

elk grove design guidelines

chapter 3B

architecture for master home plans

B

The previous section of the Design Guidelines for Single-family Residential Development relates to land planning for subdivision maps. This section of the document builds upon those provisions, but now focuses on the *master home plans*.

B. Architecture for Master home plans

Design Review is required for *master home plans* developed for each neighborhood or subdivision in the City. Design Review approval for *master home plans* is required prior to issuance of building permits for model homes and all subsequent homes within the identified development.

The architecture section is divided into two parts: 1) design concepts, and 2) design guidelines. Design concepts for *master home plans* address neighborhood character, *streetscape* variety, architectural style, and residential landscape. Design Guidelines reiterate specific objectives and establish provisions and options to ensure implementation of desirable design concepts. Guidelines herein are intended to supplement the minimum requirements of the development standards in the Zoning Code.

1. Design Concepts

As mentioned in the previous land planning section, neighborhood design has evolved over the last few decades and is now re-focused on more livable, sustainable urban design patterns. In terms of architecture, traditional neighborhoods generally had many builders with different home styles, which created a varied *streetscape* and landscape. Today, most subdivisions are designed and/or constructed by a single developer and/or builder. This change has produced a relatively narrow range of home sizes and shapes along a given block. These factors, coupled with higher land costs, have led to repetitive *streetscapes*, dominated by large, two-story homes. While it may be difficult to achieve the extent of variety that exists in older neighborhoods, the City encourages greater variety along the *streetscapes* in new subdivisions and quality of architecture for individual homes by creating architectural guidelines for *master home plans*. Thus, Design Guidelines herein are intended to achieve the following:

- ❑ Pedestrian friendly *streetscapes* where homes are oriented to the street and to common open space areas;
- ❑ Home designs that incorporate *authentic architectural styles*;

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- ❑ Variety in mass and *scale* of homes that is visually appealing from the street; and
- ❑ Landscape that softens the appearance of pavement and structures, and provides an eventual tree canopy along the street.

As mentioned in the land planning section, the City recognizes the unique design characteristics of high-density, small lot residential developments as a means of providing more affordable housing in a traditional suburban setting. The Design Guidelines incorporate special architectural guidelines to ensure design flexibility for small lot development.

2. Design Guidelines

Streetscape Variety Through Residential Design

- 1) In order to achieve variation in subdivisions, *master home plans* for each subdivision shall include a minimum number of floor plans and elevations based on the number of units within the subdivision as follows:
 - a) For subdivisions with less than 100 units, *master home plans* shall include a minimum of three floor plans with at least three elevations each.
 - b) For subdivisions with 101 to 200 units, *master home plans* shall include a minimum of four floor plans with at least three elevations each.
 - c) For subdivisions with more than 200 units, *master home plans* shall include a minimum of five floor plans with at least three elevations each.

Aerial view of residential development in Elk Grove.



street
scape
variety

- 2) The design of structures shall be varied along a street to create variety and interest. A significant alternation of the placement, *massing*, and composition of each adjacent model/floor plan within the *master home plan series* should be accomplished by a combination of the following means:
- a) Each floor plan/home design shall be significantly different from the others through variation of building height, mass, shape and roof form, and the physical and functional relationship of the frontage to the street. See Figure III-4.
 - b) Incorporate interesting roof lines into each home within the *master home plan series*. Design rooflines with changes in ridgeline direction and configuration to ensure variation in the rooflines between structures (good “*roof bounce*”). For the purpose of these guidelines, *roof bounce* is the movement of one’s eyes while visually scanning the overall street scene and the individual homes while viewed from a perspective that encompasses several homes in relationship to one another. The eye should be drawn from one home to the next in a manner that creates visual interest in a series of up and down motions. Each floor plan within the *master home plan series* should include a different roofline. Refer to Figure III-4 for a variation in height, mass, shape, and roof form, which shows appropriate variety between floor plans.

