

# EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS

LAND USE COMMITTEE:  
GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES



SAN FRANCISCO  
**PLANNING**  
DEPARTMENT

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# Hierarchy of Design Policies and Controls

- **General Plan (Policies)**
  - **Urban Design Element**
  - **Area Plans – Built Form Chapters**
- **Planning Code and Zoning Maps (Controls/Standards)**
  - **Height, bulk, rear yard, open space (eg. Sec.134, 270, Zoning Maps)**
  - **Ground Floors and Facades (eg. Sec. 144, 145.1, 155.5)**
- **Design Guidelines**
  - **Residential Design Guidelines (R Districts)**
  - **Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines (RTO, NCT, EN MU, DTR)**



# Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines

Referenced in proposed Planning Code Sections 144 and 145.1:

*“...consistent with the ‘Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines,’ as adopted and periodically amended by the Planning Commission.”*

Similar to Section 311 incorporation of Residential Design Guidelines:

*“...consistent with the design policies and guidelines of... the ‘Residential Design Guidelines’ as adopted and periodically amended by the Planning Commission.”*

# Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines

- Applies to RTO, NCT, EN Mixed Use, and DTR Districts
- General Plan policies require active uses on ground floors, including walk-up residential uses.
- Code Sections 144 and 145.1 require parking to be set back from facades and ground floors lined with “active uses” – commercial, residential, public, PDR.
- Where residential uses are incorporated as “active uses” in lieu of commercial, public, or PDR, the building must meet the Guidelines.
- Guidelines do not dictate *where* ground floor residential uses should be located (ie. instead of commercial), just provide guidelines for their design.
- For R Districts (i.e. RTO), Guidelines supplements existing Residential Design Guidelines.



# Ground Floor Residential Design Guidelines

## Subject Areas:

- **Façade Modulation**
- **Setbacks**
- **Residential Unit Floor Elevation**
- **Entries**
- **Landscaping**
- **Fencing, Walls, Screens & Gates**

## Structure:

- **Goals**
- **Principles**
- **Guidelines**

# Example: Residential Unit Floor Elevation

## *Goals:*

- Habitable and sufficiently private ground floor units
- Adequate private/public transition space from the public sidewalk to the residential unit.



## Example: Residential Unit Floor Elevation

### *Principles:*

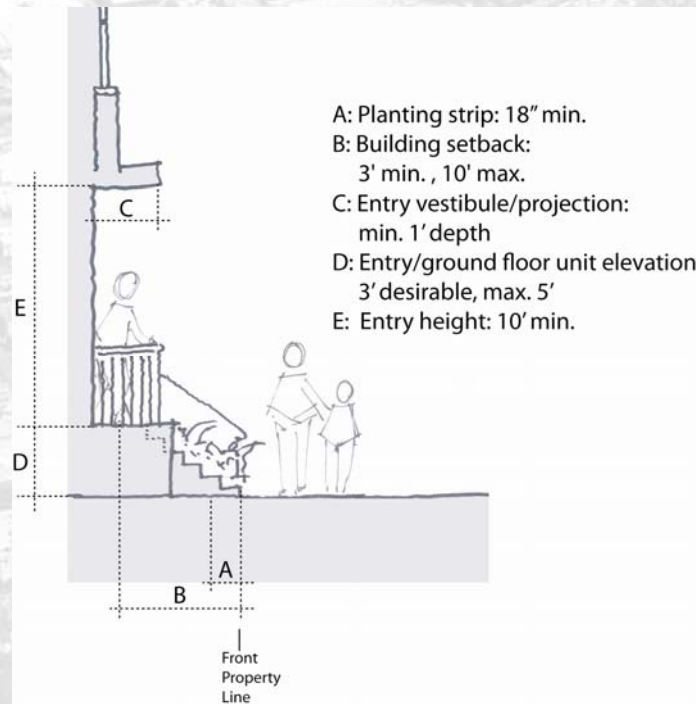
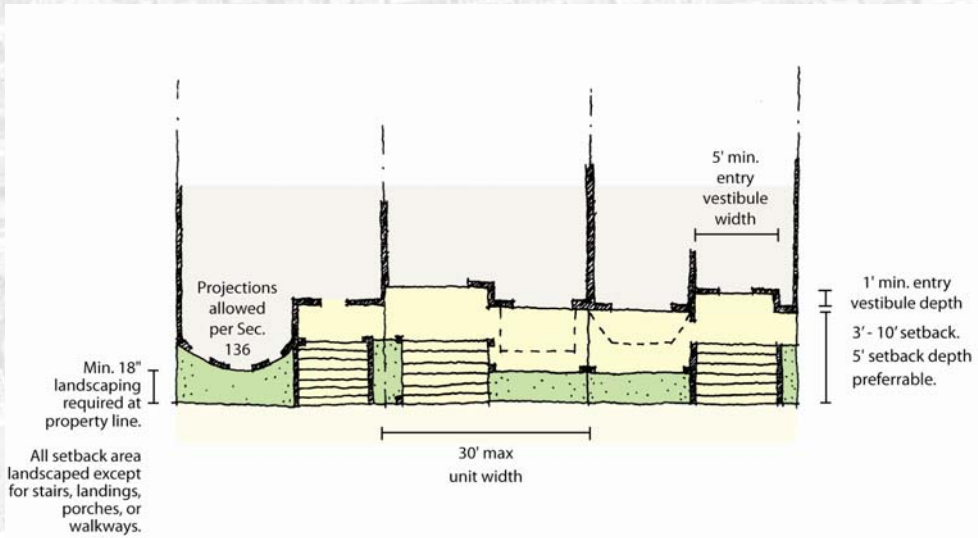
- **Ground-level residential units are important for activating and offering surveillance to the street environment, but the units should not be so physically proximate as to create an uncomfortable situation for residents within their homes.**
- **The ability of pedestrians to look horizontally at eye level directly into the window of a residential unit at sidewalk grade will reduce the privacy of the unit and the usability of the abutting rooms.**
- **Three feet is the general minimum height above sidewalk grade of the floor of residential units that keeps pedestrian eye level below the sill of the windows of residential units, which typically are about two feet above the floor. The eye level of the average adult is approximately five feet above grade.**

## Example: Residential Unit Floor Elevation

### *Guideline:*

The floor of ground story residential units in a building should be raised approximately three feet above the grade of the immediately abutting sidewalk, but not more than five feet.













# Questions?