

# Taaffe-Frances Heritage Neighborhood Design Guidelines

City of Sunnyvale



Adopted March 24, 2009



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## INTRODUCTION

The Taaffe-Frances neighborhood exemplifies a part of Sunnyvale's cultural, social, political and architectural history. The architectural styles and building scale of the neighborhood are a valuable reminder of the City's heritage. It is the purpose of these design guidelines to preserve those historic characteristics which make this neighborhood unique.

The Taaffe-Frances neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Sunnyvale. The neighborhood has a concentration of older homes in a rich and rare variety of interesting architectural styles which have generally retained their original architectural features. The tract was created in 1925 and 1927 by the Pal Jose Subdivision which contained the 500 blocks of Taaffe Street and Frances Street, and the west side of Murphy Avenue. There are now 59 single family homes and two duplexes in the neighborhood, constructed on lots which are typically either 5,000 or 6,500 square feet in size. The majority of the homes were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s.

The Taaffe-Frances neighborhood has a strong historic identity which is distinct from newer subdivisions in Sunnyvale. This neighborhood is oriented to the pedestrian rather than the automobile with generous parkway strips for shade trees buffering pedestrians from street traffic. Garages and cars are in back of the lot instead of predominating the front yard area, and entries to the homes are oriented to the sidewalks rather than garage driveways. These characteristics create a pedestrian orientation which helps make this neighborhood unique.

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## INTENT

These guidelines are intended to accomplish the following:

- Preserve the unique historic character of the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood.
- Assist property owners in designing new homes, expansions, and other exterior changes to complement the historic scale and character of the neighborhood.
- Provide staff with direction in reviewing applications to ensure designs meet community expectations.
- Provide the Heritage Preservation Commission and City Council with a clear set of design guidelines that apply specifically to this neighborhood.

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## APPLICABILITY

This document replaces the previously adopted City Council Policy 6.3.2 for the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood, and incorporates relevant guidelines from the *Sunnyvale Single Family Home Design Techniques*.

The guidelines apply to all parcels shown in the diagram on page 6.

These guidelines are in addition to and subordinate to the applicable zoning regulations. Zoning Code information can be found on the City's web site at:

[www.sunnyvaleplanning.com](http://www.sunnyvaleplanning.com)



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## REVIEW AUTHORITY/PROCESS

The homes in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood are zoned R-0/HH (Low-Density Residential/Heritage Housing Combining District). These homes are subject to the same zoning standards (height, setbacks, lot coverage, floor area ratio) as any other home in an R-0 Zoning District. Information on the R-0 Zoning Standards is available through the Planning Division.

In addition to the standard R-0 Zoning, this neighborhood is part of a Heritage Housing (HH) Combining District. The purpose of the combining district is to preserve, protect, enhance and perpetuate the appearance of certain historic residential neighborhoods which contribute to the cultural or aesthetic heritage of Sunnyvale. The design guidelines provide guidance on how to maintain the character of the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood.

The homes in this neighborhood have a higher level of protection than other single-family homes. All alterations are reviewed against the design guidelines described in this document. Significant alterations or additions may trigger a public hearing. The following is a general description about the review processes for certain types of projects.

- **Interior changes not altering exterior**  
No Planning review is necessary. Building permits may be required.
- **Minor exterior changes not adding square footage**  
Design is reviewed by Planning staff using these guidelines.
- **Minor addition**  
Design is reviewed by Planning staff using these guidelines.

- **Major / two-story addition or major exterior changes**

The design must be reviewed at a public hearing by the Heritage Preservation Commission, with an associated notice to adjacent neighbors. A historical evaluation and/or environmental review may be required.

- **Demolitions**

Owners must hire a consultant to prepare a historical evaluation of the building/site. Environmental review is required. The proposal must be reviewed at a public hearing by the Heritage Preservation Commission, with an associated notice to adjacent neighbors.

The above categories are determined as a guideline only. The Planning Division will make a final determination about the type of review required for any proposed project on a case-by-case basis. Information evaluated by Planning will include the details of the proposal, the specific conditions on the property, the design guidelines contained in this document, the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

In addition to the local heritage resource status held by all homes in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood, some of the homes may also have special designation as local landmarks, California State landmarks, or National landmarks. Additional requirements may apply to such properties.

**For City staff assistance in the development review process, please contact the City's One-Stop Permit Center at (408) 730-7444.**



Taaffe-Frances  
Heritage Neighborhood  
Boundaries

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

### Overview

The Taaffe-Frances neighborhood has a rich collection of traditional residential architecture and mature landscaping. Some additions and new homes have been added over time, but the essential 1920's scale and character have been largely preserved.

The following text from *Images, Sunnyvale's Heritage Resources* prepared by the California History Center, De Anza College with research and text by Kent L. Seavey, published 1988, describes the history of the neighborhood's development.

*The 1887 survey for the original town of En-cinal [Sunnyvale] marked out three north-south streets: Murphy, Frances and Taaffe. They ran from Evelyn to McKinley, where they stopped except for Murphy Avenue, which continued south to meet the San Francisco and San Jose Road (El Camino Real). Their names derive from the Martin Murphy family, including Murphy's son-in-law William F. Taaffe, a San Francisco merchant. Except for the Murphy Avenue commercial corridor, which has 25' frontages on 100' deep lots, parcels along the three streets were 50' x 130'.*

*Their 100 and 200 blocks formed Sunnyvale's first residential core. With the subdivision of the Spalding addition by local orchardists C.C. Spalding and N.B. Scofield in June 1906, they were pushed 2 blocks south through Iowa Avenue (named for Spalding's home state) to Olive Avenue (named for Spalding's mother). 105 of the new lots sold in six months, many to long time residents expecting a building boom to accompany industrial development. Further southern expansion did not occur on the three primarily residential streets until the 1920s.*

*Much of the early architectural heritage of the Murphy-Frances-Taaffe neighborhood fell to shopping mall development near the City center in the 1970s and the 1980s. What does remain along the 300 and 400 blocks range in age from turn of the century vernacular and Colonial Revival styles to a variety of bungalows and Eclectic Revival homes. These represent almost every house type in Sunnyvale. The integrity of these blocks has been diminished by zoning changes, demolition and neglect; however, enough of the streetscapes remain intact with significant housing to give some sense of the high quality of life early residents enjoyed.*

