

Chapter 9

Commercial Design Guidelines

9.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This Chapter provides general design guidelines and concepts applicable to commercial development throughout the City.

Commercial development includes a broad range of development types. Project applicants should also reference Chapter 10 for additional standards that may be applicable to commercial projects.



Figure 9-1: Example of commercial development in Santa Ana

9.2 GENERAL DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The design of commercial development in Santa Ana should consider the following general design objectives:

- Consider scale and character of adjacent uses and

demonstrate sensitivity to the influences of the surrounding area;

- Preserve buildings and site features that have cultural or historical significance.
- Design building forms and elevations that contribute to the overall quality of the built environment;
- Utilize landscaping as an integral component to overall project design;
- Design site access, parking, and circulation systems in a logical, safe manner.

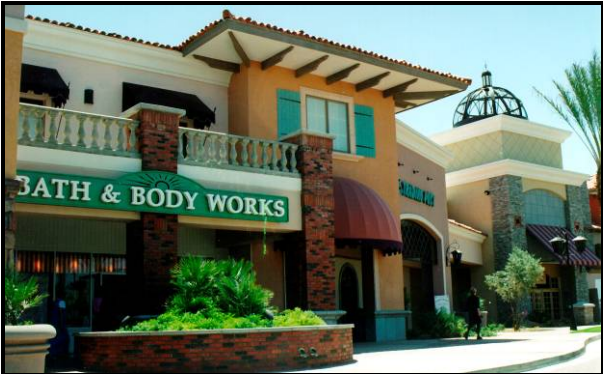


Figure 9-2: Example of commercial development that provides strong design features and elements are encouraged

9.3 SITE PLANNING GUIDELINES

9.3.1 Grading

- Grading of commercial developments should be sensitive to the natural surroundings.

- b. Grading should emphasize and accentuate scenic vistas and natural landforms.
- c. Property should be graded to prevent surface water from draining onto neighboring properties.

9.3.2 Building Siting

- a. The siting of buildings should recognize the particular characteristics of the site and should relate to the surrounding built environment in pattern, function, scale, and character.
- b. Building siting and design should encourage pedestrian activity.
- c. Buildings should face the primary street frontage and provide direct linkages to the public sidewalk (Refer to Figure 9-3).
- d. When possible, freestanding buildings should be sited along street frontages. Buildings sited along street frontages in conjunction with landscaping treatment helps to screen parking areas (Refer to Figure 9-3).

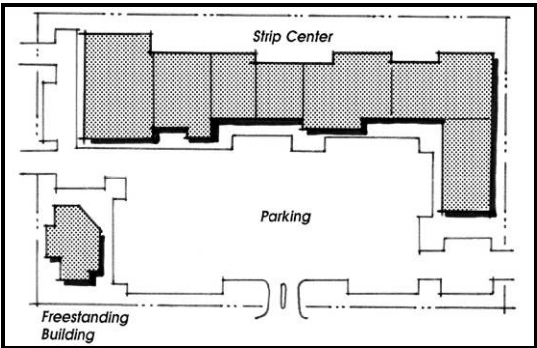


Figure 9-3: Whenever possible, place freestanding buildings along street

9.3.3 Compatibility

- a. Commercial development should be buffered from residential as much as possible. Building orientation, landscaping, and increased setbacks should be used to provide adequate separation between incompatible uses (Refer to Figure 9-4).



Figure 9-4: Substantial landscaping should buffer adjacent residential structures

- b. Commercial development use should not face residential streets.
- c. Commercial development should provide primary access from the front of the building. Avoid public access to the rear of structures when adjacent to potentially incompatible uses.

9.3.4 Pedestrian Activity Areas

- a. Development should provide site amenities and other design features that encourage pedestrian utilization (Refer to Figure 9-5).

- b. When possible, buildings should be clustered to create courtyards, plazas, and outdoor dining areas (*Refer to Figure 9-6*).



Figure 9-5: Building siting and design should facilitate and encourage pedestrian activity

strongly encouraged (Refer to Figure 9-9).

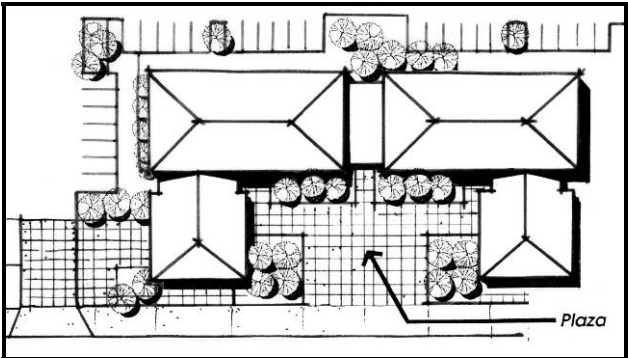


Figure 9-9: Plazas at mid-blocks encourage pedestrian activities



Figure 9-6: Providing amenities through clustering of buildings

d. Pedestrian activity areas should provide site amenities that encourage pedestrian use. Benches, seating areas, bike racks, public art, water features and other appropriate amenities are strongly encouraged.



