

## Chapter IV

*even commercial development defers to the landscape and natural environment of San Juan Capistrano*

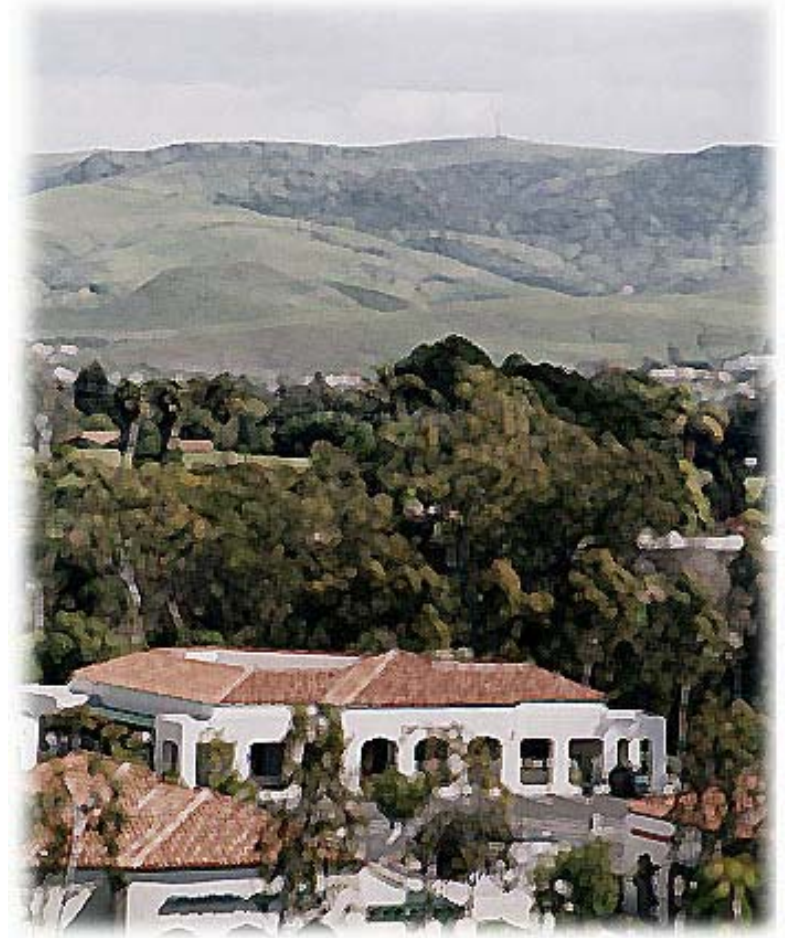
### General Commercial

#### A. Introduction

Commercial developments occupy dominant locations within San Juan Capistrano and serve essential community commerce needs at different levels, from neighborhood to region-wide. The design of commercial spaces reflects the community's character. The care and attention paid to the design of commercial projects exhibits the city's pride in itself and contributes to its socio-economic vitality.

The following guidelines provide design concepts and direction for all commercial projects, encourage high quality and innovative design solutions and recognize the importance of storefront visibility as well as parking and circulation design to the success of commercial enterprises. The guidelines implement the Design Principles set forth in Chapter 1 and are intended to foster developments which would be in keeping with the overall character of San Juan Capistrano.

Site-specific standards shall take precedence when in conflict with the guidelines. Where such standards are silent, these guidelines will serve as a supplement. Section 9 of the Land Use Code should be consulted for specific regulations governing land use and zoning development standards.

