

RIVER HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

# Architectural Guidelines



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# Guidelines

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# Preamble To The Architectural Guidelines

As you read the River Hill Community Association (the “Village”) Architectural Guidelines (the “Guidelines”), you likely have one of two goals in mind: either you are a current resident contemplating a property alteration or you are a new/potential resident educating yourself as to the Architectural Guidelines which affect our community.

Columbia was created in the 1960s based on James Rouse’s vision that a “better city” could be built. He and his planners envisioned the creation of a human-centered community—a community that “grew people.” Their concept developed out of the social consciousness of the period and was a response to our Nation’s experiences with urban blight and suburban sprawl. Goals of the Columbia project include:

- Respect for the land;
- Creation of a “real city” that is open to people of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds; and
- Creation of an environment that provides for the “growth of man, woman, and family.”

Columbia’s physical design reflects these social objectives. Two key elements of the concept were the creation of neighborhoods and villages within the city and the importance of aesthetics. By designing portions of the community as open space available for common use, the developers sought to enhance the relationships between the city’s residents as well as each resident’s relationship with the environment.

From the outset, Covenants were created for each Village in order to balance the needs and wants of the property owner with the philosophy behind the development of the community. In the spirit of fostering a sense of community and resident connection, the Covenants establish Village Architectural Committees (ACs). The Covenants also ensure minimum standards for land use, architectural design, and property maintenance, and provide for the architectural review process.

In each Village, the architectural review process and associated Architectural Guidelines

advise Columbians when making changes to their properties. That the process is succeeding is evident by what is not seen in River Hill: there are no designs, color schemes, or materials that detract from the harmonious “whole” and instead, all development enhances the livability and enjoyment of our community. In order to ensure the continued success of this process, the Village of River Hill does everything possible to ensure that all property owners make changes to their property consistent with the goals of the Columbia concept and design to further the enjoyment of our community by its residents. The River Hill Village Covenants and Architectural Guidelines are our tools to achieve these goals.

A single set of Guidelines does not apply to all of Columbia. The River Hill Architectural Guidelines were developed from other Columbia Village Guidelines and have been adapted to the unique situations found in River Hill. Every effort is made in our Guidelines and through the review process to promote privacy and individual tastes while at the same time both protecting the owners’ property rights and avoiding encroachment on or interference with the rights of neighbors to privacy and comfort. For example, in some areas of River Hill, the lots are small, the houses are relatively large, and thus, the open space is constricted. In applying the Guidelines to such areas, consideration is given to the impact of the proposed modification on open space and adjoining properties.

The Guidelines have been modified from time-to-time. Guideline evolution and modification is a very public process and approval of all modifications rests with the members of the Architectural Committee.

It is the sincere hope of the River Hill Architectural Committee (RHAC) that you find the Architectural Guidelines reasonable, appropriate, and easy to apply to your property. Residents should consider serving on the Architectural Committee or at least attending a meeting to see what we are all about. You may even meet some neighbors, people who have chosen Columbia as home for the same reasons you have!

# Answers to Commonly Asked Questions

## **Q. What are the Covenants?**

The Covenants are a set of legal documents which are binding on you as the owner of property in River Hill. The Covenants “run with the land,” i.e., they also bind future owners. The Covenants ensure minimum standards for land use, architectural design, and property maintenance. The Covenants allow for the operation of the River Hill Community Association, River Hill Architectural Committee, and generally provide for the architectural review process. You should have received these documents upon entering your housing contract, whether you purchased or rented your home from a builder or resident. Similar Covenants exist in all other Columbia villages. Copies of the Covenants may be obtained from the Village office in Claret Hall.

## **Q. Why do we have Architectural Guidelines?**

The Covenants establish general criteria for architectural changes and property maintenance through the Architectural Guidelines. These guidelines are designed to interpret those criteria and, generally, to prevent excesses and abuses while allowing individual flexibility in property use, as well as keeping our community an attractive and desirable place which will conform to the Covenants.

## **Q. What is the Architectural Committee?**

The River Hill Architectural Committee, or RHAC, is responsible for review and final approval of all exterior alterations to existing property, and in-home businesses. Each member of the RHAC has the authority to approve or disapprove applications that come before it. The RHAC shall be composed of three or more individuals designated by the Columbia Association (CA) and the River Hill Community Association (RHCA), with CA being entitled to approve a majority thereof.

## **Q. How does the Architectural Review process work?**

A resident wishing to make an exterior alteration or establish an in-home business completes an application form and submits it to the Covenant Advisor. A list of pending applications is published and/or posted on the Village web site at [www.villageofriverhill.org](http://www.villageofriverhill.org), at the Village office in Claret Hall and in *The Villager*—the association’s newsletter. The Resident Architectural Committee (RAC) makes recommendations on applications at a public meeting which interested residents are encouraged to attend. The applications are then forwarded to the designated RHAC Sign-off-Representative for final action.

The entire process can be expected to take 5-6 weeks. The Village Covenants allow up to 60 days for review. If the applicant is not satisfied by the decision, the applicant can appeal the decision to a committee comprised of a quorum of the RHAC. The Village Covenant Advisor will assist residents in preparing and filing applications.

## **Q. What if I don’t wait for approval?**

Proceeding with an alteration or in-home business prior to obtaining written approval is prohibited by the Covenants and is done at your own risk. Unless your alteration fell within the criteria under these guidelines for certain alterations not requiring an application, your property would be in violation of the Covenants. Another resident could make the RHAC aware of this violation. You could then face the cost of removing or modifying the alteration/in-home business to comply with the RHAC’s decision. A Covenant violation could ultimately impair your ability to sell the property. In considering applications, the RHAC will not be influenced for or against the application if work is commenced prior to approval, so residents are strongly urged not to undertake construction or operation in advance. Prospective purchasers should check with the current owner, the village office, and the RHAC to see if all alterations on a property have RHAC approval.

**Q. What if I have a complaint?**

Complaints, which remain anonymous, should be brought to the attention of the Covenant Advisor who may investigate to verify if a violation exists. The property owner will be notified and asked to correct the violation either by removal, by submission of an acceptable application, or by repair in the case of a maintenance problem. Most problems are resolved at this stage. However, if no action is taken by the homeowner to correct the violation, a formal notice is sent stating that legal remedies may be initiated. A letter stating that the property is in compliance will not be issued if a violation exists, and this may affect property resale. Realtors may be notified of known Covenant violations.

**Q. What is a Certificate of Compliance?**

A Certificate of Compliance for a newly completed home is a document which certifies that all original builder construction is completed according to approved plans and will be issued by the RHAC. A Letter of Compliance is issued only upon request (such as resale) and certifies that all subsequent alterations were approved by the RHAC and comply with the Covenants. It is the property owner's responsibility to make sure that the alteration is constructed within the property lines and meets Covenant guidelines.

# The Architectural Review Process

Residents who are considering an exterior alteration to their house or property or starting a profession or in-home business should review the River Hill Covenants and the RHCA Guidelines for Exterior Alterations, Maintenance, Profession, and Home Businesses. If there are any questions, please contact the Covenant Advisor.

A written application to the River Hill Architectural Committee is required for every new structure placed upon a lot and for most alterations made to existing structures. The Association has established a Fast Track Review Process for some changes. The purpose of the

guidelines is to assist the resident in planning exterior alterations/in-home businesses by noting the types which will normally be approved, and to ensure that an application will provide the RAC with all necessary information to thoroughly evaluate the application as quickly as possible. Howard County requires a building permit and inspection for many types of alterations, and the resident should call Howard County directly at (410) 313-2455 to determine if a building permit is necessary. Although the RHAC assume no responsibility for monitoring Howard County Building Codes, a known code violation would be adequate grounds for denial of the application.

## I. Application Procedure—for Standard and Fast Track Applications

- A. Obtain an “Exterior Alteration Application” or “In-Home Business Application” from the RHCA office, Covenant Advisor or online at [www.villageofriverhill.org/covenants/how-to-apply](http://www.villageofriverhill.org/covenants/how-to-apply).
- B. Fill out the application as follows:
  1. Identification of location: All applications should include name, address, lot number, telephone numbers of tenant/owner/applicant (home and work) and the APPLICATION MUST BE SIGNED BY THE OWNER, OR OWNER AND THE TENANT.
  2. Description of changes: The application must include a certified site plan (plat) indicating the relationship of the structure to applicant’s house, all adjacent houses and property lines. This plat can be the diagram of your property that was attached to your purchase contract. You may draw the proposed alteration in by hand. If available, also include a picture or detailed drawing, manufacturer’s drawing, photograph, color samples, description of materials, all dimensions, and any other information pertinent to the alteration.
- C. Return the application to the address shown on the application.
- D. Completed applications under the Fast Track and the Standard Review Processes are posted on the Association website at [www.villageofriverhill.org](http://www.villageofriverhill.org), at the village office in Claret Hall, and in most cases in the village newsletter, *The Villager*. Residents may call the village office for information on pending applications.

The RAC will typically meet twice per month, at a publicized location or via Zoom. The meetings are open to the public and residents whose applications are to be considered.

All professions and in-home businesses require written approval, which must be renewed after one year, and every two years thereafter and in the event of any change from the original application. If, after approval, other properties become affected by the profession or in-home business a reconsideration of the approval by the RHAC may be necessary. Please refer to Article XI, Section 11.02 of the River Hill Covenants for further information. Residents should be aware of county zoning when considering an in-home business.

## II. Review Process—Fast Track Applications

- A. A completed [Exterior Alteration Application](#) may be submitted under the **Fast Track** process by noon any Friday that Claret Hall is open. Due to scheduling conflicts and unforeseen circumstances, the Fast Track process may not be available during all weeks of the year. Please check the Architectural Guidelines to note whether the alteration you desire is eligible for the **Fast Track** process. The application form for the Fast Track process is the same form used for all Exterior Alterations Application requests.
1. Include the proposed change/alteration description, site plans, drawings and samples, and the owner’s signature.
  2. Covenant Advisor reviews the application for completeness. If it meets **Fast Track** criteria, it goes directly to the Sign-off Representative. If the application is incomplete (at the time of submission and/or not eligible for the Fast Track process), it will be reviewed at the regularly scheduled Resident Architectural Committee (RAC) meeting.
  3. A complete application includes plot plan, samples, drawings, and all pertinent measurements. If the application is complete and meets the criteria for **Fast Track** review, it will then be reviewed by a member of the Architectural Committee.
  4. AC Sign-off Representative makes a decision about the application.
  5. Covenant Advisor notifies applicant of AC decision. Confirmation in writing will follow. If an application does not meet all the criteria for the **Fast Track** process, the Covenant Advisor will move the application to the regular review process. **The decision to move an application to the standard process is final.**

**NOTE:** Any application from a townhouse or condominium must include the local association signature denoting approval or disapproval **at the time** of submission. Due to scheduling conflicts and unforeseen circumstances, the **Fast Track** process may not be available during all weeks of the year.

- B. Exterior Alterations available for “**Fast Track**” process:
- Attic Ventilator
  - Clotheslines
  - Gutters/Downspouts (Addition, Relocation, Material Change).
  - House Numbers
  - Lights/Lighting (if to remain basically the same style and wattage).
  - Roofs
  - Radon Units
  - Skylights
  - Storm Doors
  - Trees (fitting certain criteria) such as danger to home, health, and property.

### III. Review Process—Standard Application

- A. Prior to the RAC’s consideration of an application, RAC members will, in most cases, view the site and may talk to the applicant. Residents are urged to cooperate in this process.
- B. The agenda of the RAC meeting will observe the following priorities:
  - 1. Sign in will begin ½ hour prior to the RAC meeting.
  - 2. Applications from residents in attendance are reviewed in the order of sign-in.
  - 3. Residents who wish to address the committee will identify themselves when that application comes up for review.
  - 4. The Committee member assigned to review the application will present it. The resident will address any questions. Finally, any resident who wishes to address the committee on that application will speak. The RAC will then make its decision.
  - 5. Remaining applications.
  - 6. Other business.
- C. Applications will be presented to the RAC by the member(s) who reviewed the site, or the Covenant Advisor. After discussion, the RAC acts on the application by either of the following:
  - 1. Recommends approval, approval with conditions, or disapproval. The application is then forwarded to the Sign-off Representative.
  - 2. Tables the application for stated reasons until the next meeting.
- D. A designated member of the RHAC, the Sign-off Representative, reviews the RAC recommendations and then takes final action (as detailed in Section 7.01 of the River Hill Village Covenants). The designated RHAC member is not bound to accept the RAC recommendation. A statement of reasons must accompany any application that is disapproved.

