

**From:** [Meha Patel](#)  
**To:** [Leonard Ng](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)  
**Cc:** [Lesley Xavier](#)  
**Subject:** RE: PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Revised Design - Neighbor Concern Letter 2  
**Date:** Monday, June 5, 2023 8:38:06 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Hi Leonard,

Thanks for the neighbor concern letter #2. Since the agenda has been posted already, it will be included as a Post-Meeting Material, but it will be provided to the Development Review Officer.

Thank you,

**Meha Patel | Assistant Planner**

Community Development Department | Planning Division  
1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050  
D: 408.615.2454 | E: [mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)



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**From:** Leonard [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 4, 2023 11:44 PM  
**To:** Meha Patel <[mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)>; [Planning Public Comment](#)  
<[PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov)>  
**Subject:** PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Revised Design - Neighbor Concern Letter 2

Hi Meha,

Thanks so much for the information - we had a chance to review the agenda packet and were shocked and dismayed that it seems no changes have been made at all to the exterior bulk and massing of the home, even though the review officer asked specifically that the design be updated to incorporate a 3'-5' minimum at the 2nd floor along the shared side yard to comply with the City's Design Guidelines.

As such, please kindly see our neighbor concern letter #2 (dated 6/3) attached below, which also re-references our original concern letter (dated 5/8) which we feel is still valid and has not been addressed.

If you can kindly include both letters in the design review officer's packet so that all information is available, we would sincerely appreciate it.

Thanks so much again for all your support and help,

Leonard

On Friday, June 2, 2023 at 09:55:59 AM PDT, Meha Patel <[mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)> wrote:

Hi Leo,

Yes, the revised development drawings and DRH Agenda are available at this link [Development Review Hearing Agenda and Packet](#). The next hearing is next Wednesday on 6/7 at 4:00 PM.

Thank you,

**Meha Patel | Assistant Planner**

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

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**From:** Leonard Ng <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 2, 2023 9:06 AM  
**To:** Meha Patel <[mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)>  
**Subject:** PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Revised Design?

Hi Meha,

Hope all is well - I am writing to see if there is a revised/updated design available yet for 74 Woodhams - if so, can you please forward me the drawings for my reference?

Also, I remember the next hearing will be next Wed, is that correct?

Can you please forward the meeting information for me as well?

Thanks so much,

Leonard

On Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 02:40:50 PM PDT, Meha Patel <[mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)> wrote:

Hi Leonard,

Thank you for your email and letter. We understand your concern. We will include this in the record for the project. It has been forwarded to the review officer.

Couple things to note:

- The City's single family design guidelines are 'guidelines' and not objective standards similar to the code.
- The windows on the interior side (along the shared property line) will be frosted to maintain privacy.

I have attached the agenda again if you'd like to join the Development Review Hearing tomorrow at 3pm.

Thank you,

**Meha Patel | Assistant Planner**

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

D: 408.615.2454 | E: [mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)



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**From:** Leonard Ng [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 12:36 AM  
**To:** Meha Patel <[mpatel@Santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@Santaclaraca.gov)>  
**Cc:** Planning Public Comment <[PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:PlanningPublicComment@santaclaraca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Neighbor Concern

Hi Meha,

Thanks so much for the info - in studying the project plans in the agenda packet, we are actually extremely, and actually even more, concerned about the proposed 2nd story addition.

From our perspective, the proposed design does not seem to be in keeping at all with many of the clear and specific points from the City's single family design guidelines.

Please kindly see our detailed letter and concerns attached below as PDF - if you can kindly include this email and our PDF letter as part of the formal project file/record for the reviewing officer or committee, we would sincerely appreciate it.

Thanks so much again for your help and please let us know if you need anything additional from our end.

Thanks again,

Leonard

On Friday, May 5, 2023 at 01:25:02 PM PDT, Meha Patel <[mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)> wrote:

Please note, your email will be part of the public record on this item.

**Meha Patel | Assistant Planner**

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

D: 408.615.2454 | E: [mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)



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**From:** Meha Patel

**Sent:** Friday, May 5, 2023 1:11 PM

**To:** Leonard Ng <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** RE: PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Neighbor Concern

Hi Leonard,

Thank you for your comment. This project requires a development review hearing. Please find the 5/10 Development Review Hearing Agenda attached and on the Planning website:

<https://santaclara.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

The maximum height limit is 2-stories, 25 feet. The minimum step back from the property line on the interior side is min. 5 feet. There is no FAR requirement, but the maximum lot coverage requirement is max. 40%.

They are proposing height is 20 feet in height. They meet the minimum 5-foot interior setback (they are proposing 6-foot from the property line). They are proposing 38% lot coverage.