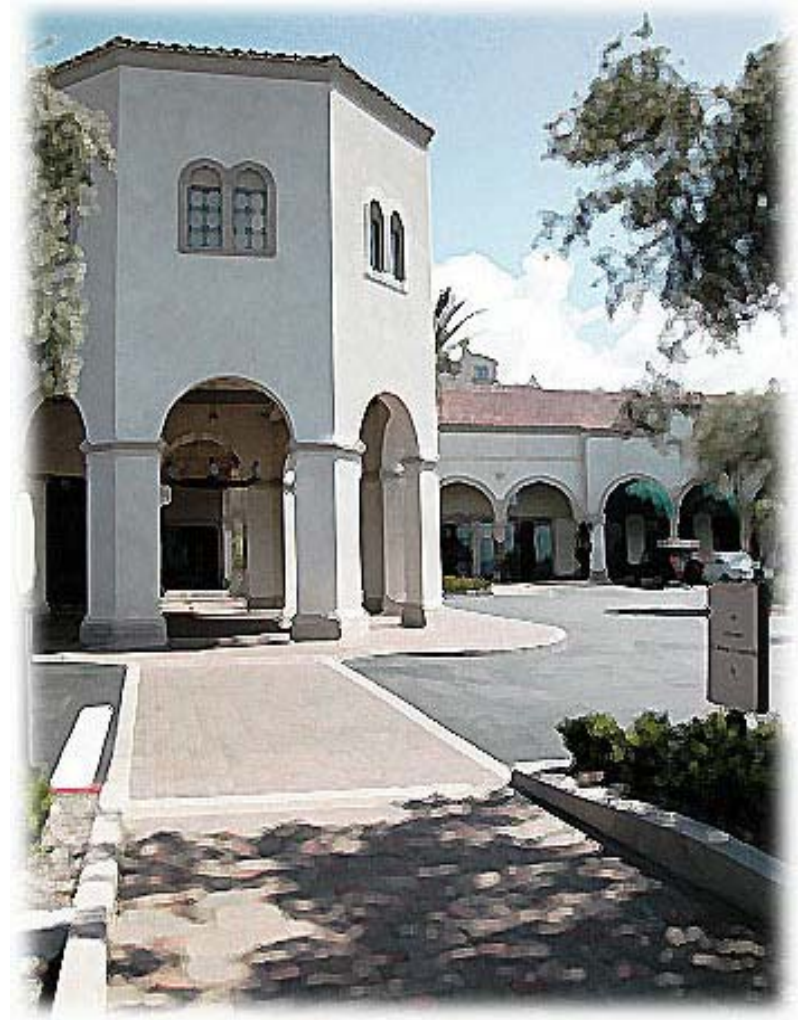


### **B. General Design Objectives:**

The design of each commercial project in San Juan Capistrano should:

- Reinforce or establish a unique environmental image, for the district within which the project site is located, by considering the scale, proportion and character of development in the surrounding area
- Establish attractive and functional site arrangement of buildings, open space, parking areas and landscaping
- Provide site-specific, innovative, high quality architectural design solutions
- Provide stylistically diverse architectural design solutions which convey a sense of timelessness and elegance
- Facilitate pedestrian activity and access
- Minimize impacts of noise, light and traffic
- Preserve and take advantage of natural site amenities such as mature trees and hillside views
- Preserve and incorporate structures which are distinctive due to their age, cultural significance, or unique architectural style into the project development proposal

*simple elegant forms, high quality design, details and materials are encouraged*



## C. Site Planning

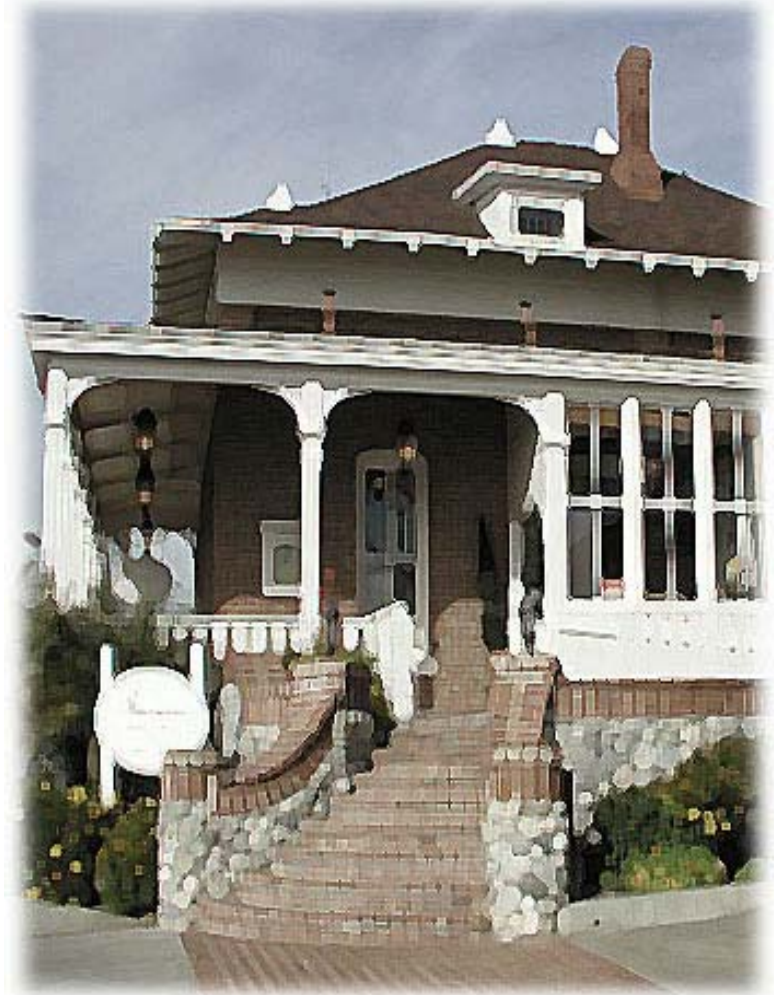
### 1. Grading

- a. Landform preservation should shape and guide site development of commercial proposals. 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.
- b. Innovative grading concepts such as contour grading, that incorporate use of variable slopes and meandering tops and toes of slopes techniques are encouraged. Smooth, gradual transitions between manufactured and natural slopes are recommended.
- c. Use of retaining walls should be minimized. Where use of retaining walls cannot be avoided, they should be screened to the maximum extent possible and use of plantable retaining walls systems should be employed as part of the design solution.

### 2. Compatibility

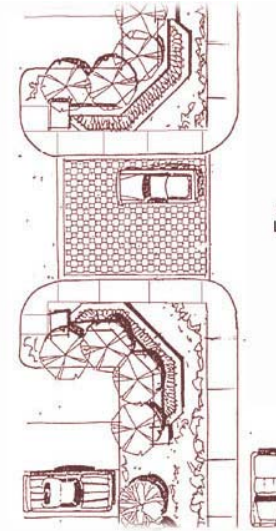
- a. Project design should complement the surrounding built environment in pattern, function, scale, character and materials. Natural site features including streams, scenic vistas and stands of mature trees should be integrated into the overall project design
- b. The placement of structures, circulation patterns and open space location should acknowledge the site's characteristics. Culturally and architecturally significant structures should be preserved and incorporated in the project development proposal.
- c. Increased setback buffers, intensified landscaping, and building orientation and design techniques should be utilized to attain the greatest degree of compatibility between commercial developments and lower intensity land uses.
- d. Linkages between commercial and residential uses are encouraged, where appropriate.

