

1. What is scheduled time for the meeting?

Trey P., 6 Dec 2024, 11:12

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 pm. However, we will allow time for you all to start showing up before we begin.

2. I have a real problem with how you are calculating maximum square footage. I believed that there was an interest in this being a democratic process. On the survey, more than half (99 out of 189) voted to have the size limitation for homes to be 2300 sq ft or more. More than half of that 99 (54 votes) wanted a size limit of more than 2400 sq ft. I don't know if you are catering to a vocal minority or your own preconceptions, but you are not honoring the desires of the homeowners in Norhill. This is not right. This is our neighborhood and you should not have the right to listen only to your preferred minority and dictate these very impactful guidelines for our properties.

Susan Mitchell, 26 Feb 2025, 12:37

Good Day,

I apologize that you feel that the team is catering to a vocal minority. We have listened and included everyone and as we stated before (at the workshops) we would use weighted averages to make sure that everyone who contributed to the poll/survey would be heard and accounted for. By doing so means that we are catering to everyone who took the time to take the survey/poll. This team has always stated that this was not a majority rules vote, our stance has been that this was a survey/poll from the day we began. With that being said, we truly do apologize that you feel we are listening to a vocal majority.

Thank you for taking the time to make a comment.

3. Terrance and Team- Following up with you regarding your response to my original comment. You asked what changes we did not like from the first to the "final" draft. In comparing the first draft from February 2024 to the latest "final" draft, there were a few concessions made that we were not in support of. The lot size to total living area increased for lots 5000 ft or more. The interior two story addition rear setback from property line decreased from 25 ft to 18 ft. And also the corner lot two story addition rear setback from property line decreased from 25 ft to 20 ft. In the February draft there were requirements and limitations on parking. And it seems

those have been left out of the “final” draft. We prefer the more restrictive limitations, allowing for less intrusion into neighbors property and privacy. We support simpler and smaller, and it is hard to find that anywhere in Houston, excepting our few historic neighborhoods. Thanks for following up with me!

Tiffany, 11 Jan 2025, 6:52

Thank you so much for your input. We will make note of this and make sure we take a more detailed look at your concerns.

Also, please be informed that we have been instructed to send out the survey again. We will be updating lets talk Houston, this week to get you all the new timeline.

Once Again, Thank you for your input! We really appreciate it.

4. Have the final guidelines been accepted and published?

Liz, 29 Jan 2025, 12:18

Hello and thank you for your question.

No the final guidelines have not been approved and published, there will be an update to the schedule this week.

We have been instructed to send out another survey to you all. More information to come.

Thanks Again!

5. Norhill was designed as a planned community of single-story craftsman-style homes for working families. The design specifically included much green space, space around homes to allow for trees and neighbor contact. These are major reasons people choose to live in Norhill. It is unique from other historic neighborhoods in Houston, or in the rest of the country, actually, in that it still consists of a higher percentage of those original -style homes than other historic areas. This necessitates the need for clear, dimensional and character guidelines to reduce confusion and conflict over what changes can be made to these properties. Citing dimensions, areas, characteristics of historic homes in other parts of the Houston Heights should have no bearing on guidelines for Norhill, as Norhill was constructed differently. As a 12-year resident of Norhill, I approve the draft guidelines prepared by the City. The more they are clear, specific, and consistent as

far as appropriate with Norhill deed restrictions, the easier it will be for residents to understand historic parameters when they they choose to live in Norhill.

mmary45, 18 Dec 2024, 16:45

Thank you for your participation in this process. We also want to thank you for your commitment to the Norhill neighborhood. We look forward to completing these guideline and we can only hope that we continue to serve the residents of Norhill. We look forward to working with you all in the future.

6. Just a quick note to confirm my strong support of the adoption of the Norhill Guidelines. I understand that there may be some "tweaks" to the document, but taken as a whole it is a good document with compromises made to address residents opinions. The concerns about the poll from recent meeting (Dec 18) seem to indicate that some residents would like a written explanation on weighted values . . . perhaps that could be posted here somewhere. I strongly support the moderate numbers of square footage allowable per square foot: 2000-2200 for 5000, 2200-2400 for 6000. While these far exceed original home sizes, these sizes also address current needs within reason. This small working class neighborhood should have modest scale/proportions to retain its historic charm. This includes green space around the house and sky space above the house/garage. I support the 1.5 story garage idea, which seems like a good compromise for the neighborhood, helping to retain modest proportions with some of the needs of residents without creating towering garages. Not everyone should live in small bungalows, and there are options nearby which can accommodate families who require large square footage for their activities. Thank you Terrence and team for your hard work on this project. Now it is time to take this project to the finish line. Happy holidays.

Karen, 20 Dec 2024, 10:10

Thank you so much for your comments. The team is going to be looking into the 1 1/2 story garages to see if we can make it a reality and have that included in the guidelines. We appreciate your kind words and we appreciate you attending the meetings and workshops.

7. I support the draft design guidelines as they will preserve Norhill's historic charm. The framework provides a consistent and clear path to secure Norhill's magic - one of the many reasons people want to live in this beautiful neighborhood. Other parts of the Heights are being swallowed by huge homes which block the sun and breezes

of neighbors. Furthermore, I support the one-story garage for the backyard privacy. Thank you for all your hard work on this final draft. I truly appreciate your time and efforts.

Esmeralda , 29 Dec 2024, 18:03

Hello,

Thank you for your kind words and comments. We also would like to thank you for attending and participating in this process.

8. I also want to express my support for the Neighborhood Design Guidelines. I very much appreciate the character of the current Norhill architecture and want to see it preserved. Gillian Steinhauer, 1102 Peddie Street.

Gillian, 30 Dec 2024, 13:50

Thank you so much for your comments. We appreciate your willingness to support us with this draft.

9. Having attended all of the design guidelines meetings we wanted to be certain our voice is heard. We purchased a home in Norhill three years ago specifically because of the limitations/protections afforded by a historic district. We were in favor of the original draft guidelines as written. And while we are not thrilled with some of the intervening compromises, we are in favor of approving the final draft as last presented to protect the quality of life for all Norhill residents. Norhill is an incredibly unique neighborhood in Houston and needs to be protected.

Tiffany Till, 30 Dec 2024, 17:32

Hello,

Thank you for your comments. As you may know this process has been going on for years and the historic preservation team is working as hard as we possibly can to try to please everyone. Of course we know that we cannot. We are happy that you would be in support, but if you do not mind us asking:

What is it that you would have changed back? What changes were made that you would like taken out?

Thank You

10. I am in favor of these design guidelines.

LLR, 6 Jan 2025, 16:58

Hello and thank you so much for your comments.

11. Greetings all, I have been a Heights resident since 1990 and a homeowner in Norhill since 2000. I have witnessed the vast changes around the area over these decades - and I want to express my support for the Neighborhood Design Guidelines. I am particularly concerned that Norhill retain the historic character this neighborhood has with its bungalows and large number of 1930's-era kit homes. I have seen the explosion of buildings in nearby neighborhoods like Woodland Heights and do not want to see Norhill evolve in that manner. I believe the character and harmony of this historic district would be lost were design guidelines such as these not adopted and enforced. There should be front and rear lot line setbacks and guidelines for added protection to this historic representative neighborhood. Thank you for ensuring the continued nature of Norhill's character through the clarifications these guidelines provide. Peace, Duane Bradley 4023 Pineridge St. Houston, TX 77009

Duane Bradley, 18 Dec 2024, 13:14

Thank you sir for the kind words. The Norhill design guideline team has worked really hard in resolving the very issue you speak of. We are happy to present these guidelines to the residents as this shall be a representation of what they wanted and how they would like to keep the character of the neighborhood intact.

12. Is there a virtual / zoom option for next week's meeting. I'd really like to participate, but I'm able to make there at that time.

Gddunton, 12 Dec 2024, 14:04

Unfortunately, no there is not a virtual option. If you would like to submit any questions you may have to Lets Talk Houston or you can email the HOP staff for any questions and/or concerns.

13. Thank you for the response. So to clarify, there is no historical preservation rationale to limit the height on garages, but this is a deed restriction conversation?

Gddunton, 26 Nov 2024, 19:32

If I am not mistaken, there is a requirement that a 1 story garage ridge height is not to exceed 17 feet. But I think that is about it. The deed restrictions cover garages more than the guidelines do.

14. I am ok with the total allowable square footage (section 2.2a) as drafted by the City. I think the minimum rear setback requirements should be more like 3 to 5 feet versus 10 feet. Overall, I think these new requirements regarding maintaining, repairing and making necessary replacements to one's home, including worn out or broken items like broken doors, windows, etc. are excessive and will be overly expensive, time consuming, burdensome, and difficult on homeowners in this wonderful, modest neighborhood. Homeowners in Norhill do not generally have financial means comparable to homeowners in a Courtlandt Place or Houston Heights with larger lots and homes, for example. I think these requirements could potentially backfire on their intent and be detrimental to the appearance and values in the neighborhood with some owners choosing to defer repairs and improvements to delay or avoid the expense in time and money. - but that is just my opinion. Many of the numerous landlord owners of homes in the neighborhood already fail to keep their rental homes in good repair and maintenance; it is doubtful they would go to the extra expense and time imposed with these requirements; so, the condition and appearance of these rental homes can be expected to continue to decline. I hope I am wrong. Thank you for sharing the poll results and providing your draft for review.

Marian Livingston, 21 Nov 2024, 12:54

Hello and thank you for your comments.

I understand your stance regarding maintaining and repairing your home(s). However, I want to make sure that we point out, that these are typical preservation practices. Meaning, these practices are utilized across the country in preservation and conservation districts. Unfortunately, it may be time consuming and burdensome and we cannot say that it will not, that is determined by the owner and/or agent that is having that type of experience. But we can tell you that this team is working very hard to try and make sure that every experience with this office is a good one.

Again, no problem. We are making sure we are trying to be as transparent as we can. There will be a meeting to discuss the draft guidelines. Please plan to attend.

15. Will the "guidelines" be merely a list of requests that our Civic Organization will ask of any potential proposed remodeling to adhere to? w How & who will be responsible for enforcing these guidelines. Will the guidelines be incorporated into our deed restrictions, so they are enforceable?

Terry Heroy, 4 Nov 2024, 20:59

The guidelines are separate from your deed restrictions and civic club, this is a city of Houston document. The guidelines will be enforced by the city of Houston. They will not be considered a list of requests but will be a list of guidelines that residents, architects, and contractors shall follow when it comes to remodeling the structures in the neighborhood. They will not be incorporated into your deed restrictions.

16. Please stop using the picture on page 31. It is inaccurate. Watson is a full wide street from 14th to Fugate. The non conforming lot DOES NOT EXIST. We wish it was left a lot like originally designed. Our home at 812 Fugate is the only home in entire Norhill where a major feeder road is pointed straight up our driveway. A car crashed through our gate this year by driving too fast down Watson. We have to explain our unfortunate location compared to other lots every time we protest taxes. Please get rid of this picture City of Houston or correct it. It has been like it is well before the dates on this document. Better yet shut down Watson and feed the lot back to Norhill where it was always meant to be.

Earl, 11 Nov 2024, 8:25

This is the map that was approved by city council.

I am sorry for the damage caused to your home, but this is a legal document which shows the approved boundaries of the historic district.

17. Thank you for your previous response, but I am still unclear on what the basis is for the the 17' garage ridge height. This would appear to be the most restrictive design guideline published in Houston with most (including the Heights) at 26'.

gddunton, 12 Nov 2024, 22:23

Per your deed restrictions, you all are not allowed to build a 2 story garage. The 26 ft, you reference from the Heights, is from the Heights, which does not have a deed restriction that prevents them from building 2 story garages. Therefore, the 17 ft ridge height is for the one-

story garages. Those whom have existing two story garage, I believe the NNA would allow them to build back what was once existing.

If you have an issue with garages, the Historic Preservation Office recommends that you all get with your NNA and have a discussion between them and the residents. Unfortunately, garages are not something we can resolve with your deed restrictions that must be done by the residents.

18. I appreciate the work that has gone into this, but still don't quite track the plans for garages. These guidelines effectively ban second stories on garages by limiting the max ridge height to 17'. What is the basis for this restriction and how many current garages exceed this level? The deed restrictions clearly don't allow APARTMENTS, but has nothing to say about second stories. The Black's Law dictionary defines an apartment as "A part of a house occupied by a person, while the rest is occupied by another, or others. As to the meaning of this term, see 7 Man. & G. 95; 6 Mod. 214 ; McMillan v. Solomon, 42 Ala. 356, 94 Am. Dec. 654; Commonwealth v. Estabrook, 10 Pick. (Mass.) 293; McLellan v. Dalton, 10 Mass. 190; People v. St. Clair, 38 Cal. 137."

gddunton, 3 Nov 2024, 18:40

Thank you for your comments.

As mentioned, the city of Houston historic preservation office has chose to remain out of the disagreement between residents and the deed restrictions. Due to the fact that our office cannot regulate deed restrictions, we have decided to take a back seat until the "two story" and/or "garage apartment" debate. If and when the residents and the neighborhood association come to an agreement, we would be happy to amend the guidelines (or add garages to the guidelines, should it be done prior to city council approval).

The guideline for a 17' maximum ridge height s for new garages.

