

Plan Implementation

Subdivisions



City Hall * 200 N. Spring Street, Room 721 * Los Angeles, CA90012



January 29, 2014

TO: All Interested Parties

FROM: Michael J. LoGrande 
Advisory Agency

SUBJECT: **ADVISORY AGENCY POLICY
SMALL LOT ORDINANCE**

Introduction

Established in 2005 in LAMC Section 12.22-C,27, the Small Lot Ordinance allows for the subdivision of underutilized land in multi-family and commercial areas into fee-simple homes. Intended as infill development and a smart-growth alternative to traditional, suburban style single-family subdivisions, small lot homes would have smaller lot areas with compact building footprints and reduced yard setbacks, street frontages, passageways between buildings, and open space.

As such, small lot subdivisions create a unique set of design challenges and spatial complexities with regards to massing, height, circulation, and transitional areas from adjacent properties. Small Lot Design Guidelines provide an opportunity to address these complexities while also promoting the design and creation of small lot housing with neighborhood compatibility for consistency with applicable General and Specific Plans and addressing site organization and urban form, setbacks and building transitions, parking and driveways, building design and materials, and landscaping and access.

Small Lot Design Guidelines – Advisory Agency Policy

All small lot subdivisions filed after February 1, 2014 must comply with or meet the intent of the attached 2014 Small Lot Design Guidelines through either methods listed in the Guidelines or through alternative methods that achieve the same objective. This Advisory Agency Policy and the attached Small Lot Design Guidelines replace and supersede the Advisory Agency's prior policies dated January 10, 2006 and November 15, 2006.

In cases where site characteristics, existing improvements, or special circumstances make substantial adherence with the Small Lot Design Guidelines impractical, substantial compliance may not be possible; in which case, small lot subdivisions must meet the intent of the Small Lot Design Guidelines, as stated above. The Small Lot Design Guidelines will be used to condition a project and not as the basis approving or denying a project. Conditions imposed by the initial decision maker may be appealed. The Small Lot Design Guidelines shall be used in conjunction with any other adopted

design guidelines, as applicable, and shall not supersede any adopted Specific Plan Design Review Board procedures.

Authority of the Advisory Agency

The Advisory Agency's authority to adopt this policy is based on the Subdivision Map Act (and LAMC 17.03) and the General Plan. The Map Act requires that the Advisory Agency must find in the affirmative that the proposed tract or parcel map, and its design and improvement, will be consistent with the applicable General and Specific Plans and that the site will be physically suitable for the proposed type of development. Where the "design" of the tract or parcel map refers to the configuration and layout of the proposed lots, easements and/or access and "improvements" to the infrastructure facilities serving the subdivision, such as roadways and sidewalks, the Map Act requires that the proposed map also be consistent with the General Plan.

The Small Lot Design Guidelines allow the Advisory Agency to implement the purposes, intent, and provisions of the General Plan and its various elements, and effectively provide the Advisory Agency with the tools to make the consistency findings with the General Plan for the purposes of approving a small lot subdivision. The Guidelines, in turn, are in conformance with the City's General Plan Framework - Chapter 5, Urban Form and Neighborhood Design - which encourages the "enhance[ment of] the liveability of all neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm" and the "formulat[ion] and adopt[ion of] building and site design standards and guidelines to raise the quality of design Citywide".

The Small Lot Design Guidelines shall only apply to subdivisions that are subject to the Small Lot Ordinance (LAMC 12.22-C,27).

Mixed-Use Small Lot Subdivisions

The Small Lot Ordinance states that "parcels of land may be subdivided into lots which may contain one, two or three dwelling units" for the purpose of a small lot subdivision. The Planning Department has historically interpreted this statute as allowing residential uses as part of a small lot subdivision while inherently excluding any commercial uses as part of a tract or parcel map for the purposes of creating "small lots." However, the Ordinance does not explicitly prohibit commercial uses as part of a small lot subdivision even when the underlying zone permits commercial uses. This policy will allow for the creation of a mixed-use development as part of a small lot subdivision, in that:

A small lot subdivision may allow for a mixed-use building on a lot that combines a commercial use on the ground floor and upper level residence that is effectuated by the recordation of a tract or parcel map, as long as the underlying zone permits the commercial use, pursuant to LAMC Section 13.09-B,3. – Definitions of a Mixed Use Project.

Mixed-use small lot projects must comply with all other applicable regulations governing the site with regards to parking, signage, access, and FAR limitations in

the LAMC. Joint Living & Work Quarters, as defined in LAMC 12.03, shall not be considered a Mixed-Use Project for the purpose of a small lot subdivision.

Small lot developments along commercial corridors must employ high-quality urban design to define the character of the proposed development. Storefronts must be vibrant, transparent, and protected, and most importantly, be compatible with the form and character of the existing commercial district. These projects must incorporate the design elements from the Small Lot Design Guidelines under the Special Guidelines for Ground-Floor Commercial Uses section.

Small lot projects with ground floor commercial uses help to fulfill the General Plan Framework's Policy 3.13.1, "Encourage the development of commercial uses and structures that integrate housing units with commercial uses in areas designated as 'Boulevard-Mixed Use'..." in CR, C1, C1.5, C2, C4, [Q]C2 Zones. They also fulfill Policy 2.2.1 of the 2013-2021 Housing Element, to "provide incentives to encourage the integration of housing with other compatible land uses."

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to Jae H. Kim, Senior City Planner, at (213) 978-1383.

MLG:AB:JK:JC

Attachment:

2014 Advisory Agency Small Lot Design Guidelines

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DESIGN GUIDELINES



This handbook provides recommendations for addressing the complexities of designing small lot developments to be within conformance of the General Plan. Each guideline should be considered in a proposed project. However, because of the unique nature of each small lot development, not all will be appropriate in every case.

The guidelines are intended to help guide architects, developers, and residents in designing for a more livable city. Incorporating these guidelines into a project's design will encourage more compatible architecture, attractive multi-family residential districts, context-sensitive design, and sustainable environments, and will also contribute to pedestrian activity and place-making.

Tentative tract and parcel maps for small lot subdivisions must be consistent with the City's General Plan and Community Plans in order to be approved. It is important to review all relevant city documents for policies that may affect your small lot design and layout.

Published January 2014

Cover photos: Artis, Cullen Street Art District Homes, Rock Row

Document is designed to be printed double-sided.

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1 Introduction



The Small Lot Ordinance allows for subdivisions in areas zoned for multi-family or commercial uses, permitting the development of this small lot in Echo Park.



Small lot homes must be structurally independent with no shared foundations or common walls.

The City of Los Angeles has enacted the Small Lot Ordinance (No. 176354) to allow the construction of fee-simple, infill housing on small lots in multi-family and commercial zones. While home ownership options have traditionally been limited to single-family homes on 5,000 square foot lots or condominiums, the passage of the Small Lot Ordinance extends these options to include townhomes, row houses, and other types of infill housing typically only available for rent.

The Ordinance provides a more space-efficient and economically attractive alternative for sites zoned for apartment or condominium uses. In short, the Small Lot Ordinance simplifies the land subdivision process, making it easier for developers to construct creative new fee-simple homes in urban areas.

It was envisioned to allow the subdivision of underutilized land in multi-family and commercial areas for the creation of up to 15 lots with detached single-family homes. It was not intended to generate a request for a General Plan amendment and zone change to permit the development. Generally, these homes have smaller lot areas, compact building footprints, and minimal streetfront and setback requirements. They are distinct from condominiums in that the tenants of these compact homes have complete ownership of that lot.

While the Ordinance provides a smart-growth alternative to the suburban single-family home, generally reduces density, and creates new options for home ownership, it also brings a new set of spatial complexities. For instance, challenges brought on by neighborhood context and the proximity of adjacent structures require thoughtful considerations about massing, height, and transitional areas from adjacent properties. *These spatial constraints require innovative design solutions.*

Small Lot Design Guidelines

This handbook provides design guidelines issued by the advisory agency to address these complexities while also promoting the design and creation of small lot housing with neighborhood compatibility for consistency with applicable General and Specific Plans. The Guidelines outline recommendations for site organization and urban form, setbacks and building transitions, parking and driveways, building design and materials, and landscaping and access. The recommendations are not mandatory, but help to guide decision-makers to ensure that a project is compatible with its surroundings. Projects that are not in compliance with the Guidelines may be subject to delays, redesign, and community appeals.

Applying the Guidelines

The Guidelines outlined in this document identify the level of design quality expected for small lot developments. They provide guidance and direction for applying policies contained within the General Plan Framework and the Community Plans. Incorporating these Guidelines into a project's design will encourage more compatible architecture, attractive residential projects, context-sensitive design, opportunities for pedestrian activity, and overall contribute to an enhanced sense of place.

Interested property owners, developers, and designers should first review the zoning of the property before proceeding with the project. The Small Lot Ordinance and Guidelines are only applicable to developments within multi-family and commercial zones. They are also only applicable to modestly-scaled well-designed projects with 47 or less dwelling units. Projects with a greater number of units will need further review prior to accepting the applications for filing.

The Guidelines are intended for use by the Planning Department, as well as other City agencies and department staff, developers, architects, engineers, and community members in evaluating project applications. The Guidelines should also be used in conjunction with relevant policies from the General Plan Framework and Community Plans. In order to ensure the creation of well-designed and context-sensitive small lot homes, the Guidelines listed here will apply to all new small lot applications.

Small lot projects must substantially comply with the Small Lot Design Guidelines in order to receive project approval. However, some leniency and creativity is permitted in implementing these Guidelines. For instance, in cases where special circumstances make complete compliance infeasible or impossible, the project must nonetheless substantially conform to the overarching goals of the Guidelines. Development applications must then demonstrate clear alternatives that achieve the same goals and objectives, and describe to what extent these Guidelines are incorporated into the project design.

In short, the Small Lot Design Guidelines will only be used to condition approved projects, and may not serve as the basis for a project approval or denial. Conditions imposed by the initial decision-maker may be appealed.

OVERARCHING GOALS

To ensure the creation of well-designed and compatible developments that improve the context of the built environment, the Small Lot Design Guidelines promote the following goals:

- 1 Create high-quality indoor and outdoor living environments for all residents.
- 2 Enhance the public realm.
- 3 Provide fee-simple home ownership opportunities for a greater number of people, at a wider range of income levels.
- 4 Provide solutions for infill housing.
- 5 Design and configure housing to be compatible with the existing neighborhood context, especially in sensitive areas. This includes areas contained within Specific Plans, Community Design Overlays (CDOs), and Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs).
- 6 Prioritize the livability and market value of a project over strict density.



The Auburn Street small lot development in the Silverlake neighborhood demonstrates the Guideline's overarching goals.

2 About Small Lot Subdivisions

- 1 Small lot subdivisions are not condominiums. Properties are titled in fee simple, meaning they can be bought and sold just like conventional single-family homes.
- 2 Subdivisions are only permitted in areas zoned for multi-family housing or commercial uses for projects with up to 47 dwelling units. Projects with a greater number of units will need further review prior to accepting the applications for filing.
- 3 Small lot homes must be structurally independent, with no shared foundations or common walls. This also applies to the conversion of existing buildings into small lot homes, which are permitted by the Small Lot Ordinance.
- 4 Generally, the subdivisions will only have one dwelling unit per lot, although duplexes and triplexes are permitted.
- 5 The Ordinance reduces the minimum lot size and side yard requirements and eliminates requirements for conventional street frontage, allowing for flexibility to be compatible with the existing neighborhood context. This allows for the creation of more space-efficient compact homes. Small lots may be irregularly shaped, a minimum area of 600 square feet, and at least 16 feet wide.
- 6 A 5-foot setback is required between the subdivision and adjoining properties. There are no yard or setback requirements along alleys, streets, or between lots within the approved subdivision.
- 7 All structures on a lot which includes one or more dwelling units, may, taken together, occupy no more than 80 percent of the lot area, unless the tract or parcel map provides common open space equivalent to 20 percent of the lot area of each lot not meeting this provision.
- 8 Parking may be provided anywhere on the site, either on individual or shared lots or a separate parking garage. Communal parking areas must be accessible via the community driveway, street, or alley, and have clear pathways connecting to residential units. Tandem parking is also allowed.
- 9 Small lot subdivisions must be filed as a Vesting Tentative Track Map or as an illustrated Parcel Map. Both will require supplemental site plans, building elevations, and other illustrative information.
- 10 Each proposed small lot subdivision must be reviewed and approved by City Staff, and is subject to public hearing and appeals.

