

# The Hill Area Residential (HR-1) District

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RESIDENTIAL BUILDING GUIDE

# Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTION .....	4
HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT .....	4
VISION FOR THE HILL .....	5
THE HILL AREA RESIDENTIAL (HR-1) REGULATIONS .....	6
Lot Standards.....	6
Setbacks.....	6
Building Form .....	7
<i>Maximum Lot Coverage</i> .....	7
<i>Maximum Floor-to-Area Ratio (F.A.R)</i> .....	8
<i>Maximum Height</i> .....	9
<i>Minimum Roof Pitch</i> .....	9
<i>Maximum Building Width</i> .....	10
Entry Features .....	11
<i>Walkways</i> .....	11
<i>Porches &amp; Stoops</i> .....	11
<i>Front Yard Fences</i> .....	12
Building Finishes .....	13
<i>Alternative Construction Materials</i> .....	13
<i>Administration</i> .....	14
<i>Application</i> .....	14
Garages and Carports .....	15
<i>Detached Private Garages and Carports</i> .....	15
ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE .....	16
Trees .....	17
<i>Planting Requirements</i> .....	17
<i>Tree Preservation</i> .....	17
<i>Application of Tree Regulations</i> .....	18
<i>Frequently Asked Questions</i> .....	18
Landscaping Plan Submittal Example .....	19
SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT .....	20
Character Defining Criteria .....	20
Qualifying Regulations for SDP .....	20
Site Development Permit Application Procedure .....	21



# INTRODUCTION

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The Hill neighborhood is a historic neighborhood that was developed in the early 1900s by the Imperial Sugar Company as employee housing. Recognizing that this area was historic in nature, the 1997 Development Code established a unique zoning district for this neighborhood – the Hill Area Residential (HR-1) zoning district. However, the regulations did not require new houses or improvements be built in character. Over the years, there has been renewed interest in this neighborhood due to its many desirable features that are not found in today’s suburban neighborhood such as large lots, mature trees, no homeowner’s association, and walkable streets. These features in combination with aging homes and inadequate regulations resulted in increased redevelopment by replacing existing homes with new homes rebuilt at a larger scale.



In 2018, based on The Hill resident and property owner feedback, the City initiated a community planning process to evaluate whether The Hill community desired additional regulations to maintain the character of the neighborhood. The 2018 Land Use Plan, Chapter 6 of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, listed this project as an action item and was further spurred by council members after residents voiced concerns with the changing character. The project was divided into two phases – Phase I: Public Engagement and Phase II: Implementation – to determine how widespread these sentiments were and to what extent they reached within the community.

During Phase 1, extensive public feedback through multiple meetings and surveys indicated the importance of maintaining The Hill’s character. Therefore, the Hill Neighborhood Steering Committee, a City Council-appointed citizen committee, drafted a vision for The Hill neighborhood and set of recommendations. With their guidance, city staff drafted HR-1 zoning regulations according to public feedback. The regulations listed in this document intend to preserve The Hill’s character through mass, building form, and scale.

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

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The purpose of this document is to illustrate how the Hill Area Residential (HR-1) zoning district regulations, as amended in July 2021, apply to new construction and additions. The regulations referenced in this document can be found in the City of Sugar Land Development Code Article II Part 7, unless otherwise noted. **This document is not a replacement for regulations found in the Development Code, which can be accessed online at [https://library.municode.com/tx/sugar\\_land/codes/land\\_development\\_code](https://library.municode.com/tx/sugar_land/codes/land_development_code). It is the responsibility of the property owner and their respective design professional to refer to the Development Code for any additional regulations that may apply.**

Property owners and their design professionals (architects, builders, etc.) should consult this document as early as possible when planning a project that involves a change to the exterior of a building, including an addition, or the construction of a new building in The Hill neighborhood. The City’s Planning and Development Services staff and the Planning and Zoning Commission will also use this document to determine whether to approve an application for a Site Development Permit for a project that proposes to make changes to a building in The Hill.

# VISION FOR THE HILL

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“The Hill neighborhood, with homes dating from the early 1900s, has a unique identity. Front porches and sidewalks shaded by mature trees evoke the small town charm of the original company town. The design of the homes and walkability encourage neighbors to interact—distinct in a city of master planned communities. The vision of The Hill community is to recognize and protect the character of the neighborhood while allowing homes to adapt to modern-day needs.”



# THE HILL AREA RESIDENTIAL (HR-1) REGULATIONS

## Lot Standards

When the Imperial Sugar Company decided to sell the company-owned homes, surveyors divided the lots as they were built and were sold by a simple metes and bounds description. There is no existing subdivision plat (formal subdivision of land) in place other than the original deeds with metes and bounds descriptions. Therefore, unlike typical subdivisions with fairly uniform lot dimensions, lots vary in width, size and depth.

The minimum lot standards provide a starting point for someone who is interested in either subdividing or combining lots in The Hill. However, in order to prevent multiple lots from being combined and resulting in a large house, a maximum lot width is also established.

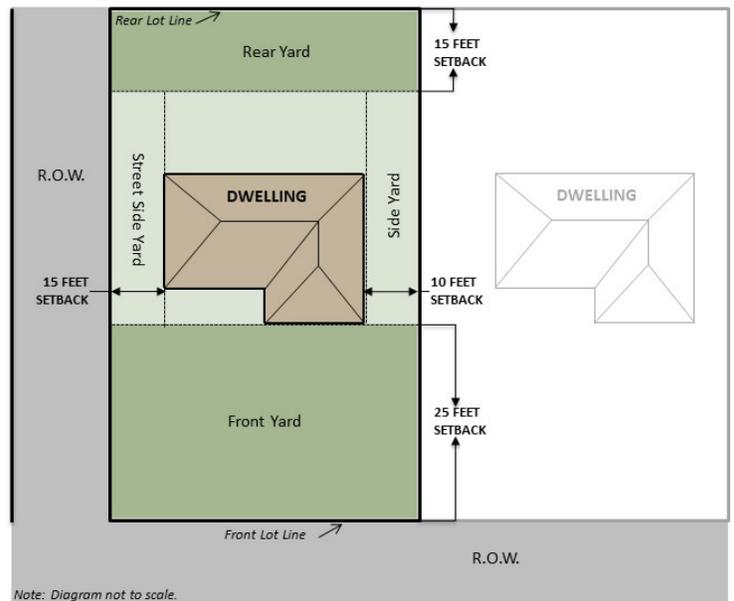
LOT STANDARDS		
<b>Minimum Lot Area</b>		6,600 sq. ft.
<b>Minimum Lot Width</b>	Corner Lots	70 ft.
	All Other Lots	60 ft.
<b>Maximum Lot Width</b>		120 ft.
<b>Minimum Lot Depth</b>		110 ft.

## Setbacks

Setbacks are used to provide minimum spacing standards from property lines and between structures and uses. The HR-1 district outlines the following setbacks noted in the table below and are measured from the property line. In addition to setbacks, properties may also have established easements that often can be found on the property survey or deed.

- *Minimum Street Side Yard (Setback)* applies to residential lots with a side yard that abuts a street. This applies to corner lots.
- *Minimum Side Yard (Setback) Nonresidential Use* applies to lots with a nonresidential use, such as a church or daycare. For example, The Hill has a few nonresidential uses within the neighborhood. If these properties were to construct a new building or addition, they would have a required setback of 25 feet from the property line.

FRONT YARD SETBACKS		
<b>Minimum Front Yard (Setback)</b>	25 ft.	
SIDE YARD SETBACKS		
<b>Minimum Side Yard (Setback)</b>	Residential Use	10 ft.
	Nonresidential Use	25 ft.
<b>Minimum Street Side Yard (Setback)</b>	15 ft.	
REAR YARD SETBACKS		
<b>Minimum Rear Yard (Setback)</b>	15 ft.	



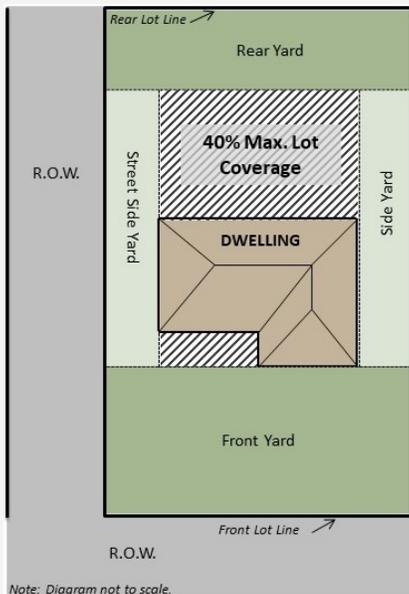
## Existing Character

Original houses in The Hill are one-story, modest structures with minimal ornamentation; the architectural styles of these homes are primarily based on building form, rather than architectural details such as:

- Predominantly one-story homes
- Simple rooflines
- Open gabled, low pitched roofs
- Porches and stoops
- Built on Pier and Beam or Block and Beam

## Code Definitions

**Lot Coverage** – the percentage of the lot area occupied by all enclosed areas of buildings on that lot, including primary and accessory structures, as determined at ground level.



## Building Form

The following regulations focus on managing the size of new houses and placement of the house on the lot to retain The Hill’s character. The subsections provide additional detail on each of the regulations listed in the table below.

BUILDING RESTRICTIONS		
Maximum Lot Coverage		40%
Maximum F.A.R.		0.45
Maximum Height		27 ft.
Minimum Roof Pitch		4/12
Maximum Building Width	Lot width less than 60 ft.	30 ft. (c)
	Lot width equal to or greater than 60 ft.	0.46 BTLW (c)

### Maximum Lot Coverage

**In the HR-1 District, maximum lot coverage is 40%.** It is considered the maximum first floor building foot print of enclosed buildings. Accessory structures such as garages and sheds count towards lot coverage. The maximum lot coverage is represented by the cross-hatched area in the diagram.

Any unenclosed structures such as porches, patios, or carports do not count towards the 40% maximum lot coverage. Site plans submitted should include the area of all enclosed structures, their total, and percent lot coverage. To calculate the maximum allowed lot coverage for a property in square feet use the following formula:

$$\text{Lot Area} \times 40\% = \text{Max. Allowable Lot Coverage (sq. ft.)}$$

For example, if the lot is 10,000 square feet, as noted in the example below, a maximum of 4,000 square feet of lot coverage is allowed.

$$10,000 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 40\% = 4,000 \text{ sq. ft. Max. Allowable Lot Coverage}$$

Please note that for the purposes of drainage, the City also regulates impervious cover, which can be a maximum of 70% (*City of Sugar Land Design Standards Section 6.7.4.*). The Engineering Department (281-275-2780) can provide more information on this requirement.

## Code Definitions

**F.A.R.** – means the floor to area ratio of a Premises, and is calculated by dividing the sum of the total square feet of the climate controlled areas of a Dwelling plus the total square feet of all Accessory Buildings located on the same lot as the Dwelling, by the lot's total square feet.

## Maximum Floor-to-Area Ratio (F.A.R)

**In the HR-1 District the floor-to-area ratio or FAR is a maximum of 0.45.** FAR is a way to limit total living space based on the lot size. FAR is similar to lot coverage, but it also accounts for the second story of a house. FAR is calculated by dividing the sum of the total square feet of the climate controlled areas of a Dwelling plus the total square feet of all Accessory Buildings (such as garages or Sheds) by the lot's total square feet. To calculate the maximum allowed living space for a property in square feet, use the following formula:

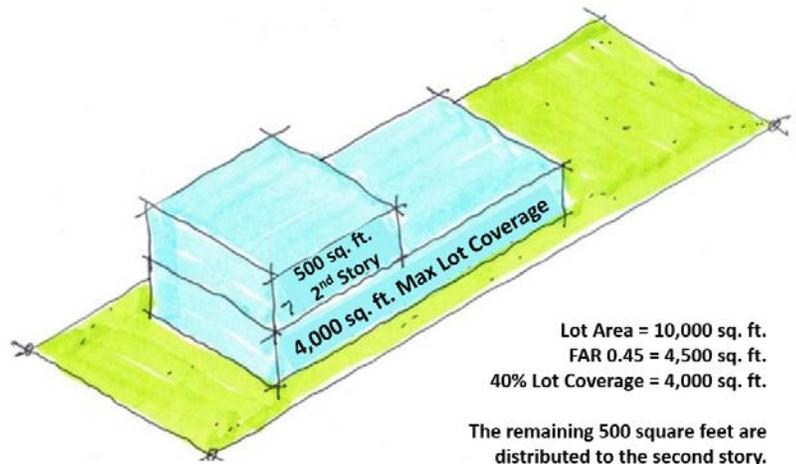
$$\text{Lot Area} \times 0.45 \text{ FAR} = \text{Max. Allowable FAR (sq. ft.)}$$

FAR works in tandem with maximum lot coverage. Lot coverage caps the building footprint of enclosed buildings at 40%, while the remaining FAR square footage allowance may be distributed to a second story.

For example, a 10,000 square foot lot is allowed an enclosed building footprint of 40% or 4,000 square feet. However, the 0.45 FAR, essentially 45%, allows 4,500 square feet of living space. The ground floor enclosed building footprint may be 4,000 square feet, while the remaining 500 square feet of allowed living space can be distributed to a second story.

$$10,000 \text{ sq. ft.} \times 0.45 \text{ FAR} = 4,500 \text{ sq. ft. Max. Allowable FAR}$$

$$4,500 \text{ sq. ft.} - 4,000 \text{ sq. ft. Max Lot Coverage} = 500 \text{ sq. ft. for 2}^{\text{nd}} \text{ Story}$$



## Existing Character

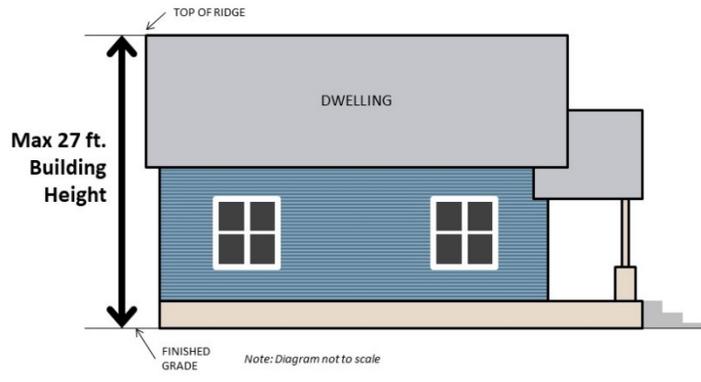
About 87% of houses in The Hill are one-story in height. When measuring a sample of homes, the height of these one-story original homes averages about 17 feet from finished grade to top of ridge. Most new construction has been two-story with few one-an-a-half story houses.

## Code Definitions

**Roof Pitch** – means the steepness of a roof quantified as a ratio between rise and run.

## Maximum Height

**Maximum height is measured from finished grade to the highest point of the Structure and is established at 27 feet**, as shown in the diagram below. This allows two-story houses and potentially an attic, depending on the chosen ceiling height.



Ornamental features such as chimneys may be constructed up to 15 feet above the maximum height. (*Development Code Section 2-171*)

New construction should also consider design solutions to prevent houses from “towering over” the street or adjacent houses. This may include setting back the second story from the front façade or incorporating dormers.

## Minimum Roof Pitch

**In the HR-1 District a minimum of 4/12 roof pitch is required.** When constructing a new house or new addition, the plans submitted will need to show the pitch on the roof to determine if it meets this requirement.

New houses and additions are encouraged to match the roof pitch of existing houses and provide minimal number of eaves. This is in an effort to minimize the “McMansion” style that is known for a mixture of different architecture styles.



## Existing Character

The width of original homes and new construction does not vary widely. However, when compared to lot width, the difference in proportion is apparent due to differing lot widths.

## Code Definitions

### Building-to-Lot Width Ratio (BTLW)

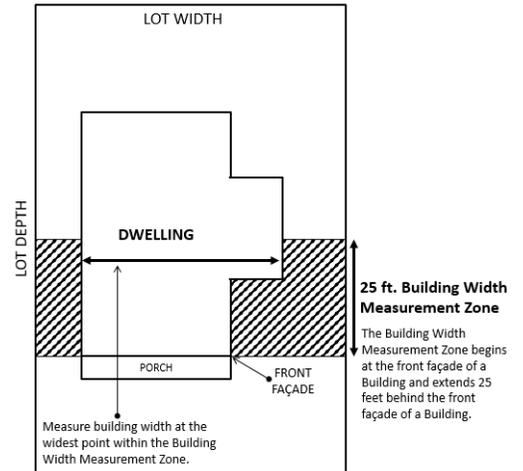
– means a ratio used to calculate allowable building width and is calculated by multiplying the identified ratio by the Lot Width.

## Maximum Building Width

In the HR-1 District the maximum building width is defined based on lot width. This design standard helps maintain the open feeling of the neighborhood by limiting building width in the front of the lot, and distributing the building footprint to the rear, behind the Building Width Measurement Zone.

The Building Width Measurement Zone begins at the front façade of a Building and extends 25 feet

behind the front façade of the Building. If the front façade is located at the 25-foot front setback, then the Measurement Zone is essentially the first 50 feet of the lot. A diagram on where to measure building width is provided below. Behind the Measurement Zone, the building can extend up to the rear and side setbacks, provided it meets other applicable regulations.



**Depending on the lot width, Maximum Building Width in the Building Width Measurement Zone is either 30 feet or a 0.46 Building-to-Lot Width (BTLW) Ratio.**

- Lots greater than or equal to 60 feet wide would have a maximum building width based on lot width at a 0.46 ratio.
- For lots less than 60 feet wide, a maximum 30-foot wide house would be allowed.
- Section 2-160 Tree Regulations provides an opportunity for additional building width if the property owner preserves more Protected Trees.

To calculate the maximum building width of a house on a lot greater than 60 feet wide, multiply the building-to-lot-width (BTLW) ratio by the lot width. For example, using a 0.46 BTLW ratio for a lot that is 100 feet wide, the house could be 46 feet wide in the Building Width Measurement Zone. Behind the Building Width Measurement Zone, the house may extend up to the side setbacks. The equation is:

$$0.46 \text{ BTLW} \times \text{lot width} = \text{Max. Building Width}$$

$$0.46 \text{ BTLW} \times 100 \text{ feet} = 46 \text{ feet Max. Building Width (within Building Width Measurement Zone)}$$

## Existing Character

The neighborhood's grid street pattern and the homes' relationship to the street provide another defining feature that distinguish it from most modern subdivisions. Interesting features such as porches and architecture enhance the pedestrian experience and walkability. Features include:

- Small front yard setbacks
- Walkway from front main entrance to sidewalk
- Entry features such as porches, stoops, or decks

Even though the required setback is 25 feet, many built structures do not meet the setback because they were built before the regulation was adopted.

## Code Definitions

**Porch** – means a roofed area attached to, or part of, and with direct access to, or from, a structure and usually located on the front or side of the structure; a covered entrance or semi-enclosed space projecting from the facade of a Principal Building.

**Stoop** – means steps ending in a platform, covered or uncovered, and leading to the front entrance of the Principal Building. As used herein, Stoop includes the platform.

## Entry Features

In the HR-1 District, Residential Dwellings must provide a front walkway and the option of either a porch or stoop.

### Walkways

Walkways from the main entrance of the principal structure to the sidewalk or curb should be provided.

**New construction** is required to add a minimum 4-foot wide walkway of any desired material from the front entrance or Porch to the sidewalk or curb.

**Existing house** that does not currently have a walkway will only be required to add a walkway if replacing or repairing more than 50% of the house.

Additional walkways, such as from the entrance to the driveway, are not required but may also be provided, if desired.



*Example of home with an enclosed front porch and walkway to the street.*

### Porches & Stoops

**New construction** is required to include an entry feature consisting of either a:

1. Covered front porch that is a minimum of 6 feet deep; or
2. Stoop with a minimum size platform of 3 feet wide by 3 feet long.



Image Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3kxy5cdk>



Image Source: <https://tinyurl.com/n8hdu2jr>

## Code Definitions

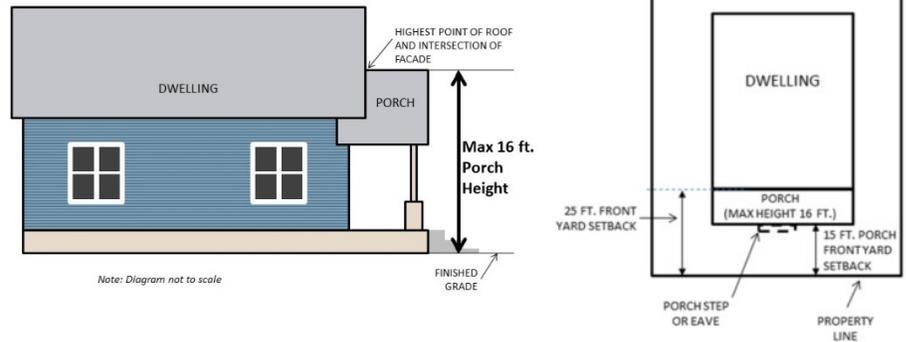
**Nonconforming Building** – means a building, structure, condition, or use of land that does not comply with the zoning regulations but did comply with regulations at the time the building or structure was constructed. *(For the complete definition refer to Chapter 10 of the Development Code)*

### Reduced Setback for Qualifying Front Porches

New construction may take advantage of a reduced setback for qualifying front porches. Qualifying front porches may have a minimum front setback of 15 feet if the front porch is:

- Unenclosed,
- 16 feet maximum height as measured from finished grade to the intersection of the highest point of the porch roof and the façade; and
- Meeting minimum rear, side, and street side yard setbacks.

Glass enclosed or screened porches, and porches greater than 16 feet in height must meet Principal Structure front yard setback (25 feet).



**Existing houses** with a nonconforming covered front porch may replace their porch if identical to the original in footprint area, width, length, and height.

### Front Yard Fences

In the HR-1 district, fences must be aligned with or behind the front façade of the Principal Building. Front yard fences are not allowed.

**Existing front yard fences** may continue to be maintained.



*Front yard fences are not allowed. They must be aligned with or behind the front façade of the house.*



*Example of houses in The Hill with fences aligned with front façade of the house.*

## Existing Character

Original houses along Main Street and between 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Street were built with horizontal siding. Houses east of Wood Street were built with brick. Newer construction has mostly incorporated siding with some opting for vertical board and batten siding as it's become more popular in recent years.

### Code Definitions:

**Exterior Finish** – means the material or product that is visible from or used as the exterior surface of an exterior facade.

**Primary Finish** – means an exterior finish as defined in this article for each zoning district.

**Secondary Finish** – means an Exterior Finish as defined in this Article for each zoning district that makes up the remaining portion of an Exterior Wall that is not covered by a Primary Finish.



*Example of a house in The Hill with siding as exterior finish building material.*

## Building Finishes

In the HR-1 district, residential buildings must be constructed with the following Primary and/or Secondary exterior finishes (*Development Code Article X*).

FINISH REQUIREMENTS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS HR-1		
	MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM %	MATERIALS*
<b>Primary Finish Requirements</b>	Minimum 85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brick or Thin Brick</li> <li>• Horizontal Siding (wood or fiber reinforced cement)</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Finish Requirements</b>	Maximum 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vertical Board and Batten Siding (wood or fiber reinforced cement)</li> <li>• Cementitious Stucco (on gable only)</li> <li>• Stone or Stone Material</li> <li>• Decorative Shingle Siding (wood or fiber reinforced cement)</li> </ul>
* A maximum of two of the following materials may be used to meet the finish requirements.		

Accessory buildings that are 200 square feet or less, such as sheds or workshops, and which are located to the rear of the Principal Building are exempt from the exterior finish requirements.

Any exterior finish not included in the table above is not allowed. Examples of prohibited exterior finishes include vinyl siding, metal, plastic, fiberglass panels, concrete finishes, etc.

### Alternative Construction Materials

The Director may approve alternative Primary or Secondary Exterior Finishes not specified if the Director determines that the alternative finish is substantially equal to or better than a specified Primary or Secondary Exterior Finish in quality, durability, and appearance and the use thereof will not violate any provision of Article X.

## Code Definitions:

**Elevation** – means a geometrical drawing depicting the Exterior Façade of a building.

**Exterior Façade** – means any of the exterior faces of a building and shall include all Exterior Walls facing the same direction that are viewable together from a vantage point.

## Administration

Each exterior façade of a Building, not including Interior Courtyards, shall meet the required finish standards. Residential permit submittals shall include Elevations for each Exterior Façade of the Building. For the purposes of calculating building finishes, doors and roofs are excluded from the square footage of the façade.

The Elevation sheet must identify the Primary and Secondary exterior finish and the amount per façade both in square feet and percentage.



*Example of an Elevation Sheet illustrating each Exterior Façade.*

*Image Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ykkwt4d9>*

## Application

**Existing Buildings/Houses** may continue to utilize materials other than those Exterior Finishes listed in the previous page, provided that any Exterior Finish replacement is for maintenance purposes only and the existing Finish material is continued. Any material change or replacement of more than fifty (50) percent of the total area of a façade, including on a cumulative basis, shall require that all Exterior Finishes be brought into compliance on that façade.

For example, if the front façade of an existing building is stucco, which is not listed as an allowed primary exterior finish, and a property owner is redoing the entire front façade, then the front façade must now be reconstructed with primary and secondary finishes that comply with the finish requirements.

**Additions to Buildings** erected legally of materials other than those listed in the table in the previous page may be constructed of the same materials as the original Building, provided the addition or additions do not exceed 50% of the area of the original Building.

For example, an original building is 1,200 square feet and an addition is proposed. The addition must be 600 square feet or less in order to be constructed of the same materials as the original building.

## Existing Character

Historically, detached garages were located at the rear of lots. Over time, those original garages have been replaced by larger, more modern detached structures located closer to, but still to the rear of, the house. Some garages have been expanded upward or newly constructed with second-story living space.

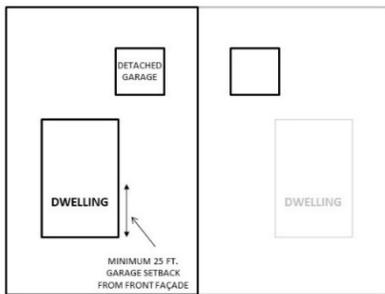


Example of a typical detached garage that is set back behind the home.

## Code Definitions:

**Garage, Attached Private** – means a Private Garage that shares a common wall with or is located less than 5 feet from the Principal Building.

**Garage, Detached Private** – means a Private Garage that is located at least 5 feet from the Principal Building.



## Garages and Carports

In the HR-1 district, the following regulations apply to all garages and carports.

PRIVATE GARAGE & CARPORT RESTRICTIONS (ATTACHED AND DETACHED)		
Minimum Private Garage and Carport Setback from front façade of Principal Building, not including Porch		25 ft.
Minimum Street Side Yard (Setback)	Front Load (garage doors and carport entrance facing front lot line)	15 ft.
	Side Load (garage doors and carport entrance facing street side lot line)	20 ft.
Maximum of one Private Garage and one Carport permitted per lot.		

**Attached Private Garages and Carports** are considered part of the Principal Building and must comply with the Principal Building regulations. Please refer to the [Setbacks](#) section for setback requirements.

## Detached Private Garages and Carports

In addition to the above regulations, the following regulations apply to detached garages and carports.

	DETACHED 1-STORY	DETACHED 2-STORY
Minimum Distance from Principal Building	5 ft. (a)	
Maximum Size (cumulative)	600 sq. ft. (b) or 10% of Lot Area (c)	
Maximum Height	16 ft. (d)	27 ft. (d)
Minimum Side Yard (Setback)	1.5 ft.	10 ft.
Minimum Rear Yard (Setback)	1.5 ft.	15 ft.

- a. May be connected by an unenclosed breezeway that is no more than six feet wide.  
 b. For lots less than or equal to 6,000 sq. ft.  
 c. For lots greater than 6,000 sq. ft.  
 d. Maximum Height as measured from finished grade to the highest point of the Structure.

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

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Other prevalent character features that exist in The Hill neighborhood include the use of shared driveways and houses built on pier and beam or block and beam. While these character features are not required by the HR-1 zoning district regulations, staff encourages that these be considered to further build in character with The Hill neighborhood. The following is additional guidance to other character defining elements that are not required via the HR-1 zoning regulations.

- The continued use of shared driveways is encouraged.
- Circle driveways are discouraged, unless existing.
- Secondary driveways are discouraged, unless existing.
- Consider building on pier and beam or block and beam. New construction built on concrete slab foundation may consider elevating homes to replicate the character of pier and beam.

## Existing Character

Mature trees line the streets of The Hill providing shade to pedestrians as they walk on the grid street pattern of the neighborhood.

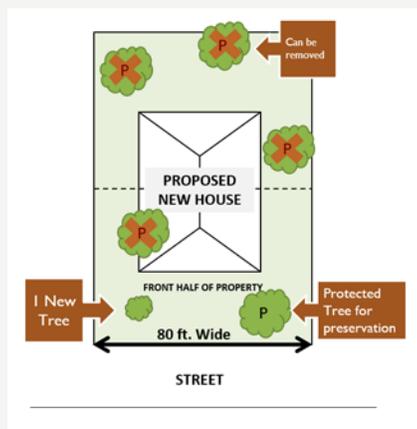
## Code Definitions:

**Shade Tree** – means a tree listed on the Approved Landscape Materials list in Chapter 2 of the Development Code. Shade trees, once matured, provide a canopy of shade for human comfort.

**Protected Tree** – means a hardwood tree having a minimum caliper size of 8 inches or greater, as measured 4½ feet above ground level.

## Notes:

Examples of hardwood trees include pecan, oaks, elms, and bald cypress. Trees such as magnolias are not considered Shade Trees, but can be planted in addition to the required Shade Tree.



*The above diagram meets both the tree planting and preservation requirements.*

## Trees

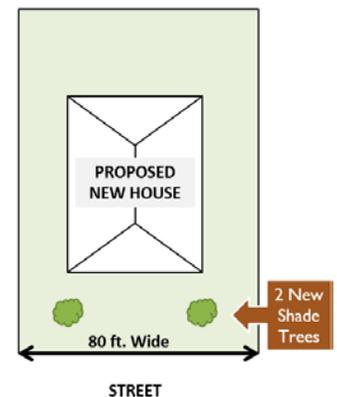
In the HR-1 district, properties undergoing new construction, demolitions, and additions must follow the tree planting specifications and tree preservation requirements. **The regulations do not apply to property owners conducting regular maintenance of their property that is not related to construction (new house or addition) and demolitions.**

## Planting Requirements

**New construction** must follow the tree planting requirements in the HR-1 district. Preserved Protected Trees in front half of the lot, may count towards the total number of required trees.

- Plant one Shade Tree for every 50 feet of lot width or portion thereof
- The tree must be planted between the Principal Building and front Property Line
- Trees must be 7 feet overall height and minimum of 4-inch caliper immediately after planting

For example, a property is 80 feet wide with no existing Protected Trees and a new house will be constructed. Two shade trees must be planted to comply with the above tree planting requirements. If the property is 40 feet wide, only one shade tree is required. Shade trees include hardwood trees such as pecan, oak, and elm trees that mature to provide a canopy of shade.



## Tree Preservation

**Properties with existing trees that are defined as Protected Trees** will be required to follow the tree preservation requirements for demolition, new construction, or additions.

- Preserve 1 Protected Tree in front half of lot
- Protected Trees in front half of the lot count toward the tree planting requirements above
- If additional Protected Trees are preserved, then the property is granted additional building width
  - Lots greater than or equal to 60 feet wide would have an increased maximum building width of a 0.50 ratio
  - Lots less than 60 feet wide would have an increased maximum building width of 35 feet

If no Protected Trees exist on the property, new construction must provide new trees according to the planting requirements above. For example, on the diagram to the left, if a property has five Protected Trees, only one tree located in the front half of the lot must be preserved. It is important to note that in this example one additional Shade Tree is required to meet the front yard tree planting requirements.

## Application of Tree Regulations

### Submittal Requirements

When applying for a residential demolition permit, or a building permit for new construction or an addition, the property owner or agent on behalf of the property owner must submit the following to ensure the tree preservation requirements are met.

- Submit a landscaping plan (or property survey) identifying the location (shown as a dot) that will be preserved for the Protected Tree and identify the required protection barrier (show as a circle with dashed line)
- Identify how far the Protected Tree is from the closest property line in feet
- List the common species name of the Protected Tree (i.e. live oak, pecan, etc.)
- List the size in caliper-inch of the Protected Tree (instructions on how to determine caliper are noted below)
- Submit photo of tree

### Inspection Requirements for Tree Preservation Requirements

An inspection will be conducted to ensure that the Protected Tree that will be preserved is protected during the construction process. Before inspection, provide a protection barrier during construction with the following:

- Fence with a radius equal in feet to the tree caliper (8-inch caliper tree = 8-foot radius fence)
  - Orange construction fence is sufficient
  - Minimum 4-feet in height
  - Must be in place prior to inspection

### How to measure tree caliper-inch?

1. Take any form of tape measure and measure around the trunk of a tree (the tree's circumference), approximately four and a half feet above the ground. This is also known as dbh (diameter at base height).



Image Source: <https://tinyurl.com/434wt9ym>

2. Then take the measurement of the circumference of tree and divide it by 3.1415 (Pi). The resulting number will be the diameter of the tree trunk, also known as caliper inch.

$$\frac{\text{Tree Circumference}}{3.1415 (\text{Pi})} = \text{Caliper Inch}$$

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need a permit to cut down a tree?

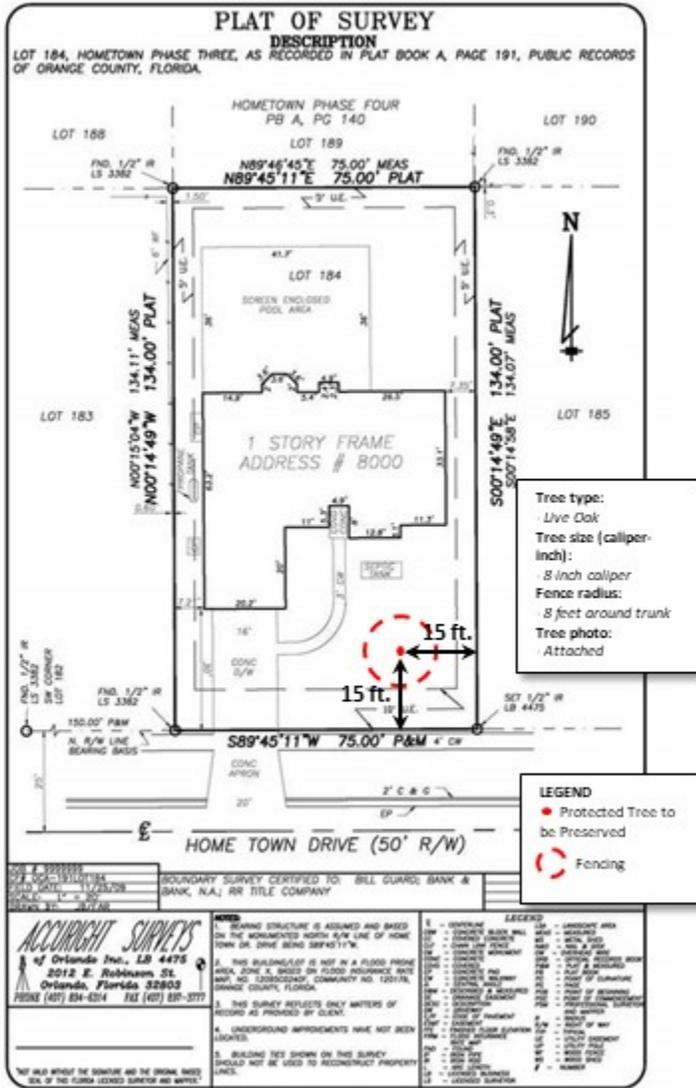
No, you do not need a permit to cut down a tree when not related to demolitions, new construction, or additions. However, if a property owner is submitting a demolition permit or residential building permit, then city staff will review to ensure that the proposal meets the HR-1 tree planting and preservation requirements.

### Do I need a permit to plant a tree?

No, you do not need a permit to plant a tree. Property owners can continue to plant any desired landscaping.

# Landscaping Plan Submittal Example

The following landscaping plan is an example of a property survey used to show the location the Protected Tree identified for preservation. The dot indicates the location of the Protected Tree, while the dashed circle indicates the protection barrier. A photo of the tree is included to correctly identify the tree during inspection.



Tree type:	Live Oak
Tree size (caliper-inch):	8-inch caliper
Fence radius:	8 feet around trunk
Tree photo:	Attached



The survey provided in the example above is not a real property survey.

# SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT

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The Site Development Permit (SDP) is a tool to provide flexibility for certain regulations if a proposed addition or new construction is in character with the neighborhood, but does not comply with the strict application of the Development Code regulations. Upon submittal of a SPD application staff initially reviews the SDP application and works with the applicant to prepare the application to be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission, who ultimately decides whether or not to grant a SDP.

## Character Defining Criteria

The Planning and Zoning Commission may grant a Site Development Permit if it finds the proposed development is in character with the neighborhood. This means the project includes character features that are prevalent in The Hill such as one-story homes, one-story detached garages, preservation of original façade, and preservation of protected trees, to name a few.

For example, a property owner may desire to construct an addition to an existing house that is one-story with a detached garage and a large front porch, while maintaining the front façade, but exceeds the Building Width Maximum by 2 feet. The property owner could apply for a Site Development Permit to request the additional building width. The Planning and Zoning Commission would determine if the house is in character, taking into consideration the character-defining features of the neighborhood that are incorporated into the project. The more neighborhood character-defining features included in the project, the more likely the Commission will grant the SDP. Staff and the Commission will utilize The Hill Character Reference Guide as background information on historical development and architectural characteristics in The Hill.

## Qualifying Regulations for SDP

The following regulations may qualify for a Site Development Permit.

- Maximum F.A.R.
- Maximum Building Width
- Maximum Lot Coverage
- Maximum Porch Height
- Minimum Private Garage and Carport Setback from front façade of Principal Building, not including Porch
- Maximum percentage of Secondary Building Finishes - refer to Chapter 2, Article X Building Finish Standards

## Site Development Permit Application Procedure

When a property owner submits a Site Development Permit (SDP) application, staff reviews and evaluates the proposed development plan to determine if it's in character with The Hill neighborhood. Staff review takes approximately 3 weeks and may require that the applicant submit additional information necessary to undertake a complete analysis and evaluation of the request. Once staff reviews the application and provides comments, the applicant will be directed to resubmit the corrected materials and additional materials for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Staff will make a recommendation to the Commission for approval or denial of the requested SDP. The Planning and Zoning Commission will then evaluate the facts and either grant or deny the SDP. If an application is denied by the Commission, an applicant may appeal the decision to the City Council. The application procedure is outlined below.

1. **Submit Application** – Applications will be accepted by the established deadline found on the application.
2. **Staff Review (approximately 3 weeks)** – Staff will review the request and comments will be sent to the applicant after review is completed.
3. **Applicant submits additional information as needed** – The applicant will be directed to resubmit the corrected materials, if needed, and additional materials for the Planning and Zoning Commission, and staff will review them for clearance. This step may be repeated, as necessary, until all materials have been submitted and the applications is deemed ready to be placed on a Planning and Zoning Commission agenda.
4. **Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting** – The request will be placed on a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting agenda. Staff will present the request and staff's recommendation to the Commission. The applicant may address the Commission on their request. The Commission will review the facts provided and make a recommendation during the same meeting. However, if the Commission feels they need more information or more time to make a decision, they may table the item to a future meeting. The Commission may approve or deny a Site Development Permit. The public may address the case at the beginning of the meeting during public comment.
  - a. Commission meetings are held on the second Tuesday and fourth Thursday of each month starting at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, unless otherwise noted.
5. **Site Development Permit Granted**
  - a. If Denied, Applicant may submit Appeal to City Council
6. **Proceed with Building Permit Submittal**