Figure 9-7: Plazas at corner locations are encouraged

e. Pedestrian activity areas should provide a sufficient level of shade for pedestrians. Landscaping, canopies, trees, or other methods of providing shaded areas are strongly encouraged.

f. The finished floor of ground-level uses should not be significantly above or below the sidewalk.

c. The creation of pedestrian activity areas at mid-blocks locations are

9.4 ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

There are no specific architectural styles required for commercial buildings. However, innovative and imaginative architecture is encouraged. These guidelines do not promote a particular architectural style. The guidelines are presented to

encourage a quality and completeness of design that will contribute to the overall quality of built environment.



Figure 9-10: Example of commercial development in Santa Ana

9.4.1 Architectural Imagery

- a. The use of standardized “corporate franchise” architectural styles are strongly discouraged.
- b. Architectural styles should be compatible with the surrounding character, including a building style, form, size, materials, and roofline.
- c. Design features must be consistent on all elevations of a structure. Side and rear elevations should not be minimized because they are oriented away from public view (Refer to Figure 9-11).
- d. Buildings should emphasize a single architectural style, properly articulated and detailed for that style. Mixtures of styles and details, such as a mansard roof on a Spanish Colonial Revival building, is strongly discouraged.



Figure 9-11: Example of design features continued on side elevations of the building

9.4.2 Building Facade

- a. Building facades should be articulated with architectural elements and details. Buildings should be segmented in distinct massing elements. Vertical and horizontal offsets should be provided to minimize large blank walls and reduce building bulk (Refer to Figures 9-12a and 9-12b).

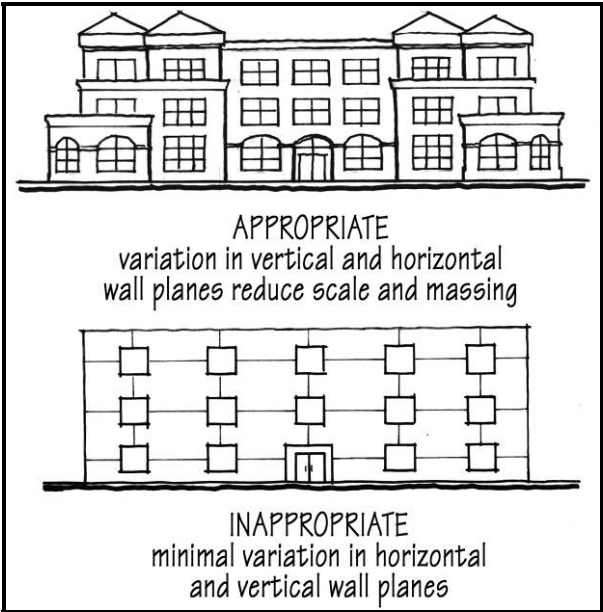


Figure 9-12a: Building Facades should be articulated with architectural elements and details

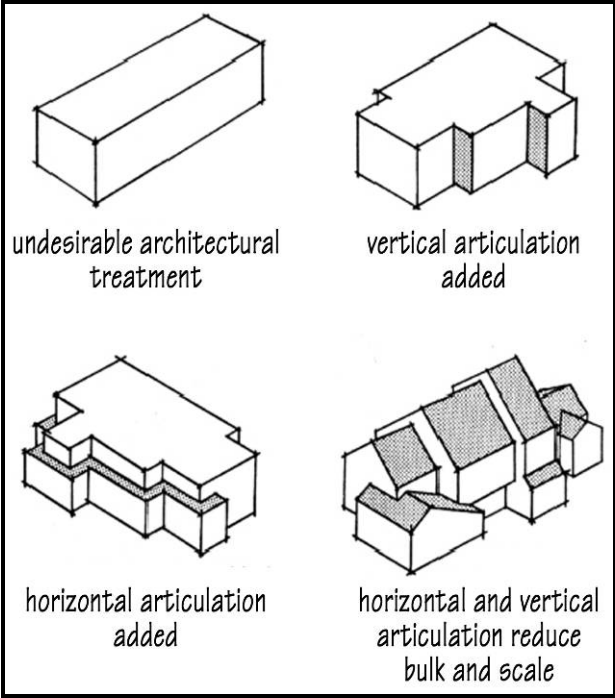


Figure 9-12b: Building scale and mass can be reduced through articulation



Figure 9-13: Building facade design should incorporate architectural details to reduce scale and mass

b. Primary building entries should be easily identified and provide a prominent sense of entry. The use of projections, columns, entry lobbies or other design elements are strongly encouraged.



Figure 9-14: Building entries should be easily identified

- c. The size and location of doors and windows should relate to the scale and proportions of the overall structure.
- d. Windows should be provided at storefront locations.

9.4.3 Roof Articulation

- a. Roofs should be given design considerations and treatment equal to that of the rest of the building exteriors (Refer to Figure 9-15).
- b. Roofs and rooflines should be continuous in design throughout a commercial development. Full roofs are encouraged (Refer to Figure 9-15).



Figure 9-15: Rooflines should be continuous in design throughout a commercial development

- d. Gutters and downspouts should be located on the exterior of structures.

- c. Roofline elements, including parapet walls, should be developed along all elevations.

9.4.4 Materials and Colors

- a. Exterior materials, textures and colors should complement the architectural style or theme of a building (Refer to *Figure 9-16*).



