



**Owen Brown**  
Community Association

# Architectural Guidelines to the Owen Brown Covenants

*Last updated February 2026*



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## **OWEN BROWN VILLAGE COVENANTS**

The Owen Brown Covenants are binding legal obligations between the Owen Brown Community Association and each lot owner in the village. They “run with the land,” as part of your deed of ownership, which means the obligation transfers to all successive owners. You should have received the Owen Brown Covenants within days of signing the contract for your new home.

**The Covenants are not easily changed. Sixty-seven percent of lot owners in the village must agree to change the Covenants.** Lot owners who are in compliance with the Covenants may cast one vote per unit when changes of the Covenants are proposed.

Our Covenants assure residents of certain standards for land use, architectural design, and property maintenance throughout the village. They also provide you membership in the Owen Brown Community Association and establish the mechanism for the operation of that association.

Because of the legal, contractual nature of the Covenants, it is important that all exterior alterations to residential and commercial properties be approved through the architectural review process. If an alteration is made without approval, you incur the risk of legal action in order to compel modifications consistent with the architectural standards (Guidelines). Such legal actions may result in a notation being placed on the Columbia Association Assessment File which serves as a notice to potential purchasers that the property is not free and clear of all encumbrances.

## **ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES**

All homeowners in Owen Brown have an obligation to keep their properties in compliance with the Owen Brown covenants. The Owen Brown Architectural Guidelines have been developed to help make it clear what is considered compliant; however, it is impossible to anticipate and document every possible scenario. In the case where an application is not explicitly stated in the guidelines, the Residential Architectural Committee may evaluate the request on a case-by-case basis and make a decision, including a denial, using their best judgment regarding compliance to our governing covenants.

The goal of these Guidelines is to keep our community an attractive, desirable place in which to live, and to protect property values. We hope the use of these Guidelines provides assistance to residents in preparing applications as a practical means of accomplishing these goals.



## **WHO OVERSEES THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW PROCESS**

### **Covenant Advisor**

The village employs a Covenant Advisor who is available at the village office to assist in preparation of exterior alteration and in-home business applications, to answer questions, process covenant inquiries, to serve as secretary to the EAC and to carry out certain duties associated with covenant enforcement.

### **Resident Architectural Committee (RAC)**

The Owen Brown Village Board appoints interested and qualified residents to the RAC. This committee is composed of volunteers who conduct on-site visits and initial reviews of exterior alteration and in-home business applications, making recommendations to the Executive Architectural Committee for final approval of these alterations. The RAC also recommends revisions to the Guidelines.

### **Executive Architectural Committee (EAC)**

The Owen Brown Covenants provide for an EAC which is composed of qualified volunteers (preferably with Village Board, RAC, or architectural experience) with the majority being appointed by The Columbia Association and the minority by the Owen Brown Village Board. The EAC is responsible for setting the rules and procedures for architectural control, for the review and final approval of all exterior alterations on residential properties, for all in-home business approvals, and for the review and approval of new residential and commercial construction. It is also the final body of appeal for all architectural decisions in the village.

## **STEPS NEEDED FOR AN EXTERIOR ALTERATION**

When you contemplate making an exterior alteration, initiating an in-home business or changing your landscaping, you should first consult the Architectural Guidelines contained in this booklet. If in doubt, call the Covenant Advisor at 410-381-0202 or email at:

**[covenants@owenbrownvillage.org](mailto:covenants@owenbrownvillage.org)**

**Residents whose property also belongs to a townhouse or condominium association must check with that HOA to see if it has its own architectural guidelines and review process.**

- Any alterations to the exterior of a townhome should remain consistent with the aesthetics and color schemes of the townhouse community. Any changes to the materials used on the structure should maintain the existing style and design.

***Note: Some projects may require Howard County building or variance permits. It is the homeowner's responsibility to obtain all applicable approvals and adhere to all restrictions.***



1. Obtain an application for an exterior alteration or in-home business by doing one of the following:
  - Stop by the lobby of the Owen Brown Community Center at 6800 Cradlerock Way.
  - Download an application from our website at [www.owenbrownvillage.org](http://www.owenbrownvillage.org) Click on Property Owners and then Exterior Change.
  - Call 410-381-0202 for one to be e-mailed or mailed to you.
2. The following application instructions are intended to help you avoid delays in processing your request:
  - a. To identify your property, fill in all the blanks on application page 1.
  - b. On page 2, sign the application and print or type your name and date.
  - c. Beginning on page 11, guidelines for various kinds of projects are listed alphabetically. After reading the section(s) that apply to your project, provide the Committee with a typed or printed description of what you want to do. Depending on the project—and specifically when applying for fences, sheds, decks or patios—you will need to provide **dimensions, drawings, material samples, descriptions and/or brochures and photographs**.
  - d. **Property plats (house location surveys)** shall be included with all applications. If a plat is not available, then a drawing may be acceptable. To help you get started, many **plats are available through the Owen Brown village office**.
3. Public RAC meetings are held on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 7:30 PM at the Owen Brown Community Center at 6800 Cradlerock Way, except for the months of November, December, January, and February. During those months only one meeting is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The review/approval process usually takes under four weeks. Prior to each meeting, members of the RAC make site visits to the properties to assess the applications.

At the public meeting, which residents are encouraged to attend, the RAC makes its recommendations for action on the application which is then forwarded to a member of the EAC for a final decision. The EAC member may disapprove of any plans and specifications submitted because of any of the following:

- a. the failure of such plans or specifications to comply with any of the Village Covenants;
- b. failure to include information in such plans and specifications as may have been reasonably requested;
- c. objection to the exterior design, appearance or materials of any proposed Structure;
- d. incompatibility of any proposed Structure or use with existing Structures or uses upon other Lots in the vicinity;
- e. objection to the location of any proposed Structure upon any Lot or with reference to other Lots in the vicinity;
- f. objection to the grading and landscaping plans for any Lot;
- g. objection to the color scheme, finish, proportions, style of architecture, height, bulk



or appropriateness of any proposed Structure;

- h. objection to parking areas proposed for any Lot on the grounds of (i) incompatibility to proposed uses and Structures on such Lot or (ii) the insufficiency of the size of parking areas in relation to the proposed use of the Lot; or
- i. any other matter which, in the judgment of the Architectural Committee, would render the proposed Structure, Structures or uses inharmonious with the general plan of improvement of the Property or with Structures or uses located upon other Lots in the vicinity.

4. An appeal of a **denied or amended application** may be requested in writing within ten days of receiving the results. At that time, a meeting is set up with the resident and the EAC to attempt to resolve any issues. The decision of the EAC shall be issued in writing. That decision is binding upon all parties.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXCEPTIONS**

These Guidelines indicate what is *most likely* to be approved in *typical* circumstances. Special circumstances may allow the approval of an application that might be denied at another location or the denial of one that might be approved elsewhere. Decisions will be made considering lot size, topography, visibility from streets, open space or neighboring properties, and compatibility with the architecture of homes in the surrounding neighborhood.



## **THE FAST TRACK PROCESS**

A *FAST TRACK* process is offered for the approval of certain exterior alterations. This process was developed to shorten the processing time for certain standard alterations.

*FAST TRACK* applications submitted by Monday at 5 PM to the community center **will generally** be reviewed by 5 pm the following Thursday. The application form for the *FAST TRACK* process is the same as the regular application. It is imperative that all information be complete to be considered for this speedy process. The application is then approved or disapproved by a member of the EAC. A letter is mailed or emailed to the applicant indicating the results.

If a *FAST TRACK* application is incomplete or ineligible for this process, it is automatically shifted to the regular process and reviewed at the regularly scheduled RAC meeting. The decision by the RAC to change a *FAST TRACK* application to a regular one is final.



## THE FOLLOWING EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS ARE ALLOWED IN THE *FAST TRACK* PROCESS:

**\*Please read the designated Guideline page for details as each item has specific requirements in order to meet the *FAST TRACK* process:**

Attic Ventilators	Rain Barrels
Compost Bins	Rain Gardens
Doors (Entry and Storm)	Ridge Vents
Driveways	Roofing
Fences	Siding
Garage Doors	Skylights
Gutters/Downspouts (if same)	Solar Panels
HVAC Units	Storage/Deck Boxes
Lighting	Trees
Patios	Walkways
Radon Mitigation Units	Windows

## **COMPLETION OF PROJECT**

An exterior alteration must be **completed within 120 days of the start of construction**. Requests for time extensions due to extenuating circumstances must be brought to the attention of the Covenant Advisor in writing. Any modification of the original terms of approval requires an amendment of the application, which must be submitted and reviewed by the RAC. A major modification requires a new application and approval.

## **PRACTICES FOR A MORE “WATERSHED-FRIENDLY” PROPERTY**

There are a number of practices a property owner can do to help reduce the volume of stormwater that runs off an individual property and into Columbia’s lakes and streams that eventually feed into the Chesapeake Bay. Every parcel of land in the watershed impacts the quality of our water. You can reduce the impact of your property by reducing the amount of stormwater generated from your lot. For more information on how to do this, consult this website <http://chesapeakestormwater.net/> for a “*Homeowner Guide for a More Bay-Friendly Property*,” or contact the Columbia Association Watershed Management at [Sustainability@columbiaassociation.org](mailto:Sustainability@columbiaassociation.org).



## **LETTER OF COMPLIANCE PROCEDURE**

Every home in Columbia was issued a Certificate of Compliance by the developer, HRD or its successors, upon building completion. To ensure that a property remains in compliance with the Covenants, an update to this certificate, or a Letter of Compliance, will be issued upon request of any property owner in the village. Upon request, the Covenant Advisor inspects the property to verify compliance with the Covenants and all approved applications on record. If the property is found in compliance, a Letter of Compliance is issued. If there are unapproved, improperly completed, incomplete alterations, or maintenance violations on the property, the owner and realtor are notified. Upon correction of the violations and application for approvals, the property is re-inspected, and a Letter of Compliance issued. A seller is obligated by law to disclose any known defects to a prospective buyer, and it is a buyer's right to request this letter when buying a home in Columbia. Letters of Compliance can be requested directly through our website under the property owners tab, selling your home. A Letter of Compliance may be requested at any time and is valid for 6 months.

## **WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR COVENANT ENFORCEMENT?**

Alleged violations of the Village Covenants and Guidelines may be reported by any resident to any member of the Owen Brown Community Association staff. These complaints remain anonymous. The complaints are passed on to the Covenant Advisor or Architectural Assistant who makes a site visit to verify the violation.

When a covenant violation is verified, the owner of the property is contacted by letter and given a specific time limit, depending on the violation, to correct the problem. A second site visit is made after the specified date. A second letter is sent if the violation has not been corrected. If these contacts do not remedy the situation, a third letter is sent giving the resident until the next Village Board meeting or a reasonable date to make the corrections. If there is still no response or resolution, the Village Board issues a 15-Day Notice, which is sent certified and regular mail, requiring the violation to be corrected within 15 days. If it is still not resolved, the Village Board may send the issue to the Columbia Association for possible legal action.



## **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AT A GLANCE**

**Owen Brown Community Association.....410-381-0202**

**Miss Utility..... 1-800-257-7777**

Call before digging for free information on location of gas, power and telephone lines.

**Howard County Permits.....410-313-2455\*\***

**It is your obligation to obtain any necessary permits. Village and County processes are separate. Approval from one does not guarantee approval from the other.**

\*\* Call this number for Building, Electrical, and Plumbing Permits and for Contractors, Rental, Solicitor/peddler, and Traders licenses.

**Howard County Sign Information.....410-313-1830**

**Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning.....410-313-2350**

**Columbia Association Land Management Division..... 410-381-0194**

### **OWEN BROWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION** **WEB-SITE & E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

**Web-site: <http://www.owenbrownvillage.org>**

**Manager's E-mail: [manager@owenbrownvillage.org](mailto:manager@owenbrownvillage.org)**

**Covenant Advisor's E-mail: [covenants@owenbrownvillage.org](mailto:covenants@owenbrownvillage.org)**



## EXTERIOR ALTERATION GUIDELINES



### ADDITIONS

An application **is required** for any addition made to a home. **Additions include, but are not limited to carports, garages, greenhouses, porches, rooms, carport enclosures, and deck enclosures. A set of architectural drawings similar to those required by Howard County for a building permit must accompany the application. Samples of building materials (i.e. siding and shutters) must also be submitted with the application.**

The proposed structure must be compatible with the original structure, the surrounding properties and in proportion to the existing lot size. The following must be taken into consideration.

- Siding, roofing, and trim must match the existing materials as to finish and color.
- New windows and doors must match existing as to style and color and should be located on walls at the same approximate height and vertical plane as the existing units.
- Roof eaves and fascia must be the same depth, style, color, and approximate height, with all slopes proportionate to the style of the house.
- Exposed foundation on additions must be painted to match existing approved foundation color.
- If an existing deck, screened porch, or other addition is to be further modified for year-round use, all the above requirements must be met.
- Light fixtures must match existing fixtures as to style and color.

### 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 device 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.



### **APIARIES (Beekeeping)**

An Exterior Alteration Application is required for all apiaries. Apiaries will be allowed on a case-by-case basis, since some properties are not suitable. Proposed Apiaries must meet all of the following conditions:

1. The minimum front set back is at least 50 feet from the front lot line.
2. The minimum side and rear setback are 25 feet from the lot lines, except minimum setbacks are 10 feet if the apiary is located to direct the entrances away from neighboring property and are located:
  - At least 6 feet above the ground



- Are behind a solid fence, hedge or other barrier that is at least 6 feet high and runs parallel to the lot line.
- At least 6 feet above any deck or other open outdoor structure that is located on an adjoining property that is less than 25 feet from the apiary.

3. A water supply must be provided close to the apiary to minimize bees from seeking water off site.
4. The location and flight paths of the colony should be arranged carefully and should be located and oriented so that flyways are above head level (a minimum of 6.5 feet) when the bees cross adjacent property lines.
5. The State of Maryland requires that hives be registered. Apiaries shall comply with Maryland Department of Agriculture regulations pertaining to beekeeping and must be operated and maintained in accordance with Best Management Practices.
6. The apiary does not create unreasonable interference with the use of others' property.

#### Application Requirements:

1. A diagrammed and labeled site plan showing the location of the apiary, the number of individual hives, the water source and the flight path in relation to the lot lines and the flight path. Drawing must show the distance from the home and the lot lines.
2. Picture or detailed drawing of the apiary, the structure on which the apiary sits and the water source.
3. Dimensions of the apiary.
4. Material description and the color of the apiary.
5. Landscaping plan for screening.
6. Certificate of training for bee keeping
7. Compliance with county code.



#### ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The architectural style of single-family homes is determined prior to construction and **may not** be altered without the express approval of the Architectural Committee. When



an alteration is desired, the homeowner must apply for a complete transformation to another style. **Partial transformations are prohibited, that is, all required changes must be made at the same time. The application must include detailed information about the changes being requested, including samples of materials to be used.**

The architectural style of duplexes, townhouses, and condominiums **may not be changed.**

**Single-Family Traditional Homes** are defined as generally having

- horizontal aluminum or vinyl siding,
- trim that is white or matches the siding color,
- hip, gambrel (Dutch Colonial) gable, or common roof lines,
- shutters at least on front windows (but not on some double windows) that generally match the door color,
- muntin's (window grids), if desired, must be on all windows.

This general group of houses include duplexes (semi-attached), Omni homes (Attic Window, Bright Soul, and Harp String), and Victorian homes (Steamerbell and connecting streets.)

**Single-Family Contemporary Homes** are generally defined as having

- vertical wood siding, or horizontal/vertical vinyl siding when re-sided,
- uncommon or off-setting roof lines (optional),
- no shutters or muntin's on windows,
- plain window frames,
- wide trim (three inches or more), in a color generally darker than the siding, around the windows and doors.



## **ATTIC FANS AND RIDGE VENTS**

**FAST TRACK**

An application **is required** for all attic fans and ridge vents. Include a brochure or photograph of the fan or vent and indicate the location, color, and height of projection above the roof.

Attic Fans and Ridge Vents are Fast Trackable if the following conditions are met:

- They are mounted on the least visible slope of the roof.
- They are low profile and painted to match roof color.
- They are not wind-powered units (wind powered units will be considered)



- Any blocking of airflow is done from inside the structure.
- Ridge vents must match the roof color as closely as possible.

## **AWNINGS, PERGOLAS, ARBORS AND TRELLIS**

An application **is required** for all. Must provide a photo or drawing of the item, the color to be used, and a description of where the item will be located and whether it is retractable or stationary.

Awnings, pergolas, arbors and trellis will most likely be approved if these conditions are met:

- Sun control devices should be compatible with the architectural character of the house in terms of style, color and materials.
- Awnings should be of straightforward design.
- They are located in the rear of the house and in scale with the house.
- They are compatible with the style and color of the house.
- Pipe frames are painted to match trim or house color.
- If awning is removed for winter, pipe frames are also removed.



## **BASKETBALL BACKBOARDS**

An application **is required** for all basketball backboards, whether attached to the house, freestanding, or portable. A site plan showing the proposed location of the backboard must be included. Screening may be required. **Howard County code prohibits portable backboards on the street, by the cul-de-sac island, or obstructing the sidewalk.**

The location of the basketball backboard must be as follows:

- The ideal location for freestanding backboard is in the rear yard. A hard playing surface in the rear yard may be requested. Playing surface must meet the guidelines for a patio. Refer to Howard County code.
- Backboards in the front should be attached to the house, garage, or carport.
- Freestanding or portable backboards are allowed on the front driveway, or in the yard, if it is a minimum of 4 feet from the nearest property line.
- Freestanding poles in the yard must be anchored into the ground at the base.

All backboards must have the following characteristics:

- It must be of commercial quality.



- The height of the goal should be between 7' and 10'.
- The pole on freestanding units should be white, black, or brown painted metal. Wood poles must remain natural in color.
- The backboard, rim, net, and pole must be kept in good repair.

## **CHICKEN COOPS**

Chicken coops will be considered on an individual basis. Because of the potential impact on neighbors, applications for chicken coops must be submitted and approved annually. At a minimum, all the following must be true:

- Coops must comply with all County, State, and Federal laws.
- The lot must be at least ¼ acre.
- The coop contains no more than five hens.
- Chickens must be confined to the coop/run at all times (no free range).
- Coop/run must be roofed structure and comply with the guidelines for Sheds
- Coops must be at least 50 feet away from neighboring dwellings and open space.
- Coops must be sanitary and cleaned regularly.

Roosters are not permitted. In order to limit the potential impact on neighbors and open space, additional requirements may be levied including but not limited to the following:

- Installation of screening
- Limits on the amount of visible chicken wire
- Complimenting the color or style of the home
- Requiring additional distance between the coop and neighboring dwellings beyond the minimum 50 feet



## **CHIMNEYS AND FLUES**

An application **is required** for the addition of a chimney or flue. Submit a drawing of the proposed location and details of the construction materials.

- Chimneys and flues that exit through the foundation or wall of the house and run vertically up the exterior wall must be totally enclosed with brick



or boxed in with materials that match the exterior house finish, such as siding. All flue structures must extend the entire length of the flue.

Flashing on all flue installations must be painted to match the adjacent flue materials.

- A bare metal pipe chimney may be considered if the location and visibility of the pipe is not visible from the street. The metal should be painted to match the siding or trim of house. (Factory applied flat black paint will be considered.)
- Flues that exit through the roof on the front slope or roof ridge are discouraged due to high visibility; however, they may be permitted if boxed in. The resident is responsible for obtaining Howard County code information and guidelines.
- Caps and spark arresters must be low profile.
- Flues that exit through the roof on the rear slope and are not visible from the front may not need to be boxed. If an exposed installation is allowed, the flue must be painted to match the roof; it cannot exceed 14 inches at outside diameter.
- Direct vent fireplaces/stoves will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approval will be based on visibility to surrounding properties.

While each case will be reviewed individually, additional flues must be identical in design, proportion, and materials to any existing flue. When a second chimney is to be added on the same end of the house as an existing boxed-in chimney, both flues should be run through the same enclosure.

## **CLOTHESLINES**

An application **is required** for a clothesline unless it is located in the rear yard, in the least visible part of the lot and at least 10 feet from the rear of the property line, within the sidelines of the house.

## **COLORS**

The number of colors permitted on a home is five, which includes the color of the roof. Brick or concrete left natural is not considered a color. Items that would normally require a color are siding, foundation, roof, trim, doors (including garage doors), windows, and shutters. If you want to change the color of one or more of these items, then an application is required.



*FAST TRACK*

## **COMPOST BINS**



An application **is required** for all compost bins. Compost bins should meet the following conditions:

- Compost bin must be located in rear yard at least 10 feet from the rear property line and within the sidelines of the house.
- Color must be black, green, brown, or tan.
- Compost bin must be contained and should be no larger than 27 cubic feet in volume. Larger volumes will be considered when justified.
- Compost plant material only—no oil, meat, dairy, or non-vegetable waste may be composted.

## **CONSERVATION/ENERGY SAVING ALTERATIONS**

An application is required for all conservation or energy saving exterior alterations. Because this technology is constantly evolving, the Architectural Committee will consider any exterior alteration application that supports conservation or saving energy on a case-by-case basis.

Submit a plot plan showing the proposed location of alteration, provide a picture, drawing or brochure of proposed alteration, describe color, material, and dimension. Screening may be required.



## **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 and duplexes must also be consistent with the overall community.**
- Lattice may be used for deck skirts. Color must be compatible with deck and home.
- Built in a professional, workman-like manner.



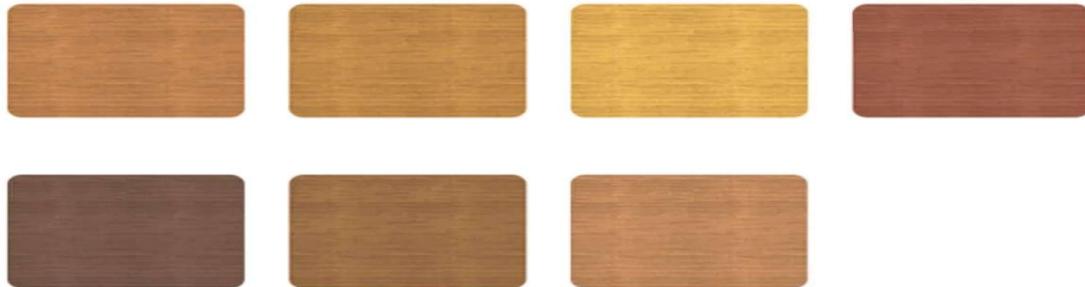
- Recycled composite and vinyl deck materials will be considered in wood tones, grey, or white colors that match the existing house.

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.

Examples of wood tone colors that are acceptable:



## **DOG HOUSES**

An application **is required** for a dog house unless the doghouse is small (2' wide by 3' deep by 3' high), placed as close to the rear of the house as possible, is painted to match the house, and has roof covering that is dark color. The maximum size is 4' wide by 4' deep and 4' high.

Screening may be required if the doghouse is located in a more visible part of the lot.



**Fenced dog run enclosures are not permitted.**

## **DOORS (All Types)**

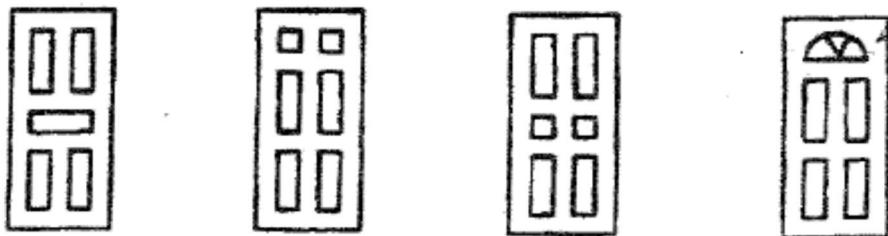
**(SLIDING, STORM, SCREEN, ENTRY & GARAGE)**



### **ENTRY DOOR**

An application is required for all exterior doors. Information on color and style must be submitted with the application (a brochure or picture is required). An exterior door must be compatible in color and style with the house. One color only is allowed (See Painting and Staining). Entry doors *may be* fast-tracked if they are of one of the existing colors on the house, and match the existing door style, or one of the four approved styles. (See below) **Color changes cannot be fast-tracked.** Townhouse and condominium owners must check with their local homeowners or condominium associations for approved styles and colors. A wood or wood-like door may be approved.

