

RW CRCRC HEIGHT STUDY

CONTEXT

- Still a very high percentage of 1-story and 1-1/2 story homes in RW
- high percentage of new custom homes that are 1-story, or with a 1/2 story attic and/or basement garage/carport
- new custom homes that are 2-story often do not build to the maximum allowable height, or fully encompass 1st floor
- fully 2-story, and the introduction of 3- and 4-story is relatively new and an increasing trend, but not the "norm"

ACTIVE AND PENDING PERMITS

- 4 of 9 (44%) Pending permits are for homes that exceed 35ft. for a significant portion of the overall, but 2 are "in review".
- 19 of 30 (63%) Active Permits are for homes that exceed 35ft. for a portion of the overall building
- I cannot collect data on the heights of all the older homes in RW from observing from the street or going to the vault to look at old plans. From walking the neighborhood, my best guess:
 - In the last 10 years I can account for 2 that are 3-4 stories for a significant percentage of the overall, and
 - about 9 that appear between 35'-45' for some portion.

Sec. 107-71. - Maximum permissible height

No portion of any building or structure (except a chimney, attic vent, lightning rod, or any equipment required by the city building code) may exceed 35 feet in height. Except as may be required by applicable codes, no chimney, attic vent, lightning rod or required equipment may extend more than three feet above the highest point of the following: the coping of a flat roof, the deck line of a mansard roof, or the gable of a pitched or hipped roof.

Sec. 107-3. - Definitions

Building height, residential, means the vertical distance above a reference datum measured to the highest point of the building. The reference datum shall be selected by either of the following, whichever yields a greater height of the building:

1. The elevation of the highest adjoining original native ground surface within a five-foot horizontal distance of the exterior wall of the building when such original native ground surface is not more than ten feet above

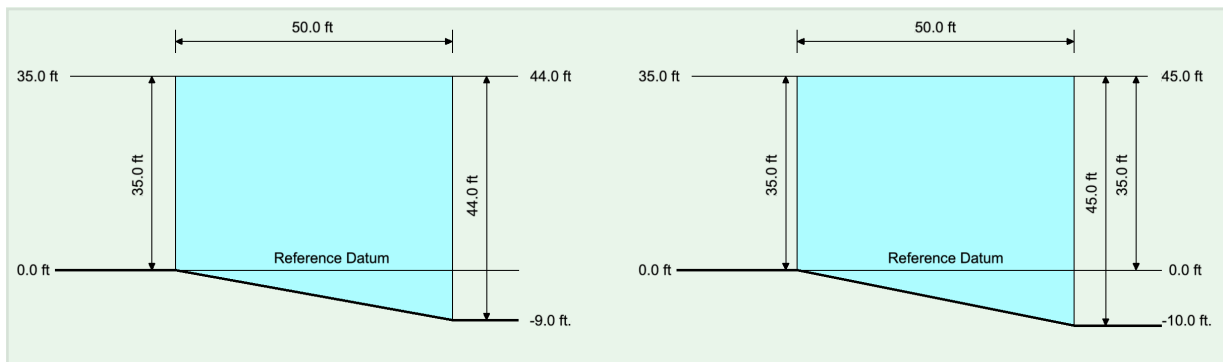
the lowest grade; or

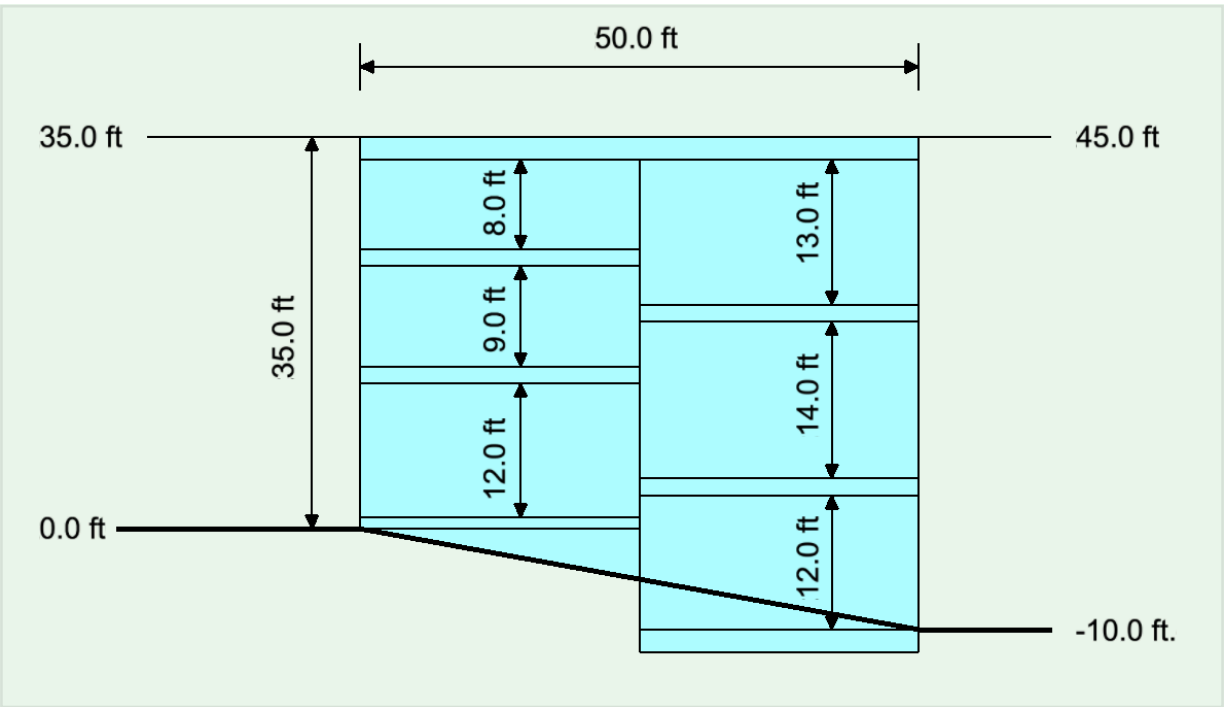
2. An elevation of ten feet higher than the lowest grade when the original native ground surface (described in subsection (1) of this section) is more than ten feet above lowest grade

ISSUES

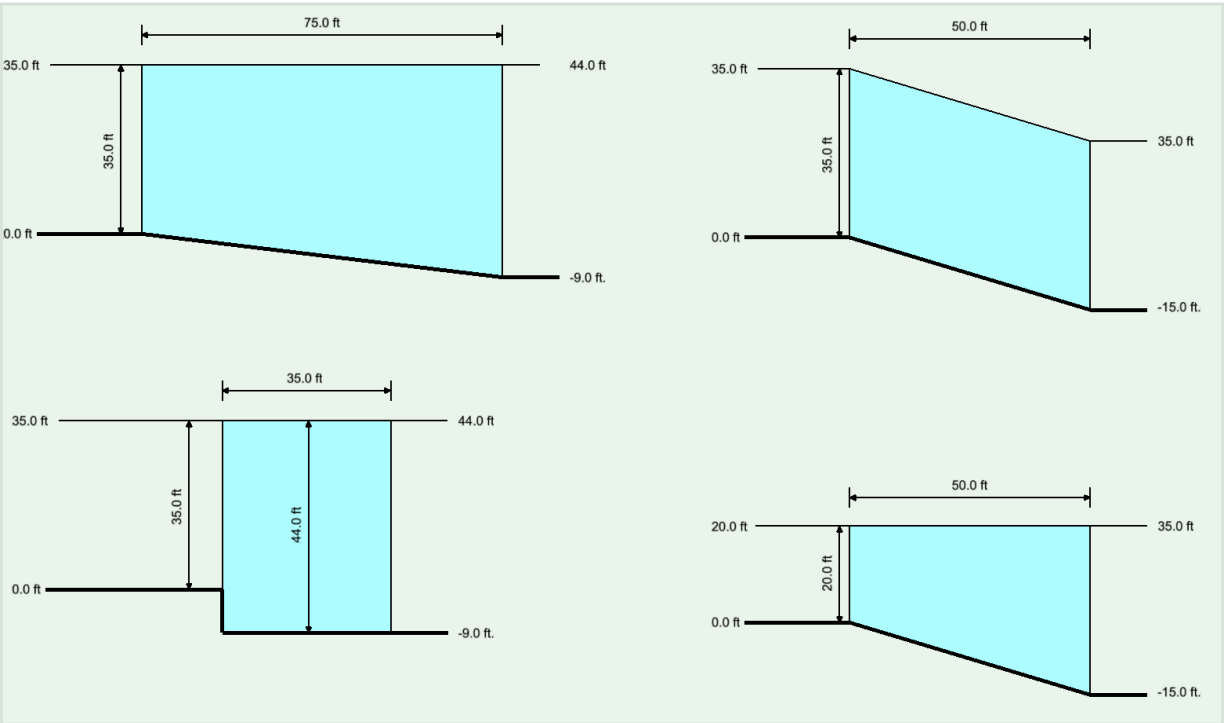
- Sec. 107-71 seems to be in conflict with Sec. 107-3 regarding maximum permissible height. Should we be enforcing maximum building height? Should it overlay the Definitions instead of the other way around?
- The definition of what is an "exterior wall" is unclear - does it include terraces, porches, columns, or must it be conditioned space?
- The newly revised definition of "lowest original native ground surface" could be qualified with, adjoining the exterior wall of the building, for both definitions.
- You can use Def. 1 to build from 35-44ft. depending on slope.
- You can use Def. 2 to build up to 45ft., which can encompass the entire buildable area by grading flat.
- There should not be a step-function that allows you to choose #1 or #2, which creates an incentive to game the system in order to get whichever is more preferable.
- There is little difference between Definition 1 and 2, and no clarity on how to enforce the 35ft. height requirement, so if they are both so similar, one new rule could be chosen for both.
- Spirit of the rule is not being followed and a statement to the intent of the rule could be considered in an effort to craft new wording that matches the spirit of the rule in the first place, for instance - trying to help those with steeply sloping lots, especially those that face a greenbelt and not a neighbor - or are impacted by excessive drainage issues - and define steep by either grade, and/or location, as in Zoning Districts

