THE VISTAS
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

DESIGN GUIDELINES
HANDBOOK

REVISED July 2016

Proposed Amendments – June 2018
# Design Guidelines

## Table of Contents

I. **Introduction**  2

II. **Design Review Committee and Guidelines**  3

A. General Principles of the Guidelines  3
B. Layout of the Guidelines  3
C. Definitions  4
D. All-Inclusive Submission Facilitates Review and Approval  5
E. Important Reminders  5

III. **Application Procedures**  7

IV. **Guidelines for Modifications to Homes**  8

A. Additions, Major (e.g. Rooms, Screened Porches, Sunrooms)  8
B. Outbuildings  8
C. Awnings  10
D. Decks and Patios  11
E. Driveways/Parking Pads/Walkways  13
F. Fences  14
G. Landscaping, Planting, and Tree Removal  16
H. Exterior Lighting  20
I. Exterior Painting/Staining/Color Changes  22
J. Play Equipment and Basketball Backboards  22
K. Retaining Walls  23
L. Doors and Windows  24
M. Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs and Other Water Structures  25
N. Exterior Decorative Objects  26
O. Satellite Dishes  27
P. Mailboxes  28
Q. Miscellaneous  29

V. **Removal of Existing Structures and Landscaping**  31

VI. **Standards for Maintenance of Lot and Improvements**  31
I. INTRODUCTION

These Design Guidelines are for your use in preparing an application for architectural review by the Design Review Committee (DRC). The purpose of this booklet is to serve as an adjunct to the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, Easements and Restrictions (“Declaration”). In the event of any conflict between the Declaration and these Design Guidelines, the Declaration shall control.

By following these guidelines, homeowners should find that the procedure for submitting applications for review to the DRC is a straightforward, simple process. The guidelines in this booklet address the most common additions or modifications, although there may be modifications desired by owners for which guidelines have not been included. These will be evaluated as received, and approved or denied at the sole discretion of the DRC. Guidelines will then be added to this document as needed.

The Board of Directors of the Association welcomes any comments or suggestions you may have regarding these Design Guidelines.
II. DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE and GUIDELINES

DRC Mission Statement: “To provide guidelines that foster “curb appeal” and grant homeowners the freedom and flexibility to enhance and enjoy their property.”

A. General Principles of the Guidelines

These Guidelines strive to:

➢ Maintain and enhance property values through high “curb-appeal” by having high standards for property frontages.
➢ Encourage homeowners to enhance their properties by not having unnecessarily restrictive rules and cumbersome and over-regulated processes.
➢ Limit freedom only where absolutely necessary to ensure neighboring property values are not adversely affected by exterior modifications to homes or lots.
➢ Provide clear and concise guidance for alterations, limiting the need for a subjective analysis of proposals.
➢ Promote a “common sense” approach to design review, thereby ensuring maximum homeowner involvement in the process.
➢ Notify homeowners of DRC pre-approved modifications created as a result of an upfront analysis where some alterations have been deemed acceptable.
➢ Provide homeowners with advance notice of alterations that are never deemed acceptable in this community.
➢ Provide recommendations for the consideration of homeowners when they are proposing changes to their property.

B. Layout of Guidelines

Each major section of the Guidelines will have three subsections to describe the vision for the community: the Design Intention; the Requirements and Specifications; and the Application section.

1. Design Intention

The Design Intention is where the guiding principles for a modification are explained. **It should be noted that it is the “spirit” of these Guidelines, not the “letter”, to which properties and improvements must conform.** The Design Intention section is meant to aid in understanding the “spirit” of the section’s guidelines.

2. Requirements and Specifications

This is where specific Requirements and Specifications for a modification are detailed. This section provides the most detailed information regarding a modification, and may have a further breakdown of information by providing up to three categories of Guidelines.
The first category is **PRE-APPROVED**. As per the community Declarations, all changes need to be reviewed and approved by the HOA Board or DRC. The **PRE-APPROVED** category of change is a set of changes for which the DRC has already set pre-approved standards, and as such, if a homeowner follows these standards for the changes, there is no need to submit an application. Approval is granted for the entire community for this class of changes via this document. Note that all **PRE-APPROVED** changes must meet the Requirements and Specifications documented in the section and must be completed within 30 days of the alteration start date.

If a homeowner has any confusion or questions regarding the Pre-Approved Guidelines, it is suggested that the homeowner contact the DRC for clarification, or submit an application. The homeowner must assure that the change meets the Pre-Approved Guidelines and the Design Intention, or risks having the HOA require the homeowner modify or remove the change at the homeowner’s expense.

The second category is **RECOMMENDATIONS**. These are suggestions for a homeowner to consider before making an application for change. It does not preclude approval of the request if the homeowner does not follow the recommendations, however it is suggested that homeowners do so.

The third category is **NOT-PERMITTED**. These are the things within each type of change that are never permitted.

3. **Application**

This section is a list of the required elements of an application for a modification.

C. **DEFINITIONS**

Throughout this Guidelines document, words with associated definitions are in *italics*. Unless otherwise defined herein, all capitalized terms contained in these Design Guidelines shall have the same meaning as specified in Appendix 1 of the Association’s Declaration.

- **Adjacent**: having a common endpoint or border; immediately preceding, following, or next to
- **Alley**: paved access road owned by the community that extends behind homes for access to rear garages/parking pads
- **Awning**: a structure of canvas, metal, etc. extended before a window or door or over a patio, *deck*, etc. as a protection from the sun or rain
- **Brick**: a block of clay hardened by heat, and used for building, paving, etc.: traditionally, in the U.S., a rectangle 2.25 × 3.75 × 8 inches (5.7 × 9.5 × 20.3 cm), red, brown, or yellow in color.
- **Corner lots**: lots at the intersection of *streets, alleys*, paths, and parks
- **Deck**: a roofless floor structure specifically allowed to encroach into a *yard*. A *deck* is similar to a terrace but made of boards
- **Exterior Decorative Objects**: items placed on the exterior of structures that serve an aesthetic rather than a functional purpose
- **Facade**: the exterior walls of the front of a building
- **Frontage**: the area between the façade of the building and the front boundary line of the property.
- **Front yard**: the lawn portion of the frontage
- **Leadwalk**: walkway from the house to the main public walk or driveway
- **Living Fence**: a fence or boundary formed by a more than two shrubs or trees
- **Lot line**: the boundary that legally and geometrically demarcates a lot

Revised: July 2016
Neck: the portion of the driveway located between the apron and the main driveway that is no more than 12 feet in width for 2-car or 3-car garage homes.

Outbuilding: an auxiliary structure located within a yard; for the purposes of this document, examples include (but are not necessarily limited to) sheds, greenhouses, and storage chests.

Permanent nature: anything that would require substantial efforts to relocate or remove, including, but not necessarily limited to, demolition work, disassembly, requiring power equipment to move (fork lift, jackhammer, etc).

Pipestem lots: lots with a long, shared driveway

Principal building: the main building on a lot, disposed to provide the facade on the frontage

Rear yard: a yard extending across the full width of the lot and lying between the rear lot line of the lot and the rear of the principal building

River Rock/Pond Stones: rock or stone that appears to have been smoothed by the forces of water and friction so that there are no sharp edges

Short-duration: for the purposes of this document, intended to be no longer than one month

Side of House/Side Yard: the area between the side property line and an imaginary line drawn along the side wall of the house from the front to the rear building line.

