WESTWOOD PARK ASSOCIATION

Adopted by theCity Planning Commission through Motion No. 13992 as

Specific Area Residential Design Guidelines

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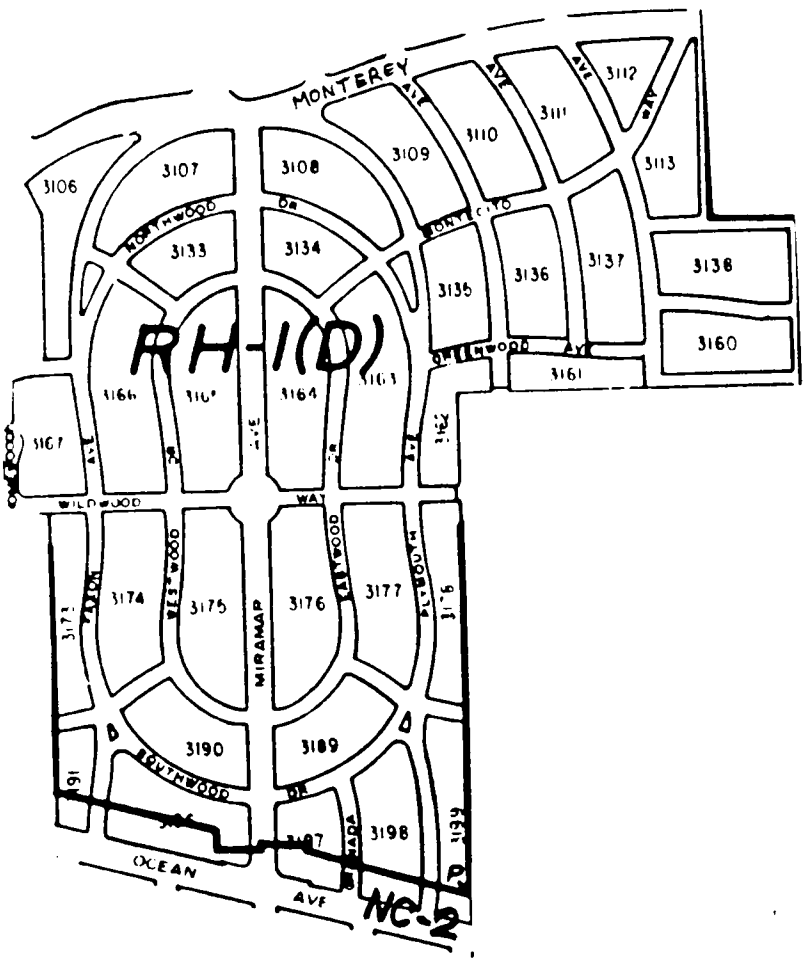
NOTE: In 1962, the Westwood Park Association developed the original Residential Design Guidelines from which the design guidelines in this publication were derived. In Motion Number 13992, the City Planning Commission adopted Section III and Appendix B of the original guidelines as specific area design guidelines. These guidelines amend the city-wide November 1989 San Francisco Department of City Planning's "Residential Design Guidelines" for purposes of reviewing building permit applications for the Westwood Park Neighborhood Character District which consists of the portion of the area in the map below zoned RH-1(D).



SECTION III- DESIGN GUIDELINES

SITE

"The topography and location of the project lot and the position of the building on that site guide the most basic decisions about design. The Location, Front Setbacks, Rear Yards and Side Spacings will be particularly important to the adjacent neighbors and for maintaining or creating rhythm along the block-face, and maintaining a sense of common open space in the interior of the block." (16)

The siting of the homes in Westwood Park is one of the most important factors that has defined the neighborhood character. Westwood Park is zoned RH-1(D) by the City Planning Code. Buildings are limited to a single unit per lot and are to be detached from adjacent structures with setbacks on all sides. It is the detached requirement that has resulted in the open, light feeling that we have in the neighborhood.

