

4.0 **Unit Design Element**

4.0 URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

4.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the Urban Design Element is to provide the City with the policy design guidelines and implementation directive to shape the future image of the downtown. The desire to achieve an urban form and appearance which results in a visually distinctive downtown which sets Belmont apart from the El Camino Strip has been a common desire and thread running through all community discussions on the Plan. However, the important focus of the Urban Design Element is less on portraying an ideal image and more on defining a practical vision of a better looking downtown that can be implemented through available regulations, redevelopment, and capital improvements. Because the downtown is already developed, change will be gradual as old buildings are replaced with new; the process of image-building will be slow, as development conforms to design guidelines. In other areas, such as the Village Center, where imaginative development opportunities can be achieved through redevelopment, new development can have a striking, immediate impact on the appearance of downtown.

Urban design policies, while guiding change, are also intended to conserve what is valued today such as buildings with a historic character, established landmark trees and streetscapes, and building scale. Design policy also ensures mitigation of the possible adverse impacts of downtown development on surrounding neighborhoods by creating visual buffers, boundaries and transition zones.

In the proposed Village Center shopping area of the downtown, urban design policies are set forth to strengthen the pedestrian shopping environment, unify commercial activity, and enhance the attractiveness of the downtown to serve as a people-oriented place. These are contained in the Village Center Element.

4.2 REMAKING DOWNTOWN: A LONG TERM VISION WITH NEAR TERM REWARDS

4.2.1 Where Is Downtown?

The people of Belmont consistently express great pride and satisfaction with their community and the way it looks, except when referring to the downtown. Comments such as, "We need a clean sweep," or "Let's start over" speak to the frustration of creating order out of the fragmented pieces that loosely form the downtown today.

The past history of Belmont as a small community village, a stop-over along the railroad and El Camino Real, persists in the remaining wooden storefronts and "Queen Anne" bungalows,

that dot the building fabric. A walking tour of the individual pocket sub-areas which make up the downtown also evoke this remaining small-town feeling, yet the pieces no longer add up to a cohesive sense of place. Not surprisingly, one of the first tasks in the public involvement process beginning in 1986 was to define the limits of downtown. Since neither the urban portions of the City nor its downtown has distinguishable edges, the establishment of a boundary for the downtown was an important initial starting point toward shaping a new downtown image.

4.2.2 Existing Streetscape Character

A streetscape analysis was conducted to assess the pattern of buildings and urban spaces which comprise the Downtown Planning Area, and to identify locations and urban design elements which are appropriate for the improvement of the urban streetscape. The analysis indicates that the downtown consists of a fragmented streetscape lacking visual coherence yet retaining some of the visual order formed by the remaining storefronts, commercial buildings and cottages of Old Downtown Belmont. The small intimate scale associated with these remnant forms creates pleasant niches in places yet is overpowered by the expanse of El Camino Real and the lack of visual focus for the Downtown.

As is typical of old mainstreets, most original storefronts face directly onto the sidewalk forming a nucleus for rebuilding a desirable commercial building frontage. This pattern occurs primarily on the west side of El Camino Real, along Ralston Avenue west of El Camino, and to some extent along Old County Road. However, because these storefronts face onto primarily arterial roadways, the pedestrian scale of these streetscapes is lost. Throughout most of the remainder of the planning area, the sense of streetscape is weak to chaotic, with few continuous storefronts, a lack of cohesion between clusters of buildings, and a lack of enclosure which allows the roadways to dominate the streetscape.

Building design guidelines and streetscape improvements are needed to create greater definition of pedestrian space and provide for the amenity, convenience and comfort desirable for a pedestrian shopping streets. Much of this can be achieved through the creation of urban shopping "streetwalls", landscaped building frontages and street trees. Urban streetwalls of continuous, uniform storefronts can provide the compactness, ease of pedestrian movement and comfortable walking distances which provide greater advantages for a shopping environment.

Landscaped building frontages can provide for outdoor activity areas such as outdoor cafes and streetside eating places. Outdoor awnings along storefronts can create greater definition of the physical pedestrian space, shield shoppers from the rain and harsh sun, and provide for a greater level of comfort for the pedestrian shopper.

Street trees can soften the street's appearance while improving the sense of enclosure and scale, and can overcome low building profiles by creating taller "streetwalls" to enclose the street.

4.2.3 Building On Existing Visual Assets

While the edges of the downtown may be fuzzy, the center is obvious to everyone: the axis of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue by reason of location, visual and historical imperative and yes, traffic. Logically, consensus recognizes that the adjacent blocks bounded by El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, Sixth Avenue and O'Neill Avenue, represent the downtown commercial core which should be developed as a primary shopping area and visual urban landmark.

The visual relationship of the downtown to its backdrop of tree-covered hills is also an unmistakable asset, reminiscent of seemingly less urbanized communities in the Bay Area, such as Mill Valley or Corte Madera in Marin, rather than the Peninsula's urban Bay front. This relationship of town center to natural hills and woodlands has been a consistent theme throughout the public workshop process and is clearly a key building block by which to remake a new downtown image.

4.2.4 A Coordinated Urban Design Approach

The urban design challenge is to resolve the inherent conflict between those who prefer an almost semi-rural town character and scale, and those who envision a modern downtown urban center. The Urban Design Element sets forth a well-orchestrated framework of development provisions aimed at shaping a long-term image consistent with traditional Belmont values but capable of accommodating future urban needs.

The conservation and enhancement of natural elements forms a unifying foundation of the plan and an excellent means for upgrading Belmont's image in the near term. A coordinated program of public and private improvements promoting the greening of the downtown through a cohesive fabric of street trees and well landscaped parklets, pedestrian ways and plazas should be implemented. Coupled with a realistic redevelopment program for the Village Center area, the citizens of Belmont should realize a greatly enhanced downtown image as a result of their investments in the community planning effort.

To achieve the long term vision, consistent and patient administration of guidelines dealing with building form and architectural character, as well as policies for site planning and parking design, will be required to complete the image remaking process.

4.3 URBAN DESIGN GOAL AND CONCEPT PLAN

This section sets forth the goal statements and urban design concept plan which describes the intent of the urban design policies which form a coordinated program to improve the appearance of the downtown.

4.3.1 Overall Urban Design Goal And Objectives

GOAL:

THE DOWNTOWN SHOULD FORM A VISUALLY DISTINCT URBAN DISTRICT WHICH RETAINS THE INHERENT QUALITIES OF SCALE AND CHARACTER OF BELMONT, AS WELL AS MAJOR VISTAS OF THE SURROUNDING HILLS WHICH SERVE AS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE BELMONT NAME. AN ATTRACTIVE, VISUALLY COHESIVE APPEARANCE SHOULD EXPRESS A SENSE OF VITALITY AND PROVIDE A FOCAL POINT FOR PUBLIC ACTIVITY AND A COMMUNITY LIFESTYLE.

OBJECTIVES

The overall urban design framework of policies and design guidelines is organized by the following objectives:

1. Streetscape, Urban Open Space and Landscape Objective:

Achieve a well landscaped streetscape which distinguishes the downtown district, forms the urban open space network and establishes a new design quality for El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, the major gateways and surrounding streets. A visual streetscape hierarchy should be created which establishes El Camino Real and Ralston as major prominent evergreen boulevards and all other downtown streets as having a uniform streetscape character.

The streetscape should have an urban vitality and should function as a place for people to walk and enjoy the downtown. It should also be richly landscaped and be visually linked to the backdrop of hillside woodland vegetation which distinguishes the downtown.

2. Building Form Objective:

The pattern of building massing, height and bulk should achieve an orderly, generally low profile, urban village scale and appearance. The contrast of taller landmark building elements at the Village Center should visually anchor the townscape overall.

New development should fit in rather than disrupt the appearance of the downtown district. The opportunity is to provide an overall pleasing building scale and profile which distinguishes Downtown Belmont.

3. Architectural Theme and Appearance Objective:

A distinct architectural image for the downtown should be based on a mixed theme of building styles derived from the architectural heritage of Downtown Belmont. Creative architectural design should be encouraged to utilize historic forms in innovative and attractive ways.

The diversity of building styles and sometimes visual conflicts found in the downtown can evolve to a more unified and cohesive architectural image through consistent application of an architectural design theme.

4. Site Design Objective:

Creative site and building design should be promoted to achieve architectural and land use intensification goals of the Plan, while ensuring efficiency in automobile access and parking, provision for on-site landscaping, and a high-quality site appearance.