*The original character of these streets remains essentially intact on the 500 block of this three street neighborhood. This block south of Olive Avenue initially was developed in 1925 by the Dempsey and Raisch families as part of what they called the Pal Jose subdivision, which included Murphy Avenue and a further extension of Frances and Taaffe to El Camino Real. While lots were still 130', frontages on all the streets narrowed to 25' suggesting an increase in land values. In 1927 the developers added the west side of Taaffe Street to the subdivision with 50' frontages. Although they completed the development's infrastructure – gutters, sidewalks, and paving – sales were slow. Only a few houses went up along Murphy and Taaffe as the Great Depression began. The developers failed and building in the Pal Jose subdivision did not gain momentum until after 1936.*

*By that time, contractors Louis Scott and Burr Matthews were both working in Sunnyvale. Many of their best houses went up in the subdivision development which followed, but the west side of Taaffe first was built up one property at a time. Individual builders like Wilbur Fleckner, Roy Pinkney, and Os-*

*car Liebert designed their own homes on the street and completed some other houses on speculation. The area of Frances Street south to Murphy Avenue remained planted in Hay by Nodman Scofield, whose ranch house was near the corner of Murphy and El Camino Real.*

*During the 1930s, the City sold the lots along the east side of Taaffe for taxes at \$600 each. Between 1937 and 1939, the two areas began filling in, and by the beginning of world war II the 500 blocks of Murphy, Frances and Taaffe were all built up. In 1937 or 1938 Emile Corboline and his neighbors along Taaffe went to the Harrison Nursery on North Murphy Avenue and bought magnolia trees for about 35 cents each to plant along the street. Now mature, these trees form one of the most scenic streetscapes in Sunnyvale.*

*Despite limited commercial intrusion along Murphy Avenue, this neighborhood today contains the largest concentration of pre-World War II architectural styles in Sunnyvale. It is one of the community's finest historical residential neighborhoods.*



*Special attributes of the neighborhood include substantial street trees and landscaped parking strips*

## Important Neighborhood Characteristics

Homes within the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood reflect the era in which they were constructed, drawing from traditional architectural styles that were popular in the Bay Area at the time. Individual homes vary in the extent to which their designs and details represent the full expression of a particular architectural style. In some cases, the details are extensive, and include many of the forms and features that one might find in historic architectural style manuals. Others may have many features of one or even more than one architectural style as a result of builders' and home owners' preferences at the time. All, however, have a very traditional respect for details of the 1920s and 30s, and are relatively small in scale with varied wall plane profiles and outlines, including porches, recessed portions of the street front el-

evation, applied chimneys, and similar features. It is this sense of small scale and traditional architecture, rather than individual architectural landmarks, that gives the neighborhood its distinctive character.

Overall, the area has a strong one-story feeling. Second floors, where they occur, are generally either integrated into the first floor roof form or constructed to the rear of the parcel, giving the street frontages a strong sense of a one-story neighborhood of a modest size and scale. Roof eaves at the first floor ceiling line are the norm for both Taaffe and Frances Streets.

The photographs below and to the right illustrate some of the wide variety of residential styles in the neighborhood with special attributes of the three most common styles found in the area.



### Spanish Revival Style example

*Architectural features common to this style include:*

- *Low pitch roofs*
- *Red tile roofs*
- *Small roof overhangs*
- *Asymmetrical facades*
- *Stucco walls*
- *Unique window shapes*
- *Prominent chimneys with decorative caps*
- *Uniquely shaped wing walls*
- *Decorative stucco or tile roof vents*
- *Applied decorative details and grilles*



*Prominent first floor roof eave lines contribute to a strong feeling of one-story homes even when some individual homes have a second story*



*Front yard lawns are a strong feature of the neighborhood and low side property line fences and landscaping often separate one parcel from the next*



**Traditional Ranch Style example**

*Architectural features common to this style include:*

- *One-story height*
- *Low or intermediate pitch roofs*
- *Gable, hip or combination of hip and gable roofs*
- *Wood or composite shingle roofs*
- *Stucco or wood siding walls*
- *Entries contained under the roof eave*
- *Simple window shapes*



**Craftsman Bungalow Style example**

*Architectural features common to this style include:*

- *One-story height with dormers for a second floor*
- *Low or intermediate pitch gable roofs*
- *Exposed roof rafters and decorative beams*
- *Wood or composite shingle roofs*
- *Stucco or wood siding walls*
- *Prominent projecting porches with distinctive column shapes*
- *Prominent stucco, brick or stone chimneys*



**Moderne Style example**



**English Tudor Style example**



**Eclectic Art Deco Style example**

Other traditional, but less common, architectural styles in the neighborhood are shown in the examples to the right.

