RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES OF WEST ALAMEDA COUNTY
CHAPTER 8.1
OBJECTIVE STANDARDS FOR TOWNHOME DEVELOPMENT

Adopted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors per Ordinance O-2023-XX on November 09, 2023

These Objective Standards for Residential and Mixed-Use Residential Development are applicable to (1) new construction, reconstruction, additions, and remodels of residential dwelling units and mixed-use residential developments of more than one dwelling unit, (2) affordable housing dwelling units, and (3) mixed-use residential affordable housing developments of any number of units.

A townhome is a housing type comprised of two or three story attached units, with an individual entry on the ground floor and a private open space, such as a patio or balcony, for individual residential units. They often make use of private streets with an internal street and pedestrian pathway system. Attached garages are a component of this housing type, but parking may also be provided in the form of detached garages or parking courts.

When a project proposes a residential development type, including but not limited to small-lot single-family, and detached single-family, that is typically built to a lesser density than the project parcel's General Plan designation, the project must conform to the applicable standards for the proposed housing type.

DEFINITIONS

Daylight-Facing. A façade or architectural element that faces the exterior of the building, as opposed to a wall that separates individual residential units within a townhome building.

Individual Residential Unit. The individual residential units together comprise a townhome building. Each unit will typically have one or more entries and windows on daylight-facing facades of the townhome building. The entries will include discrete elements, such as porches, stoops, entry lighting, balconies, patios, and garage doors.

Parcel Frontage. The parcel frontage is that side of the townhome parcel that faces a public street or a primary vehicular access road when the townhome parcel does not face a public street.

Townhome Building. A townhome building is comprised of individual attached residential units that share dividing walls. Entries to individual residential units are located on a daylight-facing façade of the townhome building. In projects for which a vehicle garage is

incorporated into the townhome building, garage doors will be located on a daylight-facing façade. Due to the unique site constraints and parcel configuration of any specific project, the townhome building façade that contains a majority of residential entries may not typically face the parcel frontage.

Townhome Parcel. A townhome parcel is the lot used to develop a townhome project. The project is comprised of one or more townhome buildings and in some cases, accessory buildings. The project will implement a network of pedestrian pathways that connect to on-site features and parking areas, and to the adjacent public sidewalk.

A. SITE STANDARDS

1. Access

These Standards prioritize the pedestrian network in concert with existing Residential Design Standards and Guidelines (RDSG) Standards.

1.1. All residential entries, community open space areas, and parking areas shall be connected with an internal pedestrian pathway network. The internal pedestrian pathway network shall also connect every residential unit to the public sidewalk along the parcel frontage.