Location

In the evaluation of the "Location" of a building, the building will be reviewed for its harmonious integration into both the overall topography of the site as well as its relationship to the adjacent built environment of surrounding structures. In order for a building to fully integrate into the neighborhood, the building should not "...disregard or significantly alter the existing topography of a site. The context should guide the manner in which new structures fit into the streetscape, particularly along slopes and on hills." (17)

Because Westwood Park was developed on Mount Davidson, there is continuous slope throughout the neighborhood. This slope has been utilized in the layout of the lots to provide for a terraced rhythm of development. For houses on slopes, the terracing allows each successive residence to gain light, air, private and shared open space, and, in many cases, full or partial views. The advantages of uniform terracing will be substantially negated for numerous adjacent lots if the neighboring building's height and scale are not respected. The surrounding neighborhood's light and air amenities should not be sacrificed due to one property's increase in mass.

Front Setback

The "Front Setback" for a particular lot is the distance between the front property line at the sidewalk to the front building line. In Westwood Park, the front setback line was defined in Article VII(a) of the C.C.& R.s. "No dwelling house or other structure shall be constructed nearer to the front street than the line shown on said map marked 'Building Line.'" (18) This document, was developed to provide for front yards and a transition space for gaining access to the residences. Because of the uniformity of setbacks in Westwood Park, a front setback that does not conform with the overall pattern of development will be seriously disruptive to neighborhood character. This parameter is applicable to all levels of the structure.

Rear Yards

The space between the rear property line and the rear of the residence is defined as the "Rear Yard" of the lot. Not only do rear yards provide private open space for the specific residence but also, in tandem with the other rear yards in the block, provide a public, visually open, shared space.

The Planning Department guidelines state: **"Intrusions into the rear yard, even though permitted by the Planning Code, may not be appropriate if they fail to respect the mid-block open space and reduce adverse impacts on adjacent buildings."** (19) In Westwood Park, the rear yards of many lots are minimal at best. Because of the priority placed on the front setback, the rear yard is, in many cases, already less than that required by the San Francisco Planning Code. In cases where a detached garage already exists in the rear yard of a lot as a legal nonconforming structure as defined by the City Planning Code, the remaining minimal rear yard will not provide sufficient space to utilize for additional building area. In these cases, encroachment into this area would be detrimental because of the decrease in open rear yard area for the residence as well as for the block.

Side Yards

Westwood Park is privileged to have side yards where windows can be placed for light and air. This element of the design is a major factor in the quality of the residences of the neighborhood. These side yards are a requirement of the Planning Code, but the Code does not address location of windows and the pattern of spacing on a block. In the development of a design, attention should be paid, not only to the pattern of spacing in the area, but also to the location of windows on the side. Although side yards provide the opportunity to provide windows for light and air, the location of these windows should be such that privacy of neighboring residences is addressed.

The Planning Department Design Guidelines state:

> **"Often a small set back or notch can prevent blockage of a neighbor's window or light well, or a slight reduction in height can avoid blockage of a view. These kinds of 'good neighbor' gestures should be incorporated into the design."** (20)

BUILDING ENVELOPE

> "The building envelope refers to the exterior elements of a structure - the roof, the front, rear and side facades, and other projecting elements such as bays, overhangs and balconies. The actual envelope of a building, within the maximum envelope established by the Planning and Building Codes, should be compatible with the envelopes of surrounding buildings." (21)

In the alteration of an existing building, the building envelope that is allowable by code is not the only factor in determining the compatibility of a design. The way the building envelope relates to the surrounding buildings is the factor that should be addressed during any preliminary conceptual design. Westwood Park was developed originally as a tract of predominantly uniform buildings in regard to building envelope and, therefore, major deviation from the prevalent envelope is highly disruptive.

As the buildings in Westwood Park terrace down the slope of the hill, a clear pattern of stepped down roof lines occur. A building that attempts to break this pattern would be considered disruptive to the overall pattern of development. In some cases where the pattern may not be as obvious as others, or where there is a mixed pattern of building heights, setting a taller building back from the front of the lot may mitigate some of the disruption created, but in an area of detached houses where upper levels can be seen from the street and surrounding buildings, upper level setbacks may not provide a solution to the break with the pattern.

