Chapter 3

DESIGN GUIDELINES

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301 Purpose

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Section is to ensure that development within the West Pico Corridor will be consistent with the City’s General Plan Goals, Urban Design Program, and Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors. This chapter provides guidelines for site planning, landscape, and architecture.

II. USE OF GUIDELINES

These Design Guidelines are to be followed by developers, project designers, and the City’s Development Management Team in the design and review of new development projects and modifications to existing development in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance. They are not precise zoning regulations, but guidelines to be considered as qualities of good design in order to implement General Plan Goals and Policies, the Urban Design Program, and the Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors. City decision-makers should use the Design Guidelines to assist in the discretionary review process to approve, modify, or deny projects. The Design Guidelines should motivate design efforts toward meeting the City’s quality standards. More specifically, the Guidelines objectives are to:

A. Help implement the General Plan Policy Intent for each of the West Pico Corridor neighborhoods (see Chapter 1).

B. Further define the land use and urban design policies described in Chapter 2.

C. Direct specific project designs toward achieving visual harmony within the various West Pico Corridor neighborhoods.

D. Define a consistent approach to site planning, architecture, streetscape, lighting, landscaping, and other design elements.
302 Site Design Guidelines

I. PICO COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL AREA

A. Outdoor Spaces - Defined outdoor spaces should be incorporated into buildings and site designs of all new development. Outdoor spaces encouraged include courtyards, patios, plazas, covered walkways (arcades and colonnades), passages, gardens, trellised areas, verandas, balconies, roof terraces, and all other spaces that are enclosed or partly-enclosed by architectural or landscape elements.

B. Building-Street Edge - The street edge adjacent to the public sidewalk should create a unified appearance composed of landscaping and buildings. Recessed covered walkways, shallow courtyards or walkways leading into internal courtyards, or pedestrian plazas are encouraged. Building entrances should be recessed to provide visual interest and prevent doors swinging into the sidewalk right-of-way. Auto service bays should be oriented away from or screened from view of streets and residential areas.

C. Outdoor Lighting - Parking lot and outdoor lighting should be the minimum needed to accommodate safety and security, while minimizing impacts on surrounding residential areas. Decorative fixtures with shields to direct light downward should be used for overhead lighting. Bollard or other low-height lighting should be used whenever possible for pedestrian areas. Light fixture design should be consistent with the character of the project.

D. Signs - Commercial centers should be identified by a master sign program with monument signing and wall signs for individual tenants. Such signs may include logos and should be harmonious in scale, form, materials, and colors with project buildings, walls, and other structures. Signs must comply with the City’s Sign Ordinance.

E. Variations in Building Footprint - Building footprints should be designed with variations composed of insets, entries, corners, and jogs integrated with adjacent outdoor areas in order to create visual interest and give a sense of small scale and intimacy.

F. Parking Areas - Parking should be located to the rear of a building where alleys exist. Driveway openings along the public street should be minimized and located on the street with the least traffic volume. Parking lots should be divided into parking courts with landscaping and clear pedestrian linkages to buildings. Parking areas should be set back at least five feet from the face of a building, with that area used for landscaping or pedestrian walkway. At least one tree (minimum 24-inch box size) should
be provided for each 300 square feet of perimeter area between the property line edge and the parking lot.

G. **Parking Lot Size** - Parking lots should be broken up into modules by means of intervening landscaping, access drives, or buildings in order to avoid large unbroken expanses of paved areas.

H. **Parking Lot Interconnections** - Parking lot design should provide for vehicular and pedestrian access to adjacent parcels where uses are compatible and where such connection is practical in order to provide interconnections without requiring vehicles or pedestrians to re-enter the public right-of-way.

I. **Parking Lot Buffering** - There should be a buffer area of at least five (5) feet between buildings and parking areas or driveways, in order to avoid placing paved vehicular areas next to building walls. These buffer areas should be landscaped or designed as pedestrian walkways with landscaped planters. Parking areas should be screened from the street by landscaping and berming.

J. **Parking Lot Entries** - Parking lot entries should be located as far as possible from intersections in order to minimize congestion and conflicts. For projects on major or primary arterials, or where otherwise determined necessary by the City, full curb return street intersection type entries should be used instead of standard driveway approaches. All Entries should be at least thirty (30) feet wide and at least two hundred (200) feet apart. Major Entries should be at least forty-four (44) feet wide to accommodate a truck turning in and two exit lanes.

K. **Parking Area Screening** - In addition to the Zoning Ordinance standards, a continuous screen at least 30 inches high should be formed by a solid wall or planting. If a wall is used to create a screen, it should not be greater than 42 inches high. If shrubs are used, the shrubs should be a minimum of 30 inches high after two years growth. Space shrubs in massed plantings so that branches intertwine. Solid walls used for screening should be accompanied by a minimum 5-foot wide landscaped edge between the property line and the wall facing the street.

