

Avonlea

Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, B.W.I.



Type: Resort Village
Designed: March 2003
Status: Inactive
Size: 250 acres
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Avonlea is a relatively flat 250-acre property that gently slopes towards 850 feet of ocean coastline. It is bounded by Sea View Road to the south, a proposed major arterial to the north, and undeveloped private properties to the east and west. During the course of a weeklong charrette, the DPZ team produced two possible master plans for the site.

One major problem discussed during the charrette was the lack of quality vernacular architecture on the island. Most of the historic houses had been demolished to make way for new resorts, vacation homes, restaurants, and the like; the remaining examples are generally associated with poverty conditions and lack modern commodities. As a result, a substantial portion of the charrette was dedicated to the development of an architecture style for Avonlea. Pedro St. James was selected as a precedent because of its distinct ties to the region. The prototype was adapted to single-family housing and stacked duplexes, with the added modern amenities of bathrooms, garages, and kitchens.

The first possible design scheme divides the site into three distinct neighborhoods. At the heart of the plan is a neighborhood square, lined on two sides by apartments and single-family homes with the other sides opening to the Caribbean. The square serves as the entry to the town center and will contain a mix of civic, residential, retail, and recreational uses. The neighborhoods are compact and walkable, with most houses served by rear alleys to maintain a pleasant street frontage. The streets and pedestrian pathways connect a series of lakes and ponds that run throughout the community.

The second plan features a university campus, consisting of educational, administrative, residential, and athletic facilities. The vision of a New Urbanist resort community—complete with a town center, neighborhood squares, and spectacular ocean views—works in conjunction with the campus to create a truly unique community in the Cayman Islands.