

# Multi-Unit Dwelling Design Guidelines



Citywide Design Review Area  
June 2019

*City of*  
**SACRAMENTO**  
Community Development



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# Introduction

This document articulates design principles for multi-unit dwellings to assist the Planning and Design Commission, City Council, City staff and project planners and designers by identifying the City's design criteria for multi-unit development. The intent is to achieve well-designed projects to enhance the community's overall value and appearance.

## How to Use this Document

Project proponents and their design team will use this document as an informational tool, since it provides guidance as to appropriate design solutions. It will also be useful for City Staff in determining if a project proposal meets the minimum design standards necessary as part of review of a site plan or discretionary permit.

Designers should use the guidelines as a framework for decisions made during the design process. This will ensure timely processing of applications, and minimize revisions, delays and misunderstandings.

Reviewers, such as the Planning and Design Commission and its staff will use the design principles to provide consistent, objective, and fair review of proposed projects.

## Organization of this Document

Each section of the document includes principles, rationales and guidelines/design approaches defined below:

Principle: Represents the prescriptive or mandatory elements of project planning or design that will be used by the City to determine compliance with the Principles Document. Principles allow for flexibility in design approach and alternative design solutions.

Rationale: The underlying reason or explanation for the Principle.

Guidelines/Design Approaches: Each design principle includes advisory guidelines or a series of suggested approaches to accomplish the principle. Alternative design approaches that achieve the design principles will be also be considered. Drawings and photos are provided as examples and are not intended to list or illustrate possible solutions to all situations.

### Alternative Design Approaches

The Planning and Design Commission and its staff will use the design principles to provide consistent, objective, and fair review of proposed projects. The intent is not to subject projects to undue hardships. The Commission and staff are committed to engaging in a collaborative review process.

The Commission and staff welcome alternative designs, that, while not meeting every design principle, contribute to the goals of the General Plan of the City.

The Commission and staff will review projects for overall compliance with the design guidelines, realizing that not every guideline will be met on any given project.

While these principles promote the development of enduring and sustainable neighborhoods, they do not individually address problems or opportunities associated with each unique site or structure. The principles are not intended to list or illustrate possible solutions to all situations. The principles do, however, promote quality design and innovative solutions. Alternative design solutions that are consistent with the spirit of the design principles identified in this document will be considered and even encouraged.

The design principles shall be in addition to any other regulations / requirements, as well as any applicable design review district requirements. Where design guidelines have been adopted for a specific area (see Appendix), those specific guidelines shall take precedence over the Multi-Unit Dwelling Design Principles. In approving these Principles, the Planning Commission strongly encourages applicants for multi-unit projects to meet or exceed minimum standards identified in City Codes and Ordinances.

Changes in planning and design practices may arise in the future and result in the need to modify the design principles. The Planning Commission will re-evaluate the principles annually, with input from members of the community, and make revisions as necessary.

# Multi-Unit Dwellings

This document establishes design principles for new multi-unit projects (containing three or more units). These principles are intended to promote and protect the public health, safety and general welfare of the community by carrying out the following goals:

- Promotion of a positive environment for the residents of multi-unit developments with sustained quality and adequate amenities.
- Compatibility of multi-unit development with surrounding properties.
- Contribution to and enhancement of the character, value and livability of Sacramento's neighborhoods.
- Direct and safe pedestrian access to adjacent transit and activity center locations.
- Clear, consistent and specific objective guidelines to provide developers with a timelier, cost effective, and more certain review process.
- The 2035 General Plan provides a vision reflecting the city's commitment to sustainability and livability. Based on this vision, the City continues to develop and refine standards and guidelines intended to influence the design of future development in Sacramento.



Source: Architectsjournal.co.uk

*Multi-unit front entrance*

## Multi-Unit

### Site Design

This section discusses the location of multi-unit structures on the lot, their orientation toward the street and adjacent buildings, and the location of parking lots and parking structures.

Good site design of multi-unit structures should ensure that residents can easily access them from the street, with entryways clearly located on the street side. Parking areas, utilities, and service facilities should be located toward the rear of the site and outside of primary view. Common outdoor spaces should be toward the interior of the site so that all residents can easily access these facilities, and to provide additional safety for small children.

### SECTIONS

- **SITE PLANNING**
- **BUILDING ORIENTATION**



Source: Sacramento Places

*Site design with multiple access points to the street*

## 1 Site Planning

### Design Principle

Site planning should address how the various components of a development (e.g., buildings, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parking, open space, etc.) relate to adjacent streets and existing development, and how the various components relate to each other within the development site to foster a cohesive, safe, and interactive environment.

### Rationale

Appropriate building location and site organization can help to create an interesting and safe streetscape that promotes interaction and visibility. For example, pedestrian-oriented ground floor retail combined with residential development can provide “eyes on the street,” and increased activity and security for the corridor.

### Design Guidelines

- 1-1 Residential buildings should be arranged to provide functional public and private outdoor spaces.
- 1-2 Locate structures to create continuity of desirable characteristics (i.e., porches, balconies, etc.) along the street face.
- 1-3 Pedestrian orientation is encouraged in the allocation of space, building size and placement, and open space design. Provide adequate interior walkways and connections to public sidewalks without obstructions (i.e., curbs and steps).
- 1-4 Encourage appropriate amenities to serve anticipated residents (e.g., on-site childcare and play lots for projects for families with children, less parking and more walking paths, etc.)
- 1-5 Active common spaces should encourage gatherings and avoid noise, light, and other potential conflicts with adjacent neighbors.
- 1-6 Infill development within existing neighborhoods should be sensitively designed to respect existing residential patterns and development, and reinforce the character and functional relationships of existing neighborhoods.
- 1-7 Projects should reflect the sustainability goals of the General Plan and provide designs that are reflective of the project area micro-climate including solar orientation, availability or natural and artificial shading elements, daylighting, and natural breezes and air flow.



Source: Sacramento Places

*Example Site Plan*

## Multi-Unit

### 2 Building Orientation / Relationship to the Street

#### Design Principle

Building orientation and positioning of other elements on a site (e.g., entrances, parking lots, and driveways) shall be planned to address the street with entries and active uses to assure both a viable, safe, and attractive site design.

