



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

URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

The Summerland Community Plan established two subareas for the community. These two areas are the **Urban Area** where principally urban land uses exist and the **Rural Area** where land uses are rural or agricultural in nature. An understanding of the character and land uses plays an important role in the development of new design guidelines. When considering Building Scale and Form, it is important to recognize the different characteristics of each area and the important issues of each.

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.

The existing Floor Area Ratios (FAR) were established based on an assessment of existing structures in Summerland and found to be compatible and consistent with the goals set forth in these guidelines. The following components determine how Floor Area is measured:

Floor Area Ratio - 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 - 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.

Single-Family Floor Area Ratio

All new single family residences in any zone district except design residential shall not exceed the following standards:

Lot Size Between	FAR	Max. Allowable ¹
Up to 2,500 s.f.	0.5	950 s.f.
2,500 and 3,600 s.f.	0.38	1,296 s.f.
3,601 and 4,700 s.f.	0.36	1,598 s.f.
4,701 and 5,800 s.f.	0.34	1,856 s.f.
5,801 and 6,900 s.f.	0.32	2,070 s.f.
6,901 and 8,100 s.f.	0.30	2,268 s.f.
8,101 and 9,400 s.f.	0.28	2,538 s.f.
9,401 and 10,800 s.f.	0.27	2,808 s.f.
10,801 and 12,000 s.f. ²	0.26	3,100 s.f.

¹ The maximum square footage allowable is based on the minimum square footage of the next lot range category

² The maximum allowable square footage (sf) for lots over 12,000 sf shall be established as a base of 2,500 sf plus 5% of the lot area new with a maximum allowable size of 8,000 sf.

Note: The Maximum Allowable square footage column sets a cap on each category so that there is no overlap between the categories. Each parcel may develop to the limits set by the FAR for its parcel size except those parcels to the larger end of each category which may not develop structures larger than the Maximum Allowable square footage set for each category.

Example #1: If a lot is 5,998 sq. ft. (lot range of 5,801 to 6,900 sq. ft.), the residence shall be a maximum of 1,919 sq.ft. (FAR of 0.32 x 5,998 = 1,919 sf)

Example #2: With a lot of 6,600 sq. ft. (lot range of 5,801 to 6,900 sq. ft.), the residence shall be a maximum of 2,070 sq. ft. (although FAR of 0.32 x 6,600 sq. ft. = 2,112 sq. ft.; 2,070 sq. ft. is the maximum sq. ft. allowable in that lot range)

Duplex Floor Area Ratios

The FAR for duplexes shall be 0.29. Maximum duplex size shall be 3,600 sq. ft. of total living area (for both units in the duplex).

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).

Floor Area Ratio Penalties - 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.

Floor Area Ratio Penalties - 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.

Floor Area Ratio Penalties - Basements

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).

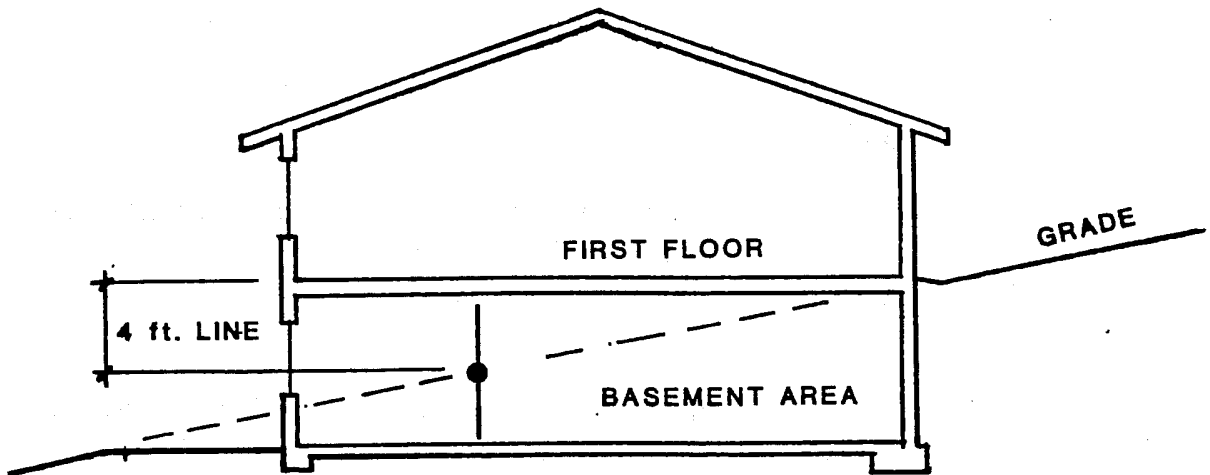


Figure 5 - Basement Area Defined

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.