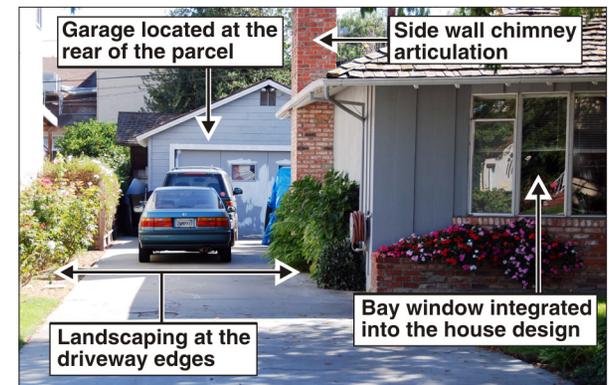
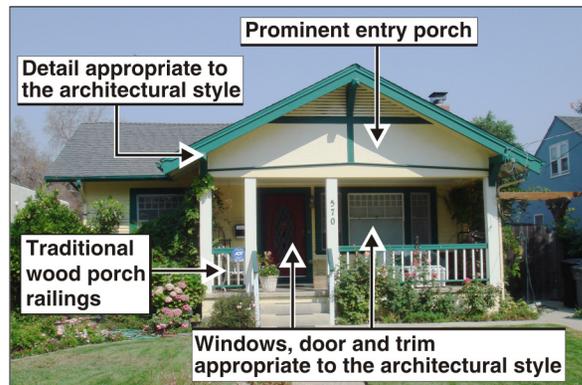
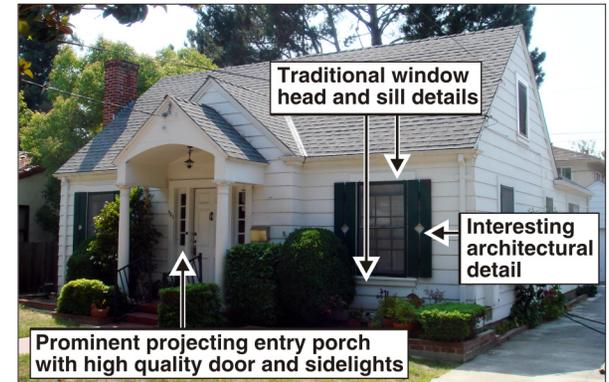
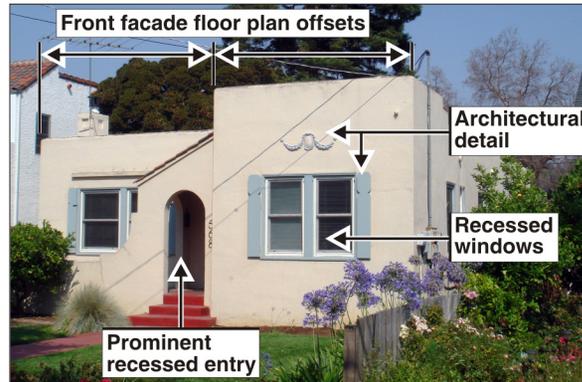
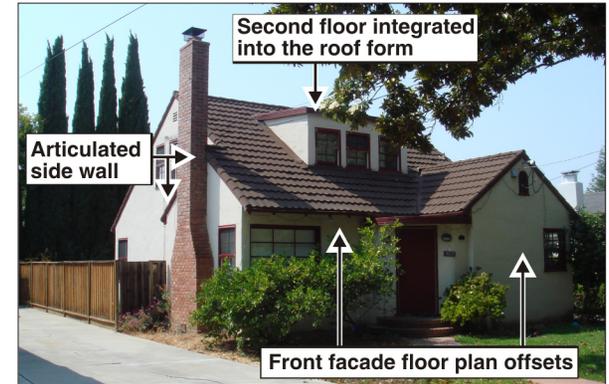
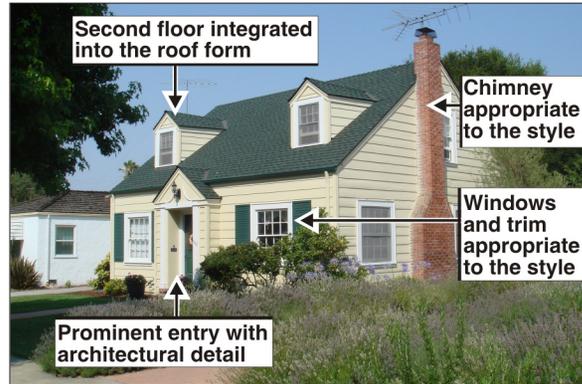
**IMPORTANT NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS**

Individual homes rarely conform exactly to all of the forms and details of their architectural style. Each structure should be respected, and treated on its own merits.

Before planning alterations to an existing home, look at it carefully and analyze what contributes to its character. For new homes, look around the neighborhood for good examples.

The features outlined below and shown on the annotated photos to the right are important to both the architectural integrity of individual homes and the distinctive character of the neighborhood.

- Siting, height, setbacks, and front yard landscaping.
- Garage location and driveway width.
- Roofs: (e.g., shapes, slopes, materials, texture, and dormers)
- Construction materials: (e.g., walls, window, and trim)
- Floor plan projections and indentations: (e.g., wall plane variations, bay windows, porches, recessed entries)
- Windows: (e.g., size, proportions, method of opening, sash materials, trim)
- Foundation or basement: (e.g., difference - if any - in treatment from main house walls)
- Chimneys: (e.g., height, location, shape, and materials)
- Ornamentation and architectural detail.



Examples of important neighborhood features

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

The older, distinct architectural styles and pedestrian orientation of the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood are a valuable reminder of Sunnyvale's heritage. In order to preserve this unique historic character, all alterations and new construction should be consistent with the guidelines in this document.

The design guidelines in this section will be used by staff and the Heritage Preservation Commission in reviewing all discretionary approvals and permits in the neighborhood.

In the event that the guidelines do not directly address a specific condition, the design principles on this page will be used to evaluate the proposal.

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### 3.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

These design principles should be respected for all exterior remodels, additions, and new residential construction projects in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood. They are the touchstones upon which all of the design guidelines in this document are based.

#### A. Reinforce prevailing neighborhood development patterns

Maintain a sense of neighborhood by utilizing setbacks, garage placement, entry types, and front yard landscaping that are sympathetic to those commonly found in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood.

#### B. Respect the scale, bulk and character of homes in the neighborhood

Buildings should be sympathetic to the predominant building forms and scale of the neighborhood, including but not limited to, height, bulk,

character, building form, roof form and orientation, window treatments, materials, and colors.

Additions and new homes should blend in with the neighborhood, not visually stand out as substantially larger or of a significantly different architectural style. Special care should be given to avoid large building volumes and tall blank walls immediately adjacent to one story homes.

#### C. Design homes to respect their immediate neighbors

New construction should be especially mindful of the immediately adjacent homes and those to the rear of the parcel with special attention given to size, scale, and potential privacy intrusions.

New development should avoid privacy, noise, light and visual conflicts with adjacent uses to the maximum degree possible. Special care should be given in the placement and treatment of windows and site landscaping to minimize views into the windows and private outdoor spaces of neighboring homes.

#### D. Minimize the visual impacts of parking

Garages should be located at the rear of lots and subordinate to the entry and architecture of the house. Only in highly unusual circumstances will a garage be allowed near the parcel's front setback line. Paved driveways and on-site surface parking, visible from the street, should be minimized as much as possible. Driveways should be limited to one car in width.

#### E. Design homes with architectural integrity

Alterations, additions and other exterior improvements should be consistent with the original architectural style of the home. The use of identifiable traditional residential architectural

styles, with windows and details appropriate to the style, is required for new construction and encouraged for the alteration of existing homes which do not conform to the predominant styles of the neighborhood.

Architectural materials and details should be carried around to all sides of the house to avoid a "false front" look, and to avoid the presentation of poorly articulated and unadorned facades to neighboring homes and public view.

#### F. Use high quality materials and craftsmanship

Quality materials and craftsmanship require less maintenance to remain attractive over time, and they convey a sense of pride in one's home and neighborhood.

#### G. Preserve mature landscaping.

Wherever possible, mature trees and landscaping should be protected during construction and integrated into new landscape plans. Retaining the character of the streetscape with large street trees and a landscaped park strip will be expected.

