GUIDELINES FOR

AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONUS PROGRAM DESIGN

San Francisco Planning

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Introduction

Inviting and active ground floors, sidewalks and streets enrich and enliven dense neighborhoods. Above the first twenty feet, thoughtful small-scale adjustments can help larger-scale volumes that add significant housing complement existing neighborhood architectural character. In recognition that the projects utilizing the **Affordable Housing Bonus Program (AHBP**) will sometimes be taller or of differing mass than the surrounding context the AHBP Design Guidelines clarify how projects shall both maintain their size and adapt to their neighborhood context.

In order to ensure consistency with the intent of the Planning Code and, the General Plan, and construct high quality buildings, as well as provide project sponsors with guidance and predictability in forming their building proposals, the Planning Commission and City Agencies will use the following guidelines as an evaluating tool for specific project implementation.

- Four **AHBP Specific Design Guidelines** clarify how projects shall both maintain their size and adapt to their neighborhood context.
- Because several portions of the AHBP program area, such as the neighborhood commercial districts, do not have design guidelines, several existing design principles around massing, articulation, ground floor treatment and streets will also apply.
- AHBP projects in historic districts shall preserve materials features of the District and be complementary and differentiated.

Interface with Existing Design Guidelines

Generally, **AHBP** projects will be reviewed under existing guidelines, however in some cases, due to the specific goals of the bonus program, guidelines adopted in this program will supplement or supersede portions of them. These existing guidelines include the Residential Design Guidelines, the Draft Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines and the forthcoming Urban Design Guidelines. The general principles and the related policies of these documents shall apply to **AHBP** projects. In cases where there is a discrepancy between the unique architectural attributes accessible through the **AHBP** and the Residential Design Guidelines, the **AHBP Specific Design Guidelines** shall apply.

S Specific Design Guidelines

1. Create a gracious, well-defined ground floor.
2. Ensure tops of buildings contribute to neighborhood quality.
3. Articulate Sidewalls
4. Express Exceptionally Complementary Architectural Character

S SPECIFIC DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Create a gracious, well-defined ground floor.

Generous ground floor heights are crucial to ensuring flexibility, diversity, and activity at the level of the public realm. New construction projects shall strongly consider adding additional ground floor height to make a gracious commercial ground floor, including heights from 10 to 15 feet.

» Residential uses on the ground floor facing a public right-of-way or other publicly-accessible pathway should be elevated a minimum of 3' above the adjacent exterior sidewalk and connect directly to that right-of-way or pathway.

» Projects must comply with the Draft Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines which includes direction on stoops and landscape buffers.

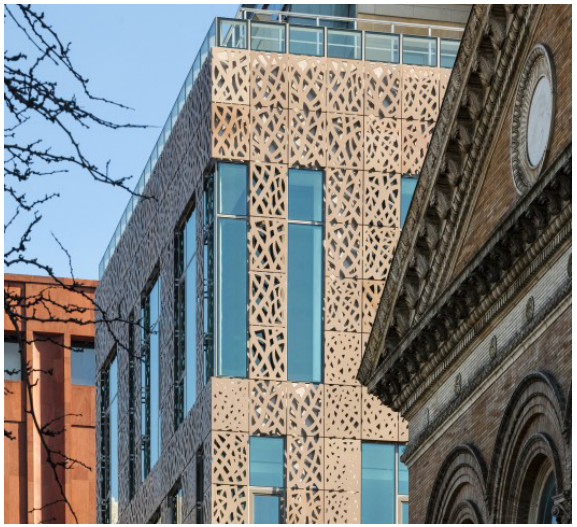
2. Ensure tops of buildings contribute to neighborhood quality.

New buildings taking advantage of additional height offered by the AHBP should shall articulate building mass to most appropriately complement the surrounding neighborhood context. Significant reductions in building volume, however, are detrimental to achieving the housing goals that are the

basis of the AHBP and should be avoided. Building design elements should be selected and composed in a manner that assures – to the extent possible – that such projects are contextually compatible despite greater bulk than otherwise allowed. For example, small to medium scale features can contribute to the shaping of upper stories with minimal impact to floor area.

