

Glossary & Reference Publications

The following terms are frequently used within this guideline manual and/or design review process. For terms not defined in this glossary, please refer to the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan and Land Use Code.

Alignment (Architectural) - The alignment and placement of architectural elements such as windows, cornice elements, soffits, awnings, etc. or structures in a manner that promotes blockscape continuity.

Alley - A public or private way permanently reserved for access to the rear or side of properties.

Arcade - A series of arches supported on piers or columns.

Arch - A curved structural element which is used to span an opening such as a door or window.

Arterial - Any street, highway or road designated as an arterial street in the General Plan.

Articulation - A method or manner of joining that makes the united parts clear and distinct in relation to each other. A highly articulated surface is typically composed of a number of different planes, usually made distinct by their change in direction (projections and recesses) and/or changes in materials, colors or textures.

Awning - A roof cover of canvas or other material extending over building openings to provide protection from the sun and rain.

Balcony - A platform that projects from the wall of a building, above the first level, and is surrounded by a rail, balustrade or parapet.

Baluster - Any of a number of closely spaced supports for a railing. Also called a banister.

Balustrade - A series of balusters surmounted by a rail.

Bay (Structural) - A spatial division element of a building defined by beams or ribs and their supports.

Bay Window - A window that projects out from an exterior wall.

Blockscape/ Blockface - Abutting properties along one side of a street and lying between the two nearest intersecting or intercepting streets, or nearest intersecting or intercepting street and railroad right-of-way, unsubdivided land, watercourse, or city boundary.

Building - Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls for the housing or enclosure of persons, animals, chattels, or property of any kind.

Bulkhead - The space located between the pavement/sidewalk and the bottom of a traditional storefront window.

Canopy - A roof structure, typically projecting over a niche or doorway.

Carport - An open permanent roofed accessory structure, used for vehicle storage.

Casement Window - Window with hinges to the side and a vertical opening either on the side or in the center.

City - The City of San Juan Capistrano.

Cladding - Any exterior building wall covering, including masonry.

Colonnade - A series of regularly shaped columns supporting a roof structure.

Column - A vertical support, usually cylindrical, consisting of a base, shaft and capital, either monolithic or built up of drum sections.

Cornice - A continuous molded projection that crowns a wall or other construction or divides it horizontally for compositional purposes.

Corridor - The passageway providing the principal or occasional means of vehicular and/or pedestrian movement, interconnecting land uses and activities.

Curb Cuts - The elimination of a street curb to enable vehicles to cross sidewalks and enter driveways or parking lots.

Defensible Space - Spatial configurations designed to discourage crime.

Density - The number of dwelling units per unit of land; usually density is expressed "per acre."

District - An urban or rural area with common distinguishing characteristics such as building forms, details, building types, uses, activities, and/or topography.

Double Hung Window - A window with an upper and low sash arranged so that each slides vertically past the other.

Eaves - The overhang at the lower edge of the roof which usually projects out over the exterior walls of the structure.

Façade - The front of a building or any of its sides facing public spaces, frequently distinguished by distinctive architectural treatment.

Fascia - The outer horizontal surface on a cornice or eave.

Fenestration - The arrangement and design of windows and other exterior openings of a building.

Focal Point - A building, object or natural element that serves as a point of attraction, attention or activity.

Gable - The triangular portion of a wall enclosing the end of a pitched roof from cornice or eaves to ridge.

Hardscape - Decorative outdoor elements, such as paved or decorated surfaces of rock, stone, brick, block, or similar material; garden walls and planters.

Hip Roof - A roof having sloping ends and sides meeting at an inclined projecting angle.

Infill - Improvements within an existing developed area.

Intensity - The degree to which land is used. Intensity typically refers to the levels of concentration or activity of land uses.

Landscaping - An area devoted to or developed and maintained with native or exotic planting, lawn, ground cover, gardens, trees, shrubs, and other plant materials. Plants on rooftops, porches or in boxes attached to buildings are not considered landscaping for purposes of meeting minimum landscape zoning code requirements.

Lighting (Artificial) - Illumination of a site, or building by means of street lighting fixtures, architectural accent lighting, security lighting etc.

Lintel - A structural support member (beam) that supports a load over an opening, such as a window or door opening, exposed or obscured by wall coverings.

Lot - Any numbered or lettered parcel shown on a recorded final map or record of survey pursuant to an approved division of land, or a parcel map.

Mansard - A roof having on each side a steeper pitched lower roof part and an upper shallower pitched roof or parapet wall. In contemporary commercial development, the second portion of the roof is replaced with a flat roof or equipment well.

Masonry - Natural or manufactured construction units (e.g. stone, brick and concrete block).

Mass - The physical volume or bulk of a solid body.

Monolithic - A single large flat surface (facade) without relief. A massive uniform structure.

Mullions - The divisional members in a multi-paned window.

Node - A significant focal point in an urban environment, such as a public square or street intersection that is a center or junction of movement and activity.

NPDES - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit process, established by the 1972 Clean Water Act.

Off-Street Loading Facilities - A site or portion of a site devoted to the loading or unloading of motor vehicles or trailers, including loading berths, aisles, access drives, and landscaped areas.

Off-Street Parking Facilities - A site or portion of a site devoted to the off-street parking of motor vehicles, including parking spaces, aisles, access drives, and landscaped areas.

Ornamentation - Accessories, articles or details added to a structure solely for decorative reasons (i.e. to add shape, texture or color to an architectural composition).

Parapet - A low protective wall at the edge of a terrace, balcony or roof especially that part of an exterior wall, firewall or party wall that rises above the roof surface.

Pattern - The use of construction materials to add texture, character, scale, and balance to a building.

Pergola - A structure consisting of parallel colonnade supporting an open roof of cross rafters.

Pier - A vertical supporting structure, column or pillar.

Pilaster - A column attached to a wall or pier. A vertical feature projecting from a wall, architecturally treated as a column.

Pitch - The slope of a roof commonly expressed in terms of inches of vertical rise per foot of horizontal run.

Planned development communities - A development pattern which often includes a mix of residential unit types and densities, community commercial uses, schools and open spaces.

Plant palette - A comprehensive list of planting materials that comprise the landscaping concept of the project.

Porch - A platform, usually having a separate roof, at an entrance to a dwelling or enclosed room that is attached to the outside of a building.

Project - Any proposal for new or modified land use, or for new construction, alteration, or enlargement of any structure, that is subject to the provisions of this manual.

Private Property - Property owned in fee by an individual, corporation, partnership, or a group of individuals.

Proportion - The comparative, proper or harmonious relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to magnitude, quantity or degree.

Public Art - Any form of art located in a public space or private space open to public view.

Public Property - Property dedicated to the City or acquired for public use, including but not limited to streets, alleys, parks, public rights of ways, landscaped areas, and sidewalks.

Reconstruction - The act or process of depicting, by means of new construction the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Recycling, Adaptive Reuse - The reuse of older structures that would have otherwise been demolished, often involving extensive restoration or rehabilitation of the interior and/or exterior to accommodate the new use.

Rehabilitation - The act or process of repair, alteration, and addition to a structure while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural value.

Remodeling - The upgrade of the interior or exterior faces of a building or structure without altering to any degree its structural integrity.

Relief - A projection of a figure or form from the flat background plane on which it is formed.

Restoration - The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by removing features from other periods in its history and reconstructing missing features. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate as part of a restoration project.

Reveal - The vertical side section of a doorway or window frame.

Rhythm (Horizontal, Vertical) - The regular or harmonious recurrence of lines, shapes, forms, elements or colors, usually within a proportional system.

Ridge - A horizontal line of intersection at the top between two sloping planes of a roof.

Rustication - A method of forming stonework with recessed joints and smooth or roughly textured block faces.

Sash - The framework into which windowpanes are set.

Scale (Human) - The size or proportion of a building element or space relative to the structural or functional dimension of the human body.

Setback Line - A line across the front, side, rear of any property or public property which delineates an area adjoining a property line in which erection of a building, fence, or other structure is prohibited except as otherwise provided in the zoning ordinance.

Shake - Split wood shingles.

Siding - A material such as shingles or boards used for surfacing the exterior of a frame building (with the exception of masonry).

Sill - The horizontal framing member that forms the lower side of an opening.

Site - A lot, or group of contiguous lots that are proposed for development.

Storefront - The traditional "main street" facade bounded by a structural pier on either side, the sidewalk on the bottom and the lower edge of the upper facade on top.

Story - The portion of a building included between the surface of any floor and the surface of the floor or finished undersurface of the roof directly above it.

Street Wall - The edges created by buildings and landscaping that enclose the street.

Stucco - An exterior finish, usually textured, composed of cement, lime and sand mixed with water.

Transom - The horizontal division or crossbar separating a doorway from a window or fan light above it.

Texture - The visual and tactile quality of a surface apart from its color and form. A building texture refers to variations in the exterior facade and may be described in terms of roughness of the surface material, the patterns inherent in the material or the patterns in which the material is placed. Texture and lack of texture influence the mass, scale and rhythm of a building. Texture can add intimate scale to large buildings by the use of small detailed patterns (e.g. brick masonry patterns).

Town lot - A development pattern which consists of small lots and short blocks developed on a consistent grid pattern.

Trellis - A frame supporting open latticework used as a screen or a support for growing vines or plants.

Trim - The finished woodwork or other construction material used to decorate border, or protect the edges of openings or surfaces.

Waterscape - Pools, fountains, and water features that may be incorporated as part of an overall landscaping/hardscape site plan design solution.

Yard - An open space on the same site as a structure, unoccupied and unobstructed by structures from the ground upward except as otherwise provided in the zoning ordinance, including a front yard, side yard, or rear yard.

Z-Lot - A parcel designed in a “Z” configuration.

Zero-lot-line Lot - A parcel which may be developed with zero side, rear or front yard building setbacks.

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