Rock Hill Residential Development Guidelines

Zoning Ordinance

Application for New Single-Family Homes

List of Minimum Submission Standards

CITY OF ROCK HILL RESIDENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT and DESIGN GUIDELINES MANUAL

A guide to sustainable residential redevelopment

Adopted by Ordinance No. 1601
Of the City of Rock Hill Board of Aldermen
June 6, 2006

INTRODUCTION

The City of Rock Hill was incorporated in 1929 as a village and became a Fourth Class City in 1941. The City has served the St. Louis region as a wonderful community to call home.

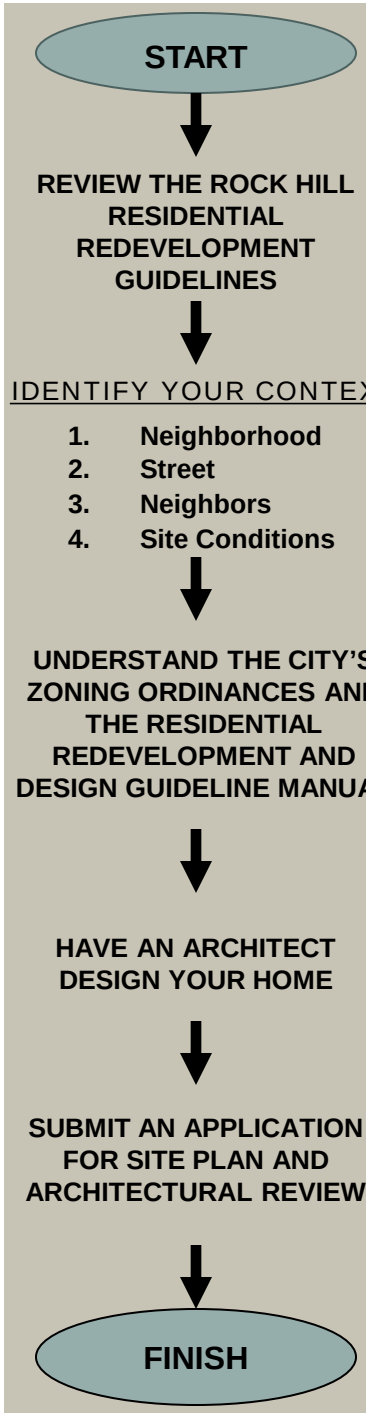
During the 1940's and continuing through the national housing boom of the post-war years, Rock Hill experienced rapid growth. Most of the existing housing stock in Rock Hill was built between 1940 and 1970. Most post-war homes were built on lots of 5,000 square feet or more. The homes ranged from 900 square feet to about 1,200 square feet. Most can be architecturally classified as "bungalow" homes, a one-story, horizontal house with a low-pitched roof.

Historically, Rock Hill was home to many farms, greenhouses and dairies. This agrarian history and heritage resulted in many of the post-war subdivisions featuring wooded lots with substantial shade and tree-lined streets. This "tree-friendly" approach remains a dominant feature of most Rock Hill neighborhoods today.

There has been another constant that characterizes Rock Hill – its location. Ever since Auguste Chouteau traded with the Native Americans over a path that later became Manchester Road, Rock Hill has been at the very center of the St. Louis region. Our excellent location, fine schools, and stable neighborhoods have sparked renewed interest in Rock Hill for residential redevelopment.

The City of Rock Hill welcomes and embraces this renewed interest in residential redevelopment. The city, however, wishes to foster this new residential redevelopment interest while maintaining the character and cohesiveness of its existing neighborhoods. Today's new homes tend to be quite different from the original housing stock and the City wishes to both encourage redevelopment and maintain a harmonious balance between the old and the new. This manual has been prepared to encourage creative and good design in an effort to preserve the genuine character of existing neighborhoods.

The Rock Hill Planning and Zoning Commission is in charge of reviewing applications for renovations, additions, and new single-family homes in Rock Hill to ensure the architectural compatibility of new homes is balanced with the surrounding appeal and character of our neighborhoods. With the spirit of renewed interest in redevelopment in Rock Hill, the Rock Hill Planning and Zoning Commission has prepared this manual to illustrate the primary design issues that are considered during Site Plan Review and Residential Architectural Design Review.



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This manual is intended to encourage renovations, additions and new home design that will result in greater long-term value and enjoyment, by both the home owner and neighbors.