What current rules allow at a maximum:



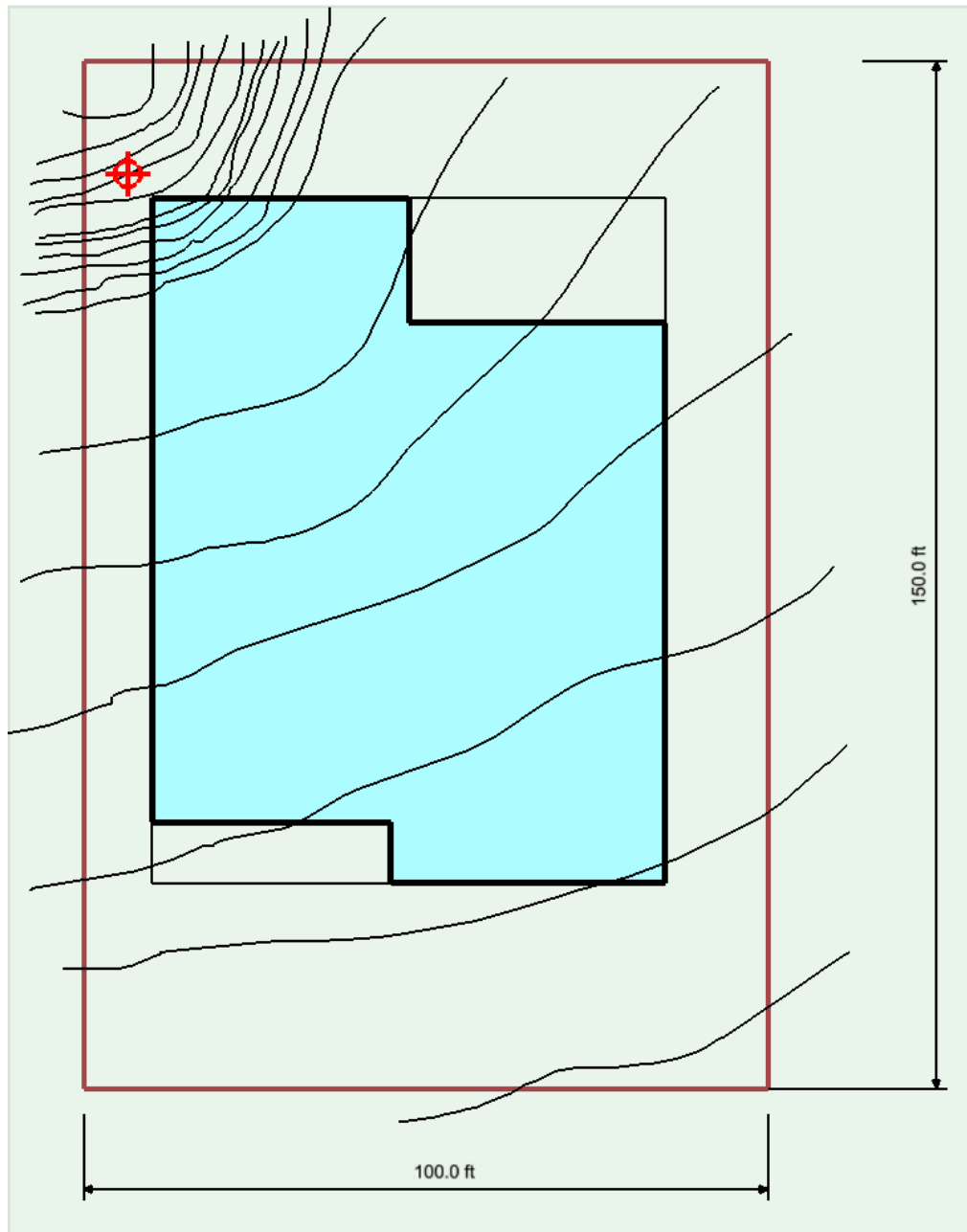


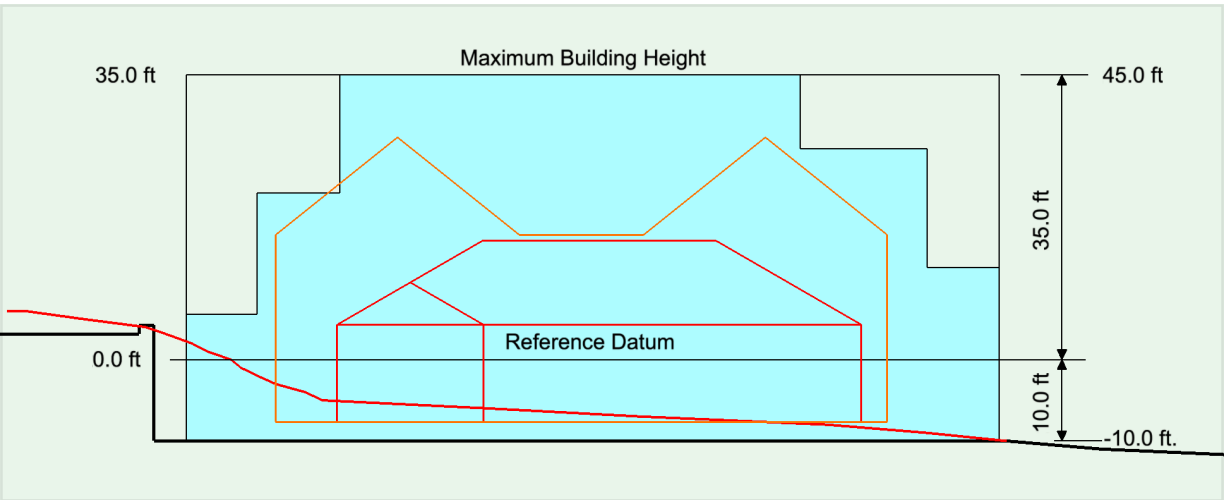
Additional Volumetric Examples:



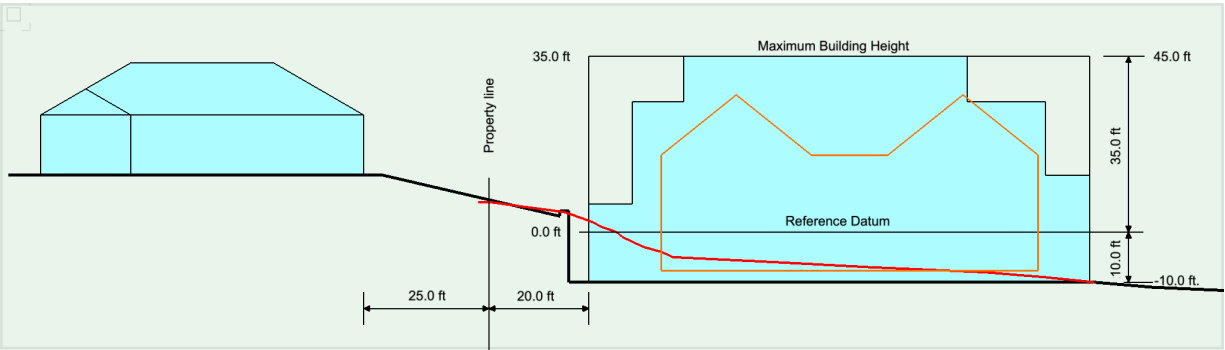
- A property may be generally flat, except for a portion on the perimeter which can allow for greater building height overall.
- This height difference can have implications for neighbors on three sides and across the street.
- Measuring the Reference Datum Point before site development is meaningless if the lot is then graded flat.

