# Residential Design Guidelines

## Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines

### Introduction

These guidelines seek to provide property owners, designers and developers with a clear understanding of the City's expectations for new multi-family residential development (i.e., a building containing three or more dwelling units. They will be used as criteria for approval during the City's plan review process.

While development must comply with the Calistoga Zoning and Subdivision Codes and other applicable regulations, these guidelines seek a higher degree of design excellence than the minimum standards.

Development on properties within an Entry Corridor or Character Area designated by the Land Use Element of the Calistoga General Plan must incorporate the design features prescribed by those overlays.

### Design Objectives

These guidelines are intended to promote development that will:

- Provide attractive, functional and convenient site arrangements
- Enhance safety and security
- Protect and promote Calistoga's rural, small town character
- Create a human-scaled and pedestrian-friendly environment
- Encourage visual diversity while protecting the unique and desirable qualities of established neighborhoods
- Promote high-quality design that enhances the character of Calistoga and is compatible with its environs
- Allow creative design, in keeping with the eclectic nature of residential development in Calistoga
- Safeguard the privacy of neighboring properties

### Design Guidelines

#### A. Siting

1. Views (particularly of the palisades and hillsides), and on-site mature trees and other natural amenities shall be preserved and incorporated into development proposals whenever possible.
2. Buildings should be oriented to promote privacy to the greatest extent possible.
3. Large projects should be broken up into clusters of structures.

#### B. Building Forms and Massing

1. The scale and mass of new infill buildings should be reduced by stepping down the building height towards adjacent smaller structures.
2. Building heights should be varied to give the appearance of a collection of smaller structures.
3. Consideration should be given to stepping back upper stories to reduce the scale of facades that face a street, common space and adjacent residential structures.
4. The perceived height and bulk of multi-story buildings should be reduced by dividing the building mass into smaller-scale components and adding details such as projecting eaves, dormers and balconies.

The use of awnings, moldings, pilasters and comparable architectural embellishments are also encouraged when functional and/or consistent with the building's architecture.

## C. Building Articulation

1. Buildings that are oriented to a street or interior drive should have varying setbacks to provide visual interest.
2. All facades of a building should be articulated and incorporate variation in massing, roof forms and wall planes, as well as surface articulation. While they do not need to be identical, there should be a sense of overall architectural continuity.
3. Extensive, unarticulated exterior walls are discouraged. Massing offsets, varied textures, openings, recesses and design accents are encouraged to provide visual interest.
4. Architectural elements that add visual interest, scale and character, such as balconies, trellises, recessed windows, overhangs and porches are strongly encouraged.
5. Balconies should be recessed from the building face and use appropriate screening measures, such as solid walls or landscaping, to protect the privacy of users and residents of neighboring units. The supports for overhanging upper floors or decks shall be designed to provide a substantial appearance integrated with the overall design of the building.
6. The use of vertical elements such as towers may be used to contrast with the predominant horizontal massing and provide visual interest.
7. The design of an infill project in a potential historic district, as identified in the General Plan, should be compatible with any prevailing architectural styles and details in the neighborhood.
8. Accessory buildings, such as management offices, storage facilities, recreational facilities and pool equipment buildings shall be designed as an integral part of a project. They shall be similar in material, color, and detail to the principal buildings of a development.

## D. Roofs

The use of multiple rooflines and designs can create visual diversity and break up building mass.

1. The use of traditional roof forms such as gables, hips and dormers is encouraged. The use of mansard and flat roofs without a decorative cornice are strongly discouraged.
2. Variation in ridgeline height and alignment is encouraged.
3. Roof overhangs should be sized appropriately for the desired architectural style. Where applicable to the architectural style, roof eaves should extend a minimum of 12 inches from the primary wall surface to enhance shadow lines and articulation of surfaces.
4. Flat carport roofs are prohibited.

## E. Windows, Doors and Entries

The appearance of a building can be enhanced by carefully-designed windows, doors and entries.

1. Window types, materials, shapes and proportions should complement the architectural style of the building.

2. Windows should be articulated with sills, trim, shutters or awnings that are authentic to the architectural style of the structure. Where architecturally appropriate, they may be inset from structure walls to create shade and shadow detail.
3. In order to enhance privacy, windows shall not be positioned directly opposite an adjacent residence's windows.
4. The main entrance to a unit should be clearly identifiable and should be articulated with functionally- and architecturally-appropriate projecting or recessed forms so as to create a sheltered landing.
5. Entries should be in proportion to the building façade as a whole.

## F. Building Materials, Finishes and Colors

1. Materials, finishes and colors should be consistent with the desired architectural style and sensitive to any prevailing pattern in the vicinity.
2. Compatible accent colors should be used to enhance important architectural elements and details.
3. Bright or intense colors should be used very sparingly, and shall typically be reserved for more refined or delicate detailing.
4. Exterior materials should reflect those that have traditionally been used in Calistoga, including wood, stone and stucco. Reflective materials are prohibited.
5. Stairways shall be constructed of durable materials that are compatible with the design of the primary structure. Prefabricated metal stairs are strongly discouraged.
6. Surface detailing should not serve as a substitute for well-integrated and distinctive massing.

## G. Circulation

1. Multi-family projects should incorporate pedestrian connections to adjoining residential, commercial, public and other compatible land use facilities.
2. Cross circulation between vehicles and pedestrians shall be minimized. Clearly-marked walkways should be provided from parking areas to the main entrances of buildings.
3. Walkways should be located to minimize the impact of pedestrians on the privacy of nearby residences or private open space. Walkways should not be sited immediately adjacent to a building and should be separated with a landscaped planting area.

## H. Parking

1. Parking areas should be located within a project's interior and not along street frontages.
2. Carports and tuck-under parking should not be visible from public streets.
3. Garage doors should be articulated with trellises, panels and/or windows to break up their large planes.
4. The width of driveways as well as cuts at the curb shall be as narrow as possible.

## I. Landscaping

Landscaping for multi-family projects can be used to define and accent specific areas (e.g., building entrances, recreational areas), provide a transitional buffer between neighboring properties and screen utilities. Landscaping

should be used as a unifying element within a project and to ensure compatibility with surrounding projects.

1. A variety of height, textures and colors should be used in a project's landscape palette.
2. A combination of trees, shrubs and ground cover should be incorporated into landscaping plans.
3. Plantings shall be used to soften building lines. Landscaping around building perimeters is encouraged.
4. New and rehabilitated landscaping shall comply with the State of California Model Water-Efficient Ordinance, where applicable.
5. Plantings shall not interfere with lighting, clear line of sight or access to emergency equipment or utilities (e.g., fire hydrants, fire alarm boxes, water meters).
6. Landscaping shall be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment by raised planting surfaces and curbs.
7. Gravel, bark and artificial turf is not allowed as a substitute for plant materials.
8. Trees should be used to create canopies and shade, especially along walkways, in parking areas and open space areas.
9. Trees and large shrubs shall not be planted under overhead lines or over underground infrastructure if growth may interfere with public utilities.
10. When selecting tree species, consideration should be given to potential maintenance issues, nearby pedestrian activities and public rights-of way.
11. Trees and shrubs should be located and spaced to allow for mature and long-term growth.
12. Potential root problems caused by trees and shrubs in or adjacent to the public right of way shall be avoided by careful selection and planting procedures. Root barriers shall be required for any tree placed where roots could disrupt adjacent paving or curb surfaces.

## J. Community Facilities

1. Buildings should be oriented to create courtyards and open space areas.
2. Community features such as plazas, recreational areas, community gardens and other gathering places shall be included whenever possible.
3. Common open space areas should be sheltered from the noise and traffic of adjacent streets and incompatible uses.
4. Children's play areas should be as publicly visible as possible.

## K. Lighting

Properly-designed lighting can enhance a project's design while promoting safety and security.

1. The design of exterior lighting fixtures should complement that of the residences in style and finish.
2. Lighting shall be arranged to provide safety and security for residents and visitors but prevent direct glare of illumination onto adjacent units.
3. Pedestrian-scaled lighting shall be located along all pedestrian routes of travel.

4. Lighting sources shall be screened from off-site view.
5. Lighting levels shall be the minimum necessary to provide safety and security while avoiding glare, light trespass and "sky glow."

## L. Walls and Fences

Walls and fences shall be designed using styles, materials and colors that complement the multi-family project.

1. Walls should be constructed of natural materials such as stone, wood, flagstone, or masonry with an architectural finish.
2. The following fencing materials are not allowed: chain link, barbed wire, razor wire and unfinished precision masonry block.
3. Vinyl and other manufactured fencing materials are acceptable if the overall appearance appears natural.
4. Wrought iron fencing should be powder-coated to reduce the potential for rust.
5. The face of retaining walls that are more than four feet in height and visible to the general public should be textured to provide visual relief.
6. Walls visible to the general public, such as project perimeter walls, should be enhanced to provide visual relief and soften their appearance through techniques such as textures, staggered setbacks, wall inserts, decorative columns or pilasters and variation in height, in conjunction with landscaping.
7. Stucco and plaster walls should be capped with a different material to give them a finished appearance.
8. Walls should be constructed as low as possible while still performing screening, noise attenuation and security functions.
9. At street or driveway corners, the area in front of fencing should be landscaped, and plantings or walls shall allow a clear line of sight.
10. Walls on sloping terrain should be stepped to follow the terrain.

## M. Utilities

All mechanical equipment shall be suitably screened or placed in locations that are not viewable from residences, common areas or the street. All screening devices shall be compatible with the architecture and color of the adjacent buildings.

## N. Trash Enclosures

1. Trash enclosures should be located in non-conspicuous areas, well screened with landscaping, and designed so as to protect adjacent uses from noise and odors.
2. Trash enclosures shall be constructed of materials and finishes that complement those of the primary building. Gates shall be solid metal.
3. Trash enclosures shall be sized to accommodate recycling, yard waste and trash containers.

## O. Mailboxes

1. Mailboxes shall be located in highly visible, heavily-traveled areas for convenience, to allow for casual social interaction and to promote safety.
2. Trash and recycling receptacles shall be provided adjacent to the mailboxes.