

# III. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN THEMES

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## Grass Valley Architectural Themes

The intent of this section is to discuss an appropriate design theme for the proposed prototype by conducting an evaluation of the architectural styles and design elements of housing units in the Grass Valley area. In addition, preliminary architectural plans and elevations are provided for three different Workforce Housing prototypes that will accommodate varying incomes and household characteristics.

### A. Contextual Analysis

To review the architectural character of the City, the design team was directed to neighborhoods surrounding the selected sites to review new and old building styles. The team assembled images from these visits and combined them with other relevant architectural images to develop the Style Survey that was presented to the community at the February 9, 2004, Workshop held at the Center for the Arts in Grass Valley. The goal of the Survey was to solicit feedback from the community about site and building characteristics that were appealing and important. The Survey is included as Appendix A.

The community's preferred building types tend to have a smaller setback from the street, single-lane driveways, alley-accessed garages, a "bungalow orientation" (with the short side to the street), and smaller lot sizes. They also have front porches, steeper pitched roofs, articulated trim at the building openings, and a simple building form. These are the recurring themes in the most popular images.

The team was also interested in determining an architectural style for the homes that would guide the design of the prototype units. These styles were summarized in the "Architectural Character" discussion also given during the Workshop on February 9, 2004. This presentation is included in Appendix B.

### A Rich History of Buildings

The City of Grass Valley has numerous wonderful historic buildings, from the masonry Elk's Building and the commercial "main-street" retail, to the exquisite Victorian Mansions and "workers cottages" that dot the hills and illustrate the wealth and economic boom generated during the gold rush.

Determining "THE" architectural style of Grass Valley was not the intent of this document. Rather, efforts were to identify relevant building styles and characteristics that spoke to the community as appropriate and worthy of being added to the rich building history of the City.

The team observed several relevant residential styles:

**Victorian and Queen Anne:** Often including ornate detailing with steep pitched roofs, subservient porches, fancy gable ends, clapboard siding, and a prominent front bay window.

**Folk Victorian:** A simplified version of the Victorian design without the complex ornamentation. Often a single-car wide driveway between the buildings is present.

**Neo-Victorian:** Modern interpretations of the Victorian details or massing.



Preferred Building Type:  
Typical Grass Valley  
Craftsman-Style Home

**National Folk:** Simple gable roofed buildings with simple windows and front porches with simple columns.

**Spanish:** A couple of Spanish-style buildings in the central city were seen with cement plaster walls, earth-toned colors and terra-cotta tile roofs.

**Neo-Spanish:** Modern interpretation with cement plaster and natural colors.



Preferred Building Type:  
Typical Grass Valley National  
Folk Style Home

**Craftsman:** Expression of structural members, exposed rafter tails, exaggerated beams and columns, and use of deep colors.

**Neo-Craftsman:** Simpler version of the Craftsman style often with less detail.

**Ranch Style:** Common newer building style on wider lots. Single story, 2 or more car garage facing street. Various styles. Usually set further back from the street.

*A more complete description of these historic styles and their characteristics can be found in the useful resource: [A Field Guide to American Houses](#) by Virginia McAlester.*

It should be noted that most of the older buildings have a “bungalow” style site plan. This means that the lots are rectangular in shape with the short end facing the street and the buildings have shallow setbacks. In addition, the older buildings generally do not have prominent garage features facing the street, but instead have a small drive between the buildings to allow off-street parking.

Based upon the responses to the Style Survey and the associated Architectural Style discussion we noted popular interest in the National Folk and Craftsman building styles. These styles work nicely as simple two-story structures on smaller lots for the workforce housing prototypes.

**B. Proposed Compatible Architectural Prototype**

Compact, simple, flexible and oriented to individuals and the community. These are some of the qualities that guided the design process and yielded the three small house prototype plans - all under 1,400 square feet.

All three of the Workforce Housing Design Program prototypes have efficient floor plans that accommodate individuals, couples, and families with light and bright home environments.

