

Architectural & Property Modification Standards and Guidelines

Architectural & Property Modification Standards

The purpose of the Architectural and Property Modification Standards is to provide guidance to property owners, the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) and the White Birch Circle Homeowners Association (WBCHOA) Board. Defining and documenting the standards should ensure consistency of decisions made by each successive Architectural Review Committee and WBCHOA Board.

Guiding principles in determining appropriate changes or additions to each property are:

- **Compatibility & Scale** – Proposed modification or improvement of the applicant's home (structural or landscape) should be similar in architectural style, quality of workmanship, and similar use of materials, color, and construction details as that of adjoining homes in the White Birch Circle (WBC) neighborhood.
- **Impact On Neighbors** – Proposed improvement should relate favorably to the landscape, the adjacent homes and the WBC neighborhood. The consideration of design, quality, scale, location, architectural compatibility and functional impacts will be considered. Examples of adverse functional impacts include structural additions that would cause a material loss of sunlight or ventilation to a neighboring dwelling and an alteration in topography that would change natural drainage patterns to the detriment of a neighboring property.
- **Color And Materials** – Continuity or compatibility of color and finishing materials with the original construction and surrounding dwellings will be a specific consideration in evaluating the appropriateness of proposed improvements.

Architectural Modification Guidelines

The ARC feels that the closer these guidelines are followed the more harmonious and aesthetically pleasing our community will be. The ARC is always open to ideas and suggestions and will review projects not covered by these guidelines on a case-by-case basis. The ARC reserves the right to revise these guidelines as necessary and review with the neighborhood as appropriate.

Categories of Changes / Additions / Improvements include:

Antennae and Satellite Dishes

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 grants communities the ability to establish and enforce guidelines regulating the location, installation and color of these dishes, when such rules do not adversely affect signal reception, unreasonably delay the installation, or cause an unreasonable financial burden to the homeowner.

- The ARC must approve new installations of satellite dishes and their location when there is a potential of being seen from the street.

- Satellite dish units should not be visible from the front of the home and be located in the least conspicuous location to neighbors.
- Satellite dishes should be removed when they are no longer being used by the homeowner.
- No radio or television transmission or reception towers or antennae shall be erected on any lot. (Bylaws 12.14).
- In no event will free-standing transmission or receiving towers be permitted.

Air Conditioners

Individual air conditioner units extending from the windows of homes and visible from the street or adjoining neighbors are prohibited.

Attic Ventilators

Attic ventilators and turbines are permitted, provided their finishes are compatible with the color scheme of the house. Ventilators and turbines should be mounted on the least visible side of the ridge of the house to minimize their visibility. Attic ventilators and turbines must be approved.

Awnings

Exterior awnings on the front of the house are prohibited. Awnings may be installed on the side or back of homes if not visible from the street or adjoining neighbors. Structural supports for canvas awnings (or similar material) should be painted to match the trim of the dominant color of the house.

Basketball Backboards

Backboards should not be attached to the front of homes or garages. Freestanding basketball hoops may be installed in back or side yards behind the privacy walls without approval of the ARC.

Chimneys and Metal Flues

Chimneys must either be masonry or enclosed in the same finish consistent with the material and color scheme of the home. Chimney caps, consistent with the style of the chimney and the house, may be installed or replaced without approval of the ARC.

Clotheslines

Clotheslines or similar apparatus for the exterior drying of clothes may be installed in the back or side yard provided they are not visible from the street or a neighbor's yard.

Decks

The ARC must approve any new decks that will be visible from the street or a neighbor's yard. The following must be considered:

- Decks must be located in rear or side yards.
- Elevated decks must be of a scale and style that are compatible with the home to which attached or adjacent homes.
- Insect resistant materials (cedar, redwood, pressure treated wood and composite material (i.e. Trex) may be used. Railings may be wood, metal or vinyl.
- Decks should be painted or stained and generally match the trim or dominant color of the applicant's house. Natural or wood colored stains may also be used.

- Consideration must be given to not impacting the ability of a neighbor to perform painting and maintenance of their property or maintenance of their gutter systems.

Decorative Objects (Exterior)

Approval is required for exterior decorative objects in front yards and side yards (if visible from the street), which were not part of the original construction design. Examples include dominant features such as weather vanes, sculptures, boulders, large fountains, ponds, freestanding poles of all types, and any items attached to approved structures. Such objects will be evaluated in terms of their general appropriateness, size, location, compatibility with architectural and environment design qualities and visual impact on adjacent homes and the surrounding areas. Seasonal decorations may be installed as long as they are removed when the season/holiday is over. Small decorative yard flags are permitted.

Dog Houses and Dog Runs

Dog houses must be located in the side or back yard and not visible to neighbors. Dog runs are prohibited.

Driveways

All driveways and entrances to garages or houses must be concrete or a substance approved in writing by the ARC or the WBCHOA Board and shall be of a uniform quality. No asphalt or similar material will be approved. (By-laws 12.16)

- Concrete, brick or similar durable construction material may be approved if scale, location and design are compatible with the lot, home and surroundings.
- Repairs may be made to cracks in driveways. Although grey bricks matching the concrete driveway are recommended, a number of driveways have already been repaired with red bricks. Attention should be given to the repair patterns and uniformity of a pattern maintained.

