



Block Face Character (Table 1) Fact Sheet & Focus Questions:

BACKGROUND

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT AND BLOCK FACE CHARACTER

- “Neighborhood Context” refers to the defining characteristics such as street trees, lighting, buildings with common scale, and common architectural styles or elements that identify an area or community.
- “Block Face Character” refers to the common patterns and rhythms of buildings along a street block, and between those blocks.
- The South Board of Architectural Review Finding #7 for Projects Subject to Design Review reads:
“There is a harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments, avoiding excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted.”¹
- New Commercial Design Guidelines will emphasize adherence to neighborhood context and the block’s existing character in order to maintain neighborhood compatibility when considering design for new development or renovation.

DEFINED VISUAL CHARACTER

- Some block faces may have a strong visual character defined by buildings with compatible siting, form, proportions, texture, and architectural details.

MIXED VISUAL CHARACTER

- Some block faces do not have an apparent overriding visual character, or the character may be mixed or changing. Often, mixed visual character areas provide a transition between compatible land uses.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Applicability of defined and mixed visual character areas
- Does Summerland have definable commercial areas that may act as a “core” for Summerland?
- How is a “block defined?”
- If so what are the boundaries?
- What is important in these areas?
- What defines each?

¹ County of Santa Barbara South Board of Architectural Review Findings for Approval LUDC, Section 35.82.070

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING GUIDELINES AND THE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT CODE

NARROW LOTS AND SIDE YARDS (BAR GUIDELINES, PAGES 22-33)

This section should be reviewed for important issues or aspects pertaining to the design and articulation of structures. The existing language discusses large expanses of walls and second floor step backs. These elements may be used and clarified in the new commercial design guidelines and they play an important role in the compatibility of a new structure or addition to an existing neighborhood.

“As many of Summerland's lots are narrow, special consideration needs to be given to the minimization of the massing of the structure at or near the sideyard setbacks. Single plane walls and large expanses of wall area should be avoided in order to add architectural interest and relief to these areas. Upper floors should be stepped back to enhance view corridors and a feeling of open space between structures.”

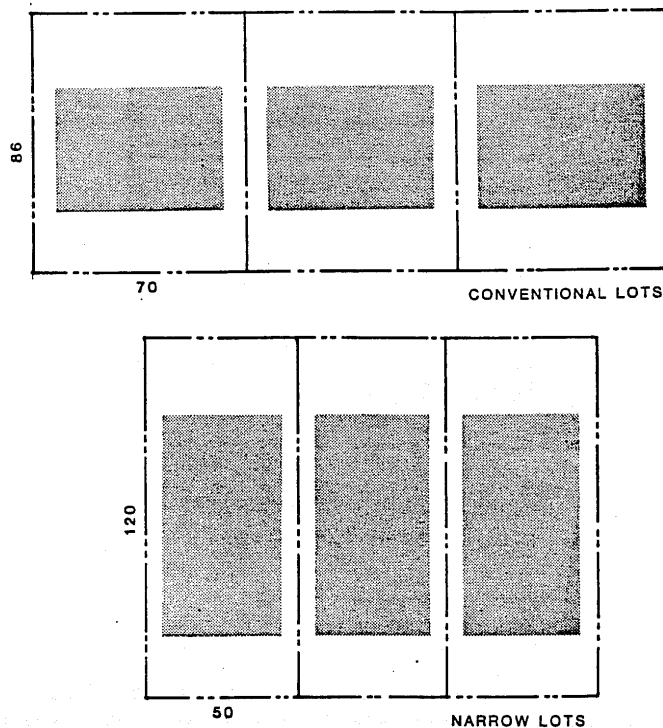


Figure 9 - Effect of Narrow vs. Conventional Lot

Figure 9 illustrates the comparative building footprint area (which is shaded) of three conventional lots and three narrower lots of the same lot size with the same setback standards. With a conventional lot (e.g. 70 foot wide lot), the setback is 10% or 7 feet in this example. Assuming two 70 foot wide lots, a total setback of 14 feet would be provided between two adjacent structures. With a narrow lot (e.g. a 50 foot wide lot), the same 10% setback (5 feet) provides a total setback between two structures of only 10 feet. In addition, the length of this narrow setback area is greater with a narrow lot than for conventional lots. This figure illustrates the potential for large wall areas and the undesirable closeness of the buildings as well as reduced yard areas.”

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Applicability to commercial development, mixed use development, transition areas
- Privacy issues
- Designating important corners or intersections
- Different treatment for east versus west (core) end of Lillie?

SCALE AND ORIENTATION (BAR GUIDELINES, PAGE 22)

This section should be reviewed and consideration should be given to the important elements of scale and orientation in the commercial area of Summerland.