Roofline

Westwood Park has predominate roofline forms. The majority of roofs consist of flat or slightly sloping roofs for the side and rear of the building and small decorative sloped roofs on the street facades. The other predominate roof form is the steeply sloping roof.

> "In general, a strong repetition of consistent rooflines calls for similar design for new construction." (22)

In evaluating the roof form of an alteration or addition, attention must be paid not only to the adjacent structures, but also to the overall forms of the surrounding block on both sides of the street.

Volume and Mass

The volume of a building relates to the overall size of the perimeter footprint and the height of the building. The massing of a building also relates to the articulation of the facades and the materials used that can emphasize or decrease the perceivable size of the building.

> **"The volume and mass of a new building or an addition to an existing one should be compatible with that of surrounding buildings."** (23)

The evaluation of mass can be difficult to articulate in one dimensional drawings. Shadows and line weight on drawings can be helpful in evaluating the compatibility of the proposed project to the surrounding area. Massing models of the proposed and adjacent structures may also be helpful in evaluating the proposed massing of a project and its relationship to the massing of adjacent structures. The design of the articulation of windows, porches, and doors that are not consistent with neighboring buildings can increase the visual massing of a building. See Appendix B for information on the heights of buildings in Westwood Park.

SCALE

> **"The scale of a building is its perceived size relative to the size of its elements and to the size of elements in neighboring buildings. The scale of any new building or building alteration should be compatible with that of neighboring buildings. To assess compatibility, the dimensions and proportions of neighboring building should be examined."** (24)

The scale of a building is based on its dimensions in plan and elevation as well as its proportions of design elements. Two buildings of the same dimensions can be very different if differently proportioned. The original Westwood Park designers used the articulation of the facade's proportions to give a sense of grandness in scale to small sized bungalows. A feeling of a solid connection with the ground is made because of the de-emphasis of the height of the buildings. The vertical proportions are minimized and the horizontal proportions are emphasized.

Dimensions

The actual dimensions of a building are the length, width and height of the structure. Westwood Park residences vary little in the overall dimensions of the buildings. This uniformity of the existing fabric of design creates a condition which dictates that a larger structure than the existing buildings in an area will be incompatible with the neighborhood. The visual impact from an increase in height can be counteracted in some cases by incorporating front setbacks as well as side and/or rear setbacks on upper levels. All of the original buildings that were designed with upper levels for the original development of Westwood Park utilize major setbacks from all sides and most of these buildings utilize the sloping roof form to minimize the perceived overall height of the building as well as minimize the perceived massing of the small upper level.

Buildings that "decorate" facades with appropriate articulation and detailing can still be grossly out of character with the surrounding area due to incompatible scale. Large, well proportioned buildings can still be incompatible if the scale of the surrounding buildings is small. Both the dimension scale and the proportions of a project need to be addressed during design and review.

Proportions

The proportions of a building are the relationships between the dimensions of height, width, and depth of the elements of design as well as the relationship of the building to other surrounding structures. Westwood Park consists predominantly of buildings with horizontal proportions of trim, bay windows, bands of roofing, and articulation of porches and facades.

> **"Poorly proportioned buildings may seem out of balance, inconsistent or unharmonious with their surroundings.**
>
> **The proportions of the basic shapes of a project should be compatible with those of surrounding buildings."** (25)

Even small changes to the proportions of such elements of a facade design as the window shape or trim location can have a major effect on the compatibility of the design within the context of the surrounding buildings.

