



Building Scale and Form (Table 3) Fact Sheet & Focus Questions:

BACKGROUND

WHAT IS BUILDING SCALE?

Building scale refers to building elements and details as they proportionally relate to each other and to humans. The following terms are used when referring to scale and form:

- **Size** of a structure is determined by the two-dimensional measurement of the length and width combined (i.e., square feet).
- **Bulk** is the qualitative visual perception of the composition and shape of a structure's massing. Bulk is affected by variations in height, setbacks, and stepbacks of second stories.
- **Mass** of a structure is determined by the following elements:
 - The volume of the building
 - Variation in building shape and form
 - The relationship between a structure and the size of adjacent structures
 - The building site and its relationship to the sidewalk and street(s) and importance to "human" scale

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING GUIDELINES AND THE LAND USE DEVELOPMENT CODE

The existing Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Guidelines for Summerland contains elements (i.e. Floor Area Ratio and Height) that influence the scale and form of a structure. In addition, the Floor Area Ratio and Height have been folded into the LUDC as quantitative requirements. The topics following this discussion will reference the appropriate BAR Guidelines and/or LUDC requirements that influence that topic.

- **Relationship to Guidelines and LUDC:**
 - Floor Area Ratio (BAR Guidelines, pages 15-17)
 - Height (BAR Guidelines, pages 18-12)
 - Height Calculation Methodology

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

FAR is an established number which determines the amount of building area (floor area) allowed on a parcel. Generally, FAR represents a percentage of the square footage of a site. Building area or floor area is based on a measurement of the structure to determine its proposed floor area. In Summerland, the building floor area must not exceed the established FAR in the Community Plan, BAR Guidelines and LUDC.

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in Summerland is unique in that it is codified and thus a hard and steadfast requirement. Other communities, such as Montecito, use the FAR as a guideline. The use of FAR as a guideline or code requirement varies from city to city and

county to county. The need to control scale through the application of FAR is understood and widely practiced. However, in commercial areas, the application of FAR should be considered carefully.

In Summerland, the C-1 (Limited Commercial zone) has a FAR of .29, which is simple enough. The following language is directly from the BAR Guidelines (pages 15-17).

In order to establish clear and objective standards of review for both the applicant and the Board, the following Floor Area Ratios shall be established to limit the maximum size of a structure allowed on both residential and commercial lots. These Floor Area Ratios (FAR) have been determined based on an assessment of existing structures in Summerland and found to be compatible and consistent with the goals set forth in these guidelines. A FAR Worksheet is included in Appendix B of the existing BAR Guidelines.

1. Floor Area Ratio Defined

FAR is defined as the Floor Area Net of the structure divided by the Lot Area Net.

Easements or encroachments which diminish the usable area of the lot will be taken into consideration when establishing the lot area net, and this area shall be adjusted accordingly. Easements and encroachments include, but are not limited to, roads, well-sites, utility installations, portions of the property that in effect are used by other properties, etc.

Floor Area Net is defined as the total floor area of all floors of a building as measured to the surfaces of exterior walls, excluding unenclosed porches, balconies and decks. Garages and carports shall be excluded as per "Limitations and Exceptions to FAR" below. Interior stairs shall be counted on only one floor.

Note: [a-b applicable to residential only]

c. Commercial and Mixed Use Floor Area Ratios

The maximum FAR shall be 0.29 if the entire project is commercial or 0.35 if it is a mixed use development. If mixed use, all of the additional square footage allowed over the 0.29 FAR shall be devoted exclusively to residential use.

Commercial projects will be subject to other County Planning and environmental constraints which may have a bearing on the size of the building. See the next section for garage exceptions.

d. Limitations and Exceptions to FAR

1) Garages

For commercial and mixed use projects, up to 500 sq. ft. of garages per 6,000 sq. ft. of lot area can be excluded from the FAR (e.g., a commercial or mixed use project on a 12,000 sq. ft. lot can exclude 1,000 sq. ft. of garage space from the FAR calculations). On pre-existing lots of less than 6,000 sq. ft., up to 500 sq. ft. of garage space can be excluded.

