



City of Hughson Multi-Family Residential Design Guidelines

Introduction

By their nature, multi-family developments are large in scale and tend to dominate their surroundings if not properly designed. Additionally, issues of parking, circulation, open space, site amenities, and resident safety need to be addressed.

The purpose of this section is to provide design guidelines that address the particular issues associated with multi-family developments. The guidelines cover attached-type dwellings in general, including apartments, condominiums, and townhouses throughout the Medium and High Density Residential zoning districts.

The primary objective of the design guidelines in this section is to ensure quality development that will stand the test of time, be safe and convenient for its residents, and be compatible with the character of the neighborhood.

Applicability

The design guidelines in this section are applicable to all new multi-family developments throughout the City, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and other attached multi-family projects whether available for rent or ownership.

General Design Objectives

The design guidelines for multi-family developments are based on the following objectives:

A. Neighborhood Compatibility

- Establish multi-family residential architectural designs that complement various neighborhood characteristics and that support high quality development.
- Provide attractive, functional, and convenient site arrangements.

- Identify landscape materials and designs that enhance the appearance of multi-family housing developments and contribute to the overall quality of the community.
- Provide for amenities and passive recreational activities appropriate to the different age groups of multi-family residential developments within the project.
- Apply design principles that enhance safety and security within multi-family residential developments.

Site Planning

A. Neighborhood Context

1. New multi-family residential development should be compatible with other development in the immediate area through the use of complementary building arrangements, buffers, and avoidance of overwhelming building scale and visual obstructions.
2. New multi-family developments are encouraged to use courtyard siting arrangements, where appropriate, to complement similar siting in the area.



Arrange residential units around courtyards and open space.

3. Landscaping should complement existing landscape materials, location, and massing on adjacent developments.
4. Developments should relate directly to the adjacent street, and present an attractive and interesting façade to passersby. Developments that ignore the street and create an isolated enclave are strongly discouraged.

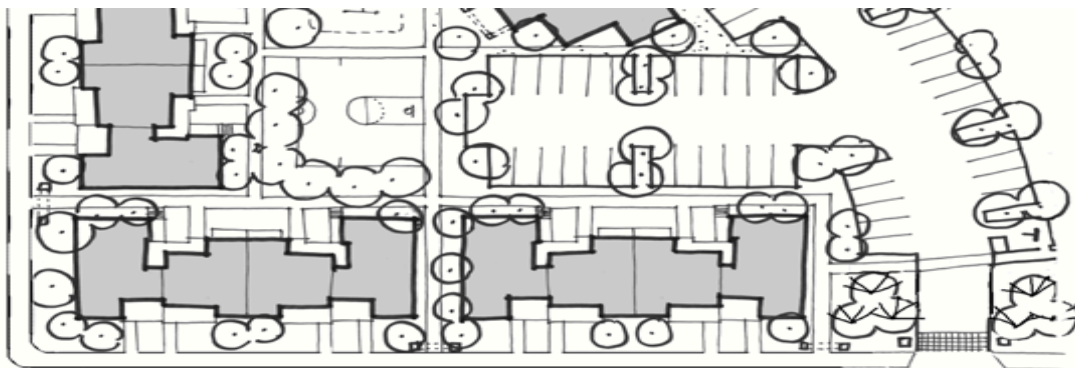


Dwelling units oriented to the street

B. Building and Facilities Location

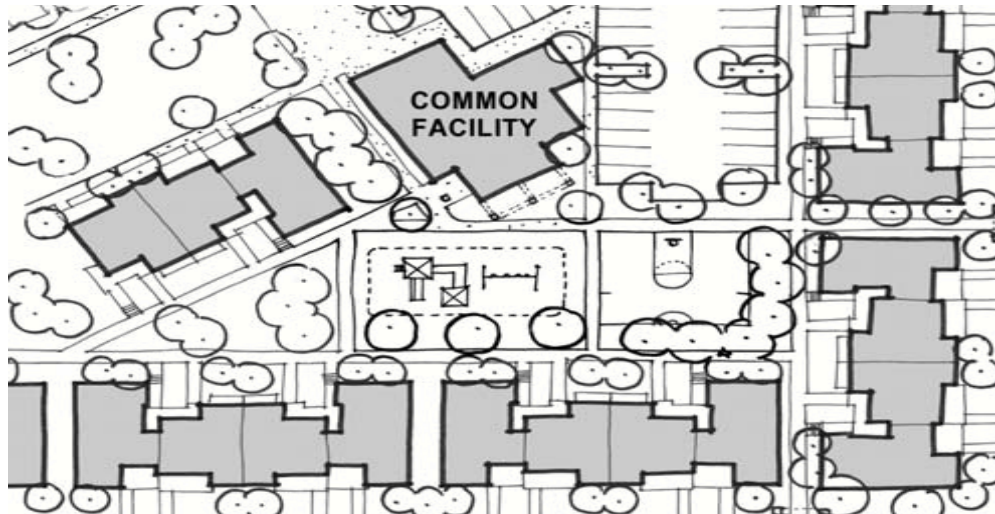
Appropriate building siting can reduce the perceived density of multi-family developments, maximize open space areas, provide “eyes on the street” surveillance, and enhance neighborliness by creating community gathering spaces.