The application of land use development guidelines and zoning standards to specific site conditions of individual parcels must relate to the overall design objectives and policies. Guidelines should assist the site designer while providing for flexibility to interpret the design philosophy and provide creative design solutions.

4.3.2 Urban Design Concept Plan

The Urban Design Concept Plan describes the vision for the future downtown image and character which underlines the specific objective and policy sections dealing with streetscape, architectural and site development elements. The following primary principles of Belmont's urban form and appearance describe the Plan:

- 1. Downtown Hillside Backdrop. The unique semi-bowl shaped backdrop of hills and woodland vegetation visually contains and distinguishes the western portion of the downtown. By enhancing, strengthening and expanding the woodland vegetation in this area, this historic quality can contour to enhance the downtown.**
- 2. The Roadway Axis of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue. The visual identity of downtown will always be shaped by the design identity and visual quality of these two roadways. Special landscape plaza treatment and use of roadway materials should be employed to embellish the appearance of the intersection. Although constrained by physical conditions and highway functional requirements, a**

handsome urban boulevard image should be sought which achieves a distinct appearance beginning at the gateways of these road elements.

- 3. Entry Gateway Enhancement.** East-west and north-south gateways to the City are located at key entry points where initial views of the downtown are offered the traveler. A variety of street treatments, architectural and landscape enhancements should be employed to define and enrich the City's front doors.
- 4. Building Fabric and Profile.** The chaotic pattern of building form today should evolve to a more unified orientation to the inherent grid of the downtown streetscape. Low-profiled streetwalls of buildings flanking well landscaped street channels will define the form of the downtown district in the future.

4.4 STREETScape, URBAN OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE POLICIES

Whether driving through or walking through the downtown, the streetscape is what the public experiences, views and enjoys as downtown open space. The quality of pedestrian amenities (trees, lighting, benches, furnishings and materials) enhances the appearance of the downtown and its attractiveness as a social place. The streetscape is, at first, shaped by the building forms that line the streets as well as what is contained in the sidewalk, pedestrian plazas and areas, and vehicular way.

Detailed design guidelines dealing with streetscape materials and furnishings further enhance and complete the streetscape policy framework. These include statements dealing with the pattern of streetscape paving materials, location of special planting areas, lighting, paving and street furniture.

STREETScape, URBAN OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE OBJECTIVE

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STREETScape PLAN POLICIES

4.4.1 Streetscape Plan Map. The accompanying map, Figure 4.1 identifies overall streetscape policies dealing with the hierarchy of streets both as to vehicular function and

pedestrian amenity and visual form as well as the manner in which entrances and gateways to the downtown are to be treated.

Detailed design guidelines are provided for each policy element set forth below dealing with streetscape materials and furnishings further enhance and complete the streetscape policy framework. These include statements dealing with the palette of streetscape paving materials, location of special planting areas, lighting, paving and street furniture.

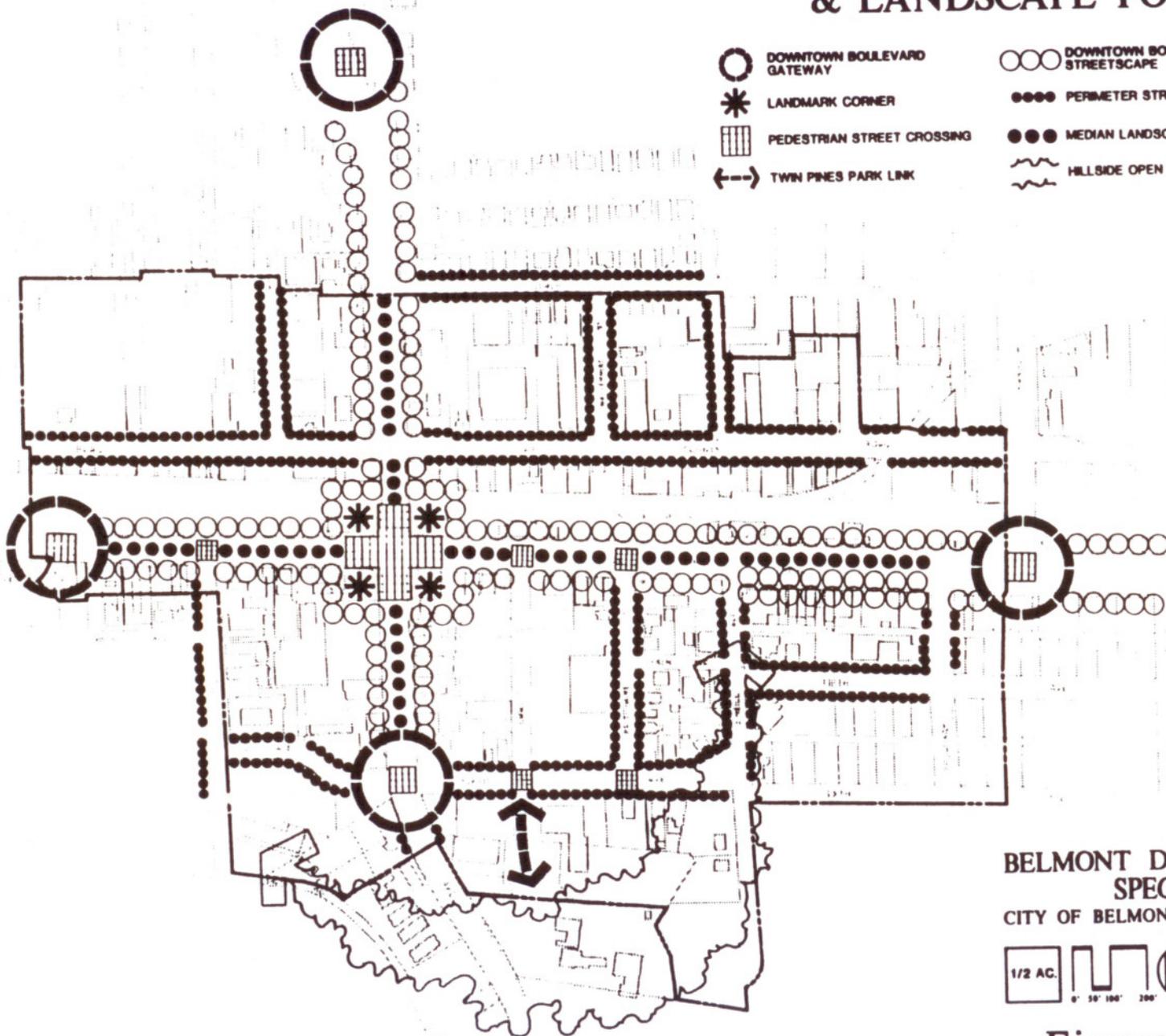
4.4.2 Downtown Boulevard Policy. El Camino Real from Middle Avenue to Broadway and Ralston Avenue from Hiller Avenue to Sixth Avenue shall be developed as the visually prominent, evergreen boulevards of the downtown as roadway improvements are phased over time.

Design Guidelines. The intent is to achieve a continuous wall of evergreen street trees along property frontages, and a landscape median where possible and as required for traffic control. The boulevard cross section elevation illustrated below demonstrate the ultimate street right-of-way treatment which should be achieved through development of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue over time in conjunction with traffic improvement upgrades. The following boulevard design guidelines set forth the design intent for right-of-way treatment, street trees and plant materials, and street lighting.

1. **Right-of-Way Treatment.** The El Camino and Ralston Avenue right-of-way should include landscape medians as described in the Circulation Element, Interim Improvements. Fronting sidewalks may be less than 8 feet in width, and street trees may be established in planters within the parking lane rather than the sidewalk to allow establishment of continuous street trees. (This treatment is similar to the approach taken by the City of Palo Alto along University Avenue within the downtown.)
2. **Street Trees.** Street trees are to be large, broad canopied, round-headed evergreens such as cork oak (*Quercus suber*) or evergreen oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) planted approximately 25 to 30 feet on center. The wider portions of medians should have a ground plane of flowering ground cover, and narrow aisles should contain flowering low shrubs. Trees such as crepe myrtle or flowering fruit trees should be used for accent at median beginning and end points. Within the main body of the median, the same broad canopied evergreen trees used along the sidewalk edge should be installed.
3. **Street Lighting.** Street lighting at the sidewalk should be a distinctive fixture for the downtown district compatible with the architectural treatment theme. The fixture may have an old-fashioned character such as the streetlights along Market Street in San Francisco (comparable fixtures include the National Series by Union Metal or those by Visco). Within the El Camino Real median, tall dual cobra-head fixtures (PG&E standard) mounted on single poles at appropriate intervals to meet Caltrans standards should light both sides of the roadways. All light poles should be painted a deep gun-metal blue.