All garages constructed under this exception shall remain permanently as garages, i.e., they shall not be converted to living, storage, commercial or other space.

- 2) **Abandoned East/West Rights-of-Way (ROW)**
For lots with abandoned East/West right of ways, such abandoned area may only be credited 50% towards the total lot area used in the calculation of the FAR.

e. Existing Large Structures that Exceed the FAR

Existing large structures that exceed the FAR may be altered or reconstructed provided:

- 1) The alterations or reconstruction shall not increase the FAR to an amount greater than was contained in the original structure; and
- 2) The proposal conforms to these guidelines in all other respects.

Although the following requirements are regulated in the height section of the BAR Guidelines, they directly influence the scale of a structure by reducing FAR based on the height of certain portions of a structure. The following are found in the BAR Guidelines (pages 18-19).

1. Plate Heights

Plate heights are defined as distance between the floor and where the wall intersects with the roof or the floor joists of the story above.

a. **Small Lots**

Since it is desirable to keep the height and bulk of a building within reason, plate heights shall be factored into the FAR as follows (this applies to lots of < 1 acre):

Average Plate Height	FAR Adjustment
up to 9'	0%
9' - 10'	-10%
over 10'	-20%

b. **Large Lots**

On lots of 1 acre and greater, a maximum of 40% of the floor area shall be allowed to exceed a plate height of 9 ft. If more than 40% of the floor area exceeds a plate height of 9 feet, the excess will be counted as two times the floor area.

2. Understories

Understories are defined as the portion of the structure between the exposed finished floor and the finished grade (as defined by the latest edition of the Uniform Building Code)

The following provisions adjust for slopes but allow for larger houses if they are well designed with minimal understories.

Applicants should make every attempt to limit the height of understories, including spaces under decks. Excessive understories shall reduce the FAR as follows*:

Height of Understory	FAR Adjustment
Over 4 Feet	- 10%
Over 6 Feet	- 20%
8 Feet or Over	- 33%

A proposed residential structure that does not qualify for a basement credit may add 5% to the FAR provided that no part of the lowest finished floor over the entire building footprint is more than 18" above grade.

*Homes built prior to the implementation of these Guidelines shall not be subject to the understory standards as long as any proposed addition conforms with the original building footprint and profile.

As you can see, other elements can significantly impact the allowable floor area of the building.

3. Basements (pages 19-22)

The following provisions adjust for slopes but allow for larger houses if they are well designed with minimal basement exposure.

Basements shall be defined as any usable or unused under floor space where the finished floor directly above is not more than 4 ft. above grade (as defined by the latest addition of the Uniform Building Code).

