



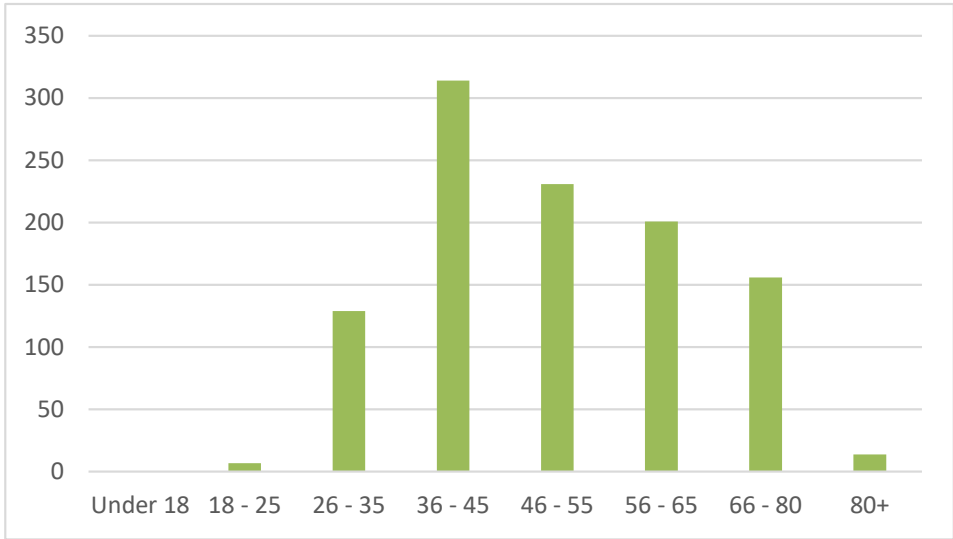
Visual Preference Survey Results

Working Group Meeting - June 11, 2020

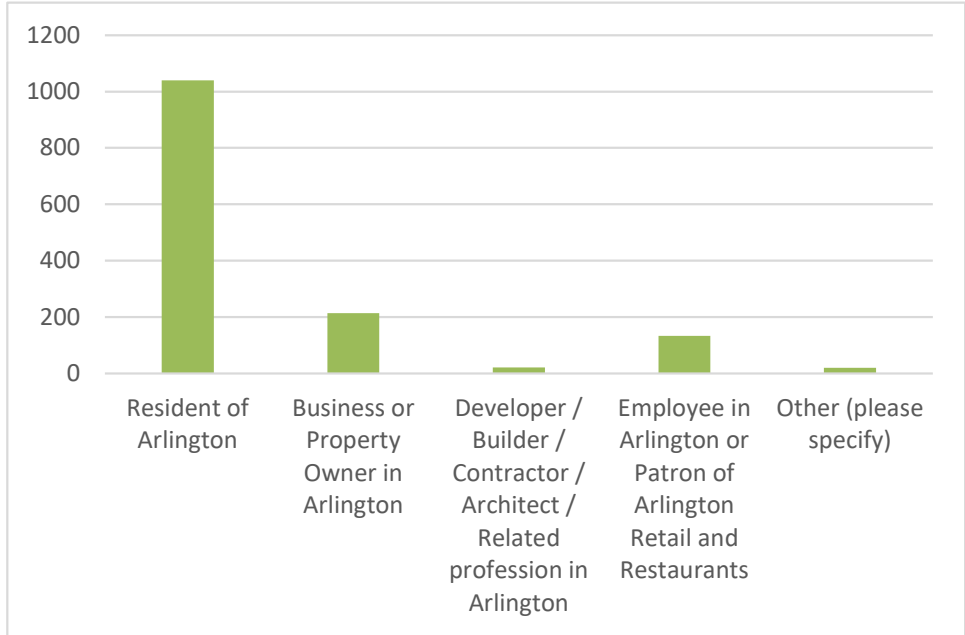
Visual Preference Survey - Respondents

A total of 1,071 responses were received as of June 8, 2020.

1. Please select your age group:



2. Please select your association(s) with the Town of Arlington:



What do you like about Arlington's residential neighborhoods?