Street: for the purposes of this document in reference to views, street is defined to be county-maintained roads; it is not intended to include HOA maintained alleys

Swale: A trough-like depression running along the side of the street, intended to carry water mainly during rainstorms or snow melts.

Temporary nature: anything that could be moved or removed without major effort; anything not permanently installed

Yard: an area left free of principal buildings and outbuildings

Terms not included in this list of definitions will be defined as necessary using the following resources consecutively: 1) laymen’s terms, that is, every day use of that word; 2) www.Merriam-Webster.com; 3) www.Dictionary.com.

D. All-Inclusive Submission Facilitates Review and Approval

To facilitate the DRC’s approval process and for homeowners to receive a quick response to requests for modifications, homeowners are requested to submit items for review in an all-inclusive manner. Rather than submitting plans on an item-by-item basis as you progress through improvements planned for your home or lot, the DRC requests that you devise your entire plan from the outset.

As an example, when you submit a pool plan, the DRC also requires that you provide the accompanying deck or patio plan, a complete landscape plan, with location and type and size of plant materials to be used, and the fencing plan and its specifications. Please note that if you have considered landscaping needs in connection with the planned improvement for your home and feel that no additional plantings are required, you should indicate such on your application.

E. Important Reminders

1. County Approvals

Many exterior projects require a review and permit from Montgomery County and/or Maryland-National

Revised: July 2016
Capital Park & Planning Commission in addition to DRC approval, and the property owner is responsible for all such County approvals. Montgomery County authorities should be contacted before commencement of work to be sure that any and all required permits have been obtained. County approval does not preclude the need for DRC approval, nor does DRC approval relieve the applicant of the responsibility to obtain County or governmental approval. In some cases, Montgomery County may require written confirmation of the DRC’s approval before issuing a permit. For further information on this topic, please refer to section 7.7 of the Community Declarations and/or contact the Montgomery County Division of Permitting Services at (240) 777-6300.

2. Modifications by Previous Owners

Purchasers of a resale property could be notified that they are in violation of the legal documents because of an existing unapproved architectural addition or modification on their property. Current owners are responsible for any existing violations. Should owners find themselves in this situation, they should remove the unapproved addition or modification themselves or, alternatively, if the previous owners did not seek approval, the new owners should submit an application explaining the matter and requesting approval. The buyer of a resale home is urged to protect him or herself from this occurrence by obtaining a resale certificate from the Association prior to settlement which will state whether any fees are due or whether any covenant violations exist on the property so that these may be immediately resolved by the sellers.

Homeowners are legally responsible for notifying any prospective buyer of their home of all applicable rules and regulations and of any violations of such.

ALL HOMEOWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO ASSURE THAT ANY IMPROVEMENTS ON THEIR PROPERTY WERE PROPERLY OBTAINED AND WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY VIOLATION, EVEN IF IT EXISTED PRIOR TO THEIR OWNERSHIP.
III. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

- Read this booklet to understand the requirements and process for the type of change envisioned.
- Develop your plan. (Consider the impact on your neighbors.)
- Fill out an Application Form, available for download from the Community Website or by contacting the Property Manager.
- Your application should contain the signatures of the homeowners located adjacent to your home who are most affected by the requested change. By signing the application, your neighbors are acknowledging that an application will be made with the Association. The signatures do not constitute approval of the application. If you are unable to provide neighbors’ signatures, the DRC may elect to forward a copy of your application to your neighbors.
- Submit the completed application and all required plans. Your application must include detailed plans showing the site layout, exterior elevations, exterior materials and colors, landscaping, drainage, lighting, irrigation, and other features of the proposed improvements.
- Your application will be processed by the DRC on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Each member of the DRC will be provided a copy of the application prior to the meeting so that they will have a chance to visit your property if necessary to better understand your plans.
- The DRC will review the application to determine if the information provided is sufficient for a complete understanding of the requested modification(s). If so, the request will be reviewed by the DRC at the next regularly scheduled meeting. If not, you will be asked to provide additional information and the request will be included on the agenda for the next regular meeting of the DRC after receipt of the additional information. Homeowners are encouraged to attend the meetings so that they may provide additional information to the committee if needed.

The DRC has 45 days from receipt of a fully and correctly completed application to evaluate a homeowner’s application. After an approved application is returned to the homeowner, work shall commence on the approved improvements within 12 months, and shall be completed within 6 months of commencement of the project. See Section 7.4b of the Community Declarations for a detailed explanation of the procedures involved in the timing and handling of change requests, as well as the timing requirements of the completion of approved changes.

For any application, a homeowner may submit concept drawings or preliminary plans for DRC review and comment before more detailed plans are made. Any preliminary comments are not to be interpreted as final approval by the DRC.
IV. GUIDELINES FOR MODIFICATIONS TO HOMES

A. Additions, Major (e.g.: Rooms, Screened Porches, Sunrooms)

1. Design Intention

Major additions can have a significant impact on the appearance of the original building and on neighboring property. The design of the addition must be in style with the principal building and neighborhood in general, with a location that has a minimal affect on adjacent properties. The size and scope of the addition shall be in proportion to the remainder of the property.

2. Requirements and Specifications.

The design of the addition must be compatible in scale, massing, roof pitch, character, materials and color with the original house. To the maximum extent possible, additions shall identically match the principal building in terms of color/siding/brick/trim/windows/doors/etc.

The location of the addition should be planned to minimize the effect on neighboring properties as it relates to their privacy and views, and located to minimize the removal of trees and other vegetation. Additional landscape screening of adequate size at the time of planting to visually soften the view of the addition from the neighbors and street shall be required for permanent additions. Additions should be set back a minimum of eight feet (8’) from all property lines.

Changes in grade or drainage resulting from the addition must not adversely affect adjacent property, and should be shown on the site plan.

3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site plan and/or record plat (scale not less than 1” = 30 ft.) showing the location of the proposed addition, the existing building(s) and the setbacks from all property lines
- Detailed construction elevation drawings for all views (scale not less than ¼” = 1 ft.)
- Drawings or photographs of the existing principal building and yard and site conditions before the proposed changes
- Samples of colors and materials
- Catalog cut sheets of exterior lighting specifications, if applicable
- Landscape plan (scale not less than 1” = 30 ft.) showing locations of new landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs.
- Perspective drawings or scale models (not required, but may be helpful).
B. **Outbuildings**

1. **Design Intention**

    Outbuildings can have a significant impact on the appearance of the original building and on neighboring property. The design of an outbuilding of a permanent nature must be in style with the neighborhood in general, with a location that has a minimal affect on adjacent properties. The size and scope of the outbuilding is a critical element of its approval, and it cannot under any circumstances be so large as to overwhelm the aesthetics or harmony of the property in the sole discretion of the DRC.

    Outbuildings of a temporary nature are intended to be permitted as long as the structure is camouflaged from view as best as possible.

    The overriding principle regarding outbuildings is that the homeowner will be required to take steps to make the outbuildings as aesthetically pleasing as reasonably possible. In order to achieve this goal, the following will generally be required:

    a) any outbuilding that is (i) not adjacent to the principal structure, and (ii) that is visible from a street or neighboring property, must be of high quality (an outbuilding with construction of type having integral vinyl, resin or plastic structural elements and siding will not be considered high quality, but a wood frame outbuilding with vinyl siding and an asphalt shingle roof may qualify as high quality).

    b) any outbuilding with construction of type having integral vinyl, resin or plastic structural elements and siding must (i) be located adjacent to the principal structure, and (ii) must be camouflaged through the use of lattice and/or landscaping that will grow to at least three feet in height within six months of installation of the outbuilding.

