City of
SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING

INFILL DEVELOPMENT
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

INFILL DEVELOPMENT. *Use these guidelines on multi-unit residential, mixed-use, and nonresidential buildings to ensure that infill development complements existing buildings, preserves neighborhood character, and is well integrated into the neighborhood.* **Check all that apply.**

A.   Building Design, Height, and Massing

Identify any techniques that were used to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.   **APPLIED**

1.   Design new buildings to enhance and fit into the streetscape. Consider all design elements for compatibility with adjacent buildings and with the immediate neighborhood.   ☐

2.   Setting back a building more than the Zoning Ordinance requirement may be necessary to be compatible with the general alignment of the setbacks of neighboring properties and to reduce apparent building mass along the street.   ☐

3.   Avoid massing that overwhelms adjacent buildings and streetscapes. Stepping back upper floors can mitigate overall mass of the building.   ☐

4.   Reduce the overall floor area of the building by decreasing the average unit size, number of units, bedrooms or bathrooms per unit. The floor-to-lot area ratio (FAR) can be used to evaluate if the project may be too large for the size of the lot.   ☐

5.   It may be necessary to reduce the plate heights to lower overall building height and massing. Plate heights should relate to the size and use of the occupancy type.   ☐

6.   Use variation in height and roofline to reduce the perceived height of the building.   ☐

7.   Step down larger buildings in height adjacent to smaller buildings, especially if adjacent buildings are historically significant.   ☐

8.   Open stairs leading to upper floors or the roof top can help reduce building mass.   ☐

9.   Design parking to minimize building mass and height and to maximize functional open space and landscaping. Stacked parking and at-grade podium designs can increase building height, while underground parking can lower building height and reduce mass.   ☐

10   Provide articulation to reduce the apparent mass and scale of the building, and to be sensitive to the neighborhood.   ☐

11.   Organize the street facades of a large development or building into several visually distinct parts to create the appearance of several smaller buildings.   ☐

12.   Divide a larger building mass into smaller components similar in size to adjacent structures to reduce the overall mass of the building. Consider all elevations of the project.   ☐

13.   Buildings should be within the range of heights seen in the neighborhood. Careful consideration should be given when proposing a building with more stories than surrounding buildings. Three- or four-story buildings may not be appropriate in all neighborhoods.   ☐

14.   Encourage the use of traditional building materials compatible with neighborhood style.   ☐

B.   Site Planning for Open Space and Landscaping

Identify any techniques that were used to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.   **APPLIED**

1.   Provide significant landscaping and trees at the ground level, particularly in areas that can screen and soften the larger masses of the building.   ☐

2.   Include landscape buffers between surface parking, hardscape, and buildings.   ☐

3.   For larger residential developments, combine or increase the amount of functional common open space and landscaped areas to accommodate amenities, such as play areas for children, recreational facilities, and outdoor gathering areas.   ☐

4.   Landscaping on upper level decks may be appropriate as a method to increase livability and soften the mass of the building.   ☐

5.   Preserve and incorporate existing natural landscape features and mature trees into new development. If not preserved, provide sufficient new landscaping.   ☐

6.   Designs with parking garages under buildings or with stacked parking could help provide additional area on the site for open space and landscaping.   ☐

C.   Livability and Privacy

Identify any techniques that were used to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.   **APPLIED**

1.   Provide appropriate useable open space to accommodate gathering, playing, and seating areas for residents. In some cases, above-grade open space such as roof decks may be an acceptable substitute for on-grade open space if it provides adequate functional space, preserves privacy, and does not pose massing, height, and other aesthetic concerns.   ☐

2.   Certain projects in certain zone districts do not have required setbacks from interior property lines. In specific cases, it may be appropriate to set back the proposed development in order to provide greater livability, light and air, and privacy for users of the proposed development and adjacent development.   ☐

3.   Design parking to avoid conflict with living areas, but still be easily accessible to residential units.   ☐

4.   Provide pedestrian pathways to create safe and efficient connections to onsite buildings, the public right-of-way, adjacent properties, and the neighborhood.   ☐

5.   Design projects with visible entrances, lobbies, and gates from public sidewalks and streets.   ☐

6.   Provide clearly demarcated, accessible, and lighted pathways between sidewalks and building access points to establish a sense of presence and safety.   ☐

7.   Use courtyards, paseos, gardens and other outdoor areas to enhance open spaces.   ☐

8.   Design projects to comply with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance and Guidelines.   ☐

9.   Place windows to avoid direct views into neighboring windows by offsetting or staggering with neighbors' window locations.   ☐

10.   Avoid placing larger upper-story windows overlooking the rear yards of adjacent properties.   ☐

C.   Livability and Privacy

11. Locate upper-story balconies and decks to minimize loss of privacy for neighboring properties. ☐

12. Set back upper floors or increase side and rear yard setbacks to pull windows farther away from neighboring residents. ☐

13. Orient upper story decks to face the street or away from neighboring windows, openings, and yards. ☐

D.   Projects Adjacent to Historic Resources

Identify any techniques that were used to ensure compatibility with adjacent resources.   **APPLIED**

1. Architectural styles of new or remodeled buildings should be compatible and fit with the character of adjacent structures. ☐

2. Special consideration shall be given to setbacks for projects adjacent to historic resources or historic patterns of development to be compatible with other historic resources on the street. ☐

3. Design interior setbacks to maintain an appropriate distance to provide views to the resource, appropriate light and air, and avoid impacts such as crowding or looming over adjacent historic resources. ☐

4. Location of parking and garages should be sensitive to adjacent historic resources. ☐

5. Orient the front entrance of the building to the street and clearly identify the front entrance unless this is not the predominant pattern on the street. ☐

6. Larger buildings should be stepped down in height as they approach smaller adjacent historic resources. ☐

7. Design the front façade to appear similar in scale with adjacent historic resources. ☐

8. Align foundation and floor-to-ceiling heights to be sensitive to adjacent historic structures. ☐

9. Align eaves, cornices, and ridge lines to be compatible with those of the neighboring historic structures. ☐

10. Design the front of buildings to have a similar rhythm and pattern of window and door openings as those of the existing streetscape. ☐

11. Incorporate materials and colors similar to those traditionally used in neighboring historic structures. ☐