

Norhill Design Guidelines

Public Comments (August-September 2026)



**PLANNING &
DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

HOW THIS IS ORGANIZED

Each section below reproduces the substantive comments submitted for that topic. No names or addresses are displayed. All comments are displayed exactly how they were submitted.

Category	Address-level comment records represented
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FAR / Measurable Standards

14 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

We should be able to add sq ft within existing structures, finish an attic or garage, add a basement. So long as we remain within the other guidelines.

Comment 2

FAR is arbitrary, too restrictive & conflicts with guidelines. If a proposed addition meets all setback and design guidelines, allow it! Delete FAR.

Comment 3

On two story rear additions, the 19 foot rear setback, combined with not being able to extend past the side of the original structure, is too restrictive.

Comment 4

Why does the FAR not align with what the majority voted for in the survey?

Comment 5

0.46 is big enough

Comment 6

FAR should 0.47 for all lot sizes, HAHC has consistently approved homes with that FAR for norhill

Comment 7

I am fine with the FAR standards

Comment 8

Should be passed as written in last draft.....FAR should not be increased any further!

Comment 9

We FAR should be removed entirely — setbacks and the 2-story limit already constrain home size. A FAR cap functions as de facto zoning, which Houston prohibits.

Comment 10

Support flat FAR at .50 for all lot sizes. Easier and fairer to larger lots. Must allow young families to continue living in this neighborhood.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

Ratio should be a flat percentage of 60% coverage, regardless of lot size, like other nearby high-value areas. Families w/ kids will keep NH valuable.

Comment 11

Ideal FAR - .38. FAR on June Guidelines w/ conditions should remain. Larger lots should have smaller FAR. Almost all lots have fixed sizes - no 5201 sf lots.

Comment 12

Remove entirely. This is zoning under the guise of historic preservation.

Comment 13

Exclude single-story garages and attics from Living Area, they do not contribute to the massing of the houses but provide meaningful space in these small homes.

Comment 14

Keep the FAR scales where they are based on lot size. There are plenty of options to expand and be within FAR.

Attics / Plate Height / Massing

13 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

Residents should be able to add height to attics a small amount to add updated appliances or to finish out the space as a half story.

Comment 2

FAR is arbitrary, too restrictive & conflicts with guidelines. If a proposed addition meets all setback and design guidelines, allow it! Delete FAR.

Comment 3

Well proportioned rear two story additions should be able to extend past the side of the original structure. Going straight back does not always look better.

Comment 4

Attics should never be counted in the massing. That's an unacceptable metric. Plate height should be measured from finished floor.

Comment 5

all good for front, second story should be 28' and garages should be 28'

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

fFr second story garages with 28' ridge height instead of 24

Comment 6

Crawl space should not be included

Comment 7

If a home is in a flood zone, they should be allowed to raise their home, floor plate and ceiling top plate accordingly to protect the overall structure.

Comment 8

Rigid plate heights (11'-7"/21'-2") and single-side-addition rule don't account for raising homes to meet FEMA flood elevation requirements.

Comment 9

Endorse these proposals as reasonable.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

A/Ced space shouldn't count toward FAR, esp. not in TX climate - many reasons to A/C and finish an attic besides living space. 9' ceilings are good.

Comment 10

Ideal 2 story plate - 20' - 9" (approved additions used 2x12's for long time). Max 2nd flr plate: 21'- 3". Only attics in original structure not include in FAR

Comment 11

Remove rigid plate heights and single-side-addition rule don't account for raising homes to meet FEMA flood elevation requirements.

Comment 12

Plate heights are measured from grade, limiting flood-compliant elevation. Ridge height should vary with house width, with 9-ft ceilings allowed.

Comment 13

Attics shouldn't be finished spaces and the height of structures should be prescriptive and more stringent than the broad definition in the Deed Restrictions

Garages

14 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

Garages should be able to be raised a small amount of desired to fit modern vehicles and also we should be allowed to finish the interior of garages as desired.

Comment 2

An unconditioned garage can have walls, insulation and still be just a garage. Clean up definition.

Comment 3

Finished conditioned garages should not be part of the Living Area as currently defined. There is no difference on exterior massing.

Comment 4

Both 2 story & attached garages should be allowed

Comment 5

Second Story Garages should be allowed (to 28') as there are more of those than camelback homes. Survey results agree

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

For second story garages

Comment 6

Two story garages and attached garages should be allowed

Comment 7

We live in one of the most lightning pervasive cities in the country and not being able to connect our garages to our home is a safety issue.

Comment 8

Living/conditioned space must be included in FAR!

Comment 9

Allow 2-story garages (office/storage, not apartments) — deed restrictions only ban garage apartments, not 2-story garages; guidelines overreach here.

Comment 10

Support 2-story garages as of right, not case-by-case, and connections wider than the 8' breezeway limit when the house itself is one story.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

2-story garages should be allowed as of right, within height/setback limits. Connection/breezeway should be allowed to be bigger if 1-story house.

Comment 11

Ideal no two story garages. Any space in outbuilding over 585 sf must be included in FAR. A 21' max ridge height would allow 1 1/2 story compatible w/ Norhill.

Comment 12

Allow 2 story garages. What people do with their property, 2-story or renting or not, isn't a historic concern. This is an overreach.

Comment 13

The deed restrictions allow second-story garages. The City should not remove this right from homeowners, especially when there are so many in the neighborhood.

