larger.
- Height Increase. The new or expanded upper story, or alterations over 17 feet in height, increases the existing building height by more than 5 feet.

4.2.2 High FAR Projects (Over 85% FAR)

Projects proposed at more than 85% of the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) must include a Neighborhood Context Study and at least one other supplemental visual aid.

4.2.3 FAR Exceptions (Over 100% FAR)

Projects proposing an FAR Exception to be over 100% of the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) must include at least one supplemental visual aid and must install “Full Level” story poles at least seven calendar days before Project Design Review. See Section 4.5 (Story Pole Requirements).

4.2.4 Large Grading Projects

Projects proposing more than 500 cubic yards of grading outside of the main building footprint must include a 3D massing model or 3D topographic/grading model showing proposed terrain changes.

4.2.5 Terraced or Elevated Sites

At least one supplemental visual aid is required when terracing or grading creates a 4-foot vertical difference greater than four feet between the adjacent street right-of-way and the finished grade along the front lot line.

4.2.6 Ridgelines, Scenic Views, and Hillside Exposure

A supplemental visual aid is required when the project is located in an area with elevated visual sensitivity based on mapped or measurable topographic conditions including:

a. Ridgeline Vertical Proximity

The highest point of the proposed structure is within 15 feet vertically of a mapped ridgeline.

b. Ridgeline Horizontal Proximity

Any portion of the proposed roof form is within 150 horizontal feet of a mapped ridgeline and not fully screened by existing development or vegetation.

c. Scenic View Corridor

The project is located within a mapped Scenic View Corridor identified in an adopted City document.

4.2.7 Setback Modifications

Projects requesting zoning modifications into required setbacks must include at least one supplemental visual aid.

4.2.8 SFDB Difficulty Making Required Findings

If one or more SFDB members state that due to insufficient information they cannot make required Project Compatibility Findings, the applicant must submit supporting visual aid materials as specified by the Board. An applicant’s failure to provide the SFDB with sufficient visual information may result in a denial at Project Design Review.

4.2.9 Other Review Bodies

Story poles or other visual aids may also be required by the Planning Commission, Staff Hearing Officer, or during environmental review. When more than one decision-making body requires visual aids, the most stringent applicable requirement applies.

4.3 Visual Aids Waiver

During Concept Review, or before the application is deemed complete, supplemental visual aids may be waived by:

- The SFDB, for Full Board projects, or
- The Community Development Director, for projects eligible for Consent or Administrative approval.

A waiver may be granted only when the standard submittal materials or other available visual aids clearly show the building’s height, massing, and relationship to nearby development.

4.4 Types of Visual Aids

Supplemental visual aids help the public and the SFDB understand a project’s height, massing, neighborhood context, and potential visual impacts. Detailed preparation requirements, viewpoints, formatting, and documentation are provided in the Visual Aids Supplemental Application.

The following types of visual aids may be required:

4.4.1 Neighborhood Context Study

A study showing the project’s relationship to surrounding parcels using aerial photographs, keyed site photos, and basic neighborhood data such as building heights, number of stories, parcel sizes, zoning, and lot coverage. This study helps evaluate neighborhood compatibility and scale.

4.4.2 Photo Simulations (Renders)

Scaled images showing the proposed building accurately overlaid onto site or contextual photographs. These include required public vantage points such as streets, parks, beaches, and mapped scenic view corridors.

4.4.3 Streetscape Context Elevations

Scaled drawings showing the proposed building in relation to adjacent or representative nearby structures across a continuous streetscape. These may include silhouettes, rendered building elevations, or drawings placed on photographic background.

4.4.4 Perspective Drawings

Three-dimensional drawings from human-eye level showing the project's building form, plate heights, rooflines, and surrounding development, illustrating how the project appears from key public viewpoints.

4.4.5 Three-Dimensional Massing / Topographic Models

Physical or digital 3D models showing building form, major volumes, rooflines, and any proposed grading or terrain changes. These models illustrate massing, height, and topography without requiring photorealistic detail.

4.4.6 Story Poles

Temporary on-site markers showing the proposed building's height and massing, installed according to Section 4.5.

4.5 Story Pole Requirements

Story poles illustrate the proposed building's height, massing, and rooflines on site.

- When story poles are required for SFDB review, Full Level installation is the default.
- The SFDB may reduce to Standard Level or Basic Level, or waive the requirement, at a Concept Review hearing based on the criteria in Section 4.3 (Visual Aids Waiver).
- If Planning Commission, Staff Hearing Officer, or CEQA visual analysis requires story poles the SFDB cannot waive or reduce the story pole requirement. The most stringent applicable requirement governs.

4.5.1 Levels of Story Pole Installation

a. Full Level

Show all major building forms, corners, ridges, eaves, rakes, outer plate heights (not the outer edge of the eaves), and ridgelines with vertical poles and string lines.

b. Standard Level

Show selected building forms (as determined by the SFDB) with vertical poles and, if requested, string lines.

c. Basic Level

Show selected locations at highest building elements (as determined by the SFDB) with vertical poles only.