STREETSCAPE, OPEN SPACE & LANDSCAPE POLICIES

- DOWNTOWN BOULEVARD GATEWAY
- * LANDMARK CORNER
- ▤ PEDESTRIAN STREET CROSSING
- ↔ TWIN PINES PARK LINK
- DOWNTOWN BOULEVARD STREETSCAPE
- PERIMETER STREETSCAPE
- MEDIAN LANDSCAPE
- ~ HILLSIDE OPEN SPACE

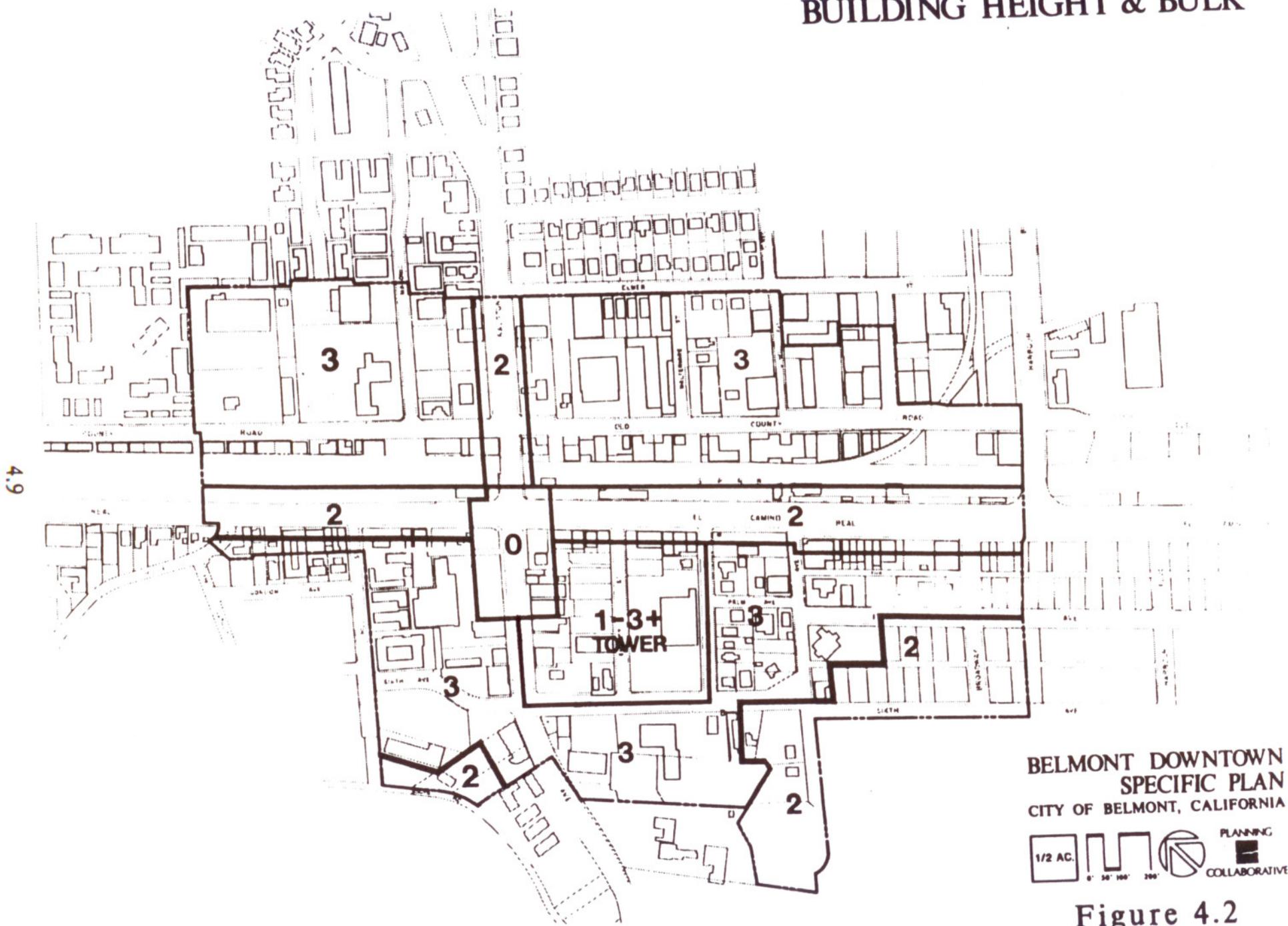


BELMONT DOWNTOWN
SPECIFIC PLAN
CITY OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA

1/2 AC. 0' 50' 100' 200' PLANNING COLLABORATIVE

Figure 4.1

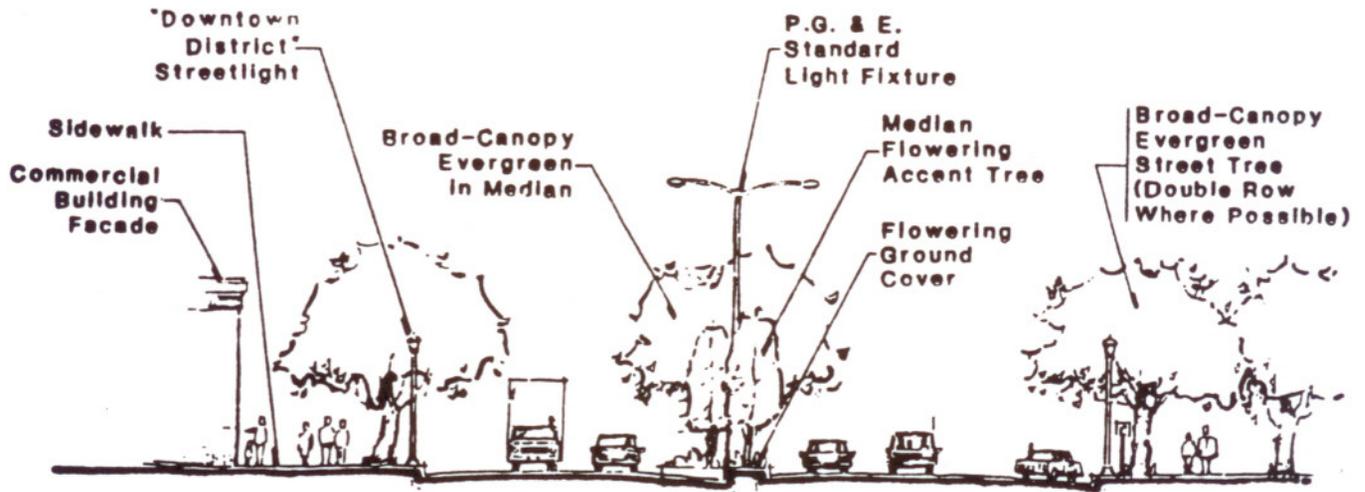
BUILDING HEIGHT & BULK



BELMONT DOWNTOWN
 SPECIFIC PLAN
 CITY OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA

1/2 AC. 0' 50' 100' 200' PLANNING COLLABORATIVE

Figure 4.2



El Camino Real & Ralston Avenue
TYPICAL BOULEVARD SECTION

4.4.3 Downtown Boulevard Gateways Policy. An entry landmark design statement should be created at the north gateway in the vicinity of El Camino Real and Middle Avenue, the south gateway at El Camino Real and Harbor, east gateway at Ralston and approximately Hiller Avenue, and west gateway at Ralston Avenue and Sixth Avenue to form the major entryways portals to the downtown.

Design Guidelines. The design intent of these gateways should be achieved by initiating the boulevard treatment elements at these locations at an early phase in the downtown improvements program. Where available, right-of-way allows, double rows of boulevard trees should be used to strengthen the entry points. Double headed side street lights should be utilized for emphasis and an entry landmark monument and downtown sign incorporated into the median island.

4.4.4 Downtown Streetscape Policy. The remaining roadway network consisting of arterials, major and minor collectors should receive a uniform design treatment of street trees, landscape materials and lighting to create a cohesive overall image for the downtown district.

Design Guidelines. The design intent should be accomplished by the following:

1. **Street Tree Planting.** Plant medium sized, somewhat upright oval-head evergreen and deciduous trees such as Evergreen Pear (*Pyrus kawakami*), flowering Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* "Bradford"), *Tristania laurina*, or Raywood Ash (*Fraxinis raywoodi*) or planted every 20 to 25 feet on center. The evergreen trees should be planted in a north-south direction and deciduous trees on east-west running streets. Evergreen pear

trees should continue to be planted on north and south portions of Sixth Street to complete the new plantings already initiated there.

