City of Folsom

HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Final
February 14, 1995
Planning Department
Resolution No. 4604

Hillside Development Guidelines

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these Hillside Development Guidelines is to illustrate key design principles and issues which the Planning Commission, Architectural Review Commission and staff will use in evaluating applications for development of any site within those identified Hillside areas of the City. Significant hillside issues include street design, grading, site design, parking, drainage, architecture, landscaping, visual impact and preservation of natural features. Careful review and study of these issues is necessary to assure attractive developments which are sensitive to the surrounding environment.

The guidelines have been prepared to familiarize applicants with site design, architectural design and landscape design concepts encouraged by the City of Folsom and which will be applied by the Planning Department to evaluate compliance with the Hillside Ordinance.

2. INTRODUCTION

The majority of the hillside areas to which these guidelines will apply have been designated for single family development however, there may be opportunity for industrial and commercial development along the East Bidwell Street corridor north of Highway 50. For all areas, these Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the City-wide Design Guidelines, particularly for commercial and industrial development.

These Guidelines are based on principles established in the Hillside Development Procedures and Standards Ordinance (Ordinance No. 798). Where any inconsistency may occur, the language of the ordinance shall prevail.

3. STREET DESIGN

a. Street systems should be established to permit safe an efficient travel for motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians, yet ensure ready access for fire and emergency vehicles.

b. Streets should be designed to reflect the type, density, scale, and character of hillside development. This will require sensitivity to grading, topography, existing vegetation, natural site features, and panoramic views. Alternative street designs require review by the Public Works and Planning Departments early in the design process.

c. Streets should generally follow the natural contours of the lands and should not be placed perpendicular to contour lines, unless absolutely unavoidable. Curvilinear streets are preferred, but sharp curves should be avoided that will hamper emergency access.

d. In order to reduce grading and allow for narrower residential streets, parking bays for guests and residents should be considered as an alternative to continuous curbside parking lanes. Parking lanes should not be included if the street does not provide direct access to abutting residences. However, parking bays may be needed for emergency turnouts or desired to provide parking at strategic vista points.

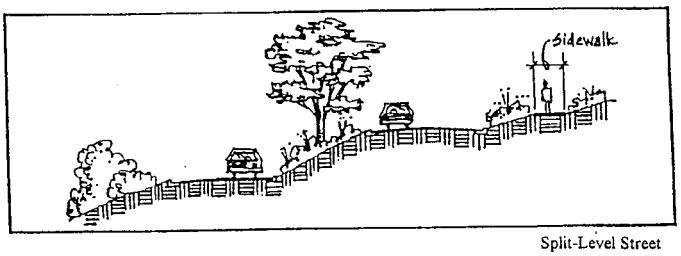
e. Where traffic volume will be low, such as on loop or cul-de-sac streets, and where the street will not be a bus route, street width should be reduced in accordance with City standards to minimize grading and paving. Limiting the width will preserve and enhance the hillside setting and discourage speeding. Fire Department access shall always be maintained.

f. Street design criteria may be reduced to promote slower traffic and to match existing contours while maintaining traffic safety. When ever feasible, a consistent design speed should be utilized for the entire street.

g. A vertically offset or split-level road designed along a hillside slope is desirable where it would minimize grading, preserve an important site feature, or enhance the hillside setting.

h. Arterial and collector streets should be designed to accommodate looped bus routes.

i. Where possible, major developments should include a minimum of two vehicular access points. Public and emergency access to natural and common open space should also be provided.



Split-Level Street

4. SIDEWALKS AND PLANTER STRIPS

a. Flexibility in sidewalk design and placement should be encouraged within hillside areas. Sidewalk alignment should be varied to follow the hillside terrain. Sidewalks should also be darkened, colored, or textured to exhibit a natural appearance and to blend in with the surroundings, while maintaining pedestrian safety. Alternative materials for off-street paths and trails such as asphalt, may be appropriate maintain a natural appearance. Design plans should be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Department for preliminary review if alternative materials are proposed.

b. On streets with low traffic volumes that serve a small number of residents, sidewalks should be provided on one side of the street only; however, curbs should be provided on both sides. Large estate-lot developments may eliminate sidewalks.

c. On major and minor arterials and collector streets, planter strips (minimum 5-1/2 feet in width) should be placed between the curb and sidewalk to allow for landscaping and a greater separation between pedestrians and autos, unless excessive grading would be needed to accommodate the planter strips.