3 Site Planning



The Rock Row development in Eagle Rock features a central driveway with alternative paving.

Constructing infill housing offers a unique set of design challenges not only on the parcel level, but also on the neighborhood level and within the public realm. Developers and architects must therefore consider the design elements of each small lot home and how they will enhance the overall neighborhood character and vitality of the larger public realm.

Parcel

Small lot design is fundamentally a site planning challenge. It requires addressing practical spatial requirements while simultaneously creating high-quality living environments. These spatial requirements include: small lot sizes and awkward configurations; parking and automobile access; pedestrian circulation; adequate access to air, light, and ventilation; outdoor space and privacy; and refuse bin placement and utilities location. Developers must address these issues in ways that ultimately enhance the living environment of each dwelling unit.

Additionally, each home must exhibit a high level of design quality, including: well-articulated entries and facades to each dwelling unit, proportionate windows, quality building materials, connections to a pedestrian circulation system, and context-sensitive elements.

Neighborhood

By its very nature, infill development occurs in neighborhoods with preexisting development and characteristics, and should therefore supplement to and enhance the overall quality of the neighborhood. At this

scale, developers and architects must consider the three-dimensional nature of the entire development, including height, massing, siting, and orientation. These characteristics must relate to the surrounding built form, respecting the overall neighborhood character and existing topography.

Other considerations include building patterns, streetscape characteristics, orientation to the street, pedestrian routes, transit stops, parking arrangements, and opportunities for defensible space considerations, each of which impact a development's integration into the neighborhood context.

Public Realm

Each infill project, however small, must contribute to a vital and coherent public realm through an improved network of streets and sidewalks that is pleasant, interesting, and comfortable for pedestrian activity. To do so, each project should focus on the relationship between the proposed small lot subdivision and the public environment, with emphasis on: building siting and orientation, height and massing, articulation of facades and entry ways, building fenestration, pedestrian circulation, type and placement of street trees, landscaping and transitional spaces, and location of driveways and garages.

Objective: Design and configure housing to be consistent with applicable General and Specific Plans, be compatible with the existing neighborhood, while also striking a balance between parking, adequate common areas, and the public realm.



Through the use of courtyards and grasscrete paving, the Perlita Mews development in Atwater Village strives for livable shared spaces.



Sufficient space should be provided for an entry, landing and transitional landscaping between the sidewalk and private entryway.

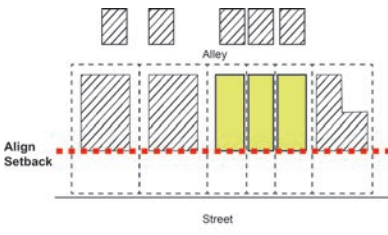
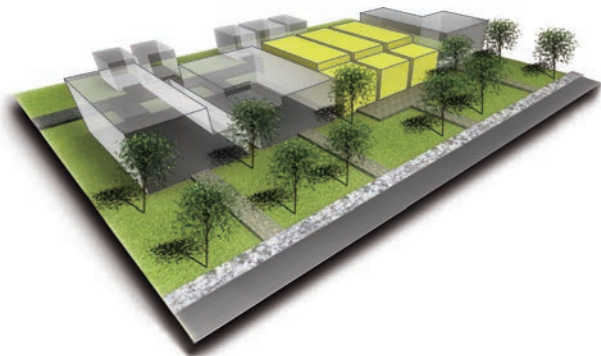
RELATIONSHIP TO THE STREET GUIDELINES

When designed well, small lot developments can enhance the preexisting character of a good street or improve a fragmented one. Therefore, small lot developments should embrace, rather than ignore, the street. Although there are no requirements for front setbacks, neighborhood context shall provide direction for setting buildings back from the street.

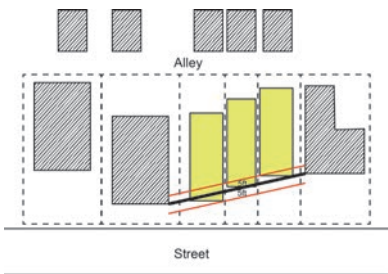
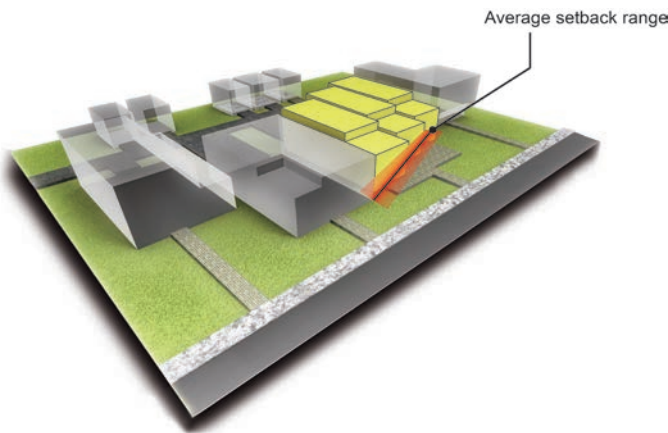
Minimal setbacks are appropriate for small lots on commercial streets. Similarly, setbacks are not required for dwelling units with ground-floor retail. On residential streets, preexisting front setbacks should guide the distance that a development is set back from the street. Moreover, a 5 foot side setback is required of any property adjacent to the perimeter of the small lot project and development.

- 1 In areas with an existing prevailing street setback, align the small lot development to be consistent with this setback and provide continuity along the street edge. Slight deviations from the setback are acceptable.
- 2 On residential streets with varying setbacks, the front yard setback should be within 5 feet of the average setback of adjacent properties.
- 3 On commercial streets with a range of setbacks, small lot developments should nearly abut the sidewalk, allowing sufficient room for entry, front stoop, and some transitional landscaping. However, this is not required for dwellings with ground floor retail.

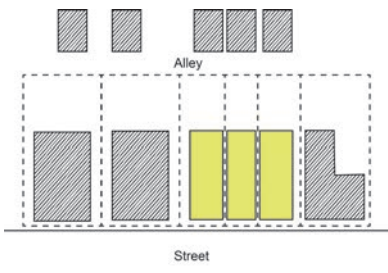
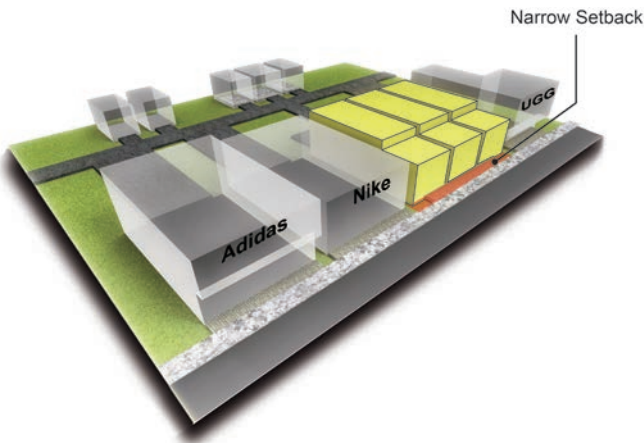
RELATIONSHIP TO THE STREET ILLUSTRATIONS



Where applicable, proposed small lot developments should align with the prevailing setback of the street.



Where applicable, the setbacks of proposed small lot developments should be within the range of setbacks of existing properties.



Where applicable, proposed small lot developments along commercial streets should nearly about the sidewalk.



Enhanced paving denotes the entryway to the Vesper Village development in Van Nuys.

SITE LAYOUT AND CIRCULATION GUIDELINES

Small lot developments are presented with numerous spatial challenges that require innovative design solutions. Regardless of spatial constraints, developments must strive for neighborhood compatibility and be able to fit all aspects, such as parking and driveways, adequate trash and utility locations, adequate indoor and outdoor living space, within the project site.

Builders and designers should consider all possible configurations that take advantage of the site topography in providing sufficient open space, and consider how characteristics of the street and adjacent structures affect the overall form and orientation of the proposed development.

- 1 Configure homes to front public streets, primary entryway, circulation walkways, and open spaces, rather than driveways.
- 2 For homes not adjacent to the public street, provide pedestrian circulation in the form of private walkways or clearly delineated paths of travel from the sidewalk to their entryway.
- 3 Maximize green space while minimizing the total amount of driveway space.
- 4 Where possible, utilize alleyways for vehicular access.
- 5 Take advantage of existing topography and natural features (i.e. existing trees) to maintain appropriate grade levels consistent with surrounding structures.
- 6 Homes fronting a public street should have the primary entrance and main windows facing the street.
- 7 Enhanced paving should mark the pedestrian and vehicular entries of complexes to provide a sense of arrival.

SITE LAYOUT AND CIRCULATION GUIDELINES (CONTINUED)

- 8 Design floor plan layouts in relation to lot shape, width, and depth to maximize usable outdoor spaces.
- 9 Provide space for entry, front landing, and transitional landscaping between the public sidewalk and private entryway.
- 10 Provide direct paths of travel for pedestrian destinations within the development. Whenever relevant, create primary entrances for pedestrians that are safe, easily accessible, and a short distance from transit stops.
- 11 When multiple units share a common driveway that is lined with individual garages, provide distinguishable pedestrian paths to connect parking areas to articulated individual entries.
- 12 Vary building placement to increase variation in facades and more articulated building edges.

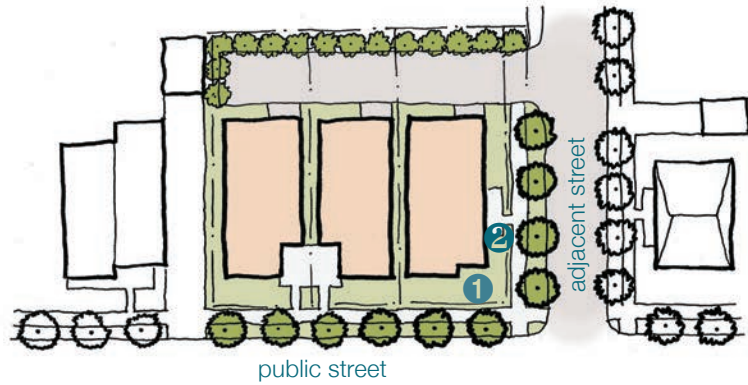


The Cullen Street development demonstrates a side access driveway with the front unit having a strong relationship to the street.

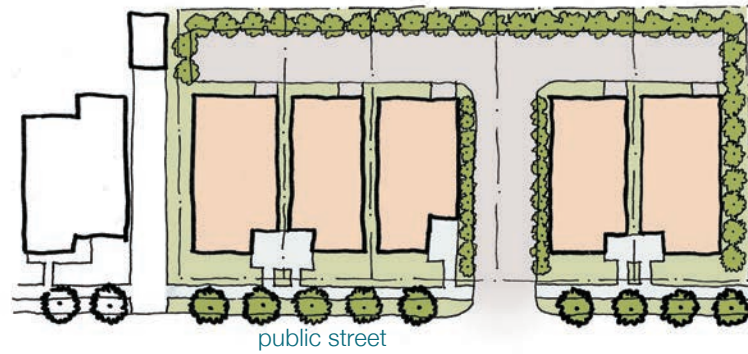
POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS

When rear driveways are used:

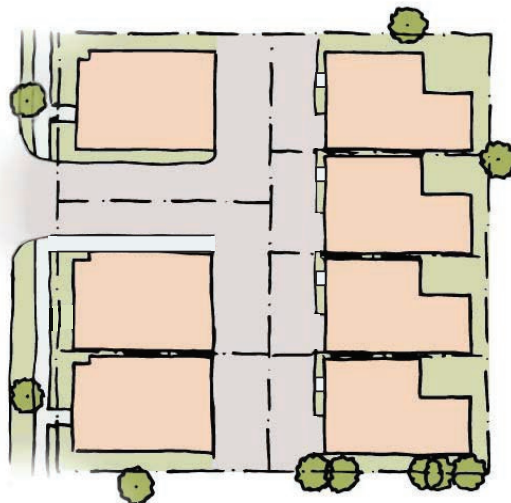
- ① The streetfront should still give the appearance of an entry.
- ② Pedestrian entrances should closely align with the entrances of adjacent dwelling units.