Thanks Again

19. The polling supports a Living Area Ratio of .45 for all lots. Almost 30% of respondents voted to allow homes greater than 2,400 sq ft on 5,000 sq ft lots. Conservatively estimating that these respondents would want 2,500 sq ft (which they could have wanted even larger homes), the weighted average comes to 2,261 sq ft. I see no reason to make the homes smaller than the weighted average. Even

assuming that the +2,400 group only wanted 2,400 sq ft, the weighted average would be 2,233 sq ft which is still closer to the .45 ratio than the .43 ratio. Even though the City would like to use a weighted average, it should keep in mind that 53% of responders voted for homes at least 2,300 sf with the largest pool voting for homes larger than 2,400 sf. For these reasons, the City should allow a ratio of .45 instead of .43 on all lots. Single-story garages should not be included in Living Area. There is no reason that putting air-conditioning in my detached garage should affect my ability to build a larger home. I'm fine with including a second story of garage in the Living Area calculation, but it should not include the first floor garage. Whether or not my garage has air conditioning has no effect on the look of the neighborhood, historic character of the house, stormwater runoff, or privacy of my next-door neighbor (all the cited concerns with larger homes). However, putting air conditioning in garages allows us to efficiently use the space in our small homes. Houston is very hot and we cannot work in the garage without air-conditioning during certain parts of the year. I suggest changing this definition to explicitly exclude single-story garages under the 585 sf limit. The height restrictions in Section 2.4 are incredibly limiting. 8 foot ceilings are the bare minimum for a livable space, so it is concerning that these are also the absolute maximum for a second-story addition and many first-floor additions. As anyone with a child knows, in an 8-ft room, you cannot lift your child above your head without fear of smacking their head on the ceiling. Ceiling fans are also very uncomfortable in rooms with 8 foot ceilings for similar reasons. There is no reason not to allow 10 ft ceilings or at the very least a compromise of 9ft ceilings. I understand we do not want incredibly tall buildings, but 8 ft is really low and allows no wiggle room in construction. I suggest allowing first and second-floor new construction to be 9 feet. This is a very reasonable compromise, and balances the desire to minimize scale while allowing some flexibility for homeowners. Overall there are too many restrictions on the building of garages. How many garages currently built in the neighborhood would conform to these restrictions? My guess is that most of the current garages would not conform. The guidelines are already very restrictive, so we should allow people flexibility to try to fit a garage on their properties. The comments from the polls suggest people are largely in favor of allowing garages. I suggest removing all but the front (60ft) , rear (3ft) , and side- setbacks (3-ft). People should be allowed to connect the garage to their homes. Why do we want the garages to be 5 ft from the homes? That is an inefficient use of space. Especially considering how far back garages have to be, how close they are to the home has only a minor (if at all) impact on neighborhood aesthetics. Agree with the other comments. The deed restrictions do NOT disallow second story garages, only second-story garage apartments. As confirmed by the

poll results, the people in the neighborhood would like to allow second-story garage apartments. Again, this makes sense because when people read their deed restrictions prior to buying the homes, they see there are no prohibitions on the building of second-story garages.

MG, 4 Nov 2024, 8:49

Thank you for your comments and suggestions. we will make sure we take a look at them and compare them to the other comments we receive.

Also, I would like to point out that the survey was not to be considered a vote. It was a poll for the city to get a sense of what the residents were feeling. The square footages are an improvement from what was originally proposed.

20. This is a great, simplified update to the design guidelines. Good work Terrance and team. I do have a few comments: 1- 2 story garages. There are NO restrictions to two story garages in the deed restrictions of either neighborhood in Norhill. There ARE restrictions on garage apartments. These are not one in the same. The data from the survey of nearly 200 residents of Norhill shows that 75% of respondents are in favor of building over the garage. With 20% against them, and 5% neutral. The data is clear in support of these. So I would like to remove the restriction on garage height in the guidelines, or redo them in 2.4.d. I would argue a second story over the garage is more historic than over the main house, in context and in history. 2- I like the idea of controlling massing alongside 2nd story garages in lieu of preventing them. Total square footage of a/c space could be limited to 2200 sq ft. Or alternatively, maximizing the "open air" space to provide both privacy and prevent over-massing. Great work so far.

RBurns, 28 Oct 2024, 13:53

Thank you for your comments and the Historic Preservation staff appreciates your recognition. The team has worked very hard to provide a nice concise document for you all.

Unfortunately, the preservation office has elected to NOT include 2nd story or garage apartments in the guidelines, do to the fact that there is a constant debate between the residents and the deed restrictions. Due to the fact that we cannot regulate deed restrictions, it seems clear to the team that this is something that needs to be revisited by the two parties. Once things have been resolved, we would be more than willing to add the garage decision to these guidelines.

We appreciate your willingness to participate and contribute to this process.

21. Chosen FAR's do not align with the public poll. The guidelines show for 5000-5200 sq ft lot sizes homes are limited to a 0.43 FAR or 2,150-2,236 sq ft. 52% of respondents want 2,300 sq ft homes to be allowed on normal sized lots. Therefore, the FAR should be amended to be 0.45 for ALL lot sizes. The corner lot rear setback of 20ft is higher than the interior lot setback of 18ft, the corner lot size should be changed to be 18ft. The garage should be allowed to be attached to the house, this was overwhelmingly supported by the comments from poll participants. The 5 ft setback between the garage and house should be eliminated. 2nd story garage additions are not addressed in the guidelines. Previously they were addressed by saying they would not be allowed. Now, they are being indirectly banned by not being addressed in the guidelines. Poll respondents were clear that 2nd story garage additions should be allowed. How can residents accomplish this if it is not addressed in the guidelines? These guidelines should be a compromise of what homeowners want. The NNA should NOT have more influence than homeowners. They have less members than the amount of people that responded to the poll and DO NOT speak for the neighborhood, which is why their membership is so low!

kb, 30 Oct 2024, 11:52

Hello,

Thank you for your comments. As stated the survey was a poll and not to be considered a vote. The math used was to apply weighted averages to all the square footages and setbacks to include everyone single poll participant.

Also, the city of Houston preservation office cannot have a deed restriction discussion because, we cannot regulate or enforce them. We have not changed our response to that and the questions about garages were asked to inform the NNA of the thoughts and feelings of the residents. It was stated in the beginning that the preservation office would be removing items that we cannot legally regulate. If the residents would like to change what the deed restrictions say, we strongly suggest that you all attend the NNA meetings to have them edited.

Once again, we thank you for your comments and for taking the time to review the draft guidelines.

22. I wanted to comment on the updated draft - it appears to be a great combination of allowing for flexibility of property alteration while maintaining the historic nature and

charm that draws people to Norhill. Some will feel it isn't restrictive enough and others that it is too restrictive. It seems to be a nice middle ground from first glance. Thanks all for the effort in preparing, hearings, edits, and the future work to be done with the guidelines!!

NorhillResident1, 24 Oct 2024, 11:47

Hello,

Thank you so much for your comment. The goal was to create a document that reflected what the residents wanted which was a long process to find that balance for you all. We appreciate your honesty and we really appreciate your willingness to participate in the creation of these guidelines. As you continue to review them, please feel free to leave comments of things that deem necessary for the future of the neighborhood.

23. The proposed guidelines should be thoroughly reviewed before implementation as they will heavily restrict property owners' rights in Norhill. It's imperative to address these concerns: Increasing the proposed FAR to 0.5 is essential. A 0.38 FAR would severely limit homeowners, allowing only a modest increase in square footage. Recent HAHC approvals for similar constructions in Norhill indicate a higher FAR is reasonable. Allowing attached and two-story garages aligns with recent HAHC approvals and should be included in the design guidelines. Ensuring protection for existing structures is crucial. Homeowners should be able to rebuild based on the previous structure and not have to maintain and % in order to do so. Requiring a historic photograph for porch restoration is unnecessary. Homeowners should be allowed to restore their porch to match historically accurate designs without strict documentation requirements. Side and rear setback requirements for the 2nd floor should be reconsidered to allow homeowners flexibility in design.

Elizabeth McCarthy, 20 Feb 2024, 10:24

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

The guidelines are being thoroughly reviewed and they are only a draft. your input is important to us. However, it also must be pointed out that historic districts with lots larger than those of Norhill were not granted FAR of .5 by the HAHC. Yes, we agree that a higher FAR is reasonable, and all this can be negotiated.

The two story garages are not allowed as per your deed restrictions, which the city of Houston does not regulate or enforce.

Please feel free to attend the Norhill resident workshop either on February 27th and march 5th.

24. Before implementing the proposed guidelines in Norhill the HAHC should look at previous approvals of the following homes: 731 W. Temple, 802 W. Temple, 901 Key St, 907 Key St., and 725 W. Cottage. They all have FAR's that exceed 0.38 and three of them have connected two story garages. This supports the FAR being increased to 0.5 to allow for meaningful improvements in square footage and that attached and two-story garages are in harmony with the neighborhood! Also, homeowners should be able to restore their porch based on historically accurate designs without strict documentation requirements.

Elizabeth McCarthy, 20 Feb 2024, 10:25

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

The design guidelines are drafts and are not legal documents at this time. It is also important to state that historic districts with larger lots than Norhill do not have FAR of .5, and the HAHC was involved in that process.

As it relates to two-story garages, that is covered in your deed restrictions and the city of Houston does not regulate nor enforce deed restrictions.

The Historic Preservation Office takes the context area and previously existing conditions into consideration when it comes to porch restoration.

Please feel free to attend the Norhill residents workshop on either February 27th and March 5th.

25. I've only lived in Norhill for two years but, as young childless professionals, we found just enough house for us. We love the front porch community aspect of this area and have gotten to know so many of our neighbors walking our dogs. At recent neighborhood association meetings, a small group of people kept demanding the Association allow bigger homes for families. I was glad to see neighbors who have raised their families here say they had enough space. Also, my neighbors are other young professionals, older empty nesters, retirees, and families. The guidelines for Norhill allow all the homes to stay reasonably sized so all types of homeowners can be present in this area, making it a more vibrant and exciting community.

, 14 May 2024, 16:29

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

The Historic Preservation team has worked very hard in making sure that the guidelines provide the sense of community that Norhill has been, and we hope to remain. Please stay tuned as we work through this process. We look forward to hearing more from you all.

Thanks Again!

26. The Guidelines, as proposed, provide an invaluable framework for allowing for growth while at the same time preserve our historic character. I moved to Norhill for the 'small town' feel and for the feeling of open space in my backyard. Others speak of their right to build out their lot but what of my right to retain the serenity of my lot? The Guidelines are a balance of these two perspectives. As for garages, I am not in favor of any new 2 story garages.

vk, 15 May 2024, 13:05

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

In the developing of these guidelines all things mentioned were considered. We appreciate your commitment to Norhill and to the design guideline process. Please stay tuned as we prepare to forward with the process.

Once again, Thank You!

27. I think that the restriction of 1900 sq. ft. is on the low side. Also, at one point there was a "no new 2-story garages" restriction. I believe that this has been removed. I am very much opposed to restrictions of 2-story garages.

924 West Cottage, 19 Apr 2024, 12:26

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

Please take the survey / poll which has been mailed to your address. As it relates to the two-story garages, that is a matter that is covered in your deed restrictions. It has been removed from the guidelines, however they are still prohibited by your deed restrictions and NNA.

28. We moved to Norhill because it was such a unique neighborhood. Smaller homes on smaller lots and the sense of a neighborhood is nice. The design guidelines are

long overdue, they provide consistency to a process that is left to the subjective opinion of those interpreting the deed restrictions (whether the Neighborhood Association, City of Houston, property owners, investors and contractors flipping the property). The design guidelines will provide a consistent clarity to our community standards and everyone will know what can and cannot be done with the property. I believe these guidelines are a fair compromise on both schools of thought (larger is better / smaller is better) and I am hoping after 5+ years the guidelines can be approved and we can move past this and focus on living our lives in Norhill. Thank you for your effort in this endeavor, the time has come to get them approved.

Dave, 28 Apr 2024, 19:18

Hello and Thank You so much for your comments.

We are determined to get these design guidelines passed through for you all. We look forward to continuing a wonderful working relationship with each and every resident of Norhill.

29. My primary issue with the guideline is the very restrictive square footage limitations. First of all, I don't understand why there aren't 2 measurements as the Historic Heights has. Those measurable standards include a percentage for lot coverage and one for FAR (Floor Area Ratio). The FAR is higher to allow for more square footage for two story additions. It just makes sense. Why are doing it differently here? 1900 sq feet does not adequately allow for a second story. I would support numbers more in line with the Heights numbers. Lot coverage for 5000-5999 sq ft lots being 42% and the FAR being 49-50%. I very strongly oppose the restrictions this guideline puts on my properties. I encourage all responders to look into this.

Susan Mitchell, 31 Mar 2024, 17:55

Hello,

Thank You for your comment. Yes, the Heights has two measurable standards, and both must be met thus most people have stated that they are too restrictive.

The 1900 square feet is not a number set in stone. It is not permanent.

Please take the poll/survey that should be arriving in your mailbox between today and tomorrow and voice your opinion of the guidelines and what the square footage should be.

Thank You

30. Hello - I feel the living area restrictions are far too restrictive. For the scale to go from 40% for lots under 5k Sq FT, all the way down to 31% on lots over 7k sq ft is even more mind boggling. I purchased my home on a larger lot in Norhill with ideas of expansion in the future. I do not believe it is fair to implement such a large restriction, on people that have already made significant investments in the neighborhood. 1. Is there currently a restriction on home square footage by lot size? 2. If there is a limit in place, I do not believe it should be scaled down so drastically based on the size of the lot. 3. It would make more sense to be by surface area, as this allows people to build up, while still maintaining green space. 4. Will the poll questions arriving to residents mid April address max square footage? 5. The current knock on Norhill is that it is a great area to live, but many people will move out once they have kids due to smaller homes. I think we should be creating a neighborhood that wants young families, vs making them feel as if they need to leave.

