

**Policy of Nob Hill Neighborhoods Association
Walls, Fences, and Carports in Front Yard Setbacks**

Adopted 5-12-2006

The first of Nob Hill's six residential subdivisions was platted in 1916. Most of its houses were constructed between then and 1950. Monte Vista and College View subdivisions are a registered State and National Historic District. The Association values our historic character and encourages property owners who make modifications to their property to do such work in a way that is sympathetic and respectful of that character.

Most houses in Nob Hill do not merit historic listing individually, but as a group they create districts that do. Their value as a group derives, principally, from how they create a historic *streetscape*. ***This refers to spacious front yards of uniform depth, fronts of houses (facades), porches, and lead walks.*** These convey the sense of the ideal suburban development of the pre-1950 period intended by those who built our neighborhoods. Preserving these streetscapes allows the community now and in the future to appreciate the deep front yards and facades of houses, promotes collegial interaction, and allows visibility around houses providing for increased security.

The R-1 zoning and M-R zoning, which govern most of our residential areas, require a front yard setback of 20 ft. Within this setback, homeowners are permitted to build a wall or fence up to 3 ft high. This includes walls or fences on the side property lines within the front 20 ft of the lot. (Typically the front property line is well inside the curb and sidewalk.) This zoning permits a wall or fence up to 6 ft high (or 8 ft high with engineered design) on the rear and on side property lines but only up to 3 ft maximum height in the 20 ft front yard setback.

An owner may seek a special exception from the City to build in the front yard setback. One type of special exception is a conditional use permit to construct a wall or fence up to 6 ft high or a carport. The other type of special exception is a variance to reduce the 20 ft setback.

The Association believes that buildings, carports, walls and fences over 3 ft high within the 20 ft front setback injure the neighborhood by disrupting historic vistas down streets, blocking visibility of the facades of houses thus diminishing character, and allowing intruders to work without detection. The Association believes this streetscape is key to our historic character.

Special exceptions allowing buildings, carports, walls or fences higher than 3 feet diminish that character irreversibly. Existing walls or carports are the exception and do not, in the opinion of the Association, set a precedent for additional structures in the neighborhood. Therefore, it is the policy of the Board to oppose such requests for variances or conditional uses, except as noted here.

1. For properties whose side property line adjoins a street with heavy traffic and noise, such as—but not limited to—Lead or Coal, the Association generally supports a conditional use as follows: The wall may be up to 6 ft high on the ***side property line*** adjoining the street with heavy traffic, even within the 20 ft front

yard setback. The wall should be architecturally compatible with the house in terms of materials and color. Ten calendar days prior to the hearing by the Zoning Hearing Examiner the applicant should provide a site plan and elevation drawings to the Association.

2. For properties which are unique owing to size, shape, extreme grade, existing non-conforming building pattern, or traffic safety issues the Association will consider requests for **walls over 3 ft in height elsewhere in the front yard setback** case-by-case. Ten calendar days prior to the hearing by the Zoning Hearing Examiner the applicant should provide the materials above as well as photographs and written expressions on the proposal from immediate neighbors.