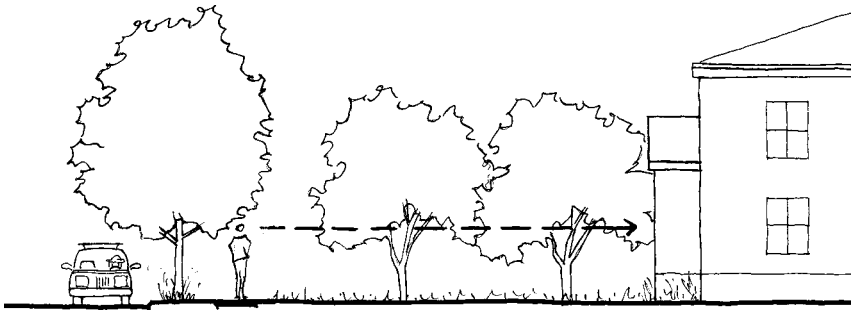
Chapter 3: Basic Principles

This chapter discusses some basic principles for buildings. Although the guidelines provided in other chapters of this document offer specific guidance for particular land use categories in Livermore, this chapter offers a preliminary overview of some basic principles for the design of buildings and how buildings can better relate to the community they serve. These principles, although straightforward and rudimentary, should be considered in the preliminary phases of the design of a project. Applicants should refer to other chapters for more detailed design standards and guidelines. The goal inherent in these principles and the guidelines in this document is to produce a built environment that, rather than being oriented to the automobile, is oriented to people.

A. Building Orientation

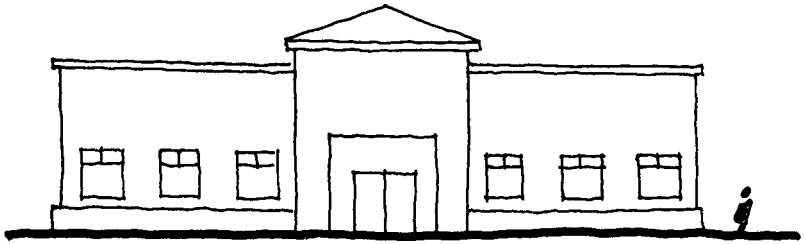
Entrances to buildings or building complexes shall face onto or be clearly visible from a public street.



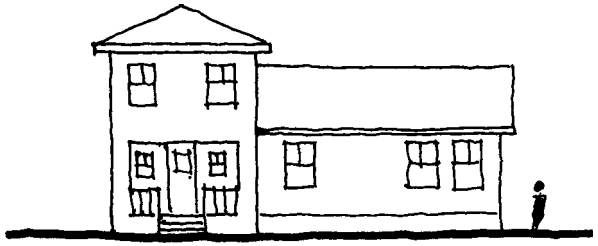
Building entrances should be clearly visible from a public street.

B. Building Massing

The massing, or three-dimensional volumetric form, of larger buildings shall be broken into smaller components that more readily relate to the human scale. Building massing should generally conform to buildings in the surrounding vicinity.



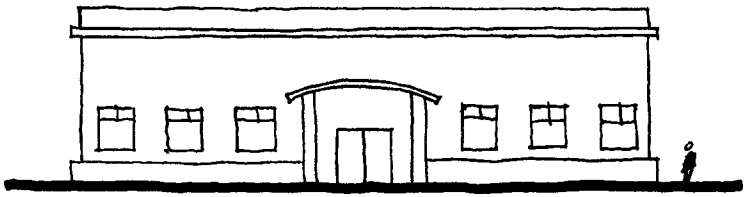
Larger entry volume breaks up smaller mass.



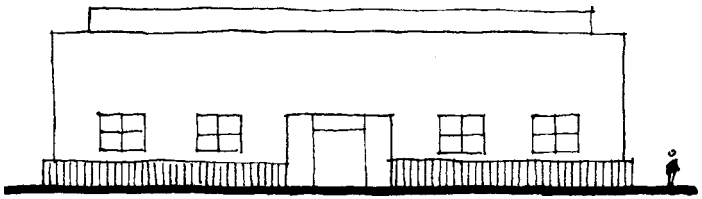
Even single-family homes are made up of various building volumes.

C. Building Components

A building shall have three distinct components that establish a human scale and promote a relationship to people using the building. A building shall have a base, a middle and a top, which can be achieved for any architectural style or building type.



