Chapter 2: Single-Family Guidelines

Single-family developments are made up of detached units that are usually surrounded by a yard. This chapter provides general guidelines for the design of single-family homes. This chapter provides general guidelines for the design of tract developments in all areas of the City, with the exception of Specific Plan areas where site-specific guidelines and standards take precedent. The City encourages new development to use designs and an urban form that recall the area’s history and small town character. Desirable features include houses on lots oriented toward the street; relatively narrow streets; landscaped parkways between curbs and sidewalks; large canopy trees; and the use of alleys, detached or recessed garages located at the rear of the lot.

The following topics are addressed:

- Site Planning,
- Landscaping,
- Building Design, and
- Utilitarian Aspects.
Lot Layout

Intent:

Building placement and orientation should be carefully designed to enhance its visual impact on the streetscape, minimize the visibility of garage doors, retain natural site features, and conserve energy. Development layouts shall be designed to limit repetition and a "regimented" tract appearance. Setbacks must conform to the standards of the applicable zoning code, but the following guidelines shall be adhered to when feasible.

Guidelines:

a. To minimize the dominance of garage doors on the street facade, garage placement shall vary. At least 20 percent of residences shall have side loading, detached, or rear garage layouts. (Figures SF-1, SF-2)

b. An opportunity to provide alley access should be explored on lots under 10,000 square feet. This is intended to provide maximum landscaping at the street edge as well as front facades dominated by porches and entries instead of garage doors. (Figures SF-4, SF-5)

c. Development shall incorporate existing natural features into the overall site design including rock outcroppings, major landforms, ridgelines, significant trees and vegetation, streams, and drainage areas.

d. Climatic factors such as prevailing winds, shade trees, window and door orientation, and the positioning of buildings on the site shall be coordinated to maximize energy conservation. (Figure SF-3)
e. Cul-de-sacs should provide pedestrian and bicycle access to adjacent neighborhoods, open space, and land uses where connections are available. (Figure SF-6)

f. A minimum of every third house should be set back a minimum of 5 additional feet from the required front yard setback to create a variety of front yard setbacks. (Figure SF-7)

g. Developments shall be designed to give individuals maximum privacy within and outside homes. In addition to the required 5-foot variation in front setback, site layout techniques for privacy include alternating the placement of windows, rear yard outdoor patio areas, and entrances. (Figure SF-8)

h. A minimum of every fifth house should employ a minimum 5-foot variation in lot width, side setback, or building height. (Figure SF-9)
Project Entry and Character

Intent:

Site amenities, entries, and features should be coordinated to complement one another and to create a unified project appearance.

Guidelines:

a. A combination of the following accent features shall be incorporated into the project entry: public art, ornamental landscaping, landscaped medians, water features, architectural monuments, decorative walls, and/or signs. (Figures SF-10, SF-12, SF-13, SF-11)

b. Project entry features shall reflect the overall architectural identity and character of the project. (Figures SF-10, SF-12, SF-13, SF-11)

Figure SF-10  A distinctive wrought iron gate and natural materials create a unique entry feature

Figure SF-11  Decorative walls and natural materials establish a character for the project
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c. Colored, textured, and permeable paving treatment at entry drives is encouraged to accentuate these areas. (Figure SF-13)

d. Project icons, thematic pilasters, special paving treatment, water fountains, and specialty landscaping should be used to unify a project. (Figures SF-10, SF-12, SF-13, SF-11)

Figure SF-12
Special planters and monument sign create an easily identifiable entry

Figure SF-13
Water feature at entry provides a focal point/icon for the project
Grading and Drainage

Intent:

Site grading should address existing drainage patterns and landforms while providing subtle transitions of architectural elements to grade.

