SAN FRANCISCO
DESIGN STANDARDS

OCTOBER 2024

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Cover photo: Aerial of The Painted Ladies houses with wide view of San Francisco city buildings and skyscrapers. Photo by Nicholas Klein / iStock.

San Francisco Design Standards

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Purpose of This Document

San Francisco values excellent building and urban design. The standards in this document are intended to assure that new buildings are well designed and contribute to vibrant urban places. These objective standards involve no personal or subjective judgment and are publicly available and verifiable by reference. The standards complement but do not replace existing obligations in the Planning Code.

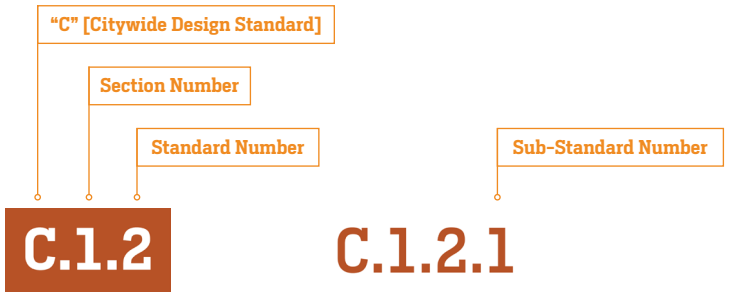
The Corridor

How to Use This Document

The Design Standards are covered in two chapters, Site Design and Architecture. Site design addresses the overall building form and how it is placed on a site and the relationship with its surroundings. These include ground floor setbacks, upper story stepbacks, and modulation covering a range of scales from multi-acre sites to smaller mid-block properties. The Architecture chapter focuses on finer grained aspects of a new building that create depth, texture and expression that support an engaging pedestrian-friendly environment.

The standards in this document are regulatory and compliance is mandatory, and are to be used in concert with development standards in the Planning Code. This document will often refer to certain Planning Code sections to find specific requirements for setbacks, heights, and other controls that define a site's development capacity.

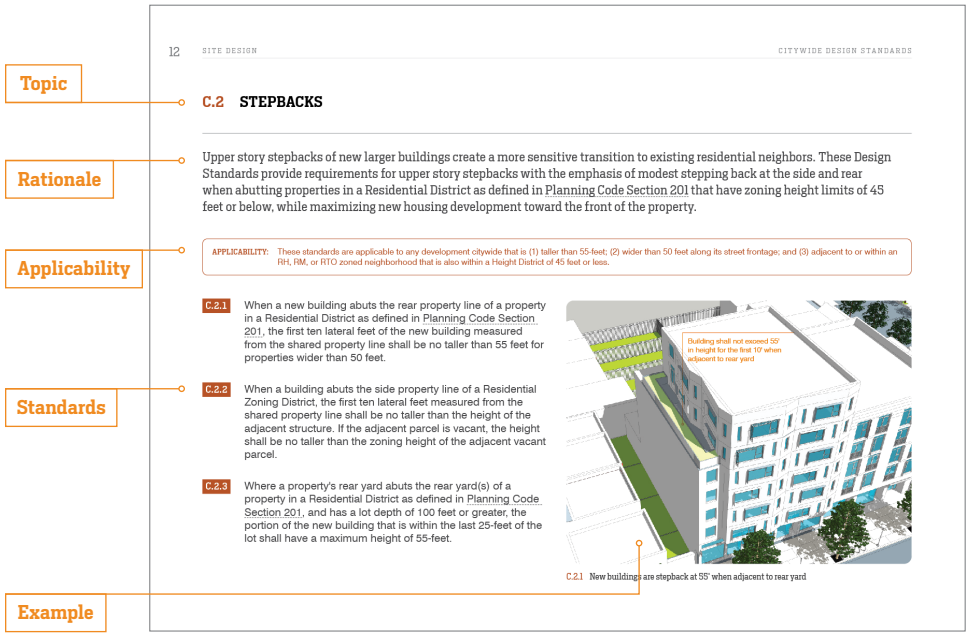
Design Standards found only in this document (and not in the Planning Code) are assigned specific numbers in the following format:



Application of the Standards

Projects subject to the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) under California Government Code Section 65589.5 are subject only to objective design standards. HAA-eligible projects are generally those that construct two or more dwelling units, including mixed-use developments that are at least two-thirds residential. In addition to the standards contained in the Planning Code, HAA-eligible projects must comply with the San Francisco Design Standards. Projects not subject to the HAA are subject to the City's adopted design guidelines, as follows: Urban Design Guidelines, Residential Design Guidelines, and Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines.

Standard Structure: Each standard is described at the top of the page, followed by a sidebar that explains the rationale for the standard, and illustrations that further describe its application. Projects must satisfy all applicable standards. Where these standards differ from the Planning Code, the Planning Code shall govern.




OUTSIDE
Inside
ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW


OUTSIDE

SITE DESIGN

C.1 LARGE SITES

Ensure that block sizes for new housing support walkable neighborhoods. Large blocks inhibit pedestrian movement by lengthening the distances between points, discouraging people from walking to nearby destinations and from using transit.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any site citywide that meets the description herein, except for those that are subject to Planning Code Section 270.2.

Development lots that are either (1) two acres or larger, or (2) have a frontage of 200 feet or greater on block frontage that is 400 feet or greater, must be divided into smaller resultant lots in either one of the two following ways:

C.1.1 **Option 1:** Lots shall be divided into resultant blocks such that no block frontage exceeds a dimension of 300 feet and no block perimeter exceeds a total dimension of 1,200 feet. In such cases, resultant blocks shall be separated from each other by newly created public street(s) or alley(s) or publicly-accessible privately-owned street(s) or alley(s). Such streets shall meet San Francisco street standards (including Better Streets Plan standards). If privately-owned street(s) or alley(s) are created, they shall be maintained and provide public access under the same standards provided in Planning Code Section 270.2 (f).

C.1.2 **Option 2:** Block faces up to 400 feet with no block perimeter exceeding a total dimension of 1,400 feet. Resultant blocks must meet the same separation standards as set forth in C.1.1 above. These larger blocks shall provide a mid-block pedestrian passageway on off corridor block faces:

C.1.2.1 Be located at the middle portion of the subject block face, perpendicular to the subject frontage and connect to existing adjacent streets and alleys, where they exist. A passageway that crosses the block at its center line or 50 lateral feet of the block's center line shall be considered as having met this standard. Where the subject lot is not within the central portion of its block, a passageway that crosses the lot at its centerline or 50 lateral feet of the lot's center line shall be considered as having met this standard.

C.1.2.2 Be open to the public 24 hours a day. Fences and or gates that would limit public access at any point within the passageway shall not be permitted;

C.1.2.3 Provide no private vehicular access;

C.1.2.4 Have a minimum width of 20 feet measured from building to building at any point.

C.1.2.5 Have a minimum clear walking width of 10 feet free of any obstructions.

C.1.2.6 Have at least 60 percent of the area of the alley or pathway open to the sky. Obstructions permitted within setbacks pursuant to Section 136 may be located within the portion of the alley or pathway that is required to be open to the sky. All portions of the alley or pathway not open to the sky shall have a minimum clearance height from grade of 15 feet at all points;

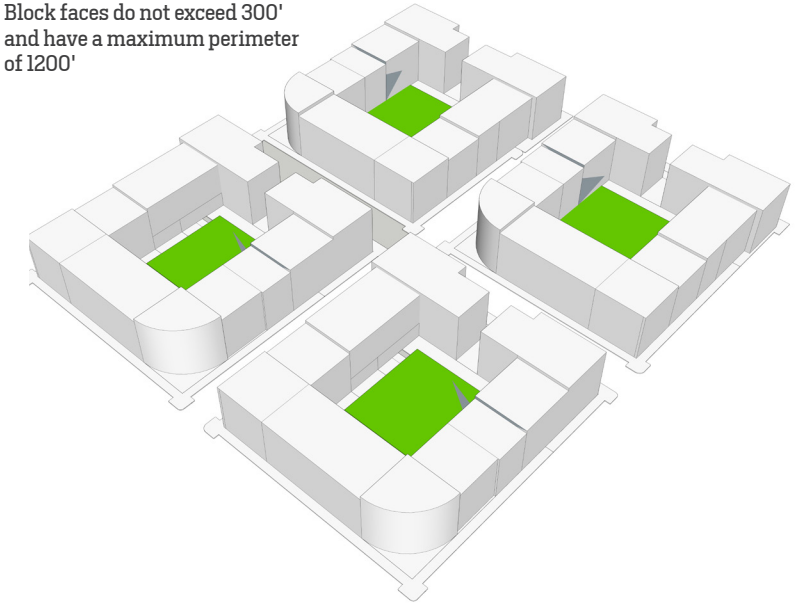
C.1.2.7 Be free of any changes in grade or steps not required by the underlying natural topography and average grade; be fronted by active ground floor uses, as defined in Section 145.1, for no less than 60% of their fronting length and in no case feature more than 50-feet of inactive use in any single segment.

C.1.2.8 Be configured to allow clear visual access from one end of the passageway through the development lot to its opposite end.

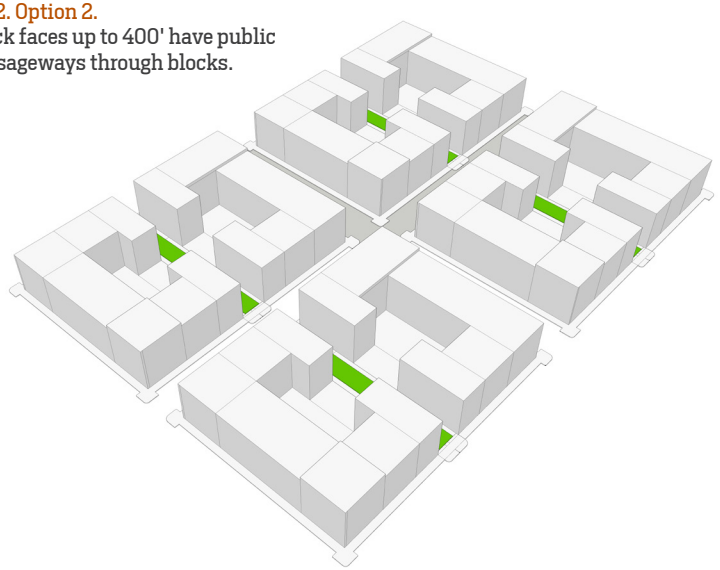
C.1.2.9 Maintenance and access provisions of Planning Code section(s) 270.1(d)-(f) shall also apply to passageways created under this Section.

Example of how a large site could be broken up into smaller, walkable blocks.

C.1.1. Option 1.
Block faces do not exceed 300' and have a maximum perimeter of 1200'



C.1.2. Option 2.
Block faces up to 400' have public passageways through blocks.



C.2 STEPBACKS

Upper story stepbacks of new larger buildings create a more sensitive transition to existing residential neighbors. These Design Standards provide requirements for upper story stepbacks with the emphasis of modest stepping back at the side and rear when abutting properties in a Residential District as defined in Planning Code Section 201 that have zoning height limits of 45 feet or below, while maximizing new housing development toward the front of the property.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that is (1) taller than 55-feet; (2) wider than 50 feet along its street frontage; and (3) adjacent to or within an RH, RM, or RTO zoned neighborhood that is also within a Height District of 45 feet or less.

C.2.1 When a new building abuts the rear property line of a property in a Residential District as defined in Planning Code Section 201, the first ten lateral feet of the new building measured from the shared property line shall be no taller than 55 feet for properties wider than 50 feet.

C.2.2 When a building abuts the side property line of a Residential Zoning District, the first ten lateral feet measured from the shared property line shall be no taller than the height of the adjacent structure. If the adjacent parcel is vacant, the height shall be no taller than the zoning height of the adjacent vacant parcel.

C.2.3 Where a property's rear yard abuts the rear yard(s) of a property in a Residential District as defined in Planning Code Section 201, and has a lot depth of 100 feet or greater, the portion of the new building that is within the last 25-feet of the lot shall have a maximum height of 55-feet.

C.2.1 New buildings are stepback at 55' when adjacent to rear yard

C.2.3 When rear yard of project abuts rear yard of a Residential Zoning District the building must step down to 55' when within 25' of lot depth.

C.2.2 When abutting a side property line of a Residential Zoning District the first 10' shall be no taller than adjacent home

C.3 TALL BUILDINGS

Mass of buildings above a height of 85-feet should be reduced in bulk to reduce their impact on the street and surrounding properties. Buildings above 140-feet height shall be sculpted with consideration given to tapering their form and assuring sufficient views through multiple towers. See also Planning Code Section 270

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that is taller than 85 feet and where the applicable Bulk District does not prescribe building dimension limitations or separation requirements are provided in Planning Code Section 270. Where an applicable Bulk District prescribes maximum building dimension above a certain height threshold but does not prescribe building separation standards, the separation standards of this document shall apply above the specified height threshold in Planning Code Table 270. The standards in this Section S3 do not apply in bulk districts S, S-2, TI, TB, CP, HP, PM, TI, EP, CS, IB, PY (e.g. Bulk Districts A through N, R, R-2, V, OS, S, S-2, T, TB, CP, HP, PM, TI, EP, CS, IB, PY)

The following bulk limits and separation requirements apply to buildings above 85-feet in height unless identified elsewhere in the Planning Code.

C.3.1 Buildings between 85 feet and 140 feet in height (exclusive of permitted height exceptions):

C.3.1.1 Minimum 15-foot setback from side property line(s) for the portion(s) of the building above 85 feet.

C.3.1.2 For portions of the building above 85 feet, the average floor plate shall not exceed 12,000 square feet.

C.3.1.3 Above 85 feet, a maximum length of 130 feet is permitted, and a maximum diagonal of 160 feet is permitted.

C.3.1.4 Building portions above 85 feet and up to 140 feet must maintain a 30-foot distance from other buildings above 85 feet.

C.3.2 Buildings above 140 feet in height (exclusive of permitted height exceptions set forth in the Planning Code) must meet the following requirements:

C.3.2.1 Above 85 feet, a maximum length of 130 feet is permitted, and a maximum diagonal of 160 feet is permitted.

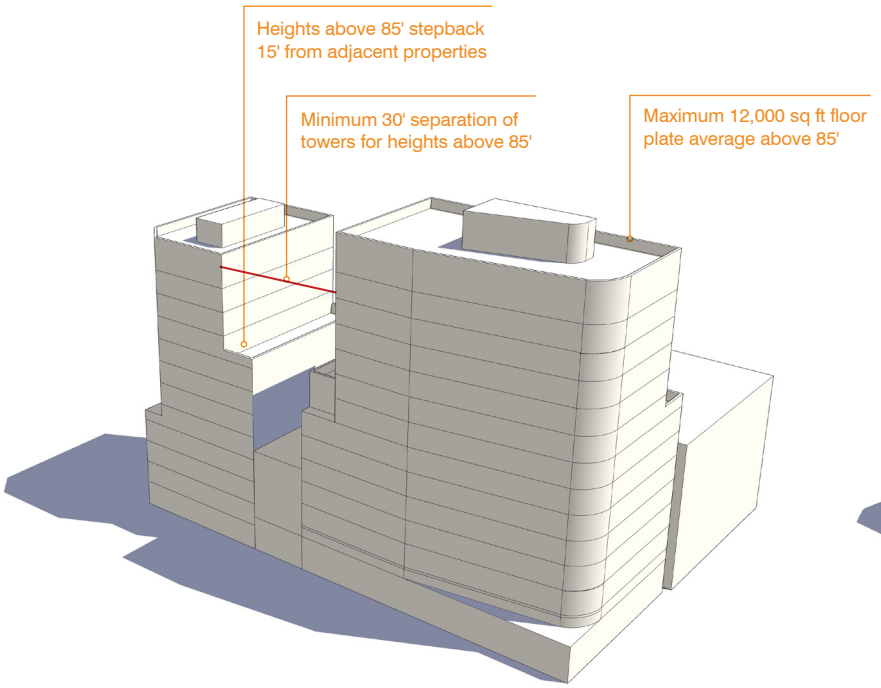
C.3.2.2 For portions above 85 feet, the average floor plate shall not exceed 12,000 square feet.

C.3.2.3 The tower portion of the building shall be setback from any shared property line(s) by 15 feet.

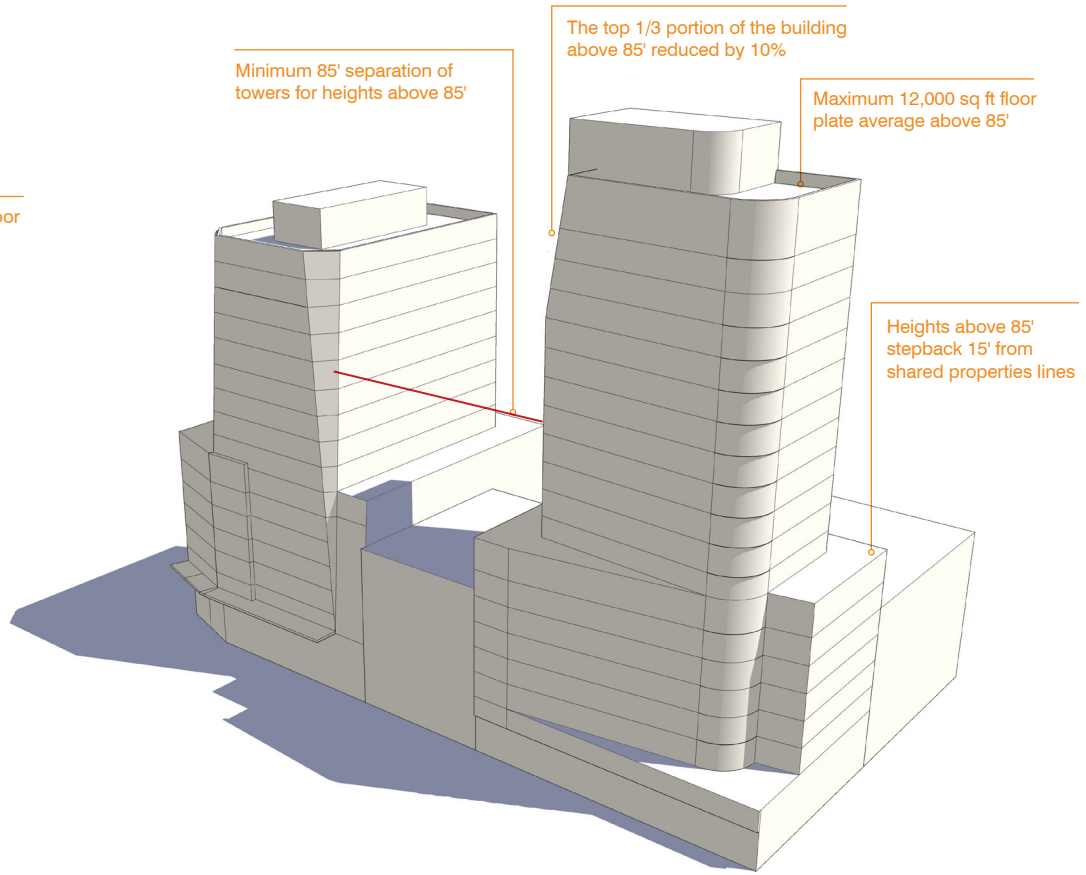
C.3.2.4 Building portions above 85 feet shall be separated by no less than 85 feet from other buildings above 85 feet.

C.3.2.5 For portions above 85 feet, a maximum unbroken wall width of 100 feet is permitted. Walls of more than 100 feet in width shall provide relief through a notch of at least 10 feet by 10 feet or a change in plane of at least 10 feet.

C.3.2.6 The top 1/3 portion of the building above 85 feet shall be reduced in both square footage and the allowed maximum dimensions described above by 10 percent.



C.3.1
BUILDINGS 85'-140'



C.3.2
BUILDINGS TALLER THAN 140'

C.4 MODULATION

Breaking up the massing of long building façades encourages architectural variety and prevents monotonous streetscapes.

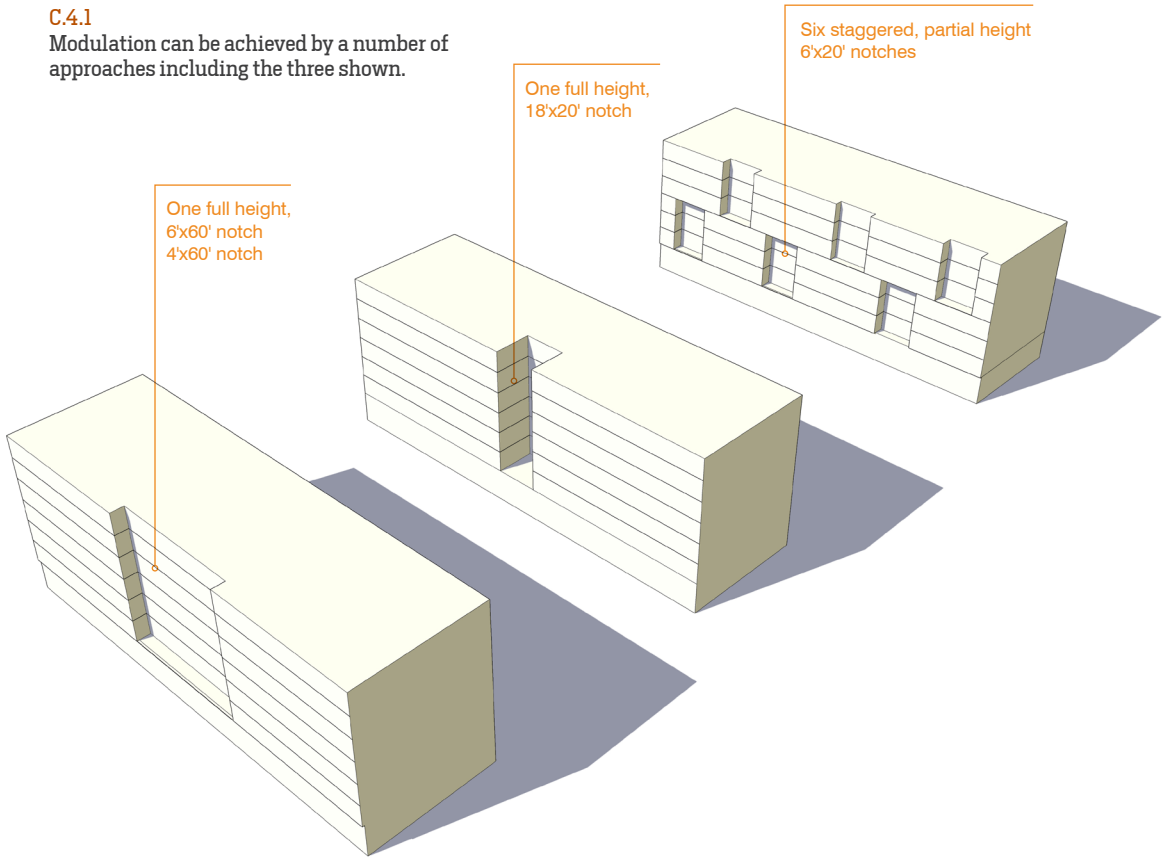
APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that is wider than 200 feet along its street frontage and is not otherwise subject to Planning Code Section 270.1. Modulation requirements here are for portions of buildings above the ground floor and below 85-feet in height [i.e. not the tower portion of a building].

C.4.1 Building frontages greater than 200 feet along a street or alley must be modulated using the following method:

Subtract 3600 gross cubic feet from each full floor above the ground floor on the public right of way adjacent façade(s), where each subtraction is at least four feet deep and four feet wide and 8 feet tall along the frontage.

For every additional 50 feet of building frontage over 200 feet, an additional 900 cubic feet must be subtracted from each floor above the ground floor.

C.4.1
Modulation can be achieved by a number of approaches including the three shown.



Examples of different modulation approaches found throughout the city.

C.5 LIGHTWELLS AND SIDE SETBACKS

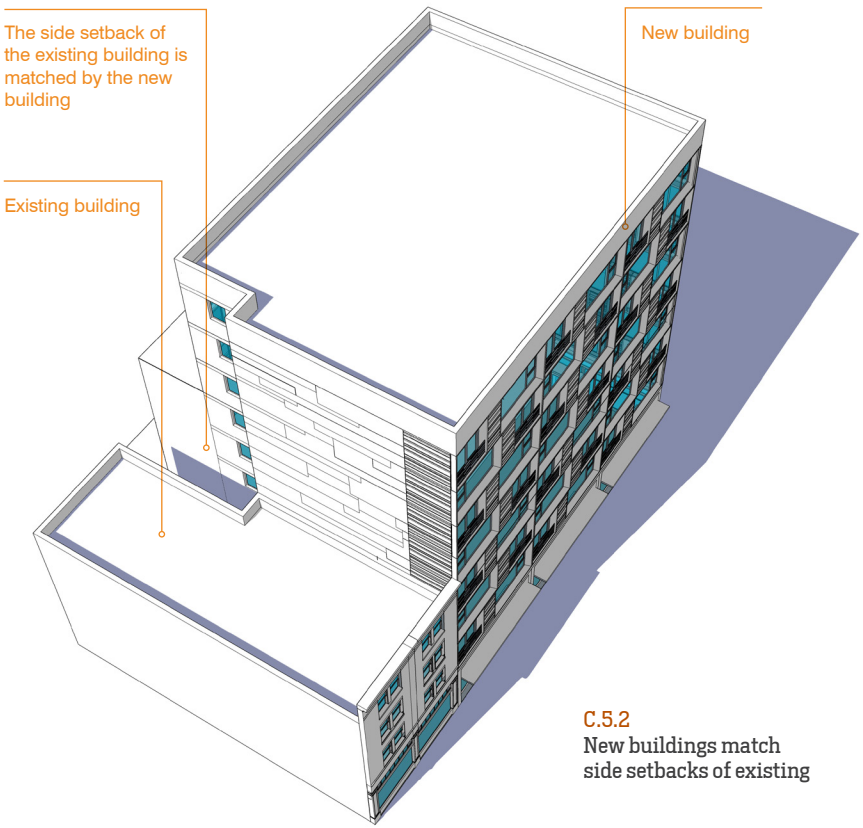
Side setbacks and lightwells are a common feature of existing residential structures and enable natural light and air to reach living spaces further from streets or rear yards. New development must be sensitive to these existing conditions by incorporating matching lightwell and stepbacks and setting back occupiable space on roofs.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that is adjacent to a residential structure that features a lightwell or side setback described here.

C.5.1 Existing adjacent lightwells above the ground floor shall be matched by the new building when the existing lightwell is ten feet deep or less from the property line and the light well features windows. The matching lightwell in the new structure shall have a minimum depth of three feet from the property line and shall match the location of the adjacent lightwell for a minimum of 75% of existing lightwell's width.

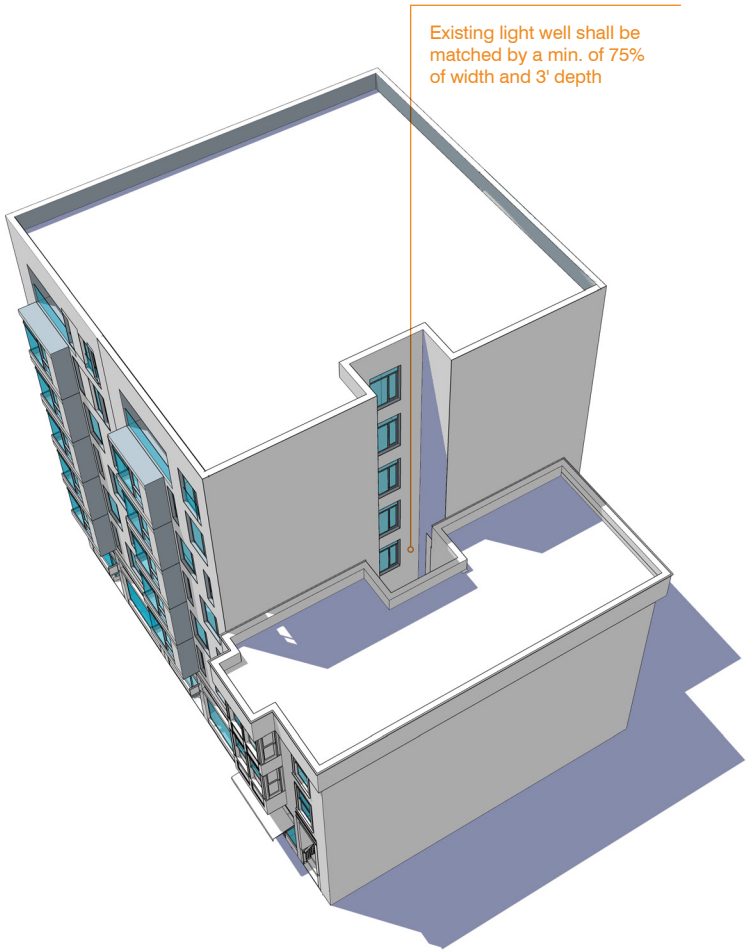
C.5.2 For projects 55' or greater in lot width adjacent to a Residential Zoning District features a side setback less than ten feet that serves a window it shall be matched by setting back at the same level of the setback and every level above. The setback shall have a minimum depth of three feet and match a minimum of 75% of the length.