TEXTURE AND DETAILING

> **"Texture refers to the visual surface characteristics and appearance of the building facade. Detailing refers to the manner in which building parts are put together. The texture and detailing of a building's facade often have the strongest impacts on how people perceive a new structure and, therefore, on their sense of the character of the neighborhood. The use of Materials and the degree of Ornamentation give the building its texture."** (26)

Exterior Materials

The designers of Westwood Park's homes utilized many materials in the design of the development but the predominant material is cement plaster (stucco) for walls, spanish style clay tile for decorative roofing, and wood for windows. Unpainted and painted brick is used for the entry porches and steps in many cases. There are also examples of shingle style bungalows and some wood sided buildings as well as flat, parapeted built-up roofs and composition shingled, peaked roofs.

In the design of an addition or renovation, the materials of the existing house as well as the materials of the surrounding buildings need to be addressed. The quality of materials and installation should be comparable to those used in the original buildings.

Ornamentation

Ornamentation is the decorative detailing of a building. Westwood Park homes are not heavily ornamented like those found in the victorian style of design. The concept of simple, well crafted, elegant detailing was an important concept in the bungalow style. Therefore, detailing of the exterior of buildings will be evaluated on simple ornamentation. Examples of ornamentation in Westwood Park are the trellised porches, the raised stucco decorative friezes, the curved lines of porch walls, and the decorative mullion designs in many of the windows. If used with restraint, the ornamentation can be an effective method of mitigating other inconsistencies in design. If used without consideration for the surrounding neighborhood, ornamentation can become tacky and obtrusive.

OPENINGS

> **"Typically, openings in a building - Doorways, Windows and Garage Doors - make up the largest and most distinctive elements of buildings' facades."** (27)

Entryways

The entrance to the house is considered the entryway. Westwood Park homes utilize several methods to articulate entryways. Most houses have decorative doors, often with curved tops. Articulation of the surrounding "portico" is often created with raised stucco "rustication", decorative detailing, or pediment elements of roof forms. Most of the homes also emphasize the entryway with a grand, often curving, stair and entry porch. Doors are oriented directly toward the street.

> **"Doorways should be designed to be consistent with the surrounding entries. In a neighborhood where the predominant pattern is of stairways located on one side of the building, ignoring this pattern could be disruptive. Where symmetry or asymmetry has become an important ingredient of a building group, the goal is to respect it and respond sensitively to it."** (28)

Entryways that are to be altered should respect the level of articulation of the existing entry as well as the predominant level of articulation and design in surrounding buildings.

Windows

In Westwood Park, because of the emphasis on simplicity of design in the bungalows, windows play an important role in the design and proportions of the buildings and are often the major ornamentation element of the facade.

> **"The proportion, size, and detailing of windows should relate to that of existing adjacent buildings... The proportion of window (void) to wall (solid) area on a facade varies with building type. New windows should approximate rations of neighboring structures while meeting the building's functional needs."** (29)

The quality of wood windows and/or wood trim should be utilized in facades for conformity with the quality of the original development. Decorative mullion and muntin design should be utilized when applicable and detailing of trim and reveals should be coordinated for compatibility with the surrounding area as well as the subject building.

Garage Doors

Garage doors are often the most prominent element of the main level of the front facade of a building that incorporates the parking of cars on the ground level. Care must be taken to de-emphasize the garage door in the design. Many homes have the garage setback in plan well away from the street and front facade of the house. Those that do not, recess the door back in order to reduce the visual impact of the door.

LANDSCAPING

> **"Appropriate landscaping can help improve the character of a neighborhood. Front setbacks provide space for the planting of shrubs, flowers and trees."** (30)

Areas in front setbacks for landscaping were the major focus of the Westwood Park developers in the creation of a garden atmosphere for the area. Every effort should be made to minimize pavement for driveways and walkways so that the maximum area in the front of the residence can be used for planting. Large areas of pavement in the front of buildings is unacceptable.

APPENDIX B - GENERAL INFORMATION

EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHT STUDY SUMMARY

The following summary outlines a prepared study of building heights in Westwood Park. Information for the study has been gathered from several sources in an effort to collect data that accurately reflects current conditions. The study's major element is a map of Westwood Park with building heights of each home designated. On the map, building heights in stories are numerically shown and shading is used to denote taller buildings.