2. **Requirements and Specifications.**

    Each home shall have no more than one outbuilding of a permanent nature, and one outbuilding of a temporary nature.

    The location of the outbuilding should be planned to minimize the effect on neighboring properties as it relates to their privacy and views, and located to minimize the removal of trees and other vegetation. Additional landscape screening of adequate size at the time of planting to visually soften the view of the outbuilding from the neighbors and street may be required for outbuildings.

    Outbuildings can be up to eight feet by eight feet in footprint area, with a maximum height of ten feet. The ground below an outbuilding shall be prepared to assure the outbuilding appears level.

    Outbuildings of a permanent nature: The design of outbuilding must match the colors of the original house, and must be compatible in scale, character, and materials with the original house. Outbuildings shall be constructed of wood and may contain glass or screened windows. Siding on outbuildings can be either wood or vinyl. Entry must be achieved by a single hinged door or double hinged door. Outbuildings and the areas around the outbuildings shall be maintained to keep a neat appearance at all times. Freestanding outbuildings shall be installed in rear yards only.

    Outbuildings of a temporary nature: Outbuildings of a temporary nature are defined to be plastic, vinyl, resin, or those made of similar materials (not including storage chests). Outbuildings of a temporary nature
with any dimension larger than 5 feet require approval, and shall be placed against the principal building or against/under a deck, and shall not be visible from the street.

Storage chests: Storage chests shall be located in rear yards only, and may be placed against the principal building, or against another structure attached to the principal building (such as a deck or other addition). Storage chests may also be placed on decks provided they are no taller than the height of the deck railing.

PRE-APPROVED: Provided the constraints in the requirements and specifications, and the NOT-PERMITTED sections are followed, the following items are pre-approved: Outbuildings of a temporary nature placed against the principal building or against a deck with no dimension larger than five feet are pre-approved (For clarification, this is intended to permit small storage sheds or cabinets of the plastic variety to be PRE-APPROVED.) Storage chests are pre-approved.

NOT – PERMITTED: Aluminum or metal outbuildings are not permitted. Barn-style outbuildings shall not be permitted (see photo example below). Outbuildings shall not be permitted in the frontage or in side yards. The entry door(s) to an outbuilding shall never resemble a garage door. External areas around an outbuilding shall not be used for the storage of additional materials with the exception of neatly stacked and maintained firewood (see Miscellaneous for further information on storage of firewood).

3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site plan and/or record plat (scale not less than 1” = 30 ft.) showing the location of the proposed outbuilding, the existing building and the setbacks from all property lines
- Detailed construction elevation drawings for all views (scale not less than ¼” = 1 ft.)
- Drawings or photographs of the existing principal building and yard, and site conditions before the proposed changes
- Samples of colors and materials,
- Catalog cut sheets of exterior lighting specifications, if applicable
- Landscape plan (scale not less than 1” = 30 ft.) showing locations of new landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs.
- Perspective drawings or scale models (not required, but may be helpful).

C. **Awnings**

1. **Design Intention**

   Awnings are desired in this neighborhood only as protection against the elements over a deck or patio. It is also intended that homeowners do not use an awning to cover a non-finished area of a yard.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

   Large awnings shall be permitted only in conjunction with a rear or side deck or patio. Awnings may be smaller in coverage area than the surface area of the deck/patio, but shall not be significantly larger than required to protect the surface. Materials for the cover portion of the awning shall be of a color which coordinates with the existing colors on the house.

   Smaller awnings used for covering individual windows shall be of a color(s) which coordinates with the existing colors on the house.

3. **Application**

   Your application shall include a completed application form and:

   - Site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” = 30’ ft. showing proposed awning(s) and associated existing deck or patio, or associated windows
   - Catalog sheets of awning including photographs/drawings, description, size, and color

D. **Decks and Patios**

1. **Design Intention**

   A deck plan should demonstrate that its design is complementary to the existing house and it will not interfere with the right of enjoyment of adjacent homeowners. The community also seeks to create a few standards from which a homeowner can select so that the neighborhood has a consistent design throughout.

   Patios should be designed and installed in a professional manner, and should not have any loose components.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

   Decks are permitted on the rear or side of homes, depending upon the design of the home. For consistency, three standard railing designs (picket rails, Chippendale rails, starburst rails or a combination thereof) may be permitted on decks. (The DRC may accept additional complementary designs as appropriate, which will then be added to this document.) Samples of each design are provided here:
Decks must be constructed with composite material or pressure-treated lumber, with railings permitted to be constructed of the vinyl or the identical material as the deck itself. Decks may be painted or stained, or may be left to weather naturally. Painted or stained wood decks should be in a color which blends with the colors of the house. Column supports and any other visible structure and trim for above ground decks must be finished with the same level of quality and detail as the deck itself.

Any planned deck features such as arbors, pergolas, and trellises should be submitted as part of a deck application (NOTE: these types of features can also be added later with application, but if planning them at initial construction, they should be included in the application). Decks with a floor surface elevation of four feet (4') or less shall have all exposed sides below the floor surface enclosed by additional decking material (e.g. lattice) or densely screened by appropriate landscaping. Privacy/shade screening mounted on or above the floor surface of a deck is permitted provided it meets all of the following: is a lattice style, matches the railing color, is finished with the same level of quality as the deck itself and does not exceed 7 feet in height when measured from the deck surface. The total length of all the privacy/shade lattice panels on a deck must not exceed 1/3 the length of the perimeter of the deck railing (not including the side abutting the home or any stair opening).

Decks shall have a setback of at least 5 feet from all property lines.

Patios are permitted on the rear or side of homes, depending upon the design of the home. Patios shall be constructed of stone, brick, brick or concrete pavers, exposed aggregate concrete, stamped concrete, plain concrete, or flagstone. Other materials will be considered upon request. Loose gravel or rocks shall not be part of the surface of a patio. For example, using stepping stones or pavers, surrounded by gravel or loose rocks as a patio is not permitted. All patios on the same property should be constructed of identical materials, and have identical design qualities (mixed materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and must integrate in a harmonious manner).

PRE-APPROVED: The addition of bench seating, built-in storage boxes, or other items that are completely below the railing level of a deck and permanently mounted on a deck surface is pre-approved, provided it matches the deck in materials, color, and craftsmanship. Items of a temporary nature that are placed on a deck surface and are completely below the railing level of the deck are pre-approved. Window box style planters mounted on the railing of decks is pre-approved. The application of clear protectant to decks is pre-approved.

NOT-PERMITTED: Patios shall not be constructed by simply laying materials on the surface of the ground. Materials must be laid in a professional manner with a foundation of materials, and held in place as to not move. With the exception of awnings (see Section C), no type of privacy/shade screening...
mounted on or above the floor surface of a deck is permitted. Privacy/shade screening mounted on or above the floor surface of the deck which is made with any material that creates the look of louvers/slats, netting, mesh, metal/wire screens, planks/boards or fencing is not permitted.