C.5.3 Occupiable space on roof decks shall be setback from the building face by a minimum of five feet, except when a deck abuts a blank property line wall of a neighboring building where no setback is required.

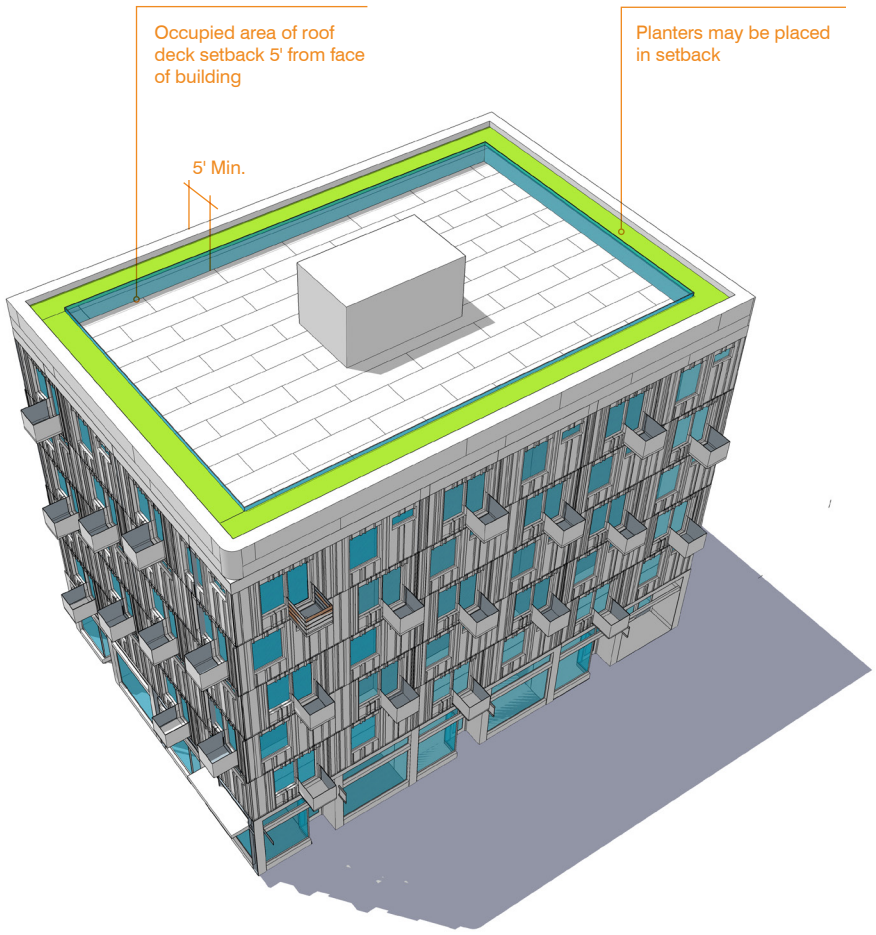


C.5.2
New buildings match side setbacks of existing

C.5.1
New buildings match light wells of existing



C.5.3
Roof decks are setback 5'




OUTSIDE
Lands
ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW

ARCHITECTURE

C.6 FAÇADE ARTICULATION

Well articulated façades include projections and/or recessions that create a rich textural quality through shade and shadow that distinguish a residential use.

APPLICABILITY: These façade articulation standards are applicable to any development citywide. These requirements are for portions of buildings above the ground floor.

C.6.1 Articulation requirements apply to any façade abutting a public right of way and must extend across the entire façade for all floors above the ground floor. Meeting the standards can be achieved by a number of means including major and minor projections or recessions. At least one of the following methods shall be used:

C.6.1.1 Code compliant bay windows spaced no more than thirty feet apart on center

C.6.1.2 A projecting balcony or recessed terrace a minimum of four feet by four feet spaced no more than thirty feet apart on center.

C.6.1.3 A major volumetric projection/recession of at least one foot at it's deepest portion that spans thirty feet.

C.6.1.4 All windows that exceed standard requirements described in C.11.4.1 with a recess of six inches or more from primary cladding to exterior frame. Section detail to be provided in plans.

C.6.1.5 A textured façade that provides a minimum of two inches of relief. Spacing of relief shall not exceed two feet either vertically or horizontally.

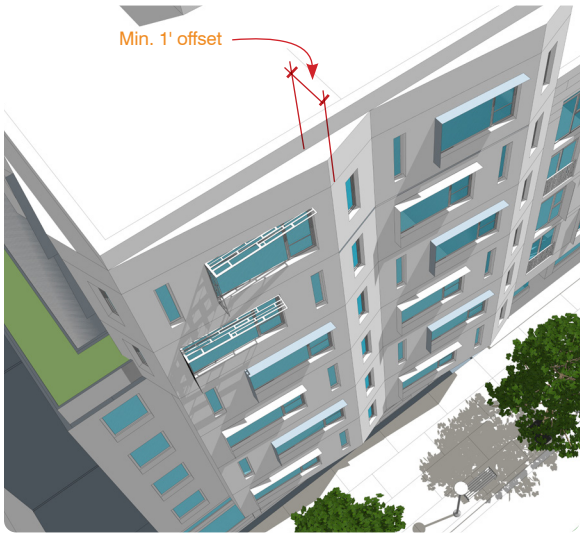
C.6.1.6 Pilasters spanning all upper floors placed no more than twenty feet on center with a minimum three inch projection from the primary cladding. Pilasters must be a minimum of one foot wide.

C.6.1.7 An externalized structure or framing that at a minimum articulates each floor and unit on the façade. The structure must project a minimum of three inches from primary cladding.

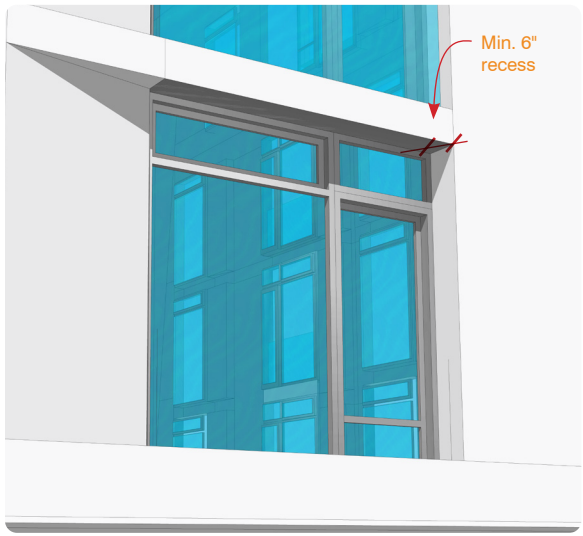
C.6.1.8 Sunshades, fins, louvers, eyebrows, Juliet balconies, or any horizontal or vertically oriented projection a minimum of one foot from façade spaced no more than fifteen feet apart on center. Projections shall be a minimum of four feet in length.

Articulation requirements can be achieved through a number of different methods.

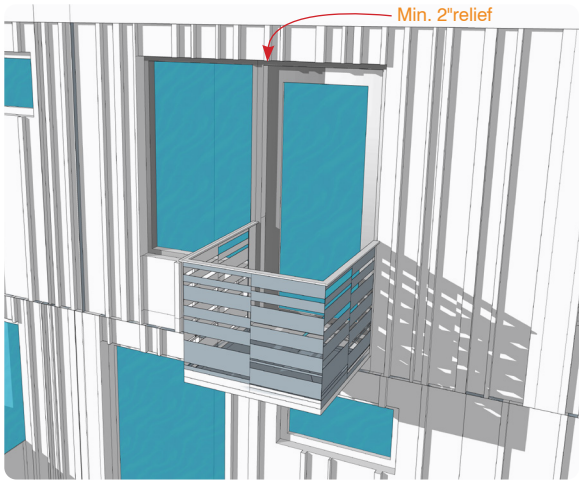
C.6.1.1 Bay windows spaced no more than 30' apart



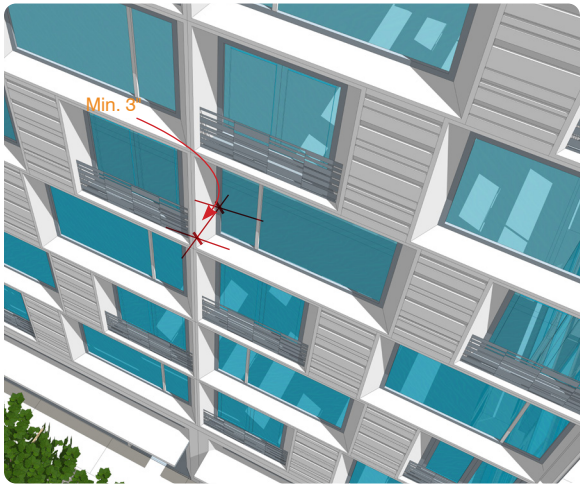
C.6.1.3 A major volumetric offset of at least 1'



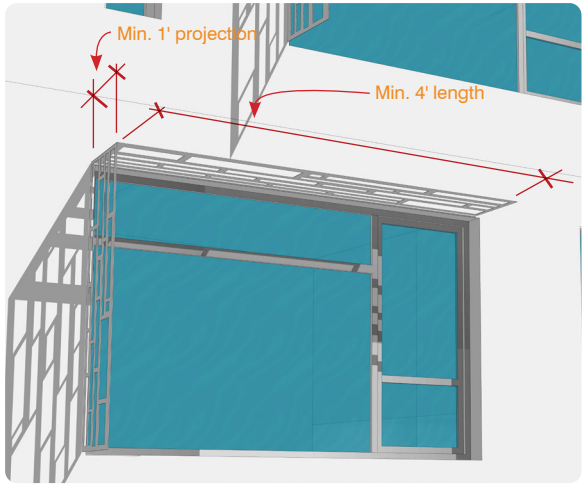
C.6.1.4 Windows recessed at least 6"



C.6.1.5 Textured façade with min. 2" relief
C.6.1.2 Projecting balcony min. 4'x4'



C.6.1.7 Framing element that articulates each unit and floor at a minimum



C.6.1.8 Sunshades spaced no more than 15' apart

C.7 GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL

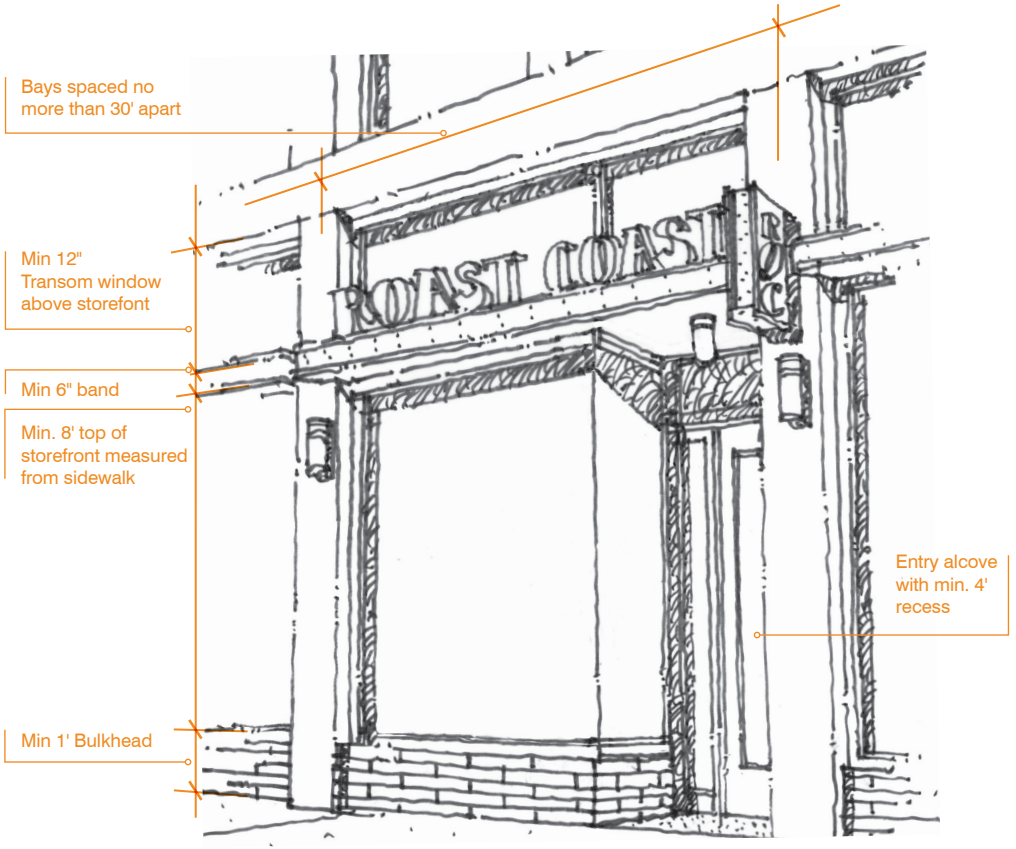
The ground floor is where pedestrians interact with a building and its treatment is integral to creating a rich, engaging streetscape environment. A rhythm of elements that address the pedestrian are fundamental aspects of storefront design. See also Standards for Storefront Transparency

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that features ground floor commercial use. [but not PDR]

C.7.1 Commercial storefronts must be articulated into bays no more than thirty feet apart on center. The vertical articulating element shall be no less than one foot wide and no wider than two feet and extend either from the sidewalk or top of bulkhead to top of ground floor. Storefronts less than thirty feet wide do not require bay articulation.

C.7.2 For storefronts over ten feet transom windows are required over storefronts. Transom windows shall be a minimum of twelve inches in height and separated from the storefront below with a solid band or projecting canopy of six inches minimum height. If used, an awning shall be mounted to this band. Louvers for venting may replace transom glass only where required by the Building Code.

C.7.3 Commercial storefront windows, exclusive of the transom window shall be a minimum of eight feet in height measured from the sidewalk. For buildings on streets and alleys with slopes greater than 5% at least one point of the storefront window shall be eight feet.



Typical storefront condition

C.7.4 Commercial entries shall have alcoves recessed from the sidewalk by a minimum of four feet in depth by four feet in width. Alcoves may be combined for adjacent businesses. Combined entries shall be a minimum of four feet depth by eight feet width.

C.7.5 A bulkhead at the sidewalk of at least one foot in height is required below then storefront. For sloped sites the bulkhead may be measured from the downslope end of the bay.

C.7.6 For ground floors greater than seventeen feet in height a horizontal projection of at least four feet shall be placed no higher than twelve feet above the sidewalk for 40% of ground floor active uses.