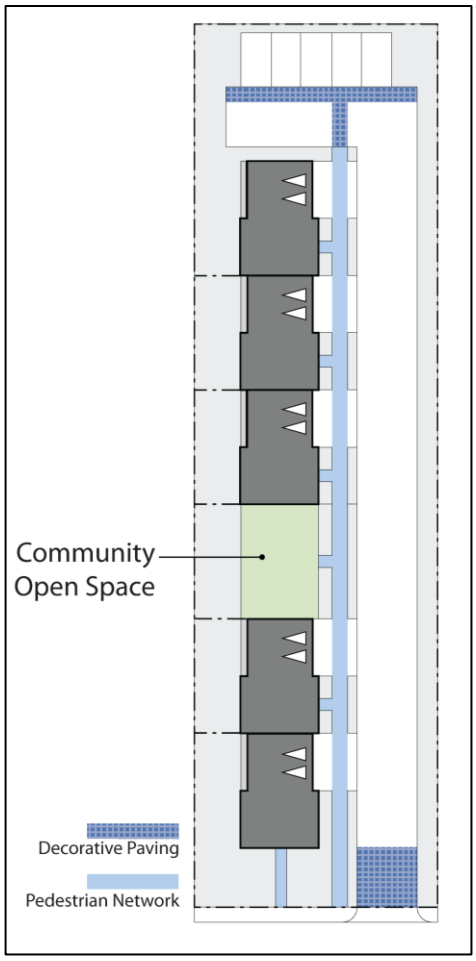

Figure A.1.1a

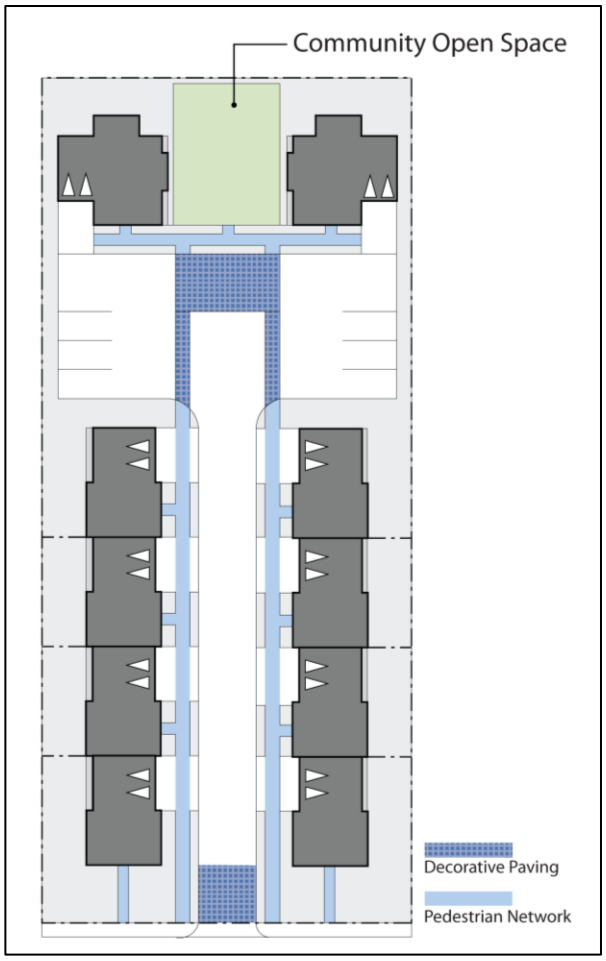

Figure A.1.1b

1.2. Provide permanently anchored bicycle racks as part of the internal pedestrian pathway network for short-term use. Bicycle racks shall be provided at a rate of 5 percent of visitor motorized vehicle parking spaces, with a minimum of one, two-bike capacity rack.

1.3. The 10 percent minimum required decorative driveway paving (RDSG Table 2.4-1: Townhome Standards) shall demarcate the pedestrian pathway network where it crosses vehicle parking areas.

1.4. For townhome projects with perimeter fencing and containing 5 or more units, the pedestrian pathway connecting to the street shall utilize a dedicated gate that is not the vehicle entry gate.

1.5. Internal streets and driveways serving five or more units shall be designed to be at a minimum 20 feet wide.

2. Landscaping and Screening

2.1. Site landscaping shall be in the form of trees, hedgerows, flowerbeds, mulch, decorative gravel or stone, or ground cover vegetation. No more than 20 percent of the required site landscaping (RDSG Figure 2.4-1) shall be non-vegetation material or hardscape material, which includes mulch, decorative gravel, and stone. Landscaping shall incorporate best management practices for stormwater management, per Alameda County requirements under the Clean Water Act permit (current Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit) and per the Alameda County Engineering Design Guidelines.

2.2. Fences, walls, or hedges that delineate private open spaces for individual residential units shall be a minimum of 3 feet in height.

3. Open Space

3.1. Common usable open space(s) shall be located so that they are accessible by all buildings in the parcel and connected to the internal pedestrian pathway network.

4. Parking Location and Design

4.1. Open-air parking lots are prohibited in the front setback area between the public right-of-way and the on-site buildings.

4.2. Open-air parking lots must be located to the side or rear of buildings.

4.3. Locate individual residential unit garage entrances and driveways to a side of the front building façade. The maximum garage door width shall be a maximum 16 feet width that accommodates 2 vehicle parking spaces per residential unit. The maximum driveway apron width shall be a maximum of 20 feet.

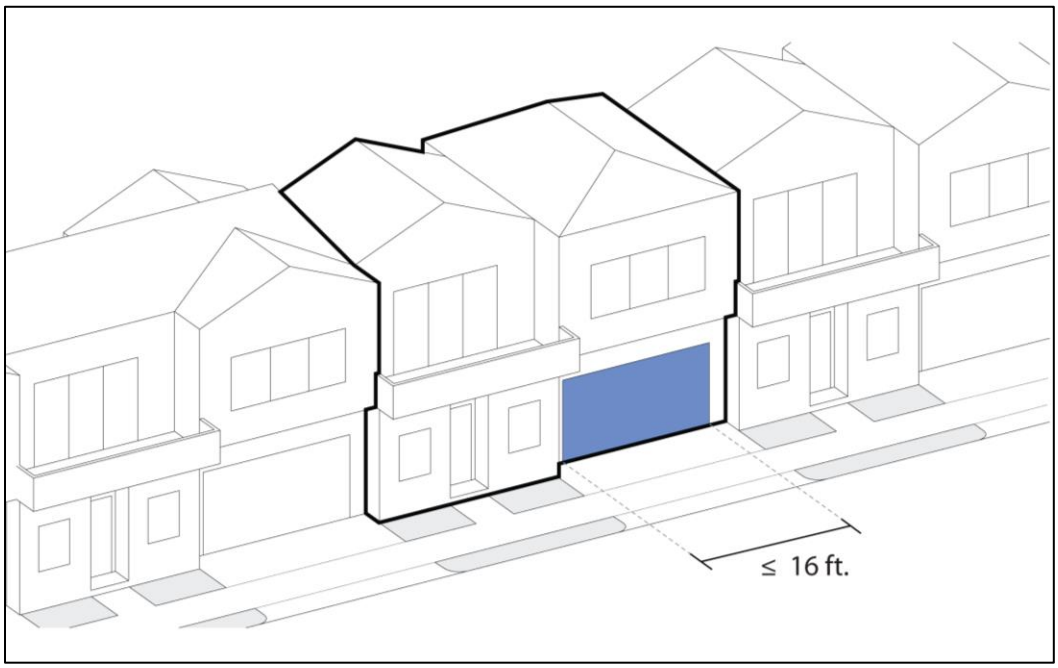

Figure A.4.3

5. Utilities

5.1. Utility equipment, including electrical panels and air conditioning equipment, shall not be located on any building façade that faces a public frontage.

B. BUILDING DESIGN

1. Massing and Scale

1.1. Ground-floor façade planes must offset between attached units a minimum of 2 feet.

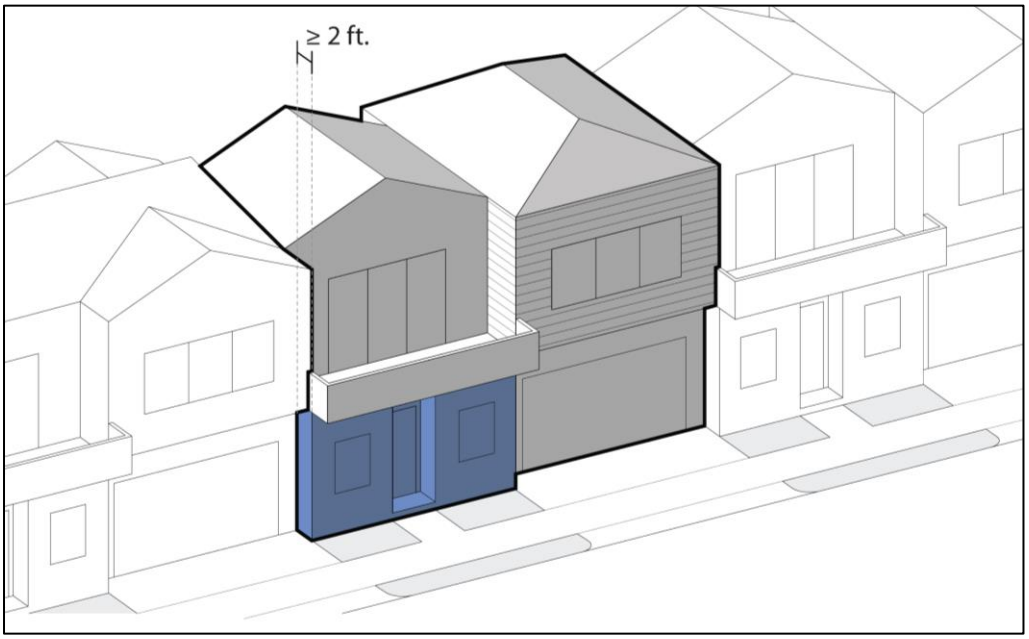

Figure B.1.1

1.2. A ground-floor façade on which the residential entry and the garage door(s) are adjacent components, those components shall be offset from each other a minimum of 2-feet.