Emergent themes from the 884 responses include:

- Walkable, friendly neighborhoods that are convenient to many amenities and good for families.
- Balance between density and quietness.
- Variety of neighborhoods and architectural character that reflect Arlington's history.
- Green spaces, yards, and trees.

Sample Responses:

"The walkability, how neighbors in my neighborhood often hang out in their front yards and porches, the tree canopy, the variety of housing styles especially older homes."

"Walkability. Even the densest sections of East Arlington maintain a feeling of openness that you simply do not get if you walk through Somerville or Cambridge. This is what I like most about Arlington-- a happy medium between the dense city and the suburban Lexington."

What are your thoughts on more recently built or renovated houses (from 2000 to today) in Arlington's residential neighborhoods?

Emergent themes from the 904 responses include:

- Inappropriate scale of many of the new houses relative to parcel and surrounding neighborhood context.
- Many new houses feel generic, boxy, oversized, and priced higher.
- Sensitive renovations were preferred.
- A sizable minority felt neutral or positive towards recent constructions.

Sample Responses:

"Renovations are usually attractive, but new construction is often bland and lacks character compared to older houses."

"Some are well designed, fit well with the neighborhood, respect neighbors rights and property, and are improvements to the neighborhood. However, a substantial number are completely out-of-place/character with respect to scale and massing, intrude significantly on neighbor's property with respect to loss of sunlight (shading), loss of privacy, and loss of sightlines/visual impairment..."

