



# Hillside Overlay Silhouette & Visual Aids

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In accordance with Article 41, Chapter 1, Division 9 of the Torrance Municipal Code, the Planning Commission, or the City Council on appeal, may grant approval of a Precise Plan of Development for residential and commercial development on properties located within the Hillside and Local Coastal Overlay.

As part of the discretionary review process and pursuant to Section 92.21.11 of the Torrance Municipal Code, project applicants are required to install story poles (silhouette) to demonstrate the height, width and depth of a proposed development. Silhouettes provide a visual aid to assess the potential impacts a project may have on the view, light, air, and privacy of properties in the vicinity. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, other forms of visual aid may be required such as perspective drawings, three-dimensional models, and photo simulations.

## **SILHOUETTE CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES**

Applicants are required to sign an indemnification agreement that holds the City harmless for any liability associated with the construction of, or damage caused by the story poles (silhouette). Silhouettes should be constructed of lumber, metal, or other sturdy building material (PVC pipe not acceptable) and braced at the base using diagonal supporting beams or guy wires to withstand inclement weather and ground shaking. Depending on the project scope, building permits and inspections may be required. Silhouettes should be maintained in good condition. Silhouettes that are damaged or have loose flagging may delay scheduling of the public hearing date. If at any time the silhouette becomes unsafe, the project applicant should repair or remove the silhouette immediately. Inaction to remove an unsafe silhouette may result in Code Enforcement.

## **LOCATION, HEIGHT, AND MARKING INSTRUCTIONS**

Story poles must be installed at the most distant corners of the proposed structure, roof ridgelines, lower ridges, balconies, and any projections. The pole heights must represent the outline and final height of the proposed structure. Changes to grading elevation should be accounted for in the pole heights. Bright color tape, netting, ribbon, or other type of flagging must be tightly strung between the poles to represent the outline of the proposed structure. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, additional materials may be required to fully demarcate the scope of work.

## **PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD**

Photographs of the silhouette must be taken from three angles (center, left, right) as viewed from the public right-of-way (curb, sidewalk, street) and accompanied with a plan or map showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction with an arrow keyed to the photos. At the discretion of the Planning Manager, additional photographs may be required from more distant locations. Do not include “zoomed in” photographs that increase the size of the subject without changing the position of the camera. Photographs should be taken at eye level approximately 5 to 6 feet above grade. Photograph print size should be no less than 8 inches by 10 inches and must include an electronic copy delivered through email or USB.

## **SILHOUETTE CERTIFICATION AND PLAN**

A silhouette certification form is required to verify that installation of the story poles accurately represents ( $\pm 3$  inches) a proposed addition or structure as shown on the project plans. The certification form must be completed by a licensed land surveyor or licensed civil engineer and must be accompanied by a silhouette plan that utilizes the project site plan, roof plan, or survey as the base drawing. The silhouette plan must be no less than 11 inches by 17 inches and drawn to scale. An electronic copy of the silhouette plan must be in PDF format delivered through email or USB. The silhouette plan must show the location of the benchmark, existing and proposed lowest adjacent grade, each story pole and connecting tape or ribbon. The silhouette plan must also show the base elevation and the maximum elevation of each pole. Inaccurate or incomplete silhouettes will require resubmittal of the certification form and plan. The project application cannot be deemed complete until the silhouette certification form has been submitted.

## **SILHOUETTE DURATION**

Silhouettes must be constructed prior to the project application filing and must remain in place for the public hearing and at least 15 days through the appeal period, but no more than 45 days after the final public hearing date. Silhouettes associated with an inactive project that has been withdrawn or continued indefinitely must be removed after 6 months of inactivity unless arrangements have been made at the discretion of the Planning Manager. Inaction to remove the silhouette may result in Code Enforcement.

## **OTHER VISUAL AIDS**

At the discretion of the Planning Manager, other forms of visual aid may be required to help demonstrate how a project will integrate into its surroundings. Visual aids show the composition of the project as it would appear from a certain distance and height, or “perspective” from the project, and can include perspective drawings, three-dimensional models, and photo simulations. In accordance with Section 65103.5 of the Government Code, the design professional is also requested to submit an electronic copy of the site plan and massing diagram.

Visual aids should represent how the project would appear to a passerby (approximately 5 to 6 feet tall) as seen from the public right-of-way (curb, sidewalk, street) and should include one or more prominent viewpoints. The relationship between the project and its surroundings should be demonstrated by showing in sufficient detail the existing buildings on the adjacent properties along either side of the project. All roof variations, wall articulation, and eave lines including plate heights must be shown. Plate heights, overall roof heights, and other measurements must be verified and changes in topography must be shown accurately. Three-dimensional models should include four aerial photographs from different angles (north, south, east, west) of the existing project site along with the adjacent properties. Aerial photographs and modeling may also be utilized to visually represent the project massing, height, lot coverage, and open space in relation to neighboring buildings and the surrounding area. Photo simulations should be taken at eye level (approximately 5 to 6 feet above grade) and must be accompanied with a plan or map showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction with an arrow keyed to the photos. The scale and viewing perspective of drawings must accurately match the scale and viewing perspective of the photographs. Building elevations should be colored to match the proposed materials. If landscaping is shown, it must be shown at no more than 5 years growth unless included as a separate overlay.

## **EXCEPTIONS**

At the discretion of the Planning Manager, an exception to the story pole requirement may be granted due to (a) a public health and/or safety concern, (b) the story pole installation would substantially impair the use of existing structures or the site to the extent it would not be able to be occupied and the existing commercial or residential use would be infeasible, or (c) the existing condition of the site (existing structures, steep slopes) does not allow for adequate story pole installation. In that case, other visual aids are required.

