

# East Ojai Avenue Design Guidelines

City of Ojai

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urban design studio



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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Preface**

The East Ojai Avenue Design Guidelines manual has evolved as a tool for implementing the Land Use Element of the Ojai General Plan. The Land Use Element states; “key to the development of this area is the establishment of an architectural focus or theme that would be implemented as development occurs.”

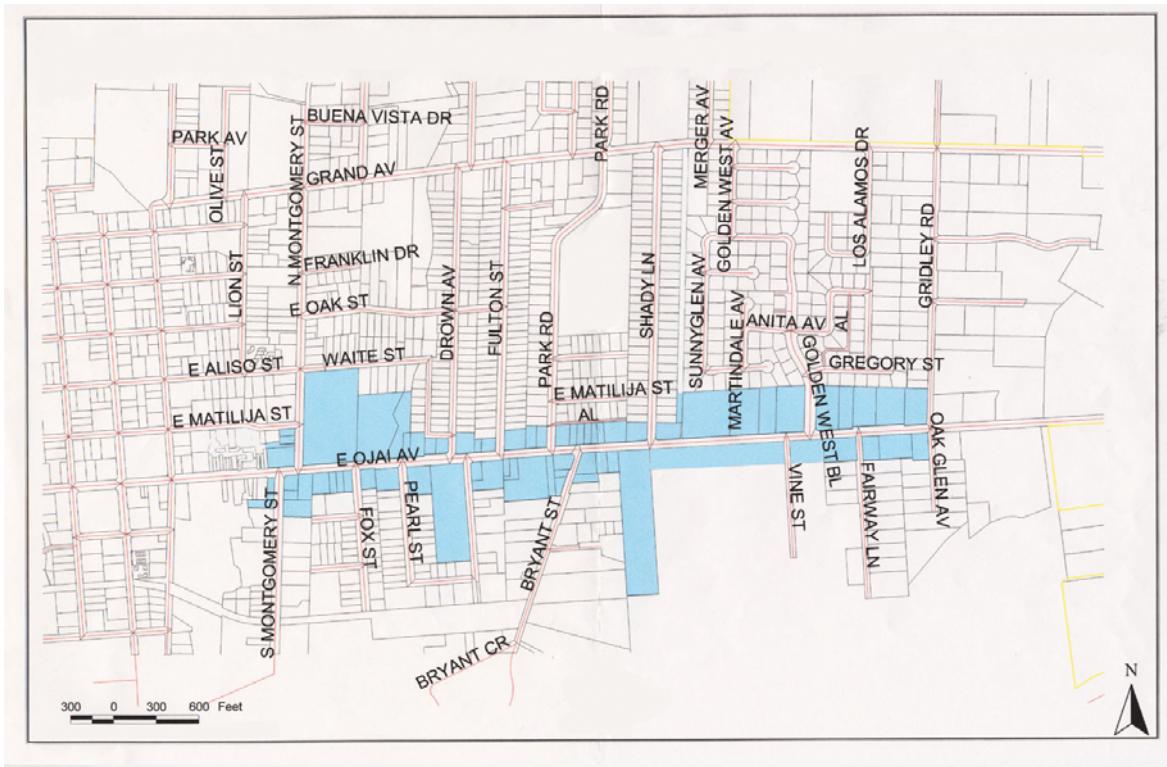
The purpose of the East Ojai Avenue Design Guidelines is to influence the character of new development so that East Ojai Avenue can preserve its present qualities - mainly its rural, eclectic nature of existing development and feeling of openness - as it continues to develop in the future. It is not the purpose of these guidelines to replicate the character of the Town Center. However, it is important for project designers to be aware of the Town Center’s contribution to the community’s unique imagery, especially in terms of its overall scale and the standard for high quality of design that has been established there.

The East Ojai Avenue Design Guidelines seek to address development issues that are of concern to the City and to propose appropriate solutions to be considered by property owners, developers, architects, and builders as they prepare development proposals for consideration by the City. The guidelines provide recommendations for site planning, building form, architectural style, signs, landscaping, lighting, and improvements within the public right-of-way to ensure that new development (including remodeling and additions to existing buildings) contributes to the City’s vision for East Ojai Avenue and to the goals established in this design guidelines manual.

### **B. Project Review and Approval**

The design guidelines in this manual will be applied to projects within the East Ojai Avenue corridor, including the commercially zoned properties fronting on Montgomery Street as shown on the following map (Figure 1). The guidelines will be used by the Planning Commission in its review of proposed projects in compliance with requirements of the City’s Municipal Code for architectural review.





**Figure 1**  
**East Ojai Avenue Area Map**

The following types of projects are subject to design review by the Planning Commission within the East Ojai Avenue corridor:

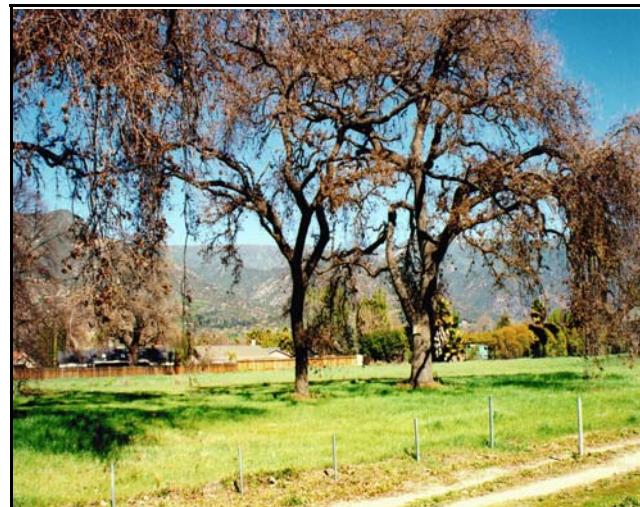
1. All applications for building permits;
2. Projects/uses requiring the approval of a conditional use permit;
3. Any construction (whether or not a building permit is required) that affects the exterior elevation of an existing building or structure (e.g., replacing doors or windows);
4. A change in the exterior appearance of a building (e.g., painting, reroofing, replacing siding) or similar changes unless exempted by the Community Development Director; and
5. A change in the use of an existing building that requires additional parking.



During its review of applicable projects, the Planning Commission will use its discretion in applying the various guidelines in this manual to specific projects. It is not anticipated that each guideline will apply equally to every project. In some circumstances, one guideline may be relaxed to facilitate compliance with another guideline determined by the Commission to be more important in a particular case. The overall objective is to ensure that the intent and spirit of the guidelines are followed and that the project respects its surroundings in terms of scale, character, and orientation.

### C. Area Character and Vision

The character of East Ojai Avenue is one of transition, from a rural/agrarian past to a future character that encourages the development of visitor serving uses as well as uses that serve the everyday needs of local residents. While at present, businesses along the Avenue are disconnected and the corridor does not provide the typical patterns of uses or amenities necessary to attract a high level of pedestrian activity, it is the City's vision that East Ojai Avenue develop a more pedestrian friendly atmosphere with a development pattern and mix of uses that supports a highly walkable environment. In contrast to the Town Center, however, development along East Ojai Avenue would be less dense with a feeling of more openness. This would be achieved by the provision of more open space, protection of views to the surrounding hillsides, and the increased use of landscaping within the public right-of-way and on private property to tie the otherwise eclectic area together.



The Land Use Element of the City's General Plan contains a variety of descriptive



statements that help define the community's physical image. It is important that project designers recognize this image and make specific efforts to enhance it.

The elements that help define Ojai's character include:

1. Identifiable landmark buildings;
2. Understated buildings and signs with a residential scale;
3. Views to surrounding mountains;
4. Walkable environment, pedestrian in scale;
5. Good quality development with a feeling of being "handmade."

To successfully maintain and strengthen the community's existing character, project designers will be required to integrate design features that support the City's efforts to preserve Ojai's small town character and maintain an image of quality development. Following the guidelines in this manual will help achieve this goal.

## **II. COMMON DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

While no two projects will be exactly alike, each should demonstrate adherence to certain design principles that are central to enhancing the quality of the development along East Ojai Avenue. This section provides the basic design goals (e.g., pedestrian orientation) that each project is expected to address. Newly-constructed projects will have a greater opportunity to address each of the design principles more fully, while projects that involve additions or remodeling may be more limited in their ability to address each specific principle. However, regardless of the type of project, it is expected that all project proponents will strive to implement the principles outlined below to the greatest degree possible. The information in this design guidelines manual will help in achieving this goal.