Figure 9-16: Materials, colors, and textures should complement the overall architectural style of a building

- b. Colors and materials should be durable and weather resistant.
- c. The use of natural stone is encouraged.

9.5 PARKING AND CIRCULATION GUIDELINES

9.5.1 General Guidelines

- a. Parking spaces should be sited to produce the shortest route of travel from a building entrance.
- b. Parking spaces should be dispersed and located closest to all accessible entrances.
- c. Site access and internal circulation should promote safety, efficiency, convenience, and minimize conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

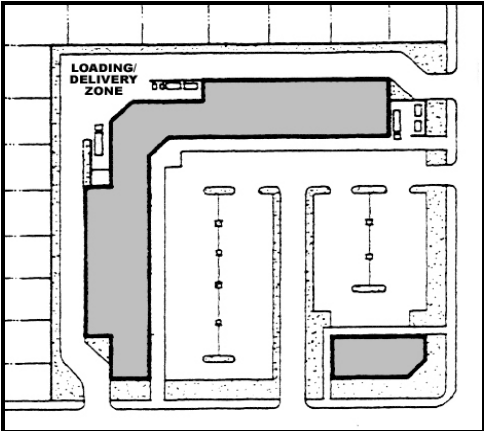


Figure 9-17: Locate loading/delivery zones at the rear of building to minimize conflict between trucks and vehicles

- d. The use of common or shared driveways between adjacent uses is strongly encouraged. Shared parking and access agreements are encouraged (Refer to Figure 9-18).

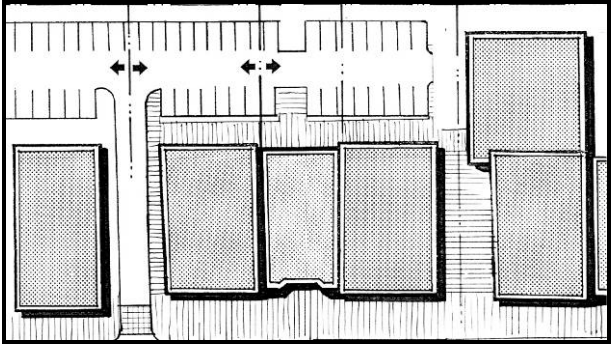


Figure 9-18: Shared parking and access agreements are encouraged

- e. Unobstructed visibility and clear delineations between pedestrian paths and vehicular travel aisles should be provided (Refer to Figure 9-19).



Figure 9-19: Pedestrian paths should provide clear, unobstructed visibility

9.5.2 Parking Lot Design

- a. Parking lots should be designed with a clear hierarchy of circulation. Major access drives with no direct access to parking spaces; major circulation drives with little or no parking; and parking aisles for direct access to parking spaces.



Figure 9-20: Parking lot circulation should be clearly defined

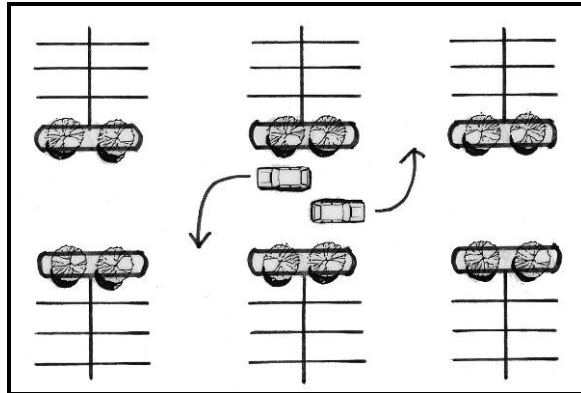


Figure 9-22: Encouraged travel aisle alignment

- b. Dead-end aisles should not be used. The use of “hammer head” or vehicle turn around area may be acceptable in limited cases, but is not encouraged as a general solution to dead ends (Refer to Figure 9-21).