#### **Entry door *Fast Track* styles**



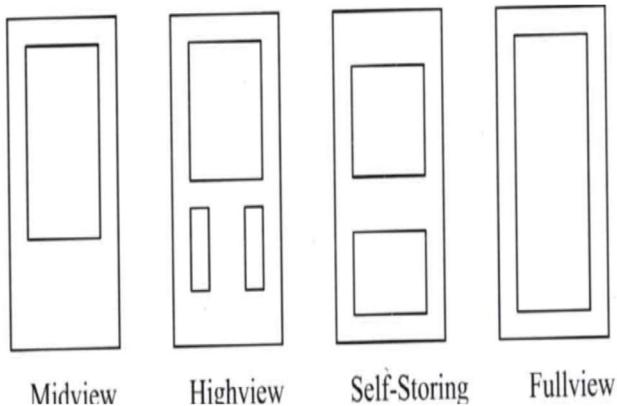
### **SLIDING DOORS**

Sliding doors must have the same frame color as the window frames of the house. If the windows do not have muntin's, the sliding doors cannot have muntin's.

### **STORM/SCREEN/SECURITY DOORS**

An application **is required** for a storm/screen or security door other than the styles pictured below. The following conditions must be met:

- Must be compatible in style with house.
- Must be a plain design, without decorative embellishment.
- The door must match the color of either the front door, shutters, trim, or siding.
- Uncoated aluminum-colored doors will not be approved.



## **GARAGE DOORS**

An application **is required** for all garage doors. Garage doors must match the color of the siding, shutters, or trim of the house. Garage doors on shared garages must match in style and color. Garage door windows must be on the top or second row of panels. Garage doors can be “fast tracked” if the door will be the same color and style as the current door.

## **DRAINAGE PIPES**

Drainage pipes must be buried, never lying above ground.

## **DRIVEWAYS AND PARKING PAD**

An application **is required** for any driveway or parking pad changes on the property. **A site plan must be included showing the proposed changes of the driveway or parking pad (a property plat is preferred).**

Conversion from concrete to other materials will be considered. Driveway aprons must be concrete. Driveway extensions should be constructed of the same material as the existing driveway and be similar in color. **Driveways may not be painted.** Only clear sealant is allowed on concrete driveways.

Vehicles parked on residential property may only be parked on driveways, in carports or garages, or on approved parking pads, not on lawn areas or walkways.

**Maintenance, repair, or replacement of driveways is the responsibility of the owner or owners.** Maintenance or replacement does not require an application if the size and materials are to remain the same as the current approved driveway. **In the case of flag or shared driveways, all owners are responsible for maintenance of the shared areas.** Permeable driveways will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



## **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS**

Exterior EV Charging stations can be approved in locations that are adjacent to parking spaces or driveways. Electrical conduit must be hidden in walls or buried underground. Charging cables must not impede walkways or sidewalks, when stored or while in use.

If proposing a location on common area property owned by an HOA, the HOA must submit an application. All installations must comply with state law regarding EV chargers.



## **EXHAUST VENTS (Radon, Gas, Waste Stack)** *FAST TRACK*

An application **is required** for all radon pipes and for exhaust vents. Submit a drawing of the vent and its proposed location. Direct exhaust vents must be painted to match the color of the surface via which they exit, except for roof.

An exposed exhaust pipe must meet the following criteria:

- Painted the color of the house siding or downspouts.
- Be on the side or rear of the house.
- Extend no further above the roofline than required by EPA Regulations.



## **FENCES** *fast track*

*An application is required for all new fences and changes in configurations of existing approved fences. Columbia and Owen Brown were conceptualized with openness in mind. Maintaining the feeling of openness is an important priority for the village. Community open space gives small residential lots a sense of spaciousness. The street sides and many back yards of homes are visually part of the open spaces of our neighborhoods. These considerations influence the rules regarding fences described below, specifically the prohibition on privacy fences for single family homes.*

Fast Track is available when replacing an existing fence or gate in the same location with the same exact style. A **site plan/property plat** showing the location of the fence and property lines, as well as a description of all materials used, a **brochure and/or photograph must be included as well as fence styles and height**.

**Prior approval of a fence on a property does not mean that the style is still approvable.**

**ALL RESIDENTIAL FENCES MUST CONFORM TO THESE REQUIREMENTS:**



- **Fences must be built on the property line**, except for a privacy fence (see below).
- Fence style must match one of the approved pictured fence styles in this guideline booklet.
- Wood must be left natural or stained with a transparent or semi-transparent color of either clear or wood tones (brown and tan).
- **Recycled composite and vinyl materials or other man-made materials will be considered.**
- Fence posts must be well secured or placed in concrete.
- Fence gates must be compatible with fence style, height, color, and materials.
- Gates must open inward unless property outside the fence is also owned by resident applying.
- Residents are required to match existing neighboring, approved fencing style. If abutting neighbors have different fence styles, the property owner may choose which style to match.
- Wire mesh must be attached to inside of fence and not extend above top rail.
- Fence height must be e 48" at top rail.
- Posts must be perpendicular to the ground.
- Should connect to neighbor's post/fence.
- Built in a professional, workman-like, manner of resilient material.

#### **THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT PERMITTED:**

- Chain link fencing.
- Wire fencing
- Wire with hedge fencing
- Basket weave fencing
- Stockade fencing
- Parallel fencing on the property line (Exception: If neighboring property has a two rail, and is unwilling to change to a three rail, constructing a parallel, three rail fence is allowed.)
- Front yard fencing, except where builder installed as part of original design.
- Rear yard fencing that would create front yard fencing for a neighbor.
- Property line privacy fences are not permitted except with townhomes and homes that back to the following streets, Broken Land Parkway, Oakland Mills Road, and Snowden River Parkway. Privacy fences on single family homes may only be installed along the portion of the property adjacent to the listed approved roads. The other sides must follow the fence guidelines.

#### **APPROVED FENCE STYLES**



***Split Rail (a/k/a Post & Rail) and Split Board:*** three-rail (48-inch height) are appropriate for single family homes. Wire mesh, such as galvanized or vinyl coated (no poultry wire) will be permitted only on the inside of the fence.



**3 Rail Flat Board, Paddock style (48 inches in height)**



***Board-On-Board (a/k/a Shadow Box or Wyngate):*** Flat top, alternating boards, 5 or 6 foot privacy fence.



**Standard Picket:** 36 inches in height  
(only approved for the Victorian homes in Hopewell).

#### FENCING FOR SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED HOMES:

- Split rail/paddock fences are the only approved property line fences. When replacing an existing approved fence, it must match adjacent neighbors even if a different style was previously approved.

#### PRIVACY FENCE (if not on property line or in an allowed area)

- Board-On Board fences may be 5 to 6 feet high and must be visually attached to house,
- Fence must be of substantial construction, no lattice fencing.
- Fence sections must be “stepped” on sloping terrain and horizontal rails made to match in the same plane,
- May be no more than 2/3 the distance from the original foundation to the side of the property line, up to a maximum of 18 ft.
- May be no more than 2/3 the distance from the original foundation to the rear property line, up to a maximum of 24 ft.

#### DUPLEX HOMES:

- Three-rail split rail fences are allowed on property line and must be a height of 48 inches.

#### PRIVACY FENCE

- Board-On Board fencing, up to 6 feet high on the property line between units of duplex homes, is allowed up to 16 feet or a maximum of one-half the distance from the house to the rear property line, whichever is less,
- Fence must be of substantial construction,
- Fence sections must be “stepped” on sloping terrain and horizontal rails made to match in the same plane,
- In the future, if either duplex owner desires to replace the split rail fence between the individual units with board-on-board, this will take precedence and be



approved. The committee will recommend removal of conflicting split rail sections.

- May be no more than 2/3 the distance from the original foundation to the side property line, up to a maximum of 12 ft.
- May be no more than ½ the distance from the original foundation to the rear property line, up to a maximum of 16 ft.

#### **OMNI HOMES: (Attic Window, Bright Soul, Harp String)**

Because of the difficulty of obtaining replacement fencing owners may change the fence style to board-on-board style fences.

#### **VICTORIAN HOMES:**

- Fences may be two rail split-rail, or white contemporary picket, not to exceed 36 inches at top. (a three-rail fence may be considered)
- Wire mesh covered in green or black plastic, if desired, must be attached to the inside of the fence and not extend above the top rail.

