

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW DISTRICT
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

City of Bexley, Ohio
Board of Zoning Appeals

Introduction

The purpose of the Architectural Review District is to maintain the quality and existing character of residential neighborhoods in the City of Bexley. The Board of Zoning Appeals (the "Board" or the "BZA") is charged with the responsibility of assuring that new homes and exterior changes to existing homes are compatible with and do not adversely affect the surrounding neighborhood.

The BZA, directly or through its staff, reviews all exterior changes and additions to homes in Bexley. The Board does not review normal repair and maintenance, which does not cause any visual change to a building. Board members are all residents of the City, including citizens with real estate, building and design experience.

No new home can be constructed and no existing home can be enlarged or have its architectural style and details changed, unless the City issues the property owner a certificate of appropriateness. In deciding whether to issue the certificate, the BZA considers elements such as architectural design, exterior materials and detail, height and building mass, placement of buildings on the site and grade levels. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the proposed new home or modifications are compatible with the neighborhood. The goal is not uniformity of design since Bexley has many different architectural styles. Instead the goal is to foster compatible design which respects a home's existing style and its surroundings.

The following design guidelines include:

Specific Standards: For certain types of projects, the Board has established specific standards. If you comply with these standards, City staff or planning consultants will conduct an administrative review of your project and an appearance before the BZA will not be necessary.

General Guidelines: These guidelines are for projects which will be reviewed by the BZA. Please keep in mind that these guidelines are not absolute rules, although they are applicable in many cases.

For information about the design review process and submission requirements, please call the Building Department at (614)235-0956.

Repairs and Maintenance Projects Which May Not Require Architectural Review

Routine repairs and maintenance do not require the approval of the BZA when the work is completed using matching materials and design. Existing architectural details, including trim, shutters, columns, porches, windows and other elements shall be retained. If certain elements have deteriorated beyond the point where they cannot be retained, they shall be replaced in kind. **However, any modification or deletion of existing exterior architectural details requires a certificate of appropriateness.** Examples of typical maintenance items are as follows:

Re-pointing: Mortar used to re-point existing brick or stone shall match the color of the mortar on the existing building; the width and profile of the mortar joints shall also match the existing condition.

Roofs: Areas of deteriorated shingles can be replaced without replacing the entire roof if the new shingles match the material, color, texture, and profile of the existing roof. Asphalt shingles shall not be used to patch a slate, wood shake or shingle, or tile roof.

Porches, Railing, Steps, Decks: When porches, railings, steps, decks, or other exterior elements are replaced, pressure-treated wood is acceptable for structural members but a higher grade of lumber, such as cedar, redwood or cypress, is recommended, but not required, for all finish elements, including posts, railings, fascia and trim, stair risers and treads, and other visible features.

Shutters: If shutters are replaced, the new shutters shall be equal to the height of the window and approximately half its width. The shutters shall be installed so that the bottoms of the shutters align with the tops of the windowsills.

Design Standards For Projects Which May Receive Administrative Review

Roofs: Distinctive roofing materials, including slate, copper, clay tile, and wood shakes, shall be repaired and maintained whenever possible. If a roof is deteriorated beyond repair, asphalt or fiberglass reinforced asphalt shingles are acceptable alternatives in most cases.

Staff must approve shingle color. New roofs shall be compatible in color and texture with the architectural style of the house. The BZA has established a palette of pre-approved colors, generally in the darker range, which are appropriate to various architectural styles. Since shingle colors vary with different manufacturers, please contact the City to see if your color choice is pre-approved.

Slate, synthetic slate, cedar shakes, and other roofing materials are encouraged for some houses, based on architectural style.

Window and Door Replacements: Replacement windows and doors which replicate the size, style, color and appearance of existing windows and doors are permitted and may be reviewed and approved by staff.

Any variation from these standards may require an appearance before the BZA. Also, applicants whose projects have been reviewed by staff may request and apply for review and approval by the Board. The staff may also decline to review a project and refer it to the BZA.

Design Guidelines For Projects Which Must Be Reviewed by the BZA

The design of a new residence shall consider the rich architectural heritage of the City as well as the relationship in massing, scale, texture, and color of the residence to its neighbors. New homes shall be designed as a product of their own time but incorporate design elements of the primary architectural style(s) of the surrounding area. The design of alterations and additions shall be compatible with the existing structure in terms of architectural detail, scale, materials, and colors.

Materials for new construction and additions shall have architectural character and should be selected for harmony within a building and with adjoining buildings.

Additions: The scale and proportions of an addition shall be compatible with the principal structure and with the surrounding structures and context. Whenever possible, architectural elements on an addition shall align with similar elements on the existing building. For example, windows on an addition shall align with the windows on the principal structure. Also, fascia and other trim shall be used consistently and the details on additions and auxiliary structures shall relate to those on the main structure.

The BZA typically does not require that additions replicate the existing architecture; rather, residential additions shall be respectful and sensitive to the existing architecture. In most cases, additions shall be sided and roofed with materials that match the existing house in terms of scale, texture, and color.

Flat roofs are sometimes appropriate for additions; gabled roofs shall replicate the roof pitch on the existing house when possible.

Additions and bay windows shall fit into the existing architecture of a house, both physically and visually. Often, in maximizing the size of an addition, other elements on the house, including existing doors and windows, become overly crowded in a visual sense. Not all homes can accommodate a large addition or a bay window. These elements must be studied carefully to ensure that they do not disrupt the existing scale and proportions of a house.

Windows: Window replacements and new windows shall correspond to existing window styles and fit into the house's established pattern of fenestration. Windows, which make a strong architectural statement, such as arched windows and bay windows, shall be used

only in the appropriate context. These windows will act as a focal point on a house and should be used with restraint.

Roof windows and skylights may be inappropriate for some traditional houses. In many cases, dormers are encouraged as a more compatible solution. When used, skylights shall be located in inconspicuous locations, preferably where they are not visible from the street. Skylight placement shall relate to the exterior details of a house as well as to the interior constraints. Grouping several small skylights together is often preferable to installing one large skylight.

Re-siding: Every effort shall be made to preserve existing architectural details when re-siding a house. Special care shall be taken to address the relationship of the new siding to the existing architecture, especially at the rake of the roof and at the window and door casings. “Jumping” or siding over the existing casings is not permitted.

Detached Garages: Garages and other auxiliary buildings shall be roofed and sided to match the principal structure whenever possible. The pitch and orientation of a garage roof shall also relate to the roof on the principal structure.

Porches, Decks, and Ramps: Pressure treated wood is acceptable for structural members but a higher grade of lumber, such as cedar, redwood or cypress is recommended, but not required, for all finish elements, including posts, railings, fascia and trim, stair risers and treads, and other visible features.

Other Legal Requirements

Architectural review is not the exclusive review procedure for residential structures. Structures are also subject to general zoning and building code requirements. Here are a few examples:

Walls and Fences: Walls and fences are not subject to architectural review but are regulated by Chapter 1256 of the City’s Zoning Code. Please contact the Building Department for information regarding the requirements governing walls and fences.

Demolitions: A permit is required to demolish a structure, and in most cases an existing structure cannot be demolished until the replacement structure or a site restoration plan has been approved. Please contact the Building Department for further information.

Setbacks, Etc.: All structures in residential zoning districts are subject to a number of other requirements, including permitted uses, minimum lot size, minimum front, rear and side yard depth, maximum height and maximum lot coverage. Any departure from the standards set forth in the City’s Zoning Code requires a variance from the BZA. All structures are also required to comply with the City’s building regulations. All exterior air conditioning equipment, exterior lighting and private swimming pools also require permits. The City also has a building and property maintenance code, which requires

property owners to maintain building exteriors and property areas. Please contact the Building Department for further information.

A Final Word

The preceding guidelines are intended to be just that, and not inflexible regulations. Therefore, the BZA reserves the right to deviate from the guidelines in appropriate cases. The BZA encourages homeowners, architects and builders to take advantage of the preliminary review process, especially for large or unusual projects. For a preliminary review, a simplified set of plans may be submitted early in the design development phase in order to get feedback and direction from the BZA. Please see the BZA submission packet for more details about the preliminary review process.