4.5.2 Story Pole Timing and Documentation

a. Standard Timing

Story pole installations must be completed a minimum of 7 days prior to the Project Design Review hearing and must remain in place until the hearing.

b. Photographic Record

Once installed, the applicant must photograph the story poles from all angles visible to the public. Additional photos from more distant points may be required.

c. Post-Construction Documentation

Before issuance of Final Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy, submit photographs of the completed building from the same locations used for the story pole documentation.



5 |

Landscape Design Guidelines



5

Landscape Design Guidelines

5.1 Purpose

The Landscape Design Guidelines provide general and specific direction for designing and installing throughout single-family neighborhoods. Landscaping should be used to unify the project design, enhance the site, and support compatibility with surrounding development while complying with applicable City policies and regulations.

5.2 Landscape Plan Applicability and Requirements

5.2.1 Applicability

A landscape plan is required for the following SFDB projects:

- When a landscape plan is required under SBMC Chapter 14.23 (Landscape Design Standards and Recycled Water Use).
- When a project either alters or adds required landscape areas, or requests a waiver, under SBMC 30.140.118 (Landscape).
- Subdivision grading plans in Residential Single Unit Zones.
- Any grading permit when not submitted in connection with a building permit for construction or alteration on the same lot.
- Vegetation Removal Permits under SBMC Chapter 22.10.
- Alterations to Approved Landscape Plans under SBMC Chapter 22.11.
- Landscape Design Standards Waiver under SBMC 30.140.118 (Landscape).

The SFDB may also require a landscape plan when necessary to determine consistency with applicable findings.

5.2.2 Landscape Plan Contents

Landscape plans must contain the information required in the City's the Landscape Plan Submittal Guide.

5.2.3 Landscape Plan Preparation Licensing Requirements

a. License Required

Per Business and Professions Code (BPC) §5641, the following construction-level plans must be prepared by a licensed landscape architect, registered or licensed engineer, architect, land surveyor, or a landscape contractor who is contracted to install the landscaping:

- Final grading or drainage plans
- Construction details, specifications, or plans for tangible landscape features

These requirements include grading or drainage plans prepared for Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) compliance.

b. No License Required

In the following circumstances, plans may be prepared by an unlicensed person:

- Property owners preparing plans for their own property (BPC §5641.1).
- Concept Review Plans for a single family dwelling (BPC §5641).
- Project Design Review Plans that do not require grading or drainage plans (BPC §5641).
- Irrigation Plans prepared by property owners or irrigation consultants (BPC §5641.6).

Advisory. The SFDB may suggest, but cannot require, the use of a licensed landscape architect when plan submittals are inadequate or when the project involves extensive grading, revegetation, or sensitive habitat areas.

5.3 General Landscape Design Guidelines

Landscape is an integral part of a project's design and helps maintain neighborhood character. Landscape plans should enhance site aesthetics, complement architecture, and provide screening, usable outdoor space, water-wise planting, and efficient irrigation.

The following guidelines apply to all landscape proposals:

5.3.1 Site Layout and Massing

a. Landscape Coverage

Landscape massing must provide substantial plant landscaping relative to hardscape. Paved areas should be minimized and planting areas maximized.

b. Screening

Screening plants, such as hedges, may be used to provide privacy between neighbors. Species must fit the space at maturity and comply with applicable hedge height standards in the Zoning Ordinance.

c. Trees

Mature canopy trees must be provided for shade and weather protection, where appropriate.

d. Limit Lawn Size

Use turf/lawn grass only where necessary for recreational uses. Consider natural lawn-alternative species.

5.3.2 Plant Selection

a. Blend with Existing Vegetation

New plants should blend with existing vegetation in type, coloring, and scale.

b. Growth

Select and place plants to:

- Minimize blocking of adjacent properties' primary scenic views and solar access.
- Achieve desired screening without requiring excessive pruning.
- Maintain scale compatible with public view preservation policies.

c. Adaptability ("Right Plant / Right Place")

Plants must be appropriate for site conditions, including soil, slope, climate, and available space.

d. Native Plants

Use native plants whenever possible. When using non-native species, prioritize Mediterranean -climate plants.

e. Fire Resistant Landscape

Use fire resistant landscaping where feasible. See Section 3.6 and the City's High Fire Hazard Area resources for required plant lists.

f. Invasive Plants

Avoid invasive species, especially near sensitive habitats. Refer to the California Invasive Plant Council (www.cal-ipc.org) for a list of invasive plants.

g. Plant Spacing & Height

Space plants to accommodate mature size without crowding or root conflict. Select plants with appropriate mature plant height.

h. Group by Plant Needs

Group plants with similar water and sun requirements into hydrozones with appropriate irrigation valve types.

i. Natural Plants

Landscaping must use live plant material. Artificial plants and artificial turf are prohibited in parkways. Artificial turf may be considered in less visible private areas but is generally discouraged.

5.3.3 Sustainability Principles

Landscape and irrigation design should incorporate sustainable practices, including:

- Preserve existing vegetation and significant trees (see Section 5.4).
- Protect natural features and revegetate graded areas promptly.
- Use landscaping to assist with passive heating and cooling.
- Avoid nonnative species that add weight to steep slopes; prefer deep-rooted species for stability.
- Comply with water-efficient landscape requirements in SBMC Chapter 14.23.
- Minimize waste in landscape planning and materials.
- Follow Stormwater Management Program (SWMP) principles by incorporating bioswales, porous paving, rain gardens, and onsite infiltration strategies.
- Maximize permeability and onsite percolation using BMPs.
- Use natural drainage features such as swales, v-ditches, and drywells to direct and manage flows.

5.3.4 Street and Driveway Design

a. Grading & Retaining Walls

Minimize grading and avoid unnecessary retaining walls.

b. Limit Paving

Limit driveway widths and consider permeable materials. Consult the Fire Department and Transportation Division before proposing alternative paving (ribbon driveways, permeable pavers and other materials).

c. Garage Orientation

Orient driveways and garages to present a street-friendly facade, so that garage or carport openings are not facing directly onto streets.

d. Sidewalk Widths

Provide street sidewalk widths that allow landscaped parkways to buffer pedestrians from street traffic.

e. Street Trees

Incorporate City street trees as recommended by the SFDB, City Arborist, and the Street Tree Master Plan. Removal requires Parks & Recreation Commission approval. Consult with the Parks & Recreation Department for information on Street Trees.

f. Planting in Parkway

Water-wise plants are required and turf is prohibited in parkways. Use drip irrigation or low precipitation systems to avoid runoff. See the City's list of recommended plants for parkways on the City website.

5.4 Tree Preservation

Protecting existing trees, especially mature and native trees, is a primary design goal. Mature trees must be integrated into project design whenever feasible, and all reasonable preservation and protection measures must be considered before removal is proposed. Tree removal and replacement may require Design Review, Street Tree Advisory Committee and Parks & Recreation Commission review, and/or a building permit. The following standards apply to any project involving tree removal or replacement.

5.4.1 General Tree Replacement Standards

If preservation of existing trees is not possible, replacement trees must be provided according to the ratios and size standards below.

a. Tree Replacement Ratios

Trees measuring 4 inches or more in diameter (measured 4 feet 6 inches above grade) that are proposed for removal must be replaced onsite at a minimum 1:1 ratio, unless environmental review determines that a different ratio is appropriate.

- The standard mitigation ratio for tree loss is 3:1.
- Ratios may be increased up to 10:1 depending on tree species, lot size, and the size and expected survival of replacement trees.

b. Tree Replacement Size

The required replacement size will be determined through environmental review, in coordination with SFDB review, based on the size and biological value of the tree being removed and onsite conditions. See Section 5.4.2 for additional standards.

5.4.2 Tree Protection and Replacement Standards

Efforts must be made to preserve existing trees—particularly native species such as oaks—consistent with applicable City policies (Environmental Resources Element ER11

and ER12; 1979 Conservation Element Visual and Biological Resources policies). Projects involving work near existing trees are subject to the following standards:

a. Earth Disturbance Prohibitions

No earth disturbance is allowed within a radius from the trunk equal to one-third of the tree's canopy radius. Example: If the canopy extends 30 feet from the trunk, no work may occur within the inner 10 feet. In the remaining canopy/dripline area, soil may only be disturbed with hand tools.

b. Arborist's Report

Work within a tree's dripline or within a distance that may affect the tree's root zone requires an Arborist's Report. When an Arborist's Report is required, the SFDB may base its conditions of approval on the report's recommendations.

c. Paving

Paving or other non-permeable surfaces under native tree canopies must be minimized.

For oak trees:

- No more than 25% of the area beneath the canopy may be paved.
- Paving under the canopy must be installed by hand or using hand tools due to the sensitivity of surface roots.

d. Distance from Structures

The edge of all new structures must be placed at least 5 feet outside the expected mature canopy/dripline of a native tree, unless approved with an Arborist's Report.

e. Protection Notes

Projects that include work within or adjacent to the dripline of an existing native tree must include Tree Protection notes on all site and grading plans.

f. Replacement Dimensions

If removal of a native tree is approved, each required replacement tree must have a trunk diameter equal to or greater than one-quarter of the diameter of the removed tree.

Example: A 16-inch oak must be replaced with a tree at least 4 inches in diameter.

