COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

These Community Design Guidelines establish general design guidelines that apply to conditions that occur throughout the Torrey Hills community plan area (such as slopes), as well as to unique one-of-a-kind conditions (such as the bluff escarpments) that require special design considerations. The design guidelines for the entire community have been developed to take advantage of the site opportunities offered by the varying topography, ocean views, and Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. At the same time, these guidelines also mitigate the impacts of the development to adjacent sensitive areas. Although reference is not specifically made throughout this section, the following guidelines have been considered and included as appropriate and necessary in the PRDs, PCDs and PIDs adopted to date within the community plan boundaries.

GRADING CONCEPT

GOALS

1. Project grading shall be designed to minimize impacts to the existing landform based on the City's Hillside Review (HR) Guidelines.

2. Substantial areas of the community lie within the City's HR overlay zone. The HR design guidelines shall direct development in those areas.

3. The prominence of development should be reduced through contour grading techniques and low-scale compatible architectural design.

4. Erosion and runoff impacts should be avoided through appropriate control measures.

5. Grading operations, slope erosion control and building construction should be phased to reduce long-term visibility and erosion susceptibility of manufactured slopes.

BACKGROUND

Because of its varying topography and on-site resources, surrounding open space and adjacent freeway systems, development within Torrey Hills can affect views from several vantage points. For this reason, grading plans must respond to specific project orientation. Slopes created adjacent to I-5 are essentially extensions of freeway slopes. Contour grading of these slopes will break up uniformity of typical freeway slopes. For manufactured slopes adjacent to Los Peñasquitos Canyon preserve, special grading techniques are essential in minimizing potential conflicts between development and the park experience. Within the community, grading could result in the creation of manufactured slopes visible to employees, residents and visitors. Minimizing slope heights, simulating natural landforms whenever possible and integrating internal open space will assist in creating a high quality living and working environment.

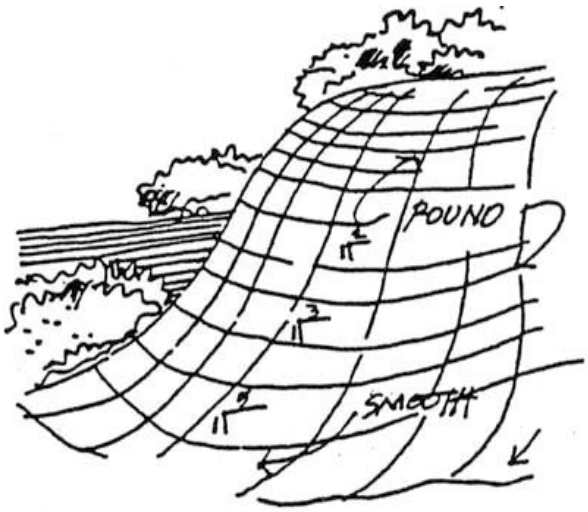
Grading can also result in erosion and sediment transport due to the removal of vegetative cover. Good drainage and erosion control techniques are essential in limiting erosion and minimizing runoff.

Provided in this section are specific recommendations and policies which should be implemented at the project level. Implementation of these criteria will minimize impacts associated with grading.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Landform Grading

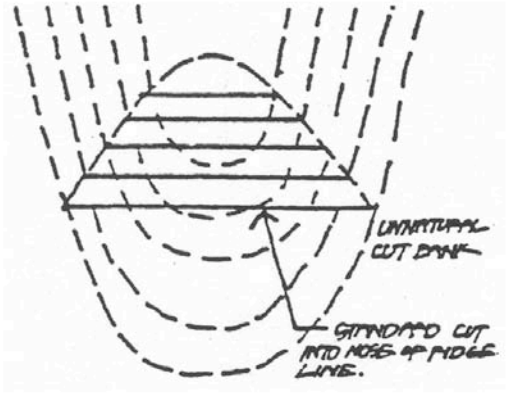
In order to create slopes which closely reflect the linearity of consistent slopes, graded landforms shall have variation in their slope ratios. Abrupt cuts and fills shall be avoided. Smooth, flowing contours of varied gradients from 1-1/2:1 to 5:1 will be required. Cut and fill slopes shall not exceed 1-1/2:1 for slopes under ten feet high and 2:1 for all other slopes. Slope banks shall be rounded at the top and toe.