*While the guidelines in this document are organized into categories that are likely to coincide with planned improvements, homeowners should read all of the guidelines in this document. There are important guidelines in each section that will be applicable to all proposed projects, as appropriate. If you have questions, consult with Planning staff.*

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE**

These guidelines are not intended to establish or dictate a specific style. While selection from a wide range of traditional architectural styles is acceptable, there is an expectation that any specific style selected will fit into the neighborhood, and will be carried out with an integrity of forms and details that are consistent with that style.

The resources listed below and in the sidebar on page 15 may be useful to homeowners, builders, and design professionals in understanding the special qualities of specific house styles and traditional details.

- **A Field Guide to American Homes**  
Virginia & Lee McAlester  
*Alfred A. Knopf 2000*
- **The Abrams Guide to American House Styles**  
Wilkin Morgan  
*Harry N. Abrams, Inc 2004*
- **House Styles in America**  
James C. Massey  
*Penquin Studio 1996*
- **Celebrating the American Home**  
Joanne Kellar Bouknight  
*The Taunton Press 2005*
- **The Distinctive Home, A Vision of Timeless Design**  
Jeremiah Eck  
*The Taunton Press 2005*

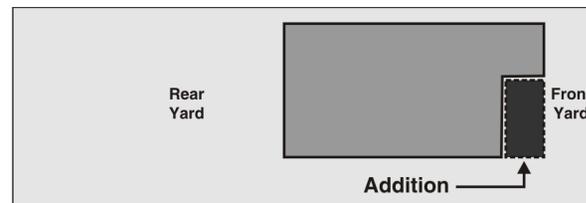
**3.1 PLANNING FOR A GROUND FLOOR ADDITION**

Ground floor additions to existing one-story homes are strongly encouraged as they are more likely to fit into the neighborhood scale and character than second floor additions.

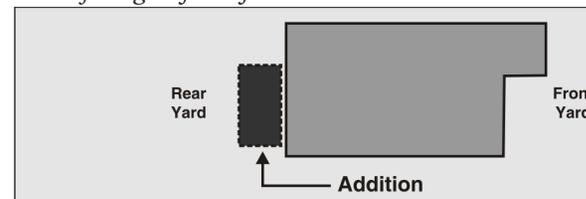
In addition to the guidelines in this section, please also refer to section 3.3 regarding guidelines for exterior treatments.

**3.1.1 Locate ground level additions at the rear of the existing house.**

Significant additions to the front of an existing house have more potential for negative impacts on the unique feel of the neighborhood. Every attempt should be made to place additions away from street frontages. Only in rare circumstances or for a very minor addition will front additions be considered.

**3.1.2 Avoid filling in front facade recesses such as porches and recessed entries.**  
Since most homes in the neighborhood are

*Avoid filling in front facade recesses like this*



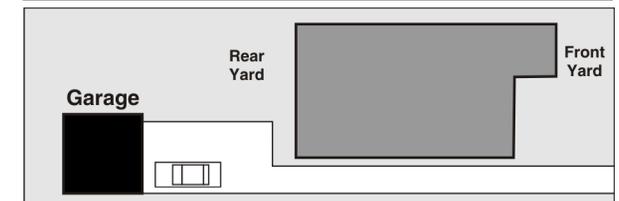
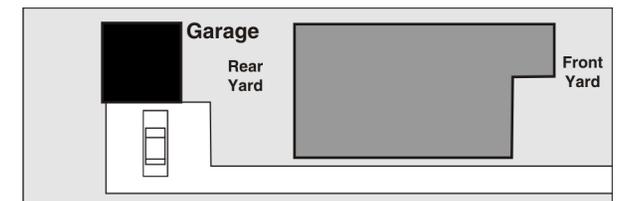
*Place additions to the rear of the house*

constructed to the required front setback line, additions on the street side of the house would likely require the filling in of current wall plane recesses which are a strong feature of the neighborhood and contribute to its special scale and character.

**3.1.3 Place new or expanded garages at the rear of the site.**

a) Rear garages accessed by a single car width driveway is the norm for the neighborhood, and should be maintained unless the existing garage is otherwise sited.

b) New or expanded garages that encroach into the minimum side or rear yard setbacks will require a Variance.



*Place new or expanded garages at the rear of the parcel  
Note: Garages located in side or rear setbacks will require a Variance*

### 3.1.4 Design additions and garages to be sympathetic to the architectural style, materials, and details of the existing house.

a) The character of any addition or alteration should be in keeping with and subordinate to the integrity of the original structure.

b) New outbuildings, such as garages, should be clearly subordinate to the main structure in massing, and should utilize forms, materials and details which are similar to the main structure.

c) Newly constructed exterior elements should match the materials, sizes, dimensions, shapes and locations of the original house.

d) When an addition necessitates the removal of older architectural materials (e.g., windows, doors, and decorative elements) which are difficult to replace with similar ones today, they should be carefully removed and reused in the addition where possible.



*Matching accessory structure example*

e) The introduction of window and door openings not characteristic in proportion, scale, or style with the original architecture is strongly discouraged (e.g., sliding windows or doors in a structure characterized by double hung windows and swinging doors).

f) The amount of foundation exposed on the addition should match that of the original building.

g) Deck additions should be placed to the rear of the structure only.

### 3.1.5 Plan and design structures near the rear property line with care.

a) Avoid bulky forms, heights, and window placements that would impact the privacy of adjacent residents.



*Matching accessory structure example*

#### TRADITIONAL DETAILS

Architectural details will be expected to follow traditional standards. The reference resources below can help understand basic principles and details:

#### **Traditional Construction Patterns: Design & Detail Rules of Thumb**

Stephen A. Mouzon

*McGraw-Hill 2004*

#### **Get Your House Right: Architectural Elements to Use and Avoid**

Marianne Cusato, Ben Pentreath, Richard Sammons, and Leon Krier

*Sterling Publishing 2008*

#### **Traditional Details: For Building Restoration, Renovation, and Rehabilitation**

Details from 1932 - 1951

*Ramsey and Sleeper*

*Wiley & Sons 1998*

#### **Caring for Your Old House: A Guide for Owners and Residents**

Judith L. Kitchen

*Wiley & Sons 1991*

**3.2 PLANNING FOR A SECOND FLOOR ADDITION**

Homes in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood are largely one-story in height along the street front, and second floor spaces are contained within the home's roof form or at the rear of the parcel. Second floor additions and two-story additions to existing homes in the neighborhood should respect this pattern.

Acceptable designs for second floor additions will depend on the scale and architectural style of the existing structure and adjacent homes. Special sensitivity is needed for additions to homes adjacent to small one-story homes.

Please also refer to section 3.3 regarding guidelines for exterior treatments.

**3.2.1 Integrate second floor space into the roof form, whenever possible.**

The placement of second floor space within the roof form usually minimizes the visual impacts of the addition on the streetscape. It also can minimize visual and privacy impacts on neighboring homes.

a) Use gable and shed roof dormers, supplemented by side wall windows, to provide light and air into second floor rooms. Dormers should be designed for compatibility with the existing architectural style of the house.

b) Gable dormers, single or an aggregate of multiple dormers, should be appropriate to the architectural style, and generally should not exceed 50 percent of the width of the roof. Shed dormers may be wider.

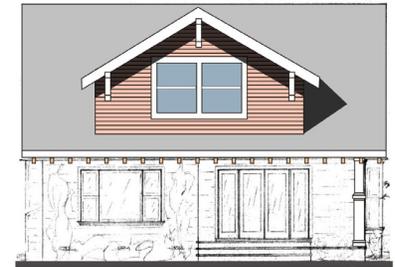
c) Avoid roof skylights in areas visible from the street. These elements can interrupt traditional roof forms, and appear to be light beacons at night.



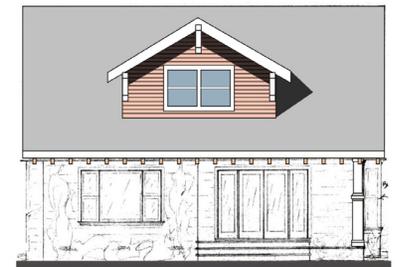
*Original one-story house*



*Same house after second floor addition within the roof form with shed dormer and side windows)*



*Avoid over-sized gable dormers like this*



*In favor of smaller gable dormers like this*



*Or shed gable dormers like this*

*Large shed dormer example  
Note first and second floor window alignment*

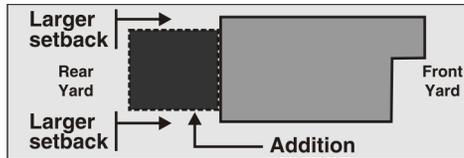
**3.2.2 Place two-story tall elements at the rear of the existing structure whenever integration within the house roof form is not possible**

Locating two-story additions toward the rear of an existing house is relatively common in the neighborhood, and helps to maintain the one-story character of the streetscape.

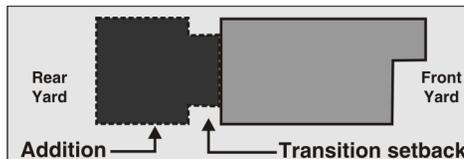
a) Articulate the transition between the existing house and the new construction.

Some techniques include:

1) Providing side wall setbacks.



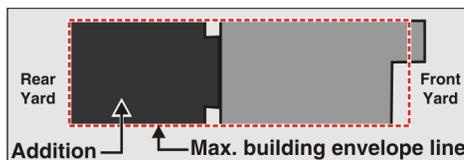
2) Providing transition space between new and old.



b) Avoid allowing the addition to dominate the visual scale of the existing house.

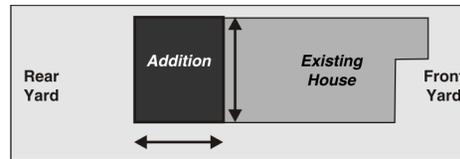
Some techniques include:

1) Limiting the size of the second floor addition.

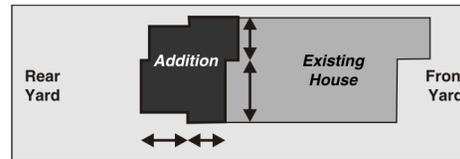


*Avoid building second floor space out to the minimum setback lines*

2) Limiting the width of wall planes.



*Avoid long flat facades like this*



*In favor of articulated facades like this*

3) Limiting the floor-to-ceiling heights of second floor rooms.

4) Breaking up tall walls with elements like belly bands, bay windows, lattices, and trellises.



*Horizontal elements such as trellises can be used to break up taller vertical walls.*

**3.2.3 Develop floor plans and elevations together.**

Traditional home design from the era when the neighborhood's homes were constructed generally consisted of fairly simple floor plans with modest-sized rooms. In recent years, floor plans have often become much more complex with master bedroom suites and other special rooms and features (e.g., walk-in closets, two-story interior spaces, and bay windows).

A common problem in newer homes is the development of complex floor plans to accommodate these spaces, with elevations and roof plans only designed later to match the floor plans. This often results in very complex second story building forms and roof shapes that are out of keeping with the simplicity of the existing house.

a) Keep floor plans for second story additions simple, and consistent with the floor plan of the existing house.

b) When designing additions, be mindful of the exterior appearance as well as the interior functions.

c) Relate the location of windows on second floors to those on the first floor. Alignment is not necessarily required, but placement should be appropriate to the architectural style and not appear haphazard.

d) For architectural styles where formal window patterns and/or the alignment of first and second floor windows are common, that traditional arrangement should be followed in any second story addition.

**3.2.4 Design second floor additions to appear integral to the original house.**

In some historic neighborhoods, such as those that might be found on the National Register of Historic Places, additions to an original house might be designed to create a strong distinction between the addition and the original structure in order to highlight the original historic house. However, in the case of the Taafe-Frances neighborhood, it is the overall scale and traditional pre-World War II character of the homes in the area that gives the neighborhood its distinction, rather than any historic landmark quality of individual homes. In this neighborhood, it is more desirable to approach the design with the goal of creating additions that appear as though they might have been built concurrently with the original house. However, it will usually be most successful if one is able visually identify the original one-story home. The examples shown to the right accomplish this effectively.

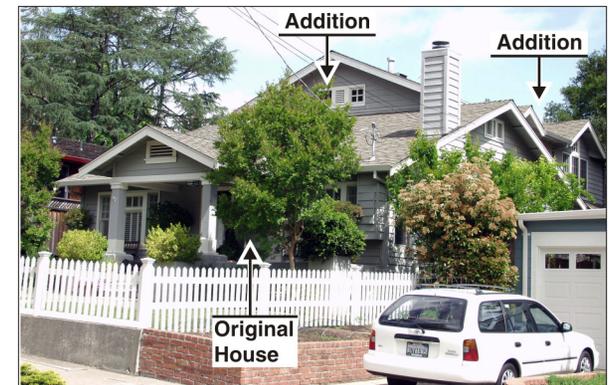
a) Design second floor and two-story additions to appear as though they were constructed at the same time as the original house. The result should be consistent with examples of two-story homes originally built in that architectural style.

b) Relate roof forms to the existing house. Similar roof shapes, slopes and materials should be used.

c) Window types, proportions and locations should be related to the existing first floor windows.



