



# **CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

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MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 6, 2009

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: URBAN MASTER PLAN SCREENING REQUEST UMP-09-11  
573 THROUGH 591 VICTORIA STREET

DATE: SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

FROM: PLANNING DIVISION/DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION BY: MEL LEE, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: MEL LEE, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER  
(714) 754-5611 [mlee@ci.costa-mesa.ca.us](mailto:mlee@ci.costa-mesa.ca.us)

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

Provide feedback and identify any concerns for a proposed 44-unit detached residential project (with a 17-unit density bonus request) in the Mesa West Residential Urban Plan area.

## **BACKGROUND**

The site of the proposed project is located mid-block on the south side of Victoria Street between Miner Street and Maple Street. Maple Street ends at this location at a signalized intersection. The site is bounded on three sides by mostly one-story multiple family residences; across the street from the site is Ketchum-Libolt Park.

On April 4, 2006, City Council adopted the Mesa West Residential Urban Plan. The purpose of the urban plan to encourage new owner-occupied residences on the City's Westside at residential densities higher than normally allowed in the underlying base residential zoning district.

## **EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

The urban master plan screening process was created to address two central questions:

- 1) Does the project meet Council's expectations for projects in the Urban Plan areas? The screening process is an opportunity to determine if the conceptual project meets Council's expectations for new projects in the urban plan areas. Council will be providing initial feedback to the applicant.
- 2) Does Council have any comments on any concerns identified by staff? The screening process will highlight any initial concerns to Council's attention.

(Please refer to Attachment 1 for a summary of concerns/issues related to the proposal.)

The screening process allows the applicant to consider Council's initial comments and to refine the development concept based on their feedback.

***Development Concept - Summary Sheet***

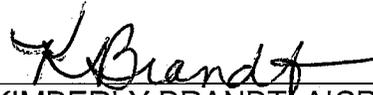
A one-page, project summary sheet is attached for the screening request. This summary sheet calls attention to any concerns or requested deviations about the project (Attachment 1).

**CONCLUSION**

Council's general comments do not set a precedent for approval/denial nor constitute final action on the development project. In addition, the applicant may expect the Planning Commission to have other comments/concerns on a proposed development concept that may have not been necessarily raised by City Council. The screening process allows the applicant to consider Council's initial comments and to refine the development concept based on their feedback.



MEL LEE, AICP  
Senior Planner



KIMBERLY BRANDT, AICP  
Acting Development Svs. Director

- Attachments:
1. Summary Sheet
  2. Memo from Police Department of Security Concerns
  3. Applicant Letter
  4. Site Photos and Concept Plans

cc: City Manager  
Asst. City Manager  
City Attorney  
Public Services Director  
Transportation Svs. Mgr.  
City Clerk  
Staff (4)  
File (2)

Bryan Coggins  
The Preface Group  
1835 Newport Blvd., Suite A109  
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

Eric Van Wechel  
Van Wechel Architects  
3373 Country Road  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

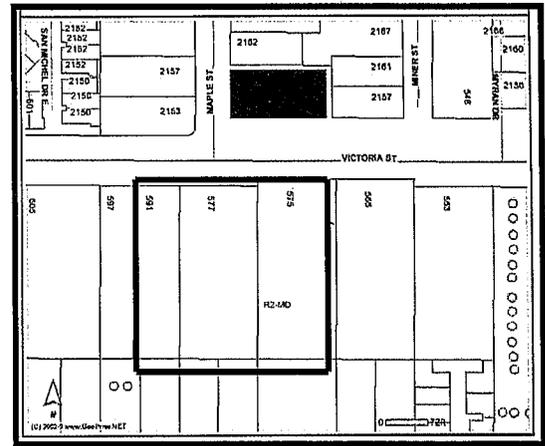
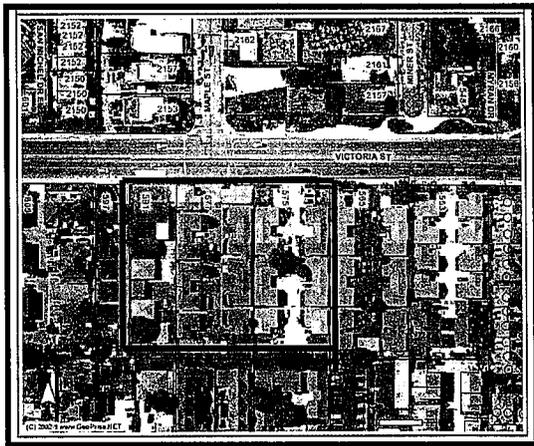
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Date: 092409

Time: 1:15 p.m.

UMP-09-11

**573 Thru 591 Victoria Street - Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan Area**



**DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT**

- Density Bonus request for additional 17 units in Residential Ownership Urban Plan. (27 units allowed, 44 units requested per Urban Plan)
- 44-unit, three-story, residential common interest development.
- 2 bedroom/2 to 3 bathroom units from 1,600 to 1,900 square feet, including garages.
- Detached units at a parking rate of 3 spaces per unit.

**PRELIMINARY TRAFFIC EVALUATION**

The 17-unit density bonus for this high-density residential project would result in a 63% increase of average daily trips compared to the General Plan/R2-MD zone. According to the Transportation Services Division, this is not considered a significant increase.

Development Scenario	AM Peak Hour Trips	PM Peak Hour Trips	Total Average Daily Trips
General Plan/R2-MD zone: 27 Units (12 du/acre)	20	27	258
Proposed Project: (Density Bonus of 17 additional units) 44 units (20 du/acre)*	33	44	421
<b>Percentage Increase in Traffic</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>63%</b>

## **POTENTIAL CONCERNS WITH PARKING LAYOUT, BUILDING MASSING, AND SITE DESIGN**

Some positive aspects of the project include the following:

- Consolidation of three R2-MD parcels totaling 2.25 acres and demolition of 28 multiple-family residential units originally constructed in the 1960's.
- A new bus turnout area along the Victoria Street frontage of the project will be constructed.
- Common open space area with a tot lot and community garden surrounded by 16 of the 44 units.
- Minimum 20-foot Code-required front setback on Victoria Street.

However, these features may not fully compensate for the serious design issues. This screening process provides an opportunity to obtain preliminary Council feedback on the following concerns identified by staff.

### **1. Failure to provide a central guest parking area may create parking confusion and disputes.**

There is no street parking allowed on Victoria Street, consequently, all resident and guest parking must occur onsite.

The City of Costa Mesa has not approved a high-density residential project with a nontraditional parking layout at this scale. The City has approved parking spaces between buildings in select developments in the Eastside with 4 - 6 total units where on-street parking was also available.

However, this proposal intersperses **all** guest parking spaces between the 44 houses instead of locating them in a common parking lot(s). Staff believes this parking layout may cause problems because guests will be continually searching for parking adjacent to neighbors' houses. Adding to the confusion, new guests may find it difficult to differentiate between where guests and residents are allowed to park.

In addition, because open stalls are located right next to the house, a resident may regularly park in these guest parking spaces instead of in garages. This may cause parking disputes between neighbors. Even a proactive HOA will be challenged to solve parking disputes associated with poor parking design.

Finally, staff would like to point out that on-street parking is available on Maple Street, north of Victoria Street. Staff is concerned that guests not able to locate an on-site guest parking space within the development could park along Maple Street and walk across Victoria Street, which is a signalized intersection, to reach the development. This could create adverse parking impacts to the residents of the Maple Street neighborhood.

**2. Noncompliance with Residential Design Guideline may create homes with “mansionized” feel (Second to first floor ratio - 80% required; 100%+ proposed).**

A major criticism of high-density projects is a feeling of being closed-in. The need for a developer to create a “sense of space” is especially critical in a high-density residential development. The project features 1,600 to 1,900 square-foot buildings that do not meet the Residential Design Guidelines with regard to bulk/massing.

The Design Guidelines recommend a reduction in the building mass by minus 20 percent for the upper floor(s). However, for all proposed units, the upper floors are designed to be larger than the ground floor by cantilevering over the smaller footprint, for a second to first floor ratio of over 100 percent. Because these units are proposed to be 3-story structures without any front or back yards, the building massing may create an overbuilt/confined environment.

**3. Noncompliance with Code-required setback requirements and Minimum Open Space requirement may create congested living environment without adequate light, air, and landscaping.**

A critical design feature in high-density residential projects is to position houses to front on pocket parks and other open space to give residents the feel of a spacious yard/recreation area. The project does not comply with rear building setbacks (20 foot setback required, 10 foot setback proposed). Additionally, twenty-three homes along the perimeter of the project are proposed to be designed with the front doors/front porches facing the perimeter block wall.