C.7.7 For corner properties the storefront treatment must extend around corner for a minimum of ten feet.

A range of architectural expressions can be designed within the standards.

C.8 GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL

Ground floor residential units with entries from the sidewalk enhance the pedestrian experience and the livability of dwelling units; they provide a clear buffer between the private realm of the building and the public realm of the street.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that features ground floor residential units and has a frontage width of 50 feet or greater along any of its frontages.

The standards address three primary conditions: raised external entries, at grade entries and raised, recessed entries. Standards apply to the ground floor only – upper floors do not require any setback.

C.8.1 75% of ground floor units that face a public street, alley or passageway must have an entry from the sidewalk.

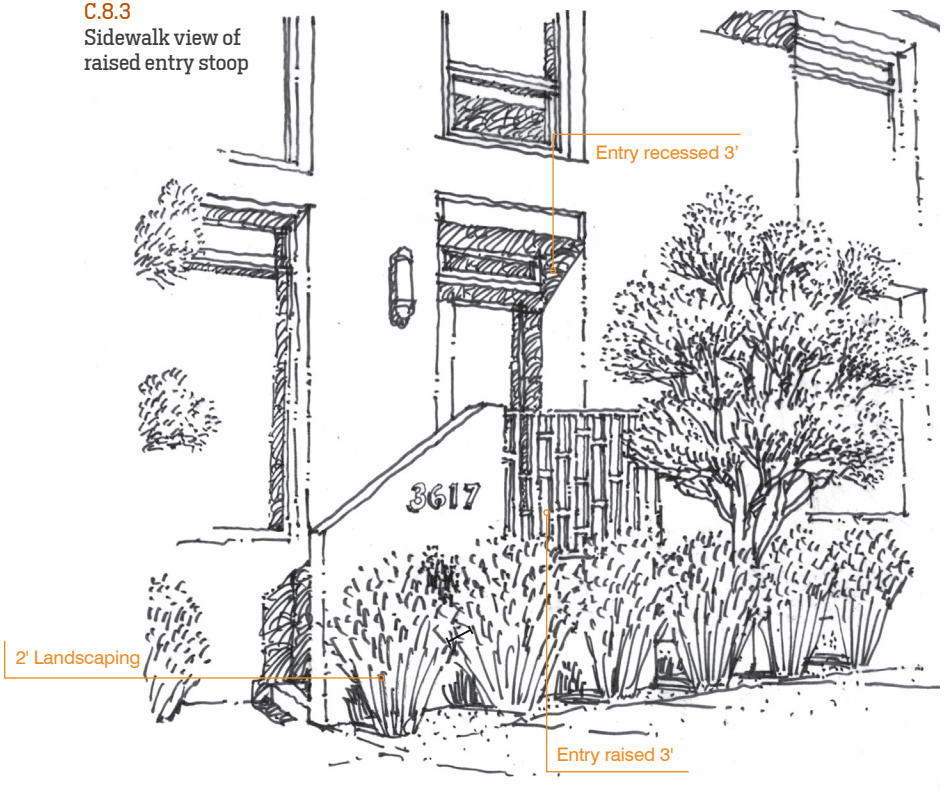
C.8.2 All conditions shall have a minimum two foot landscape strip for the width of the unit excluding entry paths either on the property or in the public right of way subject to a minor encroachment permit through the Department of Public Works. Where permit is not issued due to sidewalk width restrictions the standard may be waived.

C.8.3 Raised, external entries shall meet the following:

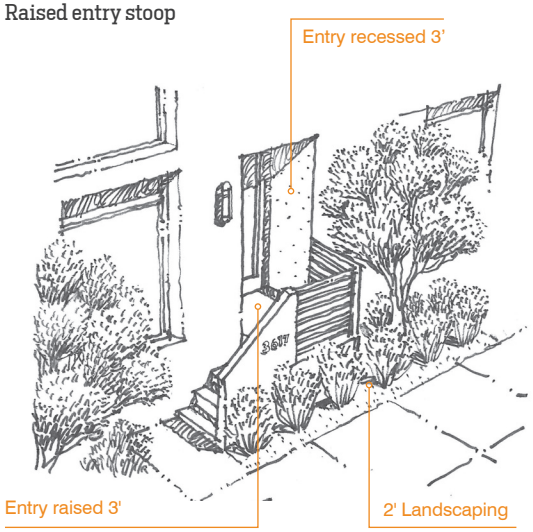
C.8.3.1 Upper landing shall be raised a minimum of three feet from grade

C.8.3.2 Entry door shall be setback from the property line a minimum of five feet and a maximum of eight feet.

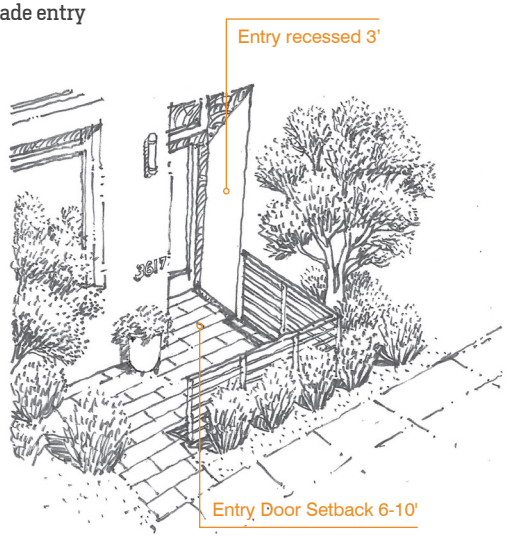
C.8.3
Sidewalk view of raised entry stoop



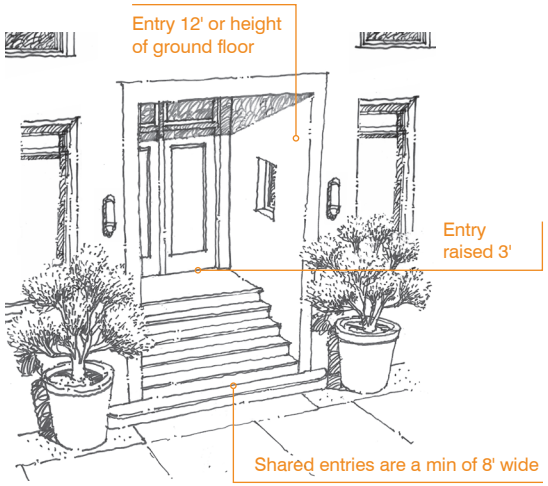
C.8.3
Raised entry stoop



C.8.4
At grade entry



C.8.5
Raised, recessed entry to multiple units



C.8.3.3 Entry door shall either be recessed a minimum of three feet from the primary façade or flush with a canopy that spans the entry opening and projects a minimum of one foot.

C.8.3.4 Entries must be a minimum of four feet wide and eight feet tall.

C.8.4 At grade entries or entries raised less than three feet shall meet the following:

C.8.4.1 Entry door shall be setback a minimum of six feet and maximum of ten feet from property line including a minimum of three feet recess from the primary façade.

C.8.4.2 Entry openings must be minimum of five feet wide and twelve feet tall or the height of the ground floor, whichever is less

C.8.5 Recessed, raised entries shall meet the following:

C.8.5.1 Upper landing shall be raised a minimum of three feet from grade.

C.8.5.2 Minimum clear height of entry shall be eight feet measured from the upper landing.

C.8.5.3 Shared entries to multiple units with stairs that run perpendicular to the property line shall be a minimum of eight feet in width.

C.9 NON-ACTIVE FRONTAGES

Non-active frontages that include functional "back-of-house" features of buildings, including but not limited to, vehicle and loading entries, trash rooms, and electrical rooms should be treated as an integral part of the ground floor façade treatment rather than as blank walls that disrupt the pedestrian experience.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide.

C.9.1 For buildings that front on intersecting streets or alleys (corner buildings), non-active uses and blank walls shall not occur within twenty feet of the corner of the building.

C.9.2 The square footage of frontages of non-active uses shall include a minimum of 10% glazing or a minimum of 5% glazing if a mural treatment is provided and maintained for at least 20% of the ground floor façade area. Glazing may be translucent for these uses.

C.9.3 Non-active frontages shall incorporate the standards for Ground Floor Commercial that are provided by active uses (excepting window and transparency requirements).

C.9.4 Where eligible, projects shall apply to place transformer vaults in an underground sidewalk vault to maximize active uses at the ground floor.

C.9.5 If a project has a ground floor recession including at an entry or open space of sufficient size and clearance the vault shall be placed in an underground vault there.

These buildings maintain the rhythm of the active storefront composition across non-active use.

C.10 BLIND WALLS

Large blind walls that are visible from the street or adjacent properties increase the visual impact and perception of bulk of taller buildings. Modest treatments can reduce their prominence.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide.

C.10.1 Blind walls (e.g., windowless walls at side property lines) of twenty feet or more above an adjacent building and over twenty feet in width must be treated in one of the following ways for a minimum of 70% of the visible wall:

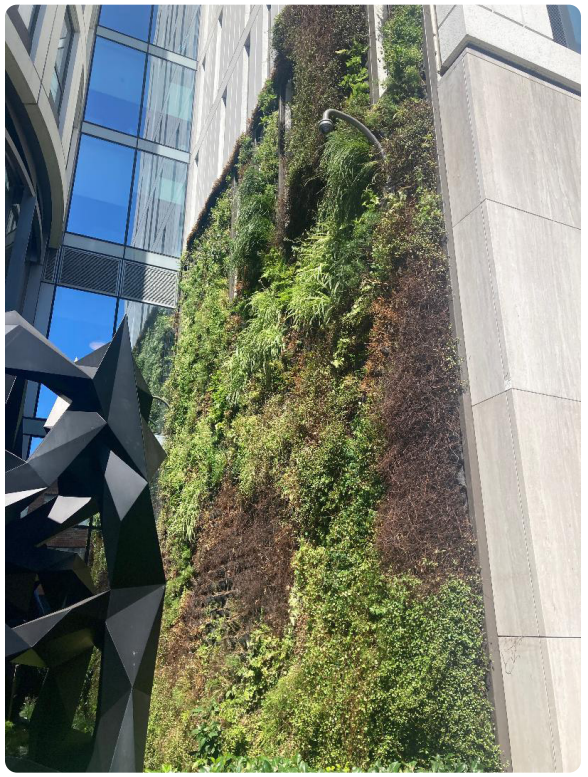
C.10.1.1 A mural. A mural is defined as a purposeful artistic graphical expression, that is not also a sign as defined by Planning Code Article 6, painted or affixed (e.g. tile mosaic) directly on a wall and clearly distinguishable from the building's architecturally painted or tiled surfaces. Area shall be measured from the outer edges of mural. A mural shall be maintained for the life of the project.

C.10.1.2 A living wall or green wall, which features living plants supported by the building wall or structure affixed to the wall. A living wall or green wall shall be maintained for the life of a project.

C.10.1.3 A textured façade that provides a minimum relief of two inches of depth. Spacing of relief shall not exceed four feet either vertically or horizontally.

C.10.1.4 A scoring pattern where each defined segment does not exceed one hundred square feet. Scoring must be a minimum of one inch deep by ½ inch wide. Each segment shall be a different color from the adjacent segment.

C.10.1.1 Murals enliven large otherwise blank walls while supporting neighborhood identity



C.10.1.2
Green walls provide a lush, living surface that contrasts with the built environment

C.10.1.3
A patterned façade breaks up the expansive blind wall

C.11 FENESTRATION

The size, detailing and type of windows is essential to overall building quality.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide. Fenestration requirements here are for portions of buildings above the ground.

Minimum and maximum transparency requirements shall be shown in plans submitted as part of the project application materials. Transparency percentages shall be calculated from the floor of the first level of residential use to the ceiling of the uppermost level in elevation view. Spandrels and opaque glass do not contribute to minimum and maximum requirements. Overall window opening excluding frames above the ground floor shall meet the following requirements:

C.11.1 For public right of way adjacent façades:

- Minimum amount of transparency shall be 30% of the building façade.
- Maximum amount of transparency shall be 70% of the building façade.

C.11.2 For rear facing façades of properties in Residential Districts as defined in Planning Code Section 201:

- Maximum amount of transparency shall be 50% of the building façade.

C.11.3 Type, material, and placement of windows are as follows:

C.11.3.1 At least one operable window must be provided per dwelling unit.

C.11.3.2 Windows must be clear, non-mirrored and with a minimum transparency of at least 85%

C.11.3.3 Vinyl windows are not permitted for public right of way adjacent façades.

C.11.3.4 When used divided lite windows must have true divided lites or have muntins on the interior and exterior with spacers between the panes. Muntins must have a minimum ½" relief. Detail and product information shall be submitted with the project application materials.

C.11.3.5 Louvers or screens that cover windows must be a minimum of 75% transparent in elevation view and no deeper than three inches. Details shall be submitted with project application materials

C.11.4 Windows shall provide a minimum of three inch shadow line for public right of way adjacent façades. Shadow lines shall be achieved by at least one of the following means:

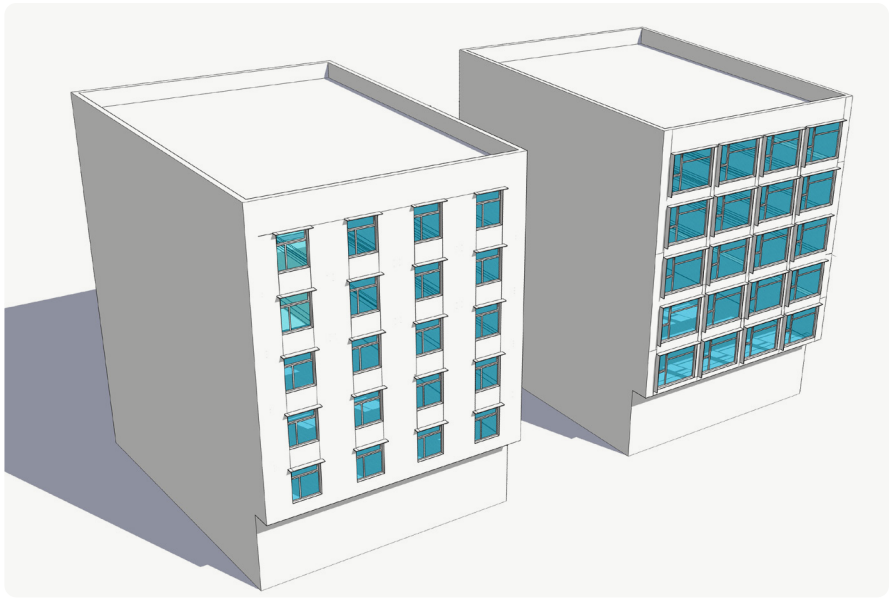
C.11.4.1 A minimum three inch window recess measured from the primary exterior cladding to sash. Window surrounds shall not contribute to three inch requirement.

