

# NORHILL HISTORIC DISTRICT DRAFT DESIGN GUIDELINES



**City of Houston, Texas**

June 2026

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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## NOTE

These design guidelines were prepared pursuant to the direction given by the City Council of the City of Houston by Ordinance No. 2016-848 and have been prepared in accordance with the authority granted to the City of Houston under the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, to protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1. INTRODUCTION

The following guidelines are a means to maintain the historic character of the district and guide future development. Property owners and their design professionals, builders, or contractors must consult these design guidelines as early as possible when planning a project that involves a change to the exterior of a building, including construction of a new building, within these historic districts. The City of Houston Office of Preservation (HOP) staff and the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) will also refer to these design guidelines when considering applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

This document contains both measurable (quantitative) standards and qualitative guidelines. The measurable standards apply to the construction of additions and new buildings; these requirements generally must be met to obtain a COA. The qualitative guidelines encompass the aesthetic elements and are determined on their own merits, considering the circumstances of a particular property and the work that is being proposed. Preservation staff are available for consultation as you plan your project. This pre-planning opportunity helps avoid pitfalls and delays in the review process.

### 1.1.a. Background

The Norhill neighborhood is a designated historic district in the City of Houston. These guidelines provide guidance on the interpretation of the approval criteria in the city code of ordinances. Norhill mainly consists of small one-story single-family residences, with some two-story four-square buildings primarily on corner lots. Most homes in Norhill followed designs from pattern books such as E.L. Crain's *Crain Ready-Cut Houses*, rather than being architect-designed. A defining feature of the historic Norhill neighborhood is the widespread use of kit and pattern houses built during the same period, resulting in a highly cohesive neighborhood in terms of architectural elements and building scale. The Norhill neighborhood is a deed restricted community overseen by the Norhill Neighborhood Association (NNA). This is a separate and unrelated entity from the City of Houston. The NNA deed restrictions are outside the scope of regulation and enforcement authority of the City of Houston. <https://www.norhill.org/remodeling/>

### 1.1.b. Work Authorization

As with all historic districts in Houston, approval must be given from the HOP for exterior alterations to a structure visible from the street in the Norhill Historic District. Approval comes in the form of a COA.

The NNA's architectural review board may separately approve work in the district, per the neighborhood's existing deed restrictions. These two review processes are conducted by separate and unrelated entities. Obtaining approval from HOP and NNA is the sole responsibility of the individual property owner prior to undertaking alterations to an existing historic building.

These guidelines remove the administrative approvals of shall approve additions (also known as mandatory approvals) provided in subsection (a) of section 33-241.1, as allowed per sec. 33-241.1. (g). The HAHC must review any proposed addition including rear, side, or partial two-story additions of any kind in accordance with the provisions of this document.

## 1.2. DEFINITIONS

**Accessory Building or Structure:** A secondary building or structure, such as a shed or gazebo, which contains no living space and the use of which is associated with the principal building on a property.

**Alteration:** Any change to the exterior of a building, structure, object or site. Alteration shall include, but is not limited to, replacing historic material; changing to a different kind, type or size of roofing or siding materials or foundation; changing, eliminating, or adding exterior doors, door frames, windows, window frames, shutters, railings, columns, beams, walls, porches, steps, porte-cocheres, balconies, signs attached to the exterior of a building, or ornamentation; or the dismantling, moving or removing of any exterior feature. Alteration includes expanding an existing structure or the construction of an addition to an existing structure. Alteration includes the painting of unpainted masonry surfaces. Alteration does not include ordinary maintenance and repair, or the addition or replacement of fences that are not otherwise regulated by the Historic Preservation ordinance or these guidelines.

**Balustrade:** A railing supported by balusters, especially an ornamental parapet on a balcony, porch, bridge, or terrace.

**Building Lot Coverage:** The maximum Building Lot Coverage (BLC) includes the living area (as defined in this section) as well as porches and all other structures such as garages, carports, port-cochères, and outbuildings (Refer to Section 2).

**Carport:** A structure that is either free-standing or attached to a garage intended to provide covered parking (Refer to Section 2).

**Certificate of Appropriateness:** A current and valid permit issued by the HAHC or the Director, as applicable, authorizing the issuance of a building permit for construction, alteration, rehabilitation, restoration, relocation or demolition required by the historic preservation ordinance (Refer to Section 3).

**Certificate of Remediation:** A current and valid permit issued by the HAHC authorizing the issuance of a building permit for construction, alteration, rehabilitation, restoration, relocation or demolition intended to correct action taken contrary to the requirements of the historic preservation ordinance, and shall serve as a COA for the enforcement and violation of this article, and is granted by the same standards that a COA is granted.

**Conditioned Space:** Space within a building which is heated or cooled.

**Context Area:** For interior lots, the context area shall be interior lots in the entire Norhill Historic District neighborhood. This is due to the area having a high rate of architectural uniformity. For corner lots, the context area shall be other corner lots within the Norhill Historic District (Refer to Section 3).

**Compatibility:** The degree to which new or altered buildings blend with their historic surroundings by respecting the established scale, massing, orientation, and spacing of the district. **Contributing Structure:** A building, structure, object or site that reinforces, or that has conditions, which, if reversed, would reinforce, the cultural, architectural or historical significance of the historic district in which it is located, and that is identified as contributing upon the designation of the historic district in which it is located. The term also includes any structure that was identified as "potentially contributing" in any historic district.

**Dutchman Repair:** A technique for replacing a damaged section of material with a matching piece. It is used in many fields, including woodworking, masonry, and historic building preservation.

**Grade:** The average elevation as it exists on a lot prior to development and unaffected by construction techniques such as berming, fill, and landscaping.

**HAHC:** The Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission.

**HCAD:** Harris County Appraisal District.

**HPAB:** Houston Preservation Appeals Board.

**In-kind:** Of the same type, design, and material.

**Inset and Recessed:** Set inside a frame, set back or indented by 1-3/4" from the surface of the exterior casing. Recessed elements can add visual interest and complexity to a building's design. For example, recessed windows, doorways, and other features can create depth and shadow. See the window diagram in Section 5.3.b for details.

**Living Area:** The living area includes all portions of a property that are conditioned, part of, or attached to the primary residence. Living area contributes to the overall massing and visual compatibility of the site. Its square footage is measured from the outside face of an exterior wall to the outside face of an exterior wall and includes the thickness of the exterior wall. If there is a second floor living space above a first-floor porch the first-floor porch square footage will be counted as part of the living area (Refer to Section 2).

**Mass (Massing):** A combination of building volume (height x width x depth) and the arrangement of shapes/forms that make up the building. The relative proportions of these dimensions -- and the proportions between individual forms within the overall composition -- strongly influence how the building is perceived. Each dimension also contributes individually to the overall visual effect of the building.

**National Park Service (NPS):** The government agency central to historic preservation in the U.S. Its many roles include administering federal grant programs, setting standards for preservation, and listing properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) to protect cultural resources nationwide. The NPS also manages nationally significant historic sites, the documentation of historic cultural resources through programs like HABS/HALS/HAER, and the provision of technical expertise and guidance to state and local preservation offices and tribes.

**National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):** The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, NPS's NRHP is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

**Non-Contributing Structure:** A building, structure, object or site that does not reinforce the cultural, architectural, or historical significance of the historic district in which it is located and is identified as noncontributing upon the designation of the historic district in which it is located.

**Outbuilding:** Any detached or subordinate building that is located on the same property as the main building (does not include garages) (Refer to Section 2).

**Ordinary Maintenance and Repair:** Any work to correct or prevent deterioration, decay or damage to a building, structure, object or site (or any part thereof), provided that the work does not change the design, character, texture or material of any exterior feature or constitute an 'alteration' as defined above. Ordinary maintenance and repair do not include replacement of historic material. Ordinary maintenance and repair do include the leveling of a foundation in a way that does not raise or lower the foundation (Refer to Section 5).

**Period of Significance:** According to the NPS and the NRHP, the “period of significance” is the specific span of time during which a property was associated with important historical events, people, or unique characteristics that qualified it for listing. The Norhill neighborhood was initially developed in 1920. Per HCAD records, 93.4% of existing residential structures were built by 1930, apart from a few structures constructed in the 1940s. The period of significance for all residential properties is from 1920-1930. The period of significance for commercial properties is 1920 – 1950 (50 years from the Norhill Historic District designation date).

**Porte-Cochère:** A structure that is a minimum of 80% open on three sides and is attached to the side of a house that allows a vehicle to be able to pass through. The structure must be integrated into the design of the house, and it must be one story. No addition may be added above a porte-cochère at any time (Refer to Section 2).

**Repoint:** The process of removing deteriorated or damaged mortar from the joints between bricks or stones and replacing it with new mortar to restore the wall's integrity and appearance.

**Ridge Height:** The vertical distance from the ground to the highest point on a building's roof, as measured from existing natural grade relative to a fixed point in the right-of-way, such as the crown of the street or a manhole cover. The “overall height” of a building is based on ridge height and does not include architectural features such as chimneys or decorative roof features such as crests or finials.

**Scale:** The relationship between two or more objects, such as the size of windows, doors, and porches in relation to people (“human scale”), or the size of a new building as compared to its neighbors.

**Setback:** The distance from the property line to the front or side walls, porches, and exterior features of a building or structure.

**Shall-Approve Addition:** Also known as *Mandatory Approvals for Additions*. The City of Houston's historic preservation ordinance provides that the Planning Director shall issue a COA for the construction of any one, but not a combination, of the following additions to a contributing structure in a historic district: rear addition, partial second-story addition, or side addition. This has been referred to in the past as “shall approve” criteria, which is a different set of criteria conditions from City of Houston Code of Ordinances 33-241: Exterior Alteration, Rehabilitation, and Restoration of Historic Properties. In order to qualify for mandatory approval, your project must meet all the conditions for one of these types of additions.

**Shiplap:** Wooden boards with overlapping joints, often used for walls and ceilings, that also serve as a structural component, particularly in older homes with balloon framing.