2. **Street Lighting and Traffic Signals.** A distinctive, standardized downtown light fixture (see Section 4.4.2(3) above) should align the sidewalks at a spacing of approximately 40 to 50 feet apart and a pole height of approximately 12 to 15 feet. Traffic signal poles should be consistent within the light fixture and a standard, gun-metal blue paint color employed for all metal work.
3. **Street Furniture.** Uniform use of standard trash receptacles, newspaper racks, seating benches, bicycle stands and other street furniture should be accomplished.
4. **Decorative Paving.** Decorative sidewalk paving should continue to be employed on all downtown sidewalks. However, a compatibly colored, unit paver system (such as manufactured by Kratsner or Muller Supply) should be substituted for the red bomanite brick pattern on those blocks where less than 1/2 of the block frontage is already in bomanite. On those blocks which already have a serious commitment to bomanite (more than 50% of the block frontage), the red bomanite pattern should be continued. A compatibly colored brick paver should be used within the Village Center.
5. **Implementation.** Implementation of the Downtown streetscape policy will require an expanded program beyond the current practice of the City (see Implementation Policy 7.4.7). Currently, the City requires new sidewalk, street tree and tree grate improvements at the time that property owners renovate or rebuild. This approach has resulted in gradual, incremental streetscape changes within the Downtown but lacks the coordinated impact necessary to achieve the goals of the Plan. Moreover, the integrated requirements of streetscape improvements combining irrigation, street lighting, and sometimes parking and utility undergrounding are best accomplished when a Streetscape Master Design Plan is prepared in advance of improvements. This approach also allows for a more flexible approach to project financing.

4.4.5 Ralston-El Camino Landmark Corners Policy. Create a four-cornered landscaped green at the intersection of Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real to overcome the unsightly, road-oriented character and to instill an attractive visual landmark at the center of the boulevard axis of downtown. Each corner visual element should be installed in phases as opportunities permit.

Design Guidelines. Each corner feature should form a 30-35 foot square with the primary emphases on an interior bosque of medium-sized flowering, round-headed trees such as Evergreen Pear (*Pyrus kawakami*) or mildew resistant varieties of Crape Myrtle (*Lager stroemia indica*). Low framing walls should announce the City's name and logo, at the back edge of a ground plane that slopes toward the street. Flowering shrubs and ground cover should complete the treatment. A fountain could be incorporated in the southwest corner at the new Village Center.

Each corner element could be installed in phases as implementation opportunities allow. They could be incorporated into new development (Village Center) or obtained through design open space easement dedications. Where buildings now occupy the eastern corners at El Camino Real, right-of-way acquisition may be delayed until roadway improvements are required.

4.4.6 Streetscape Plan Implementation Policy. The streetscape plan should be implemented as permitted by road improvement and development opportunities and capital funds.

Streetscape Improvement Projects. The following project elements shall be undertaken:

1. Ralston Avenue Boulevard and Gateway improvements west of El Camino Real shall be incorporated into the Village Center project.
2. Ralston Avenue Boulevard and Gateway improvements east of El Camino Real shall be phased with reduction of curb cuts, and installation of street trees within sidewalk planting area or as pockets in between on street parking spaces.
3. El Camino Real Boulevard and Gateway improvements south of Ralston Avenue shall be improved as timed with Village Center project.
4. Downtown streetscape improvements shall be phased so that the southwestern sub-area receives the highest priority followed by the northwest sub-area, the northeast sub-area and southeast sub-area.
5. Ralston/El Camino Landmark Corners program should be implemented within the next five years, as consistent with property availability and/or development opportunities.

URBAN OPEN SPACE, PEDESTRIAN WALKS, PARKS AND PLAZAS POLICIES:

4.4.7 Hillside Open Space Backdrop Policy. The wooded hillside should be conserved and enhanced as a western backdrop for the downtown as it merges with Twin Pines Park and along the remaining open channel of Belmont Creek.

Design Guidelines. Existing trees in the backdrop area should be conserved by careful site design, and supplemented by planting new evergreen oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*). The visually prominent wooded riparian corridor along Old Belmont Creek should be conserved and strengthened with new tree plantings.

4.4.8 Pedestrian Ways and Linkages Policy. The downtown streetscape network shall serve as the primary system of pedestrian movement augmented by interior block connections and linkages to adjacent areas.

Design Guidelines. Pedestrian ways and street crossings shall provide an 8-foot minimum

pavement width and shall be safely located for street crossing. Decorative paving shall be installed for all pedestrian ways in the downtown, and shall be extended across intersections to demark the pedestrian area. In the Village Center area brick pavers shall be utilized. Elsewhere, a unit paver or equal shall be utilized throughout the downtown streetscape system and shall replace the bomanite pavement now utilized.

4.4.9 Downtown Parks and Plaza Policy. Usable outdoor park and open space shall be provided on a site-by-site basis for future residential development. A public park and/or plaza shall be provided within the Village Center, as per policy 3.5.7 of this Plan.

Design Guideline. The major downtown public plaza shall be incorporated within the Village Center redevelopment project.

4.4.10 Twin Pines Park Policy. Implement a strong pedestrian linkage between Twin Pines Park and the downtown Village Center as designated in the Village Center Element, Policy 3.5.10.

4.4.11 Streetscape Improvement Funding Policy. Funding for the recommended streetscape improvements shall be provided through a combination of public and private sources, as more fully described in the Implementation Element, Section 7.4.

Design Guidelines. Table 4.1 details the estimated costs for the various streetscape improvements. The costs are order of magnitude. The estimate includes a 10% design component and a 40% contingency. Costs are shown based on a phasing program described in Section 7.4.7 of this Plan.

TABLE 4.1 RECOMMENDED STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT COSTS

Improvement	Cost
Phase I	
Boulevard Streetscape; El Camino Real	\$ 270,000
Boulevard Streetscape; Ralston Avenue	135,000
Downtown Streetscape; O'Neill, Waltermire and Sixth	475,000
Gateway, West Ralston Avenue	220,000
Landmark Corner	<u>415,000</u>
Subtotal	\$1,515,000
Phase II	
Boulevard Streetscape; El Camino Real	\$ 480,000
Gateway; North and South El Camino Real	<u>440,000</u>
Subtotal	\$ 920,000
Phase III	
Boulevard Streetscape; El Camino Real	\$ 375,000
Downtown Streetscape; North, East and West Quadrants	1,300,000
Boulevard Gateway; East Ralston Avenue	<u>220,000</u>
Subtotal	\$1,895,000
Total	\$4,330,000
Design Costs (10%)	433,000
Contingency (40%)	1,732,000
Grand Total	\$6,495,500

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4.5 BUILDING FORM POLICIES

There are four major ways in which building form in the downtown area can be used to achieve a desired form and appearance: 1) designing the pattern of building height and bulk as it occurs throughout the downtown so that it can achieve a variety and richness in the massing of buildings, allowing tall buildings to serve as landmarks while low profile buildings may provide pedestrian scale or transitions to existing development, 2) controlling the manner in which building forms shape the edges of the City streets through building line and frontage so that the edges of building masses take on a controlled shape and image. This technique can be used to enhance downtown gateways and create "streetwalls" that have an urban feeling, and 3) conserving buildings which have a historic character or architectural interest which distinguishes the downtown as well as retains a sense of linkage to the past.

4.5 BUILDING FORM OBJECTIVE:

The pattern of building massing, height, bulk, building line and frontage should achieve an orderly urban village scale and appearance. The contrast of taller landmark building elements at the Village Center should visually anchor the townscape overall.

BUILDING HEIGHT AND BULK POLICIES:

4.5.1 Height and Bulk Policy Map. The pattern of permitted building height within the downtown is set forth on the Building Height and Bulk Map, Figure 4.2. Permitted heights range from 2 to 4 stories and provide for a 2-story streetwall along Ralston and El Camino Real.

Design Guidelines. The varied building height pattern should allow vistas of the western hillsides to be afforded from vantage points within the downtown, create a low profile building scale while allowing opportunities for more intensive development, ensure adequate access to sunlight, promote compatibility of scale between new and old development, and provide for a gradual transition from tall to lower buildings.

4.5.2 Streetwall Policy. A 2-story streetwall shall be maintained along Ralston Avenue and El Camino Real within the downtown from which additional higher stories shall be stepped back in height.