**A. *Pedestrian Orientation. Strengthen the pedestrian character of East Ojai Avenue and create new linkages where possible.***

The high quality of Ojai's pedestrian environment within the Town Center is an important aspect of the City's character. The extension of this character eastward along the Avenue is a basic design principle to be addressed by all projects. Project proponents should demonstrate how the proposed project contributes to the goal of increased pedestrian activity along East Ojai Avenue.



**B. Eclectic Character.** *Protect the existing eclectic character of East Ojai Avenue and promote diversity in new development.*

The eclectic nature of existing development contributes to the unique identity of the Avenue. New projects are expected to promote a diversity of architectural style while maintaining continuity of scale, pedestrian orientation, patterns of open space, and use of landscaping. The guidelines allow a variety of architectural styles; Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Monterey, Craftsman, and Western. It is expected that individual project designs will demonstrate adherence to the basic character-defining features of each of these styles as described later in this document.

Choosing which architectural style to use is a matter of personal choice keeping in mind the existing context and vocabulary of adjacent development. Sharp contrasts between different architectural styles on adjacent parcels is strongly discouraged.

Additionally, it is expected that the Spanish-related styles (i.e., Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Monterey) will be more appropriate within the first two to three blocks east of the Town Center with the more rural Craftsman and western styles being introduced further to the east. Exceptions to this principle may be considered for good cause.



**C. *High Quality.* Maintain a high level of expectation for quality development.**

Quality of development can be expressed in a variety of ways: through the adherence to authentic architectural styles and details; the honest and simple use of materials and colors; the provision of useable open space (plazas and courtyards); the concern for human scale and pedestrian orientation; and the use of landscaping to soften the otherwise hard surfaces of structures and pavement. All projects are expected to achieve a high level of quality.

**D. *Development Character.* Promote a consistent and coherent rhythm of structures and open spaces along the street edge.**

The structures, and the spaces and landscaping between them, can create a variety of physical environments from urban/suburban with limited open space, to very rural, with large open spaces between structures. The desired character for East Ojai Avenue is one that provides more open space than the Town Center through the provision of front and side building setbacks, plazas and courtyards, outdoor dining areas, pedestrian paseos, view corridors, and landscaped areas.



**E. *Context and Relationships.* Create appropriate relationships between new projects, existing uses, and future development.**

In order to help ensure that each new project along the Avenue is well integrated with existing development, the design of each project must demonstrate respect for Ojai's small town character and sensitivity to the contextual influences of the area, especially in terms of building scale and architectural design. New projects should demonstrate consideration of the following:

1. Location of structures on neighboring properties;
2. Architectural character/style of neighboring structures;
3. Opportunities for the creation of pedestrian linkages and shared vehicle access;
4. Preservation of existing natural features (e.g., mature trees);
5. Preservation and enhancement of views to surrounding hills; and
6. Protection of adjacent residential uses from the impacts of commercial

development.

## II GENERAL SITE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following guidelines address how buildings should present themselves to the street. Historically, buildings along East Ojai Avenue were placed adjacent to the street with little or no emphasis on vehicles. Later projects (especially further to the east) often set the building back from the street in order to allow parking in front of the building, separating it from the street and decreasing opportunities for pedestrian connections between the building and the public sidewalk.



Another significant feature of the historical development pattern is the spacing of the buildings and the rhythm of the buildings to the spaces between them. Unlike the arcade area which has no spaces between buildings, East Ojai Avenue east of Montgomery Street presents a pattern of development that is punctuated frequently by spaces that create a feeling of openness, allows views to the surrounding hillsides, and provides areas for trees and landscaping. This pattern of development reinforces the rural, eclectic character of the Avenue and should be maintained and strengthened.



The intent of these site development guidelines is to continue to reinforce the historic development patterns, and to create increased opportunities for pedestrian activity, open space, landscaping, and preserve views to the hillsides.



## A. Building Siting/Orientation

1. **Orientation.** Generally, the front building wall should be built parallel to the street with the main entrance oriented to the public sidewalk. Exceptions may be allowed to accommodate outdoor dining, plazas, and courtyards which are strongly encouraged. (See other guidelines in this section that address these features.)

Building frontages should:

- Create active building frontages along the public sidewalk.
- Provide inviting indoor and outdoor spaces visible from the sidewalk and street.
- Provide display windows to showcase merchandise and allow views into the business.
- Avoid blank walls and other dead spaces along street frontages.



2. **Front building wall setback.** Ojai Avenue and Montgomery Street are divided into two districts relative to the guidelines for front building wall setbacks. The first district is nearest the Town Center where buildings have traditionally been built to, or very near, the front property line. This district includes properties fronting on Montgomery Street and properties fronting on Ojai Avenue from Montgomery Street east to Park Road. In this district, there is no front building setback required and the maximum setback is five feet. However, greater setbacks may be allowed when they provide space for outdoor dining, courtyards, plazas, and similar activity areas. Flexibility in setbacks may also be allowed to accommodate appropriate groupings of buildings that create interesting designs and intimate pedestrian spaces.

The second district includes the remainder of properties fronting on Ojai Avenue eastward to Gridley Road. Buildings in this district should be set



back from the front property line a minimum of 5 feet. However, outdoor dining areas, plazas, and similar public use open space areas may extend to the front property line. Parking is not allowed between the building and the front property line.



Additionally, uses that are typically conducted out of doors, such as nurseries and flower shops may also extend to the front property line.

### **3. Side building wall setback.**

The side elevations of buildings should not be set on the property line unless buildings on the adjoining parcel are either currently built to the property line or new buildings are being designed/developed approximately at the same time and are also to be constructed on the property line in approximately the same location. The purpose of the guideline is to avoid situations where buildings are constructed on property lines with large expanses of blank walls and no roof overhangs because of Building Code requirements for fire safety.

In situations where buildings are separated, whether on the same parcel or on



different parcels, the minimum separation should be 15 feet unless a greater separation is required to preserve a particular view, provide solar access, or other reasons as determined by the Planning Commission.

4. **Second floor setback.** Second floor building walls should be setback a minimum of 10 feet from the first floor frontage so that a continuous two story building wall does not dominate the street frontage. Exceptions may be allowed where the Planning Commission determines that sufficient building wall articulation has been provided so that the two story facade does not appear flat and uninteresting. Also, refer to guidelines related to building mass and scale provided in Chapter IV, General Architectural Guidelines.

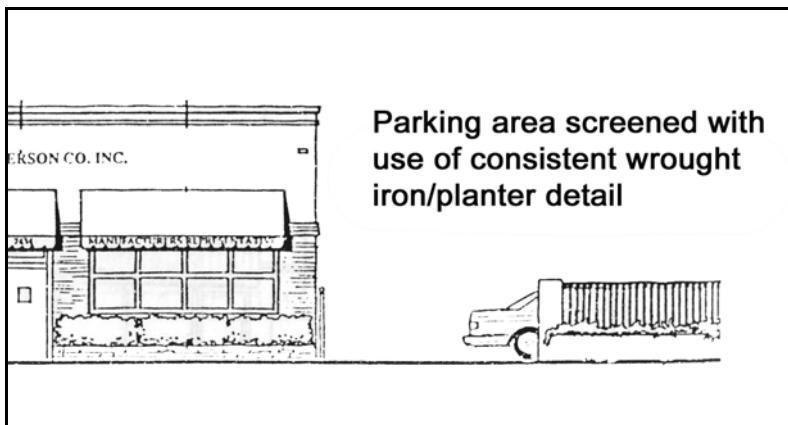


5. **C onverted residence.** When converted to commercial use, existing residences that are set back from the street should make use of the front yard area. Porches, trellised entries, and courtyards are methods to enhance the pedestrian connection between the building and the street. Parking is not allowed in the setback area.



## B. Parking and Circulation

1. **Parking location.** Parking lots should be designed to be as visually unobtrusive as possible. This usually means locating the parking at the rear of the building where it may not require screening from public view. Parking lots may be located to the side of a building when properly screened from public view. The maximum width of a parking lot adjacent to the street should be the width of one two-way drive aisle and one parking bay (approximately 45-50 feet). Exceptions may be considered for larger projects with more than 100 feet of street frontage.



*Parking area screened with use of consistent wrought iron/planter detail.*

2. **Parking lot screening.** Parking lots adjacent to the street should be screened from view with a 3-foot high solid decorative wall designed to be consistent with the architectural style of the on-site buildings. The wall should be setback a minimum of 5 feet from the front property line and the setback should be fully landscaped including trees.
3. **Parking lot landscaping.** Landscaping of parking lots is required consistent with the City's landscape requirements. Trees should be distributed throughout the parking area to provide the maximum amount of shade. Trees should also be provided around the perimeter of the parking area.
4. **Driveways.** Driveways should be kept to the absolute minimum required for the project. Projects with fewer than 100 parking spaces should be limited to one driveway. Where a corner lot is being developed, the driveway should be located on the side street.
5. **Connections between lots.** Parking lots should be designed to provide access between adjacent parcels so the vehicles do not need to enter the public right-of-way to circulate between businesses. New developments should anticipate the need to accommodate future connections to adjacent parcels if they are not currently developed.



6. **Bicycle parking.** Bicycle transportation is strongly encouraged throughout the City. To facilitate the use of bicycles, each business should provide adequate facilities for bicycle parking based on the type of business. Several adjacent businesses may wish to pool their resources and provide shared bicycle facilities. These may be located within the public right-of-way, subject to approval by the City.

## C. Courtyards and Passages

1. **Courtyards encouraged.**

New developments and existing developments that are adding new buildings are encouraged to incorporate plazas, courtyards, and other outdoor pedestrian spaces into their site plans and to establish linkages to other similar spaces on neighboring sites.



2. **Location.** Courtyards should be located to be visible from the street or linked to the street by a clear circulation element such as an open passage or covered arcade.



3. **Courtyard activity.** The edges of courtyards should contain retail shops, restaurants, offices, or other pedestrian-related activities. Blank walls and dead spaces without pedestrian interest should be minimized.



4. **Solar orientation.** The solar orientation of courtyards and other pedestrian spaces will greatly affect their use and should be a prime consideration in their location and in the placement of landscape materials and structural elements. Spaces with south or west exposure should be tempered to provide shade and cooling in the summer and to allow sun to penetrate in the winter.
5. **Courtyard elements.** Characteristics of courtyards that are encouraged:
  - Sculpture or fountain as a focal point.
  - Movable seating and tables.
  - A choice of shaded and sunny areas.
  - Several doors opening onto the courtyard.
  - Variety of texture and color.
  - Covered and uncovered outdoor passages.



## D. Landscaping

Landscaping should be considered an important design element in the overall plan for any new or redeveloped development site. An abundance of trees and other plant materials will help reinforce the small scale, “village” atmosphere envisioned for East Ojai Avenue.

1. **Integrated landscape concept.** Landscaped open spaces should be planned as an integral part of the overall project and not simply located in left-over areas on the site.
2. **Use of landscaping.** Landscaping is encouraged to help define outdoor spaces, emphasize places for pedestrian use, soften the appearance of structures, buffer incompatible uses, and to screen parking, loading, storage, and equipment areas.
3. **Landscape groupings.** Plants should be grouped in combinations requiring common environmental conditions, such as soil type, water, sun, temperature limitation, etc.
4. **Use drought tolerant plants.** Plant materials should be selected for their water conserving qualities and ability to withstand drought conditions. Lush plantings of tropical species are discouraged.
5. **Use uneven spacing.** In order to foster a more natural look, uneven plant spacing is recommended except when plants are being used to create a massed shrub or ground cover bed.
6. **Pedestrian amenities.** The use of pedestrian amenities (e.g., benches, shelters, drinking fountains, lighting, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks) is strongly encouraged. These elements should be provided in conjunction with pedestrian open spaces and should be well integrated into the development’s site plan as primary features, not afterthoughts that are tacked on to artificially dress up a proposal.
7. **Landscape elements.** Structures, such as arbors and trellises can be used to identify entries and other pedestrian use areas. The design of these elements should be consistent with the design of other project structures.
8. **Existing trees.** New development should preserve and protect the existing healthy mature trees which add to the special character aesthetic quality of East Ojai Avenue and the greater Ojai community.



## E. Land Use Buffering

Many of the commercially zoned parcels along East Ojai Avenue, especially on the north side, abut residential uses. Care should be taken to ensure that activities on the commercial sites do not impact residential neighborhoods.

1. **Orientation of uses.** Outdoor activities on a commercial site should be oriented away from adjacent residential uses. Parking lots, refuse storage areas, and similar activities should be physically separated from residential uses by solid masonry walls and landscaping. Outdoor equipment (e.g., air conditioning equipment) and outdoor uses (e.g., trash collection areas) should be located as far away from residential as possible.
2. **Screening.** Screening should be used to buffer and separate incompatible uses from one another for the purpose of decreasing noise, or visual impacts and to provide privacy. The need for screening should be considered early in the design process so that screening elements (i.e., walls, berms, landscaping, etc.) can be effectively integrated into the overall project design and not added later as an afterthought.
3. **Landscaped buffer.** Where a commercial parcel abuts a parcel zoned for residential use, a minimum 6-foot high solid masonry wall should be provided along the adjoining property line. A minimum 5-foot wide landscaped buffer area should be provided adjacent to the wall to screen the wall and provide visual separation between the adjoining uses. Trees should be provided to create a dense visual barrier.
4. **Protect residential privacy.** The design of commercial buildings should take into consideration the placement of second story windows and balconies so that the privacy of adjacent residential uses is not compromised. This may require that special attention be paid to the layout of interior spaces to accommodate the proper placement of windows and balconies to protect the privacy of residential uses.

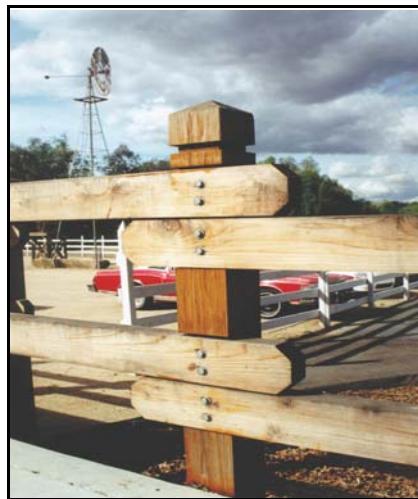


## F. Fences and Walls

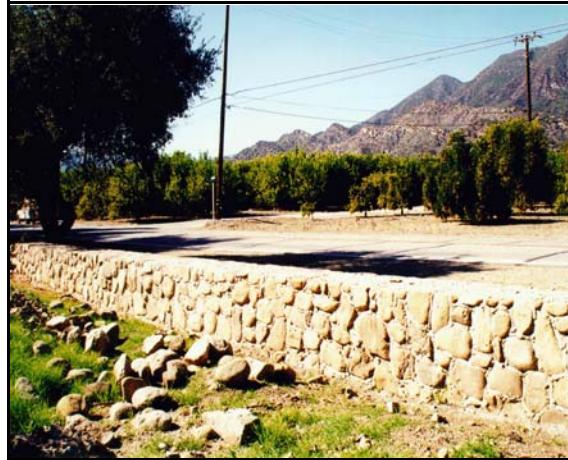
The use of low fences and walls to screen and separate functions, provide decoration, and create areas for landscaping is a unique design feature found throughout the community. Especially noticeable is the use of rock work to create distinctive walls and planters – a tradition that is strongly encouraged along East Ojai Avenue.



1. **Height.** Walls should be kept as low as possible while still performing their intended security or screening functions.
2. **Design compatibility.** Wall materials and colors should be consistent with the architectural theme of the main buildings on the site.



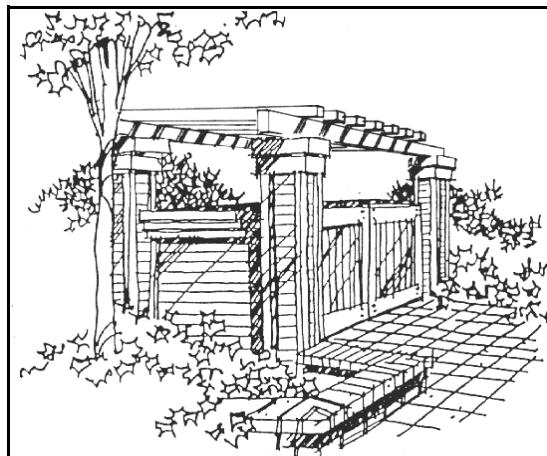
3. **Rock work encouraged.** The incorporation of decorative rock work into the design of walls and planters is strongly encouraged. The use of local fieldstone is recommended as this will provide a link to Ojai's past and existing natural environment. The use of river rock, cast-stone, or other materials that attempt to imitate real stone are strongly discouraged. Grout/mortar should be a natural grey cement color.



## G. Refuse, Storage, and Equipment Areas

1. **Location.** Refuse storage, service, and loading areas should be located out of view from the general public and so that their use does not interfere with parking and circulation.
2. **Refuse storage.** Areas for the storage of refuse containers should be incorporated into the design of the building whenever possible. When this is not possible, such areas should be completely screened with decorative walls and abundant landscaping. Wall materials and colors should be compatible with the architectural theme of the main buildings on the site.

Refuse storage areas that are visible from the upper stories of adjacent structures should have an opaque or semi-opaque horizontal cover/screen to mitigate unsightly views. The covering structure should be compatible with the architectural theme of the site's buildings.



## IV GENERAL ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to apply to all buildings regardless of architectural style. They address the general appearance, scale, and proportion of buildings as they relate to their surroundings. Proportion may be defined as a numerical comparison of parts or as a statement of relative difference between parts. Scale is the relationship to human size.

Design guidelines related to the various recommended architectural styles are provided in the next chapter. Both the “general” architectural design guidelines in this chapter and the architectural “style” design guidelines in the next chapter need to be considered in conjunction with one another when a particular project is being designed.

### A. Mass and Scale

Mass and scale are important design considerations in Ojai because of the City’s noted “small-town character.” The preservation and enhancement of this character should be a primary consideration of any development proposal. Projects that are out of scale with their surroundings are strongly discouraged.

1. **Designing in context.** Project proponents should demonstrate evidence in their designs that they have studied the predominant scale and proportions of buildings along the East Ojai Avenue corridor. Elevation sketches, photographic montages, and other graphic studies are required. The Community Development Director may also require that elevations and/or photographs of adjacent buildings be included with the project’s elevations where it is determined that this would assist the Planning Commission in their determination.
2. **Pedestrian scale.** The scale of building elements, especially at the ground floor level should be kept intimate and close to human scale using relatively small parts and accents.
3. **Large buildings.** Larger buildings should be designed to appear as a collection of smaller buildings connected by arcades, paths, gardens, and courtyards. Buildings should be organized into increments of not less than 25 feet and not more than 50 feet in width.





4. **Avoid large flat walls.** Large undifferentiated wall planes are strongly discouraged. Buildings should be designed to avoid a “box-like” appearance. Significant horizontal and vertical wall articulation is required in order to reduce the apparent mass of a building. This should be expressed through variation of the roof eaveline or roof structure, changes in the wall plane, recessed windows and entries, awnings, full roofs with overhangs, second floor setbacks, covered arcades, and similar elements consistent with the architectural theme of the building.



5. **Architectural elements.** Architectural elements such as roof forms, pilasters, columns, balconies, window details, and building facade articulation should be effectively used to maintain a “small-town character.” Architectural design elements should be incorporated on all building facades, not just the main entry facade.



6. **Building height.** The use of large false parapets and high ceilings to make buildings look over scaled should be avoided unless deemed essential to the building’s architectural design. These elements and others detract from a building’s ability to achieve an appropriate relation to the pedestrian scale desired.

## B. Proportion

1. **Horizontal emphasis.** Building proportions with horizontal emphasis are desired over more vertical proportions that exaggerate building height.
2. **Solid to void proportion.** The proportion of solid (wall) to void (doors, windows) should be approximately 60 percent solid to 40 percent void for walls abutting pedestrian activity areas (e.g., sidewalks, courtyards, etc.). In nonpedestrian areas, a higher proportion of wall is acceptable provided that large flat walls are avoided through appropriate articulation techniques.



3. **Thickness of walls.** The thickness of walls should be revealed at door and window openings, and depending on the architectural style of the building, in archways and arcades.



### C. Design Consistency

1. **Historic influence.** Building designs that draw from Ojai's history establishes a sense of timelessness and helps relate buildings to one another in scale and proportion. "Canned" or trademark building designs and urban contemporary design themes are out of context with this approach and are not acceptable.

2. **360° architecture.** Building designs should demonstrate a compatible use of colors, materials, and detailing throughout all elevations of the building. Elevations that do not directly face a street should not be ignored or receive only minimal architectural treatment. Full, "360-degree" architectural treatment should be provided on all building facades open to public view, whether the view is from a parking lot at the rear of the building or the public street in front of the building.

3. **Avoid gimmicks.** Architectural gimmicks should be avoided. The designer should avoid the use of visual contrast from neighboring structures as an advertising tool or attention-getter.



## D. Rooflines

1. **Full-pitched roofs encouraged.** The design of a structure's roof strongly influences its image as a quality, permanent structure. Structures with full-pitched roofs project a more small-town image and reinforce the desired pedestrian orientation for East Ojai Avenue. Structures with flat roofs and parapets tend to appear unfinished and less permanent in their structure (with the possible exception of the Mission Revival Style). Therefore, the use of full-pitched roofs, or the appearance of full roofs is strongly encouraged.



2. **Flat roofs.** When flat roofs are used, there should be a screening parapet topped with a decorative coping, cornice, or, if determined appropriate to the building's style, a modified mansard. Mansards should maintain roof pitches that are both high and deep enough to create the illusion of being a true roof. Small, steeply-pitched mansard roofs that appear "stuck-on" are strongly discouraged.
3. **Roof-mounted equipment.** Roof equipment should be completely screened to a height equal to or higher than the height of the equipment. Screening elements should be an integral part of the roof design and should not appear as a "tacked-on" afterthought. For flat roofs, a screen enclosure behind the parapet wall may be used if it is constructed to appear as an integral part of the structure's design. Ground and interior-mounted mechanical equipment (with appropriate wall or landscape screening) is encouraged as an alternative to roof-mounted equipment.

## E. Building Remodeling and Additions

1. **Maintain harmonious relationship.** The remodeling of an existing structure or an addition should follow the general scale, proportion, massing, and detailing of the original structure. It should be harmonious with the existing structure, not a stark contrast.

2. **Incorporate similar details.** A new addition should be an interpretation of the existing building wherein the main characteristics and details of the existing structure are incorporated. This may include: the extension of architectural lines from the existing structure to the addition; repetition of roof forms and roof pitches; repetition of bay, window, and entrance spacing; use of harmonizing colors and materials; and the inclusion of similar architectural details (i.e., window/door trim, lighting fixtures, tile/brick decoration, etc.) An exception to this guideline may be applied when the existing building lacks any redeeming qualities or the entire building is proposed to be remodeled.
3. **Architectural style.** Buildings that are being remodeled should follow the guidelines in the following section for architectural theme.
4. **Service station canopies.** When service stations are converted to other uses, it is often the desire of the developer to retain the existing pump island canopy and incorporate it into the new design. When this occurs, great care must be taken to ensure that the existing canopy relates well in terms of design, scale, and use of materials with adjacent buildings. In order to blend effectively with the small town character and pedestrian scale of East Ojai Avenue, canopies may be required to be lowered and/or redesigned with the use of pitched roofs and appropriate materials to reduce their overall scale and be compatible with adjacent buildings.

## **V. ARCHITECTURAL THEME**

### **A. Background**

The architectural character of existing commercial buildings along East Ojai Avenue is derived from a variety of early western/agrarian wood structures and more contemporary stucco derivations of earlier Spanish styles. In recent times, many of the older western board-and-batten buildings have been “remodeled” to modernize the appearance and function of the building. The architectural style that has been encouraged the strongest is Mission Revival - a reflection of the style established for the Downtown by the post office, storefront arcade, and Pergola.

