



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 30, 2013  
**TO:** Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Mike Moore, Planning and Building Director  
**SUBJECT:** Discussion on Residential Design Review Guidelines

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At its meeting of May 28, 2013, the Planning Commission directed staff to place an item on the June 10 agenda to discuss the City's design review guidelines related to lawn area, house colors and the so-called "Lantern Effect" (house designs that utilize extensive areas of glass that may create night-time light impacts on adjacent neighbors or affect distant or cross-canyon views). In addition, the Commission wanted an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of having distinct design review guidelines for "flat" properties and those on slopes or hillsides. The current residential design review guidelines were originally created to address sloped or hillside properties.

The Commission's intent in the discussion of lawn area, house colors and the "Lantern Effect" is to provide greater clarity and consistency for subsequent applicants, design professionals and for the Commission itself in its consideration of projects with these features. As the Commission has already applied its discretion on these matters in many prior applications, which is consistent with the purpose and intent of the guidelines and the design review process, further clarification by the Commission does not necessarily have to result in actual amendments to the guidelines (although that might be appropriate at some point in the future), but can be done through general Commission consensus on a more expanded explanation of what these terms mean and how they should be applied. That can be done either by the addition of more objective criteria (such as the current 500 square foot limit on lawn size that the Commission has been applying), or by expanding on what is already stated in the applicable guideline.

Staff will use this clarified language suggested by the Commission as a supplement to the existing design review guidelines and provide it to applicants and public through our handout information and as we meet with applicants who are looking for information prior to submitting an application.

For the discussion on whether or not to have distinct guidelines for the "flats" and "hillsides", the first question is whether or not the Commission finds that to be necessary. Keep in mind that it may not be necessary to create an entirely new set of guidelines, but as a start and as with the previous discussion, simply "supplement" the existing guidelines with additional language that can be provided to "flat" property owners and their design professionals to consider with their

applications. That will provide the Commission with the opportunity to test potential new guidelines on trial basis through discretionary review and then determine if there is interest in pursuing a new guidelines as part of a future work program.

The Commission can use this discussion to create a framework of which existing guidelines need to be supplemented to address flatland issues and suggest the direction that language should take to appropriately address those issues. Staff can return at a subsequent meeting with proposed language for further review.