Staff is concerned that housing with inadequate setbacks will create unwelcoming front entryways and an undesirable living environment due to:

- Poor Light & Air. The 23 homes along the perimeter will experience adverse shade/shadow effects from the 8-foot block wall and the 3-story structures. The front of the house is only 10 to 13 feet away from the block wall. This confined space constitutes the “front yard” of these homes, and this area will be in shadow.
- Poor Security. The Police Department has major concerns with the majority of homes facing the block wall. Their concerns relate to obstructed visibility and potential criminal activity occurring in the confined front porch area of these homes. The front doors are not visible from the street or from the greater part of the neighborhood. A memo from Crime Prevention Specialist Sue Hupp is attached (Attachment 2).
- Poor Landscape/Green Space. The main entries of these homes will face a block wall and minimally landscaped area. Staff believes that there is no sense of open space or green space for the 23 perimeter homes. The walkways between the block wall and cars parked in-between houses further eliminate potential landscaped area. This contributes to the stark and enclosed feeling for these residents.

The applicant has submitted site renderings showing views from the landscaped courtyard in the center of the development. However, there are no renderings depicting overall views of development, such as cars parked in between all homes or a view of the 10-foot area between homes and the block wall.

**4. Experimental site design and parking layout has not been proven successful in surrounding cities.**

A major criticism of high-density housing is that poor site design and parking layout will lead to an unattractive living environment that may become rental housing. To date, the applicant has not provided examples of successful housing projects with this similar design concept in other cities.

While some developments may feature one or two structures with less than optimal features in the same tract, the City of Costa Mesa has not approved a residential project with these overall design issues where a majority of the proposed homes are sited in an unfavorable environment.

Planning staff surveyed three cities to inquire if this design concept has been a proven success. These cities have not approved a high-density residential project with these design issues (poor orientation of front entries, lack of common parking lot, overbuilt structures on small lots).

- a. **City of Newport Beach** – Newport Beach has not approved a single-family detached project at this scale that does not face the street. In fact, the Newport Beach Design Guidelines requires the main entry of detached units (single or multi-family) to be oriented facing the drive aisle.
- b. **City of Irvine** – Irvine has not approved front porches facing a perimeter wall. Irvine considers the lack of common parking areas as an unpreferred design.
- c. **City of Fountain Valley** – Older duplexes and triplexes from the 1920's and 30's may feature some aspects of that design concept. However, Fountain Valley has not approved any development since that time at the scale of the currently proposed project.

**5. Noncompliance with Urban Plan objectives with regard to quality design.**

The project requests a density bonus of 17 units and deviations from development standards. This involves increased traffic by 63 percent compared to the medium-density zoning. The objectives of the Urban Plan involve quality residential construction to add neighborhood vitality. From a quality design perspective, the applicant has not provided justifications to address concerns regarding the experimental site design. The concern is that these structures will revert to rental housing due to the site design problems and parking layout.

## CONCLUSION

The major criticisms of high-density projects is the "mansionized" feel of the homes and sense of being closed-in. The proposal involves an experimental site design that has not been approved at this scale in Costa Mesa, or in planned communities of Newport Beach, Irvine, and Fountain Valley.

While there are some positive aspects of the proposal, these features may not fully compensate for the overbuilt massing of the buildings, serious site design which may deprive residents of adequate light, air, and sense of space, and parking layout issues. Staff is concerned that the proposed 44-unit, high-density residential project (inclusive of a 17-unit density bonus request) may create a crowded, undesirable living environment that could become rental housing in the future.

**COSTA MESA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Claire Flynn, Senior Planner  
**FROM:** Sue Hupp, Crime Prevention Specialist  
**SUBJECT:** 573-591 Victoria Street  
**DATE:** September 23, 2009

After reviewing the plans for 573-591 Victoria Street, the Police Department has concerns with the location of the front doors on the 23 perimeter homes. A security issue is created by having the doors face the six foot cinder block wall. There will be no natural surveillance therefore increasing the likelihood of criminal activity.

The Police Department is recommending the front doors be oriented to face the vehicular drive service.

If this can not be accomplished we're recommending at least a 20' setback rather than the proposed 10' setback.



August 11, 2009

Costa Mesa City Council Members  
City of Costa Mesa  
77 Fair Drive  
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-1200

RE: A new solar powered, for-sale detached residential community in the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan.

Dear Council Members:

We are very pleased to present a for-sale, detached, new home community in Westside Costa Mesa. The project, consisting of 44 homes, is located on Victoria Street, one of the city's most traveled streets, and one of only two streets to bisect the city from East to West. This project's location and scale will bring significant economic benefits to the city's Westside, and demonstrate continued success of the city's Urban Plans.

Three contiguous parcels were purchased from multiple owners to create the project. The detached homes will provide private courtyards and attached 2 car garages. Each home will include roof mounted photo-voltaic solar panels for electrical power generation, making it one of the largest residential solar projects to date in the city. The homes will be located on individual fee-simple lots, bringing home ownership to an area of the city almost entirely occupied by rental properties.

The project includes a central village green with a community garden, a trellised barbeque and seating area, and a play area for children. This large common area, available to use by all residents, is provided instead of large yards for a select, few homes at the rear of the project. Landscaped pedestrian paseos will connect all of the homes and foster a sense of community. Many homes will front Victoria Street, providing a redeveloped street scene 340 feet long.

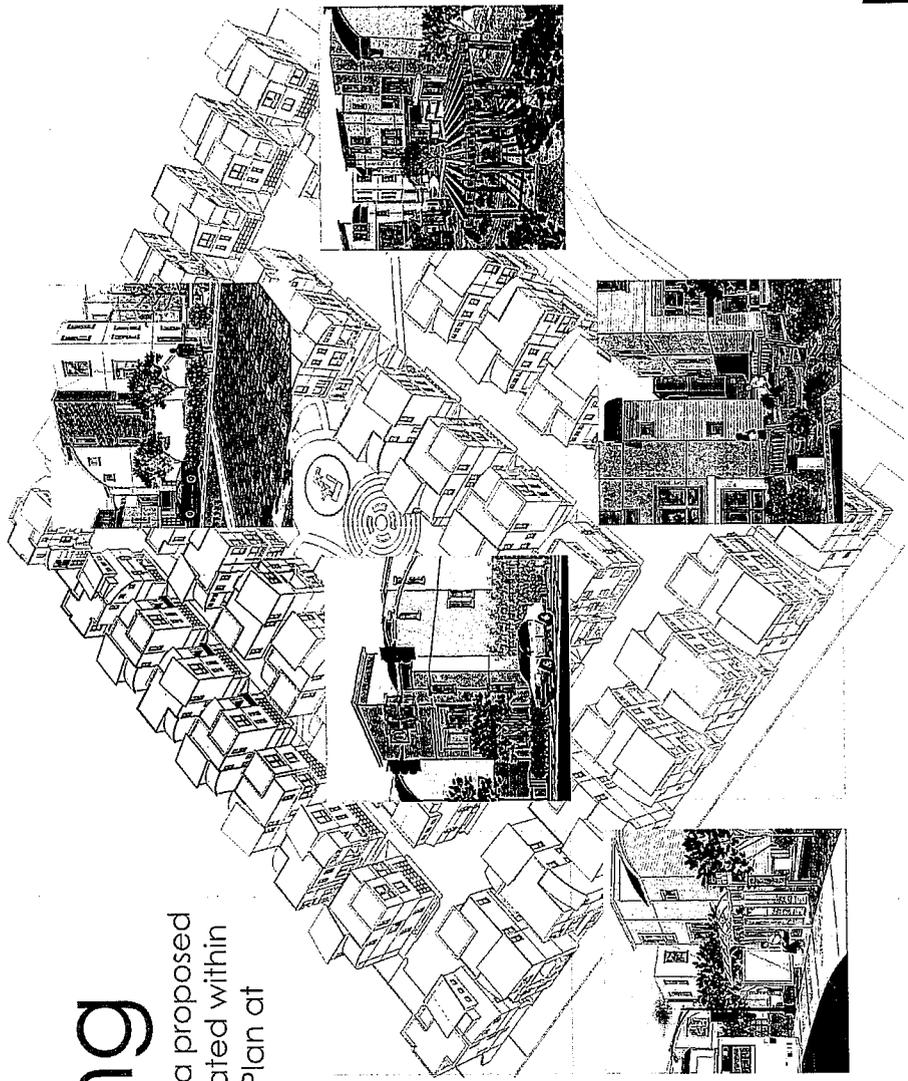
A portion of the property purchased for the project will be dedicated to create a bus turnout lane on Victoria Street. This turnout will enhance the safety of motorists, pedestrians, and transit users, and provide an alternative means of transportation for the project's residents.

Finally, we are interested in pursuing city impact fee deferrals, whereby we would remit required payments at issuance of certificate of occupancy rather than at map recordation or building permit issuance.

We look forward to working with you, staff, and area residents to bring another great project to the city's Westside.

Sincerely,

Bryan G. Coggins



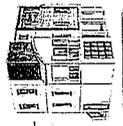
# Maple Crossing

Urban Master Plan Screening Application for a proposed  
 44 Unit Detached Planned Development located within  
 the Mesa West Residential Ownership Urban Plan at  
 573-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa

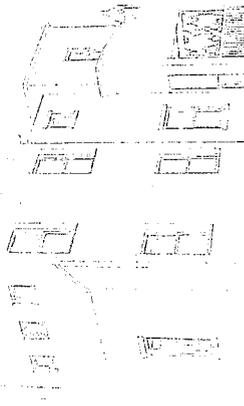
**Applicant:**  
 The Preface Group  
 1835 Newport Blvd. A109  
 Costa Mesa, CA 92627  
 (949) 350-6657

**Owner:**  
 Harmony Capital, LLC  
 c/o Van Wechel Architects  
 3373 Country Road  
 Fallbrook, CA 92028  
 (760) 723-0484

- 1 Cover Page.....
- 2 Design Objectives.....
- 3 Existing Site Photos.....
- 4 Proposed Victoria Street View.....
- 5 Proposed Site Plan.....
- 6 Conceptual Landscape Plan.....
- 7 Proposed Village Green View.....
- 8 Plan 1 Floor Plans.....
- 9 Plan 1 Exterior Concepts.....
- 10 Plan 2 Floor Plans.....
- 11 Plan 2 Exterior Concepts.....
- 12 Plan 3 Floor Plans.....
- 13 Plan 3 Exterior Concepts.....
- 14 June Shadow Study.....
- 15 December Shadow Study.....



# Mesa West



## Residential Ownership



Encourage owner-occupancy through the design of detached homes on fee-simple parcels in a planned development community.

Preserve and support the existing residential character of Victoria Street through the design of homes that front the street and incorporate entry courts and balconies.

Institute a design vocabulary blending urban and suburban elements to appeal to younger professionals and couples while providing efficient and livable floor plans.

Minimize visual impact of new development through the extensive use of perimeter and internal landscaping and varied building forms and colors.

Provide diverse public and private spaces that provide a hierarchy of uses for residents and guests through the use of courtyards, paseos, arcades and balconies.

Provide a sense of community for project residents in a village setting through the incorporation of a highly-amenitized Village Green.

Utilize sustainable building practices and features including photo-voltaic electrical systems, high efficiency appliances, enhanced insulation, and other energy and resource efficient project components.



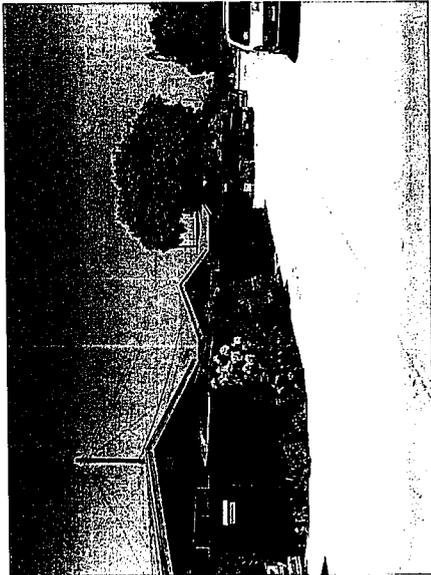
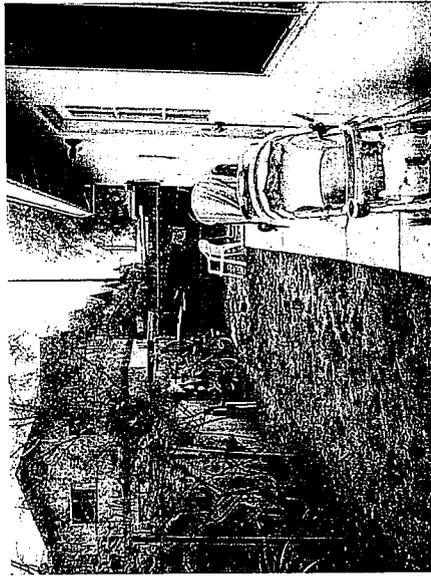
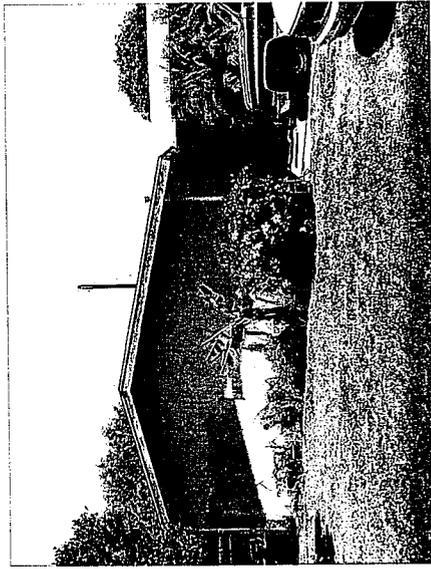
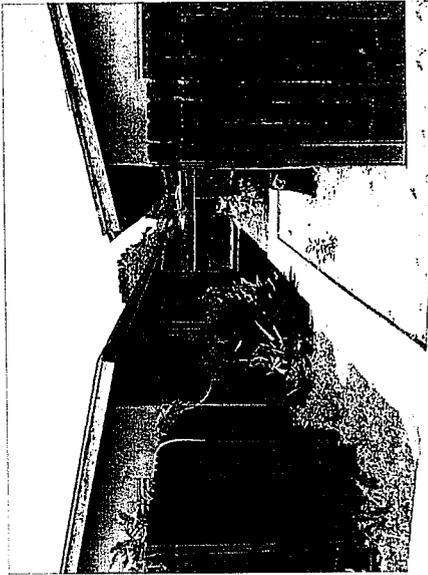
# Urban Plan



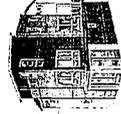
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Maple Crossing

44 Detached Residences - 573-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



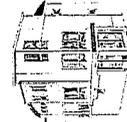
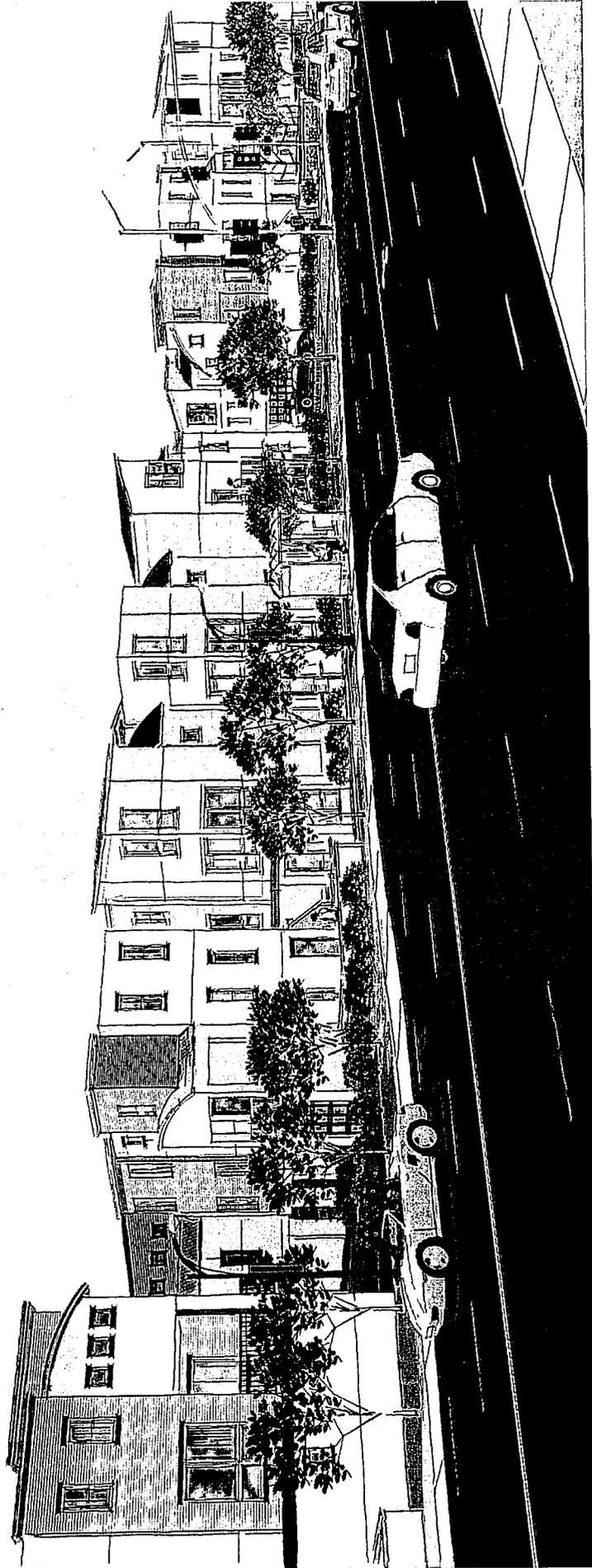
existing site photos