#### Rationale

Building orientation plays an important role in neighborhood context, particularly in proximity to residential development and activates the building to best interact with the street.

#### Design Principle

Multi-unit structures should present a street facade that encourages interaction with the street by including entry features, windows, and landscaping along the side of the building.

#### Rationale

Multi-unit structures that are adjacent to a public street should encourage residents to actively engage with that street through a variety of design elements. In addition to improving the visual quality of the streetscape, design elements should allow residents to see and be seen from the street, enhancing neighborhood interaction and improving safety.

#### Design Guidelines

- 2-1** Multi-unit buildings are encouraged to be oriented to the adjacent public street by providing large windows, porches, balconies and entryways or other entry features along the street. Multi-unit structures that present a blank wall are not allowed. Active spaces provide visual access to street side activities. Balconies are allowed internally.
- 2-2** Multi-unit structures that are near single-unit residential neighborhoods should provide a streetside facade that is complementary to the single-unit homes in style and massing.
- 2-3** New infill residences should be compatible with the existing on-site relationships of the surrounding established neighborhood such as front facade orientation, scale of front entries, and prevailing front and side yard setback areas.
- 2-4** Building ends should contain windows and active spaces to provide for additional security, and visual interest.

## Multi-Unit

- 2-5 Residential buildings should have pedestrian access and visual orientation to the adjacent roadways and/or open space features. Avoid the creation of monotonous streetscapes.
- 2-6 Pedestrians should have clear, unobstructed access to the street and nearby transit stops.
- 2-7 Locate buildings to minimize the potential for disruption to privacy and outdoor activities of adjacent neighbors/buildings.
- 2-8 Develop projects that face on alleys to enhance the general livability, visual quality and safety of the alley.



Source: ccdboise.com

*Encourage walkable / pedestrian friendly building orientation*

### Parking / Circulation

The visual prominence of vehicles shall be minimized by generally siting parking areas to the rear or side of the property rather than along street frontages, providing underground parking, and screening parking areas from views exterior to the site. Parking shall be designed to minimize potential pedestrian conflicts.

Planning for safer and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians can result in an aesthetically appealing site with less impervious surfaces and increased open space. In addition, pedestrian ingress and egress provides opportunities for increased transit use and interaction with the community.

### SECTIONS

- **PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**
- **VEHICLE CIRCULATION / PARKING**
- **GARAGE / CARPORTS**



Source: Sacramento Places

*Minimize visual prominence of vehicles*

### 3 Pedestrian Circulation

#### Design Principle

Multi-unit structures should present a facade that encourages interaction with the street by including entry features, windows, and landscaping along the street side of the building.

#### Rationale

Multi-unit structures that are adjacent to a public street should encourage residents to actively engage with that street through a variety of design elements. In addition to improving the visual quality of the streetscape, design elements should allow residents to see and be seen from the street, enhancing neighborhood interaction and improving safety.

#### Design Guidelines

- 3-1 Pedestrian planning should be given priority to vehicular access, and provide easy pedestrian access to public bicycle / pedestrian ways, neighborhood centers and transit stops. Pedestrian routes should be as obvious, direct and simple as possible.
- 3-2 Pedestrian access should not be limited to vehicle access locations. Provide separated pedestrian access points wherever possible. Sidewalks should not be combined with or be part of driveways.
- 3-3 Pedestrian paths of travel should be separated from auto circulation routes. Where pedestrian circulation crosses vehicular routes, a change in grade, materials, textures or colors should be provided to emphasize the conflict point and improve its visibility and safety.
- 3-4 Actual walking distances to transit services should be considered in project designs. Pedestrian accessibility should be measured by the actual path available, rather than a straight line. The general rule for time and distance for people willing to walk to get to transit is five minutes, or approximately 1,000 feet.
- 3-5 All likely pedestrian routes should be considered in the design phase to eliminate “short cuts” which damage landscape areas.
- 3-6 Pedestrian pathways should include amenities such as trellises, trees, or other landscaping. Lighting should be provided for safety and visual access.
- 3-7 Bicycle parking should be located close to, and with direct access to, residential buildings.



Source: SWAgroup.com

*Create pedestrian and bike friendly streets*

## Multi-Unit

### 4 Vehicle Circulation / Parking

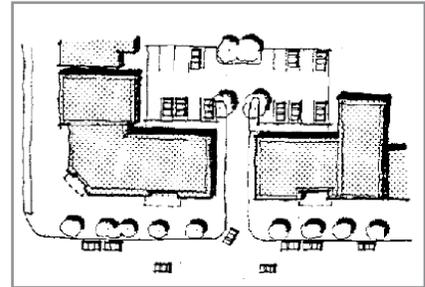
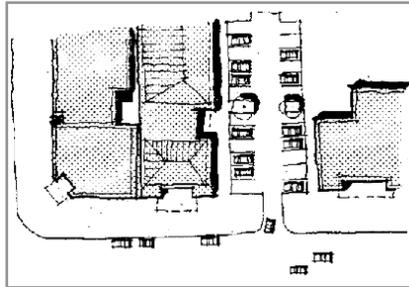
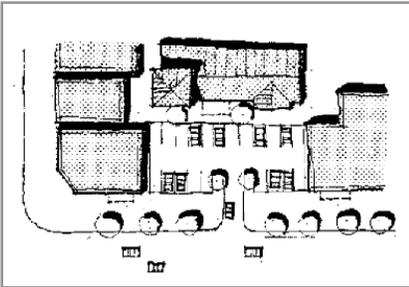
#### Design Principle

Parking should be located at the rear or interior of the complex, where feasible. Parking lots that face the street or are on the side of multi-unit housing should be minimized.

#### Rationale

Multi-unit dwelling structures should encourage residents to have an active relationship with the street(s) adjacent to the development. To this end, parking lots should be located at the rear or in the interior of the development so as not to interfere with access to the street or interior common spaces.