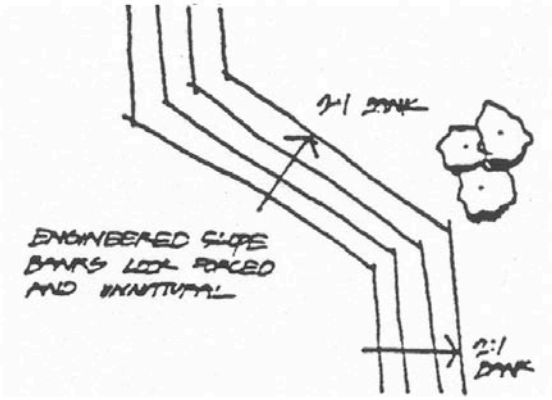


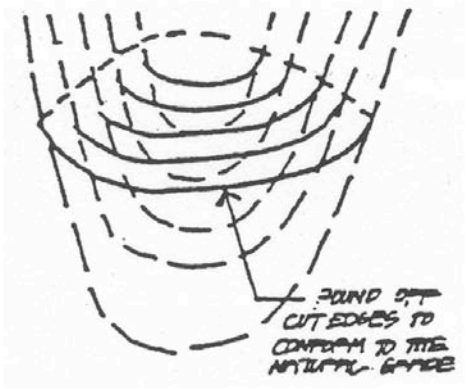
Variable slope gradients will be required. Large slopes adjacent to natural slopes which have native vegetation shall mimic a "natural" appearance.

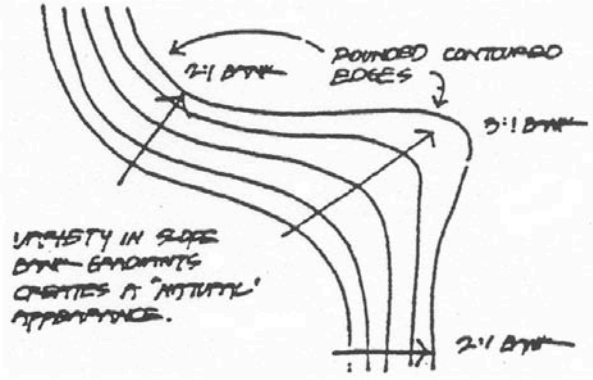
Continuous "engineered" slopes that have hard edges and no transition areas at the top or toe of the slope shall not be allowed.

Building sites shall be graded so that they appear to be part of the hillside, rather than competing with it.



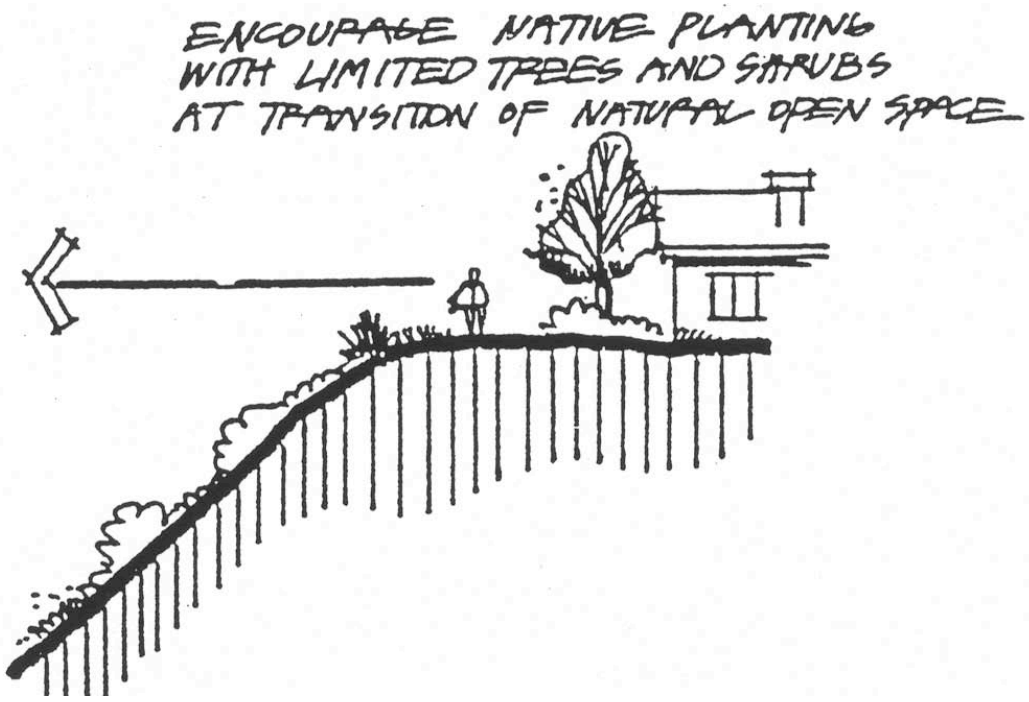






Buffers

Buffers are encouraged between less compatible land uses and to aid in the creation of public and private space definition. These buffers shall consist primarily of physical space and be enhanced by plant materials or occasional physical barriers such as walls or fences. Space only, with added planting shall be used to provide these buffers. Physical barriers shall only be used when space requirements are prohibitive or when security/safety reasons dictate their use.



Transition Areas

Transitional areas should be designed in a manner which promotes compatibility of land uses, such as residential and open space components, to visually blend and link with each other. The intent of land use transitions is to increase the visual perception of the project's hillside and canyon components by allowing them to interface and blend with individual project open space.

GRADING CONCEPT DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. The visual impact of all hillside development shall be minimized, with buildings, retaining walls and other improvements approximating to the natural landforms.

2. Hillside sites offer opportunities to create outdoor decks, roof gardens, terraces, lookouts for viewing, sculptured stairs and other special characteristics and this shall be emphasized. However, development of hillside areas shall be screened from views beyond the plan area through the use of landscaping, setbacks and berming.

3. When attempting to separate incompatible land uses, landforms consisting of slopes and berms shall be used if possible.

4. All landform separations shall be appropriately landscaped with a combination of trees, shrubs and ground covers.

5. Coordination of screening and buffering efforts between adjacent projects is required to maintain the visual and vegetative continuity of materials.

6. Physical barriers such as solid walls or fences shall not be allowed in transition areas unless needed for noise attenuation. Open fences which do not obscure views may be employed within transition areas.

7. Low retaining walls may be used within transition areas to accommodate grade changes. Walkways and planting areas shall use small retaining walls and other stepping techniques to minimize graded areas.

8. Landscape treatments along transition areas between the project and the Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve shall employ native plantings to match existing plantings.

9. If berms are used for screening, they shall be large enough to not have a "dumped wheelbarrow" appearance.

10. Plant materials placed on any ridges or edges shall reinforce its natural profile and character.

11. Temporary ditches, dikes, berms or sandbagging shall be used to protect critical areas exposed during grading and construction.

12. Sedimentation basins shall be installed and maintained during development to remove sediment from run-off water.

13. Provisions (catch basins, drain inlets, etc.) shall be made to effectively accommodate increased runoff caused by changed surface conditions (paving, etc.) during and after development. Designs shall implement features which encourage groundwater recharge. Detention basins shall be designed to be natural in appearance.

14. Permanent planting shall be installed on slopes for erosion control as soon as practical during development activity.

POLICIES

1. Slopes that are visible from surrounding communities shall be treated to imitate the natural topography. This can be accomplished through contour grading and is particularly appropriate in areas that are being revegetated with native plant species.

2. The top and toe of manufactured slopes should be rounded to make a natural transition to pad areas.

3. Recontoured slopes should be stabilized with appropriate plant materials to help reestablish the natural vegetative appearance.

4. Where soils and geologic conditions permit, utilize variable slope ratios to aid in achieving a more natural topography.

5. All grading operations shall be subject to strict erosion and siltation control measures that will protect the valuable lagoon environments downstream.

6. There should be close phasing of grading operations, slope erosion control measures and building construction to reduce the period when bare slopes are susceptible to erosion.

7. Individual projects shall be designed to preserve important natural topography, unique geologic formation and sensitive native vegetation to the fullest extent possible.

8. The height of cut and fill slopes should be minimized wherever possible, while varying the gradient of long horizontal slopes.

9. Permanent energy dissipaters and settlement/temporary catchment basins should be constructed, with the provision for regular, long-term maintenance.

10. A system of bladed ditches as flat gradients across larger, graded pad areas should be provided to allow on-site entrapment of silt during construction.

BUILDING PLACEMENT

GOALS

Encourage buildings which, when grouped, create distinct but cohesive land use areas and neighborhoods which provide visual interest and architectural intrigue and which encourage social interaction.