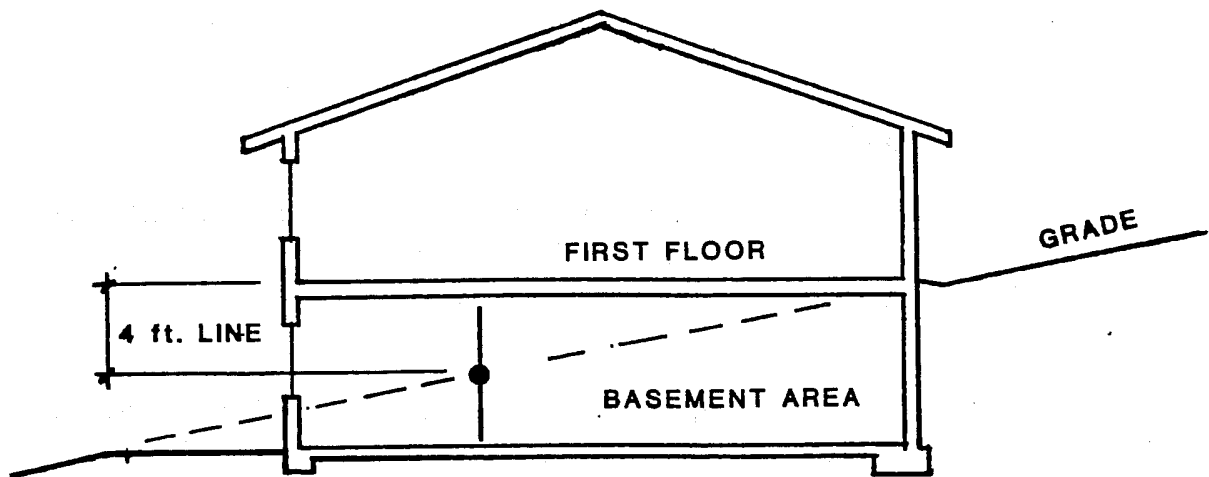


Figure 5 - Basement Area Defined

For residential structures, basements shall be counted toward the FAR as follows (see Figure 6):

First 250 sq. ft.	=	0%	=	0 sq. ft. counted and 250 sq. ft. "free"
Next 250 sq. ft.	=	50%	=	125 sq. ft. counted and 125 sq. ft. "free"
Next 300 sq. ft.	=	75%	=	225 sq. ft. counted and 75 sq. ft. "free"
Over 800 sq. ft.	=	100%	=	all sq. ft. counted and none "free"

If the living areas of a residential structure does not qualify as a basement or only partially qualify, any area of the given garage/storage allocation which qualifies under the basement definition may be calculated as per the above formula and the "free" square footage added to the allowable floor area of the structure. However, the basement "credit" may be used only once per lot, including lots with multiple unit structures.

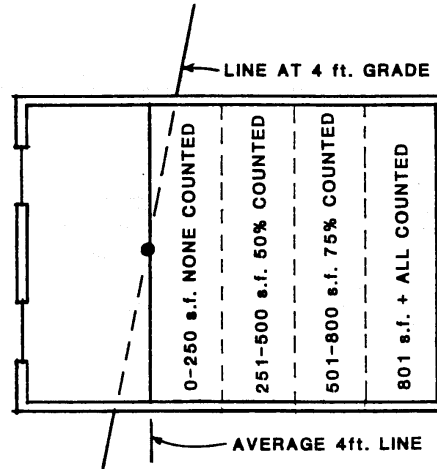


Figure 6 - Percentage of Basement Applied to Floor Area

Basements shall be counted at 100% of floor area unless there is no second floor on the structure or unless the second floor mass is set back from the downslope face of the first floor by a minimum of 10 feet at all locations. Figure 7 shows a structure where the basement does not count 100% towards the floor area (as per Figure 6). Figure 8 shows a structure where the basement does count 100% towards the floor area.

