

**APPENDIX B**

**HILLSIDE AND RIDGELINE  
DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES  
FOR  
BASS LAKE HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN**

Modified from  
City of Danville's  
*Hillside/Ridgeline Danville Guidelines*  
prepared by David L. Gates & Associates

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## INTRODUCTION

El Dorado County contains many significant topographic features and ridgelines that contribute to its rural character and sense of place. Historically, development has occurred on lower lying lands and in valleys which are more easily developed; however, pressure is increasing to develop the surrounding hillsides.

The ridgelines form important visual and physical breaks between communities providing for separation of communities and adding to the visual character of the County. It is the intent of the County to allow development to occur on hillsides consistent with the El Dorado County General Plan and in a manner which maintains the visual quality.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a design policy guide for future development within the Bass Lake Hills Specific Plan area. Design plans for development should be prepared to conform with these guidelines.

## DEFINITIONS (Figure 1)

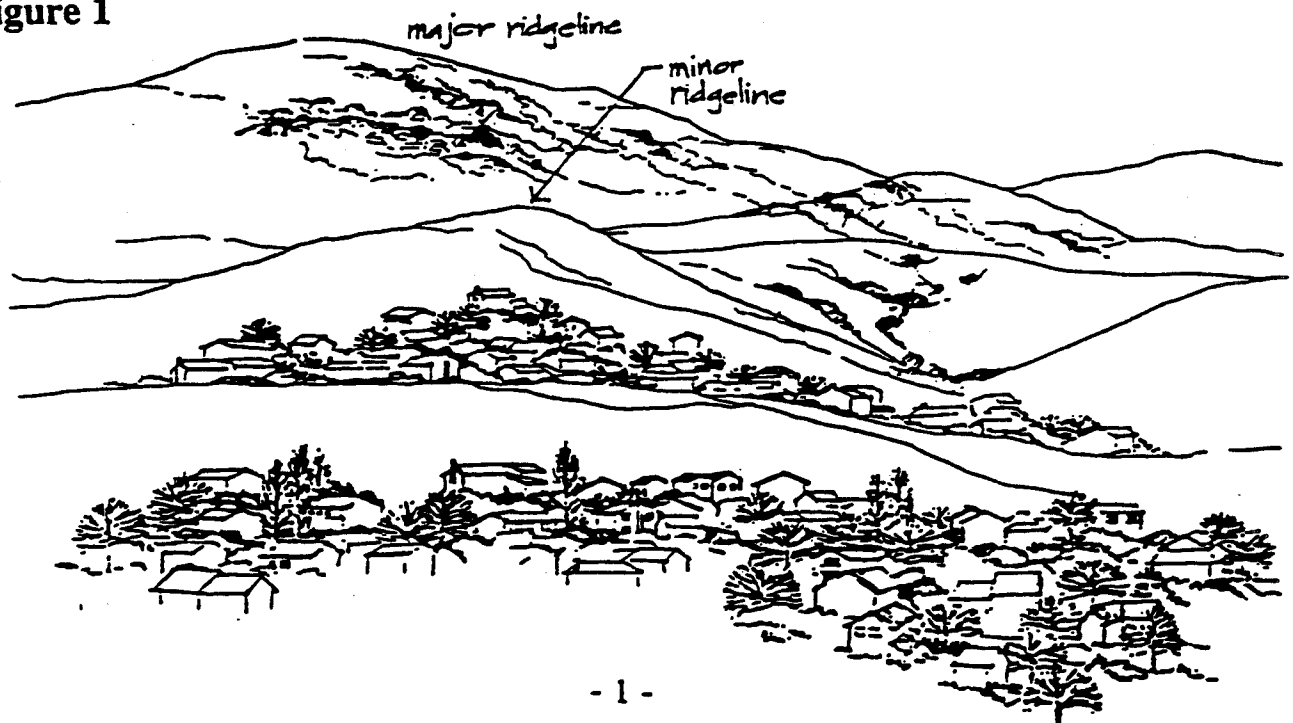
Scenic Hillsides: Elevated land formations with unique visual character, especially those which fall within the identified foreground of the Highway 50 corridor.

Ridgelines: The top of a range of hills or mountains.

Major Ridgelines: A ridgeline which is prominently visible from a substantial land area, in or around a community area, or from a major transportation corridor.

Minor Ridgelines: A ridgeline which is not prominently visible to a large area. Minor ridgelines are typically lower, compared with surrounding terrain, and may be visible only to one limited area, or have a backdrop of a nearby higher terrain.