C.11.4.2 A minimum three inch projecting window measured from the primary cladding to the window sash

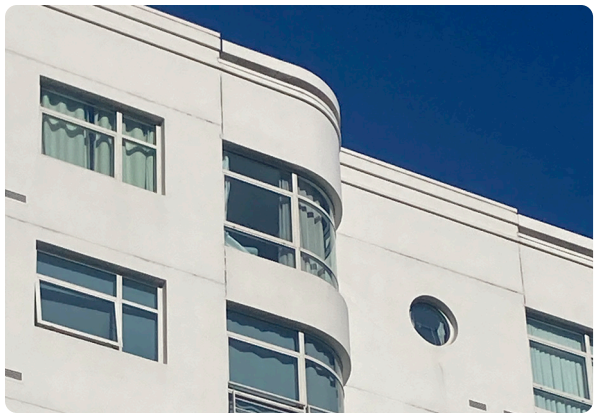
C.11.4.3 A minimum three inch sun screen surrounding all sides of the window. Sun screen shall not exceed one inch width in elevation.

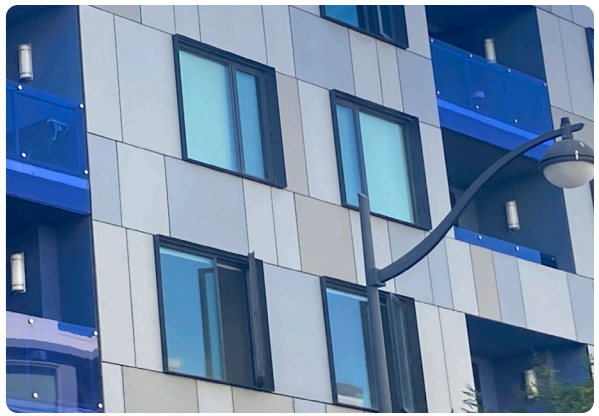
C.11.4.4 For bay windows a minimum one inch recess from cladding is required

C.11.1 Allowable range of transparency is 30-70% for public right of way adjacent façades.



C.11.4 A 3" shadow line can be achieved by recessed windows (left), projecting windows (center) or with a sun screen around all window sides (right).





C.12 RESIDENTIAL LOBBY ENTRIES

Lobbies are the main building entry and require the scale and prominence reflecting their importance.

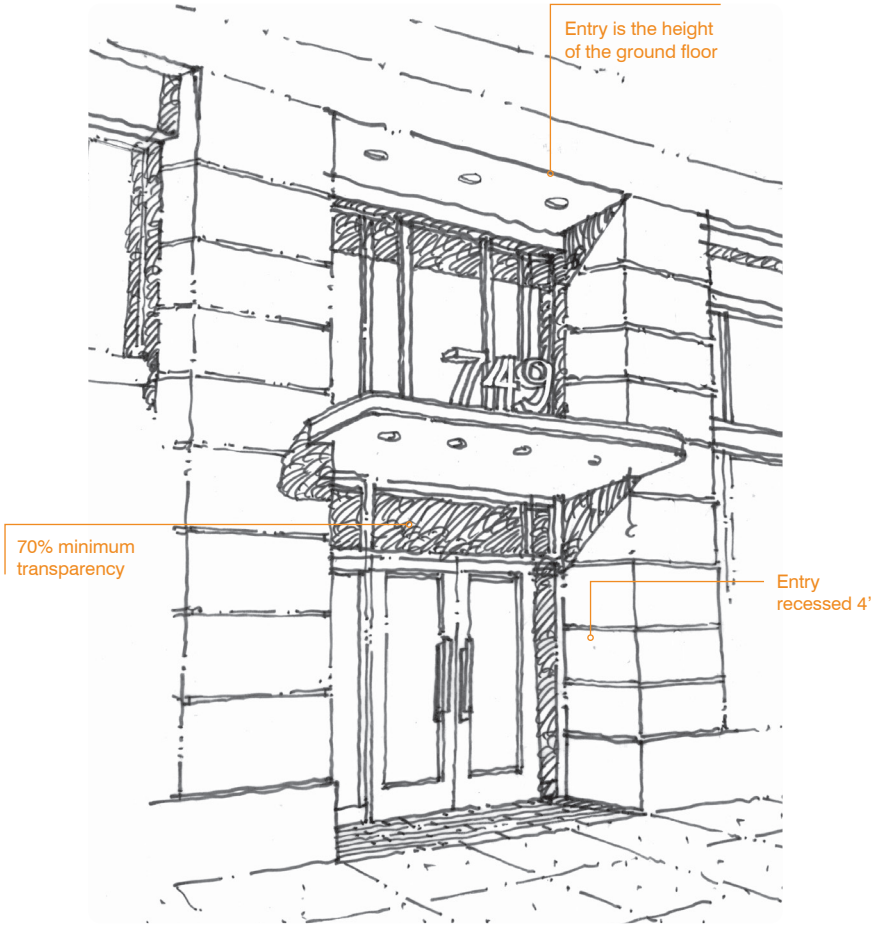
APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide that features a residential lobby and is not considered a tower.

C.12.1 Lobbies of buildings must feature entry openings (including door, transom windows, side windows) that are at least as tall as the height of the ground floor measured from the ceiling height.

C.12.2 Lobby entry opening features (including door, transom windows, and side lites) must feature at least 70% transparency for 75% of the ground floor height, not less than 10 feet.

C.12.3 Lobby entries to buildings lower than 85 feet shall incorporate alcoves with a recess that is at least four feet deep measured from the building façade.

C.12.4 Building façades that are fifty feet wide or more shall feature lobby entries that are least eight feet wide. Buildings façades that are less than fifty feet wide shall have lobby entries that are at least six feet wide.



Lobby entries in the city are expressed in a number of ways

C.13 BUILDING MATERIALS

Allowing for a diverse range of durable and sustainable cladding materials supports the various styles found throughout San Francisco's neighborhoods.

APPLICABILITY: These standards are applicable to any development citywide.

C.13.1 The primary façade cladding shall wrap a minimum of 5’ to blind walls.

C.13.2 The following exterior cladding materials shall not be used: Vinyl, plywood, any tropical hardwoods or tropical hardwood wood products, virgin redwood or virgin redwood wood products.

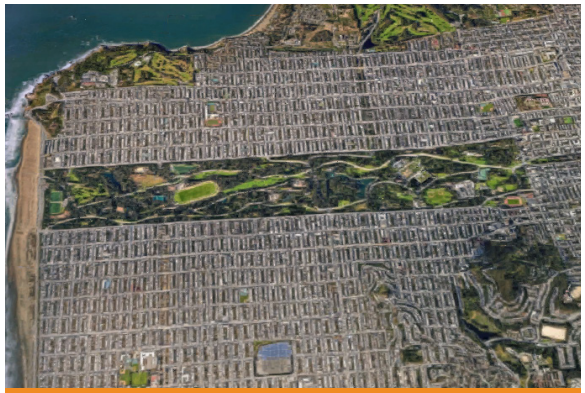
Allowing for a wide range of materials contributes to a rich and varied cityscape.

PRESERVATION

DESIGN STANDARDS

Preservation Design Standards

ADDITIONS AND MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS



REGULATORY CONTEXT

Purpose of this Document
Applicability of this Document
How to Use this Document
Historic Designations in San Francisco
Contributors to Historic Districts
Character-Defining Features

EXISTING FEATURES

Treatment of Character-Defining Features
Existing Windows
Existing Building Entrances and Garage Openings
Existing Storefronts

SITE DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE

Massing
Façade Articulation
Ground Floor Commercial
New Window Openings
Building Entries
Garage Entries
Rooftop Features
Materials

Purpose of This Document

San Francisco's historic and cultural resources include iconic architectural masterpieces, monuments to historic events, and sites associated with cultural legacies and social movements. Conservation of these resources allows for their long-term enjoyment to educate, to celebrate, to support local businesses and communities, and to instill meaning and authenticity in our environment.

San Francisco values excellent building and urban design. The standards in this document are intended to assure that new buildings are well designed and contribute to vibrant urban places. These objective standards involve no personal or subjective judgment and are publicly available and verifiable by reference. The standards complement but do not replace existing obligations in the Planning Code.

This document provides objective standards that are applicable to projects involving historic buildings in San Francisco.

Applicability of This Document

The Preservation Design Standards for Additions and Modifications to Existing Historic Buildings apply to Category A properties that have been determined to be individually significant or are contributors to historic districts (see definition on page 43). For more information on determining whether these Standards apply to a particular Category A property, see "How to Determine Whether a Historic Property is a Contributor to a Historic District" on page 44.

The Preservation Design Standards for Additions and Modifications to Historic Buildings do not apply to non-contributing buildings within a historic district, and do not apply to Category B or C properties. Please refer to all other adopted design standards for standards applicable to non-contributing buildings within historic districts.

The Preservation Design Standards are supplemental to and complementary with all other adopted design standards, which are applicable to properties citywide. For properties where the Preservation Design Standards apply, all other applicable adopted design standards must be met, and any applicable Preservation Design Standards must also be met. In the event that the different standards provide conflicting guidance for the same aspect of a project, the Preservation Design Standards shall prevail.

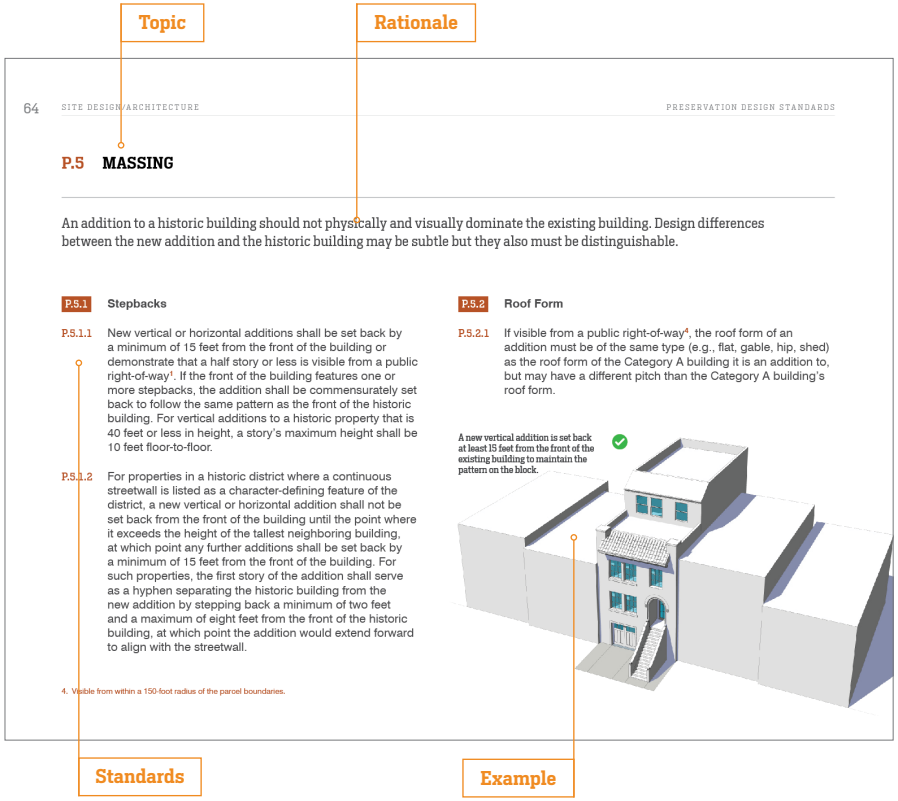
The Preservation Design Standards do not apply to new construction.

Historic rowhouses within the Liberty Hill Landmark District

How to Use This Document

The Preservation Design Standards in this document are regulatory and compliance is mandatory. The standards are to be used in concert with development standards in the Planning Code and any other applicable objective design standards. This document will refer the reader to certain related Planning Code sections to find specific requirements for setbacks, heights, and other controls.

Design Standards found only in this document (and not in the Planning Code) are assigned specific numbers in the following format:



Historic Designations in San Francisco

There are four distinct types of historic designations in San Francisco:

Category A*

Properties designated as historic resources under Article 10 or 11 of the Planning Code.

Category A

Properties listed on or formally determined to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places; or properties determined to be historic resources as part of an adopted local survey.

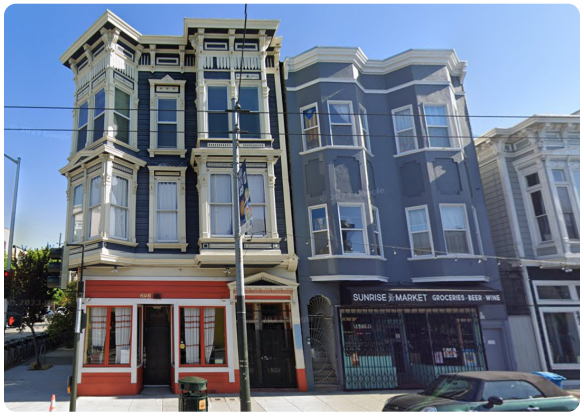
Category B

Properties that are eligible to potentially be considered historic resources due to their age (more than 45 years old) and require further consultation and review

Category C

Properties that are ineligible to be considered historic resources due to their age (less than 45 years old) or that have been determined not to be historic resources through formal evaluation by the Planning Department.

Category A building at 93 Cumberland Street, located in the Eligible Inner Mission Boulevards and Alleys Reconstruction Historic District



Category B building at 698 Haight Street, constructed circa 1900 but not yet formally evaluated for historic significance by the Planning Department

Category C building at 50 Barcelona Avenue, determined not to be a historic resource by the Planning Department in 2024

Category A/A* properties can either be individually significant buildings or can be located within the boundaries of an identified historic district. Please note that there are many Category A/A* buildings in San Francisco that are within a historic district but have been determined as non-contributing to the historic district. The Preservation Design Standards for Additions and Modifications to Historic Buildings do not apply to non-contributing buildings within a historic district, and do not apply to Category B or C properties.

Contributors to Historic Districts

Since the early 1970s, the City and County of San Francisco has designated 14 Article 10 historic districts and 7 Article 11 conservation districts and has recognized approximately 150 districts included in or determined to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, the National Register of Historic Places, or named as National Historic Landmark districts. A historic district is a collection of resources (buildings, structures, sites, or objects) that are historically, architecturally, and/or culturally significant. Historically, San Francisco has rated individual buildings in districts in one of three ways:

Contributory

A classification applied to a site, structure, or object within a historic district signifying that it generally shares, along with most of the other sites, structures, or objects in the historic district, the qualities that give the historic district cultural, historic, architectural, or archeological significance as embodied by the criteria for designating the historic district. The term “Compatible” was used in historic district designations made prior to 1986. Category I, II, III, and IV Article 11 properties will be considered contributors for the purposes of applying the Preservation Design Standards.