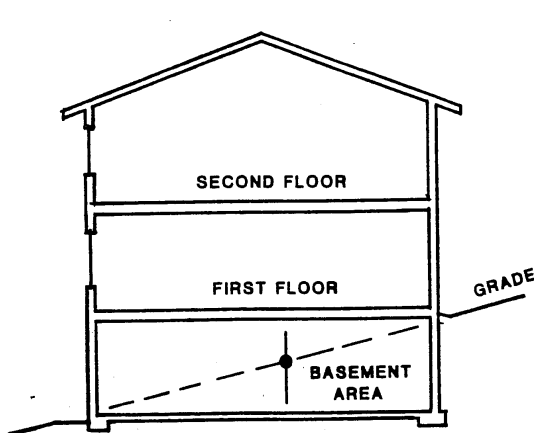


Figure 8 - Basement Counts 100% Towards Floor Area

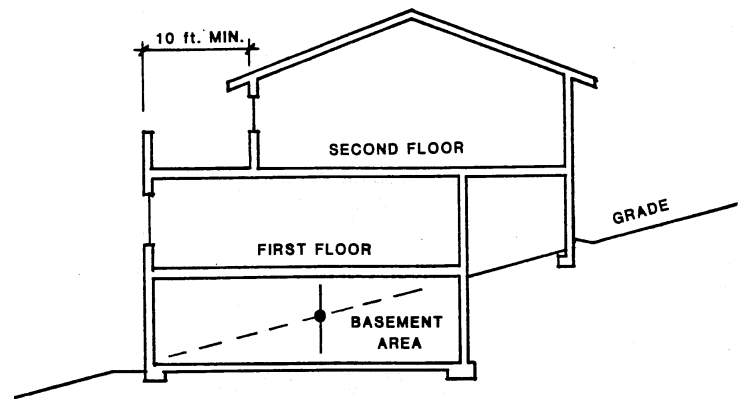


Figure 7 - Basement Does Not Count 100% Towards Floor Area

The following definitions are found in the LUDC (§35.11) and further illustrate the difference in code requirements for Summerland versus the rest of the County:

- **Floor Area, Net – Summerland** - The total floor area of all floors of a building included within the exterior surfaces of the surrounding exterior walls, excluding unenclosed porches, balconies and decks. Interior stairs shall be counted on only one floor.
- **Floor Area, Net – County Wide** - The gross floor area excluding shafts, stairways, corridors and halls, unusable attics, and unenclosed porches and balconies.
- **Floor Area Ratio – Summerland** - The net floor area of the structure divided by the net lot area.
- **Floor Area Ratio – Montecito Coastal** - A measurement of development intensity represented by the quotient of net floor area, excluding basements used exclusively for storage and residential units that meet the County's definition of affordable housing, divided by net lot area. Where there is an approved Final Development Plan, the floor area ratio shall be the quotient of net floor area, excluding basements used exclusively for storage and residential units that meet the County's definition of affordable housing, divided by the sum of the net lot area of all lots included in the Development Plan.
- **Lot Area, Net – Summerland** - The gross lot area minus any area lying within a public street, such street being defined as a permanently reserved right-of-way which has been dedicated to the County of Santa Barbara. For the purpose of calculating the Floor Area Ratio, the net lot area shall also be reduced by any area that may not be utilized for structural development due to easements or encroachments that may include roads, well sites, utility installations, and portion of the property that in effect are used by other properties.
- **Lot Area, Net – County Wide** - The gross lot area excluding any area lying within a public street, public street being defined as a permanently reserved right-of-way which has been dedicated to the County.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- How applicable are plate height and understory to the generally level commercial area of Summerland?
- Interior space plays a very important role in the viability of commercial space.
- What commercial spaces do you like and why?
- Can additional guidelines pertaining to form, architectural details and materials ensure quality design while allowing more discretion to the architect?

BUILDING HEIGHT

The height of a building is measured differently from county to county and city to city. Moreover, it is measured differently from area to area within the County. The following excerpts are from the height requirements from Summerland and Montecito and the applicable guideline or LUDC section is referenced. Included in each are the method of measurement, exceptions, definitions for each, and the actual height requirement. It is important to review these in relation to commercial design.

HEIGHT CALCULATION METHODOLOGY IN SUMMERLAND

The height of a structure shall be the vertical distance between the average finished grade of the lot covered by the structure to the highest points of the coping of a flat roof or to the mean height of the highest gable of a pitch or hip roof. The mean height of a gambrel roof is the average height of the height of the ridge and the height of the first break in slope of the roof.

The following height limitations/restrictions apply to all parcels in Summerland:

- 22 feet maximum in urban areas (with variances allowed if appropriate)
- 16 feet in rural areas

The height of any structure shall not exceed the applicable height limit except for certain exceptions discussed below.

EXCEPTIONS

1. Chimneys, church spires, elevator, mechanical and stair housings, flag poles, oil and gas derricks, noncommercial antennas, towers, vents, and similar structures which are not used for human activity may be up to 50 feet in height in all zones. The use of towers or similar structures to provide higher ceiling heights for habitable space shall be deemed a use intended for human activity.
2. Special exemptions for commercial and noncommercial telecommunication antennas (see Article II Section 35-127.C).