As input to the preparation of this design guidelines manual, a community workshop was held wherein participants expressed a strong desire to broaden the spectrum of encouraged architectural styles and to create a more “eclectic” mixture of building styles. Workshop participants took part in an exercise where they viewed approximately 80 photographic images of buildings with different architectural styles and scale and then voted for their preferences. While buildings with a “Spanish” influence were the most popular, the results of the survey clearly indicated preferences for a western theme and Craftsman style. The results of the survey also showed a strong preference for small scale buildings with a pedestrian orientation. Following the visual survey exercise, workshop participants discussed their feelings about the various images and provided valuable comments regarding their vision for the future



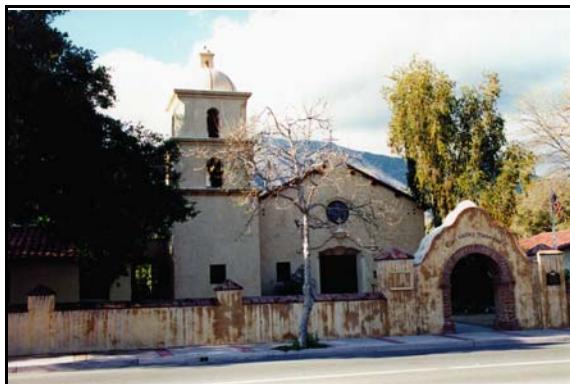
of East Ojai Avenue. The results of the visual survey exercise and follow-up comments can be summarized as follows:

- Maintain small, pedestrian scale.
- Orient buildings to the sidewalk, not parking lots.
- Provide open space and landscaping.
- Create interesting buildings with different architectural styles – eclectic mixture.
- Respect Ojai's historic architectural styles.

## B. Architectural Style

Cities develop over long periods of time and are a reflection of the many attitudes and fads that come and go throughout their history. The variety of architectural styles that develop as a result of this evolution creates an eclectic and interesting town character that changes over time as new buildings are constructed and older ones are remodeled or demolished.

East Ojai Avenue contains a variety of architectural styles, each of which contribute to the area's unique character. No single architectural style predominates. This is a direction that is expected to continue.



This is not to say, however, that anything goes. All new projects, including remodels must respect the context of their surroundings in terms of scale, orientation, architectural style, use of materials, etc. There should not be any jarring inconsistencies of style between adjacent buildings, and between new buildings and the overall character of the surrounding environment. On the other hand, the architectural image of the area as a whole should not become so generic as to be sterile and uninteresting.

The previous chapter presented guidelines addressing such factors as building scale, proportion, orientation, wall articulation, etc. These are common issues that must be considered regardless of the architectural style of a particular building. This chapter addresses the character of a building as presented through its architectural style.

There are five architectural styles that are appropriate for East Ojai Avenue; Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Monterey, Craftsman, and Western (board and batten). Each style and the characteristics common to each are the subject of this chapter and are discussed in detail in the following pages.

### **C. Which Style is Appropriate?**

Which architectural style to choose is a matter of individual choice, keeping in mind the desire of the community to maintain and strengthen its eclectic image and to avoid generic, uninteresting buildings. To accomplish this, keep the following in mind:

- Consider whether or not it is appropriate to place buildings of the same style immediately adjacent to one another. Does the continuity of styles create a particularly strong statement, such as a grouping of buildings around a shared courtyard or other pedestrian-oriented space, or does it create a feeling of confusion and discontinuity.
- Consider the use of the building. For example, office buildings and hotels can appropriately use the Monterey style because of its opportunities to accommodate exterior circulation and balconies.
- Consider the size of the building. Larger buildings are more likely to be able to take advantage of the scale and proportion options available with the Mission Revival or Monterey styles.

### **D. Attention to Detail**

It should be noted that while the architectural styles discussed on the following pages are more commonly associated with residential structures, their adaptation to commercial and office uses should respect the basic design principles associated with each style.



In adapting these styles to commercial buildings, it is acceptable to adopt the proportions of typical storefronts in terms of window and door size and spacing. It is not acceptable, however, to replace principle design features such as a hip roof with a flat roof.

The exclusion of important character-defining elements, or the lack of attention to detail is not an acceptable design response based solely on the premise that commercial buildings are more “utilitarian” than residential buildings and therefore do not require the same level of design detail. Fine, hand-crafted details are strongly encouraged.

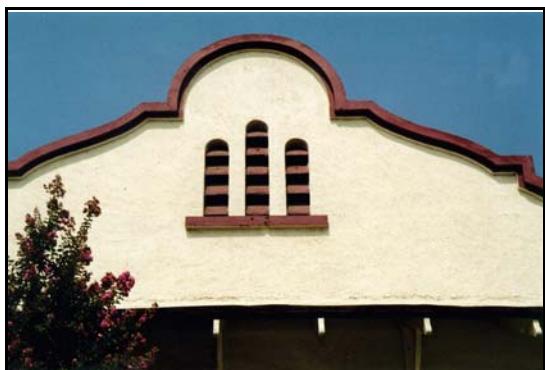
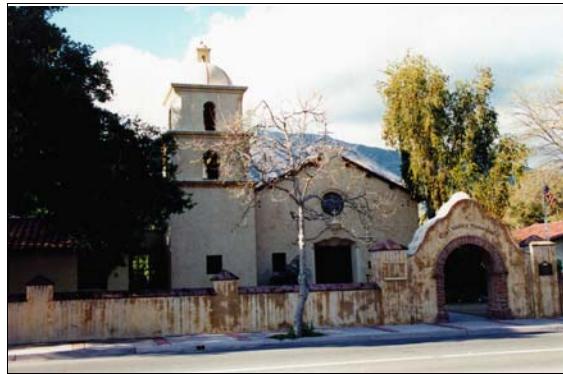
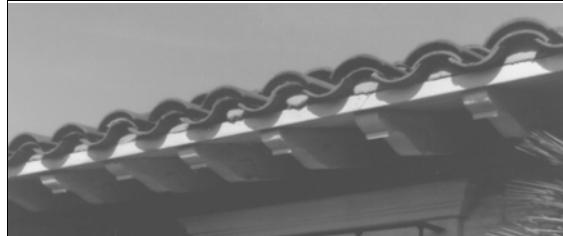
## **E. Mission Revival**

As the name implies, the Mission style finds its roots in the architecture of the California missions. In the late 1800s, several innovative California architects began to advocate the Mission style in a response to other “revivalist” movements taking place then on the east coast. They chose as their inspiration local Hispanic design elements and adapted these elements to adorn traditional building shapes whether residential or nonresidential. The Mission style found great impetus when the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads adopted the style for their stations.

### **Character-defining features.**

- Parapets with coping fashioned after the California missions.
- Full pitched roofs over most of the building. Simple low pitch hip or gable roofs are preferred. Shed roofs may be appropriate when attached to taller walls. Minor portions of the roof may be flat.
- Symmetrical facades are most common but asymmetrical designs are also acceptable.
- Clay tiled roofs using two-piece tile of consistent color. “S” type tile and multi-colored tile are prohibited.
- Simple box-like massing with the appearance of thick walls. Windows and doors are recessed to expose thickness of walls.
- Arched doors and windows with semicircular shapes preferred. Large windows are multi-paned.
- Arcades used to define courtyards and walkways.
- Smooth plaster/stucco walls with hand-troweled finish.
- Exposed timber structural elements for beams, rafter tails, and corbels. Color is dark stain.
- Simple wrought iron grillework railings, window grilles, and decoration.
- Quatrefoil windows on primary facade.
- Tile accents used around door and window openings, built in seating, paving, and general decoration.
- Building colors are white, off-white, or earth tone with contrasting door and window trim colors.
- Larger structures may incorporate Mission-like bell towers.