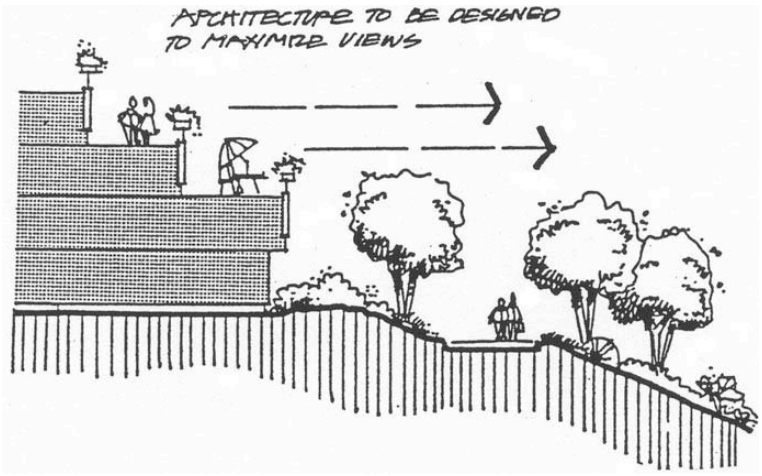
BACKGROUND

Building placement can affect internal and external views and can create external space within developments. Site planning and building design must integrate in a manner which relates to variations in the natural topography and which results in efficient site utilization and circulation. The proper integration of site planning and building design will minimize visibility of structures while maximizing view potential for residents and users.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Building Orientation Views

Individual buildings can be arranged to provide views, contain space, suggest orientation or address grade changes. When placing a building on a site, designers should look for opportunities for buildings to work with each other, creating larger functional spaces. Buildings should not be treated as standalone objects.



Orientation to Streets or Open Space

Buildings should address the street wall frontally to reinforce the concept of the street. This concept is only appropriate in areas that are topographically flat. In steeper areas, the landform should be the dominant determining factor in siting the building.

The height, scale and design of structures shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment. Structures shall be designed to follow the natural contours of the landscape, and shall be sited so as not to intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing spaces. Mesa top structures shall be set back from the mesa edge sufficiently far to ensure that the structure is not prominent from Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve. Detailed orientation and view analysis to and from the site shall be conducted prior to individual project approval.

Exterior Space Creation

The spaces between buildings should provide enclosure and orientation. It is the intent of these guidelines to create exterior "places." Buildings shall be thought of as clusters that come together to form groups that have relationships with each other.

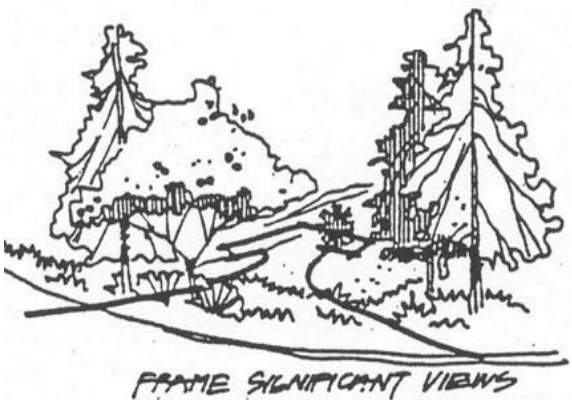
Hillside Conditions

Architecture shall work with the topography in a sensitive manner. This will allow for the buildings and the landscape to integrate and minimize grading.

BUILDING PLACEMENT DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Breaks in building clusters should be created along open space to avoid linear walls of development.

2. Buildings shall be arranged to create positive outdoor space. The characteristics of positive space are containment and easily perceivable boundaries. View corridors beyond the space help tie it into a larger network of open space.



3. To avoid a straight, layered look to the hillside, side-to-side grade changes shall be utilized. This may be accomplished by stepping buildings at breaks between individual units or other logical places or breaking larger buildings into smaller components.

4. From public viewing areas, such as Los Peñasquitos Canyon, breaks in the roof form or long sloping roofs running roughly parallel to the hillside are encouraged to avoid disruptive visual effects from public viewsheds and to create an illusion of buildings stepping with sloping topography. Roof forms which slope or step opposite the hillside slope are discouraged.

POLICIES

1. Articulate building forms through the use of architectural projections, porches, balconies, exterior stairways, etc.

2. Integrate private outdoor uses into developments such as patios and balconies for residential areas and employee eating/seating areas for industrial/office park projects.

3. Create active public spaces that provide recreational opportunities for both employees and residents of the community.

4. Design roof forms that complement the site design and natural features.

LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

GOALS

1. Develop a landscape design concept which reinforces the community's landform grading concepts.

2. Implement landscape guidelines which adopt an approach to landscape planting which allows the site to blend with natural open hillside and canyon vegetation within and surrounding the site.

3. Establish a landscape planting palette which employs drought tolerant, native and naturalized plant materials which are compatible with existing native vegetation, particularly the use of Torrey Pines.

4. Encourage the planting of landscape materials in natural, random freeform groupings in the same manner as existing native plant materials on and around the site.