Guidelines:

a. Grading shall coordinate with drainage methods of adjacent properties.

b. Grading shall minimize differentiation in pad heights between the subject property and adjacent properties.

c. Development on hillside lots should accommodate a majority of the grade differential by stepping the building to reflect the slope of the natural topography. (Figures SF-14, SF-15)
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d. All cuts and fills shall be at a 2:1 slope or less unless stabilized by a retaining wall or crib wall as approved by the City Engineer. Retaining walls 4 feet high or more (measured from existing/finish grade) shall be of concrete or masonry.

e. Excessive cut and fill should be avoided by following natural contours when possible. (Figures SF-16, SF-17)

f. Slopes shall be rounded and contoured to blend with the existing terrain and to minimize grade differentials with adjacent streets and properties. (Figures SF-16, SF-17)

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Figure SF-16
Existing topography

Proposed topography
Smooth transition

Encouraged - Example of grading contoured to complement the natural grade

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Figure SF-17
Existing topography

Proposed topography

Discouraged - Example of grading done without consideration to the natural grade
Landscaping

Guidelines:

a. A combination of trees, shrubs, and ground cover shall be incorporated into landscaping plans. (Figures SF-18, SF-21, SF-22) Minimum sizes are as follows:
   • trees: 36-inch box; 20 percent,
   • trees: 24-inch box; 30 percent,
   • trees: 15-gallon; 50 percent,
   • shrubs: 5-gallon; 100 percent, and
   • groundcover: 100 percent coverage within one year.

b. For every 500 square feet of landscaping, at least one tree shall be provided. For every 50 square feet of landscape area, one shrub or vine should be provided.

Planting Areas

Intent:

Landscaping should be used to define areas such as entrances to buildings and projects, provide a buffer to incompatible land uses, and provide screening when necessary.
c. Specimen trees shall be strategically planted to assist new development in looking “established” as quickly as possible. (Figures SF-20, SF-23)

d. Plant materials shall be placed to not interfere with the lighting of the premises or restrict access to emergency apparatus such as fire hydrants or fire alarm boxes. Trees or large shrubs shall not be planted under overhead lines or over underground infrastructure if growth may interfere with such public utilities.

e. Trees should be kept trimmed. When selecting tree species, consider the need to keep trees trimmed above the ground level to accommodate pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

f. Trees and shrubs should be selected and planted to minimize root problems. (Figures SF-21, SF-23)
Landscaping

g. To the extent possible, landscaping along street frontages should coordinate with adjacent properties to provide a consistent visual corridor. (Figure SF-22)

h. At least 35 percent of the trees provided shall be of an evergreen species.

i. A minimum 5-foot wide planted parkway should be provided on arterial corridors between the street and sidewalk. Parkways should be planted with shade trees to provide a more pleasant pedestrian environment and contribute to streetscape continuity. (Figures SF-18, SF-21, SF-20, SF-23)
Trees and shrubs should be located and spaced to allow for mature and long-term growth. Trees and large shrubs should be placed as follows:

- a minimum of 5 feet between center of trees or large shrubs and edge of driveway, water meter or gas meter and sewer laterals,
- a minimum of 10 feet between center of trees or large shrubs and edge of driveway, water meter or gas meter and sewer laterals,
- a minimum of 10 feet between center of trees and large shrubs to utility poles, and
- a minimum of 8 feet between center of trees or large shrubs and fire hydrants and fire department sprinkler and standpipe connections.
Irrigation and Water Conservation

Intent:

Native and low water plants in conjunction with an efficient water system such as drip irrigation, should be incorporated in the landscaping design. Refer to the City of Temecula’s Xeriscape Ordinance for guidelines on irrigation as well as a suggested plant palette.

Guidelines:

- Plants shall be grouped in high and low maintenance zones and coordinated with irrigation plans to minimize use of water and the placement of irrigation tubing. (Figure SF-24)

- Drought tolerant plants should be selected wherever feasible. (Figures SF-25, SF-26)

- All landscaped areas shall have automatic irrigation systems installed to ensure that plant material survives.

- Irrigation systems shall be designed to prevent overspray onto walkways, parking areas, buildings, and fences.