#### **PRIVACY FENCE**

- A section of rear board-on-board fence, no longer than 12 feet, perpendicular and attached to the back of the house, may be approved.

#### **TOWNHOMES AND CONDOMINIUMS**

##### **PRIVACY FENCE**

- Builder-installed or Board-on-Board fences are allowed up to 6 feet high and must be visually attached to the house.
- May be built on the property line.
- Fence heights at lakefront properties may be limited. In addition, fences may be required to be stepped on lakefront properties.

#### **FLAGS AND FLAG POLES**

An application **is required** for a freestanding flagpole. A site plan showing the location of the flagpole, along with height (maximum height for a pole is 25 feet), color and style, and the size of the flag must accompany the application. If the flag is to be displayed after dark, it must be illuminated to meet federal regulations (any illumination must not disturb neighboring homes.)

A freestanding flagpole may respectfully display two portable, removable United States flag, Maryland state flag, Howard County flag, flags of a US military branch, or official flag of a local first responder on their property. The flag must be displayed consistent with U.S. Flag Code, Maryland Flag Protocol and with any rules and regulations adopted by a townhouse or condominium association.



## **FLOWER BOXES**

No application is required if the following guidelines apply. Flower boxes must match the trim color of the house and the size of the windows to which they are attached. Flower boxes must be planted with natural plant material and be well maintained. Flower boxes must either be removed during the winter months or planted with evergreen plant material.



## **GARAGES AND CARPORTS**

An application **is required** for all carport and garage additions, as well as for the conversion of a carport to a garage. A site plan showing the proposed carport or garage location, as well as the description of all proposed materials, must accompany the application.

Carports and garages must match the house in style, materials and color and window style and color. If a house is to be repainted or re-sided, the carport or garage must be repainted or re-sided to match at the same time. Shared garage doors must match. Any exposed foundation must match house foundation color.

Shared garages and carports must meet the following requirements:

- Must match in color and material either the associated house or the other half of garage/carport.
- Only one roof color is permitted, and it must match the color of one of the associated houses.
- If a house is repainted or re-sided, the associated half of the shared garage or carport must be repainted or re-sided at the same time, unless it matches the other half.
- There must be only one trim color on a shared garage or carport, and it must match the trim on either of the houses sharing the garage or carport.
- Carport dividers may be considered.
- Townhouse and condominium owners must check with your local homeowner's association for appropriate carport guidelines.
- Built in a professional, workman-like manner.



## **GAZEBO**

An application **is required** for a gazebo, which is considered a permanent structure. A site plan showing the proposed location of the gazebo, as well as a brochure or photo of the structure and description of any proposed material, and screening must be included with the application.

The following conditions must be met:

- Must follow the same color tones as decks, i.e. pressure-treated wood shall be left natural, stained or painted an approved color in wood tones, grey or white that match the existing house.
- Located in least visible part of lot or incorporated into the deck.
- The size must be in proportion to lot.
- Landscape screening may be required.
- Built in a professional, workman-like manner.

## **GRILLS, FIREPITS AND BARBECUES**

An application **is required** for a permanent, built-in grill, firepit or barbecue. A site plan showing the proposed location of the grill or barbecue along with dimensions and materials must be included.

- Permanent structures must be located in the rear yard in the least visible area,
- Must be at least 10 feet from the rear property line and within the side lines of the house.

## **GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS**



*FAST TRACK*

Gutters and downspouts are required as part of the original architectural style. **An application is required for the replacement of gutters and downspouts.** Indicate on the application any change of placement and color. Gutters and downspouts are generally the same color as the siding or trim (fascia, rake, or soffit). Residents should ensure that any repositioning of downspouts does not create drainage problems for neighbors or drain on to a driveway. Raised leaf guards must match either the gutter or roof color.

Downspout extensions must be buried underground if longer than six feet from the house.

## **HEATING /AIR CONDITIONING UNITS**



An application **is required** for the replacement of a heating or air conditioning unit in a new location, or for any additional units. A site plan indicating the new location must be submitted with the application.

Window and wall air conditioning units **may be approved** if they are placed in a rear or side window of the house, not visible from the street, and be properly installed. Units required for medical reasons will generally be allowed.



## **HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**

No application is required for holiday decorations. Decorations may be placed within the confines of the resident's yard for four weeks prior to, and after a holiday.

## **HOT TUBS**

An application **is required** for all hot tubs and spas. A site plan with the location of the hot tub or spa, materials, lids/covers, and any screening planned must accompany the application.

Hot tubs and spas must meet the following conditions:

- They should be placed on the least visible part of the Lot.
- The size must be in proportion to the lot.
- They should be adjacent to the rear of the house or a part of the deck.
- They may require screening.

## **HOUSE NUMBERS**

No application is required for house numbers 3"-6" in height, plain in style and must be in a contrasting color to the color of the siding. Two sets per property are allowed if one is near the garage and one is near the front door. An application is required for all other variations of house numbers. **No house numbers may be painted on the curb.**



## **IN-HOME BUSINESS**

An In-Home Business Application, which is different from an Exterior Alteration Application, **is required** for all in-home businesses **except daycare, as provided by law.**

Approval is valid for one year only. A new application is required to be filed annually.



The business should be incidental or secondary to the residential use of the dwelling. The following criteria will be enforced:

- Parking availability and traffic impact will be the prime consideration in approving the application, as well as any other factor that may significantly impact the neighbors.
- No direct retail sales from the residence is permitted. Distributorships will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- No landscaping, construction or car repair businesses will be approved.
- No sign or other advertising related to the in-home business will be permitted.
- Only one employee, other than the permanent residents of the house, will be allowed unless specifically approved by the Architectural Committee.

Any variance from the approved application will be considered an Owen Brown covenant violation.

## **LANDSCAPING**

An application **is required** for the following changes:

- 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.
- Any hardscaping or landscaping changes for a substantial portion of a yard requires an application. (A substantial portion of a yard is defined as, on any side, 20% or more of a single-family detached or 30% or more of a townhouse or duplex.)
- For townhomes and duplexes no more than 30% of the *front* yard may be hardscaped (non-living, manmade materials)
- Artificial turf is prohibited.

Application requirements:

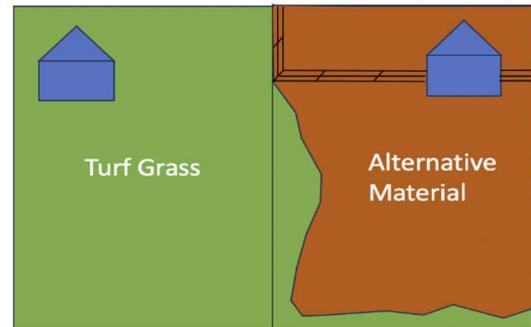
- Any permanent structure requires a material list and dimensions and must match the aesthetic of the house and its surroundings.
- A site plan showing the location and the nature of the changes must accompany the application.
- Unused mulch or stone or other materials must not be stored for more than 30 days. Mulch and other bulk materials must not be placed on the sidewalks, open space or right-of-way.
- 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. See **graphics** on the following page for clarification:



#### **Incongruous Look - Prohibited**



#### **Set back – Allowable**



#### **No application is required for:**

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

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](https://dnr.maryland.gov/criticalarea/Documents/chesapeakenatives.pdf) 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>  
For selection and care of native plants refer to the Maryland Native Plant Society Guide at: <https://mdflora.org/piedmont>
- To choose native plants, Owen Brown is in 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.**

### **LAWN ORNAMENTATION**

An application **is required** for lawn ornamentation (such as sculpture, statuary, fountains, birdbaths, freestanding bird houses, flowerpots and decorative fences) unless all the following conditions are met:

- Item is small in scale (12 – 18 inches).



- Item is located in the rear yard or least visible part of the lot.
- Item is 10 feet from rear property line, within side lines of the house.
- No more than 5 items may be placed on the lot.
- Decorative fences are 12" or shorter, coordinates with house colors, and edge garden beds.

If the above conditions are not met, an application is required. Landscape screening may also be required. A site plan showing the location, a photo of the ornament and a description of the color and materials must accompany the application.

Man-made materials, such as artificial flowers and painted rocks are not permitted.



