

Chapter II

Single Family Residential

A. Introduction

Incremental development of agricultural and residential properties in San Juan Capistrano with single family detached dwellings over the past 200 years and recently developed master planned subdivisions comprise the predominant residential urban form of the community. The overall residential development scale reflects the City's small-town rural past, and the community's sensitivity towards preservation of natural amenities and topography. The Spanish, Agrarian and Native American heritage of San Juan Capistrano is apparent in its town design and traditional architectural building styles.

The guidelines in this chapter implement the Design Principles set forth in Chapter 1 and apply to smaller infill and to larger master planned projects. They are intended to promote design solutions that produce a sense of timelessness, elegance and to specifically address challenging design issues primarily associated with small-lot development.

Standards and guidelines for master planned developments shall take precedent over the following guidelines. Where site-specific standards or guidelines are silent, these guidelines will serve as a supplement.

early era single family residence



B. General Design Objectives

The design of detached residential development projects in San Juan Capistrano shall:

- Complement the scale and character of the site and surrounding areas
- Establish high-quality, pedestrian friendly and functional site arrangement of buildings, parking and landscaping areas
- Provide stylistically authentic and creative architectural design solutions which convey a sense of timelessness and elegance
- Create visual interest by utilizing architectural and landscape concepts that maintain a sense of harmony and proportion along street frontages and other areas of the project exposed to public view
- Provide adequate open space
- Maximize privacy between adjacent residences
- Provide adequate on-site and street parking
- Preserve existing unique site amenities such as views, topography and mature trees
- Recognize the historic, cultural and archeological importance of a particular site by preserving and incorporating structures, elements or features indigenous to the site as part of the project development proposal
- Utilize high quality details and materials

*natural landscape and open space
should be profound components
of residential developments*



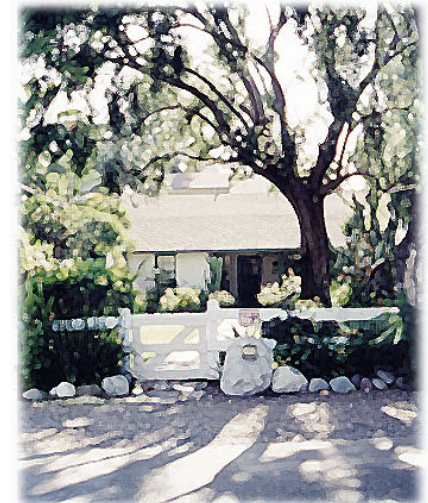
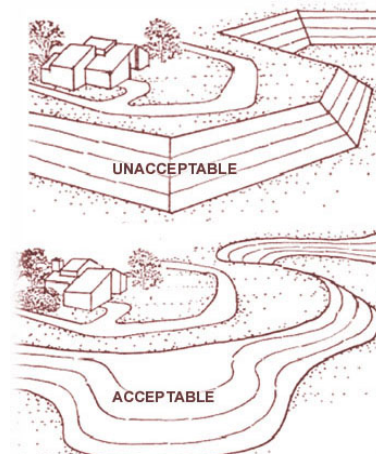
C. Site Planning

1. Grading

- Landform preservation should shape and guide site development. Grading should not substantially alter natural grades to increase the area of developable land. Grading of or within characteristic topographical areas such as ridgelines, unique hillside features and creeks is prohibited.
- Innovative grading techniques such as contour grading that incorporate use of variable slopes, both vertical and horizontal, and meandering tops and toes of slopes are encouraged.
- Smooth, gradual transitions between manufactured and natural slopes are encouraged.
- Use of retaining walls should be minimized. Where use of retaining walls can not be avoided, they should be screened to the maximum extent possible and use of plantable retaining walls should be employed as part of the design solution.