- The Reference datum should be the highest survey point before or after construction, whichever measurement is lower.
- A property can build a volumetric 45ft. box, while an adjacent neighbor on a flatter lot at nearly the same elevation can only build a volumetric 35ft. box. Another reason step-function is incompatible with our conditions.

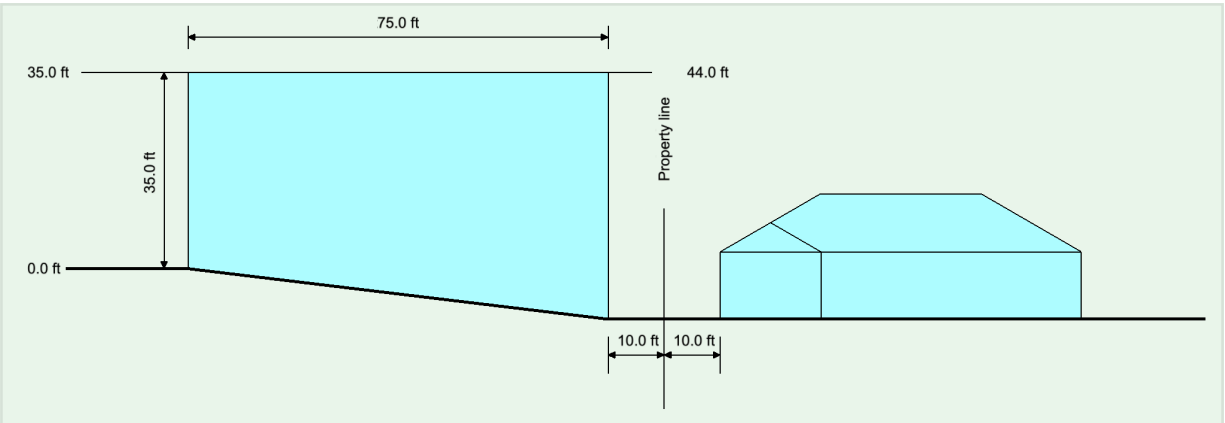




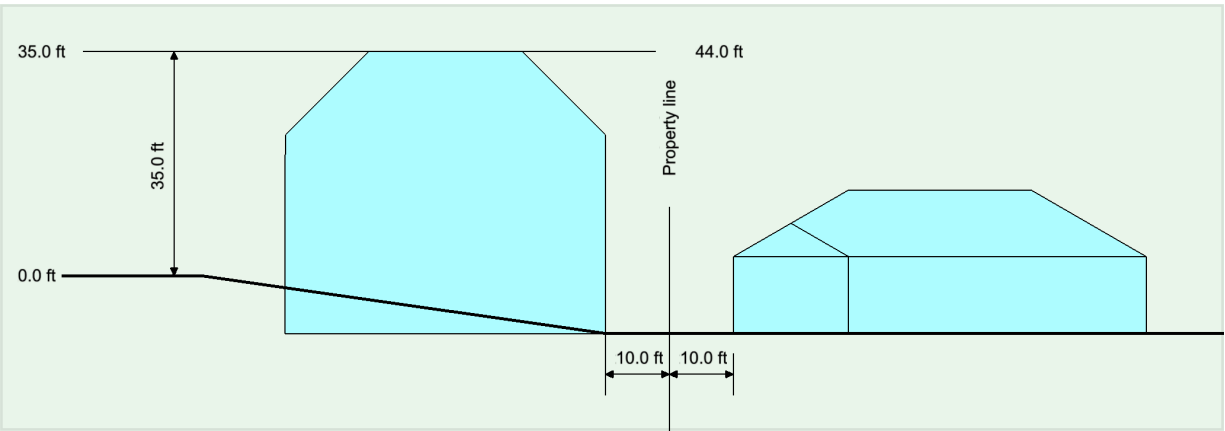
- For 1-story homes upslope that had sunlight and views over an existing 1- or 2-story home before, may be impacted by 3-4-stories.



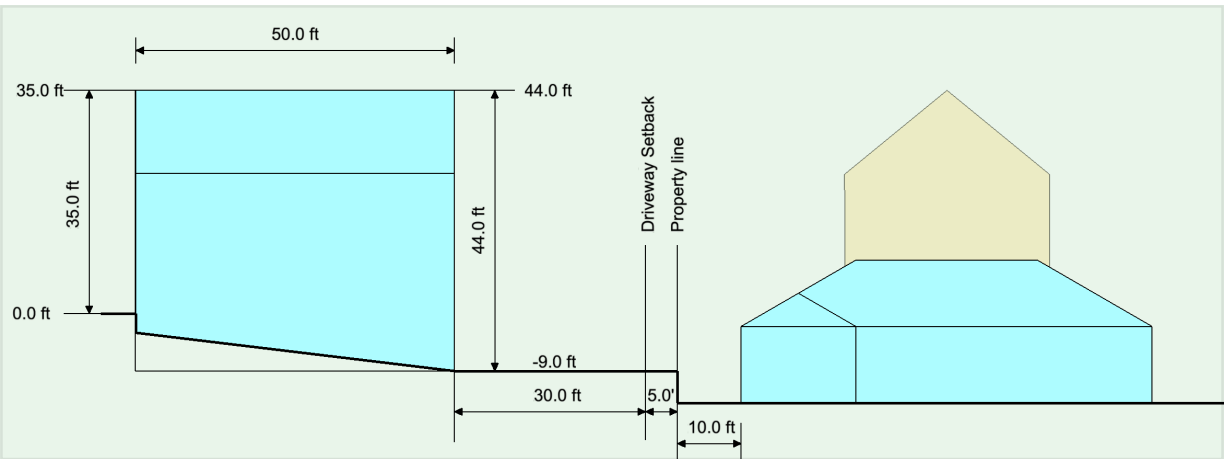
- There is no accounting for **side setback impacts** in our code
- There are no eave height requirements, which allows for a structure that looms over an adjacent property within 20' at a minimum, 30' at a maximum.
- There are a number of recent examples of this in RW.
- Homes can be impacted downslope, as well as upslope.



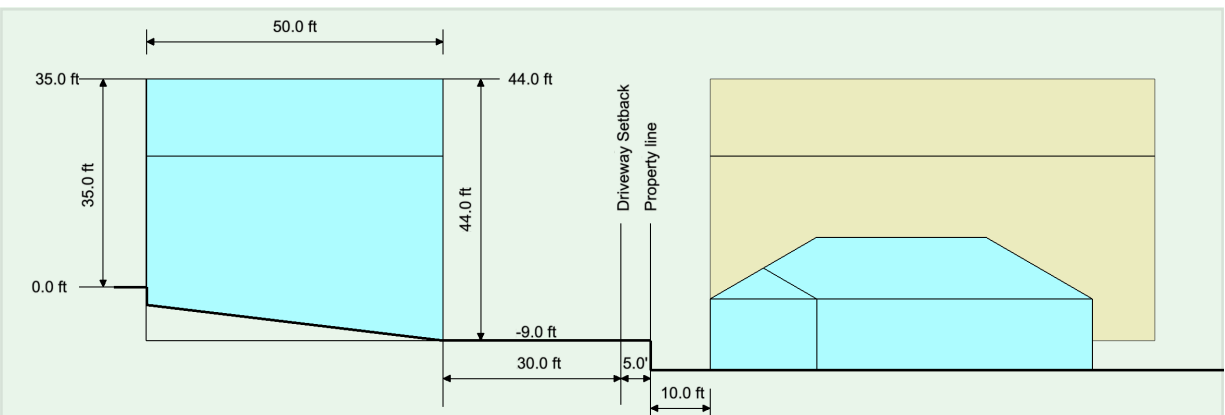
- Helps to mitigate the impact with a sloping roof:



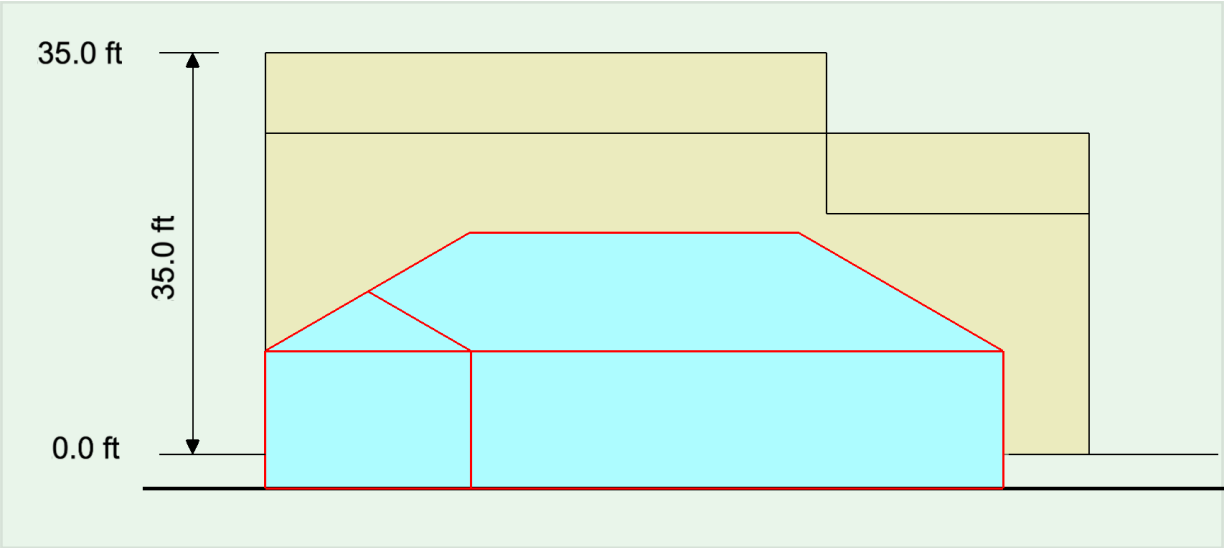
- Homes that have side entry garages reduce the impact by virtue of the 5' driveway setback, plus a minimum of 25-30' backing out distance.
- Also beneficial if the side elevation is narrow, and the highest point is literally a point and not a square or rectangle.



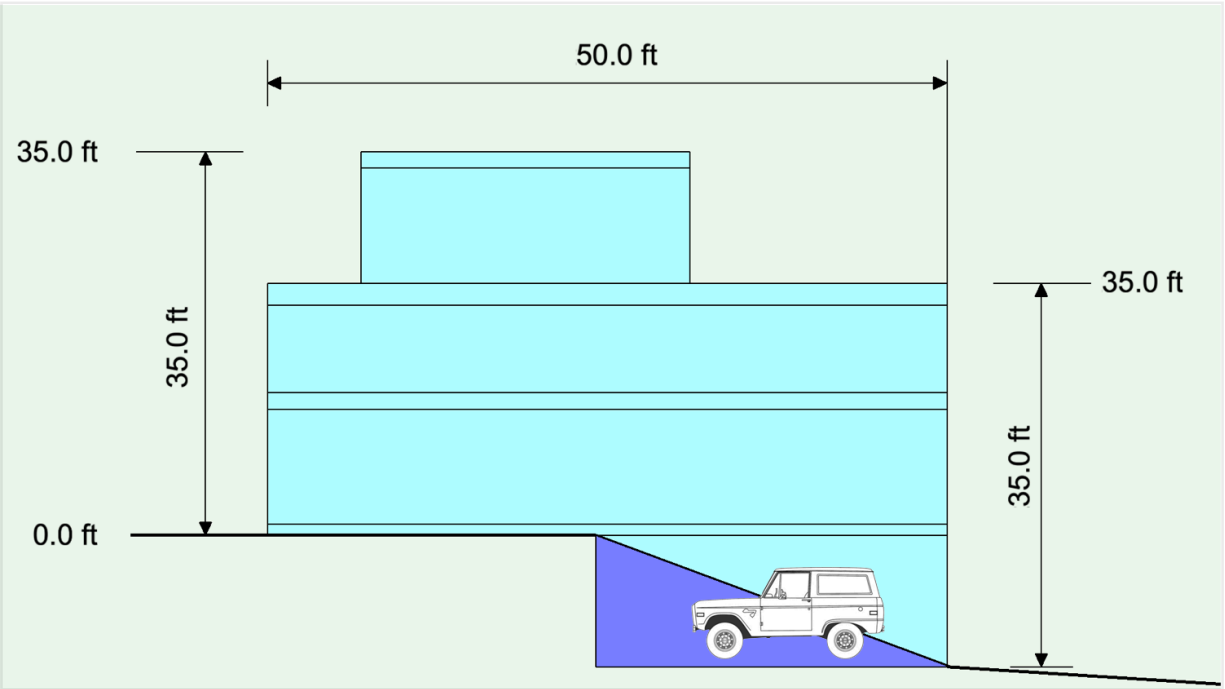
- Starts to feel much different if the volume runs the length of the setback, especially if it is upslope.
- Impacts can also be experienced from across the street, either upslope or downslope, where views were of trees, hillsides, or even downtown, and may impact access to sunlight, but now stare at a large wall of house.