5. DRIVEWAYS

a. The location, width, design, grade, and type of material for driveways shall be sensitive to potential visual impacts and the terrain of the hillside. Specific attention should be given to driveway widths and construction materials.

b. Common driveways with adjacent lots are encouraged, where feasible, to minimize pavement. Provisions for joint ingress/egress and common area maintenance should be included in deed restrictions as part of subdivision applications and other land use entitlements.

c. Driveways should be constructed using concrete, exposed concrete, or an all-weather material (e.g., darkened or colored concrete, textured or stamped concrete, or interlocking pavers) that will blend in with the surroundings. Asphalt paving of driveways is prohibited. When driveways are located on steep slopes where concrete may be necessary, the surface should be darkened to reduce the visual impact.

d. Driveways or accessways serving structures located beyond 150 feet from a public street must reviewed by the Fire Department.

e. Grading for driveways shall utilize the following techniques

1. Set house on the site so that the length of the driveway is minimized.

2. Minimize the visibility of driveway cuts from off the property.

3. Use plantings, wall materials and colors to minimize visual effects of driveway cuts.

4. Design driveway slope to fit with natural topography.

6. RIDGELINES

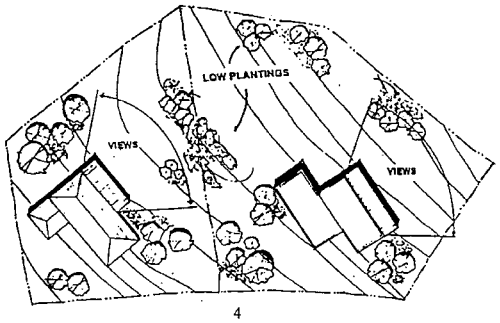
Ridgelines may be defined as "the line and adjacent slopes comprising the top of a hilly topography.

a. For the purposes of these guidelines, "ridgeline" may be defined as "the line and adjacent slopes comprising the top of a hilly topography".

b. Development located near or on a ridgeline shall be sensitive to the surrounding environment. Homes should blend into the topography, creating minimal visual disturbance to existing ridgelines and panoramic views.

c. Proper placement of homes is crucial for preserving the ridgeline and maintaining the natural scenic views and to avoid blocking neighboring views. Rows of homes shall be avoided on ridgelines.

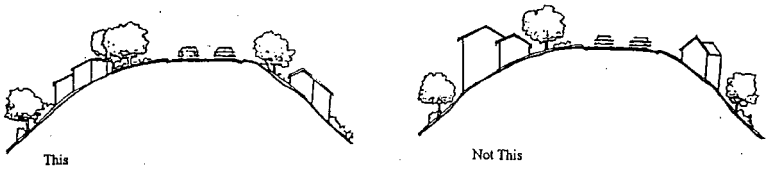
d. Development along ridgelines should consist of lots with wider frontages and wider sideyard setbacks between structures to allow for "view corridors."



View Preservation

d. Dwellings should exhibit a low profile, and roof pitches should be angled to follow the slope.

e. Landscaping shall be used on ridge lines to soften impact of uninterrupted views of structure/ridge/structure/ridge etc.



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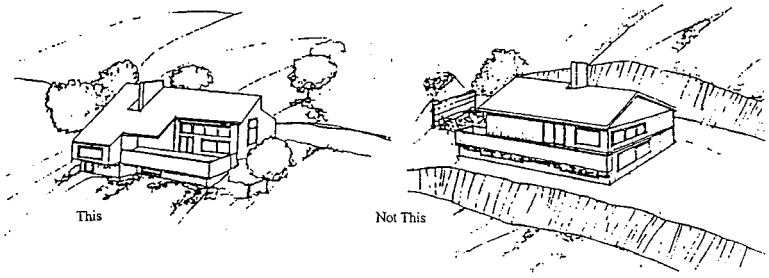
7. GRADING AND DRAINAGE

a. Grading within hillside areas shall be done according to City ordinance and guidelines. Measures for protecting existing trees, native vegetation, rock outcroppings, and other natural features shall be indicated on grading plans.

b. Cut or fill slopes should be designed to blend into the existing slope. The top and toe of slopes shall be rounded to provide a smooth transition between grade changes. Contour grading should be used to blend landforms rather than severe cutting, filling, padding and terracing. Large cut and fill slopes should be contoured to create a natural appearance and to provide swales for clustering vegetation.



