



Palo Alto
Single-Family
Individual Review
Guidelines

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CITY OF PALO ALTO

Department of Planning and Community Environment

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These Guidelines were approved . . . *(final version to contain the review and approval details)*

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Note: Consistency with these guidelines is required for each proposal to be approved

The Single-Family Individual Review process and the applicability of these guidelines were established by PAMC 18.12.110 to preserve the character of Palo Alto neighborhoods by placing specific requirements relating to streetscape, massing and privacy of new two-story homes and upper story additions within the R-1 zone district.

These “updated” guidelines replace the 2001 guidelines that were modified in 2004, as recommended by the Planning and Transportation Commission. The updated guidelines do not change the objectives of the previous edition, but intend to more clearly emphasize and better illustrate them. The IR process is not design review, nor intended to prescribe specific architectural styles.

Applicability

- New two-story homes.
- New second-story additions to existing one-story homes.
- Addition of more than 150 square feet of floor area to an existing upper story.
- Modifications to previously approved IR projects.
- Existing portions of a structure to be remodeled are exempt from these guidelines.
- For properties in the Historic Professorville District:
 - New one-story homes.
 - Addition of more than 150 square feet of floor area to any existing story.
 - Relocating a home more than four feet horizontally on the property.

Goals

- Preserve the unique character of Palo Alto neighborhoods, recognizing that the visual unity of a street and shared architectural and site features of nearby property will result in varied design responses per each particular neighborhood context.
- Promote new construction that is compatible with existing and evolving residential neighborhoods’ site development patterns, mass and scale, and streetscape appearance.
- Encourage new two-story houses and second-story additions that balance diversity of style with respect for the surrounding context.
- Foster consideration of neighbors’ concerns regarding privacy, scale, massing and streetscape.

How to use

- Each guideline covers an aspect of residential development essential to meeting the goals of the Individual Review (IR) program.
- Each guideline has a criterion statement that must be met to obtain IR approval.
- The illustrations show examples of houses that **do not** and **do** meet each guideline. Some examples are tailored to specific neighborhood types.
- The “Key Points” that follow the illustrations provide additional direction and reminders that are useful in meeting the guidelines.

Properties in the Professorville Historic District

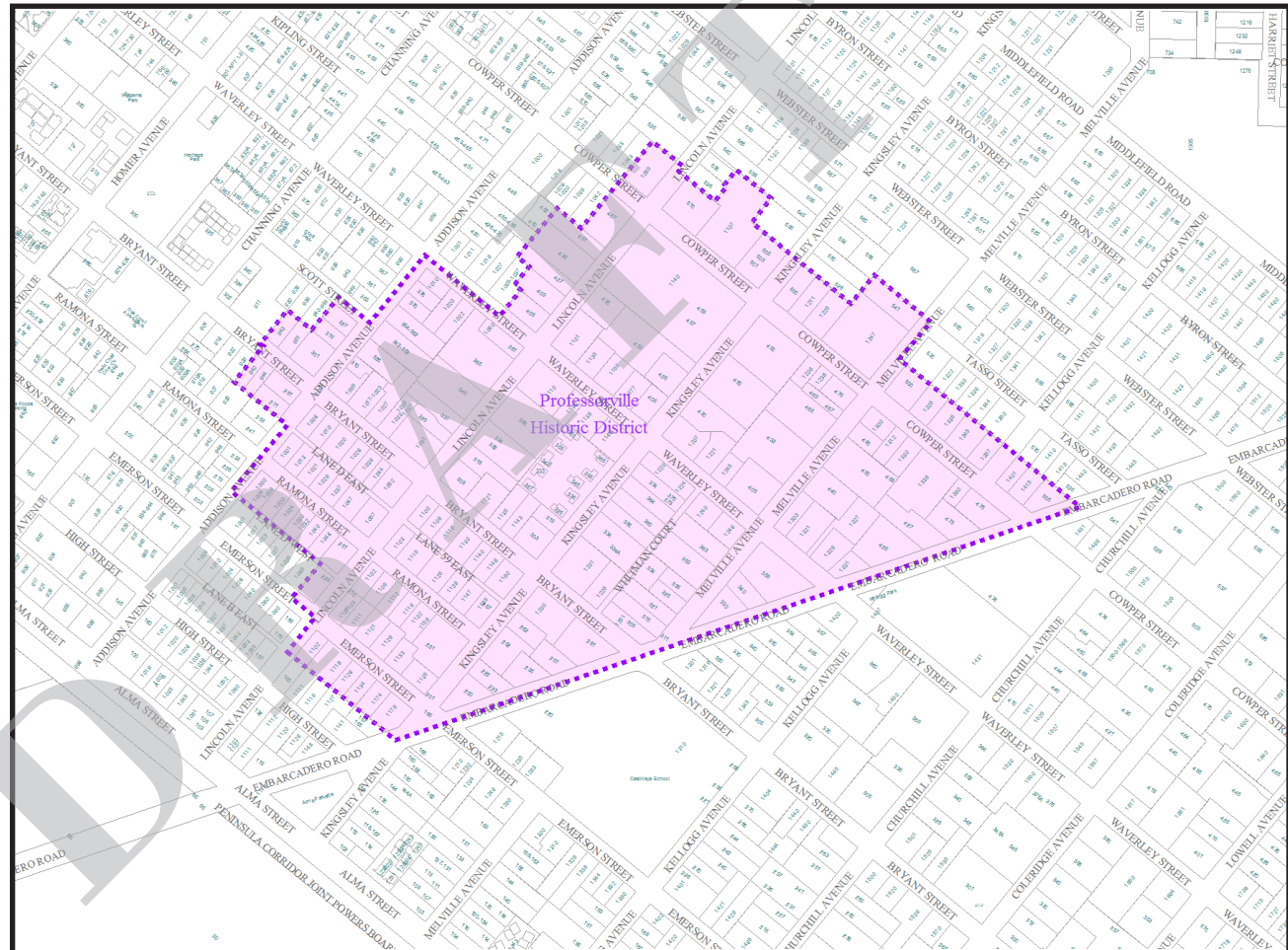
Approval Criterion:

The proposed new construction, new addition or remodel shall be consistent with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SISR) of historic structures.

* *Information within this guideline clarifies Professorville District Characteristics, and is used to refine the application of Individual Review Guidelines 1 through 5 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation for new homes or additions within the Professorville District.*

Introduction

The Professorville Historic District ("Professorville" or the "District") comprises the National Register Historic District of 1980 and the District Expansion of 1993. Reference the map below produced by the City of Palo Alto, revised 2010.



Professorville Characteristics and the Secretary's Standards



The Professorville District

- Professorville has an exceptional number of historically significant homes, a rich collection of diverse architectural styles, a distinctive land development pattern, and substantial landscaping. To promote and preserve these defining characteristics of the District, the following key points are provided for owners and prospective owners of residential properties in Professorville who are contemplating exterior modifications or new construction.

Proposed Projects in Professorville

- In accordance with the City of Palo Alto, the proposed new construction shall be consistent with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures (SISR or the "Standards"). To assist owners of residential properties in Professorville who are contemplating exterior modifications or new construction, the City of Palo Alto offers a No-Fee Application Study Session with the City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Board (HRB) to discuss the proposed project and its consistency with the Standards.
- Note that the Standards use preservation terms that have specific meanings for the Professorville Historic District. Early consultation with the HRB is strongly recommended.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION: The following standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.*

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*National Park Service, US Department of the Interior

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Evaluating Significance within Registered Historic Districts:

The following Standards govern whether buildings within a historic district contribute to the significance of the district.

1. A building contributing to the historic significance of a district is one which by location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association adds to the district's sense of time and place and historical development.
2. A building not contributing to the historic significance of a district is one which does not add to the district's sense of time and place and historical development; or one where the location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association have been so altered or have so deteriorated that the overall integrity of the building has been irretrievably lost.
3. Ordinarily buildings that have been built within the past 50 years shall not be considered to contribute to the significance of a district unless a strong justification concerning their historical or architectural merit is given or the historical attributes of the district are considered to be less than 50 years old.

Project applicant should confirm the historic status of the subject building with City staff.