2. Compatibility

- Projects shall complement the surrounding natural and built environment in pattern, function, scale, character and materials.
- The placement of structures, circulation patterns and open space shall acknowledge the site's positive characteristics.
- Culturally and architecturally significant structures shall be preserved and incorporated in the project development proposal.
- Increased setback buffers, intensified landscaping, and building orientation design techniques should be utilized to attain the greatest degree of compatibility between residential and higher intensity land uses.
- Natural site features including streams, scenic vistas and stands of trees shall be integrated into the overall site design of the project.



3. Site Entry and Edge Design

- a. Residential developments should incorporate neighborhood “entry” and “edge” design features. Ornamental landscaping, open space areas, architectural monumentation and enhanced paving may be utilized to create a unique design statement and distinguish new residential areas from their surroundings.

4. Lot Design

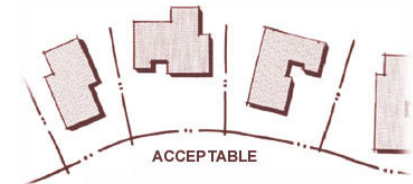
- a. Interior lot widths should be varied to allow sitting of different types and sizes of homes. Corner lots should be substantially wider than interior lots to permit three-sided architectural treatment and provide opportunities to incorporate side entry garages.
- b. Creative lot design techniques which lessen the impact of closely spaced homes, achieving a desired density without compromising street scene visual aesthetics, are encouraged.

5. Building Siting

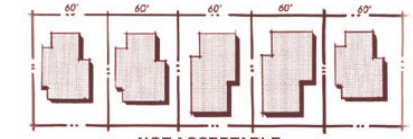
- a. Variable setbacks should be provided along street frontages and between adjoining properties in order to establish different patterns of open spaces, thereby achieving an aesthetically pleasing street scene and minimizing privacy loss between dwellings.
- b. Placement of garages towards the rear portion of the lot and use of side entry garage configurations are encouraged in order to create a pedestrian friendly street-scene.

6. Streets

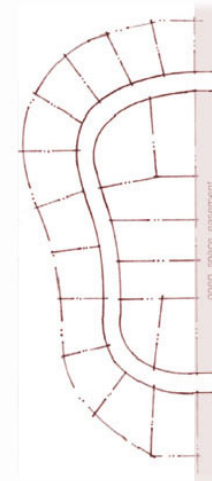
- a. New streets should form a continuous circulation network and connect with adjacent existing streets. T-turnarounds, gated and/or dead-end streets are discouraged, except in such cases when a significant natural or cultural feature can be more effectively preserved or when the location or configuration of the parcel prevents implementation of the optimum design solution.



VARIABLE LOT WIDTHS AND VARIABLE FRONT SETBACKS ON CURVILINEAR STREETS



REPETITIVE LOT WIDTHS AND SIMILAR FRONT SETBACKS ON A STRAIGHT STREET



RECOMMENDED



- b. The length of residential blocks should generally not exceed 400 ft., however, exceptions to this guideline will be considered in those cases where additional length is necessary to preserve the existing natural topography.