*project design should be compatible  
with its context*



### 3. Site Entry Design

- a. Site entries may be accentuated by ornamental landscaping, decorative paving, raised medians, gateway structures, and monument signage.
- b. Where deemed appropriate, based on context considerations, main entry drives may include the following design features:
  - a median with a 10-ft. (min) wide clear landscaped area between the street and the first bisecting parking aisle
  - a 5ft. (min) wide sidewalk on each side of the driveway
  - a 10-ft. (min) wide landscaped parkway on each side of the driveway
  - a 20-ft. (min) wide decorative paving band

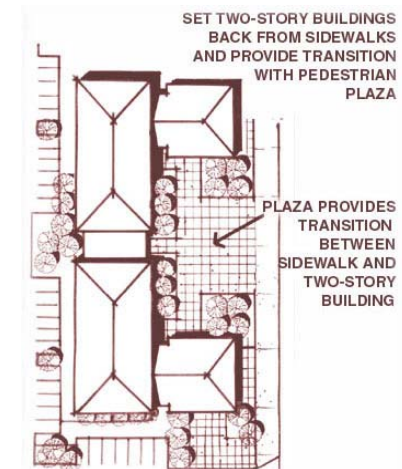


ENHANCE PROJECT ENTRIES WITH LANDSCAPING AND SPECIAL PAVING



### 4. Building Siting

- a. Structure siting should take into consideration surrounding context, location of incompatible uses and unique site characteristics.
- b. The placement and design of structures on corner and mid-block parcels, should create a strong visual and physical connection to the street frontage.
- c. Building and site arrangements should facilitate pedestrian activity, screen parking and foster public use of spaces.
- d. Clustering of structures to create plazas and pedestrian malls is encouraged. When clustering is infeasible, visual and physical linkages between separate structures should be established by the selected architectural style, freestanding architectural elements (e.g. arcade systems, trellises) landscaping and hardscape.



- e. The building design of structures sited adjacent to street corners should recognize the importance and visibility of the “local” by incorporating appropriate building massing and forms to “anchor” the intersections. Angled or curvilinear building forms and plazas are encouraged at corner locations.
- f. Extensive parking lot areas between buildings and right-of-ways are discouraged along pedestrian oriented as well as auto oriented corridors.
- g. Parking lots should occupy no more than 60% of a site’s street frontage. Use of landscaping and architectural elements to enhance perimeter parking areas is encouraged.

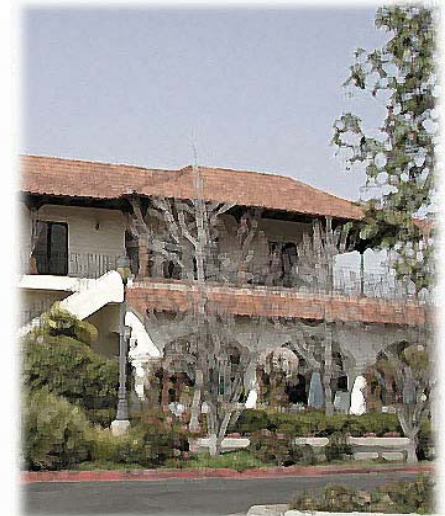
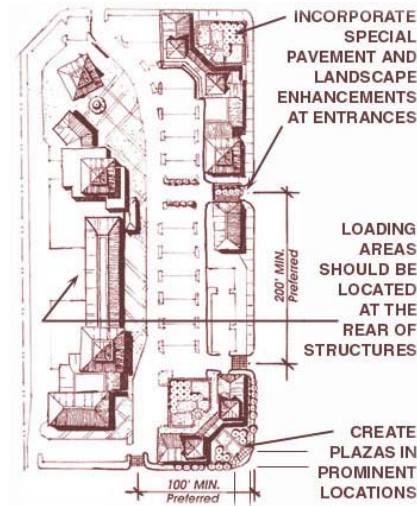
## 5. Vehicular Access/ Circulation/ Parking

- a. Site access and circulation design should promote safety, efficiency, and convenience for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- b. Use of streets to fulfill internal circulation needs is not permitted. A continuous circulation network system should be provided throughout the site to the greatest extent possible. Dead-end driveways should be minimized. Adequate areas for maneuvering, stacking, truck staging, loading and emergency vehicle access shall be provided on site.
- c. The number of site access points should be proportional to the functional needs and scale of the development. Placement of driveway entrances in proximity to street intersections should be avoided. Use of common or shared driveways is encouraged.
- d. Driveway entry locations should be aligned with existing or planned median openings and driveways on the opposite side of the roadway.

