



City of East Palo Alto

Planning & Housing Division

1960 Tate Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Phone: 650-853-3189 • Fax: 650-853-3179

E-mail: planning@cityofepa.org • Website: www.cityofepa.org/planning

RESIDENTIAL FIRST-FLOOR ADDITION

1. What are the requirements for a first (ground) floor addition?

First floor additions must meet all applicable requirements (setbacks, parking, etc.) in the Development Standards handout in addition to the requirements listed below:

- **Trees and Stormwater Retention** – Planting of 1-2 trees (24-in box trees) is required to offset the impacts of the first floor addition. Alternatively, owners can incorporate one or more design intervention discussed in Appendix L of the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program C.3 Technical Guidance Manual (<http://tinyurl.com/eastPaloAltoC3>) into the lot.
- **Fire Sprinklers** – a 50% modification to the square footage of the property (minus the garage area), will require fire sprinklers for the entire house.

<i>Example</i>	
Total Area	1,400 square feet
Garage Area	400 square feet
Total Living Area	1,000 square feet
50% Trigger	500 square feet (50% of 1,000 square feet)

In the example above, any modification of 500 square feet or greater will require the property owner to install fire sprinklers.

- **Floodplain Requirements** – If the addition, reconstruction or rehabilitation of a single-family dwelling is more than or equal to 50% of the market value of the current house and the property is located within a Special Flood Hazard Zone then the entire structure will have to be elevated 18” inches above the base flood elevation.
- **Engineering Review** – an addition of 50% or more or greater than 500 square feet requires review by the Engineering Division to ensure adequate water flow for the property.

Department Approval – Permits from Planning, Building, Fire, and Engineering are needed for a first floor expansion.

2. Design Guidelines for additions:

Additions are most successful when they appear as though they were designed and constructed at the same time as the rest of the house. Please check the design standards and prepare a draft site plan according to those standards.

- **Appearance** – the exterior of the structure must be compatible with the principal structure on the premises. Roof slopes and details should complement that of the main dwelling. Match the cladding materials and windows to the existing structure.
- **Location** – additions should be constructed as far away from public streets as possible and where they will have the least impact on neighbor or the neighborhood. Avoid filling in voids if it is a character defining feature of other houses in the neighborhood.