Figure 1



## **SITE PLANNING**

It is recommended that grading plans for development in the Bass Lake Hills area in the hillsides be prepared by licensed civil engineers, and architectural design plans be prepared by licensed architects.

Preliminary plans for difficult to develop sites in major ridgeline areas may be referred to the Planning Commission for comments. A preliminary plan may be approved by the Planning Commission subject to final review by the Planning Department.

A portion of hillside developments should be set aside for open space. These open space areas should be positive, useable spaces, not narrow strips of leftover land.

Adequate fire safety should be insured by providing fire protection measures (i.e., sufficient water supply and pressure, fire truck access, fire retardant exterior building materials, weed control, surrounding buildings, etc.).

Buildings should be clustered in areas which are accessible to emergency vehicles and which are the least visually prominent from the outlying valleys.

Building siting should be responsive to existing features of the terrain (i.e., drainage patterns, geologic stability, rock outcroppings, and views from outlying areas).

On-site natural systems (hydrologic systems, existing vegetation cover, wildlife, and existing topography) should be minimally disturbed.

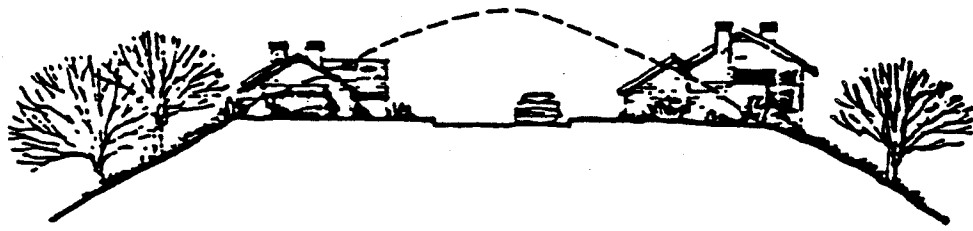
Downstream natural environments should be preserved through the use of water retention ponds, and the elimination of sheet flows.

## **SITE DEVELOPMENT**

The architectural style of buildings should be adapted to hillside slopes rather than adopting land forms to buildings designed for flat land development. (Figure 2)

Natural slopes and topography should be reasonably retained so that the visual impact of grading is kept to a minimum. This can be accomplished by maintaining a transition between graded and natural areas, and by avoiding flat planes or sharp angles of intersection. This may require more cutting, but will result in a more rational hillside form with fewer erosion problems. (Figure 3)

