



## GUIDE TO DESIGN REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR **SINGLE FAMILY HOMES**

### **PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT, A DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION IS REQUIRED FOR:**

- **ALL NEW SINGLE FAMILY HOMES, & ADDITIONS TO EXISTING HOMES, *WHERE THE NATURAL GRADE OF THE PERMIT SITE UNDER THE PROPOSED STRUCTURE HAS AN AVERAGE SLOPE OF TEN (10) PERCENT OR GREATER.***
- **OTHER PERMIT SITES, AS REQUIRED BY A CONDITION OF APPROVAL FOR THE PERMIT SITE'S SUBDIVISION, OR IF THE PERMIT SITE IS IN EITHER A VISUALLY SIGNIFICANT OR GEOLOGIC HAZARD AREA (as defined in Section 22.34.030)**

### **STEPS FOR DESIGN REVIEW APPLICANTS:**

#### **Step I. Pre-Application meeting with staff:**

The pre-application meeting with staff is intended to familiarize the applicant with the zoning regulations and design guidelines that apply to the building site. It is also a chance for applicants to explore the feasibility of a concept before a great deal of time and money are spend on design drawings. All that is needed for a pre-application meeting are the following:

- A conceptual site plan, showing property boundaries, easements that may restrict building placement, existing slopes, and proposed home placement.
- Rough sketches of proposed house, preferably with a floor plan and elevations
- Any photos of similarly styled homes that illustrate the applicant's design concept.

**SHOULD I PROCEED?** Upon its review of the pre-application material, staff can advise the applicant as to whether the concept is likely to be supported by staff. Other applications for exceptions to the normally required zoning standards (i.e. a variance for a reduced setback from a property line, or a use permit to exceed the normally allowed height) can also be discussed.

**Generally, concepts that significantly vary from zoning standards or the existing character of a neighborhood homes are less likely to be supported.**

**WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?** Martinez is largely built out, and the few remaining vacant lots often pose challenges to an applicant. Some lots will require the construction of (streets and utilities) before a home can be built. Others will require the reconstruction of landslides in conjunction with neighboring property owners. As part of the pre-application meeting, staff can advise you of the additional studies that an applicant may need to conduct, and at what stage a Design Review application would be prudent.

**WILL I NEED PROFESSIONAL HELP?** Applicants wishing to make a Design Review application are strongly encouraged to hire a professional architect or building designer to prepare such drawings. In addition, some application drawings for hillside lots must be prepared by a civil engineer, or equally qualified professional:

**APPLICANT'S SITE PLAN AND SECTIONAL DRAWINGS WILL NEED TO BE PREPARED BY A CIVIL ENGINEER, IF THE PROPOSAL REQUIRES**

- any retaining wall of 3' or more in height
- grading of more than 50 cubic yards (an area of approximately 36' by 36', one foot deep)

## **Step II. Preparing Design Review application materials**

**NOTE:** All required drawings must be to an identified scale (e.g. 1" = 10', and/or ¼" = 1'), and all drawings must be consistent with each other (e.g. height and locations of retaining walls must be the same in all three views: site plan, elevation and sectional).

### **PART 1 - UNDERSTANDING YOUR SITE'S EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

- (a) **Title Report:** Provide copy of either preliminary title report, or copy of title report given to you at time of purchase. The title report helps to document both the legal status of the property and to identify any easements that could affect building placement. Such title reports should generally be no more than one year old.
- (b) **Site Plan, existing conditions:** Provide a site plan with the following information. A plan by a licensed land surveyor is not generally needed, but could be required if there are discrepancies in the information provided:
1. Scale, north arrow and vicinity map.
  2. Provide exterior boundary lines or property limits, indicating easements
  3. Label and dimensions of adjacent streets and rights-of way (public and/or private)
  4. Show location of existing utility lines (e.g. sewer and water), and identify service provider (e.g. Central Contra Costa Sanitation District)
  5. Show approximate location of adjoining structures
  6. Show existing topography in two foot contour intervals
  7. Show existing structures on property
  8. Illustrate trunk and dripline of any trees (6.5" or greater in trunk diameter) that are within or adjacent to the area proposed for development. Note

type of tree(s) on site plan. Removal of, or work adjacent to, trees protected by the City's Tree Preservation, Protection and Removal Regulations (MMC Chapter 8.12). Based on the type of trees and/or construction to be proposed, staff may require the submittal of a tree report from an Certified Arborist to document steps to preserve trees and/or appropriate replacements.