Figure III-4
Variation in Height, Mass, Shape, and Roof Form



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- c) To encourage a variety of one and two-story homes throughout each neighborhood, a minimum of one of the home plans in each *master home plan* series shall be a single-story. However, this requirement does not apply to higher *density* single-family development in the RD-10 and RD-15 zoning designations.
- d) All homes should be oriented to the street by utilizing floor plans which de-emphasize garage fronts as the most prominent architectural feature of the dwelling front and encourage *live forward home designs*. Priority should be placed on the relationship of the rooms of the house or outdoor spaces to the street rather than the relationship of the garage to the street, except as provided for age-restricted communities. Outdoor living areas and prominent entry features at the front of the home are encouraged. At least one of the model homes in each *master home plan* series shall have a designated outdoor living area (e.g., porch, courtyard) that is at least five feet deep and eight feet wide to accommodate seating.
- e) Each home plan within the *master home plans* series should have a distinct footprint in terms of the placement and relationship of the garage, interior living space, and any designated outdoor living space or entry feature. The intent is to create structural and spatial variety along residential *streetscapes* by creating distinct configurations of garages and livable space between home plans along the street. Builders are also encouraged to enhance *streetscape* interest through variation in the placement of homes on individual lots along the street. Refer to Figure III-5 *streetscape* Variety and Orientation to the Street showing variation in elevations and corresponding footprints representing variety in the design and relationships of garage and living space facing the street. In Figure III-5, no two footprints along the *streetscape* have identical relationships between the garage, livable portion of the home, and designated outdoor living space.
- f) The City encourages color variety among homes within a neighborhood. To that end, each architectural style within a *Master home plans* series shall include at least three color schemes. The intent is to have distinct color palettes for elevations types with similar architectural styles among floor plans in the *master home plan* series.



Figure III-5
Streetscape variety and orientation to the Street

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- 3) To ensure variety in home frontages along the street, no two identical floor plans and elevations shall be placed on adjacent lots. Two of the same floor plans with different elevations may be placed adjacent to one another if one of the floor plan is reversed.
- 4) The City encourages the design of individual homes to minimize bulk and mass. Design techniques that reduce bulk and mass are listed below (see photos III-40 and III-41).
 - a) Use of horizontal elements to soften vertical ones in an elevation.
 - b) Minimize use of tall or two-story-high design elements with no architectural relief.
 - c) Keep second floor exterior wall heights as low as possible.
 - d) Use roof forms that reduce bulk (e.g., minimum number of hips and valleys).
 - e) Avoid massive, tall chimneys (locate them either on an internal wall or centered on a gable end when possible).

Photos of Design Techniques to Minimize Bulk and Mass



Photo III-40: The home on the left utilizes low second floor exterior wall heights and limits two story design elements

Photo III-41: Good use of horizontal elements and vertical elements to reduce mass and roof forms that reduce bulk



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- 5) Placement of buildings should consider the existing context of the surrounding area. Single-family homes should respect the privacy and solar access through appropriate siting of structures. Building setbacks shall be consistent with the development standards of the underlying zoning district. Special standards have been adopted to allow flexibility in the design of higher *density* single-family residential development as follows:
- a) As identified in the land plan section, to encourage separated sidewalks on local residential streets, the front yard setback for livable portions of the home may be reduced by six feet, measured from the back of separated sidewalk.
 - b) To allow design flexibility for higher *density* single-family “small lot” development, minimum building setbacks in the RD-7 zoning districts have been reduced to 18 feet for the front yard and the rear yard setback was reduced to ten feet for one-story structures and 15 feet for two-story structures.
 - c) To allow design flexibility for higher *density* single-family “small lot” development, minimum building setbacks have been eliminated in the RD-10 and RD-15 zoning districts (see photos III-42 thru III-44).

Photos of Higher *Density* Small Lot Residential Development



Photo III-42: The auto court design is an effective way to concentrate garages and parking in a condensed “cul-de-sac” with livable portions of the homes facing courtyards and landscape corridors

Photo III-43: This design includes reduced setbacks, garage entrance from the rear, and livable space elevated for privacy



Photo III-44: These 4,500 square foot lots have reduced setbacks and neotraditional design with detached garages facing alleys

Architecture

- 6) The City of Elk Grove possesses a rich tradition of residential architecture. The older residential neighborhoods contain re stored examples of Craftsman, California Bungalow, Queen Anne Cottage, Ranch and other architectural styles from the turn of the century. Good modern architecture is also evident in the City. Although no particular “style” is required for new residential construction, these houses illustrate quality of craftsmanship and the thoughtful integration of form, *massing*, and materials—qualities that should be emphasized in the design on modern single-family residences. All homes within a master plan series shall be designed with an *authentic architectural style*. That style shall be reflected in building form, decorative features, materials and colors. Diversity of architecture is encouraged throughout the community and within neighborhoods. However, only one architectural style shall be represented on an individual elevation of each home plan in a *master home plan series*. Examples of *authentic architectural styles* are shown in Photos III-45 thru III-56.

