



# SHIPLEY FARM ARCHITECTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES

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[Abstract](#)

This document articulates the architectural and environmental standards and guidelines to maintain the aesthetics and structural integrity of the Shipley Farm Community.

## I. Introduction

In a planned community, the question naturally arises as how to maintain a harmonious, quality development as the community matures. Typically, an architectural committee is responsible for maintaining the aesthetic and structural integrity of the association and enforcing the Covenant, Conditions & Restrictions (CC&Rs). They review all applications for modifications, additions, or architectural changes in the community to make recommendations to the board—which makes final decisions.

Based on the small size of the Shipley Farm community, the Board of Directors (BOD) manages the duties of the architectural committee. The board of directors has a fiduciary duty to do what's best for the whole association.

The fact that each homeowner is subject to the CC&Rs should assure all homeowners that the standards of design and quality will continue to be maintained, thus enhancing the community's overall environment and protecting property value.

The rules, responsibilities and procedures outlined in these guidelines have been established by the BOD of the Homeowners' Association (HOA), in compliance with the covenants. It is hoped that these standards will serve as a positive tool to assist in the full and free use of each homeowner's property in a manner that is consistent with the aesthetic and harmonious development of the community. Specifically, it is the intent of these guidelines to:

- Provide for the architectural integrity of the neighborhood
- Protect and enhance property values
- Minimize problems and expenses for the HOA
- Ensure quiet enjoyment for the residents

With the cooperation of each homeowner, the community will be able to express individual tastes and preferences—all while maintaining esthetic standards within the community. All architectural and environmental changes made prior to these guidelines have grandfathered rights.

The Shipley Farm Architectural and Environmental Guidelines document has been written in accordance with the CC&Rs and is considered a part of each homeowner's permanent papers and should be made available to any renters. If additional copies of this document, the bylaws, or the covenants are needed, please contact the property management company or visit the website at <http://www.shipleyfarm.org>.

The scheduled review cycle for this document is at least once a year. The Architectural & Environmental Review Committee (AERC) will review this document to ensure guidelines are current with the CC&Rs, technology, laws, and home trends that may apply to the Shipley Farm community.

## II. Architectural & Environmental Review Committee

The AERC is charged with conducting the review of all applications for exterior changes.

The AERC may from time to time publish and distribute architectural standard bulletins, which shall be fair, reasonable and uniformly applied. The AERC shall be responsive to technological advances or general changes in architectural designs and materials and related conditions in future years and use its best efforts to balance the equities between matters of taste and design and the use of private property. Such bulletins shall supplement the CC&Rs and are incorporated herein by reference.

## III. The Architectural & Environmental Process

The section explains the Application review process and important things to consider when making design changes and improvements.

It is encouraged that homeowners plan in accordance with the AERC's schedule to review Applications within 30 days. It is strongly suggested that the city and/or county be contacted to determine what permits or approvals are required, if applicable. The AERC's approval is not a substitute for approval by the city and/or county.

**Step 1: Submission**—The homeowner submits to the AERC, the Shipley Farm Architectural and Environmental Application for architectural and landscaping review along with all requested documentation. Please note the AERC has 30 days to review the application, but in practice, will strive to provide a faster response.

**Practice Note:** Out of courtesy, it is encouraged that lot owners inform their neighbors of the proposed improvement(s) and obtain their signature on the application form. Their signature does not give their consent; it promotes community harmony and lets the AERC know that your neighbors understand your intent.

The Application is acceptable when all the information necessary for review is received. Upon receipt of an application, the AERC will make a precursory review of the application and request any additional information from the lot owner if needed. The 30-days review period **may be longer if additional information is required.**

**Step 2: Review & Decision**—The AERC reviews the Application after all the appropriate information has been received to review applications. The homeowner will then be notified of the decision. The application will render one of the following four decisions:

Approved	Approved with Conditions	Disapproval	Additional Information Required
The application is approved as submitted.	The application is accepted, but with specified changes, limitations or requirements that must be followed.	The application is denied. The homeowner can appeal to the board of directors - within 15 business days. (See the Appeal Procedure section for more details.)	The AERC has determined that additional information is needed for appropriate review of the application.

**Step 3: Post Decision**—Once work has begun on an approved or approved with conditions application, it must be completed within 90 days, unless otherwise specified in the decision. Approved applications are valid for one (1) year from the date of approval. Step 1 begins again for all other decisions.

#### IV. Review Criteria

The AERC evaluates each application based on the following standards:

1. ***Validity of Concept***  
The basic idea of the exterior change must be sound and appropriate to its surroundings.
2. ***Landscape and Environment***  
The exterior change must not unnecessarily destroy the natural landscape or the achieved man-made environment, if applicable.
3. ***Relationship of Structures and Adjoining Property***  
The proposed change should relate harmoniously to its surroundings and to existing buildings and terrain that have a visual relationship to the change.
4. ***Protection of Neighbors***  
The interest of neighboring owners should be protected by making provisions for such matters as surface water drainage, sound and sight buffers, preservation of views, light and air, and other aspects of design, which may have substantial effects on neighboring property. For example, fences may obstruct views, breezes or access to neighboring property. The AERC will also consider the various appropriate criteria and exercise discretion in determining which of the criteria govern in each specific application.

## 5. *Design Compatibility*

The proposed change must be compatible with the design characteristics of the applicant's home and the general neighborhood setting. Compatibility is defined as harmony in style, scale, materials and color.

- a) **Style**—The overall look and feel of the improvement should match that of surrounding properties and of the neighborhood.
- b) **Scale**—The proposed change must relate satisfactorily to adjacent structures and their surroundings.
- c) **Materials**—Continuity must be established by using the same materials as those used in the existing home. Siding materials and shingles must match the existing structure. If the original materials are no longer available, compatible materials may be substituted.
- d) **Color**—Color(s) may be used to soften or intensify visual impact, while maintaining continuity.
- e) **Workmanship**—The quality of the work must be equal to or exceed that of any existing structure. Poor practices may cause the owner problems and may be visually objectionable to others. For example, an aluminum or wooden fence not properly treated and maintained may start to decay and become unsightly to the lot owner and neighboring property owners.

## V. **Appeal Procedure**

In the absence of an AERC, the board of directors have the final decision making authority. Should an AERC exist and the homeowner disagrees with the committee's decision o in its review, within 15 business days, an appeal may be submitted to the board of directors at [bod@shipleyfarm.org](mailto:bod@shipleyfarm.org).

Upon receipt of the appeal, the board of directors will contact the homeowner and schedule a review relating to the request and appeal. Normally, the appeal is heard at the next scheduled board meeting. A majority vote by the board of directors is needed to reverse a decision. Explanation of Standards

There are three categories of improvement guidelines. They are blanket approvals, common improvements and appearance standards and maintenance.

### ***Blanket Approvals:***

These are category items that do not need approval. Please reference the CC&Rs to ensure compliance.

- A sign no more than 18” x 24” to advertise a project and the sale or rent of the property. Candidate signs are also permitted by and in accordance with the Maryland Homeowners Association Act. All other signs are prohibited unless it is signage for an event of the day. A vendor may only display one sign in the community during the project and no more than two weeks after the project.
- Up to two pets (dogs or cats) may be acquired. Pets that are of any annoyance or are obnoxious to residents in the vicinity are not allowed.
  - Cannot be bred or maintained for any commercial purpose
  - Must apply to county leash laws
  - Must immediately clean up solid waste left by pets on any lot or common area
- Plants, shrubs and flowers planted within three feet of the front of your house, that do not grow higher than the lowest portion of the windows.
- Plantings of flowers and shrubs around trees or the mailbox.
- Mailboxes and posts if repainted or replaced in original colors.
- Low voltage lighting to illuminate the home—see CC&Rs for additional guidance.
- Hose caddies affixed to the home or enclosed in appropriate container and screened with vegetation may be in the front of the house.
- Outdoor seasonal decorations displayed up to five (5) weeks prior to and six to eight weeks after the holiday season.
- Vegetable gardens in backyards, provided the plants do not exceed allowed fence heights or grow through to the neighbor's yard. Gardens should not be visible when standing on the street in front of the house.
- Removal of trees that are less than six inches (6") in diameter and measure four feet (4') above the ground. All other trees to be removed must have the approval of the AERC and if deemed necessary, signatures of neighbors. If a tree is dead, it may be removed without approval.

