

12. THE HILLSIDE ORDINANCE

The Hillside ordinance amended Sections [12.03](#), [12.21](#), [12.21.1](#), [12.23](#), and [12.27](#) of LAMC governing development of hillside lots, for new construction, additions and remodeling and establishes regulations and definitions for height, front and side yards, fire protection, lot coverage, parking, street access, sewer connections, and grading.

Definitions

Hillside Area – Area designated on District Map as Grading Ordinance Hillside except for areas designated as ZI 1802.

Standard Hillside Limited Street – A street (public or private) with 36' dedication and 28' improvement.

Major Remodel, Hillside – Any remodeling of a main building on a lot in the Hillside Area whenever the aggregate value of all alterations within a one-year period exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of the main building.

Application

Applies to all new construction, additions, and major remodeling to single family dwellings and accessory buildings on a lot in the A1, A2, RA, RE, RS, R1, or RD zones within Hillside areas as designated by the Bureau of Engineering on the Department's District Maps as "Grading Ordinance Hillside" except for areas designated as ZI 1802. There are exceptions for certain lots within the designated "Grading Ordinance Hillside" Area. See Section labeled "Exceptions."

Yards

Front Yards

Lots fronting on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street shall provide at least five (5) feet.

Lots fronting on a Standard Hillside Limited Street shall provide the code required setback per the zone.

Projections into Front Yards - Projections are permitted per code except that open, unenclosed stairways, porches, platforms and landing places not covered by a roof or canopy are **not** allowed to project into the front yard. Balconies ten (10) feet or more above grade may project or extend not more than 30 inches into the front yard.

The following projections will, however be permitted:

- 1) Access stairs or path of travel, constructed on grade and leading to the dwelling's entrance
- 2) A raised driveway necessary to provide access to the required parking spaces for a dwelling located on a lot with a descending slope provided no portion of the driveway within the front yard exceed 3'-6" above natural grade
- 3) Up to 3'-6" high retaining wall (and any necessary open guardrail) when used to retain a built up level pad, landing, or planter box.

Side Yards

Main buildings shall provide the basic required side yard for the zone unless the lot is less than 40 feet in width, then each side yard shall not be less than 4 feet.

Main buildings on a lot in the RA, RE, RS, R1, and RD zones shall increase the basic required side yard by 1 foot for every 10 feet or fraction thereof above the first 18 feet of height of the main building.

Height

On any lot with a slope, as measured from the lowest point of elevation of the lot to the highest, of 66 percent or less, the building or structure shall be limited to 36 feet in height as measured from grade. If the lot has a slope of greater than 66 percent, the building shall be limited to 45 feet in height as measured from grade.

Exception – Where the slope of the lots measured from the highest point of the lot within five (5) horizontal feet of an exterior wall of the main building is less than 66 percent, then no portion of the main building shall exceed 36 feet.

Roof Projections – Roof structures may exceed the allowable height limit, provided the structures conform to the provisions of Section 12.21.1B except for **projections** above the height limit for skylights and stairways. For skylights, 30 inches maximum and not more than 1/3 area of the roof. Note that the setback requirement of Section 12.21.1B3(a) is still applicable. Roof structures housing stairways are limited to 5 feet in height and 26 square feet in area.

Imposes **transitional height limitations** for dwellings located on lots that have ascending slopes. Where ground elevation measured 50 feet from front lot line and midway between side lot lines is 33 feet or higher than the lowest elevation along the front lot line, no portion of the building within 20 feet of the front lot line can exceed 24 feet. The 24-foot maximum height is measured from the elevation along the centerline or midpoint of the street on which the lot fronts.

Provides a new **definition of grade** for purposes of measuring height. Grade is defined as the elevation of the finished or natural surface of the ground, whichever is lower or the finished ground elevation established with a grading plan approved with a tract or parcel map.

Fire Protection

An entire building shall be sprinklered in the following cases:

- 1) New dwelling or detached accessory building (storage, garage, recreation room, etc.)
- 2) Addition of 50 percent or more of the area of the existing dwelling or accessory building.
- 3) Major Remodel-Hillside fronting on a substandard hillside limited street when the lot is located more than two (2) miles from a fire station housing a Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Truck Company or more than one and one half (1½) miles from a fire station housing a LAFD Engine Company.

Exceptions – Detached gazebos, pergolas, or storage sheds that do not exceed 200 square feet in floor area. Building and Safety may consider requests for less than full coverage in cases 1 and 2 above.

Street Access

Requires that lots fronting on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street must have at least one-half of the width of the street(s) dedicated for the full frontage of the lot or for a lesser frontage as determined by the City Engineer. Relief from this requirement may be provided by Section [12.371](#) of the Zoning Code.

If a lot fronts on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street which is improved to a width of less than 20 feet, then building permits for construction or additions on such lot may be issued only when the project is approved by the Zoning Administrator pursuant to Section [12.27118](#).

Lot Coverage

Limits buildings and structures extending more than six (6) feet above ground level to cover a maximum of 40 percent of the lot area for standard lot and 45 percent for lots of less than 50 feet in width and area of less than 5000 square feet.

Sewer Connection

Requires that new homes within 200 feet of the City sewer system be connected to it, rather than to a septic tank. Applicant will be referred to Bureau of

Engineering for a determination that will be indicated on the back of the application.

Off-Street Parking

For lots fronting on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street, one additional space is required per 1000 square feet thereof for a main building and any accessory building (excluding floor area devoted to required parking) that exceed a combined floor area of 2400 square feet (includes area of existing dwelling) in the following cases:

- 1) New construction of a Single Family Dwelling (SFD) or accessory building
- 2) Addition to a SFD or accessory building
- 3) Major remodel

Note – The additional spaces required may be uncovered and in tandem and may be located within the required front yard (all spaces within the required front yard shall be uncovered). Code-required primary parking may not be in tandem.

Note – The exception for parking for ‘Dwelling on a Narrow Lot’ in Section [12.21A4\(q\)](#) for lots in the A1, A2, RA, RE, RS, R1, and RD Zones that front on a Substandard Hillside Limited Street cannot be used.

Grading

Zoning Administrator’s approval pursuant to Section [12.27119](#) is required for grading of 1000 or more cubic yards resulting from compliance with off-street parking requirements.

Exceptions that Preempt Compliance to the Hillside Ordinance

- 1) Construction within subdivisions for which a Tentative or final Tract Map was approved by the Advisory Agency after February 1, 1985, provided Covenant Code and Requirements (CC&R) governing building height, yards, open space, or lot coverage recorded on or after February 1, 1985, as a result of the map. Such CC & R’s must be those that are imposed by the Advisory Agency and are generally found in ZI 1022 under the tract number NOTE: The date that the Map was approved is not the same as the date the Map was recorded.
- 2) Any construction fronting on a street improved in such a manner that meets or exceeds the dimensions of a Hillside limited street.
- 3) Any addition to an existing single family dwelling (SFD) provided:
 - Dwelling was existing prior to September 14, 1992

- Total cumulative floor area of all additions made after August 30, 1992, does not exceed 750 square feet
- The height of the resulting building does not exceed the height of the existing building or the height permitted in this ordinance, whichever is higher.