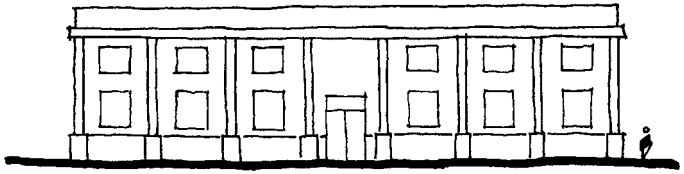
Heavier base and articulated cornice break the façade into smaller components.



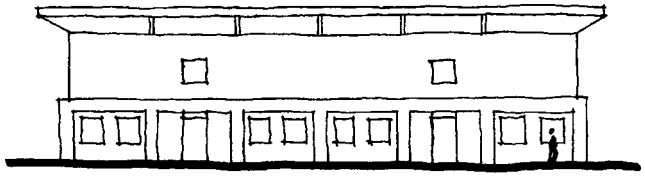
An articulated base of a contrasting material or color divides a tall façade into smaller-scaled pieces.

D. Façade Composition

The design of building façades shall incorporate elements that help to break up long, undifferentiated walls or sides of buildings and facilitate a relationship with the building's users as well as its landscape setting.



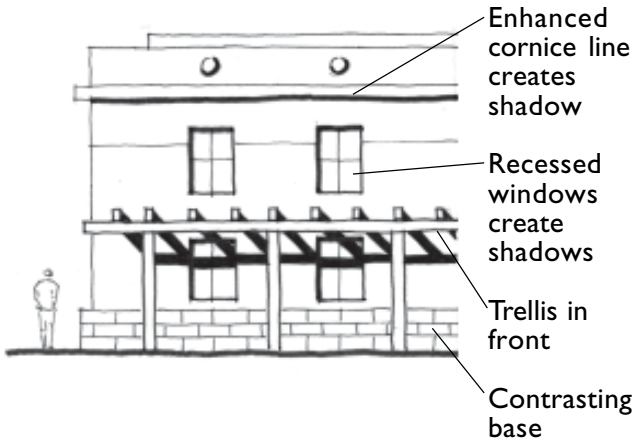
Pilasters and column bases help to break long, linear façades into smaller, scaleable increments.



Ground floor façade and roof design break up the long building wall.

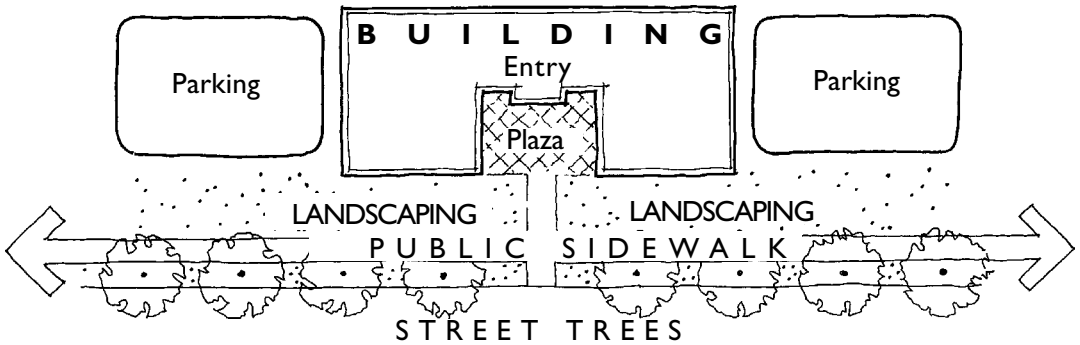
E. Relationship to the Human Form

Building façades that are visible from public streets shall incorporate design features and architectural elements that relate to the scale of the pedestrian. Buildings that utilize smaller-scale elements and useable outdoor spaces, such as plazas or seating areas, will appear less massive, fit more appropriately on their sites and appear more inviting to visitors and residents or building users.



F. Pedestrian Orientation

Site planning, building design and landscaping of projects should implement design solutions that provide amenities, maximize access and optimize the use of new development by pedestrians.



Plazas and forecourts provide transitional space between the public and private realms. Locating parking beside buildings facilitates more immediate pedestrian access to the building.

G. View Preservation

Buildings should be sited to maximize views from public streets of the geographic and topographic features that surround the City.

Building placement maximizes opportunities for views from public streets.