

# **Proposed Southwest Center City NCO Guidelines**

8-13-24

The Neighborhood Conservation Overlay seeks to guide the construction of additions and new homes in a manner that improves the urban environment by reinforcing architectural characteristics that are beneficial to the surrounding neighborhood. The NCO seeks to lessen the impact of construction on light and air; improve safety and security on the street; lessen the nuisance of utility meters and trash; and decrease summertime heat.

## **1) Building Height**

For additions that add a new story above an existing structure, and for new structures that are at least three stories tall, if at least one abutting lot on either side contains a structure that is only two stories tall or contains a structure with a mansard roof, new stories above the second story shall be faced with a mansard roof that complies with the following:

- a) The mansard roof shall have a minimum slope of 11 degrees measured from a vertical plane.
- b) The mansard shall be clad in roofing materials, such as standing seam metal panels or synthetic slate shingles. Asphalt shingles shall not be used.
- c) The bottom of the mansard roof shall align with the front face of the building and a cornice shall be incorporated into the building design at the base of the mansard.
- d) Dormers constructed on the mansard shall have sloped roofs clad with the same material as the mansard roof, and the side walls of the dormers are to be set in from the side property lines by no less than two feet.
- e) A rainwater collection gutter shall be concealed behind the roof cornice at the bottom of the mansard roof and shall connect to a downspout that discharges to the building waste pipe.

## **2) Roof Cornices**

Roof cornices on existing buildings are encouraged to be repaired, maintained, and returned to their original configurations and materials. Additions and new construction shall include roof cornices in accordance with the following:

- a) Additions that add a new story above an existing structure shall repair the existing roof cornice to its original conditions or, if that is not possible, include the construction of a new roof cornice that matches the vertical dimension and horizontal projection dimension of the original cornice.
  - i) Alternatively, a new roof cornice is to be constructed that matches the vertical dimension and horizontal projection of the larger of the roof cornices on the two adjacent buildings.
- b) New structures are to include a roof cornice that matches the vertical dimension and horizontal projection dimension of the larger of the cornices on the two adjacent buildings.
- c) New roof cornices are to be set no more than 12" higher than the taller of the roof cornices on the two adjacent structures.

Note for a) and b) above: the vertical dimension of the cornice is defined as the dimension between the lowest and the uppermost points of the cornice features.

### **3) Roof Decks**

- a) Roof deck surfaces are to be set no more than 3' above the surface of the roof below.
  - i) This regulation does not apply to decks over roofs with a slope greater than 2 in 12.
- b) The roof deck railing on the front side of a structure shall be no more than 40% opaque and shall not be constructed of wood or white vinyl.
- c) The front railing and the front edge of side parapet walls are to be set back no less than five feet from the front wall of the building.

### **4) Exterior Wall Materials**

- a) For new construction and additions, vinyl siding is not to be installed on the *front* of a structure, with *front* as defined by Zoning Code Section 14-701(d).

### **5) Windows and Doors**

- a) The aggregate area of first-floor windows and doors on the front wall is to be no less than 40% of the total area of the first-floor front wall area.
  - i) Wall area is to be determined as the width of the building multiplied by the height of the wall measured from the bottom of the first-floor structure to the first-floor ceiling.
- b) Windowsills on the front wall are to be no higher than 5'-0" above the sidewalk and are to project no less than 1" from the face of the wall.
- c) Sliding doors and windows are not to be installed on the front walls of a structure.
  - i) This regulation does not apply to basement windows.
- d) Front doors are to have transom windows above that are not less than 12" tall.
  - i) This regulation does not apply to doors that are 8' tall or higher.

### **6) First Floor Level**

- a) The height of the first-floor level of a new house is to be no more than 12" higher than the lower first-floor level of the two adjacent structures.

### **7) Egress Wells**

- a) The top surfaces of egress well foundation walls and covers in the public right of way are to be set flush with the surrounding sidewalk.
  - i) Egress well covers are to have hinged access panels that are easily openable from below.
  - ii) Fences are not to be installed around egress wells located within the public right of way.

### **8) Fences and Walls**

- a) Chain link fencing is not to be installed in locations visible from a public right of way.
  - i) This regulation does not apply to a fence installed along a rear property line.
- b) If the rear yard of a property is adjacent to an alleyway, perimeter fences or walls must have a gate to provide access to the alleyway.

## 9) Utility Meters and HVAC Devices

- a) Utility meters are to be located within structures.
  - i) Alternatively, utility meters are to be hidden from view by exterior closets, stairways, or other permanent, architectural features.
- b) Rooftop HVAC units are to be set back from the front so they are not visible from the public right of way.
- c) HVAC units are not to be located on the front walls of buildings.
  - i) This regulation does not apply to air conditioners temporarily located in window openings.

## 10) Trash Containers

- a) New multi-family housing structures with three or more residential units are to include a common use trash storage area located within the building or a private outdoor area concealed from view from the public right of way with permanent walls or fences.

## 11) Street Trees

- a) A tree shall be planted in a sidewalk tree pit in accordance with city regulations in the front of a new house or in front of a house undergoing exterior renovation that requires a building permit if there is no existing tree in front of the house.
  - i) This regulation does not apply in situations where the sidewalk configuration or the location of existing trees prevent a new tree from being planted in conformance with the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation Tree Planting Guidelines.

## Proposed NCO Area