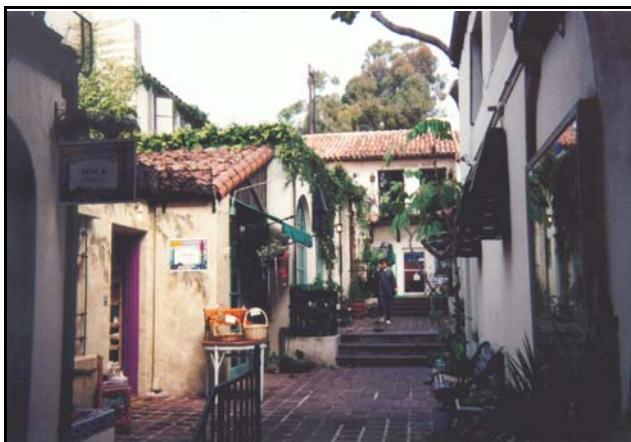
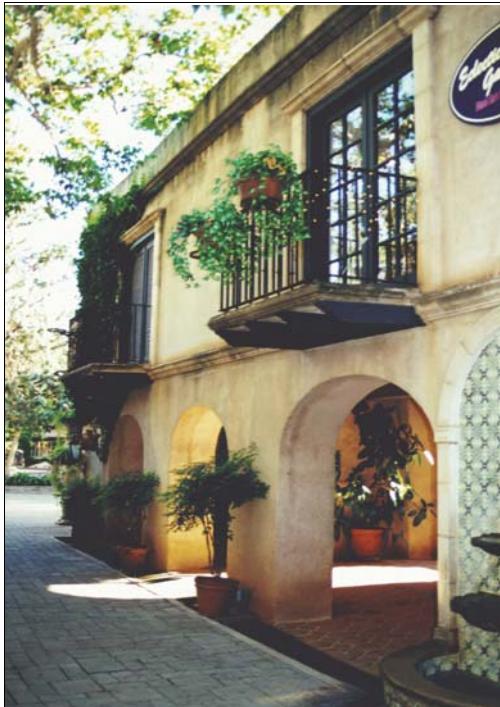
## F. Spanish Colonial Revival

The Spanish colonial Revival style borrows from the full range of Spanish architecture. Beginnings of the style derive primarily from the Panama-California Exposition of 1915. Until that time, Mission-style architecture was more popular. The exposition showcased the richness of Spanish and Latin American architecture and trendsetting architects of the time found new inspiration in this style during the 1920s and 1930s.

### Character-defining features

- Simple low pitched roofs are preferred. Shed roofs may be appropriate when attached to taller walls. Minor portions of the roof may be flat.
- Asymmetrical facades are most common.
- Multi-level clay tiled roofs using two-piece tile of consistent color. “S” type tile and multi-colored tile are prohibited.
- Eaves with little or no overhang.
- Simple box-like massing with the appearance of thick walls. Windows and doors are recessed to expose thickness of walls.
- Large windows are multi-paned.
- Arcades used to define courtyards and walkways.
- Smooth plaster/stucco walls with hand-troweled finish.
- Decorative masonry or tile vents.
- Exposed timber structural elements for beams, rafter tails, and corbels. Color is dark stain.
- Simple wrought iron grillework railings, window grilles, and decoration.
- Tile accents used around door and window openings, built in seating, paving, stairs, and general decoration.
- Building colors are white, off-white, or earth tone with contrasting door and window trim colors.
- Larger structures may incorporate round or square towers.





## G. Monterey

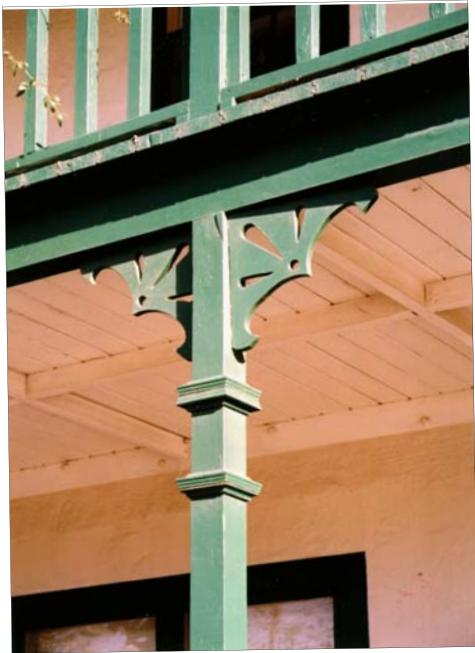
The Monterey style is essentially a two-story adaptation of early Spanish Colonial styles. As trade opened up the west coast, Anglo immigrants arrived in the territory with their own building traditions. As these were superimposed on the traditional adobe construction, the two-story versions came to be called Monterey style after the colonial capital of California. A revival of the style from 1925 to 1940 favored Spanish detailing while versions from the 1940s and 1950s emphasize English Colonial details. In Ojai, Spanish details are preferred.

Because this style is always two-story and therefore may be larger in scale than adjacent buildings, the Monterey style should be used carefully and with appropriate consideration to the style and scale of surrounding buildings.

### Character-defining features

- Low pitched gabled roofs.
- Second-story balcony, usually cantilevered and covered by main roof.
- Clay tiled roofs.
- Simple box-like massing with the appearance of thick walls. Windows and doors are recessed to expose thickness of walls.
- Large windows are multi-paned.
- Arcades used to define courtyards and walkways.
- Smooth plaster/stucco walls with hand-troweled finish.
- Exposed timber structural elements for beams, rafter tails, and corbels. Color is dark stain.
- Wood grillework, railings, window grilles, and decoration.
- Staircases are fully enclosed.
- Building colors are white or off-white with contrasting door and window trim colors.





## H. Craftsman

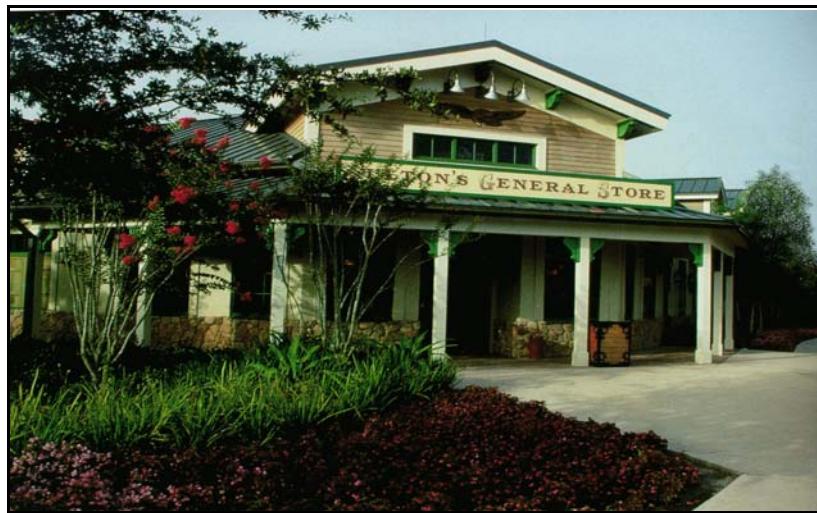
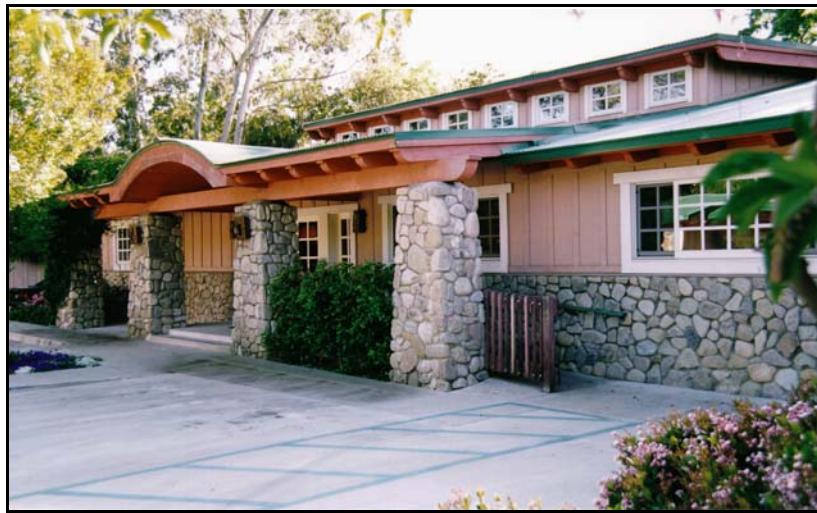
The Craftsman style was inspired by the work of the Greene brothers who practiced architecture in Pasadena from 1893 to 1914. The Craftsman style represented a philosophy of life which featured honesty, integrity, and a return to nature. Natural woods, shingles, earth colors, brick, stone, river rock, and heavy wooden beams signified a oneness with nature. The rocks and bricks were often used on foundations, chimneys, foundations, and railings to set a unifying theme. Oriental, Tudor, and Swiss-influenced elements lent variety to the style.