3. Articulate Sidewalls

Generally, building architecture should be conceived of three-dimensionally with exposed sidewalls alongside property lines given special attention through the use of planting or green walls, premium materials, fenestration, art, and architectural sculpting. This is particularly important for portions of sidewalls that extend above existing height limits or adjacent to lots with historic or residential structures, particularly those not likely to be developed with taller buildings, as **AHBP** buildings will be more vertically prominent than adjacent structures. Fenestration, lightwells, decks, or balconies can help achieve this intent. Consider upper story setbacks along interior property lines to allow for fenestration above the prevailing height. (Generally consistent with number 7 of Market and Octavia principle for massing and articulation).



4. Express Exceptionally Complementary Architectural Character

While overall building mass may be larger for AHBP projects than adjacent ones, thoughtful design and fine-grain detailing with high-quality materials can provide patterns of visual interest to enhance the pedestrian experience. While this should be present in all projects, AHBP projects should elevate this aspect to enhance compatibility and character. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, such as:

- Window detailing – increased setback depth (minimum of 2-inch or greater if achieveable) or sun shading devices
- Fenestration proportions or patterns
- Variation in materiality or depth of materiality on visible facades
- Notches or Bays
- Fine-grain façade detailing with high-quality, durable materials, particularly at the building base and street level.
- Design elements that respond to the adjacent or prevailing neighborhood scale, even if the overall building is larger.

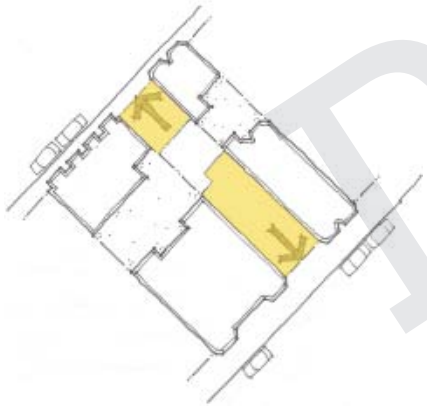
E Existing Design Guidelines

Many areas of San Francisco have neighborhood or district specific design guidelines – specifically in the recently adopted plan areas, several new and important design principles have been established. This section details several existing design principles that shall be applied to all AHBP projects.

E FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION

1. **Most new buildings should be built to all property lines facing public rights-of-way.**

2. **Building façades should include three-dimensional detailing; these may include bay windows, cornices, belt courses, window moldings, and reveals to create shadows and add interest.**



Construct infill development to property lines

In most cases, a minimum window reveal of two inches should be incorporated and sliding windows or applied mullions should not be incorporated on windows facing the street or the public realm (streets, alleys and other publicly-accessible spaces). Windows and cornices are especially important elements contributing to the creation of a comfortable "urban room" and pedestrian environment. Upper floors may include smaller, vertically proportioned windows punched into walls, projections such as bay windows, or small balconies. Windows should typically be vertical to reflect traditional arrangements found throughout San Francisco. Other façade elements that contribute to visual interest may include awnings, canopies, projections, trellises, and detailed parapets.

3. **The façades of new buildings should extend patterns.**

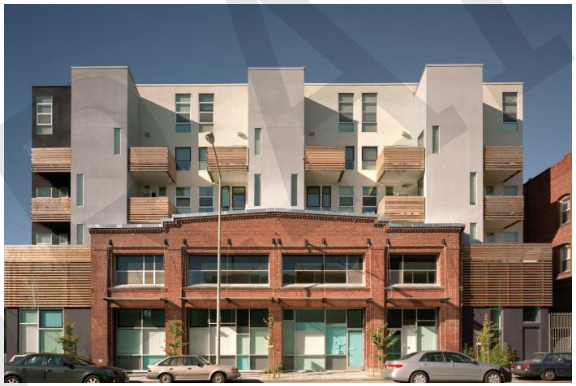
New buildings should occupy narrow frontages and express a vertical orientation in their use of projections, windows, and other detailing. This is ideally achieved through individual buildings on narrow frontages. On wider lots, at the least, vertical elements should break down the visual scale of larger buildings and create a rhythm that visually minimizes overall massing, consistent with historic development patterns.

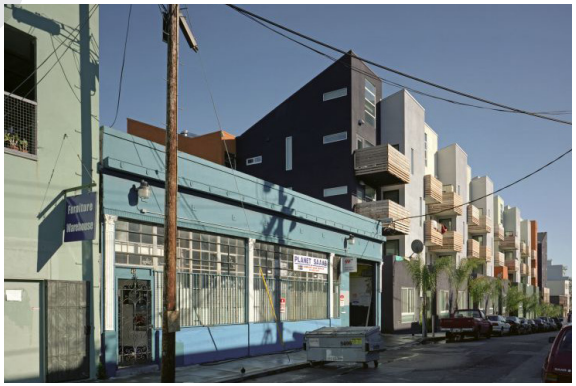
Although constructed on a large lot, this building façade replicates the traditional 25 - 50 foot-wide lot pattern through changes to the plane, color and roof line.