## **LIGHTING**

### ***FAST TRACK***

RESIDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN YARD LAMPPOST LIGHTS. THESE LIGHTS MUST BE OPERATIONAL AND, FOR SAFETY PURPOSES, WE ASK THAT THEY BE TURNED ON NIGHTLY. THEY MAY NOT BE REMOVED AS THEY SERVE AS STREET LIGHTS.

An application **is required** for the replacement of any exterior light fixture and for the addition of lighting, such as security lights. A site plan showing the location of any new lighting, as well as pictures of the new fixtures, must be submitted with the application.

- Front door light fixtures and lamp post fixtures must be a similar color and style.
- Black lamp posts do not require an application if they match the style of the other lighting fixtures on the front of the home. Any other color *may* be considered depending on the light fixture and house colors.
- Security lights or flood lights may not be located above the front door or on lampposts, and must not shine into neighbors' yards or windows, or open space.
- Landscape lighting on walkways and driveways must be uniformly installed, level and as low to the ground as possible.
- For holiday lights please refer to the Holiday Decorations section of these guidelines.
- Pathway lighting should not exceed 12" and be consistent in style and color throughout

## **NEW CONSTRUCTION**

**An application is required for all new construction, including, but not limited to, teardowns done** prior to building a new home on an existing lot, and additions.

A. 1. An exterior application should include all of the following information:



- a. Timeline with anticipated tear down date, start date and completion date.
  - b. Elevation drawings of all sides of the house showing style, siding or façade materials, window placement, door and garage door placement, roof lines, walkways, driveways, porches, deck, gutters, shutters, and skylights.
  - c. Plans and drawings which the applicant has, or will, submit to Howard County for approval.
  - d. Dimensions of all sides of structure.
  - e. Site plan showing full footprint of house and other structures.
  - f. Description and color samples of all exterior building materials.
  - g. Landscape plan
  - h. Lighting plan
  - i. Notification of all adjacent residents
2. The footprint of the proposed structure must be clearly staked out to provide a visual reference.
3. Consideration should be given to the proportional scale and architectural style of the proposed construction as it relates to the lot and other properties in the neighborhood/street. The new building should be architecturally consistent with the existing shape, style, and size of the dwelling.
4. New construction should not significantly impair the view, amount of sunlight, or ventilation of adjacent residences, or the public's use of open space.
5. New construction should not adversely affect drainage conditions on adjacent properties through changes in grade or other significant run-off conditions, including conditions during construction.
6. New construction should not create situations in which neighbors will have difficulty modifying or maintaining their dwellings.
7. New construction may not infringe on a neighbor's right of way.

Any changes to the original application that take place during the planning or building phase of construction, including those made by the county or other authorities, will require a new application.

B.

1. Before digging, call Miss Utility for the location of underground utilities. This service is provided free of charge and is required by law.
2. Any construction close to the Columbia Association's Open Space could adversely affect that Open Space. Contact the Land Management Division of the Columbia Association for their permission to use Open Space PRIOR to any use during construction. The lot owner



is responsible for ensuring that contractors do not dump materials or damage Open Space land.

3. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits and approvals from any relevant agencies such as the County, Homeowner's Associations, etc. Applications to said agencies may be submitted concurrently with the architectural application to save time on your project. Approval of the exterior alteration application by the village does not authorize violation of any provisions of county, state, or Homeowners' Association codes.

4. Construction, including the approved landscaping, should be completed in accordance with the timeline submitted by the applicant. Any request for extensions of this time frame must be submitted in writing to the covenant advisor. Work should be done in a professional manner. Trash, bulk materials, and general disruption of the work site should be kept to a minimum.

**\*\* Remember that alterations made to a lot without architectural approval are done at the owner's risk, considered to be in violation of village covenants and are subject to removal at the owner's expense.**



## **PAINTING AND STAINING**

**An application is required for any painting or staining of a house when it changes the current approved or original color.** A change in house color is defined as any variation as to shade, lighter or darker, than the current approved color. Semi-gloss paint may be used on doors and shutters, but a flat surface paint must be used on all other surfaces.

When duplexes and townhouses share an exterior material of the same color, every effort must be made to re-paint or re-side with the original color, unless adjacent neighbors agree simultaneously to re-paint or re-side in an approved new color. When weather damages one side of a duplex, requires re-siding, the new siding must match or be as close as possible to the original color. Exterior colors that are allowed are generally in the townhouse community covenants, which should be consulted before applying to Owen Brown.

## **PATIOS AND WALKWAYS**

An application **is required** for all patios and for walkways other than stepping-stones flush with the ground. A site plan showing the location of the patio or walkway and a description of all materials used must accompany the application. Semi-permeable materials are preferred to concrete, especially for large patios. Patios attached to single-family homes may not extend more



than 20 feet or  $\frac{1}{3}$  the distance from the original foundation to the property line, whichever is less. Detached patios may be approved in the side or rear yard. A setback and/or screening may be required if abutting another residential lot, and the patio may not contribute to runoff on a neighboring property. Total area covered by patios may not exceed 400 sq ft or  $\frac{1}{3}$  the area of the rear yard, whichever is less. Basketball courts and other hard surfaces are included in this total. Townhomes may apply for additional coverage. Please consult townhouse regulations regarding patios before submitting plans to Owen Brown.



## **PLAY EQUIPMENT**

*Since the design concept of Columbia includes play equipment on open space, residents are spared the expense of building, installing, and maintaining play equipment on their own property. Residents are encouraged to make use of the tot lots as an alternative to personal play equipment. The locations of the tot lots are available at the village office.*

An application **is required** for any play equipment (including trampolines) or playhouse in a permanent location on the residents' property. A site plan including information about location, size, materials, and screening must be included with the application along with a photo or a brochure of the equipment.

Play equipment must meet the following conditions:

- It should be located in the rear of the property, within the side lines of the house and at least 10 feet from the rear property line.
- Play equipment should be in proportion to the lot size and cannot exceed 20 feet in height.
- Equipment should be restricted to two pieces per yard.
- **All portable play equipment should be stored in the least visible part of the lot when not in use.**
- Landscape screening may be required.
- Playhouses must not exceed 36 square feet; siding must match the house siding and roof color unless it is located away from the house where it may be left natural and the roof color must be consistent with home. Playhouses may not be used for storage and must be kept in good repair.
- Trampolines and tree houses should blend with the surroundings and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Single sandboxes may not exceed 1 foot in height, 20 square feet in size and should be covered during the winter months.



## **PONDS AND POOLS**

*The design concept of Columbia includes neighborhood pools, therefore, private pools are discouraged.*

An application **is required** for all permanent in-ground pools or any portable wading pools more than 8 feet in diameter or more than 24 inches deep and all aquatic ponds of any size. **No above ground pools are permitted.** Portable pools must be located in the back yard within sight lines of the house.

A site plan showing the location of the pool, lighting, all pool apparatus and equipment, and screening (both fencing and landscaping) must be included with the application. In addition, any details of any proposed grading, deck areas, walkways, patios, or any other associated changes to the property must be included with the application.

Each application is evaluated on individual factors such as size of pool in proportion to lot size, location, visual impact, grading, and landscaping requirements. Landscape screening on the outside of the pool fence may be required due to location of pool, pool accessories, or type of fence used.

Approval will be granted most readily if the following conditions are met:

- All pools must be located in the rear of the house.
- Pools must be enclosed with privacy fencing 5 feet to 6 feet high and meet all requirements of the Owen Brown Architectural guidelines and covenants, including fences and landscaping.
- All pool apparatus and equipment, including, but not limited to, diving boards, slides, etc., must be screened by fencing and must not extend above the top of the fence.
- Lighting equipment should be lower than the fence and must not illuminate the adjoining properties.
- Ornamental ponds such as Goldfish and Koi ponds will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applications should include a site plan, dimensions including depth, and means of avoiding safety risks.

## **PORCHES AND PORTICOS**

An application **is required** for all porches and porticos. A site plan with the location and dimensions of the structure must be submitted, along with a drawing or description of the rails and posts.