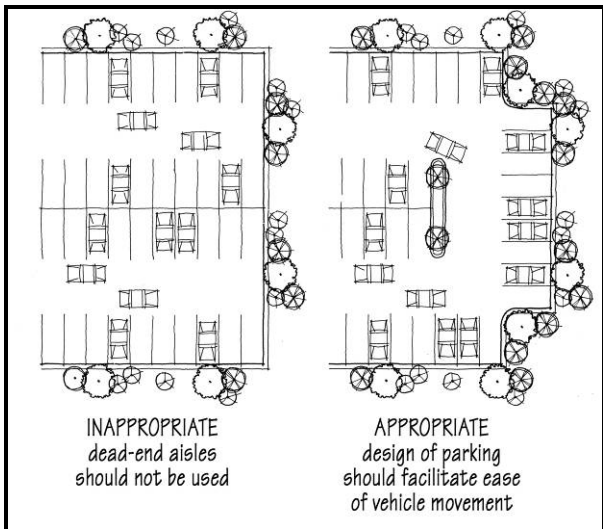


Figure 9-21: Avoid dead-end parking lot configurations

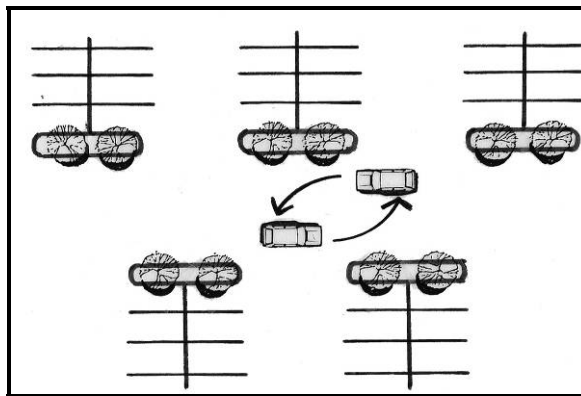


Figure 9-23: Discouraged travel aisle alignment

9.5.3 Site Access

- c. Travel aisles should be aligned to avoid vehicles competing for the same travel aisle space while making left-hand turns (Refer to Figures 9-22 and 9-23).

- a. The number of site access points to a parking lot should be minimized and located as far as possible from adjacent street intersections. Parking lot access points should not interfere with function of adjacent roadways.

- b. When commercial development is adjacent to residential uses, commercial access should not front on residential uses.

- c. When parking is provided on an access drive, the parking aisle

should have the same width as the curb cut (Refer to *Figure 9-24*).

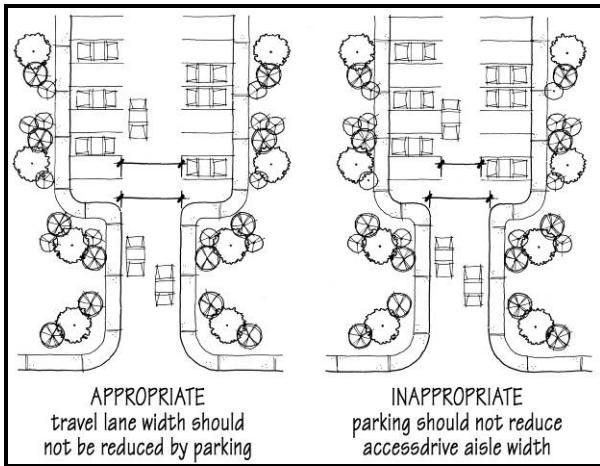


Figure 9-24: When parking is used off of an entry drive, parking should not reduce aisle width

- d. Entries and exits to parking facilities should be limited in number and should minimize interference with the flow of street traffic (Refer to *Figure 9-25*).
- e. Entry driveway throats should be designed with enough distance to minimize the interference with street traffic. A minimum throat distance of 60 feet is recommended, but may vary based on unique site conditions.
- f. Driveway access locations should consider existing or planned median openings and adjacent driveways.

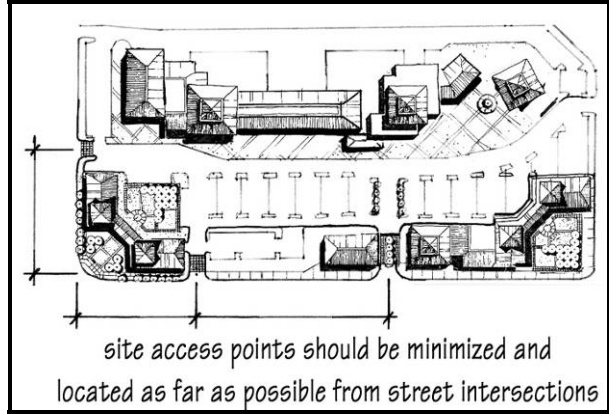


Figure 9-25: Site access points should be minimized and located as far as possible from street intersections

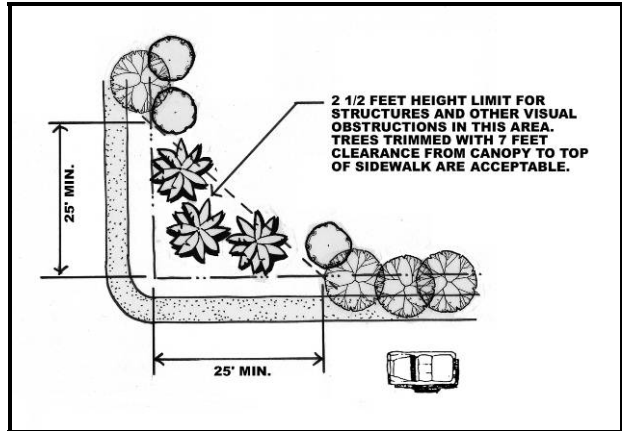


Figure 9-26: Development on corner lots should ensure visibility is not obstructed

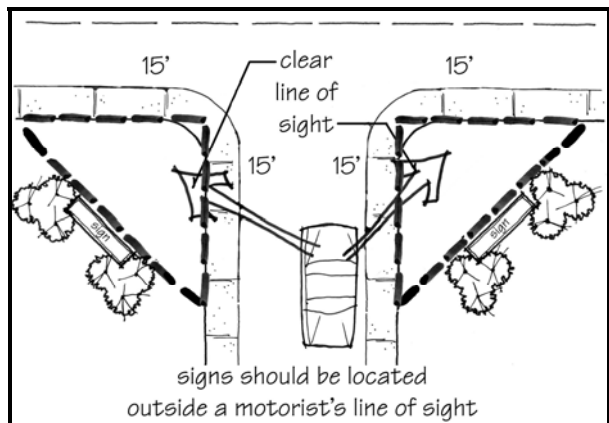


Figure 9-27: Driveways should provide a clear line of sign at the street

- g. To ensure visibility for vehicles entering and exiting the site,

unobstructed sight lines at corners and mid-block should be provided. Visual obstructions at entrances and exits are prohibited within a fifteen-foot diagonal cut-off (triangular area). The location of utilities within these areas should be avoided (Refer to Figures 9-26, 9-27 and 9-28.)