A. Accent plants - higher maintenance, more water; keep these zones to a minimum

B. Drought tolerant/native plants - low water use plants for exposed, full sun areas

C. Heavy shade plants - very low water requirements

D. Partial shade plants - moderate water usage, morning sun only

E. Turf - high water and maintenance requirements

Figure SF-24
Example of a site plan with multiple landscaping zones
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e. Water conservation techniques shall be incorporated into all landscape plans. Examples of these techniques include automatic controller, drip irrigation, or matched precipitation rate sprinkler heads.

f. Irrigation systems should be designed to apply water slowly to allow plants to be deep watered and reduce runoff. Drip systems should be used in all areas except turf irrigation and small ornamental planting.
Building Form

Intent:

The scale and massing of additions and new homes should be compatible with the general scale and shapes of neighboring homes. Building massing shall include variation in wall planes (projections and recesses) and wall height (vertical relief) as well as roof forms and heights (silhouettes) to reduce the perceived scale of the building.

Guidelines:

a. Where feasible, massing will accentuate entry and minimize garage prominence. (Figures SF-27, SF-29, SF-30)

b. There shall be a change in wall planes on all sides of the house visible from a public street. (Figure SF-27)

c. In tract developments, a mix of single-story and two-story homes should be provided to create variation in mass and building height along streets. All two-story homes shall have single-story elements on prominent elevations and/or on elevations visible from a public right-of-way or public view. (Figure SF-29)

d. Any second story should not exceed 80 percent of the first floor square footage. (Figure SF-30)
Multiple roof forms, changing roof planes on an individual house, as well as mixing single story homes with two-story homes, creates pleasant variety along the street.

Placing the second story over only a portion of the first story building reduces its overall massing and scale.

e. The second story of a house should be designed in such a way as to reduce the appearance of the overall scale of the building. (Figures SF-27, SF-28, SF-30) Reduction in scale can be accomplished in a number of ways, including:
  • set back the second story from the front and sides of the first story, unless a stepped second story setback is not in character with the proposed authentic architectural style of the building. Variation in upper story setbacks should be provided along the streetscape to prevent forced repetition created by regular or consistent setbacks.
  • provide significantly larger front and/or side setbacks for the entire structure.
  • place at least 60 to 70 percent of the second story floor area over the back half of the first story.

Garages shall not be the most prominent feature of the front elevation.
Roof Forms

Intent:

Multiple rooflines and designs should be incorporated into tract developments.

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Figure SF-31

Multiple roof forms create a unique look to each house and diversify the appearance of this tract development.

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Figure SF-32

Multiple rooflines are encouraged.
d. Multi-form roofs, gabled, and shed roof combinations are encouraged to create varying roof forms and break up the massing of the building. (Figures SF-33, SF-34)

e. Roof overhangs should be sized appropriately to the desired architectural style. (Figure SF-35)

f. Roof overhangs should be sized appropriately to the desired architectural style. (Figure SF-35)
Garages

Intent:

Garages should be integrated into the overall design of the project and should not dominate the street scene. (Figures SF-42, SF-43)

Guidelines:

a. Garage doors should incorporate panels and/or windows to articulate these large planes. (Figures SF-39, SF-40)

b. Garage doors shall be recessed a minimum of six inches from the face of the garage. (Figure SF-41)

c. Garage doors facing the street shall be set back from the face of the main house to help reduce visual dominance of garage doors. (Figure SF-38)
d. A maximum of two garage bays shall face the street. Any garage bays over two should have a different orientation. However, in the case of a custom home on a large lot, more than two garage bays may face the street if the garage is placed at the rear of the site. (Figures SF-39, SF-40)

e. The ratio of garage frontage to the width of the house should not be greater than 50 percent. (Figure SF-39)

f. Roof forms, trellises, and balconies should be located directly above the garage door to help minimize the impact of garage doors on the street scene. (Figure SF-44)
Windows, Doors, and Entries

Intent:

Window, doors, and entries should help to capture the desired architectural style of the building.