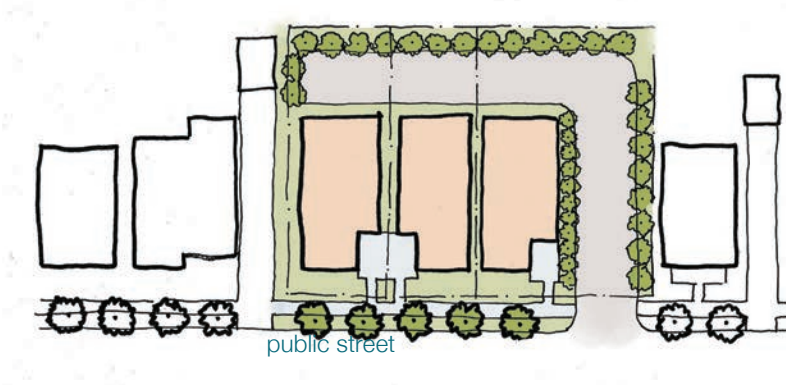
When rear T-driveways are used, all units should have direct access to the public sidewalk.



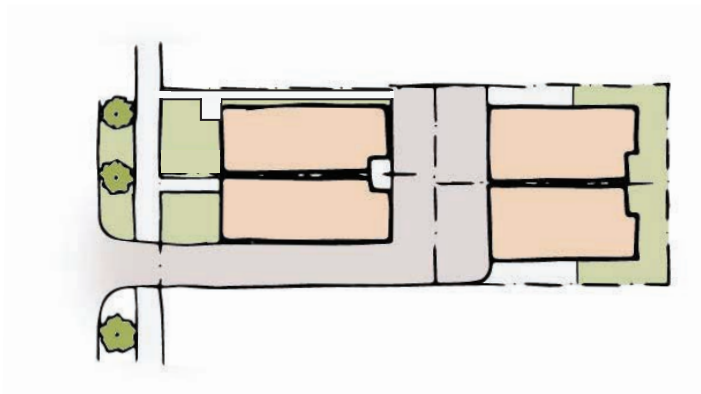
This alternative T-driveway configuration separates rear units from the public street and sidewalk.



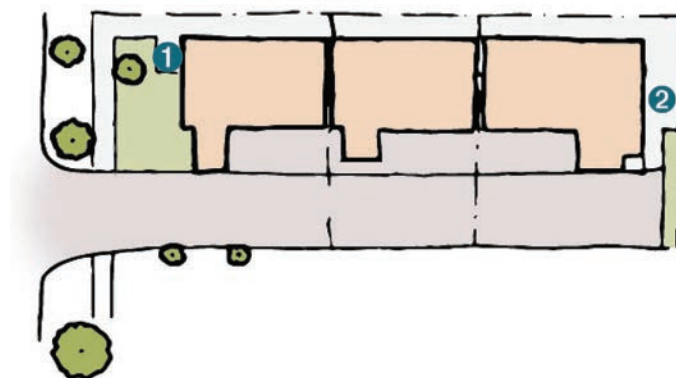
POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS (CONTINUED)



When rear L- driveways are used, all units front onto the public sidewalk.



When an alternative L-driveway is used, all rear units that do not front on the public sidewalk should still have a separate pedestrian path.

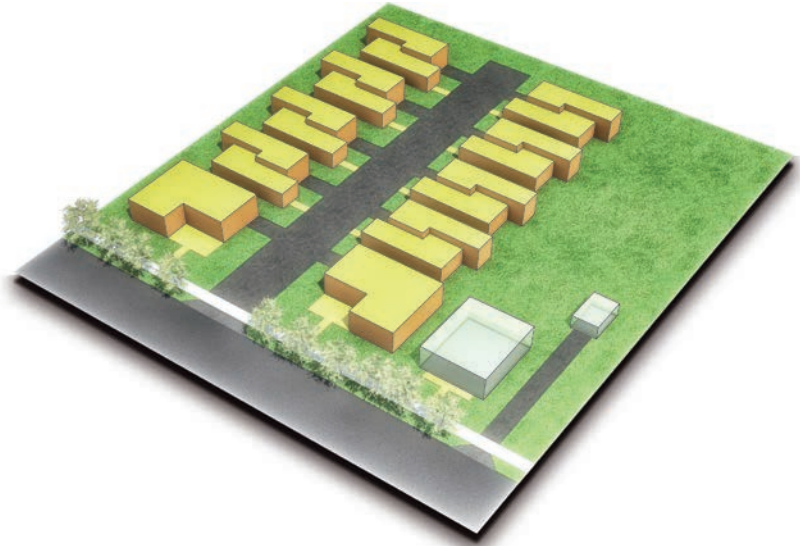


When side access driveways are used:

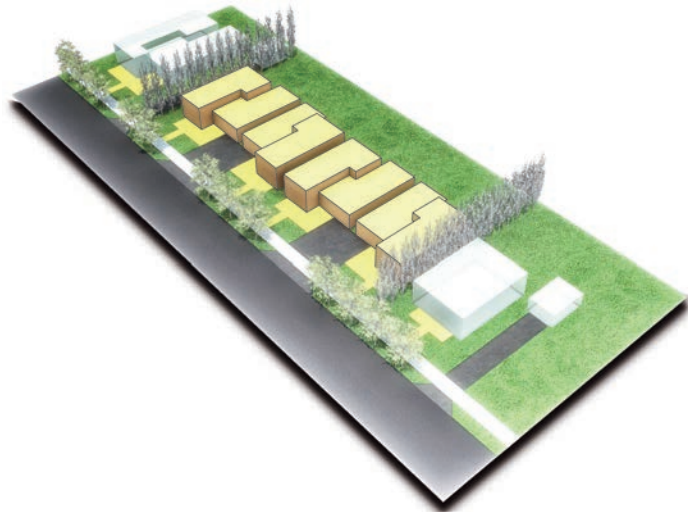
- ① Small lot developments with a side access driveway should configure front homes to be accessible from the sidewalk.
- ② Interior homes should be accessible from both the driveway and a private walkway at the front of the homes.

POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS (CONTINUED)

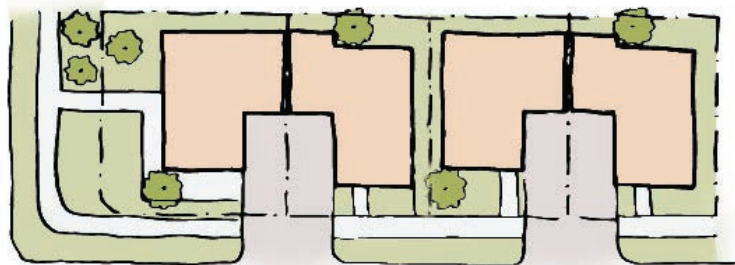
Townhouses with a central access driveway can enhance the public realm when front homes are accessible from the sidewalk.



Row houses with shared driveways enhance the streetfront by reducing the number of driveway cuts and vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. This results in enhanced and more opportunities for pedestrian entries.



The combination of tandem parking and deep garage setbacks can minimize the amount of streetfront dedicated to driveways.



BUILDING-TO-STREET PROPORTION GUIDELINES

Building-to-street proportion refers to the relationship between the height of buildings on either side of a street and the width between those buildings. An ideal proportion between these two creates a pleasant and visually interesting public realm. The public realm, therefore, may be considered as an “outdoor room” that is shaped by the “walls” of the building heights and the “floors” of the roadway. Through proper setbacks, appropriate building heights, and lush landscaping, small lot developments can help contribute to the creation of these outdoor rooms.

Outdoor rooms with excessively wide roadways or short building heights tend to eliminate any sense of enclosure for the pedestrian. Therefore, building heights should be constructed at a minimum of one-quarter of the width of the roadway.

In cases where neighborhood context may preclude increased building heights, trees may be planted along the street or front yard to help increase the sense of enclosure.

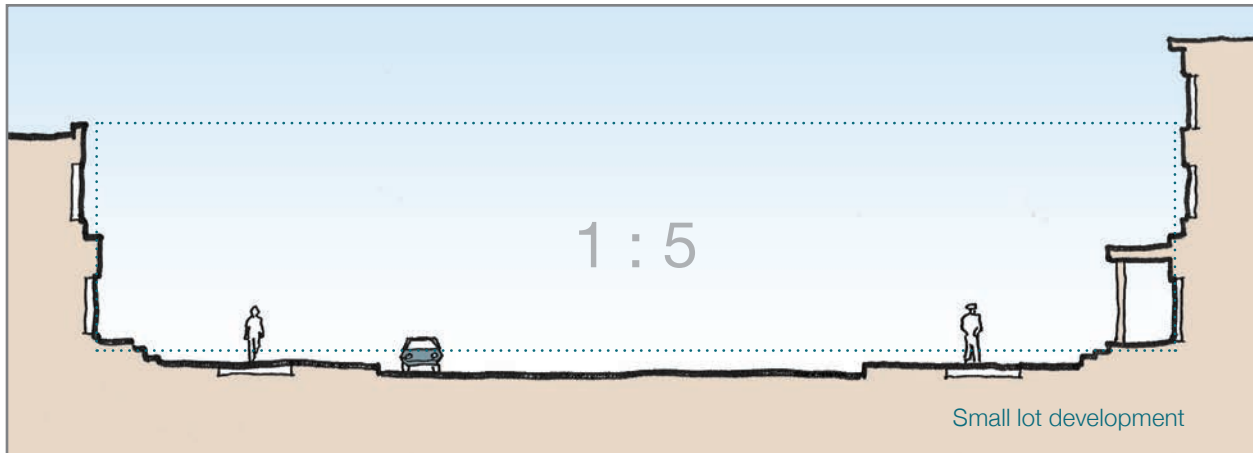
- 1 Small lots should be constructed with a building-to-height ratio of 1-to-4. In other words, buildings should have a height of at least one-quarter of the width of the roadway. For example, on a 100 foot wide street, an appropriate building height would be 25 feet.
- 2 Define the proper proportion of the public right of way through the planting of shade trees and low-growing vegetation (see Landscaping Section for further information).
- 3 Plant shade trees and ornamental plants to define the edge and increase visual interest to both the public and private realms. Avoid placing 4-foot-tall or higher shrubs immediately adjacent to the sidewalk.



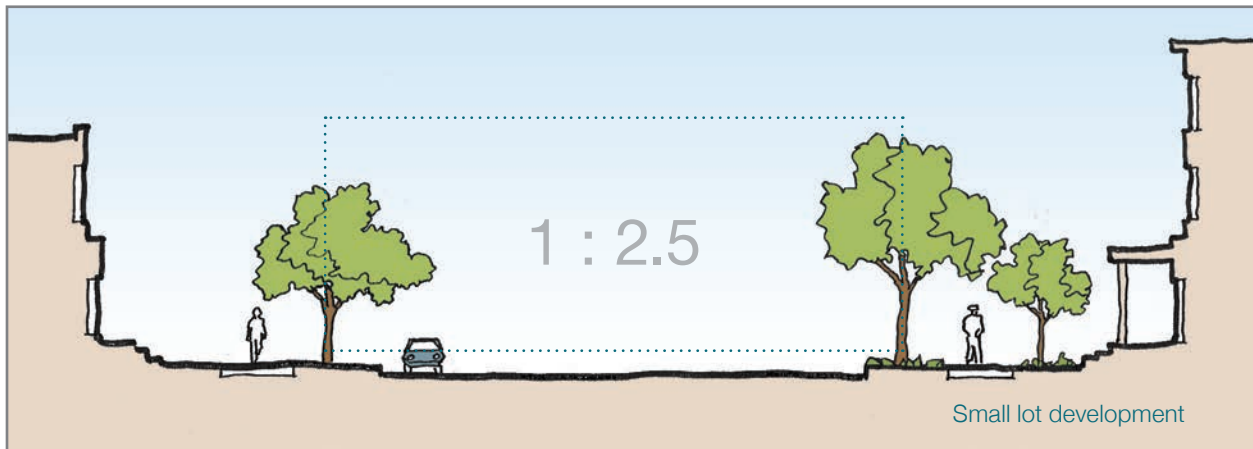
Many Los Angeles streets have undesirable height-width ratios with: low-rise buildings, narrow sidewalks, and extremely wide streets.