Thank you,

**Meha Patel | Assistant Planner**

Community Development Department | Planning Division

1500 Warburton Avenue | Santa Clara, CA 95050

D: 408.615.2454 | E: [mpatel@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@santaclaraca.gov)



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**From:** Leonard Ng <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 5, 2023 12:08 AM  
**To:** Meha Patel <[mpatel@Santaclaraca.gov](mailto:mpatel@Santaclaraca.gov)>  
**Subject:** PLN23-00109 74 Woodhams Road, Neighbor Concern

Hi Meha,

This is Leonard here, and I am the homeowner located at 82 Woodhams which is directly next to 74 Woodhams and share a long common property line.

Their home is very close to ours and very close to our shared property line, and I have deep concerns given the large proposed 2-story addition at almost 1000sf and it's direct and adverse impact on the privacy, views and daylight on our lot - especially if it will be directly over their existing home.

It seems their new home will almost double in size and their 2nd story will presumably be looking directly into our backyard and over our entire property!

I went online but there does not seem to be any documents, plans, drawings, renderings, elevations or information available yet.

If you can kindly send link or documents so that I can review in more detail, I would sincerely appreciate it. If you can also let me know what the City's maximum height limit, minimum setbacks, and FAR is for their lot, and what they are proposing, I would appreciate it as well.

Thanks so much in advance for all your help,

Leonard

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

June 3, 2023

City of Santa Clara  
Planning Division  
1500 Warburton Ave  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

**RE: 74 Woodhams Road – 2-Story Addition ( PLN23-00109 )**

**Neighbor Concern Letter 2:**

**Project Has Not Been Updated to Address Review Officer's  
Recommendation to Setback 2nd Story a minimum of 3-5'**

**And Still Violates City's Single Family Design Guidelines**

Dear Development Review Officer, Meha Patel & Planning Division:

Hope you are well and we are the adjacent concerned neighbors at 82 Woodhams Road and share a long side yard property line with 74 Woodhams Road.

In the last meeting, the development review officer asked that 2nd story be setback a minimum of 3'-5' farther away from the side property line to comply with the City's Design Guidelines. We thought this was a great suggestion, as it would begin to help address our extreme alarm and concern regarding the towering massing and bulk of the proposed 2nd story addition being proposed right next to our low single-story existing home.

We did not receive any notices at all from the last meeting, but reached out to Meha to kindly forward along a link to the latest drawings. To our shock and dismay, it appears that no revisions have been made at all to change the exterior bulk or massing of the project at all and the 2-story addition remains an unmitigated 48' long x 20'4" tall wall along our entire shared property line.

While we appreciate the reformatting of windows to allow for increased privacy, our primary and greatest concern regarding the bulk and massing still remains, and we feel none of our greatest concerns from the first review meeting have been addressed at all, including:

**2nd Story Addition is a Massive 48'x20' Wall with No Setbacks & No Relief**

**2nd Story Addition is Due South and Will Cast Shadows & Block Sunlight All Day / All Year into our Property**

**2nd Story Addition Seems To Violate Many Aspects of City's Single Family Design Guidelines:**

- SENSITIVE DESIGNS ESPECIALLY IN 1-STORY NEIGHBORHOODS
- 2ND STORY SETBACKS NOT PROVIDED
- HORIZONTAL INSETS/OFFSETS NOT PROVIDED
- 'TRUE' 2ND STORY ADDITION IS +/- 82% OF 1ST FLOOR AREA (exceeds 66% max limit)
- 2ND STORY CASTS LONG SHADOWS AND BLOCKS SUNLIGHT
- 2-STORY DOUBLE VOLUME HEIGHTS DISCOURAGED

Again, we sincerely hope the planning staff and review officers and committees will kindly take our concerns seriously. The proposed 2nd story addition will have huge impacts to our home and property and seems to go against everything the City's own Design Guidelines tries to safeguard against.

Thank you so much again for your time and consideration,

Adjacent Neighbor,  
82 Woodhams Road

Enclosure:      Our Original 5/8/2023 Neighbor Concern Letter                      (11 pages)  
                         with Relevant Design Guideline Excerpts



May 8, 2023

City of Santa Clara  
Planning Division  
1500 Warburton Ave  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

**RE: 74 Woodhams Road – 2-Story Addition ( PLN23-00109 )**

**Neighbor Concern Letter + Project Seems to Violate Single Family Design Guidelines**

Dear Development Review Officer, Meha Patel & Planning Division:

Hope you are well and we are the adjacent neighbors at 82 Woodhams Road and share a long side yard property line with 74 Woodhams Road. We recently received a notice of development review hearing regarding the large proposed 2nd story addition and had a chance to reach out to the project planner to review the proposed drawings/agenda packet. We would like to humbly submit our concerns here:

**2nd Story Addition is a Massive 48'x20' Wall with No Setbacks & No Relief**

We are extremely alarmed and concerned regarding the massive 2nd story addition being proposed so close to the property line, which is completely out of scale with the predominantly 1-story neighborhood and will effectively create an approximately 48' long and 20' tall wall right next to our property. The massing of the home shows no sensitivity to neighbors or privacy, and will tower and overlook our entire property. While a token applied roof eave has been applied, this does not conceal the fact that the new addition is an unmitigated 20' tall wall next to our home.