***buildings and/ or plazas should  
“anchor” corner locations***

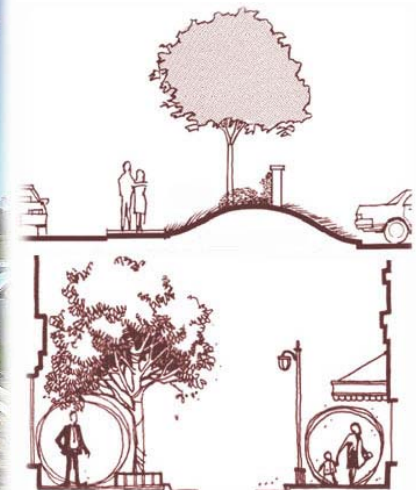
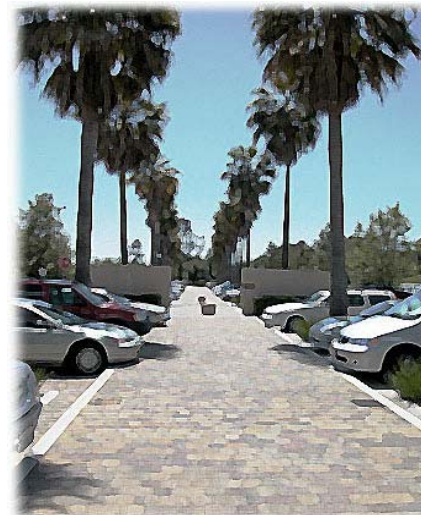


- e. The parking lot design, particularly of larger parking lots, should differentiate and provide the following: major access drives with no direct access to parking spaces; primary circulation drives with minimal parking; and parking aisles for direct parking space access. Loading and service access and circulation should be independent from the general circulation system.
- f. Parking should not dominate street frontages. Parking areas should be screened by landscaping and structures.
- g. Larger parking lots should be divided into a series of interconnected areas.
- h. A raised walkway and landscape strip should be provided between parking areas and buildings. Walkway and landscape strip dimensions should amply accommodate anticipated functions, intensity of use, landscaping theme and associated planting materials.
- i. Placement of parking areas along primary circulation driveways and adjacent to building entrances is discouraged.



## 6. Pedestrian Circulation

- a. Pedestrian linkages should be established between buildings, sidewalks and parking areas.
- b. Clearly defined pedestrian paths should be provided from sidewalks and parking areas to primary building entrances.
- c. Pedestrian pathways should be separated from vehicular traffic by a change in grade level. Use of raised pedestrian pathways in conjunction with enhanced paving, landscaping and bollards to delineate pedestrian paths is recommended.
- d. Parking areas should be designed in a manner that allows pedestrians to walk parallel to moving cars and minimize the need for pedestrians to cross parking aisles and landscape islands to reach building entries.



## 7. Plazas and Courtyards

- a. Inclusion of plazas and courtyards within commercial developments is encouraged. Entries to plazas and courtyards should be inviting and well lit.
- b. Landscaping, water features, and public art should be incorporated into plaza and courtyard design.
- c. Courtyards should be buffered from parking areas and drive aisles.
- d. Primary access to public plazas and courtyards should be provided from the street. Secondary access may be provided from retail shops, restaurants, offices and other uses within the development.
- e. Shade trees or architectural elements which provide shelter and relief from direct sunlight should be provided within plazas and courtyards.

## 8. Auxiliary Structures/ Areas

- a. Auxiliary structures and areas such as play structures and outdoor dining areas should be integrated within the overall site and building design.

## 9. Loading & Delivery

- a. Loading and delivery service areas should be located and designed to minimize their visibility, circulation conflicts and adverse noise impacts.
- b. The building structure(s), architectural wing walls, freestanding walls and landscape should be used to screen loading and delivery service areas.
- c. Placement of loading and delivery areas within setback areas is discouraged.

*architecturally integrated outdoor dining area*

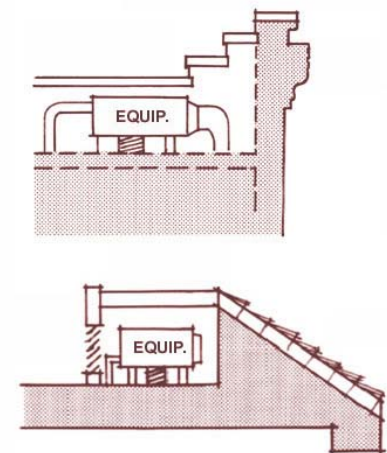
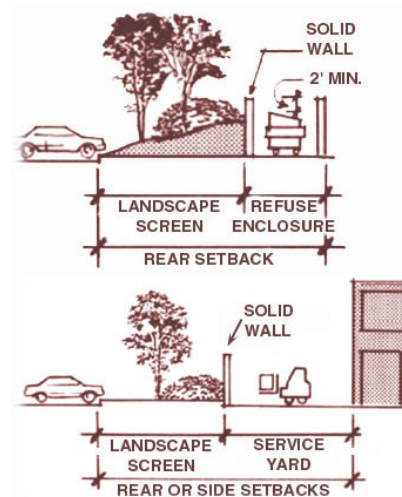


## 10. Utility and Mechanical Equipment

- a. Utility, service areas and mechanical equipment should be screened from view. All screening devices should be compatible with the architecture, materials and colors of adjacent structures.
- b. Utility apparatus such as transformer units, valves and timers which are required to be installed along street frontages should be undergrounded or otherwise screened from public view with landscaping.

## 11. Refuse and Storage Areas

- a. Trash and storage enclosures should be architecturally compatible with the project design. Landscaping should be provided adjacent to the enclosure(s) to screen them and to deter graffiti.
- b. Trash storage should be enclosed within or adjacent to the main structure or located within separate freestanding enclosures.
- c. The location of trash enclosures should be easily accessible for trash collection and should not impede general site circulation patterns during loading operations.
- d. Trash enclosures should be sited to minimize nuisance to adjacent properties.
- e. Cart storage should be integrated within the initial building and site design. Large freestanding enclosures or unscreened “cart corrals” are generally considered unacceptable.



## 12. Walls and Fences

- a. Walls and fences should be designed to complement the project's architecture. Landscaping should be used to soften the appearance of wall and fence surfaces.
- b. Solid wall enclosures with pilasters, decorative caps and offsets are recommended for screening purposes.
- c. Solid walls and fences within front and exterior side yards of commercial sites should be avoided.
- d. The design of outdoor dining enclosures should be integrated within the overall project design and should be consistent with the architectural theme.

## 13. Paving

- a. Paving materials should complement the overall architectural theme. Use of unadorned concrete paving solutions is generally discouraged. Use of decorative paving materials is recommended.
- b. Decorative paving should be incorporated into parking lot design, driveway entries, pedestrian walkways and crosswalks on private property.
- c. Use of pavers that allow water infiltration is encouraged. Use of stone and brick is acceptable, where such materials are deemed appropriate. Use of stamped and color concrete treatments are discouraged but may be considered and permitted on a case-by-case basis.

*decorative paving is encouraged*



## 14. Lighting

- a. The type and location of parking lot and building lighting should preclude direct glare onto adjoining property, streets, or skyward. Lighting systems should be designed for two operating levels; a higher intensity lighting level for business operating hours and a reduced intensity level for non-operating hours.
- b. The design of the light fixtures and their structural support should be architecturally compatible with the theme of the development.
- c. Pedestrian scale/decorative light fixtures are encouraged. "High mast" poles are discouraged.
- d. Lighting should be designed to satisfy functional and decorative needs. Security lighting should be designed as part of an overall lighting plan.
- e. Storefront lighting should complement the architectural style of the building while providing illumination of building facades and entrances.
- f. Use of accent architectural lighting is encouraged.

## 15. Other Site Amenities

- a. Site amenities should be coordinated in terms of color, materials and design in order to convey a cohesive project appearance and distinctive character.

### Site Furniture

- a. Seating should be included within plazas, courtyards and along pedestrian circulation areas.

*pedestrian scale, decorative light fixtures*



### Tree Grates/Guards

- Tree grates should be utilized along street frontages and plaza areas where a decorative and/or continuous walking surface is desirable. Grates should be a minimum of four feet in diameter and should incorporate knockouts to accommodate the growth of the tree trunk over time.
- Tree guards should be provided to protect trees in high activity areas. Their design should be compatible with site furnishings.

### Bollards

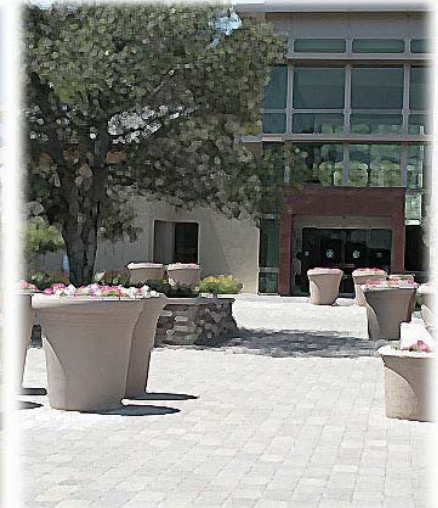
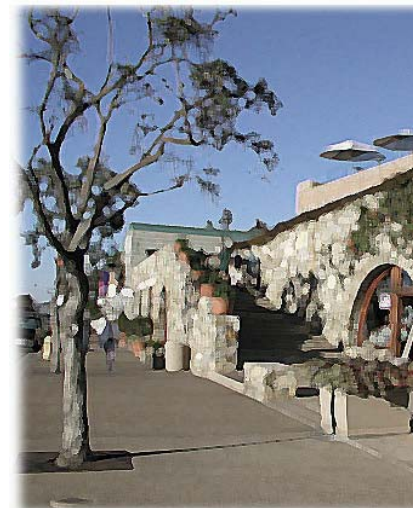
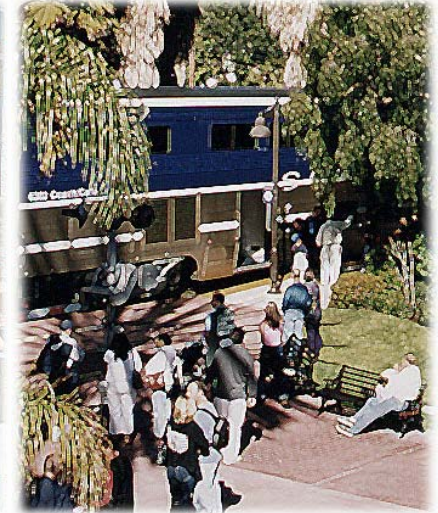
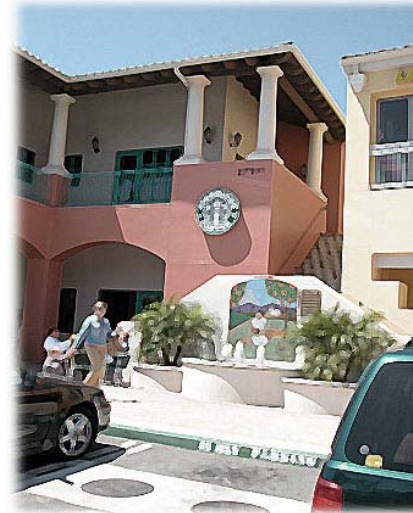
- Bollard design should be consistent with the overall project theme and should complement other site furnishings.
- At locations where emergency access may be necessary, removable bollards should be considered.

### Pots and Planters

- The placement of planters and pots may be used to organize, accent and direct pedestrian traffic flow.
- Planters and pots should be utilized to provide visual interest and color accent building recesses, at locations where access is discouraged and adjacent to blank walls.
- Planter colors and materials should be compatible with the architectural theme.

### Newspaper Racks

- Newspaper racks should be carefully sited to ensure provision of adequate pedestrian circulation clearance around them.
- Newspaper rack design should be enhanced by masonry and/or metal elements that compliment other streetscape furnishings.
- Newspaper racks should be consolidated wherever possible.



### Kiosks, Bulletin Boards, Directories

- a. Kiosks, bulletin boards and directories should be provided near vehicular and pedestrian entrances to multi-tenant commercial developments.
- b. Directory and bulletin board siting should maximize their visibility while minimizing the potential for creating a traffic hazard.
- c. Kiosk design should be consistent with the architectural theme of the development and other site furnishings.

### Trash Receptacles

- a. Trash receptacle design should coordinate with other streetscape furnishings.

### Bicycle Racks

- a. Bicycle rack design should be consistent with other streetscape furnishings. Use of “loop racks” and “ribbon bars” are encouraged.
- b. Bicycle racks should be located in visible areas.

### Bus Shelters

- a. Bus shelter design should compliment the architectural style of adjacent buildings.
- b. Bus shelters should not be utilized for commercial advertising.
- c. Bus shelter design should provide unobstructed visibility into the shelter to maximize user safety and minimize vandalism.

*directory/ bulletin board*



## D. Architectural Guidelines

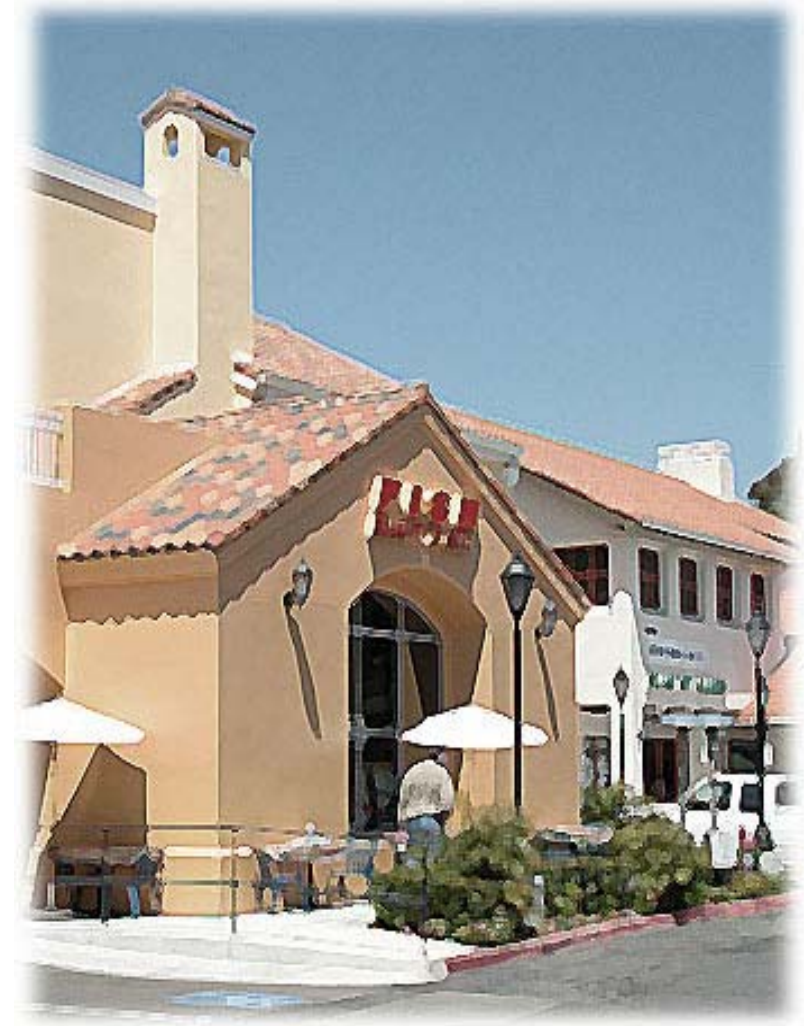
### 1. Architectural Imagery

- a. The architectural design for all new structures which are located outside the historic downtown area should consider the City's Early California heritage, however, no particular architectural "style" or theme will be required. Buildings should convey a sense of authenticity, timelessness and elegance regardless of style or genre. High quality, innovative architecture is encouraged.
- b. The architectural style/ design should enhance the site's context and should be harmonious with existing building massing, scale, proportions, colors and materials. In all cases the selected architectural style should be utilized on all building elevations.
- c. Architectural details and variations in form should be incorporated in the building design in order to create visual interest.
- d. Site-specific design solutions are encouraged. Use of "building prototypes" for the purpose of achieving corporate image advertising objectives is discouraged.

