

CHAPTER 1.0

Introduction to the Design Guidelines

1.1 Background

San Juan Bautista, “the city of history”, has by and large escaped the negative effects of rapid growth felt by many other communities in the region. Efforts to preserve the persisting small town, rural character, and protect existing cultural resources in the city are major goals of the *1998 San Juan Bautista General Plan* and, more recently, the *Historic San Juan Bautista Preservation and Enhancement Plan (2000)*. This manual, the *San Juan Bautista Design Guidelines*, has evolved as a tool to help implement these plans and enhance the community of San Juan Bautista.



San Juan Bautista – view from San Jose & First Streets

1.2 Historical Context

Architecturally, San Juan Bautista has indeed been the product of Professor Harold Kirker's culturally conservative immigrant society from Spanish/Mexican times through the American conquest and occupation even into the early twentieth century with the introduction of the bungalow as "the unconscious synthesis of the entire course of California domestic architecture."¹ The builders who constructed San Juan Bautista were just that: men who for the most part followed other professions and took to construction in order to put a little money aside in case of a dry year, or to purchase an animal or piece of farm machinery. Generally, they were anonymous builders, individually or as groups. Only a few people like Issac Mylar² seemed to realize the intrinsic value of these "carpitects" (i.e. a combination of carpenters and architects) who defined the look of the community over time. For the most part, their stylistic sources appear to be memory, but their products, with simple details, especially as regards the decorative elements of the Classic Revival, created San Juan Bautista's unique vernacular expression. They were people of limited means for the most part - teamsters, mechanics, merchants and saloonkeepers - and their homes and shops were small; but their collective product, San Juan Bautista, is a town of neat cornices, cheerful houses with harmonious and pleasing outlines. And if, as Harold Kirker postulates, "the architecture they produced was of necessity colonial", then San Juan Bautista remains the quintessential "colonial" town in California.

¹ Kirker, Harold. **California's Architectural Frontier**. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, Inc.

² Mylar, Issac. **Early Days at the Mission San Juan Bautista**. Fresno: Valley Publishers. 1976.

Architectural styles evolve through time; variations or adaptations in form are made to fit the particular geographic, climatic, material and economic conditions of the builders. Both the early Spanish and American buildings in San Juan Bautista are the product of the limitation imposed by the remoteness of the region, especially as regards to materials and the trained craftsman to work them. However, where possible, through the transmitted memory of craftsmen's original sources, they attempted to introduce specific elements of remembered style to the frontier buildings they constructed. It was not until the early 1840's that the Gente de Razon of San Juan Bautista could emulate the Monterey style, the most modern building mode in California; and it was not until the post-Civil War period that the community's American and European settlers attempted a "high style" in their public buildings.

The economic decline in San Juan Bautista after 1870 slowed the building trades. Some residences and commercial structures did get built; but not in the quantity or of the same quality as those constructed during the late 1860's. With the coming of industry to the small town after the turn of the twentieth century, a new spurt of economic growth initiated a small building boom. These structures were largely comprised of the low cost California bungalows of the period. San Juan Bautista is in the best sense of the word, vernacular - a town of anonymous buildings by anonymous builders representing each epoch period since its founding.

1.3 Design Principles

While no two projects will be exactly alike, each should demonstrate adherence to certain design principles that are central to respecting the sense of place and architectural heritage found throughout San Juan Bautista. The following principles provide the basic design goals that each project is expected to address to ensure quality development. Newly constructed projects will have a greater opportunity to address each of the design principles fully, while projects that involve additions or remodeling to existing buildings may be more limited in their ability to address each specific principle. However, regardless of the type of project, it is expected that all project proponents will strive to implement the principles outlined below to the greatest degree possible.