The three prototype floor plans offer two- and three-bedroom single family detached homes in keeping with the smaller lot sizes, housing character, and configurations found in Grass Valley’s older neighborhoods. These Craftsman and National Folk style homes offer two floors of living space, simple building forms, simple exterior detailing, and modest sized covered front porches that are well suited for compact development schemes. These factors, not only relate to styles common to Grass Valley they, directly relate to affordability. The simple styles reduce site work, framing costs and finish costs. Please see Table 2 below for unit configurations.



Preferred Building Type: Metro Square, Sacramento, CA  
Example of Neo-Craftsman Style Home



Preferred Building Type: Orcas Island, WA  
Example of Contemporary Interpretation of a National Folk Style Home.  
Also a Community Land Trust Project.

**TABLE 2: UNIT TYPES**

Type	Square Feet	Bedrooms	Bathrooms	Parking Configuration	# of Stories
A	1,448	3	2.5	1 garage attached / 1 driveway	2
B	1,246	3	1.5	1 carport attached / 1 off-site*	2
C	1,050	2	1	1 driveway / 1 off-site*	2

\* Parking varies depending upon location.

Characteristics of all the plans include:

- Two stories to minimize the plan footprint;
- All bedrooms on the second floor;
- Front porches - minimum 9’ x 6’;
- Separate living and dining areas;
- Ability to step up or down the slope in a front to back orientation; and
- Expansion opportunities - for example, Plan C can easily allow a small room addition on the first floor.

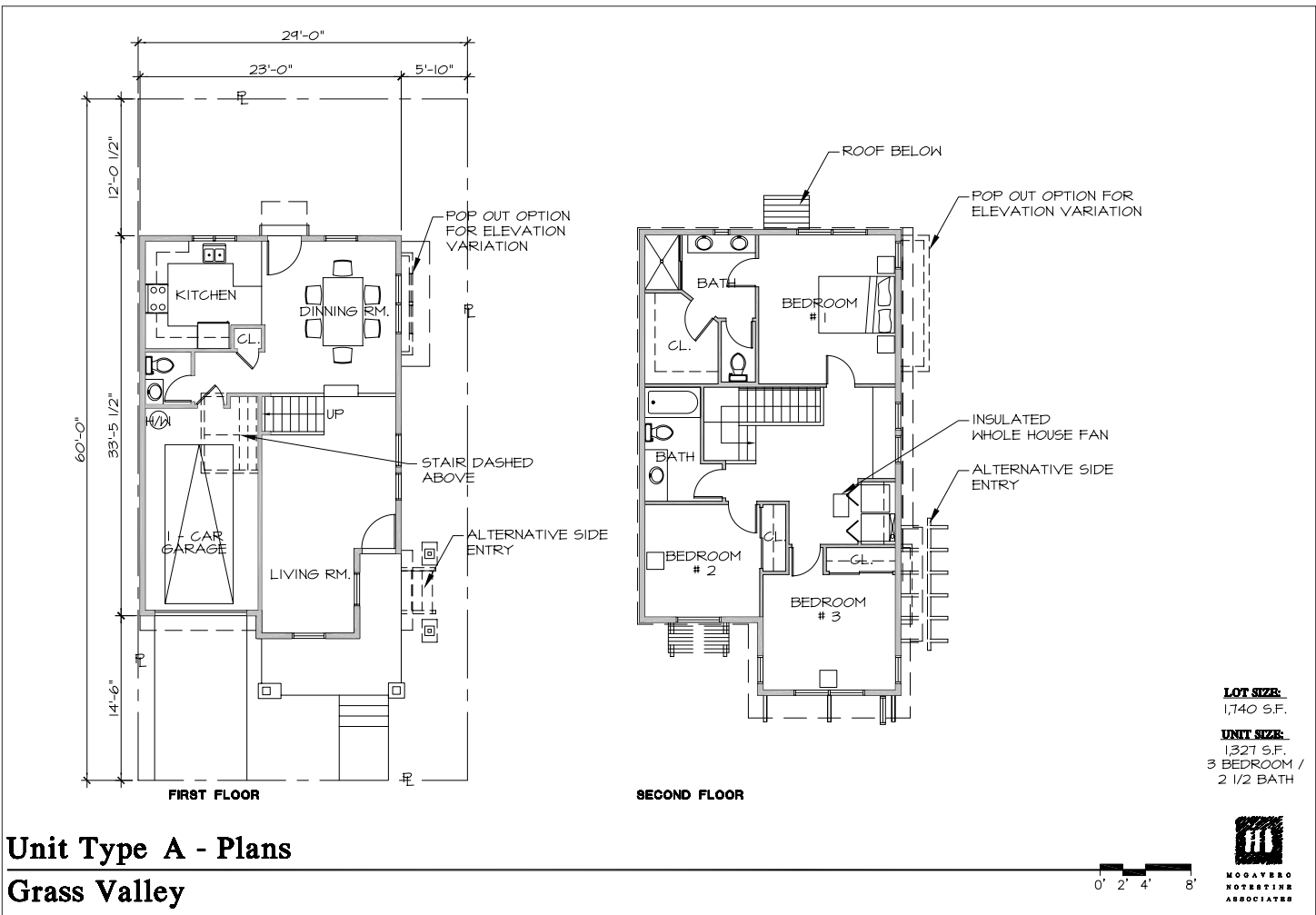
For additional information regarding the unit specifications, please see the Example Construction Specifications included as Appendix C.