**2nd Story Addition is Due South and Will Cast Shadows & Block Sunlight All Day / All Year into our entire Property**

To make matters worse, in terms of orientation, 74 Woodhams is directly to the south of our property where we share a long, common property line. Their 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition right up against the property line creates an almost 50' long x 20' tall wall will effectively block most of the sunlight into our property and render our property in deep shadow throughout the entire day, as the sun arcs east to west fully in the southern sky.

**2nd Story Addition Seems To Directly Violate City's Single Family Design Guidelines**

We had a chance to look up City of Santa Clara's Single Family Design Guidelines, and were shocked to see that the 74 Woodhams addition seems to directly violate many of the wonderful and sound design principles that the design guidelines delineate. Highlighted excerpts are attached for convenience at the end, but these include:

**1 Design Guideline #2B  
Sensitive Design Solutions for 2-story Additions in 1-story Neighborhoods**

The proposed design has an unmitigated 48' long x 20' tall mass 6' away from our shared property line.

## 2ND STORY SETBACKS NOT PROVIDED

The design guidelines specifically call for 2nd story additions to be setback a minimum of 3-5' from the first floor, and more if the 2nd story is greater than 35% of ground area (which it is, at close to 60% of existing). This does not seem to have been provided.

## HORIZONTAL INSETS/OFFSETS NOT PROVIDED

The design guidelines also call for relief in the massing through breaking up the façade into smaller volumes. It describes horizontal insets of 2' wide x 6' long minimum, which also does not seem to have been provided.

## 'TRUE' 2ND STORY ADDITION IS +/- 82% OF 1ST FLOOR AREA (EXCEEDING 66% MAX LIMIT)

While the large 2-story double height volume may not count as area on paper, the reality is this double-height volume is effectively a 2nd story for all intensive 'real-life' purposes to the surrounding neighbors and neighborhood. From an exterior perspective, it IS in fact a 2nd story with corresponding 2nd story height, mass and bulk.

When viewed from a mass and bulk standpoint in meeting the intent of the design guidelines, this extra area should definitely be factored in as part of the 2nd story area – which makes the 'true' 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition approx. 1,570SF – more than 80% of the 1st floor area. This is far above the 66% max limit outlined in the guidelines.

## **2 Design Guideline #4A: Site Planning – Casting Long Shadows & Blocking of Sunlight**

The proposed design is directly south of our home, and will block sunlight and cast deep shadows over our entire property. This is directly what guideline #4A warns against, where proposed designs must setback and minimize shadows onto adjacent neighbors and not block access to light, air and views.

## **3 Design Guideline #4D: Mass & Bulk / Scale & Height**

Similar to guideline #2B, the proposed project seems to be in direct violation of this section:

- reduce mass, height and bulk
- eliminate large blank walls, inadequate setbacks and excessive height
- offset second floor walls and provide horizontal offsets

## **4 Design Guideline #4F: High Volume Areas / Double-Height Areas**

The proposed project seems to try to 'max out' as much as possible and seems to be in direct violation of what this section is trying to protect against:

- double volume spaces in 2-story homes are discouraged
- high volume areas that appear 2-stories tall are discouraged – adds to exterior height/bulk

## 5 Design Guideline #3D: Design/Location of Windows

While frosted windows have been proposed, the windows are extremely large for side yard windows and look directly over our entire property. In reality, there is no guarantee that the owner or future owner may not switch out these windows for clear glass panels – which realistically would be very difficult for anyone to regulate or enforce.

Rather than designing a more sensitive 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition, it seems the design ‘maxes out’ a double-height space at the center of the lot, and pushes all the rooms to abut our shared property line – hence forcing the issue by placing rooms along the property line which directly violates principles of good building design, site planning and the spirit of protecting neighbor privacy.

We hope the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor layout can be reworked with better design principles, where the bedrooms have better light/view access to the two street frontages they have available (as opposed to all along our private side yard).

At a minimum, the Design Guidelines calls for minimum sill heights of 5’ to protect privacy, and we would like to kindly request that all windows be kept at this height. Notwithstanding layout changes, it seems Bedroom 2 can easily accommodate, as they have a front facing window to the street. Same with master bath window. For Bedroom 1, we would like to kindly request that the window be kept frosted and that the sill height be kept at egress maximum, at approx. 44” above L2 finish floor (not lower) to protect privacy, if there is no other option.

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We sincerely hope the planning staff and review officers and committees will kindly take our concerns seriously. The proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> story addition will have huge impacts to our home and property and it seems the intent of the City’s wonderful design guidelines were to help safeguard and protect against these kind of adverse development impacts to the neighbors and neighborhood.