1. The siting of buildings should consider the existing neighborhood context. Developments should generally be oriented parallel to the public street or to the development’s internal streets, with some setback variation to provide visual interest.



Buildings sited parallel to the public street

2. In addition to a street orientation, the clustering of multi-family units should be a consistent site planning element. Whenever possible, buildings should be configured around courtyards, gathering areas, and open spaces.



Buildings are configured to form a centralized open space area for children's outdoor play.

3. Portions of the development that are not oriented to the street should be well integrated into the project's overall site design. As with the street-oriented area of the development, the same design considerations should be given to siting, appearance, circulation, landscaping, and safety issues.
4. Buildings should be oriented to provide some privacy yet still relate to the street and the existing community. Doors should be visible from the street and windows should allow residents to have "eyes on the street" for natural surveillance.



Doors and windows encourage "eyes on the street"

5. Energy efficiency and energy conservation should be considered in building siting. Buildings should be oriented to take advantage of prevailing breezes and solar opportunities whenever possible.
6. Where public transit is located near the development, the site design should consider convenience and comfort factors for residents. These include direct access, widened sidewalks, shaded seating areas, and weather protection provided near public transit stops.

C. Open Space

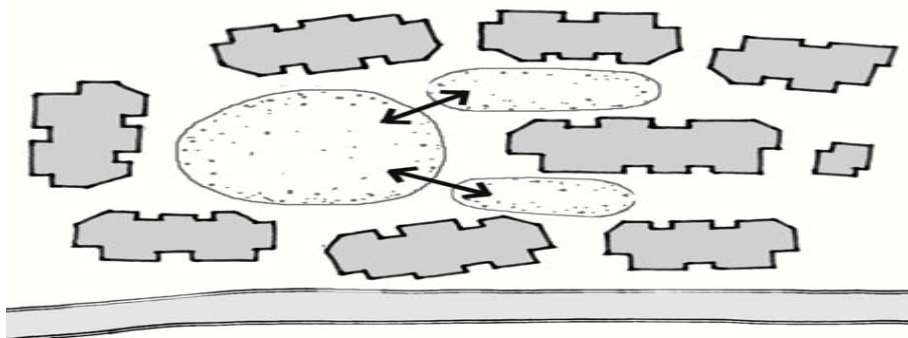
Common open space provides opportunities for casual social interaction and safe play areas for children, as well as helping to reduce the perceived density of the development. Private open space serves as an outdoor room for residents and as a protected play area for toddlers.

1. Residents should have access to useable open space for recreation and social activities. Open spaces should be conveniently located for the majority of units.



Centralized open space provides convenient access for many units

2. Open space areas should be sheltered from the noise and traffic of adjacent streets or other incompatible uses. Open space siting should take advantage of prevailing breezes and sun orientation in order to provide a comfortable environment.
3. A series of connected open space areas of varying shape, appearance and usage are encouraged. Smaller areas may directly relate to a cluster of units, while the larger areas may serve several clusters as common open space.



Large and small open spaces are connected

4. Boundaries between private and common open spaces should be clearly defined by low walls or plant materials.
5. Buildings should be sited and designed so that windows of neighboring units do not overlook private open spaces likely to be used for private activities.
6. Private open space should be provided adjacent to the units it serves and should be immediately adjacent to the public right-of-way or common open space.
7. Shade structures are encouraged to provide shelter from sun and rain.



Private open space adjacent to common open space

D. Outdoor Play Areas

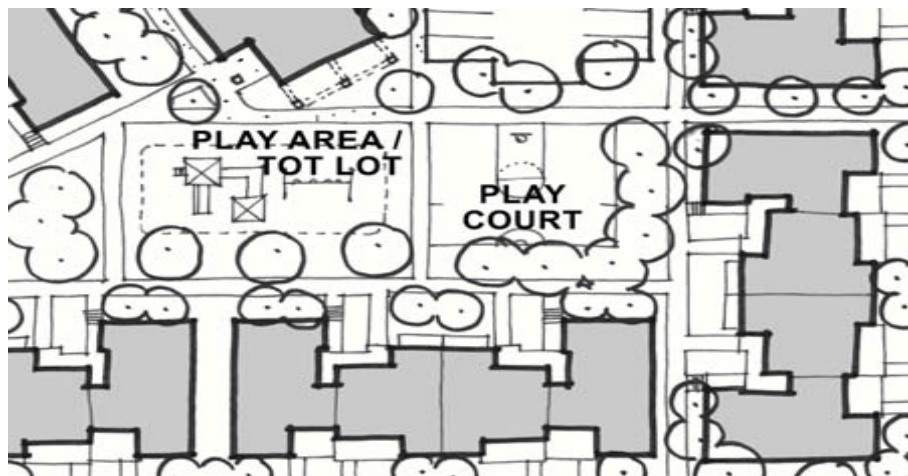
Onsite outdoor play areas can provide children with a safe and interesting environment, and allow parents to easily view play areas in order to supervise play activities. Children, especially those in the five- to twelve-years old age group, tend to play throughout the entire grounds of a development, not just in designated play areas. Therefore, their needs, as well as maintenance requirements, should be important design considerations.

