

# General Architectural Design Guidelines – Adopted 2/19/2020

## The Echo Park Improvement Association Welcomes You!

Developers are members of the Echo Park community, and are entitled to the same access to, and respect from the community that any stakeholder is entitled to. The Echo Park Improvement Association (EPIA) strives to find a balance between development goals and the goals of the community to produce the best projects possible. EPIA encourages developers to meet with us early and often to get input from us and our community's vast experience and resources.

### Background:

The architecture and scale of buildings in Echo Park is one of the features that so many of our stakeholders cherish. In reflecting on the value of what we have, EPIA recognizes that:

- A significant component of the quality of life for a community is based on the perceived value of the investment made into buildings and the land where they are sited.
- Echo Park is an area that is architecturally rich. The beauty and scale of its structures is the result of historic development and reflects styles that span more than a century. The styles and designs that are valued today reflect the styles that were, at the time they were built, contemporary styles.
- While some micro neighborhoods like the Angelino Heights Historic Preservation Overlay Zone have specific architectural styles, in general, there is no style that is specific to Echo Park. It is eclectic.
- Historic architecture that is perceived to be successful or “classic” today usually reflects the materials and craftsmanship that were “state of the art” when they were built.

### Architectural Guidelines

EPIA encourages:

1. Design with vision and integrity: Design that is fresh and contemporary or reinterprets the historic with a fresh, contemporary approach, and is consistent throughout the structure. While accurate reproduction of historic design is a wonderful concept, it is very expensive, and can fail the test of time if compromised by budgetary limitations.
2. Development that respects and is appropriate relative to the mass, scale (height, floor area ratios) and setbacks of what exists in the immediate areas surrounding the proposed development.
3. The use of high quality or state-of-the-art materials and craftsmanship appropriate for the structure being built, with particular attention paid to windows and finish.
4. **A 100-year View:** That the design you build today will be something your grandchildren will be proud of!

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## ***General Design Considerations:***

**Community Outreach:** We strongly encourage developers to canvass an area at least a block around your project providing adequate opportunity to inform neighbors of your plans, building support wherever possible, and inviting all neighbors to participate with the EPIA through attendance of Neighborhood Issues Committee meetings or letters.

**Echo Park/Silver Lake Community Plan:** The community had a lot of input into this plan. Its roadmap in general is a reflection of the community’s vision for future development. Study the plan and ask about its intent whenever possible. In general, variances from the plan will be viewed with great scrutiny.

**Historic Preservation:** In general, we see value in every structure built here over the last 100 years, even when others don’t. Our definition of historic includes the humble and the anonymous, not just grand buildings or the homes of the notable. Each structure from the past contributes to the historic fabric of the neighborhood and tells a story of our unique past. “Restoration” is our favorite word. Our two second favorite words are “Adaptive Reuse.”

Plans to demolish are not taken lightly. When historic structures are in the way, we seriously encourage you to explore relocation as the first option. If this is not possible, salvage is encouraged. Where historic structures are involved, we suggest consultation with the Echo Park Historical Society: [www.historicechopark.org](http://www.historicechopark.org).

**Landscaping:** We have a lot of trees in the neighborhood. Many planted through community-led volunteer efforts. The community is sensitive to appropriate maintainable landscaping, and respect for existing native and heritage trees.

**ADA Readiness:** Buildings that are required to be ADA compliant for access are encouraged to provide an appropriate number of ADA ready (not adaptable) units and ADA parking spaces.

**Transportation & Parking:** Our neighborhood was originally designed and conceived around public transportation which meant little or no off-street parking. New development is encouraged to reflect real life requirements, which may be different than what is required by the City of Los Angeles.

- Ingress and egress relative to existing traffic conditions are encouraged to be thought through carefully.
- Ride sharing services are increasingly popular and the arrival of autonomous vehicles is on the horizon. Ride-share circulation and passenger pick-up and drop-off should be thoroughly considered.
- New structures for automobiles should be designed with future re-purposing in mind; including level versus sloped floors, appropriate ceiling heights and chases to accommodate future utilities and ventilation.

**Trash:** Every project when occupied produces trash. Projects with individual household bins should have dedicated storage spaces which cannot be easily adapted for other purposes and are convenient for setting out for pick-up and then re-stowing. Projects with common bins should anticipate how the bins will be accessed by users and haulers as well as the noise and traffic impacts of trash hauling services.

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**Street Facing Facades:** Pedestrian friendly architecture increases public safety and engagement. In residential areas, projects should be mindful of the prevailing setbacks of neighboring properties. Multi-unit residential projects that face the street ideally will provide entrances at the street that will look and feel like entrances. Driveways and street facing parking structures can create pedestrian "voids." Commercial and large multi-unit buildings should provide street fronts that are interesting and engaging to pedestrians, ideally with retail or other publicly accessible spaces.

**Environment:** Energy Star compliance is a minimum goal. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) compliance is suggested: <http://www.usgbc.org/>

Solar is now a mandate in California for some residential projects. The dollar value for solar and battery storage technology is on a steeply positive trend. Whether your project incorporates these technologies now or not, thought should be made in design that can easily accommodate these products in the future.

Please go to <http://www.epia-echopark.org/> for more information regarding the Echo Park Improvement Association and the Neighborhood Issues Committee.