We understand and respect that there are many factors in designing a home, but we sincerely feel not much thought or effort has been made to practice sensitive design to us neighbors, and the design as proposed does not even come close to meeting the standards espoused by the Design Guidelines.

We especially feel that the problem is perhaps arising from the desire to ‘max out’, and having such a large, double-height volume over their living space goes against the existing 1-story neighborhood, the intent of the design guidelines, and forces the layout to push all second story massing and rooms up against our property line.


Thank you so much again for your time and consideration and we hope the project can be redesigned to meet both the concerns above, as well as the basic requirements of the City’s own Design Guidelines.

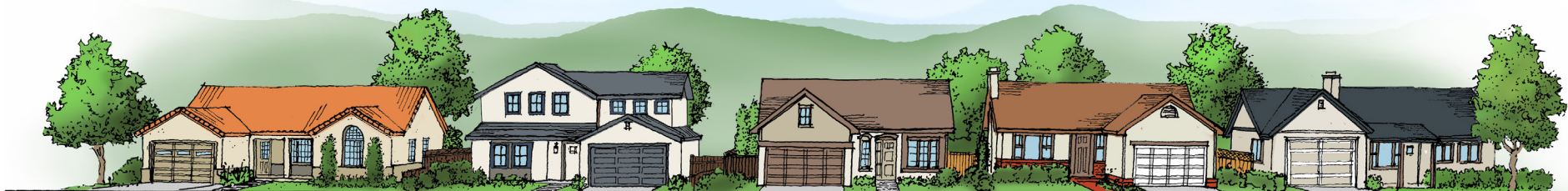
Thank you,

Adjacent Neighbor,  
82 Woodhams Road

Enclosure: Highlight Excerpts from City of Santa Clara’s  
Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines (8 pages)



CITY OF SANTA CLARA  
SINGLE-FAMILY AND DUPLEX RESIDENTIAL  
**DESIGN GUIDELINES**   
2014



## 2b. Sensitive Design Solutions

**Goal: To create homes compatible with the neighborhood and maintain privacy.**

The following are specific guidelines for second-story additions. Special attention is devoted to second-story additions, as these project types have been the most challenging for the City and neighboring residents.

### Designing a Second-Story

While permitted by the Santa Clara City Code, second-story additions or new two-story homes, built in a predominantly single-story neighborhood, can be one of the most neighborhood sensitive and challenging situations. The design must pay special attention to neighborhood compatibility and privacy issues. Unless designed correctly, second-story additions can substantially change the scale and character of the neighborhood.

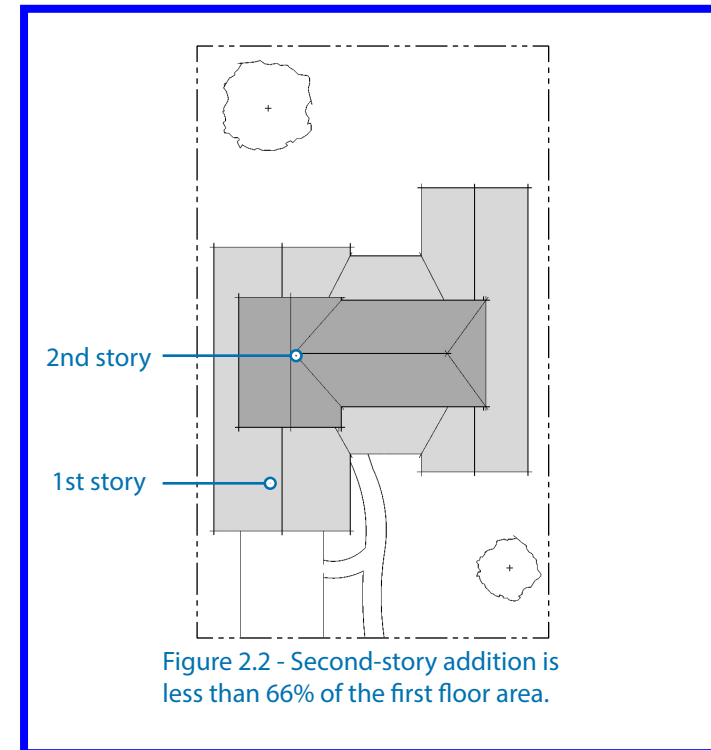
An application for a new two-story home next to a one-story home must be designed so it does not overshadow or dominate the one-story home by way of scale, proportion or massing, or unreasonably interfere or conflict with the privacy of neighbors.

Construction at or above the second-story should be carefully designed to minimize building massing, the placement of windows, balconies, and location of common living areas, in order to minimize potential impacts on adjacent properties. A proposed two-story design must demonstrate that it protects the privacy of neighbors.