Norhill Scott, 3 Apr 2024, 14:22

Hello,

There has been no attempt to prevent anyone from expanding on their property. That has never been a question in the guidelines. There are neighborhoods like Woodland Heights that do not allow a restriction, however a proposed addition on a non-contributing home, that is massive can still be denied by the HAHC. These guidelines address massing, and Norhill is a more intimate neighborhood than Woodland Heights. The lots are smaller.

We are listening to your issues, but we must also listen to your neighbors, who may not want what seems like a mid-rise looking into their yard or home. Despite, your issues with the guidelines, I do not believe such a mass would be approved by the HAHC or the NNA.

To answer your questions:

1) No there is not, however a proposed addition would be reviewed by staff and the HAHC. Massing and whether the original home has an addition that is subordinate.

2) Thank you for your thought.

3) That has and will further be taken into consideration.

4) The poll/survey questions will have a few questions about square footage.

5) Please, take a look at Norhill, the lots are smaller. The homes are smaller. This is how the neighborhood was built. I apologize that you feel that way, but Norhill has characteristics just as Woodland Heights, The Heights, and Old Sixth Ward. It is our duty to create design

guidelines that lend to the make up of the neighborhoods and the future of them. The city of Houston is not doing this to force anyone out.

31. I am very concerned about the weight on which the City seems to give the comments on this website. How do we even know these people are my Norhill neighbors? I know all of my actual neighbors in North Norhill really support these guidelines and we all love the historic nature of our neighborhood. That's why we live here. Why do people want to move in to a very long established historic neighborhood and change it? My right to have my privacy in my yard and not have your gargantuan house looming over me is paramount! There are thousands of unrestricted blocks in Houston. If you bought in Norhill in the last 20 years, you knew what you were getting. I am also concerned about these comments because people don't seem to know what's really going on! They don't know the distinction between deed restrictions, historic designation, and guidelines. How can their opinions be valid when they don't even understand the issues? Makes no sense.

Brenda actually in Norhill, 8 Apr 2024, 11:19

Hello,

As city employees, the Historic Preservation staff must consider everyone's thoughts. Yes, there is a lot of confusion with the deed restrictions, historic designation, and the guidelines but that is why we want to make sure we answer everyone with an honest answer, the best we can. We as staff would prefer to have the conversation and explain the difference of the three, rather than not. The comments on this page are welcome. Please if you would like to contribute to the Norhill Design Guidelines, please check your mailbox for the poll/survey questions for the guidelines. There is a 30 day window to complete the questionnaire.

Thank You

32. As a long time resident of Norhill, we bought our house because we wanted the security having historic protections and deed restrictions afforded us. It is very frustrating to see people choosing to buy a home in our protected community and wanting to change it. We support the clarifying guidelines, which are well overdue. We support continued protections that ensure our family home won't be dwarfed by some massive new addition on our block, removing views and trees and the privacy we bought and paid for. People like to yell a lot about their property rights. My

immediate slice of this neighborhood is still all small homes, with only minimal additions. That hasn't stopped young couples, empty nesters, single professionals, or young families from buying on my street in the more than a decade our family has lived here. Those concerns are much ado about nothing! Nationally, historic preservation has protected property values and our price per square foot is in line with the most sought after areas in Houston!

RVTM, 8 Apr 2024, 11:28

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

We really need more comments like this, as we only hear the opposite. Please take the poll/survey that has been mailed to all Norhill residents. Your feedback will prove to be vital to this process.

33. These guidelines are very restrictive. We are not going to see people move into the neighborhood. Why are we making these changes now? Don't we want to see progress?

Alisa , 5 Mar 2024, 3:18

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

This has been going on for years, this is not something that just happened over night. Every historic district is set to get design guidelines at some point.

To answer your question, some see this as progress. However, we do not expect everyone to agree.

34. Thank you for sharing the draft guidelines. My comments: 1) Rather than a firm restriction on 2 story garages, could we move to establishing acceptable guidelines for those structures. Fully agree with the comment below that 2-story garages are NOT garage apartments. The inability to have a study or playroom is needlessly limiting when many 2 story garages already exist in the neighborhood and can keep the 'harmony' with appropriate guidelines.

Brianna, 5 Mar 2024, 9:04

Hello and Thank you for your comments.

Please take up any garage issues (garage apartments, two-story garages, etc.) with the Norhill Neighborhood Association. The Historic Preservation Office is going to allow you all (residents and NNA) to work that issue out amongst yourselves.

35. After attending last week's workshop (thanks to the city for hosting), I had a few recommendations for next steps: 1. Another meeting is necessary - I have owned a home in this neighborhood for five years and only heard about this in November. 2. The polling was great, but more options were needed - It would have been helpful to have an option for "do not address in the design guidelines" for some of the specifications. In particular, a resident raised the question of why have a restriction on building size if we are already restricting distance on the lot. It would be great to have this as an option in the polling. 3. Ground residents in the difference between deed restrictions and design guidelines and how this is an added layer of restrictions and approvals 4. A yes/no vote if Norhill wants to adopt design guidelines - While the meeting was focused on the specifics, it would be helpful for all residents to have the opportunity to weigh in on whether this is something that we actually want. Perhaps we could ask this as the last polling question at the end

EHorn, 5 Mar 2024, 15:40

Hello and Thank you for your comments and suggestions.

We will surely take them into consideration moving forward.

36. I'm new to the neighborhood so I'm not an expert in the deed restrictions, but I've seen multiple responses claiming that 2nd story garage additions aren't allowed. Where in the deed restrictions is that called out? I see no garage apartments, but that seems to be very different than a garage apartment.

gddunton, 5 Mar 2024, 17:26

Hello and Thank you for your comments.

You will need to go to the Norhill Neighborhood Association to get the answers for the garage clarification. The Historic Preservation Office is going to remove themselves from that argument. We recommend that garage apartments, two-story garages, or anything dealing with garages and spaces above them, be discussed with the NNA.

37. I am in favor of the guidelines, and very opposed to changing the setbacks or square footage any further. As a recent transplant to Houston, this neighborhood is unique, and will retain its value based upon what is already here; it is what attracted me to this neighborhood in particular. For more square footage and being closer to the street - so many other neighborhoods already provide this. By keeping the footprints as they are, will actually INCREASE the value of our properties.

New to Houston, 13 Mar 2024, 6:44

Thank You for your comments.

38. To Whom It May Concern. I am in favor, generally speaking of the Design Guide Lines with the following 2 comments: 1) As far as building size is concerned, 1900 square feet maybe agreeable as far as a one story structure is concerned, but could be small for a 2-story structure. Maybe we should consider footprint as a more reasonable way. 2) I am totally, 100% opposed to the restriction of 2-story garages. Garage apartments are already prohibited. And while a 2 story garage could possibly be converted at a later stage, it is prohibited by the 2-residence prohibition already in existence in the deed restrictions. A 2-story garage is NOT a garage apartment. Kind regards

Jorgen, 1 Mar 2024, 15:26

Hello and thank you for your comments.

As it relates to your first concern - it looks like there is a chance that this will change to provide more square footage for an addition. We are not sure what that number is, however we would like to know what your suggestions for square footage would be.

The garage conversation is something that our office is looking into removing ourselves from. We would like the residents and the NNA to have that discussion, as it relates to that in the deed restrictions.

Kind Regards.

39. Thank you planning & development team for leading tonight's meeting. The polls mainly focused on square footage & setbacks. Further polling with more specificity regarding garage apartments and attached garages seems to be needed. There are also other issues that need discussion/polling that were not covered tonight. What is the best way to make sure all changes are thoroughly discussed and not passed

along for council vote without thorough feedback from the neighborhood? Although efficiency is important, we have concern that 2-3 meetings won't be sufficient to discuss of the changes.

Anna Kalmbach & Dylan Parker, 27 Feb 2024, 21:26

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

While we understand you all would like for us to poll about garages, what you saw at the workshop may be the extent of the garage polling. We are trying our best to gather the information for the NNA and pass that along to them. Due to the fact that your deed restrictions prohibit garage apartments, we are making an effort to avoid the battle between the homeowners and the NNA.

The polling was based on the issues that were placed here in the comments section. If you would like to discuss your issues further, please place them here or you can email them to me. The only way we can discuss the issues is to hear them from you all and so far this seems to be a pretty helpful tool for us to gather that information.

This is not going to the HAHC soon.

The workshops started back in 2016, thus this has been going on for a while and there have been numerous meetings prior to my involvement. We will meet until we feel we are close enough to move without issue.

40. Question.....when I look down the street all the houses are lined up evenly with a standard set back from the street EXCEPT for the new builds (one of which Roman highlighted in his presentation tonight). I want to see all houses, new and old, have the same street setback as their neighbors.

Lynne Hoefer , 27 Feb 2024, 20:07

Thank You for your comment.

The front setbacks in Norhill currently are between 15 ft and 20 ft. Some are different, but there could be a number of reasons why. We will make verify that the 15 ft setback from the property line is in the design guidelines.

41. In the responses to the comments, the City has asked for specific number suggestions for the guidelines. Below we outline specific suggestions for improvements. 1-2 Definitions and Suggested Changes The definition of "Carport"

should be revised to be consistent with the side setbacks in Section 2-3e. The reference to R322 of the Houston Revisions of the IRC 2021 (the latest City codes as of January 2024) does not seem appropriate as there is no code restriction in that setback about Carports needing to be 5 feet from the property line. The side setbacks for a Garage and a Carport should be the same. The definition of “Harmony” should be revised to confirm that if a property is “in Harmony” per the Guidelines, then it is “in Harmony” per the deed restrictions. This will foster more consistent implementation of the restrictions and provide clarity for homeowners and prospective purchasers. The definition of “Living Area” should be revised to exclude garages, porches, stairs, and space under the stairs. None of these spaces provide actual living spaces for people in homes. Excluding these ancillary spaces allows flexibility as promoted by the Strategy Paper, pg. 44. These spaces do not contribute to the overall mass of a home. This definition will also be difficult to implement. Such a specific definition would require the City to conduct an intrusive inspection of homes to for compliance. For example, should the City need to inspect the inside of a home to measure any usable space under stairs? Should the City need to come in to see if the owners installed an air conditioning unit in the garage? Finally, please consider defining “garage apartment” to only pertain to rented space above garages. Such a definition could be applied to the deed restrictions to allow the building of second story garages (which are not rented out).

2-2a Residences Arguably, the biggest issue with the proposed guidelines is the Maximum Living Area. We propose increasing this ratio to 55%. This number is sufficient to prevent obtrusively large homes, while allowing enough flexibility to meet family needs. The Maximum Living Area is one of many requirements on these properties. We do not need this number to be strict in order to prevent overbuilding. We suggest using this flexible number in combination with the setbacks outlined herein (as well as those already in the deed restrictions).

2-2b Porches Large porches should not be counted as Living Area. Again, given the considerations and the prevailing need to accommodate growing families in our homes, the benefits of including porches are severely outweighed by the constraints.

2-2c. Garages, Enclosed Storage, and other Outbuildings. The comments have shown broad support for second-story garages. As suggested above, we should consider defining “garage apartments” in a way that allows more second-story garages to be built. Even if we will require a deed modification to allow the construction of new second-story garages, we should not impose new restrictions in these guidelines. We suggest removing the entire second paragraph of 2-2c.

2-3a Interior One-Story Addition. The 6 ft rear setback for one-story additions is unnecessarily restrictive. The City requires a 3 ft rear setback and many properties have easements less than

5 ft. Additionally, there are properties in Norhill that back up to commercial lots or other non-residential lots and can gain valuable living area without encroaching on our Norhill neighbors. We suggest that the minimum rear setback should be the greater of 3 ft and the property's rear easement (as currently proposed for Garages and Carports. Please explain the purpose of "A First-Floor addition to the side of the house may not project more than 6 ft into the side yard or measure more than 15 ft wide, and may only be located on one side of the house." This restriction seems very difficult to implement. For example, on my original structure, the back bedroom pushes into the side yard. If I were to create a side addition, would I be unable to connect the two given the width restrictions? This seems like a restriction that would be better left to simple easy to understand setbacks. We support allowing side additions to homes. However, this provision should be simplified and clarified. We suggest, "Side additions are allowed within the following setbacks, 3 ft min. Side setback, 12 ft. minimum side setback on driveway side, 6 ft rear setback, 20 ft front setback. 2-3b Interior Second Floor Setbacks To provide flexibility, we should remove the following: "No two-story addition should extend past the sides of the original structure." Instead, we can rely on setbacks to prevent overbuilding and maintain clear, consistent guidance for homeowners. The 25-foot rear setback is too restrictive. We suggest revising to be a 12-foot rear setback and a 30-foot front setback. This provides ample room for a backyard and some breathing room between houses. Again, given the small lots, we need to balance overcrowding with our ability to house a family. The proposed setbacks strike a better balance and are strict enough to preserve the character of the neighborhood. 2-3e. Interior Lot Garage Construction/Outbuilding The 5-ft minimum between exterior walls of a garage and house should be eliminated. We have smaller lots and need to be efficient with our spaces. Requiring a large setback between the garage and house has little benefit, but makes creating functional space difficult. We should consider reducing the front setback for garages to 45 feet through a deed amendment and these restrictions (for consistency). The 60-ft garage setback necessitates smaller back yards and dedicating roughly a third of our lots to cars. It would be more efficient to have the garages further up as it would allow people to use their back and side yards for more than just a driveway. 2-6d Dormers Dormers add style and beauty to these homes and should be allowed. These can also be used as an effective and non-obtrusive way to create more living space in small homes. Qualitative guidelines may be appropriate to conform to the character and historic style of the homes. 2-7a impervious cover It is unlikely that 55% impervious cover restriction significantly aids in the prevention of stormwater runoff. These lots have been compacted through construction and have little ability to soak up rainwater. We suggest

increasing this number 70%. If the real reason behind this restriction is to protect green space, then please change to state so and change the restriction to directly address this concern. If 45% of space needs to be pervious to prevent stormwater and flooding issues (based on engineering studies that should be published), then serious changes need to be considered for these guidelines. To provide this much open space on a given lot requires families be able to expand their homes upward to achieve space and utility. Combining this strict limit on impervious cover with the parking requirements leaves very little flexibility for expansion in these homes. Reducing the parking requirement to one car per lot would allow more open space if that is a priority. We recommend removing the inclusion of packed gravel. Gravel is a more pervious alternative to concrete and does not require watering like grass. For these reasons it should be encouraged. Additionally, we suggest considering reasonable discounts to impervious area for lot materials that are not completely impervious (wooden decks, gravel, non-grouted paved walkways, etc.). this would encourage the selection of more pervious materials for parking and outdoor areas while still allowing for valuable use.