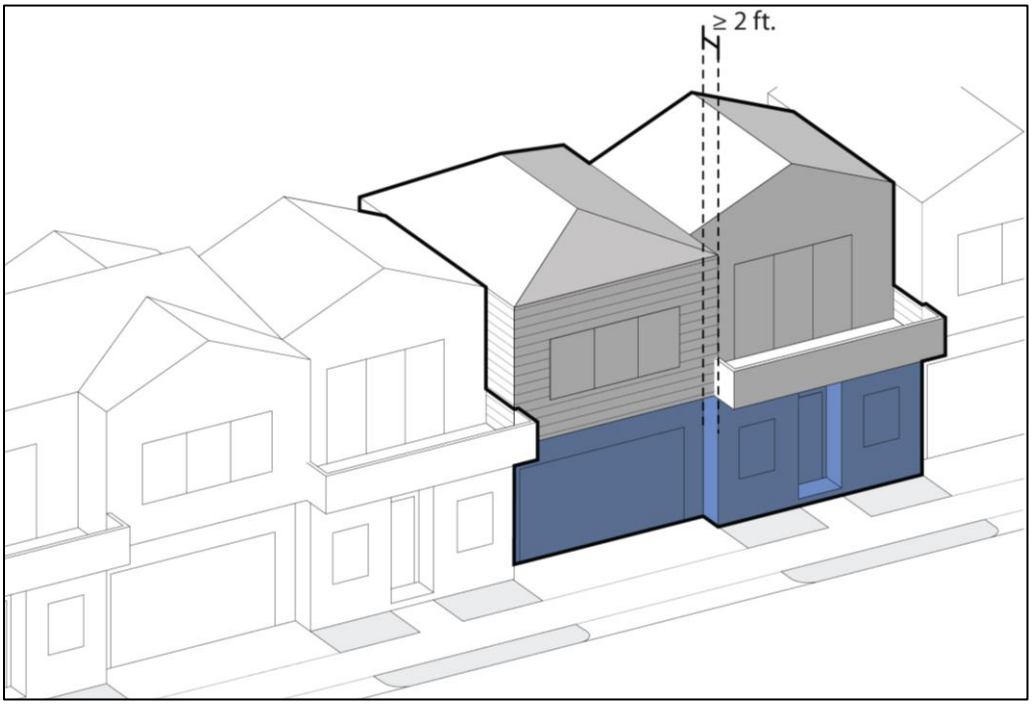

Figure B.1.2

1.3. Required upper floor massing reductions shall be implemented on any daylight-facing façade.

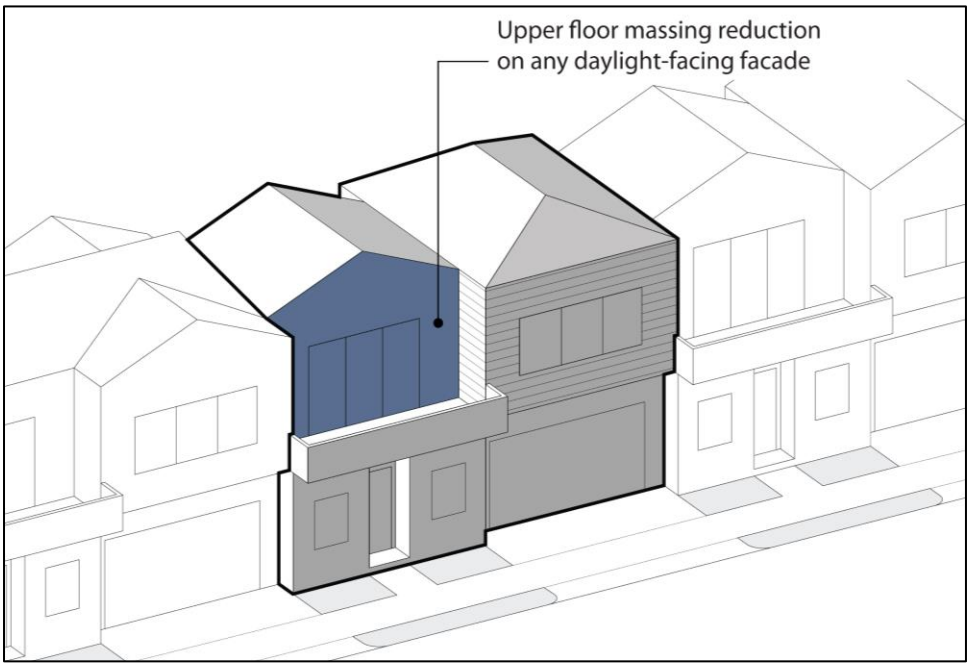

Figure B.1.3

2. Roof Design

2.1. A townhouse building greater than 60 feet in length shall introduce a change in roof form every 40-feet. This change shall be implemented by the introduction of a gable, a hipped roof, or dormers. This required change in roof form may also implement required reductions in upper story mass and square footage.