**NOTE:** Residents generally receive final RHAC approval within 7-10 business days after RAC review. If an alteration is started prior to receiving approval, it is done at the applicant’s risk.

### IV. Appeal Process

In accordance with Article VII, Section 7.01 of the River Hill Village Covenants, if the applicant disagrees with the decision of the River Hill Architectural Committee, the following process should be followed for an appeal of that decision:

- A. File a written request for an appeal to the River Hill Architectural Committee (RHAC) within 10 days after receipt of notice of their decision. The written request should be sent to:

The River Hill Architectural Committee  
c/o Covenant Advisor  
6020 Daybreak Circle  
Clarksville, Maryland 21029

- B. The Covenant Advisor will set a date for the review of the application. The appellant will be notified of the time and place.

- C. All documents and other material relevant to the appeal shall be provided to the Covenant Advisor (to be distributed to the Committee) a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing.
- D. Prior to the hearing, each Committee Member will review all documents and other material provided. If needed, each Committee Member may request additional information and/or may visit the site prior to the hearing.
- E. The Appellant:
  - 1. May choose to abide by the decision of the Architectural Sign-off Representative and withdraw the appeal.
  - 2. May reschedule an appeal hearing. An appeal may be rescheduled only once.
- F. The RHAC Committee:
  - 1. May cancel the appeal if the appellant fails to provide requested information in a timely fashion.
  - 2. If the appellant misses two scheduled meetings, the Committee may make a decision based on the information available to them: including the original decision of the Architectural Sign-off Representative.
- G. The hearing will be a public meeting. All decisions will be made in the public session.

## **V. Completed Projects**

- A. Once work has begun on an approved Exterior Alteration Application, the work must be completed within 120 days of the start of work. Extenuating circumstances should be brought to the attention of the RAC by notifying the Covenant Advisor.
- B. Any variances from the original approval terms require that an amendment to the application be submitted and reviewed by the RHAC. A major modification will require a new application and approval.
- C. Upon completion of the alteration, the resident should send notice of such completion to the address indicated on the approved application to ensure that his/her lot file is kept current.

# Additional Information

## Letter of Compliance Procedures

- A. Upon request, the Covenant Advisor will inspect the property to verify compliance with the Covenants and all approved applications of record. If the property is in compliance, a statement to this effect will be issued.
- B. A Letter of Compliance will not be issued if there are unapproved alterations or any other Covenant violations on the property. This might affect property resale and realtors may be notified.

## Covenant Enforcement Process Summary

- A. Alleged violations may be reported by anyone to the Covenant Advisor. Complaints remain anonymous and must be verified by the Covenant Advisor prior to any action.
- B. Violations will be processed in the following manner:
  - 1. Letters will be sent to the violator and/or property owner. The letter or letters shall clearly state the nature of the Covenant violation.
  - 2. If there is no response within the prescribed time limit, the Covenant Advisor may request the RHAC and the RHCA Board of Directors serve notice in accordance with the Covenants, and to otherwise enforce the Covenants as permitted therein.

## Lot Lines

- A. The plot plan submitted with an application for exterior alteration is not always an accurate scale diagram of the lot. Therefore, when considering the application, the RAC and the RHAC cannot verify that the alteration as ultimately built will be located within the property lines and applicable set-back requirements.
- B. It is the homeowners' responsibility to make sure that the alteration is constructed within the property lines of the lot and within applicable set-back requirements.

## Additions

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all additions. Additions include, but are not limited to, garages, greenhouses, porches, rooms, outdoor rooms, deck enclosures, and any enclosed, partially enclosed, or “bump out” extension of the house.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan labels with the new addition.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Drawings to scale of new construction with:
  - (1) floor plan
  - (2) roof plan
- SDP (Site Development Plan) or similar item that will show relationship to other homes.
- Elevation views to include:
  - (1) Bird’s eye/Top view
  - (2) Side views
  - (3) Front view
  - (4) Rear view
- All pertinent dimensions/measurements and locations of such features as floors, windows, doors, rooflines, trim, and new exterior fixtures in relationship to the existing structure.
- Description of materials, including type, style and color of siding material, color and type of roof, color and type of trim material, lighting fixtures, and windows.
- Samples, brochures, and/or manufacturer’s pictures of the proposed materials, colors, etc.
- Grading/drainage plans.
- Pitch of new roof (if applicable).
- Lighting plans with description, bulb type, and wattage.
- Skylight plans with description and dimensions,
- Deck Plan (for screened-in porches).
- Steps, walkway, landing, patio with dimensions (include on plot plan).
- Landscaping and/or screening plans as applicable.  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).  
See [GUIDELINE No. 28a,b,c—LANDSCAPING](#).

- Designation on the plot plan of relocation or removal of existing items/structures (i.e., trees, landscaping).
- Any other information requested by the Architectural Committee representatives in relation to review of the application.

### **Approval**

Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The color, style, and texture of the new materials are the same as or compatible with the existing materials of the primary dwelling.
2. The style, size, and color of new windows and doors are compatible in style and proportion with those of the existing dwelling.
3. New windows and doors are located vertically on walls at the same approximate height as those of the existing dwelling and are trimmed in the same or a similar manner.
4. Eaves and fascia are the same depth, style, and approximate height of existing eaves and fascia.
5. New roofs should have the same approximate slope, material, and color as the roof of the existing dwelling.
6. The Additions/Alteration will not impair the view, amount of sunlight, or ventilation of adjacent residences, and will not have negative visual impact on the neighborhood, or the public's use or enjoyment of open space.
7. Additions do not create situations in which adjacent neighbors will have difficulty adding to, modifying, or maintaining existing dwellings.
8. New windows, doors, lighting or viewing areas from the addition will not impinge upon existing internal or external private areas of adjacent residences.
9. Additions do not adversely affect drainage conditions on adjacent properties.
10. If an existing deck, screened porch, etc., is to be further modified for year-round use, all materials must match the house exactly as to siding, roof, etc.

For building permit information call Howard County at (410) 313-2455. Before digging, call "Miss Utility" toll free at 1-800-257-7777 for existing utility and cable locations.

## **Animal Control**

Howard County law requires owners to pick up after their pets and dispose of waste material in a sanitary manner or face legal penalties. This applies to dogs AND cats, ON and OFF one's property, which includes all open space and public lands. Howard County animal control laws state, "A domesticated animal is 'at large' when it is not on a leash and under the control of a responsible person." All dogs in Howard County are required to be licensed. No wild, exotic, or "game" type animals shall be maintained on any residential lot. Complete copies of the animal control laws, and violation forms are available at the Village Office, or call Howard County Animal Control at (410) 313-2780. Citizens having animal problems may use these remedies:

- Personally bring the problem to the attention of the animal owner.
- Restrain the animal if found on your property and contact Animal Control for pick-up at (410) 313-2780.
- Write or call Animal Control about the problem requesting action; and
- File a Violation Affidavit. This is a formal, notarized statement describing the problem (dates, times, etc.) to be sent to:

Animal Control Division  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

- As a last resort, citizens can take the offense directly to the Commissioner of the Howard County District Court by having a summons issued to the pet owner.

## Antennas and Satellite Dishes

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for:

- Satellite dishes that are one meter (39 inches) or more in diameter.
- All satellite dish antennas (regardless of size) that are mounted on a pole exceeding 12 feet in height.
- All broadcast service antennas exceeding 12 feet in height.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan labeled with the new location of the alteration. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of the satellite dish or antenna size and material.
- Landscaping plan for screening.  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following conditions:

1. The antenna is installed in the least visible location on the lot that will not substantially degrade reception.
2. The antenna is placed to blend in with the surroundings. Possible locations include rear deck floor, rear section of the roof, adjacent to chimneys, and rear yards.
3. Cables and wires associated with the installation of a dish are secure and in the least visible location.
4. The type and dimensions of screening plants, shrubs etc. at maturity are provided.

**NOTE:** Applications for antennas and satellite dishes will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis as screening and painting of antenna poles may be required. The following factors will also be taken into consideration: 1) size and visibility from adjoining properties and from the street, 2) screening for satellite dishes installed on the ground. Screening should shield the dish from the view of other properties. Screening with landscaping /or fencing increases the likelihood of application approval. An application is required for screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#) for relevant criteria.

## Apiaries

Apiaries will not be allowed in townhouse or condominium communities. An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all apiaries requested for single family homes and will only be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Apiaries will not be allowed as an in-home business.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan labeled with the location of the apiary.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of and number of hives.
- Landscaping plan for screening and flight path prevention.
- Description of barriers.
- Flight path information.
- Registration of hives.

### Approval

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Your application for an apiary will most likely be approved if you meet the following conditions:

1. The hives are registered with the State of Maryland.
2. Hives are located no closer than 300 feet to any house or building used as a dwelling other than a house or building owned by the applicant.
3. Apiary does not endanger public health or safety or create unreasonable interference with the use of others' property.
4. Adequate flight dispersing barriers are constructed and maintained that do not serve as a nuisance to nearby residences or Open Space areas that are for the enjoyment of the public.
5. Apiary is not closer than one hundred (100) feet from public walking paths.

**NOTE:** In the State of Maryland beehives must be registered. The apiary plan will clearly denote provisions for the containment and maintenance of the bees in a manner that they will not endanger other residents or the public or create an unreasonable interference with the use of others' property.

## Attic Fans

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all attic fans.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan, showing the location of the attic fan.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Dimensions, color, style of fan.
- Description of the material and/or manufacturer's drawing.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if you meet the following conditions:

1. The style, color, materials, size, and proportion complement the architectural character and existing color scheme of the house.
2. The attic fan is low profile.
3. The fan is mounted on the least visible slope of the roof.
4. The exhaust fan trim blends in with or matches the roof color.

## Awnings and Sun Trellises

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all Awnings and Sun Trellises.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed and labeled plot plan with the placement of the alteration in relation to the house. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- All pertinent dimensions/measurements.
- Method of attachment (where) applicable.
- Description of materials, including type and color of siding material, roof material, trim material, lighting fixtures, and windows.
- Samples, brochures, and/or manufacturer's pictures of the proposed materials, colors, etc.
- Pitch of new roof (if applicable).
- Lighting plans (if applicable) with description, bulb type, and wattage.
- Description of any planned relocation or removal of existing items/structures (i.e. trees, landscaping).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if you meet the following conditions:

1. The style, color, materials, size, and proportion complements the architectural character and existing color scheme of the house.
2. Proposed awnings are wood or cloth.
3. Awnings are not metal (including aluminum) or fiberglass. These awnings are **NOT ALLOWED**.
4. Awnings are of a straightforward design, of a solid, natural color, and without embellishments such as fringes, contrast trim, etc. Awnings with very little or no visual impact may have stripes that are natural in color or that complement the house and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
5. Awnings do not significantly impair the view, amount of sunlight, or ventilation of adjacent residences or the public's use or enjoyment of open space.

**NOTE:** If awnings are to be removed after installation, the pipe frames must be removed, and any necessary repairs must be made.

**Basketball  
Equipment  
(Portable,  
Permanent,  
Attached)**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all basketball equipment, freestanding and attached, temporary or permanent.

**Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the basketball unit. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Completed Basketball Worksheet.
- Description of proposed unit.
- Description of the backboard color.
- Manufacturer’s drawing or photograph.
- Color of the pole.
- Height of the rim.
- Description of how and where the equipment will be anchored (for attached units).
- Plans for screening as applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- Signature of affected neighbors.

**Approval**

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Your application for free-standing, portable or permanent basketball equipment will most likely be approved if you meet the following conditions:

1. The backboard is a quality, commercial one.
2. The backboard is clear, white, graphite (gray), with hoop, stripe, and net.
3. The proposed placement provides reasonable visual and noise consideration for neighbors.
4. Appropriate screening is proposed (where applicable). See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

**Front of House Placement**

1. Placement is at the side of the driveway away from the applicant’s house toward the side property line.

2. The basketball equipment is no more than 20 feet or less than 3 feet from the front of the garage, and no more than 4 feet from the sideline of the driveway.
3. There is a minimum of 7.5 feet between the backboard and the side property line and a minimum of 20 feet or half the length of the driveway (whichever is less) from the front property line to the backboard.
4. The basketball hoop faces the driveway.
5. You have obtained written permission of all owners if you have a shared driveway.

### **Rear of House Placement**

1. Placement is 10 feet or more from the rear and side property lines (although this placement will be considered on a case-by-case basis).

**NOTE: Basketball equipment is not and will not be approved in the Howard County Right of Way (ROW: the street, the sidewalk, street tree easements, and the cul-de sacs.)** Residents with complaints about basketball equipment in the County Right of Way may contact Howard County at 410-313-7450.

## **Boats, Trailers, Trucks and Recreational Vehicles**

Section 8.01 of the River Hill Village Covenants states that without prior written approval of the Architectural Committee, “No boat trailer, house trailer, trailer, truck or any similar items shall be stored or parked in the open on any lot.” Boats, campers, and motor homes are similarly regulated.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the vehicle.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Elevation drawings of the house and driveway showing the appearance of the vehicle on driveway in relation to adjacent and surrounding properties.
- Dimensions of driveway.
- Dimensions of vehicle.
- Dimensions of vehicle in relation to driveway.
- Description of material to be used to screen vehicle from adjacent properties. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Vehicle size does not obscure view of street traffic.
2. Size of the vehicle does not obscure the ability of adjacent neighbors to ingress or egress their driveways safely.
3. Screening does not significantly impair the view or amount of sunlight of adjacent residences.
4. Screening is not unattractive in appearance.

**NOTE:** Trucks and multi passenger vehicles are defined as vehicles exceeding 2000 lbs. with exterior signing or lettering; with or without an open, loaded or flatbed rear section; with area for a ladder and tool carrying capacity. This includes pickup trucks with or without signage that are used for commercial hauling; Full-Size vans, Minivans and SUVs weighing between 13,000 and 33,000 lbs. and heavy trucks that are used for local delivery and public service commercial purposes.

## **Chimney and Flue Additions**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all Chimneys and Flues.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan, showing the location of the chimney or flue to the house. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Dimensions, color, style.
- Complete description of the material.
- Manufacturer’s drawing.
- Elevations showing the exact location of the chimney or flue.
- Elevations showing other chimneys and flues located on property.

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if you meet the following conditions:

1. Chimneys meet Howard County minimum height requirements. Height shall not exceed the County minimum unless required for proper functioning.
2. Flues are totally enclosed (boxed in) with brick or stone or a material which matches the exterior house finish and **do not exceed 14 inches** in outside diameter.
3. Painting to match the siding or the trim if the flue will exit the rear slope of the roof.
4. If the flue is visible from the street, the flue enclosure extends the entire length of the flue.
5. All flashing and trim is painted to match adjacent materials.
6. Flues are identical with respect to design, proportion, and materials if more than one flue is proposed.
7. Both flues are combined in one box enclosure if an additional flue is to be added adjacent to an existing one.

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GUIDELINE No.10

## Clotheslines, Exterior

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all exterior clotheslines.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing exact location, size, type, and color of clothesline device. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Manufacturer's drawing or photograph, if available.
- Screening is described; include complete description. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if:

1. You apply for an umbrella or retractable type of clothesline. No other clothesline types are permitted.
2. Clotheslines will be removed when not in use.
3. The clothesline is as close to the rear of the house as practicable and within lines defined by the sides of the house.

## **Backyard Enclosed Compost Bins**

A backyard enclosed compost bin (compost bin) is a contained, property-maintained area for decomposition of plant and other organic material.

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) shall be required for consideration by the RHAC.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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An examination of applications will be based on the following criteria:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the placement location of the compost bin or tumbler behind rear sight lines of the house and at least ten feet from the property lines.
- Drawing showing the exact dimensions and style of the compost bin or tumbler; not to exceed four feet in height and four feet wide, and not larger than ten cubic feet.
- Material not permitted for backyard composting to minimize odors and attracting scavengers are meat, fish, dairy, grease/oils, pet feces, diseased plants, and ash from charcoal.
- Description of materials to be used to construct the compost bin and the type and location of the materials to be used for the screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The placement of the proposed compost bin/tumbler minimizes the “look and smell” of the compost bin on neighboring properties.
2. The compost bin will be located close to the rear of the house.
3. The compost bin is not on Open or Common Space.
4. The property is not a townhouse (although these applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis).

NOTE: If a compost bin or tumbler is moved to a location other than that of the original application, or the compost bin or tumbler design is altered in any way, you must submit a new application. A compost bin or compost tumbler includes any structure built to house composting materials.

Failure to maintain your compost bin is a violation of the maintenance provisions of the River Hill Village Covenants.

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GUIDELINE No.12

## **Condominium and Townhouse Exterior Application Procedure**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for ALL exterior alterations.

It is important to maintain the original architectural character or theme of the condominium or townhouse community in which the dwelling is located. Any exterior alterations should not conflict with the original plan.

Individually Owned Property: Applications must be signed by the Association's representative prior to submitting the application to the RHAC. Some homeowners' associations have more restrictive Architectural Guidelines than those of the Village and those Guidelines must also be complied with (the more restrictive Guidelines shall apply). If you have questions, consult your Association's Board of Directors; your property management company and/or the Village Covenant Advisor.

Common Property: [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be signed by a member of the Condominium's or Townhouse Association's Board of Directors. If the work is to be done in stages, a master plan must be submitted.

## **Decks, Porches, Screened/Enclosed Deck Additions**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all new or modified decks, porches, or screened/enclosed decks.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan, showing location of the proposed structure. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Completed Deck Worksheet.
- Detailed plan, to include a written description of all materials to be used.
- Measurements, dimensions, etc. of project.
- Color palette.
- Elevation drawings of the structure.
- Details of any railings to be used, if applicable.
- Description of treatment or paint to be applied to the materials.
- Description of any plantings to be removed, relocated, or replaced for the construction of the structure.
- Description of equipment such as meters or heating and air conditioning sources that will be relocated and provide new location.
- Description of additions of or changes to window or door location, size or style.
- Description of proposed installation of or changes to the exterior lighting.
- List with all wattages of exterior lighting. Description of proposed landscaping or screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- List of construction materials with colors.
- Description of the roof to include pitch, material, and color, if a roof is to be added.
- Color of soffit and fascia.

## Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The alteration is compatible in location, color, size, conformity with design of house, and relationship of structure to neighboring dwellings.
2. The Howard County Building Code is adhered to in all its aspects, including the obtaining of a building permit.
3. Open, screened, or enclosed decks are constructed of durable materials.
4. The deck is constructed of natural pressure treated wood or composite material. Any other finish will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
5. If composite material is used it is earth tone in coloring, matches the color of the siding, or is white.
6. The proposed deck is in the rear of the house and does not extend beyond the sides of the house. If any of these structures are to extend beyond the sight lines of the house, it will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
7. Evergreen screening is provided as applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#) for more information.
8. The following Guidelines have been reviewed and applied to the application as applicable:  
[GUIDELINE No.1—ADDITIONS](#)  
[GUIDELINE No.34—PATIOS and WALKWAYS](#)  
[GUIDELINE No.38—PORCHES: SCREENED, ENCLOSED DECKS](#)  
[GUIDELINE No.13b—DECKS \(STONEHAVEN TOWNHOUSES\)](#)  
[GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#)

**NOTE:** Townhome/condominium owners should be aware that there might be additional requirements, restrictions, and guidelines imposed by your association. If you have questions, please contact your association officers or the Village Covenant Advisor.

## Decks (Stonehaven Townhouses)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all decks on townhouses.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan, showing location of the proposed structure. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- A Completed Deck Worksheet.
- A detailed plan, to include a written description of all materials to be used.
- Measurements, dimensions, etc. of project.
- Elevation drawings of the structure.
- Details of any railings to be used, if applicable.
- Details of the flooring to be used.
- Description of any plantings to be removed, relocated, or replaced for the construction of the structure.
- Description of equipment such as meters or heating and air conditioning sources that will be relocated and provide new location.
- Description of additions of or changes to window or door location, size, or style.
- Description of proposed installation of or changes to the exterior lighting.
- List with all wattages of exterior lighting.
- Description of proposed landscaping or screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- List of construction materials with colors.
- Description of the roof to include pitch, material, and color, if a roof is to be added.
- Color of soffit and fascia.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Deck is constructed with an 18-24 inch setback from the side property lines.
2. Deck has a minimum of 1 foot setback from rear property line.

3. Deck is a minimum 3 feet from adjacent decks.
4. Deck is not attached to adjoining common walls.
5. Deck length does not exceed 16 feet from the rear wall of the subject property that is farthest away from the property line.
6. Privacy screens (if installed) will be board-on-board style and installed only on the sides of the deck.
7. If composite material is used it is for flooring only.
8. Screening (if used) does not exceed 6 feet in height from the deck floor and no more than half the length of the deck.
9. Railings are non-decorative, 2 inch x 2 inch vertical pickets and have a 2 inch x 6 inch cap.
10. No decorative picket patterns e.g., sunburst, Chippendale, etc.
11. Clear wood preservative is used.

**NOTE:** Rear property line fencing is discouraged and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis. The installation of both a deck and rear property line privacy fencing is discouraged and will only be considered on a case-by case basis. Due to unique configuration of these townhomes (i.e., space constraints and security considerations), stairs are strongly discouraged. However, if stairs are proposed, they will be reviewed on a case-by case basis. The installation of landscape material will be required to minimize the impact that stairs may have on the adjacent open space areas.

## Doors and Garage Doors

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all door and garage door changes to include additions, addition of stone or masonry trim; color or design change or variation of color; material, or style changes.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan indicating location of door (s).  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of colors and color wheel or actual color of door.
- Description of and brochure of any stone or masonry to be used.
- Description of current trim and siding color.
- Description of current house style.
- Description of door style if door is to be changed.
- Manufacturer's drawing and or photograph for all replacement doors.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following conditions are met:

1. Style of door is compatible with the house style and blends with neighboring houses.
2. The door(s) match the color of the house siding, exterior door trim or trim.
3. Use of differing material and styles will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**NOTE:** Style changes to garage doors must be compatible with the design and color of the existing garage door and trim. Treatments that draw attention to the garage doors, i.e., mirrored glass or ornate decoration on or around the door will not be permitted.

## **Dog Houses and Dog Runs**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all dog houses and dog runs. This includes all dog runs and any temporary or permanent structure for housing a dog or other animal otherwise allowed by Howard County and the River Hill Covenants.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan detailing the location of the proposed doghouse and/or dog run. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Elevation drawings showing the pitch of the roof on the doghouse.
- The dimensions, materials, and color of the doghouse.
- Details of proposed screening, if applicable.
- Manufacturer’s drawing or photograph, if available.

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following conditions are met:

1. The roofing material and color of the doghouse roof are the same as the roof of the owner’s house.
2. The sides of the doghouse match the color of the owner’s house.
3. The size of the doghouse does not exceed 4 feet in any direction (height, length, width).
4. The doghouse will be located within 20 feet of the rear of the house, but not closer to any property line than one half the distances from the house to the property line.
5. The doghouse is located within the site lines of the house.
6. The doghouse is adequately screened from view of adjacent properties.
7. Does not include a dog run.