2-7b Parking We recommend removing the restriction on long-term parking a car in front of the setback line. "Longterm" is vague, leaving the enforcement of this provision open to arbitrary action. This is a needless restriction, and some people may prefer to use their lots for other uses than parking. We recommend changing this section to read: "All lots must be able to house one car off the street and behind the Front Setback Line." Please consider an overview of the parking requirements in these guidelines and the deed restrictions. A 60 ft setback on garages combined with the requirement of parking two vehicles on a lot dedicates a large portion of these lots to cars. On balance, lots should be used for people, not cars. Allowing these garages to move up will allow shorter driveways and bigger backyards. Other changes to consider is removing the requirement of being able to park two cars behind the setback. This is a neighborhood chosen for walkability, we do not need to dedicate this much space to cars.

2-7c. Fences. We recommend removing the requirement that fences must be 80% open. This is a needless restriction. For example, we have dogs and would love to have them in the front yard. Frankly having such an open fence would encourage barking and escape attempts. If privacy is a major concern, then we should allow privacy fences to be 10 feet. This does not affect any historic features and the view from the street will be the same. This allows us to be denser while maintaining a sense of privacy.

3-4. Exemptions Fences of any size should not need NNA approval.

M. & B. Guerinot, 25 Feb 2024, 11:02

Hello and Thank you for your comments.

The majority of your comments have been edited to reflect some of the changes you wish to see.

Also, it is hard to imagine any historic commission allowing 55% for FAR. This would mean the massing of structures exceeds the amount of green space on each site that chooses to do so. For instance, the Heights were not granted such a number and they have lots much bigger than the majority of the lots in Norhill. It would be irresponsible of the HOP to not speak against such a number.

To sum up this response, a lot of the things you mentioned have been edited out of the guidelines as a whole. We would prefer to reveal them at the Norhill Resident Workshop. Please feel free to attend one of the

42. I would like to build a second story garage office. I don't want a bedroom up there, just flex space for an office. Space is limited in these charming historic bungalows, and we would like to extend our footprint while maintaining the historical integrity and timeless design aesthetic of Norhill.

lizroberts406, 25 Feb 2024, 13:08

Hello and Thank you for your comment.

The deed restrictions prohibit such a space, therefore we recommend you speak with the Norhill Neighborhood Association about second stories above your garage.

43. I am happy to live in a historic neighborhood whose character and quality are maintained through some regulations. It's a source of pride to see talented people in that neighborhood volunteer their time to see that those regulations... actually the character of the neighborhood we all chose to call home, are maintained and ultimately benefit all residents. It's also a source of pride that the City of Houston provides a structure for review of guidelines within those "regulations" to be reviewed and diverse opinions of new residents to be heard and considered. There should be room for some specific details in guidelines to be modified in necessary cases, as long as the "Compatible Building Elements" found in the majority of the historic buildings are not violated. Residents who purchase homes in Norhill must be attracted to the ambiance that results from its historic construction and maintenance, and know at outset of deed restrictions to maintain that ambiance. Neighborhoods with no board of residents dedicated to maintain historic regs have quickly lost their character, their uniting elements and sense of community.

msmmary45, 25 Feb 2024, 20:27

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

We appreciate your compliments and look forward to seeing you at the Norhill Resident Workshop.

44. The proposed guidelines for Norhill pose considerable limitations on property owners' rights within the community. Several key adjustments are necessary to address these restrictions before formal adoption. The current proposal suggests a FAR of 0.38, which significantly constrains the potential for property expansion. This limitation, in practical terms, restricts homeowners to modest increases in square footage, hindering substantial improvements and adversely impacting property resale values. To align with recent approvals by the HAHC and neighboring areas like the Heights, an increase to a FAR of 0.5 is recommended. The imposition of setback regulations for second-floor additions presents practical challenges, potentially resulting in awkward design solutions. Granting homeowners the ability to match existing setbacks for second-story construction, with reasonable rear setback allowances, promotes design coherence without compromising neighborhood aesthetics. Contemporary renovation trends, supported by recent HAHC approvals, advocate for the inclusion of attached and two-story garages. Amending the guidelines to permit these modifications maintains consistency with evolving architectural preferences while respecting the neighborhood's historical character. Requiring historic photographic evidence for porch restoration presents logistical challenges. Instead, adopting criteria based on archival documentation or contextual architectural similarity facilitates practical and historically sensitive restoration efforts. In summary, these recommended adjustments serve to refine the proposed guidelines for Norhill, fostering a balanced regulatory framework that respects property rights while preserving the neighborhood's unique character and architectural heritage.

Liz Hughes, 19 Feb 2024, 13:51

1. Hello and thank you for your comments.

These are draft guidelines and not the final guidelines.

As you are aware, the Norhill homes were built circa 1920, on substantially smaller lots than the modern homes that are being built today. Also, it is important to state that historic

districts with lots larger than those in Norhill do not have a FAR of .5, and I am sure the HAHC will take that into consideration.

Your deed restrictions do not allow two-story garages and the city of Houston does not regulate or enforce deed restrictions. Please feel free to provide us with the addresses of NEW 2-story garages in Norhill as we have do not recall any cases where this has occurred.

Please feel free to attend the Norhill resident workshops either on February 27th or March 5th.

45. The proposed guidelines, if enacted, would represent a significant restriction on property owners' rights in Norhill. The following restrictions should be remedied via changes to the proposed guidelines before they are adopted: 1) Increase the proposed FAR to 0.5. A 0.38 FAR for Norhill would limit the majority of homeowners to a 1,900 sq ft home, meaning that most homes would only be able to increase their square footage by 400-600 square feet. This would significantly stifle further improvements to the community, as trying to renovate a home for such small square footage and still see commiserate improvements to a potential re-sale price would be impossible. The FAR should be increased to 0.5 to match recent approvals by HAHC that are currently being constructed in Norhill: 731 W. Temple = 0.553, 802 W. Temple = 0.626, 901 Key St = 0.5451, 725 W. Cottage = 0.4630. Also, when looking to the design guidelines for the Heights, a much larger FAR of 0.48 is also seen. 2) Remove the side and rear setback requirements for the 2nd floor. Homeowners should be allowed to match the side setbacks of their existing home with their 2nd level. Otherwise, you are asking homeowners to awkwardly design staircases to be in the middle of their first floor. Rear setbacks of 5 feet are acceptable, the design guidelines for the Heights utilize this as well. 3) Attached garages and two-story garages should be allowed in the design guidelines. The deed restrictions prohibit new garage apartments from being constructed, they do not disallow connected garages or two-story garages. Multiple recent approvals by the HAHC support this and the design guidelines should be amended to uphold that these types of renovations are consistent with the neighborhood. Example properties include: 901 Key St., 907 Key St, 802 W. Temple. 4) Remove the requirement of a COA for a fence. A COA should not be needed for a fence, that is a waste of homeowners and the HAHC's time and resources. 5) Ensure that existing structures are protected and able to be rebuilt in the event of neglect or a tragedy. For the Context Area for New Build's (Page 6, 1.2), if an existing structure is destroyed due to fire, flood, or other Force Majeure events and a homeowner needs to re-build they should be allowed to

utilize the structure that existed as a basis for the new structure. If they are required instead to utilize interior lots that had not been altered, they could be put in a position where they bought a specific home and now are unable to replicate it due to these design guidelines. Also, for Page 9, 2-2c., property owners should be able to make the most cost-effective decision to maintain a safe and aesthetically pleasing structure, not be beholden to trying to save a structure that hasn't been maintained to maintain square footage that was considered in their purchase of the property. 6) A historic photograph should not be required to restore a home's porch. Property owners should not be required to maintain a porch that is clearly not historic and is not able to be fully utilized. Instead, if a homeowner can find their home in the Crane catalog or point to similar homes in the context area, they can be allowed to restore their porch to match what would be considered historically accurate for the neighborhood.

Kelsie, 19 Feb 2024, 12:00

Thank You for your comments.

Please attend one of the resident workshops on either February 27th or March 5th.

A FAR of .5 was not granted to historic districts with lots larger than those of Norhill, thus that number should be compromised. We too believe .38 is too restrictive, but we need to have dialogue to come to an agreement.

Garages are covered in your deed restrictions and the city of Houston cannot regulate or enforce them.

Side and rear setbacks are regulated by the city. We would suggest taking a drive around the Heights and notice how some home dwarf others and also how they encroach on their neighbors yard. Its something to consider...

46. The proposed design guidelines represent an attack on property owner rights. Homes in Norhill were purchased with full knowledge of the deed restrictions in place, however the extremely restrictive setbacks, FARs, and garage/carport requirements that these design guidelines are proposing will make the ability to expand these homes in a way that allows people to fully enjoy their lot size impossible. The majority of lots in Norhill are 5,000 to 5,200 sq ft, which means homes would never exceed ~1,900 sq ft. This would cripple property development in Norhill, which already has the highest price per square foot of any neighborhood in the heights. I implore the HAHC to go back and look at recent approvals they have

provided post COVID to accommodate how people live their lives today (separate rooms for children, home offices for remote work, playrooms for children due to the oppressive heat Houston experiences), which requires more square footage. The HAHC should look to their most recent approvals and re-write these design guidelines to ensure that their decisions yesterday would still be made tomorrow.

KB, 19 Feb 2024, 12:07

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please attend one of the resident workshops on either February 27th or March 5th.

We believe in compromise as it relates to the 1900 SF, and that is why we would like your participation. We also believe .5 is asking the HAHC to approve something that they did not approve in historic districts with lots larger than the 5000 to 5200 in Norhill.

47. Regarding Section 2-2c: "No new Two-Story garages shall be constructed". I am vehemently opposed to this restriction. Nowhere in the NNA Deed Restrictions does it prohibit the construction of two-story garages. This is an unnecessary restriction. The NNA area already has about 110 two story garages. It is unfair to residents without two-story garages to prevent them from getting a two-story garage, when about 13-14% of residences already have one. A very large percentage of residences have neighbors who have two-store garages overlooking their properties. I propose that this restriction put to a vote at the general meeting of the neighborhood association.

Jorgen, 17 Feb 2024, 10:31

Thank You for your comments.

We suggest you address that with your neighborhood association as we cannot regulate or enforce deed restriction issues.

If you have concerns about the design guideline draft, please feel free to attend one of the resident workshops on February 27th or March 5th.

48. I do not understand the rationale for calculating square footage allowed per home based on lot size. This makes no sense and significantly lowers the marketability and usefulness of our homes. As long as our home adheres to set backs then what we do to an added floor should be up to us and not some obscure calculation which

has zero affect on ground area for drainage. The city allows homes like DeGeorge Townhomes to be built without consideration of ground cover and its effect on our neighborhood right behind it.

KJN, 17 Feb 2024, 8:52

Hello and Thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to attend one of the resident workshops on February 27th or March 5th.

Contrary to belief, the FAR and lot coverage do contribute to drainage. The Historic Preservation Office, was not included in the design of the DeGeorge Townhomes as they are not inside of a historic district.

49. From my standpoint, the proposed guidelines for Norhill are unnecessarily restrictive for property owners. Prior to finalizing them, I'd like to proffer some revisions for consideration: 1) Relax setback rules for second-floor additions to avoid awkward designs 2) Increase the FAR to 0.5 for more flexibility in home size. 3) Homeowners these days typically seek attached or two-story garages, Norhill needs to relax the guidelines to allow for this. 4) Similarly, relax porch restoration requirements and eliminate the need for old photos. These revisions would allow homeowners greater flexibility with their home while also accomplishing the important goal of preserving the neighborhood's character.

MIBS98, 19 Feb 2024, 14:48

Hello Thank You for your comments.

The design guideline are a draft and are not set in stone.

Please free to attend one of the resident workshops:

February 27th or March 5th.

Historic Districts with much larger lots than the average lot in Norhill, were not granted a FAR of .5 and we believe a compromise can be made between .38 and .5, however the dialogue must take place.

As it relates to 2-story garages, that is a deed restriction regulation that the city of Houston cannot enforce.

50. If the proposed design guidelines go through, they're gonna restrict property owners in the area. Here's what needs fixing before they become official. Picture this: most homeowners would be stuck with tiny increases in square footage, making it near impossible to do any meaningful renovations without hurting the resale value. We're saying bump it up to 0.5, which matches what's already been approved for some new constructions in Norhill and even what's allowed in neighboring areas like the Heights. Let homeowners match the setbacks of their existing homes for the second floor, with maybe a small setback in the rear for good measure. Then there's the issue of garages. If something happens like a fire or flood, homeowners should be able to rebuild without jumping through hoops. They shouldn't be forced to use some outdated standard or be left unable to recreate what they had before. The rules say no attached or two-story garages, but recent approvals from the Historical Commission say otherwise. A COA just to put up a fence? Talk about bureaucratic nonsense. Ditch that requirement and save everyone some time and hassle. Not being able to improve front porches is impractical. If you can show your home in an old catalog or point to similar houses nearby, that should be proof enough to make the necessary changes.

YoungNorhillResident, 19 Feb 2024, 15:29

Hello and Thank You for your comments.

There are historic districts with larger lots than Norhill and the HAHC did not allow FAR of .5, therefore I believe there needs to be conversations about compromise. The .38 is not set in stone, it is a part of the draft guidelines.

Unfortunately, we cannot think of any home in the Heights where the setbacks are matched by the existing contributing structure. There may have been additions that were done prior to the district being created, however the heights require a hyphen or indention off of the rear existing corners.

Also, the only two-story garages in Norhill that may have been approved already had one there. If that is not true, please provide the address and we can research this.

Please feel free to attend one of the workshops on either February 27th or March 5th. More information will be provided.

51. These proposed guidelines for Norhill REALLY negatively impact all the neighborhood's property owners' freedoms to an extreme extent. The living area ratios are really out of whack with the current market – the majority of the lots in

Norhill fall into the 0.38x multiple, which maxes out at 2,280 square feet of living area. That's nearly 100 square feet LESS than the average home being built in Houston for the past decade! If the ratio were bumped up to 0.50x it would help bring Norhill properties more in line with the rest of Houston construction and the general direction of home construction, meaning homeowners wouldn't be paying through the nose for every renovation on a dollar per square foot basis relative to the rest of the market. Also, the nonsense with setbacks second-floor additions will cause headaches for homeowners trying to keep things looking normal. And why not allow attached or two-story garages? It's not like we're building apartment complexes here, just giving folks more flexibility for their properties (you know, that they own and should be allowed to live in as they decide). What happens if homeowners are trying to rebuild after disasters or renovate after extreme neglect (which is painfully common around here...)? Red tape would bog the process down for months or years. Let's make it easier for them to get back on their feet and restore homes to be improvements to the community, rather than continue to drag the neighborhood back into the last century. Finally, and I'm amazed I even need to say this, but porch restorations shouldn't require digging up old photos. Let's use common sense and let homeowners restore them in a way that fits with the neighborhood.

Norhill Since '86, 19 Feb 2024, 15:32

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The guidelines are a draft and will be discussed in depth over the next couple of months. These are draft guidelines and not the final guidelines.

As you are aware, the Norhill homes were built circa 1920, on substantially smaller lots than the modern homes that are being built today. Also, it is important to state that historic districts with lots larger than those in Norhill do not have a FAR of .5, and I am sure the HAHC will take that into consideration.

Your deed restrictions do not allow two-story garages and the city of Houston does not regulate or enforce deed restrictions.

There are no cases that we are aware of that guideline regulations have prevented construction for years. I am sorry you feel that you are being taken back to the last century and that is not the purpose of design guidelines nor the HAHC. The ordinance and 11 criteria are put in place to preserve the historic character of the homes and the neighborhoods, not exclusive to Norhill.

Please feel free to attend the Norhill resident workshops either on February 27th or March 5th.

52. The proposed guidelines for Norhill pose considerable limitations on property owners' rights within the community. Several key adjustments are necessary to address these restrictions before formal adoption. The current proposal suggests a FAR of 0.38, which significantly constrains the potential for property expansion. This limitation, in practical terms, restricts homeowners to modest increases in square footage, hindering substantial improvements and adversely impacting property resale values. To align with recent approvals by the HAHC and neighboring areas like the Heights, an increase to a FAR of 0.5 is recommended. The imposition of setback regulations for second-floor additions presents practical challenges, potentially resulting in awkward design solutions. Granting homeowners the ability to match existing setbacks for second-story construction, with reasonable rear setback allowances, promotes design coherence without compromising neighborhood aesthetics. Contemporary renovation trends, supported by recent HAHC approvals, advocate for the inclusion of attached and two-story garages. Amending the guidelines to permit these modifications maintains consistency with evolving architectural preferences while respecting the neighborhood's historical character. Requiring historic photographic evidence for porch restoration presents logistical challenges. Instead, adopting criteria based on archival documentation or contextual architectural similarity facilitates practical and historically sensitive restoration efforts. In summary, these recommended adjustments serve to refine the proposed guidelines for Norhill, fostering a balanced regulatory framework that respects property rights while preserving the neighborhood's unique character and architectural heritage.

LizHugehs, 20 Feb 2024, 10:29

Hello, Thank You for your comment. The guidelines are a draft and the purpose of the Workshop that will be held on February 27th and March 5th are for residents to provide input.

As it relates to the Heights, the FAR is not .5, and for good reason. It is important to note that the Heights have larger lots than those of Norhill, thus the HAHC would (more than likely) not grant a FAR as large as what has been approved there. Lot coverage and things of that nature will also be considered.

Living in a historic district unfortunately comes with certain regulations and the HAHC has not allowed for massive additions to be built on the top of the historic structure. They have allowed contemporary additions at the rear of properties, but as it relates to the garages, those are issues that are not allowed as per your deed restrictions, and the city of Houston does not regulate nor enforce deed restrictions of any neighborhood.

53. As a Norhill resident I find these design guidelines to be overly restrictive and meaningfully conflicting with the intent of the existing deed restrictions and the neighborhood as it exists today. I purchased my home with existing deed restrictions as do all other Norhill residents; it is unclear why additional restrictions should be enacted and applied retroactively to my property and the others in the same position. While these are called guidelines, they are restrictions on building in all but name. The Norhill board reasons that these guidelines will improve "consistency" in the application of the deed restrictions, their argument falls flat-these guidelines impose restrictions significantly in excess of those set forth in the deed restrictions and at best are an unreasonable and close-minded interpretation of the existing deed restrictions and at worst would constitute a legal takings in enacted. Further, the implementation of the deed restrictions merely adds an additional layer of review to the process of modifying your home, a process the Norhill board is already incapable of managing. The HAHC has a reasonable, reliable, consistent approach to our historical area, there is no reason to add further interpretive hurdles. These guidelines ignore the actual makeup of the neighborhood where homes with attached garages, second story garages, limited setbacks, and square footage beyond 1900, to name a small number of variables, are demonstrated in meaningful percentages. This retroactive rulemaking would result in a devastating loss of value to existing residents and an unreasonable burden on existing and future homeowners. If an owner were to purchase property in Norhill following the enacting of these guidelines, would they be limited to 1900 sq. ft. while both neighbors have attached garages and second floors? How is that in conformity with the surrounding homes? Further, the guidelines ignore the realities of society today where working from home is more and more 'the norm'. It is not uncommon to need one or more offices in a home, is the goal that Norhill residents must be retirees or are families with children and working parents allowed?

T. Hillebrand, 3 Feb 2024, 17:04

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The guidelines are a draft and no numbers and/or ratios provided in them are permanent at this time. The reason for the guidelines, is because the Historic Preservation Ordinance states that historic districts will get design guidelines. This was part of the agreement (if you will) to becoming a historic district. This was not implemented by a neighborhood association, as we are two separate entities. The city of Houston does not regulate or enforce the Norhill deed restrictions. With that said, that is the reason we have not addressed the complaints about the Norhill Neighborhood Association... we simply cannot get involved.

As it relates to conformity in Norhill, there may have been things that we done prior to the neighborhood becoming a historic district... or things that were done illegally, without a permit. I am not sure how these things may have happened without knowing the circumstances.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill Residents workshops. They are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. More information will be provided to you all soon.

Thank You Again

54. As a homeowner in the Norhill Historic District of Houston, I am requesting an official public participation plan for the Norhill Historic District Design Guidelines, in line with the principles outlined in the City of Houston's Citizen Participation Plan (2020), and other similar participation plans within related agencies. Our requests are as follows: 45-Day Comment Period: We request a 45-day public comment period, starting from Monday, December 11, 2023 through January 24, 2024, to accommodate the winter holidays. This duration ensures ample time for public engagement, especially considering the holiday season. Public Meeting for Oral Comments: We advocate for a public meeting at the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) to receive oral comments from the community. This meeting should occur after the start of the new year (2024), in advance of the closing date for public comments. This approach will enable effective community involvement as emphasized in the Citizen Participation Plan. Post-Comment Period Actions: After the close of the public comment period, and the HAHC has incorporated community feedback and made its final recommendations, we request a final meeting to outline any changes made to the Norhill Historic District Guidelines. Following the release of the final draft, an additional public comment period of at least 20 days should be provided, allowing for further community input

before the final version is presented to the City Council for voting. This step is vital for ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the final decision-making process. These requests are made to ensure a thorough and inclusive public participation process, reflecting the commitments of the Citizen Participation Plan. It's crucial that community members have adequate opportunities to express their views and that their feedback is genuinely considered in the development of these important guidelines. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to a constructive and collaborative process. Sincerely, Jordan Macha & Kent Hemphill

machahemphill, 11 Dec 2023, 21:15

Hello and thank you for your comment.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops which are tentatively scheduled for February 26th and March 5th. We will be providing more information about those meetings soon. If you have any questions and/or comments as it relates to your comments or the response, please feel free to contact us at 832.393.6556.

Please see division 5 of the historic preservation ordinance. The information you have requested below, which outlines the process the preservation office is required to follow, as per the ordinance.

Division 5 - Design Guidelines

- Sec. 33-266. - Application.

(a)

The applicants for the *designation* of an historic district may prepare and submit proposed *design guidelines* as part of the application. If the applicants do not submit proposed *design guidelines*, the director shall prepare *design guidelines* for consideration by city council within one year after the creation of an historic district.

(b)

The HAHC or city council may direct the director to prepare *design guidelines* for one or more historic districts for which no *design guidelines* have been adopted in accordance with subsection (a) of this section if the HAHC or city council finds that the adoption of *design guidelines* would benefit the review of certificates of appropriateness for the historic district. The director shall prepare *design guidelines* for the historic district in accordance with the following:

(1)

The director shall conduct one or more public meetings within or near the historic districts for which *design guidelines* are proposed to enable the public to provide input on the proposed *guidelines*;

(2)

The director shall mail notice to all property owners within the historic districts for which *design guidelines* are proposed not less than 15 days before each public meeting; and

(3)

The director shall present *design guidelines* to the HAHC within one year of the request for *design guidelines*, or if the director is unable to do so, the director shall report on the progress of the *design guidelines* to the HAHC and include a timeline for completion of the *design guidelines*.

(c)

Reserved.

○ Sec. 33-267. - Requirements.

(a)

The purpose of *design guidelines* is to provide guidance on how to interpret the criteria of this article within individual historic districts.

(b)

The proposed *design guidelines* shall contain:

(1)

A map and description of the proposed historic district, including boundaries; photographs of buildings in the district; an inventory of the age, setting, character and architectural, cultural or historical significance of structures in the district; and objectives to be achieved in the historic district;

(2)

A statement of the architectural, cultural or historical significance of the proposed historic district and a description of structures and features to be preserved; and

(3)

A set of specific standards that illustrate compliance and noncompliance with the criteria for certificates of appropriateness for demolition, new construction, alteration, rehabilitation, restoration and relocation that are tailored to the specific characteristics and features of the district for which the *design guidelines* are written. These standards may be stricter than the provisions of this article, and shall not be more lenient except as provided for by this article.

(c)

The proposed *design guidelines* shall not contain any standards for reviewing applications for certificates of appropriateness that allow for activity specifically prohibited by the criteria for certificates of appropriateness in this article, except as provided for by this article. *Design guidelines* shall not provide for alternative rules and regulations except as provided for in this article.

(Ord. No. 2015-967, § 40, 10-7-2015)

- Sec. 33-268. - Approval; effect of approval; amendment.

(a)

The director shall present the proposed *design guidelines* for adoption to the HAHC, who shall conduct a public hearing on the adoption of the *design guidelines*. The director shall mail notice to all property owners within the historic districts to be affected by the *design guidelines* not less than 15 days before the public hearing before the HAHC. At the public hearing, interested parties may comment in person or in writing on the proposed *design guidelines*. At the close of the public hearing, the HAHC shall vote to disapprove, defer, or recommend that city council approve the proposed *design guidelines* in the form presented to the HAHC or as amended by HAHC during the public hearing. The director shall present any recommended *design guidelines* to city council as soon as is reasonably possible.

(b)

The city council shall consider the recommendation of the HAHC and shall vote to approve or disapprove the *design guidelines* in the form in which they are recommended by the HAHC. If city council disapproves the *design guidelines*, the director shall revise the *design guidelines* in accordance with any suggested changes made by city council, and resubmit the *design guidelines* to HAHC in accordance with the provisions of subsection

(a) of this section as soon as is reasonably possible. After approval by city council, the HAHC shall use the criteria within the *design guidelines* for granting or denying applications for certificates of appropriateness for applicable activities within the boundaries of the historic district.

(c)

Amendments to *design guidelines* that have been approved by city council shall be considered in accordance with the process for the adoption of *design guidelines* in this section.

(d)

A copy of the *design guidelines* is to be maintained in the office of the city secretary and on the website of the department.

55. Can we build garage apt

rodfrego77p@gmail.com, 1 Jan 2024, 19:12

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The garage issue is a topic of discussion in our office. However, we must state that the Norhill deed restrictions, heavily restrict the 2nd story garage issue. The historic preservation office does not have the authority to amend or enforce your deed restrictions.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

56. The 2023 Proposed Guidelines (the “Guidelines”) significantly limit the opportunity for homeowners to modify their homes to accommodate modern lifestyles. Many of the Guidelines go beyond preserving the historic features of the homes and risk disincentivizing long-term investment in the community. The parks, walkability, schools, and community draw many young families to the neighborhood. However, by not allowing certain renovations, these families may be forced to relocate (if they

decide to expand their families, i.e., have children) when simple alterations would have allowed them to achieve their needs without sacrificing the feel of the neighborhood. Below I summarize the specific guidelines that are overly restrictive and insufficiently tailored to achieve the purpose of the historic district. I appreciate your considerations of my comments, and I look forward to your response. 1. The current “Living Area” restrictions severely limit usability of homes without furthering historic preservation. In reference to the Maximum Living Area Ratios, the Guidelines state that, “[t]hese ratios allow for growth while still preserving the historic character and scaling of the neighborhood.” Contrary to this statement, current limits do not allow enough growth to accommodate a family. The average home in the United States recently surpassed 2,000 square feet. (The 2022 American Home Size Index). The proposed maximum Living Area is 1,900 sf for a 5,000 sf lot. These strict limitations on the size of the home ensure the Norhill Neighborhood will stay behind current living standards, without furthering the purpose of historic preservation. If Norhill wishes to attract young families, looser guidelines will be needed. The Guidelines also beg questions of fairness. A significant percentage of homes in the area have Living Areas that exceed the new Guidelines, have garages that are multilevel, and do not comply with setback standards, among other non-compliant features. However, these homes have been “grandfathered” in, and so they only need to comply with the Guidelines on a go-forward basis. However, many other homes do not have these features, and because of when they were deeded and the new restrictions of the Guidelines, they will never be able to. Due to the pricing of these larger homes that are not subject to the Guidelines’ restrictions, many homeowners who want to start families or expand their existing families will be priced out and forced to leave Norhill altogether because they are so limited in renovations they can make to their homes. Further, the definition of “Living Area” is far too broad. If the purpose of restricting “Living Area” is to preserve the feel of the neighborhood, then porches, garages and interior space should not be included. Efficient uses of space allow homeowners to honor their historic home while accommodating the needs of their family. For example, a historic home with a finished attic looks the same as one without the increase in Living Area. However, these restrictions may render the first home out of compliance with the Guidelines. Similarly, a back porch and a finished garage do not have any effect on the neighborhood while providing huge benefits to the homeowners. Examples like this show that creative uses of a given space do not harm the historic nature of the neighborhood. Instead, they allow for new life to be given to these old homes. The Maximum Living Area Ratio should be removed, or, in the alternative, significantly increased to allow homes to expand if they do not fun

afoul of the other guidelines. The Houston Historic District Guidelines Project Strategy Report (2017) found that 68% of people agreed that “[a] bigger house can fit in if it is well designed, and respects traditional neighborhood patterns.” This broad approval shows that the neighborhood needs thoughtful additions, not a blanket restriction on the size of homes.

2. Two-story additions should be allowed to the extent they do not change the character of the neighborhood. The Guidelines encourage small “pop-out” style additions. Instead of keeping with the character of the home, these additions are unsightly and inefficient. A more favorable approach would be to remove the rear setback to allow the addition of a cohesive second story. In fact, encouraging a second story is an efficient way to increase square footage without compromising the space between homes. This approach is commonly used in historic districts across the country. A full second story can be added with an appropriate front setback to maintain the street appearance. Many homes currently in Norhill have second story additions larger than those allowed under these Guidelines. Far from detracting from the neighborhood, such homes have allowed more families with children to move in. Beyond the tangible increase in home values, allowing space for families contributes to the vibrancy of the neighborhood and the community feel.

3. A 55% restriction on impervious coverage is not designed to preserve the historic home and is inappropriate in the Guidelines. This restriction is not tailored to achieving historic preservation. This will serve as a burdensome impediment without furthering the character of the neighborhood. Further, this may disincentivize water-conscious landscaping such as xeriscaping.

4. Restrictions on second story garages are too restrictive. Second story garages are an efficient way to allow the historic home to remain intact while increasing the living areas of the home. Current second story garages should be allowed to be rebuilt if in disrepair. Further, additions of second story garages should be allowed on any home to achieve more living space for families.

Madison Guerinot, 13 Dec 2023, 9:26

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please note that the guidelines that have been posted are draft guidelines. The numbers, ratios, and percentages are not set in stone. The purpose of the comments was to receive suggestions from the residents. However, it has not gone that way.

Also, please know that the garage subject is being discussed in our office. However, it must be addressed that the deed restrictions heavily restrict the 2 story garage issue and the preservation office cannot amend the Norhill deed restrictions.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

57. Hi Terrance! Hope that you are doing well and Happy Holidays! 2-2a Residences - The proposed maximum ratio of 38%, for a 5,000-5,999 SF lot, is too restrictive. A maximum ratio of 45%-50% would be acceptable and still preserve the historic character and scaling of the neighborhood. 2-3b. Interior Two-Story Addition - The proposed 25 ft minimum Rear setback from the back property is also too restrictive. A minimum of 15-20 ft would be acceptable and still preserve the privacy of the surrounding neighbors, while also allowing for properties that may have a more pronounced Front setback to expand to meet their familial needs.

wcr329, 20 Dec 2023, 14:48

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please note that the guidelines that have been posted are draft guidelines. The numbers, ratios, and percentages are not set in stone. The purpose of the comments was to receive suggestions from the residents. However, it has not gone that way.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

58. I do not agree with limit set in square footage for the living space of a home. I also do not agree with the 3ft side and 6 ft rear set backs on building structure to property lines. I do not agree with not allowing 2 story garages to be built. There are way too many restrictions. Plenty of home in the neighborhood already do not meet those guidelines and there are no issues with it. The neighborhood still feels wonderful. You can still renovate or have a home that fits in the historic style of the neighborhood if it is 2 story, surpasses the side and rear setbacks you want to impose, and be over 1900 sq ft. Being more restrictive pushes people away who

have the resources to renovate and maintain the homes in Norhill. It's not cheap to buy a property here.

Caroline truong , 14 Dec 2023, 16:32

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please note that the guidelines that have been posted are draft guidelines. The numbers, ratios, and percentages are not set in stone. The purpose of the comments was to receive suggestions from the residents. However, it has not gone that way.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

59. These guidelines are excessively restrictive. The lots in Norhill are small and the houses are small compared to what the greater Heights housing market demands. We've lived on the 800 block of W. Cottage for five years and in those five years 12 of the 18 houses on the block have sold and at least half of those the people who left have said their family was outgrowing their homes. We can have beautiful architecture and decent sized yards. We don't need to require 2nd story additions to be so small. We don't need to prevent two story garages. We can modernize our neighborhood and still keep the original charm. If we want families to plant roots here, we need to make it suitable for modern families. Kids don't share rooms as much anymore. More families have two cars. People have more clothes. Kids have more toys. We shouldn't prevent Norhill from adapting. A few months ago I caught someone who had come onto my property without permissions to measure the distance between my back fence and front fence. She claimed it was because she felt our lot was well laid out and wanted to include the measurement in these guidelines. These guidelines are as out of touch with the needs of Norhill as she was in thinking that she could wander onto a stranger's property and start taking measurements in their backyard.

Mike Benza, 11 Dec 2023, 23:07

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please understand that the design guideline are a draft and are subject to change. Your input is very important to that change, thus we would need suggestions along with your comments.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

60. This version is being pushed by a small group and does not, I believe, represent all the homeowners. I own 2 properties in East Norhill. The 36-38% restriction is too small. I am so angry that these extreme minimalists are trying to push their personal preferences on the entire community. I moved into Norhill in the late 80s and in the years that followed, I was on the cutting edge of so many preservation efforts. The street light campaign, the historic designation process, watchdogging the failures in compliance. I am telling you that this set of "quantitative" regulations goes too far. I remember debating with my husband when the 45% number came around in early 2000s. He hated it but I wouldn't have put up a big fight at that percentage. I don't think the rear setback should charge at all, but I wouldn't fight a 5 ft setback. There is only one area were I partially agree with change. That is with the 2 story additions. Especially on the interior lots (not corner) building to the COH 3 ft line, is encroaching on neighbors. That being said, a 25 foot setback is too much. 15 to 20 ft is sufficient. I know you want a plan that is a consensus. This isn't it. This is going to get the NNA sued by deeper pockets, and that is bad for everyone.

Susan Mitchell, 8 Dec 2023, 16:00

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please note that the guidelines that have been posted are draft guidelines. The numbers, ratios, and percentages are not set in stone. The purpose of the comments was to receive suggestions from the residents. However, it has not gone that way.

Also, please know that the historic preservation office is separate from the NNA.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

61. These are very thoughtful guidelines. As a long time Norhill resident, I appreciate the effort that's been put in creating this.

Nadia Lauterbach , 9 Dec 2023, 12:17

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

62. In a quick review of the document, I did not see the requirement that garages, and house do not share a roofline and are not connected. This an important feature for the historic district may need to be added so there are no grey areas.

W Parker , 9 Dec 2023, 12:21

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

63. I would like to propose an idea, a restriction on solar panels on street facing roofs. While I do not see this as an issue, yet this could quickly alter the look of the neighborhood if over the next ten year a majority of house install solar panels on street facing roofs. It is best to get the regulation in place for the historic protection before there is an issue and it is still irrelevant to most. Thank You

W Parker , 9 Dec 2023, 12:26

Hello and thank you for your comment.

By law the city of Houston and the historic preservation office cannot regulate the installation of solar panels.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

64. These guidelines drastically limit the size of additions, even beyond the limits under the old guidelines. Combined with the prohibition on garage apartments, we are really limiting the ability of families to grow with their homes. Our neighborhood is full of young families, who move out the moment they have a second child because the 2br historic structures on most of the lots simply cannot accommodate their new family sizes. This greatly saddens me. I want to be able to stay in this neighborhood, which we love. I want the kids across the street to stay in this neighborhood, grow up with my kids, and go to school together. I am all for reasonable limits, and do not want us to turn into Woodland Heights, but our overly strict approach is not working for the people who actually live here. I would encourage us to allow more reasonable growth in ways that allow people to keep the original historic structure and tastefully expand it. Allowing 2-story garages, for example, would be an easy win. Most of the garages in the neighborhood are not original historic structures, and they are in any case set back from the street. Allowing families to add on a few hundred square feet for a home office etc to a non historic structure out of the line of sight is not harming the historic character of our neighborhood at all, and is a small way that we could help families grow without needing to leave the neighborhood.

Catherine Bratic, 9 Dec 2023, 14:34

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The garages are something we are discussing in our office, however it is still something that is very well covered in your deed restrictions. Please understand that the Historic Preservation Office does not enforce or regulate your deed restrictions, thus we cannot amend them.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

65. RATIOS FOR RESIDENCIES 2-2a This punishes residents as lots increase - eg if a lot is 4990sqft your residency can be 1996sqft, however to have an equally sized residence in the next bracket you would need a lot of 5252sqft.

RPM, 9 Dec 2023, 15:51

Hello and thank you for your comment.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops which are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

Should you have any questions and or comments in relation to what was stated above, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 832.393.6556.

66. What is changing with the new guidelines compared to the old guidelines? I was expecting to see a summary of changes rather than such a detailed document.

123456, 11 Dec 2023, 9:49

Thank you for your comments.

The change is that the "new" draft is a lot more concise, which allows for there to be less restrictions. Also, this give you all the opportunity to comment and make suggestions.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 832.393.6556.

67. It is my opinion that the proposed voluminous draft design guidelines will impose a financial burden on middle class homeowners in the neighborhood who want to maintain and improve their homes. The requirements would necessitate the hiring of an architect in most cases due to the very detailed quantitative requirements outlined. It will also be costly from a time perspective due to the required additional navigation through more bureaucracy. As someone who has worked as a residential realtor in the past, it is my opinion that many realtors will discourage their clients

from looking for homes in Norhill due to the cost and hassle factor for residents to improve and maintain their homes in the neighborhood, if these new requirements are imposed. The current requirements are sufficient. The Norhill Neighborhood Association is not a mandatory Homeowners Association (HOA). It is a voluntary organization whose membership represents less than half of the homeowners in the neighborhood. It seems presumptuous and inequitable for a small group of volunteer officers in the association to impose such impactful requirements without first taking a survey/poll of ALL Norhill homeowners given the seriousness and magnitude of the proposed changes. The survey should be accompanied by a complete copy of the "Draft Design Guidelines." If a majority of all homeowners (as measured by one owner vote per taxable residence) is in favor of these new requirements; then, so be it. A good deal of time and work has been expended on drafting these guidelines by neighborhood association volunteers. A reasonable amount of time should be given to ALL property owners they personally and significantly affect to review and digest, so that they can render an informed opinion, with consideration given to many families traveling during the holiday season. Thank you, Marian Livingston

marian.livingston@gmail.com, 11 Dec 2023, 10:08

Hello and thank you for your comments.

We are making sure that the design guideline draft is provided to all residents with plenty of time to review. That is the reason we have placed them here for review. Again, please note that they are draft guidelines and the residents' voices shall be heard and acknowledged.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops which are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. We will be providing more information for you all soon.

If you would like to discuss the issues you have with the draft, please feel free to contact us at 832.393.6556.

68. Section 1-2 Definitions. Living Area. Conditioned space in secondary structures such as garages that have been converted to studio space will be included in Living Area. 2-2c. Garages, Enclosed Storage, and other Outbuildings: No new Two-Story garages shall be constructed. Comments: The Norhill Neighborhood Association contains approximately 825 residences. Of these about 110 have 2-story garages. That represents about 13%. It is completely unfair to the people without 2-story garages to prohibit the new construction of these. Many properties without 2-story

garages have neighbors with 2-story garages. Why shouldn't they be allowed to build? Most of the houses in NNA are relatively small and have little storage space. A 2-story garage would assist in solving this problem. I pay about \$245 a month for storage that could be stored in a 2-story garage. As far as renting out the space, the deed restriction prohibits more than one residence on a lot. So, renting out a 2-story garage would violate the deed restrictions. Consequently, I strongly believe that we should NOT prohibit the construction of 2-story garages.

Jorgen, 14 Dec 2023, 11:17

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The garages are something we are discussing in our office, however it is still something that is very well covered in your deed restrictions. Please understand that the Historic Preservation Office does not enforce or regulate your deed restrictions, thus we cannot amend them.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

69. Norhill Guidelines. 2-2c. Garages, Enclosed Storage, and other Outbuildings: No new Two-Story garages shall be constructed. A homeowner may repair an existing Two-Story garage, to the exact same dimensions, if it is in disrepair. In the case of a repair, no more than 67% of the original structure may be demolished during the repair process. However, if a Two-Story garage has had more than 67% removed, it will be considered razed, and a new Two-Story garage may not be rebuilt. No Two-Story garages may be approved administratively. Exceptions may be made in the case of force majeure. I am in 100% opposition to the prohibition of the construction of 2-story garages. This prohibition is not in the existing deed restrictions. This prohibition is a usurpation of the deed restrictions. There are about 110/115 2-story garages already in existence in Norhill. In addition, there are numerous garages that have been allowed to be converted to living areas. Many property owners have 2-story garages next to them and this prohibition will prevent them from building their own 2-story garage. Many are opposed to 2-story garages because they can be rented out. The deed restrictions allow only one residence per lot.

Jorgen, 20 Dec 2023, 17:18

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The garages are something we are discussing in our office, however it is still something that is very well covered in your deed restrictions. Please understand that the Historic Preservation Office does not enforce or regulate your deed restrictions, thus we cannot amend them.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. Our office will provide more information to you all very soon.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556

70. I'd like to comment on changing the guidelines around garage spaces. Specifically, the ban on new two-story garage additions. I understand that garage apartments have been banned as part of the deed restrictions for some time, but I think we should be able to build 2nd story garage spaces that are not for rent. Given that the new guidelines will be very permissible for 2nd story additions to the main house, this feels like an overly restrictive requirement. Making an addition to the 2nd story of the main house does much more to change the character of the neighborhood than a second story over the garage. This also feels like it's much more restrictive than the current deeds. A two story space that isn't rented out is technically not an apartment, but now all two-story garage construction is banned. I understand that people don't want space rented out, but letting people have more flexibility with how they meet the square footage guidelines would help the homes be more adaptable as we make these older homes work with families and work from home. It's also much easier and much less disruptive to the house and the neighborhood to create a room over the garage than to take the roof off the house.

JohnS, 21 Dec 2023, 9:11

Hello and thank you for your comments.

The garages are something we are discussing in our office, however it is still something that is very well covered in your deed restrictions. Please understand that the Historic Preservation Office does not enforce or regulate your deed restrictions, thus we cannot amend them.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

If you would like to speak with us directly about anything, please feel free to call us at 832.393.6556.

71. Agree: Setbacks and easements in 2-3 pertaining to single story homes. These are important and I appreciate the consideration of neighbors. All of section 2-6 for materials and design is incredibly important and, although previously covered, should be specified. Height provisions- I agree with height provisions as pertaining to one and two story homes. Concerns: Rather than living space restrictions, a % of lot covered would be a much more equitable application for size and allow to maintain good drainage. 1,900 can be divided in so many ways when thinking about finished garage space, porches, home, etc. By allowing the % that a living space can occupy it leaves flexibility in the home size - just something to consider. 1,900 for the 5,000sqft lots (many of the neighborhood) is incredibly low when considering garage space. If keeping both restrictions, would recommend increasing to 2,200 if including finished garage spaces and porches as living area. The % permeable of the lot favors the corner lots with small driveways- need to consider with setbacks for garages and "preserving" the way the driveways are, they are forcibly introducing a high lot % to be impermeable unless there is design guidelines that the driveways can be replaced with permeable surfaces (grass/crushed gravel, etc.) - or that this option is left open if it is not directly addressed Second story additions- I believe they should have the same rear set-backs as the first floor. The purpose is to assist in creative ways to "minimize the impact the homes appearance." Square bump-ups are hard to avoid and not pretty to see. While these work well for corner lot properties for creative approaches, those interior properties do not have many visually appealing options that maintain the homes character and appeal with the guidelines outlines on page 11. On page 17, the height of garages is limited - I do not believe that the height should be restricted to 9', when many modern SUVs and trucks would be a better fit with 10' garage doors .I recommend a change to 10' for garage door height, resulting in a 11.5-12' maximum height. Most of these garages were not original to the homes as well- so they are visually complementary, but not historic. Second story additions to garages is restrictive past the deed restrictions which specify no second story garages apartment (page 9 in draft referencing no second story additions). An apartment is "self-contained housing unit that occupies only part of a building." This requires certain criteria to be met, kitchen, bathroom,

etc. Second story garages - with proper size (sq ft. 585 like the "living area" restriction on page 7), height (less than or equal to the two-story addition on pages 16-17) , no windows facing the adjacent properties (new restriction to be considered), +if new garage build-must meet the set-back restrictions (page 14) would help to maintain the historic nature of the homes and actually have a better style impact for interior lots than retrofitting "bump ups." This maintains the historic nature of the home while allowing for growth for a family unit for space for work from home, kids schoolwork, play areas etc. The home is the historic due to it's layout, one-story bungalow, and allowing space additions on garages is actually preserving these features and which leads to "a highly congruent neighborhood in terms of architectural elements and scale of buildings" - excerpt from page 5. From the meeting on Monday December 4th, the intent of the "no second story garage apartments" was to discourage second-household situations to prevent overcrowding and rentals. This intent as well as wording is not violated by adding space above a garage, and no additional restrictions above the deed restrictions should be imparted when the item is already addressed for the homeowners.

Thoughts/Comments: These have not been adequately distributed to the 800+ households that are impacted by these guidelines. The neighborhood association membership should be examined to see how many property owners have actually been contacted (as a %) and physical mailers need to be sent to all households to notify in advance of the draft advancing any further. While I agree that the historic guidelines need to be met, and the character of the neighborhood preserved- the way we live life has changed drastically in the past 100 years. We need to leave room to adapt, and consider that these design guidelines are too restrictive and may negatively impact the neighborhoods future. The intent of these homes were to service "working-class FAMILIES" (page 5). By restricting what can and cannot be used as "living space" - i.e. finished garage space limits - it makes it difficult for a modern family (needing work from home space/kid's to have computer space for schoolwork) to live in this neighborhood as the children get older. Even when we moved our realtor advised us that this is a neighborhood that is becoming for retirees or adult children, those who do not want children, or pre-child understanding that you will not be able to stay long term - which has become apparent as we watch young families list their homes to move for minimal additional space- but it is already too difficult to try and add in the neighborhood. These restrictions are likely to increase the value of the grandfathered properties, and hurt the homes that are still preserving the home's size and layout currently. There is a need to look at how many properties already violate all these, generate a % compared to those that do not, and then look at property value of the categories -

the burden of many of this should also fall on those wishing to make the change rather than those who are happy with the current situation - which often ends up to be the quiet majority. Also, a point was drawn in the sand without statistics introduced, just "what looked reasonable" (not examination of standard deviation, skew, etc). A person picking a spot on a graph is not examining how equitable these are when examining each output against the properties resulting value (via sale or appraisal). I appreciate the work that has been done, but believe room for interpretation and less oversight by ordinances is incredibly important as our world continues to change rapidly. If someone violates specifics, the world keeps turning regardless! Lots of true problems in the world, and who does over "legalizing" truly protect when we are meant to live in and support our community & neighbors!

NorhillResident20, 21 Dec 2023, 11:43

Thank you for your comments.

A lot of the topics that are mentioned in your message are going to be addressed. Please feel free to contact us with any suggestions you may have as it relates to the draft guidelines.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshops, tentatively scheduled for February 27th or March 5th.

Should you have any questions or concerns beyond the issues you mentioned, please feel free to contact our office at 832.393.6556.

72. The restriction about not allowing two story garages reads like a "Taking" under the Texas Private Real Property Rights Preservation Act Guidelines. The deeds restrict our ability for accessory dwelling units on the garage / lot. If a two story garage space doesn't meet the definition of an accessory dwelling unit then restricting the second story isn't actually disallowed by the deed restriction. For example, if a space doesn't have plumbing or meet other requirements then it's legally not an accessory unit and not restricted by the deed. Adding extra space over a garage is significantly less expensive than tearing the roof off a house to add extra square footage and the difference between those two costs is an economic taking. If the city wants to add this regulation it will both diminish our right to use the property AND diminishes the properties value due to the extra cost of building above the main home roof. Given the sensitivity a Takings Impact Analysis should be performed for this section. It's also significantly less disruptive for the neighborhood

because building a garage space is less complex and takes less time, meaning less construction nuisance on the street.

Norhill Resident, 30 Jan 2024, 19:27

Thank you for your comments.

The garages are the topic of discussion in our office. Please understand that the deed restrictions are not enforced by the Preservation Office and that is a matter that we unfortunately cannot address.

Please feel free to attend one of the Norhill resident workshop(s), tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. We will be sending out or delivering more information soon.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact us at 832.393.6556.

73. While I am supportive of providing homeowners clear, objective standards on the requirements for renovations and new construction in Norhill, the guidelines as proposed are overly restrictive and proscriptive, and will make the neighborhood prohibitively expensive and unwelcoming to families and multigenerational households. I have both procedural and substantive disagreements with the guidelines as proposed and cannot recommend their adoption without a significant number of changes and an increase in neighborhood input. Procedurally, the proposed guidelines have not been well socialized in the neighborhood. I have lived in Norhill for many years and only was made aware of the proposed guidelines in the past few months. In fact, I only saw the specific proposed limits in the past few weeks. Based on my conversations with many others in the neighborhood who have work and family obligations, they too were unaware of the timing and the extent of these guidelines. Many of the most onerous restrictions proposed reflect the views of only a minority of homeowners, many of whom have unique concerns not shared by many of their neighbors. For example, there are only a few backyard pools in the neighborhood – significantly fewer than the number of existing second story additions and two story garages. Furthermore, as someone who has navigated both the City of Houston historical and Norhill Neighborhood Association approval processes for construction, the city review was never the concern. As proposed, these guidelines would only increase the burden on homeowners by making city approvals more onerous without cabining, reducing, or replacing the neighborhood's approval process based on the "harmony" provision in the existing deed restrictions. This will make renovating in Norhill more procedurally complicated while not removing most of the barriers homeowners currently face.

Adopting additional rules on construction would only make sense if by meeting such criteria a design was deemed per se harmonious under the deed restrictions. More substantively, the proposed guidelines would limit the size of renovated houses for the overwhelming majority of homes in Norhill to 1,900 square feet. According to the National Association of Home Builders, the average new single-family home in 2022 was 2,537 square feet – over 30% larger than the proposed limits and much more in line with the needs of modern families. The average family in the US with children under 18 includes four people. In a post-COVID world, these families often include two parents who spend a portion of their week working from home. These guidelines as proposed would discriminate against those families by making it difficult to have more than three full-sized bedrooms in a Norhill home. If anything, these size restrictions will become increasingly problematic in the next few years because millennials have entered their peak childbearing years and their parents' generation have reached retirement. Neighborhoods like Norhill that are close to downtown and have walkable restaurants, shops, and retirement homes should not impose such stringent size restrictions to make it difficult for families to move into the area. If the proposed guidelines stand, my family will have to move out of Norhill if our household grows and we will find it near impossible to ever sell our home to a family of four or more. Other proposed guidelines are disproportionately restrictive in comparison to the alleged harms they are supposed to mitigate. For example, the guidelines will require a 25-foot rear set back for second story additions – almost the length of two entire cars – to provide backyard privacy and adequate daylight. If privacy is truly the concern, limiting the size and type of rear-facing windows on a second-story addition is a much more targeted solution than such a large blanket setback requirement. And while direct sunlight may be a concern with tall neighboring structures, the 25-foot setback is unnecessarily duplicative because the guidelines will already limit homes to only two stories and include rules around total addition height and roof shape. Both of my neighbors currently have two-story structures (including one with a narrow setback) and I have not had issues with access to light. A 7-10-foot setback rather than 25-foot setback for second-story additions seems much more reasonable to address any privacy or lighting concerns considering the existing density of the neighborhood. Lastly, the proposed guidelines try to address problems would be mitigated more effectively by other means. The guidelines restrict the percentage coverage of a lot by deemed impervious materials, which excludes things such as grass and loose packed gravel. As proposed, that would limit homeowners' ability to have brick or compacted aggregate rear patios depending on factors like the size of the existing home and whether the lot includes a garage. This serves no aesthetic purpose because such

patios would not be visible from the street. If the concern is drainage, the grass lawns are fairly impervious themselves and to the extent that neighborhood occasionally has minor street flooding, improved storm sewer systems would be significantly more effective than these surface material limits. These types of restrictions should be removed entirely from the guidelines.

T. Shattuck, 21 Dec 2023, 12:07

Thank you for your comments.

The Norhill Design Guidelines are at the draft portion of the process.