Figure 9-28: Landscaping should be low as possible at corner locations

- h. The design of the driveway throat from the intersection to the first internal drive aisle should prevent stopped vehicles from blocking internal circulation.
- i. Loading and services areas should be separate from the primary public access.
- j. Driveway design should utilize decorative pavers, textures or other appropriate elements to distinguish from drive aisles or secondary access points.

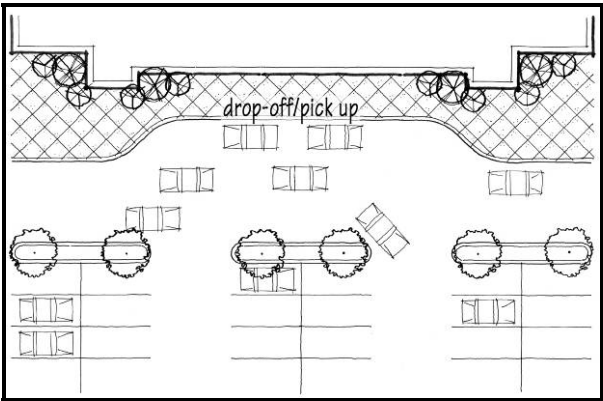


Figure 9-29: On-site drop-off/pick-up locations are encouraged.

9.5.4 Drop-off Areas

On-site drop-off areas should be adjacent and parallel to streets and/or drive aisles and allow vehicles to get out of the main flow of traffic and stop. These include bus stops and pedestrian pick-up/drop-off areas (Refer to Figure 9-29).

9.5.5 Pedestrian Circulation

a. Pedestrian circulation should be clearly delineated and separate from automobile circulation. The use of landscaping, walkways, and decorative hardscape to delineate pedestrian circulation should be used to the greatest extent feasible. Minimum width of walkways should be 4 feet with no obstructions (Refer to Figure 9-30).



Figure 9-30: Use landscaping and/or special paving to delineate pedestrian pathways

b. Pedestrian crossings at driveways and major circulation aisles should be accentuated by extending pedestrian sidewalks into the parking aisle/lane.

c. Design parking areas so pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars. Parking lot design should minimize the need for pedestrians crossing parking aisles and/or landscape islands to reach building entries (Refer to Figures 9-31 and 9-32).

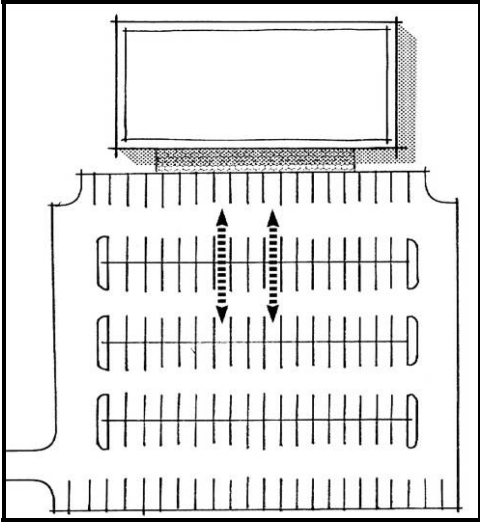


Figure 9-31: Parking aisle alignment with inappropriate pedestrian circulation

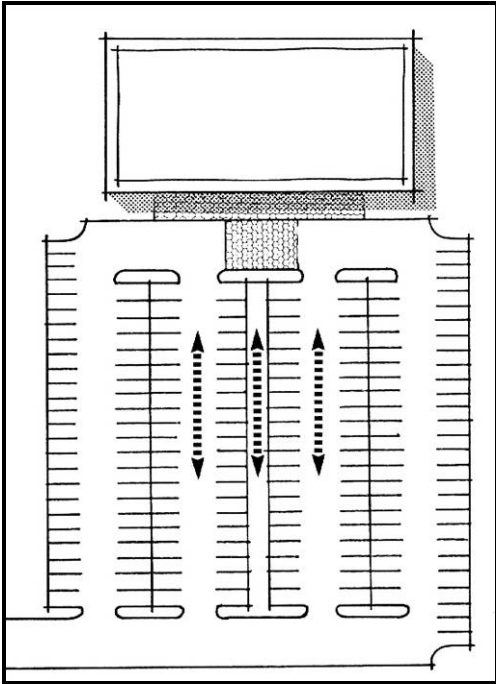


Figure 9-32: Parking aisle alignment with appropriate pedestrian circulation

d. The design and placement of building entrances in relation to parking and the internal and external circulation system should consider access to persons with disabilities.

e. Clearly defined access between primary building entries and the public sidewalk should be provided in all commercial developments (Refer to Figure 9-33).