Parking Orientation types, with buildings oriented towards the street preferred



Source: City of Seattle

Discouraged

Acceptable

Preferred

#### Design Guidelines

- 4-1 Surface parking lots should be located away from the adjacent public roadways, to the rear of (or beneath) buildings where possible. Parking areas should not be located adjacent to public roadways.
- 4-2 Parking and vehicle access should be located away from street corners.
- 4-3 Landscaping and walkways should be provided between buildings and paved parking areas. Parking directly against buildings is strongly discouraged.
- 4-4 Parking areas visible from the street right-of-way should be screened from view with landscaping or other types of visual barriers. However, screening should not exceed four feet in height, and should be permeable so that areas can be viewed by passing pedestrians and vehicles.

## Multi-Unit

- 4-5** Multiple smaller parking lots are preferred over single, large lots to minimize the expansive appearance of parking fields.
- 4-6** Perimeter parking aisles which surround a complex and isolate residences from the parking areas shall be discouraged. Parallel parking along drive aisles may be added to minimize the number of stalls in lots.
- 4-7** If large parking areas are needed, a clearly defined pedestrian path inside the parking area that provides safe and easy access to and from buildings and sidewalks should be included in the design.
- 4-8** Textures, patterns, and colors are encouraged in the design of paved parking areas or entries. Large monolithic areas of single-color untextured paving are discouraged.
- 4-9** Covered parking should be located so that it does not interfere with front entries or access to interior common spaces.
- 4-10** Minimize the number and width of driveways and curb cuts. Shared driveways are encouraged where possible.
- 4-11** All walkways, entry gates and common facilities shall meet Title 24, California Code of Regulations pertaining to disabled access design requirements.
- 4-12** Parking lot design shall be subject to Section 3, Chapter 2 of the Zoning Ordinance, and Title 24, California Code of Regulations.
- 4-13** Smaller driveways, curb cuts and parking areas can reduce barriers to pedestrian movement, improve aesthetics of a site, and reduce development costs.

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*Minimize sea of parking by adding more pedestrian friendly circulation, green spaces and parallel parking*

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Source: Integritystructural.com

## Multi-Unit

### 5 Garages / Carports

#### Design Principle

The visibility of multi-unit garages from the street should be minimized. Instead, garages should be located beneath, at the side, or at the rear of multi-unit structures. Garage and carport materials and architectural styles should complement the materials and styles of the primary buildings.

#### Rationale

To minimize the visual prominence of garages, they should be placed underneath or at the rear of multi-unit structures. Garages should be grouped in small clusters rather than unbroken lines.

#### Design Guidelines

- 5-1** Carport roofs should reflect the design of the buildings, and materials and colors should be compatible with the adjacent buildings. If carport roofs are flat or need to vary from the design of adjacent buildings they should be located interior to the site, away from street views.
- 5-2** Break up setbacks of garages to avoid “corridors” of garage walls.
- 5-3** Garages should be varied in their location to minimize the impact of a row of garage doors.
- 5-4** Rows of garages or carports around the perimeter of a development should be avoided.
- 5-5** The use of photovoltaic solar panels on carports is encouraged.
- 5-6** Place garages and driveways in well-lit and secure alley in rear of structures.



Source: Sacramento Places

*Minimize visibility of multi-unit garage from the street by placing it in the rear of structures*

## Multi-Unit

### Landscaping / Open Space

Residential projects should be designed to maximize opportunities for creating usable, attractive, and integrated open space.

Landscaping can be used to complement buildings and to make a positive contribution to the aesthetics and function of the specific site and the area. Planted areas shall be used to enhance the appearance of structures, define site functions, and screen undesirable views.

Open space areas should be linked among adjacent developments to allow shared open space opportunities, with a goal of providing contiguous regional open spaces and greenbelts.

Usable, attractive and functional open space and landscaping provide for a pleasant and sustainable living environment. Landscaping also provides cooling shade and helps to improve air quality.

#### SECTIONS

- **INTERIOR COMMON SPACE**
- **LANDSCAPING**
- **IRRIGATION**
- **OPEN SPACE**



Source: newvistas.com

*Landscaping used to complement buildings and contribute to the aesthetics of the area*

## 6 Interior Common Space

### Design Principle

Interior common spaces that are easily accessible and visually appealing should be provided in multi-unit resident communities. Units that are adjacent to common spaces should have entry features and windows that open onto those common spaces.

### Rationale

Interior common spaces should ideally foster a sense of community, which can be facilitated by building facades that allow residents to see and use common spaces. Common spaces should offer amenities that invite use, such as seating, shade, and tot lots.

### Design Guidelines

- 6-1 Ground floor units should have doorways that open onto interior common spaces.
- 6-2 All units that overlook interior common spaces should have windows that allow residents to easily see these areas.
- 6-3 Common amenities should be provided that cater to all age ranges, from small children to the elderly, such as tot lots, seating areas, and swimming pools, as appropriate.
- 6-4 Common facilities such as recreation rooms, laundry and mail areas should be located adjacent to common open space to increase activity in these areas.
- 6-5 Common open spaces should be designated as a visible, accessible transition between the street and individual units.

*This common space provides shade, a range of engaging areas, and easy access from nearby units*



Source: Sacramento Places

## Multi-Unit

### 7 Landscaping

#### Design Principle

Landscaping should be provided within all street side setbacks, common areas, and parking lots to provide shade and create visually appealing exterior spaces.

#### Rationale

A variety of landscaping plants and materials can contribute to the visual interest of a neighborhood. Landscaping elements should be selected not only with consideration for the style of the multi-unit structures, but should also complement the landscaping of other buildings on the block.

