

C H A P T E R

# 5

ALL  
PROJECTS



**This chapter presents design guidelines for the following topics that apply to all projects in San Jose, whether for rehabilitation or new construction:**

- Sidewalks and Walkways p. 68
- Fences and Site Walls p. 69
- Landscaping p. 71
- Lighting p. 73
- Driveways and Parking p. 74
- Accessory Structures p. 76
- Mechanical Equipment and Service Areas p. 77
- Energy Conservation p. 78
- Building Color p. 79



## CHAPTER

# 5

## ALL PROJECTS

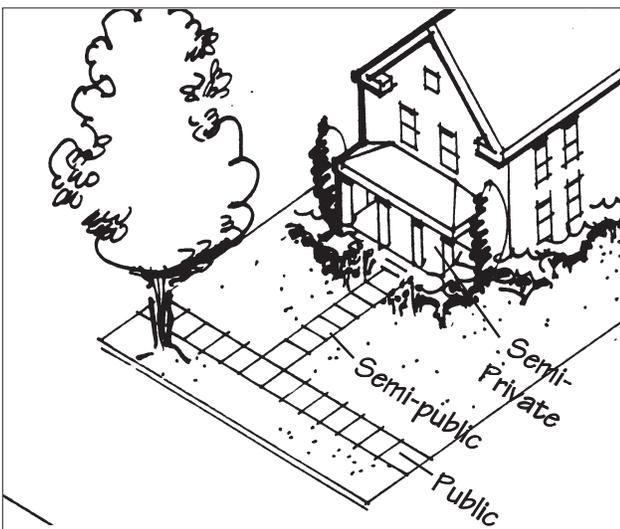
This chapter presents the design guidelines for a variety of categories that may apply to many projects, including historic properties and new construction. *Also note that for many of the design topics presented in this chapter other City regulations may apply, in particular Title 13 Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places and Title 20 Zoning Ordinance of the San Jose Municipal Code. Please consult the City of San Jose before planning a project to determine which requirements are applicable.*



*Preserve original sidewalks. If replacement becomes necessary, match a new sidewalk with that of the original. This includes scoring lines or brushing patterns which are not the same from block-to-block.*



*When new sidewalks are to be installed, they should be compatible with the original.*



*Historic residential properties have an established progression of public-to-private spaces.*

## Sidewalks and Walkways

*Sidewalks and walkways should be compatible with the surrounding area.*

Sidewalks are significant elements. The alignment of original sidewalks with the street and the overall neighborhood layout is of importance.

### 5.1 Preserve original sidewalks.

- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated beyond repair. Any replacement materials should match as closely as possible to the original in color, scoring lines and brush finishes.

### 5.2 When new sidewalks are to be installed, they should be compatible with the original.

- In residential areas, a sidewalk should be detached and separated from the curb with a planting strip (sometimes called parkways or devil strips).
- A new sidewalk should align with those that already exist along a block.
- Scoring lines or “brushing” patterns should be consistent with those in the existing sidewalk.
- Using paving materials that are similar to those employed historically is preferred.

### 5.3 Maintain the established progression of public-to-private spaces.

- The typical neighborhood tradition of walkways from the sidewalk to the house should be maintained.
- This includes a sequence of experiences, beginning with the “public” sidewalk, proceeding along a “semi-public” walkway, to a “semi-private” porch or entry feature and ending in the “private” spaces beyond.

### 5.4 Maintain the tradition of trees planted in the planting strip.

- A planting strip, located between the street and a detached sidewalk should be planted with grass, flowering plants and trees.
- If a tree is cut down, replace it in-kind.

## Fences and Site Walls

*A fence or site wall should be in character with those used traditionally and relate to the principal structure on a lot.*

In some instances, fences were a part of traditional construction in San Jose. When used historically, fences were typically wood picket or wrought iron. Most were relatively low in height and had a “transparent” character, allowing views into yards and providing interest to pedestrians. Site walls were also used in some cases where yards slope down to the street. Common materials were brick and stone.

### 5.5 Preserve original fences and site walls.

- Replace only those portions that are deteriorated. Any replacement materials should match the original in color, texture, size and finish.
- A historic wood fence should be protected against the weather with a painted or stained surface.
- If repointing a wall is necessary, use a mortar mix that is similar to that used historically and match the original joint design.
- Painting a historic masonry wall, or covering it with stucco or other cementitious coatings, is not appropriate.

### 5.6 Where no fence exists keeping the yard open may be the best approach for a front yard.

### 5.7 Where a new fence is needed, it should be similar in character with those seen historically.

- A fence that defines a front yard or a side yard on a corner lot is usually low to the ground and “transparent” in nature.
- New fence design and materials that are similar to those used historically are appropriate.
- Solid walls or walls with decorative metal panels are not appropriate.



