

## **A Guide to Building in Los Caminitos**

The Association's Board of Directors has adopted these guidelines to assist our members in planning their new homes, additions or subsequent exterior modifications here in Los Caminitos. Our hope is that this information will minimize the apprehension, confusion and frustration that can sometimes accompany the building process.

It may be helpful to first understand the history and intent of the policies outlined in the Restrictive Covenants and Architectural Control Rules, which are included in the Owner's Handbook and also posted on our website (<http://www.loscaminitos.com>):

### **History**

When the subdivision was created in the 1970's from 1,400 acres bordering the national forest, the developers, together with Santa Fe County, established standards to maintain the rural character of the land. These include large lot sizes, setbacks, and prohibitions regarding use and strict limits on the visual impact of anything built or brought into the community. The result has been a mostly unspoiled landscape, still dominated by hills and trees, where we are fortunate to enjoy unparalleled privacy and direct access to nature just minutes from the city.

Over the years, the standards have been debated and tested as times change and new arrivals find their places in the community. Once in a while a prospective builder would want to recreate a former life in a city or suburb rather than unobtrusively adapt to the foothills of the rural Southwest. As a result, the rules have been rewritten or expanded for clarity's sake, often after months of discussion, by a majority vote. The current language was adopted by the written agreement of 81% of all lots in the subdivision at the annual meeting held on August 22, 2009.

### **Procedure**

The Architectural Control Committee (ACC) acts on behalf of the Board of Directors to regulate the visual impact of all new construction, additions or other outdoor changes within the subdivision. As such, the ACC must approve the building site, architectural style, exterior colors, outside lighting, reflectivity and, especially, the height of any proposed structure before construction can begin.

The Association often employs a Consulting Architect to advise the committee about proposed structures. His or her time spent considering plans submitted to the ACC or consulting with an applicant is the financial responsibility of the lot owner who wishes to build or remodel. While the Consulting Architect or committee members may offer a variety of suggestions to improve proposed designs, their mandate is limited to those elements that may impact appearance or community standards as outlined in the Covenants.

The ACC is composed of at least three members, at least two of whom must own lots in the community. Typically one or more committee members also serve on the Association's Board of Directors or attend that group's meetings so that the Board is kept informed about the proposals and projects underway. Any lot owner who is not satisfied with a decision made by the committee may appeal to the full Board, which has the ultimate authority.

### **Typical Progression and Timeline**

Anyone considering building here should first review the community's Covenants and Architectural Control Rules. Once familiarized with these documents, a potential applicant (or representative, such as an architect) should contact a member of the ACC, preferably its Chairperson, to inform him or her of plans to build and seek answers to remaining questions. The current committee roster and contact information is listed on our website and is also available from any Board member.

Once acceptable plans (see Architectural Control Rules #10: Minimum Submittal) are prepared, the approval process typically goes through the following steps, which most often require between 2 and 6 months:

1. Plans go to the Consulting Architect for review, which may take one month.
2. Committee then meets within 2 or 3 weeks to consider his or her comments and recommendations. They may need to gather additional information at this point to form their position on the submittal.
3. The committee gives feedback to the owner very soon after agreeing among themselves on a response, including conditions of approval, if appropriate.
4. The owner responds to the committee with an agreement to make requested changes, if any, or to offer alternative proposals for the committee's further consideration.
5. Written approval is given once all outstanding questions are resolved. In cases where the applicant still desires to build, but is unwilling to meet the committee's requirements, owners may appeal to the Board of Directors.
6. The Board's policy is to make every effort to respond to an applicant's written appeal within 30 days.
7. Once approval is granted, plans become actionable after the applicant pays a Construction Impact Fee as described in Architectural Control Rules #13.

A note about fences:

To maintain the look and feel of an open, rural environment with widely-spaced homes, and with lots flowing naturally from one to the other, the covenants prohibit members from fencing most Los Caminitos properties located in the foothills adjoining the national forest. Lots in Phase III, on the other hand, are both larger and lower, and allowed to corral horses or goats.

Exceptions to the ban on fences may be granted in cases of “enclosures for pets or private gardens” or “privacy barriers... within thirty-five feet (35') of any residence or guest house” as long as these enclosures or barriers do not conflict with the established nature of our forested terrain by calling attention to the unwanted visual demarcation (and reduction) that fences introduce. In all cases, no construction will be permitted without prior ACC approval.

Therefore, as with any other proposed structure, the committee will take into account the proximity to, and visibility from, roads and public areas, as well as sightlines from neighboring properties, before granting permission for any exceptions to our rule against fences.