Comment 14

Garages should be allowed to be second floors but not converted to ADUs and also should be allowed to be connected to the main structures.

Setbacks

15 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

I agree with guidelines on setbacks.

Comment 2

Two story 19' rear setback and limitation not allowing extension past side of original house is not in any way supported by public polling.

Comment 3

The required setbacks should allow you to still achieve maximum square footage allowance

Comment 4

ok with this with exception of the confusion created with "second story addition" setbacks and potential second story garages.

Comment 5

Back set back for 2nd level should be same as 1st

Comment 6

I am fine with the setback standards

Comment 7

It is not reasonable to have a 19 ft rear setback for two story additions on interior lots. It will not be economic for anyone to build these in the future.

Comment 8

Should be passed as written in last available draft!

Comment 9

Survey majority favored 3-5 ft code-minimum setbacks, not the draft's 45-60 ft requirements. Align setbacks with resident preference.

Comment 10

Corner-lot garages/outbuildings require a 20' street-side setback, double the 10-12' required for house additions. Consider narrowing that gap.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

If house front is setback further than required, back-of-house/garage setbacks should be given more flexibility.

Comment 11

Remove offset of rear setback by offset of front setback. Never polled for. Unfair advantage for certain lots. Increases massing. Side 2nd flr setback 5' min.

Comment 12

Align setback with resident preference.

Comment 13

Ensure that a second-story can be feasibly built with the guidelines to add bedrooms, not just a small landing.

Comment 14

Front setback of the original homes must stay. Second story set back must not alter the historic context of the street and side setbacks consider neighbors

Comment 15

We agree with the NNA guidelines that are proposed

Windows

13 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

I agree on preserving historic windows

Comment 2

Allow replacement windows double-hung wood appearance. Most glass has been replaced. Quality of life, energy efficiency, weather, and noise matter! NNA allows!

Comment 3

Aluminum clad, wood windows should be allowed. Currently it requires wood windows only but this doesn't align with city ordinance. CONSISTENCY!!!

Comment 4

Corner lot homes incurs more noise. Trucks leaving wake us up early. Can our windows be replaced for noise and energy efficiency purposes?

Comment 5

"Use the same material as the original window, when feasible." I don't think wood windows are feasible given our famously humid and damp climate

Comment 6

1Section has already seen much compromise.....should be passed as written

Comment 7

Allow non-original window materials (e.g. aluminum-clad) matching original look — high cost, poor energy performance, and unsafe painted-shut sashes.

Comment 8

Support the no-altering-openings rule. Homeowners should be allowed to install new energy-efficient windows if size, shape & hanging style match.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

Repairing rot and improving energy efficiency should not be restricted at all, so long as repairs match the originals' shape/size.

Comment 9

No Vinyl allowed on any house. Wood or aluminum clad wood. People want to replace their windows.

Comment 10

Allow non-original window materials that meet code reducing high cost, poor energy performance, and unsafe painted-shut sashes.

Comment 11

Allow alternative window materials. Historic windows can be difficult and costly to repair; even a specialist refused to work on mine due to their complexity.

Comment 12

Historic, solid wood windows should only be required if replacing one itself. New additions/renovations should allow wood covered vinyl or modern material

Comment 13

We agree with the concept of keeping windows looking appropriate, but would like the option to have non-original windows that still suit the historic character

Other Comments

16 address-level comment records represented

Comment 1

Sq footage requirement needs to go away. We should be able to finish out our current interiors, garages, add a basement, as desired.

Comment 2

Allow painted brick. Painting does not alter the historic character of Norhill, and over 50% of homes on our street with paintable brick are already painted.

Comment 3

The prescriptive requirements, in combination with each other, make it impossible to reach the maximum FAR on the largest lots.

Comment 4

Most important to me is allowing families to build a 2500 sf home which allows for 4 br 4 bath & useable garage space. The world has changed!

Comment 5

the "conditioned" garages adds confusion. If I put a window unit in to work on my car does that now add to FAR?

Comment 6

Have established parking criteria for business so that customers can access a parking lot at a designated business.

Comment 7

Front porches should be allowed to change to match neighborhood

Comment 8

I do appreciate that we have guidelines being put in place especially around setback and FAR. I take umbrage with the window policies

Comment 9

I have made previous comments. Just wanted to encourage passing these guidelines! Thanks!

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

Norhill needs these guidelines and quickly....please pass them with no further changes

Comment 10

Remove the NNA from the COA process — it's a nonprofit whose sole activity for 3 years has been suing neighbors, not investing in the neighborhood.

Comment 11

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Planning & Development Department

Guidelines are inconsistent and address additions in siding but not brick. All additions should match original material; differentiate via design/pattern.

Additional submission associated with the same submitted address:

Guidelines are inconsistent regarding siding vs brick. All additions should match the original material.

Comment 12

Total massing on lot important - include outbuildings in FAR. Reduce distance to 3' between garage & house. Director should not be able to modify Guidelines.

Comment 13

Remove NNA from COA process. It's a private member-only nonprofit that for 3 years has been suing neighbors with membership money and causing division.

Comment 14

Simplify these guidelines. These guidelines are so contentious because there are so many different restrictions.

Comment 15

Please just pass them. We just need to know what's required and grow from there, and don't allow massing to make us like Woodland

Comment 16

We believe the guidelines are a reasonable compromise and should be approved