Single-Family Residential



Google Streetview



Zillow, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage



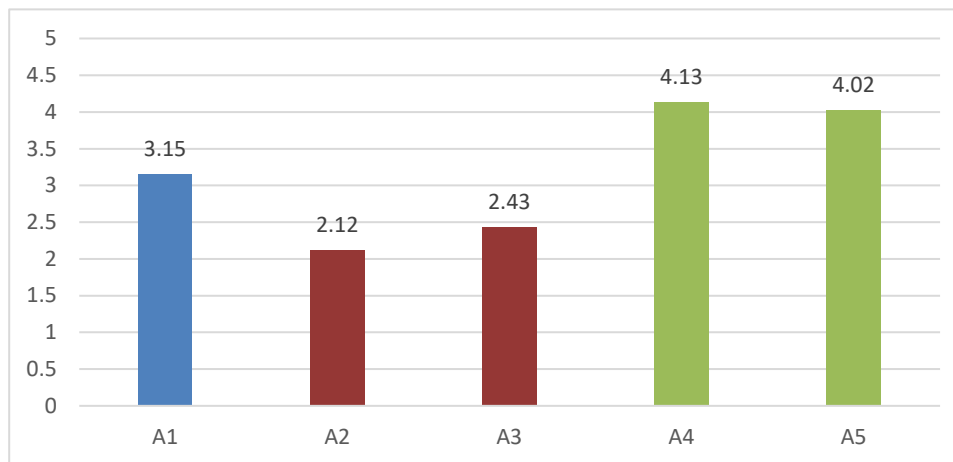
Codwell Banker Residential Brokerage



Zillow, Compass

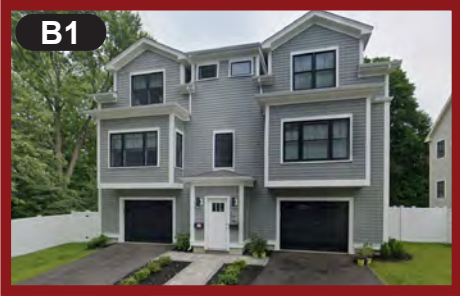


Compass



Green - Higher rating
Blue - Mixed/Neutral rating
Red - Lower rating

Two-Family Residential



Google Streetview



Redfin, MLS Property Information Network, Inc



Zillow, Eastern Massachusetts Realty Group



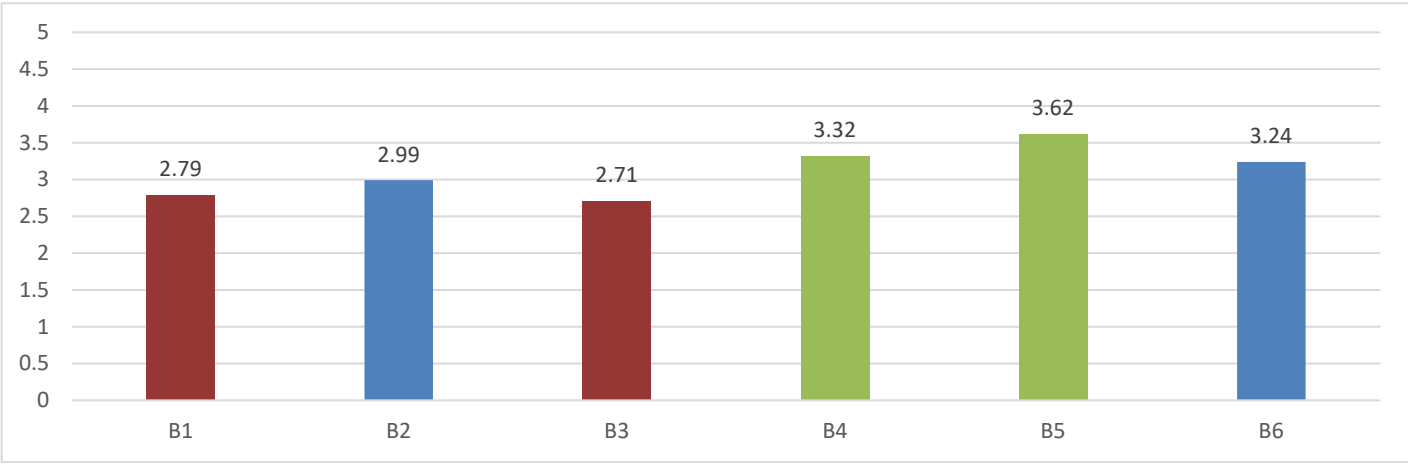
Google Streetview



Google Streetview



Google Streetview



Green - Higher rating
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 Red - Lower rating

Parking Strategies



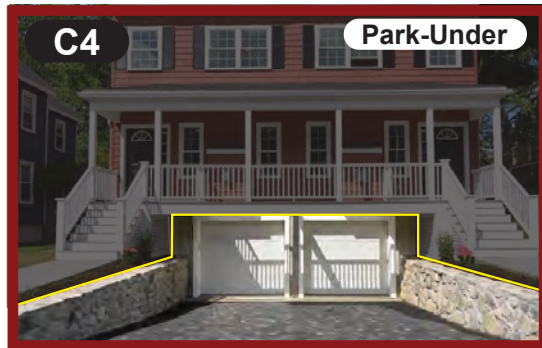
Google Streetview



Google Streetview



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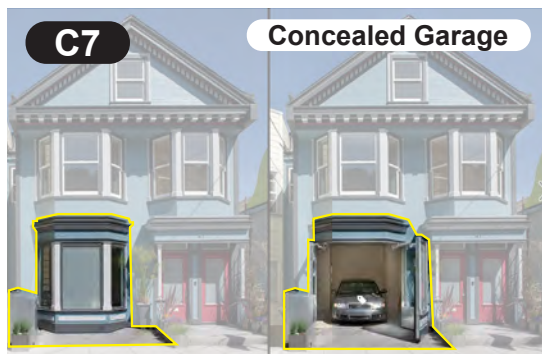
MLS Property Information Network, Inc



