

### 3. Grading and Landform Guidelines

The purpose of this section is to provide design guidelines for grading projects within Encinitas. These guidelines are intended to create landforms that work together with the surrounding topography, existing vegetation, circulation, and land features as well as other elements of the total project site.

#### 3.1 Guiding Principles

- 3.1.1 *Development shall consider the constraints and opportunities of the site and adjacent property.*
- 3.1.2 *The project grading should be sensitive to the existing site topography.*
- 3.1.3 *The view of the graded landform from private properties and public areas should reflect the existing landform character and minimize a manufactured appearance.*
- 3.1.4 *Significant natural features shall be incorporated into developments including, but not limited to, rock outcroppings, natural drainage courses, trees, and other visual assets of the site to the extent possible while adhering with the allowed density of the underlying zone.*

3.1.5 *Excessive grading should be avoided and removal of vegetation shall be limited to the minimum necessary.*

3.1.6 *Pads shall not be significantly “built up” above existing topography, unless no feasible alternative exists given engineering constraints.*

#### 3.2 Guidelines

Unless otherwise stated, these guidelines shall apply to all development.

3.2.1 The overall architecture shall complement and reinforce the existing topography.

3.2.2 Rather than using extensive grading to create one large pad, projects should create smaller pads gradually terracing up hillsides where feasible. This produces smaller slopes that are more easily re-vegetated, visually less obtrusive and more suitable for slope contouring and blending.

3.2.3 Long, continuous slopes that have hard edges, sharp, angular forms and no transition areas at the top or toe of the slope shall be avoided. "Natural" landform contour grading smoothed to blend with the surrounding natural terrain and with rounding and blending at the top and toe of the slope shall be used to create a more natural appearing slope (See Figures 3-1 and 3-2).