1. Children's play areas should be visible from as many units as possible and from private open space areas. Direct, convenient access from ground level, private open space to the communal play area is encouraged.



Units with views and convenient access to the play area

2. Outdoor play areas should be located adjacent to laundry rooms, community centers, or similar common facilities. Play areas should not be located near public streets, parking, or entry areas unless physically separated by appropriate walls, fencing, or dense landscaping.
3. Hard surface areas for outdoor activities (e.g., bicycle riding, skating, rope jumping, and hopscotch) should be provided. These active play areas should be safely separated from vehicular use areas.
4. In larger developments, separate, but not necessarily segregated, play areas or informal outdoor spaces should be provided for different age groups for safety reasons. Small developments may combine play areas (e.g., a tot lot incorporated into a larger activity area for older children).



Create separate play areas for the activities of younger and older children

5. Seating areas should be provided where adults can supervise children's play and also where school-age children can sit. Seating location should consider comfort factors, including sun orientation, shade, and wind.

E. Miscellaneous Site Elements

1. Walls and Fences

- a. The design of walls and fences, as well as the materials used, should be consistent with the overall development's design. Fence and wall color should be compatible with the development and adjacent properties. Paint color or stain used on fences should be common colors readily purchased and kept readily available on the development's premises.
- b. If front yard fences are provided, visually penetrable materials (e.g., wrought iron or tubular steel) should be used.
- c. Long fences or walls should consider vertical variation in the design.



Penetrable wrought iron fences allow views



Low retaining walls in the front yard

- d. Wall design and selection of materials should consider maintenance issues, especially graffiti removal and long-term maintenance. Concrete capstones

on stucco walls are encouraged to help prevent water damage from rainfall and moisture.

- e. Individual dwelling unit patio and rear yard fences and walls visible from the development's open space should be no higher than 42 inches for security reasons. Outdoor privacy walls between units, however, may be higher. To increase privacy, it is encouraged that the privacy walls be solid.

2. Site Furniture

- a. The design, selection and placement of all site furnishings (e.g., tables, benches, bollards, and trash receptacles) should be compatible with the overall site design and architectural character of the development.
- b. Seating opportunities should be provided in both sunny and shaded areas. Seating in areas that offer opportunities for social interaction and informal surveillance, (e.g., a bench near the communal mailbox area or benches near tot lot areas and laundry rooms) are strongly encouraged. A variety of sitting area designs, from formal arrangements (benches) to informal arrangements (low walls or steps) is encouraged. In general benches should be located in areas that have some provision for shade.



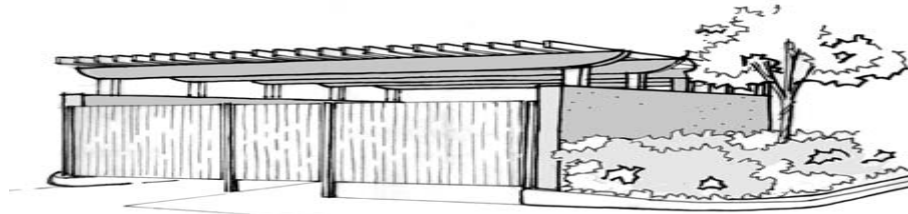
Seating Areas in Shaded Location

- c. A drinking fountain located near each children's play area is encouraged. Drinking fountains should be "high/low" to accommodate various age groups and disabled persons.
- d. Onsite trash receptacles and recycling containers should be located in or adjacent to high use areas (e.g., community facilities, play areas, and laundry rooms).

3. Trash Enclosure Storage Areas

- a. Trash enclosure and recycling storage areas should be located in convenient but not prominent areas, such as inside parking courts, or at the end of parking bays. They should be well screened but usable by the serving utility company. Screening should be of the same type of material as, or

complementary to, the material used on the main building. Landscaping should be provided where possible.

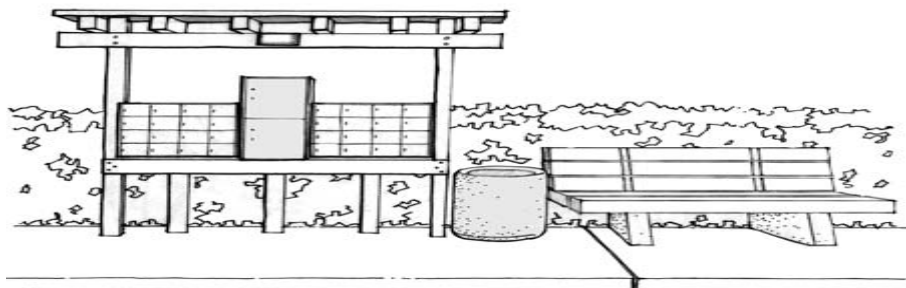


A trellis and gate screen the trash enclosure

- b. Trash receptacles should be accessible for trash collection but should not block circulation drives near loading areas or conflict with parking. For security reasons, trash enclosure locations should not create blind spots or hiding areas.