7. Sidewalks

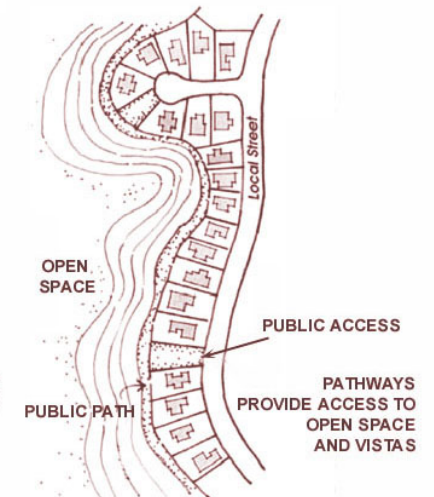
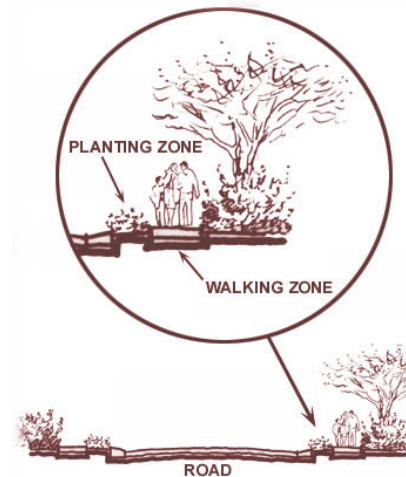
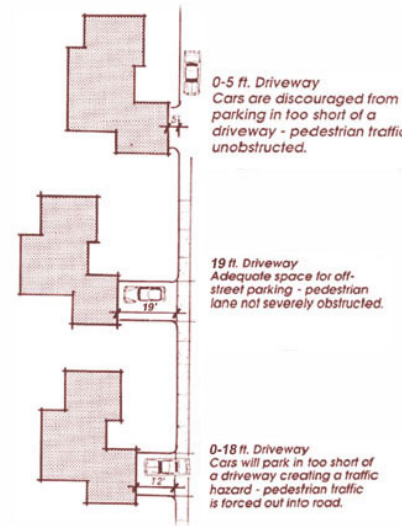
- a. Sidewalk design should be safe, attractive, and well defined by landscaping. Use of decorative pavement is encouraged on private property.
- b. Sidewalks should provide a 4 ft. (min) clear width, (exclusive of curb). Six ft. (min) wide landscaped parkways should be incorporated between street-curb and sidewalk areas.
- c. Use of meandering sidewalks is encouraged adjacent to arterials and open space areas.

8. Driveways

- a. Driveways should maintain a 25 ft. (min) clearance from street intersections.
- b. Adequate off-street parking areas should be accommodated on each residential lot. Provision of 18 ft. (min) long driveways is recommended.
- c. An 8 ft. wide landscaped planting area should be provided between adjacent driveways to minimize adverse visual impacts from expansive driveway surfaces.

9. Open Space

- a. Passive and active open space areas should be provided within each residential “neighborhood”. In new developments, placement of open space areas within easy walking distance from every dwelling (approximately 1,500 feet) is recommended.
- b. Pathways should be provided to open space areas and vistas.



- c. Open space areas should be usable and accessible, not leftover land fragments.
- d. Natural site amenities such as vegetation, views and topographic features should be preserved and integrated in the project design.

10. Walls and Fences

- a. Community perimeter walls should be constructed of high quality, enduring construction materials such as masonry and/or ornamental metal (view fencing) and should be sited to accommodate a 15 ft. (min) landscaped setback along street frontages.
- b. Walls and fences should be architecturally enhanced and complimented by adjoining landscaping. Tiered planting should be provided adjacent to perimeter walls to soften their appearance from surrounding areas.
- c. Walls at corner locations along street frontages should be either eliminated or substantially setback and curved or angled to create “gateway element” design opportunities.
- d. Where appropriate, pedestrian access points should be incorporated in community perimeter wall or fence design solutions.
- e. “Saw-tooth” fence design solutions are discouraged.



11. Paving

- a. Driveway entries, pedestrian walkways and crosswalks on private property should incorporate decorative paving.
- b. Use of pavers that allow water infiltration is encouraged. Use of stone and brick is acceptable, where such materials are deemed appropriate and would complement the overall architectural theme. Use of stamped and color concrete treatments is discouraged but may be considered and permitted on a case-by-case basis.
- c. Noise impacts that may result from use of certain types of pavers should be considered during the materials selection process.



12. Lighting

- a. The type and location of site and building lighting should preclude direct glare onto adjoining property and streets.
- b. Decorative light fixtures are encouraged. “High mast” poles are discouraged.
- c. Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be located along all pedestrian routes.
- d. Street lighting fixtures should be installed in a staggered configuration on both sides of the street, at a maximum distance of 180 ft. between staggered lights.