### Plan Type A

#### Floor Plan:

The two-story 1,327 square foot home is entered from a raised covered front porch facing the street. A second access is at the rear of the home off of the kitchen/dining area and offers convenient access to the small rear yard area. The home has a one-car attached garage that can be accessed from the kitchen. The unit features three bedrooms and two-and-a-half bathrooms and locates all of the bedrooms on the second floor, as well as the laundry and extra storage space. The master bedroom has a large private bath and walk-in closet. A large living room occupies the front of the home. This homes' configuration is ideal for families with 2-4 children who need a little extra flexibility in their living space.

The home offers numerous large windows to maximize daylighting opportunities while locating them strategically to maximize energy efficiency.



**LOT SIZE:**  
1,740 S.F.

**UNIT SIZE:**  
1,327 S.F.  
3 BEDROOM /  
2 1/2 BATH

### Unit Type A - Plans

### Grass Valley



**Elevation:**

Utilizing a standard sized compact development lot, this unit type offers an elevation that is sympathetic to the Craftsman style. It also offers a contemporary plan and exterior detailing, such as an eave venting dormer, eave brackets, and brick accents at the column base.

The ground floor is raised from the street level to provide a more traditional feel to the homes raised wrap around front porch and offers a side entry option. The one car attached garage is at grade. A pop-out option in the dining room offers additional living space as site limitations allow.

Exterior materials include cement plaster with screed lines that become costless features when placed correctly.

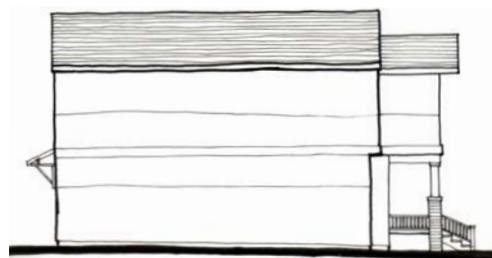
See Appendix F for more detail.



