

City of Cambridge
307 Gay Street
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE (410) 228-4020
MD RELAY (V/TTY) 711 OR 1-800-735-2258

ORDINANCE NO. 985

AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND ("THE COMMISSIONERS"), TO AMEND THE CITY'S ZONING ORDINANCE ADOPTED MAY 12, 2003, BY ADDING A NEW SECTION 274 ENTITLED "ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS IN THE NC ZONING DISTRICTS."

WHEREAS, by Ordinance Adopted May 12, 2003, the Commissioners of Cambridge adopted its zoning ordinance; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of clarity in the existing Zoning Ordinance as it relates to allowable infill construction in the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) zones in the City of Cambridge. In section 275, the table requires a minimum building height of "one and ½ stories" and in Article II, Section 9, page 31 under definitions, a "Story, Half" is defined as: Residence with two levels of **living area** above ground. The second level (half story) is a portion of the building under a sloping gable, hip or gambrel roof, the wall plates on the exterior walls of which are at least three (3) feet above the floor level of such half-story; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this text amendment is to replace the reference to the current minimum requirement of 1-1/2 story residential buildings in NC 2, 3, and 4. Provide for a workable matrix defining standards for 1, 1-1/2, and 2 story single family and duplex dwellings. Provide design minimums so new affordable in-fill housing is compatible with existing neighborhoods; and to add clear definitions for 1-1/2 story with **unfinished second floor**, two, two and ½, and three story construction; and

WHEREAS, the objective of this text amendment is to replace the reference to the current minimum requirement of 1-1/2 story residential buildings in NC 2, 3, and 4. Provide for a workable matrix defining standards for 1, 1-1/2, and 2 story single family and duplex dwellings. Provide design minimums so new affordable in-fill housing is compatible with existing neighborhoods; and to add clear definitions for 1-1/2 story with **unfinished second floor**, two, two and ½, and three story construction; and

WHEREAS, an additional benefit of the proposed amendment is to provide a framework of design guidelines that achieves the following:

1. Establishes standards that can be met through standard construction materials and practices so that compliance requires an investment on the part of the builder/developer that does not jeopardize the concept of "affordable workforce housing"
2. Establishes standards reflective of predominant architectural elements found in existing neighborhoods throughout the NC zones.



3. Establishes standards that provide for economical construction, but do not sacrifice elements that will aesthetically improve the neighborhood, and strengthens the long term value of the property and the neighborhood.

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines "affordable" as housing that costs no more than 30 percent of a household's monthly income. That means rent and utilities in an apartment or the monthly mortgage payment and housing expenses for a homeowner should be less than 30 percent of a household's monthly income to be considered affordable; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners have deemed in the best interest of the City to approve the proposed text amendment by adding Section 274 entitled "Architectural Design Minimum Requirements in the NC Zoning Districts," to the Zoning Code; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of Cambridge conducted a public hearing on the proposed amendments on April 13, 2009; public advertising of said notice having been published in the Star Democrat on March 26 and April 2, 2009, and the Dorchester Star on March 27 and April 3, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of Cambridge on APRIL 27, 2009, by a vote of 3 in favor, 2 opposed, approved the text amendments as set forth below.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED by the Commissioners of Cambridge that the following Section 274 entitled "Architectural Design Minimum Requirements in the NC Zoning Districts," is hereby approved and added to the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge:

"Section 274. Architectural Design Minimum Requirements in the NC Zoning districts.

General Requirements:

Applicability:

This section shall apply to residential projects occurring within the Neighborhood Conservation (NC) districts as defined by the City of Cambridge Zoning Ordinance. Projects covered include new construction, and any renovation project that involves exterior alterations to the foot print or roof line.

Definitions:

- a. **One (1) story** – a dwelling in which all heated living space is located on the first floor. Any space allocated to the upper level shall be unfinished, unheated and not habitable.
- b. **One and a half (1.5, 1-1/2) story** – a dwelling in which heated living space is primarily on the first floor. Second level may be unfinished and unheated, but suitable for finishing into habitable space.
- c. **Two (2) stories** – a dwelling in which heated living space is located on a first and second floor. Second floor has full height exterior walls, and is fully finished and heated.
- d. **Two and a half (2-1/2) story** – same as (c) with a third level within the roof system that may be unfinished and unheated, but suitable for finishing into habitable space.
- e. **Three (3) stories** – Same as (c) but with a full third floor with full height exterior walls that is fully finished and heated.

