CHAPTER 3

RESIDENTIAL

Residential development in Mesa should elevate the quality of existing neighborhoods, while creating walkable and resilient communities that will stand the test of time. New developments should present residents with a diverse set of choices including materials, access options, colors, architectural styles, and scales. Streetscapes, parks, parking, and community access should all accent the neighborhood through both function and design. The creation of a healthy, and safe community should be at the forefront of each design.

Applicability: These standards and guidelines are intended to promote quality design and cohesive neighborhoods for a wide variety of single residence (detached and attached) and multiple residence developments. These guidelines do not apply to properties in Planned Community District with an approved Community Plan unless specifically authorized within the Community Plan.

SINGLE RESIDENCE

Single Residence (RS and RSL) lots consist of detached and attached housing. Single residence development can consist of a variety of densities, lot configurations, home sizes, and architectural styles. When combined with parks, schools and commercial areas, single residences form the various neighborhoods that constitute the greatest land use component within the city.

A. SITE DESIGN

The standards and guidelines herein are intended to assist in the appropriate siting of homes in all residential areas of the City. Residential site design should contribute to a strong sense of place, a desirable streetscape appearance, walkable neighborhoods, and convenient access to parks, commercial areas and community facilities.

1. Neighborhood Character

a. Provide a sense of neighborhood arrival where entry streets intersect arterial or major collector streets, which should include such elements as monument signs, special landscaping, specialty pavement, enhanced fence and wall details, architectural tower or arch features, water features utilizing reclaimed water, boulevard medians, etc.

b. Provide distinctive project themes consistently throughout the development, which may include examples such as specialized fencing, accent wall details, light fixtures, plant palette, tree-lined boulevards with detached sidewalks, bollards, water features, signage, address labels, ornamental artwork, etc.

c. Provide view fencing along arterial and collector streets that provides views into the subdivision and creates relief from solid walls. View fencing is desirable along open spaces, not along residential private space areas, such as backyards and sideyards.

d. Projects should incorporate open spaces and pedestrian amenities that are centrally located, functional for a variety of uses, and aesthetically pleasing.

e. Common open space shall be incorporated into the site plan as a primary design feature and not just as remnant pieces of land used as open space. Use project amenities to animate the local street system by placing along street frontage and at corners. Amenities should not be placed in remote, hard to see locations.

f. Residential development adjacent to designated open space areas should maintain visual access to the open space from residential units, common buildings, and/or streets (buildings should not back up to open space areas creating areas hidden from public view).

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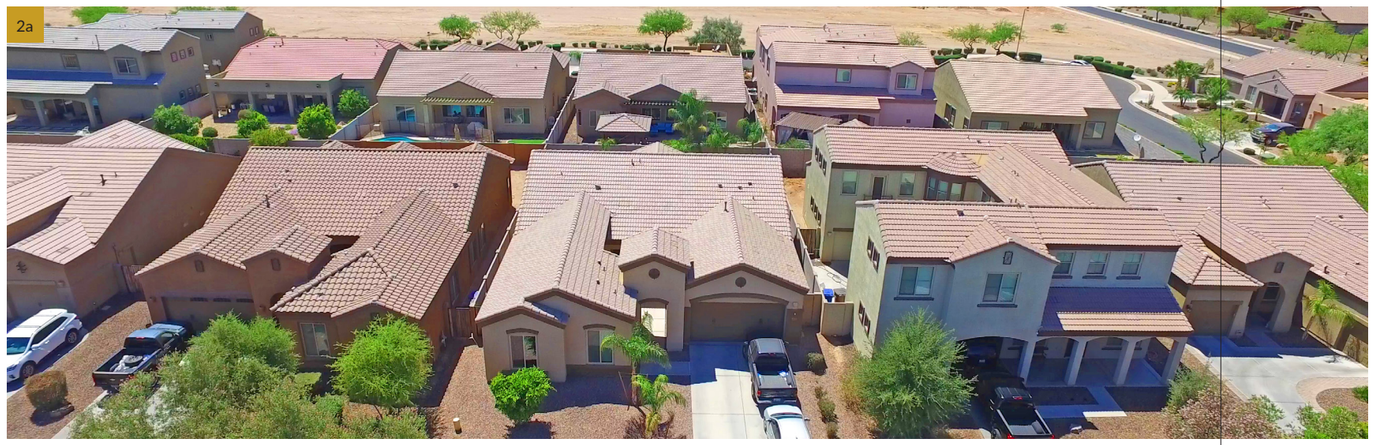

