CHAPTER 4: SITE PLANNING

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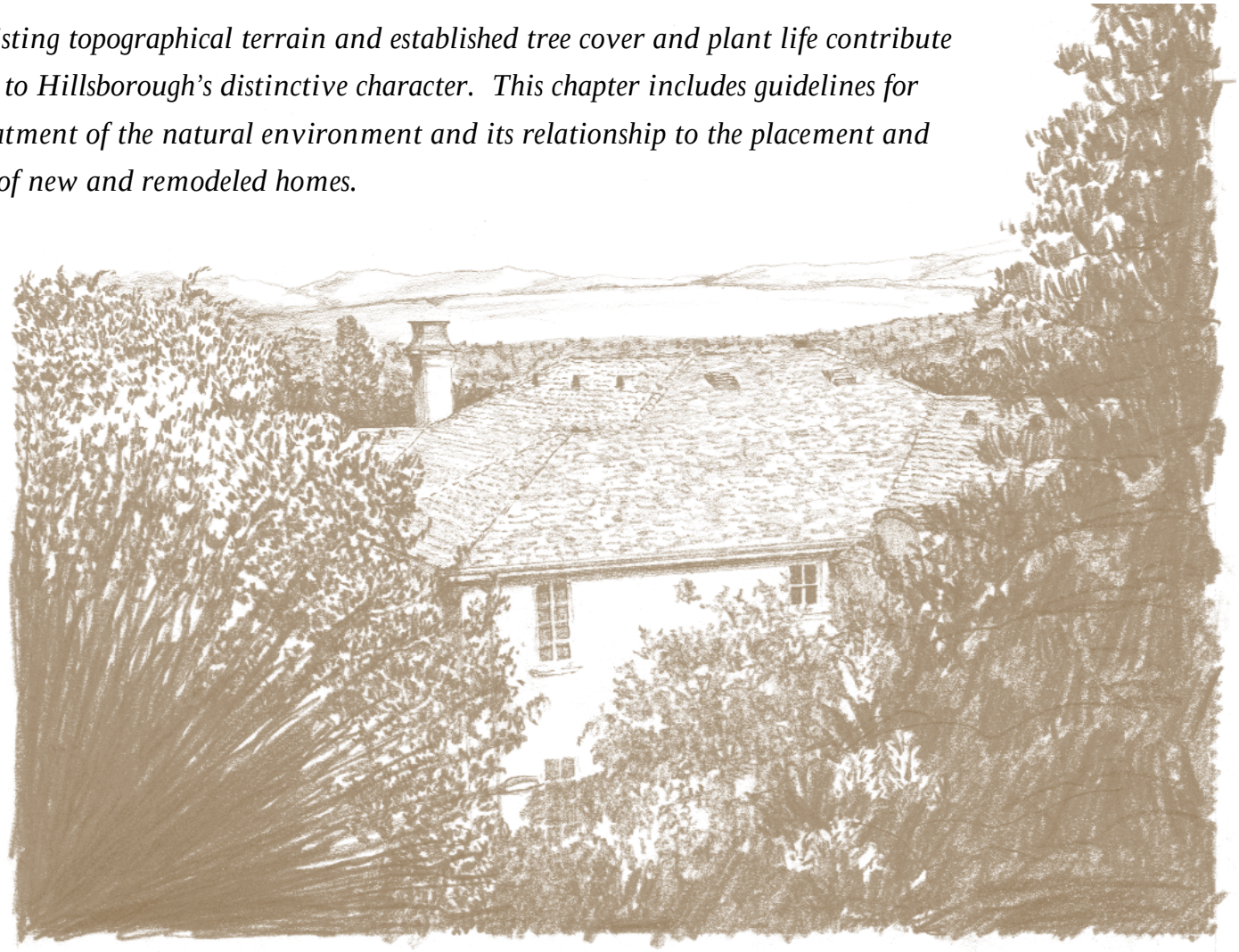
The existing topographical terrain and established tree cover and plant life contribute greatly to Hillsborough's distinctive character. This chapter includes guidelines for the treatment of the natural environment and its relationship to the placement and design of new and remodeled homes.



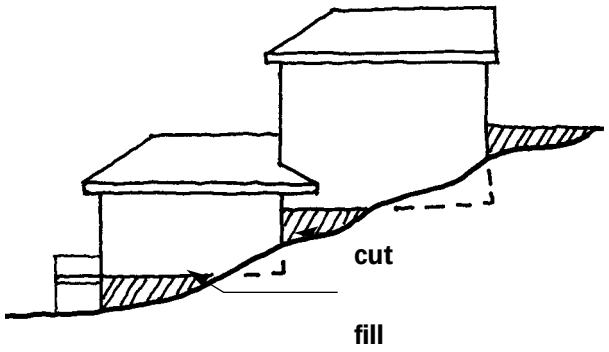
A. Natural Site Features

The siting and design of structures should integrate mature and native trees and existing vegetation into the site plan and building design. It is Town policy to prevent significant loss of vegetation through individual projects.