**Figure 2**

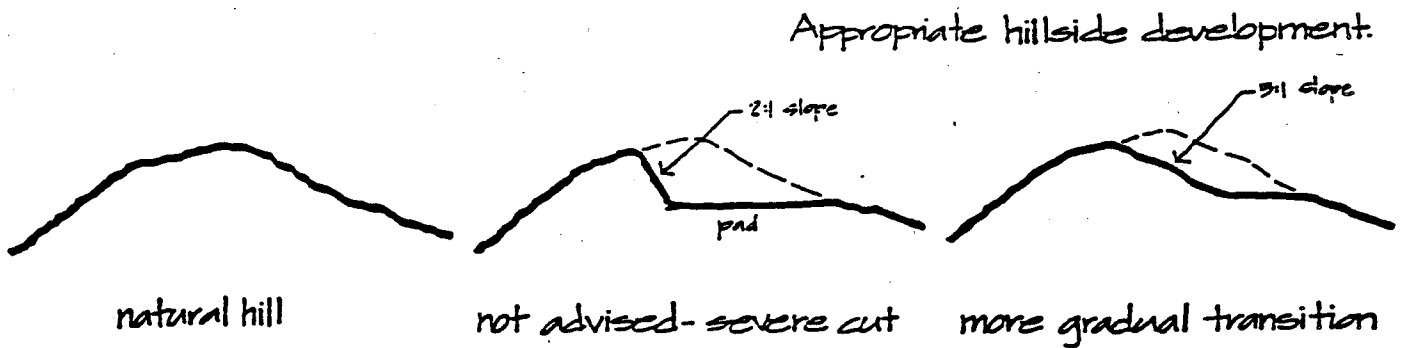


*Inappropriate hillside development.*



*Appropriate hillside development.*

**Figure 3**

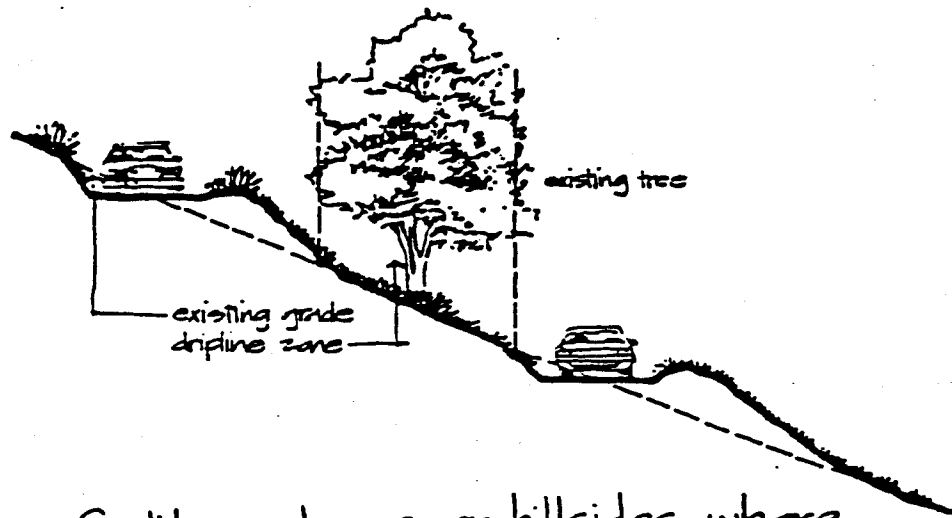


Cut slopes should be screened by the building, and should optimally occur behind the building.

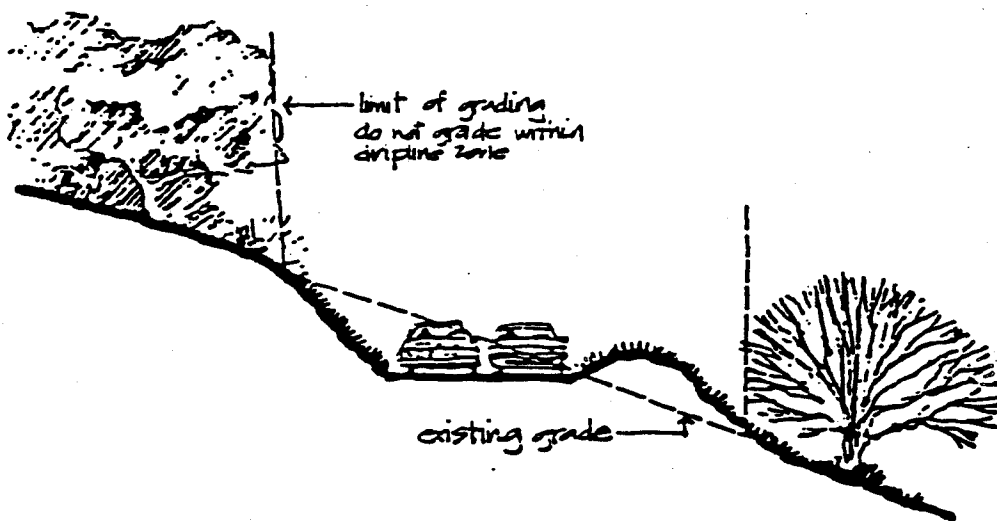
Where hilltop development cannot be avoided, mounding/berming around developed areas is encouraged to provide natural screening.

New roads and driveways should be developed in such a way as to be minimally visible, environmentally sound, and compatible with the existing contours of the hillside. Minimal roadway dimensions are recommended where possible to reduce grading, decrease visibility and decrease the area of impervious surfaces. Roadways may be split in order to reduce the area of cut in a hillside, or to save a special tree or knoll. (Figure 4)

Figure 4



Split roadways on hillsides where appropriate.



Roadway development on hillsides.

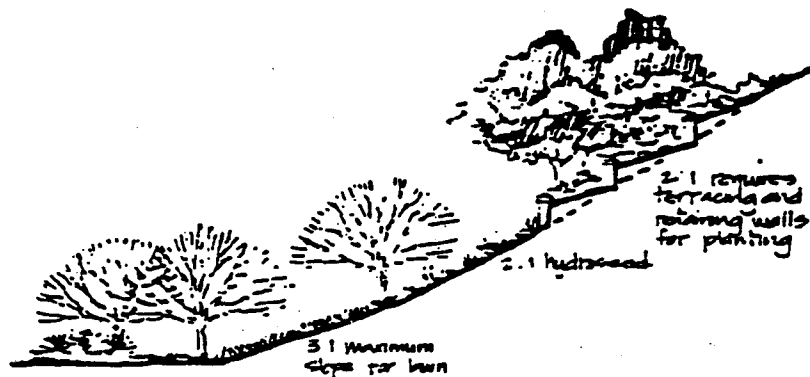
Drainage resulting from grading new developments should be directed into the natural watershed and concentrated water should be removed in a non-erosive way. Impervious surfaces should be kept to a minimum.