Since the Craftsman style is predominantly residential in character, its use for commercial buildings should be approached cautiously. This style is most appropriate for buildings that do not require large commercial display windows. Restaurants and office buildings are two examples.

### **Character-defining features**

- Low-pitched gable roof.
- Clapboard or shingle siding.
- Exposed timber structural elements, rafter tails, brackets, corbels.
- Large open porches with columns.
- Square or tapered columns.
- Overhanging eaves with exposed rafters.
- Projecting brackets/beams.
- Large front window(s) usually in three parts.
- Front door with sidelights.
- Doors and windows outlined with heavy wood molding.
- Colors are typically medium to dark earth tones.





## I. Western

The Western “false front” style derives primarily from the boom years of the late 1800s when towns sprang up overnight in a rush to keep pace with the ever-rapid push westward. In their most modest form, these simple wood-framed buildings seem temporary in nature – erected overnight to meet the urgent demands for new commercial space. In more prominent towns or where more money and time were available, the buildings might be adorned with wood detailing typical of the Victorian style architecture that was popular at the time for residential buildings. As towns became more established, new buildings constructed of brick replaced the earlier wood-framed structures.

### Character-defining elements

- Simple rectangular shapes arranged symmetrically
- Gable roofs with wood shingles (or similar appearance) or standing seam metal
- False front main facade over street-facing gable
- Porches at ground level, with balconies above for two-story buildings
- Elongated, multi-paned windows
- Wood trim around doors and windows
- Wooden decoration and detailing from the Victorian era including ornamental balconies and brackets
- Board and batten siding on the more simple buildings and clapboard siding on the more elaborate ones
- Colors are earthtones or light pastel in the Victorian tradition



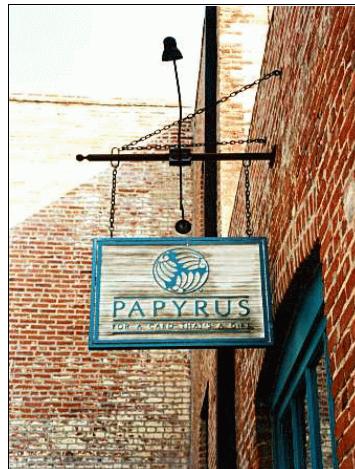
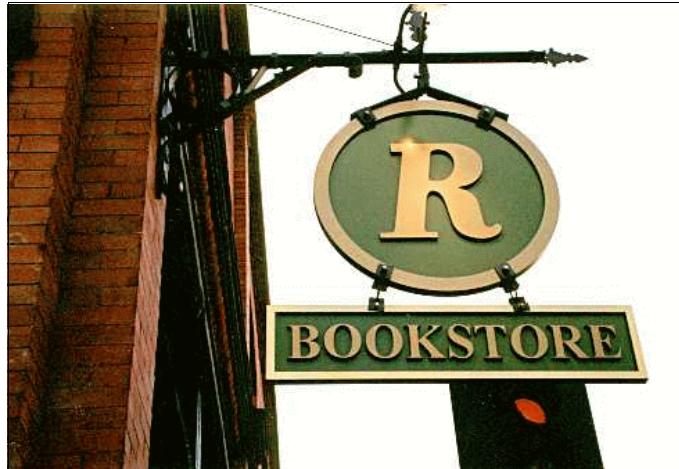


## VI SIGN GUIDELINES

The following sign design guidelines should be considered prior to developing signs for any project. The design guidelines complement other requirements for signs found in the City of Ojai Sign Ordinance. The Sign Ordinance provides standards for signs related to size, height, number, location, etc.

### A. Design

1. The scale of signs should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed and proportionate to the area in which they are located.
2. Signs should be constructed to give an appearance of hand craftsmanship. Three-dimensional hand carved and hand painted signs are strongly encouraged. Flat plywood signs and plastic signs are strongly discouraged.



3. Signs should not obscure a building's architectural features. A well-designed building facade or storefront is created by the careful coordination of sign and architectural design and over-all color scheme.
4. Wall signs should be placed to establish facade rhythm, scale, and proportion.

5. Pedestrian-oriented signs are strongly encouraged. Pedestrian-oriented signs are signs that are designed for and directed toward pedestrians so that they can easily and comfortably read the sign as they stand adjacent to the business.



## B. Color

1. Color is one of the most important aspects of visual communication — it can be used to catch the eye or to communicate ideas or feelings. Colors should be selected to contribute to legibility and design integrity. Even the most carefully thought out sign may be unattractive and a poor communicator because of poor color selection. Too many colors used thoughtlessly and bright colors intended to attract attention can confuse and negate the message of a sign.
2. Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs. A substantial contrast should be provided between the color and material of the background and the letters or symbols to make the sign easier to read in both day and night. Light letters on a dark background are the most legible, especially at night.
3. Colors or color combinations that interfere with legibility of the sign copy or that interfere with viewer identification of other signs should be avoided.
4. Sign colors should complement the colors used on the buildings.

## C. Sign Legibility

An effective sign does more than attract attention, it communicates a message. Usually, this is a question of the readability of words and phrases. The most significant influence on legibility is lettering. The following criteria should be considered in the design of signs.



1. The number of lettering styles should be limited in order to increase legibility. A general rule to follow is to limit the number of different letter types to no more than two for small signs and three for larger signs. Intricate typefaces and symbols that are difficult to read reduce the sign's ability to communicate.
2. A brief message should be used. The fewer the words, the more effective the sign. A sign with a brief, succinct message is easier to read and looks more attractive. Evaluate each word. If the word does not contribute directly to the basic message of the sign, it detracts from it and probably should be deleted.
3. Letters and words should not be spaced too close together. Crowding of letters, words or lines will make any sign more difficult to read. Conversely, over-spacing these elements causes the viewer to read each item individually, again obscuring the message. As a general rule, letters should not occupy more than 75 percent of sign panel area.
4. The use of symbols and logos used in place of words is strongly encouraged. Pictographic images will usually register more quickly in the viewer's mind than a written message.

#### **D. Sign Size**

1. The East Ojai Avenue area is envisioned to be an area of high pedestrian activity. Signs should be oriented toward pedestrians and should be of a pedestrian scale.
2. A pedestrian-oriented sign is usually read from a distance of fifteen to twenty feet; a vehicle-oriented sign is viewed from a much greater distance. The closer a sign's viewing distance, the smaller the sign should be. The following table provides a guideline for lettering size based on the distance between the sign and the intended reader.

<b>Pedestrian-oriented signs: Lettering size</b>	
<b>Minimum Letter Size (in.)</b>	<b>Intended Reading Distance (ft.)</b>
1.0	10
1.5	20
2.0	30
2.5	40
3.0	50



## **E      Sign Illumination**

The way in which a sign is to be illuminated should be considered carefully. Like color, illumination has considerable value for visual communication. Imaginative and innovative lighting techniques for signs are encouraged.

1. Use illumination only if necessary. Consider if the sign needs to be lighted at all. Lights in the window display may be sufficient to identify the business. This is particularly true if good window graphics are used.
2. A sign that is illuminated by a direct source of light (e.g., spotlight) is usually the best arrangement because the sign will appear to be better integrated with the building's architecture. Light fixtures supported in front of the structure cast light on the sign and generally a portion of the face of the structure as well. Internally illuminated signs are prohibited.
3. Whenever direct lighting fixtures are used (fluorescent or incandescent), care should be taken to properly shield the light source to prevent glare from spilling over into residential areas. Signs should be lighted only to the minimum level required for nighttime readability.
4. The use of back-lighted, solid letter signs is encouraged. Signs consisting of opaque individually cut letters mounted directly on a structure can often use a distinctive element of the structure's facade as a backdrop, thereby providing a better integration of the sign with the structure.