B. Topography

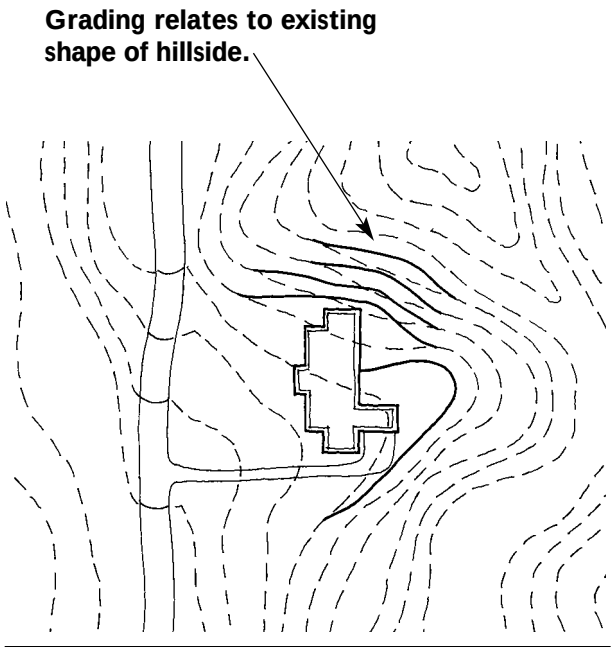
1. Siting

Siting and design of structures should conform to the natural contours of the site and mitigate the need for extensive cutting, filling or terracing.

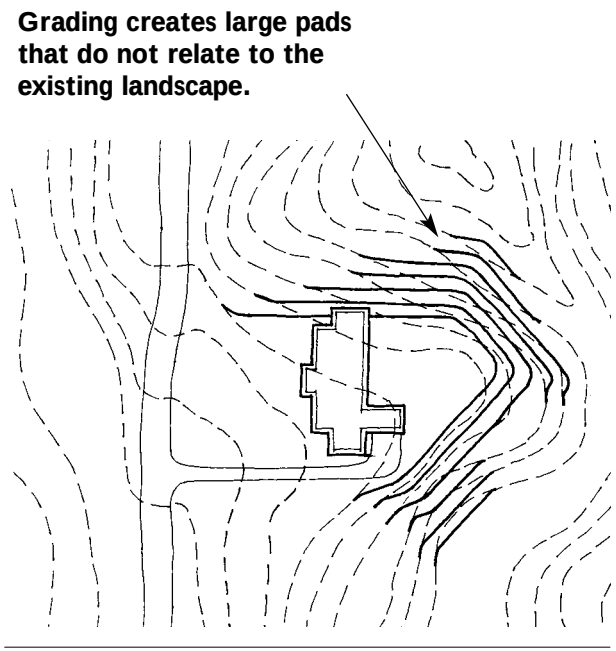


2. Grading

Where grading is necessary, contour grading that emulates the topography of the existing slope should be utilized. The site should not be shaped into terraced building pads nor should a flat site be created on a parcel that has existing topography.



Encouraged



Discouraged

"A house is in delicate balance with its surroundings, and they with it."

The Place of Houses

C. Building on Hillsides

Development proposed on slopes in excess of 25 percent are subject to the guidelines in this section. Planning staff can assist to determine the slope of a parcel.

1. Grading

Grading should be minimized to reflect the natural site conditions and existing slope and should not create a slope condition that is in excess of 50 percent.

Grading within an interior setback area, which is defined in the Municipal Code, should be avoided.

2. Driveway Grade

Unless otherwise approved by the Fire Department, driveways shall not exceed 16 percent slope, as prescribed in the Municipal Code. Additionally, the first 15 linear feet of a driveway shall not exceed a 5 percent slope.

3. *Massing*

A building's mass, roof form and projecting elements should be designed so as to minimize the visual impact of the building on the slope. Rooflines should be designed in ways that minimize interference with views from neighboring properties.

a. Step Building

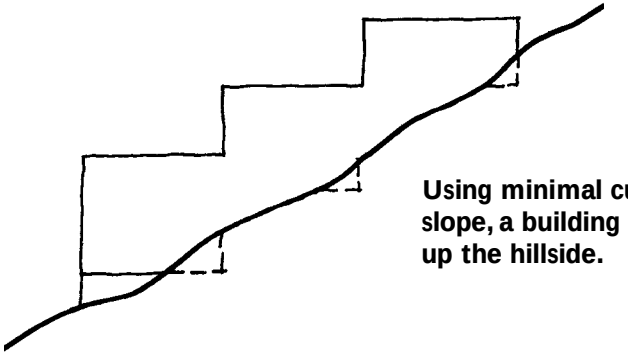
Buildings should be broken into a collection of volumes that step up or down a hillside, unless appropriate for a particular style. Buildings should avoid excessive cantilevers, unless they are integrated into the architectural design and topographical conditions.

b. Roof Forms

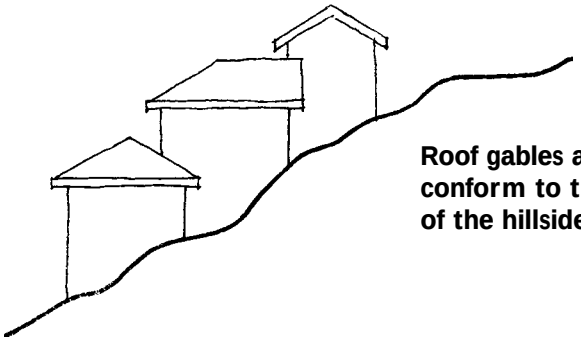
Roof forms, such as gabled or hipped roofs, should generally parallel the slope.

c. Decks

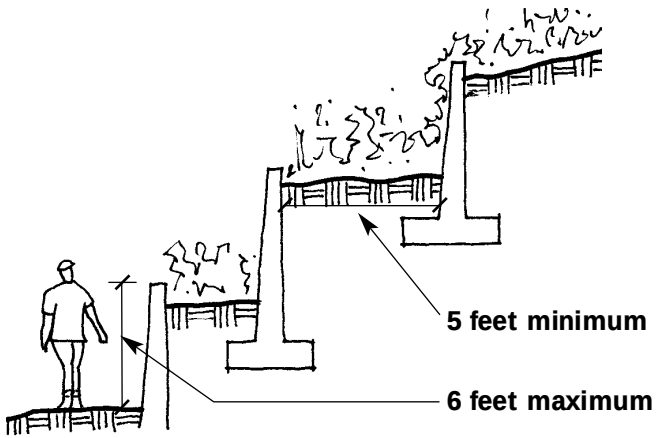
Overhanging or cantilevered decks require special design consideration. Excessive cantilevering should be avoided, unless it is integrated into the architectural design and topographical conditions.



Using minimal cuts into the slope, a building is able to step up the hillside.



Roof gables and hips generally conform to the existing slope of the hillside.



4. Retaining Walls

Retaining walls shall not be higher than 6 feet, except where they are located within an Interior Setback Area, in which case they shall be no taller than 4½ feet, as prescribed in the Town Municipal Code.

Terraced retaining walls shall be horizontally separated by a minimum distance of 5 feet and that area shall be landscaped.

The exposed face of a retaining wall should be constructed of natural materials, such as stone or wood, so as to be in harmony with the predominant color and character of the adjacent landscape.

D. Neighborhood Context

Buildings shall conform to setback standards and should generally reflect the established development conditions of neighboring properties, including building setbacks and landscape treatments.

E. Views

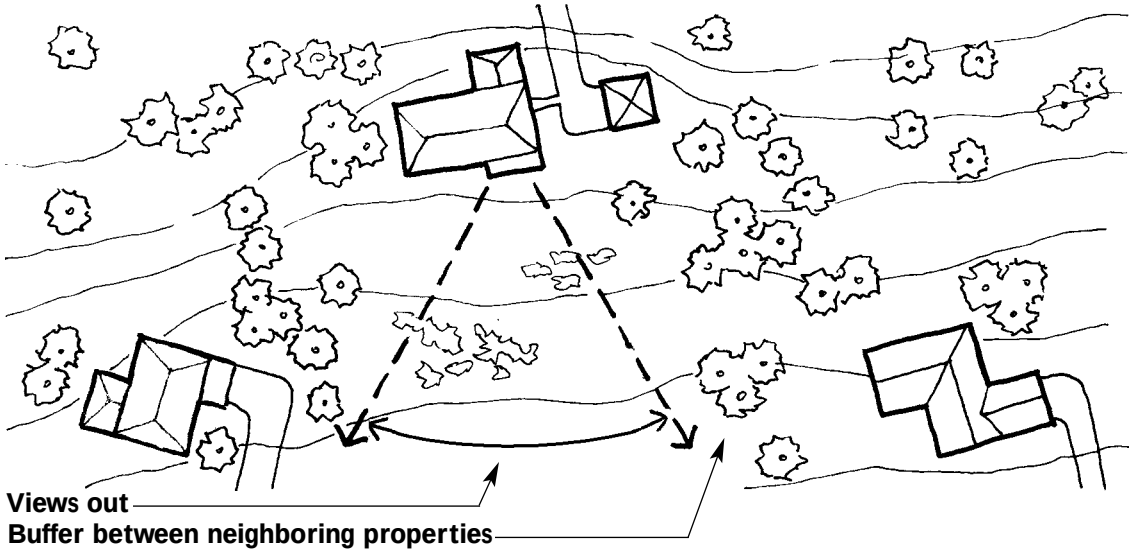
The various topographical and tree cover conditions that exist in Hillsborough create unique view opportunities that often require sensitive site planning.

