

PART 2: RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

DESIGN GUIDELINES

In the site plan review process, the Residential and Infill Design Criteria will be applied in addition to existing City ordinances and policies.

Residential Design Guidelines

The intent of these guidelines is to increase the livability and the appearance of single-family and moderate-density and multifamily complexes. The design of such development contributes to the overall image of the city and is a significant component of the community's residential mix. Where multifamily buildings are clustered into complexes rather than integrated into mixed-use "Traditional Neighborhoods", it is expected that such complexes will be designed to establish strong "neighborhood" environments.

- A. As much as possible, developments should include a mix of housing styles such as townhomes, condominiums, garden apartments, duplexes, and single-family residential units to create a mixed-use community with housing options for residents of all ages and incomes.
- B. When located adjacent to single-family dwellings, the design and appearance of multifamily dwellings shall incorporate similar massing, height, roof pitch, and architectural features -- including front porches; cornice lines; horizontal lines of windows; and architectural embellishments such as shutters, dormers, belvederes, chimneys, etc. to create the appearance of single family dwellings.
- C. Site designs should create a sense of "neighborhood" which includes:
 - 1. An internal vehicular circulation system reflective of a single-family residential street system, as opposed to looped systems which may appear disjointed and confusing.
 - 2. Buildings sited with front entrances and porches oriented toward streets, drives, and plazas, rather than clustered around parking lots.
 - 3. Parking lots located behind buildings or screened from view from internal streets, unless it is deemed appropriate to use a parking lot as a buffer from an arterial street.
 - 4. Walkways that connect all buildings with parking areas, play areas, club houses, and sidewalks along adjoining streets, as well as neighboring stores, offices, and transit stops.
 - 5. Centrally located plazas, clubhouses, pools, and recreational facilities.
 - 6. Access to transit stops and neighborhood retail centers, whenever possible.

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Residential Design Guidelines

For Residential (single-family residential, moderate-density residential and apartments) development, the following design guidelines are recommended. During Site Plan review of moderate-density and multifamily development proposals and/or in R-2 and R-3 PD reviews, the City should implement the following residential design guidelines. In plat reviews of single-family subdivision, and R-1 PD proposals, the City should refer to the guidelines to the extent applicable..

Site Planning

1. Respect the street and locate buildings on the site so that they reinforce street frontages.
2. Respond to existing and planned adjacent uses.
3. Respond to traffic, parking, circulation, and safety issues, light and glare, noise, odors, dust control and security.
4. Provide as many private, ground level entries to individual units as possible.
5. Ensure that all building entries are prominent and visible.
6. Provide each unit with its own visual identity and individual address whenever possible.
7. Maintain existing setback patterns. Projects should not be located in front or behind the average setback line of the neighborhood.
8. Provide pedestrian accessibility to adjacent uses with gates, pedestrian walkways, crossings, etc.
9. Locate common facilities — such as community rooms and laundries — centrally and link them to common outdoor space.
10. Locate buildings and landscaping to maximize solar access during cooler months and to control it during warmer months. Maximize natural ventilation, sunlight and views for each unit.
11. Adopt lot coverage limitations:
 - Limit lot coverage for Moderate-density developments to no more than 50 percent for principal and accessory structures, and 60 percent including off-street parking.
 - Limit lot coverage for moderate-density and multifamily developments to no more than 40 percent for principal and structures, and 70 percent including off-street parking.

Parking - Multifamily

1. Parking does not dominate the site, the building or the street.
2. Place parking lots at rear or side of the site to allow a majority of dwelling units to front on the street.
3. Build multiple small parking lots in lieu of one large lot.
4. Plant trees and shrubs to soften the overall impact of parking areas and to provide shade and noise reduction.
5. Avoid blank walls facing the street on buildings with parking garages.
6. If blank walls are unavoidable, decorate with artwork, display cases, vines, and good quality durable materials.

7. Place parking lot in proximity to dwelling units to allow for casual surveillance and to minimize walking distance.
8. Separate bicycle and pedestrian paths from vehicular traffic.
9. Designate “vehicle free areas” for bicycle and pedestrian safety and enjoyment.

Public Open Space—Multifamily

1. Design outdoor open space as “outdoor rooms” and avoid undifferentiated, empty spaces.
2. Provide public open space for social or cultural activities.
3. Provide direct access to open space for each dwelling unit while controlling nonresident access.
4. Locate public open spaces so that they can be viewed from individual units, preferably from the kitchen, living room or dining room.
5. Locate play area(s) centrally and to allow for adult supervision from dwelling units and/or from a central facility such as a laundry.
6. Provide lighting from a variety of sources at appropriate intensities and qualities for safety.
7. Provide energy-efficient lighting.

Private Open Space

1. Provide each household with some form of private open space, including patio, porch, deck, balcony, yard, or shared entry porches or balconies.
2. Private open space should be easily accessible — physically and visually — from individual units.
3. Screen balconies for privacy but avoid solid walls that prevent residents, particularly small children, from looking out.
4. Provide fencing to insure privacy and to help define boundaries between public and private open space.

Landscaping

1. Design landscaping as an integral part of the project.
2. Provide a variety of hardy, native plant species — trees, shrubs, groundcover — that are easy to water and maintain.
3. Avoid large, empty paved areas.
4. Provide a variety of seating in landscaped areas.
5. Include paths to accommodate children, adults, bicycles, skate boards, shopping carts, walkers, pets, furniture moving, etc.
6. Provide appropriate lighting to insure that paths are safe.

Architecture

1. Maintain overall height of structure(s) to that of other buildings in the neighborhood except where the local plan calls for redeveloping the area at much greater height and density.

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2. Relate first floor to the street and insure that it is consistent with the first floors in neighboring buildings.
3. Relate size and bulk of project so that it is consistent with buildings in the immediate neighborhood.
4. Eliminate box-like forms with large, unvaried roofs by using a variety of building forms and roof shapes (This may be accomplished by creating clusters of units, variations in height, setback, and roof shape).
5. Give the building visual and architectural complexity by varying the height, color, setback, materials, texture, landscaping, trim and roof shape.
6. Enhance views and make spaces feel larger by maximizing the number of windows.
7. Screen ground floor windows from walkways to provide privacy.
8. Respect the placement and quality of front doors in neighboring homes.
9. Break up the façade of horizontal buildings into smaller components by utilizing vertical adjacent structures.
10. Ensure that rhythm, size and proportion of openings (windows, doors) are similar to good quality buildings in the neighborhood.
11. Use porches, stairs, railings, fascia boards, and trim to enhance buildings' character.
12. Select building materials and color that are complementary to the surrounding area and have high levels of recycled content whenever possible.

Moderate-Density Examples

Recommended

The design creates visual relief from concrete and driveways in duplex and four-plex site plan. Also, interest through the use of varying roof planes, materials.



Recommended

Landscaping softens the density. Public and private open space adds to the residential feel.



Recommended

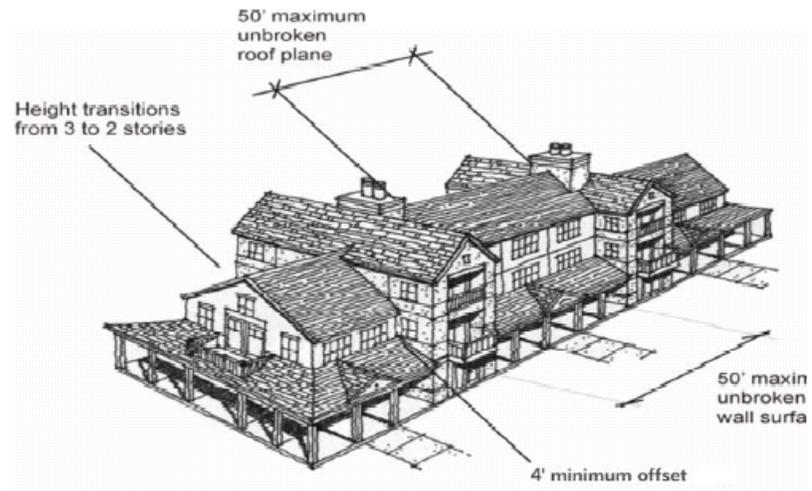
Grass and landscaped areas provided separation between drives, and soften the main entrances. These additional pervious surfaces define private space and help create a residential character. Combined with the side yards and rear private areas, density is controlled.



Multifamily Examples

Recommended

The design of multifamily housing can make high density development more acceptable, such as use of brick and similar materials. Private access to the outdoors makes the housing livable. Undulating facades and use of a variety of architectural details create interest. (Graphic from City of Overland Park, Kansas design guidelines manual)



Recommended—Elderly Housing

Design standards for elderly housing can allow for greater density while protecting appearance and use values, such as private open space.



Not Recommended

The main entrances are varied, but grass areas are not sufficient. Extensive concrete areas compromise the livability— unless softened by greater side yards and rear yards.



Neo-Traditional Planning Guidelines

The following neo-traditional planning guidelines should serve as guidelines when reviewing proposals for new residential development. The purpose is to make varieties of residential density more acceptable in Pleasant Hill in order to diminish local resistance to higher density rezoning requests. They could also be applied to infill residential development; and the second set of standards is geared specifically to infill housing.

- 1. Encourage the development of logical, interconnected street grids, and avoid “jigsaw” street systems.**

Interconnected, grid-like street systems allow for a more dispersed traffic pattern because there are multiple routes to move from one place to another within the city. A grid configuration of streets helps to minimize peak hour traffic flows. In addition, these interconnected systems are more comprehensible and, thus, easier for visitors and residents alike to find their way around the city. On the contrary, “jigsaw” street systems, with no apparent repetition or order, can be disorienting and tend to funnel traffic to collector-type roads, even for short distance travel. This situation contributes to unnecessarily heavy traffic on main roads at peak traffic periods. It should be noted that a gridded street pattern does not necessarily require all streets to be straight. The design of the roadway system should work with the land. The basic goal for the city's overall road layout is a system of north-south roads that regularly intersect with east-west roads.
- 2. Promote the development of tree-lined streets.**

Pleasant Hill should adopt an ambitious street tree program for new development. Street trees provide shade for streets and sidewalks, improve aesthetics, and generally encourage pedestrian use of sidewalks. Street trees also maintain a ceiling or canopy that further imbues a pedestrian scale to the streetscape.
- 3. Require landscaping, primarily through preservation of mature trees and existing vegetation.**

Trees, shrubs, flowers, and other elements of the surrounding environment of a housing area greatly contribute to the quality of life within that area. Shade, wind breaks, beautification, and attraction of songbirds and other wildlife are all benefits of substantial plant communities within housing areas.
- 4. Require grass or planting strips between curbs and sidewalks.**

This space provides safety for pedestrians on the sidewalks and creates an area suitable for street-tree plantings.
- 5. Encourage front porches and other private areas in multifamily town homes.**

Front porches allow homeowners to comfortably spend more time near the front yard and street. This creates a greater opportunity to know ones neighbors, maintain a casual surveillance of the area, and thereby maintain a safe residential neighborhood. This also reinforces a small-town village ambiance.
- 6. Require sidewalks on both sides of public streets.**

One of the most significant elements of pedestrian atmosphere and function is that residents can easily walk to other places within the community. By placing sidewalks an/or bike lanes on each

side of all streets, pedestrian use is indicated as a priority in the community because of a prominent, safe, and accessible system.

7. **Promote flexible standards to allow differing setback requirements.**

Encourage more green space within a residential community by providing room for more backyard shade trees, landscaping, and in instances where existing vegetation is nearby, more beneficial wildlife habitat.

8. **Encourage visually appealing, points of beautification within subdivisions.**

The development of points of beautification within new subdivisions can enhance the perception of neighborhood, a characteristic that is important in the development and maintenance of small-town atmosphere. Beautification areas should be encouraged particularly at entrances, but should not encourage the inclusion of subdivision identification monument signs.

9. **Develop fence specifications to control type of fencing used along arterial and collector roads in residential areas.**

Privacy fences prohibit visual access to residential property and make casual surveillance by law enforcement and neighbors more difficult. Therefore, they should be allowed as partial screens around small, private areas, only, not as perimeter fencing. Visual surveillance is an important part of creating a safe residential neighborhood environment.

Infill Housing Development Guidelines

Without direction from adopted standards, infill development may damage the existing neighborhood fabric. **Figure 6.1: Inappropriate Infill Housing** shows how typical infill housing with little consideration of surrounding development meets the goal of filling a vacant lot, but detracts from rather than complements or enhances the existing character. In this example a moderate sized, single story house (center) is shown in relation to two houses with historical features (ends). Although the infill house has an appropriate orientation and similar scale, the mass, proportion, rooflines, pitch and architectural features are inconsistent with the character of the established neighborhood.

Figure 6.1: Inappropriate Infill Housing



The infill house (center) has little relation to existing houses.

With little or no change in the footprint and square footage, a "functional" house can be complementary to the surrounding development and an asset to the neighborhood. **Figure 6.2: Appropriate Infill Housing** shows how additions such as a stoop, dormers, window treatments and a steeper roof pitch can substantially change the character of a house.