## Important Considerations

### 1. Second-Floor Massing

1. The area of the second-floor should not exceed the common pattern of the neighborhood. For new second-stories in predominantly one-story neighborhoods, the second-floor area should not exceed approximately 66% of the first floor area (including the garage area). (Figure 2.2)
2. Unless two-story high walls are common in the neighborhood, maintain a roof segment between the first and second-floor walls for at least 50% of the building perimeter. Generally, these roof forms should be carried around building corners to provide visual continuity between adjacent house facades. In predominantly one-story neighborhoods, avoid two-story walls without intervening roof eaves on front elevations.
3. Second-floor ceiling heights should be minimized. If interior ceilings heights in excess of nine feet are desired, they should be achieved through the use of vaulted ceilings rather than increased wall height. (Figure 2.3)



## 2. Walls

1. The front and side walls of the second-floor should be set back from the first floor to minimize mass and bulk. Second-floor areas should be set back at least five feet from the front wall of the first floor, and three to five feet from the side and rear walls of the first floor. (Figure 2.4)
2. For second-floors with an area greater than 35% of the ground floor area, setbacks of the second-floor should be greater than these minimums.
3. Avoid a bulky appearance when adding a second-story to the front facade. (Figure 2.5)

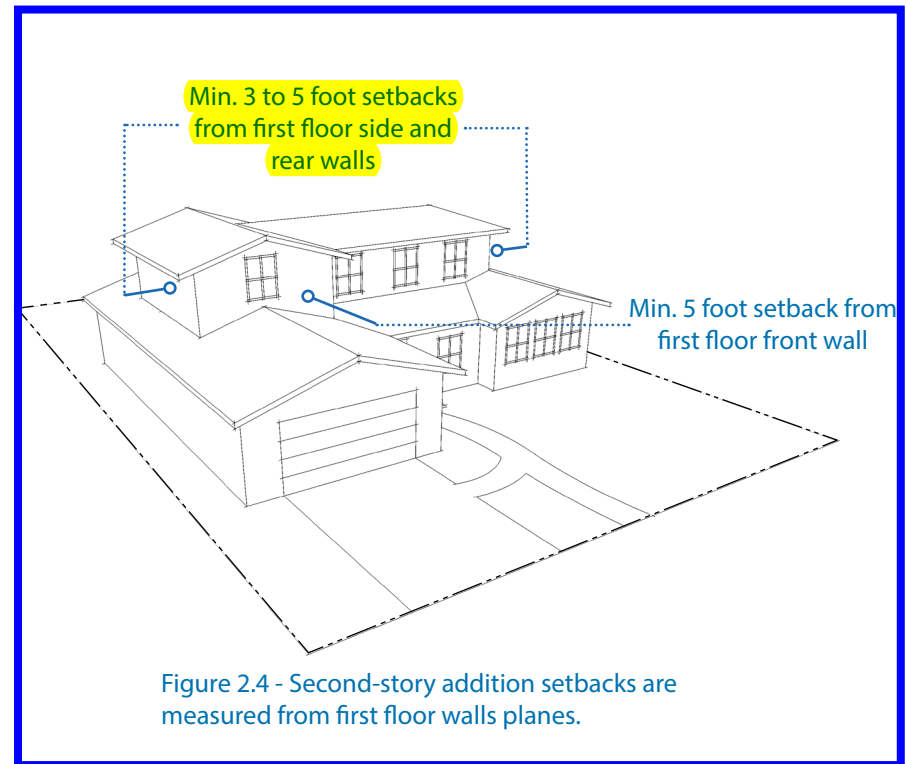


Figure 2.4 - Second-story addition setbacks are measured from first floor walls planes.



Figure 2.5a - Second story addition is adequately set back from the first floor and does not have a bulky appearance.

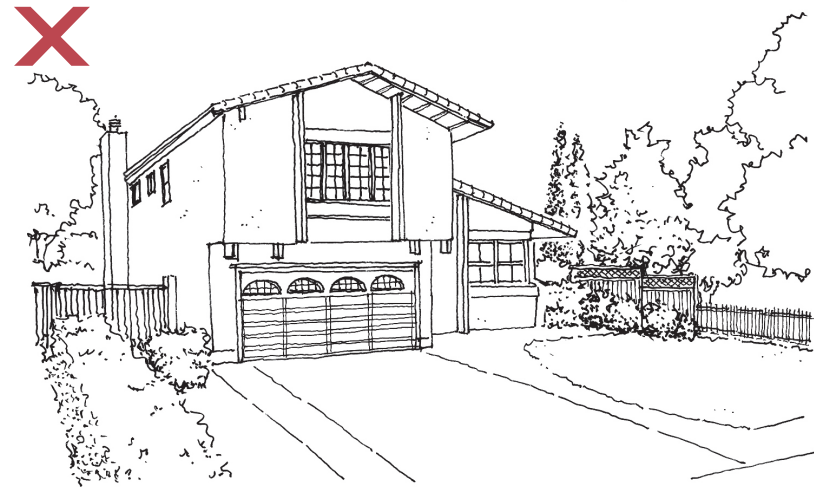


Figure 2.5b - Bulky second-story addition.