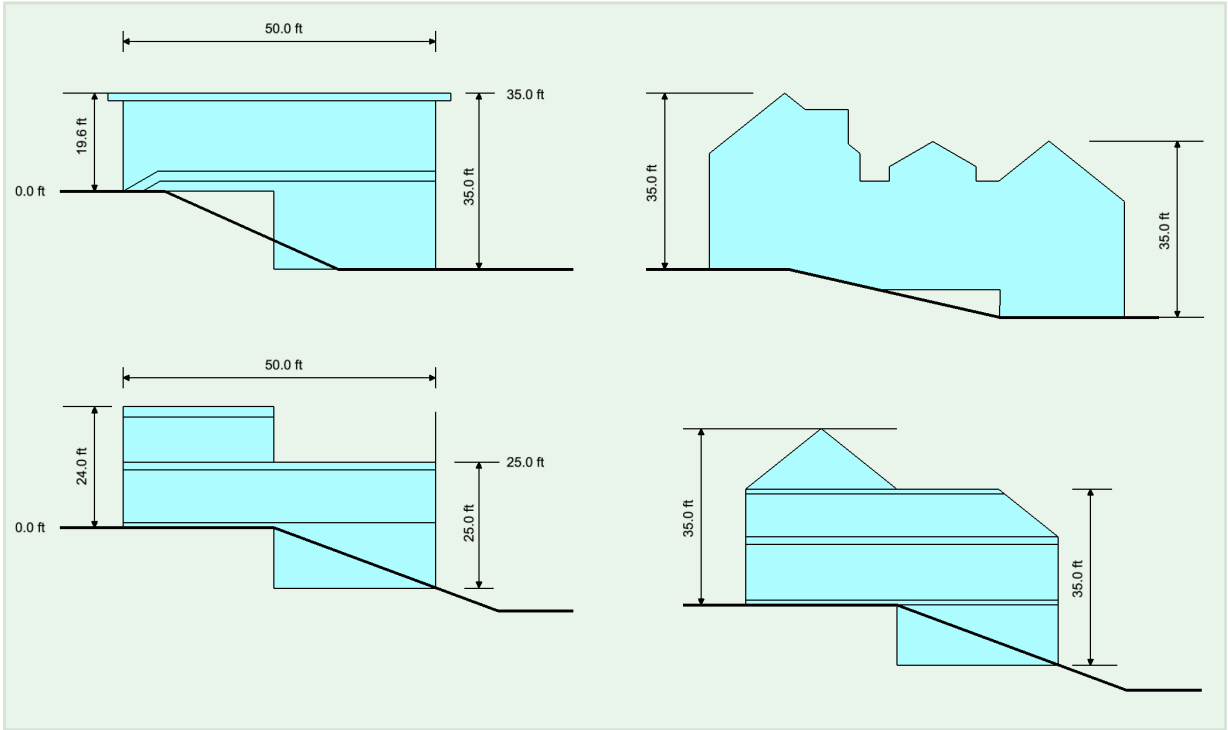
Reducing the length of a 2-story volume to 2/3 the length of the side setback also mitigates the impacts.



- Homes that have partial basements or garages also reduce visible impacts
- The home below is also an example of Terracing, where no portion of a home exceeds 35ft. above grade.



Happy, Eclectic Hypothetical Terraced Neighborhood



What happens when we overlay our typical RW 1-story prototype:

