

**CHAPTER 22.29****ALHAMBRA VALLEY DISTRICTS****22.29.010 Purposes.**

In addition to the purposes prescribed in Sections 22.02.010 and 22.12.020 of this Title, the Alhambra Valley (AV) Districts are included in the zoning regulations to achieve the following purposes:

- A. Preserve the semi-rural atmosphere and the balance of residential and agricultural land uses in Alhambra Valley.
- B. Allow development that is compatible with existing agricultural, residential and open space uses.
- C. Preserve and enhance both the natural and man-made environment in Alhambra Valley.
- D. Restrict development in environmentally sensitive areas.
- E. Enhance watercourses and associated riparian habitat to their natural state to restore water quality, wildlife diversity, aesthetic values and recreation opportunities.
- F. Minimize air, water, noise and soil pollution in Alhambra Valley.
- G. Minimize soil erosion and runoff throughout Alhambra Valley.
- H. Protect historical and archaeological resources.
- I. Provide adequate levels of public services within Alhambra Valley. Ensure new public facilities are sensitive to the natural setting.
- J. Encourage and enhance agriculture and maintain and promote a healthy and competitive agricultural economy in Alhambra Valley.
- K. Minimize and resolve conflicts between agricultural and urban uses.
- L. Preserve and protect areas of identified high scenic value including scenic ridgeways, scenic routes (Alhambra Valley Road, Reliez Valley Road and a portion of Vaca Creek Road), and valley gateways

(intersection of Alhambra Valley Road and Vaca Creek Road and Reliez Valley Road and Alhambra Valley Road).

**22.29.020 Applicability.**

This Chapter specifies the regulations that are applicable within the Alhambra Valley Districts.

**22.29.030 Establishment and Purpose of Alhambra Valley Districts.**

The Alhambra Valley Districts are hereby established as set forth below.

- A. AV/R-20 Single Family District. The purpose of the district is to reserve land for the construction, use and occupancy of detached single-family development. Minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet.
- B. AV/R-40 Single Family District. The purpose of the district is to reserve land for the construction, use and occupancy of detached single-family development. Minimum lot size is 40,000 square feet.
- C. AV/A-5 Agriculture District. The purpose of the district is to reserve land for agricultural uses and supporting operations, including detached single-family residential uses. Minimum lot size is 5 acres.
- D. AV/PD Planned Development District. The purpose of the district is to allow for large-scale integrated residential development with a cohesive design. The Planned Development District is intended to allow diversification in the relationship of various uses, buildings, structures, lot sizes and open space while insuring substantial compliance with the applicable standards and regulations.

**22.29.040 Use Regulations.**

A. Permitted and Conditional Uses. The allowable land uses for the AV/R-20, AV/R-40 and AV/A-5 Districts shall be as specified in Table 1. Uses are designated in Table 1 as follows:

1. P Permitted land use;
2. UP Subject to use permit as set forth in Chapter 22.40, Conditional Uses - Use Permits; and
3. - Not allowed in specified zoning district.

Uses not listed in Table 1 are prohibited in all Alhambra Valley Districts.

In addition to the land use permit required by Table 1, special provisions related to certain land uses may apply, and Design Review may also be required for certain uses in compliance with Section 22.29.100, Alhambra Valley Districts - Design Review. Where the last column in Table 1 (Specific Use Regulations) includes a section number, the regulations in the referenced section apply to the use. Provisions in other sections of this zoning ordinance may also apply.

**Table 1: Permitted and Conditional Uses <sup>(1)</sup>**

Uses	Districts			Specific Use Regulations
	AV/R-20	AV/R-40	AV/A-5	
<b>Residential Uses</b>				
Family day care home	P	P	P	
Day care, general	UP	UP	UP	
Foster family home	P	P	P	
Residential congregate care facility	P	P	P	
One family dwelling	P	P	P	
Secondary housing units	P	P	P	22.12.085
Additional one family dwelling	UP	UP	UP	22.29.050.A
Free-standing exterior lighting over seven feet in height	UP	UP	—	22.29.050.B
Home occupation	UP	UP	UP	
Wind generator	UP	UP	UP	22.12.090.N

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Uses	Districts			Specific Use Regulations
	AV/R-20	AV/R-40	AV/A-5	
<b>Agricultural Uses</b>				
Agriculture - Large Scale	—	—	P	
Agriculture - Small Scale	P	P	P	
Aviaries	P	P	P	22.29.050.C.1
Christmas tree farms	UP	UP	UP	22.29.050.D
Dog kennels	—	—	UP	
Horse riding academies and horse riding instruction	UP	UP	UP	22.29.050.C.3
Livestock	P	P	P	22.29.050.C.2
Services incidental to agricultural uses	—	—	UP	
Small animal farming	P	P	P	22.29.050.C.4
<b>Institutional Uses</b>				
Community recreation facilities, such as golf, tennis or swimming clubs	UP	UP	UP	

Uses	Districts			Specific Use Regulations
	AV/R-20	AV/R-40	AV/A-5	
Museums in which objects of historical, artistic, scientific or cultural importance are preserved and displayed	—	—	UP	
<b>Public and Recreational Uses</b>				
Publicly owned buildings and structures	UP	UP	UP	
Publicly owned parks and playgrounds	P	P	P	
<b>Other Uses</b>				
Temporary real estate offices and construction yards	UP	UP	UP	
Pumping stations, power stations, drainage ways and structures, storage tanks, and transmission lines found by the City Planning Commission to be necessary for the public health, safety or welfare	UP	UP	UP	

Note: (1) Allowed Uses within the Planned Development District. Those land uses permitted by an approved final development plan which are in harmony with each other, serve to fulfill the function of the Planned Development District, and are consistent with the General Plan; and a detached one family dwelling unit on each legally established lot and the accessory structures and uses normally accessory to it.

- B. Allowed Uses within the AV/PD District. The following uses are allowed in the AV/PD District: those land uses permitted by an approved Planned Development Permit, which are in harmony with each other, serve to fulfill the function of the Planned Development District, and are consistent with the general plan; and a detached one family dwelling unit on each legally established lot and the accessory structures and uses normally accessory to it.
- C. Prohibited Uses. The following uses shall not be permitted within the Alhambra Valley Districts:
1. Commercial radio and television receiving and transmitting facilities other than broadcasting studios and business offices;
  2. Hospitals, philanthropic institutions, and convalescent homes;
  3. Churches and religious institutions and parochial and private schools;
  4. Medical and dental offices and medical clinics; and
  5. Commercial nurseries, except for Christmas tree farms.
  6. Commercial Greenhouses

**22.29.050 Standards for Specific Land Uses in Alhambra Valley Districts.**

- A. Additional One Family Dwelling. An additional one family dwelling unit shall be allowed, subject to use permit approval and based upon net lot area requirements as follows:
1. AV/R-20 district: 20,000 square feet per dwelling unit;
  2. AV/R-40 district: 40,000 square feet per dwelling unit; and
  3. AV/A-5 district: 5 acres per dwelling unit.
- B. Lighting. Installation of free standing exterior light fixtures with a height of seven feet or more above the finished grade of the parcel requires use permit

approval, as set forth in Chapter 22.40, Conditional Uses - Use Permits. The following additional finding is required: glare and annoyance to adjacent property owners shall be minimized to the greatest degree possible by sensitive fixture placement, use of shielded and downcast lighting and low wattage lamps.

C. Keeping of Animals.

1. Aviaries. Aviaries shall be maintained in a sanitary manner as determined by the County Health Department and shall be subject to the setback requirements for Animal Structures within Section 22.29.060.G.1.a.
2. Livestock. Livestock may be kept on lots of 40,000 or more square feet in area (with at least 40,000 square feet for each two head of livestock). To be counted in the aggregate minimum lot size requirement, lots must be contiguous and in one fee ownership.
3. Horse Riding Academies. The requirements for the keeping of livestock must be met in order to submit an application for a use permit (see Section 22.29.050.C.2 above).
4. Small Animal Farming. Within the AV/R-20 and AV/R-40 districts, small animal farming shall be allowed for the primary purpose of home consumption.

- D. Christmas Tree Farms. A use permit application for a Christmas tree farm shall include a site plan indicating parking areas and circulation, planting and landscaping areas, existing and proposed structures, and plans and elevations to indicate architectural type.

**22.29.060 Alhambra Valley Districts - General Development Standards**

- A. Minimum Lot Area. The minimum net lot area shall be as specified in Table 2.

**Table 2: Lot Area**

Districts	Minimum Net Lot Area
AV/R-20	20,000 square feet
AV/R-40	40,000 square feet
AV/A-5	5 acres

- B. Minimum Site Area per Dwelling Unit. The minimum site area per dwelling unit shall be as specified in Table 3, and as further regulated for sites of 10 percent or greater slope, by Section 22.29.080, Hillside Development.

**Table 3: Site Area per Dwelling Unit**

Districts	Minimum Site Area per Dwelling Unit
AV/R-20	20,000 square feet
AV/R-40	40,000 square feet
AV/A-5	5 acres

C. Minimum Lot Depth and Width. The minimum lot depth and minimum lot width (average) shall be as specified in Table 4.

**Table 4: Width and Depth**

Districts	Minimum Lot Depth	Minimum Lot Width (Average) <sup>1</sup>
AV/R-20	120 feet	120 feet
AV/R-40	140 feet	140 feet
AV/A-5	200 feet	250 feet

<sup>1</sup> Average lot width is calculated by dividing the total area of the lot by the depth of the lot.

D. Front Yards, Side Yards and Rear Yards. The front yards, side yards and rear yards shall be as specified in Table 5. For setback requirements for animal structures, see Section 22.29.060.G, Animal Structures.

**Table 5: Minimum Yards**

Districts	Aggregate Minimum Side Yards	Minimum Side Yard		Minimum Front Yard	Minimum Rear Yard
		Interior	Corner	Interior and Corner	
AV/R-20	35 feet	15 feet <sup>1</sup>	20 feet	25 feet	15 feet <sup>2</sup>
AV/R-40	40 feet	20 feet <sup>3</sup>	20 feet	25 feet	15 feet <sup>4</sup>
AV/A-5	40 feet	20 feet	20 feet	25 feet	15 feet

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Within the AV/R-20 district, the side yard minimum may be reduced to three feet for an accessory structure, which does not exceed 600 square feet floor area coverage or 15 feet in height, if it is set back at least 65 feet from the front property line.

<sup>2</sup> Within the AV/R-20 district, there shall be a rear yard for accessory structures of at least three feet.

<sup>3</sup> Within the AV/R-40 district, this minimum may be reduced to three feet for an accessory structure, which does not exceed 600 square feet floor area coverage or 15 feet in height, if it is set back at least 75 feet from the front property line.

<sup>4</sup> Within the AV/R-40 district, there shall be a rear yard for accessory structures of at least three feet.

- E. Maximum Height of Structures. No single-family dwelling or other structure permitted in the Alhambra Valley Districts shall exceed two and one-half stories or 35 feet in height.
- F. Off-Street Parking Requirements. Chapter 22.36, Off-street Parking and Loading Facilities, shall apply within the Alhambra Valley Districts, excluding Sections 22.36.082 and 22.36.084, which shall not apply within the Alhambra Valley Districts. Parking requirements for the AV/A-5 district shall be the same as the R-40 district. Each parking space shall be entirely outside the setbacks of the main structure.
- G. Animal Structures.
1. Aviaries shall not be over 12 feet in height nor exceed one square foot in area for each 50 square feet of net lot area per parcel and shall not exceed 1,600 total square feet. Aviaries shall be set back at least 25 feet from the front property line or any street or limit of right-of-way and at least ten feet from any side or rear property line, and shall be maintained in a sanitary manner as determined by the County Health Department.
  2. Small animal structures shall be set back not less than 60 feet from the front property line or any street or limit of right-of-way, and shall be not less than 40 feet from any side or rear property line.
  3. Large animal structures shall be set back not less than 100 feet from the front property line or any street or limit of right-of-way, and shall not be less than 50 feet from any side or rear property line.
  4. Fenced pasture, paddocks, or other enclosed livestock areas shall not be located nearer than ten feet to any property line.

**22.29.070 Alhambra Valley Districts – Street and  
Subdivision Standards**

- A. Purpose. In addition to the purposes prescribed in Section 22.29.010 for the creation of the Alhambra Valley Districts, the requirements of this Section are intended to promote the stability of the Alhambra Valley's rural residential character by restricting the potential introduction of incongruous urban streets and subdivisions.
- B. Street Standards. One of the principal features of the rural appearance of Alhambra Valley's existing rural neighborhoods is the manner of existing street improvements; which are generally relatively narrow streets, without curbs, gutters, sidewalks or subsurface storm drains. Retention and continuance of the rural street standards appears to be an essential element in the preservation of Alhambra Valley's rural residential character. Therefore, within the boundaries of the Alhambra Valley Districts, property owners are exempted from the otherwise normal requirement for street and related improvements as prescribed in Sections 21.08.010 through 21.08.180 and 21.08.200. Requirements for subdivisions and street improvements shall generally be limited to the preservation and continuance of the established infrastructure, as deemed necessary for the public health, safety or welfare by the City Engineer.
- C. Criteria and Standards for Subdivision Approval. The review authority shall consider the Goals and Principals of the Alhambra Valley Design Guidelines, as adopted by separate Resolution of the City Council of the City of Martinez, as well as the criteria and guidelines listed below, in its consideration of a Subdivision application:
1. Site Planning and Grading Design.
    - a) In order to conserve the scenic beauty of Alhambra Valley, developers shall generally be required to restore the natural contours and vegetation of the land after grading and other land disturbances.

- b) Public and private projects shall be designed to minimize damage to significant trees and other visual landmarks.
- c) Extreme topographic modification, such as filing in canyons or removing hilltops shall be avoided. Clustering and planned development approaches to development shall be encouraged. All future development plans, whether large-scale or small-scale, shall be based on identifying safe and suitable sites for buildings, roads and driveways.
- d) Hilltops, ridges, rock outcroppings, mature stands of trees, and other natural features shall be considered for preservation, at the time that any development applications are reviewed.
- e) Development in flood inundation zones shall be avoided and development in Federal Emergency Management Act 100-year flood zones shall be prohibited.