**NOTE:** Maintenance of structures and surrounding areas is of prime importance! Waste must be removed daily. The impact of the doghouse on neighboring properties will be considered. Dog runs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Driveways

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted if there will be changes to the driveway. Changes include changing of materials, size, shape, or grade to the already approved existing driveway.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan detailing the dimensions of the proposed driveway in relation to existing structures and property lines.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Submit any proposed changes in grade and provide details (care must be taken in any drainage change).
- Description of materials to be used, including color and texture.
- Screening type and location, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Materials of all driveways in the vicinity have been considered.
2. Asphalt is not used (except for exceptional circumstances such as flag lots).
3. Driveways are not of loose material (e.g., crushed stone).
4. Repairs are made with the same material as the existing driveway.
5. Any necessary screening has been provided.

**NOTE: Painting of the driveway is NOT ALLOWED.**

Maintenance, repair, or replacement of all driveways is the responsibility of the owner or owners in the case of a flag lot or shared driveway.

## Fencing

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all fence construction.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed site plan showing the location of the fence and gate(s). **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Completed Fence Worksheet.
- Description, brochure, drawing, or photo of fence and gate style.
- Materials to be used.
- The architectural style and color of the house.
- Fence dimensions on the site (plot) plan which shows the relationship to adjacent houses, open spaces, and property.
- Description of the style of other fences in the immediate area.
- Description of the type of screening to be used, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- Description of how the fence will be secured.

### Approval

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Your fence application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The fence matches the style and height of existing, approved fencing on adjacent properties and in the general vicinity.
2. The fence set back is a minimum of 4 feet from the edge of a walking surface and is on the owner's property.
3. Fence posts are secured or placed in concrete to prevent sections from blowing down. Fences not adhering to these stipulations will be considered in violation.
4. Staining is clear. If staining is not clear it must be applied for or requested as part of the [Exterior Alteration Application](#) process and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
5. Fence gates match the fence in style, height, color, and materials and do not swing onto neighbor's property.
6. Have a finished side facing out i.e., if necessary, fences must be finished on both sides.
7. The fence comes off the back edge of the house.

**NOTE:** Front yard fencing is not allowed (except where builder installed as part of an original design concept.) Rear yard fencing, which would create front yard fencing for a neighbor, will not

be approved. The Committee will not approve chain link, wire, wire with hedge fences, or privacy fencing of the basket weave or stockade styles (except where it conforms to the original builder-installed design within the same development.) If welded wire mesh (sold as “hardware cloth”), galvanized, or vinyl coated welded wire mesh is used, it must be of durable material, black or green in color, and not readily visible. Wire must be applied to the inside only and may not extend above the top rail. Poultry and chicken wire is not permitted and will not be approved.

### Acceptable Fence Styles

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#### Single-Family:

1. Transparent (e.g., 3-board or split rail) should be 42 or 48 inches at the height of the top rail for a 3-rail/board fence. These fences should remain natural.
2. Semi-transparent, such as picket fences, can be property line fencing in certain cases. These fences must remain natural, should be uniform in height e.g., either 42 or 48 inches from grade, must be installed in a vertical manner, and should be of a simple style such as dog eared, standard gothic picket, or French/Colonial gothic picket. The tops of the posts must be level with the pickets and the post caps should match the fence finish.
3. Opaque/Privacy (ex., board-on-board and panel, 5 to 6 feet in height) shall be visually attached to the house. Due to their solid nature and the potential for impact on the Columbia concept of open space and adjacent properties, these fences should only be designed for a specific purpose e.g., to screen hot tubs, pools, and patios, be used sparingly, and have minimal impact on neighbors. Special attention should be given to construction of solid fences to avoid wind damage. In areas of sloping terrain, the fence sections should be stepped, and any horizontal rails be made to match in the same plane. These fences should remain natural.
4. Iron and Aluminum Fences. Open wrought iron or aluminum fences will **only be considered for pools and not along property lines**. They must be a minimum of 3-1/2 feet from the property line.

#### Townhouses and Condominiums:

1. Fences shall match builder installed as to style unless the individual associations and/or the Architectural Committee have approved alternative styles.

**NOTE:** Invisible fencing should be on your own property or property line. On shared property lines or corner properties invisible fence should be 4 feet inside the property line.

## Fire Pits

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all in ground fire pits (Wood, Propane or Gas).

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan detailing the location of the fire pit.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- All dimensions of fire pit above and below ground.
- Description of materials and colors.
- Manufacturers drawing or brochure, if applicable.
- Description of fire pit cover for wood burning fire pits.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The fire pit is made of non-combustible material with sides that measure at least 18 inches from the bottom of the pit to the top.
2. The pit is made of non-combustible material and is at least 18 inches in height and contains fuel wood or coals.
3. Has a 4-6 inch slab/base, made of non-combustible material.
4. Has a shield that prevents ashes from being blown by the wind.
5. The center of the pit is 15 feet or more away from any combustible vegetation or structures, vertically and horizontally.
6. Vegetation, overhanging branches, or any other flammable material has been removed or is no closer than 15 feet from the center of the pit.
7. There is, at least, a 6-foot apron of pavers or non-combustible material around the fire pit consisting of a layer of mineral soil, sand, pea gravel, or concrete.
8. A screen with openings no greater than 1 inch will be placed over the fire pit.
9. The fire pit is equipped with spark arrestors.
10. The fire area does not exceed 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height.
11. The fire pit apron meets the minimum material depth and distance requirements (it can be any shape).
12. The fire pit has a cover.

**NOTE:** The RHAC reserves the ability to revoke use of a fire pit until fire danger is reduced any time a higher-than-normal fire hazard exists.

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GUIDELINE No.19

## **Fireplace and Hearths (Outdoor)**

See the following Guidelines:

[GUIDELINE No.1–ADDITIONS](#)

[GUIDELINE No.18–FIRE PITS](#)

[GUIDELINE No.28a,b,c–LANDSCAPING](#)

[GUIDELINE No.30–LIGHTING](#)

[GUIDELINE No.34–PATIOS and WALKWAYS](#)

[GUIDELINE No.47–SCREENING](#)

[GUIDELINE No.58–TRELLISES](#)

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GUIDELINE No.20a

## **Gardens: Flower and/or Vegetable**

Gardens that exceed 225 square feet, side yard vegetable gardens, extensive foundation planting, or when significant garden changes are planned, require an [Exterior Alteration Application](#) for consideration by the RHAC.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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An examination of applications will be based on the following criteria:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location and dimensions of the garden is required. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Any fencing on the plan, including the dimensions and materials, if applicable.
- Planting materials to be used for screening, if applicable.
- Description of the type of temporary wire to be used to keep small animals out of the garden area, if applicable. Temporary wire fencing of wire mesh may be used to keep out small animals. Total height of the fencing, including support, shall not exceed 36 inches and must be removed at the end of the planting season.
- A description of plants or vegetables to be grown, including its height at maturity. Utilization of low-impact, environmentally responsible landscaping techniques and use of Maryland native plants is preferred.
- A description of plant growth medium material.
- Gardens that are placed on a grade may not add or contribute to soil erosion or property damage.

## Approval

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Your Exterior Alteration Application will most likely be approved if the following conditions are met:

1. Garden is not placed on a grade that may lead to soil erosion or property damage.
2. It is not a front yard vegetable garden. These will not be approved.

## No Approval Required

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An Exterior Alteration Application will **not** be required when **either** of the following criteria is met;

1. Small plots, located at the back of the house that do not extend more than 3 feet from the foundation wall and do not exceed the length of the house.
2. One single plot per property located within the rear lines of the house and the rear property line in which **ALL** of the following conditions are met:
  - A. size does not exceed **225** square feet.
  - B. garden is not placed on a grade that may lead to soil erosion or property damage.

**NOTE:** Temporary wire fencing of welded wire mesh may be used to keep out small animals. Total height of fencing for vegetable gardens, including support, shall not exceed 36 inches and must be removed at the end of the planting season.

When having any bulk garden materials delivered, please have items placed on your own property or driveway, not sidewalk, right-of-way, etc., and have reasonable amounts delivered. Items may not be stored in a visible location for more than 1 week.

Failure to maintain your garden is a violation of the maintenance provisions of the River Hill Village Covenants. See [GUIDELINE NO.31—Maintenance](#).

**NOTE:** In Howard County, last frost date is May 6th; first frost date is October 6th.

## Gardens: Rock

A rock garden, also known as a rockery or an alpine garden, is a small field or plot of ground with or without water features designed to emphasize a variety of rocks, stones, and boulders. A rock garden should be planned to use a variety of native plants to create a haven for butterflies and other beneficial insects. An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for all rock gardens, for consideration by the RHAC.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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An examination of the applications will be based on the following criteria:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the exact location and specific dimensions of the garden, is required. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- A design plan or diagram with placement of all rock and/or plant material.
- A description of the type, size, color, and amount of rock material to be used.
- If applicable, a description of planting materials to be used, including height at maturity.
- If applicable, a description of water feature (including bird baths) size, dimension, and materials to be used, including any grade change information.
- Determination that the garden is not placed on a grade that may lead to soil erosion or property damage.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Garden is not placed on a grade that may lead to soil erosion or property damage.
2. All water feature information is included with any grade change information.

## Gazebos and Pergolas

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all gazebos and pergolas.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

Diagrammed plot plan, showing the location of the gazebo or pergola. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**

- Details on the size and elevation of the gazebo or pergola.
- Details of all materials to be used.
- Description of roof (to include, size, pitch, material, color).
- Description of any treatment to be applied to the materials.
- Description of any trees and or plantings to be removed for the construction of the gazebo or pergola.
- Description of any equipment such as meters or heating and air conditioning sources that will be relocated and added.
- Description of proposed installation of and/or changes in exterior lighting.
- Description of proposed landscaping or screening. See [GUIDELINE No.28a,b,c—LANDSCAPING](#) and [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Gazebos and pergolas are located at the rear of the property and constructed of durable materials.
2. Gazebos and pergolas are within the sightlines of the house.
3. All visible portions are natural wood, painted, or stained.
4. The location of the gazebo or pergola does not significantly impair the view or amount of sunlight to adjacent residences.
5. The location of the gazebo or pergola does not significantly impair the public's use or enjoyment of open space.
6. The size and scale of the gazebo or pergola is in scale relative to the house, lot size, surrounding houses, properties, and open space.

**NOTE:** Gazebos and pergolas will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Grills and Barbeques (Permanent)**

An **Exterior Alteration Application** must be submitted for all permanent grills and barbeques.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The applications must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the proposed grill. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Scale drawing of the grill or barbeque.
- Description of materials to be used for the grill or barbeque.
- All measurements of the grill or barbeque.
- Manufacturers' drawing and or photograph if available.
- Information about additional lighting or other exterior alterations.

### **Approval**

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The application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The permanent grill or barbecue is located behind the house at least 10 feet from the rear and side property lines.
2. The materials are compatible with the houses and are not so large as to dominate the space.
3. Are permanently installed on a concrete base (if a gas grill) and located at least 10 feet from the rear property line, at least 7 feet from the side property line, behind the rear of the house, and within 15 feet of the rear of the house.

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GUIDELINE No.23

## Gutters and Downspouts

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for color, material or relocation changes to new gutters and downspouts.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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- A plot plan showing the location of the gutters and downspouts. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of the house color and trim, and a paint sample showing the proposed color blends with the current colors of the dwelling.
- Description of material change, if applicable.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The new material blends with the siding.
2. The new color blends with the color of the siding or trim.

### No Approval Required

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An application is not required for replacement gutters and downspouts provided there is no color or material change.

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GUIDELINE No.24

## Heating and Air Conditioning (Exterior)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for newly added exterior heating and air conditioning units including relocation of equipment and apparatus used with same.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the unit and related equipment. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of all equipment with dimensions.
- Manufacturer's drawing and/or photograph, if available.

### Approval

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Newly added units will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Units are screened from the street while allowing proper airflow. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

2. Units are located as close to the rear of the house as possible.
3. Placement and or size will not create a substantial acoustical or visual impact on adjacent property owners and not violate the criteria established in the Final Development Plans (FDP) if the unit is being relocated.
4. Units are not window or wall mounted air conditioners. These requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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GUIDELINE No.25

## Holiday Decorations

Holiday decorations do not require an application; however, they must not be in operation more than 28 days before the holiday and must be completely removed within 28 days after the holiday.

