



**Town of Tiburon
Community Development Department**

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SECOND STORY HOME ADDITIONS FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Homeowners are sometimes interested in either adding a second story to their existing one-story dwelling in Tiburon or in constructing a new two-story home. Although the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance generally sets a maximum potential height of 30 feet in residential zones, there are many instances in which a second story would be inappropriate and would not likely be approved.

Tiburon has a Design Review process for most construction projects, including any proposal to add new floor area to an existing home or to construct a new dwelling. For projects that would create a new second story, the following factors are considered in determining whether a second story is appropriate in that location:

- Neighborhood pattern. In neighborhoods consisting of predominantly one-story homes, a second story is usually considered to be inconsistent with the established development pattern of the area. In particular, the Bel Aire neighborhood and the interior portion of the Belveron East neighborhood are made up almost entirely of one-story dwellings. *Two-story projects are strongly discouraged in these neighborhoods.*
- Views. Residents cherish their views in Tiburon. It doesn't take much for a new house or building addition to block views of the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco, the bay, or other landmark views. A second story can often diminish precious views from nearby homes. In such cases, neighbors will likely object to the project and it is unlikely to be approved through the Design Review process.
- Privacy. A second story can cause privacy impacts for adjacent homes by creating unwanted viewpoints from windows or decks that would allow someone to look into the yards or private spaces of their neighbors. These privacy-invading elements of new second story projects should be identified and avoided early in the design phase.
- Sunlight and Shade. The additional building height created by a second story can block sunlight into a neighbor's home or create too much shade in nearby yards.
- Mass and bulk. A second story can often loom over a one-story home or a downhill house. Two-story projects should be designed and articulated to avoid large, uninterrupted spaces that would appear massive from nearby properties.
- Lot characteristics. The size and physical characteristics of a property can make it difficult to approve a second story. A steep lot could make a two-story home look even larger when viewed from below, and a two-story home on a flat lot could tower over its one-story neighbors.

The Town of Tiburon often encourages alternative design solutions to a two-story project in order to accommodate an appropriately sized single-story home on a lot. The Tiburon Design Review Board has historically supported alternative project designs to avoid the impacts on surrounding properties often caused by second stories, including designs with increased setbacks for second stories or only partial second stories. The Board will consider granting a variance for homes to spread out more on a site and allow for a design that minimizes impacts and fits into the established neighborhood character. In addition, the Town's *Hillside Design Guidelines* booklet provides direction on appropriate project designs for homes throughout Tiburon and gives visual examples of preferred design elements.

Town staff encourages homeowners to talk to their neighbors who may be affected by their project at the outset of the design process, and then keep them advised of any substantive changes as the design takes shape. Installing preliminary "story poles" or other visual aids for a project can often help identify whether a project design will create problems for neighbors and can promote discussion about possible design solutions that will make the project work better for everyone.

If you have any questions about two-story projects in Tiburon, Planning Division staff is happy to meet with you to discuss whether a second story design would be appropriate for your property. The Tiburon Planning Division is available at Town Hall Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and can be reached by telephone at (415) 435-7390.

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