*Example of a new two-story addition well-integrated with the original house*



*Another well-integrated two-story addition*



*Another well-integrated two-story addition*



*Another well-integrated two-story addition*

### 3.3 PLANNING FOR EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

The exteriors of homes within the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood have changed over the years as a result of many small improvements for normal maintenance and for upgrades as new products and materials have become available. This process will continue far into the future.

The goal of these guidelines is to encourage those improvements to be made in a manner that respects and reinforces the special qualities of the neighborhood that led to its designation as a Heritage Housing District.

#### 3.3.1 Design home entries with sensitivity to the architectural style and the neighborhood.

Most architectural styles have a distinctively unique entry type. The photos below and to the right illustrate some of the common entry types in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood. There are many variations on these themes, but all entries tend to be modest, small in scale, and consistent with the architectural style of the house.



*Projecting Entry*



*Recessed Entry*



*Projecting Porch*



*Entry under Roof*

#### WHICH EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRE DESIGN REVIEW?

Not all improvements to an existing home require Design Review. For example, interior improvements may require a Building permit, but are not covered by or subject to these design guidelines.

For exterior improvements, the lists below include some of the items that do and do not require Planning review and approval. This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult Planning staff for information on review requirements for specific planned exterior improvements.

#### Improvements not requiring Design Review

- Repainting with the same colors
- Minor repair using the same materials
- Interior changes

#### Improvements requiring Design Review:

- Changes to existing doors or windows
- New doors or windows
- Changes in exterior wall cladding
- Changes in color
- Re-roofing
- Additions
- Changes in architectural style

*Additional explanation of reviews types and processes is provided on page 7.*

a) Avoid using an entry type that is not part of the style. For example, avoid using projecting entries, especially those with an eave line higher than the first floor roof eave, for Ranch Style houses which typically have their entry placed under the roof eave.



*Avoid formal entries like this with eave lines higher than the adjacent first floor roof eave*

b) Orient the entry to the street front. It should be visible from the street.

c) Provide a separate walkway from the sidewalk to the entry as is common in the neighborhood. Avoid entries that are out of scale with the house or surrounding neighborhood.

d) Entry columns, railings, steps, details, and lights are just a few elements that can be used to add individuality to a house. Generally, wood columns, posts, railings, and decorative details will be more appropriate to the traditional styles of the neighborhood than metal. Avoid vinyl or fiberglass materials. Some entry detail examples are shown to the right.



*Wood columns, posts, rails and decorative details add visual interest to this home entry*



*The detailed wood doors and decorative carriage lights are consistent with the architectural style of the two homes above and below*



### 3.3.2 Match the original house materials and details.

a) When a remodel requires the use of newly constructed exterior elements, they should be identical in size, shape and location as the original, and should utilize the same materials as the existing house.

### 3.3.3 Match new windows to the existing house and architectural style.

a) Use windows of similar size and proportions as the original house. If in doubt or if a large number of windows are being replaced, select window types to complement the style of the house. Each architectural style generally has one or two window types that are traditional to the style. Double hung windows, for example, are common features of the Craftsman Style while casement windows are seen frequently in Mission and Spanish Eclectic styles.

b) Limit the number of different window types and proportions to enhance the visual unity of the house design.

c) Arrange windows in patterns and groupings consistent with the architectural style. Many architectural styles have individual windows that are grouped into patterns of two, three or more windows. Be conscious of this fact, and organize the windows to complement the style.

d) For second floor additions to existing homes, match the windows on the original first floor.

e) Match the size and shape of window shutters to the shape and size of the windows. Shutters that are large enough to cover the windows, if closed, should be the goal. Hinges on shutters to allow their closure are desirable, but not required. Avoid very

narrow shutters that are clearly not wide enough to cover the window opening.

f) Wood windows and trim are common in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood. Wood is still the desired choice for architectural styles that traditionally used wood. Today there are some window materials, such as vinyl clad wood windows, that are not noticeably different visually from wood at a short distance. These may be used only if their visual appearance matches wood.

g) Generally, avoid metal windows. They may be considered acceptable for a Moderne Style house, but would be strongly discouraged for all other styles.

h) Most architectural styles - except Mission, Spanish Eclectic or Moderne - should have wood trim around the windows. The trim width should be matched to the style, but in general, should not be less than 3 1/2 inches wide. Head trim depth should be equal to or wider than the jamb casing.



*Wood trim with projecting heads and sills are common in traditional architectural styles*

i) Projecting window sills and heads are strongly encouraged unless the architectural style would not normally have those features.

j) Wood trim is also encouraged on stucco houses unless the window frames are recessed at least 4 inches from the outside face of the wall. The use of stucco covered foam trim is strongly discouraged. However, high density foam trim with crisp edges may be considered.

k) Divided light windows (i.e., larger window panes broken up into smaller pieces) are common in many traditional home styles. Use either vertical or square proportions for the smaller window elements. Be consistent in the proportions (i.e., the ratio of the horizontal to the vertical dimension) of the smaller panes. Do not use snap-in flat grids to simulate divided lights. Use either true divided lights or one of the newer window systems with double-pane glass and dimensional muntins on both the exterior and interior of the glass. The example to the below right is the most convincing substitute due to the spacers located between the two glass panes. Use consistently for windows on all sides of the house.



*True Divided Light Window*



*Simulated Divided Light Window*

**3.3.4 Add bay windows with caution.**

a) New bay windows are permitted only when they are consistent with the existing style, design and character of the structure.

b) New bay windows should be built in the same size, shape, dimension, proportions, material and type of foundation and roof typical of the architectural style.



*Matching the bay window roof material to the house is often a good way to integrate it into the home design*



*Good example of a bay window, shutters and matching windows adding rich detail to a home's street facade*

c) Generally, traditional architectural styles will require either a foundation to the ground or substantial supporting brackets below a bay window. Floating windows without support are rarely appropriate.