3

Maple Crossing

41 Detached Residences - 573-5911 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



4

Maple Crossing

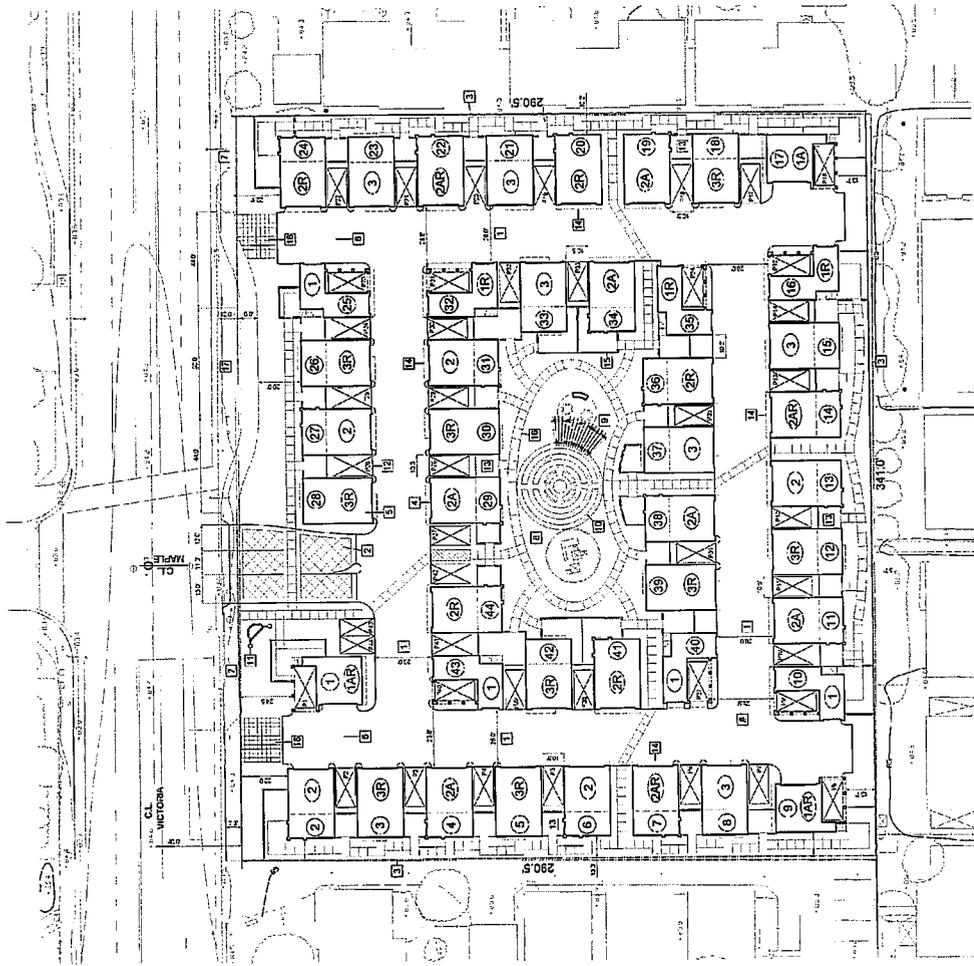
411 Detached Residences - 578-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa

van wechel  
architects  
www.vanwechel.com

view from victoria street

**PROJECT AMENITIES/FEATURES**

- DETACHED HOMES TO PROMOTE OWNER OCCUPIED USE
- DEDICATED BUS TURNOUT AT FRONTAGE
- CONTROLLED SIGNALIZED PROJECT ENTRY
- ENCLOSED 2 CAR GARAGES
- ENERGY STAR PROGRAM COMPLIANCE
- PHOTO VOLTAIC SOLAR ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS
- UPGRADED WINDOWS AND EXTERIOR DOORS FOR ENERGY AND ACOUSTIC RATING
- PROJECT ENTRY MONUMENT
- STAGGERED BUILDING OFFSETS FOR VISUAL INTEREST
- PRIVATE LOW WALLED ENTRY COURTS AT EACH HOME
- EXTENSIVE OPEN SPACE AMENITIES INCLUDING TOT LOT, BARBEQUE PATIO, SHADE STRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY GARDEN
- INTERIOR LANDSCAPED PASEO PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM
- DECORATIVE POLE LIGHTS/BOLLARDS SITE SECURITY LIGHTING SYSTEM
- UPSIZED PLANT MATERIAL WITH PREDOMINANT PLANTING UTILIZING NATIVE SPECIES
- CC&R CONTROLS REQUIRING VEHICULAR STORAGE AT GARAGES ONLY
- ENTRY AWNING OVERHANGS FOR PROJECT AESTHETIC AND SHADING
- STAMPED CONCRETE PROJECT ENTRY
- INDIVIDUAL RUBBISH COLLECTION

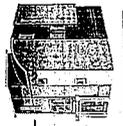


**SITE PLAN SUMMARY**

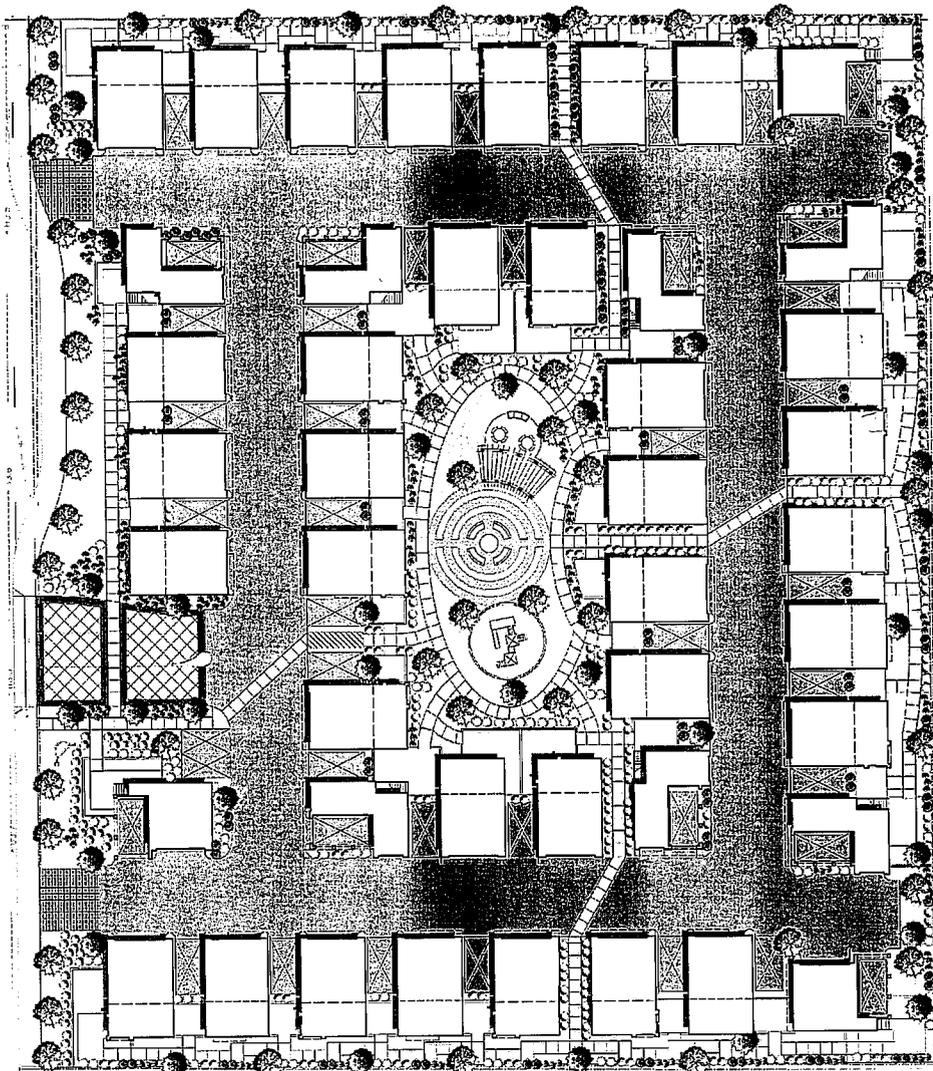
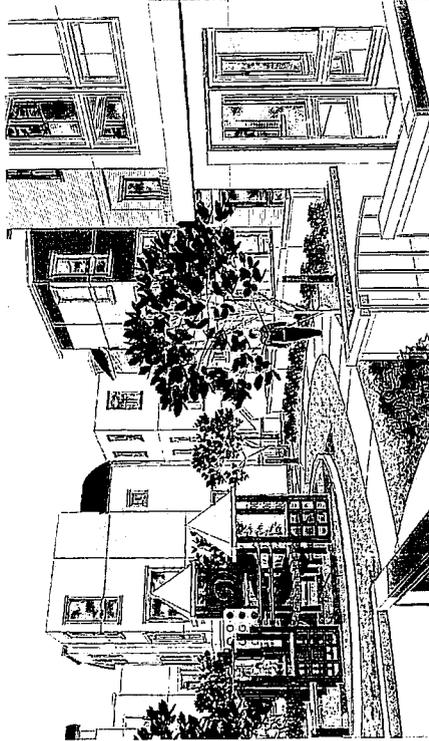
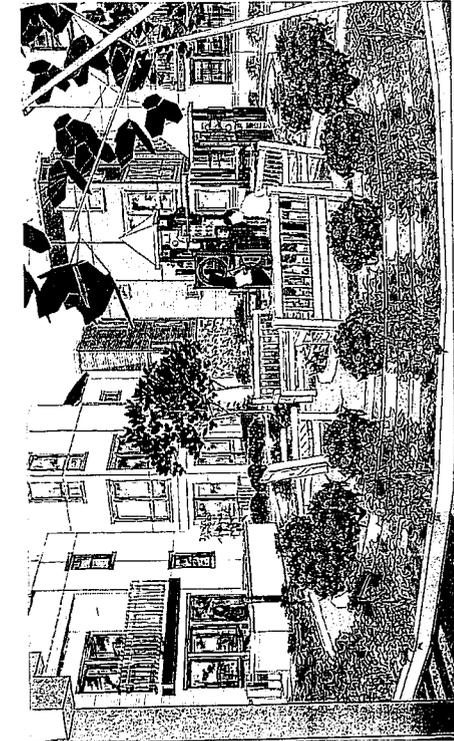
NET LOT AREA: 98,005 S.F. (2.25 ACRES)  
 DENSITY: 19.55 UNITS/ACRE  
 BLDG. FOOTPRINTS: 27,958 S.F. (28.5%)  
 DRIVEWAY: 26,262 S.F. (26.8%)  
 GUEST PARKING: 7,524 S.F. (7.6%)  
 OPEN SPACE AT GRADE: 36,261 S.F. (37.0%)  
 BALCONIES AT 2ND FLR: 3,578 S.F.  
 TOTAL OPEN SPACE: 39,839 S.F. (40.65%)  
 PARKING PROVIDED: 88 GARAGE STALLS  
 44 OPEN STALLS  
 132 TOTAL STALLS  
 BUILDING HEIGHT: 36 FEET MAXIMUM AT RIDGE