*Preserve original fences and site walls.*



*Fences and walls should be designed to allow views into a yard while at the same time successfully defining one's property line.*



Where no fence exists keeping the yard open may be the best approach for a front yard. Here a property owner chose to define the “private” front yard with a gate only. Low-level landscaping lines the rest of the lawn where a fence would be.



Chain link, concrete block, un-faced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, plywood and mesh “construction” fences are inappropriate.

### 5.8 A combination of fencing and screening vegetation may be appropriate.

- Chain link, concrete block, un-faced concrete, plastic, fiberglass, rebar, iron, plywood and mesh “construction” fences are inappropriate.
- Cast metal ornamentation and carriage lamps are inappropriate.
- A wood fence should be painted or stained.

### 5.9 A side yard fence should be set back from the primary facade of a house.

- Two types of side yard fences were seen traditionally: a fence that extends between two houses and a fence that runs between two houses.
- A side yard fence should be set back enough to provide the historic sense of open space between homes.
- A side yard fence may be taller than their front yard counterparts, but the taller portion should be located behind the front plane of the house.
- Consider staggering the fence boards on either side of the fence rail, or using lattice on the upper portions of the fence, to give a semi-transparent quality to the fence.



A side yard fence may be taller than their front yard counterparts, but the taller portion should be located behind the front plane of the house.

## Landscaping

*Plant materials should be used to create continuity among properties.*

San Jose has a rich array of landscape materials, most are indigenous to the area, that grow readily in the California climate. Trees and flowering plants help provide interest to pedestrians, as well as shaded protection from the sun, as they walk along the street.

### 5.10 Preserve historic landscape and streetscape features.

- Existing historic landscape and streetscape features, such as fences, sidewalks, trees, lights and hitching posts, should be preserved, and should be protected during construction projects.
- Existing native plantings should be preserved in place. This particularly applies to historically significant trees, shrubs and garden designs.

### 5.11 In new landscape designs, use materials that are compatible with the historic property and neighborhood.

- Minimize the amount of hard surface paving for patios, terraces or drives in front yards.
- The tradition of landscaping located along structural elements (such as foundations, walkways and fences or walls) should be continued.
- Avoid planting too close to a structure that will damage architectural features or building foundations. This also can cause moisture retention against the structure.
- Garden ornaments and sculpture which are incompatible with the style, scale and materials of the building are not recommended.



*Preserve historic landscape and streetscape features, like these carriage steps.*



*The tradition of landscaping located along structural elements (such as foundations, walkways and fences or walls) should be continued.*



*Maintain mature trees.*



*Maintain the traditional character of boulevards where planted strips exist between vehicle travel lanes.*

**5.12 Consider using plant materials that are adapted to the California climate if water conservation is a concern.**

- Use native, water conserving, and regionally appropriate landscaping.
- Group plants together with similar watering needs.
- The use of an automatic drip or low volume irrigation system to water shrubs and trees is encouraged.

**5.13 Maintain mature and historic trees.**

- Mature trees should not be removed unless the tree is dying, dead, diseased or poses a safety hazard to the residents or the public.
- If a tree is cut down, at least one replacement tree, not less than 8 feet tall, of a similar kind should be replanted in its place, unless it would damage the house.
- Replacement plant materials should be similar in kind, size or equivalent massing to the plants removed (e.g., a cluster of smaller new trees may be used to establish a massing similar to one large tree).

**5.14 Maintain the traditional character of boulevards where planted strips exist between vehicle travel lanes.**

- Avoid replacing plant materials with hard and/or impervious surfaces. Consider using stepping stones if a walking surface is needed across a boulevard.
- Protect established vegetation during construction to avoid damage.
- Notify the City if damaged or diseased trees exist in a boulevard.

## Lighting

*Exterior lighting should be a subordinate element on a site.*

Traditionally, lighting within a site was minimal. An occasional garden light was seen, but porch lights were usually the only exterior illumination. Most used incandescent lamps. These were relatively low in intensity and were shielded with simple shade devices.

Also, when new street lights are to be installed, they should be designed to be subtle and unobtrusive. A highly ornamental design for new street lighting that has not been documented or that invokes a false sense of history is not recommended.

### 5.15 Original lighting fixtures should be preserved, when feasible.

- Light fixtures that are original to a house or integral to an architectural style are examples of fixtures that should be preserved.
- Replace broken glass. Re-secure loose fixtures.
- Check electrical connections for exposed or damaged wiring. Replace as necessary.
- If a historic light fixture is damaged beyond repair, then replacing it with a replica fixture is preferred.