2. Building Placement and Orientation

Developments are encouraged to enhance streetscape interest through variation in the front and side setbacks of homes. Create visual interest by staggering the placement of homes and structures such as covered porches, trellises, arbors, etc.

a. Relate side yard setbacks to the massing of the residence to protect privacy and prevent a canyon effect between dwelling units.

b. Corner lots should address both the primary street and the secondary side street. This may be achieved, but is not limited to, the application of a corner entrance, wrap around porches on both streets, or enhanced architectural details and materials on each facade.

c. Consider the orientation of buildings and/or lots to mitigate solar exposure.

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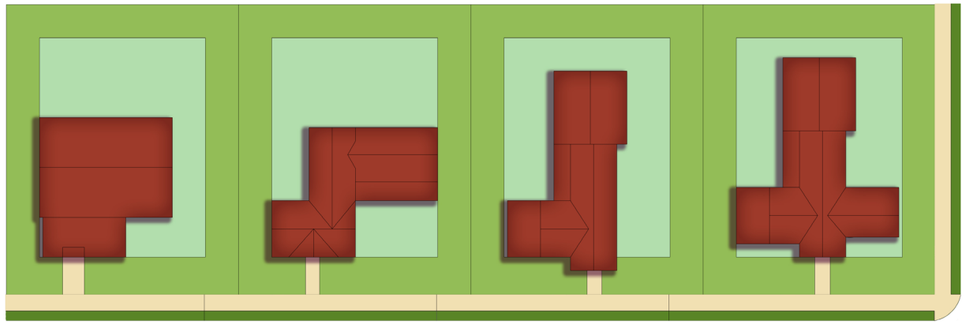

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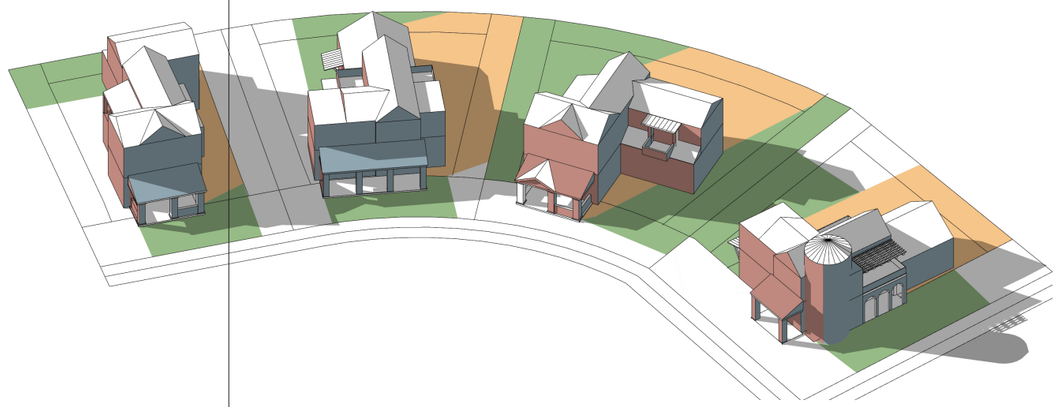

B. ARCHTECTURAL DESIGN

The architectural style of a residential development creates the identity for the project when combined with other identity/amenity features. Residential development contributes to the character of the entire community. The intent of the following design guidelines is not to require a specific architectural style, but rather to establish a minimum set of parameters to ensure quality architectural design. Residential development should establish a style that is carried throughout the project mass and form, features, and finishes.

1. Garage Placement and Orientation

Garages should not be the first thing that you notice upon entering a residential subdivision. By placing the garages subordinate to the living area, a better streetscape is developed. Pedestrians will also feel a sense of belonging by having the living areas of the home closer to the street.

a. A variety of garage placements should be offered on the same block in order to de-emphasize garage doors and avoid garages from dominating the streetscape and the front of the house. Utilizing a combination of attached or detached garages that are recessed, side entry, or placed at the rear of the home, is encouraged.

b. When oriented as a side entry garage, the front façade should be made to appear as a livable portion of the home through the use of windows and other architectural detailing.

c. Front-facing garage doors should be recessed behind the front elevation of the house whenever possible.

d. Within multiple lot developments, a variety of garage door styles should be applied to individual homes to create a more visually interesting street frontage. Garage doors should be articulated with windows, paneling, detailing and/or utilize high-quality materials or finishes that complement the architecture of the building.

e. Provide one and a half or two-story massing so that the garage is a smaller part of the overall front façade of the home.

f. Driveway paving material comprised of pavers; stamped, colored or textured concrete or asphalt are encouraged.

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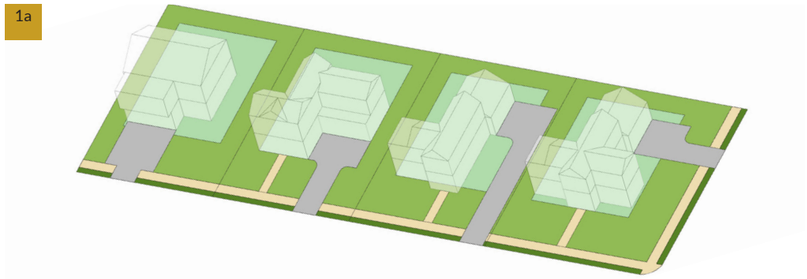

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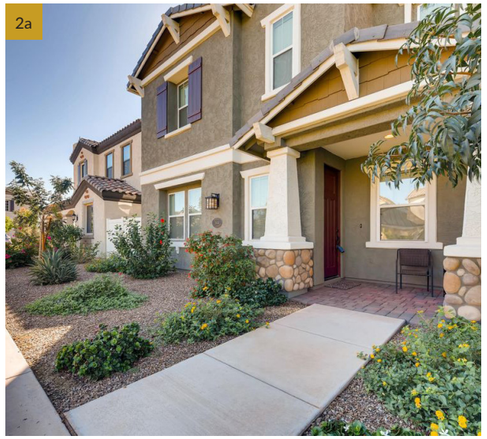

2. Primary Entries

Beyond their functional purpose, primary entries should provide a defined transition between the public and private realm. They should convey a sense of privacy while expressing a welcome entryway for those who approach. The design of the entry should respond to the level of activity along the street.

a. Primary entrances should occur along the front façade, but the door does not necessarily need to face the street.

b. Entrances should be prominently indicated with a first-story massing change or design element such as a porch, awning, portico, or recess.

c. A protruding entrance feature that is not enclosed on the ground floor may be a fully enclosed room on the upper level and still extend into the front setback in accordance with the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

d. All homes must provide a clearly defined paved walkway from a primary entrance to the abutting primary street or driveway. Walkways paved with stone; pavers; or stamped or textured concrete are encouraged.

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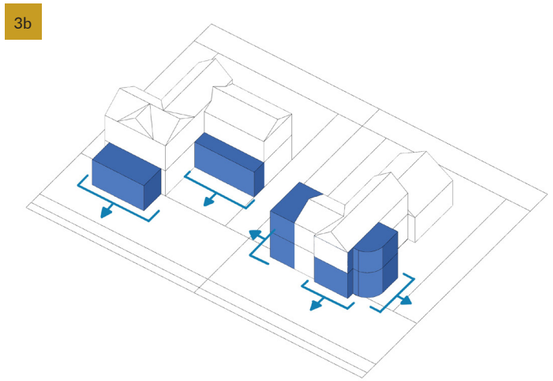

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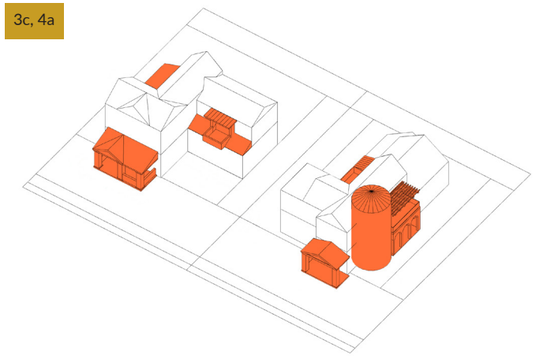

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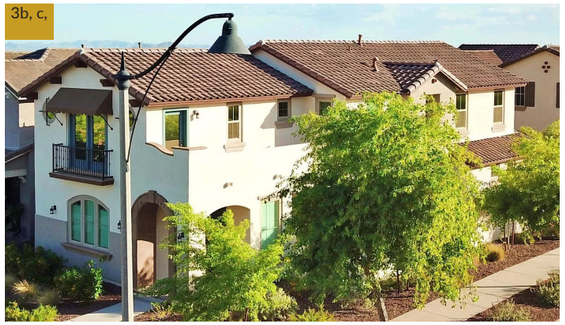

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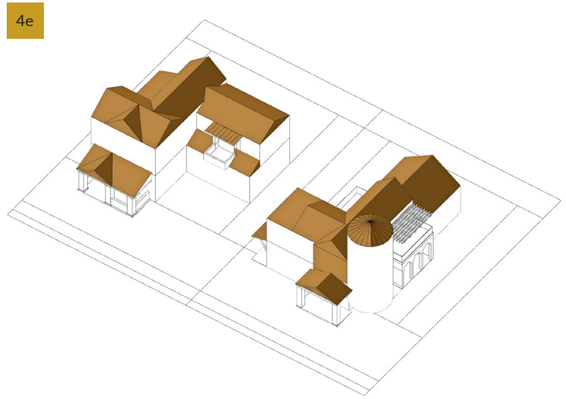

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3. Massing and Scale

Residential buildings should have varied massing and scale elements to ensure an interesting streetscape, allow sunlight into side yards and provide shaded relief on the front and rear of the home, and accommodate different uses and activities in each part of the house.

a. The front facade should be broken up into forms of varying depths to avoid a flat-front design

b. Multi-story homes shall incorporate a single-story massing element on the front facade. This may be achieved by using porches or stepping back second story wall planes to create single-story living areas seen from the street.

c. Along all sides of a home, massing should offset on wall planes or step back on upper floors so as to reduce their perceived size and provide opportunities for terraces or balconies.

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4. Articulation

All public-facing facades should be balanced and pleasing in their articulation and include windows or doors that face the street.

a. All street side elevations of a structure shall provide visual interest by incorporating architectural elements such as overhanging eaves, recessed windows, window trim or other building details.

b. Create diversity by varying the bulk and mass of buildings. Avoid a monotonous streetscape by creating diverse elevations with cutouts and pop-outs.

c. Each facade of a building that is visible from a public right-of-way, private tract, or common open space shall incorporate accented or highly articulated openings through the application of window trim, window recesses, cornices, changes in materials or other design elements.

d. Windows shall have style-appropriate trim detail on at least two sides of all windows or shall be recessed. Windows that are not recessed or have no trim are not allowed.

e. Long, single-ridge roof lines must be avoided.

f. The massing of roof forms should be reduced by varying the height and orientation of the roof lines.

g. Roof forms should be varied amongst homes along each street. Where houses in a development back onto collector or arterial streets, a variety of roof designs should be offered and utilized so as to avoid a series of repetitive roof slopes visible from right-of-way.

h. Attached products should look like separate units by the use of clearly identified entries, style and design details, and differing roof forms to avoid an institutional appearance.

5. Materials

The selection of building materials can have a great impact on the overall character of both individual buildings and on a neighborhood as a whole. Therefore, it is especially important to give care when selecting materials and colors for individual buildings and groups of buildings.

a. High-quality authentic building materials - such as stone, brick, wood, and stucco - should be utilized to enhance the building's architectural character and assure a long-lasting building life.

b. Developments should provide visual interest through the use of accent materials (such as stone or brick veneer) such that the application replicates the authentic means of construction.

c. When continuing the material around a corner from a front to side elevation, it should be terminated by an architectural element such as an offset, column, intersecting wall or fence.

d. Material changes should occur at a change in wall plane where the changes tend to appear substantial and integral to the structure, preferably at an inside corner.

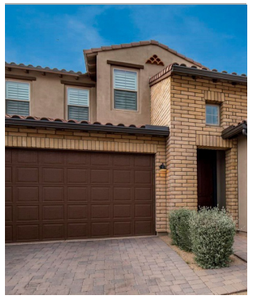
e. Materials should be selected that have proven durability in extreme heat and under high amounts of sun exposure.

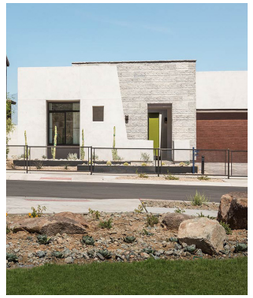
f. Exterior building colors should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood setting and should be in keeping with the geographic and climatic conditions specific to Mesa.

g. Earth tone colors traditionally used in the desert southwest are suggested; however, deep, rich accent colors are recommended instead of using a pale color palette. Bright colors should be used sparingly as an architectural detail element.

h. Change in color should always be accompanied by a change in plane and separated by a facade element, enhanced architectural detail or other means.

The materials shown below meet the guidelines described above, however, these examples are not the only materials that meet the intent of these design guidelines.





C. EXAMPLES AND INSPIRATION

MULTIPLE RESIDENCE

Multiple Residence (RM) buildings can be found in a variety of settings and locations within the community. Multiple residence projects can be a single building on a single parcel or can be a large complex of buildings on multiple parcels. The buildings can be integrated into residential neighborhoods along with single residences or they can be constructed in conjunction with commercial or office buildings (horizontal or vertical mixed-use). Multiple residence complexes that are isolated and segregated from the rest of the city are strongly discouraged. Instead they should play a critical role in creating vibrant and active residential and mixed-use neighborhoods.

A. SITE DESIGN

Multiple residence buildings should promote a walkable, healthy neighborhood by engaging the street, offering sidewalks and pedestrian paths, and using attractive design that reflects the scale and character of adjacent buildings. Multiple residence buildings in mixed use districts support the density of an urban center and create vibrant, active, walkable neighborhoods to live, work, socialize, and relax.

1. Neighborhood Character

a. Common open space areas and amenities allow residents to gather, promoting community interaction and creating a sense of place. Shared open spaces within multiple residence projects are particularly important as an organizing element in defining space and establishing character. Therefore, open space features should be carefully integrated into the design of multiple residence projects to provide safe areas, that can be easily surveyed from nearby dwellings or the street and complement the building architecture and project site design. Projects should incorporate common open spaces and pedestrian amenities that are centrally located, functional for a variety of uses, and aesthetically pleasing.

b. The overall character of the development should be defined through the use of a consistent design concept and should incorporate the architectural embellishments commonly associated with that style.

c. Major intersections and corners should be treated as neighborhood/project entryways. Provide a sense of arrival through the use of monument signs, special landscaping, specialty pavement, architectural features, etc.

d. Terminate primary drives at open space or amenity features to create a focal point and enhance view corridors.

e. In common open space areas, pedestrian amenities such as shade structures, trellises and arcades over walkways, benches and tables, bike racks, scooter parking, or similar amenities are recommended. Consider locating these in courtyard spaces and near main or secondary entrances for easy access.

f. Avoid outdoor areas that are between or behind buildings, that have little or no surveillance. These spaces with ambiguous “ownership” should be placed within the control of individual units.

g. Provide a continuous pedestrian circulation system that links various site amenities, such as play areas, a club house, pools, adjacent streets, trails, and bus stops.

h. Connections to adjacent compatible uses, existing public amenities such as parks or school playgrounds and public streets by maximizing intersections and ‘straight line’ paths where possible is encouraged.

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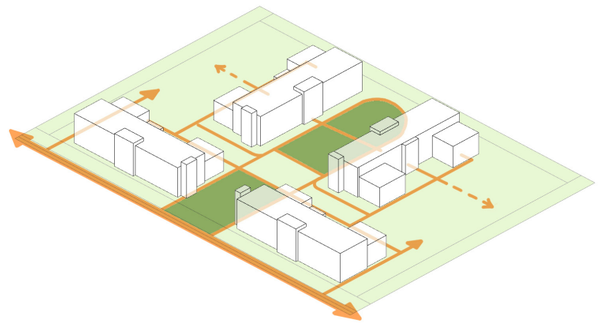

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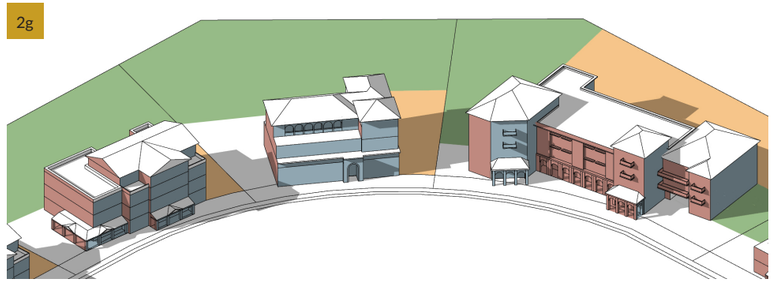

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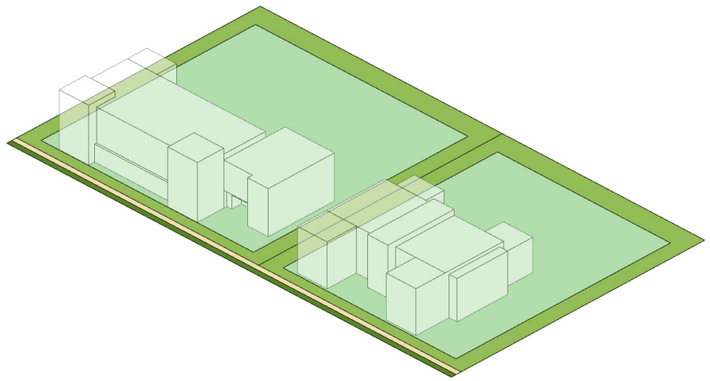

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2. Building Placement and Orientation

The manner in which buildings are placed on a site is important to the pattern of development within a neighborhood. Buildings that apply thoughtful setbacks facilitate a more walkable, vibrant and lively public realm; while buildings that are isolated from adjacent developments often act as barriers and impede pedestrian activity.

a. Corner or end units located along public streets should address both the primary street and the secondary (or side) street. The primary facade and entrance should face the more prominent street. Corner entrances or dual porches on front and side facades are encouraged.

b. Multiple residence buildings should maintain the minimum setback allowed along streets to better define the public realm and emphasize the overall site design as well as to help activate the streetscape and enhance the walkability of the neighborhood by reducing distances between desired destinations.

c. Design the primary facade of buildings with varied setbacks (including ground floor and upper floors) to create an interesting and attractive street edge, while maintaining minimum average setbacks.

d. Consider the existing grade and topography of the site in building layout, height, scale, and massing to maintain compatibility with adjoining lower intensity residential uses. Taller buildings should be stepped back or reduced in height when adjacent to lower density residential uses to maintain the privacy of rear yards, patios, and private outdoor spaces.

e. Extend porches, stairs, and stoops into the front setback to articulate the building facade.

f. Design setbacks between buildings so that spaces are usable or are part of the overall pedestrian scheme.

g. Consider the orientation of buildings and the use of sustainable development practices to mitigate solar exposure.

h. Mechanical equipment, electrical meter and service components, and similar utility devices whether ground level, wall mounted, or roof mounted, shall be screened and designed to appear as an integral part of the building.

3. Parking and Garage Placement

Parking lots are necessary elements for multiple residence projects. Large parking areas can create “seas” of asphalt and dominate streetscape views. Several smaller parking areas are encouraged in multiple residence projects. Proper parking placement and screening allows parking areas to integrate into the overall project design seamlessly and create a more visually appealing site.

a. Buildings should have the primary presence on the public street. Off-street parking areas should be located in the rear of the building(s) and away from public streets. Placement of parking areas to the side of the building(s) may be allowed to the minimum degree necessary.

b. Design and locate parking areas such that the walk from the designated parking to the dwellings is short and direct. Ideally, residents will have visibility of their parking stalls from their residence. All resident and visitor parking spaces shall be clearly identified.

c. Pedestrian walkways shall be distinguished from the vehicle driveway using different hardscape materials or by providing a landscape buffer.

d. To add visual interest and avoid the effect of a long blank wall with no relation to human size, perimeter garages that face public right-of-way or private property should provide articulation in horizontal wall plane, roof line, mix of materials, and windows or other fenestration.

e. Carports and detached garages should be designed as an integral part of the architecture of projects. They should be similar in material, color, roof materials, and details to the principal buildings of a development.

f. Guest and handicap parking should be evenly and conveniently distributed throughout multiple residence projects.

g. Incorporate pick-up and drop-off zones that are easily accessible to riders and rideshare operators.

