

# Sierpe del Pacifico Design Guidelines

Effective: April. 1, 2009 (rev.) (rev.)

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## Design Guidelines & Review Checklist to Help Create & Maintain:

- **quality architectural design & detailing,**
  - residence compatibility,
  - **quality landscape architectural design & detailing,**
  - sensitive residence siting & amenity features,
  - appropriate planting & groundcovers,
  - protection of and minimal impact to surrounding environment and ecosystem,
  - **property value.**
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## Contents:

### Part I.

- A. Introduction
- B. Process of Design Review

### Part II.

- A. General Exterior Design Guidelines
- B. Minimum Design Requirements
- C. Architectural Design Guidelines
- D. Landscape / Site Design Guidelines

## **Part I.**

### **A. Introduction:**

Sierpe del Pacifico was created as an exceptional eco-adventure residential community that provides a unique setting that encourages interaction and respect for the natural environment, interaction with the SDP community and the preservation of unique species and ecosystem diversity offered by the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica. The Architectural Committee and Design Guidelines were written for the following reasons:

- To establish a community of homes that build on the theme of low impact, non-invasive aesthetic harmony and respect for nature that is reflected by the built-in amenities.
- To ensure that each home will fit the topography, preserve views, protect the natural environment and other features that define this community.
- To protect each owner's investment in their home by requiring all owners to build to the same high standards of quality design and attention to detail.
- To ensure diversity of design and not allow established builders models or portfolio to be duplicated by other builders.
- To encourage a close working relationship between the Architectural Committee and SDP Homeowners to accomplish the goals of these guidelines.

Our desire is not to dictate what is to be built, but to assist the owner in making the design the best it can be – for both the owner and the surrounding environment - within the owner's budgetary constraints.

### **B. Process of Design Review:**

Each residence to be built or altered in Sierpe del Pacifico must be submitted for a two step Design Review Process before Building Permits are applied for at the local municipality and permission to build is granted by the Architectural Committee. An additional Intermediate Review may also be indicated. Each step has a list of required submittals to be prepared by the owner or their designer. After submittals are received by the Architectural Committee for each step, the review process should be completed in 14 working days or less. One set of plans will be returned to the owner or owner's representative along with suggested modifications. It is the intent of the Architectural Committee to work closely with the owner and designer and attendance at Architectural Committee meetings is encouraged. Please refer to Part III for the "Plan Contents and Review Checklist". This form indicates the Design Review process in detail and will be filled out as the process proceeds.

## **Steps to Final Approval of Design:**

### **Step #1 Concept Review - Required**

Inclusions: As much as you can, but sketches are sufficient; home type desired, floor plan sketch or example, elevation sketch or photo example. Indicate type of materials you plan to use on the home exterior.

Preliminary site plan sketch on developer provided scaled 1"=20' plot plan showing residence orientation, approximate proposed spot grades and elevations, access drive (optional), walks, decks, patios, bio-digester positioning and grey water recycling design.

### **Step #1A Preliminary Review - Encouraged and may be required**

Inclusions: Preliminary hard line floor plans, front, sides and rear elevations, site plan complete with biodigester location, grey water recycling design, existing and proposed spot grades and contours, proposed plantings and ground cover, general material choices, and colors

### **Step #2 Final Review and Approval - Required**

Inclusions: A. Full Architectural Plan; elevations, roof plan, exterior details  
B. Detailed list of Specifications  
C. Final Site Plan on 1"=20' scale plot plan; (these first three items must receive approval by the Architectural Committee before the start of construction).

## **I. Design Guidelines and Minimum Requirements**

### **A. General Exterior Design Guidelines**

#### **1. Desirable:**

- A. Well proportioned designs utilizing one recognizable style (or a very careful tasteful blend of two compatible styles).
  - Tropical Cabana
  - Polynesian or Bali-esque
  - Craftsman Bungalow
  - Spanish colonial fusion
  - Log cabin