D. Architectural Guidelines

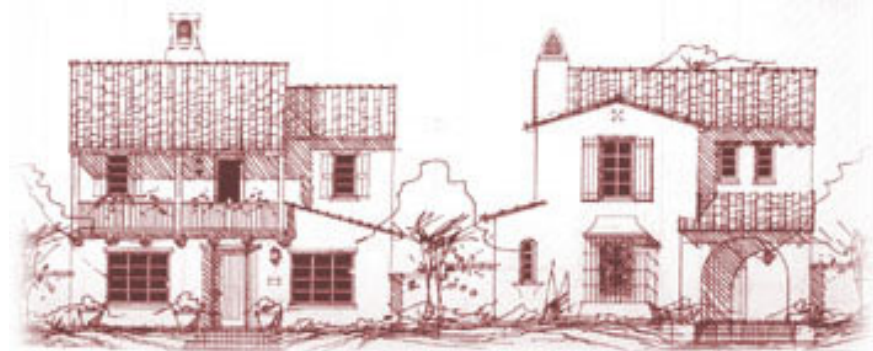
1. Architectural Imagery

- a. San Juan Capistrano's residential neighborhood fabric is comprised of an eclectic mixture of architectural styles, thus, in keeping with the existing character of the residential community, no particular architectural "style" is required for single-family detached residential structures. The primary focus is on developing a high quality residential environment.
- b. The building design should ultimately take advantage and enhance the site's unique natural amenities. Structures' design should be inspiring, functional and enduring.
- c. The selected architectural design should be compatible in terms of form, size, color, materials and roofline with the character of existing development in the surrounding area.
- d. "Human scale" proportions and architectural building details which emphasize and reflect the presence and importance of people are encouraged .
- e. The arrangement and design of architectural elements such as windows, doors, cornice details, etc. should take into consideration scale, style and proportion of the overall architectural form and should result in a rhythmic and authentic composition.
- f. Front porches create architecturally attractive semi-private front yard spaces and foster community interface, therefore they should be included in the design of single-family detached residential projects.

2. Building Facade and Roof Articulation

- a. Dwellings should be designed to complement, yet be distinguishable from adjacent structures. Buildings should relate in terms of mass but utilize different form and detail compositions to create a unique design statement. The same building elevation should not be repeated more frequently than every fourth house.

a range of appropriate styles are encouraged



- b. Roof designs should be compatible in terms of type, slope, size, materials, and colors to surrounding residential structures.
- c. All building elevations should be architecturally enhanced. Unarticulated walls and monolithic roof forms are prohibited. Massing offsets, fenestration, varied textures, openings, recesses, and design accents are strongly encouraged.
- d. The selected architectural style shall be consistently employed on all building elevations. Use of architectural gimmicks, which sacrifice the integrity of the proposed architectural style heritage, should be avoided.
- e. Building elevations which are visible from public areas should be significantly articulated. Inclusion of vertical and horizontal massing offsets, porches, balconies, reveals and awnings are encouraged.
- f. One-story architectural elements and massing should be incorporated into two-story building designs to the greatest extent possible. Where two story masses occur, one or more of the following features should be used to soften the visual impact of a two-story wall surface;
 - Variety of hip and gable roofs
 - Arbors, trellises and shade structures
 - Balconies
 - Cantilevered building elements
- g. Front porches should be designed to provide a depth of 8 ft. (min) and a width of 12 ft. (min).
- h. The building design should provide vertical and horizontal roof articulation. Flat roofs are discouraged, unless appropriate to the architectural style.

authentic architectural details are encouraged



3. Fenestration

- a. Proper door and window placement can significantly contribute towards achieving a pleasing and unified building composition, therefore, window sizes and their arrangement on a building elevation should be carefully studied during the design process and harmoniously coordinated.
- b. Unique fenestration forms and unconventional placement of doors and windows on a building surface will be considered on a case by case basis if the applicant can demonstrate that the proposed design arrangement comprises a well thought-out, integral component of the intended overall building design statement.
- c. Consistent use of a specific window style and level of detail is encouraged on all building sides.