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- Satellite Dishes
  - No more than two feet (2') in diameter, with hidden cable. Preferred placement of the dish is on the roof at the rear of the house.
  - If the dish must be placed on the ground on the side or at the front of the house, an architectural approval must be obtained.
  - If more than one dish is placed on a home, written architectural approval must be obtained.

- Front Storm Doors
  - Same color as the existing door or trim to aesthetically match the exterior of the home..
  - Full view design, no cross rails.
  - Constructed of anodized aluminum (including baked-on enamel).
  - All adornments must match door and not be obtrusive.

- Back Storm Doors
  - White or the same color as the existing trim.
  - Constructed of anodized aluminum (including baked-on enamel).

- Window Treatments

- Appropriate window dressings are required and should blend in with the colors of the home when seen from the street (sheets, newspapers, reflective material, blankets, etc. are prohibited).

Note: Paper shades are permissible and must be kept in good condition when seen from the streets.

- Exterior Painting/Maintenance

- Provided the material and color remains the same, no approval is required for standard maintenance of the house exterior.

- Hot Tubs

- Hot tubs may not be visible from the street and must be in the backyard.
- Must meet all city, county and state requirements (enclosed, fencing, plumbing, electricity, etc.) Please check the city, county, and state statutes before applying.

- Play Equipment

- All play equipment should be located at the rear of the house. Equipment should not be in the side or front yards or on porches. Please note that this also includes skateboarding ramps.
- Play equipment must be located at least 3 feet from property lines.

Note: Treehouses are prohibited.

### ***Common Improvements***

Items in this category require approval. An application must be submitted along with all required documentation to be considered complete. Improvements needing approval are not necessarily limited to those listed here, but these are some of the most common.

- Grading

- Major changes to the topography of a lot require approval by the AERC prior to being started and may require city and/or county approval as well.
- Drainage and water flow patterns must be taken into consideration prior to the start of any grading.

- Roof, Roofing Accessories & Solar Panels

- The two roofing materials approved for this community is asphalt and architectural shingles. Other materials may be considered through a formal request to the BOD. Tile and metal materials are not authorized to avoid disturbance in the visual relationship to other roofs in the community. Shingles must blend in with the colors of the home (e.g., black, dark brown, or brown). All other colors must be submitted to the BOD for authorization.

- Adding a roof accessory (e.g., satellite or antennae) requires an approval from the BOD.

- Solar panels on front-facing or side-facing roof surfaces visible from areas open to common or public access must be mounted in the plane of the roof surface minimizing stand-off distance from roof. Panels that may require other locations for optimal solar gain must be approved by the AERC.

Efforts must be made to make the solar energy system an integral and harmonious part of the architectural design of the residence. Visibility of any plumbing, wiring, or auxiliary equipment should be minimized as much as possible. All system components visible from areas open to common or public access and not involved in energy production should be painted to blend with the roof coloring.

- All components of the solar system should be integrated into the design of the home. The color of the solar system components should generally conform to the color of the roof shingles to the extent practical. Solar “shingles” that mimic the look of a composite shingle are acceptable but should match the color of the current roof shingles as much as is practical.

- Exterior Color and Maintenance (Changes)

- You must specify the new material and/or color you wish to use. Please include a color sample from the store. Please see Section VIII for community colors.

- Drives and Parking Areas

- Changes to driveways or parking pad additions require AERC approval.
- Gravel driveways or parking areas will not be permitted.

- Pools

- Requests for in-ground swimming pools will be considered. If approval is given, the pool must meet all city, county and state requirements (enclosed fencing, plumbing, electricity, etc.) Please check the city, county, and state statutes before submitting an application.

- Fences/Walls/Private Trees

- Wire, plastic or chain-link fences are not permitted.
- Dog pens must be approved by the AERC. The open side of dog pens may not be seen from the street or situated for pet to disturb neighbors.
- Fences must be installed on the rear of lots—located behind a line running parallel with the furthest most rear portion of the exterior siding of the dwelling structure extended to the lot lines.
- Construction will consist of vertical members (pickets) supported on horizontal members (rails) with the pickets on the outward side of the fence. The maximum spacing between pickets is 4 inches.
- The required fence height is a minimum of 4 feet (42" at lowest point if a scalloped design) and a maximum of 6 feet.
- Fences must be maintained and kept in good repair. The proposed color, finish and material should be consistent with other fences currently installed throughout the community and approved by the Board Of Directors or Architecture Control Committee.
- Privacy trees have the same required heights as the fence. They must be kept manicured, in healthy condition, and not to encroach upon a neighbor's property. The privacy trees must not attract pestilence that cause infestations or annoyances to neighboring property owners.