2. Public Utilities.

- a) All new utilities shall be placed underground. New residential development shall be connected to a public sewer or provide a septic system which meets the standards of the County Health Department. All new residential development shall also provide on-site storm drainage and shall pay a fee for off-site drainage improvements, if required.
- b) Small community well water or septic systems shall not be established to serve proposed subdivisions.

3. Scenic Tree Planting.

- a) As a way to enhance the aesthetic and scenic qualities along the Alhambra Valley/Reliez Valley Road Scenic Corridor, new subdivisions shall be required to plant new specimen trees along their road frontage according to the following:

- i. Beginning at either end of the parcel's frontage, trees shall be planted at minimum of 50-foot intervals;
- ii. Trees shall be Live Oaks and shall be a minimum size of 24 inches; and
- iii. Shall be located approximately 10 feet from the road shoulder area.

**22.29.080 Alhambra Valley Districts - Hillside Development**

- A. Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to regulate development on hillside areas within the Alhambra Valley Districts, in order to avoid potential geotechnical hazards and to preserve the scenic view from the valley floor.
- B. Applicability. This Section shall apply to any residential development requiring Design Review or Subdivision approval on parcels with any areas of 10 percent slope or greater within the Alhambra Valley Districts, as determined by the applicant's preparation of a Slope and Hazard Area Map as described in Section 22.33.020, Hillside Development Regulations - Maximum Allowable Density Calculations.
- C. Maximum Allowable Density. The maximum allowable density of residential units on properties governed by this Section shall be as prescribed in Section 22.33.020, Hillside Development Regulations - Maximum Allowable Density Calculations, subject to the Exemptions, Exclusion and Conditions of Section 22.33.30, and the following:
  1. Residential density in the AV/R-20 district shall not exceed that prescribed in Section 22.33.020 for the R-20 zoning district;
  2. Residential density in the AV/R-40 district shall not exceed that prescribed in Section 22.33.020 for the R-40 zoning district; and
  3. Residential density in the AV/A-5 district shall not exceed that prescribed for each of the Slope and Hazard Area Map Site Categories as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Allowable Density for AV/A-5 District**

Site Category	Maximum Units per Gross Acre
0-10%	0.20
10.01-30%	0.06
30.01% and over	0.00
Hazard Areas	0.00

4. The maximum allowable density for parcels within the AV/PD district shall be as specified in the approved final development plan.

D. Criteria and Guidelines for Permit Approval.

1. Any residential development requiring Design Review or Subdivision approval shall comply with the requirements of Hillside Development Regulations Sections 22.33.030 and 22.33.040.
2. The review authority shall also consider the Goals and Principals of the Alhambra Valley Design Guidelines, as well as the criteria and guidelines listed below, in its consideration of a Hillside Design Review or Subdivision application.
  - a) Slope stability shall be a primary consideration in the determination to develop land. Development in landslide areas shall not be allowed unless the area is stabilized through high-quality engineering design approved by the City and peer reviewed by a qualified structural and/or geotechnical engineer as determined by the City.
  - b) Structures shall be designed to blend into, rather than dominate the natural setting, especially on ridgelines. The massing of new dwellings shall be compatible with the natural setting.
  - c) The construction of new structures on the top of scenic ridges or within 50 feet of the ridgeline shall be discouraged.
  - d) When development is permitted to occur on hillsides, structures shall be located in a

- manner which is sensitive to available natural resources and constraints.
- e) All new land uses which are to be located below a major scenic ridge shall be reviewed with an emphasis on protecting the visual qualities of the ridge.
  - f) Any new development shall be encouraged to generally conform to natural contours to avoid excessive grading.
  - g) New water tanks that would harm the visual quality of a scenic ridge shall be buried, camouflaged or screened to mitigate their impacts.
  - h) Visual analysis may be required as part of the permit approval process to better determine the effects of new development, grading and landscaping on the built and natural environment, including parklands.
  - i) Hilltops, ridges, rock outcroppings, mature stands of trees and other natural features shall be preserved to the greatest extent possible. Preservation of such features shall be considered at the time that any development applications are reviewed.
  - j) Any development on slopes which exceed 30 percent is prohibited, subject to the Exemptions, Exclusion and Conditions of Section 22.33.030.
  - k) The City shall not accept dedication of public roads in unstable hillside areas. Private roads which would require an excessive degree of maintenance and repair costs shall not be allowed.

**22.29.090 Alhambra Valley Districts – Creek Protection and Enhancement**

- A. Purpose. The purpose of this Section is to regulate activities within and adjacent to Protected Creekbeds in order to:
- 1. Maintain the ecology and hydrology of creeks and streams and provide an amenity to the public,

while at the same time preventing flooding, erosion and danger to life and property.

2. Preserve and restore remaining natural waterways which have been identified as important and irreplaceable natural resources.
3. Employ alternative drainage system improvements which rely on increased retention capacity to lessen or eliminate the need for structural modifications to watercourses, whenever economically possible.
4. Enhance opportunities for public accessibility and recreational use of creeks, streams, drainage channels and other drainage system improvements.

B. Applicability. This Section shall apply to any parcel with a Protected Creekbed or a creek setback, as shown on Figure 1, Protected Creeks. Within the Alhambra Valley Districts, Protected Creekbeds are defined as follows:

1. Natural Creekbed. A watercourse or waterway which can support its own environment of vegetation, fowl, fish and reptiles, and which appears natural. The intent of this designation is for the retention of existing creekbed form and riparian habitat.
2. Partially-Improved Creekbed. A watercourse whose natural form has been altered. Some creekbanks have been buttressed to prevent erosion, and in some cases, drop structures have been installed in the bottom of channels. Nevertheless, many of the natural riparian features and scenic qualities associated with natural creekbeds are still intact. The intent of this designation is to retain and enhance the riparian habitat and scenic qualities of these creeks consistent with prudent drainage controls and protection of existing residential development.

C. Creek Setbacks.

1. Establishing Creek Setbacks. At the time of any permit application for approval to build structures or alter topography, including, but is not limited to, applications for Design

Review, Subdivision or Grading Permit approval, the creek setback shall be determined as part of the permit review. The minimum width of the creek setback shall be 50 feet from the centerline of the creek, but as a condition of permit approval, a setback greater than 50 feet may be required to protect the creek or its adjacent riparian habitat, if such is deemed necessary by the City or any other agency with review authority.

2. Creek Setback and Net Lot Area. The portion of a lot within a creek setback shall be excluded from the calculation of net lot area when determining conformance to any minimum net lot area requirement standards prescribed by this Chapter.

D. Creek Preservation and Enhancement Plan.

1. Submittal of Plan Required. In addition to the establishment of a creek setback as required by Section 22.29.090(C), a Creek Preservation and Enhancement Plan is required for all permit applications subject to this Section, and applicants shall provide as a part of permit application submittal, the following:
  - a) Visual materials and a narrative which describes existing creek conditions;
  - b) A description of the methods of protecting and enhancing the creek resource;
  - c) Scaled drawings which show a cross-section of the existing creekbed and creekbank; and
  - d) A creek re-vegetation plan which shall use native riparian vegetation from the local seed stock, where feasible.
2. Plan Approval. The Creek Preservation and Enhancement Plan is subject to the approval by the City and or any other applicable agencies' reviewing authority. When alteration of streambanks or streambeds is proposed, the applicable agencies shall be notified in accordance with their authority under State law and/or when their assistance is needed.

3. Erosion Prevention and Structural Improvements. Erosion in natural watercourses shall be controlled where creek capacity and bank stability necessitate, while maintaining consistency with the Creek Preservation and Enhancement Plan for that development. Minor structural improvements, e.g. drop structures, may be allowed if consistent with the concepts of the Creek Preservation and Enhancement Plan.
- E. Criteria and Guidelines for Permit Approval. The applicable review authority shall consider the criteria and guidelines listed below, in its consideration of an application regarding property subject to this Section.
1. Existing native riparian habitat shall be preserved and enhanced by new development unless public safety concerns require removal of habitat for flood control or other public purposes.
  2. Revegetation of a watercourse, if required as a part of the development, shall employ native vegetation, providing the type of vegetation is compatible with the watercourse's maintenance program and does not adversely alter channel capacity.
  3. Natural watercourses shall be integrated into new development in such a way that they are accessible and provide a positive visual element.
  4. Where feasible, existing natural waterways shall be protected and preserved in their natural state and channels, which are already modified, shall be restored.
  5. Proposed drainage discharges into the protected watercourses shall be reviewed to minimize erosion of creekbanks and visual impacts.
  6. New parcels which are created shall include adequate space outside of the creek setback for pools, patios, and appurtenant structures to ensure that property owners will not place improvements within the areas which require protection.
  7. Grading, filling and construction activity near watercourses shall be conducted in such a manner as to minimize impacts from increased runoff,

erosion, sedimentation, biochemical degradation or thermal pollution.

8. On-site water control shall be required of major new developments so that no increase in peak flows occurs relative to the site's pre-development condition, unless the City determines that off-site measures can be employed which are equally effective in preventing adverse downstream impacts.

#### **22.29.100 Alhambra Valley Districts - Design Review**

##### **A. Applicability.**

1. Design Review for Non-Residential Properties. All applications made for a building permit to construct or alter the exterior of a commercial, recreational, institutional or public structure, or where proposed grading involves the movement of 1,000 cubic yards or more of soil material, shall be subject to the Design Review requirements of this Section, in addition to the Criteria and Standards of Section 22.34.045.
2. Design Review for Residential Properties. All applications made for a building permit to build a new or enlarge an existing residential structure, including but not limited to single family residences, accessory buildings (for residential, utility, agricultural or animal use), arbors, pergolas or swimming pools shall be subject to the Design Review requirements of this Section. Building permits that do not involve enlarging a structure, such as siding and window replacement, shall be not subject to the requirements of this Section.

##### **B. Application and Approval Required.** Applications for Design Review pursuant to this Section shall be made as prescribed by Section 22.34.040, and may be appealed as prescribed by Sections 22.34.050-23.34.070.

##### **C. Criteria, Standards and Guidelines.** The Design Review approval authority shall render a decision based upon

the following Criteria and Standards and shall also consider the Goals and Principals of the Alhambra Valley Design Guidelines, as adopted by resolution of the City Council, in its consideration of a Design Review application.

1. Site Plan and Grading.

- a) The natural contours and vegetation of the land shall generally be restored after grading and other land disturbances so that a naturalistic appearance is maintained.
- b) Private projects shall be designed to minimize damage to significant trees and other visual landmarks.
- c) Hilltops, ridges, rock outcroppings, mature stands of trees, and other natural features shall be considered for preservation, at the time that any development applications are reviewed.

2. Home and Landscape Designs.

- a) New home designs shall blend in with the semi-rural character of the area. Buildings on hillsides shall complement the topography of the site. Exterior building materials of wood, wood shingles and brick are preferred and exterior colors shall be earth tone colors. Bright colors shall be avoided.
- b) New projects shall be designed to blend in with the rural setting of Alhambra Valley as much as possible. The use of fire resistant materials shall be encouraged.
- c) New buildings which are proposed in highly visible areas, such as on hillsides, shall be sited, designed and landscaped so that supporting columns, piers and building undersides are not visually dominant.
- d) Energy efficient features in new development shall be encouraged and new additions or remodeling projects shall conform with building code regulations related to energy conservation.

- D. Findings and Decision. The review authority may approve a Design Review application only after making the following findings.
1. The design, layout, size, architectural features and general appearance of the proposed project is consistent with the general plan, and any applicable specific plan and with the development standards, design guidelines and all applicable provisions of this code, including this Title and any approved master plan and precise development plan.
  2. The proposed project would maintain and enhance the community's character, provide for harmonious and orderly development, and create a desirable environment for the occupants, neighbors, and visiting public.
  3. The proposed development would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; is not materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity; does not interfere with the use and enjoyment of neighboring existing or future developments and does not create potential traffic, pedestrian or bicycle hazards.

#### **22.29.110 Alhambra Valley Districts - General Provisions and Fences**

All uses and development applications within the Alhambra Valley Districts shall be subject to the general provisions and exceptions prescribed in Chapter 22.34 of this Title, except for:

- A. Design Review. Design Review shall be as prescribed in Section 22.29.100 of this Chapter; and
- B. Fences. Notwithstanding the requirements and limitations prescribed in Section 22.34.090, Fences Walls and Hedges, the following exceptions and design standards shall apply:
  1. Fences up to four feet in height are allowed at the front property boundary and within the front yard setback, but must be of an open-rail design.

2. Solid board fences shall be prohibited along Alhambra Valley and Reliez Valley Roads. Only open rail fencing within the front yard setback shall be allowed on all properties fronting these roadways.
3. Solid board fencing and walls along side and rear property boundaries are discouraged in or adjacent to agricultural areas. To minimize visual impacts of perimeter lot fencing, fencing on slopes greater than 15 percent shall be open rail or wire. Barbed wire may be used to keep grazing animals from wandering into residential areas.

#### **22.29.120 Alhambra Valley Districts – Residential and Agricultural Compatibility**

- A. Purpose. This Section is included in the zoning regulations to enhance and encourage agricultural operations within the Alhambra Valley Districts and provide residents with proper notification of such agricultural uses. Where non-agricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas or exist side by side, agricultural operations can be the subject of nuisance complaints, resulting in detrimental impacts on farming. However, it is intended that through mandatory disclosures, purchasers and users will better understand the impact of living near agricultural operations and be prepared to accept attendant conditions as the natural result of living in or near rural areas.
- B. Compatibility Standards.
  1. Agriculture shall be protected from nuisance complaints from non-agricultural land uses.
  2. Where a discretionary development permit is sought within or adjacent to areas designated for agricultural use, natural or constructed buffers between the agricultural and urban use shall be required. A minimum 60-foot setback shall be required for non-agricultural structures located within or adjacent to cultivated agricultural areas. Such buffers must occur on the parcel for which the discretionary permit is sought.

3. An agricultural or equestrian notification statement in the property deeds shall be required for all new residential lots created in or adjacent to planned agricultural districts. The statement shall inform owners regarding the nuisance and hazards associated with nearby agricultural practices. Such concerns may include, but are not limited to, the noise, odors, dust, chemicals, smoke, and hours of operation that may accompany agricultural operations.
4. Where unmitigatable conflicts exist between agricultural and residential uses, priority shall generally be given to maintaining the agricultural use.

