Italian Gardens is located in the Gardner District approximately two miles south of downtown San Jose. It is part of the Tamien Station Area Plan to redevelop the area around CalTrain, light rail, and bus-transit hub with high-density urban housing. On the site, the Lo Curto house, a Tudor revival home built in the 1920s, and the surrounding park-like area of trees, ponds and grottos, are designated landmarks by the City of San Jose. The house and park were preserved and rehabilitated as part of the affordable housing development, and the house includes a two-bedroom manager’s unit on the second floor.

The construction was designed with a “board and batten” appearance consistent with nearby developments and the site’s own historic structures. The design generates the appearance of a cluster of smaller buildings, thus reducing its mass and scale. All six buildings surround a central courtyard area with a lawn, two tot lots, a swimming pool and two community buildings.

A joint venture between MidPen Housing and Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Italian Gardens received a Gold Nugget Award of Merit From the 2005 Pacific Coast Builders Conference and a 2004 Builder’s Choice Award of Merit from Builder Magazine.