Plan A - Front Elevation With Alternate Side Entry



Plan A - Side Elevation With No Pop-Out



Plan A - Zero Lot Line Side Elevation

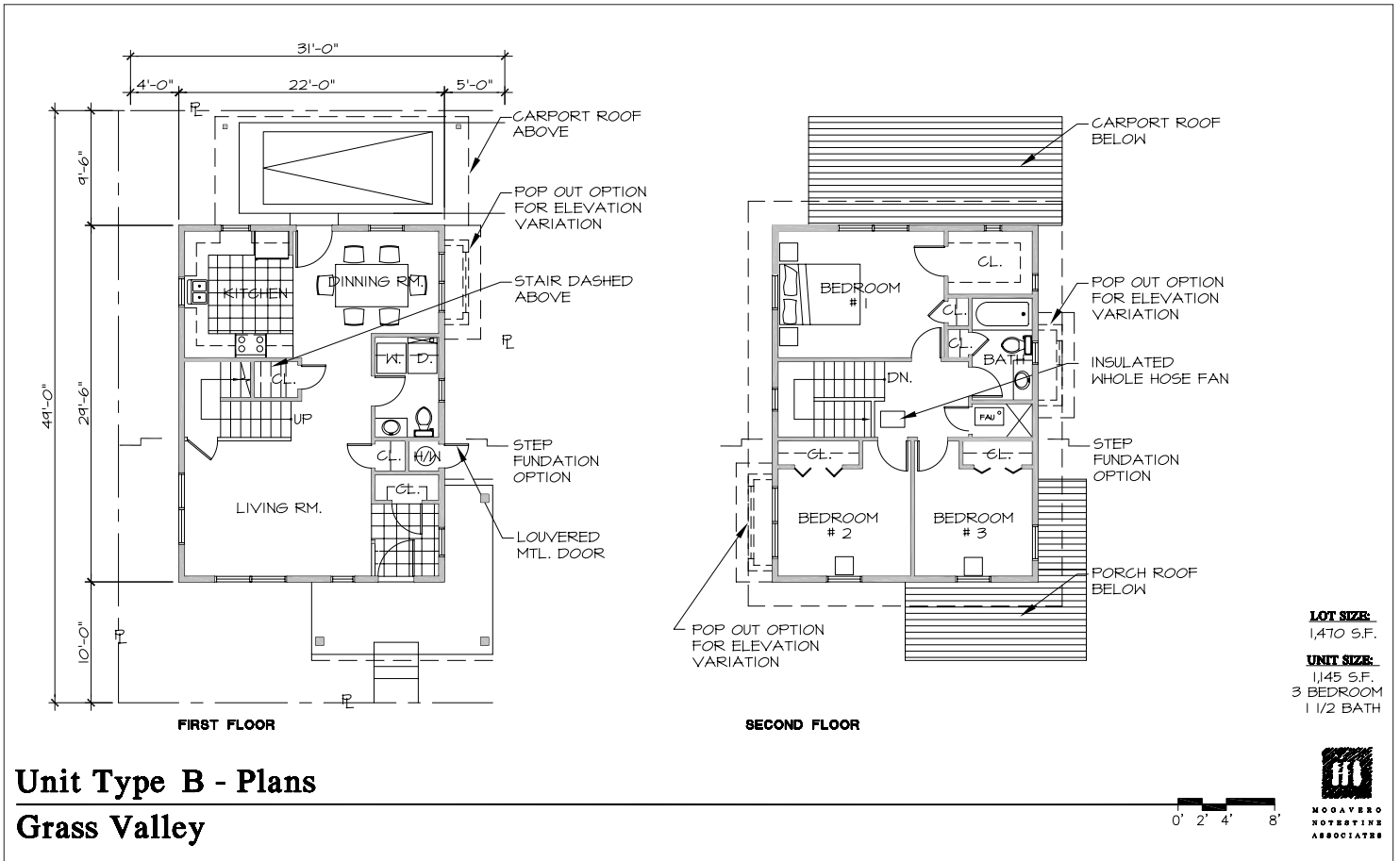


Plan A - Rear Elevation With No Pop-Out

### Plan Type B

**Floor Plan:** Plan B also offers three bedrooms all on the second level of the home. However, this plan's 1,145 square foot size and smaller footprint has only one bathroom on the second floor with a half bath and laundry located on the first floor. The plan offers separated living and dining areas and a modest covered wrap-around raised front porch and tiled entry with a large entry closet.

