

	CITY OF BELVEDERE – ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL		
	POLICY 15.6 APPROPRIATE COLORS & MATERIALS		
Adoption Date:	5/11/2009 ¹	Adopted by:	City Council Motion
Revised Date:	9/9/2013 ² 3/11/2019 ³ 3/11/2019 6/14/2021 ⁴	Revised by:	City Council Resolution No. 2013-32 City Council Resolution No. 2019-07 City Council Resolution No. 2019-04 City Council Resolution No. 2021-14
Authority:	City Council		

15.6.1 BACKGROUND

On December 16, 2008, and January 20, 2009, the Planning Commission reviewed a written interpretation of Belvedere Municipal Code Section 20.04.140, “Materials and Colors Used,” which was developed to clarify appropriate direction to applicants regarding administrative or staff-level Design Review determinations. The policy maintains applicants’ and residents’ ability to request Planning Commission approval for any project color or material on a case-by-case basis. The policy also addressed long-standing procedures used by the City in the construction of street repairs, park improvements, and utility projects. One resident addressed the Commission and raised concerns about the possibility that the policy could guide Planning Commission decisions. The Commission adopted a motion recommending the policy with changes, including wording to clarify that the policy is for administrative decisions only.

15.6.2 COMMENTS

Staff approvals of new colors and materials are necessarily conservative. The Planning Commission has greater leeway under the Belvedere Municipal Code to review project colors and materials. A succinct policy that defines staff’s interpretation of the Code that is reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council, such as the attached, will encourage a consistent application of the criteria and will provide further guidance to applicants seeking City approvals.

15.6.3 INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 20.04.140 FOR STAFF LEVEL APPROVALS ONLY

These guidelines for interpretation of shall apply to Staff Level approvals only, and not to consideration by the Planning Commission, who shall consider all factors described by the Architectural and Environmental Design Review Code.

¹ Recommended by Planning Commission 1/20/2009

² Recommended by Planning Commission 4/4/2013

³ Recommended by Planning Commission 2/19/2019

⁴ Recommended by Planning Commission 5/18/2021

1. Colors that are not considered “earth tone” and “wood tone”, specifically white and black can be reviewed as a Design Review Exception, provided that the color is compatible with building setting, compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, and that the color does not stand out. Bright whites should be avoided in favor of soft muted whites. Black roofs may be approved if they fit with in the surroundings and do not cause reflection. Staff shall have the authority to elevate the review to a full Planning Commission review at its discretion.
2. The predominant color of a structure should not cause a structure to stand out.
3. As the Design Review criteria require, trim colors and window colors should be compatible with the other building colors. White and off-white are considered complementary trim colors and may be used on house trim, including windows and doors, as well as on garage doors, fences, and other architectural elements.
4. Metals which develop an attractive, naturally-oxidized finish may be left unpainted, but may not be clear-coated to enhance shine. Brush metal finishes without an oxidized patina may be deemed appropriate for use in certain circumstances. Other exposed metal should be: painted flat black, painted to resemble a naturally oxidized finish, or painted a color which minimizes their visibility. This includes fences, railings, metal roof vents, flashing, conduit and other appurtenances.
5. Stone pavers and veneers should be primarily darker colors in the grey, brown, or serpentine range. Manufactured stone is discouraged.
6. Applicants may view the selection of samples and identify the sample that most closely matches their proposed color. Concrete pavement on public property, such as in the right-of-way or public easement, shall meet Public Works Department standards and specifications.
7. Decorative features, such as streetlights, flagpoles, and permanent park installations, such as stone benches, that are located on public property are subject to Design Review and other Planning approvals. Major Public Works projects, such as the San Rafael Avenue Seawall and Beach Road median improvements, are subject to Design Review and other Planning approvals. Other Public Works projects located in the public right of way are exempt from Design Review under the following conditions:
 - a) Incorporate landscape screening whenever possible.
 - b) Retaining walls are constructed of wood, stone or concrete and generally complement adjacent building and paving materials
 - c) Existing retaining walls are replaced or repaired in kind.
 - d) Utilities are placed below grade whenever possible.
 - e) Minor landscape projects, street furniture and park furniture are reviewed by the Parks and Open Space Committee.
8. Large, unbroken expanses of window glazing is generally discouraged as it may cause excessive glare and light reflection during the day, and light transmission during the night. In determining whether window glazing is appropriate, mitigating factors include, but are not limited to, the property’s location near water and risk of light reflection off water, effectiveness of landscape screening, use of light reduction glass, and use of architectural elements to reduce light impacts.