

ART JURY CORNER

Driveway Gates

As Art Jurors we must often make decisions regarding driveway gates. If you have ever wondered why we care about gates the following will explain why the design and placement of driveway gates is so important to Rancho Santa Fe's character.

The Art Jury's primary intent in reviewing projects is to maintain what the Protective Covenant refers to as the "*rare quality*" of Rancho Santa Fe's "*landscape, trees and shrubs*" A special part of Rancho Santa Fe's landscape is its rural character created by the prominence of the trees and shrubs mentioned in the Covenant. Since a major part of the perception of the area's character is based on views of the community from the road, entry features visible from the road will naturally affect the perception of the community. Rancho Santa Fe's character is based on a feeling of openness: open land, open spaces, and undeveloped countryside with a low density of homes. A contributing factor to the open feel of Rancho Santa Fe is the fact that many of the homes are well hidden, thus creating a more rural feeling than is sometimes really the case. A large number of prominent driveway gates destroys the perception of rural character. Gates not only introduce man-made elements along the road but also accentuate the number of driveways leading to homes which may otherwise be unseen.

When gates are allowed, they should maintain and reinforce Rancho Santa Fe's character by being visually unobtrusive through proper siting, low scale, and the use of rustic materials and subdued colors. The resulting design should be restrained and not visually prominent, gates should not incorporate features that would be inherently eye-catching. To create the desired appearance the Art Jury will often request that gates and pilasters be reduced in size and height or be moved further back from the street. By making these changes the Art Jury can still approve gates while maintaining our community's appearance.

Applicants often ask us why they can't have a gate like one that they have seen elsewhere on the ranch. In Rancho Santa Fe you will see many gates built in the past that because of their proximity to the street, size or other characteristic are visually prominent. These older designs, while perhaps attractive on their own, would probably not be approved under the current review policies. What has brought about this change in attitude towards gates? We must now give greater attention to gate design and placement because of the increased amount of development in Rancho Santa Fe. In the past, driveways with a gate were the exception, most properties didn't have them so the relatively small number of gates didn't interfere with the undeveloped character of the community. Today, as more homes are being built, enlarged and remodeled, an entry gate is usually part of the overall design package and the number of properties with gates has increased dramatically. The cumulative effect of all the gates near the street expands the amount of man-made features along the roads, brings attention to all of the individual properties and diminishes the natural character of the Ranch. To allow gates without compromising the "*rare quality*" of Rancho Santa Fe the Art Jury follows review policies to ensure that gates will not dominate views.