

Friends of Squaw Valley

Recommendations to DRC Village at Squaw Valley Design Guidelines

Revised for 5/1/14 DRC Meeting

The recommendations below are in reference to the proposed Village Core Commercial district. We will comment at a later date on other zoning district guidelines, though many of these recommendations will apply in other districts also.

Building Mass and Scale

Adopted Policies and Guidelines from the Squaw Valley General Plan, Land Use Ordinance, and Design Guidelines

We first include items from the Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance (1983) and the Squaw Valley Design Guidelines (1985). These should be included in the Specific Plan Appendix B.

1. SV Design Guidelines, Building Design Guideline 1, page 21: *“Building design should compliment and harmonize with neighboring buildings.”* Height and scale are listed as 2 ways to achieve compatibility.
2. SV Design Guidelines, Building Design Guideline 3, page 21 (in part): *“A building or project should be in scale with its immediate surroundings and with the area.”*

Protection of views via restrictions on height and mass of buildings

3. The Village Commercial district text in the Squaw Valley General Plan on page 85, para 4, states that high density development may be justified but that: *“At the same time, the maintenance of the principal views of the mountain peaks and hillsides must be retained to the maximum degree possible. It is therefore intended that these regulations establish pedestrian open space requirements, floor area ratios, and open space ratios which provide the framework for a pedestrian and view oriented urban design.”*
4. SV Design Guidelines, Site Design Guideline 2, page 10: *“Buildings should be sited so that they do not interrupt the flow of the skyline as viewed from common vantage points.”*

The following guideline relates to PD zones but includes a relevant recommended finding:

5. PD projects, if they exceed 35 ft. in height must demonstrate *“That the buildings proposed will not adversely affect the view from adjoining development, nor adjoining developable land.”* (Land Use Standards 137.13, page 81, SVGP)

FoSV Recommended Design Guidelines

We now include specific recommendations being made by the Friends of Squaw Valley (FoSV) :

(Note): there have been changes made to this set of recommendations from the document sent to the DRC members prior to the April 3rd meeting. They are shown in red. Photos are also added.

Building Mass and Scale

Terminology (from Revised KSL Specific Plan)

“Passageways” are the primary pedestrian thoroughfares that interconnect main outdoor spaces and resort facilities.

“Paths” are the smaller, secondary pedestrian ways that link the passageways, terraces, plazas, and courtyards.

Guidelines/Standards Recommended by FoSV

1. **SV Design Guidelines**, Building Design Guideline 1, page 21: *“Building design should complement and harmonize with neighboring buildings.”* Height and scale are listed as 2 ways to achieve compatibility. [Restatement of #1 above.]
2. **Stepping:** The design shall consider a large building as a series of smaller modules, horizontally and vertically, with the objective being to create a street scene with significant texture in building facades rather than long buildings with no variation and to achieve a human scale in height adjacent to walkways and plazas.

To this end, buildings shall be “stair stepped” to reduce the appearance of bulk. *In zoning ordinances, this is a concept called “sky exposure plane”, which these ordinances use to make sure that streets and open space have adequate light and air. Buildings are required to step back behind a theoretical inclined plane. For the same reason, stepping is used in lower density districts to limit the height of outer walls above which there must be a step back before rising to the permitted height.*

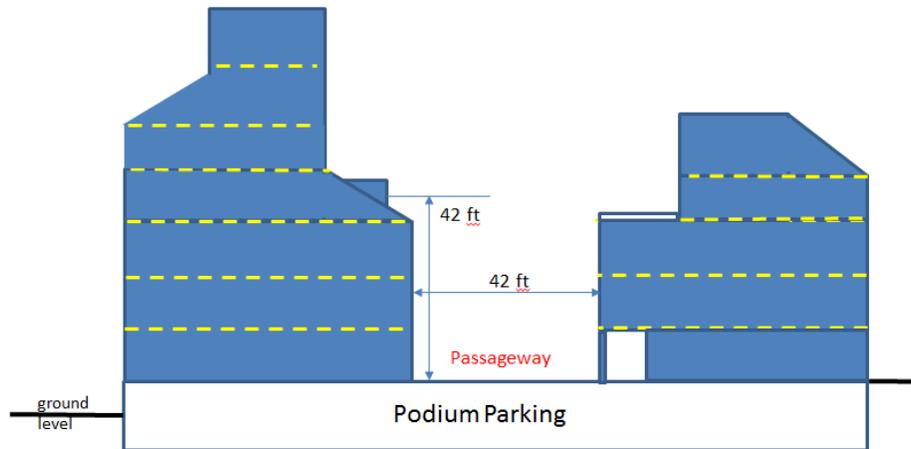
Stepping of buildings opens the spaces between buildings to the sky and to the surrounding views while avoiding a closed in feeling at ground level. *There are two recommendations on stepping:*

- a. *The face of a building fronting on a plaza or passageway must not be taller than 3 ½ floors. This stepping would not be required on the face of a building fronting a path, parking lot, or small courtyard. Nor would any further stepping be required, beyond one step, before rising to the permitted height.*
- b. *The step back should be approximately 40 ft. (about the depth of one unit).*

In other words, when stepping is called for, a fourth floor unit would be either stepped back from the face, or would be in the sloped roof of the fourth floor, forcing the roof to slope away from the eave and the passageway.

