

Appendix E: Sample Design Guidelines

Related Section:
Land Use and Zoning

All new house construction, additions and remodel projects must conform to the development standards of the zoning districts in which they are located. The single-family design guidelines presented below are intended to go beyond the basic requirements of the Palmer Zoning Ordinance and, in greater detail, address issues specifically related to neighborhood character and compatibility. These guidelines apply in all neighborhoods but will perhaps be particularly important in neighborhoods with established historic or architectural merit and for individual buildings with historic or architectural merit.

These simple guidelines are intended to be flexible and to convey the intent of Palmer's development wishes – to maintain a small-town character and to emphasize the natural surroundings and outdoor life and recreation.

Applicability

The Guidelines apply to all new single-family detached structures on individual lots, including new subdivisions located within or adjacent to existing neighborhoods, and additions and remodels which exceed the Zoning Code thresholds for construction without a Planning Permit. For projects not located within or adjacent to an existing neighborhood, the Residential Design Guidelines should be consulted for project design guidance. For some projects, both sets of guidelines will apply.

Application

These Guidelines are provided for the use of homeowners, builders, contractors, architects, designers, City staff and City decision-makers. The Guidelines are expected to be useful for making design decisions about single family detached construction at a number of levels:

- Homeowners, builders, architects and other designers are encouraged to consult the Guidelines prior to designing new houses, additions or remodels for ideas and advice.
- For single-family construction which does not require a Planning Permit, the Guidelines can be used as an informational resource by homeowners, builders and/or designers.
- For single-family construction which does require a Planning Permit, the Guidelines will be used by City staff and decisionmakers as the criteria for making permit decisions. It should be noted that the guidelines in Chapter III, presented under the heading "Suggestions" are just that and are not intended as requirements for permit approval.
- Neighborhood residents should consult the Guidelines to understand the neighborhood compatibility concepts which will apply to new construction.



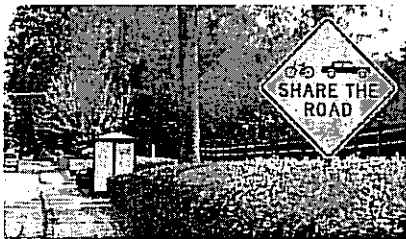
Neighborhood patterns

Design intent

Palmer should portray a strong identity, including the presence of recognizable districts and landmarks. New homes should exhibit a variety of styles, but Neotraditional design intent is among the preferred styles.

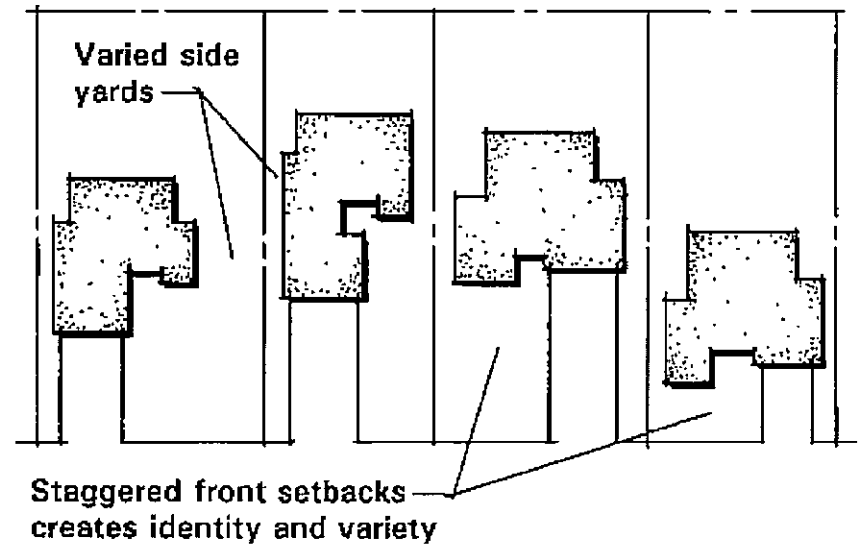
Palmer should take advantage of important views and vistas, and provide numerous opportunities for access to light and air. Palmer should connect through a network of public spaces and paths. Streets or paths which connect to multiple destinations encourage walking when weather conditions permit. Compact development makes walking possible because destinations are closer to one another and the walk is more interesting. [compact development can also preserve views].

The street is the visual foundation of the neighborhood. A street should read as a well-defined space, with appealing streetscapes with trees, sidewalks and pedestrian amenities. A street should readily communicate that it is public space. A street should contribute to the physical safety and comfort of pedestrians. A street should be an active and engaging place.



Setbacks

1. At a minimum, setbacks must conform to the standards of the applicable zoning district.
2. In addition, front setbacks should exhibit variety to the average of existing front setbacks on the block or on adjacent properties. A variety of setbacks creates interest for pedestrians when walking.
3. Side setbacks should generally exhibit variety where possible, especially to create views between houses.

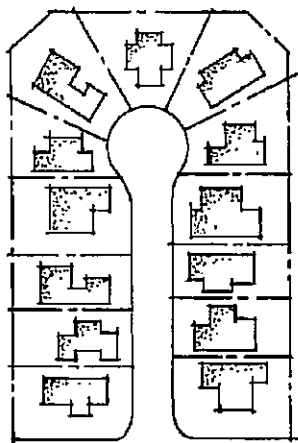


Lot sizes

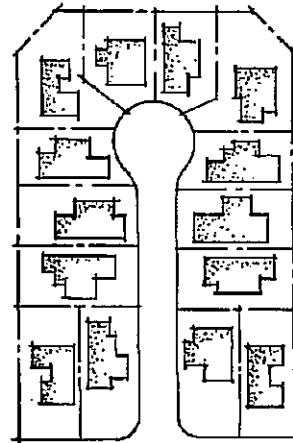
Where possible, lot sizes should vary in a neighborhood. This creates visual interest and allows for the possibility of more varied incomes in the neighborhood.

Garages

Garages should be deemphasized. On gridded streets, alleys should be created and garage access should be off the alley. Where there are no alleys, garages should not be considered a part of the house and should be set back to the rear; this does not imply a detached garage, but rather a deemphasized garage that does not dominate the street front. The width of paved driveways on private property as well as driveway cuts at the curb should be as narrow as possible, and in no case wider than the predominant block pattern. Paving accessible for parking in the front setback area should be limited to the width required for access to a garage or other required parking spaces. Curb cuts should never be three cars wide even if they provide direct access to a three-car wide driveway.



Varied lot widths



Lot orientation

Examples of great neighborhood design