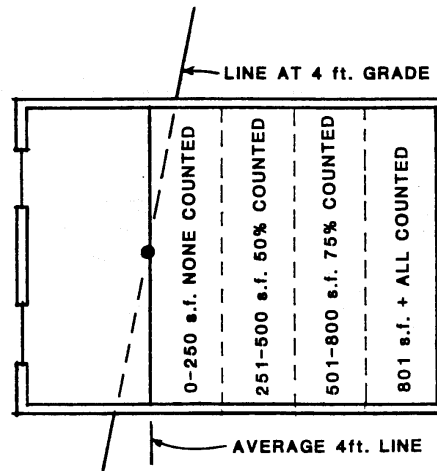


Figure 6 - Percentage of Basement Applied to Floor Area

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.

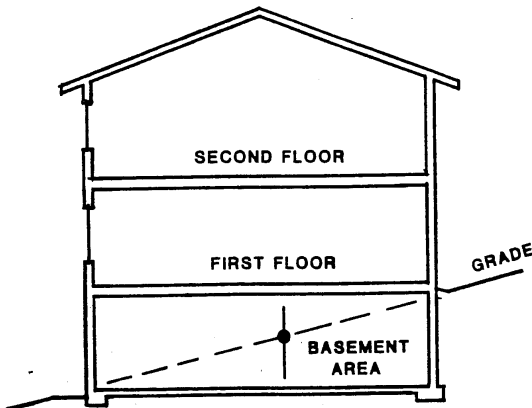


Figure 8 - Basement Counts 100% Towards Floor Area

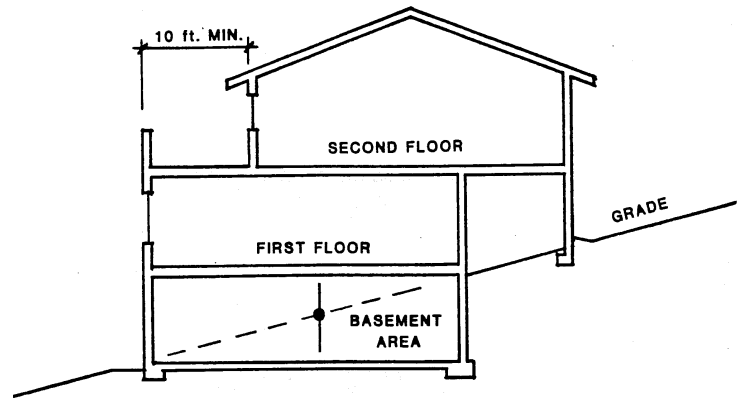


Figure 7 - Basement Does Not Count 100% Towards Floor Area

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:

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- How applicable are plate height, basement and understory to the residential area of Summerland?
- If plate height for residential 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 understory or basement limitation applicable to residential development?
- Are there other ways to address this issue?
- What are the underlying issues for each?
- Are they more applicable in the **Rural Area** as opposed to the **Urban Area**?
- What residential areas 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 residential design.

The height methodology for Summerland was changed during the development of the Commercial Design Guidelines. The methodology has been included below. 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

HEIGHT CALCULATION METHODOLOGY IN SUMMERLAND

Except for structures located within the Coastal Zone on property zoned with the VC View Corridor Overlay, the height of a structure (not including fences and walls) is determined by the vertical distance between the **existing grade** and the uppermost point of the structure directly above that grade. If the structure is located within the Coastal Zone on property zoned with the VC View Corridor Overlay, then the height of the structure (not including fences and walls) is determined by the vertical distance between the **average finished grade** and 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).

1. 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.
2. This 32 foot limit may be increased by no more than three feet where the highest part of the structure is part of a roof element that exhibits a pitch of four in 12 (rise to run) or greater.

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 subject to compliance with the F Airport Approach Overlay and the VC View Corridor Overlay. **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 four 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 BAR.
4. Special exemptions for oil/gas equipment (see Article II, Section 35-127.1.a).

DEFINITIONS

Existing Grade: The existing condition of the ground elevation of the surface of a building site at the time of permit application, including 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.

Diagram 1

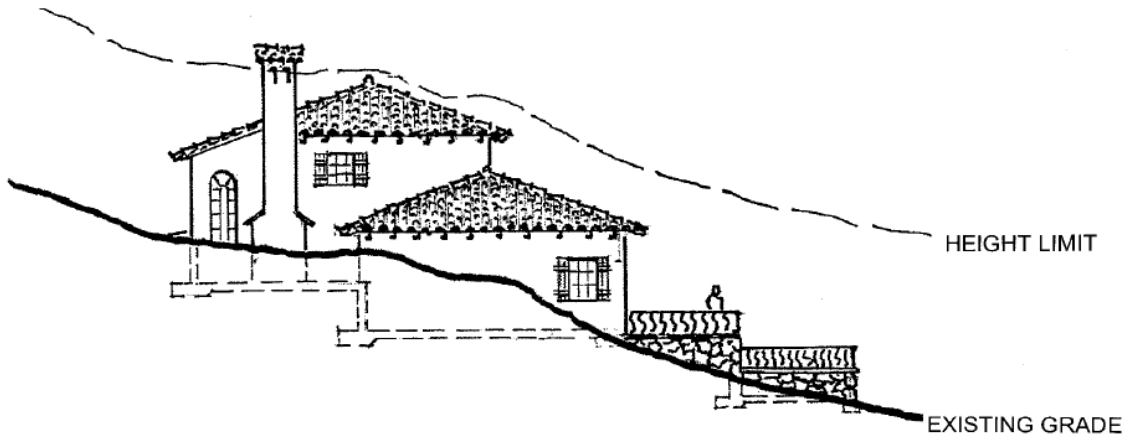
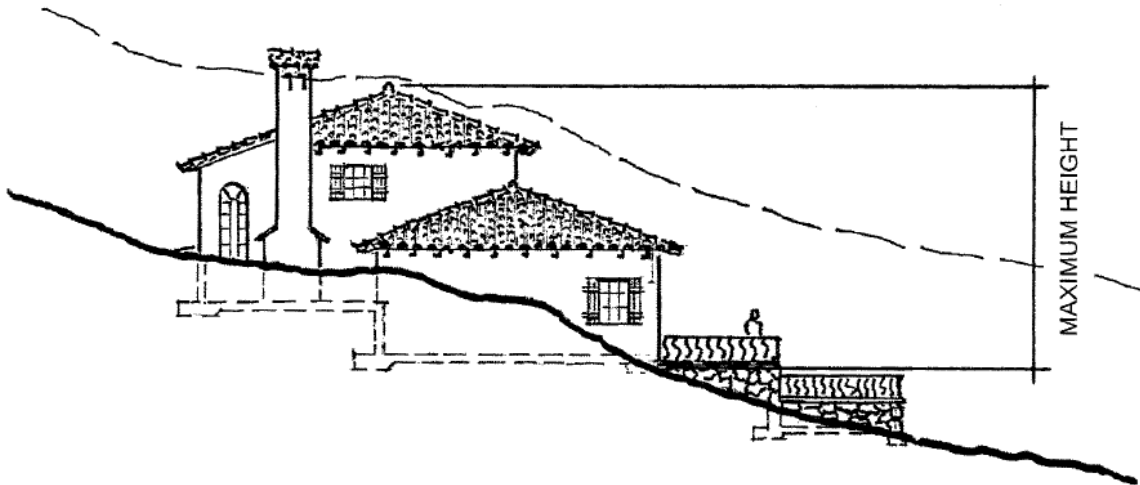


Diagram 2



ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- How does the community want residential development to the topography of the site?
- Should the additional FAR adjustments for plate height be applied to residential development?

BUILDING SIZE, BULK, SCALE AND 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. The following elements help to further establish the building form within the building envelope:

- Neighborhood Scale
- Second Stories and Additions
- Eave lines
- Solar Access
- Façade Articulation
- Narrow Lots and Side Yards

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- The importance of existing patterns
- Varied setbacks at the first level and above the first floor
- Reducing perceived bulk and scale by dividing mass into smaller components
- Building height in relation to adjacent homes
- Common rooflines and elements

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. *What elements of residential 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. *What influences scale and form in the **Urban Area** ? In the **Rural Area**?*
5. *Does the community want to provide consistency in the application of regulations and guidelines throughout the County?*
6. *What types of guidelines should be used to address scale and form for accessory structures?*

