Valley Village Architectural Design Standards

Vision Statement: To bring about a higher level of architectural quality in new buildings in Valley Village by establishing design standards administered by the Planning Department staff after review and recommendation by the Neighborhood Council. This is to ensure new commercial and multi-family buildings have superior architectural quality and an overall unity so that architectural styles utilized will enhance the character of the community.

Special thanks to:
City of Los Angeles

Neighborhood Council Valley Village,
Valley Village Homeowners Association,
Valley Village Business, Residential and Education Leaders

Valley Village Vision Committee:
Tony Braswell, Donna Gooley, Ginny Hatfield, Sandy Hubbard (chair), Suzanne Lewis, Mikie Maloney, Dale Liebowitz-Neglia, Tom Paterson, Breice Reiner, Peter Sanchez, Marc Woersching

EDITED BY: Sandy Hubbard • PHOTOGRAPHED BY: Marc Woersching

COVER: The rich detailing, including pillars at the entryway, sloped tile roofs, arches and light color shade of the Mediterranean architectural style, along with thoughtful landscaping make this building visually interesting and extremely appealing.

Purpose

The purpose of this book is to articulate preferred styles that shape community design guidelines and standards within Valley Village in order to assist site planners and designers in guiding projects toward design criteria for future multi-family and commercial development.

The intent is to enhance the community's overall value and appearance and to achieve legacies of well-designed architecture. We recognize that design professionals, architects, and urban planners are trained to strive for creative excellence. The examples detailed within this book are not intended to deter other creative solutions.

Valley Village Specific Plan

Background of Zoning-Based Planning

When city planning began in the United States in the early 20th century, its main practitioners were architects and landscape architects and the focus was initially on design and aesthetics. This was the era of the "City Beautiful Movement" inspired by "White City" that was the main feature of the 1893 Worlds Fair in Chicago. The emphasis of the movement was on parks, grand boulevards and elegant, harmoniously designed civic centers, to provide a relief from the often gritty and ugly industrial cities of the late 19th century.

However, starting in the 1920s, city planning evolved into a zoning-based system, due to the need for a regulatory device to prevent incompatible land uses and regulate density and height. During the 1920s zoning ordinances were enacted in most large- and medium-sized American cities, encouraged by a model zoning-enabling ordinance prepared by the U.S. Commerce Department under the direction of Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover. That same decade zoning ordinances were held to be constitutional by the Supreme Court in the 1926 case *City of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty*. Since then, zoning codes based on the type held to be legal by the Euclid case have been referred to in planning circles as "Euclidian zoning."

The enactment of zoning ordinances was supported by most business interests who were willing to have some infringement of property rights in order to protect property values. Zoning ordinances provide certainty into the future against unpredictable, undesirable change. However, they do not address the

architectural design of buildings or aesthetics as these were not deemed by the courts in the 1920s, and for several decades after, to be an essential governmental interest, regulated under the "police power." Design and aesthetics were considered to be luxury items for the wealthy only and were left to be determined by the economic marketplace.

When development first started in Valley Village in the 1920s and 1930s, it was regulated by Euclidian zoning that dealt only with land use, density, height, setbacks and parking. Architecture was unregulated.

Thus, as Valley Village developed, the buildings constructed had different levels of architectural quality and different architectural styles. This is most evident in the design of commercial and multi-family structures along the major streets.

Our "vision" stylebook seeks to endorse a consistently high level of architectural quality and an overall unity of architectural styles, so that buildings are not nondescript or uninspiring, and do not clash with each other in style.

We will also partner the stylebook with the preparation of an urban design plan, illustrations included, for the commercial section of Laurel Canyon Boulevard in order to create an attractive, pedestrian-oriented business district for Valley Village similar to Tujunga Village in Studio City.

--Marc Woersching

Architectural Quality

Preferred multi-family residential buildings are presented showing various architectural styles including Mediterranean style, various ornate/non-Mediterranean styles, buildings with a variety of styles (displaying mansard roofs and art deco detailing, Moorish styling and stone facing on the façade), and buildings with an East Coast look (wood frame exteriors in Cape Cod and Colonial styles).

Commercial buildings with high architectural quality are displayed in traditional and modern styles.

Contributing to design quality are buildings having pedestrian orientation by being placed next to the sidewalk with parking spaces behind the building rather than between the building and the sidewalk. Modest setbacks from the sidewalk are acceptable provided they are landscaped with some decorative paving.

Also, lighter, creamy, pastel colors look better than darker shades. Darker shades should be limited to only a portion of a building's façade.

On the last photo page, we have depicted a small sampling of multi-family residential and commercial architecture that we find less desirable. These pictures show the undesirable characteristics of flat walls, flat roofs, boxy shapes, windows lacking window frames, exteriors that are often constructed of stucco, non-pleasing or bland color schemes, or are structures with sign or billboard clutter.

Buildings that are overly large or tall, making them out-of-scale with adjacent low-rise buildings, should also be avoided.

Preferred Multi-family Residential Styles and Trends will:

Create a pedestrian friendly environment.

Develop use of open space in individual projects, reflective of the garden-style apartments being replaced by contemporary infill projects.

Create and maintain a "village" feel... blending of various lifestyles including single-family and multi-family.

Preserve the remaining single-family homes by not encroaching into these areas with overly-large buildings.

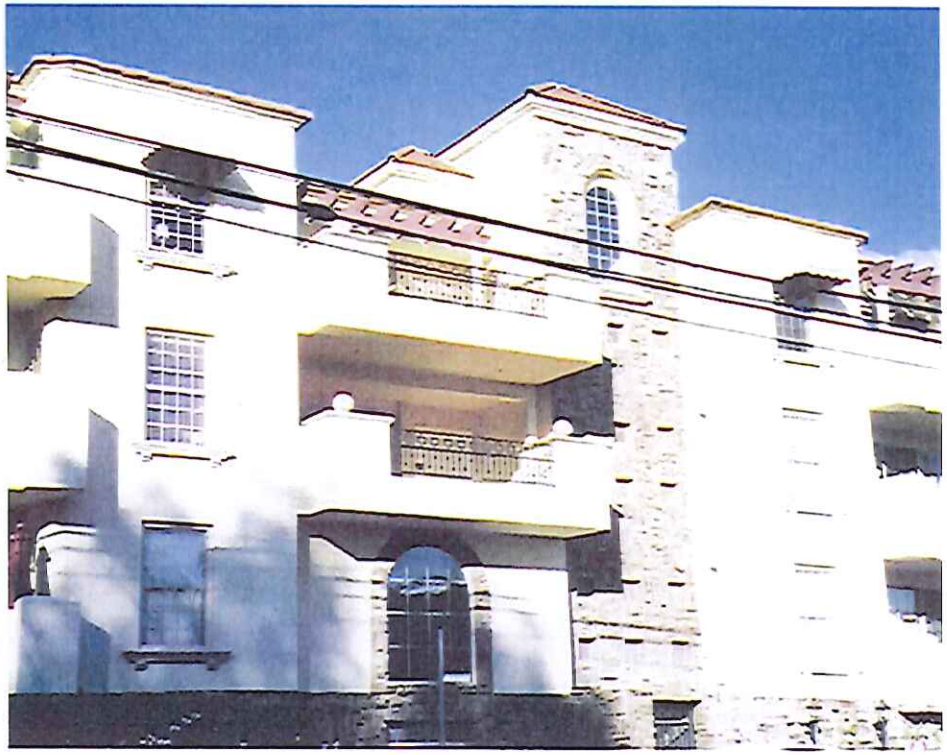
Develop Senior Housing near functional public transportation.

This attractive design features sloped mansard roofs composed of wooden shingles that have a French influence along with facade variations, open balconies with railings and chimneys that provide for a varied roof line, a sandy, light gray color shade and high quality building materials.

Mediterranean Styles

RIGHT: Sloped tile roofs, arches, façade variations, a wooden trellis and the light color shade are features of the Mediterranean style.

BELOW: Neighboring mediterranean-style buildings feature sloped tile roofs, arches and façade variations.



LEFT: Mediterranean-style development has sloped tile roofs, arches, façade variations, open railings on its balconies and light colors.

RIGHT: Attractive Mediterranean-style variant with stone facing on part of façade, light color shade.

Cape Cod and Colonial Styles

RIGHT: Cape Cod-style variant with quality materials in arches, facade variations and light/dark color scheme.

BELOW: Attractive features for this smaller unit are the Colonial-style pillars, window frames, and grassy courtyard.

ABOVE: Attractive features for these smaller units display Colonial-style white wood/brick facade exterior and pillars under roof overhang; courtyard, sloped roofs, window frames, light colors; both are above-average in architectural quality.

The community benefits from attractive moderate-income housing, and building sizes easily transition into single-family neighborhood.

Traditional Styles

The rich detailing, façade variations (including a curve in the façade at the corners), open balconies, wood trellis and light color shades enhance these buildings.

LEFT: This building has the fine detailing and the roof cornice of a traditional architectural style, a light color shade and quality building materials.

BELOW: While too large for its location and with a bolder color scheme, this building does have detailing, façade variations and open balconies that add to its character.

LEFT: Art deco-style with façade variations, architectural element extending beyond roof, and lighter color. Visually interesting as well as attractive. **RIGHT:** This building has a darker color shade and architectural features that give it a slightly Moorish look. As with the other buildings, it has the rich detailing and facade variations that make it above average in architectural quality.

