



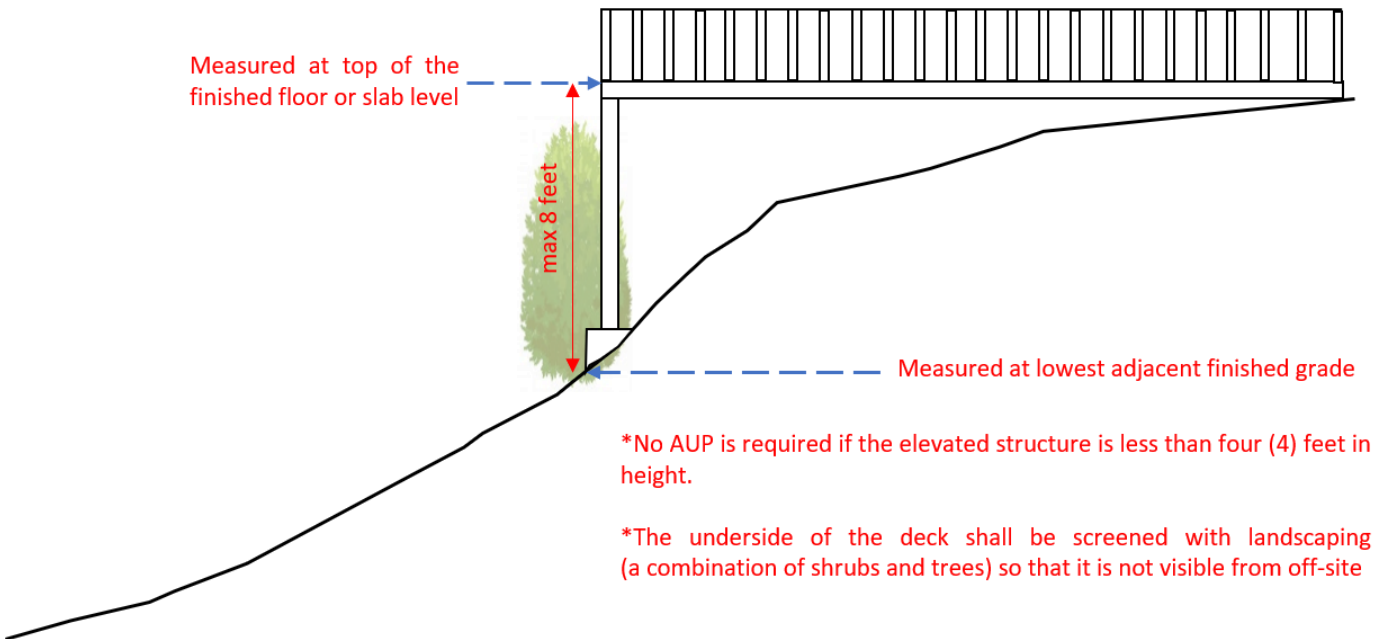
Elevated Structures & Retaining Walls Guidelines