Google Streetview



Google Streetview

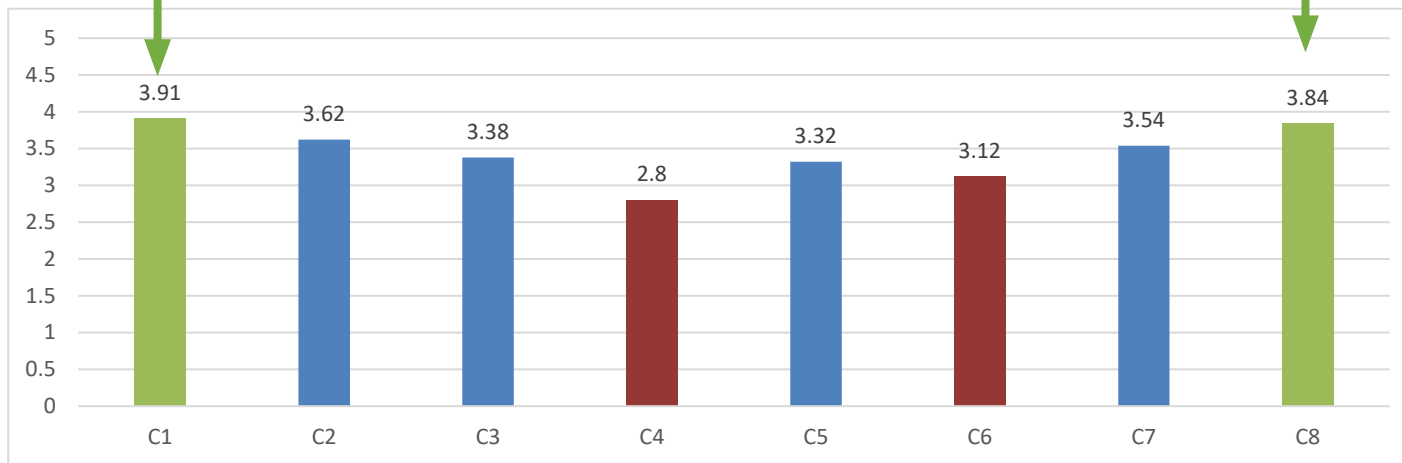


Architect -Levy Art N Architecture; Ken Gutmaker Photography



Houzz

Parking Strategies



Green - Higher rating
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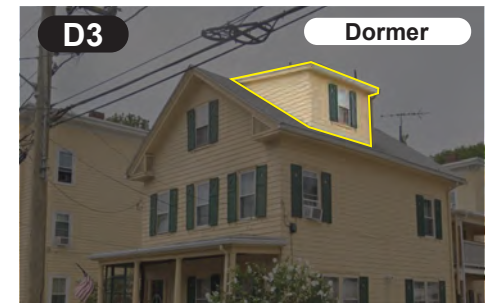
Additions: Dormers, Enclosed Porch



