

Design Traditions of Carmel DESIGN GUIDELINES



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Enhance. Subordinate. Fit. Retain. Design. Detail.

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CORE PRINCIPLES

All improvement projects shall adhere to the following principles, which serve as the regulatory basis for determining compliance. Existing development shall not establish precedent for proposed projects.

1. ENHANCE, restore, and preserve the native forest in all improvement projects: private, public, and otherwise.
2. SUBORDINATE every built structure to the character and continuity of the forest, natural environment, and to the natural features of its own site.
3. FIT every built structure within its neighborhood context.
4. RETAIN and build upon Carmel's architectural heritage.
5. DESIGN every built structure with modesty.

Enhance.

Subordinate.

Fit.

Retain.

Design.

Detail.

6. DETAIL every property authentically and consistently.



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KEYS

IMAGE SYMBOLS KEY

- ✔ Image and caption describe a **SUPPORTED** principle.
- Image and caption describe a **CONDITIONAL** principle.
- ✘ Image and caption describe an **UNSUPPORTED** principle.



LINKED DOCUMENTS KEY

<u>GP</u>	General Plan
<u>HCS</u>	Historic Context Statement
<u>LCP</u>	Local Coastal Program
<u>CMC</u>	Carmel-by-the-Sea Municipal Code
<u>WUI</u>	California Wildland-Urban Interface) “WUI” Code
<u>MPWMD</u>	Monterey Peninsula Water Management District
<u>PRC</u>	Public Resource Code

PREFACE

“It has become a symbol of an attitude and an approach.

The attitude is that quality is worthwhile in itself, but that it also makes economic sense.”

- Lawrence Halprin, landscape architect, January 1967

From its earliest years, Carmelites sought for their village to be different from other communities, to have originality and uniqueness, to weave pleasantly amongst the natural landscape of sea, hill, tree and beach. Before incorporation as a city in 1916, the Carmel Development Company was aided by the Carmel Civic League, an entity created to protect the physical assets of the village and to advocate for tasteful, person-kind improvements. A dozen years after 1916, Dr. Carol Aronovici, a renowned city planner, addressed members of the community on the civic value of architectural control.

Dr. Aronovici told the assembled mass that good civic design “is the art of conserving all the natural advantages of a city and controlling all building enterprises, whether public or private, so as to blend them into a harmonious whole.”

It was the local newspapers which led the effort for community architectural review. By 1929, Perry Newberry had become publisher and part-owner of the Carmel Pine Cone newspaper and began a year-after-year drumbeat for better planning and architecture, calling in editorials for “lines of distinction and individuality” in building design. “There should be some measure of civic control” he wrote in 1935, “which will make Carmel more beautiful.”

Newberry was joined in this crusade by Willard K. Bassett, publisher of the Carmel Cymbal, who in 1938 opined in favor of architectural review of buildings in the commercial core. In 1940, Bassett editorialized to “Keep Building Atrocities out of the Business District.” And by the end of 1940, the City Council created a process for civic review and approval of new buildings.

The enclosed Design Guidelines are heirs to over a century of our community's want to assure new or remodeled structures meld with Carmel's natural beauty and with their neighboring edifices. Generations and succeeding generations have sought architectural sincerity in what is built.

Despite the friendly term “guidelines”, the following Design Guidelines are an integral and mandatory part of Carmel's regulatory documents. Both Carmel's General Plan and its Municipal Code authorize and require the guidelines, in order to bring greater specificity to the town's defining general principles. Please familiarize yourself with these interrelated legal documents before beginning the design of your project: [Carmel's General Plan](#), especially chapters [Land Use and Community Character Element](#) (pages 1-1 to 1-53) and [Coastal Resource Management Element](#) (pages 5-1 to 5-49) as well as [Carmel's Municipal Code](#) (CMC), especially CMC [Title 17](#). In all these legal documents you will find both the background and basis for the Design Guidelines as well as multiple references to specific design principles and related regulations that apply to your project.

Our Design Guidelines Committee hopes this booklet assists you in your quest to become part of our heritage by blending your project amongst its neighbors and within our ancient forest, both on your own property and any adjoining public property. Only with your help and dedication to our shared commons can

we preserve and enhance the overall continuity and harmony of the built and especially the natural environment that is our unique legacy.



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FIRE ALERT

When beginning any residential design or remodel in Carmel-by-the-Sea, fire resilience must serve as the premier guide for the proposed project to ensure long-term sustainability and community safety. Because significant portions of the city are classified as an extreme fire danger area, wildfire represents the single greatest threat to both the natural environment and architectural character of the community.

True sustainability is not complete without proactive protection against catastrophic fire risk, necessitating design concepts that prioritize ignition-resistant materials, Class A roofs, and ember-resistant detailing. To address the critical gap in wildfire resilience, applicants must now utilize ignition-resistant [products listed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal \(OSFM\)](#). This allows projects to honor the village's aesthetic legacy—using materials that convey a natural patina and human scale—while meeting the objective safety requirements of the [California WUI Code](#).

Furthermore, the initial design layout should consider defensible space to ensure proper distance between structures and flammable materials such as vegetation, fences, etc. By making fire resilience the primary driver of a design, homeowners can harmonize Carmel's unique aesthetic heritage with the objective regulatory standards required to make the built environment both beautiful and survivable.

Fire-Resilient Design Matrix: Residential Guidelines Integration

The following matrix provides a “compliance at a glance” summary. It bridges the 2026 California Building Code requirements and Carmel-by-the-Sea's specific design traditions.

Architects and applicants should utilize the Fire-Resilient Design Matrix below as a supplemental “compliance at a glance” tool during Track One and Track Two reviews. Early pre-consultation with the Monterey County Regional Fire District is encouraged for projects

involving additions of 50% or more, to integrate sprinkler and access requirements into the site design from the start.

Design Element	Traditional Carmel Aesthetic	2026 Fire-Resilient Standard	Planning Policy Recommendation
Roofing	Wood shake, heavy texture, irregular lines.	Class A fire-rated materials (synthetic, metal, or tile).	Encourage high-quality composite shakes with "thick-butt" profiles to mimic cedar.
Siding	Redwood lap, shingles, or textured stucco.	Ignition-resistant materials (fiber cement, stone, or treated timber).	Require fiber cement or treated lumber for large surfaces; allow natural wood only for small, protected accents.
Perimeter	Foundation-adjacent flower beds and mulch.	5-foot "Zero-Ember" Zone (Zone 0).	Mandate non-combustible hardscape (gravel/stone) within 5 feet of all structures.
Eaves & Vents	Open eaves with exposed rafter tails.	Ember-resistant vents and soffited (boxed) eaves.	Recommend "boxed" eaves with decorative moldings to maintain historical charm.
Windows	Large single-pane or divided lite wood frames.	Dual-pane tempered glass (at least one pane).	Favor Class A rated frames (sash) that offer fire protection without a "commercial" look.
Landscape	Dense canopy, "Forest Floor" mulch/needles.	10-foot vertical separation; no "ladder fuels."	Require removal of dead wood and thinning of dense brush under the drip lines of protected trees.
Site Access	Narrow, winding driveways.	12-foot clear width and 13.5-foot vertical clearance.	Use permeable "ribbon" driveways or grass-crete to meet width requirements while minimizing hardscape.
Utilities	Exposed meters and battery arrays.	ESS spacing (3 feet from openings) and impact bollards.	Require utility screening using non-combustible materials or recessed architectural cabinets.



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I. RESIDENTIAL

Design Guidelines





1. **ENHANCE**, restore, and preserve the native forest in all improvement projects: private, public, and otherwise (as seen in the dense, healthy Monterey Pine and Coast Live Oak environment above).

Enhance.

Subordinate.

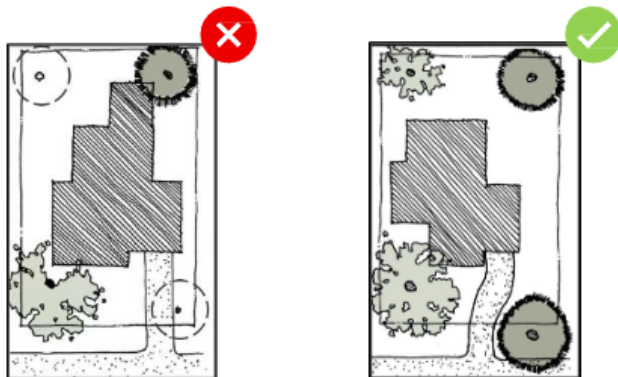
Fit.

Retain.

Design.

Detail.

- 1.1. Preserve all existing healthy upper canopy and lower canopy trees.