City of West Covina- Community Development Department - Planning Division

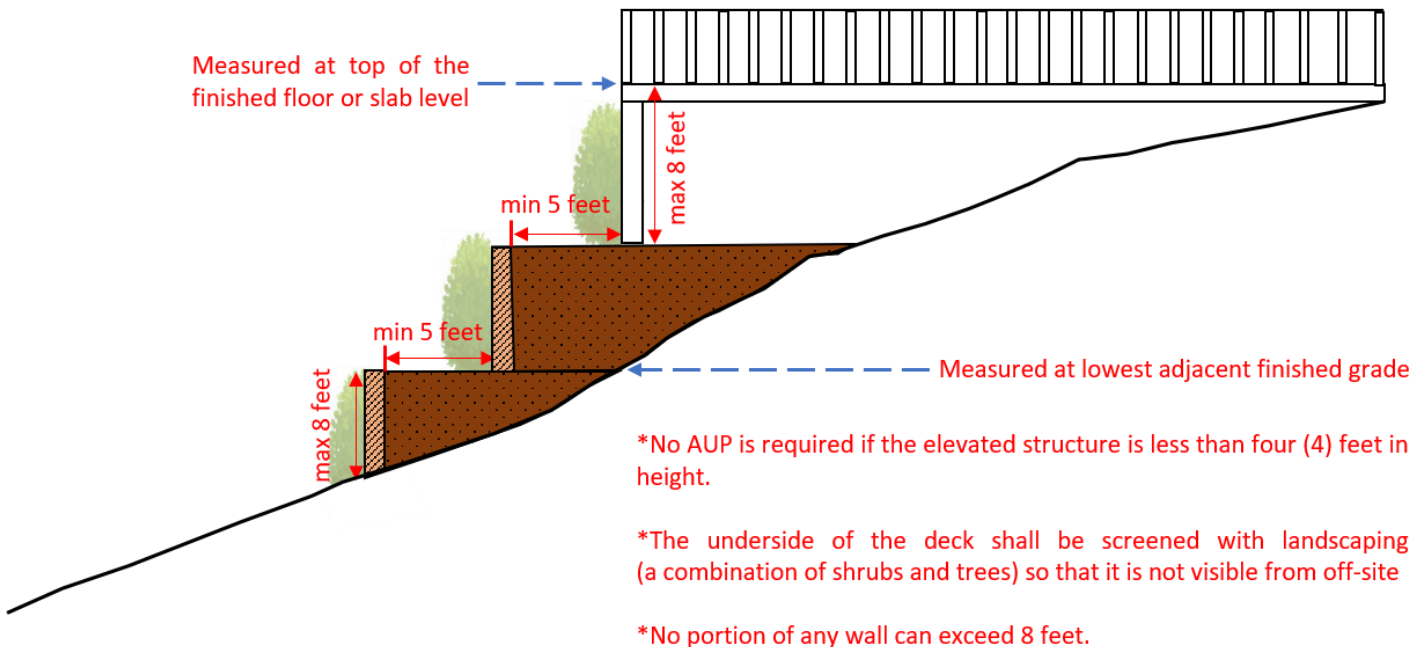
(The following represents a summary of development standards and should not be mistaken for the Zoning Code)

See Planner for details

DECK



DECK (Cross-Section)