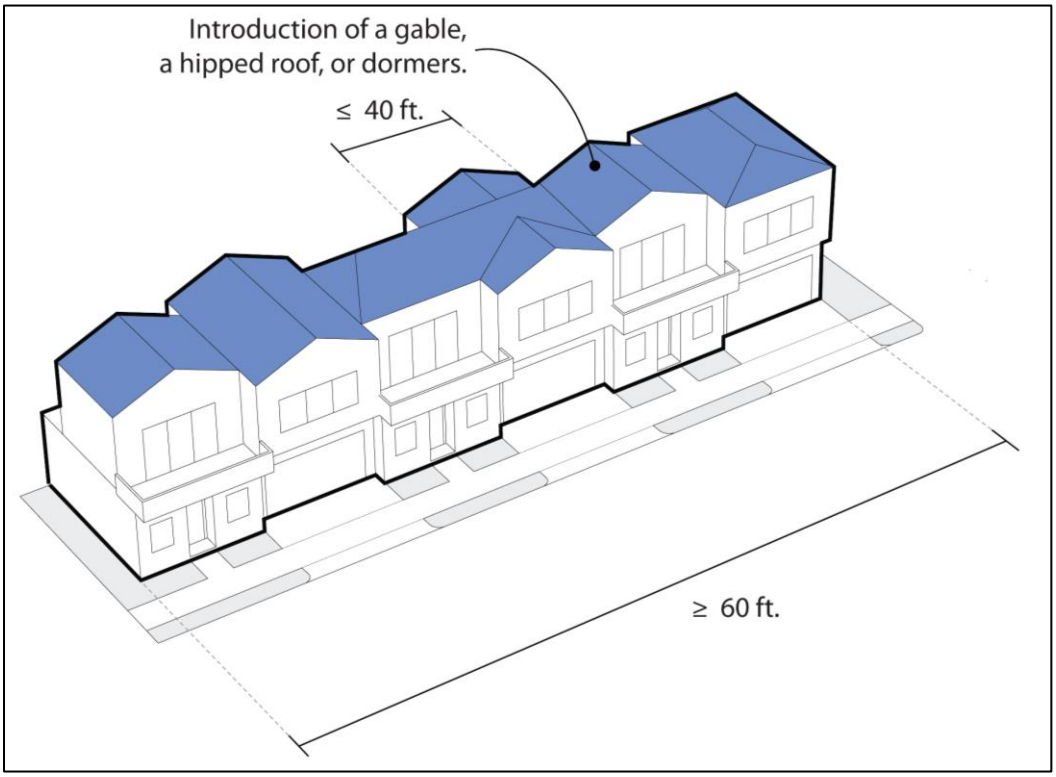

Figure B.2.1

3. Façade Design and Articulation

3.1. Building façades facing a public street, private street, driveway, or on-site parking area(s) shall implement a minimum of two materials, each of which shall be a minimum of 30 percent of the total façade.