Preservation Buildings

LEFT: Commercial shops opposite Post Office have distinct Swiss-style sloped roofs and gingerbread façade detailing.

BELOW: Retail shops have Swiss-style sloped roofs and detailing, next to turreted Post Office with slightly medieval look.

Desirable Commercial will:

Create visually interesting buildings.

Create corridors of specialized commercial uses:
* Artisan businesses in the Laurel Canyon corridor between Magnolia and Chandler.
* Medical businesses along Magnolia between Laurel Canyon and Coldwater Blvd.
* Boutique businesses at the intersections of Whitsett/Magnolia and Riverside/Colfax.
* Restaurant corridors on Laurel Canyon and on Riverside.

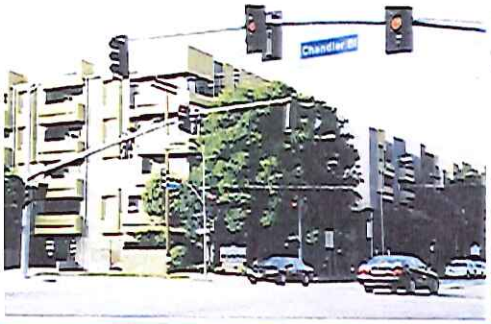
Create pedestrian-oriented frontages, placing sufficient parking behind or underneath the building.

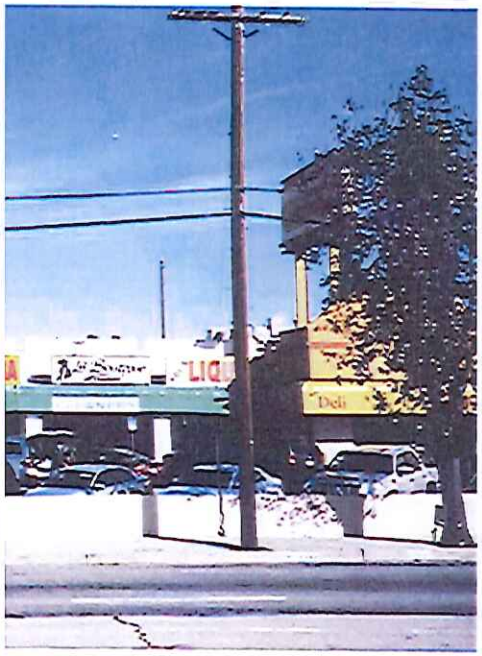
OPPOSITE: This low-rise office building has very rich wood detailing on its façade and stained glass windows, which gives it a style similar to English Tudor. This is in marked contrast to most commercial buildings in the Valley which have mostly stucco or glass façades.

This mid-rise office building has a sloped roof, portions of its facade that extend outward with bay windows and steep, pointed roofs above the bay windows that extend further above the roofline. These features result in the building having a Victorian architectural style which is rare for the Valley and results in it having a high level of architectural quality.

This Modernist-style mid-rise office building uses high-quality building materials along with attractive brown glass and textured concrete façade with an interesting curved section at the corner.

LEFT: Sloped roofs and wood detailing on its façade gives it a rustic look. RIGHT: Recently remodeled to give it a new facade with a greater amount of detailing and variations, and a color scheme with more contrast, so that it now has above average rather than average architectural quality, especially for a fast food restaurant.





Characteristics to avoid in future developments: Dated color scheme, boxy structure, out-of-scale development, flat walls, flat roof, lack of articulation in roof or façade, enclosed balconies, aluminum sided windows or windows without framing, inadequate provision for telecommunication items, aboveground utilities, buildings without distinct architectural style, exterior walkways, unattractive landscaping, parking that is inadequate, partially aboveground, carport or in front of development.

Other considerations

Attractive landscaping should always be incorporated into a project, in a manner that enhances the neighboring area.

To enhance the pedestrian-oriented nature of walking by multi-family and commercial structures, parking garages should be built as underground structures, not extending above grade.

Unsightly overhead utilities are along all the major streets of Valley Village, and should be placed underground at every possible opportunity.

Some residential areas would benefit from installing retro lighting fixtures like those in the Agnes/Weddington blocks, north of Magnolia, enhancing the "village" characteristic.

Valley Village has a dearth of public parks; development of open space adjacent to or developed within all new projects is encouraged.

Laurel Canyon projects should contribute to a softening of the visually commercial look of the area. Development of a center median with trees can contribute to this goal, as well as distinct façade and frontage elevation changes.

Systematic planting of street trees along east/west corridors of Riverside, Magnolia, Chandler, and Burbank and north/south streets of Colfax, Laurel Canyon, and Whitsett should become a priority project.

Aesthetic harm caused by off-premise outdoor advertising signs clutter should be phased out during future development, without additional billboards being erected within Valley Village. On-premise signage should be developed in an aesthetically pleasing manner. In both cases, sign and billboard clutter should be reduced.