



Planner Don Westphal,
President
Donald C. Westphal
& Associates

JONATHAN URBANEK

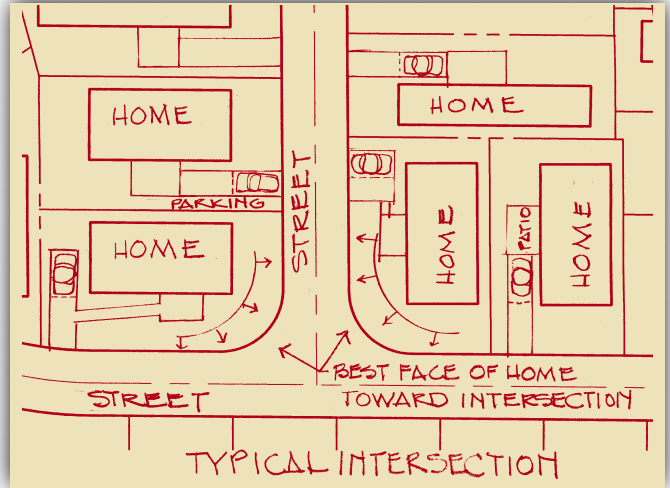
Earn Extra Points for Presentation A home's siting and appearance sells your community or subdivision

Q How can we improve the appearance and siting of homes in our community to enhance its image?

A Nearly all manufactured homes today have an acceptable appearance when placed in a subdivision or land-lease community with the long face of the home parallel to the street. Most of these homes are displayed "broad set" in order to capitalize on that more attractive looking face. Unfortunately many of these homes lack curb appeal when placed on the narrow lots found in many subdivisions and most land-lease communities. Since costs related to lot width often rule out the possibility of broad setting homes, four actions can be taken to improve community appearance with little or no additional cost.

First, place homes that are on corner lots with the front door and living yard facing the street. This must be done in the initial planning of the community and can be accomplished by either spinning corner lots ninety degrees or making provisions for the utility risers to accept a home with a reversed floor plan.

Second, require in the community guidelines that all homes have some attractive treatment on the street-facing end of the home. This can be accomplished by requiring one or more of the following: a minimum amount of window area, an eyebrow roof or bay window, a porch or entry covering for any street-facing entry door, or a garage or carport in front of the home. I've seen communities where the street-facing ends of the homes were a solid wall of siding, while



Enhancements such as garages, covered porches, eyebrow roofs and bay windows can improve the exterior appearance of a community.

the attractive sides were obscured.

Third, maintain a uniform front setback from the street. Many communities are designed with the utility risers placed close to the rear of the homesite. This requires the homes to be placed to the rear of the homesites to cover the sewer and water risers, which results in different front setbacks and a lack of streetscape continuity. Place risers further forward so that shorter multi-section homes can be placed closer

to the street without making riser location adjustments.

Fourth, design off-street parking so that landscaping can be placed along the front of the home. Many communities are designed with the parking in front of the home making it impossible to landscape there. Some developers design the parking in tandem along the side of the home to allow for a future carport or garage. This reduces the number of cars parked off street adjacent to the curb and results in fewer cars in the streetscape.

Attractive streetscapes don't happen by accident. Plot plans for each home placement assures that the home and homesite add to the over all positive appearance of the community. Interior appearance sells the home, but exterior appearance sells the community.

Don Westphal has over 35 years of experience planning manufactured home communities. He can be contacted at (248) 651-5518 or via email at don@dcwestphal.com