

## Urban and Architectural Design Review Process and Questions

The design process is a collaborative and problem-solving process engaged by a development team. In addition to important questions such as “how do I satisfy my client’s program and budget?” and “how do I solve all the technical aspects of the building?” are a series of questions that must be answered in relation to design. City staff and the Architectural Review Board will also engage in this dialogue with the project team. It’s important to ask the right questions early during the design process.

This handout is intended to assist the project design team to best understand some of the city’s priorities when designing a project, and how that project will be evaluated by City staff and decision makers. The ARB requires a complete submittal package. Refer to the ARB review application for all submittal requirements and contact ARB staff for a sample packet.

In addition to a design that takes into consideration the principles and standards below, the project must adhere to the requirements of the Zoning Code, Building Code and all other City Departments.

### SITE AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- **What is the overall site and landscape design concept?**
- **What is currently on the site, and when was it built?**
- **Is the property identified on the Historic Resources Inventory?**
- **What is the development pattern on the surrounding blocks?**
- **What are the special characteristics of the neighborhood and how does the project relate?**
- **What is the relationship of vehicular access and parking and how does that compare to surrounding properties?**
- **Along the street frontage of the adjacent blocks, what is the relationship of the buildings to the street?**

### Street Frontage

- *Does the building appear inviting from the street?*
- *Are there entries, window openings or other architectural features at the street frontage?*
- *If the project is on a corner site, does building address the corner?*
- **Does the project minimize its environmental impact? Is the project oriented to maximize natural light and air?**
- **If the site has a sloping topography, does the building and site design follow the topography?**

- **Does the site design manage stormwater on site (Are Low Impact Development Standards incorporated)?**
- **What are the additional site planning considerations:**
  - What are existing streetscape features to consider?
  - Where are utility easements and points of connection?
  - Where is fire department access?
  - What is the look and feel of landscaping in the neighborhood?
  - Where is open space in the neighborhood and how is it configured?
  - What exterior lighting exists and what would be appropriate for the site and the project?
  - Are there fences, walls, gates, pergolas/arbors, and hedges in the front setback and are these features common? Location of pool/spa?
  - Location of HVAC or condensing units? Location of covered patios, decks, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

## **MASS AND SCALE**

- **What's the big idea or governing architectural concept?**
- **How does project massing relate to the overall scale of the neighborhood, street and adjacent buildings?**
- **Does project massing reinforce the overall design concept or does it detract?**
- **Does the project massing maximize open space opportunities?**
- **Does the project minimize its environmental impact? Is the project oriented to maximize natural light and air?**
- **Is scale and proportion of buildings appropriate to the surrounding context?**
- **How are major building elements designed and configured?**

## **DESIGN AND DETAILING**

- **Are elevations well designed, in scale, proportion, materials, details?**
- **Are there a variety of exterior building materials, appropriate for placement and design?**
- **What does the roofscape look like? Are noise and privacy impacts addressed?**
- **Have windows been located to minimize direct views into adjacent living spaces and on neighboring sites?**
- **Has circulation been minimized to maximize living space?**
- **Do the landscape design and paving materials complement the building?**

- **What about the lighting design?**
  
- **Is signage necessary for project or site?**
  - Is a sign program required?
  - Are the signs appropriate in type, size, and color for the building?
  - Are the number of signs appropriate to the site?
  - Are the signs pedestrian-oriented?