Design Guidelines. The streetwall shall be no higher than 28 feet in height whereas the step back for the floors above 2 stories shall be setback a height which is equal to the setback distance from the streetwall such that a 1:1 ratio is maintained between building facade setbacks and heights. The streetwall setback shall create a uniform, low profile building edge along these roadways while permitting taller elements to rise out of general view without creating a canyon-like building effect, thus maintaining and enhancing the views of Belmont Hills.

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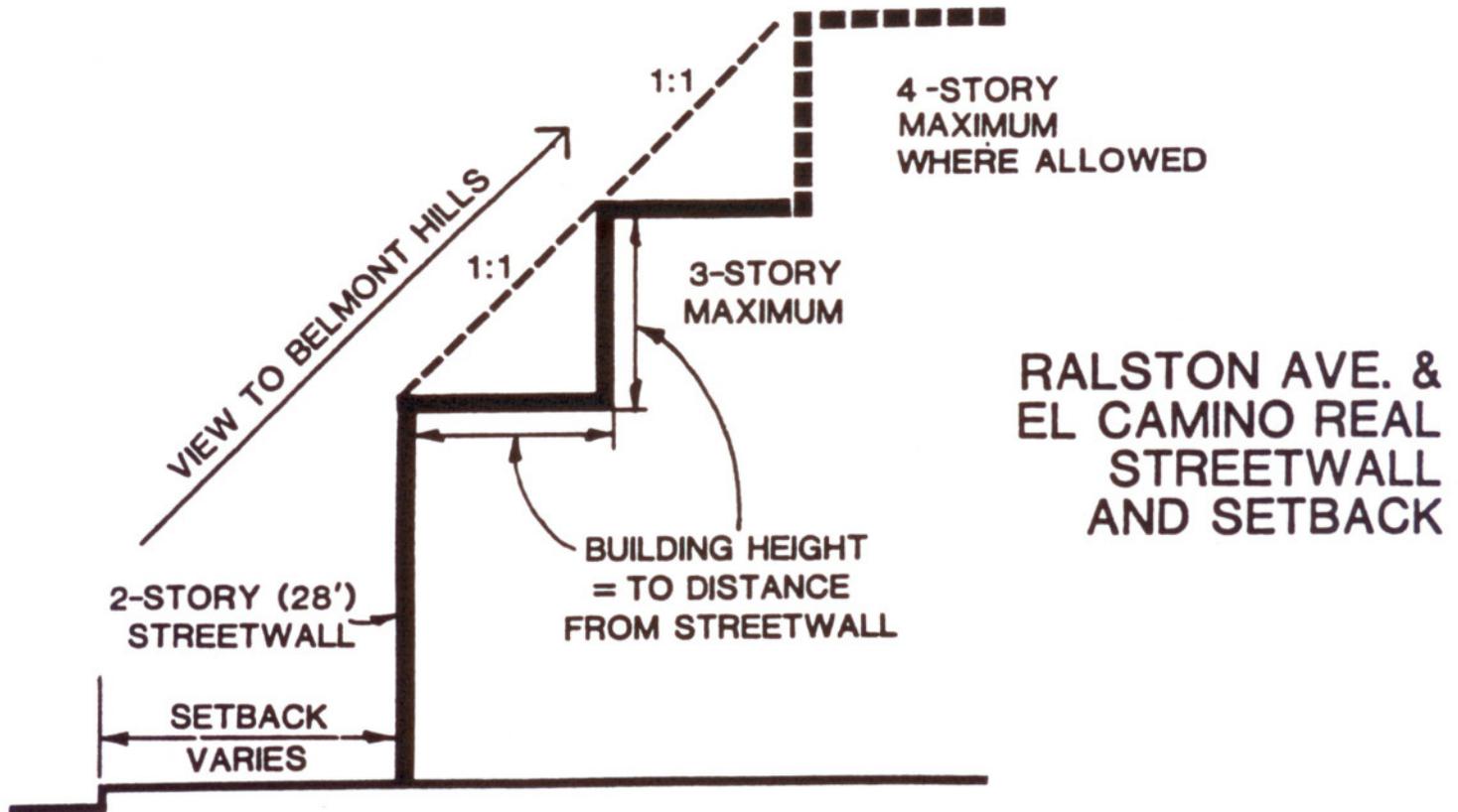
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STREETWALL AND SETBACK REQUIREMENTS

4.5.3 Building Bulk Policy. The building bulk should be massed along the frontage of the block face so that a continuous building line and profile are created. Building voids should occur at the core of blocks or buildings should be primarily oriented to private streets with parking set behind on secondary collectors. Buildings should be primarily oriented to the primary street call line as given in the Building Line and Frontage Policy Map.

BUILDING LINE, FRONTAGE AND SETBACK POLICIES:

4.5.4 Building Line, Frontage and Setback Policy Map. The building line, frontage and setback policies provide for a continuity of building lines and facades which maintains the traditional urban character of the downtown. Buildings are required to conform to the designated building line, and should be oriented to the primary streetwall line.

Design Guidelines. The oldest areas of Downtown Belmont are characterized by continuous building facades setback 15 feet or less from the curb line. In order to provide for a more varied interplay of building facades sidewalk widths and landscape materials an alternating pattern of setbacks are set forth which blend the traditional urban character of the Downtown with a more open landscaped suburban character. The following setback categories and guidelines are provided in Table 4.2 and corresponding Figure 4.3.

TABLE 4.2 BUILDING LINE, FRONTAGE, AND SETBACK GUIDELINES

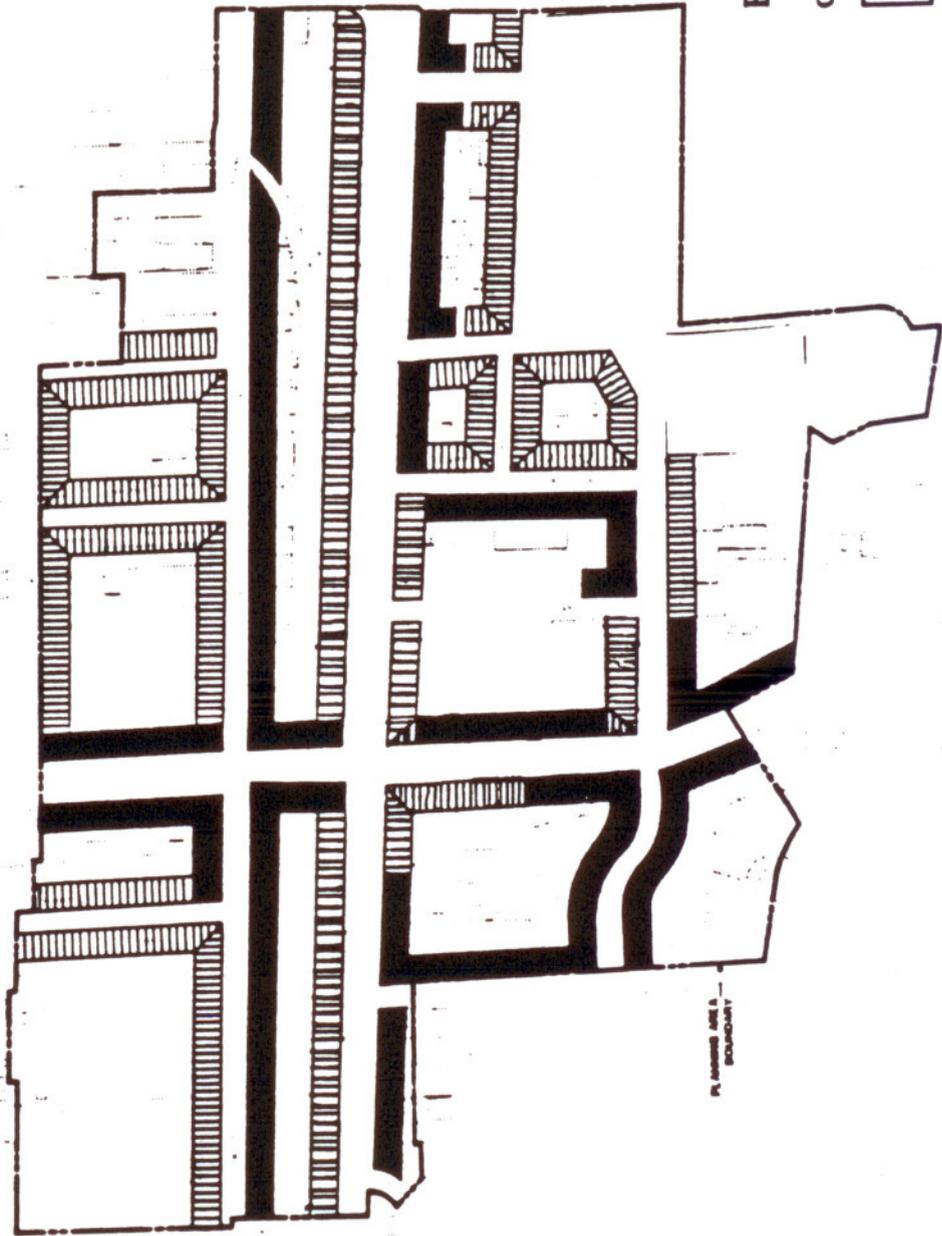
Required Improvements Within the Setback

Street Frontage Type¹	Building Setback Range²	Required Sidewalk	Street Tree	Landscape Treatment or Frontage
Urban Streetwall	10 - 12 feet	10 - 12 feet	Single Row	Planters Pots and Boxes
Landscape Building Frontage	15 feet minimum	5 - 10 feet	Single Row	Landscape Buffer 5 feet minimum

¹Setback type corresponds to Figure 4.3, Building Line and Frontage Policy Map.