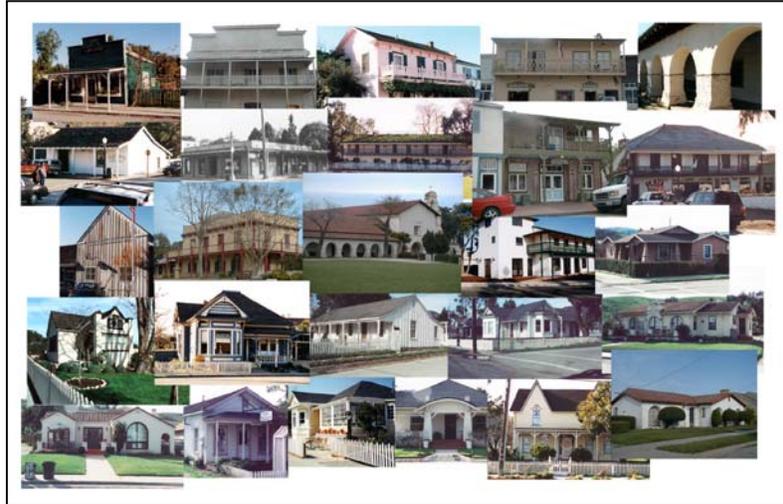
Pedestrian Orientation San Juan Bautista is a walkable community. It was founded long before the advent of the automobile. The high quality of San Juan Bautista's pedestrian environment is an important aspect of the City's character. The pedestrian experience throughout San Juan Bautista should be strengthened and new pedestrian linkages should be created where possible. Desired pedestrian-oriented development in San Juan Bautista includes open space for plazas, courtyards, outdoor dining, pedestrian paseos, view corridors, and landscaping. A consistent and coherent rhythm of structures and open spaces should be promoted along the street edge. Project proponents should demonstrate how the proposed project contributes to the goal of increased pedestrian activity.

Historic Preservation History is an important part of San Juan Bautista's character – the City's rich sense of history and architectural heritage is apparent in the built

environment. New development adjacent to historic properties must be sensitive to and maintain the integrity of these historic resources by incorporating appropriate architectural elements and designs which contribute to San Juan Bautista's history. Whenever possible, in conjunction with new projects, historic buildings and properties should be preserved, rehabilitated, and restored.

Vernacular Character

The vernacular and eclectic nature of existing development throughout the community contributes to San Juan Bautista's unique identity. New projects are expected to promote a diversity of architectural style while maintaining continuity of scale, pedestrian orientation, patterns of open space, and use of landscaping. The guidelines encourage a variety of architectural styles and vernacular adaptations,



Favorable images identified by community members in a visual image survey conducted on April 4, 2000.

including Monterey, Bungalow, Spanish Colonial Revival and Western False Front. Individual project designs should demonstrate adherence to the basic character-defining features of these styles as applicable (see Chapter 3.0).

Context and Relationships

In order to ensure that each project in San Juan Bautista is well integrated with existing development, the design of each project must demonstrate respect for San Juan's small town character and sensitivity to the contextual influences of the area, especially in terms of building scale and architectural design. Projects should demonstrate consideration of the following:

- ❖ Location of structures on neighboring properties;
- ❖ Architectural character/style of neighboring structures;
- ❖ Opportunities for the creation of pedestrian linkages;
- ❖ Preservation of existing natural features (e.g. mature trees);
- ❖ Preservation and enhancement of views to surrounding hills;
- ❖ Protection of adjacent residential uses from the impacts of commercial development.

Quality

Quality of development can be expressed in a variety of ways: through the adherence to authentic architectural styles and details; the honest and simple use of materials and colors; the provision of usable open space (plazas and courtyards); the concern for human scale and pedestrian orientation; and the use of landscaping to soften

otherwise hard surfaces of structures and pavement. All projects are expected to achieve a high level of quality.

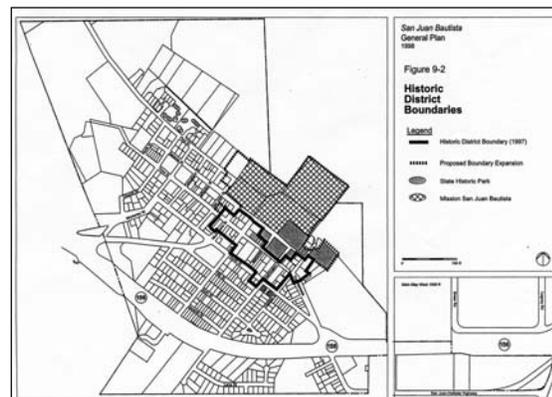
1.4 Purpose and Intent of the Guidelines

These Design Guidelines have been adopted to implement Chapter 11.22 of the San Juan Bautista Municipal Code (Site Plan and Design Guidelines). Within the context of the above design principles, the purpose of the San Juan Bautista Design Guidelines manual is to influence the character of development so that San Juan Bautista can preserve its present qualities – mainly its rural, historical, and vernacular nature of existing development and its feeling of openness – as it continues to develop and change in the future. The manual is designed to meet the needs of many users: property owners, merchants, real estate interests, architects, designers and building contractors, San Juan Bautista Historical Society, Historic Resources Committee, Planning Commission, City Council, City staff, and other interested organizations and persons in the community.

These guidelines, while attempting to be comprehensive in scope, are not exhaustive in detail. The aim is to engender creative approaches and solutions within a workable framework, rather than laying out detailed and rigid standards.

1.5 Applicability

It is the city of San Juan Bautista in its entirety that makes it historic, unique, and special. This document reflects this notion by providing design guidelines that are applicable throughout the community, addressing commercial, mixed-use, public, and residential projects under a variety of circumstances, including new development, infill, and rehabilitation/conversion.



The Design Guidelines are applicable to development throughout San Juan Bautista. Different levels of design review and approval exist depending upon the type of project and its location within the City.

While the design guidelines are applicable throughout the community, the site planning and design review approval process varies depending upon the type of project and its location. Projects within the Historic District or affecting historical structures require review by the Planning Commission and Historic Resources Committee.

New construction and any projects otherwise requiring Commission review are also subject to Commission site plan and design review approval. Staff level approval exists to streamline the process for projects that will not impact the visual environment. The following table summarizes the design review and approval process.

The overall objective of the design review process is to ensure that the Design Guidelines are followed and that projects respect San Juan Bautista in terms of scale, character, quality, and orientation. During its review of applicable projects, Planning staff, Historic Resources Committee and the Planning Commission will use its discretion in applying the various guidelines in this manual to specific projects. It is not anticipated that each guideline will apply equally to every project. In some circumstances, one guideline may be relaxed to facilitate compliance with another guideline determined by the staff or the Commission to be more important to the particular case. Additionally, because of the unique, compact nature of San Juan Bautista's physical environment, elements of both residential and commercial development design guidelines may be applicable to specific projects (e.g. bed and breakfasts; mixed-use, converted residential, etc.).

STAFF LEVEL SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW

- ❖ Minor alterations to non-historic residences.



HISTOIC RESOURCES BOARD SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW (Recommends to Planning Commission)

Projects that do not involve an historic resource

- ❖ Commercial, mixed use, planned unit, institutional, and public projects that involve new construction, relocation, or major exterior maintenance of buildings and structures.
- ❖ Residential projects involving the construction of three or more new residences.

Projects that involve or may affect an historic resource

- ❖ Projects that involve an historic resource, a contributing or non-contributing resource within a Historic District, or that are adjacent to a historic resource.
- ❖ Gateway entries to the City of San Juan Bautista.
- ❖ Signs, banners and plaques at any location within the City.
- ❖ Any other project referred to the Historic Resources Committee by the Planning Commission, City Council, or City staff that may affect a historic resource in the City of San Juan Bautista.



PLANNING COMMISSION SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW

- ❖ Projects requiring review and recommendation by the Historic Resources Committee.
- ❖ New construction, relocation and major exterior maintenance of all structures for residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial, planned unit, institutional, and public purposes.

1.6 Organization and Contents

The Design Guidelines are organized so that property owners, design professionals, Planning Commission and Council members, staff, and other users will not have to review the entire document in order to derive the salient guidelines applicable to a particular project.

In order to provide an easy to use document, the San Juan Bautista Design Guidelines are presented in the following eight chapters.

Chapter 1.0 Introduction to the Design Guidelines

This chapter provides the background, historical context, and design principles that serve as the foundation to the San Juan Bautista Design Guidelines.

Chapter 2.0 General Non-Residential Site Development Guidelines

This chapter describes standards and guidelines addressing how non-residential developments should present themselves to the street and to adjacent buildings and spaces. The chapter includes design guidance on landscaping and signs.

Chapter 3.0 San Juan Bautista's Architectural Styles

This chapter presents a written and visual summary of prominent architectural styles existing in San Juan Bautista. It can be used as a reference to evaluate various rehabilitation efforts and the compatibility of new architectural styles.

Chapter 4.0 Architectural Design Guidelines: Non-Residential Development

This chapter provides architectural design guidance for new and infill development that is non-residential in nature, including mixed-use projects, commercial projects, and public buildings.

Chapter 5.0 Architectural Design Guidelines: Single and Multi-Family Residential Buildings

This chapter provides architectural and site plan guidance for residential development applicable within and outside of the Historic District. The section addresses single family infill development, multi-family developments, and new residential subdivisions.

Chapter 6.0 Guidelines for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction of Historic Buildings

This chapter provides general rehabilitation principles and specific suggestions for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of historic structures. The section primarily targets efforts within the Historic District and/or on historically significant properties.

Chapter 7.0 Sign Design Guidelines

This chapter presents design guidelines for the commercial/mixed-use districts within San Juan Bautista intended to supplement the guidance found in the San Juan Bautista Zoning Code.

Chapter 8.0 Glossary of Terms

This chapter defines many of those terms in the document related to design, architecture, and preservation that may be unfamiliar to the reader.