- Storage Sheds

- A suitably constructed floor system or foundation is required.
- Installed on the property behind the home so the shed cannot be seen from the road when standing directly in front of the house.
- They must be at least 1 foot from property lines.
- The siding material must be similar in color and composition to the home.
- The roof must have a similar pitch, similar materials, and a similar color that keeps continuity in the community.

- Decks/Screened Enclosures/Outdoor Living Areas

- A deck should not extend past the side of the house.
- All decks should be on the rear of the house. No side or front decks are permitted.
- Decks may not be painted. However, staining is allowed. Decks must be stained to conform with the color scheme of the community to maintain aesthetic appeal.
- They can pose no drainage problems for the homeowner or neighbors.
- The materials to be used should be designed specifically for patio and/or deck designs.
- Screened enclosures must not be visible from the street.
- All decks, patios, gazebos and screened porches must blend in with the natural terrain. If a screened porch is connected to the house, the roof, siding and other building materials should match the materials used on the house.

- Lamps and Landscape Lighting
  - One walkway/entrance light on a post is allowed. The light is not to exceed 7 feet in height, measured from the ground to the base of the light fixture.
  - The post must be erected at all times.
  - The post will be painted black metal.
  - The lamp design should be similar to the existing house exterior lights.
  - Other lighting on AERC approved structures will be considered providing it matches existing light fixtures.

*Note: Low voltage lighting does not need AERC approval.*

- Basketball Goals
  - Only permanent basketball hoops on permanently installed freestanding poles are permitted. The location of the pole must be approved by the AERC.
  - Basket goals are to be installed on portions of the back yards to lessen view to street.
  - Goals must be mounted on a single pole with a backboard that is predominately black, gray or clear.
  - Basketball goals are prohibited from being mounted directly on the house.
  - Basketball goals need to be erect always.

- Windows
  - Window unit air conditioners are prohibited.
  - Fans in windows are prohibited.

### ***Appearance Standards/Maintenance***

NOTE: These standards are in addition to any listed in the Declaration of Covenants.

- Paint and stain must be maintained and kept in good repair with no peeling, chipping, cracking or discoloration on the trim or siding. Please see community paint colors in Section VIII.
- Lawns must be well kept with uniform ground coverage. Grass should be maintained at 3-5 inches in height but cannot exceed 8 inches in height. Edging and pruning should be done on a regular basis. Driveway and sidewalk cracks should be kept clear of grass and weeds. The designated front and side lawn areas should be fully covered with grass. Brown or bare patches must be repaired during the Spring or Fall seeding season. Dead and unhealthy trees and shrubs must be cared for, removed or replaced with plantings of similar size and shape.
- No items (toys, bikes, garden equipment, trash containers, indoor furniture, wood, recycling containers, etc.) may be left in front or side yards.