²Setback measured from front of curb.

BUILDING LINE & FRONTAGE



BELMONT DOWNTOWN
SPECIFIC PLAN
CITY OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA



Figure 4.3

4.5.5 Uniform Landscape Frontage Policy. As part of the building frontage and setback policy, uniform landscape treatment is required for each type of setback as follows:

1. In the "streetwall" setback, the use of planter pots and window boxes should be employed to enliven the sidewalk streetscape with flowering plant materials.
2. Within the "landscaped/activity" setback, the 9 to 14 foot minimum landscape frontage from the back of the sidewalk should be enhanced by flowering groundcover and shrubs and trees where appropriate and where consistent with the building land use and function. Outdoor patios and sitting areas may be included within this landscaped frontage.
3. Within the "Plaza" and "Plaza Complement" setback, major opportunities for groupings (bosque) and double row (alle) tree plantings and mounded earthen areas should be created. These landscaped areas should be continued in their theme into landscaped islands within parking lots.

4.5.6 Retail Window Continuity Policy. Maintain a continuous retail shopping experience along streetscapes designated as "streetwall"; shown on the Building Line, Frontage and Setback Policy Map Figure 4.3 to promote the ground floor retail use and function within key areas of the Downtown. Continuous window displays and retail use would be required along designated areas on Ralston Avenue, El Camino Real, Sixth Avenue and within the Village Center.

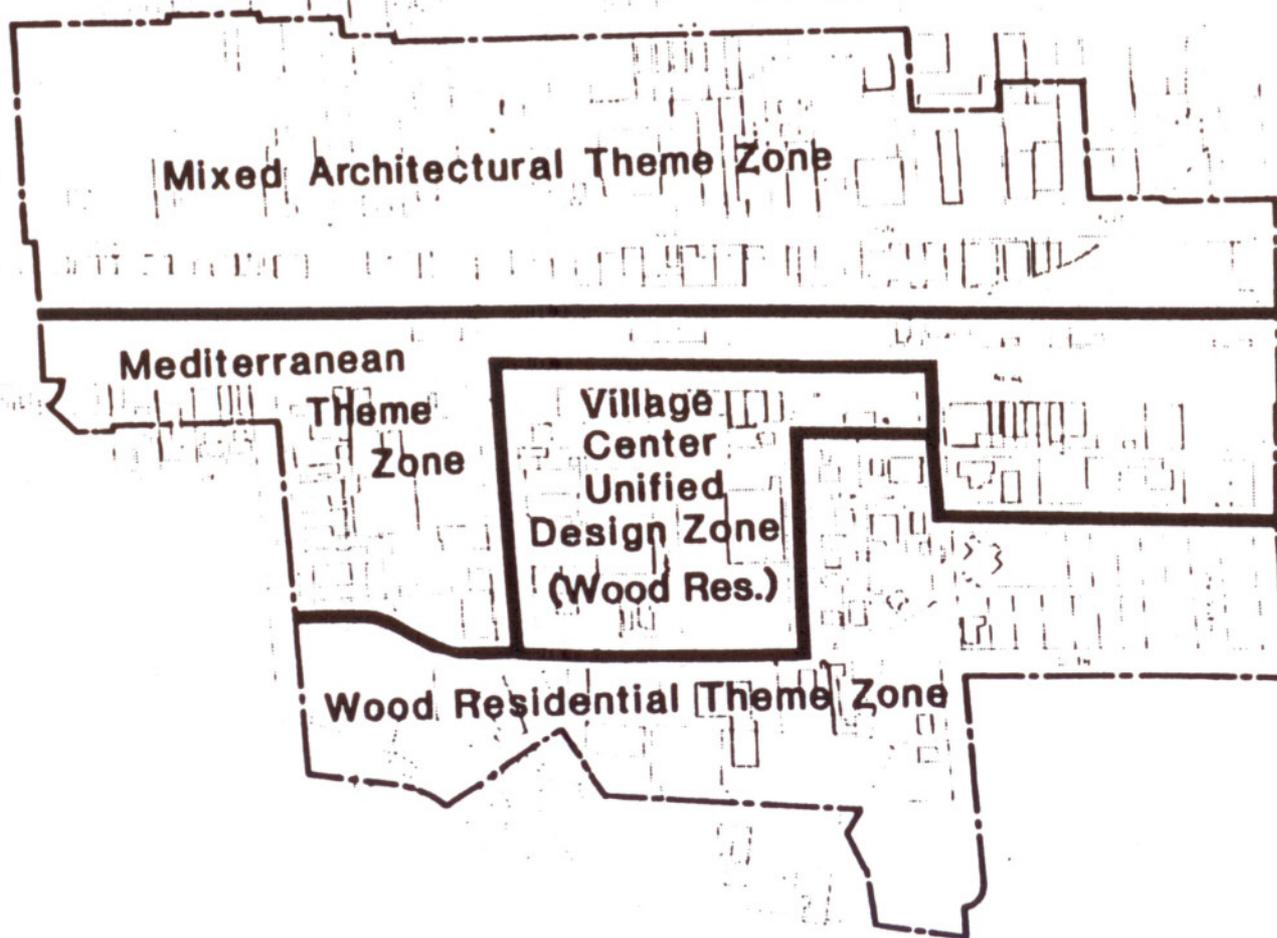
Design Guidelines. The loss of continuity of retailing at the ground floor level can damage the role of the Downtown as a primary shopping area and undermine its health and vitality. The shopping experience is as much a commercial retail necessity as well as a vital element of the streetscape experience for pedestrians and passersby within the Downtown. This requirement will ensure that new development will not remove existing window shopping frontage and will strengthen commercial use and the shopping role of the streetscape.

4.6 ARCHITECTURAL THEME AND TREATMENT POLICIES

An architectural theme, whether adopted as an overall pattern for an entire area or for particular subareas is yet another way to create a new downtown image. The varied architectural styles which have been historically developed in the downtown include Italianate, Mission Style, Spanish Eclectic, Monterey Style, Queen Anne Victorian, Stick Style, Shingle Style, Bungalow Craftsman and Modern. Other buildings are less distinct and derive their form in a very eclectic fashion from many of these patterns. The intent of the City should be to encourage creative design and architecture. At the same time, conserving buildings which have an historic character or architectural interest can distinguish the downtown as well as retain a sense of linkage to the

ARCHITECTURAL THEME ZONES

4.20



BELMONT DOWNTOWN
SPECIFIC PLAN
CITY OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA



Figure 4.4

decorative but should provide for recessed window glass surface which creates a deep shadow box effect in the building facade.

3. Porches and Entry Ways. Ground floor porches which may enclose the first story, include the front entrance and may wrap around a portion of the building to accentuate the asymmetry of the facade shall be encouraged at the first floor level.
4. Signage. All exterior signs must be flood lit, wood or brass, or internally lit and in a color compatible with that of the color scheme of the building (fluorescent colors are not acceptable). Sign detailing and decorative work should be consistent with the architectural detailing of the structure. Unlighted signs are permissible.

4.6.3 Mediterranean Theme Zone. The Mediterranean Theme Architectural Treatment Zone is established along El Camino Real to reflect the historic character of the area and the mixture of Mission Style, Spanish Eclectic and Monterey Style buildings which are generally found in this area.