Contributory Altered

A classification applied to a building, site, structure, or object within a historic district signifying that it generally retains the qualities that give the district significance but has also received some alterations. The term “Potentially Compatible” was used in historic district designations made prior to 1986. Contributory Altered properties will be considered contributors for the purposes of applying the Preservation Design Standards.

Noncontributory

A classification applied to a site, structure, or object within an historic district indicating that it is not representative of the qualities that give the historic district cultural, historic, architectural, or archeological significance as embodied by the criteria for designating the historic district. The term “Incompatible” was used in historic district designations made prior to 1986. Category V Article 11 properties will be considered noncontributors for the purposes of applying the Preservation Design Standards.

How to Determine Whether a Historic Property is a Contributor to a Historic District

The Preservation Design Standards apply to properties determined to be contributory or contributory altered within historic districts, but not to noncontributory properties. To determine whether a property in a historic district is a contributor or not, follow these steps:

1. Look up the address on the San Francisco Property Information Map (PIM): https://sfplanninggis.org/pim.

2. Click on the Historic Preservation tab on the left to determine the status of the historic resource.

3. If it is a local landmark, check the Designating Ordinance or Planning Code Appendix for the Article 10 or Article 11 landmark on PIM.

4. If it is a state landmark, check the California Register designation report on PIM.

5. If it is a federal landmark, check the National Register Nomination form on PIM or on the Library of Congress website.

6. If it has been determined to be a resource through a survey, click on the link to the survey document on PIM.

If the designation report or other documentation of the property does not clarify whether the property is a district contributor or non-contributor, consult with Planning Staff by sending an email to pic@sfgov.org. If Planning Staff confirm that the property is in a historic district but has not received an evaluation to determine whether or not it is a contributor to the historic district it is located within, the property will be considered a contributor for the purposes of applying the Preservation Design Standards.

Character-Defining Features

San Francisco's historic buildings are one of the many elements that make our city distinct. The historic qualities of buildings, districts, and landscapes help characterize our neighborhoods by contributing a richness of character, texture, and human scale. Neighborhood context is defined by these specific qualities in the built environment that give it a distinct personality and should be preserved and enhanced where present. To provide continuity with that fabric, the identification of the physical features of buildings and districts that are historically significant is done through the analysis of character-defining features.

Character-defining features are features that convey the historic significance of a resource. They are features that must be maintained in order for a resource to maintain its integrity as a historic resource. These features often correspond to a specific style, type, period, region, or method of construction or are associated with significant events or persons. Character-defining features are often associated with a period of significance, which often corresponds to the date of construction of the resource. In some cases, a property may have multiple periods of significance if a later modification or event that occurred at the property was determined to be significant as well. Materials added or alterations made outside of a property's period of significance are typically are not considered character-defining features.

Character-defining features of the Sylvester House (Article 10 Landmark #61)

Elements that are often considered character-defining features include the following:

Roof Materials and Form: Slate, clay tile, metal, and cedar shingles are common historic roof materials. The gable of the roof and presence of a parapet or other ornament are often important details to include in the character-defining features of a resource. Asphalt shingles or other modern materials typically are not considered character-defining features unless in specific cases where the historic resource is itself a modern building.

Cladding: Historic cladding materials are typically brick, stucco, wood, stone, metal, or some other specialty material. Vinyl siding or other modern materials typically are not considered character-defining features unless in specific cases where the historic resource is itself a modern building

Decorative Elements: Exterior elements such as moldings, brackets, and trim often reflect a particular architectural style and are typically considered character-defining features. These elements are commonly found around windows and entrances or are directly applied to a façade's cladding.

Windows: The style, material, operation of the frame and sash, depth of installation, pattern, and placement of windows often are included in the character-defining features. The number of window lites and profile of muntins and glazing bars are often included in the protected features of the windows.

Historic slate roofing material at Ghirardelli Square

Historic cast iron cladding at Cafe Zoetrope

Decorative elements (terra cotta) at the Shell Building

Historic windows at 2080 Washington Street

Siting: The location of the building in relation to front, side, and rear setbacks and landscaping features is often a character-defining feature relating to a style, period, or movement.

Landscape Elements: Hardscape elements located in a setback, such as retaining walls, entrance paths, fences, and gates can be considered character-defining features of a property.

Massing: The overall size, shape, and scale of a building often is related to the expression of a certain architectural style or movement.

Entrances and Porches: Historic buildings often have articulated entrances. The style, material, ornament, and composition of the doors and surrounds likely relate to an architectural style or period.

Storefronts: For commercial buildings, the storefront is often a character-defining feature. The opacity, glazing, symmetry, and materiality of the storefront all often relate to the use of the commercial space and provides a snapshot of the nature of advertising and public life during the period of significance.

Structural elements: Often the structure of the building is expressed in different ways depending on the architectural style and norms during the date of construction. The structural system is typically load-bearing masonry, wood-frame, or steel construction.

Landscape elements at 2790 Broadway Street

Entrance at 140 Maiden Lane

Storefront at Twin Peaks bar

Structural elements at 600 Montgomery Street

How to Locate the Identified Character-Defining Features for a Historic Property

To determine whether character-defining features have already been identified for a particular property, follow these steps:

1. Look up the address on the San Francisco Property Information Map (PIM): https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/

2. Click on the Historic Preservation tab on the left to determine the status of the historic resource.

3. If it is a local landmark, check the Designated Ordinance or Planning Code Appendix for the Article 10 or Article 11 landmark on PIM.

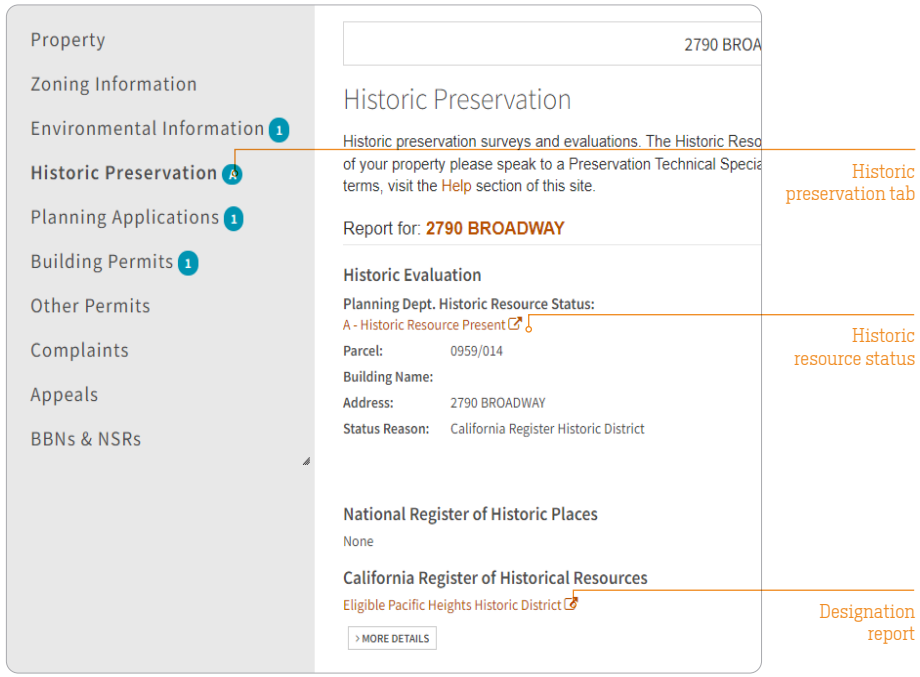
4. If it is a state landmark, check the California Register designation report on PIM

5. If it is a federal landmark, check the National Register Nomination form on PIM or on the Library of Congress website

6. If it has been determined to be a resource through a survey, click on the link to the survey document on PIM.

If the designation report or other documentation of the property does not clarify character-defining features of the district as a whole or the property specifically, consult with Planning Staff by sending an email to pic@sfgov.org.

If Planning Staff confirm that the property does not already have identified character-defining features, all existing elements of the property that are visible from a public right-of-way (visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries) will be considered character-defining features for the purposes of applying the Preservation Design Standards.



San Francisco Property Information Map

EXISTING FEATURES

P.1 TREATMENT OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The historic qualities of buildings, districts, and landscapes help characterize our neighborhoods by contributing a richness of character, texture, and human scale. Neighborhood context is defined by these specific qualities in the built environment and should be preserved and enhanced where present.

P.1.1 Keep and repair in kind all identified exterior character-defining features (See “Character-Defining Features” on page 46 for further information) that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] or replace in kind if deteriorated beyond repair, unless otherwise specified within these Standards. For this standard, "in kind" shall mean repair or replace exactly to match the feature's material, dimensions, finish, profile, and details unless otherwise specified within these Standards.

P.1.2 Keep and repair in kind character-defining features of any interior spaces that are accessible to the public (e.g., lobbies, performance spaces). For this standard, "in kind" shall be defined as noted in Standard P.1.1.

P.1.3 All existing unpainted brick, stone, concrete, and other masonry surfaces shall remain unpainted.

P.1.4 All historic character-defining features and their surface area and dimensions that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] shall remain exposed. Historic features (dimensions and areas) shall not be covered or obscured with new materials.

P.1.5 Alterations to or removal of character-defining features beyond what is specified in these standards is allowed if necessary to meet Building Code requirements. The alternative provisions of the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) shall be used to meet code requirements when applicable. For further information on what scopes of work qualify for use of the CHBC, please reference Information Sheet G-07, prepared by the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.

Historic moldings, ornamentation, recessed garage doors and bay window retained.

1. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

Image (left) showing the original building. Image (right) showing inappropriate removal of glass bricks original to the the building

Existing materials and features of interior spaces accessible to the public should be retained.

This signage covers up the character-defining historic storefront transom and does not meet Standard P.1.4.

P.2 EXISTING WINDOWS

Windows are integral features of historic buildings. When historic windows are replaced, the new windows shall match the original windows and be consistent with the following standards.

P.2.1 Replacement of any existing windows that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] shall use the window replacement matrix on the following page to determine the appropriate replacement window material and operation. If the original window material is not known[2], it will be considered wood if the property was constructed before or during 1955, and aluminum if the property was constructed after 1955.

P.2.2 Any replacement windows that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] shall match the configuration (number and proportion of lites), operation (method of opening), profiles, and dimensions of the original windows. If the original window configuration, operation, profiles, and dimensions are not known[2], the replacement windows shall match these aspects of the existing windows.

P.2.3 If original wood double-hung windows with ogee lugs that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] are being replaced, the replacement wood windows shall have integral ogee lugs. Snap-on ogee lugs are not permitted on any windows that are visible from a public right of way.

P.2.4 Any replacement windows that are visible from a public right-of-way[1] shall be recessed at least three inches from the surrounding exterior wall surfaces, measured from window frame to finished exterior wall.

P.2.5 If windows feature muntins, these muntins must feature true divided lites or simulated divided lites with dark-colored spacers. Sandwich, roll on, or tape muntins shall not be allowed.

P.2.6 Replacement windows that are not visible from a public right-of way[1] can be of any material, configuration, operation, profile, or dimension unless they are identified as interior character-defining features in the designating ordinance.

P.2.7 Vinyl windows are not permitted as a replacement for any window that is visible from a public right-of-way[1].

1. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.
2. The original windows' material, configuration, operation, profiles, and dimensions can be considered known if the historic windows are extant. If a historic photograph of the building can be located via the San Francisco Property Information Map, the original windows' material and configuration can be considered known.

This matrix clarifies allowable window replacements within existing window openings following standards P.2.1 through P.2.3.

	Category A Properties	CURRENT WINDOW				
		Wood / DH or SH	*Wood / CS*	*Aluminum / CS*	*Aluminum / SL*	*Vinyl or Other*
ORIGINAL WINDOW	*Wood / DH*	**Wood / DH or SH**		**Wood or ACW / DH or SH (if Wood, integral ogees required)**		
	Wood / CS	**Wood / CS**	**Wood or ACW / CS**			
	Wood / FX	**Wood / FX or CS**		**Wood or ACW / FX or CS**		
	Aluminum / CS	**AL, ACW or FG* / CS**				
	Aluminum / SL	**AL, ACW or FG* / SL**	**AL, ACW or FG* / SL**			

Key (Materials):

Wood

AL = Aluminum

ACW = Aluminum-Clad Wood

FG* = Fiberglass

* If the windows match the profile of the original aluminum window.

Key (Operations):

DH = Double-Hung

SH = Single-Hung

CS = Casement

FX = Fixed/Picture

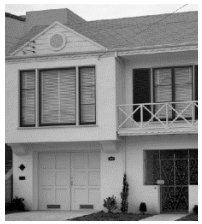
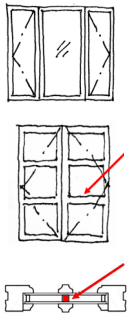
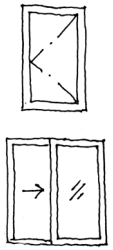
SL = Slider

P.2 EXISTING WINDOWS

(Left) Incompatible replacement aluminum windows located at the second floor

(Right) Inappropriate replacement with vinyl windows

This chart provides examples of allowable replacement windows using standards P.2.1 through P.2.5 for three types of windows commonly found at historic buildings in San Francisco.

Original Windows:	*Current Windows:*	*Appropriate Replacement Windows:*
EXAMPLE 1		
 **All wood double-hung**	 Aluminum and vinyl fixed/casement	 *Material:* All wood, when original are existing. Alum-clad wood when original have been replaced. *Operation:* Double-hung or single-hung Original wood windows with ogees on Cat. A buildings must be replaced with wood windows with integral ogee lugs. Snap-on lugs are not permitted.
EXAMPLE 2		
 **All wood casement**	 Aluminum and vinyl fixed/casement	 *Material:* All wood or aluminum-clad wood *Operation:* Casements, fixed at center Should be full height of window opening. Wood casements with horizontal muntins must be replicated. Simulated divided lights must have dark-colored spacer bars.
EXAMPLE 3		
 **Thin-profiled aluminum casement**	 Thin-profiled aluminum casement	 *Material:* All aluminum (or fiberglass if the windows match the profile of the original aluminum window) *Operation:* Casements, match original design.

P.3 EXISTING BUILDING ENTRANCES AND GARAGE OPENINGS

Modifications to historic building entrances and garage openings to increase accessibility or accommodate a new dwelling unit or ADU shall retain character-defining features by complying with the following requirements.