IDENTIFYING YOUR CONTEXT

Redevelopment occurs within a context. A *context*, as used within this manual, is a series of interrelated parts that together create quality residential environments.

Good design principles dictate that when designing within the residential environment, consideration of four basic parts of the overall context can make a significant difference. The four basic parts of the residential context this manual focuses on are:

(1) neighborhood,
(2) street,
(3) neighbors, and
(4) site conditions.

IDENTIFYING YOUR CONTEXT:
STEP 1 –Understand Your Neighborhood

The first necessary step in considering a design for a new home is to understand your new neighborhood. A substantial part of the appeal of Rock Hill is its many strong neighborhoods. Begin by identifying the characteristics of your neighborhood. Make sure that the design features of your new home complement and fit into the neighborhood context.

Understand the character of your neighborhood before you decide on your house design.

Step 1: Understand Your Neighborhood

The answers to the following questions will help you determine the characteristics that define the identity and distinct appeal of your neighborhood. Remember, good design takes into account prevailing neighborhood features.

What are the boundaries of the neighborhood? (streets, parks, creeks, etc.)

_____

What type of development is the neighborhood and when was it built? (subdivision, eclectic, historic homes, etc.)

_____

What are the zoning designations / limitations? (setbacks, uses, etc.)

_____

How have the streets and lots been organized? (square, irregular, winding, etc.)

_____

What characterizes the streetscape? (horizontal, vertical, trees, sidewalks, etc.)

_____

How many floors do most homes in this neighborhood have? (1, 1 ½, 2, more)

_____

What are the predominant materials used in the neighborhood? (brick, siding, stone, stucco)

_____

What are the predominant roof lines, pitches, eaves, etc.? (1,2,3 ridges, steep or shallow pitch, deep or shallow eaves, etc.)