5. Limit the use of turf to active use areas to avoid visual conflicts with natural open space hillsides and canyons and reduce the total demand for landscape irrigation.

6. Create a pleasant, safe and protected environment that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

BACKGROUND

Landscaping assists in achieving the goals of the **Community Design Element** and are also closely related to other components such as open space and resource management. The landscape concept for Torrey Hills is to reflect the climax vegetation associated with the immediate region and/or plant species which are complementary and compatible with these climax species. Other acceptable designs should provide for and encourage successional growth which will result ultimately in the attainment of climax species.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Streetscapes

The streetscape is a living thread that holds together and unites the design fabric of the community. Because of this important role, streetscapes must be able to draw upon the influences of the natural open spaces within the project and be able to effectively transfer these natural influences throughout the project. Streetscapes will borrow from the site's natural elements to become linear zones which set the character for the community at large. Since a majority of the views of the project's natural and improved open spaces are from the circulation corridors, the streetscapes along these corridors will establish a visual character and design theme for the entire project.

Slope Treatment

The proper planting of manufactured slopes can create visual separation, screening and buffer of adjacent land uses. Plant materials for slope planting shall consider the context in which the slopes occur. Slopes which occur in "refined" areas such as streetscapes or between developed lots, shall be planted with refined plant materials. Slopes which occur adjacent to areas of existing undisturbed native vegetation shall be planted with plant species which are compatible with the native vegetation. Where slope plantings occur adjacent to native vegetation, consideration of appropriate fuel modification practices and the use of low fuel volume introduced plant materials shall be considered.

Brush Management

A Brush Management Program will be required in conjunction with specific development proposals. The purpose of a brush management program is to reduce the risks of wildfires while minimizing visual, biological and erosion impacts to existing slope areas. The program must be instituted in conformance with Section 6 of the City of San Diego Landscape Technical Manual and "Appendix II.A" of the Uniform Fire Code.

Parking Areas/Structures

Well-designed parking area planting can help to provide visual relief from paving and parked cars. Maintaining a reasonable area between parking areas and property lot lines or public streets can help to provide areas for landscape screening which reduces the visual impact of parking areas. The incorporation of landscaped islands in parking lots can provide for the creation of an overhead tree canopy that can help to screen parked cars and reduce the reflect glare from large paved parking areas.

LANDSCAPE CONCEPT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Landscape plans shall be required for all developments within Torrey Hills. The design of these plans must comply with the City's Landscape Technical Manual. Provided below are specific guidelines which must be considered in preparing landscape plans.

1. Lawn may be used, but shall be limited to small areas for accent only, except in play fields.

2. Accent trees shall be used at locations that require special attention, such as entrances.

3. Decorative/enhanced paving should be used at major intersections, monuments and points of interest. Selection of decorative/enhanced paving should be similar to and reflect decorative paving used elsewhere in the community to create cohesiveness in design.

4. Slopes adjacent to native areas will be hydroseeded and planted with native plant materials compatible with existing vegetation.

5. All areas adjacent to the street which are planned as native hillsides and to be left undisturbed shall remain in a natural state.

6. Minor encroachments such as trails, trail staging areas and trail signage may be placed within natural open space.

7. Plant material located in the streetscape shall be consistent, simple and limited in variety.

8. Additional site amenities such as lighting and street furnishings shall be used where appropriate.

9. Entry monuments and project identification signs shall be located within this streetscape zone outside of the public right-of-way. Care must be given to integrate signage into the landscape environment of the streetscape.

10. Parking areas shall not usually encroach into the streetscape areas.

11. Where parking areas face a public street, they shall be screened from view using grade separations or dense shrub and tree planting.

12. Planting within parking areas shall be clustered in random, freeform arrangements, rather than distributed evenly in formal patterns. The freeform patterns will blend more effectively with the planting themes in the parkways.

13. Vines on trellis structures, columnar trees and shrubs, and insets for shadow relief should be used to soften the automobile and parking areas.

14. Specimen plant materials should be located at project entries and to highlight key architectural features. Highly visible community oriented slopes should receive container plant material, in addition to groundcover and hydroseed.

POLICIES

1. All landscaping shall be consistent with the citywide landscape ordinance and Landscape Technical Manual unless specifically refined and enhanced through the planned development process.

2. Plant material used in revegetation and landscaping should reflect native vegetation in color and texture to provide continuity between natural and developed areas.

3. Planting shall be designed in a manner which effectively enhances existing views or provides new view corridor opportunities into the open space corridor, major landforms or other visual amenities within the project.

4. Plant materials shall effectively screen parking areas, utility enclosures, utility cabinets, service areas, or service corridors to reduce negative visual impacts when viewed from major streets.

COMMUNITY/PLANNING AREA ENTRIES

GOALS

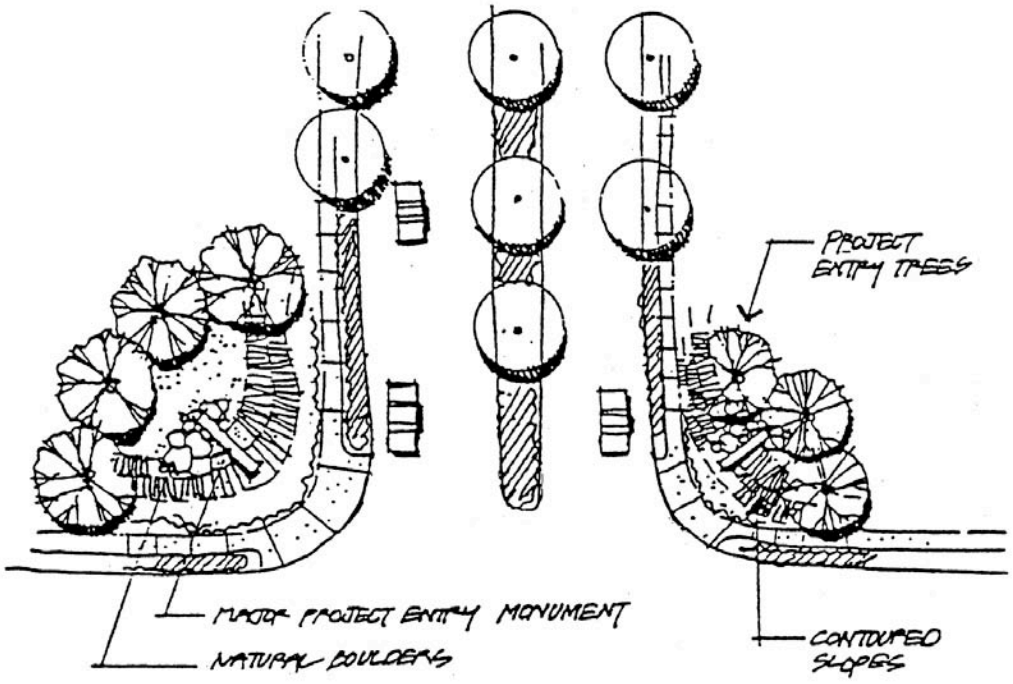
A hierarchy of community and project entries should be developed for the community. The prominence and scale of the entries will vary with their location on the site and the land use components they identify. Uniform project logos will be permitted to create identifiable neighborhoods within Torrey Hills.

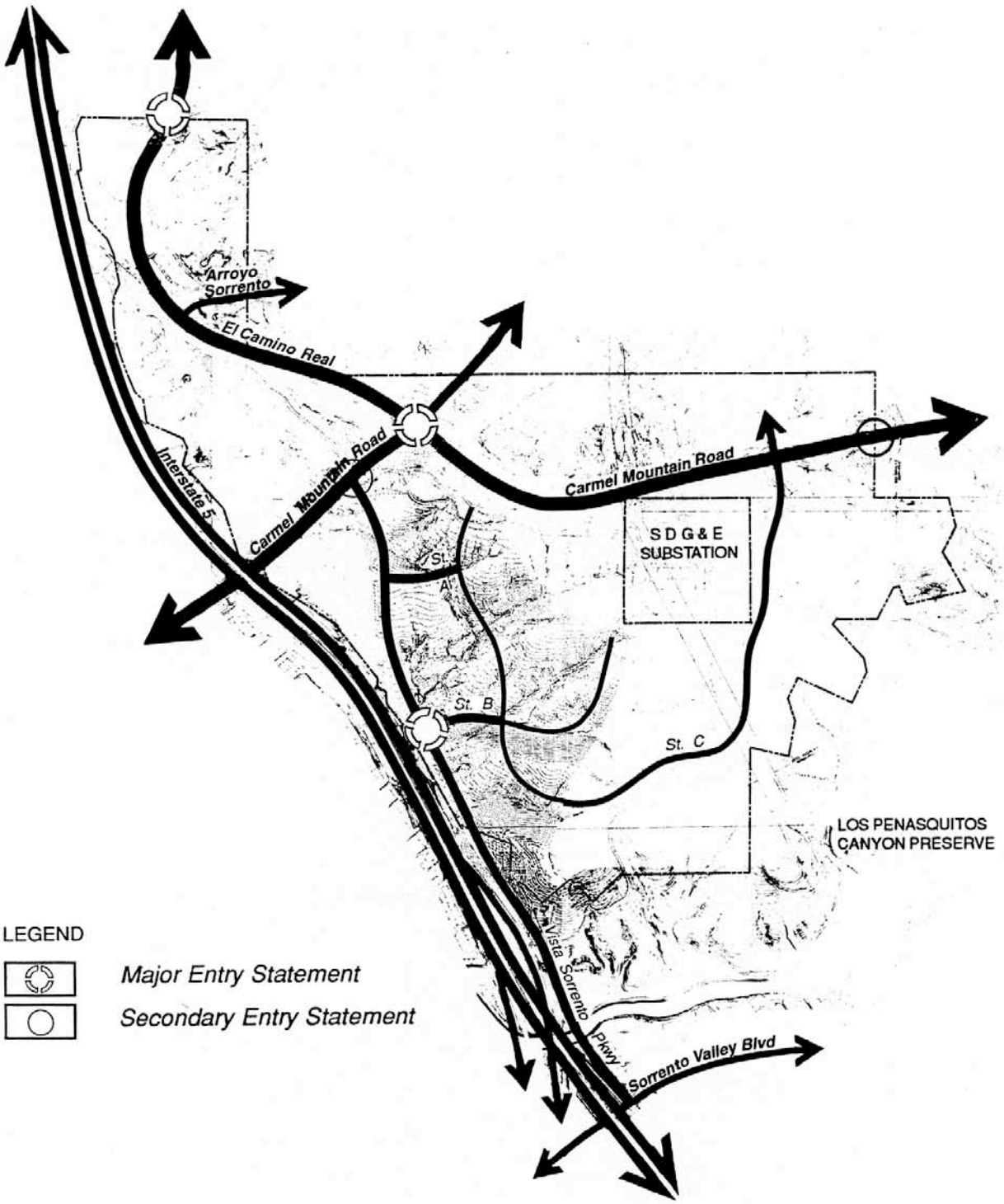
BACKGROUND

Community/planning area entries are located throughout the community, as shown on **Figure 19**. These will occur as major community entries, secondary community entries and project entries as described below.

Major Community Entries

Major community entries will occur at major intersections or "gateway nodes" into the community. These entries set the initial impression of the community for visitors and residents. These intersections will create special opportunities for community identification using a combination of on-grade freestanding or retaining monument walls, planting and lighting. The use of contoured mounding will reflect the natural, freeform qualities of the community's landform. Mounding at entries is encouraged to promote their integration into the project's landform such that the entries appear to emerge from rather than be imposed on the landscape. Placement of any special pavement within the public right-of-way shall conform to the City's Street Design Manual.