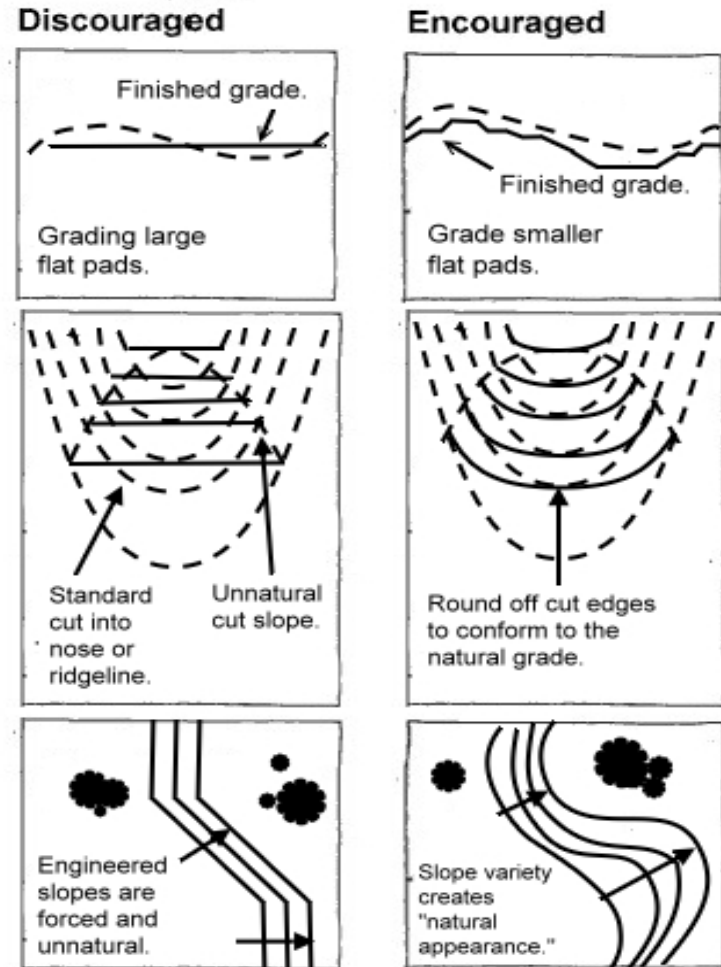
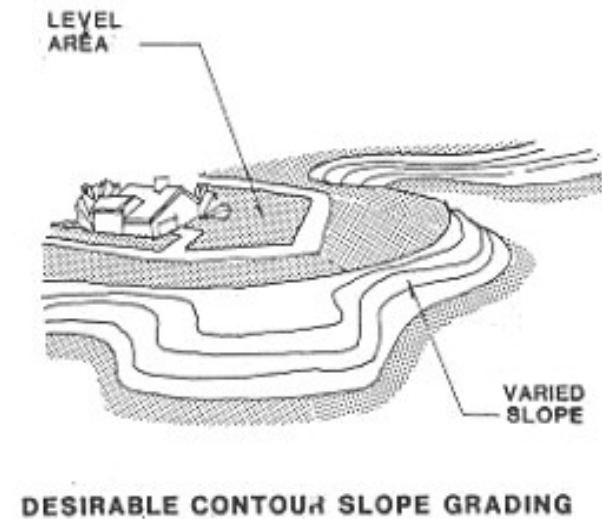
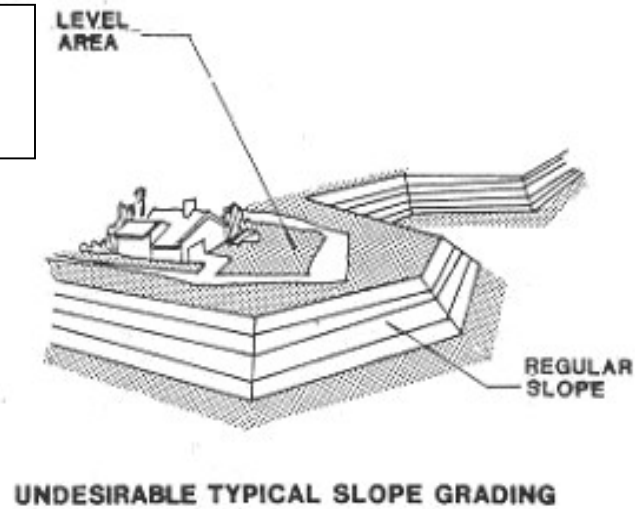


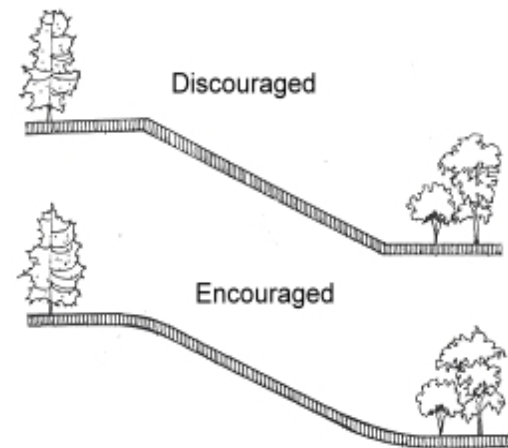
Figure 3-1 Alternative Grading Techniques

*Figure 3-2  
Smooth  
Contours*



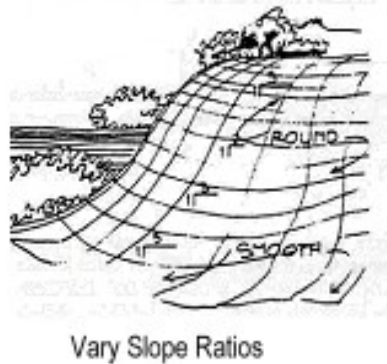
3.2.4 Variable slope gradients are encouraged. Slopes adjacent to native areas should retain a "natural" appearance. The “manufactured” look of slopes shall be minimized. Sharp cuts and fills shall be avoided to create an undulated appearance. Smooth, flowing contours of varied gradients from 2:1 to 5:1 are preferred. Slopes may be approved to exceed 2:1 if demonstrated safe by specific site engineering studies (See Figure 3-3).