# SECTION 2: MEASUREABLE STANDARDS

The purpose of this section is to provide a clear set of directions for Norhill homeowners who wish to alter their homes while maintaining and embracing the existing character of the neighborhood. These aim to preserve the historical integrity, neighborhood livability, and long-term sustainability of individual homes and the neighborhood at large. Projects reviewed under this section must comply with the measurable standards to be considered for approval.

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## 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Additions and renovations must be compatible with the neighborhood's historic infrastructure. To that end, additions and modifications to an existing home should be supportive of and subordinate to (i.e. appear secondary to) the original historic home. Measurable standards may help promote compatibility in terms of setbacks, height, scale, and proportions. It is important to retain the character of the historic houses, and this generally means not removing distinctive elements such as chimneys, decorative venting, and dormers.

Not all characteristics in this section apply to commercial properties. Most properties in the Norhill Historic District are residential; therefore, commercial properties will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For more information on commercial property reviews and considerations, please refer to section 2.7.k.

The measurable standards apply to the construction of additions and new buildings. These requirements generally must be met to obtain a COA.

## 2.2. SIZE

### 2.2.a. Residences

Maximum ratios of the **living area** (see definition section) within the house to the lot size are listed in the table below and are expressed as FAR (floor-to-area ratio). These ratios allow for growth while still preserving the historic character and scale of the neighborhood. Norhill is comprised of 855 lots ranging from 5,000 to 6,240 sq ft in size. Based on HCAD information, the most common lot size in Norhill is 100' x 50', which is 5,000 sq ft (63.2% of total lots). This is followed by 104' x 50', which is 5,200 sq ft (11.8% of total lots). To determine the maximum sq ft allowed for your lot, multiply the area of the lot by the FAR percentage shown in the table below.

*Example:*

- (5,000 sq ft lot x 0.460 FAR) = 2,300 sq ft max. living area for the entire lot.
- (5,551 sq ft lot x 0.45 FAR) = 2,500 sq ft max. living area for the entire lot.

Lot Size	FAR	Living Area	% of Lots	Notes
3755-4800 sf	0.470	1765-2256 sf	1%	1
5000-5200 sf	0.460	2300-2392 sf	75%	
5201-5550 sf	0.455	2366-2525 sf	9%	
5551-5650 sf	0.450	2500-2543 sf	6%	
>5650 sf	0.445	2514+ sf	9%	

Note 1: The smallest lot in Norhill is 3,755 sf and the largest lot under 5,000 sf is 4,800 sf

**Included in FAR Calculations:**

- Primary structures (house or main building).
- Sunrooms or enclosed porches with walls and windows.
- First-floor open or screened-in porches with conditioned space above it.
- Attics or garages that are conditioned.
- 
- Conditioned space that is part of the primary structure or contributes to the overall massing of the property, including (but not limited to) conditioned attics, conditioned attached or detached garages, and conditioned accessory structures of any kind.

**Excluded from FAR Calculations:**

- Open or screened-in porches with no conditioned space above it.
- Uncovered decks or patios.
- Roof overhangs.
- Attics or garage structures that are finished but not conditioned.
- Unconditioned space that is part of the primary structure but does not contribute to the overall massing of the property, including (but not limited to) unconditioned attics, carports, detached unconditioned garages, or other unconditioned accessory structures.

## 2.2.b. Porches

Porches are not counted as part of conditioned space *unless* the total square footage for all porches is larger than 240 sq ft in which case the amount of square footage above 240 sq ft is included in the FAR. If there is living space above a porch, the living space and the porch beneath are included in the total living area. Front porches shall be excluded from FAR, so long as they remain unconditioned with typical proportions as seen throughout the contributing context area. Porte-cochères and carports are not included in the 240 sq ft limit. No addition may be added above a porte-cochère or front porch at any time.

## 2.2.c. Detached Garages, Enclosed Storage, and Other Outbuildings

Detached garages and outbuildings must be located on the rear of a lot subject to the 60 ft front setback outlined in 2.3.g. When the combined square footage of the existing and proposed detached buildings exceeds 585 sq ft, the excess square footage shall be included in the living area and count towards calculating the maximum living area.

*Example:* The proposed footprint of a new detached garage is 600 sq ft. Considering the proposed building exceeds 585 sq ft, the remaining 15 sq ft will count towards the maximum living area calculation (FAR) of the property ( $600 - 585 = 15$  sq ft). The square footage of carports attached to a garage is not included in the Living Area calculation. The roof of such a carport cannot project forward of a garage by more than 20 ft or be wider than 21 ft.

## 2.3. SETBACKS

Typical homes in Norhill have a 15 ft front setback. All homes must be 15 ft from the front property line (front setback).

Roof overhangs need to be in the scale and character of the original house. Roof overhangs for additions, outbuildings, and garages must be a minimum of 2 ft from any property line. Any addition, outbuilding, or garage that is 3 ft from the property line must meet the overhang minimum rather than match the original house.

No accessory structures may be in the front 15 ft setback line.

Porches may extend over the front building setback line by no more than 6 ft. However, in no case may a porch be forward of the prevailing porch setback of the contributing neighboring properties on either side of the lot in question.

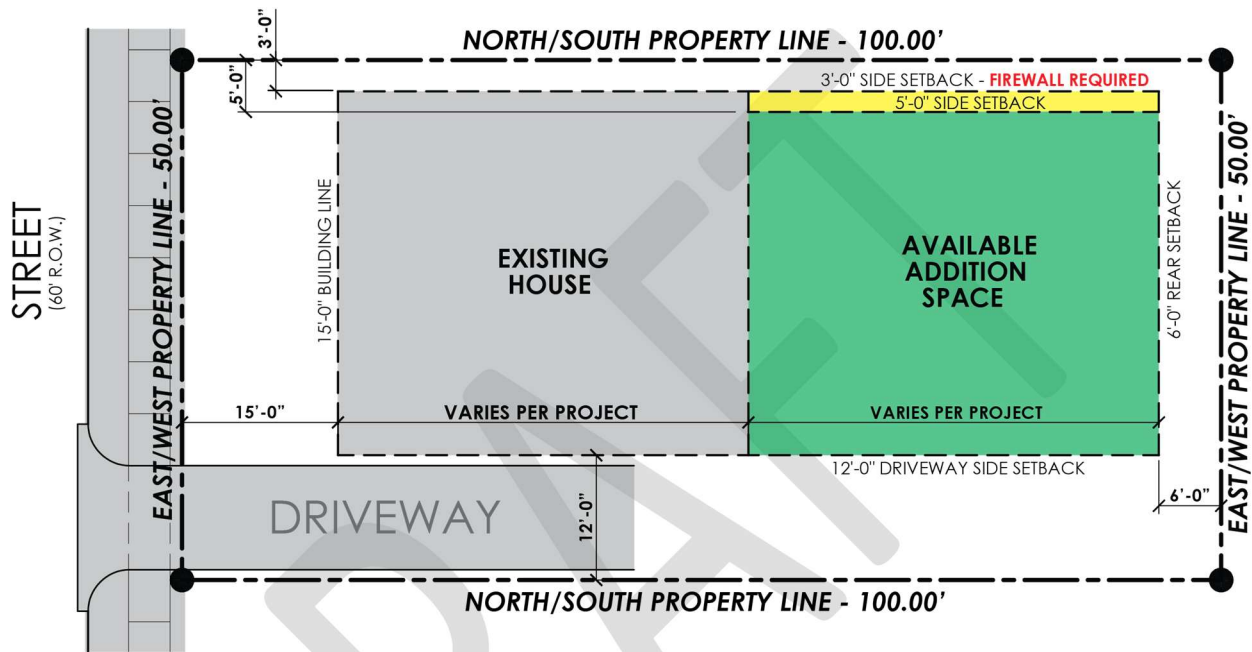
Current City of Houston code allows for a 3 ft side setback so long as the wall is fire-rated and has 25% or less glazing. Otherwise, a 5 ft setback is required.

**\*\*NOTE\*\* - All diagrams featured in section 2.3 are representations only and are meant to serve as an aid to the reader. Each project is unique to the individual property and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

### 2.3.a. Interior Lot One-Story Rear Addition

Additions shall be complementary to the existing house.

- 3 ft minimum side setback with a fire rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise, 5 ft.
- 12 ft minimum side setback on the driveway side.
- 6 ft rear setback.



### 2.3.b. Interior Lot One-Story Side Addition

- 35 ft minimum front setback.
- 3 ft minimum side setback on non-driveway side with a fire-rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 12 ft minimum side setback on the driveway side.

\*\*Only one side addition allowed on the contributing structure.

\*\* A projecting bay window can be forward of the minimum front setback.

\*\* A projecting bay window can extend a maximum of 3 ft from the side addition.

\*\* A projecting bay window must be less than 8 ft wide.

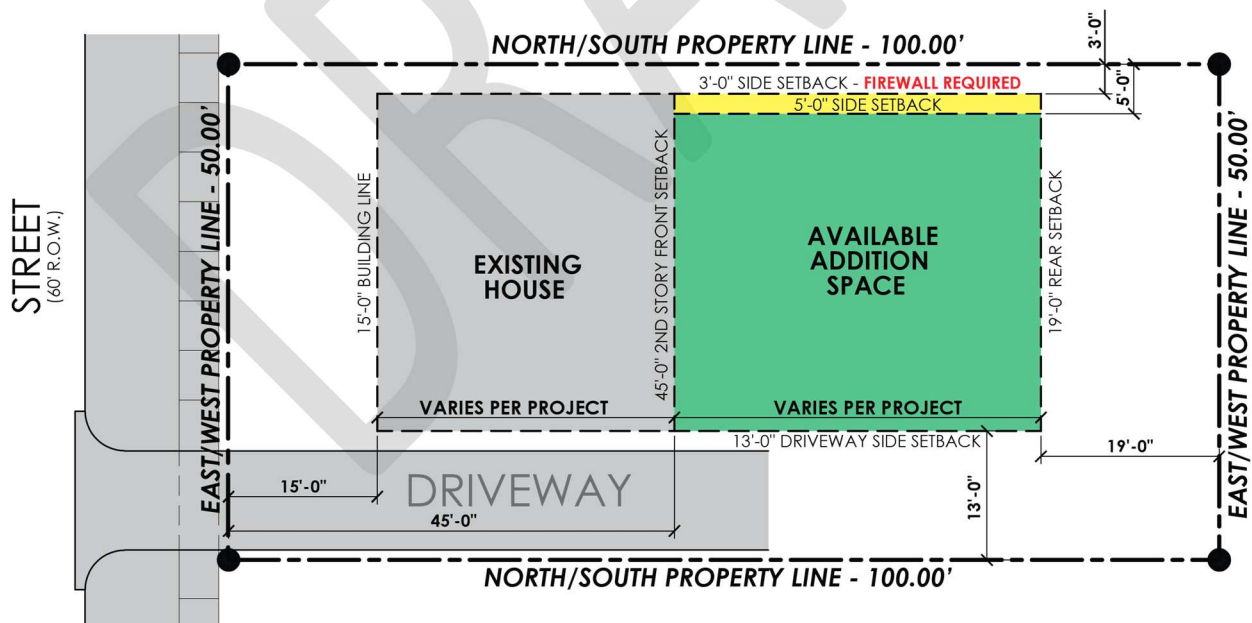
### 2.3.c. Interior Lot Two-Story Rear Addition

The addition shall be subordinate to the existing house and in keeping with the scale and overall massing of the original structure. The owner is encouraged to limit the addition's width, parallel to the street, to reduce the visual impact and massing to maintain the compatibility of the structure to contributing structures. No two-story addition shall extend past the sides of the original structure unless it is connected to a garage structure which may extend past the side of the original structure, nor shall they extend forward more than 50% of the depth of the original structure.

- 45 ft minimum front setback from the property line.
- 3 ft minimum side setback non-driveway side with a fire-rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 13 ft minimum side setback on the driveway side.
- 19 ft minimum rear setback from back property line (assuming a 15 ft front setback).

The minimum rear setback may be offset by the same linear footage if the front setback is deeper than 15 ft.

*Example:* A front setback of 18 ft would result in a minimum rear setback of 16 ft. Second-story balconies will be considered within the context of the neighboring properties and on a case-by-case basis. These types of balconies are discouraged unless modest and compatible with the existing contributing structures. No second-story balcony can be built within 19 ft of the rear property line.

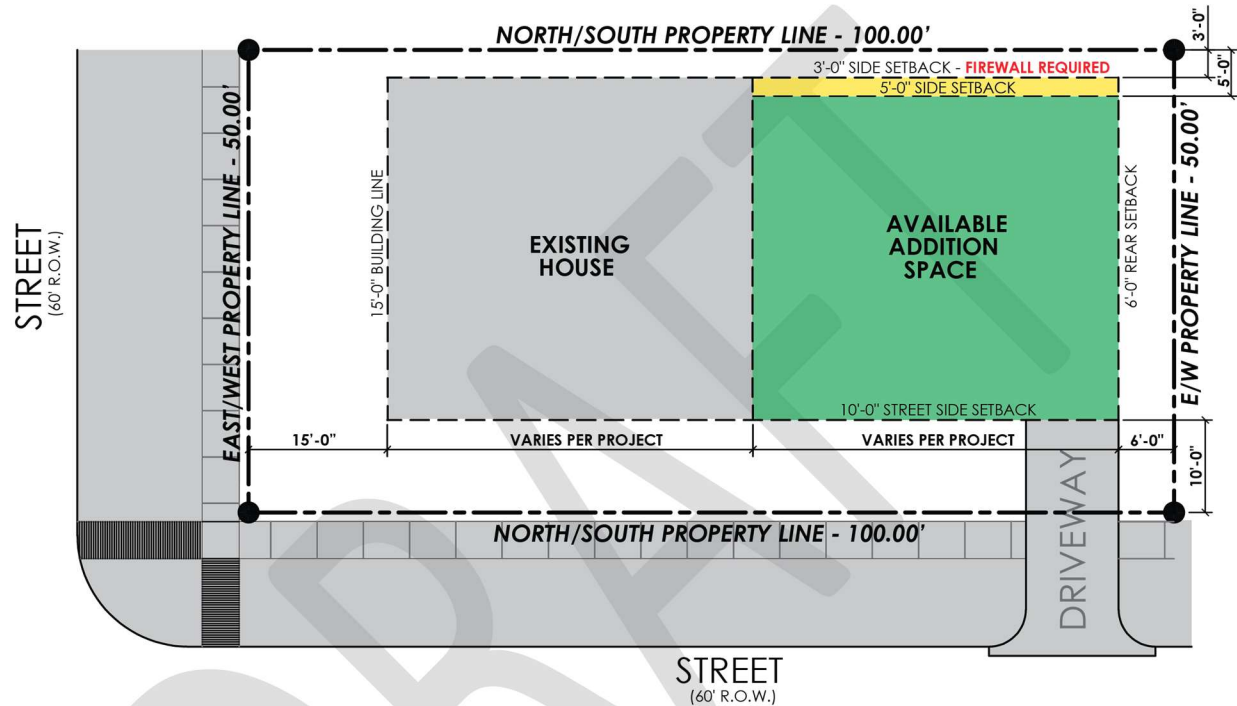


### 2.3.d. Corner Lot One-Story Rear Addition

All homes must be 15 ft from the front property line (front setback).

- 3 ft minimum side setback with a fire-rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 10 ft minimum side setback on the side street face.

6 ft rear setback



### 2.3.e. Corner Lot One-Story Side Addition

(Atypical lots may require individual consideration)

- 35 ft minimum front setback.
- 3 ft minimum side setback on non-driveway side with a fire-rated wall and 25% glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 12 ft minimum side setback on the driveway side.

\*\* Only one side addition is allowed.

\*\* A projecting bay window can be forward of the minimum front setback.

\*\* A projecting bay window can extend a maximum of 3 ft from the side addition.

\*\* A projecting bay window must be less than 8 ft wide.

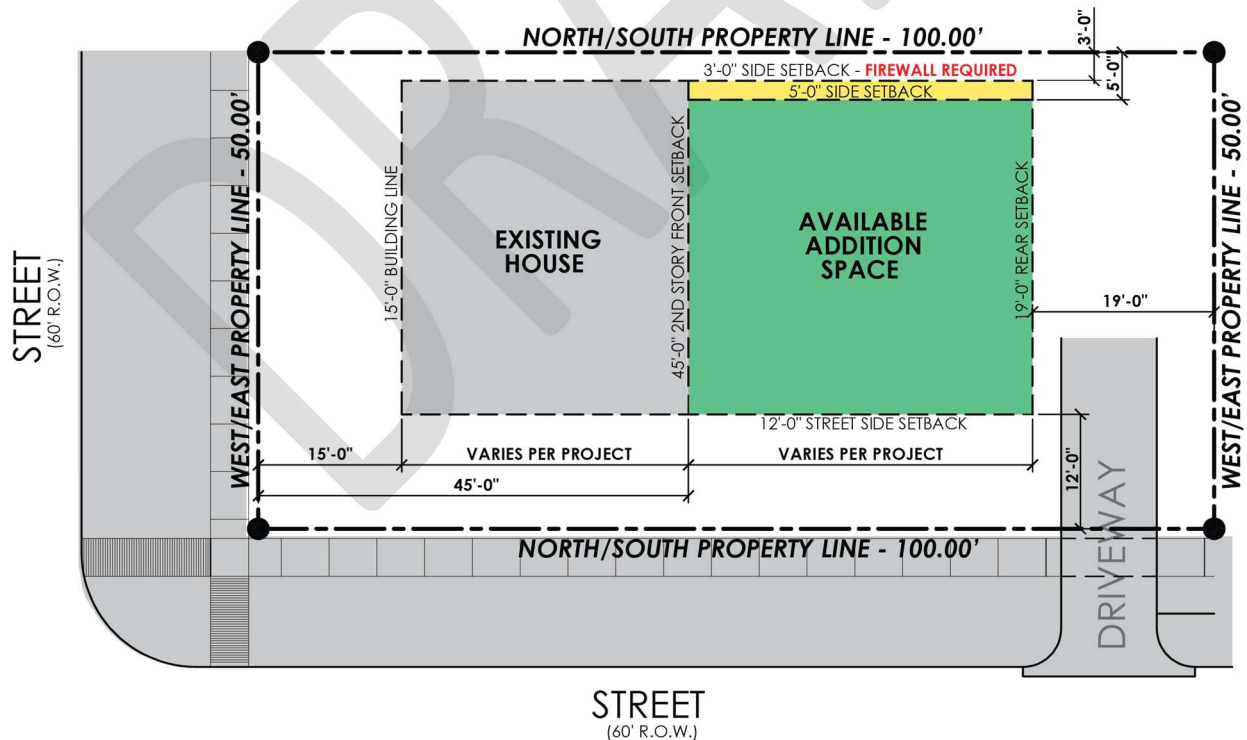
### 2.3.f. Corner Lot Two-Story Rear Addition

The addition shall be subordinate to the existing house and in keeping with the scale and overall massing of the original structure. The owner is encouraged to limit the addition's width, parallel to the street, to reduce the visual impact and massing to maintain compatibility with contributing structures. No two-story addition shall extend past the sides of the original structure unless it connects to a garage structure which may extend past the side of the original structure, nor shall they extend forward more than 50% of the depth of the original structure.

- 45 ft minimum front setback from the property line.
- 3 ft minimum side setback with a fire rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 12 ft minimum side setback on the side street face.
- 19 ft minimum rear setback from back property line.

The minimum rear setback may be offset by the same linear footage if the front setback is deeper than 15 ft.