#### Design Guidelines

- 7-1** Exterior site design and landscaping should provide functional recreational spaces and/or community site amenities.
- 7-2** Exterior spaces should be designed to enhance the overall appearance and compatibility of such development by providing privacy, buffering daylight, and to provide a pleasant transition to the street.
- 7-3** Street-facing elevations should have landscaping adjacent to their foundation. Landscaped area may be along the edge of a porch instead of the foundation.
- 7-4** Dense landscaping and/or architectural treatments should be provided to screen unattractive views and features such as storage areas, stand-alone unfinished or untreated trash enclosures, freeway structures, mechanical equipment (i.e., transformers, HVAC etc.) and other similar elements.
- 7-5** Incorporate appropriate landscaping that includes a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. Unpaved areas should be planted with irrigated plant materials. Unpaved areas where landscaping would be challenging should be mulched to minimize weed growth and improve appearance.
- 7-6** Provisions for on-going maintenance should be identified to ensure the timely replacement of any dead or diseased vegetation.
- 7-7** Landscaping compatible with building design is encouraged. Trellises, arbors, cascading landscaping, vines and perimeter garden walls are encouraged.
- 7-8** Landscaping should be in scale and compatible with the project and adjacent land uses.

## Multi-Unit

- 7-9** Landscaping should be utilized to soften the differences between infill development and existing adjacent properties in the established neighborhood.
- 7-10** Security issues should be considered in the landscape design of the site, including creation of barriers and screening.
- 7-11** Landscape plans should avoid potential conflicts between landscaping and lighting.
- 7-12** Provide deciduous shade trees around the east, west and south sides of residences to help reduce cooling loads during the summer and allowing solar gain during the winter months.
- 7-13** Landscaping shall conform to the City Municipal Code Section 13.64.010, "Landscaping requirements," which requires that the front and street side setbacks must be planted with landscaping materials that primarily consist of turf or low-growing groundcover.
- 7-14** Trees should be planted in the setbacks and common areas at intervals appropriate to the full spread of the mature trees.
- 7-15** Street trees should be retained. Consult the City of Sacramento Parks and Trees Service (916-264-5200) for questions regarding the care of street trees. Private tree services are available to consult before trimming or removing mature trees.
- 7-16** Plant species should be suitable for the Sacramento climate. Low-water landscaping materials are encouraged.
- 7-17** All planting areas, including those designed to accommodate the 2-foot overhang on parking spaces, should be landscaped with groundcover or other planting materials to reduce stormwater runoff.
- 7-18** New planting strips located between the sidewalk and street should be a minimum of six feet wide to promote the health of shade trees.
- 7-19** Paved and hardscaped surfaces should be shaded by trees, shade structures, or photovoltaic solar panels, when possible, to reduce heat transmission and reduce energy consumption.
- 7-20** Deciduous shade trees and shrubs should be planted on the west and south sides of buildings to minimize solar heat gain and increase energy efficiency.
- 7-21** Streetscapes should incorporate a planter strip separating the sidewalk from the street (except where prohibited by the existing street cross section). Planting of trees within the planter strip is strongly encouraged for screening, security, shading and cooling benefits.

## Multi-Unit

- 7-22 Retain existing mature trees in landscape and building location plans where possible.
- 7-23 Landscaping shall not impede fire access to hydrants connections.
- 7-24 Street design (cross sections) shall be compatible with the City Street Design Manual.
- 7-25 All new landscaping shall comply with the City of Sacramento Water Conservation Ordinance.

**Refer to the following lists for more information about recommended species:**

**Sacramento Tree Foundation**

[www.sactree.com/treeInfo/treesWeOffer.html](http://www.sactree.com/treeInfo/treesWeOffer.html)

**Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD)**

[www.smud.org/residential/saving/trees/index.html](http://www.smud.org/residential/saving/trees/index.html)

**City of Sacramento Department of Parks and Recreation**

[www.cityofsacramento.org/parksandrecreation/urbanforest/index.html](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/parksandrecreation/urbanforest/index.html)



Source: earthdevelopmentinc.com

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*Landscaping used to complement buildings and contribute to the aesthetics of the area*

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## 8 Irrigation

### Design Principle

An automatic irrigation system should be provided for new construction to maintain the health and positive appearance of all landscaped areas.

### Rationale

The seasonal extremes of the Sacramento climate make regular irrigation of planted areas mandatory. Automatic irrigation ensures regular and consistent watering, and is desirable for the health of landscaping. Irrigation systems and watering frequency should reflect planting types with drought tolerant landscaping requiring less frequent watering capabilities.

### Design Guidelines

- 8-1 An irrigation system must be installed to provide consistent coverage of all landscaped areas.
- 8-2 Turf and groundcover are more effectively irrigated with a conventional spray system. Head-to-head spray coverage is recommended. Avoid overspray onto sidewalks and adjacent properties.
- 8-3 A drip irrigation system is recommended for shrubs and trees to provide deeper, more even watering. Drip irrigation also permits greater water conservation than a conventional spray system.
- 8-4 Automatic controllers with rain shut-off valves will allow for greater water conservation.
- 8-5 Irrigation controls must be screened from view by landscaping or other attractive site materials.



Source: mithun.com

*Irrigation controls must be screened from view by landscaping or other attractive site materials*

## Multi-Unit

### 9 Open Space

#### Design Principle

Open space should be situated to allow for shared open space opportunities among all multi-unit residents

#### Rationale

Usable, attractive and functional space and landscaping provide for a pleasant and sustainable living environment.

#### Design Guidelines

- 9-1 Multi-unit projects should be organized around usable common space. The site plan for each multi-unit project should address both active and passive open space uses. Open spaces consisting of playgrounds, pools, picnic areas, tot lots, community rooms, etc. should be provided as appropriate for the ages and number of residents. Unless otherwise identified as an “adults only” or “senior” project, recreation areas for children should be provided.
- 9-2 Common areas should be accessible from all buildings and connected by a comprehensive, on-site pedestrian circulation system. Common open space recreation areas, plazas and courtyards should be located and landscaped to take advantage of solar orientation, provide protection from wind and afford shade.
- 9-3 Individual dwelling units should consider a usable outdoor space designed for the exclusive use of that dwelling unit at grade or in the form of a balcony for upper story dwellings. Private usable open space, if provided, should be directly accessible from buildings and be of such size as to offer a reasonable outdoor living opportunity. The placement of air conditioning and other mechanical equipment should not render private open space unusable.



Source: cadanet.org/EVIVA

*Multi-unit projects should be organized around usable common space*

### Lighting / Security

Residential projects should be designed with uniform spread of lighting and with eyes on the street and crime prevention through environmental design in mind.