Google Streetview



Google Streetview



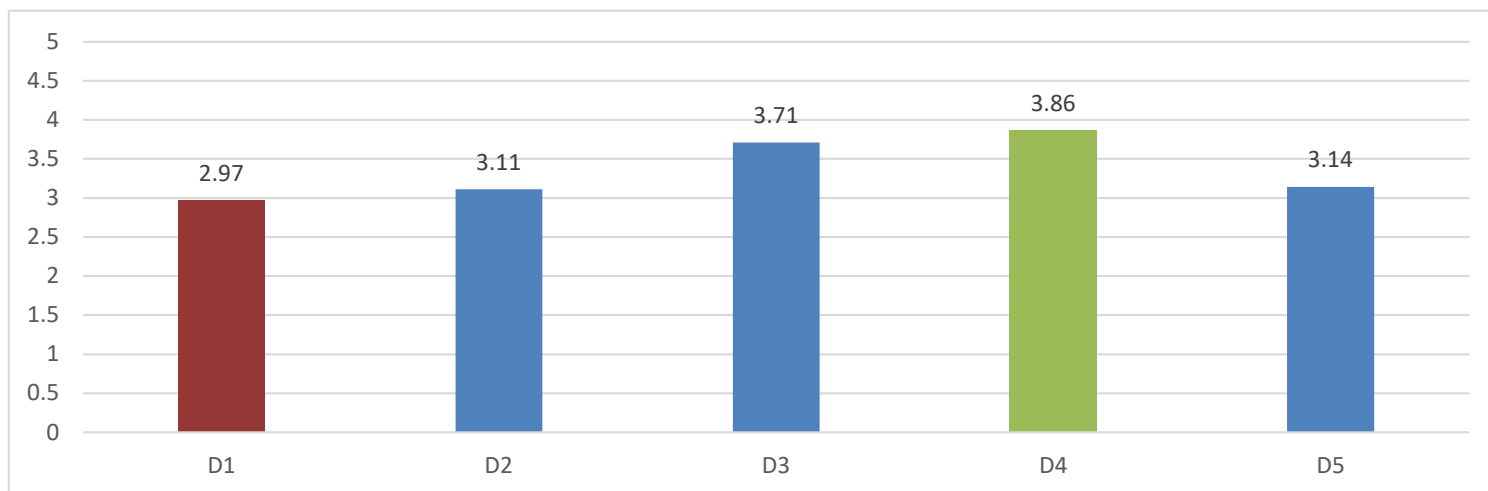
Google Streetview



Google Streetview



Google Streetview



Additions: Side, Rear



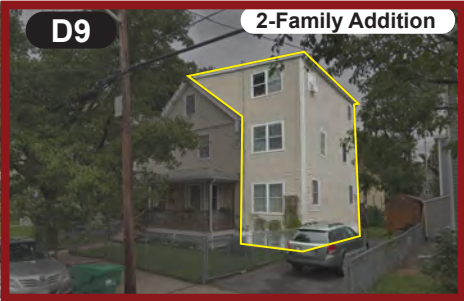
Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



Old House Online, Gordon Bock,



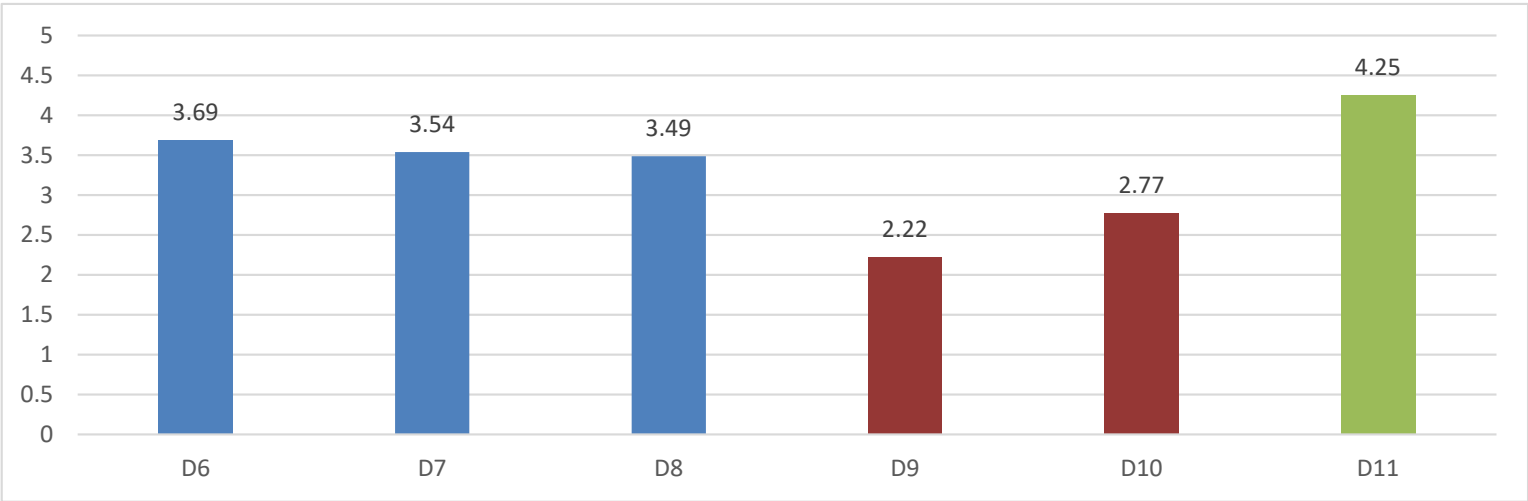
Google Streetview



Angela DiRusso of William Raveis R.E. & Home Services



Keith Robertson, Crismotec



Additions: Vertical



Old House Journal, Additions 101



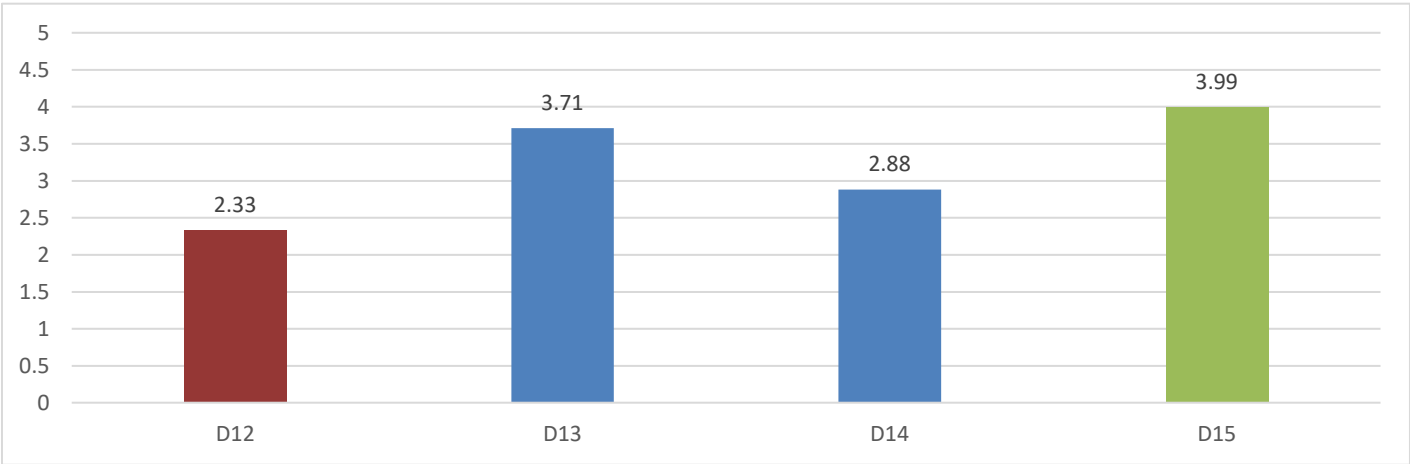
Old House Online, Gordon Bock



Old House Journal, Additions 101



Metzler Home Builders



While the focus of the design guidelines will be on the design of the building itself, do you have any thoughts about landscaping?

Emergent themes from the 517 responses include:

- Emphasis on the need for green space and tree cover while avoiding impermeable, paved yards.
- Avoid regulating or requiring a certain kind of landscaping and leave landscaping design decisions to homeowners.

Sample Responses:

“Landscaping can improve the visual look of a neighborhood. I think how one landscapes (if at all) should not be regulated.”

“It is important for houses to have yards with unpaved surfaces for rainwater management.”

“Eco-friendly landscaping vs. generic grassy lawns would be great. Gardens and raised beds also enhance quality of life and food security. Consider edible plants and fruit-bearing trees over simply aesthetically “pleasing” trees and shrubs.”

Now that you've taken the visual preference survey, what do you hope the Residential Design Guidelines will accomplish?

Emergent themes from the 620 responses include a desire for the guidelines to:

- Encourage diversity in high-quality design.
- Encourage new houses that fit in with the neighborhood, particularly around scale and lot coverage.
- Promotes better designs without creating too many restrictions to new housing and renovations.

Sample Responses:

"Give some guidelines without being overly intrusive."

"Flexibility to allow homeowners to build or add space while not completely being out of scale with neighbors, and while maintaining a pedestrian-scale street environment and "neighborly" feel. Along those lines front porches/stoops should be required or highly encouraged."

What concerns or reservations do you have about the Residential Design Guidelines?

Emergent themes from the 557 responses include concerns that the guidelines will:

- Be too strict and discourage any new development.
- Regulate taste, creating too much uniformity, or still allow oversized houses and lack enforcement.

Sample Responses:

“I am afraid if we make the guidelines appear very strict or arbitrary they will not be accepted, yet we need something to protect the integrity of the town architecture and greenspaces.”

“I am concerned that individual taste in housing design may be stifled to meet a community norm.”

Finally, what questions do you have about the Residential Design Guidelines?

Emergent questions from the 309 responses include:

- Clarity around goals, timeline, and process for the guidelines.
- How the guidelines will be used and enforced.

Sample Responses:

“Does Arlington want to maintain or to achieve an unique style while staying affordable? Does Arlington encourage sustainable building practices? Do other communities send out surveys?”

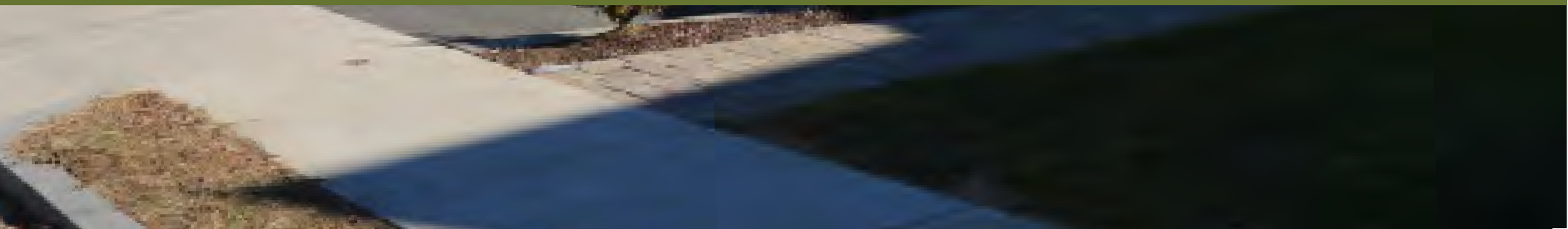
“What is the purpose of the guidelines? Who will be the final arbiter? Will they be used to unjustly prevent something from being built?”

Visual Preference Survey - Key Takeaways

- Respondents **love Arlington** because of its balance between urban convenience and the community feel of a quieter, smaller town.
- Respondents had **concerns about recent developments**, noting how many new homes were boxy and felt too large, relative to the lot and neighborhood.
- While some better **single-family examples** were well-received, none of the **two-family examples** were especially well-received.
- **Parking strategies** that de-emphasized the garage and car were well-received. Garages that dominated the facade were not well-received.
- **Additions and renovations** that looked as if they were originally built as part of the house were successful while over-sized additions and dormers were not.
- **Overall**, respondents hope the guidelines will be clear and enforceable. They hope that it will promote quality designs that fit well in the neighborhood and provide enough flexibility to not overly restrict development.



Workshop Facilitated Breakout Groups Concept



Guidelines - Testing Three Approaches

Option 1

The appearance of Attached Garages should be minimized. The attached garage should not dominate the principal facade.

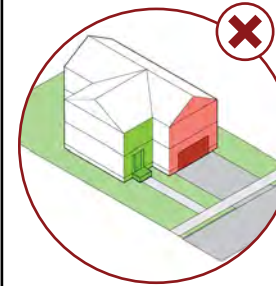
Option 2



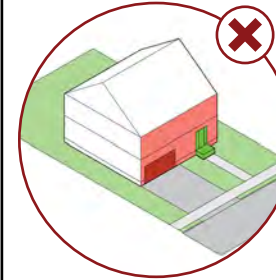
The appearance of the Attached Garages should be minimized. The attached garage should be distinct from the primary building and subordinate to the principal facade.

- The facade with the garage door must be set back at least 8 ft from the principal facade.
- Single-car garage doors are preferred. Double-car garage doors should ideally be set back further. Driveways should taper and not be wider than 12 ft at the point of intersection with the sidewalk.
- Permeable pavers should be used on the driveway.

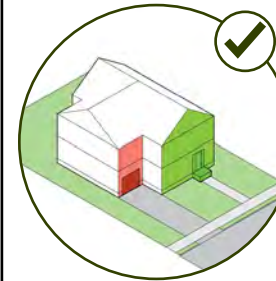
Option 3



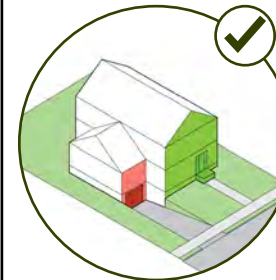
Attached Garage should not extend past the principal facade.



Attached Garage should not be flush with the principal facade.



Ground-level, Attached Garage should be set back at least 8 ft from the principal facade.



Park-Under, Attached Garage should be set back at least 8 ft from the principal facade.

Next Steps

1. **Draft Residential Design Guidelines for Community Review - Early Fall 2020**
2. **Design Residential Guideline Comment Period and Workshop - Fall 2020**
3. **Final Residential Design Guidelines - November 2020**