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GUIDELINE No.26

## Hot Tubs and Whirlpools

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all hot tubs and whirlpools.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the hot tub in relation to the applicant’s house, property lines, and adjacent dwellings. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Dimensions, type, and color of proposed materials.
- Manufacturer’s drawing and/or photograph, if available.
- Include details of proposed screening.  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

Hot tubs and whirlpools will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The tub does not create a substantial acoustical or visual impact on adjacent property owners.
2. The hot tub will be located in the rear yard within the side sight lines of the residence, and not more than 20 feet from the back of the house.
3. The hot tub does not protrude more than 3 feet above the adjacent ground or deck level and is made of material that will blend with surrounding structures.
4. Additional screening with fences and landscape buffers such as shrubs are proposed to reduce the impact on adjacent property owners if necessary. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

5. The hot tub or whirlpool is proportional to the Lot and other exterior structures.

**NOTE:** Hot tub, whirlpool and fencing requested for townhouse or condominium property will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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GUIDELINE No.27

## House Numbers

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for all house numbers that are not Arabic numerals in plain, block style or numbers are not black in color, or the numbers are less than 3 inches or larger than 5 inches in height or the numbers are on a plaque.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the proposed location of the numbers. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Detailed drawing or picture of the proposed installation with color, materials, size, and style of numbers indicated.
- Any additional information that might be helpful in the review of the application.
- Color and materials.
- Size and style of numbers indicated.
- Size and color of plaque and numbers.
- Any exterior lighting changes.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Numerals on plaques are clearly visible.
2. Numerals on plaques face the street named in an address.
3. Numerals on plaques are clearly visible from the street.
4. Numerals or plaques are attached to the front porch, front door trim, garage trim, or within 3 feet of the front door.

### No Approval Required

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An application will not be required if the following criteria are met:

1. Numerals are Arabic numerals, in plain, block style.
2. The color of the numerals is black.
3. Numerals are at least 3 inches high and no larger than 5 inches high.

4. Numerals face the street named in an address.
5. Numerals are clearly visible from the street.
6. Numerals are attached to the front porch, front door trim, garage trim, or within 3 feet of the front door.
7. The number is not on a plaque.

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GUIDELINE No.28a

## Landscaping

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) for landscaping is required for, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Planting of trees as a barrier.
- b. Hedges more than 2 feet in height.
- c. Flower beds (other than foundation plantings); planting “islands” or clusters.
- d. Landscaping that involves a change of slope and/or installation of a retaining wall or other structure.
- e. Changes in drainage.
- f. Removal of any tree whose trunk is over 20 inches in circumference (approximately 7 inches in diameter) when measured at a point 2 feet above the ground, whether the tree is alive or presumed dead.
- g. Plantings with four or more plants in a row used as a hedge or windbreak or for screening purposes. See [GUIDELINE No.29–LAWN ORNAMENTATION](#).

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the alteration.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Complete description of plant material.
- Master landscaping plan.
- Size of plants at maturity.
- Size and shape of flower/shrubbery beds.
- Identification of the type of ground cover.
- Identification of any existing landscaping.

## Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The plan provides visual breaks.
2. A variety of plant materials are used.
3. The atmosphere of a larger natural open area is preserved.
4. Plant materials are clustered or staggered.
5. The scale and location of landscaping is considered.
6. Opaque plantings of trees or shrubbery are not used along property lines as delineation or otherwise planted in a row.

## No Approval Required

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An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is not required for planting the following:

1. Individual shrubs (unless used as a hedge).
2. Plants around the foundation.
3. Low growing annual or perennial plantings.
4. Ground covers (See [GUIDELINE 28c–GROUND COVER](#) )
5. Any single specimen tree that, at maturity, will be in scale with the size of the house.
6. Stepping stones flush with the ground and of a color that blends with the surroundings.

**NOTE:** A homeowner’s desire for privacy combined with small lot sizes presents a challenge to the open concept of Columbia. Residents are encouraged to arrange a variety of plantings in groupings which are strategically placed to provide privacy yet leave visual breaks and diversity which preserves the atmosphere of a larger natural open area. Visual screening can often be created very effectively by staggered clusters of plantings. Residents may wish to consider plantings which screen the immediate area around the house, deck, or patio furniture, rather than the entire backyard. The growth characteristics and root structure of all proposed plantings and trees need to be considered. The use of a variety of species, such as hollies, arborvitae, privet, euonymus, and forsythia should be considered. Homeowners should take into consideration the scale and location of the landscaping in relation to not only their lot, but also the adjacent lots as well. The delineation of property lines with opaque plantings of trees and shrubbery should be avoided.

## Low Impact Landscaping

Low impact landscaping is resource-conserving and environmentally friendly landscape design and maintenance practices; including Pollinator, Rain Gardens, Xeriscape, and Ground Cover. See [GUIDELINE No.28c—GROUND COVER](#).

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) shall be required for low impact landscaping for consideration by the RHAC.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan outlining the proposed garden/landscaping area. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Submission of a landscape design plan to include Low Impact Landscape type, listing of Maryland native plants to be utilized, including the placement and number. A description of other materials to be used, including but not limited to hardscape.
- Irrigation plan, if applicable.
- Submission of photos of adjacent lots if the project will be placed in the front yard.
- Identification of ground cover and methods used to prevent the spread of non-invasive ground cover. Invasive plants and/or invasive Ground Cover as defined by the University of Maryland Extension Service are not permitted.
- Ability to adhere to [GUIDELINE No. 31—MAINTENANCE](#), to include weeding, pruning, cutting back and or replacement of plantings as seasonally appropriate.
- Identification of any existing landscaping.

## Ground Cover

Ground cover or groundcover is any plant that grows over an area of ground. Ground cover provides protection of the topsoil from erosion and drought.

Ground cover shall include only Maryland noninvasive ground cover as defined by the University of Maryland Extension Service that grows no taller than 6 inches in height at all times. Use of ground cover on a lot requires an [Exterior Alteration Application](#) for consideration by the RHAC.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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- A design plan must be submitted to include a maximum of four types of plants to be used, growth and height at maturity. Approved ground covers are Crested Iris (*Iris cristata*), Green and Gold (*Chrysogonum virginianum*), Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*), and Creeping Phlox or Sherwood Purple (*Phlox stolonifera*).
- A description of materials and methods used to control the growth of ground cover to include the use of a physical barrier of 6-8 inches in depth or deeper than the root system of the ground cover.
- A physical barrier must be installed at the property line.

## Lawn Ornamentation

Lawn ornaments are decorative objects placed on the lot and include, but are not limited to, sculpture, statuary, fountains, birdbaths, and trellises. An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) shall be required for lawn ornamentation for consideration by the RHAC.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

- A diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the lawn ornamentation. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- A complete description of the lawn ornamentation including dimensions, material, and color. A manufacturer’s drawing or photographs must be submitted.
- Details of proposed screening. If applicable, see [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

## Lighting (Exterior)

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all changes to outside light fixtures and for additional exterior lights including spotlights.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the exterior light placement. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Statement as to the architectural style of the home and the proposed lighting.
- The style, size, and wattage of proposed light fixtures.
- Manufacturer’s drawing and/or photograph.

### Approval

Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Exterior lighting does not illuminate adjacent property or public open space.
2. Placement of lighting is not intrusive to surrounding properties.
3. Exterior lighting is aesthetically planned for the location.

**NOTE:** The RHAC, upon receipt of a complaint that a light from a neighboring property is disturbing them, shall require that the resident with the light adjust it, if the RHAC deems this necessary.

**Breaking Ground?** It is recommended that before any digging is initiated the applicant call “Miss Utility” (1-800-257-7777) for existing locations of utilities.

## Maintenance

**Bulk Items**—Bulk items are not to be stored or accumulated on any lot, deck or under overhangs. Store bulk items out of sight or discard them. Do not cover items with a tarpaulin.

**Cul-de-Sacs**—Adjacent homeowners are responsible, under Howard County Code, for the mowing and maintenance of the grass area between the sidewalk and the street, and maintenance of the cul-de-sac islands.

**Drainage**—Modification to the grading or drainage installed by the original builder must be approved by the Architectural Committee. There may not be rechanneling of the drainage flows after location and installation of drainage swales, storm sewers, or storm drains. No obstructions or debris may be placed in catch basins or drainage areas. No above ground drainage apparatus or pipe shall be maintained on any Lot. (Article VIII, Section 8.07).

**Driveways**—Driveways that are deteriorating need to be repaired or replaced. Repairs must be made with the same material as the existing driveway. An approved application will be required for material or color change.

**Fences**—Fences should be in good repair, standing straight with no broken or missing boards, and no peeling paint. An approved application is required for new fences, removing fences in some cases, or a change in style.

**Garbage Cans & Recycle Bins**—Must conform to guidelines prescribed by Howard County, the collection company and the Village of River Hill Covenants and must be concealed from public and adjoining property view. (Article VIII, Section 8.06).

**Grading**—Any change in the grade of any lot of more than six inches from that existing at the time of purchase by each owner is considered a “structural change” and requires an [Exterior Alteration Application](#).

**Grass**—Grass should be mowed and trimmed on a regular basis during the growing season. Tall weeds and overgrown vines should be trimmed or removed. Landscaped areas should also be kept free of weeds and overgrown plant material.

**Gutters & Downspouts**—Gutters and downspouts should be in place and secure, with no peeling paint. Gutters should be clean of tree debris and dirt. All drain extensions must be buried below ground. An approved application may be needed for new gutters.

**Holiday Decorations**—Holiday decorations should only be displayed and must be removed within 28 days of the holiday.

**House Numbers**—House numbers must be on every Lot or house and must be easily visible from the street. Do not paint house numbers on the curb (Howard County does not allow house numbers to be painted on the curbs). An approved application may be required for new or replacement house numbers.

**Lamp Posts & Exterior Light Fixtures**—Lamp Posts should stand straight and should be free of rust. Light fixtures should not be crooked or have missing or broken light bulb coverings. Globes to cover the light bulbs should always be in place. An approved application may be required when replacing or adding new light fixtures.

**Leaf & Tree Debris**—Yard, roof, and gutters should be cleared of leaves and debris on a regular basis during the respective seasons. Raking leaves and debris into the street, surrounding properties, open space or ravines is prohibited. An approved application is required for compost bins. Do not cover leaf piles of debris with a tarpaulin.

**Mold, Mildew & Algae**—Mold, mildew and algae should be removed from all structures.

**Paint**—There should be no peeling paint or rotted wood on structures. An approved application is required when any structure or trim is to be painted or stained a color different from its existing color. The new paint or stain is considered to be different if the color itself changes (for example, yellow instead of green) or if, while the color remains the same, it is lighter or darker than the original. No RAC approval is necessary for repainting or re-staining when the color remains the same, provided the existing color has been approved by the Architectural Committee.

**Patios & Walkways**—Patios and/or walkways that are crumbled, raised or sunken, should be repaired or replaced. An approved application may be required.

**Rain Barrels**—Rain barrels must be maintained at all times and should be kept free of standing water on or around anything not used as part of the rain barrel system. Ensure that rain barrel drainage/overflow/runoff is properly diverted and does not flow onto neighboring properties. During the winter season, rain barrels should be stored to prolong barrel life and avoid maintenance issues.

**Roof**—The roof should be in good repair and of all one color. There should not be any accumulation of debris on the roof. An approved application may be required when replacing the roof.

**Screens**—Screens should be in good repair and fit properly.

**Shrubs**—Shrubbery should not be overgrown for the size of the structure. Dead shrubs should be removed and properly disposed. An application may be required for planting shrubs.

**Sidewalks**—Sidewalks should be clean and free of discoloration from dirt, mold, algae, and/or mildew and kept in good repair with no crumbling or heaving. All owners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the sidewalks within or adjacent to their lot. The maintenance, including snow removal, of adjoining sidewalks is the responsibility of the property owner under Howard County law. This means that if your lot abuts any section of a sidewalk, you are responsible for that portion of the sidewalk. Maintenance of the grass area between the sidewalk and curb are also the responsibility of the adjacent property owner and should include appropriate mowing, trimming, weeding in the same manner and frequency as regular lawn care. Howard County will repair your sidewalk on request by calling 410-313-7450, at the property owner's expense unless the sidewalk is damaged solely by the roots of trees in the county right of way or by county water or sewer construction project.

**Siding**—Siding should be securely intact and free of rotting wood, dirt and mold. An approved application is required for all siding.

**Snow Removal**—Sidewalks must be shoveled within 48 hours after the snow has fallen and is the responsibility of the adjacent property owners and regulated by Howard County Code.

**Street Trees**—Problems with street trees should be brought to the attention of Howard County Bureau of Highways by calling 410-313-7450. Howard County Bureau of Highways is responsible for the trimming, maintenance, and pruning of street trees.

**Tarpaulins**—Brightly colored tarpaulins are not allowed in the open on any lot.

**Trash, Trash Containers & Recyclables**—The following is a direct quote from Article VIII, Section 8.06 of the Covenants: “If trash or other refuse is to be disposed of by being picked up and carried away on a regular basis, containers may be placed in the open, on any day that a pickup is made, at such a place on the lot so as to provide access to persons making such a pickup. At all other times such containers shall be stored in such a manner so they cannot be seen from adjacent and surrounding property.” Trash containers should have secure lids on them. Except for scheduled trash day, containers should not be stored in view. No refuse, trash or bulk items/materials may be accumulated or stored on any lot. Trash should not be put out earlier than the afternoon prior

to pick up day and should be stored out of sight by sunset of the trash collection day. Information on the use of the Howard County landfill may be obtained by calling 410-313-5410. For other trash information call 410/313-SORT (7678).

**Trees**—Dead trees or branches should be removed from the property. An approved application is required for tree removal. An approved application may be required for planting of trees. See [GUIDELINE No.57—TREE PLANTING OR REMOVAL](#).

**Vehicles**—Inoperable vehicles, commercial vehicles or trucks, vehicles without current registration, or any similar items are not allowed in the open on any lot. No boat trailer, house trailer, trailer, or truck or any similar item should be stored or parked in the open on any Lot, without expressed written approval of the Architectural Committee. Owners/ Operators of campers, recreational vehicles and motor homes may wish to consult the telephone directory for alternative storage locations. Renovation of vehicles or major repairs may not be undertaken except in enclosed garages. Only minor emergency repairs such as changing a tire, batteries, etc. are permitted.

**Woodpiles**—Woodpiles should be neatly stacked inconspicuously, never covered with a brightly colored tarpaulin, located in the rear of the house, and located within the lines defined by the sides of the house extended to the rear. Stacking of wood on sidewalks, driveways, in front of the house or rights-of-way, etc. is not permitted, nor is the storage of excessive amounts of wood. The Columbia Association and Howard County do not permit use of their Open Space for this or any other personal use and violators will be cited. The RHAC may require screening of woodpiles. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

**Windows**—Window frames and trim should be kept in good repair. Panes that are broken or fogged due to broken seals should be replaced. Grids/mullions should be intact and uniform. An application may be required for window additions or changes.

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GUIDELINE No.32

**Open Space**

The Columbia Association does not allow unauthorized use of Open Space for gardens, play equipment, pets, tree removal, motorized vehicles, etc. Proposed changes of open space use must be reviewed by the River Hill Architectural Committee (RHAC) and the River Hill Village Board before being considered by the Columbia Association.

## Painting, Staining

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for any repainting or staining which will result in a color change, or any request for staining of a fence or deck.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Sample or detailed description of the proposed new siding.
- Samples of all colors selected.

### Approval

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The application will most likely be approved if your application meets the following criteria:

1. The number of colors used is limited to one for siding, one for trim, and a compatible accent door color.
2. The garage door color matches either the siding or trim.
3. The proposed changes complement the roof color.
4. Medium to dark earth tone colors (browns, grays, tans) are used where applicable.
5. Bright or pastel colors are not used.
6. “Flat” finish paint or stain is used.
7. Semi-gloss paint is used only on front doors.
8. Trim is close to, but not lighter than, house siding color.
9. The color of the foundation paint matches or blends with the color of the siding.

**NOTE:** A change in the color of one’s residence, which includes any variations in shade, lighter or darker, from the original builder-approved and applied color as well as the addition of stone or masonry trim, is an alteration which can have a dramatic impact on the neighborhood. The RHAC will take this into consideration when approving a color change.

## Patios and Walkways

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all patios and walkways.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location and dimensions of the new patio/walkway and its relation to the existing house.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Diagram of the existing patios/walkways.
- Diagram of trees and lot boundaries.
- Description or sample of the materials to be used.
- Description of proposed lawn contour changes, if applicable.
- The proposed placement of any plantings or landscaping.
- Description of any proposed screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- Description of railings, if applicable.
- Description of proposed steps or landing, if applicable.
- Description of new, replacement, or additional exterior lighting, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.30—LIGHTING](#).
- Statement of the architectural style of the house.
- Manufacturer’s drawing and/or photograph, if applicable and available.

### Approval

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The application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The design, location, and size of patios and walkways conform to the design and scale of the house and neighboring dwellings.
2. All new materials are of a natural color, such as un-dyed concrete, stone, clay, brick, or wood.
3. Existing contours are disturbed as little as possible. Terracing to follow existing land contours should be built in small increments, or a safety railing should be provided.
4. Ingress and egress to and from the patio and maintenance of the patio can be accomplished while on your own property, i.e., without trespass.
5. Materials for patios and walkways match existing patios and walkways which they adjoin.

6. The location provides reasonable visual and acoustical privacy for neighbors.
7. Screening, fencing, or planting has been proposed to preserve such privacy, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
8. The proposal does not include loose material walkways e.g., crushed stone.

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GUIDELINE No.35  
**Play Equipment**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for the following:

- a. All play equipment over **8 feet** in height and/or over **10 feet** in length.
- b. Sandboxes more than one foot above ground and/or over **25 square feet**.
- c. Tree houses, forts, playhouses, and trampolines.
- d. All play equipment not made of natural wood, regardless of size.

**Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the play equipment. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Description of the play equipment.
- Completed Play Equipment Worksheet.
- Manufacturer’s drawing or photograph, if available.

**Approval**

Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. All equipment is in proportion to lot size.
2. The overall size of the equipment is proportionate to the area and does not dominate the site.
3. The equipment is inconspicuously located in the rear yard area at a reasonable distance (7.5 to 10 feet) from side and rear property lines.
4. If natural wood play equipment is proposed; or if; metal play equipment is proposed, it is painted a dark earth tone color (brown, green).
5. Equipment is located in the rear of the house and within lines defined by the sides of the house extended to the rear.

6. Play Equipment is within 20 feet from the rear of the house or 2/3 the distance between the rear of the house and the rear property line, whichever is closer to the house.
7. Fencing, planting, or landscape screening have been proposed, required. See [GUIDELINE No.17—FENCING](#) or [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### **Approval Not Required**

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An application is not required for swing sets and play equipment if all the following five criteria are met:

1. Total height of **8 feet** or less.
2. Total length of **10 feet** or less.
3. Located at the rear of the house and within the lines defined by the sides of the house extended to the rear.
4. Within **20 feet** of the house or **2/3 the distance** between the rear of the house and the rear property lines, whichever is closer to the house.
5. The swing set or play equipment is made of natural wood.

An application is **not** required for sandboxes if all the following criteria are met:

1. Total height is one foot or less above ground.
2. Area is **25 square feet** or less.
3. The sandbox is within **20 feet** of the rear of the house or two-thirds the distance between the rear of the house and the rear property line, whichever is closer to the house.

**NOTE:** Townhouse and condominium associations may have further restrictions on play equipment so please check with your local association. The most restrictive guidelines will apply.

## Pools

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all pools except portable children’s wading pools that can be emptied at night and do not exceed 36 square feet. A two-step approval process outlined below is recommended for all in ground pools.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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#### Pool Part 1:

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the pool and its associated equipment. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Map showing location of all neighboring dwellings which will have visual and acoustic access to the pool.
- Signatures of all neighboring dwellings which will have visual and acoustic access to the pool.
- Schematic or sketch, with dimensions, showing:
  1. Deck Areas
  2. Patio
  3. Lighting
  4. Walkways
  5. Fence
  6. Additions as result of pool
  7. Other structural change e.g., fire pits, grills, kitchens, etc.
- Completed Pool Worksheet.

#### Pool Part 2:

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the pool and its associated equipment. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- All information from Part 1.
- Signatures of all neighboring dwellings which will have visual and acoustic access to the pool.
- Approved pool permit from Howard County.
- Completed Deck Worksheet.
- Completed Fence Worksheet.
- Grading plan.
- Landscape plan.
- Screening plan.
- Completed Pool Worksheet.

## Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Size of the pool is of reasonable proportion to the house, lot, and other structures on the lot.
2. Fence surrounding the pool meets the requirements of the River Hill Architectural Guidelines and Covenants. Howard County has specific requirements pertaining to fencing surrounding the pool area. Contact the County for specific fencing requirements.

**NOTE:** Approval of certain fence styles will be contingent upon completion of the pool. Applicants must demonstrate that the lot's size, shape, and topography are suitable for a pool; however, the RHAC may deem some lots unsuitable for a pool. An approved Howard County Building permit does not constitute authorization for the construction of the pool **nor does the approval of the preliminary application constitute authorization for the construction of the pool.**

Above ground pools will not be approved.

**Portico/  
Front Porches/  
Front Entryways**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for the addition of, or restructuring of a front entryway, portico, or front porch.

**Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The applications must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan, showing location of the proposed structure. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- A detailed plan, to include a written description of all materials to be used.
- Measurements, dimensions, etc. of the project.
- Elevation drawings of the structure.
- Details of any railings to be used, if applicable.
- Description of flooring.
- Description of any corbels, brackets, or braces to include number, color, and placement.
- Description of any plantings to be removed for the construction of the structure.
- Changes in window or door locations, size, or style.
- Description of changes in exterior lighting to include the addition or removal of lighting and wattage.
- Description of proposed landscaping or screening. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- List of construction materials to include colors.
- The roof pitch and color if one is added.
- Color of soffit and fascia.

**Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The alteration is compatible in location, color, size, conformity with the design of the house, and in relationship to neighboring dwellings.
2. The Howard County Building Code is adhered to in all its aspects, including the obtaining of a building permit.
3. The alteration matches the existing structure in style, color, and material.

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GUIDELINE No.38

## **Porches: Screened, Enclosed Decks**

See [GUIDELINE No.13a,b—DECKS, PORCHES, SCREENED/  
ENCLOSED DECK ADDITIONS](#).

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GUIDELINE No.39

## **Professions and Home Business**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all professions and home businesses.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Type of profession/home business desired (complete description).
- Purpose of the Business.
- Description of where business-related materials will be stored.
- A description of any signage to be used must be included in the application.
- Approximate square outside footage of lot to be used for the business, if applicable.
- Description of how products, services, or materials will be distributed and advertised, if applicable.
- Type and number of vehicles and where such vehicles are to be parked if rental property.
- Number and type of deliveries required.
- Type and number of vehicles to be used in the business, and where such vehicles are to be parked.
- The total square footage of the home and the percentage of that square footage to be utilized in the conduct of the proposed business.
- The operating hours.
- The number and times of meetings to be held per week and the number of people, who will attend meetings, as well as the number and type of vehicles that meeting members will drive and park at the meeting.

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. A completed in-home business or profession application is submitted.

2. An acknowledgment of the adjacent or affected property owners by signature is provided. (Signatures acknowledge awareness and does not constitute approval or disapproval.)
3. The primary use of the residential property will remain a personal residence.
4. Any sign or signage, other advertising service relating to professions or home businesses has been applied for using an [Exterior Alteration Application](#) and will not be placed on the Lot until approved by the RHAC.
5. Operating personnel is limited to one employee other than those members permanently residing in the residence. Other proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**NOTE:** Section 11.02 of the River Hill Village Covenants states: “No profession or home industry shall be conducted in or on any part of a Lot or in any improvement thereon on the Property without specific written approval of the Architectural Committee.” The Architectural Committee, in its discretion, upon consideration of the circumstances in each case, and particularly the effect on surrounding property, may permit a Lot or any improvement thereon to be used in whole or in part for the conduct of a profession or home industry.” Home businesses are included in “home industries.”