The master bedroom and walk-in closet and generously sized bedrooms make this an ideal floor plan for small families with 2-4 children. The home provides access to an attached single-car carport through the kitchen/dining area.



**Unit Type B - Plans**  
**Grass Valley**

**Elevation:**

Utilizing a standard sized compact development lot, this unit type offers an elevation that is sympathetic to the National Folk style, while offering a contemporary plan and exterior detailing such as eave brackets, front porch with a side entry option, and a one car attached carport off the kitchen/dining area.

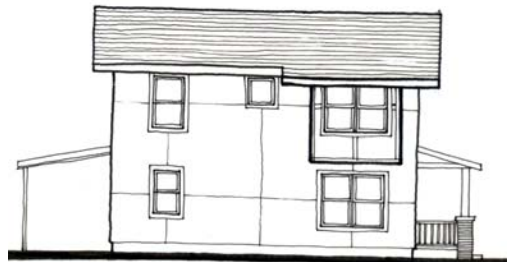
Additional square footage options are available as allowed by the site configuration. These include a pop-out option in an upstairs bedroom, bathroom and dining room.

Exterior materials include cement plaster with screed lines that become costless features when placed correctly. Hardiboard panel with trim at the pop-outs in a lighter color than the homes rich body color offer a more visually interesting elevation.

See Appendix F for more detail.



