



CITY OF DAVIS

UTILITY SCREENING GUIDELINES

Through Design Review, Conditional Use Permit, Tentative Map, Final Planned Development and other applications, the Planning and Building Department requires all mechanical equipment, including transformers and backflow devices be screened. Because transformers and backflow prevention devices are regularly maintained and tested, screening is required to meet certain criteria for the accessibility and visibility, as specified in this handout. Landscape Plans and/or Minor Improvement Forms must be approved and screening of devices must be installed, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy on a project.

SCREENING FOR BACKFLOW PREVENTION DEVICES

Background

In 1988, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 1499, which requires that backflow assemblies (also referred to as back flow prevention devices) be installed in commercial projects. The adoption of the ordinance complies with the requirements of State Title 17 (Public Health) and the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. In general terms, the purpose of backflow assemblies is to prevent contaminated water on private properties or private water systems from flowing back into the city water supply.

Backflow prevention assemblies are mechanical devices that, most often, must be installed above ground at or near the property line; such devices may not be located within the right-of-way on primary pedestrian streets. As these devices are somewhat unsightly, they may detract from otherwise attractive landscaping, therefore, must be integrated into the building design and concealed from public view. Consistent with the Design Guidelines, it is a requirement of the City of Davis Planning and Building department for backflow prevention devices to be screened.

In order to minimize the future negative visual impact of such devices, plans for screening the devices will be required for approval of applications for Design Review, Conditional Use Permits, Final Planned Developments, etc. Ideally, for new construction, the designer/architect should consider the backflow device installation as a feature of the project rather than an add-on. Backflow devices and screening should be included in the landscape plans initially proposed to be reviewed by the Planning Department.

Screening Guidelines

Whenever feasible, backflow prevention devices shall be located within the building or behind the front setback line so as to minimize their visibility from public view adjacent to the building. Backflow prevention devices shall be covered, hidden or camouflaged, in any way that does not inhibit access for maintenance, operation, or emergency use. For accessibility, a minimum of three feet of clear space must surround the device. Screening should be attractive and strive to compliment the architecture/landscaping of the project. Landscape should include tall-growing shrubs which can be severely pruned for accessibility and grow back quickly such as Photinia Fraseri or Nandina Domestica. Thorny or prickly landscaping is discouraged as it impedes access for maintenance and emergencies. Where screening is not possible, devices may be painted to match the trim of the building.

SCREENING FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT CONNECTION DEVICES

Where fire sprinkler backflow devices are required the designer/architect should contact Public Works Water Division (530)757-5686 and the Fire Department (530)757-5684 to determine if a portion of the device should remain visible. Generally, backflow devices for fire sprinklers may be screened so long as the threaded valves and point of connection remain visible and accessible.

For additional information on screening either backflow prevention devices or transformers please contact the Planning and Building Department at (530)757-5610 or Public Works at (530)757-5686.

SCREENING FOR PADMOUNT TRANSFORMERS

Background

In 1992, the state Public Utilities Commission adopted the policy that all transformers in new residential developments will be pad mounted (above ground). This decision was made because the pad mounted transformers are more cost effective for utility companies. To comply with this requirement, the City Council adopted an ordinance allowing transformers to be located above ground.