3.2. The façade of a townhome building on a parcel frontage shall include one or more individual residential entries.

3.3. Scored plywood and aluminum siding are prohibited materials.

3.4. Changes in building materials shall be located at interior corners of the building facades.

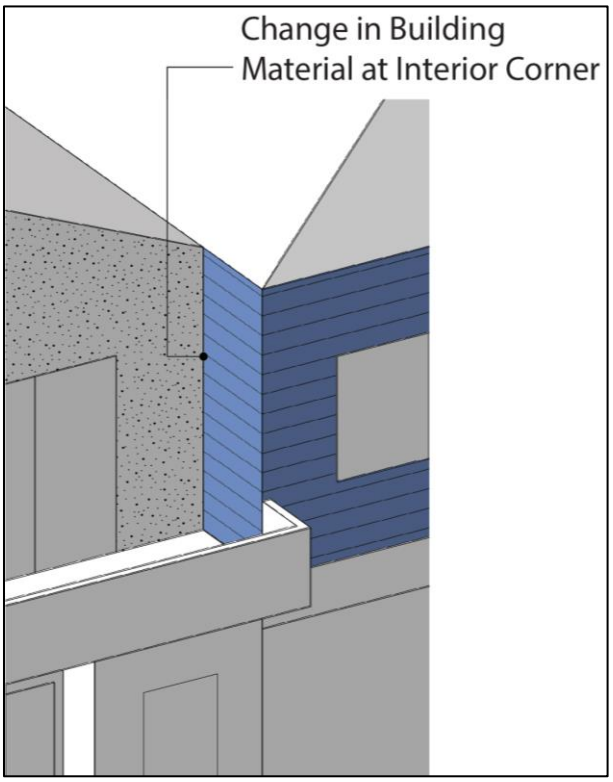

Figure B.3.4

3.5. For any new building that is located 10 feet or less from an existing building on an adjacent property, the edge of any window shall be offset from the edge of the existing building's windows by no less than 3 feet.

