

SHADOWLAWN INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Background

The Shadowlawn neighborhood is a residential enclave located in the southern half of the Resort Area of the city. Residential units consist primarily of single-family dwellings with small clusters of multi-family units.

The neighborhood was platted in the first half of the 20th Century. As a result, the streets and lots are laid out in size and pattern typical of that period. Streets, with right-of-ways of 50 feet, are aligned on a grid pattern. The majority of the lots were established at 30 feet by 100 feet; however, some of the lots adjacent to Lake Rudee were established at 25 feet by 100 feet.

The residential dwellings constructed in the neighborhood vary in style and size and are representative of single-family architecture from throughout the 20th Century. Most of the homes appear to have been constructed during the decades from 1950 to the present, and are Colonial Revival or Ranch in style. The number of stories is one or two, but one-story dwellings seem to predominate. Due to the fact that these styles of homes cannot be constructed on single 30 foot lots, most of them are constructed on a combination of two or more of the 30 foot lots. In most cases, all of the lots in the combined parcel have been built on, but in some cases, one of the 30 foot lots in a combined parcel may not have been built on. As a result, there are several 30 foot or 25 foot lots remaining between constructed homes. Occasionally, two or more unbuilt lots (in the same or separate ownership) may be adjacent to each other, resulting in a potential of 60 or more feet width.

In the last decade, as individuals have sought to reside or own residential property in the neighborhood, homes have been constructed on some of these 'infill' lots, which represent the last residential development opportunities in the neighborhood. In most cases, from a standpoint of land use and aesthetic compatibility with the existing neighborhood, the resulting dwelling units have not been a success.

The reasons that most of these newer dwellings cannot be considered to be a major aesthetic and land use success is a direct result of the narrow lot width that the home is built on, the dimensional restrictions placed on new construction by the City's Zoning Ordinance, and the style and architectural design characteristics of the adjacent dwellings. Usually, new construction on the infill lots has resulted in narrow, two-story structures, of almost a townhouse style, located between one-story ranch style structures.

Section 502(e) of the City Zoning Ordinance prohibits a single nonconforming lot from being developed where two or more contiguous lots are being held in common ownership. Such lots must be combined to meet or more closely approximate the frontage and area requirements of the R-5S Residential Single-Family District. Any lot with a width less than 50 feet and an area less than 5000 square feet, where an adjacent property is owned by the same party, can only be approved for development through the subdivision variance process.

Compatibility Guidelines

Utilization of the following design and land use compatibility principles can help to ensure that new dwelling structures constructed on the infill lots in the Shadowlawn neighborhood are integrated into the character of the neighborhood and are less likely to negatively impact adjoining dwellings. Designing a dwelling to satisfy the factors will no doubt be more difficult than utilizing a design that simply fits the site and the accompanying zoning restrictions. The result, however, will be a dwelling that is compatible to the surrounding dwellings, in respect to design and land use, and that will give the impression to those who pass by that it has always been part of Shadowlawn.

Height, Width, and Proportion

- New infill structures should be constructed at a height that is compatible to the adjacent structures. If at all possible, the new dwelling should have the same number of stories as the dwellings on either side or be within 15% of the height of those dwellings. The majority of the dwellings in Shadowlawn are one-story and occasionally, two-story. Introduction of a narrow, two-story structure (which is the case most of the time in Shadowlawn) between two one-story structures creates an incompatibility that can, in effect, act as a detriment to the overall character of the neighborhood.
- Equally important to the height factor for a new infill structure is the width factor. The majority of the remaining infill lots are only 25 to 30 feet in width, with resulting structures of only 20 or less feet in width. Structures on either side of the infill lot were usually constructed on lots of 60 to 90 feet in width, with a resulting dwelling width of 30 to 50 feet. The resulting effect has been that of the insertion of a single townhouse dwelling between two ranch style dwellings. Every attempt should be made to utilize every inch of the available width of an infill lot.
- The relationship of the new structure's width to height establishes its proportion. The proportion of the new structure should be as similar as

possible and compatible with the proportion of existing adjacent structures. For example, if in adjacent dwellings, the proportion of the structure is such that for every one foot of height the width is one and one-half feet, the new infill structure should have a proportion as close to that as possible.

Location on Site / Setbacks / Relationship to the Street

- Probably the key factor in ensuring that a new infill structure possesses land use and aesthetic compatibility to the neighborhood is in the relationship of the structure to the street and to the adjacent structures. In order to have that relationship in a manner similar to the adjacent structures, all of the factors discussed in this section must be successfully satisfied. If a good relationship is achieved, two objectives will be met: first, the streetscape (the appearance of all of the buildings, landscaping, and other site improvements on a street seen as a whole) will be maintained, and second, the potential for negative land use impacts to adjacent properties will be reduced.
- The location of the structure on the site should be such that the new dwelling does not disrupt the existing rhythm of building width and spacing and does not have setbacks, which vary significantly from the predominant setbacks in the neighborhood. Accomplishing this on the 25 or 30 foot lots will be difficult, if not impossible. An exact rhythm of width and spacing does not currently exist in the neighborhood; however, there is a consistent rhythm that a design for an infill lot can strive to reach. To achieve a design that fits the rhythm of the other structures on the street as closely as possible, it will be necessary to utilize the full width of the lot. A minimum lot width of 35 feet with a buildable width of 25 feet should be strived for.
- The front yard setback should meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, while at the same time, be consistent with the front yard setbacks of the adjacent structures. In some cases, it might be necessary to encroach into the required rear yard setback due to the need to have a dwelling that has adequate floor area but still maintains proper height and width proportions.

Materials and Details

- Compatibility cannot be achieved if the building materials used on the facade (outside visible wall) of the structure and the details (windows, doors, decoration) differ substantially from those predominantly found on the other dwellings in the neighborhood. The common facade materials in

Shadowlawn are brick and clapboard-style siding (wood and vinyl). New infill structures, therefore, should utilize brick or clapboard-style siding on the exterior facade. Use of materials such as dryvit, stucco, or grooved plywood would reduce the possibility that the new structure would be compatible to the neighborhood.

- Similarly, compatibility can only be achieved if the decorative and functional details of the structure are as similar as possible to the surrounding dwellings. For example, if the surrounding dwellings commonly utilize multi-pane, double-hung windows, of a certain proportion, then the windows to be installed in the new structure should be as similar as possible to them in those respects. Installation of windows with large areas of glass and of irregular shapes probably would not be appropriate.

Parking

- If dealt with successfully, the manner in which the parking is arranged can ensure compatibility of the new dwelling to the surrounding dwellings. The predominant method of parking in the neighborhood is either on the street or on a single-stack driveway. This method of parking arrangement permits the remainder of the front yard area to be left as open space and lawn. New structures should try to achieve the same effect by installing a single-stack driveway and leaving the remaining portion of the front yard as open space or lawn. The paving of the entire front yard area is not desirable, because it will greatly reduce the potential compatibility of the dwelling with the surrounding dwellings. If it is absolutely necessary to utilize the entire front yard area for parking, the surface material should be of a type that permits a lawn groundcover to grow through, such as porous pavers.