P.3.1 Category A properties shall use the alternative provisions of the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) to preserve significant historic features when upgrading buildings for ADA accessibility if ADA accessibility requirements cannot otherwise be met. For further information on what scopes of work qualify for use of the CHBC, please reference Information Sheet G-07, prepared by the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.

P.3.2 If a garage opening that is a character-defining feature of the building at a street-facing façade must be infilled for the purposes of adding a new dwelling unit or ADU at the ground floor, the outline (length and width dimensions or surface area) of the garage opening shall be retained and the infill shall be recessed at least one foot from the surrounding wall surface. Any new windows within the infilled garage opening shall follow the "New Window Openings" standards found on page 72. If the new dwelling unit does not require a pedestrian entrance or windows at the location of the garage opening to meet Building Code requirements, then the project shall retain the existing character-defining garage door in a fixed position.

P.3.3 If a garage opening that is not a character-defining feature of the building at a street-facing façade must be infilled for the purposes of adding a new dwelling unit or ADU at the ground floor, the infill shall be flush with the surrounding wall surface and shall be clad to match the surrounding cladding material along the entire surface area. New windows and entrance doors introduced to meet Building Code requirements shall be located within the outline (surface area of the former garage opening and not extending beyond the original opening) of the former garage opening. Any new windows within the infilled garage opening shall follow the "New Window Openings" standards found on page 72.

The character-defining features (gate and surrounding decorative elements) were retained within the historic garage opening at left when a new dwelling unit was added to the ground floor of this building, with glazing inserted behind the historic metal gate, in alignment with Standard P.3.2.

Actuator buttons for an automatic door-opener installed at this storefront do not damage or cover any character-defining features of this recessed entrance

P.4 EXISTING STOREFRONTS

Commercial storefronts can enhance the street-level experience while also drawing customers. Modifications to existing storefronts should balance marketing, an active public realm, and respect for the character-defining features of the building.

P.4.1 Replacement storefront framing shall be no wider than 2 inches to maximize visibility into interior activity and merchandising.

P.4.2 The height and profile of the historic bulkhead shall be retained if known[3]. If not known, the bulkhead shall be limited in height between 18 and 24 inches, with a rectilinear or chamfered (45-degree angle) profile where the bulkhead meets the display window.

P.4.3 Replacement storefront bulkheads shall match the historic bulkhead material, if known[3]. If not known, bulkhead materials shall be limited to glazed square-format tile, granite or marble, painted wood, or metal with a non-reflective (e.g., powder-coated, polymer, marine-grade, or heavy galvanized) finish.

P.4.4 Clear glass shall be used for all ground-floor storefront windows for mid-block buildings, including areas where back-of-house functions—such as stock rooms, break rooms, and corridors—are present.

P.4.5 Clear glass shall be used for all ground-floor storefront display windows for corner buildings. Areas where back-of-house functions—such as stock rooms, break rooms, and corridors—are present may have windows with translucent glass.

3. The original storefront bulkhead's height and material can be considered known if the historic bulkhead is extant. If a historic photograph of the building can be located via the San Francisco Property Information Map, the original bulkhead's material can be considered known.

Historic storefront with tiled bulkhead, thin-profile storefront framing, recessed wood-and-glass entrance door and transom, and stone-tiled vestibule flooring

Incompatible replacement storefront door

Historic bulkhead and flooring

Historic paneled vestibule ceiling at the storefront entrance

SITE DESIGN/ ARCHITECTURE

P.5 MASSING

An addition to a historic building should not physically and visually dominate the existing building. Design differences between the new addition and the historic building may be subtle but they also must be distinguishable.

P.5.1 Stepbacks

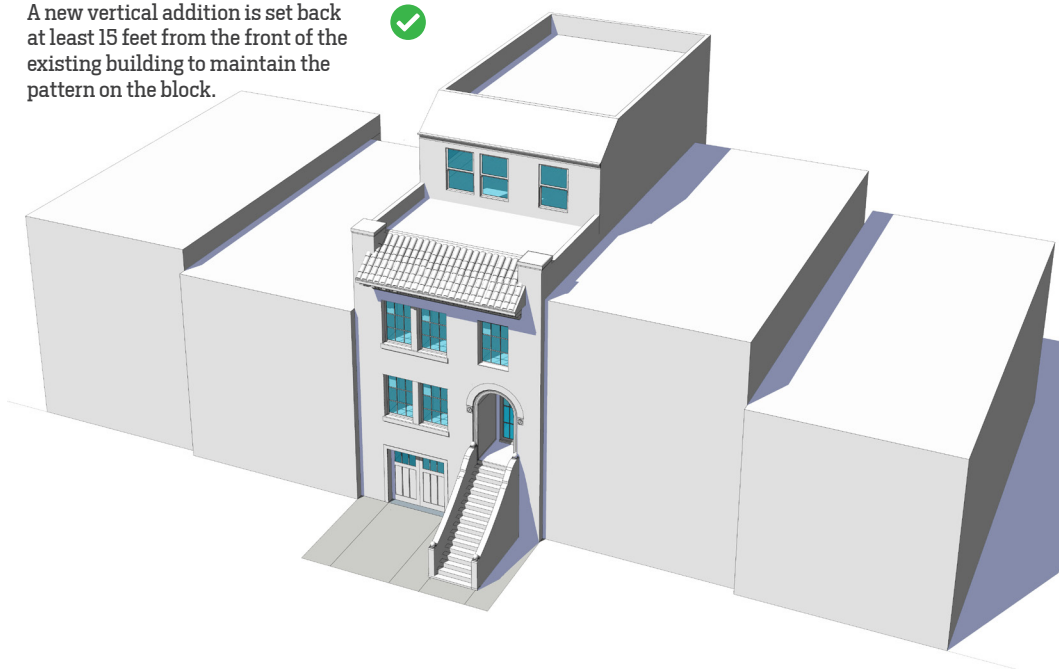
P.5.1.1 New vertical or horizontal additions shall be set back by a minimum of 15 feet from the front of the building or demonstrate that a half story or less is visible from a public right-of-way[1]. If the front of the building features one or more stepbacks, the addition shall be commensurately set back to follow the same pattern as the front of the historic building. For vertical additions to a historic property that is 40 feet or less in height, a story's maximum height shall be 10 feet floor-to-floor.

P.5.1.2 For properties in a historic district where a continuous streetwall is listed as a character-defining feature of the district, a new vertical or horizontal addition shall not be set back from the front of the building until the point where it exceeds the height of the tallest neighboring building, at which point any further additions shall be set back by a minimum of 15 feet from the front of the building. For such properties, the first story of the addition shall serve as a hyphen separating the historic building from the new addition by stepping back a minimum of two feet and a maximum of eight feet from the front of the historic building, at which point the addition would extend forward to align with the streetwall.

P.5.2 Roof Form

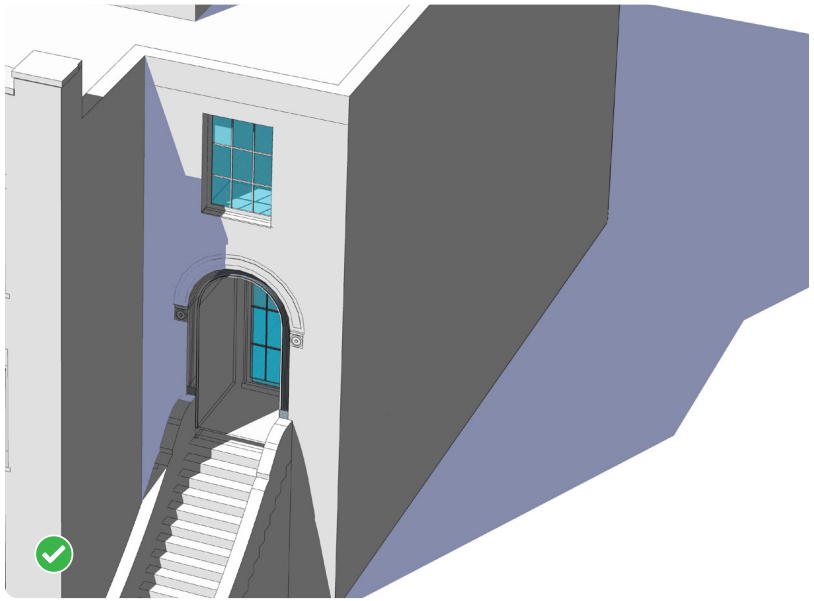
P.5.2.1 If visible from a public right-of-way[4], the roof form of an addition must be of the same type (e.g., flat, gable, hip, shed) as the roof form of the Category A building it is an addition to, but may have a different pitch than the Category A building's roof form.

A new vertical addition is set back at least 15 feet from the front of the existing building to maintain the pattern on the block.



4. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

The rooftop addition at the right is not sufficiently set back, and overwhelms the historic building it is constructed on top of.



The addition to this building has a stepped front facade to follow the pattern of the existing building's front facade stepbacks.

An addition to a two-story historic building, located in a historic district where a continuous streetwall is a character-defining feature of the district, follows standard P.5.1.2.

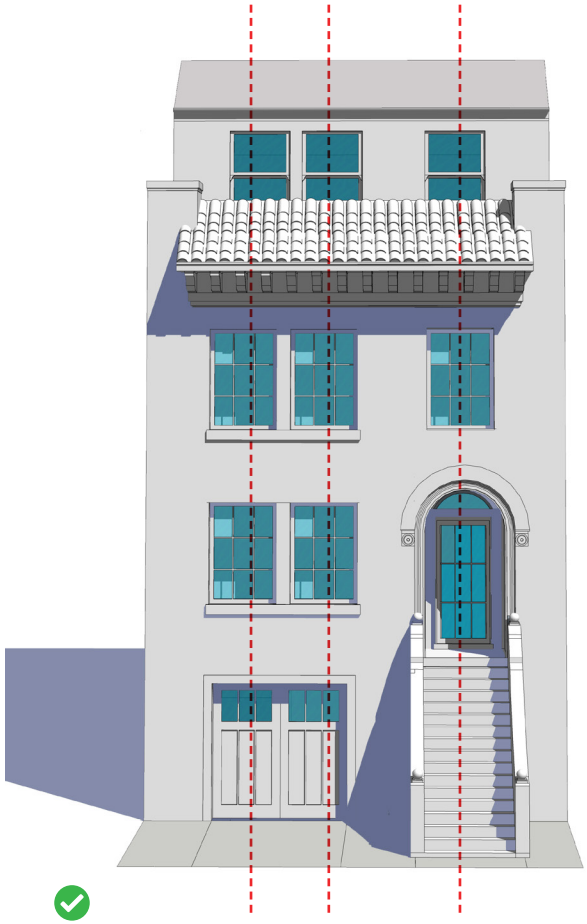
P.6 FAÇADE ARTICULATION

Additions shall relate to the original building's design by referencing the historic building's window composition and alignment as well as the overall solid-to-void ratio of the historic building's front façade.

P.6.1 The solid-to-void ratio (solid wall area square footage vs window/door opening square footage) of the street-facing façade(s) of an addition shall be equal to or within 10 percent of the solid to void ratio of the contributing resource.

P.6.2 Window openings visible from a public right-of-way[4] at the addition's street-facing façade(s) shall either be vertically or horizontally oriented to align with the predominant window orientation type found at the Category A building.

P.6.3 Window placement at the street-facing façade(s) of the addition shall align vertically with window placement found at the Category A building.



The window openings of the rooftop addition align vertically with the windows of the Category A building.

4. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

The windows of this historic home's rooftop addition are vertically oriented to align with the vertically oriented windows of the historic home.

The rooftop addition to the building at the center of this image features a windowless street-facing façade, and the horizontally oriented visible side windows do not align with the vertically oriented windows of the historic building.

The windows of this visible addition to a historic building do not align with the placement or vertical orientation of the historic building, and the addition's solid-to-void ratio is not within 10 percent of the original building's solid-to-void ratio.

P.7 GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL

The vitality of our commercial streetscapes is dependent on the existence and the success of storefront businesses. Modifications to the commercial ground floors of historic buildings shall balance tenant visibility with respect for the character-defining features of a building.

P.7.1 **Awnings, Canopies, and Marquees.** Section 136.1 of the Planning Code establishes the foundation of requirements for awnings, canopies, and marquees. The following standards supplement the Planning Code requirements of Section 136.1 with additional requirements for awnings, canopies, and marquees at historic properties.

Awnings

P.7.1.1 The following awning types shall not be allowed: awnings illuminated from below or internally, box awnings, or waterfall awnings.

P.7.1.2 No more than one awning per window opening is allowed.

P.7.1.3 Awnings shall not extend over more than one window opening.

P.7.1.4 Awnings shall have open undersides and sides extending the full length and depth of the awning.

P.7.1.5 The entire area and surface area of an awning shall be constructed of a non-vinyl cloth or canvas with a matte finish.

P.7.1.6 Valances shall not exceed more than 12 inches in height and shall be unframed and flexible unless historic documentation indicates that the original awning valances were framed.

These open-sided, sloped cloth awnings with unframed valances meet the awning standards.

P.7.1.7 Awnings shall be of the sloped variety unless the shape of the opening is arched, in which case an awning must follow the contour of the opening. The underside of the awning must remain open.

P.7.1.8 Awnings shall be attached to the storefront within an existing window or storefront opening and shall not be attached above the opening. Awnings shall be attached to the storefront at the lintel or at the transom bar if one is present.

Canopies

P.7.1.9 Canopies shall be attached to the building directly above entryways only and shall not be attached above the entryway opening.

P.7.1.10 The width of a canopy shall not exceed the width of the entry opening, and in no case exceed ten feet.

P.7.1.11 The vertical distance from the top to the bottom of canopies shall not exceed two feet, including any valance.

Marquees

P.7.1.12 Marquees are limited to one per tenant along any given building frontage.

P.7.1.13 The width of a new marquee shall not exceed the width of the entry opening.

P.7.1.14 The vertical distance from the top to the bottom of any marquee shall not exceed three feet and the horizontal projection shall not extend beyond a point closer than two feet from the curb.

P.7.1.15 Marquees shall be attached to the building directly above entryways only and shall not be attached above the entryway opening.

This non-historic marquee meets the preservation standards.

This waterfall awning is not installed in a window opening and covers character-defining features, overwhelming the historic storefront.

P.7 GROUND FLOOR COMMERCIAL

P.7.2 Security Gates

P.7.2.1 Attachments for retractable gates or security grilles shall either be hidden behind an architectural element, tucked into a framed pocket opening, mounted on the interior, attached to a storefront return, or mounted high enough above the glazing system so as to conceal housing mechanisms and to minimize visibility during daytime and/or business operating hours.