3. **Application**

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” = 30 ft.) showing the location of the deck or patio relative to the house and the property lines
- Construction elevation plans (minimum scale ¼” = 1 ft.) of deck/patio, including details all permanent features. Drawing should indicate relationship of the deck/patio to the existing house.
- Paint or stain color samples where applicable
- Patio material samples or photos of samples

E. **Driveways/Parking Pads/Walkways**

1. **Design Intention**

Enlarging or modifying a driveway and/or walkway may be done only where it and its use will not adversely affect adjacent property and natural areas or drainage, and where it will not negatively impact the appearance of the streetscape.

Leadwalks should be designed uniformly and installed in a professional manner, and should not have any loose components. Multiple leadwalks on the same property shall be constructed of identical materials, and have an identical design quality.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

If a home is equipped with a 1-car garage, the driveway shall not be widened beyond the width of a single apron. If a home is equipped with a 2, 3, or 4-car garage, the driveway shall not be widened beyond the width of a double apron. For Neo classical homes with only a parking pad (no garage), the parking pad shall not be widened beyond a triple parking pad.

A Neo classical home whose property borders an alley is permitted to increase its total parking surface by adding one additional asphalt parking pad beyond its double wide parking pad or double wide garage; thereby, bringing the total parking surface of the property to the width of 3 cars (maximum of 30 feet). This additional pad should be no larger than 9 feet wide by 20 feet long. It may be implemented by widening the existing double wide pad/driveway to a triple wide, or it may be implemented as a standalone pad. One end of the pad must intersect either the alley or the existing pad/driveway. This pad requires DRC approval, and it must meet all the requirements and restrictions for permanent driveway expansion outlined below.

Material for permanent driveway expansion/improvements is limited to asphalt. Asphalt driveways with builder installed concrete aprons are grandfathered-in. The only exception to the above listed material

Revised: July 2016
prohibitions is the addition of a strip of river rock in the neck of the driveway; see the Pre-Approved section for the specific requirements.

Placing any type of hardscape improvement, that is not a part of the primary structure, adjacent to, or within 6 feet of, the edge of the driveway is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: patios, basketball courts, landings, etc. Leadwalks are permitted to intersect the driveway, but leadwalks are not permitted to run parallel to the driveway unless separated from the driveway edge by a minimum of six feet of lawn or densely installed planting material.

Landscape beds which touch the driveway may not have any type of hardscape border or manufactured border used as edging material along the boundary line between the bed and the driveway.

Leadwalks shall be constructed of stone, brick, brick or concrete pavers, exposed aggregate concrete, stamped concrete, plain concrete, or flagstone. Other materials will be considered upon request. Pebbles, stone, gravel, or other loose materials shall not be used for a leadwalk (the only loose material permitted in the construction of a leadwalk is where sand is used in conjunction with a paver project. Leadwalks shall be six feet or less in width, except at the ends which may flare out to a width of eight feet.

PRE-APPROVED: Ground-embedded river rock may be used as a solution for the ground around the neck of the driveway that has been damaged by tire wear. This solution is pre-approved provided that: the widened rock surface on each side of the asphalt is not any wider than 18 inches, the average diameter of the rocks used for this type of widening are at least 3 inches, and the combined width of the driveway and river rock surface does not exceed 15 feet. See the landscaping section for other restrictions regarding plantings and the use of rock/hardscape products within the swale and public right-of-way.

Widening of a driveway to make the entire driveway a two car driveway is pre-approved, provided the following conditions are met:

- Must be an asphalt widening
- Removal of any portion of the sidewalk that would otherwise extend into the new driveway
- Extension of the culvert pipe to meet county requirements
- Obtaining a country permit prior to starting any work
- Professional installation
- For homes with builder installed culvert stone walls, the widened driveway must also have culvert stone walls. The culvert walls on the widened driveway must be of identical design, material and size as the builder installed walls. The outer edge of the walls must continue to be located over the outer edge of the culvert pipe and the outer edge of the walls must be located a minimum of 5 feet from the adjacent driveway.

RECOMMENDATIONS: It is recommended that a stoop and a leadwalk be of one consistent material.

NOT-PERMITTED: Walkways shall not be constructed by simply laying materials on the surface of the ground. Materials must be laid in professional manner with a foundation of materials, and held in place as to not move.

3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

Revised: July 2016
A site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1" = 30 ft.) showing the location of the existing house and driveway or parking pad and proposed changes with dimensions and distances from property lines

- A grading plan if the existing grading is changed
- A plan showing any additional landscaping beds planned

## Fences

### Design Intention

Fencing should be a property enhancement. It should not be so large as to become an intrusion on the open nature of the community from both an aesthetic and a physical standpoint. Fencing should be of a high quality, and as such, require minimal maintenance. Fences are evaluated to ensure there are no site-specific considerations of sunlight, views, and aesthetics for adjacent properties. It is intended that the installation of back-to-back fences is minimized. Fences may not obstruct the view of traffic. This is particularly important for corner lots and lots backing to alleys.

### Requirements and Specifications

Fencing may be permitted which runs parallel to the rear and/or side lot lines of a home. Fencing shall not extend beyond the midway of the house, and in no case beyond the front of an adjacent house, except on certain pipestem lots. Any fencing which extends from the home to the side lot lines must meet the side lot lines at a 90-degree angle for a typical rectangular lot; other lots will require a site-specific proposal. Neo-Traditional style homes may have three-foot high picket fencing extending to the front of the foundation.

Fences shall be no taller than six feet. Fences shall be installed with the finished side facing out. Fences must be constructed from pressure treated lumber, vinyl, or iron.

Vinyl fences shall have pickets that extend through the rails, with fence posts having either a solid core or (at least) a four inch by four inch wood post at its core.

Back-to-back fences are permitted only under circumstances where the homeowner can demonstrate this is the only reasonable course of action for fencing a property, and their approval is at the sole discretion of the DRC (back-to-back fences are two fences that run parallel to each other within a few inches of the same property line). If a neighboring property already has a fence, a fence proposal should show intersection with that existing fence. (Note that fences intersecting a neighboring fence, or fences, will be carefully evaluated to assure the design intent is met.)

Small fences (28 inches or less in height) around gardens are permitted in rear yards only. (This is sometimes known as “Rabbit Fencing”.) Fences around gardens that are taller than 28 inches require approval and shall not be constructed of non-permitted materials.

**PRE-APPROVED:** The addition of clear protectant to fences is pre-approved.
SPECIAL PRE-APPROVED FOR TEMPORARY FENCING AROUND GARDENS. Temporary fences erected around gardens are pre-approved, provided the requirements below are followed:

- Temporary fences shall be entirely erected in the rear yard of the home. No part may extend forward of the rear corners of the home, along the sides or in the front of the home.

- Temporary fences shall not be erected before May 1st and must be removed by October 31st. Any temporary fences erected before or not removed after these dates will be treated as violations.

- Temporary fences shall be built around the perimeter of the garden only. Gardens within the temporary fence are expected to adhere to the existing design rules regarding size and therefore, may not exceed 10% of the square footage of the rear yard.

- Such temporary fences shall be maintained regularly. Holes and tears must be repaired and in the sections that fall over or tilt must be up-righted and repaired. Any trash that collects must be removed.

- Temporary fences shall be constructed of wood, netting, mesh, or wires supported by wooden, plastic, or metal stakes. All materials used must be black, brown, dark green, dark grey, terra cotta, clear, or wood colored so as to blend, as much as possible, into the landscape. All materials must be removed so that when the fencing is dismantled at the end of the growing season, all that remains is the garden bed itself.