Smaller sizes may be allowed when replacement availability is limited.

g. Tree Root Barrier Guideline

The SFDB may recommend or condition that the applicant consult a qualified tree expert (landscape architect, City Arborist, or certified arborist) to determine whether a root barrier is appropriate.

Root barriers may be required when roots will be within 4 feet of any hardscape and may affect buildings, sidewalks, pathways, or curbs.

- Palm trees do not require root barriers.
- Root barriers are not recommended when existing trees are nearby, because installation may damage existing root.

h. Condition of Approval for Specific Tree or Planting

The SFDB may conditionally approve projects requiring maintenance of specific trees or plantings. Trees or plantings identified for retention on an approved landscape plan may not be altered without Design Review or a permit.

5.5 Special Areas

5.5.1 Hillside Residential Landscape Design

Landscape in hillside areas must respect both public views toward the project and views from the subject property. Plantings should soften the appearance of new homes, major additions, and retaining walls. The following guidelines apply to hillside areas:

a. Appearance

Landscaping must reduce the visual mass of structures when viewed from public areas. Plantings should be selected from California native or Mediterranean species that blend with the hillside. Species that visually contrast with natural terrain (e.g., palms along ridgelines or large expanses of brightly colored vines) are discouraged in publicly visible locations.

b. Natural Surroundings

Disturbance to oak woodlands, steep slopes, bluffs, creeks, watersheds, and other native habitats must be evaluated by a qualified professional to determine appropriate plant selection and maintenance that minimize impacts on natural areas.

c. Grading

Grading should be minimized.

d. Slope Failure Mitigation

If slope instability occurs, recommendations from a soils engineer, geologist, or landscape architect is required for plantings, irrigation, and erosion control.

e. Erosion Control Measures

Erosion control measures must be included on hillside landscape plans.

5.5.2 Creeks and Wetlands

Projects near creeks and wetlands must comply with the guidelines below and be consistent with the sustainability principles in Section 5.3.3.

a. Degradation Prohibition

Development adjacent to creeks or wetlands must not degrade the waterway or its riparian environment.

b. Native Plant Species

Native vegetation along creeks and wetlands must be protected, maintained, enhanced, and restored.

c. Immediately Adjacent Landscaping

Only native, non-invasive plants may be installed immediately adjacent to creeks and wetlands. A licensed landscape architect or biologist should provide plant recommendations. If the project impacts a creek or wetland, a biologist must prepare a restoration plan.

d. Buffer Landscaping

Vegetative buffers must be provided between natural areas and developed or high-use areas. Buffer vegetation should be native to California.

5.5.3 High Fire Hazard Area Landscape Design

a. Defensible Space

Projects must meet defensible space requirements in the Fire Code and comply with the Fire Department's High Fire Hazard Area Landscape Requirements. These standards identify drought-tolerant, fire-resistant species and placement requirements to reduce wildfire risk. Consultation with the Fire Department's Wildland Fire Specialist is recommended.

b. Native and Fire Resistant Vegetation

Native or fire-resistant vegetation must be used on major cut-and-fill slopes within hillside development areas. Within Vegetation Management Units identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, vegetation must be designed to reduce flammable plant materials. Consultation with the Wildland Fire Specialist is recommended.



6

Administrative Approval Standards



6

Administrative Approval Standards

6.1 Administrative Approval Procedures

6.1.1 Procedure

Projects may be reviewed and approved administratively by the Community Development Director—without SFDB review—if the project meets all applicable Administrative Approval Standards in Sections 6.2 (Project-Specific Standards) and 6.3 (General Standards).

Administrative approval is a ministerial action. Projects are not eligible for administrative approval if:

- The project may create a risk of an adverse environmental effect, or
- The project requires public noticing under SBMC §30.220.040.

The Community Development Director may approve, conditionally approve, or deny a project submitted for administrative approval.

a. Evaluating Projects Using the Administrative Approval Standards

To determine whether a project may be approved administratively, staff must use the following procedure:

1. Review the scope of work and plan sheets to identify which Project-Specific Administrative Approval Standards apply.

2. Evaluate each portion of the scope of work for consistency with the criteria in the applicable project-specific standards (Section 6.2).
3. Evaluate each portion of the scope of work for consistency with the General Administrative Approval Standards (Section 6.3).
4. If the project meets all applicable project-specific standards and all general standards, it may be eligible for administrative approval.

b. Example

If a project includes a first-story addition, a new window, a pool, and new landscape, staff must review the corresponding project-specific standards in Section 6.3:

- First-Story Additions (6.3.2)
- Hardscape & Landscape Alterations (6.3.10)
- Pools and Spas (6.3.14)
- Windows (6.3.22)

The project must also meet the applicable general standards in Section 6.2:

- Design Style (6.2.1)
- Alterations (6.2.2)
- Colors (6.2.3)
- Scale (6.2.4)
- Landscape (6.2.5)
- Consideration of Neighbors (6.2.6)
- Changes to Approved Plans (6.2.7)
- Home Hardening (6.2.8)

Note: Even if a project meets all applicable project specific and general standards, staff may refer the application to the SFDB if the project raises potential neighborhood compatibility concerns.