DEFINITIONS (LUDC § 35.11)

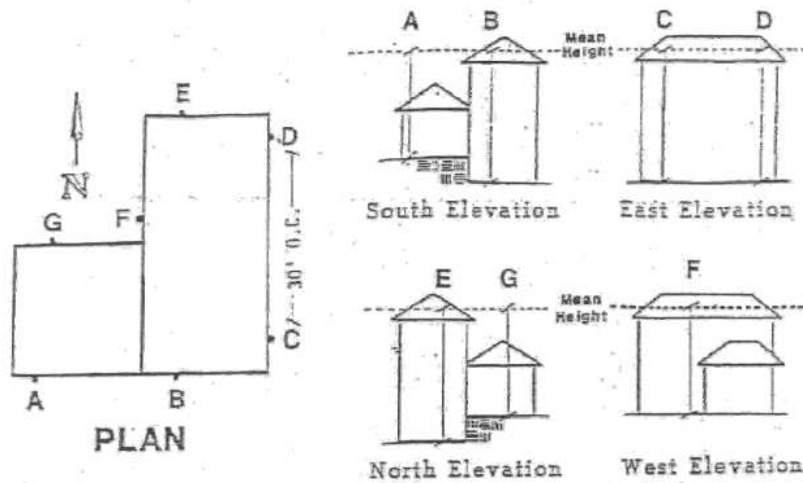
1. **Finished Grade, Average:** The average height of the manufactured grade of that portion of the lot covered by the structure following the completion of an approved grading operation.

For buildings constructed on stepped pads (with various finished grades and multiple roof heights), structure height may be determined by taking measurements from the finished grade at equal intervals around the entire footprint of the structure to the highest mean roof height. This methodology is demonstrated on the following page.

In the example below, measurements taken from the finish grade to the mean height of the highest gable, using an interval of 30 feet, gives the following height:

A= 20'
B= 26'
C= 26'
D= 26'
E= 26'
F= 20'
G= 20'

Total of height measurements = 164; 164 divided by 7 (the number of measurements) equals a calculated height of 23.5'



Basement - Any usable or unused under floor space where the finished floor directly above is not more than four feet above grade (as defined by the latest addition of the Uniform Building Code).

Basement – Countywide A story partly or wholly underground. A basement shall be counted as a story if its floor-to-ceiling height is 6.5 feet or more, and more than one-half of its height is above the average level of the adjoining ground surface.

Mixed Use Development – Summerland Only Development in which 49% or less of the usable square footage (excluding garages) is for residential purposes.

Plate Heights – Summerland Only The distance between the finished floor and where the wall intersects with the lower portion of the floor joists of the story above, or if there is no intervening story, the lower portion of the structural roof members.

Understory – Summerland Only The portion of the structure between the exposed finished floor and the finished grade.

HEIGHT CALCULATION METHODOLOGY IN MONTECITO (COASTAL ZONE PROPERTIES)

The height of a structure (not including fences and walls) located in the Coastal Zone is determined by the vertical distance between the existing grade and the uppermost point of the structure directly above that grade unless (1) the structure is located on property zoned with the VC View Corridor Overlay or (2) any portion of the structure is located above an area of the site where the finished grade is 10 feet or more above existing grade and the structure is not subject to the Ridgeline/Hillside Development Guidelines.

1. VC View Corridor Overlay. If the structure is located on property zoned with the VC View Corridor Overlay, then the height of a structure is determined by the vertical distance between the average finished grade and the uppermost point of the structure directly above that grade.

2. Location over 10 feet or more of fill. If the structure is not subject to the Ridgeline and Hillside Development Guidelines and any portion of the structure is located above an area of the lot where the finished grade is 10 feet or more above the existing grade, then the height of the structure is determined by the vertical distance between the finished grade and the uppermost point of the structure directly above that grade.

The height of the structure shall not exceed the applicable height limit (see Diagram 1 below) except for certain limited exceptions discussed below.

In addition to the height limit applicable to a structure as described above, a structure subject to the Ridgeline and Hillside Development Guidelines shall not exceed a maximum height of 32 feet as measured from the highest part of the structure, excluding chimneys, vents and noncommercial antennas, to the lowest point of the structure where an exterior wall intersects the finished grade or the existing grade, whichever is lower (see Diagram 2 below).