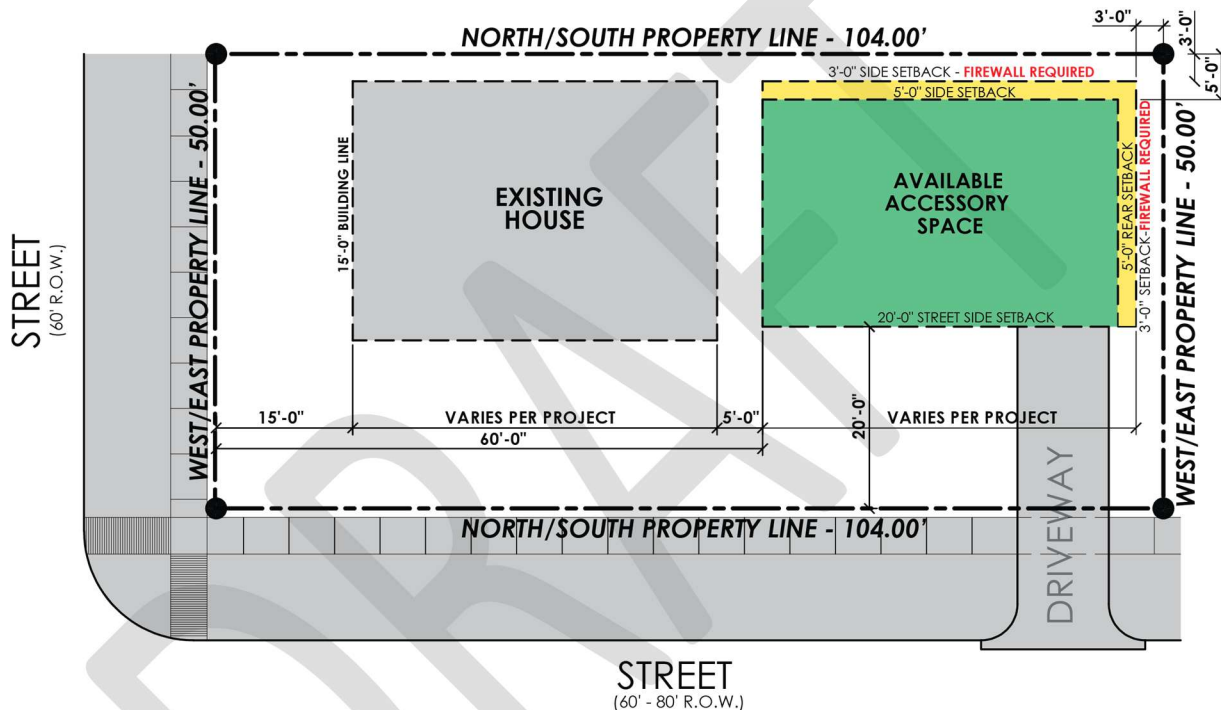
*Example:* A front setback of 18 ft would result in a minimum rear setback of 16 ft. Second-story balconies on the rear or street side of a lot will be considered within the context of the neighboring properties and on a case-by-case basis. These types of balconies are discouraged unless modest and compatible with existing contributing structures. No second-story balcony can be built within 19 ft of the rear property line.





### 2.3.h. Corner Lot Porte-Cochère, Carports, Auxiliary Buildings, and Garage Construction/Addition

- 60 ft minimum front setback from the front property line to an outbuilding.
  - o The roof of such a carport cannot project forward of a garage by more than 20 ft or be wider than 21 ft.
- 20 ft minimum side setback from street side property line to an outbuilding.
- 3 ft minimum side setback on the interior lot side of the property with a fire rated wall and 25% or less glazing, otherwise 5 ft.
- 5 ft minimum between exterior walls of garage and house.
- 3 - 5 ft minimum rear setback as per city code.



- \*\* The width of a garage parallel to the rear property line is limited to 23 ft in width if the rear wall is set back 3 - 5 ft from the rear property line.
- \*\* The width of the garage parallel to the rear property line can be greater than 23 ft in width if it is 6 ft or greater from the rear property line.
- \*\* No secondary outbuilding structures (e.g., garage and/or carport) may have a combined solid wall exceeding 25 ft in length along the side property line.

Garages on corner lots are limited to 585 sq ft. Carports cannot extend past the side face of the house, and they cannot be attached to the house. A breezeway can attach the house to the garage. The width of the breezeway is limited to 8 ft in width from outside of stud to outside of stud. A connection made between the house and garage can be enclosed and conditioned at a minimum of 5 ft in length, no more than 9ft in length. This space must be set back from the house and the garage to appear subordinate. Plate height of the breezeway or connection shall not exceed 9 ft.

## 2.4. HEIGHT

### 2.4.a. Roof Pitch

Roofs are required to have a roof slope between 5-over-12 and 7-over-12. Carports attached to a garage can have a low-slope or flat roof. An 8-over-12 roof slope will be considered on a case-by-case basis if the existing slope of the house is 8-over-12. A steeper roof pitch may be considered when mimicking original architectural details. Shed roofs and dormers will be allowed and reviewed on a case by case basis.

### 2.4.b. One-Story Addition

The new construction is limited to a maximum height of 11'- 7 1/8" from existing grade (ground/dirt) to top of first floor plate to match the existing house plate height.

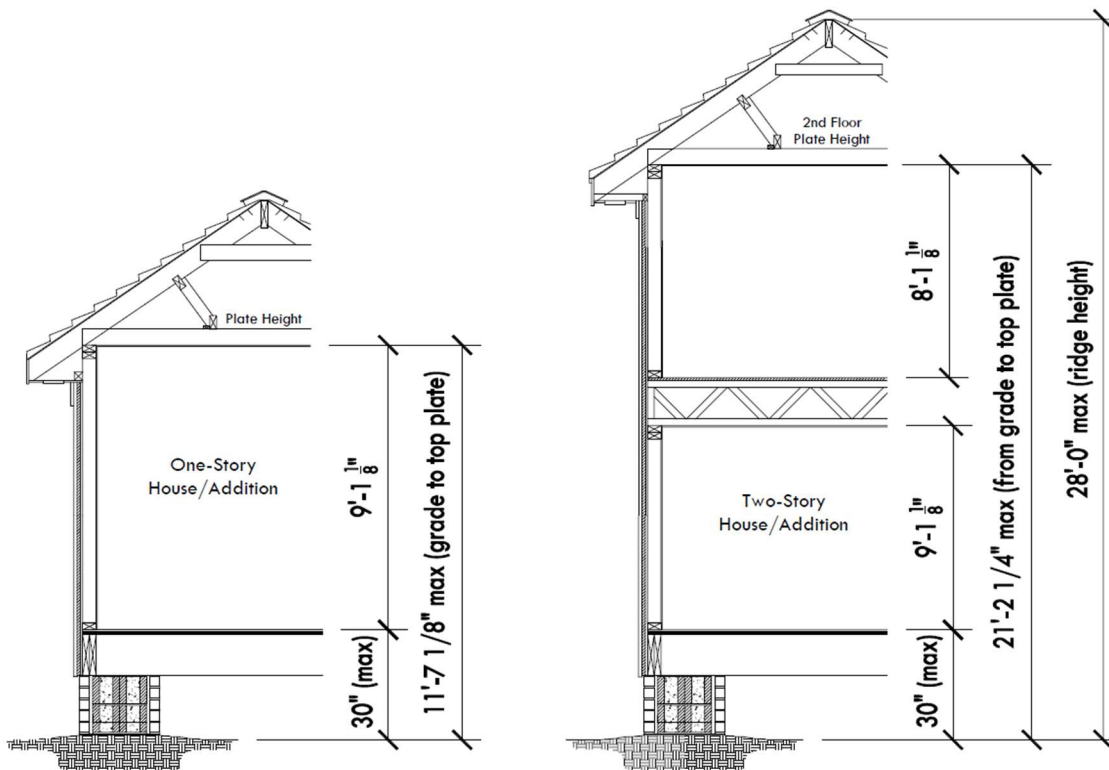
New addition/construction plate height cannot be greater than 9'- 1 1/8". If the existing house has a plate height higher than 9 ft, an exception will be considered.

### 2.4.c. Two-Story Addition

Distance from grade to the top of the second-floor plate cannot exceed 20'- 8".

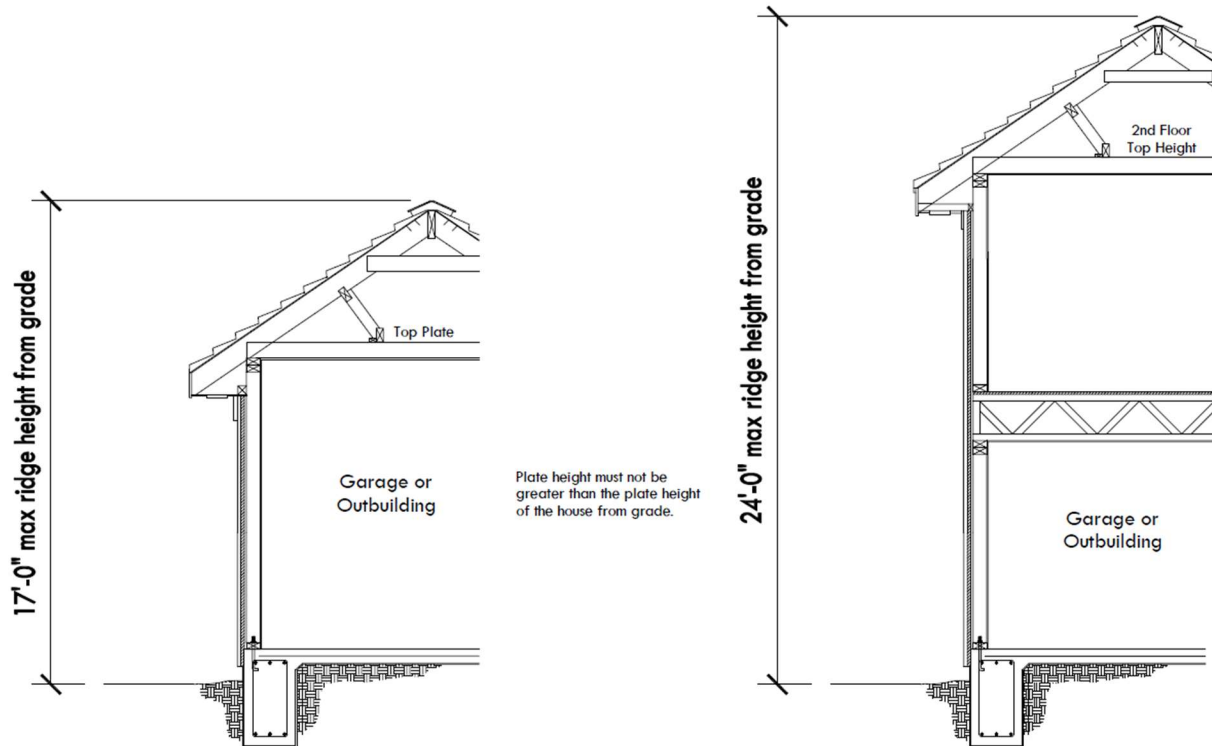
The maximum ridge height from grade for any residence is 28'.

The roof of a two-story addition can be either a hip or a gable.



## 2.4.d. Garage, Porte-Cochère, Carport Construction/Addition

The plate height for a new garage cannot exceed a 9 ft stud height but also must be less than or equal to the plate height of the house from grade. The ridge height of a one-story garage may not be taller than 17 ft above grade. A two-story garage may not exceed 24 ft above grade. Existing two-story garages may be considered on a case-by-case basis.



Please note that while the HAHC may grant approval of a new two-story garage under its authority in conjunction with these guidelines, an applicant must still satisfy their valid neighborhood deed restrictions or risk liability for noncompliance. An applicant's deed restrictions and the City's preservation ordinance operate independently of each other and are not enforced by the Houston Office of Preservation. Proposals for two-story garages will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Garage roof pitch is to be less than or equal to the pitch of the existing contributing home and/or its addition; a steeper pitch will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the slope of the house's roof. Neither garages nor porte-cochères may have a flat roof. Carports may have a flat roof. A carport should be designed with the same integrity as the primary structure on the lot.

A porte-cochère must be one story and have a hip roof or gable. The porte-cochère must be subordinate in height to the first story of the main house.

## 2.5. NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Any new construction must follow all existing setback lines and size limitations established in this document. These guidelines provide that a new construction with two stories must match the width, height, overall massing, and scale of the components typical of the historic district. The size of a new construction is also limited by lot size as defined by the FAR chart in section 2.2.a. The style of new construction must be compatible with the architectural styles (Craftsman, Bungalows, Prairie, American Four Square, Tudor Revival Cottage, etc.), found in Norhill.

## 2.6. MATERIALS AND DESIGN

### 2.6.a. Character and Style

Norhill has maintained a style consistent with the original homes constructed between the 1920 and 1930, apart from a few structures constructed shortly after this time frame in the 1940s. Many homes followed designs from pattern books such as E.L. Crain's *Crain Ready-Cut Houses*. Copies of this book are available for reference at the Houston Public Library downtown in the Julia Ideson building

Any addition should be compatible and appropriate to the exterior features of the existing, contributing house and be sympathetic to the historic design aesthetic. For example, the new siding may match that of the existing house, although minor differences are encouraged to differentiate the existing structure from the new construction.

### 2.6.b. Doors

Every effort should be made to retain the style and appearance of the original doors. If the doors are damaged, all efforts must be made to repair first, but if the door is damaged beyond repair the replacement door should match the stylistic appearance and quality of the original.

- **If a door cannot be repaired, match its replacement to the original.** If a similar door in the same building is available to be moved from a less prominent location, this option is preferred. If an existing replacement door is not available, match the new replacement door to the original door's design. For example, the number, size, and arrangement of panels and lites should be the same. Match the material of the original door or choose a material that will look similar after it is painted. If the original door design is unknown, use a design that is appropriate to the architectural style of the house.

### Typical Craftsman residential doors



- **Altering an Existing Door Opening.** A change in the size and shape of an original door opening may be considered if (a) the door is not highly visible from the street, such as on a side wall toward the rear of the building, and (b) the existing door is not a character-defining feature of the building and, therefore, may be altered without substantially affecting the integrity of the historic building. Do not alter a historic door opening on the front of a building, unless the design of the new door is compatible with the historic building. Use a design that matches the architectural style and is also compatible with the contributing structures in the context area. There are less restrictions to a door design that is further back on the side wall.
- **A Structure with Two Front Doors.** The presence of two front doors is a common detail on many residences in Norhill. Duplexes are often found in war era neighborhoods to address the housing shortage or be an extra source of income. While some have since been converted into single-family residences, others still function as traditional duplexes.

For a structure that has two front doors, the following are acceptable alterations that require a COA and must be approved by the HAHC:

- Retain both front doors to give the appearance the building was historically a duplex; one door may be made inoperable.
  - Alternatively, one of the door openings may be replaced with a single window, and the other door must remain as is.
- **A previously altered front entry may be restored.** If a building was converted from single-family use to a duplex, and historical evidence for a single front entry door is available, you may restore the front entry to its original configuration.
  - **Installing a Door in a New Location.** In some cases, a new door may be needed in a location that did not have one historically. This may be considered where: **(a)** the new door would not be highly visible from the street, and **(b)** creating the opening would not destroy any other key character-defining features.

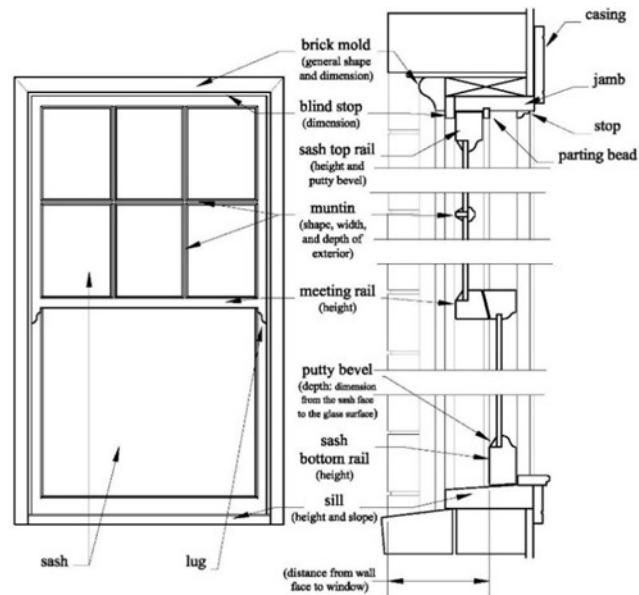
### 2.6.c. Windows

Every effort should be made to retain the style and appearance of the original windows as well as window-like wall openings, such as gable vents, which provide ventilation for attic spaces. If the original historic windows are damaged, all efforts shall be made to match the stylistic appearance and quality of the original. Windows shall be wood or wood clad, and shall be inset and recessed a minimum of 1 ¾" depth from the exterior casing to the face of the window unit. The windows shall be of the same style, proportion, and character as the original windows of a house (if remodeling) as well as the homes in the context area. This includes matching the window depth in the wall as well as surrounding trim work. Alternative window materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending on the proposed window location, manufacturer's design and their compatibility with the originals.

No vinyl windows are to be used on the contributing/non-contributing structure, per the 2025 HOP Window Policy.

- **Altering an Existing Window Opening.** Although preserving all historic windows is recommended, a change in the size and shape of an original window opening may be considered: **(a)** in a location that is not highly visible from the street, such as on a side wall toward the rear of the building, and **(b)** when the existing window is not a key character-defining feature. Do not alter a window opening on or near the front of a building.
- **Installing a Window in a New Location.** Occasionally, a new window may be needed in a location that did not have one historically. This may be considered where: **(a)** the new window would not be in a highly visible location, and **(b)** creating the opening would not destroy any key character-defining features, such as on a side wall toward the rear of the building.
- **Design a new window to be compatible with the historic building.** Use a simple shape for the window with a profile that is simple in character to identify the window as being new. More flexibility in window design, including size and detailing, may be considered farther back on the side wall of a building. Reglazing with frosted glass may be permitted if privacy is a concern. Properly detailed trim around openings should mimic a structure: the jambs should appear to rest on the sill and to support the lintel. The lintel should be deeper than the jamb width. Avoid mitered corners.

- **Typical components of historic, double-hung wood windows:**



- **Typical windows in Norhill have a “one-over-one” life pattern.**



**Repair, rather than replace, frames, sashes, and other features:**

- Windows that have been painted shut are not considered damaged. Use hand tools, such as a putty knife or five-in-one tool, to cut carefully through paint around the window sash without damaging it. Gently pry the window open, using a small pry bar, if necessary. Avoid painting windows shut.
- Brittle or missing glazing putty or glazing strips can be replaced; do not use caulk instead of appropriate glazing material.
- Small areas of rot or similar damage are most likely to be found at the windowsill, where water may pool or splash onto the lower edge of the sash. Consider using a wood consolidant in these locations to preserve the original wood.

- If a patch or Dutchman repair is appropriate, remove the least amount of material needed to properly execute the repair. Use wood as close to the original material as possible (same species, grain pattern, and color) for a less visible result.
- Typical windows in Norhill are one-over-one windows.

**Determine whether window components are damaged beyond repair:**

- Damage beyond repair is determined on a case-by-case basis. Discuss with HOP staff regarding application requirements and resources.

**Enhance energy efficiency of existing historic windows rather than replacement:**

- Add weatherstripping and caulking around the window frame.
- Install a storm window or insulated window shade. Interior storm windows are available and easy to install and remove. Exterior storm windows may be considered if there is a wood frame, and they match the historic windows.

**If replacement cannot be avoided, match a new window to the original:**

- Do not replace the entire window if new components, such as sash packs, are available. Replace the frame as a last resort.
- Match the original sash configuration: single-hung, double hung, casement, etc. with wood or wood clad windows.
- If damage is confined to one sash, look for a historic salvaged replacement sash.
- Select a similar profile and depth of trim, as well as the arrangement and number of layers of trim from the frame to the glass (no flat boards). All new windows must be recessed.
- If the original window had divided panes (lites), select a replacement window that is made with genuine muntins, with panes of glass set between them. Do not choose a window with strips of material located between large panes of glass to simulate muntins.
- Use the same material as the original window, when feasible.
- Although the City does not regulate glass, consider using clear window glass (glazing) to convey the visual appearance of historic glass. Visible differences in the reflectivity of new vs. historic glass can have a negative impact. If transparent low-E glass is used, ensure that the low-E glass is the outermost surface to avoid damaging a storm window.