4. Mailboxes

- a. Mailboxes should be located in highly visible, heavy use areas for convenience, to allow for casual social interaction, and to promote safety. A bench or seating area in close proximity to the mailbox location is strongly encouraged. A trash receptacle should be located adjacent to the mailboxes.
- b. Incorporation of design features, such as a built frame consistent with the development's architectural style, is encouraged.



A bench near the mailbox offers an opportunity to socialize

5. Signs

- a. Signs contribute to the development's identity as a unique environment. Professionally designed, creative signs are strongly encouraged, especially for internal directions and building identification.
- b. Clear legible entry signs should be provided to identify the development. Internal circulation signs and visitor parking areas should also be clearly indicated. A directory that shows the location of buildings and individual dwelling units within the development is encouraged.

- c. Building numbers and individual unit numbers should be readily visible, in a consistent location, well lit at night, and compatible with the overall design of the development.



Visible building numbers help visitors to easily locate units

ARCHITECTURE

It is not intended that these guidelines designate a particular architectural style or a specific design character. The primary focus should be to construct a high quality residential environment that is compatible with the surrounding community. The architectural guidelines address the overall external appearance of the development, including building forms, details, and proportions. Use of single-family residential design elements (e.g., pitched roofs, porches, individual entries) are recommended to reduce perceived density, give identity to the development and its individual dwelling units, add visual interest, and be compatible with the neighborhood context.

A. Architectural

1. Where the neighborhood or street has a recognizable architectural theme, style, or character, it should be incorporated into the development's design.
2. To create a unified appearance, all support buildings in the development, (e.g., laundry facilities, recreation buildings, carports, garages, and the management office) should be compatible in architectural design with the rest of the development.

B. Building Scale and Height

1. Buildings should incorporate smaller-scale architectural forms such as bays, recessed or projecting balconies, and dormers to visually reduce the height and scale of the building and emphasize the definition of individual units. Architectural elements such as bay windows, porches, projecting eaves, awnings, and similar elements that add visual interest to the development are strongly encouraged.
2. In order to "scale down" facades that face the street, common open space, and adjacent residential structures, it may be desirable to set back portions of the upper floors of new multifamily buildings.



Height transition from existing one-story dwelling to new two story development

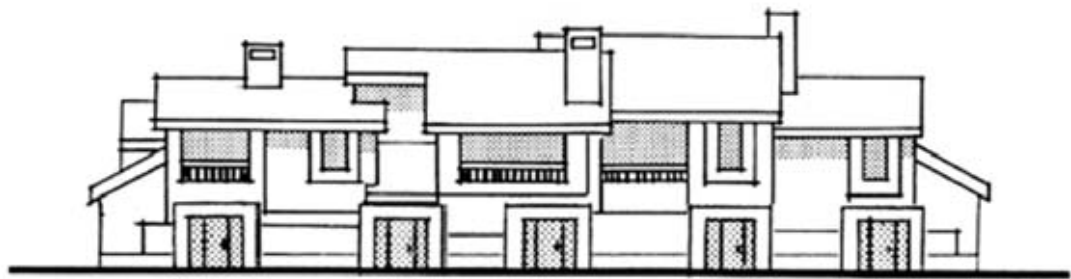
3. Varied building heights are encouraged, both to provide visual interest and give the appearance of a collection of smaller structures. Building heights at the development's edge should be considered within the context of the project's surroundings, the adjacent uses, and the distance from adjacent buildings. The development's building height should create a transition from the heights of adjacent existing residential development, rather than form abrupt height changes.



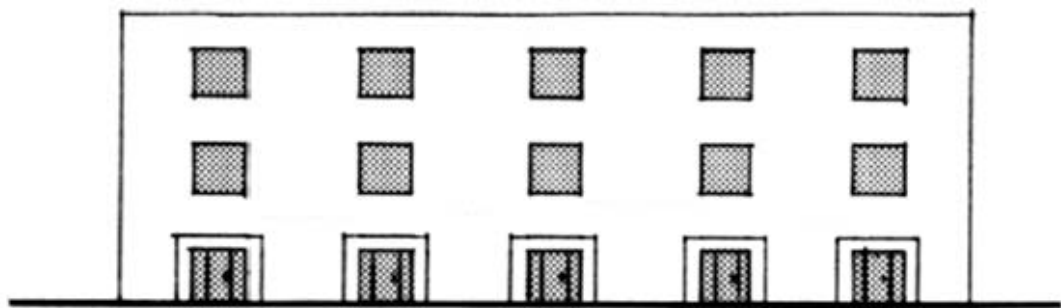
The use of porches, balconies, and trellises are encouraged

C. Facade Modulation

1. Boxy and monotonous facades that lack human scale dimensions and have large expanses of flat wall planes should be avoided. Architectural treatments, such as recessed windows, moldings, decorative trim, balconies, and wood frames, should be used to add visual interest to the facade.
2. Building facades that enclose stairwells should include residential-type windows to reduce the visual bulk of the stairwell and enhance safety. Building facades enclosing elevator shafts should use architectural treatments to reduce the visual mass.
3. To provide visual interest and avoid an identical appearance, garage doors should incorporate some architectural detailing that is consistent with the overall development's architectural design, such as patterned garage doors or painted trim.