Exterior Painting

Approval is needed for any change in color made to the exterior of the home. A color chip must be submitted with the ARC Request Form. This requirement applies to siding, doors, shutters, trim, and other appurtenant structures. The continuity or compatibility of color with the original construction and surrounding dwellings will be a specific consideration in evaluating the appropriateness of proposed color.

Fences

In general, due to the existing fencing surrounding our neighborhood and all homes, additional fencing on any property is prohibited unless not visible from the street.

Flagpoles

Permanent, freestanding flagpoles should not be installed in the front yard. Previously installed flagpoles may remain in place. Temporary flagpole staffs, which do not exceed six (6) feet in length and are attached at an incline to the wall or pillar of the home do not require approval.

Firewood

Firewood for wood burning fireplaces should be stacked in the side yard behind the fences and not be visible to any neighbors.

Front Door

Approval is not required if door is similar in architectural style, quality of workmanship, materials and is compatible in color and finishing materials as that currently existing in the WBC neighborhood.

Garage Door

Approval is not required if a door is similar in architectural style, quality of workmanship, materials and color as that currently existing in the WBC neighborhood.

Gardens

Vegetable gardens are prohibited in the front yard of all homes or visible from the street or neighbor homes.

Gazebos / Picnic Shelters

Gazebos must be approved if visible to neighbors. Requirements are:

- Must be located in back or side yards with minimal visible impact to adjoining lots and street views.
- Must be of a size appropriate for the size of the home, lot, surrounding dwellings, and should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the house and adjacent houses.
- Architectural design should be compatible with the design of the home as well as adjacent decks or patios.
- Insect resistant materials should be used and should be painted or stained to match the trim or dominant color of the applicant's house. Natural or wood colored stains may also be used.

Greenhouses

Greenhouses that are attached to a home will be treated as a major alteration and subject to the same level of review and meet the following criteria to be approved:

- Size and design must be architecturally compatible with the home and surrounding homes.
- There must be no adverse visual impacts for adjoining properties.

Grills (Permanent)

Permanent grills should not be installed in a location visible from the street or neighbor's yard and must comply with any relevant fire codes and other government regulation.

Gutters, Downspouts and Related Landscape Drains

Approval is not required for replacement of existing gutters and downspouts. Changes to color, or appearance of gutters and downspouts will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

- Replacement or additional gutters and downspouts must match the design of the original gutters and downspouts.
- Color must be white or match the house trim or siding.
- Discharge from downspouts must not adversely affect drainage onto adjacent properties.

Hot Tubs/Spas

- Exterior hot tubs or spas must be located in the rear yard or side yard adjacent to the home and should have minimal visible impact to adjoining lots and street views.

Landscaping

In general, landscaping changes will not require special approval. However, no tree, hedge or other landscape feature should be planted or maintained in a location, which obstructs sight lines for vehicular traffic on streets or driveways.

Prior approval is necessary for the following cases:

- Plantings intended to form a hedge or natural screen and which will attain more than two (2) feet in height.
- Substantial or total removal of turf and replacement with another material, such as mulch or stones.
- Installation of retaining walls or similar structures that form a wall over twelve (12) inches high and eight (8) feet long. Acceptable materials for walls are stone, brick or approved interlocking architectural pre-cast concrete bricks. Railroad ties or garden timbers will not be approved for aesthetic reasons.
- All changes in lot grading. No elevation changes will be permitted which materially affect the surface grade of surrounding lots.
- Planting of trees on or near the property line.
- Certain varieties of shade trees are prohibited because they may cause future damage to the owner's surrounding property or may interfere with a neighbor's enjoyment of his own property. Restricted tree varieties are as follows: chinaberry, scrub oak, weeping willow, black willow, silver maple, box elder, black maple, black walnut, Siberian elm, mulberry, River Birch and large fruit trees.

Lighting (Exterior)

The replacement of existing fixtures or the addition of new fixtures does not require approval by the ARC, if the fixtures to be installed are compatible in style and scale with the owner's house. Consideration must be given to any additional lighting that would adversely affect adjoining neighbors due to location, wattage, or other features.

Mailboxes

Any replacement mailboxes which conform to the existing design specifications will not require approval. Brick or wooden coverings should not be installed. The ARC must approve alternate designs.

Patios

Patios located in rear yards do not require approval. Patios located in side yards may be repaired or replaced without approval. Any patios visible to neighbors will be evaluated on their individual merit.

- Patios should be constructed of materials that harmonize with the colors of the community. Suggested materials include slate, flagstone, brick or concrete.
- The scale, location and design should be compatible with the lot, home and surroundings neighbors.
- Any adverse drainage requirements, which might result from the construction of a patio, should be considered and remedied. The use of a partially porous patio surface, or the installation of mulch beds adjacent to the patio, represent alternative ways to eliminate drainage concerns.

Pergolas

Pergolas must be approved if visible to neighbors. Requirements are:

- Must be located in back yards or side yards with minimal visible impact to neighbors.
- Must be of a size appropriate for the size of the home, lot, surrounding dwellings and should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the house and adjacent houses.
- Architectural design should be compatible with the design of the house as well as adjacent decks or patios.
- Consideration must be given to not impacting the ability of the neighbor to perform painting of their property or maintenance of their gutter systems.

Retaining Walls

Retaining walls will be considered on a case-by-case basis for the following purposes:

- To prevent soil erosion.
 - For landscaping purposes such as flower beds or rock gardens.
- No walls that divert ground water onto adjoining properties should be installed.

Recreation and Play Equipment

Semi-permanent recreation and play equipment, which either constitutes a structure or an addition to an existing structure, requires approval if visible from the street or neighbors home. Examples include playhouses, gym sets, play sets, etc.

- All such equipment must be placed in rear or side yards.
- The equipment should be generally compatible with the lot size. The design and any visual screening are additional considerations in evaluating visual impact.
- Equipment should be maintained in a good state of repair and removed when no longer being used.

Roofing

No approval is required to replace roofing in the same general color and similar materials. Approval by the ARC is required for change in roof color or type.

- Continuity or compatibility of color and finishing materials with the existing construction and surrounding homes will be a specific consideration.
- Consideration will be given for replacement of older roofs with more modern materials.

Security Bars

In general, the use of security bars or grates on windows and doors visible from the street will be prohibited. Homeowners concerned about the security of their residences are advised to consider security systems (monitored or unmonitored) and sophisticated lock systems.

Shutters

Replacement of shutters matching original builders' color, style and dimension does not need approval. Removal of shutters will not be approved. Missing, hanging, broken or otherwise unsightly shutters must be repaired or replaced as promptly as possible.

Screened Patios and Decks

Screened Patios and Decks must be approved if visible to neighbors. Requirements are:

- Must be located in back yards or side yards with minimal visible impact to neighbors.
- Must be of a size appropriate for the size of the home and lot, and be compatible with the architectural qualities of the house and adjacent houses.
- Insect resistant materials (cedar, redwood, pressure treated wood and composite material (i.e. Trex) may be used. Railings may be wood, metal or vinyl.
- Decks should be painted or stained and generally match the trim or dominant color of the applicant's house. Natural or wood colored stains may also be used.

Solar Panels

Solar panels should be placed on the side roof of the home and must be approved by the ARC.

Storage Sheds

In general, a shed must be of a size appropriate for the size of the lot, as well as surrounding dwellings and should be compatible with the architectural qualities of the houses. -Sheds must be located in the back or side yards with minimum visible impact to adjoining homes or the street.

Swimming Pools

Pools must be located in the rear or side of the property and will be approved if size and location are consistent with the scale and characteristic of the lot.

Walks

Walks located in rear yards or side yards when not visible from the street do not require approval. Front and side yard walks (if visible to neighbors) will be evaluated on their individual merit. Replacement of existing walks with the same materials will not need approval.

- Stone, brick, concrete, slate, flagstone or similar durable construction material may be approved if scale, location and design are compatible with the lot, home and surroundings.

Walls

Each homeowner is responsible for maintenance of the walls surrounding their property.
(Bylaws 12.19).

• Property Maintenance Standards

All lots, properties and premises should be kept clean at all times. If litter or other material is found on any lot, the materials shall be removed by the lot owner, at his/her expense, within five (5) days of written request by the Board or the ARC.

- Lots must be maintained with grass, shrubs (or other vegetation or ground cover approved by the Architectural Review Committee).
- No bare earth may be exposed on a lot for more than 60 days without approval of the ARC.
- All turf areas on a lot must be kept neatly mowed during the growing season and periodically trimmed as needed during the non-growing season. Grass should not be permitted to exceed four inches in height.

- Turf areas and other vegetation should be watered during dry periods, unless prohibited because of water controls.
- Any dead plants, shrubs or trees must be removed as quickly as possible. Dead, diseased or damaged trees, which might create a hazard, must be promptly removed.
- No trash or debris may accumulate or be stored in a visible location on a lot.
- Construction materials required for the improvement of a home or lot should be neatly stored, in as unobtrusive a location on the property as possible, when not in use.
- Construction dumpsters should not be placed on the street due to the limited width of our street and the potential constriction on normal traffic. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the ARC or the WBCHOA Board.
- All hedges, trees, and shrubs, must be neatly trimmed and maintained. Their size must be maintained in proportion to the lot and home through pruning.
- Yard maintenance companies must remove all clippings, shrub and tree debris from properties and not leave debris on the street.
- All clippings or debris should be bagged and placed near (not on) the street the evening prior to the regularly scheduled pick-up (Currently on Wednesdays, unless delayed by a holiday).
- No clippings or debris should be placed in the street gutters or near a storm drain.
- Maintenance companies contracted by the WBCHOA are not responsible for removing debris from individual owned properties, unless contracted by the homeowner directly with the company.

The exterior of a home must be maintained in an attractive manner. No blistering or peeling of exterior painted surfaces should be allowed. Any exterior building components (i.e. siding, gutters, downspouts, roof shingles, and doors) which are missing, broken, or otherwise in a state of disrepair, should be repaired as quickly as possible.