Abbot Kinney Blvd. in Venice is an example of a more appropriate building-to-street proportion.



This small lot development creates a height-width ratio of approximately 1:5, and provides little sense of enclosure to the pedestrian. Although it may not be possible to alter the building heights, a series of landscaping interventions can enhance the semblance of an outdoor room.



Landscaping within the public, transitional, and private realms heightens the semblance of an outdoor room. Here, canopy-creating shade trees have been added to effectively reduce the width between buildings, and bringing the height-width ratio to approximately 1:2.5.

PARKING AND DRIVEWAY GUIDELINES

The design of small lot developments must strike a particular spatial balance: it must simultaneously maintain high-quality public and private living environments while also accommodating for the automobile. In poor design layouts, small lot configurations allow parking, driveways, and garages to dominate the landscape, creating conflicts for pedestrians and decreasing the overall aesthetic quality of the development. Improperly placed parking at the front of townhouses can have unsightly effects onto the streetfront. Frequent curb cuts and driveways jeopardize pedestrian safety and eliminate space for street trees and on-street parking. Ideally, designs should locate parking to be behind dwellings and accessible from alleys where present. If driveways are necessary, designs should minimize their width, number, and visual impact.

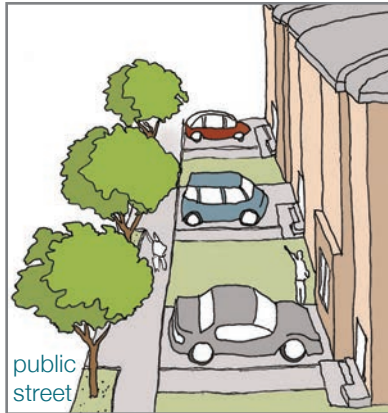
- 1 Locate parking to the rear of dwellings where homes front the public street.
- 2 Where available, use alleyways as access to off-street parking.
- 3 If individual front driveways must be used, the setback of the building should allow for an ample amount of landscaping space and a front entryway, porch, or landing.
- 4 Allow for a pedestrian access path separate from driveway whenever possible. When the driveway provides pedestrian access to individual dwellings, a distinguishable path should be provided.
- 5 Access driveways should be designed to be no wider than circulation and backup requirements, while still allowing for landscaping and a pedestrian access path on-site.
- 6 Space permitting, design the driveway area for multi-functional uses.
- 7 Structures should limit encroachment over the driveway area to not restrict the movement of trucks.



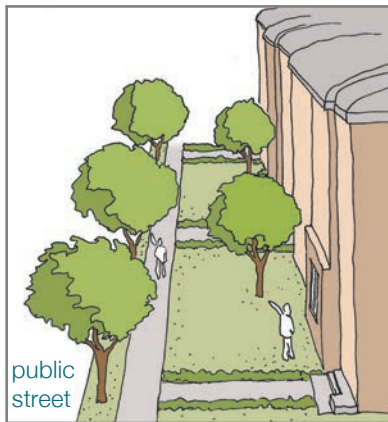
These homes have garages located in the rear of the buildings.



Rock Row uses permeable paving to provide a more hospitable pedestrian path along the driveway.



The placement of individual driveways along the streetfront can disrupt the continuity of the sidewalk and public realm, and eliminate space for street trees and on-street parking.



However, when driveways are located to the rear of dwellings, the streetscape can become a comfortable outdoor space for residents and passers-by.

Number of spaces

The Los Angeles Municipal Code lists requirements for the provision of parking spaces for residential developments.

Single-family homes are required to provide:

- 2 spaces for each home

Tandem parking is also acceptable, space permitting. One space can be dedicated for a compact car.

Duplex and triplex developments are required to provide:

- 1 space for each unit with less than 3 habitable rooms
- 1.5 spaces for each unit with 3 habitable rooms
- 2 spaces for units with more than 3 habitable rooms

Small lot developments are also required to provide guest parking based on site layout and circulation. Small lots are subject to the following guest parking requirements:

- Developments with less than 10 units: 0 spaces
- Developments with 10-100 units: 0.25 spaces per unit
- Developments with over 100 units: 0.5 spaces per unit

Locally adopted Specific Plans may require more parking. In these cases, the locally adopted plans supercede these parking requirements.

Dimensions

The Municipal Code requires the following dimensions for parking spaces:

- 8'6" x 18' for standard-size cars;
- 7'6" x 15' for compact cars.

Driveway widths depend on lot depth and building configuration. Individual front driveways should be 10 feet wide. In these instances, the building width should adequately allow for integral front parking plus some yard and porch or landing space. Access driveways will vary in width depending on lot size, depth, and building height, and are required to meet Code requirements for stall dimensions and access aisle. Please consult the Fire Department for further information.

4 Building

In order to make townhouse construction more feasible, the Small Lot Ordinance minimizes the required sizes of side, rear, and front yards. As a result, small lots are ultimately shaped by building configuration. Designers should consider how the arrangement of interior space affects exterior massing and how the configuration of building elements respond to adjacent buildings. Design strategies incorporating neighborhood context include considerations of: building height transitions, arrangement of buildings and open space, landscape elements, vehicular driveways and pedestrian paths, and architectural details and scaling devices that breakdown the massing of the development.

With reduced setback requirements and small lot areas, providing access to air, light, and ventilation is more challenging for small lot developments than typical single-family designs. Thus, architects and builders must take full advantage of the unique design opportunities presented to them to create livable environments.

Objective: Develop the overall form and relationship of the buildings by focusing on neighborhood compatibility and high-quality design of the following elements: entry, height and massing, building facade, roof lines, and materials.



Sensitive window and balcony placement in the Rock Row development are key to enhancing the light and ventilation of the home's interior.



The Buzz Court development demonstrates how the front unit of the development is designed to engage the public street and sidewalk.



Entryways, porches and stoops clearly delineate public and private realms while maintaining a comfortable relationship between these realms and their users.



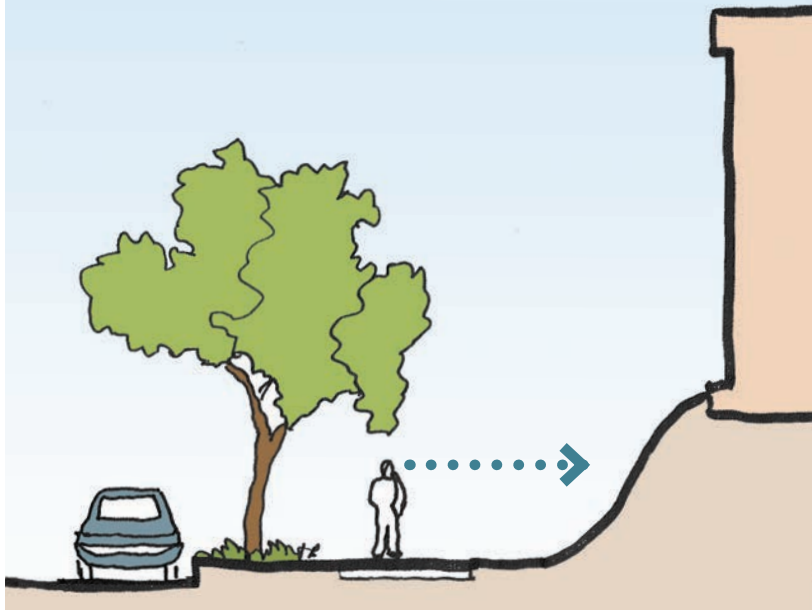
These home entrances sit a few steps above the sidewalk. A small landscaped area provides a buffer between the sidewalk and building edge.

ENTRY GUIDELINES

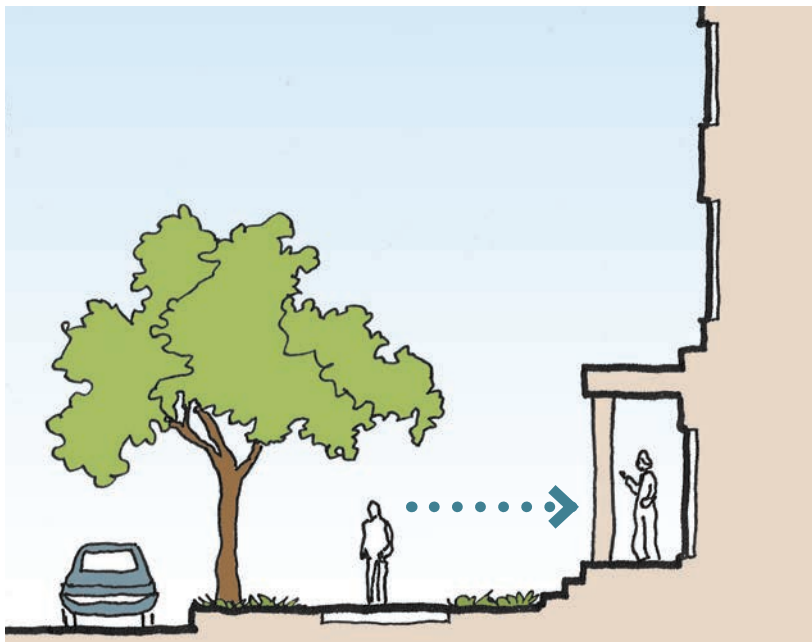
When entries are well articulated and easy to find, they function as gateways— simultaneously welcoming visitors, allowing for seasonal decorations, and clearly delineating the boundaries of the private realm. They may also offer habitable outdoor space in the form of a small front porch or patio.

- 1 Primary entryways should be clearly identifiable and connected to the public street by a walkway. Individual residences should incorporate transitions such as landscaping, paving, porches, stoops, and canopies.
- 2 Homes that front a public street should have their primary entryway accessible from the street. Garages should not take the place of the main entryway.
- 3 Entryways should sit at a grade comparable to those of the surrounding structures, and should never tower above the street.
- 4 Use ornamental low-level lighting to highlight and provide security for pedestrian paths and entrances. Ensure all parking areas and walkways are illuminated.
- 5 Sole entrances should be at grade level. Homes with multiple entrances may include a secondary entrance at three to five steps above grade or consistent with the average grade of existing structures.
- 6 Entrances that front commercial boulevards should allow room for a stoop and entryway and ideally some landscaped area.
- 7 Ground-floor commercial arrangements fronting on the street in a commercial district do not require a separation between the entry and the street. See Special Guidelines for Ground-Floor Commercial Uses (p. 28) for further information.
- 8 Incorporate transitions such as landscaping, paving material, porches, stoops, and canopies at the primary entrance to each residence, and at the main pedestrian entrance to the development from the sidewalk.

ENTRY (CONTINUED)



Small lot homes with excessive grading tend to tower awkwardly above the neighborhood and sidewalk. This creates a physical and visual barrier between the public and private realms.



A better interaction between a small lot development and the street is achieved when buildings are only a few steps above street level. This creates a clear sight line between the sidewalk and the front entry.