DESIRABLE



NOT RECOMMENDED

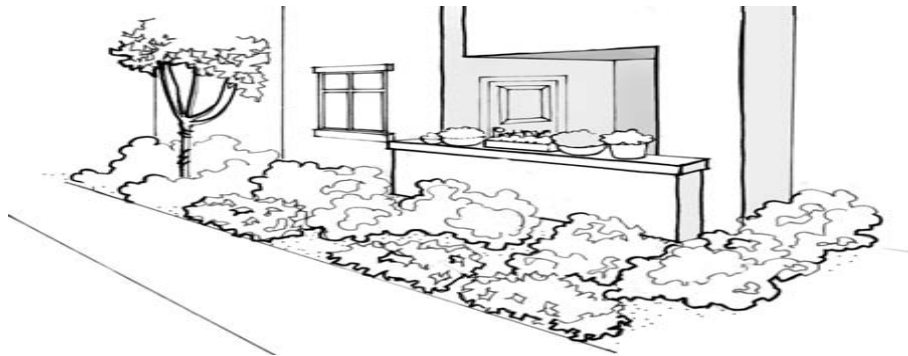
Façade articulation is important to avoid blank, monotonous walls.



Garage doors with architectural detailing create visual interest

D. Building Entries

1. Courtyard doors or gates used at building entries should be attractively designed as an important architectural feature of the building or development.
2. Individual entries should have a strong relationship with a fronting street, internal walkway, or courtyard, as appropriate to the overall siting concept. A transitional area from the public space or walkway to the private dwelling unit entry, such as a porch, steps, or landscaped walkway, should be provided.
3. Each dwelling unit's entry should be emphasized and differentiated through architectural detailing and elements such as porches, stoops, or roof canopies. Opportunities should be provided for residents to personalize their entry by providing ground level space or a wide ledge for potted plants.



A wide ledge creates opportunities to personalize the dwelling unit

E. Stairs

1. Not more than three second floor dwelling units should be served by a single flight of stairs. Where appropriate for the architectural style, the stairway design should be open to allow for natural surveillance. Example of open stairway:



2. Where prefabricated metal stairs are used, additional design features such as screen walls, enhanced railings, or accent colors should be used to enhance their appearance. The additional design features should be consistent with the overall building design.

F. Building Materials

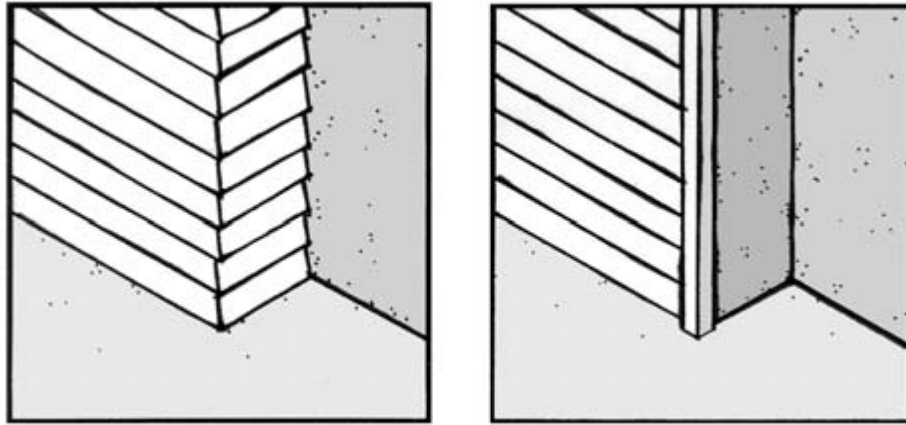
1. The development's dwelling units, community facilities, and parking structures should be unified by a consistent use of building materials, textures, and colors. Exterior columns or supports for site elements, such as trellises and porches, should utilize materials and colors that are compatible with the rest of the development.
2. Building materials should be durable, require low maintenance, and be of comparable quality and image to what is used in the surrounding neighborhood. Frequent changes in building materials should be avoided.

G. Roofs

1. Roof pitches and materials should appear residential in character and should consider the prevailing roof types in the neighborhood, including flat roofs, hipped or gabled roofs, and mansard roofs. The roof pitch for a porch may be slightly lower than the roof pitch of the main building.
2. Roof lines should be broken up and varied within the overall horizontal plane. Combinations of roof heights that create variation and visual interest are encouraged.
3. Carport roofs visible from buildings or streets should incorporate the roof pitch and materials of the main buildings. Flat carport roofs should be avoided.

H. Color

1. Color should be used as an important design element in the development's appearance. Garish and incompatible colors should be avoided. Appropriate use of more than one predominant paint color is encouraged. Compatible accent colors are encouraged to enhance important building elements.
2. The color of shadow patterns, relief, decorative trim, and wood frames should be distinctive yet compatible with the overall building color.
3. Materials such as brick, stone, copper, etc. should be left in their natural colors. Such materials should not appear thin and artificial. Veneer should turn corners and avoid exposed edges.



