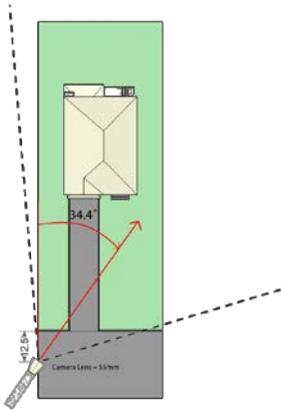
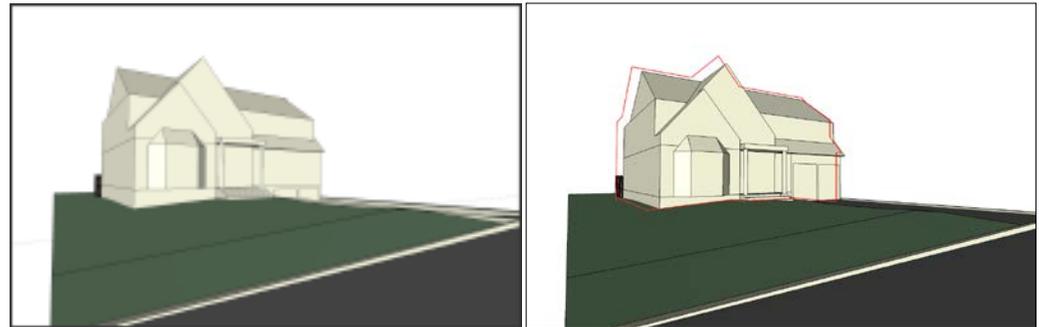
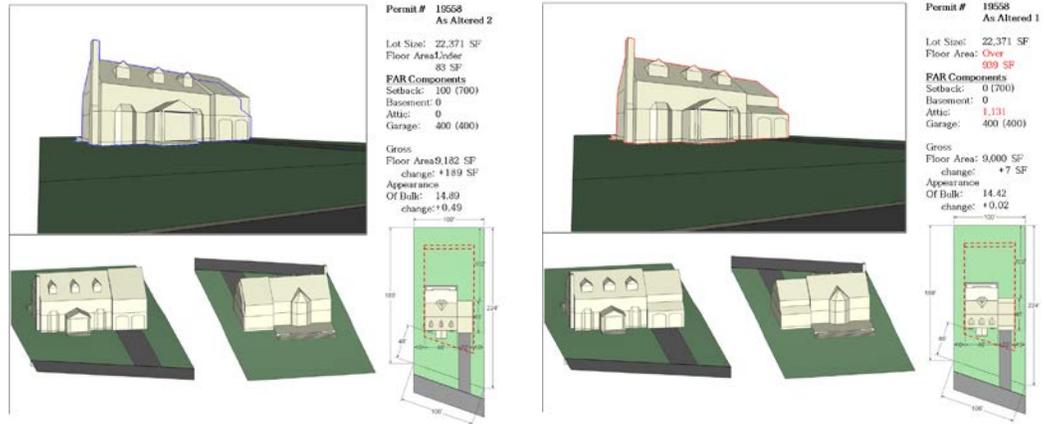


Village of Scarsdale, FAR and Built Form Study

Scarsdale, New York



The ESC developed a uniform method of measuring the perception of bulk or mass so that buildings could be compared to each other



A Scarsdale home as permitted (left) and the same home altered to comply with regulations (right) with the outline of the permitted home shown in red.

Client:
Village of Scarsdale, NY

Co-Project Directors:
Michael Kwartler
George Janes

Completed:
2007

In 2002 the Village of Scarsdale implemented FAR regulations as a part of their Village Code with the intention of limiting the size of homes being built in the Village. In addition to limiting the total FAR on the lot, the regulations provided bonuses (and penalties) based upon design elements thought to increase (or decrease) the perception of building mass. In 2006 the Village engaged the Environmental Simulation Center (ESC) to evaluate how effective these regulations had been at limiting the size of new homes in the village, and to make recommendations as to changes that could be made to make the regulations more effective, if any.

The ESC designed a study that not only evaluated how buildings have been constructed since the regulations went into effect, but also interviewed dozens of architects, board members and village staff to gauge their understanding as to the effectiveness of the regulations and how designs have been changed to comply with the regulations. Perhaps the most notable part of the ESC study was the examination of buildings constructed immediately prior to the regulations going into effect and how they needed to be altered so that they would comply with the new regulations. The ESC's study showed that the regulations were marginally to modestly effective at limiting the size of new homes in the Village, but that the community needed to better define the goals of the regulations, as there was wide agreement that big wasn't always bad. After considerable feedback from community members, board members, architects, staff and developers, the ESC recommended that an explicitly contextual approach, that considered the size and location of surrounding buildings might better suit commonly held objectives.