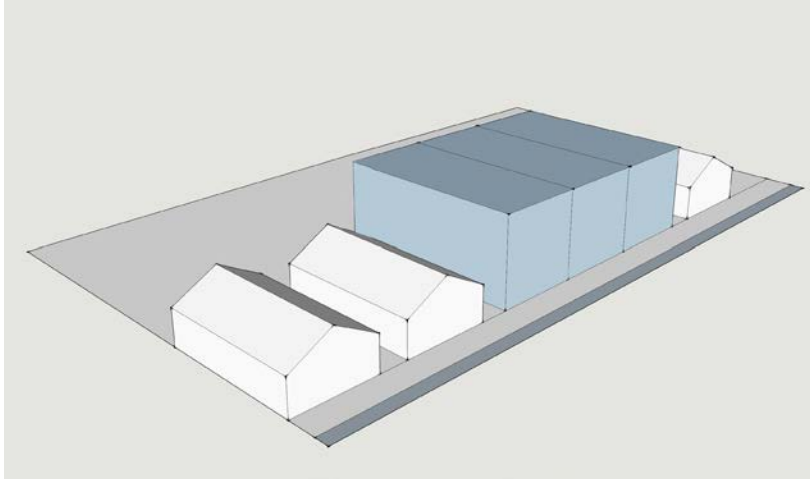
HEIGHT AND MASSING GUIDELINES



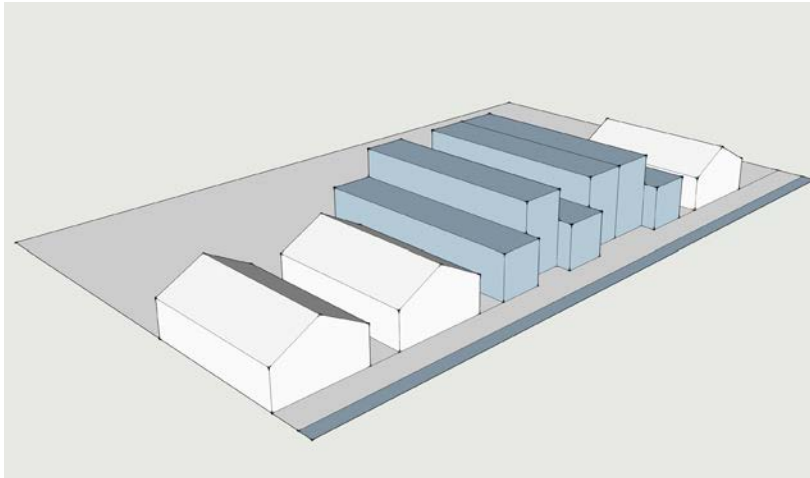
Varied building heights and massing creates a more interesting and walkable streetfront.

While building height is often criticized for a project's incompatibility with the neighborhood, it is more often the building's massing--the overall volume of the building--that can cause the new structure to seem out of context. Well-designed buildings do not "max out" the allowable building massing permitted by the code --height limits, yard, setbacks--but employ variations in height, massing, rhythm, and texture to reduce the perceivable massing of the building. These variations serve dual functions: they help small developments mesh with their surroundings, while also enhancing the overall quality of the street by providing visual interest and a pedestrian scale.

- 1 Use the surrounding built environment to inform decisions about variations in height and massing.
- 2 Avoid excessive differences in height between the proposed development and adjacent buildings.
- 3 Provide sufficient space between buildings, articulation along the street frontage, and visual breaks to diminish the scale and massing.
- 4 Small lot developments should be appropriately designed and scaled to transition from single-family properties using methods such as step backs, building placement, driveway location, variations in height, and landscape screening elements.



This small lot development maxes out the building envelope and does not respond to surrounding context.



By breaking down the height, massing, and facade of the buildings, this small lot development becomes more compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.



The use of unique building materials and accent colors helps to articulate the facade and entrance of this corner building.



The Buzz Court development alternates texture, color, and materials on the front facade.



Small overhangs above the doors at Maltman Bungalows provide shade and shelter, as well as adding articulation to the entryway.

BUILDING FACADE GUIDELINES

The building facade is a crucial element in relating the building to the street and neighborhood. Design elements such as porches and stoops can be used to orient the housing towards the street and promote active and interesting neighborhoods. Effectively placed and articulated doors, windows, and balconies can enhance the overall quality of the project.

- 1 Employ architectural details to enhance scale and interest by breaking the facade up into distinct planes that are offset from the main building facade.
- 2 The placement of windows should follow a consistent rhythm to create visual clarity and character-defining features while avoiding the creation of blank walls.
- 3 Provide windows on building facades that front on public streets, private driveways, and internal pedestrian pathways within the development.
- 4 Layer architectural features to emphasize elements such as entries, corners, windows, and organization of units.
- 5 Alternate different textures, colors, materials, and distinctive architectural treatments to add visual interest while avoiding blank facades.
- 6 Treat all facades of the building with an equal level of detail, articulation, and architectural rigor.
- 7 Include overhead architectural features at entrances and windows that provide shade and passive cooling.
- 8 Design balconies so that their size and location maximize their intended use for open space. Avoid “tacked on” balconies with limited purpose or function.
- 9 Reduce the monotony of undifferentiated facades through landscape screening elements, entry enhancements, and building/garage facades.

BUILDING MATERIALS GUIDELINES

Los Angeles architecture varies in style often within neighborhoods. Therefore, context and surrounding structures should inform the choice of materials for small lot developments.

- 1 Select building materials, such as architectural details and finishes, that convey a sense of permanence. Quality materials should be used to withstand weather and wear regardless of architectural style.
- 2 Apply trim, metal and woodwork, lighting, and other details in a harmonious manner that is consistent with the proportions and scale of the buildings.
- 3 Materials should appropriately respond to the neighborhood context.
- 4 Apply changes in material purposefully and in a manner corresponding to variations in building mass.



The Gatsby Homes in Hollywood demonstrates how to use different materials in response to building mass.

ROOF GUIDELINES

While townhouses should exhibit some individuality, excessively varied, multi-pitched and gabled roofs tend to create visual chaos that is undesirable and unnecessary.

- 1 Integrate varied roof lines into the upper floors of residences through the use of sloping roofs, modulated building heights, gables, dormers, and innovative architectural techniques.
- 2 Avoid excessive use of multi-pitched and gabled roofs
- 3 Where appropriate, consider enhancing roof areas with usable open space.
- 4 Consider the design and placement of ridge locations as well as direction in relation to side yards and atriums



Excessively varied and multi-pitched roofs risk create visual chaos.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES for **GROUND-FLOOR COMMERCIAL USES**

Small lot developments along commercial corridors may be required to provide ground-floor commercial uses along the streetfront. Similar to standard commercial projects, these mixed-use small lots must employ high-quality architecture to define the character of the proposed development. Storefronts must be vibrant, transparent, and protected, and most importantly, be compatible with the form and character of the existing commercial district.



Ground-floor commercial spaces in the Eagle Rock small lot development feature recessed entrances, protective awnings, and wide windows for a pleasant pedestrian experience.



The Evo and Luma residential towers in Downtown Los Angeles features live-work units with ground-floor commercial and attached upper-level residences.

- 1 Ensure that storefronts convey an individual expression of each tenant's identity while adhering to a common architectural theme and rhythm.
- 2 Design storefronts with a focus on window design to create a visual connection between the interior and exterior.
- 3 Incorporate traditional storefront elements by including a solid base for storefront windows. Use high quality durable materials such as smooth stucco or concrete, ceramic tile, or stone for the window base.
- 4 Provide shelter from the sun and rain for pedestrians along the public right-of-way where the buildings meet the street. Extend overhead cover across driveways or provide architecturally integrated awnings, arcades, and canopies.
- 5 Align awnings with others on the block, particularly the bottom edge of the awning. Coordinate the awning color with the color scheme of the entire building front.
- 6 Ensure that store entrances are recessed, not flush, with the edge of the building facade to articulate the storefront and provide shelter for persons entering and exiting.



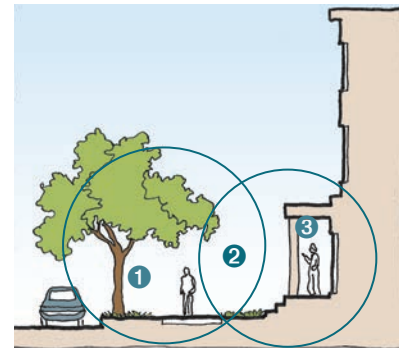
This small lot development in Eagle Rock is the first to feature ground-floor retail. Individual commercial tenants occupy the ground floor of the single-family homes along a commercial corridor.

5 Landscaping

The landscape of a small lot project can be divided into three areas. This provides a helpful framework for designing a cohesive landscape plan. The public area consists of the street, parkway, sidewalk, and driveway; the private area incorporates spaces not within a common area or driveway; and the transitional area is comprised of the spaces in between. It is important to strike a balance between privacy, transparency, visual interest, and order when landscaping for these areas.

This approach clearly delineates public, private and transitional zones without creating walls and yet maintains visual interest through variations in plant materials, grades, and limited hardscape. This also minimizes water consumption and maximizes contributions to local flora and fauna while also enhancing the living environment of both the public, private, and transitional areas.

Objective: Design landscaping that delineates the public, private, and transitional areas; enhances visual interest; and utilizes native and drought tolerant plants.



1 Public, 2 transitional, and 3 private areas.

FRONT AND COMMON AREA GUIDELINES



Excessive use of turf grass is visually bland, requires extensive irrigation, and fails to enhance or define both the public and private outdoor spaces.



However, subtle variations in grade and drought-tolerant plant materials helps to gracefully define transitions in the landscape.

Front yards and common areas serve a dual function, and therefore deserve particular attention. They act as both habitable outdoor space for its owners and as shared areas within the proposed development and the neighborhood. The yard is a visual amenity to the development, neighborhood, and passers-by. Additionally, it serves as a semi-transparent bridge between the private interior of the home and common areas.

Landscaping should be visually interesting, sustainable, and relatively easy to maintain. Turf grass should be used sparingly. Use water-conserving plant materials and irrigation systems. Utilize trees along the parkway and shorter shrubs in the transitional zone.

- 1 Use a range of low-water and drought-tolerant plant materials and ground cover to provide visual interest in place of turf grass.
- 2 Use fences and shrubbery less than 3'6" tall in areas adjacent to the sidewalk (within 5' of front lot line), and common public areas.
- 3 Plant shade trees within public areas, ideally spaced between 15' and 20' apart, to screen blank building facades and shade the driveway and parking areas.
- 4 Whenever possible, use subtle variations in grade.
- 5 Plant parkways separating the curb from the sidewalk with trees, ground cover, low-growing vegetation, or permeable materials that accommodate both pedestrian movement and clearance for car doors.
- 6 Design the landscape to be integrated with the building and for the intended use of the space.

PRIVATE OUTDOOR SPACES GUIDELINES

Private outdoor spaces can take the form of small interior yards, balconies, and roof decks. For these spaces, the emphasis should be placed on flexibility. For yard space, plant materials need not be too varied, so that residents may easily modify them to make them their own.

- 1 Designate fully private outdoor space whenever possible.
- 2 Utilize plants that can be easily modified/maintained by residents.
- 3 Provide balconies to enhance rather than substitute for actively used common open spaces. Balconies and roof decks should be generous enough in size to create usable spaces.



The use of raised beds in varying heights provides for a flexible outdoor space by serving as both landscaping and seating options.

PLANT MATERIALS GUIDELINES

Ultimately the landscape should enhance the natural environment of the neighborhood and should be relatively low-maintenance. Drought-tolerant and native species satisfy both of these criteria by creating visually appealing and sustainable landscapes.

- 1 Apply mulch in between and around plants to conserve moisture and eliminate bare earth, which can look unsightly.
- 2 Use water-conserving ground cover instead of turf grass.
- 3 Avoid invasive plant materials.
- 4 Plant in groupings according to water needs.
- 5 Incorporate existing natural features and topography.

For more information, visit: http://www.bewaterwise.com/Gardensoft/garden_type.aspx?listType=types



This side yard is wide enough to allow for layers of planting and decorative paving.

PRIVACY GUIDELINES

With small lot developments come issues of privacy – not only for residents, but also for those of neighboring properties. For instance, improperly designed developments result in balconies overlooking neighboring yards or other balconies, and windows facing directly into adjacent residences.