Definitions

Differentiation:

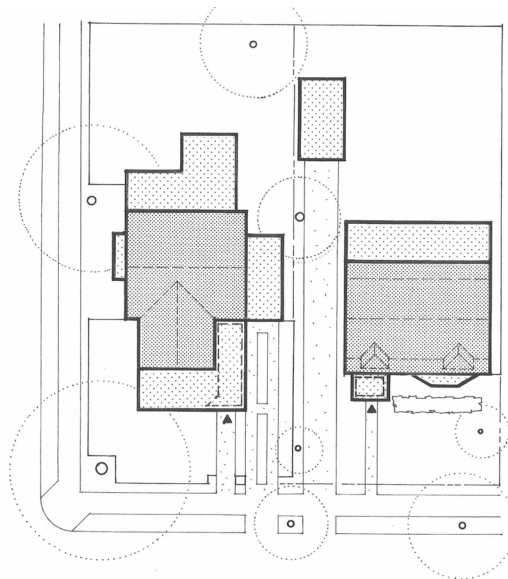
- Differentiation for construction of a new home is achieved when there is a perceived visual difference between the construction and the neighboring houses in the District. Differentiation for an addition is achieved when there is a perceived visual difference between old and new construction.
- Examples include:
 - New exterior walls step in a minimum of 6 (six) inches from the plane of old exterior walls.
 - The proportion of new window-to-wall areas is different than the proportion of old window-to-wall areas.
 - Exterior materials - subtle material changes are employed on addition that are otherwise consistent with the building architecture.
 - An architectural transition provided at the connection of the existing structure and an addition so that the building forms are separated. Forms and material usage may be otherwise similar with this example.

Compatibility:

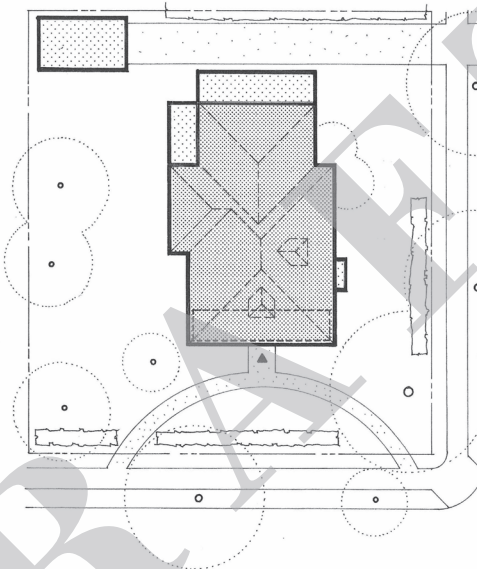
- Compatibility for style of a new home is achieved when the quality of the design is in accordance with and complementary to any of the historic styles in Professorville. Existing historic styles in Professorville include:

- Colonial Revival	- Mission Revival
- Craftsman	- English Cottage
- Queen Anne	- Spanish Colonial Revival
- Tudor	- French Chateau
- Prairie	- Shingle.
- Compatibility for a new structure is achieved when the perceived scale and massing of the new construction is consistent with the streetscape of neighboring homes on both sides of the block on which the subject property is located. Examples include:
 - A house style that is similar to any of the existing historic styles in Professorville.
 - An innovative house style that is consistent with the Individual Review (IR) Guideline Six.
- Compatibility for an addition is achieved when there is cohesive articulation of architectural details, massing and materials of the new addition with the existing construction. Examples include:
 - New roof shapes are perceived to be similar to existing roof shapes.
 - New roof heights are perceived to not exceed existing roof heights.

Key Professorville Points



Small Lots



Large Corner Lot

- Garages typically detached or set to rear of house or otherwise minimally visible.

Key Points Site Planning

A. Basic Site Planning. Key Points 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 of *Guideline One* apply.

Add:

7. Professorville contains a mix of large and small lots, with large and small houses. This variety of sizes resulted from the early development pattern of the neighborhood and is a defining characteristic.

Many homes in Professorville were constructed before families owned an automobile, and long before families owned more than one. Garages have been located to be minimally visible or significantly less prominent than the houses. The location of new garages shall remain consistent with the pattern of low visibility and lack of prominence.

Key Points

Height, Mass & Scale

B. Neighborhood Compatibility for Height, Mass and Scale: Key Points 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of *Guideline Two* apply.