- Temporary fences may be constructed up to 6 feet in height.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Painted fences are discouraged, but if used must be maintained to prevent peeling and flaking. The installation of 6 foot privacy fences is discouraged.

NOT-PERMITTED: Chain-link and other similar wire style fences are not permitted. Fences shall not be permitted in the frontage. Fences which are constructed with only adhesive holding them together are not permitted.

3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1" = 30 ft.) showing the home, other improvements, exact fence location including distance from home and property lines, locations of any existing fencing on adjacent lots

- Detailed description of proposed fence including a catalog sheet (with exact height from ground level indicated), color photograph or drawing, and finish description

- Landscape plan, if applicable, showing location of additional landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs

Revised: July 2016
G. **Landscaping, Planting and Tree Removal**

1. **Design Intention**

Landscape modifications or additions should be integrated in a way which is harmonious with the existing landscaping on the lot and adjacent lots. Landscaping is intended to visually soften or provide a finished look to a lot. Landscaping will also maintain the neighborhood’s open feel, and will provide a consistent streetscape.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

Landscaping shall be neatly edged, pruned, and maintained. If a landscaping border is utilized, it shall be maintained in a manner that achieves a professionally installed look, and must have all grass trimmed around the borders as to not permit overgrowth.

Ground cover materials may be either living or non-living. All non-living organic ground covers (mulch) should be of a naturally occurring soil color (brown, black, dark red-brown, grey-brown). Additionally, Scotts® Nature Scapes Color Enhanced Mulch of the colors Classic Black, Sierra Red, and Deep Forest Brown are permitted. Synthetic wood products must be of similar colors to the natural ones described prior. All mulch in the *frontage* shall be uniform in color (mulch for street trees is the responsibility of the HOA and cannot be changed, but it also does not drive a homeowner’s choice of mulch for the landscaping beds in the *frontage*.)

Non-organic ground covers are river rock, pond stones, synthetic wood chip mulch, or other rock or stone products. Rock or stone products used as ground cover shall not be used for more than 50% of each landscaping bed where it is used. Rock or stone products used as a ground cover shall be of a natural color and shall not be dyed. When rock or stone products are used as ground cover, the individual component elements shall have an average diameter of at least 1 inch. All non-organic ground covers used in the *frontage* shall be identical.

The majority (at least 51% of the square footage) of the *frontage* must be maintained as lawn. (For the purposes of this calculation, all property in the *frontage* shall be considered, including driveways, leadwalks, and landscaping beds.) The expansion or addition of landscaping beds in the *frontage* requires approval.

Vegetable gardens shall be maintained only within the *rear yard* of any Living Unit, and shall be maintained in a neat and attractive manner. Vegetable gardens shall not exceed more than 10% of the square footage of the *rear yard*.

Manufactured landscaping borders shall be installed in the manner intended by the manufacturer, and maintained to a neat appearance (not falling over, rotting, coming out of the ground, grass neatly trimmed around the border, etc.). Manufactured landscaping borders in the *frontage* shall be constructed of identical materials. If the border is of a natural rock or stone variety where the rocks or stones are not identical, they must be installed to a height of less than six inches and not to exceed a width of 8 inches with a uniform appearance as viewed from the street. Landscaping borders stacked more than 1 course of material high are considered retaining walls, and guidelines in that section apply. In no case shall a landscaping border be taller than six inches from any part of the ground. Landscaping borders are not permitted to edge portions of a driveway, parking pad, public sidewalk, public road, alley, or retaining wall.

Revised: July 2016
Shrubs cannot be removed from landscaping beds with the end result being an empty (or mostly empty) landscaping bed, or one only filled with non-living ground cover, without prior approval of the DRC.

Living fences shall be maintained at a height of less than 12.25 feet, and shall not obstruct the views or sunlight of any other home. A living fence is a group of three or more trees and or shrubs planted in proximity such that at maturity they create a natural barrier for the purpose of enclosure, protection, privacy, screening, security, or to minimize erosion (list of purposes not all inclusive). Generally expected to be planted in such a manner as to help define a property boundary.

Tree removal may be necessary in order to accomplish another modification or should the homeowner no longer want to keep the tree. If this is the case, an indication of the tree(s) to be removed and reason for removal must be included in the modifications application. Owners are asked to carefully plan modifications so as to eliminate or minimize the need to remove any trees.

SPECIAL GUIDELINES FOR SWALES AND STREET TREES: General maintenance of the swales is the responsibility of the homeowner. This includes mowing, trimming, and weeding and fertilization of the grass, as well as trash removal. Trees on the street side of the swale from a homeowner’s property are the responsibility of the HOA. Homeowners can “fluff” the mulch at the base of these trees if it looks faded and old, but mulch cannot be replaced by the homeowners. During times of drought, homeowners are encouraged to water the trees unless water restrictions are in effect. Landscaping borders, retaining walls, or other decorative objects shall not be installed around street trees. Planting in the beds around street trees is not permitted. Planting trees in the swale or right-of-way area is not permitted. With the exception of the 18 inches of river rock allowed in the neck of the driveway (see Section E), the use of any hardscape material or rock/stone product in the swales and right-of-way areas will not be considered for approval by the DRC unless accompanied by documentation which shows that Montgomery County has authorized the planned improvement. A copy of a signed county permit or a written note from the Department of Permitting Services Representative is sufficient for this purpose.

PRE-APPROVED: Planting and replacement of flowers/shrubs/plants/living ground cover/vegetable gardens is pre-approved, provided the constraints above and in the NOT-PERMITTED section are followed. Hanging planters and placing flower pots on plant stands or tables on porches, decks, or patios is pre-approved (pots cannot be empty). Window-box style planters mounted on deck rails are pre-approved.

Watering bags at the base of trees are pre-approved.

Changing from one ground cover to another ground cover is pre-approved. (This is intended to permit homeowners to switch between ground covers, or vary areas from one ground cover to another, provided the guidelines listed above are met.

Trees or shrubs, whose growth at maturity is 16 feet or less, are pre-approved for rear yards (note that this implies that plantings with a mature height of greater than 16 feet are not pre-approved, and require application.)

Creation of new landscaping beds in rear yards is pre-approved, provided no trees or shrubs are planted which exceed 16 feet in height at maturity.

Revised: July 2016
Planting of vegetable gardens is pre-approved provided the stated requirements are met.

Landscaping borders of a temporary nature are pre-approved (including, but not necessarily limited to, fiberglass edging, stones, concrete pavers of various shapes, wood or landscaping timbers of a single timber height, etc. Landscaping borders of a permanent nature – like the ground-embedded concrete shown in the following photo example – require a request for approval).

RECOMMENDATIONS: River rock or pond stones are more appropriate for use at the end of a downspout, or in other accent applications.

