

appropriate for the style of the house and will it allow you to take advantage of the solar orientation while minimizing the impacts of the wind. Is the house set high enough to drain into the sewer system, yet low enough to allow you to make it up the driveway on a wintry day? Although these are all very important considerations, many are secondary to the need to save the natural features of the site and incorporate them into the site design.

The right to live in the City's hillside areas goes hand in hand with the responsibility to build in an environmentally sensitive manner. If the street you have chosen had a woody feel when you selected the site, it is your obligation to see that this feel still exists when you are finished. The house will need to appear as if it was designed for the site when viewed from all sides, but particularly so from the street. This goal can be accomplished by incorporating the following:

- The driveway should not be the predominant feature of the front yard. Paved and structural areas must be softened by preserving the pre-existing vegetation.
- Setbacks should be staggered to avoid a canyon effect.
- Shared driveways are encouraged, when appropriate.
- Cuts and fills are to be minimized and vegetation is to be preserved.

## **BUILDING MULTI-FAMILY, OFFICE, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROJECTS IN THE HILLSIDES**

Single-Family homes are not the only projects built in the Hillside areas. Multi-family, commercial, office and industrial projects can also be appropriate if care is taken in the design of these projects to insure that important hillside characteristics are maintained.

The following is a list of design standards and guidelines which should be addressed in siting multi-family, commercial, office or industrial projects within Hillside Areas:

- Multi-family buildings should be designed in such a manner to provide the greatest degree of privacy possible for the individual structures as well as to adjacent properties.
- Buildings placed upon downslope lots should be sufficiently screened by vegetation to avoid degrading views from off-site.
- Existing vegetation, especially mature trees and groves of Scrub Oak should be integrated into the project design.
- For building sites in proximity to ridgelines, additional height restrictions may be necessary to insure that rooflines will be located below the natural ridgeline.
- Large expanses of flat areas for parking that require cuts, fills or the removal of existing significant vegetation or natural landforms should be avoided.
- Buildings should be sited with different floor elevations to achieve height variation.
- At site perimeters with high off-site visibility, buildings should be sited with a staggered arrangement and screened with mature vegetation to minimize the "wall effect".

- For multi-family projects, stagger alignments of buildings both horizontally and vertically to create unit identity, privacy at entry and private outdoor space, and to share common open space.
- Building sites should be selected so that construction occurs below the ridgeline.
- The roofline, based upon maximum permitted height, should not extend above the line of sight between a ridgeline and any public right-of-way, whether the ridgeline is above or below the right-of-way.
- The slope of the roof should be oriented in the same direction as the natural slope of the lot.
- Significant views of the natural ridge silhouette from public rights-of-way and other public spaces should be retained.
- When a major building elevation will be visible from off-site, appropriate combinations of screening and design treatment should be taken to reduce the bulk of the structure.

## GRADING, DRAINAGE, CUTS AND FILLS

Mother Nature rarely offers us a site that fits the shape of a house. When the time comes to start construction, it is easier to change the terrain than it is to design around the slopes and imperfections of the land. There are two types of changes that can have a great impact on the natural contours of a site: cuts and fills.

Cuts are made when the slope of a lot rises and the house doesn't. This is commonly seen on upslope lots, those that rise away from the street. Fills are made when the house is placed on a pedestal or a pile of dirt intended to hold the home higher than the natural terrain. Both of these changes should be held to an absolute minimum.

There are a lot of reasons given as to why cuts and fills on the lot are desired. They are used for all of the following:

- To create basement walkouts.
- To make flat yards for a play or recreation area.
- To achieve drives with workable slopes.
- To carry drainage away from the house.
- To permit sewage outflow from the basement bath.
- To improve views.
- To reduce the building height calculation.
- To give structural support and frost protection to foundations.
- To make the building design compatible with the existing topography of the lot.

Although some of these reasons are better than others, the City takes a dim view of excessive or unnecessary cuts and fills. Plans which make inordinate use of cuts and fills *will be denied*. Large cuts into a slope usually indicate that the wrong house design is being used for the conditions of a site. Building a flat house on an upward slope is akin to placing the proverbial square peg into a round hole -- it doesn't fit. If a lot runs uphill, then a house should be designed