In the case where the lowest point of the structure is cantilevered over the ground surface, then the calculated maximum height shall include the vertical distance below the lowest point of the structure to the finished grade or the existing grade, whichever is lower.

EXCEPTIONS

1. Chimneys, church spires, elevator, mechanical and stair housings, flag poles, noncommercial antennas, towers, vents, and similar structures which are not used for human activity may be up to 50 feet in height in all zones. The use of towers or similar structures to provide higher ceiling heights for habitable space shall be deemed a use intended for human activity.
2. Portions of a structure may exceed the applicable height limit by no more than three feet where the roof exhibits a pitch of 4 in 12 (rise to run) or greater.
3. Architectural elements (portions of a building that exceeds the height limit and extends beyond the roof of the building) with an aggregate area less than or equal to 10 percent of the roof area or 400 square feet, whichever is less, may exceed the height limit by no more than eight feet when approved by the Montecito Board of Architectural Review.

DEFINITIONS

Existing Grade: The existing condition of the ground elevation of the surface of a building site at the time of permit application, including Montecito Board of Architectural Review applications, that represents either (1) the natural grade prior to the placement of any fill on the site or the excavation or removal of earth from the site, or (2) the manufactured grade following the completion of an approved grading operation including grading approved in conjunction with the subdivision of the site.

Finished Grade: The height of the manufactured grade of that portion of the lot covered by the structure following the completion of an approved grading operation.

Finished Grade, Average. The average height of the manufactured grade of that portion of the lot covered by the structure following the completion of an approved grading operation.

Height Limit: The maximum allowed height of a structure as established by an imaginary surface located at the allowed number of feet above and parallel to the existing grade. See following diagram.

Diagram 1

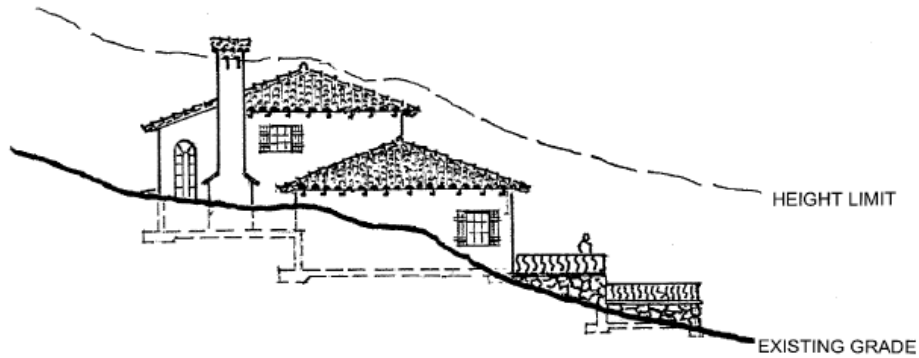
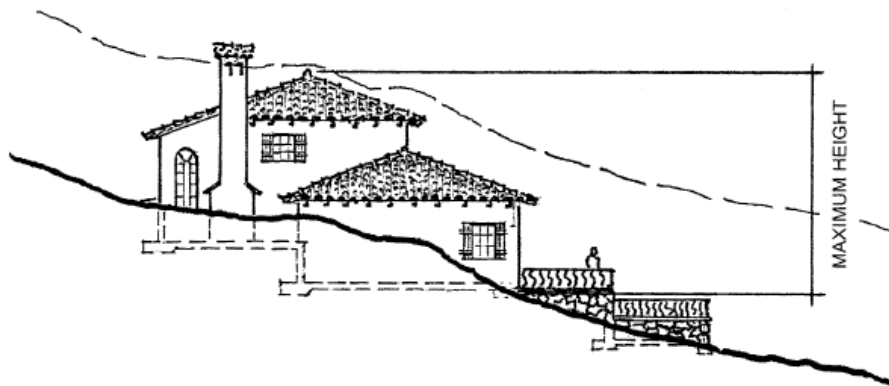


Diagram 2



- **Summerland Height** – The height of a structure shall be the vertical distance between the average finished grade of the lot covered by the structure to the highest points of the coping of a flat roof or to the mean height of the highest gable of a pitch or hip roof. The mean height of a gambrel roof is the average height of the height of the ridge and the height of the first break in slope of the roof.
- **Summerland Exceptions** – The height of any structure shall not exceed the applicable height limit except for certain exceptions discussed below.

