



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
OFFICE OF LONG RANGE PLANNING
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 8, 2007
TO: South County Board of Architectural Review
FROM: John McInnes, Director
STAFF CONTACT: Derek Johnson, Project Manager, 568-2072
SUBJECT: Draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines

Recommendation

Hearing on the request of the Office of Long Range Planning that the South County Board of Architectural Review (SBAR):

1. Receive and review the attached draft Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines;
2. Receive the attached Design Guidelines Goals as articulated by the Mission Canyon Planning Advisory Committee (MCPAC) members; and
3. Set a South Board of Architectural Review meeting date on June 22, 2007 to provide comments regarding the draft Design Guidelines.

Executive Summary and Discussion

The Mission Canyon Area was identified by the Board of Supervisors for the formulation of Residential Design Guidelines and an update to the 1984 Mission Canyon Area Specific Plan. The Board of Supervisors appointed the 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 (i.e., erosion, transportation, parking ,emergency access, etc).

*“The purpose of the Guidelines is to guide, educate and motivate homeowners, developers and designers to create projects that contribute to community design objectives and provide the tools needed for staff, the South Board of Architectural Review and other decision-makers to properly evaluate development proposals”.*¹ As projects in the Mission Canyon Planning Area are already subject to design review under the (D) Design Control Overlay, the proposed Residential Design Guidelines would apply to all new structures, including additions, with exceptions to design review approval as identified in the County’s Land Use and Development Code.

¹ Mission Canyon Residential Design Guidelines; June 8, 2007 Draft, pg 4.

Staff reviewed Residential Design Guidelines from the County and other jurisdictions throughout the State to integrate design concepts pertinent in developing the attached draft Mission Canyon Design Guidelines. A MCPAC subcommittee was formed to advise and assist staff in developing the draft document. In compliance with Board direction, the format of the draft Design Guidelines follows the recently adopted Eastern Goleta Valley Residential Design Guidelines format. The guidelines are still in the early stages of development with significant time still available for SBAR and public input.

Project History

The County Board of Supervisors directed the Office of Long Range Planning to include preparation of Residential Design Guidelines and an update to the 1984 Mission Canyon Area Specific Plan as part of its annual work program. The MCPAC has held five meetings and two public workshops focused on development of the draft Design Guidelines. A three-member subcommittee of the MCPAC was formed to advise and assist staff in the draft preparation.

The first public workshop, held on February 24, 2007, was an opportunity for the MCPAC and the general public to provide input on design-related issues effecting new development. The workshop was conducted in a “*World Café*” format with rotating round table discussions on different design issues, facilitated by MCPAC members. Approximately 60 people attended the workshop. Following the workshop, MCPAC members utilized the public input to develop goals that guided the design guidelines (see attachment A).

The first draft of the Residential Design Guidelines was presented to the MCPAC on April 25, 2007, followed by a Saturday public workshop on May 5, 2007. Staff solicited input from the MCPAC and the public on each section. Comments received during the meetings, as well as written comments submitted to staff, were incorporated into the draft (see attachment B).

Process

Comments from the SBAR and the public will be incorporated in the draft document. The Guidelines will be presented as an informational item to the City of Santa Barbara’s Architectural Board of Review after the SBAR hearing. The County maintains a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Santa Barbara that provides any changes to the 1984 Mission Canyon Specific Plan must be jointly approved by both the County and City of Santa Barbara. The guidelines are intended to be a significant component of the land use policy and is therefore necessary that the City’s Architectural Review Board comment on the draft document.

After the hearing(s), the draft Guidelines will be placed on hold pending the Specific Plan Update. Any relevant changes to the Specific Plan will be incorporated into the Design Guidelines to ensure conformity between the two documents. The revised draft Design Guidelines will be returned to the MCPAC and SBAR prior to initiating the joint City of Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara County Planning Commission hearings in early 2008. Both documents are scheduled for final adoption hearings and implementation in summer/fall 2008.

In summary, staff and the MCPAC are requesting the SBAR's professional expertise and guidance in the practical use of these Design Guidelines for project review. Additionally, the MCPAC requests that the SBAR recommend tool or policy options for determining new or remodeled homes neighborhood compatibility. Some of the tools and policy options that the MCPAC has considered and discussed include:

- Floor Area Ratios (FAR as both guidelines and standards),
- Sloped Based FARs,
- FAR incentives for Good Design,
- Second Story Setback Requirements,
- Limiting Second Stories to a Certain Percentage of First Floor Footprint,
- Daylight Plan Requirements,

Staff has provided a memo that was sent to the MCPAC in April 2007 which discusses each of the tool and policy options (see attachment C). The SBAR's recommendation regarding the set of tools and policy options will be considered by the MCPAC for their final recommendation.

The following questions provide a framework and focus for discussion:

- Do the draft Design Guidelines work towards maintaining a community consistent with the existing rural, semi-rural and suburban neighborhoods with regard to bulk, size, height, and scale of structures?
- What methods for controlling size, bulk and scale (i.e., floor area ratio guidelines/standards or design alternatives such as second story setbacks etc.) are preferred by the SBAR? What are the most effective tools for preventing and/or minimizing large homes in Mission Canyon?
- Are the hillside guidelines responsive to promoting aesthetically pleasing, safe and environmentally sound hillside developments?
- Are the guidelines easy to understand and based upon transparent rationale?
- Do the guidelines work to ensure that the natural beauty of Mission Canyon is preserved with consideration of structure placement, use of materials, landscaping, exterior lighting, public viewsheds etc?
- Are the guidelines responsive to fire hazard concerns in Mission Canyon?
- What are the design review challenges the SBAR faces most often in Mission Canyon? Can the design guidelines be crafted to make the review process proceed more efficiently?
- What weight does SBAR give to an applicant that does, or does not, follow "good neighbor practices"?