

5.1 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of the Specific Plan's Design Guidelines is to describe the visual character that is desired for development within Vista Canyon, and the manner in which developed areas should relate to other land use designation zones within the Specific Plan. The Design Guidelines address issues that are primarily aesthetic in nature and subject to a variety of solutions. Due to varying interpretations of aesthetic design, flexibility should be permitted to encourage design innovations and changes in design standards that occur over time. For these reasons, rigid adherence to the Specific Plan's Design Guidelines is not intended. Instead, it is intended that developments within Vista Canyon be evaluated for their substantial conformance to the general intent associated with the applicable "General Guidelines" and the other applicable guidelines set forth below.

5.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following General Guidelines are intended to allow flexibility and innovation throughout the Specific Plan site.

5.2.1 DESIGN THEMES

- (a) Consistent with the *Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines* adopted by the City of Santa Clarita on March 24, 2009, Vista Canyon will retain and encourage architectural variety and promote quality development. The overarching design objectives are to create a sense of timelessness, ownership, place and identity, and community.
- (b) Neighborhood design concepts will encourage sustainable planning and design practices, including the smart growth, new urbanism, and sustainability principles described in Chapter 2 of the 2009 *Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines*.
- (c) Consideration should be given to strengthening the identity of each Planning Area through the use of landscape palettes, buildings, signage, and such other elements.
- (d) Siting and design of structures should consider views relative to the Specific Plan area.

5.2.2 SITE PLANNING

5.2.2.1 Residential

- (a) Residential streets should be designed so that traffic to the highway system flows as directly as possible. Circuitous street patterns and very long residential streets should be avoided.
- (b) Multi-family homes should be located near active centers, hubs, parks/recreation facilities, and trails throughout the Specific Plan site.
- (c) Creative siting, design, and landscaping solutions should be used to blend structures into the site, to the extent possible.
- (d) Pedestrian and vehicular circulation should be designed to create a consistent community image.
- (e) Entries to residential areas should be visibly reinforced through techniques such as landscape treatments, monument signage, and/or pavement details.

5.2.2.2 Mixed-Use/Commercial/Retail/Public Facilities

- (a) Prominent buildings should be sited in key locations and easily accessible.
- (b) Service areas should be effectively screened.
- (c) Mixed-use land use areas should be planned and integrated to provide functional and cohesive relationships.
- (d) Within the Mixed-Use land use designation, commercial, retail, and office buildings should be clustered around central gathering places.
- (e) Within the Mixed-Use land use designation, the shared use of service areas, parking, access, *etc.*, should be integrated into the overall design.

5.2.3 ARCHITECTURE

5.2.3.1 Residential

- (a) A diversity of architectural styles is encouraged to enhance the character of the community.
- (b) Use of roof overhangs, low-energy outdoor lighting, and passive solar systems to enhance energy conservation is encouraged.

- (c) Roof equipment should be screened from view where feasible.
- (d) Utility and service areas should be treated (*i.e.*, color, landscaping, screening) to minimize visual effects.
- (e) Variations in height within and among buildings is encouraged to create visual interest and avoid a monotonous street scene.
- (f) Siting variations in building facades, articulation, height, mass, and scale is encouraged to create and enhance architectural interest.
- (g) Elements such as stairways should be architecturally compatible and integrated into buildings.

5.2.3.2 Mixed-Use/Commercial/Retail/Public Facilities

- (a) Design of public facilities should be compatible with the surrounding areas.
- (b) Overhangs, trellises, and other architectural elements should be incorporated into the design of mixed-use/commercial/retail buildings where feasible.
- (c) Signage and lighting should be included as an integral element of buildings.
- (d) Architectural detailing should be used in Mixed-Use land use designations to assist in creating a design scene.
- (e) The use of roof overhangs, low-energy outdoor lighting, and passive solar systems to enhance energy conservation is encouraged.
- (f) Multi-level buildings should relate to the pedestrian. Ground-story front facades should be designed to strengthen pedestrian scale. Pedestrian scale along streets also should be established through the use of awnings or structural features, which add horizontal articulation to facades.
- (g) Roof equipment should be screened from view where feasible.
- (h) Utility and service areas should be treated (*i.e.*, color, landscaping, screening) to minimize visual effects.
- (i) Variations in height within and among buildings is encouraged to create visual interest and avoid a monotonous street scene.
- (j) Siting variations in building facades, articulation, height, mass, and scale is encouraged to create and enhance architectural interest.

- (k) Elements such as stairways should be architecturally compatible and integrated into buildings.

5.2.4 FENCING

- (a) Fencing should be compatible with the architectural theme and character of the neighborhood or specific development within a particular area.
- (b) Fencing should be consistent in style and color.
- (c) Wall or fencing sections should be horizontally offset at regular intervals to provide visual relief and landscape opportunities.
- (d) Fencing and landscaping should be designed as an integral part of the overall site design.

5.3 OTHER APPLICABLE ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The Specific Plan also incorporates by reference the applicable 2009 *Santa Clarita Community Character and Design Guidelines*. The City's 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines* received an Excellence Award for Best Practices from the American Planning Association (APA).

Specific to Vista Canyon, the desired architectural style will be "Rustic Californian." Based on the 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines*, this style represents a mix of the architectural elements found in Mission Revival, Arts and Crafts, Craftsmen, and Ranch styles. Commonly recognized elements authentic to each of these architectural styles will be utilized within Vista Canyon, including the introduction of natural materials such as stone veneer, exposed timbers, and selective accents. Conceptual renderings of the Vista Canyon Specific Plan, which illustrate this architectural style, are contained within **Appendix 5.0-1**.

The "Rustic Californian" architectural style incorporates numerous elements, including wall articulation, roof elements, attached elements, openings, accents, exterior building materials, and colors, all of which are described in Chapter 3 of the 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines*.

The comprehensive nature of the City's 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines* allows Vista Canyon to incorporate the community character and design elements associated with the Specific Plan's Residential (single-family and multi-family) and Mixed-Use land use designations. Specific to those land use designations, Chapter 4 (Single-Family Residential), Chapter 5 (Multi-Family Residential), Chapter 6 (Commercial), and Chapter 7 (Mixed-Use) of the 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines* will provide direction for new development within the Specific Plan.

Consistent with the 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines*, the Specific Plan's incorporation of these guidelines are intended to provide a general framework for design.

5.4 APPLICATION PROCESS

This Specific Plan will utilize the "Application Process" set forth in the 2009 *Community Character and Design Guidelines* (see Chapter 1), including the Development Review Committee process.

For all projects/developments within the Specific Plan, design review determinations shall be made by the City's Director of Community Development, and those determinations shall be considered the final decision.