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DESIGN GUIDELINES

Case Studies



7 Case Studies

Since the City of Los Angeles passed the Small Lot Subdivision Ordinance in 2005, small lot projects have been under development in neighborhoods across Los Angeles. As of November 2013, over 160 subdivision cases have been filed, resulting in the approval of over 1,500 individual lots. 39 subdivisions were recorded, creating approximately 330 new lots on the County Assessment Roll.

This section of the handbook looks at model small lot subdivision developments built between 2006 and 2010 and highlights some outstanding features.

As these model projects demonstrate, the Small Lot Ordinance is not only increasing the quantity of housing available to the market, but also the variety. The Small Lot Ordinance helps developers provide housing to meet the demands of an increasingly disparate set of Angeleno needs and lifestyles.

ROCK ROW, EAGLE ROCK

Heyday Partnership
1546 Yosemite Drive

15 homes
(16 condos allowable)
Zoning: RD1.5-1
Zoning Adjustments: 5

1st LEED Certified Small Lot Subdivision.

Each townhouse has a series of decks and balconies.

Simple maintenance organization for driveway, trash areas, and landscape.

Neighborhood council and Southern California Edison supported Heyday Partnership in being exempted from street widening.

Sustainable Features:
Permeable driveway, instant hot water heaters, indoor air quality control, green roofs, solar arrays.



Site Plan.



Architectural rendering highlighting roof gardens, entry ways and grasscrete driveway. Also note the visual interest created by the use of materials and varied window orientation.



Low water plants minimize water consumption and enhance the transition between the front sidewalk and building facade. Permeable paving material reduces the perceived width of a double-loaded driveway, while providing for a more comfortable pedestrian path of travel and reducing the amount of visible paving material.



The development contains landscaping along the project's public edge to create a pleasant pedestrian environment



A green roof helps absorb runoff, reduces the heat island effect, and provides an attractive amenity for residents.



The front two homes are configured with their main entrance close to the sidewalk. This, in addition to a small front landscape section and the Grasscrete paving material provides a good transition from the public to the private realm.

**AUBURN 7,
SILVER LAKE**
Mass Architects
2748 Auburn Street

7 homes built
Zoning: RD 1.5-1XL

2 levels of habitable flooring.

Only a 5" air gap between units requires more engineering for earthquake protection than a typical single family home.

Floor to ceiling windows.

Each unit has an option for solar electricity.

Informal agreement with the Department of Water and Power to use the front easement as garden space.

With no walls separating the front yard space the easement becomes a community amenity while still retaining the feel of a private yard



Variations in massing, window orientation and materials distinguish the dwellings.



Interior spaces have a good relationship with the exterior as all units have front garden space in the easement. There is a pedestrian path that runs between the landscaping and the homes which helps define the edge.



The front easement features a mix of fruit trees, vegetables and low-water ornamental plants.



Permeable paving (decomposed granite) allows the infiltration of storm water. Homes feature private patios.



Site furnishings make the development's public areas usable.



Community garden built on space leased from DWP

CULLEN STREET ART DISTRICT HOMES, Modative 2624 Cullen Street

3 homes built (4 allowed)
(2 single-family and 1 duplex)
Zoning: RD 1.5

Adjacent Culver City Arts District served as inspiration

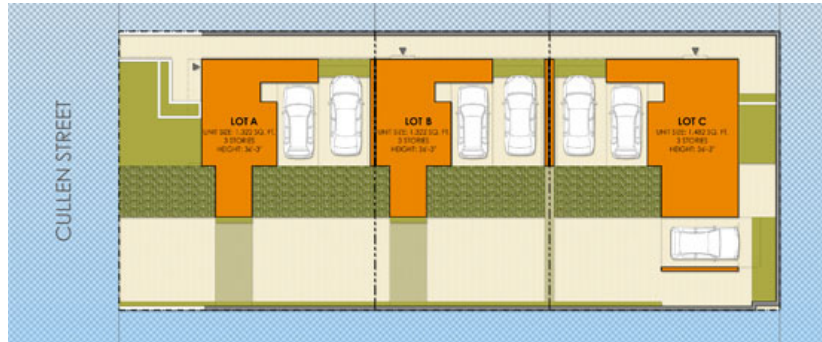
Rear unit has mother-in-law unit with separate entrance

All units have second story private deck/balcony

Front home has primary entrance oriented to the street with generous front landscaping to transition between public and private

Interior spaces as well as doors & windows were configured to provide privacy between homes and adjacent property.

