

Final Report – Design Review Committee on Village at Squaw Valley

Executive Summary

The task before the Squaw Valley Design Review Committee (DRC) was to analyze the Design Standards provided in Appendix B to the Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan (Specific Plan), and, where appropriate, make recommendations for modifications and/or additions.

To accomplish its task, the DRC broke its review into four topics.

- (1) Layout – what would it feel like to walk through the proposed new Village
- (2) Mass, Scale, Heights – how would the proposed new Village appear from outside the Village
- (3) East Parcel – this is an area set aside for employee housing, additional parking, a market, and a shipping, receiving and distribution facility
- (4) Architecture – details about the look of the buildings, materials used, etc.

The DRC completed its review in July 2015. In August and September, the applicant, Squaw Valley Real Estate (SVRE), submitted their response to the DRC recommendations. The DRC reviewed these and, in the end, the DRC and the applicant agreed on all recommended Design Standards but one, Building Height Arrangement under Mass, Scale, and Heights.

This Executive Summary includes only the KEY Design Standard Recommendations made, and many have been condensed and paraphrased for brevity.

I. LAYOUT – (INTERIOR ASPECTS)

The intent is that a pedestrian walking along the main passageway from the existing IntraWest Village into the Village Core Commercial (VC-C) area of the new Village should not feel any more hemmed in, suffer any loss in ability to see the sky, nor perceive an increase in heights of the buildings. As a reference, the main passageway in the IntraWest Village is about 40 feet wide and the building walls on either side are about 50 feet high.

The following Design Standards were adopted by the Squaw Valley DRC:

Pedestrian Passageways and Paths –

- Passageways shall be a min 40 feet wide, and Paths a min 20 feet wide.

Sense of Enclosure (building height to building separation ratio) –

- The building separation to building height ratio must be at least 8 feet separation for every 10 feet in building height (0.8) for passageways, and 6 feet separation for every 10 feet building height (0.6) for paths. The height of the building for this ratio is measured from the level of the pedestrian passageway to the top plate of the wall adjacent to the passageway.

Stepbacks –

- Maximum building height adjacent to a passageway is 50 feet (again measured from pedestrian level to adjacent wall top plate). If a building's maximum height is above 50 feet, a minimum 15 foot stepback shall be required at the 50 feet level before the building rises further in height.

Pedestrian Plaza –

- A main public pedestrian plaza within the VC–C shall be prominently located, have open access, be a minimum of .75 acres in size, and be capable of supporting public events.

Shading –

- Buildings shall be oriented so as to minimize shading and shadows on principal plazas and pedestrian passageways throughout the year.

View Corridors –

- Buildings shall be oriented so as to maximize views to the surrounding mountains – especially to the South and to the West

II. MASS, SCALE & HEIGHTS – (EXTERIOR ASPECTS)

These topics focused on how the Village would appear, viewing from Squaw Valley Road or some other aspect point exterior to the Village.

The following Design Standards were adopted by the Squaw Valley DRC:

Building Shape –

- The buildings, if having more than four retail/residential floors above the ground level, must not appear as monolithic blocks – there must be variations in roofline with step downs and shorter sections (for example, at shoulders).

Building Height Arrangement – (DRC and SVRE did not agree on this Standard)

- Buildings shall be arranged in VC–C with generally shorter buildings to the North and taller ones to the South, with a one floor minimum difference in max height between “steps”.
- The “steps” in Height Arrangement Standard for VC–C shall be arranged starting from nominally 72 feet (or less) to the North and stepping to nominally 108 feet (or less) to the South, with a one floor difference in max height between “steps”.

VC–N – This addresses which of these recommended Mass, Scale and Height Design Standards, created with VC–C in mind, should apply to VC–N (Village Core – Neighborhood).

- Buildings in VC–N must abide by the Building Shape Design Standard.
- The Height Arrangement Standard does not apply in VC–N except for Lot 13, which must have a step height arrangement for maintaining views of Tram Face.

III. EAST PARCEL

The East Parcel will contain employee housing, employee and overflow parking, a market, and a shipping, receiving and distribution facility.

The following Design Standards were adopted by the Squaw Valley DRC:

Buffer Zones –

- There shall be a minimum 100 feet wide, 100% vegetation, natural landscape buffer all zoned V–CP, between all buildings and neighboring resident lot lines. (These would be lots 37 & 44).

Building Heights

- All buildings in East Parcel shall be no higher than 35 feet from average grade (Reference B.2.2)

Layout

- The East Parcel buildings must be laid out in such a fashion so as to absolutely minimize, if not totally eliminate, the need for delivery trucks to back up.

IV. ARCHITECTURAL

The goal for recommendations in this area was to introduce what were called “universal truths” without tying the hands of future designers and planners.

1. Architecture

- Architectural diversity is to be encouraged; however, all buildings shall complement their neighbors and environment.
- Long facades shall be broken up by providing three dimensional relief through, among others, steps in horizontal planes, recessed openings, adding balconies, and/or changes in color and material.

2. Walls & Finishes

- A variety of exterior wall types may be incorporated into building design. No more than four exterior wall treatments shall be used on any one building
- Changes in material must be associated with a change in building plane or floor plates. Materials must be consistently applied to all sides of a building

V. MODIFICATIONS TO DESIGN GUIDELINES

The DRC recommends making clear in the Specific Plan the role the DRC will play in reviewing project/architectural plans as they are submitted for approval, and requests changes to the Development Standards and Design Guidelines as follows:

1. Section 8.3.8 of the Specific Plan be written such that it is clear that all Design Review applications must come before the Squaw Valley DRC for review and approval or modification.

2. Section B.2.3 of the Design Guidelines “Modifications” be amended to state that changes to the adopted Development Standards and Design Guidelines should first be reviewed by the SV DRC for the purposes of making recommendations to the Planning Services Division or Planning Director.

3. Section B.7.1 of the Design Guidelines be amended to indicate that signage plans will be brought to the SV DRC for review and to make recommendations to the County.