*The example above shows two traditional means of supporting bay windows. In this case, a metal roof is used in-lieu of matching the house roof.*

d) Care should taken to avoid large bay windows that dominate the front facade.

e) Bay windows and more solid bay projections with windows are often good ways to add visual interest to side walls on corner lots and at driveways

where they would be visible from the street and sidewalk.



*The bay projection on the side wall of this Taafe-Frances neighborhood house adds visual interest*

**3.3.5 Use building materials that are authentic to the architectural style and neighborhood.**

a) Use natural/original construction materials (e.g., real wood siding, stone, brick, shingles, plaster) which match and are consistent with the existing materials of the structure. The use of faux stone, for example, is not appropriate.

b) New materials should match original materials in shape, size, dimension, texture and pattern.

c) Avoid rough textured stucco in favor of a smooth sand finish, unless the original finish is rough.

d) Composite, synthetic, metal, vinyl, plastic or fabricated imitation wood products, painted brick or imitation used brick will generally not be approved. Some exceptions to the authentic building materials requirement may be made on a case-by-case basis when it can be demonstrated that a lay person would

be unlikely to discern the difference. For the use of a substitute material to be approved, it must appear the same as the authentic material at a distance of 3 feet if used on the first floor and 10 feet if used on the second floor. Material samples, photographs and specific locations where the material can be seen in use may be required to assist staff in the evaluation of alternative materials.

e) The decision-making body may approve an alternative to the original building material if matching the original material is not feasible due to unreasonable cost, commercial availability, or health and safety considerations.

### 3.4 PLANNING FOR A NEW HOUSE

Most homes in the neighborhood were constructed in the first third of the Twentieth Century. They are informal in character and modest in detail. The goal of the City is to ensure that any new home constructed in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood is sympathetic to and compatible with this existing fabric, scale and character.

#### 3.4.1 Select a traditional architectural style that will fit with the neighborhood scale and character.

- a) New homes that are large with very formal styles and/or with elaborate decorative detailing would not fit well into the neighborhood.
- b) Selection of an architectural style similar to one that already exists in the neighborhood will likely be the most successful approach.
- c) A few contemporary home examples that might be appropriate are shown below and to the right. There are many others that could fit comfortably into the neighborhood if designed properly.



### DEMOLITIONS

The creation of the Taaffe-Frances Heritage Housing District was intended to preserve the unique housing in the neighborhood. The demolition of existing houses in the neighborhood is strongly discouraged.

However, there may be instances when an existing house is so seriously damaged by fire, seismic event or other condition as to justify demolition. In some of these instances, demolition may be required for public safety reasons.

An applicant seeking the demolition of all or a portion of an existing house in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood must apply for a Resource Alteration Permit to be considered by the Heritage Preservation Commission at a public hearing. Owners must hire a consultant to prepare a historical evaluation of the property, and environmental review is required. Consult with Planning staff for additional information and guidance prior to planning any demolition.

### 3.4.2 Respect the predominant house patterns in the neighborhood.

- Place garages at the rear of the parcel.
- Limit driveways to one car in width.
- Roof eaves at the first floor along street frontage will most easily fit into the neighborhood.
- Provide an entry to the house consistent with the architectural style, and similar in scale to others in the neighborhood.
- Avoid tall floor-to-ceiling heights to avoid a house that appears more massive than others nearby.
- Provide second story spaces within the roof form, if possible. If a visible second story is necessary, locate it toward the rear of the site away from street frontages.

### 3.4.3 Use materials and finishes that are common to the neighborhood.

- Stucco and horizontal wood siding are the predominant materials in the neighborhood, with isolated examples of brick seen mostly as an accent material. Stone veneer is not part of the neighborhood materials vocabulary.

### 3.4.4 Use architectural and decorative details that are common to the neighborhood.

- All architectural features (e.g., entries and windows) should be consistent with the traditional architectural style selected.
- Stucco and brick side wall chimneys are common features of the neighborhood. Consider using them to break up and add visual interest to blank walls. Chimneys will be required for gas fireplaces for

any architectural style that would have traditionally had a chimney.

c) Drawing from details and materials in the neighborhood can assist in comfortably fitting a new home into its surroundings. Some common details in the Taaffe-Frances neighborhood include:

- Exposed rafter tails
- Gable and Shed dormers
- Contrasting gable-end infill
- Decorative gable-end roof vents
- Shaped living room windows
- Divided light windows
- Wood shutters
- Shaped chimneys
- Wood window trim
- Decorative metal details on Spanish-Style homes
- Pot shelves
- Low wood walls with landscaping at side property lines



*Gable-end infill*



*Decorative gable-end roof vent and pot shelf*



*Low wood walls with landscaping*



*Exposed rafter tails and shaped chimney*



*Shaped window, decorative tile and metal grilles*



*Wood shutters, applied decorative detail, shaped walls*



*Wood shutters, divided light window and flag bracket*



*Dormers, wood shutters, divided light windows, carriage lights, and decorative door trim*



*Shaped window and chimney, divided light windows, decorative roof vents, and shaped wall extensions*



*Wood shutters, decorative roof vents, and detailed column caps*



**GLOSSARY****Bay Projection**

A projecting element on the exterior of the house. Similar to a bay window, but without vision glazing.

**Bay Window**

A window projecting outward from the main wall of a building.

**Belly Band**

A continuous horizontal band of brick, stone or wood on the exterior wall of a building, used for decorative purposes, or as a means of breaking up a large expanse of wall surface. Also known as a Belt Course.

**Brackets**

Plain or decorated projecting support members found under eaves or other overhangs.

**Carriage Lights**

Matching exterior decorative wall-mounted lights on each side of a house entry or garage door.

**Casement Window**

A window containing two opening segments with hinges on their vertical edges and separated by a vertical frame element.

**Craftsman Style**

A traditional architectural style of the early 20th century, incorporating locally handcrafted wood, glass, and metal work, that was simple and elegant. A reaction to Victorian opulence and the increasingly common mass-produced housing elements, the style incorporated clean lines, a sturdy structure and natural materials.

**Dormer**

A vertical window projecting from the slope of a roof. Gable dormers have gable roofs while shed dormers have one plane sloped roofs.

**Divided Light Window**

Windows divided into smaller segments of glazing by intermediate dividing members called muntins.

**Double Hung Window**

A window of two parts located one above the other with each section capable of sliding vertically to open and close them.

**Eave**

That portion of the roof which projects beyond the walls.

**Facade**

The face or elevation of a building.