#### SECTIONS

- **LIGHTING**
- **SECURITY / CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN**



Source: m.amli.com

*Provide good lighting and eyes on the street*

## Multi-Unit

### 10 Lighting

#### Design Principle

Project lighting shall respect the scale and character of the adjacent residential neighborhood. Lighting shall not intrude or create a nuisance towards adjacent properties. At the same time, lighting should provide for adequate visibility and security for residents.

#### Rationale

Lighting not only provides for increased security and visibility, but can also contribute to the design of a project.

#### Design Guidelines

- 10-1** Exterior lighting should be architecturally integrated with the building style, material and colors. Light fixtures can add to the aesthetic character of a building when designed to complement the architecture. Raised light pole bases should be attractively designed and well detailed to be compatible with the overall project. The use of cylindrical type concrete pole bases is discouraged.
- 10-2** Parking areas and entry drives should be lighted to facilitate pedestrian movement and safety, especially where parking is located away from street views. Pole mounted lighting should be spaced for maximum energy efficiency and be no taller than 16 feet.
- 10-3** Pedestrian walk lighting should be of an appropriate scale and style such as bollard type lighting, step lighting and/or pole mounted lighting. Site lighting should not be pervasive or impact surrounding neighboring properties.
- 10-4** Low, downcast lighting adds safety to pedestrian walkways without contributing to “light pollution” and nuisance illumination. Coordinate planting of landscaping and installation of lighting. Choose appropriate light pole size and location to avoid conflicts between mature trees and lighting. This will help to prevent mature trees from being severely pruned.



Source: Sacramento Places

Multi-unit development with lighting architecturally integrated with the building style

## 11 Security / CPTED

### Design Principle

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – or CPTED, is the proper design, maintenance, and use of the built environment. The use of CPTED standards provides for security, appropriate color of lighting, minimized glare, and energy-efficient lighting use.

### Rationale

CPTED should be incorporated into a design in order to enhance the quality of life and reduce both the incidence and the fear of crime.

### Design Guidelines

- 11-1** For security, landscaping or other suitable barriers should be provided between sidewalk and entrances or windows. Avoid plant massing that may provide “hiding spaces”.
- 11-2** Landscaping needs to be trimmed and maintained to prevent places of concealment for unauthorized users.
- 11-3** Projects should encourage use of neighborhood watch and good neighbor policies.
- 11-4** Consider the use of low walls on downstairs patios to allow residents to watch children and other activities (eyes on street / common areas).
- 11-5** Windows need to be free of obstructions, such as bushes, trees, and walls, so that there are clear views from inside the dwelling units, common spaces, parking spaces, and offices.
- 11-6** Barriers between outdoor areas, such as fences should be designed to be at least partially see-through to prevent the creation of “hiding spaces”.
- 11-7** Shared facilities, such as laundry rooms or mail rooms should be adjacent to well-traveled areas, and doors to these shared facilities should have windows.
- 11-8** Seating, lights, and landscaping should be arranged to encourage use of common outdoor areas for activities such as cook-outs, gardening, or children playing.
- 11-9** All exterior unit doors should have wide-angle viewers (peep holes), or windows on or immediately adjacent to, when located near mechanical equipment.



Source: metrolinx.com

*Example of incorporation of CPTED principles into multi-unit development*

## Multi-Unit

- 11-10** All outdoor lighting should be light emitting diode (LED) and provide a soft, even light around the property, without deep shadows or bright glare, and lights should be left on at night with photosensitive timers, so they go on at dusk and off at dawn.
- 11-11** All exterior doors, alcoves, hallways, stairwells, parking areas, pedestrian walkways, and recessed areas should be illuminated.
- 11-12** Residents should be encouraged to use LED front and back porch lighting during the hours of darkness, or lights should be designed with photosensitive timers.
- 11-13** There should be a clear transition between the sidewalk or public property, and the complex's property. This can be achieved through changes in pavement textures, landscaping, or changes in elevation.
- 11-14** Entrances to the property and buildings should be accentuated with architectural elements, lighting and/or landscaping so that it is clear where pedestrian traffic should go.
- 11-15** Multi-unit developments should have a manager or maintenance person keeping the property clean, replacing burnt-out light bulbs promptly, cleaning graffiti immediately, and maintaining landscaping so it does not become overgrown.
- 11-16** Street address numbers and apartment numbers should be clearly visible and illuminated at night.
- 11-17** When all units do not face the street, there should be well-lit directional signage to assist emergency responders in locating units quickly.



Source: metrolinx.com

- Large windows at upper levels promote casual supervision of the street.
- Clear building signage.
- Exterior of building well illuminated.
- Large windows at-grade promote surveillance from street.
- Clearly defined private and public space.
- Good pedestrian-scaled lighting on street.

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*Example of incorporation of CPTED principles into an urban multi-unit development*

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**Accessory Structures / Infrastructure**

Amenities and community structures (such as community rooms, mail rooms/kiosks, recreation rooms etc.) should be centrally located and easily accessible by residents. Service elements and infrastructure such as trash enclosures, loading docks and mechanical equipment shall be located away from street views.

**SECTIONS**

- **STORAGE / ACCESSORY STRUCTURES / MECHANICAL / HVAC / UTILITY EQUIPMENT**
- **TRASH / RECYCLING ENCLOSURES**



Source: Stroico Construction

*Amenities and accessory structures located in a central and visible location*

## Multi-Unit

### 12 Storage / Accessory Structures / Mechanical / HVAC / Utility Equipment

#### Design Principle

Service elements and infrastructure such as loading docks and mechanical equipment shall be located away from street views.

#### Rationale

Unsightly and poorly located service elements can detract from the compatibility with main building designs and create hazards for pedestrians and automobiles.