"Sanborn" maps of San Francisco have been used for the initial basis of the study. These maps are available in the Assessor's office located in City Hall. Because Westwood Park is a uniform planned community and because the neighborhood was largely constructed prior to 1940, the "Sanborn" maps give relatively accurate information on the original buildings in the neighborhood. For purposes of clarity and coordination, descriptions of building types from the "Sanborn" maps have been used in the preparation of the study. A visual survey of the neighborhood was subsequently undertaken in an effort to verify the information obtained from the "Sanborn" maps as well as to gather preliminary information on vertical additions not reflected in the maps.

Once the visual survey was completed, San Francisco Building Department records were reviewed to gather information on all buildings of two stories or more as well as to investigate information of vertical additions that have been added to original buildings subsequent to the preparation of the "Sanborn" maps. The information from the records has been incorporated into the study.

The building height types, a description of each building type, and each building type's percentage of total buildings in Westwood Park has been included in this summary.

BUILDING HEIGHT DESCRIPTIONS

1 "ONE LEVEL" (13.7% of total residences)

One story main "living" level on grade with no "basement." Usually with an on-grade detached garage.

1B "ONE LEVEL OVER BASEMENT" (77.3% of total residences)

One story main "living" level over a "basement." The majority of the lots slope with the basement built into the slope of the lot with retaining walls. The basement usually is used for parking and utility with less than the required ceiling height for utilization as living space. Many homes have utilized this "basement" area for living space with excavation to gain ceiling height.

1.5 "ONE LEVEL WITH ATTIC" (0.6% of total residences)

One story main "living" level with partial upper "living "level and no "basement." Upper level is fully within lower level roof form and visual impact is of a one story structure with steeply sloping roof and attic.

2 "TWO LEVEL" (4.5% of total residences)

One story main "living" level with partial upper "living" level and no "basement." Usually with an on-grade detached garage.

2B "TWO LEVEL OVER BASEMENT" (3.8% of total residences)

One story main "living" level with partial upper "living" level over "basement." Upper level usually has been added to an existing one story over basement.

A **Denotes buildings where upper levels have been added to original buildings through the construction of a vertical addition.**

SUMMARY OF STUDY

1. 91.6% (613 total) of the 669 residences in Westwood Park are "one level," "one level over a basement," or "one level with an attic" type buildings.

2. Only 8.4% (56 total) of the 669 residences are "two levels" or "two levels over a basement" type buildings. This percentage breaks down as follows:

   a. 4.1% (27 total) of the 669 homes are "two level" or "two level over basement" type buildings from the original development. The upper levels usually consist of a limited square footage single room.

   b. 4.3% (29 total) of the 669 homes are buildings that are "two level" or "two level over basement" type buildings due to vertical additions.

   c. The "two level over a basement" type buildings, the tallest type structure in Westwood Park, make up only 3.8% (26 total) of the 669 homes.
      i. Only 6 of these 26 homes of this type are from the original development. These homes are buildings with small, well integrated upper levels with setbacks from all sides of the lower level.

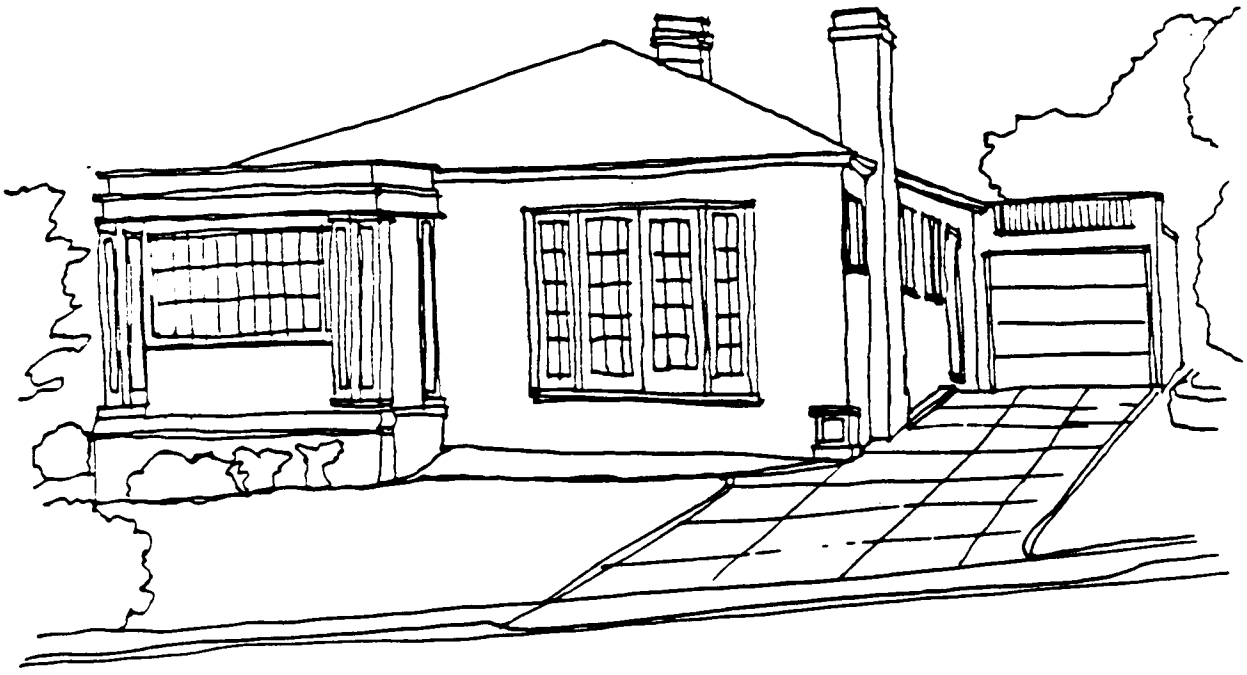
      ii. 20 of the 26 homes of this building type are due to vertical additions to an existing one level over basement structure.

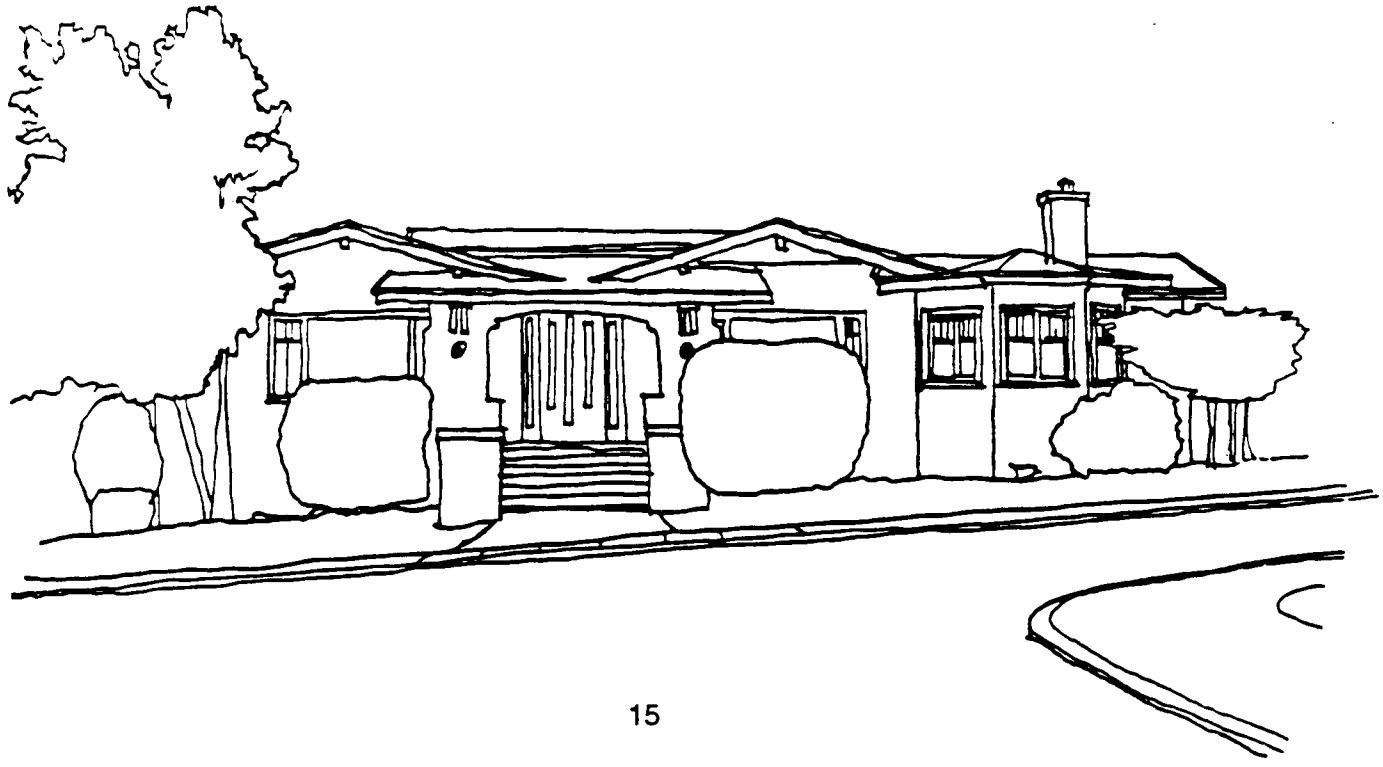
CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be drawn from the study show that the existing fabric of Westwood Park is predominantly of "one level" and "one level over a basement" type buildings.