4. Garage Design

- a. Garage design should be subordinate to the main dwelling. Garages with side entries, split, deep-recessed garages and motor courts are encouraged. Alley loaded garages may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- b. Garage frontages should be set back a minimum of 3 ft. from the dwelling's first story facade. Garages may be recessed less or project in front of the dwelling, only if they occupy no more than 50% of the building frontage and incorporate at least one of the following mitigating design features:
 - A porch not less than 12-ft. wide in front of the living area, or
 - A trellis extending not less than 2-ft. beyond the front of the garage, or
 - A balcony above the garage with a trellis or roof along the garage frontage



- c. Garage doors should not dominate the street scene. Multiple panel door designs, windows or other architectural detailing should be used on garage doors to reduce their impact and scale.
- d. Automatic garage door openers with sectional roll-up doors should be provided where the driveway length is less than 18 feet to avoid automobile encroachment within sidewalk areas.
- e. Garage storage areas should not encroach within minimum garage parking areas.

5. Building Materials and Colors

- a. Selection and application of building materials and colors should take into consideration and relate to surrounding development.
- b. Use of colors that reduce and eliminate reflectivity and blend structure(s) into the terrain is recommended. Use of muted colors and deep hues which reflect the project site's context are encouraged. Use of "Heritage colors" should be considered when appropriate to complement specific architectural styles.
- c. Materials should stylistically compliment architectural details and should not appear "tacked-on" to the building surface.
- d. Frequent changes in materials should be avoided. Changes in colors and materials should occur at interior corners and should coincide with vertical and horizontal wall plane changes.



E. Landscaping Guidelines

1. Standard Guidelines

- a. Landscaping should frame, soften and embellish the quality of residential environment, buffer units from noise and screen undesirable views.
- b. Tiered planting (tree-shrub-turf) and decorative hardscape should be utilized to enhance the visual character of the project.
- c. Preservation of existing vegetation and effective integration within the overall landscaping plan is encouraged.
- d. The selected landscaping materials should be appropriate for the climatic zone of the City and for the function that they are intending to serve including visual screening, space definition, privacy and accenting purposes.
- e. The placement of plant materials should not interfere with lighting or restrict access to emergency apparatus.
- f. Trees and large shrubs should be placed as follows:
 - 8 ft. (min) between center of trees and edge of driveway, 6 ft. from water meter or gas meter and sewer laterals
 - 25 ft. (min) between center of trees and beginning of curb returns at intersections
 - 25 ft. (min) between center of trees and large shrubs to utility poles and street lights; and
 - 8 ft. (min) between center of trees or large shrubs and fire hydrants, fire department sprinkler, standpipe connections
 - Root-barriers (guards) are required to be installed between planting and adjoining hardscape areas. A 5 ft. (min) clearance should be provided between root barriers and adjacent hardscape areas

the San Juan Capistrano residential landscape



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- g. Trees should be clustered on property lines to screen buildings and take advantage of views.
- h. Plant materials should be located in a manner that simulates natural conditions.
- i. Common area landscaping and maintenance should ensure the natural quality and appearance of selected planting materials

2. Slope Vegetation and Erosion Control

- a. All proposed slopes with a gradient greater than 6:1 and with a vertical height of 3 ft. or greater, should be vegetated within 30 days of completion of finish grading.
- b. All plant materials should be appropriately spaced to control soil erosion.
- c. Trees, shrubs, and ground covers should be planted in undulating groupings to improve the character of manufactured slopes.
- d. New or vegetated slopes should include permanent irrigation systems.

3. Vegetation Fuel Modification Zone

- a. A fuel modification zone area, ranging in width from 50 ft. - 100 ft. should be provided for any development requiring a building permit for the primary structure where the property is located immediately adjacent to mature flammable vegetation, pursuant to the Orange County Fire Authority regulations.
- b. The first 50 ft. (wet zone) of vegetation fuel modification must consist of irrigated landscaping.
- c. Plant materials within the wet zone area must be fire resistant and preferably drought-tolerant. Plant materials outside the wet zone must be fire resistant.