- B. Design consultation by skilled residential design specialist.
  - C. Home plan and siting to take advantage of sun, views, natural building footprint, natural vegetative surroundings and provide for privacy while also minimizing environmental impacts and respecting sight lines of other homes.
  - D. Bio-digester and grey water treatment - preferred location downslope of house in an area camouflaged by natural or planted vegetation
  - E. Retaining materials / slopes that preserve natural lay of the land, drainage, natural vegetation and compliment home design.
  - F. Roof pitches of 4:12 or 3:12.
  - G. Well proportioned fascia, gutter, soffit, frieze details, skirt board, and corner board true to style.
  - H. Dark (green, brown, or burnt red) roofs, with covered ridge vents, valley flashing of copper, prefinished aluminum, or matching shingles.
  - I. Construction materials must consist primarily of the following: cement pillar, metal perling or wood post “stilt-built” support; pressure treated wood or steel perling floor framing; premium natural wood internal framing; steel, pressure treated or natural wood roof supports
  - J. Concrete / colored, patterned or brick walkways and entryways.
  - K. Masonry brick, stone, and natural wood exterior materials.
  - L. Houses must be deemed to be “stilt-built” with a spacing of at least 18 inches between the grade of the land and the floor elevation
2. Acceptable:
- A. Flat roofs in conjunction with larger sloping roofs.
  - B. Exterior walls at angles other than 90 degrees.
3. Avoid:
- A. Poor quality vinyl, metal or press board siding.

- B. Large expanses of identical siding material.
- C. Construction to be deemed primarily of cement block, pre-fabricated cement pillars, or fibrolite cement board.
- D. Poorly proportioned, unaccented contemporary designs or design "parts".
- E. Overly complex or mixtures of too many architectural styles.
- F. Window or screenless wall expanses in excess of 25 lineal feet.
- G. Three story walkout facades without massing variations, grade transition, over-hangs, vertical accents and details on rear wall of home.
- H. Acute (less than 90 degree) building corners in front or side yards facing the road ways,
- I. Flat roofs greater than 50% and/or that transition into vertical walls without overhangs or sloping roof section, friese or facia.
- J. White or light color asphalt shingles. Unpainted galvanized aluminum or metal roofing

**B. Minimum Design Requirements;**

- 1. Landscaping - See Section D

## **C. Architectural Design Guidelines**

1. **General Guidelines:** Each individual home shall have its own identity and character. It will be balanced, details consistent with its basic architecture and be made with quality materials and workmanship. Homes identical to an established builder's model or portfolio will not be allowed and homes not demonstrating adequate design variety will not be allowed within Sierpe del Pacifico.

### 2. Overall Massing:

- A. Select a home type and mass based on perception from perimeter servidumbres agricolas (private access road).
- B. Respond to Architechtural committee and home type preference site plan.
- C. Be sensitive to, and avoid unaccented, 3-story walkout facades.
- D. A house's inside and outside should work together and be mutually supporting.
- E. Consolidate the home's footprint to the best use of the lot.
- F. Limit the home's footprint to the area cleared and designated as the building footprint upon day of purchase.
- G. Simple, strong forms are better than many small or unrelated elements.
- H. Be consistent with the style or general image of the home.
- I. "Stage front" appearance will not be approved, the sides and rear should support the style of the front.

### 3. Roof:

- A. The roof on each home is one of the most important visual masses on the house. It must be appropriate to the individual style: Research your style, know its convention. A few exceptions may be granted in small areas for pitches less than 3:12.
- B. Simple and strong roof forms.
- C. Avoid mixing different roof forms or pitches on the same home,

- D. Facia size must be appropriate and relative to the home size, line and style.
  - E. Gutters and downspouts must be integrated to color and style of house.
5. Paint/Stains:
- A. Strong recommendation is made for tone on tone contrast.
  - B. Contrasting compatibility are the watch words.
  - C. The greater the contrast of materials, the less use of the contrasting color.
  - D. Corner trim can be the same as the siding or with contrasting color.
6. Exterior Finish Material:
- A. Masonry - Brick/Stone
    - 1. Masonry fronts must wrap corners to a logical terminus.
    - 2. Use masonry in larger areas and in locations most visible.
    - 3. Use soldier coursing to help establish building lines and texture, above and below windows, as a frieze, etc.
    - 4. Columns must be sized appropriate to their height and building scale.
  - B. Woodsiding and Trim:
    - 1. Wood is the preferred siding material.
    - 2. The use of native tropical hardwoods and pressure treated pine are encouraged.
    - 3. Design may be clapboard, tongue and groove, board, batten or shakes.
    - 4. Under no circumstances will plywood siding be accepted.
    - 5. Wood should be stained, painted, or oiled.
    - 6. Spacers should be used to cover gaps in siding that may occur after the drying of natural wood siding.

