

City of Albany Planning and Zoning Code Section 20.100.050 – Design Review

D. Standards of Review. The reviewing authority shall evaluate all applications for new construction, additions or modifications in terms of their adherence to the following standards, to the extent they are applicable to the project under review.

1. General Standards. The following standards are applicable to all projects for which design review is required:

a. General Plan. New development and the alteration of existing development is consistent with applicable goals, policies and programs of the Albany General Plan.

b. Design Guidelines. Residential projects shall be reviewed for conformance to the Residential Design Guidelines, and projects in the SPC District along San Pablo Avenue for conformance to the San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines.

c. Site Planning. The planning of the site creates an internal sense of order, and is visually and functionally harmonious with the surroundings of the project site; the design provides a desirable environment for occupants and visitors. The design deals appropriately with any constraints on development of the site.

d. Access. Access and circulation are safe and convenient for pedestrians and vehicles. Parking facilities are provided sufficient for the use, consistent with the requirements of Section 20.32. Where required, access for persons with disabilities and facilities for bicycles are included.

e. Architecture. The architectural design is of high quality and is appropriate to the function of the project; the surroundings of the project site are considered in determining the size, massing and bulk of proposed buildings; materials and colors used are visually harmonious with the surrounding environment, including natural land forms and vegetation; where appropriate, the design promotes harmonious transitions between different land uses.

f. Landscape Design. The design of landscape improvements is coordinated with architectural design; plant materials are selected with respect to levels of maintenance effort appropriate to the project, with consideration of the need to conserve water.

g. Natural Features. The project design preserves trees and other natural features to the greatest possible extent, avoiding indiscriminate clearing of property and excessive and unsightly grading, particularly on steep slopes.

h. Signs. The design and location of signs and their materials and colors are consistent with the character and scale of the buildings to which they are attached or which are located on the same site, and with the character of the street upon which they front; signs are visually harmonious with surrounding development; signs are consistent with provisions of Section 20.36, Signs.

City of Albany Planning and Zoning Code Section 20.100.050 – Design Review

i. Coordination of Design Details. Details of the site plan, architectural and landscape designs, signage and exterior illumination are coordinated for an attractive and harmonious setting. Details of the floor plans and other interior planning are coordinated with other design elements to the extent that these interior elements may affect exterior appearance or the potential use of structures. Elements such as mechanical equipment, delivery areas and refuse storage are screened from public view.

j. Retention and Maintenance of Buildings. The project design process has considered the maintenance, rehabilitation and improvement of existing buildings and structures.

k. Solid Waste. The project design provides adequate space and facilities for the storage and handling of solid waste and recyclable materials, consistent with the County's Waste Management Program.

l. Privacy. Attention has been given in the design of the project to avoid significant interference with the privacy enjoyed by residential occupants of adjacent properties. This shall include consideration of the locations of windows, public entries, parking and service areas, among other elements. Appropriate solutions may include the use of devices such as landscape screening, fences, or obscure glass. The Planning and Zoning Commission should approach solutions with an intent to balance the respective benefits and burdens of the project and the residents of adjacent properties.

2. Additional Specific Standards for Single-Family Residential Additions. The following standards shall apply in addition to those listed in paragraph A. above.

a. The addition is consistent with the scale, massing and other architectural features of the existing structure. Factors such as roofline, trim details, window type and placement and other design elements which affect exterior appearance will ensure compatibility with the structure to which the addition will be made. The mass of the resulting building has been considered in relation to the visual impact from the street, lot size and the placement on the lot, as well as the compatibility of the project with adjacent structures and integration with the surrounding neighborhood.

b. The bulk of the project is appropriate to the site and its surroundings, in that the ratio of gross square footage to site area is consistent with criteria set forth for the R-1 District in the Table 2.A., Site Regulations by District (Residential), subsection 20.24.020.

c. Off-street parking spaces are provided to the property to account for the increased living area as required by subsection 20.28.020A.

City of Albany Planning and Zoning Code Section 20.100.050 – Design Review

E. Findings for Design Review Approval. A design review application may be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Community Development Director, if, on the basis of the application and the evidence submitted, the Commission or the Community Development Director makes the following *findings*, insofar as they are applicable to the particular case.

1. *The project conforms to the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, applicable design guidelines adopted by the City of Albany, and all applicable provisions of this Chapter.*

2. *Approval of project design is consistent with the purpose and intent of this section.*

3. *Approval of the project is in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare.*

4. *The project is in substantial compliance with applicable general and specific Standards for Review stated in subsection 20.100.050D.*

5. *In approving any project on San Pablo Avenue the Planning and Zoning Commission or the Community Development Director shall further find that the City-adopted San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines have been considered and incorporated in the project. The Planning and Zoning Commission may grant exceptions to the criteria, provided one (1) or more of the following findings are made:*

a. *There are specified special circumstances applicable to the property, such as size, shape, location of existing structures, or traffic conditions, which cause practical difficulties in the application of the design guidelines.*

b. *The Planning and Zoning Commission recognizes that the proposal exhibits a superior level of design which exceeds the approved criteria.*

c. *With the granting of an exception, development on the site will achieve the overall purposes of the design guidelines, and the development will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to persons or property in the vicinity.*

(Ord. No. 04-09)