### 2. Building Façade and Roof Articulation

- a. Buildings should be segmented in distinct massing elements. Vertical and horizontal offsets should be provided to minimize building bulk.
- b. Articulated building facades which employ variable architectural elements and details are encouraged along street frontages.
- c. Structures such as pergolas, arcades and trellises should be utilized to visually and physically link buildings and create connections to adjacent sidewalks.
- d. The architectural design and placement of "Anchor buildings" on site should balance and not overshadow minor "in-line" tenant spaces and "freestanding pad" structures.

*variation in massing and use of real materials are encouraged*



- e. Building entries should evoke a “sense of arrival” by being distinctively designed and readily identifiable. Variations in massing, architectural detailing, colors and materials are encouraged to articulate entry areas.
- f. All wall surfaces visible to the public should be architecturally enhanced.
- g. Where vertical architectural elements (e.g. clock towers, stair towers) are proposed as focal points, their scale and relationship to the main structure should be carefully considered.
- h. Stairways should be designed as an integral part of the building architecture.
- i. Nearly vertical or mansard roofs should be avoided.
- j. Gutters and downspouts should be concealed, unless designed as a decorative architectural feature.
- k. Mechanical equipment should be fully screened. All screening enclosures should be compatible with the building’s architecture, colors and materials.

### 3. Fenestration

- a. The proportions and location of fenestration elements (e.g. doors, windows, skylights) should relate to the scale of the building upon which they are located.
- b. Security hardware should be architecturally integrated within the building design. The use of scissor grilles is strongly discouraged.

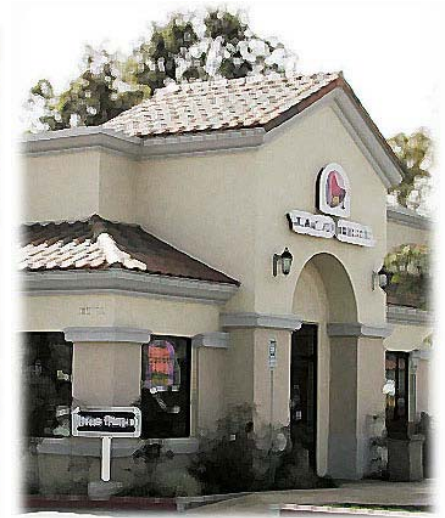


#### 4. Building Materials and Colors

- The colors and materials palette utilized by national franchise tenants should complement the overall design theme and surrounding development.
- Use of precast building materials is generally discouraged and may be considered and permitted on a case-by-case basis.
- High quality stone and brick veneers as well as use of muted, deep tone color is encouraged.

#### 5. Building Lighting

- Lighting should be designed to satisfy functional and decorative needs. Security lighting should be designed as part of an overall lighting plan rather than as single stand-alone elements.
- Storefront lighting should complement the architectural style of the building while providing illumination of building facades and/or entrances.

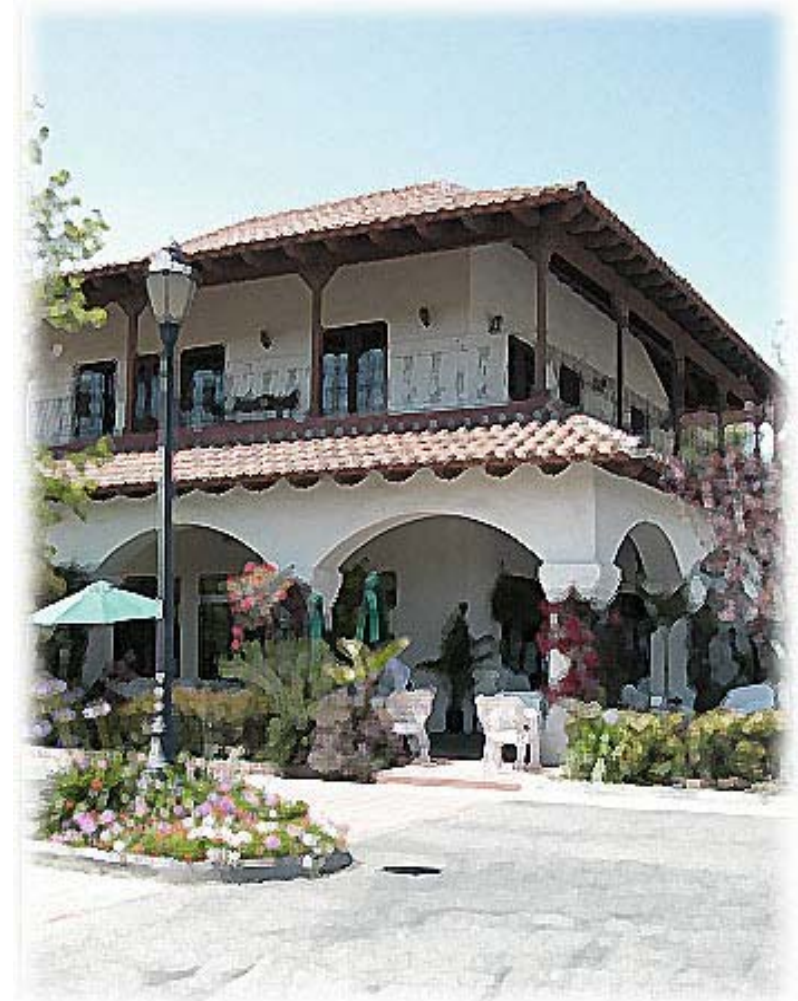


**landscaping should be used to define site functions and create a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles**