“The commercial and urban residential areas of Summerland are diverse in style, unimposing and small in scale. The scale of a proposal in relation to both the size of the site and the scale of the neighborhood and community is an important consideration. An applicant should visualize his or her project from different area within the neighborhood and also from higher and lower elevations within the community. The treatment of large surfaces, landscaping, grading and retaining walls should be compatible with a small scale community and should respect the grid orientation of Summerland.”

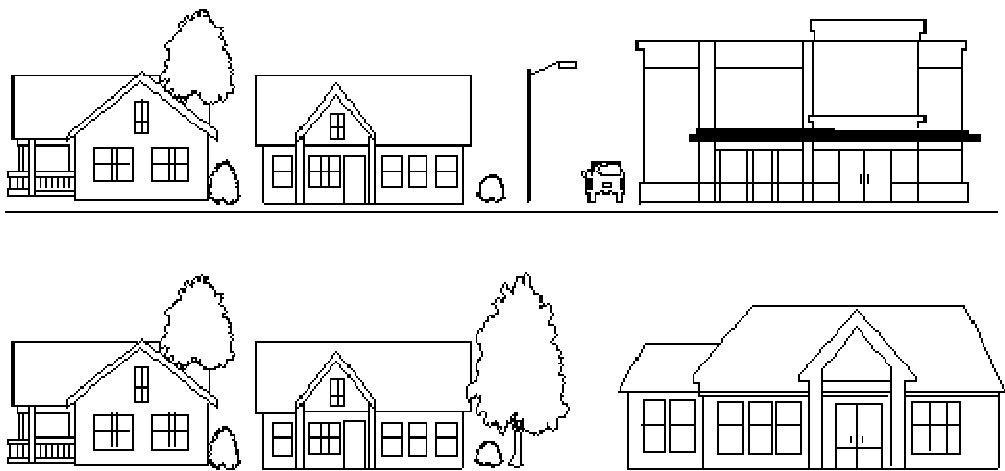
ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- Applicability of articulation of the sides of buildings
- Importance to corner buildings

EXAMPLES

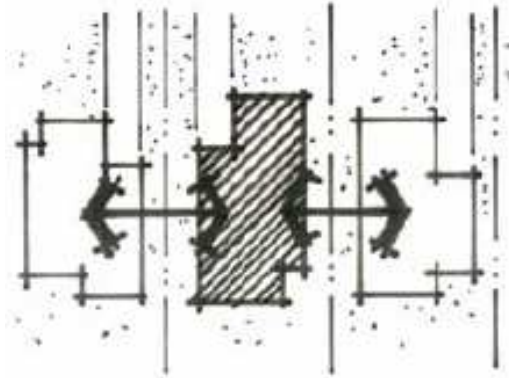
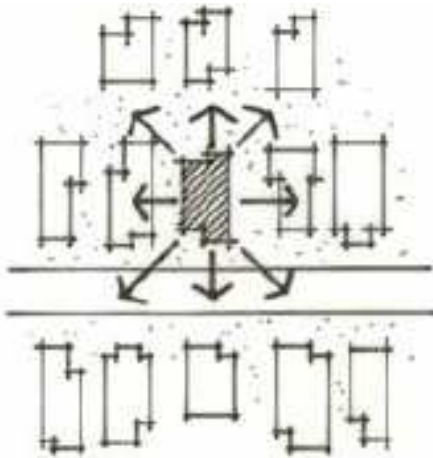
COMPATIBLE VERSUS INCOMPATIBLE DESIGN

The following graphic illustrates the importance of design and its relationship to neighborhood context and block face character. It is important to define the elements that give a neighborhood or area its identity and a block its character. This assists architects, designers and the public when developing a design.



IMMEDIATE CONTEXT – HOW THE BUILDING RELATES TO SURROUNDING BUILDINGS ON THE BLOCK

These illustrations indicate how a building or structure relates to its immediate neighbors and other buildings on the block and across the street. Taking these aspects into account will help an architect or designer determine important elements in the area, such as setbacks, massing location, rooflines and other materials that define an area.



FOCUS QUESTIONS

1. Does Summerland have definable commercial areas that may act as a “core” for Summerland?
2. What defines a “block?” If so what are the boundaries?
3. What is important in these areas?
4. What architectural styles define the different blocks along Lillie Avenue? Are there any common themes or characteristics?
5. What are the prominent colors and building shapes, styles and materials along Lillie Avenue?
6. To what extent should the Summerland Commercial Design Guidelines address neighborhood compatibility, block to block?
7. On blocks with a mixed visual character where no clear architectural pattern has been established, what standards should a project be subject to?
8. Considering the eclectic characteristics of the buildings in Summerland, how can building design guidelines be used to achieve neighborhood compatibility and appropriate transitions while still respecting the unique architecture represented along Lillie Avenue?
9. What other issues related to the Block Face Character along Lillie Avenue should be addressed? Why?