We are not recommending an ultimate height at this time, we assume the DRC will take this up at a later date.

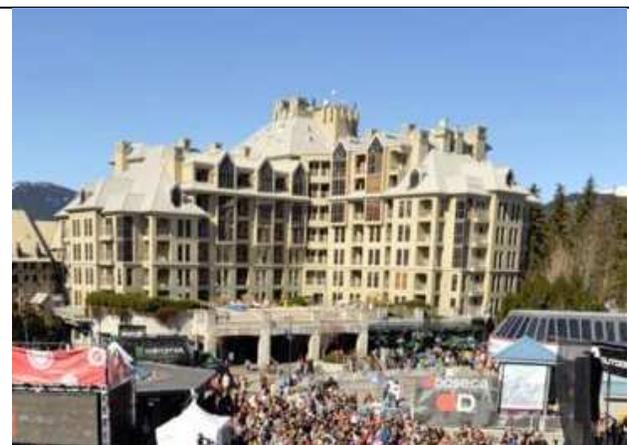
The drawing below seeks to illustrate this point a bit further. The face of a building fronting on a plaza or passageway must not be taller than 3 ½ floors. The face of a building fronting on parking areas, courtyards, paths, or other “open space” does not have such limits. So in this drawing, the left hand building has a 4th floor slanted roof (with dormer window) softening the vertical rise on the face fronting the passageway. The building on the right has a 3 floor rise, but a terrace on top of the 3rd floor. The other face of each building has no such restrictions.



Here are views of the Pan Pacific Mountainside in Skiers Plaza at Whistler that illustrates this concept. Stepping reduces height impact from the maximum six stories, dropping to one and two stories at the mall level.



In this view, the stepping of the building is clearly evident. The non-stepped faces of the building are allowed as these faces do NOT front onto any passageway or public plaza.



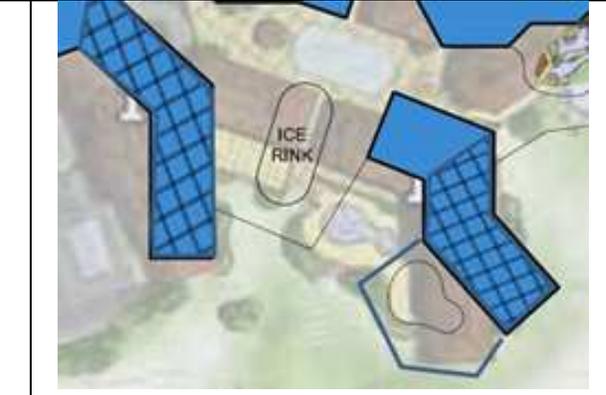
In this view, the stepping is less apparent, but the building steps down to one and two levels adjacent to, and is recessed away from, this public plaza.

Other architectural elements to vary the façade (varied rooflines; balconies; architectural details; window treatment, dimensions, and depth; canopies; etc.) shall be used in addition to, but not instead of, this basic stepping criteria (see images below).



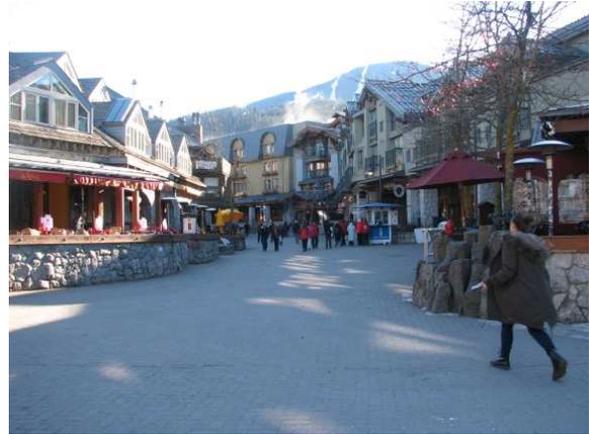
3. **Podium facade:** Particular attention shall be given to the architectural treatment of the facades of podiums on which plazas and buildings may be built. Podiums must be included in maximum height limits. The recommendation is that the maximum height of a parking podium visible from the street should be no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ floor from the finished grade. In addition, where podium exterior walls are adjacent to public use areas, they should be guided by the stepping and façade treatment requirements.
4. **Shadowing:** Proposed buildings shall not cast a shadow on existing or planned buildings in the new or expanded village (using as the standard from 10 am to 2 pm on December 21), nor on passageways or plazas. This shall be achieved by orientation of buildings, limits on height, distance between buildings, and stepping of facades. For example, a north-south orientation of buildings can be used to maximize solar access, to open views from the village to the slopes, and to minimize the width of shadows in comparison to an E-W building

To illustrate this point, consider the buildings around the ice rink in the current illustrative concept diagram, shown in the left hand image below. North is to the top of both images.