Guidelines:

a. Building entrances shall be emphasized using lighting, landscaping, and architecture. (Figures SF-45, SF-46, SF-47, SF-52)

b. The main entrance to a home shall be clearly identifiable and shall be articulated with projecting or recessed forms. (Figures SF-45, SF-46, SF-47, SF-52)

c. Window type, material, shape, and proportion shall complement the architectural style of the building. (Figures SF-46, SF-47, SF-48, SF-49, SF-52)

d. Windows shall be located to maximize daylighting and reduce the need for indoor lighting.

e. Primary upper and lower windows should stack vertically whenever possible for organization of facade. (Figure SF-51)

f. To enhance privacy, windows on side elevations should be staggered whenever possible so as not to be positioned directly opposite of the windows in the adjacent structure.
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g. Windows shall have divided lights appropriate to the architectural style of the building. (Figure SF-50)

h. Where appropriate to the architectural style, windows shall be generously inset from building walls to create shade and shadow detail. The minimum inset shall be three inches. Flush windows are not permitted on homes. (Figure SF-52)

i. Windows should be articulated with sills, trim, kickers, shutters, or awnings that are authentic to the architectural style of the building. (Figures SF-46, SF-47, SF-48, SF-49, SF-52)

j. Any faux shutters shall be proportionate to the windows so as to create the appearance of a real and functional shutter. (Figures SF-48, SF-49)

k. EPA “Energy Star” labeled windows with low e-coatings shall be utilized.
Articulation

Intent:

Building designers should incorporate 360-degree architecture in all buildings and remodels within Temecula. 360-degree architecture is the full articulation of all building facades, including variation in massing, roof forms, and wall planes, as well as surface articulation. Architectural elements such as overhangs, trellises, projections, awnings, insets, material, and texture shall be used to create shadow patterns that contribute to a building’s character.

- Acknowledging sensitivity to budget, it is expected that the highest level of articulation will occur on the front facade and facades visible from public streets; however, similar and complementary massing, materials, and details should be incorporated into every other building elevation. (Figure SF-55)
- Surface detailing shall not serve as a substitute for well integrated and distinctive massing. (Figure SF-55)
- Architectural elements that add visual interest, scale, and character, such as recessed or projecting balconies, trellises, recessed windows, verandas, and porches are strongly encouraged. (Figures SF-53, SF-54, SF-56)
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d. Architectural elements such as overhangs, trellises, projections, awnings, insets, material, and texture shall be used to create shadow patterns that contribute to a building’s character. (Figures SF-53, SF-54, SF-56)

e. Building elements and details shall be consistent with the chosen architectural style. (Figures SF-53, SF-54, SF-56)

f. Chimneys shall be exposed as architectural features rather than hidden within a wall surface. (Figure SF-55)

g. Chimney caps shall be decorative and conceal spark arrestors.

h. Porches shall be a minimum of six feet deep with materials and/or details that are necessary to achieve an authentic architectural style. (Figure SF-53)
Materials and Colors

Intent:

High quality materials should be used to create a look of permanence within the project. Materials and colors should be varied to create visual interest in building facades and to reduce the monotonous appearance that can take place in tract home developments.

Guidelines:

a. Materials and color should be used to enhance different parts of a building’s façade. (Figure SF-59)

b. The use of materials and color shall convey a sense of quality architecture and permanence. (Figure SF-59, SF-60)

c. Material changes shall occur at intersecting planes, preferably at inside corners of changing wall planes or where architectural elements intersect, such as a chimney, pilaster, projection, or fence line. (Figures SF-57, SF-58)

d. Projects of three or more homes shall provide a minimum of three distinctly different color/material pallets.

e. Heavier materials should be used lower on the building elevation to form the building base. (Figure SF-59)
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f. Contrasting but complementary colors should be used for trim windows, doors, and key architectural elements. (Figure SF-60)

g. Roof materials and colors shall be consistent with the desired architectural style. (Figure SF-59, SF-61)

h. Traditional two-piece tapered, multi-colored terra cotta barrel tiles with brown hues and approximately a 20 percent concrete boost in the field tiles and double tiles or boosted double tiles at the eave is the recommended specification for tile roofs. High profile one-piece “S” tiles may be acceptable but are discouraged. Low profile one-piece “S” tiles are not permitted. (Figure SF-61)
Utilities

Intent:

Utilitarian aspects of the project should be aesthetically screened from view.