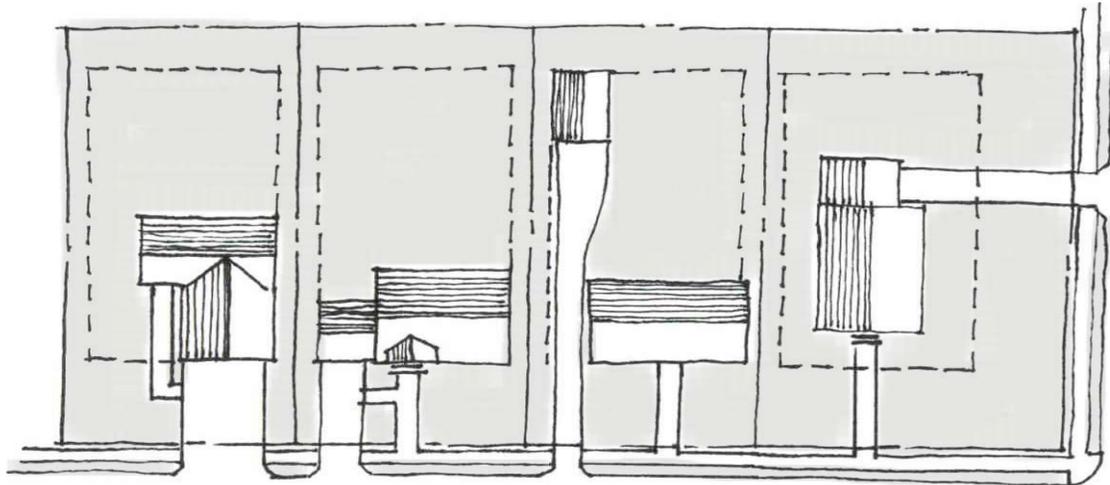
Figure 6.2: Appropriate Infill Housing



With a few additions and no change in square footage, the infill house center) blends with existing houses. Massing, proportion, rooflines, pitch and character are similar to surrounding development.

Additional considerations should include building setbacks, entry features and orientation, garage locations and dominance, landscaping and screening of mechanical equipment. **Figure 6.3: Inappropriate Infill Lot Development** shows common mistakes made by infill development. The lot to the furthest left illustrates how the garage often becomes the dominant feature. This lot also shows how the entry is recessed and shielded from view by the rest of the house, which is inconsistent with the traditional development patterns. Although greatly reduced in dominance, the second lot from the left illustrates a prominent garage with no variation in the front façade. The second lot from the right shows no variation in rooflines and no architectural detailing. Finally, the lot to the furthest right shows an inappropriate setback that disrupts the rhythm of the existing pattern of the block.

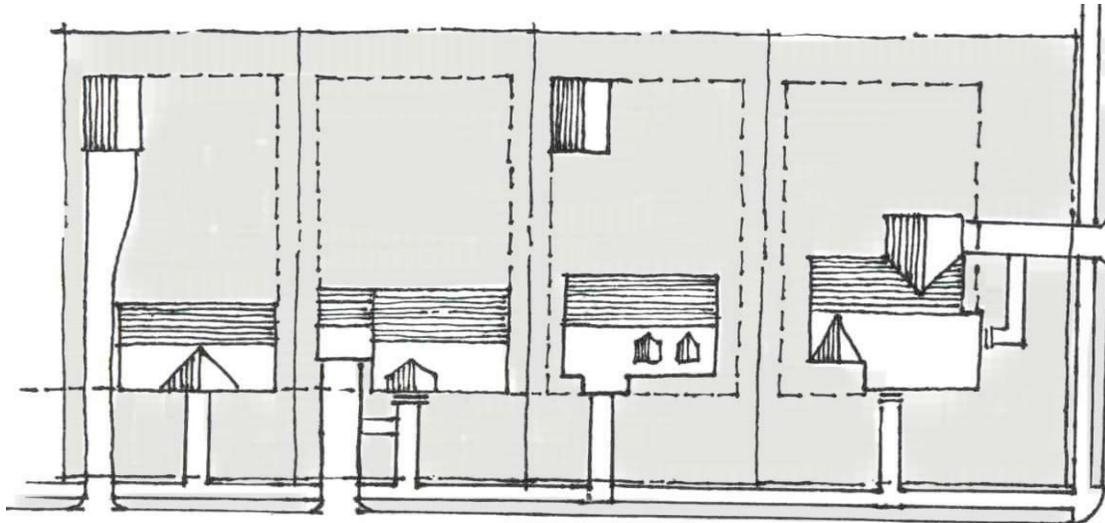
Figure 6.3: Inappropriate Infill Lot Development



Inappropriate infill development disrupts the rhythms and patterns established by the existing development.

Figure 6.4: Appropriate Infill Lot Development shows how simple modifications to site plans can improve infill housing. This figure shows how garages can be located to the rear or side of the lot to be accessed from the street or alley and reduce their dominance. The second lot from the left shows how an attached garage can be recessed to reduce its dominance and provide variation in the front façade. This figure also illustrates how the addition of stoops, dormers, porches and variation in rooflines can be used to substantially change appearance without substantially changing the building footprints or square footage. Consistent setbacks and dominant entries as shown below help retain the block's streetscape and rhythm.

