

Approved Changes to Guidelines – 2023

Changes are in red.

ANTENNAS and SATELLITE DISHES

The FCC allows antennas; however, there are a few covenant restrictions that are based simply on aesthetics of a residential area.

No application is required if all of the following conditions are met:

- The satellite dish is one meter (39 inches) or less in diameter.
- No more than one dish or antenna per property.
- The dish or antenna is not mounted on a pole or mounting device more than 12 feet high.
- Mounted devices cannot extend more than 2 feet above the peak of the roof.
- The dish or antenna is not mounted on a fence.
- The dish or antenna is installed -on the roof.
- The cables and wires are secured to the home in an inconspicuous manner or buried when appropriate.

An application is required

- If the dish must be installed in a visible location, other than roof.
- If the antenna or satellite dish is larger than one meter in diameter, or any size on a pole more than 12 feet high, or a television broadcast service antenna more than 12 feet high.
- If mounted on a fence.
- **If requesting a second dish or antenna per property.**
- **Any unused dishes or antennas must be removed.**

A site plan showing the location of the proposed antenna or satellite dish must be included with the application.

Other Antennas

An application is required for all other outdoor antennas.

Townhouse and condominium or rental apartment residents must check with their respective associations or rental offices for additional regulations on the placement of any satellite dish or antenna.

DECKS

An application **is required** for all decks, whether new or a replacement. A site plan with complete description and sketch of the deck including location, dimensions, shape, and materials as well as preservative/color to be applied to those materials must be included with the application. Stairs, guardrails, balusters and landings must be included on the application.

Decks must meet the following conditions:

- Pressure treated wood shall be left natural, **stained or painted an approved color in wood tones** (see image below for examples) **grey or white** that is part of an existing color on the house. **Deck colors on townhomes must also be consistent with the overall community.**
- Lattice may be used for deck skirt. **Color must be compatible with deck and home.**
- Built in a professional, workman-like manner.
- Recycled composite and vinyl deck materials will be considered in wood tones, grey, or white colors that match the existing house.

Balusters, lattice, and guardrails of different materials and/or color may be considered if consistent with existing house and deck in style and color.

- Decks should be related in style to adjacent structures and compatible in size with the house. Separate decks on a single structure must match in style, color, and material.
- Sunshades and trellises must be part of the application information.
- On “zero” lot line properties, structures may be prohibited within the easement areas.

Enclosed decks must relate in scale and design and match the exterior house materials in style and color. Roof slopes should approximate or complement the house roof. Doors and windows should match the house in color and style. All decks over 30 inches above ground level must have railings consistent with Howard County code.

LANDSCAPING

An application **is required** for landscaping for the following plans. A site plan showing the location of landscaping changes must accompany the application.

- Any plantings used as hedge or windbreak, or for screening purposes, (see Screening rules)
- Any change of grade or slope and/or installation of a retaining wall, pond or other structure.
- Well-maintained yards are an important feature of Owen Brown. Replacing a substantial portion of a yard **on any side** (20% or more of a single-family detached or 50% or more of a townhome or duplex) with an alternative (i.e., mulch, ground cover, stone, etc.) requires an application. **A single-family, detached home's** landscaping must not create an incongruous look with abutting properties (*does not apply to townhomes or duplexes*) and a setback may be required to avoid this.
- ~~Rain barrels will be considered and may require screening.~~
- Any permanent structure requires a material list and dimensions and must match the aesthetic of the house and its surroundings.
- Unused mulch or stone or other materials must not be stored for more than 30 days.

No application is required for:

- The planting of individual shrubs (unless used as a hedge), foundation plants, small annuals and perennial beds, ground cover, or stepping-stones flush with the ground.

Mulch and other bulk materials must not be placed on the sidewalks, open space or right-of-way.

Use of native plants is encouraged.