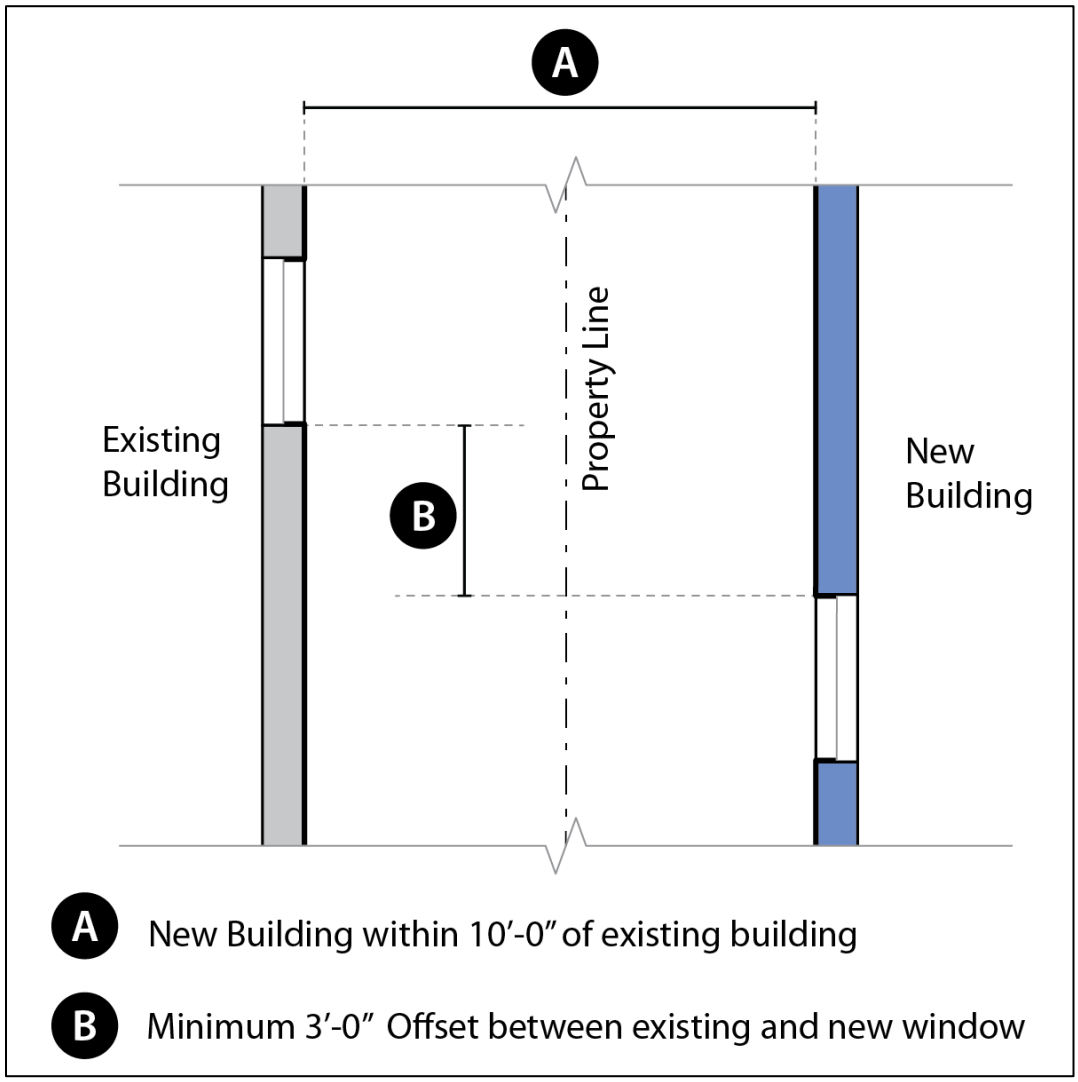

Figure B.3.5

3.6. For any new building that is located 20 feet or less from an existing residential building on an adjacent property, any balcony shall be offset so that the edge of the balcony is no closer than 3 feet from the edge of any of the existing building's upper-floor windows.

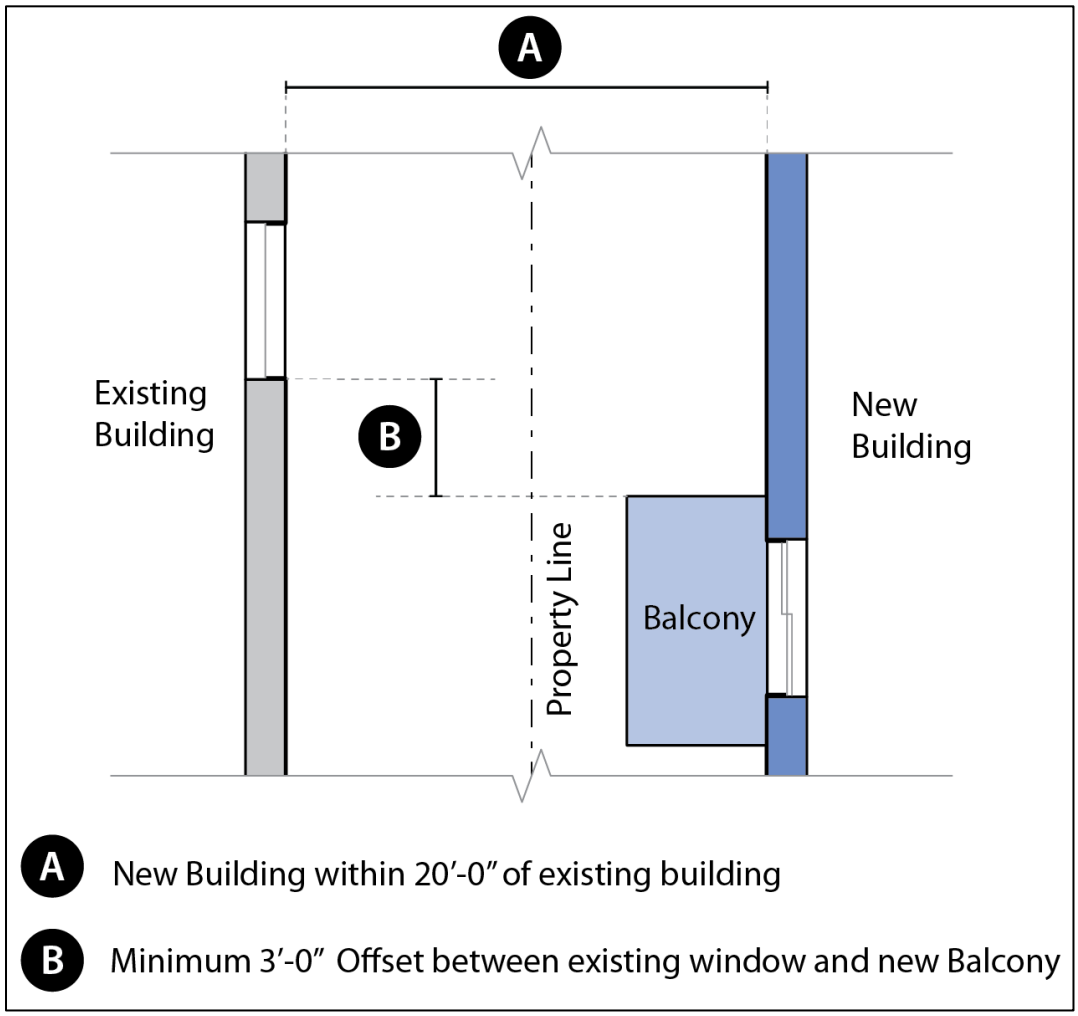

Figure B.3.6