Figure 9-33: Clearly defined access between the public sidewalk and primary building entries should be provided.

9.6 LANDSCAPING GUIDELINES

9.6.1 General Guidelines

a. Landscaping should be considered an important design element in an overall plan for development (Refer to Figure 9-34).



Figure 9-34: Landscaping should enhance the visual quality of commercial development

b. Landscaping should enhance the quality of commercial developments by framing and softening the appearance of buildings, screen undesirable views, buffer incompatible uses and provide shade.

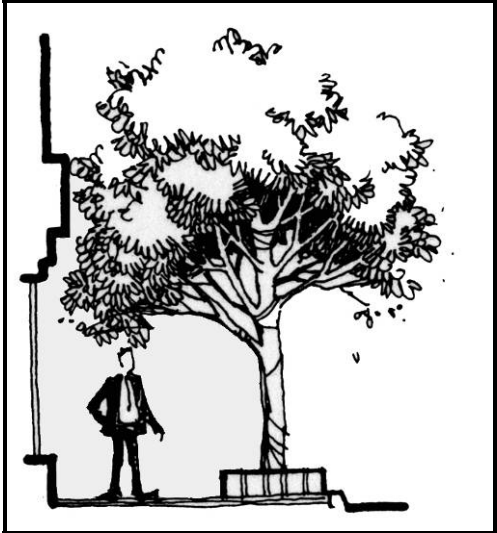


Figure 9-35: Trees with large canopies are encouraged.

c. Landscaped areas should incorporate a three tiered planting system: 1) trees, 2) shrubs and vines, and 3) grasses (Refer to Figure 9-36).

d. The following landscape design concepts should be utilized in all project design.

- use of specimen trees (36-inch box or larger) in groupings and rows at major focal points, such as project entries and pedestrian gathering areas;
- use of flowering vines on walls and arbors where appropriate;

- use of planting to create shadow and patterns against walls;
- use of trees to create canopy and shade, especially in parking areas and passive open space areas; and
- use of berms and vines on walls to screen parking areas, refuse, storage, and equipment areas.

e. Areas not utilized by structures, storage, paved walks, driveways or parking should be landscaped.



Figure 9-36: The use of “three-tiered” planting is encouraged to create a natural look

f. Landscaping at the base of buildings should soften the transition between building and parking lot. Consideration should be given to the scale and bulk of a building and its relationship to the scale of adjacent development (Refer to Figure 9-37).



Figure 9-37: The use of landscaping around the base of buildings is encouraged

g. Planters and pots placed in building recesses and adjacent to blank walls are encouraged. Planters and pots provide visual interest, color accents and enrich sidewalks, courtyards, and plazas.

Planter and pot materials should complement the building architecture (Refer to Figure 9-38).



Figure 9-38: Planters and pots with landscaping should be used to provide visual interest

- h. Self-watering planters are strongly encouraged.
- i. Drought tolerant plants and irrigation systems should be utilized whenever possible.

9.6.2 Scale and Spacing

- a. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and be of appropriate size at maturity.
- b. Landscaping should be spaced so it does not adversely impact on-site lighting, restrict access to emergency facilities, or interfere with installation and maintenance of overhead or underground utilities.

9.6.3 Parking Lot Landscaping

- a. Parking lot landscaping should accent primary driveways, frame major internal circulation aisles, and highlight on-site pedestrian

pathways (Refer to Figures 9-39 and 9-40).

- b. Parking lots should be separated from the street frontage by a landscape buffer to reduce visual impacts (Refer to Figure 9-40).



Figure 9-39: Screen parking lots with landscaping

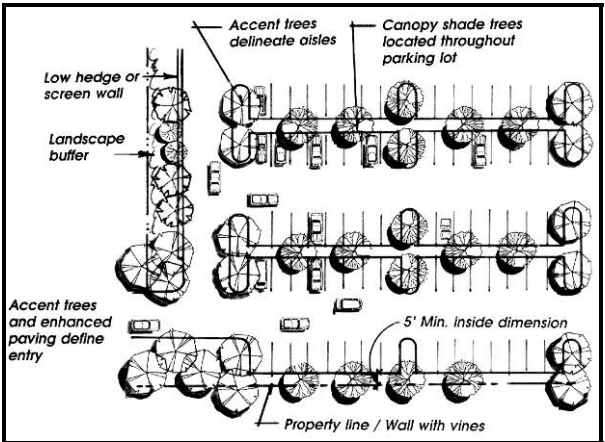


Figure 9-40: Screen parking lots with landscaping

- c. Parking lot landscaping should contribute to minimizing environmental impacts such as noise, light, and exhaust.
- d. Parking lots with more than 250 spaces should provide continuous landscape planting strips between every row of parking. Trees planted in planting strips for shade

should be at a rate of 1 tree at a minimum of 34' on center. This strip should be a minimum of 7-feet in width not including a 6-inch wide curb and a 12-inch wide concrete mow strip on both sides.

- e. Parking lots with more than 250 spaces should create large planting islands at the ends of parking rows that are a minimum of 500 square feet, with a 7-foot wide minimum-planted width. They should be planted with shade trees, low shrubs and/or groundcover and should be protected by a 6-inch high curb on all sides and a 12-inch wide concrete step-off area adjacent to parking spaces.