**Gable**

The triangular portion at the end of a roof composed to two downward sloping planes on either side of a central, horizontal ridge.

**Lattice**

An openwork grill of interlacing wood strips used as screening or as a base for climbing landscaping.

**Mission Style**

A style of architecture associated with that of the early Spanish Colonial missions in Mexico and the southwestern United States.

**Muntin**

A secondary framing member used to divide and hold the panes of glass in a multiple-lite window or glazed door.

**Plate Height**

The distance between a home's finished floor and the top of the horizontal beam on which the roof rafters rest. Plate height may differ from interior ceiling height when vaulted ceilings are used.

**Pot Shelf**

A shallow horizontal wood or metal projection from an exterior wall, supported by brackets and used for the display of potted plants and flowers.

**Ranch Style**

An architectural style first popularized in the 1930s and extremely popular during the 1950s to 1980s. The style is often characterized by one story profiles with low, roof lines, simple floor plans, attached garages, and large windows and sliding glass doors.

**Roof Pitch**

The angle of the sloped planes of a roof - often expressed in the rise in inches for every foot of horizontal distance, as in a 4 in 12 pitch.

**Setbacks**

The horizontal distances a structure is held away from the adjacent property lines. Also used to describe the off-set distances between horizontal or vertical wall planes of a structure.

**Shutters**

A movable screen or cover for a window, usually hinged and often fitted with louvers.

**Simulated Divided Light Window**

Windows, utilizing surface-mounted interior and exterior dimensional muntins, which are designed to give the window an appearance of being divided into smaller segments of glazing.

**Spanish Eclectic Style**

An architectural style drawn from historic Spanish and Mission that became popular in California following the Panama-Pacific Exposition held in San Diego in 1915.

**Trellis**

A horizontal light framework, freestanding or projecting from the face of wall, used for the purposes of sun shading and/or the support of vines.

**Window Jamb**

The vertical side frame elements of a door or window opening.

**Window Lintel**

A horizontal top member of a window, door or other opening.

**Window Sill**

The framing member that forms the lower side of an opening, such as a window or door sill.

APPENDICES

- A 2008 Home Conditions (Age, Size, and Lot Data)\*

\*Note that the information in this appendix is based on available Santa Clara County Assessor's data as of January 2009. It is provided for reference purposes only and is not intended to be an accurate record of actual property conditions.

**APPENDIX A**  
**2008 Home Conditions (Age, Size and Lot)**

City of Sunnyvale  
**Taaffe-Frances Heritage Neighborhood Design Guidelines**

APN	Site Number	Site Street Direction	Site Street	Parcel Size (Sq. Ft.)	Year Built	Bathrooms	Bedrooms	Building (Sq. Ft.)	Garage (Sq. Ft.)
20929001	505	S	Frances Street	6500	1935	1	3	1580	360
20929002	519	S	Frances Street	6500	1995	2.5	4	1768	420
20929003	523	S	Frances Street	6500	1937	1	3	1568	324
20929004	527	S	Frances Street	6500	1935	3	5	2999	550
20929005	531	S	Frances Street	6500	1928	1	2	1120	324
20929006	535	S	Frances Street	6500	1926	1	2	888	216
20929007	541	S	Frances Street	6500	1933	1	2	1096	360
20929008	545	S	Frances Street	6500	1938	1	2	1186	280
20929009	549	S	Frances Street	6500	1949	2	3	1541	512
20929010	555	S	Frances Street	6500	1934	1	2	1010	216
20929011	567	S	Frances Street	6500	1938	1	2	1517	400
20929012	571	S	Frances Street	6500	1948	2	2	1538	286
20929013	575	S	Frances Street	6500	1932	2	2	925	836
20929014	581	S	Frances Street	6500	1923	1	2	1148	216
20929021	576	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1940	1	2	977	240
20929022	574	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1941	1	3	1537	360
20929023	570	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1954	0	0	1628	0
20929024	568	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1941	1	2	1172	400
20929025	562	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1954	0	0	1628	0
20929026	560	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1939	1	3	1955	480
20929027	554	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1948	1	2	728	360
20929028	542	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1940	1	3	1567	391
20929029	536	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1951	2	3	1674	288
20929030	532	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1939	1	2	1261	440
20929031	528	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1939	1	2	1265	440
20929032	524	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1948	2.5	3	1851	672
20929033	518	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1939	1	2	1125	440
20929034	500	S	Taaffe Street	6500	1943	1.5	3	1634	324
20929035	505	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1928	1	2	1272	560

APN	Site Number	Site Street Direction	Site Street	Parcel Size (Sq. Ft.)	Year Built	Bathrooms	Bedrooms	Building (Sq. Ft.)	Garage (Sq. Ft.)
20929036	519	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1930	2	3	1330	216
20929037	523	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1928	2	2	1380	240
20929038	527	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1936	1	2	1240	288
20929039	531	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1936	1	2	1007	378
20929040	537	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1931	1	3	1258	216
20929041	541	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1938	1	2	1098	0
20929042	555	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1922	1	2	1264	216
20929043	559	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1935	1	2	1010	324
20929044	563	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1941	2	5	1545	400
20929045	567	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1926	1.5	3	1131	216
20929046	571	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1932	1	2	1040	216
20929047	575	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1928	1	2	1065	216
20929048	577	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1930	1	2	968	216
20929049	585	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1939	1	2	1163	600
20929050	591	S	Taaffe Street	5000	1940	1.5	2	1670	268
20930001	505	S	Murphy Avenue	9750	1940	1	3	1690	520
20930017	580	S	Frances Street	7150	1928	1	2	1583	322
20930018	574	S	Frances Street	6500	1928	1	4	1339	324
20930019	570	S	Frances Street	6500	1920	1	3	1200	360
20930020	568	S	Frances Street	6500	1928	1	2	996	216
20930021	554	S	Frances Street	6500	1936	1	2	1324	216
20930022	550	S	Frances Street	6500	1937	1	2	1994	360
20930023	546	S	Frances Street	6500	1941	1	3	1562	342
20930024	540	S	Frances Street	6500	1934	1	2	927	216
20930025	536	S	Frances Street	6500	1938	1	2	1056	0
20930026	534	S	Frances Street	6500	1980	3.5	4	2648	572
20930027	530	S	Frances Street	9750	1957	2	4	2361	420
20930028	520	S	Frances Street	6500	1927	2	5	2124	400
20930029	500	S	Frances Street	9750	1939	2	4	3018	816