D. Other Siding and Trim Materials:

1. Vinyl, steel, aluminum and stucco are acceptable based on submittal of sample product and manufacturer's spec's. describing thickness, texture, and color fastness. Permission to use alternative siding materials mentioned above is granted at the sole discretion of the architectural committee
2. Other composites will be considered only if actual finish samples and manufacturer's testing information are submitted.
3. Fibrolit (cement board) paneling is allowed and encouraged, but only if it is framed in natural wood or stone. Fibrolite panels must be painted. The desired combination of fibrolite paneling (complete with color) and natural framing must be submitted with Steps 1A or 2 of design approval
4. Siding deemed as concrete block, pre-fabricated cement, or unpainted fibrolite cement board is not allowed.

7. Doors, Windows, and Screens:

- A. The entry door is expected to be a central feature to the front of the house. It should be scaled to the rest of the house.
- B. The liberal use of windows and screens to maximize views and an "open air" environment is strongly encouraged
- C. Simulated divided light grilles are encouraged.
- D. Windows and screens must be framed
- E. Window framing, screen framing and doors are encouraged to be made of natural wood and either stained, varnished, or oiled. Painted doors are acceptable as long as colors are muted and cohesive with overall style and design of residence
- F. Shutters should look as if they could close over entire window. Do not use with multiple unit windows or screens

8. Other Elements:

A. Architectural Trim

1. The use of Architectural trim consistent with home and home style is

strongly encouraged.

2. Plain wood, metal, clad or composites will be accepted if sample or manufacturer's catalog with trim indicated and color specified are submitted.

B. Decks

1. Must be consistent with home style and should be an extension of the home.
2. Size columns to deck and home scale.
3. Handrailings design and detailing should be consistent with the home's style.
4. Future decks should be included with the plans for approval, but indicated as future construction.

C. Flat Work

Porches, natural stone retaining walls, entryways and can be an opportunity for inexpensive but high-value features.

1. Flatwork at the entry point to the residential structure.
2. Colored, exposed aggregate, and patterned concrete are recommended.

D. Security Fences

1. Security and privacy fences are not allowed as they might restrict the natural movement patterns of wildlife. Allowable and encouraged exceptions would include privacy wall around trash receptacles, satellite dishes, and water
2. cisterns. Fences may not exceed 8 feet in height.

## **D. Landscape / Site Design Guidelines**

The Sierpe del Pacifico Design Guidelines have been formulated to assist each home owner to help create a distinguished residential community that complements this extraordinary site.

Careful siting of each home must seek to fit the topography, protect existing vegetation, views, open space, and other features that define the character of this community. These guidelines will further this goal by establishing criteria aimed at achieving quality levels of landscape architecture and environmentally sensitive site plans. Our goal is beautiful, low-impact and non-invasive landscapes and open spaces and interesting and complementary lot amenity features and planting design. Careful consideration must be made for future additions, decks, outbuildings and screened porches. Considerations must be made for lot inclusive communal areas (i.e gardens, walking trails, viewpoint platforms). Consultation with a landscape consultant is recommended at the early stages of planning.

1. Minimum Design Requirements:

- A. A minimum of \$300 in landscaping or procured equivalent deemed of equal value by architectural committee
- B. Architectural committee reserves the right to mandate the addition of landscaping to cover or camouflage areas or installations within expanse of private lots it deems to be unsightly or visually distracting.
- C. Architectural committee reserves right to require additional landscaping on lots where side and rear house elevations are highly visible to public. (See #1-E)
- D. The exclusive use of plant species native to Costa Rica is strongly encouraged.
- E. The cutting of any trees or removal of native vegetation must be approved by Architectural Committee prior to removal.
- F. The cutting of any trees or removal of native vegetation must be congruent with Costa Rican environmental law.

2. Home-Lot Siting Design Guidelines:

- A. Home plan selection and siting should take advantage of sun, views and provide both privacy and maintain preservation and minimal impact on surrounding environment. Set backs from the servidumbres agricolas (private internal access roads) can vary from a minimum of 10 feet up. Please consult with the Architectural Committee.
- B. Look for design plans that establish a friendly relationship with the servidumbres agricolas, communal use areas, and natural environment via porches, decks, gradual level changes and ante ways, pathways, entry sitting areas, courtyards (If a home plan is to have porches or verandahs, plan more than tacked, narrow, unusable porches).