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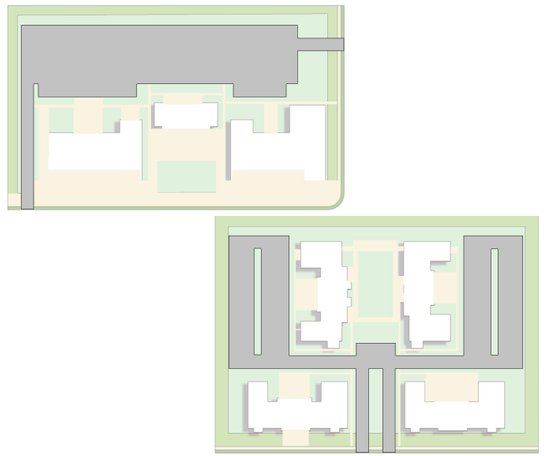

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4. Landscaping and Shading

a. Use planting to highlight significant site features and to define site use areas and circulation. Examples include site and building entrances, pedestrian walkways, and focal points, such as gathering areas or plazas.

b. Incorporate existing natural features such as trees, topography, washes, and vegetation into the site plan.

c. Infrastructure elements such as stormwater retention basins should be incorporated into the overall landscape plan.

d. Consider using deciduous trees and shrubs along south and west facing facades to provide seasonal shading while providing fall color, seasonal flower, and other desired effects.

e. Provide weather and sun protection, such as overhangs, awnings, canopies, etc. to mitigate climatic and solar conditions.

f. Shade elements, both landscape and architectural should be provided at prominent pedestrian points such as near entries, near common open space, and along paths serving parking lots.

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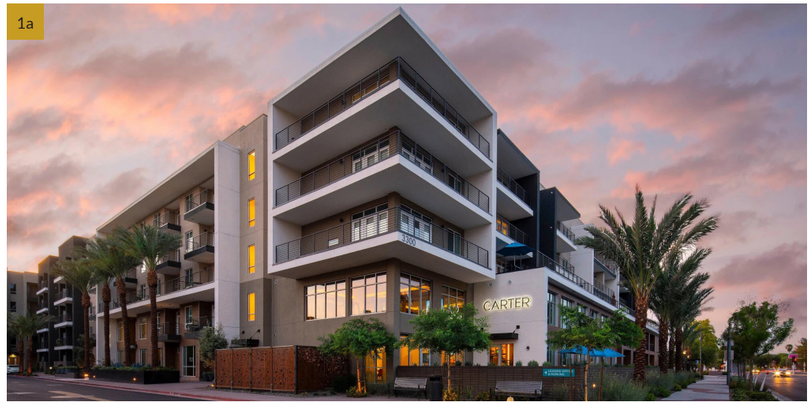


B. ARCHTECTURAL DESIGN

Mesa has a rich variety of architectural styles that have evolved to incorporate local materials and reflect the desert climate through form and design. Multiple residence developments should seek harmonious balance by selecting architectural design elements and details that complement each other. Multiple residence developments should contribute to the design of the neighborhoods with regard to mass and scale, architectural style, and use of colors and materials.

1. Primary Entries

a. Location of primary entrances (shared or individual) should face the street to the greatest extent possible. Low volume streets are better suited for individual unit entries; high volume streets are better suited for shared entries.

b. Primary entrances should be prominently indicated with a multi-story massing change and a first-story roofed design element such as a porch, awning, or portico.

c. All units must provide a clearly visible paved walkway from the primary entrance to a public sidewalk along the abutting primary street, tract, or common open space.