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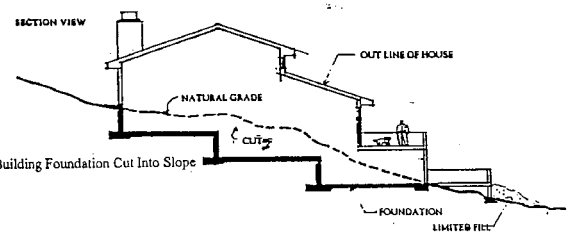
c. The following grading guidelines shall apply to single-family dwellings located in hillside areas:

On existing slopes under 10%:

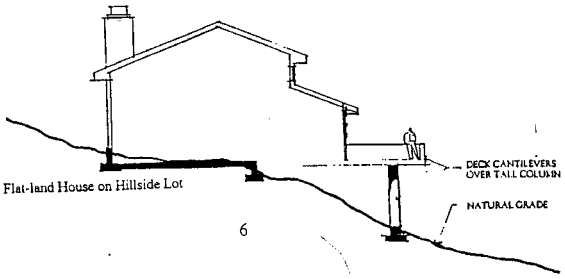
- Grading to create single-level padded lots is permitted provided that significant vegetation, rock outcroppings, or other important natural features will not be removed or disturbed.
- The proposed grading will blend with the natural terrain and will not be located at a visually sensitive area.

On existing 10 - 15% slopes:

- Dwellings should be designed with raised, stepped or pier and grade foundations to reduce grading, to avoid contiguous stair-stepped and padded lots, and to retain a more natural appearance.
- Grading to create flat usable open space shall be limited. Outdoor living space should be provided by constructing elevated decks or patios that are integrated into the design of the dwellings.



Building Foundation Cut Into Slope



Flat-land House on Hillside Lot

d. Grading and drainage shall be designed to avoid mass grading of large building pads, minimize amount of cut and fill, prevent excess erosion, concentrated run-off and excessive tree and vegetation removal.

e. Revegetation of all manufactured slopes shall be required to control erosion. Permanent vegetation coverage shall be accomplished within 12 months of completion date of finish grading.

f. Site drainage shall not increase existing natural run-off to adjoining lots and open space and shall avoid significant disruption of vegetation

8. LANDSCAPING

a. Landscaping should be provided to minimize the visual impact of structures, walls, and graded slopes, especially where the development abuts open space areas or is located on ridgelines or on highly visible hill faces.

b. Domestic landscaping should emphasize the use of native, water-conserving, fire resistant, and deer tolerant plants that will blend with the natural vegetation. Avoid installing landscaping that can create a fire hazard when the vegetation matures (e.g., tree canopy overhanging roof, fuel ladders, dense flammable vegetation, and plants that produce excessive debris). Plants on slopes should be deep-rooting for erosion control. Existing vegetation and trees should be preserved as much as possible.

c. Avoid planting trees and shrubs in a straight line to define property lines, driveways, or edges. Plants should be clustered informally to blend with the natural vegetation.

d. On large lots, concentrate irrigated landscaping adjacent to the dwelling, and transition to more natural planting on the remainder of the lot.

e. Irrigation systems should be water efficient and emphasize the use of drip emitters, bubblers, and low precipitation spray heads. An automatic controller should be installed with all irrigation systems.

f. The boundary between multi-family and single-family developments should be well buffered with planting.

g. Palette and Tree Profile Chart

The following list is not to be considered all inclusive, however, landscaping plans should utilize plantings from this list. Trees shall be a minimum of 15 gallon.

Trees (Evergreen)

Cedrus deodara
Cupressocyparis leylandii/ Leyland cypress
Magnolia grandiflora
Photinia fraseri (standard)
Pinus halepensis
Quercus agrifolia
Sequoia sempervirens

Trees (Deciduous)

Cercis occidentalis
Fraxinus oxycarpa "Raywood"
Lagerstroemia indica
Liquidambar styraciflua
Malus "radiant"
Pistacia chinensis
Platanus acerifolia "Bloodgood"
Platanus racemosa
Populus fremontii
Quercus douglasii
Quercus lobata

Shrubs

Aesculus californica
Agapanthus "spp"
Arbutus unedo
"Compacta" Arctostaphylos "Dr. Hurd"
Arctostaphylos "spp"
Ceanothus "Concha"
Ceanothus "Julia Phelps"
Ceanothus "spp"
Cephalanthus occidentalis
Cercis occidentalis
Cottoneaster "spp"

Escallonia "spp"
Grevillea "noellii"
Heteromeles arbutifolia
Pittosporum "spp"
Rhamnus californica
Rubus "spp"
Sambucus mexicana

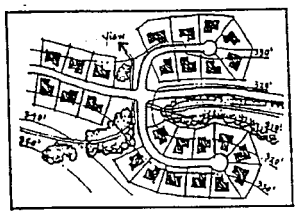
Groundcover

Acacia redolens
Agapanthus "spp"
Arctostaphylos "spp"
Baccharis pilularis "Twin Peaks"
Gazania "spp"
Helianthemum
Rubus "spp"
Ficus pumila/Creeping fig
Campsis radicans/Trumpet vine

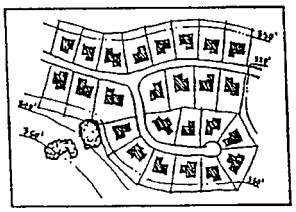
9. ARCHITECTURE AND SITE DESIGN

a. The architectural design of homes and choice of building materials and colors should provide a smooth visual transition between the homes and natural surroundings.

b. Preferred hillside development includes clusters of approximately 8 to 12 single-family dwellings or large clusters of multi-family structures separated by inter-connected natural open space corridors.