Guidelines:

a. Electrical meters, cable boxes, junction boxes, and irrigation controllers shall be designed as an integral part of the building on a rear or side elevation and screened from public view.

b. Gutters and downspouts should be decorative and designed to integrate with the building façade and should not appear as a “tacked on” afterthought. (Figure SF-63)

c. All vents, gutters, downspouts, flashing, and electrical panels shall be painted to match the surface to which attached, unless used as a major design element, in which case the color is to be consistent with the overall color scheme of the building.

d. Discharge from gutters and downspouts should not flow directly across pedestrian walkways. Water should be directed to permeable areas for percolation. Discharge that ties into a project’s drainage system is preferred; however, flexible hosing or splash guards are acceptable.
e. Street addresses shall be a minimum of four inches in height, or larger if placement allows, and shall be displayed so that the addresses are easily visible to approaching emergency vehicles.

f. In tract developments, common mailboxes shall have enclosures designed similar or complementary in form, material, and color to the tract homes. (Figures SF-64, SF-65)

g. New on-site connections and utilities shall be installed underground within existing or proposed underground utility districts when feasible.

h. If utilities and connections cannot be located below ground, these elements should not interfere with or adversely affect the access, visibility, appearance, or character of the structures in the vicinity. (Figure SF-62)

i. Building forms, fences, trellises, and landscaping shall be used to screen above ground utility transformers, pull boxes, and termination cabinets where allowed by utility providers. (Figure SF-62)
Walls and Fences/Screening

Intent:

Where fencing and walls are absolutely essential, these elements should be designed to be as low as possible to complement the architecture of the project and should be heavily landscaped and screened from the public right-of-way.

Guidelines:

a. Fences and walls should be minimized along public streets.

b. Fences and walls should be constructed as low as possible while still performing screening, noise attenuation, and security functions. (Figure SF-70)

c. All exterior perimeter walls located along public streets shall have an offset a minimum of 5 feet deep for every 50 feet to 75 feet of wall.

d. All non-transparent perimeter walls should incorporate standards to provide for wall inserts and/or decorative columns or pilasters every 20 feet to provide relief. (Figure SF-66, SF-67)

e. All non-transparent perimeter walls and/or fences shall be architecturally treated on both sides and shall incorporate landscaping whenever possible. (Figures SF-68, SF-69)

f. All fences and walls required for screening purposes shall be of solid material. (Figures SF-66, SF-68, SF-71)
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g. Fences and walls should be designed to complement project architecture. (Figure SF-70)

h. Fences placed adjacent to a street and outside of the public right-of-way shall be screened with the following landscape buffers: (Figure SF-71)
   • minimum 25-foot landscape buffer along arterial streets, and
   • minimum 10-foot landscape buffer along interior streets.

i. Walls and fences should be designed with materials and finishes that complement project architecture and should be planted with vines, shrubs, and trees. (Figures SF-66, SF-68, SF-71)

j. Walls on sloping terrain should be stepped to follow the terrain.

k. To bring continuity to the overall street scene, similar elements such as columns, materials, and cap details should be incorporated on perimeter walls that transition from one development to another.
City of Temecula
City-Wide Design Guidelines

Utilitarian Aspects

Guidelines:

a. Light fixtures shall be architecturally compatible with building design. (Figure SF-72)
b. All lighting shall be shielded to minimize glare upon neighboring property.
c. Use latest lighting technology to minimize the brightness of lighting, e.g., high-pressure sodium yellow vs. bright white.
d. The lighting of building elements and trees is an effective and attractive lighting technique that is encouraged; however, light sources for wall washing and tree lighting should be hidden.
e. Low-voltage/high efficiency lighting should be used in the landscape whenever possible.
f. Incorporate timers and sensors to avoid unnecessary lighting.
g. Pedestrian light poles along sidewalks or pathways within a project shall be between 12 feet to 15 feet high. (Figure SF-73, SF-74)

Intent:

The quality of light, level of light measured in footcandles, and type of bulb should be consistent with the Mount Palomar Lighting Ordinance. Lighting levels should not be so intense as to draw attention to the glow or glare of the project site. Lighting fixtures should be selected to complement the architecture of the project.