"An essential dilemma of architecture is that it straddles two inherently contradictory levels of endeavor: the making of things and the making of places."

ReBuilding

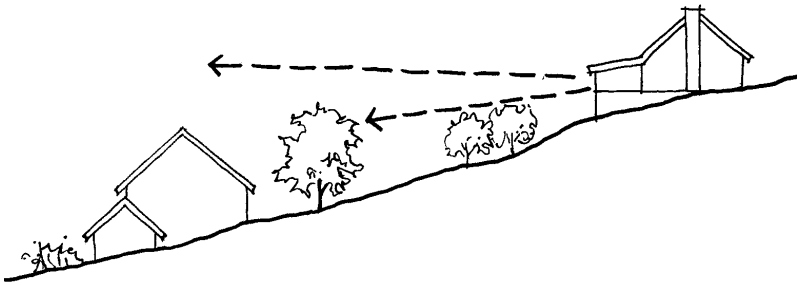
1. Views from Site

Where feasible, buildings should be sited so as to maximize the view potential from the site while also maximizing the distance from buildings on adjacent properties.

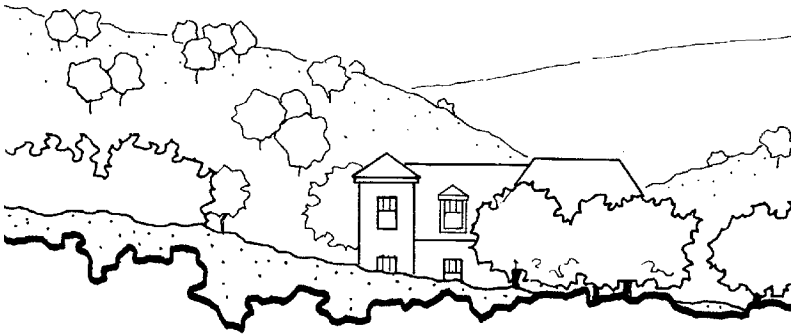


2. Views from Neighboring Properties

The Town of Hillsborough does not have an ordinance protecting views. Where feasible, buildings and trees should be designed and sited so as to minimize the obstruction of key views from adjacent properties.



Landscaping should be placed to screen views to proximate properties while allowing views out.

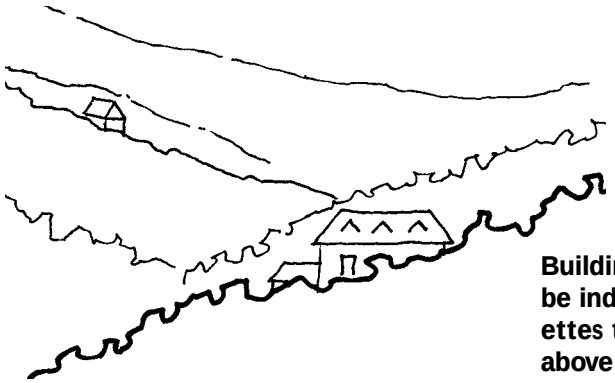


A carefully planned site layout and well-placed landscape elements might only achieve a partial buffering of views between proximate parcels.

3. Ridgeline Protection

Buildings should not be sited on ridgelines or hilltops.

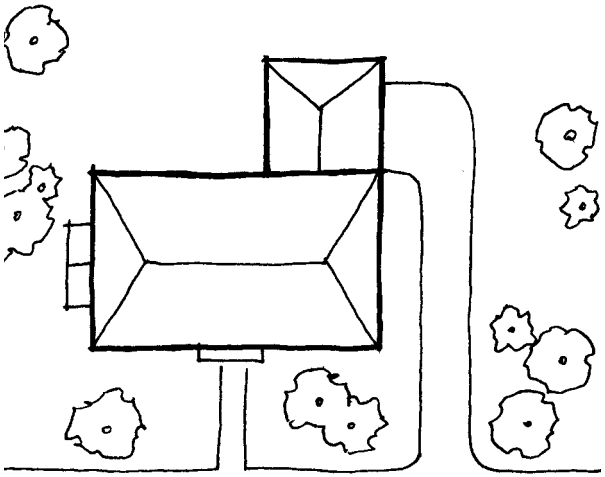
The rooflines of buildings on hillsides should be below the height of the existing tree canopy.



Buildings should not be individual silhouettes that rise above ridgelines.

F. Parking

Where feasible, entries to garages should be on the sides of buildings to avoid placing them in direct view from a public street.



Garage is located behind house.