City of SANTA BARBARA PLANNING

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GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDELINES

DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

GENERAL INFORMATION

WHAT ARE DESIGN GUIDELINES?

The City's Design Guidelines establish a set of goals, values, and qualities by which projects are evaluated in design review. They outline clear expectations that projects must demonstrate to be successfully entitled. Design guidelines assist applicants and the public in understanding both the design review meeting procedures and to define the major concerns and objectives of the design review process. Separate documents provide detailed direction for certain areas or types of projects.

HOW DO I APPLY THE GUIDELINES?

Not all guideline techniques or approaches are appropriate or practical for every development project. When designing your project, identify as many of the design techniques and approaches used in order to achieve the guideline objectives. Other creative and innovative design techniques and approaches may be considered in order to achieve the intended objectives of the listed guidelines. Guidelines using the words "encouraged" or "discouraged" are desirable or undesirable but are not mandatory.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOCUMENTS

These checklists have been provided as a reference to be used in conjunction with the text of the City's existing discretionary Design Guidelines. It is not meant to replace a full reading of the Guidelines text.

In such cases where multiple sets of guidelines apply, the respective guidelines are viewed as "layers," where the most specific guidelines – in the unlikely event of a conflict – would take precedent.

DESIGN GUIDELINES CHECKLIST

GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDELINES. *Use these guidelines on single-family residences to advance sound planning with scrutiny of neighborhood compatibility, views and privacy.* ***Check all that apply.***

A. Privacy Guidelines

Identify any techniques showing your project was designed with your neighbors in mind.		**APPLIED**
1.	Locate structures and additions to increase visual distance between buildings. Avoiding large two-story building masses at the sides and rear of adjacent single family rear yards can help preserve privacy and sunlight access for your home and for neighbors.	☐
2.	Rather than simply following Municipal Code minimum setback standards, consider what a comfortable distance between a proposed addition and an existing neighbor's structure would be. Also consider the pattern of building separation in the immediate neighborhood and design a project compatible with this pattern. Locate areas that require more privacy away from your neighbors. Orient active outdoor areas away from neighbors.	☐
3.	Avoid or minimize the number of decks that overlook neighboring properties. Locate upper-story balconies and decks to minimize the loss of privacy for neighboring properties. Upper-story balconies or decks facing the street are usually preferable to upper-story balconies or decks facing a yard area adjacent to a neighbor. Techniques to lessen impacts to neighboring property privacy include the following:	☐
4.	Meeting with neighbors adjacent to proposed upper-story balconies and decks prior to beginning the City application process is strongly encouraged.	☐
5.	Screen second-story balconies and decks from neighboring property by incorporating architectural screening elements such as enclosing walls, trellises, or awnings. For example, effective enclosures might include walls over 4' and perimeter planters facing neighbor's side or rear yards.	☐
6.	Locate second-story balconies and decks to avoid direct sight lines from the deck or balcony to neighbors' windows, open yard, patio, deck, or loggia areas.	☐
7.	Set back upper-story decks or balconies over 20 square feet at least 15' from interior lot lines when possible.	☐
8.	Avoid siting any "free-standing" chimneys on upper-story decks or balconies. Such chimneys look "out of place" architecturally and are better sited adjacent to a structure. Also, such chimney might block neighbors' views. If Building and Safety minimum clearance standards can be met, chimneys are generally recommended to be less than 8' in height.	☐
9.	In Hillside areas, special consideration is needed for decks and outdoor courtyard placement. Depending on topography, these features have the potential to greatly affect downhill neighbors' privacy and noise levels. Often, keeping decks and outdoor courtyards within the Municipal Code setbacks listed for a zone district, even when not required, can help to maintain good neighbor relations.	☐
10.	Minimize the number of windows on proposed buildings that overlook neighboring properties. Orient your upper-story windows to protect your neighbor's privacy. You may not want to see them any more than they want to be seen by you.	☐

A. Privacy Guidelines

11.	Place windows to avoid direct views into existing neighboring windows by offsetting or staggering windows facing neighbors' windows.	☐
12.	Avoid large upper-story windows overlooking adjacent rear yards.	☐
13.	Use translucent window glass or high windows to allow illumination while protecting privacy.	☐
14.	Set back upper floors or increase side and rear setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residences.	☐

B. Landscaping Guidelines

Identify any techniques showing your project was designed with your neighbors in mind.		**APPLIED**
1.	Review the SFDB Guidelines, Part II, Screening Plants, such as hedges on side and rear property lines, should be considered to create privacy between neighbors.	☐
2.	Keep existing vegetation that currently gives privacy to you or your neighbors.	☐
3.	Use landscaping to screen living areas.	☐
4.	Use evergreen trees and shrubs to provide year-round privacy.	☐
5.	When window placement creates direct views between neighbors that need to be shielded, such as when a balcony placement may allow a line of sight into a neighbor's side or rear yard, or if an applicant is not able to stagger windows, a landscape plan to provide additional screening may be required by the SFDB.	☐
6.	Review the SFDB Guidelines, Part II and design landscaping consistent with the guidelines.	☐