**SITE PLAN NOTES**

1. FIRE LANE
2. DECORATIVE INTERLOCKING PAVERS
3. 8' HIGH TAN SPLIT FACE BLOCK WALL WITH DECORATIVE CAP
4. 2 CAR GARAGE WITH 16' WIDE DOOR
5. 3 STORY DWELLING, TYPICAL
6. CONDUCT DRAINAGE TO APPROVED OUTLET
7. EXISTING SIDEWALK
8. COMMON LANDSCAPE AREA WITH SHADE STRUCTURE AND TOT LOT
9. BARBEQUE PATIO
10. COMMUNITY GARDEN
11. ENTRY MONUMENT SIGN
12. 9.5' X 19' MIN. GUEST PARKING STALL
13. PRIVATE OPEN SPACE
14. LINE OF SECOND FLOOR ABOVE
15. 36" HIGH STUCCO O/BLOCK COURT WALL WITH DECORATIVE CAP
16. CONCRETE WALKWAY
17. BUS TURNOUT PER CITY STANDARDS
18. GRASSCRETE EMERGENCY ACCESS



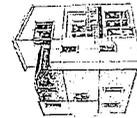
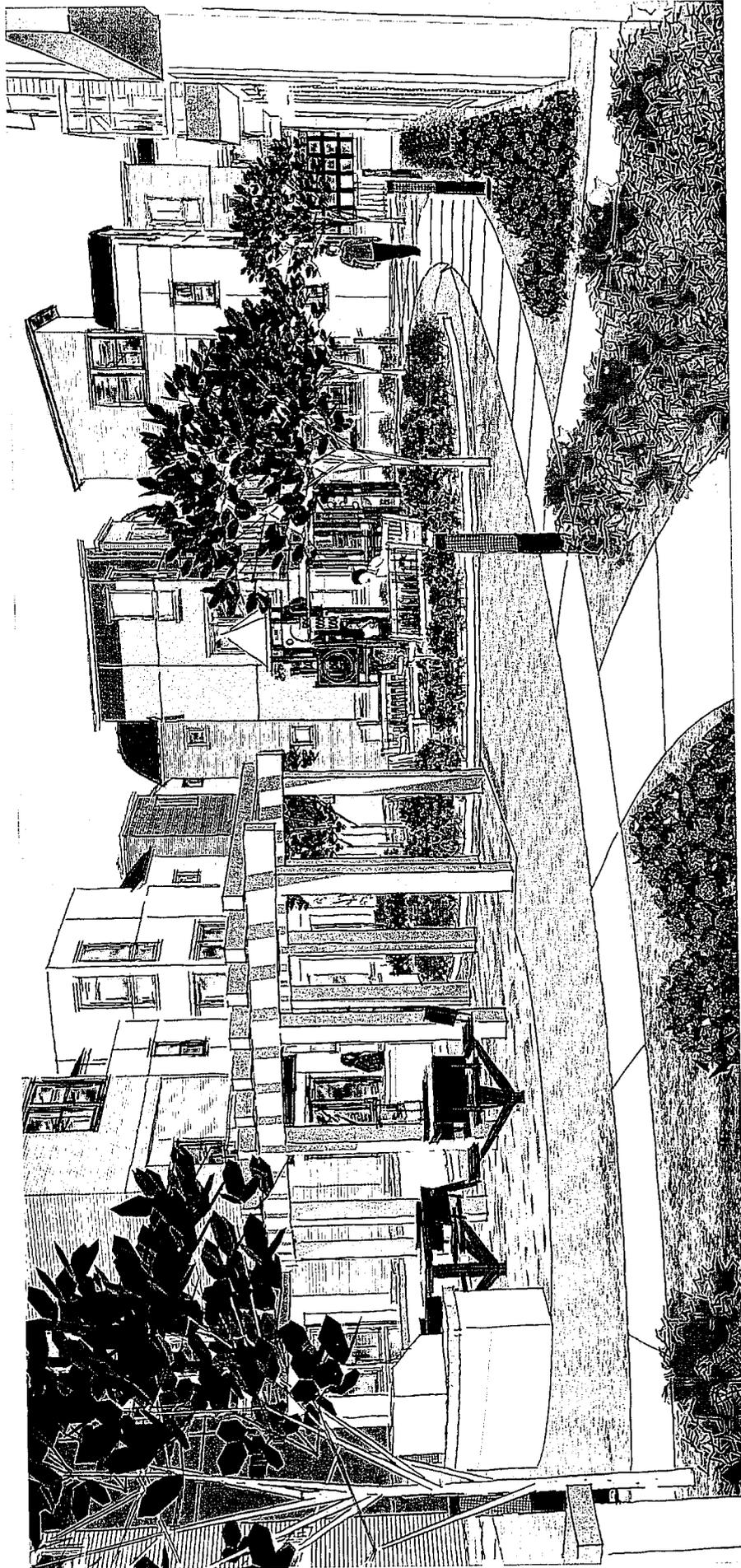
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# Maple Crossing

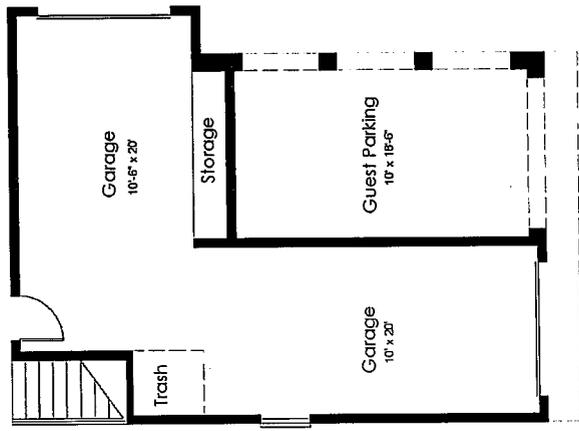
441 Detached Residences - 573-521 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



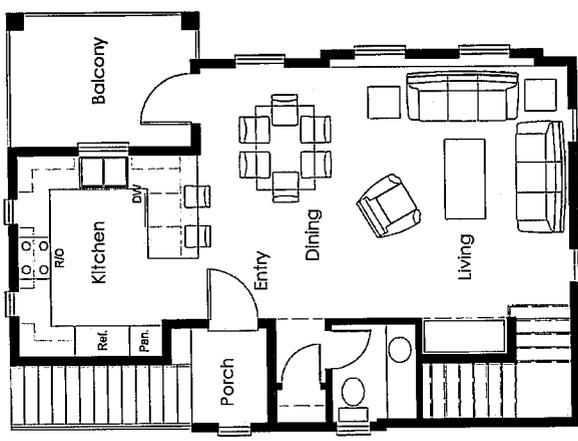
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# Maple Crossing

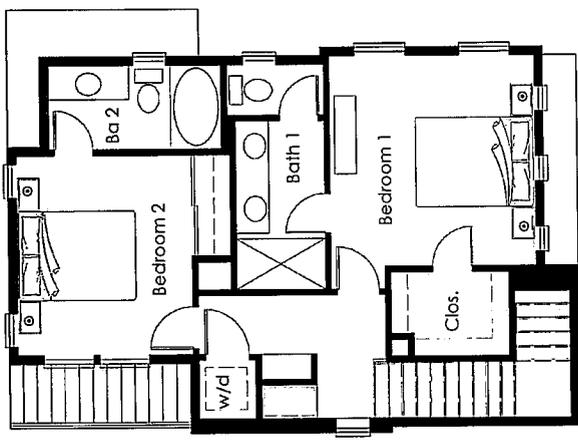
77 detached residences - 573-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



First Floor



Second Floor



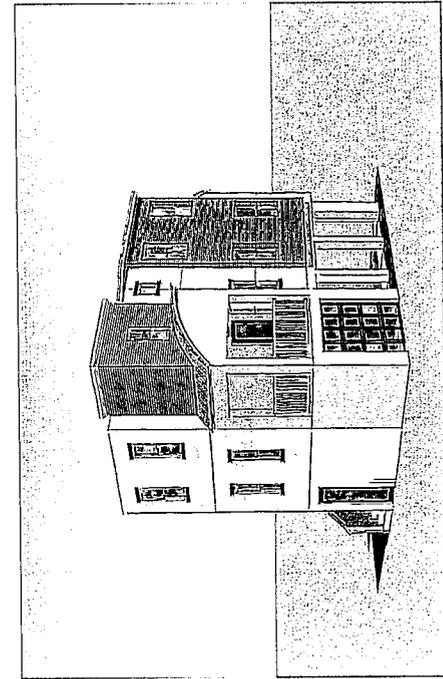
Third Floor

First Floor	0 s.f.
Second Floor	621 s.f.
Third Floor	615 s.f.
Total Livable	1,236 s.f.
Garage	420 s.f.
Balcony	89 s.f.