6.2 General Administrative Approval Standards

To be eligible for administrative staff review, a project must comply with the following general standards in addition to all applicable project-specific standards in section 6.3.

6.2.1 Design Style

The architectural style must be clearly stated on the plans. The design must either match the building's existing style or result in a cohesive new style. Staff will verify style consistency by reviewing architectural elements such as windows, doors, lighting, railings, trim, eaves, roof pitch, proportions, and materials.

Staff may reference A Field Guide to American Houses or similar resources to confirm the proposed style classification. Proposed exterior materials must visually match or be consistent with the stated style.

6.2.2 Alterations

Alterations must match the current architectural style or produce a single, cohesive style. Projects that introduce multiple exterior changes may be approved administratively if the design intent is clear and the overall style is unified.

6.2.3 Colors

Additions must match existing colors. Simple color changes may be approved administratively if they use colors from the Santa Barbara Colors Guide. Bright or incompatible colors do not qualify for administrative approval.

6.2.4 Scale

Additions must be compatible with the scale of the house, architectural style, and neighborhood. Staff will evaluate scale using criteria such as visibility, plate heights, roof pitch, and maximum building height. See SFRDG 17-C for additional guidance. Projects that are out of character with the neighborhood or poorly sited will be referred to the SFDB.

6.2.5 Landscape

Changes to an approved landscape plan must be consistent with the original planting purpose, such as privacy screening, shade, solar access, interest, historic preservation, erosion control, or appropriate species near sensitive habitat areas.

6.2.6 Consideration of Neighbors

Projects must generally conform to the Good Neighbor Guidelines in the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines. Development must be sited and oriented to minimize privacy impacts and reduce potential noise or lighting issues.

6.2.7 Changes to Approved Plans

Minor changes may be approved administratively if they meet the criteria in Section 1.3.7 (Changes to Approved Plans – Determining Substantial Conformance). Changes that do not substantially conform must be referred back to the SFDB for revised Project Design Approval.

6.2.8 Home Hardening (fire-resistant construction).

Projects in High Fire Hazard Areas must comply with Chapter 7A of the California Building Code or use materials listed on the State Fire Marshal Wildland Urban Interface Products list.

Examples include:

- Class A fire-rated roofing systems
- Dual-pane windows with at least one tempered pane
- Fire-retardant decking materials within 10 feet of the structure

Projects in High Fire Hazard Areas may receive greater design flexibility related to materials.

6.3 Project-Specific Administrative Approval Standards

Projects requesting administrative approval must meet all applicable project-specific standards in this section, as well as the General Administrative Approval Standards in Section 6.2. See the table below to help navigate to the standards applicable to your project. Applicable project elements include:

6.3.1 Accessory Buildings (Excluding ADUs)	6.3.12 Mechanical Equipment: General
6.3.2 Additions: First Story	6.3.13 Mechanical Equipment: Rooftop
6.3.3 Additions: Second or Higher Story	6.3.14 Pools and Spas
6.3.4 Awnings	6.3.15 Porches
6.3.5 Chimneys	6.3.16 Retaining Walls
6.3.6 Color Changes: Exterior	6.3.17 Roofs and Reroofs
6.3.7 Decks	6.3.18 Screening and Screening Waivers
6.3.8 Doors	6.3.19 Skylights
6.3.9 Fences and Site Walls (Excluding Retaining Walls)	6.3.20 Tree Removal
6.3.10 Hardscape and Landscape Alterations, Including Grading	6.3.21 Tree Removal: Emergency or Hazardous
6.3.11 Lighting: Exterior	6.3.22 Trellises, Pergolas, Patio Covers, and Sunshades
	6.3.23 Windows

6.3.1 Accessory Buildings (Excluding ADUs)

New, altered, or expanded accessory buildings (not Accessory Dwelling Units) may be approved administratively if all of the following standards are met:

1. The building is 800 square feet or less.
2. The building does is one story or 17 feet or less in height.
3. The project does not exceed 85% of the Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
4. Any mechanical equipment complies with subsections 6.3.12 (General) and 6.3.13 (Roof-top).
5. The accessory building does not include a roof deck.
6. Carports use supporting columns at least 4 inches in diameter (thin support poles are not eligible).
7. Accessory buildings are not located in the front yard.
 - Exception: Carports and garages, including garage conversions, may be approved in the front yard only if they are not publicly visible due to site topography or existing or proposed screening.
8. If publicly visible, accessory buildings must match the architectural style of the main house. If not publicly visible, style matching is not required.