Small lot designs should maximize access to private outdoor space, light, and views, while ensuring an adequate level of privacy for all residents. This will require particular attention to the orientation and spatial configuration of the development, distances between walls, and the location of windows and balconies.

Whenever possible, small lot designs should designate some fully private outdoor space for each dwelling. This can take the form of small interior yards, balconies, and roof decks. For these spaces, emphasis should be placed on flexibility.

- 1 Windows and balconies from separate dwellings should not face or overlook each other.
- 2 Minimize the number of windows overlooking neighboring interior private yards.
- 3 Use translucent glass, landscaping, and screens to create privacy.
- 4 Provide functional distances between building walls and vary height to maximize private outdoor space, light and views.
- 5 Plant trees, shrubs, and vines to screen walls between property lines. Use variations in color, material, and texture.
- 6 Rooftop open space should be located away from the building edge to enhance privacy.

6 Sustainability

Proposed small lot projects present a unique opportunity for innovative sustainable approaches. These sites allow for environmentally-sound principles to be applied on a smaller scale, helping to mitigate the development's impact on the surrounding neighborhood. They also provide the opportunity to employ strategies that might be cost prohibitive on a larger scale such as solar roof materials, semi-permeable paving materials, and energy and water efficiency. All development is required to meet Los Angeles Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements and Low Impact Development (LID) strategies (Ord. 181899).



A permeable driveway (concrete grid filled with grass) increases storm water infiltration on the small lot.

Objective: Achieve low-impact development through design that focuses on environmental sensitivity in site planning, building, landscaping, and construction.

SITE PLANNING GUIDELINES

- 1 Incorporate renewable energy technologies (such as photovoltaic panels) on-site.
- 2 Use permeable paving materials (such as porous asphalt, porous concrete, permeable concrete pavers and grid systems filled with gravel or grass) where allowed by the Alternative Paving Material Ordinance (No. 182431).
- 3 Utilize adequate, uniform, and glare-free lighting such as dark-sky compliant fixtures, to avoid uneven light distribution, harsh shadows, and light spillage.
- 4 Reduce pollution by controlling soil erosion, waterway sedimentation and airborne dust generation.
- 5 Seamlessly integrate the SUSMP and LID elements into the project design.



The Gatsby Homes integrate photovoltaic panels into its roof for enhanced energy efficiency.



Mature trees should be preserved during small lot construction.

BUILDING GUIDELINES

- 1 Use passive cooling systems like operable windows for ventilation.
- 2 Provide controllable systems such as localized thermostat control, task lighting, or localized lighting controls.
- 3 Provide connection between indoor and outdoor spaces to take advantage of natural light and ventilation.
- 4 Maximize water efficiency and minimize water waste within buildings.
- 5 Use energy efficient equipment to increase the energy efficiency of the buildings.
- 6 Use renewable, recycled, and regional materials.
- 7 Use certified wood provided from environmentally responsible forest management.
- 8 Use or redirect demolition material to recyclable or reusable centers (Ord. 181519).

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

- 1 Plant trees to shade buildings to reduce the heat island effect.
- 2 Facilitate storm water capture, retention and infiltration, and prevent runoff by using permeable or porous paving materials in lieu of concrete or asphalt. Collect, store, and reuse storm water for landscape irrigation as per SUSMP and LID requirements.
- 3 Los Angeles Low-Impact Development (LID) and Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) requirements mandate stormwater to be managed through filtration or reuse for all development projects, including small lot developments. There are various ways to incorporate storm water techniques while also using thoughtful design. The City offers different storm water management techniques that don't overwhelm the design of the project.

Some of the small scale Best Management Practices include:

1. Rain Barrels & Small Cisterns
2. Permeable or Porous Pavement Systems
3. Planter Boxes
4. Rain Gardens
5. Dry Wells

For more information, refer to the City of Los Angeles Low Impact Development Best Management Practices Handbook.



The Auburn 7 development provides enhanced landscaping along a DWP easement as a unique amenity for its residents.

7 Case Studies

Since the City of Los Angeles passed the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance in 2005, small lot projects have been under development in neighborhoods across Los Angeles. As of November 2013, over 160 subdivision cases have been filed, resulting in the approval of over 1,500 individual lots. 39 subdivisions were recorded, creating approximately 330 new lots on the County Assessment Roll.

This section of the handbook looks at model small lot subdivision developments built between 2006 and 2010 and highlights some outstanding features.

As these model projects demonstrate, the Small Lot Ordinance is not only increasing the quantity of housing available to the market, but also the variety. The Small Lot Ordinance helps developers provide housing to meet the demands of an increasingly disparate set of Angeleno needs and lifestyles.

ROCK ROW, EAGLE ROCK Heyday Partnership 1546 Yosemite Drive

15 homes
(16 condos allowable)
Zoning: RD1.5-1
Zoning Adjustments: 5

1st LEED Certified Small Lot Subdivision.

Each townhouse has a series of decks and balconies.

Simple maintenance organization for driveway, trash areas, and landscape.

Neighborhood council and Southern California Edison supported Heyday Partnership in being exempted from street widening.

Sustainable Features:
Permeable driveway, instant hot water heaters, indoor air quality control, green roofs, solar arrays.



Site Plan.



Architectural rendering highlighting roof gardens, entry ways and grasscrete driveway. Also note the visual interest created by the use of materials and varied window orientation.



Low water plants minimize water consumption and enhance the transition between the front sidewalk and building facade. Permeable paving material reduces the perceived width of a double-loaded driveway, while providing for a more comfortable pedestrian path of travel and reducing the amount of visible paving material.



The development contains landscaping along the project's public edge to create a pleasant pedestrian environment



A green roof helps absorb runoff, reduces the heat island effect, and provides an attractive amenity for residents.



The front two homes are configured with their main entrance close to the sidewalk. This, in addition to a small front landscape section and the Grasscrete paving material provides a good transition from the public to the private realm.

**AUBURN 7,
SILVER LAKE**
Mass Architects
2748 Auburn Street

7 homes built
Zoning: RD 1.5-1XL

2 levels of habitable flooring.

Only a 5" air gap between units requires more engineering for earthquake protection than a typical single family home.

Floor to ceiling windows.

Each unit has an option for solar electricity.

Informal agreement with the Department of Water and Power to use the front easement as garden space.

With no walls separating the front yard space the easement becomes a community amenity while still retaining the feel of a private yard



Variations in massing, window orientation and materials distinguish the dwellings.



Interior spaces have a good relationship with the exterior as all units have front garden space in the easement. There is a pedestrian path that runs between the landscaping and the homes which helps define the edge.



The front easement features a mix of fruit trees, vegetables and low-water ornamental plants.



Permeable paving (decomposed granite) allows the infiltration of storm water. Homes feature private patios.



Site furnishings make the development's public areas usable.



Community garden built on space leased from DWP

CULLEN STREET ART DISTRICT HOMES, Modative 2624 Cullen Street

3 homes built (4 allowed)
(2 single-family and 1 duplex)
Zoning: RD 1.5

Adjacent Culver City Arts District served as inspiration

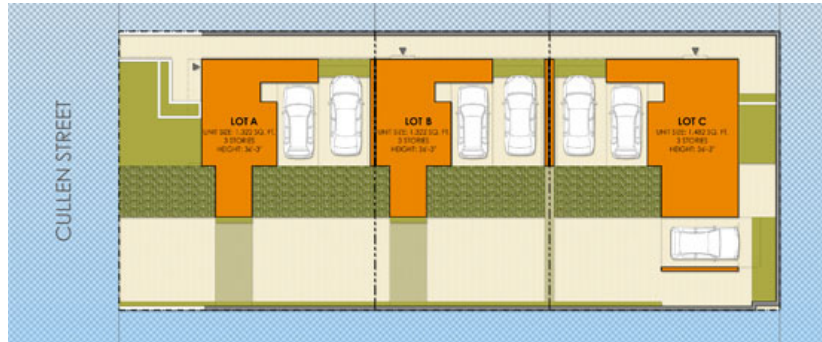
Rear unit has mother-in-law unit with separate entrance

All units have second story private deck/balcony

Front home has primary entrance oriented to the street with generous front landscaping to transition between public and private

Interior spaces as well as doors & windows were configured to provide privacy between homes and adjacent property.

Single-pitched roof has southern orientation to accommodate future solar panel installation



Site plan shows linear configuration with a shared driveway and a pedestrian path separate from driveway.



Front unit designed to have excellent orientation to the street with front entrance and pedestrian path connected to the public sidewalk, and lush front landscaping buffer. Although the second story deck extends away from the home, the rest of the massing is pulled away from the street which creates a nice transition between public and private space.



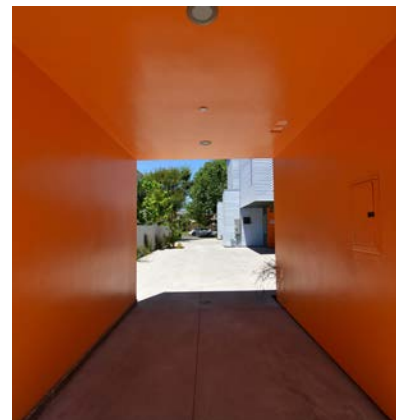
The homes are designed to each have second story private deck space that is pulled away from the property line and located above the driveway. This activates the access path while orienting the private spaces away from adjacent residential



Rear unit features a double car garage for primary home, and a single car garage for mother-in-law unit with private deck above parking.



Example of how private balcony space on the second floor can still activate the front of the property near the property edge



A striking color on the interior of the covered parking provides a strong visual link from the sidewalk to the rear of the development, creates character, and provides a connection with the other units

MALTMAN BUNGALOWS, ECHO PARK

Civic Enterprise Associates
918 Maltman, Echo Park

17 Homes
(18 units allowable)
Zoning: RD2-1VL
Zoning Variances: 5
Zoning Adjustments: 3

Historic bungalows provide
small compact units.

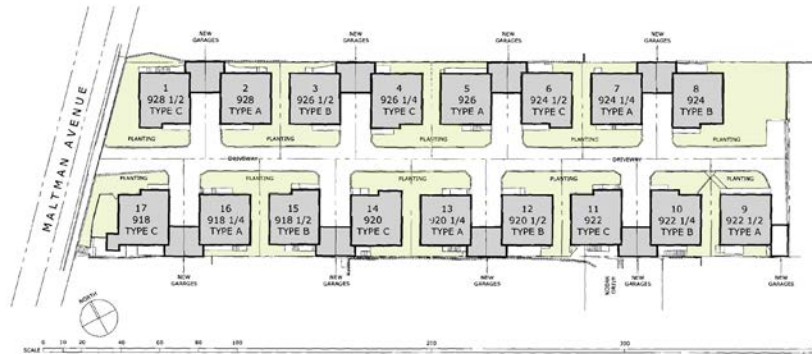
Porches, visibility, and close
proximity provide a safe
environment for residents.

A smaller truck from a
private trash company can
navigate a smaller driveway
for trash collection.

The utilities are on a mutual
easement. Units have a one
car garage; no guest parking
is provided.

Sustainable Features:
An adapted reuse and/
or an historic preservation
project is inherently more
sustainable than new
construction.

Selected by Architectural
Record magazine as one of
their 2008 Record Houses.



Site Plan.



Aerial.



Restoration preserved the charm of original units.



Narrow drive preserved front yard space and each unit boasts 1 shade + citrus tree. (Photo Credit: A. Marshburn)



Pedestrians share central driveway with autos.



Orientation and function of front door provides transparency and bolsters sense of community.



Attached garage with compact tandem parking.

**PERLITA MEWS,
ATWATER VILLAGE**
Corsini + Stark Architects
4254 Perlita Avenue

23 Homes

Indoor/Outdoor homes are organized around interior courtyards and designed in a Modernist style.

