

Shores

4201 Via Marina
Marina Del Rey, California 90292

Shores is a multi-family renovation of an existing project built in the 1960's. The same ownership built thirty-one, two story garden style structures and have now redeveloped the same 8.3 acre parcel into a beautiful new project which is as appropriate for the 21st century as its predecessor Del Rey Shores was for the 1960s. The new building layout has increased efficiency in the site plan, increasing the green space from 161,888 square feet, to 224,039 square feet. The new project takes full advantage of its proximity to the Pacific Ocean and adjacent marina by providing a heavily programmed two acre central courtyard space that serves as the heart of the project and encourages a strong sense of community.

As a large multi-family project with over 500 units, the challenge for the landscape architect was to transform this development. Taking a large housing project and turning it into a neighborhood. This was accomplished by creating a series of spaces or outdoor rooms, filled with amenities that offer each resident a feeling as though they have their own private garden or park, or space to meet and socialize with other residents. Working with the project team and owner, the landscape architect developed a list of residential amenities crucial to creating a sense of individual ownership, all the while fostering a sense of community and neighborhood.

The project creates a robust relationship between outdoor living and environmental stewardship. It helps define the importance of designed common space within the residential complex by creating an emphasis on allowing the residents to interact and form a sense of community. The project facilitates a more active and engaged lifestyle within the framework of the landscape and larger natural environment. Equally as important, the project is exemplary in that it employed construction practices that are environmentally sensitive.

The central court is massive in comparison to typical residential complexes at over 2 acres in size. Within this, the space is divided into outdoor rooms, which are more useable and human scaled. The largest of these rooms is the outdoor covered lobby space. Designed as the main social hub of the project this space has a direct relationship with the adjacent community room for classic Southern California indoor/outdoor living. Smaller, more active social spaces designed for bocce, barbecuing, sunbathing and swimming form the outer edges of the courtyard and are adjacent to the more passive and serene central wave garden. As a whole the courtyard provides each resident with opportunities for either social engagement or solitude. Its strong geometry of interconnecting pathways creates an overall space that is more than the sum of its parts. Something as beautiful to gaze down upon from the units above, as it is to stroll through.

The project sits adjacent to Mother's Beach in Marina Del Rey, ironically the most polluted beach in the area. The storm water treatment train employed within the courtyard conveys storm water through a series of bioswales and flow through planters. The majority of the storm water is encouraged to percolate through the sandy site soil, where it helps recharge groundwater. The water that leaves the site is filtered through natural biological means to help improve water quality in the marina.

To emphasize and reinforce this connection to the marina and ocean, the project employs a strong nautical theme. Large spinnaker shaped stair towers rise up above the wave park in the central courtyard. Conceptually the park is designed to mimic the rhythmic pattern of rolling waves, and tidal ebb and flow. The park is defined by a series of low rounding walls and mounding turf panels. Opposing diagonal walks and colorful planting bands, which serve as bioswales for storm water treatment, divide the park into rooms for reflection and observation.