4. Provide horizontal insets and offsets of two feet deep by six feet wide minimum, for any second-floor walls of 25 feet in length or greater. These insets or offsets shall fall within setback requirements. (Figure 2.6)

### 3. Windows

1. Where proposals include second-floor side-facing windows located within 15 feet of a side property line, applicants are encouraged to raise the window sill level of these windows to a minimum of five feet above the finished floor. Other common design techniques include the use of clerestory or frosted windows. (Figure 2.7)
2. Larger second-floor windows should orient towards the front and rear. Second-floor windows on the sides of a home should be kept to the minimum building code size for light, ventilation, and emergency egress. Placement, design, and orientation of all windows and glass doors on the sides of the home should pay strong consideration towards privacy impacts. (Figure 2.8)
3. Avoid aligning side yard second-floor windows directly with windows on neighboring properties.

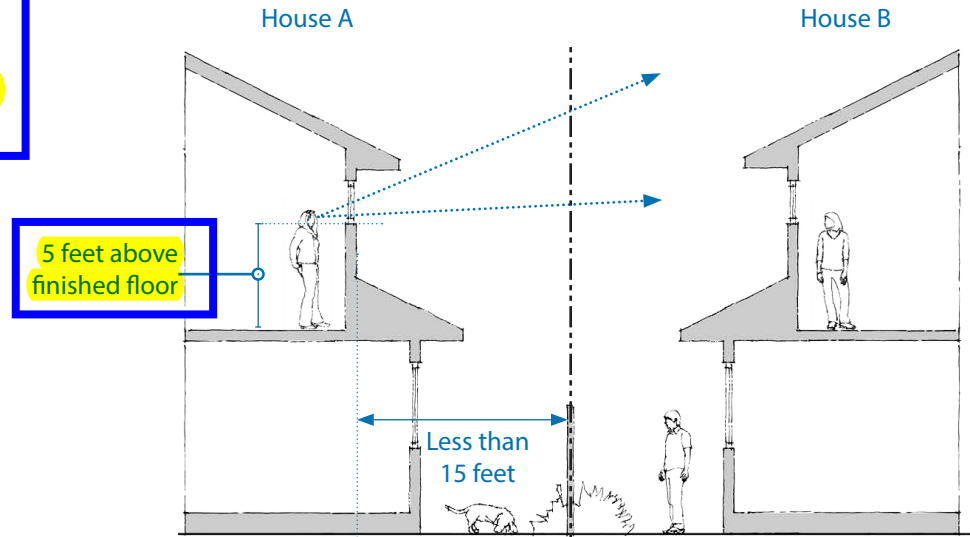


Figure 2.7 - Second-story windows on *House A* are raised at least five feet above the finished floor, reducing privacy impacts.

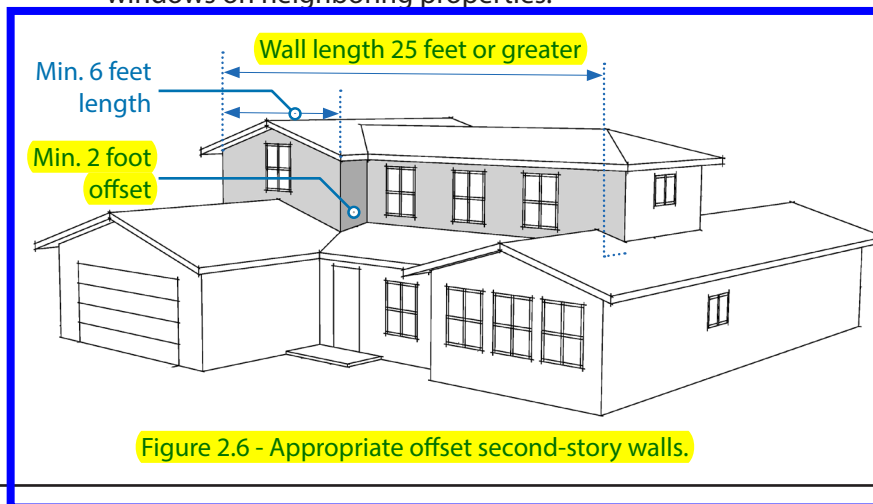


Figure 2.6 - Appropriate offset second-story walls.