The railings, posts, and all exposed surfaces, of any front porches or porticos must be painted or stained to match the house siding or trim color. Railings must be consistent in style, and match existing railings, if present. The floor surfaces and steps connected to the porch may be left natural, if desired, or painted a gray tone, if concrete (*see Colors section for number of colors permitted.*). Any roof structure should be the same color as the house roof, and it should



approximate the existing roof as to pitch. All porch or portico floor surface coverings are subject to approval. **Carpeting on porch surfaces and stairs will not be approved.**

### **PROPANE/FUEL TANKS/GENERATORS**

An application **is required** for all fuel tanks over 30 pounds. They must meet all local, county, state, and federal requirements. All tanks should be placed within the rear sidelines of the house as close to the house as possible and be screened by appropriately sized evergreens or fencing.

Generators must be placed within the rear sidelines of the house, as close to the house as possible, and be screened by appropriately sized evergreens or fencing.

### **PROPERTY MAINTENANCE**

The lack of proper maintenance on residential lots is a violation of the Owen Brown Covenants. General Property and Lawn Care: Article VI, Section 6.01 of the village covenants states: **“Each owner shall keep all Lots owned by him, and all improvements therein or thereon in good order and repair, including but not limited to, the seeding, watering, and mowing of all lawns, the pruning and cutting of all trees and shrubbery and the painting (or other appropriate external care) of all buildings and other improvements, all in a manner and with such frequency as is consistent with good property management.”**

Grass must be cut, and trimming done on a regular basis throughout the growing months. Leaves must be raked or mulched in the fall and not placed or blown into the street or onto CA property. Homeowners are responsible for maintenance of their rental property.

The adjacent homeowner is responsible under the Howard County code for the mowing and maintenance of the grass area between the sidewalk and the street. Maintenance of the cul-de-sac islands is the responsibility of the adjacent residents. Residents are encouraged to make a joint effort to maintain and beautify these areas.

#### **Bulk Deliveries:**

Residents must place any bulk deliveries of wood, garden material, or other items on their property, not on sidewalks, driveways, right-of-way, streets, open space, or neighbors' property. Only a reasonable amount should be delivered.

### **RAMPS, RAILINGS, ACCESSORY MOBILITY STRUCTURES**

An Exterior Alteration Application is required for a new accessory mobility structure or any changes to an existing approved structure. Examples of this type of structure include wheelchair ramps or lifts, stair lifts, and railings, as well as changes to walkways or decks to assist the mobility of the residents. When designing an accessibility structure, the design must be harmonious with the style and color scheme of the residence. Railings and sides of ramps on the front of the house must be painted to match the siding or trim color of the house and otherwise follow the color and style guideline for porches. Ramps in the rear of the house must



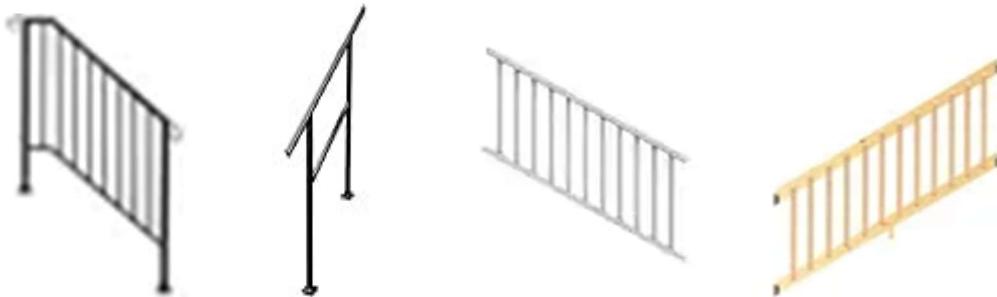
match the deck in color and style. Ramp structures may include stairs as part of the overall structure.

Applications for metal wheelchair ramps, such as those that may be rented from medical equipment suppliers, are intended for short-term solutions and may be approved for up to one year. Such ramps should be removed when no longer needed.

## Application Requirements

The following materials must be submitted with the application:

1. A site plan showing the location of the proposed structure drawn to the proper scale. Dimensions must be included.
2. Elevation drawings of the proposed structure that include dimensions. Include views of all visually affected sides of the property.
3. A description of the materials to be used for the structure, including color and style.
4. Color photos, samples, and/or brochures of proposed equipment such as a chairlift or a prefabricated metal ramp.
5. Details about any additional alterations that will be installed to accommodate the mobility structure, such as lighting, landscaping, or pathways.
6. Railings, by themselves, can be Fast Tracked if one of the following styles:



## 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. Applicants 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 color, 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 a fine screen to prevent creation of a breeding place for mosquitoes. Rain barrels should be placed on a level surface with a stable base.



## RAIN GARDENS

### **Fast Track**

An application is required for all rain gardens. A site plan and a listing of the types of plants to be used are required. Plans approved through the Howard County Clean Scapes Program may be "Fast Tracked."

<https://www.cleanwaterhoward.com/what-your-role/residential-properties/cleanscapes>

Rain Gardens must be properly maintained and weeded. Any drainage or overflow must be properly diverted so it does not flow onto neighboring properties.



**FAST TRACK**



## ROOFING

An application **is required** for all roof replacements. If the roof will be the same color and shingle style it can be done as a **FAST TRACK**. A shingle sample or color brochure must accompany the application.

All types of new roofing materials will be considered. For shared garages and carports please follow the section labeled Garages and Carports. Duplexes must have the same color and shingle style as adjoining home. (We recommend replacing both roofs at the same time, when possible.)



## **SCREENING**

Screening is intended to hide specific areas or unsightly property features only. It may not be installed along a property line in a manner that creates the equivalent of a privacy fence. See Fence section for guidelines regarding privacy fences.

Evergreen trees and shrubs are preferred. When an application is approved with an amendment to require landscape screening, the following criteria are required:

- Plants or trees must be initially large enough or fast growing and be planted in sufficient density to provide an immediate impact. If original screening dies it must be replaced with similar plants.
- Plantings must be 2/3 the height of the object to be screened, or 4 feet tall, whichever is greater.
- Other types of screening may be approved.
- Refer to the references listed under **Landscaping**.



## **SECURITY CAMERAS**

An application **is required** for the installation of any exterior security cameras. A **site plan** showing the location of the cameras, as well as pictures of the fixtures, must be submitted with the application. The maximum number of cameras is limited to six (6) and no camera may be pointed at adjacent properties.

## **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.

### 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 exceeding 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 onto common areas or a neighbor's yard or patio. Gutters may be required.

**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.

**SHUTTERS**

An application **is required** when adding or removing shutters from the home or when the resident changes the current approved color or style. A photo or a brochure and a color sample must be submitted with the application.

**SIDING**

Consideration of new siding shall be in harmony with the prevailing character of the homes in the neighborhood. Variation in detail and form may be used to provide visual interest and avoid monotony. The siding of separate offset and/or shared garages, sheds, and carports must match the house siding color and style. **An application is not required when there is to be no change in color, size, or style.**

An **application is required** when changing the color, size, or style of the siding and when adding or removing stone, brick, etc., to the facing of the house. Please include color samples, size and materials with the application.

- The entire home must be sided to match in style and color.
- If a resident changes the home's siding color, the foundation color must be reconsidered at the same time.
- Duplex units must have the same style and color.

Multi-family housing requires an application for any and all changes.

**Algae, mold etc., that grow on siding must be regularly removed to maintain the color of the siding.**



## SIGNS

An application **is required** for all signs, on both commercial and residential property, except for the following:

- The sign is a security system sign (less than 1 square foot) located near the front or back entrance of the house with a maximum height of 24.”
- The sign is a temporary real estate sign advertising the sale or rental of the property.
- The sign is a political sign for a candidate, which can only be displayed sixty days prior to the election and up to seven days after the election.
- The sign is a temporary sign commemorating/advertising an event or a cause that is displayed for thirty days or less within a six-month period and is no larger than 2’ x 3’ with a maximum height of 48.”
- A flag 3’ x 5’ or smaller is permitted without an application.

Only one permanent and up to three temporary signs are allowed at any given time. **No business or commercial signs are permitted on residential lots.**

All signs and flags must meet the following standards:

- Must be of professional quality and durability.
- Must be appropriately sized for the lot.
- Must comply with Howard County ordinance.
- Must not present a cluttered appearance.
- Must not display hateful, profane, or bigoted language and/or symbols.
- Must be well maintained.

All signs should comply with Howard County sign ordinances. Please call 410-313-2022 for County sign information.