Plan B - Front Elevation



Plan B - Side Elevation With Pop-Out at Bedroom



Plan B - Side Elevation With Pop-Out at Bathroom



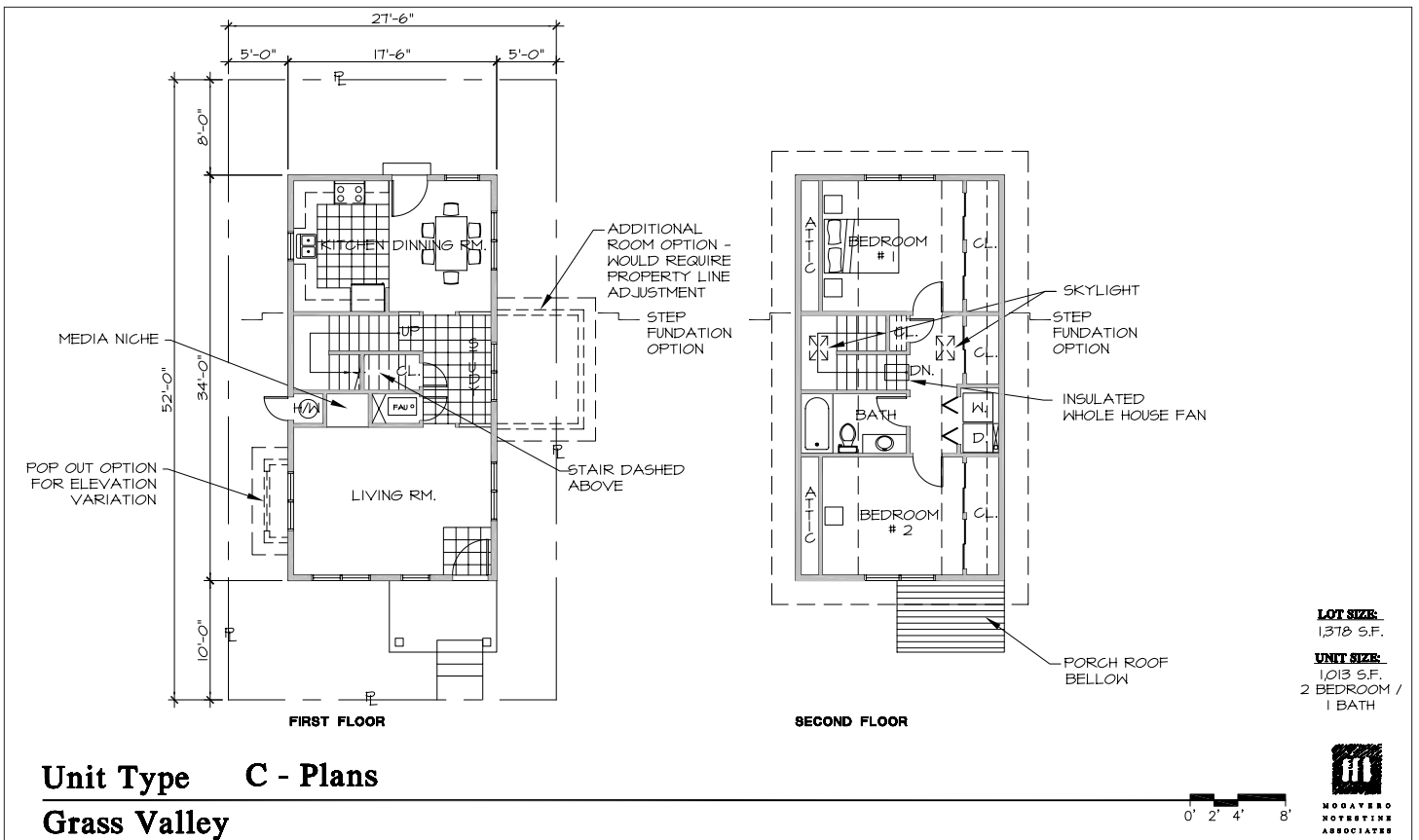
Plan B - Rear Elevation

### Plan Type C

**Floor Plan:** The 1,013 square foot floor plan is arranged around large living areas on the first floor and two large bedrooms on the second floor with lots of storage. Two skylights above the stair landings allow additional light and air flow through the unit. The two-bedroom and one-bathroom configuration is ideal for individuals, couples, and young families with up to two children.

The living area is generously sized with a built-in media niche and small “study” at the base of the stairs between the living and dining areas. It is at this location that the unit could be expanded to add a bedroom and/or bathroom on the first floor, or possibly an attached garage or carport as allowed by the lot and building location.

The home is entered from a modest, raised covered front porch that is oriented to the street offering additional living space for the homeowner. The home is designed to be nestled in a small courtyard of similar homes that share a common access walkway/ open space and shared parking arrangements. There is no on-site parking provided for this small house in any of the site plan alternatives.



**Elevation:**

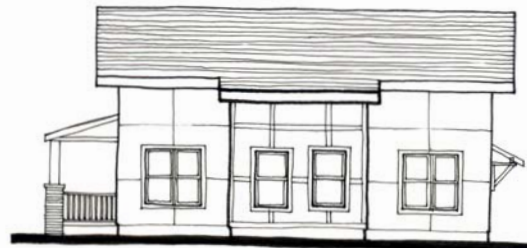
Utilizing a standard-sized compact development lot, this true 1-1/2 story unit offers an elevation that is sympathetic to the National Folk style, while offering a contemporary plan and simple exterior detailing including a single roof form, modest covered front porch, decorative eave brackets, and shed dormers.



Plan C - Front Elevation

There is no garage or carport attached to this prototype.

Additional square footage options are available as allowed by the site configuration. This includes a pop-out/addition option at the base of the stairs on the first floor and consists of either a small 2-foot pop-out to create a larger study or a 10-foot pop-out/room addition. This prototype demonstrates the idea that a simple building where the base form is unchanged can achieve variations as needed by the demographics and demands of the site with simple expansion variations.



Plan C - Side Elevation With Pop-Out at Study

Exterior materials include cement plaster with screed lines that become costless features when placed correctly. Hardiboard panel with trim at the pop-outs in a lighter color than the home's rich body color offer a more visually interesting elevation.



Plan C - Side Elevation

See Appendix F for more detail.



Plan C - Rear Elevation