



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN SEEKING APPROVAL FOR A NEW SINGLE-FAMILY HOME

QUESTION #1 WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP?

- **REQUEST A PRE-APPLICATION MEETING WITH STAFF:** The pre-application meeting is intended to familiarize the applicant with the zoning regulations and design guidelines that apply to the building site. It is also a chance to explore the feasibility of a concept before investing time and money on design drawings.

QUESTION #2 SHOULD I PROCEED?

- **CHECKING THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPMENT:** Upon review of the project, staff can advise the applicant as to whether the concept is likely to be supported by staff. Exceptions to the required zoning standards (i.e. a variance for a reduced setback, or a use permit to exceed height) can also be discussed. As part of the pre-application meeting, staff can advise you of additional studies that may be needed, and at what stage a Design Review application would be prudent.

QUESTION #3 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.
- Drawing prepared by a **CIVIL ENGINEER** will be required for hillside projects where significant changes to the site's topography are being proposed, such as retaining walls of 3' or more in height, or grading more than 50 cubic yards.
- Assuming your design is approved, a **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** will be needed for building permit plans (in most cases), depending on the complexity of the project.

QUESTION #4 WHAT DO MY DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION DRAWINGS NEED TO SHOW?

A. "EXISTING CONDITIONS" SITE PLAN SHOWING:

1. Scale, north arrow and vicinity map.
2. Provide exterior boundary lines or property limits, indicating easements
3. Label and dimension 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 location of existing structures on the lot, and structures on adjacent properties
6. Show existing topography in two foot contour intervals

7. Show type, trunk and dripline of any trees (6.5" or greater in trunk diameter) that are within or adjacent to the area proposed for development. The City's Tree Preservation, Protection and Removal Regulations (MMC Chapter 8.12) may apply to your project, and you may need to submit a tree preservation/replacement plan prepared by a Certified Arborist

B. "PROPOSED CONDITIONS" SITE PLAN SHOWING:

1. Show proposed building(s), (including porches, decks and garages) with distance to each property line and/or limit of right-of-way.
2. Show proposed retaining walls(s), with "top-of-wall/bottom-of-wall" call outs with every 1 foot change in wall height.
3. 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.
4. Indicate trees to be removed and trees to be retained. For trees to be retained, indicate the trees' trunks and driplines.

C. SITE SECTIONS:

1. Provide a minimum of 2 cross sections through the entire property, (front to rear/side to side) showing proposed grading, retaining walls and mass of proposed home. Maximum allowed building height (typically 25' above existing grade) shall be clearly labeled. (additional sections may be required due to complexity of lot and or proposed home).

D. ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS, illustrating:

1. Floor plans, with overall exterior dimensions
2. Roof plans, accurately showing roof configuration and labeling all 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.

E. CONCEPTUAL LANDSCAPE PLAN, illustrating:

1. Trees to be retained, and replacement trees (if protected trees are removed).
2. Proposed planting plan, showing all trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines and/or lawn areas, indicating size and irrigation type to be used.
3. Decorative treatments of proposed fences, paving and retaining walls, if any.

QUESTION #5 IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I MAY NEED?

1. Generally, building a new home on a 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.
2. A PROPERTY BOUNDARY SURVEY prepared by a licensed surveyor is not generally needed, but could be required if there are discrepancies in the information provided: