

SECTION 6: ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO NONCONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

A structure may be classified as noncontributing because it was constructed after the end of the historic district's period of significance (see page 2-3), has been altered in a way that removes or conceals character-defining features (see page 2-6), or otherwise does not share the characteristics that make the historic district, as a whole, significant. Since noncontributing buildings already do not support the historic qualities of the district, the criteria for making changes to them are less strict than those for contributing structures. However, the visual qualities of noncontributing structures still impact the character of the historic district, so many changes to them must be managed.

In addition, a building that is classified as noncontributing due to previous inappropriate alterations may have the potential to be restored. It is important to recognize whether a building has the potential to contribute to the significance of the historic district and avoid destroying that potential with additional changes, if possible.

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NOTE:
The recommended design standards are in draft form for discussion purposes only. This material has not been reviewed by the City's legal counsel and is not final until after council consideration.

RULES FOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO NONCONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

Most changes to noncontributing structures within a historic district require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Some of these can be approved administratively by the Planning Director, while others must be reviewed by the HAHC. Some changes do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness at all. Please review the following information to determine what criteria apply to your project, as established in the historic preservation ordinance.

The following types of work **do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness**.

- Ordinary maintenance and repair
- Re-roofing with in-kind materials with no change to the structure, shape, or pitch of the roof
- An alteration that is obscured from view from the street by the original structure and not merely obscured by fencing, landscaping, non-historic additions, or other impermanent obstructions
- Gutters, downspouts, storm windows and doors, window screens, screen doors, temporary emergency weatherization features such as plywood coverings over windows, porch ceiling fans, light fixtures, HVAC units, landscaping
- Fences
- Removal of burglar bars, satellite dishes, antennae, solar panels, free-standing signs, and accessibility ramps or lifts
- Installation of solar panels, antennae, satellite dishes, or other roof equipment installed on the rear half of the roof
- Installation of free-standing signs
- Painting non-masonry surfaces, and repainting previously painted masonry surfaces
- Reconstruction of a portion of a 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, only if the reconstruction is built within the same footprint and has the same exterior features as the damaged or destroyed noncontributing structure
- Demolition of a noncontributing structure

The following types of work **require a Certificate of Appropriateness**, which may be **approved administratively**:

1. An alteration, rehabilitation, or restoration of a noncontributing structure that *does not require* the removal or replacement of the structural elements (not including the foundation) within 67% or more of the structure, can be approved administratively by the Planning Director, if it meets the following criteria:
 - a. The proposed activity must recognize the building, structure, object, or site as a product of its own time and avoid alterations that seek to create an earlier or later appearance; and
 - b. The proposed activity must match the architectural features, materials, and character of either the existing noncontributing structure or the contributing structures within the context area.
2. The HAHC **must review** any application for a Certificate of Appropriateness which proposes the alteration, rehabilitation, or restoration of a noncontributing structure that requires the **removal or replacement of the structural elements (not including the foundation) within 67% or more of the structure**. The application will be considered based on the criteria and design guidelines for New Construction, provided elsewhere in this section.
3. **Proposed additions to a noncontributing structure are eligible for administrative review**, as long as they meet the following criteria:
 - a. The distance from the property line to the front and side walls, porches, and exterior features of any proposed addition or alteration must be compatible with the distance from the property line of similar elements of existing contributing structures in the context area.
 - b. The noncontributing structure with the constructed addition is compatible with the typical proportions and scale of existing contributing structures in the context area.

Note: If the Planning Director finds that an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness does not meet the criteria required to qualify for administrative approval, the Director shall refer the application to HAHC for consideration.

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO NONCONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

6.1 Design a new addition to reflect contemporary trends in architecture; to not create a false sense of history.

New construction should reflect the time period in which it is built. While many people think that new buildings in a historic district should look “historic,” attempts to design new “historic” buildings often fail because of inaccurate scale, proportions, and detailing. In addition to failed recreations of historic buildings, even an accurate design of a historic style is inappropriate since it confuses history and the understanding of the district, unless it is a reconstruction with a purpose. Best practices in historic preservation — in place for more than 50 years, and applied all over the United States — instead encourage new buildings and additions to look new.