- f. **Predominant** – A feature is considered predominant when it appears on at least 60% of the houses surveyed using the Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet.
- g. **New Construction** – A new building that is erected on a vacant lot, including a new foundation. Building may be constructed on or off site.
- h. **Exterior Alterations** – Any project that involves a change of the building's footprint through either demolition or addition, or a change in the appearance through the addition or elimination of windows, doors, roof lines or other architectural features.
- i. **Rehabilitation** – Any project that updates and/or improves the condition of a house, and brings it into compliance with current building codes, but does not substantially alter the exterior appearance of the house.

Neighborhood Compatibility Survey (NCS):

- a. The Department of Public Works shall provide the owner/builder/developer of the property with a NCS form and the guide to the Architectural Styles of Cambridge prior to application being made. The pre-application documents shall be available on the city's website.
- b. Owner/builder/developer shall conduct a NCS of the properties surrounding the proposed site to determine the prevailing height, massing and style of construction in the adjoining neighborhood.
- c. The owner/builder/developer shall submit the results of the NCS, along with other supporting documents, with the proposed plans for the project, with a description of how the project is compatible with its surrounding neighborhood.
- d. The Planning Office and the Office of Housing and Community Development shall review and field verify the application documents and provide a staff report that supports the application, or makes recommendations for a successful re-submission based on the minimum guidelines listed below.

Compatibility Guidelines

- a. Based on the results of the NCS, the new project should meet the predominant setbacks, height and massing prevalent in the neighborhood
- b. Window sizes, styles and patterns should meet the predominant sizes, styles and patterns in the neighborhood, and must comply with building code requirements.
- c. Architectural features such as porches, roof pitch, chimneys and trim details should meet the predominant details of the neighborhood. Chimneys will be required only for functional purposes.
- d. Consideration will be given to elements that provide added energy efficiency or other means of lowering operating costs for the occupant of the house.

Minimum Design Guidelines

Foundations

- a. Crawl space foundations of a minimum 3 courses of block above grade are required, 4 courses above grade for 1 story designs.
- b. Slab on grade foundations will be considered if the house is designed for adaptation to applicable accessibility standards as established by code.

Roof pitch on the primary structure

- a. 1 story – minimum roof pitch shall be 8/12.
- b. 1.5 stories – minimum roof pitch shall be 10/12 to provide for living space in the second floor.

- c. 2 story – minimum roof pitch shall be 6/12.
- d. Attached garages shall have a roof pitch matching the main house.
- e. Porch covers, dormers and other attachments to the above may be lower.

Setback –

- a. Front of main house (excluding front porch) shall align with front corner of neighboring dwellings (excluding front porches). If neighboring dwellings are inconsistent, align with neighbor with the longer setback.

Exterior Materials –

- a. Siding and trims – shall be of durable materials in keeping with styles of the surrounding properties
- b. Windows – shall be in keeping with size and style of surrounding properties, and meet building code requirements.
- c. Roofing materials - shall carry a minimum of 25 year warranty and be in keeping with surrounding properties.

Façade Requirements

- a. Any front-facing gables shall include a gable overhang of not less than 8”
- b. Front facing gable shall include an attic window, if compatible with surrounding properties.
- c. Front entry porch roof shall be differentiated from the main structure roof
- d. Front entry porch shall be a minimum of 2x the width of the front doorway including any sidelights, and a minimum of 4 feet deep. Porches over 30” in height above grade require railings as dictated by building codes.
- e. Any attached front-loading garage or carport shall be set behind the front façade by a minimum of four feet.

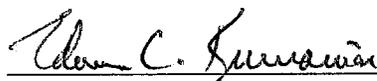
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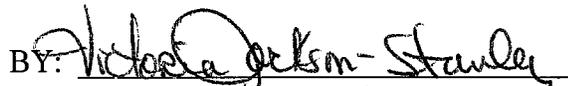
The results of the Neighborhood Compatibility Survey will be given more weight if the findings of the survey show that following the minimum standards would result in a project that is incompatible with its surroundings. (i.e. a neighborhood dominated by lower pitch roof lines, or a street where covered front porches are not the norm)”

AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED that Exhibit A attached hereto entitled “The Housing Styles of Cambridge,” and Exhibit B attached hereto, entitled “Neighborhood Compatibility Worksheet,” are hereby approved and adopted as documentation to be used for completion and approval of applications made pursuant to this Ordinance.

ATTEST:

THE COMMISSIONERS OF CAMBRIDGE


 Edwin C. Kinnamon, Clerk

BY: 
 Victoria Jackson-Stanley, Mayor

City of Cambridge
Cambridge, Maryland

Introduced the 13TH day of APRIL, 2009.

Approved the 27TH day of APRIL, 2009,
 By a Vote of 3 in Favor, 2 Opposed.