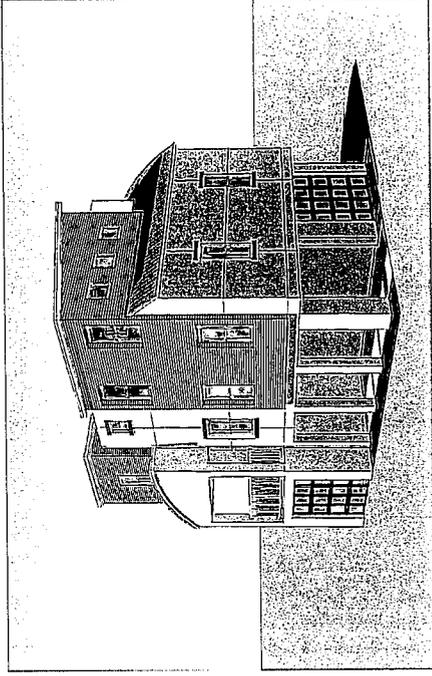


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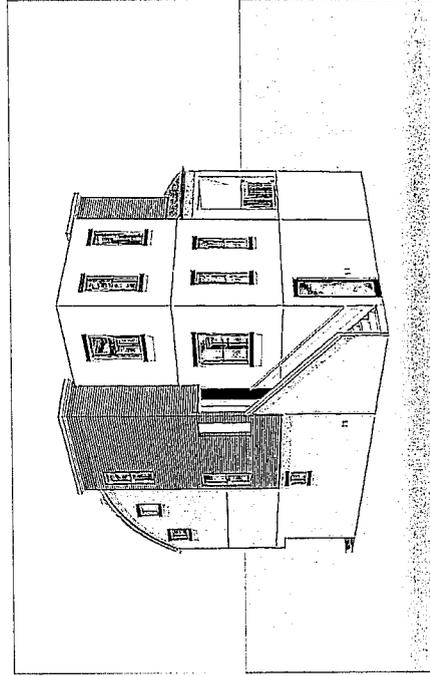
plan 1 floor plans



Driveway View



Driveway View



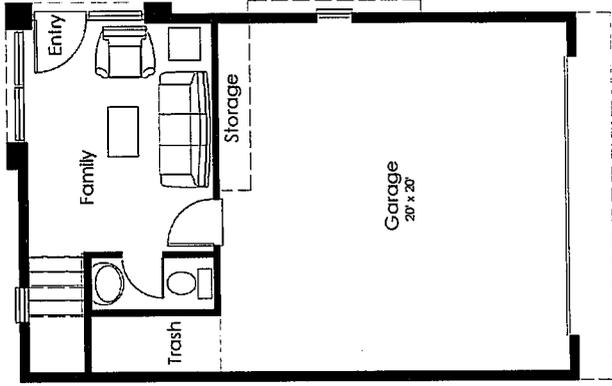
Front Door View



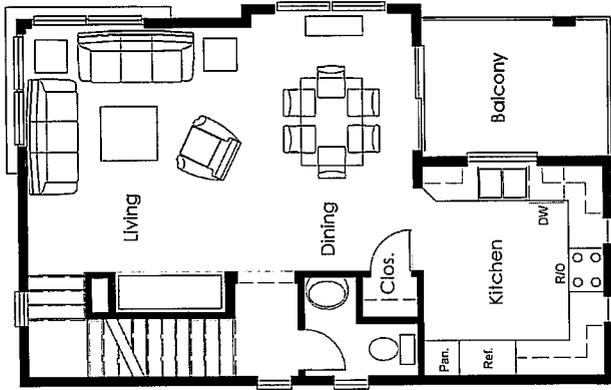
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Maple Crossing

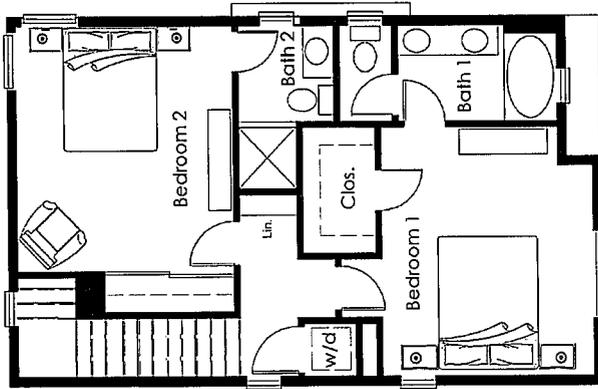
44 Detached Residences - 573-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



First Floor



Second Floor

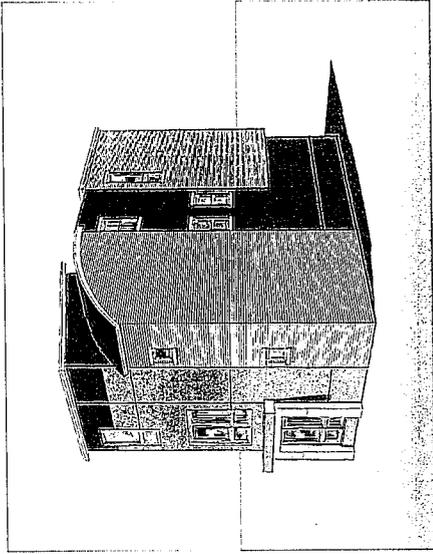


Third Floor

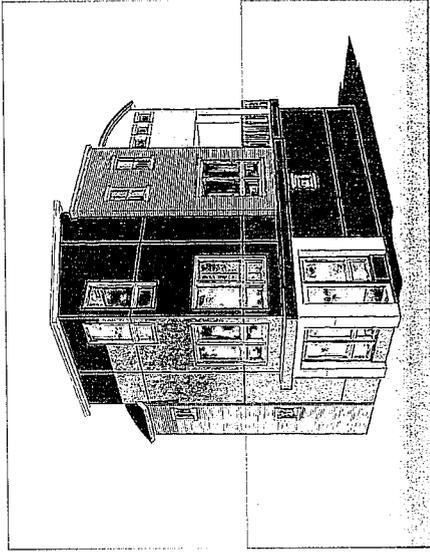
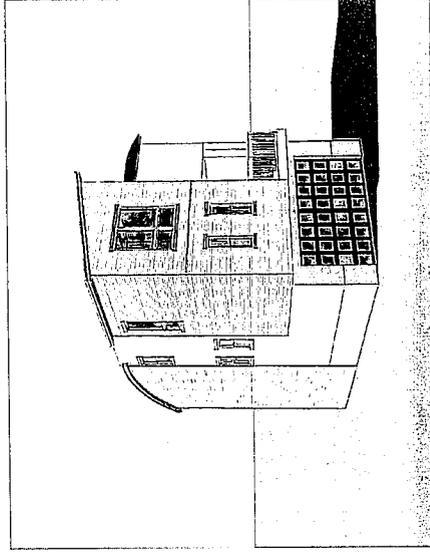
First Floor	241 s.f.
Second Floor	635 s.f.
Third Floor	634 s.f.
Total Livable	1,510 s.f.
Garage	420 s.f.
Balcony	87 s.f.