C. Noise Guidelines

Identify any techniques showing your project was designed with your neighbors in mind.		**APPLIED**
1.	Orient active outdoor areas away from neighbors.	☐
2.	Avoid placing noise sources at the sides of small lots or near neighboring windows of frequently used rooms (pool or air conditioning equipment, garbage can, parking areas, balconies, barbecue areas, spas, outdoor furniture, etc.).	☐
3.	Retain or add walls that act as noise buffers.	☐
4.	Equipment which runs on a regular basis and that must be attached to a structure should minimize noise impacts to neighboring properties. Consider siting air conditioning, pool, and other mechanical equipment as far from neighboring structures as possible and insulate equipment.	☐

D. Lighting Guidelines

Identify any techniques showing your project was designed with your neighbors in mind.		**APPLIED**
1.	In general, all exterior lighting should be designed, located and lamped in order to prevent or minimize overlighting, energy waste, glare, light trespass, and skyglow.	☐

D. Lighting Guidelines

2. Plan carefully to only install lighting where it is needed. Directional lighting and lower intensity lamps can reduce lighting impacts. Indiscriminate flood-lighting of broad areas is unacceptable. Where safety "flood-lighting" is proposed for areas such as garage entries, only use lighting activated by motion sensors and directed downward. ☐

3. Light sources for landscape lighting should be near to the ground. Fixtures mounted on the building should relate to a human scale in their size and mounting height. Floodlighting for security, when used, must be aimed close to the building and not create glare for neighbors. ☐

4. Light sources must not be objectionable when seen from a distance. Is your property on a hillside visible from other areas? Consider how to place lighting on your site in ways that will minimize visibility from distant locations. ☐

5. Where possible, design driveways and landscaping so that headlights do not shine onto neighboring properties. Avoid the use of lighting fixtures spaced along the length of a driveway, limiting use and placement to the minimum necessary for safety. Keep in mind the view of this lighting from surrounding areas. ☐

6. Along walkways, low-level lighting in the form of bollards or fixtures mounted on short posts are the preferred lighting solution. Fixtures should be located to avoid hazards for pedestrians or vehicles and should account for growth of landscaping. ☐

7. Where other than low-intensity light sources are used, fixtures must incorporate shielding to prevent objectionable brightness or light trespass. The city's Outdoor Lighting Guidelines contains useful charts of the intensity of different light sources, and when shielding becomes required. Keep in mind that even low-intensity light sources that are shielded, may still be directly visible from downhill neighbors, and considered a nuisance. ☐

8. "Up-lighting" of trees and building elements is discouraged, but when used, such lighting must be limited in its use, and fixtures must confine lighting to features being lit through use of shielding, lamps with low intensity and appropriate beam spread, and timers. ☐

9. Lighting for outdoor living areas such as decks, patios, and swimming pools should be designed to minimize the visibility of the lighting from the surrounding neighborhood. Mounting of floodlights on the building wall and aiming away from the building is not acceptable. ☐

10. Prohibited Lighting. Municipal Code Section 22.75.030.A prohibits the use of the following fixtures in all zones: ☐

    - Lighting fixtures mounted in such a way as to illuminate a roof or awning.
    - Lighting fixtures mounted to aim light only toward a property line.
    - Lighting fixtures mounted in a way that is distracting to motorists or that interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle, as may be determined by the City Engineer.
    - In addition to these ordinance provisions, lighting of architectural features or athletic courts is not appropriate for single family structures.

TIPS FOR CONSIDERING NEIGHBORS' VIEWS

- ✓ Visit your neighbors' houses to see how your building will affect their views and work to accommodate their concerns.
- ✓ Be sensitive to your neighbors' views in the placement and architectural appearance of your house or addition.
- ✓ Identify neighbors' lines of sight and current views and how both your neighbors' views and your own can be preserved or enhanced through a good design.
- ✓ Where it is possible to preserve a view from a neighbor's property, achieve your project goals and respond effectively to environmental and other site constraints, then locate new dwellings so they interfere minimally with the neighbors' views. Strive to place a new dwelling so that similar amount and quality of private views may be achieved on a neighbor's property as on your property.
- ✓ Fences and hedges on Coastal bluff properties often follow property lines perpendicular to the shoreline. These fences and hedges should maintain an open and unobstructed feeling in keeping with the ocean front.
- ✓ Consider your views and your neighbors views that occur at oblique angles across one another's properties. Avoid privacy fencing or hedges that extend well beyond the house toward the ocean. Minimize the visibility of fences and hedges from neighboring houses and from the ocean and beach.
- ✓ Reduce height of the structure to minimize blockage of views.
- ✓ Define neighbors' views and how your new project will affect the views.
- ✓ Introduce methods that can be used to limit views blocked by a building's height.
- ✓ Be sensitive to the existing size and bulk patterns in the neighborhood.
- ✓ Locate higher portions of the structures to minimize view blockage.
- ✓ Consider views from major living areas as well as other high-quality views.
- ✓ Avoid tall landscaping, fences or walls that interfere with your neighbors' views.
- ✓ Consider the mature plant growth height when selecting plants.
- ✓ Screen solar panels, satellite dishes, radio antennae and other equipment from neighbors' views to the maximum amount possible