Sustainable Features:
Grasscrete paving allows water to reach the water table and reduces pollution from runoff.
Clerestory windows provide natural ventilation; heat rises through the top of the townhouse, cooling the units.
Fewer exterior walls limit the places where heat and energy can seep out.

Adaptable units: Units can be combined and expanded around the interior courtyards. More affordable than buying one very large house. Rear units can be separated since they have a rear staircase.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the 23 units, each with a courtyard space.



This home on one of the edges of the project shows the interior courtyard space connected to a side yard, providing additional usable open space.



The development features 23 homes with double-loaded garages on a center access driveway and internal courtyards



The interior courtyard spaces create an outdoor room that also provides access to light and air for the second story.



Rendering of how the garage, driveway, and primary entrance interact



Rendering of a courtyard created by two adjacent buildings. While each side is a private patio, joining these spaces provides the perception of a larger volume of space.

PREUSS FOUR, CIENEGA HEIGHTS

Danny Cerezo, Architect
2008 Preuss Road

4 homes built (5 allowed)

Zoning: RD 1.5-1

Average lot size: 1,780-2,560 s.f.

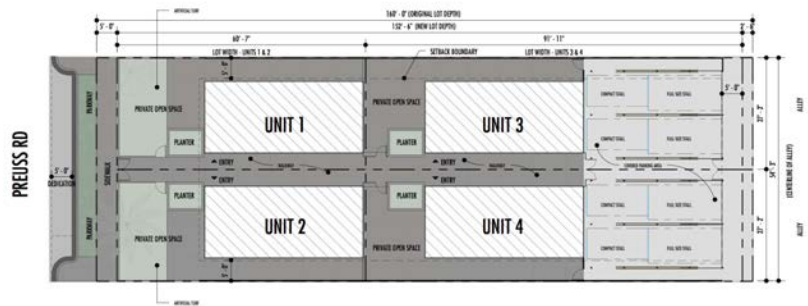
Each unit is 2 stories with a 3 bedroom/3 bathroom configuration

All homes feature over 400 s.f. of private open space off of the main living level.

Each home also features a 2.8Kw solar panel system as a standard feature.

All hardwood flooring has been reclaimed from a barn in Tennessee that was slated for demolition.

Sustainable features include exterior fiber cement siding installed as a rain screen system, electric vehicle chargers, bio-filtration planters, and a central heating and air is multi-zoned to maximize comfort.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units with parking accessed via an alley and a 6 foot wide pedestrian passageway in the center. Parking for all homes is accomplished with a tandem configuration to the rear of the site.



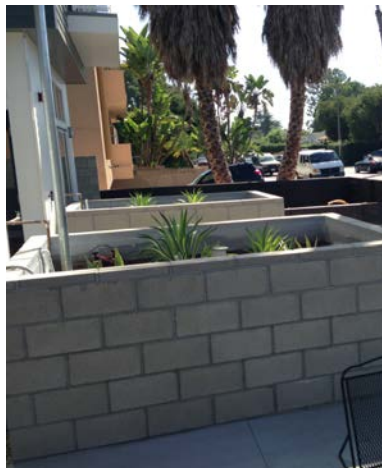
Front elevation shows good height and massing relationship with surrounding structures and balconies facing the public sidewalk.



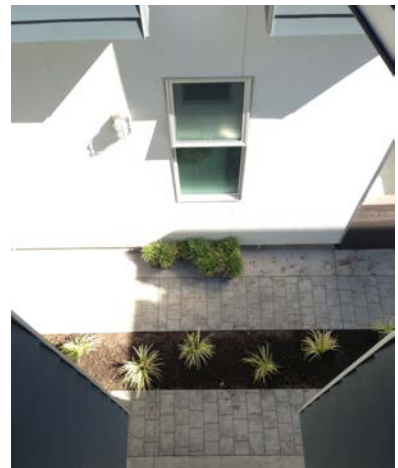
The front two homes are designed to have an almost typical front yard configuration with a patio and green space adjacent to the public sidewalk.



A 6 foot wide pedestrian path through the center of the project provides both access from the parking and common amenity space.



Planters in the front yard allow opportunities for landscaping to buffer common spaces from private spaces.



The pedestrian access path is open to the sky providing ample access to light and air for each home.

**BUZZ COURT,
SILVER LAKE**
Heyday Partnership
Buzz Court, Los Angeles,
90039

6 homes built (6 allowed)

Zoning: (Q)C2-1VL

Average lot size: 1,720 s.f.

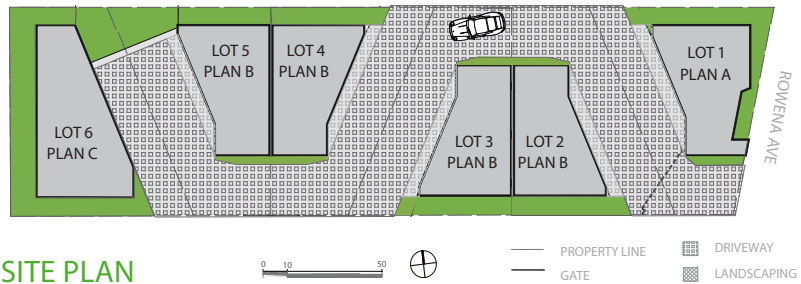
Variances/adjustments: 6

Each home is 3 stories with a rooftop deck as amenity space

The zigzag pattern allows for greater separation between units and creates an added sense of privacy for rear units

Common maintenance agreement for driveway, access gate, trash area, and landscape

Additional notes: Certified LEED Platinum, Permeable Driveway, Solar Arrays, Instant Hot Water Heaters, Indoor Air Quality Controls, Exceed Title-24 by >30%, Green Roofs.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units in a unique zigzag pattern that staggers the home placement on either side of the narrow lot.



The primary entry of the front home is clearly delineated by landscape planters and the massing of the facade. A second floor balcony brings an element of private space into the public environment, activating both the front facade and the sidewalk of this more urban streetscape.



The Buzz Court project is located along a more urban streetscape than other small lot development. As a result, the architects design a facade that looks more commercial than residential while still placing residential elements like a balcony on the front facade.



The unique spatial arrangement of the development causes the homes to have a staggered effect, making the spaces between buildings seem more open.



The facade treatment provides for a visually interesting and appealing display at night. The shading element provides privacy for the residents while still allowing light to be displayed along the sidewalk. The front entrance is clearly illuminated for safety and delineation.



While the homes are configured to provide adequate access to the garages for cars, the interior spaces are arranged so that windows and balconies do not directly face each other. This creates a better sense of privacy for homes that are closely spaced.

EDGECLIFFE TERRACE, SILVER LAKE

Green City Building Company
1372 Edgecliffe Drive, Los Angeles

4 homes built (4 allowed)

Zoning: RD1.5-1VL

Average lot size: 1,840 s.f.

Variances/adjustments: only an “early start” variance

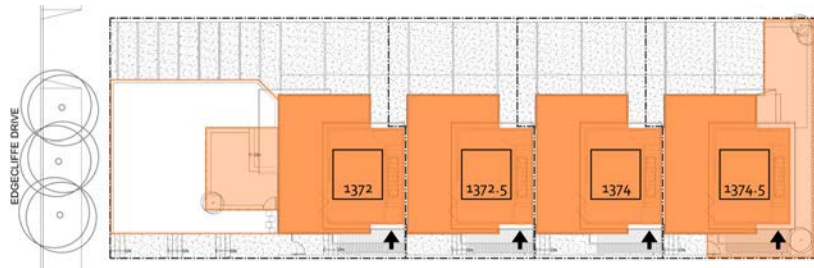
Key design elements include corner glass, natural cedar siding, and metal exterior accents.

The front and rear houses have ground level open garden space, while all units have rooftop terraces.

The project was designed to be neighborhood appropriate, with deferential massing by cutting the garages into the up-slope and providing a significant third floor setback.

A 35' front yard building line setback was provided and landscaped.

Three existing decades-old street trees were preserved as part of the project.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units on the narrow lot with ample front yard landscaping and a large balcony/deck for the rear unit



The slightly sloping site resulted in the units having a “stacked” configuration and the garages being cut into the slope. A 35 foot front setback was provided



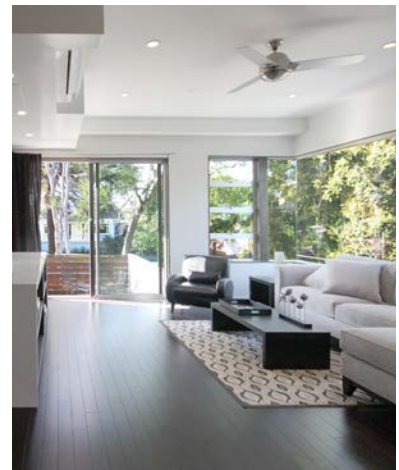
The site has a two story building on one side and a single story residence on the other. As a result, the mass and height of the buildings are located on the side adjacent to the two story building.



The entries for each individual home are separated from the driveway and have a direct connection to the public sidewalk.



The view from the rear deck shows how the units are "stacked" to follow the slope of the site. All homes also have window orientation over the driveway to help activate the space.



Interior spaces are organized around access to light and air with large windows and a balcony (front unit)

VESPER VILLAGE, VAN NUYS

Ken Stockton, Architects
Silverberg Development Corp.
14550 West Kittridge Street

16 Homes
(51 units allowable)
Zoning: CR-1VL-CDO
Zoning Variances: 3
Zoning Adjustments: 4

Built prior to the Small Lot Ordinance, this development provided the framework for the passage of the Ordinance.

Was a result of community opposition to new apartment complexes. Individual owner-occupied homes were preferable. Small Lot subdivision was a compromise.

The utilities are on a mutual easement. Units have a one car garage; no guest parking is provided.

Has a 3-foot separation between homes.

Uses a very modest annual maintenance fund for the driveway and mail boxes. No home owners association.



Site Plan.



Three-foot-deep front yards soften the transition from stucco facade to hard-scape drive.



The 26-foot width between homes is syncopated with a 32' distance occurring at the garage/parking. This articulates the massing of the buildings and prevent the pedestrian from feeling "boxed in".



Two-foot separation between homes.



Pedestrian environment along the edge of the development features pleasant landscaping and trees.



Open sight lines to front doors.

APPENDIX A

VENICE SPECIFIC PLAN VERIFICATION

The community of Venice has a refined set of small lot guidelines that are based on the Venice Coastal Specific Plan. A summary follows. Architects and developers proposing a small lot project for Venice should consult the Specific Plan, and where it is not explicit, refer to the Los Angeles Municipal Code, including the Small Lot Ordinance.

1. **Parking:** Required parking for subdivision projects shall be based on the parking requirements pursuant to the Venice Coastal Specific Plan—2 or 3 spaces, depending on lot width. Each new lot resulting from a small lot subdivision that contains one unit will fall under the “single family dwelling” category in the Specific Plan. For purposes of parking calculations, small lot subdivisions shall be considered “less than 40 feet in width, or less than 35 feet in width if adjacent to an alley.” Where new lots resulting from a small lot subdivision include multiple units on a lot, they shall provide 2.25 parking spaces for each dwelling unit.
2. **Driveways:** All driveways and vehicular access shall be from the alleys, when present. When projects abut an alley, each newly resulting subdivided lot shall be accessible from the alley and not the street. Exceptions may be made for existing structures where alley access is infeasible.
3. **Setbacks:** Front, rear and side yard setbacks abutting an area outside of the subdivision shall be consistent with the Specific Plan, where it sets limitations. This includes locations in which new lots abut a lot that is not created pursuant to the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance and not part of the project, or where the lots abut a waterway or street.
4. **Multiple Lots:** Existing lots may be subdivided into multiple lots so long as the averaged newly resulting lot size is equivalent to the minimum requirement for “lot area per dwelling unit” established for each residential zone in the LAMC, pursuant to the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance.
5. **Multiple Units:** Lots subdivided pursuant to the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance shall be limited to one unit per resultant lot, unless the lot size is large enough to permit additional units based on the “lot area per dwelling unit” calculation established for each residential zone. In no case may a newly resultant lot contain more than three units. Generally, the combined density of the newly resulting lots shall not exceed the permitted density of the original lot, pre-subdivision. For Subareas of Venice that restrict density by limiting the number of units on a lot by a defined number, the resulting density from multiple lots may increase the originally permitted density on one original lot. Unit restrictions prescribed for Subareas shall still apply to individual resulting lots, but not over the entire pre-subdivided area.