Please feel free to attend one of the workshops that is tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

74. The proposed guidelines for Norhill are discriminatory against families and multigenerational households. They do not reflect the needs of modern families and would make the neighborhood unwelcoming to them. I cannot support these guidelines without significant changes that better represent the needs of those in the neighborhood. I love this neighborhood and its unique charm, but we cannot preserve it by treating it like a museum. We should adopt reasonable standards that allow families to expand as long as the expansion isn't too visible from the street, similar to the existing guideline about not building on top of the original structure. Most families in the neighborhood were unaware of these conversations and the proposed guidelines. These discussions happened in pockets that did not include the diversity of voices and variety of needs that our residents have. These do not reflect the neighborhood. The process has not been transparent or collaborative. Passing these guidelines would punish families both because they often don't have time to join multi-hour neighborhood meetings and because they are the ones most impacted by these changes. In the guidelines, the limit to renovated homes in the majority of Norhill is 1900 square feet. This does not reflect the needs of modern families. Many homes in Norhill are at this size or above, causing harm to homes that have not already been renovated and potentially causing a loss in resell value. By adopting such a restriction, Norhill is turning away families, even though with our parks, schools, and walkable streets, this is a perfect place to raise a family. These restrictions, instead, favor niche concerns of a few loud voices in the neighborhood. Woodland Heights and Central Heights are lovely and desirable neighborhoods that have not adopted the type of restriction on size proposed for Norhill. I don't see any reasonable rationale for Norhill to be so out of step with our nearby neighbors or

why, given the high desirability and continued rich history preserved in those neighborhoods, we would choose to go in a different direction. Aside from my objections to the substance of these guidelines, they also make the process for any type of modification even more burdensome by still subjecting families to review by the neighborhood association even after a home would have to meet these design guidelines. In evaluating these guidelines, I hope the city will weigh the following questions: a) Does this discriminate against residents that have certain needs in favor of others with niche and perspective preferences? b) Does this allow Norhill to continue to be welcoming, flourishing, growing, and dynamic? c) How are other nearby areas addressing these concerns in a more inclusive way?

EHorn, 21 Dec 2023, 14:26

Hello, Thank you for your comments.

It is important to note that the design guidelines are a draft and have not yet been approved. It is also important to point out that the Heights and Woodland Heights have larger lots than does Norhill.

Should you wish to discuss this with us, please feel free to give us a call 832.393.6556

Please feel free to attend the workshops that are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

75. The aggressively strict guidelines proposed by the Norhill Neighborhood Association (NNA) are disappointing and concerning. The proposed guidelines should appreciate history and while allowing for modern conveniences that already exist in decades-old and recent construction. But instead, the proposed guidelines seek to create an unappealing time capsule that, if approved, will drive young, growing families out of Norhill. The proposed guidelines focus on minutia that have no affect on historical integrity. If approved, they will punish residents who have not yet expanded their homes, driving their property values downward in comparison with properties that have already been expanded based on the existing guidelines. While the existing guidelines could use improvement, they are still effective and have produced beautiful home expansions throughout Norhill. Below are specific examples that penalize residents financially and functionally: - The new maximum living area appears to be 400 sqft. more restrictive than the current guidelines. This is a significant amount of space (e.g. bedroom plus bathroom plus closet and more). - The rear setback for single story additions is 3 ft. more restrictive than the current guidelines, which creates less area to build upon. This area is not visible

from the street and would have no affect on the outward appearance of the home. - Second story additions appear to be infeasible for many existing homes. Instead of the option to build a second story on top of new construction, residents would have to build on top of the existing historical structure in order to comply with the proposed setback limits. This is more expensive (as it requires residents to move out during construction) and is significantly more impactful to the appearance of the original historical structure.

Shadowheart, 22 Dec 2023, 21:02

Thank you for your comments.

It is important to inform you all that these guidelines are draft guidelines. There will (more than likely) be changes to a lot of the numbers for setbacks and ratios within the guidelines.

Feel free to contact us with any numbers you would like to discuss in depth at 832.393.6556

Also, feel free to attend the workshop for Norhill residents tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

76. 1. Fences should not be included in the guidelines. The Norhill deed restrictions limitations and City of Houston ordinances on fences is sufficient. 2. When calculating living area calculation (for maximum allowable size on a lot), existing garage apartments for space above the garage should not be included unless these spaces can be attached to the existing house as this limits "true" livable space for a residence. 3. Maximum size ratios are too low. A more reasonable ratio for 5000 to 5999 sq ft lots would be .45 and adjust other lot size rations to .43, .41 and .38 respectively. 4. Setback recommendations are great except for setback between house and garage. I think 3 ft is sufficient. Isn't this already covered in City of Houston building codes? 5. I believe rooms above garages (not an apartment) should be allowed as long as it is possible to require privacy type windows facing adjacent neighbor's residences. 6. Impervious coverage is already addressed in a City of Houston ordinance so I do not think the restriction should be included in the proposed guidelines. 7. The rest looks great. Good job!

Martin1037, 29 Dec 2023, 15:21

Hello, thank you for your remarks.

The Historic Preservation Office does not regulate fences.

Please note that the design guidelines are a draft and the numbers are not permanent. If you would like to discuss the numbers in depth please feel free to give us a call at 832.393.6556

Also, yes setbacks are covered in building codes.

Please feel free to attend the workshops for Norhill residents, tentative scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

77. Thanks for all the hard work putting these together. I have a few comments, at least partly based on my own experience drafting plans for a remodel at 1115 Le Green St. I can appreciate the desire to have specified number-based restrictions in the guidelines, since people have been asking for more “black and white” guidance to follow, but in general I feel the draft guidelines are too conservative. I feel the priority of the guidance should be around preserving the historic craftsman street view of the homes. To that end, I appreciate the restrictions on how far forward a 2nd story can get to the front of the house, and I love that the guidance allows historic style details in the remodeled portion of the homes. My 2 main concerns on the guidance are related to conditioned space and setbacks. A 0.38 fraction for conditioned space for a 5000sqft lot size is too restrictive, particularly for properties with garage apartments counted as conditioned space. I think a more reasonable number would be closer to a 0.5 fraction of lot size. I also think some of the setbacks are too restrictive. Our property is 3’ from the side of our lot, meaning a second story has to come in by 2’ to honor a 5’ setback. On a small house, that 2’ has a huge impact on the design of the 2nd story interior. I believe the 2nd story should be allowed to fit the width of the original home as long as it doesn’t create water drainage issues for the neighbors in accordance with city ordinance. Also, I ran into a neighbor who is not a member of the neighborhood association and she was not aware that any new guidelines are being proposed. As a property owner, she was concerned. We need to find a way to engage our many neighbors who do not follow the facebook page or come to the meetings. Happy to discuss in more detail any time. Thank you! Elspeth

Elspeth, 1 Jan 2024, 10:02

Thank you for your comments.

The draft guidelines will see changes over the coming months. In regards to the floor to area ratio and setbacks, they are all numbers that could see slight or drastic changes over the course of the process. I will state for the record that a 50% floor to area could prove to be no good for the neighborhood because it could heavily contribute to flooding.

Please feel free to contact us in the office if you would like to discuss these issues in depth at 832.393.6556

Also, we will be having workshops for the residents of Norhill. The tentative dates are February 27th and March 5th.

78. I have been a happy resident of Norhill for over 15 years and I love the neighborhood. I think there are elements of the historic restrictions that need to be updated, but this document goes too far in many instances. 1>>> The most glaring issue is the severe restrictions on Living Area maximum ratios. These values do not keep up with modern living standards considering the prevalence of working from home and a family of 1 to 2 children. Since there are historic homes in the neighborhood that meet or exceed these Living area max values, this is not required to align with historic character. Given the other explicit guidelines in this document, I don't think any restrictions on living area ratio are required. Looking at other adjacent historic districts, just across Studewood 'the heights' living area ratios for a 5000' lot is limited to 0.46. This seems much more reasonable and I see this as the lower limit for restrictions. Given the smaller lot sizes in Norhill, we need flexibility to better utilize our lot if needed, so a ratio of 0.5 would be preferred. The living area calculations includes garage apartment space. The allowable living area ratios should exclude the living area in the garage apartment. In order to stay within the very restrictive proposed ratio limits, we would need to demolish our historic garage apartment to allow for even a modest expansion. We clearly don't want to demolish a historic structure, but we need the flexibility to have our home (where we have lived for 15 years) grow with our family. Garage apartment living space should be excluded from the living area calculations. 2>>> Second story setback requirements are also very restrictive. I think a setback from the front of the house is definitely worth including, although I think a limit of 35' from the front of the house (vs. 45') is preferable. Otherwise, for second story additions, I think we should have the ability to extend above the existing structure. The 5' restrictions on one side of the house would be particularly problematic for our own remodel plans. Since our home is 3' off the property line, a second story would be required to be offset an additional 2'. This would have a dramatic effect on the interior layout and restrict remodel options for a small second story addition. Other city restrictions are already in place to limit runoff onto adjacent properties. We should rely on these existing restrictions instead of adding new ones. This should be changed from 5' to 3', if there is an existing structure. 3>>> The historic design details present in the neighborhood help

give it the charm that we all know and love. The best thing these new guidelines do is allow additions to match existing historic designs. This provides homes with design details consistent with original architecture and allows for a single consistent style for the entire structure. If only one thing is updated in the guidelines, this should be it. 4>>> We are fortunate enough to have an existing garage apartment on our property. We enjoy using this as a home office and a spare bedroom for guests. Since many of the existing homes have garage apartments, I don't see why we should restrict others from having new garage apartments. Restrictions on a second story above a garage should be removed so that all are free to add these structures, as they did in the first half of the century. 5>>> In order to expedite approvals and limit unnecessary work for all parties, 'Shall Approve' designs should still be kept and maintained. This reduces workload on NNA, city of Houston, architects, and contractors. 6>>> I know many people have been working very hard on this proposal for a very long time. They have put in a lot of work and believe they are doing the right thing for the neighborhood. But many people in the neighborhood that aren't members of the neighborhood association are completely unaware of these new proposed restrictions. They have no idea that this is happening and that it could result in them losing significant freedoms and rights to modify property that they own. Better effort should be made to bring in the whole neighborhood, not just a few select impassioned individuals.

James H, 1 Jan 2024, 11:09

Hello and thank you for your comments.

Please note that these are draft guidelines and there is no guarantee that the numbers in the draft guidelines are the final numbers. The numbers could increase or decrease. However the process will be transparent and inclusive of the residents.

Also, please know that we are in the process of amending the ordinance or creating policies that address the Shall Approve COA.

Please also note that the NNA and the City of Houston are two separate entities.

Please feel free to attend the workshops for Norhill residents. They are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th. We will provide more information and notice soon.

If you would like to discuss the issues listed above in detail please feel free to give us a call.

832.393.6556

79. I support these guidelines for preserving the character of our neighborhood!

paul_jarvis, 9 Jan 2024, 21:06

Thank you so much.

We will be having workshops for the residents of Norhill. The dates are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

We will provide more information and notice soon.

80. My wife and I are homeowners at 1022 Peddie St., and we just want to provide an affirmative comment for the proposed guidelines. We are mid-40's professionals, and we specifically chose Norhill for its character, charm, and protection from overbuilding and the trend toward greater density. There is undoubtedly those that wish to remove/relax some building restrictions for our historic neighborhood, but I would hope to be a voice for those that feel that the restrictions are essential to maintaining the core personality and integrity of our beautiful neighborhood. We believe these guidelines provide greater clarity and certainty for those who are current residents and future, prospective residents alike. We are strongly in favor of the guidelines as written, and would like to thank those responsible for the time and effort expended to author them.

TinTown, 9 Jan 2024, 13:18

Thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to attend the workshops for the residents of Norhill. They are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th and we will provide more information and soon.

81. These guidelines imposing a 25-foot setback requirement for second-floor additions appear excessive. What reasoning justifies the specific 25-foot distance, and what distinguishes it from alternatives like 3, 5, or 10 feet? This becomes particularly perplexing in the case of corner lots, where the risk of overlooking is significantly lower compared to internal lots. Both aspects of this rule demand reconsideration; it seems both unreasonable and difficult to comprehend. If the intention was to prohibit second-story additions altogether, that would be more understandable. However, permitting such additions while severely restricting them raises questions about the logic behind these guidelines.

RPM, 11 Jan 2024, 10:44

Thank you for your comment.'

Please understand that these are draft guidelines. There is no number in the guidelines that are set in stone at this time. Please feel free to attend the workshops for the residents, which are tentatively scheduled for February 27th and March 5th.

We will provide more information and notice soon.

82. I'm a resident of Norhill and I fully support these guidelines. The neighborhood is deed restricted, but the deed restrictions are not specific enough to provide helpful directions on construction. The neighborhood is going to go the way of Woodland Heights. We are the last neighborhood in the 610 loop that has open sky and privacy in our backyards.

, 9 Jan 2024, 21:06

Thank you for your comments.

Please feel free to attend the workshops for the residents. The tentative dates are February 27th and March 5th.

83. The residency ratios in sections 2-2a create a disadvantage for residents as lot sizes increase. For instance, if a lot measures 4,990 square feet, the allowed residency size is 1,996 square feet. However, to maintain an equally sized residence in the next bracket, a larger lot of 5,252 square feet is required. This discrepancy penalizes residents as their lot sizes increase, posing an inequitable situation in terms of allowable residency dimensions. This nonsensical system must be promptly revised to ensure fair, logical and more importantly linear residency ratios that do not penalize certain residents based on arbitrary lot size brackets.

RPM, 11 Jan 2024, 10:49

Hello, thank you for your comments.

Unfortunately, there is a method to the system. Lot coverage must be considered in any construction, be it renovations or new construction to prevent flooding. However, it is important to understand that this is a draft. The number could increase or the number could decrease. Please feel free to attend the workshops to express the floor to area ratio

numbers you have in mind. The city will be conducting workshops for the residents to attend. Right now, the tentative dates are February 27th and March 5th.

Please feel free to contact me with any concerns