Photos of Authentic Architectural Styles

Photo III-45:
Victorian



Photo III-47:
Mediterranean



Photo III-46:
French



Photo III-48:
Tudor



Photo III-49:
Ranch



Photo III-52:
Bungalow



Photo III-50:
Craftsman



Photo III-53:
Italian (Italiante)



Photo III-51:
Spanish



Photo III-54:
Monterey



Photos of Authentic Architectural Styles (continued)

Photo III-55:
Colonial Revival



Photo III-56:
Prairie

- 7) Project themes are encouraged. Themes establish a project compass to follow and create identity. Some sort of historical bias in the theme as a mechanism to forge a sense of heritage and community is also encouraged.
- 8) The City encourages the use of comparable levels of detailing/finish on all elevations of the structure (e.g., recessed, pop out, or trim features). However, emphasis shall be placed on designing superior architectural detailing on front elevations and other elevations visible from public streets and open space. At a minimum, all architectural treatments on the front elevation (e.g., fascia treatments such as stone veneer) shall be extended or wrapped a minimum distance four feet along the side yard elevations or to the side yard fence, whichever is less. Such treatment may be amended to accommodate the location of any service panels flush against the building façade. Additionally, window treatments shall be required on all elevations (e.g., window trim (see photos III-57 and III-58)).

Photos of Architectural Detailing/Finish

Photo III-57:



Photo III-58



- 9) For all houses on lots backing onto arterial streets, design roof lines so as to avoid a series of roof slopes visible from the arterial street which are parallel with, or perpendicular to the arterial street (see photos III-59 and III-60).

This
Photo III-59



Not This
Photo III-60



- 10) As shown by the photos III-61 and III-62, the main entrance to a home should be part of a clear entry sequence extending from the public sidewalk to the front door. Orient the main entrance to the public street in order to promote an active street. Porches and covered entries improve the neighborhood *streetscape* by breaking down the *scale* and mass of the home. Porches also provide a transition zone from the public space to the private space and provide for informal socializing with neighbors without entering the home. It is recommended that one of the following options be incorporated into the design of the *master home plans*.

- a) Provide a separated sidewalk from the street to the entry at a minimum width of three feet (may be developed with a *pervious surface*) and upgrade the door and hardware.
- b) Incorporate a front porch, covered entry or courtyard into the home design. Front porches shall be a minimum of five feet deep in order to accommodate outdoor seating. In order or encourage these items they will not be considered as part of the land coverage calculations.

Photo III-61

Photo III-62

Photos of walkways to entrances and usable porch areas



- 11) When located on corner lots, *duplexes* and *halfplexes* shall be designed with garage doors facing opposite streets. When located on interior lots, *duplexes* and *halfplexes* shall be designed with livable portions of the home separating the garage doors facing the street.

Garage Placement

- 12) It is anticipated that the *master home plans* will have a variety of garage placements in order to ensure that garages in single-family residential neighborhoods will be subordinate to the main living area/designated outdoor living space and not dominate the *streetscape*. (see photos III-63 thru III-67) One or more of the designs listed below shall be incorporated into each *master home plan*. The City recommends a combination of the garage placement design solutions below, rather than one single solution for all home plans.

In no event shall more than one in three of the *master home plans* have the garage door extending beyond the livable portion of the house. This restriction applies to garage doors facing forward and is not intended to limit garage doors located perpendicular to the street. The restriction on forward garage placement does not apply to active adult projects (age restricted for 55 years and older). However, development of three-car garages in active adult projects will be subject to the provisions of the guidelines herein. Additional guidelines are listed for three-or more-car garage design.

a)
Place the garage at the rear of the lot, attached or detached from the main dwelling. On a case-by-case basis, the City may allow placement of garages at the rear of the lot with access from the alley.

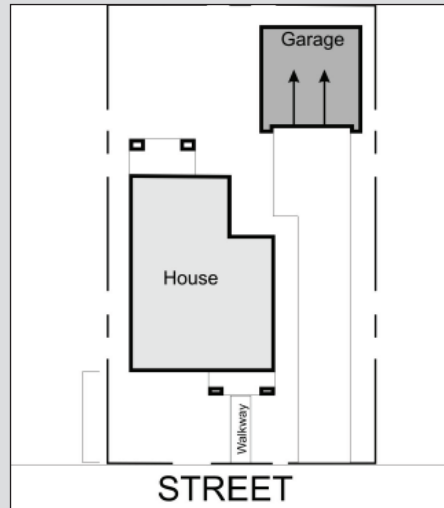
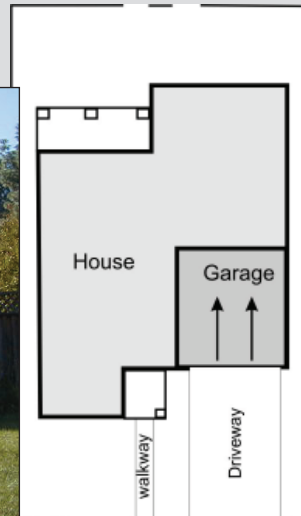