Figure 6.4: Appropriate Infill Lot Development

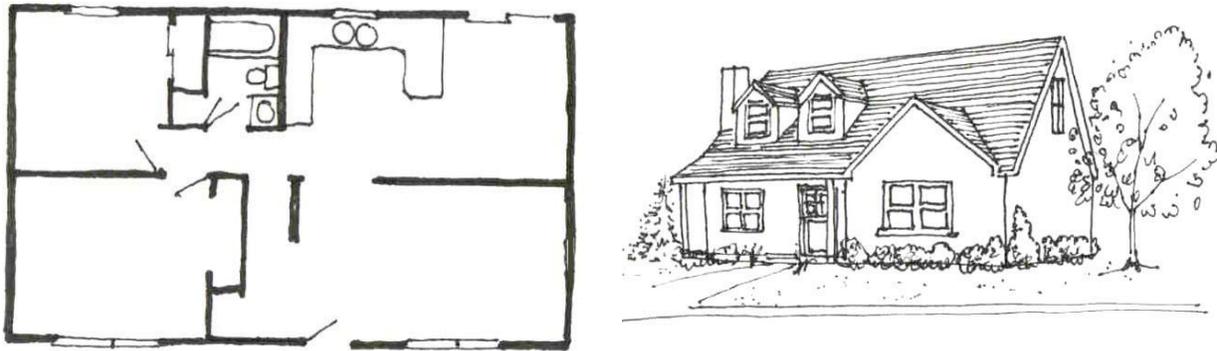


Appropriate infill development complements and continues the rhythm and patterns of the neighborhood.

In addition to providing general housing opportunities, infill housing development is recommended to fill the need for smaller single-family housing. Although smaller housing can help fill the need for entry-level housing, development considerations do not have to be put aside. **Figure 6.5: Sample Plans for 1,000 Square Foot House** provides an example of how a house with modest floor plans can be designed to provide traditional character.

To address infill development, additional consideration should be given through the use infill development guidelines for residential neighborhoods. These guidelines should be promoted to preserve and perpetuate the character of the Pleasant Hill's existing residential development and ensure compatibility between new and existing development. In order to help ensure that guidelines do not hamper development, these guidelines should be promoted by staff when advising developers and builders on infill development projects.

Figure 6.5: Appropriate Infill Housing



Although modest in size, exterior details such as dormers, a porch and multiple rooflines provide character and emulate traditional development styles.

To achieve the above objectives, the following guidelines are recommended:

1. **Applicability:** Prior to the issuance of a building permit, all infill residential projects shall reviewed by the City Staff as applicable according to the following standards. For the purpose of these standards, infill residential projects shall be any new development or redevelopment proposed within an existing, established residential area, unless otherwise approved as part of a restricted overlay, historic overlay or planned residential overlay district.
2. **Guidelines:** The physical form and pattern of existing, established residential neighborhoods should be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Infill design should incorporate the following principles:
 - Building orientation should reflect the predominant neighborhood pattern. The front-to-front, back-to-back relationship of typical residential neighborhoods establishes security, privacy, and a very identifiable streetscape that should be maintained. New construction should address the street in a manner consistent with surrounding buildings. In most

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cases, building facades should be parallel to the street. Front entries and walkways should address the street directly or in a manner consistent with the adjacent properties.

- Vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns should be maintained by infill projects.
- Neighborhood open space patterns, and side, front, and rear yards should be visually preserved. The spacing of infill units (front, rear, and side yards) should generally reflect the spacing of existing homes in the neighborhood.
- Building heights should be compatible with the average height of homes in the neighborhood. Each project should be particularly sensitive to planning and design of contiguous parcels.
- The streetscape and landscaping should be designed to reflect existing neighborhood forms, rhythm and spacing.
- Architecturally, project design should represent: compatible building form; roof types, slope, and overhang; horizontal and vertical proportions; exterior materials, finishes, and details. Architectural details such as gables, porches, windows, shutters and awnings should be used to create interest in the street façade and minimize monotony.
- The style and image of the neighborhood should be reinforced by infill development. Where an established style and image can not be established, infill design has more latitude and should strive to achieve a stronger neighborhood image.
- Garages should be visual or physically secondary to the primary residential structure to maintain the residential and pedestrian character of the street. Where possible, garages should be recessed. Garages for corner lot development are encouraged to be located and accessed at the rear or side of the primary structure. In no case should the garage dominate the street façade.
- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment should be located at the rear of the structure and screened from adjacent properties.