## SKYLIGHTS/LIGHT TUNNELS FAST TRACK

An application **is required** for all skylights and light tunnels, whether they are new or replacements. A site plan showing the location of the proposed skylight or light tunnel must be included with the application.

Skylights and light tunnels should meet the following conditions:

- Should be located on the least visible slope of the roof.
- The frame should match the roof color.



## **SOLAR COLLECTOR SYSTEMS**

An application **is required** for all solar collector systems. A solar collector system must be integrated into the design of the house, and the apparatus in its resting state should appear flush with the roof where possible. A site photograph or elevation drawings of the house showing the location and appearance of the proposed system must be included with the application. **Solar collectors can be fast-tracked.**

Solar panel systems should meet the following conditions:

- Front roof mounts are discouraged, but may be considered if the house face has a southern exposure.
- All pipes, plumbing, wiring, must be hidden.
- Units should be mounted flush to roof where possible with all trim and flashing painted to match roof color.
- Collector height may not extend above roof peak.
- Other technology, such as photovoltaic shingles, will be considered on a case by case basis.

## **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 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.

## **TEMPORARY STRUCTURES**

An exterior alteration application is necessary for any temporary structure. The structure can be approved to remain in place for up to 90 days\*. The application must include the duration that the structure will be in place. All temporary structures must be located on the residents' property.

Temporary structures might include:

- PODS, maintenance dumpsters (or similar storage units)
- Canvas, nylon or other fabric canopy-type structures
- Any seasonal structure other than holiday decorations

**Note: Brightly colored tarps are not allowed in the open in any lot. For Example: Blue, Orange.**

\* 30 days for tarps.



## **TRASH AND BULK ITEMS**

### **Bulk Deliveries:**

Residents must place any bulk deliveries of wood, garden material, or other items on their property, not on sidewalks, streets, CA open space or a neighbors' property. All bulk items should be removed from view within two weeks of delivery.

### **Trash:**

Section 8.06 of the village covenants states: "No lumber, metals, bulk materials, refuse or trash shall be kept, stored, or allowed to accumulate on any Lot. If trash or other refuse is to be disposed of by being picked up and carried away on a regular and recurring basis, containers may be placed in the open, on any day that a pickup is to be made, at such a place on the Lot so as to provide access to persons making such a pick-up. At all other times, such containers shall be stored in such a manner so that they cannot be seen from adjacent and surrounding property."

The storage of trash bins and recycle/compost bins should not be visible from the street. The ideal locations for the storage of the bins are in a garage or behind the house (or behind the garage if the garage is detached). Alternate locations for storage will be considered as long as the following criteria are met:

- appropriate screening is installed, and the location does not impede onto adjoining properties.
- The material of the screening should be the following: planting/shrubbery, materials and colors that blend with the adjoining structure.

### **Screening:**

An application is required for the screening of trash/recycling cans being stored on side or front of a home. The location, size and materials used need to be indicated in the application. The screening should blend with the adjoining structure. If shrubs are to be used, also see the "Screening" section of these Guidelines. The size and footprint of the screening should be proportional to the height, width and depth of the cans being stored behind it.

According to Howard County regulations, trash and recyclables should not be put out for pickup before 6 p.m. the night prior to the pickup and containers must be collected by the resident on the day of the pickup and stored out of sight (never in front of the house). The clean-up of trash spilled and/or spread by animals or wind is the responsibility of the resident. Trash may not be placed adjacent to the cluster mailboxes or fire hydrants.

***For information on trash & recycle pickup, and the Howard County Landfill: 410-313-7678***



## **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 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.
- Screening is intended to hide specific areas or unsightly property features only. Trees may not be installed along a property line, or in combination with other features, in a manner that creates the equivalent of a privacy fence.

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 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 crops. 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](http://www.columbiagardeners.com)



## VEHICLES

**Boats, campers, motor homes, trailers, recreational vehicles, visibly inoperable or untagged vehicles, commercially used trucks or vans that equal or exceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton in size bearing commercial signage and other similar items may not be stored or parked on any lot, carport, or driveway without approval.** An annual application is required for the storage of any such vehicle and, if approved, will be valid for one (1) year. Parking of any motor vehicle anywhere other than a driveway or an approved parking pad is prohibited. A site plan showing the location of the proposed storage site, along with plans for screening, must be submitted with the application.

Major vehicle renovation or repair may not be undertaken except in enclosed garages. Any maintenance project must be completed, and proper cleanup accomplished prior to sundown the same day.



## WINDOWS

An application is required for all window replacements, and for storm windows or screens of a different color or style from the original. Fast Track is available when replacing with the same style and color as existing windows. All windows on a house must be of consistent style and color. Different styles such as bow, bay, and basement windows will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The style and color must be included with the application. An application is not required for the replacement of broken windowpanes, or for window screens exactly matching original.

Muntin's (window grids) are permitted on traditional homes only, but they are not required. If used, all windows must have muntin's and their appearance must be the same.



Storm window trim must match window trim color and be consistent in style with house. If one window on a side of a house has a storm window, all on that side must have a storm window. Security grates will be considered on a case-by-case basis and do require an application.



## **WOODPILES**

An application **is required** for woodpiles **unless all the following conditions are met:**

- Woodpiles must be located in the rear yard or least visible part of the lot.
- Woodpiles should be located at least 10 feet from the rear property line and within the side lines of the house, except for townhomes.
- Excessive amounts of wood (more than one cord) will not be approved.

Screening may be required. Woodpiles located between two trees are discouraged. Stacking of wood on sidewalks, driveways, open space, and Howard County right-of-way areas are not permitted.

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## **HOWARD COUNTY LAWS**

Howard County imposes certain restrictions on residents. **Please call the appropriate County agency for these problems, as Owen Brown has no authority.** Those most significant to Owen Brown residents include:

### **ANIMAL CONTROL:**

Copies of the Howard County Animal Control Laws are available at the Village office, or by calling **410-313-2780**. All dogs and cats in Howard County must be licensed annually.

The Law states that an animal must be on a leash and under control of a responsible person when not on the owner's property. Owners are required to clean up after their pets daily, on or off their property, and dispose of the waste material in a sanitary manner or face legal penalties. No wild, exotic, or "game" type animal may be kept on any residential lot.

Citizens having animal problems, including excessive barking, should first personally bring the problem to the owner's attention; or restrain the animal on your property and call the Animal Control for pick up; or call or write Animal Control about the problem requesting action; or file a Violation Affidavit, a formal notarized statement describing the problem, with dates and times. Send the affidavit to:

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

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

### **CUL-DE-SAC ISLANDS:**

Maintenance of the landscaping on cul-de-sac islands and street is the responsibility of adjacent homeowners. **Parking around cul-de-sac islands is a county violation and vehicles may be ticketed by the police. (Ho. Co Code 21.221 A-8)** Call the non-emergency Police number to report parking around your cul-de-sac island, 410-313-2200.

### **RENTAL PROPERTIES, BOARDERS AND SHARED LIVING:**

Property **owners** are responsible for compliance of their property with the Owen Brown Covenants.



Howard County requires the licensing of any rental unit and an inspection of the premises. All known rental units are reported to the County. Call 410-313-2455.

A residence may not be subdivided, partitioned, have additional kitchens or efficiencies, or separate and exclusive entrances. All occupants must have equal and unrestricted use of the common household areas.

Vehicle parking is a prime concern, especially in multi-family, high-density areas. Howard County requires approximately two spaces per unit and residents with vehicles exceeding allotted spaces should use overflow areas.

#### **SIDEWALKS, SNOW REMOVAL, GRASS STRIPS AND STREET TREES:**

Repair and maintenance, including snow removal, of adjoining sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner under Howard County law. Deteriorating sidewalks must be replaced with concrete. No application is required to repair or replace existing sidewalks with concrete. **Call Howard County Public Works at 410-313-7450 with any questions about sidewalk repair.**

**Any deviation from the original design or location requires application approval by the Resident Architectural Committee.**

Maintenance of grass areas between sidewalk and curb, including trees and shrubbery, is also the adjacent property owner's responsibility and must include appropriate mowing, trimming, weeding, and fertilizing in the same manner as regular lawn care. Trees and shrubbery must be pruned to allow clearance for walkers and bikers. For information on County Street trees, call 410-313-7450.