#### Design Guidelines

- 12-1** The roof pitch of accessory structures should be consistent with the predominant roof slope of primary structures. Materials and colors should also be consistent with primary structures.
- 12-2** Resident storage areas should be integrated into the building design. Storage facilities integrated with carports should have architectural treatment consistent with the buildings, using similar design elements. On site storage facilities will help to prevent the use of porches and balconies as storage areas.
- 12-3** Dedicated storage units provide secure storage and minimize clutter in other spaces.
- 12-4** Mechanical equipment (e.g., heating, cooling, antennas, satellite dishes, air conditioners or similar mechanical devices) should be integrated into the design of projects as much as possible.
- 12-5** When integration is not possible, mechanical equipment should be screened from view whenever possible. Mechanical equipment placed on building roofs shall not be visible from the street or walkways.
- 12-6** Minimize the visibility of roof top mechanical equipment by grouping plumbing, vents, and ducts away from the public view.
- 12-7** Utility equipment such as transformers, electric and gas meters, electrical panels and junction boxes should be screened by walls and/or landscaping. Combine the location of utilities and services where feasible.
- 12-8** All electric, gas, television, radio, and cable television lines should be placed underground. Mechanical equipment should be installed consistent with the Comprehensive Floodplain Management Plan.
- 12-9** Where possible, provide shade trees adjacent to mechanical equipment to reduce temperature at air intakes.

### 13 Trash / Recycling Enclosures

#### Design Principle

Trash enclosures shall be located away from street views and away from neighboring residential zones.

#### Rationale

Unsightly and poorly located service elements can detract from the compatibility with main building designs.

#### Design Guidelines

- 13-1 Trash enclosures should contain enough space to facilitate both waste disposal and recycling. Containers should be convenient to use and not block each other.
- 13-2 Trash enclosure design should address solid waste personnel safety. All enclosures should have access routes that do not require solid waste personnel to lift dumpsters for collection. Vertical curbs should be avoided, and materials for sidewalk or driveway access should be flat to prevent wheels from becoming stuck.
- 13-3 Views of trash storage areas should be minimized from public streets and be located to avoid impacting adjacent properties.
- 13-4 Trash enclosures are required to be constructed of concrete block or other durable material. Split face block, brick, stucco or similar quality materials are preferable. Avoid the use of unsurfaced cinder block.
- 13-5 Landscaping should be incorporated around trash enclosures to provide for more effective screening.
- 13-6 Trash enclosures and surrounding areas should be kept clear of loose trash.
- 13-7 Trash enclosures should be architecturally integrated with the building design.



*Architecturally integrated trash enclosure*

## Multi-Unit

### Fencing / Walls

It is important for multi-unit projects to have connections to the surrounding neighborhood or streets, but at the same time promote the safety of residents.

Where fencing and gating are part of a project, they shall be integrated into the overall design which contributes to the long-term value of a project, and the neighborhood as well.

### SECTIONS

- **FENCING / WALLS**



Source: equityhousing.com

*Multi-unit development incorporated into surrounding area and not fenced off*

## 14 Fencing / Walls

### Design Principle

Fencing should complement the design of the buildings and define the boundary of the complex without obstructing physical or visual access from a public way.

### Rationale

Although the City recognizes the need for security measures, it is not recommended that multi-unit projects become walled-in enclaves with few connections to the surrounding neighborhood or streets. Where fencing and gating are part of a project, they shall be integrated into the overall design which contributes to the long-term value of a project, and the neighborhood as well.

### Design Guidelines

- 14-1** Sound-walls, masonry walls or fences should be designed to minimize visual monotony through changes in plane, height, material or material texture or significant landscape massing where appropriate.
- 14-2** Fencing and gating should be designed as an integrated part of the site, rather than as a separate fence, (i.e. planter wall, continuation of architectural wall, etc.).
- 14-3** Alternative fencing designs and materials, (e.g., wrought iron/brick mix, hedges, shortened walls/fencing) are encouraged. Plain black wrought iron and chain link fencing without breaks or pillars are discouraged. Chain link and woven-wire fences are prohibited within the front-yard and street side-yard setback areas.
- 14-4** Support place-making goals with fences and walls that reflect the style, materials, colors and architectural character of the buildings and the site.
- 14-5** Fencing should be screened to the greatest extent possible with landscaping.
- 14-6** Details such as landscaping, trellises and variation in fencing design can add to the character, desirability and value of multi-unit projects.
- 14-7** Fencing on street sides should be set back as much as possible and softened with landscaping to minimize a “fortress” image. Fencing should be between buildings and not continuous on the street face side.

## Multi-Unit

- 14-8** Solid fencing, walls, large hedges, or other similar barriers exceeding four (4') feet in height are discouraged within streetside setback areas.
- 14-9** Fencing should allow pedestrian (resident) ingress and egress to the project site. Fencing should not create a barrier to pedestrian movement. If building entries face the public way they should not be blocked with project perimeter fencing.
- 14-10** Fencing shall not exclude use of hydrants or fire department connections or hydrants. All gates should have non-destructive emergency access with no forced entry required, subject to review and approval by the City of Sacramento Fire Department.



Source: multifamilyexecutive.com

*Multi-unit development incorporated into surrounding area and not fenced off*

### Drainage / Water Quality

In accordance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, the City is required to implement a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Program in order to reduce pollutants in urban runoff to the maximum extent practicable.

#### SECTIONS

- **PARKING LOTS / VEHICLE WASH AREAS**



Source: spur.org

*Use of permeable pavers for a parking area*

## Multi-Unit

### 15 Parking Lots / Vehicle Wash Areas

#### Design Principle

New multi-unit development shall incorporate design features which provide for on-site source and treatment of urban runoff.

#### Rationale

Controlling urban runoff pollution from new developments during and after construction is critical to the success of Sacramento's Comprehensive Stormwater Management Program (CSWMP). The goal is to minimize the increase in runoff pollution typically caused by land development and protect the beneficial uses of receiving waters by employing a sensible combination of pollutant source control and site-specific treatment measures.

#### Design Guidelines

- 15-1** With early planning and design, it is possible for areas required for tree planting to also be used to satisfy the City's requirement to provide on-site treatment of stormwater.
- 15-2** Parking lots which are part of new developments with one acre or more impervious area are generally required to provide treatment control measures that capture and treat stormwater runoff through settling, filtration, and /or biodegradation. The treated runoff is then released to the storm drain system or percolated into the ground.
- 15-3** Integrating treatment measures with areas used for tree shading may significantly reduce land requirements and costs. Vegetated swales and filter strips can effectively be integrated with tree shading. The Department of Utilities and Stormwater Management Program should be contacted for specific design and plan approval.
- 15-4** New multi-unit sites shall be designed to incorporate urban runoff mitigation measures as identified in the City of Sacramento Guidance Manual for On-Site Stormwater Quality Control Measures.