Design Guidelines. The following design guidelines are set forth below, and demonstrated in Figure 4.6, Mediterranean Theme Prototype:

1. Roof Treatment. A low-pitched roof shall be provided on which there is little eave treatment or minimal overhang at the roof wall junction. A wide-eaved overhang may be provided such as typical of the Mission Style; it should be open and not boxed. Roof materials should be shingle or tile.
2. Facades. Wall cladding should be either stucco, brick or board and batten wood with different cladding materials on the first and second stories permitted. Use of second story balconies is encouraged either overhanging the lower story and covered by their principal roof or set in over a portion of the first floor. Use of paired casement windows and false shutters with minimal or decorative window detailing is appropriate.
3. Porches and Entry Ways. Entrances may include arcaded entry porches or ground level doorways with simple low relief ornaments and door surrounds.
4. Signage. Exterior signs may be wood, stucco or tile as consistent with the building's wall treatment and must be either flood lit or unlighted. The color should be shades of earthtones, dark shades of primary color, or other hues compatible with that of the color scheme of the building (fluorescent colors are not acceptable). Sign detailing and decorative work should be consistent with the architectural detailing of the structure.

4.6.4 Mixed Architectural Theme Zone. The Mixed Architectural Theme Zone is established for all areas east of El Camino Real. This mixed zone is established to allow for a wide variety of architectural themes, yet to provide for guidelines which would be consistent and complementary to the Mediterranean and Wood Residential Theme Zones within the rest

4.6 ARCHITECTURAL THEME AND TREATMENT OBJECTIVE

A distinct architectural image for the Downtown should be based on 8 mixed theme of building styles derived from the architectural heritage of Downtown Belmont. Creative architectural design should be encouraged to utilize the historic forms in innovative and attractive ways.

ARCHITECTURAL THEME AND APPEARANCE POLICIES:

4.6.1 Architectural Theme Zone Policy. Architectural theme zones are established within the Downtown to maintain a cohesive architectural image which reflects the heritage of Belmont and the types of buildings which are currently being built within the downtown, and ensure a compatible and united yet diverse building theme and style. These zones include a wood residential zone in the area at the base of the western hills and Village Center, a Mediterranean theme zone along El Camino Real including the area and a mixed theme zone of both styles in the area east of El Camino Real as shown in the Architectural Theme Zones Map, Figure 4.4.

4.6.2 The Wood Residential Theme Zone. The wood residential style is expected to govern the development of residential, office and commercial buildings yet retain a character associated with the heritage of wood framed and clad buildings in both the old Downtown as well as the residential areas of the City. Established styles range from Italianate to Queen Anne Victorian, Stick and Shingle Style as well as Bungalow Craftsman Style. Each of these styles when taken together has characteristic features associated with the detailing of roofs, the detailing of the sides and facades of buildings, including window and doorway ornamentation, as well as the first floor and building/ground relationship.

Design Guidelines. The following design guidelines are set forth; and demonstrated in Figure 4.5, Wood Residential Prototype.

- 1. Roof Features and Treatment.** Roofs shall be predominantly steeply pitched including a variety of roof types such as hipped roof with cross gables, front gabled roofs with cross gables, side gabled roofs, cross gabled roof or gambrel roof. Eaves shall be detailed whether unenclosed overhangs with decorative beams and braces or boxed and enclosed with molding and accents. Roofs may be multi-level and may include dormers ranging from gabled, hipped, curved, eyebrow, arched, pedimented or shed forms.
- 2. Facade and Wall Treatment.** Facades should be generally asymmetrical and employ a variety of devices for avoiding flat wall surfaces including irregularities in ground plane, use of frequent bay windows, wall insets or projections, and changes in the horizontal continuity of the wall plane. Devices to break up the continuity of the wall plane elevation include overhanging gables in upper stories as well as projecting wall shapes and dormers. Wall materials should be shingle or clapboard or board siding and should be applied in consistent patterns of detailing and decorative wood window surrounds can be simple or

of the Downtown.

Design Guidelines. The design guidelines from the Mediterranean and/or Wood Residential Theme Zones shall apply to the Mixed Architectural Zone.

4.6.5 Transitional Areas. Small, individual developments outside of the Village Center will sometimes lie at the border of two theme zones. In these cases, development may be designed with attributes of both districts to avoid a harsh contrast of architectural styles.

4.7 SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN

Policies and guidelines dealing with the siting layout and configuration of buildings on a development site, building orientation to the streetscape, pedestrian areas and parking facilities, on-site open space and landscape buffers provide specific guidance as to how the urban design goals and objectives may be implemented.

4.7 SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN OBJECTIVE.

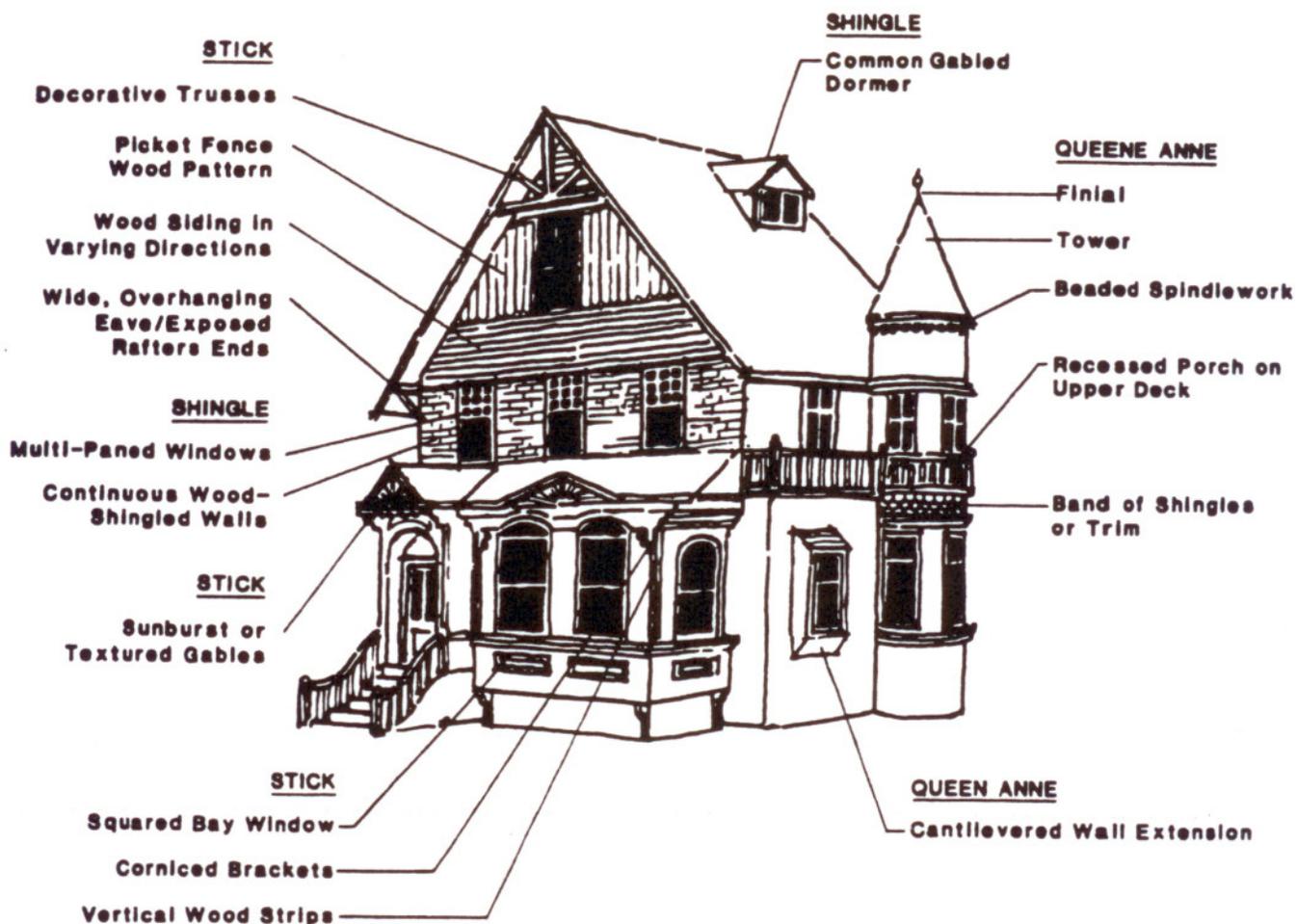
Creative site and building design should be promoted to achieve architectural and land use intensification goals of the Plan, while ensuring efficiency in automobile access and parking, provision for on-site landscaping and a high-quality site appearance.