Veneer materials should turn corners and avoid exposed edges.

I. Mechanical Equipment and Vents

1. On-site mechanical equipment visible from buildings or a public street should be screened to block sight lines.
2. Roof flashing and vents exposed to public view should be painted to match adjacent surfaces or concealed in a manner consistent with the building's appearance.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping serves many functions in a multi-family housing development. Plant materials can create unique identity, visually connect areas, soften the architecture, provide shade, and screen unattractive areas. Landscaping is important to site design and safety/security issues, as it helps to define outdoor space and edges and can be used to discourage graffiti. An attractive, well-maintained landscaped environment contributes to overall resident satisfaction in the development and enhances the appearance of the surrounding neighborhood.

A. Use of Landscaping

1. Landscape design and selection of plant materials are an important component in multi-family developments. The development's budget should provide for quality landscaping design, proper installation, and plant sizes that will "fill in" and beautify the development within a reasonable period of time. Encourage the use of 24" and 36" box trees in landscape design.
2. Use of landscaping is encouraged to define and accent specific areas such as building and parking lot entrances and the main walkways to community facilities.
3. Plant materials should be used to define the territorial edge between public and private space, buffer adjacent uses, when appropriate, and screen service areas.

B. Landscape Design

1. Landscaped areas should generally use a three-tiered planting system consisting of ground cover; shrubs and vines; and trees. Grass is a high-maintenance ground cover that should be used primarily for active recreation areas. Grass should not be used in narrow strip areas; groundcover or shrubs are more appropriate.



Groundcover, shrubs and trees help to create an attractive development

2. Different landscape designs and plant materials should be used in the various courtyards and common open space areas of the development to create an individual identity for each space.
3. Landscape designs that emphasize water-efficient plants are encouraged. Water-intensive landscaping, such as grass, should be concentrated in areas of high visibility and use.
4. Vines and climbing plants on buildings, trellises, perimeter walls, and fences are encouraged, both to provide an attractive appearance and to minimize graffiti.
5. Landscape plantings should be used to help define property lines and distinguish private space from public space by creating a strong edge through a distinct change of plant material, form, height and/or color.
6. Trees and shrubs should be selected based on their mature size and root characteristics. Plants with root systems that uplift hardscape materials should be avoided.
7. Landscape materials should be used to help screen trash enclosures and mechanical equipment so that they are not exposed to view from the street or major walkways within the development.
8. Trees and shrubs should not be planted so close together that they create maintenance and security problems at maturity. They should not completely obstruct views into the development from the public right-of-way, especially views to dwelling entries and common open space areas.

9. Tree height and spread should consider the location of light standards in order to avoid conflicts and maintenance problems as the tree grows.
10. The following are design concepts that are encouraged in all developments:

Use specimen trees (24-36" box trees) and accent plant materials at major focal points, such as the entry to the development or where major walkways intersect with the common open space area.

- Use landscaping to help define the edges of common open space areas and to distinguish the boundary between private and common open space areas.
- Use plantings to soften building lines and emphasize the positive features of the site. Use plantings to create shadows and patterns against walls.
- Use dense landscaping to physically separate children's outdoor play areas from vehicular parking or entry areas.
- Use trees to create canopy and shade, especially in parking areas and passive open space areas. Trees with open branching structures and less dense foliage should be used to allow "filtered" views to parking lots for security purposes.
- Hardscape materials should be consistent with the architectural design or style of the development. The use of interlocking pavers, scored concrete, or rough textured concrete to define site entries is strongly encouraged. Stamped concrete or colored concrete is not recommended due to excessive maintenance and repair costs associated with its use.

PARKING AND CIRCULATION

Safe and efficient parking and circulation arrangements take into consideration the needs of pedestrians, children at play, parking lot appearance, and prevention of car theft or damage.

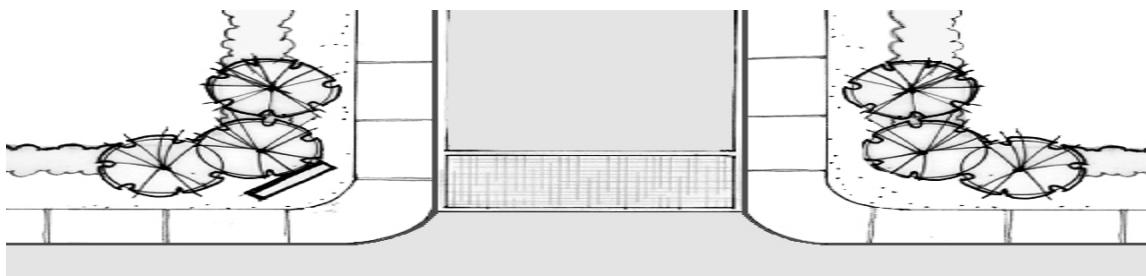
A. Parking

1. One large parking area where cars would dominate views and increase perceived density should be avoided. Parking areas should be divided into a series of small parking courts with convenient access that relates to adjacent dwelling units. For security reasons, dwelling units should have sight lines out to the parking areas, but these views should be partially filtered through use of appropriate landscaping, such as trees.



Small parking courts with trees that filter views from dwelling units

2. Parking areas should be located in the development's interior and not along street frontages. Carports and tuck-under parking should not be visible from a public street.
3. Parking structures, such as garages and carports, should be located where they do not obstruct natural surveillance. See subsection on Public Safety Through Design, below.
4. Entry drives should have an adjacent pedestrian entry path.
5. Special accents that define the main entry, create territorial reinforcement, and provide visual interest are strongly encouraged. Examples include entry signage with name of project, specialty lighting, textured paving, and accent plant materials such as specimen trees and flowering plants.



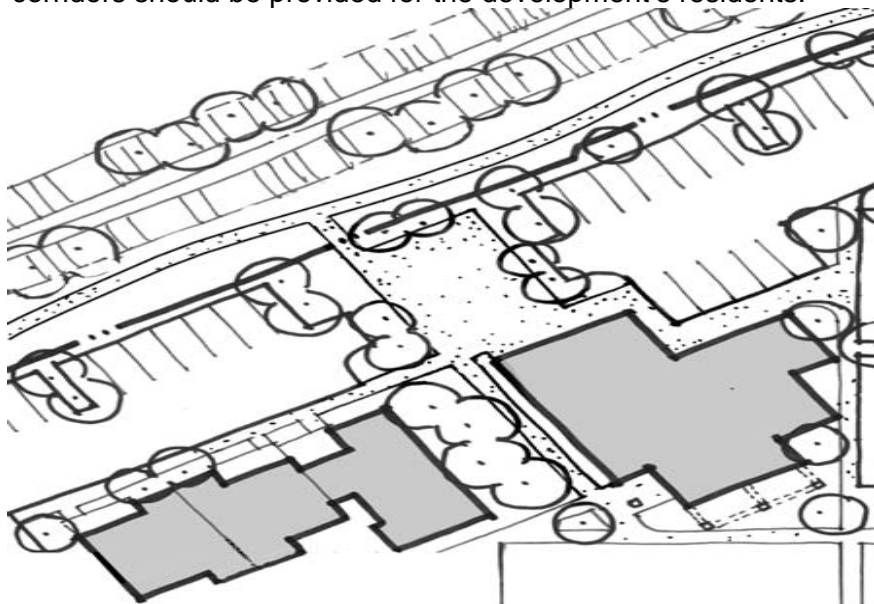
Entry drive with textured paving and border strip

6. Carports, detached garages, and accessory structures should be designed as an integral part of the development's architecture. They should be similar in material, color, and detail to the main buildings of the development. Flat roofs should be avoided. Prefabricated metal carports should not be used.
7. Parking courts should be well designed, with consideration given to landscaping, lighting, building massing, and pedestrian/vehicular circulation.
8. Visitor and disabled parking should be clearly identified and distributed throughout the development to provide convenient access to groups of dwellings and community facilities.
9. For convenience, parking spaces should be assigned, but the parking space numbering system should not identify the dwelling unit that is assigned to the space.

B. Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrian circulation provides safe, efficient access to facilities and dwelling units for residents, encourages opportunities for casual social encounters, and allows natural surveillance by residents.

1. Convenient pedestrian connections should be provided to adjoining residential developments, commercial projects, and other compatible land uses.
2. Pedestrian access to adjacent existing or planned open space areas and corridors should be provided for the development's residents.



Provide access to adjacent open space corridors

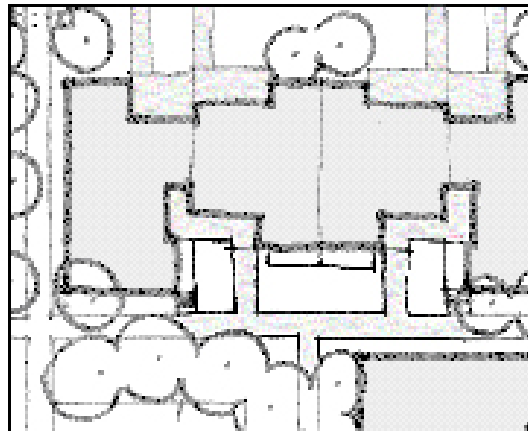
3. Cross circulation between vehicles and pedestrians should be minimized. A continuous, clearly marked walkway should be provided from the parking areas to main entrances of buildings.

4. Walkways should be located to minimize the impact of pedestrians on the privacy of nearby residences or private open space. Avoid siting a walkway directly against a building. A landscaped planting area between walkways and building facades is strongly encouraged.
5. Adequate lighting should be provided along all walkways.

C. Access to Dwellings

Access to dwellings should provide a unique identity for the individual unit, allow opportunities for social interaction and increase natural surveillance.

1. The main entry to each dwelling unit should be clearly visible from the nearest public circulation walkway. A porch, covered stoop, or similar entry feature should be provided at each unit's front entry.



