

Design Review in the City of Santa Monica is consistent from project to project and based on priorities and criteria set forth in **Section 9.55.040 of the Zoning Code:**

## **9.55.040 Guidelines and Standards**

The Architectural Review Board may, by resolution, establish guidelines and standards for its evaluation of proposed developments within an architectural review district, to supplement the criteria set forth in this Chapter. Such guidelines and standards shall reflect and effectuate the purposes expressed by Section [9.55.010](#) of this Code and shall include, but need not be limited to, consideration of the following elements:

- A. The integrity of neighborhood environments:
- B. Existing local, social, aesthetic, recreational and cultural facilities, designs and patterns within the district;
- C. The disparate elements of neighborhood communities within a district and the architectural relationship of adjoining neighborhood communities; and
- D. General patterns and standards of architectural development within the entire district.

(Added by Ord. No. 2486CCS §§ 1, 2, adopted June 23, 2015)

The approval of projects will still require Findings to be made. These Design Principles help identify the design principles that must be satisfied in order to meet the required Findings.

## **Design Concept**

Every project should have a Design Concept that provides a formal organizing structure that informs design decisions. This forms an understandable visual logic for those visiting or experiencing the building or project.

The Design Concept informs the overall design configuration and becomes an organizing principal for all other aspects of the project design. As the project design evolves from big picture concept to small details necessary for proper implementation, design analysis and review is organized into three main categories: 1) Site and Landscape Design, which includes site configuration, streetscape, street frontage and façade design, and pedestrian and vehicular access; 2) Mass and Scale which affects the size and appearance and/or perception of size; and 3) Design and Detailing which includes colors, materials and details necessary for the project to endure the elements and maintain high quality appearance over time. The design concept should be reflected in these main areas.

Below is a description of priorities and objective principles for each of these main areas of design.

### **1) Site and Landscape Design**

#### *Site Configuration*

The placement of the building(s) and configuration on the site is reviewed for similarities/differences with typical development patterns, solar orientation and relationship in context. The overall configuration should reflect the urban design and architectural design concept.

#### *Streetscape*

In mixed-use and commercial districts, pedestrian orientation, active ground floor design and use, and a majority of the ground floor should be transparent as required by Code (*Refer to*

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9.11.030.A. *Active Ground Floor Design and Use*). For residential districts, an open feeling of the site front façade design is encouraged for connectivity to the pedestrian realm. Primary entries should be clearly and architecturally highlighted. In all districts, street trees and parkway planting are essential for strengthening urban design throughout the city and should be properly coordinated with the City’s Urban Forest Master Plan.

#### *Landscaping*

The landscape design shall have a clear concept that is complementary to and integrated with the site and building design. A sense of openness at the front of the site is encouraged. A layered landscape design for residential projects is recommended to provide privacy for front units and to enhance private and common open space while maintaining openness to the street. At the sides and rear, landscape buffer to create privacy for the new building and neighbors is also encouraged.

#### *Lighting*

Lighting is an important component of the exterior project design. Lighting is reviewed to ensure the design enhances the overall site and project design. The lighting level should ensure safety around the site while not appearing overly lit or result in unnecessary light spillage.

### **2) Mass and Scale**

The importance of design of the mass and scale of the project is to maintain a positive relationship to the surrounding context. This requires sensitivity to overall massing especially in projects that are larger than what they replace and to what is adjacent. The scale of the project should be appropriate as a whole, and in the composition of individual elements to relate the project to human scale and the surrounding context. For example including but not limited to size, scale and placement of windows, doors and architectural elements can help enlarge or reduce a project’s appearance and relate the new building to its surroundings, even if the architectural style or design expression is different.

### **3) Design and Detailing**

The design expression, materials and detailing must be high quality and should enhance the overall architectural idea. Materials should be authentic and not imitate other materials. Details should be thoughtfully designed to ensure proper implementation and durability over time. Demonstrable strategies for daylighting and ventilation throughout the project, with an overall strategy toward environmental design is required to maintain a high quality of life for City of Santa Monica residents and occupants.

Design review does not prioritize one architectural style over another but ensures that any particular style is carried out with integrity, authenticity and consistency.