	
<p>The E-W orientation of the buildings to the south of the plaza will cast long shadows during the winter months, when the sun is low in the sky.</p>	<p>By rotating the buildings and the rink to a more N-S orientation, the plaza is open to the sun as well as the views to the mountain to the South.</p>

5. **Free standing parking structures:** Moved to Recommendations on Parking & Circulation
6. **Sense of Enclosure:** Research has shown that the ratio of building height adjacent to a pedestrian passageway to the width of that passageway determines the pedestrian’s “sense of enclosure”. A high ratio gives one a closed-in, urban feeling. While a low ratio gives one a relaxed, more open, feeling. Highly walkable passageways should not have tall buildings adjacent to them, except in very urban environments. From the literature, a ratio of 1:1 to 1:2 for the height next to the passageway versus the width of the passageway seems most appropriate for the type of Village envisioned. (See references at end of document).

From item #2, the recommendation is that the height of any building fronting on any pedestrian passageway or public plaza shall not exceed 3 ½ stories (42 ft.). If the building is to be taller, then the recommendations of stepping-back come into effect. To illustrate this “Sense of Enclosure” point, here are three examples.



Good: (L) old Vail. (R) Village Stroll from Village Square (Whistler). Buildings are up to 3 ½ stories, approximately same width as passageway, with the fourth story in the roof. Notice detailing at the pedestrian level.

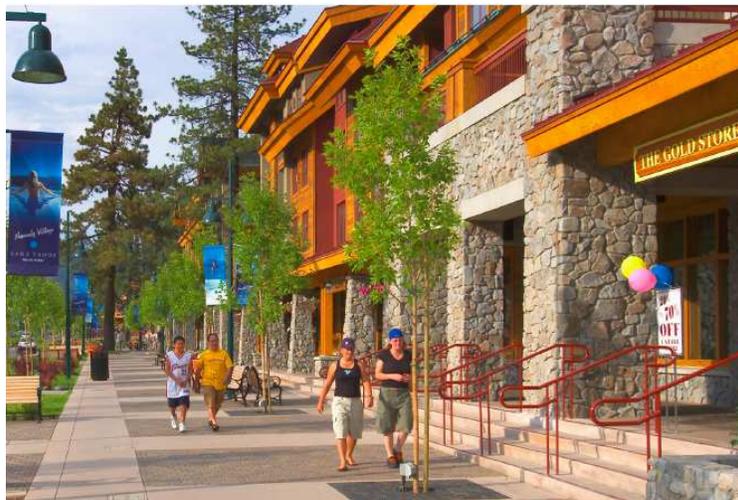


Bad: Even though the passageway is 50' wide, a 5 story structure feels intruding. Stepping the structure so that the maximum is 3 ½ floors at the passageway would have a dramatic opening feeling. Furthermore, there is no use of varied rooflines, balconies, architectural details, window treatment and dimensions, canopies, nor pedestrian level detail.



Very Bad: This is completely unacceptable. (Image is at the main entrance to the ice rink at Northstar). Note how overwhelming the buildings feel even though the walkway is almost 50' wide. Notice also the shadows that will be there all year.

7. **Enclosed Walkway:** Each of the passageways and public plazas must have at least one protected walkway for pedestrians to be able to walk around without being exposed to the weather. This walkway must not block visual or physical access to the internal storefronts. Where this walkway is recessed into the building, it is the wall adjacent to the passageway that would be used in calculating the passageway width for Sense of Enclosure. Consider the following examples:



Good: Internal protected walkway has extensive openings, and does not block visual access to the internal storefronts. The passageway width calculation for Sense of Enclosure would start outside of the stone structure.



Bad: Opening in stone façade is very limited, blocking visual access to the store fronts.

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References for Sense of Enclosure ---

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,32674,en.pdf> (see page 9)

Downtown Napa Specific Plan

http://mammothlakes.granicus.com/Viewer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=119&meta_id=14427

A Framework for Walkable Urban Thoroughfare Design

<http://www.ite.org/css/online/DWUT04.html>