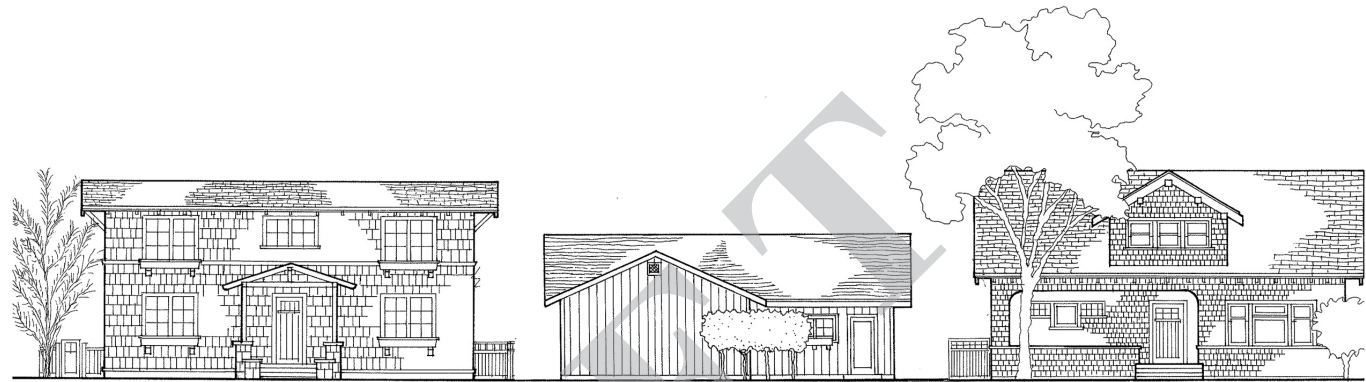
Add:

7. To promote compatibility for scale, mass and height of the new house or addition, the scale, mass and height of neighboring homes on both sides of the block on which the subject property is located shall be considered.

Note: City of Palo Alto Ordinances allow property owners to apply for possible relief from some zoning regulations through the Home Improvement Exemption (HIE) process. Examples include:

- Building Height
- Daylight Plane
- Rear, Side and Front Yard Setbacks
- Building Floor Area
- Additional relief from building regulations may be available by using the California Historic Building Code.
- Additional basement area beyond the footprint of the first floor.

HIEs are not applicable to new home construction.



Before



After

Neighborhood Compatibility For Height Mass And Scale

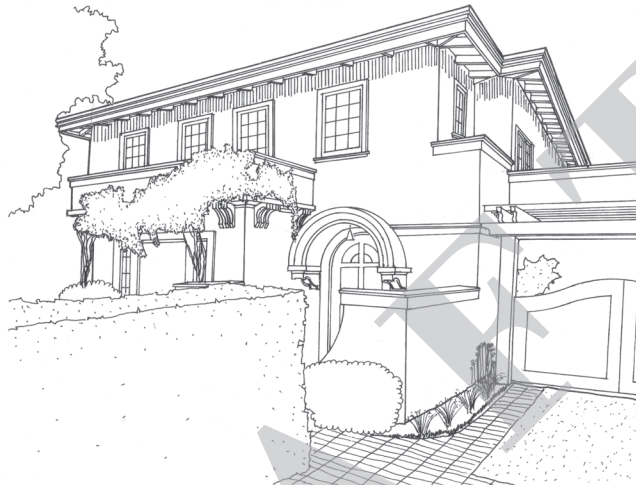
- New two-story Professorville home shown between existing homes.
- Second floor tucked into gambrel roof form - eave side faces street - to lower height and reduce mass.
- Height and mass of new home blends well with existing context on both sides of the street.

Key Points

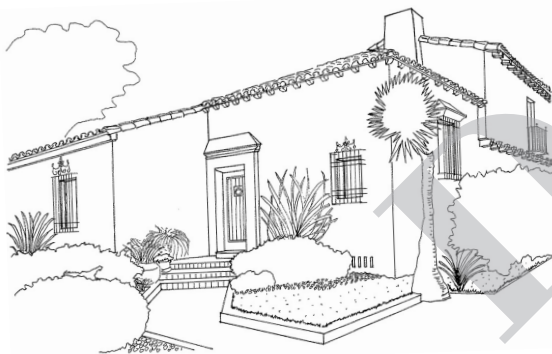
Form & Rooflines



Shingle Style



Prairie Style



Spanish Revival Style



Innovative Style

Examples of home styles in Professorville

- C. Resolution of Architectural form, Massing and Roof Lines: Key Points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of *Guideline Three* apply.