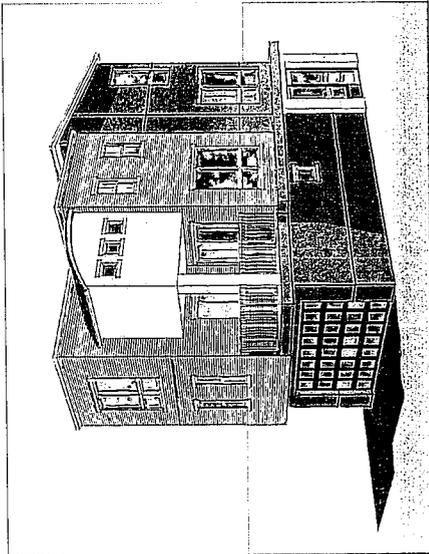
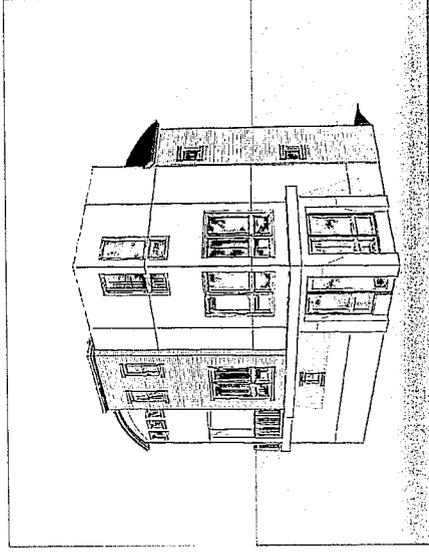
10



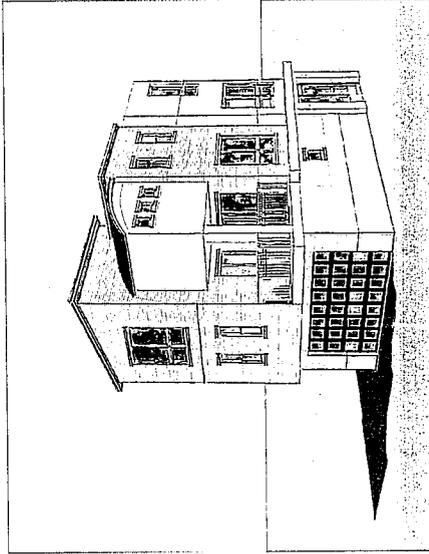
Interior Side View



Front Door View



Driveway View

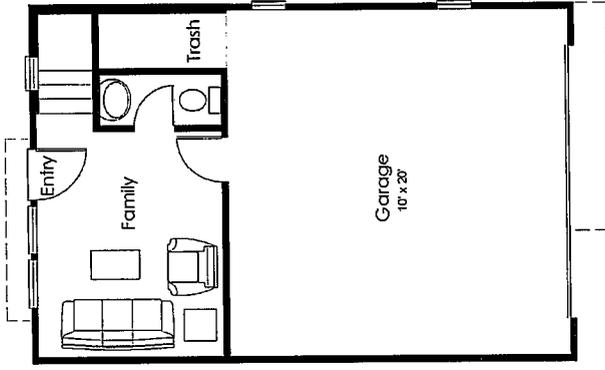


11

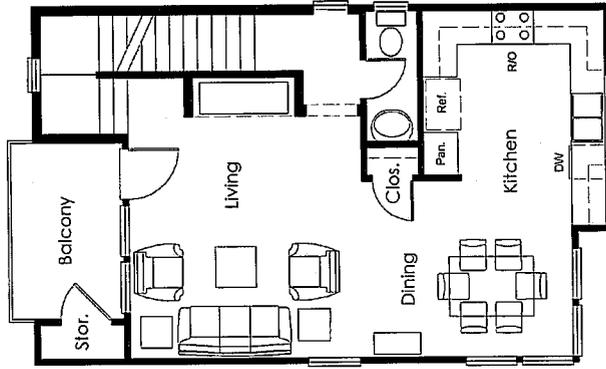
# plan 2 exterior concepts

## Maple Crossing

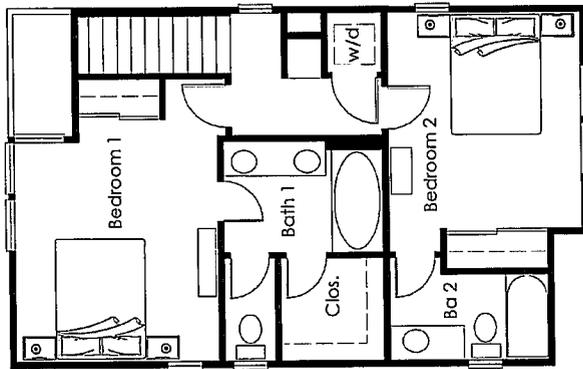
444 Detached Residences - 573-5911 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



First Floor



Second Floor

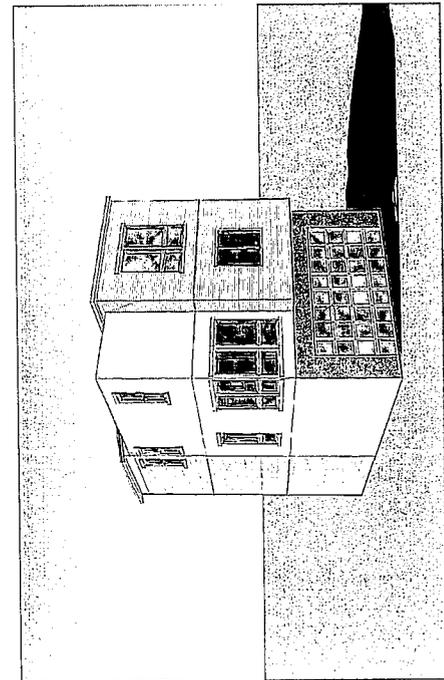


Third Floor

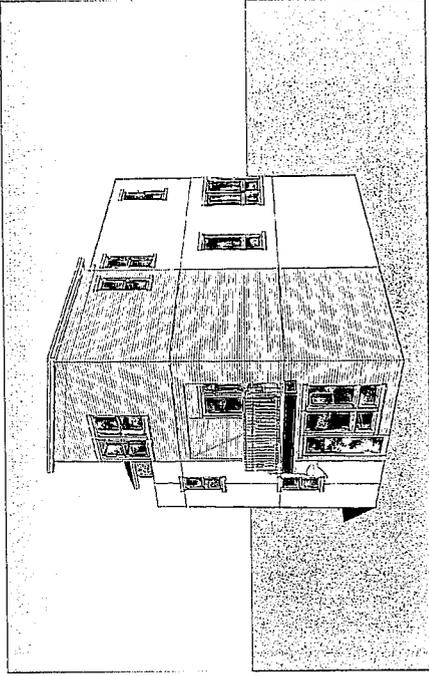
First Floor	191 s.f.
Second Floor	629 s.f.
Third Floor	670 s.f.
Total Livable	1,490 s.f.
Garage	420 s.f.
Balcony	69 s.f.