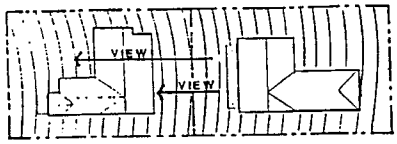
Cluster Housing



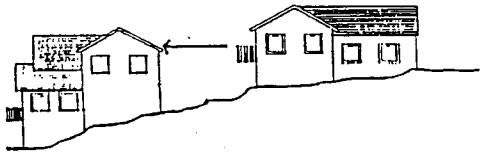
Conventional Lot Pattern

c. Development should be clustered to avoid geologic hazards and preserve significant natural site features, including but not limited to rock outcroppings, woodland and riparian vegetation, mature trees, natural drainage courses, important wildlife habitat areas and corridors, and scenic views.

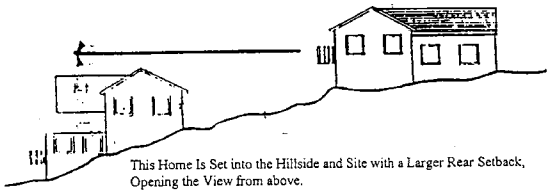
d. Buildings should be designed so as to not totally block views from neighboring structures



On Homes Located On Steep Slopes with Lots Situated Directly Behind One Another, Care Should Be Taken Not to Completly Block View of Uphill Home.

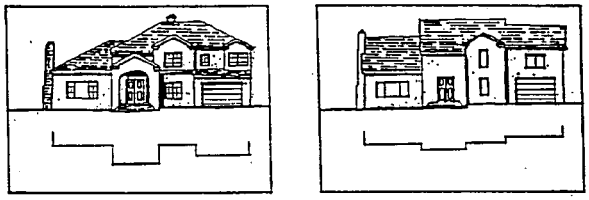


The Downhill Home Is Taller than the Uphill Home and Situated on the Lot with a Minimum Rear Setback. Both Are Contributing Factors in Loss of View from Uphill Home.



This Home Is Set into the Hillside and Site with a Larger Rear Setback, Opening the View from above.

e. Buildings should exhibit varied elevations, floor plans, setbacks, and quality architecture to enhance the hillside setting. Front elevations should be articulated with well-proportioned windows, roof lines, entries, wall offsets, materials and/or other details. Side and rear elevations should also be attractively designed; design elements and materials should relate to the front elevation, with the level of articulation based on visibility from the surrounding areas.



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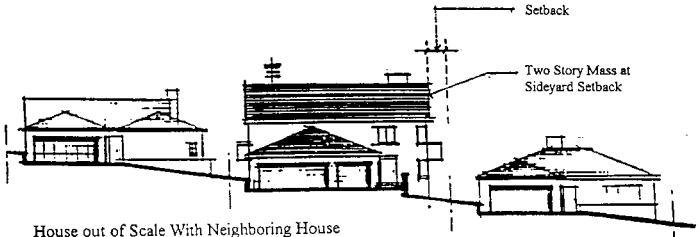
f. Large flat wall surfaces should be divided into smaller wall planes with horizontal offsets to reduce the bulky appearance of the structure. Roofs should also be broken into smaller components which accentuate the wall offsets.

g. New structures, additions, and remodels should be architecturally compatible with surrounding development with respect to bulk, articulation, design, colors and materials.



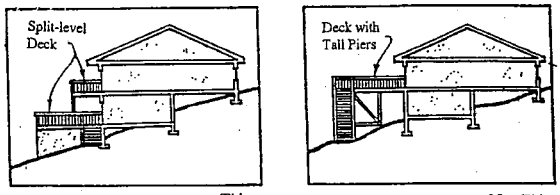
House out of Scale With Neighboring House

h. The use of colors, textures and materials that are highly reflective, garish, of intense chroma, vivid or insensitive to neighborhood character shall be avoided.

i. Colors, detailing and materials are encouraged to strive for consistency with the architectural theme or style of the structure. Piecemeal embellishment and frequent changes in material should be avoided.

j. The color of external materials is encouraged to be in harmony with the landscape and background colors.

k. Elevated decks should be well-integrated into the design of the dwelling. Avoid massive decks that stand out in the hillside. Reduce the bulk of an elevated deck by lowering its height or terracing the deck to follow the slope. When possible, avoid tall piers and/or skirting by extending the floor joists of a dwelling to support the deck.