If the impact of the profession or home business on other properties is significantly greater than that stated in the original application, the RHAC may reconsider and rescind its approval. The impact on traffic and parking is a consideration that the RHAC will take under advisement. Approval will only be granted if the business is considered to be compatible with a high-quality residential neighborhood. Any variance from the approved application will be considered a violation of the River Hill Village Covenants.

The following activities, among others, may be permitted at the discretion of the RHAC: music, art, and dance classes; schools, medical and dental offices; fraternal or social club meeting place; seamstress services.

Applications must be renewed after the first year and/or in the event of any material changes. Thereafter, applications must be renewed every two years and/or in the event of material changes.

## Radon Units

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for all radon mitigation systems/units where exhaust pipes etc. must be located in the front of the home or above the roofline.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan including the exact location of the radon unit. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Manufacturer’s drawing and/or photograph if available.
- Description of the type of screening.  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. A completed application is submitted.
2. A screening plan is provided.  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval Not Required

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An application for exterior radon units will not be needed if the following criteria are met:

1. The exhaust pipe is located alongside a downspout and painted the color of the downspout.
2. The unit is placed vertically on the side of the house and painted to match the siding.
3. The unit is located along the rear or side of the house and is of a size that does not require screening.

## Rain Barrels

Rain barrels, or rainwater storage containers, capture rainwater and hold it for later use on lawns, gardens, and indoor plants. Collecting rain runoff in rain barrels reduces the amount of water that flows from a property, reduces erosion, and conserves water. An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) for consideration by the RHAC is required when placing a rain barrel on your property.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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- A diagrammed plot plan showing the location of no more than one rain barrel located at each downspout on your property. Rain barrels shall be placed on a level surface and secured so as not to topple.
- Rain barrels must not exceed a sixty-five-gallon capacity limit and may be constructed of either vinyl material to match the siding or trim of the house or unstained wood material.
- Rain barrels must be maintained at all times and should be free of standing water on or around anything not used as part of the rain barrel system, must be conducted including the use of the collected water, mosquito screens or dunks (that kill mosquito larvae, but are harmless to birds, wildlife, and pets) to prevent breeding, and have an annual inspection for cracks, leaks, or debris.
- A properly diagrammed plan to properly divert the drainage/overflow/runoff from the rain barrel onto the neighboring properties, common areas, or open space.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The rain barrel is located on the property at a downspout.
2. The rain barrel is secured so as not to topple.
3. The rain barrel is placed on a level surface.
4. The rain barrel does not exceed 65 gallon capacity and 48 inches in height.
5. Vinyl barrels, match either the siding or downspout color.
6. Wooden rain barrels remain natural, i.e. unstained.
7. No more than two (2) rain barrels are proposed.
8. Information is provided on how mosquitoes will be prevented.

**NOTE:** Rain barrels must be maintained at all times and should be kept free of standing water on or around anything not used as part of the rain barrel system. The rain barrel drainage must be properly diverted and may not flow onto neighboring properties, common areas or open space.

During the winter season, rain barrels should be stored and/or all water removed or maintained in such a way that water will not get into the receptacle and freeze. These steps will ensure prolonged barrel life and avoid maintenance issues.

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GUIDELINE No.42

## Rebuilds

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for all tear downs and/or new construction. Approval is required prior to demolition except where demolition is necessary to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood. All applications for tear downs/rebuilds are required to obtain a Howard County building permit.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed site plan with dimensions, boundaries, present structures, and the proposed alteration. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Diagrammed plot/survey plan showing the current and proposed footprints of the new house in relationship with and measurement to all abutting property lines.
- List of exterior building materials with detailed descriptions, color samples and styles.
- Scale drawing of proposed floor plan.
- Scale drawings of proposed construction including elevations/all views.
- Description of material, and color(s) for the following: roof, siding, trim, doors, fixtures.
- Lighting design plan with wattages.  
See [GUIDELINE No.30—LIGHTING](#).
- Foundation information.
- Completed Deck Worksheet (if applicable).
- Garage plans to include garage doors.  
See [GUIDELINE No.14—DOORS AND GARAGE DOORS](#).
- Landscaping plans. See [GUIDELINE No.28a,b,c—LANDSCAPING](#).
- Patio plans. See [GUIDELINE No.34—PATIOS and WALKWAYS](#).
- Deck/Porch plans. See [GUIDELINE No.13a,b—DECKS](#).
- Walkway plans. See [GUIDELINE No.34—WALKWAYS](#).
- Window plans. See [GUIDELINE No.60a,b—WINDOWS](#).

## Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Submitted a completed application.
2. Have clearly marked corners of the structure for any site visits to be done by the Resident Architectural Committee. Have described tree removal. See [GUIDELINE No.28a,b,c—LANDSCAPING](#).
3. All replaced structures are of the same style, materials, colors, etc.
4. Timelines with anticipated starting and completion dates for demolition, construction and landscaping are provided.
5. Five (5) copies of plans over 11 x 17 inches are included.

**NOTE:** Remind your contractors that they may not start before 7:00 a.m. and if work is to be done on the weekends that they are considerate of your neighbors. It would be greatly appreciated if they could start a little later on weekends. If port-a-potties are used please ensure that your contractor follows COMAR rules for placement. Please ensure that all debris is removed in a timely fashion during and after construction and that no waste is allowed to accumulate on the lot.

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GUIDELINE No.43

## **Rental Properties, Boarders and Shared Living**

An In-Home Business Application is not required for rental properties, boarders and shared living. Every dwelling or dwelling unit in Howard County which is not occupied solely by the owner or owner's immediate family must be licensed.

## **Re-Siding, Reroofing, and Restyling**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for residing, reroofing, or restyling if it will be a color or material change. A “change” in house color includes any variations in shade, lighter or darker, from the original builder-approved and applied color as well as the addition of stone or masonry trim.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Sample of the proposed new siding or shingle.
- Plans for addition of any masonry or stone.
- Plans for roof with sample of the color.

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Samples of all colors selected are provided. The number of colors used should be limited to one for siding, one for trim, with a compatible accent door color.
2. Care is taken to complement the roof color.
3. Proposed colors are medium to dark or earth tone colors.
4. Trim should remain close to, but not lighter than, house siding color.
5. The colors do not duplicate colors used on neighboring homes.
6. Foundation painting matches or blends with the color of the siding.

**NOTE:** Residing with aluminum or vinyl should follow the same color guidelines as for house repainting. An actual sample is required. Horizontal siding is preferred. Window and door trim should remain contemporary in style.

## Retaining Walls

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for all retaining walls. Retaining walls and rock walls require thought and planning just like any other building project. Soil properties, wall height, wall type or function, drainage discharge loads, adjacent grading, etc. must be taken into consideration.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The applications must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan with the location of the retaining walls.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- List of materials and colors and or a brochure or sample, if applicable.
- Grading diagram.
- Drainage diagram.
- Completed cross-sectional drawing of wall to scale.
- Elevation view from low grade side of wall drawn to scale.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Exposed height of the retaining wall does not exceed 36 inches.
2. Materials compliment the character of the house.
3. Long expanses of walls are broken up with insets or change of materials.
4. Retaining walls do not block or affect an existing swale or drainage path in a manner to cause damming and small shallow pools/puddles.
5. Site plans show water run-off (use arrows to indicate the flow of water).
6. The location of the retaining wall cannot obstruct any swales or natural water run-off.
7. No part of a retaining wall 36 inches or higher extends across the building restriction line (BRL), (typically 7.5 or more feet from the property line).

**NOTE:** Homeowners will be responsible for all safety concerns including any need for a railing on the retaining wall. Homeowners will coordinate with Howard County for all necessary permit requirements.

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GUIDELINE No.46

## Satellite Dishes

See [GUIDELINE No.3—ANTENNAS AND SATELLITE DISHES](#).

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GUIDELINE No.47

## Screening

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for screening of any kind.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan including a scaled drawing of the item to be screened. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Location, variety, width, height, and description of landscape screening.
- Detailed landscape plan for screening.
- The size of all trees and shrubs at planting and the projected size at maturity.
- Any existing landscaping and/or fences.
- Description of the material of the fence(s) as well as the height, style, material, and color if a fence or partition will be used as screening. See [GUIDELINE No.17—FENCING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. That particular attention is paid to the RHAC recommendations for deciduous or coniferous type plantings, whichever is more appropriate.
2. Trees are not planted in a row in the form of a hedge or barrier.
3. A variety of plant materials are used.
4. Plant materials are clustered or staggered.
5. The scale of screening is considered.
6. Opaque plantings of trees or shrubbery are not used along property lines as delineation or otherwise planted in a row.

**NOTE:** Landscape or fence screening may be required as part of, but not limited to, the following exterior alterations: antennas and satellite dishes, basketball units, clotheslines, compost piles, dog houses, driveways, vegetable gardens, heating and air conditioning units, hot tubs and whirlpools, lawn ornamentation, patios, and walkways, play equipment, pools, sheds and storage units.

## Security Lighting

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) will be required for all security lighting, flood lights and various types of high output lights.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Bulb type and wattage or wattage equivalent.
- Aim and illumination area of lights.
- Style, size, scope (range) of proposed lights.
- Describe the impact on neighboring properties.
- Manufacturer's drawing.
- Brochure.
- Description or photograph, if available.

### Approval

---

Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Consideration is given to the impact on neighboring properties.
2. The lighting illuminates only a specific area which is totally within the applicant's property.
3. High light fixtures are shielded to prevent unwanted or excessive intrusion of light from one property to another.
4. Number (amount) of security lights is reasonable to the size and scale of the property.
5. Lighting does not detract from the residence's appearance or the residential look of the neighborhood.
6. All lighting equipment is painted to match the color of the surface to which they are attached.

**NOTE:** Exterior Alterations of this type must be considered carefully because of the impact on neighboring properties.

## Security Cameras

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) will be required for all exterior security cameras.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the cameras.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Aim and reach area of camera.
- Style, size, scope (range), number of proposed cameras.
- Description of the impact on neighboring properties.
- Manufacturer’s drawing and/or photograph, if available.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Consideration is given to the impact on neighboring properties.
2. The cameras are carefully aimed so that they COVER or survey a specific area, which is totally within the applicant’s property and not where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.
3. Number (amount) of security cameras is reasonable to the size and scale of the property.
4. Cameras do not detract from the residence’s appearance or the residential look of the neighborhood.
5. All camera equipment is inconspicuous or painted to match the color of the surface to which it is attached.

**NOTE:** Exterior Alterations of this type must be considered more carefully because of the impact on neighboring properties.

## Sheds and Storage

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all sheds and outside storage sites. This includes any permanent structure built to house tools and provide extra storage outside the existing house.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan which shows the relationship of the shed to the house and property lines. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**

- Statement as to the architectural style of the house/townhouse.
- List of materials to be used. Include a description of the color along with all color samples (e.g., shed, house and trim).
- Detailed drawing of the shed including elevation drawings.
- Dimensions, style, and location of door(s).
- A description of proposed landscape screening, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### **Approval**

The shed will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Shed is located behind the house and as close to the rear of the house as possible. Sheds attached to the house are preferred. If a more desirable location such as the back of the owner’s lot in a heavily wooded area is available, the RHAC will give it consideration.
2. **FOR SHEDS ATTACHED TO THE REAR OF THE HOUSE:** The shed is a sturdy, permanently anchored structure, which will be maintained.
3. **FOR SHEDS IN OTHER LOCATIONS ON THE LOT:** The shed structure door/opening faces towards the homeowner’s property.
4. Material is similar to the house (e.g., wood for wood siding houses). Composite material may be considered if it matches the style and material look of the house and is of the same quality and color. If the house is restyled, resided or paint color change is made, the shed must match.
5. The shed does not include decorative embellishments (e.g., eagles, etc.). These are typically not approved.
6. Size is based on lot size and is in reasonable proportion to the house and/or fenced area.
7. Appropriate screening is provided where applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47 —SCREENING](#).