- Refer to the US Fish and Wildlife Service booklet: [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping, Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#) to choose plants for your growing conditions (sun/shade, moist/dry...) that will need little maintenance. This publication is free on-line at:
<https://dnr.maryland.gov/criticalarea/Documents/chesapeakenatives.pdf>
- To choose native plants, Owen Brown is in the *Piedmont*.
- Whenever possible use the scientific name to choose plants because common names are applied to many different plants including some that are invasive.
- **Consider planting bushes and plants that support butterflies, bees, and other pollinating insects.**

Please do not plant invasive ornamental plants. Refer to <https://mda.maryland.gov/plants-pests/Documents/Invasive-Plant-List-March-2020.pdf> for a complete list of aggressive invasive plants to avoid.

For tree information see separate TREE heading.

RAIN BARRELS

An application is required for all rain barrels, **but can be fast-tracked, if all the conditions below are met.** A “rain barrel” is defined as a container that collects and stores rainwater from downspouts and rooftops for future use in watering lawns and gardens.

Applications being submitted to the committee must contain the following information:

1. Size / dimensions – may not exceed 65 gallons
2. Style, color and material of barrel. This must be submitted in the form of a brochure, picture or drawing. Applicant should choose a color/style of rain barrel that suits the style of the residence and include a screening plan if the barrel(s) can be seen from the street, pathways or other public area. Generally, the barrel color must match the foundation or siding color or be left natural wood.
3. Location: describe and show on a property plat (this may be a hand drawing)
4. Number of rain barrels. The number of rain barrels may not exceed the number of down spouts and may only be located in the vicinity of downspouts.
5. Freezing water may damage rain barrels. They should, therefore, be stored upside down or in the garage or carport during winter months. If a section of downspout was removed for installation, it must be reattached during this period.

Rain barrels must be maintained at all times and must be kept free of standing water on and around anything not used as part of the rain barrel system. Assure that drainage/overflow/runoff is properly diverted and does not flow onto neighboring properties. Rain barrels should be covered securely with fine screen to prevent creation of a breeding place for mosquitoes. Rain barrel should be placed on a level surface with a stable base.

SHEDS/INDEPENDENT STRUCTURES

An application is required for all sheds and independent structures. Only one shed will be allowed per property. A site plan showing the proposed location of the shed/structure must be included. A description of the materials and dimensions of the shed/structure must also accompany the application.

~~Storage Containers also called Deck or Patio Boxes and Storage Bins that are less than or equal to 3 x 5 feet in area and 5 feet in height may be fast-tracked.~~

All Shed/Structure Requirements:

1. Location must be in the rear of the house preferably attached, although an alternative location may be approved. In such cases, screening may be required.
2. Siding must match the house siding unless it is located away from the house where it may be left natural. Roof color must match house roof color or be of a dark color.

3. If the house is restyled, re-sided, or painted a different color, the shed must match unless approved to remain natural.
4. Decorative embellishments will not be approved.
5. Secure anchoring is required.
6. The shed/structure should neither dominate nor stand as a primary feature on the property. It should be proportional to lot size, not larger than 100 square feet and not exceed the height of 8 feet at the roof peak, except as noted in 7 below.
7. Sheds/structures with base area larger than 64 square feet may have a 9' roof.
8. Water run-off from the shed/structure must not be directed unto common areas or a neighbor's yard or patio.

For Duplexes, Townhouses and Condominiums:

Sheds may not exceed 20% of rear yard. The placement must be so that it has the least impact to the neighbors. Water run-off from sheds ~~and/or storage containers~~ must not be directed onto common areas or a neighbor's yard or patio.

STORAGE CONTAINERS

An application is required for all storage containers **larger than 3 x 5 feet in area and 3 feet in height.**

~~Storage Containers—also called Deck or Patio Boxes and Storage Bins—that are less than or equal to 3 x 5 feet in area and 5 feet in height may be fast-tracked.~~

For Single Family Homes:

Storage containers should be placed abutting the rear wall of the house and must not be larger than 15 square feet nor exceed 6 feet in height.