To make new buildings compatible with existing contributing structures, consider either incorporating new design elements with traditional building forms, or applying traditional design elements to unconventional or contemporary building forms. Either approach, if executed well, can result in the design being compatible with the context area but still easily identifiable as new.

If most contributing structures in the context area are fairly simple in design, the new building should similarly be fairly modest. In a context area where buildings are more highly ornamented or exuberant in design, a new structure could reflect that higher level of complexity.

New construction is required to be compatible with the exterior features of the contributing buildings in the context area; see Criteria 3 on the previous page. No specific architectural styles are required.

6.2 Design an addition to a noncontributing structure to be compatible with the scale and proportion of contributing buildings in the context area.

Additions to noncontributing structures are required to be compatible with the scale and proportion of the contributing buildings in the context area (see Criteria 1 and 3 on page 6-3). This applies to the building overall as well as to individual building elements.

- Use materials that are similar in dimensions, profile, and finish to traditional materials.
- First floor finished floor height may not exceed 30".
- Do not use slab-on-grade construction, except for garages.
- Use engineered concrete pier foundations, or other pier-and-beam options which meet current construction code. Piers can be wrapped in brick for a traditional appearance, if desired.
- Use wall cladding materials, such as siding or brick, that are traditionally sized. Do not use oversized exterior building materials.
- Design the addition with overall height, porch eave height, main roof eave height, and ceiling (plate) heights that are consistent with the existing noncontributing structure or contributing buildings in the context area.
- Use header heights for doors and windows that are similar to contributing buildings in the context area.

6.3 Design additions and alterations to noncontributing buildings to be compatible with the front and side setbacks of contributing structures in the context area.

6.4 If required, design alterations to noncontributing structures using the design guidelines provided for new construction.

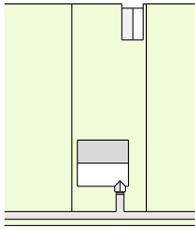
See Criteria 2 on page 6-3.

6.5 Do not destroy historic material that could make a building contributing if in appropriate alterations were reversed.

Some buildings are classified as noncontributing because of inappropriate alterations that have substantially compromised their integrity. If those changes can be reversed, it is possible for a previously noncontributing building to be reclassified. Although no one is required to restore a building, it is important to be aware of the reason for a noncontributing classification before undertaking additional construction projects that could make it impossible to reverse previous alterations.

APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE ADDITIONS TO NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

1. Existing Non-Contributing Building



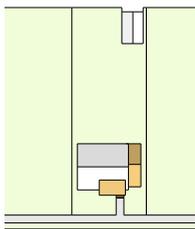
2. Side and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 1-story in height



3. Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

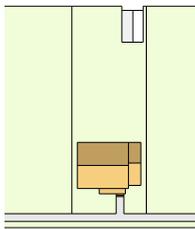
- 50% of front wall plane

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition
- Appropriate scale and style
- Compliments existing window patterns



4. Inappropriate Full Second-Story Roof and Porch Addition

Porch Addition:

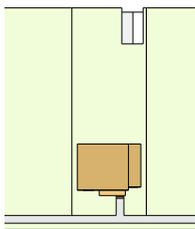
- 50% of front wall plane
- Inappropriate scale

Side Addition:

- Offset 1.5 ft. from front wall plane
- 2-stories in height
- Inappropriate roof form and style

Rooftop Addition:

- Full 2nd-story addition
- Inappropriate scale, style and roof form

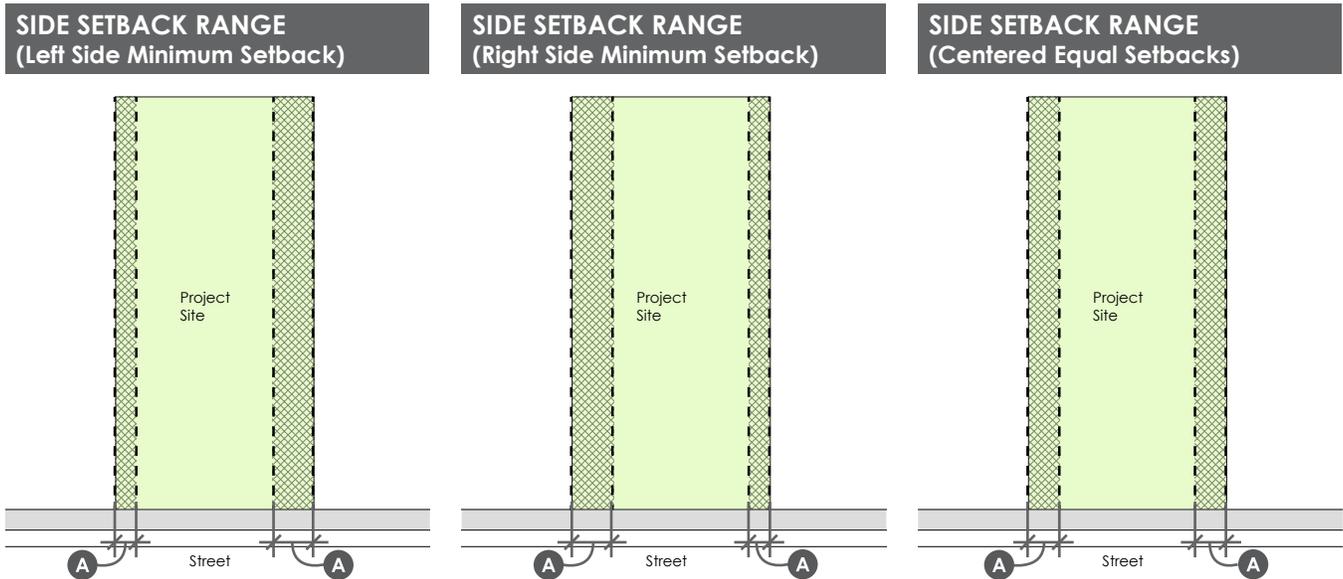


MEASURABLE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR NEW ADDITIONS

The following quantitative (measurable) standards apply to new additions. These do not require interpretation; the standards are either met or they are not.

Table 1: Setbacks

Additions must be located at a minimum distance from the front and side property lines. Those distances, also known as setbacks, are measured from the property line to the closest wall, porch, or exterior feature.



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	5 FT.	Each side wall must be a minimum distance from the property line.
	15 FT.	The minimum cumulative side setback is calculated by adding the lengths of the two side setbacks.

NOTE:
The above side setback examples only illustrate three of numerous combinations that comply with the cumulative 15 ft. minimum setback.

-  = Non-Contributing Structure
-  = Contributing Structure
-  = Building Setback Range

Table 2: Maximum Floor Area Ratio

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the ratio of eligible building area to lot size. FAR is calculated by dividing the total square footage of conditioned and unconditioned space in eligible buildings by the square footage of the lot, with the result expressed as a two-digit decimal (such as 0.44). FAR applies to all construction, including both new buildings and additions to existing ones. See additional information on page 7-9.

The following are excluded from FAR calculations: building space with less than 7 foot ceiling height which are not considered habitable due to lack of headroom (per the current City of Houston Construction Codes and International Building Code), up to 250 square feet of a detached garage, and enclosed conditioned or nonconditioned space in detached accessory structures of 120 square feet or less.

