



**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF LONG RANGE PLANNING
MEMORANDUM**

Date: January 14, 2008
To: City of Santa Barbara Single Family Design Board
From: Derek Johnson, Deputy Director
Subject: Draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines

Recommendation

Hearing on the request of the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Office of Long Range Planning that the City of Santa Barbara Single Family Design Board receive and review the attached draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines.

Project Background

In 2006, the County Board of Supervisors identified the Mission Canyon Area (Canyon) for the formulation of Residential Design Guidelines and an update to the 1984 Mission Canyon Area Specific Plan. The Board of Supervisors appointed a nine-member Mission Canyon Plan Advisory Committee (MCPAC) to advise staff on the preparation of draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines, and the update of the 1984 Specific Plan. Because City of Santa Barbara wastewater services are provided to portions of Mission Canyon, the County maintains a Joint Powers Agreement with the City whereby both the County and City of Santa Barbara must jointly approve amendments to the Mission Canyon Specific Plan. In addition, permit applications for projects in Mission Canyon are referred to City Planning staff for comment. In light of the Joint Powers Agreement, as well as the City's Sphere of Influence designation over the Mission Canyon Planning Area, a courtesy review of the Draft Residential Design Guidelines by the City of Santa Barbara Single Family Design Board (SFDB) is appropriate.

Preparation of the Design Guidelines was initiated in February 2007 with a public workshop that provided an opportunity for the MCPAC and the general public to provide input on design-related issues effecting new development. Following the workshop, MCPAC members utilized the public input to develop goals that guided the Design Guidelines drafting.

In June 2007, the Draft Design Guidelines were presented to the County's South Board of Architectural Review (County SBAR) for comment. Since then, the draft was revised based on County SBAR, staff, MCPAC and public comments and placed on hold pending the Specific

Plan Update, which was initiated in summer 2007. Staff is currently drafting sections of the Specific Plan for MCPAC review.

Draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines

The Residential Design Guidelines are intended to preserve, protect and enhance the visual character of Mission Canyon by encouraging high standards in architectural and landscape design. The guidelines will apply to all new residential structures and additions, with a few exceptions as identified in the County's Land Use and Development Code. The Guidelines are intended to be used by homeowners, architects, designers, developers and builders when designing new single family homes or changing existing ones. The Guidelines provide a framework for review by County staff and the County SBAR.

1. Introduction

The Introduction sets the document's tone with an acknowledgement that Mission Canyon is a unique setting that is not patterned after typical urban or suburban residential subdivisions. Future development in the Canyon will generally fall into one of three categories: new development on constrained parcels using innovation engineering and design techniques, development of more remote parcels in upper Mission Canyon, and remodels and replacement of existing homes. The Design Guidelines provide a framework for staff, County SBAR and other decision-making agencies to evaluate these development proposals.

The MCPAC developed nine goals for the Design Guidelines, starting on page 1. These goals set the stage for drafting the subsequent guidelines for development. Also included in the Introduction are County standards and review criteria including role of the City of Santa Barbara, a review process description and flow chart, voluntary "Good Neighbor Practices" and conflict resolution tips.

2. Neighborhood Context, Character and Compatibility

This section of the document has a description of immediate and neighborhood context to assist applicants in determining how their project fits with the immediate neighborhood. To carry the concept further, a Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet for applicants was developed (included in the Supplemental Section) as well. Also included is a description of three distinct Canyon neighborhoods to further assist applicants and planners in determining how a new home or remodel can integrate into the setting. The community-wide neighborhood compatibility guidelines on page 17 are intended to promote consistent, compatible development.

3. Site Planning and Structure Placement

This section is concerned with integrating structures with the setting. Fire safety is a primary concern in this area and the guidelines address firewise structure placement. Other issues important to the community addressed in this section include:

- consideration of access to sunlight and space for solar energy systems
- accessory structures placement and style

- integration of a structure with trees and other vegetation
- grading minimization
- stormwater management
- off-street parking considerations
- public viewshed protection.

4. Elements of Design

The design principles in this section provide a starting point for achieving neighborhood compatibility and visual harmony. Firewise construction guidelines are included to stress the importance of this issue; however, they may be modified or eliminated as “guidelines” as they were developed prior to adoption of the new building code for high fire hazard areas. The MCPAC advised staff to include neighborhood scale and second story guidelines to control size, bulk and scale of structures. These guidelines stress proportion, breaking up mass, lowering eavelines and setting second stories back and to the center of first stories (where appropriate to the design). City staff generously provided graphics for this section on page 33, 35 and 40 to help illustrate the design concepts. A concept borrowed from the City of Santa Barbara for the solar access guidelines in this section is limiting the height of structures on the northerly property line to protect solar access. Other issues addressed in this section include design of garages, carports and driveways, roof design and exterior materials and colors.

5. Garage Conversions and 6. Residential Second Units

These two one-page sections are included to address the appearance and location of garage conversions and residential second units.

7. Hillside Housing

Many homes in Mission Canyon are on hillsides and these guidelines are included to provide direction for integrating structures into the natural surroundings, grading (including driveways), architectural elements and decks and courtyards. The City’s Single Family Residence Hillside Housing Design Guidelines were instrumental in developing these guidelines for Mission Canyon’s hillside homes.

8. Landscaping, Screening, Fences and Walls

Firewise and resource-efficient landscaping and the use of screening plants, fences and walls are important features in this community. Property owners are encouraged to select plants for resource efficiency and their ability to reduce wildfire hazards with an included firewise landscaping plant list courtesy of the Santa Barbara City Fire Department firescape demonstration garden. Landscaping screening is recommended to create privacy but selective use is encouraged to not inhibit the passage of wildlife and to maintain visual openness and fire safety. Materials and placement of walls and fences is considered through guidelines that encourage minimizing height and length in the front yard and use of natural materials. The historic stone walls found on Mission Canyon Road and elsewhere throughout the Canyon are treasured and guidelines encourage their preservation without alteration.

9. Exterior Lighting

Mission Canyon is one of the few developed areas in the South Coast with a visible canopy of stars and the night sky is relatively free from the glow of exterior lights. In keeping with the existing setting, the guidelines highly encourage minimizing the use of lighting except where needed for security and safety purposes. They also address fixture and bulb type and location. Additionally, the MCPAC will be reviewing a new outdoor lighting ordinance, in conjunction with the Specific Plan update, which would set standards for outdoor lighting. If such standards were adopted, the exterior lighting guidelines would likely be eliminated from the Design Guidelines so as not to be duplicative.

10. Supplemental

The supplemental section includes forms and information useful for applicants and the South County SBAR. As noted earlier, this section also includes a firewise landscaping list and native alternatives to exotics provided by the Botanic Garden. A Green Design section provides text and graphics on methods of incorporating green design principles into a project. Lastly, there is a small section on post-disaster reconstruction and a glossary.

Project Schedule

After the SFDB Hearing, the guidelines are scheduled for a second County SBAR Hearing on February 15, 2008. Comments received from the SFDB will be relayed to the County SBAR during this hearing. After the hearing(s), the Guidelines will be placed on hold pending completion of an administrative draft of the Specific Plan update. Once an administrative draft of the Specific Plan has been prepared, the Design Guidelines will likely be amended to ensure compatibility with the Specific Plan prior to bringing both documents forward for approval by the City and County.