VENICE SPECIFIC PLAN VERIFICATION (CONTINUED)

6. **Affordable Replacement Units:** Projects in some Subareas of Venice are required to provide “Replacement Affordable Unit(s)” as defined in Section 5(T) of the Specific Plan when there are any units in excess of two units on newly resulting single lots. The requirement to replace an affordable unit will increase the number of units that would otherwise be permitted under the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance only when the development includes three units on a lot. Mello Act requirements to replace affordable units still apply in all circumstances, and consistent with the Specific Plan, any affordable replacement units shall be replaced on the small lot subdivision project site.
7. **Density:** Density shall not exceed the density permitted by zoning of the original lot, which is the “lot area per dwelling unit” restriction for each zone as determined by the Venice Coastal Specific Plan, or when not explicit in the Specific Plan, the Los Angeles Municipal Code.

APPENDIX B

PRE-FILING PREPARATION LIST AND MEETING FORM

Small Lot Meeting Request:

Prior to Meeting:

Our goal is to ensure that your meeting goes as smoothly as possible. In preparation for your time with the Planning Department staff, please carefully read through, complete, and return (electronically) two (2) business days prior to your appointment day, the required information contained in this checklist to ensure that items that need attention are addressed during the course of the meeting.

1. Read through Small Lot Ordinance No. 176354. You can find it on:
 - <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/>
 - click on Policy Initiatives
 - click on Housing
 - click on Small Lot Subdivision (Townhome) Ordinance
 - or
 - Full address:
(<http://cityplanning.lacity.org/PolicyInitiatives/Housing/Small%20Lot/SmallLot-DesignGuide.pdf>)
2. Also, read through:
 - Small Lot Guidelines
 - FAQ sheet
 - Notes
3. Bring 3 copies each of the following:
 - Small Lot Meeting form (pages 2 and 3)
 - Full ZIMAS property report with map (<http://zimas.lacity.org/>)
 - Site or Plot plans with dimensions, lot areas, driveways, etc.

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Fill in the following information and return this form to the at least two (2) business days prior to your scheduled meeting date.

Case Number: (if applicable)	
Address / Location / Neighborhood:	
Case Planner: (if applicable)	
Project Description:	
Objective from meeting with UDS, Subdivision or Expedited:	

PART 2: SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Provide the following materials (if available) in electronic/digital format. (Email is preferred)

1. Entitlement Application
2. Project Architectural Plans (Floors/Elevations/ Sections)
3. Site Plan
4. Site Photos, and Adjacent Property Photos
5. Aerial Photos
6. Landscape Plans
7. Radius Map
8. Zoning Map

PART 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Name(s)/relationship of people presenting the proposed project:

Name: _____	Name: _____
Company: _____	Company: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____
Email: _____	Email: _____
Owner__Engineer__Developer__Architect__	Owner__Engineer__Developer__ Architect__
Other: _____	Other: _____

Existing Zoning: _____ Proposed Zoning: _____

Applicable uses on adjacent properties

Single family	Apartments	Commercial	Condos
Industrial	School	Park	Other: _____

Proposed number of lots and units: _____

Proposed number of guest parking spaces on-site: (if applicable) _____

Front yard setbacks on adjacent and nearby properties: _____

Proposed lots range in area from: _____ sq. ft. to: _____ sq. ft.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the Small Lot Ordinance require a home owners association?

No, you do not need a home owners association (you can have one if you like). Instead, you can use a maintenance association formed to maintain the areas used in common, e.g. driveways, landscape, trash location, etc.

Do you have to identify each proposed lot?

Yes. You need to show the lot lines on the tract map or parcel map for all proposed lots and must indicate the front yards of each.

What do I do with common areas such as parking and landscape?

You can record reciprocal easement in these common areas.

Can parking spaces be separate from dwellings?

Yes. Parking spaces may be grouped together on a separate lot within the boundaries of the tract or parcel map. You may not place grouped parking under the development – the lots must remain fee simple.

What is the minimum size a lot can be?

Small lots must be at least 600 s.f.

Does this Ordinance apply to R2 Zoning?

This Ordinance almost never applies to R2 Zoning. Please consult the Department of City Planning Geoteam if you are considering an R2 lot.

What about setbacks required for the Small Lot Ordinance?

No front yard setbacks are required within an approved small lot subdivision. However, a five foot setback is required from any property adjacent to the perimeter of the small lot tract or parcel map.

What about fences and walls?

Fences and walls within 5 feet of the front lot line (see FAQ above) shall be no more than 42 inches in height. Fences and walls within five feet of the side and rear lot lines shall be no more than 6 feet in height.

Why are you asking for all of the setback dimensions during the tract or parcel map approval process?

If you wish to begin construction before the final map records, then you must also file a Zoning Administrator Case for all setbacks that deviate from the Los Angeles Municipal Code as if the Lots have not recorded.

What are the requirements for tract/parcel map filings?

1. Tract maps must be filed as Vesting Tentative Tract Maps with accompanying site plan layout, elevations and other illustrative information. Site plan layout is to be superimposed on proposed lot lines.
2. Parcel Maps must be filed with accompanying site plan layout, elevations and other illustrative information. Site plan layout is to be superimposed on proposed lot lines.
3. Entitle tentative map or preliminary parcel map:
“Vesting Tentative Tract Map No. _____ (or “Preliminary Parcel Map No. _____”) for Small Lot Subdivision Purposes”
4. Each Tentative tract or Preliminary parcel map must include:

“NOTE: Small Lot Single Family Subdivision in the _____Zone, per Ordinance No. 176,354.”

What are requirements for the maps?

1. Reciprocal easements: Easement(s) outside of the building envelopes shall be identified for any underground utilities – water, sewer, gas, irrigation etc. – that serve all homes and must cross over other lots to serve those homes.
2. Easement(s) outside of building envelopes must be identified for electrical, cable, satellite, telephone or similar lines for the same reason.
3. Easement(s) outside the building envelope must be identified for vehicular, pedestrian access across lot lines; and drainage across property lines.

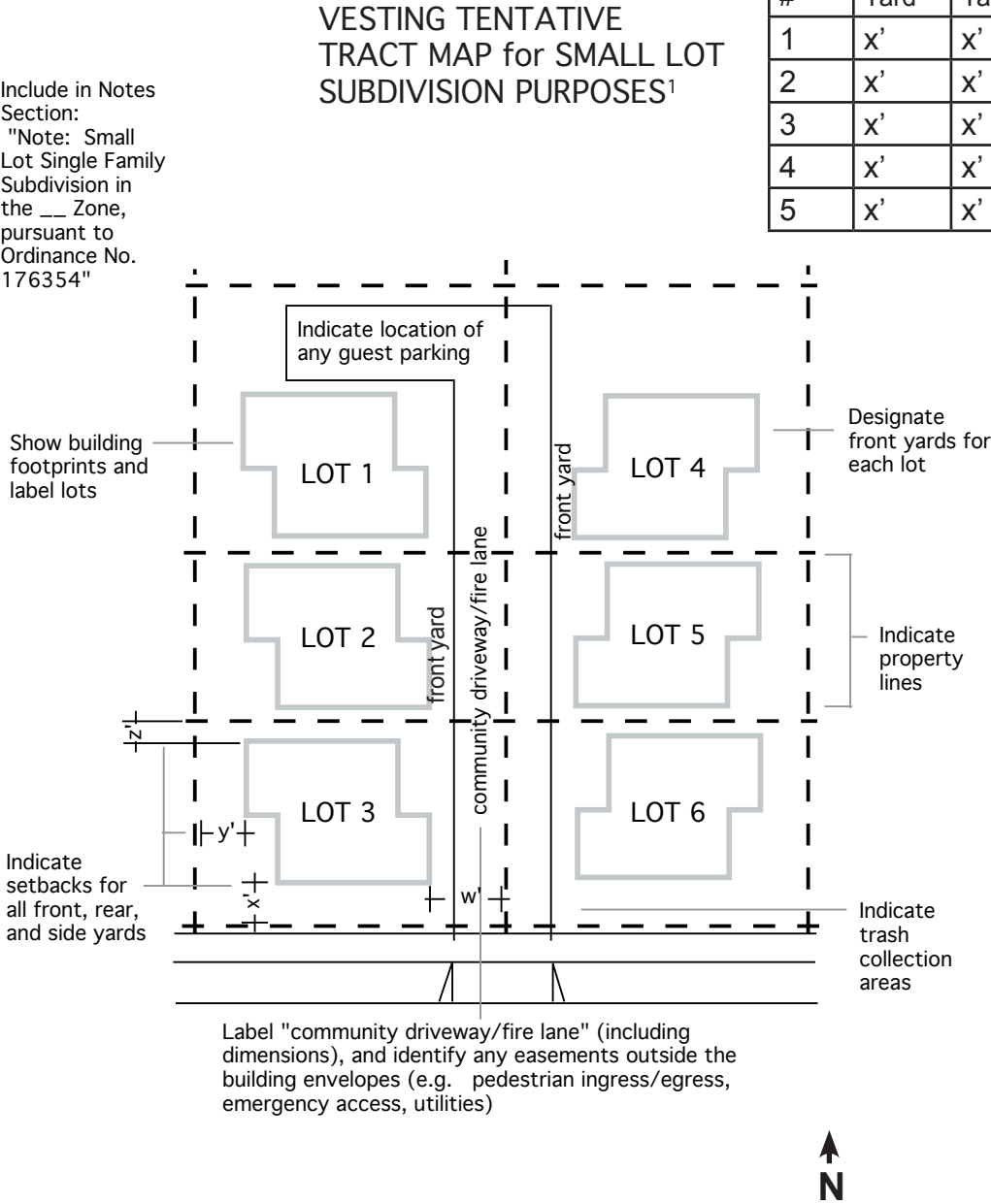
When can I submit construction drawings to the Department of Building and Safety for Plan Check?

The Department of Building and Safety will ONLY accept construction drawings for Plan Check after the effective date of the Advisory Agency approval under the Small Lot Ordinance of a subdivision for the division of land (Tract or Parcel Map). The early submittal must be accompanied by an effective Zoning Administrator determination specifically permitting deviations from the Zone Code for setbacks/separation between buildings as if the map has not recorded.

How long will it take to get my plans approved?

We advise that you check with the Department of Building and Safety for their Plan Check procedures (including expediting review); with the relevant Geoteam in the Planning Department for the subdivision approval times. Projects may pay an extra fee for expedited review through the Planning Department's Expedite Section – the procedure takes approximately 90 days.

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE SUBDIVISION LAYOUT



1. All other information required by Sec. 17.00 for filing is also required but is not shown in this example.

For more information about the City of Los Angeles Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance, Small Lot Design Guidelines, and additional resources, visit the following:

Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance:

http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2004/04-1546_ORD_176354_01-31-2005.pdf

Small Lot Design Guidelines:

<http://urbandesignla.com/resources/SmallLotDesignGuidelines.php>

California Green Building Standards Code (Cal Green):

http://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/CALGreen/2010_CA_Green_Bldg.pdf

City of Los Angeles Low Impact Development Best Management Practices Handbook:

http://www.lastormwater.org/wp-content/files_mf/lidhandbookfinal62212.pdf

Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) and Low-Impact Development (LID) Ordinance (No. 181899):

http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2009/09-1554_ord_181899.pdf

Storm Water Pollution Control Ordinance (No. 173494):

http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/1999/99-2420_ORD_173494_09-14-2000.pdf

Landscape Ordinance (No. 170978):

http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/1992/92-0043_ORD_170978_04-03-1996.pdf

Alternative Paving Material Ordinance (No. 182431):

http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2011/11-1331_ord_182431.pdf

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Eric Garcetti

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