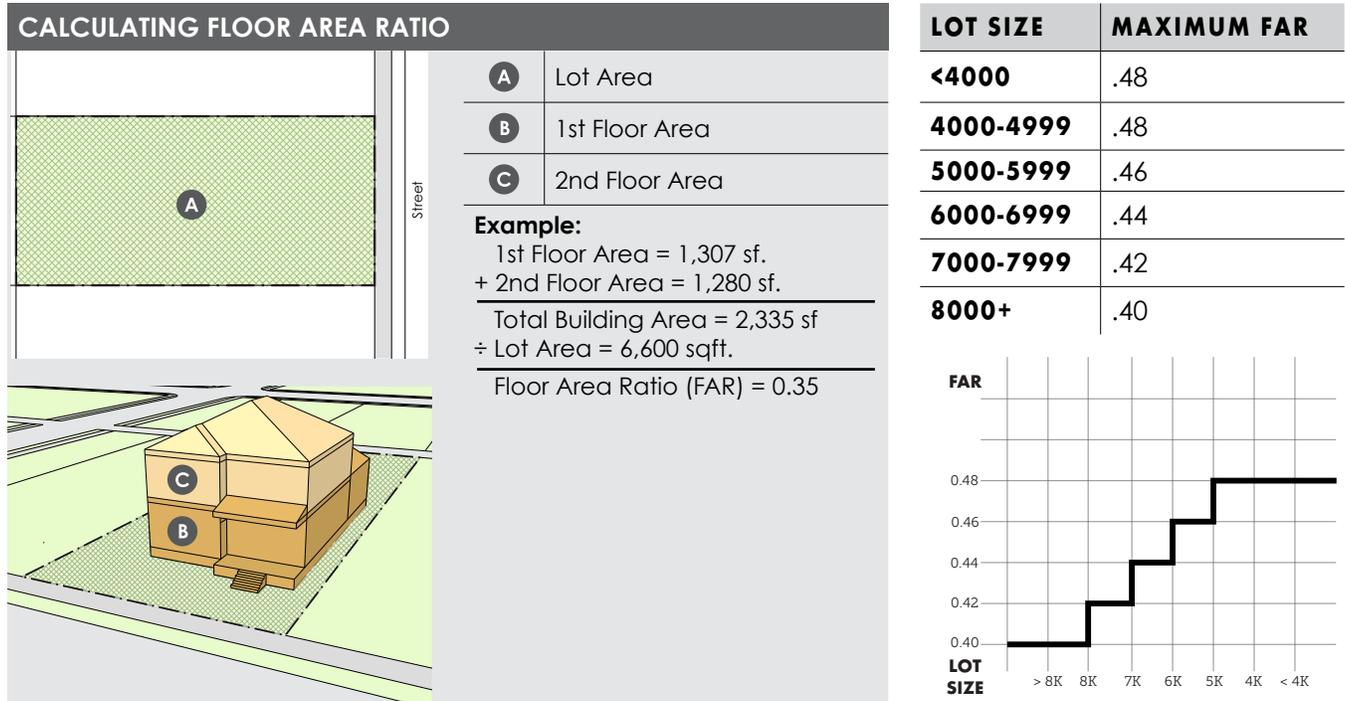


Table 3: Maximum Lot Coverage

Lot coverage is a measure of the amount of a lot's surface that is covered by buildings, expressed as a percentage (such as 43%). Lot coverage is calculated by dividing the total area of included building footprints by the total area of the lot, where building footprints are measured at the outside of exterior walls.

Lot coverage calculations include primary structures, porches, attached garages and storage space, and detached garages and accessory buildings (whether conditioned or not). Not included are roof overhangs, uncovered decks or patios, and detached accessory structures which are open or only partially enclosed (such as a gazebo), and roofed structures less than 120 square feet, and 250 square feet of a detached garage.

LOT SIZE	MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE
<4000	44%
4000-4999	44%
5000-5999	42%
6000-6999	40%
7000-7999	38%
8000+	38%

Property Line = - - - - -
 Lot Area = [Cross-hatched pattern]

CALCULATING LOT COVERAGE

A	Lot Area
B	Building Footprint

Example:
 Lot Width = 50 ft.
 X Lot Length = 132 ft.