**NOTE:** Townhouse and condominium associations may have further restrictions on sheds, so please check with your local association. The most restrictive guidelines will apply. Townhouse sheds will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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GUIDELINE No.50

## **Sidewalks/ Street Trees**

Repair maintenance, including snow removal, of adjoining sidewalks is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner under Howard County Law. Sidewalks must be shoveled within 48 hours after snow has fallen.

If your lot abuts any sections of sidewalk, you are responsible for the sidewalk. Deteriorated sidewalks must be replaced with concrete. (NOTE: No application is required to repair or replace existing sidewalks with concrete; however, any deviation from the original design or location requires that an [Exterior Alteration Application](#) be submitted to the RHAC.)

Maintenance of the grass areas between the sidewalk and curb is the adjacent property owners' responsibility and must include appropriate mowing and weeding, in the same manner and frequency as regular lawn care.

Street Tree maintenance remains the responsibility of Howard County Highways. For Street or Road Trees requiring maintenance in Howard County contact 410-313-7450.

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GUIDELINE No.51a

## **Real Estate Signs**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) need not be submitted for real estate signs if all the following applicable criteria are met:

1. One direction sign is permitted on a corner leading to an Open House but must be removed at the end of the sale day.
2. The sign is in compliance with the Howard County Sign Ordinance for Real Estate signs.
3. The sign does not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic, obstruct traffic sight lines, or otherwise impair safety.
4. The sign does not include "SOLD" "PENDING" or "UNDER CONTRACT" riders. These riders are not permitted.

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GUIDELINE No.51b

## **Temporary Garage Sale and Temporary Contractor Signs**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) need not be submitted for temporary signs such as garage sale signs, or signs advertising contracted work being done on the property, **if ALL the following applicable criteria are met:**

1. The sign is in compliance with the Howard County Sign Ordinance.
2. The sign is not larger than 20 inches by 28 inches and does not stand more than 3 feet above the ground when measured from the top of the sign or post, whichever is higher.
3. Contractors using their logos, trademarks and other color schemes do not post more than one sign per lot.

4. Signs are not posted on trees, light poles, street signs or official neighborhood identification or on neighborhood watch signs.
5. No more than one temporary sign is on any property.
6. Signs are neatly lettered, clean and maintained in good condition.
7. Garage sale signs are posted no more than 24 hours in advance of the sale and are removed at the end of the sale day.
8. Signs advertising contracted work being done on a property are posted for no more than 30 days. These signs must be removed upon completion of the project.
9. The sign does not interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic, obstruct traffic sight lines, or otherwise impair safety.
10. The sign is at least 20 feet from the adjacent curb or street.

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GUIDELINE No.51c

### **Political Signs**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) need not be submitted for political signs. Political signs may not be posted in the community's common areas and must meet the criteria of Howard County, Maryland, and Federal Law.

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GUIDELINE No.51d

### **Home Security Signs**

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) need not be submitted if the following criteria are met:

1. Standard home security signs are attached to the front of the house.
2. A free-standing home security sign is no more than twelve inches square.
3. Free standing signs are mounted on a metal stake or wood post located no further than 10 feet from the house.
4. Only one free standing or attached sign is in front of the house. A second sign may be attached to the rear of the house or mounted in the rear yard.

**NOTE:** No other signs shall be permitted on any lot without submission and approval of an [Exterior Alteration Application](#).

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GUIDELINE No.52

## Skylights

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) will be required for skylights and or tubular skylights.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The applications must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan indicating the location of the skylight.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- An elevation view of roof with skylight or tubular skylight.
- Information on all material to be used.
- Color of frame and trim.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The size and position of skylights on roof planes complement the overall design of the home.
2. Skylights are made of clear materials, such as acrylic, glass, Lexan, fiberglass, or thermalized glass (acrylic).
3. The location will not result in undue outside reflection during the day and night.
4. Skylight is self-flashing (has its own aluminum mount).

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GUIDELINE No.53a

## Solar Collector Panels (Roof/House Mounted)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all Solar Panels.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Elevation drawings of the house showing the appearance of the collector, collector panel size and number of panels to be installed.
- Material and color of the collectors.
- Details of how the collector edges will meet the roof.
- Materials and a manufacturer's drawing and/or photograph.
- Description of where the inverter will be located.
- Description of the location and placement of the conduits, electric panel, and utility meter, as applicable.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Collectors should be located to give maximum advantage.
2. Large collectors on a sloping roof should appear to be flush with the roof and not lying on top.
3. All trim should be painted to match the background color of the roof or house trim, where attached.
4. All pipe work is concealed.

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GUIDELINE No.53b

## Solar Collectors/ Panels (Free Standing)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all free-standing Solar Collectors.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the free-standing panels. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Elevation drawings of the house showing the appearance of the collector, collector panel size and number of panels to be installed.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Permanent location of the solar structure is within the rear sightlines of the house; and this has been indicated on the plat plan.
2. Dimensions of the solar structure as provided.
3. The distances of the solar structure from the house, side property line and rear property line have been drawn on the plot plan.
4. Dimensions and materials of the platform on which the solar structure will be mounted have been described.
5. Description of the plant material to be used for screening (deciduous or evergreen), to include the height of the plant screening material at installation and heights of plant material at maturity has been included.
6. The exact location/placement of plant material to be used for screening has been indicated.

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GUIDELINE No.54

## **Storm or Screen Windows and Doors (New and Replacement)**

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for storm/screen windows and doors other than full view doors where door trim matches, exterior door, shutters, gutters and downspouts and front door molding.

### **Exterior Alteration Application Requirements**

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The application must include:

- Complete details of the style, color, size and location of the storm/screen windows and doors.
- Manufacturer's drawing and/or photograph for all replacement storm/screen windows and doors.

### **Approval**

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The doors or windows are of straight forward design without bars, cross-hatching, filigree, or decorative embellishments.
2. The storm door is compatible with the house style.
3. Storm doors match the color of the house siding, exterior door or trim.

**NOTE:** Townhouse and condominium associations may have further restrictions on storm/screen windows and doors so please check with your local association. The most restrictive guidelines will apply.

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GUIDELINE No.55

## **Swing Sets**

See [GUIDELINE No.35—Play Equipment](#).

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GUIDELINE No.56

## **Townhouses**

See [GUIDELINE No.12—CONDOMINIUMS/TOWNHOUSES](#).

## Tree Planting or Removal

*Fast Track Available*



An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) will be required for the following:

- a. Removal of any tree whose trunk is over 20 inches in circumference (approximately 7 inches in diameter) when measured at a point 2 feet above the ground, whether the tree is alive or presumed dead.
- b. Any plantings with four or more plants in a row or used as a hedge or windbreak or for screening purposes whether in a row or not. See [GUIDELINE No.17—FENCING](#) and [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).
- c. Planting of more than one tree specimen.
- d. Relocation and replanting of trees.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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Application must include:

- Diagrammed plan showing the exact location(s) and number of tree(s) to be removed or added.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Indication of the reason for tree removal or addition.
- Indication of the height of tree at time of planting.
- Tree type, name, and height at maturity, for tree addition or replacement.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. You submit a completed application.
2. You stagger plantings of more than 2 trees.
3. Opaque plantings of trees are not used along property lines as delineation or planted in a row.
4. Stumps are removed or dissolved if large trees are removed.

## Trellises

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for trellises.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the trellis.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Material, color, and size of the trellis.
- Relation of trellis to neighboring properties.
- Drawing or brochure of the trellis.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. The style, color, materials, size, and proportion complement the architectural character and existing color scheme of the house.
2. The trellis does not significantly impair the view or amount of sunlight of adjacent residences.
3. The trellis is not out of scale with the house.

### Approval Not Required

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An application will not be required for small plant supports placed against the house or garage which match the background color and are made of a natural material.

## Vehicles

Vehicle renovation or repairs lasting longer than two days may not be undertaken except in enclosed garages. Inoperable vehicles, vehicles without a valid current registration, or any other similar items may not be stored in the open on any lot.

No boats, boat trailers, house trailers, trucks, recreation vehicles, mobile homes, campers, or any similar items can be stored or parked in the open on any lot without prior written approval of the Architectural Committee. See [GUIDELINE No.8—BOATS TRAILERS, TRUCKS AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLES](#).

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the location of the vehicle.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Elevation drawings of the house and driveway showing the appearance of the vehicle on driveway in relation to adjacent and surrounding properties.
- Dimensions of driveway.
- Dimensions of vehicle.
- Dimensions of vehicle in relation to driveway.
- Description of material to be used to screen vehicle from adjacent properties. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. Vehicle size does not obscure view of street traffic.
2. The size of the vehicle does not obscure the ability of adjacent neighbors to ingress or egress their driveways safely.
3. Screening does not significantly impair the view or amount of sunlight of adjacent residences.
4. The screening is not unattractive in appearance.

**NOTE:** Trucks and multi passenger vehicles are defined as vehicles exceeding 2000 lbs. with exterior signing or lettering; with or without an open, loaded or flatbed rear section; with area for a ladder and tool carrying capacity. To include pickup trucks with or without signage that are used for commercial hauling; Full-Size vans, Minivans and SUVs weighing between 13,000 and 33,000 lbs., and heavy trucks that are used for local delivery and public service commercial purposes.

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GUIDELINE No.60a

## Windows (Replacements, Additions)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all additional windows, replacement windows, garden windows, dormers if the style of the replacement or addition varies from the original.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan indicating location of window changes.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Complete details about the style, color, size and location of all windows to be added or replaced.
- Manufacturers' drawings, photographs.
- Material samples, if requested.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are followed:

1. Alterations and materials are in keeping with the existing style and exterior color scheme of the house.
2. Proposed additions are uniform with other windows, e.g., mullions, grids, trim, color, etc.

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GUIDELINE No.60b

## Windows (Films or Coatings)

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) must be submitted for all films or coatings to be applied to windows.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan indicating location of window changes.  
**Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Details about the color, and material of film or coating.
- Manufacturers' drawings, photographs.
- Material samples, if available.

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. Films are neutral in color and nearly invisible from the exterior of the home.

## Woodpiles

An [Exterior Alteration Application](#) is required for woodpiles not located at the rear of the house and located within the sightlines of the house.

### Exterior Alteration Application Requirements

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The applications must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan showing the proposed location of the woodpile. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Relation of woodpile to neighboring properties.
- Explanation of reason for the proposed location of woodpile.
- Screening information, if applicable. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

### Approval

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Your application will most likely be approved if it meets the following criteria:

1. A complete application is submitted.
2. Application is accompanied by an application for screening, if applicable.

### Approval Not Required

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No application is required for woodpiles if the following criteria are followed:

1. Woodpiles are located at the rear of the house and within the lines defined by the sides of the house extended to the rear.
2. Wood is not stacked on sidewalks, driveways, rights-of-way, etc.
3. There are not excessive amounts of wood.

**NOTE:** The Columbia Association and Howard County do not permit use of their Open Space for this, or any other personal use and violators will be cited. The RHAC may require screening of woodpiles. See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

Stacking of wood on sidewalks, driveways, rights-of-way, etc. is NOT PERMITTED, nor is the storage of excessive amounts of wood.

**Other**

When a guideline is not available for the project you are proposing, a complete application is needed.

**Exterior Alteration Application Requirements** .....

The application must include:

- Diagrammed plot plan with the proposed change shown. **Note: Applications without a diagrammed plot plan will not be accepted.**
- Information sufficiently detailed to permit understanding and evaluation of your proposal.
- Dimensions, materials colors.
- Landscaping and or screening plans, as applicable.  
See [GUIDELINE No.28—LANDSCAPING](#).  
See [GUIDELINE No.47—SCREENING](#).

**Conclusion:** It is impossible to write guidelines necessary to cover all exterior changes. When a guideline is not available for the project you are proposing, a complete application is needed. Emphasis should be placed on proper scale, materials, color and impact on neighboring properties. It should be noted that certain lots are not conducive to certain architectural and landscape changes. You must complete and submit an application prior to embarking on any project for which an application is required. Approval or disapproval of any proposed exterior change is within the discretion of the RHAC.