

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ARBOR

A landscape structure consisting of a latticework shelter that may be intertwined with climbing vines and flowers.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The composition of a building, its overall scale, proportions of primary forms, building elements, details and openings that help define its purpose and use.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The aesthetics of a building, defined by its primary forms, building elements and details within these elements and the materials used to construct them. An architectural style is often associated with a certain region or historic period.

BALANCE

Defined as having equilibrium and stability. It may be achieved by a symmetrical design in which its various elements identically correspond in size, shape and relative position on opposite sides of a dividing line or central axis. It may also be achieved by an asymmetrical design in which the elements on either side of a dividing line or central axis are not identical but nonetheless, when perceived as a whole, display equilibrium.

BLOCK

An area surrounded by city streets, often subdivided into separately owned parcels, or areas facing either side of the same city street between the intersections of perpendicular city streets.

COMPATIBLE

To be harmonious with one another, without negative impacts to either.

CONTEXT

The physical characteristics of a specific location, establishing its setting.

DARK SKY COMPLIANT

A method to limit nighttime light pollution.

DAYLIGHT PLANE

Daylight plane is a tool used to regulate building heights to avoid shadow and privacy impacts on adjacent properties. The “plane” is an imaginary line that begins at a designated point above the ground (e.g., 25 feet), and continues at a defined angle (e.g., 45 degrees) up to the height limit of a structure. It is used to further limit height or expanse to a more restrictive geometry. See the definition of daylight plane in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-107).

EMPHASIS

The condition in which individual buildings along a street, or individual elements of a single building direct attention to themselves. The incorrect use of emphasis can upset the rhythm of a building or a street when improperly using it to create symmetry, or using it to call attention to itself, to the detriment of its neighbors.

FENCE/WALL

A free-standing, self-supporting, linear vertical device, without supporting additional horizontal framing, used to create a sense of separation, sometimes visually and acoustically. A fence or wall may include a trellis or arbor that is solely supported by the fence or wall and is no greater than 24 inches in width. See the definition of fence in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-107).

FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

The ratio between a structure's or combination of structures' gross floor area and the area of the parcel upon which it or they stand. See the definition of floor area in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-108).

HARDSCAPE

Manmade or non-living materials used to cover the surface of a site. For the purpose of calculating coverage, hardscape includes structures, pools and decks, but does not include fences, retaining walls, benches or other similar landscaping features that cumulatively cover no more than 100 square feet. See the definition of hardscape in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-109).

IDENTITY

The quality of encouraging a sense of association, belonging or unity.

LIGHT TRESPASS

The unwanted illumination of grounds, structures or nighttime sky.

LITE

The individual window pane between muntins.

MASS

The three-dimensional form of a building, usually comprising a collection of intersecting simple solid geometric forms. The arrangement of these forms into a complex composition is generally described as the "massing" of a building.

MODULATION

The stepping back or projecting forward of portions of a building façade to reduce its overall massing.

MUNTIN

A bar that divides or simulates the division of individual window panes.

ORIENTATION

The quality of relating to a specific location.

PERGOLA

A landscape structure consisting of parallel colonnades with open roof framing members.

PERMEABLE PAVING

Paving material and/or layouts of paving that allow for the intrusion of fluids.

PORTE-COCHERE

A covered passageway connected to a structure for vehicles to access one part of a property to another.

PRIVACY

The sense of seclusion from the visual or acoustical observation of others.

PROPORTION

The ratio of dimensions between the width and height of a window or door, between a building's high point and the heights of other points on the building, between building forms and elements, and the relation between overall height and width to the width of its street frontage. The proportion of a building within the streetscape is determined by lot size, street front setbacks, and the location and size of adjacent buildings. It is also determined by its relationship with streetscape elements, such as landscaping, lighting standards, and other on-site and off-site features.

RHYTHM

The relationship of the overall characteristics of buildings to each other, or the relationship of an individual building's components to each other. See **Proportion**, **Balance** and **Emphasis**, for types of Rhythm.

SCALE

The measurement of the relationship of one object or thing to another object or thing. The scale of a building can be described in terms of its relationship to another building or group of buildings, or to a human being. The relationship of a building, or the portions of a building, to a human being is called its relationship to "human scale".

SETBACK

An open space resulting from the placement of structures or site features with respect to streets, rights-of-way or property lines. Setback measurements are taken between a property line and the footprint of a structure or site feature.

SIGNIFICANT VIEW

As defined in Sections 3.03.01.1.B and 3.03.01.1.C. See the definition of view in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-106).

STREET WALL

A continuous set of building façades with similar heights that are set back a similar distance from the property line. For pedestrians, having a *street wall* on both sides of the *street* creates a feeling of comfort and enclosure.

TEXTURE

Variations in the exterior façade of a building, created by the exterior material, the patterns inherent in the material or the patterns in which the material is placed. A building's texture may vary from rough (wood shingles, masonry, stone) to smooth (clapboard or stucco). Landscape planting also has a texture defined by the size and density of a plant's leaves. Planting texture may range from coarse (large leaves carried openly on the branching system) to fine (small leave carried densely on the branches).

TRELLIS

A series of horizontal framing elements, sometimes with lattice work that is either self-supporting or supported by a building, fence or wall.

YARD

An open space between a property line and the nearest point of any structure on that lot, including eaves, sills, cornices or other architectural projections. See the definition of yards in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 17.90.020 (page 17-106).

YARD, FRONT

A yard extending across the full width of the lot measured between the front property line and the nearest point of any structure on that lot, including all eaves, sills, cornices or other architectural projections. The “front yard” of a corner lot is the yard containing the main pedestrian access to the building from the sidewalk or street. There is a difference between a “front yard” and a “street yard setback.”

YARD, REAR

A yard extending across the full width of the lot measured between the rear property line and the nearest point of a structure on that lot, including all eaves, sills, cornices or architectural projections. There is a difference between a “rear yard” and a “rear yard setback.”

YARD, SIDE

A yard on either side of the lot, extending from the front line of any building to the rear line thereof, the width of which is measured between the interior side property line of that lot and the nearest point of a structure on that lot, including all eaves, sills, cornices or other architectural projections. There is a difference between a “side yard” and a “side yard setback.”

ADDITIONAL GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

An additional reference for glossary of terms may be found in:

- **A Visual Dictionary of Architecture**
By Francis D.K. Ching
Wiley, 2011
- **Piedmont Zoning Ordinance**
Sec. 17.90; Definitions and
Measurements