### **2.6.d. Roofs and Eaves**

A roof is a prominent character-defining feature of a historic residential structure. The shape, pitch, complexity, materials, and treatment of eaves and soffits are all key characteristics of a roof. Many roofs on older residential buildings have one of the following shapes: gabled, hipped, pyramidal, hip-on-gable, gable-on-hip, or some combination. Roof shapes may be simple or complex; they may be sloped with a steep

pitch or a low pitch. Roofs shall have a slope between 5-over-12 and 7-over-12. A different roof pitch may be considered when mimicking original architectural details. Roof material should be shingle, primarily asphalt/composite, with other materials considered on a case-by-case basis.

Roof eaves (roof overhangs) should match the design and depth of the existing house where possible. Eaves may be boxed with soffits, or open with exposed rafter tails. They may be wide or narrow and may be ornamented with brackets or braces.

### **2.6.e. Dormers**

Dormers are subordinate in scale and character to the primary roof. Where they are already present, historic dormers should be preserved. If a new dormer is desired, it must be compatible with the character of the historic building and subordinate to the primary roof. No dormers may be added to the front elevation.

- Dormers must be functional — to create additional living space or allow light to enter an attic space — not merely decorative. Use a simple design that can be distinguished from, but is compatible with, any historic dormers.
- The style of a new dormer should be in keeping with the style of the house.
- Locate a new single dormer no closer than 60% from the front wall of the original structure. Do not extend the dormer over the eave of the roof; it is to be set back from the eave.
- If two dormers are desired on the same side of the roof, they may be arranged with a historically appropriate spacing between them and do not necessarily need to be located toward the rear of the building.
- If two dormers are desired and they will be on opposite sides of the roof, they may not extend to or cover the ridge of the roof, and they must be located on the rear half of the roof.

### **2.6.f. Painting of Historic Brick**

No new, existing, or restored masonry on any structure may be painted. Only previously painted masonry may be repainted.

### **2.6.g. Siding**

The most common types of siding found on historic houses in the Norhill Historic District are wood siding and decorative shingles (on gables). In modern construction, siding usually covers a framed structural system. Shiplap siding, used in some early types of construction methods, may also serve as part of the structure of a building. As a result, interior structural shiplap siding must not be removed unless you have taken precautions to protect the structural integrity of the building. Please consult with the HOP staff if you are unsure whether this applies to your project.

- Damaged original siding must be assessed by Staff for repair before considering replacement. If 49% or less of the original siding on any elevation is damaged beyond repair, it may be replaced with new wood siding that matches the

original in design, dimension, and profile. Such replacement is considered Repair & Maintenance and is exempt from the requirement for a COA.

- If 50% or more of the original historic siding on any wall/elevation is damaged beyond repair, it may be replaced with siding of the same material, profile, and finish, including smooth cementitious siding, and **DOES** require a COA. If 50% or more of the siding is replaced with like-kind wood, the COA may be administratively approved. If the applicant desires cementitious siding the COA must be presented to HAHC for approval. Please contact the Historic Preservation Office staff for information about the documentation required to substantiate this level of damage.
- Damaged original historic decorative shingles shall only be replaced with like-kind wood shingles. If 49% or less of the shingles are damaged beyond repair, they may be replaced with new wood shingles that match the original design and do not require a COA. If 50% or more of the shingled area is being replaced, a COA is required. If the scope of work is limited solely to the replacement of 50% or more of a shingled area, the COA may be administratively approved.

## 2.6.f. Porches

Porches are one of the most important character-defining features for houses in the Norhill Historic District. Front porches often establish a consistent one-story line along a block face. Some porches extend out to the side of a house.

Porches typically consist of the following parts: a hipped, gabled, or shed roof, which is supported by posts or columns and finished with a ceiling; a balustrade between the posts, which includes top and bottom rails, with balusters in between; a floor deck; and steps from the ground to the porch, which may be flanked on either side by posts or piers and sometimes handrails.

Porches are such important visual elements that inappropriate changes can have a negative impact on the entire house. For example, original porch materials may have been replaced with inappropriate designs, porch components or details may be missing, or a porch may have been partially or completely enclosed. Most of these alterations are reversible. A property owner who wishes to restore a porch should refer to historic photographs of the property and consult with HOP staff, who can provide helpful guidance.

If no historic photos are available, the porch elements can be a simplified form of other porch elements within the context area.

*Note: Please refer to the Houston Building Code for additional requirements for guardrails and handrails.*

- **Existing Porches.** All efforts should be made to preserve original historic porch elements. All repairs shall match the style, texture, finish, composition, and

proportions of the original. Do not enclose a front porch in a way that alters its open character. When screening a porch, do not damage or remove the entire existing porch or porch elements, such as posts and railings. Maintain the original location of front porch steps and preserve the front-facing gable vent. Replace wooden porch steps with the same size material and profile. Substitute materials, such as composites, may be appropriate if their appearance matches that of the original material. When replacing deck boards, use the same size material and profile (such as tongue-and-groove). Substitute materials, such as composites, may be appropriate for porch decking. Do not replace a wooden porch deck with concrete and do not cover porch decking with tiles.



- **Adding a New Porch to an Existing Building.** A new porch may be added in a location where it will not affect the integrity of the contributing building, such as at the rear of the building or toward the rear on a side wall. A new porch can also be included as part of a larger addition, particularly when the porch helps to reduce the perceived mass and scale of the addition. A new front porch may be added to a noncontributing building where one did not originally exist. Keep the scale, proportion, and character of the new porch compatible with the historic structure and compatible with the contributing structures in the context area.

**2.6.g. Chimneys.** Chimneys are distinctive character defining features which accent rooflines and often include unique decorative patterns. They should be preserved when feasible. Do not cover a historic brick chimney with any other material.

Any new chimneys should be constructed to be in character with the style of the house or other contributing structures within the context area. Brick or stucco are appropriate materials and stone is not allowed.

**2.6.f. Building Foundations.** Most original residential buildings in Norhill were constructed on pier-and-beam foundations. The design of a building's foundation, including the materials used, height of the finished floor, and screening details (where present), are character-defining features that should be preserved. Foundation height should not be changed unless required to preserve the integrity of the foundation, such as problems that can occur with insufficient space between the ground and the structure. Changing the height of a foundation may damage porch piers and chimneys, which also must be raised.



Screening between piers is recommended. Choose a screening design that is consistent with the architectural style of the house or other residential structures within the context area.

## 2.7. ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN THE DISTRICT

Most of the buildings in Norhill are one-story. The neighborhood also contains a few two-story residences and some commercial structures. The most common type of house is a wood-framed Craftsman bungalow, with various other styles from the early-mid 20th century.

### 2.7.a. Craftsman

Characteristics of one-story Craftsman details include prominent front porches, low-pitched roofs, wide eaves with exposed rafters, and ganged (or “ribbons”) of windows. Roofs may be gabled or hipped, or a combination of the two.



### 2.7.b. English Bungalow

A single or one-and-a-half-story home with a low-pitched roof, wide verandas, and a horizontal design that emphasizes its connection to the ground. This style of home typically has deep eaves.



### 2.7.c. Pediment Bungalow

A home with a triangular or semicircular decorative element, typically placed over the door or window. The Pediment Bungalow includes flat, engaged columns with a based and capital on each side of the entrance.



### 2.7.d. Tudor Revival

The most dominant features of this typical Revival style are the false or ornamental half-timbering which covers the upper story, and the steeply picturesque roof. Exterior texture using brick, stone, or stucco together with the half-timbering and asymmetrical massing, gives a Tudor Revival style building a picturesque/storybook look. This style of building was common during the early 20th century.



### 2.7.e. Transitional Architecture

During the early 20th century, builders often combined the Queen Anne style, which was beginning to go out of fashion, with the newly popular Craftsman style. This was not uncommon, and the practice continued through the 20th century. As a result, it is not unusual to see buildings that historically combined details from different architectural styles.



### 2.7.f. Folk National

Sometimes referred to as “Vernacular or Folk Houses,” these relatively small, modest houses are common in Houston. Many of the examples in this neighborhood have a front-gabled roof or a hipped roof with an inset porch (as shown in the photograph below). Full-width porches are also common.

Folk National Houses were constructed from the mid-1850s through the 1920s. As a result, they may include or combine architectural details typical of other styles that were popular at the time, such as Craftsman style bracketed eaves or Queen Anne-style turned porch supports.



### 2.7.g. Minimal Traditional

During the early 1940s, a small number of Minimal Traditional homes were built generally as small, one-story homes, very loosely based on the Tudor Revival style home. The

typical front facing gable, or a gable covered entry point, echo the Tudor features. With a slightly lower pitched roof than the Tudor predecessor, the Minimal Traditional roof pitch was intermediate with closed eaves. With simple façade features other than the decorative shutters, typical wall features include cement asbestos shingles, brick, or wood siding. The Minimal Traditional typically is boxy in appearance with a centered main entrance with windows flanking on both sides.



### 2.7.h. Duplex

Residential buildings that share a common wall, typically in the center of the structure. They are often Colonial, Victorian, Craftsman, and/or Tudor Revival architectural styles.



### 2.7.i. American Four-Square

American Four-Square houses are two rooms wide and two rooms deep. In other words, each floor has four rooms in a square shape. They were originally designed as multi-family dwellings. These houses may be one or two stories tall. In Houston, these are usually two-story houses with decorative details from the Craftsman, Prairie, or Colonial Revival styles. They were originally only built on some corner lots in Norhill and did not

exist on interior lots. The context area shall be other corner lots within the Norhill Historic District.