6.3.2 Additions: First Story

First-story additions may be approved administratively if all the following standards are met:

1. Additions and related alterations are less than 17 feet in height.
2. On lots developed with less than 4,000 sq ft of net floor area, the addition is 800 square feet or less.
3. On lots developed with 4,000 square feet or more of net floor area, the addition is 250 square feet or less.
4. The project does not exceed 85% of the Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
5. Any retaining walls proposed with the addition comply with the development standards for retaining walls in the Zoning Ordinance and Section 6.3.16 (Retaining Walls).
6. The project does not include a vegetated roof.
7. The addition does not significantly alter the front or street-facing façade's massing, scale, or architectural style.
8. In the Hillside Design District, the addition does not result in a taller apparent height than the existing structure (see Section 29, p. 53-H of the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines for apparent height).

6.3.3 Additions: Second or Higher Story

New second story additions on existing one-story residences are not eligible for administrative approval. Additions to existing second or higher stories may be reviewed and approved administratively if the following standards are met.

1. Addition is 250 square feet or less.
2. The project does not exceed 85% of the Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
3. Any retaining walls proposed with the addition comply with the development standards for retaining walls in the Zoning Ordinance and Section 6.3.16 (Retaining Walls).
4. The project does not include a vegetated roof.
5. The addition does not significantly alter the front or street-facing façade's massing, scale, or architectural style.
6. In the Hillside Design District, the addition does not result in a taller apparent height than the existing structure (see Section 29, p. 53-H of the Single Family Residence Design Guidelines for apparent height).

6.3.4 Awnings

Awnings up to 9 square feet over windows or doors may be approved administratively if they match the style and colors of the house. Shiny or reflective materials are not allowed. See Section 6.3.22 for patio cover standards.

6.3.5 Chimneys

The following standards must be met for administrative approval:

1. The chimney matches the style of the house and uses masonry, stone, stucco, or metal pipe.
2. Wood material is not used on chimneys.
3. Metal flues have a traditional design and are painted to match the roof color.
4. Exposed pipe beyond the top of the chimney is limited to the minimum height required by Building & Safety.

6.3.6 Color Changes: Exterior

The project is consistent with General Administrative Approval Standards, Colors (6.2.3)

6.3.7 Decks

Decks are defined pursuant to SBMC §30.300.040 "D". Rooftop decks are not eligible for administrative approval. Other decks may be approved if all of the following are met:

1. First story decks are no larger than 400 square feet.
2. Elevated decks are no larger than 250 square feet.
3. Elevated decks are at least 15 feet from any interior lot line.
4. Deck railings meet, but do not exceed, the minimum required by the Building Code.
5. Wood decks are left natural or finished with a neutral or wood-tone color stain or sealer or painted to match the color of the house or trim. Non-wood decks use high-quality materials such as a wood-simulating composite in neutral or earth tone in color.
6. Shiny or reflective decking and railing materials are prohibited. Glass railing may be approved if treated to eliminate glare.

6.3.8 Doors

Administrative approval requires:

1. For double doors, both doors and sidelights have equal width.
2. Doors and sidelights are centered or symmetrically placed within architectural elements when that is appropriate for the architectural style.

6.3.9 Fences and Site Walls (Except Retaining Walls)

Administrative approval requires:

1. The following materials are not eligible: chicken wire, sheet metal (except quality COR TEN/weathering steel), corrugated metal, plastic, vinyl, wire mesh fence materials, gabion wall (rock and wire mesh) and unfaced cement block.
2. Wood, chain-link, and picket fences must be 8 feet tall or less. Masonry, stucco-finished block, stone, concrete, plastered CMU, or similar site walls must be less than 5 feet tall.
3. Height added to existing fences must match existing fence materials and contribute to a cohesive fence design.
4. If the fence is constructed of wood, it is constructed of smooth cedar, redwood, high-quality pressure-treated pine, or comparable material and left in a natural condition to weather or is treated with a neutral or wood color stain or sealer, or painted as described in number 4 below.
5. If the fence is proposed to be painted, the paint color either matches the predominant color of the siding or trim of the main building or is painted a neutral/earth tone color to blend with the surroundings.
6. If the fence is constructed of chain link, it is dark colored or hot dip galvanized chain link fencing located outside of any front yard. Chain link fences that are publicly visible must be screened with vegetation such as vines or shrubs to soften the appearance of the fence.

6.3.10 Hardscape and Landscape Alterations, Including Grading

Alterations including walkways, on-grade patios, driveways, planters, barbecues, firepits, fountains, and other yard amenities may be approved if they meet the following criteria:

1. Grading outside the building footprint does not exceed 50 cubic yards.
2. No grading on slopes averaging 15% or more.
3. No alterations on slopes of 30% or more.
4. No grading within required setbacks.
5. Driveway paving is limited to what is required for access per the City's Access & Parking Design Standards.
6. Paving materials are concrete, asphalt, pavers, flagstone, or similar in neutral or earth tone colors.

7. New paved parking areas are screened from public view using fencing, landscaping, or other approved structures.
8. Planting changes must generally match the original planting intent and does not change a condition of approval.
9. No alterations within 50 feet of the top of the creek bank or within an established creek buffer.
10. A vegetation removal permit is not triggered (SBMC Chapter 22.10)
11. Any retaining walls meet SBMC §30.140.110.G and the standards in Section 6.3.16.
12. No alterations in an environmentally sensitive habitat area unless a qualified study confirms no adverse impact.

6.3.11 Lighting: Exterior

Administrative approval requires that lighting fixtures and placement meet all Outdoor Lighting Ordinance standards (SBMC Chapter 22.75), including shielding to limit sky glow and prevent light spill onto neighboring properties.

6.3.12 Mechanical Equipment: General

The following criteria must be met for administrative approval:

1. Property-line noise levels comply with the Noise Ordinance (SBMC Chapter 9.16).
2. Equipment is screened per Municipal Code, and landscaping used for screening is shown on plans and maintained.
3. New equipment attached to a structure is not publicly visible. Attached mechanical equipment that is publicly visible is not eligible.

6.3.13 Mechanical Equipment: Rooftop

Telecommunications facilities and antennas are not eligible for administrative approvals

Other rooftop equipment must meet the following criteria for administrative approval:

1. Equipment is screened per the Municipal Code and is integrated into the building design.
2. If equipment remains visible or uses only vegetation for screening, it must be painted to match the roof or background as specified by staff.

6.3.14 Pools and Spas

Material excavated for a below-grade pool, or within 5 feet of a building foundation that must be recompact, is not counted as grading outside the footprint.

Above-ground pools may only be approved if not publicly visible. Pools and spas may be approved if all criteria below are met:

1. The pool or spa is screened or not publicly visible.
2. Site grading outside the footprint of the pool or spa does not exceed 50 cubic yards.

- Any retaining walls associated with the pool or spa must meet the administrative approval standards for retaining walls in subsection 6.3.16.
- Any proposed mechanical equipment meets the mechanical equipment administrative approval criteria listed in subsection 6.3.12 and 6.3.13.

6.3.15 Porches

Residential porches may be approved administratively if the porch is publicly visible the porch roof is not higher than 12 feet.

6.3.16 Retaining Walls

Retaining walls may be approved if:

- They are less than 5 feet tall. Exception: Existing, permitted walls may be rebuilt to the same height and length using original materials or replaced with cut sandstone or stucco.
- They are similar in height, length, and materials to other retaining walls visible in the neighborhood.
- In the Hillside Design District, walls are screened with vegetation or finished in neutral colors.
- Retaining walls must meet the development standards for retaining walls in SBMC 30.140.110 (Fences and Hedges).
- Any grading or landscape alteration associated with retaining wall construction complies with the administrative approval standards for hardscape and landscape alterations in subsection 6.3.10.

6.3.17 Roofs and Reroofs

Administrative approval requires:

- Reroofs or replacement of two-piece clay Mission-style tile with another material are not eligible. S-tile is only eligible if replacing existing permitted S-tile.
- No shiny or reflective roofing materials.
- Roof materials and colors are compatible with the architectural style of the structure. Neutral colors and earth tones are generally acceptable. (See the Santa Barbara Colors Guide)
- Vegetated roofing is prohibited in High Fire Hazard Areas.

Roofing Materials Guidance. Roof materials generally eligible for administrative approval are listed in the table below by architectural style. Note: the table below is not an exhaustive list; roofing materials not listed below may be considered for administrative approval on a case-by-case basis. Additional guidance on appropriate roof materials can be found in A Field Guide To American Houses.

Architectural Style of Main House and Roofing Materials

Any Style

- Match Existing Material

Contemporary (Ranch, Midcentury, American Vernacular, tract homes)

- Composition Shingle, Standing Seam Metal

Craftsman

- Composition Shingle

Mission

- Clay Two-Piece Terra Cotta Mission Tile

Spanish Revival

- Clay Two-Piece Terra Cotta Mission Tile

6.3.18 Screening and Screening Waivers

Screening elements (fences, hedges, walls, landscape planting) may be approved administratively if the following criteria are met:

- They are no higher than needed to fully screen the item.
- Screening may be waived if the item is not publicly visible or is already screened by existing features or topography.
- Refer to fence standards in Section 6.3.9 for allowed materials.

6.3.19 Skylights

Administrative approval requires:

- Skylights are flat and of non-reflective.
- They are screened by the building, landscape, or a parapet.

6.3.20 Tree Removal

Tree removal or replacement may be approved if the following criteria are met:

- The change meets the original planting purpose (Section 6.4).
- The tree removal or replacement does not change a condition of approval.
- No more than three trees are removed or replaced.
- No historic tree or specimen tree is removed. (Historic and specimen trees are specially designated and are reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Department.).
- No setback tree is removed without required approvals at Street Tree Advisory Committee and Parks & Recreation Commission.
- No skyline or mature native tree (such as a Coast Live Oak/Quercus agrifolia) is removed.
- Replacement is not within 50 feet of the top of creek bank.
- A vegetation removal permit is not triggered (SBMC Chapter 22.10).

9. If tree removal does not include replacement trees, it may still be approved if it meets any of the following criteria:
 - a. Enough trees remain to maintain the original planting purpose; or
 - b. Nearby trees on City property maintain area tree density; or
 - c. A qualified arborist finds the tree harms existing structures; or
 - d. A qualified arborist finds the tree harms other trees; or
 - e. A qualified arborist finds the tree cannot survive or thrive in place.

6.3.21 Tree Removal, Emergency/Hazardous

Removal of a tree that presents an apparent hazard to life or property may be approved if a certified arborist verifies the hazard in writing and one of the following applies:

1. The trunk is less than 4 inches in diameter at 4 feet 6 inches above grade; or
2. The tree is diseased and threatens surrounding trees; or
3. The tree is weakened and poses immediate danger; or
4. The tree is dead; or
5. The Fire Department orders removal for defensible-space requirements.

6.3.22 Trellises, Pergolas, Patio Covers, and Sunshades

Administrative approval requires:

1. The following materials are not eligible: chain link, chicken wire, shiny/reflective material, corrugated metal, plastic, vinyl, wire mesh, and unfaced cement block
2. The structure is less than 250 square feet and under 12 feet in height. Exception: If not publicly visible, it may be up to 500 square feet.
3. Materials are smooth cedar, redwood, high-quality pressure-treated pine, or comparable, left natural or stained/sealed in wood-tone or neutral colors. Non-wood materials must be high quality (e.g., composite). Painted structures must match the house siding or trim.

6.3.23 Windows

Administrative approval requires:

1. Vinyl replacement of original wood windows is not eligible when publicly visible.
2. Projects proposing to remove a publicly visible Special Design Window (Section 6.4) are not eligible for administrative approval
3. Proposed windows are compatible in type, color, size, and scale with the architectural style.
4. Windows in additions visually match the main house.
5. Window placement, size, and scale generally meet Good Neighbor privacy guidelines.
6. Where nearby windows are divided-light, new windows match that pattern.
7. Divided-light windows use external grids; faux or internal grids are not allowed.

6.4 Definitions

Any terms used in these Guidelines that are not specifically defined below shall be as defined in the Municipal Code.

6.4.1 Original Planting Purpose

The intended function of a tree or plant shown on an approved landscape plan. The purpose may be explicitly identified or implied by the design. Examples include providing privacy, preserving solar access, creating shade, framing a building, maintaining architectural style consistency, adding visual interest, supporting historic character, preventing erosion, or using appropriate species near sensitive biological areas.

6.4.2 Publicly Visible

The condition when a building, structure, or land use is within the area between a front lot line and up to 35 feet behind any front lot line and is either (1) observable by the public along any abutting public area or (2) is observable by the public from a public area on the other side of an abutting street or right-of-way.

6.4.3 Ridgeline

The line of highest elevation along a hill or mountain crest, identifiable in the City's topographic GIS data as the narrow summit between descending slopes on both sides.

6.4.4 Skyline Tree

A tree that is at least 50 feet tall that is publicly visible from multiple viewing locations and contributes to the character of a streetscape or neighborhood. Skyline trees are generally taller and more noticeable than adjacent trees and structures

6.4.5 Special Design Window

A window that uses quality materials such as wood or steel and is constructed using a unique or artistic design style is considered a Special Design Window. Such windows are an important component of a building's character and may be an enhancement to the entire neighborhood. Such windows include, but are not limited to, leaded glass windows, stained glass windows, multi-pane wood windows with elaborate muntin patterns, or non-rectangular accent windows.

6.5.6 Substantially Similar Tree or Landscaping Replacement

Replacement trees or plantings are considered "substantially similar" and eligible for administrative design review when they meet either of the following sets of criteria:

a. Same Species Replacement

1. The replacement is the same species as the tree or plant being removed; and
2. The replacement tree has a trunk diameter equal to or greater than one-quarter of the diameter of the tree being removed; and
3. The replacement meets or exceeds the planting size shown on the approved landscape plan, with a minimum 5-gallon container for trees.

OR

b. Different Species Replacement

1. The tree being removed is less than 12 inches in diameter (measured 4 feet 6 inches above grade) and less than 20 feet tall; and
2. The cumulative area of changes to conditionally approved plantings is less than 1,000 square feet in the front yard and less than 20% of the total landscaped area; and
3. Removal does not require a vegetation removal permit under SBMC Chapter 22.10; and
4. The replacement species continues to fulfill the original planting purpose, such as privacy, solar access, shade, screening, erosion control, or habitat compatibility.