*Figure 3-3  
Blending  
Slopes*

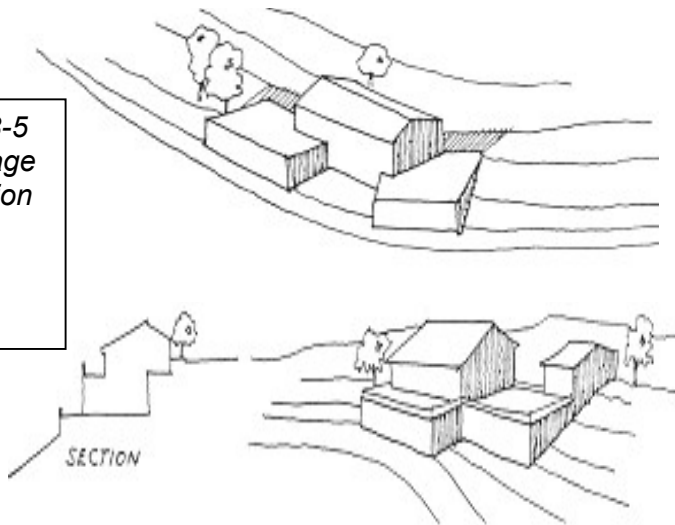


3.2.5 Hillside design should avoid large building pads and should minimize the height of retaining walls. Buildings should be integrated into the hillside and be sited to conceal graded slopes and retaining walls where possible (See Figures 3-4 and 3-5).

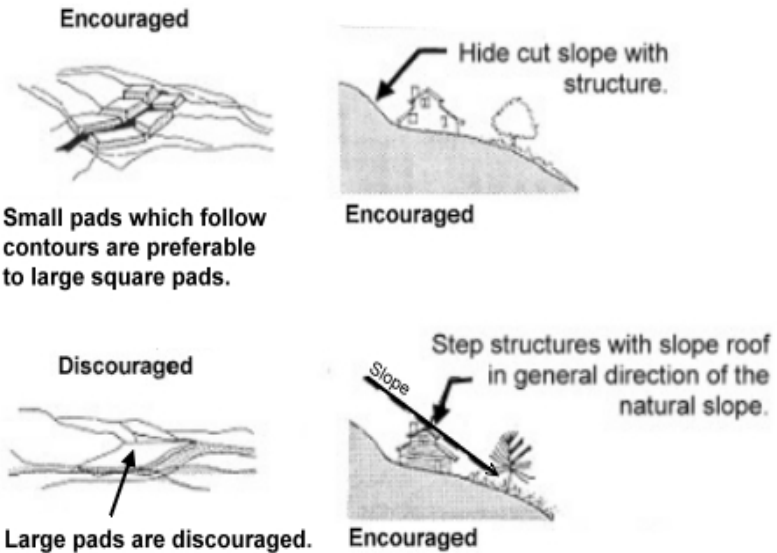
*Figure 3-4  
Encourage  
Contoured  
Grading*



*Figure 3-5  
Encourage  
Integration  
into  
Hillside*



*Figure 3-6 Follow the Natural Slope*



3.2.6 Significant graded slopes shall be landscaped.

3.2.7 Retaining walls faced with local stone or of earth-colored and textured concrete are encouraged, and should be used to minimize grading, where practical. Plantable walls are encouraged.

3.2.8 All drainage shall be conveyed to vegetated areas or other approved areas of the site in a manner consistent with the City's Jurisdictional Regional Stormwater Management Program.

- 3.2.9 Grading shall be sensitive to existing natural forms.
- 3.2.10 All hardscape and walkway areas shall be graded to facilitate drainage.
- 3.2.11 All buildings should be equipped with adequate roof drains, downspouts, and/or other drainage conveyances.
- 3.2.12 Permanent landscaping shall be installed as soon as practical during development activity.
- 3.2.13 Pads shall not be significantly built up above the preexisting or natural topography, unless necessary due to engineering constraints.