### 5.16 New exterior lights should be simple in character and low in intensity.

- Lighting fixtures should be appropriate to the building in terms of style and size.
- Lights that cast a color similar to that of daylight and that have a low level of luminescence are preferred.

### 5.17 Minimize the visual impacts of site and architectural lighting.

- Unshielded, high intensity light sources and those that direct light upward are inappropriate.
- Where safety or security are a concern, the use of motion sensors that automatically turn lights on and off are appropriate.
- Do not wash an entire building facade in light.
- Avoid using more than one fixture to light the same area.

### 5.18 Prevent glare onto adjacent properties by using shielded and focused light sources that direct light onto the ground.



*When new street lights are to be installed, they should be designed to be subtle and unobtrusive.*



*Avoid paved parking in the front yard.*



*Consider providing a Hollywood drive (middle photo), with turf between the strips, instead of large driveways (bottom photo).*

## Driveways and Parking

*Parking areas should have a positive visual impact.*

When parking was originally introduced it was an ancillary use and was located to the rear of a site. This tradition should be continued, and in all cases, the visual impacts of parking—which includes driveways, garages and garage doors—should be minimized.

### 5.19 Avoid paved parking in the front yard.

- Paving for parking in the front yard is inappropriate in most cases.

### 5.20 Use paving materials that will minimize the impact a driveway will have on a streetscape.

- Decomposed granite, pea gravel, exposed aggregate concrete, gravel or chip and seal are appropriate paving materials.
- Consider providing two paved driving strips (also known as a “Hollywood drive”) with turf between the strips instead of large driveways.
- Large areas of paving are not appropriate.
- Plain asphalt or black top is discouraged.
- Use materials that are not impervious to water and will not create runoff into the street or onto adjacent properties.

### 5.21 Preserve a historic garage where it exists.

- Respect the character-defining features of a historic garage such as the primary materials, roof materials, roof form, location, window and door openings and any architectural details.
- Avoid moving a historic garage from its original location.

**5.22 A new garage should not appear to dominate from the street.**

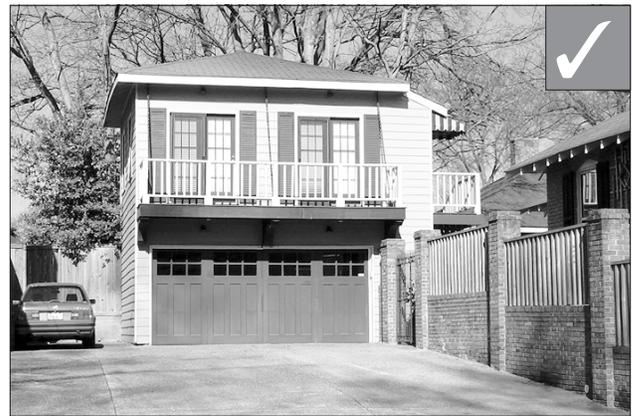
- A garage should be subordinate to the primary structure on the site.
- A garage should be compatible in design with the primary structure. A new garage should also be seen as a new addition to the streetscape, it should not be designed to appear old.

**5.23 A detached garage located to the rear of the property, and that is set back substantially from the house, is recommended.**

- The material and detailing of a garage should be utilitarian.

**5.24 When parking is not located in a garage, screen it from view from the public right-of-way.**

- Consider using a fence, hedge or other landscape device.
- Also consider visual impacts on adjoining properties.



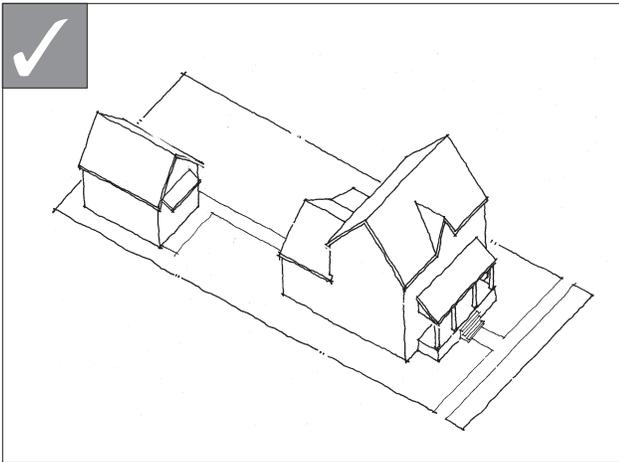
*A detached garage located to the rear of the property, and that is set back substantially from the house, is recommended.*



*A new garage should not appear to dominate from the street.*



*A garage should be subordinate to the primary structure on the site. This garage visually competes with the primary structure because it is similar in scale.*



Locate an accessory structure to the rear of a lot.



An accessory structure should be similar in character to those seen traditionally. Basic rectangular forms, with hip, gable or shed roofs, are appropriate.

## Accessory Structures

*An accessory structure should be similar to those seen historically.*

### 5.25 Locate an accessory structure to the rear of a lot.

- Locating an accessory structure to the side of a primary structure, but set back substantially may also be considered.

### 5.26 Construct an accessory structure that is subordinate in size with and similar in character to the primary structure.

- In general, accessory structures should be unobtrusive and not compete visually with the house.
- An accessory structure should remain subordinate, in terms of mass, size and height to the primary structure.

### 5.27 An accessory structure should be similar in character to those seen traditionally.

- Basic rectangular forms, with hip, gable or shed roofs, are appropriate.
- Maintain the simple detailing found on accessory structures.

### 5.28 Maintain the traditional range of building materials on accessory structures.

- Appropriate siding materials for accessory structures include: unpainted or stained wood siding, wood planks, vertical board and batten siding or corrugated metal.

## Mechanical Equipment and Service Areas

*Utilities should be placed such that their visual impacts are minimized.*

Utilities and mechanical equipment that serve properties may include telephone and electrical lines, gas meters, air conditioners, telecommunication systems and security systems. For new construction, adequate space should be planned in a project from the outset and should be designed such that visual impacts are minimized.

### 5.29 Minimize the visual impacts of utilities and mechanical equipment.

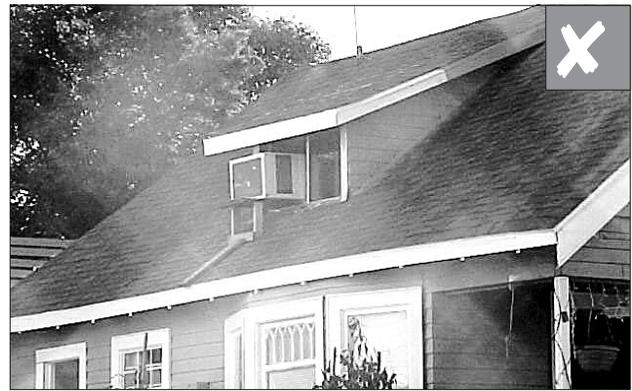
- Provide adequate space for utilities. They should not simply be put into “left over” space that abuts the public right-of-way.
- Locate mechanical equipment at the rear or sides of a property and screen them with landscaping if visible from the public right-of-way.
- Vents for direct-vent fireplaces should not be installed on the building front.
- Window air conditioning units or condenser elements should be located where they are not visible on a front facade.
- Any utility device or mechanical equipment should have a matte or non-reflective finish.
- Horns for security alarms should be hidden from view. Consider placing them under an eave or at ground level screened by landscaping.

### 5.30 Screen a satellite dish from view.

- Use landscaping to screen a satellite dish that is mounted on the ground.
- A small satellite dish should be located away from the front of a structure.

### 5.31 Service areas should not be visible from major pedestrian ways.

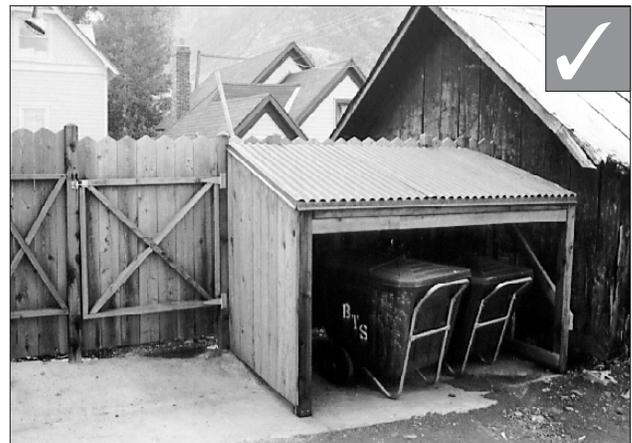
- Locate a service area along the rear of a site.
- Trash areas, including large waste containers or dumpsters, should also be screened from view, using a fence, hedge or enclosure. For a larger storage area, consider using a shed to enclose it.
- Provide adequate trash storage capacity so that debris will not overflow the containers.



*Window air conditioning units or condenser elements should be located where they are not visible on a front facade.*



*A small satellite dish should be located away from the front of a structure.*



*Trash areas should also be screened from view, using a fence, hedge or enclosure.*



The addition of features such as skylights or solar panels should not be installed in a manner such that they will interrupt the plane of the historic roof. (Ft. Collins, CO)



If attached to the building, solar devices should lay flush with the roof line, as seen in this photo from the Hensley Historic District. The devices in the top two photos are inappropriate.

## Energy Conservation

*Elements used for energy conservation should not interfere with the original character of a historic house.*

### 5.32 If energy conservation is a concern, do not replace original single pane glass with double pane, or thermal pane glass.

- In some cases, owners may be concerned that an older window is less efficient in terms of energy conservation. However, most heat loss is associated with air *leakage* through gaps in an older window that are the result of a lack of maintenance, rather than loss of energy through the single pane of glass found in historic windows.
- The most cost-effective energy conservation measures for most historic windows include the replacement of the glazing compound, the repair of wood members and the installation of weather stripping. These steps will dramatically reduce heat loss while preserving historic features.

### 5.33 Solar devices should not block views or be placed where they are visible from the public right-of-way.

- If attached to the building, solar devices should lay flush with the roof line. This will not cause a significant decrease in the device's solar gain capabilities.
- If not attached to the building, collectors should be located in side or rear yards. Exposed hardware, frames and piping should have a matte finish, and be consistent with the color scheme of the primary structure.
- Collectors not attached to the building should be screened by whatever landscaping may be necessary to reduce their visibility. However, screening may diminish the effectiveness of the collectors to receive sunlight.

## Building Color

*Use colors to create a coordinated color scheme for a building.*

### 5.34 The facade should “read” as a single composition.

- Employ color schemes that are simple in character.
- Using one base color for the building is preferred.
- Using only one or two accent colors is also encouraged, although precedent does exist for using more than two colors for certain architectural styles, such as the Queen Anne.

### 5.35 Base or background colors should be muted.

- Use the natural colors of the building materials, such as the buff color of limestone, as the base for developing the overall color scheme.
- Use matte finishes instead of glossy ones.

### 5.36 Reserve the use of bright colors to accent building features only.

- Contrasting accent colors may be used to highlight entries.
- Muted earthtone colors are preferred.

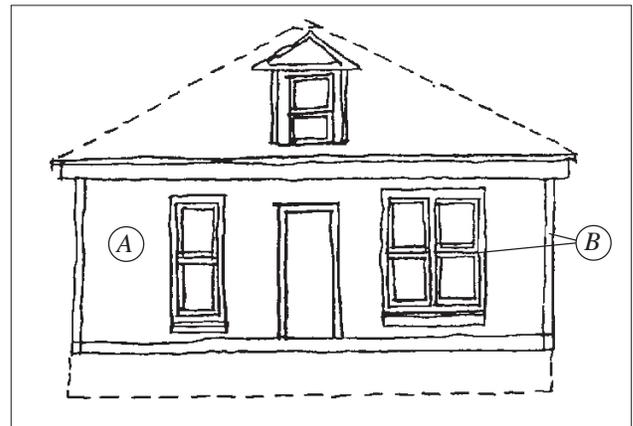


*Use colors to create a coordinated color scheme for a building.*

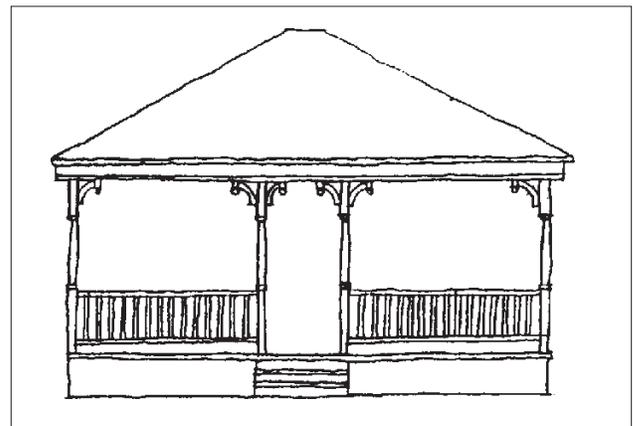


*When designing your own color scheme, consider the entire composition:*

- The back plane of the main facade is a major surface for which a scheme should be devised, and*
- A color scheme for the front plane, composed of a porch in this case, also should be designed.*



*Apply a base color to the main plane of the facade (A). Next, apply the first trim color to window frames and edge boards (B).*



*When developing a color scheme, use a limited number of colors. Apply one or two colors to porch elements; avoid making the scheme too busy. Consider using a different shade of the first trim color—or even matching it exactly for porch trim.*