## VII LIGHTING GUIDELINES

- A. **Project feature.** Lighting should be a well thought out feature of the project, not only for security reasons, but also for the nighttime ambiance that good lighting can create.
- B. **Compatibility.** Lighting fixtures should be compatible with the architectural style and scale of the project.
- C. **Lighting accent.** Lighting should be used to accent building details (e.g., parapets, cupolas, towers, etc.), provide shadow lines, and create visual interest. The uplighting of trees and the use of Tivoli lights in trees is encouraged.
- D. **Parking lots.** Parking lots and other large areas should be illuminated using a greater number of short pole-mounted fixtures rather than a fewer number of tall fixtures that are more obvious and may allow light to spill over into areas where it is not desired (e.g., residential areas).
- E. **Pedestrian lighting.** Pathways should be well lighted with pedestrian scale fixtures that are compatible with the style of the building.
- F. **Avoid light spill/glare.** Lights should be directed and shielded to avoid the intrusion of light spill and glare onto adjacent property or into the eyes of motorists. Light sources above 10 feet in height should incorporate cut-off shields to prevent light spill.
- G. **Preserve Ojai's dark sky.** In order to enhance the rural character of Ojai and the Ojai Valley, it is important to maintain a dark sky at night. Light sources should be shielded so that light is not emitted into the dark sky.



## VIII STREETSCAPE

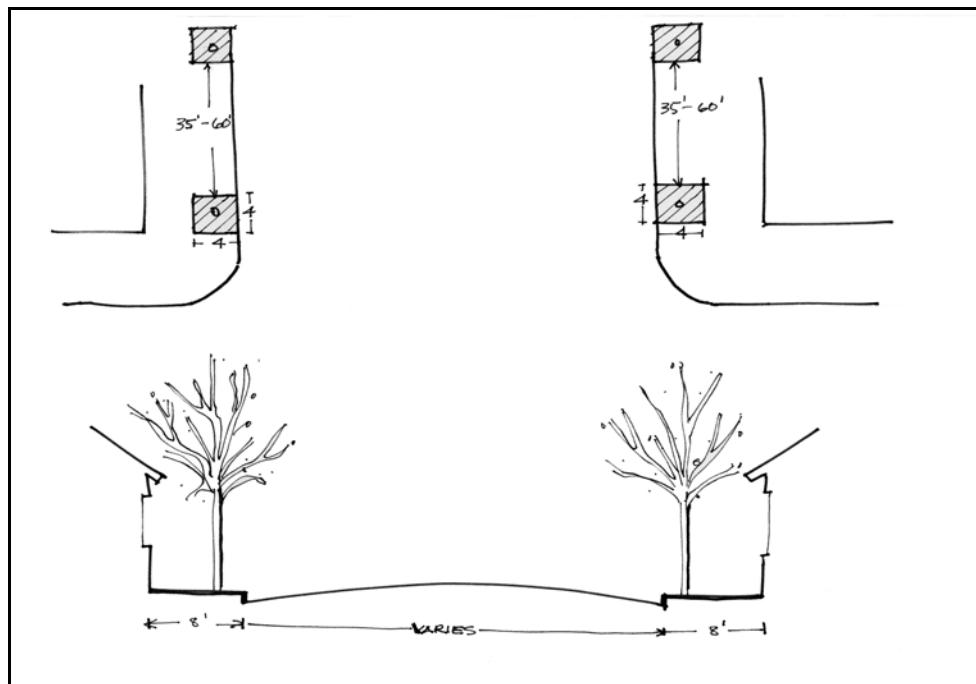
### A. General

The image of the “streetscape” is derived from the various physical elements positioned within and adjacent to the public right-of-way. This includes buildings and landscaping on private property as well as elements placed within the public right-of-way. For purposes of this chapter, however, we are concerned only with elements in the public right-of-way. These elements include landscaping (street trees), furniture (benches, trash receptacles, bicycle racks), and hardware (lighting, paving, signs). Together these elements help give the street its scale, form, organization, identity, and vitality. Elements of the streetscape within the public right-of-way are as important as the buildings and landscaping that enclose the street and define its space.

This chapter provides recommendations for the improvement of East Ojai Avenue’s public streetscape image, including pedestrian circulation improvements, street trees, street furniture, and lighting.

### B. Street Cross Section

A consistent street cross section for East Ojai Avenue is a goal of the City. At present, various right-of-way widths exist, and sidewalks and street trees are not continuous or consistent. As development along the Avenue continues to occur it will be important to have a comprehensive plan in place to guide future improvements in a consistent manner. The diagrams below establish a framework for such improvements.



Typical Street Cross Section and Tree Location



## C. Public Street Trees

The use of street trees planted within the public right-of-way, and adjacent to the right-of-way on private property, can serve as a valuable unifying element in an area that is otherwise very eclectic in its overall character. As new development occurs, street trees should be required to be planted within the public right-of-way. Landscaping provided on private property should be coordinated with street tree plantings in order to help unify the public and private realms and provide a consistent design element for East Ojai Avenue.

To help achieve the unifying effect of a coordinated tree palette for public and private property, two types of trees are differentiated as follows:

**Primary Trees:** These are used as street trees within the public right-of-way and as major trees in the context of private development. Primary trees include:

- London Plane Tree / *Platanus Acerfolia*
- Valley Oak / *Quercus Lobata*
- Coast Live Oak / *Quercus Agrifolia*

**Secondary Trees:** These function as accent trees, providing a different size, profile, and color from the primary trees. Secondary trees include:

- Crape Myrtle / *Lagerstroemia Indica*
- Chinese Pistache / *Pistache Chinensis*

Street trees in the public right-of-way should be planted in a consistent pattern 35 feet to 60 feet on center, depending on the individual site and tree species. Trees should not be planted closer than ten feet from any driveway or 15 feet from utility and light poles. Trees should be 24-inch box size minimum and should be staked per City standards.

## D. Street Furniture

Street furniture elements help define public use and function for outdoor spaces and public streets beyond their traffic function. Street furniture enhances and adds to the image of the public space. This furniture includes the small-scaled elements that we constantly see and use, such as drinking fountains, planters, benches, trash containers, and a variety of other elements. Larger scale elements, such as bus stop structures, trellis features, and fountains also act as street furniture. The design, selection, and placement of street furniture should add to the overall continuity of outdoor spaces.



A traditional style of street furniture (as opposed to a contemporary style) is recommended for East Ojai Avenue. This will enhance the rural, eclectic image desired for the area. The style should be selected to compliment the project's architecture. The colors and materials of the street furniture should be vandal resistant, durable, repairable, and complementary in terms of colors, materials, and textures. The provision of low quality, nondurable, nonrepairable plastic furniture and planters is not allowed.

The following are appropriate elements of street furniture. Others may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Benches
- Tables and chairs
- Bicycle racks
- Bollards
- Clocks
- Drinking fountains
- Fountains
- News racks
- Pedestrian lighting
- Planters
- Refuse receptacles
- Street trees and landscaping
- Tree grates and guards





## **F. Street Lighting**

There should be a differentiation of lighting patterns to accent pedestrian and vehicular circulation along the Avenue. Lighting should be designed to create pools of light rather than a harsh overall ambient wash. An overall wash of the street results in a dull and featureless streetscape with no distinction between pedestrian and auto uses.

The City has completed the installation of decorative streetlights along Ojai Avenue in the Town Center District. Ultimately, these fixtures should be continued along East Ojai Avenue from Montgomery Street to Gridley Street. This would act as a unifying element for the pedestrian oriented commercial areas of the City and visually extend the main commercial area eastward. It would provide a signal to pedestrians in the Plaza District that there are additional commercial areas to explore to the east.

Spacing of street lights should be approximately 40 feet depending on the specific fixtures used. Distances of 60 feet and greater require brighter lights and could result in increased glare and harsh lighting affects.

## **G. Works of Art**

Works of art and art integrated with architectural elements that are part of the public realm, including locations on private property, create interest and add aesthetic value to the overall environment. The placement of sculptural elements, murals, decorative tile work, fountains, and similar items within areas planned for public access is encouraged. Approval of such items will be on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the City's Municipal Code for architectural review. Works of public art must obtain approval from the City's Arts Commission and/or City Council as appropriate.