P.7.2.2 Design new security gates and grilles to be a minimum of 75% open and transparent to perpendicular view.

P.7.3 Signage, Light Fixtures, Security Cameras, and Other Façade-mounted Elements

P.7.3.1 Signage, light fixtures, security cameras, and other wall-mounted elements shall not be anchored into any surface area of cast iron or terra cotta elements of a building.

P.7.3.2 Signage, light fixtures, security cameras, and other wall-mounted elements shall not obscure any surface area or dimensions of any character-defining features of the façade including storefront transoms.

P.7.3.3 Signage, light fixtures, security cameras, and other wall-mounted elements shall not have visible exterior electrical conduit of any dimension.

P.7.3.4 Gooseneck light fixtures shall not be permitted.

P.7.3.5 Acrylic or other plastic materials shall not be permitted as the face material for a projecting or wall sign.

This security gate is mounted on top of a historic storefront with a highly visible frame rather than being installed within the storefront opening.

P.7.4 Seismic Retrofits

P.7.4.1 Any required seismic retrofitting shall not allow exterior diagonal bracing at the street-facing façades of a historic building.

Projecting sign appropriately installed in the mortar joints

Security cameras installed with visible electrical conduit

This seismic retrofit does not meet Standard P.7.3.1 due to its exterior diagonal bracing

Inappropriate installation of gooseneck light fixtures

P.8 NEW WINDOW OPENINGS

Windows in additions to historic buildings or new windows added to the existing building shall be durable and of high-quality materials and shall have a visual relationship to the historic building's windows if visible from a public right-of-way.

P.8.1 Windows in an addition to a historic property that are visible from a public right-of-way[4] shall match the finish of the windows at the corresponding frontage of the historic building and shall also match the historic property's window material and/or operation at that frontage.

P.8.2 Windows in an addition to a historic property that are visible from a public right-of-way[4] shall not feature a configuration with more lite divisions than the existing windows at the corresponding frontage of the historic building.

P.8.3 Vinyl windows shall not be permitted in any window openings visible from a public right-of-way[1] in an addition to a historic property, unless a project proposes 100% affordable housing.

P.8.4 Windows in an addition to a historic property shall be recessed at least three inches from the surrounding exterior wall surfaces, measured from window frame to finished exterior wall.

P.8.5 If windows in an addition to a historic property feature muntins, these muntins must feature true divided lites or simulated divided lites with dark-colored spacers. Sandwich, roll on, or tape muntins shall not be allowed.

P.8.6 New windows may be introduced along the surface area of the ground floor of the street-facing façade(s) of a historic building if necessary to meet Building Code requirements. The surface area of the new windows must be transparent and shall not have translucent, frosted, or opaque glass. Any new windows shall be smaller (in length, width, and/or area) than the largest existing window found at the upper floors of the street-facing façade(s).

4. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

Inappropriate treatment of ground floor windows with frosted glass

Inappropriate windows installed in an addition to a historic building that do not match the finish, operation, or material of the historic building's original windows

P.9 BUILDING ENTRIES

When additions or alterations to historic buildings require additional entrances to be added that are visible from the street, such as for a new dwelling unit or ADU, these new entrances shall not be larger or more prominent than the existing historic entrances.

P.9.1 Any new pedestrian entrances that must be added to meet Building Code requirements shall be located on a secondary façade whenever possible. If required to be located on a street-facing façade, the new entrance opening will be no larger than applicable codes require.

P.9.2 New entrance doors at street-facing façades will be the same material as any existing street-facing entrance doors, with a solid-to-glass ratio matching or within 10 percent of that of the existing entrance doors.

A new entrance door in an addition to a historic building is smaller than the historic entrance, is the same material as the historic entrance, and has a solid-to-glass ratio within 10 percent of the historic entrance, which itself has already been replaced with a non-historic door.

P.10 GARAGE ENTRIES

A new garage entrance shall be designed to not overwhelm the scale of the historic building or remove any character-defining features.

P.10.1 A garage opening shall be inserted into the surface area of a side or rear façade of a Category A building unless that opening would prove infeasible or inoperable.

P.10.2 No existing primary entrances, decorative features, or bay windows (either their material, operation, or dimensions) at the primary street-facing façade may be modified or removed to allow for insertion of a new garage entrance.

P.10.3 Garage doors shall be recessed at least one foot from the surrounding wall surface.

P.10.4 Any new garage opening shall be no wider than 10 feet. If the façade where a new garage opening is being added has an existing garage opening over 10 feet wide, a new garage opening may be wider than 10 feet as long as it is less wide than the existing garage opening.

P.10.5 Garage doors must have a solid, painted finish and may feature no more than 25 percent glazing.

An inappropriate garage insertion that required modification of the historic bay window

A garage insertion that did not require modification of the historic bay window and is recessed from the surrounding wall surface

P.11 ROOFTOP FEATURES

New elements added to a historic building's roof shall be set back from the front of the building and shall not detract from the historic building.

P.11.1 Mechanical equipment shall be set back from the roof edge so as not to be visible from a public right-of-way[4]. If equipment cannot be set back so as not to be visible from a public right-of-way while still meeting Building Code requirements, the equipment shall be hidden from direct view with screening whose finish color matches the surrounding façade cladding and/or roof finish and is no taller than the tallest mechanical equipment element.

P.11.2 Roof decks shall be set back at least 5 feet from any roof edge.

P.11.3 Glass is not permitted on any surface area of a roof deck railing unless the roof deck will not be visible from a public right-of-way[4].

Inappropriate highly visible glass railing

4. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

P.12 MATERIALS

The cladding materials of an addition to a historic building shall be high quality and shall relate to the historic building's materials.

P.12.1 Unless identified as a character-defining feature, no surface area of an addition to a Category A building visible from a public right-of-way[4] may include Vinyl, T1-11, nor aluminum siding.

P.12.2 All surface area of fiber cement or other non-vinyl synthetic siding, if used as cladding on an addition, shall have a smooth finish, and shall not have a simulated wood grain texture.

P.12.3 Any surface area of wood siding on an addition shall be painted, unless the existing Category A building features untreated or stained wood cladding as one of its character-defining features (e.g., unpainted shingle siding).

P.12.4 All surface area of façade cladding for the portions of a new addition that are visible from a public right-of-way[4] shall match the existing Category A building's predominant façade cladding in up to two but not all of the following properties: material, texture, and/or finish.

P.12.5 All surface area of roof cladding for the portions of a new addition that are visible from a public right-of-way[4] shall match the existing Category A building's predominant roof cladding in up to two but not all of the following properties: material, texture, and/or finish.

The concrete cladding of a 1968 tower addition to 400 California Street matches the texture and finish of the original 1908 building's granite façade.

4. Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.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GLOSSARY

Glossary

Acrylic: A transparent thermoplastic used architecturally for windows, skylights, bulletproof security barriers, signs, and displays.

Alcove: A recessed area in the wall.

Alley: A right-of-way, less than 30 feet in width, permanently dedicated to common and general use by the public.

Aluminum-Clad Wood Window: Windows with wood sash and frame, wrapped with a protective exterior layer of aluminum.

Articulation: The act of giving expression. In architecture, it is the definition of the formal elements of architectural design. Through degrees of articulation, each part is united with the whole in such a way that the joined parts are put together. The articulation of a building reveals how the parts fit into the whole by emphasizing each part separately.

Awning: A light, roof-like structure, supported entirely by the exterior wall of a building; consisting of a fixed or movable frame covered with cloth, plastic, or metal; extending over doors, windows, and/or show windows; with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain and/or embellishment of the façade.

Bay: A space between architectural elements. For example the space between storefront pilasters.

Bay Window: A window that projects outward from the façade of the building.

Blind Wall: Windowless or doorless walls at side property lines.

Bracket: A structural or decorative element that projects from a wall, usually to carry weight or support the roof.

Bulkhead: The lower part of a wall, upon which the storefront display window is placed.

Canopy: A light, roof-like structure, supported by the exterior wall of a building and on columns or wholly on columns, consisting of a fixed or movable frame covered with approved cloth, plastic, or metal, extending over entrance doorways only, with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain and/or embellishment of the façade.

Cedar Shingles: A shingle material made of Cedar wood that is often left unpainted and associated with the First Bay Tradition style. Used for roofing or siding.

Cladding: Application of one material over another to provide a skin or layer. For example wood siding and stucco are common cladding materials.

Clay Tile: A commonly used roofing material made of terra cotta that is hung from a roofing system systematically to shed water from a sloped roof plane. It is commonly associated with Mission Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles.

Clerestory/Transom Window: A high section of wall that contains windows above eye level with the purpose of admitting light, fresh air, or both. Often found above storefront display windows.

Development: Any construction activity either as new construction or addition to an existing structure(s) that result in at least two units or more is at least two-thirds residential.

Divided Lite Windows: A true divided-light window has multiple panes of glass that are separated by muntins or grilles. Simulated divided-light windows have one piece of glass with removable muntins attached to both the interior and exterior of the glass.

Eyebrows: A flat, typically concrete, projection which protrudes horizontally from a building wall, generally located above windows.

Façade: The face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space.

Fenestration: The arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of a building. Fenestration is often examined as a pattern.

Fiber Cement: A cement siding material reinforced by fibers and commonly used as a replacement material that mimics wood, brick, or stone.

Finish: A surface treatment applied to floors, ceilings, or walls for aesthetic, waterproofing, or textural effects.

Glazing: Glass windows, doors, or walls.

Gooseneck Light Fixture: A light fixture that incorporates a semi-rigid, flexible joining element made from a coiled hose.

Light Wells: An open area or vertical shaft that is surrounded by building mass on all sides. Typically located on the side property line wall and bring natural light to the lower floors or basement.

Lite: Also known as panes; an individual section of glass in a window or door.

Living or Green Wall: A wall that features living plants supported by the building wall or structure affixed to the wall.

Marquee: A permanent roofed structure attached to and supported entirely by a building, including any object or decoration attached to or part of said marquee, no part of which shall be used for occupancy or storage, with the purpose of providing protection from sun and rain and/or embellishment of the façade.

Mass: In architecture, mass is used to describe the three-dimensional volume or shape of a building or part of a building or the act of creating it.

Matte: A quality of a finish or surface material that is dull and flat; without a shine.

Mid-block: Open space Public or private site area, often including multiple lots, left as open space in the center of city blocks. This is typically created by an ensemble of many lots that follow a similar pattern, for example, consistent application and compliance with rear yard requirements.

Modulation: A three-dimensional modelling and definition of form that repeats, and supports the overall design. Recesses, projections, or other changes in façade planes, can be used to modulate.

Molding: Detail elements usually constructed of plaster or wood that contour or outline the edges and surfaces of a wall projection or ornamental detail.

Muntin: A strip of wood, metal, or other window material separating and holding panes of glass in a window. Muntins divide a single window sash or casement into a grid system of small panes of glass, called "lites."

Mural: A purposeful artistic graphical representation, that is not also a sign as defined by Planning code Article 6, painted or affixed (e.g. tile mosaic) directly on a wall and clearly distinguishable from the building's architecturally painted or tiled surfaces.

Ogee Lugs: Moldings with an S-shaped profile sometimes located at the bottom of a double-hung window's top-sash stiles. Integral ogee lugs are part of the stiles themselves, while snap-on ogee lugs are a separate molding piece that is attached to the stiles with screws or snaps.

Opaque: Lacking transparency. Not “see-through.”

Operable Window: Window that can be opened. Common types are single and double hung, casement, awning, hopper

Ornament: Embellishments used to improve the appearance of buildings through articulation. Often using figurative or literal forms taken from nature or abstracted.

Parapet: A low protective wall along the edge of a roof, deck, or balcony

Pilaster: A vertical architectural member that is rectangular in plan and is structurally a pier but architecturally treated as a column and that usually projects a third of its width or less from the wall

Pitch: The slope of a roof or surface.

Public Right-of-Way: Any street, avenue, boulevard, sidewalk, alley, or similar space that is owned or controlled by a governmental entity.

Residentially Zoned Properties: Properties zoned RH, RM or RTO

Roof Decks: Any occupiable space located on the roof of a volume.

Setback: A recession of the building volume from the property line at the ground level. A setback may extend the full height of the building or just the ground level.

Sidewalk: An elevated paved path for pedestrians at the side of a road and often between the roadway and a building. For the purposes of this document, sidewalks do not include private property or vehicular travel lanes.

Slate: A rock material that is cut and prepared for use as architectural shingles in roof systems.

Stepback: A volumetric recession on an upper level of a building

Storefront: Façade or entryway of a retail store located on the ground floor or street level of a commercial building.

Street-Facing Façade: A façade of a building that is parallel to and fronting on a public right-of-way.

Streetscape: The result of natural and built elements combined that define the street.

Streetwall: Combined façades of buildings generally built to the property line facing a street or open space

Stucco: A surface finish material used as an application to interior and exterior walls and ceilings. Composition includes aggregates (often sand), a binder(often lime or portland cement), and water. Interior uses of stucco are often referred to as plaster, while stucco often refers to exterior applications.

Sunshades: Devices that block sunlight and reduce the amount of solar gain typically made of metal.

Tower: Any building that is taller than 85 feet in height (exclusive of permitted obstructions) where the building is not subject to Height and Bulk provisions of Planning Code Section 270; for buildings that are subject to the height and bulk limitations of Planning Code Section 270 (including but not limited to Table 270), any building that is taller than the base height provided therein.

Tower Portion: The portion of a building that is above 85 feet in height where the building is not subject to the height and bulk provisions of Planning Code Section 270; for buildings that are subject to the height and bulk provisions of Planning Code Section 270, the portion of the building that is above the provided base height.

Translucent: Transmits light through but does not allow visibility through. Examples include frosted or fretted glass.

Transparent: Clear, non-mirrored glazing with a minimum transparency of 85%.

Trim: Volumes of wood or plaster applied to walls around doors, windows, thresholds, or ornamental elements to add visual interest and articulation.

Tropical Hardwoods: Woods from tropical forests including ramin, rosewood, ebony, mahogany, brazilwood, lignum vitae, meranti, wenge, merbau, and sapele

Vinyl: Architectural plastic used to frame windows, doors, or other architectural elements. Often used as a replacement material for wood or metal historic features.

Visible from a Public Right-of-Way: Visible from within a 150-foot radius of the parcel boundaries.

Volume: A three-dimensional measure of space that comprises a length, a width, and a height. In architecture, a volume can describe a three dimensional portion of a building or shaped element.

Window Frame: The sill, head, and jamb of the window system. The frame is the interface between the operable sections of the window and the wall, creating a transition between these parts and giving structure to the window.

Window Sash: The sash of the window are the operable parts of the window that rotate or slide to allow the window to open.

San Francisco Planning

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