Leyland Cypress, Ornamental Pears and Weeping Willow are discouraged due to their specific attributes such as fast growth rate, enormous size potential and weak root or trunk structure. It is also recommended to avoid anything that Maryland considers to be invasive. (An updated list can be found at http://www.mdinvasivesp.org/list_terrestrial_plants.html)

NOT-PERMITTED: Bamboo is not permitted as it can spread to adjacent properties quite easily. Gravel, or other rock or stone materials with an average diameter smaller than one inch, is not permitted as ground cover. Landscaping borders shall not comprise loose gravel, rock, stone, or other loose materials. All landscaping borders shall be immobile under normal circumstances. Landscaping borders shall not be used to edge any portion of a driveway, parking pad, public sidewalk, public road, alley, or retaining wall. Fruit or not bearing trees are not permitted in the frontage. Flowers/shrubs/trees/plants/living ground cover/vegetable gardens are not permitted to extend beyond a homeowner’s property boundaries at full maturity (anything extending beyond a homeowner’s property boundary could require removal at the homeowner’s expense). No tree, hedge or other landscape feature shall be planted or maintained in a location which obstructs sight-lines for vehicular traffic on streets or alleys. Landscaping borders, retaining walls, or other decorative objects shall not be installed around the street trees. Planting in the beds around street trees is not permitted.

Revised: July 2016
Planting trees in the public right-of-way is not permitted.

3. **Application**

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” – 30 ft.) showing the location of the proposed landscaping beds (or tree to be removed), existing plant beds, existing buildings and other improvements, and property lines.
- The general location of plantings should be shown in the proposed new or expanded landscaping beds.
- If applying for a tree, or trees, with a mature height greater than 16 feet, exact location of the tree, existing trees, existing plant beds, existing buildings and other improvements, and property lines must be shown.
- A detailed description and location of any structural elements such as retaining walls, etc. (See the section below regarding Retaining Walls).

**H. Exterior Lighting**

1. **Design Intention**

Consistent with its daytime character, the community should be viewed as a quiet, natural nighttime setting without intense, overly decorative lighting. Fixtures should be traditional in design, of a residential nature, and compatible with the house. Lighting should not be intrusive to other properties or the street.

2. **Requirements and Specifications:**

Lamp fixtures should use bulbs no brighter than a 100 watt incandescent equivalent.

Lighting fixtures should be diffused or shielded (or appropriately aimed) to avoid causing glare when viewed from adjacent properties or from the street.

Building mounted fixtures that are visible from the street, with the exception of security floodlights, should be identical to each other or of comparable style size and wattage (it is permitted to use a different sized fixture for door entry lighting versus garage entry lighting, but the look of the fixture must be of a comparable style). Building mounted fixtures shall be of residential design and not resemble a commercial lighting fixture. When building-mounted light is inadequate for desired illumination, post-mounted fixtures of 8 feet or less in height are permitted.

Landscape or garden lighting should be used sparingly for areas along foundations or as accents in landscaping. Such lighting must be properly maintained. Security floodlights should be used with discretion so as not to adversely impact adjoining properties. They should be mounted to minimize glares. The fixture should be of a color which matches or blends with the surface upon which they are mounted or where they are installed.

All fixtures shall be spaced to avoid any kind of commercial effect.
All conduit and wiring should be concealed.

Flush-up and accent lighting for building *facades* must be of low intensity to create a subtle, warm impression. The lights must not be obtrusive either as visible fixtures, nor provide any glare.

**PRE-APPROVED:** The addition of solar-powered accent lighting of a *temporary nature* is pre-approved. The addition of low-voltage landscape lighting of a *temporary nature* is pre-approved. (In the context of exterior landscaping lighting, ‘*temporary nature*’ implies the fixture can be moved easily if neighbors or the HOA find it intrusive.) Replacement of light fixtures mounted on the *principal building* is pre-approved provided they meet the requirements and specifications.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Landscape and garden lighting fixtures should be spaced at least 6 feet from each other to avoid a commercial effect. Security floodlights should be equipped with an automatic motion sensor to prevent the light from remaining on for longer than two consecutive minutes each time the motion sensor is activated.

**NOT–PERMITTED:** Exterior lighting directed outside the boundaries of a lot is not permitted. Facade and garage lighting cannot be replaced with flood lighting.

Examples of styles of light fixtures which are not permitted:

From left to right: Bare bulb and socket security light, bare bulb and socket in-ground fixture, 6.5 inch diameter up-light/well light with no grills/hood/eyebrow

Examples of styles of permitted light fixtures:

From left to right: Shielded security light, solar powered garden light, 3 in. diameter hooded low voltage (directional) light, low voltage down-light, 4.5 inch diameter well light with eyebrow/hood.
I. **Exterior Painting/Staining/Color Changes**

1. **Design Intention**

   All exterior color changes on a home or other approved structure within the community must be submitted for approval. Color selections should be harmonious with the color scheme used in the neighborhood.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

   Selected colors shall be harmonious with the other colors used on the structure (e.g., roofing, trim and brick) and shall be harmonious with the color scheme used in the neighborhood.

   **PRE-APPROVED**: No request for approval is needed to re-paint any exterior elements in the existing approved color(s) already on the house.

3. **Application**

   Your application shall include a completed application form and:

   - Sample color chips (minimum 2” square in size) of proposed new colors and existing paint colors to be retained
   - Photos, illustrations, and/or a written description of all surfaces to be painted or stained.

J. **Play Equipment and Basketball Backboards**

1. **Design Intention**

   Play equipment should be placed in such a manner so as not to constitute an annoyance to adjoining homeowners and to be as inconspicuous as possible from the street. Homeowners need not seek approval for play equipment of a temporary nature. Additionally, play equipment shall be maintained in a manner to assure a neat appearance.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

   There are no restrictions on the installation of recreation and play equipment intended for short-duration usage (such as wading pools, badminton nets, lawn games and other equipment intended for short-duration use). Semi-permanent play structures (examples include Little Tikes or Step 2-type play sets, other swing sets, jungle gyms, combination structures, playhouses, and sandboxes) are permitted rear yards provided the play area is within the lot on which the structure is located. The structure(s) must be set back from property lines by a minimum of 5 feet on all sides. Equipment shall be kept free of rust and in good repair (as examples, there shall be no broken chains or seats on swing sets; grass around equipment shall be neatly trimmed).

   Basketball hoops of a temporary nature are defined to be the type with wheels, stands, or fillable bases. The base shall be filled with manufacturer suggested materials. Lawn around the base shall be kept neat and trimmed. When the basketball hoop is removed, the grass killed by the base shall be repaired in a timely manner.

Revised: July 2016
manner.

Note that permanent recreational equipment (such as permanent basketball hoops and courts, skateboard ramps, large soccer goals) requires approval in all instances.

Basketball hoops installed in the frontage shall have clear backboards only.

PRE-APPROVED: Basketball hoops of a temporary nature are pre-approved provided they meet the requirements and specifications, and don’t violate conditions in the NOT-PERMITTED section. Semi-permanent play structures are pre-approved provided they meet the constraints in the requirements and specifications.

NOT-PERMITTED: Basketball backboards are not permitted to be attached directly to the house. Basketball hoops of a temporary nature shall not be held in place with bags of rock, sand, or other materials. Basketball hoops installed in the frontage shall not have a backboard that is not clear.

3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A detailed drawing or catalog sheet which shows the play equipment including dimensions and color;
- A plan showing the location of the play equipment, the existing home, all other lot improvements and distance from property lines
- A landscape plan showing location of additional landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs, if applicable

K. Retaining Walls

1. Design Intention

Retaining walls should be installed only where structurally necessary such as for purposes of diminishing erosion or creating a more level lawn or garden area. Retaining walls should be installed to appear vertical and level as viewed from streets and neighboring properties. Retaining walls should be designed and maintained such that they do not become an environment for harboring pests (bees and other insects, especially).

2. Requirements and Specifications

Retaining walls must be constructed of stackable stone or brick, or approved interlocking architectural precast concrete blocks. Construction of retaining walls shall be such that the materials are held together via interlocking design, or other methods to minimize movement over time. Retaining walls shall not obstruct or change the drainage of surface water within the Community. Retaining walls should be built only to the minimum height needed to serve their function. If possible, the ends of all walls should be gradually tapered down to the ground rather than abruptly ending. If building codes require a railing on top of the retaining wall the design specifications including dimensions, material and color must be included as part of the application.
Retaining walls constructed of manufactured materials shall be of one consistent color. Retaining walls constructed from natural materials shall be of the same materials.

Retailing walls shall have lawn or a landscaping bed against them.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** If a retaining wall’s design would lead to a code-required railing on top, the owner may want to consider stepping the wall in a terracing effect in order to keep the wall height below the maximum height for which a rail is not required.

**NOT-PERMITTED:** Solid concrete or cinder block walls, or walls constructed of landscaping timbers are not permitted.

3. **Application**

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- Site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” = 30 ft.) showing the location of the retaining wall, any existing or planned buildings and the relationship to property lines
- A sectional drawing showing the construction details
- A description of the materials to include samples, photos, or manufacturers product information sheets
- Landscape plan showing location of additional landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs

L. **Doors, Windows, and Garage Doors**

1. **Design Intention**

A door, window, or garage door should not detract from the traditional theme of the home and community. Additionally, a screen door or window should not significantly alter the appearance of the door or window behind it

2. **Specifications**

A solid surface door, or any door constructed with fan-shaped, rectangular or oval glass window is permitted. Etched or frosted glass is acceptable.

Screen and storm doors and windows should allow a full or nearly full view of the existing door or window behind it and should be the same color as the existing door or door trim color. White doors are also acceptable. Generally, only straight line framing with little or no ornamentation will be permitted.

**PRE-APPROVED:** Installation of storm doors or screen doors is pre-approved, provided the constraints in the specifications are followed. Replacement of garage doors is pre-approved provided the color of the garage doors remain unchanged (note that this implies that replacing garage doors with different colored doors is not pre-approved and requires application).
3. Application

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- Detailed drawing or catalog sheet, which shows the new screen/storm doors, garage doors, or windows including dimensions and color;
- For doors, depiction of the existing door with dimensions and frame color noted. For garage doors, depiction of the existing garage door color and existing house trim color.

M. Swimming Pools, Hot Tubs, and Other Water Structures

1. Design Intention

Swimming pool plans will be very carefully reviewed and considered in terms of any possible disturbance to others. A swimming pool and the associated decking, fencing, and landscaping must be designed to conform to the character of the community. Note that the intention with above-ground pools is to allow wading pools of a reasonable size, but not permit an inflatable or plastic pool to be used as a permanent, above-ground pool.

Water structures should be harmonious with the other aspects of the property, and their size must be in proportion to the size of the property.

2. Requirements and Specifications

Permanent outdoor swimming pools, hot tubs, and spas shall only be located in rear yards. If not in-ground, the hot tub or spa must be architecturally treated with decking and the base must be enclosed to hide the tub from view. The hot tub must be screened both architecturally and with landscaping so as to minimize the visual impact from all adjacent property owners. Hot tubs and spas shall have locking covers that shall be
locked when not in use.

Swimming pool and hot tub equipment must be located to avoid interference with neighbors and must be enclosed architecturally or screened from view with landscaping. Structures to be used to enclose equipment must also be softened with landscaping where visible from other properties.

Ponds and fountains are permitted providing they do not exceed 18” in depth and are not used for swimming. They are preferred in the rear yard with accompanying landscaping. Small ponds, waterfalls and fountains in the front yard will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will be approved/denied at the sole discretion of the DRC. All ponds and fountains shall have automatic water circulation to reduce the risk of becoming a breeding area for mosquitoes and other insects.

Under no circumstances may water structures become an annoyance to neighboring homeowners as a result of noise, insect/wildlife breeding or infestation, inadequate maintenance, smells, appearance or similar causes.

Note: See sections on fences, decks/patios, landscaping for related information. Birdbaths are considered “exterior decorative objects” and are addressed in section N.

**PRE-APPROVED:** Installation of solar powered, battery-powered, or electric fountains less than 30 inches in any dimension is pre-approved in rear yards or on patios or decks.

**NOT-PERMITTED:** Above-ground pools shall not be left outside for longer than three days. (The intent here is to prevent any above-ground pools from being used as a permanent pool.)

3. **Application**

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- A site/grading plan (minimum scale of 1” = 30 ft.) showing the proposed swimming pool or hot tub, pool equipment, decking, fencing, other lot improvements and property lines
- Fence Plan
- Landscape Plan showing location of additional landscaping beds and general locations of trees or shrubs
- Exterior Lighting Plan

**N. Exterior Decorative Objects**

1. **Design Intention**

Exterior decorative objects are items that a homeowner can use to enhance the aesthetics of the community. The HOA encourages these enhancements, as long as the items are of good quality and don't become excessive in the frontage. Additionally, decorative objects in the rear yards of corner lots should not be excessive as to become an eyesore from the street, or an eyesore for surrounding homeowners in the sole discretion of the DRC. For the organization of this document, examples of exterior decorative objects
include, but are not necessarily limited to, birdbaths, birdhouses, house numerals, statuary, synthetic flora and fauna, flags, wind-chimes, and seasonal adornments.

(Note that house numerals must be in accordance with Montgomery County Fire Safety Code and harmonious with other colors used in the neighborhood.)

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

Bird baths and other items that permit standing water shall be maintained and have their water periodically cycled/emptied to reduce the risk of becoming a breeding area for mosquitoes and other insects.

Exterior decorative objects shall be maintained as to not deteriorate beyond normal weathering. Additionally, objects that are significantly weathered should be restored to original condition or replaced.

Holiday, or other temporary, event-celebrating decorations shall be removed within a reasonable time frame (for the purposes of this document, generally accepted to be within 30 days).

House numerals shall have a highly contrasting background and be a minimum of 5” high (as per Montgomery County Fire Safety Code, Section 22-97). Additionally, their color shall be harmonious with the other colors used on the structure (e.g., door, trim, siding, exterior lighting, etc) and shall be harmonious with the color scheme used in the neighborhood.

**PRE-APPROVED:** Holiday, or other temporary, event-celebrating decorations are pre-approved. Exterior decorative objects placed in *rear yards*, or mounted behind the main structure, are pre-approved. Thermometers mounted in a manner as to not be visible from the *street* are pre-approved. Flagpole staffs which do not exceed six feet (6’) in length and are attached to a wall or pillar of the home are pre-approved (permanent, freestanding flagpoles are not permitted on lots). Decorative flags on small, removable flag poles are pre-approved. Modifying house address numerals on your front porch is pre-approved provided the requirements are met. Up to two exterior decorative objects placed in *frontages* in landscaping beds and not exceeding 3 feet in any dimension are pre-approved (pre-approved items in other sections of the guidelines, decorative flags, and holiday or event-celebrating decorations do not count toward the two pre-approved other decorative objects).

3. **Application**

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- Site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” = 30 ft.) showing buildings and property lines and showing proposed decorative object
- Catalog sheets of fixtures, photographs, drawings or description as appropriate

**O. Satellite Dishes**

Note that these guidelines supersede Exhibit A and/or any other previously existing guidelines, where Exhibit A is “Exhibit A- The Vista Community Association Inc. Rules for installation of antennas”.