Steep slopes should be landscaped with appropriate erosion control, planting, and stabilization techniques, i.e., hydroseed.

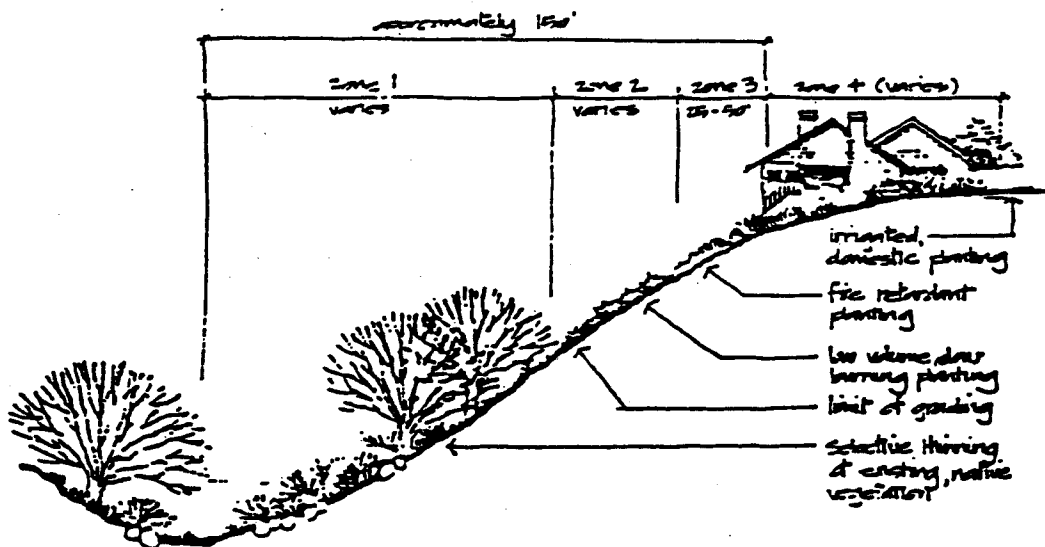
Appropriate hydroseed mixes should be determined by the soil type and slope orientation.

Native vegetation should be preserved (including grassy open spaces), and native plantings are recommended so that the presence of hillside vegetation and forms will be maintained. Non-native plant materials should be compatible with the natural setting and require minimal watering. (Figure 5)

Figure 5



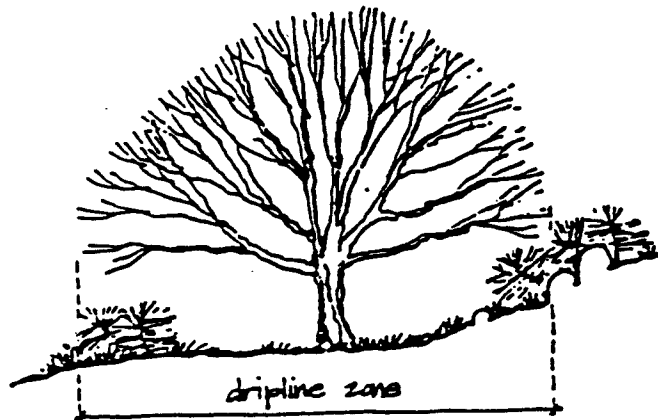
Typical hillside planting.



Appropriate planting around development on hillside slopes.

Existing trees with trunk diameters exceeding six inches should be preserved where appropriate. Existing grade and drainage patterns surrounding existing trees should be maintained for adequate tree protection. (Figure 6)

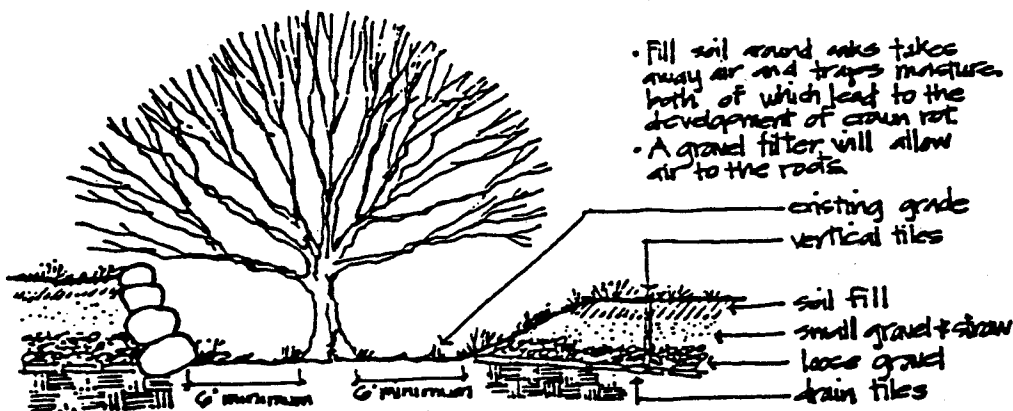
Figure 6



The oak tree is very intolerant of any disturbance to its root system.

- maintain existing drainage
- avoid compaction within dripline zone
- plant only drought tolerant species within dripline

Typical oak tree preservation.



An appropriate response when fill is necessary in the dripline zone of an oak.



### Native Trees

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*)  
Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*)  
California Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)  
Big Leaf Maple (*Acer macrophylla*)  
Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

### Suggested Compatible Trees

Oak species (*Quercus* species)  
Evergreen Pear (*Pyrus kawakamii*)  
White Alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*)  
Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)  
Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodora*)

### Native Shrubs

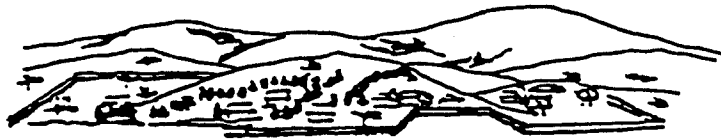
Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*)  
Manzanita species (*Arctostaphylos* species)  
Wild Lilac (*Ceanothus* species)  
Coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*)  
Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

### Suggested Compatible Shrubs

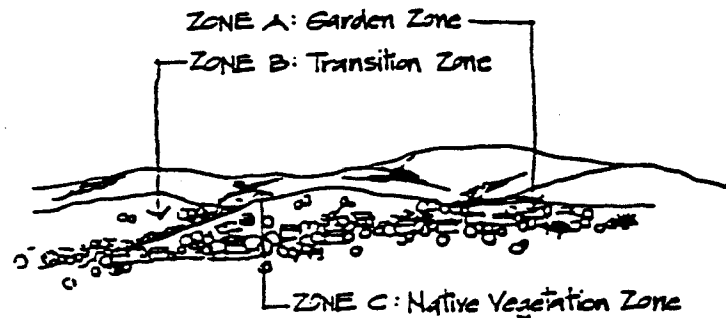
Heather (*Erica* species)  
Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)  
Sage (*Salvia* species and *Artemisia* species)  
Euryops (*Euryops pectinatus*)  
Mock Orange (*Pittosporum* species)  
Lantana (*Lantana* species)

Landscaping should be used to appropriately screen hillside development. Landscaping should be clustered around the immediate vicinity of the buildings, not in rows along property lines or driveways. (Figure 7)

Figure 7



Boundary and road edge tree planting conflicts with topography and native vegetation.



Random planting or rounded tree forms arranged in groupings reflect topography and native tree patterns.

## ARCHITECTURE (Figure 8)

Architectural systems should respect the existing on-site natural systems; hydrologic patterns should not be disturbed if possible, and native vegetation should be preserved where practical.

Building height and scale should respond to the existing terrain. One-story and split level buildings are considered most appropriate in ridgeline areas.

Visible roof materials (flat tile, fire retardant wood shakes and shingles) and color (earth tone) should be used to blend into the environment and should be coordinated with building design.

Roof forms should be stepped or pitched to reiterate the contoured form of the hills, with the most dominate roof form over the most significant part of the building.

Building materials and colors should minimize contrast with hillsides by the use of natural materials. Subdued colors should be encouraged in order to compliment the hillside environment. Reflective windows and materials are not appropriate.

Buildings should be designed to minimize balkiness on hillside terrain. Recesses, overhangs, and play of light and shadow can further reduce mass and add interest, variety, and human scale to the building facade.

The need for building skirting should be kept to a minimum by stepping the foundation and using appropriate hillside architectural designs.