## E. Landscaping Guidelines

### 1. Standard Guidelines

- a. Project landscaping should be designed to contribute towards achieving an overall cohesive appearance and compatibility with its surroundings.
- b. Landscaping should define site functions, enhance architecture, soften the appearance of structures, buffer incompatible land uses and screen undesirable views.
- c. Tiered planting (tree-shrub-groundcover) and decorative hardscape should be utilized to enhance the visual character of the project. All areas not covered by structures, with the exception of service yards, walkways, driveways, and parking spaces, should be landscaped.
- d. The following planting design concepts are encouraged:
  - Specimen trees (12-16 ft. high min. from finish grade, or as recommended by conditions of approval) in informal groupings or rows at major focal points
  - Use of flowering vines both on walls and arbors or trellises
  - Use of planting to soften building lines with shadows and patterns
  - Use of “canopy-trees” in parking areas and passive open space areas
  - Use of berms, plantings, and walls to screen parking lots, trash enclosures, storage areas, utility boxes, etc.
- e. Existing mature, healthy trees should be preserved and incorporated within the overall landscaping plan.



- 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
  - 8 ft. (min) between center of trees or large shrubs and fire hydrants and fire department sprinkler and 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
- g. Synthetic turf is not permitted as a substitute for planting materials.
- h. Use of vines and climbing plants on trellises, and privately owned perimeter walls is encouraged.
- i. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended goals.
- j. Landscaping materials should be spaced so that they do not interfere with the lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus (e.g. fire hydrants, fire alarm boxes).
- k. Trees or large shrubs should not be planted under overhead lines or over underground utilities if their growth will interfere with the installation or maintenance of these utilities
- l. Provision of landscaping adjacent to buildings is encouraged.

**multi-tier landscape concept**

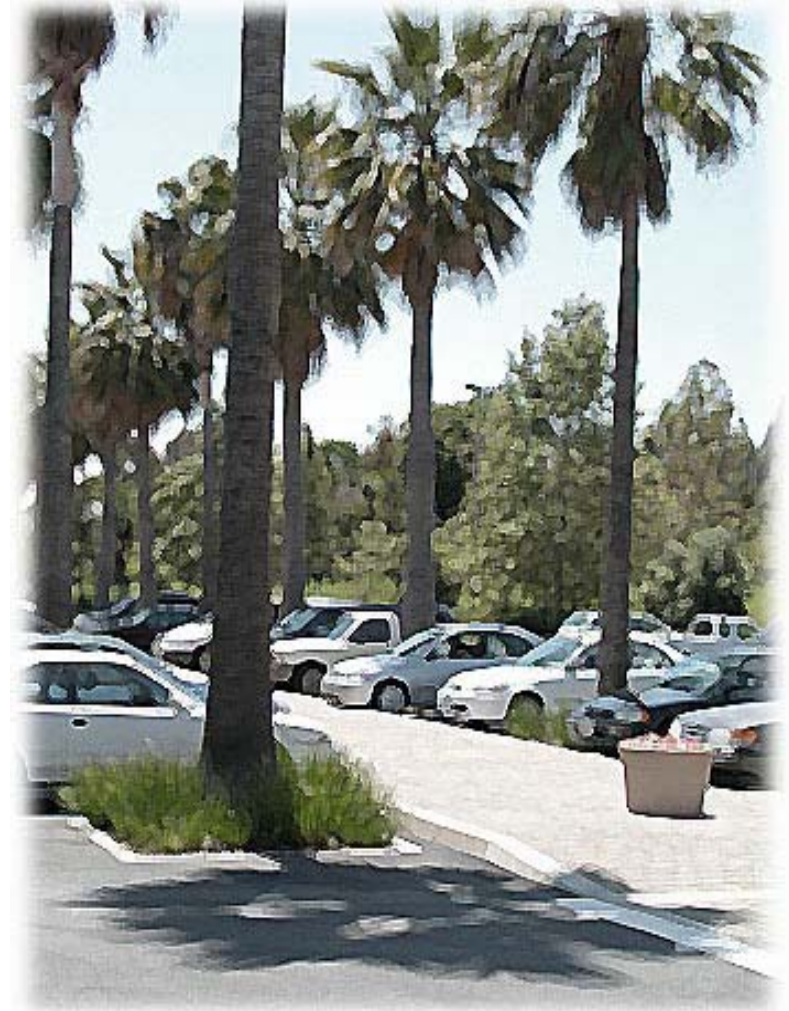
## 2. Parking Lot Landscaping

- a. Parking lot landscaping should accent driveways, frame the major circulation aisles, and highlight pedestrian pathways.
- b. Parking areas should provide interior planting islands in accordance with Title 9 requirements of the San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code. These landscaping areas should be planted with trees, low shrubs and groundcover.
- c. All parking lot street frontages should be screened by landscaping. Parking lot landscape screening should be implemented by utilizing one or a combination of the following:
  - a 32-inch high (max) evergreen hedge
  - a 32-inch high (max) earth berm with a slope no greater than 3.5:1
  - trees planted at a distance of 35 ft. on center. Trees should be a 12-16 ft. high min. from finish grade, or as recommended by conditions of approval

## 4. Slope Vegetation and Erosion Control

- a. All proposed slopes with a gradient greater than 6:1 and a vertical height of 3 ft. or greater, should be vegetated within 30 days of completion of 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. Vegetation of permanent slopes should include permanent irrigation systems.

*landscaping should be used to enhance parking lot design*



## 5. 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 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 of the wet zone must be fire resistant.