C. Agricultural Standards.

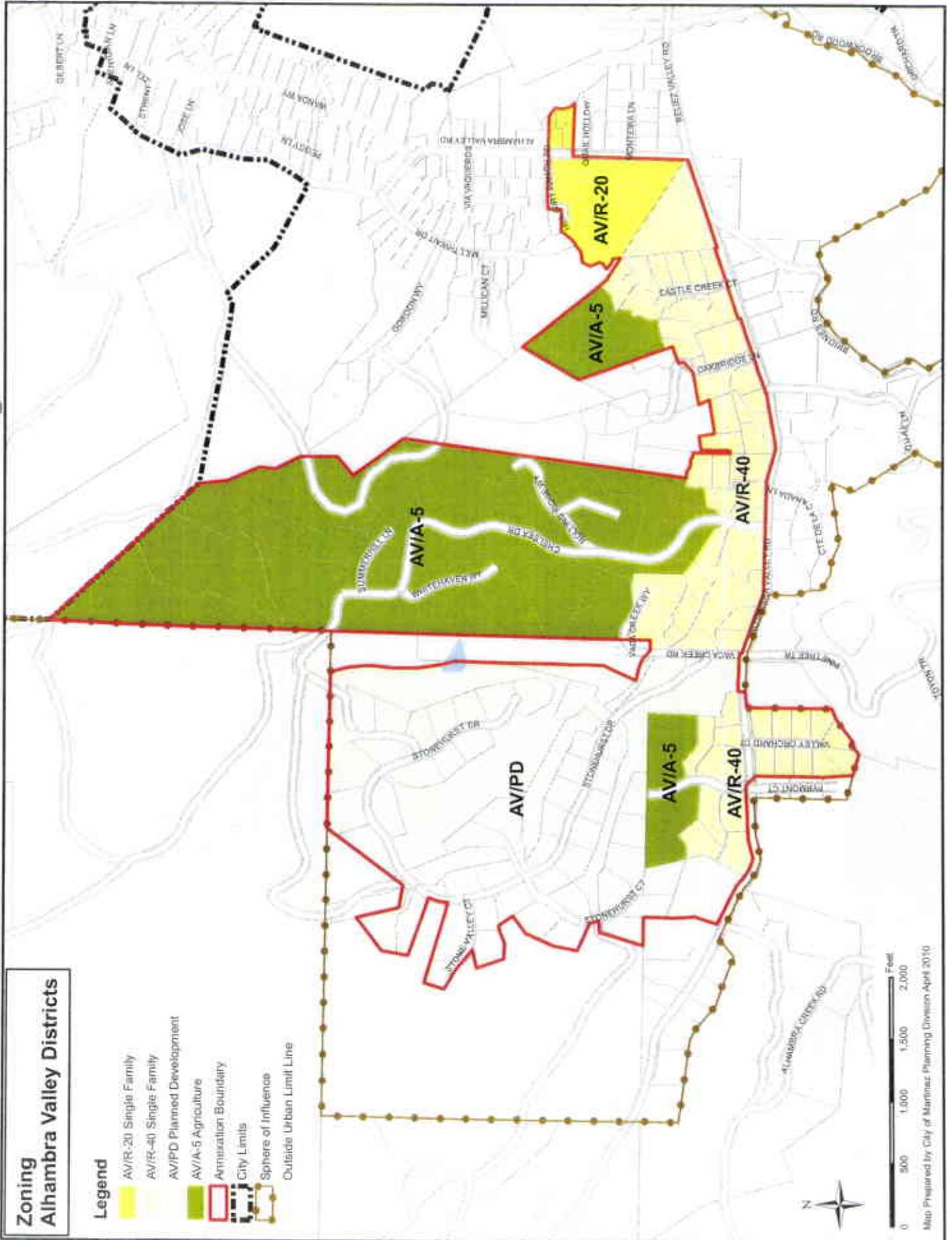
1. Grazing areas shall include fencing to contain grazing animals, keep domestic dogs out of grazing areas and deter trespassing.
2. The use of toxic and nutritive chemicals by agricultural operators shall be minimized.
3. Both public and private infrastructure that supports agriculture shall be promoted.
4. Efforts to provide adequate, high quality and fairly-priced water supply for agricultural irrigation shall be supported.

REVISED

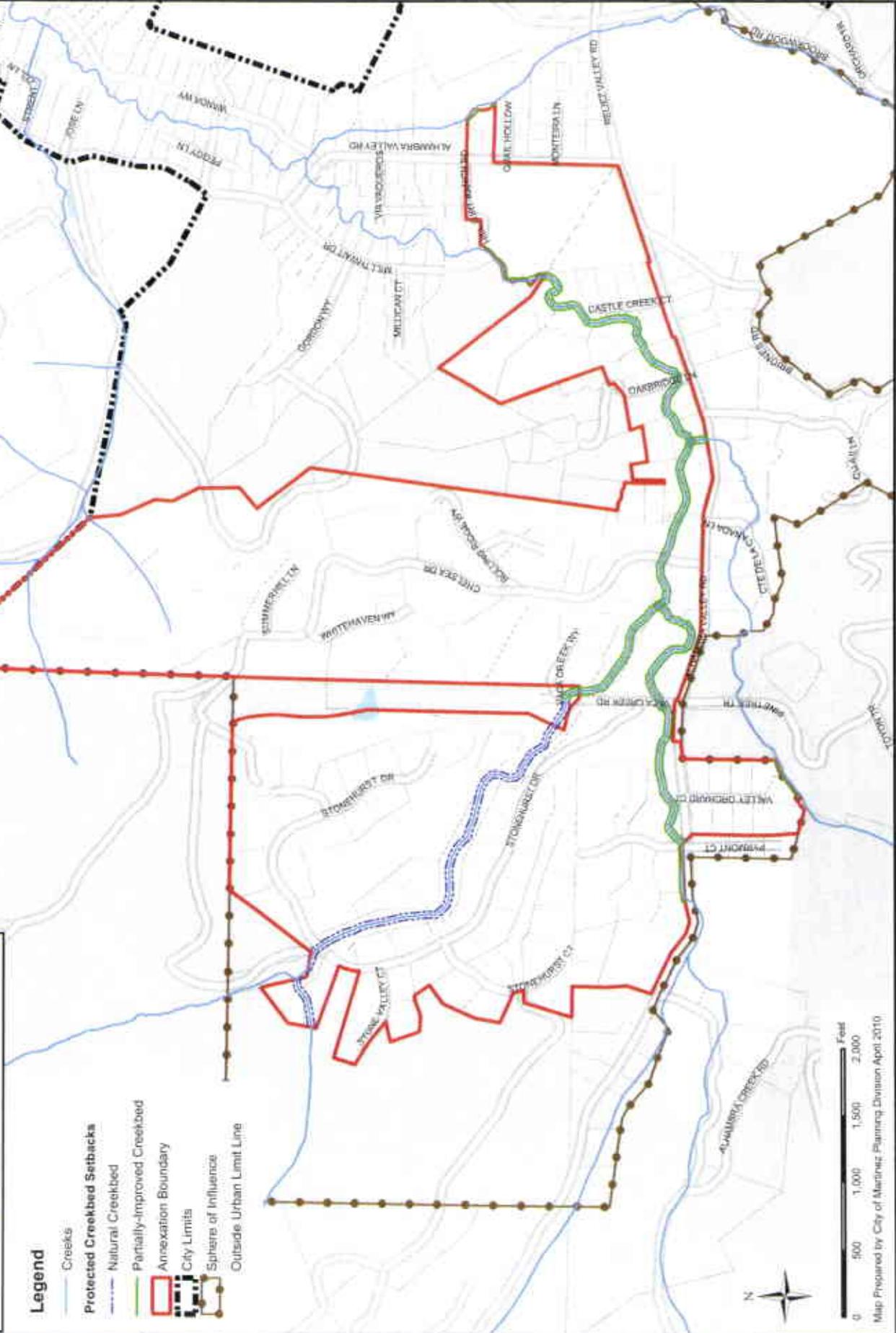
### Zoning Alhambra Valley Districts

#### Legend

- AV/R-20 Single Family
- AV/R-40 Single Family
- AV/PD Planned Development
- AV/A-5 Agriculture
- Amnization Boundary
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Outside Urban Limit Line



**Figure 1**  
**Zoning**  
**22.29.090 Alhambra Valley Districts-**  
**Protected Creekbeds**



**Legend**

- Creeks
- Protected Creekbed Setbacks
- - - Natural Creekbed
- Partially-Improved Creekbed
- Annexation Boundary
- - - City Limits
- · · Sphere of Influence
- Outside Urban Limit Line

# **Alhambra Valley Districts Design Guidelines**

Adopted by the City of Martinez City Council  
[REDACTED], 2010

# Alhambra Valley Districts Design Guidelines

These guidelines are excerpted from Contra Costa County's Alhambra Valley Specific Plan (1992) and shall serve as the Design Guidelines for the City of Martinez Alhambra Valley Districts. The guidelines are intended to provide a framework for high quality residential development that will complement and be compatible with the existing residential community in the Alhambra Valley and express the desired landscape and architectural character for future residential development in the valley.

These guidelines are also intended to serve as design criteria for use by planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers and builders and to provide guidance for the City staff and Planning Commission when reviewing future residential development proposals or remodeling of existing residences. These guidelines are also intended to provide a framework to achieve quality residential development without limiting design creativity. These guidelines are not meant to discourage unique and inventive design solutions, nor are they iron-clad rules. Deviations from the guidelines should be allowed for good reasons and should enrich the various patterns in the Alhambra Valley.

The Design Guidelines have the following two principal goals: to reduce the effective visual bulk of development; and to reduce the environmental impact of development. Both goals are to be achieved by the following design principals, shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Design Goals and Principals**

<b>Goal 1 – Reduce Effective Bulk</b>
<b>Principals</b>
1. Cut building into hillside.
2. Terrace building using slope.
3. Reduce effective mass with vertical and horizontal articulation.
4. Follow hillside contours.
5. Follow contours with horizontal elements.
6. Avoid downhill cantilevers.
7. Avoid large retaining walls.
8. Use materials to reduce bulk.
9. Use underground spaces.
10. Avoid single form solutions.

**Table 1 Continued**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 2 – Reduce Environmental Impact</b></p> <p><b>Principals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Use form and materials which blend with texture of environment.</li><li>2. Do not use large expanses of single material.</li><li>3. Use native materials wherever possible.</li><li>4. Use non-reflective materials.</li><li>5. Screen foundations and underside of structures.</li><li>6. Make the landscape work for the site.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Landscape with foresight.</li><li>b. Use natural and planned landscape.</li><li>c. Use earth formations to minimize impact.</li><li>d. Use native drought-resistant plants.</li></ol></li><li>7. Avoid sprawling plans.</li><li>8. Site building to avoid prominence.</li><li>9. Height limits.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Limit.</li><li>b. Variances.</li></ol></li></ol>
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**Additional Design Principals**

1. Protection of Ridgeline View – New residential structures should be located and designed so as to minimize obstruction of any ridge silhouette as viewed from scenic routes on the valley floor.
2. Drainage – Each building site should be graded so that concentrated water caused by improvements does not flow onto an adjacent property, but instead, is directed into a natural drainage channel, street or storm drainage facility.
3. Fences – Fences should be designed and located so that they do not block vehicle and pedestrian sight lines and so that they are compatible with the design of the residential building and are aesthetically attractive.
4. Roofs – All roofs on new structures should be of non-combustible materials and achieve a Class “A” rating or better.
5. Exterior Lighting – Both construction and permanent exterior lighting should be designed to eliminate glare and annoyance to adjacent property owners, passerby

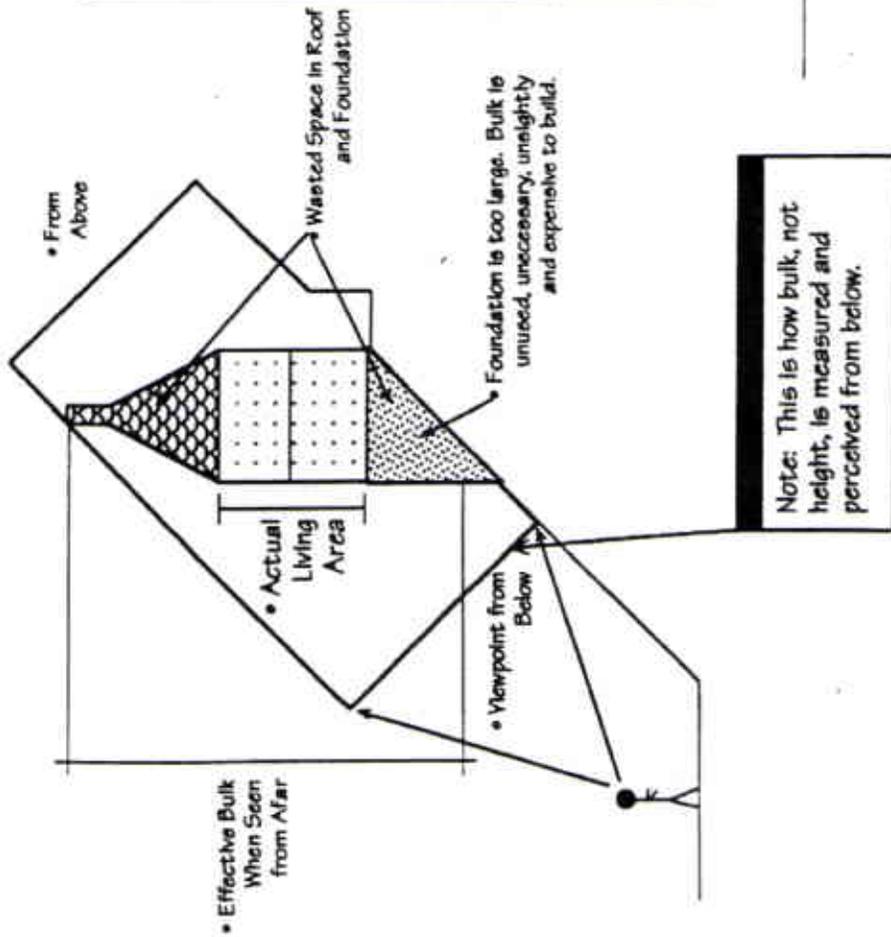
and vehicular traffic. Lighting should be shielded and directed downward. Lamps should be low wattage and have incandescent light color.

6. Erosion Control – Landscape plans should include appropriate planting to repair, reseed and/or replant all grading cuts to prevent erosion.
7. Driveways – The maximum slope of new residential driveways should not exceed 25 percent; all driveways with a slope of 20 percent or more shall be constructed with grooved concrete. Driveways should be designed to follow as closely as practical to the natural contours of the property and to provide safe access, minimal grading and minimize the need for retaining walls, as practical.
8. Siting of Leachfields – Placement of leachfields for proposed tentative subdivision map applicants shall be limited to natural slopes of 20 percent or less.
9. Interior Sprinklers – All new residences may be equipped with interior sprinkler systems to aid in the suppression of fires. The use of fire retardant materials is encouraged.
10. Drought-Tolerant Landscaping – Landscaping for new residences shall comply with Zoning Title 22, Chapter 22.35, Water Conservation in Landscape, or as subsequently updated by State or local mandate.

**GOAL 1: To reduce effective visual bulk of a structure and to avoid monumental and excessively large dwellings.**

Structures stand out prominently on hills when seen from a distance or from below. Most hillside structures cannot be screened effectively until trees grow to maturity - a process which takes many years.

**NO - Siting of structure enlarges viewshed from below.**

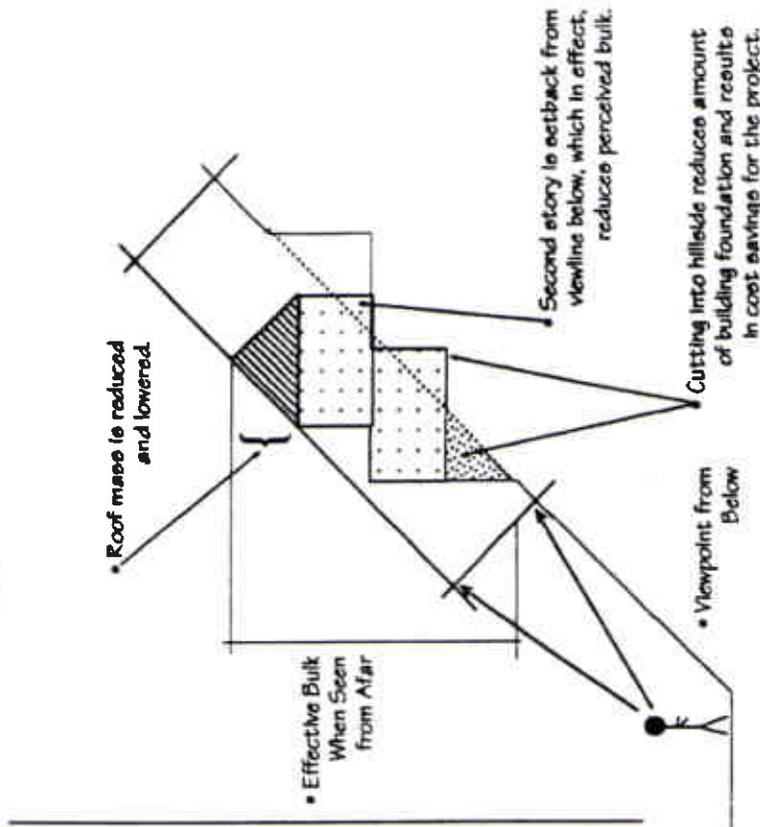


**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P1.**

**Principal 1: Cut building into hillside to reduce effective visual bulk.**

- expose maximum of a half story (= 5 feet) of foundation to view in elevation;
- expose maximum of a half story of roof to elevation.

**YES - same amount of living space redesigned reduces viewshed from below..**



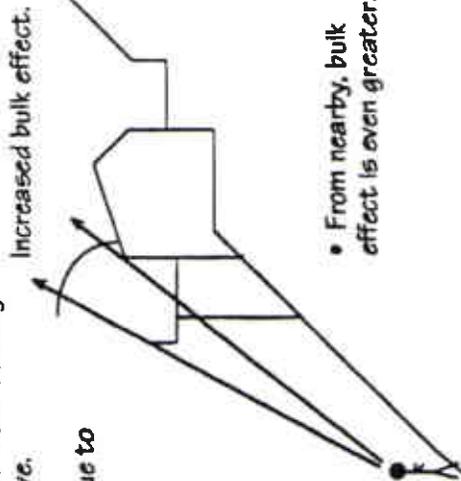
*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

**Principal 2: Terrace building using the slope. Use roofs of lower levels for the deck open space of the upper levels.**

12 foot wide decks (minimum) needed to effectively break up mass.

**NO**

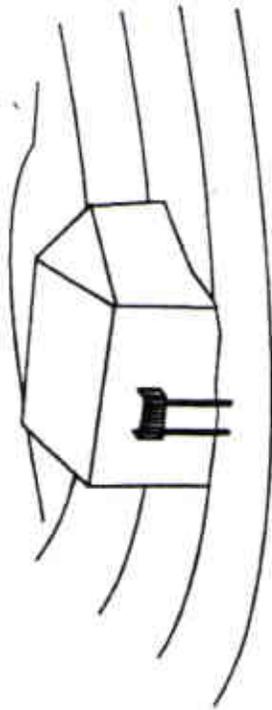
- Overhanging decks make building seem more massive.
- Bulk increase due to deck overhang.
- Effective bulk.



- From nearby, bulk effect is even greater.

**NO**

Building stuck up in the air stands out on the hillside.

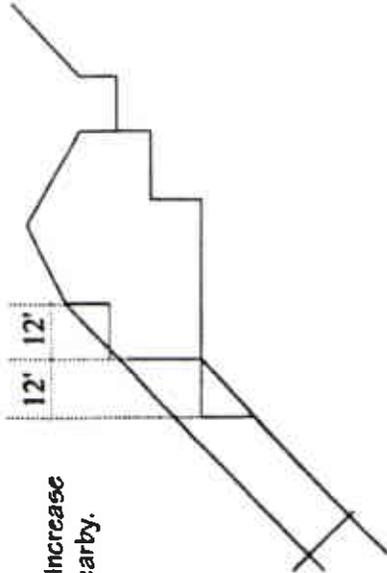


Avoid decks hanging from the downhill side with long pole supports.

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G1-P2**

**YES**

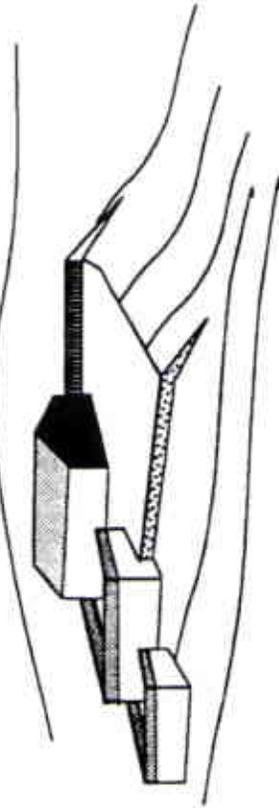
- Terraced decks do not increase building bulk when seen nearby.



- Effective bulk with or without decks.

**YES**

- Building correctly fits into the ground and minimizes effect on the hillside.



- Use roof decks, low levels decks and side of building decks.

*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

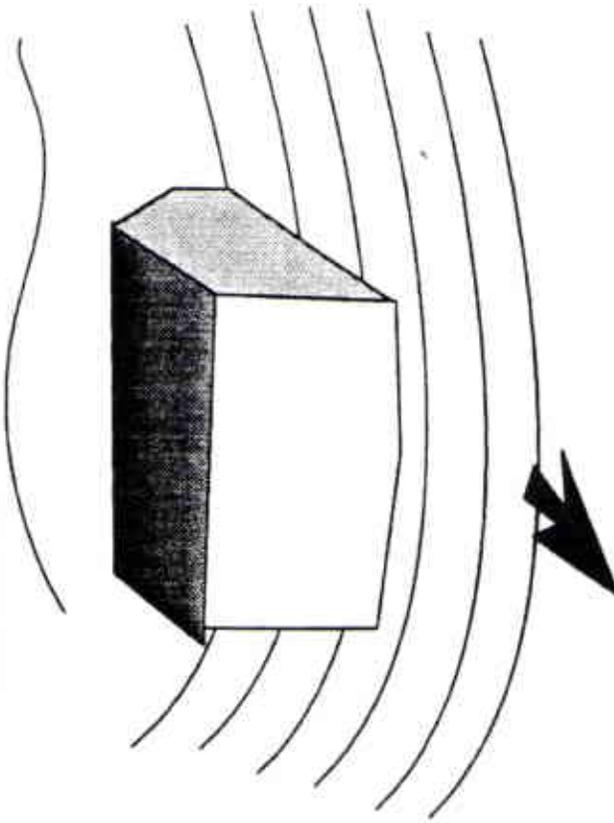
**Principal 3: Avoid large expanses of any material in a single plane. On downhill elevations, break up building masses with horizontal and vertical elements.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P3**

**Suggested Deck Standards:** Minimum deck setback: 12 feet; Maximum vertical height: 10 feet; Maximum horizontal width: 30 feet.

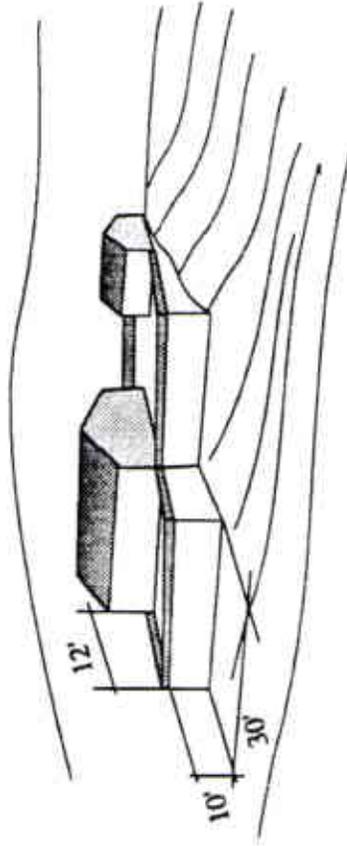
**NO**

- Large single plane downhill increases visual bulk.



**YES**

- Breaking up building mass reduces visual bulk. Deck elements must be large enough, however, to be effective.



- Minimum deck setback: 12 feet
- Maximum vertical height: 10 feet
- Maximum horizontal width: 30 feet.

*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

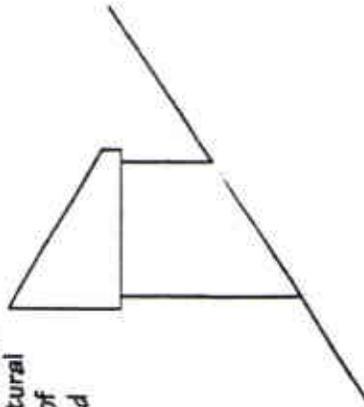
**Principal 4: Avoid large expanses of any material in a single plane. On downhill elevations, break up building masses with horizontal and vertical elements.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G1-P4**

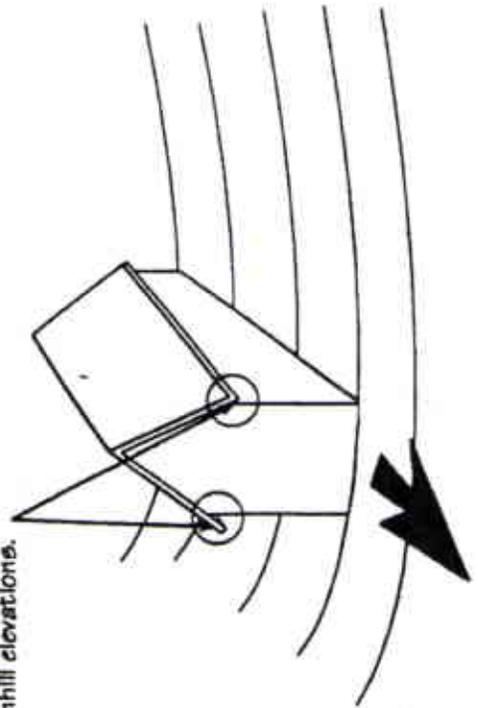
Occasionally, a portion of the structure can "go against the grain" of a slope for a particular reason and in moderation.

**NO**

- Angular forms which slope in the opposite direction to the natural slope destroys relationship of hillside and building mass and increases effective bulk.

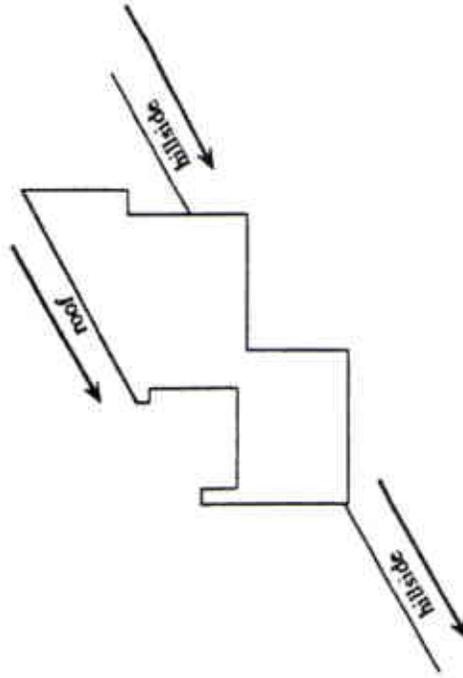


- Avoid large gable ends on downhill elevations.



**YES**

- Roof slope approximates that of the natural slope of the hillside and follows its direction. The building follows the ground form better.



*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

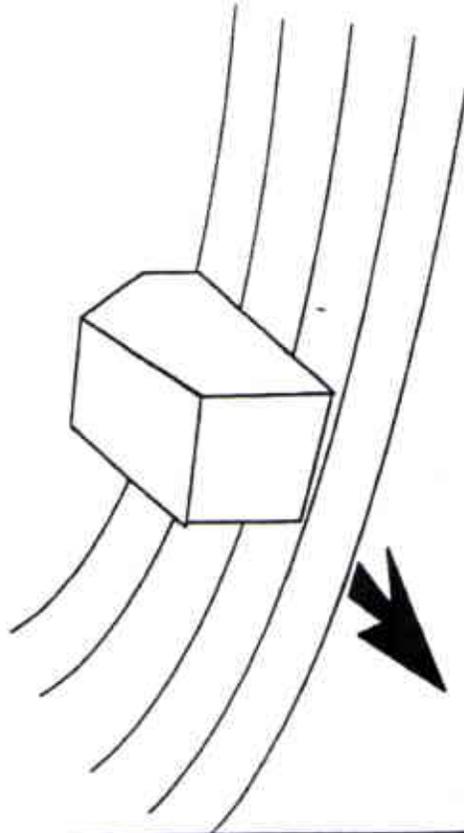
**Principal 5: Follow the hillside contours with horizontal building elements to better integrate the structure into the site.**

Suggestions: Do not use more than two-story high elements without major horizontal articulation

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P5**

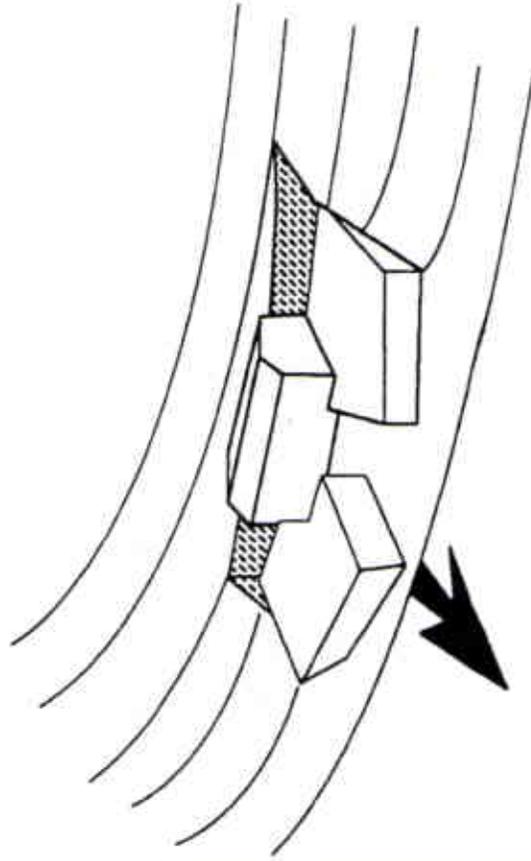
**NO**

- Building stands out as a major object.



**YES**

- Building mass follows contours and flows with the site.



*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

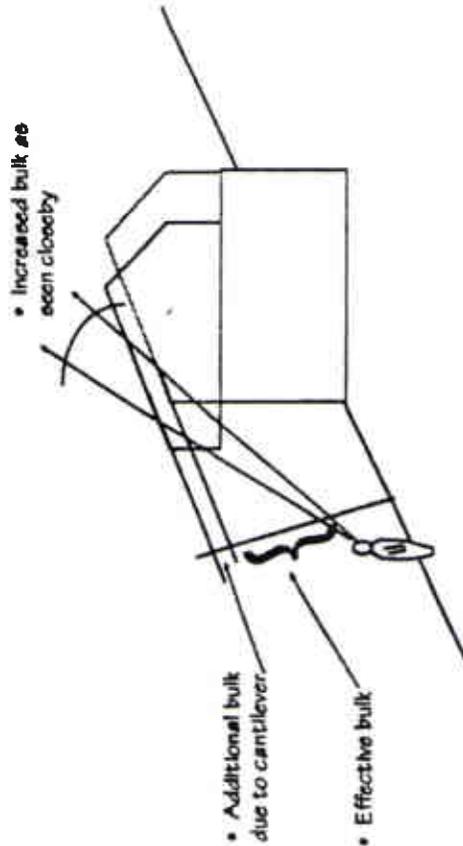
**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P6**

**Principal 6: Avoid cantilevers on downhill faces of buildings.**

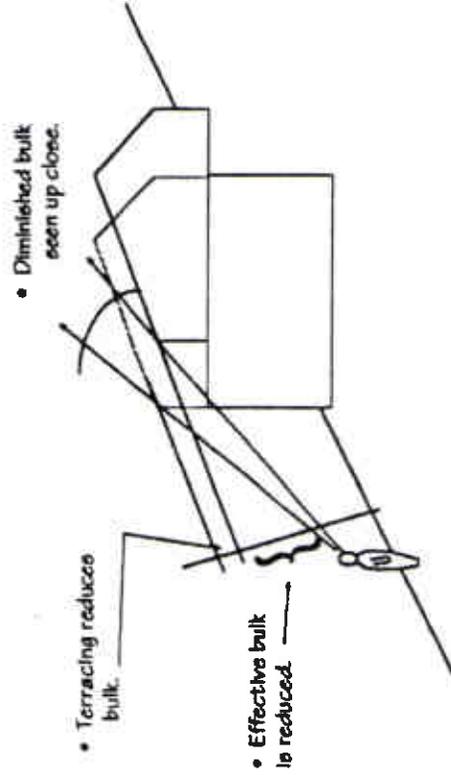
Limit downslope cantilevers to the dimensions necessary to provide proper sun screening over windows and walls.

**NO**

- Avoid large gable ends on downhill elevations.
- Additional bulk makes building appear taller and more monumental.



**YES**

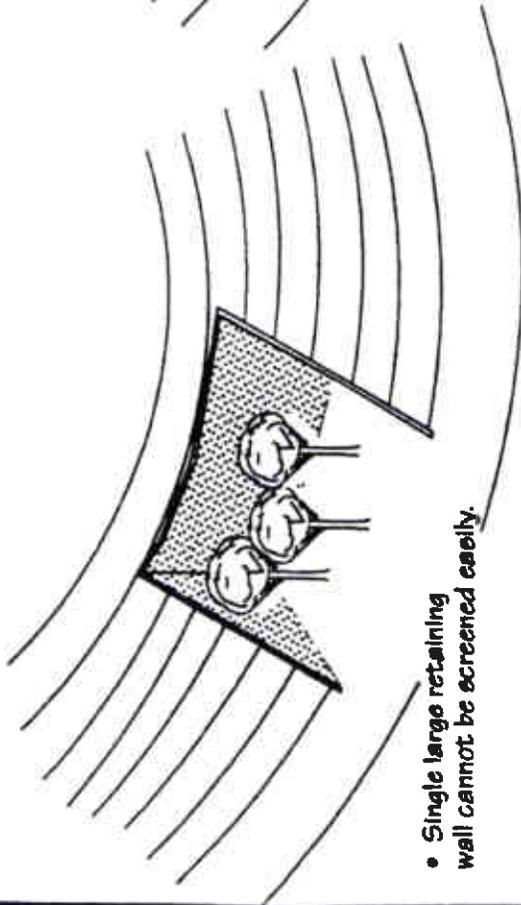


*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

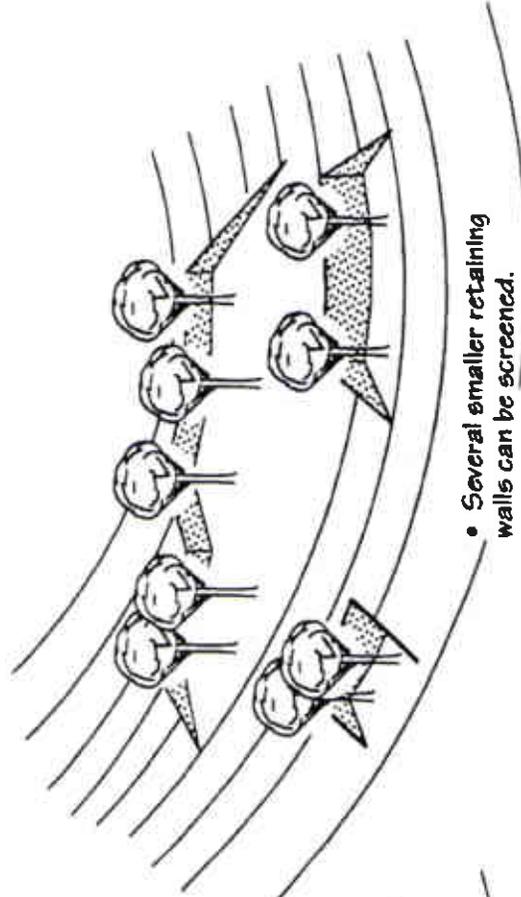
**Principal 7: Avoid large retaining walls in a uniform plane. Break retaining walls into separate elements such as terraces.**

**Suggested standards: Maximum vertical dimension of a single retaining wall should be six feet.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G1-P7**

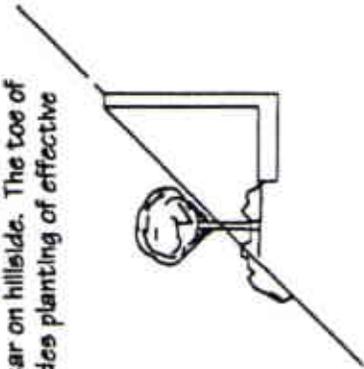


• Single large retaining wall cannot be screened easily.

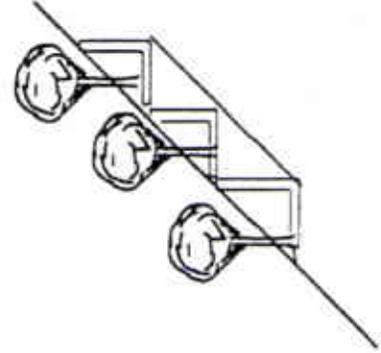


• Several smaller retaining walls can be screened.

• Single retaining wall makes a massive scar on hillside. The toe of wall precludes planting of effective screen.



• Terraced retaining walls break up mass.



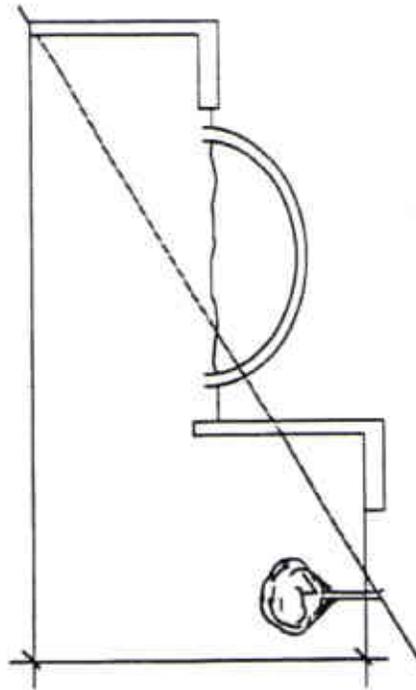
*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

**Principal 7: Avoid large retaining walls in a uniform plane. Break retaining walls into separate elements such as terraces.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P7b**

**NO**

- No plantings possible due to the toe of retaining wall.

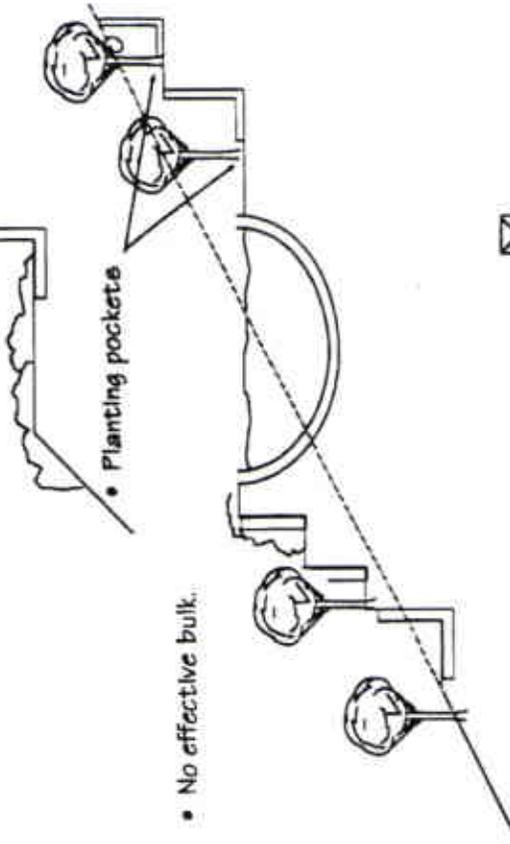


- Effective Bulk

- Large concrete retaining wall surfaces can be seen for miles and can take years to conceal with plantings and trees.

**YES**

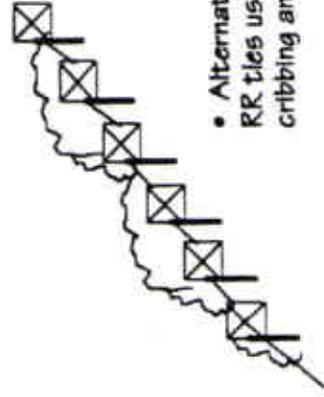
- Planting pockets on stepped retaining wall allow screen planting at several levels.



- Planting pockets

- No effective bulk.

- Alternate possibility: RR ties used for cribbing and planting.



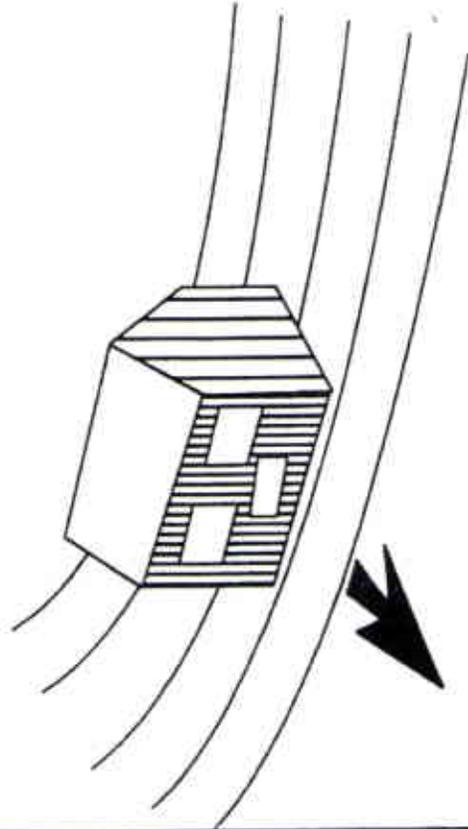
*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

**Principal 8: Use changes of material to "soften" large building elevations and to blend into the hillside.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P8**

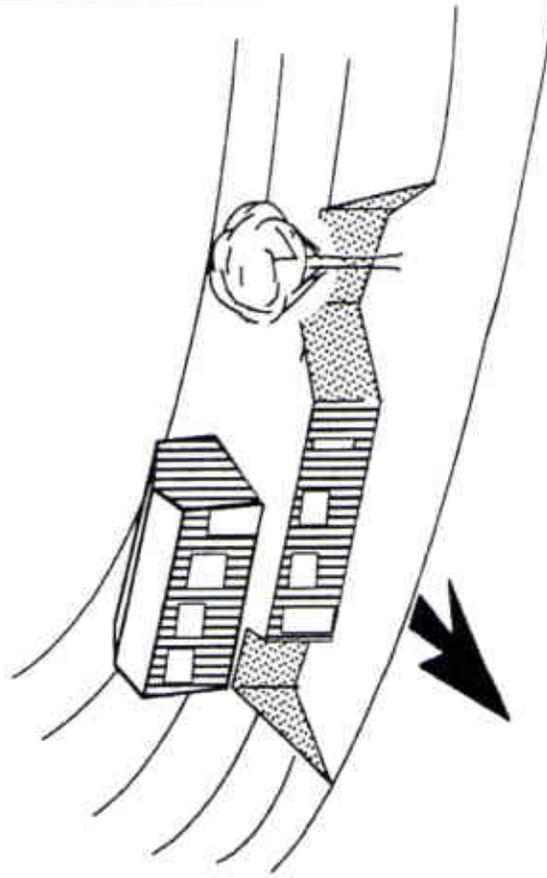
**NO**

- Large facades of uniform material is lifeless. Even if modulated by windows, facade is still plain.



**YES**

- Natural materials, wood and windows in small increments provide more interesting human scale and varied pattern to topography.
- Stone foundations and retaining walls relate well to the ground.



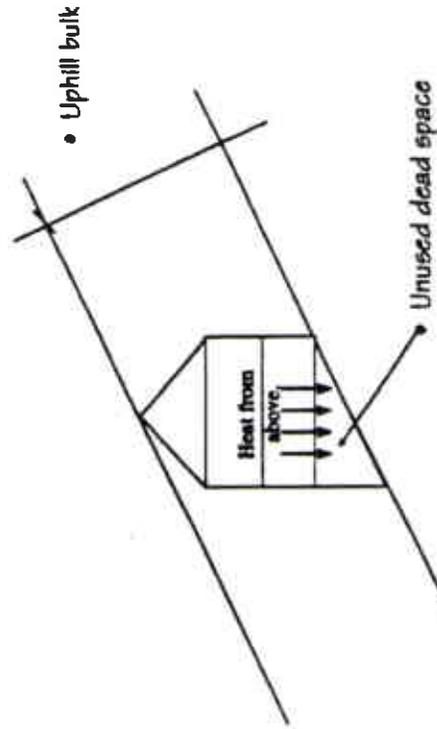
*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

# Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines Figure: G1-P9

**Principal 9: Excavate underground or below grade rooms to dramatically reduce effective bulk, provide energy efficient and environmentally desirable spaces.**

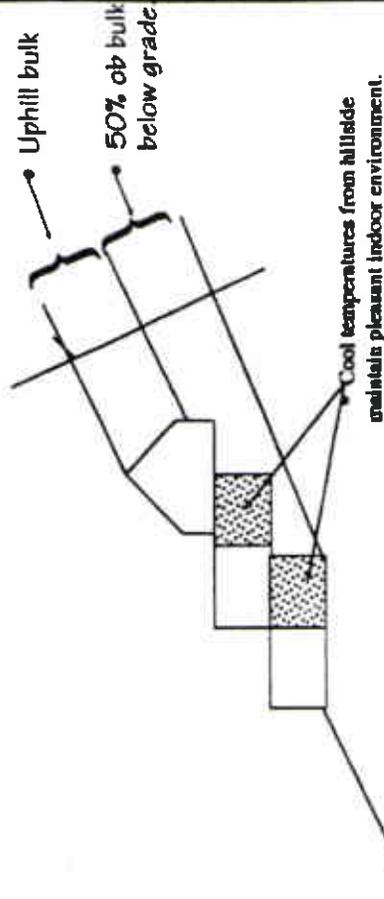
**NO**

- Sauna, workshop, billiards room wine cellar require air conditioning.



**YES**

- Cool, quiet space under ground.



- Shops, billiards, storage, halls closets, wine cellar. Space is cooled naturally by being placed into the hillside.

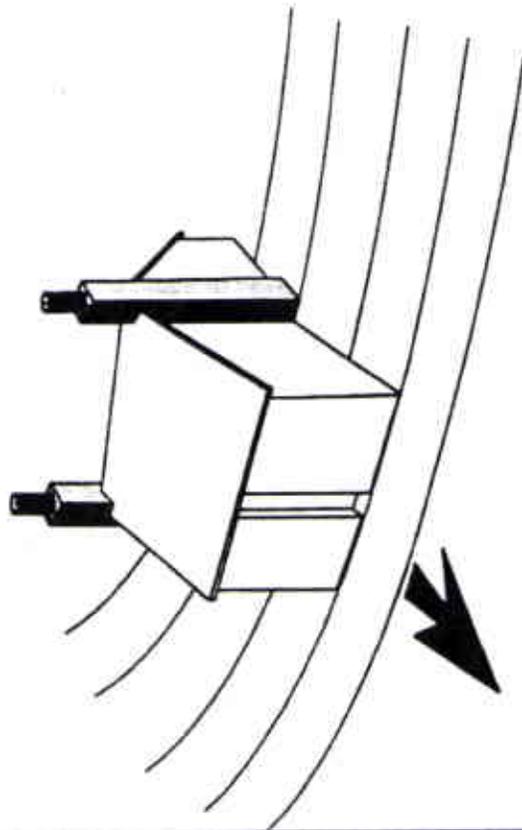
*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

**Principal 10: Balance structure's horizontal elements with vertical accent elements like stairs or chimneys. Avoid single form solutions to the building envelope.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G1-P10**

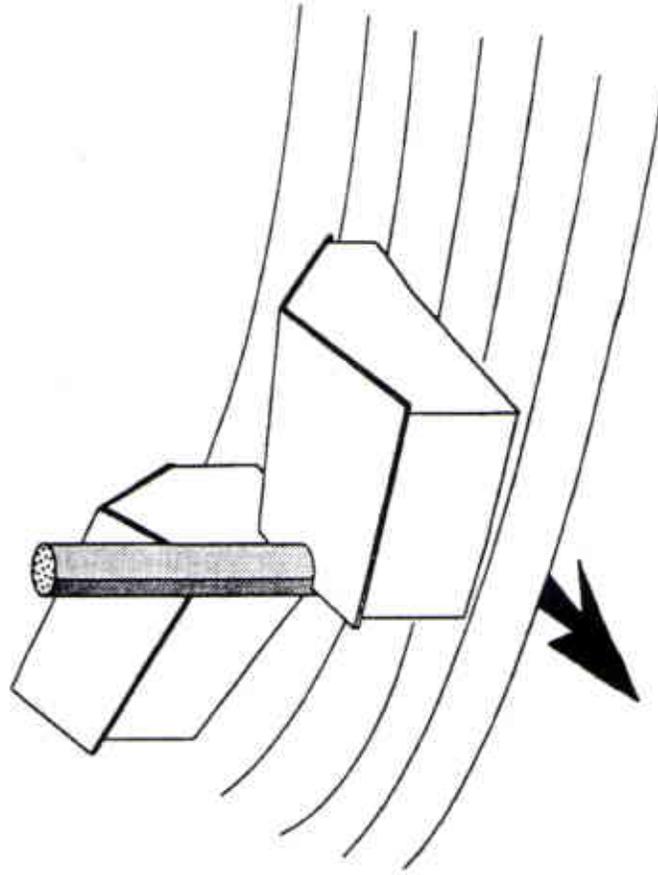
**NO**

- Large "colonial" on a steep hill is inappropriate to the site.



**YES**

- Broken-up massing and more natural "flow" of structures blends in with the topography of the site (see H. Richardson, Frank Lloyd Wright, Green & Green).



*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

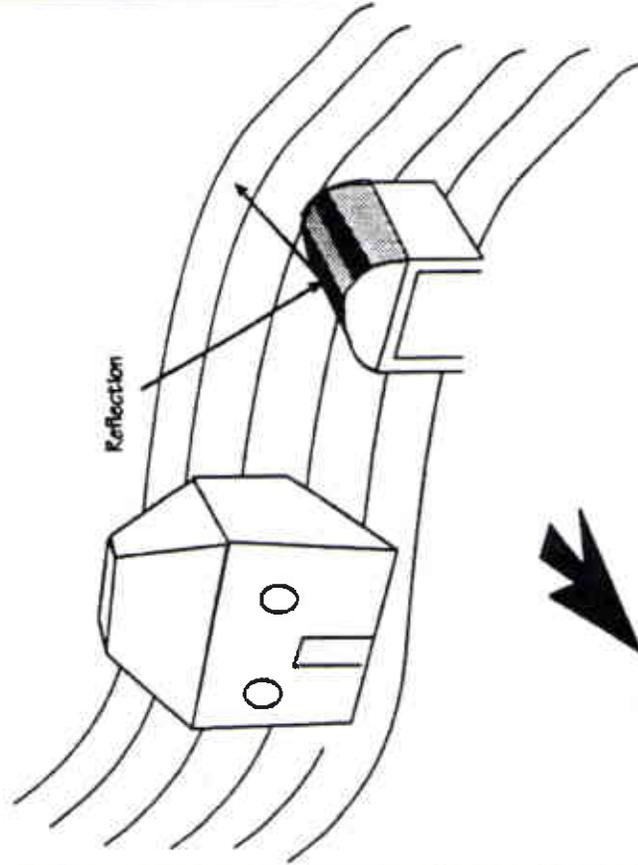
**GOAL 2 To reduce the general environmental and visual impacts of new dwellings in the neighborhoods. Designs and siting of new buildings should respect existing structures and other features of the site and surrounding properties.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P1**

**Principal 1: Do not use colors, textures, materials and forms which will attract attention by not relating to other elements. Remember, the hillside, seen as a whole, is a texture of dwellings, trees and open spaces. No one dwelling should stand out.**

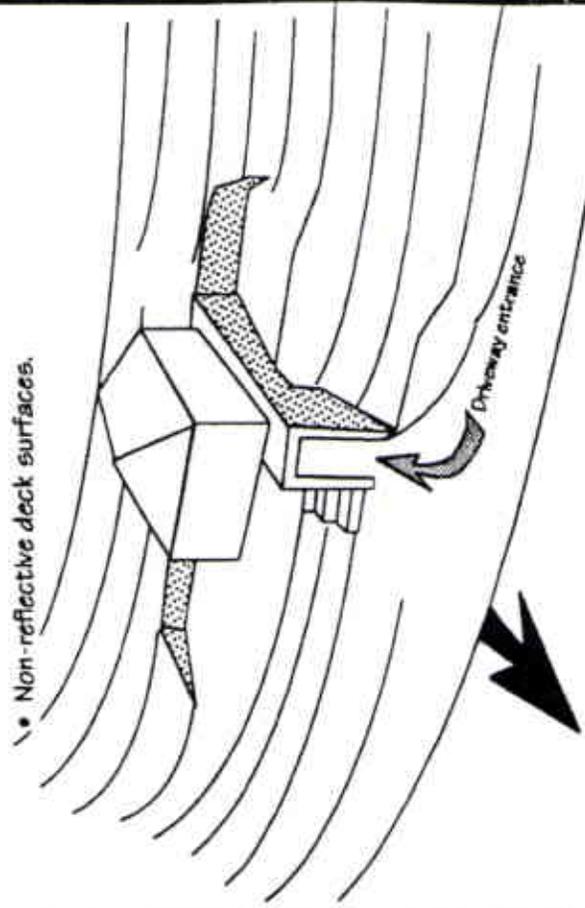
NO

- Avoid bright colors reflective materials



YES

- Native stone, earth-toned brick or textured concrete retaining walls.
- Natural, earth-tone shingles (non-flammable) and non-reflective solar panels.
- Wood-stained medium-value, earth-tones.
- Non-reflective deck surfaces.