Individual private walkways lead to each ground level unit

2. Stairwells should be centrally located to the units served and should be visible from as many units as possible.
3. Not more than three units should share a common entry or stairway.
4. To minimize the outdoor clutter that can accumulate in private open space areas, private storage space for strollers, bicycles, etc., should be provided for each dwelling unit. Its location should be either inside the unit, or outside and immediately adjacent to the unit.
5. Walkways and access to dwelling units should be designed to facilitate the moving of furniture by considering minimum widths, heights, and turning angles.

PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH DESIGN

Residents have a basic right to feel safe and secure in their homes. The following guidelines promote the use of site planning, landscaping, community involvement, and physical and psychological barriers to create a safe environment and to prevent crime, vandalism, and graffiti.

The principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) are used extensively. The lighting guidelines are less detailed, and recognize that specific illumination levels are dependent on the individual site characteristics.

A. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)

The following CPTED strategies should be incorporated into the design of multi-family developments, whenever possible.

1. Use the concept of natural surveillance, or “eyes on the street,” by promoting features that maximize the visibility of people, parking, and building entrances.
2. Use the concept of territorial reinforcement by promoting features such as landscape plantings, paving designs, and gateway treatments that define property lines and distinguish private space from public space.
3. Use the concept of natural access control by designing streets, walkways, building entrances, and development entries to clearly indicate public routes and to discourage access to private areas.

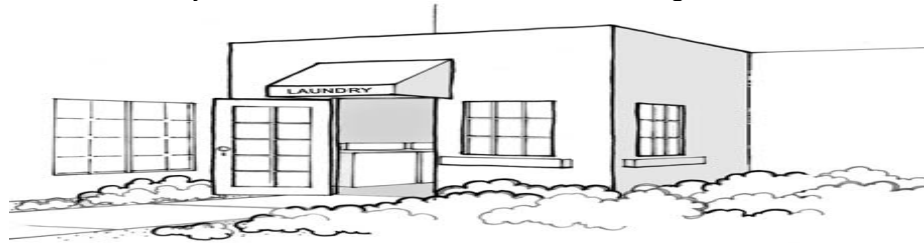
B. Opportunities for Surveillance

1. Windows and entries should be placed to maximize natural surveillance of the site. Sight lines from dwelling units to the parking area should be provided.
2. Open spaces, courtyards, circulation corridors, and individual dwelling unit entrances should be designed to be visible from as many dwelling units as possible. Enclosure of private open space should not prevent common open space surveillance by residents.
3. The management office should be located in a central, visible location, and community meeting rooms and other amenities should also be located close to other heavily used areas.



Security is enhanced with a management office that is in a highly visible location

4. Laundry rooms should be located adjacent to the children's play area to facilitate supervision. Doors and walls should have windows to allow natural surveillance both into the laundry room and outside to the surrounding area.



A laundry room with windows allows open views out to the surrounding area

C. Hierarchy of Space

1. Development design should use a “hierarchy of space” to define territory for public space (streets), community space (common open space, play areas, communal laundry, community center, etc.), and private space (individual units and private open space.) The use of design elements to define the public/private edge, such as special paving, change in building materials, and grade separations, or physical barriers such as landscaping, fences, walls, screens, or building enclosures, are encouraged.



Grade separation and low retaining walls establish a public/private edge and define territories

2. Building entrances and individual dwelling unit entries should be accentuated by architectural elements, lighting, and/or landscaping to further emphasize their private nature.
3. Where appropriate, handicapped accessibility should be integrated into the design concept.

D. Access

1. Doors to community facilities should contain some transparency and be key-controlled by residents. Courtyard gates and shared building entrances that access individual units should automatically lock when closed.
2. All front doors in individual dwelling units should have a peep hole or other feature to allow residents to see who is at the door before opening it. To prevent break-ins, door knobs should be 40 inches from any window pane. Single cylinder dead bolt locks should be installed on the exterior doors of all individual dwelling units. Sliding glass doors should have one permanent door on the outside and the inside moving door should have a locking device and a pin.
3. If security bars are provided, they should be located only on the inside of windows and have proper emergency release mechanisms.

E. Lighting

1. Lighting levels should vary depending on the specific use and conditions, but the overall consideration should be to provide lighting levels sufficient that intruders cannot lurk in shadows, steps and other grade changes are apparent, residents can easily unlock their door or identify visitors on their doorstep, and opportunities for theft and vandalism are eliminated.
2. Street lighting should be installed along the internal circulation streets. Lighting should be designed to shine downward and eliminate skyward glare. Light standards should be residential/pedestrian in scale and be spaced appropriately for the fixture, type of illumination and pole height.
3. Lighting in parking areas should be arranged to prevent direct glare into adjacent dwelling units and onto neighboring uses/properties.
4. Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be located along all walkways within the development. Lighting bollards should not be used as they do not illuminate large enough areas and are subject to vandalism. Light standards 12 feet in height are recommended as they allow proper illumination, discourage vandalism, and have a pedestrian scale. Site lighting may be located on buildings to illuminate site areas not covered by individual light standards.

F. Security Systems

1. Security cameras should be installed to monitor all common areas such as laundry rooms, parking areas, children's play areas, recreation halls or rooms, and swimming pools. The cameras should be connected to a Digital Video Recorder (DVR) with the ability to record and maintain recordings for at least three days.