Figure 9-41: Landscaped parking lots contribute to the overall quality of a commercial development

- f. Parking lots with more than 250 spaces should provide interior planting islands between parking spaces at an average of every 10 parking spaces to avoid long rows of parked cars. The planting islands should be a minimum of 153 square feet and be protected by a 6-inch high curb on all sides and a

12-inch wide concrete step-off area adjacent to parking spaces.



Figure 9-42: Parking lots should be planted with shade trees

9.6.4 Landscape Maintenance and Irrigation

- a. A Landscape Maintenance Plan shall be submitted to the City of Santa for approval. Landscaping should be maintained on a regular basis to ensure it does not interfere with on-site lighting, restrict access to emergency facilities, or interfere with maintenance of utilities.
- b. Root barriers should be provided for any tree placed in a paved location, or where roots could damage adjacent paving/curb surfaces. All trees within 5 feet of hardscape should be planted with root barriers.
- c. Automatic sprinkler controllers should be installed to ensure landscaped areas are properly watered. Irrigation systems should be designed to prevent run-off and over spray.
- d. Irrigation system controls should be designed and installed to reduce

the potential of vandalism by placing controls in appropriate enclosures.

9.7 LIGHTING

a. The type and location of lighting should minimize direct glare onto adjoining properties. Lighting should be shielded to confine all direct rays within the property (Refer to Figure 9-43).

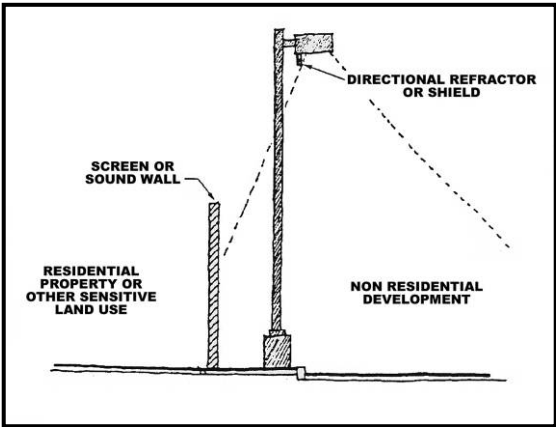


Figure 9-43: Lighting should avoid spillover onto adjoining properties

- b. Lighting should be designed to satisfy functional as well as contribute to overall design quality.
- c. Lighting should be provided in a relatively even pattern with ground level foot-candle illumination levels not varying by more than four to eight foot-candles.



Figure 9-44: Lighting should be scaled to the pedestrian

- d. Accent lighting, when provided, should complement exterior color and materials (Refer to Figure 9-44).
- e. Site lighting should not exceed more than 5 foot-candles of illumination with 50 feet of a property used as or zoned residential
- f. Security lighting should be designed as part of a comprehensive lighting plan.



Figure 9-45: Architecturally compatible light fixtures are encouraged

- g. Vehicle entrances, driveways, parking and service areas, pedestrian entrances, walkways, and activity areas should have a sufficient level of lighting to provide security and safety. A minimum of 1 foot-candle should be provided.
- h. Parking lot lighting fixtures should not exceed 35 feet in height. When within 50 feet of residentially zoned properties, fixtures should

not exceed 20 feet (Refer to Figure 9-46).

- i. Pedestrian-scaled lighting for sidewalk and street illumination is encouraged.
- j. Light fixtures and structural supports should be architecturally compatible with the theme of the development.
- k. Lighting should be used to accent on-site public art, specimen trees, and architectural features (Refer to Figure 9-47).



Figure 9-46: Parking lot lighting fixtures should be appropriately scaled. Avoid excessive fixture heights.

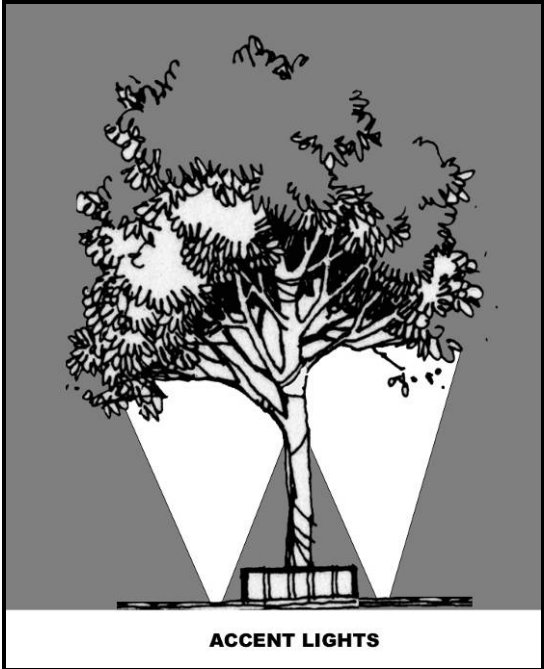


Figure 9-47: Use accent lighting to illuminate on-site amenities

- l. Light standards within parking lots should be designed with raised bases to protect them from damage by vehicles.
- m. Wall mounted lighting should not extend above the height of the wall or parapet to which they are mounted.
- n. Lighting should not be animated.
- o. Overhead service wires or exposed conduit should be avoided.
- p. Lighting fixtures with exposed bulbs should not be used.