Add:

6. Professorville includes houses in several architectural styles, and the introduction of diverse styles has been a common pattern since the neighborhood's early development. The mixture of these styles along a street or street corner area is a defining characteristic. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation require that new construction on an existing structure be compatible with, yet differentiated from the old. The Standards are permissive with respect to architectural style.

New construction in a house style that is similar to any of the existing historic styles in Professorville will be deemed to be compatible more readily than proposed construction in a style not represented in the District. New construction in modern, contemporary or innovative styles shall be compatible and unobtrusive in perceived visual impact with respect to the existing streetscape through general roof forms, mass, building volumes, etc.

Key Points

Facades & Entries

- D. Visual Character of Street Facing Facades and Entries: Key Points 1, 2, 3 and 5 of *Guideline Four* apply.

Add:

6. Due to the variety of architectural styles in Professorville, the consideration of front entries to be consistent with the neighboring homes does not apply. The entry for the house shall be more consistent with the architectural style of the individual house.



Recessed Covered Entry

- Porch is simple covered recess in facade.
- Columns are not used or needed.
- The scale and level of detail reflect the Craftsman style.



Additive Porch Form

- Porch is clear addition to main form, as are adjacent bay window and dormer.
- Porch is relatively small, but projection forward provides additional column details to highlight entry.
- Break in roof pitch and scale of porch is consistent with Cottage style.

Key Points

Windows & Decks

- E. Placement of Second Story Windows and Decks for Privacy: Key Points 1, 2, 3 and 4 of *Guideline Five* apply.

Add:

5. Windows for an addition will not be required to be translucent material to provide privacy. Privacy shall otherwise be required through other means.



Subtractive Porch And Entry Form

- Broad, colonnaded porch set into building volume reinforces the simplicity of the rectangular house form.
- Classically shaped porch columns and grouped columns provide Colonial Revival detailing.

Entries Consistent with Architectural Style





Appropriate Addition

- Front dormer expands living area while being in scale with the original cottage.
- Clipped gable and narrow gauge siding relate to the forms and materials of the original cottage.
- Rear dormer uses clipped gable and small openings to lessen visual prominence.
- Wider siding at rear addition helps distinguish the addition from the original cottage.



Inappropriate Addition

- Use of gable rooflines increase the scale of the addition and are out-of-character with the original cottage's roof form.
- Large Palladian window and sunburst detail emphasize the addition as the focal point.
- Large skylight calls attention to the rear addition as seen from the street.

F. ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC HOMES FOR CATEGORIES 1, 2, 3, 4 AND CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

1. Additions to historic homes shall be given careful consideration, as an improperly placed or poorly designed addition can cause an historic home to lose integrity. Standards 9 and 10 of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation shall be carefully followed.
2. To preserve a home's historic character, a new addition must be visually differentiated from the historic home. This does not mean that the addition must be glaringly different in terms of design, materials, or other visual qualities. Instead, the new addition should take its design cues from the historic home. Considerations when designing an addition include:
 - Emphasize the historic attributes to remain as the predominant features. Additions should be perceived as subordinate in size, located on the rear portion of the structure when possible, and differentiated from the existing.
 - Step in the exterior walls of the addition a minimum of 6 inches back from the wall plane(s) of the historic home or incorporate a simple, recessed exterior area to physically separate the new addition from the historic home.
 - Use building materials that are harmonious with the original building materials.
 - Placement of windows and door openings shall be compatible with those of the historic home.

Key Points Landscaping

- G. Landscaping: Landscaping is a unifying feature in Professorville amid its varieties of architectural styles and house sizes. Vegetation can mask differences between buildings and can provide visual elements that are consistent across many properties.

It would be beneficial to present landscape plans to the HRB to discuss the impact of landscaping on the project.

Conceptual landscape plans should be provided for the front and side yards, describing significant landscape features.

- Landscape at street frontage softens and frames view of house from street.



Dense Landscaping Frames Houses

- Large, publicly visible front yard.
- Numerous street trees and a variety of large trees on property give the appearance of an informal garden.
- Hedges are used along perimeter of property to provide some privacy and visual barrier.
- Hedges are broken at points on either frontage to provide views into yard area.



House Subordinate To Dense Landscaping