- 1.1.1. Provide enough open space on each building site to preserve upper and lower canopy trees and add new trees, as required by the City Forester in the tree evaluation, with sufficient space for growth to maturity (as shown above right by building footprint and path both altered to preserve existing trees).
- 1.1.2. Locate new construction in accordance with the [CMC 17.48.110](#) to minimize impacts on established trees and avoid pruning of limbs and canopies. Set foundations for buildings and walls back far enough from the base of any tree to adequately protect its roots. Plan curb cuts, paving and drainage systems to maintain air transport and water percolation to root systems.
- 1.1.3. In order to screen buildings, contribute to the forest character of the street, and achieve a settled, mature look upon project completion, plan access and site development to protect trees during construction as provided in the [CMC 17.48](#). Do not alter the grade level near nor excavate into the root zone or drip-line of any healthy mature tree, whether on or adjacent to the site, including on abutting properties and in the right-of-way, without consulting the City Forester.

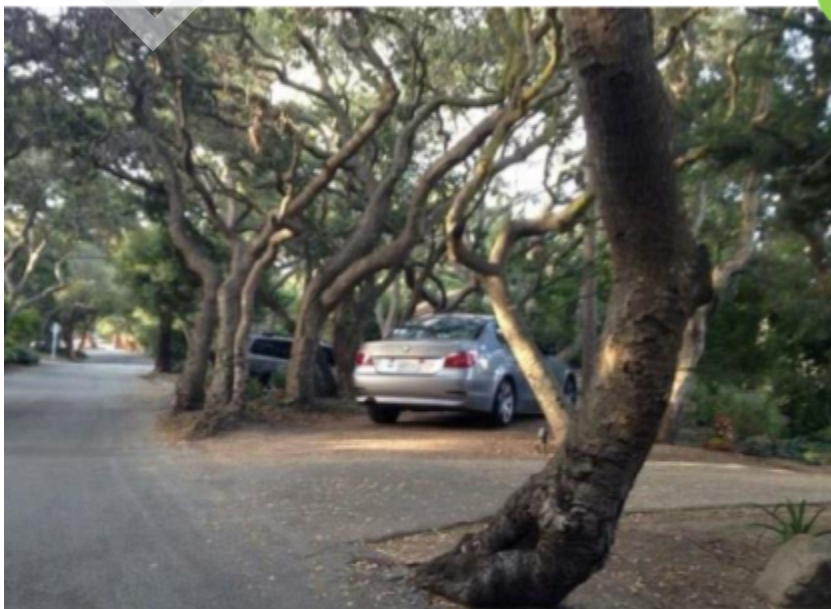
- 1.2. Preserve or enhance the informal, vegetated, open space character of the right-of-way.



- 1.2.1. In order to preserve the informal continuity of the Carmel forest streetscape, maintain native vegetation and trees both in the right-of-way and the periphery of the site so that the pavement follows the topography and curves around and emphasizes natural landscape features, creating the appearance of a cohesive, meandering forested lane with occasional "mini-parks" (as shown above by the continuous plantings along irregular pavement edges and encroaching vegetation).
- 1.2.2. Remove any excess existing paving and other non-conforming and easily displaced materials, such as gravel per [CMC 12.24.020.B](#). Irrigation equipment or un-permitted paving, gravel, boulders, logs, timbers, planters, fences, retaining walls, other above-ground encroachments, is prohibited.
- 1.2.3. Maintain the existing character of street gutters. Typically a rolled asphalt curb or, where more formal gutters are present, a channel faced with large native rock is appropriate. A plain concrete curb is inappropriate in all neighborhoods.



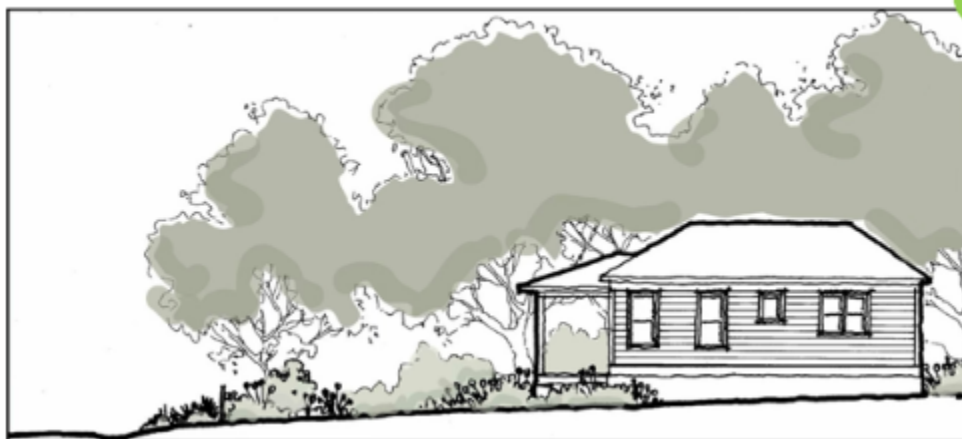
- 1.2.4. To create connectivity with adjacent properties, leave the right-of-way as an unpaved, natural forest floor with an informal edge, consisting of trees, naturally occurring vegetation, and organic surfaces (as shown above by the natural area between the private property line and the street pavement).
- 1.2.5. Ensure defensible space around a structure complies with [WUI standards](#) and [California Fire Code](#) regarding allowable ground cover. Ground cover in the defensible space must be non-combustable materials (i.e. river rock, soil, decomposed granite, flagstone etc) or herbaceous, high moisture native plants. Gravel within 5 feet of the primary dwelling is exempt from site coverage calculations.
- 1.2.6. When adding plantings to the right-of-way use only drought tolerant plants or plants native to the Carmel forest: drought-tolerant and non-irrigated, green foliage, ground covers, or low shrubs, informally arranged. Do not use planters, formal plantings, and exotic species in the public right-of-way.



- 1.2.7. Do not remove trees or add gravel or other “hardened” surfaces to provide parking in the right-of-way. Reinforce the forest image by separating parking spaces from driveways with plantings and by using natural soil, or mulch as surface materials (as shown above by a nearly undetectable natural area sized to accommodate parking).

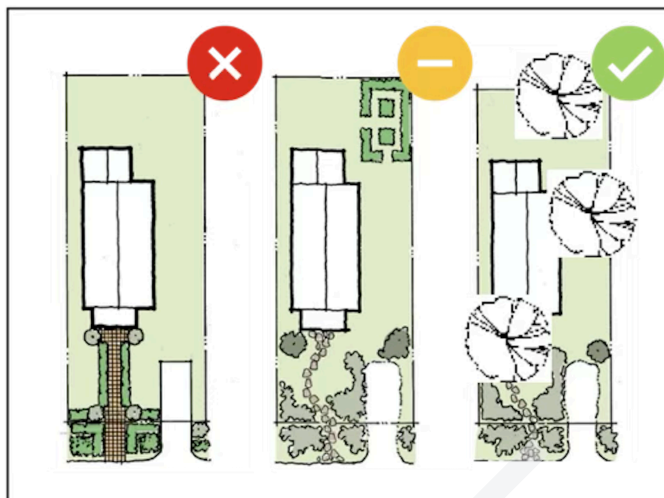


- 1.3. Preserve and enhance the forested image of the site (as shown above by how the home's natural pine-bark siding echoes and the massing avoids the existing trees).
- 1.3.1. Preserve and add trees to ensure the site has a mix of upper canopy trees and lower canopy trees. The City Forester shall determine the mix of upper and lower canopy trees to ensure consistency with City regulations in [CMC 17.48.080](#) regarding tree replacement ratios and species.



- 1.3.2. Extend the forest character of the right-of-way into the visible parts of the site by keeping a large portion of each site as open space, with plantings located to filter views of

structures (as shown above by the unimpeded, vegetated zone between the street on the left and the home on the right).



- 1.3.3. Locate plants and site coverage in relaxed, informal arrangements that are consistent with the urban forest character (as shown above at far right). Reserve formal, unnatural arrangements, bedding plants, or exotic flowering plants only for small areas out of public view or small walkway or entry accents (as shown above at center).
- 1.3.4. The majority of landscaping must be native or drought-tolerant species, following the [CMC Chapter 17.34](#). Refer to the preferred planting list for best options.
- 1.3.5. Ground cover must be informal when visible from the right-of-way. Manicured lawns must be sited so they are not visible from public property. Artificial turf is prohibited. Turf must not exceed 20% of the landscaped area per [MPWMD requirements](#).
- 1.3.6. Projects that involve a new building or substantial alteration require a landscape plan consistent with [CMC Section 17.34.060](#). All new landscaping must be from the preferred planting list, meet [WUI standards](#), and comply with [California Fire Code](#).
- 1.3.7. Projects that involve a new building or substantial alteration require a fuel management plan that is compliant with [WUI standards](#) and the [California Fire Code](#).
- 1.4. **Minimize stormwater impacts with Low Impact Development principles.**
 - 1.4.1. Preserve pre-development water drainage ways, such as seasonal creeks, as site amenities, incorporating natural drainage ways into development plans.
 - 1.4.2. Address stormwater close to the source, install bio-retention, and install permeable paving materials.
 - 1.4.3. Enhance water quality with stormwater management systems that mimic the natural water cycle. Filter stormwater into the ground, directing flows through vegetative buffers and rain gardens where plant and tree uptake can remove pollutants.
 - 1.4.4. Design new on-site stormwater control devices to appear naturally integrated into the forest. Use “green roofs,” “retention areas,” or landscaped areas to capture flow and

prevent new runoff toward adjacent properties per [CMC 17.43](#).