L. **Screening of Service Areas** - Service and storage areas and trash enclosures should be screened from public view by means of walls and landscaping.
II. LOS MOLINOS INDUSTRIAL AREA

A. Landscaped Street Edge - An area of landscaping should be provided along all front and side street property lines.

B. Parking Lot Buffering - There should be a buffer area of at least five (5) feet between buildings and parking areas or driveways in order to avoid placing paved vehicular areas next to building walls. Except where there are walkways, this buffer area should be landscaped. Parking and circulation areas should be screened from the street by landscaping and berming.

C. Pedestrian Orientation - The siting of buildings around common pedestrian walkways is encouraged. Pedestrian walkways should be provided connecting individual buildings.

D. Outdoor Lighting - Parking lot and outdoor lighting should be the minimum needed to accommodate safety and security, while minimizing impacts on surrounding residential areas. Decorative fixtures with shields to direct light downward should be used for overhead lighting. Bollard or other low-height lighting should be used whenever possible for pedestrian areas. Light fixture design should be consistent with the character of the project.

E. Project Identification Signs - Projects should be identified by low-level monument signing in order to provide business center identification. Such signs may include logos and should be harmonious in scale, form, materials, and colors with project buildings, walls, and other structures. Signs must comply with the Sign Ordinance.

F. Variations in Building Footprint - Building footprints should be designed with variations composed of insets, entries, corners, and jogs integrated with adjacent outdoor areas in order to create visual interest and give a sense of small scale.

G. Screening - Storage yards (when they are a permitted use) and service areas should be screened with landscaping alone or in combination with fences and walls.

H. Screening of Service Areas - Service and storage areas and trash enclosures should be screened from public view by means of walls and landscaping.
303 Landscape Guidelines

I. LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

A. Project Entries - Major project entries should be designed as statements reflective of the character of the project in order to establish identity. Special paving textures, flowering accents, and specimen trees should be used to reinforce the entry statement.

B. Parking Area Screening - In addition to the Zoning Ordinance standards, parking and circulation areas should be screened from the street by means of landscaping and berming in order to shield views of cars and paving while promoting views of buildings on the site.

C. Boundary Landscaping - Boundary landscaping should be installed along all property lines with at least one tree planted for every 30 lineal feet on average.

D. Decorative Paving - Decorative paving at project entries and interior project pedestrian areas should be used. This should consist of brick, tile, pavers, stamped concrete, or similar materials.

E. Street Trees - On local and collector streets, street trees should be provided at an average ratio of one tree per every 25 feet of frontage in order to visually soften the effect of buildings and hardscape as viewed from the street. Trees should be minimum 15-gallon size and should be planted within 10 feet of the sidewalk (or curb where there is no sidewalk). Care must be exercised to avoid potential impacts to existing sewer, water, gas, and utility infrastructure. Preferred species include Liquidambar, London Plane, Honey Locust, Purple Plum, Star Pine, Canary Island Pine, Fern Pine, Nerium Oleander and various palm species. Undesirable tree species may also be specified by the City via policy or resolution.

II. STREETSCAPE

A. Primary City Entry at Avenida Pico and I-5

1. Design Goals - The Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors calls for an entry statement which will announce arrival into San Clemente by utilizing plant materials that reflect the “Spanish Village By The Sea” image. The use of a landscape treatment that offers a contrasting element to the horizontal plane of the freeway is recommended.
2. **Planting Concept** - The landscape palette identified in the Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors for Primary City Entries from the I-5 includes Mexican Fan Palms, Kaffirboom Coral Trees, Oleanders and Bougainvilleas.

B. **Avenida Pico**

1. **Parkways Within Right-of-Way** - In accordance with the Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors, landscaped parkways adjacent to scenic highways should generally be 15 to 20 feet in width. Bikeways may be placed within or outside these parkways. Sidewalks may be adjacent to the curb or may meander through the parkways. Such specific design considerations will be as approved by the City at the project level of review.

2. **Setbacks from Right-of-Way** - In order to promote a variety of depth and visual relief for buildings adjacent to Avenida Pico, buildings up to 20 feet in height may be placed as close as 30 feet from the right-of-way, while maintaining an average 50-foot average setback.

3. **Plant Palette** - Plant materials utilized in the Avenida Pico median and parkways should be consistent with the City's Master Landscape Plan for Scenic Corridors, Avenida Pico Coastal Segment section and/or the Marblehead Coastal Specific Plan when adopted.

4. **Walls adjacent to Scenic Corridors** - Masonry or stucco walls or view fences (e.g. wrought iron) should be used adjacent to scenic highways instead of wood fences. Designs should incorporate colors, materials, and finishes to blend with the surrounding environment. Setbacks for walls should vary to add interest to the streetscape. Long straight stretches of wall should be avoided. Wall heights should be less than six feet wherever feasible, with landscaping integrated with the wall design to soften appearance.

C. **Calle de Los Molinos**

1. **Sidewalk Width and Design** - Calle de Los Molinos is the main collector street through the Los Molinos Industrial area. It provides pedestrian linkages for employees of the industrial area to reach the North Beach Village and/or the Pico Community Commercial area for lunch or convenience shopping. In order to encourage more pedestrian use of Calle de Los Molinos, where the existing sidewalk is eight feet or more in width, street trees should be planted at least every twenty-five feet on centers.
2. **Street Tree Species** - The Nerium Oleander tree is recommended because it can easily be trained to be in scale with the narrow right-of-way on Calle De Los Molinos, adapts well to poor soil conditions and high salt content, is drought tolerant, and is consistent with the City’s Design Guidelines and Master Landscape Plan For Scenic Corridors.

III. **CRITERIA FOR PLANT SELECTION**

Plant materials for both public and private property should be chosen on the basis of both functional and visual characteristics. The following additional criteria should be used in plant selection:

A. **Spanish Village Theme** - The selection of plant materials for the West Pico Corridor should reinforce the “Spanish Village By The Sea” theme established for San Clemente by Ole Hanson. Palm and citrus trees, with tropical plants such as bird of paradise, hibiscus, flowering vines, and geraniums cascading from window boxes have traditionally been used in San Clemente’s Spanish Colonial Revival courtyards and outdoor spaces. Drought tolerant species such as fruitless olive trees and bougainvilleas can be used to enhance the theme, while conserving water.

B. **Plant Selection Considerations** - Consideration should be given to the reduction of landscape maintenance and water consumption, and adaptability to high-salt and high-boron soil conditions present in San Clemente.

C. **Undesirable Species** - Invasive or otherwise undesirable species, as listed in Appendix C, should not be used unless the City determines that other desired characteristics of such a species for a specific use will override the undesirable characteristics.

D. **Irrigation Systems** - Consideration should be given to water conservation when designing irrigation systems.
304 Architectural Guidelines

I. COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL AREAS

A. Outdoor Spaces - Defined outdoor spaces should be incorporated into buildings and site designs per the City’s Urban Design Guidelines.

B. Building Form and Mass - Building form and mass should be designed per the City’s Urban Design Guidelines.

C. Proportion and Scale - Architectural design should strive to create a visual balance in the relation between dimensions of buildings, their parts, and the spaces between and around them, as well as the spaces they enclose. Building proportions with a horizontal emphasis are generally desired, except in the use of accent tower elements. Avoid vertical proportions that exaggerate building height. Give careful attention to the ratio of height to width of arches. Arcades should have sufficient wall thickness to emphasize strength and balance. The area of solid building should be greater than the total area of door and window openings in the wall, except at storefront locations. The relation between the height of a column and its mass or thickness should be visually consistent with the weight of the overhead structure it supports. Theme towers may be permitted, where appropriate as an architectural element. Skirt walls on the rear elevations of buildings on downhill lots shall conform to the regulations of Section 17.24.190 of the Zoning Ordinance.

D. Building Materials, Colors and Texture - Architectural design should incorporate the following:

1. Ground surfaces - Concrete, tile or masonry surfaces of integral earth tones.

2. Building or garden walls - White, off-white, or light earth tone cement plaster/stucco finishes; white or light earth tone integral color concrete finishes; and whitewashed brick or adobe finishes. Avoid Reflective glass; large dark building surfaces; dark glass (unless deeply recessed); large areas of glass; glass curtain walls; synthetic materials; and high contrast color glazed masonry or tile (except in small areas of details).

3. Roofs - Natural red clay or earth tone color barrel type mission tiles; red clay or earth tone color concrete tiles; dark-stained exposed wood structural members; and tiled decks used for outdoor living spaces. Avoid reflective or colored metal roofs; high contrast color
glazed roofing tiles; large areas of membrane roofing which can be viewed from above; and wood shingle or shake roofs.

4. **Balconies** - Painted or stained finishes; wrought iron/decorative metal; and wood.

5. **Doors, Shutters and Trim** - Painted finishes in colors that harmonize or, in some cases, contrast with wall materials.


7. **Awnings** - Awnings are encouraged. Avoid unfinished aluminum.

E. **Signage** - Signs should be integrated with the design concept of the development. Commercial centers should be identified by a master sign program with monument signing and wall signs for individual tenants. Such signs may include logos and should be harmonious in scale, form, materials, and colors with project buildings, walls, and other structures. Signs must comply with the City’s Sign Ordinance.

II. **INDUSTRIAL USE AREAS**

A. **Walls** - Exterior wall materials that contain integral color and texture such as pre-cast concrete, brick, split-faced block and ribbed metal wall systems should be utilized. Avoid bright colors and highly-reflective wall surfaces. Earth tones and warm light colors are preferable. Visual relief should be provided on long walls through pilasters, reveals, color and material changes, or small off-sets in plan view.

B. **Entrances** - Entrances should be located on street frontages when possible.

C. **Form** - Building heights and setbacks should be varied to define different functions such as office and warehouse.

D. **Roofs** - Careful attention should be given to the appearance of large flat roof surfaces from off-site properties. Built-up roofs should be accompanied by parapets; roof aggregate should be earth tone color and applied dense enough to completely cover the roof. Metal roofing systems with integral color (earth tone) may be used; however, bright-colors and highly reflective wall surfaces, including unpainted galvanized metal roofing, are strongly discouraged. Equipment should be screened from view by being enclosed in a housing which is compatible with the architecture of the main building. It should be organized on the roof to give an uncluttered appearance and painted to match the roof color.