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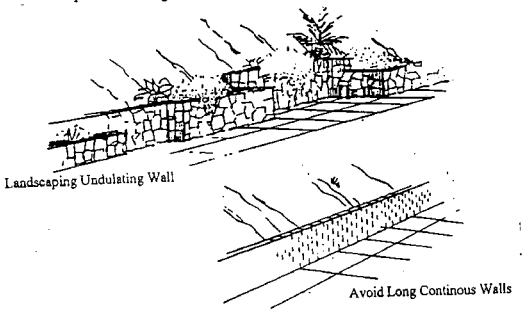
l. Rows of homes with similar setbacks/elevations should be avoided.

10. FENCES AND WALLS

a. Minimize fence and wall heights.

b Break walls into low segments, stepping up or down the hill.

c. Avoid long continuous walls along roads which block views. Walls should be textured and landscaped to discourage graffiti. Where possible, avoid placing fences on top of retaining walls.



d. Use horizontal lines and proportions to reduce perception of height and bulk.

e. Follow topography with wall and fence design

f. Minimize length of solid fences and walls on hillsides.

g. Use open rather than solid fence to reduce visual and structural bulk.

h. Use earth tone colors and native, natural materials.

i. Chain link fences are strongly discouraged in hillside areas. Where proposed, chain link shall be softened with landscaping, vinyl coating, or wooden slat inserts with hardware to match fencing color.

Chain Link Fence Screened by Landscaping

11. LIGHTING

a. A minimal approach to lighting shall be taken to outside illumination of any use, site, or structure.

b. The primary objective of exterior lighting should be safety for pedestrians and other nonvehicular uses around the primary building of the site.

c. Natural site conditions and location should be taken into account in development of any plans for exterior lighting of a structure and/or property. Sites that have little tree cover and that are very open, and easily accessed locations should have less need for lighting than more secluded sites with heavy tree cover and difficult points of access.

d. Lighting for purely decorative purposes should be avoided. For example, up-lighting of trees, lighting around or within landscaped areas, accent lighting of architectural features, lighting of the perimeter of parking and similar areas are discouraged.

e. Use of conventional unshaded or non-recessed spot lights and spot light or flood light bulbs of 75 watts or greater should be avoided.

12. GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICIES

a. Lighting

There is legitimate concern about adequate lighting for safety purposes but, lighting should not spill onto your neighbor's property.

- Screen light sources from neighboring properties and/or use directional lighting.
- Light sources should be at ground level.
- Light sources should not be seen from a distance.
- Limit light intensity.
- Design driveways so that headlights do not shine onto neighboring properties.

b. Views

Private views are an issue between private parties. Be sensitive to your neighbors' views and work with them to minimize impacts on their views. Views are valuable.

- Visit your neighbors' house to see how your building will affect their views and work to accomodate their concerns.

- Be sensitive to your neighbors' views in the placement and architectural appearance of your house or addition.
- Reduce height of the structure to minimize blockage of views.
- Locate higher portions of the structure to minimize obstruction of neighboring views.
- Protect views of major living areas as well as other high quality views.
- Avoid tall landscaping that interferes with your neighbors' views.
- Screen solar panels, satellite dishes, radio antennae and other equipment from neighbors views to the maximum amount possible.

c. Privacy

Privacy is a major concern of residents which should be addressed in the initial stages of design. Sensitivity to privacy is as important on hillsides as on small lots.

- Locate structures and additions to increase distance between buildings.
- Orient your upper floor balconies toward your yard area.
- Orient your second story windows tpo protect your neighbors' privacy.
- Use translucent windows or high windows to allow illumination while protecting privacy.
- Locate areas that require more privacy away from your neighbors.

- Keep existing vegetation that currently gives privacy to you or your neighbor.
- Use landscaping to screen living areas.
- Use evergreen trees and shrubs to provide year-round privacy.

d. **Noise**

Neighborhood noise is an ongoing issue. While these guidelines cannot do anything about the late night parties, th efollowing suggestions contribute to overall neighborhood peace and quiet.

- Orient outdoor activities away from neighbors.
- Avoid placing noices sources at the sides of small lots (pool or air conditioning equipment, garbage cans, parking areas, etc.).

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