4. There are cases where new buildings may be built adjacent to existing buildings that are substantially shorter (i.e. by two or more stories).

Sometimes these adjacent buildings have historic merit, contain housing units, feature lower height limits, or are limited by other factors that make them unlikely to be re-developed in the foreseeable future with larger buildings that might mask the side facade of the proposed building. Large expanses of blank wall are unsightly and potentially blighting on a neighborhood. New buildings shall sensitively and creatively treat these prominent interior property line conditions, cognizant of the visibility of these facades from surrounding public spaces and buildings. Larger, wider buildings with greater amounts of street frontage shall also consider more significant articulations or partial upper floor setbacks along these property lines.

Techniques for incorporating planted "living walls" can also soften the visual impact of exposed sidewalls and facades while providing ecological benefit.



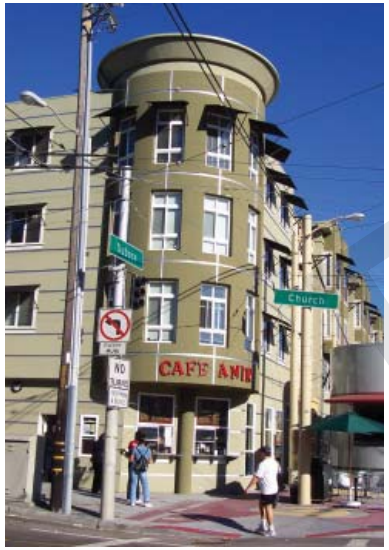


5. Buildings on sloping sites should follow the slope to reinforce and accentuate the city's natural topography and maintain a strong relationship to the street.

One of the qualities most revered in San Francisco is streets and buildings that rise and fall in concert with topography. New buildings or additions should follow the slope of the street to accent and celebrate the natural topography and provide a vertical rhythm to the street. Where buildings fail to step up slopes, they adversely "flatten" the city's natural topography.

E FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION

6. For buildings on slopes, the ground floor and building entries should step-up in proportion to the slope between façade segments.



Corner Tall tower / bay element establishes a visual landmark at an important street intersection.

7. High-quality building materials should be used on all visible façades and should include stone, masonry, ceramic tile, wood (as opposed to composite, fiber-cement based synthetic wood materials), precast concrete, and high-grade traditional "hard coat" stucco (as opposed to "synthetic stucco" that uses foam).

Rich architectural detailing on individual buildings significantly contributes to the public realm. Detailing is encouraged to provide interest and create variation in wall planes; materials and level of detail should be drawn from the best examples in the area. Base and cornice materials should be balanced in material and color.

E FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE GROUND FLOOR

1. **Surface parking should not be permitted between the street facing property line and the fronts of buildings in most instances.**

The use of setbacks for parking detracts greatly from the sidewalk character and pedestrian comfort. Parking should not be permitted at the front of buildings, except on parcels with 25 feet or less of frontage, where it is in a garage that is integrated into the structure of the building.

The buildings in the two images above both have a density of 100 units to the acre. The building in the top image, built before parking requirements, provides one parking space for every four units. The building in the bottom image provides one parking space for every unit. It is four stories taller than the first building. On the street level, it offers little except views of the parked cars within.

2. **No more than 30 percent of the width of the ground floor may be devoted to garage entries or blank walls.**

This shall in no case require garage entries be less than 10 feet wide. Where curb cuts are expressly prohibited by this plan, garage entries are not permitted. No façade may feature garage entries that together total more than 20 feet in width. The building area immediately facing the street should support residential or commercial uses, have a human scale, and contribute active uses to the street. Large garage entries are extremely detrimental to a street's design character and pedestrian safety,. Vehicular traffic crossing the sidewalk should be limited to the absolute minimum necessary to facilitate access to parcels. At least 70 percent of the width of the ground floor facing streets must be devoted to windows, entrances to dwelling units, store windows and entrances,

E FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE GROUND FLOOR

landscaping or planters, and other architectural features that provide visual relief and interest.

Excessively wide garage doors create a visually "dead" sidewalk.

3. Building entries and shop fronts should add to the character of the street by being clearly identifiable and inviting.

Blank walls (absent windows, entries, or ornamentation) should be avoided. Display windows with unobstructed views into interior spaces and building entrances should line major streets. Service functions such as trash, utility, or fire rooms, should not be placed at the street front where possible.

4. Primary building entries may be set back from the street-facing property line, though no more than 5 feet from the street-facing façade; and if set back, should be no wider than 15 feet at the property line per individual entry.

A recessed entryway provides transition space between the public sidewalk and the private interior of the building, and is common in many neighborhoods for both commercial and residential uses.

5. Building projections and recesses, along with variations in materials and color and other architectural design features, should be used to emphasize pedestrian entries and de-emphasize garage doors and parking.

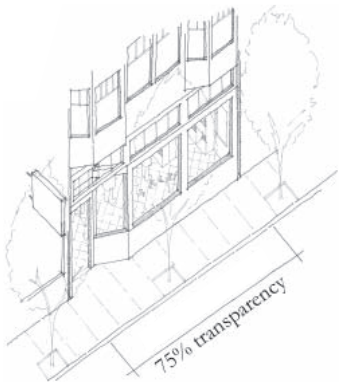
6. Residential units on the first (to third) floor(s) should generally be directly and independently accessible from the sidewalk, rather than from common lobbies. Individual entries to residential units help to provide rhythm to a building façade, contribute activity, interest, and "eyes" on the street, and enhance the sense of connectedness between residential units and the public life of the street.

Direct residential entries from the street are appropriate in most buildings where they do not conflict with ground floor retail uses.

E FUNDAMENTAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR STREETS

1. **Where present, retail frontages should occupy no less than 75 percent of a building frontage at the ground floor.**

The interior of the retail space should be visible at pedestrian eye level to help activate the street. Retail spaces in the neighborhood typically provide ample transparency to the street. Businesses often use retail frontages to display goods and provide views to the interior. Dark or mirrored glass is not permitted. Solar consideration should be treated architecturally, through the use of recesses, eyebrows, or awnings.



2. **Ground floor retail use should be directly accessible from the street at the grade of the sidewalk onto which it fronts.**

Storefronts located above or below grade often feel removed from the life of the street and are notoriously difficult to make successful. Steps up or down should be avoided. On sloping sites, taller retail spaces at the low end of the site are preferable to sinking a portion of the retail floor below sidewalk grade.

Historic District Design Guidelines

H HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR AHBP PROJECTS

NEW CONSTRUCTION

The Guidelines below apply to AHBP projects located within diestrics determined to be Historic Resources eligilbe for local, state or National registers. Infill construction shall preserve historic features, character, and spatial relationships. Recognizing that AHBP projects may be taller than existing buildings, the design of infill construction should not be so differentiated that it becomes the primary focus of the district. Design differences between new and historic may be subtle but they also must be clear. Every project will have its own unique benefits and constraints; infill construction will be reviewed for compatibility with the overall district. In districts with uniform character, the design may rely on subtle differentiation from the dominating character-defining features. In districts with mixed character, the design may define the character of the district by referencing significant features.

Infill Construction - Reflect Materials Features and Forms of the District

1. Design a site plan that is harmonious with the characteristics found with the district. Avoid unnecessary contrast with historic fabric in form or building articulation, to maintain the integrity and character of the site and its context.
2. Strengthen the primary characteristics of the district through infill construction by referencing and relating to the historic design, landscape, use, and cultural expressions found within the district.

Infill Construction - Complementary and Differentiated Design

1. Design to be visually distinguishable to the historic district.
2. Design to be identifiable as contemporary and harmonious with the historic district in terms of general site characteristics, materials, and features.
3. Employ innovative and exceptional design solutions where scale and massing may visually overwhelm or compete with historic buildings or districts in dense, urban environments
4. Utilize character-defining features of the historic district to inspire the design.
5. Respect the historic and architectural features without duplicating historic styles or features that will create a false sense of history.

6. Reference the size, proportion, rhythm and alignment of doors and windows found in the district to reinforce compatibility in the design.
7. Design roofs to fit within the historic context and integrated into the building's overall composition.
8. Select materials that are harmonious and referential to the general character, color, and textures of the historic district. Avoid contrast that detracts or visually competes with the historic district.

San Francisco Planning

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No appointment is necessary.