



City of East Palo Alto

Planning & Housing Division

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DESIGN GUIDELINES – SECOND FLOOR ADDITIONS*

1. Locate new building area to complement the original structure

- Construct additions as far away from public streets and adjacent properties as possible (e.g., to the rear and the center of the existing house.)
- Locate second-floor additions over the living portion of the house rather than over garages to maintain a visual balance between the first and second-floor building masses. Especially, avoid placing second-floor additions over existing first floor garages that project out in front of the remainder of the home.

2. Relate the size of second floor additions to the original structure

- Design second-floor additions to minimize the perceived size, bulk, and mass of the house.
- Limit the size of second floors to a maximum of 50% of the first-floor area, excluding the garage. See example to the right.
- Avoid second-floor additions that are too small (second floors that are less than 20% of the ground floor area will appear awkward).
- Keep second-floor additions simple in form and mass consistent with the guidelines for articulation of building forms (Guideline 3.6 on page 27 of the EPA Residential Design Guidelines).
- If a second-floor addition is located over a garage, set it back a minimum of 5-feet from first-floor front and side walls.
- Strive for well proportioned building masses accented with a few smaller elements.
- Avoid the use of more than two roof forms.



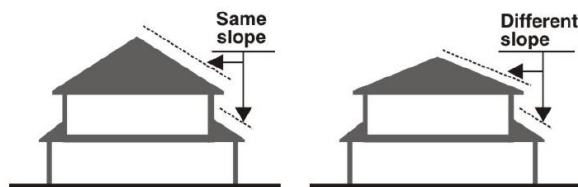
Example of a house with a second floor which is approximately 50% of the first floor

3. Design second-floor additions to minimize privacy intrusions on adjacent residents

- Follow the solar access and privacy guidelines for new homes.
- Avoid second floor balconies and decks that look out over the active outdoor areas of adjacent properties.

4. Match the design of second floors to the first floor of the structure

- Use materials for second floors that blend with those of the first floor.
- Match first floor roof forms and slopes.



Do This

Not This

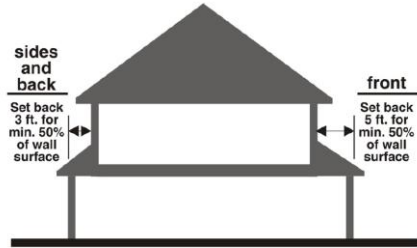
5. Limit the extent of visible two story tall walls

- Avoid unbroken two story tall walls on elevations easily viewed from public streets and sidewalks
- Break up tall walls with elements such as trellises, belt courses and moldings.

*This is not a comprehensive guideline, please refer to the East Palo Alto Residential Design Guidelines for the full document.

6. Set second floor walls back from first floor walls

- Unless two-story front facades are common in the neighborhood, locate second floor walls facing front property lines back at least 5 feet from the first floor walls below.

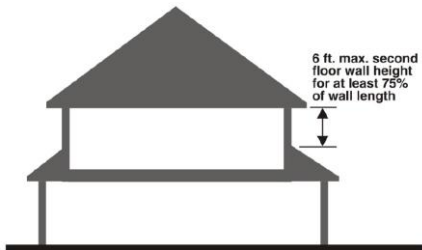


Set back second-story walls

- Second stories greater than 50% of the first floor area should have greater setbacks.
- Set second floor walls back from first floor walls on at least 50% of the structure's perimeter. Walls not facing front property lines may be set back a minimum of 3 feet.
- Locate second floors well back from the front and/or side lot lines when the adjacent house is one-story in height.

7. Limit the height of second floor walls

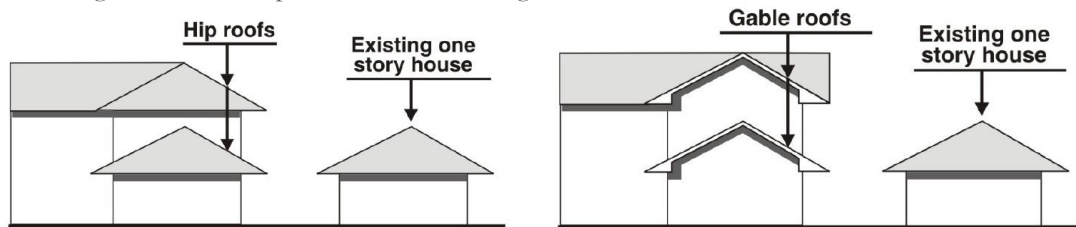
- No more than 25% of second floor walls should be higher than 6 feet in height above the roofs below.



Limit the height of second-story walls

8. Minimize the visual bulk of second floors

- In neighborhoods with smaller one-story homes, generally use simple gable and hip roof forms with their ridge line oriented parallel to the fronting street.



Do This

Not This

- Consider a smaller second-floor building mass in front of the main second-floor volume to reduce the apparent second-floor size.
- For second-floor masses immediately adjacent to one-story homes, the use of hip roofs and horizontal moldings will help to reduce the height contrast and visual impact on the neighborhood.