### 2.7.j. Mid-Century

A small number of houses continued to be built into the 1940's and 1950's. These houses reflect elements and scaling of their earlier counterparts but also can reflect more mid-century elements. These houses typically diverge from earlier houses in porch design.



### 2.7.k. Early 20th Century Vernacular Commercial Storefront

The Vernacular Commercial Storefront of the early 20th century appears in neighborhoods throughout the country. This building is divided into two distinct bands. The first floor is more commonly transparent so goods can be displayed while the upper floor(s) are usually reserved for offices, residential and storage functions. The commercial buildings along 11th Street include both one- and two-story examples with simple cornice lines. A few cornices have a Mission style influence.

Considering most properties located within the Norhill Historic District are single-family residential, all commercial properties will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. How a

building conforms to the overall scale, massing, and historic character of the neighborhood will determine the extent of proposed alterations permitted by the HOP and the HAHC. The historical character of all commercial properties should be retained, and all alterations (including painting of non-painted masonry) must go through the COA process.

Commercial properties within historic districts qualify for certain parking variances and signage. A 40% parking reduction is allowed for redeveloping a designated historic building. The building must be a protected landmark or a contributing structure with an approved COA, per Sec. 26-498 of the City of Houston code.



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# SECTION 3: CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS PROCESS (COA) & ORDINANCES

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## 3.1. HOUSTON'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The City designates historic districts, and manages changes to properties within those districts, through its historic preservation ordinance (Ch. 33, Article 7 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances). This ordinance is a local law that establishes the City's authority and responsibilities regarding historic landmarks and districts. It also establishes the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC), a group of professionals who are appointed by the Mayor and City Council to interpret and administer the historic preservation ordinance. These Norhill design guidelines are subject to any future updates to the historic preservation ordinance (Ch. 33, Article 7) or any other applicable city ordinance.

In addition, the Director of the Planning and Development Department has the authority to institute policy revisions to the design guidelines for staff that further define or clarify specific items or sections. However, any proposed policy revisions must seek and consider the views of the public in a manner that reflects and represents the Norhill Historic District residents prior to any policy revision being adopted.

The Houston City Council designated the Norhill neighborhood as a City of Houston historic district on June 14, 2000. An inventory of buildings within each historic district is submitted with each application for historic district designation. That inventory classifies each building as a contributing or potentially contributing structure to the historic character of the historic district or a non-contributing structure. Potentially contributing structures include structures from the period of significance that have been significantly altered over time, but prior to the historic district designation date. Because of their age, these structures could be renovated back to their original state, thereby making them contributing structures, although there is no requirement for that level of renovation in the ordinance.

The ordinance requires property owners to receive approval from the City before making certain changes to buildings in a historic district. To get the City's approval to make any of these changes, a property owner must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). The Planning staff in the Office of Preservation can help property owners with their application, which is processed through that office. A property owner must obtain a COA before beginning any work that is regulated under the historic preservation ordinance. Additional city building permits may be required.

Some changes, as well as ordinary maintenance and repair, are exempt from this requirement and do not require a COA. Other changes require a COA application but can be approved administratively by the Planning Director without going before HAHC. All other changes require a COA application to be considered in a public hearing before the HAHC; this includes most alterations to the exterior of a building, additions, new construction, relocation of a building into or out of a historic district, and demolition. Each month, the HAHC considers and makes decisions about COA applications at a public hearing. HOP staff base their recommendations, and the HAHC members base their decisions on the criteria for evaluating COA applications as listed in the ordinance. A summary of those criteria is provided in this section, for your reference.

While the HAHC may grant approval of any proposed alterations under its authority in conjunction with these guidelines, an applicant must still satisfy their valid neighborhood deed restrictions or risk liability for noncompliance. An applicant's deed restrictions and the City's preservation ordinance operate independently of each other and are not enforced by the Houston Office of Preservation. Proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## 3.2. PLAN SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

**Per the City code, the entire planned project should be presented in the COA application.** Applicants who hold back “future phases” of a project to gain approval for initial work may find that subsequent proposals will not be approved if the cumulative effect of all proposed changes is too great and collectively diminishes the integrity of the building.

Plans must show accurate area calculations for conditioned spaces, porches, garages, outbuildings, carports and porte-cochères. Impervious area calculations for the lot should also be accurately calculated and depicted. The calculation for the primary house square footage should be from the exterior face of masonry or framing and include all interior spaces not only living areas but also storage, staircases, etc.

The City of Houston does not preclude someone from beginning the permitting process prior to obtaining a COA; however, such an application will eventually be held up if a COA is required and has not been obtained.

### **Submission packets shall include, but are not limited to:**

1. Site plan:
  - a. Property lines and dimensioned building setbacks.
  - b. Roof plan.
  - c. Dimension of house to all property lines.
  - d. Square footage of all impervious coverage.
2. Floor plans (Existing floor plans and proposed):
  - a. Square footage calculations for living space, porches, garage and other outbuildings.
3. Elevation drawings:
  - a. Existing and proposed views.
  - b. Exterior finish details, existing and proposed.
  - c. Building height dimensions referencing from grade to finished floor, and to plate and ridge heights. If a second floor is proposed, dimension first floor and second floor plate heights.

### **Submittals are encouraged to include:**

1. Photos of existing elevations and any additional photos for architectural details (e.g., doors, windows, trim, columns, and overhangs columns).
2. 3D renderings of proposed additions.

### 3.3. CONTEXT AREA

For interior lots, the context area shall be other interior lots in the Norhill Historic District due to its high rate of architectural compatibility. For new construction, only those contributing structures on interior lots can be used as the basis for establishing comparative standards. For corner lots, the context area shall be other corner lots within the Norhill Historic District.

When a property owner applies for a COA, the HOP staff will make a recommendation to the HAHC whether the proposed changes are compatible with the surrounding context area and historic district.

### 3.4. EXEMPTIONS (NO COA REQUIRED)

The following types of work do not require a COA.

- Ordinary maintenance and repair. This generally means the least amount of work necessary to preserve the historic materials and features of a building, and in-kind repairs. In-kind means using the same material type, design, dimensions, texture, detailing, and exterior appearance.
  - Note: Replacement of historic materials (even in-kind) is an alteration and may require a COA. Please contact HOP staff if you are unsure if a COA is required for your project.
- Re-roofing with in-kind materials with no change to the structure, shape, or pitch of the roof (ex: composition shingles for composition shingles).
- Installation or removal of:
  - Gutters and downspouts
  - Window screens and screen doors
  - Temporary emergency weather protection, such as plywood coverings over windows
  - Porch ceiling fans
  - Light fixtures
  - HVAC units
  - Landscaping
  - Removal of non-historic (aluminum, vinyl) siding to reveal historic siding underneath. If no historic siding is present under non-historic siding, new replacement siding requires a COA but may be approved administratively; see Section 3.5.
  - Removal of storm windows and storm doors
  - Removal of burglar bars
  - Removal of accessibility ramps or lifts
  - Removal of solar panels
  - Removal of satellite dishes or antennae
  - Installation of satellite dishes, antennae, or other roof equipment on the rear half of the roof
  - Per Texas state law, municipalities do not regulate the installation of solar devices
  - Installation or removal of free-standing signs

- Painting non-masonry surfaces
- Repainting previously painted masonry surfaces (unpainted masonry on a structure in a historic district may not be done without a COA)
- Reconstructing a contributing or noncontributing structure that was completely or partially destroyed by a fire, natural disaster, or other damage not intentionally caused by the owner of the structure. This only applies if the reconstruction is built within the same footprint and has the same exterior features as the damaged or destroyed contributing structure.
- Demolition of non-contributing non-residential structures.
- Fences

### 3.5. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVALS

The following types of work require a COA, which may be approved administratively, per Section Sec. 33-241.1 of the Code of Ordinances. The list of what may be administratively approved is amended by the adoption of these design guidelines and the list follows:

**Removal of:**

- A window or door that was not original to the contributing structure and replacing it with a window or door that meets all the following conditions:
  - It is appropriate to the historic significance of the structure.
  - It does not change the size, shape, or location of the opening from which the window or door elements are to be removed.
  - It does not change the trim, molding, or other features associated with the opening.
- Exterior wall cladding that was not an original feature or characteristic of the structure and replacing it with appropriate cladding.
- Non-historic additions, including attached garages or carports
- Non-historic decorative elements, such as shutters or eave brackets
- Non-historic, low-profile skylights
- Canopies or awnings
- Signs attached to the building

**Replacement of:**

- Historic materials that are damaged beyond repair with materials of the same size, shape, material, and pattern. For example, if a small amount of siding is damaged beyond repair, it may be replaced with new material that matches exactly. See next page for more administrative approvals. Section 1: Introduction 1-11.

**Installation of:**

- Burglar bars
- Accessibility ramps or lifts
- Low-profile skylights, antennae, satellite dishes, or other roof equipment on the front half of the roof
- Shutters
- Awnings or canopies

- Architectural details (including porch elements) that have been partially lost or removed, if you can provide proof that they used to exist, either through existing elements that are still in place or by historical documentation, such as architectural plans or photographs
- Signs attached to the exterior of the building that meet all of the following conditions:
  - It does not compromise historic exterior features on the structure, such as siding or trim, porch elements, etc.
  - It is 25 square feet or less in total area.
  - It is installed without damage to significant historic material

**Construction of:**

- Free-standing (detached) garages, free-standing carports, and other secondary structures, so long as they have a footprint of 600 square feet or less and are located at the rear of the lot.
- A rear porch that is not taller than the existing structure and does not extend beyond the existing side walls of the structure.

***Repair or reconstruction of internal structural elements (such as interior shiplap) that are essential to support the building envelope to which they are attached. The following conditions must be met:***

- You must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Director that the structural repair or reconstruction can be accomplished without harming those exterior features of the structure that are visible from the right-of-way.
- You must provide a written statement from a structural engineer, licensed by the State of Texas, that the proposed repair or reconstruction can be accomplished without harming the exterior features of the structure that are visible from the right-of-way.