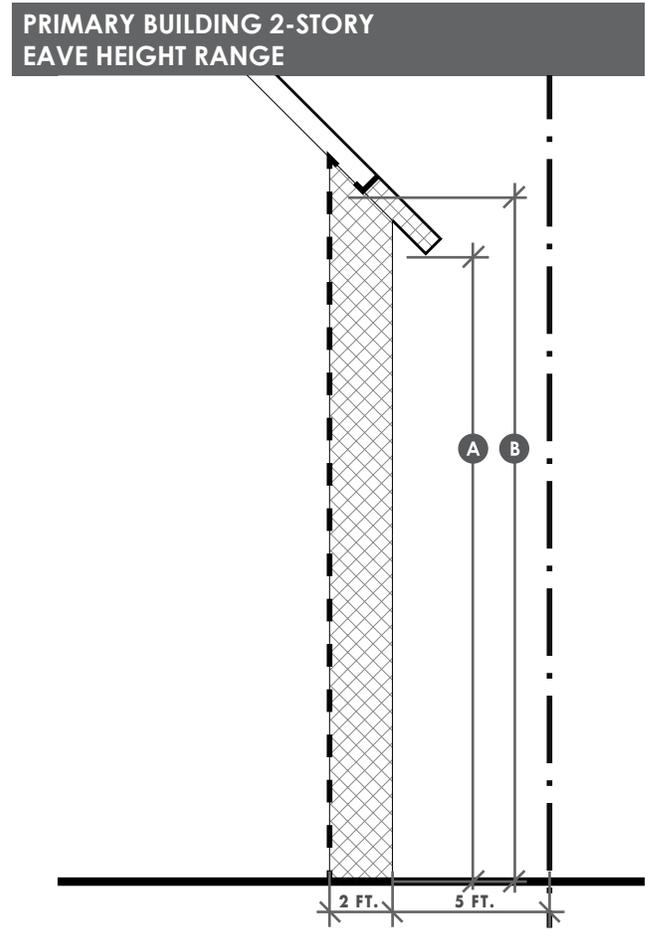
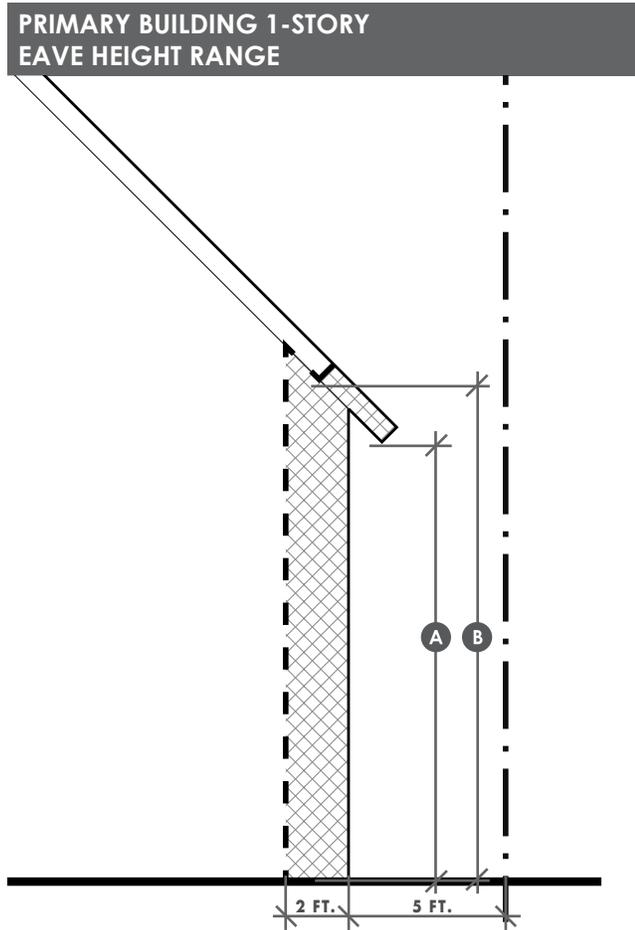
 Lot Area = 6,600 sf.