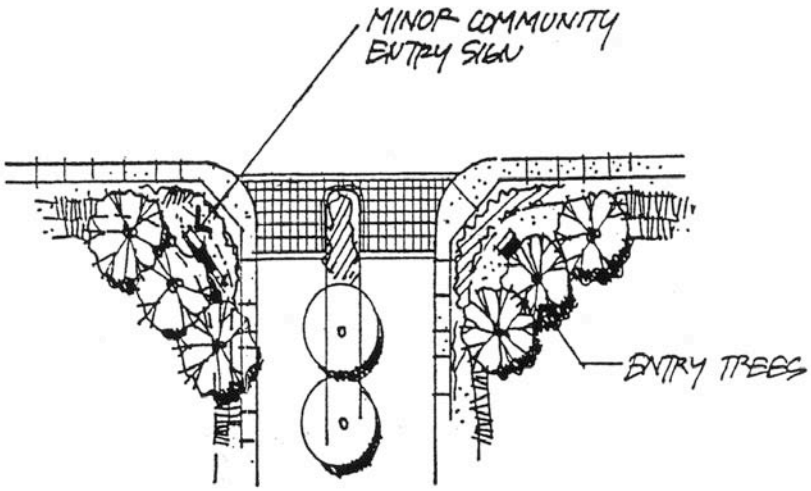




Community Entries
Torrey Hills Community Plan
19 FIGURE

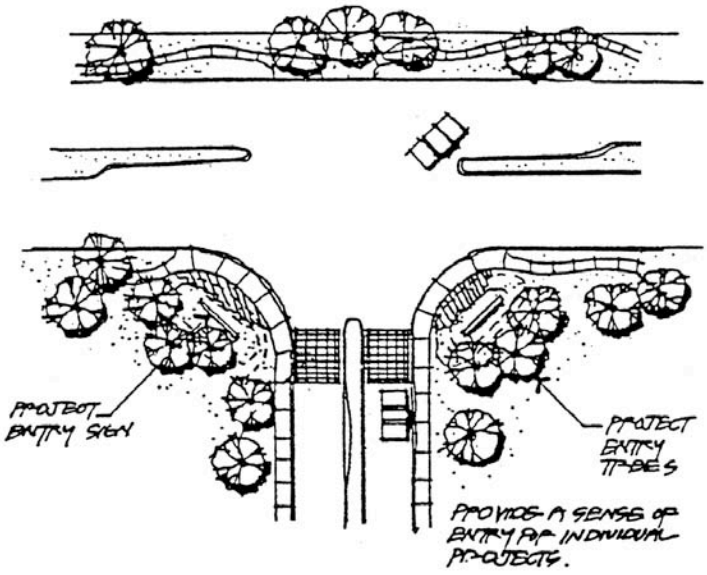
Secondary Community Entries

Secondary entries are planned at less significant intersections within the community. These secondary access points will emphasize the transition from the community's circulation system to a project's internal circulation system. Though these entries would be somewhat reduced in scale, the components should be similar to major Community Entries. Contoured mounding also is encouraged at secondary entries. Placement of any special paving within the public right-of-way shall conform to the City's Street Design Manual.



Project Entries

These entries will define individual commercial, industrial or residential projects. Their size and scale will be of less prominence than community or secondary project entries. They will typically occur at minor street or driveway entries into individual projects. Because minor entries will need to respond to a variety of land use types (i.e., commercial, residential, industrial) their design components and materials will vary to a greater extent than those of the major and secondary entries. Placement of any special paving within the public right-of-way shall conform to the City's Street Design Manual.



SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Figure 19, **Community Entries**, identifies the locations for entry statements at the community level. Project entries should be developed as individual land use areas and projects are proposed.

Major Community Entries

Major community entries are planned for El Camino Real as it enters the community from the north, at two locations along Carmel Mountain Road (at its intersection with Vista Sorrento Parkway and at its intersection with El Camino Real), and at the eastern end of Carmel Mountain Road.

Secondary Community Entries

Secondary entries are planned at various locations throughout the community (see **Figure 19**) Secondary entries are to occur at the intersection of Carmel Mountain Road and Sorrento Hills Boulevard and at the Vista Sorrento Parkway entries to the community activity node planned in the western portion of the community.

Project Entries

- Industrial/Business Park Entries. Industrial entry statements would denote a transition from major or secondary project circulation streets into minor project circulation streets, which serve a cluster or grouping of industrial lots or an individual industrial project on a large single lot. These entries should strive to strike a balance between the use of natural and construction materials. Though freestanding monument walls can be employed at industrial/business park entries, the integration of retaining monument walls in conjunction with contoured mounding is preferred.

- Commercial Entries. Commercial entries, like industrial entries, should exhibit a balance between natural and artificial materials. Contoured mounding with retaining monument walls is preferred. A more formal planting treatment, incorporating flowering accent trees and decorative accent lighting, would provide visual interest for commercial entry locations.

- Residential Entries. The residential entry statements should exhibit a more natural and somewhat less refined appearance than other project entry statements. The materials used shall reflect the character of the individual project's architecture. To emphasize the less urban setting of the residential areas, the use of contoured mounding and retaining monument signage will be essential. Unlike the formal landscape planting approaches that may be employed at other project entries, a more naturalized and random approach to planting is encouraged at residential entries. This will allow the residential entries to blend with the natural open space and green belt linkages.

COMMUNITY/PLANNING ENTRIES DESIGN GUIDELINES

1. Community and project entries shall be low-scale, non-intrusive features of the landscape.

2. Contour mounding will be used to blend entries into the landform.

3. Logos shall be compatible and reflect a uniform design throughout the community. This will provide identity and cohesiveness to individual land uses and neighborhoods within Torrey Hills.

4. Planting for entries shall be compatible with the landscape theme established within the project streetscapes.

5. Plant materials chosen for entries shall have qualities which allow them to visually blend with native plant materials. The emphasis of landscaping shall be to recreate a native plant palette indicative of natural landscape.

POLICIES

1. Formal plantings are encouraged at project entries to provide a sense of formal arrival.

2. The use of medians is encouraged at project entries. The medians will provide an opportunity to separate incoming and outgoing traffic and allow the introduction of plant materials which could reinforce the theme of the project.