## 3.6. CITY OF HOUSTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

### 3.6.a. City of Houston Historic Preservation Ordinance

*Chapter 33 (Planning and Development), Article VII (Historic Preservation), et al.*  
[ARTICLE VII. - HISTORIC PRESERVATION | Code of Ordinances | Houston, TX | Municode Library](#)

### 3.6.b. City of Houston Code of Ordinances 33-241: Exterior Alteration, Rehabilitation, and Restoration of Historic Properties

*Chapter 33 (Planning and Development), Article VII (Historic Preservation), Division 4 (Certificates of Appropriateness), Section 241*  
[https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances/312514?nodeld=COOR\\_CH33PLDE\\_ARTVIIHIPR\\_DIV4CEAP\\_S33-241SAXTALREREAD](https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances/312514?nodeld=COOR_CH33PLDE_ARTVIIHIPR_DIV4CEAP_S33-241SAXTALREREAD)

### 3.6.c. City of Houston Code of Ordinances 33-242: New Construction in Historic Districts

*Chapter 33 (Planning and Development), Article VII (Historic Preservation), Division 4 (Certificates of Appropriateness), Section 242*  
[https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances/312514?nodeld=COOR\\_CH33PLDE\\_ARTVIIHIPR\\_DIV4CEAP\\_S33-242SAEWCOHIDI](https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances/312514?nodeld=COOR_CH33PLDE_ARTVIIHIPR_DIV4CEAP_S33-242SAEWCOHIDI)

**\*\* These design guidelines are subject to any future updates to City of Houston Code of Ordinances.**

## 3.7. RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

### 3.7.a. City of Houston Office of Preservation

The City of Houston Historic Preservation Division is within the Planning and Development Department. The Houston Office of Preservation (HOP) staff can assist in the early phases of project development and guide applicants through the review process to ensure proposed alterations are made appropriately.

**Phone:** 832-393-6556

**Email:** [historicpreservation@houstontx.gov](mailto:historicpreservation@houstontx.gov)

### 3.7.b. Mayor's Office of Economic Development

Properties located within a historic district may be eligible to receive property tax exemptions. Inquire through the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.

**Phone:** 713-837-7963

**EcoDev Contact Us Form:** [Nintex Automation Cloud \(workflowcloud.com\)](https://www.nintex.com/automation/cloud/)

**Website:** [https://www.houstontx.gov/ecodev/historic\\_site\\_tax\\_exemption.html](https://www.houstontx.gov/ecodev/historic_site_tax_exemption.html)

## **SECTION 4: ABOUT THE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

This section describes the history of Norhill, including an historical plat of a portion of the district and a current map outlining the boundary of the Norhill Historic District.

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## 4.1. THE HISTORY OF NORHILL

The Norhill subdivision north of downtown was a planned community for working-class families. Houston businessman William C. "Will" Hogg developed the neighborhood in the 1920s. Most of the buildings in the neighborhood are small two bedroom/one bath Craftsman dwellings. The Norhill Historic District includes two of the three sections of the original neighborhood and contained 858 total lots when the district was designated in 2000. The North and East subdivision sections (north of 11th Street) are inside the district boundaries, while the South section (south of 11th Street) is not included.

By the end of World War I, Houston had one of the strongest economies in the South. It was a railroad center and a shipping center, thanks to the Houston Ship Channel and Port of Houston. The city's population boomed between 1900 and 1925. New residential developments sprang up all over Houston to meet the demand for housing. No one played a more important role in meeting that demand than Will Hogg.

Will Hogg was a member of one of Texas' most wealthy and influential families. In 1920, Hogg organized a group to develop a master planned community for working-class families, Norhill. Norhill was built with streets, curbs, sidewalks, and water and sewer lines. Norhill Boulevard was the main thoroughfare in North Norhill; it runs the entire length of the neighborhood. The boulevard contains esplanades that provided green space and a park-like quality to the neighborhood.

The developers also planned space for schools, parks, and commercial activity. Norhill's commercial center was located along 11th Street, between Studewood and Pecore Streets. That commercial corridor separated North and East Norhill from South Norhill. Proctor Plaza Park is in the East Norhill area. Several churches also moved to the neighborhood, providing additional opportunities to build a sense of community that was family centric.

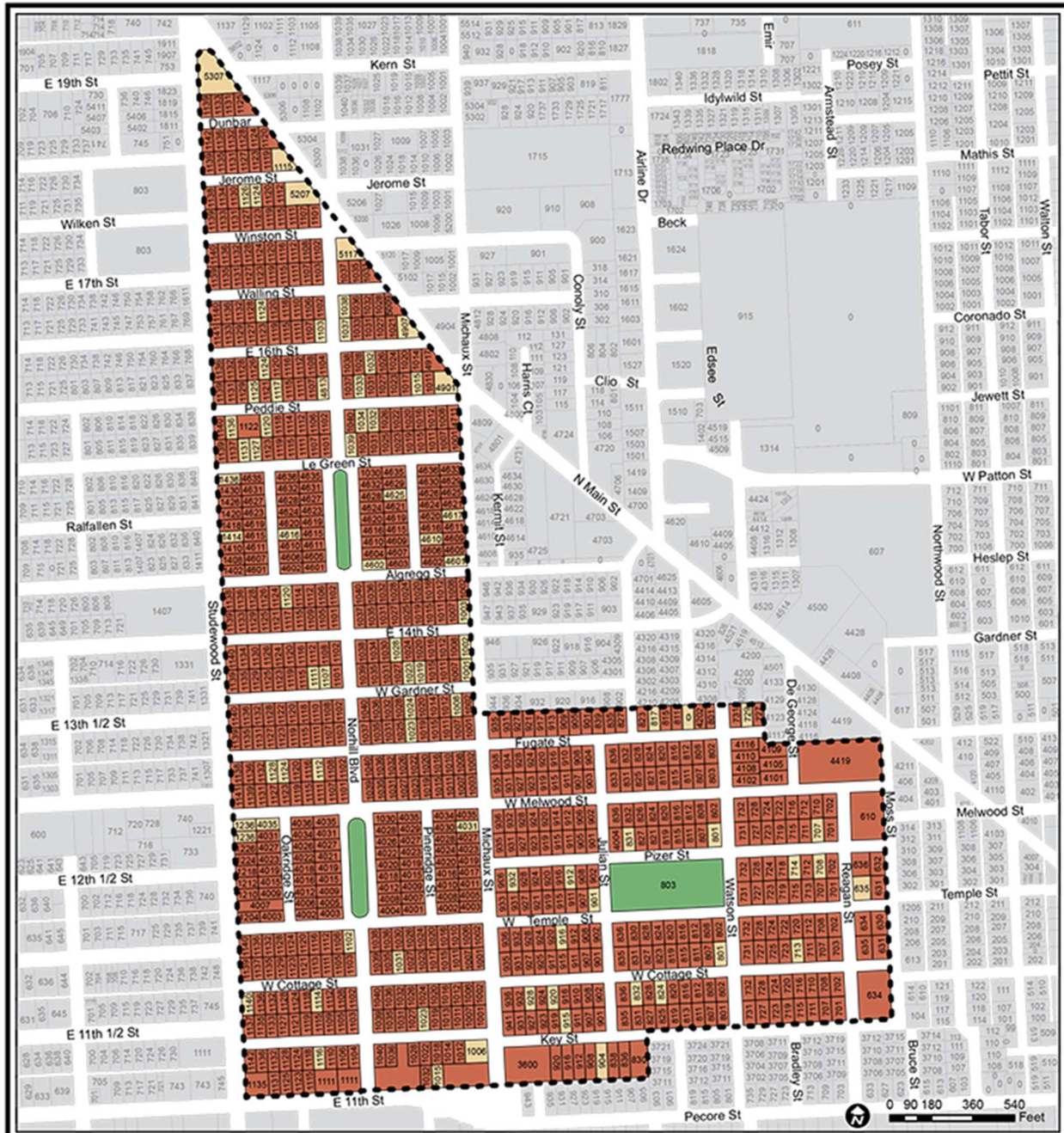
Norhill was only a short ride from downtown by the existing Studewood streetcar line or automobile and the entire Norhill subdivision developed very quickly. Lots sold for between \$650 and \$1,000. Buyers could make a 2% down payment, then pay 2% per month at 7% interest. The lots started selling in 1923. By August 1924, more than 700 lots had been sold, and many residences had already been constructed.

Deed restrictions were established to protect the value of the neighborhood. Specifically, they required that all houses cost at least three times as much as the lot on which they were built; that the homes be set back from the street by a certain distance, and no garages could be used for living quarters. Lots surrounding Proctor Plaza came with additional requirements for the homes to have brick veneer on the exterior.

Over time, Norhill experienced the same ups and downs as other historic neighborhoods. Today, Norhill has transitioned from a predominantly working-class resident base to a more professional class of residents, attracting those who desire an established community atmosphere. The challenge is balancing the desire for more space to accommodate growing families while maintaining the historic integrity of the overall neighborhood.



A copy of a portion of the "East Norhill" addition plat. City of Houston, Texas; June 16, 1924.



# Norhill Historic District

**Historic District Boundary**  
 - - - -

- Building Classification**
- Contributing
  - Non-Contributing
  - Park

Established: June 14, 2000  
 Source: GIS Services Division  
 Date: May 1, 2013  
 Reference: pj17025\_Norhill

This map is made available for reference purposes only and should not be substituted for a survey product. The City of Houston will not accept liability of any kind in conjunction with its use.



**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

## SECTION 5:

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESOURCES

For more information, a variety of resources are available to assist property owners and design professionals as they plan building projects in historic districts.

#### **City of Houston**

Complete information about the City of Houston's historic preservation programs and design review process are available online at <https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/HistoricPres/>.

#### **Texas Historical Commission (THC)**

State-specific information about the National Register of Historic Places and preservation programs, including the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit program, is available at [www.thc.texas.gov](http://www.thc.texas.gov).

#### **National Park Service (NPS)**

Publications from the NPS include preservation briefs, which include technical information about the repair and maintenance of historic building materials and systems. These resources are available at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>. NPS also publishes *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, available online at [www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm).