

Homes Association of Cedar Hills

Board Policy

Permit Process Policy

Goal:

The Association wishes to:

- Enforce the Restriction (Article V (a)(1)) which states that alterations that materially alter the exterior appearance of the dwelling or other structures require a permit from the Association.
 - Provide homeowners policy guidance regarding what constitutes “material” alterations, in the view of the Association.
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Policy:

The Board of Directors defines community norms for “material alteration” using input from the membership at Board meetings and annual surveys, and through consensus-building discussion as Board members representing the Association. Any permit application may be denied if the Board determines the proposed change is “inharmonious” with the immediate neighborhood, or if it does not comply with specific Restrictions (Article V (a)(2)).

Alterations requiring permits from the Association typically have three characteristics: materials used, extent of the modification and location of modification.

Materials used:

- Concrete – pouring concrete for slabs, walkways or retaining walls anywhere on the property requires a permit.
- Change in materials (e.g. different house siding or roofing material) – often creates a change in appearance and so would trigger a requirement for a permit.

Extent of Modification:

- New structures (e.g. walls, roofs, fences, sheds) – all require permits.
- Change in number or size of openings to the dwelling (i.e. windows, doors, skylights) – require permits.
- New house paint color – including trim color – requires a permit.
- New equipment such as HVAC units – requires a permit.
- Major overhaul/replacement of majority (50% or greater) of the front yard that is not already approved as parking surface – requires a permit.

Location of Modification:

- County right-of-way – structures are essentially disallowed. Sidewalk maintenance and planting or removing street trees require permits.
- Easements/setbacks – the permit process is used to protect access to easements and enforce restrictions on construction in setbacks.
- Front/side/back yard – different areas of the property’s yard have different visibility to the neighborhood and so have different standards for permitting. Typically, the farther from street view, the lower the requirement.

- Fencing – new fencing requires a permit (maintenance repair does not – see the Fences and Retaining Walls policy for what constitutes a repair).

Permits:

The Association permit application is a two-page form:

- Page 1 identifies the property address, provides homeowner contact information and a description of the project, with a desired timeline.
- Page 2 contains room for neighbor signatures indicating acknowledgment of the proposed project, as well as a signature line for the homeowner acknowledging the permit and the permit process (tenants are not allowed to submit applications for modifying properties).

The same permit form is used for most purposes, with some variations for special purposes (car covers, temporary use of RVs, etc.). Supporting documentation attached to the application varies by specific need. Refer to individual policies for standards and specific documentation required in each case (e.g. Fences and Retaining Walls, Accessory Buildings, etc.):

- Site plan – used for most permits involving construction or landscaping – shows property dimensions, setbacks, easements, existing buildings, and placement of proposed modification.
- Documentation of major products used (e.g. paint color chips or manufacturer’s description of siding, roofing, windows).
- Neighbor signatures – typically the neighbors affected visually (or by traffic) – the bigger the modification, the more neighbors may need to be contacted.
[note: sometimes neighbors are difficult to contact – the Association allows certified mail to be sent to the neighbor, giving them 10 (calendar) days to respond. Permits submitted with missing signatures may be reviewed but will not be approved until the neighbors have had a chance to acknowledge the application.]
- Neighbor support is not *required* for Association approval of a permit application but requiring neighbor acknowledgment ensures the Permit Committee that direct neighbors are informed of changes that may affect them.

Level of approval required for the permit depends upon the magnitude of the requested change:

- Office staff – may approve sidewalk permits, car cover permits and courtesy or short-term RV parking permits.
- Permit Committee (less than quorum of Board) – approves most modifications (other than additions) and most structures in the yard (other than large sheds).
- Permit Committee (full quorum of Board required) – approves large sheds, non-walkway slab-work allowed in the front setback and exceptions allowed in some policies (e.g. Accessory Buildings).
- Board of Directors (at a normal monthly meeting) – approves additions in concept, and level of required neighborhood review input, passes authority to Permit Committee for final detail approvals (e.g. final colors, windows, etc.).

Further questions about whether a permit is necessary for a desired project are best handled by office staff: in person, by phone or email.

Adopted by Board of Directors
Mark Swan, President
Homes Association of Cedar Hills,
April 10, 2018