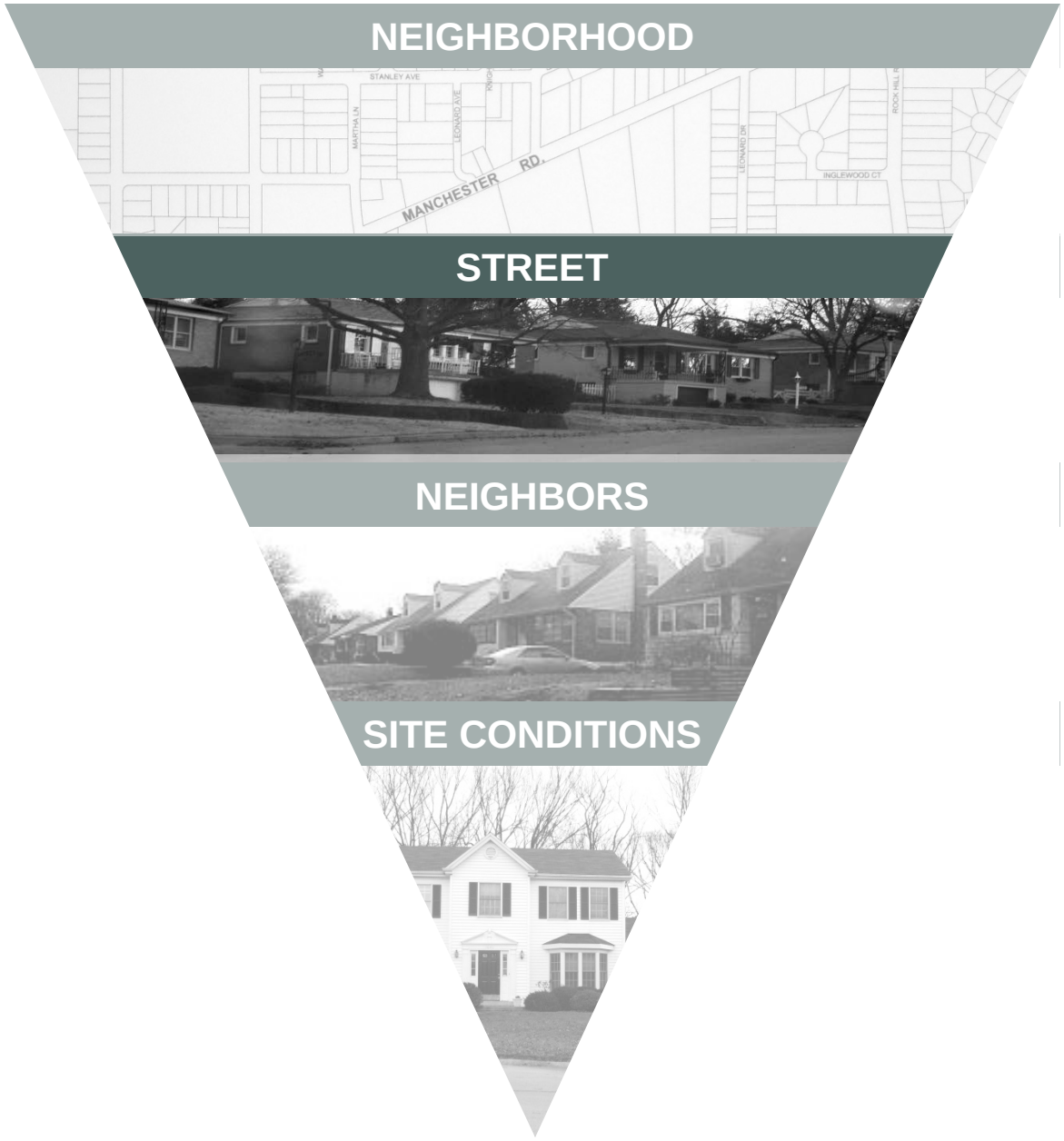
_____

Is the neighborhood wooded, with substantial shade? (predominant tree stock, shade affecting street, adjacent properties, etc.)

_____

STEP 2 – Understand Your Street

The character of your street is the next crucial part of the context you must identify and understand. A good design will consider the street at two levels, site plan and elevation.



Step 2: Understand Your Street

The following questions will help you understand the qualities of your street that should be respected.

How old are the houses on your street? What percentage, if any, have been redeveloped or rehabilitated?

_____

Is your street the same as others in your neighborhood or is it unique in some way?

_____

What vertical pattern or predominant theme is formed by the roof heights on the street?

_____

What architectural features do you see repeated? (porches, dormers, window patterns, front door treatment, etc.)

_____

How are garages treated? (Attached, Detached, Recessed, Side Entry, etc.)

_____

Where are garages located? (along the front, side or rear)

_____

How are the homes aligned along the streetscape? (single line, diversity of setbacks, protruding fronts and elevations, etc.)

_____

What is the dominant elevation along the street? (the main home footprint, the entry porch, garage, etc.)

_____

What landscaping features characterize the street? (tree types, maturity of tress, amount of shade, variety, spacing, bushes, etc.)

_____

The streetscape will help you identify the pattern of houses that line the street.

Streetscape is most simply described as the visual appearance of the homes and landscaping on a street.

Elements include:
- **Setbacks of buildings**
- **Height of structures**
- **Building materials**
- **Pattern of roof lines**
- **Pedestrian entryways**
- **Orientation of garages**
- **Location of driveways**
- **Street Trees and landscaping**

Step 2: Understand Your Street

Identifying Street Characteristics

Rock Hill has setback requirements, but we also require that new homes respect the prevailing setbacks of other homes on the street. Many of our existing homes have front entry garages but only have one garage door. Today, when garages are often much larger, we prefer that they not become a dominant feature from the street.

Easy Tools:

An aerial view of your street can help identify street conditions that you need to respect. Maps like this one can be found at www.mapquest.com, www.terraserver.com and www.co.st-louis.mo.us. All you need is your address!

Maintaining Harmony

A crucial element of good design is harmony. Make sure your new home is in harmony with the character of your street. This means you should not build a house that is radically different in terms of roof line, roof pitch, building height, garage projection, garage size, building materials, design elements, etc. Work hard to make sure your new home is a *PART* of your street, and don't build a home that is in stark contrast to those of your neighbors'.

STEP 3 – Respect Your Neighbors

By following good design principles, you can make your new home a great asset to your new neighborhood. To do so, you must respect the architectural qualities of your neighbors' homes.

Make sure you make every effort to design a home that does not dominate or overshadow your neighbors' home. A new home site should not be mounded, nor should a new house tower over a neighbor's house.

Step 3: Respect Your Neighbors

Your project will affect your neighbors immediately. The following questions will help you identify qualities in the adjacent homes that must be respected.

What type of home sits on either side of your property? (ranch, two story, split-level, age)

What characterizes the roof lines and slopes of the homes on both sides of your property? (multiple ridges, steep or shallow slope)

How are driveways, turnarounds, and garages situated for your neighbors?