EXCEPTIONS

1. Chimneys, church spires, elevator, mechanical and stair housings, flag poles, oil and gas derricks, noncommercial antennas, towers, vents, and similar structures which are not used for human activity may be up to 50 feet in height in all zones. The use of towers or similar structures to provide higher

ceiling heights for habitable space shall be deemed a use intended for human activity.

2. Special exemptions for commercial and noncommercial telecommunication antennas (see Article II Section 35-127.C).

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- How does the community want commercial development to relate to the street and do the current height requirements accomplish that goal?
- Reduced bulk for structures over one story
- Should the additional FAR adjustments for plate height be applied to commercial development?
- If plate height for commercial was eliminated, could the massing of a structure be addressed through additional exterior design requirements (i.e., taking into account the structures on the block, such as architectural style, height, materials and other items)?
- Is the understories limitation applicable to commercial development?
- Is the basement limitation applicable to commercial development?
- Should a business that installs basement parking be penalized in allowable floor area for doing so?
- What is the intent the additional height limitations?
- Are there other ways to address this issue?

BUILDING FORM

The FAR and building height set the maximum volume or envelope in which the building can be developed. The form of the building is in direct relation to the neighborhood context and block face character. The following elements help to further establish the building form within the building envelope:

- Proportions & Scale
- Façade Width
- Rooflines and Elements

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- The importance of existing patterns
- Relief and interest along the building façade
- The width of commercial facades compared to established businesses
- Varied setbacks at the first level
- Varied setbacks above the first floor
- Reducing perceived bulk and scale by dividing mass into smaller components
- Building height in relation to the street and sidewalk
- Common rooflines and elements
- How these reduce mass

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. *What elements of commercial design are important to Summerland?*
2. *Do the existing FAR regulations for Summerland need to be revised, and if so, how?*

3. *What are the advantages and disadvantages for using FAR to regulate building size?*
4. *Does the existing Height Calculation Methodology for Summerland need to be revised, and if so, how?*
5. *Does the community want to provide consistency in the application of regulations and guidelines throughout the County?*

Height Calculation Methodology

Methodology applies to: Structures located within the Summerland Planning Area.

The height of a structure shall be the vertical distance between the **average finished grade** of the lot covered by the structure to the highest points of the coping of a flat roof or to the mean height of the highest gable of a pitch or hip roof. The mean height of a gambrel roof is the average height of the height of the ridge and the height of the first break in slope of the roof.

The height of any structure shall not exceed the applicable **height limit** except for certain **exceptions** discussed below.

EXCEPTIONS

1. Chimneys, church spires, elevator, mechanical and stair housings, flag poles, oil and gas derricks, noncommercial antennas, towers, vents, and similar structures which are not used for human activity may be up to 50 feet in height in all zones. **The use of towers or similar structures to provide higher ceiling heights for habitable space shall be deemed a use intended for human activity.**
2. Special exemptions for commercial and noncommercial telecommunication antennas (see Article II Section 35-127.C).

DEFINITIONS

1. Finished Grade, Average: The average height of the manufactured grade of that portion of the lot covered by the structure following the completion of an approved grading operation. For buildings constructed on stepped pads (with various finished grades and multiple roof heights), structure height may be determined by taking measurements from the finished grade at equal intervals around the entire footprint of the structure to the highest mean roof height. This methodology is demonstrated on the following page.

In the example below, measurements taken from the finish grade to the mean height of the highest gable, using an interval of 30 feet, gives the following height:

- A= 20'
- B= 26'
- C= 26'
- D= 26'
- E= 26'
- F= 20'
- G= 20

Total of height measurements = 164; 164 divided by 7 (the number of measurements) equals a calculated height of 23.5'