TREE PLANTING AND REMOVAL

Trees are a valuable part of Columbia, and their preservation is a priority for Owen Brown.

Tree Removal:

An application is required for the removal of any tree whose trunk is over 6 inches in diameter when measured at a point 2 feet above the ground. This removal can be fast-tracked. **Dead trees are required to be removed.**

Trees located within 20 feet of a home's foundation will be approved for removal **and can be fast-tracked.** The distance will be measured from the trunk of the tree 2 feet off the ground to the nearest part of the foundation.

Trees located more than 20 feet from a home's foundation will not be approved for removal unless one of the following is true:

- The tree is dead or dying. If this is not visibly obvious, a licensed arborist's note indicating that it is dead or dying is acceptable proof.
- The tree is in danger of falling over. If this is not visibly obvious, a licensed arborist's note indicating that it is at risk of falling over is acceptable proof.
- The tree is currently damaging a sewer, water line, **sidewalk or driveway**. If not visibly obvious, a note from a relevant professional (e.g., plumber) is required for proof.

When removing a tree, trunks and exposed roots must be cut or ground to at or below ground level. The architectural committee can grant an exception to this requirement if the trunk in question abuts a naturally wooded area.

Any tree that is removed – for whatever reason – must be replaced by a new tree of approximately the same size when fully grown. This new tree must be planted at least 20 feet away from the foundation of the home. The Architectural Committee will grant exceptions to this requirement for several reasons:

- The removed tree was a small (under 20 feet) ornamental tree
- There is no room on the lot to place a new tree
- The property is already heavily wooded

Tree Planting:

Residents are encouraged to plant trees. Trees provide shade and privacy, contribute to the natural aesthetic of the village, and combat erosion and climate change.

Ornamental trees with a maximum height under 20 feet located within approved garden areas do not require approval.

Shade trees with a maximum height over 20 feet require approval. These approvals can be fast tracked. Those applications will be denied if and only if one or more of the following is true:

- The tree trunk, when fully grown can be reasonably expected to intrude onto a neighbor's property. For example, an oak with a potential trunk diameter of two feet, should not be planted six inches from a neighbor's property. This does not include tree planting along property lines abutting green space.
- The tree, in combination with other features (including other trees), is planted in a manner that results in a "fence-like" quality along a property line.

The following trees are not recommended due to undesirable growth characteristics such as surface roots and susceptibility to disease or insect damage. Ash, Austrian Pine, Black Locust, Box Elder, Bradford Pear, Hemlock, Norway Maple, Ornamental Plum, Osage Orange, Poplars, Red Oak, Scots Pine, Silver Maple, Standard Weeping Willow,

Sycamore Maple, Thorny Locust, Sweet Gum, Black Walnut, Crabapple, and Tulip Poplar.

Native species are encouraged for lower maintenance and environmental concerns. Refer to <https://dnr.maryland.gov/criticalarea/Documents/chesapeakenatives.pdf>

For more information, please call the Howard County Agricultural Extension Service at 410-313-2707.

VEGETABLE GARDENS

An application is required.

- In most cases, a garden plot should be no larger than 100 square feet. Larger plans will be considered for plots in the least visible location on the property.
- Bulk garden materials must be on the homeowner's lot and stored out of sight in the rear yard. Such material must not be left on public sidewalks, open space or right-of-way.
- Since garden size and maintenance are crop dependent, the garden should be maintained appropriate to crop. Failure to adequately maintain plots is a violation of the maintenance provisions of the Owen Brown Covenants.
- Front yard vegetable gardens are not permitted.
- Mesh-type fencing, **of a dark, dull color**, no more than **6** feet high, may be allowed.

Large garden plots for the avid gardener or for tall, conspicuous crops, are available through Columbia Gardeners. More information at www.columbiagardeners.com