- 1.4.5. For new building or substantial alterations, provide a landscape plan that identifies areas for “low-scale plants,” shrubbery, and trees for initial review and shows specific planting plans for final review. Address the special needs of each species, such as using high-water-use plants near redwoods but not near oaks and paving materials that minimize tree root impacts.

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2. **SUBORDINATE** every built structure to the character and continuity of the forest, natural environment, and to the natural features of its own site (like how the tree above overshadows the street view of the home).

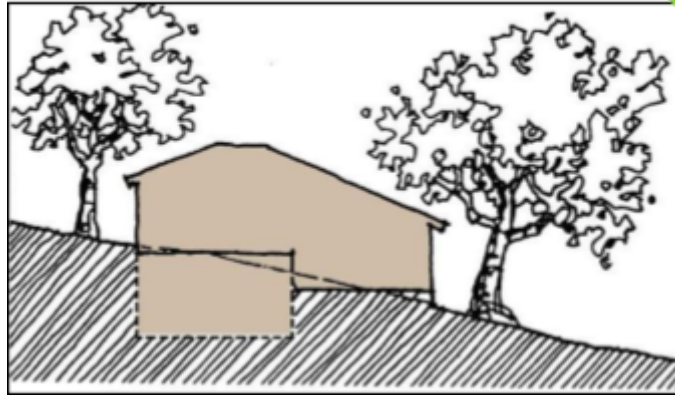
- 2.1. Nestle a building in the trees to minimize the mass visible from public view and subordinate built structures into the forest.



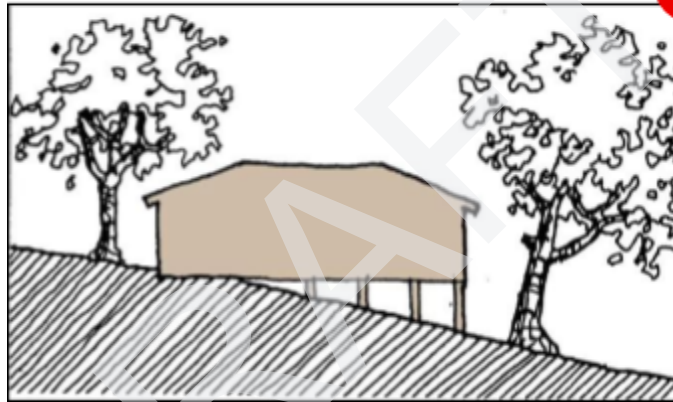
- 2.1.1. Position buildings to avoid cutting into the canopy of established trees (as shown above where the architect laser scanned existing tree branches and computer-positioned roof planes precisely beneath them).
- 2.1.2. Decrease the apparent size of buildings. Options to achieve this include building less than the maximum allowable floor area, minimizing large volume spaces (high ceilings or steep pitches across wide spans), avoiding above-grade underfloor areas, and avoiding extensive cantilevers, especially over excavated areas.
- 2.1.3. Reduce perceptible building height by locating some floor area either fully or partially below grade or at a “garden level.” Locate walkout areas, light wells, retaining walls, and terraces to the side or rear of a building to reduce perceived height from public right-of-way. When these locations are not feasible, provide more screening.
- 2.1.4. Minimize the visual impacts of retaining walls and garden walls (per [CMC 17.10.030.E](#)), window wells, and other foundation structures by incorporating sloped, planted areas to create a smooth grade transition.
- 2.1.5. When nestling buildings in trees, maintain the required spacing between trees and structures to comply with all [WUI standards](#) and [California Fire Codes](#) specifically applicable to Carmel.

2.2. Follow the site’s natural contours.

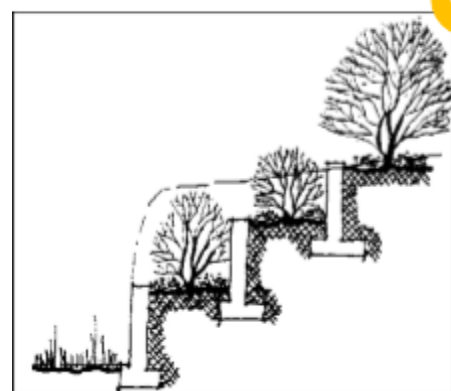
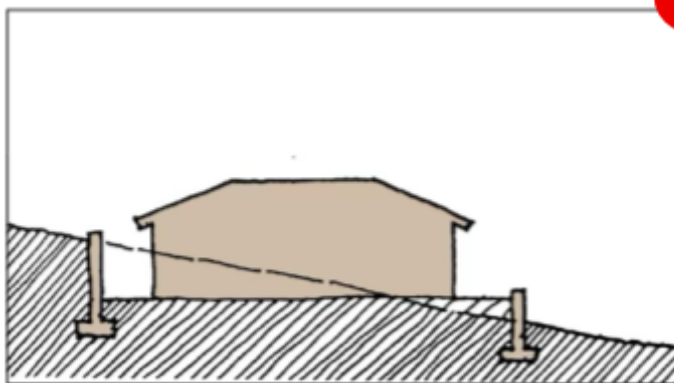
- 2.2.1. Minimize construction on steep slopes.



- 2.2.2. Minimize excavation and fill on a site by maintaining existing topography and, keeping all final grading and excavation completely within the proposed building footprint (as shown above by dashed line directly under house).



- 2.2.3. Step building height, foundations, and floor levels to follow site slopes and contours (unlike above, where support posts create a single level floating above a downward slope). When floor levels cannot be stepped, larger underfloor spaces (as shown above under most of the building) count as part of the allowed floor area, per [CMC 17.10.030.D.1](#).



- 2.2.4. Avoid abrupt changes in grade (as shown above left by flattened grade with added retaining

walls) within a site and between adjoining properties. If such transitions are unavoidable, then use sloped, planted areas. If a stable planted slope cannot be created, then use multiple landscaped terraces rather than a single tall wall (as shown by short walls above right).

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2.3. Subordinate parking to the house and site.



- 2.3.1. Minimize the visual impact of garages or carports by: concealing them from the street, detaching them at the back of the lot or elsewhere, subordinating them into the building design (as shown above left) by tucking them underneath or into the foundation (as shown above right), or locating them partially below grade (while avoiding any three-story appearance). On smaller lots, where a garage is visible from the street, provide a single, one-car garage door.
- 2.3.2. Use parking to maintain or enhance variety along the street edge and to maximize landscaped open space, views, and privacy. If a detached, one-car garage or carport meets the requirements outlined in [CMC 17.10.030.A.1.a](#), the Planning Commission may determine that it can encroach into the front setback.
- 2.3.3. When installing driveways, follow existing grade, with no excessive cuts and fills that would dominate the front garden, create a steep ramp effect, or introduce tall or massive retaining walls.

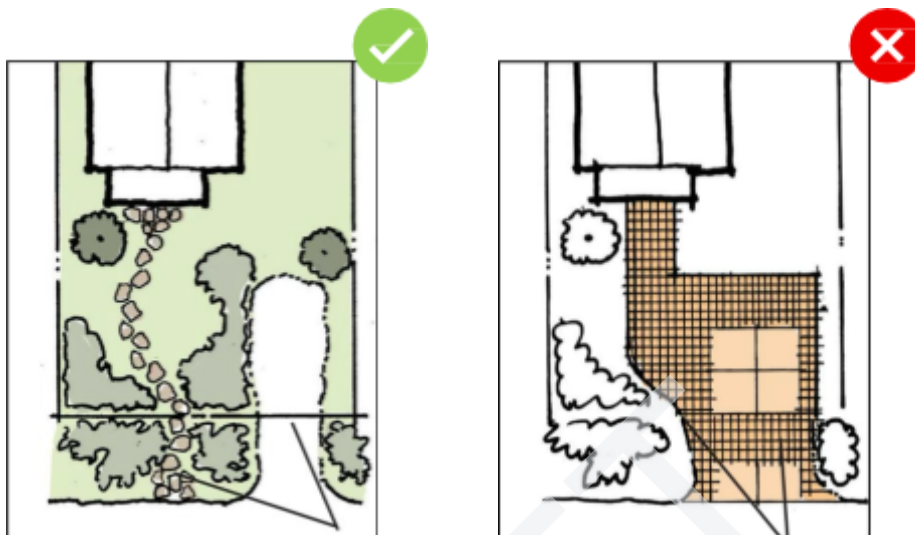


- 2.3.4. Minimize the amount of paved surface area for a driveway, with strategies such as using “tire track paving strips” (especially for sites with long driveways) or sharing a single driveway between two adjacent properties (as shown above by merged surface spanning property line). Provide only one curb cut per site, except for corner sites with a “through driveway.”

2.3.5. Driveways must comply with [WUI Standards](#) for size and emergency vehicle access.

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- 2.4. Subordinate all paved areas, designing them to be small, informal, and intimate.



- 2.4.1. Separate a driveway from a front walkway with plantings and soften the paved edges with landscaping (as shown above left by the planted, separated, and irregular driveway and front walkway).
- 2.4.2. Avoid formal or urban paving treatments such as grass-crete or wide areas of asphalt or concrete (as shown above right by the rectilinear pavers, straight edges, and joined driving and walking areas).



- 2.5. Blend on-site landscape with that of the public right-of-way to make vegetated spaces appear larger and to improve continuity with the forest setting (as shown above by the continuous natural forest floor extending from the public street paving, through the public right-of-way to the private property, creating an

uninterrupted forest landscape).



- 2.5.1. Native shrubs, hedges, or other vegetated landscaping can be used for enclosure or additional privacy in front yards (as shown above by the landscaping lush foliage on private property used as a necessary screening to the glass façade).
- 2.5.2. Ensure all landscaping complies with [WUI standards](#) and the [California Fire Code](#).



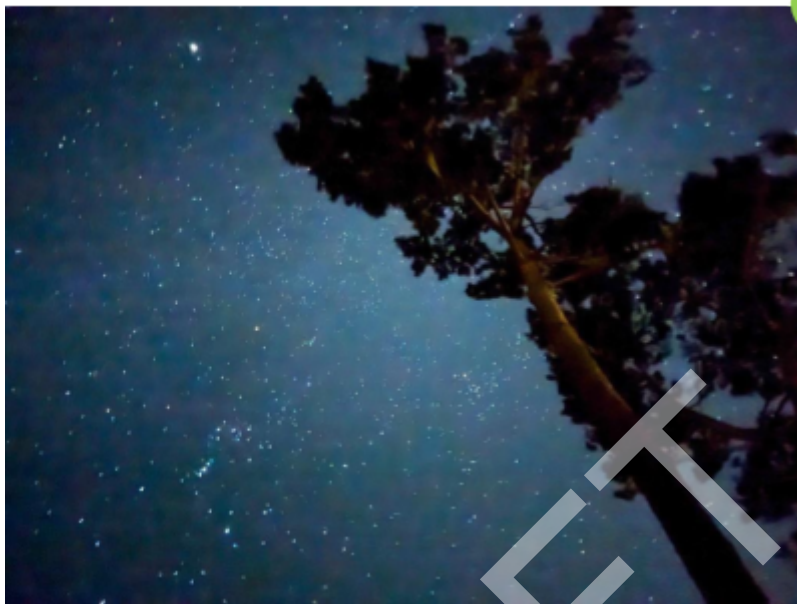
- 2.5.3. Fencing can be used for enclosure or additional privacy in front yards (such as in the foreground above which preserves visual access into the front yard and at street intersections). Fences in the front setback must be spaced, allowing filtered light views into the front yard.



- 2.5.4. When creating arbors, do not dominate the street and instead maintain a narrow, low, light, and open design consistent with any adjoining fence (such as above, where the arbor is styled like the open fencing). Avoid the use of tall [CMC 17.10.030.E](#) or wide entryways and avoid massive timbers or other heavy building elements when creating an arbor.



- 2.5.5. Stone, masonry, or stucco, low garden walls that fit into the site can be used for enclosure or additional privacy in front yards (such as above where a low wall that matches the home is nestled into the slope).



- 2.6. Preserve the nighttime, “dark-sky” character of neighborhoods (as shown above where stars are visible in Carmel-by-the-Sea due to drastically reduced artificial lighting).
- 2.6.1. To eliminate glare and excess illumination onto neighboring properties and the street, subdue all exterior lights with shielded and downward facing fixtures meeting the lumens standards, as defined in [CMC 15.36.070.B](#)
- 2.6.2. Use lights only where needed for safety and at outdoor activity areas, such as building entries, gates, terraces, walkways, and patios.
- 2.6.3. Do not use floodlights, spotlights, or uplights.
- 2.6.4. Use conventional, curb-mounted skylights only if interior spaces have no access to exterior windows. Minimize skylight visibility, glare, and light pollution affecting neighbors through location and automatic shading, per [CMC 17.58.030](#). Eliminate skylight visibility from the public right of way.

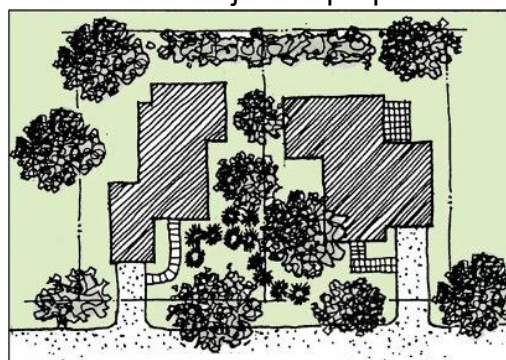
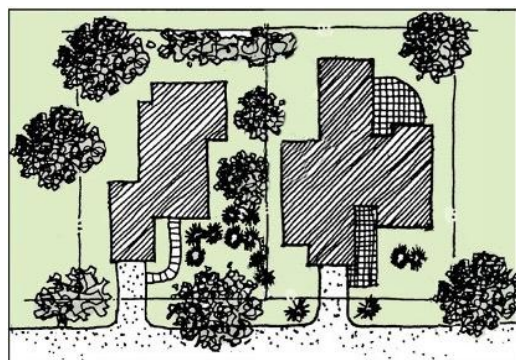


3. **FIT** every built structure within its neighborhood context

(Note how the three homes above relate to one another despite different massing and materials).



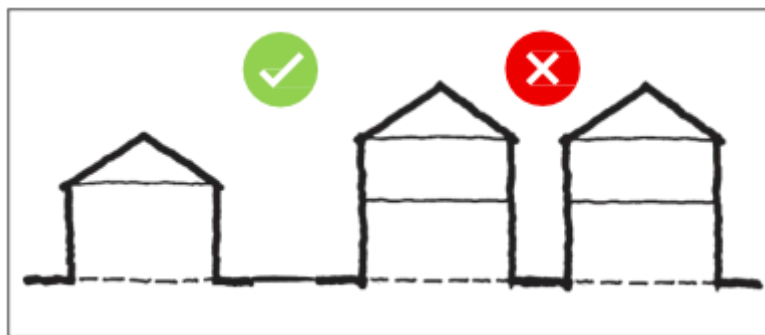
3.1. Locate open space so that it visually links with that of adjacent properties.



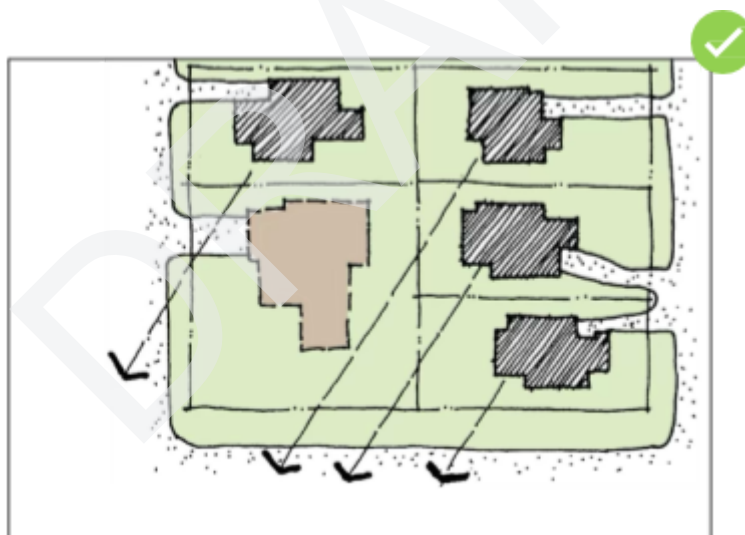
- 3.1.1. Coordinate open spaces with neighboring properties, combining them to increase their apparent size (as shown above right by wide forested space between homes), rather than simply maintaining required setbacks (as shown above left by narrow space with little room for plantings).
- 3.1.2. On oversized or combined properties, maintain the open space character of Carmel's typical 4,000 square foot lot sizes, with 40-foot frontages along the streetscape, avoiding the appearance of a "compound" or "estate."
- 3.1.3. Fit every built structure within its neighborhood context. Relate a building's mass to the context of other homes nearby. Divide a larger building into forms similar in scale to traditional village houses, placing some mass in a detached secondary structure (garage, guest house, etc.) if necessary to reduce the overall mass of the primary building.



- 3.1.4. Stagger front setbacks to frame outdoor spaces and provide variety in the arrangement of buildings and open spaces along the street. Avoid aligning a building front with those of adjacent properties, unless doing so would result in a visual aggregation of open space and save significant trees. Locate housing to be compliant with [WUI standards](#) regarding distance from the right-of-way for access to emergency services.

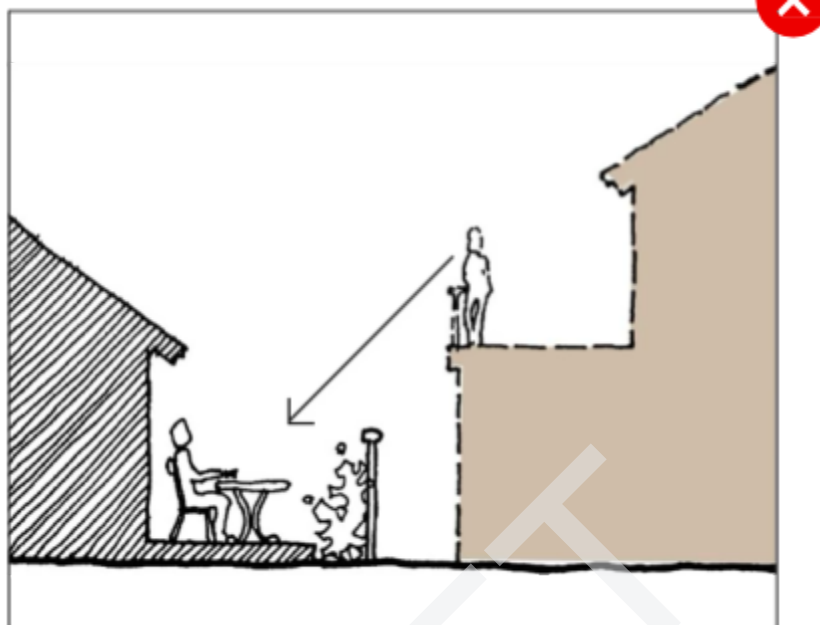


- 3.1.5. Stagger side setbacks with adjacent properties to avoid the "canyon effect" of a narrow corridor or tunnel between buildings (see above right where the homes are too parallel and close together). Consider how the side yard space may relate to that of the adjoining property to maximize the perception of open space. See [CMC 17.10.030.A](#) for side setback requirements.
- 3.1.6. Minimize building mass as seen from adjacent properties by: avoiding long, uninterrupted wall planes and placing tall building walls away from the property line and similar walls on neighboring sites.
- 3.1.7. Preserve access to light between properties.
- 3.2. Preserve views from nearby properties to natural features.



- 3.2.1. New buildings must have low masses and compact footprints to maintain substantial views enjoyed by adjacent properties and the public right-of-way (like the proposed home shown in brown with dashed lines above, which allows all neighboring homes to preserve the primary views).

- 3.2.2. Keep building elements from blocking views with sensitive placement and sizing, for example use chimneys with narrow profiles or minimalist flues.



- 3.3. Organize functions on a site to preserve reasonable privacy for adjacent properties (unlike the proposed home shown above in dashed lines with an upper deck that overlooks a neighboring patio).
- 3.3.1. Screen patios, terraces, and active areas of adjacent properties through the position of buildings and the preservation of Significant Trees ([CMC 17.48.070](#)).
- 3.3.2. Locate and size windows and skylights to avoid privacy concerns on neighboring properties.
- 3.3.3. Locate and screen balconies and decks to avoid overlooking active indoor and outdoor use areas of adjacent properties.
- 3.3.4. Rooftop decks on top of an upper story are prohibited. Rooftop decks on single story homes must meet all guidelines and requirements for balconies and decks.
- 3.4. Minimize negative impacts to surrounding properties.
- 3.4.1. Fully integrate service equipment, including water heaters, Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers, communication connections, and trash receptacles, into the architectural design of the building.
- 3.4.2. Fully integrate utilities, including gas meters, electrical panels into the architectural design of the building. If full integration is not possible, group and shield them with architectural and landscape elements, such as cabinets, walls, fences, or plantings.
- 3.4.3. Outdoor entertainment facilities (e.g. grill, hottub, kitchen) must not be visible from the public right-of-way and must not have a negative privacy impact on neighboring properties. Never install outdoor televisions nor hot tubs above the ground level.



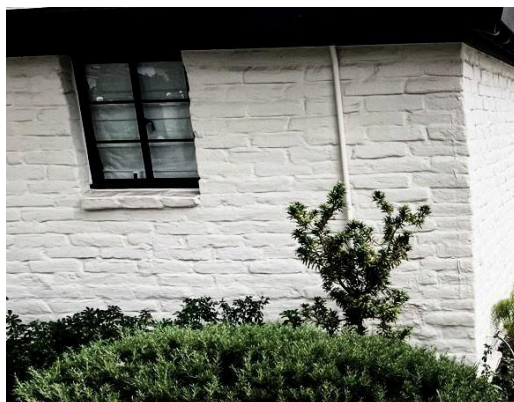
- 3.5. Vary the design of a new building from that of nearby and abutting properties (as shown by how the home above left, with its stone walls and roof ridge parallel to the street, varies from the neighboring home above right, with its wood shingles and roof ridge perpendicular to the street).
- 3.5.1. Provide variety in building materials along a block.
- 3.5.2. When using painted or otherwise coated surfaces, provide variety in building color along a block.



4. **RETAIN** and build upon Carmel's [documented](#) architectural heritage (including the examples above clockwise from top left by local masterworks in the traditions of Craftsman, Mission Revival, Fairytale, Organic, and Modern).



4.1. Preserve historic buildings and retain existing resources.



- 4.1.1. Retain historic buildings and their components. For example, restore original windows when possible (like the restored antique steel casement window in its original adobe home above).
- 4.1.2. For all new windows, use dual pane, compliant with [WUI standards](#).
- 4.1.3. Respect adjacent historic properties by preserving adequate, light, open space, and views of character-defining features of and around the structure.
- 4.1.4. Follow additional standards for properties recognized as having official historic significance, such as [CMC 17.32](#), the [Historic Context Statement](#), [Secretary of Interior's Standards](#), and [Historic Review Board](#) consideration.

4.2. Continue Carmel's tradition of architectural diversity.

- 4.2.1. To promote individual artistic expression, differentiate a new building's overall design from that of nearby and abutting buildings.



- 4.2.2. When reproducing [historic architecture](#), use the same materials and craftsmanship as those of the reproduced period (for example, the genuine, handcrafted, rolled wood shingle roof above). Regardless of architectural language, use materials of equivalent quality and craftsmanship to those of historic architecture. Use building materials and Class A roofing assemblies in compliance with [WUI standards](#) and [California Fire Code](#).



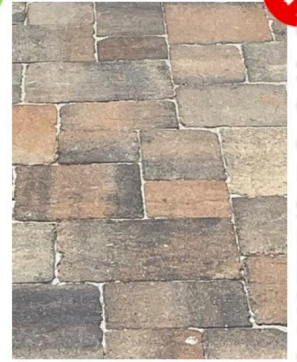
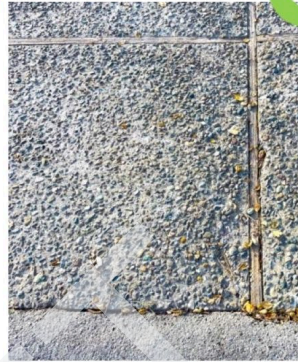
- 4.3. Use traditional, natural building materials or preferred alternatives (such as the structurally-stacked Carmel stone and the untreated, rough, fire-rated wood shingle siding , shown above). Use materials in compliance with [WUI standards](#) and [California Fire Code](#).
- 4.3.1. Do not use corrugated plastic roofs.



- 4.3.2. Choose materials that will form a natural patina over time or that can be maintained in their original condition (such as the unstained, weathered wood siding above).
- 4.3.3. When adding surface treatments, use matte finishes in either transparent or muted “earth tones.” Do not use highly polished treatments such as mirrored glass or reflective metals.
- 4.3.4. Apply materials using methods traditional to Carmel, for example, wood siding in shingles, horizontal clapboard, or board and batten, brick in its traditional modular dimension, or stucco in smooth or lightly textured finishes. Follow all fire rating requirements, per [PRC 4291](#).
- 4.4. Use manufactured materials according to tradition and to natural and

sustainable principles.

- 4.4.1. Apply manufactured materials in a manner that conveys a “human scale.” For example, use it in modules or dimensions that are similar to those used traditionally.
- 4.4.2. Use manufactured materials when they fit with the architectural style.



- 4.4.3. Select paving with muted colors and textures of natural materials , such as Carmel stone (above far left), granite cobblestone (above center left), brick, asphalt, natural-colored poured concrete (above center right), gravel, decomposed granite, permeable pavers, and mulch, keeping easily displaced materials on private property only, per [CMC 12.24.020.B](#).

Enhance.

Subordinate.

Fit.

Retain.

Design.

Detail.



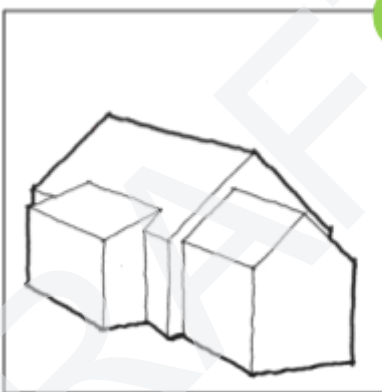
5. **DESIGN** every built structure with modesty and simplicity. *(such as the small-scaled vernacular cottage above with uncomplicated massing, natural materials, and simple roof and building forms).*



5.1. Design simple building forms, materials, and details



- 5.1.1. Design a building consistently, with the chosen design concept extending to all sides of the building and with no mixing of “architectural languages” (as shown above by the continuation throughout the entire building of the handcrafted brickwork).



- 5.1.2. Keep primary building volumes simple, using basic rectangular, L-, T-, or U-shaped layouts and limiting the number of subordinate volumes (as shown in the above building with a primary mass and only two smaller subordinate masses).



- 5.1.3. Avoid unnecessary visual complexity, such as “busy” building forms (as shown above by the five extra projections added to the building’s two subordinate volumes)



- 5.1.4. Organize building mass into authentic, realistic modules to reduce perceived size. Use restraint when introducing variation in “building planes.” Use building offsets only for clear purposes (*as shown above where the offset serves the clear purpose of centering the chimney in the room within*). Do not use small, purposeless offsets only for visual interest.
- 5.1.5. Use simple roof forms, for example gable and hip roofs. Limit the number of subordinate attachments such as dormers, to avoid a cluttered design.
- 5.1.6. Design garages to have a subdued character. Garages must have a simple, rectilinear form with materials, and colors that do not contrast with the main buildings.
- 5.2. Ensure that every building appears to be no more than two stories in height, as viewed from the public right-of-way. Garages, even sunken below grade, count as a story per [CMC 17.70.020](#).
- 5.2.1. Locate two story elements in such a way that they do not negatively impact surrounding properties.
- 5.2.2. Make any detached garage one story, with its plate height not to exceed that of the ground floor plate height of the main house.



- 5.3. Ensure that the scale of the building forms and elements is consistent with its architectural style (as shown above by the understated standard dimensions of the doors, windows, and story-heights in this vernacular style building).
- 5.3.1. Design buildings using [Carmel historic styles](#) to be an appropriate scale for their style.
- 5.3.2. Design plate heights in such a way that they do not negatively impact surrounding properties.
- 5.4. Use building details to provide interest but not to exaggerate the scale of the building.

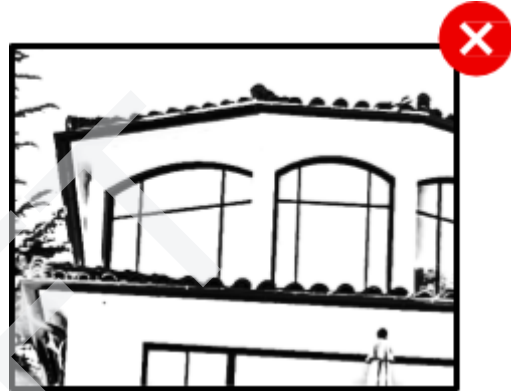
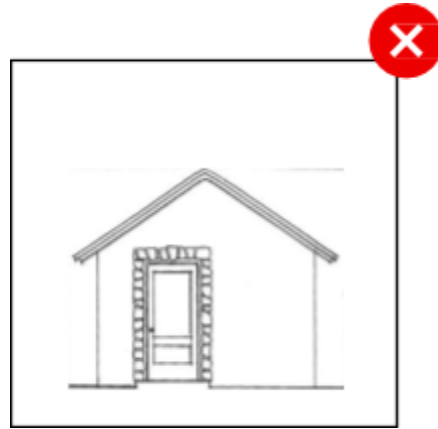
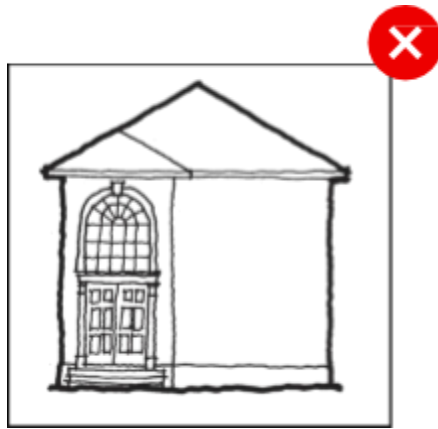


- 5.4.1. Add details to relieve blank surfaces and achieve a scale compatible with the building's forms and its architecture (such as shown above where the half-timbering breaks up the wall while fitting the architecture).



- 5.4.2. To reduce scale, use appropriately sized building elements such as overhangs, dormers, porches, entries, doors, and windows (*like the appropriately small and architecturally integrated fenestration on the Prairie Style home shown above*).

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- 5.4.3. Keep openings subordinate in scale to the building. Do not use grand, oversized entryways, windows, or doors or ostentatious design treatments (such as the enormous entry door and clerestory window combination shown above left or the extraneous rock border emphasizing the door above right)
- 5.4.4. When reproducing historic architecture, limit the span of any openings to that which was possible with the construction methods of that earlier era (as shown in the above left Mission Style home by the very thick areas of stucco surrounding a small arched window, which accurately reflects the constraints of mission construction; and not as shown by the very thin stucco areas between oversized windows above left, which could not have been built using mission construction methods).
- 5.4.5. In traditional architecture, avoid large, uninterrupted plate glass windows facing the street.
- 5.4.6. Limit the use of specialty windows that add to building bulk to only one bay or oriel type window visible from the street. Avoid street-facing specialty windows altogether if this would create a repeating pattern with adjacent structures.
- 5.5. Keep the overall color scheme muted earth tones that blend with the forest palette.
 - 5.5.1. Limit the use of bright colors to key accent features, such as an entry door.
 - 5.5.2. Avoid high contrast color schemes.



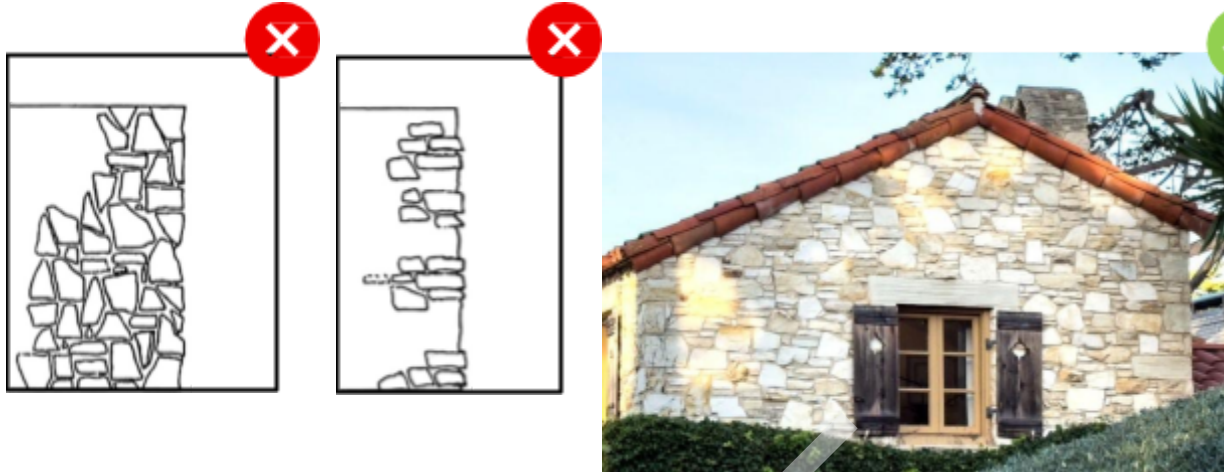
6. **DETAIL** every property authentically and consistently
(like the homes above with wood detailing that is authentic to the architecture.)



- 6.1. Use building materials and elements in a manner that conveys a sense of authenticity.
- 6.1.1. Design architectural details in a manner that conveys a sense of craftsmanship.
- 6.1.2. Avoid non-functional or purely decorative details. Do not use fake building elements such as dummy chimneys, doors, windows, or shutters. For example, size any shutters so that they would cover their entire window, whether or not they are in active use.



- 6.1.3. Use simple details that are or appear to be true structural elements, such as stacked stone foundations, wood beams, or exposed rafter tails and beams (like the structural roof beams protruding beyond the house wall and the roof above). Do not use details inauthentic to the architectural style or that appear non-structural, non-functioning, or applied as superficial elements, such as wall “accents.” All building materials must be class A, compliant with [WUI standards](#) and [California Fire Code](#).
- 6.1.4. On multi-paned windows and doors, use either true dividers or dividers that create the appearance of true dividers.



- 6.1.5. Do not “float” stone above lighter materials or use it purely decoratively, such as framed just around windows or doors, or randomly clustered on corners, walls or chimneys. Whether on a building or a landscape element, stack stone traditionally so that it appears or actually is, structurally load-bearing (as above right, not wallpapered or sprinkled on as above left).



- 6.1.6. Use a “hierarchy” of building materials, with heavier coarser materials below lighter materials (such as the wood clapboard over stacked stone shown above left or the vertical wood siding and glass over the poured concrete foundation above right).
- 6.1.7. Detail new and/or manufactured materials in ways authentic to their own composition.
- 6.2. Use building materials or features in a consistent manner.
- 6.2.1. Do not stop wall materials at corners. Use design details and surface materials throughout the full exterior of the building. Do not apply special materials or design treatments to the street façade only.



- 6.2.2. Use only one primary material for all building walls with any additional materials clearly subordinated to foundations and the like (as in the above home, clearly identifiable as “stucco”, with only one secondary material used only on separate features such as the foundation, chimney, and addition).
- 6.2.3. Make window and door styles, materials, and finishes uniform throughout a design.



- 6.3. Make architectural details integral elements of the overall building design concept (such as the corner-mitered glass shown above, which by eliminating an expected structural member, reinforces the lightness and floating of the roof).



- 6.3.1. Use window and door proportions, sizes, styles, and materials consistent with and accurate for the architectural style of the building (as shown above left by the small punched windows as seen in the Mission Style and as shown above right by the use of full glazing rather than actual “windows” as seen in Modern styles).

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- 6.3.2. Integrate the primary entrance with the overall design of the house (as shown above by the recessed porch of the same material as the overall house, tucked subtly under a slight asymmetrical flare of the roofline and with arched openings of similar height to nearby window openings).



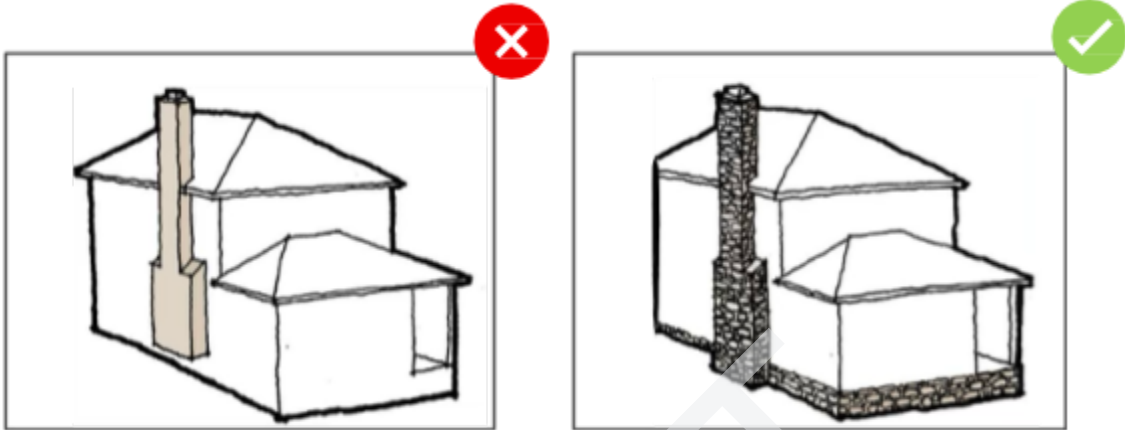
- 6.3.3. Craft a garage door either to provide visual interest (like the quirky, handmade double doors above), to recede completely into the materials and colors of the building wall, or orient it so as not to face the street.



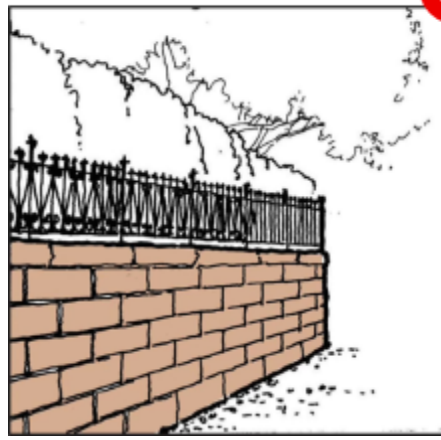
- 6.3.4. Blend any skylights, their size, shape, placement, number, and framing, into the overall roof and building design (like the glass ridge integrated into the structural roof members

above). Ensure that skylights do not appear random. Do not use unintegrated high profile, domed, or pyramidal units.

- 6.3.5. Design a balcony or deck to be subordinate in scale and proportion to the house, while using materials and details appropriate to the overall building design.



- 6.3.6. Locate and proportion a traditional chimney and its cap to integrate into the overall building design. Make a chimney attached to the side of a building appear to be self supporting (as shown above right where the chimney material sits on the ground and clearly integrates with the foundation material), not “floating” above the ground or foundation (as shown above left).



6.3.7. Choose roof materials and installation details accurate to the architectural style of the building. Do not exceed maximum allowable roof heights [CMC 17.10.30.B](#).

6.3.8. Use Class A fire-rated materials for fences that fit the architectural style of the site (as shown above left) and not ornate wrought iron or chain link (as shown above right).



6.3.9. Integrate any garden wall with the building architecture and materials, using matte-finished native stone, river rock, brick, or plain-textured plastered masonry (as shown above left where the low garden wall is of the exact same color, dimension, and pattern of adobe brick as the home itself). Do not use unfinished concrete or concrete block (as shown by the store-bought industrial retainage units above right)

6.3.10. Ensure that an arbor does not dominate the street. Instead, integrate it into the fence or wall design using consistent materials. Incorporate vines or other landscaping to blend it into the environment.

- 6.3.11. Distinguish a gate from the adjoining fence or wall with crafted or individualized details, while maintaining filtered views into the property.
- 6.3.12. Locate vehicle gates at or behind the street-facing setbacks.
- 6.3.13. Never use gate posts or columns that are monumental or out-of-scale with the building design nor stone columns that are not integrated into other stone elements. Keep posts and columns the same height as their adjacent fence or wall.
- 6.3.14. Use house identification devices, such as name and number signage that is subordinate to and appropriate to the architecture and in conformance with all applicable requirements including [CMC 17.40.060](#) and [CMC 15.55.100](#).

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APPENDICES

Design Guidelines



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PREFERRED MATERIALS

Planting & Building



PREFERRED PLANTING MATERIALS

from pages 140-143 of Coastal California's Living Legacy: The Monterey Pine Forest

Scientific Name

Common Name

TREES

<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	big-leaved maple
<i>Acer negundo</i>	box elder
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	madrone
<i>Aesculus californica</i>	California buckeye
<i>Cupressus goveniana</i> ssp. <i>goviana</i>	Gowen
cypress <i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i>	Monterey cypress
<i>Myrica californica</i>	Pacific wax myrtle
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	coast live oak
<i>Pinus muricata</i>	bishop pine
<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Monterey pine
<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	sycamore
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	afroyo willow
<i>Salix scouleriana</i>	Scouler's willow
<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	blue elderberry

SHRUBS

<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>	chamise
<i>Arctostaphylos tomentosa</i> ssp. <i>bracteosa</i>	Monterey manzanita (shaggy-barked)
<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri</i>	Hooker's manzanita
<i>Arctostaphylos pumila</i>	sandmat manzanita
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	California sagebrush
<i>Baccharis douglasii</i>	Douglas's baccharis
<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	coyote brush
<i>Berberis pinnata</i>	California barberry
<i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i> var. <i>rigidus</i>	Monterey ceanothus
<i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i>	blue blossom
<i>Chrysopsis chrysophylla</i> var. <i>minor</i>	chinquapin
<i>Corethrogyne filaginifolia</i>	branching beach
aster <i>Cornus sericea</i> ssp. <i>occidentalis</i>	western red dogwood
<i>Ericameria fasciculata</i>	Eastwood's golden fleece
<i>Eriodictyon californicum</i>	yerba santa
<i>Eriogonum elongatum</i>	long-stem buckwheat
<i>Eriogonum latifolium</i>	coast buckwheat
<i>Eriogonum parvifolium</i>	seacliff buckwheat
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	salal
<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	toyon
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	cream bush, oceanspray
<i>Lepechinia calycina</i>	pitcher sage
<i>Lonicera hispidula</i> var. <i>vacillans</i>	hairy honeysuckle
<i>Lotus scoparius</i>	deerweed
<i>Lupinus albus</i>	silver bush lupine
<i>Lupinus arboreus</i>	tree lupine
<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>	sticky monkey flower
<i>Oemleria cerasiformis</i>	oso berry
<i>Rhamnus californica</i>	coffeeberry
<i>Rhamnus crocea</i>	redberry
<i>Ribes divaricatum</i>	creek gooseberry
<i>Ribes malvaceum</i>	chaparral currant
<i>Ribes sanguineum</i> var. <i>glutinosum</i>	pink-flowering currant
<i>Ribes speciosum</i>	tuchsia-flowered gooseberry
<i>Rosa californica</i>	California wild rose
<i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	wood rose
<i>Rosa pinetorum</i>	pine rose
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	black sage
<i>Salvia spathacea</i>	crimson sage
<i>Solanum douglasii</i>	Douglas' nightshade
<i>Symphoricarpos mollis</i>	creeeping snowberry
<i>Symphoricarpos rivularis</i>	common snowberry
<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>	poison oak
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>	huckleberry

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	yarrow
<i>Agoseris grandiflora</i>	mountain dandelion
<i>Alliaria hickmanii</i>	Hickman's onion
<i>Arnica discolor</i>	rayless arnica
<i>Aster radulinus</i>	rough-leaved aster
<i>Calochortus albus</i>	white globe lily, fairy lantern
<i>Calochortus luteus</i>	yellow mariposa lily
<i>Calochortus uniflorus</i>	large-flowered star tulip
<i>Calystegia macrostegia</i> ssp. <i>cyclostegia</i>	coast morning-glory
<i>Castilleja affinis</i>	coast paintbrush
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i>	soaproot
<i>Claytonia perfoliata</i>	miner's lettuce
<i>Cordylanthus rigid</i> ssp. <i>littoralis</i>	seaside bird's-beak
<i>Cynoglossom grande</i>	hound's tongue
<i>Dichelostemma capitatum</i>	blue dicks

Scientific Name

Common Name

<i>Epilobium ciliatum</i>	California willow-herb
<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	California poppy
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	wood strawberry
<i>Fritillaria affinis</i>	checker lily, mission bells
<i>Galium californicum</i>	California bedstraw
<i>Horkelia cuneata</i>	wedge-leaved horkelia
<i>Iris douglasiana</i>	Douglas iris
<i>Lomatium parvifolium</i>	small-leaved lomatium
<i>Lotus formosissimus</i>	bicolored lotus, witch's teeth
<i>Lotis stipularis</i>	stipulate lotus
<i>Madia elegans</i>	common madia
<i>Madia madioides</i>	woodland madia
<i>Osmorhiza chilensis</i>	sweet cicely
<i>Pedicularis densiflora</i>	Indian warrior
<i>Piperia elegans</i>	elegant piperia
<i>Piperia elongata</i>	tall fein-orchid
<i>Piperia yadonii</i>	Yadon's rein-orchid
<i>Perideridia gairdneri</i>	Gairdner's yampah
<i>Polygala californica</i>	California milkwort
<i>Potentilla hickmanii</i>	Hickman's cinquefoil
<i>Rubus ursinus</i>	California blackberry
<i>Sanicula crassicaulis</i>	gambleweed
<i>Satureja douglasii</i>	yerba buena
<i>Sidalcea malvaeflora</i>	checkerbloom
<i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i>	blue-eyed grass
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	fat solomon
<i>Solidago californica</i>	California goldenrod
<i>Spiranthes romanzoffiana</i>	hooded ladies' tresses
<i>Trifolium polyodon</i>	Pacific Grove clover
<i>Trifolium trichocalyx</i>	Monterey clover
<i>Trillium chloropetalum</i>	giant trillium
<i>Triteleia ixioides</i>	pretty face
<i>Xerophyllum tenax</i>	bear grass
<i>Zigadenus fremontii</i>	Fremont's star lily

FERNS

<i>Adiantum aleuticum</i>	five-finger fern
<i>Adiantum jordanii</i>	California maiden-hair
<i>Dryopteris arguta</i>	wood fern
<i>Pellaea andromedaefolia</i>	coffee fern
<i>Pityrogramma triangularis</i>	goldback fern
<i>Polypodium californicum</i>	California polypody
<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	sword fern

GRASSES, SEDGES AND RUSHES

<i>Agrostis pallens</i>	leafy bent-grass
<i>Bromus carymus</i>	California brome
<i>Calamagrostis nutkaensis</i>	Pacific reed-grass
<i>Carex barbarae</i>	Santa Barbara sedge
<i>Carex brevicaulis</i>	short-stemmed sedge
<i>Carex obnupta</i>	slough sedge
<i>Carex praegracilis</i>	clustered sedge
<i>Carex tumulicula</i>	foothill sedge
<i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>	tall cyperus
<i>Danthonia californica</i>	California oatgrass
<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>	tufted hair-grass
<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	Western ryegrass
<i>Festuca californica</i>	California fescue
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	red fescue
<i>Juncus balticus</i>	wire rush, Baltic rush
<i>Juncus bufonius</i>	common toad rush
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	common rush
<i>Juncus falcatus</i>	sickle-leaved rush
<i>Juncus occidentalis</i>	Western rush
<i>Juncus patens</i>	spreading rush
<i>Juncus xiphioides</i>	iris-leaved rush
<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	junegrass
<i>Leymus condensatus</i>	giant ryegrass
<i>Leymus triticoides</i>	beardless ryegrass
<i>Luzula comosa</i>	common wood rush
<i>Melica californica</i>	western melica
<i>Melica imperfecta</i>	Coast-Range melica
<i>Nassella lepida</i>	foothill needlegrass
<i>Nassella pulchra</i>	purple needlegrass
<i>Poa secunda</i>	pine bluegrass
<i>Scirpus cernuus</i>	low club rush
<i>Scirpus americanus</i>	three square

PREFERRED BUILDING MATERIALS

MATERIAL	NOTES	USES
NATURAL		
wood	<i>reclaimed or FSC sustainable redwood or cedar or fir</i>	posts, beams, siding, trim, un-clad windows, doors, garage doors, fireproofed roof shingles or shakes,
bark	<i>reclaimed or FSC sustainable redwood or cedar or fir</i>	siding, roofing
bamboo	<i>sustainably cultivated</i>	flooring, siding, structural panels
cork	<i>sustainably cultivated</i>	flooring, siding, structural panels
living plants	<i>drought-tolerant, native species (see Preferred Planting Materials)</i>	walls, roofs
stone	<i>local, dry-set or mortared stacked in dry-set structurally-feasible patterns only</i>	mudstone/golden granite for walls, foundations, driveways, Carmel stone for walls, patios, walkways
earth	<i>locally sourced cob or rammed soils/sands</i>	walls
brick	<i>locally-sourced clay or adobe</i>	walls, patios, walkways
bale	<i>locally sourced straw</i>	walls, insulation
tile	<i>genuine ceramic, clay, or concrete</i>	mono-chromatic for roofs, patios, walkways multi-chromatic for decorative accents
basic metal	<i>uncoated, naturally-aging zinc, bronze, brass, aluminum</i>	roofing, gutters, hardware, cladding for deconstructable/recyclable wood windows
glass	<i>low-E, clear, or evenly sandblasted, non-mirrored, non-tinted</i>	windows and other glazed openings
sealing oil	<i>penetrating, non-peeling, non-VOC, pure tung, linseed, hemp, teak oils</i>	exposed wood treatment, when natural aging is undesired
MANUFACTURED		
poured concrete	<i>artistically-crafted in natural or in uniform, integrated color with only non-uniform, handcrafted textures (as with exposed aggregate or genuine wood formwork)</i>	walls, patios, walkways, pavers
cast concrete	<i>integrated, uniform color, and finish without stamped, faux "natural" textures</i>	walls, patios, walkways, pavers, roof tiles
alt-crete	<i>e.g. ashcrete, sandcrete, grasscrete, woodcrete, hempcrete: poured or cast, maintain original surface pattern and color</i>	walls, patios, walkways, pavers, roof tiles
fiber cement	<i>e.g. Hardiboard, Equitone smooth texture only, no mimicry of natural materials</i>	siding
stucco	<i>uncoated, non-pigmented, smooth textured</i>	wall coating
advanced brick	<i>e.g. wool brick, shell brick</i>	walls, patios, walkways
advanced metal	<i>steel, galvanized steel, stainless steel, Cor-Ten steel, Zinalume, Galvalume, earth-toned anodized aluminum</i>	slim-profile windows, siding, landscape elements, standing seam roofing with non-corrugated flat panels, devoid of ribbing

advanced wood	<i>FSC sustainable: mass timber, industrially-pickled/acetylated, pre-charred/shou-sugi-ban, thermally-modified, bio-based fiberboard super-wood</i>	posts, beams, siding, trim, un-clad windows, doors, garage doors, fireproofed roof shingles or shakes,
stain	<i>penetrating, naturally-fading, rather than peeling, monochrome, earthtone pigment</i>	exposed wood treatment, when added color is desired

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GLOSSARY

Selected Definitions



GLOSSARY

Architectural Elements: Individual physical features and design components of a building that contribute to its appearance, character

Compound or Estate: Large or combined multi-structure developments that disrupt the open-space character of traditional small lot sizes

Earth Tones: Muted, non-reflective surface colors and finishes, such as subtle pigments, required for exterior materials to blend structures harmoniously into Carmel's surrounding forest palette

Garden Level: Floor area situated partially or fully below grade.

Green Roofs: Living, vegetated roof surfaces designed as natural stormwater management devices that absorb rainfall runoff and visually blend built structures into the forest

Human Scale: The size and proportion of architectural elements in relation to human size and use of the space. Elements should be appropriately scaled and not excessively large or visually dominant.

Low Scale Plants: Low-growing native vegetation, ground covers, and low shrubs specified in landscape plans to complement the forest canopy without dominating the natural setting

Retention Areas: On-site vegetated drainage features or basins designed to capture stormwater flow and prevent runoff onto neighboring properties

Tire Track Paving Strips: A driveway design strategy that uses narrow parallel paved tracks for vehicle wheels rather than a fully paved driveway to minimize overall hard surface coverage

**PLEASE NOTE:
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Enhance.

Subordinate.

Fit.

Retain.

Design.

Detail.

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