



CITY OF  
**PALO  
ALTO**

## **SINGLE-FAMILY INDIVIDUAL REVIEW (IR)** **Guidelines' Key Points Checklist**

The following checklist is intended to help staff ensure a project's compliance with the City of Palo Alto's Single-Family Individual Review Guidelines. These Key Points, illustrated in the Guidelines booklet, are techniques intended to help projects meet all five Guidelines. Some are not applicable to new two story homes and some are not relevant to second floor additions. This checklist should be used by applicants to communicate how a new single family home or second floor addition will meet the five guidelines for approval in accordance with Zoning Code Section 18.12.110(d). It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete and submit this checklist with all other required materials during the application intake meeting. Staff may make further notations on the checklist during the review process, as applicable. If a key point is not relevant to a project, the "N/A" box can be checked.

**Project Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Checklist completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Guideline 1: Site Planning Key Points**

Approval Criterion: The driveway, garage and house shall be placed and configured to reinforce the neighborhood's existing site patterns (i.e. building footprint configuration and location, setbacks, and yard areas) and the garage and driveway shall be subordinate to the house, landscape and pedestrian entry as seen from the street.

Technique Used (yes, no, n/a)	Guideline 1 Key Points
	1. Locate driveways and minimize paving to diminish the driveway's presence and to highlight yards and pedestrian entryways.
	2. Locate garages to be minimally visible or significantly less prominent than the house. Attached garages could be a one-car garage, narrower in width relative to the house, setback from the house's front façade, or otherwise subordinated to the house.
	3. Configure the site plan and footprint of the house so it is a "custom fit" with the neighborhood. Avoid imposing a compact rectangular building footprint on the site if adjacent homes have sprawling, elongated or irregularly shaped footprints.
	4. Create landscaped open space between homes to respond to the neighborhood context.
	5. Locate an upper floor well back from the front façade and/or away from side lot lines if the home is adjacent to small or one-story homes.
	6. Avoid placing a second story such that it would emphasize the garage.

Explain how project meets Guideline 1: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Guideline 2: Height, Mass and Scale Key Points

Approval Criterion: The scale (perceived size), mass (bulk or volume) and height (vertical profile) of a new house or upper story addition shall be consistent with the existing neighborhood pattern with special attention to adapting to the height and massing of adjacent homes.

Technique Used (yes, no, n/a)	Guideline 2 Key Points
	1. Avoid overwhelming adjacent one-story homes with large masses, monumental forms and sharp contrasts in height. Incorporate a lower height and profile and place more floor area on the first level than the second level whenever possible.
	2. Avoid first floor levels placed high above ground level, tall wall planes, boxy forms, and strong vertical elements, which accentuate mass and scale.*
	3. Avoid a significant height contrast between adjacent roof edges including single-story roof edges.
	4. Place floor area within the roof volume to mitigate height, mass and scale.
	5. Locate smaller volumes in front of large volumes or choose appropriate roof pitches and forms to manage perceived height.
	6. Avoid large unused attics and tall ceiling heights at perimeter walls. Instead, use the underside of the roof form to define ceilings to provide interior volume.

*\*When new two story home is proposed adjacent to an existing one story home(s), additional techniques may be needed, such as placing a greater percentage of floor area at the ground floor than the second floor, and lowering plate heights at all floors. This is especially relevant in floodplain areas.*

Explain how project meets Guideline 2: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guideline 3: Form and Rooflines Key Points

Approval Criterion: The architectural form and massing shall be carefully crafted to reduce visual mass, and distinguish the house's architectural lines or style. Roof profiles shall enhance the form, scale and proportion of primary and secondary house volumes, while rendering garage and entry forms subordinate in mass and scale to principal building forms. Upper floor additions shall also be balanced and integrated with the existing building.

Technique Used (yes, no, n/a)	Guideline 3 Key Points
	1. Avoid forcing building mass and rooflines to fit a detailed or interior design-driven floor plan. Test roof layouts and massing profiles early in the design process and adjust floor plans to create the best three-dimensional design.
	2. Consider using the vocabulary of a particular architectural style to define a home's visual form, compose its massing and determine roof pitches, eave lines and details.
	3. Avoid awkwardly placed second floor additions, poorly combined roof forms and inconsistent roof slopes when planning an addition. Primary and secondary volumes should be carefully proportioned and spaced for a unified design.
	4. A good basic massing strategy is to use a few simple, well-proportioned masses accented with a few smaller elements, such as bay windows or dormers. Using too many elements can create clutter.
	5. Adjust roof layout, ridge orientation, and roof pitch; vary eave lines, and lower eave height facing the street or adjacent homes, where beneficial to reduce mass and enhance form.

Explain how project meets Guideline 3: \_\_\_\_\_

## Guideline 4: Facades and Entries

Approval Criterion: Publicly viewed facades shall be composed with a clear and cohesive architectural expression (i.e the composition and articulation of walls, fenestration and eave lines), and include visual focal point(s) and the supportive use of materials and detailing. Entries shall be consistent with the existing neighborhood pattern and integrated with the home in composition, scale and design character. The carport or garage and garage door design shall be consistent with the selected architectural style of the home.

Technique Used (yes, no, n/a)	Guideline 4 Key Points
	1. New facades and additions should have a unified visual character, not a collection of fragmented forms and elements. Give special attention to elevations on the side of the house and corners that may be highly visible from the street.
	2. When composing facades, employ a clear use of line, order, hierarchy, and stylistically consistent windows, and give attention to proportion and adequate spacing between visual focal points.
	3. To add visual interest and character to the design, incorporate architecturally distinctive eaves, window patterns, shapes or groupings and use of materials.
	4. Avoid using over-scaled or monumental entries that aggressively stand out on the house or in relationship to other houses in the neighborhood due to size, height or vertical proportion. Where there is a prevailing neighborhood pattern for an entry type, such as front porches or entry courts, that entry type should be considered for the design.
	5. Design garages, garage door openings and door panels to be modest in scale and architecturally integrated with the home, when garages are visible from the street.

Explain how project meets Guideline 4: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Guideline 5: Windows and Decks Key Points

Approval Criterion: The size, placement and orientation of second story windows and decks shall limit direct sight lines into windows and patios located at the rear and sides of adjacent properties in close proximity.

Technique Used (yes, no, n/a)	Guideline 5 Key Points
	1. Gather information on neighboring homes and yards and locate potential privacy-sensitive areas on your site plan before you design.
	2. Design the house to mitigate possible privacy impacts by providing non-transparent glazing, significant landscaping, permanent architectural screens or sufficient distance between houses. When necessary to achieve greater privacy, re-orient the direction of windows or decks or adjust window size or sill height.
	3. Avoid windowless building walls, especially walls visible from the street. Use smaller upper floor windows and/or selective glazing at privacy sensitive locations. Windows may still remain operable, particularly for ventilation for bathrooms and egress for bedrooms.
	4. Second story decks are permitted only to the extent that they result in minimal loss of privacy to side or rear facing properties. Deck size and potential use may be considered in determining potential loss of privacy.

Explain how project meets Guideline 5: \_\_\_\_\_  
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