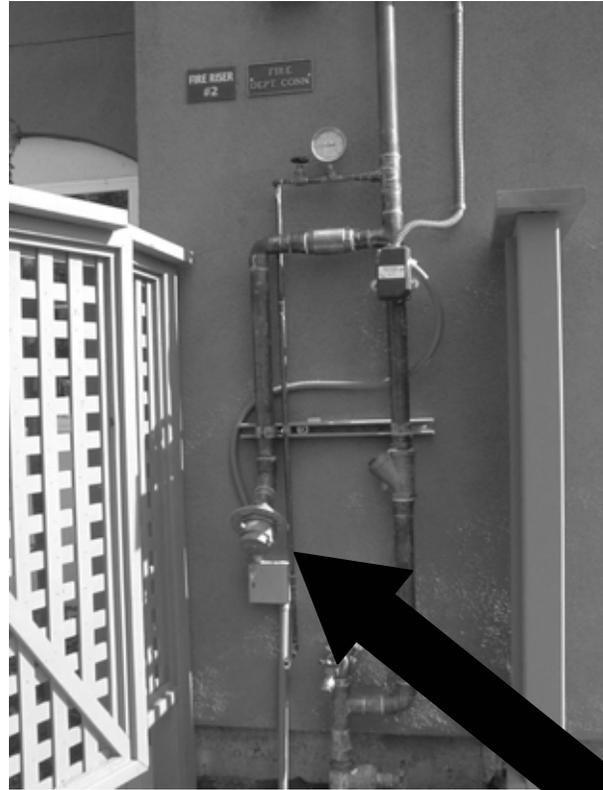
Screening Guidelines

To mitigate the visual impact of pad mounted transformers for residential and commercial applications, the City of Davis has adopted screening guidelines. Wherever feasible, transformers should be located behind the front setback line or below grade. All pad mounted transformers shall be screened with landscaping, fencing and/or walls. Screening shall meet the following requirements for accessibility to transformers:

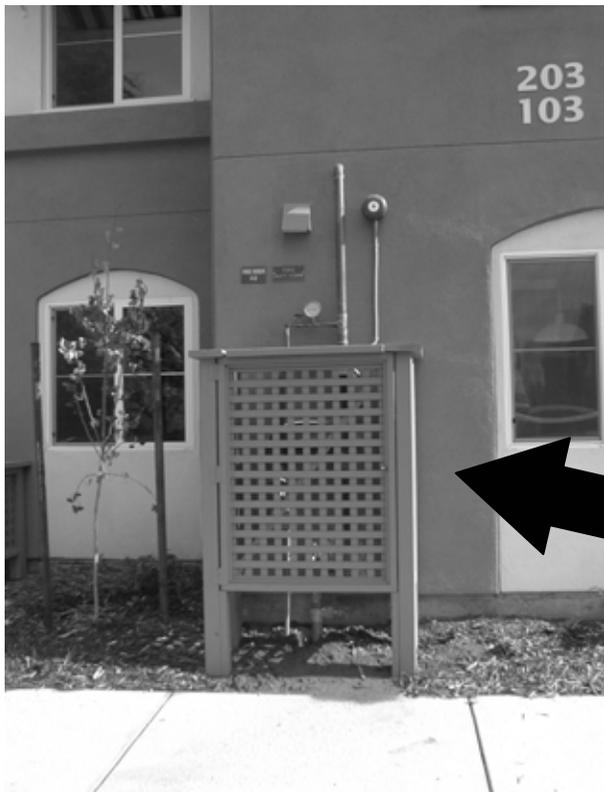
SCREENING REQUIREMENTS		
Screening Material	Distance from Transformer Encasement or Pad (sides and rear)	Distance from Transformer Encasement or Pad (front)
Landscaping	0' from Transformer Pad	8' from Transformer Pad
Fencing, lodge poles, walls or other permanent screening	2' from Transformer Encasement	8' from Transformer Encasement
Fencing or wall with gate	2' from Transformer Encasement	0' from Transformer Pad

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), the utility company which serves the Davis area has provided several drawings which reflect the requirements for accessibility to the transformers. In general, landscaping may be planted as close as the edge of the pad. In new residential developments, the pads are anticipated to be 12" or less beyond the encasement of the transformer. Permanent screening, such as fencing, lodge poles, retaining walls, etc. must be a minimum of two feet away from the encasement. The front of the transformer must have a clear space of at least eight feet for accessibility purposes. In most cases the front of the transformer will be facing the street. Fencing may be used for screening if it has a gate which can be opened for maintenance.

For additional information on screening either backflow prevention devices or transformers please contact the Planning and Building Department at (530)757-5610 or Public Works at (530)757-5686.



**Fire Department
Connection Valve must be
visible at all times.**



**Appropriate
screening if a hole
was cut to create
visibility of Fire
Department
Connection.**

For additional information on screening either backflow prevention devices or transformers please contact the Planning and Building Department at (530)757-5610 or Public Works at (530)757-5686.

Acceptable methods of screening



Landscaping and Fencing adequately screen a device while maintaining required clearance and visibility.

Unacceptable screening



Landscaping and cover inadequately screen a device from public view.

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