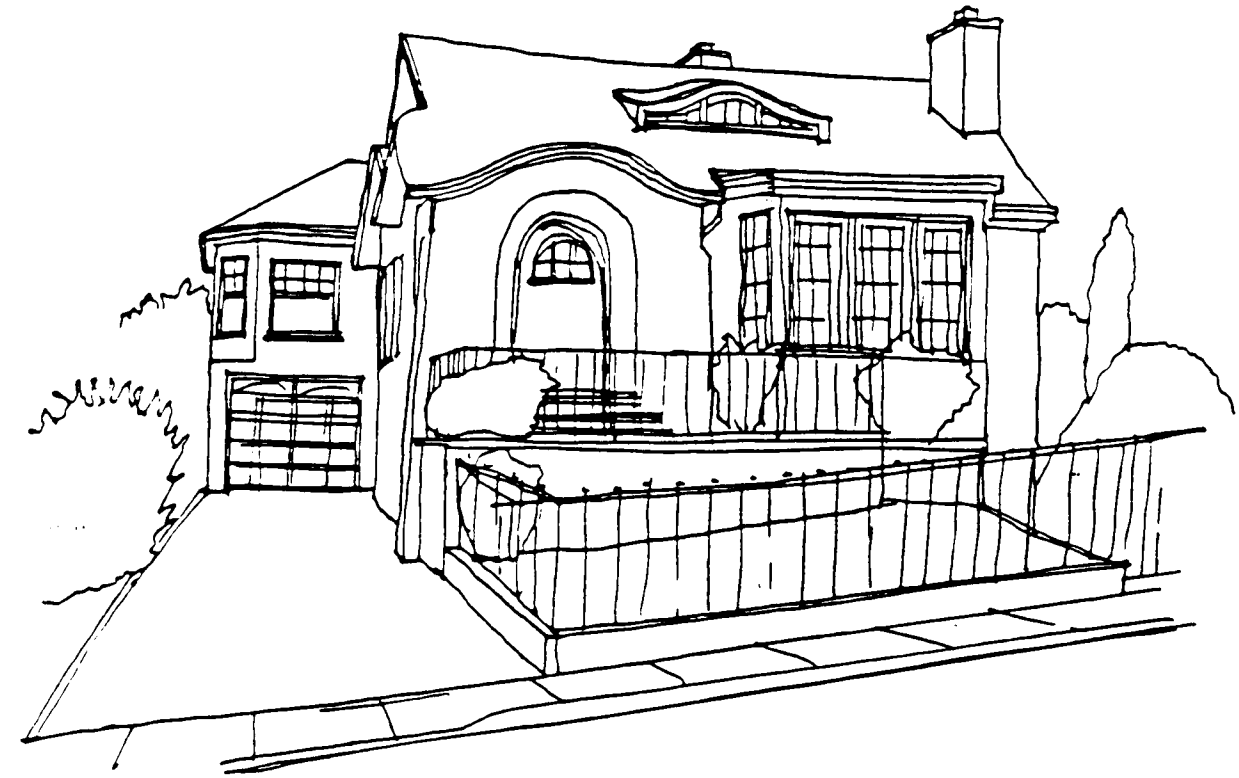
The great majority of larger size buildings are present because of vertical additions over an existing "one level" or over a "one level with basement" type structure.

Without exception, the buildings that have extremely large upper levels are buildings that have had vertical additions and are not buildings that were originally designed in this manner.





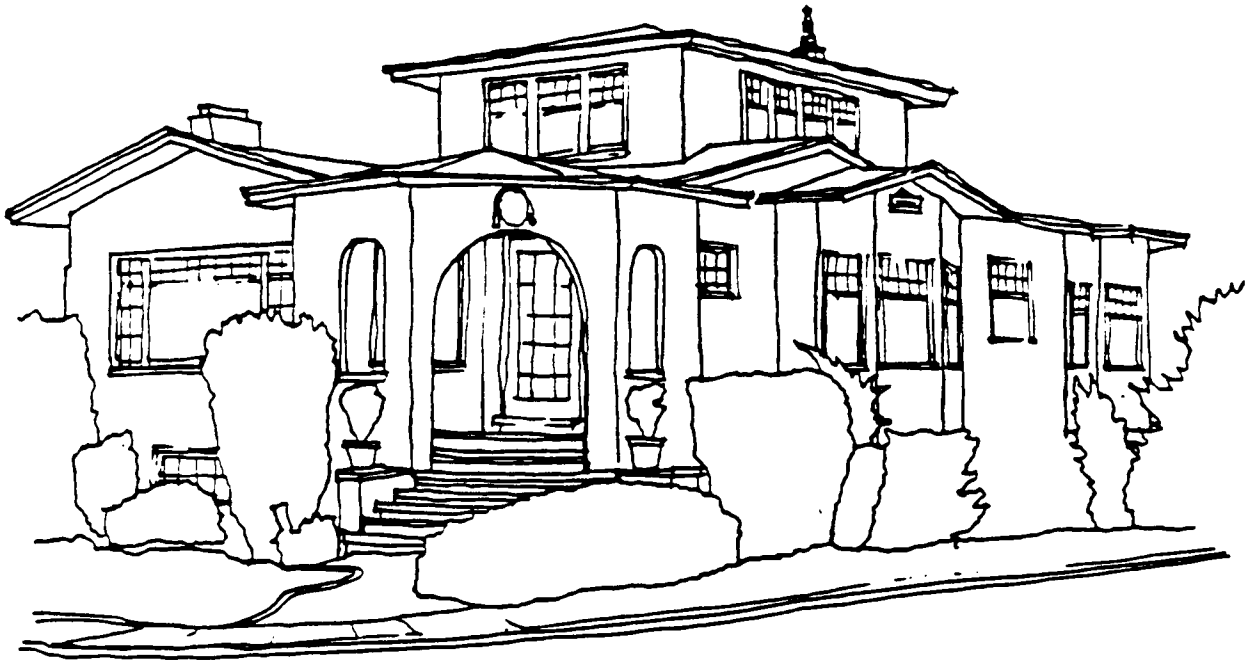
ONE LEVEL



ONE LEVEL OVER BASEMENT

ONE LEVEL WITH ATTIC

TWO LEVEL



TWO LEVEL OVER BASEMENT