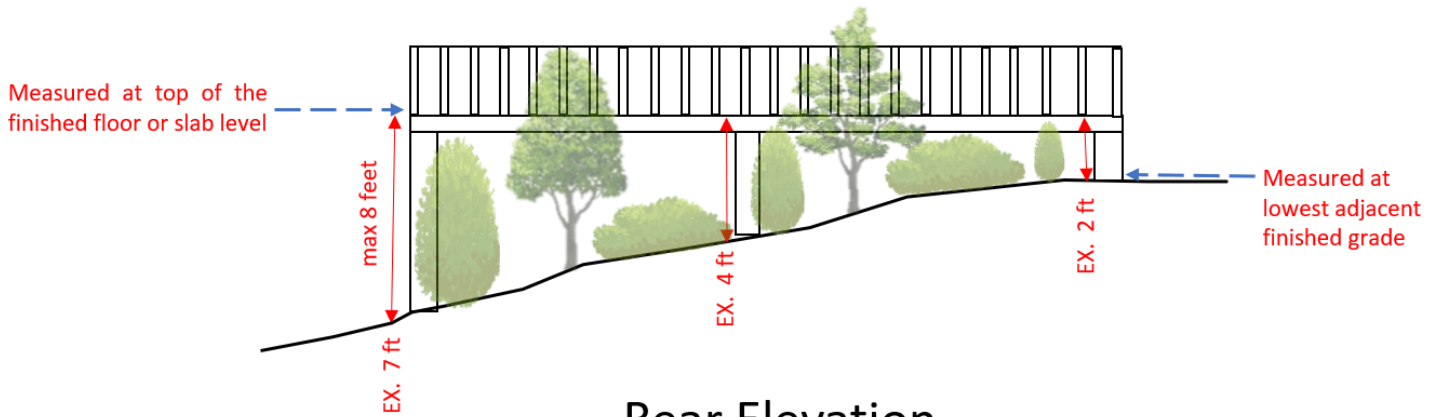




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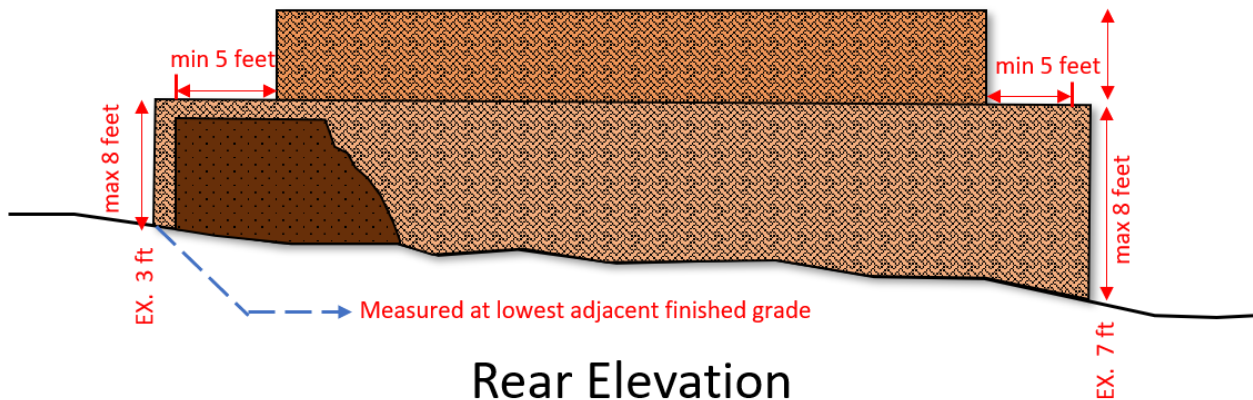
DECK



*No AUP is required if the elevated structure is less than four (4) feet in height.

*The underside of the deck shall be screened with landscaping (a combination of shrubs and trees) so that it is not visible from off-site

OUTWARD FACING RETAINING WALL



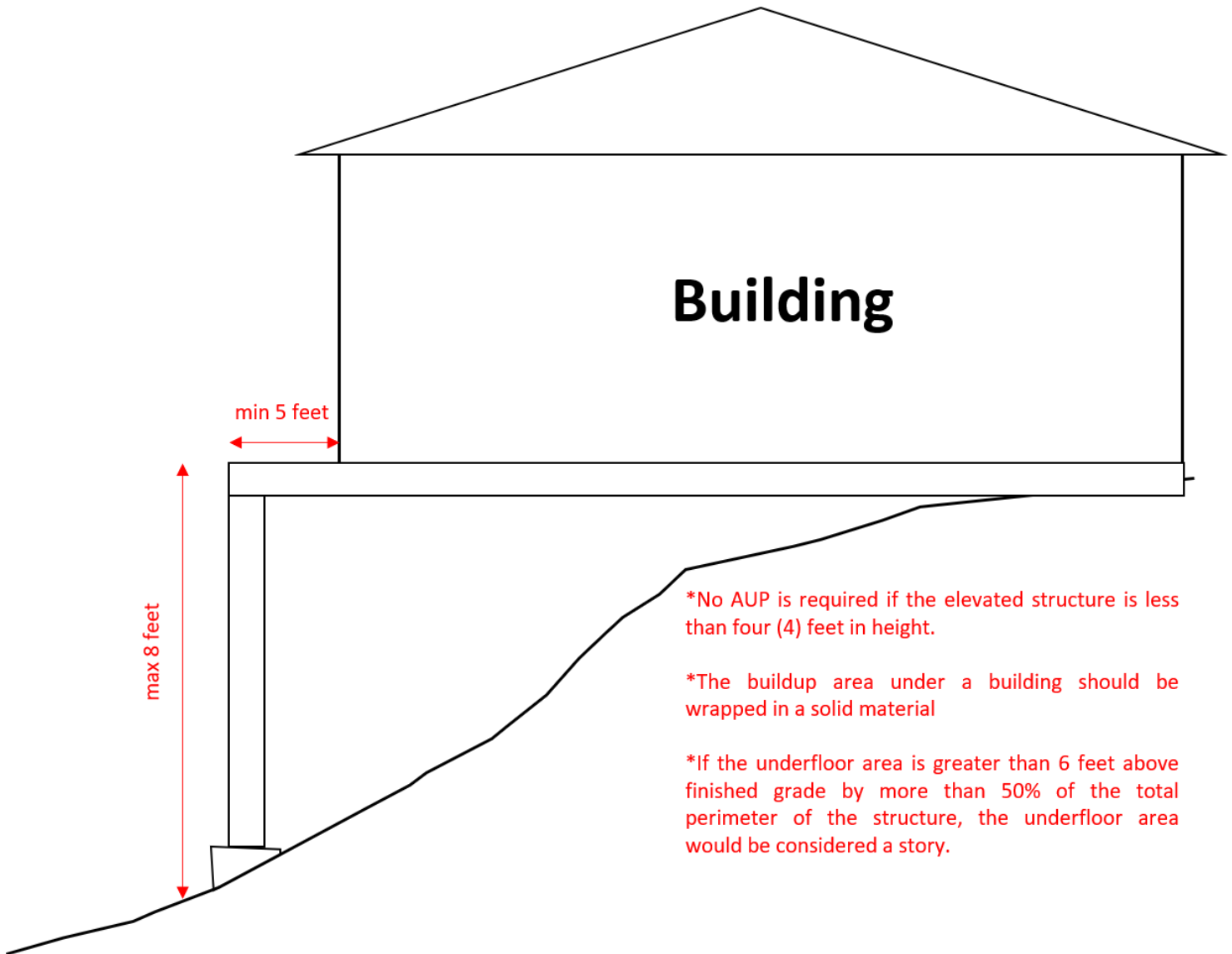
*No AUP is required if the elevated structure is less than four (4) feet in height.

*No portion of any wall can exceed 8 feet.



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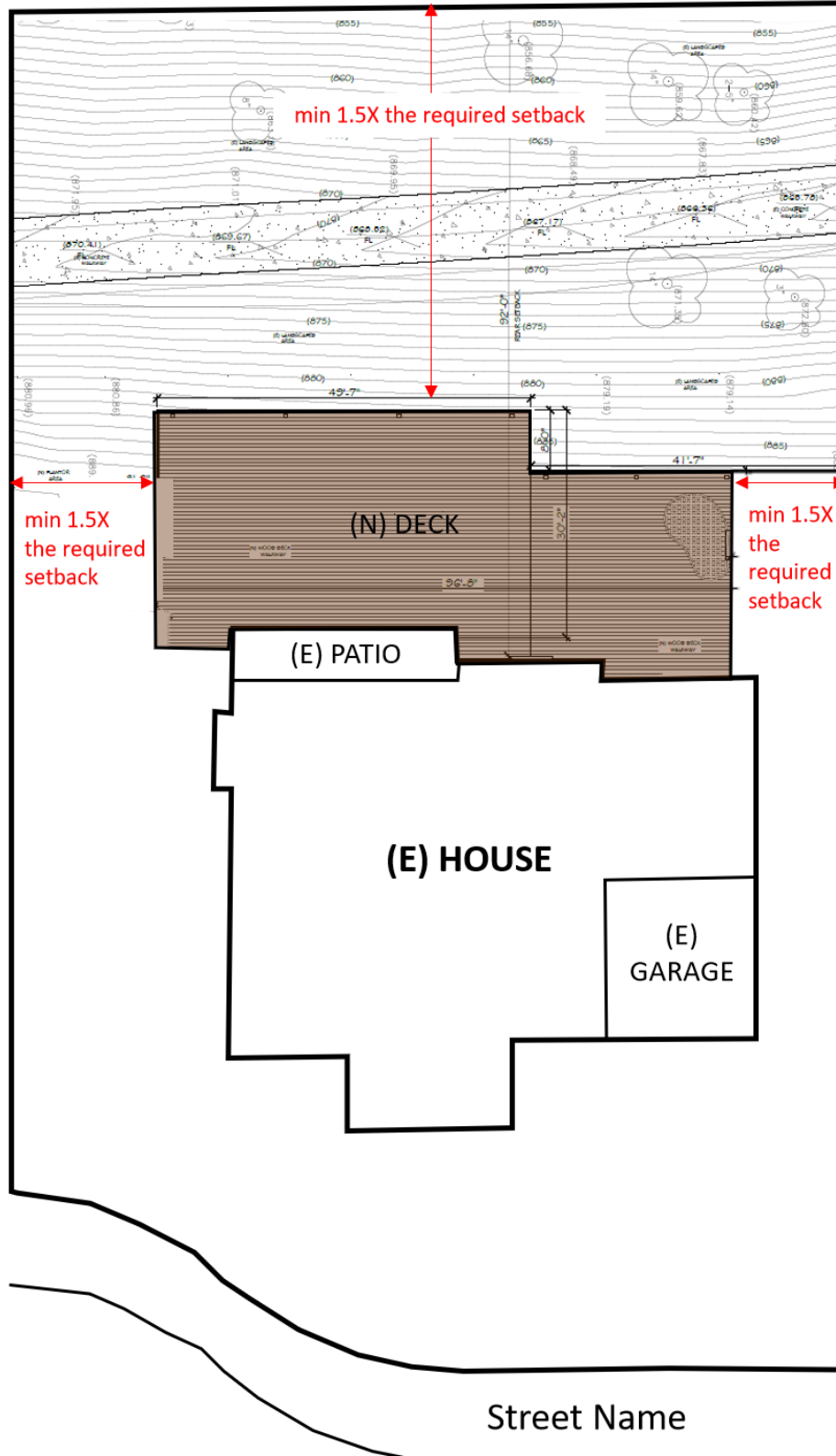
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Sec. 26-414. - Retaining walls and elevated structures.

- (a) *Definitions* . For the purposes of this section, the following definitions shall apply:
- (1) "Retaining wall" shall mean a wall designed to resist the lateral displacement of soil or other materials. The height of a retaining wall shall be measured at continuous points along the length of the wall from the top of the wall to the lowest adjacent finished grade.
 - (2) "Landscaped crib wall" shall mean a type of retaining wall comprised of a hollow rectangular cribwork of logs, timbers, reinforced concrete beams, or steel beams filled with soil or rock, designed with vines and/or other planting extended across the face of the wall.
 - (3) "Elevated structure" shall mean any deck, patio, view platform, tennis or sport court, or other similar structure which is elevated above finished grade. The height of an elevated structure shall be measured at continuous points around the perimeter of the structure from the top of the finished floor or slab level of the structure to the lowest adjacent finished grade.
 - (4) "Screened wall or fence" shall mean any wall or fence, other than a retaining wall, designed and constructed for the purposes of screening, security, and/or separation of property.
 - (5) "Screen wall or fence, solid" shall mean any screen wall or fence comprised of a material such that more than thirty (30) percent of the view through the fence or wall is obstructed.
- (b) *Exemptions* . The following types of retaining walls and elevated structures shall be exempt from the regulations of this section regardless of their height:
- (1) Retaining walls and elevated structures that are not readily visible from the ground level of surrounding properties or public rights-of-way as determined by the planning director.
 - (2) Retaining walls necessary for reasons of emergency slope stabilization and/or public safety as determined by the city engineer.
 - (3) Decks or balconies not exceeding two hundred (200) square feet in area which take direct access from the second story of a residence and do not extend horizontally over an area with a horizontal to vertical slope ratio of three to one (3:1) or steeper.
- (c) *Administrative use permit required*. Unless otherwise exempt pursuant to subsection (b) above the following types of retaining walls and structures may only be constructed with the approval of an administrative use permit as set forth in article VI, division 5 of this chapter:
- (1) Any retaining wall or elevated structure in excess of four (4) feet in height.
 - (2) Any retaining wall or elevated structure constructed in combination with a screen wall or fence above, such that the combined height exceeds eight and one-half (8.5) feet. Wall and fence surfaces, or portions thereof, that are not solid as defined in subsection (a)(4) above shall not be counted toward the measurement of height.
 - (3) Any structure constructed on top of an area of artificial fill created by a retaining wall or constructed on top of an elevated structure proposed or approved pursuant to subsections (1) and (2) above, such that any portion of such structure is located within five (5) feet of the edge of the retaining wall or elevated structure. Such structures shall not be subject to the maximum height limits pursuant to subsection (d) below.
- (d) *Maximum height*. Except for those walls and structures exempted pursuant to subsection (b) above, no retaining wall (except for a landscaped crib wall) or elevated structure shall exceed a maximum height of eight (8) feet, and no landscaped crib wall shall exceed a maximum height of fifteen (15) feet. The height of screen walls and fences constructed above retaining walls and elevated structures shall comply with the standards set forth in section 26-413 of this article.
- (e) *Required setbacks for elevated structures*. All elevated structures shall provide side setbacks of 1.5 times the required side setbacks and shall comply with the required rear yard setback specified in section 26-406. In cases where a side or rear property line is adjacent to a landscape maintenance district, golf course, country club, park, public school or similar type of permanent open space the setback adjacent to such use shall comply to the standard setback required.



Elevated Structures & Retaining Walls

Guidelines

City of West Covina- Community Development Department - Planning Division

- (f) *Parallel retaining walls and fences.* Any retaining walls constructed in combination with other retaining walls, screen walls and/or fences on the same property that are separated and approximately parallel to each other shall be separated by a horizontal distance of three (3) feet or greater. Where two (2) or more walls and/or fences are approximately parallel to each other and separated by a horizontal distance of less than five (5) feet, the parallel walls and/or fences shall be treated as a single wall and the height shall be measured at continuous points from the lowest adjacent finished grade of the lowest wall or fence segment to the top of the highest wall or fence segment. The area between parallel retaining walls and other walls and fences shall be landscaped such that a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of the wall surface will be screened from view once the landscaping reaches maturity.
- (g) *Maintenance .* It shall be the responsibility of the property owner, or other person leasing, occupying, or having charge or possession of a property to properly maintain all retaining walls, including any associated drainage and irrigation systems, in a safe and undamaged condition. All landscaping required per this section shall be maintained in compliance with the standards set forth in section 26-416 of this article.
- (h) *Submittal requirements.* In addition to the application requirements set forth in division 1, article VI of this chapter, the following information shall also be provided:
- (1) Site plan for the entire site indicating the proposed location of the retaining wall or elevated structure. The plan shall include existing and proposed topographic contours, existing trees and vegetation, elevations for the top and bottom of the proposed wall or structure, and the setback from all property lines.
 - (2) Elevation drawings depicting the proposed architectural treatment, including proposed colors and materials.
 - (3) Cross-section of the proposed retaining wall or elevated structure at its point of maximum height indicating the existing and finished grade and the height of the structure as it relates to the finished grade.
 - (4) Landscape/irrigation plan indicating the size and species of all proposed plant materials.
- (i) *Findings .* Before an application for an administrative use permit for a retaining wall/elevated structure may be granted, the following findings shall be made:
- (1) The proposed retaining wall, elevated structure, and/or other structure, has been designed so as to substantially minimize any adverse aesthetic and visual impacts as visible from surrounding properties and public rights-of-way.
 - (2) The proposed retaining wall, elevate structure, and/or other structure complies with the following design standards:
 - a. *Colors and materials.* Decorative materials and/or design elements shall be used as necessary to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the retaining wall or structure. Suggested materials include, but are not limited to, stone, masonry, wood, textured poured concrete, and textured colored precision block with colored grout. Natural and earth-tone colors should be utilized for retaining walls to blend the wall with existing surroundings. A variation in design or materials should be used where necessary to break up large masses and/or add visual interest.
 - b. *Landscaping .* Landscaping shall be integrated into the design of the retaining wall or elevated structure as necessary to screen the retaining wall or structure from open view. Where required, a landscape and irrigation plan shall be reviewed and approved by the planning director. Selected plant species shall be drought tolerant and fire resistant. Suggested plants include, but are not limited to, Arbutus unedo (Strawberry Tree), Nandina domestica (Heavenly Bamboo), Parthenocissus tricuspidata (Boston Ivy), Photinia (Photinia), Pittosporum tobira (Mock Orange), Rhus lancea (African Sumac), Ribes (Currant or Gooseberry), and Xylosma congestum (Shiny Xylosma).
 - c. *Wall separation.* Retaining walls shall be separated into terraced segments where necessary to break up large undifferentiated masses.
 - d. *Privacy impacts.* Retaining walls and structures shall be located and designed to avoid unreasonable interference with the privacy of surrounding properties.

(Ord. No. 1988, §§ 1, 2(Amd. 274, Exh. A), 2-18-97; Ord. No. 1992, §§ 1, 2(Amd. 277, Exh. A), 4-1-97; Ord. No. 2030, § 4, 4-20-99; Ord. No. 2254, § 3(Exh. A, § 3), 1-21-14)