Single-pitched roof has southern orientation to accommodate future solar panel installation



Site plan shows linear configuration with a shared driveway and a pedestrian path separate from driveway.



Front unit designed to have excellent orientation to the street with front entrance and pedestrian path connected to the public sidewalk, and lush front landscaping buffer. Although the second story deck extends away from the home, the rest of the massing is pulled away from the street which creates a nice transition between public and private space.



The homes are designed to each have second story private deck space that is pulled away from the property line and located above the driveway. This activates the access path while orienting the private spaces away from adjacent residential



Rear unit features a double car garage for primary home, and a single car garage for mother-in-law unit with private deck above parking.



Example of how private balcony space on the second floor can still activate the front of the property near the property edge



A striking color on the interior of the covered parking provides a strong visual link from the sidewalk to the rear of the development, creates character, and provides a connection with the other units

MALTMAN BUNGALOWS, ECHO PARK

Civic Enterprise Associates
918 Maltman, Echo Park

17 Homes
(18 units allowable)
Zoning: RD2-1VL
Zoning Variances: 5
Zoning Adjustments: 3

Historic bungalows provide
small compact units.

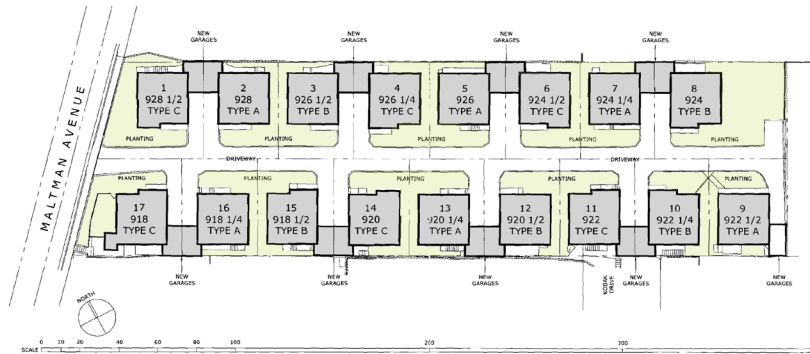
Porches, visibility, and close
proximity provide a safe
environment for residents.

A smaller truck from a
private trash company can
navigate a smaller driveway
for trash collection.

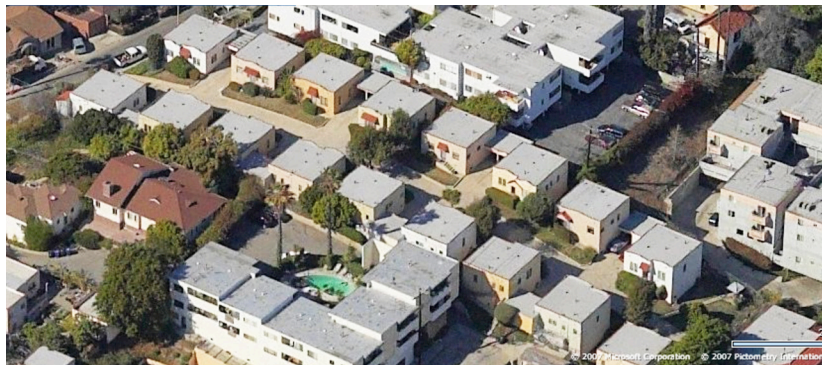
The utilities are on a mutual
easement. Units have a one
car garage; no guest parking
is provided.

Sustainable Features:
An adapted reuse and/
or an historic preservation
project is inherently more
sustainable than new
construction.

Selected by Architectural
Record magazine as one of
their 2008 Record Houses.



Site Plan.



Aerial.



Restoration preserved the charm of original units.



Narrow drive preserved front yard space and each unit boasts 1 shade + citrus tree. (Photo Credit: A. Marshburn)



Pedestrians share central driveway with autos.



Orientation and function of front door provides transparency and bolsters sense of community.



Attached garage with compact tandem parking.

**PERLITA MEWS,
ATWATER VILLAGE**
Corsini + Stark Architects
4254 Perlita Avenue

23 Homes

Indoor/Outdoor homes are organized around interior courtyards and designed in a Modernist style.