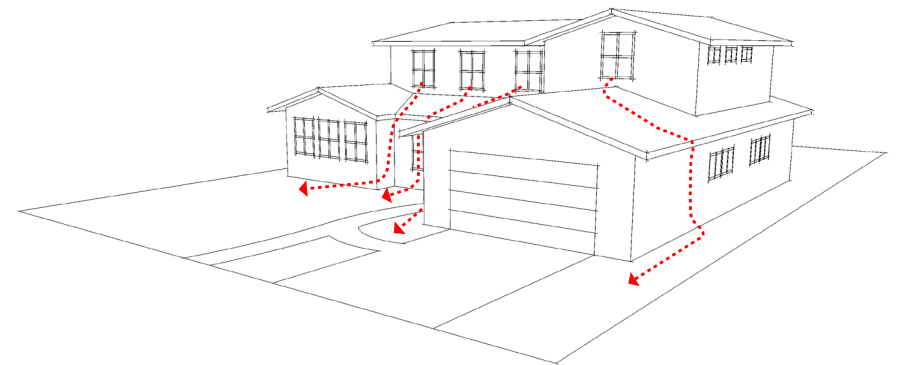


Figure 2.8 - Larger second-floor windows at the front provide emergency egress. Smaller second-floor windows on the sides provide privacy.



3. Proposed designs should minimize, to the extent possible, shading of adjacent homes and private yards. Impacts of scale, shadow, views, air, and light and other consequences of development upon nearby properties may require use of greater setbacks to provide less shading. (Figure 4.2)

4. Building massing and orientation will subject to special consideration to weigh potential shadow impacts on neighboring properties.

5. Where appropriate, proposed setbacks should be adjusted to complement adjacent development or to accommodate special needs of the development as determined through the architectural review process.

6. Second-story additions should be set back from the front yard or street side yard walls of the first floor to reduce the appearance of bulk.

7. Second-story additions should be located away from the side and rear yards of neighboring residential properties as much as feasible.

8. Requirements for on-site grading and drainage should be considered at the preliminary stages of design development. The finished grade above the top of the nearest street curb should be used as benchmark.

9. Building pad heights should be determined early in the interests of flood hazard mitigation, stormwater runoff, design treatment of building elevations, and to consider appropriate measures to protect privacy on surrounding properties.

10. Locate buildings to avoid removing mature trees and landscaping to the extent possible. (Figure 4.3)

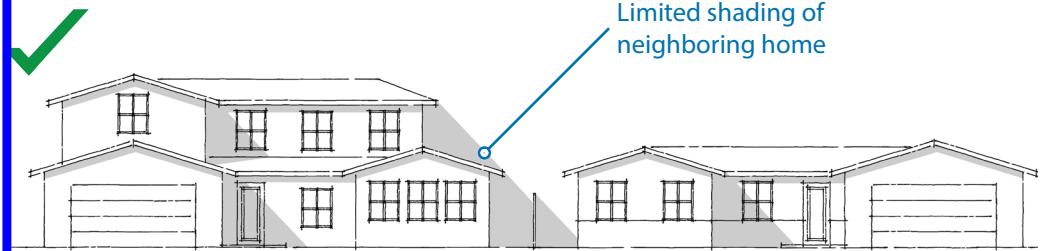


Figure 4.2a - Second-story addition with larger side setbacks to reduce shading of neighboring properties.

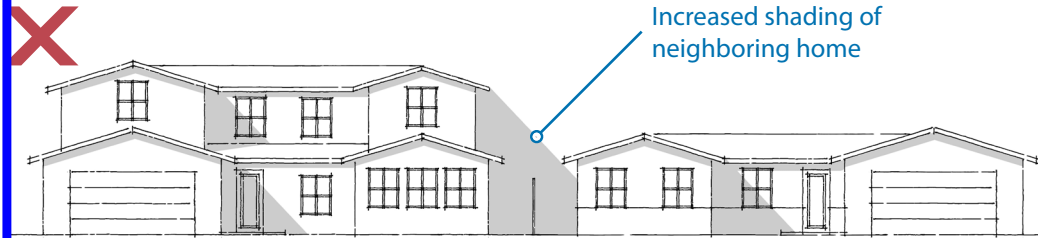


Figure 4.2b - Second-story addition built close to the allowed side setback, resulting in increased shading of neighboring properties.

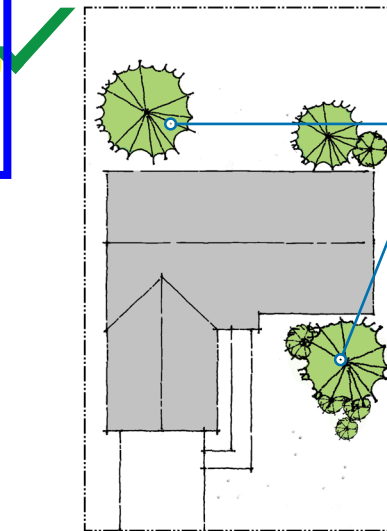


Figure 4.3a - Site planning that preserves mature trees.