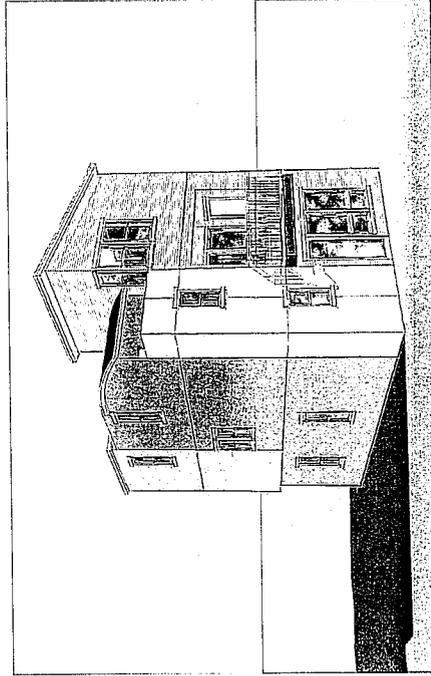
12



Driveway View



Interior Side View



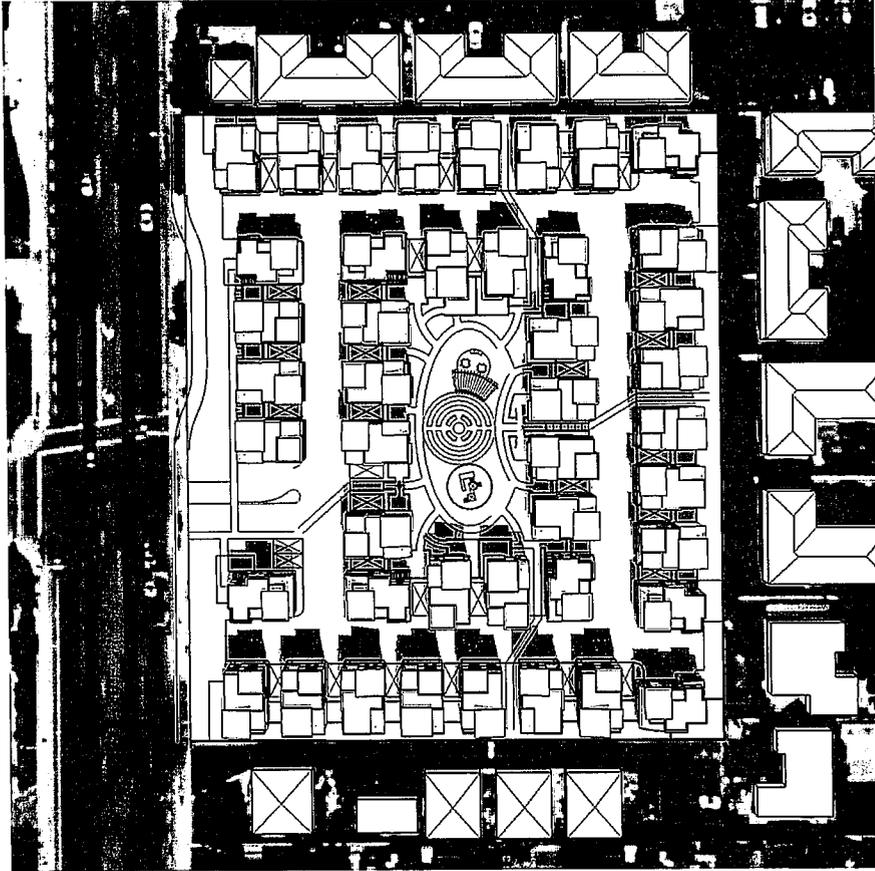
Front Door View



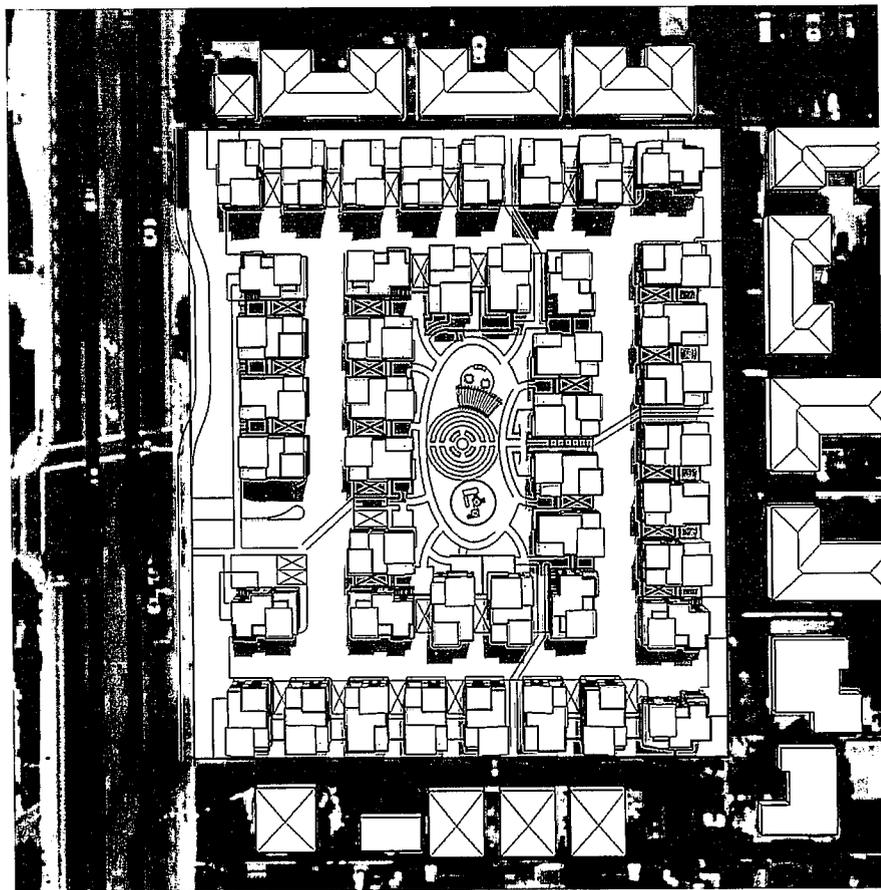
13

Maple Crossing

24 Detached Residences - 573-521 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



June 21 - 2:00 PM



June 21 - 10:00 AM

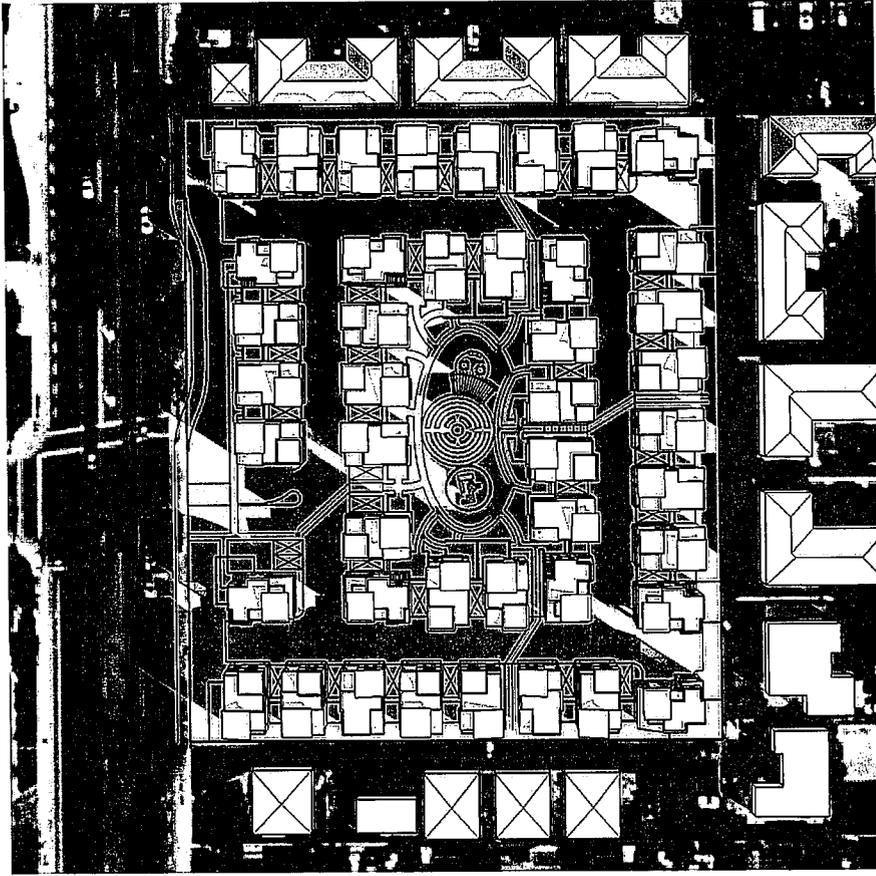


14

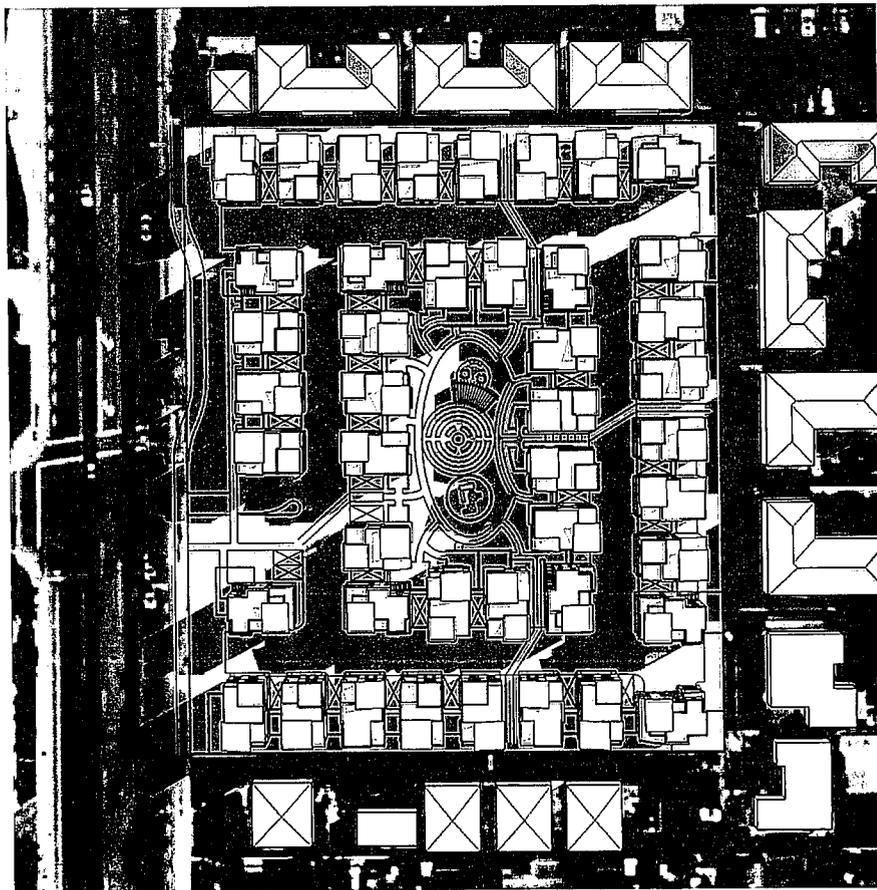
june shadows

Maple Crossing

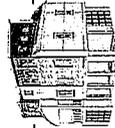
41 Detached Residences - 578-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa



December 21 - 2:00 PM



December 21 - 10:00 AM



15

# december shadows

Maple Crossing  
44 Detached Residences - 573-591 Victoria Street - Costa Mesa