- C. Create attractive off-lot visual impacts. Be mindful of the home's massing as seen from surrounding road approaches, in context with other adjacent and surrounding homes, and with surrounding natural environment
- D. Respect sight lines of other homes to natural and built-in amenities.
- E. Position retaining walls and slopes to preserve trees where possible. Select wall materials and colors to compliment the home design and material.
- F. Respect the existing topography and work with it.
- G. Identify any terracing, cutting, or grading of the land that you intend to do.
- H. Make every attempt to minimize soil and or land erosion
- I. Use each site's opportunities to help define the home's outdoor spaces.
- J. Work with and promote front and rear yard natural areas. Position ground cover, trees and shrubs in response to Architectural Committee - preferred tree massing, berming and natural area plans.
- K. Corner lots will have special review ensuring that side and rear yards have received equal landscaping attention.
- L. Homes should be positioned both in respect to cleared building footprint area, natural lay of the land, in anticipation of siting of future homes, in respect to communal use areas, and natural eco-logical occurrences (vegetation, travel corridors, etc.) of the surrounding environment
- M. Contour site to protect mutual drainage issues.
- N. Attention must be paid to side and rear yards with respect to significance of their visual orientation and community impacts.

3. Lighting:

- A. Lighting of the structure and grounds will provide enjoyment for a longer period each day. Dramatic results can be accomplished with simple lighting.
- B. Lighting sources should be concealed where possible with all lighting in shades of white (no colored bulbs).
- C. Spillover of light must be avoided to neighboring lots and lighting must be shielded to prevent glare. Wall washes can be achieved through an eave or ground mounted light fixture.

- D. Lights intended to illuminate surrounding natural environment or attract wildlife or insects is prohibited.
  - E. Garden lights or walkway bollards should direct the light downward with concealed spotlights
4. Fences / Retaining Walls/ :
- A. Fences are not allowed on the property as they are considered to restrict the movement of native wildlife species.
  - B. Privacy or utility screening must integrate with and compliment the architecture.
  - C. Retaining walls should not exceed 4' in height, and be constructed of materials such as stone, veneer or decorative concrete block (i.e., keystone). Break up larger elevation drops with stepped multiple walls.
5. Terraces / Porches /Outdoor Living Space:
- Outdoor living spaces can provide effective transition between home, outdoors, and a place of interaction with the natural environment. These could include patios, decks, gazebos, or formal gardens.
- A. Design, materials and layout must be submitted for Architectural Committee review.
  - B. Materials shall be consistent with materials used on home.
  - C. These spaces are encouraged to be used at front yards as well as rear.
  - D. Associated fences, retaining walls and lighting used to define these spaces should meet requirements previously described.
6. Aesthetic Guidelines:
- A. Proper trash receptacles must be used outside of home and must be shielded or hidden from public view by natural wood, masonry, or vegetative landscaping or structure.
  - B. All private water storage tanks are to be painted green so as to blend into the natural surroundings. At the discretion and direction of the architectural committee natural vegetative accents or plantings may be required to camouflage water tanks from the public view.

- C. Swimming pools and hot tubs are not allowed
  - D. Any and all residential signage must be included within sight plan for review by the architectural committee.
7. Special Requirements:
- A. During construction each homesite will be kept clean and free of debris. Each builder will be held responsible for debris which blows off the site, so please police your site. If the developer must clean up for you the appropriate charges will be passed on.
  - B. Every owner and builder is responsible to provide erosion control.

These Guidelines are for you, the homeowner. As the design process proceeds you will receive ideas and input from very competent people on the Architectural Committee. You should view these professionals as an exceptional resource available to you for your benefit resulting in a better home plan.

While the overall concept of the guidelines will be consistently complied with, your comments and suggestions on improving both the guidelines and the process itself are always welcome. We share a common goal for good design and enhanced property value for you, your neighbors and the entire Sierpe del Pacifico community. The design guidelines were drafted to make these goals a reality.

Thank You,  
Fred Scheer, Chariman  
Architectural Committee

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