How are the homes situated on their properties? (close to the street, far away, further to one side, centered, etc.)

What landscape features are adjacent to your property, and do landscape features on your property affect your neighbors? (shade trees, etc.)

What materials are used on your neighbor's homes?

Is the massing of the neighboring façades simple or complex?

What special or unique features are worth repeating?

What elements in your home are designed to recognize and respect the size and height of your neighbors' homes?

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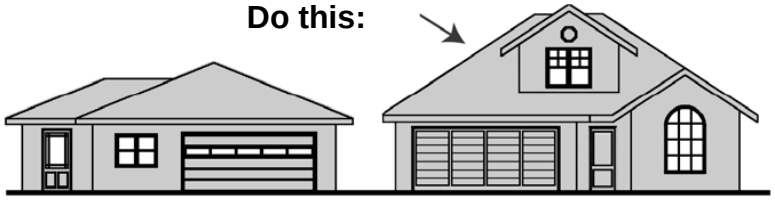

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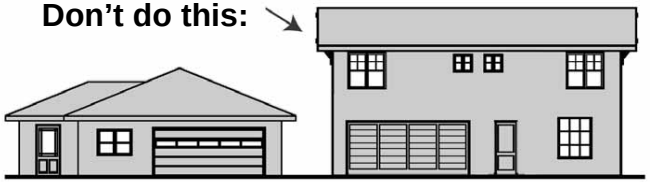
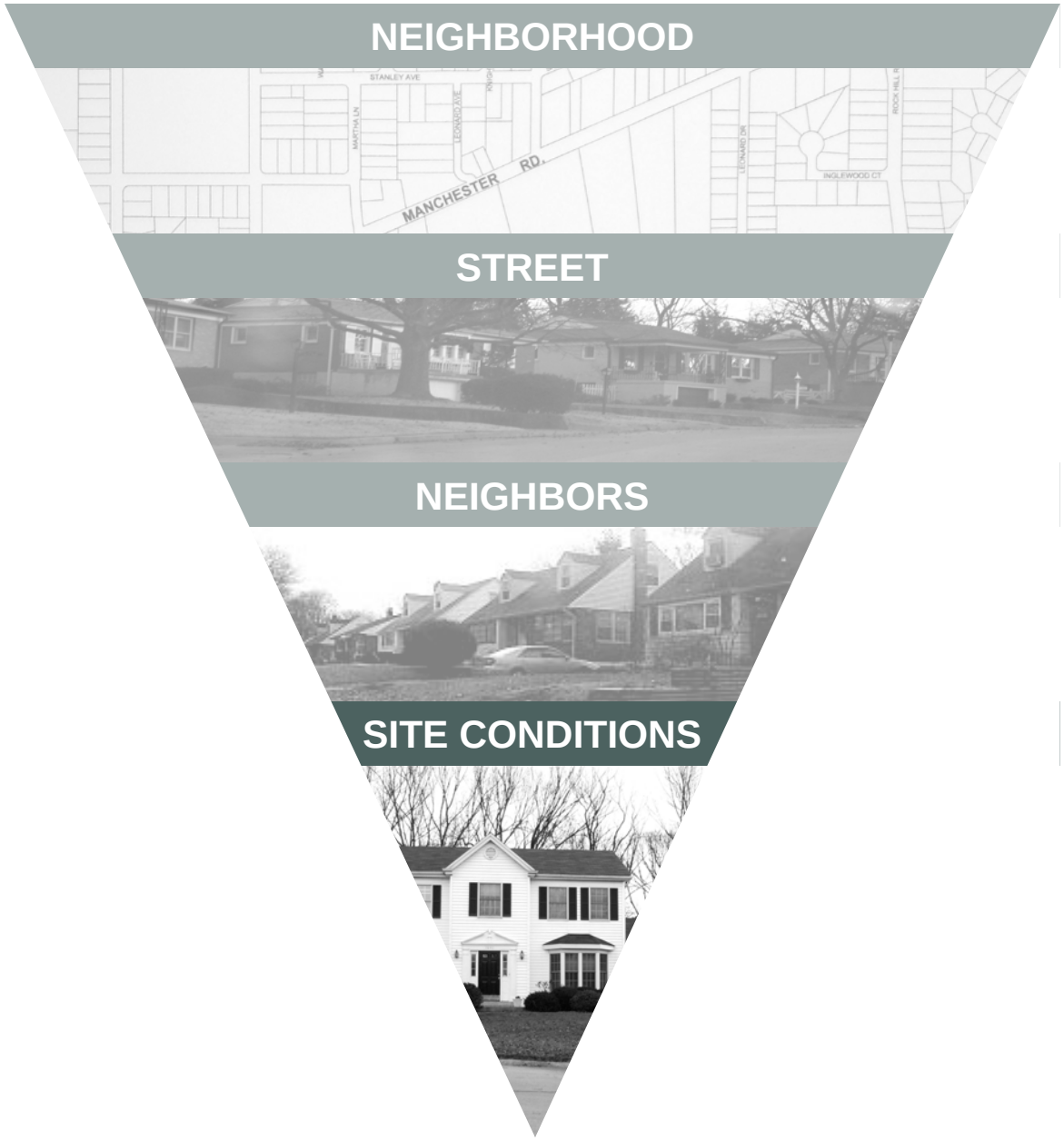


IDENTIFYING YOUR CONTEXT: STEP 3 – Design A Home to Fit Your Site, Not A Site To Fit Your Home

No two sites are exactly the same. Since Rock Hill is an established community, new homes will be built on sites that cannot be significantly changed or modified without adversely impacting adjacent properties.

Your new home must be designed to fit into existing site conditions. Given Rock Hill's character and lot sizes, there is not much room to change a site without affecting those around you.

Never artificially mound a site or substantially regrade a site to fit a house. Design a home to fit your site, not a site to fit your home.



Mounding

Changes to the existing natural terrain through grading should be kept to a minimum to preserve the inherent characteristics of the site.

Grading should be kept to a minimum and should be performed in a way that respects significant natural features and blends visually with adjacent properties. Building pads should disturb natural contours as little as possible. Balanced cut and fill volumes are desirable, and alterations to natural land forms should be minimized. Factors to be considered in the development of a grading plan are:

- **The natural features of the site;**
- **Slope and soil characteristics;**
- **Vegetative cover;**
- **Access to the site;**
- **Drainage;**
- **Orientation and visibility of both the site and the proposed development; and**
- **Drainage.**

Step 4: Site Conditions

The answers to these questions will help you determine the site conditions of your lot and that of the overall neighborhood. Remember, good design includes taking into account and building within existing site conditions.

What is the existing topography of the site? (flat, sloped, etc.)

_____

Does the design of the home fit the conditions of the lot described above or is substantial alteration necessary to fit the home? (the topography is flat and the home needs no adjustment, the topography is sloped and the home has been adjusted and stepped to conform with the existing topographical conditions, etc.)

_____

Where does the majority of the stormwater on the site drain? (to the street, property corner, etc.)

_____

How are adjacent lots graded? (flat, mounded,stepped, etc.)

_____

How many sizable trees are on the lot? (1, 2, 3, etc.)

_____

Where is the highest point on the lot? (by the street, rear corner, etc.)

_____

What is the elevation of the sewer lateral and what is the elevation of the basement floor? (is there enough fall between the two, will there be a grinder pump, etc.)

_____

Where do the downspouts drain? (drain to street, drain to swale, etc.)

_____

Is the existing site properly graded? Or does runoff from the existing site create standing water or problems for your neighbors?

_____

Architectural design is a combination of art and science. These guidelines are neither permissive nor prohibitive. While they express the principles we want you to consider for your house, they are intended as a starting point for creative and diverse design. Some design elements may work well in one context, but not work in another. A house design is not judged solely on the basis of conformity to the guidelines, but how well all of the design elements combine and work together in the context of your site, your street and your neighborhood.

An important part of the City's review and approval of new homes relates to elements of design. There aren't always clear rules telling us what "good" design looks like, and it is hard to explain the design principles the City wants to encourage in words alone. But there are common design elements that provide for compatibility with existing neighborhoods.

The following pages explain and illustrate what the City of Rock Hill desires to encourage in the design of new homes. The City's evaluation of the proposed design of your new home will generally focus on the elements described in the next seven pages.

Please understand that other elements may also be considered in accord with the guidelines about neighborhood, street, neighbors and site already explained.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: Elements to be Reviewed

Massing

Roofs

Materials

Garages

Site and Grading

Elevation Articulation

Massing

Principles to Design By…

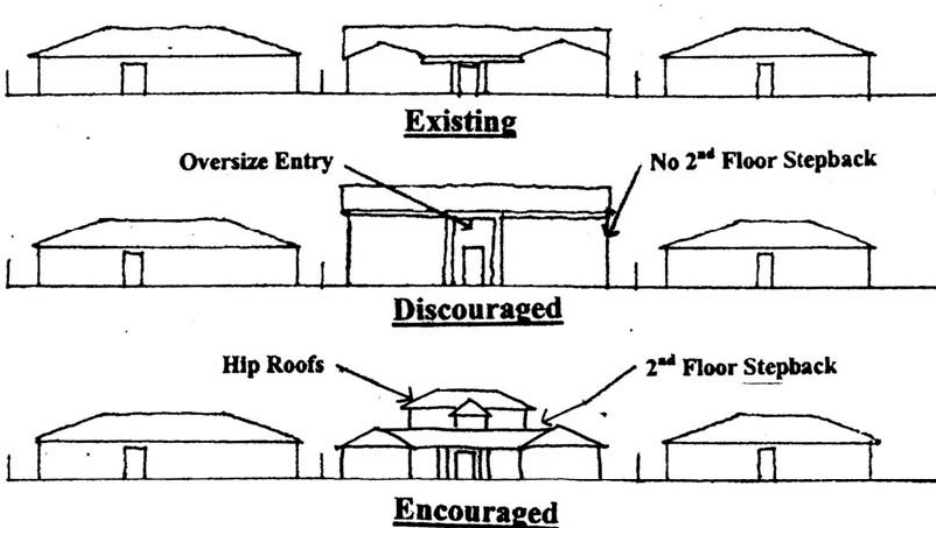
The appeal of Rock Hill has been the strength and character of our neighborhoods. The strength of these neighborhoods lies in the architectural relationships between each home. When one home dominates another in sheer size and shape, the character of the neighborhood is weakened.

Consider the following elements in addressing mass:

- **Building height**
- **Building width**
- **Breaks in building plane**
- **Window treatment**
- **Use of material**
- **Roof proportions**
- **Architectural Detail**
- **Site grading**

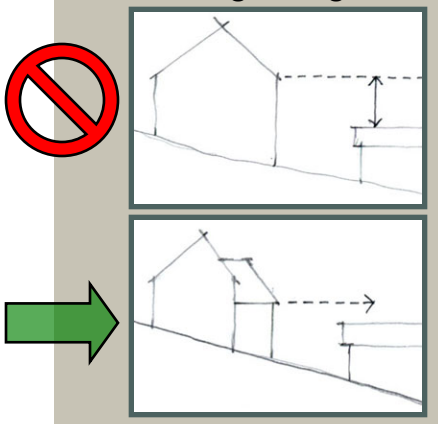
Relationship to Neighbors

Break down the mass of your home to avoid towering over your neighbors



Step down the rooflines

When you respect the height of adjacent homes, your home looks better and your neighbors won't feel overshadowed. The example shown below illustrates a desirable approach.



"Mass" does not simply mean size, though the size of your new home is an important element. Mass, more importantly, refers to the appearance of your new home as compared to your neighbors. The design of your new home should not dominate, tower above or overshadow your neighbors.

Roofs

Principles to Design By…

Your rooflines should not be the dominating architectural theme of your new home. Instead, the roof line can be used to help your home ***harmonize*** with the roof patterns of the street without calling attention to itself.

Many of our neighborhoods have homes with shallow roof pitches. A new home with a steep roof pitch can really stand out. It is the intent of the City to ensure that rooflines do not detract from the overall streetscape. **The primary roof pitch of the the new home shall not be greater than twice the roof pitch of any adjacent home and shall not exceed a 10:12 pitch.**

Consider the following elements of roof design:

Roof pitch

Principal roof pitch

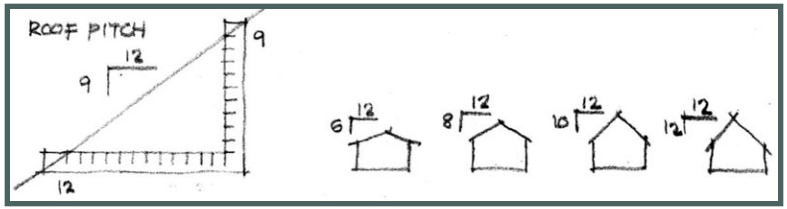
Secondary roof pitches

Edge treatment

Gables

Predominant roof pitch in the neighborhood

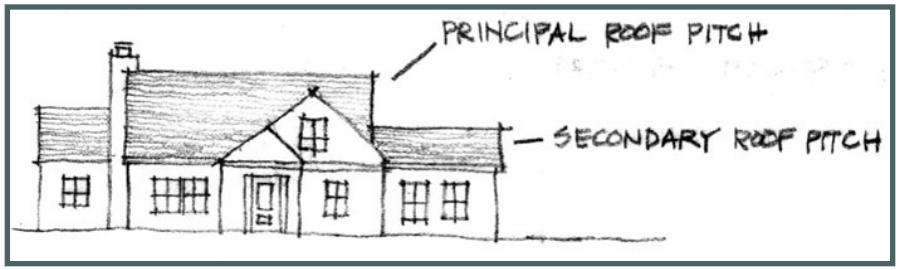
Roof patterns in the neighborhood

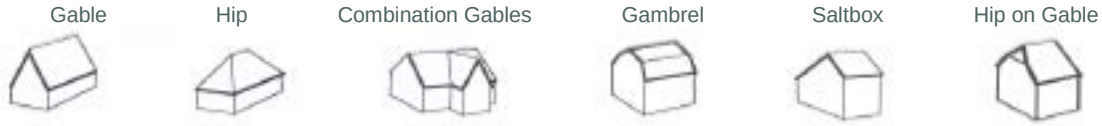


Less vertical expression compared to a more desirable expression next to a one-story home

Roof pitch: The angle or "pitch" of a roof is expressed in inches of rise (vertical) for every 12 inches of run (horizontal).

Steep Shallow





Garages

Principles to Design By…

Much of the original housing stock in Rock Hill was constructed with a single car garage or carport aligned with the main building plane or behind the front elevation. Understanding that the modern day family has at least two vehicles, the design for indoor off-street parking should be sensitive to the fact that garages in Rock Hill are not necessarily the dominant architectural feature of a building elevation and do not necessarily dominate the streetscape of a neighborhood.

Architecture that fails to express the presence of humans is unsatisfying. We encourage homes that express the idea we are a city of people, not cars. Oversized garages, front entry garages and double width garage doors call negative attention to a home. Even more so, a garage that projects beyond the main front building plane towards the street centers attention on the garage and not the home.

During the Architectural review, it is a priority of the City to ensure that the garage is not the primary architectural feature of any elevation, and that the garage does not detract from the general streetscape. **Any projection of a garage beyond the main front building plane, including the front porch, is discouraged.**

What to do with the cars?

Garages are for storing cars, tools and lawn equipment. A well designed home does not have a garage projection or door as the primary architectural feature. Instead, place your garage around back and show off your beautiful home instead!

Consider the following elements of garage design:

- **Building setback**
- **Street entry**
- **Side entry**
- **Garage door face**
- **Number of garage doors**
- **Overall mass, size and placement of the garage compared to the rest of home**
- **Predominate garage types in the neighborhood**
- **Garage layouts in the neighborhood**

Encouraged

Recessed Front Entry Garage

Flush Front Entry Garage

Rear/Side Entry Garage

Detached Garage

Discouraged

Protruding Garages

Carports

Elevation Articulation

Consider the following elements when designing an elevation:

Building width

Building articulation

Building mass

Avoid the void

Ban the bland

Keep all four sides interesting

Design a home on all sides

Principles to Design By…

A good home design pays equal attention to all four building elevations: the front, two sides and rear.

Front Elevation

The front elevation of your home should harmonize with adjacent homes, but should not be identical to them either.

Side and Rear Elevations

You don't see the sides or back of your home from inside your house, but your neighbors DO! Remember to address basic design on the sides and rear of your home. **Good architectural design includes design features and articulation – walls that include elements of architectural interest, not a blank wall.**

No Articulation

The appearance of your new home at each elevation is an important element in good design. Good design principles dictate that your new home provides elevations on all sides that help foster a sense of community and respect for your neighbors.

Materials

Consider the following elements when considering building materials:

Brick and stone (or high quality substitutes)

Siding, including wood or aggregate substitutes such as hardi-plank, or restoration grade vinyl profiles *may be acceptable*

Painted wood trim

Principles to Design By…

To reflect the quality of our communities we expect building materials to be of the highest quality, reflecting the material use and patterns of the neighborhood.

Colors, including trim and accent colors, should be compatible with neighboring buildings and include at least 3 design elements on the front elevation and at least 2 on the side and rear elevations. The design must also adhere to the City's masonry requirements. More information on materials and design are available in Section 405. 760 of the City code.

Elegant Use of Materials

Limiting the number of materials makes it easier to harmonize colors and textures.

Complex Use of Materials

The more materials you use, the harder it is to make them look good together.

Site and Grading

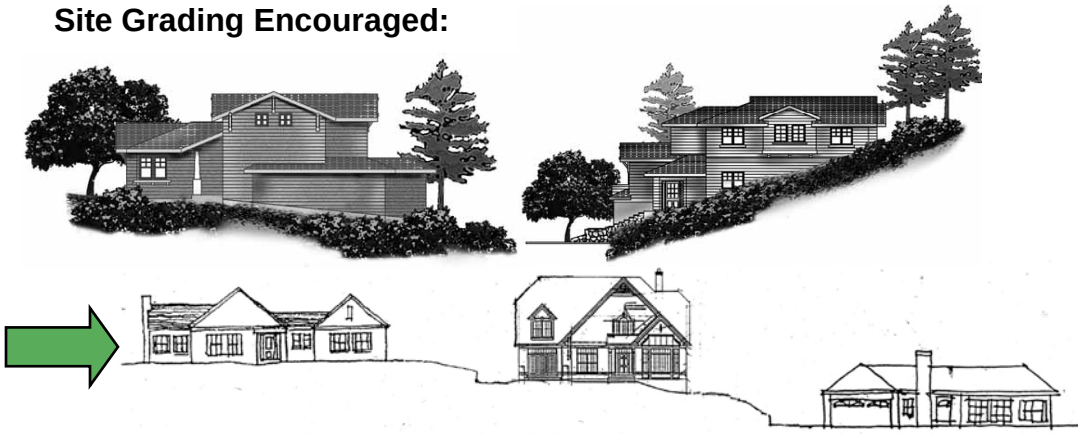
We consider the following elements of a site design:

- **Topography**
- **Top of foundation**
- **Avoid mounding**
- **Storm-water discharge**
- **Existing and proposed grades**
- **Proposed Downspouts**
- **Neighboring property lines**
- **Street accessibility**
- **Landscaping, trees and shading**
- **Tree preservation**

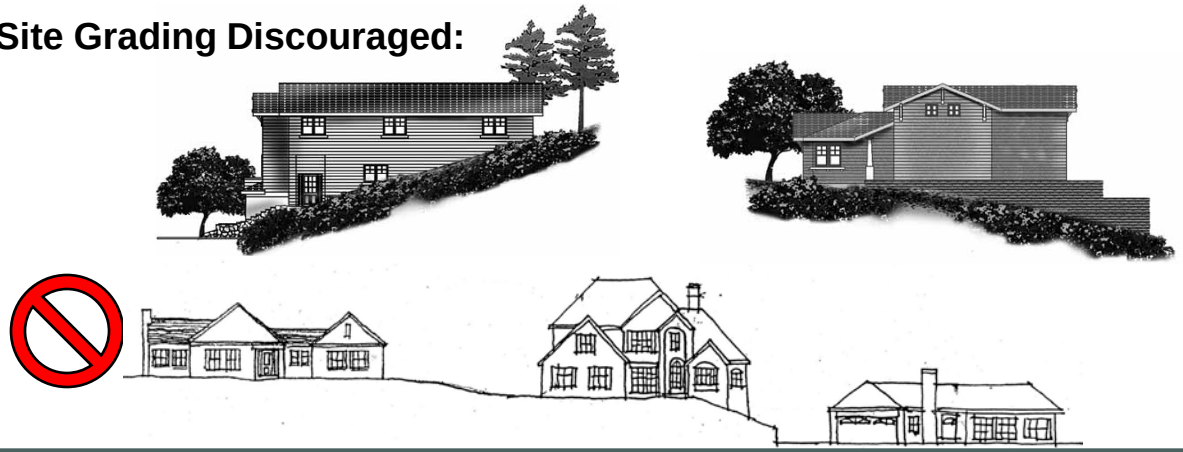
Principles to Design By…

You should expect to address and solve site drainage problems that already exist. Ignoring drainage patterns or increasing the amount or velocity of storm-water runoff to adjacent properties is not acceptable.

Site Grading Encouraged:



Site Grading Discouraged:



Remember, good design means taking advantage of existing grades. Too much grading on a site can alter the character of a lot and severely and negatively affect neighbors.

Do design your house for the lot.
Don't alter the lot for the house.