

City of Calistoga
Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Lynn Goldberg, Planning and Building Director
DATE: June 20, 2017
SUBJECT: Report on Residential Design Review Process

APPROVED FOR FORWARDING

[Signature]
Dylan Feik, City Manager

1 ISSUE: Consideration of residential design review process

2 RECOMMENDATION: Provide direction to staff if appropriate

3 BACKGROUND: At the February 21, 2017 City Council meeting, Mayor Canning asked
4 staff to provide information on the residential design review process and options for
5 addressing concerns such as those that have been raised about two recent projects
6 (i.e., a two-story addition to the single-family dwelling at 1900 Cedar and the new single-
7 family dwelling at 1706 Foothill).

8 Regulatory Background

9 Prior to May 2014, the Calistoga Zoning Code required a Planning Commission public
10 hearing for the following types of residential development:

- 11 • Proposals that require a conditional use permit
12 • New construction or substantial alterations on land designated with a hillside
13 overlay
14 • Multi-family developments
15 • Single-family residences with more than 4,000 square feet of floor area
16 • Tentative subdivision maps (five or more lots)
17 • Planned developments (e.g., Silver Rose, Calistoga Hills)

18 Residential proposals were subject to general design guidelines that applied to all types
19 of design review applications. There were also a number of design standards primarily
20 directed at ensuring the compatibility of mobile and manufactured homes with
21 conventionally-constructed housing. The Housing Element of the Calistoga General
22 Plan called for a review of these standards to ensure that they were consistent with
23 current state law and did not hinder the development of this housing type.

24 In March 2014, the Planning Commission recommended to the City Council adoption of
25 Single-Family Design Guidelines (attached) after considering various drafts at four
26 public hearings. One of the Commission's primary concerns in formulating the
27 Guidelines was that they be *permissive*, rather than *prescriptive* (reflected in the use of
28 "should" rather than "shall" in most of the guidelines). The Commission also sought to
29 allow creative design in keeping with the eclectic nature of residential development in
30 Calistoga. The Guidelines were adopted by the Council in April 2014.

31 Following adoption of the Guidelines, the Zoning Code was amended to:

- 32 • Require consideration of the Guidelines in reviewing residential design review
33 applications
- 34 • Expand the design review requirement to apply to all new residences (regardless of
35 size) and additions thereto
- 36 • Delegate review authority to the Planning and Building Director for the construction
37 of a single-family dwelling and additions and alterations to those dwellings in the RR,
38 R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts. The Director may refer any staff-level application to the
39 Commission for review.

40 Design Review Approvals since May 2014

41 Twelve single-family residences and a 30-unit apartment project have received design
42 review approval since the adoption of the Residential Design Guidelines.

- 43 • Planning Commission design review projects

44 In addition to the Calistoga Senior Apartments project, the following five single-family
45 residences were subject to review by the Planning Commission due to conditions of
46 their subdivision approvals.

47 1711 Emerald
48 1749 Emerald
49 1801 Michael
50 1805 Michael
51 933 Petrified Forest

- 52 • Staff-level design review projects

53 The following seven single-family residences were approved by Planning Department
54 staff.

55 2095 Mora 1706 Foothill
56 1001 Cedar 1820 Money
57 1717 Cedar 3000 West Money
58 3005 West Money

59 Staff also approved significant single-family additions at 1900 Cedar and 2886 Foothill.
60 Details of two of these approvals follow.

61 1900 Cedar Street SFD addition

62 Despite the absence of a public notice
63 requirement, staff consulted informally
64 with neighbors and one of the Planning
65 Commission's architects in the case of
66 the 1900 Cedar design review
67 application, which involved a second-
68 story addition. This input resulted in a
69 change of the project's proposed colors
70 to more-muted tones and a different
71 garage door.

72 Staff felt that the addition's location
73 adjacent to a street, its screening by a
74 row of trees and the modest size of the
75 master bedroom balcony would
76 minimize potential visual and privacy
77 impacts to the neighborhood.

78 The addition also complies with all
79 Zoning Code setback and height
80 standards.



81 1706 Foothill Boulevard SFD

82 In the case of the single-family dwelling at 1706 Foothill Boulevard, the applicant select-
83 ed an upgraded manufactured home model that includes enhancements such as
84 window shutters and textured shingles, and an earth-tone color palette. A free-standing
85 garage is being constructed behind the home. A six-foot high privacy fence will be
86 constructed at the front property line along Foothill, limiting the public's view to only the

87 top portion of the home. The
88 residence complies with all
89 Zoning Code development
90 standards.



91 Staff felt that the proposed
92 design is in keeping with the
93 modest home designs along
94 this side of Foothill and would
95 have a more-attractive street
96 view than some of the existing
97 homes by avoiding a garage at
98 the front of the property.
99 Furthermore, the California
100 Department of Housing &
101 Community Development limits
102 the ability of the City to require
103 design enhancements that are
104 not otherwise required of other
105 single-family dwellings in order to promote this more-affordable housing type.



106 **DISCUSSION:** Design review is a subjective process that is challenging to approach
107 objectively. The City's general philosophy, in recent years, has been to respect the
108 design preferred by the applicant and their design professional. Staff often meets with
109 applicants before a project is submitted to identify and discuss design elements that
110 may be of concern based on individual circumstances (such as a prevailing
111 neighborhood character).

112 The City is fortunate to have had one or two architects on its Planning Commission over
113 the last few years to provide suggestions on how to improve a project's design.
114 However, the Commission did not offer substantive design recommendations during its
115 review of any of the above-listed single-family dwellings, leaving the originally-proposed
116 designs essentially intact. Neither was there significant input from neighboring property
117 owners on proposed designs.

118 In St. Helena and Yountville, the Planning Commission/Zoning and Design Review
119 Board review all residential design review applications, except for minor additions and
120 alterations.

121 **ALTERNATIVES:** Possible changes to the residential design review process include
122 the following.

- 123 • The Zoning Code does not require public notice prior to staff approval of
124 residences or additions. Adding a requirement for public notice of staff-level,
125 single-family residential design review applications would advise neighboring
126 property owners of pending development and allow them to provide input on a
127 proposed design. Doing so would increase the processing time of the

128 applications by approximately two weeks and increase their cost by
129 approximately \$125. The review process could also be further extended if staff's
130 action is appealed to the Planning Commission.

- 131 • Amend the Zoning Code to delegate residential design review approval to the
132 Planning Commission. Such review would require a processing deposit of \$2,500
133 and an approximate four-week review process due to the public hearing
134 requirement. Staff review requires a processing deposit of \$725 and applications
135 are typically processed within two weeks.

ATTACHMENT

1. City of Calistoga Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines

Residential Design Guidelines

Single-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 single-family residential development and additions to existing homes. They will be used as criteria for approval during the City's plan review process.

While development must comply with the Calistoga Zoning Code 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:

- 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. Streetscape

A neighborhood's streetscape can be enhanced by incorporating the following design features.

1. The main entrance to a home should be clearly identifiable and visible from the street, and should have a connecting walkway.
2. The inclusion of front porches is encouraged in neighborhoods characterized by this design feature to create an attractive interface with semi-public front yard areas.
3. Garages should be a subordinate element of a home's design and should not dominate the streetscape.
4. Setbacks for infill development should be similar to those of existing homes on the block or on adjacent properties.
5. The design of an infill home should reflect any prevailing site orientation in the neighborhood.

B. Building Form and Massing

Building forms and massing can enhance visual interest and reduce the perceived scale of structures.

1. The massing of structures shall be in proportion to the size of the buildable area of a lot.
2. The design of an infill home should be compatible with any prevailing pattern of scale and massing in the neighborhood.

3. The scale and mass of new infill buildings should be reduced by stepping down the building height towards adjacent smaller structures.
4. Decks and balconies that protrude from the second story at the rear or side of a home should be recessed from the building face and use appropriate screening measures, such as solid walls or landscaping, to protect the privacy of neighboring properties.

C. Building Articulation

Facades should be articulated to avoid a monotonous appearance.

