



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

Date: February 28, 2008

To: Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission

From: Derek Johnson, Deputy Director

Subject: Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines and Draft Community Plan

**Recommendation**

The Office of Long Range Planning is requesting Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission (HLAC) review and comment on the draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines (Attachment 1) and the History and Archaeology section of the Draft Mission Canyon Community Plan (Attachment 2).

**Project Background**

In 2006, the Board of Supervisors identified Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines and an update to the 1984 Mission Canyon Area Specific Plan in Long Range Planning's work program. In late 2006, the Board 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 1984 Mission Canyon Specific Plan.

Beginning in December 2006, the work effort focused on preparing a draft of the Residential Design Guidelines. In June 2007, the draft Design Guidelines were presented to the South Board of Architectural Review (SBAR) for comment. Since then, the draft was revised based on SBAR, staff, MCPAC and public comments and presented for a courtesy review to the City of Santa Barbara's Single Family Design Board and for a second review by the SBAR in February 2008. Following HLAC review, the Design Guidelines will undergo another revision prior to submittal for City and County Planning Commission review.

The Specific Plan update portion of the work program was initiated with the MCPAC in July 2007. As work on the document progressed, the community expressed interest in pursuing new policies and development standards to guide future in-fill development within Mission Canyon.

In order to accommodate those land use objectives, staff is recommending the 1984 Mission Canyon Specific Plan be incorporated within a broader policy based Community Plan.

### **Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission Review**

Long Range Planning is requesting HLAC review on two components of the Mission Canyon project: The draft Residential Design Guidelines and the historic and archaeological resources section of the Community Plan.

#### Draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines

The intent of the Residential Design Guidelines (Attachment 1) is to ensure that new and remodeled projects are compatible with the semi-rural and eclectic residential character of the Canyon. The portions of the document most relevant to HLAC review are highlighted below:

##### 1. Introduction

The Introduction established the documents' 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: 1) new development on constrained parcels using innovation engineering and design techniques, 2) development of more remote parcels in upper Mission Canyon, and 3) remodels and replacement of existing homes. The Design Guidelines provide a framework for staff, South County Board of Architectural Review (SBAR) and other decision-making agencies to evaluate these development proposals.

##### 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. Please note Guideline 2.05, which specifically addresses projects in the vicinity of County adopted places of historic merit or landmarks.

##### 3. Site Planning and Structure Placement and 4. Element of Design

These sections are concerned with integrating structures with the setting and achieving neighborhood compatibility and visual harmony. Fire safety is a primary concern in this area and the guidelines address fire-wise structure placement and construction methods. Other issues important to the community addressed in these sections 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, minimization of grading, stormwater management, off-street parking considerations, neighborhood scale and protection of the public viewshed.

## 8. Landscaping, Screening, Fences and Walls

This section addresses fire-wise and resource-efficient landscaping and the use of screening plants, fences and walls. 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.

### Mission Canyon Community Plan Update

During the course of meetings and workshops for this project, both MCPAC members and the public have expressed a strong interest in protecting historic resources in Mission Canyon. There are two County landmarked structures in Mission Canyon: Glendessary and Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, Mission Dam and Aqueduct. There has been anecdotal public testimony of the historic importance of structures and settings in Mission Canyon but there are no historic resource surveys on file with the County specific to this area. The draft Community Plan proposes several actions to promote historic resources surveys (proposed Actions HA-MC-2.2 and HA-MC-2.3) as a starting point for identifying resources that may qualify for nomination to landmark status at a future date. The plan also includes an action to consider participation in the Mills Act program to offer historic preservation incentives for qualified historical properties (proposed Action HA-MC-2.4).

The community has also expressed an interest in protecting the scenic character of Mission Canyon Road, particularly the stretch from Rocky Nook Park to Foothill Road and possibly continuing up to the Botanic Garden, as the historic “gateway” entrance into the Canyon. The interest in scenic resources extends to cut stone walls, bridges and pillars, architecturally or historically significant homes and public views. To respond to the concern, staff has proposed developing a Mission Canyon Plan Overlay with specific development standards to protect the historic and scenic portions of the corridor.

Some of the components of the proposed overlay could include additional findings for projects that come before the SBAR for design review. These findings would serve to preserve the original stone walls to the maximum extent feasible, maintain front yard setbacks from road centerline in the pattern that is found traditionally in the neighborhood and ensure that new buildings or alterations do not overwhelm, impede views of, or interfere with the setting of nearby or adjacent historical or traditional buildings along Mission Canyon Road.

HLAC’s input on the policies and action items proposed in the Community Plan as well as any other historic resources issues for the Plan is greatly appreciated and will help ensure that historical resources are incorporated into Mission Canyon’s long term planning effort.