

**Design Guidelines
And
Standards**

Shaker Heights
Architectural Board of Review

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The purpose of the ABR is to maintain the high standard of architectural quality in the City of Shaker Heights. The Board is concerned not only with the design of a specific project but also with the effect it will have on the surrounding environment.

The Shaker Heights Architectural Board of Review (ABR) reviews all exterior changes and additions to homes in Shaker Heights. The ABR also reviews new buildings, commercial and institutional projects, and signage. Normal repair and maintenance which does not cause any visual change to a building is not reviewed by the Board. Board members are all architects who live in Shaker Heights.

The following design guidelines include:

Specific Standards: For certain types of projects, the Board has established specific standards. If you comply with these standards, Planning Department staff will conduct an administrative review of your project and an appearance before the Architectural Board of Review will not be necessary.

General Guidelines: These guidelines are for projects which will be reviewed by the ABR. 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 Planning Department at (216) 491-1430.

Repairs and Maintenance

Guidelines for Projects Which May Not Require the Approval of Architectural Board of Review

Routine repairs and maintenance do not require the approval of the Architectural Board of Review when the work is completed using matching materials and design. Existing architectural details, including trim, shutters, columns, porches, and other elements shall be retained. If certain elements have deteriorated beyond the point where they can be retained, they shall be replaced in kind. Any modification or deletion of existing exterior architectural details requires the approval of the Architectural Board of Review. 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, Railings, 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, shall be used 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 window sills.

Residential

Design Standards for Projects Which May Be Reviewed by Planning Department Staff

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.

When replacing a roof or adding a layer of asphalt roofing shingles, the building code requires that shingles have at least a 30-year warranty.

Shingle color must be approved by Planning Department staff. New roofs shall be compatible in color and texture with the architectural style of the house. The Architectural Board of Review has established a palette of pre-approved colors, generally in the darker range, which are appropriate to various architectural styles, based on the *Shaker Village Colors* brochure. Since shingle colors vary with different manufacturers, please contact the Planning Department 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.

By ordinance, you are not permitted to replace more than 25% of an existing roof without replacing the entire roof.

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 Planning Department staff.

Any variation from these standards may require an appearance before the Architectural Board of Review. Also, applicants whose projects have been reviewed by Planning Department staff may request and apply for review and approval by the ABR.

Residential

Design Guidelines for Projects Which Will Be Reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review

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 ABR typically does not require that additions replicate the existing architecture; rather, residential additions shall be respectful of 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, proportions, and rhythm 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.

Walls and Fences: The ABR reviews freestanding walls, retaining walls, and some fences. Please refer to *Shaker Heights Fences*, available in the Planning Department, for information regarding appropriate fence types and styles.

Porches, Decks, and Ramps: Pressure treated wood is acceptable for structural members but a higher grade of lumber, such as cedar, redwood or cypress shall be used for all finish elements, including posts, railings, fascia and trim, stair risers and treads, and other visible features.

Commercial/Institutional

Design Guidelines for Projects Which Will
Be Reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review

New Buildings: New commercial or institutional buildings should reflect the scale, orientation, and character of the neighborhood in which they are to be located.

Storefront Alterations: Storefront alterations should respect the architectural character of the existing building in terms of materials, scale, proportion, and fenestration. Alterations to storefronts which are part of a shopping center are reviewed within the context of the plan for the shopping center as a whole.

Mechanical Equipment: Mechanical equipment should be screened in a manner that is compatible with the architectural character of the building. Appropriate screening for rooftop equipment may include parapet walls or fabricated panels. In some cases, painting is sufficient to reduce the visibility of rooftop equipment. Board members reserve the right to review screening of rooftop mechanical equipment by requesting sight line studies and/or through site visits. Appropriate screening for mechanical equipment on the ground may include landscaping, fences, or auxiliary structures.

Site Plan constraints: Commercial sites should be laid out in such a way that access and traffic patterns are optimized. Trash management and the accommodation of delivery trucks should be designed into the site plan. Parking areas should have landscape screening where applicable and pedestrian concerns should be considered.

Signage

Design Guidelines for Projects Which Will be Reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review

A sign should have good scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to buildings and surroundings. In most parts of the city, signage should be designed for the pedestrian scale.

A sign should be designed as an integral architectural element of a building and site to which it relates. If a building has a sign band or an area that was designed specifically for sign placement, a sign should respect and conform to this architectural constraint.

Illuminated signs are allowed in some cases. However, full illumination is discouraged, especially if the illumination will have a negative effect on the surrounding neighborhood. Illuminated letters on an opaque background or individual, backlit letters are preferable.

The colors, materials and illumination of a sign should be restrained and harmonious with the building and the site to which it relates. Text should be arranged on a sign in a balanced way. Individual items of information should be minimized in order to improve readability and reduce the appearance of clutter.

A sign should be compatible with signs on adjoining premises and should not compete for attention.

A sign which is a corporate standard may need to be modified in order to be compatible with a building or a site.

Auxiliary signs, including neon window signs, may be allowed if they are appropriately designed and compatible with other signage on the storefront. Neon signs may also be permitted for businesses in shopping centers if standards have been established for the shopping center to ensure that auxiliary signage is used consistently.

Note: Some shopping centers and multi-tenant buildings in the city have specific signage criteria which has been reviewed and approved by the ABR. In these cases, a new sign may be approved by Planning Department staff if the sign complies with the established criteria. However, applicants whose plans have been reviewed by Planning staff may request and apply for review by the ABR.

Although the preceding guidelines are applicable in many situations, the Architectural Board of Review reserves the right to deviate from the guidelines for unusual circumstances and complex projects. The ABR encourages you to take advantage of the preliminary review process, especially for large, complex 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 ABR. Please see the ABR submission requirements packet for more details about the preliminary review process.

There is a well-established precedent of high quality design in Shaker Heights. The ABR seeks to maintain and encourage alterations and new construction that are in keeping with this precedent. However, specific design detail (such as a skylight, bay window, etc.) on one home in the city does not necessarily mean that the same detail will be approved by the Board for other homes and in other circumstances. Because every home and every situation is different, the ABR reviews projects on a case by case basis.

The Planning Department has examples of recent projects, both approved and not approved, for your reference. Please call (216) 491-1430 for more information.

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