- Parking vehicles on lawns, private sidewalks leading to driveways, common areas, or the middle of the street is prohibited.
  - Parking must be 30 feet from stop signs and 15 feet from fire hydrants.
  - At no time should any vehicle be parked on the street or in a driveway without license plates.
  - Homeowners hosting events such as garage sales or parties are responsible for informing neighbors with adequate notice of the event and making provisions not to damage any neighbor's property.
- To preserve the harmony of external design and location in relation to surrounding structures and topography, lines from exterior walls into home (e.g., phone, gas, electricity, cable) must not be exposed. All lines should be either covered or tied.
- Also, to preserve the harmony of external design and location in relation to the surrounding structures and topography, no temporary units such as window dehumidifiers, air conditioners, and fans are permitted unless requested and authorized by the board to support a medical condition as a reasonable accommodation under the Fair Housing Act.
- Mobile house trailers (whether on or off wheels), recreational vehicles and campers are prohibited. Watercrafts, boats, trailers, etc. must be parked in such a manner as to be fully enclosed in the garage.
- No commercial truck, commercial bus or other commercial vehicle of any kind may be parked on the street, unless it is in support of a known event. Typical commercial trucks supporting events are video game trucks, trucks that carry trains, or animals or bounce houses. Homeowners are responsible for informing neighbors with adequate notice of the event.
- No portion of the property visible to the community may be used for the repair of automobiles exceeding a 48-hr period.
- No portion of the property can be used to tie up dogs or for dog breeding. No dog houses should be visible from the street in the front of the house. Excessive dog noise, animal odors, excrement, cruelty, etc. will be called into animal control.
- Vegetable gardens are allowed in backyards only.
- Trash storage must have privacy screening fixture to prevent view from the front of the home or adjoining lots. The private screen must be the color of the siding material or similar in color and blend with the composition of the home.
  - Trash storage must be secured to prevent turnovers and accessibility to animals.
  - The property should be free of any debris. Debris around the house (e.g., front yard, back yard, side of home, water drains, etc.) should be picked up immediately to be added to the weekly trash pick-up.
- Grills must be 20 ft. from any combustible surface. Concrete patios and driveways may be used for grilling. To the extent possible, outdoor grills should be routinely stored in the garage or basement. If this is not feasible, outdoor grills not in use should be covered and stored out of the view of the front of the home and adjoining lots.
- Decorative lawn ornaments that draw major attention such as statues, wheelbarrows, windmills, or untimely seasonal decorations must receive written architectural approval prior to installation on any lot.

- Clotheslines in accordance with Maryland laws are permitted, but dimensions, placement, or appearance of clotheslines must protect the aesthetic values.

- Generators, both temporary and permanent are allowed. The AERC or Board of Directors shall approve the installation as to size of the unit, location, and aesthetics. Homeowners must meet all of the following requirements in order to install a generator:
  - No generator may be connected directly to a home's wiring unless the home has been wired for generator use by, or under the supervision of a licensed master electrician. Proof of such alteration must be provided to the Board prior to any direct connection.
  - Permits required by Prince George's County must be obtained and all inspections required to be performed must be performed. The homeowner shall provide copies of permits and approvals to the Board.
  - Installation must be in accordance with Prince George's Fire Safety Law.
  - Permanent stationary generators must be operated on natural gas. A licensed plumbing contractor must install gas connections and obtain any required permits.
  - Generators must be in compliance with the county's noise ordinance.
  - Exhaust outflow must be a minimum of five feet from the rear of your home (location subject to Board approval).
  - Generators must be located at the rear or side of the home in the vicinity of air conditioning units. All generators must be enclosed in a manner consistent with and not otherwise offensive to neighboring lots and landscaping.
- Portable Generators  
In addition to the requirements above, portable generators must comply with the following:
  - Portable generators must be placed at least ten feet from the home, with the exhaust facing away from the home and any neighboring residence.
  - No portable generator may be placed on or near combustible surfaces such as wood decks and porches. At no time shall a generator be operated inside the garage.
  - The generator must be operated on a dry surface and kept dry. During inclement weather, an open temporary structure may be used to comply with this requirement.
  - Portable generators must be properly grounded and connected to heavy duty, outdoor rated extension cords. Extension cords must be three pronged and free of cuts or tears.

## VI. Violations and Penalties

In addition to a rule violation, an exterior change made without the required approval of the AERC is in violation of the covenants. A violation may require removal or modification of the work at the expense of the homeowner.

When a violation is determined to have occurred the following steps shall be taken:

1. The AERC will investigate any reported violation and attempt to bring the owner into compliance. Homeowners will be notified in writing of the violation and are expected to bring the violation into compliance within a reasonable amount of time. The amount of time given to the homeowner will be based on the alleged violation.
2. Should the homeowner fail to act upon the recommendations for corrections, the homeowner shall be invited to a hearing with the AERC where the homeowner will have the opportunity to be heard and present evidence. Failure to appear may result in a fine that will begin to accrue on the day after the scheduled hearing date. If the violation is brought back into compliance prior to the hearing, no hearing is necessary. In this case, the homeowner must let a member of the AERC know its updated compliance status. If the issue is verified, no further action is required. If compliance cannot be verified, the parties proceed with the hearing.
3. After the hearing, the AERC will respond to the homeowner with a decision in writing within five (5) days. Any penalties, legal fines or fees relating to the violation the homeowner is responsible for will be noted in the letter from the BOD. The letter will include the date the accrual of fines will begin.