Sustainable Features:
Grasscrete paving allows water to reach the water table and reduces pollution from runoff.
Clerestory windows provide natural ventilation; heat rises through the top of the townhouse, cooling the units.
Fewer exterior walls limit the places where heat and energy can seep out.

Adaptable units: Units can be combined and expanded around the interior courtyards. More affordable than buying one very large house. Rear units can be separated since they have a rear staircase.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the 23 units, each with a courtyard space.



This home on one of the edges of the project shows the interior courtyard space connected to a side yard, providing additional usable open space.



The development features 23 homes with double-loaded garages on a center access driveway and internal courtyards



The interior courtyard spaces create an outdoor room that also provides access to light and air for the second story.



Rendering of how the garage, driveway, and primary entrance interact



Rendering of a courtyard created by two adjacent buildings. While each side is a private patio, joining these spaces provides the perception of a larger volume of space.

PREUSS FOUR, CIENEGA HEIGHTS

Danny Cerezo, Architect
2008 Preuss Road

4 homes built (5 allowed)

Zoning: RD 1.5-1

Average lot size: 1,780-2,560 s.f.

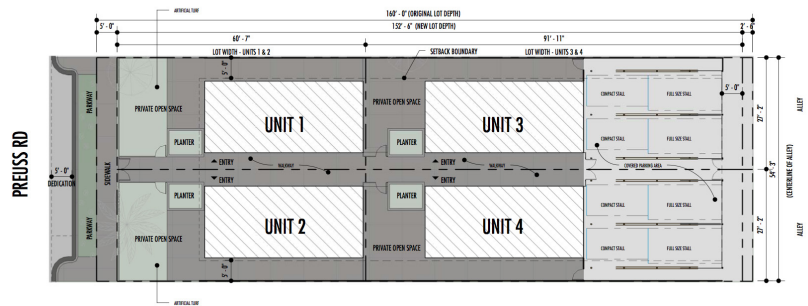
Each unit is 2 stories with a 3 bedroom/3 bathroom configuration

All homes feature over 400 s.f. of private open space off of the main living level.

Each home also features a 2.8Kw solar panel system as a standard feature.

All hardwood flooring has been reclaimed from a barn in Tennessee that was slated for demolition.

Sustainable features include exterior fiber cement siding installed as a rain screen system, electric vehicle chargers, bio-filtration planters, and a central heating and air is multi-zoned to maximize comfort.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units with parking accessed via an alley and a 6 foot wide pedestrian passageway in the center. Parking for all homes is accomplished with a tandem configuration to the rear of the site.



Front elevation shows good height and massing relationship with surrounding structures and balconies facing the public sidewalk.



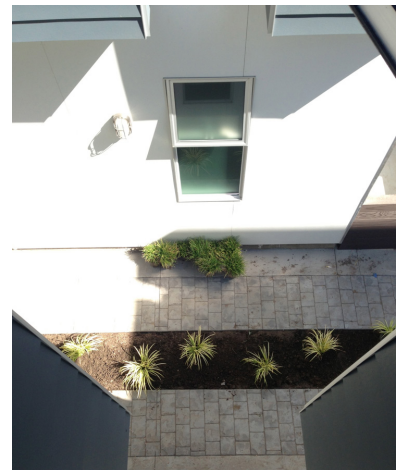
The front two homes are designed to have an almost typical front yard configuration with a patio and green space adjacent to the public sidewalk.



A 6 foot wide pedestrian path through the center of the project provides both access from the parking and common amenity space.



Planters in the front yard allow opportunities for landscaping to buffer common spaces from private spaces.



The pedestrian access path is open to the sky providing ample access to light and air for each home.

**BUZZ COURT,
SILVER LAKE**
Heyday Partnership
Buzz Court, Los Angeles,
90039

6 homes built (6 allowed)

Zoning: (Q)C2-1VL

Average lot size: 1,720 s.f.

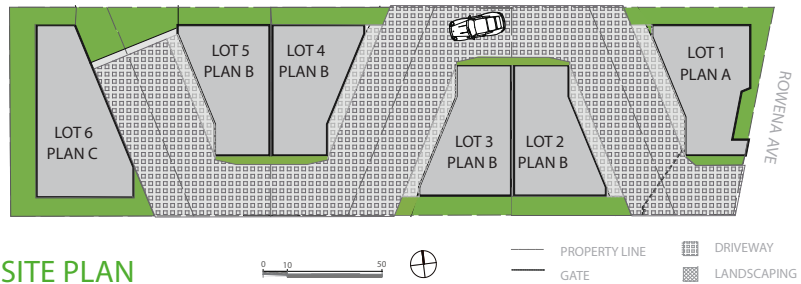
Variances/adjustments: 6

Each home is 3 stories with a rooftop deck as amenity space

The zigzag pattern allows for greater separation between units and creates an added sense of privacy for rear units

Common maintenance agreement for driveway, access gate, trash area, and landscape

Additional notes: Certified LEED Platinum, Permeable Driveway, Solar Arrays, Instant Hot Water Heaters, Indoor Air Quality Controls, Exceed Title-24 by >30%, Green Roofs.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units in a unique zigzag pattern that staggers the home placement on either side of the narrow lot.



The primary entry of the front home is clearly delineated by landscape planters and the massing of the facade. A second floor balcony brings an element of private space into the public environment, activating both the front facade and the sidewalk of this more urban streetscape.



The Buzz Court project is located along a more urban streetscape than other small lot development. As a result, the architects design a facade that looks more commercial than residential while still placing residential elements like a balcony on the front facade.



The unique spatial arrangement of the development causes the homes to have a staggered effect, making the spaces between buildings seem more open.



The facade treatment provides for a visually interesting and appealing display at night. The shading element provides privacy for the residents while still allowing light to be displayed along the sidewalk. The front entrance is clearly illuminated for safety and delineation.



While the homes are configured to provide adequate access to the garages for cars, the interior spaces are arranged so that windows and balconies do not directly face each other. This creates a better sense of privacy for homes that are closely spaced.

EDGECLIFFE TERRACE, SILVER LAKE

Green City Building Company
1372 Edgecliffe Drive, Los Angeles

4 homes built (4 allowed)

Zoning: RD1.5-1VL

Average lot size: 1,840 s.f.

Variances/adjustments: only an “early start” variance

Key design elements include corner glass, natural cedar siding, and metal exterior accents.

The front and rear houses have ground level open garden space, while all units have rooftop terraces.

The project was designed to be neighborhood appropriate, with deferential massing by cutting the garages into the up-slope and providing a significant third floor setback.

A 35' front yard building line setback was provided and landscaped.

Three existing decades-old street trees were preserved as part of the project.



Site Plan shows the arrangement of the units on the narrow lot with ample front yard landscaping and a large balcony/deck for the rear unit



The slightly sloping site resulted in the units having a “stacked” configuration and the garages being cut into the slope. A 35 foot front setback was provided



The site has a two story building on one side and a single story residence on the other. As a result, the mass and height of the buildings are located on the side adjacent to the two story building.



The entries for each individual home are separated from the driveway and have a direct connection to the public sidewalk.



The view from the rear deck shows how the units are “stacked” to follow the slope of the site. All homes also have window orientation over the driveway to help activate the space.



Interior spaces are organized around access to light and air with large windows and a balcony (front unit)

VESPER VILLAGE, VAN NUYS

Ken Stockton, Architects
Silverberg Development Corp.
14550 West Kittridge Street

16 Homes
(51 units allowable)
Zoning: CR-1VL-CDO
Zoning Variances: 3
Zoning Adjustments: 4

Built prior to the Small Lot Ordinance, this development provided the framework for the passage of the Ordinance.

Was a result of community opposition to new apartment complexes. Individual owner-occupied homes were preferable. Small Lot subdivision was a compromise.

The utilities are on a mutual easement. Units have a one car garage; no guest parking is provided.

Has a 3-foot separation between homes.

Uses a very modest annual maintenance fund for the driveway and mail boxes. No home owners association.



Site Plan.



Three-foot-deep front yards soften the transition from stucco facade to hard-scape drive.



The 26-foot width between homes is syncopated with a 32' distance occurring at the garage/parking. This articulates the massing of the buildings and prevent the pedestrian from feeling "boxed in".



Two-foot separation between homes.



Pedestrian environment along the edge of the development features pleasant landscaping and trees.



Open sight lines to front doors.