Photo III-63



Photo III-64



b)
Recess the garage behind the living area of the home

c) Recess the garage behind the designated outdoor living area of the home. For the purposes of these guidelines, designated outdoor living area shall include framed or delineated spaces typically located in the front of the house for outdoor seating or gathering, which may be covered by a portion of the roof or landscape structure (e.g., porch, courtyard, veranda, trellis, deck).

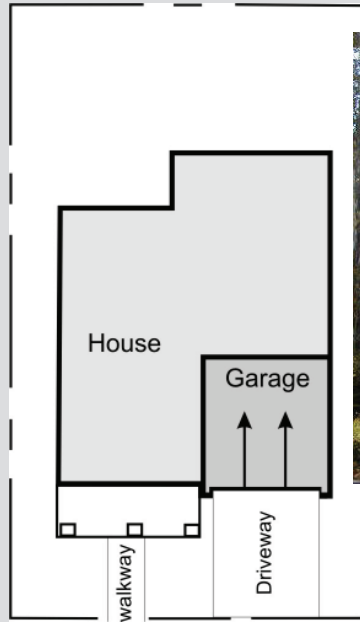


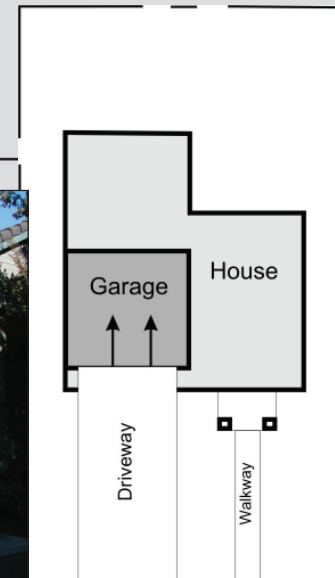
Photo III-65



d) Cantilever the second story (or project a portion thereof) out over the garage.



Photo III-66



e) Develop a tandem garage so that the appearance from the street is that of a single-car garage.

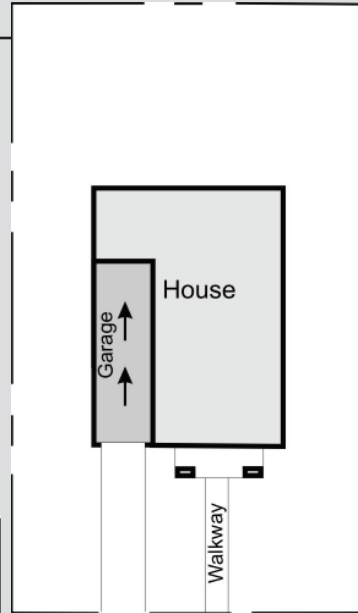


Photo III-67

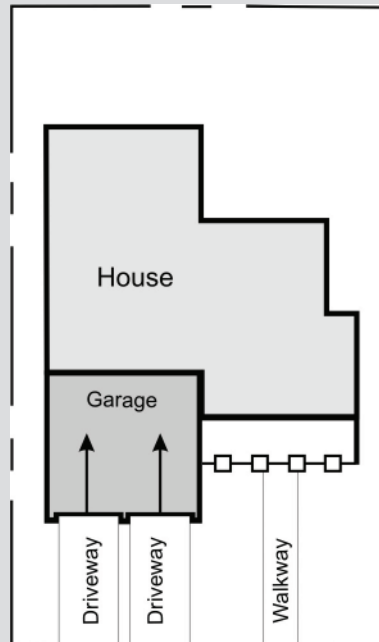
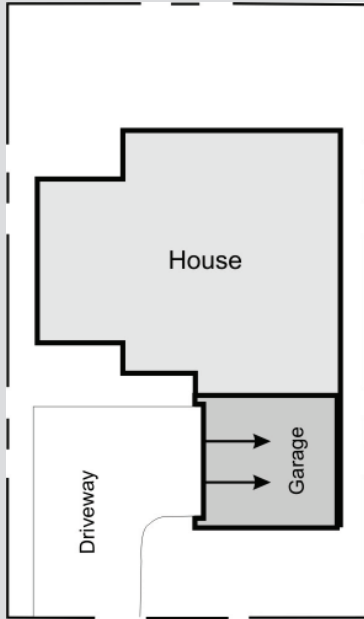