*These graphics illustrate design principles and are NOT to scale.*

**Principal 2: Do not use large expanses of a single material on walls, roofs or paved areas. Remember, most dwellings are seen from below and above by others higher on the hillside.**

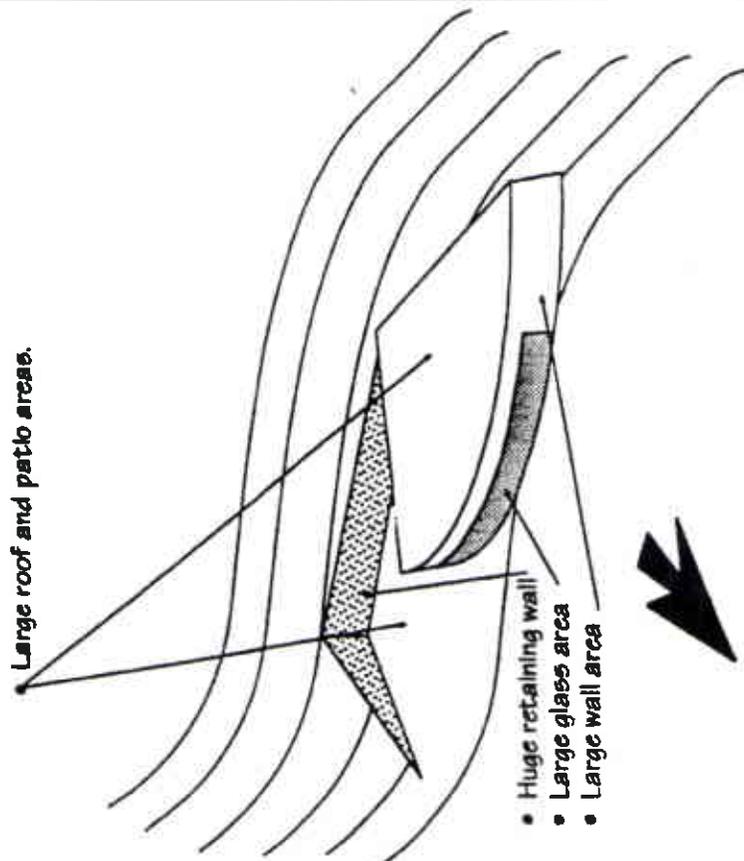
**Suggestions: Maximum of 300 square feet of any single material in any plane. Areas larger than 300 square feet sinds out on the hillside.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P2\***

**NO**

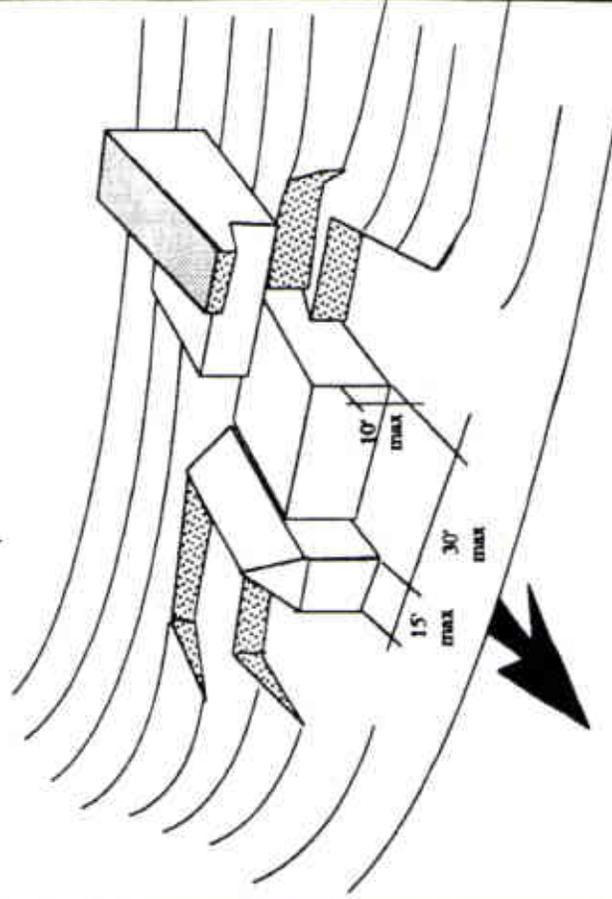
Large roof and patio areas.

- Huge retaining wall
- Large glass area
- Large wall area



**YES**

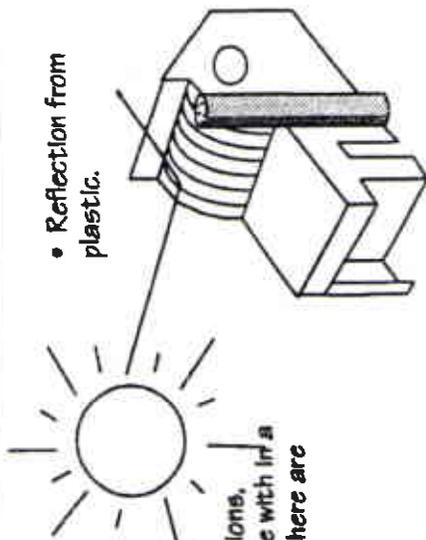
- Large roof areas broken up.
- Retaining wall broken up.
- Terraced patios and decks.
- Wall areas broken up.



*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

### Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines Figure: G2-P3

**Principal 3: Use native and natural materials which blend with the hillside where possible. Use synthetic or compound materials (concrete, stucco, metal, plastics and glass) with moderation and care.**

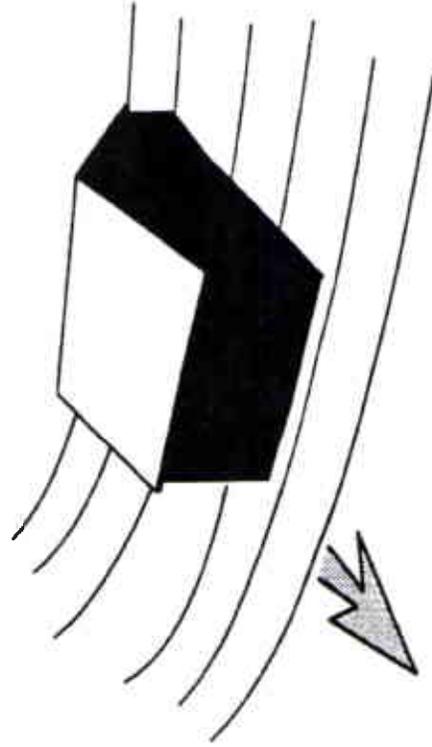


NO

• Architect's Note: This may look great in architectural publications, but it is difficult to live with in a neighborhood unless there are many such buildings.

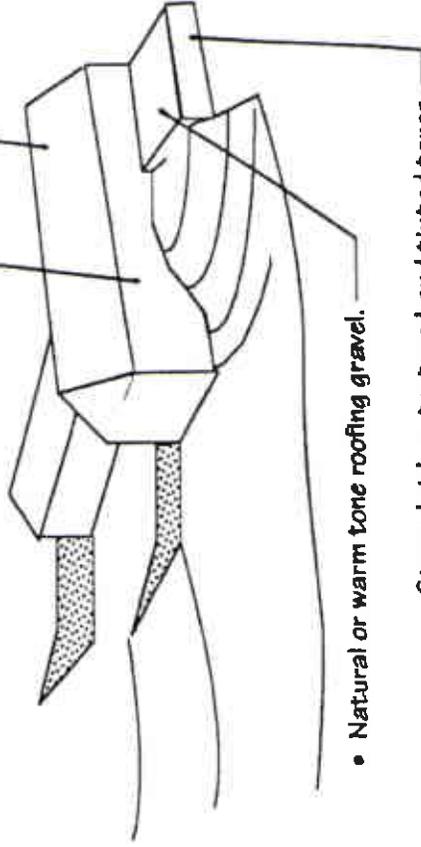
• Reflection from plastic.

• Very dark or very light painted structures stand out on hills which are usually dried native grasses and brush with light to medium values.



YES

• Wood or natural tone composition shingles  
• Natural wood stained, light earth-tones.

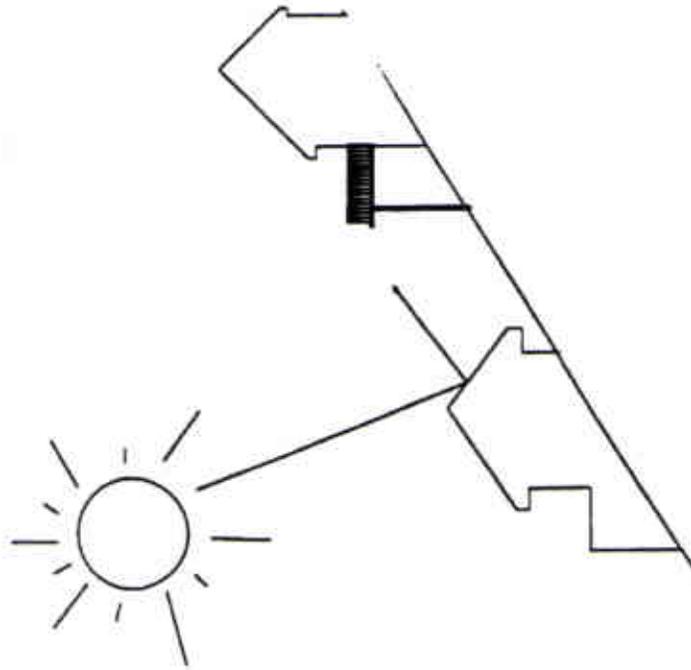


• Natural or warm tone roofing gravel.  
• Stone, brick or textured and tinted tones.

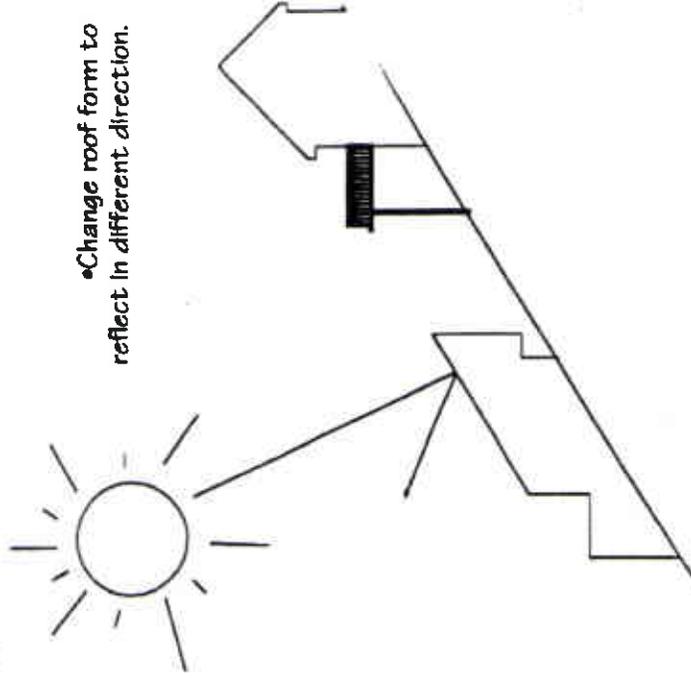
**Principle 4: Use great care with reflective materials and exposed undersides of structures. Glass, aluminum and plastics all reflect light and can cause great annoyance for neighbors. Dark anodized aluminum is best. Where possible, use non-reflective glass or plastic for skylights. Control building forms so reflections do not strike other residences.**

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P4**

NO



YES

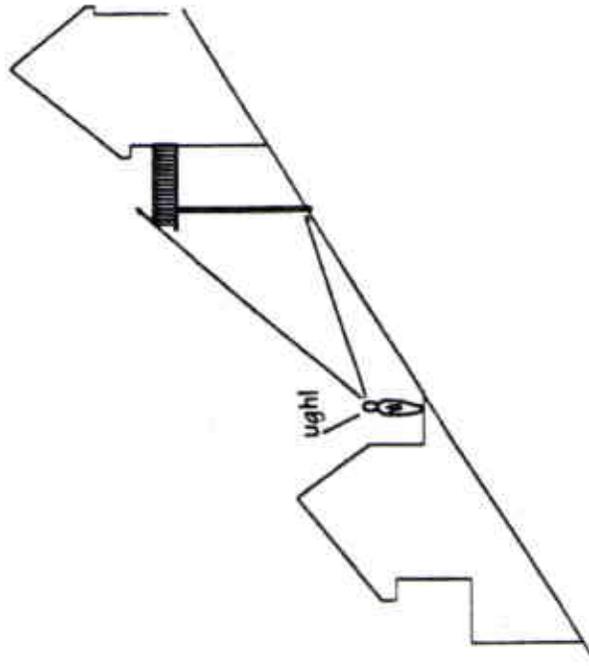


**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines  
Figure: G2-P5**

**Principal 5: Avoid unsightly exposed structural and mechanical elements unless well-integrated into the design concept. Exposed structures are eyesores for people lower downhill.**

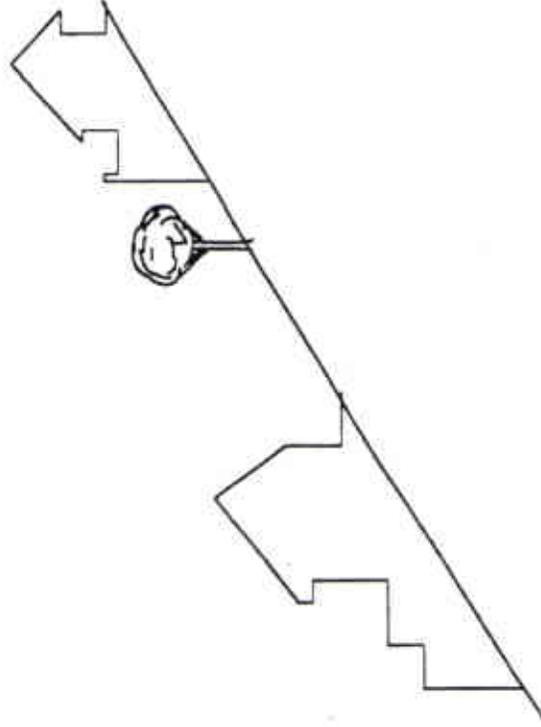
**NO**

- Poorly conceived lateral bracing, deck joists, plumbing drains, etc. can be unsightly.



**YES**

- Use foundation screening and closure of exposed structure or mechanical work unless well-integrated with the design concept.

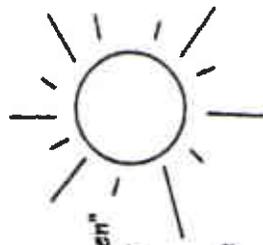


**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P6**

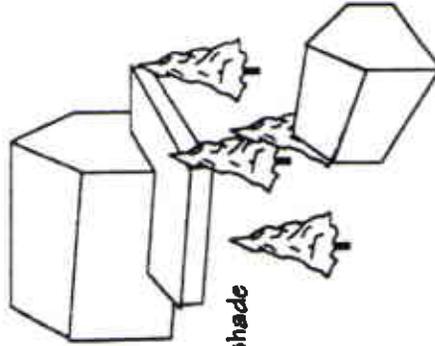
**Principal 6: Use native and natural materials which blend with the hillside where possible. Use synthetic or compound materials (concrete, stucco, metal, plastics and glass) with moderation and care.**

**A. Install landscaping with foresight.**

**NO**

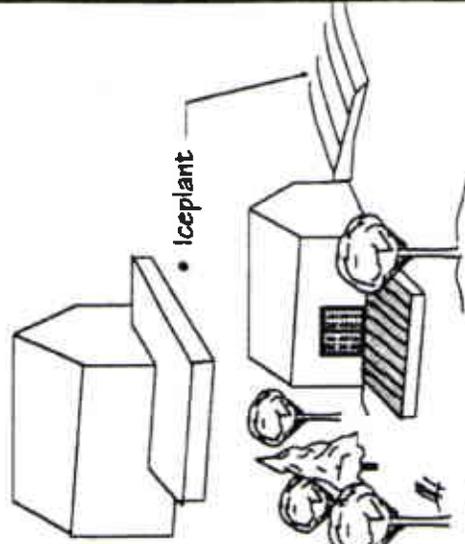


- Fast-growing trees planted for privacy "screen" grow into a view block for neighbors.
- Fast-growing trees die within a short period of time.
- Trees planted too close to dwelling become possible root-expansion and fire problems.
- House receives no sun shade benefits from trees.



**YES**

- Fast-growing, low-height trees provide privacy but maintain views.
- Mix fast-growing and slow-growing trees to screen house from the hot sun.
- Automatic irrigation systems are essential for good maintenance of landscaping and even for fire protection.
- Specimen tree provides beautiful object to look at and becomes part of the view, not something which obstructs the view.

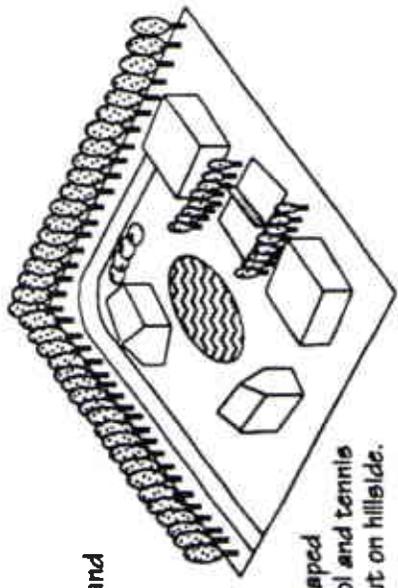


- Well-covered planting and patios help reduce fire hazards

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P6 b/c**

**B. Avoid landscaping entire large parcels of land. Instead, plan small discrete courts and patios of well-landscaped areas, leaving larger areas native and natural.**

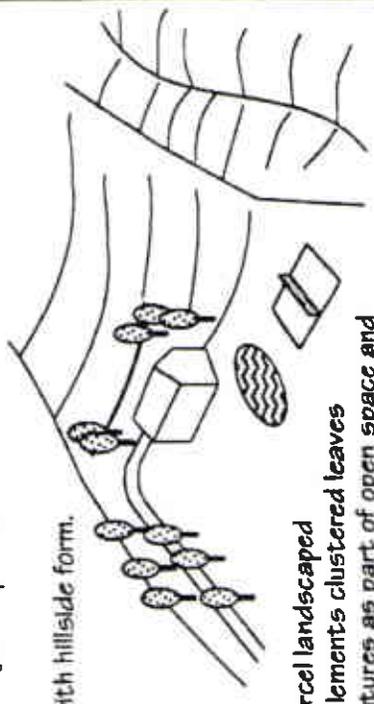
**NO**



- Huge maintenance and irrigation problem.
- Large parcel landscaped with out-buildings, pool and tennis court which stands out on hillside.

**YES**

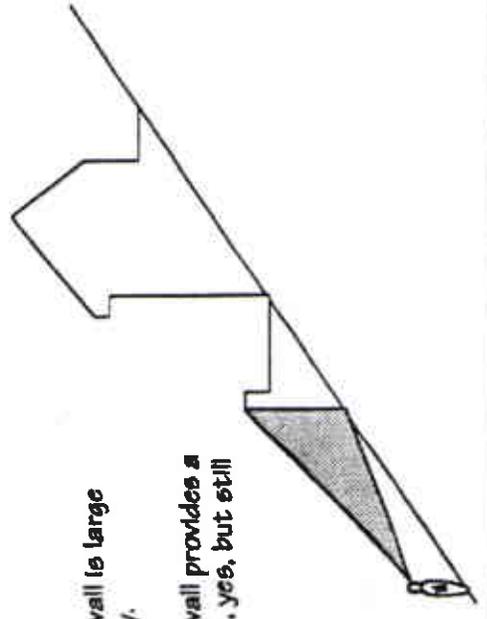
- Smaller maintenance and irrigation problem.



- Blends with hillside form.
- Large parcel landscaped with major elements clustered leaves natural features as part of open space and does not attract undue attention.

**C. Use earth berms and land forms to enhance dwelling, minimize impact conceal unsightly elements and parking lots.**

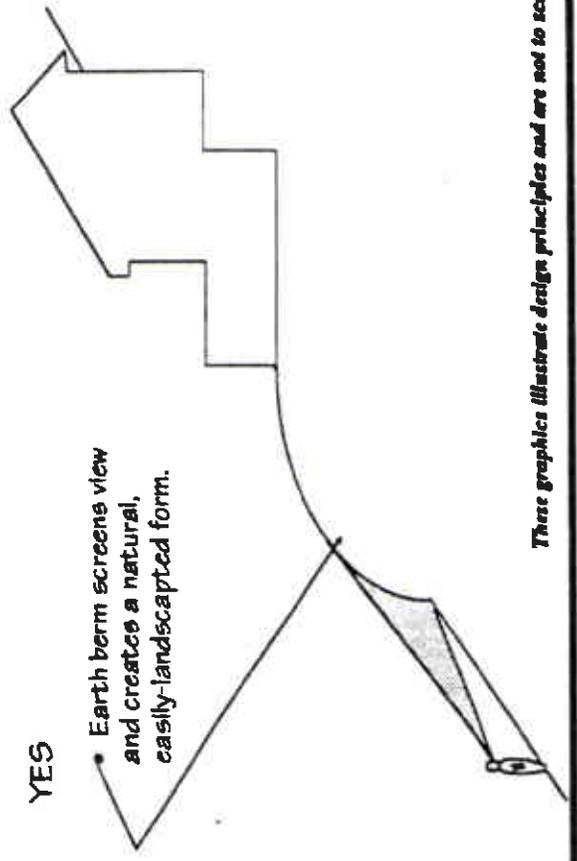
**NO**



- Retaining wall is large and unsightly.
- Retaining wall provides a visual screen, yes, but still unsightly.

**YES**

- Earth berm screens view and creates a natural, easily-landscaped form.

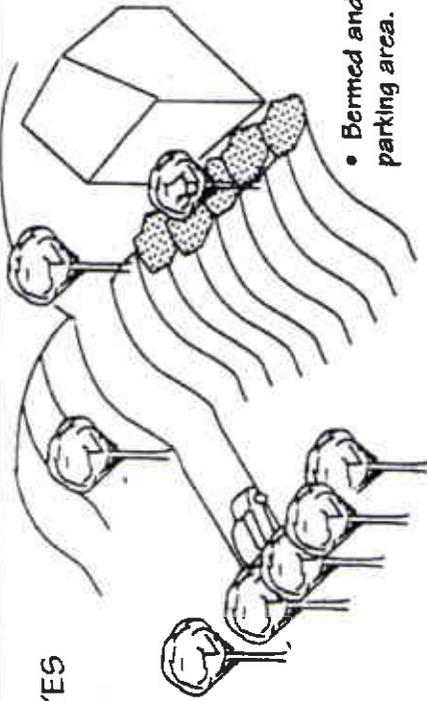


*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*

D. Drought-resistant trees and bushes plus natural vegetation should be used wherever possible. Certain fast-growing trees (Monterey Pine, Blue Gum Eucalyptus) are discouraged unless they are planted with the concept of fast growth - later removal by the owner in conjunction with slower growing varieties. Some trees are particularly susceptible to fire (pines and eucalyptus) and should never be planted near dwellings, while some vegetation (iceplant) is extremely fire resistant. Some trees are desirable, albeit, slow growing (California Live Oak). These should be mixed with other planting since they provide beautiful, drought-resistant, low-maintenance shade when mature.

**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P6 d**

YES

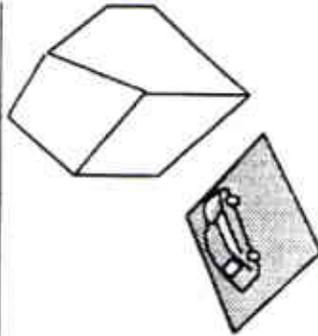


- Bermed and screened parking area.

- Planting used to create shade in parking lot. Reduces heat buildup and glare from cars.

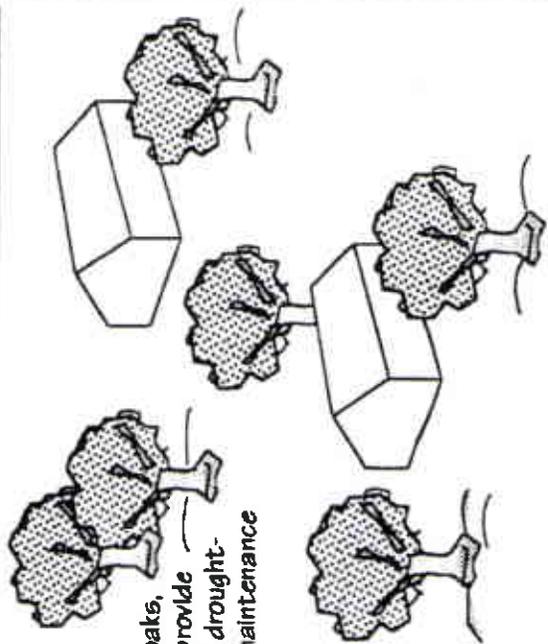
NO

- Unsightly parking lot.



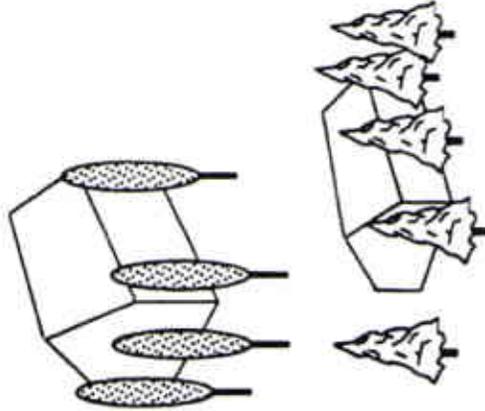
NO

- Poorly planned landscaping of fast-growing pines and eucalyptus will eventually block view for distant dwellings next door and for even one's own home



YES

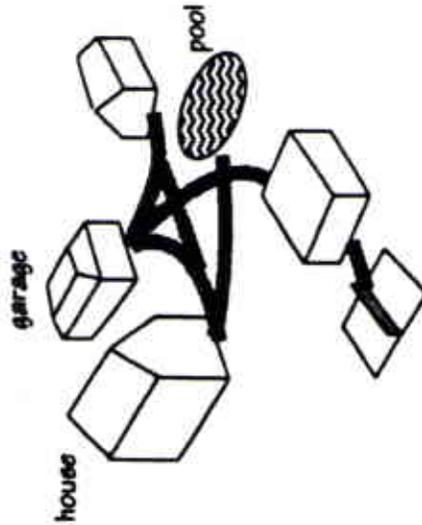
- Well-suited oaks, when mature, provide beauty, shade, drought-tolerant, low-maintenance landscaping.



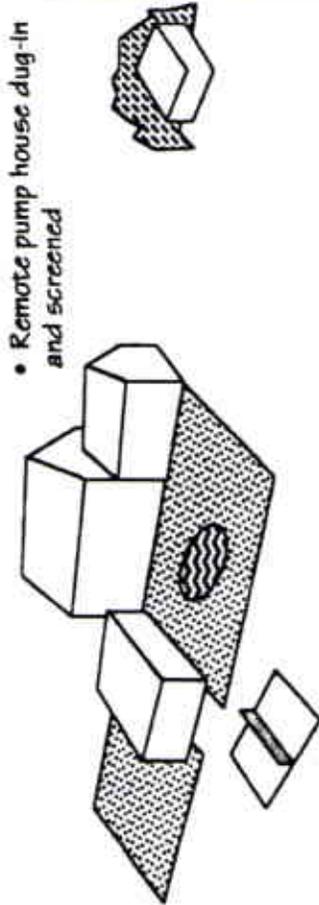
**Principle 7: Remotely located outbuildings are discouraged.**

Swimming pool houses, pump houses, too sheds, garages and other structures remote from the principal dwelling make the effective built and general amount of building on a site seem larger. If possible, these facilities should be in the main dwelling, or, if remote, they should be dug into the hillside or substantially screened with berms, plantings, fences, etc. Note: This is not meant to discourage cluster plans with courtyards between garage and dwellings.

NO



YES



• Remote pump house dug-in and screened

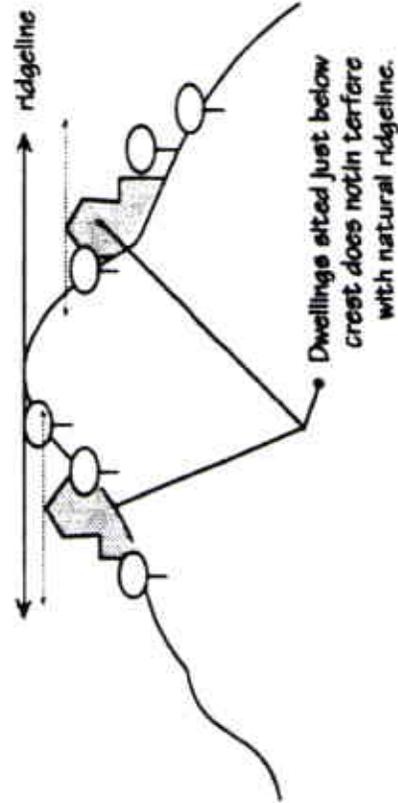
**Alhambra Valley Specific Plan - Design Guidelines**  
**Figure: G2-P7**

**Principle 8: Site buildings so they don't stand out.**

Do not build on crest of knolls, ridgelines or other visually prominent locations. Remember all structures on the hill are part of a rich texture of buildings, landscaping and open space. No one dwelling should be exceptionally prominent.



• The "egotrip" buildings in prominent locations can be seen detrimentally from everywhere.



Dwellings sited just below crest does not interfere with natural ridgeline.

*These graphics illustrate design principles and are not to scale.*