*Vegetated swales and filter strips effectively integrated with tree shading*

### Architectural Elements

Quality in detail and design contributes not only to the long-term value of a project, but the neighborhood as well. The use of different “styles” and materials are intended to add variety to the buildings just as is most often found in cities that have evolved over time.

### SECTIONS

- **ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY**
- **SCALE / MASSING / ARTICULATION**
- **FACADES / ENTRIES**
- **MATERIALS / TEXTURES / COLORS**



Source: Sacramento Places

*Use of different “styles” and materials intended to add variety to the building*

## Multi-Unit

### 16 Architectural Variety

#### Design Principle

New multi-unit dwelling developments shall consider the scale and character of the adjacent residential neighborhood through attention to views, building scale and orientation and proximity to adjacent uses.

#### Rationale

A variety of design styles and materials should be utilized to create interesting streetscapes. Quality in detail and design contributes not only to the long-term value of a project, but the neighborhood as well. The use of different “styles” and materials is intended to add variety to the buildings just as is most often found in cities that have evolved over time.

#### Design Guidelines

- 16-1** Variety in the architecture, which adds interest and character, is encouraged.
- 16-2** Vary roof form, mass, shape and material changes to create variations in planes.
- 16-3** Larger projects (greater than 200 units) should contain a variety of building elevations. Avoid excessive repetition of elevations throughout a neighborhood or project with little differentiation.
- 16-4** Use high quality (permanent and long lasting) building materials to contribute to sustained quality and sense of permanence.
- 16-5** Multi-unit projects should be designed to respect the privacy of surrounding uses. Upper story views into adjacent yards are discouraged
- 16-6** Privacy of individual units should be considered. Inappropriate location of windows and balconies as well as design of building features can reduce the privacy of the adjacent residences.



Source: Sacramento Places

*Variety in the architecture, which adds interest and character*

## 17 Scale / Massing Articulation

### Design Principle

Multi-unit design should develop massing and scale to best transition with surrounding scale, massing, setbacks, and articulation and maximize integration into the existing streetscape.

### Rationale

Stair stepping building height, breaking up the mass of the building and shifting building placement can help mitigate the impact of differing building scales and intensities.

### Design Guidelines

- 17-1** Buildings should be stepped down at upper levels in areas with a relatively smaller scale character. There should be a scale transition between intensified land uses and adjoining lower intensity land uses.
- 17-2** Extremely long facades should be designed with sufficient building articulation and landscaping. Include visual variety and provide a sense of human scale at the ground level. Long expanses of uninterrupted wall area, unbroken roof forms, and box-like structures should be avoided.
- 17-3** Street elevations should contain appropriate features to provide visual interest, including posts or columns, wainscoting, decorative tiles, shutters, window boxes and other pedestrian level details.
- 17-4** Units clustered into one structure should have varying front setbacks, staggered roof planes, and variety in orientation. Avoid a monotonous or overpowering institutional appearance.
- 17-5** Articulation such as roof dormers, hips, gables, balconies, wall projections, shade devices, and porches should be used to break up the visual massing of building facades. End units should have articulation such as windows and doors facing onto the sidewalks. Unarticulated and windowless walls are discouraged.
- 17-6** The massing of large complexes is improved by variation in roofline, balcony placement, windows, and chimneys. These details add to the rhythm of the facade.



Source: Sacramento Places

*Articulation such as roof dormers, hips, gables, balconies, wall projections and porches are used to break up the visual massing of building facades*

## Multi-Unit

### 18 Facades / Entries

#### Design Principle

Designs within a specific project area need to be compatible in scale and character, but not to the point of being identical or repetitious. The design shall consider the characteristics of the existing developments in the project area.

#### Rationale

Quality in detail and design contributes not only to the long-term value of a project, but the neighborhood as well.

#### Design Guidelines

- 18-1** Provide entries that allow residents to “see and be seen”. These entries can be integrated with second floor elements to provide balconies and decks. Various types of roof supports are encouraged.
- 18-2** Visibility of and from entries and public spaces adds security and visual interest to the streetscape.
- 18-3** Provide clearly defined site and building entries that are in scale with the proposed project, and that relate directly to the street frontage. The front door to each unit should be clearly visible.
- 18-4** New infill residences should preserve and reinforce the streetscape character by maintaining similar horizontal and vertical proportions with the adjacent facades to maintain architectural unity.
- 18-5** The main entrance of each primary structure should face the street-side lot line when structures are proximate to street rights-of-way.
- 18-6** Provide addresses that are clearly readable from the street, and illuminated.
- 18-7** All building entrances shall meet Title 24, California Code of Regulations pertaining to disabled access design requirements.
- 18-8** Building design should include windows with visible massing and detail. Shutters, trim, awnings, and moldings on windows are encouraged.
- 18-9** Aluminum window frames, without trim or other details, are discouraged.



Source: millatbroadway.com

*Provide clearly defined site and building entries that are in scale with the proposed project, and that relate directly to the street frontage*

## 19 Materials / Textures / Colors

### Design Principle

New multi-unit development shall incorporate a mixture of materials, textures, and colors.

### Rationale

A variety of quality materials can help a project control the appearance of bulk, and can contribute to quality building design.

### Design Guidelines

- 19-1 Materials selected for multi-unit projects should be very durable and require low maintenance, including, but not limited to: stucco, wood siding, stone, and brick. Over-use of prefabricated, less durable materials (including T1-11) is discouraged.
- 19-2 The use of a variety and combination of building materials is encouraged. However, it is generally preferred that the number of materials used on the exterior be such that an uncluttered design statement is the result.
- 19-3 Integrate signs consistent with the design of the project.
- 19-4 Use material textures and colors to help articulate the building design.
- 19-5 Careful application of materials is important to final design and appearance. For example, poor installation results in low quality appearance.
- 19-6 “Permanent” roof materials, such as concrete and clay tile, are encouraged because of their low maintenance and consistent appearance over time. Wood shake or shingle roofing is also acceptable. Composition shingles should be the heavy laminated dimensional type, and be of at least 25-year quality.
- 19-7 The patterns created by the window and door placement can help add variety and interest to the design. Relentless grids of repeated windows should be avoided.



