

Point Loma from Mission Hills

Urban Design

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

Urban design is not a physical entity in and of itself which can be isolated from the other elements of this community plan. Urban design deals with all the issues examined elsewhere in the plan, yet it is also concerned with more detailed features such as architectural and site design. The definition of urban design provided in the General Plan is as follows: To deal with the preservation, rehabilitation and re-use of existing man-made facilities as well as the integration of new development with the natural landscape or within the framework of an existing community, with minimum impact on that community's physical and social assets.

For the purpose of analysis, the Urban Design Element will begin by addressing the issues on a community-wide basis. Subsequent sections will provide more detailed analysis and recommendations for each of the six subareas within the Uptown community. While each subarea is described as a neighborhood for ease of analysis, the boundaries between the designated neighborhoods are often overlapping and not distinct.

Within the City of San Diego, and particularly in the Uptown community, exist many older neighborhoods which have evolved unique characteristics of their own. These neighborhoods range from having a majority of low-density single-family housing to incorporating dense multifamily developments, and from small commercial districts to large-scale development such as the dominant medical center complex. The following objectives and design guidelines should be considered as a part of improving urban design character and appearance of the Uptown community.

Objectives

- Preserve the diverse and unique character of each neighborhood in the Uptown community.
- Develop design standards and guidelines with incentives which will maximize quality development that is compatible in both character and scale.
- Ensure that canyon rim and hillside development is unobtrusive and of the same character and scale as the surrounding quality development.
- Create neighborhood identities through coordinated street plantings.
- Preserve existing street trees and increase the quality and quantity of landscaping in the public rights-of-way and open spaces.
- Maintain and reinforce mixed-use commercial cores that are urban in character and pedestrian in orientation.
- Improve the pedestrian and vehicular quality of the streetscape through the design of new development, public improvements, landscaping, and coordinated street plantings.

- Eliminate visual clutter through the use of unified signs, coordinated lighting and street furniture, and the removal of overhead utilities.

Urban Design Guidelines

SITE PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE

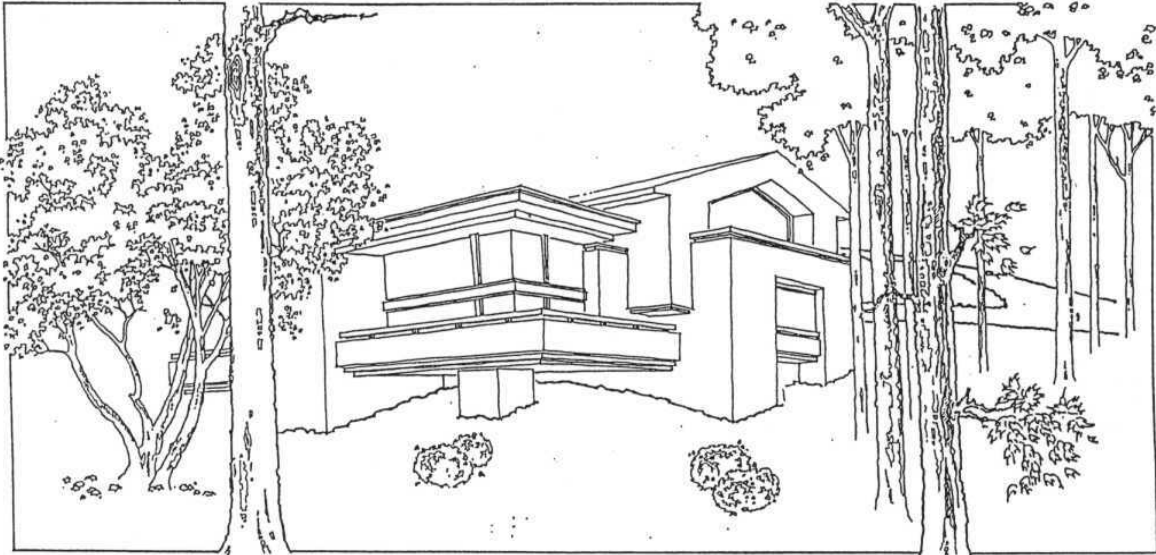
1. Incorporate appropriate site planning, landscaping and architectural design to preserve the function and architectural character of the existing single-family neighborhoods.
2. New construction and improvements to existing structures should be compatible with the existing architectural detail and overall appearance of the quality development in the surrounding neighborhood.
3. Multifamily development should incorporate wall texture variations, facade off-sets, upper floor setbacks and the utilization of varied roof forms.
4. Patios, balconies, courtyards, pools or other recreational amenities should be required for all residential projects to maximize usable open space.
5. Enhance the urban quality in commercial and retail activity nodes by encouraging individual buildings to be designed to contain a mixture of land uses and larger projects to be designed with physical linkages between structures to help integrate the building functions.
6. As an alternative to new construction, restore or adaptively re-use existing structures either by themselves or as elements of larger development projects.
7. Articulate the design of buildings so they relate to the form and scale of surrounding structures through the use of compatible setbacks, building coverage and floor area ratios.
8. New construction and improvements to existing structures should be compatible with the color, texture, architectural detail and overall appearance of the historically significant and/or higher quality buildings in the surrounding neighborhood.
9. Large flat rooftops should be considered as usable outdoor space which can be designed to accommodate commercial or recreational activities.
10. Visually distracting rooftop appendages such as stairway towers and mechanical equipment should be screened from public view.
11. Structures should be designed to utilize shade and breezes. Solar heating and cooling and improved insulation techniques should be employed.

HILLSIDES AND OPEN SPACE

1. Maintain the existing scale and character of the community, in addition to retaining public vistas and access to open spaces and pedestrian bridges, through the use of appropriate setbacks, building coverage, floor area ratios and unit clustering.

The permitted floor area for lots partially within open space areas should be based only upon that portion of the lot outside of the open space designation. As a minimum for lots predominantly or entirely within open space, the permitted floor area should assume a lot depth of 100 feet rather than the true lot depth in computing the lot area. In designing the project, the garage should not be eliminated in an effort to reduce the floor area. These recommendations should be implemented through the Hillside Review Overlay Zone permit procedures.

2. Require that hillside developments complement the natural character of the land, minimize disturbance of the topography and ensure minimal danger to human life and property.
3. Developments which are on any portion of a property within designated open space should maintain existing views and public access to canyon areas, and adapt to the natural terrain.
4. Developments on corner lots of existing streets which serve as public view corridors for vistas and open space need special design considerations such as being required to setback from the corner or terrace away from the street.
5. Limit the development intensity in hillside locations where emergency access may be hampered by narrow, curving streets.
6. Large commercial projects should incorporate public open space areas such as plazas, fountains, benches, tables and arcades. Art exhibits, displays, and small performances can be held within these open spaces depending upon the size of the space.



Hillside Guidelines

Require that hillside development complement the natural character of the land, minimize disturbance of the topography and ensure minimal danger to human life and property.



Residential Guidelines

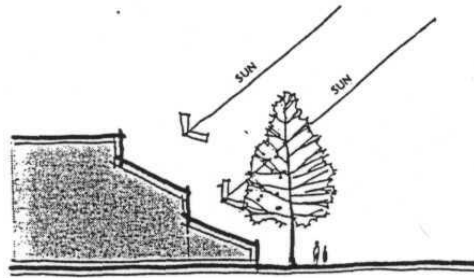
Medium to high density development should incorporate height, depth and wall texture variations, facade off-sets and upper floor setbacks.



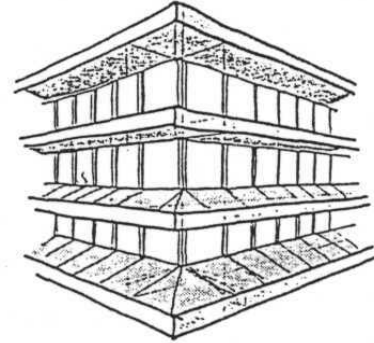
HILLSIDE & RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

UPTOWN Community Plan
CITY OF SAN DIEGO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

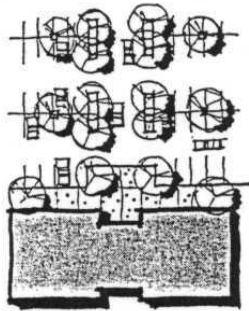
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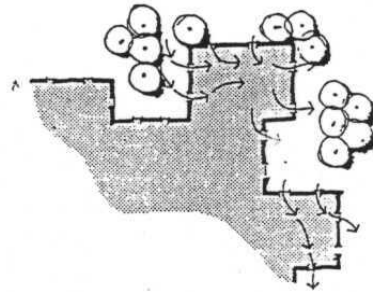
ORIENT THE MAJORITY OF GLASS AREAS ON BUILDINGS TO THE SOUTH & LOCATE DECIDUOUS TREES ADJACENT.



BUILDING FACADES SHOULD INCORPORATE OVERHANGS TO SHADE DIRECT SUN & REDUCE HEAT GAIN.



INCORPORATE DECIDUOUS TREES INTO PLANTING PLANS NEAR BUILDINGS & LARGE PAVED AREAS.



BUILDINGS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE NATURAL VENTILATION.



STREETSCAPE DESIGN AND LANDSCAPING

Detailed design studies should be initiated for special treatment areas, such as the Hillcrest commercial area, Washington Street, Park Boulevard, Laurel Street, and Reynard Way, to implement the following recommendations:

1. Street trees should be provided and existing trees preserved with all new development as appropriate; trees which must be removed should be replaced. Examples of appropriate tree types are Mexican Fan Palm, Queen Palm, Jacaranda, Southern Magnolia, Fern Pine Podocarpus, Ficus, Lemon Scented Gum Eucalyptus and Silver Dollar Gum Eucalyptus.

The following should be considered in selection tree type:

- a. The predominant existing street tree.
 - b. Potential conflicts with overhead or underground utilities, or with adjacent structures.
 - c. Compatibility with the scale and style of the development.
 - d. Parkway width.
2. Street furniture, coordinated signage and lighting, planters, kiosks, public art, and plant material should be incorporated whenever possible to add to the vitality of the streetscape.
 3. Require street trees and other landscaping which is compatible with the existing species within each neighborhood.
 4. Medians should incorporate landscaping and/or decorative paving.
 5. Street trees, lighting, bollards and/or sidewalk textures should be provided along major streets to create a pleasing pedestrian environment, in addition to providing a separation between pedestrian circulation and vehicular movement. The coarseness of sidewalk surface treatments should not be so great as to create difficulty in walking.
 6. Enrich the pedestrian quality of all areas by increasing sidewalk widths when appropriate, identifying street tree themes, providing cohesive street furniture, unifying signage, increasing lighting, varying pavement materials and providing nodal points at strategic locations.
 7. The citywide landscape ordinance should be utilized to increase the amount of landscaping in and enhance the appearance of the streetscape, private yard areas and off-street parking lots. Low maintenance, drought tolerant plant material should be utilized.
 8. Specimen trees in key locations can be designated as a natural resource and become a community focal point. New development should be sited and built so that harmful impacts to all major trees and other significant resources are mitigated.

9. Above ground utility boxes and trash receptacles should be screened from view and located away from public sidewalks when feasible.
10. Excessive use of pavement within front yard areas should be avoided.
11. Enforce existing signage regulations to minimize "sign clutter."
12. Lighting fixtures should be geared to the specific use of the areas and forms to be illuminated.

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION

1. Access should be taken from the alleys whenever possible and where traffic problems are not created. Where alley access is unavailable, street curb cuts should be minimized in number and width.
2. The design bus shelters should relate to the overall form of the streetscape. At minimum, they should provide protective seating areas and information kiosks.
3. Off-street parking should be placed underground and/or amply screened from the public right-of-way and adjacent residences. Access should be taken from the alleys whenever possible.
4. Curb cuts and entrances to off-street parking areas should be minimal and designed so that conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic are minimized.
5. Alley access should be retained for public vehicular use, emergency access and secondary pedestrian paths. Lighting standards and trash receptacle placement should be supportive of this statement.
6. Improve the flow of traffic on arterial streets without reducing the area for pedestrian circulation by pursuing alternatives to street widening.
7. Use pavement variations whenever possible to guide traffic and control auto speed.
8. Required parking spaces should not be utilized to accommodate trash receptacles. Provisions should be established to provide for refuse collection areas in a manner that will retain required parking, in addition to cutting down on litter in the street and alleys. These collection areas should be screened from public view.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

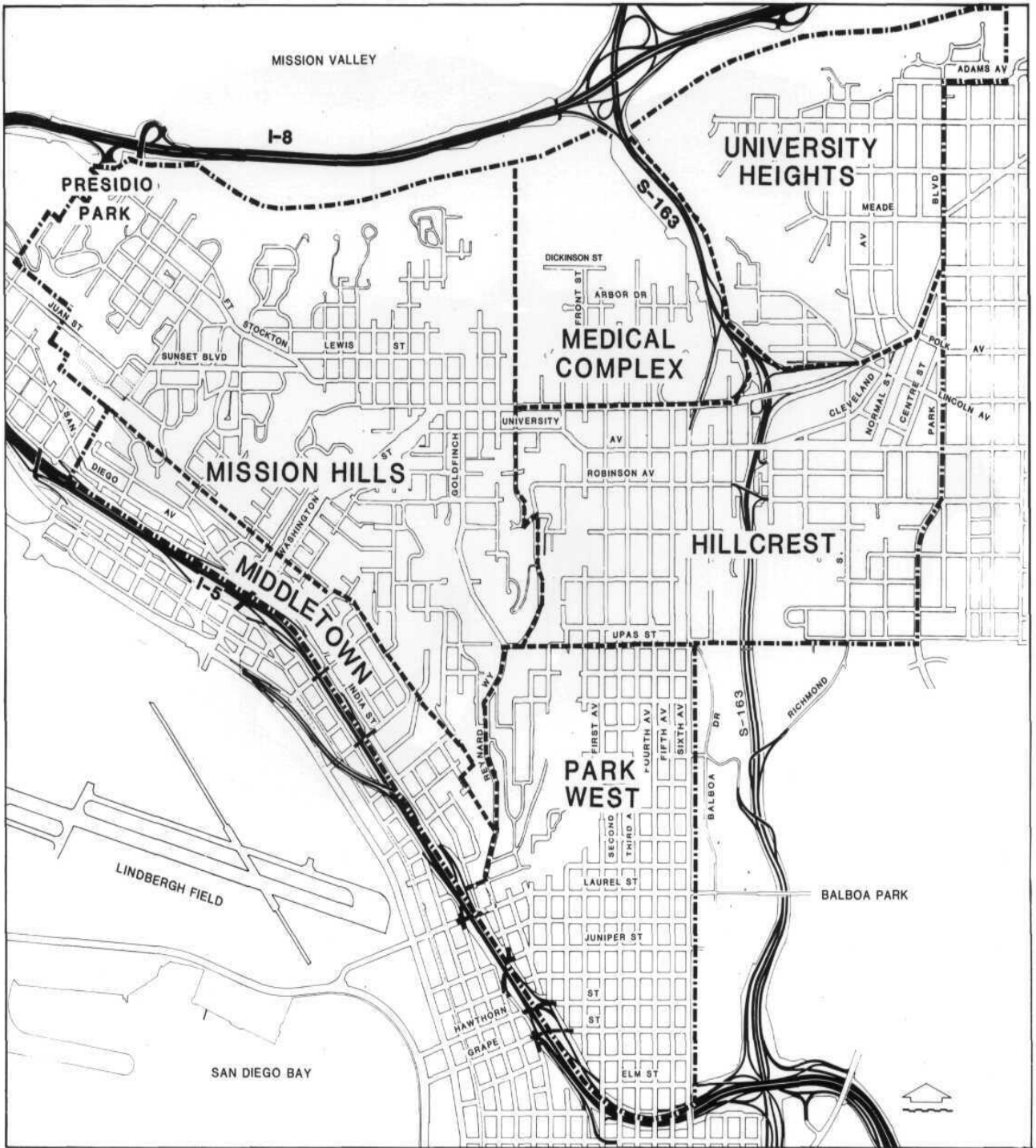
1. Enrich the pedestrian experience within the commercial areas by designing buildings and outdoor spaces which are visually stimulating and include activities that create a sense of excitement. Banks and offices which generate low levels of pedestrian activity should

not be developed as the predominant use along pedestrian streets. Sidewalk cafes, retail shops, entertainment establishments and similar uses should be permitted.

2. Adequate sidewalk and parkway areas should be provided. Except where there are physical or topographical constraints, the minimum curb-to-property line along width should be ten feet; twelve to fourteen feet or more should be provided in high activity areas. Any street widenings should also maintain these minimum dimensions.
3. Sidewalks should be contiguous to the curb in commercial areas and noncontiguous in residential areas where adequate right-of-way exists.
4. Large developments in high activity areas should provide open space in the form of widened sidewalks and usable plazas visible from adjacent streets. Plazas should respect the established street wall in commercial areas.
5. Special consideration should be given to those buildings that face pedestrian streets so that visual interest is created at the street level. Building facades incorporating variations in texture and form create interest, street level arcades create indoor/outdoor spaces, recessed storefronts add to the spatial form, awnings and canopies provide shelter and add to the human scale, elevation changes provide an interface between the building and outdoor space, storefront transparency creates an interrelationship of indoor/outdoor space, and landscape features buffer and add interest.
6. Encourage both daytime and nighttime activities to extend the usage of the commercial activity areas.
7. Pavement textures can be used at street crossings to clearly mark and improve the appearance of the intersection. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that pavement textures indicating pedestrian crossings are used only in situations where proper traffic controls are in place so as not to create unsafe pedestrian crossings.
8. Increase pedestrian traffic by appropriately locating street furniture so that it is not in conflict with pedestrian movement.
9. Pedestrian paths that provide variety and views should be encouraged. The recreational value of a path can be increased by providing a series of rest stops.
10. Retain unimproved street rights-of-way when they serve as pedestrian access routes, provide vistas, play areas, open space, or parking areas. Improvements such as benches and play and exercise equipment should be provided as appropriate.
11. Maintain the existing fluted post-style streetlights as redevelopment occurs, to maintain mid-block lighting for pedestrians.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Optimize passive solar opportunities wherever possible. Locating the long axis of a building in an east-west direction provides for a more even heat distribution year-round. Generally, a building's axis which runs perpendicular to the lot for north-south lots and parallel to the lot for east-west lots will have better solar access.
2. Site planning and building design should take into consideration environmental factors such as sun, wind, noise, shadow and reflection as they relate to the quality of outdoor space. A public space located on the south side of a block, for instance, will have sunlight most of the day and be a more comfortable space than one located on the north side of a block.
3. The physical design of a development should provide surveillance opportunities of the neighborhood by its residents and of the commercial areas by merchants, employees and visitors to the area. All projects should provide adequate lighting in all areas, avoid hidden "pockets" within landscaped areas, and eliminate long, narrow hallways or passageways. Parking areas, pedestrian pathways and entrances should be well marked and open to visual surveillance. Mixed-use and other developments providing daytime as well as nighttime activities in the commercial areas should be provided to encourage use by a variety of people and extended hours of usage.



UPTOWN NEIGHBORHOODS
UPTOWN Community Plan
 CITY OF SAN DIEGO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

FIGURE
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