Revised: July 2016
1. **Design Intention**

All efforts must be made to locate the dish away from the frontage and to limit the visual impact on adjacent homes to the greatest extent possible, so long as the dish can receive an acceptable signal. If it is necessary to locate a dish where it is visible from the street or from adjacent properties, reasonable landscape screening is required in order to reduce the visual impact.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

Satellite dishes shall be 1 meter in diameter or less. Satellite dishes shall be colored in grey, black, or tan.

The preferred location for satellite dishes is to the rear of a home. If that location isn’t possible due to reception issues, the next most preferable location for the satellite dish is on the side of the home near the rest of the house utilities (gas entry and meter, electric entry and meter, phone entry area), located with a 5 foot setback from the frontage. The least desirable location for a satellite dish is the frontage, and one should only be installed there if it is not possible to receive an acceptable signal in any other location. Satellite dishes located in the frontage, or within the five foot setback are required to have landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the satellite dish. Also, regardless of location, if the satellite dish is located within 6 feet of the ground, landscape screening could be required to reduce the visual impact of the satellite dish (this requirement is at the sole discretion of the DRC).

No more than 24 inches of wires leading to a dish may be visible. All exposed wire must be neatly bundled and hidden from street view, or tacked to the side of the home. If installed on a mast, the mast must be constructed of metal and kept maintained.

Note that if a homeowner no longer utilizes the satellite dish for the reception of signals, the satellite dish shall be removed.

**PRE-APPROVED:** Installation of a satellite dishes is pre-approved. If landscape screening is required due to the location of the satellite dish, it is required to be installed within 30 days of installation of the satellite dish.

3. **Application**

Post-application is required after installation of the satellite dish if it is located in the frontage, or within the five foot setback limit. This application shall show the location of the satellite dish, and associated landscaping. Photos are preferred.

**P. Mailboxes**

1. **Design Intention**

Mailboxes should be of a similar look as to bring consistency to the streetscape.

2. **Requirements and Specifications**

Mailboxes shall be made of black metal. Mailbox posts and supports shall be black. Posts painted black...
shall be maintained to eliminate peeling and chipping paint.

Houses supplied with wooden posts are grandfathered in for the life of the post, but must be brought into compliance with the above requirements upon replacement. Wooden posts shall not be painted any color other than black.

As a reminder, Montgomery County code states that mailboxes must be mounted on a support that will bend or break away on impact by a vehicle if they are mounted in the vehicle right-of-way. For further information, please see section 49-10 of Montgomery County Code (can be found at http://www.amlegal.com/montgomery_county_md/)

**PRE-APPROVED:** Replacement of existing mailboxes and posts is pre-approved provided the requirements and specifications outlined above are met.

**NOT-PERMITTED:** Mailbox decorations and adornments other than seasonal and holiday decorations of a temporary nature are not permitted.

**Q. Miscellaneous Notes**

- Devices for holding exterior garden hoses are **PRE-APPROVED**. Plastic hose “caddies”, or similar mobile devices for holding garden hoses, shall not be stored in the frontage when not in use unless completely screened from the view of the street with landscaping.

- Small hose guides placed at the edge of a landscaping bed are **PRE-APPROVED**, provided they do not stand higher than six inches from ground level.

- Solar collector systems are permitted on roofs, exterior walls of the principal structure, or in rear yards only. They shall be screened with landscaping that minimizes the system from being seen from adjacent lots, unless such landscaping would affect the ability of the system to perform its function.

- **Deck**, patio and porch furniture does not require approval. This could include chairs, tables, benches, plant stands, swings, etc. No umbrellas are permitted in the frontage.

- Storage of up to one cord (4 feet high by 4 feet wide by 8 feet long) of neatly stacked firewood is **PRE-APPROVED** to be stored outside the principal building provided it is not stored in the frontage.

- Compost bins and composting piles are permitted in rear yards only, should be screened with landscaping to minimize the visual impact from all adjacent property owners, and must be shown on a plan for approval, if a permanent structure is to be installed. Temporary/Portable compost bins are allowed provided they meet adequate screening requirements. Under no circumstances may they become an annoyance to neighboring homeowners as a result of drawing insects/wildlife, smells, appearance or similar causes.

- Stockpiles of mulch or other lawn/gardening items do not require approval provided they are not in the frontage, and are screened from view by landscaping or architecture to minimize the visual
impact to adjacent lots. They should not be an eyesore from the street or an eyesore to surrounding homeowners in the sole discretion of the DRC.

- Downspout extensions are pre-approved, but an effort must be made by the homeowner to minimize the visual impact of the extension by routing it behind landscaping, using a dark-colored extension, or some other means as to not be overtly visible from the street.

- Rainwater collection barrels/systems are **PRE-APPROVED**, provided they are not installed in the frontage. Rainwater collection barrels that can be seen from streets, alleys, or other neighboring properties shall be of a decorative kind, and not of an industrial styling. Rain barrels must be properly secured to prevent creation of breeding place for mosquitoes. (Rainwater collection systems installed out of public view can be of any type.)

  o Sample of a system hidden from view:
Samples of a few prohibited types below (not all-inclusive):

V. REMOVAL OF EXISTING STRUCTURES/LANDSCAPING

1. Design Intention

The removal of any major structure or landscaping requires DRC approval. The intent is to require homeowners to seek DRC approval for items that required approval to initially install, or to remove builder-provided items. The DRC will evaluate to assure that the property will be restored to the original condition, or to a similarly acceptable condition.

2. Requirements and Specifications

The removal of any approved building, major addition, fence, wall, major landscaping or other natural or structural element shall be reviewed by the DRC. The removal of PRE-APPROVED elements contained herein can be accomplished without review by the DRC. Materials must be properly disposed of outside of the boundaries of the Community.

3. Application.

Your application shall include a completed application form and:

- Site plan, plat or house location survey (minimum scale of 1” = 30 ft.) showing location of item(s) to be removed
- Supporting photographs as appropriate

VI. STANDARDS FOR MAINTENANCE OF LOT and IMPROVEMENTS

Each Owner shall keep his lot and all improvements therein or thereon, in good order and repair and free of
debris. All improvements shall be maintained in a condition which is substantially similar to the original
condition at the time of DRC approval. Such maintenance includes, but is not limited to:

- Repainting, re-staining or renovating, on a periodic basis as needed, exterior surfaces which through
damage and/or normal wear and tear appear substantially different from what was originally
approved by the DRC.

- Replacement or repair of exterior damage or deterioration of exterior housing materials, such as
siding, trim, roofing, doors, shutters, gutters, downspouts, flues, windows or screens.

- Replacement or repair of exterior damage or deterioration to fences, retaining or screening walls,
decks, recreational structures, lighting fixtures, etc.

- Pick up trash and/or debris from the roadway, swales and yard.

- Maintaining the lawn and swales; lawns shall not be allowed to exceed 8 inches in height, and
trimming around fences, decks, posts, landscaping beds, foundations, etc shall be required.

- Noxious weeds must be controlled to maintain the overall appearance of the lawn and landscape.
Weeds must be removed from planting beds.

(For additional information, refer to the Article 12 of the Association’s Declaration, as well as Community
Code 1.)