Source: dc.curbed.com

*Relentless grids of repeated windows should be avoided as in the example above*

## Multi-Unit

### Mixed-Use Development

Incorporating residential units within mixed-use developments provides opportunities to facilitate a mixture of neighborhood-serving businesses and residences. This can encourage a variety of housing types that can capitalize on ready access to commercial and retail establishments.

#### SECTIONS

- **SITE ORIENTATION**
- **BUILDING DESIGN**
- **WINDOWS / ENTRIES**
- **HORIZONTAL MIXED-USE**



Source: [turnerconstruction.com](http://turnerconstruction.com)

*A mix of residential and commercial uses*

## 20 Site Orientation

### Design Principle

New mixed-use developments shall be located at or near the property line, and oriented with active ground floor uses that seamlessly connect to the public and semi-public realm.

### Rationale

Active ground floor non-residential uses enhance the viability of non-residential uses with an active pedestrian realm, that is an engaging and well-populated environment with a variety of uses and activities.

### Design Guidelines

- 20-1** Where feasible, buildings should be located adjacent to the street at the front setback line or immediately behind a public or semi-public space, such as an outdoor seating area for a restaurant.
- 20-2** The development should not create gaps or voids in the rhythm of the street’s architectural edge due to excessive setbacks.
- 20-3** Vertically mixed-use buildings should be designed with commercial storefronts on the ground floor and residential units above.
- 20-4** The street corners of corner sites should be developed with buildings, public plazas, or open space areas.

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*Buildings are located near the street and semi-public spaces*

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Source: Sacramento Places

## Multi-Unit

### 21 Building Design

#### Design Principle

New mixed-use developments shall avoid design that creates a continuous facade that looks overly long and bulky without articulation to minimize the bulk of the building.

#### Rationale

No official architectural style is dictated or preferred, but the goal is to create unified and harmonious building compositions, promote quality architecture, and visual diversity.

#### Design Guidelines

- 21-1 Vertically mixed-use buildings should be designed with commercial storefronts on the ground floor and residential units above.
- 21-2 Building materials should be used to differentiate between commercial and residential uses, and should create a smooth transition between the two.
- 21-3 At adjacent storefronts, the change in establishments should be clear through a change in storefront facade. Solutions include a change in base materials, window type, and/or door type. This is particularly important for storefronts located in the same building.
- 21-4 Provide continuous storefront windows, open air store frontages, and frequent, highly visible entrances for ground floor commercial uses adjacent to the street and sidewalk.
- 21-5 Where multiple-tenant spaces are incorporated into a building, individual tenant spaces shall be located within the building bays. This can be achieved by any of the following:
  - Placing a column, pier or pilaster between facade elements
  - Applying vertical slot or recess between facade elements
  - Providing variation in plane along the building wall
  - Varying the building wall by recessing the storefront entrance or creating a niche for landscaping or pedestrian area.



Source: Sacramento Places

*Materials help differentiate between residential and retail uses*

## 22 Windows / Entries

### Design Principle

New mixed-use developments shall incorporate windows and entries that are clearly distinguishable in form and location.

### Rationale

Well designed windows and entries can enhance a building's design and strengthen the pedestrian realm.

### Design Guidelines

- 22-1** At mixed-use buildings, entrances to residential, office or other upper story uses shall be clearly distinguishable in form and location from retail entrances.
- 22-2** Doors at storefronts shall include windows that permit views into the establishment.
- 22-3** Service or employee doors that are visible from public streets or walkways shall be an integral part of the building design.
- 22-4** Upper story windows shall be detailed with architectural elements, such as projecting sills, molded surrounds and/or lintels.
- 22-5** Windows should maintain consistency in shape and location across the facade. Unifying patterns should include common windows and doors. The overall effect should create a harmonious pattern along the streetscape.
- 22-6** Commercial storefronts should include street-oriented display windows. These windows should provide visual access to the inside of the buildings, while also serve as an area for merchandise display.
- 22-7** Ground floor retail windows should be of a storefront design and should be larger in proportion than residential windows.



Source: turleymech.com

*Ground level retail windows should be larger in proportion than residential windows*

### 23 Horizontal Mixed-Use

#### Design Principle

New horizontal mixed-use developments shall incorporate a mixture of commercial and residential land uses that are adjacent to each other on the same parcel. The opportunities for interplay between these uses will primarily be in the relationship of the open space and parking requirements of the adjoining uses. Projects should develop a comprehensive open space network that uses plazas and other open space elements to connect uses. Open space areas and the paths that link them should facilitate the integration of adjacent land uses on the site.

#### Rationale

Strong pedestrian connections between various uses via paths, plazas, and other pedestrian oriented connectors encourages integration while reducing potential conflicts created by mixing uses.

#### Design Guidelines

- 23-1 Buildings should be laid out to define the open space and should be positioned to be used by both residential and commercial uses.
- 23-2 Open space areas and the paths that link them should be facilitate the integration of adjacent land uses on the site.
- 23-3 Plazas and building forecourts should be developed to maximize circulation opportunities between adjacent uses.
- 23-4 All mixed-use buildings shall be publicly accessible via a pathway or walkway from a public sidewalk.
- 23-5 Both the commercial and residential components of projects will have specific parking requirements.
- 23-6 Parking areas shall not separate the adjacent land uses.
- 23-7 Parking areas should be located on the periphery of projects with pedestrian connections to the buildings.
- 23-8 Opportunities for shared use of parking facilities are encouraged. The peak parking demand times will differ for the various land uses. Residential guest parking can take advantage of surplus parking space that the commercial areas will have during evening and overnight periods.



*Horizontal mixed-use projects should have private residential space, as well as easily accessible public open spaces*