## **SILHOUETTE CHECKLIST**

All required items described above must accompany the project application filing as a complete package that includes an electronic copy in PDF format delivered through email or USB. Partial submissions are not accepted. Inaccurate or incomplete silhouettes will require resubmittal of the certification form and plan. The project application cannot be deemed complete until the silhouette certification form has been submitted.

- Silhouette Certification:** The certification form must be completed by a licensed land surveyor or licensed civil engineer and must be accompanied by a silhouette plan that utilizes the project site plan, roof plan, or survey as the base drawing.
- Silhouette Plan:** The silhouette plan must be no less than 11 inches by 17 inches and drawn to scale and must include an electronic copy delivered through email or USB.
- Silhouette Photographs:** Photograph print size should be no less than 8 inches by 10 inches and must include an electronic copy delivered through email or USB.
- Other Visual Aids** (if applicable)

## **QUESTIONS**

For more information, please contact the Planning Division at (310) 618-5990 or visit the Permit Center (Planning Counter) located at 3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503, open 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Thursday, open alternate Fridays.



City of Torrance, Community Development Department, Planning Division

3031 Torrance Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90503, Telephone (310) 618-5990

# Hillside Overlay Silhouette Certification

I, the undersigned, surveyed the silhouette located at \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  
STREET ADDRESS ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER

on \_\_\_\_\_ , based on the project plans submitted to the City of Torrance  
DATE OF SURVEY

by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ .  
NAME OF PROJECT APPLICANT DATE OF APPLICATION SUBMITTAL

The survey was taken from a benchmark located at \_\_\_\_\_  
LOCATION OF BENCHMARK

with an elevation of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
BENCHMARK ELEVATION

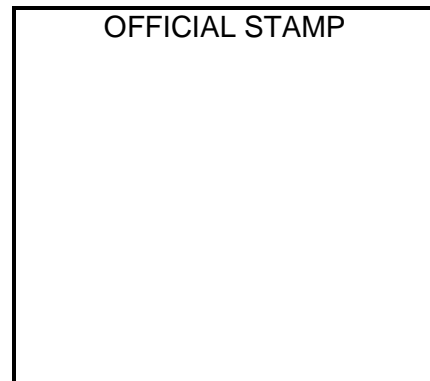
The highest point of the silhouette was determined to have an elevation of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
HIGHEST ELEVATION POINT OF SILHOUETTE

The project plans indicate the highest point should have an elevation of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
HIGHEST ELEVATION POINT OF PROJECT PLANS

The existing lowest adjacent grade was determined to have an elevation of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
EXISTING LOWEST ADJACENT GRADE

The project plans indicate the lowest adjacent grade should have an elevation of \_\_\_\_\_ .  
PROPOSED LOWEST ADJACENT GRADE

*I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the silhouette located at the above-referenced site was constructed and/or surveyed under my supervision and found to be in conformance ( $\pm 3$  inches) with the design, height, and location shown on the project plans submitted to the Community Development Department and the attached silhouette plan, and that the silhouette was constructed in accordance with the City of Torrance silhouette standards.*



\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR OR CIVIL ENGINEER DATE OF SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME OF REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR OR CIVIL ENGINEER LICENSE NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS TELEPHONE NUMBER

FOR STAFF USE ONLY – DO NOT COMPLETE BELOW	
PLANNING RECORD NUMBER(S)	DATE STAMP RECEIVED
REVIEW COMPLETED BY	REVIEW COMPLETED DATE
STAFF DETERMINATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> COMPLETE SILHOUETTE CERTIFICATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> INCOMPLETE SILHOUETTE CERTIFICATION	

**STAFF CHECKLIST**

**APPLICATION FILING**

- STEP 1:** Verify the silhouette certification form is completed by a licensed land surveyor or licensed civil engineer and is accompanied by the silhouette plan, silhouette photographs, and other visual aids (if applicable).
- STEP 2:** Verify an electronic copy of the silhouette certification form, the silhouette plan, the silhouette photographs, and other visual aids (if applicable) have been delivered through email or USB.
- STEP 3:** Verify the silhouette plan measures no less than 11 inches by 17 inches, drawn to scale, and utilizes the project site plan, roof plan, or survey as the base drawing. The silhouette plan must show the location of the benchmark, existing and proposed lowest adjacent grade, each story pole and connecting tape or ribbon. The silhouette plan must also show the base elevation and the maximum elevation of each pole.
- STEP 4:** Verify the silhouette photographs are taken from three angles (center, left, right) as viewed from the public right-of-way (curb, sidewalk, street) and accompanied with a plan or map showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction with an arrow keyed to the photos. Photographs should be taken at eye level approximately 5 to 6 feet above grade. Photograph print size should be no less than 8 inches by 10 inches.
- STEP 5:** Verify other visual aids (if applicable).

**FIELD VISIT**

- STEP 6:** Conduct a field visit to verify the story poles are installed at the most distant corners of the proposed structure, roof ridgelines, lower ridges, balconies, and any projections. The pole heights must represent the outline and final height of the proposed structure. Changes to grading elevation should be accounted for in the pole heights. Bright color tape, netting, ribbon, or other type of flagging must be tightly strung between the poles to represent the outline of the proposed structure.

DATE OF FIELD VISIT: \_\_\_\_\_

PRECISE PLAN RECORD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

**END OF STAFF CHECKLIST**