



City of San Ramon

Architectural Review Guidelines for Residential Additions, Improvements, and New Constructions

(Zoning Ordinance Section D6-22)

July 17, 2007

I. Introduction:

The City of San Ramon provides these guidelines to homeowners who wish to remodel or add to an existing house. The following is an overview of Architectural Review requirements, design review criteria, design review process summary, and a list of required items for Architectural Review applications.

If you have any questions and concerns regarding your home improvement projects, Planning Services Division is available at (925) 973-2560.

II. Architectural Review Requirements:

Additions and exterior improvements to your home require Architectural Review and approval by the Zoning Administrator prior to issuance of building permits. Architectural Review is required to verify not only compliance with the Zoning Ordinance, but also aesthetic quality of the proposed improvements. A separate Architectural Review application is required unless the Zoning Administrator determines that Architectural Review can be conducted in association with a Building Permit review. There are two types of Architectural Review processes depending on the magnitude of the proposed improvements.

A. Administrative Architectural Review

An administrative Architectural Review application is required for the residential improvements listed below. If a proposed improvement is determined, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, to be minor in nature and does not cause a significant visual impact, an administrative Architectural Review is conducted in association with the Building Permit plan check review process.

- 1) Additions to existing single-family dwellings.
 - a. Single-story additions to existing single-family dwelling units; and
 - b. Second story additions to existing two-story single-family dwelling units.
- 2) Exterior modifications and repairs (e.g., balconies, doors, exterior siding, skylights, solar panels, windows, etc.);



- 3) Architectural projections into yards (e.g., bay windows, fireplace chimneys, stairs or landings, etc.);
- 4) Accessory structures (e.g., arbors, balconies, carports, decks, gazebos, greenhouses, patio covers and enclosures, storage sheds, trellises, etc.);
- 5) Decorative mail boxes and columns located in front yards;
- 6) Retaining walls; and
- 7) Good neighbor fence that is taller than six feet.

The Zoning Administrator could defer any Administrative Architectural Review projects to the Architectural Review Board for their review if the proposed improvements were determined, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, to be major in nature and/or would cause a significant visual impact.

B. Review by the Architectural Review Board (ARB)

Other residential improvements not listed above in Section A are subject to the review by the ARB. The ARB will review the application at a scheduled meeting and make a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator for the final decision. The following is a sample of improvements that would require review by the ARB:

- 1) Two-story additions to existing single-story single-family dwelling units;
- 2) New single-family dwelling units;
- 3) Second story additions that result in creation of a second unit; and
- 4) Major improvements on the front elevation of single-family dwelling units

III. Design Review Process Summary:

The applicant (the home owner or an authorized agent) needs to file an Architectural Review application with the Planning Services Division unless noted otherwise.

A. Administrative Architectural Review in association with a Building Permit review:

If an administrative Architectural Review is conducted in association with the Building Permit plan check review process, the project proponent does not need to file an Architectural Review application with the Planning Services Division. The project proponent, however, needs to file a Building Permit application with the Building and Safety Division in accordance with the Building Permit Application Guidelines. The guidelines can be found at <http://www.ci.san-ramon.ca.us/bldgsubmit/sfd.htm>



B. Review by the Architectural Review Board (ARB):

Project proponent files an Architectural Review Application with the Planning Services Division. Planning Services Division staff prepares a staff report and schedules the application review by the Architectural Review Board at an ARB meeting. The ARB meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month. After reviewing the proposed improvements, the ARB provides comments to the applicant and makes recommendation to the Zoning Administrator for project approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the project. Upon determination of a complete application by staff, the review process takes 3 to 5 weeks depending on the timing of the application submittal.

IV. Design Review Criteria:

The residential development policy of the City of San Ramon is to employ creative site design and architectural quality that blends with the aesthetic characteristics of each location and its surroundings, and incorporate a 360-degree design element*. Architectural design compatibility with the existing structure and the structures in the neighborhood are the keys to preserve and enhance the City's aesthetic quality. The following design issues are considered during the application review:

1) Bulk and Height of Structures;

Well designed homes in San Ramon often have variety of indentations, projections, and height variations. A monotonous home design is generally not well-received. A large blank wall with a few windows should be avoided.

2) Windows

The size of windows should be proportionate to the structure and architectural features such as dormers and gables. Window and window trim design should be consistent with the architectural style. Locations of windows should be sensitive to minimize potential privacy invasion to the neighboring homes.

3) Architectural Details

Architectural details such as stone veneer façade, window shutters, and window flower boxes are encouraged to enrich the quality of the home. Any architectural details should be consistent with the architectural style.

4) Materials, Textures, and Colors

Selections of finishing materials such as walls, siding, and roofing and their colors are as critical as the rest of the architectural design. Most common approach to selecting the finishing materials and colors is to match the existing conditions. The finishing materials and their colors shall also be consistent with the architectural style.

(*360-degree design: An architectural design that relates to all adjacent buildings, including those on the side and rear as well as those facing the building.)



V. Required Items for Architectural Review:

A. For Administrative Review in conjunction with the Building Permit plan check process:

If an administrative Architectural Review would take place in conjunction with the Building Permit plan check process, please follow the Building Permit Application Guidelines.

<http://www.ci.san-ramon.ca.us/bldgsubmit/sfd.htm>

B. For Architectural Review Applications:

Regardless of the extent of the proposed addition and alteration, the following items are required for Architectural Review by the ARB:

1) General Requirements:

- Complete Architectural Review Application Form
- Application Fee
- Property Owner's Authorization Letter if the applicant is different from the property owner.
- Project Description
- Graphic Quality: Plans prepared by a licensed architect, engineer, or other professional as appropriate are highly desirable. Poorly prepared plans and plans lacking necessary information will not be accepted for submittal.
- Number of submittal and plan size
(3 sets of 24" x 26"; 8 sets of 11" x 17"; and 1 set of 8.5" x 11")

2) Graphic Information:

Cover Sheet including:

- Project Address;
- Property Owner's name, address & phone number
- Project Design Professional's name, address, phone number, title, and registration information
- Project Description

Site Plan including:

- North Arrow and Scale
- All property lines with distances and bearings
- Setback distances from all existing and proposed building to the property lines (Setback distance is a shortest distance between the foundation of the building or structure and the property lines.)
- Dimensions of the building footprint
- All existing structures on the property such as arbor, deck, shed structure, fences and walls
- Identification of all streets and right-of-ways adjacent to the site, any easements, and visible utilities on site
- Location of driveways, curb cuts and site entrances
- Topographical information as determined by the Zoning Administrator



Existing Floor Plan including:

- Diagram of all rooms and closets on all floors with labels of room types including garage space
- All window and door locations
- All utility cabinets such as water heater, furnace, and air conditioning unit

Existing Roof Plan including:

- Roof ridge lines and roof slopes

Existing Elevations accurately showing the entire length of each side including:

- All windows and doors including trims
- Labels of all exterior materials such as sidings, walls, and roofing materials
- All architectural design elements such as shutters, awnings, and window flower boxes

Proposed Floor Plan showing both the existing conditions to remain and all the proposed improvements including:

- Sizes of all windows and doors
- Labels of all room types and dimensions of all rooms
- All appliances and toilet & bath units

Proposed Roof Plan including:

- Both the proposed roof ridge lines and the existing ridge lines to remain.

Proposed Elevations showing the entire length of each side of the proposed and existing conditions including:

- All windows and doors including trims
- Labels of all exterior materials such as sidings, walls, and roofing materials
- All proposed and existing architectural design elements such as shutters, awnings, and window flower boxes

Proposed Section showing the entire length of the proposed and existing conditions as determined by the Zoning Administrator

Color and Material Sample Board including

- The proposed paint color samples
- Samples of decorative architectural features such as stone or brick details

C. Graphic Standards:

Scale

- For Site Plan (Plot Plan):
1/16" = 1'-0" (1:192) or 1"=10'-0" (1:120)
- For Floor Plan and Roofing Plan:
1/8"=1'-0" (1:96) or 1/4"= 1'-0" (1:48)



Lettering Sizes

- Minimum Size: 10pt. for computer generated plans and 1/8” for hand drafted plans

Line Quality

- Proposed Improvements = Dark Solid Lines 
- Existing To Remain = Medium Solid Lines 
- Existing To Be Removed = Medium Dash Lines 
- Property Lines = Dark Property Lines 

VI. Sample Conditions of Approval

The following is a list of standard conditions of approval typically applicable to most of the home improvements and addition projects:

- 1) Prior to any construction, the applicant shall submit building plans and obtain all necessary building permits from the Building and Safety Services.
- 2) The building permit plans for the construction authorized by the Architectural Review approval shall be in substantial conformance with the project plans filed with the application unless modified by the conditions herein.
- 3) The design approval shall expire one year from the date of approval if building permits have not been issued. The applicant may apply for a one-year extension prior to the expiration of this entitlement.
- 4) The Planning Services shall review and approve all building permit plans for exterior modifications or change of uses prior to building permit issuance.
- 5) Any new improvements not shown on the approved plans shall require review and approval by the Planning Service Division prior to issuance of necessary building permits.
- 6) Any changes and modifications not identified by the conditions herein shall require review and approval the Planning Service Division prior to the issuance of necessary building permits and/or building permit revision.
- 7) The maximum number of bedrooms allowed in a residence with a two-car garage is four and that with a three-car garage is five pursuant to the Zoning Ordinance Section D3-28.
- 8) If the interior wall(s) of the existing garage would have to be reconstructed for structural reasons and if the interior dimension of the existing garage was substandard, necessary adjustments to the proposed improvements would be required to achieve the minimum standard garage size pursuant to the Section D3-35. A minimum interior dimension of a 2-car garage is 20 feet wide and 22 feet deep with a 16-foot door opening or two 9-foot door openings.

ATTACHMENTS: Examples of Site Plan, Floor Plan, Elevations, and Sections