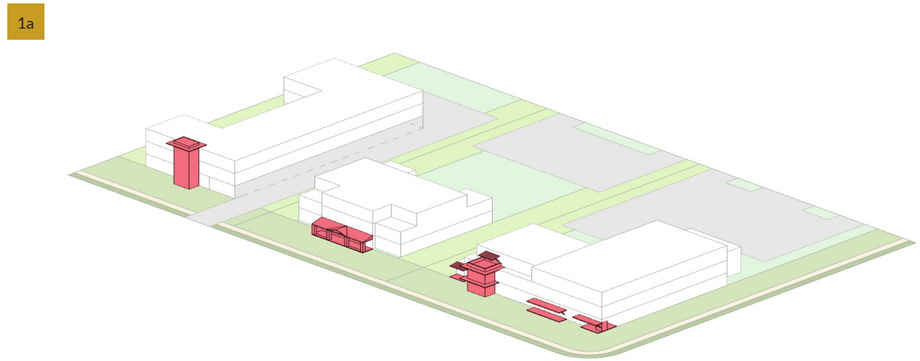
2. Massing and Scale

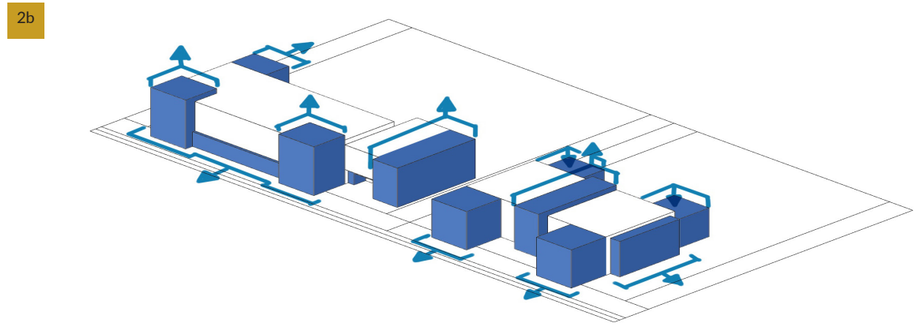
a. Multiple residence buildings should offset their massing on wall planes or step back on upper floors so as to reduce perceived size and provide opportunities for terraces or balconies.

b. Multiple residence developments must provide unique massing and variation from adjacent multiple residence buildings; as to avoid the appearance of contiguous developments.

c. Where multiple residence projects are adjacent to single residence zoning districts, provide a sensitive transition by maintaining a height compatible with adjacent buildings. Mitigate negative shade/shadow and privacy impacts by stepping back upper floors and avoiding direct views into neighboring single residence yards.

d. Help define the street edge through the location of building massing and heights. Increase building mass and height proportional to the street width, with higher massing on wider streets and decreased massing on narrower streets.





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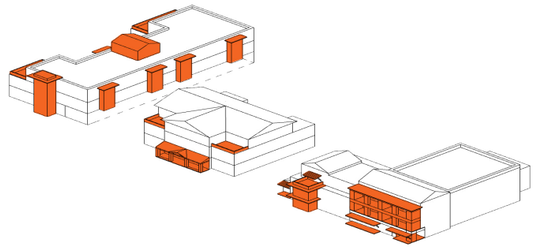

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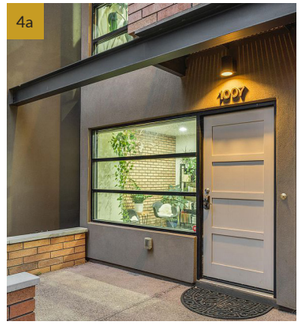

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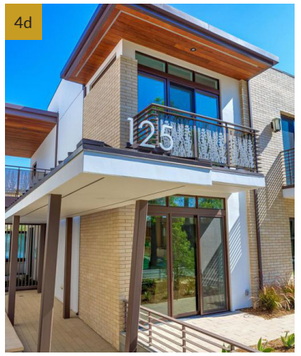


3. Articulation

a. Long expanses of windowless, blank walls are to be avoided. All building facades are to be treated aesthetically with changes in materials, colors, artwork, use of pilasters, building lines, ornamentation, and/or other aesthetic treatments; and, should utilize durable quality materials.

b. Building façades visible from a public right-of-way, private tract, or common open space should incorporate highly accented or highly articulated openings, through the application of window trim, window recesses, cornices, changes in materials or other design elements.

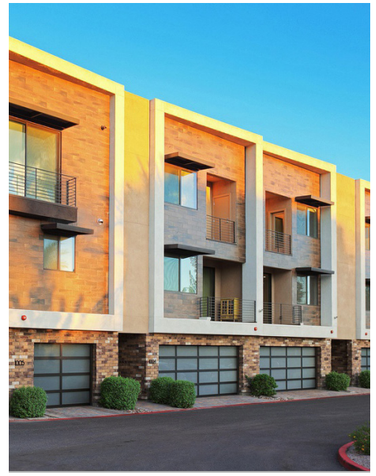
4. Materials

Residential building frontages provide the interface between public and private space and should create a sense of place and a feeling of belonging. Architectural details should provide visual interest to the pedestrian and complement the character of the development.

a. Material changes should occur at intersecting planes, preferably at inside corners of changing wall planes or where architectural elements intersect.

b. The selection and placement of building materials should provide visual interest at the pedestrian level. Heavier materials should be used to form the building base and as accents on upper stories and walls. Materials and colors should be used to enhance buildings and adjacent pedestrian spaces by adding color, shadows, and interesting forms.

c. Materials should be selected that have proven durability under high amounts of sun exposure and extreme temperatures.

d. Exterior building colors should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood setting and should be in keeping with the geographic and climatic conditions specific to Mesa.

C. EXAMPLES AND INSPIRATION