Building Footprint = 2,500 sf.
 ÷ Lot Area = 6,600 sf.

 Lot Coverage = 38%

Table 4: Eave Height

An eave is the overhanging lower edge of a roof. Eave height is the vertical distance from the ground to the eave, 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 maximum eave height is established at the minimum side setback from the property line; it can increase one foot (1') in height for each one foot (1') increase in side setback. Smaller increases in side setback qualify for the equivalent increase in eave height; for example, an additional seven inches of side setback would result in a maximum of 14' 7" eave height for a one-story roof.



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	14 FT.	Maximum 1-story eave height at the 5 FT. MIN. side setback
B	16 FT.	Maximum 1-story eave height with an increase of one foot (1') in height for each one foot (1') increase in side setback

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	20 FT.	Maximum 2-story eave height at the 5 FT. MIN. side setback
B	22 FT.	Maximum 2-story eave height with an increase of one foot (1') in height for each one foot (1') increase in side setback

Property Line = - · - · -
 Range = [hatched box]

Table 5: Building Wall (Plate) Height

Plate height is the distance from the subfloor of a building to the top of the framed wall; in other words, it is the height of the wall of the building. Because plate height can be difficult or impossible to determine in an existing building, this measurement is typically applied to new construction or additions.

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	10 FT.	Maximum first floor plate height *See guideline 6.2 on page 6-5
B	8 FT.	Maximum second floor plate height