Photo III-68

f) Garages may extend in front of the livable portion of the home if a designated outdoor living area is located in front of the house and either a trellis is incorporated over the garage opening or the garage doors are highly articulated with windows, paneling, or other high quality detailing. Garage doors shall be recessed a minimum of one foot from the garage door frame and garage doors shall be painted a darker contrasting color.

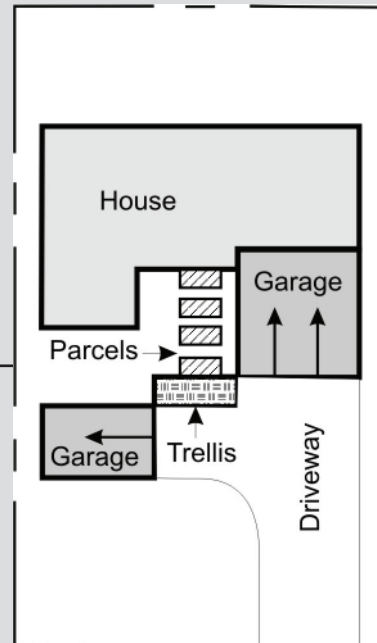
Photo III-69



g)
Place the garage perpendicular to the street (side-on garage). The front yard setback requirement for side-on garages may be reduced by a maximum of five feet from the front property line and shall include windows along the elevation facing the street.



Photo III-70



h)
When a side-on garage is developed in conjunction with a garage facing the street, the home design shall include an announcement of entry to the livable portion of the home. Entry treatments may include a trellis, arbor, gate, landscape, and/or enhanced pavement.

- i) Other garage placements/designs that serve the functional equivalent to minimize the visual dominance of the garage from the street.
- 13) In addition to the previous garage placement provisions, the City intends to minimize the appearance of three- or more-car garages facing the street. To that end, one of the design options listed below shall be utilized for each three- or more-car floor plan within the *master home plan* series. Three car garages shall be designed with at least one individual single car garage door. All garages shall be designed with articulated garage doors (e.g., windows, paneling, or other high quality detailing). Homes with more than three car garages shall be designed with a maximum of three car garage doors facing the street (see photos III-71 thru III-74).
- a) Shift the orientation of the garage so that one or more of the garage doors do not face the street (e.g., side-on garage that is perpendicular to the street). Side-on garages may be located a minimum of 15 feet from the front property line and shall include windows along the elevation facing the street. When a side-on garage is developed in conjunction with a garage facing the street, the home design shall include an announcement of entry to the livable portion of the home. Entry treatments may include a trellis, arbor, gate, landscape, and/or enhanced pavement;
 - b) Place active living areas at the front of the house with windows on the street limiting the garage projection.
 - c) Create tandem parking spaces so that a maximum two-car garage faces the street.
 - d) Design a single garage door that is offset or separated from the face of the two-car garage. Additionally, garage doors shall be recessed a minimum of one foot from the garage door frame and garage doors shall be painted a darker contrasting color or material.
 - e) Other creative design alternatives that serve the functional equivalent of minimizing the appearance of three garage doors facing the street.

Garage
Placement
&
Orientation

Photos of Garage Placement and *Articulation*



Photo III-71: Third and fourth car garage is perpendicular to street with window *articulation*, announcement of entry, and driveway width is limited to 16 feet



Photo III-72: Alternative design to separate the third car garage with articulated and recessed garage doors, alternative driveway design, emphasized entry



Photo III-74: The darker contrasting color of the garage door minimizes the visual impact of the door from the street



Photo III-73: Third car garage is perpendicular to street with window *articulation* and announcement of entry

14) Driveways should not dominate the front yard landscape with excessively wide paved driveways. Minimizing driveway width and *impervious surfaces* in the front yard setback will reduce storm water runoff. To achieve these design and environmental goals, the maximum driveway width for two car garages shall be 16 feet within the required front yard setback. Where the driveway access to three- or more- car garages and/or RV access is located in the required front yard setback, the additional driveway width shall be designed with alternative paving materials and/or design. Examples of alternate paving materials and design include pervious concrete, pervious asphalt, pervious unit pavers, wheel strips (Hollywood driveways), flared driveway, and decorative concrete (see photos III-75 thru III-78).

Photos of alternative driveway materials and design

Photo III-75



Photo III-76



Photo III-77



Photo III-78



- 15) Garages should not dominate the front elevation of the house. To that end, garage door width facing the street shall not exceed 50 percent of the width of the home. Recognizing the design constraints of small lot residential development, subdivisions with minimum lot widths less than 50 feet may increase this proportion to a maximum of 60 percent . These restrictions do not apply to high *density* single-family development in the RD-10 and RD-15 zoning districts.
- 16) When garages in the RD-10 and RD-15 zoning districts are located within five feet of the back of curb, landscaping shall be provided at the base of the garage door frames (see Photo III-80). Additionally, garage doors located within 15 feet from the back of curb shall be recessed one foot from the garage door frame and painted a darker contrasting color (see Photo III-80).

Photos of Garage Enhancements



Photo III-79: Landscaping at base of garage door frame

Photo III-80: Garage door is recessed one foot from the garage door frame



Landscape

- 17) On local residential streets, street trees are required for aesthetic, shade/climate control, and pedestrian purposes. Ideally, street tree plantings will create a contiguous tree canopy along the street over time. A minimum of two trees shall be planted in the front yard area of each single-family residential lot. One of the trees shall be a minimum 15-gallon size planted near the street and sidewalk as listed below (street tree). The second tree (*accent tree*) shall be a minimum five-gallon size and may be located anywhere in the front yard area.
- Where a monolith sidewalk abuts the back of curb, the street tree shall be planted within seven to eight feet from the back of walk.
 - Where the sidewalk is separated from the back of curb with a planter strip, the street tree shall be planted centrally in the planter area.

The street tree requirement on local residential streets will be designed or conditioned in conjunction with the Design Review for *master home plans* and subsequent Building Permits. However, street trees on local residential streets with separated sidewalks may be reviewed and approved in conjunction with the land plan/subdivision map. Alternative landscape design themes along local residential streets may be approved on a case-by-case basis as part of the Design Review process.

- 18) Lawn area that blend from one yard to the next to avoid calling attention to property lines are encouraged. However, where the intent of neighborhood design is to create distinct landscape themes for each home, side yard shrub beds create an attractive buffer and architectural break.
- 19) Groundcovers, shrubs and hedges should be utilized around the foundation line of homes to soften architecture or to hide fences or walls.
- 20) To the extent possible with other design considerations, drought tolerant planting selections and designs are encouraged.
- 21) The City encourages limited increases in stormwater runoff relative to development of previously undeveloped sites. One way to minimize the runoff from individual single-family residential lots is to design front yard landscaping with grassy swales/rain gardens to catch stormwater runoff (or a portion thereof) before the water drains to the street (see Figure III-6 and photos III-81 and III-82).

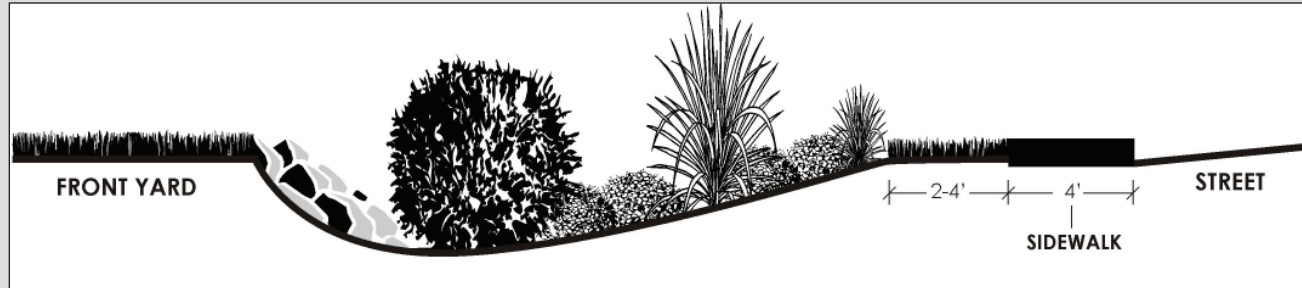
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One generation plants the trees under which another takes its ease.

Chinese proverb

Figure III-6 Grassy Swale



Photos of Rain Gardens in Front Yard Landscape



Photo III-81



Photo III-82