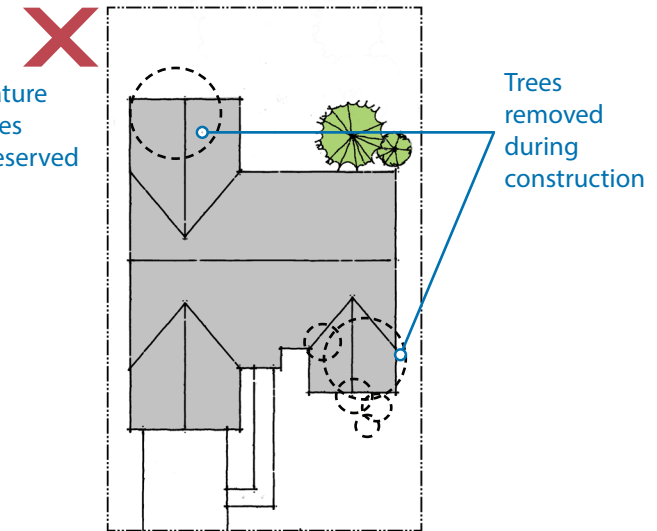


Figure 4.3b - Site planning that removes mature trees.

## 4d. Mass & Bulk / Scale & Height

### **Goal: Reduce mass and bulk of homes**

Development proposals should be reviewed for their overall size and intensity relative to adjacent homes and the prevailing neighborhood pattern. Designs should reduce the appearance of mass and bulk wherever possible. This is especially critical with two-story homes.

### Important Considerations

#### 1. Articulation and Massing

1. Large blank walls, lack of architectural relief or building articulation, excessive building heights, inadequate setbacks and other design features should be eliminated so that proposals are not out of scale with the neighborhood.
2. Reduce the perception of mass and bulk of two-story homes, by offsetting the second-floor walls from the first floor walls on the front and side elevations. (Figure 4.8)
3. Provide horizontal offsets for long walls of two feet deep by six feet wide minimum along any second-floor walls of twenty-five feet in length or greater. These insets or offsets should fall within Zoning setback requirements.



Figure 4.7 - Two-story home having second-story walls set back from first floor walls.

## 4f. High Volume Living Areas

**Goal: High volume living areas that are designed in a manner not apparent from outside**

Interior areas with high ceilings that are one-story on the inside, may appear on the outside as if they are two-story spaces. This can add significantly to the perception of mass and bulk of the home; if not designed properly.

### Important Considerations

1. High volume and/or attic storage areas that appear two stories tall from the outside are discouraged. (Figure 4.11)
2. When high volume living areas in excess of nine feet high are necessary, they should be achieved through the use of vaulted ceilings rather than increased exterior wall height.
3. Double-volume spaces within two-story homes are discouraged. (Figure 4.12)

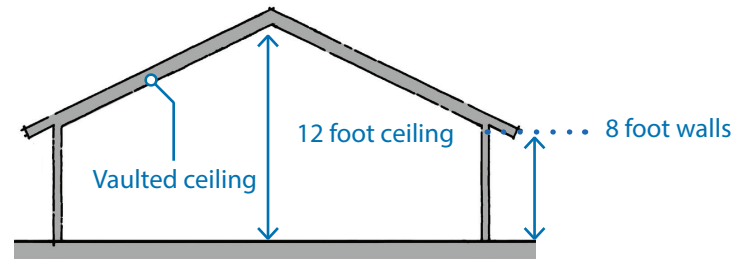


Figure 4.11 - High volume living areas: Positive example utilizes vaulted ceilings to achieve a higher ceiling rather than increasing wall and building heights.

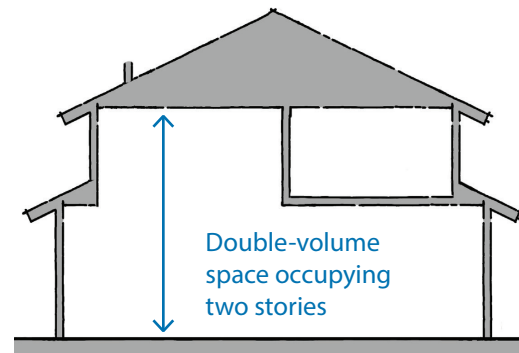
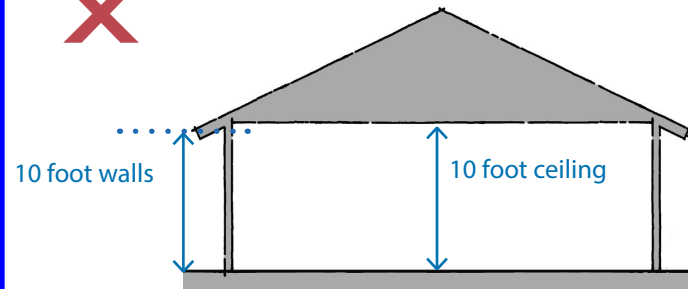


Figure 4.12 - Double-volume living areas taking up two or more stories are discouraged.