POLICIES:

4.7.1 Building Grouping and Orientation Policy. Individual and groups of buildings shall be oriented to the street conforming to the streetwall policy of the building line and frontage policy plan and shall create an interesting appearance. Where larger parcel development is proposed, buildings shall be grouped to create convenient pedestrian access to buildings and to minimize walking distance between buildings and parking areas. Building arrangements should also form shared open spaces such as courtyards or lawn areas. A varied building height and roofscape is desirable for groups of buildings and very large single buildings to provide architectural interest and compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.

4.7.2 Conservation of On-site Features Policy. Existing mature trees should be saved and incorporated into a site plan where possible, especially where visually significant or expected to be long lived.

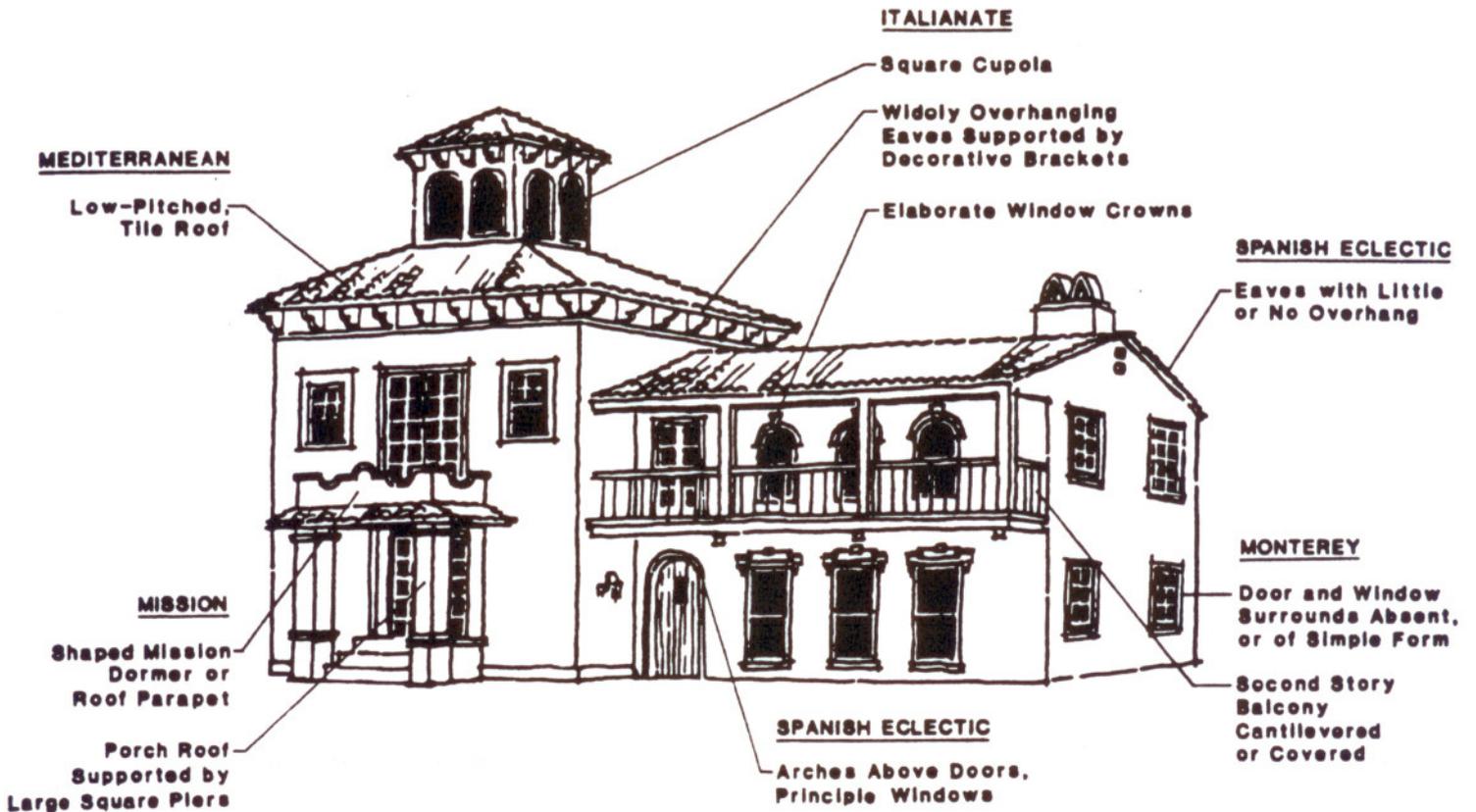
WOOD RESIDENTIAL THEME PROTOTYPE



This architectural prototype is intended to serve as an example of the variety of detail treatments available within the Queen Anne, Stick, and Shingle styles. The sketch alone should not serve as a model for future architectural design. Building designs should be judged on an individual basis when a blending of styles has been proposed within the Wood Residential Theme Zone. Different styles should be "meshed" in an appropriate and aesthetically pleasing manner.

Figure 4.5

MEDITERRANEAN THEME PROTOTYPE



This architectural prototype is intended to serve as an example of the variety of detail treatments available within the Mission, Spanish Eclectic, Monterey and Italianate styles. The sketch alone should not serve as a model for future architectural design. Building designs should be judged on an individual basis when a blending of styles has been proposed within the Mediterranean Theme Zone. Different styles should be "meshed" in an appropriate and aesthetically pleasing manner.

4.7.3 On-site Landscape and Site Appearance Policy. A varied and rich palette of plant materials emphasizing flowering ground covers, shrubs and incorporated into the landscaped areas of new development.

Design Guidelines. The following design guidelines should apply to the treatment of landscape buffers, parking lot islands, streetscape/landscape frontage, on-site open space and common areas.

1. Parking areas shall be shaded by round-headed canopy trees which shield heat gain in the parking lot while allowing flow through of cross breezes. One 15-gallon tree shall be provided for every 3 parking spaces.
2. Landscape and Site Appearance. All development shall be landscaped in a way that is both aesthetic and functional. Landscape plans prepared by a licensed landscape architect shall be required for all projects. The following standards shall be met:
 - a. Areas shall be large enough to ensure the survival of planted material.
 - b. Drought tolerant plants shall be used wherever possible.
 - c. Lighting shall be adequate to illuminate pedestrian and parking areas. All pedestrian walks shall be lit if nighttime activity is anticipated for a particular building.
 - d. Light sources should be shielded to reflect onto the ground, and not onto adjacent streets or properties.
 - e. Where possible, lighting shall be integrated with the architectural detailing of a building. Pad-mounted transformers shall be integrated with the architecture of buildings, or screened from view with landscape materials or fencing.
 - g. All utilities shall be undergrounded.

4.7.4 On-site Parking Design Policy. Parking areas should be confined to the rear or center of development blocks to allow full streetwall development of a building. Access to parking areas should be confined to entrance alleys on side streets or from rear streets and only permitted along streetwall frontages where alternate access cannot be provided. Curb cuts along arterials and important traffic collectors shall be minimized.

Design Guidelines. The following design guidelines are intended to guide the orientation, appearance and pedestrian accessibility of on-site surface parking areas. Parking space requirements are contained in the Land Use Element and minimum design requirements provided for in the City Zoning Code. Landscape requirements are provided for under On-site Landscape Improvement Policy.

1. Parking lots shall be screened from adjacent sidewalk and street areas by a medium sized wall, 4-½ feet in height, which is architecturally detailed and clad in materials which are consistent with and reflect the design theme of the buildings they serve. A minimum 2-foot planting landscape area shall be included between the sidewalk and the wall to allow for shrub and vine plantings. This requirement may be modified if necessary to permit optimum parking lot layout and if provisions are made to permit pocket planting of vines. Landscape berming may be substituted for wall screens where deemed appropriate and consistent with the intent of screening.
2. Entrances to parking lots contained by wall screens shall continue the design treatment of the wall and shall include a change of wall height, decorative pilasters, ornamental portal structures such as archways pergola or the like. Entrances should be enhanced with landscape materials and lighting.
3. Parking lot lighting should include a combination of pole-mounted luminaires not to exceed 25 feet in height which are spaced appropriately to provide safety to users. Light fixtures should downcast light so as to protect adjacent uses from glare. Within parking areas pedestrian ways should be illuminated with lower-scaled light fixtures (pole or wall mounted) approximately 10 to 2 feet in height which create a pedestrian scale.