1. All facades of a residence 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.
2. Extensive, unarticulated exterior walls are discouraged. Massing offsets, varied textures, openings, recesses and design accents are encouraged to provide visual interest.
3. Architectural elements that add visual interest, scale and character, such as balconies, trellises, recessed windows, overhangs and porches are strongly encouraged.
4. The design of an infill home in a potential historic district, as identified in the General Plan, should be compatible with any prevailing architectural styles and details in the neighborhood.
5. Porches should have a minimum depth of six feet and employ materials and/or details that are authentic to the architectural style of the home.
6. The supports for overhanging upper floors or decks along the rear of a residence shall

be designed to provide a substantial appearance integrated with the overall design of the home.

D. Roofs

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

1. The forms and materials of roof additions in a potential historic district, as identified in the General Plan, should be compatible with those of the existing building.
2. The use of traditional roof forms such as gables, hips and dormers is encouraged. The use of "exotic" roof forms such as geodesic domes, "A" frames and flat roofs without a decorative cornice are strongly discouraged.
3. Variation in ridgeline height and alignment is encouraged.
4. 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.

E. Building Materials and Finishes

High-quality materials shall be used to create a look of permanence.

1. Materials, finishes and colors should be consistent with the desired architectural style and sensitive to any prevailing pattern in the vicinity.
2. Exterior materials should reflect those that have traditionally been used in Calistoga, including wood, stone and stucco. Reflective materials (exclusive of windows) are prohibited.

3. Surface detailing should not serve as a substitute for well-integrated and distinctive massing.

F. Windows, Doors and Entries

The architectural style of a residence can be enhanced by carefully-designed windows, doors and entries.

1. The main entrance to a home should be clearly identifiable and should be articulated with functionally- and architecturally-appropriate projecting or recessed forms so as to create a sheltered landing.
2. Entries should be in proportion to the building façade as a whole. Two-story entrances are generally not acceptable.
3. Window types, materials, shapes and proportions should complement the architectural style of the building.
4. 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.
5. In order to enhance privacy, windows on side elevations shall not be positioned directly opposite an adjacent residence's windows.

G. Garages and Driveways

A garage that is well-integrated into a residence's design will ensure that it does not dominate its front façade. Minimizing paved surfaces such as driveways increases opportunities for landscaping and reduces runoff.

1. Consideration should be given to setting garage doors facing the street back from the front façade to help reduce their visual impact.

2. Garage doors should be articulated with trellises, panels and/or windows to break up their large planes.
3. The width of driveways as well as cuts at the curb shall be as narrow as possible.
4. Circular driveways are discouraged except where needed to ensure safe backing onto highly-traveled streets. Where unavoidable, the view of vehicles in the driveway shall be screened with landscaping and/or fencing.
5. Driveways on corner lots should be located as far as possible from street intersections.

H. Landscaping

Landscaping shall be used to enhance properties and streetscapes, define entrances to homes, provide a buffer between incompatible land uses and provide screening when necessary.

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. New and rehabilitated landscaping shall comply with the State of California Model Water-Efficient Ordinance, where applicable.
4. 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).
5. Trees and large shrubs shall not be planted under overhead lines or over underground infrastructure if growth may interfere with public utilities.
6. When selecting tree species, consideration should be given to potential maintenance and wildfire issues, nearby pedestrian activities and public rights-of-way.

7. Trees and shrubs should be located and spaced to allow for mature and long-term growth.
8. 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.
9. Parkways should be planted with shade trees to provide a pleasant pedestrian environment and reduce area temperatures.

I. 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 residence in style and finish.
2. Lighting sources shall be screened from off-site view.
3. Lighting levels shall be the minimum necessary to provide safety and security in order to avoid glare, light trespass and "sky glow."

J. Walls and Fences

Walls and fences shall be designed using styles, materials and colors that complement the house or neighborhood.

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. Front yard fencing should be as transparent as possible to allow connectivity between the residence and the street.
5. Wrought iron fencing should be powder-coated to reduce the potential for rust.
6. 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.
7. Walls visible to the general public 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.
8. Stucco and plaster walls should be capped with a different material to give them a finished appearance.
9. Walls should be constructed as low as possible while still performing screening, noise attenuation and security functions.
10. On corner lots, the area in front of street side yard fencing should be landscaped. Plantings or walls at street corners shall allow a clear line of sight.
11. Walls on sloping terrain should be stepped to follow the terrain.

K. Viewshed Protection

New development shall minimize impacts on the scenic views of ridge lines and hilltop areas from neighboring properties.