Figure 9-48: Raised bases in parking lots protect from vehicle damage

9.8 MISCELLANEOUS



Figure 9-49: Tree grates should be provided along street edges and areas with greater pedestrian utilization

9.8.1 Site Furniture

- a. Street furnishings (i.e. benches, bollards, trash receptacles, bicycle racks, and newspaper racks) should be compatible with the design of adjacent development (Refer to Figure 9-50).
- b. The siting of street furnishings should not create pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.
- c. Legible and appropriately scaled kiosks/directories should be sited

near vehicular and pedestrian entrances.



Figure 9-50: Street furnishings should be compatible with adjacent development

- d. Tree grates should be provided along street edges and locations where a continuous-level walking surface is needed (Refer to Figure 9-49).
- e. Tree grates should be provided to protect trees in high activity areas. Tree gate design should be compatible with adjacent development and other street furniture.
- f. The design of newspaper boxes should be consolidated into one rack. Racks should be attractive on all sides (Refer to Figure 9-51).



Figure 9-51: Newspaper racks be consolidated together. Racks should be attractive on all sides

g. Public telephones should provide enclosures that are consistent with the prevailing streetscape furniture and architecture (Refer to Figure 9-52).



Figure 9-52: Public phone enclosures should be consistent with prevailing design

h. Bike racks, bike corrals or similar facilities should be consistent in design of adjacent streetscape furniture.

9.8.2 Refuse, Storage and Equipment Areas

a. Refuse, storage and equipment areas should be screened from

public streets and/or neighboring residential properties. Screening should be compatible with the design of adjacent architecture (Refer to Figure 9-53).



Figure 9-53: Trash enclosure should be screened with landscaping

b. The design of refuse, storage and equipment areas should incorporate landscaping to screen from view.

c. Refuse storage areas that are visible from upper stories of adjacent structures should provide an opaque or semi-opaque horizontal cover/screen to reduce unsightly views. The screening should be compatible with the design of adjacent development.

d. Refuse storage areas should be located outside the required setbacks and screened from street visibility. The enclosure should be located so that the doors do not interfere with landscaping, pedestrian, or vehicle path of travel and allow for trash truck access.

- e. Dimensions of refuse enclosures should not exceed the reasonable space required for anticipated uses.
- f. Refuse enclosures should be designed solely for refuse.
- g. Utility equipment should be located at the rear of the development.



Figure 9-54: Loading delivery and utility equipment areas should be located at the rear of the development

9.8.3 Loading/Unloading Zones

- a. Loading and unloading zones should be located to minimize interference with traffic flow.
- b. Loading and unloading zones should provide adequate space for maneuvering into and out of a loading position. These areas should be designed to integrate with the entire development (Refer to Figure 9-54).
- c. Loading and unloading zones should be located and designed to minimize direct exposure to public view. Landscaping to reduce the visual impact whenever possible (Refer to Figure 9-55).

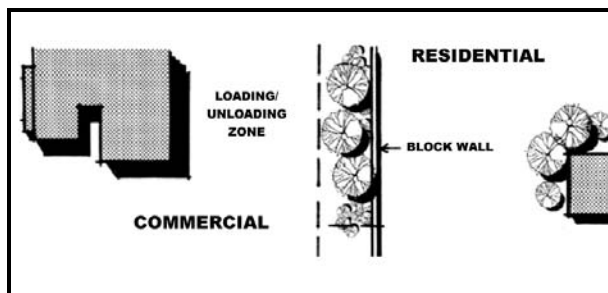


Figure 9-55: Provide a wall and landscaping between loading/unloading zones in compatible uses

9.8.4 Walls and Fences

- a. Walls and fences should be kept as low as possible while performing their functional purpose. Heights of commercial walls and fences should be kept to a minimum height to avoid a “fortress” image.
- b. Landscaping should be used in combination with walls to visually soften blank surfaces. Vines are strongly encouraged (Refer to Figure 9-56).



Figure 9-56: Place landscaping adjacent to walls to soften their appearance and deter graffiti

- c. Colors, materials and appearance of walls and fences should be compatible with the development. Opaque materials, such as plywood boards, sheet metal, etc. are not allowed.
- d. Perimeter walls should be constructed of decorative masonry block or similar material. The use of chain link fencing is not permitted (Refer to Figure 9-57).

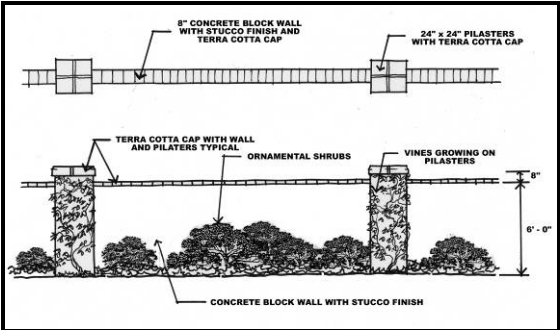


Figure 9-57: Example of appropriate perimeter wall design