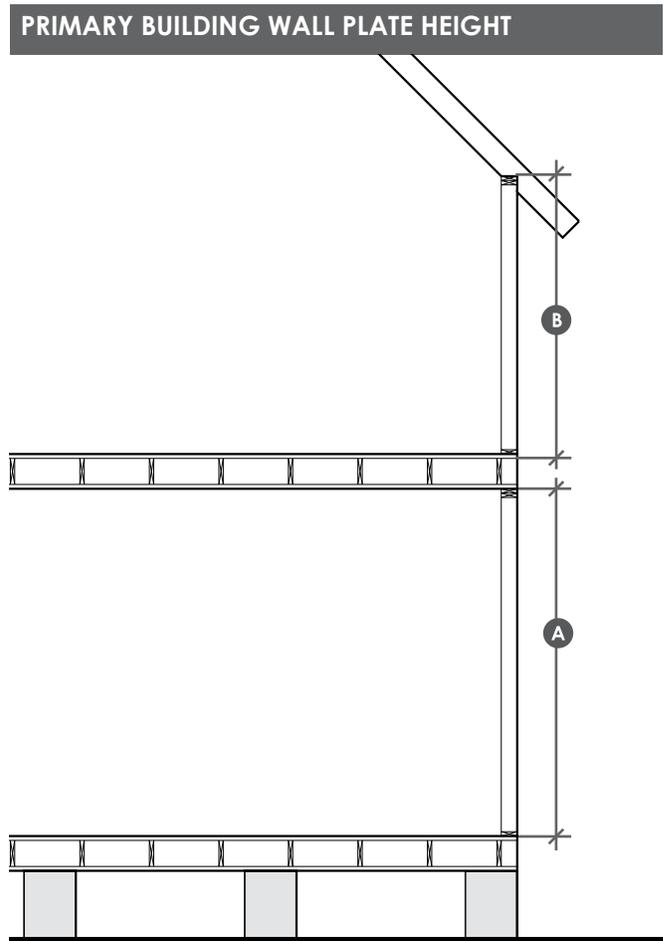
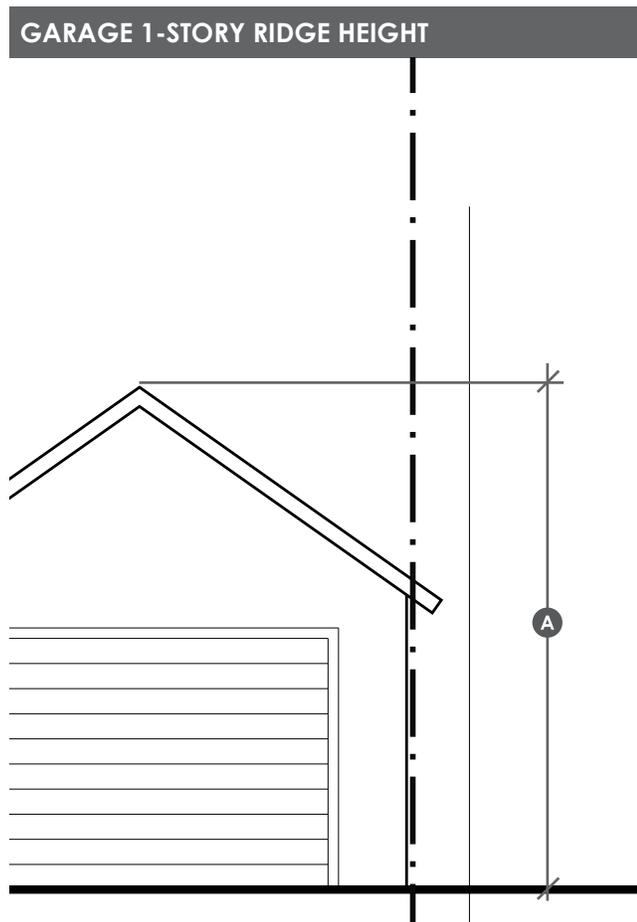
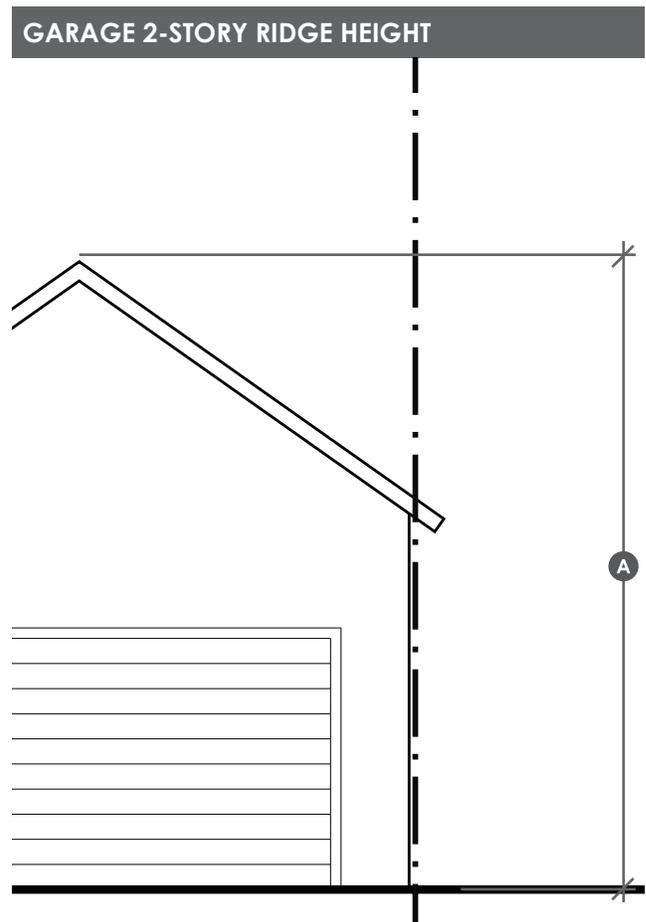


Table 6: Garage Ridge Height

Ridge height is the distance from grade to the top of ridge. These measurements apply to both one-story and two-story garages.



KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	16 FT.	Maximum 1-story garage ridge height

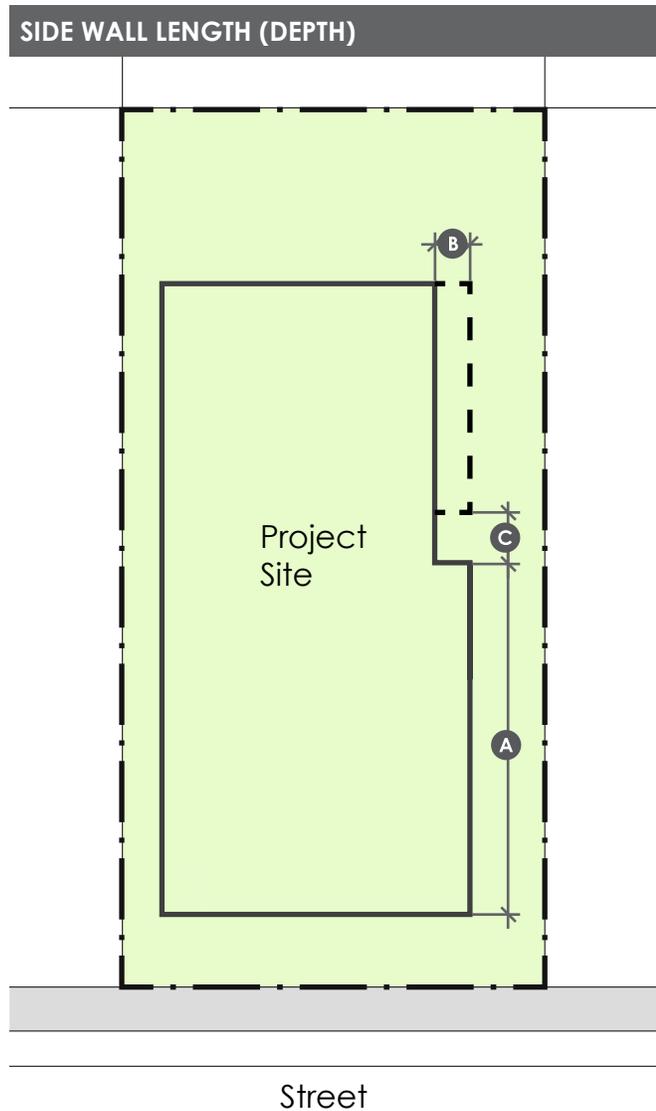


KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	25 FT.	Maximum 2-story garage ridge height

Property Line = - · - · -
 Range = [shaded box]

Table 7: Side Wall Length and Offsets

Maximum overall wall lengths have been established for front walls and side walls. In addition, within those overall maximum lengths, these design standards establish how long a wall can be before it must be offset, with a portion of a wall set farther in or out relative to the rest of the wall. These measurements apply to both one-story and two-story buildings.



SIDE WALL LENGTH (1-STORY BUILDING)

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	50 FT.	Maximum side wall length without offset
B	1.5 FT.	Minimum depth of inset section of side wall
C	6 FT.	Minimum length of inset section of side wall

SIDE WALL LENGTH (2-STORY BUILDING)

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	40 FT.	Maximum side wall length without offset
B	1.5 FT.	Minimum depth of inset section of side wall
C	6 FT.	Minimum length of inset section of side wall

Table 8: Porch Eave Height

A porch may be included in an addition. A porch eave is the overhanging lower edge of a porch roof. Eave height is the vertical distance from the ground to the eave, 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.

Porch roofs should be lower than the main roof of the building, unless the main roof extends over the porch.

KEY	MEASUREMENT	APPLICATION
A	9 FT.	Minimum 1-story porch eave height.
B	11 FT.	Maximum 1-story porch eave height.