- (c) **Soils Information:** Most Design Review applications require a soils report to provide as to the suitability of the site for construction. The level of soils investigation needed varies due to both the nature of the property and the scale of development being proposed. Generally, the construction of a new home on hillside lot will require a full soils report, and a peer review of that report by the City's geotechnical consultant. (at the applicant's expense). Please contact the Engineering Division at (925) 372-3599.

## PART 2 – PRESENTING YOUR PROPOSED DESIGN

- (a) **Site Plan, proposed conditions:** Provide a site plan, using the “existing conditions” site plan as base sheet, with the following additional information. (NOTE: As stated above, any plan proposing any retaining wall of 3' or more in height, or grading of more than 50 cubic yards (an area of approximately 36' by 36', one foot deep) shall be prepared by a civil engineer, or equivalent):
1. Illustrate the normally required minimum setback (per applicable zoning district requirement) as measured from each property line and/or limit of right-of-way
  2. Show proposed building(s), providing a dimension, at the closest point, to each property line and/or limit of right-of-way. All porch posts, raised decks and similar features shall be shown as part of the building footprint, and be considered as a part of the building in calculating the proposed “site coverage.”
  3. Show proposed retaining walls(s), providing a dimension, at the closest point, to each property line and/or limit of right-of-way. Provide “top-of-wall/bottom-of-wall) call outs with every 1 foot change in wall height. Indicate decorative wall treatment (if applicable), and/or provide reference to landscape plan.
  4. Illustrate any proposed grading of the property, with two foot contour intervals, and spot elevations as appropriate. Illustrate all areas to be paved, such as driveways, walks and patios and provide notes on conceptual drainage design. Note any decorative paving treatment (if applicable), and/or provide reference to landscape plan.
  5. Indicate trees to be removed and trees to be retained. For trees to be retained, indicate the trees' trunks and driplines.
- (b) **Site Sections:** Provide a minimum of 2 cross sections through the entire property, one from street to rear property line, the other from side to side property lines (additional sections may be required due to complexity of lot and or proposed home). Sections shall show proposed grading, retaining walls and mass of proposed home. Maximum allowed building height

(typically 25' above existing grade) shall be clearly labeled.

(c) **Architectural drawings**, illustrating:

1. Floor plans, with overall exterior dimensions
2. Roof plans, accurately showing roof configuration and labeling app proposed roof pitches (e.g. 6:12).
3. Exterior elevation views of all sides of the proposed home, with all architectural features shown and labeled (such as window trim, siding materials etc.) and dimensions showing building height.
4. Proposed materials and colors, with an accompanying material and color board.

(d) **Conceptual landscape plan**, using the proposed conditions site plan (which shows proposed grades and retaining walls) as a base, and illustrating:

1. Existing trees to be retained, and replacement trees, if protected trees are to be removed.
2. Proposed street and accent trees
3. Schematic lawn and planting bed layout; vocabulary of ground cover and shrub plantings to be used
4. Decorative treatments of proposed fences and retaining walls, if applicable.

### Step III. Submitting formal application package

To initiate your application, the following is required:

- 1) **“Application for Development Review” form.** Only one form is needed when applying to a variance and/or use permit concurrently.
- 2) **Applications fee(s).** (list of current fees provided with application form)
- 3) **Five copies of the drawings described in Step II above (folded to approximately 8½ x 11 size).** These will be reviewed by staff for completeness, and if they are found to be incomplete, you will be notified of what additions are/or corrections are needed to complete the package. You may be asked to provide additional check sets for completeness review. The number of complete plan sets is determined by the hearing body (Zoning Administrator or Planning Commission) that will act on your application, and staff will inform you, once your application is deemed complete, how many sets are needed.